

20 September 1991

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 20 day of September, 1991, by and between Margaret Mulholland (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie J. 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.
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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 Margaret Mulholland Date 20 Sept. 1991

Interviewee: Margaret Mulholland (name)
12401 Augusta Drive (address)
Sun City, AZ 85351

Signed Melanie S. Sturgeon Date 20 Sept 1991

Interviewer Melanie F. Sturgeon (name)
1535 E. Hampton Cir. (address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 206

Interview with Margaret C. Mulholland

September 20, 1991

Date of Birth: December 5, 1901

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois

Margaret was one of the early residents and very active in community affairs. After the death of her husband, she moved back to Illinois to pursue a career, then returned again after four or five years absence.

Synopsis:

- Parents probably born 1880s. Mother young housewife; doesn't know what father did.
- Mother high school education and perhaps one year of advanced education.
- I grew up and was educated in Chicago, then Jamestown, New York. Advanced education in Decatur, Illinois. Studied welfare of young people, sociology. Worked, married and had 3 children in Chicago.
- Husband became ill and I entered the government. Was with the Treasury Department, and Department of Army – 25 years with U.S. Government.
- I was not involved in any kind of community activity until I moved to Decatur, Illinois in the mid 30s. Then I was very interested in Order of the Eastern Star. All 3 children attended Milliken University and daughter attended college for women in Jackson, Illinois, McMurray College.
- In 1966, my husband and I traveled to Europe. Did Ireland then flew to England. Husband had heart attack, died 6 days later
- Went back to Illinois and interviewed with Dean at Milliken College. No job, but opening in sorority as Housemother. Spent 4 years with 38 girls every semester. Pleasant association.
- Oldest son lived in Arizona. Came out to visit him. Advised us to see Sun City. Only about 2,500 people when moved in. All from different states. Joy to gather around swimming pool. Joined Federated Women's Club. The interested in volunteering at hospital for about 5 years. Swim Club, golf course and golf club.
- Still living in same house; 19th house finished in Sun City.

- Dr. in Sun City asked me to be his medical secretary. I was upset by older people with gray hair and illness. Got away from the community. In Decatur wanted to be with younger people. Then decided to come back to home in Sun City.
- Want SC to be unincorporated. We governed city for the last 30 years. No reason for more expenditures, paying salary to Mayor, Fire Chief, etc. 75% of people here donate time.
- Paid cash for the house.
- Del Webb attended some meetings. Everyone respected him. Gave retirement world much joy. Delightful to speak with him. Very busy, I had friends move out here.
- Sun City thrived because of early retired people. Showed how to live leisurely. Early residents were models for those who came afterward. After 15 years, younger groups different, more advanced ideas. They earned more than we did.
- When new recreation center, I was never involved in contention. I wanted to run things, and I have. All groups were organized and you do go up the ladder. Instrumental in forming get-together Club; 30 – 35 people for book reviews; still meet once a month. Volunteered for 5 years with Northwest Hospital in Glendale. After husband's death not interested in that. Still very active in Eastern star.
- Tom Austin would come before groups and advise us, etc., very pleasant man, well-liked.
- After first year, company sent out questionnaires. What would you do to make improvements in your home? Husband filled them out. Didn't buy house directly from Webb. Neighbor bought 5 houses; we bought from him. Saw house as being built. House on golf course amount of space we wanted.

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Margaret C. Mulholland – early Sun City resident

Interviewer Melanie Sturgeon 20 Sep 1991

Transcribed by Belva McIntosh Apr 2008

This is Melanie Sturgeon and on behalf of the Sun Cities Area Historical Association and the Arizona Historical Foundation. I am interviewing Margaret Mulholland, one of the early pioneers to Sun City, in her home in Sun City Arizona.

STURGEON: Margaret, can you tell me approximately the dates your parents were born and where they were born?

MULHOLLAND: Well, I will try. My parents were born in the United States and they were probably born in 1888 – in there some place.

STURGEON: What did your parents do for a living?

MULHOLLAND: Well, my mother was a young housewife and my father, well really I don't know what my father did because I was just a very small child then he was out of my life.

STURGEON: Do you know what your mother's education was? Did she go through school?

MULHOLLAND: Oh yes. Mother had a high school education and perhaps a year of advanced.

STURGEON: What about yourself? Can you tell me when you were born and where?

MULHOLLAND: I was born in Chicago, Illinois on December 5, 1901.

STURGEON: Did you grow up in Chicago?

MULHOLLAND: I grew up and I was educated partially in Chicago. The rest of my education was in Jamestown, New York and I finished advanced education in Decatur, Illinois. In college I studied the welfare of young people, sociology. I worked in Chicago, Illinois and I was married in Chicago. My working with young ladies was later in my life. After I finished college I was out in the business world in the Chicago Loop. It was clerical work that I did and then I was married and I had three children. My husband became quite ill and then I entered the Government. I was with the Treasury Department and also I was with the Department of the Army. I spent twenty five years with the Government.

STURGEON: I would like to go back a little bit in your life. Did you have any brothers and sisters?

MULHOLLAND: One sister who was eight years younger. The neighborhood where I grew up in Chicago was on the south side, probably most of the people were Irish, German and I suppose there was some Polish also and it was in the early 1900's. We lived in a house. Of course I was quite young when I lived there. This was my grandfather's house and they had what they called a flat upstairs. My grandfather was a tin smith and he had his business in the basement of the house. The people who lived there were naturally all working people. They consisted, as I have said, Irish, German, probably some Polish mixed in with them, but mostly Irish.

STURGEON: How did you get to Jamestown from there?

MULHOLLAND: My mother married Mr. Kyle who was a telephone man and he took my mother and myself to Jamestown New York. I graduated from high school there. After I had worked with the telephone company then we went back to Chicago and I met my husband and I married him and my life took on from there.

STURGEON: Did you stay in Chicago the rest of your married life?

MULLHOLLAND: I stayed in Chicago probably sixteen years. I went to Decatur Illinois. I started with the government in Chicago and I worked for probably four years. Then I transferred to the Department of the Army and spent the rest of my government years with the Department of the Army in Decatur.

STURGEON: That must have been hard working and raising three children at the same time.

MULHOLLAND: When one is young one doesn't see all these hardships.

STURGEON : When you were a child did you ever see your mother involved in any community activities?

MULHOLLAND: There was always church, well really I don't remember that particular time. But I knew she was always there and devoted as much time to me as a young mother does.

STURGEON: What about yourself? Did you get involved in clubs or community activities?

MULHOLLAND: Do you want to know that I did not become involved in any kind of activities until I moved to Decatur Illinois, when I was probably about 33 or 35. I became very interested in the Order of the Eastern Star and I became very involved in their background. All three of my children, two boys, attended Milliken University and my daughter attended the college for women at Jacksonville, Illinois, McMurray college. I wanted her to learn how it would be to live with women.

STURGEON: How did you get involved with young women?

MULHOLLAND: In 1966 my husband and I went to London. We went to Europe. We did all of Ireland and were flying over and arrived from Ireland to London. On our transportation from the airport to our hotel my husband had a heart attack and he spent six days in London hospital and of course he expired on tenth of June 1966. I had him cremated and brought his remains back and my doctor here in Sun City Arizona asked me to be his medical secretary which I was for perhaps five months. I got very upset with living in Sun City. I needed to become interested in the business world again. I just could not stand these old people because I was much younger. At that point in my life I went back to Decatur Illinois and I had an appointment with the Dean of Women at Milliken University. Then she advised me that she did not have anything in the administrative office but she did have an opening in one of the sorority houses as a house mother. So I had a very nice interview – that is the alums interviewed me for the position and I was accepted and I spent four years as a house mother with these young girls - 38 every semester. It was not a rude awakening, it was a pleasant association with these young women. The girls I had were about 18 until they graduated. It was a delightful four years. If I told my daughter earlier that I wanted her to become acquainted and learn how to live with women, I learned how to live with women.

STURGEON: What did your husband do for a living when you were first married?

MULHOLLAND: My husband was a college graduate and he was also quite – he had an illness that caused him to be not too active. His illness was consistent of his lung and his heart. My husband was the manager for the unemployment office. So that was his job. He was the manager of this particular office in Decatur for probably sixteen years with seventeen employees under him.

STURGEON: What did you do for the government?

MULHOLLAND: My first job was with the Department of Commerce in Washington D. C. A very uninteresting job. Then I was asked to come back to Chicago because this was going to be a permanent position, which I did. It developed that I was a telephone operator for the large Post Office in Chicago for two years and then I transferred to the Treasury Department and worked for them for five years. Then I worked for the Department of the Army and worked there until 1961.

STURGEON: When you were growing up, you probably would have been about thirty when the depression hit. Do you remember what it was like during the depression?

MULHOLLAND: No, really. We always had enough food to eat, we had enough money to pay our rent and it wasn't anything different than I am probably living now. Both my husband I had very lucrative jobs during that time.

STURGEON: Do you remember, not necessarily the date when Social Security was passed but do you remember the Social Security Act, when they were debating it?

MULHOLLAND: No, really I didn't. None of my family was affected by it. I think it was a very good act. It did a lot for the country. People had a little more security. We all complied with the rules set up.

STURGEON: When you were thinking about retiring what were your plans for the future?

MULHOLLAND: Well, it was nigh on to twenty five years and I was certainly going to get my twenty five years in. But my husband, no I will have to go back a little bit further, our oldest son lived in Arizona and we came out to visit him. He advised us that we should come out to see Sun City because it was a new retirement development. We did come out and there were things that were very dear to Mr. Mulholland, especially the golf course because he was a golfer. Then to the climate was very conducive to his health. It was a dry climate and it was a great help to him.

STURGEON: Sometimes when you stayed in a community for a long time were you at all concerned about making new friends or things like that when you moved?

MULHOLLAND: It is very simple to make new friends in a place like Sun City because after all when we came out here there were probably only about 2500 people. We all came from different states and we were interested in retirement and it was a joy gathering around the swimming people. I went into the Federated Women's Club which brought me in contact with many women from all walks of life. Then I became interested in something that I had never had the opportunity to do and that was to volunteer myself the hospital of volunteer work and I did that for five years. Your time was always taken up with some kind of recreation which contributed to the friendship that I had carried on with all these many years.

STURGEON: When you were thinking about retiring you would have had Social Security benefits, were there any other pension or monies that you could depend on to keep yourselves going once you had retired?

MULHOLLAND: Yes, I was very fortunate to have other incomes. I had my pension from my Government job and of course my husband was an employee of the State of Illinois and I had an income from his position.

STURGEON: You must have been, as you said earlier, a little bit concerned about his health. Did you ever think about your health as you got older? Did you ever worry about that?

MULLHOLLAND: I never worried about it. I was always able to do eight hours every day. I am still living in the first house we bought. This house was the 19th house that was finished in Sun City. We came here in 1960 and we visited Sun City and we also knew that there was a golf course which my husband was interested in. We saw this particular model and we came back in March of 1961 and bought this house and moved into it in August and that is thirty years ago.

STURGEON: When you became involved in the community did you have some idea of about what the community was before you moved in and was it any different from what actually happened?

MULHOLLAND: Oh, heavens yes. I had no idea of course what the community would be like and who would be living here and I had absolutely no idea about the entertainment or the volunteer work that one could do if one so wished. It agreed with me and I certainly contributed many hours and I am still contributing hours to volunteer work in Sun City.

STURGEON: You had mentioned that when your husband died you decided to go back to Illinois because it was hard for you. Was that because there were so many old people and you didn't feel like you belonged?

MULLHOLLAND: Yes. I was employed by my Doctor for about five or six months. I got so upset with these old people, these gray people, and everyone was more ill than the next one that I just had to get away from this community. So I did go back to Decatur Illinois and went out into the business world. It was a great joy really to not have to be with these older people. I had to be with younger people and I was. I was housemother for a sorority at Milliken University and so I learned how to live with girls from seventeen to perhaps twenty one in this environment. In fact, I suppose it took off twenty years of my life and really I think any person who has the desire to get into the business world, the older person, involve herself with the younger people. It is great.

STURGEON: Have you done that a lot since you have been back here then?

MULHOLLAND: No, I just was a housemother for four years and then I decided that I was going to come back to my own home and resume my retirement. I have very lovely neighbors and I have a very pleasant home to live in, lots of friends.

STURGEON: I know in the early days of Sun City they were thinking about incorporating. Did you have any feelings about that at the time?

MULHOLLAND: Heavens yes! I still want Sun City to become not incorporated. After all, we have governed this city for the last thirty-one years and I see no reason that we have to have more expenditures going out of the pocket book because you have to pay these people who are going to be the Mayor and the Fire Chief and what not, a salary.

STURGEON: So the people who run Sun City are all volunteers, is that right?

MULHOLLAND: I would say that perhaps seventy five percent of the people do volunteer their time.

STURGEON: When you first came here and bought your house, how were you able to finance it? Did you pay cash, did you get a mortgage, how did you do it?

MULHOLLAND: I am just so delighted to tell you that this house was a cash deal. This is my house and nobody else.

STURGEON: Did you ever have any dealings with Del Webb, the person?

MULLHOLLAND: Del Webb would attend some of our meetings and he was always the speaker and everybody always respected Del Webb and felt that he probably did the retirement world much joy. He was a very delightful man to speak with, of course, being as busy as he was always, one did not spend too much time chatting with him.

STURGEON: After you moved out here do you have any friends come out here because you told them how wonderful it was?

MULHOLLAND: Oh yes. Perhaps I was a very good salesperson. There were friends of ours who came out, but they didn't come here immediately to live, perhaps after five or six years they made up their minds that Sun City was a good place to retire to. Of course they missed the opportunity, most of them, in not buying in the early days because real estate was set up for the retired person and it was most reasonable. After a few years things did soar, prices did go up, materials went up, so therefore your finished house was far greater than what the first people paid. This is Phase I. In fact the area that I live in is the very first area and it was called New Life. Del Webb wanted these people who had always worked, and when they reached the age of 65 that this was the place for them to retire and enjoy the friendship, the sunshine and the wonderful weather that we have here the year round. We liked the active retirement. It means that you are not sitting in your four walls and grieving and feeling sorry for yourself, you get up out of that chair and you are really just wanting to give all you can to the community. I think Sun City has thrived and has become as popular as a retirement community because of the early retired people. They were the ones that showed the newcomers the way to live leisurely. After about maybe ten or fifteen years there were the younger groups that came in. Of course we were fifteen years older at that time and the younger group had different ideas. More advanced ideas and their ideas were advanced because they had been earning more money than the people who came here in the very beginning.

STURGEON: I read in Jubilee, the history of Sun City, that when they built Phase II and they built the new recreation center that there was some unpleasant feelings between people on one side of the road and on the other side.

MULLHOLLAND: Oh yes, we had some of these people who said, I live on the other side of the track, and my reply to them was, isn't that funny I live on the other side of the tract too and isn't it strange, the same breezes that blow, the same sun that shines, shines on both side of the track. I didn't have time to get involved in those conflicts. My dear, I didn't have time because when I went into any kind of an activity to give of my volunteer service, I didn't want to be just sitting on a chair listening, I wanted to do things, in fact, I wanted to run it, and I did. I have never been in one organization that I have not been the president. The groups were all organized and you do go up the ladder to become a guiding light to it. But I suppose I was instrumental in forming a little get together club. That club really did expand itself. We had about thirty five people and it is a book review and that group is still very active and we meet once a month. We have a vacation from this from June until October. Most everybody is away in the summertime so you have to take a rest. I was a volunteer for five years at the Northwest Hospital in Glendale and after my term of presidency was over my husband died soon after that. After I came back I just was not interested in that particular phase of volunteer work. I am still a very active member of

the Eastern Star and we have two separate clubs right here in Sun City which is connected with the Eastern Star. Only yesterday I selected, well I was on the nomination committee and naturally I obtained the officers that they needed. I didn't need anybody at all in the background to help me. I didn't get involved in any of the civic organizations. I always put my name down as a volunteer but I wasn't too interested to take that particular intimate job.

STURGEON: I know in the early days of Sun City, or maybe it was a little bit later, there were really some strong feelings about getting involved with other school districts and school taxes. Were you involved in any of that?

MULHOLLAND: No. Of course I contributed any time they needed any school monies because I have three children and I have grandchildren and I have great grandchildren and I feel that they need to have support on a voluntary basis of course.

STURGEON: So rather than paying school taxes you feel that you should get involved in some way to support the school district.

MULHOLLAND: That is the way I became involved in donating freely.

STURGEON: When you look back over Sun City and your long history can you see any ways that it has really changed a lot since the early days when you were here?

MULHOLLAND: Oh yes. Sun City has changed. It has changed for the better. If we didn't have far thinking people we wouldn't have all the activities and the different places of entertainment nor would we have the ASU come in here with their branch, so I would say it just has loads – we have really developed, I should say.

STURGEON: Did you ever have any interactions with Tom Austin?

MULHOLLAND: I didn't have anything that he and I would do together, it was just that he would come before the group and talk with us and advise us what was going on and how we should be in back of the project and so on. He was a very pleasant man and well liked throughout the Sun City history.

STURGEON: Do you remember ever participating in any surveys that Del Webb did or Sun City did in the very first few years you were here asking you questions about Sun City or what you liked?

MULHOLLAND: Oh yes, after the first year he sent out these questionnaires. What would you add to your house? What would you do to make improvements on your house? You answered those and sent them in to the proper department and that was the extent of any type of interview about the growth or the likes or dislikes of your home.

STURGEON: Did they ever interview you before you bought your house? Did you fill out one of those?

MULHOLLAND: That was my husband's job. My husband took care of all of that. Now we did not buy this house directly from Del Webb. One of the neighbors two doors away bought five houses, and this house was one of the houses he bought and it was he that we bought the house from. We came to Sun City on a Monday and had dealings with Sam, who was the owner of it and the next day we went into Glendale and consummated the deal.

(end of side 1)

STURGEON: Now when you first bought the house and came in did you have the key given to you, was there a ceremony, or what happened?

MULHOLLAND: Oh no, because we did not buy it from Del Webb, we bought it from Sam. Sam Turnbow was his name. So it was just an exchange of signatures and the turning over of the check for the house because it was a cash transaction.

STURGEON: Now you said you never looked at a model home but did you see this house as it was being built so you knew what it would like?

MULHOLLAND: Oh yes. We saw it and of course, for me, whatever pleased my husband pleased me. It pleased him because it was on the golf course – it was within the amount of space we wanted to have and it had many potentials that really developed. We have put a lot of money into this house.

STURGEON: Can you tell me something about your children?

MULHOLLAND: Yes, I have three children, two boys and a girl. Both boys graduated from Milliken University in Decatur, Illinois. My daughter, who is the youngest, graduated from McMurray College, that is a woman's college. The three are married and are very successful in their marriages – they still have the same spouses. My three children were responsible for me having ten grandchildren and those ten grandchildren have given me great pleasure by presenting me with twelve great grandchildren. I don't see these great grandchildren often. I only have one living here in Arizona because great grandchildren have another strain of blood in them. My pride and joy, of course, were my ten grandchildren. I have six granddaughters and four grandsons. My first grandson is a Doctor, my second granddaughter is a lawyer, and my next to my youngest grandson is an architect and the rest of them all have their own business. My oldest son is a banker, my second son was connected with Illinois Central railroad and my daughter is a wonderful housewife and she is a constant companion to her husband and he is a very successful businessman with interests in Europe. My youngest son and my daughter live in Illinois. One son lives in Arizona.

STURGEON: Can you think of anything else you would like to tell me about Sun City?

MULHOLLAND: No I think I have told you about all I think is of interest.



20 September 20, 1991

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Signed R. Evelyn Parry Date Sept. 20, 1991
Interviewee: Evelyn Parry (name)
10729 Claire Drive (address)
Sun City, AZ.

Signed Melanie I. Sturgeon Date 20 September 1991
Interviewee: Melanie I. Sturgeon (name)
1535 E. Hampton Circle (address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 207

Interview with Evelyn Parry

September 20, 1991

Date of Birth: June 1917

Place of Birth: Janesville, Wisconsin

Evelyn Parry, the wife of DEVCO employee, Les Parry, arrived in Sun City in 1960, the first year it opened, and became an active volunteer in a number of associations.

Synopsis:

- Parents were dairy farmers. Had one brother.
- Mom a schoolteacher before marriage. Taught in a newly-built small country school with all 8 grades.
- Father attended University of Wisconsin at Madison for 2 years; studied agriculture.
- I grew up in Janesville; went to business college there for 2 yrs.
- Husband born in Dodgeville Wisconsin. Met after graduation. He was a Marine in WWII in the Pacific. Worked as mechanical engineer; supervised installation of machinery all over the country; worked out of Rockford, Ill.
- I started with General Motors as general office manager doing cost accounting right out of business college.
- First heard of Sun City when husband went west for a couple of weeks for his health; someone told him about Del Webb Company; but when he saw Sun City, he changed his mind. He liked the idea of rec. ctrs, golf, grocery stores, banks, etc.
- No one knew if Sun City would succeed. We were pioneers; arrived Feb. 1960. He met couples at their new home, would present keys after quality control inspection; assured couple would be happy in new home; started working as a key man, "inspection counselor", and invented 'key ceremony' giving keys to 16,000 homes in 15 years.
- I arrived in August, 1960 and eventually lived in 4 homes here.

- Early days: no churches; neighbors got acquainted quickly at the rec ctrs. or through the many volunteer projects
- Women joined Christian Fellowship and at holidays would set up fruit baskets and food, etc, and make baby layettes,
- I was always home at mealtime for my husband.
- We didn't see the need for incorporation. School taxes a concern for the community. We paid taxes before, think should have kept it going.
- DEVCO asked such things as 'how much money needed for retirees to live on per month in 1960?' I thought \$500 a month was good.
- DEVCO provided Christmas cards.
- As note-taker at the first Oakmont Rec Ctr mtg, I used roll of toilet paper for my notes.
- First years everyone was active. Lots of volunteers.
- My groups were: Sun Valley Lodge, baby group, Rebekah Circle, Women's groups, Information Referral Svc., Sun City Pioneers, and Sun City Area Historical Society.

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Evelyn Parry – Early Sun City Resident

Interviewer: Melanie Sturgeon 20 Sep 1991

Transcriber: Belva McIntosh April 2008

This is Melanie Sturgeon and on behalf of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society and the Arizona Historical Foundation I am interviewing Evelyn Parry, one of the very early residents of Sun City, whose husband Les Parry was also "the key man", in her home in Sun City, Arizona.

STURGEON: Evelyn, can you tell me the approximate dates your parents were born and the places they were born in?

PARRY: About 1889 and 1892 – Mom was born in Wisconsin and Dad in Nebraska.

STURGEON: Nebraska? How did he get back to Wisconsin?

PARRY: He was brought back by his family when he was about eight years of age.

STURGEON: So what did your parents do for a living?

PARRY: Oh, successful dairy farmers.

STURGEON: Did your father buy the farm after he came back to Wisconsin?

PARRY: Yes, when he started out on his own. It is a beautiful farm. My brother is there now.

STURGEON: Was your mom a hard working farm wife?

PARRY: Yes, she had been a school teacher before they were married. It was a country school, just newly built, all eight grades.

STURGEON: Did your father go to school, I mean had he finished high school and everything?

PARRY: He went to the University at Madison for two years.

STURGEON: What did he study?

PARRY: Agriculture.

STURGEON: Can you tell me something about yourself? When you were born and where?

PARRY: Jamesville Wisconsin, June, 1917. I grew up there, went to schools there, business college. I had one brother.

STURGEON: Can you tell me a little bit about your husband?

PARRY: Oh yes. We went to the same schools and we met after we were out of school and he served as a marine in World War II in the Pacific and I was very worried about him. After he came home he went to – was a mechanical engineer of the F. & John Barnes Company and supervised the installation of machinery all over the country from the Rockford, Illinois Headquarters. He went to college as an engineer and medicine. We both grew up in Jamesville. He was born in Dodgeville Wisconsin. He was about four years older than me. We had no children. I went to Business College for two years. I studied general office, comptometer, bookkeeping. That was before computers. My favorite work was in the cost accounting department at General Motors, cost of assembly and proof of production on a monthly basis and I had four or five very nice girl helpers. Our reports went into the main office. I did that about ten years. It was a really interesting place. It was one big room, we had 100 girls and 50 men and we really worked hard to do a good job. There was a Fisher body assembly line and the bodies came right off to our Chevrolet Division and that is where they completed the cars, right off the line and then they were shipped all over the local area. Those Jamesville Chevrolets were about the best around. Les and I were married before the war. By the time we had been married five years he had been away half of the time. He enlisted in the Marine Corps. I was with him in San Diego until he had to leave. I stayed in Wisconsin while he was overseas. When he came back he went to work for the engineering company.

STURGEON: Would you tell me a little about what Jamesville was like when you were growing up?

PARRY: Jamesville was a very nice place. As I recall it was about 23 or 24,000. A nice high school, we were all friends and we have had our fiftieth anniversary. There were other smaller communities all around but Jamesville was the center of Southern Wisconsin. It was a combination industrial and farming company. We had General Motors and the home of the Parker Pen. We knew the Parker's. There was a ----- Woolen Mill that made this beautiful woolen fabric for the automobile industry. We had a business college, and at Melton, Melton College. That was a nice school. There was a teacher's college nearby and then Madison was of course forty miles.

STURGEON: Did you live in the town or out on the farm?

PARRY: Out on our country farm home until I was about thirteen. Then we moved into town. We lived with friends in their home. I loved reading and sewing. Mother taught me how to sew. I was involved in school activities, like the bookkeeping club and some of the activities that way rather than athletic. We were involved in church activities. That has always been a special part of our family, my parents were very generous. Many blessings to be thankful for. My husband was a very generous person too. Mother was involved in church. There were lots of church suppers for the visiting ministers. It was a great life. There were always neighbors and friends. If ever anyone had a problem or needed help there was always someone to help. My Dad was always willing and helpful. He was involved in the church. They were involved in activities in town too. They weren't involved in politics. My Dad was on the school board.

STURGEON: Do you remember very much about the depression? You must have been about sixteen when it started, or fourteen maybe?

PARRY: The depression didn't concern me like it did many of my friends because from the country – I recall one Thanksgiving we all brought something for the baskets for those who needed help. When I said my folks would bring a chicken the other kids thought that was wonderful to contribute meat in the baskets.

STURGEON: Do you know what the working conditions were like for some of the parents of your friends?

PARRY: I think they had prepared a little bit for that rainy day. That went to General Motors when they started, there were college graduates who wanted to go to work and they would stand in line waiting hours to have the next job or chance and probably produced the best Chevrolets around. They took pride in their work. In our little bank in our homeroom it would be down to pennies to deposit on bank day where it used to be a dime or a quarter. That is about the best I remember of my friends.

STURGEON: Do you remember how people felt when they were talking about Social Security?

PARRY: No, I don't recall anything about that. I didn't seem to have any worries as a youngster.

STURGEON: When you started approaching retirement age what were some of the concerns you were thinking about?

PARRY: I think I just retired into volunteer work. I was always hoping that our health would be as good as possible. We have always been blessed with friends. My husband is a very friendly person. My husband always wanted the best for me and I think we never worried about it. We weren't spendthrifts but we had lots of nice trips and about anything we wanted.

STURGEON: When you got ready to retire, in addition to Social Security, did you have any other pensions or benefits to help you?

PARRY: No, none at all. At General Motors we had a chance to contribute a portion of our pay and they would match it and then as I left, they didn't want me to leave but Les was here and that was where I wanted to be, and they gave me General Motors stock and bonds, but no pension. We probably converted them to some other help.

STURGEON: How did you first hear about Sun City?

PARRY: The dampness in the Midwest was not agreeable to my husband's sinus and so we had to find – Arizona had this soft and more agreeable climate and when he came here in a couple of weeks he felt fine and when he came home it bothered him so he said he was going back. He came for the climate mainly and he met this gentleman who told him about Sun City, Del Webb, he had never heard of Sun City before. Sun City was new, it was just opening and they said why

don't you go to work here, and my husband thought it was not enough pay and then he came out to see Sun City and he changed his ideas and he felt better and he wanted to go to work and be a part of Sun City. There were too many things he liked about Sun City – the recreation centers, the golf courses, the swimming pools and the banks and the grocery stores were all here. Well they were here and the people just moved in ready to enjoy it all. It just made every body happy.

STURGEON: When he took the job did he think it was going to be successful?

PARRY: I don't think any body knew. We were all pioneers. By the time I got here there were a lot of friends. He came here in February 1960. He had the appointment with the first couple who were ready to move into their new home. He met this couple at their home and he would present the keys after a quality control inspection to see if everything was all right – no broken windows or chipped woodwork and assured them they would soon be happy in their new homes as soon as they got settled and met their neighbors. His card says inspection counselor but he was affectionately known as “the key man”.

STURGEON: When you came out to join him did you feel strange, being so young and moving into a community for retired people?

PARRY: Oh, no. I didn't talk about my age. Everyone was nice. I got interested in golfing which is lots of fun and then came a volunteer project. I volunteered over at the Northwest Hospital because that was before Boswell. I was there and then I became a leader with the Girl Scouts. Were they surprised to have someone who didn't have youngsters. I was a leader for about three years. I did reading in one of the Peoria schools. When they were giving me the briefing they said it is a pretty little school. It is way out in the open and you can see it for miles and now you can hardly see the school for all of the homes. It was a pleasure to see them gain a grade or two. I came out here in August 1960.

STURGEON: When you first came out here were you worried at all about moving to a town that wasn't like the town you grew up in?

PARRY: No, it was just all interesting and exciting. I had come here in March. That was a beautiful time of year. We saw a rodeo parade. We looked around at other different places but this was just like a magnet to us. Les was feeling well and liked what he was doing.

STURGEON: Now, are you still living in the first home you bought?

PARRY: No, we moved around. I think we had four homes with three cars with a one car garage to begin with. That is where number two came in and then the third one – Les came one night and said there is a beautiful place there. You can see the mountains all around. So we moved. He could put an addition on the side of the yard for another car and a shop. And then we went to Cinnebar and that was great, it was an acre with the white post and the redwood and he put up a building. He had it designed just to match the house and he had the equipment that he had collected through the years and an overhead door so he could work on a car, besides the double garage. He had his desk there and a television. He said some men have a dog house, this is my poodle palace. After his death I realized that place was larger than I needed or could really

take care of. One day when I was over here at the exercise class I saw the sign and I thought that looks like a nice little home for me. I called the realtor, she had just put the other place up for sale. It was the first time I hadn't had a new home but it has been a nice home and the neighbors are great. It is quite special.

STURGEON: Can you tell me what it was like in the real early days in Sun City when people were moving in from all over and they didn't really know each other?

PARRY: I think the neighbors got acquainted real soon on both sides, sometimes adjoining. In the community centers and the churches they had all this help.

STURGEON: When you first came here they didn't even have a church did they?

PARRY: That's right. That is when Dr. Witt and his wife Gladys really guided us. He guided our new congregation in fellowship. He went around and organized little neighborhood groups and they invited us to their home and Gladys baked cookies. That was nice.

STURGEON: Did you get all involved in helping organize the church?

PARRY: Well, that was a little difficult because it was daytime and Les was working. But we were charter members when that time came.

STURGEON: Because Les worked for the corporation did you have much interaction with Del Webb?

PARRY: No, I went to work as a secretary at one of the Webb buildings and it was always nice to be involved. Like when they built a new building in downtown Phoenix we were all invited. That was his work and we had parties.

STURGEON: I know that when you first came it was just getting started really, how did you get involved in so many clubs? How did those get organized?

PARRY: I was busy over at the Northwest hospital. There were ladies, one was from San Francisco and one was from Montana and they started the Ladies Federated Club. But I was having so much fun playing golf that I was a year late instead of being a charter member.

STURGEON: I know that Dr. Witt started a lot of volunteer groups. Were you involved in those or can you tell me how that worked?

PARRY: I think that was for a singles group right off. That very first year I was with the board of Christian Education and we heard a siren go by and that sort of stopped us all. He said well there have been no deaths this first year and there are very few churches that can say that. Some of our ladies joined the Women's Fellowship right after they came and that is doing work to help others. At the holidays we would set up baskets with fruit and food. Well, The Federated Women's Club did the baby layettes and the nursery in Phoenix would call with the names of the most deserving. So I made my little kimono and I asked the ladies if they would please help me.

And they did, they would embroider them. I would go into Phoenix and they would give us the diapers they couldn't use any more. So that helped the budget. We would go out and deliver them.

STURGEON: Did you help with the Sun Valley Lodge when they were organizing that?

PARRY: Not at the time but I am there now with the auxiliary. I tried to be at home at meal time for my husband. Oh I like this – "I must do something for someone today. Round up my love and give it away. Telephone a friend just over the hill. Write on my heart several things to be done. It will be such a pleasure not to mention the fun. Write a few words on a little note to make someone glad I wrote. Remember a friend if I can't be there. Open my heart and just say a prayer. The day moves on and getting in high to give away love and friendship which money can't buy." In a way it is my theme song.

STURGEON: If you can think of something that I am not asking you that you think is important just let me know.

PARRY: I want to tell you about this little radio jingle. It is called "Wake up and Live in Sun City". It goes "Wake up and live in Sun City for an active and new way of life. Wake up and live in Sun City Mr. Senior Citizen and wife. Don't let retirement get you down. Be happy in Sun City, it is a paradise town. Wake up and live in Sun City Mr. Senior Citizen for the rest of your life. Mr. Senior Citizen and wife." That was in a story from the New Yorker and it told about Les. He went along on an appointment in 1964. The Sun City Pioneers Club was born in 1973. "Of the unique groups who received keys to their homes in 1960 and 1961 originally and membership opened to those who moved here in 1962, 63, 64 and 65. Members meet to reminisce at the annual anniversary luncheon. And then the Jubilee, the 25th Anniversary of Sun City book is wonderful, written by Jane Freeman and Glenn Sandberg.

STURGEON: Did you meet much with Tom Austin or have a lot to do with him when you were here first?

PARRY: No, we knew who he was. He was a friend to everybody. Les worked mostly with the people when he came to their home. Sometimes he would set up condo groups. I believe Tom Austin was with the recreation centers. Les had several ceremonies to give keys to the people. He saw that everything was OK. He had a sheet and when he had spent a whole hour with them he would mark it all down on a sheet. He was very busy. He handed out more than 16,000 keys in ----- years. Usually he was the only one doing that. He worked very conscientiously about it all. He retired in 1975 about the time they were moving over to Sun City West. He was having a minor health problem about then and so it was just a real good way to ease into retirement. We liked everything here and everybody. He mostly enjoyed his workshop.

STURGEON: But in the early days he was not just doing Del Webb things, he was also involved in organizations, wasn't he?

PARRY: Yes. His work took most of the time. He had cameras and equipment and when Freichres had the newspaper he would go around and take some of those pictures. And really, the Sun City Players, that was the beginning when they had the minstrel show etc. He was active with them just the first few years.

STURGEON: Did any of your friends move out here from Wisconsin?

PARRY: I wish I could claim more than have moved out. They used to like to come visit us and they liked everything they saw but I guess the roots of home were too strong.

STURGEON: Well, when you look back at Sun City how has it changed over time do you think, or how you looked at it?

PARRY: We have always lived right in this area and I think that whenever people come or move we just claim them as friends, enjoy their friendship, our church is right near by. We could always get out and get away and do a bit of traveling on weekends.

STURGEON: What about Sun City getting very large? Did you think that changed the city at all when it started getting so big?

PARRY: There were some who were really bothered about it. Sort of a North and South area. We never got into any of those things at all.

STURGEON: What were some of the things people were upset about?

PARRY: Probably the recreation rooms – using one here, or going to another one. It was probably petty.

STURGEON: Since you have been retired now for a while have your financial concerns changed over the years?

PARRY: No.

STURGEON: When you first came to Sun City how did you finance your home? Were you able to pay cash or did you get a loan?

PARRY: I think we paid cash for it. My husband always wanted enough of the best for me but we never really had concerns after we first got started. We pay as you go, we never owe.

STURGEON: Did you ever get involved in those arguments they had early on about whether or not they should incorporate?

PARRY: No. We never did see any reason.

STURGEON: Why did they want to incorporate in the first place? Do you remember?

PARRY: It seems to be money and I have never figured out why they wanted it.

STURGEON: How about school taxes? I know there were really some great concerns about the residents of Sun City having to pay school taxes.

PARRY: Oh yes, there was a lot of fussing about that. I think we have paid part of those school taxes right along. It seemed like much ado about nothing. Even though we paid school taxes before I think we should have gone right along and kept paying them.

STURGEON: I know you have been very busy in lots of organizations throughout the years and I was wondering if you are as busy now as when you started?

PARRY: I am sort of easing out of it. I don't know if this would be a good one to say or not. Because when I got to ten project involvements I thought, that is just too much. "It is a great misfortune to be of use to nobody, scarcely less to be of use to everybody". I had a tendency to get involved in too many things. They said you have to learn to say no. I volunteer at Sun Valley Lodge. On Sunday evening at supper time I help with the water and coffee, fruit and vegetable juice in the dining room, and information and referral, that just kind of follows along.

STURGEON: In the early days of Sun City they used to take surveys of people who lived here. Do you remember filling out one of those? What kind of things did they ask you, do you remember?

PARRY: The first one was how much money you should have to live on for a month. We sort of decided that \$500 would do it, and at that time in 1960 that was a good moderate, reasonable amount. They ask if you would want more cupboards or different room arrangements. I never had any problem with that it because you could choose it or fix it up. I thought they were all nice models.

STURGEON: You were telling me about the Christmas cards they used to give you. Did they have anything on them about Sun City?

PARRY: Oh yes. The one I recall best was one with a gate, it was green and white and when you opened that there were pictures of Sun City like the churches and some of the rec centers. They had boxes and we could go over there and they gave them to us. I don't recall any post cards.

STURGEON: Was it hard in the beginning not having a post office here and just the one shopping center?

PARRY: The shops had pretty nice things and we could always go to Phoenix. There were only about two stop signs before the big highway was finished. We could run to Park Central real easy if there was something I couldn't find here. At Christmas time over by the Safeway by the post office boxes piled up by the fence. Everybody was sending gifts back and forth. Our parents came to visit and they loved everything they saw.

STURGEON: When you moved out here how many people lived out here?

PARRY: There were very few. (end of side one of tape) (start of side 2) "British TV wants to film you for a documentary about Sun City if possible. Will call back around 9 a.m." This letter is dated April 1974 from Mr. & Mrs. Earl Morene and she writes "Hi, you won't remember me but I will always remember you. You were always so gracious to us when we came to Sun City for our key inspection. I was so appreciative of your sharp eyes noting what needed to be done. Then a week later we again had you when we stood in for our friends home for key inspection. Your sense of humor stayed with me. So glad you are getting recognition at last as unofficial ambassador, it is a good name. We are now here three years as of Feb 21, 1974. It has been a lovely three years and we are glad we came. Hope every new owner you give a key to will find as much happiness as we did. As Mr. Webb said, Bless you. Signed, Mrs. Earl Morene." The first Sun City amateur players presented Minstrels performance in May 1961 and Les was end man, Mr. Bones. Later on the Sun City players presented light opera "Martha" plus variety revue "Café Scene" where he was cast as comedian and master of ceremonies.

STURGEON: Did you know he had all that talent?

PARRY: No it just kept showing up, always, all our lifetime through. He was great about whatever was happening. He was very generous about my volunteering my time with our Federated Women's Club. It started in September of 1960 and I joined in 1961. They had a variety of choices; the bridge games were always fun, but I liked the welfare and even then there were babies that needed layettes and a nurse from Phoenix would refer names. So when I held up the first little kimono gown these ladies came right to help. They made them and the little blankets and quilts and we would deliver them to appreciative mothers. I had a time working at Savings and Loan in investments for a short time. Also I was at the Post Office for Christmas time rush. Sorting the letters before all these automatic machines came. Later when I got caught up I did secretarial work. Now my total time is volunteer work. I alternate with the church and community. Very interesting activities. The Historical Society is meaningful, especially to us pioneers. It has been a wonderful time here in Sun City. We had a pretty pink and white "Shoplifter". Here is a picture of it. "Unable to resist testing its comfort Mrs. Lester Parry and Mrs. George Mallard, both Sun City residents ----". "Transportation throughout the Sun City area was inaugurated this week as a Shoplifter. A 25 seat open trailer began making the rounds picking up passengers." It was in September 1960. "Designed to provide easy transportation for people who do not drive or have no other means available, the Shoplifter, provided by the Del E. Webb Development Company is pulled by a jeep. Routes and scheduled times are being worked out, reports Tom Austin, Sun City activity director. It will be made available to residents as soon as possible. Because of the large area to be covered we will be unable to give house to house service, Austin said. Routes will be worked out at key points to the best advantage of all residents. The Shoplifter, custom built, is patterned after similar conveyances seen at such places as Disney Land. It is equipped with seats covered in all weather plastic and roofed over completely with a colorfully striped canvas canopy to afford passengers protection from the elements. The conveyance is equipped with passenger signals to indicate stops." Then they started closed buses, then we had taxi cabs and now they are doing bus routes again.

STURGEON: The thing I wanted to ask you about Les was about the ceremonies. Aside from asking them what was wrong he must have made the key ceremony very special. Do you remember anything about that?

PARRY: Yes. Everyone told me how he just made them welcome. He was their first friend here in Sun City. He went through the house and somebody said, well aren't you going to write down this little scratch or something? And he said, I will. When he was all finished and he wrote everything down on his little sheet. He went through each room, checked all the windows, checked to see the oven had all the proper racks, then they could have two trees I think it was in the lawn. So they really had a nice beginning and it was a pleasant time for everyone. If there were neighbors Les would introduce them. The recreation centers were there and the golf course, swimming pool, shopping centers were not far away and the churches. He was involved with Fairway West – I believe there were over fifty homes under that condo roof and Les set up the meeting with their officers and advised them to keep the rules simple because they been added to. I thought that was a great start for the beginning. Fifty couples met and had that to work with however they wanted, besides the quality control inspection. He was called the unofficial ambassador. He always kept a sense of humor and when people would stop by our home he was always kind and helpful to them. He liked people and he knew where most of the people came from all over the states. He was a nice friendly man.

STURGEON: Since he started in so many of these minstrel shows do you think he was sort of an actor while presenting the keys to people?

PARRY: He was very sincere in whatever he did, and that was just the first and only minstrel show. I believe they tried to have a key man in the other Sun Cities. I don't know if they could ever fine one quite like our Les. And I think this is the favorite Sun City. I was hostess occasionally. My favorite time was over at Fairway East. I believe it was the day of the first meeting when Sun City Arizona went on the big board and they would sell stock. Mr. Del Webb was here and the color of dress I wore that day was the color of the apartment and that was where I was hoping Mr. Del Webb would stop by and everybody else wanted him too. Some of our ladies went to Sun City California to act as hostess and they would be in the new homes. Some of those first homes were open for our historical homes on the 30th anniversary. Everybody takes such a pride in their yards and their homes here and sometimes they would put a little additional something. Remarkable. Les retired just about the time Sun City West started. Les enjoyed retirement. We had the ranchette and he put up this building 26x32 with all the mechanical equipment that he had for his work before he came to Sun City. It was designed and built along the design of the house. He could do anything.

(There was much talk about her life as a little girl on the farm. I chose not to transcribe it all. Much of it has already been said.)

PARRY: Youngtown had a nice grocery store. The King's Inn as a good place to go eat. There was something about the beginning that was so special. People would speak to everyone they would see on the street. There are now many clubs, and our Information and Referral service started in 1978. That is a terrific resource. The United Church was a very friendly church right from the beginning. I am still involved in church. Until just recently our Pioneer Club was

active. When Les died I had a big decision to make – whether to stay here or go back home. I decided to get a smaller home and stay. I had so many friends here and I loved the weather.

26 September 1991

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 26th day of September, 1991, by and between Alice C. Messick (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 Alice C Messick Date Sept 26, 1991

Interviewee: Alice Messick (name)
10254 Lenahurst Dr (address)
Seas City, Ariz 85351

Signed Melanie Sturgeon Date Sept 26, 1991

Interviewer Melanie J. Sturgeon (name)
1535 E. Hampton Circle (address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 208

Interview with Alice Messick

September 26, 1991

Date of Birth: November 23, 1909

Place of Birth: Ray, Arizona

Alice Messick and her husband sponsored and promoted the Sun City Angels, a woman's softball team.

Synopsis:

- Mother born in San Diego, early 1890s. Finished 8th grade then taught school for a year.
- Father a Jack-Of-All-Trades. Head janitor in Ray, AZ schools.
- I was eldest of four: had two sisters and one brother.
- Flu epidemic struck when I was 9. Sick kids couldn't attend school. Mother very ill; I tended her. Father had to keep the heating plant going. Daddy got ill too; no one could take over his job, so I got up at 5 a.m. to get steam up. A lot of people died in the epidemic. Funeral homes busy both day and night. Father helped build coffins.
- During Depression my folks did not have money to send me to school, and women then did not work and go to school. I was good with kids, and I worked in Phx for the LaPrads, our AZ Attny General.

- Lived in Ray, AZ (home of the Consolidated Mining Company) until about 17, went into Phoenix to work during the Depression. Picked cotton, waited tables, babysat, and worked at a root beer stand.
- Ray, AZ was a small community, about 3,000. Had number of hills with houses, near Sonora, a Mexican town. Ray was home of Consolidated Mining Company. Company did have houses for rent, but father owned. Mother involved in community through church.
- Hispanics brought in from Mexico during WWI about a mile from Ray. Blacks had their own school as did the Mexicans. Also, a large number of Chinese groceries and laundries.

- What Sun City offered was very appealing. Husband relaxed, tried golf, liked the youth in the Sun City Saints, ages 16 to 25.

- When husband and I moved to Sun City, the Sun City Saints were just getting started. Raymond and I agreed to help make posters and distributed them. After he died, I continued, even offered 2 or 3 to lie with me. Girls were mostly amateur team players from the valley. Didn't get paid. Got uniforms and some money for transportation.
- Eventually I put up money for trophies in competitions. Belonged to the Booster Club, eventually on Board of Booster Club, in charge of year books, score cards, etc.

C-208

C208

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Alice Messick

Transcribed by Belva J McIntosh in March 2008

This is Melanie Sturgeon and on behalf of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society and the Arizona Historical Foundation I am interviewing Alice Messick, on of the early pioneers of Sun City in her home in Sun City, Arizona and it is September 26, 1991.

STURGEON: Alice, can you tell me the approximate dates and places of your parents birth?

MESSICK: I believe that my mother was born in California in San Diego, probably in 1890 or the early 1890's. I am not sure where my father was born.

STURGEON: What did your father do for a living?

MESSICK: Well, kind of a jack of all trades in a way, but he was head janitor in the Ray school system in Ray Arizona.

STURGEON: Can you tell me some background about yourself. Where were you born and when?

MESSICK: I was born November 23, 1909. I don't know whether I was born at Ray or not – that is where I grew up. I couldn't tell you for sure.

STURGEON: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

MESSICK: I had two sisters and one brother. Two sisters are living and one brother is gone.

STURGEON: Were you the oldest?

MESSICK: I was the oldest. Next was a sister, LuDell then my brother Ed, and then my sister Hazel.

STURGEON: Do you know anything about your parent's educational background?

MESSICK: No, I think in those days – I remember my mother saying she graduated from eighth grade, then did teach a year when she was young, which they were allowed to do in those days. When you think of it now you just wonder.

STURGEON: Where did you grow up? You said you grew up in Ray, did you stay there all your young years?

MESSICK: I grew up in Ray until I was about – oh, I guess I graduated about seventeen then I came into Phoenix to go to work and of course that was depression time, which was hard and you really struggled.

STURGEON: And what did you do?

MESSICK: A little bit of everything from picking cotton to waiting on tables to finally ending up working at a root beer stand. I was in charge of the girls. There were eighteen girls working at the Twin Barrels Root Beer Stand. It was the only root beer stand in the valley at that particular time that was not serving illegal alcohol. All of the rest of them were just fronts. But we weren't and because we had programs – just volunteer people coming and singing and playing instruments, we usually had two or three hundred cars on the car lot. So we had about eighteen to twenty girls that worked.

STURGEON: So did people come in to eat?

MESSICK: No, no, no. It was a drive in – root beer stand – where you were served at the car.

STURGEON: How long did you keep doing this then?

MESSICK: Probably a year. Then I went to California and worked at different places and just went from place to place working. I met my husband in Colorado. When we got together we found that we had crossed paths several times during the previous year, it was odd that we would just meet in Colorado.

STURGEON: What did he do for a living?

MESSICK: He was in the mining business as an engineer. Well it was gold mining. He was superintendent of Minnesota Mines in Colorado.

STURGEON: How did he get from California up to Colorado?

MESSICK: That has been so long ago I just don't remember. It was just another job that you were going to. I don't think in those days they didn't travel as much as they do now so that if you did go anywhere it had to be by bus because there were no planes.

STURGEON: Was this still during the depression?

MESSICK: Yes, I think my husband and I were married in 1934 in Colorado. That is when I got involved in the March of Dimes. In Colorado I had a Girl Scout group and it came up that Roosevelt was having birthday balls for the polio patients. The girls wanted to do something to raise some money. So in our little mining town they decided let's have a dance. Those days you made box lunches real pretty and they were auctioned off. So we thought we were real good for a little old mining town, we sent three hundred dollars in that year. That was the first year of the thing to do with the March of Dimes. I just stayed in there and every year we would do something. When we moved after the war to Wyoming I became chapter chairman there for

twenty-five or thirty years. I have a forty year pin from the March of Dimes. I spent all those years as a volunteer. I enjoyed every minute of it.

STURGEON: After you were married did you work?

MESSICK: No. I was always involved in community activities and of course my husband – it seemed like after I was married my husband was always the boss wherever we were and the boss's wife was always asked to do a lot of things that you don't ordinarily do. But I enjoyed it and we didn't have any children and most everything was done for children.

STURGEON: Besides the March of Dimes and the Girl Scouts what were you doing?

MESSICK: I was involved for the twenty five years we had the state fair in the home town in Wyoming. I was in charge of the state fair parades and also the grandstand, which involved – I also had high school girls as the ushers for the grand stand. So that kept me involved with youth. They were needing help and since I had been involved with the volunteers in the Lions and different groups they wanted to know if I would like to take charge of this with the state fair. At first it was the grand stand then they said we don't have anyone to run the state fair parade, how about you taking it over. You get so involved you don't realize that one thing is on top of the other yet they are all going at the same time. So I was real busy.

STURGEON: When you think about the town you grew up in, Ray, how would you describe it as a community? Was it real small? About how large do you think it was?

MESSICK: It was a small community. Probably around 3,000, there was town site and Boyd Hill and Hercules Hill and I am talking about where all the houses were. Then there was Sonora which was a little Hispanic town a mile away from the actual city of Ray. This was a company town with the Ray Consolidated Copper Company. They owned all the land. You could own your own home but you rented the land for a dollar and a half for three months. This included your garbage haul and your water and all of that, which was reasonable. The company did have some houses built that they rented for ten or twelve dollars a month for those who didn't build their own. My father built the one we lived in.

STURGEON: Since you were so busy in the community was your mother as busy as you in the community?

MESSICK: I think she was through the church because I remember going to - in those days the women always made their hats – and the church would have these big bazaars and it would always be hats for sale that they had worked on for three or four months. There would be the spring hats for Easter and the fall hats for winter. That is what I remember that my mother did. She always kept her hands busy in all kinds of handiwork.

STURGEON: I know in some mining towns they had lots of ethnic groups besides Hispanics. Did you have any other ethnic groups with you like Poles or -----?

MESSICK: Oh, I suppose there were. Maybe I grew up with not – there was a separation of course from the Hispanics, but they were brought in from Mexico during the war. So they had to build a place for them to live. That was the only place they could live which was about a mile up a canyon from Ray which developed into their community. I guess I didn't have that ethnic really – now they did have a little school. We had a real small group of negroes and they had their own school until high school just like the Hispanics had their own school, then for high school they all came into Ray. I think the only ethnic group that I can remember – of course I know there were other groups, but so many things were Chinese. We had Chinese groceries and Chinese launderers. In those days you had a butcher shop and a place where you bought your vegetables and another place where you bought the dry staples. I mean they were separate, you didn't go to one store and buy everything. It seemed like I, being the oldest one in the family, did all the shopping. I get to thinking about it I think I have been old all my life. When I was nine years old, that is when the flu epidemic hit, and if somebody in your family had flu you couldn't go to school – they wouldn't allow it. But Daddy was the janitor for all the schools so he had to see that the heat from the heating plant kept going. Mother got down so I had to stay home with nobody to help – she was pregnant with my youngest sister, and my oldest sis she went out of her head and had convulsions and I was the one that brought her out of all those. Daddy got down and there wasn't a sole to take over his job at the heating plant which was just about a half a block from our house. So who did that? Up at five in the morning to get the steam built up. I don't think I could do it now but I look back and I can see me going up there. Daddy had told me – of course I had been with him a few times. He told me how to do it and what to look for, but at nine years old that was a lot of responsibility. But there was no one the company could even get. I think I grew up because I had all that responsibility.

STURGEON: Now did you live in the middle of town or the outskirts of town?

MESSICK: Oh we lived about two blocks from where the main part of town was. Across the street was some businesses. In a little town you had a little bit here and a little bit there. We were along a creek and things were built on both sides of the creek. It was an interesting time. It was during the war, first world war. You couldn't get a lot of things at the grocery store. We made a lot of things.

STURGEON: Did you have a lot of people in town die from that influenza?

MESSICK: Yes. I think that was what was wrong with Daddy was that he was helping the mortician because almost day and night they were going by with bodies. Daddy helped build just the raw coffins and then would help load the bodies up on the wagon. I don't know who dug the graves, but they would take them out to the cemetery. Years later my husband and I were on a plane and sitting next to us on the plane was a gentlemen and we got to talking and he said that he was in charge of the Ray open pit mine. I said, oh that was where I used to live. I want one question answered. The cemetery there, you dug around it, it is just a mound sitting out there in this great big open pit. I said what are you going to do with it? He said why do you want to know and I said because my Dad is buried there. Then he got real interested and he said well we are going to have a memorial cemetery built just for all those people. But he said there are so many graves there and we don't have any names and we don't know anything about them, we can't understand what happened. I said well, I think I can tell you and he said what do you

mean? I said well they were dropping like flies during the flu epidemic and they were taking them out there day and night. I know how much work there was since daddy was helping. I said, they probably didn't even have names for half of the people or maybe two thirds of the ones they buried there. They were workers that come in, it was during the war and they would come in from all over the country to work in the mines. He said oh, we are sure happy to know that, because we just didn't know what we were going to do. So he took all the information about Daddy and when they had their big deal they called and wrote to me and wanted to know if any of the family could be there. My one sis and I could go. So we were there for the services. So it is just gradually over the years and watching this area grow from nothing to what it is now.

STURGEON: You mentioned that you went to work because it was the depression, do you remember what it was like in Ray during the depression, why you left?

MESSICK: There really wasn't much up there for a person to do. The folks didn't have money to send me to school. If it had been now I could have worked and gone to school but in those days women didn't work and go to school. It just wasn't one of those things. So you just had to work and make your own living. I came down here and since I helped raise the two sisters and brother I was pretty good with kids. So I went to work for the LaPratt's. He was the attorney general for the State of Arizona at that time. They had three boys and a girl. A.T. was the oldest and Lauren and Janice and baby Paul. They called him baby Paul because he was the baby. So I had the four children that I took care of for the LaPratts for quite a while. Then I went on to other things. One thing leads to another.

STURGEON: Do you remember what working conditions were like for your father during the depression? Was he able to keep working?

MESSICK: Well, it was a little rough. I know one time that he came into Phoenix looking but I don't think evidently because he went back to Ray, that he got anything. It was just one of those things. He kept his job but in the summer time and then there was a period there where they were just giving script. The whole state was just on script.

STURGEON: Did your Dad ever get involved in like the WPA programs or anything like that?

MESSICK: No

STURGEON: Do you remember any relatives moving in with you during the depression to kind of get together? Do you remember when your father retired was he able to get any kind of pension from the state?

MESSICK: No relatives moved in with us. I really don't know that much about when he retired or what he got.

STURGEON: Did he retire – like now at age 60 or 65 or did he keep working until he was much older than that?

MESSICK: No, let's see. He got sick and I think because of his health he had to retire and I think he was probably in his early 50's when he died. He had cancer.

STURGEON: Do you remember when it was really hard during the depression and they were debating about social security and they finally passed the act? Do you remember how people felt about that?

MESSICK: No. That was after I was married and I do know that Raymond and his Dad were talking and Raymond said well Dad you will get a little pension but I probably won't. I can remember Dad saying that well it won't be very much but it might help. I remember it was around twenty five or twenty six dollars a month when they first started out. But in those days that was quite a bit of money. A dime would buy an awful lot.

STURGEON: Do you think that, when you look back over time do you think social security was a good thing?

MESSICK: I think so. Well I think in its time it helped people. I am thinking of the early days here when the people came out here and their social security was what, about \$200 or maybe less and they could sell their little place wherever they were and they come out here and they could buy and live cheaper. It sounded very good. But who would ever guess that everything would just go up, up, up. You don't really realize that so if you were completely dependent on social security, which when I say I am just on social security and it's not enough, well it isn't. But what Raymond left when he passed away, I have had to have a new roof, I have had to have a new stove and refrigerator, washer and dryer and a lot of things to keep the place up. That all just takes money that you had to pull out of savings. Then you have the car breaks down and so on. There are so many things that happen. When Raymond and I moved here – we had been so used to working for community projects and everything and the Sun City Saints were just getting started. They were playing on a dirt field. They were making their own posters on poster paper. But here they are working and trying to play ball and everything. It was hard for them to get their posters out to all the business places and we were to a game and Raymond is talking and said well, we will help you make them and put them out. After I lost him I stayed right in there with the team. It is funny how one thing just pulls right through to the other.

STURGEON: When you were living in Wyoming did you stay in the same town and what kind of a town was it?

MESSICK: Ranching town. They did have coal and there was uranium there which they brought out in the last few years after we had gone. There is a coal field that goes clear across into Canada through all those states. So about anyplace you dig you can get coal down about ten or fifteen feet.

STURGEON: You said your husband was involved in community activities too. Was he as busy as you?

MESSICK: Well in a way. I mean when you own your own business you are busy. But then he was made chairman of this and chairman of that. Trouble is that when he got to be chairman

of something, who did the work? I did. Of course he belonged to the Chamber but I was doing the Chamber work. He would get appointed to these different things so he gets on the board and they decide it is coming up the 75th anniversary of the town so who gets appointed as the chairman of the anniversary but Alice Messick. She can do it she has got the time. So then I put on and made a real big success of it. One of our state senators said well now let's see, in three years the state is going to have their anniversary. I already talked to the Governor and you got to write a letter. I said what do you mean I got to write a letter. Well everything you are involved in and so forth and so on. And I said oh no and he said oh yes, so I was forced in to writing to the Governor my resume and then I get appointed to the state's anniversary for their 75th. But I did a real bang-up job on that too. We bought a town that was one of the first communities in the state that had been in private hands and was being torn down piece by piece but was really a part of the early history of the Wyoming territory. So we wanted to see it preserved and we had a little money left over from our anniversary so we just up and bought it.

STURGEON: So when you moved up to Wyoming your husband wasn't working for a company anymore, he went up there to start his own business?

MESSICK: Yes. He was a mechanic in the garage. He finally built his own garage and gradually added a car agency. You just expand and don't stand still really.

STURGEON: When you and he were approaching retirement age what were some of the things you were concerned about as you looked into the future?

MESSICK: Of course we thought we would keep our place and be out somewhere during the winter months. Raymond came home one day and he said, honey, when I retire we are going to leave period, whether we come back even a little bit in the summer I don't know. I said how come? He said, well they have got me down for Mayor and going to run me for the legislature and they want me to do this and this and I am tired. He has worked all his life. He really had and had no really vacation time. When he was in the mine we would go someplace, get a telephone call and they were having problems and we would have to stop whatever we were going and go back, even in your own business. He said if we stay here they are going to have me too involved and I am not going to be able to say no. So that is why we took off looking for a place with the idea that we would be down here about eight or nine months of the year and back up there maybe a couple or three. But we had a friend who was in the real estate business and when we came down here and we knew we were going back so Del and my sister bought our car for one of their daughters who was needing transportation. So Charles said well I will fly down and pick you up and drive you back to Wyoming. So after he got us in the air, he said I have sold your house. I said Charles, nobody told you to do that. He said well but I did and you have got just a week to move out when you get home. So many years in a place. I just practically flipped and he said well, yes, I know you bought a place in Sun City, which was a little place, it wasn't this one it was a little one. But he said you will be down there all winter and up here you will have to have the heat going and you will be worrying about if the water breaks or if the power goes off so you don't have any heat and all of this will happen. He said you can get rid of the place up here and when you come up in the summertime you can rent a motel room a lot cheaper than you can keep your housing going all winter, which made sense. So we said OK but oh boy was that rough getting out of there in one week.

STURGEON: So how did you hear about Sun City when you first heard about it?

MESSICK: I think we knew that there was Sun City here and of course my sisters, or my sister living here in Mesa. Then we had some friends that came down here that we knew about. So we knew about Sun City. But when we left up there Raymond said oh we will look around New Mexico and California and Arizona. But as quick as my husband made up his mind I knew that he was going to stop in Arizona after it all happened. I can look back and see that he wasn't going to go to New Mexico or California that it was going to be here. My sis said I just thought you would never move to Arizona. I didn't push it – I would like it, but I was real happy when that is what he decided to do.

STURGEON: How did you end up in Sun City?

MESSICK: We called these friends and they took us around. They had a whole list of places to show us, properties, and since we weren't interested in a bigger one, we saw one on Alabama that we bought, just the second house on the corner of Alabama and 107th. We bought that and that was where we moved in '71 or '72.

STURGEON: So Sun City had been in place about eleven years when you got here.

MESSICK: Yes but there wasn't anything North of Grand. I'll tell what happened to me when we first bought our little house. We had to go get the water turned on you know go to the water place. I said well where is it because everything was on Grand. They said well you just go across the rail road cross on this dirt road and you just go up that dirt road and you will see the water building, where you go in and they will take care of you. I thought that is funny to have it way up there when the town is down here. So I drove across the railroad tracks and kept a going and kept a going and kept a going. I said I think we must have made a mistake and about that time I looked up ahead and there was a building sitting off on the left hand side of the road. I turned off there and I jumped out and went in and I said is this the water place. Well yes. I said I don't know why the heck it is way out here in the country when things are down there. I think it is terrible. And she said why honey this will be the center of Sun City before too long and I said Ha, Ha, Ha. And that is exactly the way I answered her. I was so disgusted when you couldn't see anything but just desert. I think there had been some plants where they had some fields out there but it was just open. All of a sudden they started building the lakes and all that.

STURGEON: When you were thinking of moving what was it about Sun City was appealing as opposed to moving to Mesa or some other place?

MESSICK: I think what they had to offer. My husband had never played golf – he never had time – he couldn't see any sense of men going out there and hitting that little white ball. He worked all the time. He was usually down at the business at five in the morning and maybe home at eight at night. So he didn't have time for relaxation like that. But I had played in Douglas and I thought well rather than having him underfoot all the time I can get him started playing golf. Well, he said I don't think so, but I got him started. He really enjoyed it.

STURGEON: You had mentioned the baseball team. Had you been interested in baseball before?

MESSICK: I had always been interested in baseball. Daddy was very interested in baseball. Mother hated it. So I always went with Daddy to all the ball games we had on dirt fields up there at Ray. Anywhere there was baseball I would always go. Really never to any big league games. You could listen to them on the radio then finally you could get them on TV. So I have always been interested. But I think it was the youth in the Sun City Saints that really got us going.

STURGEON: Could you explain just exactly what kind of a team this was – what the age groups were and what they did etc?

MESSICK: The girls were, I would say, age sixteen up into about twenty five. They all enjoyed playing ball. They all had to work in order to play ball. They were dedicated ball players. Because you can't work eight hours a day and then go out and play ball unless you are dedicated. They had games away from here. In fact after my husband passed away I usually had two or three girls living here because that would save them rent. They had to work to get their scholarships for the fall or money to go to school or whatever they were doing.

STURGEON: So where did the girls come from that were on the team?

MESSICK: Well, mostly around the valley, from high schools and colleges.

STURGEON: And was it a professional team you had here?

MESSICK: I wouldn't say they were professional because they were all amateurs. We did belong to the league in California which was really not professional but they are so good they are almost, but they weren't considered professional, because if you are an amateur you are an amateur. They didn't get paid. The only thing they got paid for, they got their uniforms and when they had these trips there was usually money to pay for the transportation and places to stay.

STURGEON: So Sun City sponsored the team?

MESSICK: Yes.

STURGEON: And how much more did you get involved other than just putting posters up?

MESSICK: Well, eventually after my husband passed away I put up - for their memorial day – they always had a memorial day – bringing in teams anyway – competition. So I put up money for trophies for that. I belonged to the Booster Club and eventually got on the board of the Booster Club which gets you more involved in the operation which is raising money. I was in charge in putting out the year books, getting the ads and all that and the score cards. So it entailed a lot of work.

STURGEON: What else were you involved in?

a place about ten or twelve blocks south of here and I think they were in a bind to get money so they could finish up on that one. They had us down for dinner and gee whiz, there is a block wall all the way around their house, one of those with atriums in the front, you don't have any ---and they only had one little window about like this from their dining room that went out to the street on 103rd and you are blocked out of everything because they had this great wall around the back. Anyway we were down there for dinner that night she said, oh I don't know why we sold. I feel so hemmed in, I can't even see out except in the backyard. I never could understand that either because this is a much better plan.

STURGEON: When you first came here were you able to pay cash for your house?

MESSICK: Oh yes, we paid for everything when we moved down here. That is where a lot of our retirement money went you know.

STURGEON: When you were here the first couple of years was DEVCO still sending around surveys to the people who lived in their homes about the Sun City community?

MESSICK: Personally I don't remembering answering or going through anything like that unless my husband did it.

STURGEON: Did you ever have any interactions with anyone from the Del Webb Company?

MESSICK: Not personally.

STURGEON: By the time you were here were the recreation centers and committees and organizations pretty well set up?

MESSICK: Well of course there was Oakmont and Fairway and Mountain View I think were the three when we moved here. So they were pretty well set up and operating. I don't know if they had all the activities that they ended up with but at least they were active. We were swimmers so that is the thing we were involved was just the swimming, not any of the others even though I paint. Raymond said why don't you joint one of their painting classes? I said I will go around and check. I came home and said I don't think I am better than anybody, but I don't think these teachers can teach me anything. He said why? I said, well I had an awful good teacher, but these teachers, those that I watched, and I watched two or three, they had their board up here and all these people sitting here with their boards and they would say now take your brush and take this color and do this. So everybody was doing the same thing. You can't look exactly like the teachers, but it is so similar and you are not learning. At least that is not the way I was taught. The teacher I took from you brought your paint and you brought your boards and he said now paint a picture. I said what do you mean paint a picture? He said well paint what you would like. Just go ahead and start painting. What he wanted to know was what you could do and he wanted everybody to have their own style and not be copying everybody. Well I started out and I had perfect perspective, so he didn't have to work with me on perspective but he said the sky is not always blue, the water is not always blue, the ground is not always brown, the tree trunks are not always brown, telling you all these things to get your mind working so you would pick up colors, the color reflection is different on everything. That is the way I was taught

and I went to all these places so I didn't join anything. They weren't doing anything I was interested in. I painted after I came down here.

STURGEON: Did you or your husband get involved in the Home Owners Association?

MESSICK: I think we belonged but I don't think we went to meetings or anything like that. Raymond had had enough meetings and he wanted to just relax.

STURGEON: When you were here were they still debating back and forth whether they should incorporate Sun City? And what were some of the arguments you were hearing about that? Were there some that felt you should and some that you shouldn't?

MESSICK: Oh yes. Just about the same as they are arguing now. I think when you moved here it was to get away from all of that hooray. Why mess it up when you have something is very, very good and is working? It also works in a lot of other places they don't want you to know about. Larger communities than this too, but I think we are doing just fine the way we are and I think we were back then. One thing I think that people will try, now when we moved into Alabama we had two little poodles. I wanted to have a fenced yard so I could just turn them out because they were used to being out in the yard. I went to every one of my neighbors and asked if it would bother them if we put up a chain link fence in the back yard and they said no that is fine, which we did. Well, none of them had pets, but the one lady next door, she said I just want you to know what is going on. They are coming around with petitions to get rid of all animals. All dogs and all cats. They are going to take it into the Health Department because they say it is a health hazard, these animals. But she said I don't think they are going to get very far with it. Well, the people that had – now we never did sign because nobody ever came to us but I know the people next door signed, wherever it was they were signing petitions. When it went down to the county health department, the people who wanted to get rid of all the animals, not only the dogs and cats but the rabbits and everything else that run around here, they had about twelve hundred signatures and the other people had something like three thousand or thirty five hundred signatures. So of course the health department just threw it out because it was so ridiculous. People try it every once in a while. I just don't understand. What would we gain by incorporation that we don't have now? We would still have to pay for some of the things that we are paying for now, plus, I don't care what they say, you have got to have a building for a police station and you have got to have a jail, got to have all of these things. Oh, but we will get lots of money from the county. Have they been listening to how much they have been cut off to go to all these communities, how many communities have had to put out a deal to raise taxes in their community. I hope that it gets defeated. Meredyth is getting out a petition to get it on the ballot in November. They defeated it in Sun City West this last spring and I hope it is defeated here.

STURGEON: What about the school tax issues, were you ever involved in that?

MESSICK: No, because we really do pay school taxes. We are paying for colleges and different areas of school. I think the whole hooray was that if we get incorporated you have got to have a school, state law says that. If you are a community, yes, you have got to have one, that is why we voted it down before. We didn't want the school.

STURGEON: Where would the kids come from anyway?

MESSICK: Well, there are certain kids here that they pick up to go to school. I do know that they have laws but some people do have some kids around here. I don't know how long they are allowed. One year I know a woman came to the swimming pool one day she had a baby. But she went swimming and the baby was in a buggy. I thought oh well, her daughter or somebody must be visiting. She was reluctant to talk about it at first but she said no, her husband told her daughter that if she had that baby he would leave. She had the baby and she just brought the baby to me and said it is yours and if you don't want it I am going to throw it away. She said, it is my grandchild, what do you do? So she stayed here about two years, I think, or three with that baby and all of a sudden she was no longer in Sun City so I imagine she moved some place else. So those things do happen and I think the idea of kids here is that not that you don't like kids and you love them but they get to screaming and yelling and scooting and you are too old to take that anymore. I know, I go to my sis's and she is almost pulling her hair out because of her grandkids and I can see, they slam the door, she will say let the door close quietly and wham it will go and they are screaming and yelling.

STURGEON: How have your perceptions of Sun City changed over time as you lived here and watched it?

MESSICK: I don't know that it has changed. I like what has happened. They keep saying that south of Grand are the old people. Let me give you a little hint. The old people are now north of Grand because the old people South of Grand are dying off and younger people are buying their property. So we are becoming the younger element, or will eventually, as against those on the north side. It is just going to work back and forth that way.

STURGEON: Do you think the older people in the first areas that moved in are having a harder time now that the cost of living is going up so high?

MESSICK: I think some of them are having a real rough time and I think a lot of people don't know it, if you did know it you would be really upset over some of the things that they talk about. Helping these people down in Africa and all these countries and send so much money to take care of these poor starving people and kids. I said you have got it right here. I have always, all my life, would rather give it to somebody I know or the area than just to give it and not know where it is going. I know there are times when I have helped people, but you don't want to be thanked for it, you know, you just do it, and people do it for you sometimes. I have got very good people who do nice things for me.

STURGEON: Have your own ideas about financial security changed as you have gotten older?

MESSICK: Not really. I was never a clothes horse, or keeping up with the Joneses in other words, so that has never bothered me. After my husband retired we did quite a bit of traveling which was good for him and I am glad he had it for the simple reason that he had worked hard all of his life and really had not had good vacations where he was completely away. So we went to Hawaii three or four times and we went to Fiji and we went to Tahiti and took trips like that. And yet again we didn't splurge. It seemed like, we talked about it, it seemed like young folks

always gravitated towards Raymond and I. It was very unusual, in a way, when you are on trips to have younger people want to be with you. It happened on one trip we made to Hawaii. We arrived at this place the same day a newlywed did from Frisco. So they came over the next day and said do you mind if we eat with you folks, you seem to eat about the same time we do. No, we said, that is fine. One of those places – a Med Center – where you get your meals and everything, Club Med. They said what are you going to do today? Oh, we were going to do so and so. That sounds like fun. Mind if we go along? And here these kids were, I would say twenty five and this trip his Dad had given them as a wedding gift and that was the wedding night trip as they left right after the wedding. They spent the whole two weeks with us, everywhere we went, everything we did, they wanted to be with us. In fact when we got home and they got home they sent us the nicest letter thanking us for allowing them to be with us and having such a great time on their honeymoon. So that is when we got to wondering, why does this happen? But maybe it was because we had a younger outlook on a lot of things, I don't know.

STURGEON: Is there anything about Sun City that I haven't asked you that you think would be interesting to know?

MESSICK: I don't know. One time, of course Welk used to come down here to the Sun Bowl. I think the first time that we were here and they were here and we were up on Grand Avenue, which was a shopping center area and I guess we weren't paying attention to the people who were passing us when pretty soon I felt a tap on my shoulder and somebody said how come you aren't saying hello to us. We looked and it was some of the Welk men, you know, that sing and dance and play. I said, Oh, Hello and we had a chat. They just wanted to know why we weren't saying hello to them. We said well we weren't trying to ignore you or anything we just didn't see you because we weren't looking. A lot of things just happen and somebody says well they didn't speak to us and they just didn't see them.

STURGEON: Do you think Sun City is as friendly as it was when you first came here?

MESSICK: I don't know. I think just certain people are. I am thinking about church. You have some people that are real friendly and some that aren't. I think you find that everywhere. You have warm people and cold people. I guess I am not out enough to really give a good answer to that. However I have my favorite place to eat in Sun City again. We used to go down to a Mexican place on Peoria and then it left and now there is a Mexican place in the Smith's Shopping Center. The cook there is the cook that used to be at El Charro at Nino's. About the second or third day they were open I was there and got to talking to them and it seems like I am part of their family now. They have just kind of accepted me that way. And I have taken a lot of people there and those people have taken people. Maybe it is a friendship – and the grandkids, the little kids, they see me coming and they come and grab me and it makes you feel good when you are welcomed like that.

STURGEON: When you moved here did any of your friends move down here over the years from Wyoming and other places you lived?

MESSICK: No, the people that lived next door to us, and we were friends for years and years, the bank president. They moved down here. Fact they bought just a little rent place to be down here for a couple of months. Then they sold that and bought a little bigger place, a condo, a small one. And than they decided they would sell that and get a little bigger place, which they did, and then he retired. So they were down here winter time and back up there in the summer time. He is still involved in the bank even though he is retired, when all the people in the bank take vacation he substitutes for them because he likes to.

STURGEON: Did you have to sell your business when you moved down here – you sold the house then did you sell the business?

MESSICK: We had already sold the business when we retired. But we hadn't sold the house because they owned their own place and had a ranch besides. But, Cecil, the bank president would tell my friends down here, yes whenever she got involved in anything I would always be the treasurer for whatever she was in. I said that is true – who better to have it than the bank president. You never did say no and he said how could I.?

STURGEON: Did you get involved in fund raising down here with the baseball team?

MESSICK: Yes, with the Saints. That was my last big effort for fund raising. That takes a lot of effort to go out and get ads for score card book and for your year book. It is not only just getting the ad in it is gong back and getting it checked and getting it right back to the right place. It is a lot of work to it. That is all freebee. You are doing it because you want to and then you end up once or twice where somebody refuses to pay for their ad. Some want to see it in print before they will pay and that is kind of bad too.

STURGEON: Is there anything else you can think of that you would like to say?

MESSICK: I don't know that I can say that I haven't enjoyed my years. It has been twenty years and I have thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. I haven't been swimming this year but I enjoy it when I do go swimming. It was everything we hoped it would be when we moved down here. As you can tell with all those trophies, if you have seen them out there. I had them in my storage area that I couldn't even get into for all those years before they could take them down there. Trophies for the Sun Cities Saints team.

STURGEON: Is the team still playing?

MESSICK: Well, we tried last year and then that all went kaput, the other people had the place, so Gerald was our manager and he has had the team this year and it is just called the Saints. They played over around the Phoenix and Mesa area. There is no place out here for them to play. It costs, we tried it last year with the Saints, and when they are invited to these tournaments it will cost you twelve hundred to fifteen hundred bucks. It is hard to raise that kind of money. So I think if they could get a place to play here where it could be permanent where you could pick up a lot of people to be members it might pay. Cause people did enjoy the young folks.

STURGEON: Well, thank you very much for your information.

MESSICK: Well, thank you for taking your time to be here. I don't know if I have given you anything that you wanted or not.

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 209

Interview with Florence M. Spears

September 26, 1991

Date of Birth: December 31, 1908

Place of Birth: Lakewood, Ohio

Florence was an early resident of Sun City and a DEVCO hostess.

Synopsis:

- Father born in Berne, Switzerland in 1882 and immigrated to Pennsylvania at age 1. He worked for the National Carbon Company, Lakewood, Ohio; dropped of school in 8th grade out to help family.
- Mother born Mt. Washington, Pennsylvania in 1891; family moved to Ohio when she was a baby. She attended school through 10th grade.
- Met husband in Lakewood; married June 7, 1929; son born 1938.
- Husband was a bricklayer who worked for his dad; worked many jobs during the Depression; eventually with Roosevelt and the WPA; died in 1938 of meningitis; sister (nurse) came to live with me.
- Got job with Republic Steel in Cleveland; worked 2 years; married my boss, who was a widower with a young daughter. His heart doctor recommended a move to AZ; we arrived in 1957.
- Bought biggest model home so children could come and visit. Paid cash. We were the 8th couple to move into Sun City. Loved the Sun City life.
- Husband died in 1963
- Became hostess in the models; later work in office and King's Inn. I set up tours and meals in Phoenix; showed homes to everyone; married a widower.
- Sun City now too large, with too much traffic; it has lost its sense of community.

C-209

26 September 1991

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 26th day of September, 1991, by and between Florence Sears (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:

C209

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Florence Sears – DEVCO Hostess

Interviewer – Melanie Sturgeon 26 Sep 1991

Belva McIntosh transcribed the audio tape in May 2008

This is Melanie Sturgeon, and on behalf of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society and the Arizona Historical Foundation. I am interviewing Florence Sears, one of the early pioneers of Sun City in her home in Sun City, Arizona. It is September 26, 1991.

STURGEON: Florence, can you tell me the dates and places of your parent's birth?

SEARS: My Dad was born in Bern, Switzerland. My mother was born in Mt. Washington, Pennsylvania. I should have got the data out. I don't remember the years they were born. My mother would be one hundred and my dad would be one hundred and nine.

STURGEON: When did your father come over here?

SEARS: He was a year old. They went to Pennsylvania.

STURGEON: Can you tell me what your parents did for a living?

SEARS: My dad for worked for what is now Union Carbide, but he worked in the plant called the National Carbide Company in Lakewood, Ohio. He was foreman over, I don't know what department but he was foreman.

STURGEON: When he began to work for the company did he start as a laborer and work up?

SEARS: No, he went right in as far as to my knowledge, he went right in there when I was just a little tiny girl.

STURGEON: What was your parent's educational background?

SEARS: My mother went through grammar school, not to high school, my father went to the seventh or eighth grade and my grandfather passed away and he had to –my grandmother had five children and one on the way. Dad was the oldest and he was thirteen and he – no he was fourteen, and he had to go to work to keep the family together. Besides, my grandmother worked some of the time too by taking in washings.

STURGEON: Did your mother ever work?

SEARS: My mother worked before she was married in a chewing gum factory in Cleveland Ohio but I don't know which one. She did not work after she and dad were married.

STURGEON : Can you tell me a little bit about yourself – where and when were you born?

SEARS: I was born in Dec. 31, 1908 in Lakewood Ohio – born at home, had a midwife deliver me because my uncle was a doctor and he didn't get there in time. They didn't have transportation. He had a car but I guess he was held up someplace, but he got there but I was born when he got there. I have two sisters – I am the oldest, one sister is 3 ½ years younger than I am, my brother was born about six years after my birth date and he only lived 24 months. My younger sister was born twelve years younger and in the meantime dad was transferred to New York to the plant there and my youngest sister Betty was born in Carney, New Jersey.

STURGEON: What was your educational background?

SEARS: I went through the tenth grade.

STURGEON: After you moved to New York did you stay there?

SEARS: We were there three years and my mother disliked it so much and she had the baby there and she just could not – and her mother was in Cleveland Ohio and was dying of cancer, she said to my dad I have to go home and I am not coming back. So Dad had to make all kinds of preparations to move back. Each time he moved was a promotion, well, then he had to go back to his old position in National Carbon. But we went back home. In the meantime we rented our home to an aunt of mine so we had a home to go to.

STURGEON: When did you meet your husband?

SEARS: I met my husband in Lakewood. He lived in Cleveland. I worked for the telephone company. I was sixteen years old when I quit school. My aunt was the telephone chief operator at the Lakewood Telephone Company and Dad passed away. We were left with a home but that is about all. My aunt said to my mother why don't you let me get Florence a job here. So mother fought it tooth and nail because she wanted me to continue school and even my home room teacher came out to the house to talk to me and said, Florence, you cannot quit school. I said I feel like I should help. I can't see my mother going out and doing housework for us and I am old enough to go out and work. I loved to work at the telephone company. I was a telephone operator and I was there for four years and that is where I met my husband. He was picking up a girl friend of mine and he saw me and asked Elizabeth who I was and she told him and he said would you introduce me, I like that girl. I had bright red hair and of course Elizabeth was a real nice person and it was just a date. In those date we dated other people, we didn't just find one boy and stick to them you know. So Elizabeth told me about it and she said I made a double date for you. So that is how I met my husband and we were married in 1929, June 7, 1929.

STURGEON : What did he do for a living?

SEARS: He was a brick layer and his father was the contractor. He worked for his father.

STURGEON: Let's go back to your father. When he died he didn't have any insurance, there was no pension?

SEARS: He had a pension. Of course the pensions they had in those days were not too much but that is about all he had. Yes, he did have insurance. We had a little but not enough to carry us through the life we were used too.

STURGEON: You got married just on the eve of the depression. Did your husband keep his job during the depression?

SEARS: No. My husband worked at several things during the depression. They couldn't get any building – building went down hill. He sold Hoover's. My mother belonged to the Eastern Star, the Rebecca's, the Pythian Sisters and she had a lot of friends. My mother was a club lady. She belonged to a lot of things and did a lot of things with clubs. She would tell her friends that my husband was out

of work and then they would call and say, my windows need washing, do you want to come over. So he did handy work. He did anything he could for people and finally, you know, Roosevelt was President and he formed the WPA and my husband worked for the WPA for a while until they got back on their feet. We did go all through the depression. There were very hard times. I worked at the telephone company and I had a cousin that worked for Griselly Chemical Company in Cleveland Ohio and she said, Florence, (we were like sisters) there is a job here as a key punch operator and I wish you would come. By that time I was put on the floor as supervisor. I had to work split hours and when my husband would come home from work I was going to work. So I thought maybe I ought to take that job because it was an all day job. And like a foolish person I quit and I regretted it to this day because I loved the work and I could have gone up and up and so I went over and worked at Griselly Chemical as a key puncher and then in 1930 E. I. Dupont took over Griselly Chemical. Our whole data processing was asked to go to Wilmington Delaware. So I couldn't leave my husband and he was working then. I thought I can't go to Wilmington. You weren't forced to go you had your choice. I didn't go. Only about a third of the people went. I didn't have a job. So I said to my husband I am almost thirty and if we want to have a family we should do it. So we tried and we accomplished that. I was so happy carrying my baby – I didn't know if it was a boy or girl like they do today, so I had a little boy. In the meantime, a month before my baby was born – my husband had sinusitis and he had tremendous headaches – he was so bad that my youngest sister next to me was a nurse and she came over and took care of him or helped me. She said Florence there is something more wrong with Mike (his name was Michael). Why don't we get Dr. Mitchell – he was a specialist. Before Dr. Mitchell came – they used to come to the house- He started to get out of his head and he knew it was about time for my baby to be born and he knew I was going to have this child any day and he would have spells when he would be out of it and then he would be alright. Then he would say to me, Florence I don't know why I have to be like this now. I should be with you and I don't think he knew when I went to the hospital to have the baby. They brought him into the hospital – Dr. Mitchell came to see him and said get him to the hospital. So while he was in the operating room he had spinal meningitis. I didn't even see Jerry yet, it was a boy and I named him Jerry, not Gerald, Jerry. One of the doctor's came to me and said you can have Jerry every day if you don't see your husband. If you see your husband we can't bring Jerry to you. That is a very contagious disease. Anyway he passed away and that is how I remember Jerry's birthday. So I was married eight years to Michael and he always said he wanted to build a brick house. We had all kinds of plans so that was the end of that. I wanted to stay home and take care of my baby and we didn't have very much in the savings and we had to - my mother said anytime you

start college. We had moved there so he could go to Arizona University and then he could come home. I would like a year off just to do what I want. He had wheels going on in his head all the time. So I knew the principal of the school near us so I called him and said would you and your wife come over for the evening I have something I want to talk over with you. He came over and we talked it over and he said everybody can't go to college and if he is willing to go after this year let him have a year off. So we did. He went to the Aviation School, there was one in Kansas, there was one in Hollywood and there was another one but I forget where it was. He picked Hollywood. So he met this girl there at the school and in Oct 1957 my husband and I went on the Ohio picnic up at South Mountain and when he got home there was a phone call from Jerry saying he was married. He was eighteen and she was eighteen. They are married and they are the happiest family and they have two lovely girls. He has had wonderful positions even though he didn't go to college. He worked for an Insurance Company and he worked for Fremont Insurance in Los Angeles for years and just the same as my department was eliminated his department was eliminated because they thought it would be cheaper to have their investigations done by other companies rather than have that whole office for it. Jerry was management of that office force. He called me and told me he was out of a job and my heart just sank and I said Jerry what are you going to do. He said don't worry mom I have a job already. I work for this detective agency and I manage the whole deal. A woman owned it and she knew Jerry through Fremont and she said this was my luckiest day to get you so that is where he is working now. Well my other husband lived here, getting back to that we would go over to see the kids and visit them on weekends. On the way over we saw all this commotion going on these fields, big machines working and a big sign about future retirement home and then there was a little tiny shed and I then that Sunday I saw a piece in the paper about Del E. Webb planning this retirement center and I said isn't that interesting. We had an acre and a half lot over in east Phoenix and I said maybe we ought to go into something smaller. And we did, we came out here and we bought our home from a picture up on the board. They had all the models pictured and we no more than stepped in there when Bob Dietzler, there were two salesmen, there was Bob Dietzler and Jack Hayden. Bob was the one that waited on us and took us up to see where they were beginning to build up on Peoria Ave was the end right then – there was nothing beyond Peoria Ave. I liked it and my husband he looked at me and when we knew what the prices of the houses were I said, Dear this is for us. We bought that lot – they drove us up in a truck through the cotton fields to see the lot – we bought the lot – we picked out the house – we bought the Pickford. He lived until '63. He passed away in '63. He had a nice life while he lived here. He played golf – the doctor allowed him to play golf – nine holes three times a week. He had an aneurysm on the brain. He

was bleeding and he died in St. Joseph's Hospital. So I came back home and I knew I didn't need that house. We got the biggest house here because of the kids coming over. So I put the house up for sale. My husband and I sold our house in Phoenix and I sold this house myself on Augusta Drive. We had the eighth key – we were the eighth people to move in. There was George and Mable Bain, Lu Lecy and I forget the other person's name, the Ellis, the O'Bryants and the Turnblooms. It was a lot of fun moving here in Sun City and knowing all the people. We would get out on the sidewalk with our brooms and we would all stand there and talk. And don't forget the recreation center was there – the swim pool was ready to swim in – everything was here. We went swimming every day and all of a sudden we went down to the rec center one day and Tom Austin came along and he said I need a few ladies to help me. This is volunteer work, he said. Gyla O'Bryant, Garnet Burnham, myself, Lou Lecy and Ray Bain – oh we would help. All of us helped to get the clubs organized, crafts, the swim club, the card clubs, everything. Every night a few of us would congregate down by the pool on Oakmont Drive and just visit and sing and have the best time. We were the happiest people.

STURGEON: Before we talk a lot more about Sun City; would you mind telling me a little about the neighborhood you grew up in?

SEARS: Oh a wonderful neighborhood. My uncle, my dad and another friend built our home. It was a real large home and we went to live in it before all the inside work was finished and that was in Lakewood Ohio. Dorothy was born there and Charles was born there. It was a nice neighborhood and all of my friends that were say a year older or even a year younger than I were are all gone now. The neighborhood was like years ago it wasn't all built up. There was a lot of spaces between our homes. We had places to run. We would play war – we would bicycle in the street. The street went from Bell Avenue to Warren Road and Warren Road was the center street in Lakeland Ohio and went all the way north and south and we had no traffic and everybody didn't have car then. We didn't have a car.

STURGEON: Was Lakewood a suburb of Cleveland? Was it a small town?

SEARS: Seven miles out of Cleveland. It was small when we started but now I think there must be maybe 100,000 people there. See, they couldn't expand too much because there was Cleveland, there was Rocky River, Fairview Village, Omstead Falls. Some places can't expand because there was no place to expand. I went back a year ago in June and some of the same people were living there.

Some of the younger ones that came after we lived there not when we first came. It used to be before they ever started to build homes on that street it used to be a grape vineyard with concord grapes. Sort of rural – half and half. Our school was a mile and a half away. We had to go way down to Detroit Street for our elementary school, for our Junior High School and our Lakewood High School was built in, oh I can't remember the year, but that was a little closer for me. It was near Madison Avenue. We bicycled back and forth.

STURGEON: In your neighborhood did you have different ethnic groups – like Poles or Swedes?

SEARS: Where my Dad's factory was there were about twelve streets that were all ethnic. We used to call it the bird's nest. I don't know why. There were Polish, Bohemian, all kinds. They had another school at that end all the children that went to our school were from the heart of Lakewood and west. To my knowledge I don't know of any ethnic children in the school then. That is so many years ago that you can't remember.

STURGEON: You mentioned that your mother was very active in clubs. Was your Dad active too?

SEARS: My Dad was active also. My sisters were both active in lodges and clubs and I resented it when my mother and dad would be going through their routine. Every lodge they belonged to they went through the chairs and there is a certain amount of material you have to learn. They would go up in their big master bedroom and they would be learning it. I used to think – they didn't do it every night, but the nights they did, maybe I was a selfish child and I said to my mother I am never going to join a lodge. Now wasn't that a nasty thing to say. And I never did.

STURGEON: Now when you got to New York you said your mother hated it. It must have been a different kind of community there. What was it like?

SEARS: We were in a sort of – it was a nice district but it was all scotch people and they were so aloof, except for our neighbor next door and she was a lovely little woman. She wasn't scotch. Vera – what was her last name? I always called her Vera. She had one child after another and Mother and her became fast friends and they would take the babies out for a walk n their carriages. Mother never became involved in clubs there, just in Lakewood. That is another reason she wanted to come back.

STURGEON: Now, what about when you got married, did you get involved in any activities, I know you didn't want clubs but did you get involved in anything else?

SEARS: No, because I worked everyday when I was first married.

STURGEON: What about when you married your second husband and you stopped working did you get involved in things then?

SEARS: I was involved in the Red Cross and I collected for them and everything that went on but I didn't ever join a club. Except our little card clubs we had with our friends and things but I never joined a lodge. My Dad was a 32nd degree Mason and my stepdad was too. But I enjoyed working for the Red Cross. When we came out here I went right to IBM and they gave me a job. I worked in many places. I worked for IBM and like the Kelly Girls, I worked for American Oil, I worked for Motorola. I worked for the Arizona Republic for certain lengths of time. They sent me all over. I never graduated from high school – I never went to college. Sometime I think maybe I should go to college here, over on the east side I thought about getting my diploma, but all this came up about Sun City and I just let it go. I did go down to the typing school for a semester. I can't think of the name. I never joined the clubs.

STURGEON: Do you remember during the depression, was your mother remarried during the depression so that she was taken care of? Do you remember when your step-father retired?

SEARS: He retired in '58, right after we moved here. He retired then and he was way up in his 70's and he lived alone in that big house. My other sister the nurse in the meantime had married and lived in the country. She married a man who was a farmer in Dover, Ohio, when Dad was failing so and she would go up and visit him. One time she went to visit him and she said you have got to come home with me. You can not stay here. So they helped get the house sold and he went to live with Dorothy. He died in Dover Ohio right before my second husband died. We went there and he knew me.

STURGEON: Do you remember during the depression when you were having a hard time and they were having all those debates over social security, did you remember ever thinking that might be a good thing to have or were you concerned about that at all?

SEARS: They didn't have social security. Never gave it a thought.

STURGEON: Do you think social security has been a good thing?

SEARS: Yes I do. It helps a lot of people and some people here that is all they have to get along on.

STURGEON: When you were starting to approach retirement age after you had moved out here and you were working did you think at all about your future and how you were going to take care of each other?

SEARS: We had a savings and we had our home. We figured we were retired. When Ernie and I bought the place in Sun City, we figured yes, we are retired now and I still worked until I was just getting awfully tired of going so far back and forth from Sun City. So one time Tom Austin asked us one late afternoon when we were all sitting there and he said he needed help and we all said we were glad to help and we started on that. Finally they had – see I never came to the grand opening here. The weekend of the grand opening I think I was in California so I never saw the model homes until (end of tape side A)

(Side B) anyway I scheduled them all and then the tours they would take them all over Phoenix in these buses and Scottsdale wasn't what it is today. They would stop at one of the little ice cream places in Scottsdale on main avenue and they would have a strawberry pie or some little dessert. Oh, I tell you we had a big time. Then finally they told Gray that we were spending too much money. But that is what my job was – scheduling all these entertainments for all the people that rented those apartments. Those people came here to see it and maybe buy houses. I don't think that there were – I bet ten percent or maybe less didn't buy. Everybody was just so very happy here and liked it so well and liked the layout of the streets and how everything was so pretty. They just liked it and they would come up after their tours and we would talk and I would tell them everything I knew about Sun City. And they would say how nice every body was. You would go in the store and everybody would talk to you. They just thought it was great.

STURGEON: When you were helping Tom Austin organize the clubs did they grow very quickly?

SEARS: Everybody that was here. Most people that age have something they are doing and are interested in. Did they take advantage of it? Yes. I am not a

seamstress or a sewer. The only thing I liked to do was cross stitch or embroider or crewel. But I don't care for sewing. But I went to the sewing club. I went over to Lakeview sewing club for years because it was interesting and I did learn a lot even though I wasn't a seamstress and they would have good speakers there. So I still have my card and I just talked to a lady I met in church and she said when are you coming back and I said, oh I may come back. What we liked was outdoors. I took golf lessons because my husbands played golf and I didn't. So I took golf lessons and I played golf for a while and then my back started bothering me. I had back surgery and he told me not to play golf and bowl. So swimming was the priority. I loved to swim. I lived in the pool. That is how I got so many wrinkles. We played shuffleboard. We played mini-golf. I love to play mini golf. I couldn't play golf so I played mini golf. Joined the clubs. Anything outdoors. I didn't play tennis but they didn't have a tennis court. It is just in recent years that they put in a tennis court here at Mountain View.

STURGEON: Were you part of the Reverend Witt congregation?

SEARS: I was with Reverend Witt. They were two fine people. We went to church. We went to the Congregational Church over on 3rd Avenue in Phoenix. We didn't join. Then when we came here we did go over to the church once but we didn't continue going. Then there was a couple that moved here by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Forrester. They were swimming all the time too. He said one time that they knew a minister in California and he was going to talk to him and see if he couldn't come out here and form a church. He did so and it happened and we had our church in Oakmont Center. My husband was the first deacon and Lady Ross was really the first deaconess but then she didn't go the whole way, I mean she didn't take her full term so I took over. I am a charter member of that church and I love it and I love everybody in it and I go to the church meetings. That is one thing I don't miss. We were all so happy when Reverend Witt and Gladys came. You know what Gladys did. She baked thousands of cookies. They stayed in that little apartment in back of King's Inn on 107th and then whoever was going to join the church would come there for their orientation and then she would serve cookies that she had baked. She baked cookies for years. I was on another committee with them too. I was in so many things I don't remember all of them. We went around the neighborhood for money and when they were talking about building Sun Valley Lodge they had a write up in the paper about people that put one hundred dollars in would become a member and get into the lodge maybe a little bit sooner or whatever. We all worked on that. Gee, that is a long time ago.

STURGEON: When you first moved here do you remember any of the surveys that the Del Webb Company sent out to residents?

SEARS: I believe so. I don't remember written surveys. I know we had a little office where if we had any complaints about our houses we would go there and whatever was wrong they would fix it. But our key man, Les Perry, he would always go to the house and asked how you liked it. I don't remember written surveys. That must be something I missed.

STURGEON: Did you ever have any interaction with Del Webb, the man?

SEARS: My husband talked to him on the golf course. I never talked to him but I saw him a lot. I never had the honor of speaking to him and I wish I had because he was a nice man. I knew most everybody else in the company. I knew Jerry Svendson when he started working when Tom left. I hated to see Tom go. This little red haired fellow came along and he was newly married and then a year after he had a baby. We all got to like him very much. Every time I see Jerry if he is speaking and I happen to be there he just always waves. Afterwards he comes up and he hugs me. It is just so nice to have people like that you know.

STURGEON: Did you or your husband ever get involved in the Home Owner's Association?

SEARS: No, we never got in any of the groups that take charge of things.

STURGEON: I understand in the early days they had a big discussion about whether Sun City should incorporate or not. Do you remember what they were arguing about?

SEARS: Oh so much they were arguing about. We would get more money if we incorporated. Another would get up and you don't know what you are talking about. We wouldn't get more money. Then they would bring different things up reasons why we wouldn't. We have gone this long as a self governing little city and we want to keep it that way. We have had a lot of hot arguments at these meetings. I felt that I did not want to incorporate. Because I felt we had gone all these ways with self government and even though we don't get the money that the cities that are incorporated get I still think that we are better off as we are. Now Mr. Meredyth, and I know he might hear this tape, but I can't help it and I will tell him face to face I am not for incorporation. He might say don't come up here anymore. Sun City is basically run by volunteers. The only ones that are paid are

the ones that are the pros in the golf club. We have a new man in the pro shop with the clothes and things. He gets paid.

(The transcriber is unable to hear Ms. Sturgeon very well, if at all.)

Oh, about the school taxes? I was always willing to pay school taxes regardless. We always have paid school taxes. If we were incorporated we would have to pay more school taxes and we are paying school taxes now.

STURGEON: When you look at Sun City now, how do you think it has changed?

SEARS: It grew too large. There is a lot more traffic. When we came we were younger. Now I am old. If it was like it was when we came it would be wonderful, but there is so much traffic. This week I have noticed how much more traffic there is this week than last week. You know people are coming back and it is getting to be a busy place. That is what I have noticed about Sun City. The people are still lovely. They are real nice. There was a real sense of community in the early days that isn't quite the same now. It can't possibly be with the number of homes and streets.

STURGEON: I heard that when they started on Phase II and built the recreation center that there were some unhappy feelings on both sides. Do you remember any of that?

SEARS: I very seldom paid any attention to that because I knew that Del Webb was gone and they were going to build as much land as they could get. It was a little disappointment. Now from Peoria down, that includes this street there was just a little land and it was all agriculture. Watermelon, carrots, no cotton, it was agriculture. We used to go down there and down about where Olive Avenue is there was an old house and a great big old barn and one side was all open. They would pick watermelons and fill that with watermelons and you could go and buy them for a cent apiece. They would say go up the field, there are some overripe ones, take them. You see it was more rural. It is so different now. It is like living in a city. We are in a city now. We aren't in a little community.

STURGEON: When you first moved out here there were only about eight houses and not very many people. Were you worried about moving someplace where there really wasn't a community and nobody knew each other?

SEARS: No. We were looking forward to reading the paper about what it was going to be like. We knew they were building. The houses started on Alabama and 107th. They went up Alabama to St. Annes.

STURGEON: When did your first husband die?

SEARS: In 1988 at Sun Valley Lodge. He was in Sun Valley Lodge five years. He had Parkinson's disease. We were married twenty years. He died two days before his birthday and I had a party set up in the nursing care center and ordered the cakes and everything and he was gone that Sunday and I had to call it off.

STURGEON: As you lived in Sun City and the cost of everything started going up, are you still comfortable with your financial situation?

SEARS: I can feel the difference on the interest on my money. I don't get near the social security as a lot of people that I know. I was flabbergasted. My husband and I had a pre-nuptial agreement that everything goes to his children and the ----- and everything goes to my children. He did leave me money. I noticed that the interest keeps going down. The bills they pay for me keep going higher. So I notice it but I don't think I will die poor. I think I will be able to make the grade. I know that if Harry knew that it was going to be as bad as it is he would have maybe made things just a little better. His children are so good to me. I have nothing to worry about. I have so many homes I could go to.

STURGEON: When your husband first came to Sun City were you able to pay cash for your house or did you have to take out a mortgage?

SEARS: We paid cash for it.

STURGEON: When Del Webb built Sun City there were no hospitals and very few medical facilities. Were you involved in trying to get those things started?

SEARS: I really was not involved but I was very happy to know they were talking about building a hospital. See, I was in the hospital several times at St. Joseph's for operations and illnesses that I had. Then that is where my second husband died was in St. Joseph's. That was quite a ways over. So that is why I was very, very happy when they said something about building a hospital. I had nothing to do with that. I do belong to Sun Health organization there and give money every year for the hospital.

STURGEON: Were you involved in the Sun Valley Lodge?

SEARS: No. I feel ashamed. I feel that I should be working down there. I know so many people – of course since my husband died a lot of other people have died – but when I go in that door I just can't.

STURGEON: I can understand that. Are you still involved in the community?

SEARS: Oh, indeed! I always welcome newcomers and take them muffins. We have a gatherings every once in a while. We can't have the whole street. You know what I was thinking? I would just love to have our whole street have a yearly street picnic. You know there is one street that I know that has that and it is Hacienda Drive. From one end of it to the other end. That is a lot of people but it is a lot of fun. You would get to know everybody down that way, up that way. Now that we are having more discussion about having block watches, maybe I can get something about the yearly picnic.

STURGEON: Well, when you look back at Sun City and all the changes you have seen, is there anything else you would like to tell me?

SEARS: I got my sister to come live here. She lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She knew we loved Sun City and she knew that after Harry died I was here alone, but they moved before Harry died, they moved while Harry was in the nursing home. I think they came because I was alone here, and I liked it so much and they have so many things to do. My sister is a little more active in clubs than I am. She belongs to the Newcomer's Club. She belongs to a lot of church clubs. She is in to everything. She is on the order of myself. She goes to visit people that need visiting. People that are alone or people that never get out or people that are sick. And that is what I do most of the time. I am always doing for somebody. My dear friend is in the hospital right now. Tuesday was her surgery – she had a knee operation. She has no family here and no one except a good neighbor. The good neighbor has her husband in a nursing home and goes every day to see him. So I said just lean on me while you are here and I will look after you. So I was down there most of the day of her operation. I went down after I got through at the Historical Society yesterday and I am going down today and keep her buoyed up. She is a widow.

STURGEON: Do you have any friends that came out here because you liked it so well?

SEARS: Yes, they all bought out here. Most of them are gone now. My friend of 60 years and her husband are both gone now. There is Irene that came out here. Irene Boss is gone. I have brought a lot of friends out and a lot of people out. There are some people that came to visit us but they won't leave their children. I can't think of anything else except that I do love Sun City. I will do anything I can to promote it and hope that the Ambassador's – I will go up there and find out if they are not advertising. I know that Sun City West is, but I would like Sun City to advertise. This is Phase I from the tracts down to Olive and you see we are older and we are either passing away or we are going into retirement homes. That means there are a lot of houses for sale and the younger people are buying them and I think we are getting more young people down this way than the other people are. The ones in the 50's and early 60's. It is becoming revitalized. The house catty-corner across the street – the man doesn't look too young but I think she looks like a little 16 year old. She is as cute as a button and nice. They are from Texas.

STURGEON: Have your neighbors been from all over the place?

SEARS: Yes, the one that just called us from Wisconsin, they are from Texas. Nellie is from New York, Harriet and George are from Detroit, Michigan and Harriet's husband, George is down at Sun Valley Lodge. Helen is from Chicago, Petit's are from Wisconsin.

STURGEON: Did you ever have neighbors that didn't like Sun City and left?

SEARS: Yes, the people that bought my house on Augusta Drive were from Chicago and oh, yes, she wanted that house. He said well we ought to think it over and she said no I am going to buy this house. They bought the house and they lived in it six months. She just did not like it here. I don't know why. I didn't keep in touch with them. My neighbor down there told me she just didn't like it here.

(doorbell rang and that ended it.)

3 October 1991

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 3 day of October, 1991, by and between Rose M. Butler (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie L. 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 Rose M. Butler Date 10-3-91

Interviewee: Rose M. Butler (name)
10865 N. Century Blvd (address)
San Jose, CA 95151

Signed Melanie I. Sturgeon Date 3 October 1991

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

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 210

Interview with Rose Butler

October 3, 1991

Date of Birth: 1898

Place of Birth: Washington, Indiana

Ruth Butler was one of the earliest residents of Sun City. She and her husband bought a home the first day that the community was open on January 1, 1960. They founded the cycle group: The Sun City Pushers.

Synopsis:

- Mother born on a farm in Montgomery, Indiana in 1862.
- Father born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1867. Carpenter and musician.
- They met in Washington, Indiana, and married July 7 1897.

- One brother later became first DEVCO salesman in Sun City.
- Dad took brother and me when he tuned organ pipes; we sat on bench and held down the notes.
- In our house, Dad played piano; I played violin; brother played drums.
- Attended parochial school in Terre Haute, Indiana. My future husband's sister was a nun in that school.

- Taught in Bedford Union H.S. for 15 years; met husband in Chicago.
- Depression didn't hurt us too much; both had jobs; I was teaching.
- Married in 1934 and moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan. Husband was director of Western Union; was trained in communications in WWI.
- Bought 22 acres in Michigan in 1942 for retirement investment.

- After father died, Mother came to live with us. Social Security was new and I remember thinking it was a good idea, until I heard Goldwater say it would be better to just invest the money. But Mother's little pension gave her \$30 a month and it helped.
- Originally planning to stay at the farm, we saw an ad in the Saturday Evening Post about the new Sun City community. Sister lived in Scottsdale and our son was heading west to go to school in CA.

- We arrived January 1, 1960. Made a down payment on our house in Sun City the first day they were open. They had run out of sales slips, had to give us a paper receipt instead. We bought the smallest house model because husband said if cit went broke, we haven't lost a fortune.
- First day it was open... it was a circus in Sun City. Weather was fine, but we had had to grab a salesman to get assistance. The model homes were beautiful. Our house was only one with gas and original heater.
- Our new house cost \$8,500 but we paid cash and got it for \$8,300 on the spot. About every 6 months, it went up in price.

- Peoria Public School's tax issues wanted to pull Sun City in because of money; no one wanted to be on the school board, they ran ads for it. Gene took the job and when it was his turn to be the president, he demanded an agenda; being a budget man, he cut the school budget amounts in half.
- Pedal Pushers formed because I wanted to cycle, plus the roads were smooth and the community was easy to get around. Anyone could join. Enjoyed the bike trips; we got to see what people were doing with landscaping.
- Community has changed; less community atmosphere; more selfish.
- Community telephone book listed folks three ways: alphabetically, then by street, and then by state.
- Early 'community cards' cost about \$8-\$10. Couldn't use the Rec. Ctrs without this card.

C-210

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Written by Rose Butler, 10865 Cherry Hills Ln W. Sun City, AZ

February 1960

1959: Home from teaching. The Saturday Evening Post had named a winner for naming Del Webb's Retirement Center. We emplaned at Toledo airport amid a most severe wind, snow and sleet storm. Arrived at Phoenix airport amid sunshine and beautiful landscaping including roses around the airport. "This is for us," we both shouted to others. Next day drove out to Del Webb's Retirement Center. It was like a circus – hundreds of people touring the center.

We couldn't drive through the mudded cotton fields to see where the houses were being built. We grabbed a salesman's coat tail and hung on until he could service three or four couples at once. We finally got a down payment made. Back to Michigan to sell our twenty two acres purchased for retirement

Del Webb had offered a #1 home to the winner who named his Retirement Center; a second prize a lot to build one and a third prize two weeks vacation for a couple at his apartment center.

There was a large map of Sun City on the wall of a little 10x10 building. We stuck a pin on the map on a site that was next in construction. We moved in on our twenty sixth wedding anniversary, July 4, 1960.

Safeway was having its grand opening. This circus crowd was far beyond Del Webb and his staff's wildest dream. The day before the grand opening, January 1, 1960, they were said to be chewing their fingernails and "wondering if anyone would show up."

No one who moved in knew anyone else. We were all strangers. But all at once everyone knew everyone. We were anxious to know our new neighbors. Neighborhood parties, dinners all helped to add to the friendliness of the most unique center in the country, yes, and the world.

We had to drive to Phoenix to shop for furniture. Very few shops were opened as yet. We had to go to the Center each morning for our mail. I believe it was Carnation who drove a dairy truck around, milk, butter, cream, etc. were provided.

Del Webb provided sixty dollars to each household for landscaping his property. It wasn't long before each house became a small "castle", beautifully landscaped.

I told my husband, Gene, that it was a perfect setup for a bike. No chuck holes and perfect mountain views. He said "OK, we'll drive to Maryvale for one. On the way he said, "we'll get two." We bought two Firestones for the total sum of \$72. Started riding that evening. I still have the twenty-six inch bike; a stationary one and a better fitted one to my 5'3" height – a 24". We rode each morning around 7 a.m. and again after sunset.

Riding a bike we could appreciate the landscaping of each yard. No two houses were allowed to be painted the same color, nor the front elevation allowed to be the same design.

Our first morning out, April 4, 1961, a couple invited us to join them on their back patio. Her husband was making donuts. They were the first couple to join us. A neighbor across the street wanted to ride. She purchased a bike, got on, and was wobbling, trying to get started. She fell backward into a cluster of cacti. She just escaped going to the hospital! But she persevered. Gradually men and couples joined us. They met at our driveway until we finally decided to meet at the Sun City United Church parking lot, on which was painted a map of the United States.

We used to brag about riding from "coast to coast". The local newspaper, a weekly, Bob Jantz paper had a heyday teasing us. We continued to give them ammunition for their columns. After some months the Schwinn Company called on Gene to interest him in managing a bike shop in Sun City. No way could he take on another activity. His time was spent in helping Sun City get started as living places.

After registering in Glendale to vote, we both became Registrars to get people registered to vote. Gene became a Precinct committeeman and later, as we grew, he was appointed chairman of all the elections held here.

A native Arizonian, Mrs. Ethel Angel, a Republican who moved to Sun City asked Gene to help her host a barbeque on evening in April. At that meeting The Republican Club of Sun City was formed. She knew personally the Governor Jack Williams, Goldwater, Paul Fannin, the next Governor, and many important Republicans. Gene served as President, secretary and treasurer of the club. He was president at the time of his death March 3, 1966.

He served as Director of the Homeowners, the Recreation Centers, the Peoria School Board as president (no one else would take it); was parliamentarian of clubs and a charter member of the Men's Club. He was chairman of a committee of four (two from Sun City and two from Youngtown) to decide on the location for the parish of Catholics of Sun City and Youngtown. Del Webb had set aside several sites for churches. He was a member of Holy Name Society of St. Joachim's parish and a fourth degree Knights of Columbus. His picture and obituary were on our front page news paper.

I was a member of St. Joachim's choir, retired after twenty five years; a charter member of the parish Sodality; a Sodality Mass song leader. I am a charter and retired member of mini-golf. I am now a "prodigal daughter" returned to my first love a "Pedal Pusher."

After the death of Gene I didn't ride regularly with the group until 1986. We were in a waiting line. A man in front of me overheard me talking to my brother and his wife about joining an exercise class. He, Mr. Larry Baur, turned around and said to me, "Why don't you join the Pedal Pushers?" I couldn't believe what I heard. The Pedal Pushers? That's my gang! The next morning the riders gathered on my patio for breakfast and I was with my first love pushing "Pedals".

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 211

Interview with Dr. Edgar Deissler

October 10, 1991

Date of Birth: January 16, 1908

Place of Birth: Meadville, Pennsylvania

Synopsis:

- Grew up in Meadville; college town of about 28,000 people
- Wife from Coreau, Pennsylvania
- Went to college for pre-med (2 years), in 1931
- Graduated from Hanaman University; interned for 1 yr in Buffalo, NY
- Returned to Meadville to practice medicine
- Won scholarship for debating about the Constitution

- Moved to Sun City because wife was ill; had been there before.
- Saw opportunity to continue medical practice in Sun City; there were no doctors when I arrived; population about 2,800.
- Made house calls in City; busy practice; about 60 patients/day.

- Helped set up a scholarship at Glendale College in Dr. Stump's name.
- Appreciative people.

C-211

10 October 10, 1991

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 10 day of October, 1991, by and between Edgar P. Deissler (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.

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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:

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 212

Interview with John and Ina Dodt

January 22, 1992

Place of Birth: Washington, Indiana

John was a DEVCO salesman in the early Sun City years; Ina was a hostess for 5 years.

Synopsis:

- John was born 92 years ago in Washington, Indiana; two sisters.
- Father was a railroad cabinet maker;
- Left high school in Jr. year; drafted into the war.

- Met wife at a play; married in Vermont.
- Worked 40 years with Wells Fargo.
- No children.

- Visited Sun City in 1960; loved it. Safe place to live.

- Ina was born in southern Illinois; graduated from high school; worked in dress shop; later owned dress shop.
- Enjoys dancing and volunteering at the hospital.
- In early Sun City, community was small enough to know everyone; many pioneers now gone.
- Against incorporation.
- Lived in Ray, AZ (home of the Consolidated Mining Company) until about 17, went into Phoenix to work during the Depression. Picked cotton, waited tables, babysat, and worked at a root beer stand.
- Met future husband in Colorado, he was in the mining business as an engineer/superintendent of a mine in Colorado.
- Married in 1934 in Colorado.
- I remember my husband and his father talking about Social Security. Got about \$26 a month. In Sun City, Social Security helped early residents. Could sell old place, come out here and live fairly well with Social Security.

- After husband died, I moved to Douglas, Wyoming, to a ranching/mining town.
- Remarried; new husband owned garage and car agency in Wyoming.
- Governor appointed me head of the State's 25th Anniversary committee.
- When he retired we moved to Sun City; there were no houses north of Grand Ave. at that time.

Case # 212

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 22nd day of January, 1992, by and between John W. Dodt & Ina M. Dodt (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie 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.

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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:

22 January 1992

Signed John W. Dodt Date 1/22/92
 Interviewee: John & Ina Dodt (name)
 _____ (address)

Signed John W. Dodt Date 1/22/92
 Interviewer Melanie T. Sturgeon (name)
1535 E. Hampton Circle (address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 213

Interview with Burt Frierich

January 22, 1992

Date of Birth: November 23, 1909

Place of Birth: Ray, Arizona

Burt Frierich was the owner, editor, and publisher for the News Sun, the Sun City newspaper, from 1960-1984. Too young to live in Sun City, he and his wife lived in Youngtown. As a newspaperman, he interviewed hundreds of residents and he spoke out on a number of controversial issues in the community.

Synopsis:

- Mother born in Chicago; father born in New York and moved to Chicago. All grandparents immigrated from Austro-Hungary.
- Went to Univ. of Illinois, then into Army; served in Arizona guarding German and Italian POWs in winter of '43, then to combat in Germany; Battle of the Bulge; wounded in Remagen Bridge Head (78th Division).
- Back to Univ. of Ill. (Journalism); spent 2 years at Illinois State Journal, then sports column in St. Louis; worked at the Phoenix Gazette for 10 years, then bought News Sun in 1960 and ran it until sold in 1984.

- Only about 300 residents in Sun City when paper started in 1960; paper ran every other week at first; had an active 'letters to the editor' column.
- Early editorials did not support incorporation; thought we were too young to support incorporation; but as Sun City matured, I changed my viewpoint.

- Reported on establishment of churches' very church-going group; recreation centers had community squabbles; controversy established recreation centers as unified groups; those in first group couldn't use second, even though those in second could invite outside friends. The 'Berlin Wall' of Sun City; opposition from 1st group since they were not required to pay dues; for merger, 1st group had to agree to pay dues; didn't sit well at first.
- Early S.C. still needed helping hand of Del Webb to work out future.
- Sun City Saints baseball team began in 1963/4; lasted a long time and ended up 4th in National Championships for 5-6 years running.

- Del Webb Co. was active in organizing clubs; Tom Austin sponsored organization of a number of clubs, establishing the boards himself.
- In later years S.C. upset w/Webb because he supported incorporation; many felt Webb made a mistake in getting involved in local politics.
- In 1960, my wife was in charge of business activities of the News Sun and wrote a column called "The Other Half", geared toward women.
- Some doctors in community put Dr. Stump in one of the original model homes; company also opened clinic.
- School tax issues: Ira Murphy, Superintendent of Peoria Schools (who later became a resident of Sun City), needed taxes to improve school buildings; strong opposition from residents against school taxes. They had already raised their families and did not want to pay for others. State passed law and Sun City withdrew from school district; had to pay a certain amount in lieu of school tax; funds distributed statewide.
- Wife and I lived in Youngtown; too young for Sun City. My paper took stands on political issues. I was Democrat; many S.C. folks were Republican.
- Sun Citians cared for each other; if injured, put card in window and people would come and help you; heard of one woman who did that often because she was lonely and people would come by and chat.
- Volunteers worked on other communities; El Mirage Center; teach English; some in health areas go in and help.
- Major negative change in community was the split of S.C. West from original S.C.

C-213

Jan. 22, 1992

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 22 day of January, 1992, by and between Burt Freireich (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie 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 Burt Freireich Date 1/22/92

Interviewee: Burt Freireich (name)
1118 N. Villa Nueva Drive (address)
Litchfield Park, Az 85340

Signed Melanie D. Sturgeon Date 22 January 1992

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

intrvw

**Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

Case # 214

Interview with Beulah R. Heuer

February 7, 1992

Date of Birth: January 7, 1900

Place of Birth: Granten, Wisconsin

Beulah was an early Sun City resident; active in Sun City affairs.

Synopsis:

- Went to college in LaCrosse, Wisconsin
- Worked at a playground job
- Father was a farmer; mother came from Germany; one sister and two brothers; all deceased.
- Mom and Dad very active in community; church groups, etc.

- Husband was a pharmacist; owned several stores. I was his accountant and bookkeeper for the business.
- Our lives were very busy.

- First heard about Sun City while visiting in Mesa
- Liked the location; bought a home; anxious to leave the cold weather
- Moved into the house before it was completed; paid cash for it
- Joined Woman's Club; became president
- Husband in many clubs also
- I attended painting class; still involved in many clubs
- Was involved in many clubs before moving to Sun City
- Was active in sports; a friend to everyone

C-214

7 February 1992

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 7th day of February, 1992, by and between Beulah R. Heuer (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie F. 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.

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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 Bentley L. Sturges Date 7 February 1992

Interviewee: Bentley R. Heney (name)
12021 Jamaica Court (address)
Desert City, Ariz

Signed Melanie T. Sturgeon Date Feb 7, 1992

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

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 215

Interview with Mildred Toldrian

February 1, 1992

Place of Birth: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Mildred was an early resident of Sun City West and active in community affairs.

Synopsis:

- Mother born in Michigan; father born in Wisconsin; he was a tailor.
- Grew up in farming community through high school; graduated from a teaching college in Milwaukee.
- Taught one year during the Depression, tutored the wealthy.
- Father a Jack-Of-All-Trades. Head janitor in Ray, AZ schools.
- Alice was eldest of four: had two sisters and one brother.
- Flu epidemic struck when I was 9. Sick kids couldn't attend school. Mother very ill; I tended her. Father had to keep the heating plant going. Daddy got ill too; no one could take over his job, so I got up at 5 a.m. to get steam up. A lot of people died in the epidemic. Funeral homes busy both day and night. Father helped build coffins.
- During Depression my folks did not have money to send me to school, and women then did not work and go to school.
- Married June, 1935; 3 children; 6 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren.

- We tried to retire to Florida, then came to AZ. Husband was a mail carrier; he wanted to move to Sun City. One of first to move here. He liked to swim and lawn bowl.

- Looked at Youngtown; lived there until January, 1960, when Sun City had its grand opening. Was impressed with the recreation, and shopping center, but there was no savings and loan.

- Husband died in 1974 and I moved to Sun City West.
- Belonged to several clubs; dance club; woman's club, etc.
- Met future husband in Colorado; he was an engineer/superintendent of a mine in Colorado.

- Married in 1934 in Colorado. I got involved with March of Dimes and had a Girl Scout troop.
- After the war, we moved to Wyoming. I was Chairman of March of Dimes there for 30 years. Didn't work commercially after marriage, but was always involved in community activities. Husband was the boss; boss' wife involved in a number of things. Involved 25 years with State Fair in Wyoming; in charge of number of parades and grandstands. High school girls ushers. Started as volunteer, Governor asked me to take charge.
- Husband owned a garage and car agency in Wyoming.
- Husband was busy in community affairs too; belonged to Chamber, etc. State Senator asked me to write resume to Governor; was appointed the head of the state's 25th anniversary.

- My sister lived in Mesa and we came down to visit. Heard about Sun City, so we began to look for a place.
- When we approached retirement we thought we'd be in Wyoming in the summer and Sun City in the winter, but real estate agent sold our Wyoming house and we had one week to get moved.

- In Sun City, Social Security helped early residents. They could sell old place, come out here and live fairly well with Social Security.

- What Sun City offered was very appealing. Husband relaxed, tried golf, liked the youth in the Sun City Saints, ages 16 to 25.
- When husband and I moved to Sun City, the Sun City Saints were just getting started. Raymond and I agreed to help make posters and distributed them. After he died, I continued, even offered 2 or 3 to live with me. Girls were mostly amateur team players from the valley. Didn't get paid. Got uniforms and some money for transportation.
- Eventually I put up money for trophies in competitions. Belonged to the Booster Club, eventually on Board of Booster Club, in charge of year books, score cards, etc.

- Was also involved with March of Dimes in Valley for about 4 years.

C-215

Feb. 7, 1992

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 7th day of February, 1992, by and between Mildred Toldrian (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.

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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 Mildred Toldrian Date February 7, 1992

Interviewee: Mildred Toldrian (name)
13223 Maplewood Dr. (address)
Sun City West 85375

Signed Melanie J. Sturgeon Date 7 February 1992

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

intrvw

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mildred Toldrien

Interviewed 7 February 1992 by Melanie Sturgeon

Transcribed by Belva McIntosh 16 June 2007

This is Melanie Sturgeon on behalf of the Sun Cities Area Historical Association and the Arizona Foundation, I am interviewing Mildred Toldrien in her home in Sun City West. Mildred was an early resident of Sun City and has been involved in the community for many years. This is February 7, 1992.

STURGEON: Mildred, can you tell me something about your parents?

TOLDRIEN: My father was born in Wisconsin and my mother was born in Michigan. They were married May 4, 1904 and my father was a tailor and my mother helped him with all the sewing in the shop. They had a very small farm. They had nine acres with cows and pigs and chickens and that sort of thing. I grew up in a farming community. I graduated from a little High School and then I went on to Milwaukee where I graduated from State Teacher's College. After a period of time I met my husband and we were married June 1, 1935. He worked as a mail carrier in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Of course I stayed home and took care of my children. I had three children. I now have six grand children and two great grand children. When it was time to think about retirement we decided we had better start looking around. So the first Easter vacation we piled up the kids and went out to Florida because my husband thought he would love to retire in Florida, because so many of his friends had retired down there. I had been out to Arizona previously, on a job back in my early years and I said now next year we will go out to Arizona. So we came out to Arizona and Youngtown had just been started, so we looked at the homes there and thought they looked pretty nice, so we decided when he retired we would come out and we lived in a John Long home to begin with, and it was very, very nice. All of a sudden we discovered they were building a retirement section out on the desert and we started looking at it and on January 1, 1960, they had the grand opening. We didn't go out that day but we saw in the newspaper all the people flocking to see it and the reports were wonderful so he said, come on, let's go out and take a look at that place. So we did. And we were quite impressed, because they had nine holes of golf, they had the shuffleboard and they had the carpenter shop, they had a nice recreation center and they had all sorts of rooms for people to come out and form clubs, I mean come out to live and

then form clubs. So we looked around and they had five model homes and one two-bedroom apartment and a one bedroom apartment. But the nice thing of it was that they had a shopping center which included a Laundromat, barber shop, beauty shop, Safeway store, drug store and a TG&Y. But the strange part of it all, when I tell this to other people, they hardly believe me. They did not have a bank, they did not have a savings and loan. We had to go in to either Peoria or Glendale, but all went all, and we had no Post Office but we would have rural delivery. Then Del Webb decided that he would rather have people get their mail out there so it was all brought down to a little building down there and we all went down and collected our mail every day. This was a great opportunity for us to meet all the residents of Sun City. Gosh, I missed something.

STURGEON: Don't worry about that. Before we talk about Sun City anymore may I ask you a few questions about when you were growing up. You never did tell me where you were born.

TOLDRIEN: Oh, I was born in Wisconsin. It was a little town called Denmark, Wisconsin. And way back then we had a population of 750 people. I was born on the outskirts because, like I said, we were down in the farming community.

STURGEON: So, did you stay there until you went away?

TOLDRIEN: I stayed there until after I graduated from High School. And then I came to Milwaukee and went to the State Teacher's College there.

STURGEON: And I forget, did you tell me that you taught after you were finished?

TOLDRIEN: I taught one year after I finished and then we were in the depression and it was very difficult to get a job and this was at a little country school and I just thought I would get away, so I went to Milwaukee and then I started working as a tutor with children of the wealthy people of the area. So that was when I came out to Arizona for the first time. They had six children and they had trunks loads of books. Down near Oracle Arizona, which is not too far from Tucson, and we were here for two and a half months and I tutored the children during that time.

STURGEON: Was that during the summer or the winter?

TOLDRIEN: It was during the winter. We came out here the end of January and we were here until May. It was great and I just loved it out here. I thought some

day I am coming back. In the meantime I got married and had my family. So it took me a long time but I got back.

STURGEON: What did your husband do for a living?

TOLDRIEN: He was a mail carrier.

STURGEON: Did he stay with the Post Office until he retired?

TOLDRIEN: Yes, he did. And when it was time for him to retire he retired and we came out here.

STURGEON: When you were first married you were right in the middle of the depression weren't you? In 1935 – was it hard for your family during the depression?

TOLDRIEN: Well, my husband had a job which helped. I don't think it was as hard for our family as it was for some others. But you know back in those days they didn't give money for relief. If you needed help you could go and if they had lots of oatmeal or flour or sugar or whatever they had, you would get that. And for the children they would get shoes and clothing, but nothing like this giving money for relief. We never had to go for relief we always managed.

STURGEON: Did you have neighbors or friends who had a real hard time then? Do you remember?

TOLDRIEN: I know my sister-in-law and brother-in-law had a hard time. We helped them out quite a bit. Back then everybody helped everybody else in the family. If somebody had problems we would all kind of pitch in and help. Those of us who had a little more would help.

STURGEON: Were they in Milwaukee with you?

TOLDRIEN: My parents were not but the rest of the family were. You see, my parents had this little farm so they always had plenty of food. They always had a big garden and they had meat. So they really didn't have it that bad. They could take care of themselves. I think the people in the cities that had no outlet to grow food or anything like that, I think they are the ones that really had the hardest times. But it was terrible, just terrible. I hope we never get into anything like that again.

STURGEON: Do you remember when they started talking about Social Security in the 1930's? They were debating it in congress, did you ever think about whether that was a good thing or whether it would help you in later years?

TOLDRIEN: Well, yes, after I was married and my children were all in school I decided to go out and get a part time job. I started at the Oster Manufacturing Company. I worked in the payroll department and there we had to deduct for social security and things. I just sort of wondered if it was really going to work out to be a good thing but I guess it has. Of course this was way before Medicare. That came much later.

STURGEON: Did it help your father at all when he retired?

TOLDRIEN: Oh no, he never worked under Social Security. He was self employed. He had his little farm.

STURGEON: Did he just keep working until he got really old than?

TOLDRIEN: Yes, my father died at 91 and I would say he worked up until at last 85 or 86.

My mother lived to 97 and she worked up until that time too. I was very fortunate having healthy parents. I am hoping I will be healthy too. So far so good.

STURGEON: So you used to go down to Florida after you retired?

TOLDRIEN: No we went down one time. We went to see how we would like it and I did not like Florida because it is so humid. I just didn't like it at all. I just couldn't wait to get back to Arizona. I was spoiled because I knew what Arizona was like.

STURGEON: So you came out here to Arizona several times, is that right?

TOLDRIEN: We came out to see it that one year and the next year we moved out.

STURGEON: Had you ever thought about moving to a place like Sun City where there were just older people?

TOLDRIEN: When we came here Sun City had not been started. We came Labor Day of 1958. And this did not start until January 1, 1960. But as I look I really do believe that we just felt we wanted the warm weather. I was so tired of the dampness back in Milwaukee. Arizona is a beautiful state but I just don't care for that damp weather and the cold. When I was growing up I walked two miles to high school in that bitter cold – 20 degrees below and a north wind blowing. I had enough of that – don't want anymore of that.

STURGEON: Well, when you were thinking about retiring were you concerned about the later years in your life and if you would be able to take care of one another?

TOLDRIEN: No that thought never entered my head because both of us were well. We didn't come out here because we were sick. I think if we had come out here being sick I think then we might have been concerned. But, no, that thought never entered my head.

STURGEON: How old was your husband when he retired?

TOLDRIEN: He was 58.

STURGEON: So he retired early.

TOLDRIEN: And I am glad he did, because he had twelve wonderful years of retirement before he got sick. He died in '74 and that's how come I moved out to Sun City West. I wanted something different.

STURGEON: What was there about Sun City, aside from the fact that it was in Arizona that really appealed to you when you came out and looked at it.

TOLDRIEN: The first day when we came out we looked around and everything was just great. Everything was there for us. So the next morning my husband said lets go out and take a look at it again. You must understand that at this time I was living in a house that John Long built on 62nd Avenue, and I liked it. It was a nice little house and I didn't think I would ever move out of it. We got out to Sun City and we looked at the houses and all and all of a sudden my husband said, let's buy out here. I looked at him - I was always the one going, he was not – he was just always – anything I wanted to do, fine. He never seemed to suggest anything like that. I looked at him and I said, what did you say? And he said let's buy out here. I said do you want to and he said don't you? And I said yes, but coming from you

I am so surprised. So then we decided which house we liked of the five model homes, then we went to get a salesman. Well people were standing in line. You could hardly get a salesman. Finally, all you did was put a pin on the map on the lot you wanted and the house you wanted. We put down, I can't remember, a \$100 deposit or a \$500 deposit. They said they would call us within thirty days to sign your sales agreement and if you changed your mind, no problem, you would get your check back. Of course, we would go out just about every day and look things over and we knew we weren't going to want our money back. It was great.

STURGEON: Before you moved in were you worried at all about moving into a place with no community yet or –

TOLDRIEN: No. That thought never entered my mind either. We had every thing there. We knew – well the swimming pool was there. We did come out and swim before we ever moved in because that was available before our homes were available. No, I just never had those feelings. I thought this was going to be great and it was.

STURGEON: Did you ever expect it to get as big as it got?

TOLDRIEN: No and Del Webb didn't either, because I talked to his mother-in-law one day. We were at the Laundromat and we were talking about it. She said his plan was to have Sun City go from Grand Avenue to Peoria, and 103rd to 111th. That was going to be Sun City. His reason for building Sun City was that so many poorer people could not afford country club living and the wealthy could. So he was going to build a community where people who maybe had social security and not much else could come and live in a community like that. That was the reason he started Sun City. When people first moved in I know there were quite a number who all they had was social security. It was a lot different then; the homes were a lot cheaper. Of the five models, ours was the third one. Like one and two were the cheaper, then four and five. We added a little bit of extra concrete to the back of ours and our house was only around \$9900. So you see that is quite a bit of difference. That way we were able to pay cash for ours, because after all I felt we were retired we ought to have \$10000 cash in order to retire. But a lot of people who didn't and I know there were a lot of people on social security. And there were some wealthier too. I heard there were some millionaires there but I didn't know who they were. Everybody was so friendly and nice. I didn't know who the really wealthy people were because they sure didn't act it.

STURGEON: When did you move in to Sun City then?

TOLDRIEN: We moved in June 20, 1960.

STURGEON: So you were one of the very first.

TOLDRIEN: The very first person that moved in moved in the end of April 1960. So it was right at the beginning.

STURGEON: So there weren't very many of you when you first moved in.

TOLDRIEN: No, there weren't that many, but oh, they started moving in fast. Of course there were no clubs so we all had to get together and start organizing clubs. The first club that was organized was a craft club and that was formed July 4 1960. And we just got together and people could knit, crochet or sew. We had one gal who was real good at sewing and she would fit things for us. It was just like a little fun club. And you know that club, they added a sewing club and they combined, but that club is still going after all these years. They meet on Thursday mornings and it is still going. I think that is quite a record.

STURGEON: Had you been active in clubs in Milwaukee?

TOLDRIEN: No. I really didn't have time because I had my family. My husband and I did things together.

STURGEON: So this was something new to you to come out to Sun City and get involved in a lot of different clubs. Were you involved in clubs when you lived in the John Long house?

TOLDRIEN: No, there weren't any clubs there. The people living there – there were children, and a lot of people working. It was not a retirement community. When this started we came out here it was entirely different and it was a lot of fun. Del Webb used to come out here in the early years and when he came out and had the opportunity to meet with the people he would notify the PR department and they would notify the club president and they would be the welcoming committee and the Del Webb Company would furnish the refreshments. He was just like one of the group. He was a very nice, very friendly man, very humble and he just loved Sun City; that was his baby.

STURGEON: Did you remember Tom Austin?

TOLDRIEN: Yes.

STURGEON: Do you remember him organizing the clubs?

TOLDRIEN: Yes, we would go to him if you had an idea for a club and then he would set up a date and they would put a notice in the newspaper that anyone interested in this type of a club to come down to the Community Center on such and such a day at such and such a time for the purpose of organizing a club.

STURGEON: And when you organized a club how did you decide who was going to be in charge, or did you?

TOLDRIEN: Oh, then they would elect a president, vice-president and treasurer and we were on our way.

STURGEON: And how many clubs did you get involved with when you first came?

TOLDRIEN: Oh, well when lawn bowling started I was in on that. But that didn't start though until I think October of that year. The area was there for the lawn bowling green but they did not have it ready until I think it was October. I am a charter member of that club, or I was I should say. Then of course we went swimming every day. They had a swimming club that we belonged to and then they had a Ladies Rhythm Class. Pauline Shepherd was the teacher of that. I joined that and I loved it. That was really great. I danced the part of a man because there were so many women whose husbands danced so I was in big demand. She taught us all sorts of dances. Now that club is still going because when Pauline couldn't do it any more then Kay Sexton took it over and I noticed in the paper she is still running it.

STURGEON: Were you involved in the women's club or any of those?

TOLDRIEN: I helped form the Federated Women's Club. Now that had to disband here about two years ago because the people who were in it were getting so old and couldn't do it anymore. So it finally disbanded. Now that was organized back in – I think it was '61 before that organized.

STURGEON: Why did you organize that group?

TOLDRIEN: Well, I tell you. I had never been a federated club woman, but so many people had and they wanted one and they talked to the district officers and they came out and organized a club. I thought well, I've never been in one, I might as well go, I can always join and if I don't like it I can always drop out. It was really nice. Membership at one time was around 360 people. But then it kept dwindling, down and down as people got older. And now they have a club over there now but that is just a woman's club that is not a federated club. I never joined that. But I understand it is very nice. Then I joined the swimming club. Then the sewing club – it is hard to think back to all these things.

STURGEON: Did your husband join any groups?

TOLDRIEN: All he was interested in was swimming and lawn bowling. Those were his two clubs that he really enjoyed. Oh, whenever we would have a meeting of things going on in the community, I don't even remember what they called that club anymore, but you know that room was packed full of people. You couldn't get anymore in, so then they would sit out on the patio. They piped the meeting out there so people could hear it. The community spirit was something you wouldn't believe. Just wonderful. I treasure those years.

STURGEON: I understand that Reverend Witt and some other groups sort of came around and organized the neighborhood into groups; do you remember any of that?

TOLDRIEN: Yeah, the groups that they organized were called colonies. And they were like for a block – anyone in that block could be in that colony, and they would meet in the homes, they took turns, and they would have coffee and sweets. But it was a way of getting acquainted. It was nice. They formed that all over – I guess there is still some of that going. But they have new members. New people have moved in and other people have died off. So I don't think they are all the original people. But he and his wife did a lot for the community, to get them together. He was a real organizer.

STURGEON: I understand his wife baked thousands of cookies. I have heard that several times.

TOLDRIEN: Yes, she was a lovely person. She was in our Federated Women's Club as well.

STURGEON: Do you ever remember DEVCO sending around any surveys in the early days of the community asking questions about the house and if there is anything you would like to change?

TOLDRIEN: Oh yes, they had surveys every now and then. I know one time they built a home and they put in all sorts of new things. The people who were living there were supposed to go through and you had a questionnaire to fill out about what you liked about these new things and what you didn't like. I can remember that very plainly because there was a step down like into a solarium and I know I put down, for older people, please no steps. Somebody is going to fall. And every year in January, that was the birthday and they would have a big bash. Oh, I can remember back, they would have cake, and there would be a capsule in the cake and inside the capsule was something that you would win. I know I won fifteen gallons of gas one time. You know, different things that they had. Then of course for Mother's Day they always had the strawberry festival, ice cream with fresh strawberries. For Father's Day they would have a Root Beer Bust. And of course everybody came out for all these things. The community spirit was something that I don't think you can understand unless you lived it because it was just fabulous.

STURGEON: When did you see that starting to change?

TOLDRIEN: Well, I don't know. I think it was always more or less there. But we were getting bigger and bigger and bigger. Somehow when you get big you lose some of that friendliness – not that's not right, I shouldn't say they weren't friendly, because they were. But once you get big, you are getting so big you are just kind of growing away from each other.

STURGEON: Perhaps you lose some of the intimacy that you had.

TOLDRIEN: Yes. Because when I would go down to the grocery store in those early years, sometimes I would be gone 2 ½ hours. You would get down there and you talk to people and talk to people, and you just never get away. This is something as you get bigger and bigger you are meeting new people. So many of my very good friends died off and I am meeting new people. I remember when Boswell Hospital opened. That was a big grand affair too. Whenever they would have big doings like this the Del Webb Company would always furnish refreshments. They were always thinking about what they could do to make the people happy. And this was really worth a lot to the people in the community. Every time a store would open or something everybody was there for the grand

opening. And I will never forget when the first bank opened, they had a real big grand opening. So it was a lot of fun. I have really many, many happy memories of it. I am so glad I was there at the beginning of it to see it develop.

STURGEON: When they built the hospital I have heard two stories. One is that Del Webb thought it would be a good thing to have and the other story is that the people in the community felt they needed a hospital. Do you know which of those is true? Maybe they are both true.

TOLDRIEN: I think they are both true. I think they really felt they needed a hospital and I think Del Webb thought it was a good idea too. I know there were so many people who wanted to go through it at the grand opening that they could only take so many through and the others could come back the next day.

STURGEON: They raised a lot of money didn't they – the people in Sun City?

TOLDRIEN: Yes, they did. And a lot of memorials have gone into it. They formed the Sun Health Auxiliary and they have done a lot. I just joined with them a year and a half ago and I am one of them too, and they really do a lot of things.

STURGEON: Do you remember meeting Tom Breen or any of the other Del Webb staff? Did he ever talk about he felt about retirement communities or why he started it?

TOLDRIEN: I think it was on the 25th anniversary they were talking about it and they said on New Years Eve before they opened they were all so worried and upset because they just didn't know if it was going to go over or not. Here all this money was invested. And the next day when they saw these cars all coming out there and they couldn't believe it. And the first day they sold a lot of homes too. I think Del Webb's idea of doing something for people who didn't have much money and giving them country club living was really a beautiful dream. Before he started he sent questionnaires to everybody in Youngtown asking them what they liked about Youngtown, which was a retirement community and what they didn't like. And on the basis of that he had better ideas of what to have in Sun City. And one was they didn't have a shopping center or a recreation center. They had very, very little in that way. I think this is why he built the recreation center and got everything started.

STURGEON:: Did you have a lot of interaction with the people in Youngtown the first few years you were out there?

TOLDRIEN: Yes, quite a few people from Youngtown moved to Sun City. Sold over there and moved over. And we did have a lot of people from Youngtown come over as guests and use our swimming pool. I think there were good feelings between Youngtown and Sun City. I never felt there was any friction of any kind between the two of us. I met a lot of very lovely people from there.

STURGEON: I understand there were some real strong feelings in Sun City in the early days when they were talking about incorporation. Can you tell me what you remember about that?

TOLDRIEN: Well now back in early, I don't know if it was '63 or '64 they started talking about incorporation. Del Webb had told us that it would be a good idea, that it would benefit our community a lot if we were incorporated. But then you know, there are always some people who say, if we incorporate we are going to have graft and this sort of thing. Some people came from cities where they did have a lot of graft, and I guess they felt it would be the same way here, but I never thought it was because I favored incorporation. But when they voted, that was back in 1964 we were still a very small community and because there were some of the people who were against it and said, oh your taxes are going up, it is going to cost you a lot of money and you are going to get bosses and people that are going to run the place. It wasn't very good because people were afraid, I think they were afraid. People coming from say, like Chicago or New York or some of these places where they do have a lot of crime and a lot of graft and I think they felt that this is exactly what we would have and I don't think we would. But when they had the vote of course it didn't go through, but really it didn't fail by a bit majority either. Of course, they never had another vote, I mean that is the only vote for incorporation in Sun City.

STURGEON: Why do you think they only did it once?

TOLDRIEN: I don't know. There was talk about them doing it another time but they never did. Of course now they are trying and it is going to be very interesting to see what happens.

STURGEON: Do you remember any of the discussions they had about the school taxes with Peoria and having to be involved in school districts – when they didn't feel that they should.

TOLDRIEN: There was a lot of controversy about that. I know my husband and I felt that education was very important as our children all had good educations, and he and I did. And we just felt that education was needed so we did vote for the school taxes. Of course they kept falling through. A lot of people I guess didn't feel the same way. And then I believe the Peoria district decided they would like to get rid of us because we would always vote down all these bond issues, then of course we were put out of the Peoria district. However we do pay school taxes. Lot of people say we don't, but we do. If you look on your tax bill we do pay school taxes.

STURGEON: You pay it to the state though don't you?

TOLDRIEN: Yes, but it benefits all the children of Arizona. I mean it isn't that we aren't doing something.

STURGEON: Did you ever get involved in any of the groups that went outside the community?

TOLDRIEN: Our Federated Women's Club decided that we were going to have some programs, welfare programs, and we started out with an infant layette program. When a mother would have a baby we would bring out a layette which of course consisted of the diapers and we had little sacs. We had one woman who made all the little sacs and they were the most adorable little things you ever want to see. She had a little embroidery on them and everything. Oh they were so pretty. So it was a complete set. I mean a complete layette for the new mothers. I did go out quite a few times with some of the girls and they were so happy to get them. They were just so happy. Then we started one year we had a "Dress a Living Doll". We made clothes, one woman made shirts for boys and we bought blue jeans. I think she must have made thirty or forty shirts. Many of us, I know I made lots of dresses and stuff and some women were knitting sweaters. And then before Christmas the parents would come, get coupons from the county I think it was, now I think it was the Salvation Party that handles a lot of that. I think the last time I worked on it the Salvation Army did it. They would give these people a slip and on this slip was the number of children and the ages and they would bring it to us and we would outfit them and they could pick out what they liked. So that was quite a nice program that we enjoyed. I think we helped a lot of people that way. Then we had a Cancer Dressing Club where we made cancer dressings out of old sheets. I was involved in an awful lot of things like that. We really did - oh - we would collect food for people that didn't have it. So I was involved in quite a few of those things back in the early years. Oh and I worked on the committee that

TOLDRIEN: I stayed in that same house until I moved out here to Sun City West. I moved out here October 29, 1978. But I was in that same house all those years. It was a nice location and I liked the house but I thought it would be good for me to get away from the sadness of my husbands death. It has been good for me to come out here. I picked up all my good memories and brought them along. Sometimes I almost feel like he is here with me.

STURGEON: Do you remember when they went across Grand Avenue and started building Phase II? Do you remember any conflicts they had over the rec centers?

TOLDRIEN: Well, to begin with we had the first rec center which was the Community Center and is now called Oakmont, I believe. Then they started the Town Hall section which is now called Fairway and then beyond that of course is Mountain View. However when we were in our center we allowed any of the people to use our center. But the Town Hall people, some of them, felt that their center was better than ours and we were all paying about the same so there was no reason why we should come up there. However we kept letting them come down to us. There was friction there. It was kind of too bad but I think it was just personality conflicts. Then when they started across the highway, the Town Hall section would have liked to have included that in theirs, but of course they couldn't jump over us. Jerry Svendson, who has really done a lot for Sun City community got started on it and worked on unifying the whole center. Now they are all one and we can use any facility over the entire Sun City area. And it was Jerry Svendson who really did a tremendous job getting it organized. You have to remember when Del Webb started he didn't know what was going to happen. The first year we were there we didn't pay any dues or anything. We did monitor the swimming pool. We would take turns doing it. Then all of a sudden they decided they would have to put a charge on it. But at least the first whole year we didn't pay any rec center fees. You see they were learning by doing. By the time they got across the highway and started building they had some pretty good set rules.

STURGEON: I understand that probably around 1965 that the number of people moving to Sun city dropped dramatically and didn't really come back up until around 1968. Do you remember that?

TOLDRIEN: I didn't know that. You mean you got that information from the population of Sun City each year? I wasn't aware of that.

STURGEON: It dropped and they were only selling about 500 houses a year after about 1965 and then in 1968 and 1969 it shot way up again. Did you or your husband get involved in the Sun City Home Owners association at all?

TOLDRIEN: Oh yes, we belonged to the Home Owners association.

STURGEON: Why did they organize that group?

TOLDRIEN: Well we weren't incorporated and you couldn't work as a city so any problems that came up you would work through them. For instance if there was anything about the water, or if there was anything you thought ought to be corrected you worked through them.

STURGEON: But the Home Owners Association was started by Sun City Residents wasn't it?

TOLDRIEN: Yes it was.

STURGEON: And how did they decide who was going to be in charge of that? Did you vote on that too?

TOLDRIEN: I think what really happened was that certain people got together and maybe with a little help from the Webb Company formed the Home Owner's Association and then invited all of us to join. I don't think it was 100% but I know many, many people joined. Then you could bring your problems there and every year they would vote for new officers. So then you had an opportunity of selecting who you would want. The first ones that were selected I have a feeling they were appointed. I really don't know. I know we had a chance to vote every year then on the officers.

STURGEON: And what about the Rec centers, who ran the Rec centers?

TOLDRIEN: I think we had officers there too, sure we did. They were elected officers. I think we voted them in every year. I think they are doing that now too. But how the first ones got in I really don't know.

STURGEON: Would you tell me something about Sun City West? You decided to move out here in 1978?

TOLDRIEN: I was alone over there and I thought well, I wanted to do something different. I liked the house I had there, it was a nice location and it was comfortable but I wanted to get out of it. I looked all around Sun City thinking well maybe I could find a lot here I would like. But I didn't find anything that I liked as well as what I had. So when they decided about Sun City West I thought, that's pretty good. I'll try that. So then in September I believe of 1977 we could sign a letter of intent, I don't think we picked out the house then, but we signed, but after a certain length of time, after they had the lots laid out you could come in and pick out a lot. I think they suggested you pick out three lots, for first, second and third choice. Then if you couldn't get the first you could get the second. I happened to get the one I picked out. I moved out here October 20, 1978. The first people moved in just up the street the week before me. There were so many empty homes around here. You see what happened was people were going to make a lot of money. They would buy homes and think they could sell them and make money. Back in Sun City, back in the early years, as soon as a new section of homes was opened, lots of people would buy and sell the house ahead. I never did that, but so many people did. They would buy and make money on their houses. Well, it just seemed that some people must have thought this would happen here, I don't know. They bought homes and a lot of them I think got stuck, some of them maybe made money. As soon as the Del Webb Company had all these orders they put on extra shifts and extra shifts so of course they couldn't compete with the Del Webb Company, but it happened that this being the first section we – well it was a couple of years before we got all our new neighbors in here. A lot of the homes were speculation homes. So it would be like a home here and a home there, so there weren't that many people on our street. But unfortunately when we moved out here we didn't have a swimming pool, we didn't have a Rec center, we didn't have a shopping center. We had Crestview and all activities were held there and the golf course up there was the only golf course that was finished. This is not the way Del Webb started over in Sun City. Before he ever let you move into a section it was completely ready for you. I mean you had your shopping, you had everything you needed. But not out here. It was different. But we had banks. Oh boy, did we have banks. We had banker's row out here instead of Johnson Boulevard. And they had so many apartments for vacationers. I really think they started Sun City West wrong. But it got along alright afterwards. People worked and got the thing going and we had a big community spirit out here.

STURGEON: So was it like the early days at Sun City? A fun community spirit I mean.

TOLDRIEN: No it wasn't because in the early days of Sun City everything was there and all you had to go was get out and start organizing. It was very sad for people who came here, who gave up every thing where they came from. They came here, you didn't have a store to go to, you didn't have - no club activities, you didn't have anything - there wasn't anything here. Of course with me, I had friends over in Sun City. It wasn't bad at all - I knew my way around. But I think it was rather sad. I think I would almost have given up if that had been me at that time. But anyway it developed into - Jerry Svendson had done something. He asked me one day what I thought a tour of Phoenix. I said that would be great - it would give the people something to do. So they rented a bus and didn't charge the people anything. Took them out to Mountain Shadows, because they owned it at that time. We had beautiful French pastries and oh it was a nice trip. But they dropped a bomb shell when they said you will do it and I said I had never done anything like that in my life. And they said you know Phoenix, and I said well yes after a fashion. They said will you try it. And I felt so sorry for the people here that I said OK I will try it. It was kind of frustrating but we had a lot of fun. I must have done about eight or nine of those. People were enjoying it and kept asking for more and more so they took us to Lake Powell. Of course the people paid a little but they were subsidized very nicely. I must have done about four trips to Lake Powell. We went to San Diego, we went to Sahara, we traveled all around. We went to Nogales, to Laughlin. So that I think got the people going and they were happy about it and they got to know people and started to play cards in their homes. They would have little parties. After all that got started it seemed to work a little better. Then when they got the Safeway; store here, I can't remember when that came. It was quite a while after, we had to go into Sun City to shop. Then we had that terrible rain storm. A new bridge went down.

STURGEON: And you were isolated.

TOLDRIEN: Yeah! Really oh I am telling you we were really pioneers out here. But we did got a lot of places and then when they built Crestview then they had different parties, we had a Hawaiian party one night for residents. Anything they charged to us all a minimum charge. We would subsidize it. I know they had a Spanish party and they had style shows. They started dancing. And finally they got the swimming pool and the Rec center, finally got the shopping and then everything was more like a normal way of life.

STURGEON: Now was Sun City West opened by a new group of Del Webb executives?

TOLDRIEN: Oh no, it was the same Del Webb Company.

STURGEON: Right, but were they new executives.

TOLDRIEN: No, I think Meeker was out here and he was with Del Webb always. And Don Tufts was out here and Jerry was out here. There were people from there. And of course new people coming in all the time too.

STURGEON: Did you have an equivalent of a Reverend Witt here in Sun City West?

TOLDRIEN: Well, Reverend Witt came out here and organized a church out here as an interim pastor. Then other churches formed. They tried to get one church for all the different Protestants rather than have so many churches, but it didn't seem to work cause we sure have a lot of churches here. But I was quite amazed back in the early years of Sun City West how many Catholics there are out here. There are a tremendous amount and they have a beautiful church up on 128th.

STURGEON: So you didn't have somebody like him coming around organizing colonies and things.

TOLDRIEN: No, no we didn't have that. He just came out as an interim pastor.

STURGEON: Were there a number of people here who had come from Sun City?

TOLDRIEN: and lived out here? Yes. There are quite a few people out here who lived in Sun City previously. There are people who lived in Sun City for just a couple of years then they found this and they moved out here. Of course both Sun Cities are wonderful communities. If my husband were alive I might still be in Sun City. Cause I am not the type that moves often.

STURGEON: Do you have a Home Owner's Association here in Sun City West?

TOLDRIEN: Yes, PORA. PORA stands for Property Owners and Residents Association. We handle a lot of affairs through that. Right now they are working very hard on a Post Office for out here and I hope we get it. We are such a big community I think we are entitled to have our own Post Office.

STURGEON: You mean you don't have a Post Office?

TOLDRIEN: No, it all comes through Sun City. We have a little contract station over here. I was in there yesterday and we were lined up all the way out to the street waiting to get help. We have one contract station in all Sun City West.

STURGEON: How big is Sun City West?

TOLDRIEN: Well it is over 20,000, I don't know the exact figure but it is over 20,000.

STURGEON: Is it expected to get as big as Sun City?

TOLDRIEN: I don't know. Del Webb is adding on more land further north-west, I believe it is. So there will be more coming and it being so successful and they get more land I wouldn't be surprised if they keep on building up. As they build out they will build new centers and probably another golf course I imagine. A lot of people out here play golf, I don't. I've never really wanted to learn to play golf. But I think it is fine if they do.

STURGEON: So they built the one Rec center, do have they have two Rec centers here now or three?

TOLDRIEN: We have three. Now one thing, over in Sun City when they have a Rec center they have everything there. They have silver craft and lapidary and ceramics and all that. Now here each center is different, now the one on 128th and Beardsley, which is called the Beardsley Center, they have card playing over there and they have I think photography is over there and china painting and that sort of thing. They have a big swimming pool over, now that pool is indoor. The first center up here is the R.H. Johnson Center. It has a swimming pool, oh, I didn't tell you over at Beardsley they also have an exercise room and a hot pool and a swimming pool. Then they have a park where they can have picnics. Now the Johnson pool they have Bocce, they have tennis too, lawn bowling, shuffleboard and they have the bowling alley up here. They are going to have one bowling alley and they have billiards. The craft clubs that are there are the ceramics and a railroad club there, and they have lapidary, silver craft and weaving and sewing. Then at the Kuentz Center they also have the swimming pool there, and they have the exercise room and therapy pool and they have a softball diamond up there, and also metal craft and carpentry. The art club is up there and they have a computer club meeting there and the crafts. They have basketry. Just about everything you can imagine. But you see all of that is in one center. You don't get that in every center. That is all up in that center. Then they have a woman's club up there.

They have their own club room, and the men have their own clubroom but theirs is at Beardsley. 'Right up across from the Kuentz Center they have a Community Center Room where you can have meetings and things. The Interfaith have their room there. Now the Interfaith you can bring your sick person and they can spend the day there and you pay a certain amount and they get their hot food at noon. Now they have branches throughout Sun City. The Posse have their office up there. And also the Lending Hands. The Lending Hands we have equipment for sick people. We have hospital beds, wheel chairs, anytime of hospital equipment that you need. You can rent it or go up and get it free of charge, however when you bring it back they like it if you would give a donation because it is all private donations. They also have a thrift shop there which is run by the Sun Health Auxiliary, which is of course Boswell and Del Webb. They made a lot of money there and all the money that comes into the Sun Health Auxiliary goes to different types of medical equipment for the hospital. I think last year they gave \$300,000. They have a little gift shop in the hospital and they get a lot of money there too.

STURGEON: Are the people in Sun City West thinking about incorporating ?

TOLDRIEN: They had a vote about two years ago and it failed by not to big a margin. But here was the same thing, I noticed, the same thing as back in Sun City. People were afraid we were going to have our taxes raised, we were going to have politicians that were crooked like maybe where they came from. They don't realize this is a retirement community and as far as jails and that sort of thing, we don't have crime here like that. But people just don't understand that, they say oh yes, we heard this before and then what happens is we get it. I think that is what has killed it. It is going to be very interesting to see what happens in Sun City.

STURGEON: You sound like you are very involved in the community here also, what kind of things are you doing?

TOLDRIEN: Well, I give a lot of time at Del Webb Hospital as a volunteer. Prior to that we had our AARP and we have a chapter out here and I was a co-chairman. I did over 130 tours in 8 ½ years. I set them up, collected the money and escorted them and did the whole bit. So that occupied most of my free time. I do a lot of walking out here, which is good for me and I enjoy it. I go swimming a lot in the summer. Seem I am awfully involved, there is always something going on.

STURGEON: Do your children live around here?

TOLDRIEN: I have a daughter living in Spokane Washington and I have a son and his family and a daughter living in Rush, California, which is right across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. They do get here quite often. And I get there a lot too.

STURGEON: Are they thinking of retiring here when they -

TOLDRIEN: I don't know. My daughter and her husband talk about it, they come down here and they like it, but they just aren't committing them selves yet. But they love to come down here.

STURGEON: Did anyone else in your family come out here and retire?

TOLDRIEN: No

STURGEON: Did your parents ever come out and see you?

TOLDRIEN: Not here, but my mother and father came to visit us in Sun City. We had driven up to see them in Wisconsin and they drove back with us and I sent them back home on a plane. They loved it. They were with me for a month.

STURGEON: But they didn't want to come out to retire.

TOLDRIEN: No. I would have liked for them to come out and spend a winter with me but they said no we are so used to Wisconsin, they lived there all their lives, that was home. So I think at their ages it was just a little too hard to try to make a change.

STURGEON: Did any of your friends move out here because you wrote back and said this is great?

TOLDRIEN: No, no they didn't. They would come out a visit but they - I don't have any friends who retired - oh I'll take that back - I have two friends that retired here, I forgot that. Our children grew up together, years and years ago, and I have two friends, one in Sun City and one in Belaire Estates, it is out in Peoria, she is in the retirement section. We get together real often.

STURGEON: This is back to Sun City, I had forgotten to ask you this. I remember reading that in the early days in Sun City they had a survey asking people in Sun City if they would like

a trailer court. They were overwhelmingly voted down. Do you remember that? Why did the people vote against that?

TOLDRIEN: I guess they felt it might cheapen the community. Because at that time you know – now a lot of the mobile homes have gotten to be really like a home, but at that time I don't think they were and still if you put mobile homes here I don't think it would look as nice as all the homes. One thing nice about it you don't have to have all the same kind of home all together. You could have an expensive home next to a cheaper house and so that makes it look more like a community too. I'll never forget back in Sun City when we chose the colors for our houses. I was the first one in my block to choose a color so I chose pale green. Now if people on either side of me wanted green they couldn't have it. They wanted different colors. They didn't want the colors right next to each other to be the same. And also when they had laid out the Sun City they had the type of trees you should plant in your front yards to make it look real coordinated and they had olive trees for the front of my house and I said there is no way I will put an olive tree in front of my house, I don't like them. I only want fruit trees. You didn't have to and there were very few people who did, but they had laid out the entire landscaping for the whole area.

STURGEON: Did they do the same thing here?

TOLDRIEN: No, I don't think so. I never heard of it. They probably didn't do it because it didn't work out. And very interesting, the first homes that were built in Sun City we didn't have street lights. We used to go out at night and it was so dark. Of course in these communities people go to bed by nine o'clock. But when they started building the second area, which was the Town Hall area they put in lights there and they went around and ask if we would like lights and of course we all went for it so we got lights. But I think it is very interesting how Sun City got started – it was very successful.

STURGEON: Yes, it certainly was. Mildred, have your perceptions of Sun City West changed in the thirteen years you have lived here?

TOLDRIEN: I don't really think it has. Of course you are meeting more people and people are bringing in ideas in different areas. Like we have in our craft club people will bring in different crafts that they have made and they teach it to us. I think people are very helpful out here. They seem to want to share, which is good. It has been fun all the years I have lived here. I've loved every minute of it.

STURGEON: Can you just sort of sum up your experiences just briefly, in both cities and just what it is that has pleased you so much about living in both of these communities?

TOLDRIEN: Well, I think the thing that I have liked the most are the people. I have met so many fine people. I have made many friendships and I have liked the activities. You can't begin to take part in all the activities you enjoy, but you can choose, and there is always something going on. I live alone but I am never lonely because there is always something to do to take up your time. Both communities are quite similar. They have different clubs in Sun City than we have out here but there is always something going on. One thing I didn't tell you, they have a theater here and we have a group that puts on shows and they are really professional. Every year we have a talent show in the fall of the year. They do a much better job than lots of the professionals that come out here. The end of March they are having another talent show but that is going to be Sun City and Sun City West. The two are combining which I think is good. It is going to be held at the Sundome. I am glad we are getting together because I suppose there is some friction here and there but you can't live any where unless there is a little friction. People are different. Some people can find something they don't like and grumble but on the whole I don't find many people out here grumbling. They are happy. The weather has something to do with it. We can be outdoors a lot. To go back to Wisconsin where I grew up in the winter time you get outside but you hustle up and get back in.

STURGEON: Can you think of anything that we might have missed that you would like to talk about?

TOLDRIEN: Well, not really. I think we have covered it very well. But I would like to say that I certainly feel very privileged to think that I was out here all these years and that I am a pioneer of Sun City and Sun City West.

STURGEON: Thank you very much, Mildred, for all the time you have spent talking about your experiences.

TOLDRIEN: It has been a pleasure working with you.

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 216

Interview with Zella Wilson

February 7, 1992

Date of Birth: 1907

Place of Birth: Lemont, Oklahoma

Zella and her husband owned the first camera shop in Sun City.

Synopsis:

- Father owned a jewelry store; mother ran a variety store. I have two older sisters.
- I was married in 1929; husband worked for paper in Mangum, Oklahoma all through the Depression; I worked in law office.

- I thought of operating a camera store after retirement.
- First heard of Sun City while visiting son in Arizona in 1961. Liked what we saw; bought a house; bought a business.
- Preferred Sun City when it was smaller.
- Started a camera shop on Grand Avenue; did quite well.
- Sold it in 1964 to move back to Oklahoma; lived between both places until 1966 when we stayed here permanently. Missed it when away.

- Paid cash for house; was a little concerned about money for retirement
- The neat thing about Sun City is that there is always something going on and something to do; town is very interesting.
- Became a member of S.C. hand bell ringers and joined the churches
- Remember Reverend Witt started the block parties and study groups.
- Husband instrumental in organizing Sun City photo club; became first chairman and very active; also involved in Lion's Club
- Liked Sun City ability to keep people active; thought it easy to meet neighbors and get involved; everyone eager to make friends

- Sun City Homeowners not in favor of incorporation; not against paying school taxes
- Sun City has not changed much, but it has lost its small town flavor
- Husband worked for Sun City paper

7 February 1992

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 7th day of February, 1992, by and between Zella Wilson (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:

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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 Zella Wilson Date 2-7-92

Interviewee: Zella Wilson (name)

11435 111th Ave. (address)

Sun City, AZ 85351

Signed Melanie I. Sturgeon Date 7 February 1992

Interviewer Melanie I. Sturgeon (name)

1535 E. Hampton Circle (address)

Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 217

Interview with Harvey Finks

February 14, 1991

Harvey Finks arrived in the Sun City area as a young attorney and set up his practice. He worked with a number of Youngtown and Sun City residents.

Synopsis:

- Lawyer since 1956 degrees from Syracuse, Boston, and Harvard.
- Moved to Sun City vicinity in May, 1963 at age 30.
- Heard of Sun City from friend; had been doing business in Phoenix
- Opened practice in Youngtown; about 1500 residents there then
- Thought Sun City and Youngtown weren't interesting
- First two years he lost money; incorporated about 50 clubs for free
- Problems: water, sewers, lights, age gaps, etc.
- Age zones were in effect in Sun City
- Stayed out of politics
- People came to retire in the sun; most people had no children
- Medical care was totally needed
- Cotton bugs were a big problem
- Del Webb was never around

14 February 1992

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 14th day of February, 1992, by and between Harvey Finks (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.

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Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 218

Interview with Elizabeth Inwood

February 14, 1992

Date of Birth: 1907

Place of Birth: Seattle, Washington

Elizabeth was one of the earliest residents of Sun City. An avid pilot, she was one of the first 99 women in U.S. to receive her pilot's license.

Synopsis:

- Parents from Indiana; father graduated in engineering/education from Purdue; mother lived in Marion, Indiana; they married in 1903
- Father hired on as an engineer in Seattle; moved from Indiana in the midst of the black small pox epidemic; was afflicted.
- I moved to California with parents and two younger siblings when six years old; first to the small town of Santa Monica; later they moved to Berkeley and my father became officer with California Edison Company; we were never affected by the Depression

- Became a pilot at age 12 due to her father's interest in flight; got pilot's license at age 16; knew Amelia Earhart from air races
- When I flew across the country, enclosed cockpits were just coming in

- Went to college at Berkeley to become a teacher; never graduated; got married instead; both interested in learning to fly; started a flying school in Alhambra; moved east; husband later became director of airports in Philadelphia
- One son; one daughter; got interested in PTA
- Husband became director of airports in Phoenix; Sun City just beginning;

- Sun City grew like a mushroom; helped organize first Homeowners Association; husband became first Homeowners Assoc. President
- Nice homey place; small; nice; nice homes; good yards
- Not much here when we arrived: a grocery store or the churches was where you got acquainted

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 14th day of February, 1992, by and between Elizabeth Inwood (INWOOD) (herein after called "Interviewee") and Helene I. Sturgeon (herein after called "Interviewer".)

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X Signed Elizabeth K. Inwood Date February 14, 1992

Interviewee: _____ (name)

_____ (address)

Signed Melanie J. Sturgeon Date 14 February 1992

Interviewer Melanie J. Sturgeon (name)

1535 E. Hampton Circle (address)

Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 219

Interview with Lucille A. Rethford

February 14, 1992

Lucille is the archivist and founder of the Youngtown Historical Assoc.

Synopsis:

- Ben Schleiffer visited friends in nursing home and saw the sad life of the residents; came to Phoenix and wanted to something for the active elderly; talked w/Francis Greer and liked her ranch, with its pool and tennis courts, etc. She wouldn't sell to him, but she eventually became convinced of his plans and Greer, Schlieffer, and Elmer John formed a development company. Schleiffer was active in the community for five years.
- 1957, Dave Garroway's "Wide, Wide World" segment informed about people across the U.S. about Youngtown and he did a t.v. show from there. It was broadcast across the nation. Youngtown hadn't done much advertising until this.
- Everything in Youngtown done by the people (Rec Ctr, clubs, and gas lines). Del Webb bought neighboring lands. Youngtown proud to be the first retirement community; many people, Del Webb included, saw success of Youngtown and wanted to cash in on the profits of a retirement community.
- People in Youngtown loved the climate and the small little houses that were inexpensive. Elmer John was the first city manager.
- Pioneer club was the first major club; first hospital in Youngtown in 1958; then a post office, hardware store, and convenience store.
- Youngtown mainly consisted of farmers and blue collar workers from all areas and all climates; elderly volunteers help a great deal in the in Peoria schools; townspeople do what they can for church services.
- Youngtown had children living there despite an Arizona statue allowing residents to discriminate against age; Youngtown had no real Homeowners' Assoc., and was run by realtors who were willing to sell to young families. Some citizens did not want youth living there; Youngtown took it to court and won, no longer allowing children to move there. Some young families

remained, but houses cannot be sold to your people, as long as 85% of the town was age 55 or older. Federal Gov't allowed statutes to be enforced. Don't think Youngtown developers would want to make town any larger than it is.

- Youngtown's Mayor was from Youngtown; have a common council, basically volunteers' everything in town is done by volunteer work.
- Two churches in community: Methodist and Baptist.
- Youngtown has not lost its small town feel; good neighborhood watch on crime; Youngtown partnered Sun City to share a room in the Arizona Historical Society Museum, located in Tempe.

- Youngtown owns its own water company and sewers; have many more trees and lush yards than Sun City because owners could do whatever they wanted with houses and yards; within some guidelines.
- Youngtown listed on Historical Register as a culture, but not for its unique architecture.

C-219

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 14th day of February, 1992, by and between Lucille A. Retheford (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie I. Sturgeon (herein after called "Interviewer".)

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Signed Lucille A. Rothford Date 2/14/92

Interviewee: _____ (name)

_____ (address)

Signed Melanie J. Sturgeon Date 14 February 1992

Interviewer Melanie J. Sturgeon (name)
1535 E. Hampton Circle (address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

C 219

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Lucille Rethford

Interviewed 14 February 1992 by Melanie Sturgeon

Transcribed by Belva McIntosh 12 June 2007

This is Melanie Sturgeon and on behalf of the Sun Cities Area Historical Association and the Arizona Historical Foundation I am interviewing Lucille Rethford who is the archivist and founder of the Youngtown Historical Association. I am interviewing her in the building which houses the Historical Associations materials in Youngtown. It is February 14th, 1992.

STURGEON: Lucille, can you tell me something about the founding of Youngtown and how it was even conceived?

RETFERD: There was a gentleman from the east named Ben Schleifer who had visited a friend of his in New York, I believe it was. His friend was confined to a nursing home, so to speak. He had no choice of activity. All he did was sit all day. He was depressed. His health wasn't good. He was failing all the time. He complained to his friend, Ben Schleifer, that he had no options about how to run his life. That everything was totally done and dictated to him. He didn't want to live that way. It was on Ben Schleifer's mind for a long time. Then Ben Schleifer's health became bad and he came to Phoenix to establish a real estate business. At that point with that in the back of his mind, all the time that he wanted to do something, out here in the sunshine and the fresh air, for those people who still were able to get around. So they could have their own homes, modest homes, affordable homes and still do what they wanted to do. So he came out and talked to Francis Greer, a lady who had a cattle ranch out on the Agua Fria river. He thought it was a delightful place. It had a swimming pool, it had a tennis court. The ranch complex did. So he looked the area over and he asked her if she would be willing to sell it. She said, oh no, she didn't want to sell it. Said that she was still happy here, and active. He kept working with her until he told her that it would be a noble thing to do, to sell her property to him and be the mother, so to speak of this retirement community. It would be for people who were over fifty and no longer working, of modest homes that were affordable to everybody at that time. At that time her foreman or her superintendent for the ranch itself was Elmer Johns. He and Mrs. Greer and Ben Schleifer the land, let's see, what did they call it. I've got it here, but anyway I can get that for you later. They formed this

development company. I guess even then he was going to call it Youngtown because he thought that was very appropriate. I believe it was the Youngtown Development Company. So here were the three of them – the lady who was going to provide the land, the man who was going to manage and supervise the whole thing and Ben Schleifer who would be the main developer of the property. He is the one who had the idea. So that is how all that came about. That is how Youngtown came to be the way it is. And for five years then, Ben Schleifer was very, very active in this community. In 1957 Dave Garroway who was doing “Wide, Wide World”, a television program at that time, was informed about Youngtown. He was told there is a real strange community out in Arizona that is for people over fifty only and we thought you might enjoy hearing about it. So he brought his whole television crew and they did it right over here, on the other side of this club house. They set up their cameras and they had their dance and their picnic and just did the whole show here – interviewed the minister of that time and Ben Schleifer himself and the residents that were here. One of the ladies said, Dave, this is a very unique community. We don’t have any schools here. We don’t have any children. Then they went on to show some of the simple homes. And of course that went across national programs on TV. We have videos of it. The people who saw that in all areas who were ready for retirement decided, well we are going to go out there next summer. We are going to go out as soon as we can and take a look at that place. Prior to that all of the people who came here, on a personal reference basis, that put us definitely on a full United States exposure. So it wasn’t anytime at all before the whole town filled up, or practically filled up. All the lots were sold. They were ready to annex 320 acres south of here and about that time Del Webb came along and approached Boswell, and Colonel Boswell sold it to Del Webb because he was the source, really, of some very big money. The price was right. Mrs. Greer said (and it is published) I never will forget that being done to us because he had promised me that I could have it anytime I wanted it. But that’s how all that came about. So Youngtown became a very viable community at the beginning. It was a community that came about for two reasons. During the war all families were splintered, so to speak, and they went all to the West Coast and Arizona, even those people who were not in service, who worked in the war industries. It used to be that there was a nucleus of the family, the grandparents, the parents and the children. After World War II they had somehow fallen by the wayside and the grandparents decided that they didn’t want to stay in a cold climate. So they made their way out on vacations and they found Youngtown, so here they came. It is a cultural change. The mid-fifties are very significant to the culture of the United States and to the progress of the health and welfare and social systems of retirees and elderly people, and it has just gone from

there. Youngtown is very proud to be the very first one to be recognized as the very first fully retirement community.

STURGEON: I have some questions I would like to ask you. James Boswell made a tape at the Sun Cities Historical Society and he said there that Elmer Johns had been a land developer in California. That he had had dealings with him in California. Had you ever heard that?

RETFERFORD: No. When the Greers came here in 1946 or 47, they came from St. Johns Arizona and they had 27000 acres there and ran 2800 cattle and he was their superintendent all those years. And our clubhouse that we have of course is the original ranch building and on the chimney is the T lazy V that is brought down from St. Johns and put on the chimney here. No, Elmer Johns was the Greer foreman for many, many years.

STURGEON: I had heard that then after he had finished with this community and I had read it in a couple of newspaper accounts went up into Northern Arizona between here and Flagstaff and started another retirement community and had not been developed very well. I think he called it Circle Town.

RETFERFORD: I was not aware of that. I didn't know he had anything to do with that. We have never heard that before.

STURGEON: I will have to find the source. I've got it in my notebook. Maybe you could ask someone, maybe someone would know.

RETFERFORD: Mrs. Schleiffer is still living. And many of the people who worked with Ben in the National Council of Senior Citizens, all those people. And his health became bad not very long after he left here.

STURGEON: He was asked to go back, I believe, and speak and be on a panel for the President of the United States. Do you know why?

RETFERFORD: Well, of course, he was known as the developer of Youngtown and he worked with all of these people who were into the aging movement. National Council of Senior Citizens or something – anyway he was honored as a developer.

STURGEON: When Youngtown first started then it doesn't sound like they did a tremendous amount of national advertising. So they grew slowly until the Dave Garroway show presented them nationally.

RETFERFORD: Well in 1955 I think they had 700 homes built – well the first winter they had about forty homes built. By Christmas of 1954. Then the next year they had built 700 more. And it just snowballed from there. That would be all through '55 and '56. It never did slow down. It was steady all the way because of people communicating. They would send letters to their home and they would publish it in their home newspaper and we have endless clippings from Cleveland and Chicago and Detroit and Utah and Montana. We have them from all over the country. It was all done by word of mouth. It just happened so fast. Then of course when Dave Garroway put his program nation wide it filled up immediately, almost overnight. We had our full complement by 1960, when Sun City started.

STURGEON: Are you aware that some of the people on the Del Webb staff had watched that show and that was one of the reasons that they were really intrigued with the idea of a retirement community?

RETFERFORD: Del Webb himself, Del Webb came out and made a tour of Youngtown and he said I believe there is money to be made in this approach and therefore he – of course he was a very, very rich man and he had influential and moneyed friends and they all got together. Of course they were some heavy hitters in terms of any kind of approach to living with all the social aspects involved, especially social aspects. So what they did was come on out and all the homes on the South side of Grand Avenue, almost all of them, especially the ones here on 111th Avenue, just across the street from Youngtown. They are Youngtown homes. Their floor plans are the same. There is no difference in them. And even the outside of it, they are the same homes. And so that is what he did. He just copied Youngtown with one big exception. Youngtown had to create all its own social activity. They had all their own garden clubs, they had all their own dance clubs, card clubs. They swam at the lake – they fished at the lake, they did everything themselves. We had septic tanks when we came here. We didn't even have gas yet. So people had to cook on hot plates and things of that nature until they got gas. They did it. The people did it. No developer did it. We did it. In other words everything was done by the people, socially, utility wise, administration and all of that. But when Del Webb went in he took all that responsibility away from the people and he said I want to make this a place for people to play. He wanted them to be active constantly. Well, that is wonderful but at the time there was still a place for both. There were those who had the

money and wanted to play and didn't want any responsibility, they had discharged their responsibility on their jobs, so that is the kind of community Sun City is and Youngtown is the working community.

STURGEON: So the people in Youngtown, when Ben and Elmer and that group set it up, they didn't have the gas lines – what was their function?

RETFERFORD: No, no water lines. Their function was just to lay it out. They did the streets and they contracted to have the homes built.

STURGEON: They didn't build them themselves though.

RETFERFORD: No, they contracted them out.

STURGEON: They must have had floor plans though.

RETFERFORD: Oh my yes. Now, this building – see right up here, this y1, y2 and y3, y4. Now this building was used as a headquarters between the crafts people. When I say crafts I mean the trades people, the plumbers, the electricians and the cement workers, the brick builders. All of those people had to come to a central area to look at plans to see what it was the foreman was going to tell his people to do. So each one of these areas had tables with plans for the different floor plans of the houses. Yes, we had about four different floor plans and in 1960 – well before Sun City even went in we put some condominiums in which were very nice, they still are. All of the homes were built to last. They are all of block, some of them are slump block, some plain cement block. They are on concrete foundations. They are tiled, really ceramic tile and they all of them have patios, some have porches, some do not. The homes have been modified now, they have been upgraded. Almost all of the homes have been. The basic floor plan is still there and they did have them and right down here close to us is the very first house that was ever built for a model home. The daughter of the people that bought the first home, right on the corner of Alabama here, the daughter lives in Sun City. She is very supportive of us. But it was a community where people created it. All those vital juices when they were working were still being used, and in that way they were able to have an active way of life, mentally and physically.

STURGEON: So basically they were doing in Youngtown all the things that Mr. Webb was advertising. Your community was already doing it.

RETFERFORD: Well, so to speak. They were providing everything. It was already turnkey, ready to go in. And ours was a little bit different. When we first started we didn't have sewers, we had septic tanks and we didn't have gas for a long time.

STURGEON: They must have done a little bit of promotion. When people were talking about it to their friends did they say this is a place where you can come out and still be active?

RETFERFORD: Oh yes. Well for one thing they raved about the climate and then they said we have the most gorgeous little home, it is so easy to take care for and it is so inexpensive. The homes that were first sold here in 1954 were less than \$7000 and we have endless bits of material that were used by the sales. There was only one sales representative here. She is still here. Katherine Doone. She is still here. She lives here. There is one other pioneer who lives here. Just those two ladies. That's all. The rest of them are all gone.

STURGEON: Some of them moved over to Sun City, didn't they. I was reading the first Sun City directory that came out in 1960-61. There were fifteen or twenty people who had listed their address the year before as being Youngtown.

RETFERFORD: Well, I never really researched that. But I know there were some, but it works both ways. We have people who come here and they didn't realize how quiet it was and something I hesitate to mention –

STURGEON: Do you want me to turn it to pause and you can tell it to me off the tape?

RETFERFORD: Please.

STURGEON: When the community got started and you had maybe 700 people here when did they start organizing clubs and doing that sort of things and when did they decide they needed a government or some way to run things.

RETFERFORD: It started immediately. Actually Elmer Johns was our first City Manager so to speak or it was a Community Manager. Of course we weren't a town, we weren't a city or anything else, we were just a community, sort of a village concept. He was the man who coordinated things that had to be done, but it was the citizens themselves who came up with the idea, we are going to have to get the septic tanks out of here, we need to have sewers. So they went back and forth

because that cost everybody some money. They did run a bond program and each one of us were levied so much to pay for the sewers and the water system. We didn't have much of a water system either. So we had a good well and good water but sometimes people at the furthest reaches didn't have any water. The pressure might all be down by then. So that needed to be corrected. So yes, when we first started the "Pioneer Club" was probably the very first big club they had. They started off with pot luck dinners, right off the bat with even as few as fifteen people. It went from there to the dances and sing-a-longs. Of course there was always swimming in the lake and fishing in the lake and they went there for picnics and people would have their own relatives come out to the lake to swim. We didn't have swimming pools except Mrs. Greer. They took the swimming pool out. I have never heard why. And I never did get to talk to Mrs. Greer, so I don't know why they took that out and they put the cactus garden in. I think it had to do with utilizing their water in a little more efficient way. But our clubs really started immediately. Just immediately. By Christmas they had a big celebration. Everyone came to Mrs. Greer's home at that time. She didn't turn that building over to the town until they were incorporated. She maintained this as her home. But they did meet in the park out there on her patio.

STURGEON: She was right in the middle of town then.

RETFERFORD: Oh you bet. This is it. This was her club house – her ranch house and that building over there where the police department is, that was a cow shed.

STURGEON: So you are actually sitting in the middle of the ranch buildings here then.

RETFERFORD: There is the self-guide which you may take with you. I have it in that packet there. When they had began having the business kind of thing, there were never any arguments between residents. We didn't even have to worry about having any police protection until, I believe it was 1958 and then it was only one sheriff's deputy who made the rounds here or he would be called in case somebody needed some extra attention. But we didn't have that problem at all. Everybody just worked together. It was a beautiful kind of thing.

STURGEON: One of the very early letters that I read before Sun City was even probably thought of was an older couple who wrote a letter saying that they were sorry but they were having to move out because they were getting old and they had been promised when they moved here that there would be some medical facilities

and there weren't and so they were having to leave because they were getting old. Was that a problem in the early days when you didn't have anything here at all?

RETFERFORD: It must have been very early. Because they didn't have a hospital in Peoria either, they would have had to go clear to Glendale. We had our first hospital in 1958, however, a big hospital. It kept growing. It became quite a very large hospital. In fact it was where all the Sun City people came to. But early on, somebody came out from the mid-west and came with bad health they would have to travel all the way in to Glendale in order to have attention. It could have very well happened.

STURGEON: Did you have businesses set up in the community in the first couple of years? Stores, grocery stores?

RETFERFORD: No, we had a hardware store only early on. The Post Office had a corner of the hardware store. Then there was a little - not a deli - in those days it wasn't called a deli, just a little quick, you know, bread and milk sort of thing, sort of a milk store. We didn't even have grocery stores. They had to go into Peoria to buy groceries.

STURGEON: Have they ever looked at the demographics of Youngtown in the early years? What group of people came, were they blue collar, white collar workers?

RETFERFORD: No, a great many of them were farmers. They were farmers and they were blue collar workers, yes, factory employees, there were a few accountants. After I came here I worked, when I say worked, it was voluntary work for the town, for a CPA. But he is gone now. But he is the one also who brought about the sewers. We had retired policeman. We had nurses, school teachers, a lot of people out of the automobile industries and farmers.

STURGEON: So, where did they mostly come from? From the mid-west or did you have a lot from California?

RETFERFORD: No, we had almost nobody from California. Most of ours came from the cold climates, from Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, lot of West Virginia people, Ohio, back in the cold country, Nebraska.

STURGEON: When Ben got his idea for Youngtown, had he looked at things going on in Florida, because at that time they were having some, like little suburbs, sort of, of larger cities, where developers were selling –

RETFERFORD: I am not aware if he did. Not aware of it at all. He may well have. But, he could have before he ever moved here, I don't know.

STURGEON: I was just curious because one interview that I read in, I think it was an Arizona Highways or something where they interviewed him, he had said that he knew that older people could come out here because he had looked really carefully at it and he could tell you how much social security people were getting, so he must have been aware of trends that were going on.

RETFERFORD: Oh, yeah. This is that Arizona Highways article right there. You can take that with you also. I wasn't aware because when he came out it was because of his own bad health. Then he went back and visited his friend. He came out here and went directly into the real estate business. Then he went back to visit his friend and at that point a germ of an idea hit him. He came back and it wouldn't let him rest so he decided he would try to do something with it. This is the first I had heard that he had investigated anything in Florida.

STURGEON: Well, I don't know if he had, I was just asking. But I know that he was aware of people getting social security because he knew that they could support themselves when they came out here. And I guess because I am an historian I am looking at things that are going on in the whole country you know, like cultural things or things that sociologists were looking at so I was just curious because at that time sociologists really believed that you couldn't put a group of old people together in a community and they were really debating it in the academic world so I was wondering if he looked at any of those things.

RETFERFORD: Exactly. That was a sort of a – you know – senior citizens and even today and then, more so then I think than now. There was a stereotype that they were ready to lay down and die and I think that Ben recognized that that was not the case. He was a brilliant man. And I am sure that in his real estate dealings he had occasion to be involved with what social security was paying to retirees.

STURGEON: Youngtown seemed to have been very supportive of some of the school bond issues and much more willing to pay school taxes or be involved in the communities surrounding in that way than Sun City has.

RETFERFORD: Well we are not in a school district here. Only a part of the town, what is west of 115th Avenue is in the El Mirage district, the Dysart district. And those people do pay taxes. They are assessed just like anybody in the Dysart district. The rest of the town is in the Peoria district. We have about 73 children in both schools. Most of them in the Peoria schools. We are assessed an amount for each child who goes there per year. I don't know, the last I heard, I don't know what it is right now, but the last I heard it was about \$3700 per child that we have to pay, their tuition. We are very supportive of education factors. Of course we all have to pay the Junior College taxes. That is levied on all of us. But now I must say in defense of Sun City as well, the work that they do with young people in both Dysart and Peoria, and especially Dysart, is just tremendous. I don't know what it would cost the school system if they had to pay all those people, because they couldn't even run that kind of a system. These people devote so much of their time to help these disadvantages students to learn. Even learn to read, learn good study habits. They provide the patience and the understanding to get these people through and pretty soon they begin to think. Between the churches and the people who are retired from the teaching profession, and the sociologists, they do a tremendous amount of work with the students. Sun City is criticized so strongly by the press in so many – well – it is isolated – I shouldn't say it is all the press trashes them, but they do have that reputation that they do not deserve. Because what they don't put out in money they put out in effort and devotion.

STURGEON: Were the people in Youngtown involved in El Mirage also?

RETFERFORD: Not as much. There are two reasons for it I think. Our average age is so high. It is 73. Most of our people – a good many of them – since we have 75 children and we only have 2500 and something people here. There are a goodly number of them who are over 73. They really don't have the mobility to go and do things. There are churches that do garments; they adopt families. They do the moderate things that everybody does in terms of helping charities. But in terms of the big commitments that some of the Sun City people do, no we don't do that. It isn't because we don't want to, it is just that we do have limitations.

STURGEON: Why are there so many children in a community that is age restricted?

RETFERFORD: Well, now that is a whole other story. That is something that we are very proud of. There were several reasons for that condition in Youngtown. In the early 70's there was the philosophy that there would be no such thing as discrimination in the 60's and the 70's. And of course the rest of the world thought

primarily no discrimination between races. The feminists didn't even enter it then. But then somebody decided, probably ACLU, decided that well there is going to be no discrimination on age and housing either. Well it just so happens that we have an Arizona statute that has been on the books for a long time that says a community that is developed, advertised and sold as a retirement community for people over the age of fifty without children, that is valid in Arizona. So therefore we can do it and it is legal. But along with that philosophy of discrimination a lot of people said, oh I'll be sued. Somebody comes along and wants to buy my home and has children, I don't dare not sell it to them because I will be taken into court. You couldn't convince them otherwise. There was no way. I was here then. Some of those people got real radical with the children. That caused a lot of problems. One family caused all the terrible reputation we got coast to coast. Anyway, then the other thing was our town was run by real estate people. Our Mayor and half the council or more, the majority of the council were real estate people. Sun City had a Home Owner's Association that absolutely were adamant about not having children over there. And it worked. And of course the homes were more expensive, there were many more of them to sell, and these people over here if they didn't want to lose a dime, so, OK, I can't sell you anything in Sun City, but I can sell you something in Youngtown. So what happened is we got a lot of young people. These were inexpensive, the overhead was low. The low income people could come and have a reasonable, a moderate house and be able to afford it. And of course young families with children, they are starting out in the world and they need affordable housing. So it was wonderful and it was safe, they didn't have to worry about their children being abused. So here they came. So then these people got so radical, one of them even tried to run a car into one of the teen-agers. They were taken to court and the people won it. The other people won it. The people who were charging the retiree with it. They lost their home; they lost everything they had because of that. Well, that reputation hit us all. So we went along for about approximately eight or nine years with that condition. Then the citizens really began to get alarmed because we had entirely too many then. We were losing our retirement status. We were going to have to go back into the school districts, we were going to have to do all kinds of things that we had never intended to happen. So the Civic Association got together. We wanted Sun City to do it. They are the ones who had all the money and could go to court. The county said it's OK, and we can keep them out that way and we aren't going to do anything. Now that is the one place where I take issue with Sun City. There was little Youngtown with 2300 people at the time and Sun City is sitting over there with 40,000 and we took it to court. And I worked with it myself so I know all about it. We produced all of the backup information and cited the Arizona Statute and we won. Now, the reason the young people are still here, we are not heartless.

They were grandfathered in when the change was made. These people want to be here until it becomes time to sell their home. Then they cannot sell it to anymore young people. Now this is their home – just because they are the victims of circumstances you don't put them out of their home. That is why they have a goodly number of them. We do have another one where a developer got to us. We have a little ghetto here. There are little flimsy apartments that, he gave us a hard luck story and said that he wanted to get his loan and after he got his loan, and he went by all the rules for senior housing, very small, not near big enough for families. Of course this is a single family residential community and so he gave us the hard luck story and the council let him do it. And after he got his loan and started building he says to heck with you. I'm not going to sign anything. So consequently we got an awful lot of children in one two story complex. But it is sad to think that they did that, I think, because it is no place for children. Let's face it, we don't abuse them, but at the same time we don't have that warm interchange that we normally would have with our own family. We all have children and great grandchildren. I've got thirteen great-grandchildren. I love them all. I only see them twice a year and occasionally they come out here. But this isn't fun. They don't like to come here. After they go to the lake to see the ducks and maybe go throw a ball around the park, well that's it. So this is not a place to raise children except from the standpoint of safety. From that standpoint it is wonderful. But that is how come we – and then the federal government got into it in 1988 and said that none of these state laws are valid unless – you had to have 85% people over 55. Well we had 50 on our books so we had to go back and change our statute to age 55 and make the survey, and everybody had to produce their driver's license, social security thing or something to prove their age. You know, one person in the household, nobody under eighteen and we stacked up 92%. In addition to that you had to have health facilities, recreation facilities, other aspects of retirement living. Well we made the cut, no question about it. So we are perfectly legal now under all systems.

STURGEON: So you had some real struggles then.

RETFERFORD: Oh we did. And they are recent. The early problems that Youngtown had were because we could control everything that was going in those days. And it is just like now days all – I don't care what it is – whether it is business or any other aspect, there are so many controls imposed by the State, the County and the Federal Government. You can't run your own business. You have to just fight it through and qualify everything you do. So we are still at it. It keeps us all on our toes.

don't know – I think it was a brooder house the way it smelled when we were cleaning it up. But anyway all of these buildings were – there is a big building over on the other side of the club house that was the tenant houses for the ranch. It was all a ranch complex, every bit of it. None of it is new. Now it has been enlarged a little bit but it is all part of the complex including that library building over there. We have a bigger water tank. We used to have a water tank right out here but it was much smaller.

STURGEON: Now did you do the same thing

(end of side A – something lost)

start of side B)

RETFERFORD: less than a year after they came – two of them. One Methodist and one Baptist. I hate to answer that question. I don't know. I know they had to build them and a lot of that was done with volunteer labor. I don't know whether they bought the plat or – I wouldn't doubt if that wasn't part of this complex. I wouldn't doubt but what Mrs. Greer gave it to them. I wouldn't be at all surprised.

STURGEON: Basically the churches are all right here.

RETFERFORD: They are both right there together.

STURGEON: And those are the only two churches that you have?

RETFERFORD: Yes. We have the Mennonite meeting houses – well they moved to private homes, but other than that those were the only formal churches that we have.

STURGEON: In talking to the pioneers in Sun City one of the things that most of them mentioned is that they find it somewhat bad that the community has gotten so large. They have lost that small town enthusiasm they had in the first few years and that is something that they pointed out as being something that they really enjoyed. So you, I assume, have not lost that because you are small.

RETFERFORD: Oh, we like the small town. We feel like we are in control of what happens here, what goes on here. We don't have a structured block watch. Where there are enough of the older residents distributed around town that we all know exactly who to go to if there is a problem. So if we see somebody – that is

another reason why we are so – everybody is very alert to any fast moving cars at night. We don't hesitate to get on the phone and call the police department. We don't know whether there is anything wrong or not, but they tell us if there is any questionable activity going on let us know so we can check it out before something does happen. So we have a real strong community watch and the reason I bring that up is that – yes, we are glad we are small enough to be able to be concerned about each other as well as being in control of our own destiny.

STURGEON: Can you think of anything else that I have not asked you that might be germane to the discussion.

RETFERFORD: Oh my. Of course you know, people who are involved with this kind of history thing can talk forever about various things and aspects involved. I will say that we have a very good relationship with Sun City. I don't know at what level or more than one level you have spoken to in Sun City -

STURGEON: Almost everyone I have spoken to in Sun City says that you have a great relationship.

RETFERFORD: We do have. Right now one of our Youngtown residents is being groomed to be President –she is President elect - of Meals on Wheels. And I serve as corresponding secretary of Meals on Wheels. I keep Jane Freeman of the Historical Society over there informed about everything going. We went to a meeting not long ago – every year we have National Historic Preservation Week – which is run by the Arizona Parks Department. A couple of years now I haven't seen anybody from Sun City and I happened to mention it to Jane Freeman here a while back and she said, how come I don't know about that. And I said, I don't know but I am going to see that you do. So I called them and said, would you please put her – the Sun City Historical Society on your list. Now we are going to have a room, Sun City and Youngtown, have a room the Arizona Museum over in Tempe. Do you know Michael Duchesne? We are going to be working – it is not ready of course – they have too many things going right now, but when they are ready we are going to have a little niche. Sun City will have the major part of it because they are just so much more complex now. We are there to let it be known that we are the first. We started it all. We are very proud of that. And it doesn't bother us at all, we are not a bit paranoid about Sun City. They might have been at one time but not now. Our council works with all the members of the Maricopa County Government and Alliance of Government. They, the Northwest Community Council, we are very much integrated into that and work with it. Our town attorney – he just gets practically no money. He is almost a volunteer. He is

the unofficial historian of Peoria. He is doing the incorporation papers for Sun City – Cal McBride. But we have a very good working relationship with the Sun City people. I think, if we had to deal with Del Webb I don't know how that would gel but person to person we have a great respect for each other.

STURGEON: I know that is what I found in the interviews that it is just the management, company things that I find were in conflict but not the citizens at all. This is just a very speculative question but do you think that if Elmer Johns and the construction group had been able to buy say 2 or 3000 more acres do you think they might have done that and made this a much larger community.

RETHEFORD: I know they would have liked to have had 320 more acres. They wanted the area south of us. We are annexing land into the river bed, well next to it, you are only allowed so much but we have annexed between Sun City and the Agua Fria there to Olive Avenue. But way down the road somewhere there will be some development. They haven't even got that out of the flood plain yet so no telling when that will be, if ever. I don't know whether they would have – they did want the – Mrs. Greer wanted the 320 acres. But she never did go beyond that and I think they didn't want to do anything more then they had the ability to work with. I just wonder. Knowing the limitations or what could be the potential limitations of retirees if in their best judgment they would have wanted to expand too much.

STURGEON: When I was driving around the community I noticed down on that end, down near Grand and I don't know if that is part of Youngtown but there seemed to be a large development of new homes or new apartments. Is that part of Youngtown?

RETHEFORD: On this side of Grand Avenue, on the south side of Grand Avenue, those white buildings, the Spanish Gardens, those are the condos that I was telling you about. They are still very nice, they have their own swimming pool.

STURGEON: They looked new. They didn't look like they were very old.

RETHEFORD: Well, they were built in 1958 or 9. So they have got some age on them but they were well maintained and built well in the first place. And the ones across the street, those are also condos and they were built of block and they are new, relatively. They are gray I believe. The white Spanish Gardens is an old one. Now just down right on, way down on Tennessee Avenue off 113th, that is that

STURGEON: So you own your own water company?

RETFERFORD: Oh yeah, we own everything.

STURGEON: You own everything. What about electricity?

RETFERFORD: Well, of course that is – we own the right-of-ways, but we have APS.

STURGEON: But you own all the water –

RETFERFORD: We own all the water and all the sewers.

STURGEON: Because I thought it was quite delightful to drive around and see all the trees and the green. I drove around the lake area.

RETFERFORD: Our lake area is gorgeous. That's got a nice walk around it – they can fish there and we are hoping one day we will have a family of swans. We have two, but they aren't very compatible I don't think. We have a lot of ducks and they are delightful when you go a little further down the road and see the little ones paddling around. But they try to keep those mud hens weeded out. Of course they can't disturb the mallards – the actual wild life. The other ones are just trash ducks, the little old black mud hens.

STURGEON: But your community didn't do what Sun City did then, you didn't say you have to plant x many trees in your front yard, your house can't be the same color as the house next to you – you didn't do any of that – you just had your house and you could do anything you wanted.

RETFERFORD: That lot belongs to us. We can park our recreation vehicles as long as it is behind the building. We can do anything we want to in our backyards. We can hang our clothes out if we wish. There are places over there where you cannot have clothes lines of any kind. You can only have a certain kind of storage shed, if you are allowed a storage shed. They don't even have places to put their wood for their fire places. They are too structured. Now we looked over there before we ever moved to Youngtown. We decided that it was not for us. Because we are such independent people. You couldn't even have your home upgraded over there. You had to take what they had.

STURGEON: You could upgrade it later if you did it yourself.

RETFERFORD: Yes, but if they knew it you wouldn't do it, you couldn't do it. You might be able to put in a tile bath, but you better keep it quiet. That is why we didn't go there. You had to take their model homes – no changes. Just like that.

STURGEON: But here you could just take the basic model and do whatever you wanted?

RETFERFORD: Well, we built our home like we wanted to. We have a custom home.

STURGEON: So you didn't have to follow the models that they gave you if you didn't want to.

RETFERFORD: No. Ours is different entirely. It is a different kind of place. We had to follow the standard guidelines for zoning – all that sort of thing – back so many feet, you know.

STURGEON: So when they had the model homes in the beginning, they didn't say, you have to build one of these model homes.

RETFERFORD: Well, that was for the money – it was an inexpensive home in the first place. But you could turn that home anyway you wanted.

STURGEON: But you didn't have to buy one of the models is what I am saying. If you came in here you could say, I really don't any of those models. I am willing to pay a little bit more.

RETFERFORD: No, you would have to buy the lot and have somebody else build it. That little pink house up there in that top picture. That one is the same house that you see all over, except that they turned it long-ways. They modified the windows a little bit and that is just exactly the same house that you look at head on.

STURGEON: Elmer Johns came and lived here didn't he?

RETFERFORD: Oh, yes. I have his picture. Elmer Johns is the one right there in the middle. His is right on the corner as you go to the lake. It wraps kind of around the corner. It is one of these homes except it has an addition on each end.

STURGEON: Did Ben live here?

RETFERFORD: No, Ben never did live here.

STURGEON: Why didn't he live here, do you know?

RETFERFORD: Well, he still lived in Phoenix. But he was out here regularly.

STURGEON: And Mrs. Greer, did she stay here all the rest of her life too?

RETFERFORD: She built a new home up on Duluth, she built a real nice home up there. She built this one. When she turned this over for club house use she built a little house that the library is in and lived there for a while. She wanted to be over right on the river bank and so that is where she built her last home. There is an article in there that will tell you all about it. You will find that real interesting. Everybody could modify their windows, they could do anything they wanted to do with it but they had to take the basic square footage and the like. A lot of the homes have just the insides of the cement block, a lot of the homes are furred with the dry wall inside of that. Some are, some aren't. It is a little more fuel efficient when you have it on. But we are just so proud of our little community and the things that everybody has done and continue to be. Even our new retirees who come in, the young retirees, of course they have considerably more money than we had when we first came, not a whole lot, I'm not saying that at all, but their retirement is so much better. Actually it has been good for Youngtown. They still have that feeling of this is what we want, that is why we came. Yet they have a progressive way of thinking about things, which helps us, the old timers, to modify what we think. We don't have an opportunity to get set in our ways and say we don't want to be told anything. We are not that way.

STURGEON: So you are going to have your 40th anniversary in three years – no two years.

RETFERFORD: Yes, in '94. We have already laid the ground work to be put on the National Register of Historic places, from the cultural standpoint. We will not be from the terms of architecture of anything of that nature. But as a culture we will be considered. There is no question in my mind – I may not live that long – to 2004, but if I don't I hope that somebody will pursue it because I keep reminding all of our new retirees as they come in. Don't forget. I've got all that information ready for you to use when that time comes.

STURGEON: You should get it written up now all ready to go.

REGHERFORD: Michael Dushamen, he is well aware of it. We have already turned it in.

(conversation ended)

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 220

Interview with Rose Schwartz

February 20, 1992

Date of Birth: September 30, 1901

Place of Birth: Des Moines, Iowa

Rose was a dance instructor in Sun City.

Synopsis:

- Father born in Bavaria; never naturalized; mother born in Providence, Rhode Island. Father worked as foreign interpreter for U.S. Steel; died when Rose was 3 years old; she was the youngest of 7 children.
- Music played an important part in family life; always had a piano; entertainment was family songfests.
- Graduated from H.S. 2nd highest in class; did not participate in activities. Began dance lessons at age 16; her first and only love. She started a dance studio instead of going to college; opened her first studio in 1922 with 157 students.

- Neighbor was a vaudevillian piano player and joined her as piano player for her classes; they were married in 1931; no children.
- A dance colleague she met in 1922 wrote to say she was moving to Sun City and encouraged them to move there. In 1971 Rose and her husband, who suffered from pulmonary fibrosis, moved to Sun City, but he died 7 months later.

- Sun City appeal: population about 15,000 in 1971; people friendly, clean air, lots of activities and busy recreation centers.
- Enjoyed her activities such as organ club, arts and crafts, Ladies Gym Club and Canasta. Chairman of Ladies Gym Club asked her to start a class for ladies without partners in Hawaiian dancing. This eventually led up to an aerobic dance class and slimnastics classes designed for 'older women'. Channel 3 (ABC) taped one of her classes and idea was picked up by the Regis/Kathie Lee syndicated show and was televised on October 25, 1991. She made an appearance on the show.

- Her students gave her a 90th birthday party; 800 people showed up; many were former students and many from out of town.
- Incorporation issue has caused many controversies and hard feelings. It would just add another level of government to contend with.
- Concerned that the other Rec Ctrs outside of Sun City will not be able to be used by Sun City residents.
- Thinks she would've been bored to death if she'd stayed in Des Moines.

C-220

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 21st day of February, 1992, by and between Rose Schwartz (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:

X Signed Rose Schwartz Date 2/21/92
Interviewee: Rose Schwartz (name)
10312 Talisman
Sun City, AZ (address)
85351

Signed Melanie J. Sturgeon Date 21 February 1992
Interviewer Melanie J. Sturgeon (name)
1535 E. Hampton Circle (address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 221

Interview with Jerry Svendsen

Date of Birth: 1935

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois

Jerry was the Public Relations Director for the Del Webb Development Company (DEVCO). He is now the owner and publisher of the Sun Life Magazine.

Synopsis:

- Came to Phoenix at age 13 with parents; went to college in Tempe; studied radio and t.v. production. Worked for the Arizona Republic.
- Heard there was a Public Relations job available and joined DEVCO in 1961. Initial job was to publicize Sun City, interview residents, take pictures, write articles for local newspapers. 50-60% of these articles also showed up in residents' hometown papers.
- In 1966 Del Webb built the Sun Bowl; I hired the entertainment. This was a tremendous promotional tool; winter visitors took house tours.
- Knew many of the residents of Sun City; Tom Austin was a Project Manager and my mentor. Tom organized things; I planned parties and social gatherings. Tom's work drew community closer together.
- People often bought a home on a whim that would not be ready for 90 days or more. Often, when they returned home, their friends would try to dissuade them. We created a weekly newsletter to update residents of the status of their homes, hoping they would not cancel the sale.
- Whenever Del Webb appeared at functions, he drew large crowds.
- Del Webb had a lot of insight; my job grew. I helped with sales, and felt I had a major role in the success of Sun City.
- Residents were the best Chamber of Commerce; Sun City Christmas cards, made by residents, were sent all across the country.
- Salesmen were called 'retirement counselors'; residents got excited by seeing all the pins on the Sun City maps at the real estate office. When I

- conducted Chuck Wagon dinners for tourists, I would give my little spiel, and tell people how many houses were being sold.
- I used to talk to Senior Centers in Phoenix.
 - House sales dipped between 1964-1969; after 1969 the community jumped across Grand Avenue; Webb company decided to build homes on a lake with a country club.
 - Hospital helped; we could offer them 'a whole new way of life'.
 - Most early residents grew up on farms in a country atmosphere, then moved to a large town; over time we got suburb and city people.
 - White collar, middle management helped Sun City become independent from Del Webb.
 - John Meeker was a sharp businessman. Del Webb was like a father figure; we played on this image; then we got a divorce when we went to Sun City West; relationship became strained. Sun City West never bonded among residents like Sun City. It is a new community with only one generation; security.
 - In the 1960s there were block parties; more camaraderie than in 70s.
 - Many residents had smaller families; fewer family ties back home.
 - Re: Incorporation: opponents believed there might be some corruption, but these are very capable and influential people.
 - Bigger, more expensive homes, and a country club, drew in a different clientele; less blue collar; more white collar. Bigger pensions.
 - Del Webb Cohad to work with residents when conflicts arose about who could use Rec. Ctrs; this subsided about the time third one was built.
 - While community growing, Del Webb company very involved.
 - Sun City is seven miles long and two miles wide; built like a series of villages; community aged over time; concerned about the aging. Today Sun City is full of healthy 75-80 year olds; what happens in a few more years?
 - Sales strong; last year we sold about 1,500 homes.

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 21st day of February, 1992, by and between Therry Svendsen (herein after called "Interviewee") and Metanie 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.

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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

Jerry A. Svendsen

Date

2/21/92

Interviewee:

Jerry A. Svendsen
9192 W. Cactus St.

(name)

Peoria, Ar

(address)

85345

Signed

Melanie J. Sturgeon

Date

21 Feb. 1992

Interviewer

Melanie J. Sturgeon

(name)

1535 E. Hampton Circle

(address)

Mesa, Ar 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 222

Interview with Les E. Merydith

February 27, 1992

Date of Birth: January 18, 1904

Place of Birth: Fairmount, West Virginia

Les was an early proponent of incorporation.

Synopsis:

- Parents moved family to Marietta, Ohio, when Les was age 3.
- Attended Marietta College; majored in mathematics; minored in chemistry; graduated cum laude in 1927. (After retirement, I became member of Board of Trustees of Marietta College).

- Jobs scarce; first job after graduation was shoveling dirt at \$3 a day.
- Heard about a bridge being constructed over the Ohio River; took various construction jobs, including diver.
- Wife-to-be in Marietta; hard to get time off to be with her; received letter from Chairman of School Board of New Haven, West Virginia offering position teaching Math and Science; taught for one year.

- Took position with Standard Oil Company; moved to Cleveland and began a 37-year career, starting at \$84 a month as service station manager, working 56 hours a week. Was employed throughout the Depression. Worked up to supervisor and eventually Regional Manager in charge of 1600 employees.

- Retired in 1965; always active in my communities as well as business organizations like: Urban League, Community Fund and United Way.
- With an Airstream trailer, I traveled the continent in the five years after retirement. Met a fellow from Texas who lived in Mesa; went to visit him and heard about Sun City. Rented an apt. in Sun City and within a month had purchased two Sun City homes.

- I liked the completeness of the enterprise. Everything you could possibly want taken care of by Webb: entertainment, stores, rec. facilities, etc. Not

yet an established society, everyone was new and pliable; easy to make friends.

- Wife was real estate broker in Ohio; worked for Del Webb here as for 10 years as sales rep.
- First nine years of retirement I tried everything: golf, silver crafts, rock hounding, etc. Never got interested in community work until an Englishman named Jack contacted me in 1978. He wanted to incorporate the town, thought it was losing millions in tax income. Later we organized Charter Government Assoc., incorporated 1978 with 27 members; changed name in 1985 to Citizens for Self-Gov't.
- Incorporation issues began in 1964; voted down by 2 to 1. Del Webb was taking care of everything; little need to incorporate.
- Home Owners Associate formed and substituted for city government. Took our complaints to county.
- Del Webb Company by-laws said it would make studies of incorporation feasibility on a yearly basis. We did so. In 1974 the Taxpayers Assoc. also appointed committee to study incorporation; conclusions remarkably similar but dollar figures differed.
- About that time a veteran politician from Philadelphia, Albert Brown, moved in and he wanted no part of incorporation. In 1976 he founded the Town Meeting Assoc. (TMA) to help citizens arrive at policy decisions. This group enrolled 36,000 members by simply declaring every Sun Citian automatically enrolled. Then they claimed themselves as the only organization entitled to speak for all Sun Citians. In 1977 he suggested Homeowners and Taxpayers Associations might as well be disbanded, ignoring the fact that Sun City was the way it was because Webb built it that way. He argued that Citizens for Self-Gov't wanted to destroy S.C. He riled folks up.
- Incorporation studies were shared with the public at a public meeting. People at meeting rebelled against incorporation and many asked to have names taken from Homeowners list.
- Mr. Brown clobbered Del Webb. Meeker was president of DEVCO and in 1979 S.C. built out and Del Webb wanted to have someone else take over; Meeker did. He hired prestigious organization to make study, then called meeting. At meeting, when J.Svendson and Meeker started talking, the crowd would hoot and holler; Brown would raise his hand and they would hoot. He accused Webb Corp. Papers said that Del Webb Corp was trying to get out of responsibilities by promoting incorporation.

- L. C. Merrill* 2/27/92
- One night phone call wanting to know my address; late that night large rock thrown through window of house. It was meant for the next door; got wrong house. Committee for Self Government group received hundreds of letters telling us to get out of town. Two letters contained human excrement; also received bomb threats.
 - Mr. Brown died sometime during 1985. Nat Jampal was his replacement. He used inflammatory tactics. We have been ineffective at bringing incorporation to a vote; need about 3,500 signatures. People in public eye don't want to be identified.
 - We made several proposals; mayor and council will be volunteers. Mayor would be elected by council. Need a full time highly qualified professional to provide continuous management. I think the people of S.C. think of me as a wealthy man who wants to throw his weight around to run the town.
 - We here in Sun City have lost our good reputation in last 10 years. During Webb's time, Phoenix areas thought we were young and vigorous. Today, greater Phoenix thinks we are child haters, retired behind walls, don't want to pay taxes, etc. There is no ambassador to speak up for us. Ambassadors do good work; for no money. As S.C. ages, the residents need more buses, but money not there. SCAT is a volunteer system and use is escalating. Newer residents don't contribute much.

C-222

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 27th day of February, 1992, by and between Les E. Merydith (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 L. E. Munday

Date 2/27/92

Interviewee: _____ (name)

_____ (address)

Signed Melanie D. Sturgeon

Date 27 February 1992

Interviewer 1535 R. Hampton Circle (name)
Mesa, AZ 85204 (address)

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Les Merydith 27 Feb 1992

(Audio tape transcribed by Belva J McIntosh on 26 March 2008)

This is Melanie Sturgeon and on behalf of the Sun Cities Area Historical Association and the Arizona Historical Foundation, I am interviewing Les Merydith who has been active promoter of the incorporation issue in Sun City since 1978. I am interviewing him in his home in Sun City.

STURGEON: Les, can you tell me where you were born and when.

MERYDITH: I was born in Fairmount, West Virginia on January 18, 1904.

STURGEON: And did you grow up in West Virginia?

MERYDITH: No, my parents moved to Ohio when I was about three years old and I grew up in Marietta, Ohio. I went to school there and through college there.

STURGEON: What was your father's occupation?

MERYDITH: He was a contractor, a bridge contractor and a home builder.

STURGEON: How would you describe Marietta? Was it a small town?

MERYDITH: Marietta is the oldest town in the Northwest Territory, which included the states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin. It was at the junction confluence of the Ohio and the Muskingum rivers. That is the reason the city was founded there. It is older than Chicago or Cleveland or Detroit or any of those. We aren't talking about the forts, we are talking about the communities.

STURGEON: And was it an industrial community or a farming community?

MERYDITH: It was a river traffic community because in the early days before the railroads the commerce took place on the rivers and they had -----rivers. When I grew up there were steam boats all up and down the river. But it never grew much then after that because the main trunk railroads didn't go through there. But the valley, the Ohio Valley is the ruler of this nation. They have the steel mills and they have the heavy industry and so on.

STURGEON: You mentioned that you went to college there; did they have a university in Marietta?

MERYDITH: Yes. We had Marietta College which was the second oldest college in Ohio. It was founded in 1837 and it was founded before Ohio State University, which was the oldest. It has been a liberal arts college throughout its history. After I retired I was elected to the board of trustees and I spent four years on the campus. I was a member of the executive committee, working on college projects.

STURGEON: What did you study when you went to the University?

MERYDITH: I majored in mathematics and minored in chemistry. There is my diploma up there, cum laude.

STURGEON: What did you decide to do with your life after you graduated?

MERYDITH: Well, I intended to be a construction man. I worked my way through college in heavy construction during the summer, and any job I could get as a part time job during the school year. So I always thought that I would be a heavy construction engineer – a bridge builder. My grandfather was a bridge builder. He built all the bridges that were around in that part of the country, including the bridge across the Ohio River at Marietta.

STURGEON: So your grandparents were in Ohio when you moved there?

MERYDITH: Yes.

STURGEON: Were you involved in any community activities or were your parents?

MERYDITH: No, my parents were not very prosperous. They didn't cut much ice in -----

STURGEON: After you graduated you must have gone into some -----

MERYDITH: My grandfather was.

STURGEON: What kind of things did he do?

MERYDITH: He was on the city council and he was sort of a crusader.

STURGEON: So he was sort of an example to you?

MERYDITH: Yes.

STURGEON: After you graduated then what was your first job?

STURGEON: My first job was shoveling dirt at three dollars a day. It happened that that year for the first time I was so busy graduating that I didn't line up a job and it was in 1927 and jobs were very scarce so I went down to – after a week or so I decided that I was going to have to go someplace else and I heard that they were building a job across the Ohio River between Point Pleasant West Virginia and -----so I thought well I will just go down there and get a job. And I could handle most any job they had because I was familiar with construction machinery and methods. But the only job I could get was common labor so I thought well I will start at the bottom and it won't take me long to get up, but what a line. I found out that the lower levels of many organizations in those days that college boys didn't rate very high. Particularly in the mechanical trades. So as soon as my boss found out that I was a college graduate I had my

problems. I won't go into all those details but I got fired and not because of anything I did but because he asked me to work overtime and I couldn't get back across the river, we had to row across the river and the boat was on the other side so I couldn't work overtime so he fired me. So I heard that they were building a West Virginia National Guard Camp in the north end of Point Pleasant. I went up there and I got a job running a concrete mixer. We got a raise from three dollars a day to four and a half a day. After a half a day at that I noticed that they needed concrete finishers to get this job done. So I told my boss well if you will get me a screen or the materials to make one I will finish that concrete for you three times as fast as they are doing it. So he got me the materials and I made the screen and he gave me a helper and I was able with that device that they use on the roads to finish these floors in short order. So I was a hero and I got a raise to five dollars an hour. But in about two weeks I worked myself out of a job. So I didn't want to go back to Marietta with no job and tell them I wasn't any place. I heard that the Devro Construction Company was planning to build a bridge across the Ohio at Pomroy, Ohio. I thought well that is the kind of outfit I want to work for that has got enough money to spend their own money to build a bridge. So I got on the train and went up there and I went in and talked to the general superintendent. He sort of liked the way I talked so he gave me a job as a labor foreman building some underwater facilities for the -----Steel Mill in Duqueene Pennsylvania, suburb of Pittsburgh. So they gave me a gang of about fifteen blacks, I could hardly understand what they said, from the south. I was directing their efforts. They brought a diving suit on the job. Boy, my eyes lit up like a candle, so I said to the superintendent, who is going to use that and he said well I guess I am going to have to. All of our professional divers are busy. So he went down a few times exploring and I said well I could try that so they outfitted me and I went down and I got my job done and so I had a steady job then for the rest of the summer as a diver. In those days the suits were made of rubberized canvas. They had lead shoes, a lead life preserver and a collar plate of brass and a helmet. The collar plate bolted to your suit. The only part of you that was out in the water was your hands. There was two blacks up on deck pumping, so if one went to sleep I would still get my air. When you got that load on you could hardly walk. If you stumbled you would fall because it was so much weight. So ordinarily you would dress right beside the water then you got on the ladder and went down. So it was fun for a while. We were working ten hours a day except Sunday we only worked eight hours. It was a little different on Sundays. I shouldn't say that, I don't remember for sure if we worked Sundays or not. Anyway after I was thoroughly accustomed to the work and so on - and incidentally working under water, in that dirty water you could only see about eighteen inches in front of you. If you wanted to see anything you had to get real close. This was an old suit and the lacing was leather, the tops were sort of torn apart so they laced my shoes on and then tied the rest of the strings around my ankles. So this day I was down there working and one of my shoes came off so I just adjusted the pressure with the valve on my helmet and kept on working. Pretty soon the other one came loose. So I thought well it is time I went up above. I found that if I dropped something on the bottom of the river that I would have to lie down to get my eyes close enough to see it. So I laid down to find this other shoe and my suit filled up with air and I was standing on my head and I couldn't move. We had two knobs on our breast place. One had our lifeline which was a half inch rope around our waist and it was tied to this knob and the other was a hose that came under my arm and it came up on this side. So you had two things right in front of you all the time. You had your hose and your life line and you signaled to the tender above what you wanted to do. If you wanted more air you worked on your hose and if you wanted to boom up or boom down or load up or load down you had signals to communicate with. No telephones. So

when I went to call and let the guy up above that I was in trouble I couldn't get to my lifeline because the string had broken and my lifeline was like this see. Well it seemed like a long time but I finally got back here and I pulled and I came up feet first. Everybody was so excited that the superintendent fell on the ray in the river. I had another more dangerous mishap later on in the season that took a little bit of the charm of the job away from me. Long towards the end of the summer the water was getting colder and it was uncomfortable, this water would leak up your arms and get down so by the time you had worked there a couple of three hours you were wet and cold. So about that time, course my wife to be was down in Marietta and I hadn't seen her for three months, and so I said to the superintendent, I wonder what the chance of me getting off for Labor Day. He said well I don't know. I said I got off for Christmas three years ago. I got to thinking about that and I thought this is a hell of a life. Am I going to go through life like this? That same day I got a letter from the superintendent of schools in New Haven West Virginia offering me a job teaching math and science. I had applied there earlier in the summer. So I quit my career as a construction man and I taught school for a year there in New Haven. I coached basketball and I enjoyed it thoroughly. At the end of that school year, or shortly before the end of that school year, I got a letter from Mr. A. A. Stanball, who at that time was Vice President of Standard Oil Company of Ohio. He said (I still have the letter) he said, we are re-organizing the Standard Oil Company and my brother tells me that I had worked for his brother on a road construction contract. I had run a contract for him when I was a junior in college. I had run a contracting building guard rail for the state of Ohio. So he said my brother tells me you have qualities we are looking for, would you come up to Cleveland and let me look you over. So I went up and he hired me and I started a career with Standard Oil that lasted thirty seven years.

STURGEON: What did you do there?

MEREDYTH: I started in as a service station man at \$84 a month, 56 hours a week. But that was just for training and within a few months I was a supervisor of service stations. I used my mathematical vent to carve out a career that worked out very well. The marketing departments in those days were full of salesmen. They didn't fool around very much with figures and I was a figure man. I kept measuring things and comparing things and so on and gradually because I had started at the bottom and knew how things worked I could see well this isn't making any money and this is making money. We shouldn't be doing this we should be doing this. Over the years it worked out pretty well. My last job there was regional manager of the division that took care of the southwestern portion of Ohio and the states of Kentucky and West Virginia – or Kentucky and Indiana. I had about 1600 employees in that operation. I retired in 1965 and went back to Marietta for five years. Then I didn't feel at home in the academic world. They thought different than I did so we found Sun City and moved here in 1969.

STURGEON: When you working for Standard Oil were you living in Cleveland then?

MEREDYTH: I lived all over Ohio. I lived in Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati. I was living in Cincinnati when I retired – Akron, Canton, Mansfield.

STURGEON: Did you get involved in the community when you were living in -----

MEREDYTH: Yes, I did. I was very active in the communities where I stayed long enough to do so. In Canton for example my first major assignment, I was a promoter and chairman of the community that built a camp for the boy scouts and for the YMCA on a lake outside of town. I was also the vice president of the urban league and worked with the blacks. I had a lot of experience working with the blacks. Was active in the business organizations, community fund and the like. I was the president of three sales executive collaborations in Cleveland and Mansfield and Cincinnati.

STURGEON: Were you able to keep your job during the depression?

MEREDYTH: Yes, no problem. If you went to work for Standard Oil you had a job for life if you behaved yourself and then performed.

STURGEON: Do you remember in the mid thirties when they were debating about social security?

MEREDYTH: Yes, I heard Franklin Roosevelt tell us, you vote for me you will get \$100 a month for life when you reach the age of 65. And I believed him.

STURGEON: Did you think that would be a good thing?

MEREDYTH: Oh yes, one hundred dollars a month would be great.

STURGEON: When you were getting ready to retire and you had gone back to Marietta how did you hear about Sun City?

MEREDYTH: It happened by way of our involvement with travel trailing. My wife and I had a series of airstream travel trailers and for five years after I retired we covered this continent. Missed Mexico, but got Canada and every state of the union. We made some good friends. There was a couple from Texas that we were particularly fond of and they had moved to Mesa, or they had their trailer in Mesa. So we came out to visit them and we couldn't find an apartment that was satisfactory in Mesa and they had these vacation apartments in Sun City so we came out and had a vacation apartment at very reasonable rates for a week. At the end of the week we rented an apartment here in Sun City and before a month had passed we bought a home and then another one – we bought two homes within a month after we got here.

STURGEON: What was it you liked about this community?

MEREDYTH: The completeness of the enterprise. Everything you could possibly want was taken care of by Del Webb. You didn't have to worry about anything. They had entertainment, they had stores, and they had recreation facilities that were out of this world. Everybody was new so it was very easy to get acquainted. You didn't have to break into an established society. We still have friends that we met the first week we were here. That is a factor that I think is more important than any other for people of retirement age to move from some place else. Because if you move to another community it takes years to build a group of friendships. Where here everybody was on their own and they were looking for friends so it was just a magic thing. So

that is a point in favor of retirement communities. If we had moved to any other community we would have been outsiders.

STURGEON: Did your wife get involved in the community here?

MEREDYTH: She was a real estate broker and she had a very successful career as a real estate broker in Ohio. When she came to Sun City, well when we went to Marietta she was a little bit lost because she didn't have anything to do, she was ambitious. Incidentally she was the youngest graduate that ever graduated from Marietta College. She was still eighteen when she graduated. Well anyway, when she come out here she saw an ad in the paper for the house across the street and the ad was very poorly written. She went to the Del Webb Company who was the primary real estate agent in Sun City and talked to the manager. She said my friend has this nice house she wants to sell and this ad isn't right. She submitted an ad for it and he liked the ad. He said how would you like to go to work for us? So she went to work for Del Webb. She worked for ten years for Del Webb as a salesman, not as a broker. It wasn't a full time job for her and it wasn't in our home, it was in an office.

STURGEON: And what about, what did you do when you came out here? Did you get involved in a lot of community activities?

MEREDYTH: For the first nine years I was busy trying everything. I tried golf, I tried silver craft and rock hounding and all the different activities you could think of and enjoyed them. Then I bought a mining claim up in the Prescott National Forest – a seventeen acre mining claim and built with my own hands mostly, a nice home up there. I put a dredge in the creek and started dredging for gold. That took some time. Then we got interested in community work until one day a little fellow with an English accent called on me. His name was Jack Doward and it was in 1978. I had written a letter to the newspaper about something which had attracted his attention and he said you know we have got to get this town incorporated. We are losing millions of dollars in income tax money that we should be spending here. We don't have a dime of public funds to do things with that other cities have because we have no city treasurer. If we want to do anything we have to pass a hat to get it done. Being a mathematician I thought this doesn't make any sense. So I joined his little group. A short time later we organized what we called the Charter Government Association. It was incorporated in 1978 for the purpose of incorporating Sun City. We had twenty seven people there when we organized. Jack was the President and I have forgotten what committee I was on but anyway I was with them ever since. We changed our name in 1985 to Citizens for Self Government.

STURGEON: You were aware that they had tried to incorporate in the 1960's and it was defeated.

MEREDYTH: Yes. The city of Sun City, or rather I should say the unincorporated city of Sun City was founded or the first property was sold on January 1 1960. For the first few years they never thought too much about incorporation but by 1964 some people were thinking that this isn't running exactly the way it should run and so they petitioned for and held an election to incorporate. It was voted down about two to one. At that time there were only about five thousand people in the town. Del Webb was taking care of everything so there was very little

real need to incorporate. So shortly after that the Home Owner's Association was formed. That was sort of a mild substitute for a city government. They would take people's complaints and take them to the county or Del Webb or whoever. That was their function. It was more or less sponsored by Del Webb because Del Webb needed somebody to talk to. It is very difficult to talk to forty thousand people if there is nobody to represent them. So Del Webb really founded the Home Owner's Association. The Home Owner's Association in its by-laws when it incorporated said that we shall make periodic studies of the desirability of forming a city government. It was mandated by their charter that they make periodic studies of the feasibility of incorporation. They did so every other year was their pattern of operation. They would make a study – is it time to incorporate, should we or should we not. These were rather minor efforts. In 1974, January 1974 the board of directors of the Home Owner's Association appointed a research committee to study the thing in depth. Should we incorporate or should we not. They worked for twelve months. In December they come out with a report, I have copies of the report. The conclusion was that if we incorporated, operating under a charter, a charter form of government and using a contract method of providing most of our services that the people of Sun City could pay for their city government with state shared revenue and have a comfortable surplus left over to be used for improved services and for things that we don't have now. That same year the Taxpayer's Association, which was another organization that was formed some years previously for the purpose of studying the taxing situation in Sun City. The Taxpayer's Association at the same time appointed a committee to study the feasibility. They came out with their report at the end of the year. They didn't really turn it over to the board until January. The conclusions were remarkably similar. The dollar figures varied somewhat but the conclusion was that the people of Sun City that had a city government operating on a contract basis with a charter and the shared revenues would pay for all the anticipated expenses and have a surplus left over. This happened in 1974. At that same time there was a veteran politician from Philadelphia who moved to town. His name was Albert Brown. He had started as a patrolman in the city of Philadelphia and worked his way up to police commissioner. That is the top of the whole works. Suddenly in 19 – I have forgotten the date now, but he lost his job. Obviously he had fallen out with the boss. Philadelphia is noted for its pervasive machine politics. He just crosswise and got too ambitious so he left Philadelphia and ended up on the staff of Governor Williams in Arizona. He took up residence in Sun City. The supervisor representing Sun City on the board of supervisors of Maricopa County at that time was a fellow by the name of Hawley Atkinson. So Hawley Atkinson, before he became supervisor, he was working along side of Al Brown on Governor Williams staff. So they formed a friendship and they both moved to Sun City. So they decided that Al Brown would run Sun City and Hawley Atkinson would be the representative and they would decide what was going on in Sun City. They decided they didn't want any part of incorporation because they wanted to be the boss of Sun City. So Al Brown founded the Town Meeting Association in 1976 with the avowed purpose of providing a means whereby the residents can arrive at policy decisions that affect the future of Sun City. He enrolled 36000 spurious members in this organization by simply declaring that every person in Sun City was automatically a member of TMA. He then made the claim that TMA was the only organization in Sun City entitled to speak for all Sun Citians. He suggested in 1977 that the Home Owner's Association and the Taxpayers Association might just as well disband because the TMA was now the official representatives of Sun City.

STURGEON: What did the members of Sun City say because they seemed to be a fairly independent group?

MERYDITH: They joined it to start with. It sounded great. They called it the Town Meeting Association, so they had visions of these town meetings they had back in New England where that is the way they run things in some of the communities in New England. So they joined up. He got a strong following. So when anybody mentioned these studies Al Brown was right on them. You wouldn't think that Sun City people would fall for big city propaganda but they do in large numbers. What does it sound like. Sun City is perfect. Other cities are corrupt. Sun City is perfect because it doesn't have a city government. Other cities are bad because they do have a city government. Now he ignored the fact that the reason that Sun City was beautiful and as perfect as it is was because Del Webb built it that way. So anything that is desirable was because it was unincorporated. Anything that was undesirable in these other cities was because they were incorporated. He said a government would destroy Sun City. The people who advocate city government hate Sun City. CGA members (that is us) want to destroy Sun City. CGA leaders are power hungry politicians. CGA leaders want to get their feet back into the trough. CGA leaders are crooked politicians. CGA wants to open our rec centers to all comers. We never said that of course. CGA would invite in low cost housing. We never said any such thing as that. CGA statements are false – they have no credibility. Our two county supervisors will take good care of us.

STURGEON: I have always thought it curious that Youngtown was across the street and they were incorporated and they didn't have those problems that he was talking about. Did anyone argue besides your group? Did anyone say I don't think that is right?

MEREDYTH: Yes, we argued but we were amateurs. This fellow was a professional. He knew how to get the attention of the press. He knew how to hold public meetings. He knew how to stir up people and get them mad. He would get people so mad at us that that threw rocks through our windows. They would scratch our cars – Reba's car has a scratch all around her car because she has a bumper sticker on there for incorporation. Al Brown had two organizations. He founded the Town Meeting Association and then he moved over and took over the Retirement Community Association which was an organization that was formed for the same purpose about a year or so before by some earnest ladies in town. But he took them over and was the president for their organization until he died. The treasurer, the original treasurer of the Town Meeting Association who became the president within a few years was Nat Jampel. He has been the president of Town Meeting Association since the early 70's. Now this particular issue (end of side one) (side two started out this way) to talk to and so the thinking people know this but the uninformed people, and a lot of retired people, the university people, your doctors and lawyers. Some of our strongest supporters are doctors. More people on our rosters here are doctors than any other because they are educated and they are thinking people. But too many people are here to relax. They aren't going to worry about something that we are fighting about all the time. And if those people are going to take our heads off if we mention the word incorporation we aren't going to mention it. I don't want my car scratched up by putting a bumper sticker on there. One night I answered the phone and this man's voice said what is the address of the Citizens for Self Government. I said well we are actually operating out of my

home. I said it is 1036 Kalapani Point. Next night there was a rock thrown threw the window next door, they got the wrong house.

STURGEON: So you feel like you have been threatened someway.

MEREDYTH: We have, that is the Citizens for Self Government and the Charter Government Association, have received hundreds of letters saying, get out of town, you are trying to ruin our city. We have received at least two letters with human excrement in them, where they have used our literature for toilet paper and mailed it to us. We had one man who received so many threatening phone calls, as a matter of fact, what happens is that these people have been so incited that they will do unreasonable things. We got a letter in the mail not long ago since we moved into our headquarters over there with a notation on the margin that said we should bomb your place. We turned it over to the FBI and it turns out it is a little old lady who is slightly demented on the subject and she sends about two letters a month to us for the past three or four years. Telling us to get out of town, you are ruining our town. People just get so mad at us. Some people if you even mention the word incorporation say don't talk to me. Good friends of mine. They say, now listen, if you are going to talk about incorporation we will just quit talking.

STURGEON: Did Mr. Brown pass away?

MEREDYTH: Yes. I have been trying to tie down that figure but I think it was long about '85. He had a lieutenant who he put in as president of the Town Meeting Association. His name was Nat Jampel. Nat is a little Jewish fellow from New York City who gave as his occupation as the executive secretary of a health related organization. He didn't have this direct experience that Al did but he learned very well. They have continued it ever since to use the inflammatory tactics.

STURGEON: How have you tried to overcome that?

MEREDYTH: We have been very ineffective at overcoming it. We kept saying the truth will win in the long run. So we kept telling the truth and pointing out the errors. I am going to come out in the paper, we will put out another newspaper to every home in Sun City and we will point out in there thirty seven specific lies in it. We won't call it lies, we will say misstatements or errors in fact or something like that. We have never really stooped down to his level and that is because we are amateurs. If we really had on our board some professional politicians we would have probably been more successful.

STURGEON: I understand that – are they trying to bring this to a vote again?

MEREDYTH: We are bringing it to a vote. About a week ago we filed a petition, we are now circulating petitions, Citizens for Self Government are now circulating petitions to bring this to a vote next November. We will need about 3500 signatures. We think we will get them. We have around 2600 members on our roster that have paid dues so we know that they are for incorporation. Some of those people however are not even voters because they are old and incapacitated. Some of them have their legal homes in Canada or Chicago, so we can't count on 2600 signatures because some of them are not qualified to vote. But we plan to get this on the ballot for November.

STURGEON: Are you having a hard time getting signatures because people don't want other people to see them signing it or ----?

MEREDYTH: We have trouble getting people – our main difficulty in getting people outside of our membership to sign the petition is that it is internal with us. Our people are not aggressive. They don't like to talk to somebody who is going to take their head off if they mention the word incorporation. So what we plan to do is to talk to the people that we know and we think we can get enough signatures without getting our heads taken off. There is one other factor. There are people in the public eye that are hesitant to be identified because of this ----

STURGEON: You had mentioned that when they did this study that they were thinking about continuing to contract a lot of the services out. Were you talking about a volunteer Mayor like Youngtown when you were setting up your proposals for what the city would be like?

MEREDYTH: Yes. There are several proposals that we make. These studies have been made and our proposals have been consistently been that our Mayor and council will be volunteers. We have such a successful record in Sun City in utilizing the talents that we have here to run things like the hospital and all these different organizations. So there is plenty of qualified people here to fill these jobs. We propose an unpaid mayor and council. The mayor would be elected by the council.

STURGEON: Then would you be thinking of hiring a city manager?

MEREDYTH: Yes. In order to conduct the affairs of a city the size of Sun City you would have to have full time, highly qualified professionals who are on the job during business hours who would provide a continuous management function with records and files and with the advice of council of an attorney and engineer. So we would have a handful of full time paid professionals and we would be qualified and financially able to hire the best.

STURGEON: Now would you choose these people from Sun City or outside?

MEREDYTH: The professionals would be the best we could find. We could get bargains in that market because this would be a breeze to run Sun City. It would be a perfect place for a very successful, competent city manager who has reached close to retirement age and would like to ease off and we could get a real highly qualified person for a little less than if he was in a place where they had crime problems and all that. This would be a breeze.

STURGEON: I heard that one of the things that the opposition says is that your group is power hungry and just want to take over. Why do you think that have an idea like that?

MEREDYTH: You would be surprised what the people of Sun City think about Les Meredyth. They think I am – I am being painted as a wealthy man who wants to throw his weight around. Word had gotten out that I had given a half a million dollars to Marietta College so now they are using that against me. They are saying here is that rich guy and he wants to run the town and we don't want him to do it.

STURGEON: Is that what they are using against the other people in your group?

MEREDYTH: There has been no foundation whatever to the claim that we are out of work politicians. We have never had an experienced politician on the board. We don't have them yet.

STURGEON: Are there other politicians living here that you could recruit?

MEREDYTH: We have tried to interest some of them but so far we have never had a mayor or a fully qualified politician on our board. They just don't want to get involved. Maybe there aren't that many of them around.

STURGEON: I know when I interview people a lot of them sound like they don't want to get involved. Do you think that is part of the problem? Do you think it is just a small group on both sides that are involved and the rest of the people really don't care?

MEREDYTH: That's right. Actually we are not really suffering. What we are saying is that we could be so much better off and the pain is beginning to show. We have lost our reputation in the last ten years. When Del Webb was here everybody in the whole Phoenix area thought that the people in Sun City were great. They were vigorous, they were young, they were busy doing this, they were helping out Surprise, they were helping out El Mirage, they were world travelers, they were intelligent, they had their own symphony. They were great people. What is it today? Today the people of the greater Phoenix area think we are a bunch of child haters. We are retired behind our walls, we don't want to pay taxes, we hate children. We had the publisher of our two leading newspapers come out and say everybody in the state ought to be mad at the people in Sun City because they are opposed to pay their full share of the taxes to support our schools. The reason we have lost our reputation is that we don't have Del Webb, or we don't have a mayor, we don't have anybody to speak up for us.

STURGEON: You don't have anybody promoting Sun City.

MEREDYTH: We do have an organization called the Ambassadors and they are doing a good job but they don't have any money. We as a community are dead broke. The only way we can support the Ambassadors which is like a Chamber of Commerce is to pass the hat. So they get a few thousand dollars and they pay the rent up there but they can't put ads in the papers and national magazines saying, hey Sun City is a wonderful place. Or produce a video that they can send all over the world. We have no way of promoting Sun City. We are broke. We've got a SCAT dial-a-ride here and it is doing a terrific job but as people are getting older and the clientele is getting greater and greater and we don't have any money unless we pass the hat. The fares only amount to about half of what it costs. We get a little money from MAAG, that is ----, we get a little from them, but we don't get anymore from the county, we don't get anymore from the federal government so it is a very precarious situation. We need two or three more buses so we can expand our hours beyond six o'clock. But we can't do it because the funds aren't there. If we were incorporated the state law sets aside a certain portion of the lottery funds. They call it the public transportation assistance fund which is given to the cities and towns in Arizona. Youngtown gets a share in it and they don't even have a bus line. Sun City doesn't get it. It

would amount to some three hundred thousand dollars. That would put our SCAT dial-a-ride system, which is volunteer -----A very good friend of ours, Dale Shockley, is the president of the SCAT and he said we would be on easy street if we could put that three hundred thousand dollars on top of what we already got. We could get a couple more buses and we could hire more drivers and we could ----. We have got to get it he said, or we are in trouble. I don't know what we are going to do in a year or two because the use is escalating.

STURGEON: I would like to ask your opinion but as I have been interviewing some of the older residents of Sun City they feel that a lot of the new groups that are coming in are not as dedicated to the community as perhaps the older ones were, so they are not contributing as much. Do you find that?

MEREDYTH: That is true. Take my own experience. The first five years I was here I didn't care a thing about what was going on. I was unaware of it. I was too busy, all these goodies here, it was captivating. I was busy with having fun. So the new people coming in it takes them a year or two before they begin to pay attention to what is really going on.

STURGEON: Do you have any sense of how this election is going to turn out?

MEREDYTH: I think we are going to get the petition on the ballot and I think we have a chance of winning. I am not too optimistic because time is getting away from us and we are falling a little behind schedule. We have been putting out a newspaper – something like this.

STURGEON: Looking over what the Homeowner's Association had investigated in the early 1960's and they did a really thorough job and it looked as an outsider reading all the information that they thought that the vote would be in favor of incorporation and all of a sudden they were defeated. Do you know there – was there someone like Mr. Brown?

MEREDYTH: No there wasn't at that time but the same thing was present as is present now. As I mentioned the people that come here for the first few years are so busy enjoying the goodies and they think well we don't need anything. This is perfect. This is heaven. There are even license plates around town that say this is heaven. And in those days Del Webb was making it that way. He was selling houses by creating that atmosphere. Factually there was little need for it. There was a need to communicate with the people and Del Webb established that with the Home Owner's Association. That was adequate but even as we get closer to the build-out when Del Webb was moving on then it became apparent to thinking people that something had to replace Del Webb.

STURGEON: Now you have been involved in this organization since 1978. Have you actively been pursuing incorporation since then or do you get busy and sort of lay off.

MEREDYTH: I have never lost my determination to win this thing. There was a time back in 1982 when the founder, Jack DeWard, got worried that I was going to take his job and he made things unpleasant for me and I resigned. A year later the board came to me and said will you please come back and I came back. I have been president or chairman most of the time since. There was a period of one year where I promoted the idea of putting Ed Martin, who was ideal

man to lead this new movement. He was a PhD, a retired military officer, and a former president of a college. He was here and he was dedicated to this movement. So I said I want you, Ed Martin, to take over and run this thing and we can win. Well, Ed didn't have the background that I had and he decided that we weren't going to wait until next year that we were going to do it this year. He started a petition drive the first of April or the last week of March. It came the end of May and everybody left town and we ended up about a thousand short. So we lost that drive so in September he resigned and I took back over.

STURGEON: Are there any other areas you would like to talk about that your group is involved in that I haven't asked you that you feel are important?

MEREDYTH: Well, I can give you my appraisal of the current situation. I came to the conclusion a year or so ago that our problem was that we were acting as an undercover organization. We had no headquarters. This was the headquarters for the history, almost the entire history for the incorporation movement. It was operated out of Les Meredyth's spare bedroom. Any communication that goes out goes out through this phone and any communication that comes in comes in on this phone. So it became sort of a one man organization and even though I had very fine people on our board, PhD's and practical men and women, some of the women were just as good as the guys. But we weren't organized. I am 88 years old and I am not as keen as I used to be. I'm not as good on my platform performances as I used to be. My memory fails me when I need it worse. So I thought I have got to get out of the top of this thing. So last summer I resigned as president of the Citizens for Self Government and the board elected Doris Foster. Doris Foster is a very intelligent, capable person. She has the knack of getting people to work together. She is the ultimate team player. My problem was that I would ask people to do something and if they didn't do it I would never ask them to do it again. She asks people and they do it. She has the ability to get enthusiasm out of people. So she is our president and she is doing a terrific job. Then to get away from this undercover operation of ours I determined that we needed a place where the people could meet together every day, any time and communicate with each other so it didn't have to fall on one person, and it is working. So we leased that place over there -----So the organization rented a headquarters and we furnished it and moved in, the board meets every other week and they have a coordinating committee that meets every week and so they are organized to get the work done without filtering a bottleneck. So I think that they have the opportunity to win this election if they can beat the time clock. Days and hours and months go by so fast. We rented that place and they moved in first of September. We had a grand opening in October and we had scheduled a publication of Outlook every month. We were going to do all these things. It just seemed like we don't have enough time. The editor and publisher of our Outlook, which I had been producing in my laundry back there, was moved over there and was turned over to an ex-newspaper man, a very talented and capable man. He is also a lawyer. Then he turned up sick and hasn't been able to get out but one issue since we moved into the new headquarters. We should have had two and we ought to have three issues out. Every time we put one of these out, we not only get our message over but they pay for themselves. We enclose an envelope and most of the members we have we got through our newspaper. Every time we get enough money to publish another one plus new members. We have fallen behind in our schedule. Part of it is just because - well the man who took over the job of getting these petitions out and back is in the hospital and is laid up for 60 days. So when you are working with people who are not in the prime of life and when you are working

with volunteers – it was a very difficult transition for me to move from being a corporate executive to being the head of a volunteer group. I was used to if I said lets get this done it got done. Now somebody will say, yeah I will volunteer and then they call up and say I can't do this or we got people coming. First thing you know it isn't done. It is very difficult to make that transition from executive to volunteer coordinator.

STURGEON: Have you found that other members of your group have also had their cars scratched up?

MEREDYTH: Yes, we have had probably at least eight that have been reported. One of our members was a head of the recreation centers. Jack Spellman was a retired executive for Wall Street Journal. He became the president of the recreation centers. How he got to be that was Al Brown recruited him and said we can get you elected to the president of the rec centers. So Jack says OK. So as soon as he was installed Al said now Jack this is the way we want to do this. Pretty soon it come to a place where Jack said I am not going to do that. Al Brown said, yes you are – oh no I am not. First thing you know there is a recall election held to get rid of Jack Spellman and a fellow by the name of Vogel who was the vice-president. They are incompetent; they are this, that and the other. During that time I happened to be in Jack Spellman's office. I have forgotten what the occasion was. Probably a committee meeting of some kind. Jack was supposed to be in at ten o'clock. He didn't come in and he didn't come in and we sat there and finally come in. He said we had a little interruption out here. I apologize, but a fellow came in here demanding to talk to me. The secretary said he is in a meeting and he said well I want to see that son of a bitch and I want to see him now. She come in all disturbed and I don't remember if Jack went out or not but he handed this lady an excerpt from a gun magazine, with pictures of guns and on the margin it said this one is for you Jack and so on. The fellow was obviously demented. So they called the sheriff but the man was gone and nobody knew who it was. In the meantime this vilification program that Brown was so familiar with was so effective and these late night phone calls, he was called in the middle of night and was called names. His wife was subjected to obscene calls. This campaign went on and I'll never forget. Jack was sick, this was in May. He had been recovering from the flu and he was getting ready to go back to Chicago for the summer. I said, well Jack I been wanting to show you my place up in the mountains and maybe it would be good for you to take the trip. So we got in my car and we took a drive up to the mountains for the day and on the way up I cranked up the tape recorder and on the way back I cranked it up. He told me what he went through, the persecution that he and his wife went through during that year that he served as president of the recreation centers. He told how at the board meetings, which were open to the public, that he would get half a dozen people in the group and actually bring the proceedings to a halt. Jack could not even get business done because they would interrupt. They would slip notes to their – they had about half the board who were members of the Town Meeting Association, never succeeded in getting the five members that they needed to really run things. They really only had four and they never quite got the five that it took to really take over the whole shebang. But anyway to make a long story short, Jack and his wife never came back to Sun City. She wouldn't come back. She had been through so many traumas that she would not return to Sun City. The Town Meeting Association run Jack Spellman out of town. They have been trying to run Les Meredyth out of town and they been trying to run everybody that disagrees with them out of town. I would get hundreds of letters

that say why don't you get out of town? If you don't like Sun City go over to El Mirage. Now you get out of town or we will ride you out of town on a rail.

STURGEON: That is a shame. Was Mr. Spellman removed then, was there a recall election to remove him or did he just quit?

MEREDDYTH: No, it was defeated.

STURGEON: Is there anything else you think would be relevant

MEREDDYTH: No, I think I have covered everything.

STURGEON: Well, thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed. I appreciate that.

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 223

Interview with Ethel Parker Exline

March 13, 1992

Date of Birth: November 11, 1905

Place of Birth: Missouri

Ethel was the first person to move into a house in Youngtown, Arizona

Synopsis:

- Left Missouri when 20 years old; married Earl Parker, Wabash Railroad Engineer, and moved to Ohio. He flew in Air Force during WWI; trained in London during WWII; got medical discharge; came to AZ for his health. Went to Tucson for its Veteran's Hospital.
- Moved to Tucson to be near the Veteran's Hospital. While visiting friends in Tempe, we decided to move north. We moved to Sunnyslope and I got a job with J.C. Penney's.
- January, 1955, husband bought Youngtown house with \$1,000 down; 18 houses built at that time and no paved streets.
- Husband thought great future in Youngtown; couldn't build houses fast enough; he bought 5 lots to help out and build more houses.
- We were a welcoming community; in winter we'd take a gallon of coffee to new residents; in summer it would be ice tea or water.

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 13 day of March, 1992, by and between Ethel Parker Exline (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie J. 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:

X Signed Ethel Parker Exline Date 3-13-92

Interviewee: Ethel Parker Exline (name)

_____ (address)

Signed Melanie I. Sturgeon Date 13 March 1992

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

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 224

Interview with Oscar Friske, M.D.

March 20, 1992

Date of Birth: January 19, 1903

Place of Birth: Sparta, Wisconsin

One of early Sun City doctors.

Synopsis:

- Came to Sun City 1960.
- Both parents born in Germany
- Sparta a very small town; artillery army camp close by so there were lots of soldiers
- Went to University of Wisconsin for 8 years in 1930, 2nd in class.
- Sent to Kansas City for internship December 5, 1929; went to University for Indiana to intern; stayed for two years; met wife there.
- Had two year residency at Good Samaritan, Phoenix.
- Delivered 467 babies in Wisconsin; moved to Phoenix in 1948
- Worked for Phelps Dodge in Ajo and was head surgeon; retired in 1950s
- Came to Sun City when it has 4,400 people; volunteered to be the doctor.
- People collected lots of money for hospital.

C-224

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 20th day of March, 1992, by and between Oscar W. Friske, MD (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie J. 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.

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x Signed Oscar W. Fische m.d. Date 3-20-92

Interviewee: 9931 Sun city Blvd (name)
Sun city, Arizona (address)
J, 85351

Signed Melanie I. Sturgeon Date 20 March 1992

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

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 225

Interview with Amelia D. Lewis

Date of Birth: 1903

Place of Birth: New York City

Amelia was an early resident of Sun City and a prominent attorney.

Synopsis:

- Raised in tenement district in Bronx where German families lived. Parents born here, but grandparents born in Germany and Vienna. Father was a window trimmer in men's fashion wear; with Saks.
- Attended public school; then preparatory school until 16; got GED.
- Attended Hunter College until age 18; Graduated from St. Lawrence University School of Law, now called Brooklyn Law School, in 1924. There were 12 girls in a class of 300. Admitted to bar in 1925. Worked in law office; became managing attorney; wrote most papers.

- When 17, college professor took me to important meeting. Heard Carrie Chapman Catt speak. Wanted to help women learn to vote. Catt said she hired advertising firm to help advise how.
- I was member of League of Women Voters. Before 1935 campaign to adopt Social Security, I spoke and campaigned for it because too many old people became dependent on others due to Depression.
- Applied in 1928 for membership in NY City Bar Assoc., sent in \$75 dues. President of organization replied to my application by saying 'sorry, no female members; not enough powder room space'. Joined New York County Bar instead.

- Married in final year of law school; first son born 1925; second son born in 1930; third son in 1931. I stayed home until youngest son was 8; returned to work. Husband a social worker, became Hosp. Admin.
- Late 1940s working for an attorney handling capital cases on appeal. One case was man accused of killing mother and father. He had confessed under hypnosis. Said didn't want mother to suffer, so he killed quickly, but

wanted father to suffer. When appealed, they threw out the confession. I got transcript of trial on onion skin paper, file was 14" thick. Was requested to reduce file down to one page; appeal was successful, but murderer got off; I never got over that.

- In 1950 volunteered w/Legal Aid Society and sent to Criminal Division working with youngsters 15 to 20. Judge threw me out for comforting a boy accused of stealing a bike; Judge transferred me to Women's Court, working with call girls.
- Studied for Masters Degree at NY Law School; writing legislation; received Masters in 1956.

- Middle son, Frank, and wife decided to move to Arizona. Husband agreed to retire in 1958. He died at age 62 in 1957. I moved to AZ.
- .When came to AZ, took classes at U of A to prepare for AZ Bar. Sandra Day O'Conner in class with me; asked me why I asked so many questions.
- Took job in Navajo County as Deputy County Attorney. Once, Sheriff found skeleton in dump, painted red, yellow, and blue. Sheriff thought it was voodoo, but I thought it looked like a teaching skeleton. Through investigation, found out it was.
- Stayed five years part of which was in private practice.

- In 1962 friends advised me to come to Sun City. Came in 1963. I rented. Webb had everything north of Grand Ave. zoned commercial.
- Volunteered legal services to veterans.
- Variety Club: People did skits; brought in talented visitors.
- Helped Women's Club in Surprise incorporate.
- Sun City West had me represent them in setting up community fund; did pro bono work for various organizations, i.e.: golfers unhappy with board of rec. ctrs. I advised them to run golfers for the Board.

- I was for incorporation. No violence over incorporation. Might cost a little more; certain amount of internecine warfare, but should govern selves. Sun City needs only Posse to patrol streets. In 1963 incorporation defeated; people didn't want the responsibility of having local magistrates, lawyers, etc.
- I was threatened by S.C. resident from Chicago. Police officer said of me: "This gal is one tough old bird."
- Del Webb was a sugar daddy. Built up a place that stood up beautifully. I bought home from a couple who bought it from a mail advertisement. They arrived July 15 and left by August 1.

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- Del Webb was a sugar daddy. Built up a place that stood up beautifully. I bought home from a couple who bought it from a mail advertisement. They arrived July 15 and left by August 1.

- Some S.C. residents came for health reasons but health didn't always improve. Two hospitals were built; many great doctors attracted.
- Many folks came and rented an apt. for 2 weeks while house hunting.
- In beginning Webb made deeds for husband/wife. Then made joint tenancy, leaving the whole house to other spouse when one dies. I met Del Webb; he was quite a character.
- Over time many Sun Citians became prosperous residents. Because active retirement living, living was easier and nicer. I like Sun City better larger than smaller. Ben Schleiffer of Youngtown thought retirement should be no larger than 500 families.
- Found the practice of law in Sun City very interesting. Generous lending money out without security, probate, documents, pre-nuptial agreements, dissolution of marriages, etc.

C-#225

Release Form

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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:
6. Interviewee says there will be no restrictions on use of interview, interviewer being informed by interviewee that she is in the process of publishing her autobiography which will be copyrighted.

X Signed Amelia D. Lewis Date 20 March 1992

Interviewee: Amelia D. Lewis (name)
10432 105th Ave (address)
Sun City, Az.

Signed Melanie I. Sturgeon Date 20 March 1992

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

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 226

Interview with Dorothy Hubbell

October 22, 1992

Date of Birth: 1899

Place of Birth: Indiana

Dorothy moved to Sun City in 1970.

Synopsis:

- Graduated from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, then taught 2 years in public school in Indiana at the Waterloo High School, music classes as well as 1st and 3rd graders.
- Mother and I had visited AZ when I was 16. Felt like it was a foreign country; foreign languages, trees different, sage brush; it was exciting.
- Originally came to AZ to be near my father and family, who had intentions of moving to OR. Applied at a teacher's agency in Chicago. Got letter from Mrs. Goodman of Ganada, AZ, who was looking for a private teacher for her four children.
- When I came to Ganada, I taught two children of the Hubbell family and two cousins; got the course of study from the state. Interesting school room at Ganada; long hall opens into courtyard.
- Taught older boy until 2nd year in H.S., then sent to my sister in Illinois. Younger boy, John, I taught through the 8th grade. County Supervisor came out to inspect everything in the school.
- No one lived near us; the trading post was about 60 miles from Gallup, NM; Mr. Hubbell often had guests, and he never charged anyone. Guests included: John Collier, Secretary of the Interior; Harold Ickes; Ernest Hemingway's mother; Will Rogers; Margaret Dixon, Nicholas Roosevelt, etc.
- Ramon was in charge of Ganada trading post; a large trading post. I went out in Sept. and 2 years later we were married.
- Ramon's wife died in 1918 of influenza; when I went there, John was only 2 years old.

- Mr. Hubbell well acquainted with Teddy Roosevelt; Mr. Hubbell took him to the Hopi Snake Dance; Mr. Roosevelt very jolly.
- Circus came to Gallup once and children had never seen an elephant; were surprised to see they really had trunks.
- Lived at Ganado from 1920 to 1928 then went to Gallup for the mail and freight line to Chinle and Ganada. I took care of the accounts.
- Sent John to Columbia University; I finally sold Ganada because boys weren't interested in it; it is now a National Historic Site.
- Came to Sun City in 1970.

C-#226

Nov. 12, 1992

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 12 day of November, 1992, by and between Dorothy Hubbell (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie J. 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 Dorothy Hubbell

Date 12 November 1992

Interviewee: Dorothy Hubbell

(name)

(address)

Signed Melanie J. Sturgeon

Date 12 November 1992

Interviewer Melanie J. Sturgeon

(name)

1535 E. Hampton Circle
Mesa, Az 85204
(address)

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 227

Interview with Retha Beveridge

Date of Birth: April 8, 1910

Place of Birth: Glendale, Arizona

Retha arrived in Sun City in 1963.

Synopsis:

- Born in Arizona Territory in small agricultural town.
- Graduated from Glendale High School, went to AZ State Teacher's College in 1929, after stock market crash.
- Farm family; remember coming on flat bed, hay truck, churches built armadas with palm fronds for shade;
- Mother was a graduate of Central Missouri Univ., graduated Lamson Business College; became credit manager of Bordens in downtown Phx., so as a child, I went to Phx. a lot.
- Saw Gila monster; and took the Gila monster to Evan's Reptile Gardens on Van Buren; got \$3.50.
- Grand Avenue was not paved until Wickenburg.
- Many desert roads; 99th Avenue most prominent; as teens we'd come out in model-T Ford to shoot jackrabbits.
- Father worked for cattle feeding company called Burke Ranch; came from Kansas for his health; mother came out and they were married.
- In my grade school, after WWI I, there were 19 different nationalities: Native Americans, Mexicans, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos.

- Graduated at 19; taught in Safford for one year; taught at Jerome until the mines closed; came to Glendale in 1935 and taught non-English speaking students: Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, and Native Americans, in the throes of the Depression, in a room 36' X 36', that housed 91 students; average attendance was 72 students.
- No money for another teacher or teacher's aide; many children came in from Mexico.
- By the time the Depression had eased, I had married and moved to Holbrook, AZ

- My husband was a professional forester, assistant Supervisor of Sitgreaves National Forest.
- Holbrook was 80% Mormon; Safford also a Mormon community; most college friends were Mormon. Lived in Holbrook from 1936 to 1941 Holbrook when husband was transferred to Lincoln Forest in Alamogordo, New Mexico. Was there when first atomic bomb was tested; brilliant flash about 6 a.m.; we believed ammunition dump exploded. Shook clear in to Flagstaff ; heard that some grazing cattle had hair turn white.
- Met Dorothy Hubbell when I was 13; John Brown, Superintendent of Indian School invited us to the Navajo Reservation; stayed overnight at Ganado. Dorothy was tall with beautiful brown eyes and hair; interested in everyone; she and Roman made a handsome couple.
- Lived in Albuquerque when State Dept. asked husband to represent U.S. as a forester; a number of forests depleted in the Korean War; hard to find a fast-growing tree that could be used as firewood; used American Black Locust; 3 billion planted a year by school children.
- Doing research for trees took us to Burma, Turkey, and India. 1958 not many Americans there; had tea with Sultan; lived 6 years doing this; when finished we returned to Arizona.
- We considered Hong Kong for retirement. But Sun City offered all those golf course. When we arrived, it was still small. Burt and Ursula Freireich were the glue that held this new community together.
-
- Recall seeing the KKK (Klu Klux Klan) burning crosses in the White Tank Mtns. Why they came to AZ was a mystery; AZ had no race problems; blacks lived in Phx. south of the Santa Fe Railroad. Outside the old Adams Hotel there was a black shoeshine man; had the kind of stand you climbed up on for a shine.
- Sun City offered more amenities than Youngtown and we wanted the better facilities.
- Sun City was delightful little town; whole city was interested in baseball team.
- I was entertainment Chairman of softball team; was invited by numerous civic organizations to show slides and photos of the many countries I had visited.
- I was interested in birds and led bird study groups around community.

- By 1963 there were controversies re: incorporation; I was a rebel; rankled badly when we were taken out of the school district; angry at those who said they had raised their own children, so why should they pay for someone else's. We should help support the children.

C-#227

Nov. 6, 1992

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 6 day of November, 1992, by and between Retha Beveridge (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie T. Thurgeon (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 Retha E. Beveridge Date 6 Nov 1992

Interviewee: Retha Beveridge (name)
9909 La Jolla Circle S (address)
Sun City, AZ

Signed Melanie J. Sturgeon Date 6 Nov 1992

Interviewer Melanie Sturgeon (name)
1535 E Hampton Circle (address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 228

Interview with Ruth Compton

November 6, 1992

Date of Birth: March 20, 1897

Place of Birth: Stewart, Iowa

Ruth was an early Sun City resident, arriving in September 1960. She and her husband ran the first post office.

Synopsis:

- Stewart was a small town of 1200; father worked in brickyard.
- I worked in telephone office while growing up; loved living in a small town; went to church; sang in choir.
- Met husband at Chataqua, married June, 1922; moved to Twin Falls, Idaho, where husband worked in post office.
- Husband fought in WWI; had a long, nearly 70 year, marriage.
- Worked in postal employees auxiliaries; adopted a child; moved to Hasting, here we lived until moving to Sun City in Sept., 1960.

- Came to Sun City for my arthritis and cheap housing; still live in same house; paid cash for house. Liked the location and the people; liked 'active retirement' concept. Consider us pioneers; preferred it when it was smaller town.
- Neighbors very friendly; joined bridge club, 'welcoming club', and worked at the lodge for older people. We kept very busy.
- Retired husband took over the newly-established S.C. post office and worked there for 7 years.
- Went to dances at the center; worked with Tom Austin; a nice guy.
- Husband a golfer and gardener.

- Remember when Boswell Hosp. was built; don't think it influenced others to come here; more likely the weather and the climate.
- We were against incorporation but for school taxes; husband involved in Homeowner's group.

- Made good use of Rec. Ctr.; never regretted our move here.

COMPTON, RUTH

Nov. 6, 1992

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 6th day of November, 1992, by and between Ruth Compton (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.

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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 p 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 Ruth M. Compton

Date 6 November 1992

Interviewee: Ruth Compton (name)

12601 S. Andrew Dr. W. (address)

Sun City, Az 85351

Signed Melanie I. Sturgeon

Date 6 November 1992

Interviewer Melanie I. Sturgeon (name)

1535 E. Hampton Circle (address)

Mesa, Az 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 229

Interview with Sam Higgenbotham

November 12, 1992

Date of Birth: July 14, 1909

Place of Birth: South of Tyler, Texas

Sam was active in the Lion's Clubs and set up a number of community volunteer programs.

Synopsis:

- Born on family farm; went to grade school through the eighth grade.
- Left home at age 14 to work in oil fields; then went into construction.
- Difficult time in Depression; was offered job, but thought I could do better; couldn't find better, so I went back to job offer and took same job at much lower salary.
- Construction with Atlantic Refining Company until WWII, then became a welder; moved to South Dakota, then Nevada; started building motels in Nevada in 1952; retired December 1958.
- Traveled a lot in life; wife read about Sun City.

- Wife ill, went to see Sun City on January 18, 1960; back to Nevada, then bought a home in Sun City on the golf course.

- Sun City appealed because it wasn't a big risk; owned six S.C. houses.

- Joined Lions in 1965; became very busy with the club. Helped set up newspaper recycle bins; helped set up recording studio for the blind.

Signed Sam Higgenbotham Date 12 November 1992

Interviewee: Sam Higgenbotham (name)

(address)

Signed Melanie J. Sturgeon Date 12 November 1992

Interviewer Melanie J. Sturgeon (name)
1535 E. Hampton Circle (address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

C230

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 230

Interview with Maxine Newman

November 19 1992

Place of Birth: South Dakota

Maxine was Del Webb's Executive Secretary.

Synopsis:

- Grew up in South Dakota. Came to Phoenix in about 1942 to visit relatives; decided to stay. Studied to become a teacher.
- Worked for insurance company; then in L.A. w/Army Corps of Engineering for 14 years; met Del Webb; he hired me and I did contracts for all Army bases being built, many by Del Webb Corp. and L.C. Jacobson. (Naval Air Force Base at Litchfield Park; then Arden Farms Co.). When contracts needed to be extended they called them 'change orders' and I had to get all signatures; think I signed Del's name as often as he did.
- Originally began with Del Webb as payroll and personnel clerk. Moved up to work as assistant under Del's male assistant.

- Del Webb was half owner of NY Yankees since 1945; I got to go to many baseball games; became a fan; every day was different.
- Webb gave tickets to those he those he wanted to, also sold some. He loved baseball; he wanted to be a baseball player; he was pitcher, lost weight, hurt pitching arm; became carpenter.
- Company incorporated soon after I began with them. Del's male assistant left the company and I was promoted.

- As secretary, I became more aware of what was going on in Sun City; Webb enjoyed his status in S.C.; residents thought he walked on water, and almost had him believing it. He had a great relationship with S.C. residents; they always wanted to shake his hand. He would never have retired out there; was surprise to everyone that it grew the way it did.
- Residents always wanted Del involved in activities. He griped about having to be at so many events, like opening Rec. Ctrs., but he liked it; not a polished speaker; read prepared speeches.

- He loved the telephone; anyone working for him had to be available for phone calls 24/7. Mr. Johnson tells the story being in CA putting a new roof on a barn and had to get down to take Del's phone call.
- Webb had a small ante-room next to his office. It had a phone I usually did not answer. One day Webb wasn't there and phone rang. I picked up the line and asked who it was. I recognized it as one of Howard Hugh's names. Webb came in and answered the phone; door slammed. Webb came out and asked if I knew who it was... then told me to mark it on a wall as I was probably the first female Howard Hughes had talked to in a long time. Webb said he had to slam the door so Hughes would know the secretary was gone. He did a lot of business with Howard Hughes.
- I served as Secretary of Executive committee; had meetings in L.A. and Las Vegas. Lots of traveling to various board meetings; I was supposed to think of all detail. Went to Bd. Of Director meeting in Lake Tahoe, chartering plane. Supposed to pick Webb up at L.A. He asked me to bring oxygen w/me. Never knew what he'd ask me to do.
- Mr. Webb had a 'thing' about cars; got a new car every year. He always wore a hat and a standard car was not tall enough for him to wear his hat, so they modified the car.
- Webb was a workaholic; thought everyone else should be; thought of employees as his family; would attend funerals of former employees.
- Del Webb Foundation contributed the Del Webb Memorial Hospital, the second largest foundation in AZ. Organized in early 1960s, but not active then. Upon Webb's death (1973), Foundation became granting organization. I moved to Foundation office. Health issues were important to Webb; the grants focused on medical research/health.
- No funeral plans were included in Webb's will, but S.C. residents wanted to pay their respects. They approached John Meeker to plan a Del Webb memorial ceremony for July 1974 in the Sun Bowl. Senator Goldwater delivered the eulogy; many residents and staff members were present.
- After Webb's death, I worked for Mr. Johnson for three years to sort through the finances of DEVCO. Then went to work for Owen Childress (chief financial officer).
- Big changes in management w/new president of company. Johnson had control over the Foundation.

C-#230

Nov. 19, 1992

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 19th day of November, 1992, by and between Maxine Newman (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie T. 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:

SUN CITIES AREA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
10801 Oakmont Drive
Sun City, AZ. 85351

Technically not an oral
interview - a dramatic
presentation - a portrayal
of Maxine Newman,
Hed Webb's secretary.

RELEASE FORM

2002?

2 copies

This interview agreement is made and entered into this _____ day
of _____, 19____, by and between Tanya Griffith
(herein after called "Interviewee") and _____
(herein after called "Interviewer")

I agree to participate in a tape recorded interview with the inter-
viewer in association with research on Sun City, Arizona.

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 Cities Area Histori-
cal Society all his/her copyright, title, literary property
rights, and interest in and to the Interviewee.
2. By virtue of this assignment, Interviewer and the Sun Cities
Area Historical Society 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 remun-
eration or compensation for either his/her participation in the
Interview or for the rights assigned hereunder.
5. Interviewer and the Sun Cities Area Historical Society agree
to honor any and all reasonable restrictions on the use of the
Interview, if any, for the time specified below as follows:

-OVER-

INTERVIEWEE

SIGNED _____ DATE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

INTERVIEWER

SIGNED _____ DATE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

not necessary - public presentation -
Tapes sold for \$5.00

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 231

Interview with Loise Copes

November 20, 1992

Place of Birth: South of Tyler, Texas

Loise was an early resident of Sun City West. She has been extremely active in community affairs and is a member of the County Planning and Zoning Board.

Synopsis:

- Father from Canada; family had Gov't land grants near Lake Huron; men in his family came to U.S. for education and went West,
- Mother of German extraction; her father died when she was a child; left farm for each child; cash went to mother.
- Parents met at Taylor University, Indiana, then went to Willamette University in OR. I was born in OR during my mother's third year of law school; both graduated in 1911. Mother admitted to the Bar.

- Religious family; mother could baptize in the United Brethren Church; father began to preach and felt a calling to the ministry; applied to Methodist Home Missionary Society; appointed to the Indians NE Montana when I was age 3.
- Family lived in small cabin w/another family; snowbound in winter.
- Soon had enough parishioners to start a church in Scoby; brother 3 ½ years younger; father naturalized.
- Early interest in politics; mother traveled around Montana working with Jeannette Rankin for women's suffrage; we have to convince the men. I was never interested in running for office, but have helped a number of qualified candidates.
- By the time I was 12, there were six children in our family; parents decided there were not enough institutions of higher education; father made \$50 a year; spent money on encyclopedias and unabridged dictionaries; one winter studied cities in the East: Baltimore and Boston; father wanted to exchange pulpit w/someone in Baltimore.

- Bought a Hudson touring car from undertaker; I sat on jump seat; one child u front; three in back seat; traveled East; followed telephone lines; first paved road was in Cleveland; ate every meal in camp except once when it

was raining, then ate in coffee shop; had never been in one before. Arrived in Baltimore; church on North Avenue; called Chatsworth Methodist Church.

- I had hard time adjusting to social classes in Baltimore;
- At age 16 I graduated from H.S. (1926); applied to Lever Brothers; was hired in advertising; transferred to NY City office; stayed at YWCA; a brownstone a block from Grand Central Station.

- Had full scholarship to American University (except for final year) in Washington, D.C.; graduated in 1932 with a B.A. in Psychology; future husband, George, went to University of Maryland for two years; spent summer w/Commissioner of Motor Vehicles; traveled Maryland looking at roads; graduated in 1933; we eloped.
- We lived in George's home; everyone losing homes due to the Depression and not having money for mortgages; by 1936 we saved enough to pay cash for our home.
- Husband had job for \$15 a week; I worked at Baltimore Emergency Relief Commission as Social Worker; Supervisor of Intake; a paid position until I got pregnant, then had to give it up.
- Birth certificates checked to find people applying for Relief who weren't even citizens; many black families sent children from South to live with Northern cousins; automatically if having a child, asked if wanted tubes tied; civil liberty people stopped this practice; women expected to stop work, become home makers, and take part in volunteer activities. No one I knew worked well in wartime.

- I got involved in politics; when I was 21 I registered to vote; so few Republicans; I was given a position at the polls. I was active in church work, PTA, hospitals, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts.
- Husband given deferment in WWII because he worked in critical industry: church work.
- Became postmaster/mistress in 1962; very busy office.
- George retired at age 55 in 1962 and helped me in the post office.

- I expressed self in writing for Postal Service; I was Chairman of Communications; spoke all over the country about policy. George accompanied me; I entertained some Taiwanese when they had trained in Bethesda, Maryland; Taiwan postmaster wanted 25 postmasters and spouses to come at his expense for ten days to two weeks; Attny General said

Postmaster couldn't accept unless retires' we went and stayed at Grand Hotel; toured South China Sea in 1985.

- We were attending a convention in Phoenix and staying at the Del Webb Townhouse when I saw in the magazine Modern Maturity how you could rent an apt for a week in Sun City while looking for a home. Apts were charming. S.C. was building 75 houses a week.
- Only 118 people in Sun City West when we moved there. Some folks back east thought this was a land scam, but Webb assured us that it would be just like Sun City when it was completed.
- For self protection, we formed the Property Owners; I was elected Secretary; one of our first projects was to protest taxes on our houses because there was no rec. ctr. I testified that this made our houses worth \$10,000 less than houses in Sun City. We won.
- Town of Surprise tried to annex us; we wrote a bill saying they couldn't enclose our community.
- When we arrived, no landscaping had been done; dust everywhere, and no rec ctr. yet. Webb paid \$35,000 to rec. ctrs in Sun City so Sun City West residents could use them; Sun Citians didn't like that; they scheduled us in the morning or at night. Webb couldn't enforce it, so he started sending us on trips around Phx. and surrounding areas, or to fancy restaurants for tea or dinner, or got us tickets to the Sun's games, or scheduled shopping trips to Mexico, trips to Lake Powell.
- The SCW clubs started in 1979 and in 1980 the trips stopped. SCW population had increased to over 1,000 residents. We were part of the Surprise school district. They thought they could float a huge bond election but when vote came, it failed. By then, SCW had over 2,000 residents and we wanted out of their school district and we could elect our own school board; Surprise was very upset.
- I was in all the original organizations in SCW; member of Planning and zoning board for 4 years; we were able to get Del Webb Hospital; have been president of something every year since living here..
- Sun City West voted on incorporation; disappointed when didn't pass; losing lots of money because we are not a city; opposition considered it just another layer of government and didn't want to pay salaries; we thought Mayor could be a volunteer.

C-#231

Jan 15, 1995

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 15 day of January, 1995, by and between Loise Copes (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie T. 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.

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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 Loise Copes Date 15 January 1995

Interviewee: Loise Copes (name)
12818 Castlebar Dr. (address)
Sun City West, Az. 85375

Signed Melanie I. Sturgeon Date 15 January 1995

Interviewer Melanie I. Sturgeon (name)
1211 S. Barkley (address)
Mesa, Az 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 232

Interview with Wallace Britton

November 27, 1992

Date of Birth: July 19, 1926

Place of Birth: Western Oklahoma

Wallace was Vice President of Construction and General Superintendent at Del Webb Development Company (DEVCO).

Synopsis:

- Lived on ranch until age 20; followed construction work.
- Worked in Wichita, Kansas for 80 cents an hour.
- Went back to Oklahoma and formed own company.
- Colorado Springs, CO; A.J. Betty Corporation; did mill work

- 1962 moved to Phx.; did some mill work for Del Webb; got hired by Del Webb as inspection manager; Superintendent; V.P.; left in 1975.
- Early Sun City was mass confusion; planned 600-1200 homes; built at least 12 per day in an assembly-line procedure.
- Used our own lumber, carpenters, and architects; built our own streets and sewers. SCW used outside contractors.
- Original S.C. homes made of block; after bricklayer's strike, built frame houses.
- Every two years we built an experimental house, for more options.
- Surveyed current occupants to see how homes were doing.

- Compare 1961 homes to 1970 homes; more modern; ceramic tiles; double carports; mandatory air conditioners, etc.
- Western design most popular; houses increase in quality and luxury as Sun City grows older.
- Original plans provided lots for churches and shopping, etc.
- Homes never custom built; people not interested in buying own lots and building own homes; changed models every 2-3 years for variety.

- Hard to keep good workers; 1,000 workers at height; sixty days from purchase to completed house; Webb used own truss plant.
- Streets and sewers in open area six months ahead of time; then opened to building houses around golf course and corners sold first; owner could paint any color; street lights put in late in some places; plumbers were outside contractors as were electrical and drywall.

- When S.C. built across Grand Ave., they were laid out differently.
- For landscaping, Webb put in two mature trees in every home; 15 one-gallon plants; a couple 5-gallon plants and 2 trees.
- Lots of dust in early years; tumble weeds too.
- Les Parry was the 'key man'; checked out all the houses.

- Continuous stream of Sun City copy cats across country; 1964-68 sales slump; two labor strikes hurt.
- Bathrooms built ahead of time; goal was to 30 days start to finish.
- In 1966, people paid cash for private country club; ended up with 3.
- 75% of residents paid cash for their homes.

C-232

Nov. 27, 1992

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 27 day of November, 1992, by and between Wally Britton (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie J. 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 Malcolm D. [Signature] Date 11-29-92

Interviewee: Wally Britton (Wallace) (name)
10820 Cumberland (address)
Sun City, Az 85351

Signed Melanie I. Sturgeon Date 27 November 1992

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

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 233

Interview with Andy Germond

Place of Birth: New York

Andy was an early insurance agent in the community, from 1961 to 1973.

Synopsis:

- Born in small, rural farming area about 20 miles from Cooperstown.
- Parents separated; we stayed on farm; gathered own firewood, and raised our own vegetables and meat; we were poor but happy.
- Graduated H.S. in 1937; went to work in 1939 for Reynolds Tobacco Company; Beechnut Packing Company for 2 ½ years, then to GE in production dept. in charge of Navy Radar predication; married in 1943; wife also employee of GE; joined U.S. Navy in 1944, into radar training; assigned first to Atlantic, then to Halsey's Pacific fleet.
- Left military in 1946 and started insurance business; moved out here in 1957; ran agency in Phoenix until April 1961 then opened office in Sun City until sold in 1973.

- Looked at Sun City in 1960 when only a few houses had been built; looked again in 1961, there were 100-150 houses built, a Safeway store, a drug store, a hardware store, a coffee shop, and a newspaper.
- Opened my office in back of mall area; Burt Freireich had office next to me; risky starting new business; borrowed \$500; leased furniture; interviewed several people in S.C. they needed an agent; biggest problem in early days was getting car insurance for folks over age 65; made trip to Chicago to find company that would insure as over-age.
- Represented Great American Insurance Company since 1946; built up a tremendous volume: homes, cars, businesses in shopping centers; we knew they had money; majority of homes insured had no mortgages; they paid cash; one gentleman gave \$25,000 toward new church construction.

- Most Sun City folks came up the hard way; in early years rarely millionaires; top middle management; entrepreneurs, retired on a pension or social security; a few rich, but the exception; predominantly middle class; understood the value of a dollar.

- Two of my companies didn't want homeowners, thought they would slip and fall; but homeowners and auto ins. were great profit makers; we were all pioneering in those days.
- Most S.C. folks came from the Midwest and came here for the good weather; many from CA and WA states; wanted recreational facilities; men wanted to play golf and live away from big city congestion.
- Del Webb organized a big advertising campaign; Webb would rent out condominiums for a nominal fee; advertised in national magazines and on radio; pushed the 'active lifestyle'; big seller.
- Majority of residents very conservative, surviving the Depression and saving their money; checked their expenditures carefully; wanted value for their money; hard working, God fearing, very religious people with high morals; the backbone of America.
- Clubs started because some had too much time on their hands; bridge and social clubs; no one will ever know the amount of goods and hours and talent expended in the neighborhood; West Side Food Bank was run almost exclusively by S.C.; unbelievable amount of charity work and volunteering, all year long.
- In the late 1960s, a little known clause in the state law, could withdraw from Peoria school district; felt they had raised their children and didn't want to pay for someone else's; withdrew.
- I was 'Father Confessor' to many of them; they'd ask for advice.
- Often talked about incorporation;
- One couple was out of their class; she called me and said she just found out that Del Webb had made a profit on their home and that I probably made a profit on the insurance; she wanted their money back; they were moving out; it was only their second day in S.C.
- As S.C. developed, one of the problems Webb didn't foresee was the rec. ctrs. Originally to participate in the rec. ctrs. was a voluntary contribution; many people didn't use ctrs., so didn't pay; rec ctrs became a burden; after much controversy Webb Co. broke off the rec. ctrs. and made them a separate corporation, self-supporting. Still have controversy on the board, but basically successful and well run. Pensions don't always allow for increases and rec ctrs and golf course fees increase, causing financial pinch.

- Webb did an outstanding job of community relations; if a new resident had a construction complaint, the company would be there in a few hours to take care of it. One lady had an office trainer behind the shopping center to handle customer complaints; if anyone had to call twice for the same problem, she gave the Webb company hell.
- Construction in first S.C. homes was outstanding; houses north of Grand Avenue not as well built; Webb had some problems with the brick layers union and began to build frame houses; all with good maintenance.
- Sometimes folks had complaints about Webb: overcrowded rec. ctrs.; model railroad wanted to expand; always complainers. One man got into conflict with Webb Company by painting his house jet black.
- I was one of a group of people who helped raise funds for Boswell Hospital; several people gave \$5-\$10,000; Austin Turner was first Hospital Administrator.
- Incorporation was a hot issue; either violently opposed or violently for; majority felt didn't need more government; some want to be leaders and have official positions.
- 111th Avenue divided Youngtown from S.C. like the Berlin Wall; two totally different worlds; S.C. folks didn't shop at Youngtown's A.J. Bayless store; Youngtown had no amenities; possibly a resentment because Youngtown couldn't use S.C. golf courses or rec ctrs.
- The longer we were in business, the younger the new residents became; as time went on many who moved in still worked; no youth; no gangs; no traffic; good place to live. In our Rotary Club, the younger people aren't coming in; service clubs almost a thing of the past; younger people not inclined that way; less folks joining or volunteering; wonder about the future of S.C.; trends/needs changing.
- Sun Citians very clannish; want to patronize businesses only in S.C. area; very protective of S.C. environment/stores; in a couple instances where they didn't run businesses the way people thought they should, businesses didn't last long; had to be a part of S.C. to understand.
- One of the characteristics of early Sun City: very, very self-sufficient; widows different. One gentleman, a ship's captain, ran his house the way he ran his ship; when he died his wife had no idea how to write a check; she lost her mind; some widows need someone to talk to; a lot of men were lord

- of the household; didn't take wife into confidence; making many widows targets and were taken advantage of.
- If I could sell advice, I could have given insurance away; widows needed assistance; their men were managers of the household.
 - These were truly some of my happiest days in the insurance business.
 - The Merchant's Association was very active; each year a big pit barbeque, ice cream social, and a big parade; I was chairman for many years; Merchant's Assoc. did a good P.R. job.
 - One of the things I want to record is the work of the two original doctors in S.C.: Bob Stump and Ed Deissler. No one will ever know the good work they did; they'd make house calls in the middle of the night; they saved my mother's life; in the early days the only hospital was in Youngtown; doctors were criticized severely because they would charge for a house call; they never got credit for all the work they did for free. Medicare paperwork back then was a nightmare.
 - Sun City was like one big family.

C-#233

Nov. 23, 1992

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 27 day of November, 1992, by and between Andy Germond (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie 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  Date 11-79-92

Interviewee: Andy Germond (name)
7115 North 55th Ave. (address)
Glendale, AZ 85311

Signed Melanie I. Sturgeon Date 27 November 1992

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

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 234

Interview with Evelyn Barber

Place of Birth: Northern Missouri

Evelyn is the Editorial page editor of the Daily News Sun.

Synopsis:

- Born in small town in northern Missouri; moved to Iowa; spent childhood with grandparents; traveled throughout the South with my grandparents and their trotters; later lived with parents in Davenport.
- Worked for Time, Inc., as Life magazine correspondent; at age 35 began working for newspaper; most rewarding times were on Davenport newspaper and here in S.C.; worked on Glendale paper.
- Came to S.C. in 1973; Republican community; advanced many liberal ideas that have been accepted; Sun City has some liberal Republicans; people here can speak their mind and have the courage to do so.

- Many here had important jobs back home; came here and got involved in community affairs and political life.
- Feeling is that 'incorporation' is a bad word; people content here, have freedom; don't want another layer of government infringing on this freedom; they have structure; non-governmental government; community organizations speak for them.

- Sun Citians not selfish; its pride and a fear that there will be invasions from the outside; if incorporated, would have to submit to outside rules.
- Voting here is 80% to 85% vote; many volunteers; shows compassion.
- When Frierich;s had paper, we picked the Volunteers of the Year; almost all of them surprised to be singled out; appreciate the fact they can help.

- When in Glendale, had a different picture of Sun City; in 1960 I worked for Frierich's in Sun City; not much knowledge of elderly
- Self confidence almost like arrogance; pioneers coming to new home in desert; start new life; western pioneers in real sense of the word.

- I was here when Peoria opted out; Sun City didn't want to pay increasing school taxes; no school here; folks already educated their own children. Peoria growing, couldn't keep up with school population; S.C. divorced itself from the district; Sun City West also opted out... of the Dysart School District.
- Incorporation a constant give and take; one person is the antagonist (Nat Jampel) dedicated self to incorporation defeat; head of Town Meeting Assoc.; Citizens for Self Government promote incorporation.
- Election in 1964; incorporation roundly defeated; nearly 5-1 against.
- 2 issues at fever pitch: incorporation, smoking
- Incorporation issues, we print letters pro and con; some with letters for and against also receive threats of harm to body or property.
- Lots of flak over Sun City West construction; worried about traffic; subsidizing new groups/clubs; people felt they could dictate to Webb what they wanted him to do; Citizen's Alert group fought expansion; organized and elected president to fight against Webb's construction.
- Issues now before Sun City: many felt incorporation a dead issue, as is expansion; some pioneers from early 1960s and into 1970s can no longer keep up the pace; relinquishing volunteerism; since recession people have drawn back.
- S.C. looks like a model community; mellowed over time; more sophisticated now; what started out as basic was updated with Phase II and John Meeker wanting more expensive, elaborate homes; drawing different level of retirees.

C-#234

Feb. 11, 1993

*Originals*Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 11th day of February, 1993, by and between Evelyn Barber (herein after called "Interviewee") and Metanie 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.

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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.
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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 Evelyn G. Barber

Date Evelyn G. Barber

Interviewee: Evelyn Barber (name)

c/o Daily News/Sun (address)

10102 Santa Fe Drive
Sun City, Az. 85351

Signed Melanie I. Sturgeon

Date 2/10/93

Interviewer Melanie I. Sturgeon (name)

1535 E. Hampton Circle (address)

Mesa, Az 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 235

Interview with Emil Fischer

March 2, 1995

Date of Birth: 1907

Place of Birth: Elizabeth, New Jersey

Emil has lived in Sun City since 1976. An architect, he has been involved in numerous projects in the community. He served as President of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society

Synopsis

- Father a civil engineer for the New Jersey Central Railroad; at the time I was born the railroad was laying track into the Pennsylvania coal mining district; then Dad went back into the office; during WW1 when the government took over the railroads, he was in the controllers office; in the 1920s he was auditor of disbursements, in charge of payments.
- His father was a minister. Our early life was associated strongly with the church; at that time there were few diversions other than church; had one sister 3 ½ years younger. Had movies once a week, no radios until 1920s, when we had a little crystal set; I remember the first one I made out of Quaker Oats and a salt box.
- Always liked to draw and sketch; I wanted to be a civil engineer, but my father encouraged my drawing; suggested I become an architect; after high school graduation he got me a job in an architect's office; admitted to Columbia University in New York; family lived not too far away on the New Jersey side; I had railway pass and the subway was a nickel; after graduation I was admitted to the School of Architecture; stayed on campus and came home weekends; great time to study architecture especially in New York because in late 1920s before the Depression they were building a lot of skyscraper like the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building; Saint John the Divine Cathedral; lots of examples to watch and inspire us; Radio City in Rockefeller Center was put up in the late 1920s. We were assigned to investigate Musical Hall in Radio City; during opening night given passes; we met the Rockettes.
- Most architects want to design big things, but then the Depression hit, just as I graduated; out of school, no job; thought it was terrible at the time, but

looking back on it, it was a good break; learned to do things never thought about before; bank needed someone to look over their properties; theater designer in NY wanted some to help him out; got the job for a year or so, working on scenery; I wasn't permanent; taught a while in private school, did occasional house for a friend; friend had heard of the School of Architecture at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn; I was married by this time; asked me to teach design at Pratt, I enjoyed it; then war came and all my students went to war; I got job at Bell Laboratories doing technical work on communications equipment.

- Both sons are doctors, one a pathologist in CA, the other in nuclear medicine in St. Louis; pathologist worked at NASA, worked with astronauts.
- In Sun City didn't really try to become involved; people find out you are an architect and you get asked to help with things; sketches for the legitimate theater, dog park for those who keep pets; local churches have ideas for niches in church yards for cremated remains; I made conceptual sketches; sometimes buildings need to be remodeled, you become a volunteer.
- In the beginning, I saw an article in the paper about organizing historical society here; I attended, it sounded like an excellent idea; became involved on committees and board, was President for a year; the society is an area that is difficult to get peoples' interest as there are few activities involved; need is there to collect memorabilia; Jane (Freeman) doing an excellent job as an archivist.
- We're members, but not involved in Homeowner Association, I try to avoid boards, etc., haven't been involved in political controversies although easy to get involved; Sun Cit is unique, groups unique because we are from all walks of life – teachers, managers, etc. we never ask one another what we used to do; all have time on their hands; those who have managed previously often desire to get back into the game; speak their piece, often controversy.
- Over time the feeling of volunteerism seems to be diminishing; as we've grown older, I am not sure that the new groups coming in are volunteering as much; perhaps they are more active in golf.
- We came out here for the climate and facilities; we never saw any ads, only contact with neighbor; like a country club built in here; when our sons heard we were coming out here, they had misgivings; thought we were too active

for a place like this until they saw it; we were interested in watching the development of Sun City West; we think of it as part of this environment.

- I'm not too civic minded; got involved with own doings; while in Kansas, some controversy, we had city commission-management form of government; my name came up for commissioner, before I knew it I was elected; enjoyed it very much; after a year, they elected me mayor; was there for a year; learned a lot about city government; when they talk about incorporation in Sun City, I think that with a town of this size we could have a city manager; then I think of squabbles, would not want to be in it; I positively avoid other organizations; busy on church boards, active in Rotary in Kansas, but not here.
- Retirement communities are still quite popular; medical care for elderly different than that for younger population; society has changed; previously took care of your parents when they got older; although children say you can come out and live with them, lifestyles are different.
- When I was President of Historical Society, always trying to find enough money to exist; Jane's knowledge of collecting and organizing data was great help to us; we concentrated on equipment; needed to remodel portion of building without destroying original concept; organize building and grounds, designed sign; attached small sales office that Webb gave us.
- When war almost over, friend at Cornell teaching design became ill; I took his place for a while; letter from Ohio State for someone to head up he design department; wife and I decided NY not the best place to raise a family; our families thought any place west of the Delaware River was Indian Country; enjoyed Ohio, was there for 10 years; great influx of students with the G.I. Bill, but no summer school in Ohio; University of Michigan at Ann Arbor asked if I would like to teach summer school there.
- I discovered I knew the history of architecture, but had never visited monuments in Europe, but my G.I. students knew them, so I took summer off to Europe, took photos and slides.
- Head of Department of Architecture, Manhattan, Kansas asked me if I would come and take his position as he was retiring; enjoyed 21 years there; in 1964 faculty and self wrote a program to make it a College of Architecture and Design; Board of Regents accepted and I became Dean of the College; stayed as Dean from 1964-1970, taught five more years then came out here.

- When growing up in Elizabeth, the city had about 100,000 population, very cosmopolitan; three railroads divided city, lots of manufacturing; on our street a mixture of Irish and German and several others; lots of immigrants; lot of machine shops with Swiss and Germans; close knit groups; as a child it was interesting because Father would take me to the locomotive yards and shops.
- Met wife when I was in college; Ohio was a transition period, wasn't sure what direction I wanted to go in; kept taking contracts for jobs, fate forced me to be a teacher, but always kept my hand in the field.
- I looked forward to retirement, although I never thought of it as retirement; saw myself as getting into something else; when people find out you are an architect, they ask you to help; I've never been idle, this happens in a creative field; here I got associated with the Historical Society and got interested in the Book of Churches; I taught perspective and drawing and this was a relaxing way to use it.
- The woman who lived next door in Kansas retired to Sun City; we corresponded for a while; my son moved to California; we vacationed there when I was teaching at Kansas State; one Christmas vacation we decided to visit Edna here; that did it; saw Sun City in December, left the snow and cold winds; had trouble getting Ruth back; bought house here before I retired, we rented it out; we retired early in 1976 and came out here.
- I was involved in the Bicentennial Commission in Kansas; wanted sketches of historic churches in vicinity; looked up statistics, collected photos; on one of trips from her to Kansas, we stopped by Boys Ranch in Amarillo, Texas; made a lot of sketches of the buildings and work on ranch; they used my work and put out a book of sketches.

Tape two, side one

- When at Kansas State, invited to a retirement home for dinner; elderly residents pointed out that people my age didn't understand the elderly; they said most grew up in farm communities; said farming was a little rough during their lifetime, so when they retired down there in a nice convenient place; could sit on balcony overlooking the city; we notice some people investigating our environment, saying it's a shame to put people used to nice open areas in these cells and pile them up in the middle of town and that's not very nice for them when they're used to this outdoor living; the residents

said they were sick of the old farm and this was so nice with handy post office, church, and grocery stores.

- Thought that at a different ages, hard to learn some things academically, have to experience them; now that we are that age, we know what they meant; theoretically it sounds right, but after they explained it, you realize that when their active life is over, they want convenience and companionship; Ruth and I wouldn't enjoy that particularly.
- Read a lot of literature on retirement structure; students and faculty very interested in designing facilities for those of different ages; only literature to rely on, not much experience; have kept in contact with number of younger faculty members and students; one of my students is Dean of Architecture on the Pacific Coast; they are working on the problems of the elderly.
- When growing up, grandparents and extended family lived close by; Mother's mother lived with us; I was born into a middle income family; lived in a flat when I was born; town was expanding; father bought house in new part of town in 1911; 5 bedrooms, two story, basement and furnace.
- My grandparents all immigrants; father's father came over about age 4 or 5 from somewhere in Germany; Mother's family was in the Danish Army; lived in province in Germany; got angry when Bismarck came in, so came over here; his wife also Danish; they all settled in Philadelphia; my Mother's family had a grocery store; Grandfather let me grind coffee, dish out sugar in five pound bags; nice growing up in that environment.

Case #235

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 2 day of March, 1995, by and between Emil Fischer (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie I. Sturgeon (Herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with hr 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. Narrator 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. Narrator 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 as follows:

Signed (Narrator): Emil O. Fischer Date: 3/2/95

Narrator: Emil Fischer (Name)
15201 Rosewood Dr. (Address)
Sum. City, Az.

Signed (Interviewer): Melanie I. Sturgeon Date: 2 Mar. 1995

Interviewer: Melanie I. Sturgeon (Name)
1211 S. Barkley (Address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 236

Interview with Jean Goddard

March 19, 1995

Date of Birth: 1913

Place of Birth: Ione, California

Descended from early Arizona pioneers. Jean grew up in Marinette, the site of present day Sun City.

Synopsis

- Grandparents arrived in Arizona in 1877 in a wagon train from Kansas; traveled to northern Arizona, down the Verde Valley to Camp Verde.
- Came because grandfather was adventurous; grandmother the dutiful wife, arrived with two small children; believed the west was a place of new opportunity; grandfather loved the outdoors.
- Ran cattle around Cave Creed; owned livery stable at Five Points in Phoenix; perhaps from 1880 to 1890, he was involved in freighting from Maricopa railhead to Prescott; established trade with Bashford-Bermister Company, carried their non-perishable goods.
- Later years decided to homestead 160 acres, now under Lake Pleasant; was government hunter also; furnished meat to mines in the Bloody Basin area; grandfather didn't like to stay in one place; name Julius Gowett; originally from Canada; grandmother's people originally from Pennsylvania; she lost her father in the Civil War, adopted into Burris family in Kansas, where she met grandfather; her stepfather was an invalid who came West with them, then died soon after; first one buried in the Squaw Peak Cemetery; grandmother did not even have a cook stove until they moved to Phoenix.
- My father was born in Lancaster, Ontario, Canada, one of twelve children; his parents were from Scotland, his father wanted him to be a Presbyterian minister; he didn't want to be, so he left home at an early age, became a mining engineer; I was named after one of his sisters, Charlotte; he lost all contact with his family; he worked in Butte, then at the Blue Bell mine in Arizona; he met my mother in Phoenix. She was born in 1888 in Phoenix, he was 13 years older.

- Their first home was in Phoenix; he had a mining interest in California and they moved there; I was born in Ione, California in 1913, a few miles from Sutter's Mill; moved back here when I was two years old.
- Calderwood Butte was the site of one of the early pumping systems that went into Marinette; father was involved in reclaiming all of the desert that is now Sun City and Peoria between the new River and Agua Fria Rivers. I went to school in Marinette; father worked for a California company that owned all the land between New River and Agua Fria; company kept buying land near where Dysart Road is.
- Put the land into citrus, cotton, olives; father in charge of building it up into irrigated fields; he worked for wealthy California and eastern owners; the company was McIntyre and Davies; most of the laborers were Mexican and Yaqui Indians; had celebrations for them.
- When father first started we lived at the head gates at the base of Calderwood; went to school at age five because the school needed one more pupil to stay open; I went to the little school house near the Agua Fria; I went in a burro cart across the river near grandfather's homestead.
- We moved to Marinette; Zora McCloud was our teacher; most students were from families that worked for my dad, Spanish American, Indian, and a few Caucasians; supervised big ranches; went to school in Marinette until third grade; then to school in Peoria when they closed the Marinette school; from then on we lived in Peoria for the school year; my grandmother lived with us; father lived out on one of the ten ranches he supervised; parents lived at the M&D on Skunk Creek, at the west side on Dysart Road.
- Father rented a house in Peoria where we lived during the school year; grandmother lived with us from the time when I was born; grandfather was doing his thing all over the state; never divorced but never lived together after 1913.
- When I was growing up, the railroad went through Marinette; there was a big two-story mercantile store with groceries below and rooms above; there was a big office building where the crew that managed all the books worked; big corrals were out back where they kept the mules.
- On the West Side Ranch, there was separate housing for the help, some built of adobe; on the East Side Ranch there were camps for the help; father insisted the workers be clean; Spanish American and Yaqui Indians given priority in hiring; north of Peoria the M&D place was named after two

absentee landowners; nice camps there, all adobe and neat arrangement, clean camps.

- When the ranches got electricity, the big pumps pumped day and night to water the fields; eucalyptus trees planted for windbreaks were beautiful; loved the smell of orange blossoms from the citrus orchards
- We live in nice houses; by age nine when we lived in Peoria, it was a well-established town, with a chain store; in the schools, each grade had a separate building; to go from a one room school house in Marinette to a school with rooms for each grade was wonderful.
- I remember 1938, 1929 when the crash hit Wall Street; almost overnight everything turned around.
- Remember going down Glendale Avenue when it was not paved, there were many ruts; when my grandparents lived at Alhambra it was a small place; there was an ostrich farm in Alhambra.
- Can remember the crash in the early 1920s; father tried to help the hands; he did all he could; we gave our clothes to the children in the camps, for us 1929 was bad; my father was involved in a serious accident in which two young men were killed; he was found innocent and released. The Depression and the accident changed our lives; the ranches closed down; we left Phoenix and went to People's Valley at the top of Yarnell Hill near Prescott. Historic area; father was interested because Rock Hills was nearby, the location of an old gold strike; we were very poor, but we prospected and had the freedom to do what he wanted to do; I was out of school; the majority of people with us had no place to live; my parents operated a gas station; there was a café and a big dance hall; today Yarnell is a resort area.
- We had to move where we could live within our means; total change of life; then we moved to Cherry Creek, a mining community; people who had lived comfortably learned to live like our workers did; grandmother taught us to survive; she cooked in Dutch Oven; nothing was too much for her.
- When grandmother lived in Phoenix, there was a fire that destroyed their home; she lost two children while living in Phoenix; Pearlle was one, she never got over the loss; the children died of 'summer complaint.' Probably from lack of refrigeration; young Charlie died when he was 21; he was thrown from a bucking horse; the horse came over him and he later died of injuries he sustained.

- Grandmother talked about her early days in Phoenix; they lived by an Indian reservation; the city passed an ordinance where Indians couldn't come in unless they wore shoes and pants; she would watch them from her window and watch them put on the pants and shoes to go into town; her name was Henrietta Agnes Gallet; when we moved to Cherry Creek, she was with women she had crossed the plains with: Kate Allen, Julia Allen; they spent many days talking about their lives together. The Boyers, Sessions and Woods brothers, all came out together; one of her friend was Mrs. Creech, a spiritualist; John Creech owned one of the Phoenix bars; they talked about the ostrich farm; grandfather hated the ostriches, one of them swallowed his gold watch.
- Mother went through high school in Phoenix; my family always had cars; we felt rather important; I remember as a child going into the main street of Phoenix, seeing Goldwaters, the Five and Dime; we went to the Capitol frequently as my father had business concerns there; downtown Phoenix was really nice; we went to Phoenix for culture.
- We stayed in People's Valley about three years; I went back East to Wisconsin for about a year and a half to stay with the family of a young man I was going to marry; while I was gone, my family moved to Cherry Creek; they lived in vacant mine buildings; families were in the one-room school house; I decided I didn't want to marry the young man and came back; my parents lived in a tiny cabin, tents were all around; I saw a handsome cowboy, and we were married in the little school house.
- I never more than in the Depressions, than when we had everything; after our marriage, we lived on Cherry Creek where my husband ran cattle; we sold wood, did assessment work and odds and ends; some worked in Roosevelt's CC Camps; my brother-in-law's mother had an orchard; we dug carrots and parsnips in the winter; learned how to cook beans; I didn't now how to boil water when I was first married; we hadn't been raised that way; we were trying to be the upper class; we learned quickly to be poor and enjoy life; no electricity; when my first child was born, I washed on the washboard; we pulled water out of an old well; when I was a child we had a black chef, maids, etc; I learned then not to look down on anyone.
- When we lived on the West Side Ranch we lived near Litchfield Park; the companies, sold everything to the Arizona Land and Cattle Company after things picked up, before the crash we had a big house, swimming pool, tennis courts; Mother had 10,000 turkeys; we had a dairy; I had my own pony; when we went from that to life on Cherry Creek we went from one

extreme to another; gradually we got out of the conditions in Cherry Creek; Phelps Dodge started up again and we moved; my husband went into the assay office.

- After the Depression my family stayed in the area; when jobs began to open up, the younger members moved around.
- We were sad to learn that the Del Webb Company had bought up Marinette; J.B.'s restaurant is on the site where I went to school; Sun City West was built where I lived; now I think it is fine; when Marinette school closed, the Spanish American children went with us to school in Peoria.
- Big influenza epidemic hit when I was young; Mother had studied nursing so knew about sanitation; none of us got sick; in 1928 or 29 my sister and I got small pox; during the influenza epidemic, when we went to Phoenix we wore a mask; a polio epidemic came later; in high school I lost several friends due to illegal abortions.
- No Blacks lived in Marinette; Phelps Dodge never hired Blacks here; one year I rented a room to a Black worker in the Verde Valley and I got a lot of negative comment.
- Father was a Mason, my mother was Eastern Star; mother didn't join any clubs or engage in welfare work; I've been involved in many things, historical society. Etc Grandmother belonged to the Temperance Union; she was very civic-minded; grandfather was a gambler; in Camp Verde I asked several old pioneers if they knew my grandfather; one lady from early Phoenix was a madame; she remembered Jule, said he was the handsomest man she ever met, beautiful brown eyes, said he was charming; he was a freighter. Her early life was hush; grandfather was a friend of Buck O'Neill.

Case #236

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 10 day of March, 1995, by and between Jean Goddard (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie In Sturgeon (Herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with hr 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. Narrator 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. Narrator 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 as follows:

Signed (Narrator): Jean Godard Date: 3/10/95

Narrator: Jean Godard (Name)
_____ (Address)

Signed (Interviewer): Melanie J. Sturgeon Date: 10 March 1995

Interviewer: Melanie J. Sturgeon (Name)
1211 S. Barkley (Address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 237

Interview with Laura Mathis

Date of Interview: December 5, 1991

Interviewer: Joe Keenan

Laura is a Sun City pioneer having come in the 60s. At the time of the interview she is 91 years old and blind.

Synopsis

- Born in Minnesota but moved to California in early 20s.
- Taught high school in California and in Alaska.
- Remarried and moved back to States where she lived in Des Moines next door to Rose Schwartz – another future Sun Citian.
- Discovered Sun City while enroute to California for a visit. Husband active in community affairs, organized Lakeview Rotary Club.
- Laura one of the originators of Meals on Wheels. Commented on friendliness of community, neighborhood activities, dances, etc. Sun Bowl programs were great. Medical facilities not available.
- Mountain View opened with a big auditorium. People from Phase 1 had to use what is now Oakmont Recreation Center. Could not use Fairway or Mountain View and vice versa.
- Early home reasonable price, financing not a problem. DEVCO provided landscaping and covered needed repairs. Small patios used for entertaining in homes more so than present day.
- As community grew became less friendly – too many people; model homes kept getting bigger and more expensive.

NO RELEASE

INTERVIEW

MATHIS, LAURA

C 237

Dec. 5, 1991

MATHIS, LAURA

NO RELEASE

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 238

Interview with Eugene and Rita Wright

June 8, 1995

Rita:

Date of Birth: 1929

Place of Birth: St. Louis, Missouri

Eugene:

Place of Birth: Braynard Missouri

Editors of *Jubilee*, members of the Historical Society, Northwest Valley Press Council

Synopsis

- Father hardware merchant with grandfather
- I attended University of Minnesota, College of Education; entered WWII in 1942 in the Coast Guard, European and Asiatic theaters
- After war, graduated with Ph.D.; hired University of Minnesota as Professor of Rhetoric
- Met Rita when she came home from college
- Taught at University until 1985, when retired then moved to Sun City. Had been coming to Sun City to visit my uncle and his wife for years with out children.
- Enjoyed golf courses, whole lifestyle appealing; love desert
- Rita has a degree in journalism
- When got to Sun City Eugene elected Condominium Chairman; on Northwest Valley Press Council for 3 ye4ars; Chairman now of Foundation for Community Fund; also on Maricopa Community College Advisory Board; Rita a member of information and Referral.
- Can't get new people interested. They don't understand that the community is run by volunteers.
- Eugene believes in incorporation

- Spring 1983, Jane Freeman asked them to edit materials for publication about the history of Sun City; handed a number of manuscripts, all different styles of writing and different skill levels; Jane asked if they would go with her to Webb Corporation in Sun City West to see if they would help with funding; they said no.
- Never questioned the factual aspect of the writing, only concerned about the literary style and usage; spent summer re-writing, editing, supplying transitions; felt that the project should have given credit to all those who had written and participated; Eugene was disaffected by that, felt those people should have been recognized
- Sun City West going through some growing pains; don't want to be in school districts; incorporation issued; facilities in Sun City kept up with population growth better than has in Sun City West.
- Charter member of the Sun City Historical Society; Rita very knowledgeable about the house styles, advertising, etc., for Sun City; over 35 years, the homes are larger and lots the same size; houses basically the same in all neighborhoods.
- Phase III larger houses, major differences SC West not building same numbers of multiple dwellings like condos, duplexes, etc., as in Sun City; SC West not going to have nearly the problems with winter visitors we are having here; Sun City appeals to part time people; puts stress on medical facilities.
- Sun Cities wouldn't be what they are without all the people who provide service from El Mirage and Surprise; they are responsible for the way Sun City looks.

Case #238

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 8 day of June, 1995, by and between Eugene S. Wright (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie I. Sturgeon (Herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with hr 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. Narrator 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. Narrator 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 as follows:

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 8 day of June, 1995, by and between ~~Eugene S. Wright~~ Rita Z. Wright (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie I. Sturgeon (Herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with hr 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.

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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 as follows:

Signed (Narrator): Eugene S. Wright Date: 6/8/95
Narrator: Eugene S. Wright (Name)
11029 Bluefield Ct. (Address)
Sun City, AZ 85351

Signed (Interviewer): Melanie J. Sturgeon Date: 6/8/95
Interviewer: Melanie J. Sturgeon (Name)
1311 S. Bartley (Address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

Signed (Narrator): Rita J. Wright Date: 6-8-95

Narrator: Rita J. Wright (Name)
11029 Alwe Field Ct (Address)
Sun City, Az 85351

Signed (Interviewer): Melanie J. Sturgeon Date: 6/8/95

Interviewer: Melanie J. Sturgeon (Name)
1211 S. Barkley (Address)
Mesa, Az 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 239

Interview with William Thomas

February 20, 1996

Date of Birth: August 13, 1912

Place of Birth: Racine, Wisconsin

Served on the Sun Health Corporation Board of Boswell Hospital; the Del Webb Operating Board, and the Legislative Nominating Committee for Sun Health.

Synopsis

- Father changed jobs and we moved to Indianapolis, Indiana; went to Arsenal Technical High School and graduated in 1930; with Depression, couldn't finance college right away; worked at a number of occupations; with WWII, joined navy as Lt. J.G. in the Bureau of Aeronautics.
- After war over, worked at a variety of increasingly responsible jobs in industry; in 1955 went to Washington, D.C., to the Industrial Equipment Division of the Department of Commerce.
- In 1967 worked for Universal Oil Products as the Director of Government Relations which operated in Washington, D.C.; retired in 1976 and continued in consulting jobs.
- Lived 20 years in Alexandria, Virginia, where I was part of a community security patrol; about a dozen people in Sun City West are from this neighborhood.
- March 1979 came out here to visit, stayed in vacation place; community designed for retired people, chartered clubs in recreation centers; absence of little children good even though you miss them.
- Sun City the pattern of place for active retirement
- Sun City suffering from aging process; number of houses for sale in Sun City West.
- Sun Health Corporation Board, Boswell Hospital Care Center; also served on Del E. Webb Operating Board; legislative and nominating committees for Sun Health; at that time there was an urgent need for hospitals; stalled construction for few years, then got the law changed.

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 20th day of February 1996, 1996, by and between William Thomas (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie I. Sturgeon. (Herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with hr 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:

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4. Narrator 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 as follows:

Signed (Narrator): William H. Thomas Date: 2-20-96

Narrator: WILLIAM H. THOMAS (Name)
12902 CASTLEBAR DR (Address)
SUN CITY WEST, AZ. 85375

Signed (Interviewer): _____ Date: _____

Interviewer: _____ (Name)
_____ (Address)

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 240

Interview with Joe Davisson

February 28, 1996

Date of Birth: July 10, 1928

Place of Birth: Hillsboro, Ohio

Joe was the former President of Sun City West Norwest Bank. He served on the Board of the Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. He also served on the Surprise Economic Development Group; served on the Sun City Historical Society Board and served four years as the Vice President of the Sun Cities Art Museum.

Synopsis:

- Graduated Ohio State University; spent 3 years in the Air Force; came to Arizona in 1965 because son had asthma; worked in the City National Bank for 15 years; came here to work at First National bank; in 1970 left Tucson area to come up here; 1972 came to Sun City area as manage of the Grand Avenue office of First National Bank; 1980 went with United Bank and opened a branch in Sun City West.
- President American Cancer Society and Sun City Saints Booster Club
- Great Depression affected family; father owned a store, lost money and returned to farming; 1937 moved to Leesburg, Ohio, where farmed; 4 brothers and sisters; Mother died when he was 11 and he went to live with relatives; joined the Air Force at the end of World War II; went to college on the G.I. Bill and majored in Personnel management.
- Served on the Board of the Booster Club for the Saints women's baseball team; to raise money Saints sold kisses; Ray and Corrine Leslie founded Sun City Poms dance studio and were on Board of the Booster Club; wanted dance team to perform between games; very popular.
- Retired from Norwest Bank in 1994 and is still a consultant and Chairman of Advisory Board
- On Board of the Del Webb Memorial Hospital
- Also Sun Health Corporation Committee
- Served as President of Sun Dome, president of 3 fundraising drives

- Chairman of Sun Cities Community Fund Drive; worked with Jane Freeman and others
- Challenges for hospital; formed Steering Committee to address views from the people in the hospital areas that believed Sun City was trying to build a hospital too soon; had to agree that the hospital would serve Sun City West and surrounding communities.
- Served on Lakes Club for nine years in Sun City; wanted a supper club for business people; call the Metropolitan Club, now 209 members; selected a community leader from Sun City and Sun City West to serve on the Board
- Used to be a stigma between Sun City and Sun City West; not there anymore; a number of cooperative activities now
- I serve on a Surprise Economic Groups; about 20 members; Dr. Silkerman, Dean of the Business College at ASU West serves also; ASU West surveyed and made a pamphlet that helps in long-range planning; lot of land to be developed in Surprise; Del Webb will have about 20,000 in Sun City Grand; other companies are going to build developments; new shopping center; hope for power center in Surprise.
- Northwest Valley Chamber started a Youngtown Chamber of Commerce; City leaders of Surprise meet regularly for dialog at the highest levels.
- Served on Historical Society Board for a year; also 4 years as the Vice President of the Sun Cities Art Museum

Case #240

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 28th day of February, 1996, by and between JOE DAVISON (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie T. Sturgeon (Herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with hr 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.

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4. Narrator 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 as follows:

X Signed (Narrator): Joe Davison Date: 2-28-1996

X Narrator: JOE DAVISSON (Name)
12535 ASHWOOD DRIVE (Address)
SUN CITY WEST, AZ 85375

Signed (Interviewer): Melanie J. Sturgeon Date: Feb. 28, 1996

Interviewer: Melanie J. Sturgeon (Name)
1211 S. Barkley (Address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 241

Interview with Sanford Goldstein

February 28, 1996

Place of Birth: Kane, Pennsylvania

Involved with PORA, the Sun City West Foundation, Maricopa Planning and Zoning Commission

Synopsis

- Age 2, family moved to Buffalo, New York, then to Rochester where lived until moved to Sun City West; BA psychology at Utica College; MA at Syracuse in school psychology; PhD at Rochester in student administration; worked as a social worker than school psychologist, then in administration, retiring as an Assistant Superintendent
- Involved in community during career: National Research Committee for 3 or 4 years; involved with youth in church

- When retired, wanted a retirement community, not another suburb; also wanted out of snow; visited Florida and several other places in the Carolinas; wife's cousin lived in Sun City, extolled virtues; we came, picked out a model we liked; lived here 12 years
- First thing I joined was PORA, where belonged to Deed Restriction Committee for several years; ran for PORA Board, 2nd year served as President and 3rd as 1st Vice President
- Deed Restriction Committee enforced deed restrictions; regarding property and how it should look, age restrictions, senior citizen overlay with the country; relationship with the recreation centers and property owners; deed restrictions change according to the section of Sun City West; PORA tried to make them consistent; each section had to vote; someone sued PORA and spent two years in litigation; won.
- Another major issue with PORA was incorporation of Sun City West; close vote; PORA investigated incorporation issued; issued report recommending incorporation; about a month before the vote, PORA Board and past presidents took a stand 'for it'; extremely divisive issued; a number of people resigned from PORA

- Also served as President of Sun City West Foundation; purpose, build and maintain Community Service Center; built 30,000 foot building, now a new 15,00 sq foot building for Lending Hands; Foundation works with other community groups, we donate space
- Served on Maricopa Planning and Zoning Commission; 4-year term, served as chairman, served 2nd four-year term, Chairman again; asked to chair Committee of Planning and Zoning for; and use up to the year 2020; worked on Senior Citizen overlay, re-addressing issued because of changes in federal law
- Senior Citizen Overlay: allow communities to meet certain standards to be age-restrictive. County provides overlay; takes responsibility for investigating and trying to work out the problem; we met with county attorney to bring county in alignment with federal standards which are less restrictive; number of these communities in the county
- Also involved with Sun City Historical Society for 3 years, President for 2; tried to get a branch in Sun City West, but unsuccessful; tried to alert community to existence of Historical Society; difficult to motivate people to join the Society
- One of the problems with Historical Society is people don't see history as something happening now
- Serve on Peoria Educational Enrichment Foundation; raise funds for enrichment activities for teachers; \$300-500 grants for teachers; we sell luminary kits for "light Up For Education"
- Thought retirement would be more leisurely, calendar as busy as before
- Fascinating watching the growth of the community; less than 10,000 when came here, great amount of congestion now
- Also on Sun Dome Performing Arts Association Board; income from shows doesn't even cover the cost; we raise money to help; Webb not formally subsidizing, donates each year; resource for the Valley, but people tend to think of it as Sun City

Tape 1 Side B

- Hard to book acts attractive to retirees; Webb donated Sun Dome to ASU; SPA is the support group

- Don't miss not having children around all the time; don't miss age diversity; down side: more friends begin to pass away; upside: diversity and security
- Have cousins here; have family over for Thanksgiving; when came, Sun City West supposed to be 75,000 people; Webb had to sell some of the land; when real estate prices dropped, Webb brought it for Sun City Grand.

Case #241

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 28 day of February, 1998, by and between Sanford G. Goldstein (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie I. Sturgeon (Herein after called "Interviewer").

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

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4. Narrator 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 as follows:

Signed (Narrator): *Sanford G Goldstein* Date: 2-28-96

Narrator: *Sanford G Goldstein* (Name)
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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sanford Goldstein

**Interviewer Melanie Sturgeon 28 Feb 1996
Transcribed by Belva McIntosh 9 Feb 2008**

I am Melanie Sturgeon and on behalf of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society I am interviewing Sanford Goldstein in his home in Sun City West, Arizona.

STURGEON: Sandy, can you tell me something about your early life, where you were born, where you grew up.

GOLDSTEIN: I was born in King, Pennsylvania a number of years ago, and when I was about two my family moved to Buffalo, New York. I wanted to be near them so I went along. From there we moved to Rochester, New York and that is where I spent my entire life, prior to coming to Sun City West.

STURGEON: Unusual.

GOLDSTEIN: We don't move much. My wife was born in Rochester and had her full working life in Rochester. When we both retired we came directly to Sun City West.

STURGEON: Now you went to university, where did you go there?

GOLDSTEIN: I went to three universities. I worked my way up -----, if you are familiar with New York, it was a New York State -----, I started in Utica, New York and went to Utica College which was a branch of Syracuse University. I got my baccalaureate there then went to Syracuse University where I received my masters, then the University of Rochester where I got my doctorate.

STURGEON: And all three of them on the same subject?

GOLDSTEIN: Basically. I was in psychology at the bachelor's level, I got my master's and my certification in New York State as a school psychologist at that level and then I got a doctorate in administration and student personnel work.

STURGEON: Then what did you spend your life doing as a career?

GOLDSTEIN: A number of things. I started out – with my training I looked for a job as a school psychologist. When I finished Syracuse there were no openings, so I spent two years as a social worker. Then when an opening occurred in Monroe County I got a position with what we called a BOCES, Board of Cooperative Educational Services. I served as school psychologists for a number of school districts. Depending on which day of the week you wouldn't know where to find me. Then when I completed my doctorate I worked with one school district and went into Administration and became -----Business Assistant for ---schools. Had a responsibility for

special education for pupil services, psychology positions, social workers, speech therapists and did some other things as assigned by the superintendent, population forecasting and a number of administrative things for the central office.

STURGEON: Now when you were working were you also involved in the community in any way?

GOLDSTEIN: Yes, I was involved in organization of school psychologists, a regional organization. I was president of that organization for a year. I was involved in the Mental Health Chapter of Monroe County and as a result of that involvement – a number of years involvement I was asked to serve on the National Research Committee. That was my first time out of the winter and into the Arizona sunshine. One of our meetings was here. I served on that committee for either three or four years. I served for a year with Buzz Aldren – I don't now if the name rings a bell with you or not.

STURGEON: Astronaut?

GOLDSTEIN: Second man on the moon. Yeah, that was a very interesting experience. I was in a number of other organizations. I worked with our Temple youth and served as the Youth Director on a part time basis there – ran a camp and a retreat. I was pretty busy working and being at home with a couple of kids. Not home enough though.

STURGEON: When you got ready to retire how did you decide to come to a retirement community and how did you pick Arizona?

GOLDSTEIN: We, it was a joint decision. We had decided that we would like a retirement community. We did not want to retire to another suburb. We wanted to come to a community that was more all inclusive and having a variety of things that we might want to do. As is usual with the ----- - well we wanted to get out of the snow as well. We went to Florida and we visited the Carolinas and we came out to Arizona. We went in the summertime because we knew the winters were generally pretty nice. The humidity in Florida for us, was overbearing. We got out of the plane and into the car and water was just rolling off. We spent some time and decided that we did not want that because we were not going to go back to Rochester. When we retired we were going to stay in one location. Looking in the Carolinas where we had relatives and friends, it was the same time humidity and we knew in the winters they had ice storms and those kinds of problems. My wife's cousin lived in Sun City. He would come back to Rochester on a fairly regular basis and just extol the virtues of the area. So we did come out and look well prior to retirement. We looked at Sun City just to see what it was like. Then when we were serious about retirement we came back and West was open at that time. We took Webb's vacation program and spent a week here. Then we came back a year or two later and spent a couple of weeks here. We decided this was where we wanted to locate. We weren't sure on the house. We looked at the models, selected the one we finally purchased and my wife spent a couple of days picking out the things you were allowed to pick out. We went back to Rochester and decided we really wanted to do it. When we decided yes, we had our salesman send us a map; we never saw the location in person. We picked a lot on the map and came here, and here we are. We have been here going on twelve years now.

STURGEON: So what year did you come visit?

GOLDSTEIN: It had to be around '84 if this is '96. This will be the twelfth year.

STURGEON: How soon after you got here did you get involved in the community?

GOLDSTEIN: The first thing I did was to join the Property Owners and Residents Association. That is PORA. I believe in supporting any community group like that. My own interests at that time were basically in photography and I enjoyed, although I did very little of it, prior to retiring, bowling. I consider myself not a bowler, but I bowl. There is a difference. So I started with those two activities basically and during the course of the first year or so became interested in what PORA was doing. I joined the deed restriction committee and served on that community for a couple of years and then was asked to run for the PORA board. I did so and was elected to the PORA board, and the first year I served as Deed Restriction Chairman and the second year as its president and the third year as its first vice president.

STURGEON: What did the deed restriction committee involve?

GOLDSTEIN: Basically its responsibility was to enforce deed restrictions. We have a set of CC&R's or deed restrictions in the community propagated by the Webb Corporation. They pretty well set up the standards for the community. The PORA responsibility was to accept any complaints in writing, then to investigate those complaints and try to resolve those complaints through persuasion. In the course of that we also became, as PORA, in modifying the deed restrictions, trying to bring some consistency to them. So we went through -----

STURGEON: I interrupted when you were talking about – when you said deed restrictions I was wondering if you could talk about the kind of restrictions,

GOLDSTEIN: Oh sure. There were a number of restrictions in the community. There are restrictions as to what you can build on your property. These are restrictions as to basically how the property looks. There are age restrictions that are built in, not only in the deed restrictions, but to the senior citizen overlay the county has. So it is a joint responsibility between PORA and the county in that one aspect. There are restrictions that relate to the relationship between the recreation (rec) centers and the owners of property. They may run about twenty to thirty pages. They vary by section of the community as Webb continues to build in Sun City West, the company also continues to change the deed restrictions. They make modifications on them and PORA became involved early on in trying to bring some consistency to the phase of the deed restrictions that relates to the responsibility of the owner to the rec center and the rec center to the owner. We effectively had the deed restrictions changed. In order to do that each unit has to vote and it has to be a majority of the owners who agree with the change. We did that and were successful in getting the deed restrictions changed for Units 1 through 20A. So there was consistency with the newer deed restrictions. We were subsequently, we meaning PORA, we were subsequently sued and we spent almost two years in litigation with that suit. We ultimately won it and everything was deemed to have been operated in a very legal fashion. We got all of

our, most of our legal bills paid for by the losers. That gave us a little kitty of money that we hadn't had in the past really.

STURGEON: What were some of the other issues that you dealt with when you were involved with PORA.

GOLDSTEIN: One of the major issues that started prior to my presidency and continued through my presidency and culminated the year after my presidency was the whole issue of the attempt to incorporate Sun City West, which ultimately proved to be an unsuccessful attempt. Although it was the closest vote on incorporation the county had ever had. Had 800 people voted differently then this would have been an incorporated community. But I am afraid that most of my time, during my presidency was spent in court, on legal matters and just the day to day operation of the home owners association.

STURGEON: Now did PORA take a stand on incorporation or did they just sort of mediate?

GOLDSTEIN: Part of their bylaws say that they will investigate various forms of government. The year before I came president that process was begun. It was continued through my year and the year afterwards. A report was brought to the board which basically was recommending that this community ought to consider incorporation. The board tried to stay neutral because another board outside the board, a community committee, was established to try to get the incorporation effort to become a successful one. In the last phase of it the PORA board did suggest to the community that they should consider the incorporation issue. So they did take a stand but were neutral for almost a year. Then as it came close to – and we were accused of being pro-incorporation and when it came to a month before the vote they did take a stand. All of the past president's at that time joined together to urge the community to incorporate. They had seen some of the problems that exist in an unincorporated area and felt that for the long term growth of the community and the long term good of the community that we ought to go in that direction. But it was not successful. There has not been an effort since that time.

STURGEON: Was it as divisive here as it was in Sun City?

GOLDSTEIN: Yes, it was a very divisive issue. There were people in the community who were directly opposed to it, there were a lot of statements made, both pro and con. It was a very divisive issue. It resulted in a number of people resigning from PORA. A lesser number joined PORA because they had taken a stand on the issue and they applauded the fact that it did. PORA has bounced back from that point in time, but it was an extremely divisive issue.

STURGEON: After you were through with PORA, were you doing other things at the same time, were you serving on other boards?

GOLDSTEIN: I was doing other things at the same time. I had been asked to continue to serve as Director of the Sun City West Foundation. The Foundation is a non-profit, called the 501C3, which means if you donate to the foundation, it is tax deductible. Its purpose was to build and maintain a community service center. I have served as president for seven years and thought that it was time to pass the baton. There had only been two presidents, Bob Williams was the first

president of the foundation. He asked me, when he was going to run for government, if I would come in and serve as president because he had seen what I had done at PORA. I agreed to do that and wound up seven years there and am currently on the board as first vice president because I was finally able to convince someone else to take the presidency. I will end my term with the Foundation this year. We have been successful in building a 30,000 square foot building here and are currently constructing about a 15 to 16,000 square foot building across the street from our current structure. The Sun City West Lending Hands will move over there. They have 10,000 square feet in their existing building and we will convert that 10,000 square feet to be meeting rooms for the community.

STURGEON: What are some of the services that are under that umbrella besides lending hands?

GOLDSTEIN: Lending Hands is part of the community service center, the Volunteer Bureau is part of the community service center, the PRIDES are located at the community service center. Interfaith has its adult day care center at the service center. We built an adult day care center with Interfaith and it is one of the first centers that were built specifically for that purpose. We put together about 6,000 square feet of space. We built it under their direction and we donated it to them. There is no charge to them for the use of this place. The basic philosophy behind the foundation is that we work with other community groups – we provide the space and so that any monies go to their activities, not for rentals or anything like that. And the monies that we raise go to keep the foundation going. One of our fund raisers is the Thrift Shop. We are in joint sponsorship with Sun Health. The proceeds of the Thrift Shop – half of them come to the Foundation to help in our efforts and half go to Sun Health for their efforts. We have a luminary program which is a fund raising effort. We get donations from the community. The combination of all those things keeps us going. We have \$100,000 budget just for the maintenance of the building, for the insurance, for the electricity and all those good things.

STURGEON: Why don't you just keep telling me about the different things you have been involved in.

GOLDSTEIN: Oh, I have had a lot of good things. Again as a result of my work in PORA I was asked by the supervisor, Carol Carpenter, when she was in office, she asked if I would serve on the planning and zoning commission. I did some investigation because I knew absolutely nothing about planning and zoning. I ended up with the director and a couple of staff members and told them my plight. They said great. The more diversity we have on the commission the better off we are. There are four terms. I served my first four year term. I was elected Chairman, you are allowed to do it but you can't serve consecutive years. So I served as Chairman my first year in my first term, then Carol asked if I would serve a second four year term. I agreed to that and was chosen Chairman again, but no more. It is a lot of work. I will have served eight years at the end of this year. There is a lot of work and a lot of travel. Again I think eight years is long enough so I will send in my resignation or indication that I don't want to be a part for another four year term. In the interim I have been asked to chair the committee of planning and zoning that is working on a comprehensive plan for the county. They are developing a land use plan that would carry us into 2020. I am chairing the oversight committee there. I chaired the committee that worked on land around Luke Air Force Base, trying to

protect Luke and we developed some limitations on the kinds of construction that could go on within certain noise contours around Luke. It has been a fascinating experience. It has been an enjoyable experience. It has been a learning experience for me and I hope I have been helpful to that organization. It has been fun.

STURGEON: Have you been able to do anything to help Sun City or Sun City West or retirement communities per se?

GOLDSTEIN: We have worked in that capacity and there is a commissioner from Sun City as well. We have worked on the senior citizen overlay. We are re-addressing that issue because the federal law has changed. We have to revisit the whole question of the overlay and how it is written, and how it is enforced and what the requirements are. So we are in the process of doing that. And we both work in our communities, particularly in Sun City West as Sun City West grew. Tried to establish a good contact with PORA that really represents the community. So as any new land issues came before the commission we would make sure that PORA was aware of it and that PORA, if they chose, took a stand on it and indicated that they either supported it or they didn't support it. We have that kind of close community liaison. We hope that the kind of decisions the commission has made were as consistent as possible with what the communities wishes were. You are never going to satisfy everybody. We have a little issue coming up, probably in about a month and a half which is a convenience store in Sun City West that a group of residents are opposed too. We will have to deal with that at the hearing because the land is zoned for a convenience store. We can't take the zoning away. It is called the taking and it makes the county liable for some financial payment if we were to change that or downsize it to something of a lesser magnitude. So it is a question of how you can accommodate the convenience store and have it modified so that it is more acceptable to the community. PORA has worked out and has come up with some good plans and we hope that when it comes before us that we can hear what the residents have to say and hopefully be able to modify with the developer the program so it is more tolerable and acceptable. We have been involved in some major activities, not in Sun City West, but Webb has proposed a community the size of Flagstaff along -I-17 and New River and that became a very heated issue -----

STURGEON: Would you mind explaining briefly what the senior overlay is?

GOLDSTEIN: The overlay is a commitment by Maricopa County to allow, within the federal guidelines, to allow communities that meet certain standards to be age restricted. The county by providing the overlay also assumes the responsibility for enforcement, so that if, say for instance in Sun City West, children moved in, which would be a violation of the overlay, any resident could file a complaint with the county and the county would be responsibility for investigating, for trying to work out the situation with the alleged violator and if they were unsuccessful the county would have to litigate it, take it to court because as an overlay it is a legal restriction. So the county has assumed that responsibility over the years and they have set up guidelines to see whether a community qualifies for the overlay. The federal government, in the meantime, has changed their guidelines as recently as about two months ago. We have met with the county attorney over the past few weeks and will be in the process now of trying to bring the county's overlay into a consistent pattern with the new federal guidelines which are less restrictive in terms of the requirements that the old one was. The overlay really says that we support senior

only communities and that we will try to provide some protection to that community. It is critical. There are a number of communities in the county and the east valley as well. A lot of them are trailer parks in the east valley and Sun City and Sun City West here. Youngtown is not an unincorporated part of Maricopa County. We have no authority there. They have to have their own statutes because they are an incorporated community. They have to then take the action as a town or a city, I forget what they are called. But they deal with it in that fashion, we deal with it through Maricopa County through the Planning and Zoning Department. The same situation exists, but not for Maricopa County, in Green Valley, the area that exists between Tucson and the border. They have to work it out with their county, but ours is the only county that we know of in Arizona that has officially had an overlay with that kind of restriction built into its regulations. It starts with the planning commission and then goes to the board of supervisors. The people do question it. People who are not living in the retirement communities wonder why the county would put that effort forth. I am sure that it will come up as a question before the board again because as you change the regulation you get the question of why are you doing it. The commission will have to make that determination as to whether they want to continue it and that will be an open public hearing when that comes and whatever they recommend will go on to the board of supervisors for final action. I got involved with the Historical Society. I got one of those nasty calls that said, How would you like to – and I did spend three years with the Historical Society. I was president for two of those three years. It is a fascinating organization. We tried to get a branch of it in Sun City West and we were totally unsuccessful. We polled all the members of the Historical Society who were Sun City West residents and we conducted a meeting at the Community Service Center and invited them in with members of the society from Sun City and tried to motivate some action out here. We had a room available at that time in the Community Service Center but there just didn't seem to be the motivation or the interest. So the Historical Society is gathering the history of both Sun City and Sun City West. The memorabilia that we gather we just send over for storage there. I think the society is still trying to decide what its real purpose is as related to Sun City West. And we have Sun City Grand coming along which is the next Webb community which is immediately adjacent to us. That will start next year.

STURGEON: What kinds of things were you trying to do in the Historical Society when you were the president?

GOLDSTEIN: We were trying to motivate interest. We were trying to alert the community that we existed and that we had a very delightful museum, which happened to be housed in the first home that Webb ever built, the first model they ever built. We had attached to that the first sales office. We were working really in the terms of the kinds of interest displayed by the community as to how often we would keep the museum open. It is now on a three afternoons a week basis. It really is an effort and still is to get enough members, because the only way that you survive as an historical society is through your memberships. We don't have any state money, no federal money, so that anything we can get through donations, from businesses or from individual memberships is really what keeps us going. When the air conditioner went out our current president was able to work with the company that put it in originally and they donated a new air conditioner and they donated their time to put it in. It is those kind of activities and that kind of support from the businesses that keep the Historical Society going. I still don't feel enough people know about it and know what it does. A lot of things are brought there though. When

people leave the community, or they are rummaging through things and they see some early pictures, they bring them over. We have all of the early advertisements that Webb had. They donated all of those books. It has been difficult motivating people for their interest in the society. It is just generally difficult in communities like this and I think they have done a fine job. We have a very dedicated group of people working there. All of this is volunteer work. The commission is volunteer work – PORA is volunteer work – the Foundation is volunteer work. We don't have paid people really. So it is a community of volunteers. Both Sun City and Sun City West.

STURGEON: Do you want to go on and tell me what else you have been doing?

GOLDSTEIN: I have been doing a few odds and ends. I was asked to serve on the Dean's Advisory Committee for ASU West, again I think because of the activity at this time of the Foundation. That is a relatively easy group because it meets three times a year. So we have a meeting down at the Mikado and try to review what is occurring at West and try to provide input to a large group of people. It is really not a difficult task and it is enjoyable getting together with the variety of people, it's not just retirees but people from all walks of life that are members at the West Valley. Sun Health has asked me to serve on two of their committees. Human Resources Committee – that is a once a month committee, and I am on the Legislative Committee. That meets usually on a monthly basis while the legislature is in session. We review the legislation that is being proposed in the health care field and if we take a position, with the approval of the Sun Health Board, we can do some lobbying within limits. We don't really go beyond that. The other organization that I have been involved in while I was here was PEEF, and everyone knows what a PEEF is.

STURGEON: I don't.

GOLDSTEIN: That is of course the Peoria Educational Enrichment Foundation. That was new to me as well and my background as an educator prompted them to ask if I would serve. Basically the Foundation has as its main goal raising funds to provide enrichment activities for teachers. What they do is they solicit project requests from teachers. Those are reviewed by a group of people, residents, you get a group of four or five people together. They are sort of ranked and ordered in terms of desirability and then the board takes these recommendations and either approves or disapproves. They are limited to 3 to 500 dollars grants for teachers to provide them with the kind of financial resources that the school district can't. It is not within their budget to do. We have had some major gifts each year from Honeywell and those are dedicated strictly to the science area. We have given (I served four years on that board), grants up to \$3000 per grant for science enrichment activities. We have done some camping, some music activities. We have done some fine art activities and a lot at elementary level. Teachers are very creative and supportive and if we have the money we certainly will give it to them. I tied together when I was there the luminaria that we have at the foundation and we started a light up for education program in Peoria and that resulted in almost a thousand kits being sold this year in Peoria to support education and it has been a very growing activity so we look forward to that increasing in numbers. It helps both of us. It helps the foundation, the Enrichment Foundation because they buy their kits from the Sun City West Foundation and the quantities they buy they get a discount. We sell them to them at the same price that we do here, \$5 a kit.

They then, in their case, have a \$2 profit. So with a thousand kits sold it is \$2000 and that is a couple of grants. So it has worked out very well. They seem to be enjoying it. It is a nice marriage between the two groups. Those are basically the kinds of things I have done up to now in my retirement. One never knows what the future brings but it has been an interesting retirement for me up to now. I think that is the beauty of living in a community like this. I am not well coordinated. If I were athletically oriented –I have never set foot on a golf course – I could golf. I could do a lot of things. If I were interested in lapidary or silver craft – any of those activities are here. I happen to be more interested in the service activities and those have opened up nicely for me. They are all volunteer activities. So the community provided for me the kinds of things that I was looking for in retirement. My wife is less active. She is working today – working “volunteering”. She just got her 4000 hour pin from Sun Health. She is working at the thrift shop. She is an avid reader so you will find her at the library very often, doing those kinds of things and anything else. She gets to the thrift shop every Wednesday and they call her when they need extra help, so she could be there two or three days a week. But she enjoys that. She doesn’t drive so I enjoy being her chauffeur on those days.

STURGEON: When you came out here or before you came out here when you thought about retirement, did you think of it as a time when you would be really busy doing these kinds of things?

GOLDSTEIN: No, I thought it would be a more leisurely. I got a calendar that is probably busier than the calendar I had when I was working, or at least as busy. It certainly is more varied. When I was working it was all in the education field. All the committee work and all the other things were closely related to education. This has provided a whole new learning experience. With some of the time I hope I have when I will be leaving the foundation and will have left the county, will be devoted to the activity that is in the other room there, my computer. I still keep in touch with the photo club and do all their mailing list and membership list on the computer. I do a lot of my own work, my correspondence, my bookkeeping, my tax, all those things. But I would like to spend more time and learn more about it. And I hope to become more active in the classes that are offered in computer technology.

STURGEON: I want to go back to one question about the Historical Society. Do you think that part of the problem that you are having with the Historical Society and membership is just because people are living – when people think of history they tend to think of something a hundred years ago not something that is going on right now.

GOLDSTEIN: I agree with that. The premise behind the question that I agree with is I don’t think they see history as much as a living thing. What we are doing today is history tomorrow. I don’t think it is viewed in that way. And I don’t think it is as much, at least in the experience here – this is the only history group I have been associated with – there doesn’t seem to be the overwhelming community interest. This year in particular and I am not part of any of this this year, the current president I think, has done an excellent job of getting letters to people thanking them for what they have done, letters to the membership urging them to get other people to join. It is frustrating because it stays at about the same level and I think it has a higher degree of importance attached to it than many current residents feel. But I think that happens a lot of time. People retire for a lot of different reasons. Some people retire and say I am here to enjoy my

self. So they do avail themselves of the pool, all of the physical activities, of some of the clubs and don't get as involved in the community affairs as they might do. You look at the rec centers in either community, when there isn't a "hot issue" and if you have thirty people show up that is a lot. Yet those rec centers for many people are one of the main reasons they came here. They are certainly one of the reasons that their houses maintain the value that they maintain. But unless it is a critical issue, as the recall was last year, you don't seem to have the involvement. When the Lending Hands has its annual meeting anyone who has used it is eligible to come. If they get two people they get a lot, other than the volunteers who staff Lending Hands. It is advertised in the paper. Same with the Prides. It is the people who have an interest in doing that sort of thing that show up. It is not as much the general population. They are satisfied with what is happening so why take the time to go.

STURGEON: Is there anything else about your experiences here you would like to look back on and talk about?

GOLDSTEN: One of the most fascinating things, and this won't be happening for people coming now really, has been the opportunity to watch the growth of the community, to see the changes. When we moved here across the street, beyond that was dirt. So we have watched the community grow to this point to a fairly thriving community and it will end up I think with about 32000 people. I think there were less than 10000 when we came. We experience a lot more congestion. You are not as familiar with the people. We go to the Sundome for a performance, we don't know as many people as we did ten years ago when we went to a performance. That is one of the things that I think we notice the most, a greater amount of congestion, particularly in the shopping area. That will be resolved with the second grocery store and second major drug store coming in this year. The drug store is pretty well buttoned up and should be finished in a couple of months. The grocery store has submitted its initial plans and that will be done by summer. So it may relieve some of that congestion. But you do see a lot more people, a lot more activity. The other thing I don't think I mentioned was I am on the Sundome Performing Arts Association board. We are in the process of trying to raise money to keep the Sundome viable for the people of the west valley. The income from the shows does not cover the expenses of the Sundome. So we have to go out and raise moneys through various activities to keep the Sundome at least financially neutral. They may not make any money but they are not going to lose money. There were questions raised a few years ago with the Legislature feeling that a performing arts center is not what we should be supporting through state tax monies. So SPA became much more active and aggressive in trying to maintain the Sundome and its benefits for the community.

STURGEON: This is something that the Webb Corporation is no longer subsidizing?

GOLDSTEIN: They were not formerly subsidizing. Every year that we have our fund drive and we are in that now when you go down R.H.Johnson look at the sign in front of the Sundome. You will see an indication of how far we have come in our fund raising efforts and Webb has donated each year to the Sundome. They built the Sundome with 7,000 seats. It is a rare performance when you fill all 7,000 seats. If we can get 3 to 5,000 in a performance we are very, vey happy. The Sundome is a resource to the West Valley but I think that in the valley generally it is thought of as a Sun City theater. It is becoming harder and harder to get acts to the Sundome

that are attractive to retirees. Bob Hope doesn't travel anymore, Lawrence Welk is no longer here. When we had Lawrence Welk's group here last year it was a sell out. I am sure they will come back again. There are fewer and fewer groups that are attractive to retirees so it is harder and harder to get the numbers that we need to make it a viable operation. We are looking at what we can do. We are looking at some potential changes there in terms of its physical structure. That is actively being pursued by the ----- and we work, obviously in conjunction with ASU because they own the Sundome. Webb built it, maintained ownership of it for a number of years and then donated it to the university. Then ----- came into existence as the local support for the Sundome, the fund raiser. The group that tried to advertise the events and encourage participation as much as possible. So that has been interesting. That has been a relatively new experience. I am on my second year there as a board member. It is interesting and again a learning experience. I am doing something that I never dreamed I would be doing.

STURGEON: When you were thinking about retiring and you were looking at places to go, did you sit down and say, we want to go to a retirement community?

GOLDSTEIN: Yes, because of the variety of options. As I said earlier we didn't want to go to another suburb, the kind we lived in all our working lives. Because there you have a house, you have your neighbors, and if you want to go to the theater you go far away. We never got to the theater in Rochester. Through our working and our kids we – we got to the eastern theater occasionally and we got to some of the other venues there, but not a lot. We didn't have the opportunities to do the kinds of things you can here. I can't even think of – if I wanted to get involved in silver craft or lapidary or anything like that, where I would go. Through the YMCA of the JY you have bridge groups, you have dance groups, you could have a pool, but again that was going back to the heart of the city. That was a lot of travel, which was better when I was younger than it is when I grew a little older. So we wanted a more comprehensive community. My sister-in-law can't see living in this kind of community. She will say, don't you miss kids? Well, I have a grandchild and I can go into Phoenix, we have kids here, not extensively, but on all holidays you have kids. I don't miss not having kids around all the time. I don't really miss the age diversity that I had in the suburb. The downside of a retirement community is that more of your friends pass away. It becomes more obvious to you. We just lost our next door neighbor about three weeks ago. You begin to count the people that you made friends with who are no longer here. That to me is the downside of it. The upside, again, is the diversity and the security that you feel. I don't have any hesitation about walking around at night.-----I think I would if I were in Phoenix or Mesa or any of the communities around. They seem, and maybe it is a generalization, I don't know, but they seem less secure in terms of the comfort level of just wandering around.

STURGEON: You mentioned that your wife, one of her relatives was here. Was that why you chose Sun City?

GOLDSTEIN: Yes, that is what motivated us to come out here the first time. He was so happy here. He passed away but his wife is still here. His daughter is living nearby. He talked so glowingly of it that we wanted to see what it was all about. We really came out three times. Once to Sun City and twice to Sun City West. We made our final determination and came out here for two weeks. We came out in the middle of the summer. My wife got off the plane and it

was 115 or something like that. She said, I want to go home. She was still of the old school and when she traveled she traveled all dressed up, stockings, the whole bit. I said, fine, but give it three days. If after three days you still want to go back to Rochester, we will cancel it and go back. And within a day she was fine. When we looked at all the models and we went through the valley in general, to see if the pricing was way out of line here or if it was consistent. We found it very consistent. I have other relatives here. There are a couple of sets of cousins here. The cousins I have sort of sponsor what has become a tradition for the family. It is a Thanksgiving gathering of the clan, they come from California, from New York State, from all over, our side of the family, we have Thanksgiving together. My kids come up from Minneapolis and now a grandson comes up from Minneapolis. So Thanksgiving is a time we all get together. We travel to Minneapolis. My other son is down there and he lives here so he is part of the whole shebang. We have had no regrets whatsoever about the decision we made.

STURGEON: So in the time you have been here you have watched Sun City West go from a small town basically to a larger one?

GOLDSTEIN: We knew it was going to be larger. In fact when we bought here it was going to be a community of close to 75,000. Phase 2 was going to be on the other side of Grand Avenue. The Webb Corporation ran into financial problems and sold off what was to be Phase 2. It was then going to be a smaller community and when they could acquire the area north of what was then Sun City West and is now known as the expansion area, it came back to a little closer to what it was going to be. When realty values fell Webb repurchased what they sold for half the price they sold it for. That is going to become Sun City Grand, which will be a completely separate community, not part of the city of Surprise, but just across the street from us. The commercial sections of Sun City Grand will face Grand Avenue which will make them immediately available to Sun City West people, so we will have a much expanded opportunity to do our shopping. We will also have a better opportunity to be more congested on Bell Road.

STURGEON: Well, is there anything else you would like to talk about?

GOLDSTEIN: Not unless you have any further questions I could respond to for you.

STURGEON: I would like to thank you very much for giving me your time this afternoon.

GOLDSTEIN: This has been fun. I hope it is helpful.

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 242

Interview with Warren Austin Turner

February 28, 1996

Place of Birth: Berkeley, California

First Administrator of the Boswell Hospital in Sun City: State Senator from District 15

Synopsis

- Grew up in Berkeley; went to University there from 1946-1951 after two years in the Navy; worked Price Waterhouse; moved to Boulder City, Nevada as CPA; interested in health care; back to Berkeley to get MA in Public Health
- Was Assistant Administrator at UCLA Medical Center; came to Sun City in 1968 as Administrator of new geriatrics hospital; age 42 when came, not eligible to live in Sun City

- Sun City Community Hospital, Inc. formed to build Boswell Hospital; I was attracted because of the possibility of circular nursing units like Loma Linda; geriatrics a new area of specialization; initially didn't help with fundraising but worked to get Blue Cross approval; also worked on financial projections; planned and designed staffing, hired employees
- Hospital important: emergency service; thought should have research projects studying diseases associated with aging

- John Meeker wanted Arizona engineer and local architect for drawings; Webb built a mock-up patient room for us; we were able to make some changes, save money
- Hiring staff: first a public relations director to prepare newsletter and keep the public informed; early 1970 began hiring staff: head of nursing, chief financial officer; I insisted we were an acute care hospital

- Important: the development of the Auxiliary: volunteers, we wrote job descriptions for them, they worked under the direction of the staff; Auxiliary worked under the Board to raise funds for scholarships, equipment, etc.

- Door-to-door fundraising to obtain funding for the hospital; Boswell Hospital to serve entire NW area, not just for Sun City

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 28th day of January, 1998, by and between WARREN AUSTIN TURNER (herein after called "Narrator") and _____ (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. Narrator 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. Narrator 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 as follows:

WT

Signed (Narrator): Warren Austin Turner Date: 2-28-96

Narrator: WARREN AUSTIN TURNER (Name)
18432 West Glendale Ave (Address)
WADSWORTH ARIZONA 85355

Signed (Interviewer): _____ Date: _____

Interviewer: _____ (Name)

_____ (Address)

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 243

Interview with Robert Williams

February 29, 1996

Date of Birth: September 29, 1921

Place of Birth: Tallahassee, Florida

Former State Representative from District 15; past President of PORA; helped found Lending Hands

Synopsis

- Father a lawyer who worked for the government most of his life; democrat and when Hoover elected 1928, he lost his position in the Department of Agriculture; when Roosevelt elected in 1932, got job in the Fish and Wildlife Divisions in the Department of the Interior
- I went to Fishburn Military School in 1942; went directly into the service as a 2nd Lt. In the Horse Cavalry; served in Europe in Patton's 3rd Army, 6th Cavalry Mechanized Group; attached to Patton's staff for six weeks; war experiences in the European theater

Tape 1, Side B

- Last six months in Europe, end of war; after war went into radio advertising in Washington, D.C. Wanted to be an officer in the military; in 1948, government started a program of competitive tours for officers to encourage them to sign-up again; I was accepted; integrated army
- Served in Korean War in intelligence unit; war controversial; in mid 1950s, military decided educate officers by providing university education; received an MS from Georgia Tech; 1961 head a Joint Military Intelligence Committee in Vietnam
- After Vietnam went to Europe, Germany 66th Military Intelligence, part of NATO, promoted Brigadier General; then back to Maryland to the National Security Agency; retired September 1974
- Moved to South Carolina, too humid, decided to move to San Diego; drove through Arizona and stayed
- Lived in Phoenix two years before hearing of Sun City – called it an elephant burying ground, however, visited Sun City and impressed by golf courses; Sun City West just starting; we came in one of the first waves in July 1979

- Joined PORA and asked to serve on a committee. PORA asked each committee to send a representative to form a committee to deal with the Dysart Schools. I was chosen; in July 1978, Dysart 5 member school board asked for blanket requests; Board approved 28.5 million dollar bond issue; PORA committee decides ask for vote on the bond issued; 98% of Sun city West voted no; ran three Sun City West people for Schoo Board; they won; people in Surprise and El Mirage unhappy 0 thins very tense; ask for an election for disassociation – about 95% Sun City West votes for
- Webb never publicized that when you bought a house you were in a school district and had to pay school taxes
- President of PORA in 1983, 1985; formed PORA foundation; Bill Thomas and I worked with Lending Hands; deed one acre of the Posse; started Monte Carlo at the Sun Dome to raise money for the Foundation; we needed to start something similar to the Sun City;s Sunshine Services; had been working with sun City, but we had so many people we were a drain on their resources; we call ours Lending Hands and opened December 7, 1982; Webb gave us a large tin warehouse; later gave them land to build on; built the Community Services Center at Star Dust and Johnson Blvd.
- Foundation incorporated in 1985; Jerry and Lois Leigh suggested and organized a Luminaria Festival to raise money for the Foundation; I left Foundation in 1988
- 1988 Legislative District 15 lost 2 of 3 legislators; Jim Ballif died of heart attack, Hal Runyon had stroke; I was asked to run for the House of Representatives; problems with money in the State; 1980 or 1981 there was a surplus of money; Governor Babbit and legislators took away tax of food, etc., subsidized property taxes by 55%, state lost an estimated \$200-300 million in taxes a year; started AHCCS program; by mid-1980s a recession – impact of reduced revenue really felt; legislature began ‘robbing’ different state funds; 1989 took money from state pension funds and causes a public uproar; had to overhaul state tax system
- Second term helped introduce a ‘rainy day fund’, which passed
- Problem with the legislature is that there is no real institutional memory; every year, throw away all their files: Polly Rosenbaum out sounding board
- Served two terms, didn’t run again

Tape 3, side A

- Electric utilities bill
- Legislature always grappling with the struggled between the local people and the welfare of the state
- Term limits essential

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 29th day of February, 1998, by and between Robert W. Williams (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie J. Sturgeon (Herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with hr 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. Narrator 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. Narrator 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 as follows:

Signed (Narrator): Robert W Williams Date: 2-29-96

Narrator: ROBERT W WILLIAMS (Name)
19231 132 AV (Address)
JUN CITY WEST AZ 85375

Signed (Interviewer): Melanie I. Sturgeon Date: 29 Feb 1996

Interviewer: Melanie I. Sturgeon (Name)
1211 S. Barkley (Address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

intrvw

C244

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 244

Interview with Phil Dion

February 29, 1996

Date of Birth: 1944

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois

President and CEO of the Del E. Webb Corporation

Synopsis

- Father moved when I was in 7th grade; worked my way through college, received an MBA in graduate school

- Worked for only a few companies; Armor Dial in Chicago, bought out by Greyhound which moved its headquarters to Phoenix
- Came to Del Webb as chief financial officer in 1989; Webb mainly connected with retirement communities; company got into community development when it built San Manuel; largest company in gamin business; 1988 restructured and sold all but Sun City
- Community developer; company reflects collaboration of staffs and others; regularly use consultants (engineers planning people, waste water experts, golf course designers)

- Our advertising suggests people buy the lifestyle (age restrictive, physical and social opportunities; war climate all year long, participate in many activities, promise a different way to live)
- We were involved in many aspects of the community: dances, potluck, designed to make sense of community; over time, activities meant to entertain went way beyond

- Company had vague idea of what they should do, then went step-by-step; new community different than many others; we do a lot of market research: what is the market size, who the buyer is; we then design the community to fit these people; we define psychographics, what makes them tick; how the recreation centers change with expectations of the culture; we try to stay ahead of trends
- Fundamentally all Webb's communities are the same; we provide the stimulus

- John Meeker's philosophy: do things a little bigger, flashier; innovative, his interface with customers made him extraordinary
- Many Sun City people moved to Sun City West in late 1970s; economically a boom time
- Laws governing the recreation centers have changed; governed by Board of Directors; downside, many retirees don't want to get involved in controversy
- Learned from Sun City and Sun City West, if community wants us to manage the recreation centers, we have a company that will do it for a fee; Sun City West we set up a program with a period of overlap where Webb had nothing to do with the Board; we bring consultants to talk to them about what it means to serve on a Board
- Future of retirement communities with baby boomers: going to relocate more frequently when they retire; no enough savings; we must be very cost conscious, don't want houses out of reach; will want more physical fitness; we think as they age, they become more like the generation before them
- Webb has grown as a result of diversification; we built fewer units than in the 1970s
- Sun Cities are a remarkable bit of America; the wild, wild west trying new things; the indomitable American spirit
- Don't think people imagined all of this would happen; endured the test of time; proud of the role we played in it

**Sun City Oral History Project
RELEASE FORM**

I (name of narrator) Philip J. Dion hereby authorize
(name of interviewer) Melanie I. Sturgeon to record my oral
history on the following date(s): (interviewer and narrator must
initial after each date).

Thursday, February 29, 1996 *MS*

It is my understanding that the original tape or an acceptable
copy, tape log and abstract or full transcription will be added to
materials being gathered to contribute to further research by the
Sun City Areas Oral History Project. Materials will be housed at
the **Sun City Areas Historical Society**.

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

Narrator irrevocably assigns to the **Sun City Areas Historical
Society** all his/her copyright, title, literary property rights, and
interest in and to the Interview. By virtue of this assignment, I
understand that qualified staff of the **Sun City Areas Historical
Society** will allow researchers to listen to the tapes, read the
logs, abstracts or transcriptions and I hereby grant researchers my
permission to use the materials in connection with their research
and/or educational purposes, including publication.

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.

Philip J. Dion
Signature of Narrator

February 29, 1996
Date

Address Del Webb Corporation
6001 N. 24th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85016

(602) 808-8001
Phone number

Melanie I. Sturgeon
Signature of Interviewer

February 29, 1996
Date

Address: 1211 S. Barbly
Mesa, AZ 85204

602-813-1482
Phone number

Interviewer and the **Sun City Areas Historical Society** agree to
honor any and all reasonable restrictions on the use of the
Interview, if any, for the time specified below as follows (Use
back as necessary):

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Philip Dion
Del E. Webb Executive

Interviewed by Melanie Sturgeon 29 Feb 1996
In Mr. Dion's office

STURGEON: Mr. Dion, can you tell me something about your background.

DION: My background, I was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1944, on the far west side without a great deal of benefit. My father passed away when I was in the seventh grade and my mother effectively raised me. I worked early in life and helped put myself through school and college – married my childhood sweetheart when I was 22 and she was 21. Nine months and one day after that we had a child. I was immediately working as soon as I got out of school and went to graduate school at night. I got an MBA and I have really only worked for a few companies in my whole life. One was a turnaround of a small toiletries company and ultimately the sale of it. Then I went to work for a company that was called then Armour-Dial in the Chicago land area. It was a subsidiary of Armour Company – the most profitable subsidiary involved in consumer products. It was ultimately acquired by Greyhound Corporation. I left it. But in the interim the Greyhound Corporation relocated to Phoenix. I came to Phoenix. While working for Armour-Dial I did go to New York City for five years and worked there for a couple of companies. Then I came back to Del Webb in 1982 as the Chief Financial Officer. Then in 1987 I was made the Chairman of the Board – CEO.

STURGEON: People seem to think – people in the retirement communities that Del Webb Corporation was completely focused on retirement communities, but I am sure they were doing a number of other things as well.

DION: Well it is their primary business. Over the years however, it was one of many businesses. Many people don't know, and those who do have probably forgotten that the origins of the company was really a major general contracting company where we built all kinds of very large projects all over the United States; things from Madison Square Gardens to Dodgers Stadium in Los Angeles, and everything in between. A lot of the work was done for the military, both during and after the war. Out of that grew several commercial businesses including property managements, brokerage businesses, real estate brokerage businesses and other kind of construction businesses. We got into the community development business actually many decades ago when we built the town of San Manuel, Arizona for the copper companies. We did a lot of work for Phelps Dodge and companies like that. We developed an expertise at that. In 1960 effectively a joint venture between the Boswell family and DelWebb Corporation to develop Sun City came about. In 1960 on New Year's Day it was started. But in addition to those businesses we were the largest company in the gaming business; the first public company in the gaming business. In fact we wrote all of the laws and regulations for the gaming industry in Nevada. That came on the heels of building a lot of hotels and casinos, the first of which was the Flamingo for Bugsy Siegel. Out of that grew other hotel interests, The Newporter Inn, Mountain Shadow in Paradise Valley, Arizona. Through that was the acquisition of some

marinas on Lake Powell. Glen Canyon Dam had been built and the lake was filling up and ultimately we bought all of them in that business for many, many years. We went through good times and bad times. But in 1988 we restructured the entire company, sold all of our business interests in everything but the Sun Cities and decided to expand the Sun Cities geographically. Since that time we have also expanded into the conventional home building business. We own Coventry Homes in Phoenix and recently have been very successful with a development called Terravita which is a country club community in north Scottsdale and recently we have entered the semi-custom home building business through a company called Travaix. So we are essentially community developers, home builders on a very large scale. We are one of the top ten builders in the country; the largest in Arizona and currently probably the largest in Las Vegas. Generally speaking we are one of the top few builders in any given metropolitan area that we compete. That is primarily because of our active adult retirement businesses under the Sun Cities label.

STURGEON: You mentioned the words “community developers” several times when you were talking. I am interested in learning how you learned to become a community developer, was it because you studied it or because it just sort of happened over time and you learned from your experiences.

DION: Both of those and probably a few others. While I consider myself a competent community developer in the general sense of the word, I and I think to some large extent this company reflects the collaboration of the history and experience of many people, most of which are employees of the company, but also many people outside of the company that we regularly use as consultants, such as architects, engineers, land planners. It is almost unending in terms of the expertise that you have to bring to bear on things seemingly as simple as traffic. Traffic engineers are an arcane science all to themselves. Water experts, waste water experts, golf course architects and on and on and on. So there is just a huge array and like the internal expertise, you learn from your mistakes, obviously, and your successes, but also over the times you are able to select between the better outside individuals, the people who are more capable of working with your organization, the people who have unique talents and consistently deliver those results.

STURGEON: Well, I think your company is different, especially with retirement communities. You don't just build the community and walk away. You stay involved in it. How do you do that?

DION: Well, we do and we don't. Once we are done with it we are really not involved in any financial way. We don't have any obligations. We complete our obligations and move along like we did in Sun City and like we are currently doing in Sun City West. But it is – the name Sun City and Del Webb are synonymous. It is important to us that the communities prosper over many decades and even though we are done with them and we don't generate any revenue from them or any profit it is very important to us to see to their success and make certain that to the degree that we can be helpful that we are. It is obviously limited as time goes by but you know we have a sense of responsibility, after all in the case of Sun City there are some forty thousand people living there that wouldn't be there if we wouldn't bring them there. So it is important to

us, in terms of the corporate aspect of it, that they are enjoying their lives and are happy and satisfied. But as individuals within the company we are also concerned about that.

STURGEON: In the early days of the Sun City community I know the Del Webb Corporation didn't just build but they got right in there with hands on and got the community involved in clubs. They started traditions and----- . Are you still doing that?

DION: Absolutely. I mean we don't – I mean if you look at our advertising – as much as people would want – some people would like other people to believe that advertising is false and misleading. Our advertising suggests that the first thing that somebody buys when they buy a Sun City home is really the life style. A concept of living in a community that is – first of all it is age restricted. It is not for everybody – we know that. But certainly there are those people who for whatever reasons choose that lifestyle, that lifestyle allows them, because of the values that we can create, to expand their horizons, to do things they have never done before to take advantage of all sorts of physical, social opportunities. That was really the success of Sun City originally, it wasn't the fact – it was only in part the fact that the golf course was there and the shopping center and several model homes and a presumably reliable builder. But that wasn't really what it was. It was people coming from all over the country believing that they would be meeting a lot of other people like them, people they would like and enjoy, that they would be living in a warm climate where they could socialize year round and wouldn't have to worry about the weather and all the issues that weather can create as we age and that they could participate in all sorts of activities. So the promise in that sense was not a house, but the promise was a new and different way to live. And that mandated that Del Webb foster, sponsor, and in some cases entirely organize and create many of the activities that have subsequently gone on to blossom. That very fundamental precept is in place today. All of our new communities, before our recreation centers might be available or open – we have all kinds of activities, sponsored trips and dances and pot lucks, you name it. The whole purpose of that is to begin to establish and create the sense of community, the sense of social interaction and well being, the sense of interdependence to some degree. As time passed, of course, many of those original things that were intended to entertain went way beyond that in terms of the social support systems and mechanisms that developed, the care giving, the volunteerism, all the things that the Sun Cities are known for today came out of the basic concept, I believe, as well as good business sense. If all you were doing was selling a house on the golf course or off the golf course near a shopping center, you are pretty much like everybody else. That wasn't what the people who really understood what they were trying to achieve had intended. I'm not sure that they really knew. I think they had a vague idea of what this ought to be and they just went about it step by step. They probably made plenty of mistakes along the way.

STURGEON: I understand you are starting another retirement community near Sun City West.

DION: It is across Grand Avenue, it is north or west, I don't know, it runs on an angle, but it is called Sun City Grand.

STURGEON: Would you go step by step and describe what you do when you start a retirement community?

DION: Well, this one is different from many of the other ones that we have done in Southern California and Northern California, Tulee Nevada, South Carolina, Texas. All those are new, new, new locations, required a lot of research where we had to determine what we suspected the market size would be, who the buyer was likely to be. In South Carolina the buyer is likely to be from the north east, Southern California it is likely to be Southern California. Nevada is likely to be Southern California and Nevada. In determining those differences in designing those communities to appeal to and satisfy those individuals was very different. Somebody from Philadelphia living in South Carolina versus Dallas moving to Georgetown, Texas or Southern California moving to Phoenix, Arizona. So first we have to identify where the market is likely to come from if it is not already coming from there. To find that and to find what their psychographics are, they're social dynamics, what makes them tick. Obviously Southern Californians like contrast to people from Illinois. They have very different ideas to what they need to make them happy. So we studied all those things. In the case of Sun City Grand we've had the advantage of thirty six years of history. We know who our customer is. We have defined that, we shaped it, they shaped us, they have defined what we do. But what we do, even here in this case, we take a look at what we have done and we ask ourselves how can we do it better. How can we improve on what we have done before. Should it be bigger or smaller. Should the houses have significantly different architecture, or should they be fairly similar. How should the recreational facilities change to adapt to the change in our culture. Obviously people want different kinds and different orders of magnitude today than they did in 1960. The golf course we are building on Grand Avenue I can assure you is a far cry from the golf course that we built in 1960. So are the houses. But that is like a lot of the rest of the country and the world. Everything changes and we have to both stay with it and try to stay ahead of it because these facilities are going to be around a lot longer than we are and they have got to meet the needs of people who are, and ultimately they will have to meet the needs of teenagers. So we have got to try to compromise. But the fundamentals are all the same. They are exactly the same. The golf course has to be playable, the model homes have to be available, they have to be of high value. The community recreation centers, the community centers themselves have to provide people with an outlet for their energies and the ability to interact socially. And we have got to provide a lot of the stimulus to create that or recreate that as the case may be. It is really a lot of fun. It is far more fun in this case than it is daunting or nerve wracking. You know when you go into a new area you don't have a clue as to what to expect. You have made every mistake in the book I am sure and will probably make a few more. But in Sun City Grand we can say, well we did all these things right in Sun City and took them to Sun City West and we are sure as hell are going to take them to Sun City Grand. But we did these things that were wrong – and these things didn't work out very well, and here is how we can change those and we can improve on it and we can adapt to a consumer who expects different things.

STURGEON: When you went into Sun City West (bad piece of tape – unable to understand)

DION: Well, you are going to be interviewing John Meeker, and John Meeker is the person that can best answer that question. I happen to be a big fan of John, really a self-made man. I don't know if you know it but he was Mr. Webb's caddy and he began with the company as Mr. Webb's caddy and then he succeeded in running a million-fold business. He did an extraordinary job. His philosophy was always to do things a little bigger, a little plushier, with a little more gusto and bravado. It certainly served him and the company very well. He always

had something to talk about. There was always something unique or interesting where John was concerned, whether it was the world's largest sun dial or god knows what all. But there was always something to talk about. He was very innovative, he was very adventuresome. I believe he understood our customers extremely well even though he didn't have a market research department at the time. His interface with our customers made him extraordinary. And I think what, reflecting back on it, I think what occurred there was a bit of going a bit too far. We went from Sun City to Sun City West and built virtually everything bigger or better, or whatever. Now along the way we had learned a few things. A lot of the ancillary businesses that the company was involved in were really very counter-productive in some senses. Owning the utility companies, for example, put you in conflict with the residents if you had to raise rates. The company learned that, so the Citizens Utilities was in place and made all that a lot easier. The company recognized that it had to deliver value and I think it did that early on in Sun City West. I think a lot of the people in Sun City had both done well, meaning they enjoyed their life style, but the price of their house had escalated pretty rapidly. They all did well and many of those people decided that they wanted to move to the new community because the style of the golf course was there or the Sundome was going to be there, or the library or whatever. It was all new and big and exciting and brash because this was after all still the wild, wild west to many people. I think a lot of people responded to that. It was also economically a very, very good time for a few short years. It was a boom time in the late 70's. Then of course the oil embargo came along and a lot of other things happened which included the increases in interest rates up to twenty two percent actually in 1981 or 2. In mortgage rate terms that was like sixteen or seventeen percent. That brought the home building business to a halt. But I think a lot of it was just the tremendous momentum of Sun City and the way that John was able to promote it. And the many, many good people that existed. I mean we had great people that really cared about what they were doing. It wasn't just the business, they were creating a community and they cared about that.

STURGEON: I think you can really see that when you talk to the people who were involved right from the beginning....

DION: Oh yeah. It wasn't money, this wasn't the money. Obviously everybody has to work for a living but this was far beyond that.

STURGEON: Would you mind explaining when you build the community and the recreation centers how do you turn them over?

DION: It hasn't changed too much except the laws that govern that have changed a lot. For example in Sun City all the recreation centers are in a community association governed by a board of directors. That has probably been good and bad over the years. The good part about it is that it is democratic and it is the American way. The bad part about it is most people who retire don't want to work and get involved in all kind of controversial issues which means occasionally the minority takes over and creates a lot of problems. That will change as time goes by because the laws that govern that have changed. We have now, more recently, and this is one of things that I was referring to earlier that we learned from Sun City and Sun City West. We have molded our new communities so that if the communities want us to continue to manage the recreation centers then it is really a very simple matter because we have a company that does

that. That is all they do. And they simply would pay us to do it. We wouldn't be looking to make a profit on that. We aren't interested in making money on running recreation centers, our interest is in making sure that they are run well and that people enjoy them and they are well maintained, and that they are kept up, because property values depend on all those things. Currently that is really the way it all works. Now in the case of the Sun Cities it had been predetermined that we would exit the community completely. So what we did was, in the case of Sun City West which I am very familiar with, we set up a program over many years, five or six years, but there would be a period overlap for at least two years where Webb would have nothing to do with the recreation centers in terms of its management. It would be entirely managed by the community association board and what we have done is brought consultants in to talk to the board members about fiduciary relationships, acting on board and what are the important issues that they should be dealing with, etc. etc. That is met with good and bad results I think. Some of the people who retire who are still very active candidly think they know everything so they get in and throw a few monkey wrenches into the machinery now and then. The other side of that though is, and by far the bigger side of it is that there are many, many more people who are very competent and who are very experienced who lived decades devoting themselves to various careers who contribute unbelievable amounts of their time and energy to maintaining and improving their life style. And again I think on balance, the community associations have prospered well. Certainly when I compare that to a lot of other governmental institutions, and when I look at the leadership of various political institutions, either in this state or nationally, I would have to say the Sun Cities have done a far better job of managing their affairs than our elected officials have.

STURGEON: One of the things that the Sun Cities Historical Society is interested in knowing is, what do you see how retirement communities might change or how you might approach them differently?

DION: I just came back from a meeting that I had with all our corporate officers nationally that are responsible for all this and we decided a few things. First of all we were really talking about the baby boomer generation. The people who are going to retire in fifteen years. Even though we have probably done more research on that than anyone else does, that I am aware of, and while we do know certain things. For example they are going to relocate more frequently when they retire. They are going to have part time positions. Many of them aren't going to have the benefit of enough savings and are concerned about the social security system. All of those things, by the way, pretty much suggest that we have to be very cost conscious about what we do. We have to be very concerned about the costs that go into the infrastructure of the community. Make certain that they are care free. They don't have a lot of maintenance, but also that they are not so expensive that we have to price it into our houses and people can't afford it. That is also true of the homes themselves. Not getting them out of reach of the average individuals – at least the market that we try to serve. That we not change the fundamental concept that it is a community. That it is a place for everybody, no matter what your means. We discussed the notion that it will probably be – they will probably demand more physical fitness related things. If for no other reason than the medical community and the news media is making such an important measure out of it that we have to increase the size of those facilities and we have to stay right on the forefront of the technology. Probably even border lining medical care to the extent that we would incorporate in the physical fitness concepts all notions of wellness,

complete wellness. Also that a lot of the cultural – some of the cultural, not all of them, but several of the cultural necessities of life would become more important to those people because they have grown up in an era where they were more available than their predecessors. But beyond that we determined that we should simply wait and see because we believe, to some degree – not completely – but to some degree as people age they become far more like those that they follow in their attitudes. You know, it is ironic that Tom Hayden, one of the wackos of the Chicago riots is going to go back to Chicago this summer as one of delegates to the Democratic Convention to elect a President. What goes around comes around and people change and things change. In this case we are not certain that the changes are going to be so dramatic that it is going to obsolete anything whatsoever that we have done already. You know we don't put in shuffleboard courts anymore but there are still plenty golf courses, that hasn't changed.

STURGEON: Do you see a bulge in population that's coming in so that you'll be building more?

DION: Well no. We, for our company I mean, we can only grow so large and be effective. We will probably not – we are going to grow from where we are but I don't know if we will double or triple in size over the next ten or twenty years. It will remain to be seen. But we have grown as a result of our diversification to other geographic areas. And we will benefit from that. The market here will probably grow but in terms of the number of homes we deliver here it is less than we delivered in the mid 70's. Obviously far more costly but in terms of the units we build -- -- So it is hard to tell, it really is. We are not so driven by growth that we get too concerned by that. We have all the opportunity in the world to grow to the extent that we have resources. Our issues are first people and secondarily money. But nobody has unlimited resources or unlimited capital.

STURGEON: One of the concerns – I know that when the retirement communities first started was that as the population ages and the town ages that you're not going to be getting enough new people to come in to replace them?

DION: You know the answer to that. Well, what we are able to determine is that the elderly, if you will, as they move on our being in Phase I on Grand Avenue are being replaced to a certain extent or displaced to a certain extent by younger retirees. I think there are a few reasons for that, but the benefit of course is that beyond rejuvenating the energy levels in the facilities and in the community, many of those people are able to afford really beautiful, well maintained homes in a very safe and secure area that they couldn't possibly afford elsewhere. The benefit of that that we are able to determine, well we haven't done it with any degree of precision, we know that it is happening. The younger retiree is assisting in making the older retirees life more enjoyable. Candidly I have no idea whether anybody anticipated that. I really don't. I find it ironic though that people continue to write about it. I just read an article on our Texas community and the writer couldn't find anything bad to say about it. So he decided that he would write about the concern for social degradation and what-not because there weren't any children. What would happen as everybody got older and who would provide care for all these people as though it was some socialistic attempt at engineering life style. Rather than simply asking us the question, we could have said here is what is going to happen and if you don't believe us just go spend a few days talking to people out there and you will find out what

happens. But reporters do very little research. They have deadlines and things like that as you know. I can't tell you first hand, I am not involved in it first hand, with respect to Sun City, but I am in respect to Sun City West. I have had relatives out there and I know what happens. I know what happens when people get sick, and there are losses in families and how people react to it. It is far superior to the kinds of things that happen in the general public.

STURGEON: I don't want to keep you but is there anything else as you look back over your experiences that you would care to share with us?

DION: No, I really don't think so. I think it has been, from my point of view, even taking myself out of this role and this job, it is kind of a remarkable bit of Americana. It is sort of a testament to a number of old sayings, speaking about the wild, wild west, people willing to try new things. Talking about the indomitable American spirit, people who were willing to pick up and start life all over again. I don't think anybody ever anticipated that happening at the age of sixty five, which today is young, but in 1960 it wasn't viewed as being particularly young. I think the goodness of it all, the way that – I am proud, like I said the Company did plenty of things wrong and screwed things up here and there, but I mean the fact that the Company has been reliable, that it hasn't, certainly not intentionally, let anybody down. I am sure there are dissatisfied customers but two percent of this world is going to be dissatisfied no matter what you do. But I think the fact that the Company was able to prosper, the community was successful, grew and became world famous in a very short period of time, did all the social support systems, grew up without the help of taxation or political leadership. We didn't need to regulate it. It was not necessary to fund it. People saw the goodness of it and organized it, financed it, and did all those things that were necessary. And that it is enduring, it has stood the test of time, it was not just passing, flash in a pan – older neighborhoods are regenerating themselves and property values continue to rise. It is really sort of amazing when you tell people that if you took all of the valley and you analyzed the values of residential real estate over the years, for sure we have the statistics on Sun City West. There is no comparison to the value increases that have been achieved there. I think it is extremely important to people that have fixed incomes and may need that equity out of the house to take care of themselves as they grow older or spouse grows older for health purposes or whatever. So generally speaking I think that everybody in our company is very proud of the role that we played in that. We have all probably, to some degree or another, been rewarded over time for it. From the company's perspective and my personal perspective it has been, from a working career standpoint, it has been the most enjoyable part of my life. Not just because I am the CEO and make a lot of money but it is because when I go home at night, generally on any given day there are twenty new homes that people were occupying that day. Most of them, probably not all of them, but most of them are going to be just as happy as clams and live for another fifteen, twenty or thirty years and enjoy life.

STURGEON: Thank you very much.

DION: Well, thank you.

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 245

Interview with Steve Hornacek

February 1996

Date of Birth: July 3, 1924

Place of Birth: Staffordville, Connecticut

Former manager of the first Safeway store in Sun City

Synopsis

- One year of schooling to become a physical education teacher until called into service
- Radio man and gunner in Yuma in July and August of 1943; crew in B-24 went overseas in January 1944; bombing runs in Germany and Yugoslavia
- In 1956 came to Arizona; first went into insurance; passed a Safeway store and went in and talked to the manager; went to work and was with Safeway for 31 years, 23 of which were in Sun City at 107th and Grand Ave.
- Started as a clerk in Safeway, then became Assistant Manager for about a year; had first store on 18th Avenue and Van Buren, a small store; about two years later got an opportunity to go to Sun City as a manager
- When first came in 1962 Sun City was small; Safeway pioneered in Sun City
- Challenges: many people from so many different places, they wanted a number of different items; over time more people coming from the East
- Would read about what some of the residents used to do by reading the Sunday newspaper; one gentleman played piano for Frank Sinatra; another high up with the Atomic Energy Commission in Tennessee; some pilots of large airlines; many worked for the government; some retired U.S. Senators and Congressman; some retired baseball players
- Merchants got together to put on celebration, parades, Easter or the 4th of July fireworks, different promotions; most merchants organized them; for about 8 or 9 years sponsored Sun City Saints Baseball team
- At Kings Inn used to have beer busts and hot dog rallies with Coors Beer Company; every five years or so an anniversary
- Worked with Jerry Svendson, good promoter and P.R. man; he gave us different ideas about what to do

- I was about 32 when I came to Sun City
- Our Safeway store was about 17,000 sq feet as compared to 50,000 to 60,000 sq ft of today's store; didn't make money in July, August or September; store didn't replace freezers, etc. Safeway's decided to close but residents didn't attribute closure to me, they thought I was fighting for them

- My parents moved to Youngtown, Arizona because it was more affordable
- Parents came from Czechoslovakia in 1921 to Ellis Island. Moved to New York state with relatives, then on to Staffordville into the Czechoslovakian community there; father was a button cutter and mother a button finisher in some factory.

Case #245

SUN CITIES HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Steve Hornacek

Notes of a conversation with Steve Hornacek, Manager of Safeway Grocery Store, Grand Shopping Center. He had been there for over twenty years. One of the pioneers.

Interviewer: Glenn Sanberg. 1983

The Safeway store officially opened on December 31, 1959. It was a Sunday. It was the first store in the Sun City area. After the store opened, the First National Bank and the Greenway Drug opened within two months, so we weren't lonesome for too long.

I came out here in June 2, 1961 as manager. I had been transferred from the Safeway Store at 15th Ave and Van Buren.

In 1962 the area had about six or seven thousand people. I watched the cotton grow across the tracks. I used to see the same people come into the store, sometimes three or four times in one day. They would buy just a little bit, sometimes just a quart of milk. Sometimes it was a social thing. Sometimes there was only one person in the household. Also in those days, many of them walked to the store with shopping carts. To this day many customers do this because they have no transportation. Quite a few people did not have cars. Sometimes the widows did not know how to drive. Sometimes people asked if they could borrow a shopping cart. They would take it home, unload their groceries then return the cart. We got to know these people because we saw them often. If we didn't see them we would think "they've passed away"!

There was a grand opening day with give aways, etc. The store was smaller then. There were only five or six thousand items then. When you have fifty thousand items things are very different. Then we knew many customers by name. Things were more natural. There was a different pace. About 80% of the customers were elderly; the other customers came from outlying districts,

Later the people in Sun City came from all over the country. Often they could not find the same things here so they used to ask for it. We had a list of things to see if we could get these items. Often we could but many times we could not. I would tell them, "We can get it for you but it is going to cost a lot of money if we have to send back to New York for it". They would say "Forget it."

When more stores opened there was more competition. I am sure some of the other stores were getting these items. I would send off for some items and in a way we became a sort of specialty store.

The King's Inn was here then, and the bank and drug store, then the laundromat opened and the beauty shop and barber shop. Then Melody Land restaurant opened, then Robin Hood, a grocery shop opened. Later it became Freeds Furniture Store. There was also a little jewelry store. I remember Craig Jewel who had a little shop over there. Then there was the News-Sun Office.

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 29th day of February, 1996, by and between Steve Hocknace (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie L. Sturgeon (Herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with hr 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. Narrator 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. Narrator 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 as follows:

X Signed (Narrator): Steve Hornacek Date: 2-29-76

Narrator: Steve Hornacek (Name)
10901 El. Capitan Circle (Address)
San City AZ 85351-2106

Signed (Interviewer): Melanie J. Sturgeon Date: Feb 29, 1976

Interviewer: Melanie J. Sturgeon (Name)
1211 S. Barkley (Address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

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Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 246

Interview with John Meeker

March 6, 1996

Date of Birth: June 5, 1926

Place of Birth: Texas

Former President of the Del E. Webb Company

Synopsis

- Went to school in Phoenix; caddied for Del Webb in 1941; after war came to work for him; started as mail clerk and worked my way up.
- Office Manager for Webb in Kansas City, and in Las Vegas; 1954-1955 built houses in various places throughout Valley

- 1959 involved in planning Sun City; Tom Breen, worked on this project
- Webb brought land April/May 1959, and hired planners for the project.
- January 1, 1960, Sun City, opened with 9-hole golf course, recreation facilities, and a shopping center.

- Put together sewer and water companies; first private sewer company in state; had some problems getting approved.
- Jack Hayden was the main salesperson the day Sun City opened.

- Management felt they had discovered a new vehicle for making money.
- Opened a Sun City in California and in Florida; strung out our management and resources; sales didn't meet expectations; fell off in Arizona too; by 1965 less than 400 per year sold; had over 50 people in in-house advertising.
- Major shake-up in company; I was put in charge of Sun City.

- Initially Webb Company wanted to build, then stay uninvolved; conflicts between recreation centers; changes philosophy and became involved with people for referrals; I brought Owen Childress into Sun City; in 1966 worked with Bill Chapman; turned sales around.
- Referrals so successful as a sales tool that over 15% of sales made this way.

- 1967-68 outdoor amphitheater; built Sun Dome and used for advertising; first entertainer, Liberace; Lawrence Welk a favorite

- Major problems with Spur Feed lots; took them to court and eventually won.
- Boswell Hospital important; hospital management agreed to let us help.
- Planning late 1970s for new community built around hubs, major cores and satellite centers; didn't put in neighborhood shopping centers like Sun City.
- Sun City West offered energy efficient homes
- Left the company in late 1981; new hatchet man sold assets off and nearly wiped out the company.
- We helped churches start; gave them a site for the church, then provided landscaping.

C-#246

C266

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Written Interview Oct. 21, 1986

John Meeker

Notes of a conversation between Mr. John Meeker and John Findlay regarding the history of Sun City, Arizona. The conversation took place in Mr. Meeker's office, 4041 N. Central #533, Phoenix, Arizona on 21 October 1986. Mr. Meeker was given a list of questions. First he spoke broadly about the development of Sun City, answering some of the questions along the way, then he went back and spoke more directly to each question that had been answered. The notes follow the conversation as it progressed. They paraphrase what was said, but they have not reorganized the material into a new order. The list of questions has been attached to these notes.

At Youngtown, according to Mr. Meeker, developers had believed that retirees wished to live in minimal living facilities and the Del E. Webb Development Company (DEVCO) generally agreed with this idea. All of the early research affirmed the same conclusion – economy was crucial to the success of a development planned for retirees. DEVCO was significantly different however in that it (1) would place greater stress on facilities for active retirement, and (2) would spend a good deal of money up front to have some of these facilities ready by the time the first visitors came to Sun City to see the site and the model homes.

Between the summer of 1959 and opening day on 1 Jan 1960 a great deal was done to build nine holes of a golf course, get a shopping center opened, build a motel and finish the model homes. DEVCO did not expect there to be much interest but the crowds at opening day proved them wrong. By the end of the year 1960 DEVCO figured that it was on to something big (a "bonanza"). It then started in earnest work on its California and Florida sites. Sales would decline at Sun City Arizona from 1960 to 1965 however. Incidentally, in the early going DEVCO noticed that buyers who came from out of state had more money than local purchasers. (Perhaps this was the first element of the more prosperous market to make its interest known in planned retirement communities.)

In launching Sun City DEVCO did a number of quite different things. First, in previous retirement areas, like Florida, buyers had to come down and find their own contractors to build custom houses. That was a very difficult task. DEVCO simplified matters by providing standard models and by building the houses themselves. The contractor, in a sense, was included with the whole package. More importantly however, DEVCO was not just selling houses. It was selling a way of life that was equally unprecedented. The recreation centers and golf courses said it plainly – "active retirement." Each recreation (rec) center, at first, was to be a community hub for limited neighborhood use, but the newer centers became fancier and DEVCO wanted all residents to have access to the better facilities. The company tried to avoid creating any basis for class or status differences.

Sales at Sun City declined steadily from 1960 to 1965. The Company sold 1,350 by the end of 1960, but only less than 400 in 1965. One problem for sales was the Spur feeding lot. The company was building south from Grand Avenue toward the lot and the odors and sounds were distasteful. In the end DEVCO had to pay the Company to relocate its feedlot.

Another reason for slow sales in the early years was that buyers wanted housing that was fancier and more expensive. DEVCO was too committed at first to the economical house, but it soon became clear that buyers not only could afford more but demanded nicer housing. Buyers wanted not the top of the line but not the bottom either. Between 1965 and 1970 DEVCO increasingly offered more mid-range models, along with some at the low end of the market. It offered a greater range in price and style.

The change in housing represented something of a change in DEVCO philosophy (not to mention management turnover) in mid-1960. The company still tried to keep class or status differences to a minimum. It would freely build expensive houses next to less expensive ones.

Throughout this era, one of the key selling points was the high reputation of Del Webb and DEVCO. The company always delivered and was considered reliable.

By the late 1960's residents of Sun City were trying to become more sophisticated as a community, and some of the trappings of class and status differences appeared. DEVCO actually support this because it had become committed to upgrading the community – bringing in nicer houses, more churches, fancier rec centers, private golf courses and so on. These things however, generally represented the preferences of buyers and residents more than they represented the desires or initiative of the Webb Company itself.

Meeker mentioned some examples of the upgrading. First, DEVCO made an attractive arrangement for churches to encourage nice looking facilities. This improved the appearance of the community. DEVCO also built the first private country club, again at the request of some of the residents. Using initial membership fees as well as its own capital, DEVCO built the golf course and facilities and then turned it over to the private club to operate. Another new phenomenon – fancier and bigger recreation facilities.

So the years around 1965 were a crucial period. There was a management shakeup (resulting in Meeker, among others, having greater responsibility for Sun City and greater contact with the residents). At this time DEVCO became even more involved than before in the lives of the residents in helping to create a community. (That was apparently essential to making Sun City a success. DEVCO had to do more than sell houses – it also had to contribute in ways that would create a sense of community and encourage the residents to stick together.) Another change – DEVCO began to integrate the rec facilities so that residents from any part of Sun City could use any center. DEVCO was building much nicer centers, especially north of Grand Avenue, but wanted people in Phase I to have access to them. Another example – DEVCO became involved in developing and funding an acute care hospital, again at the request of residents. Webb responded to people's initiatives, and this helped to create a stronger community. It also made the people happy with Sun City and they became the development's best salesmen. The number of sales increased after 1965, reversing the previous trend.

At the same time the Florida and California operations were foundering. They were located in remote locations – places that were too far from cities. Sun City in Arizona was close to Phoenix.

DEVCO stood on its own merits; it got no capital from the larger Del Webb Co., even after Del Webb went public in the early 1960's.

DEVCO had to "fine tune" the retirement community project. There were no precedents to follow really, and DEVCO did not originally intend to get so involved in the lives of residents. But it had to get involved to get the community off the ground and to get sales going. It had to provide programs and initiatives because there seemed to be no other place where they could come from.

Additional examples of DEVCO providing facilities or activities, and also generating publicity and favorable attitudes for sales: DEVCO built the Sun Bowl entertainment center and provided concerts for free or at very low cost to residents; people from Phoenix who came to see the shows would also learn about the Sun City way of life. DEVCO also had special Easter services and a special celebration on Flag Day. It also tried to be sure that people could not take advantage of Sun City residents. It controlled the leases in shopping centers for instance, and would not let inferior or suspicious merchants in.

In a sense DEVCO may have been paternalistic to a point. People's view of the company bears this out. Many thought that Del Webb himself had personally built their homes, and so on. His reputation was substantial. In fact the Webb employees with greater contact were Tom Breen, Owen Childress and John Meeker. They all became quite involved with the residents and quite responsive to requests and suggestions. Out of involvement with the residents came better homes, better rec facilities, better golf courses, private country clubs, and so on – and more sales of homes. This change, from economy thinking to a higher quality concept was not easy for the company, but rather was a gradual process of learning.

Meeker pointed especially to the positive marketing effect of building the hospital. Sales really increased once the hospital was under way. From the low in 1965 sales climbed to a peak in 1978 – 3500 homes in one year. This was a tremendous project for a single developer – as large as there has ever been for one company.

To succeed there had to be a bond of sorts between DEVCO and Sun Citizens. After 1965 DEVCO was almost always there in some capacity – supporting the formation of a sense of community and responding to residents' requests. In a sense it had to provide the glue that would hold the town together before the project would take off. Residents could not provide it themselves, at least at first.

Another example – Sunshine Services – again, assisted by DEVCO.

Things that helped to get Sun City going as a community helped to increase sales because between forty and sixty percent of sales came from referrals by Sun City residents. The vacation package, with reduced rates for a week at Sun City to sample the way of life was also helpful to sales. Maybe fifteen percent of sales came from it.

In the 1960's Sun City buyers were relatively footloose types. They had been more mobile than most people before moving to Sun City. Buyers also tended to be quite patriotic which helps explain the success of the Flag Day events.

After the mid-60's the development of Sun City was a process of continual upgrading as DEVCO responded to residents' needs. It did not always help – sometimes it turned down requests and sometimes its advice was ignored.

Meeker doubts that the same kind of activities that characterize Sun City could be reproduced today. For one thing land is too expensive.

Overall proximity to Phoenix was a big help to Sun City. Phoenix was a dynamic and growing city with ample cultural activities. DEVCO originally hoped that Sun City could be annexed to Phoenix to take advantage of the city's utilities. Phoenix officials were against it however, because the town was rather remote and the cost of supplying services too high.

Answers to specific questions:

3. DEVCO had done housing subdivisions before 1960, but no master planning. At first planners were not all that helpful to the company because they did not know the product well enough and did not keep sales as much to the forefront of their thinking as they might have.
4. Trailer parks were not that influential. Trailer parks and planned retirement communities do not really mix. Trailers are a whole different way of life and they conflict with housing subdivisions.

Leisure World at Seal Beach had its own medical plan before Medicare came along. That was part of the Leisure World Package.

Today the first rec centers in Sun City look crude, but in 1960 they were quite impressive as the first ever.

DEVCO did some research into the preferences of buyers and residents.

The company also offered a sixty day warranty which also encouraged sales. It would go back in and fix any problems with construction.

6. Purchasers who bought at Sun City, at least initially, were people used to traveling. They had fewer children or no children to tie them down to a specific place or hometown. They were content to get way on a permanent basis from grandkids and kids, although they were happy to see them, at least for a short while on vacation.

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 6 day of March, 1998, by and between John W. Mooker (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie Sturgeon (Herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with hr 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. Narrator 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.
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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 as follows:

Signed (Narrator): John W. Meeker Date: 3-6-96

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Interview of **John Meeker**, President, **DEVCO**
6 March 1996

Interviewer: Melanie Sturgeon

Transcribed by Belva McIntosh 27 March 2007

This is Melanie Sturgeon, and on behalf of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society and the Arizona Historical Foundation I am interviewing John Meeker, the former President of the Del Webb Development Company in his home in Phoenix, Arizona. It is March 6, 1996.

STURGEON: Can you tell me where and when you were born and something about your growing up here?

MEEKER: I was born in Brownwood, Texas in 1926, June 5th. We moved to Arizona and I grew up in the Phoenix area, went to school here, went into the service in 1944, came out in 1946 and went to work for the Webb Corporation.

STURGEON: How did you decide to do that?

MEEKER: Well, I met Mr. Webb. I used to caddy after school and weekends and I met Mr. Webb on the golf course at Phoenix Country Club in 1941 and started caddying for him and when I finished high school and went into the service he asked me to come back and see him after I got out of the service and I did and decided to give the construction business a whirl rather than go to Arizona State, and I must say that I am very happy that I did because I had a very rewarding working relationship with the Webb Company.

STURGEON: And how did you start out when you started there?

MEEKER: I started out as the assistant mail clerk. About as low as you can get. From there I worked in various – I worked in the warehouse, then moved into the accounting department, worked for various accounting functions and equipment management. At that time the Webb Company was involved in primarily Type A

construction type projects, hospitals, office buildings, high-rise buildings. I worked on the Phoenix Veterans' Hospital as an assistant job engineer. Then I moved to Kansas City, Missouri on another Veterans' Hospital which Webb was working on. I was the office manager there. Then I transferred to Travis Air Force Base where Webb was building some barracks buildings for the Air Force. Then went from there to San Manuel, Arizona where I was a job engineer, where they built a thousand homes, a hospital, school, commercial and so forth for the Magma Copper Company. Then I came back to Phoenix and worked on various jobs, hotel jobs and along the way there I worked in Las Vegas on the Sahara Hotel and motel that they built and then came to Phoenix and got involved in the housing in the Phoenix area in 1954-55 and built houses in various locations around the valley for Webb until Sun City was started which was in 1959 and I became involved in the planning and model home design of Sun City.

STURGEON: Can I just get you to go back to San Manuel for a minute? Did you, or did the Del Webb Company design the community or how did you do that?

MEEKER: No, it was a partnership. I think the Copper Company had a design and Webb just, Webb and a joint venture party from California built it. Webb had built housing in major- had built government housing at times and they built a major project down in Tucson, called Pueblo Gardens back in the early '50's but the planning on San Manuel I think was done by the Mine. They had it done.

STURGEON: Then did the company run the community for a while or –

MEEKER: No, it was turned over to the mining company and they took it over.

STURGEON: So now we are at the planning stages of Sun City. Can you tell me how you decided to build a community that was a retirement community?

MEEKER: Tom Breen, the fellow we talked about a while ago, under the direction of Joe Ashton who was a Senior Vice President, or an Executive Vice President at that time. After the land deal was talked about with Boswell let me digress a little bit. Boswell had the acreage at Marinette that his uncle, who headed up the J. G. Boswell Company had purchased from Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company some years back and he sold some land to a developer by the name of Elmer Johns and a Ben Schleifer that did Youngtown. Boswell wasn't real happy with the way that they were developing, they were going real slowly and when Jacobsen started making the deal the Boswell, which was made in a very short period of time, Breen had kind of a thumbnail sketch research made on Florida on

how retirement housing was being offered there. Youngtown was of course retirement at that time but it was very bare bones, low end market. So Breen had a radio station owner that was going on a trip back there as I understand it and he did some research. Out of that evolved that in order to be successful, rather than putting signs up saying "Future shopping center" – "Future Rec Center"; that all those facilities must be built first and there for the people to see or they are not going to come and buy. Sun City, at that time, was pretty remote from Phoenix. The main road was Grand Avenue and Glendale was not very big, Peoria was just a wide spot in the road and had just a very small commercial area. So we were really quite remote. So out of that evolved the decision that they would build a shopping center, a motel, with restaurant, and the shopping center I think in the first phase was 50,000 square feet, and a Rec facility and a golf course, nine holes on the golf course, and five model homes. So the deal was consummated on the land I think in maybe April or May of 1959 and we hired planners to come in and give us their input. We spent about three months with this one fellow from the Coast and he got off on a Venice canal type project because the property was a farm and grew cotton primarily, and had all these wells and he wanted to interconnect them with a series of canals so finally we chucked him and did it ourselves. We were working on it while we were talking to this fellow anyway and we just decided to go ahead with it. So we were, again you got to look at this time frame, this was May of '59. On January first, or second, I don't remember the exact date, we opened with the nine holes ready for play, the Rec facility done, the shopping center open, the motel wasn't quite open but they were getting ready to open with the restaurant, they had twenty rooms and we did all this in six months times. We had to break a few zoning rules and a few rules of the road along the way. A sewer company and a water company had to be put together. The Development Company formed its own Water and Sewer Company. It was the first private sewer company in the State and met a lot of resistance from the State Health Department because at that time cities and municipalities were the only ones that operated sewer plants and they didn't like the idea of somebody going private, but anyway we did get it approved and tried to make a deal with the City of Phoenix to take the Sewer and Water Company and they had a blue ribbon committee formed to review it. They reviewed it, and we were going to build it and give it to them and the committee Recommended it highly. They had an Assistant City Manager, by the name of Charlie Esser, later I found out he was an attorney, maybe he had an ax to grind with Webb or something, but anyway he nixed the idea and the city did not end up with Sun City which would have been a great tax base for them. Sun City would have been a part of Phoenix, Arizona, but of course today it is still unincorporated. I doubt if it will ever be incorporated. So anyway, we opened, sales started off, we started selling homes from a temporary

sales office at Grand and 107th avenue. We had a little sales office that we had used on one of the local housing projects we had build around the valley. We would put a salesman out there by the name of Jack Hayden and he was taking names and when we opened we sold more than 400 houses the first weekend and Jack sold them all because he had all these reservations and there was a lady we had out there by that time – we had an office out there – we were setting up in the shopping center, and we (her name was Ida Sandler) and Ida would go through Jack's pockets every night because he had checks all over him. Jack was the version of the true salesman Sam. But anyway sales – we sold 1300 houses that first year, which was a great number for that period of time and our management felt that they had discovered a new vehicle to make a lot of money with, so they promptly bought - because the purchase from the Boswell Company originally was for 20,000 acres, which included the land for Sun City West, which was later sold back to Boswell. So the 20,000 figure kind of became a standard figure, so they went over to Sun City California and put together a large acreage. Same thing in Florida. During this time we were also looking on a development out of Houston, Texas, called Clearlake City, which was next door to NASA. It was a joint venture with Exxon, at that time it was Humble Oil Company. We took off and formed a national advertising campaign. So we were busy developing the other projects. The other ones got started in '61 I believe, Sun City, California, Florida shortly thereafter. Then we even started on in Bakersfield, California, which is not very highly thought of in California. Bakersfield is in the San Joaquin Valley with a lot (---) for and oil refineries and it did not go very well.

STURGEON: Let me take you back – why, in the first place did you decide to go to the retirement communities? Why didn't you just build a suburban development?

MEEKER: Well, because it was so far – it was located out of the main stream of development. At that time there was some development on the west side but primarily the most successful development in Phoenix was going north at that time. North, but I mean to say, between Glendale to Scottsdale. But north wasn't really the primary focus. It was a different, a unique approach. It was a need that was not being met. Youngtown sold a very economical home, but that was it. They had a little shopping center – a little meeting hall, but without diRection. From looking at that and then the Florida project they decided that a Rec facility with a golf course – in Florida there had been some – not necessarily sub-division golf courses. We were kind of the pioneer of subdivision golf courses in the country at that time. There were maybe some done but more for Country Clubs, more high dollar, high end type developments. Nothing of the economical homes on the golf

course type that we were doing. We had a copy cat in Palm Springs. A guy names Nel Severen build a place called Palm City and copies everything we did and said he was the innovator of it, but he promptly failed, as we almost did too. We strung out our management from California to Florida and Phoenix and our resources. Our sales did not meet expectations in the other cities like Arizona had done. Sales began to fall off in Arizona as well as the others. By 1965 that 1300 had gone down to less than 400. Our advertising people had gotten into – by that time we had a major – we had more than fifty people in an in-house advertising group. They got into selling vitamins by mail and kind of lost sight of what we were doing. Mr. Webb made a decision one day, he said, run them all off and he ran them all off, including Breen and Ashton. Jacobson stayed for a while. He was Executive Vice President right under Webb. I got given the responsibility for the Sun Cities. We kind of – that was in 1965 and our winter traffic had all gone – at that time we had the standard philosophy that most developers have that we would build the house and try to stay uninvolved with the residents after they moved in. But that was kind of hard to do when we were doing a – the Marinette Ranch was the first development that had more than 8,000 acres in it and Sun City was going to be there for a long time and that was easier said than done. So when the first Rec facility was built it served a certain geographical neighborhood. When the second Rec facility was built it served a certain geographical area. Immediately there was conflicts between the two as to cross-use, they wouldn't permit it. People would want to have people come over to play bridge with their groups and they couldn't, and they couldn't go to the other one and it became a very sticky wicket. That contributed to the downturn in sales. And the philosophy was also at that time to advertise nationally and to bring the people there. Not a great effort was put on the residents. Now there were some people – well later on we changed that philosophy. When I took over I came from the building side, I was not in the sales and marketing end. Fact of the matter is I didn't think too much of sales and marketing. Particularly the ones we had because of course if they didn't get them sold we didn't have anything to build. To keep me from getting into a problem with all this big marketing group my boss at that time decided that he knew that I would go right after those marketing people and he said, let me take care of that, and he did. So we replaced more than fifty people with three people – in the marketing people. But we changed the philosophy in Sun City. A simple philosophy. We became involved with the people. We were going to work on those people for referrals that our sales were coming from referrals from people who were happy and were bringing in their friends. So we decided that rather than spend millions of dollars on advertising we would commence spending it on the residents. We made a change in the project managers. I brought Owen Childress to Sun City in 1966 or '67 and he was – he had worked with me in housing on the

local projects but he was on the finance side and he sales side and he was involved with corporate management. But they agreed to let him come out to be Project Manager at Sun City and his first responsibility was to unite the Rec facilities. He with the help of Bill Chapman and a number of other residents brought that about. At that time we were getting ready to build a third Rec facility. We had turned sales around. We had taken them from 400 to 600 and 800 we were getting ready to build a third Rec facility. It was voted in overwhelmingly by the residents and we got that out of the way. Our next step was to – one of our marketing people – a man by the name of Harvey Sheehan came up with a idea that we could take some of the King's Inn hotel rooms – at that time I think we had maybe 75 or 80 rooms there. We could take half the rooms and use it on what we called a vacation program. There were some semblance of one before where if they came they would give them credit for their room rate if they bought a home, but we evolved that program – that program evolved into where we took half of the rooms. Well the next year we took all of the rooms from the motel. The motel manager didn't like that too well but eventually went along with it and really supported the program. It became so successful as a sales tool that we built another 97 apartments that we would later sell, then we built another 100 and we were able to fill them during the winter. And of those people that came more than 15% bought homes which is a pretty high figure according to the experts in the business. And we did not pay for their air fare or their transportation. They brought themselves here. And we gave them a couple of rounds of golf and we gave them a little container of Arizona cactus jellies. I think there were four different kinds – prickly pear, saguaro, I don't know what all they had, but it went over very well. That was our base for our sales. Then in 1967-68 we came up with the idea for an outdoor amphitheater. It was on a plane – we were doing some other housing projects. We had one in Seattle Washington that we were building and I was involved in at that time. On this plane I saw a Time magazine – it was written for the San Francisco area and it was talking about a builder who after the war was building a large project in the South San Francisco area, I don't Recall exactly where but he had a band shell and an entertainment and he used that to sell homes. He was talking about it was still there and the people were still using it after all of those years. That was maybe fifteen years, maybe twenty. I thought that might be a good idea for us, so anyway we built the Sun Bowl. Again it was an advertising vehicle to interest winter residents to come out and see Sun City and also the residents would get to enjoy the entertainment that we put on there. We built it for something less than \$200,000, except the budget was probably only \$100,000 and we exceeded that a little bit. But Liberace was our first major entertainer and we thought we could cram 7,000 in there. Well, we sold 7000 tickets and we could have probably sold 14,000 tickets because Liberace in those days, younger people aren't familiar

with him but he was a TV piano player, entertainer and became a headliner in Las Vegas later, but at that time he was on his way up and he had a half hour show and all the older people liked him. Any Liberace filled the house and from then it was onward and upward. We brought in the Lawrence Welk stars and we had entertainment every week in the wintertime. The people brought their own chairs and it was low cost. We were just trying to break even on it, if that. We would put the entertainers up at Mountain Shadows which the Webb Company owned at that time. Out sales reflected this. We went from 1100 to 1800. But all of a sudden we ran into a major problem. There was a cattle feeding operation south of Olive called Spur Feedlots. They were feeding 5 or ten thousand head of cattle and all of a sudden they started feeding 50,000 head of cattle. The prevailing wind was from that direction, so consequently we had a major odor problem. We also had problems with the F104's flying over from Luke Field. They were about ten or twelve miles off the end of the runway but they would still line up over Sun City and take off and if they flew low altitude it was very noisy. Through a lot of effort over the years we overcame that problem. We got them to re-route. Every time they changed base commanders every two or three years we would have to go through the same fight. But the cattle feeding situation grew worse. We tried to buy the land and they wouldn't sell it. We offered to move them and they didn't want that. They wanted a big premium. We went to court. Went all the way through court and the Judge ruled in our favor. The cattle feeders took it to the Supreme Court and they took jurisdiction. We found out what cowboy justice was at that time because the Supreme Court said reverse the Judge and said we were liable and not them. Although Youngtown was there ahead of when this cattle feeding operation was built, they just disregarded all that. So we ended up having to pay the damages. We had to pay for the move. Which we did rather than appeal it. As a sidebar I am – every once in a while I will meet some attorney and they will ask what my name is and I was with Webb and they will say, Oh yeah, you were involved in that Spur Feedlot situation. I say yes, and apparently that was a landmark case that they used in law school on nuisance cases and every one of them asked me, why didn't you appeal that to the Supreme Court. You could have won that. But we didn't because it would have ended up costing a lot of money, more money to appeal it than it would to settle it, so we settled it and got it out of the way. By that time we were building toward Olive and we were going to have to cross Grand Avenue and we were working on a hospital out there. I think I moved my offices out there in 1970 and so we were selling, I think, 1700-1800 houses a year by that time. We were trying to build a little – we had been working on it for three or four years – to put a hospital together. Management agreed to let us help a group of local residents built a modest 100 bed hospital. We would give them the ground and would help them build it. Jim Boswell mentioned one day

that he might have an idea or two on the hospital. He said you are not looking far enough ahead. So we were in the process of putting on a fund raising drive and he said If you will make these conditions I think that what you really ought to do is to look at the hospital history -- I may not have this exactly correct, but anyway he said he would give us a matching grant of a million hundred or two hundred thousand dollars and if we would build a facility that would serve all of the northwest area. Then it would be named William O. Boswell Hospital. The residents would match his grant. We said, well those first two are easy now we got to get the people to come up with the money. Well, we hired a fund raiser and that was in 1967 or 8 and anyway, the residents pledged more than a million dollars as I Recall. Boswell came with the money and then Mr. Webb, through his ownership of the Yankees had become acquainted with the Mayo Clinic and used the Mayo Clinic himself for his physical checkups, so he had friends there and we went back and we ended up using Mayo's architect and built a facility that would serve older people in the radial nursing units where there were nurses stations in the center and the patients could literally see the nurses station so they would feel more secure, because the older people would like that, so we did that and the hospital grew. It started out with a modest hundred -- I think we got approval for a hundred beds -- put fifty in operation, had a lot of resistance from the local hospitals because they had a local comprehensive health program and they didn't want anybody taking their business, even though people would die if they had a heart problem before they got there because they didn't have fireman with the emergency treatments like they have today where the hospital really doesn't have to be next door -- they can stabilize you and transport you. But at that time you had to bring the hospital to the people, so in spite of all the naysayer's -- they said we would never get doctors and we would never get nurses. Finally we were having one of these little meetings and I got a little perturbed and I said, tell you what we are going to do, we are going to build it with or without your support. This health planning council did not have any legal standing. And I said the second thing we are going to do we are going to steal every one of your good nurses. And we are going to come after your doctors and if you really get testy we are going to come after some of your patients too. Well, they didn't like to hear that and they said, oh you will never get an administrator to come out there to that Podunk place. We had 197 applications for the director of the hospital and we got a good one and he stayed there for a long time, fact he retired from there. So we overcame that, but it seemed like there were a lot of obstacles to over come because people -- even the local newspapers, they did not like what Sun City stood for because they did vote against school bond issues and the schools in the areas were growing but the problem was really not on the residents, they had a school superintendent. He saw Sun City as a vehicle to take up all these --feed, clothe and take care of all the migrant farm workers that

lived in the Peoria school district. Well, that didn't go over too well. He tried it. Matter of fact he was ahead of some of the Federal programs that they have today because they would give them breakfast – but he wanted the Sun City people to pay for that. That was a thorny issue all the way through. Finally after some effort they got mad enough at Sun City and at us that they decided that Peoria School District would go its way and Sun City would go its way and so they did. But Sun City did have some children but they had enough taxes to send them to other schools so it became a non-district. But Sun City really – we had bigger and better Rec facilities, we were always looking – the Sun Bowl was successful, the vacation program was working, we were running more than 200,000 people a year through our sales offices at that time. Fact is it got up to 250,000 people going through the sales office each year, which is an astronomical number. So we were looking for bigger and better things. There was a group that was into bowling out there and they didn't have a facility, they had to drive a long ways and they asked if we couldn't get an operator to come to Sun City and so we got our commercial people – we built and operated the shopping centers and we went after all the major operators and the only way we could get one to come out there was if we built the facility and gave it to him rent free then he would come and his rates would still be the same as Phoenix rates. And I said the heck with that, we will built it as part of our Rec facilities and so we went to the Rec board and we had some people there who didn't think too much of the idea and I said well we are going to do it, it doesn't come out of your fee, we are going to do it above that. When we added the Rec facilities we agreed to spend so much a household on Rec facilities and we always exceeded that considerably as we went along and we felt we were in a position to say that we are putting that in at our expense and it pays for itself. And we put a caveat in there that said that they couldn't use it to make money to offset other expenses. Which I understand later that they came back later and tried to do, but that wasn't a part of our deal with them. I think we built sixteen lanes and with room to go to twenty four. It got expanded and that became very popular. We had a fellow come to us who wanted to put in a mini-golf course – miniature golf. That lit a light. I said, well that would be a nice idea for us to put in our Rec facilities, so we did, and it became heavily used. When we combined the Rec facilities, the people in Oakmont, which was the first Rec center wanted some renovation work done which we agreed to do and did do as a part to overcome the problems. But it really - the Rec facilities then were available to all the residents, so when we built the Bowling facility at Lakeview, everybody can use it. That was the first mini-golf overlooking the lake. We brought the lake idea back with us from Florida. We were really the first lake – we didn't like to say that too much because the water conservation people didn't like the idea of a man made lake out there. They thought we were wasting water so we didn't advertise that too much. We ran the

golf course water through the lake so it would circulate the lake water and so technically we weren't just building a lake for residents it was a part of the golf course. So we were always looking for better and new equipment in the Rec facilities. We had a great relationship with the residents on that. We had a gentleman come to us who was into weight lifting and wanted to donate some money for it and we said to heck with it we will put one in and so we put in a Universal gym and out of the universal gym today fitness is a major, major item in Sun City. And it was the same with hobbies that would come and go that people would like. But I think that really the success was listening to the people and staying involved with them. And Jerry Svendson and Tom Austin prior to him, but Austin was really in the early years he did a heck of a job out there with what he had to work with. He tried to get everybody involved but Tom later went into the commercial leasing and I don't think he liked that too well. He eventually left but Jerry Svendson came on and then we hired Don Tusks to help him on the Sun Bowl because it was a major effort and both Jerry and Don went over real well with the residents. They were young men and they kind of looked upon them like their sons, like they would their sons. They told them corny jokes and they would warm up the audience at the head of the acts that we put on and I must say that they did a heck of a job. But we went on to sell in the range of 2200 to 2500 units a year during the seventies, with a down turn coming in '76 when the energy crunch hit, but then it picked right on back up, and in 1978 we sold out. We sold thirty-four hundred fifty houses in 1978 and sold out Sun City and were taking reservations for Sun City West. Which was really a couple of years ahead of our schedule. We had planned to go with Sun City West – we had purchased the land in the early 70's for Sun City West. Then the Sun Bowl really spawned the Sun Dome. The reason that name came about. Somebody sicked us on to an architect out of New York that had an inflated dome that would – they had built them in Iowa and Florida, and you could use and it was more economical to build, but when we got into it the noise was a tremendous problem and we sent out people back to see the ones that were standard structure. That is how the Sundome was built. But then we were working on the planning in the late '70's for Sun City West. Did all the planning with the hubs, the major core, were going to have satellite Rec facilities, which Webb has pretty well followed. However, they never did put in the neighborhood shopping center like we did in Sun City, which I felt was a mistake and still do because they only had the one grocery store in Sun City and the one on the periphery now, which makes it a little inconvenient for the residents.

STURGEON: Why did they decide to do that and not put –

MEEKER: Oh, they did that in the early '80's. I left in late '81. They had some people involved. A guy named Swanson came in and took over. Johnson, he was a hatchet man, and sold all the assets off to look great, almost wiped the company out and left like he was a great hero and he was a great thief. So that happened in that period of time, he sold off land, sold off the land south of Grand Avenue for Sun City West. Sold it off to an outfit for \$19,000 an acre and the next guy, Day, the company they sold it to turned around and sold it for \$29,000 an acre to somebody else. That doesn't sound right to me, even if it was private. It was still stock holders money they were messing with, but as it turned out it was right because land went in the tank and they had all the – they had a bunch of notes and I assume they collected all the money. But when we started out in Sun City West we were building energy efficient homes and when I left they immediately went back and eliminated the insulated windows. We gave them an evaporative cooler along with the air conditioner so they could just flip a switch. We also had roof mounted solar water heaters in all the new homes. Because the residents that lived there wanted to have a monthly operating bill for a big item because they were on a fixed income, power, gas, electricity, telephones, big items. But now it has gone full circle, everybody is getting insulated homes because – insulated windows and fully insulated homes, although they haven't gone back to the solar water heaters. At that time gas wasn't available – a gas water heater is really the most efficient. Your payback on the solar is longer than ten years if you are competing with gas but if you are competing with electricity the payback is three to five years. But they haven't gone back to that. But they have pretty well followed along with the principal we had. The only thing that they do not do that we did for the residents, the greatest sales source was referrals; that is where the sales come from. That is why we were able to do what we did, pure and simple. We spent the money on those people. Those corny Sun Bowl programs, they liked it, we were involved, if something came up that somebody needed some help we were there, and they knew that. And they were not out of line, the people when they came there, it was pretty genuine. We helped the churches get started. When they first started, they would sell them a site and by the time they would pay for the site all the building was gone. So we came up with an idea. And the churches never had any money for landscaping. So we said, we will make you a deal. So we sold them the church site at cost but they had to start. We did their landscaping – we matched them two for one. They spent \$15,000 and we would match them another 30 – 45,000 dollars to landscape their churches. You can see where that started happening. You go above Grand Avenue and you start driving and you can see what started happening with the churches up there and how beautiful they are. We sold them the site cheap enough so they had building money to build their churches. Instead of letting the accountants say oh you are going to make money building these.

Yeah, but the churches sell houses and we used it as a sales tool, same with the golf courses. We ended up giving the golf courses to the residents because we operated them on a break even basis. Course that is where the big bad company, they always wanted to argue with us, they thought we had a lot of overhead in there and we didn't. Now they operate them and they are doing a good job. They really are. They have done very well. But we did the planning on Sun City West on the golf courses. We had 11,000 reservations when we went over there which was almost the first phase – under normal circumstances we would close perhaps 60 to 70 percent of those reservations. It ended up less, we ended up closing about 50 percent of them – 40 percent of them, which is good, even though interest rates went to 21%, in the early '80's which was a bad time. But Sun City evolved because there were people – residents that cared and there were people within the Webb organization that cared and that is why it succeeded, pure and simple. When there was a problem we got together and we solved it, i.e. the hospital. That is a major facility now. We had to get a few tax laws changed, we had to get legislation so they could sell tax free bonds. We found a way and we got that done, through the county, so they could sell their bonds for financing. We financed the hospital. They didn't have enough money to build the second wing. We stepped up, co-signed with the bank so they could. And we got that five million dollars. We were there. We were just there pushing them along a little bit. But there were people like Bill Chapman, and John Meade who were the head of the hospital board (he died) and many, many others who became involved. There were people on the Rec board. A guy named Myron Wagoner who was head of the Rec center when we started building better Rec facilities and when we went with the indoor facility at Sun Dial – an indoor pool – a lot of naysayer's – they didn't like that idea. I said, well that is what we are going to have, you better get used to it. But they stood in there because we were trying to give them something so they had the broad spectrum of facilities. Then when we built Bell Rec center, it was really a nice facility. We blew all of our budget, all of our budget that we were supposed to build for them and all of our budget that we had in reserve. We didn't have any money left and they made that decision. They wanted to go with one more and not build one north of Bell Road and they called that facility Meeker's revenge up there, because they said, we didn't want to build it, it was on a map, future. Well you get into trouble when you put future down there. Somebody assumes it is going to be there so we had to end up going out of our own pocket to go up there and put a small facility in. But it is being used so I guess it really was needed – they needed another pool. And then we introduced tennis, and met resistance there. They didn't want the maintenance on it. Anytime you mention maintenance to the Rec facilities people they want to go the other way because it costs money. That is understandable but built two courts and then we built more at

Lakeview Center and then we built 7 or 9 at Bell Rec facility. Nice facility. Then we built a park at Lakeview with the excavation from the lake. You ought to go take the tour and see how it evolved then go back across Grand Avenue then go to Lakeview and just see how it changed.

STURGEON: I've done that with the architecture – with the houses.

MEEKER: But go to the Rec facilities and see how those happy those people are. Yeah, there are some of them old but – you know, the average life of a home in the conventional communities – the average stay of the family is less than seven years. Out there it is longer. But as the people pass on, or get to old to live there, another family comes in and takes their spot. It has worked out quite well.

STURGEON: Now, did you decide to put in any facilities for long term care, for people who don't want to go to the hospital, don't want to move out, or was that private ?

MEEKER: Well, management made a decision and that was one area of retirement that we would stay out of. At that time there weren't really any major operators in it. We put a lot of effort into getting a nursing home operator to come to Sun City. We helped them in fact, gave them a very attractive land deal so that they would come and we would have it next to the hospital. But that has evolved until now there is competition in it and there are people – church people would come in and charge people big fees and then they would go broke, couldn't take care of it. We knew if we got into it we would be just have to take care of them, so we opted to stay out of it. That was a wise decision. It is better - then the people – what is that called, Royal Oaks? Again, Earl Walker, the same guy that came to me on the universal gym, he and a minister said, we've got an idea. I said that sounds like a winner to me. We helped them; I helped them and got it done. The people got it done, they raised their own money. That is the way it should be. You can't - you have profit operators in there and they aren't going to get the right care and prices are going to go up. There were some snipers, people around the periphery – a guy came in there with an operation on 99th Avenue across from Sun City and Peoria, I forget the name of it. Sunshine Services was a church oriented operation. They did a good job. They focused on the need. They had some intermediate care, some long term care. There again, they ran out of money and they said, we don't know what we are going to do. I said, how much do you need, I think they said \$25,000 and I gave them \$50,000. You can pay us back when you get the money. They got through the thing and they paid it back, every penny. It was really kind of like a family operation, and again the people were not, did not

ask for a lot of stuff that was not needed. Sunshine Services, you are familiar with that, started in that minister's car port and we helped him all the way. We built a little facility for him on a piece of commercial ground and they outgrew that promptly. We built another facility over across Grand Avenue and we thought, man, they will never fill that up, and they did and doubled it since. Biggest Abby Rents in the country. But is all for free, with volunteers. Reverend Thistlewaite was another guy that ran that operation. They gave of themselves. Have you ever gotten involved in the hospital, look at that and see how people will help one another. Look at the volunteers. One of the largest volunteer organizations in the country. I know it is the largest in the state.

STURGEON: I think that is true of almost everything in Sun City.

MEEKER: They become involved. It is great to see as the hospital rose up it became involved in the overall medical picture, to make sure that they had care. They stepped into the breach there and when I say they, the board is Sun City residents. Not the Administrator, that administrator runs it but that board is involved. They have been very fortunate, they had Austin Turner, then Lee Peterson is the administrator now, and they have done a heck of a job. First class facilities, first radial nursing units in the state. But the thing looking back that surprised me as I mentioned a while ago, was the opposition that we had from local and it is still there. They look on Sun City as a bunch of greedy old people, but I got to tell you something, those people create jobs. They are like a clean industry. They do nothing but spend money. And when they spend money that goes through the businesses here in this valley. The deposits that they had at the banks – they were well over a billion dollars back in the 80's, I don't know what it is now. It was an astronomical fee. We had 29 Savings and Loans and bank branches out there in Sun City alone. Of course the fallout reduced that down. The reason they were there was because there were depositors. They weren't there just for looks. Sun City has been good for the valley. The school situation, there were some outspoken residents on that. They get a little wild eyed when you mention that one. When we came to the unorganized school district that took them out of the way and got them out of the --. The only thing they are still wild eyed out there about is incorporation. I think they are wrong in not incorporating. They should because they could help themselves a lot better than they do now. They would get tax funds to do it. But they have a terrible time with a city and they see more taxes. It really wouldn't be that way. They could operate their Rec facilities at a lower cost and so forth.

STURGEON: You see the study, did you not?

MEEKER: Yeah, we did a study. We had a study made. We worked on it but it was just a losing battle. They never let it come to vote – they did not want that to come to vote. That is unfortunate. Because they do not get the representation. They have it politically because of the supervisors and representatives, but they do not have it as a Mayor and the standing that they should have. They are a major force. There are 70,000 people really that are not represented at the level they should be, i.e. they don't have a Major, or an official spokesman. They have a lot of self appointed ones but they sometimes aren't quite right. Fortunately they have had some good ones, but it doesn't really give a good image of Sun City. It has been a very positive thing. It has been a very rewarding thing for me to have been involved in it. I would like to feel that we extended those peoples lives some. How much would be a hard thing to determine, but we did make their lives happier and by their staying active I have got to assume that it makes them live longer.

STURGEON: Where did you come up with the phrase, active retirement?

MEEKER: Well, that was Bob Garland. He came with that and “an active new way of life”. You see at the time they called retirement and they still do, they will call it a retirement village when it is a building for long term care. An intermediate care type facility where people that are elderly, that can't drive anymore and they want to have their meals there. But Bob Garland was the one who came up with that. I'll see if I can track him down. He would be worthwhile talking to. He worked closely with Crane on the advertising and as I say wrote the song. He was an energetic guy, still is, nice looking man and did a hell of a job. Our problem was we went too far flung too fast and really stretched our management, spread it around and didn't pay attention to what was at hand. Although maybe we were lucky. I came from the construction side and when we made the decision, a simple one, to become involved with the people and spend the money on them it turned out to be a wise one. The residents did in fact entice their friends to come and buy in Sun City and they in turn had friends and it just snowballed.

STURGEON: Did you do the same thing in the other Sun Cities?

MEEKER: We did on a more – in California it was not an immigration state at that time, so we were really dealing with a different market. We were really dealing with just a strictly California market. It was very difficult to reach them – to get to the California market. We were remote. We were out of Riverside, out of Escondido and it is all built up around there now, but at that time it was really remote. Didn't even have a major freeway. The freeway is at the front door now,

but it wasn't then. The same in Florida. Unfortunately in Florida the decision was made to buy where they did because they passed a piece of ground in Sarasota, Florida to somebody. They had tried to develop and had waterways, right on the gulf of Mexico, I don't know whether they had a golf course or not, but the shopping center was there. They failed and it was only 5,000 acres. But our management said, we need 20,000 acres. Well, that wasn't really quite right. It took Sun City, Arizona which was very successful. When you sell 2,000 houses a year you are really in the super league, you are beyond the major leagues. Not many developments do that. In fact Sun City, Arizona was the largest development of its kind by a single builder in the history of this country. Leavitt Town built 14,000 units. Sun City built 25,000 units. It was a great experience and it is kind of nice seeing them carrying it on. Webb Company got out of the gambling business, that was our Achilles heel and are now concentrating on retirement all over the country. I hope they don't have the same problems we did building here there and everywhere. California would have been a very successful project but at the time it got started we had a lot of sales, several hundred sales and we were union at the time because we did commercial building. The carpenters went out on strike and consequently no work was done for several months and we lost a lot of sales, and we never did recoup from that. It was 200-250 houses a year operation and you can't make a lot of money building 250 houses. Not with the kind of overhead that you have, carrying costs on the land. And that was a bad deal in both Florida and California. Boswell was half owner, the land was purchased without any carrying costs on it. He had a fixed price on the land, so much an acre and we took it down as we needed it. But he got his money back. He got half of the profit on it. That is one of the major reasons it was successful and the others weren't. Location had a great deal to do with it. Phoenix was a dynamic growing community, and Tampa, at that time was a dirty port city. Riverside California was not very big, not very much there.

STURGEON: One of the things that you notice when you go from Sun City and you drive across Grand Avenue, there is a difference in the way the houses look, they are much more elaborate. Why did you decide to change things?

MEEKER: Well, if you go down into the southern part of Sun City, south of Grand Avenue toward Olive, you will see that transition taking place. Again the previous management, previous to my taking over felt we should build a very Spartan home. They were dead wrong. The people wanted a nicer looking home and they wanted bigger homes. They did not all want a little thousand square foot cracker box. They wanted nicer amenities in their homes. So we built some experimental homes, we called them. We went out and built them. We put three

or four items in there to see what they were, and they were kind of far out in some regards, like a Jacuzzi inside and this was back in the '60's and that was kind of ahead of its time. They didn't like this and they didn't like that and we gave away a bicycle, a three wheel bicycle if they would fill out the form. Well, we got thousands of elaborately filled out questionnaires, all to win that lousy bicycle. But we thought that's a good deal. There is one other thing that I didn't mention here that was a factor in getting the people involved with themselves. Jerry Svendson came in and said, I can't get these people to come to their clubs. He was getting ten, twelve, fifteen people. After that experimental home with the bicycle I said Jerry, tell you what you do. At that time a 25 inch TV was the biggest they made. I said go buy the biggest twenty five inch console and give it – I don't care if five people show up, give it away as a door prize. He was giving dinners for two at the King Inn's as door prizes. I said I will guarantee they will be there next time. He gave away that TV and the next time – I think twelve people showed up or maybe fifteen, and the next time there were 150 people and we had of course to do that a few times. But when they all got together they became involved with one another it took off. The clubs really got going, but it took a boost from us to get it done. Just that simple, stupid but simple. There were a lot of players. Jerry and Don Tusk were two key players. Owen Childress was while he was there. Our corporate treasurer died and he went down and took that position in the early 70's, but he certainly helped get the thing headed in the right way. It took a team of our people but again our people cared and we cared about the quality of house we gave, even though they were small little homes, they were nice homes. We introduced the brick veneer as we upgraded. But that veneer was on south down to Olive and we just took it on across the road. When we built the model homes on the lake we built a couple of showpieces in there that were rather elaborate, but that was all for merchandising. We did not expect to sell a lot of the large homes, two thousand twenty five square feet. If we sold twenty a year that was OK with us. We were after those fifteen – seventeen hundred square footers, and that is where the sales were. Ten to fifteen percent would buy on the low end always, and that was always there. We kept the same little thousand square foot model always. We always had that house there. Different versions. But there were certain people that would buy them. They thought they would come and live here six months and live some place else six months, so they didn't want a great big home. Those people had money and they were coming down from bigger homes, and they wanted a little better home than we were offering originally. So through those experimental homes we stepped it up a little. We were having a union problem here in '75-'76. Plumbers were making \$22 to \$25 an hour – electricians the same. Carpenters were grossing \$20 an hour. That meant building costs went up. So we came up with an idea of building manufactured homes so we started a

component plant over in Sun City West. We did that as an answer to hold the prices down. It meant that we would have to go to a more contemporary home to do that. But it was not well received by the residents and that was stopped. They wanted a four-twelve pitch roof with an entry way and a kitchen with a window over the sink. They did not like inside baths, they wanted a window in the bath. That came out loud and clear, particularly a kitchen – they wanted a window over that sink and they wanted it out to the back yard, not into the side.

STURGEON: Did you find that out through trial and error?

MEEKER: No, those experimental homes, the questionnaires – they told you. We could tell – some of them were signing them and we could look them up and see what kind of homes they owned. You could really tell because they would tell you what they didn't like about their house. But we tried to really give them – we gave them the best bathroom fixtures that we could buy – American Standard – we gave them quality. We gave them single lever bathroom faucets and kitchen faucets – way ahead – it was not the standard then. You had to pay extra for them. The elongated toilets. In those days it was a little cheap toilet and a big person couldn't hardly sit on them. That was after the war and that was what they sold a lot of. Builders would buy the cheapest ones. And we leaned on American Standard and I said, why is that more money – why is that twenty dollars more than the other one. The guy couldn't answer me. So finally it got down – it was a union problem – they gave them as a concession – they gave them extra money to make elongated water closets and I said, well you got to do better than that. Finally for a dollar more we got the elongated water closets. We made American Standard come up with a - and it is still their biggest seller today. Everything was a fight to do because people had been doing it a certain way. But we did give them quality. We were at the forefront on insulation, even when we built the little block houses to start with we built them with zonolite, which is insulating material, to cut down on their heating and cooling costs. I think in the long term it really paid off for the people. They have really kept that community pretty well up. Those houses are approaching thirty five years old and some of them look pretty good. There are a few bad ones here and there where they haven't spent the money. But when you go above Grand Avenue you see the difference and the reason you see that is we built south and then turned around and went north and you just see them evolve into better homes.

STURGEON: What about Sun City West? Those homes seem even bigger than the others.

MEEKER: Well, they really aren't. In fact the first 5,000 sales we sold off the models in Sun City. But they look bigger because they got higher ceilings. When you build a house in the new styles today – ten foot ceilings, not eight foot ceilings and twelve foot ceilings. We did that back in the 70's and we got shot down in flames. We built some high ceilings and they said this is going to cost money to maintain. They didn't sell well so we stopped doing it. That was when we came with some angled walls and did some different things – some real nice patio home designs – excellent patio designs. Today they are great designs but we were just a shade ahead of our times – they weren't ready to accept them. Another thing they liked – they liked the eating space in the kitchen – a breakfast space. Most plans back then in the 60's did not have that on the lower end. You got a little up in the middle price homes they had it.

STURGEON: When people were buying their homes how were they financing them?

MEEKER: Cash. Seventy percent paid cash and that figure is probably still good today. We had financing for them. We had FHA financing and we finally had to quit that because they wouldn't take it. The people that financed their homes we just lined it up and they would go make their own arrangements. Eventually they would pay those off. The bankers would tell us they would pay them off in three to five years. They all kept twenty five thousand dollars ready available ready cash. Don't ask me why it was twenty five because I couldn't tell you. That may have changed today but they always had that twenty five thousand dollars. They would lie on their financial statements, they would always understate it, probably 50, maybe 100 percent. They still do that too. They don't want to tell people the kind of money they have. But you talk to some people out there and they will tell you – it changed. There was a change took place. In the 60's the people that would relocate did not have a great deal of money. Now you have got to understand they didn't have pension plans like are out there today. They had to save their own money. Social Security wasn't around at the amount that it is today. The change started taking place in the late 70's. The cross section of the buyers had stepped up. You got a more affluent buyer than we originally got. I think that came about because we had a better product. Originally all the gerontologists said that it was a mistake to move into a community like Sun City. They really knocked us. I mean, nationally. They really came up with all kinds of excuses and they really worked us over. They said, oh they are all going to die. People just sitting around waiting to die. Esquire came out with a big article. They had people sitting on the park benches like they were ghosts waiting to die. Terrible, negative piece. But they overlooked one thing. That when the people do

pass on, another couple buys that home and the process starts over again. The average age hasn't gone to 80. In Sun City I would imagine it – it was below 65 for a long time – then in the late 80's in Sun City it was maybe 67. I don't know what it would be now. It might be around 70. But it had not gone way up. So people are living longer. They are more active. Because they are 65 their brains don't go away. I can speak with authority on that one. You don't really think any different than you did when you were 30.

STURGEON: Did you learn anything, besides the homes, that you took with you to Sun City West when you were designing it?

MEEKER: Sure. Look, the Rec facilities and the concept. They really like a neighborhood concept. In Sun City West, the design there was to have a major core in the center. At the time that we did Sun City West we owned 13,000 acres. We owned the grounds South. So the idea was we were going to put a regional shopping center in the core across from the Sundome. That would be a major – we tried awfully hard to get a Penny's or major store to come to Sun City and never were successful. That would all back up in there and we would have satellite Rec facilities all around. We built the bowling alley there. We thought maybe we might have to build another one in Phase 2 which was south of Grand and then a neighborhood shopping center. That is a service station, a grocery store, a drug store and normal neighborhood grocery store type deal. But that kind of got changed a little because the grocery stores started building super stores. A big store used to be 25,000 feet, that was a big grocery store. But I guess now they are 100,000 feet. That changed it a little bit. But the neighborhood concept was a strong one and that is the way we planned it. Webb didn't call it that. Then Swanson sold all the ground out and made a quick buck on it.

STURGEON: When you look back on your involvement in Sun City do you feel that perhaps you got too involved in the community? I know there was a sense of betrayal when you moved over to Sun City West.

MEEKER: Well, no, we did not get too involved. We were on the flank always. We were behind the scenes pusher to make things happen. If a church needed help we were there. We didn't advertise, but we helped things. Webb died in 1974, but in their minds Del Webb personally built their homes. They will tell you that today. That never did happen of course. But it was a respect that they had for him because it was Del Webb. Del Webb did this. And Del Webb was a company that was doing it but in his name. He got a little squeamish about that himself. He said, what you are doing to me out here. They just really looked up to him because

we were taking care of their needs and they felt a little betrayed. When we moved over there, and again had I stayed over there I would have fostered that relationship and I would have weaned off easy, but this guy Swanson just went BAM, saving money and really hurt the Webb Company because that was a source of referrals again, even though they were Sun City. And some of it they brought on themselves. We tried to meld the two communities together; that was our plan. There was a faction in Sun City that fought us tooth and toenail. We don't want any part of that, we have Sun City and they really were short sighted because they couldn't see what we were coming with over there and it was going to be bigger and better. They made us separate the water company. We had a private water and sewer company. Citizens served Sun City and they didn't want them to be served off the same contract, although we had it. The way it was written we could have done it but we chose not to. So they felt their rates might go up. Their rates might have gone up a few pennies, but in the long pull it would have held their rates down. It was a fight we couldn't win so we said, fine, if that is the way you want it that is the way it will be and that is the way we did it. So some of that was brought on by some naysayer's. There was a group that wanted to take over and run Sun City. Some big town Philadelphia police chief, he passed away but he was an argumentative type guy and he wanted power. But I think the Webb people should have stayed a little closer, but they have jumped back in there a little bit.

STURGEON: First, setting up Sun City, had you articulated a plan for what you were going to do with the Rec centers once the area had filled up and you were going to build another one or did this just sort of evolve over time.

MEEKER: Well, originally each Rec center would serve a geographical area and it would be deed over to the residents of that geographical area. And that was done. But out of that evolved the cross use problem that I spoke about earlier. When we got ready to do the third one we got sales turn around and we were going upward, we got them to form one Rec facility that would own all the facilities in Sun City. The golf courses were not a part of that deal originally. We ended up giving the golf courses to the Rec facilities for the residents because they were the only entity out there that was for all of the residents. But now that is a standard part of the deal, the golf courses go with the Rec facilities. In Sun City West we overcame that problem. When we went to Sun City West we formed an unorganized school district right out of the shoot so that we wouldn't have that problem. The school district went along with it. But the people – what is really overlooked a lot is the volunteers that spend hours tutoring children that can't speak English, tutoring adults that can't speak English. Sun City people do it today. Sun City West people do it. But it is never heard of. They go out there and

take care of those people. They try to help them. They can't speak English and help them wherever they can. But the other side of that there are a lot of takers that are just takers and really don't help themselves. The same ones that were moochers way back when are still moochers. But they have fun. Really helped a great deal in the community in that regard.

STURGEON: What about the water and the sewer plants. Do you still own those?

MEEKER: No, no. We started out owning them but later in the early 60's we decided we needed a fifty cent raise on water, maybe twenty five cent on sewer monthly. You would have thought we had started a civil war. Because we were Webb they said you are taking our money. Those are ours, we paid for them already and that argument started, because on some brochure it says, sewer and water in and paid for. Well, it was in and paid for, but the operating costs weren't. So we sold it to Citizens Utilities and they came in and operated it. They promptly went for a rate increase and got it but they didn't get the heat that we did. But as I said earlier we tried to give it to the city of Phoenix and they missed the boat there. They could have had all of that – they could have had Sun City for a tax base. That would have been good for Sun City too because they would have got all the garbage collection and police protection. But they didn't happen and the people organized the Sherriff's Posse and took care of themselves. And of course we helped them there. We were there. They needed a spot and we gave them a spot. We gave them a piece of land for a token and they built their headquarters, but they raised the money themselves.

STURGEON: As you look back on all your years of dealing with Sun City what do you think was the biggest challenge you faced?

MEEKER: Really there wasn't any. The biggest headache we faced was the cattle feeding situation, because it was a problem for the residents and we felt their pain and not being able to do something about it quicker than we did. When we won the law suit the cattle feeder went out there and piled manure fifty feet high and a half a mile long Olive just to make it worse. When we reported that to the Judge they removed that the next day. The Judge said you will either remove that or you will go to jail. That wasn't too smart on their part. But that was the biggest headache that we had. And incorporation, being frustrated and not being able to articulate the message that it was for their good, not Webb's good. They thought we were trying to abandon them when we were trying to get them incorporated, the way they looked at it. But it wasn't true. But no matter what you said they had their opinion and we weren't not going to change it so we accepted that.

STURGEON: Now when I was talking to Tom Austin he remembered that the company had not planned on any mortuary and no cemeteries and that sort of thing. What changed that?

MEEKER: That is correct. A salesman walked in talked to some of our management and said here is the kind of money you can make if you build one and at that time sales had slowed way down – that was in the early 60's, so they decided to put one up on Del Webb Boulevard, which was a dirt road, north of Grand Avenue. So they were going to take care of the need, and there was a need out there and pre-sale burials, so they embarked on that. It was a money making venture yet it provided a good service when Webb had it. Webb later sold it. I was in my 30's and I thought that was terrible, because younger people didn't understand death as older people did. We thought it would be a terrible problem to overcome sales lines to build homes next to it. Not one problem at all. We put a fence around it and sold those houses. In fact they wanted to live next to the fence. Not a problem. But that is how that evolved. It was put in as a money making venture. There was a need there. There were some other operators came in later but it is still operating. In fact we plan one for Sun City West. Webb took it out.

STURGEON: Was the hesitancy to put it in partly because you were selling it as an active retirement community?

MEEKER: Again, cemeteries have a bad connotation. But when you get older that is not a bad connotation. We were too young – I was too young to understand that but as you get older and you have been to a lot of funerals of your friends you accept death as a part of life and those people had already accepted that but we didn't. We didn't understand that quite so well. But today it wouldn't bother me at all. Matter of fact I would put one out there and make it a focal point. If one of the mate passes the other one is still there and they are there so they can go see them. We had a lot of crypts. It was very big out there and nice too – first class. But they were nearby. To me, I would put one in without any hesitation today. Again because it is part of the cycle. It is needed as much as a shopping center us needed – as much as a church is needed.

STURGEON: The last thing I wanted to ask you is I find it real interesting when I talk to people in Sun City how many of them remember meeting Del Webb, yet when I talk to Tom Austin and some other people who worked with the Del Webb Company, he didn't actually go out there all that often.

MEEKER: He was an icon. Because it was Del Webb Sun City, Del Webb built their home. He didn't go out there very often.

STURGEON: Do you think it was the advertising partly?

MEEKER: Yes, and when he did go out there, they really – they idolized him. They thought he was the second coming of Jesus Christ. Really, I bothered him that those people would come up and go gaga over him. It was hard for him to accept that. In fact he told me on several occasions, what in the world have you gotten me in to here. But then he finally accepted that he had a responsibility and we didn't bring him out there too often, but when we did, it was for a purpose. He was involved in the hospital behind the scenes. He steered us on to the Mayo Clinic and the design that we ended up with. We had a two man design team. Myself and the head guy from (---) Architects. We didn't have a committee because committees never get anything done. We sat up a lot of nights and we said here is what we are going to do and it was done. We made the decision and we designed it and it got built.

STURGEON: Did you do the same things on the homes too?

MEEKER: I kept my finger on the homes and all the design I stayed close to. Planning and design, because that was my bag. But, architects, you cannot turn them loose or they will build a monument to themselves. We can't afford that. We had to build the best looking building that you can build for the least amount of money. You kind of stretched those dollars as much as you can. That was always the battle. The Bell Rec Facility was laid out in a circular fashion so it had access all the way around. By that time we had built the pool and physical therapy facilities were a part of the pool area where people could – Jacuzzi's came in big. A person would have a stroke and you had to have that at a level where the woman or the man could wheel them in right easy. We recognized that so we just made that. But still there were no steps – we eliminated steps. You look at Bell Rec Center and just all around. You go over to Johnson Rec Center and no steps. It is all built round. You ought to go look at those Rec facilities. You been to the Sundome?

STURGEON: Yes I have.

MEEKER: That impress you a little bit?

STURGEON: Yes, a lot.

MEEKER: That evolved out of that Sun Bowl. We had a symphony orchestra out there that really wanted to have a place to play because there are a lot of music lovers there. That was first class. The Sun Bowl was noisy with the airplanes and car noises and so forth, although they played there a lot and then they went into some other buildings, but the sound was never right and so when we built that facility and that was carried on – the entertainment we had plus the orchestra. There was an old gentleman out there, he looked like Arturo Toscanini, Jennings Butterfield, - have you ever seen a picture of him?

STURGEON: I have, and I have heard about him.

MEEKER: Great conductor. They build a pretty good country orchestra out there. Of course we immediately had the Phoenix people trying to infringe and that is their territory. Same with the museum. Politics are there I guess in all cities. Some of it reared its head where we didn't expect it. But particularly the hospital. I didn't realize – I thought there would be glad to see it go in out there. They were not.

STURGEON: You had the same problem in Sun City West with their hospital?

MEEKER: No, that was Sun Health then. That was planned and set from the outset. Sun Health was there, we already had them in the loop. In fact they built a little bit early I think in there. That was over with. They were trying to allocate beds, where you could build, bureaucratic night mare. Sun City has a lot more juice than a lot of people realize. They vote. They vote. A ninety percent turnout. I tell you, you mention that to a politician and his ears perk up. Barry Goldwater – he narrated this film that we made on - what we did when we started out, we played this for the people when they came. We had a little theater in our sales office and we started out – we said we had to sell Arizona first – and we started out with Grand Canyon, the open pit mine up in Morenci. Have you ever been to Morenci? Have you flown around there? That is one huge hole in the ground. A lot of people don't even know it is there. Anyway we went around the state. We came to Maricopa County and they told a little story about how the canals were built – Jack Swilling did the Salt River Valley and then we turned around and we came back and said that we were – I guess there are seven wonders in Arizona and we were the eighth wonder. Some little gimmick like that. It was effective. But we sold Arizona, then the valley, and the last thing we sold was a house. That was just a side deal. We were really selling a way of life. We were pioneers. We had to overcome. People didn't accept old people living like that in one area. Some

USC really did a number on us. He thought it was terrible. But he didn't understand.

STURGEON: Was that before you started or after you started?

MEEKER: After we started. They would come out and look it and put all kind of interpretations on it. Those people loved their grandchildren just as much as anybody. Those were unique people that pioneered Sun City, I want to tell you. They overcame a lot of odds. They overcame the wooly worms and the cotton, because they were still growing cotton nearby, and the wooly worms from the cotton were a real nuisance. They are not nice. When they infest a field of cotton – but the people put up with that and they were really true pioneers. They stepped up to the plate on the hospital. They formed churches out there against odds. Their mother churches would give them a bad time. The Catholic Church really gave them a bad time. I don't know why. I guess they just didn't feel it was right or something. But you look at the Catholic Churches out there today – you look at the first one down on 111th Avenue, then go up and look at St. Clements on Del Webb Boulevard and then go up and look at the next one up further. They are eye openers. And they are paid for. The people paid for them. But they stepped to the forefront – the people did – from all walks of life. There was no separation of better homes and little homes. The little home was in there with the big homes. That was unique – that wasn't done. In a regular community you don't build 100,000 dollar homes along side 500,000 dollar homes. There was that much of a disparity. Webb has changed that up a little bit and that is OK but we had no class separation. So consequently you had a cross section of people in the churches from all walks of life. They were retired. And again they were smart enough and preserved with their savings in tough times, without pension plans, to come out and buy a home and live in Sun City. They wouldn't the good life. To play golf – and we had cheap golf and it is still the cheapest golf in the country today. You look at the success of Sun City and you really got to look at- we were the coach and sometimes the owner, but they made it happen. They jumped in there and they were the players. We had a women's soft ball team who came to me and wanted to play in Sun City. One of our company PR guys was involved with them some way and I said OK we will take a look. And we did and we got them out there and those people fell in love with them. Some of those women's life style weren't exactly what they thought it ought to be out there but they understood that. I had an understanding with them and I said look, you do what you want to do but don't do it out here. And they didn't. It worked out great. We brought in the major league training teams. We brought in the Brewer's. It cost us money, but it was for entertainment for the people. We built the stadium. We had soft ball games in

there. We promoted all that. Hopefully we tried to not lose a lot of money. We kept the rates down cheap. Again I think that the Webb Company could – the people that took over after the Sun City people left didn't really understand what their responsibilities were. They looked at it strictly as a business. We felt it was more than that and I think the people knew we felt that way. Because we did. They have survived. They have done OK. And I tell you, if you go out there and look at their facilities – I am involved in trying to help them raise money for a theater. We were going to build a theater and we ran out of money in the budget on the Bell Rec Center. A performing arts theater, a small one, for plays and so forth. They are out there putting it together today and they are going to get one. The Rec Centers stepped up and said Ok, we have an auditorium that we can revamp and build in and put a play gallery in so you can play your sets and they are getting it done. So they are still getting it done. You go out there – I would tell you to go out there. Go to the Oakmont Center, then go to Fairway Rec Center, then go to Mountain View, then come back and go to Lakeview. You go to Lakeview and you will see the change. We changed from – we used to build kind of institutionalized looking Rec facilities. They weren't architectural monuments, they were functional. But we created a round facility at Lakeview Center, with a pool inside. It was interesting, and it created a resort atmosphere. It really, truly did. And we had the lake, man made lake, but it was a lake. We had the coots. When you have water you have coots in Arizona and they are a mess.

STURGEON: You used to have bus tours didn't you?

MEEKER: Oh, yeah, that was part of the vacation program. We had some great ladies. When we started with the bus tours Jerry Svendson handled that. A lady by the name of Garnet Brown, she ran that, a feisty little gal. Told the sauciest jokes. They didn't want to hear but they loved her. She had hostesses to take them on the bus. We didn't have enough to show them in Sun City. We took them to Mountain Shadow and gave them coffee and doughnuts or whatever they did there. We took them to Scottsdale shopping. That was really the vacation program. That was the bus tour. That was a part of the package. Then it got so big and we had so many we gave them a western dinner and we brought in residents, paid them to come in as entertainers, they got entertainment groups out there – little bands, they would come in and they would play for these people. They would talk to them. They asked them the questions. Never any high pressure. If you liked the life style then come buy a house from us. We are here to sell you one. But we didn't pound on them. We would send them correspondence. We had a big mailing list always. We had 15 to 20 thousand on a mailing list that we would purge all the time. We would send them a letter and say, if you don't want us to contact you

anymore just check the card and let us know and if you want us to contact just check it. They stayed on.

STURGEON: Did you have any hostility from Youngtown?

MEEKER: Always. They felt left out. The people in Sun City really never reached out to them. And the people in Youngtown started it because they were there and here we are starting a new one with a ours is better type attitude. They were like little kids and they never got over that. The developers of Youngtown didn't think too much of us because we interfered with their deal with Boswell. It catered to a different life style from what we offered. We were golf and more active and they truly were the ones where they built them a house with a rocking chair and they were going to sit there and wait to die. That wasn't our concept.

STURGEON: It seems there were quite a few people that moved over to Sun City from Youngtown.

MEEKER: Oh yes. Speaking of that I will give you a little side bar here. Leisure World came to the Valley and built a facility out by Mesa. It was sponsored by Western Savings and Loan. There was a guy named Larry Driggs. You just saw his name in the paper – he just got his suspended sentence and all that. So he was the guy – they were going to come in here and show us how to do it. So, they came over – a guy who used to work for us went to work for them and they said that they were going to steal five hundred sales the first month right out of Sun City. They hired an entertainer by the name of Arthur Godfrey, he was a TV personality back in those days. He had a talent show or something that he put on. He was quite well known. They hired him and they plastered him all over billboards all over the valley. They had all the billboards set up with Western Savings. They put him on the radio, television and they said, sure, see Sun City but them come see us. They would go look at their place and then come back and buy from us. We thought that was funny. Childress and I saw Driggs sometime at some function and we said, Driggs, you've got the greatest advertising program, just don't quit. You are really helping us, and he got madder than hell at us. But they felt they would come in and leach off of sales from Sun City. Then an outfit called Design Masters built Country Meadows south of Olive and tried to do the same thing and didn't. The people in Sun City were fiercely loyal to the shopping centers in Sun City and not outside of Sun City. The one in Youngtown went bust because of us. They shopped in Sun City. The exception to that was the Lucky story down on Peoria, just outside of Sun City. It was successful. We always had the people trying to say they were in Sun City when they weren't and be way over

in Glendale and say they were in Sun City. We didn't allow that to happen. We would go right after them. They would advertise they had a Sun City Ford Dealership, Don Sanderson Ford, we did business with them. I finally had to tell him, you want to stop advertising that you are in Sun City or we are not going to buy another vehicle from you ever. He got all mad but he quit. When we started out we were building block homes south of Grand and we got our sales up and we had about 1100 homes sold out front and the masons went on strike. I told our masonry sub-contractor, you better tell that union guy that if he don't get that strike settled we are going to go to frame. So this arrogant guy comes in to see me and I told him like now. He said we will settle it when we are ready to and I said fine. I sent out letters to those 1100 sales we had asking them if they wanted to wait for their homes we would build it masonry, but we were going to switch to frame. We had one out of 1100 sales that wanted a masonry house. So when the strike was over this arrogant guy comes swaggering into my office, you can stop those dumb frame houses, we are back and ready to go work. I said, you are not going to work here, partner, you are done. You are really done – you did it to yourself. Oh, man, the sub-contractor wanted to whip him right there in my office. We are not going back. And they got wiped out within a week. We sent the letters out overnight letters. We had to do something. We got a little dose of that in California. When you wait for all those sales, people won't wait. They want their home when they want it. We switched and stayed frame. We used some masonry. Our poor masonry contractor was in tears and I told him, just hang on. You are still going to have a lot of work. We are going to have a lot of fences and we put more brick veneer on the houses. I said you will be fine and he did. What else you got in there you need to ask me?

STURGEON: I think that is just about it unless there is anything you can think of that you would like to add. I really appreciate you taking all this time.

MEEKER: Be sure to talk to Johnson and Boswell if you can. Get them to – Freeman knows both of them. She can get Boswell. It would be nice to have him on tape. Because he has got a different perspective on some things. I must say he was an integral part of the success of Sun City. When I became involved he and I just became friends. He was very supportive of new ideas and things we wanted to do. When we did that lake that was a big step for us. We changed our concept a little bit, we stepped up. We spent more money on Rec facilities. He was very supportive and really a key player in the success of Sun City. That hospital would have been nothing had he not stepped forward. He did that on his own. We were willing to settle for a lot less.

STURGEON: That was a million dollar endowment.

MEEKER: Well, I think he ended up giving five million over a period of time, what his foundation has given to the hospital. He was there when we started. He said he wanted it to be a landmark. The last item, he wanted it to be a landmark. So we said OK. Instead of sticking a basement and two levels in the ground, we stuck it on top of the ground. Put the entry way up high. That is why the entry is up high the way it is today because he wanted a landmark. I said, how is four floors, or six floors. He said, that's good.

STURGEON: And it is, you can see it from the freeway.

MEEKER: That is why it got there. Ordinarily, the basement – the service areas would have been down. That is why the driveway to the front is way up.

STURGEON: That's why it looks like it is on a hill.

MEEKER: The hill was created out of that lake over across the way. Bob Johnson was also a key player. He was my boss and he attended all of our board meetings and stayed active, was concerned over some of the things we did, but I think he was very happy with the development of Sun City – make a lot of money and fulfilled a need for the people. It was a two way street. And like our signs used to say, it changed the nations viewpoint on retirement living. And it truly did.

STURGEON: Well, thank you very much.

C247

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 247

Interview with Bill Woodyard

March 17, 1996

Date of Birth: April 12, 1919

Place of Birth: St. Joseph, Missouri

Formerly coordinated Sun City West Recreation Centers. Treasurer of the Del E. Webb Hospital Board, former member of the Board of Directors of the Sun Health Corporation

Synopsis

- Attended the University of Missouri before I graduated in April 1941, I was commissioned as a pilot in the Air Force and discharged eight years later
- 1947 military sent officers back to school; received BS, MS and Ph.D. in chemistry; needed academic faculty at West Point; Air Force provided some staff there; then I went to the newly opened Air Force Academy; appointed to the faculty then served there until retirement; stayed until 1978; then chief scientist of Eurospace developments; got to meet the top scientists in Europe.

- Applied for a job with Del Webb with the Sun City West Recreation Centers where I worked for ten years
- After recreation centers build and until all the homes in the area were sold, Del Webb Corporation. On the governing board of the recreation centers.
- In this position, I had a great deal of authority for giving criteria in the development of policy for personnel, preparing the budget. For many years, Del Webb provided a subsidy; I worked for the CEO of Del Webb; I was assisted by the Advisory Board

- Challenges: establish a viable program once the subsidies were withdrawn; getting to know people; we received facilities in good shape; constant program of maintaining facilities; funds come from membership fees; everyone required to join the recreation center
- Budget derived from residents
- Little conflict first ten years but more structured because Webb Company in charge

- I designed and implemented a maintenance program for the grounds
- Pre-built centers a remarkable marketing tool; Webb asked for input from recreation centers about new golf courses; steady improvement in elegance in each building; Deb Webb has provided some 72 million dollars to the recreation centers
- Haven't yet reached a steady state of age like Sun City; new people go to new areas, older tend to stay near original recreation center; unlike Sun City, don't duplicate crafts in recreation centers; I had a hand in doing that – this way don't disperse resources; each center specializes in something; if want to organize a craft, need 50 people, set criteria and bylaws, then get a charter which gives them a right to compete for space; clubs usually funded by the group; benefited from many move-ins from Sun City
- Sun City the pattern for Sun City West; when Webb was supporting the recreation cents, the relationship was much closer
- Feel Sun City West recreation centers are better than a country club
- On Board of Directors of Sun Health Corporation in 1980-1986 and Del E. Webb hospital; when released from the Recreation Centers, went back on Board in 1990; interesting and exciting; while on Board built Del E. Webb Hospital; 80% of the patients on Medicare
- Admire those who first came to Sun City who wanted a hospital and built it; hard to raise money there too; here we got seed money from Del E. Webb Corporation
- Treasurer of Del E. Webb Hospital Board

Case #247

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 11 day of March, 1996, by and between William T. Woodyard (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie I. Sturgeon (Herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with hr 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. Narrator 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. Narrator 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 as follows:

X Signed (Narrator): William T. Woodard Date: MARCH 11, 1996

X Narrator: _____ (Name)

(Address)

Signed (Interviewer): Melanie I. Sturgeon Date: March 11, 1996

Interviewer: Melanie I. Sturgeon (Name)
1211 S. Barkley (Address)
Mea, AZ 85204

intrvw

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 248

Interview with Winifred Culler

June 22, 1995

Date of Birth: October 12, 1919

Place of Birth: Marion, Ohio

Resident of Sun City West, very active in community affairs, former President of Sun Health Auxiliary, chaired the first Board of the Sun Health Foundation, former Chair of the Del Webb Hospital Board

Synopsis

- Mother died before I was two years old; father moved to Lakewood, Ohio
- I went to college for 3 years at Ohio State, working with deaf children; got married in 1936, moved to New York where husband worked for General Electric; later moved back to Lakewood, Ohio, and stayed for 42 years; one child

- In Brookville, Ohio, I was on the town council and helped write the city charter; chaired the town council; active in PTA earlier; wrote column in the newspaper about school activities
- We always vacationed out West, so when decided to retire in 1971, moved to Denver. Husband didn't like retirement; visited brother in Sun City; heard about Sun City West; drove out there and decided to build a house for an investment; moved here in 1979; husband died in 1982

- He was on the Board of the Boswell Hospital before his death; saw a need for a new hospital in Sun City West; I became involved
- I was asked to be President of Sun Health Auxiliaries
- There was a great deal of opposition to a new hospital from other area hospitals (not from Boswell Hospital); finally got the go-ahead for the Del Webb hospital

- Chaired first board of the Sun Health Foundation which raises funds for the hospital; raise about 4 million dollars each year; put on a Senior golf tour, and a horse show – many projects like this
- Del Webb Corporation gave the land for the hospital

- Later the Del Webb Foundation gave 2.5 million dollars for an emergency room
- I chaired the Del Webb Hospital Board for 3 years, then joined the Sun Health Corporation Board, just left the Hospital Board last April but am still on the Webb Board
- For last twenty years, tremendous growth in Sun City West; now more and more Sun City residents live here year round
- Husband was on PORA, but I haven't joined because too much fighting
- Sun City West has same debates over incorporation as Sun City
- In 1982 named Woman of the Year
- New Del Webb Grand will affect the Del Webb Hospital
- We bought up the land around the Del Webb Hospital; medical facilities and doctors coming
- I was on the Church Council before our Church was organized; served for 6 years while building the church
- Grew up in a typical middle class suburb; father was head of the foundry for the Marion Steam Shovel company
- When moved to Lakewood, my father went into the battery business; we always had a car when I was a child
- About 1929, we motored coast to coast; few paved roads; open car from Cleveland to California on northern route, then returned on southern route – very daring; Harvey Houses were in the railroads; little motels like shacks along the way
- 1935 my husband graduated with an engineering degree; retired at age 62

Side B

- Volunteer service: Skill Bank, used for volunteer services; helped us find members for boards; running a hospital is a business – need people to help serve
- Del Webb Company involved in the beginnings of the community

Case #248

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 22nd day of June, 1995, by and between Winfred CULLER (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie I. Sturgech (Herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with hr 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.

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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. Narrator 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 as follows:

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 249

Interview with Glen Sanberg

March 7, 1996

Place of Birth: Bird Island, Minnesota

Co-editor of *Jubilee: The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Sun City, Arizona* (Phoenix: Col Press, 1984); past President of the Sun City Historical Society, Sun City Homeowners Association and other community organizations

Synopsis

- Career background, association management, CEO of the American Society of Association Executives, headquartered in Washington, D.C.
- First job out of college with Mayo Clinic, Rochester; father a School Superintendent there
- Started own firm in Minneapolis, ran it for seven years, until 1949 when joined National Association and soon became national director and moved to Washington, D.C.
- Active in church and community while in D.C.

- When ready to retire, planned on moving to California, but stopped in Arizona and stayed; joined everything could find, then decided can't just play
- Helped get Sun City Historical Society organized
- Jane Freeman and I decided to write a history of the community and organized a group to gather material and write; owner of the News-Sun gave the group a room

- Del Webb Corp said would put up the \$25,000-30,000 in front money to help finance the project; later wanted to see the rough drafts, then wanted changes made; we wanted to keep it the way it was, so Webb dropped their backing
- Jane and I interviewed Jim Boswell who agreed to put up the front money
- Groups needed headquarters; decided convert one of the first homes; cost \$54,000 Boswell put up the money, we agreed to pay back with profits from the book; some of the things the Webb Corp wanted to change were their dealings with the Boswell family; wanted to insert things that would make Del Webb look good

- When we began writing, the community offered their records
- Early days of the community interesting, people worked together, 'circled the wagons;' very community-minded group; I was President of the Historical Society the year we got the building, had been on the Board 4 or 5 years; we organized volunteer groups to run the building; organized teas and open houses to help raise money; we also obtained the first sales office in Sun City and attached it to the house

Side B

- Maintenance of community's streets and roads is by the country; in Sun City, no direct line of decision making; not always easy; incorporation still a hot issue; Homeowners Association represents the community; Taxpayer's Association sometimes at logger-heads with Homeowners Association
- Active water group fighting to protect rights; Citizen's Water Company made deals with outlying community; Homeowner fighting because draining off the water supply
- The Sun City Players have had to make do with poor facility, the Sun Dome; in original plan of the city, Del Webb had a plan for a performing arts theater; instead, built the Sun Dome in Sun City West with 7,200 seating capacity which is not designed for intimate performing arts; opposition to this from a groups within the community
- Average age in Sun City is 75; many fearful of change so they get protective of what they have; people against the play house are most blue collar
- Today I write a column for the paper, active in Lion's Club, President for several years; in Habitat for Humanity
- Major change in Sun City over the years, as community matured, less and less neighborly spirited; more self-interest groups; used to look out for each other, now churches do it; today we are more corporately organized
- Also served on Community Fund; interview groups within the community looking for grant money from the Community Fund

Sun City Oral History Project: Release Form

This interview is made and entered into this 7 day of March, 1996, by and between Glenn B Sanberg (herein after called "Narrator") and Melanie T. Sturgeon (Herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with hr 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. Narrator 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. Narrator 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 as follows:

X Signed (Narrator): Glenn B Sarberg Date: 2/7/96

Narrator: Glenn B Sarberg (Name)
10035 Royal Oak Rd (Address)
Sun City, Az. 85351

Signed (Interviewer): Melanie J. Sturgeon Date: 7 March 1996

Interviewer: Melanie J. Sturgeon (Name)
1211 S. Barkley (Address)
Mesa, AZ 85204

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Transcription from taped interview with Loise Copes, February 10, 1997.
(Taped by Phyllis Street at Loise Copes' home.)

We had just retired and we were going to a convention of the National Asso of Postmasters. We saw an ad in an AARP magazine for an apt in Sun City for a week, and the charges at the Del Webb Hotel in downtown Phoenix were more than that for a day, so we decided to live in Sun City and attend the convention in the center of Phoenix. The first time we drove out here we were amazed at how far it was from the convention center. We enjoyed our apts very much, they were close to the adm building. They were built on an angle. It was strange to us. But this was the west. We were so interested in the program that Del Webb laid out for us that we spent more time in Sun City than at the convention. We had tickets to several banquets which we attended, but the rest of the time we spent in SC. We went to the Lakes Club. They had square dancers there. They looked so much younger than we were. They were in those doll like clothes and we were really impressed. They took us all around Sun City.

We had been all over the world, the other couple and two other couples, and we had decided to buy a piece of land and each of us would have a home at the four corners of the land and in the center would be a care taker's home with an upstairs where a lot of people could stay over night if we had guests. And the care taker would take care of our homes one day a week. We had looked in Spain and Costa Rica.

We had been all over the world and visited nearly every country except darkest Africa, We had been looking at every country for a place to live. The dollar was very strong then, and the dollar would buy a lot in places like Mexico and Costa Rica -- This was 1978. But when we came to Sun City, they had so much to offer, that we couldn't resist buying houses there. Our friends the bought before we left. We weren't quite sure and we waited and a week later the price had gone up \$5000.00. So we bought the same model our friend did. We told the salesman we wanted our house on the highest point in Sun City West. He said there was no high point, it was all level. We said there were some slopes and we had seen what it was like. There were still fences around the area. There was a sign that said Lizard Acres. I wonder where that sign is now. It is a historical sign. It was a cattle raising area.

We also went to see it in July of 78. We tried to get in the front entrance, but we couldn't. We went around the back way, around Grand Ave. We finally got in. They were building the golf course, Hillcrest. They were moving a tremendous amount of gravel and dirt, and material making the hills and valleys of the golf course. We couldn't locate where our place was, but we got in idea what the place was like. We waited until almost dusk when we left. And we were shopping then for tiles, and wall paper and all those things. One day, July 4, 1978, I was out all day alone, and I had been shopping different places and I came home to a friend's house in Sun City and they told me I had been out in 120 degrees and I had no idea it had been that hot. It wasn't cold, of course, but it wasn't overly hot. I was surprised at what the temperature had been.

We went home. Before we landed we could see the brown cloud over Baltimore. And I thought how wonderful it was that it wasn't that way in Sun City. The air was just as clear as could be at that time. We sold our house. I wanted to stay in Baltimore for Christmas but my husband wanted to leave before Christmas so there wouldn't be any snow and bad weather.

So we left and drove five days. And we quickly found out as we approached Arizona that driving in the later part of the day, facing the west was impossible. The sun seemed to shine brighter and there was no pollution or anything .

It was just bright and beautiful. After we got here the first week in Dec. we stayed at a friend's house waiting for the movers to come. And the day the movers came it was Monday, the 11th. It rained so hard all day long. It was about the heaviest rain I've ever seen. It rained the whole time they unloaded.

We were very happy with our home. It was beautiful and we had never had a new home before. It was off of Shadow Hills drive, on a cul de sac. It was a numbered street, but it was off Shadow Hills. It was one block east of Camino del sol. The section was number 6. The vacation apts were built at that time. First night we went out walking, it was about 19 degrees. We had brought some warm things from the east, but we were cold. We saw one house with a Christmas tree in it but the rest were all empty.

I will go back to when we first entered Sun City West.

The first day we entered, the road in, which was R.H. Johnson, had no walls on the sides. It was almost a single lane road, it was two lanes, and there was probably macadam on it, but there were so many trucks hauling materials in, it was a rough road, and it was covered with debris and sand from the trucks and materials they were hauling. It was very rough. When we came in there were houses there, but not a person in them. I don't know how many there were, there were hundreds, but no persons in them. There wasn't a blade of grass, not a bird, no trees, no landscaping. Maybe the apartments were landscaped, I don't remember, but I think I remember seeing them landscaped later. There wasn't a bird, as I said, or any living creature. There wasn't a fly, we didn't have screens. We just thought it was paralyzed. We were very lonesome for people. However, on the cul de sac where we lived there were two other couples that moved in. They came over from Sun City. They were very much more knowledgeable than we were, and they were very helpful.

As we came in, it just seemed like a dead city. At that time there were 60 families. I think there were 118 or 119 people. They had started coming in Oct. They had big ceremonies when they arrived. There was a great deal of interest by the public in this new development in Sun City West, and they had heard that I had experience in writing and they asked me to write about what was happening in SCW.

I have always been quite thorough, so I went every week on a different day, depending on their dead lines, I took articles to the AZ Republic, to the Daily News Sun, to the Independent, and to the radio station. I think there was a fifth place, too. In many cases, exactly what I had written was in the article.

In the Daily News Sun, on the front page, down at the bottom they had a logo that they had made for SCW. and the article was there. I started this near the end of December.

Now as soon as I arrived, people did come to see us. They were so happy to greet us, and they told us that we needed to get together. We were a little scared because we were told back in Maryland that there were a lot of land scams in Arizona and we were putting our money into something that we

knew very little about. The place was so desolate without any grass and without anybody having any landscaping.

And we were a little scared because there were so many houses but sometimes only one occupied in a whole block. It seems there were some Sun City people who had purchased houses, sometimes up to five, and they were waiting to resell them at a higher price. The truth of the matter was there was a depression and the economy went down and they lost money. This was especially true in the condominiums. There would be maybe one person who lived there, and the rest were purchased by Sun City people and there was no one in them, or they were renters and they had no interest in the community. We were really scared and we said we really need to get together and get this community going. We started a paper that we sent

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around, letting people know what we were doing. I was elected secretary. They had already picked the name of PORA, Property Owners and Residents Asso. The people that were running this were people from Sun City and they knew what was going on. We were newcomers, and some others were from California, but most were from Sun City.

One thing they were very clear about was that they wanted just one organization, not two. They wanted a strong Property Owners ASSO, and not two like Sun City had with HOA and the Taxpayers ASSO. We felt that with just one we could cover all the tax questions.

My time was taken up nearly entirely in working with the property owners.

I go back to where we met. We met in the Fountain Bell Restaurant. We had a round table there at a certain time in the morning and everyone would go over there and listen and contribute to what was going on. From eight to fifteen would show up, mostly men.

We didn't have any stores, or Crestview, or recreation centers. In Sun City, Del Webb had put up the recreation center before he built the houses, but here he put in the golf course, but nothing else. Webb put up \$35,000., to the recreation centers of Sun City, as I recall, so the people of Sun City West could use their facilities.

This was just not a fair deal to the people of Sun City. They said that Sun City West was going to have 75,000 people. Del Webb had bought enough land on both sides of Grand Avenue to put up to 75,000 people. And there was a cemetery in the corner near Bell and Grand Ave. There was land that was supposed to be a cemetery.

The people in Sun City, in letters to the editor, were very much against the people of Sun City West using their recreation facilities. We were given little cards that allowed us to go over there. The only times we were given were 6 am in the morning or 9 PM on Sunday night. They didn't want us to come at all. They said 75,000 people coming over wouldn't leave room for them to get in. In fact there were only about a hundred of us here.

And so Del Webb knew they would have to do something to entertain us since they had promised this. So they started having trips. The trips were several times a week. One was to the Capitol, and other places in Phoenix. I remember we went to a showing of Erma Bombeck's TV show. She had a program on the TV and we went to a taping of that. After these excursions around Phoenix, we went to the zoo and to see the outside of Goldwater's home, and hear about it.. And afterwards we went to the Mountain Shadows Hotel. That was a resort hotel in the east end that Del Webb owned. . We had tea there and the best baked goodies and it was such a pretty place. We would all go in and have tea and the baked goods was just spectacular.

One of the things they had was to see a Suns' game. All you had to do was go down and catch a bus at 6:00 and they would take you to the Suns' game. Del Webb had a big box and we could sit there. And there were other seats, too, if they were needed. When the game was over, we went out the door and the bus was right there. We became very strong fans of the Suns. But this stopped when the recreation centers were opened. We went to the games ourselves, but it was very different. We had to park our cars and walk a long ways, and then hunt for our cars when we came out. It wasn't nearly as nice as when the bus took us and it was all free. The tickets were expensive, too.

They also took us to different towns in AZ. We went to Tucson, to Mexico, to the border town. We walked across the border to shop and enjoy our visit to Mexico. Things were very reasonable down there. You could hardly resist buying everything in sight, things were so reasonable. Mildred Tolby,

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who had been a pioneer in Sun city, was usually the leader of the bus. I think Del Webb paid her. I'm pretty sure they did. She was excellent, and such a fine person. She was the first president of the Sun City West Pioneers, and I was the second president. I was vice president and then president. I know that was true.

Other places that we went were numerous. We saw mines, and we went to Roosevelt Lake, the mining community over that way, and the Indian things there. We went to Sedona, Flagstaff. We were taken to Luke Air Force. We learned why we shouldn't object to planes going over. That was the real reason for taking us there. They told what they did for the military, and showed us the planes. Then we had lunch at the officers' club at the expense of Del Webb.

However, when we went to Lake Powell, we did have to pay some. We had a full day on the lake and it was very educational. We saw the rock bridge. It was beautiful. We enjoyed that very much. These trips lasted until the recreational centers were opened. I believe that was in July, 1979. People were pouring into the community at this time.

I think we had our first PORA meeting around Jan. or Feb. of 1979. It was after the Crestview opened. When it opened we gathered there every night. There were different activities. We had square dancing on Monday and Wednesday, round dancing on Tuesday and Thursday, and we had Bingo on Friday, and ball room dancing on Saturday. I don't believe we went on Sunday. But everyone was free to go there, and practically everybody came. There were probably two hundred or more people by then.

I was still writing every week about the activities. Then they started having their clubs. There was the silver club and the bridge clubs, and I was writing about that. Then they came to me---the people, not the newspapers--and they said, "You don't need to write anymore about us because we will send in our own notices about the clubs." This had been quite a time consuming thing I was doing. My husband would drive me each day. I would take my copy, and I would try to make it a little different for each paper. I was relieved that I didn't have to do that anymore. Even the papers were sending out reporters by then.

INTERVIEW

I remember hearing someone say, "Have you been in Loise's second bedroom?" Well, it was still full of boxes, and some of the people in the community didn't go on those trips. They said they had to stay home and get their landscaping in, or get their house fixed up. They were waiting for plumbers to come, or get the drapes up and other things. But I said to myself, " I can do that later. I want to see what AZ is all about." These trips were really wonderful. They were very, very educational. " So I think leaving my unpacking til later was alright. And I had all my papers and things in that room, and that's where I did my work.

The thing that happened on New Year's Eve--We were still going to Fountain Bell then- that was our place to meet, -and we were going to have a New Year's Eve party. When we went to any affair--we went to the Sun Bowl a lot---we would look at the car tags in the parking lot for tags from Maryland. Then we would wait for those people because we were so anxious to meet others from our area.

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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INTERVIEW WITH OWEN CHILDRESS – Wednesday, April 13, 2006

In charge of the overall financing for the community – the individual mortgages for the home buyers and also the development loans. And I was in charge of the Sales people and also the Administration. Started with 1951 as a mail clerk – worked out of the warehouse and picked the mail up and handled all the packaging and stationery that we would send out to all the jobs and my first desk was sawhorses and piece of plywood in the warehouse – that's where I started.

He could see immediately when I was the stationery clerk I was destined to go up (chuckles). And if you believe that I'll sell you a bridge over Salt River. He was really neat – he gave you every opportunity to advance. I didn't finish college. I went to night school – and took financing and accounting, etc. He was great. He was a super guy.

The kind of guy Webb was: My dad developed cancer and was terminal and we get a call from Webb one Sunday. I'm out cleaning my pool and Marie says, "Mr. Webb's on the phone." I said, "Oh, sure, Mr. Webb's on the phone – it's got to be one of the guys at the office, kidding me." And it was Mr. Webb. He said, "I understand your dad's got cancer." And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well, Dr. Horton is at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, and we'll make the company plane available and we'll fly your dad back there and have him examined." And I said, "Well, it was too late at that time." But I thanked him and appreciated it very much. That's the kind of guy he was.

Jim Boswell was a great partner. He put the land up and we did the development and we got 51% of the profits and he got 49%. He was great. He'd come to board meetings and we'd say we want to do this, this and this, and he's say, "Go get 'em."

This was all cotton ranch. What we had to do was give him 90 days to 6 months notice when we wanted to take down some land. They would go in and cut all the cotton down and then give us the land and we'd go ahead and develop it.

Ed: We want to show you your sales building – we have it appended to our house. And there are a couple other things that have been done to this building since you originally planned. It started as 860 square feet, and the first owner added to it. So let's walk back to your sales office.

Owen: "My plush Sales office?"

Ed explained the changes to the patio by the MacDonalds.

Owen: This was a one bedroom or a two bedroom? One bath?

Ed: Yes.

Ed: This is your sales building (laughs). You can see it. It's a little different floor, so you have to come uphill here. And we call this our Marinette Room, because we have here a map of Marinette and the pictures from Marinette. Here's you. Now, this building was the Sales.

Owen: To start with.

Ed: And where was it located?

Owen: It was just down the street, just on the other side of the model, next to where the recreation center was. On the west side of the recreation center.

Ed: So you came down to this and then you came down to the models?

Owen: Yes.

Ed: This building had some other lives, right? Halfway House.

Owen: I don't remember that.

Ed: So you were here for how long through the development of Sun City?

Owen: From the beginning. 1959, when we first got the land deal worked with Boswell. I was here in 1959.

Ed: How long did your career go on?

Owen: I was in Sun City until 1974 and then they wanted me to go downtown to our mail office, and they were training me become Treasurer. A gentlemen by the name of Jim Miller who originally hired me, was our Treasurer. So I would go down there one day a week and work with him. Then it got to two days, and then three days. Then I kinda just pulled out and then unfortunately he had a heart attach and he passed away. So they said you're coming down full time, so get out of Sun City and come on down here. That's how I got downtown.

Ed: Then you remember the building? It was a large Sales headquarters.

Owen: Well, we had no idea how this was going to go. We thought it was going to be a success, but we just really know. And so we started kinda small and just got bigger and bigger and bigger.

Ed: From what I've read of the history, it seems that much of the work leading up to Sun City was done by Mr. Jacobsen, that Webb gave him freedom to explore, investigate adult communities?

Owen: Well, where we got the idea – there was a program called Omnibus with Allistair Cooke. It was on Sundays, and he went all over the country and the world and looked at different things, etc. One Sunday he had a program on Youngtown – a new idea, a retirement community for 50 years and older. One of our executives, Joe Ashton, and Tom Breen saw the program and said, “Hey, that’s not a bad idea. We oughta take a look at it.” Then we sent a fellow down to Florida to investigate retirement communities to see which was the best way to start one. He went down there and was there for 3-6 months (whatever), and he came back and said, “One of the problems that I saw, or found, was that everybody was disappointed in what they were promised. They were told they were going to get a shopping center. They either didn’t get it, or it was much small scale that they thought. They were promised a recreation center and a golf course; and the recreation center either didn’t materialize or was smaller. And the golf course wasn’t as big as they thought, etc. So he came back and told us that. So we said, “What we’ll do is before we sell a house, we’ll build a golf course, we’ll build a recreation center, and we’ll build a shopping center.” So when the people came out, we didn’t have to promise them anything, we just said, “Go look at our golf course, go look at our recreation center.” Jim Boswell was on the board of Safeway, and he got them to come out here and open a store, so when we opened for sale, we had Safeway out here, and we were all set for service.

Ed: And Webb was completely supportive?

Owen: Oh, yes. Yes. He was behind us all the way.

Ed: From what I’ve read, he used to kid (I think it was) Breen about his old folks home.

Owen: He might have. I don’t remember him doing that. I know he loved to come out here because the people believed that he actually built their house. And you’d see him when he came out to make a speech; people would come up and just want to touch his arm so see that he was real. And he loved it. We had a couple of annual meetings out here. And he really enjoyed it.

Ed: From what we hear, there were people who felt that if something went wrong, they could count on Webb to make it right.

Owen: Yes, correct. And we had a lot of people – even in our own organization – saying that Sun City will never go. They’re going to die off, and then what are you going to be left with. You’re going to be left with empty, nobody there, and so forth and so on. But what they didn’t realize was that the houses would then continue to sell. The market kept getting bigger and bigger with people retiring, so it proved out to be just what we thought.

Ed: We had a visitor the other day, (we can look at the guest book for the name). A man came in who now lives here who looked at this picture we have here to Opening Day, and he said, “You know, I was just a young man then. I came out on Monday and talked to the

Sales Manager about a job. But he wouldn't hire me – he said I was too young.”

Owen: I don't believe that, but whatever. We thought we wanted some elderly sales people, but we also wanted some young people because a young person to an old person would remind them of their son or nephew or whatever, and they could relate to somebody like that. So we did not just try to go with older people.

Ed: He did go on to work for John Long in Maryvale. That's where he spent his career, working down there. But I just thought that was kinda funny. You probably wouldn't remember him, since he came and went so quickly.

Owen: Back in those days, I forget who my Sales Manager was.

Ed: How big was your sales organization?

Owen: We started off, I think, with six guys. We didn't realize what was going to happen, how big it was going to be, so again we got out here, and the traffic jam and what have you. Again, we were just overwhelmed with people going through the sales office, which we set up at the recreation center. So again, I went to Safeway, I got a whole bunch of receipt books, came back and passed them out. We had most of our senior executives come out to see how the opening was going. I gave each one of them a receipt book and said, “Catch a guy. If he wants to buy a lot, get the lot number and his name, and get \$500. We'll call him later to come and sign the Sales Agreement. So we did that. We went into the recreation center the following week and set up tables – A-C, D-F, etc., and we had secretaries at each of the tables with a Sales Agreement. The person would come in, we'd find out what their last name was, then say “OK, you get in this line or that line, and that's how we finalized the Sales Agreements. We couldn't do it Opening day, it was just a madhouse. It was wall-to-wall people, you could not move.

Ed: Where did you put all the cars?

Owen: They parked all over everywhere. Course, all of this stuff wasn't here, you know. They could park anywhere they wanted to.

Ed: You opened on a Thursday. January 1st was a Thursday, and then you had the weekend. I hear that Sun City didn't get its name until a month before it opened.

Owen: Our first go-around, we had to record a plaque. We came up with a name New Life Unit I. And then we went to the Donnelly Corporation. We had them do a contest and they came down with what they thought were the three best names. And one of them was Sun City. So that's how we got the name. I shouldn't say this, but they were not too excited about the name Sun City. And Mr. Webb took a look at the names and said, “That's it. That's the name we're going to use.” But anyway, they got us to the point where we had three choices.

Ed: What was the feeling about Youngtown. You mentioned how that was one of the inputs that indicated an interest in housing. What was the Webb Corporation reaction to it?

Owen: They thought it was a good idea. But they had done it on such a small scale and did it on such a minimal budget, that again, what we could find out, they were upset that there was not a big shopping center, there was no golf course, didn't have a recreation center and what have you, so that's why, like I said, we went and built everything before we opened for sale. But it was a success for the size of development that he had. We just saw a number of ways to improve it.

Ed: I think he about 300 acres there.

Owen: I don't remember now.

Ed: Sun City kinda wrapped around it to the south there?

Owen: Now he was on the other side of 111th, and that's where our property stopped. We just went south and then north, and of course, Sun City West, and so forth. Jim Boswell was very instrumental in us getting that property. It was called Lizard Acres, as I recall. And he knew Jacobs, and being a farmer out here, he went to him and worked the deal out on buying the land from him.

Ed: There is still a Lizard Acres sign along the railroad. Once you pass Bell going north on Grand, the next light is a turn into a shopping center where there's a Wal-Mart and if you're stopped at that light and you look to your right, along the railroad track is a sign with Lizard Acres on it.

Owen: I didn't know that.

Ed: What do you recall that the community developed with the recreation center being here and then another center being opened?

Owen: That was a major problem, in that people here thought we were leaving them behind when we built the bigger and better recreation center further north or south. And each time we would build one, we would get complaints from the other people, "Well, what are you doing for us?" So what we did was a program for the whole community and said we want to set it up where anybody could go anywhere and use any recreation center. They said they didn't want that. So we said, "OK. Let us come in and you tell us what you want improved here, what you want improved in this one and what you want improved in that one and we'll do it, if you'll agree to this." And I remember being in a meeting where a guy stood up and said, "Yea, that's a lot of baloney, you won't do it, and so forth and so on." So I said, "You've got my word we'll do it. Then we did, and they agreed to let anybody go anywhere they wanted to. But that was the problem we encountered.

Ed: How about the early churches? Was land set aside for churches?

Owen: We would give the acreage to the church to get them to start. Or we gave it to them at our very minimal cost, whatever it was. But we were behind bringing all kinds of religion, churches, etc., to the community.

Ed: What was the thinking about having so many shopping centers throughout the community?

Owen: Just convenience for the residents to be able not to have to drive too far to get wherever they wanted to shop. I wasn't involved in that – we had our commercial people handle the location of the centers and the leasing of the various tenants, so we really didn't get involved in it.

Ed: What else can I ask you about your sales part of your career? You must have been gratified with the way this took off all in one weekend.

Owen: It was fantastic! And I was very proud that we were able to do this line that I mentioned to you -- \$75 Million with First National Bank – and there were probably about 10 or 15 other banks involved. And it was the first development line for an actual developer of a subdivision type operation. It was something we needed, because that way when we got ready to move into another piece of ground, I just tapped that line, paid for the ground, and we had enough money then to do the infrastructure to get the project started, and we had that line. As we sold it, we paid that line back down and it was ready to be used again when we moved to another area.

Ed: That sure was a good way to work the investment.

Owen: Sales wise, we had a young man by the name of Ken Parker. He was our Sales Manager and what we decided was at our sales office we would make it one-stop shopping. We had the title company in there, we had the lender in there, and we had an area for you to pick your colors, your tile. We had access to appliances, etc., so if you bought a house, you could go in the Sales office and they could then start you on your trip. You would go to the title company, sign the documents, they would open up escrow, run the title on it. Then you could go pick your colors, go pick you tile, if you wanted a refrigerator or whatever, so when you went through our sales office, you had a complete circle of whatever you needed to get it done. And a lot of people who drive out here were only here on a short time and had to leave and they could wrap it up in one or two days.

Ed: Where did you build your sales center?

Owen: It was done at Lakeview – the first one. In Phase II, across Grand. And we decided we'd build a lake.

Ed: How did you decide to do that?

Owen: John Meeker. He was one of the greatest development guys I've ever seen. He came up with ideas that were off the wall, but they were good. He said, "We ought to build a lake." I said, "OK, fine. What are you going to do with the dirt?" He said, "We'll build a little mountain." So we bulldozed it out, and we got that mountain over there. Then we built a second lake.

Ed: What other things did Meeker pull off? Was he behind the Sun Bowl?

Owen: Yes, we were both on that one. What we wanted there was somewhere for the community to come. We didn't charge them. We would bring in named acts. We had a number of people from the Lawrence Welk Show that came. We had Eddie Arnold. I forget who all we had. It was on a Sunday afternoon. It was all free. You could come in and bring a chair or blanket. We had a terrace and you could sit there and listen to it.

Ed: The story I get from Sun City West is that because of the crowds you got here that Meeker decided he would build the Sundome so that a similar sized crowd could be housed indoors.

Owen: What we came up with – we were trying to get to the point of having a central location where the whole community could meet for some kind of decision or whatever they wanted to do. And we wanted to make it big enough where we could get most of the people in there. Because we just drove by the Sundome, and it still amazes me how big that parking lot is. But that's why we built it. And we had entertainment come in and at that time we charged to go to the Sundome.

Ed: Did Jim Handley work for you? Advertising? He turned up recently and helped Jane and Ruby locate some of the early model homes. He's still here in the area, selling Real Estate.

Owen: Yes. We had a separate Public Relations and Advertising, which is what Jim was in. I can't remember the last time I saw Jim – it's been years.

Ed: Did he report to Sales or somewhere else?

Owen: No, he reported to the guy who was running Public Relations (Ed: Jerry McClain?). Yes. (Ed: Jerry Svendsen ?) No, Jerry Svendsen was our guy out here. Jerry's still around, I think.

Ed: King's Inn. How did HiWay Inn become King's Inn?

Owen: Well, from the type of clients we had, we needed some place for them to stay. So

we started with the King's Inn...I believe 10 or 12 units. Then we came up with the idea of building "vacation special" apartment. You could come out here for a week and we'd charge you like \$75, give you a golf cart, stay in the unit, we'd have a dinner, which Jerry Svendsen would run, and we just got you involved in the community to see whether you like it. You had a pass to go to the recreation centers and use them, play golf, so that's kinda the way it got started. Originally, it was HiWay House. We had HiWay Houses all over the country. That was through the Webb Corporation. So this one got renamed.

Ed: Do you recall any carvings that were in the King's Inn? Some people came to us for the history of one of them that they have. It's about 4 feet wide and 4 feet tall. There are 3 eagles, an eagle on top, an eagle here and an eagle here, then in the center is a knight's head and shield with a coat of arms on it. They were told that Del Webb had gone to England and had bought it there and paid \$28,000 for it. I talked to Marjorie Johnson, and she had no recollection of Webb traveling outside the country.

Owen: That doesn't ring a bell with me.

(Jane Freeman was leaving and wanted a goodbye hug from Owen, which she got.)

Ed: This is the one bedroom.

Owen: I can't believe how small it is.

Ed: The bathroom looks pretty much like it did then.

Owen: Yes, yes.

Ed: And this was the second bedroom, and that would have been a window there.

Owen: Isn't it funny, when you go back, how small things look?

(Ed related SCAHS plans for redecorating)

Mrs. Childress: Isn't this just like your Mom and Dad's house?

Owen: Yes.

Ed: You're going to have to come back because we're eventually going to have a full size cutout of Del Webb standing here and on this wall will be the blowup of Opening Day with all the people that were here.

Owen: We started what we called a key receipt situation, where if you bought a house and you went to the title company and you signed off, then you would make an appointment with one of our sales staff and they would go through with you and ask, "What don't you

like about it?" Well, there was a spot on the wall. So we'd write it down. Then they would say they didn't like this or that right here. And we'd write it down. We guaranteed that within 90 days we would be back and take care of anything that showed up on their key receipt. And we stuck to that because again, we felt that anytime somebody buys a house they're our best salesman. And we wanted to keep those salesmen happy, so whatever you didn't like about the house we came back in and fixed. And you had that situation for a year. You could keep coming back for a year and filling out things that were wrong with the house that you didn't like or something went wrong or what have you, and we'd come back and fix it – up to a year. And that proved very good sales tool for us.

Ed: You mentioned the Vacation Specials – those were the apartments that lined 107th Avenue.

Owen: That was very popular.

Ed: Referrals?

Owen: Fantastic. I don't know if you want this on there or not – I looked at the residents like a Frankenstein monster. If I kept them coming with me, I was fine. But if they ever turned against me, I was in trouble. So we tried to do everything we could to make the people happy. One of the things we did: If you moved into your house (I can't remember the time was – 60 days or 90 days; we had some came that didn't like it), we'd refund your money back. We didn't want anybody here that was unhappy. So we would give you the money back and you'd move out.

Ruby: How many years did you do that?

Owen: When I left, I thought we were still doing it. I don't remember.

Mrs. Childress: Did you talk about the Spur Feeding. The big cattle feeder operation; south. They had a big herd; they decided to buy it and had to go to court. It was a mess.

Ruby: Actually, didn't Del Webb lose that lawsuit?

Owen: We won it. In the appeal we lost it.

Ruby: So Del Webb had to pay to have the feed lot moved?

Owen: Yep, we had to pay to have them moved.

Ruby: 111th and Olive, wasn't it?

Owen: Yes. We saw the feeding pens, but we didn't think anything of it. And I don't know if they didn't have a full operation going – but we developed all the way down and

started coming back around. All of a sudden, you'd go down there, whiff, and say, "What is that?" And we went to court and we won it. So we thought we were fine, and they appealed, and they won it. I don't know where they moved it, but we had to pay for their move to get them out of there.

Ruby: I also heard that when you had new model openings, you gave out questionnaires because a lot of the people would go – it was like a social event of the year. They would go to the model homes and you gave out questionnaires that they filled out: 'I do like this about the home. I don't like that about the home. I really, really would like to have this in my home, but I'd never want that in my home.' And did you change the models for future building to accommodate those?

Owen: Whatever they said they didn't like, we didn't put back in, we took it out. And then, I don't remember when we started it, but we would build an experimental house. We would get all kinds of ideas from our subcontracts, the wildest things in the world – built-in vacuum cleaners in the walls, and I don't know what all. We'd build one of those along with the model and let the people go through that. And, like you were saying, they would go, "Oh, I love that thing in the wall, or I like this or that.' Boy, we would jump on that and put it in the next group of models.

Ruby: And you were also here for Sun City West?

Owen: I think that was about the time I left. I left in 1974. They started Sun City West in 1978.

Ruby: It was after Sun City West that Del Webb Corporation bought Jim Boswell out?

Owen: Well, Boswell was our partner. And he would release the land to us as we needed it. When we went to Sun City West, he knew the fellow – Jacobs – who had Lizard Acres – and he talked him into selling us Lizard Acres, and then we went ahead and developed that. But he did all the cotton farming. We would have to give him so much notice and then he would tear cotton out and we would go in and develop it.

Ruby: It was after Sun City West started that Jim Boswell sold out?

Ed: It was 1981 or 1982. They had a falling out over a big model home that Meeker built. Boswell told him to close it down. A furniture guy was inside at the time. Mr. Parker of Webb locked the house up, not knowing this man from Freed's was inside with some clients and couldn't get out. He called down to Swanson and said, "I'm locked in your house; somebody locked the door." Swanson called the sales manager, who told him he locked it because Boswell ordered it. That's when Swanson and Boswell got together and said we have to work this out between us.

Owen: I was gone by that time.

Mrs. Childress: Jim Miller died in 1974, you went downtown then.

Ed: When you walk out of here, I'll think of a lot more questions I wanted to ask you.

Owen: If you have any questions in the future, call me. I may not know the answer, but I'll give you one!

Owen: 62 bed hospital on 103rd and Grand – One story. Boswell came in and said, "No, you're not. You're going to build a 100-bed hospital, and it's going to look great. It's going to be fantastic, you're not going to go cheapo...we want a nice one. He contributed a matching grant of \$1 million. If we could come up with a million dollars, he would. We did, and he did. That's how Boswell Hospital got started.

Ed: Is Jim Boswell still alive?

Owen: Yes. He stays in Sun Valley, Idaho. He used to have a home in Litchfield Park.

Mrs. Childress: His wife died, so he's kind of gone away.

Ruby: Did Meeker come to Del Webb Corp. before you did?

Mrs. Childress: Five years before. John Meeker started in the same place in the warehouse as a mail person; then Owen came along five years later and did the same thing.

Owen: I was working for a cigarette company, which in those days was great. People were smoking cigarettes like crazy. And I just didn't see any future in it. And I was looking for a job wherever. John Meeker was Mrs. Childress' aunt's by marriage brother. So my uncle is the one who told us that John had said there was an opening at Del Webb. So he's the one who told me to go. I went there in 1951. Jim Miller was the man who interviewed and hired me. At that time you had to take a physical before they would put you on full time. So I go into this doctor's office and there's a little guy standing there and he's raising all kinds of trouble. He needs to get in and out. I had all the time in the world, so I said to him, "Why don't you take my appointment and I'll take yours and you can go on in." He said okay, fine, thank you. When I went to work at Webb, they're taking me around to introduce me to people and they take me into Joe Ashton, who is the Sr. Vice President. And the little guy that I let take my spot was Joe Ashton. He says "I remember you from somewhere. I hope you do." I made sure he remembers me.

Ruby: Where did your parents live out here?

Owen: I can't remember their address.

Mrs. Childress: They moved in when they were first built – in 1960.

Owen: I was thinking of Mother, when she came out.

Mrs. Childress: Oh, no that was the second time. Your folks moved in when you were selling them the first year. He died in 1964 and they'd lived here for those four years. Then, we bought Owen's mother a house later, but I don't remember where that was. His dad worked out here, too. He's the one who took the new people to their house – key receptor(?). He retired.

Ed: The key receptor was your dad?

Owen: Yes. We must have had 10 or 12 of them, because at one time we were delivering 20 houses a day. We were going crazy. Frankenstein Monster thing...we wanted quality in the houses, so the people were happy with them. We would get bids from our subcontracts on roofing and insulation, etc. We, 50% of the time%, did not take the low bid. We took the subcontractor we thought would do us the job we wanted. And one of the requirements was this "call-back" thing. We said, when we call you and tell you to go back to the house and put the insulation in a different way, you'd better do it. Contracting Department downtown thought we were crazy. They told us, "You always take the low bid. Knock 'em down and get 'em down." We said, "No, we want the quality."

Ruby: I was asked at one of my speaking engagements: Did somebody give Del Webb a whale of a deal on pink paint?

Owen: I don't know.

Mrs. Childress: Your dad's was. Your mom's was a real pale green. I remember that. Real pretty.

Ruby: Were you here during the Shoplifter days?

Owen: Yes, as a matter of fact, we bought a Bluebird from one of our Thunderbirds because this used to go around and pick people up and there wasn't any charge for it. I don't know how good the schedule was, whether they had to wait a long time. I remember when we did that.

Ed: I can't imagine buying a house without air conditioning in the desert, but I guess in the Sixties, that was something that not everybody had.

Owen: I can't remember back that far, but I guess maybe what we had was a cooler on here. You got the cooler with the house. But if you wanted air conditioning, it was another \$600.

Ed: There are the photos we have of Opening Day. We are going to make large for the

front room.

Owen: We had a rainstorm the day before, and here we had these guys out paving the street with puddles of water in it. And they kept saying, "Well, this isn't going to last." We said, "We don't care, we want it to last the weekend, and then we'll come back in and patch it."

Ed: And here are the pictures of Sun Bowl.

Owen: Liberace. Guy Lombardo. A president. The biggest hits were the Lawrence Welk groups. We had JoAnn Castle, the piano player on Lawrence Welk. They just loved her.

(gap in tape – pick up at baseball training camp...)

Owen: John and I went back to Milwaukee and met with them and went to a ballgame. We negotiated with their president and operation man (I can't remember their names) about coming out here. We told him what we'd build and what we had for them. And they said, "Okay, we'll come out for Spring Training. And that's how we got that."

Ed: Had they been coming down here?

Owen: They may have been – like in Mesa or Tempe or somewhere else. But we got them to come out here.

Ed: That got flooded out at one time, didn't it? 1978?

Owen: I don't know. I have a baseball signed by Hank Aaron when he was out here for Spring Training.

Ruby: I understand there were chairs under the stage at the Sun Bowl that were used at events. Did the Del Webb people go out and set those up?

Owen: Not that I remember. What I remember was: it was free, you could bring your folding chair or your blanket or whatever, and we had it terraced, and you could come in there for free. I know Mrs. Webb's first reaction was, "How come we're not charging them for it." I told him, "It's a great sales tool. Why would we charge them for it?" He was looking for the money.

Ed: He had this Sundial built, along with the one up in Cave Creek.

Owen: Yes, and we had the first indoor swimming pool in a recreation center.

Ruby: Were you still working for Del Webb when they did the Sundial up in Carefree and he said it had to be one foot shorter than this one.

Owen: I don't remember that. But I wouldn't put it past him. That would sound like him.

Ruby: When the indoor swimming pool at Sundial was first built, it had palm trees and everything growing in there, right?

Owen: Right!

Ruby: And they took those out later because of the hardship of taking care of them – the maintenance?

Owen: I don't remember. The only thing I remember about it is the smell of chlorine and we had a tough time balancing it to where we would save the water but it wouldn't overwhelm you when you walked in to go swimming. But it was great for people who had problems with the sun. Because they would get in there and swim and not have to worry about it.

Ed: And at the time, it was the largest indoor pool, did I hear that?

Owen: I think so.