

I am Maureen Strom, of the Historical Committee along with Catherine Kauffman, chair of the Historical Committee, here to interview JoAnn Handley.

Maureen: Do we have your permission to record and quote any part this interview?

JoAnn: Yes

Catherine: When did your family come to Arizona?

JoAnn: My mother's side of the family came to Arizona in 1897. My mother was born in Arizona in 1910 and moved to Scottsdale in 1915. Her last name was Donn. My grandparents lived a couple of different places. I'm not sure where. The only one I knew about was on Indian School and 7th Street. In the early 1900s, my grandfather said that was way out in the boonies. Everything was on Central Avenue between Washington and Van Buren – most of it was to the east of Central Avenue. There was just a little to the west. The main stores were to the east - that's where Goldwater's and Diamond's got started. That's where you shopped if you were going to shop in downtown Phoenix. Out here in Scottsdale, we had a grocery store but we really didn't have any other kind of store.

My dad's side of the family was cotton farmers from Texas and came to Arizona in 1916 and then to Scottsdale in 1919. There was cotton grown in North Africa - long staple cotton - that they used for parachutes and the early planes, which had a cloth covering. This was better cotton to use than the cotton that was grown in the south. During WWI, they couldn't get that cotton. Then somebody said, "Oh, the Hohokam Indians cultivated cotton for a thousand years. It is very similar to the North African cotton." At that point, there were only several hundred acres of this cotton grown here and it wasn't long after that they had 10 thousand acres. That's one reason in 1916 that my grandfather from Texas and many others from the south came here. As a cotton farmer, he could get more money per bale with this type of cotton than he could get growing the southern type of cotton. When my family first came, they worked for other people. Then they bought some land to grow cotton here in Scottsdale between McDowell and McKellips – on what is now Continental – it's called Continental on the west side of Scottsdale Road and Roosevelt east of Scottsdale Road. The name changed when Tempe annexed the west side and Scottsdale annexed the east side back in the 1960s.

Both my mother and dad went to school in the Little Red Schoolhouse. My dad was in the first freshman class at Scottsdale High, which was opened in 1923. So I am part of the history of Scottsdale with my family.

I was born in 1931 at Good Samaritan Hospital in Phoenix though I just tell people I was born in Scottsdale. I have 3 sisters. I'm the oldest by several years. I grew up in several different places.

When I was little, we lived at my grandparents on my mother's side – on their farm. For a little while, my dad rented a place on Indian School and then we rented a place on Scottsdale Road before he got the money to build the house on Main Street - three blocks west of Scottsdale Road. That was in 1939. The house is still there. We sold it in 2012. It is a restaurant now – House Brasserie. My dad built most of it himself though I laughed when he added a bedroom. I said I helped build the 3rd bedroom. By then I was 15 or 16 years old. I could hold up the studs and stuff.

I graduated from Scottsdale High in 1949 and then I went to Phoenix College for one year. I went to nurses training at Good Samaritan Hospital where I worked for a while and then I worked in doctors' offices.

My husband was in the Service and we moved around - all over the country and in Germany. I didn't work for a number of years. I have one son. When he was in school in the 1970s, I helped the school nurse. In 1978 she said to me, " Go get your certificate and come substitute for me." That was at the Paiute School, which is now Paiute Neighborhood Center – 66th and Osborne area and built in the 1960s

Catherine: Did you go to school at the Little Red Schoolhouse?

JoAnn: No they had closed it in 1928 and built what was later called Loloma but when I was there it was called Scottsdale Grammar School and now it's the Scottsdale Artist School.

Catherine: We just interviewed Nellie Ulloa. She was born in 1929 and she went to the Little Red Schoolhouse. She said it was just for the Mexicans and Indians.

JoAnn: At that point in time, yes it was. In 1928 they closed it and built the other school. In the teens and the twenties, they brought Mexicans up from Mexico to work in the fields and used the school for their children. Prior to 1928, they did have a separate room for the kids to learn English. When they closed in 1928, it became the school for the Mexicans. Their little barrio was right there behind Cavalliere's Blacksmith Shop going east on 1st Street and 2nd Street. I went to school with some of those kids. By the 4th grade, they could speak enough English to go to Loloma – Scottsdale Grammar School. It was really interesting. I went to school with these kids. We played and did all sorts of things together at school but I didn't go to their house and they didn't come to mine.

Catherine: Was your family one of those who went to Mexico to bring Mexicans back to work in the fields?

JoAnn: No, a man by the name of Utze went down – he was hired to go down and bring them up. One of the towns he went to was where the Corrals were. Mrs. Corral said to Mr. Corral,

“Let’s go, I don’t want my boys to work in that mine.” The mine was not safe. So that was why they came up. From what I have been told, in the late 20s, the Corral’s opened a little cantina at their house – they would have boxing matches – bring somebody from the Indian community to come box somebody here. You could get a cerveza. I learned to eat Mexican food because Senora Corral would make tamales and go around door to door with tamales in a bucket selling them. Years ago, Scottsdale High would have a yearly get-together for everybody. It was a potluck. I remember that she always brought her tamales. Eventually they turned their house into a restaurant. The back part was added on. That’s why when you go in, there are all these funny little rooms. When Los Olivos got started, we didn’t go there. That didn’t come along until later. I love going there now.

Catherine: Why did the Corral’s name their restaurant Los Olivos?

JoAnn: Los Olivos means “olive.” When Winfield Scott came to Scottsdale in 1888, somebody wanted him to grow citrus. He was the first one in Arizona to plant citrus trees. Now I’ve heard other people say; “oh no, my family planted it.” But Scott planted them in 1889. He planted citrus from 2nd Street to Osborne and from what is now Drinkwater to Scottsdale Road. He planted olive trees around the citrus trees as a windbreak – the ditches were there to water the property. Those olive trees that are on 2nd Street just before you get to Drinkwater, and when you go down by the hospital you will see some more – those trees were planted in 1896 by Winfield Scott. It was because of the olive trees that it was named Los Olivos.

Catherine: We were told that those tamales helped to build the Old Mission Church.

JoAnn: Could well be. I know that Senor Corral said they needed a church because they had to go to Tempe to go to church or a priest had to come to Scottsdale. Often church services would be out under the olive trees. At the time, the Mexican families were the only Catholics that we had here in Scottsdale. Winfield Scott was a Baptist minister and we were Protestant. Senor Corral was very much spearheading it. So it was probably true. I have seen one of the family members – not Corral but another family – granddaughter or something - had a little book where they kept what people donated and some of them donated a nickel – you figure in the early 30s, that was a fair amount of money. For some, that was all the money they had. They made the adobe themselves pretty much in the area where the City Hall is. The stained glass window was made out of extra stained glass from when they had done a church down in Tucson. A man learned how to put in those windows – so when you see the front, you see the stained glass. They did all the work themselves. That’s how it got built.

Catherine: You said that Winfield Scott was a Baptist Minister. Did he start a church in Scottsdale?

JoAnn: He himself did not start a church. They would have church services in a little one-room wooden school that they built in 1894 or 1895 just east of what is now where the Little Red Schoolhouse is. There weren't that many people here. Early, they were Baptists and then others moved in so Winfield Scott said we would be Ecumenical. When he was here, he said, "I'll preach one Sunday and somebody else could preach another Sunday." They didn't split apart until the late 20s.

Catherine: Did your family know Winfield Scott?

JoAnn: No, he wasn't living here when they came to Phoenix and Scottsdale. He had moved to San Diego. He passed away in 1910 and is buried in San Diego.

Maureen: How did you get connected with the Camelback Cemetery?

JoAnn: The cemetery was always a good old boy network. It went from one person to another person to another person. Somebody would come to them and say, "Would you like to be on this committee?" Jean Scott (not related to Winfield) ran it for some years. When Jean decided she didn't want to do it any more, she gave it to her cousin who was my yardman at the time. One day he came over and said, "Here JoAnn, Jean says that you can take over the cemetery." That was about 12 years ago. I knew Jean really well. She and I did things together. She was an old timer. E.O Scott was her father and E.G. Scott was her brother.

Maureen: Who owns the cemetery?

JoAnn: It's run by what is called the Camelback Cemetery Association though we have pretty much disbanded because many on the committee have passed away or we have lost contact with them. Paul Messinger and I mostly run it. Some of the previous committee members were Roberta Stone, Stanley Thomas, Michael Ramsey, Edwin Carrol, Calvin Curtis, Jean Shipp and Lester Matlock.

Maureen: Our attorney, Andrew Miller, said that Eric Messinger is the Statutory Agent and the contact for the cemetery. I understand that he incorporated the property. Do you know anything about that?

JoAnn: He is Paul Messenger's nephew and was a lawyer. He's not practicing law any more and he is not involved with the cemetery. Paul has another lawyer and we need to get back on that. It's different than a regular incorporation. It needs to be redone.

Catherine: Who plotted the cemetery?

JoAnn: I don't know. It was plotted way back – I never heard on that. Hans and Mary Weaver dedicated a portion of their property as a cemetery to bury their son-in-law, Adolf Poenicke

when he died in 1915. After Mrs. Weaver passed away in 1917, the next one that was buried there was a little Mexican girl – baby Dominquez – in 1919.

Lot 120 is the furthest west and Lot 1 is on the east side. They had a road that went around and came back. The Weaver's are buried back in the northeast corner. They are in Lot 123. On the north side of the cemetery is a barn and the house is to the east. Years ago, you would see a guy riding his horse back there – dressage. At one time, Paul went back there to the guy that owns it to see if we could buy it because we wanted to expand the cemetery. He said no. I suspect that Hans Weaver owned the house to the east, all of that other property where the corral is and the cemetery - so from the road, the corral and the house to the east of that. He could have had a whole lot more, but that makes sense to me. That is my thought on it because he gave that to Scottsdale, or really put together a little committee to take care of it because there wasn't any town or city yet – it was just people. We didn't do anything until the 40s when they finally put together a town type thing

Catherine: We have in our notes that victims of the 1918 Influenza were buried in this cemetery. Can you elaborate on any of that?

JoAnn: No that I don't know. I have who is buried there but not what they died of. To my knowledge there were no bodies buried in 1918. It started in 1919 when they buried the Dominquez baby. There could be some because of the number of people that died at that time. You didn't have the elaborative death certificates at that time that you have now a days.

Catherine: I see a Jake Utze bought a grave Oct 6, 1923. Was he one of the guys that went to Mexico to get the workers for the cotton fields?

JoAnn: Probably. Lot 1 (east side) is mostly Mexicans except Cavalliere who died in 1919. He was part of the Cavalliere Blacksmith family. The McWherter's are also in Lot 1 and died in 1926 and 1927. There were a bunch of babies buried here. At the time, families didn't have the money and babies were born at home. There was no care except maybe a midwife. The Mexicans are buried on the west side too. We don't have a lot of names. I know that the families buried them themselves. They'd buy the space and go out and dig the grave and bury them – not putting up any markers. It might have had some stones made into a little cross or something.

Maureen: How do people contact you if they want to be buried in the cemetery?

JoAnn: It's interesting because out of the blue, I will get a phone call like I did the other day about a man wanting to buy a space out there. My phone number is there some place. I just have two random spaces and that is it, which go for \$2,000 each. At one point, we had a lot of

spaces but over a period of years we have had several people go ahead and buy a full lot, which are 8 spaces. We haven't been able to do that now for probably the last 8 or 9 years. Once somebody buys a space or lot, we give him or her a certificate of ownership. We lay the bodies side to side - flat out. Only one person can be buried in a space. We don't stack. If you are cremated we can put a couple cremains in one space. I usually tell them, "I don't care which mortuary you use, but you have to use Trini from Paradise Memorial Gardens to dig the grave." I've had a couple other mortuaries get their own gravediggers and I've had some problems. I've had to have them come back and fix it – not cleaning up around – leaving extra dirt – sometimes the dirt would be scattered – or maybe they moved something on one of the other graves close by and they didn't put it back. So that's why I like to have Trini.

Catherine: Do you keep up the property?

JoAnn: I do. I watch it. When it needs to have something done, I get my yardman to go in and take care of it. Now when you buy a space and you bury your family member there, it is your responsibility to take care of it. We do nothing to your space. It can look like heck but I don't do anything about it because that is yours. The only thing I will do – because we have a little ceremony for Memorial Day and they put flags out on all of the military graves – is if one of those flags falls down, I will pick it up and put it back right there because it would be a desecration of the flag. But if you have a vase of dried flowers, I don't take them away. It's up to you. Recently, I just had a young man working on his Eagle Scout from the church up there and he's replaced the base of the flagpole and he put 2 benches in on either side. He raised money to do that. Occasionally, I will have some volunteers paint all of the white crosses on the west side. If they need to be replaced, they'll do that too. That's another thing I will do is to keep those white crosses painted and repaired.

Maureen: Where do you get funds to clean up the cemetery?

JoAnn: When somebody pays for a space, that's the money we have. We don't have a whole lot. We have a checking account that I put the money into. I do have one woman, whose brother is buried there. She lives in the state of New York and most years, she will send us a \$100 check to help with the maintenance and stuff like that. She's the only one that does that. If anybody wants to, they could donate but we do not have anything set up special.

Catherine: Our committee, along with Sally Thompson's committee, has been talking about getting signage for the cemetery. Who would we contact in order to get approval to do that?

JoAnn: It would have to be Paul and me.

Catherine: Would you guys be against a sign?

JoAnn: No, it would be nice to have Camelback Cemetery signage up. We talked about that before and it was fine with Paul and it's fine with me. It would have to be big enough – wide enough – to get a hearse in and out. We would work with Paul Messinger to do that. Then of course you would have to do something with a fence. We had a gate and the kids from across the street would ride their bikes in there so what we have now, right by the main gate, is you go in and take a hard turn to keep the bikes out. Although I'm not real crazy about it – for a while on the west side – we just had barbed wire. Now I grew up with barbed wire and I know how to crawl through barbed wire. We took that out and put another fence in there.

Catherine: I think there is enough interest between the Historical Committee, Sally's committee and the Bahia's, that people would pool their money together and maybe we can get this done.

Catherine: What is the succession plan for the cemetery?

JoAnn: Since it is just going to be maintenance and burying somebody, which goes through the mortuary already, there won't be any more spaces to sell, the only plan that I have ever thought about would be to turn everything over to Paradise Memorial Garden. That's where Paul's main office is. They also have everything that I have. Every time I sell a space, I have to call Chris up at Paradise Memorial Gardens to let them know. Also, I use their gravedigger, Trini. He knows the cemetery better than I do. The cemetery can't become part of Paradise Memorial Gardens. It would remain separate. I haven't talked to Paul about it. It's just my own idea. I'll do it as long as I can. I'm 87 and so far I do pretty good. There are no more good old boys around. Paul is one of the last of the good old boys!

Catherine: What were Scottsdale and Phoenix like when you were younger?

JoAnn: Main Street, where our house was, wasn't paved until 1963. For years, to get to Phoenix, we went down Scottsdale Road to Thomas. Scottsdale Road was paved from Indian School to Thomas. From Thomas, we went south on 44th Street, which was paved, to McDowell. Everything else was all dirt. Camelback and Indian School – neither were paved. Just north of the canal on Scottsdale Road, it was all dirt. In fact, when I went to Phoenix College, in the morning I would catch the bus at Scottsdale Road and it went south then on to 44th street, I would get off there and catch another bus and it would go to Thomas Road on to college. But in the evening, it didn't come all the way east so I had to take the bus downtown and catch the Scottsdale bus in order to come home.

McDonald Drive went from Tatum and over to Scottsdale Road. You know how the road goes up and down – back then my dad would take us kids - he'd go as fast as he could up to the top and we would lift our hands and giggle as we went down. He'd do that again – that's how I remember McDonald.

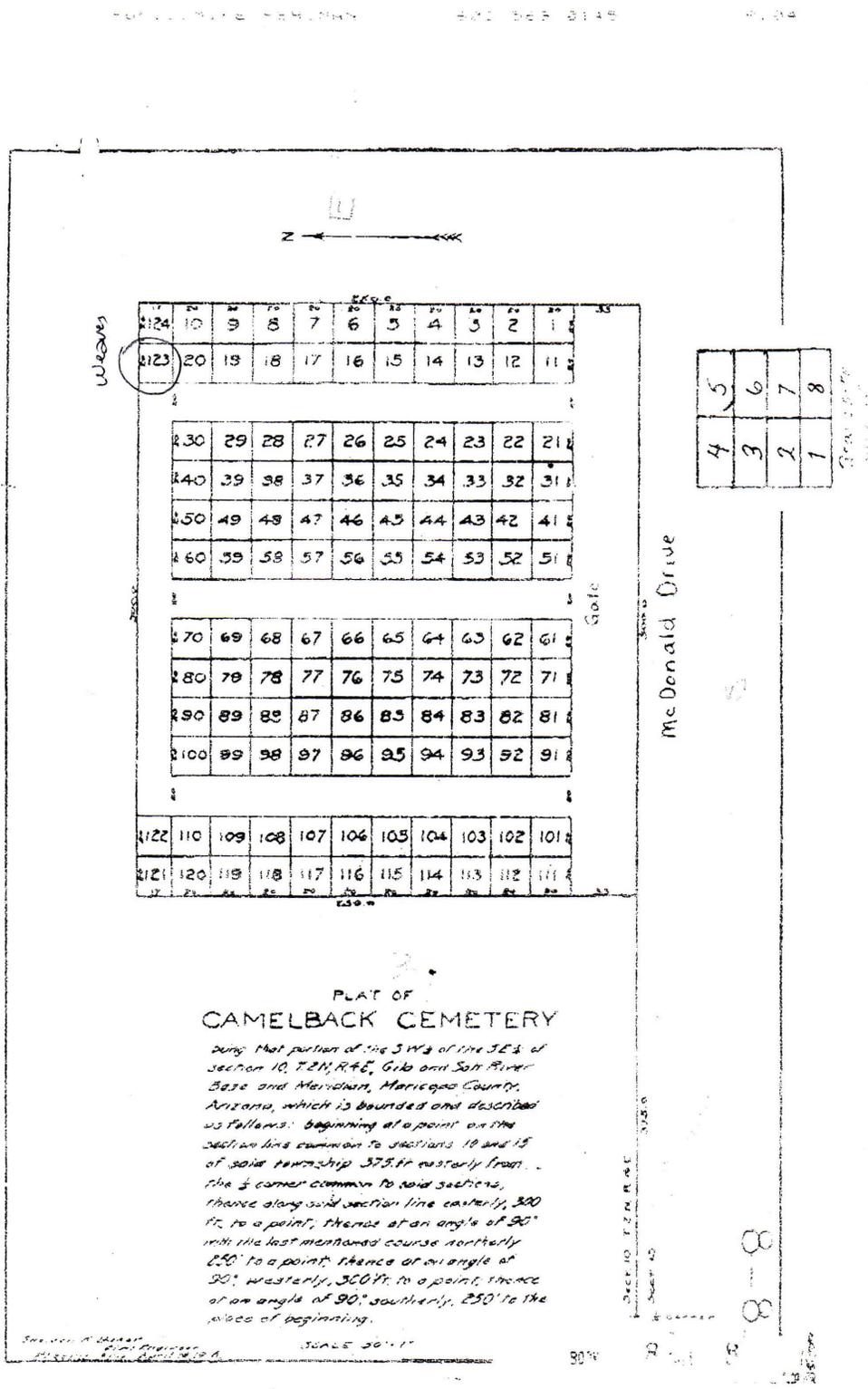
Here's another interesting thing – when WWII broke out, all of sudden we needed more pilots but the army didn't have a lot of money. We didn't have an air force. So people helped out – one of those was Hollywood – producers, directors, movie stars – all put their money in and they built Thunderbird field #1 – Glendale Airpark, Thunderbird field #2 – Scottsdale and Thunderbird field #3 – Falcon Field as pilot training centers. They built them far away of everything. One of the instructors was Malcolm White who became Scottsdale's first mayor when it incorporated. He had learned to fly in the 1930s. The airfields were not part of the military. All of the maintenance and everything else was contracted.

After the war, they didn't want it any more so they gave it to Arizona State Teacher's College, which is now ASU. The College used it for a few years but it was too far away. Then the 7th Day Adventist bought it because they did a lot of traveling for missionary work – going into foreign countries, islands and things – some of those places they went to – the best way to go was to fly. So they thought they could teach their people to learn to fly a plane. In the early 1960s, a man who had trained there came back and went to the town of Scottsdale and said; "You know you really need to have an airport here." So they set up an agreement with the 7th Day Adventists – they still have a say as to what goes on there. That's how we got Scottsdale Airpark. It was interesting seeing the little bi-planes flying over. They had many little touch down airstrips in Paradise Valley and further west.

Scottsdale didn't get electricity until almost 1920 when Mort Kimsey and other business people in Scottsdale approached the Salt River Water Users Association. The Salt River Water Users Association, which all of the farmers belonged to at the time if they wanted to have water, built a little power plant using the water going down a little waterfall on 56th Street. Mort Kimsey and some of the other people in the town went to them and asked if they could have electricity. They put together a little electric company at Mort Kimsey's service station on Main Street and Scottsdale Road. Because of him and several other business people, Scottsdale didn't have electricity until almost 1920. Families used to go down by this waterfall for picnics because it was something fun to do.

JoAnn: I tell people that I am history.

Catherine: Maureen and I really appreciate your time. Thank you so much.



PLAT OF
CAMELBACK CEMETERY

Being that portion of the S W 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of section 10, T21N, R4E, Gila and Salt River Basins and Maricopa, Maricopa County, Arizona, which is bounded and described as follows: beginning at a point on the section line common to sections 10 and 15 of said township 373 ft easterly from the 1/4 corner common to said sections, thence along said section line easterly, 300 ft. to a point, thence at an angle of 90° with the last mentioned course northerly 250' to a point, thence at an angle of 90° westerly, 300 ft. to a point, thence at an angle of 90° southerly, 250' to the place of beginning.

