

ONE PARTICULAR HARBOUR

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GREAT HARBOUR CAY



WILLIAM HUNT

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One Particular Harbour

A BRIEF HISTORY OF
GREAT HARBOUR CAY
IN THE BERRY ISLANDS

By William Hunt



TO ALL OF THE RESIDENTS OF
GREAT HARBOUR CAY, PAST
PRESENT AND FUTURE

ALL OF THE STATEMENTS CONCERNING DATES,
PLACES AND PEOPLE IN THIS BOOK ARE MY BEST GUESSES.
NO HARM TO ANYONE IS INTENDED

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GREAT HARBOUR CAY IN THE BERRY ISLANDS



This book is more of a historical novel than a serious document. I am writing it because so many things happened on and to Great Harbour over the past 30 years that were amusing. Since most of us do not keep diaries, it is difficult to remember exactly what happened to whom during any particular year. So just relax; remember when you first saw the beautiful beaches and golf course on "our" island in the sun, and chuckle at the adventures of those who came before you.

Great Harbour is a temporary kind of place for nearly all of us. We have homes in all parts of the world, but when the cold weather threatens we return to the island and enter into our world of make believe. We have new sets of neighbors, new friends and acquaintances. We meet everyone else's friends and relatives. We meet sail boaters, power boaters, and boaters in distress. We meet pilots and tourists, Bahamians and their political leaders. In fact, we meet almost everyone who sets foot on the island.

Great Harbour is like the set of an old Hollywood western film. It sits quietly for six or seven months until the next episode of the "Perils of Pauline" is to be filmed and then all Hell breaks loose!

How did it all begin and what happened to change the original plan? There are many theories but no one knows for sure. What we do know is that Great Harbour ended up being a story of the people and families that came early and some that have stayed late.

Some of my sources are not impeccable (old sales brochures) and certainly not too reliable (my own memory), but I have tried to keep things in order and to describe the events as they

happened. Don't worry if one year is exchanged for another, it really does not make any difference.

The story of Great Harbour is interesting because the same few people have kept returning year after year and they have slowly realized that this homing instinct is an admission of partial insanity. As Jimmy Buffett would say, "We have become the people our parents warned us about."

The Bahamas is made up of seven hundred islands and cays spread over 70,000 square miles of the Atlantic Ocean. A tiny section of this huge area is called the Berry Islands. They sit almost midway between New Providence to the South and Grand Bahama to the North,

In the beginning there was sunlight, clear water and thirty cays that make up the Berry islands. In 1836 ex-slaves settled in several of these cays. They tried to farm the rocky weak soil but had little success. During this time they did build small homes and churches of native rock on Little Stirrup, Hoffman and Whale Cays, but the only lasting settlement was at Bullock's Harbour.

Apparently there were five families who settled Bullock's Harbour and their descendants are living there today. The Winders, the Robert's, the Deans, the Gomezes and the Francis's.

The population in 1850 was quite small but increased to about 400 in the early 1920's, nearly all of whom were sponge fishermen. In 1929 hurricanes and sponge diseases destroyed the sponge beds, so the local men switched to the less profitable lobster trapping.

By the 1930's the population had dwindled to 100, as some families left and moved to Nassau while others moved to the States to work as migrant farmers. During the 1940 and 50's, and up to about 1968, the population held at about 150.

Of all the islands and cays in the Berry's, Manalapan island, now called Great Harbour Cay, was the largest and had the most beautiful beaches. Most importantly though, it had an ample supply of fresh water. Many of the Bahamian islands have to depend on rainwater collected off roofs to survive. The aquifer below Great Harbour is a true luxury. Unfortunately many people do not understand that this delicate resource must be used carefully or it will disappear forever.

It wasn't until Lou Chesler bought the island around 1966 and changed the name to Great Harbour that the cay started to take on a life of its own.

But wait. Who is Lou Chesler and why did he buy this small cay in the Bahamas? This part of the story really begins in Cuba in 1958.

PRE- GREAT HARBOUR



New Year's eve 1958 saw General Fulgencio Batista y Zaldivar and Maier Suchowljansky—better known as Meyer Lansky fleeing from Havana, Cuba. They realized that Cuban gambling was at an abrupt end as Castro's rebels advanced on Havana. Batista fled to The Dominican Republic while Lansky, the international gangster, headed for the Gold Coast of Florida in Broward County.

Lansky had considered opening gambling casinos in the Bahamas as far back as 1946, but determined that the time was not right. However, he did keep watching the Bahamian political climate. It wasn't until 1955, when Wallace Groves, an ex-convict from the United States, was able to ram through the House the "Hawkesbill Creek Act that created a duty free port on Grand Bahama Island, that Lansky decided to develop his Bahamian gambling plan. And then nothing happened out in the open. The plotting and planning of the Syndicate and ,within the ever changing Bahamian Government ,was moving right along. But it wasn't until 1959 that Lou Chesler, a Canadian born in 1913, was able, with the help and support of Lansky, to be in a position to actually build a hotel, golf course and marina on Grand Bahama.

In 1964 they completed the Lucayan Beach Hotel in Freeport. This was the culmination of the years of wheeling and dealing by Chesler and Lansky.

So on Jan.22, 1964, they had the grand opening of the Lucayan Beach Hotel, but by now Lou Chesler had served his many purposes to Lansky and was out of the picture in Grand Bahama.

Although I do not have any firm details about Chesler's plans after 1964, he certainly did continue to "work" in the Bahamas. He must have gotten some indication from someone in

the government that the new regulations concerning casinos in the Bahamas made it mandatory for the developer to build a hotel first. Why Chesler developed Great Harbour the way that he did remains a mystery. Perhaps he thought he could persuade the government that once he had everything in place he should be given a casino license. As you will see he built all of the large and necessary structures before he built the roundettes to use as hotel rooms. This was strange because every casino operator knows that they have to build rather extravagant hotel rooms to attract the "high rollers" to their casino.

Chesler set up and headed OSF Industries of Canada that created Roberts Realty as a subsidiary to develop Great Harbour Cay. Roberts Realty then became the center of this classic land promotion deal, not unlike hundreds of successful and unsuccessful land promotions before and since.

From 1966, when the cay was purchased, until March 31, 1969 when the first Celebrity Golf Tournament was held, an amazing amount of development was accomplished.

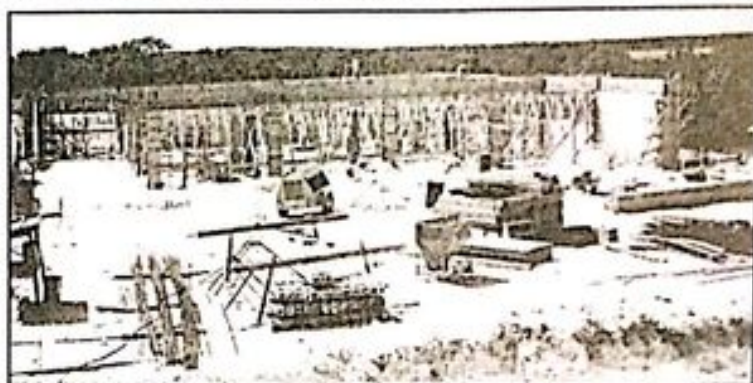
Plans for all phases of the development were prepared and a logical schedule for the various projects was established. The architect, William Dorsky, from Cleveland, and the golf course designer, Joe Lee, from Florida, were two of the first called to rush the work to completion.



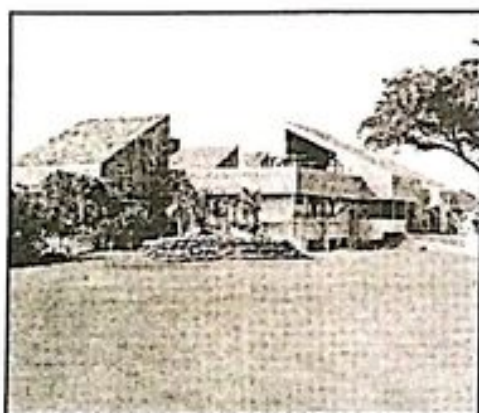
GOLF COURSE AND ROADS IN 1968

During 1967 roads were bulldozed through the scrub growth, and at the same time, work was begun clearing fairways for the 18 hole championship golf course. Also, during 1967

the footings for the clubhouse were poured. The Bahamians used to call this "Lookout Hill", because it is the highest point on Great Harbour. By February 1969 the clubhouse was nearing completion, as were the three large reservoirs that held 25 million gallons of water for use on the golf course. These huge holes were lined with a heavy rubber sheet to prevent seepage and therefore loss of the valuable fresh water. These reservoirs were supplied by over 100 wells that had been dug along side of several of the fairways.



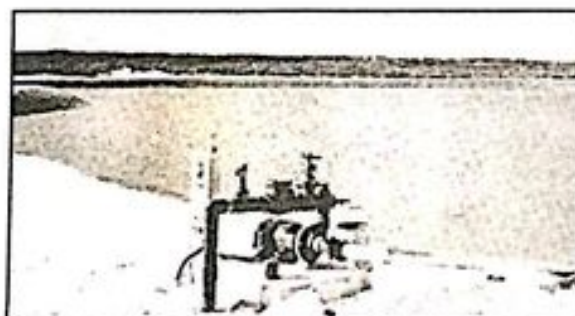
FOOTINGS FOR THE CLUB HOUSE



THE NEARLY COMPLETED CLUBHOUSE. 1969



LINING ONE RESERVOIR WITH SYNTHETIC RUBBER



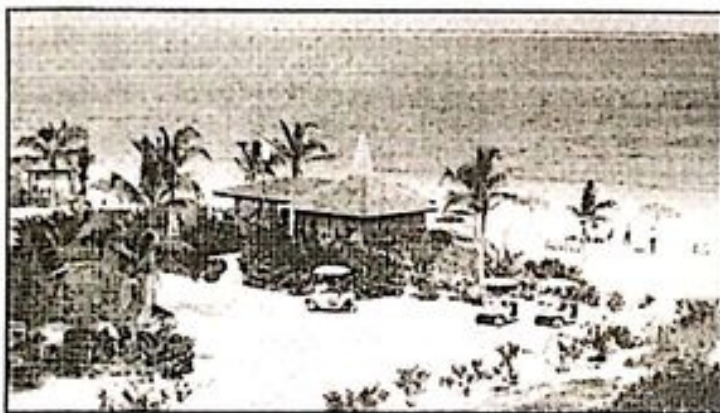
THIS ONE RESERVOIR
HELD MORE THAN
10,000,000
GALLONS OF WATER

The 3,000-foot airstrip was one of the first projects completed in 1966 and it was an excellent one for a small family island at that time. The observation tower was completed in 1967. Then the runway was extended to 4,200 feet in June of 1969.



THE OBSERVATION TOWER AT THE AIRPORT

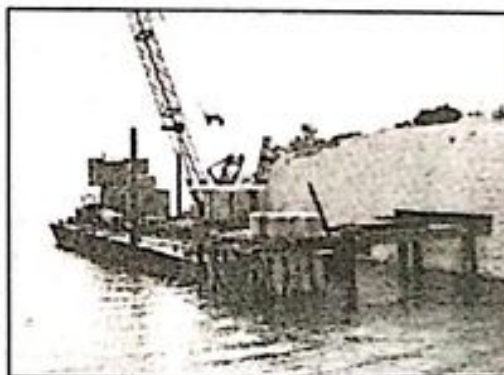
The beach club and nearby changing rooms were built for the prospects to use when on their inspection and buying tours. Shuffleboard courts were added nearby although no serious matches were ever played on them. Several years later the beach club was replaced with the double Rondette look. When Tom and Nora Tournquist started to manage the beach club, it really became the center of daytime and cocktail time on the island. It is now the longest continuously operating business on Great Harbour.



THE ORIGINAL BEACH CLUB

bridge from the new clubhouse. These villas actually served as the guest rooms and were in a sense, the hotel. An additional 32 villas were being built on the East Side of the 9th hole and these were completed by mid-1971.

In March of 1968 the first 5 Rondettes were completed. The rest of the original 46 Rondettes were completed by 1969. These were constructed on the ridge adjacent to, and across the



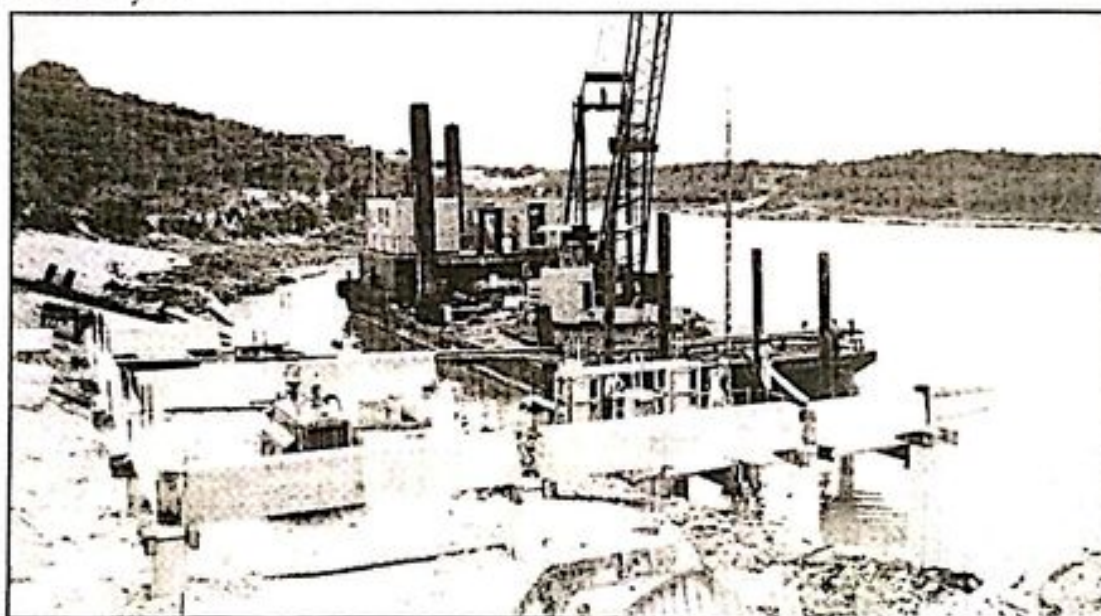
NEW ENTRANCE CHANNEL
ONE HUNDRED FEET WIDE
AND TWELVE FEET DEEP

In March of 1969, a channel was cut through solid rock, thereby giving access to the new marina from the ocean but making it necessary for a swing bridge to be erected so that Bullock's Harbour and Great Harbour would still be joined.

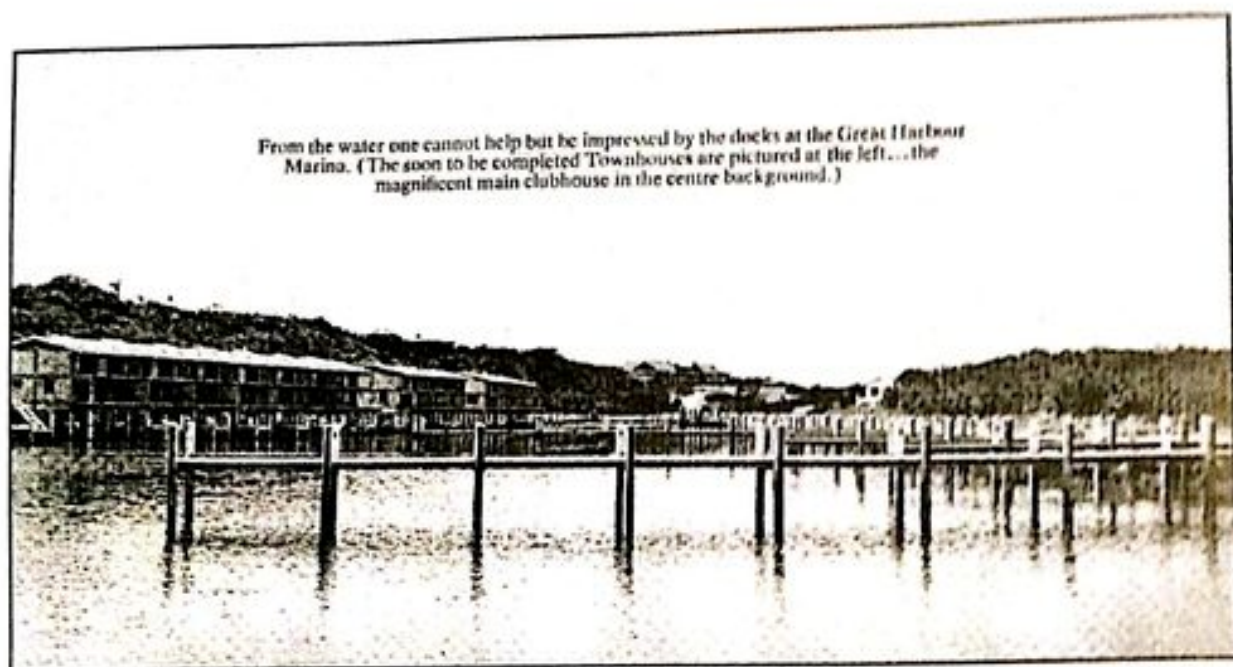


NUMBER NINE AND EIGHTEEN GREENS IN FOREGROUND
NEW RONDETTES WITH CLUB HOUSE IN BACKGROUND

Then in November of 1969 construction of the marina townhouses began. The first group of homes along Pirates Way was completed in about one year. These two bedroom units were built on pre-stressed concrete slabs and pilings and sold fairly rapidly. In fact, construction of the next section was started almost immediately and this last section was completed in about one year.



DOCK PILINGS BEING DRIVEN IN FRONT OF NEW TOWNHOUSE REINFORCED CONCRETE BASE



A VIEW OF THE MARINA WITH CLUBHOUSE IN THE BACKGROUND

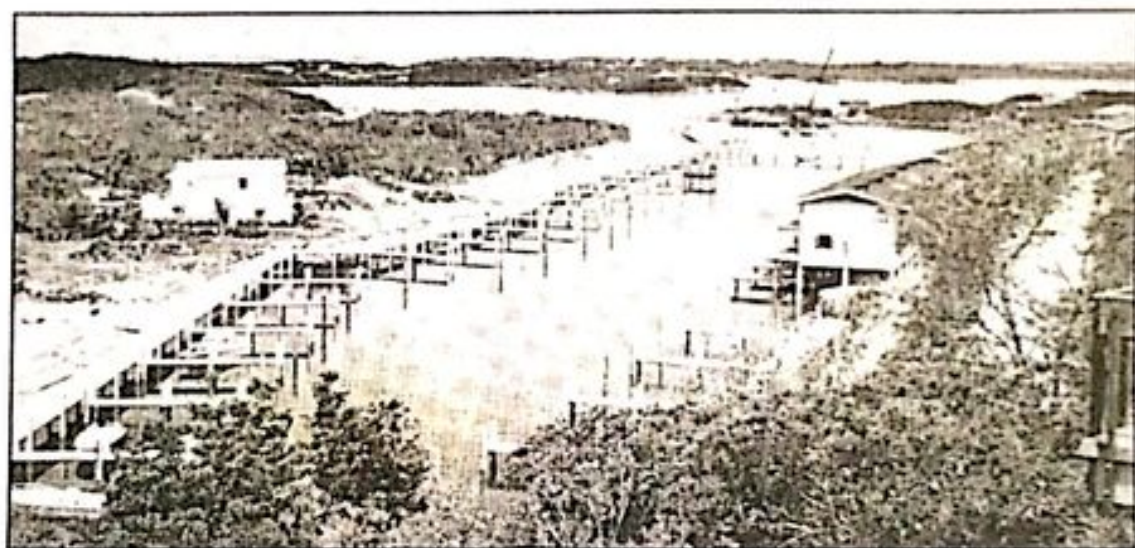
At the same time the power plant was being built near the bridge. The power lines from this plant to the clubhouse and marina were run underground so that the unsightly poles would not detract from the beauty of the island. Over the years these underground wires have been a problem, particularly after heavy rains and have now been replaced by overhead electric and telephone lines.

Even at this early date, the Roberts Realty Company had established a world-wide sales force. Well-known local brokers in various countries and cities were recruited as exclusive sales agents for their specific areas. They, in turn, advertised the glories of Great Harbour in their territories. In addition to these brokers, Roberts Realty had sales agents in Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Grand Bahama and Nassau, as well as some more or less permanent representatives on Great Harbour.

When prospective customers were interested by the advertisements in the paper or in the office windows in Miami, West Palm, Nassau or Grand Bahama, they were flown to the island on the company DC-3. The prospects would be treated to lunch at the Beach Club and later at the newly completed clubhouse, driven around the island in open topped Fiats with cane seats, and given a sales pitch.



CUSTOM FLATS AT THE AIRPORT



VIEW OF THE MARINA AND TOWNHOUSES UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Many of these prospects fell in love with the beautiful beaches, the layout of the golf course and the perfect marina site and the thoughts of hobnobbing with the rich and famous. They bought their lot or lots on the spot. I think most people, however, bought in the hope that they would be able to sell for a profit after the island became established.



BEACH VILLAS

We bought with the intention of building right away and sold our beach front property in South Bethany Beach, Delaware, and transferred our interests to the Bahamas. Our five children could not have been happier than to begin thinking about an island vacation home. I can say, that they love it more each year and really consider it our home.

But back to the construction and development stages. After the townhouses were under construction, and the Rondettes for the overnight guests completed, work began on the forty beach villas located just North of the Beach Club. These units were conceived as alternatives to the golf villas and were rented on a weekly basis. When the promotional phase of Roberts Realty ended, people who wanted a place to hang their swim suits purchased some of these units for stays longer than a week or two.

THE TAMBOO CLUB

Tamboo originally was the name of a small boat owned by a group of Florida fishermen. They built a small house on the hill that overlooked what is now the channel to the marina. When Chesler started to develop Great Harbour, he enlarged this house and made it into a restaurant called Tamboo.



THE ORIGINAL TAMBOO

By 1967 this became a stop on the island tours given by the real estate sales people. One unique feature of the restaurant was the wall over the fireplace that visitors signed before leaving.



THE TAMBOO CLUB

A little over two years later, Chesler wanted to build a private dinning club to help attract celebrities so that they in turn would attract more upscale customers to the island. Bob taplinger, the PR man for Roberts realty hired Earl Blackwell to handle this specialized assignment.

While Earl and Tommy Banyai, the sales representative from Paris, were bringing people like Dame Margot Fonteyn and Bridget Bardot (not at the same time) to visit the island, Chesler had Cory de Vrees design a clubhouse and started construction in 1970.



DAME MARGOT FONTEYN

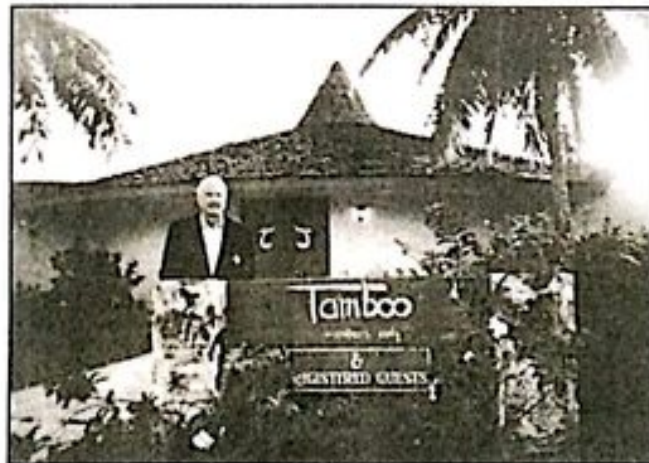
Earl and his co-founder, Frank Shields, used the name of the original Tamboo club for this new establishment and began selling shares of the new corporation to some of the homeowners and celebrities.

There were 23 Founding Members of the Club (see appendix) and some were quite well known—Walter Cronkite, Douglas Fairbanks, Cary Grant, George Plimpton and Barend van Gerbig. The only two original stockholders that have homes on the island and still have an active interest in the Club are William D. Roosevelt and William D. Hunt.



A VIEW FROM THE SIDE

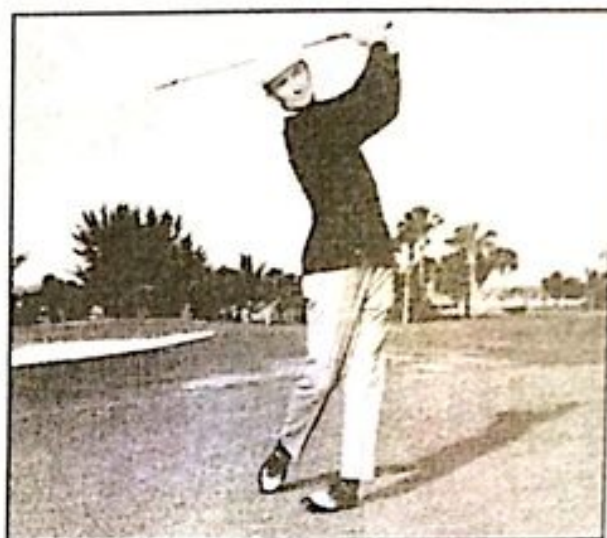
The Tamboo Club formally opened on December 31, 1971. Although all of the members and Governors were enthusiastic, most spent very little time on the island. Furthermore there were very few qualified guests to help offset the operating expenses. As a result, the Club always suffered from under utilization. Revenue was so small that in 1976 the Property Owners Association took over the management and started to subsidize this operation.



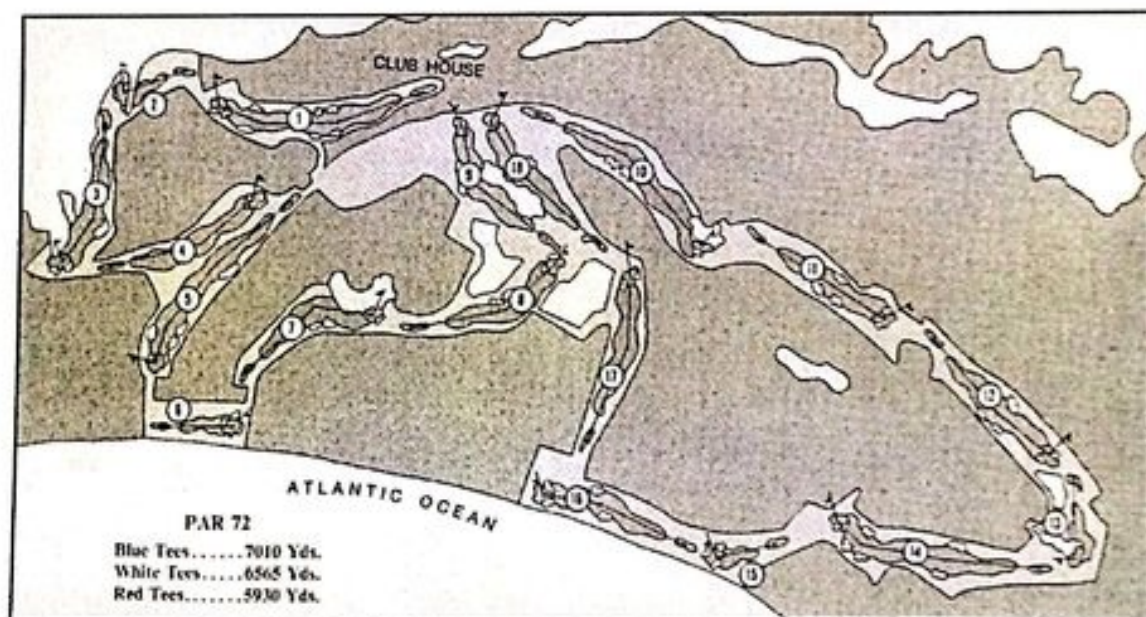
THE TAMBOO CLUB TODAY

Progress on the golf course had been amazing. From July 1, 1968, when the first grass was plugged into the fairways, it only took until January 1969 before the course was declared playable. By that time Gardner Dickinson had been hired (March 1968) as Director of Golf and had scheduled the First Great Harbour Pro-Celebrity Golf Tournament in March of 1969.

The par 72 Championship course was 7,000 yards from the Blue tees and 6,565 yards from the member's tees. When it was completed the holes were diverse, the fairways wide and the ever present wind always a factor.



GARDNER DICKINSON



JOE LEE DESIGNED THE 18 HOLE COURSE ON GREAT HARBOUR

Looking back, I think this tournament was probably the largest, most successful event ever held by Roberts Realty. The weather was bright and over 1,000 guests and participants attended. The participants came in planes and over 200 takeoffs and landings were recorded.

Each foursome had one professional golfer and there were 36 foursomes competing. Roy Bowe, the pro from Paradise Island and Charlie DeLucian's team each had a better ball of 63 to tie for first place.

Gardner Dickinson was able to attract many of the professionals who were stars on the PGA tour at the time. Pro Jack Nicklaus who was also employed by Roberts Realty was joined by Gary Player, Julius Boros, Lee Trevino, Bob Goalby, Sam Snead, Gene Littler, Tony Jacklin, Dan Sikes, Lionel and Jay Hebert, Cary Middlecoff and Miller Barber. In addition other well known players participated: Johnny Pott, Tommy Jacobs, Frank Beard, Bob Murphy, Don January, Charlie Sifford, Peter Townsend, Bob Toski, Vic Ghezzi and Chick Harber.

During this first tournament the clubhouse was only partially open, and the course not quite finished, but as I said, the weather was good and it did attract the attention of many golfers who came and played the course, and some even bought lots!

Jim Raymond, the illustrator for the "Blondie" cartoon strip, and Fred Sergeant, an oilman from Kalamazoo, were two future homeowners to participate in this inaugural tournament. John Philp was the resident pro and was later assisted by Ken Morrison. Hans Bratt, a former Stockholm hotelier was the club house director and I believe Kelly-More was the club manager.



JIM RAYMOND, 2ND LEFT



FRED SERGEANT, 2ND LEFT

THE HUNT FAMILY FIRST VISIT TO GREAT HARBOUR



When Ovetta and I signed the contract in 1969 to build our house we had no idea of what to expect. At that time there were two builders on the island. Prestige Homes owned by Maurice Wagner and Great Harbour Builders owned by Art Northern, Eddie Bopp and John Winder.

We selected great Harbour builders and began a life time friendship with John Winder. John was born and raised in Bullock's Harbour and when Great Harbour was started, realized a life time ambition of becoming his own boss. He loved carpentry and he loved to work, but he was never too busy to help when we called him.

He raised his family in Bullock's Harbour and his oldest son, Terry, followed in his footsteps in the construction business. Between the two of them they have built most of the houses on great Harbour. John Died in January 2000 and now Terry is carrying on the business.

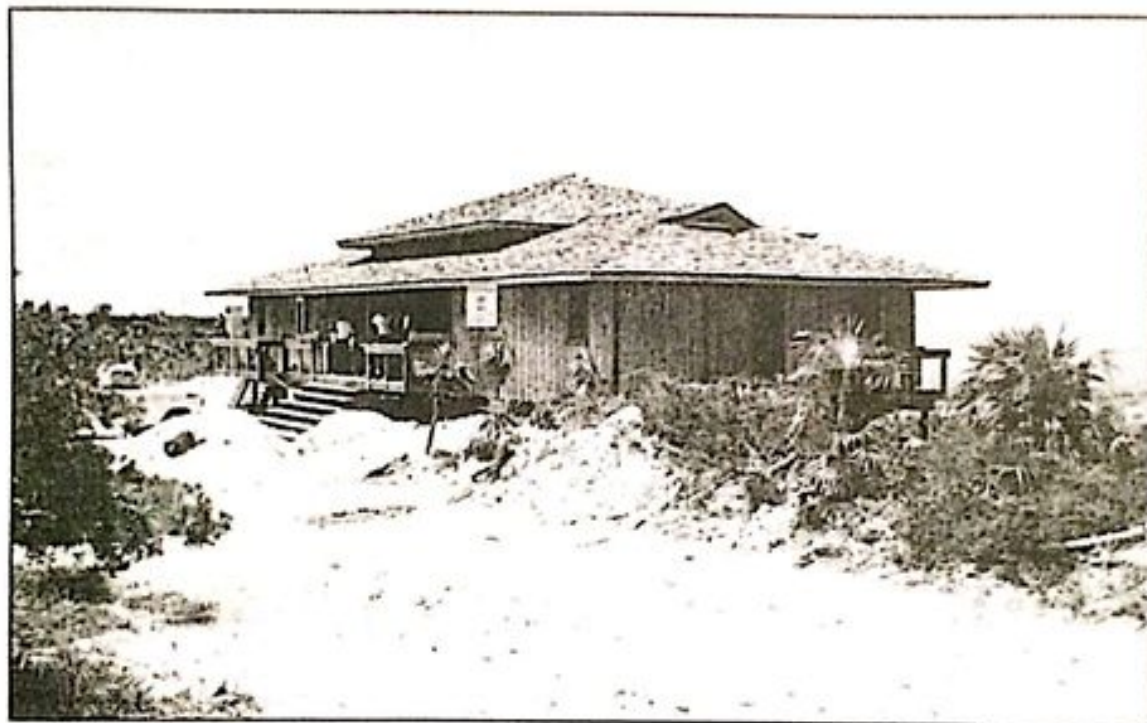
So on June 15, 1970, when we arrived on the island with our five children we were ready to enjoy all the activities that made us want to build in the first place.

The roads were not paved, or I should say, black topped, and our house was not completed and the grocery store we were told was open did not exist, but the sun, the powder white sand and the clear blue water more than made up for the broken promises.

The biggest adjustment I had to make was dealing with my very own diesel powered generator. I was told to check it every day for oil, turn it off, turn it on, listen for any change in noise volume. To get diesel oil I had to track down the oil truck and convince

the driver to come by and fill the tank. Every once in a while, he did. Fortunately, when anything went wrong with the water pump, the generator or other miscellaneous disasters, John Winder would come to the rescue any time of the day or night.

The family could not have been happier. It was everything we dreamed it would be and more. This first visit set the stage for a vacation home and family retreat that has lasted until this day.



BILL AND OVETTA'S HOUSE - COMPLETED JUNE 1970

We weren't the only family building a house at this time. In fact three other were under construction by the same builders. Jim and Helen Raymond were building on the Marina. Chris and Bobby Turman were building on the golf course as were Fred and Connie Sergeant. Some of our roof beams ended up in Sergeant's house and our water heater was put into the Turman's house. The way it worked was that whoever was on the island got what building material was available and the other two had to wait for the next freight boat. This was also

true with our generator. Several times as our plane took off I could see the crane truck lifting our generator out of its shed to be delivered to the next owner who was coming later that day.

COMMUNICATIONS

By 1971 Roberts Realty had one side band radio in Double-ten, a twin rondette on High Point Drive. They used it for business calls between Great Harbour, Nassau and the States. The homeowners could use it on request. Any one who has used a side band knows the frustrations involved in completing a call. You must first reach the marine operator, who is directing calls from hundreds of people. Once she is contacted she places your call in order of receipt and if your party is home, you finally make contact. This can take anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour. You really cannot chat because there are dozens of people waiting to make their calls. We did not try to make many calls!

In a couple of years the Bahamian Government established a telephone station in the village, near the school. Vi Roberts was the island's first operator. The next form of operation was somewhat easier. You went to see Vi, who was sitting surrounded by large batteries used to power the one phone, gave her your number and waited to see if she could make contact. This went on for years, and then a phone booth was set up at the entrance to the doctor's office in the then new Government building. Up we would go and wait our turn to use the one telephone.

By the early eighties, the portable radio appeared on the island, probably introduced by the drug traders. These little hand helds along with the larger base stations became our method of communication. On the one hand they really helped us to converse and locate people without getting into the car and driving all over the place. On the other, everyone could hear you conversation just by tuning into your channel.

The nineties finally brought the private telephone! We could actually have a phone or two in the house and carry on normal private conversations. Added to this advance was the introduction of the satellite dish for good TV reception.

These were great conveniences but they have taken away from the wonderful isolation and pioneering attitudes of the earlier years. Today many owners have their own planes and we have regular service to Nassau and frequent charter trips to the States.

TRANSPORTATION

In 1970 there was no regular air service between the States and the island. Robert Realty was flying prospects and their sales people between Nassau and Great Harbour. Since we were the only homeowners living on the island we had to fend for ourselves.

Almazar, a DC-3 pilot, flew odds and ends of building material between Miami and Great Harbour. We met him one day at the airport and told him we were living on the island with our five children with no way to buy provisions. He graciously offered to take our shopping list to his wife and have her do the shopping. So, for the next three weeks we watched and waited and listened for the low hum of those two Pratt and Whitney engines on that beautiful DC-3. When it arrived, off would come an abundant supply of milk, bread, cereal and peanut butter. This, plus candy bars kept us going.

After more homeowners were spending time on the island during 1972, 1973 and 1974, several different pilots started to offer non-scheduled flights in Piper Aztecs to and from Ft. Lauderdale.

Finally, Elorn started a semi-regular flight service and we all used him for about two years. Since Elorn really did not like to handle baggage we had to practically load the plane ourselves. He grumped and growled and sulked on the flights until Stan Cramer took over in his Aero Commander. Stan was an ex-Army pilot who loved to fly and loved people. He seemed to think each flight was a challenge and tried to get more luggage on than the flight before. We shared the cockpit with bicycles, freezers, lumber and every size suitcase ever made by man.

This seemed easy, so then Stan started to pick and deliver our mail, pick-up our shopping lists and deliver our groceries and hardware supplies on a regular basis...and he did it with a smile. If there ever was a man who liked his job, it was Stan. There were many times during the winter season that Stan would make four flights himself. With his wife, Nancy, backing him up on the ground, and one or two shoppers filling the orders, he did the job tirelessly. With the black stains from the engine oil on the back of his shirts, he never said "no" to anyone.

Then in October of 1995 Stan sold his business to David and Dana O'Donnell. By this

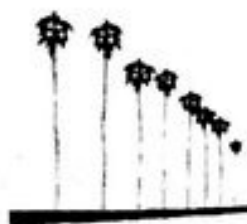
time more planes were added to the "fleet" and the volume of shopping and number of flights increased. So by the year 2000 we can easily arrange for flights via telephone, Email or fax. What a life!

Chalk Airlines was to have started regular service to the island this year. If that happens we will really be in the 21st Century.



NANCY AND STAN CRAMER
BY THE CRAMER MEMORIAL PLAQUE IN 1997

THE FIRST INKLING



In September of 1970, Lou Chesler sold Roberts Realty to Residential Resorts, a company owned by Alan Chesler (Lou's son), Eugene Sutton (the builder of the beach villas) and John Lynsky (the VP of Sales). At this point the two companies had spent over \$30 million on Great Harbour. This probably was the time Lou determined that there was no way to profitably operate the island as he had originally envisioned, or he found out that he was not going to get a gambling license to operate a casino. From this time on, answers were harder to get, progress slowed and the operating personnel changed almost weekly.

In July, Arthur Wirtz brought his 123 foot Blackhawk IV into the marina. This was by far the largest yacht to visit the island and caught everyone's eye. We thought this was the first of many large yachts to come in the years ahead. Although we have had some beauties, Great Harbour is too close to Nassau and the States to be a practical stop-over for the big boats.

By October of this year, the clubhouse still was not open and the tennis courts were not completed but the marina was in operation, although short of the advertised 85 boat slips available. Baron von Gerbig, the son-in-law of Douglas Fairbanks, jr. was the leasee of the marina and marina store.

Construction continued through 1971. In October the second group of golf Rondettes along the 9th fairway were completed, bringing the total to 76. Gerd Koenig had been named island manager and was trying to bring some order and stability to the freewheeling organization. Gerd reported to the new "owner", Alan Chesler.

Earl Blackwell was continuing to bring in celebrities. In April he accompanied Dame Margot Fonteyn, her husband, Dr. Tito Arias and her dancing partner, David Wall.

The high point for us was the grand opening of the Tamboo Club on December 31 of this year. Some of the people that attended the party were; Frank and Didi Shields (one of the original shareholders of Tamboo, father of Brooke and also my cousin), Earl Blackwell, Victoria and Barend von Gerbig, Jim and Helen Raymond, John Chase, Chess Lagomarsino, Cubby Baer, Arthur Summerfield, jr., Count Giovanni Volpi and Ovetta and I.

In November of 1972, the 2nd annual Great Harbour Golf Invitational was held. This time John Philp was the host and Kenny Morrison returned for the week to help out. This tournament featured more home owners and lot buyers and prospective buyers than the first. By this time Davis Wade was the island manager. Unless I had kept a weekly diary there is no way I could have kept up with the constant personnel changes.

Another New Year's Eve party at the Tamboo Club helped to end the year on a festive note, although there were some signs of things not going well for the developers. Most of the desirable lots had been sold at least once and the re-sales were not producing income for the developers. The promotional budget had been reduced and there were fewer potential buyers visiting.

On March 1 of 1973, Mackey Airlines started flight service from Miami to Great Harbour four days a week. Out Island Airways was flying three flights daily to Nassau. This was just in time for the Bahamian Independence Day on July 10. After hundreds of years under British rule the Bahamians voted for their independence and won. Rather quickly the reins of government were taken over by the Bahamians and they began to discourage investments by foreigners. This had a terrible effect on property sales on Great Harbour. Prospects were afraid their property may be confiscated or that they could not get clear and lasting title.

This political environment coupled with poor management on the island seemed to stop nearly all income for the developers. In fact, they did not have enough money to sponsor the 3rd Annual Golf Tournament so John Philp ran this "Last Gasp Tournament " himself From November 30th to December 3, 1973.

During this latter part of 1973, Residential Resort Development ran out of money and the Chesler family sold its 66% in Residential to United Communities Corp., a company headed by another jailbird, Alexander Guterman for \$ 4.8 million. The Chesler family's Marc-Jay

Corp. took \$4.5 million of this in notes from United Communities. After serving a prison term for stock fraud in the 1960's, Guterman had become President of United Communities in 1971. As a result of its purchase of Roberts Realty and other acquisitions, United Communities sales rose to \$31 million in 1973. (WSJ-1/30/1975). These inter company stock exchanges and other slippery arrangements would continue for many years to come.

During all of this, the Sugar Beach hotel reopened under the ownership of Harry Renshaw Smith, an Englishman who had the strange habit of tending bar in the nude from time to time. An excellent teller of tall tales he amused us for years in his attempt to run the hotel single-handedly while being bus driver, cook and repairman all at the same time. Fuzzy and his brother lived on the property and helped Harry, but I must say it was like a three-ring circus. Harry also sold liquor from his cabinet beside the bar and it wasn't unusual to see him reaching for a bottle on the top shelf and have his pants fall to his ankles. Harry was able to, by cunning and personality, attract middle aged English women to the island, with the promise of a life of leisure. When they arrived at Sugar Beach they quickly determined that they were expected to help him run the hotel. I don't know how many of these ladies he attracted, but he was never alone for very long.

DRUGS ON GREAT HARBOUR



In April of 1974 a celebrity of another sort arrived on the island. Harry "Rock" Hoffman, a 28 year old, 285 pound strongman who was trying to avoid prosecution in Florida and Michigan for running a large marijuana smuggling operation.

Rock, his pretty wife, Linda and two children, Bobby and Wendy, took up residence in the house that the company built for Jack Nicklaus overlooking the 12th hole of the course. This house burned to its foundation several years later. Rock was certainly tough but he did love his family and was kind to all the children he met. In fact, after he bought the restaurant on top of the hill on the West Side of the island. This was the original Tamboo. He renamed it "The Top Of The Rock." He became a gracious host, seating people and acting like Sherman Billingsly at the Stork Club in New York. At some point during his stay he brought his Rolls Royce to the island. It was just as silly then as it would be today.

Some of Rock's more colorful friends and visitors were two men charged in the indictments in Michigan for conspiring to possess marijuana, Gerald "Buddha" Haruki and Marvin Forrest "Smooth" Flowers. I can see them now, huddled around a large table by the dance floor at



REEFER BARON HOFFMAN (CENTER)

the clubhouse laughing and watching Linda and one of the other girls dancing together because Rock did not want his wife dancing with another man. Rock's rules were very simple. "Never mess with another man's wife or leave him in a fight".

At any rate, this new addition to the island culture did not bode well for most of the law-abiding homeowners. This was the forerunner to years of escalating drug trafficking in the Bahamas, but particularly to Great Harbour. Our little hide-away paradise became a major transfer point for drug dealers. First they brought marijuana, and later cocaine from the South. Our airstrip was perfect for them because they could either land there or drop the "square grouper" in the ocean for the locals to fish out and transport to the States in fast Cigarette boats.

All of a sudden the "rich" homeowners became the "poor" homeowners. Hundreds of planes came and went. Gold bracelets appeared. Gold Rolex watches appeared. These little baubles were not being bought with funds

from regular fishing or home building. The money wasn't coming from the green fees at the rapidly deteriorating golf course. But on the nights when the moon was full and our landing strip could be seen from 20 miles. Our little strip could have given O'Hare airport a run for its money.

Surprisingly, this drug business flourished until 1991 when several of the local participants were caught, convicted and sentenced to jail terms. By that time a lot of the drug traffic had turned to cocaine, a much less bulky product to ship.

Although the island operation was not going well for United Communities, two new tennis



THE AUTHOR SITTING BY ONE OF THE "DRUG" PLANES THAT RAN OUT OF GAS AND DITCHED IN FRONT OF HAWKS NEST CAY

courts were built and the clubhouse was still in operation. However, late in 1974 UC could not meet their payments on the \$4.5 million note it had given to Marc-Jay, so they paid off in UC shares.

At about this same time, the U.S. law enforcement agencies prevailed on the Bahamian government to arrest the "Rock". He spent time in the Nassau jail and then was deported. F. Lee Bailey was one of the lawyers on his defense team but even so, "Rock" spent several years in jail where later he took his own life.

By early 1975 things are really starting to unravel for UC, and in June Sandy Guterma quietly resigned and was replaced by John C. Bordman, an independent mortgage broker and also a director of UC.

Before resigning, Guterma had offered to sell the Roberts Realty assets on Great Harbour to the Property Owners for \$5 million. These assets included thousands of acres of unsold land, golf villas, the airport, the power plant, the golf course and \$2.7 million clubhouse and the marina. The Property Owners turned down the offer and Guterma then said he would close the island down unless the homeowners each paid him a yearly fee of \$1,200 for use of the recreational facilities. John Chase, the President of the Homeowners Association, refused this offer. Guterma never followed through on this demand.

Perhaps because Guterma was unable to pay RRD, they in turn were having a problem paying off a loan they made from Walter E. Heller International. Heller then took over the management of the island (WSJ 7/30/75).

Heller planned to put the island up for auction but finally decided to try to find a buyer without an auction. It seemed as though hundreds of potential buyers were brought in but apparently none of them wanted to assume the unknown liabilities.

During all of this, the 40 or 50 homeowners had formed an association to help protect themselves against the owners or creditors of RRD and UC. This small group of people has, over the years, kept the island going when all kinds of chicanery was going on with the island "buyers".

In an obvious attempt to keep the island going until a legitimate buyer could be found, RRD "sold" out to Dale Langford, a former sales VP for a Bahamian land development

company. Langford signed an agreement in June 1975 to buy RRD's assets from Heller for \$2.6 million. He put down \$100,000, and applied for a \$2.3 million loan from the Bank of Nova Scotia. He then told every one that his group would invest \$1.15 million in the island to put it into shape for the beginning of the tourist season starting on December 15. Then along came someone who said he was a creditor of RRD and the court halted the sale to Langford. Heller had to start over again to try to find a buyer.

By this time the Tamboo Club was really suffering due to the small number of members and the overall island economy. In 1967 in an effort to keep the Club operating, 10 new shareholders came aboard. We were still alive, but barely.

By September 1977, Heller had reached an agreement with UC and Merrill Yarborough, Phil Carnes and Charles Rowan got the rights to run the island.

But just a few months later, in early 1978, Yarborough took over from the other two and installed Charles Schlactman as managing partner. Schlactman in turn hired Davis Dean as Matre'de, John Philp as golf pro (again) and Doug Wiley as tennis pro, David Bougravanni as front office manager and Joe Strachem as food and beverage manager. In other words they had more managers then customers.

Also in early 1978, with very little fanfare, Norwegian Cruise Lines (NCL) took a long-term lease on Great Stirrup Cay and began using it as an afternoon beach party stopover for their cruise ship "Seaward". By May, NCL added two more ships to the itinerary: the "Southward" and the "Starward". Part of the allure to this stop was the opportunity for passengers to SCUBA dive and snorkel in the crystal clear waters.

Four certified divers supervised these snorkeling trips. These four men, Rex, Will, Rudy and Ron originally took rooms at the Sugarbeach hotel but then moved to Fairway Ridge Apartments. They then moved to the Mediterrian Villa by the marina, but wherever they lived they called it Margaritaville in honor of their favorite songwriter and singer, Jimmy Buffett. ("Cheeseburger in Paradise"). Rex still returns to Great Harbour, and in fact, married his wife, Lori, in a barefoot ceremony in front of the beach club.

In the early 1980's the divers had moved once again. This time to permanent quarters on Great Stirrup. The success of this program was not lost on other cruise lines. A second line leased Little Stirrup, re-named it Cocoa Cay and included it in their weekly stops. By the

1990's these two cruise lines became the main source of income for many of the people living in Bullock's Harbour.

Over the years the Bahamians have created a unique and wonderful supply system to get and sell their wares on the two cays. With thousands of tourists pouring off the ships every week, the sellers of T-shirts, curios, straw products quickly found that they could supply the tourists with just what they wanted by using the following method: They appointed one woman as the buyer, she would charter a plane from Great Harbour, go to the states, buy the shirts, hats, and other products, and then haul it all back to Great Harbour on another chartered plane. Then the next day they would transport the merchandise to the cays on small boats and be ready to supply the tourists from Florida with all these "native" crafts.

By 1979, the owners, (and I believe it was still Yarborough and friends), had run out of prospects, money and managers. They decided to let the golf course go to seed because they had given up finding a legitimate buyer and they could not afford the expense. After a short while, the Property Owners Association decided to try to keep 9 holes of the course cut and playable. (Now, in 2000, we are still maintaining the course). At this juncture I think the estate of Chesler which was controlled by his trust, managed by Gino Demarco, took control. By this time, Walter Heller Corp. had come in to guarantee some loans so the group was now Southward Ventures (Chesler's estate) Heller and Yarborough. They were trying to run things until 1984, when they sold their island assets to Dale Murray.

All the while the drug business was flourishing and there were now more drug dealers from all different South American countries arriving weekly. Now it is mainly cocaine with a little marijuana thrown in.

COCAINE IN THE BAHAMAS



From the late 1970's, when the Bahamian government first started to realize that their islands were being used as a cocaine distribution area, until the mid 1990's, cocaine was flooding into the islands. In 1988, Eddy, Sabogal and Walden wrote "The Cocaine Wars" describing in detail the large number of people and politicians involved in shipping cocaine through the Bahamas. These next paragraphs are from their book.

"...With understandable urgency, the commissioner of police passed on these observations to the Bahamian government in his own report: "The security of this country is being threatened by the incursion of armed foreign criminals,..The Bahamas is being deluged with drugs. It is an extraordinary situation."

... Nothing happened for three years. Or more accurately, during the next three years the Bahamians became to traffickers what Panama is to money launderers: a safe haven, a place where they could conduct their business with almost total impunity, so long as they paid. If in 1979 the Bahamas was deluged with drugs, by 1980 it was sodden with them.

...Much of the blame for what happened rests with Kojak. He did not invent bribery, of course, nor was he the first and only one to pay bribes in the Bahamas. But it was Kojak who introduced to those islands what he calls, in all seriousness, "true communism", a philosophy of "if I make a buck, everybody makes a buck."

Kojak paid police officers, customs officials, and immigration men. He paid lawyers, judges, and politicians. On Great Harbour Cay he paid the local doctor to maintain tap on the island's telephone exchange, and he gave money to the town drunk. {There had to more

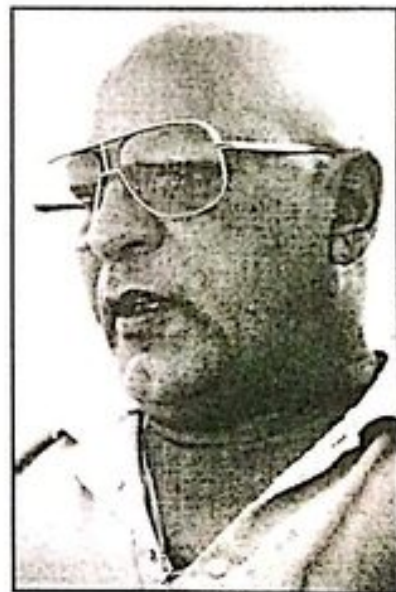
than one!}....

...When Bimini became overrun with other traffickers, and in Kojack's terms, "too hot," he moved to Great Harbour Cay where he paid \$100,000 per trip for the cooperation of the local people and the three-man constabulary; in addition he paid \$10,000 to the sole customs official on the island, who insisted on receiving the money from Kojak in person....

...It was not only the active participants in Kojack's schemes who took the money. At the Graveyard Inn at Bullocks Harbour, the only settlement on Great Harbour Cay, the drinks were always on Kojak, and his bar bill averaged \$600 a week...

... Throughout that period Morales (another big time smuggler) continued to smuggle cocaine. The DEA first acquired solid evidence of that in January 1986 when one of its confidential informants, a pilot, reported that Morales had offered him a total of \$375,000 to fly three loads of cocaine from Costa Rica—another convenient transit stop—to Great Harbour Cay in the Bahamas. With the DEA's knowledge, he made the first flight, transporting 420 kilos to Great Harbour. The DEA then informed the Bahamian police which, on January 16, raided the island and seized what it reported was only 80 kilos of that load; the rest had simply disappeared..."

The saddest memory of this period was the apparent hijacking of Lester Conrad's 45-foot yacht with Lester and another homeowner, Walter Falconer, aboard. Neither the men nor the boat were ever found. This was in 1980 when the drug traffic moved into high gear and there were not enough boats available to the smugglers. They solved their problem by stealing any boat that they felt they needed.



KOJAK

DALE MURRAY'S TIME IN OUR LIVES



Some time in late 1983 or early 1984 Dale Murray created a corporation called Berry Investments and had as his legal advisor, F. Lee Bailey.

Now another character enters the picture. Murray was a 43 year old, 6-foot-2, 240 pound North Carolinian who thirteen years before had been the owner of a coal field and four years ago bought the almost moribund Chris -Craft boat company. He arrived in Great Harbour boasting of a personal fortune of nearly \$200 million.

In July of 1984, after "purchasing" the assets of Great Harbor from Yarborough, he wrote to Jim Naber, President of the POA and said that he was now going to raise the capital to improve the island! He also said that the POA should not expect any help from him for quite a while. Guess what? We never did receive any "help" from Berry Investments.

Here is a summary of Murray's letter to Jim Naber:

There is little he can do to alleviate the day-to-day problems on the island until the government approves his purchase application.

He will work with BEC while they upgrade their power plant at their expense.

The water delivery system barely works and due to leaks in the Rondettes and in the village nothing will improve until those people repair their own pipelines. All of the offending people were the squatters in the Rondettes and the villagers. When all of this was done he was going to put in a new water tank and then charge one and all for the water they used.

The roads. Some time before Murray took over, he or Bailey discovered in the deeds to all property that the owners would have to pay a road tax to whoever fixed the roads. This led them to quickly write to property owners all over the world demanding payment for road repairs. This had one good effect. People came from all over to see how their property looked with the new roads running by them. Others sent in the requested money and by July of 1984, Murray and Bailey had collected \$50,000. They claimed they needed a total of \$100,000 to do the job properly, in the meantime they told the POA to continue to patch the roads. Since Murray never patched the roads, he was sued and told to return the money to those that had paid. Guess what? Bailey's expenses in collecting the money just equaled the money collected!

The fire truck was found to be in need of repairs. He would upgrade and train people to fight fires. He then promised to charge all homeowners a fee for this service.

Since we suffered a dearth of qualified plumbers, electricians he planned to import some trailers to house qualified help. However this too, would have to be paid by the homeowners. What a guy!

The golf course, long term, will require a lot of money but in the meantime such an overhaul will have to wait the availability of major capital.

In Murray's eyes, this huge operation needed an official line of communication so he set one up. Proposed communicators-Phil Carnes, F. Lee Bailey, Dale Murray, to Jim Naber, Bill Hunt and Fred Krapf. He also set up an advisory committee: George Weech, M.P., John Winder, Jim Naber, Phil Carnes. He noted however, that Phil was going on a three-week vacation so problems should addressed to Ed Halicy and Gary Powell, two boat captains. Does this sound like a major investor?

So yet another buyer gives every indication that he is not going to spend any money to improve the island. Quite the contrary, he would be taking out landing fees and profits from the gas dock and talk about what he wanted the property owners to do. This pattern of

thinking was getting to be a habit with these self-proclaimed saviors and millionaires.

Drugs continued to flow through the island and the homeowners struggled to keep roads, water, dump and golf course in some kind of running order. Through thick and thin about 50 homeowners kept putting in \$2,000, or more a year just to keep everything going.

It wasn't until 1986 that someone came along that did more for the island than had been done before by all of the previous "owners". He had been a homeowner from the early 70's and always loved the island, but no one knew how much he was committed to improving Great Harbour. Mickey Briggs from Detroit rode in on his white horse.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MICKEY BRIGGS AND HIS BIG PLAN



Some time in the early 80's Mickey married Joy Loeb. This started a chain of events that you won't believe, even though the results of Mickey's programs still are used and enjoyed.

Mickey and Joy built their beautiful home on Sugar Beach (Now owned and improved by Ralph Glendinning). I believe this was done from November 1982 through the spring of 1983. This was the largest home on the island and was decorated in elegant style. But this created a problem for Mickey and Joy. They had a beautiful home, but the island itself was going down hill rapidly. What to do?

They decided to buy the assets of the island.

So it came to pass that Mickey formed a corporation with his Aunt, Jane Hart, and her best friend, Ann Bronfman. They called it HBL (for Hart, Bronfman and Loeb).

Now the activity on the island became intense, important and expensive. All of the rest of the homeowners were still paying our dues but we stood on the sidelines and cheered as HBL did more for the island and accomplished more than anyone since Chesler originally developed the island.

In about a year and a half HBL transformed the island to what we all hoped it would be. Here is a summary of what they accomplished starting in November 1987:

Built the causeway after removing the swing bridge. Built a mile of new roads and resurfaced most of the other roads.

As soon as he slowed down his efforts, the sharks again started to circle Great Harbour. In 1990, an Englishman named Geoffrey Coates appeared with a golden tongue, and plans of rental programs. He entertained us with charts and talk and actually got a few of the homeowners to give him some money toward his schemes. He didn't last too long but he was entertaining.

In May of 1990, T. D. Fender arrived. His company was named Great Harbour Development Company, Ltd. located in West Palm Beach. This man and his two sons started to, you guessed it, renovate the marina, the water system and anything else that he thought needed to be done. As of Dec. 1999, he still owned the assets of the island, and the POA is still caring for the golf course and roads.

In the fall of 1992 hurricane Andrew hit Great Harbour causing more damage to homes than ever before. Unfortunately there was a waterspout imbedded in the hurricane and it caused severe damage to many homes on Great Harbour and in the village. Bill and Micki Pellington's house was knocked over and they decided not to rebuild. Brenda Kent's house was completely flattened and she did not rebuild. However, the worst result was that this tornado knocked part of a house in the village into the ocean. A woman, holding her baby was washed into the sea. The woman could not hold onto her child and the baby drowned.

In mid 1993 the POA took back the responsibility for running Tamboo from Mickey. By this time the money was gone and the realization of how hard it is to operate anything on a continual basis on the island was wearing him down. . Jim Naber, as President of the POA for the last fifteen years, worked as closely as seemed prudent with all of the "buyers" to keep the members protected and informed of significant events. Jim died suddenly in September 2000. He will be greatly missed.

In 1994, a company called Tropical Diversions bought several townhouses and planned to take over the island. They ultimately took possession of the marina and gas dock while Fender kept the airport. In April of 1995 they employed a manager and housed him in Townhouses #1 and 2. He was excited to be on the island and brought his wife and they were set to run whatever they could, as best they could. Oops! No one told them they had to have a work permit, so in a few months they too, were gone. We really did not get to know them but they were truly devastated when they heard they had to leave.

From 1995 through 1999, The fender family took control of some of the assets of the island. they have had a difficult time living up to the demanding parts of their purchase agreement and now, in 2000, seem to have transferred their interests to Mega Management.

As I understand it, this new group has ceded control and ownership of the airport and roads to the Bahamian Government.

So now, in late 2000, Lou Chesler's plan of developing a private island for the "rich and famous", has become an island owned jointly by property owners, the Bahamian government and the latest "owner".

This outcome is as it should be. The Bahamian residents have a place to build their homes, work and raise their families. The visitors and offshore homeowners have a place to build and enjoy the unsurpassed natural beauty of the island and the ocean.

All of us love Great Harbour because of the friendships we have developed, the close association we have with the wonderful Bahamian people, the uncrowded and beautiful beaches and the promise of the best is yet to come.

SOME OF THE FIRST HOMES ON GREAT HARBOUR.



JIM & HELEN RAYMOND'S HOME, NEAR THE MARINA.
SOLD TO HENRY LOPEZ, NOW OWNED BY FRANK AND
RUTHANN RICHERT



CHRIS & BOBBIE TURMAN'S HOME ON THE GOLF
COURSE AND OCEAN. NOW OWNED BY DAUGHTER
BETSY AND BOB ERWIN.



FRED AND CONNIE SERGENTS
HOME ON THE GOLF COURSE

SAUL MATSIK'S HOME ON THE OCEAN. SOLD TO
BILL DAVIS AND NOW OWNED BY GERALD WHITTMAN





TOMMI AND NADINE BANYAI'S HOME



JOHN CHASE'S HOME. SOLD TO HANK ASHER,
THEN TO FENDER.



"BRIDGET BARDOT" COTTAGE.
SOLD TO CHESS LAGOMARSINO THEN TO EARL BLACKWELL.
NOW OWNED BY JILL GARROD AND RICK



MAURICE AND FAY WAGNER'S HOME.

Some other early settlers and home builders were; Tommy Banyai, Bill Pellington, John Chase, Ralph Glendinning, Bill Kalis, Ann Beyers, Walter and Mish Falconer, Gunter Buschl, Bob and Isabelle Muth, Jim and Donnie Naber, Walt and M.L. Reese, William Roosevelt, Gus and Marge Esselin, Bill and Ruth Aiken, Mike Ryan, Andy and Betty Barber, Walt and Dorris Danneberg, John and Sheila Becker, Randle and June Dawson, Curt Jurgens and Hank Asher.

GREAT HARBOUR IN THE YEAR 2000



The homes on Great Harbour have grown from modest size to elaborate, and large. Many are right on the beautiful beach.

What follows is not a complete gallery of owners, but just a few whose pictures I have in my collection. Like everything in life, the island, the ocean and the people change from day to day.

I hope you have enjoyed reading about our "Hideaway" island in the Bahamas and hope someone will continue this unofficial history.



KIT AND DICK LANG



LARRY AND ALICE ANDERSON



MURIEL AND BERNIE REISNER WITH THEIR
FRIEND IN THE MIDDLE



ROSA AND MANOLO VERGARA



RAFTING ON THE WAY TO CHUB CAY
 SAM GREENAWALT, HARRY AND BETTY SEEGER,
 DIANE GREENAWALT, BILL HUNT, JOHN AND SHEILA BECKER



GUNTER AND GELA BUSCHL
 AND GELA'S MOTHER



EUGENIA SHEPARD AND EARL BLACKWELL



THE STRIPES HAVE IT!
BILL HUNT AND BILL PELLINGTON



NANCY HAMILTON, ROBBIE ROBINSON, SUE AND MILT HERCHENRIDER,
M.L. AND WALT REESE, OVETTA AND BILL HUNT, RUTH ROBINSON



FRED AND CONNIE SERGENT WITH JOHN ALDER IN THE MIDDLE



BILL AND ADY KALIS



MISH FALCONER



RALPH GLENDINNING WITH ANN AND DIANE GREENAWALT

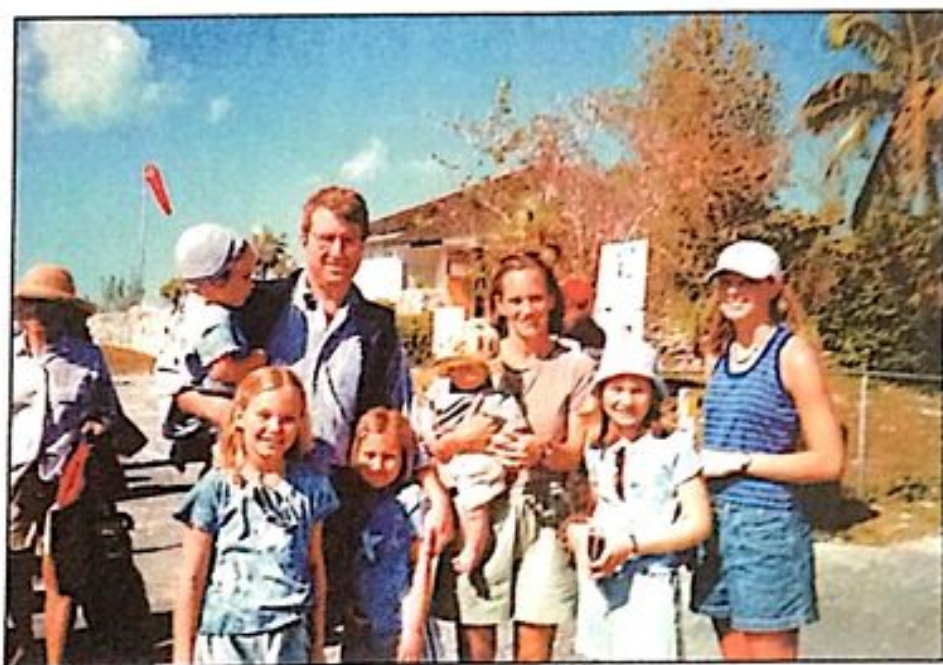
FRANK AND RUTHANN RICHERT
GEOFFREY HUNT



JUDITH AND RAY BIGGS



BILL AND OVETTA HUNT



JIM AND CHRISTEN ATWOOD AND THEIR CHILDREN



THE ALKEN FAMILY - 1974

GLORIA GELSTEIN



THE HUNT FAMILY ABOUT 1971



THE GREAT BONEFISH GUIDE
PERCY DARVIL



TOMMY BANYAI



THE JOHN WINDER CHILDREN WITH ALISON, GEOFFREY,
LESLIE AND CHRISTOPHER HUNT - IN THE 70's

DONNIE AND JIM NADOR
THE LONG TIME PRESIDENT OF THE P.O.A.



JANET RICH, JOHN AND SHEILA BECKER



NAN BEYER-MEARS



MONIE SALTSMAN, ISH AND FREEMAN CAROUTHES



JOY AND MICKEY BRIGGS

The Beach Club

TOM



NORA



THE TOURNQUESTS



ANGIE BRENNEN

HANK
&
LOU ASHER



DAVID AND DANA O'DONNELL



"CONCHMAN"



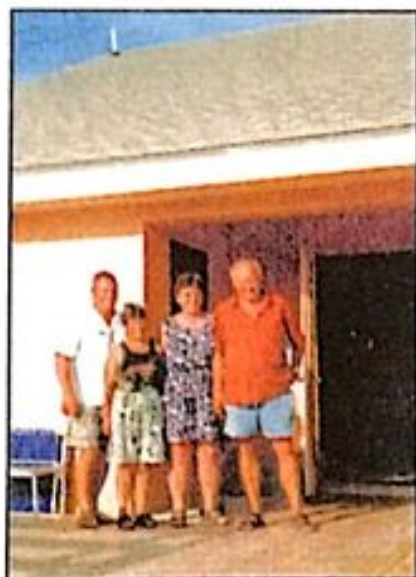
"WALLY SAUNDERS"



NANCY HAMILTON



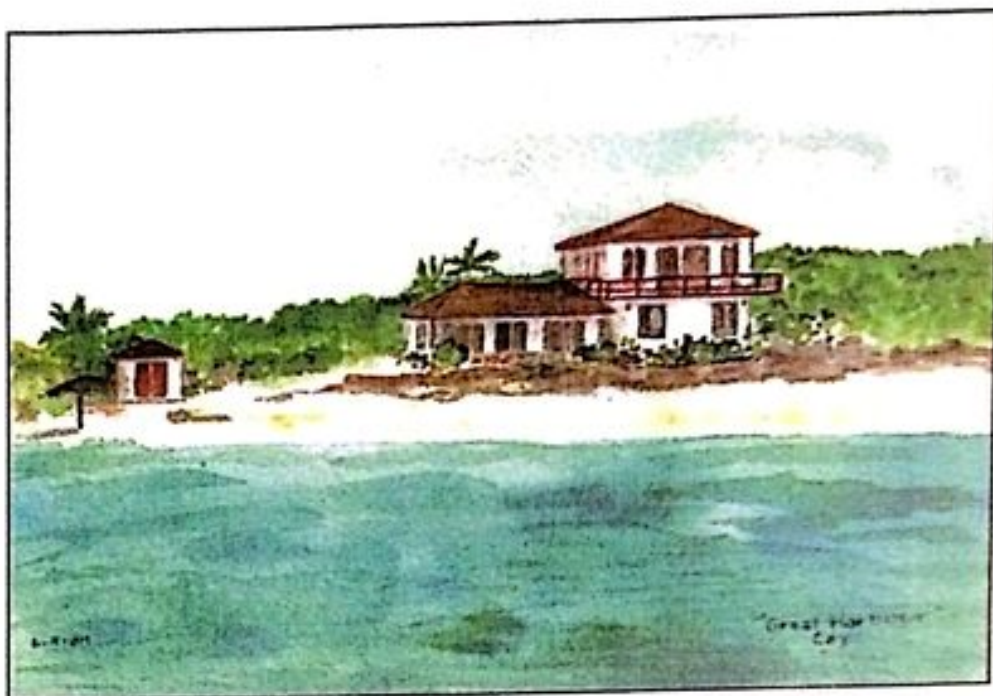
JOE BARAD, OVETTA, MARIAM BARAD,
SUE HERCHENRIDER



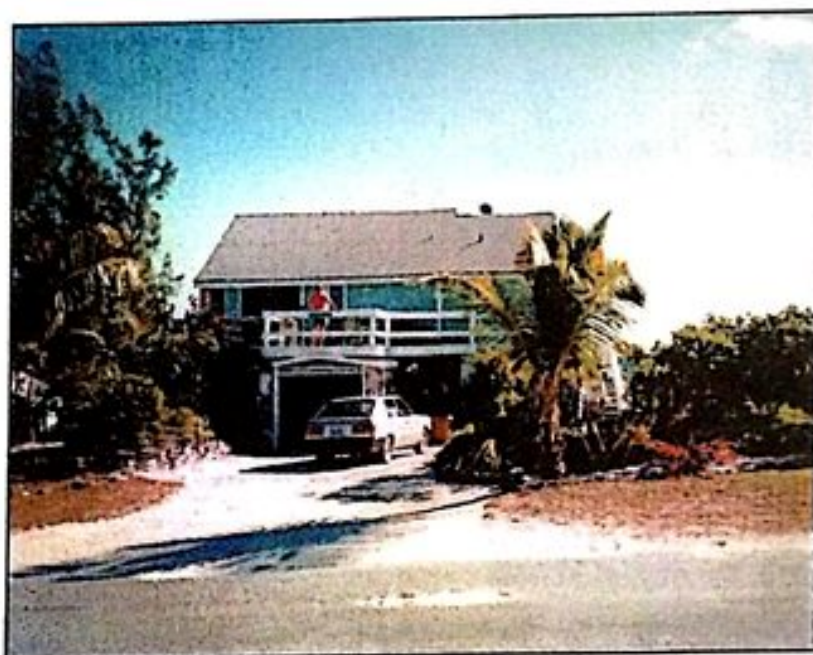
HAROLD & RENATA /
INGE & LUDWIG PUETTER



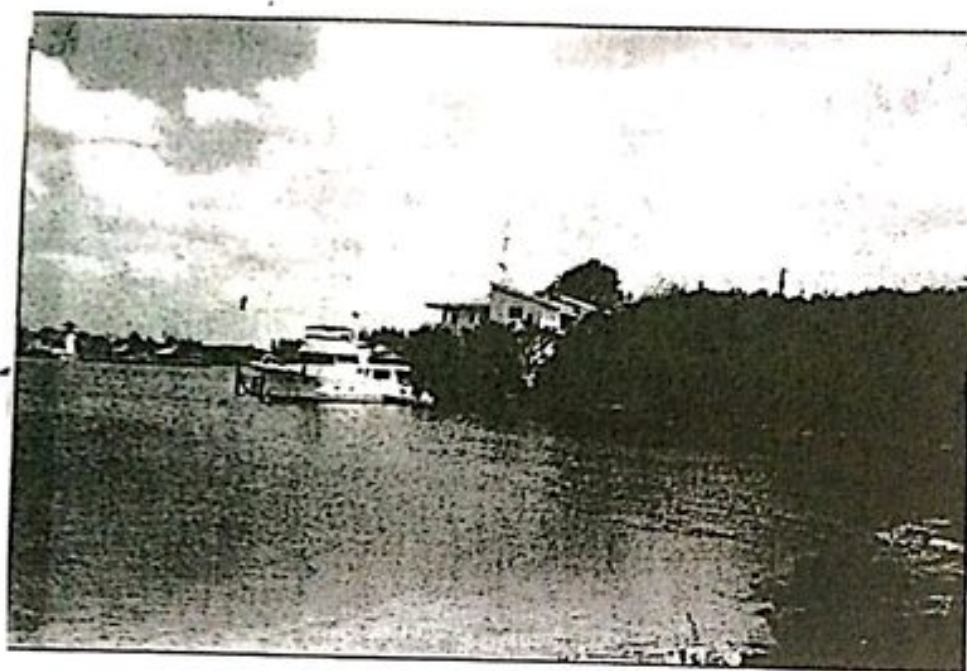
MIKE RYAN & JUDY



THE LANG HOUSE



THE REESE HOUSE



THE RICHERT HOUSE - 1998



THE HUNT HOUSE - 1998

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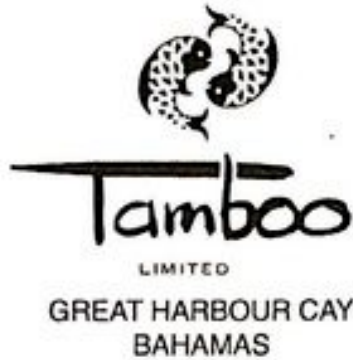


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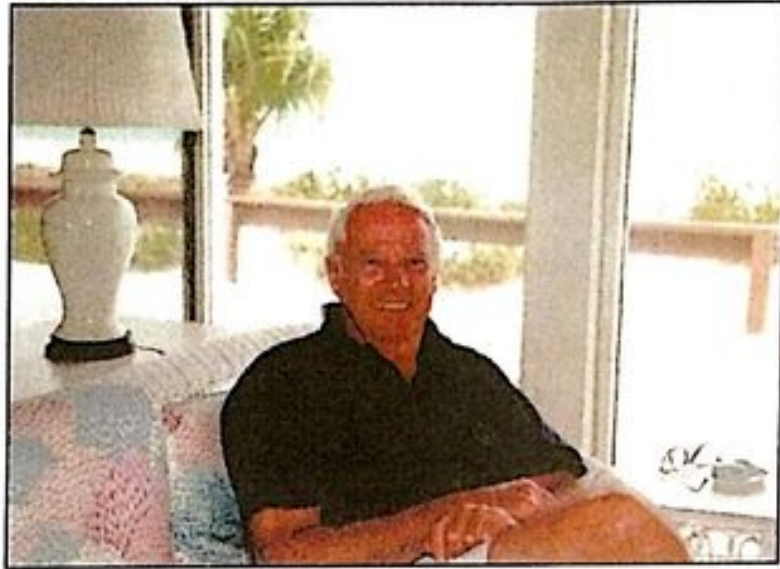
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William Hunt was born in Pittsburgh and raised in Baltimore. He has never written anything, does not have any songs to his credit and continues to come to grips with the game of golf. He does not fish, dive, or fly a plane anymore but manages to live a glorious life with his wife of fifty years. He does admit to being very proud of his children and grandchildren.