

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

RELEASE FORM

I, Nancy A. Watson-O'Neal, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history program.

I understand the purpose of the SCAHS program is to collect audio- and video- taped oral histories of the Sun Cities Area original residents, those living in the area and of those who supported the growth of the Sun Cities.

I understand that the SCAHS plans to retain the products of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication and presentations for the promotion of the Historical Society and its activities in any medium.

I hereby grant SCAHS ownership of the physical property delivered to SCAHS and the right to use the property as stated above for scholarly and educational purposes.

I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold.

I also grant SCAHS my absolute and irrevocable consent for any photographs provided by me or taken of my in the course of my participation to be used, published, and copied by SCAHS and its assignees in any medium.

I agree SCAHS may use my name, video or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction or other sound effects without further approval on my part.

I release SCAHS, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature Nancy A. O'Neal Date 7/11/06

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NANCY ANN WATSON HISTORY IN MARINETTE

1) THE MIGRATION:

... 1913, MY UNCLE - WILLIAM PINCKNEY "BILLY" WATSON STARTED A "CHAIN REACTION MIGRATION", WHEN HE MOVED FROM LOUISIANA TO LIBERTY, ARIZONA, BECAUSE OF HIS HEALTH.

THE 1920 CENSUS SHOWS THAT SOME OF MY FAMILY HAD MOVED TO LIBERTY. AND THROUGH THE 1930 CENSUS, BIRTHDATES, LETTERS AND RESEARCH, I FOUND THE REST OF MY FAMILIES HAD MOVED TO MARINETTE ABOUT 1917.

SOME OF THE FAMILIES MOVED AWAY IN 1919, RETURNING IN 1921 AND LEAVING AGAIN IN 1927, THEN SOME RETURNED AGAIN IN 1930 AND STAYED UNTIL 1935. (MAKING AN 18 YEAR SPAN IN MARINETTE.)

MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER: FATIMA MANDY (HUDSON) WATSON (1837-1922) (In Marinette 1917-21)
(Born in SC. Her husband had died in the Civil War & she lived with her parents in South Carolina, raising her son Reuben, he had moved to Louisiana and she finally moved to Louisiana, and in 1917 moved with him to Marinette. She then moved to Liberty with her son and family in 1921, where she died in 1922.)

MY GRANDFATHER: REUBEN ELZER WATSON (1861-1930) (1917-21)
(Born and lived in SC, then LA, then moved to Marinette in 1917, then moved to Liberty in 1921, then in 1930 moved back to Louisiana with his daughter Lena (Watson) Hearne. He was planning on returning to Marinette when he died in 1930 in Hoods Mill, LA.)

MY GRANDMOTHER: MARTHA ANN (MAYFIELD) WATSON (1864-1928) (1917-21)
(Born in SC. Her mother was a Watson also making their children having two (2) separate Watson lines. My father remembers her as being a very gentle person and sick a lot and had to take it very easy. She could only do light work. She died in Liberty in 1928.)

MY FATHER: ELZER BASKIN "SLIM" WATSON (1901-1969) (1917-21, 1930-35)
1929 HE MARRIED SARAH DARBY (1901-1973) (1930-35)
DONALD LEROY WATSON (1931-1973) (1931-35)
NANCY ANN WATSON (1932-) (1932-35)
(Born in LA. He moved to Marinette with his parents in 1917 and stayed till 1921, then moved to Liberty, but during these years he worked as Mechanic around the different towns throughout Arizona. He came down with Smallpox at one of the small towns (I think it was Bagdad). In 1929, he married Sarah Darby and when they moved to Marinette in 1930, he became Forman for the Marinette Ranch. My mother, Sarah had been a Kindergarden Teacher and was the Liberty Postmaster when she married my dad. Both children, Donald and Nancy were born here in Marinette. Elzer and family moved to California in 1939 and on up to Oregon in 1946. Elzer and Sarah are both buried in Yahats, OR.)

MY AUNT: CORA BEE WATSON (1904-1992) (1917-19, 1921-27)
1922 SHE MARRIED FRANK HOLLENBECK (1893-1975) (1924-27)
(Born in TX. Lived in LA. Aunt Cora came with her parents to Marinette in 1917, married Frank about 1922, living in Marinette until moving to Glendale about 1926. They moved later to California. Cora is buried in National City, CA. and Frank is buried in Escondido, CA.)

MY AUNT: JESSIE MAY WATSON (1908-1978) (1917-19, 1921-27)
1926 SHE MARRIED A.B. CAREL (1907-1957) (1926-27)
(Born in TX. Lived in LA. Aunt Jessie came with her parents to Marinette in 1917, married A.B. in 1926, lived in Marinette until 1927-28, later moving to California. Jesse is buried in El Cajon, CA.)

MY UNCLE: FERMAN LANDRUM WATSON & WIFE (1883-1968) (1917-19, 1930-?)
RACHEL (BARRETT) WATSON (1891-1973) (1917-19, 1930-?)
RAYMOND WATSON (1912 TX) (1917-19, 1930-?)
LUCILLE WATSON (1918 AZ) (1918-19, 1930-?)
(Born in SC. Lived in Marinette from 1917 to about 1919 when they moved to Phoenix, later Uncle Landrum returned about 1930 and worked as Forman for the Marinette Ranch. I don't know when they left Marinette again. Landrum, Rachel & Raymond are buried in Glendale and Lucille is buried in Liberty, AZ)

MY AUNT: DORA (WATSON) FIELDS (1891-1962) (1926-?)
 ALMA FIELDS (b.1909 TX) (1926-?)
 GARNETT WILLIAM FIELDS (b.1912 ?) (1926-?)
 MARTHA RAE FIELDS (b.1914 ?) (1926-?)
 RUBIB ALBERT FIELDS (b.1919 ?) (1926-?)
 EARL LESLIE FIELDS (b.1923 ?) (1926-?)
 (Born in SC. I Know Aunt Dora lived in Marinette during 1926 but I don't know how long she lived here. Her husband Oscar had died in 1923 in Liberty. She married Charles Barrett of Buckeye in 1937.)

MY UNCLE: ALBERT THOMAS WATSON (1893-1965) (? 1930-?)
 SARAH "BECKY" (LUCAS) WATSON (1894-?) (?1930-?)
 ROY LUCAS WATSON (b.1915 TX) (?1930-?)
 ONNIE ODELL WATSON (b.1917 LIBERTY) (?1930-?)
 JEWEL RUTH (b.1920 LIBERTY) (?1930-?)
 RALPH WATSON (b.1920 B/D=LIBERTY)
 LUTHER L. WATSON (b.1923 AZ) (?1930-?)
 SHERMAN C. WATSON (b.1925 AZ) (?1930-?)
 KENNETH ROBERT WATSON (b.1929 PEORIA) (?1930-?)
 ALBERT THOMAS "SONNY" WATSON, JR (b.1931 ?) (?1931-?)
 GLENN D. "DARWIN" WATSON (b.1934 ?) (??)
 (Born in TX. Uncle Albert Watson and family was living in Marinette during the 1930 Census, but I have not found out when they left, although he was a Ranch Hand while living in Marinette. He died in TX.)

MY AUNT: MARY LENA (WATSON) HEARNE (1896-1971) (1924-30)
 WILLIAM PARKS HEARNE (1894-1938) (1924-30)
 LEON HEARNE (b.1915 ?) (1924-30)
 EDNA HEARNE (b.1917 ?) (1924-30)
 MABEL HEARNE (b.1920 ?) (1924-30)
 CLEDA MAE HEARNE (b.1922 ?) (1924-30)
 EDWARD HEARNE (b.1924 AZ) (1924-30)
 OBERA HEARNE (b.1929 MARINETTE) (1929-30)
 (Born in LA. Aunt Lena (Watson) Hearne and family come from Louisiana about 1924 and moved back about 1930. It is possible their son Edward was born here in 1924, and their daughter Obera WAS born in Marinette in 1929.)

MY AUNT: LINNIE MAY (DARBY) HOOVER (1904-1993) (?1930-?)
 FRANCIS LEROY HOOVER (SOME PEOPLE CALLED HIM "PETE") (1910-1982) (?1930-?)
 DOROTHY JEAN HOOVER (b.1931 MARINETTE) (1931-?)
 LAWRENCE LELAND HOOVER (b.1933 MARINETTE) (1933-?)
 (Born in OK. Aunt Linnie married Francis "Pete" Hoover in 1930, he worked at the Service Station in Marinette, and his father William Hoover was a Superintendent for the Marinette Ranch, his wife was Grace. Both of their children, Dorothy and Lawrence were born here in Marinette.)

2) THE BIRTHS:

MY BROTHER AND I WERE BORN HERE IN MARINETTE, AS WELL AS SEVERAL OF MY COUSINS.

THIS IS THE ORDER OF OUR BIRTHS & I AM STILL RESEARCHING 4 MORE:

OBERA LOUISE HEARNE – BORN 5/23/1929, MARINETTE, ARIZONA.
 DONALD LEROY WATSON – BORN 1/7/1931, MARINETTE, ARIZONA. (Dr. Franklin)
 DOROTHY JEAN HOOVER – BORN 1/18/1931, MARINETTE, ARIZONA.
 NANCY ANN WATSON – BORN 12/30/1932, MARINETTE, ARIZONA. Dr. Franklin
 (I was the last baby Dr. Franklin delivered, he died 2 days later.)
 LAWRENCE LELAND HOOVER – BORN 8/11/1933, MARINETTE, ARIZONA.

IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THESE CHILDREN WERE ALSO BORN IN MARINETTE, BECAUSE OF THE TIME SPAN OF THEIR PARENTS:

LUCILLE WATSON, WAS BORN IN 1918 IN MARINETTE.
 WILLIAM EDWARD HEARNE, WAS BORN 7/9/1924 IN MARINETTE.

**ALBERT THOMAS "SONNY" WATSON, Jr, WAS BORN 5/19/31 IN MARINETTE.
GLENN D. "DARWIN" WATSON, WAS BORN 9/19/1934 IN MARINETTE.**

3) THE MEMORIES:

I CAN REMEMBER, LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY, LAYING ON A COTTON SACK BETWEEN THE ROWS OF COTTON, WATCHING MY MOTHER PICKING COTTON AND MY BROTHER PLAYING DOWN THE ROW, PICKING A BALL OF COTTON NOW AND THEN. AS I WAS FALLING ASLEEP, I WATCHED THE BEAUTIFUL WHITE BILLOWING CLOUDS IN THE SKY. IN LATER YEARS, I ASK MY MOTHER HOW OLD I WAS AT THIS TIME AND SHE WAS SURPRISED THAT I REMEMBERED THAT FAR BACK AND SAID I WAS 1 YEAR OLD, AND MY DAD WAS FORMAN AND THEY WERE SHORT HANDED AND SHE WAS HELPING OUT.

I CAN REMEMBER MY MOTHER FILLING UP THE BACK SEAT OF THE CAR WITH CLOTHING AND BLANKETS. SHE MADE IT EVEN WITH THE BACK OF THE FRONT SEATS, AND THAT'S WHERE MY BROTHER DONALD AND I LAY, TO RIDE AND SLEEP ON THE TRIP. I WAS LYING BEHIND MY FATHER AS HE DROVE, AND I COULD FEEL THE HOT WIND THROUGH THE OPEN WINDOW AND SOMETIMES I COULD SEE TELEPHONE POLES, AND ONCE IN AWHILE WE WOULD MEET ANOTHER CAR. MY MOTHER WAS SURPRISED AGAIN, WHEN I TOLD HER THIS AND SHE SAID, WE WERE TAKING A TRIP TO LOUISIANA AND I WAS ONLY 18 MONTHS OLD.

4) THE LETTERS & PICTURES:

I HAVE SEVERAL LETTERS WRITTEN FROM MARINETTE, TO MY FATHER, WHILE HE WAS WORKING AWAY FROM HOME.

NOVEMBER 26, 1926 A LETTER FROM HIS MOTHER, MARTHA ANN WATSON:

SHE IS TELLING MY DAD TO TAKE TABLE SALT FOR HIS COUGH. HIS SISTER SALLIE SPENT THE DAY WITH HIS SISTER DORA (IN MARINETTE). AND SISTERS CORA & JESSIE & FAMILIES SPENT THANKGIVING WITH THEM (IN MARINETTE). AND BROTHERS LANDRUM AND BILLY WAS SPENDING IT WITH RELATION (IN BUCKEYE). SHE'S MAKING HIM SOME FEATHER PILLOWS AND CASES.

NOVEMBER 29, 1926 A LETTER FROM HIS SISTER, JESSIE (WATSON) CAREL:

SHE IS TELLING MY DAD, THEY ALL WENT TO HIS BROTHER LANDRUMS YESTERDAY (IN LIBERTY). SHE SAID, "AND I TELL YOU MY BACKBONE IS SORE THIS MORNING. THAT ROAD IS JUST TERRIBLE". "ARE YOU COMING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS?" SISTER LENA (WATSON) HEARNE'S DAUGHTER, CLEDA MAE HAS FEVER. IT'S HER WASH DAY AND SISTER DORA SAID SHE COULD COME OVER AND USE HER NEW WASHING MACHINE.

I HAVE SEVERAL LETTERS WRITTEN TO MY FATHER IN MARINETTE:

1927 MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER AND GRANDPARENTS MOVED TO LIBERTY, WHERE MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER DIED.

1929 MY GRANDFATHER MOVED BACK TO LOUISIANA WITH HIS DAUGHTER LENA (WATSON) HEARNE AND HER FAMILY.

JULY 7, 1930 A LETTER FROM MY GRANDFATHER IN LOUISIANA TO MY FATHER MARINETTE:

HE HAS NOT BEEN WELL FOR SOME TIME AND THEY ARE HURTING FOR RAIN AND THINGS ARE LOOKING GLOOMY.

AUGUST 29, 1930 A LETTER FROM MY GRANDFATHER IN LOUISIANA TO MY FATHER IN MARINETTE:

HE SAID THAT HE WAS FEELING A LITTLE BETTER, BUT WANTS TO COME BACK TO ARIZONA. NO ONE IS WORKING THERE AND AS SOON AS HE GETS SOME MONEY OWED TO HIM, HE'S COMING BACK TO MARINETTE. (BUT HE DIED 2 WEEKS AFTER THIS LAST LETTER.)

AUGUST 17, 1934 A LETTER FROM A COUSIN, GERTIE HILBURN IN LOUISIANA TO MY FATHER IN MARINETTE:

SHE WAS TALKING ABOUT A PICTURE OF HER MOTHER AND FATHER, AND HOW SICK HE WAS BEFORE HE DIED. ABOUT THE TRIP AND HOPE WE CAN MAKE IT TO LOUISIANA AGAIN NEXT YEAR.

FEEL FREE TO LOOK AT THE PICTURES AND READ THE LETTERS. THANK YOU FOR TAKING AN INTEREST IN MY EARLY LIFE IN MARINETTE.

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BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM

Please Print Clearly

Name NANCY ANN WATSON O'NEAL
First Middle Maiden Name Last

Address 6607 N. 62nd Ave

City Glendale State AZ ZIP 85301

Telephone 623-847-3451 Email NANCYANN1230@AOL.com

Place of Birth Maricette, AZ Birth Date 12/30/32

Race/Ethnicity (optional) white Male _____ Female X

Are photos included? Yes _____ No X
If yes, see attached Photo Log.

Are manuscripts included? Yes X No _____
If yes, see attached Manuscript Log.

Are artifacts included? Yes _____ No X
If yes, see attached Inventory Log.

Interviewer BEVERLY J. BROWN Date 11 JUL 2006

Printed Name Beverly J Brown

Address 15933 W. SILVER BREEZE DRIVE

City SURPRISE State AZ ZIP 85374

Telephone 623-584-0440 Email STARFIGHTERAZ@YAHOO.com

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Nancy Ann Watson

(The interview was conducted at the home of Nancy Ann Watson on July 11, 2006.
The tape was transcribed by Belva J McIntosh)

BROWN: I am Beverly Brown and I am interviewing Nancy Ann Watson O’Neal for the Sun Cities Area Historical Society. Today is July 11, 2006. Please give us your full name and tell us how your family came to this area.

WATSON: My name is Nancy Ann Watson. Then I married Lee Acree, then we divorced. I had four children from him and then I married my present husband Darrel O’Neal. Now this is the story of the migration from Louisiana to Marinette, Arizona. In 1913 my uncle William Pinckney “Billy” Watson started a chain reaction migration when he moved from Louisiana to Liberty, Arizona because of his health. The 1920 census shows that some of my family had moved to Liberty but most of them – I found through letters and research, most of my family had moved to Marinette about 1916. Some of the families had moved away about 1919 and returned in 1921, then leaving again in 1927. Then some returned again in 1930 and stayed until 1935 making an eighteen year span in Marinette. There were always some of the Watsons living there. Those that had come from Louisiana in 1916 was my Great-grandmother Fatima Mandy (Hudson) Watson and she had come in a touring car with her son Rueben Elzer Watson. She had lived with her son, her husband was killed in the Civil War and so they lived with relations in South Carolina and then whenever he was old enough to get married she started living with him, so she traveled with him. She is buried now in Liberty, Arizona. My Grandfather Rueben Elzer Watson was born in South Carolina, then lived in Louisiana and moved to Marinette in 1916. Later on he moved back to Louisiana where he died. My Grandmother, Martha Ann (Mayfield) Watson, was born in South Carolina and her mother was a Watson also making all of their children double Watsons. So we are from two Watson lines. My father remembers her being a very gentle person and sick a lot, so she had to take it very easy. She could only do light work. She died in Liberty and is buried in the Liberty cemetery. My father Elzer Baskin “Slim” Watson was born in 1901 in Louisiana and then he came in 1916 to Marinette with his parents and two sisters and grandmother. He used to work all around, he worked as a mechanic around the different towns throughout Arizona. But his home base was Marinette. He came down with small-pox at one of the small towns, I think it was Bagdad and thank goodness he lived through it, I wouldn’t be here if he hadn’t. In 1929 he married Sarah Darby

and then they moved to Marinette in 1930 and he became foreman of the Marinette ranch. So when my mother had come to Arizona in 1920 and was the postmistress for Liberty when she married my father. Then whenever they moved out to the ranch then they lived in one of the houses. It is in a map there, you can't show it on this but it can be shown. Then, OK, I will go on to my Aunt Cora, in 1916 she came to Marinette with her parents and grandparents. She married Frank Hollenbeck. They lived in Marinette for a while and then they moved to Glendale about 1926. Jessie Mae Watson was another aunt of mine. My father's sisters. She came to Marinette also, and whenever she, in 1926 she married A. B. Carel and they lived in Marinette for a while and she had two of her children, I think they had moved to Liberty or Buckeye, and she had two children there, and then they moved back. They were back and forth so much. My uncle Ferman Landrum Watson and his wife Rachel Barrett Watson lived in Marinette also. He came in 1916 to 1919 and then he moved back in 1930 and was one of the foremans on the ranch. My father was a foreman on the ranch and my Uncle Landrum was a foreman also. Then my Aunt Dora Watson Fields. She had lived there for a while and I have some letters that she had written. I have quite a few letters that the people had written to each other, you know, one to Louisiana and one was mailed to Marinette from Louisiana. Then my Uncle Albert Thomas Watson lived in Marinette just for a short while, then moved over to Peoria. He had most of his children in Peoria. My Aunt Mary Lena Watson was already married and she had two of her children born in Marinette. Her last two children were born in Marinette. Then they moved back to Louisiana. And that was Obera and Edward. But they were not working on the ranch. Now I had told you before that there were four white children born on the ranch. And that was my brother and I and my two cousins, Dorothy and Lawrence Hoover. My Aunt Linnie May Darby Hoover married Francis Leroy Hoover. He was the nephew of the President and most people called him Pete. Then they had Dorothy Jean and Lawrence Leland Hoover.

BROWN: Now was there a hospital or were you all born at home?

WATSON: At home. Well, Dr. Franklin was my doctor and my parents had told me through the years that I was the last baby born from Dr. Franklin. Because he had come out and delivered me at quarter to twelve on the 30th of December, then he was leaving after everything was all done, he was leaving and he was hit by a train. I don't know how it happened. They didn't even know that he was hit by a train and later died. OK, I went to the Historical – I mean to the microfiche, microfilm and things and looked it up. He died in Phoenix, so he had been hit by the train and two days later he died. They didn't have anything about the train in there. I just thought that was an interesting point. Anyway, now there are some others that – I got all the births.

and then they moved to Marinette in 1930 and he became foreman of the Marinette ranch. So when my mother had come to Arizona in 1920 and was the postmistress for Liberty when she married my father. Then whenever they moved out to the ranch then they lived in one of the houses. It is in a map there, you can't show it on this but it can be shown. Then, OK, I will go on to my Aunt Cora, in 1916 she came to Marinette with her parents and grandparents. She married Frank Hollenbeck. They lived in Marinette for a while and then they moved to Glendale about 1926. Jessie Mae Watson was another aunt of mine. My father's sisters. She came to Marinette also, and whenever she, in 1926 she married A. B. Carel and they lived in Marinette for a while and she had two of her children, I think they had moved to Liberty or Buckeye, and she had two children there, and then they moved back. They were back and forth so much. My uncle Ferman Landrum Watson and his wife Rachel Barrett Watson lived in Marinette also. He came in 1916 to 1919 and then he moved back in 1930 and was one of the foremans on the ranch. My father was a foreman on the ranch and my Uncle Landrum was a foreman also. Then my Aunt Dora Watson Fields. She had lived there for a while and I have some letters that she had written. I have quite a few letters that the people had written to each other, you know, one to Louisiana and one was mailed to Marinette from Louisiana. Then my Uncle Albert Thomas Watson lived in Marinette just for a short while, then moved over to Peoria. He had most of his children in Peoria. My Aunt Mary Lena Watson was already married and she had two of her children born in Marinette. Her last two children were born in Marinette. Then they moved back to Louisiana. And that was Obera and Edward. But they were not working on the ranch. Now I had told you before that there were four white children born on the ranch. And that was my brother and I and my two cousins, Dorothy and Lawrence Hoover. My Aunt Linnie May Darby Hoover married Francis Leroy Hoover. He was the nephew of the President and most people called him Pete. Then they had Dorothy Jean and Lawrence Leland Hoover.

BROWN: Now was there a hospital or were you all born at home?

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BROWN: What was your brother's name?

WATSON: Donald Leroy Watson. Yeah, I didn't get his name in there. Anyway he was born before I was in January 7, 1931. He died at the age of 41 years old of cancer. There are two more children, or one more child that I think was born in Marinette. That was Lucille Watson, Uncle Landrum's daughter and she didn't live too long. She lived about seventeen years then she died, just suddenly. They didn't know what was wrong. I think she was born there but I haven't been able to find it. I have researched it and researched it. OK, the memories that I have: OK, I can remember like it was yesterday lying on a cotton sack between the rows of cotton and watching my mother picking cotton. She said she never picked cotton very often but she would pick cotton whenever they were really short of help. And my brother would be playing down the lane, you know, down the row with – just playing, picking bolls of cotton now and then and just playing. As I fell asleep I watched the beautiful white billowing clouds in the sky. They were so gorgeous. In later years I asked my mother how old I was at this time and she was surprised that I remembered that far back and said that I was one year old at that time. My Dad was foreman and they were short-handed and that was why she was helping out. Then another memory that I can remember is my mother filling up the back seat of the car with clothing and blankets and she made it even with the back of the front seat and that's where my brother Donald and I lay to ride and sleep in the car on a long trip. But I didn't know where we were going or anything, I just know it was a long trip. I was lying behind my father as he drove and Donald was lying behind my mother. I could feel the hot wind from the open window and sometimes I could see telephone poles. Not all the time but sometimes. Once in a while we would meet another car, there weren't a lot of cars in those days. My mother was surprised again when I told her about this and she said we were taking a trip to Louisiana and I was only eighteen months old. I still remember that vividly. OK, the letters and pictures – The pictures are out in the Historical Society right now, but the letters – I don't know if she kept any copies of the letters or not. There is one – a letter from his mother telling my Dad to take table salt for his cough. His sister Sally spent the day with his sister Dora in Marinette and sisters Cora and Jessie and families spent Thanksgiving with them in Marinette. Brothers Landrum and Billie were spending it with relations in Buckeye. She was making him some feather pillows and cases and that was written on November 26, 1926 and another one was November 29, 1926, a letter from his sister, Jesse Watson Carel, she is telling my Dad that they all went to his brother Landrum's yesterday in Liberty. So he had moved to Liberty at that time. She said "I tell you my backbone is sore this morning, that road is just terrible." You know, the road to Buckeye from Marinette. And asking if he was coming home for Christmas, you know, someone has got a new washing machine and on like that. Then there

are several letters written to my father in Marinette. 1927 my great-grandmother and grandparents moved to Liberty where my great-grandmother died and she is buried in Liberty. 1929 my grandfather moved back to Louisiana with his daughter Lena and her family. On July 7, 1930 a letter from my grandfather in Louisiana to my father in Marinette. He had not been well for some time and they were really hurting for rain. August 29, 1930, this was the day that my parents – oh no, they got married in 1929. August 29, 1930, a letter from my grandfather in Louisiana to my father in Marinette that he was feeling better but wants to come back to Arizona. No one is working there and as soon as he gets some money owed to him he is coming back to Marinette. But he died two weeks after that letter, so he never made it back. August 17, 1934 a letter from a cousin Gertie Hilburn in Louisiana to my father in Marinette. Talking about her mother and father and so on. And that is about all I have. Are there any questions you would like to ask?

BROWN: Do you know who your father worked for?

WATSON: Well, yeah. It was the Marinette ranch.

BROWN: Was it the Southwest Cotton Company?

WATSON: Yeah.

BROWN: And did they have anything to do with Goodyear Tire Company?

WATSON: Yeah. The people that came to Arizona with my parents, all of my family, they were the Shockley's. They were cousins to my Dad. Shockley's came to Arizona and they homesteaded in Litchfield, or they helped pioneer Litchfield and so anyway, they were working for the Goodyear Company over there too, and my Dad was working in the cotton fields for the – you know, they used the cotton for the tires and things.

BROWN: How did the word spread? How did they know to come to Arizona from Louisiana?

WATSON: Well, they had heard that it was drier climate and that's what they were looking for, drier climate.

BROWN: Oh, to grow the cotton?

WATSON: No, to live.

BROWN: So they just came looking for work.

WATSON: Because my Uncle Billie, William Pinckney Billy, he started the chain reaction. Because he couldn't breathe back there so he came for his health and then three years later all the rest of them came.

BROWN: Ok, so he found that there was work and let them know so they came.

WATSON: There is, I got a picture of my house.

BROWN: So what would the address be?

WATSON: It's a – you know where Furr's restaurant is? OK, there used to be a pool hall there – now Furr's restaurant is there and right behind it there was a row

of houses and I think there were two rows – no it was just one row of houses, then trees and that house right there at the end on 105th was where I was born. This was drawn by Amanda Duran.

BROWN: Now Amanda is also a pioneer?

WATSON: Well, she wasn't born in Marinette, but she moved to Marinette when she was like seven or nine. They lived in the other house – in one of the other houses – the other end one. So she knows more about the area of growing up than I do because we moved away to Glendale when I was about 3.

BROWN: Why did your parents move?

WATSON: I don't know. All I know is I remember us living in Peoria – my Dad was running a gas station there in Peoria. So he left the ranch and was running a gas station and then after that we went to Glendale and I don't know what he was doing then, I think he was working on dams and stuff because he was a heavy equipment operator. I have a lot of pictures of all the equipment that he worked on and stuff. This was a touring car that they came in. In those days traveling was not easy, because the other side of my family, some of them came out in 1922 from Oklahoma. They came right to Glendale. But they were having to use ties, put the wheels up on the ties in order to go and it took them twenty eight days to make it from Oklahoma to Arizona, to Glendale.

BROWN: Did anybody talk about going into Phoenix or was that a long ways a way?

WATSON: One of the letters said something about going into Phoenix and she didn't want to make that trip again. I think it was my Aunt Jessie. Said that the road was so rough and bumpy that her back was really sore for a long time. She was talking about it being sore going to Buckeye. Well I remember her saying, writing in the letter that her back was really sore from going to Phoenix. Now when I was a child, when I was living here in Glendale and we made trips to Phoenix it took us quite a while to get to Phoenix. There was no traffic in those days and it still took us quite a while. That was in 1934 or '35 along in there, because I had to go to the Doctor and stuff there, but it took us quite a while to get there.

BROWN: Now do you have a birth certificate? Did they have – how was that – did the Doctor then report the birth to the State or something?

WATSON: No, the nurse had to that because he died before he got to –

BROWN: But normally it would be the doctor?

WATSON: Normally it would be the Doctor?

BROWN: He would report to the state?

WATSON: Yes.

BROWN: Oh, so it is a regular looking birth certificate. Arizona State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, standard certificate of birth, state file number, registration number, Marinette, Arizona.

WATSON: And I understand too that my Aunt Lennie Darby Hoover and her husband Francis had a store there in Marinette, that they ran a store, a way back in 1930 – '31, '32, '33 along in there. They had a store.

BROWN: Where was this picture taken?

WATSON: I have no idea where it was taken, but I think it must have been taken by his parent's home because they said there was a lot of trees around it.

BROWN: In Marinette?

WATSON: In Marinette. Now that was at 103rd across the street from where Furr's is.

BROWN: Yeah, because it looks very wooded.

WATSON: Now the Hoover's big home – I mean they had a huge home there I guess, and his parents. It was a huge home right there, like you are going on Grand and you turn on 103rd, well right there to the right, the first area, right there was where that big home had sat. It had a lot of trees around it so I imagine that was taken there. Something else too was – you knew all about the beet farming.

BROWN: No.

WATSON: Well, the beet farming –

BROWN: Oh, that's right, they tried sugar beet farming and it didn't work.

WATSON: Yes, it didn't work, but this was about 1912.

BROWN: How long did they do it then – just a couple of years?

WATSON: Yeah – probably just tried it a couple of years and it didn't work.

This is a picture of Marinette here and Peoria here. This looks like a set of houses in here and here was probably the saloon. But the other picture - What else was I going to tell you. I got off the beaten path.

BROWN: We are looking at the photo album that WATSON has and she says that most of these photos are in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

WATSON: I wanted to show you this. You see this picture was taken of Sun City. They had just built the first house – here is the Historical Society here. OK, most of it was concentrating along here, but here was the Marinette section where I was born. OK, we blew up this copy, Jean blew it up for me and here it is right here and here is the house I was born in. Here is where Furr's market is now. This picture was taken in 1960 so those houses were still there in 1960. I don't know when they were torn down. And in this area here, that was the Hoover's.

BROWN: On the other side of Grand.

WATSON: Yes. It was my Aunt Lennie Hoover's place.

BROWN: Now it was considered a company town. Is that right?

WATSON: A company what?

BROWN: A company town of the Cotton Company.

WATSON: Well, yeah, Marinette was pretty much the Cotton Company.

BROWN: Very interesting.

WATSON: I guess that was about all. Oh, I know what I was going to tell you about how they cooled things. You see, there is canvas all over here.

BROWN: This was in the house?

WATSON: On the windows – there is screen behind them. They would roll up the canvas and the screen would be behind them or netting and the wind would go clear through the house. That is how they kept cool. And sometimes – now I never experienced this, the whole time that I lived – well my seven years that I lived here, I never – the heat didn't bother me. One day was like the next, you know, it never bothered me to be in the heat. But my parents would set out – sometimes they would put beds out underneath the trees and anyway they had the netting over the beds and we would sleep out underneath the trees in the summertime. So that's another way that we kept cool. Now what I never experienced that Amanda Duran had talked about was that they would wet sheets and wrap themselves in the sheets to cool off. Well a lot of people caught pneumonia that way. A lot of people did. But anyway I never experienced that because we either had the wind going through the house or a breeze going through the house or sleeping under the trees.

BROWN: Where did they go shopping for food?

WATSON: The Hoover's had a store and someone else had a store too down in Peoria. Someone had a store there, I remember them talking about there in Peoria Historical Society. You ought to get together with them too, because they can get you in on a lot of stuff. Now I had gone to the Peoria Historical Society, because I had lived there for a while, not long but a little while and they had told me about these poster deals with pictures, you know.

BROWN: Oh, poster board.

WATSON: Yes, and so that's why I figured well I would do it for that deal over there for Marinette Day that we were having.

BROWN: Did people have horses?

WATSON: They probably had them but I don't remember them.

BROWN: It was pretty well motorized by then, in the '30;s?

WATSON: Uh huh. (more picture talk)

BROWN: Is she sitting in a garden? Did you all have vegetable gardens?

WATSON: I don't remember. I'm sure that they did. Because everywhere we ever lived my parents had a garden. So I am sure they had one in Marinette too.
(more picture talk)

BROWN: Were there any ministers or churches in Marinette?

WATSON: I don't remember if there were any churches or not. I don't remember anyone talking about one. I don't think so. Well do you have any other questions?

BROWN: No, I think you have covered everything. Thank you very much for sharing this with us.

WATSON: Uh huh. I wish that I knew more about the growing up years, but all I can say that I didn't remember some of the stuff that Amanda had talked about. But I did go to school with Marty Robbins. But of course he was Martin then.

BROWN: Ok, thank you very much.

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 205

Interview with Ruth Sparks Byrne September 17, 1991

Year of Birth: 1921

Interviewer: K. Trimble; Other Voice: Jim Kring, Jr.

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C-205

SUN CITIES AREA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
10801 Oakmont Drive
Sun City, AZ. 85351

17 September 1991

RELEASE FORM

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 17th day of August, 1991, by and between Ruth Sparks Byrne (herein after called "Interviewee") and K. Trimble (herein after called "Interviewer").

I agree to participate in a tape recorded interview with the interviewer 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 Historical 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 remuneration or compensation for either his/her participation in the Interview or for the rights assigned hereunder.
4. 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:

INTERVIEWEE

SIGNED

Ruth Sparks Byrne

DATE 6-1-94

NAME

Ruth Sparks Byrne

ADDRESS

8337 N. 58th Avenue

CITY

Glendale

STATE

AZ

ZIP

85302

INTERVIEWER

SIGNED

K. Trimble

DATE

May 19, 1994

NAME

K. Trimble

ADDRESS

1609 E. Maryland

CITY

Phoenix

STATE

AZ

ZIP

85016

These dates refer to the time the Release Form was signed. Until this time, we had the interview, but no release,

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Ruth Sparks Byrne
With Jim Kring Jr. in the background**

**The interview was conducted by Kay Trimble
Transcribed by Belva McIntosh on 4 August 2007**

Material covered: Reminiscences' of early days in the area. Grandfather farmed in Marinette. Cotton camps and "cotton tickets" Description of store.

KAY TRIMBLE: I am in the home today of Ruth Sparks Byrne in Glendale, Arizona. This is Kay Trimble and we are doing a recording for the Sun Cities Area Historical Society. We are going to talk a little bit about either what Ruth remembers, either first hand or second hand about Marinette, Arizona. Ruth, thank you so much for having me here today. It was nice of you to take the time.

RUTH: Thank you, I think I will enjoy this.

KAY: Well, we know a little about Marinette, we know that the area was first involved with the Santa Fe Prescott Phoenix Railroad about 1893 when they put the railroad track through there. And Mr. R. P. Davie of Marinette, Wisconsin comes on the scene and acquires thousands of acres of land on the delta between New River and Agua Fria. He developed a deep well system, pumping system to get water to his land. He platted a town site and named it after his town that he had come from, Marinette, Wisconsin. So now we had a Marinette, Arizona. I know that the Post Office was founded there on April 25, 1912 and I also know that close to where the Post Office was there was a store and a boarding house and a few scattered homes around and I guess your family had a lot to do with the store in Marinette. Is all that correct according to your records and mine?

RUTH: According to my records and research and remembrances I think most of that is correct. I believe the Post Office was actually in the store.

KAY: I think it was too. What else can you add to that story?

RUTH: I have pictures which I am going to give you of the store. I believe that my father went to the store sometime in 1920, which was probably when the Southwest Cotton Company, which was a subsidiary of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, purchased the area. As they did in Litchfield they did not try to run the grocery store and they hired somebody, the man was named Pishan---

KAY: His name was Pishan. What an unusual name. I don't know if that was of an ethnic origin. It is really totally foreign to me.

RUTH: I don't know either. I always thought I heard my parents pronounce so that I thought it had an "r" in it but I saw a newspaper article about a robbery at the store and it was Pishan. Mr Pishan ran the store and hired my father to manage it.

KAY: And your fathers name was?

RUTH: C. L. Sparks. He evidentially hired a lot of relatives, as one of his brothers also worked there and ran the Post Office. His wife's brother also worked there and his nephew Jim Kring also worked there. So it was a family affair. Surprisingly enough the store was a regular department store. It was not just a little grocery store. Evidentially cotton was making lots of money so people had money and they were isolated from Phoenix, it wasn't that easy to get to Phoenix, so there stock included silk shirts and silk yard goods and all sorts of things, notions. Whatever people needed I presume they could buy there in that store. It was a much bigger store than I had ever supposed. I believe that this building was probably built when Davie first came out there. The article said he built a boarding house and so forth, and I think this store was part of that complex. It was a two story building, and on the back of a picture that my mother had mailed her mother, she says the windows on this side of the building are all apartments, she was talking about the upstairs. So her brother and her nephew and so forth must have lived someplace. My mother never mentioned if she cooked for them all, so I suspect there was some sort of a boarding house in that area.

KAY: You were born in what year?

RUTH: I was born in 1921. Shortly before I was born my parents moved to Peoria where my Dad went into business for himself, with a partner. They had a grocery store called Grainer and Sparks. It was in the 1921 phone book. But the cotton market crashed and his store was among the casualties. So he came back to Peoria(?) but according to my mother they had moved to a grocery store across the street. So I think this place is where the Questers out in Sun City put the marker as the first Post Office, but indeed the first Post Office was over there in the Marinette Store. I have a cousin who lived there as a young boy. His father was the Post Master and he is going to send us down some written information, but I will tell you one of the stories he told me was about the train. Of course, they were right there by the railroad tracks, about where the hospital is now, that area, a little closer to the railroad tracks. He said that the trains sometime would not stop in Marinette and his father would have to go out there and throw the mail on the train. Sometime the whole family would be out there throwing the mail on the train as it passed by. It must have slowed down a little, but that is the way they got the mail on the train. There was a marker there saying Marinette.

KAY: I remember that sign. Do you remember it?

RUTH: Well, yes. And I can remember the building, because it stood there as an empty building for many years. When we went to Prescott, of course by that time we were living in Glendale, we always went down Grand Avenue and up Yarnell Hill and so forth and we went through Marinette. Of course we always had a lot of family stories about having lived in that old store.

KAY: Did you ever take the train to Prescott?

RUTH: No, but I had taken the train to Marinette.

KAY: Tell me about taking the train to Marinette.

RUTH: Well, when the Southwest Cotton Company sold the farms to Boswell, one of my uncles went over there to manage one of the farms that Boswell was

going to farm and my grandfather and my other uncle, the same one that worked in the store with my Dad. This was the Barnes family. My grandfather was W. O. Barnes, and my uncle was Percy Barnes that ran the farm for Boswell. Jack Barnes was the one that at one time worked at the store and was back farming. They leased land from Boswell right there by the old store. There were a couple of houses by the railroad track they lived in. And so I would get on the train in Glendale and ride for fifteen cents I think it was to Marinette with the conductor complaining bitterly because he had to stop the train and he said it cost him a lot more than my fifteen cents. I remember one time I got on the train with my suitcase but what I was carrying besides my pajamas in the suit case was a roast beef for my grandmother.

KAY: Well that reminds me of going to Iron Springs in the summer time and they wouldn't stop the train for us at Iron Springs either so you had to leap off. I guess it was very much alike in all the places that were small. What next do you remember about it?

RUTH: Of course my recollections are more in the years when my grandfather farmed out there. They had quite an acreage. At this time my father, we were living in Glendale, was managing the Safeway store in Peoria. Stores used to make up handbills and take them out and Mother used to deliver the handbills. But sometime she wouldn't be able to do it so I would take one of my friends and we would drive out. Ranches, particularly in those days in Arizona, they would have what were called cotton camps and this would be a cluster of little very humble houses for the Mexican people that labored here. So we would take them out and distribute them. Another thing that they had in those days for cotton picking, they didn't pay the cotton pickers in cash; they used what they called cotton tickets. I don't know whether this was something that the southerners brought out here with them, or exactly where it came from. I think they used it at Litchfield, but a certain store would agree to cash these cotton tickets. The weigh-master would be out in the field. The people would pick the cotton, then they would come up and he would weigh it and he would give them a ticket for however much, I think they got a half-cent a pound or some ridiculously low amount in the '30's. I think earlier they got a lot more. And this thing had a little punch and you punched it and they would take this to the grocery store, and of

course the grocery store, for their trouble in cashing the cotton ticket would get the business of the people that came in. And my father managed the Safeway and he cashed the cotton tickets for my uncle and grandfather and their laborers would pick cotton for them in Peoria.

KAY: Do you remember cotton camps right in Marinette or just on the outskirts?

RUTH: No, during that time there were two houses very close to the railroad and another one sort of north about a quarter of a mile, I guess. Then across Grand Avenue, the other side of the railroad tracks, there was a little cluster of buildings, but this was not a cotton camp as I remember them.

KAY: It seems to me I remember cotton camps and it seems I remember them on some of the main roads but not necessarily close to whatever settlements -----

RUTH: Right, you remember the way they were in Litchfield then.

KAY: Oh, very well. I remember them with no doors in the doorways ---

RUTH: Adobe houses. I don't remember too much about these cotton camps in Marinette except they were there. And unpaved roads all over the area to get to them, when I was delivering handbills out there, my friend and I got stuck in the mud out there. Arizona mud is hard to get out of.

KAY: Any other stories you remember from your family?

RUTH: This is a story I have heard from other people but my mother had gone back to Texas with my sister who was just an infant to show off her new baby to the family. While she was gone my father got this job in Marinette and moved all her possessions, which in those days people didn't have very many, but she did have a piano. Of course there apartment was on the second floor which I understand had a very steep turn in the stairway. They probably gave her piano a lot rougher treatment than if she had been there to supervise. But I know the piano did arrive safely; it was still around when I was growing up.

KAY: It moved with you to Peoria and all these places that you moved. Well as you have mentioned we certainly know that the Southwest Cotton Company maintained residence in Marinette for a long time. It seems incredible that they bought all that acreage from Mr. Davie for one million dollars. I suppose today it would be worth ten times that. So Marinette became actually a company compound rather like Litchfield was for Goodyear farms. Do you have that impression?

RUTH: Well, that is what it was but it was nothing like Litchfield. I lived in Litchfield too but in later years. Litchfield was of course always a pretty little town. Marinette was, even for the supervisors, a glorified cotton camp rather than the nice planned town that Litchfield was.

KAY: It became even more so.

RUTH: You said Davie platted the town. Some of the W. J. Murphy's descendents say this was one of the towns that he platted. So there is a little question on that.

KAY: Isn't that interesting.

RUTH: Murphy platted Glendale, Peoria and Marinette and Eagle Side, which never became a town.

KAY: I knew the others, but Marinette I thought Mr. Davie had done.

RUTH: They could have been working together because I think supposedly Davie got involved in sugar beets and Murphy was the promoter for these sugar beets

KAY: . Yes, there was a lot of interaction there I think. Mainly because they were trying to develop the land. And certainly Mr. Murphy was as we know, one of the great developers of the valley in every direction when one looks around. And of course his crowning glory was the Eagle Side Inn. So I can well see that they probably worked together on this. Did you know the Boswells who then ended

up-----? You lived here for so long I am just bringing it up in terms of family ties.

RUTH: I think I had probably seen them but, my uncle of course worked for them, so I heard them talking about Colonel and Major, and they were in reverse in terms of seniority. Because Major Boswell was the head and Colonel Boswell was the underling. So I heard of the Boswells and knew more about Litchfield.

KAY: Well the Boswells, I guess, turned all that land into cotton and lettuce. That was the primary crop.

RUTH: During the time I remember it was all strictly cotton. I don't remember any lettuce or hearing any conversation about lettuce.

KAY: They say it was cotton and lettuce and no people. Which is of course why there is so little information about Marinette, when a place grows, like an inter-metropolitan area like Phoenix then you have more stories to tell. Then when it diminishes those stories don't happen.

RUTH: There were a few other farmers there, I don't know if they were leasing farms from Boswell, but they considered themselves in Marinette. Ronald Woods who lives over in the Goodyear area, maybe he lives in Litchfield now; he was a farmer over there.

KAY: Did he grow cotton as well?

RUTH: Yes he was a cotton farmer.

KAY: Do you remember any other names?

RUTH: Well, there were people that had the store and people that ran filling stations. I just don't remember too many of them.

KAY: That seems to be the basis of the economy of Marinette for the short time that it was the economic center other than agriculture.

RUTH: I do remember my grandfather making a remark about Ronald Woods though because my ancestors were all transplants from Texas and they all felt the only way to heaven was to be a good Democrat, and my grandfather said that he didn't mind somebody like Ronald Woods being a Republican because he always had been. These people that made a little money and then turned Republican, they were a poor type.

KAY: That was a good point being in a Democratic state. People always find that hard to adjust to now because now it is a Republican state. There are few and far between of us who can remember when it was very, very Democratic.

RUTH: I just want those people in Sun City to know that we were here first.

KAY: Exactly. In my younger days if you weren't a Democrat you hardly needed to look for work. I am sure you remember that.

RUTH: Family tradition in our family were always very involved and interested in politics from very early times, and of course my father ran for politics.

KAY: I know you were so terribly young. You were just too young in Marinette to remember anything at all about those living quarters there on top of the store weren't you?

RUTH: That is why I have written to my cousins to see if she can give us some information. I am sure that they had running water. And how they cooked, they probably had wood stoves to cook on, so somebody had to carry wood upstairs. Mother did say that as the people did their laundry for years in Arizona, they heated their water outside and washed that way.

KAY: And they probably did the laundry in the back of the store.

RUTH: Well, if I know my mother she probably had somebody come and do that for her. She believed that a poor manager was somebody who couldn't manage to have somebody come and help with the housework. So if there were any wives

available of the laborers or so forth –She had a tiny baby so she was entitled to have help with her housework.

KAY: Right. And I am sure that the Indian help probably didn't come this far West. No every one in Phoenix, the old Phoenix had Indian help.

RUTH: Yes, but I don't think they had Indians out here.

KAY: Something that is sort of interesting is that during the time that my father was managing the store there were quite a few Mexican families that had just come in from Mexico. One young kid that used to hang around the store was named Kelo Garcia. My father spoke very fluent Spanish so he could get along well with this kids who were learning English too, and he always strove to get ----and so forth. Probably the store was a popular place for them to hang around. But Kelo moved to Glendale and became a Glendale councilman. Another one of the young boys that lived there was a man named Manuel Lathia and he grew up and owned a business in Peoria and became the Mayor of Peoria. My cousin, the one who told me about the mail and so forth was just a young kid there, he grew up to be a Brigadier General in the Army. So all these kids in Marinette did pretty well.

JIM: And one became the water commissioner in Colorado.

RUTH: Yes, he was.

KAY: From a very small rural agricultural area. That is very interesting. Evidently the Marinette store was owned by, it says in an article I have, by three Phoenicians. Do you have any knowledge of that?

RUTH: I think maybe Pishan had partners so it could have been. But he was the one that my parents dealt with. But in the article that I read about the store being robbed one time it mentioned Pishan, not the other two.

KAY: Do you remember very much about the robbery?

RUTH: No, I suspect it was before my parents got there.

KAY: I see. It would be interesting to know if they swooped down from the hills on horse back. Something terribly romantic like that.

RUTH: I think they broke in and they took things like silk shirts.

KAY: Well that is interesting. It is wonderful to talk to you about this first hand. The sugar beets that we referred to before that Mr. Davie attempted to make into a cash crop, I guess was the result of the sugar beet factory in Glendale. You remember the Glendale Historical Society. Can you enlighten me a little bit about the Sugar Beet Factory at all?

RUTH: Well, it had troubles right from the very beginning. I think the first people that started building it ran out of money and somebody else came along, some Michigan investors I believe. This was another one of W. J. Murphy's projects. His projects didn't always turn out well. But I think they finally completed it about 1906 and it never had a very successful run. There were varied reasons given. One thing was getting the sugar beets to the plant was a problem. They had the canals and the laterals, there weren't always bridges over them so people could get by. Another story is that there was some sort of insect that affected the sugar in the plants. There is a white fly. And then the sugar content was too low. But they tried it again and again, close and open and finally they abandoned it. It was really a good thing for Glendale even though it wasn't successful. It brought a lot of people to town who stayed and developed other things.

KAY: Is your impression as you have heard people speak of Marinette in your family over the years, is your impression that most of the people, even they were a small amount, who settled in Marinette, was it your impression that there was ever any other ethnic groups besides Mexicans and people who came to that area? I bring it up because you were familiar with the Russian immigration to Glendale.

RUTH: Well, I think probably Marinette was always owned by one individual or groups or individuals, so I don't think there were any small farmers on their own

originally. Then Boswell rented this land to my father and grandfather I think that was unusual and they farmed a lot of it themselves. So I think that as far as small farmers go that was it.

KAY: Well, it was certainly an interesting day when Del Webb persuaded Mr. Boswell to let him buy 20,000 acres. You have certainly seen what happened. Do you remember when Sun City started?

RUTH: Well, just vaguely. See I have a thirty year gap in my information, because George was an Air Force Officer. So we moved around to various parts of the country. But we were back here when the first houses were being built. We were visiting here and we went out and looked at them.

KAY: Did you? I'll bet there was a little bit of de ja vu there for you.

RUTH: Well, yes. I couldn't believe this was Marinette.

KAY: Well it is a marvelous story how he always had this dream evidently, of a planned community for retired people. And to think that January first of 1960, the opening month he took orders for four hundred houses and apartments just in January alone. It is a staggering thing that he has accomplished. And certainly when we look at it today, those of us who remember when it began it is almost more than one can take in.

RUTH: My father had a little story about Del Webb. When we first came to Glendale my father was managing J. B. Bayless's store. That was A.J. Baylesses father. Evidently they had a contract with Del Webb who was just a small time Phoenix contractor or carpenter to make any repairs on the various stores. I think my father had just a very minor repair so he just hired somebody local. He then had a visit from Del Webb complaining about the fact that he had not told him. So Del Webb was always interested in getting all the business he could I guess.

KAY: Yes, I think he was. He certainly brought himself up from nothing and made an empire, a formidable empire. What is your impression of a planned

retirement community now that you have moved back to the valley and can see what it has become? Is it attractive to you or do you think not?

RUTH: Well, I am 69 and my husband is 73, but we are not old yet. No, it does not especially appeal to me, I think it is wonderful for people who are out there and enjoy it. I like to be involved with people of all ages. We have both worked quite a bit in the Historical Society here with our own local ties. Certainly a lot of people are enjoying life out there.

KAY: And of course you have the advantage of having lived here and you have a support system in your circle that you relate too. Many of the people in Sun City, many of them come from someplace else to here, leave their support system behind and so it does play a part in reality of them building another support system.

RUTH: Yes, and of course and if you live in Iowa I think the smart thing to do is come to Arizona for the winter.

KAY: Well, there is no question about that. And this summer has been so lovely that is almost appreciable to come to Arizona in the summer. I wish they could all be like this. Well this has been very, very interesting. I think you have helped me put together a little better picture of Marinette. And even more importantly the things that evolved around it, I think that basically that that is what the story of Marinette is, what it was planned to become and didn't become and what it did become and then in the end the Sun City story.

RUTH: I have to tell you one more story that Jim's dad told us. He said that he and my Uncle Jack used to be the ones to go to Phoenix to pick up the cash for the store. They drove, must have been this 1920 Hudson we were talking about. But they were warned that when they went down into a wash or something, that is how you crossed the rivers in those days, to really go fast because that was where somebody might hide and actually hold them up. So these two young men, they must have been in their early twenties or late teens at the time. So they took that order very seriously and made that trip from Phoenix back to Marinette in record time.

JIM: Before you finish this up, Kay, that is kind of along the question I had, was about getting from Marinette to Phoenix. About crossing washes and canals and rivers. How long would it take to get from Marinette, which is now Del Webb Hospital, I mean Boswell hospital, to down town Phoenix?

RUTH: I can tell you about a few years later. To go from Litchfield to Phoenix was an all day occasion. So it was a – you know the cars were slow, and it took a long time to get there. I don't remember hearing about my Mother driving from Marinette to Phoenix or from Peoria to Phoenix, but I know she did drive from Litchfield to Phoenix.

KAY: We certainly did in the 40's and again as you say it was an all day occasion, but primarily because once you were in Phoenix you did all the things that you could never do in Litchfield Park. I remember the lettuce fields well because we used to have lettuce in the back of the car on the way back to Litchfield Park. We would open all the doors to the car and all the neighbors would come in and take their share of lettuce. So I do remember that. Additionally, that was during WWII and there was gas rationing and we did not get in often by any means, but it was certainly a trip – it was an excursion.

RUTH: I can remember one time my mother and I went to Phoenix, my sister must have been in school because she was not with us. My Father would get a little bit excited about things, and when we came home he was glowering and my Dad was standing right by that flagpole in Litchfield waiting for us.

KAY: You know the flag pole moved out about two years ago but they reassembled it and put it back in its full glory. I can't imagine Litchfield Park without that flag. Well, it is interesting that you grew up in Litchfield Park too. I meet few people that can share that memory.

RUTH: My sister was born there. But she was born there at the time it was called Litchton; that is what it says on her birth certificate. There was a town in northern Arizona called Littlefield and they wouldn't let them call it Litchfield at

first. Then they called it Litchton, then they added the park, so they were Litchfield park.

KAY: I was unfamiliar with that because of Paul Litchfield I assumed it had always been Litchfield and I had assumed that it had always been Litchfield. And I had understood from the books that I had read that he wrote that it had been named after him. I suppose he was talking about it in this later context.

RUTH: Well, it was. Well Litchton was after him too I am sure.

KAY: Well, can we think of any more questions, or any more stories that we want add. Jim Kring is here today too, and his father is the gentleman who worked in the store for Mr. Sparks, and it was interesting, Jim, that your father started in the store there and then ended his life in Sun City. He went full circle didn't he?

JIM: Not more than two miles from where he started.

KAY: And the Sun City Historical Museum has a photograph of him in front of the store standing feet full of water from one of the desert storms. I am sure you remember how it used to flood so terribly, every where.

RUTH: I think most of the people that came out here then, some of them drove, but most of them came by train. My mother and dad came on the train.

KAY: Yes, we came on the train. My Dad had us get off there in Phoenix instead of Avondale because he was convinced that if Mother got off the train in Avondale she would get right back on again and go back to Ohio. So we got off in Phoenix and drove down through palm trees which neither of us had ever seen before. My, that seems in some ways a million years ago and in other ways like yesterday.

RUTH: Those palm trees in Litchfield were just little things.

KAY: Indeed, I think I remember that. You know when I got out of the Wigwam which is where we first lived I expected to see people on the lawn playing tennis or something and of course there was nothing because it was war time and the Navy had taken it over. So it was nothing at all as I had envisioned. But not a bad place to live for a while until the house was built for us.

JIM: Back to my transportation question, when did they build Grand Avenue? How long was it there, was it a dirt road, when did they pave it?

RUTH: I should know that. About 1895, I believe. It is another one of Murphy's projects.

KAY: Now it was, first of all, the road to the Vulture Mine. Isn't that right?

RUTH: Well, actually they are not the same road. They ran parallel to each other. The Vulture Road just ran at random through different sections. Then Murphy had the wonderful idea to dissect the sections right at the corner which has given us all those miserable intersections. So his road went right through all the-----

KAY: Vulture Road was built in 1867.

JIM: But was it paved?

RUTH: Oh no.

JIM: When did they pave Grand Ave?

RUTH: Well, Grand Avenue from Phoenix to Glendale was paved about 1922 or finished by then. The county would have been paving the road to Marinette. In 1935 it was definitely paved, but a two lane road.

JIM: But by '35 it was paved. So then it was just a straight drive on concrete or asphalt.

RUTH: But there was paving on the roads to the farms around here.

KAY: There was evidently controversially a water tower in Marinette. Some people say there was and some people say there was not. Do you have any recollections of hearing anything about a water tower?

RUTH: Well, I know my grandparents had running water. But I have no idea where that came from.

KAY: Well, I would have thought that came from the pumping system.

RUTH: I suspect it would but you don't have to collect it in a tank I guess.

KAY: I don't think so. Boy we know nothing.

RUTH: I don't remember anything about a water tower. There was no problem with water. They had plenty of water. I don't even remember where the pumps were. Now in Litchfield in the various cotton camps there was always a pump house right there with a little thing that-----

My grandfather before he farmed on his own ran certain acreage in Litchfield and lived in what was Camp 54 I believe and we would swim in the pump. We would want him to turn on the pump whether he was irrigating or not but he sort of frowned on that.

KAY: Well, things were a lot different then weren't they?

RUTH: My goodness yes.

KAY: It is hard to believe that Glendale is as big as it is now and Phoenix of course is a metropolitan urban center. Amazing. And I know you can remember as I can when people would look at ground out a ways from the cities and say we paid 25 cents an acre for that and when you look back you could have bought it all, but we thought, who would ever live out there. Well I really thank you so much for spending this time with us today. I think you have filled in a lot of

things, and given me a lot of personal material. Unless you can think of any other questions or stories I think we are probably done for today.

RUTH: You probably know everything I do now.

KAY: All right. That is all we ask. Thank you so much.

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

RELEASE FORM

I, Ruth Sparks Byrne, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history program.

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I release SCAHS, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature Ruth Sparks Byrne Date 26 Aug 06

Printed Name Ruth Sparks Byrne

Address 8337 No 58th Ave

City Glendale State AZ ZIP 85302

Telephone 623-934-5536

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETYORAL HISTORY PROGRAMBIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM

Please Print Clearly

Name Ruth Sparks Byrne
First Middle Maiden Name LastAddress 8337 No 58th AveCity Glendale State Az ZIP 85302-5915Telephone 623-934-5536 Email ruthbyrne@earthlink.netPlace of Birth Peoria, ARIZONA Birth Date 10-23-1921Race/Ethnicity (optional) _____ Male _____ Female ✓Are photos included? Yes ~~✓~~ No ✓
If yes, see attached Photo Log.Are manuscripts included? Yes ✓ No _____
If yes, see attached Manuscript Log.Are artifacts included? Yes ~~✓~~ No ✓
If yes, see attached Inventory Log.Interviewer Beverly J Brown Date 26 Aug 2006Printed Name BEVERLY J. BROWNAddress 15933 W. SILVER BREEZE DRIVECity SURPRISE State AZ ZIP 85374Telephone 623-584-0440 Email STARFIGHTERAZ@YAHOO.COM

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Ruth Sparks Byrne

(The interview was conducted at the home of Ruth Byrne on August 26, 2006. The tape was transcribed by Belva J. McIntosh.)

BROWN: I am Beverly Brown and I am interviewing Ruth Byrne for the Sun Cities Area Historical

BROWN: Ruth, tell us how your parents came to Marinette.

BYRNE: Well, my father worked in retail stores connected with the Southwest Cotton Company, part of the Goodyear thing. He was working in Litchfield and they transferred him to manage the Marinette Store in Marinette. This was a grocery store but it also had the post office, the barber shop and had a variety of things besides groceries. Fact is I read an article about a robbery, which I think was before my father's time, and they stole a lot of silk shirts and so forth, so it was evidently a pretty well stocked store.

BROWN: Now where were your parents from?

BYRNE: My parents were from Texas. Once cotton started being the thing out here a lot of Texans came out.

BROWN: So your parents were already married and they moved to Litchfield.

BYRNE: Yes, when my mother was a bride they moved to Litchfield. I had one sister and my mother took my sister and I back to – no, took my sister, I wasn't born, took my sister back to Texas to show off her new daughter and while she was gone my Dad moved to Marinette. They moved into the upper floor of this store. It was quite a large building and it had apartments upstairs. One of my father's nephews' helped him move and he said getting her piano upstairs was a big job.

BROWN: I was wondering if any other family members had gone because I had heard that whole families would move into an area to work in the cotton fields.

BYRNE: A lot of my family did come. I had an uncle who came to Chandler and opened a meat market over there and paid my father's way out to Arizona if he would accompany the family of this uncle on the train because he didn't want them traveling along. So when my Dad got here he worked, he never did work for the Southwest Cotton Company but usually with a civilian or a different type of business that supported it.

BROWN: Now what year was this?

BYRNE: Well, my Dad came out I think in 1917 and they were married in 1919. They were engaged when they left Texas and by the time he got situated to bring a wife he took a train back to El Paso from Arizona and she took a train back from

east Texas, she had an Aunt in El Paso and they got married there and came on to Arizona. But, yes about other family members. A lot of them came and a lot of them worked in the Marinette store. My mother's brother worked there and a couple of my mother's brothers worked there and nephews and so forth. So you are right, they did come out and work in various type jobs and so forth. But cotton was – usually they had overseers and most of the cotton pickers were Mexican people and they had what they called little camps around where – I think early in Marinette they worked in tents. Over in Litchfield they had small buildings and so forth they lived in. It was kind of a plantation situation.

BROWN: Did your parents say anything about any type of medical facilities for them?

BYRNE: Don't remember any medical facilities and know that I – when we moved to Peoria about five miles down the road we had a Glendale doctor that was supposed to deliver me. The store, though, was the center of Marinette. The mail came on the train. The people on the train just threw the mail off, and the people at Marinette had to throw it on to the train.

BROWN: So your father was in charge of that too then.

BYRNE: In charge of the whole thing. I think his brother was actually the postmaster.

BROWN: Were there schools for the children to go to?

BYRNE: I don't think that early there were. There was the Marinette school later but I don't think that early there were. Although my father's brother did have kids but I don't think they were of school age yet. I know that one my father's nephews and my mother's brother were assigned to go into Phoenix to get cash, because you know they didn't have any banks in Glendale or of course not Marinette or Peoria at that time. My father warned them that when they went to low places in the road to be on the watch out for somebody coming in and trying to rob them. So you can imagine these two young men about 18 or 19 years old, when they got to those low places did everything that Model A, or Model T I guess, would go.

BROWN: Was it a long trip for them?

BYRNE: Oh sure, because Marinette was, how far away from Phoenix. Glendale was nine miles from Phoenix and Marinette was seven or eight more.

BROWN: I guess they would take Grand Ave.

BYRNE: Yes, Grand Avenue was in being at the time I believe. But it was a pretty rough hard place. There were places where they had dips in the road and so forth. They had a fine time getting the money though.

BROWN: So how much older was your sister than you?

BYRNE: Eighteen months.

BROWN: So you were born in Marinette –

BYRNE: No, I was actually – they moved to Peoria about two months before I was born. My father went in business for himself, or in partnership with someone else. Then almost immediately after I was born there was a cotton crash where cotton dropped from a dollar a pound to nineteen cents or something. So I think they went broke.

BROWN: Well, he got out just in time then.

BYRNE: Well, no, actually he didn't. He got out at the wrong time because he was working in the store for a salary and he went to Peoria and into business for himself and lost his shirts.

BROWN: Oh yes, because the people didn't get paid there.

BYRNE: Right. So I think at that point we moved back to Litchfield and they worked in the store there.

BROWN: So when was that?

BYRNE: That would have been in 1921 or '22.

BROWN: So you moved back to Litchfield –for the company?

BYRNE: No, he worked for a man names Sorrano who owned the grocery store. They had private owners for the grocery stores, they didn't have company grocery stores and those were the people that he worked for. Later some of my other relatives worked for the Southwest Cotton Company. Fact one of them became head of the division many, many years later. But that is our early contact with Marinette. This was that big old store. I think the Historical Society has pictures of it. It was a derelict building for many years. Later when they rebuilt the store they put it on the other side. This one was north of Grand Avenue and the other one was south of Grand Avenue, but that building was just a big derelict building for many years. But then our next involvement in Marinette was about 1936 when the Goodyear Tire Company went out of the cotton business more or less and sold that land to the Boswell Company. Well, one of my uncles had worked for Boswell at that time – one of the ones who had formerly lived in Sun City. He got the job as foreman of that ranch overseeing all the cotton growing there and then my grandfather and another uncle each rented land from Boswell. I don't know that he did much renting of the land but he did rent some and the land he rented was right on Grand Avenue and the derelict building was still there. That was in 1936. Litchfield build a lot of white frame houses with a sort of a hip roof and they were all over the various cotton camps in Litchfield and a few of them in town. But there were two of those houses there where my Uncle and Grandfather lived. Then there was another house, I don't know just who built it but Boswell owned it. That is where my uncle lived, as part of his job.

BROWN: What town was this?

BYRNE: This was Marinette. We used to visit there a lot. We could take a train in Glendale for fifteen cents and ride to Marinette but the conductor mightily

complained because he said it costs us a lot more to stop this train than it did for you to –for your fifteen cents fare. But sometimes we would go up there – we would take our suitcases and we would fill it with a roast or something and take it to my grandmother, her groceries.

BROWN: So what was your earliest memory then? Was it living in Litchfield?

BYRNE: Yes.

BROWN: And you lived in one of the little white houses there?

BYRNE: No, those were our in the cotton camps. The houses in town were different and we always lived in town because my Dad worked for Sorranos not the Southwest Cotton Company.

BROWN: So did they have schools for the children?

BYRNE: Oh yes. Litchfield had schools. Then once again all my relatives came to Litchfield. They had all gone back, my mothers brothers and so forth had gone back to Texas and then when we were settled in Litchfield my grandfather came and worked for them for a while then later rented land in Marinette and then later bought cotton land down in Higley, Queen Creek Area. Still a lot of them farming down there, that is if they haven't sold there land to developers.

BROWN: How long did you live in Litchfield Park?

BYRNE: Well, we lived there until 1929 and then we moved to Glendale. But I have very good recollections of them. You know when I was young one little town made up all your memories. When you think now of all the visions the kids, by the time they are four or five years old have seen. They couldn't begin to remember, but I can remember almost everybody who lived in Litchfield because it was a little town and we knew everybody and it was a very nice little town. Once in a great while we took a trip to Phoenix. That was very rare.

BROWN: And that was a long trip.

BYRNE: Oh yes, that was a whole day trip. The cars weren't that great you know.

BROWN: Did you go to Phoenix to go shopping?

BYRNE: Yes, shopping mostly. Although the store my Dad worked in was a general store. It had stuff. I don't know what my mother took us in there fore, but something. And we went in there to Doctors although there was a Doctor in Litchfield but I think I had my tonsils out in Phoenix.

BROWN: Were there lots of children in Litchfield?

BYRNE: Well, there weren't too many children because there weren't too many people and a lot of them were a little older. So my sister and I (my younger sister was born in Litchfield) – a lot of my recollections were before she was born. We knew everybody in town and we just had a great time.

BROWN: Everybody just kind of watched out for you?

BYRNE: I think they must have because we wandered all over town.

BROWN: Do you remember the heat? How did you guys survive the hot summers?

BYRNE: Well, I guess we didn't know any better. We slept with windows open and things like that. We did not do the story with the wet sheets. I have heard that story but have never really known anybody that did it. Litchfield was really a great town to live in because they had people that took care of all your lawns for you. Evidently they wanted it to be a little showcase so they had people plant your lawn, they had people mow your lawn and so forth. They had just begun to develop the Wigwam. The Wigwam was built originally for the big executives that came in from Akron and one of the local women used to go over there and cook for them. Once in a while some of the local people used it for social events. It seems to me that my mother took us to various Ladies Aid Society Meetings or something like that. But we moved just as they were beginning to make a resort out of it. The palm trees that are there in the middle of main street were just little short ones when we lived there.

BROWN: So when did you leave Litchfield?

BYRNE: 1929. But we kept going back because our grandparents lived there and uncles and so forth.

BROWN: And did your father get another store in Glendale?

BYRNE: He came over here to manage a J. B. Bayless store. J. B. Bayless was A. J. Bayless which you might be more familiar with – his father. So he came over to manage that store. He worked in retail business and later went back to Peoria as manager of the store. Then in – I can't remember just when, he started working in the County Assessor's Office and later became the County Assessor, Maricopa County Assessor for about eighteen years. I think he did better when he didn't have to make a profit.

BROWN: Do you remember when Sun City was first built?

BYRNE: Yes, I remember but I was not living here then. I married an Air Force Officer so I was away for about thirty years. But I remember coming back at one time and people told us about Sun City out there where Marinette used to be. So we went out there and thought "it never will fly, who is going to want to do this".

BROWN: What year was that?

BYRNE: Well it was shortly after it was built. It was in the sixties.

BROWN: Oh, you didn't think it work.

BYRNE: No, no. My husband said, I would never live there and he never did.

BROWN: But a lot of other people did.

BYRNE: A lot of other people did.

BROWN: I guess Del Webb had made a survey and a lot of people had told him that it wouldn't work. But then a lot had said it might to he gave it a try.

BYRNE: Well, Del Webb was just kind of a little contract carpenter when Dad was managing the Bayless store he hired some work done and Del Web came in very upset because he had a contract with Bayless and he should have been hired instead of these other people. It was jus a very small job and he was objecting to the fact that he didn't get it. He started small and certainly had a lot of vision.

BROWN: Did your Father ever talk about him?

BYRNE: Oh yeah, he knew him.

BROWN: I guess he was a pretty dynamic man.

BYRNE: I guess so. I don't think he knew him that well but he just knew him in that other circumstance.

BROWN: He would have to have been to come in and object to a small job.

BYRNE: Right. Interesting that – my Dad spoke fluent Spanish. He grew up in South Texas and played with Mexican kids and he had an ear for languages which made it really good for him in the retail business because in Marinette, Litchfield, both, there were an awful lot of Mexicans, even Glendale. Two of the young kids he had working in the store in Marinette were young kids whose parents had just come from Mexico. One of them was Manuel Lava and they called him Bandito I believe when he was just a kid. But he became the Mayor of Peoria in later years. Kelo Garcia was a Glendale City Councilman later. So they assimilated well.

BROWN: What other memories do you have you would like to share? So then you did move back to Arizona after your husband retired from the Air Force.

BYRNE: Yes. My husband was an Iowan and he didn't want to shovel snow and he was perfectly agreeable to moving to Arizona.

BROWN: But he didn't want to move to Sun City?

BYRNE: No.

BROWN: Even after it had been there for thirty years.

BYRNE: No. Well, we still had teen age kids when we moved back here.

BROWN: So what did he say about Sun City thirty years later?

BYRNE: I think he thought it was a pretty successful operation.

BROWN: Well, thank you very much for sharing your stories with us.

BYRNE: Well, I think I have told you everything but I will probably think of something else after you leave.

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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I, Charles T. Roach, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history program.

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ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature Charles T. Roach Date 8/21/06

Printed Name Charles T. Roach

Address 7835 BALAO Dr.

City Scottsdale State AZ ZIP 85262

Telephone _____

C 254

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Charles T. Roach

(The interview was conducted at the home of Charles T. Roach on August 21, 2006. The tape was transcribed by Belva J. McIntosh.)

BROWN: I am Beverly Brown and I am interviewing Chuck Roach for the Sun Cities Historical Society.

BROWN: Chuck, could you tell us how you got started working with Del Webb Corporation.

ROACH: You bet, Beverly. I was working for a Certified Public Accounting firm, then the name of it was Peat Marwick and Mitchell, it has been merged and everything else now, but I was the auditor for the Del Webb Corporation. A friend of mine who had left Peat Marwick and gone to Webb Corporation called me up and said, Gosh, I really need help and I can offer you a job that monetarily I am sure you won't be able to refuse. He did so and told me how much money he would pay me and all that stuff and I thought, well this is the time to leave public accounting and go into corporate life. So my first assignment was actually in Las Vegas as the Assistant Treasure of what was then called the Sahara---a Nevada Corporation, which was the subsidiary of the Del Webb Corporation that owned the hotel and casinos that Del Webb had at that particular time.

BROWN: What year was that?

ROACH: That would have been in 1979. After a little less than two years in that capacity I came back to the Del Webb Corporation headquarters in Phoenix where I was doing much the same work that I had done in the hotel business, which was cash management, finance and accounting related. Working at the corporate headquarters we had some reorganization going on at the company that did the development work in Sun Cities, which was called Del Webb Development, or DEVCO for short. My boss came to me and said we have a need for a chief financial officer out at DEVCO, and if you are interested, we would like you to go out there. My response was, I'll go where the company needs me - if you want me to go there I'll be happy to do that. That was early 1983. Once I got out to DEVCO essentially my career with Del Webb spanned from then until I retired in

2001, working in the Sun Cities area. I went out as the Chief Financial Officer in 1987 and I was promoted to General Manager. Subsequent to that, I was promoted to Corporate Vice President and then Senior Vice President. I had responsibilities for not only the Arizona retirement communities but also a community in Texas and we had the Palm Springs community in California. That is kind of the way I rose up in the company.

BROWN: Did you ever meet Del Webb?

ROACH: I did once when I was still with Peat Marwick. That was just prior to his death. I had joined Peat Marwick in 1972. I don't recall whether it was in '72 or '73. Del passed away in 1974. But it was in conjunction with doing the auto work.

BROWN: Was he a pretty dynamic man?

ROACH: You know, I certainly couldn't tell much from the brief meeting I had with him, but if you look over his life and what he accomplished and the things he did with his life you can only conclude that he was a very dynamic man.

BROWN: Did you know R. H. Johnson and Boswell or Meeker?

ROACH: I certainly knew Bob Johnson very well – John Meeker I met several times and shared some stages with. The other gentleman was?

BROWN: Boswell.

ROACH: Jim Boswell was – again I met him a couple of times, there were a couple of times when I asked him to come speak for us and do some things. So yes I knew all three of those gentlemen. I probably had the most contact with Bob Johnson.

BROWN: He was mainly responsible for Sun City West. Was that right?

ROACH: Meeker was responsible for Sun City and the beginning years of Sun City West. Bob came up more through the construction, general contracting side of the business. He rose to President and Chairman of the Board. Of course, Jim Boswell was never actually with the company. He was the other side of the Sun Cities development. Until 1986 DEVCO was 51% owned by Webb and 49%

owned by Jim Boswell. Then in 1986 Del Webb bought his 49% interest. So that's where Boswell came into the picture.

BROWN: I guess they were all pretty dynamic men.

ROACH: Absolutely – absolutely.

BROWN: You said you were General Manager of Sun City West. What did that entail?

ROACH: I was responsible for essentially all the activities, development, home building, administration, the operation of the recreation amenities as long as we were still the primary control of the board, and planning of the new areas. Essentially anything having to do with Sun City West was my responsibility.

BROWN: So did you have forums with the residents to find out what they wanted?

ROACH: We did a lot of things in terms of how we determined the type of recreation amenities to build. We did a fair amount of survey work, asking the residents what their desires were. We monitored usage factors in the recreation centers to determine what amenities were being most used and in that way we also could determine what amenities we could expand or needed to be expanded – what amenities weren't being overly used and therefore didn't need expansion, you know, had excess capacity. So each time we built a new center we took all that information into account in designing what we thought would be the optimum facilities for the residents.

BROWN: In reading the history of Sun City West it was like every time the residents wanted something Del Webb gave it to them, you know, DEVCO gave it to them.

ROACH: Well, I suppose if you went to some of those meetings it wouldn't have looked quite that way, simply because, not surprisingly, the citizens we brought together to help us with the planning would basically like to have a lot more than we were capable of providing. So by having the information available that was a compendium of what the community had expressed and what they were using, it was fairly easy for us to grant the requests when those requests were in concert with what the people said they wanted and to say – oh we really don't need to go there with that one. So by and large I would say to you that our approach to things was that we had a long-term budget for how that community was supposed to be

built out. It was called, affectionately, the project to complete proforma. So each time we saw the community growing we could sit down and say well, basically we had planned for a center here and we had set aside money for that center, but we didn't in advance try to plan the amenities that would be included in that center. That was triggered by the need to build the center and then we would bring all our information together – we would bring all the residents together and say, O.K. time to plan the next one – what are we going to build.

- **BROWN:** I read that certain clubs would grow faster than others and would want a bigger building and often times would get it and I guess that would be part of what you were just saying.

ROACH: Yes, some would get it and some wouldn't. You know, I think for example at the Fred Kuentz Center we had both the woodshop and the metal shop in the same building. It seemed apparent to us that the wood shop had outgrown their needs and I think we were able to move as a result – either expand or move the metal club some place else and expand the wood shop. So we did that kind of thing. We did some expansion at R. H. Johnson Center. We could move some clubs around. Like I say it really depended upon on – you know – the clubs had to show a demonstrated need. It wasn't just no, gosh we would like to have more room, would you build us a bigger space. If they didn't show a demonstrated need by membership and usage and the like – we gave priority to those who could show that.

BROWN: Now, there was planning to have commercial organizations come in like Safeway, so did you actually plan for that kind of activity?

ROACH: Oh, very definitely, yes. In the original master plan the commercial areas were set out.

BROWN: But again, they weren't specific. It didn't have to be Safeway, or it didn't have to –

ROACH: No, they weren't specific but of course there was a core for type of commercial amenities that we knew would be needed, such as a grocery store. Which one of the chains would put in the store was never really pre-planned.

BROWN: Now, did you have to coordinate with them to come in or did they come to you?

ROACH: In the case of Sun City West, it started and we went to them. They had indicated that Safeway was certainly in the last phases of Sun City and they indicated to us that they would like to move with us. I wasn't involved in those operations. I didn't come into Sun City West until it had been in operation for about five years. I was aware that we provided a rent-free subsidy to Safeway initially because, of course, we had no roof tops and the likes, so we said we'll build the center if you guys will come and operate. You don't have to pay any rent, just open the stores so that we have something there. It was lucrative for them and it worked for us.

BROWN: I read that there were other parcels of land within Sun City West that weren't developed and it became controversial what would be there, like in the expansion area.

ROACH: Yeah, when we initially purchased the land for Sun City West there were lands to the north that were simply not available to us.

BROWN: That you wanted?

ROACH: That would have added to the community but the lands weren't for sale. So we simply purchased all the land we could going into Sun City West and you know at this point in time, I forget what year it was – what was it – about '87, '88, the owners of some of that land north came to us and said you know we are putting our land up for sale, do you have any desire for it. Of course we said yes. The question was whether to include those lands as part of Sun City West or whether to create a whole and separate new community out there. After a lot of discussion within the company our general feeling was that it would be better to include those lands within the Sun City West community because of where they were located. We went to the community to determine what the community felt about that. As a result there were certainly some people felt that no, they really didn't want the community to be any bigger and there were people who thought, yes, that would be great if you all make it one full community. So we went through the whole process. As it turned out a vast, vast majority of the Sun City West residents were in favor of including that area as part of the community. At the time we attempted to buy all the land adjoining Sun City West up there, but there was one 643-acre parcel we negotiated on, it was citrus orchards owned by Ralph Bodine. We negotiated and negotiated and finally we really couldn't come to terms, principally because of not only price but timing. He wanted to operate those orchards longer than what we could afford to do. We would have to stop development of Sun City West and wait for that land to become available and come back in and re-develop

and we said, no we really – that just doesn't work for us. So we parted company as friends and said Okay. Ralph came back to us and said, Okay, I am ready to shut down our orchards if you guys are interested in buying. We said we were and of course that is now a new country club community north of Sun City West today.

BROWN: Is that Corta Bella?

ROACH: Yes. There were some people in the community that seemed to think that we had that under option when we were trying to develop Sun City West. Some never believed me that no, we would have liked to have done that but we weren't able to come to terms with Ralph Bodine. Like I say, some years later we were able to.

BROWN: Now, you had to work with Maricopa County planning and development office?

ROACH: Yes.

BROWN: Were they pretty good to work with?

ROACH: They were excellent to work with. Debra Stark was a key player at that time in the planning department of Maricopa County. She subsequently went to the City of Peoria and is now the Director, I forget what her exact title is, Director of Planning for the city. She was just a delightful person to work with. Not like we didn't have differences of opinion or anything on certain things but we were always able to sit down and deal with issues and get them resolved in everybody's favor.

BROWN: Now did the County have some kind of master plan or when developers came to them they worked out something?

ROACH: In large at that time the County didn't really have any master plan for undeveloped land that I recall. By in large all the undeveloped areas in that part of the County were simply zoned rural 43 which means essentially unplanned as far as I am concerned. One of the reasons I think the County doesn't get that specific with details in that area is because by and large there expectation is that cities will grow and annex that land, then it becomes the city's responsibility to plan it appropriately. Sun City, Sun City West was pretty much an anomaly in the respect that the people have at times addressed that issue of do they want to be an incorporated city or do they want to remain in the County. It is essentially the

largest population of county residents – it isn't the largest land mass but it is the largest population of county residents in the County anywhere. So it was kind of interesting to work in that area and then it was interesting for me to go across Grand Avenue and acquire the land for Sun City Grand and develop that into the City of Surprise. So it was quite an interesting trip to go through all that.

BROWN: I didn't realize you were involved with Sun City Grand.

ROACH: Oh, absolutely, yes.

BROWN: So were you able to use your lessons learned from Sun City West?

ROACH: Very definitely. You know, I guess I would say it was learning, or using what we had learned in Sun City West to come up with what I call the new and improved version of Sun City. That was very effective because we were able to go across Grand and build a bit of a new concept, you know, what I called affordable resort living, and do some things different that we simply weren't able to do while we were still in Sun City West, because to try and implement a stark change in Sun City West would not be in the best interest of the residents or the best interests of the Company in terms of how that community developed out and what it looked like. Whereas once we had a completely clean slate going across the road we could do essentially whatever we wanted.

BROWN: What kind of things did you do differently?

ROACH: I guess I'd say that what we were shooting for in Sun City Grand revolved around that theme of "affordable resort." What I mean by that was we created – they weren't really stark changes in terms of anything that people could see all that much of, but just something as simple as the entry way with its appearance of being gated and private as opposed to all of the entrances into Sun City West and not really a focal point when you enter, which was the development sense at the time. But as I say we wanted to create more of a resort-living atmosphere by creating this grand entrance into Sun City Grand along that same theme and placing the main golf course right along that entry way, building up the entrance so that as you came in you could look out over the golf course and your eyes were drawn to the recreational amenities. We added some dollars to – I guess I would say to use a new architectural theme as well as pink color palette to the amenities. We focused more on making the amenities more like a hotel or like a resort atmosphere in terms of décor and terms of design and in fact I took the planning team to a number of resorts here and in Tucson and in California to gather ideas for how we needed to do those amenities so that again people felt like they

had a first class hotel in their back yard and it just happened to be their hotel and their amenities. So there were a lot of things like that that we did to try and – just the main golf course, we set that up so that it was more like a resort style golf course and that the services were more of a resort feel.

BROWN: And there wasn't as much commercial property.

ROACH: Not as much commercial – definitely not. Didn't need it in the center. That is something that actually changed. We found in the planning process that by and large the commercial interest wanted the commercial enterprises out on the main road as opposed to within the community itself. The people were more happy with that kind of a concept so that they didn't have noise and all that goes with it in the center of the community – it was all on the outskirts. It created more of a resort atmosphere in the community and kind of reduced some of the noise and some of the complaints.

BROWN: Well you did a good job.

ROACH: Well, thank you. I have a fond feeling for both Sun City West in terms of finalizing it and Sun City Grand in terms of new concept.

BROWN: Did you get involved with the Dysart School District taxes?

ROACH: Not in any meaningful way. That was pretty much left to the residents and the residents that got on the board and things of that nature.

BROWN: Tell me about the transition. How did that work?

ROACH: Transition from?

BROWN: DEVCO being in control of the board to turning it over to the residents.

ROACH: We had a –we set up an advisory board to the board of directors which was a DEVCO board – at the time I think I was the President of that board and we felt that it was a good idea to start infusing local residents into how these amenities operated and getting them attuned to the financial issues, the operational issues and things of that nature. We formed the advisory board for principally two reasons. One, to just start exposing residents more to how they operated and slowly but surely turning over that operational control and familiarity. We did that in a number of ways even though the advisory board, on paper, was advisory in nature,

we gave them a lot of authority to make decisions, and we became more and more, what I would call more of a rubber stamp board than the one actually making the decisions for the purpose of essentially saying, you all need to be ready to take this over and if we are constantly in there making decisions that's not good for either one of us. By the time we got to the transitional group we really had a pretty good group of people that were in a position to take over and then as we found in both Sun City and Sun City West there was some amount of turmoil because there were some residents who seemed to think that the Advisory Board was just rubber stamping the decisions that Del Webb had made when in fact it was quite the reverse. There always seems to be a little turmoil on transition. Some people get elected to the board crusading for truth, justice and the American way and that kind of stuff. But what we always found is that it eventually shakes out and it operates just like a small city should operate. You know you've got people get elected to the board with different ideas and they work it out.

BROWN: Did you have any trouble with residents coming forward and wanting to be on the board?

ROACH: No. There were always enough people who wanted to serve the community and put their hands up and wanted to be elected.

BROWN: So, the transition date. Was the date when the last house was sold?

ROACH: No. The transition occurred well before the last house was sold. If I am not mistaken I think we had set it up, particularly when we had annexed the expansion area. I think we had set it up at a 75% level and there were 75% of the homes had been sold and it would transition. The transition went from Del Webb being the board to a new board with Del Webb having a seat on the board until the community was finished.

BROWN: Did DEVCO write the CC&Rs or was that something that the residents did?

ROACH: No, the CC&Rs were written by DEVCO and by in large – again as long as we were operating the amenities and the board or anything any changes or amendments to the CC&Rs were essentially proposed by DEVCO and then voted on by the residents.

BROWN: So was the transition written out in the CC&Rs explaining to the residents what was going to happen?

ROACH: The original CC&Rs actually I think had DEVCO in control of the board until completion and when we annexed the expansion the CC&Rs at that time were amended to the 75% control. That was a negotiation with the team of people who came forward to negotiate the expansion area and annexation.

BROWN: Now there are lots of Sun Cities going up all around the country now. How does that work? Del Webb just decided to build in Palm Springs?

ROACH: There were a number of changes that occurred in Del Webb Corporation that resulted in the expansion of Sun Cities' concept. When Phil Deon took over as President of Del Webb Corporation from Bob Swanson we went through a very extensive strategic planning effort. It was concluded at the time that the business which had the most opportunity for growth, number one, and number two that we had the most expertise in, an expertise that few in the country had, was in fact the retirement community concept. We certainly had extensive interest in other areas. At the time we owned the marinas and the like on Lake Powell, so we had that business. We had the extensive hotel casino business; we had a realty and management business. We had of course what was the origination of Del Webb and that was the major contracting and general contracting business. Anything from high rise buildings and the like to hospitals and sewer plants and military installations. So in looking over everything, our feeling was that our best opportunity for growth was to refocus our attention on the retirement community concept to the exclusion of our other businesses because we had reached a point in the company where our ability to obtain capital for growth was not sufficient to be able to serve all the business we were in. So we set about an effort to eventually close down or sell off

BROWN: So were you involved in any of the other communities outside of Arizona?

ROACH: I was. At first I was actually kind of the point person for finding land in Tucson and to a certain extent identifying properties in Las Vegas and northern California. Eventually – I was still the general manager at Sun City West at the time and eventually the company hired some people specifically to take over that effort and move forward on acquiring the land involving the communities on those sites. Over the course of that I served on planning committees for those communities. Kind of bring to the table the expertise I had gained in the years I had spent in Sun City West and trying to essentially capture what had worked for

us historically and make sure that was a component as we went forward into the future.

BROWN: So no one questioned anymore that a retirement community would work.

ROACH: Well, we didn't question that it would work. We still had lots of questions about where it would best work, what the demand would be for the communities in various areas. We had a good idea of what the community needed to look like once we decided where the community needed to be focused. For example we had a lot of trepidation about going into Las Vegas simply because of - if you will, the reputation to Las Vegas being sin city and of course the bulk of our customers being a very conservative population. As it turned out Las Vegas was wildly successful because of some of the other aspects of Las Vegas, such as no income taxes, that was very appealing. Of course the weather, the dry desert weather and stuff. So there were things outside the scope, if you will, of the Las Vegas gambling that was appealing to the retirement population. When you added into that the relatively inexpensive entertainment when they wanted it, relatively inexpensive food and lots of food choices and the like, they all seemed to come together and be a success for Las Vegas.

BROWN: I understand there is one on the east coast in North or South Carolina that doesn't have a golf course. Is that because so many other golf courses are there?

ROACH: I am not familiar with that particular community. I wouldn't doubt it, since Pulte has taken over they have expanded the brand considerably. The first one we did on the east coast was Sun City Hilton Head, which did have a golf course. I know there are others over there on the coast, but quite frankly I haven't followed how far they have spread out these days. I have kind of been away from it now for, oh gosh, five years now. I imagine a lot has happened in that time.

BROWN: How would you summarize your time working with the Del Webb Corporation?

ROACH: I feel like I worked in a very exciting, dynamic environment. One that was conducive to rapid personal and professional growth. There were lots and lots of things happening and lots and lots of things needing to be done and for those of us that had our eyes open and were willing to help and put our hand up and say, Hey, that is something that I can do, why don't you let me go try that. Our

Chairman Phil Deon was very supportive and did not hold us back from anything and I feel like as a young man, and also one who grew and matured, every time I was in a position to acquire more skills and more knowledge I was given the opportunity to take on more responsibility. So it was a very dynamic time, a very exciting time for me. And we had a lot of fun. I thought we had a really good culture within the company. It was a company that had a lot of concern for its people – had a lot of concern for, particularly, I think our customers. We were very customer-focused and I took away from it – I had a lot of joy, personal joy in just the fact that when I went home at night I thought about the many people who, over time had thanked me and the company for the things we did, for the things we built them, for the happiness we had brought into their retirement years. That always gave me a lot of personal satisfaction.

BROWN: I understand your son is working for –

ROACH: He is. He is still in the business. Matter of fact he just moved with his wife back to Hilton Head itself. He became Vice President of Customer Relations back there and he is working in the IT area, so it doesn't make any difference where he is situated he is on a plane a lot of the time going around the country and getting the computer systems set up and operating and things of that nature.

BROWN: So he is having the same kind of experiences you did then.

ROACH: He is. Although his experience is different in the respect that so far he has shown the skills at doing a great job at managing but he has not shown a particularly strong interest. He is much more comfortable being in the field and working directly with people instead of trying to supervise a big staff or a big project or the like. His experiences are different. I have encouraged him to enjoy his work regardless of where it goes, regardless of the compensation issues or anything else. What I have always told my kids, is find something you like and find something you are good at and you will be happy in your job. Don't worry about the money side of things. My daughter is probably a fine example of that. She is a school teacher. She resisted and resisted and said, but Dad I can't make any money as a school teacher and I said, don't worry about it. You will be happiest if you are doing something that you love to do and something that you are good at. She loves teaching and she tried a lot of other things that paid more money and she has come back to teaching, and she loves it and she is very good at it.

BROWN: Is there anything you would like to add?

ROACH: No, I can't emphasize how fortunate I feel in terms of where my career took me. I didn't particularly like the place I started with Del Webb, which was the gaming industry. I simply didn't like the nature of the business quite frankly, so I didn't spend a lot of time there. I was fortunate enough to come back to the Corporate Headquarters and find another area of the Company I could work in and that led to another thing and another thing. It was a great ride, a great career ride and I met some great people – people I still associate with after retirement. I am in a boat partnership with my former president Phil Deon, and former treasurer Don Michas and we do things together. So I guess I would say I feel blessed with the way my life has gone so far. That is about all I can say about it.

BROWN: Well, thank you very much for sharing your experiences with us.

ROACH: You bet.

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM****BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM**

Please Print Clearly

Name Charles T. Roach
 First Middle Maiden Name Last

Address 7885 BALAO Drive

City Scottsdale State AZ ZIP 85262

Telephone 480-488-0961 Email cvpr797@MSN.com

Place of Birth MANHATTAN, KANSAS Birth Date 12/31/46

Race/Ethnicity (optional) white Male Female

Are photos included? Yes No
 If yes, see attached Photo Log.

Are manuscripts included? Yes No
 If yes, see attached Manuscript Log.

Are artifacts included? Yes No
 If yes, see attached Inventory Log.

Interviewer BEVERLY S. BROWN Date 8/21/06

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

RELEASE FORM

I, KEN MEADE, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history program.

I understand the purpose of the SCAHS program is to collect audio- and video- taped oral histories of the Sun Cities Area original residents, those living in the area and of those who supported the growth of the Sun Cities.

I understand that the SCAHS plans to retain the products of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication and presentations for the promotion of the Historical Society and its activities in any medium.

I hereby grant SCAHS ownership of the physical property delivered to SCAHS and the right to use the property as stated above for scholarly and educational purposes.

I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold.

I also grant SCAHS my absolute and irrevocable consent for any photographs provided by me or taken of my in the course of my participation to be used, published, and copied by SCAHS and its assignees in any medium.

I agree SCAHS may use my name, video or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction or other sound effects without further approval on my part.

I release SCAHS, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature Ken Meade Date 10/23/06

Printed Name KEN MEADE

Address 13306 W MEEKER BLVD

City SUN CITY WEST State AZ ZIP 85375

Telephone 623 584-4077

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Ken Meade

(The interview was conducted at the home of Ken Meade on October 23, 2006.
The tape was transcribed by Belva McIntosh on 30 October 2006.)

BROWN: Today is October 23, 2006. I am Beverly Brown and I am interviewing Ken Meade.

BROWN: Ken, can you tell us how you got to Arizona.

MEADE: How I got to Arizona – well, we got married in 1952 and our son Steve was born in 1954.

BROWN: And where were you?

MEADE: We were in Long Island, New York, Bethpage – I was working for Grumman Air Craft at the time. Steve was born – shortly after he was born, you know, you were giving them that Gerber's ground up baby food and he started breaking out in all kinds of rashes and he was scratching his wrists and his knuckles and his joints and behind his knees. Alice's best friend was an RN so she recommended an allergist in lower Manhattan, so Alice used to drive the car from Bethpage to lower Manhattan once a week with Steven. This started when, maybe when he was six months old. Hell, he would get a cold in winter and it wouldn't leave until July and he would start another one in September. And he would have a lot of mucus coming out of his nose and everything. Anyway she took him to the allergist and she went there for three years. And at the end of three years I went back and I said "only two things are happening – I am going broke and the boy is no better off. When do you predict this is going to happen?" And he said "I believe he will become asthmatic by the time he is ten or twelve because he seems to be allergic to almost everything". So I started to think, well where do people go for asthma because New York isn't where you want to stay. And so I came out here in 1957 and it was 110 degrees or thereabouts and I thought it was absolutely beautiful and I drove around and I kept looking at the ads in the newspaper and there was no Grumman Aircraft out here. But there was air research and I figured if there was air research there were other suppliers around who were doing work for air research. I could probably get a job. So we came out in July 1958 and we bought a new station wagon. At this time we had three children. Pat was born in February of 1958 so we had a rocker bed in the back of the station wagon and

Alice would rock her if she woke up. We came over here and we kind of made it a little bit of a vacation driving over. The amazing thing was that we got here in the summer, July of '58, 110 – 112 degrees most of the days and we rented a house in Maryvale on the west side of town and all the kids were running around in the neighborhood and they were all the same ages. You know, four, two and one and they were running around and all they had on were shoes and diapers or underwear. No shirts or nothing. Steve got brown as a berry. And all of these things dried up. All of these weeping open sores all dried up. So the next spring, he never did get a cold that winter, so it was like well, we made the right decision. So I got a job working for Phoenix engineering and then I got laid off two weeks before Christmas. And I decided that you know this happens when you work in the aircraft industry. You can be highly skilled, but if they don't have the Government contracts then you get laid off and then what do you do. So somebody told me about the Dale Carnegie course – that they were having a demonstration on Thursday or Friday night, did I want to go, and I said sure. I went to the Dale Carnegie course and they had thirty six people there that night and he gave a demonstration on how to remember names. I was sitting about number thirty-four when we went around the room and so after everybody had given their name and some way to remember it, then we went back around the room and asked every person if they could remember everybody else's name. I got thirty-five out of the thirty-six and I said this is for me. So I signed up for the Dale Carnegie public speaking course. I met some people who were starting a new company and so I went to work for them as a salesman. Since I liked Dale Carnegie I took the Dale Carnegie sales course immediately and I did quite well as a salesman and the rest is kind of history you know. While I was there they encouraged me to get a real estate license which I did and eventually I went to work for Del Webb. So that's what got me out here in Sun City.

BROWN: Was it after that you worked for Del Webb?

MEADE: I went to Del Webb as a salesman, selling homes in Sun City, real estate.

BROWN: So you were selling the original homes.

MEADE: Well, not that early. Cause I went to work for Del Webb in January of 1970 – no '74. I worked for them for nine years and they were having some financial difficulties. Del Webb had died. And they were having some financial difficulties in New Jersey – they had built a casino, but they were denied a gaming license because they figured Webb was too close to the mob, building some of

those buildings in Las Vegas so they denied him a gaming license and so I thought, well, I don't know what's going to happen now and the stock market crashed in 19 – oh no that was later. 1974 the stock market crashed. I forgot to tell you I almost starved to death that first year in sales. I made a grand total of \$6,900 in 1974. My wife said, are you sure you are going to be a salesman. Well the next year I made \$29,000 and everything was different and from there on it really has been successful, year after year. 1982, Ricky Mull and John Mull asked me if I wanted to come and be the broker-manager for their company. So I left Del Webb in May of 1982 and I went to manage Mull Realty. The first month there we sold about four houses and we had about 35 sales people and I said to myself I think I have made a mistake. I could sell four houses – what are these other 35 people doing. So they had never had any lessons in selling, so one of the salesmen said to me, well you've got this background with Dale Carnegie and you tell me all about your sales background, so why don't you start all these sales classes and teach these people about selling. So that is what we did. Every Monday our meeting was a sales meeting and one of the first things I did was I asked if anybody had a new listing that Monday and somebody had a listing so I reached in my pocket and gave them \$5 as a reward. The next Monday we had four listings and we had two sales. The two sales each got \$5. And the next week we had 8 or 10 listings and we had five or six sales, OK. Meanwhile I kept talking about people have objections – how do you overcome objections – you are supposed to say “I understand how you feel about that. Have you ever looked at it from this direction” and you give them something else to think about. Because it is like a slice of bread, there are two sides to the thing, you know. So, anyway, we went on with the selling and actually we did very, very well and I worked there almost two years and I got fired. I think the reason I got fired was they were paying me a percentage of the sales and when the sales were very low that percentage was very low, but when the sales were now 35-36 houses a month the percentage was pretty high. So what happened is I had a planned vacation with my wife to go to Florida to visit her uncle. The day before I left they fired me. I got to Florida the next day and the phone is ringing with these people from the office, when am I coming back. Why don't I start my own company, they would all come with me, they don't want to work there anymore. So after three days I flew back, and I always said we had a meeting like the French underground. We all met at the Secretary's house at 6 in the evening. If anybody would have driven by they would have recognized all the cars. They had all agreed that if I would start they would all come with me. So I got fired about September 15th and about October 1st we started Ken Meade Realty.

BROWN: What year was this?

MEADE: 1983. The first meeting was what are we going to call the company. I had worked for Webb for four years and had sold over 450 houses and everybody said we got to call it Ken Meade Realty because everybody knows Ken Meade. You sold enough houses and, you know, one of the things I always did and tried to teach my sales people was that the customer was always right. When the customer was wrong he is still right. So I had 450 boosters, so that is how the name came to be Ken Meade Realty. Bill wanted me to have the sign yellow and black like the Pittsburgh Steelers and one of the girls said that's got to be the craziest thing in the world. This is an All American city, the sign has to be red, white and blue. So that is how those two decisions were made. That was Mary Lou Farrager who said it has to be red, white and blue. I had an artist design the sign and we still use the same design today. So we started out and the first week we sold a house. We only had one listing the first week and we sold that house right away and pretty soon we had sold three houses and four houses and the way we were going it took us two years to pass Mull realty. No it didn't take us two years to pass Mull realty but it took us two years to be number two in the market place. And what had happened is our agents, for some reason they seemed to love me, maybe it was meetings and the five dollars rewards – and we had parties. Didn't have to have too many excuses to have a party. So on Monday everybody would go out on tour to tour the houses that were listed. So you could see all the new properties that were listed. So what happened was that all the companies would ask the agents, how's it going over there. And of course, "oh, it is wonderful. We love it." First thing you know, we had a party for October, then we had a party for Thanksgiving and then we are going to have a Christmas party. So they tell all the agents what a great time they are having and how good business is, and pretty soon we have somebody who wants to join from this company and somebody who wants to join from that company, somebody from another company and the word just spread. And that was actually the way we built it. In the early years I never ran an ad for Salesman Wanted. And I did run an ad that said, this was the top agent for the month, with their picture – next month they all worked a little harder to see who was going to be the top agent of the month. That was the way we built the company. Another thing about it was at the time John O'Keefe with Red Carpet Realty was the biggest in the area. I rented space from them, because they were friendly. They had seen what I had done with Mull Realty and they figured if it didn't work he will come to work for us I guess. Then, they were nice enough to rent us space, but we were in this space about two weeks or three weeks and they rented it to somebody else for more money, so we had to move and they found us another space. Well, the next space they found us was down in Youngtown on Arizona Avenue in the back and you couldn't find it unless you knew where it was in Youngtown. Lo and behold we were next door to a cheese shop. Every morning

when you came in you could smell the Limburger cheese, right through the wall. So that didn't keep the sales people in the office very long. They got out of there to go hold open house and show people around and what have you. We were there about two months and they rented that place out and now we have to move again. By then I was lucky enough that Del Webb had a space vacant in La Ronde Shopping Center. So we were able to open our own office in La Ronde shopping center. Of course that was reason enough to have another party. We built a camaraderie, if you can, where they were really trying to help each other and work together and if things were just a little bit slow we would have a contest for two weeks or four weeks, who had the most listings and who had the most sales and somebody would win \$100 and somebody would win \$250 and so we always did those kind of things. As we were doing this we would have people join us and they didn't know anything about Ken Meade Realty, they didn't know anything about the development of Sun City, how it started, 1960, they didn't know any of that. So those were the classes I would have and I would have it after the meeting on Monday and I would have another one on Wednesday and I was always there and if they had questions they could come ask me and I could answer those questions. We had them learn the models, because Del Webb gave a house a number but also gave it a name. So they knew the models by name and number so I believe we had the best educated sales people in the whole community. Because when they saw a house they knew that house was a H788. The one across the street is a 788 with a different front. The one next door is a 788 with a different front and the one over here is a 789. Anyway so our salesmen all knew these models and we were in business about two years and I hired a sales lady from Del Webb and she was with me about a month and she said Ken, you have to open an office in Sun City West and I will be the manager. I said I don't know how good a manager you will be but you are forward enough about it. So luckily – oh, that was the time that all the Savings and Loans were going under, 1983-84. So we bought the Savings and Loan building on R. H. Johnson Boulevard. It was a Savings and Loan out of Tucson. If I looked at the deed I could probably remember the name but you gotta remember I am 81 years old now, OK – it don't work so well anymore. Anyway, we bought that Savings and Loan and she opened as a manager and she did quite well hiring people. She was more strict than me because I was more pat them on the fanny, encourage them, hers were how come you aren't doing it. Anyway, she did quite well, it was Judy Belden and then I think that is about the time, my son had worked with us, like the very first year, because the gal who used to do the advertising, she got sick. And when you say gal, you know everybody out here is 60 or better. So my son came and joined us and he used to write the ads. After about a year he had saved up enough money so that he was going to go to Nashville to see if he could make it as a musician or a

song writer, because ever since he was ten years old he played the guitar and one of the things I insisted before I bought it was, if you get it you are going to learn how to read music and learn how to play. You will take lessons, we will pay for the lessons, but you have to practice. So that was at ten, and I am going to guess that by 15 or 16 he had a band. He was the lead singer in the band. They were pretty good, they would go around and play the different high schools. They played Fort Huachuca down in Tucson, they played Luke, they played up in Kingman. I don't know that they made a lot of money on those trips out of town. They played up in Globe. And they played locally. Anyway so Steve worked and did the advertising for a year, saved up his money, then he moved to Nashville to do the song writing and I kept telling him you gotta to go at that 100 percent. Well he went and got a job waiting tables at Ruby Tuesdays and I said how the hell can you be doing that at night when everyone else is out playing the guitar at night. Anyway he met his wife there, got married, and at that time we had two offices and we were going great guns. I kept talking, maybe I ought to retire. I didn't start the company until I was 58. So Steve said, why don't I come back and maybe I can take over the company when you retire. He didn't know how long I was going to stick around. Anyway Steve came back and I had him in the office for a while and Bill was my favorite salesman. We were like brothers only he was like 180 degrees different from me. But Bill said he has to learn how to sell. They will not respect him if he does not learn how to sell. So I sat Steve down and we talked and he went out and started selling. In his first year he was the number two salesperson in the company. The next year there were two or three of them tied for tops in the company. At that point we were ready to open up another office. So we bought the office at the corner of Bell Road and Del Webb Boulevard. Steve managed that office. That was really the first time that I had stepped out of managing. Because I was managing the original office in La Ronde. So Steve had come back and he joined the company and after a couple of years he started managing. Oh, and I guess I forgot, I had another office over at Greenway in '99. Yeah, we had the first office in La Ronde, and then we opened here at R. H. Johnson Boulevard in Sun City West, then we opened over at Greenway, that was the number three office, then Steve managed the one at Bell Road which was the fourth office. All of those offices continue to do well and prosper. Most of it was word of mouth. When we sold a house I tried to teach the sales people, that when they sold a house and the people had moved in, the best thing you can do, if you treat the customer right they will find you more customers. You can advertise and go broke, but if you can get them behind you, word of mouth, and that's what we did. We taught them. We bought, I don't know how many dishwashers, washing machines, refrigerators, you name it. Because there is always misunderstandings, because you never put everything in writing, word for word. Nowadays we got more and

more forms to cover that stuff, but I remember once, and I tell this story because it is very, very appropriate. We had a retired minister who bought a place down on Santa Fe Drive, one of the little apartments. The agents always do what we call a walk through with the buyer before it closes escrow, so on a used house you walk through and make sure that the faucets work, that the dishwasher works, the dryer works, you know, the washing machine, you get hot water – you get it in all the bathrooms OK, the stoppers work, the outlets work, all the lights work and the garage door goes up and down and bla, bla, bla. You spend a good hour or so going through the house with them room by room, making sure everything works. Sometimes the customers fudge a little bit on you. Anyway, this minister came back to the office at Greenway and he wanted \$625 because the washing machine was no good and the dishwasher was no good and they needed to be replaced. He didn't know how that agent fooled him into thinking these were working at the time they went through the house, but they sure were not working and if Ken Meade Realty didn't buy them new ones he was going to let everybody know bla, bla,bla. Now this was his approach. So I went to an attorney and I said "you are a retired law judge, if I bring this customer in and we each tell our story and you come to a decision, how much is it going to cost just for your time to hear the two of us and you make a decision". He said, I don't know – maybe \$400, should be no more than that – hour or hour and a half. I said let me think about it and I will decide what I want to do. And I thought the guy only wants \$625 for a new washing machine and a new dishwasher. And I said to myself, I go to an attorney and that is \$400 and if I loose I am still out the \$625 and if I win the guy hates my guts. So I wrote out a check for \$625 and I put it in my pocket, put it in my jacket pocket, and I went down to meet this fellow and I said – you know, these things happen. This isn't my house that you bought. They tell us the stuff all works and they are living here and we have to assume sometimes it all works. Sometimes these things happen. And I said now what I am prepared to do is just give you this, and he looked at it- it wasn't that I fudged, it was exactly the number he wrote in the letter. I said I would like to ask a favor. I would like for you to tell everybody you know how I treated you. He said you can bet I will. Now I don't know if he had a congregation yet or not because he had just moved here, OK, but most of them do wind up at some church. Anyway I gave him the \$625 and I said now what I'd like you to do is tell people how I treated you. And that was the way we handled our problems. If the garage door didn't work right, get it fixed, tell people how we treated you. Then the salesman could always call up and say, have you talked to anybody that is thinking about selling their house, or buying a new house lately. And that was really the way we built the company. If you can satisfy the customer you will always have a customer. And so they tell others, but as I said it took us like two or two and a half years to be the number 2 company in the market

place. When we started we had fifteen agents and Red Carpet had 200 agents. Then something happened to Red Carpet and the first thing you know we are number one. So my son as I said earlier, came with me, about the 4th or 5th year he came with me. We had him selling for about 2 ½ years and we had the opportunity for management and it's now or never, you are either going to be able to do it or you can't, you are in there. He did very well, he really did very well and so after that I think I pretty much coasted. I was the big cheese, I was the one they would show in the newspaper or a quote or what have you. Then in 1999 Alice had a stroke. October '99. We had just gone to San Francisco for a week and came back. We were here at the house and the next day she said my left arm is very cold and I don't know what is wrong. We knew the Doctor had her taking an aspirin a day and she told me he wanted her to take Coumidin but she didn't want to take it. So we went over to the hospital and they took her in and something was wrong with the operating room so they took her over to Boswell. Then they called me at 2:30 in the morning and said you had better come because a clot broke off and we are not sure how serious it is going to be. And so that was the start of the warning sign or whatever that I should begin to retire, because all the time she was in the hospital, she was there for almost two months. The stroke was October 7, '99, she came home on December 1st, '99. They had said they weren't sure she would walk again and her speech wasn't that great and so I would go to the office in the afternoon because I would make breakfast here and make sure she was OK, then we had somebody coming at 11 o'clock for some therapy and somebody else would come the next day for something else – speech therapy what have you. So after about a month or so of running to the office every afternoon at 2 o'clock to sign papers or other things I decided that this ain't going to work. So we made Steve the president of the company and we have somebody else who acts as the general sales manager and so since, I guess really, 2000 I really haven't gone to the company. I go maybe once a week or something like that just to say hello. I still look at the financials, I get all the financials to see what is going on but Steve has run the company really since December 1, 1999.

BROWN: But it is still Ken Meade Realty.

MEADE: It is still Ken Meade Realty.

BROWN: Now you were here in 1960 when Sun City first started. Were you aware of that?

MEADE: Yeah, I was here and I had read about it in the paper but didn't pay any attention to it because, you see, I was still working –

BROWN: Where were you living? Oh you were living –

MEADE: I was living here but I was from Grumman Aircraft. I wasn't from ABC realty, I was from Grumman Aircraft. So I am still trying to get on at Air Research or someplace like that.

BROWN: So you read about it but you didn't think anything about it.

MEADE: No. It was fourteen years later that I came out here. I sold windows for builders, things that were not – I didn't have special training in that stuff. I sold printing. Oh, my wife said to me once in those early years, why don't you go to the employment agency because you read the ads in the newspaper and some of them are really schlock deals, you know. So I went to an employment agency and told her all about my background in selling – Dale Carnegie, bla, bla, bla. She called up a printer and said I have a man here I would like to have you interview. He has absolutely no experience in printing. He has a tremendous background in selling. So they said send him over. So I had a legitimate job in selling. Now this was in 1960 – '62 or something like that. \$750 a month to start, plus a car allowance because you got to run all around. And I worked for that outfit for several years. I didn't know a 20 pound piece of paper from a 24 pound or a 60 pound or a book cover or a this or that or vellum. These were words that I knew nothing about, OK. He had me working in the shop for a couple of months watching the guys putting the negatives all together making the plates for the printing. I learned to feel the paper and how do you tell what this is, how do you tell what that is – all of that stuff. And then one day he said I got this call I want you to go out on. And it was a group over in Tempe that was printing religious books and religious papers and things like that. I forget the name of it. It became my biggest account. They would come in and they would order 500,000 of this and 500,000 of that and as we got toward the end, the other salesmen, they had been printing salesmen for 20, 30 years, he was the number one producer. But now here is the young punk who don't anything about printing and he is pushing the other guy off the slot. Move over, here's my orders coming in. And so finally I decided, you know, this really isn't going to work because all printing salesmen, seems like they drink like a fish. So they would go to the bars every lunch and they would come back after 2 ½ hours smelling like an uncorked whiskey bottle, half the estimates would be wrong if they did them in the afternoon and anyway I don't think I should stay here or pretty soon I will be drinking just like the rest of them.

BROWN: So when you started selling in Sun City who was responsible for making sure that only people over 55 bought the houses?

MEADE: Oh we had a form they filled out with their date of birth and stuff.

BROWN: So were you responsible then?

MEADE: It was our job to get the information. We made it clear that nobody under the age of 55 could live here. You can buy a house here but you can't live here.

BROWN: Oh, even on the resales.

MEADE: Even on resales.

BROWN: Was that an understanding between you and Del Webb or -?

MEADE: No. I am sure there were those people who violated it, but they fibbed a little bit when they violated it. Now it wasn't like the Gestapo went by and checked everybody's birth certificate. If they said they were 55 and they looked 55 or they only looked 50 so what. Now if somebody 35 said they were 55 then you would go tell the sales manager, I think there is something going on here.

BROWN: Now, was that an understanding between Del Web Corporation and you?

MEADE: No. Del Webb had rules. One of the rules was that for this to be – I forget what the right word is now – you've got to realize that I have been sitting home here for seven years, so this thing sitting on top of my shoulders is a little rusty. But they are fair housing rules. One of the occupants of the home had to be 55. Not one of the owners, but one of the occupants had to be age 55. No other occupant under age 19. But they were permitted for 90 days.

BROWN: I didn't know if that was a Home Owners Association's responsibility or the builders.

MEADE: No, it was the builders responsibility.

BROWN: The builders. But then on resale –

MEADE: On resale it was still – it was the real estate broker and his agents he was responsible for. It was his responsibility to see that that was maintained. Now it was policed at the title companies. When they went in to sign the title papers and everything they were asked their age and if they lied they lied. It wasn't the Title Companies job to call the police and say I don't believe these people.

BROWN: When we moved to Sun City Grand they asked for our driver's license because we were under 55. So they are asking now.

MEADE: Right and now they are talking about dropping it to 40. Big mistake. Maybe because houses are moving a little slower, but it is a mistake. They should not do it.

BROWN: Why is that?

MEADE: Well, if they move it to 40 they will lose their status as a –

BROWN: status as a senior housing community.

MEADE: Right. As a senior community. It may take a long time but they will lose it because how can you sit around and count how many you got. Where like here in Sun City, I believe, based on Fair Housing you can have up to 20 percent. We got something like 7 or 12 percent or something and we have had this a long time. So, but you people have had a lot of 40 year olds in there from the builder. We never had that. Here it was 55, and originally it was 50 and they made it 55.

BROWN: Is that what happened in Youngtown? They started allowing the younger people to come in and then it – Someone said they didn't get their paperwork in or something.

MEADE: I'm trying to remember exactly how it happened, but I don't think Youngtown really did anything to try to enforce it in the beginning. Now in the beginning, OK, when the builder was doing it they were probably all adhering to their age requirements, but then in the resale's I don't think they policed it enough.

BROWN: But then again they would have to work with the realtors then to make sure these people were 55.

MEADE: Right, but you see, we had an overlay recorded that said what the ages had to be. I'm not sure whether Youngtown really had that thing recorded or it

was just the way it was set up by the original builder when they did it. So to tell how it broke down I would have trouble trying to say. And the others – as I said, I have been sitting here for nine years. If you want to ask me how to make microwave suppers, I know now how to make microwave suppers. I don't know how to cook. If it wasn't for the microwave we would starve.

BROWN: Now the real estate values in Sun City – were those comparable to the surrounding areas of Peoria and Glendale?

MEADE: No, I think in a way they might have been less. They were all comparable in here, OK. But I don't think there were any premiums. Now the one thing Del Webb had in Sun City, he had the lakes and so all of the homes that backed up to the lakes carried the premiums. All the homes that backed up on the golf courses carried a premium. All the others did not. When we were selling originally it was \$500 if you wanted a corner lot, \$500 extra. If you wanted a house on the golf course, when I first joined Webb it was \$6,990 for a golf course lot. Then it went up to about \$8500, then it went up to \$12000 something and over here I think in Grand they got higher than \$50,000 for the golf course lots. Some of them that they sculpted over there were absolutely magnificent. I have a big lot but I lucked out because the guy that bought this originally cancelled before they built the house. Since I worked there I was the first one in to pick up the lot. The house I wanted was that one next door but he already built it and you can't build the same front. So I built the same house but it has a different front because Webb would not allow you to build two that looked alike side by side.

BROWN: Even with the premiums do you think they were cheaper than Glendale or Peoria?

MEADE: No, they probably were a little more money.

BROWN: Do you think if it kept up –

MEADE: But as you got to realize, you are selling houses and most of the people are 60-65 years that are buying the houses, so you can't get too out of line because they are thinking about – what am I going to have to live on. Where some of the people who are buying younger today are taking mortgages. Do you know when I was selling houses 85 – 90% of the people paid cash for the house. Today that number is way down. I think my son quoted it in the paper that now 30-40% are paying cash for the houses. Now true, this house was, I think \$112 or 20 when I bought it with the golf course lot and now it is probably about \$350. But that is

twenty-five years. Is that such a magnificent - If I want to go out and buy the same house it's \$300,000 without the golf course lot. So I am not sure that is any big deal - from 20 to 300. Well it wouldn't have been 120 because the golf course lot was 12.

BROWN: So do you still think they are a little bit lower than the surrounding communities?

MEADE: Yes, and no. But you see, you are asking the wrong person. I've been making Marie Callandars frozen dinners for nine years.

BROWN: I'm talking about back when you were in the business, you know, this is for the Historical Society. You know back when - how things progressed over the years before you did retire.

MEADE: I think they might have been a tad higher. But not significantly. The big attraction was all the facilities, for exercise, for swimming, for dancing, you know, the things that were available, the wood working shop was a big thing with the guys.

BROWN: Do you have any stories about people that bought in Sun City and why they moved to Sun City? Any particular stories.

MEADE: Well, I think of one couple I sold - they are both passed on now. But Lorraine and Harry Giger. They were here for a week in the winter time - January or February - and I was brand new with the company and they were from Chateaugay, New York, upstate New York, right near Buffalo. I guess you get 50-60 inches of snow up there every winter or something like that. And they come down here, and as we talked I said - you come down here and you go to Mesa or Chandler, and you rent a place for a month or two- why don't you come down here and buy a place. You stay all winter and you go home. The value of the house continues to go up. You got something when you want to sell it you'll get most of your money back if not all of it back. Well, I showed them a house and they liked the house and they were going to do that but then he came the next day and he said, don't you have anything we could get into right now. I said, sure. So I started naming a few things and I said, you know we got a beautiful house on the lake. I would love to own that house myself, but I am not old enough. And so, I take them down and show them the house. This house backed up and it looked at Dawn Lake, no it is Viewpoint Lake. The back of the Boswell Hospital, you could see it and it is all lit up at night and it was just an absolutely gorgeous back yard and it

was out near one of the points so it had a big spread in the back, and a boat dock out there for a little boat, pontoon boat or whatever. He turned to her and said we ain't buying that other house we are buying this one. And that was just one of my first instances of realizing that if you had something special and you showed it to people it was enough to swing them over. So he bought it. We became good friends. He joined Palm Brook Country Club. Alice and I would get all dressed up on Saturday nights and he would invite us out and we would all go dancing at Palm Brook Country Club and we went to a couple of Christmas parties with them and like that. We kind of became friends. In fact I could have probably had about fifty of that kind of friends because we got along so well. I wasn't a salesman, I was more of a guide or a tutor, or helper or whatever. And another thing I used to do, when they laid carpet, you know the carpet people got these big hunks of carpet left over. I used to go around and throw it in my trunk and I would have it at home, and my wife would say, when in the hell are you going to get rid of all this carpet. I said they got to move and when they move in I bring it back to them, you know. And spare parts from the goods from the kitchen and stuff like that. I'd bring this all back to them and they thought I was great. If they had ruined a carpet some place or spilled something on it they could have them come in and piece it. Like Alice did here, she took the extra sheet vinyl from the floor and lined all the shelves in the cabinet where you put the food and stuff. So I used to do all those little things, but they were little things that I thought they would appreciate. If they were here they wouldn't throw the carpet out in the street. They would have rolled it up and put it in the garage and maybe used it for something, you know.

BROWN: So you feel pretty good about helping out the people who moved to Sun City. Sounds like you did a good job.

MEADE: Well, yeah, I did. I did do a good job and I did help. They would come and they would be here in the spring or the fall or summer or whatever and I would always call them in the winter. If I heard it was snowing in Syracuse I would look for my Syracuse people, call them up and say, how are you doing back there? Oh, God, it's colder than hell today. And I'd say, oh, well, we were only 84 degrees this afternoon. The sun is out and it is just beautiful. I just wanted you to know that I am still here waiting for you. Things like that. Maybe I was teasing them, but they remembered it and I have another story I just remembered now. I was out showing houses one day and I was gone for a couple of hours, because when you are showing houses and they are all under construction, in different stages and so forth. Then they want to see one that is finished. What do I get when I move here. Ok, so this is what you get except they never put the carpet in because if they didn't sell this one people could make their own choices. I come back in the office

and the Hostess says, oh my god Ken, where have you been? Two and a half hours – these people are sitting here waiting for you. We tried to get another salesman to help and you know what he said? I was here three years ago, and if he can wait three years I can wait two hours. And because if they gave him to another salesman half the commission went to the other guy. So I had my customers trained. I'll be back. I'll never be more than two hours. Go eat something. I remember that so vividly. Ken, where have you been. These poor people have been waiting here two and a half hours. We got them coffee – you know. I said I can't help it. These other people wanted to buy a house. So then I felt real good because it makes a great impression on the customer that's with you. Gee, these people waited 2 ½ hours just for him.

BROWN: So you mainly just stayed with Sun City and Sun City West.

MEADE: Yeah. Now we have Sun City Grand. We just opened that several months ago. Six months or a year. We are down by, it's now CVS I guess, it used to be Osco. So go in and visit the office. You live in Grand, right.

BROWN: Yes, I do. Well, Ken this been great. Thank you for sharing your stories with us.

MEADE: Well, now ask me how I take care of my wife.

BROWN: That's probably another whole interview.

MEADE: Yeah, right, right.

BROWN: Well, thank you very much.

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM

Please Print Clearly

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City Sun City West State AZ ZIP 85375

Telephone 623 584 4077 Email _____

Place of Birth N.Y., N.Y. Birth Date Nov 25 1925

Race/Ethnicity (optional) WHITE Male YES Female _____

Are photos included? Yes NEWS SUN No _____
If yes, see attached Photo Log.

Are manuscripts included? Yes X No ~~_____~~
If yes, see attached Manuscript Log.

Are artifacts included? Yes _____ No X
If yes, see attached Inventory Log.

Interviewer BEVERLY J. BROWN Date 23 Oct 2006

Printed Name _____

Address 15933 W. SILVER BREEZE DR

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

RELEASE FORM

I, ARNOLD GRAY, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history program.

I understand the purpose of the SCAHS program is to collect audio- and video- taped oral histories of the Sun Cities Area original residents, those living in the area and of those who supported the growth of the Sun Cities.

I understand that the SCAHS plans to retain the products of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication and presentations for the promotion of the Historical Society and its activities in any medium.

I hereby grant SCAHS ownership of the physical property delivered to SCAHS and the right to use the property as stated above for scholarly and educational purposes.

I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold.

I also grant SCAHS my absolute and irrevocable consent for any photographs provided by me or taken of my in the course of my participation to be used, published, and copied by SCAHS and its assignees in any medium.

I agree SCAHS may use my name, video or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction or other sound effects without further approval on my part.

I release SCAHS, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature Arnold Gray Date 8 Nov 2006

Printed Name Arnold Gray

Address 18625 W. Happy Valley Rd

City Wittman State 02 ZIP 05361

Telephone 975-7363

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETYORAL HISTORY PROGRAMBIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM

Please Print Clearly

Name Arnold Edward Gray
 First Middle Maiden Name Last

Address 18625 Happy Valley Rd

City Willmann State AZ ZIP 85631

Telephone 623-975-7363 Email _____

Place of Birth Wewoka OKA Birth Date 2-18-40

Race/Ethnicity (optional) Caucasian Male Female _____

Are photos included? Yes No _____
 If yes, see attached Photo Log.

Are manuscripts included? Yes No None
 If yes, see attached Manuscript Log.

Are artifacts included? Yes _____ No _____
 If yes, see attached Inventory Log.

Interviewer Beverly J Brown Date 8 Nov 2000

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ARNOLD EDWARD GRAY

(The interview was conducted at the home of Arnold Gray on November 8, 2006.
The tape was transcribed by Belva McIntosh on 11 November 2006.)

BROWN: I am Beverly Brown. This is the 8th of November 2006 and I am interviewing Arnold Gray for the Sun Cities Historical Society.

BROWN: Arnold, tell me how your family happened to come to Arizona.

GRAY: Well, sometime in the early part of 1940 – late part of '46, early part of '47, Grandpa had got a flyer that somebody had distributed out there in Oklahoma. He heard that cotton was taller out here in Arizona than it was there, so him and my Dad hitch hiked from Oklahoma out to here and they found a job for J.G. Boswell there at Marinette. Well, Grandpa stayed there (--#19), or my Dad did and Grandpa came back on a bus and got the family and hired some guy with a pick-up truck and loaded the family up and all the mattresses and all their belongings that they could get and he moved the family out here to Arizona. Now I remember coming through Tempe on the way in and of course they had these orange trees, these ornamental oranges growing along side the road. Well, Grandpa, he pulled a halt to the caravan and he was pretty excited seeing all them oranges growing there, so he jumped out and got him one of them ornamental oranges. He took his pocket knife out and peeled it and he blew that orange plum across the street. He couldn't see why anyone would want an orange like that. So we ended up at 35th Avenue and Grand, where Alhambra school is right now. Right between there and Grand Avenue was a little place called Shady Lane and it was a campground type place where they had tents set up that you could rent. They had wooden floors in them and they had flaps that hung down and you rolled them up and they had screens. So in the hot part of the day you could roll those flaps up and a breeze would go through. My Grandmother cooked outside on a wood stove. We stayed there about a month. Then we wound up at Marinette. Where we lived was about where 103rd and Boswell is now. There was a little farm labor camp with about 15 one room shacks. The houses were all painted white and they all had an outside one-holer out back in a row. They called it the White Camp and the reason why was because it was painted white. All the employees got a place to live.

BROWN: Were there other camps in Marinette?

GRAY: Yes there was. There was one, you know where 111th and Grand is right now? Well there used to be a road from there that went all the way to Lake Pleasant. It was a two lane dirt road for about five miles, and right in the middle of it was a row of great big old cottonwood trees. They called that Cottonwood Lane. And about two miles north of Grand Avenue on Cottonwood Lane was another little farm labor camp. It only had about seven or eight houses and it was called Cottonwood Lane. A little further north of that about a mile where 107th and Union Hills is was a place called Bard Ranch and they grew a lot of watermelons and stuff. They wasn't part of Boswell, they were a little further north. But that dirt road was a two lane up to there then it made down into a single lane road and from there to Lake Pleasant. It generally took you about two hours in a car and you had to have two or three spare tires. The road was very rough and when you got there, there was nobody there but you.

BROWN: Was there a lake there?

GRAY: Oh, yeah. The lake was big back then, but they didn't have anybody around to supervise it or nothing, just a big lake there. That is where we went on holidays, for picnics and things like that – throw watermelons off in there to keep them cool. So that is what the area was like. Now where we lived, the White Camp we had two little shacks together because we had a larger family and they didn't have any kitchen facilities, cooking facilities, we had a water faucet out by the front door and that was it. They didn't even have insulation in the walls or the ceilings up there. They had a tin roof and it was hot. We cooked by a wood stove and if you wanted to take a bath there was an irrigation ditch out behind the house behind the toilets that supplied all the fields and we would go jump in it and float down ¼ mile and that was our bath.

BROWN: Where did you buy food, was there a community store?

GRAY: Right there at Marinette there was a post office and a little grocery store. It wasn't much of a grocery store. You could buy the basics, but what we would do is, Mom would send me down there with a note and the guy that ran the place, his name was Oswald. Oswald Montoya was his name. He was the post master and he ran the store. You would give Oswald that note and you would get stuff on credit. I remember Mom and Dad had post office box “seven”. But you would get stuff on credit, beans and flour and lard and stuff like that.

BROWN: It was like a company town then?

GRAY: It was a company town – a company store. Payday you went down there and settled up your bill. But right behind that – now that post office had a two story and Oswald and his family lived up on top. Right behind that store – now that store sat at 105th and Grand. Right now there is a rock there with a plaque on it. Have you ever seen that?

BROWN: No, I'll have to look for it.

GRAY: Yeah, you turn south on Grand Avenue on 105th and on the left hand side there is this big rock, big boulder with a little plaque on it saying Marinette. Well my Grandfather's house was right behind that. That house is now over in Surprise on Nash Street, because when they started getting ready to move everybody out of that place to build Sun City, this was probably back in 1953, they gave everybody the house they was living in but they had to move it. So Boswell contracted a house moving company up in Phoenix and they came out and moved everybody's house. I think it cost them \$100 a house. They moved them from Marinette to El Mirage and Surprise and everybody went out there and bought them a lot or two or an acre and that is where all those houses went. Most of those houses are still out there in El Mirage and Surprise right now.

BROWN: So, now did you have gardens? Individual gardens?

GRAY: The older generation of people – I can only remember one guy, Mr. Oshalene, he was the camp boss there, he had a nice garden, Italian man, and he had fruit trees and he had a garden. I remember me and Bobby Jones used to float down the irrigation ditch and there was a tree with apricots hanging over, and we would flat down that ditch and steal apricots off of it.

BROWN: Was there a school there for the children?

GRAY: No, we went to Peoria. A school bus come out and picked us up and we went to Peoria.

BROWN: Was that a long ride?

GRAY: Well to us it was. Peoria was a big town back than. There was only 1200 people. Peoria was a place now where if you really wanted to shop right, on pay day you went down there. Now the store at Marinette, that was more or less just an

emergency type thing, if you needed something to hold you over to payday. But every body went to Seliva's market in Peoria.

BROWN: What was that like five miles away or something?

GRAY: Probably six or seven, but that is where everybody went to shop. There was an old Japanese guy had a Sun Maid Market there. They had a movie theater where the fire station is now.

BROWN: Did you ever go into Phoenix?

GRAY: Oh boy, that was a rare, rare thing. Yeah, they did. Some of the men folks got together. I think it was Thursday night. I think there was a car dealer up there on Van Buren – his name was Clark Smith. He had one of them big old search lights. Everybody would go – all the men folks would – go over to that car auction. I think the reason they went was cause they had free coffee and doughnuts. They would go over to that car auction.

BROWN: Now that was a long ride, wasn't it?

GRAY: That was quite a ride, yeah, for us it was.

BROWN: What was that, about 20 miles?

GRAY: About 20 miles. And sometimes they went to Madison Square Gardens sometimes and of course her (his wife Shirley) and I met at Madison Square Gardens there on 7th Avenue and Van Buren in Phoenix at a place called Arizona Hayrides. They had a country and western dance there and that is where we met back in 1955. They just recently tore that down. It was a landmark.

BROWN: So, how long did you live in Marinette?

GRAY: We lived in Marinette – we lived at the White Camp to start with. I don't know how long we lived there. I know that Dad got a – he started off driving tractor, doing irrigating and stuff and then he got a little bit better job of being a mechanic, a tractor mechanic. He worked at the tractor shop which was right behind the Post Office. There was an equipment yard there. When he started working there they gave him a house up in Marinette. And where that house set was right between 105th and 107th, someplace just about a block or two east of Fry's. That house set there on Grand Avenue, there was four or five of them all in

a row. That house was moved over on Greasewood Street in Surprise. So we lived there about from 1947 to about 1953. That is when everybody had to move to El Mirage and Surprise and clear that off so they could start – eventually started – they was preparing for Sun City even then.

BROWN: So Boswell had sold his land to Del Webb?

GRAY: That's what happened. We didn't know that that is what happened at the time. But that is what was going on.

BROWN: What did they tell you – that you were just losing your jobs or something?

GRAY: No, they didn't lose their jobs. They kept their jobs. They just had to move the houses to get them off. And they continued to work until Boswell- until Sun City started being developed. I remember when I went in the Army in 1958 in March, I don't know if anything was going on, maybe just a house or two. But when I come back there was a golf course and everything in 1960.

BROWN: So, what was it like growing up in Marinette?

GRAY: Oh man, that was something else! Everybody had to work –

BROWN: Even the kids?

GRAY: Yeah. The men folks all worked for Boswell, but the women and kids they generally picked cotton, chopped cotton for some of the contractors that come out there and worked.

BROWN: Was there an age limit?

GRAY: No. I remember picking cotton and dragging my little brother on my cotton sack. But we had to pick cotton in the fall of the year and the winter and in the spring we chopped cotton when we planted it and in the late spring, early summer we picked watermelons.

BROWN: Now, did you go to school?

GRAY: Yeah, we went to school. I started to school in Peoria in the first grade and to the freshman year of high school– I didn't go all the way – I went to grade

school. Back then we would go to school bare footed, didn't wear shoes. School bus would pick us up – we would be on the school bus bare footed. Take a sack of marbles and at recess we would play marbles, and when I come home I didn't have any more marbles cause they was all gone.

BROWN: So you went to school during the day and then worked after school?

GRAY: Yeah, after school we had to go out in the field and pick cotton and carry the sack home then the next day we would sell it.

BROWN: Who would you sell it to?

GRAY: The contractor. He was the guy who was in charge of the crew and paid them off. We got \$3.00 a hundred for it, and you could work all day long like a dog, and you might make \$3 or \$3.50.

BROWN: Now the contractor had somebody else picking cotton too, right?

GRAY: No. It was just the field hands. That was the women and children and some of the old men. Those old guys would dip snuff and wore bib overalls. They carried there money generally in a little snap purse in there bib overalls and they had that pinned and snapped and buttoned. My Grandma used to have a homemade slip and she had a pocket on that and she would turn her back and pull her dress up and put her money in the slip pocket.

BROWN: Now did you get to keep the money or did that go into the family pot?

GRAY: Oh, what little I made I got to keep for myself. My mom got some of it, but I usually got to keep it for myself. I bought my first bicycle picking cotton. When we wasn't picking cotton we was out going swimming or looking for a stalk to make a sling shot with or a bow and arrow. We made our own toys and we made our own recreation.

BROWN: Were there lots of kids to play with?

GRAY: There were a lot of kids. At night we used to go out and build bonfires and play Hide and Go Seek and Ante Over and Red Rover and all that kind of stuff. And some time we would go snipe hunting. Did you ever hunt snipe?

BROWN: No.

GRAY: You ain't lived. Well generally the older guys would pick one of the little guys that was scared of the dark and they would take him snipe hunting. So you had to have a toe sack to put them. Of course there is no such thing as a snipe. But they would take him way out in the cotton patches, in the cotton fields where it was dark and they would tell you, you stay on this end and hold this sack open and we'll go up on the other end and we'll run the snipe your way and when they come you just snag them. What they would do is just go off and leave you there by yourself in the middle of the night.

BROWN: Now were there Mexicans there also.

GRAY: There was a lot of Mexican people and white people, I guess you call them Caucasian people. In Marinette I don't remember any black people. There were a good sprinkle of –

BROWN: Was there any discrimination?

GRAY: No. Just workers. Everybody got along. We didn't have any problems whatsoever with races. I played with Mexican kids my whole life when I was a kid and it didn't make any difference who you brought home with you, if it was supertime they got to eat. Of course I used to go with the little Spanish guys home and their mother would give me a burrito too. But, no there was none of that stuff. We absolutely had none of it. Matter of fact I never saw a policeman until I was about fifteen years old.

BROWN: So the community just kind of policed itself?

GRAY: There were no problems. I guess everybody knew if there was a problem it probably would affect their jobs. But I didn't know of any alcoholism – I didn't know of any homosexuality – never heard of the word. I only knew of two people who had been divorced in their lives. I didn't know of anybody that was living together without being married. It was quite a different place. So it was quite a place. I remember when I was a little kid about 8 or 9, every evening I made the rounds. I visited my grandma and grandpa. I used to go sit on a – when they moved that house to El Mirage or Surprise it had a front porch on it. Grandpa used to lay out on the porch on a cotton sack and dip snuff and spit it over the thing and he would talk about “when I was your age”. You know, tell stories about when he was younger, about what he used to do.

BROWN: Now how did you deal with the heat? Wasn't it hot in the summers?

GRAY: You know what – we didn't have any problems. We didn't know it was hot. We didn't know it was hot because we didn't have a thermometer, we didn't listen to – we didn't have a TV set. We had a radio and we would lay in bed and listen to the radio, like Boston Blackie and those serial radio programs – Amos and Andy. We would lay in bed at night and listen to those but we didn't listen to the news. I never did see a newspaper. We didn't keep up with stuff like that.

BROWN: But you said you slept outside during the summer?

GRAY: During the summer we slept outside. Everybody cooked on a wood stove and when I was a kid my job was to keep Momma supplied with wood to cook with.

BROWN: Where did you get the wood?

GRAY: I don't remember – well – some of the men used to go out to Glendale and they had a lumber yard out there. They used to get scrap lumber and bring it down there and dump it out behind the house. They might find a log or two laying someplace and they would pick it up and bring it home. That's where they got it.

BROWN: Now, it looks like from your pictures there are trees.

GRAY: There was a lot of trees there. What they did was, I guess Boswell did it, but over on Cottonwood Land where all those cottonwood trees were. They would go over and cut great big limbs off of those things and make 8 or 10 foot poles out of them. They would go over and plant them. They would start them like slips like you do oleanders.

BROWN: And they would grow?

GRAY: Yeah, they would grow. And that is where they got them trees from. Up at Marinette now, right behind the post office, around that equipment yard they had a great big huge oleander growing. It kind of covered the – you couldn't see the equipment yard from the road. And right across the street from the post office, which would be west of the post office, right there was a little dirt road that went down behind the shop, the equipment yard, but there was a little park there and they had a church and it was all grass, Bermuda, they kept it watered and right next to that was a soft ball field with lights and in the summer time and the spring the

employees all played softball. Right west of that park, that softball park were four or five houses, of course we lived in one of them, and that is where, all that was right between 105th and 107th.

BROWN: Did you have grass around your houses?

GRAY: Some people did, we didn't, it was all dirt. We had a big old castor bean tree out in the back yard and a big old eucalyptus tree out there and then out between our house and Grand Avenue was a row of some kind of trees, I don't know what they were. We used to sit underneath some of those trees – some of the boys did and we would, it was just a game I guess, but back then you could identify what kind of a car it was by looking at the hood ornaments. We would sit there and try to identify what kind of car it was. There wouldn't be ten or twelve of them go by there in two hours. There was no place to go and everybody was working. So Grand Avenue was pretty dull, hardly nothing on it.

BROWN: Now the railroad track was there then wasn't it?

GRAY: Yeah, the railroad track was there. I remember Oswald used to walk across Grand Avenue to the railroad track and there was some kind of a big old arm over there and he would hang the mail sack from it. And the train would come by and snag that mail sack and he would go over and there would be one laying on the ground to be picked up. That is how they got their mail.

BROWN: So there was no stop though?

GRAY: No.

BROWN: What was the closest train station that you could get on and off?

GRAY: Phoenix. Maybe one in Glendale, I don't know. Her Dad used to work there at the Railway Express there in Phoenix. He used to take them on vacations and they would ride a train to California.

BROWN: Did you not know of Lizard Flats?

GRAY: Lizard Flats? No. Lizard Acres. Yes that is right there where R.H. Johnson and Bell Road is.

BROWN: That was another little community?

GRAY: No that was a stockyard. That is where they fattened cows for market. It was a stockyard. As late as 1975 I used to go over there in my pickup and get manure for my garden. But they called that Lizard Acres – there is another name for Lizard Acres – Circle One Livestock Company, was what the official name was. But everybody called it Lizard Acres. Yeah, that was removed for Sun City West to be put in. But that was quite a place, pretty big place. They fattened a lot of steaks there.

BROWN: Now what did your father do after they moved his house. Did he continue to work for Boswell?

GRAY: Dad continued to work for – well what he did when he went to work for Boswell for a tractor mechanic he was a foreman on the hay crew. He ran the hay racks and hay baler and things like that and he was a mechanic. His job was to keep those machines running. Kind of keep the crews going. Well, somewhere, I think around 1953 or 4 Massey-Ferguson had a shop there at Marinette, it was hooked onto Boswell shop and they had a testing facility. They were from Detroit and they had their tractors out there and they – it was a proving ground out here. They would keep them tractors working at night and they hired Dad to be a mechanic for them. So he worked for Massey-Ferguson until he retired. He worked for them for 20 years or longer as a mechanic. They moved their shop from Marinette over to Beardsley – to where Beardsley is right now. Beardsley was right about where the water company is right down there. It was just east of that about a block. I guess where that new hotel is. Boswell had a tractor shop there too. Dad moved out there in 1954 or 5 and kept on doing mechanic work there. My Grandpa and his boy Floyd became cotton contractors out there. What they would do was, they would have a crew of people out there picking cotton and when they would bring their sacks in they would weigh them and they would pay them. There was another contractor by the name of Forney and there was another one by the name of Harrison. He lived in Peoria. His son became a western movie star in Hollywood. In fact I have one of his movies I bought the other day. He had two sons, one was named Mickey Harrison and one was named Dale. Mickey Harrison played the character of Sunset Carson back in the early '50's – went to Hollywood and made it big. Well he was raised there in Peoria. Went to school there, Peoria High School. But I used to steal cotton, after they would go home, at night, me and this other guy would take our cotton sacks and go up in the trailer and fill them up and put them on our car fenders and go home, then the next day we would take it back and sell it to them. I wouldn't do that now but when you are

a kid it was pretty enticing. And we used to steal watermelons. Best watermelons I ever ate.

BROWN: So, did all your brothers and sisters stay in the area too?

GRAY: In this area here? Yeah, everyone of them just stayed in El Mirage and Surprise.

BROWN: You said you joined the service and then came back?

GRAY: We came back and stayed for another couple of years, then we moved to Southern California in 1961, then we stayed there until '75, then we came back over here. Then when we came back here Sun City was really huge and I set up a tree service out here. That is what I did until I retired. But there are other people in this area that grew up there and worked there. Some of the names of the people – there is a guy by the name of – he lives up there just off Hutton, first Pioneer or something up in that area west of Del Webb. His name is Charlie Lane. He lived at Marinette. He had a brother by the name of Burley, and there was some Weedmans that lived there, Spears, Jonses, Talley's. Some of the Mexican people, I don't remember their names. There was one old guy, everybody was kind of afraid of him. He had one shoulder, underneath his clothes was a big bulge there. The story was he had a gun there. Don't mess with him, he'll shoot you. Nobody messed with him. Evidently he had some kind of a deformity. I don't remember his name. He lived next door to us. He raised rabbits. There are a lot of people that lived there that are still in this area. We run into them all the time. Guys I knew when I was a kid. There is a guy that lives across the desert there, ¼ mile that I knew. Last time I saw him was when I was about 15 years old. It was right over here where Sun City Grand is now, or Sun City West. He was driving a tractor and I am out in the field and I am driving the tractor down the road and I turned to wave at him and I ran into a parked pickup truck with my tractor and destroyed that truck. I never saw him anymore until a year or two ago. Fifty years goes by and I find out he lives over here. We both remembered that incident and that was over 50 years ago. But it happened right there at Beardsley. He lives over here, and of course there is Cutburrows, Alan Cutburrows, he has been here since '53. Peoria Avenue used to not be Peoria Avenue there in Sun City. It used to be just a dirt road. It went from Marinette to Peoria and there was not a bridge there, you just drove down the river bottom.

BROWN: Was Grand always paved though?

GRAY: Grand was always paved, in fact some of it is still there. Down around the underpass at 75th Avenue before they repaired it a couple of years ago, that was all chuck holes from back then. I remember when we were kids we used to go out from Marinette on Saturday afternoon to Peoria to go to a movie.

BROWN: That was a long walk, wasn't it?

GRAY: Well, it was about three miles. You know it only cost – you know you would take a quarter and you could go to the movies and buy a sack of popcorn and pop and pay your way into the movies. Sometimes it would be dark when we got out and sometime they would have (----415) or wolfman on and we would run all the way home. Scared to death.

BROWN: So, it sounds like a pretty good place to grow up then.

GRAY: It wasn't a bad place. We didn't know we were poor because everybody was the same way. I don't remember anybody ever not going to work because they was sick. They went to work anyways and you didn't call and say I am sick and I'm not going to be there today.

BROWN: What kind of medical care did you have?

GRAY: We didn't. Home remedies, they used the stuff they used back in Oklahoma. Kerosene if you got cut. They would pour kerosene or turpentine on it. No we didn't go to Doctors.

BROWN: And did women have their babies at home?

GRAY: They had them –in Peoria there was an old Doctor by the name of McCan and in El Mirage there was an old Doctor that moved from Oklahoma and his name was Shackelford and he worked out of his house and everybody that needed it went there. You had to be half dead though. I remember in particular one of my Aunt's picking cotton all day and she went home early in the afternoon, earlier than everybody else did and come to find out she went down to Dr. Shackelford's and had a baby. She went home that night, next morning I drove by their house on the way to go to work and she was out there in the front yard doing a washing – washing clothes. They never missed a lick. The women worked right up until they had their babies picking cotton.

BROWN: Was everybody from Oklahoma, or were they from different places?

GRAY: Most everybody we knew came from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, a few people, not a whole lot from Texas. Mostly Okies, Arkies, people like that. Mostly people had lived back in that part of the country and they lived off of the land, share croppers. My Grandpa was a sharecropper. And they was poor from day one and they was still poor, but they thought they had hit the big time when they come out here and had a job making 75 to 80 cents an hour. They used to irrigate cotton for \$7.20 a day, 12 hour days and I remember irrigating cotton for \$10.80 a day. You had to get up in the middle of the night and go out and check the fields and make sure everything was going right. When we got married in 1956, right there where Kentucky Fried Chicken used to be on Grand Avenue, there is a little donut shop there now. From there to the river there was a hay field and I used to irrigate that hay field in 1956 when we got married and I was making \$10.80 a day on a 24 hour shift. You just was responsible for that for 24 hours.

BROWN: Everybody just kept those jobs?

GRAY: They died on those jobs. Like I say you didn't call in sick. There was no such thing as not being to work. Your relatives would chastise you if you didn't go to work. I remember one time I laid (after I got married), in the bed for some reason or another and she couldn't get me up so she got up and went out to the fields, out there where all my relatives were picking cotton, and the first thing they wanted to know was where Arnold was. She told them I was home in bed. Boy, howdy, I was an outcast. That was a terrible thing to do. Back then you had two places to be – either at work or down at the mortuary getting embalmed. They just didn't do it. I remember one time I had an accident. I got between the bumpers of my Dad's car and his truck one morning, I walked between them to go around and get in the passengers side, for some reason his foot slipped off the clutch or something. But he pinned me between those two bumpers and when he backed up I just collapsed, and it hit me right across here and I couldn't walk. He picked me up and put me in the cab of the truck. And he didn't take me to the Doctor. He took me over to Marinette, and we lived over in Surprise then. He took me over to Marinette, now I was only fourteen years old, maybe fifteen, picks me up and puts me over on the tractor seat. I remember very well trying to drive that tractor with my legs like they were. I didn't make it. I had to turn around and come back. And I didn't have a job after that.

BROWN: What happened to your legs?

GRAY: I just hobbled around until they got better. I didn't go to the Doctor. I think we were going together at that time. You just didn't go to the Doctor. I don't ever remember of a kid saying, Mom, I don't want to go to school today, I don't feel good. It never happened. And back then if you got in trouble at school they would give you a note and tell you to bring one of your parents to school with you and when your parents showed up, and it was usually my mother, they would come in your school room and get you and take you to the Principal's office, and while your Mother stood there and looked he had you bend over and hold your ankles while he gave you a couple of good solid swats with a paddle. If a school teacher paddled you you didn't go home and tell your parents about it. You got another one. And back then if you were a kid and you misbehaved, they took care of it. I don't care if it was a neighbor or if it was – if they was kid to you and they could catch you they could whoop you. You didn't go home complaining to your parents about it because then you would get another one. I had that happen. It didn't take me long to remember just don't go home and say nothing to Mom.

BROWN: So, how did you meet your wife?

GRAY: How did I meet my wife? Met her at Madison Square Gardens. On Saturday night we used to go, me and some of the other guys I ran around with. We went to the country and western dance there and I spotted her there one night. I don't know when that was – when was it? 1955 – sometime in 1955. I think it was in the late summer of '55 because we got married in the summer of '56. But I met her up there. And of course I kept asking her if I could take her home and said no, you can't do that, so I quit asking and unbeknownst to us her and her girl friend decided it was time for us to take her home. I asked her how she got there and she said she took a bus. I forgot all about it. One night she asked me if I knew what time the bus ran. I didn't pick up on it and I said no, why, you need a ride home? She said yeah, so I give her a ride home.

BROWN: She was from Phoenix?

GRAY: She was – what was it 35th Ave and Van Buren? When we met she lived in south Phoenix. She lived over on 7th street and Broadway. Now it is a pretty rough, mean area over there, but I used to go over two or three times a week in the middle of the night. We would drive around, go to the movies, go to the drive-in. Back then a drive-in was a dollar a car load and gasoline was about 21 cents a gallon, cigarettes, if you smoked, was about 12 cents a pack. Back then you go in to the gas station and tell them to give you a dollar's worth of gas and they would

check your tires, check your radiator, check your battery, wash your windshield. They would do everything for a dollars worth of gas.

BROWN: Then you said when you got married you had to get your parent's permission?

GRAY: Yeah, I was sixteen years old and I guess the legal age in Arizona was eighteen. So one morning over here in El Mirage my Mom came in and woke me up, that was the day I got married, 12th of July. She come in and got me out of bed, she wanted to go to Glendale to go shopping, clothing shopping. Her idea of going to Glendale shopping was you went to J.C. Penney's or Montgomery Ward and she would go in there and window shop, look at everything, pick them up. She never had any money. I just hated to take her to do that. So I said, Mom, I tell you what, I'll take you to Glendale shopping but you got to go sign for me to get my marriage license first. I figured that that would be the end of it. That she wouldn't do that and I wouldn't have to take her to town. So she said, well come on, let's go. So I put her in the car and we drove over to South Phoenix and I said to her get your birth certificate from your Mother. We are going to go get our marriage license.

BROWN: Did she have to have her parents sign for her?

GRAY: No, she was eighteen. She told her she was going to go look for a job. So we went out and got my Dad to go to El Mirage down here, its not the court house but was where the Justice of the Peace was, and he signed a – him and Mom signed the papers. So I took her and we went back to the Court House and got a marriage license. The whole idea was that we was just going to get married and she was going to stay at her Mother's house and I was going to stay at my Mom's house until I got a job. We was just going to carry on like we had been. Stupid idea really. Well that night we come back out here and we got married over here. We rustled up a preacher and got married about nine o'clock at night, here in Surprise. It all happened so fast and after we got married we went to a watermelon Festival in Glendale. Her girl friend, the couple we was with, I grew up with him and the girl grew up with her since we was little kids. They said, why don't you spend the night with us tonight and she said, I can't because my mother and father won't let me. So her Dad worked at night for the railway express. He was a little guy, not very big, probably 5'6", small, but he was bigger than I was. I was scared to death of him. He didn't like me anyways. We went over to her house real quick and told her mother what happened, got a few clothes and went over and spent the night with our friends. The next morning I went and rounded up one of my friends here in El Mirage and I borrowed ten dollars off of him to get a motel room. Over

rent was free. They didn't have to pay any rent for the house, the water was free and they paid one dollar a month electricity. No meters, you just used what you wanted, but that is what they paid, one dollar a month.

BROWN: So, how much was your little house, was it still free?

GRAY: Free. Course being newlyweds I got to where I didn't want to go to work and I lost that job. So anyways that's what we did, just went up and down Grand Avenue doing farm work. You couldn't get a job off the farm, I mean the best pay you could get on the farm for Boswell was \$1.00 an hour and that was a job that required you to work 12 hours a day, seven days a week. The only day you got off was Christmas, that was it. And there was no such thing as sick leave. They did give you a two week vacation if you had been there enough time. I got one of those. You couldn't get any kind of job around. If you went to Phoenix, the best job you could get was working in a gas station for \$1 an hour and so we were married and had a little boy about six months old and I decided that I didn't want to live like that the rest of my life. Like they do out here, you know, and I wanted to get a better job so I got the bright idea of joining the army, thinking that it would be a job. She could go with me, we could live off post and forget that, they sent me overseas in 1958 and I came back in 1960. When I come back here in 1960 people lived different everywhere else than they do here. Living on a farm, working seven days a week, irrigating, chopping cotton, that's not no way for a future so I wasn't satisfied any more. So, I went to Phoenix and tried to work there. Best job I could get was a gas station job, \$1 an hour. So in 1961 we went to Southern California and I got a job working for the city of Riverside over there. But even before that, before we went to California I was working for the golf course over here in Sun City, South Course. Back then they only had one nine hole course, that was right there on Grand Avenue and 107th. Then they started building another nine hole back there. I was working at the equipment shop then at 105th and Peoria as a mechanic, working on the lawn mowers and stuff like that. I remember I was working eight hours a day, five and a half days a week and I was making \$345 a month.

BROWN: Was that a lot?

GRAY: To us it was the best job I ever had. We lived in Peoria and I got the bright idea of going to California where the end of the rainbow was you know. That is what happened. We went out there and had a family and came back out here. Most of them old people are all dead now. My Grandpa died in 1958 and all

them other people that picked cotton, they are all gone. Now all their relatives are still here and most of them never heard of picking cotton.

BROWN: They have machines to pick cotton now.

GRAY: They got machines to do it now. Every now and than her and I'll start reminiscing and I see a field of cotton and I'd just love to go out there and do that, just one more time.

BROWN: Well, that's a great story. It was a different way of life, a different time than now.

GRAY: You know, a different thing then, everything was done on a handshake or on your word. People's word was good. If they told you something you could count on it. You could take it to the bank as they say. Business deals, agreements of any kind, was done by a handshake. You know all the time we lived there we never had a lock on our door. Fact some of them houses didn't even have door knobs, just had the hole there. The floors didn't have linoleum, just had bare floors and sometimes a knot would fall out of the boards and there would be a hole there. You would take a lid off of a tin can and tack over it.

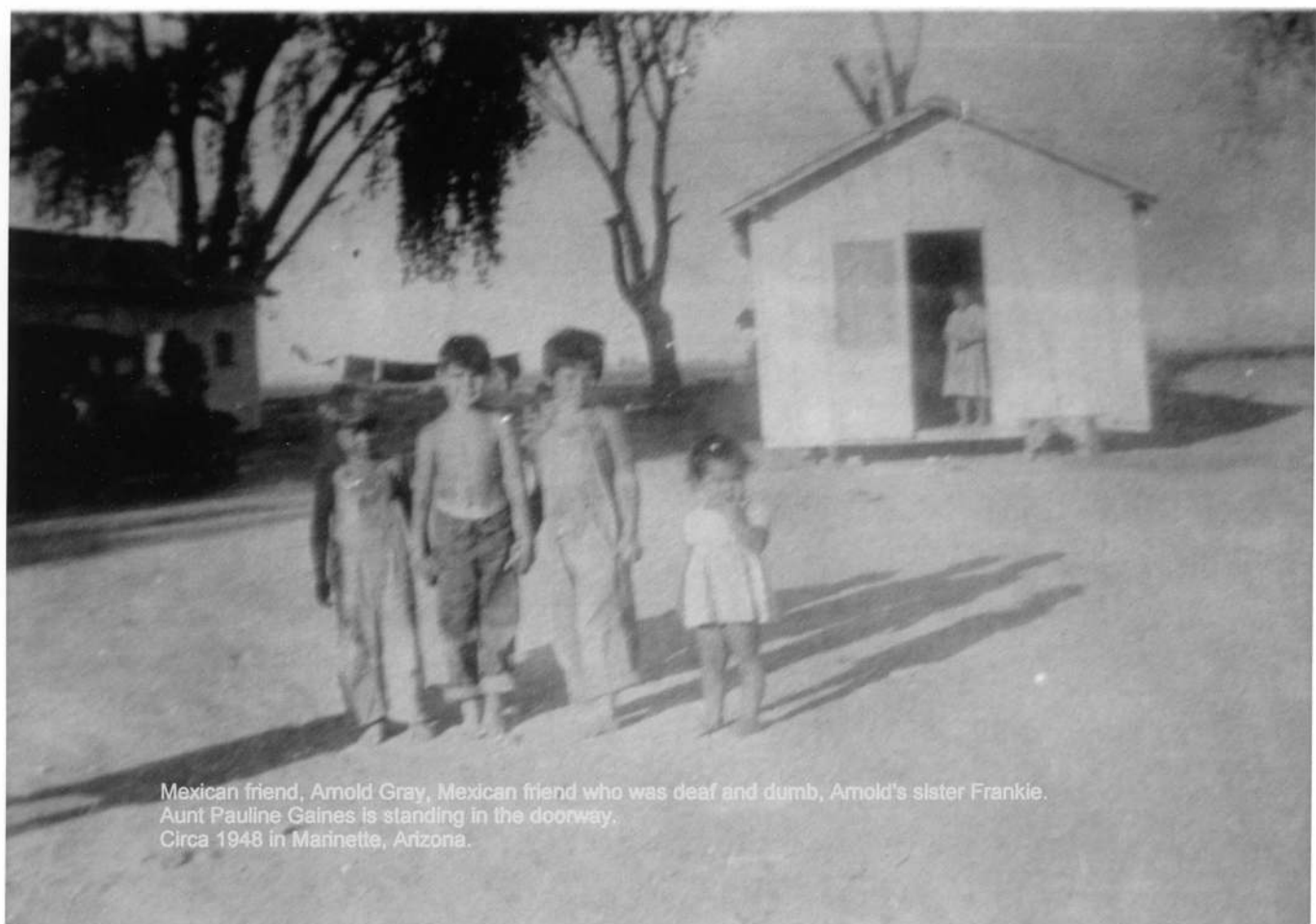
BROWN: Is there anything else you would like to add?

GRAY: No, that's about it.

BROWN: Well, thank you very much. We really do appreciate you telling your story for the Sun Cities Historical Society.

Curtis Gray holding daughter Frankie;
son, Arnold Gray. Circa 1948. White
Camp in Marinette, Arizona.





Mexican friend, Arnold Gray, Mexican friend who was deaf and dumb, Arnold's sister Frankie.
Aunt Pauline Gaines is standing in the doorway.
Circa 1948 in Maricopa, Arizona.



1929 Model A
Circa 1948 in Marinette

Honora Gehres, grandfather of Arnold Grey.
Arnold Grey is standing by her side.
Baby is unidentified.
Cape 1948 in Anikwaa, Alaska.



SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

RELEASE FORM

I, William T. Woodyard, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history program.

I understand the purpose of the SCAHS program is to collect audio- and video- taped oral histories of the Sun Cities Area original residents, those living in the area and of those who supported the growth of the Sun Cities.

I understand that the SCAHS plans to retain the products of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication and presentations for the promotion of the Historical Society and its activities in any medium.

I hereby grant SCAHS ownership of the physical property delivered to SCAHS and the right to use the property as stated above for scholarly and educational purposes.

I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold.

I also grant SCAHS my absolute and irrevocable consent for any photographs provided by me or taken of my in the course of my participation to be used, published, and copied by SCAHS and its assignees in any medium.

I agree SCAHS may use my name, video or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction or other sound effects without further approval on my part.

I release SCAHS, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature William T. Woodyard Date 11/14/07

Printed Name WILLIAM T. WOODYARD

Address 12837 W. DESERT GLEN DR

City SUN CITY WEST State AZ ZIP 85375

Telephone (602) 384-2055

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM

Please Print Clearly

Name WILLIAM TRUMAN WOODYARD
First Middle Maiden Name Last

Address 12837 W. DESERT GLEN DR

City SUN CITY WEST State AZ ZIP 85375

Telephone 623 584 2055 Email WTWBGAF12@YAHOO.COM

Place of Birth ST. JOSEPH, MO Birth Date 4/14/1919

Race/Ethnicity (optional) WHITE Male Female

Are photos included? Yes No
If yes, see attached Photo Log.

Are manuscripts included? Yes No
If yes, see attached Manuscript Log.

Are artifacts included? Yes No
If yes, see attached Inventory Log.

Interviewer Beverly J Brown Date 14 Nov 2006

Printed Name BEVERLY J. BROWN

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WILLIAM WOODYARD

(The interview was conducted at the home of William Woodyard on November 14, 2006. The tape was transcribed by Belva J. McIntosh.)

BROWN: This is November 14, 2006 and I am Beverly Brown for the Sun Cities Historical Society. I am interviewing Bill Woodyard who was the General Manager of the Sun City West Recreation Centers.

BROWN: Bill, tell us how you came to come to Sun City.

WOODYARD: Well, I retired from the Air Force in 1979 and like you I was looking for a place to stay and I had the same criteria. The sun shines frequently and lots of golf courses and so this was Sun City. I moved to Sun City in 1979. I moved to Sun City West in 1980.

BROWN: And how did you get involved in the Rec Centers?

WOODYARD: Well, after I retired from the Air Force I did not intend to go back to work. However after about two months I decided to look for a job and it so happened that the job of General Manager of the Sun City West Recreation Centers had just opened. Even though at that time there was no recreation center. But nevertheless I was the first employee of the Sun City West Recreation Centers.

BROWN: So it was a paying job.

WOODYARD: It was a paying job, yes.

BROWN: That's good because I am sure it was a full time job.

WOODYARD: It was more than a full time job, yes.

BROWN: So Sun City West had just opened up?

WOODYARD: The first people moved here in 1979, just two streets over by the way. And I moved here about a year later, 1980.

BROWN: So you were involved in getting the Rec Centers going then?

WOODYARD: Yes. There was very little – as I mentioned earlier, there were no recreation centers. R. H. Johnson Center was being constructed and the Pebblebrook golf course was under construction. So I found the job to be very rewarding. It was totally different from anything I had ever done. But I did have an input into establishing what was to be in the facilities of all five rec centers.

BROWN: Now did you have – like neighborhood meetings with the people who had already moved here about what they wanted?

WOODYARD: Yes, we had a meeting once a month and we got input from them with respect as to how we were doing and what they would like to see in the future.

BROWN: Did you work then with the Del Webb Corporation as to how it was going to be set up?

WOODYARD: Yes I worked for the CEO of the Del Webb Corporation.

BROWN: And who was that?

WOODYARD: It was John Meeker at the time. And later on it was, the name I don't recall right now but I will.

BROWN: Was it Chuck Roach?

WOODYARD: He was the next one. Chuck Roach was the third. I worked for all three of them. The other one was named – we have a recreation center named after him, Kuentz, Fred Kuentz. So I worked for all three of those. But as the inputs from the residents, we had what was known as an advisory board. It was elected annually among the residents who had indicated a desire to have inputs in the rec centers, and we met monthly with them along with the CEO of Del Webb Corporation.

BROWN: Because they, the CEO's would have had experience from working on Sun City and so were they carrying the same ideas over here to Sun City West?

WOODYARD: They were indeed and also they had the purse strings – he had the purse strings so – and the Del Webb Developments, in my opinion, were much different from developments that I was aware of, in that they built the recreation

centers up front and they had the infrastructure up front. For example, they had twenty five million dollars in the ground here in Sun City West before they had a single resident. So I think that has been their mode of operation ever since. Build the facilities up front and the people will come.

BROWN: Yes, Now reading the history of Sun City West it sounded like the residents did have a lot of input.

WOODYARD: They did up until the time they took over in 1990. The Advisory Board was done away with and then there was a Governing Board established, in which the Governing Board actually had control of Sun City West. It was always my intention that as soon as the residents became fully involved with the development that I would retire which I did.

BROWN: So how did you decide when the Weaving Club came and said we don't have enough space, we want more room, versus the computer club or whatever.

WOODYARD: Well, we did a lot of input from residents, like individuals as a matter of fact, or a group would come and say, we would like to establish a computer club. At that time computers were very new and we had a very small room with three or four computers and as you know it has grown exponentially. So as the need developed we would allocate resources to make that development possible. And by the way, Webb Corporation was very generous in providing facilities that they thought the residents needed.

BROWN: That is what I understand from reading the book. So were you involved in getting the buildings ready?

WOODYARD: Yes, I was involved in the input into what was to be contained in the buildings, but the construction of the buildings was all done by a sub-contractor, under the supervision, by the way, of Del Webb. Although I had input, they had responsibility.

BROWN: Now did you have a part in setting up the clubs?

WOODYARD: Well the clubs were set up by the residents themselves. For examples if the weavers decided they would like to have a weaving club, and if we did not have space we would include space in some facility that we did have. Almost all of the clubs got started in that way. By a group of residents coming and

saying that they would like to do this and again I must say that Del Webb was very generous in providing facilities for that.

BROWN: But you were the one that they would come to.

WOODYAD: Yes. As a matter of fact one which I didn't think too much of was the metal shops. I had never been associated with a metal shop, but they were very adamant about what they would like and now we have a magnificent metal shop over shop, a separate building in which there are quite a number of members and it continues to flourish.

BROWN: Could you see a change over the ten years that you were here in the lifestyle of the people or the interests of the people? Like you mentioned the computer group, were there some other clubs that changed?

WOODYARD: Well, let's see - of course we got more and more golfers. And the golfers, they became a rather important group and they placed demands upon the recreation centers which I felt sometimes were excessive, but they were very helpful in managing the golf courses, in how we established tee times, when we over-seeded, when we made corrections to the golf courses. But they were a rather powerful group and I think still are rather powerful.

BROWN: Now, did you add more golf courses because of them or were there already plans for that?

WOODYARD: There were already plans to have that, although we added one additional golf course that was not in the original plan. That is the one over - a par 3 course which has served the needs of our aging population.

BROWN: Now, lawn bowling, was that popular in the 80's and not in the 90's?

WOODYARD: It was very popular in the 80's, yes. And when people get to the point where they can no longer play golf up to their expectations, frequently they take up lawn bowling.

BROWN: Oh, so it's still popular?

WOODYARD: Oh, yes. You will see them out there. We all dress in white. They have a lot of tradition. The legacy in lawn bowling comes from England, the

British Isles, they dressed in white and they had certain rules which seem to have flowed into lawn bowling teams here.

BROWN: What's an example of a club that didn't make it?

WOODYARD: I can't think of any off hand. I don't know of any club that started and didn't make it.

BROWN: Anyway new ones besides the computer club growing?

WOODYARD: Well, as our population grew our clubs grew. Also we have a facility which was built in the – one of our facilities which the residents wanted a walking track, indoor walking track, which I understand, but it was a very costly thing to do. I was not particularly supportive of that idea, however Webb was, so it was built. They were far more optimistic than I was but it is very well used now.

BROWN: Now, you had people working for you, didn't you?

WOODYARD: Yes. About 100 full time people, and maybe a total of 300 additional part time people.

BROWN: What did these people do?

WOODYARD: Well, they were monitors at the various facilities. Only people who had a Sun City West rec card could be admitted to those facilities. And we had a financial manager, we had a bowling manager, we had a manager of the golf courses, the golf pro's. So it was a pretty big organization really.

BROWN: But immediately under you would have been the financial manager and

WOODYARD: Yes, and the director of facilities, who had responsibility for the maintenance of the facilities. The head of the bowling alley's and the golf professionals, and comptroller.

BROWN: Then you coordinated all the –

WOODYARD: We had a weekly meeting at which we addressed all those issues which were important at the time to include expansion, rates to be set, annual fees

BROWN: Was there a big difference?

WOODYARD: Oh yeah. Over a years time it was several hundred thousand dollars. When we opened two rec centers, we only had four thousand people. That was the R. H. Johnson Center and the Kuentz Center. So there was a significant difference between operating costs and revenues. Webb made up the difference every month.

BROWN: So how are the residents doing it now?

WOODYARD: Well, we are completely built out now, and they raised our fees. They were originally thirty dollars a year per resident and now they have maybe two hundred fifty dollars a year. And of course the price of golf has gone up significantly as well as the cost of bowling. I am no longer involved in the rec centers, but I do see the financial statements from time to time and they are doing alright.

BROWN: So, was it good working with the Del Webb Corporation people?

WOODYARD: It was indeed. You know, when they appointed me general manager there was nothing here, although as I mentioned the R.H. Johnson center had started. My office was over in Sun City, but they gave me more authority than I would have given me. They said here it is, and walked away. We would have a meeting once a month, it was a luncheon, and I would give a preview of what was going on, and they would either agree or disagree with some of the items and I would go wait for the next month.

BROWN: You said you worked for Meeker and Kuentz and Roach. Where was R. H. Johnson in all this?

WOODYARD: Well, R.H. Johnson – it was called the Del Webb Western Development Company, which was a subsidiary of the Del Webb Corporation. R.H. Johnson was CEO of the Del Webb Corporation, which had not only Sun City, Sun City West, but they owned several resorts in Las Vegas, they owned the Rosenlake Center in town and a facility in San Diego, I forget the name right now. But in 1980 when interest rates were very high, Del Webb was being inundated with the interest costs of all the facilities. There was a meeting to decide, what is it we do best. They felt that what they did best was the development of communities. So they sold all the other facilities, two casinos in Las Vegas, the Rosenlake center- they also owned the facility at Lake Powell which provides boats. Anyway

they drove their corporate to zero, so in that way the company survived and they survived as a builder.

BROWN: Did you have anything to do with the Sundome?

WOODYARD: No, the Sundome was a facility that Webb kept to himself. I had nothing to do with it other than go watch it being built.

BROWN: But that has an interesting history all of its own.

WOODYARD: Oh, it does indeed. It was a very expensive building. Beautiful building. But it had a difficult time financially. It changed hands a number of times and now it is the Maricopa County facility, I believe. Initially Del Webb donated the building to ASU. ASU operated it for several years.

BROWN: Do you have anything else you would like to add about your time as General Manager of the Sun City West Recreation Centers?

WOODYARD: No. I think it was a rather rewarding job. I had good people working for me. Many of them retired from rather exalted positions in our society. Like me, they wanted something to do, retirement did not fulfill their desires, so they went to work.

BROWN: Thank you very much.

WOODYARD: Thank you and thanks for coming by, Beverly.

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

RELEASE FORM

I, Neal Coffman, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history project.

I understand the purpose of the SCAHS project is to collect audio taped oral histories of the Sun Cities Area original residents, those living in the area and of those who supported the growth of the Sun Cities.

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I agree SCAHS may use my name, or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction or other sound effects with approval on my part prior to use.

I release SCAHS, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature Neal Coffman Date 1-16-07

Printed Name NEAL COFFMAN

Address 13307 W Prospect Dr.

City San City West State AZ ZIP 85375

Telephone 623 584 1605

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEAL COFFMAN

(The interview was conducted at the home of Neal Coffman on January 16, 2007.
The tape was transcribed by Belva J McIntosh)

BROWN: I am Beverly Brown and today is the 16th of January 2007. I am interviewing Neal Coffman for the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

BROWN: Neal, could you tell us where you are from and how you happened to come to Sun City West.

COFFMAN: I am from Illinois. Born and raised on a grain and livestock farm. Attended the University of Illinois and accepted a job with the Libby, McField and Libby Company in Chicago as a chemist. My education was the background of farming and I only worked as a chemist for about three weeks when they found out that I had the agricultural background, so then they switched me over to their department. Sent me to Southern Illinois where I set up a tomato operation for them. Worked at that for, perhaps, four or five years. Then got involved in the brokerage business, South Water Market in Chicago. While on the market one of the Campbell Soup representatives knew of my background and it was then when I took the job with Campbell Soup Company. That was in 1947. While with Campbell Soup Company we were searching for areas where we could buy fresh produce and processed. I came to Arizona and there was a large producing area near Phoenix. My first visit to Arizona was in 1969. And while in the area I learned that the Del Webb people had bought 11,000 acres of land with the intent of building a retirement area to be known as Sun City West. And Campbell Soup had a retirement date of 65, which I would be hitting shortly. So I got a hold of a Sales Representative of Del Webb's in Sun City and we drove Bell Road to what is now, of course, RH Johnson, which at that time was an old cow trail. We came down to 133rd Avenue and Bob Myer said "Well, you know, you might like this area." So I looked around and I thought, well it's not bad. So I said, why don't you just build our new home right here. And I pointed to the spot. Bob said OK. The Del E. Webb Company started breaking ground for Sun City West on February 15, 1978. Our home was completed in August, and we moved in during November 1978. Only four other houses had been built and they were surrounded by miles of desert. We heard coyotes at night and our only neighbors were the jack rabbits, lizards and road runners.

The Maricopa County Sheriffs Office saw the need for a Posse as their office did not have the manpower or finances to provide security for the residents of Sun City West. Under the Arizona State law ARS11-4441-78 the Sheriff directed a Posse be organized to provide residents with the security protection they needed. The primary function being crime prevention.

The formative years of our Posse were a challenge. Organization of the Posse got underway late 1978. Our membership quickly grew from 12 to 20. The Del E. Webb legal staff was extremely helpful in drafting our charter and submitting it to the Arizona Commission of Incorporation for approval and filing. This document was approved June 11, 1979 and approved by the Sheriffs Department June 29, 1979. Our by-laws, policies, and procedures were submitted and approved by the Sheriffs Office.

I had joined the Posse May 30, 1979 to get a persistent recruiter "off my back" and remain the only active member from the original pioneers.

BROWN: How did they pick you?

COFFMAN: Well, in that day we needed, of course, recruits so that we could build up our Posse personnel. And this recruiter would go from house to house and solicit for candidates to be Posse members.

BROWN: Was this a recruiter from the Sheriff's office?

COFFMAN: No, this was from the Posse. This was one of our Posse individuals and he would just go from house to house. He would use the telephone too. A very insistent individual by the way. As I mentioned I had to get him off my back so I joined the Posse. Having committed to be a Posse person I became active in all phases of the organization and operations of the Posse. Took all the required courses and went through the Sheriffs academy and certified to carry a weapon. Became involved as an assistant range master on the firing range.

We used our own cars for patrol; CB radios for communication. There were four members who qualified as Duty Officer's each taking one week per month, seven days per week and on call 24 hours a day.

Our headquarters was a Posse person's home and later a neighbor's garage. We did not receive any financial support from the county or federal government or other agencies.

The Sun City West population grew quickly to 500 residents. We issued our first fund drive letter in late 1979 and residents were generous.

The first major traffic assignment was in March 1980 when Del E. Webb had completed the Hillcrest Golf Course and held the LPGA tournament. The attendance at the LPGA was above expectations; we were handling up to 2000 cars daily. We were fortunate to have the Sun City West Posse personnel.

We moved our headquarters from the neighbor's garage in 1981 when Del E. Webb donated a 12 ft x 60 ft portable trailer unit for the Posse's Headquarters and was located in the far north end of their construction yard and was on loan until permanent headquarters could be established.

Del E. Webb completed the Rec. Center in 1979 and the Sundome 1979-80. The Sundome Center for Performing Arts, largest single-level concert venue in the nation. The facility played host to such stars as Red Skelton, Bob Hope, Milton Berle, Jerry Lewis, Gerald Ford and others. During the first year of opening our Posse traffic members handled 110 performances, 1500-1800 cars in and out at each performance. It involved 20 officers and we were fortunate again to have help from the Sun City West Posse traffic members.

In 1982 we purchased our first patrol car from Sanderson Ford, equipped with bar lights and mobile radio. Sanderson Ford gave the Posse six months to make payment. Payment was made and we placed an order for a second patrol car.

In 1983 I was elected Commander of the Sheriffs Posse of Sun City West. That year I logged about 2000 hours.

It was a very productive year:

1. Acquired through the Flood Control District 16.8 acres for the Sun City and Sun City West shooting range.
2. Our vacation watch program was begun, home security and block watch, search and rescue, citizen/motorist assist, responding to audible alarms, welfare check on residents.

3. Purchased a Commodore 64 computer and print-out unit making great strides in record keeping.
4. Issued a monthly "Scanner" for the purpose of keeping Posse members abreast of activities within the Posse.
5. In September of 1983 contact was made with Mr. Fred Kuentz, President of Del E. Webb Corporation, requesting a land site on which to construct a Sheriff's Posse Headquarters building. We were advised a deed of 3.6 acres was to be made at the intersection of R. H. Johnson and Stardust Blvd and we were assured of top priority as a participant for the site.

It was in 1985 when a lease agreement was made for the land site for a 99 year lease at \$1.00 per year, and paid in full.

In May 1987 our building committee selected Stover Associates, Inc of Phoenix, Arizona as the architect. Blue prints were drafted and construction on the ground and building began in April of 1987 and completed October 1987. To be assured of sufficient funds to cover cost of materials and construction of the building a line of credit was established with Valley National Bank. However, we were so fortunate in the generous financial support from residents and local businesses that the line of credit was not needed and the building cost was paid off in 1988.

The Headquarters building we have today has state-of-the-art computers and communication equipment operated completely by Posse members. Today Posse members patrol 24 hours per day, 365 days per year and since inception have donated about 1,900,000 hours.

I admit participating in law enforcement never crossed my mind before that pesky Posse recruiter called and came knocking on my door over two decades ago.

While Posse members are volunteers and receive no salary, they do receive rewards and recognition every day.

1. The feeling you get when you help a resident or someone in need.
2. Making a community affair a success by providing traffic control and other services.

3. Getting a wave and a “thumbs up” from a resident as you pass in the patrol car.

In the past review Sun City West has the lowest per capita crime rate in the county, state, United States, and probably the world.

Dedication and professionalism do have their rewards.

BROWN: Mr. Coffman, thank you very much for sharing your story with us.

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM

Please Print Clearly

Name Neal Chellis Coffman
First Middle Maiden Name Last

Address 13307 W. Prospect Dr

City Sun City West State AZ ZIP 85375

Telephone 623 584 1605 Email _____

Place of Birth Bentley, Illinois Birth Date July 9 1913

Race/Ethnicity (optional) _____ Male M Female _____

Are photos included? Yes _____ No
If yes, see attached Photograph Log.

Are manuscripts included? Yes No _____

Are artifacts included? Yes _____ No
If yes, see attached Inventory Log.

Interviewer BEVERLY J. BROWN Date 16 JAN 2007

Address 15933 W. SILVER BREEZE DRIVE

City SURPRISE State AZ ZIP 85374

Telephone 623-584-0440 Email STARFIGHTERAZ@YAHOO.COM

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

RELEASE FORM

I, Evelyn (Pit) Lucking, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history project.

I understand the purpose of the SCAHS project is to collect audio taped oral histories of the Sun Cities Area original residents, those living in the area and of those who supported the growth of the Sun Cities.

I understand that the SCAHS plans to retain the products of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication and presentations for the promotion of the Historical Society and its activities in any medium.

I hereby grant SCAHS ownership of the physical property delivered to SCAHS and the right to use the property as stated above for scholarly and educational purposes.

I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold.

I also grant SCAHS my absolute and irrevocable consent for any photographs provided by me or taken of me in the course of my participation to be used, published, and copied by SCAHS and its assignees in any medium.

I agree SCAHS may use my name, or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction or other sound effects without further approval on my part.

I release SCAHS, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature Evelyn Lucking Date Feb. 9, 2007

Printed Name Evelyn (Pit) Lucking

Address 7537 N. CENTRAL AZ

City PHOENIX State AZ ZIP 85020

Telephone 602-395-1075

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM

Please Print Clearly

Name Pit Wetzler Lucking
First Middle Maiden Name Last

Address 7537 N. CENTRAL AVE

City PHOENIX State AZ ZIP 85020

Telephone 602-395-1075 Email Pit.Lucking@gmail.com

Place of Birth DENVER COLO Birth Date NOV. 7, 1943

Race/Ethnicity (optional) Anglo Male Female

Are photos included? Yes No
If yes, see attached Photograph Log.

Are manuscripts included? Yes No

Are artifacts included? Yes No
If yes, see attached Inventory Log.

Interviewer BEVERLY J. BROWN Date FEB 9, 2007

Address 15933 W. SILVER BREEZE DRIVE

City SURPRISE State AZ ZIP 85374

Telephone 623-584-0440 Email STARFIGHTERAZ@YAHOO.COM

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Pit Wetzler Lucking

(The interview was conducted at the Sun Cities Area Historical Society at 10801 Oakmont Dr, Sun City, AZ 85351 on February 9, 2007. The tape was transcribed by Belva J McIntosh from 12-14 February 2007)

I am Beverly Brown, and I am conducting this interview for the Sun Cities Area Historical Society. Today is February 9, 2007. I am interviewing Pit Wexler Lucking.

BROWN: Pit, could you tell us the story about Lizard Acres.

LUCKING: Ok. It was in 1945. My father and his partner, Rans Spurlock decided that they wanted a Salt River Valley feed lot. They had ranches up in northern Arizona, around the Little Colorado, Petrified Forest, Holbrook area.

BROWN: Where were they from originally?

LUCKING: My father actually his father came from Germany and settled in Holbrook and had ranches there earlier. He was a business man. My Grandfather came from Germany and went with King's of Kings Canyon and the King's Canyon Trading Post. He was a trader with Kings until Kings offered him a general manager position and he decided that if he was worth that much for Kings he was worth that much to himself, so he went to Holbrook and started banking and in business there and also ranching.

BROWN: What year was this?

LUCKING: This would have been in the early 1900's, early 1890's to when the crash, the depression. He was on the board of the Holbrook National Bank and in those days bank directors were personally responsible for the debts of the bank. And when the crash came there was a run on the banks. It wiped him out. My father at that time was - actually he graduated from high school in three years - 2 ½ yrs and was about ready to make a decision. He had an older brother that was very beautifully educated, Columbia, Harvard and all that. But my father had to decide whether to go to college or go see if he could get something out of his father's businesses. So he went to Holbrook. He decided he wasn't ready for college anyhow. So he went to Holbrook and picked up the ranches, bought some

family was very prominent around Mayer in mining. So he was the one who designed, set up the design for the feed lot, for the farms, built the mill, they built three residences for the key men there – homes not unlike this – this one here in the Historical Society. Concrete block homes for their key men to live there. Because running a feed lot is a 24 hour job. Cattle have to be fed 365 days a year. They do not take holidays. These men lived out there. I was a city girl, I was spoiled and it always amazed me how these people could live out there in that dirty, dusty, fly – the flies were terrible out there because of all of the animals – and manure and all this. They lived out there and became very happy and very successful – each one of those families.

BROWN: Their families lived with them – with the men?

LUCKING: Well, yes they all had their families living with them. The three key men lived in the three homes that are like this. The other ones would bring in their trailers and Dad would provide water and gas for the trailers, so everybody actually lived out there at Lizard Acres. They built a mill because they had the farms and actually they took a lot from around, for instance – for feeding the cattle there were a lot of cotton farms around. Well after you take the cotton out all you have are these seeds. They discovered that grinding up those seeds is very good meal. So this mill would take cotton seed meal as one of the basic staples and (fodder) and all these – mix them together in this mill and then fill the feeding trucks and they would go along the troughs and feed the cattle that way. My father often referred to Lizard Acres as cattle hotel, because they would come for a period of time and then go back to where they were and were fed the best food there was. The mill actually looked more like a mining mill, for grinding ore because it was designed by a mining engineer. But it worked. It worked very well. Everything out there was built, fixed, army surplus, nothing was fancy. But it worked. My father considered himself – he called himself a peanut operation, but it actually ended up being huge.

BROWN: Where did he live?

LUCKING: We all lived in Phoenix. My Mother, Father and I lived in Phoenix. My Father drove out here to Bell and Grand –

BROWN: Do you remember what kind of car he had?

LUCKING: Well, he started out in 1945 – I remember Chevrolets for a long time. He would pick up these strange cars. He had a whole fleet of these old trucks and

just involved here he was also involved in town and he had his office in town where – they had a building out there – the way you find out whether cattle had gained weight or not was to weigh them. You just don't take one cow and do it. This way you usually do it is by truck load or moving them all on, so you would be like having 25 or 30. They would go on this scale that was probably a little bit bigger than - it would probably be about 15 by 30 feet. They would drive the cattle on and then there was a scale and then there was a mechanical thing that would actually stamp on cards the weight so there wasn't anybody – so the weights would go into the office in Phoenix and the billing was always done there. A man by the name Jack Sheely, who ran the offices in Phoenix. So my father sort of lived in both worlds. In fact, going over some old tapes of his I hadn't realized he had almost two different languages. He had a twang and he talked cowboy out here and he did not have a twang and he spoke the King's English in town. So he and my mother too, they didn't feel like people worked for them, they worked with them because he knew very well that he could not run this by himself. So the families and the wives were very important to them and they would have picnics out at the feed lot and everybody – kind of a pot-luck – they would do this frequently. Lizard Acres had a baseball team. They had all these young men and they had a baseball team and they would play with the Marinette teams. In the summertime, at night time, it was very hot, but that was the time everybody would get together and they would have picnics, and these baseball games, so life out here was innocent. And with the families it was pretty wholesome.

BROWN: Did they have schools out there?

LUCKING: They did. There was a Dysart School District. In fact in here (a scrapbook) I think you will find a picture – my Dad was on the board of the Dysart school district. And that is where these kids went to school. And I frequently, oh, at least two or three times a year run into somebody who went to Dysart with the Gello boys or with the Marshall boys and we would go out to Lizard Acres. People used to love to go out to Lizard Acres to go dove hunting, or just to go play with the kids out at the feed lot. My situation was a little different. When I would go to the feed lot it would be – and I really don't care about riding horses – I would be awakened at four o'clock in the morning so we could be out here at five o'clock in the morning. They would put me on a horse and I would sit at the corral and Dad would go this way and I would let the cow in – if he would go this way I would block the corral and this would go on and I was counting the cows. This was the excitement. After the work was done and we had moved the cattle or whatever was done, my father would tell me that I could go out and just ride on my own. Well, this was fine except I was the boss's daughter, who was a city slicker,

so the kids, the boys would all get behind the huge haystacks, they take the hay and put it in stacks, and these haystacks would be like 50 feet high and 100 feet on the side, they were huge things. Well the boys would get behind those haystacks and spook my horse. Not being a good rider, I would be off the horse – the horse would be here and so I really didn't enjoy horseback riding a whole lot. In fact it wasn't much fun. I did like the men he was working with. They were wonderful. I would go out to the – he had a machine shop, which was a Quonset hut. I would go out to the machine shop and they would be shoeing the horses and they had a blacksmith thing there, and the same man who was shoeing the horses would be fixing a truck, and just really nice people. It was a very warm environment. The feed lot kept growing and growing. Then I think you are probably aware of a law suit that happened between the Spur Cattle Company and Sun City. This is one of the most important law suits – well, when my son was in law school it was one of the first studies he ever studied. Spur Cattle Company probably had – was the most successful and had the most successful ranchers involved with it. They had a ranch just north of Sun City, or a feed lot. Sun City people complained. They didn't like the smell and they took them to court.

BROWN: This was in the 1960's?

LUCKING: It was just after Sun City was built, not Sun City West. Maybe five years after Sun City was built. They took them to court, I don't know how far it went, but Sun City won. These ranchers, who nobody had ever said anything to, had to move.

BROWN: Was this a case of eminent domain?

LUCKING: No. It wasn't eminent domain because they were here first. But they were a nuisance. They were a nuisance and they had to move. So my Dad is sitting up here with his feed lots. Well, he really cleaned that place up. He made good friends. Boswell was a very good friend of my Dad's. Dad really did some politicking; he was on the first board for Boswell Hospital. He thought Sun City was just the best thing in the whole world. He couldn't believe the golf courses and the lovely homes, the lovely people. In fact he hired a retired chemist to work part time for him out at Lizard Acres because he was doing chemical analyses on the food. In fact GE had some test things. He worked very closely with the University in stuff like this. He loved Sun City. He joined the Lakes Club and just really got involved with this such that people kept trying to buy Lizard Acres and he wasn't interested.

BROWN: It wasn't developers yet, was it?

LUCKING: Yes. Developers – I think even some Mafia people were trying to, but he said – not interested. But Boswell came to him and they made an offer – I am really bad on dates. What finally was settled, for a sum of money – Dad was given ten years to remain on that Lizard Acres and farm because Del Webb didn't want it for ten years. He wasn't ready to build Sun City West. Actually I think they took just a little bit by the railroad and put some of their materials on it. Dad was getting to be sixtyish – he had one daughter who didn't know one end of a cow from another and he thought – this is good – I will be about seventy and then I can get out. So that is what happened. He sold it and worked very closely and very nicely with Del Webb and the Del Webb people. That is how Del Webb acquired Lizard Acres.

BROWN: That is a very interesting story. Did they have medical facilities for the people there?

LUCKING: No, most of the people went to Glendale or to Phoenix for medical. They probably had a first aid kit somewhere, but no there were no facilities. There were only about – I think at the height – about fifty people who worked there. But, they had the first retirement plan, first corporate retirement plan for their people. They had an annual meeting once a year and my father who spoke Spanish like a china man, but Jack Sheely spoke it very well. So they did have that but there was no medical and certainly Marinette didn't. Surprise was such a small town that Dad took all of his mail, even from downtown, and would mail it through the Surprise Post office just to keep the Surprise Post Office going. No, there was nothing out there. They had very few accidents. I remember on man lost an arm once, but I never hear of anything serious. One of the things they did have were hay stack fires. Those hay stacks, especially in the summertime would have spontaneous combustion. If the hay wasn't really dry – just a little bit green – that heat would build up inside the haystacks and like I told you, these things were huge. They would be like, oh, 30 ft tall and they would just go up in flames. I remember my Mother and I would come out – Dad would come out, and then we would bring the coffee out and this type of stuff and watch the haystacks burn up. One time I was in kindergarten and the kindergarten teacher called my mother and was very upset because I was known for telling stories. And she said – what did you do last night. And Mother said – went we would out and watched the haystacks burn. And she said, Oh, well Pitt said you went out and watched your mother's mink coat burn up. But dad had a fire truck. He got an old antique fire truck which they used as the fire truck for Marinette, and Surprise and some of

these little places here. That was about all they had for emergencies, was the old hook and ladder truck.

BROWN: Thank you very much for sharing your story with us.

LUCKING: Well, this has been delightful. And if you would like to look at the scrap book you may.

AGRICULTURISTS OF THE MONTH

J. Charles
WETZLER

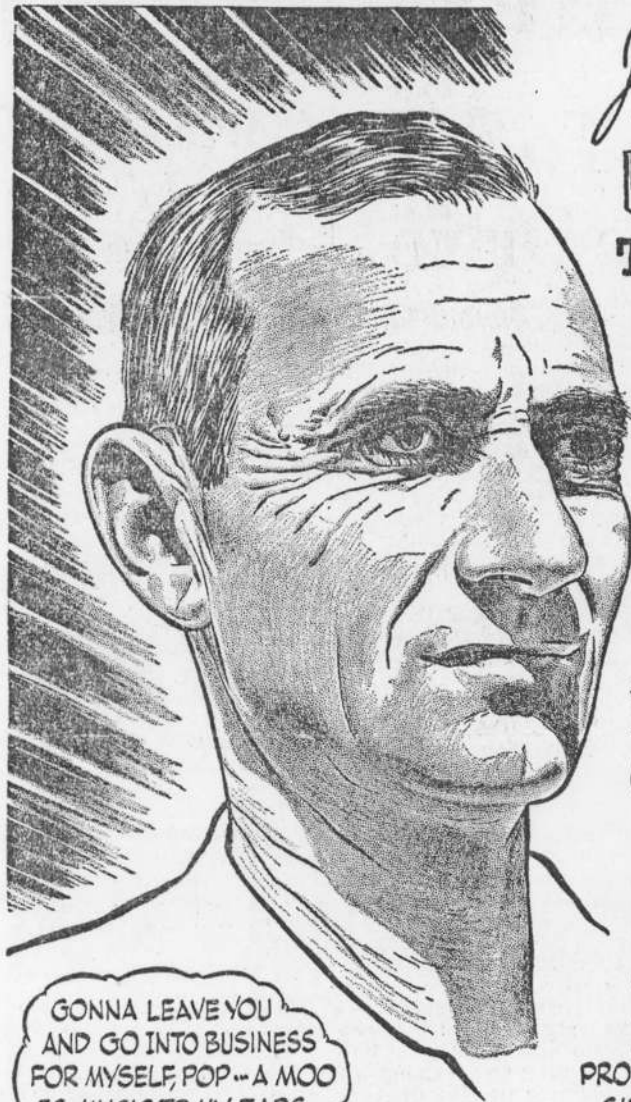
THE WINNER OF THE VALLEY OF THE SUN KIWANIS CLUB'S AWARD AS AGRICULTURIST OF THE MONTH DIVIDES HIS TIME BETWEEN HOLBROOK, WHERE HE RAISES CATTLE, AND THE SALT RIVER VALLEY, WHERE HE FEEDS 'EM.

LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE ABOUT READY FOR A SQUARE MEAL



WHEN HE WAS 16 YEARS OLD HE WENT TO WORK FOR HIS FATHER, A SHEEP RAISER, AND A FEW YEARS LATER STRUCK OUT ON HIS OWN AS A CATTLE RANCHER IN NAVAJO CO.

HE HAS SERVED ON THE ARIZONA PRODUCTION AND MARKETING COMMITTEE SINCE 1943 ... HE IS A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL ARIZONA CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, A COMMITTEEMAN WITH THE ARIZONA CATTLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION AND A DIRECTOR OF THE MARICOPA COUNTY MUNICIPAL WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT.



GONNA LEAVE YOU AND GO INTO BUSINESS FOR MYSELF, POP... A MOO IS MUSIC TO MY EARS BUT I CAN'T STAND THAT BAA-A-A



EDGE

Hello, Sun City West; So Long, Lizard Acres

Cattle are giving way to people at the new Sun City West, where residential construction is in its early stages.

One of the nation's big commercial feed lots, Lizard Acres, is part of an 11,000-acre tract which the Del E. Webb Development Corp. bought in 1972 for its second huge unit of retirement homes and recreation facilities.

Lizard Acres is moving out after more than 30 years of feeding as many as 25,000 cattle at a time, and its striking name soon will be erased by smooth streets, neat homes and nicely manicured yards.

BUT CATTLEMEN of the Southwest — and elsewhere — will remember it as Lizard Acres.

J. C. "Charlie" Wetzler says he and his wife, Katharine collaborated in picking the name after his Circle One Livestock Co. began its feeding operations there in 1945.

Not because they thought the name was pretty, but because it was different. Cattle were coming to Circle One from as far away as Florida — "and if there are two places in the United States with the same name, you can

(Concluded from Page D-1)

cleared, the feed mill dismantled and some of the equipment sold. Wetzler says he still has 4,000 or 5,000 cattle on feed with friends at other locations in the Valley and hasn't quite managed to move off the Sun City West site: "We're still one percent there."

HE'S A BIT doubtful about the commercial feeding business now because of an oversupply of feed lots and because the beef price picture doesn't encourage cattlemen to expand their holdings.

"What can a man do when he buys feeder cattle at 60 cents a pound and they get at 52 cents?" Wetzler

bet the railroads or the truckers will go to the wrong place," Wetzler said.

WETZLER, SCION of pioneer Arizona families, has been working with cattle since the 1920s. His father was a sheep man. His grandfather on his mother's side was I. E. Solomon who founded the Gila Valley Bank at Solomonville in 1899. It was a major forerunner of the present Valley National Bank.

Says Wetzler of his Circle One operations at Lizard Acres, "We've been running a hotel for cattle. We don't own them, we house and feed them for other people."

In short, Circle One takes raw steers and fattens them for market in a management operation which at one time shipped carloads of evenly developed steers to a major supermarket chain for processing as its best beef specialties.

WETZLER HAD a partner, R. C. "Rance" Spurlock, when Circle One started, and its headquarters were in Holbrook. The partners dissolved the arrangement amicably in 1954 for family and financial reasons and divided their holdings.

For a time, the Wetzler-Spurlock operations were at Tremaine, in the Mesa-Chandler area. Then Circle One acquired a 640-acre section of what was to be called Lizard Acres, which later tripled in size.

Now the 1,800 acres are being

Turn to • SO LONG, Page D-3

half a million dollars in 1951, but made most of it back the next year. His prime asset, he believes, has been good credit — which many good cattlemen always have claimed they lack in sufficient quantity.

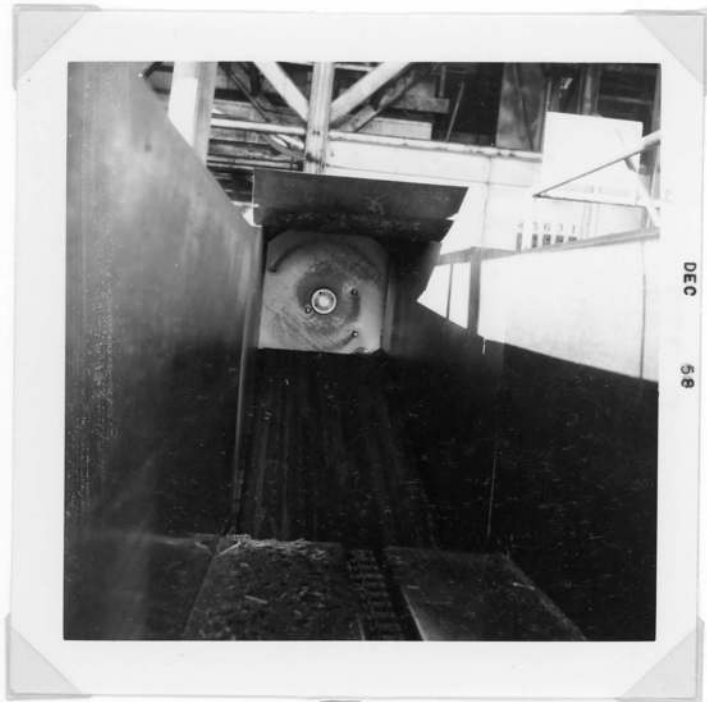
IN HIS EARLY days here, Wetzler lived on 11th Avenue and drove daily to Lizard Acres. There was only one traffic light between his home and his place of business, he recalls.

The commercial feed lot survived the first Sun City, some of whose early residents complained they couldn't open their windows because of stench from Lizard Acres' operations. Complaints stopped after scientific



WETZLER

Equipment all Made & Used at Sigard Acres, Az
1958



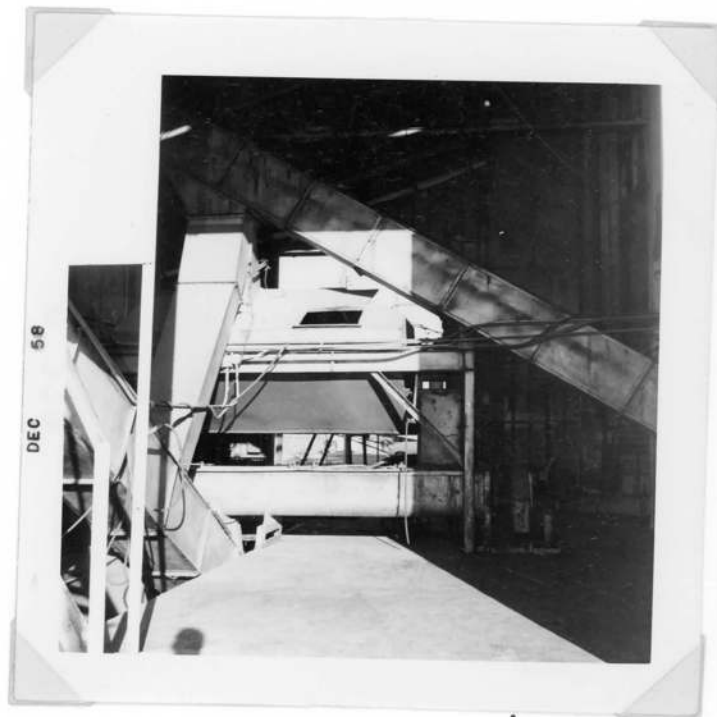
Hay Bale Shredder
made & used at
Sigard Acres



Sigard Acres mill



Mark Hemmill
with the
Baling Wire Roller



Molasses Mixer



Truck at the Mill



Old Sijard Acres Mill



Silage Equipment



Mark Gemmill
at mill



Silage Equipment



Silage Equipment



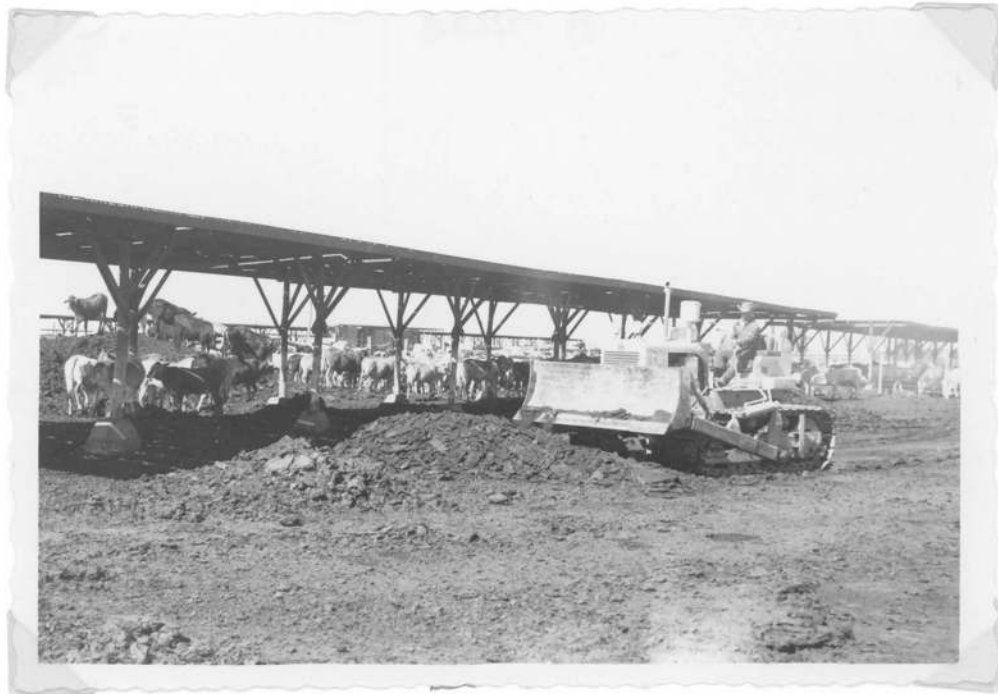
Inside the Mill



Feed Turner

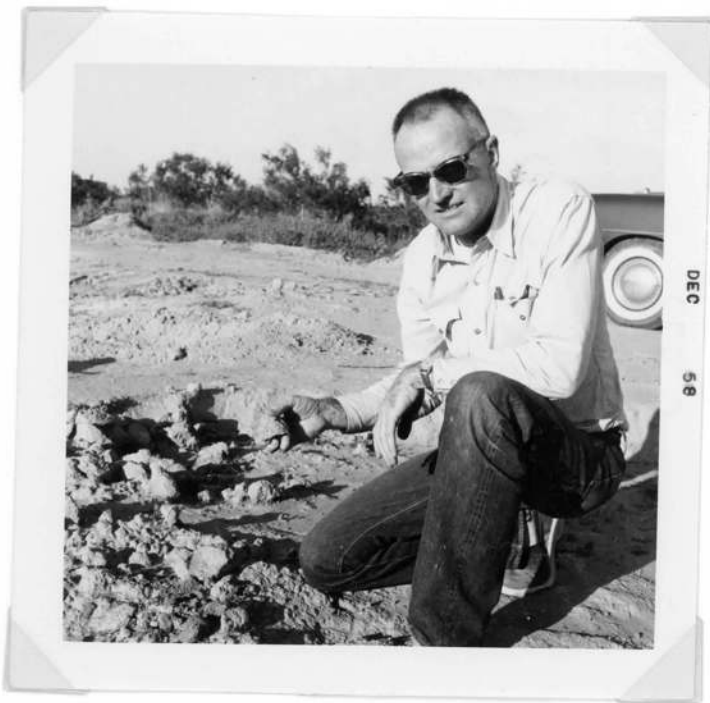


Katy's "Hope" (little brown calf)
with 400 pound Brahma calves



New TD142 International
Ray Banta driving

Some of the Men who worked at
Siyard Acers - 1958



Mark Hemmill
showing "Roofus"



Mark Hemmill
pointing out the
silage



Mark Hemmill
"Roofus Mine"



Mark Hemmill
silage

The purpose of the feed lot at Sigand Acres



Florida Brahma
Calves



Brahma Calves



Cattle & Hoopus



Feed Lot



Feed alley



The view around
Siyard Acres



Feed lot



Charlie Wetzler
at Phoenix Post Office
1958

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

RELEASE FORM

I, Barbara A. Wagers, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history project.

I understand the purpose of the SCAHS project is to collect audio taped oral histories of the Sun Cities Area original residents, those living in the area and of those who supported the growth of the Sun Cities.

I understand that the SCAHS plans to retain the products of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication and presentations for the promotion of the Historical Society and its activities in any medium.

I hereby grant SCAHS ownership of the physical property delivered to SCAHS and the right to use the property as stated above for scholarly and educational purposes.

I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold.

I also grant SCAHS my absolute and irrevocable consent for any photographs provided by me or taken of me in the course of my participation to be used, published, and copied by SCAHS and its assignees in any medium.

I agree SCAHS may use my name, or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction or other sound effects without further approval on my part.

I release SCAHS, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature Barbara A. Wagers Date 5/21/07

Printed Name Barbara A. Wagers

Address 40558 E. Louisiana Dr.

City Bennett State Co ZIP 80102

Telephone 303-644-4173

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM

Please Print Clearly

Name Barbara Ann Wagers
First Middle Maiden Name Last

Address 40558 E. Louisiana Dr.

City Bennett State CO ZIP 80102

Telephone 303-644-4173 Email barb@esrta.com

Place of Birth Brush, Colorado Birth Date 2-17-58

Race/Ethnicity (optional) _____ Male _____ Female

Are photos included? Yes _____ No
If yes, see attached Photograph Log.

Are manuscripts included? Yes No _____

Are artifacts included? Yes _____ No
If yes, see attached Inventory Log.

Interviewer BEVERLY J. BROWN Date 21 MAY 2007

Address 15933 W. SILVER BREEZE DRIVE

City SURPRISE State AZ ZIP 85374

Telephone 623-584-0440 Email STARFLIGHTERAZ@YAHOO.COM

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Barbara A Wagers

(This interview was conducted by Beverly J Brown at 10801 Oakmont Drive, Sun City, AZ on May 21, 2007. The tape was transcribed by Belva J McIntosh)

Today is May 21, 2007. I am Beverly Brown interviewing Barbara Wagers for the SCAHS. She is the granddaughter of John and Chloe MacDonald, who were the first residents of the first house built in Sun City. This interview is part of the Historical Society's Oral History program.

BROWN: Will you please state your name?

WAGERS: Barbara Wagers

BROWN: Barbara, could you please tell us a little bit about yourself and your parents and your grandparents, and your memories of this house.

WAGERS: I was born and raised in Colorado and I still live in Colorado. I am a technology trainer for the Aurora Public Schools. I have been in education now for twenty four years. My father was a farmer and so we lived on the eastern plains of Colorado as he farmed. He grew up with two other brothers and they were also farmers. So their parents as well moved to Sun City when it first opened. So I have very fond memories of both of my sets of grandparents living in Sun City.

BROWN: How did they her about Sun City?

WAGERS: I don't know. I think it was just time for retirement and they both liked to play golf a lot, both of them did, so that probably was the attraction for them coming to Sun City. So when I was four years old in 1962 were my first memories of coming to Sun City. We always came at Christmas time because my mother was a teacher and she got two weeks off. So we always came here to Sun City to spend Christmas with both sets of grandparents. So I have many great

memories of this house as well as Sun City growing up. I can remember as a child driving up Grand Avenue and there were cotton fields and desert off to the north. So things have changed even in my own life time. But needless to say the house and the area looks the same. I've walked the area a lot and the golf course and just have many very fond memories. We stayed at the King's Inn. Another set of my cousins would come also so spend Christmas with the Wager's side, so we would all get rooms at the King's Inn and I can remember that it was spread out over a large area of land and a swimming pool was right in the middle. So we all got to just run to the swimming pool. I think coming from Colorado and swimming in December was just out of this world. So that was really fun.

BROWN: This interview, which I forgot to mention, is being conducted in the Historical Society building itself which is the MacDonald's home. We are sitting at a table which is the original table and chairs from the King's Inn. Do you recognize them?

WAGERS: Yes, actually I do. I do remember them, because we would have, it would be a very special occasion we would go to the King's Inn for a dinner when we would all get together during Christmas time. That was really a special occasion to go to King's Inn. Otherwise we would have dinner at different sets of grandparents and that was fun as well. But I do remember the King's Inn and how we had to get all dressed up to go. But back then you got dressed up to go everywhere.

BROWN: Now taking a tour of the house does it look the same?

WAGERS: It is wonderful. You guys have done just a wonderful job re-decorating. Every room still holds memories for me and very good memories as well. The patio is a little bit different. I can remember playing out on the patio because it was so open. But as my Grandfather got a little older he enclosed it. He was a carpenter and built apartment buildings and motels back in Colorado and also in Kansas. He was very handy, so eventually he did close it off as a sun room so they could look out onto the golf course.

BROWN: Did he start remodeling it right away as soon as they moved in?

WAGERS: No he didn't. He left it open for quite a long time.

BROWN: I mean the whole house, adding the bedroom and bathroom.

WAGERS: No, that was done later as well. So all of the original he kept for a long amount of time.

BROWN: So where did your other grandparents live?

WAGERS: They lived on Augusta Avenue. It is right next to 12649. That is where my uncle Everett lived and that is the only address my mom could find in her address book because she sent Christmas cards. So she said you will have to look at the other side of that house. I remember in Sun City, because it was new and because it was for retired folks that they had very strict curfews and very strict laws that we should not be able to run around and that we needed to be escorted by adults. So we really had to mind our manners when we were here and just respect every body else. That was pretty interesting, because now I see it is a little – there is more traffic and there are more younger folks around and whereas before you hardly saw any car traffic, you saw golf cart traffic but you didn't see the car traffic. But just a couple of times, and I will say that, just a couple of times at night, there were times that we would all run between the two houses on the golf course, and that was like a big no-no. But we ran really fast so we didn't get caught. And we were never allowed, that was one of the rules, we were never running around or being loud or anything. So that was kind of fun. So that was South Augusta and then they moved --

BROWN: When did they move here?

WAGERS: About the same time. They moved – is there a Snead Street? I'm kind of thinking that was another street. They moved on further away from this golf course to a second home where my grandpa stayed here in this house the whole time.

BROWN: Did he play golf?

WAGERS: Yes, they played golf a lot. Both of them did.

BROWN: Did you ever get to go in the golf cart with him when he played?

WAGERS: No, that was a no-no because I don't think children were allowed to be on the golf course. When we got to ride in the golf cart that was a real special occasion.

BROWN: Did your grandparents talk about the clubs they belong to?

WAGERS: I think only my grandfathers, both of them, belonged to the country clubs and my grandmothers, I don't remember them being really involved in women's clubs. No, I take that back. They were big bridge players. My Grandma Wagers was a big bridge player. My Grandma MacDonald was not, but she pretty much stayed home and minded the house. We called them Daddy Mac and Mommy Mac because our other Wagers set of grandparents are grandma and granddad, so calling them mommy mac and daddy mac were special names. But as far as the house, getting back to the house, I think the living room is just a really neat area. I can remember my grandfather watching the Friday night boxing matches there and then like I say he was very handy so that little storage shed that they came with the house was where he had his tools and where he played a lot and built things, because he did build the railroad tracks that my brothers played with during the Christmas times. He built that and glued all the trees and probably even put a few of the trains and cars together. He was quite talented in that respect.

BROWN: So was it pretty safe here then, were there any fears of not being safe?

WAGERS: No, not at all. We always felt safe coming here. We did walk back and forth from the King's Inn and the only thing we had to do was be careful of 107th because that was always a busy street. So that was about the only thing that we really had to watch for. It was just so fun because it was just so different from life in Colorado and watching the golf carts and then being here when it was very warm out when it was very cold in Colorado. So that was special.

BROWN: Do you remember your grandparents enjoying life here?

WAGERS: Oh, they loved it here. Now they did, Mommy and Daddy Mac would come to Colorado in August and September when it was so hot here, they would come and stay with us for those couple of months. But again, that was very special too because then we did different things. I got to come home from school and they would be here and we would go off –my grandfather had a fascination for railroads so we would always go to the depot and watch the five o'clock zephyr go through and then he would sneak me out of the house at ten o'clock at night which my mother was not very happy about and we would watch the ten o'clock zephyr go through Brush. He had a real fascination for trains so that has always grown on me and I have always loved trains as well. So those are nice memories of them coming to us too, when it was so hot in Sun City.

BROWN: The Wagers didn't come up?

WAGERS: The Wagers eventually moved back. In 1978 they decided they would move back and so they did sell their house and come back and it was nice having them in town as well. My grandparents on the MacDonald side actually came to Brush, must have been in the 50's, because they lived there when my mother met my father. Brush was my dad's home town. So they moved from Denver to Brush. My Grandfather built a motel there and an apartment building, he did some plumbing. He was a master plumber and then he also owned a couple of motels in Kansas, in St. Francis, Kansas that he had built. A couple of times over a couple of summers, I believe in the late '70's, my older brother and sister, Greg and Susan went to the motel for the summer and worked there. Again I was too young to do much good but I did get to visit a couple of times. So he ran the motels for a few years and then sold them.

BROWN: So when did the MacDonald's leave?

WAGERS: My grandfather actually died here, in 1983. He had remarried – my grandmother had actually passed away in 1971, she passed away in Brush. They came back and stayed and she died in October 1971 and so she was in Brush when

she passed away. Then he came back down here and about a year or two later he remarried.

BROWN: Someone in Sun City?

WAGERS: Yes, I believe so. No, actually she was from Denver. Cause it was very interesting that they kind of dated. It was a little weird. My grandfather started wearing plaid pants and wild shirts and I think he even grew some facial hair too. It was very interesting because I remember him in what we call now Docker pants and polo shirts, golf shirts. That is all I remember him in when he lived in Sun City. But anyway he and Tabitha moved back to the house. He brought her back so he never sold the house. So they remained in the house until he passed away in 1983. It was neat that he was here for quite a while and enjoyed it and enjoyed the golfing and just the life style. Loved to go out to dinner.

BROWN: You said you walked around the area and it hasn't changed much?

WAGERS: No, it was very interesting. I walked around, I remembered the community center, now the lawn bowling is new from back in the '60's, they didn't have a lawn bowling lawn, but the golf course looks the same and the club house looks the same. They have maintained it very well. Again as I said, the community center, that was a no-no because kids were not allowed in there, so I honestly have never been inside there because that was for the community and not for visitors. Especially not for little kids. Like I said those kind of unwritten rules, were very interesting but we respected them. It was always very quiet at night. I remember that during the day the heat didn't bother us and of course in December it was pretty nice, but it seemed like it was pretty quiet during the day. I noticed that this weekend that things are still pretty quiet when it is hot out. But then this morning I took a walk early and people were lining up to play golf. That is cool, I think that is really a neat life style.

BROWN: Anything else you can think of?

WAGERS: Well, I just want to thank you so much for letting me speak and share my memories with you today Beverly, and just thank you so much for taking care of the house.

BROWN: Thank you for sharing your memories.

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

RELEASE FORM

I, Jeanne Parr, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history project.

I understand the purpose of the SCAHS project is to collect audio taped oral histories of the Sun Cities Area original residents, those living in the area and of those who supported the growth of the Sun Cities.

I understand that the SCAHS plans to retain the products of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication and presentations for the promotion of the Historical Society and its activities in any medium.

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I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold.

I also grant SCAHS my absolute and irrevocable consent for any photographs provided by me or taken of me in the course of my participation to be used, published, and copied by SCAHS and its assignees in any medium.

I agree SCAHS may use my name, or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction or other sound effects without further approval on my part.

I release SCAHS, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature Jeanne Parr Date 7/29/07
Printed Name Jeanne Parr
Address 19410 143rd Drive
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Telephone 623-584-7025

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM

Please Print Clearly

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First Middle Maiden Name Last

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City Sun City West State AZ ZIP 85375

Telephone 623-584-7025 Email jeannetarr@aol.com

Place of Birth Sayville, N.Y. Birth Date 8-24

Race/Ethnicity (optional) _____ Male _____ Female X

Are photos included? Yes _____ No X
If yes, see attached Photograph Log.

Are manuscripts included? Yes X No _____

Are artifacts included? Yes _____ No X
If yes, see attached Inventory Log.

Interviewer BEVERLY BROWN Date 29 JUL 2007

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Jeanne Tarr

Interviewed by Beverly Brown July 29, 2007

Transcribed by Belva McIntosh September 1, 2007

Today is July 29th, 2007. My name is Beverly Brown and I am interviewing Jeanne Tarr here in her home in Sun City West for the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

BROWN: Jeanne, if you could state your name and tell us a little bit about yourself and how you came to Sun City West.

TARR: My name is Jeanne Tarr and Mike and I came here from Westchester County, New York. We had a motor home and we went around the country looking for a place to land. When we first even saw Sun City we said, Ah, look at this place! So neat, clean, lovely, beautiful, this is where we want to be. So we went to a real estate agent and he said, oh you can just go over to Sun City West, which we did. We looked at the model homes, and although we weren't going to be able to retire for seven more years we decided this was where we wanted to be and we came back to visit every single year until we were able to retire in 1987. We had both been involved in theater. We met doing "Most Happy Fella", a show, a musical, played opposite each other, got married in 1974 and we both performed locally in our community theater, we did some dinner theater, we did some summer stock. We had all but given it up a number of years before we came here because we were getting older and there was a new young crowd in the theater. So we took up square dancing. That was actually what we were doing when we came here. We were challenge square dancers and we thought that was going to be the thing that would be fun for us. But it didn't take long for us to get involved here in the theater.

BROWN: Did you find out about it right away or is that just one of the things you learned about ---

TARR: Well, there was no theater here until 1989. That was when the Stardust Theater was built in the Kuentz Recreation Center. So we had already been living here before that theater was built and in that first year we were here we came to see

the variety show in 1987 and we both said, oh, we would like to be part of that. I happened to meet Dorothy Fromme who was on the committee then and she invited Mike and I to come to their next sort of board meeting to discuss the 1988 show. When Jerry Halstron was building the sets at that time we found out that Mike was also very capable at doing that, he was anxious to have him aboard. I volunteered to help out in anyway that I could. As it happened the Portofields were directing the show. The Portofields were directing it and they were having some trouble figuring just what to do and Mike and I said oh we would like to help out. Then as it happened they had some problems back in Oregon and they were not able to continue directing so Mike took over the 1988 show. He directed '88 and '89. But he was really more interested in directing shows in our Stardust Theater where he could do musicals, comedies and things of that sort. It never entered my mind that I would go on and take over the theater, the variety show that is. In 1991 there was some problems about who was going to direct it and the committee met and I found myself saying, well I'll do it. Mike couldn't believe it and I couldn't believe that I had said it because I had never done anything like that before. But that was my first time and I guess it worked out all right because I did seventeen of them before I retired in 2006.

BROWN: Now all the talent was local, right, from Sun City West?

TARR: From Sun City West and Sun City – the two of them – yes. Eventually it worked out that everybody really came from Sun City West because Sun City and Sun City Grand both had their own shows. So we wanted to give Sun City West full access to being part of it.

BROWN: Now how did you find the people, the performers, or did they find you?

TARR: We had open auditions, certainly in those first years anyway because I didn't know the people. We had plenty of people just come out. I had never had to do anything about the dancing because the dancing instructors did those for me. So we had the Rhythm Tappers and we had the Jazz Dancers and we had Hawaiian dancers and ballet and cloggers. These were all part of separate clubs and their instructors would – I would tell them what my theme was and what I would like for them to do, so they handled that. And that was really a big part of the show; it was not a problem at all. And then Mike and I really gave our time to the chorus. We had a lot of rehearsals for the chorus and that really was the most rewarding part of all, because the performers who were soloists, they just came in and do their number. Most of them you don't have to direct much and as long as they were willing to do a number that coincided with the theme of the particular show, that

was fine. But we really loved working with the chorus. It grew from maybe twenty five people in '91 to about 110 in 2002. I always felt that the chorus was the heart of the show. They were the ones who kept the show moving and came out with whatever the theme of the show was. It gave so many people an opportunity to be on that Sundome stage; people that aren't soloists but who really wanted to do it. That was the very happy part of it.

BROWN: Were most people involved in music and dancing before they came here?

TARR: You know it is both ways. We have had people who have been on Broadway, some wonderfully talented people, and we had people who had never performed before in their lives. So it ran the whole spectrum of talent and background.

BROWN: How did you pick the theme?

TARR: Well that was something else. Probably the part I liked the best was picking a theme and somehow I always had another idea for the following year. I loved research so it was great fun to find out everything about – well for instance in 1995 we did something called “We The People” and of course that was all based on patriotism. The next year we did “Once Upon a Time” and that was all the different characters from children’s books and Disney. When we did “It’s a Small World” it was all nations. So we had music from all over the world. In 1999 we did “Thanks for the Memories” which was the whole, you know from 1900 to 2000. So we started and we talked about every decade, and all that happened in that decade and we would do songs and dances that would reflect that time. Then in 2000 we did “Everything Old is new Again” because so much of what happens now has happened in the past. Then “In You Ought to be in Pictures” we did all Hollywood music and in “Give My Regards” we did all Broadway music. Then in 2003 we did “Celebration” which was Sun City West’s 25th anniversary. One of the things that we did was we made, with people, a great big birthday cake. That was all gals in white, and it was amazing how it really looked like a cake, and the men held up the 25 candles in the center. Then we did another all-American one, “The Spirit of America”. In the winner’s circle we did a show that every song either sung or danced was a winner of either a Tony award, Oscar, the Grammy and this past year, 2006, we did “Our Favorite Things” and that was – we brought back different numbers from all the shows we have done that Mike and I felt we loved the best. So it was an all repeat show. So that is pretty much the run of the shows.

BROWN: Who did you have to coordinate with within Sun City West?

TARR: The shows were sponsored, of course, by Sun Health. All the money went to Sun Health, everything that was made.

BROWN: Did they give you money to start with?

TARR: Yes, in a sense. They paid for the insurance rights to do it. We couldn't use the Sundome without a sponsor that would underwrite insurance. Yes, they paid for mailings and things like that. The Sundome charged us for the use of the building and for the tickets and all that and whatever was made, whatever profit was made, which in the years that I did it amounted to one million three hundred thousand dollars, and it was donated to Sun Health. So that was pretty exciting. I loved working with them. I worked with Sorena Sorenson all through the years. She had to retire year before last. And Pamela Myerhoffer and it was just a wonderful union. We always got along just great. There were no problems at all. That happened all up through 2005 and then last year we just did it in our small theater and the recipient of the money was Theater West because we were building on. We were adding on a sewing room and costume room so we made, I believe it was 45,000 dollars for that.

BROWN: Was that because the Sundome was closed?

TARR: The Sundome was closed. Now this current year, 2007, there will be a variety show, although she is not calling it that. I think it is something with stars. Jan Wilson will be directing it. She has always been part of the Jazz Dancers. It will be back at the Sundome in November.

BROWN: So 2006 was in the Stardust Theater you said?

TARR: 2005 was also, but in 2005 we did do it for Sun Health. So it was just one year that we did not. And now it goes back to Sun Health again. I think the largest number we have ever played to was somewhere around 12,000 people in one season.

BROWN: So at the Sundome you really didn't have to get any approval or coordination with anybody in Sun City West.

TARR: No. A benefit for Sun Health.

BROWN: How many people would you have in a production?

TARR: Well, the largest number was probably about two hundred. Anywhere from 100 to 200 depending on the year and the place we did it in.

BROWN: So you would coordinate all of these people?

TARR: Well, we would have auditions in January or February and I would have it pretty much written out what I wanted to do. The chorus would have three rehearsals in the spring, usually in May when they would get their music and get their CD's with the music on it, with the idea that they were supposed to learn over the summer because we had nothing between May and September. Then every Saturday in September and October the chorus would meet. Mike, my husband, would lead the chorus. That is where most of our work went. Meanwhile the dancers were all rehearsing in their own clubs. I would have a look in and see how things were going, but as I said before I didn't have too much I had to do as far as all the dancing was concerned. The principals would begin in the end of September, first of October, and have three or four rehearsals together then we would move into the Sundome and we would be in there for four or five rehearsals. We did five shows Thursday night, two on Friday and two on Saturday. That was always in November.

BROWN: Did you have to do the stage sets and the lighting and everything?

TARR: The stage sets were done by Jerry Holstrum who was the chairman of our committee with Helping Hands. Mike did a lot of that too. We hired professionals to do the lighting and we hired professionals to do the sound. So they came in only two days before we opened. That was an expense in addition to the cost of the Sundome.

BROWN: What about the costumes?

TARR: Costumes, mostly each person did their own costumes. We never did have a costume budget. Usually of course the dancers all bought their costumes; soloists pretty much could get their things together. The chorus, at times we charged them about \$10 a piece for their costumes. Then we had a group of people that would make them. Sometimes it was just T-shirts, other times it was vests or something like that. So there was not a lot of costs to Sun Health or anybody else.

Each one more or less got their own. Some of those dancers were in 3 or 4 different numbers so that was quite an outlay for each one of them.

BROWN: You said you did research for the shows. Did you go to local libraries or what?

TARR: Well, that is how I started but now of course it is the internet. There is just nothing like the internet for looking up things.

BROWN : (unable to hear question)

TARR: Yes, that too. We had somebody who did our music for us. He did the orchestrations for us. So we had the music way in advance so the people could work from January or February on.

BROWN: (unable to hear question, something about copyrights.)

TARR: We were covered by a blanket thing at the Sundome. They carry that.

BROWN: Did you perform yourself?

TARR: Yes, in every one of them. Mike and I both sang, so we have both been in every show. I always put myself in the second act because I like to sit out in front and watch the first act. Make sure everything was going OK.

BROWN: Now how did you decide to retire from this?

TARR: Well actually it all just sort of worked out that way. Mike had to retire from directing in the little theater so I really needed his help; I mean he really was my right hand person. There were a lot of things he could do that I couldn't do. He knows a lot about sound and lights. We were a team. I knew that it would very, very difficult to go ahead without him. I didn't want to stress him making him feel that he would have to do so. So it seemed like the right time to stop.

BROWN: Will you perform in the next show?

TARR: I will be singing in this years show. Yes, of course I miss it and I am sure that when the show goes on this year that I will have feelings, but gosh, it was a good run.

BROWN: So you don't have any regrets for moving to Sun City West?

TARR: Oh no, we have lived here twenty years now, and how fortunate to have twenty years of retirement so far. It has been wonderful. We don't want to live anywhere else but right here.

BROWN: Is there anything else you would like to add?

TARR: I think you know pretty much all about me now.

BROWN: Jeanne, thank you very much for sharing your story with us.

TARR: You are welcome.

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ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature Jane J. Freeman Date Aug. 5, 2007

Printed Name Jane J. Freeman

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City San City State Az ZIP 85373

Telephone 623-974-5377

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETYORAL HISTORY PROJECTBIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM

Please Print Clearly

Name Jane Elizabeth Jones Freeman
 First Middle Maiden Name Last

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City SUN CITY State AZ ZIP 85373

Telephone 623-974-5377 Email -

Place of Birth ERIE PA Birth Date APRIL 8, 1920

Race/Ethnicity (optional) _____ Male _____ Female

Are photos included? Yes _____ No _____
 If yes, see attached Photograph Log.

Are manuscripts included? Yes _____ No _____

Are artifacts included? Yes _____ No _____
 If yes, see attached Inventory Log.

Interviewer BEVERLY BROWN Date 5 AUG ~~2007~~ 2007

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Jane Freeman

Interviewed by Beverly Brown August 5, 2007

Transcribed by Belva McIntosh August 30, 2007

Today is August 5, 2007. I am Beverly Brown, and I am interviewing Jane Freeman in her home for the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

BROWN: Jane, if you would state your name, then tell us a little about yourself and how you came to Sun City.

FREEMAN: My name is Jane Freeman. Before we came to Sun City I was born and raised in Erie, Pennsylvania. I still have a twin brother living back there. Education wise – after high school I went to college. I came through with degrees in bachelors and masters and a doctorate at the University of Virginia. From there I went to New York State took a position up there and ended up at a brand new community college. At that time it was called Director of Student Personnel, but it was ultimately changed to Dean of Students. I was there about ten years. My husband and I decided it was time to retire. He got to checking his income and he decided he would get more money retired than he was working. So we started looking around at retirement areas in Florida, Colorado. In the meantime his sister had moved to Sun City so we thought we would come and see what that was all about. We decided we didn't want to live with all those old people but we came back the next year and it looked pretty good so we did sign up for a house. We moved out here in 1970. The first few years, like everybody else we were involved with a lot of golf and activities at the recreation centers, primarily in silver craft and lapidary. Then my husband died in 1977, not too long after we moved here. That is when I became involved in community volunteer work.

BROWN: So what did you start with? What was the first thing you did – first volunteer activity?

FREEMAN: I don't know what the first thing was but I know I became involved with Meals on Wheels, and I am now in my twenty seventh year for that. But in the early '80's the Daily News Sun and the Sun City Independent formed what they called a press council. It was composed of about ten or twelve people in Sun City, sort of an ombudsman sounding board. At one of the meetings it came up

that we didn't have a city hall, we didn't have a chamber of commerce, there was no place of central information where people could go. I said we've got a 25th anniversary coming up, that was about in 1982 or '83. Nobody has got any history, nobody has collected anything. Somebody said why don't you write one and I said oh sure, like I am an author. But Glenn Sandburg was on the committee and he had done some writing and was doing a newspaper column, so I just facetiously said well, Glenn, how about it, and he said, sure let's do it. Fools walk in where angels fear to tread. We took on the 25 year history which turned out to be a book called *Jubilee*. I will say the community was wonderful in its support. We put out a call for help and people started sending in all kinds of information, people volunteered to do preliminary work on various chapters and collecting information for us. We couldn't have done it without them. We were working out of our homes, then Bert Freireich who was then the owner and publisher of the Daily News Sun had a small room that he turned over to us. So at least we had someplace where we could keep all this information. That was a big help. We just gradually worked – it took us a good 2 to 2 ½ years to pull everything together. DEVCO, which is the Del E. Webb Development Company, which was a subsidiary of the Webb Corporation, and DEVCO as we call it, was what was building Sun City. They gave us a lot of information and helped us a great deal, particularly when it came to copyrights and that sort of thing. They did a lot of the legal work for us which was a big help. Later when we bought our house they helped us go through the deeds and all that legal work. Along the line they had a change of administration at DEVCO and John Meeker resigned, and Jerry Svendson who was a PR man resigned.

BROWN: What year would that have been?

FREEMAN: I don't remember the exact year but it was in the '80's. The orders came down from the home office to clean out all the records. I just happened to be in the office the day after that came out and the secretary was packing everything in the boxes. I said, what are you doing with it and she said we are throwing it out. I said, can we have it and so that is how we got so many photographs, all kinds of records, newsletters, model home information, boxes and boxes and boxes of it. If I hadn't been there we would have lost it. That is really the bulk of our collection, even today.

BROWN: So that is how you started the Historical Society?

FREEMAN: So after *Jubilee* was published, which came out – we had it available for sale Thanksgiving 1984 at the big fair that they have at Sun Dial. But going

back to *Jubilee* we didn't have any money to print it and we had to seek some funding. So we went to DEVCO and they said yes they would do it, but they wanted to have editorial rights and take it over and we said no, because they would be making it a marketing tool. We said no we would look elsewhere. That is when the Boswell Foundation stepped in and gave us underwriting for the entire cost and an interest free loan and I think it was about ten days after the book went on sale that we were able to repay the loan. The Boswell Foundation, even to this day, is very supportive of the Historical Society and Boswell was very, very pleasant to work with. I think we had about 10,000 copies printed and at that time it cost us \$3.65 a copy to print and we sold it for \$5.00 because we wanted to make it available and people could afford it. But part of the reduced cost was we had to do all the paste up work because we didn't have computers in those days. The printing company would do it or we could do it. So Glenn and I had a good education for preparing a book for printing. But it was fun and we learned a lot. Here we had all these boxes of information and Bert Friereich needed his office and Dr. Crease who had a lot of medical offices, which is now Arizona Medical Clinic had a small office which he made available to us at no cost, which was a life saver. We could keep everything down there and we had a phone and we had a couple of people who were helping us kind of pull things together. Then we thought, what are we going to do with all this? Some said let's form a historical society. Of course I didn't know the first thing about forming a historical society and didn't even know where to go for help but we managed it. We had an organizational meeting on the 14th of November 1986. We met at Sundowner Restaurant, which is now a Chinese restaurant there at 107th and Grand Ave. We met in what was called their Marinette Room; of course Marinette being the town which is now Sun City. That was the beginning – I was kind of initially the first president. Officially Glenn Sandberg was the first president after we had gotten organized. We got our articles of incorporation, and again DEVCO people helped us go through the legalities of that. That was a big help. They have been very supportive. I can't remember the exact date when the house came on the market – must have been late '88 or early '89. The very first model home at 10801 Oakmont Drive came on the market for sale. We thought that's it. Who had \$41,000 to buy it. So again we put the call out and again Boswell Foundation came through. The Del Webb Foundation came through and I think DEVCO gave us \$5,000. And of course community support and some of the earliest founders put in some money and we were able to buy it. It is the smallest house of the first five models and it was called the Kentworth, 858 square feet, and it had a storage and carport with 306 square feet. The basic cost \$8500. Now if you wanted air conditioning, that was \$600. The fact that it was on the golf course there was a \$1250 golf course fee you had to pay. It had a living room, two bedrooms and a

bath and attached car port and a storage room. The people who lived there, the MacDonald's occupied it from 1962 to 1984. They were not the first owners. The first owner was a gentleman in Phoenix, we don't know his name but he never lived there. I guess he bought it as an investment and then the MacDonald's lived there. In 1984 Jean Painter bought the house and she had a dress shop here in Sun City. She bought it as an investment and rental property. In 1988 she put it on the market for sale and that is when we stepped in. That is how we happened to get the house. It has been a great location. It is right next to the recreation center, which was the first recreation center, and it has been fun building it up. We got the house – we didn't have any files or desks, it was empty. The MacDonald's had put an addition on the back which included a third bedroom, a full bath and an Arizona room. So when we bought it we tore out the bath and just opened that whole back area because we wanted it as a work area. Again DEVCO came through. We could go to their warehouse and pick out files that they weren't using and desks. It was a hodgepodge. Nothing matched but it served the purpose at that particular time. It looked like a hodgepodge. It has just been this past year that we have really spruced up and gotten things in that match and it looks very professional. The society has had three publications. One was *Jubilee*, the 25 year history; then Emil Fischer did *The Churches of Sun City* which were pen and ink sketches of all the churches. He had been Dean of Architecture in one of the universities. They were beautifully done. And of course the third publication was *Sun City West 25 Year History*. So we have three copyrighted publications. They are now working on, not SCAHS particularly, but a group is working on the 50 year's history. They have agreed to have SCAHS have the copyright so that will give us four copyright publications. We are still sorting material that we got from DEVCO all those years ago, pictures, model home information. Strangely enough they never dated anything. So we have all this printed information, model home information, price information, no dates on any of it. So this has been driving us crazy trying to figure out was it here, was it there. Sometimes we just have to estimate and guess. We had to identify all of the pictures and put them in archival safe folders. We are maintaining what we call the vertical file. This is newspaper clippings that we transfer to archival acid-free paper and that covers everything that people might want to know about Sun City and Sun City West. We do limit it to those two areas.

BROWN: How did you decide to include Sun City West in the first place?

FREEMAN: Well, it was part of the DEVCO operation and it was a sister community. Now when Sun City Grand came into being we said no. Technically, that is in Surprise anyway. But they are now starting their own Historical Society.

I wish we had known it sooner because we discarded a lot of Grand information which they would have loved to have had had we only known. So the work goes on. People still bring in things and if we can use them we certainly take them. We have tried to restore the house back to the way it was as a model, particularly in the living room, with the furniture and the displays. We are still working on it. We did add what we now call the Marinette room, which is what was left of the original construction shed and sales office. We call it the Marinette Room because in it we have pictures and photographs of the Marinette community which became Sun City. It was a cotton farming community at that time. In fact when Sun City was starting there was still a little portion of it which would be at approximately 105th and Grand Avenue. There were still a few buildings standing, but that quickly went. We are still collecting history. We kind of use as our motto, today is tomorrow's history. If we don't collect it now we don't have it.

BROWN: Do you have a lot of visitors to the Historical Society?

FREEMAN: On the days we are open – some days we won't have any, some days we will have fourteen. We never know. We do have quite a few small groups that want to come in. Surprisingly enough we have quite a few from France, England, Japan, we probably have more from Japan than anywhere. But it is interesting when the foreign groups come in. To them this is an entirely new concept, and they don't believe it works. They are impressed with the volunteering that goes on. It is interesting when those groups come in. We also have quite a few graduate students coming in doing research on retirement communities, sociological aspects, that sort of thing. We have the University of Minnesota who is publishing a book, University of Michigan, University of Maryland. We have had two or three foreign scholars doing research and it is fun to work with them. We try to help them as much as we can. Once in a while, which is really fun, we get a high school student doing a term paper. They are just real excited you know. It is fun to work with the younger groups. The graduate students you can kind of leave on their own because they know what they want and what they are doing.

BROWN: Well, let's go back to when you first moved to Sun City. Tell me what it was like when you first moved here.

FREEMAN: We came in '70. There were still a lot of what we called pioneers left. They were the people who moved here in 1960 and 1961. They were a life saver when it came to getting information for our history. They had a pioneer club and we worked very closely with them. It was a considerably much smaller community. When we moved they had just jumped Grand Avenue as they say.

They had moved from the south to the north of Grand Avenue. It was still a very friendly, small community. It seemed like everybody knew everybody. The social groups were a lot of fun. They had a lot of barbeques and cookouts. It was – I don't want to call it a country town, but it was a village type. Everybody was with everybody else. The neighborhoods had parties and backyard cookouts. And of course as it grew the houses became larger and more opulent. People came in with higher incomes demanding more. It was gradually becoming more of a big town. But it still, I think, even to this day, it still has that hometown feeling and that hometown kind of touch. At that point we felt perfectly safe. We never locked the doors. We would leave the patio door open all night long and feel perfectly safe. I think it is still a fairly safe, secure community, but we are having more incidents where you have to be more careful, unfortunately.

BROWN: Do you have a feel for where the people came from?

FREEMAN: They came from all over. Probably the majority – the two biggest states, of course Phoenix, were California and Illinois. When it opened in 1960 they had a tremendous advertising campaign, the Webb Corporation, in the Saturday Evening Post and all the big magazines and they really sold. That first weekend, I don't know how many thousands of people they had for opening day. It was phenomenal. The sociologists said it would never work. I think the next year they held their convention out here to see why it was working.

BROWN: Did they ever decide why it worked?

FREEMAN: Well, it was a homogeneous grouping, we had interests; we could talk the same language; although we missed the grandchildren and the little children, but on the other hand we didn't. It was wonderful when they visited and we went back home to see them. I think it was the homogeneous grouping. We all just kind of blended in and we belonged to each other. If you needed any help there was always someone there to help you. And that is another nice thing to this day that is still true. The various organizations began developing. Community service groups started to develop; Sunshine Service which provides medical equipment at no charge as long as you are a resident. The Interfaith Services, Community Services came into being. The SCAT, local transportation came into being; all because of volunteer efforts.

BROWN: So it wasn't something that DEVCO said, you will do this.

FREEMAN: No. The people did it themselves. As I say the Sunshine Services, Interfaith Services, the SCAT and then we had an information and referral service; of course the Home Owners Association and the Taxpayers Association. No, DEVCO never dictated as to what it should be. Del Webb is said to have made the comment, I can build you a city, but the people make the community. And that is so true. And even to this day if there is a need the people will step in and see that it is met. So we haven't lost that closeness yet.

BROWN: You were very active with the hospital?

FREEMAN: I did a lot of volunteer work with the hospital, primarily with the Sun City Foundation, but I also served on the Boswell Board and the corporate board. I served as secretary of the corporate board for several years.

BROWN: What is the Sun City Foundation?

FREEMAN: The Sun City Foundation-that is the fund raising arm, where they raise the money for the additions and the wings and the equipment and everything. I was on that board for about fifteen years. It gets to a point where it is time to retire and bring in some new blood; and particularly the area that was expanding. I said we have got to get people on the board that are not from Sun City but the outlying areas; Litchfield Park, Wickenburg, bringing them in because that is where the people are living. But I have kind of retired from Sun Health. It is time for younger blood. But I enjoyed it and I learned a lot.

BROWN: Yes, but you were in education, right? And this was a medical deal.

FREEMAN: Yeah. But it was fun and I enjoy volunteer work because you feel like you are doing something for somebody. Particularly Meals on Wheels, the people are just so grateful and so glad to see you.

BROWN: What was the relationship between Sun City and Youngtown early on?

FREEMAN: I don't know that you would call it a relationship. When Sun City first opened I understand that the people in Youngtown could use the recreation center. But as Sun City became larger they had to withdraw that. But there has always been a good relationship as far as I can understand. Sometime back one of the Youngtown residents, Lucille Retherford, came to me and said we want to start a Historical Society. So I worked with Lucille and helped get the Youngtown society set up. It is a very small group but they are doing a great job. They are

still in there pitching. Every now and then we also schedule a meeting with the Sunnyslope Society, Glendale Historical Society, Peoria Historical Society. We get together and swap ideas and we usually try to bring in a speaker who can give us new insights. I want to get together again this fall. We haven't done it in about a year. It is fun to see what the other groups are doing too.

BROWN: So the Sun City Grand people who want to start their Historical Society, did they come to you?

FREEMAN: Well, she called me and she wants to come in some time this fall and see what we have done and I said I want to get you started with a professional. So I told them the person to contact at the Arizona Historical Society, Tempe Branch. I said they can get you set up as it should be set up. We just set up – I was not a trained archivist. I didn't know how to catalog. I didn't know how to accession things. I didn't know how to keep the records. We just sort of bumbled our way through. I did go to workshops and meetings and conferences and tried to learn as much as I could, but it was not professional. Right now we are trying to find somebody to come in and spend a whole year. It won't be cheap. But to get everything catalogued and what we call accessioned, everything in the computers so we know what we got and where it came from. But I said starting out, start out right. But by all means come and see us and we will show you what we have got and give some ideas. I gave her name to the Arizona Historical Society contact. So they were going to get together and get started. We will certainly help them in any way we can.

BROWN: Was it your idea to start this oral history project?

FREEMAN: Well yes. We were looking around. And that is interesting at our organizational meeting our main speaker was Doctor Stoll, Noel J. Stoll, ASU. He was chairman of the Department of State and Local History. He mentioned something about oral history. I had never heard of oral history so we pursued that. But he had a student, a graduate student who was finishing her master's degree and had hopes of going on for her doctorate. He said let me see if she would be interested in doing an oral history. That was Melanie Sturgeon who is now the State Archivist. She did our original oral histories. Now she was not a trained interviewer but she did a good job with her background. She lived in Mesa. She commuted to Sun City. She didn't charge us anything. We insisted that we pay gasoline and her materials. But she said she couldn't take a salary as a graduate intern type student.

BROWN: What was her degree going to be in?

FREEMAN In history and museum type sort of work. She continued right on through her doctorate degree with these oral histories and as a result we became quite friendly. How she did it I don't know? Shortly after she started – she had I think four or five children –and her husband left her – just left her and walked out; had nothing to do with them, no support. Here she was going to school, putting kids through school, trying to work full time. I don't know how she did it, but she did it, and she did a good job. Her kids all graduated from college and are doing fine. And as I said she is now the State Archivist.

BROWN: So she interviewed the pioneers.

FREEMAN: She did a lot of the pioneers and original residents. She really got us started in the oral history. When we first moved here the houses were very modest and as I indicated they got bigger and bigger and more expensive. Now the people coming in and buying the houses are literally gutting them and remodeling them, changing the exterior as well as the interior, enlarging so you don't even recognize the original home as it was built. It is interesting that the people coming in are doing that.

BROWN: That means that the homes were well built in the first place.

FREEMAN: The homes were very well built in the first place. They were of cement block construction. In the 70's there was a strike with the cement block layers and that is when they went some kind of lumber, I don't know what they call it, pressed board or something like that. But we could still get our choice of cinder block at that time but the house would be later getting started. But the strike was settled and we held out for cinder block because it made great insulation. But they stopped using that. But they are – the early houses were very well built. Now later on they put up the whole side at one time.

BROWN: It was more like a tract house?

FREEMAN: Yes. They had certain models and they would put up this wall and they would put up that wall.

BROWN: So the baby boomers are moving into Sun City now?

FREEMAN: Yes. And again they say the volunteers aren't like they used to be, but many of these people are still working.

BROWN: So it is a little early to judge whether they are going to volunteer like your generation.

FREEMAN: If you are working during the week, five days a week, you aren't going to take your two days off. Although we do have some in Meals on Wheels who work five days a week and volunteer one day a week. So there are some that will do it. But I have found that if you are looking for a volunteer, they may not volunteer, but if you ask them, more often than not they will say yes. So we have learned to ask people if they would help us. And by the way the Society can always use volunteers. But it is interesting how the housing is changing. One thing that has changed in the housing picture, in the 80's early 90's, of course Sun Valley Lodge was an early, kind of combination of retirement and mainly nursing home care. Then in the mid 80's Royal Oaks built and that was a very large apartment complex.

BROWN: Now was that part of DEVCO?

FREEMAN: No, that was a separate operation.

BROWN: But it is in Sun City isn't it?

FREEMAN: It is in Sun City and that was the first big retirement apartment complex.

BROWN: So were they given the land?

FREEMAN: No, they had to buy it. The group had to buy it. It was originally sponsored by the Faith Presbyterian Church, a group of people from the Faith church got it started, raised the money, bought the land and it is a very large retirement complex. It has since grown – they have a complete nursing home, assisted living, and Alzheimer's unit. It is a buy in. You get lifetime care. Since then, I don't know how many retirement centers we have. Some are just strictly independent living, others have the combination of nursing home care and home care, but it is a big business now. Another aspect as far as our health care, which I think we have a marvelous health care system in the hospitals. We have a lot of home care agencies who will come in on an hourly basis and give you help. We have wonderful medical and health facilities. I think that is one of the reasons we

live so much longer. Where I am living we have three people who are going to be 101 or 102 this year. I am one of the younger ones. They call me the kid and I think the whole life style you do live longer.

BROWN: So people have moved when they couldn't take care of their home then they moved to

(End of Side A).

FREEMAN: We have transportation; all kinds of activities are planned for us, field trips, programs in the house.

BROWN: So do you think this industry grew up around Sun City because of Sun City and because of the need?

FREEMAN: I think it was because of the need. As people got older, as in my case, I had a 14 – 1500 square foot house. My husband died in '77. I certainly didn't need three bedrooms, a living room, a dining room, Arizona room and a kitchen. I didn't need that much space. Just the upkeep – and I had a grass lawn. You reach the point where it is too much. In the case where the husband is living he usually gets infirm sooner than the wife unfortunately, and they will move in as a couple. Then he will be assured she will be taken care of if anything should happen to him or maybe they both need the help. I think that with the aging population it was one of the needs and again it was met. Where we used to only have Sun Valley Lodge, golly how many do we have now.

BROWN: Can you tell me a little about the rec centers?

FREEMAN: When we came in '70 they had what is now called Oakmont Recreation Center and Fairway and Mountain View. Those were the three rec centers. And when we moved here Lakeview Recreation Center had been finished because it became part of the model home display. That was their big selling point. Initially it was a round circle, very spectacular with a round swimming pool in the middle, on the lake, very picturesque. That was the biggest, I mean that was state of the art. And since then over the years Sun Dial Recreation center was built and then Bell Recreation Center, which is the largest by far. Then the people north of Bell said well you promised us a recreation center; they had run out of money but they did build Marinette which is a small recreation center. But there again every thing is there that you can imagine. If it isn't at one it is at the other.

Woodworking, metal craft working, all kinds of craft shops, weaving, stained glass, silver, lapidary, art, racquet ball, hand ball, of course the swimming pools and when you buy a house in Sun City you are required to become a member of the recreation centers. That entitles you to the use of any of the recreation centers. It is a fee and of course it is the fee that keeps the recreation centers going; because it is an expensive operation. And that includes seven golf courses. It is a golf haven. That has attracted a lot of the residents. Particularly the men, they want to play golf all year round. They don't want to get out and shovel the snow in the winter. That is one thing that attracted my husband when we came out. So the rec centers really are a very important part of the life style. The women can do craft work; they have sewing, coffee klatches, bridge games and all kinds of sporting events, bocce ball, lawn bowling. We have more lawn bowlers here I think than in England.

BROWN: And probably if they don't have what you want you could start your own club.

FREEMAN: Absolutely and they do. When computers first came in we didn't have computer clubs but now they are the largest clubs in the rec centers. They have 2 – 3 hundred members. And of course it keeps changing because new computers keep coming on the market all the time. Churches have played a very important part. I think we have some of the most beautiful churches I have seen in my life, architecturally speaking. Every denomination is covered. We have the temples, the Catholic Church, Christian Science, any of the denomination. They are well attended. It may be that as we get older we get a little closer to where we might need some help. But they are important and they too provide activities other than the usual Sunday church service. They have activities during the week for their members. They have outings, parties, study sessions. But the physical churches are beautiful.

BROWN: Now they have grocery stores and things, was that part of the plan to make this a total community with grocery stores and drug stores?

FREEMAN: When it opened in 1960 nobody lived here. The Grand Avenue Shopping Center had a Safeway grocery store. Nobody was living here but they had a grocery store and a gas station. Again that was part of the attraction because all of the facilities were advertised, that there would be a recreation center and a golf course. They were up and ready to use, all the equipment, the golf courses playable, the grocery store available, of course the people in the outlying areas could use the grocery store. But since then, the community was planned with

shopping centers in strategic locations as Sun City developed. Where the Fry's shopping center is now located at 107th and Grand Avenue was originally King's Inn which was a motel and they had what they called vacation apartments where people coming to visit Sun City could stay for a few days. They had a swimming pool, a wonderful dining room. People were lined up Friday night for this fish fry waiting to get in. Then the land was sold to a shopping chain outside of Utah and they tore down all the units with the promise that they would keep the King's Inn, but within a year the King's Inn was demolished too. It was a shame because it really was a part of the history. When they started Sun City had no hotel. Visitors coming in had no place to stay. But eventually a couple of motels opened up on 111th and Grand Avenue for visitors coming through. But we hated to see that King's Inn go because it was part of the community. But where Safeway store was located, gradually other stores came in. We had a variety store. We had a drug store, a clothing store, furniture.

BROWN: Was this coordinated through DEVCO to make sure there was a variety?

FREEMAN: Yes, they sponsored the shopping centers until they got started. The same with the recreation centers, they subsidized the recreation centers until the residents could take them over and run them. So they were very good at subsidizing a lot at the beginning to make sure it would work. They really were behind it and it was probably because of their support that the community thrived. People felt free to go to them. If something was wrong with their house they were right up there at that DEVCO office and they had somebody out there checking it out.

BROWN: It wasn't Del Webb himself though?

FREEMAN: No, but people think it was.

BROWN: Jane, thank you very much for sharing your stories. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

FREEMAN: No, but it took me back away, reminiscing; it was kind of fun.

BROWN: Well, thank you very much.

Ruth Butler narrative moved to C210 – Ruth Butler

Steve Hornasek narrative moved to C245 – Steve Hornasek

C265

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Written Interview Oct. 20, 1986

Donald R. Tuffs

Notes of a conversation with Donald R. Tuffs, Senior Vice-President, Marketing, Del E. Webb Communities Inc., October 20, 1986 at his Sun City West, Arizona office, by John Findlay, Dept. of History, Pennsylvania State University.

In response to a question about what kinds of studies had been done by DEVCO before developing Sun City, Tuffs responded that there was some research, most of which did not look upon the idea of a planned retirement community as very promising. The Webb Company however, did not mind taking a risk and they went ahead with the project.

As an example of this riskiness of the venture Tuffs pointed to the basic failure of the other Sun City experiments in Florida and California. Part of the problem with the non-Arizona locations was that they were remote from big cities and situated in relatively high tax states. Another part of the problem was the lack of depth in the management of the Webb Company which was not able to give sufficient attention to these long distance projects. In some ways neither the company nor the market was ready for a Webb-built retirement community except in the Phoenix area.

Tuffs pointed out that John Meeker of DEVCO was a driving force behind Sun City – a person who had a larger vision for the town and more personal contact with residents. Del Webb certainly approved the direction and details of the project, but Meeker pushed hard to make Sun City more than just another housing development – to keep DEVCO involved in the community and to keep residents content. One of the primary motivations of course, was that happy buyers helped to market Sun City to other prospective purchasers. Meeker understood the value of resident referrals in increasing the number of sales.

Asked about the history of the Webb Corporation, Tuffs explained that the subsidiary responsible for Sun City was called the Del. E. Webb Development Co. (DEVCO hereafter) until 1985 when it was changed to Del E. Webb Communities Inc. The firm has generally avoided the term “retirement” in its name and in its developments. Tuffs explained that the phrase has too many negative connotations. Also the company is increasingly targeting a younger market in its current projects.

Tuffs did not know much about the 1965 management shakeup at DEVCO and did not think that the 1980 changes meant much change of direction for the Sun Cities projects.

Asked about the rationale behind building larger homes for Sun City and Sun City West buyers, Tuffs explained that larger houses brought higher profits for the company. He also pointed out the tremendous demand for bigger units which has shaped the development of Sun City since 1960. The company also, in building larger houses, has been focusing more recently on the more upscale market.

Tuffs advised that it would be a mistake to concentrate too much on homes and their size however. Adult purchasers who come to Sun City and Sun City West can get nice homes any place. It has always been the way of life available in the Sun Cities – the lifestyle that makes the place distinctive and successful. DEVCO always sold a lifestyle more than it sold houses.

The Del Webb Company did not have a lot of experience in this area before developing Sun City, but Webb was known for hiring good people, and he used consultants with experience in the requisite areas.

In regards to the shaping influences on Sun City, Tuffs indicated that DEVCO always listened closely to what customers said. The company had an active and effective research department and responded to buyers' preferences. DEVCO actually had architects and landscape architects on its regular staff during the 1970's.

Asked what made Sun City residents different from other people in the elderly population Tuffs suggested that they have had fewer children than average, that they are generally in better health for their age group than the average. They have typically worked hard during their lives, and expect to get the most from their dollar. Most all of them have not inherited their wealth, but rather have earned it. Tuffs characterized them as "achievers/belongers" who can "break out" of the "belonger" category in Sun City. Many, especially with management backgrounds, are used to wielding some degree of authority. People in Sun City have earned their status and their savings.

Residents of Sun City want safety but not seclusion. They like the quiet and the security of Sun City, but they do not go there to become recluses. One of the most appreciated qualities of the community is its sociability. Also, Tuffs indicated, Sun City and Sun City West are places where people can feel more comfortable in many ways. He used the example of going to a swimming pool, perhaps to learn how to swim for the first time. Elderly people will not be compared to, or bothered by, younger swimmers. They feel at ease with people of their own age group.

Findlay asked Tuffs how DEVCO was building retirement communities differently now and Tuffs pointed to several factors. First, smaller projects make much more sense now. The availability, cost, and location of suitable lands now compel the development of smaller projects. "Land-banking" makes less economic sense today than it used to. Also, Del E. Webb Communities has resolved to build new "Sun Cities" closer to established towns and to use the services (e.g. hospitals) and utilities of operating communities rather than develop their own from scratch. The new Sun City Vistoso project will be a part of Rancho Vistoso, a larger community development where most housing will be conventional as opposed to for people over-45 years old. Community preferences also have resulted in more careful integration of new developments into the environment. Sun City Vistoso will retain more desert landscaping, which is also less expensive to maintain (e.g. in medians).

Tuffs pointed out that Del Webb has to bring new retirement communities "to the people" because the vast majority of retirees still does not wish to travel more than 200 miles from

hometowns. It used to be that only 3% of retirees would be willing to relocate that far, and just recently maybe 5%, and now between 8 and 10%. Because 90-92% of retirees wish to remain near their hometowns, Del Webb Communities will build smaller Sun Cities closer to conventional cities, including maybe even sites in the Northeast, rather than building retirement Mecca's that require such long migration. The company has also targeted a younger market – 45 years will now be the minimum age. Larger houses and larger yards will also be a part of the future package.

Tuffs mentioned only one "mistake" made by DEVCO in laying out Sun Cities in the Phoenix area. He indicated that Sun City West was probably too close to the original Sun City for the company's best interests. The company owned the land of course, and did turn a nice profit, but it increasingly found that it was competing against itself. Many homes were still being sold (or resold) in Sun City by Del Webb and by other realtors (as many as 2,000 annually), and those sales competed against Sun City West sales. In response Del Webb Communities upgraded houses in Sun City West so that they would appear to a quite different market niche. The new houses are larger and more modern in style.

Asked what special features were built into Sun City for the elderly residents, Tuffs pointed out: the rounded curbs; the prevalence of sidewalks everywhere; accommodations for golf carts throughout the town (e.g. parking spaces); the absence of steep grades even on the golf courses (this has begun to change as the target audience gets younger). Mostly, however, the Sun Cities are flat.

Asked about the company's level of involvement with the community Tuffs suggested that Del Webb would be involved in the community even if it were a conventionally aged group of residents. Happy residents make the best sales force and Del E. Webb Communities recognizes and makes use of this fact. In fact, the company encourages residents to realize that by encouraging more people to come they are helping to bring about the development of more golf courses, more shopping centers, more recreation centers, better medical facilities and so on, which will benefit themselves. Tuffs indicated that the Webb Company was becoming more skilled at marketing. After being run primarily as a construction company, this has been a long gradual change in direction.

Asked about the relationship between Sun City and Phoenix Tuffs explained that Phoenix has always been a great asset. It had important cultural amenities, shopping, dining, and ample medical care before Sun City and Sun City West acquired their own. Since 1960 Phoenix has grown and become even better at providing urban amenities. The growth of Phoenix has introduced a few urban problems to the Sun Cities area, such as a rising crime rate, but even that is relatively low in the Sun Cities.

The attitudes of Phoenix residents toward Sun City – sometimes the resentment has been a real problem for the Webb Company. Del E. Webb Communities Inc. intends to work on its public relation efforts for 1987. But a lot of the negative feeling is the result of misunderstanding and irrational stereotyping. Sun City, for example, was widely criticized for the problems of the Peoria School District, but Tuffs explained that the officials of the school district simply

mismanaged its bond election issues, asking always for more than was really needed. Sun City residents rejected that approach insisting on more economy.

Although Phoenix has been an asset, many Sun Citians wish to get away from the hectic life of the city. Sun City proved to be cleaner and safer. Also residents regularly noted the differences between planned and orderly Sun City and sprawling and unplanned Phoenix. The distinctions were clearly recognized facts.

Asked about the extent of Sun City's influence, Tuffs believes that it has been very influential, particularly for countries studying how to provide care and housing for their growing elderly populations (Japan), and for developers of any kind of planned community. As the first of its kind, Sun City has almost always been highly publicized and recognized, perhaps receiving more attention than any other.

Other comments made by Tuffs:

Del Webb is a squeaky clean company and has always profited from its solid reputation.

Retired people have two overriding concerns -- their health, and making their money last. These things may help to explain certain traits of the residents of Sun City.

SUN CITIES AREA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
10801 Oakmont Drive
Sun City, AZ. 85351

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this _____ day of April 20, 1986 by and between Don Tuffs (herein after called "Interviewee") and John Findlay (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 CITY AREA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1001 GARDEN DRIVE
SUN CITY, AZ 85375

SIGNED Don Tuffs DATE 4-20-94

Interviewee Don Tuffs (Name)

13540 Camino del Sol # 21 (Address)

Sun City West, AZ. 85375

SIGNED: Interviewer John Findlay DATE _____ (Name)

per Jane Freeman (Address)

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 transcripts 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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John Meeker history moved to C246 – John Meeker

6-2-67

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

James Boswell, et. al.

Notes taken during an informal luncheon at the Lakes Club prior to the spring meeting of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

In attendance: Jim Boswell, John Meeker, Owen Childress, Jane Freeman, Louise & John Byrne and Glenn Sanberg. April 15, 1987

The following are some of the notes jotted down by Louise Byrne.

Boswell: Del Webb thought he was a much better golfer than he was. He played to an eight handicap but actually had a sixteen.

Meeker: He'd step up and tee off disregarding how close he was to the foursome ahead and who it was. Once everyone in back was piled up wondering what was delaying the game. Webb had stopped, left his golf car in the cart path and gone to lunch.

On the failures of the other Sun Cities – Kern City, Clear Lake City (near Houston) for Humble Oil, Hemet and Florida. We made some mistakes in even getting in some of them. But Webb was so hot after the AZ success that all the developers were approaching us. We had them put up the money. But in the long run most failed because they didn't have the on-site management that we had. Meeker studied the deal in Texas with Humble Oil, recommended that they simply set up the development and sell the lots. His recommendation was ignored. After Webb got out of it that's how it was built.

Meeker often "nearly fired", apparently usually by Johnson who objected to the Meeker Mountain and the Lakes Club.

Meeker said that in '65-'66 they were trying to come out of a slump. Apparently Meeker took over about that time and decided they had to "get involved with the people". **Boswell** says he feels the main reason for the continuing success was Meeker's ability to care and to be involved. Meeker said they built better rec facilities, brought the feuding rec center factions together. Said that many of his actions were in spite of "much opposition from our own company".

Of others in the company: **Bob Johnson** "never got a hand on things." He asked what some project cost – couldn't see the benefits of it. **Koontz** they called Freddie the Freshman. In answer to the question "what was his job" someone replied "keeping out of sight so he wouldn't get fired." – "Every project he was in charge of "went sour". He wanted to be Chairman of the Board. **Ashton** was a developer whose idea was to build at the least cost. He thought retired people wanted a little house with a porch and a rocking chair. He tried to keep from even building sidewalks to "save \$400."

Both **Childress and Boswell** commented on Meeker's ability to look at a blueprint and spot any flaws or possible improvements. Childress particularly, thought that was Meeker's special genius.

Boswell had a much greater part in management decisions than has been apparent in other conversations. He insisted that the development bear Webb's name for recognition factor, but that DEVCO should always be independent and separate from the main company. They said whenever the Webb Company butted in there were mistakes and problems. Boswell described his part in the building of Sun City after saying that the success was because Childress and Meeker kept close watch on everything. Boswell said "My job was to keep the Webb Company elsewhere."

Meeker cited the instance of 1965 when the market was down. Webb hired some specialists to come in. He told of a Kelly Snow, the expert, who had the bright idea of advertising to people from the northern states. "Trade in your show shovels and get a discount on your house." That ran into trouble when others bought shovels and insisted that they too get the discount. Another statement about the expert Snow. He was going to sell 100,000 per year. Didn't know where.

The three agreed that they could probably each take credit for about one third of the errors made. Boswell mentioned his concern that Sun City would look like a Levittown if there were no higher buildings or features to change the landscape. His idea was the two story apartment buildings on the golf course in Phase One. They seemed to consider that a bad call. Another one they discussed was the Rancho Estates section.

Asked about their worst or biggest mistakes Boswell said "giving up that 1%.

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Exclusive Interview with Realtor Ken Meade

Taped Dec. 11, 1990 (tape not available)

When I went to work for Del Webb, the unincorporated situation was a plus. I was selling houses for Webb and you go along with the thing and think nothing of it. So everything was hunky-dory in Sun City in 1974-75-76. I was selling a lot of houses. People were moving in. We had less than two percent of the homes for sale – everything was fine – the shopping centers were filled up. The whole process was OK. The real point is that we had city government but we didn't recognize it. The government was Del Webb. He was taking care of 99th Ave., Del Webb Blvd., etc., and bending the legislature to his will. He was not going to let this place slip and go down hill because if that happened he couldn't sell houses.

When I got involved with the Ambassadors, I was thrilled with the kind of people involved. I thought, sure, we have a few things wrong here but we can certainly correct them. It all happened about four years ago when Dick King first formed the Ambassadors and asked me to serve and he made the statement. "What's going to happen to Phase I?" Without much thought I said – probably the same thing that happened to downtown Detroit and other places. Some day they will come in and bulldoze down a lot of buildings and build some more.

I volunteered and worked with them about six months. There was a lot of conversation but very little progress and I decided I couldn't spend this much time every week with a group that was getting very little accomplished. This is usually true when you have a committee of a group of people. It often slows to a standstill. So I resigned. They reorganized the board of the Ambassadors two years ago with Sid Menk as the lead man and some people with clout. Danny Ryerson, three people from the Home Owners Association, three people from the Rec Centers, a couple of ministers around town. They came to me and John O'Keefe and asked if we would serve on the board. I said if you're going to do something sure, if you are just going to sit around and talk again I'm going to bow out.

To I went to the meetings and we started to talk about some of the problems. All of the houses that are coming on the market for sale – all of the care facilities springing up around here, vacancies in the stores – the fact that the rents had gone up. New people owned the shopping centers. It was no longer Del Webb or Prudential. A number of things have changed and we needed to raise some money. By the time we had gone through eight to nineteen meetings it dawned on me that if Sun City is going to survive in the way we used to know it, it will have to incorporate.

I have been approached by Interfaith to serve with them to raise money and they told me the struggle they go through every year to raise money. We get hit by the Prides and the Posse every year. People come by here for the Community Fund. Hardly a week goes by that somebody isn't through the front door looking for a contribution to support something in Sun City which is very worthwhile. At some point the givers get tired of giving. If we had a body of government that could just take ten dollars out of everybody's pocket each year we would have the money to

support the Ambassadors Visitor's Center. With 25,000 houses, you take \$10 from each house, you have \$250,000. What starts to happen is that you have some people who will back the Visitor's Center and then you have others who don't know what's going on and some will say it is just a front for the realtors. While it appears that way because the realtors are the first ones to benefit when somebody buys a home, but so does the insurance companies, so does Park and Sons, so does the Sun City water company, so does the Rec Centers. And when we sell a house, usually we sell to two people instead of the one who used to live there. They join HOA, the Taxpayers and they go get a hair cut, they buy a dress, they buy some food, they put gas in the car, they buy tires, they buy shoes, they take their check book over to the bank and make deposits and the whole system goes on and on. So yes, to some it is just a front for the realtors because it enables them to sell more houses, but the people are blind if they can't see what happens after the house becomes occupied. Webb spent over one and a half million dollars per year promoting Sun City.

Stop and think. Is Sun City a community? No, in a true sense it is not a community. It resembles a community because it has stores, houses and people. Because Terre Haute, Oshkosh, Sheboygan, Tulsa – they don't have to advertise someplace else to get their replacements. There are families there who have children. Some move away, but more come in. It continues to further itself. Sun City does not produce its replacements. We do not have more children. So people stopping by or driving through think it is a community, but one ingredient is missing. The replacement factor is not here. How do we replace the people who die here? We must import or the place dries up and blows away!

When you get into something like this and you start trying to raise money – you start trying to help people and you see some of the resistance and you say to yourself – “How simple it would be if the Rec Centers would just take \$10 or more when they take the \$100 annual fee – and use it for a promotional fee.” But they won't. They are supposed to be looking out for our best interests – (so is the Home Owners), but none of them are doing it.

I came to the conclusion there is one major reason why they would resist incorporation, and that is because they feel their taxes will go up. They feel if we have another layer of government on what we already have our taxes will go up.

(At this point Ken Meade said he disagreed with CSG contention of no cost for mayor or city manager because we wouldn't be able to get real conscientious people without cost. Interviewer set him straight by pointing out CSG expects the city would pay a good salary for a good city manager.)

KEN: It's true we don't need new streets, schools etc. We are not constantly expanding. So much is complete. So much of the costs are already fixed and determined. But we do need a Chamber of Commerce. We have the NW Valley Chamber of Commerce. They represent Peoria, Surprise, El Mirage, Youngtown, Sun City and Sun City West. But Sun City and Sun City West have no voice. Sun City and Sun City West are not really interested in attracting industry. All they need to be interested in is keeping the status quo – keeping the occupancy rate up to a certain level so the sops and everything else can flourish and supply the people's needs etc. The only way to do that is you must bring lookers – you must sell your mouse trap.

Sun City has to be the best retirement city in the world – bar none. We have the most wonderful facilities to offer, but if you don't tell the story, it will die. When Webb was here he promoted it. He sent brochures all over the place and the residents loved what it was and went back home and told their friends. People say, why don't you start a vacation home plan? But we are not the developer. Del Webb, as the developer, bought an acre of land for four or five thousand dollars cut it up in five parts worth ten thousand dollars each. This brings it up to fifty thousand dollars for his five thousand dollar investment. Then he builds five homes on it which have at least another ten thousand dollar profit on each. So on one acre he has created something like one hundred thousand dollars worth of profit off his original five thousand dollars. With that kind of profit anybody can spend money advertising in Golf Digest or any place else – "Come take a look at Sun City". Then he does something else with his money. He built a whole bunch of apartments which he intended to sell later, but first he used them for vacation apartments where people could come and stay at a very reasonable rate. And then he did something which the Rec Centers did away with. He gave them a free pass to go play golf, swim or bowl while here and mingle with the happy people. Put your toe in the water and enjoy it. We want you to get hooked so when you go back home and it starts to snow you will think about how nice it was to get off the plane in February in the Valley of the Sun. But our Rec Centers say we don't want these people going in the swimming pools or playing golf – we don't want them here. They've done so many asinine things it isn't funny.

INTERVIEWER: They won't even let us rent one of our own halls to tell the self-government story. They claim "neutrality", but there is no such thing as neutrality. If they won't give us a chance, they are just playing into the hands of the opposition and no one has a chance to learn how wrong they are. Some of our strongest supporters have to put on this face of neutrality because the opposition is so militant. A banker at First Interstate strongly believes in incorporation but could not consent to having copies of our "Outlook" left in the bank for fear of irritating some customers. He said he felt like a wimp but couldn't help it.

KEN: Their main objection is they think it will cost more money – an additional layer of government means more taxes. That's true if you don't get more information. If you just sit here and say you have to hire a mayor, a city manager etc., and all this means more money. Where's the money going to come from? That means we have to raise taxes. That's the standard approach to their thinking. They don't realize they have already paid these taxes. For instance – your house was probably worth say \$90,000 or \$95,000 in 1985. You would probably be lucky to get \$80,000 on such a house now. That's \$15,000 lost. How much tax is that? That's a hellava lot of tax. And just because somebody didn't take that pot and you didn't write the check to the state – yet your children are going to get \$15,000 less. These people do not recognize the fact that the value of their houses has gone down substantially and therefore they have paid dearly for the fact that Sun City is suffering. They want to sit here and say everything is rosy because I can still get on the golf course, go bowling, swimming and so everything is fine and hunky-dory. That's because they are totally out of what the hell's going on in the community. It's like – as long as I can play bridge today, don't tell me there's anything wrong. But there is something wrong. There is something like 70,000 rounds of golf less being played now than used to be and those people paid to play golf. What the hell happened to that money that used to be there to help support the golf course?

Now there's something else that happens here that they don't think about. Say you moved down here and you are fifty five or sixty five and the wife gets her hair done – the guy changes his sports jacket once in a while and doesn't wear a necktie that's six inches wide – and he changes his pants once in a while. By the time he's seventy or seventy two he doesn't give a damn if his necktie is six inches – he's still wearing the same plaid jacket with the big fat wide lapels – the wife is no longer going to the beauty parlor once a week. They used to play golf two or three days a week. Now maybe he plays and she doesn't or they may play once a week. All this slowing down makes things tougher on the merchants. No way could Del Webb have foreseen these things thirty years ago. As this place gets emptier and emptier who supports the hospitals? As the houses go down in value – the guy who bought a \$40,000 house is not depositing \$220,000, but the guy who bought a \$40,000 home in 1972 or 1974 did.

This thing has so many tentacles it is mind boggling. Incorporation won't cure it unless some of the money is used to revitalize and promote Sun City. The advertising money must go back to Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, California. The promotion of Sun City must be an ongoing thing just like we must continue to fix the roof at the Rec Centers. Our share of the shared revenues is being used by other communities for their benefit and we are getting zip. The fact is that even if incorporated and the money is not earmarked for the furtherance and promotion of Sun City the problem would still be there. The Ambassadors should then just be called the Chamber of Commerce.

I have said recently at our Ambassadors meetings that we were better off when Sid Menk was the leader because we have made no more progress in the last year. The only problem with Sid was that the meetings were a little confused. There was no typed agenda. He just rambled around too much. On the other hand Sid was out there and he got people to serve as volunteers and on committees. Sid had more to contribute than most of the people on the board realized. It was unfortunate the way things worked out because Sid did as much for the Ambassadors as any member. It's a shame. I know his feelings were hurt and we can't go back and that's kind of tough.

The Ambassadors is nothing more than the Chamber of Commerce. There are some of us who believe the word Ambassadors should be played down and the Visitors Center played up. It is being seen as a visitor's center and recognized as a chamber of commerce. Twelve thousand people went through there since we opened last November. We needed this ten or twelve years ago to carry on the story. Sun City is lucky in another respect. If Del Webb had gone on to Las Vegas instead of Sun City West there would not be 220,000 people coming across Bell Road every year to go look at those models. Some of them come back here to buy a home. So if that drawing card wasn't out there we'd probably be in worse shape.

As far as Sid Menk is concerned, he is in my book as absolutely great because he had the spirit and vision and I remember him saying many times – "We'll get this thing off the ground and well make it fly." And we did make it fly. It's unfortunate that there were some people who thought it wasn't flying fast enough. I still feel like it's not flying fast enough – but it's not flying any faster than when Sid headed it. Now if there was a way Sid would come back and be the leader that would be wonderful – except I don't think some of the rest of them feel exactly

like I do. I think a few of them do. Sid was one of the ones who saw the same problems that I just talked about. This all filters down to the barber, the dress shop, the shoe store, the gas station, etc. As I told Sid that first night – if your house sold for \$100,000 three or four years ago and I sell it for \$90,000, I lose \$600 but you lose \$10,000. Which one of us should be the most concerned about correcting the problem – the guy with the house or the guy selling the house? And yet we have not been able to implant that idea in the mind of the home owner. Because the only time they really come face to face with the problem is when they try to sell it.

I'm glad to hear that Sid is getting involved with the Self Government group. I really did feel bad about him leaving the Ambassadors. I said to him once: "if you took \$60,000 over to the bank and put it on deposit and came back two years later and wanted your \$60,000 and they said sorry, but all we have left is \$48,000 you would be screaming with fury. But when the same thing happens with your investment in a house, you moan about it but are not shocked in the same way as if the bank took your money. Then getting back to the guy who says "if my house went up in value, my taxes would go up." Somehow you have to figure out a simple way to get the message out that the fact is, you poor turkeys, you have already paid taxes for the next fifteen or twenty years by losing the values on your homes. Now let's say the average property tax in Sun City is \$400 per year. If their taxes doubled, it would take them 37 1/2 years to equal \$15,000 in taxes. I don't think there is a house in Sun City that hasn't gone down more than \$15,000, so if you doubled their taxes it would take forty to fifty years to add up to the \$15,000 they've already dropped. The people on the Ambassadors could see it because we talked about it so much. When you get involved then you start to see what's happening.

We had a woman appraiser who made a long speech about general conditions and near the end of her talk someone asked what she thought about incorporation. She said, well, some of you are going to hate me, but it's the only solution. I was sitting next to Mike Garrett and I said I have to agree with the gal – and I'm quoted in the newspaper. They didn't talk about the speech, they just said "Appraiser Favors Incorporation" and quoted me. What the gal talked about was if the federal government has more money going out than coming in it goes broke. If U.S. Steel has more money going out than coming in it goes broke. If you have more and more people dying and more people moving out, who buys the dresses in the dress shops? And she went on and on and she kept coming back to business. As any business would have to do, you have to take in more than you take out. Before the Visitors Center, we did nothing to bring people in. We just sat here on our laurels.

Something else has happened because of all the hullabaloo. Sid was great and kept us in the papers; he was always in front of the public. This guy Bailey has just been a washout in comparison. Because of the publicity, Del Webb has begun to realize that Sun City does have a problem. If Sun City starts to flounder, where the hell does the Del Webb Corp. go with their retirement communities? Would you want to move to a community that turned into a ghost town 35 years later? Meeker went public on the issue in a Sun City newspaper recently – that they should incorporate.

Some banks that will be closing: Mera Bank at 107th & Peoria, 99th and Bell, Coggins & 108th and one in Sun City West. The Chase at LaRonde Center and Chase in Sun City West; Western

Star at Beardsley and 128th is already closed. Security Pacific Bank across the street here in LaRonde is closing December 28th.

There are problems. Maybe the best thing that could happen would be for the Sun City Country Club to go bankrupt and be up for grabs. That might wake everybody up!

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Notes on visit of Dorothea Wagers and her daughters Barbara Wagers and Susan Miller

April 1, 1997

Barbara Wagers had telephoned the previous week from her home in Colorado to arrange to bring her mother to visit the house at 10801 Oakmont Drive which was the home of Barbara's grandparents, John and Chloe MacDonald.

The following persons were there for part of the visit: Evelyn Parry, Florence Sears, Doris Foster, Viola Spease, Rita Wright, Julia Manspeaker, Ann Russ, Betty Green, Phyllis Street, Al Foster and John Hawks.

The following information was learned. The house was originally purchased by N. C. Wagers, Dorothea Wagers' father-in-law, as an investment. N. C. Wagers and his wife, Marie, lived in a house across the golf course on Augusta. The MacDonalds bought the house from the Wagers in 1962.

The Wagers families and the MacDonalds enjoyed many family reunions at Christmas. Pictures taken of the family in 1963 show the extension of the patio all across the back of the house. By 1965 the patio was all enclosed, providing a family room and an extension of the bedroom, with a bath between the two rooms, according to the way Susan remembered it.

Chloe died in October 1971. John remarried. He died in November 1983. His second wife was placed in a nursing home in Glendale by her son. Dorothea Wagers and her sister were given a short time to come and take a few things that had been in the house. She has a small desk which belonged to her mother. She indicated she would like for the Historical Society to have the desk if she could arrange to have it sent here.

They described the house and some of the arrangements. The living room had a floral patterned sofa along the west wall with lamp tables at each end. Mr. MacDonald had made the lamps. There was a landscape picture above the sofa. There were two lounge chairs in front of the window with a round oak table cut down to coffee table height. The TV was on the wall opposite the sofa. A drop leaf dining table stood against the wall opposite the front door. When they had family dinners they stretched the table into the room. The kitchen was divided by a wall to separate the eating area. The refrigerator was near the washing machine. There was a TV in the southwest corner of the kitchen, the table stood against the dividing wall with a chair at each end.

The second bedroom was used as a library with bookcases on both walls. The small desk stood between bookshelves on the east wall. The extension of the room became the bedroom area and was adjacent to the 2nd bath which had been built when the bedroom was extended.

Barbara presented five by seven inch copies of portraits of her grandparents, each framed in decorative gray frames. She also had copies of two snapshots which were taken of the Wagers and MacDonald families taken at Christmas 1963. They identified each person in the pictures.

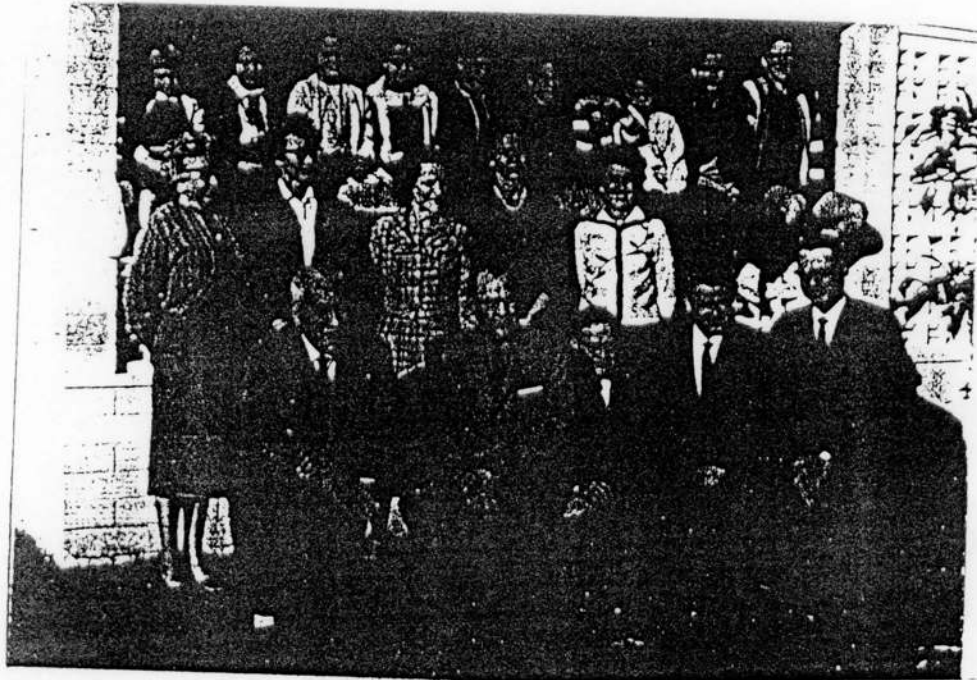
After she went home, Dorothea Wagers found a picture of the patio that her father added to the back of the house. She sent this to us. (See Wagers photographs of the McDonald home.)



Family of Bob and Dorothea McDonald Wagers
Christmas, 1963

Taken in front of the McDonald's back patio
10801 Oakmont Dr., Sun City, AZ 85351

Bob Wagers Dorothea McDonald Wagers
Barbara Scott Susan Greg



Christmas, 1963, the McDonald and Wagers families

Taken in front of the McDonald's back patio
10801 Oakmont Dr., Sun City, AZ 85351

Back row: The Wagers and McDonald grandchildren
Numbers indicate child's father.*

Barbara	Judy	Susan	Debbie	Greg	Jan	Mark	Scott	Kenny	David
3	2	3	2	3	1	2	3	1	1

Middle row

Marie	Jane	Chloe McDonald	Joyce	Dorothea McDonald
Mrs. N.C. Wagers	Mrs. Jack Wagers		Mrs. John Wagers	Mrs. Bob Wagers

Front row

John McDonald	N.C. Wagers	John Wagers	Jack Wagers	Bob Wagers
		2	1	3

*(Sons of N.C. and Marie Wagers)