



# **The History of Riverbend Golf and River Club**

## **Our story begins around 1977**

Around 1977 Fort Myers had a population of 185,000. The Edison Mall was only a fraction of its size, and I-75, the regional airport - now SW Florida International (RSW) and its effects were still a matter of speculation. Every day we would read on the front page of the Fort Myers' News-Press that Thomas Edison once said "There is only one Fort Myers and ninety million people are going to find out." Most long-term natives of the area probably learned to ignore this quote in our

daily news because it was only a quote. When the quote became reality, however, Edison's respect was elevated to a new status, even though the Fort Myers News-Press eventually removed the quote.

In the mid 1960's new communities were springing up like mushrooms to accommodate the rapid influx of people seeking respite from frigid winters. Resting on the banks of the Caloosahatchee River was a 212 acre naturally wooded parcel of property which would eventually be called Riverbend, the name of course reflected the miles of winding waterways which wander throughout the property. When Thomas Hoolihan Sr., President of Seago Group purchased the property he visualized an eighteen hole golf course and a community which would blend in with the natural environment that made Riverbend so unique.

This of course is how we know Riverbend today. The story of Riverbend, however, did not start with its development. One hundred years ago when steamboats were a common sight on the Caloosahatchee River and Thomas Edison made his winter home in Fort Myers, Riverbend was home to a sawmill. In the area that is now referred to as the Riverhouse on Walter Hagen Court, there stood a building which housed horses on the ground floor and servants quarters on the second floor. The only access was off of Coon Road where a dirt road cut across what is now known as the sixteenth fairway up PGA Drive and across the eighteenth fairway and driving range. The pioneers of Riverbend no doubt never imagined that a golf course would grace their land and would one day provide much pleasure (and frustration) to so many people who endeavor at the game. Eventually, the house was rebuilt and occupied by various families through the years.

The first real inhabitants of Riverbend were not the human kind but rather a wide variety of plants and animals that normally reside in waterfront areas. Today Riverbend is still home to many of these animals which is why so many of us choose to live here.

In 1958 a home was built by a man named Hall. Hall developed five riverfront lots in addition to buying the Riverhouse. Eventually he sold the Riverhouse to a family by the name of Dushak. The Dushaks apparently were fond of animals. According to Macy, at one time or another they had horses, dogs, cows, twenty-six cats, an aviary with over 500 birds, pigs, chickens and peacocks. One gets the impression that Jute was not particularly fond of living next to what some might refer to as Old McDonald's Farm, but that's another story.

As Riverbend was being developed, certain mysteries and unanswered questions were unearthed, literally. In the area that is now the driving range a mail truck was

found completely buried. Another truck was also found submerged behind the Golf Villas in Indian Creek!

Fears of nuclear war inspired someone to build a bomb shelter near the sixth tee. This was no doubt built in the late 50's or early 60's when world tensions were at its height. To this day no one knows who built it, only that it was quite a job removing it.

When the lake between the sixth fairway and seventh tee was dug, an Artisan well was discovered causing this lake to have a depth of thirty-five feet today. Any golf balls that find their way into this lake won't be found by even the best ball hawkers. (We know who you are -ed.)

Those of you who were fortunate enough to play the course secretly cursed the pine tree that magically jumped into the path of our golf balls, and our tempers would flare if we had to contend with the huge power lines that only ten years ago crossed the Caloosahatchee River, cut across the second fairway and continued through the ninth, fifth and sixth holes.

In the mid 1960's a company called Mobile Home Dynamics purchased most of the property that now consists of Riverbend. At the time a mobile home park was planned for the area. In order to increase the value of the property they created the canals that we now know as Indian Creek. The project never really came to fruition and fortunately today we know Riverbend as a golf course and waterfront community - one of the very few in southwest Florida.

The real history of Riverbend began when the first residents moved here in the early 1980's. As people raise their families or retire in Riverbend, a new chapter will be written. This chapter will read a little differently than those of the past. It will probably be much richer in experiences and stories to tell. Hopefully you will look forward to this as much as I will.

- Tom Hoolihan Jr. 1987

## **1981 Real Estate News**

The Seago Group inc. is boosting the changing rural image of the Bayshore Road area of North Fort Myers with the development of a new multi and single-family residential golf course project that will sprawl over 212 riverfront acres off the



thoroughfare. Named Riverbend, the project will offer 99 single family homesites and a still-undetermined number of condominium units.

\*My feeling, is that Bayshore, which ultimately will be six-lane and initially four-lane will be one of the most accessible roads in the area” Seago President Tom Hoolihan added, "When widened, I think the whole area will be upgraded. It's one of the last areas with riverfront acreage left, priced reasonably.

Project construction will span a five-year period. The single-family lots, currently under development and to be marketed from \$17,900 to \$35,500, are situated around the first nine holes of the golf course, Ninety five of the lots will front either the golf course or the canals that are to run throughout River Bend.

The first 100-unit phase of two story condominiums are expected to market in the high \$50,000s to \$60,000s Hoolihan said. Construction will begin in May or June (1981) I'd imagine as time goes on, the prices will ease up.” (Smile -ed)

## Aerial photos of Riverbend







727.520.8181  
www.aerophoto.com

## Marsh Pointe

Negative # 50209108  
Date 02.09.05









1981



In 1981 Riverbend East was developed with 99 lots built for Single Family Homes. All but a few lots were on the water or the golf course.



1984

Yachtsmans Cove was built



1985

Indian Creek Golf Villas I  
joined the Riverbend Community





1987

Riverbend welcomed  
The Village at Indian Creek





1990

Indian Creek Golf Villas I  
grew to include  
Indian Creek Golf Villas II



1993

Riverbend welcomed  
Waterway Cove





**1995**

**Marsh Point joined the ever growing  
Riverbend Community**





1997

Riverwatch was developed along the banks of the Caloosahatchee River





# **The 21st Century begins with The Village arriving in 2000**





2004

**Riverbend welcomed  
The Villas at Mediterranean Cove**





2005

**Mariners Cove completes current  
development in Riverbend**





# Inside Back Cover of the 2013-2014 Riverbend Directory

## *RIVERBEND GOLF AND RIVER CLUB*

6270 RIVER CLUB COURT  
NORTH FORT MYERS 33917



**240-8125**

CALL AHEAD FOR TEE TIMES



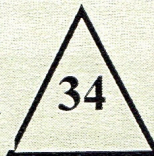
**Eighteen Hole Par 60  
Executive Golf Course  
Full Year Memberships  
Seasonal Play Coupons**

**Available for League Play  
Golf Carts Available  
Golf and Lunch Specials  
Seven Days a Week**

**Easily Accessible Between Exit 143 I-75 & Business 41  
Off Bayshore Road**



**MARKER**



**RESTAURANT**

*6270 River Club Ct*

*North Fort Myers*

**239-240-8128**

*Serving Riverbend and the Surrounding Communities*

*"A Rare Find Off the Caloosahatchee River"*

**Karaoke Wednesday, Friday and Saturday**

**Lunch and Dinner Specials Daily  
Carry Out Available**

**Casual Dining with a Waterfront Setting**



2019

We jump ahead to the year the Golf course property was sold and our beloved Marker 34 Restaurant and community pool were closed for good.

Current development by the new owners have yet to be finalized so be sure to stay tuned and attend your HOA meetings so you can stay up-to-date on the next phase of Riverbend's future.

Who knows what our future will be like but if it's anything like our past it's guaranteed to be exciting!

Stay tuned. Stay informed.  
Be involved.

