

JON BONNELL JR.
February 20, 1997

Ann Andeen and myself, Ann Townsend, are privileged today to interview Jon Bonnell, owner of the White Hogan Jewelry Store. He created the first badge for the Marshal.

Interviewer: Thank you Mr. Bonnell for giving us this time for an interview. May we have permission to quote in part or in full our conversation today?

Bonnell: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Thank you. Then if your father was here, I bet you're a Native Arizonan.

Bonnell: A Native Arizonan.

Interviewer: Did you live in Paradise Valley. When did you move there or were you raised in this area?

Bonnell: I lived in Paradise Valley. My parents purchased their property in December of 1956. After I got married, we bought an old beat up adobe in 1965 in Paradise Valley on McDonald Drive and we've been there ever since.

Interviewer: Is that one of the Robert Evans homes do you know?

Bonnell: No, our house was built before 1900. It was the irrigator's house for all of the citrus groves on the south side of McDonald Drive, between Kiva School and Scottsdale Road, from McDonald Drive to Chaparral. The owner of the property at the time owned an adobe house which is now buried up in a subdivision of what would be the extension of 68th Street between McDonald Drive and Jackrabbit. It was at one time owned by the Rivertons, but they didn't have the orchard at the time, somebody else did. We had to pay an extra quarter of a percentage because our house had been built before 1900 and they couldn't track it down.

Interviewer: Have you done any renovations?

Bonnell: Yes. The house looks the same from the street but it is twice as big as it was and nobody would ever recognize the house once they walk in it. The original part of the house still looks the same as it did when we bought it. Hardwood floors, adobe walls, plaster. The part we added, we duplicated so you can't tell what's new and what's old.

Interviewer: Our Committee is also interested in historical architecture, which is why I asked you.

Bonnell: This is old, I don't know if it's historic. My parent's house was built by George Ellis. Helen Marston, the first Town Clerk, was our next door neighbor in those days. George built her house, too. That was built in 1946. It is still up there, in fact, I

think the Lincoln Family Trust owns that property now. My mother sold that property after my father died.

Interviewer: Where is that located, Jon?

Bonnell: Five and a half acres at the end of Quail Run Road. I think it's still in the Lincoln Family Trust.

Interviewer: Tell us some of the major changes you've seen in the Town of Paradise Valley.

Bonnell: I think the reason that we incorporated that has been lost. The fact that Phoenix was trying to the east and Scottsdale was trying to expand to the west and the north, and we didn't want little winky-dink subdivisions. Most of the people that were involved when the Town was formed lived on at least one acre, most of them lived on two and a half acres to five-acre parcels. There were some larger, but more of them were in that neighborhood. They just didn't want to be subject to regular run of the mill subdivisions around them. That was the main reason we incorporated -- to limit the houses to one house per acre. So if you had 10 acres of land, you could build eight houses on the 10 acres. Unfortunately, since the big developers came in, we maybe lost sight of that a little bit. The other change is walls everywhere. I just abhor the walls. I think it was the worst mistake. When I was Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, people started insisting that we allow the first walled subdivision, which

was Camelback Country Club Estates. They put the wall around Invergordon and Mockingbird. I think that was the biggest mistake and I rue the day that we ever allowed that to happen. I don't think that is right and wish we hadn't done it because now everybody is doing it, the latest being the one that wants to put a guard gate up. I think that's wrong. I'm not there so there isn't much I can do about it.

Interviewer: Did you know and or work with Raymond Mitchell? Have you kept up with him? Do you know where he is?

Bonnell: Sure, Ray Mitchell, I went to school with his son. Ray Mitchell is dead. His son, Jim, lives in northern California someplace and his daughter lives here in Phoenix. She is a librarian at Paradise Valley High School, maybe, or some other school.

Interviewer: In reading through the history of Paradise Valley in the big books, he was known as "Mr. Paradise Valley." (I don't know why.) According to the articles, they indicated that he worked very hard and he was on the Maricopa County P&Z (so was my Dad), and that's when he got wind that they wanted to look into expanding the borders of Phoenix. Scottsdale was looking at this area for expansion too.

Bonnell: They lived on the north of the corner of McDonald Drive and Casa Blanca Road. I think the Firestones own that house now. They lived in a two-story adobe house there before he went to the South Seas when he was Governor of something down there.

Then they moved to the San Juan Islands when he retired. Ray and his wife are both dead now.

Interviewer: Were you or your father on the Paradise Valley Improvement Board? (I don't know what that was). There seems to be a group of Paradise Valley residents prior to the incorporation that Raymond Mitchell went to say, "Hey, we've got to incorporate if we want to get what we want."

Bonnell: My Dad might have been, I wasn't. I didn't know about that one. He was on the Maricopa County Planning and Zoning Commission. Then when the Town was incorporated, he resigned to become Chairman of the Paradise Valley Planning and Zoning. I didn't go on the Planning and Zoning until the '70's. My Dad was already dead, in fact, by then. No, he might have still been alive when I went on Planning and Zoning.

Interviewer: You were on the Council for two years.

Bonnell: Yes, I was on the Council. Barbara vonAmmon and I used to fight like cats and dogs over the development of Lincoln Drive. I think that was a 5-2 vote, in favor of doing what they did. I don't remember who the other dissenting vote was.

Interviewer: Then there was a recall.

Bonnell: I wasn't part of that. In fact, I was already gone when that happened.

Interviewer: Do you recall any other people besides your father that made contributions to the growth to the Town?

Bonnell: Jack Huntress, I think he's still alive. The first Mayor was Pat Downey. (Is he still living?) I think Pat is still alive but I don't think he lives here in the Valley. There's someone who lives at the corner of Jackrabbit and Casa Blanca, it starts with an "A." He was one of the first Councilmen. Helen Marston, of course. I knew Helen as well as a kid could because I was a snotty nosed 22-year-old and her husband, Jack had already died. Helen was the first Town Clerk and the Town Hall was our guesthouse up there on Quail Run. The original Town Hall was our guest house at the end of Quail Run. I think that little house is still there. I haven't been up there for a while. I would presume that the little guest house is still there. Helen lived next door on a parcel to the north of us. She used to walk from her house to the Town Hall, and then I would walk her home at night because she didn't like to be out after dark.

Interviewer: I understand she had a great fear.

Bonnell: Oh yes, she was real careful about going around at night. I guess the Town Hall was our house for about three or four years. Then I think they rented that place where Lou Davis used to have his art studio. Matilda, his wife, had her dance studio there, which would be south of where the Town Hall is now on Malcomb. It

became Clyde Alexander Refrigeration. That building was the original Town Hall after they moved out of our guest house.

Interviewer: Probably the guest house is still in existence.

Bonnell: As far as I know, it is still there. You could take a picture of it.

Interviewer: Agnese Udinotti is looking on the early architecture.

Bonnell: I know the house and I presume the guest house is still standing. It was being used by somebody who lived there two or three years ago. (At the end of Quail Run?) Yes, you go north off McDonald Drive to Quail Run and then you go through the gates and the guest house is on the south edge of the property right next to the fence line.

Interviewer: Even though there have been some big changes, since you're still in Paradise Valley, there is something that you like about it.

Bonnell: I like my house. There's not a whole lot about the Town that I like. It has just changed too much.

Interviewer: Because of the growth and walls?

Bonnell: Yes, the walls, the growth, the traffic, and the attitude.

Interviewer: If you could be a philosopher and leave a message to the people of Paradise Valley today and tomorrow, what would you say?

Bonnell: For the next Paradise Valley, I would never allow six foot walls. I would encourage no fences, other than making a three or four foot fence to keep the dogs in.

Interviewer: What about fences for the pools?

Bonnell: Swimming pools have to be fenced. I'm talking about the six foot walls where you can't even see your neighbors. If you want to talk to your neighbor, you have to climb up on a stool. I don't think that's right. At my house, the guy that lives on the east side of me build a six foot cement block wall. He build it on his property, there is nothing I can do about it. But the rest of my property is just fenced with oleanders and chain link for the dog run. That's part of living with other people is having to put up with what they want. The Town when we first started, we were pretty arrogant people. It was do our way, or go somewhere else. It is not our problem if you paid \$50,000 for an acre of land and we won't let you build what you want to build. That's your problem. I guess I'm still kind of arrogant about that. When developers came in to Planning and Zoning, we couldn't say, "You can't do something." Quite frankly, they are paying interest money on their loan and we weren't. If you want to do it our way, fine, if you don't want to do it our way, take us to court if you want to. Some of them tried. Very few people ever won. One of the things we never allowed was gate houses for several reasons. One was public

access to the property. A very important one at the time was because Rural Metro. Once you have a gate house and private street, even though the City is not maintaining the street, the police can't get in unless they have a pass key or some way of getting through. The fire department couldn't get in. So we just said no private gates. One of the big discussions one time was Mountain Shadows, I mean, Clearwater Hills wanted to see what we can do with that guard house which was grandfather cloused and it was deemed we couldn't do anything about that. There was several places who wanted put a guard gate and we wouldn't let them do it. Camelback Country Club Estates wanted to have a guard and we said no. We negotiated a settlement that included that fence. I wish we hadn't done that, but we did.

Interviewer: Do you feel that society has really changed that they feel they need it now?

Bonnell: No, that's ego. That's not safety, that's just ego. I think it's pure ego and a real estate salesman's dream to be able to say, "They have a guard house." I think it's pure ego, not a matter of safety at all. One thing I would like to see looking back on it, if I were to start a Town of my own someday, I would set up some kind of ratio of a square footage footprint of a house versus the total square footage of the lot that the house is being built on. Even though we have the side yard setbacks now, I think that putting these 10,000 square foot houses on two acres of land is ridiculous. I think there ought to be some kind of regulation similar to the hillside building ordinance that stipulates that you can put so many square feet on a lot for every square foot of lot based on the slope of

the land from the front of the lot to the back of the lot. I would do that even on the flat land. I think that would probably do away with two story houses.

Interviewer: What about clusters?

Bonnell: I think cluster is required in certain areas. If I started from scratch so that I owned all the land and the land was bare, then you could do without clusters because you can master plan the whole thing. As long as there is more than one owner, I think you can't take his property away from him unless he's willing to give it away. The way we had the cluster originally, you couldn't tell it was cluster anyway because (it might still be, I haven't looked at the ordinances that close), you still had to have 165 feet across the front even if it was a third of an acre. It had to look like an acre lot. That's the way we had it set up.

Interviewer: We have all these screwy pan handle lots.

Bonnell: I sat in on a couple of Planning and Zoning and Council meetings last year where they had these odd ball shaped lots and it ends up that they have a cul de sac at the end of 800 feet of roadway which was against the ordinance. They couldn't get the front of the lot on an existing right of way so they had to jury rig it around the cul de sac at the end of an extra long lot. If you have master planning, you don't have to worry about that.

Interviewer: Do you remember who was Planning Director when you were on P&Z?

Bonnell: He was an independent architect, Jim something, I can't remember his name. I guess I was on it a couple years before I was Chairman. I was on it for about six and a half years.

Interviewer: You saw a lot of change here.

Bonnell: Oh yes, a lot of fights. We never argued with the developer. We just would sit and smile at him. Their lawyers threatened to sue us. The only problem we really had was the time the Arizona Supreme Court declared the Town's incorporation illegal. (This was not true, Scottsdale took the Town to court about its legality and the Arizona Supreme Court declared the Town legal). There was a moratorium for about a year when we were subject to County ordinances on building. This was after we were a Town. Luckily, nobody took undue advantage of that because there were some things in the County ordinance that we wouldn't have allowed. I don't think there was anybody that grossly misused that opportunity.

Interviewer: After you incorporated Paradise Valley, other than the annexation that took place, was there much of a building boom right away?

Bonnell: No. We just went real slow. The land didn't really boom until the '70's when it really started going crazy. It was pretty much one or two for a long time. We

used the County offices to review the architect's plans and the subdivision plat. It went pretty slow until the '70's.

Interviewer: Back to the badge. Can you tell me the sequence of events between Ned being appointed Town Marshal, then Jocko being appointed. Finally, Les Naumann became one in December who got things together.

Bonnell: Les Naumann was the first full time Marshal, everybody else was part time. Ned Curtis owned Scottsdale Feed and Jocko was retired at the time, but he was Marshal for a short time.

Interviewer: We don't know if it was a few weeks or a few months. He was appointed when Ned was still Marshal. We know that Ned was appointed on May 25.

Bonnell: Jocko got his badge on July 5 of '62. (Not true, the year had to have been '61)

Interviewer: Les Naumann was hired in December 20, 1961.

Bonnell: I think this was an honorary Marshal. I don't think he was really a Marshal (Jocko).

Interviewer: He said he was out of town so much, he really didn't participate.

Bonnell: You didn't interview Jocko. (No.) There are badges that were made before Jocko. Robert Asty. These are guys that were instrumental in incorporation. Ann Lee Harris. Robert L. Asty. Bernard Lusse Jr. Philip Hank. Kenneth Perry. Carl Marden. Peter Wegner. These were issued before Jocko. I don't have any more names because they were honorary things given away. There's Jocko, he didn't get his until the 10th of July, 1962. (The honorary badges were for honoring those who worked for the incorporation).

Interviewer: What is Jocko's last name?

Bonnell: Connolly. Peter Wegner got one. He was Chief Deputy Marshal. Paul Edwards was Deputy Marshal. Ferris Simpson was Deputy Marshal and Alexander C. Wyatt Jr. was Deputy Marshal.

Interviewer: Do you know if any of them are still living?

Bonnell: I don't know if any of them are still alive. Peter Wegner is probably still around.

Interviewer: Did you know Carl Peachy?

Bonnell: Yes, he was the first judge.

Interviewer: He was the first magistrate. He is still alive and lives in California. He is 93 this summer.

Bonnell: His daughter-in-law was in here a couple of weeks ago, Pat Peachy.

Interviewer: Do you know who was the Planning Director who worked for the Town?

Bonnell: I don't know if we had one in those days.

Interviewer: I wonder who the first Planning Director was. The first one I knew was Morgan ____.

Bonnell: No, there was one before him. He was like the Planning Director/Building Inspector, he wore all those coats. So did Muin. Muin wore all those coats. I think he owns a bar in Young, Arizona, now. You might ask Oscar Butt, he might know. I think Oscar was the first Town Manager that the Town actually hired to do that job specifically. Mary Ann Brines, she is dead, but her husband is still around.

Interviewer: We understand he's re-married and lives in Flagstaff. How does the Council of today differ from when you were on the Council?

Bonnell: They're fighting like cats and dogs now. It's different. We fought like cats and dogs over things, but we're still friends. I got a feeling those people aren't friends. We were focused, we had a reason or vision for being there, whether it was Planning and Zoning or the Town Council. We agreed to disagree but we still got along good. Barbara vonAmmon and I just fought, it was brutal. But when the meeting was over with, we would make up and everything was fine. We went on about our business. I get the impression that now it is 5-2 and they're not going to smile at each other when the meeting is over with.

Interviewer: I get the sense that what you're saying is that when you were on Council, you may have fought, but the main goal was the same but it was different ways of approaching it. Everybody was focused on the same goals.

Bonnell: Yes, that's right. I see more of a reacting to things rather than focused on specific goals.

Interviewer: What would you advise a Council or group on what we should do from now on to keep from undoing any more than has been done?

Bonnell: You have to get a vision. Right now, I think the first thing is to get all of them on the same board. They are riding out across the desert in different directions. I don't know what would get them on the same course.

Interviewer: Is there any one particular thing that Paradise Valley should concentrate on?

Bonnell: I think they ought to go back to planning ahead. There is such little amount of open space left, compared to twenty years ago. They should plan what to do with this open space so they don't come in with the two and three house subdivisions. The piece of land on Mockingbird that Little America owns may be sold one day and you don't know what they will build on it. Scottsdale owns 40 acres along Scottsdale Road.

Interviewer: I think it was supposed to be a resort.

Bonnell: Yes. Little America was going to build a

Interview

Bonnell: Still, they ought to plan on what it's going to be and where the streets are going to be. They will have to call the owners in and get agreement. The City of Scotts what they do, their Planning Department has already determined the maximum zoni That may not be what the zoning is right now, but they have always determined what the maximum zoning could be on a given piece parcel of land. It is available, you can come in and apply for a

change. I think that is what Paradise Valley ought to do. Get it laid out, figure out where the streets are going to be and say, "This is the way it's going to be." If you don't like it, tough nookies. I think everybody is so afraid of being sued, stuff it. That's not what they're there for to worry about being sued. I don't think that's why you're on the Council to worry about being sued. You're on the Council to accomplish the vision. It's not an ego trip and it's not a power struggle. You have seven people of divergent background but they all should have the same vision. It can't always happen because you have a public election, but that's the way I think it ought to be. I would appoint the members and they would all think the way I think. We'd still argue, but we'd end up being friends. As long as you have the same vision and focus, then it will work out in the long run. It's going to happen and I just don't see it there right now. I think there's back biting, there's underhanded shenanigans, personality conflicts, saying things about people they shouldn't be saying. If you can't say something nice, either don't say it or say it to their face.

Interviewer:

Can

Bonnell: Yes, I have to find it. I thought they were in this folder.

Interviewer: I want to thank you very much, Mr. Bonnell, for giving us this time and being so generous with all kinds of information.