

LISA HOARD JOHNSON
November 1, 2000

Joan Horne and myself, Ann Townsend, interviewers for the Town of Paradise Valley Historical Committee, are privileged to interview Lisa Hoard Johnson, who has been a resident in this area since 1950. Thank you, Ms. Johnson, for allowing us to chat with you today. May we have permission to quote you in part or all of our conversation today?

Lisa: Yes.

Ann: Thank you.

Lisa: My real name is Elizabeth Hoard Johnson and my nickname is Lisa. A lot of people knew me as Elizabeth Hoard.

Ann: That's important to know. So the nickname, you weren't Elizabeth "Lisa" or something like that?

Lisa: Later in life, the nickname came.

Ann: Okay, thank you. According to the recent interview in the *Scottsdale Tribune*, you and your family had moved here when you were about ten years old in 1950. Did you reside here in what is now known as Paradise Valley?

Lisa: Yes.

Ann: Okay, because that was eleven years before the Town was incorporated. Did you go to Judson School?

Lisa: The first school my sister and I went to was Braunmore School for Girls over on Indian School Road. It unfortunately had some financial difficulties so it closed. Then my mother was Mrs. Palmeri, Mrs. Nancy Evans, and maybe one or two other mothers, but I think those three were the cohorts, went over to Henry Wick and asked him if he

would consider taking girls. And he said, "Well, this is a boys school." Then mother said, "Well, Henry, you'll make so much more money and we really need to have a private school for girls, too. So, he considered it, and went ahead on it, and it became a success.

Ann: Now what year was that that you started at Judson?

Lisa: I was there for four or five years and I graduated in 1960.

Ann: You probably started in about 1955.

Lisa: 1955 I think.

Ann: That's good because there was some other information that says that they didn't allow girls until the '70s and I just knew in my heart that was wrong.

Joan: No, I knew that.

Ann: Mr. Wick had said that it hadn't been too long.

Lisa: There were eight of us girls and 200 boys.

Ann: The article in the *Scottsdale Tribune* had concentrated on the fact that you're writing a book about the Jim Fredrick's murder and the complicated couples issues behind it and so forth. I really don't want to get into that so that you don't give away any of your revelations in your book before your book goes to press, so I'd like to concentrate on Paradise Valley and your memories on that and just stay with Paradise Valley.

Lisa: Actually, that is in the book; the book is not totally directed toward Scottsdale. The book is directed to my family living in this Town, moving out here and, as a matter of fact, they were in *Life* magazine along with Ed Tweed, the Assbys, and a few other people in the first issue that *Life* magazine did out here of pioneers who came out here and settled here.

Ann: Would you remember what year that *Life* magazine did an article?

Lisa: That was 1954 when the *Life* magazine did an article. I think that was the year when Eisenhower ran.

Joan: He ran in '52 and '56.

Lisa: Okay, then it was 1952. I'm sure it was 1952. But the book is basically about coming out here in this Town and the people who made this Town great. And that happens to be in the book.

Ann: Oh, great. Well tell me, did you and your family reside in what is now known as Paradise Valley.

Lisa: When we first came out here?

Ann: Yes.

Lisa: When we first came out here, we landed in this apartment building called the Built Well Apartments in Phoenix. I think it was on 16th Street or 7th Street. I remember waking up in the morning and I was ill and that was the reason we were coming out here, that I was given a short time to live if I didn't get into the heat.

Ann: Were you asthematic?

Lisa: No, I had a terrible cold and sore throat and I had stopped eating. So I suppose now you could call it anorexia. But I was just wasting away in the hospital for a year or so.

Ann: My goodness, how awful.

Lisa: They did all these tests and they decided to come out to Arizona. That led to my father commuting for twenty years.

Ann: What did your father do?

Lisa: During WWII, he put wiring in the jets for the airplanes during the war. Then he had a lot of accounts like Amana, he did electrical wiring.

Ann: So when you moved to the area we now know as Paradise Valley, where was it?

Lisa: So the next thing we did we went to Sundown Ranch. That was within days or a week.

Ann: Do you know where that is?

Lisa: That's on Shea Boulevard and it's called Scottsdale Ranch right now. But it used to be Sundown Ranch and it was a dude ranch. So we stayed there in one of those guest houses. Then my mother tried to find a house to rent. So then she found a house to rent and it belonged to the Schneiders, Bill Schneider on Cheney Road. They had two homes. They lived in one and then the one to the west of them, they rented to us. I think we were there for a year or it could have been two years. My parents were planning on building, so they got an architect and they were going to build this home. They bought a lot on Cheney Road. Mr. Cheney owned a water company and it just so happened that he put a great big water tank right in front of the lot that they bought to build the home. My parents were broken-hearted because that's what they would be looking at. So my father at this time had discovered the Pink Pony and everybody in it. He had been down there and...

Ann: For the record, people don't know what the Pink Pony, would you tell them.

Lisa: Oh yes, the restaurant here in Scottsdale. So, John Barkley, who was a local gentleman who lived here and he was a cartoonist who had worked for Walt Disney and he had moved over here. He was down at the Pink Pony also and Daddy was telling him his woes about this water tank that was put right in front of his lot. Daddy didn't know

what to do and so John Barkley said, "What you need to do is come over and look at this place where I rent a guest house. It's called Nauni Valley Ranch. It is in terrible shape. The people who own it now have run it down and I think you could get it for a good price." He said Captain Hog owned it at one time from Texas. The original builders built it in 1937 or 1932. But it was one of the old buildings. Not adobe bred. It was after the adobe brick period. It was poured concrete. I think it was their answer to better construction than the adobe brick. It had guest cottages on it. It was raining that day I remember and Daddy was very excited and came to the house that we were renting, packed us all in and drove us over there. They bought it. They lived there from 1952 until 1993. No, my sister and I sold it. I think we sold it in 1990. They had it over forty years. It was a lovely place.

Ann: Understanding where that is to the street today. What are the boundaries?

Lisa: Where Mountain Shadows East is now, it would be directly south. In order to get there, you would go down Lincoln Drive and turn south on 56th Street. Then half way up between Lincoln and McDonald Road is Nauni Valley Drive. Then you would turn directly east and go down. Of course, the whole place has been removed. My sister and I sold it to Bill Bidwell who owns the Phoenix Cardinals. They felt that they needed to remove all the buildings, which was their choice, but it's a shame because I felt it was one of the old landmarks. But you know some of these old landmarks have termites and too much of a problem. I don't know what the problem was. They built a lovely home though.

Joan: That's happening all over Town. They're throwing down everything that was here and building these huge places.

Ann: It's too bad they're building them so huge. But not everything that is being torn down is really architecturally valuable to be saved anyway.

Lisa: It was.

Ann: Well, built back in '30's.

Lisa: Like Jokake Inn. That's gone. That was a shame.

Ann: Well, what more do you want to share with us in growing up in Paradise Valley.

Lisa: After we settled there...I have a picture that I know you would like to have of that.

Ann: If we could borrow it, we have a wonderful photographer that can scan it on his computer and then we could give it back to you. It could be very valuable to us because it's very difficult to find pictures of early Town of Paradise Valley area. It will be a surprise when people see these rare pictures because of how full of nature it is not houses.

Joan: The only thing I would say is that you probably need an original to scan when I brought it to the photographer, if we give him a copy which I had copy of something else, he said he couldn't scan it. He needed the originals. I don't know if we can trust a copy.

Lisa: My sister is getting copies of this one picture. I have many pictures of my parent's house which I would be happy to share with you. This picture is an aerial picture of the ?? of Mountain Shadows West and Mountain Shadows East before it was ever built. The only houses that you see there are the P??? and my parents. There's nothing else. It really is something to see. Of course, Camelback Inn was there and El Chorro was there and the Sheen's house was there. Oh, and Happy Landing, which is Finisterre over here. These were divided into 100 acre pieces of property between McDonald Drive and Lincoln. They were ranches – there was Happy Landing and then there was Flying

T, and then there was my parent's property, and then there was the ???. Then there was The Shangrila.

Joan: It's still there.

Lisa: Is it?

Joan: I think it's up for sale. I know it's off McDonald. They maintained the right to have it that way. They came down to protect their right to operate under grandfathering.

Lisa: Some of the things that I remember my parents talking about at that time which would be kind of interesting probably...

Ann: Could I interrupt just a minute to ask if we could have that picture by the 15th of December or even earlier because we need to get pictures and text all together to go to the printers by December 31. The earlier the better but no later than the 15th of December.

Lisa: Okay. I'm going to see my sister tonight. One of the things that my parents talked about a lot that I remember as a child was water. They were on a well and I think everyone else was on a well.

Ann: Do you have any idea how deep those wells had to be in those days?

Lisa: Well, all I remember is our well went dry. It seemed to me that 50 was a number that stuck in my mind, that the well was 50 feet. We drilled but at that time, what I remember is that we had to feed the horses out of the swimming pool and all the grass went brown. But right in the nick of time, they found out that, I thought it was the City of Phoenix but maybe it wasn't, put the first water tank up on Mummy Mountain, near 44th Street, the big one, you can see it up over there. Because there wasn't a Town of

Paradise Valley, so they were subject to the City of Phoenix the big supplier. I think it was the City of Phoenix.

Joan: It's on the side of the mountain, I'm not sure.

Lisa: It's just at the tail end, just above Camelback Mountain.

Joan: I don't know where Paradise Valley Water Company comes in, so I'm not sure myself.

Lisa: I don't even think there was a water company then, but maybe there was. I don't know. But this certainly was not here, and there was a little adobe in back of here, a little bit more southeast of you. I think that was the Town Hall.

Joan: They had a couple of places before they actually built this. That's where we had dancing lessons, cotillion, so everybody went there for that. Then on Friday nights, it seemed that everybody went to Riding Rock Ranch.

Ann: Dorothy Paterson.

Lisa: Dorothy Paterson. We went for square dancing and that was a big event as a child and I remember we really loved that. Mother had some wonderful stories about a lot of the parties that they went to and the people who were at the party. But as far as living on that property, it was so open and so wonderful and there weren't any ?? They had two white stone gates on McDonald Road and then over on 56th Street. I think there was barb wire that went around, but I can't remember. What we did was we would just open the gates to the corral and turn the horses loose. They would run all around and they would run down to Camelback Inn. And then Dad the wrangler would call me and tell me to come down and get them. That was kind of a fun thing for us to do. Another thing, as a matter of fact, I just saw Shelly Stillman at the horse show, and we were

laughing about how we used to get on our horses bareback. And in the summertime, it was hot but it wasn't hot as it is now. But it was hot. We would get into our swimming suit, then jump into the pool, and then get on our horses and go moonlight riding. The big thing we liked to do so much was to ride down to Casa Blanca and there was a vineyard there, and we'd like to ride in there and steal the grapes. So that was a big event. You know in those times, we never saw a rattlesnake or heard one. And here we are riding out in the desert at nighttime. We just didn't see them. I saw a gilla monster one time. But you did not see the coyotes that much. I did see them when I'd ride out during the day occasionally, but nothing like right now. The wild life just wasn't there, you didn't see that much of it. As the years went on the Town grew. I also remember my parents quoting the things that Tom Darlington would tell them. R?? McCune and a lot of the founding fathers that had a lot to do with planning the future of this Town, meaning Scottsdale, Paradise Valley, and ????. It was going to do what it has done. I remember back, the plans and the things that they talked about, and they used to say, "This is going to be another L.A." And everyone went oh no, this is all dried out and there is not enough rain. It did take a long time for it grew it seems when we moved here. My mother thought it was going to happen right away. I do remember hearing my father talk about...I remember when he wanted to go in and buy, I think Tom Darlington wanted him to buy the Saguaro Bar which was right next to Bob Fredrickson's gas station, or the gentleman that has the jewelry store now at that corner – the northeast corner of Scottsdale and Main. There was the Lulu Bar there.

Joan: I remember Lulubelle's.

Lisa: But it used to be the Saguaro Bar. You didn't dare walk by it. It was scary and it was dark. There were a lot of cowboys in there. It was kind of scary. Daddy didn't do it. My mother didn't think that was a good idea so he didn't do that. Then there was the time when they all wanted to get together and buy Mummy Mountain. He also did not do that which was very foolish. But I think my mother stopped him from a lot of things she thought. She was just more eastern and she felt that this was not going to boom like it was projected to boom. It did it in different spurts. Then she really grew to love it here. As a matter of fact, she started the library here at the Town Hall. I have the plaque at home.

Ann: There's a lot of books in this library. Are they your parent's books then.

Lisa: Yes. My parents used to call me Betsy and I just hated that name. There's a lot of books in there that have Betsy Hoard. Then my mother, I don't know whether they're still there or not, but she took down a lot of her books and a lot of my books. She really worked hard at that. She helped start, and I don't know who else was involved in it, was the Paradise Valley beautification program here.

Ann: Which is now called the PRIDE Committee.

Joan: There must have been a hiatus in there because there was a period of time there wasn't any group.

Ann: Right. She was in on that first group. I think everybody started out picking up trash along the road. That type of thing. She was very proud of starting a library here.

Joan: Do you have a plaque?

Lisa: Yes, I have a plaque at home.

Joan: Maybe we can have a picture of the plaque. That would be great.

Lisa: Sure. Who was the gentleman who was the head of the Town Hall here?

Joan: When you say head of the Town, do you mean the first Mayor?

Ann: The first Mayor you mean.

Lisa: Yes.

Ann: Patrick Downey was the first Mayor for one year.

Lisa: No, it's not him.

Ann: Then Jack Huntress became Mayor for ten years.

Lisa: I knew Jack Huntress. I knew the Huntresses. Doug and Nancy Huntress rented one of my parent's guest houses while they were building their home. They were close friends of my parents. No, this was a man who worked here and he was here for years.

Joan: I came when Oscar Butt was the Town Manager.

Lisa: What was his name?

Ann: Oscar Butt.

Lisa: Oscar Butt, that was him.

Ann: We've interviewed him.

Lisa: He knew my mother very well.

Ann: And Jack Huntress, too. We were fortunate to interview him about a year and a half before he passed away.

Joan: Was your family involved in the incorporation of the Town? You know citizens who were very concerned about being swallowed up by Scottsdale and Phoenix.

Lisa: Oh yes, they were. I remember when it happened.

Ann: Did they carry petitions around for people to sign to agree to the incorporation?

Lisa: Yes. My mother was for it. They were for it. They thought it was a good idea.

Ann: I'm confused jumping back and forth. How did your parents land on Nauni Valley Road? Did that become part of Mountain Shadows.

Lisa: No, because Mountain Shadows West, all that 100 acres there, belonged to Alan Fienny. Del Webb bought that after a certain amount of years, like in the late '60s, the mid to late '60s. I think it was the late '60s or early '70s. The first piece that went was Mountain Shadows East. Penny Paul, that's another person you should interview. Jim Paul is still alive.

Joan: Penny, from what I've been told, has been divorced from him for many, many years. She's too ill to be interviewed. She's still living.

Lisa: Is Jim Paul still living?

Joan: I have heard anything since he faded out of the picture with Rawhide. But we could certainly check it out.

Lisa: Yes, I would. His daughter, Penny Paul, I knew. They all lived in Mountain Shadows East when he built that. They moved in. He was a very important man at that time and involved as a developer. He knew everyone. Then after they'd lived there for years, he went on and built Rawhide later. Penny Paul would remember.

Joan: Is she his daughter?

Lisa: She's my age. She would remember a lot that was going on. I don't think she went to Judson. I think she went to Scottsdale, which would be just as well because then she could get that other information. I'll tell you who else. Tommy Callan, he's around. Phil Schneider.

Joan: Phil Schneider is a resident of the Town, I think. Unless there's more than one.

Lisa: Phil and Nancy Schneider. They used to live right up the road.

Joan: In fact I think they came in with something that had to do with the pool.

Lisa: They were here before we moved here because we rented the house from them. He knows a lot and he's a very nice fellow. As far as starting the Town of Paradise Valley, I do remember my parents discussing it and they were really for it. They thought it would be a good thing because it would protect the zoning. There wasn't any zoning. Well, there was zoning but nobody paid any attention to it.

Joan: The County was always quite laxed.

Lisa: One morning we woke up about 3 o'clock to these tremendous blasts. That was that road above Camelback Inn where they blasted it in the middle of the night.

Ann: You remember the blasting of Glen Drive.

Lisa: Oh that was a tragedy. My parents were so upset about that along with everybody else. Then they had a meeting and the person who was involved in that said, "Well, the road's in so we might as well go ahead and build the house." But that's the way a lot of things were done then. That scared a lot of people so then they started...I think that that had a lot to do with starting the Town of Paradise Valley. So that they could control the zoning, don't you think?

Joan: Oh yes. I know that was a major issue.

Lisa: Everyone was flat landed. No one lived up on the mountains. A lot of eastern people who thought it would really be very sheik to have a place out here and live on the mountain. So they would get a builder to go up there and then of course, they were attacked by rattlesnakes and sold the homes. There were several times the homes stayed empty because the real estate was slow. Little by little, it started to take off. I remember right across the street over here was the wonderful horse ranch.

Joan: Where La Place is?

Lisa: Yes.

Joan: We came out here when there was still camels there.

Lisa: I used to hitch my horse up to a buggy which actually came from my parent's ranch, and then Oscar Strobel bought it, this buggy. When I was sixteen my parents bought me another horse. I had two horses. My sister had a horse and my father had a horse. This horse that I bought had come from the Green Gables Restaurant at 21st Street and Thomas. It was a white horse. I would hitch up that horse and I'd drive to school everyday. Right down Lincoln Drive and I'd pass this horse ranch here. Well it was a ranch sometimes there were horses in there and sometimes there weren't. But I remember there were people up the street along there and a fence. Then I would start cutting across people's yards in this buggy on a dead run because I was going to be late for school. My dogs would go to school with me. Judson was a wonderful place at that time. It was terrific.

Ann: I'm sure people's yards were just open desert and nobody really minded that ride.

Lisa: Open desert. No, they didn't. I'll tell you one wonderful story. There was a woman who lived on the other side of Judson and her name was Dumeres O'Connell. She was, I think, in her seventies at that time. She had two huge American saddle back horses. One's name was Evening and the other's name was Fog???. She did not have a husband, either he had passed away or she was divorced. I don't know where she came from because I was a child. My sister knew of her a little bit better. The thing about her is that she would hitch up these two magnificent horses, and on Christmas morning, she had her buggy (she had a two-seater buggy), filled it with presents like Santa Claus. On

Christmas Day, every Christmas, she would drive around to the different ranches and deliver presents. Her horses were so beautiful. The fact that she was an older woman doing this was really something.

Joan: Isn't that nice.

Lisa: Then there was Speed Richardson. They taught everybody to ride horses here. Larry Kumkler who built Kumkler's Crossing, the horse bridge going across the canal so you could ride your horse over to get into Scottsdale. My parents were one of the founders of St. Barnabas. They started that down in Scottsdale. They were one of the eighteen founders of the Paradise Valley Country Club. They had joined John Gardiner's Country Club three times. Every time it had a new owner, they had to rejoin.

Joan: It's not too much different lately, is it?

Ann: Anything else you want to share with us in your memories of the early days of the Town of Paradise Valley? It's really been fascinating.

Lisa: I remember when they built the Franciscan Retreat. Since it was pretty quiet around, I would ride my horse over and I remember the monks walking on top of the retreat.

Ann: You mean on the roof?

Lisa: Yes. I would, of course, try and strike up a conversation at which they were not very wordy. But I would spend a lot of time at El Chorro. Because I had been a sick child, my parents tried to get me to eat a lot. So they started a charge account at El Chorro.

Ann: You liked their sticky buns?

Lisa: Oh yes, and the eggs benedict. Evie and Joe at the time managed it and were working there for the Gurgersons?? They remember all of this, too.

Ann: We've interviewed Joe Miller.

Lisa: I would ride over there at least in the summer every morning.

Ann: No, they were closed in the summer.

Lisa: But every weekend I would ride over when they were open and hitch up my horse. They had a hitching post there. This horse I had, it was an Arabian, and it dug a hole so deep and they never filled it in. I felt bad and I didn't know what to do about it. But I would always hitch it there. The hole got so deep that the horse sat down into the hole and I could step into the saddle. That's how deep the hole got. Dar, the waitress there, I remember several years ago before she retired, I was about forty-five years old, and she and I were talking about that she had been there so long that she used to wait on me when I was a little girl. That was a great place. El Chorro, the Pink Pony, and the Safari were the eating places around. Daddy belonged to the rotary over at Camelback Inn and the Stewarts had owned Camelback Inn at that time. So that was a fun place to go for everyone. It was a small Town, I think there were about 5,000 people and that included the Indians on the reservation. So there really were not very many people in the Scottsdale, or much less the Paradise Valley area.

Ann: I think Paradise Valley in 1961 when it was incorporated was said to be about 2,000 in population. It must have been fun.

Lisa: Well, it was.

Ann: Was it lonely?

Lisa: It was lonely. I was lonely. I was a lonely child because we lived way out here. But we had everything. We had this beautiful place, a swimming pool, a badminton court, horses, and dogs. We had everything that we could possibly want. But at that time we lived out away from everyone else. We had to ride our horses in to Town to be able to visit our girlfriends, or to get to one another.

Ann: We interviewed Barbara and Phil von Ammon and they had a couple of daughters. They were a little further north than you. Did you go to school with them?

Lisa: I don't remember. I don't think that the girls went to Judson. But mother and Daddy had some friends out there – the Bells north of Judson. There were a few houses back there, but not very many. Steve Richardson had his on Cheney Road.

Ann: I think the von Ammons were close to what is now called Doubletree Ranch Road in that area.

Lisa: Past that, I don't think Scottsdale Road wasn't even paved. It was just kind of sprinkled around. I do remember the cotton fields along Scottsdale Road. They were on the east side of Scottsdale Road, and the orange groves along Indian School Road.

Ann: Were the cotton fields on what is now known as McCormick Ranch?

Lisa: No, they were south of Lincoln.

Ann: I think our room is being rented out to another committee meeting at the Town Hall. Is there anything else you remember in two or three minutes.

Lisa: In my eyes and in my parent's eyes, the Town was a lovely, sleepy, little Town that had a tremendous amount of future plans.