

# THE HISTORY OF CEDAR POINT & GOLDEN GATE POINT

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April, 2011

In 1910, former Chicagoan and Sarasota developer, Owen Burns, came to Sarasota and began to purchase large tracts of property including all of the remaining undeveloped landholdings of the Florida Mortgage Investment Co. and their Sarasota representative, Hamilton Gilesie, who had established the Town of Sarasota.<sup>1</sup> Burns' purchase also included a small hook of land west of downtown along Sarasota Bay which would become known as Cedar Point. The land consisted of low-lying mangroves, shallow water, and thick vegetation with numerous cabbage palms. It was first platted on August 31, 1899 and recorded in the public records of Manatee County on September 19, 1900 as an Addition to the Town of Sarasota.<sup>2</sup> The Cedar Point plat encompassed three blocks, Blocks "A, B & C". Block A consisted of six building lots, Block B contained 7 lots, and Block C contained 14 lots. All lots aligned Sarasota Bay on the west and were west Banana Avenue (today's US41) and both north and south of North Gulfstream Avenue.

By 1900, Eli Veruki and Andrew Alexaky had a two-story fish house on a pier extending out into the bay from the north side Cedar Point, north of North Gulfstream Avenue. Veruki and Alexadky had a fish business; under the trade name "Gotzago", specializing in exporting sun dried roe to Europe.<sup>3</sup> In 1903, Sarasota's first calaboose (jail) was also constructed on the north side of Cedar Point in December of 1903.<sup>4</sup>

When Owen Burns purchased the property in 1910, the small area of Cedar Point on the south side of North Gulfstream Avenue was only a small narrow strip of land. It was undeveloped and would remain so until Burns began a dredging, fill and seawall project in the middle of 1922 that would substantially enlarge the strip of land.<sup>5</sup>

The Sarasota Yacht Club was organized by Harry Higel in the summer of 1907 in a large clubhouse on Siesta Key but the club had become dormant by 1911.<sup>6</sup> It was revived as the

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<sup>1</sup> Grismer, Karl H., The Story of Sarasota, M.E. Russell, 1946, pgs. 161-162

<sup>2</sup> Plat Book 1, Page 37, Public records of Manatee County Florida

<sup>3</sup> Grismer, pg. 130

<sup>4</sup> Grismer, pg. 138

<sup>5</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, January 11, 1926

<sup>6</sup> Grismer, pg. 152



saw mill. Additionally, there were also five other structures on the north side of Gulfstream Avenue. At least two residences were constructed and completed there by 1916, possibly two of those five.<sup>13</sup> The small strip of Cedar Point land on the south side of North Gulfstream Avenue remained unimproved.<sup>14</sup>

During Sarasota early years, into the late 1940s, Sarasota's fireworks were launched from Cedar Point and later Golden Gate Point on the Fourth of July. Fireworks were also launched for the celebration of the Pageant of Sara de Sota.<sup>15</sup>

Beginning in the 1910s, Sarasotans began the habit of parking their cars on Cedar Point to enjoy the sunset. It became commonly locally referred to as Sunset Park, a more "glamorous" name.<sup>16</sup> On March 27, 1914, Burns Realty Co. replatted Blocks B & C of Cedar Point Addition as Sunset Park Subdivision, leaving Cedar Point Addition Subdivision confined to the remainder of the single remaining block, Block "A".

Sunset Park contained four blocks and fifty-nine lots and was adjacent to the Sarasota Yacht and Auto Club, northwest of Gulfstream Avenue along Banana Avenue (Ringling Boulevard), US 41, and north of Cedar Point.<sup>17</sup> Streets were not initially named on the plat.<sup>18</sup> However, Burns purchased and planted two hundred Coconut Palms along the streets. With its own yacht basin, the subdivision soon became one of Sarasota's most exclusive residential areas. Five wood frame homes were soon constructed for prominent local and winter residents such as theatrical producer Samuel Gumpertz<sup>19</sup>

By 1925, Sunset Park had an additional three structures, most likely residences, including a house and servants quarters constructed for major league Baltimore Orioles and New York Giants baseball player and manager, John McGraw.<sup>20</sup> There were also several garages or outbuildings in the subdivision.<sup>21</sup> By that time, streets had been named Cedar Point Drive and Sunset Avenue.<sup>22</sup> Burns would replat Sunset Park in 1926 with 46 lots, a reduction from the original 59 lots platted.

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<sup>13</sup> Polk, R.L., Sarasota City Directory, 1916

<sup>14</sup> Matthews, Janet, Journey to Centennial, Revised edition, Continental Heritage Press, 1997, pg. 83, and Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1913

<sup>15</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, February 25, 1926, March 8, 1926, February 2, 1935, May 7, 1939, March 3 and March 6, 1940, November 7, 1941, March 4, March 6, 1941 February 6 and 16, 1947

<sup>16</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, September 25, 1949

<sup>17</sup> Plat Book A, Page 64, of the public records of Sarasota County, Florida, originally filed in Manatee County, Florida and Plat Book 1, Page 308, public records of Manatee County

<sup>18</sup> Plat Book A, Page 64, of the public records of Sarasota County, Florida, originally filed in Manatee County, Florida

<sup>19</sup> LaHurd, Jeff, Owen Burns, The Man Who Bought and Built Sarasota, Friends of the Sarasota County History Center, 2010, pgs. 5-6 and Sarasota Herald-Tribune, October 2, 1935, December 5, 1937, and November 12, 1939

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[http://books.google.com/books?id=D6uY4mM6qsQC&pg=PA28&lpg=PA28&dq=john+mcGraw+sarasota&source=bl&ots=QK400kR8Zw&sig=Rp\\_p2zXoRq1XcbS6MG9jQgRI-bM&hl=en&ei=sfmbTfsvgYW2B6fcwMkH&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CCIQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=john%20mcGraw%20sarasota&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=D6uY4mM6qsQC&pg=PA28&lpg=PA28&dq=john+mcGraw+sarasota&source=bl&ots=QK400kR8Zw&sig=Rp_p2zXoRq1XcbS6MG9jQgRI-bM&hl=en&ei=sfmbTfsvgYW2B6fcwMkH&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CCIQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=john%20mcGraw%20sarasota&f=false)

<sup>21</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sarasota, 1929

<sup>22</sup> Plat Book 1, Page 139 and Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sarasota June, 1925

Only a few years after the completion of the Sarasota Yacht and Auto Club clubhouse in 1913, the club experienced lean times. By May 1916, the Sarasota Times reported that it was under reorganization. Failure to pay the mortgage interest resulted in the club having to vacate the building by the end of August. It then became home to the Sarasota Naval Militia until the United States entered the First World War the following spring and the militia left for the Charleston Naval Yards. Shortly before the militia vacated the Sarasota Yacht and Automobile Club, in 1917, circus magnate John Ringling purchased the clubhouse and the surrounding land of Cedar Point.<sup>23</sup> Although, the clubhouse was demolished in 1964, it was the first property acquired in Sarasota by Ringling, other than his 154 acre home site north of the Sarasota city limits. It marked the beginning of Ringling's tremendous investment in Sarasota real estate.

On October 28, 1921, a hurricane washed water a shore flooding the homes standing in Sunset Park. Although some flooding of homes took place, no lives or homes were lost.<sup>24</sup>

Soon Ringling began acquiring properties on the outlying islands off Sarasota including St. Armands and Lido and Longboat Keys and was in need of a local trustworthy capable manager to over see his various Sarasota projects. He found that in Owen Burns.<sup>25</sup> Burns also owned property on the outlying islands. The two became partners in efforts in developing the islands and in providing necessary land access to them. They began to make plans to oversee the construction of the original Ringling Causeway and bridge with Burns Construction Co. as contractor.

The first plan for a bridge and causeway to access Bird, St. Armands, and Lido Keys proposed by Ringling and Burns, was an extension of Gulfstream Avenue from south of the city pier, through Bird Key, then onto St. Armands and Lido Key. But bay front property owners were concerned over their property rights. Thus, the south side of Cedar Point and North Gulfstream Avenue was chosen as the starting point. By the second half of 1922, dredging and fill operations, to bring the area two feet higher, were well under way. Burns started utilizing two dredges, including the *Sand Piper*, dredging and filling Cedar Point at a cost of 19 cents a yard to allow access to the new bridge.<sup>26</sup> A 3,500 foot seawall was built. The filled land area on the remaining portion of the Cedar Point Addition Subdivision, on the North Gulfstream Avenue, created a new peninsula totaling 22 acres. The total cost for the dredging and seawall project was \$75,000 or \$125,000, depending upon the source, with either amount being considered a substantial improvement project for Sarasota.<sup>27</sup>

The first pilings for the bridge were driven on New Years Eve in 1925.<sup>28</sup> A new plat for Golden Gate Point was approved by the Sarasota City Council on February 23, 1925.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Matthews, Janet, Journey to Centennial, Revised editions, 1997, Continental Heritage Press, pg. 111

<sup>24</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, September 15, 1949

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, pg. 67

<sup>26</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, January 11, 1926 and December 8, 1926

<sup>27</sup> LaHurd, Jeff, Owen Burns, The Man Who Bought and Built Sarasota, Friends of the Sarasota County History Center, 2010, pg. 67-68 and Sarasota Herald-Tribune, December 15, 1923

<sup>28</sup> Sarasota Journal, February 6, 1925

The plat was a resubdivision Lots 6-14 of Block “C” of Cedar Point and filed in Sarasota County on February 25, 1925. The plat denoted three street names, Sunset Drive, which accessed the subdivision from Gulfstream Avenue, Riviera Drive and Gulf Drive both semi-circular in plan. Three Golden Gate Point Subdivision blocks, Blocks “A, B & C”, were laid out. Block “A” contained 18 lots, with all but 3 being waterfront lots facing Sarasota Bay. The remaining three lots faced or backed up to either Gulfstream Avenue or Gulf Drive. Block “B” at center of the subdivision, encompassed 32 landlocked building lots. Block “C” had 32 building lots, all but two being waterfront. The other two back up to or faced Gulfstream Avenue. Easements for storm drainage and variances for Golden Gate Point were also filed and recorded along with the plat. Interestingly, there is no notation on the plat of the person or corporation that filed it. However, subsequent sales transactions indicate that John Ringling was the owner and developer.

Some effort was made to market and sell land that would become part of Golden Gate Point as early as the first week of January of 1926 with local realtor, A. J. Skinner, acting as the sole selling agent.<sup>30</sup> That same month, plans for a luxury 200 room hotel to be constructed on Golden Gate Point were announced. Sarasota resident and promoter, Ralph Caples, served as the chairman of the Sarasota subscription committee. Plans for the hotel called for the erection of a much needed hotel of 200 rooms, at a cost of \$1,250,000, on Golden Gate Point by the American Hotels Company, a subsidiary of the United Hotels Corporation. Local stock subscriptions for the hotel project exceeded \$400,000.<sup>31</sup> Architects were developing plans by February.<sup>32</sup> However, by March, the project was put on hold and efforts by John Ringling to construct a luxurious Ritz Carlton Hotel on the south end of Longboat Key were about to begin. Investors in stock for the proposed Golden Gate hotel were asked to merge their subscription into those of John Ringling for the Ritz Carlton construction.<sup>33</sup> With the failure of the Florida Land Boom, in a few short years, the hotel on Golden Gate Point was never built and although construction on Ringling’s Ritz Carlton began, it was never completed.

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<sup>29</sup> Plat Book 1, Page 135, of the public records of Sarasota County, Florida

<sup>30</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, January 9, 1926, April 15, October 3, and October 23, 1926

<sup>31</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, January 24, January 26 and January 28, 1926, and March 15, 1926

<sup>32</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, February 5, 1926

<sup>33</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, March 14, 1926



The new Ringling Causeway and bridge were completed, at a cost of \$425,000, one year after construction began in 1926 and the bridge was formally opened on February 7, 1926.<sup>34</sup> Australian Pines brought to Sarasota from Naples, Italy aligned the causeway leading to the bridge and oyster shell paved the causeway as high grade concrete had not been available locally.<sup>35</sup> (By 1927, the bridge, constructed of wood, was in need of repairs and maintenance. Subsequently, John Ringling deeded the bridge and causeway as a gift over to the City of Sarasota on June 13, 1927 and it was accepted on January 31, 1928<sup>36</sup> which in turn later turned ownership over to the State Road Department due to excessive maintenance costs). This Ringling causeway and bridge would remain the only land access to Bird, St. Armands, and Lido Keys from the Sarasota mainland until 1959.

By the mid 1920s, John Ringling had undertaken the filling of lowlands and the building of seawalls on the outlying islands from downtown Sarasota, with Owen Burns of the Burns Construction Co. acting as contractor.<sup>37</sup> Ringling also landscaped his island land holdings as well as Golden Gate Point where he planted \$15,000 worth of palm trees by April of 1926 when paving of streets in the subdivision was underway. By March, a contract for the installation of sewers in Golden Gate Point was awarded to the John L. Walker Company.<sup>38</sup>

Although a number of lots were sold in Golden Gate Point, after the subdivision was platted and streets paved in 1926, there were no still no homes built and a number of lots remained unsold. Gulf View Park Co., and realtor, A.S. Skinner, had ownership of at least seven lots that were all subject to delinquent taxes in 1929. Some of those lots were taken by the City of Sarasota in 1929 for unpaid taxes and at least one was taken for unpaid taxes

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<sup>34</sup> Sarasota Journal, February 6, 1926

<sup>35</sup> Sarasota Journal, February 6, 1926

<sup>36</sup> Matthews, pg. 111, Sarasota Herald-Tribune, June 14, 1927, and Grismer, pg. 212

<sup>37</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, April 28, 1926

<sup>38</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, April 15, 1926, March 16, 1926, March 11, April 6, 1927

with a tax certificate in 1932.<sup>39</sup> Another lot was sold after foreclosure in 1935.<sup>40</sup> The failure of the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s, the onset of the Great Depression, and the death of John Ringling in late 1936 would have affected the ability to pay taxes, slowed lot sales, and construction on lots already sold.

Deamus Hart first sold bait out of his truck in Sarasota. In about 1934, he opened and operated a bait stand on the western side of Golden Gate Point. Hart remained in that location until 1964 when he moved the operation to the mainland side of the second Ringling Causeway.<sup>41</sup> Hart's Landing still exists today although located north of its original site.

A new major effort to sell the remaining 37 unsold lots on Golden Gate Point, belonging to John Ringling at the times of his death in 1934, began on March 10, 1937. This resulted in an immediate and rapid sale of a number of lots, marketed and sold by the St. Armands-Lido Realty, handling the liquidation of John Ringling's former Sarasota landholdings.<sup>42</sup>

In 1937, the first house to be built on Golden Gate Point was a winter home for Newton Shockey (1889-1959) a manufacturer from Detroit.<sup>43</sup> The house was designed by prominent local architect, Thomas Reed Martin and completed in the spring of 1937.<sup>44</sup> The house exhibited the most modern of materials available, including the use of glass bricks, concrete joists and floors. The local newspaper declared "Golden Gate Point House Uses Exceptional Methods of Construction."<sup>45</sup>

On June 19, 1940, Lots 1-4 of Block "C" were replated by the property owner, Golden Gate Corp. The company was incorporated in on March 5, 1940 by Julius Protas, local attorney Lamar Dozier, and Irma Van Leight with Julius Protas, as President.<sup>46</sup> Julius "Jay" Protas was a well-known animation artist and portrait painter whose work had been exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum who came to Sarasota twice each year.<sup>47</sup> His wife, Helen, was also an artist and one of the original Petticoat Painters of Sarasota. She was also former teacher at the Out of Door School on Siesta Key. The Gulf View Corp. plat reconfigured the size and shape of Lots 1-4, Block C. In the fall of 1940, Golden Gate Corp. began constructing the 4 unit Golden Gate Apartments in the "Swiss chalet type". The structure was designed by prominent Sarasota architect, Ralph Zimmerman, at a cost

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<sup>39</sup> [Sarasota Herald Tribune](#), July 27, 1929, November 27, 1929, and September 1, 1932

<sup>40</sup> [Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#), January 11 and February 1, 1935

<sup>41</sup> [Sarasota Journal](#),

<sup>42</sup> [Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#), March 11 and March 17, 1937

<sup>43</sup> [Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#), September 11, 1959

<sup>44</sup> [Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#), March 31, 1937

<sup>45</sup> [Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#), March 31, 1999

<sup>46</sup> Plat Book 4, Page 18 of the Public Records of Sarasota County, Florida and <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:jeeLUH-lrhUJ:www.corporationwiki.com/Unknown/Unknown/golden-gate-corporation-2838071.aspx+julius+protas&cd=21&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&source=www.google.com>

<sup>47</sup> [Sarasota Herald Tribune](#), December 27, 1943 and [http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/exhibitions/1571/Oil\\_Paintings\\_by\\_Living\\_Artists/set/c253d0df225e58df375596f3c02f54aa?referring-q=protas](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/exhibitions/1571/Oil_Paintings_by_Living_Artists/set/c253d0df225e58df375596f3c02f54aa?referring-q=protas)

of \$10,400, and was completed in December, 1940.<sup>48</sup> Protas and his wife maintained a residence and art studio there until their sudden deaths in 1964.<sup>49</sup>

The City of Sarasota approved the widening of Gulfstream Avenue, on its western edge north from Main Street to Cedar Point, from 21 to 35 feet in early July of 1940. The project cost was estimated to be \$2,000.<sup>50</sup>

The Riviera Apartments, consisting of twelve units, were constructed in 1941 on Golden Gate Point by Alfred Rappaport, a leading local contractor and president of the Sarasota Builders' Exchange who later constructed the 1953 Sarasota Herald-Tribune building and Sarasota's first airline terminal.<sup>51</sup> The Riviera was designed by Sarasota School of Architecture founder, Ralph Twitchell.<sup>52</sup>

In 1945, a single family residence was completed in the subdivision on Lots 11-12, Block B.<sup>53</sup> In 1947, when there were only five names listed as living on Gulf Gate Point in that year's Sarasota City Directory, a fire took place. The fire caused some damage to the home of Tracy Calhoun but, more significantly, it destroyed the \$120,000 twenty-one unit apartment building being built for Ronald B. Mattison which was 70% complete.<sup>54</sup>

A number of apartment buildings and motels that were later converted to apartments<sup>55</sup> and at least two single family residences had been construction in Golden Gate Point by the 1940s. Some included: the West Gate Apartments (1947); Pier 550 (Monterey) 1948; a waterfront duplex by A.C. and P.B. Brandt (1948); The Southwind Apartments (1949); The Causeway Apartments (1949); and the Valencia Apartments (1949) a \$25,000 apartment building for Ray Mathis in 1949). Other buildings completed in the 1940s were the Golden Gate Apartments, the Southwind Apartments; Donald Kneeder's; Bay Apartment Motel; and the Coral Sands Apartments (an apartment/hotel).<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Sarasota Herald Tribune, December 22, 1940

<sup>49</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, May 16, 1964

<sup>50</sup> St. Petersburg Times, July 3, 1940 and July 16, 1940

<sup>51</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, July 20, 1946, November 26, 1952 and May 16, 1959

<sup>52</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, August 16, 1940

<sup>53</sup> Sarasota County Property Appraiser

<sup>54</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, April 25, 1947 and April 24, 1957

<sup>55</sup> Sarasota Journal, April 24, 1974

<sup>56</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, October 14, 1947, July 11, 1948 and July 24, 1949, and Sarasota County Property Appraiser



During the 1950s, waterskiing exhibitions were also performed offshore of Golden Gate Point.<sup>57</sup> It made an easily accessible advantageous viewing point.

By the early 1950s, the 1926 Ringling Bridge had seriously deteriorated and traffic had increased in such volume as to cause congestion on the two lane causeway leading to the bridge. The new bridge was to be four lanes. In October, 1952 the State Road Department announced their plans to the Sarasota City and County Commission to construct a modern replacement bridge and causeway. Plans were advanced enough at that point to begin taking bids on the project.<sup>58</sup> The new causeway to the bridge would have a new approach from Gulfstream Avenue by passing Golden Gate Point. Plans were approved by the State Board of Administration in October, 1953 calling for a land fill of an area north of the original causeway location and the straightening and widening to four lanes of the east approach to the new bridge by-passing any entry into, or by way of, Golden Gate Point.<sup>59</sup>

Construction of a number of additional multi-family structures continued in Golden Gate Point during the 1950s. They included; the Goldenrod Apartments (1950); two additional Pier 550 buildings (1951-Bermuda) and (1953-Nassau); the Admiralty (1952); the Kenmar (Windsor) Apartments (1953), completed at a cost of \$325,000; The Townhouse (1955), a cooperative building; the; the 1950s Top Flight Apartments, a 39 unit \$490,000 cooperative apartment building built by the Solar Corporation of Florida in 1956; Three Fountains, Bay Point Club Apartments, and The Town Beach Apartments and another addition to Pier 550, the Orleans (1958). Although many Golden Gate lots had been developed and built upon by the early 1950s, just as many remained undeveloped.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, February 20, 1958

<sup>58</sup> Sarasota Herald Tribune, October 3, 1952

<sup>59</sup> Sarasota Herald Tribune, October 30, 1953

<sup>60</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, April 1, 1952 and January 23, 1953

In 1955, the first Golden Gate Point homeowners association was founded. It was the first Florida not-for-profit corporation filed in response to the request of property owners.<sup>61</sup>

Eight families purchased a just completed building on Golden Gate from the owner and building contractor, Dominick Tiezzi, in October of 1955, for \$122,000. This was said to be the first “cooperative” building in Sarasota, although the concept was already popular in the north.<sup>62</sup>

In 1957, former streets in Golden Gate Point bearing the names of Riviera, Gulf and Sunset Drives, were changed to one single street name, Golden Gate Point Drive. In 1959, a sign for Golden Gate Point was erected at Gulfstream Avenue.<sup>63</sup> Improved street lights were installed in 1960 with the expense shared by property owners and the City of Sarasota.<sup>64</sup>

With the rerouting of the causeway away from Golden Gate Point and completion of the causeway and new bridge to the outlying islands in 1959, a new wave of construction took place in Golden Gate Point additional apartment/condominium multi-family buildings were built between 1962 and 1972, including: the 16 unit Harborview Apartments (1962), now the Harbor View Condominiums, Richard Bassett’s Shalimar Apartments; the Outrigger (1964); John Edwards Apartments, completed (1966) for Edward and Mildred Hellmich by contractor Harry Thompson;<sup>65</sup> Harbor House South (1965) and Harbor House West (1968); (Gulf Haven Condominium) ((1969)). O.B. Thompson’s Bay Point Club Apartments (1969); Marina View (1970)<sup>66</sup> and the Townhouse Apartments (1972).<sup>67</sup> Members of the Asolo Festival Company, the official State Theater of Florida, were lodged on Golden Gate Point in three adjoining apartment buildings during the 1960s.<sup>68</sup>

In February, 1971, the Sarasota City Commission vacated the street that was the original approach to the Ringling Causeway. The property was to revert to the abutting land owners, T. G. Shaw and E.J. Helmuth.<sup>69</sup>

In July of 1973, the Sarasota City Commission moved to limit buildings on Golden Gate Point to 75 ft. in height and a RMF-5 zoning. At the time, the tallest building was 70 ft.<sup>70</sup>

In 1978, a survey, requested by the City of Sarasota, revealed that there were 680 apartments and 1447 people residing in Golden Gate Point.

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<sup>61</sup> “Golden Gate Point Association, Inc. Membership Roster, Brief History of Golden Gate Point,” 1996

<sup>62</sup> St. Petersburg Times, February 28, 1955 and October 20, 1955

<sup>63</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, March 15, 1959

<sup>64</sup> “Golden Gate Point Association, Inc. Membership Roster, Brief History of Golden Gate Point”, 1996

<sup>65</sup> Brink, Linda Hellmich, daughter of Edward and Mildred Hellmich, and long time Golden Gate Point resident, in a communication to Mikki Hatig on March 8, 2011

<sup>66</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, October 10, 1969, and March 25, 1970

<sup>67</sup> Sarasota County Property Appraiser

<sup>68</sup> Sarasota Journal, August 16, 1965

<sup>69</sup> Sarasota Journal, February 11, 1970

<sup>70</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, July 2, 1973

A number of landscaping enhancements and improvements have taken place in Golden Gate Point over the years. In 1991, original Canary Island Date Palms were removed due to the request of Florida Power and Light. Smaller Island Date Palms were planted in their place.<sup>71</sup>

In 1993, a traffic light at the entrance to the subdivision was finally installed. Residents had first requested a light 25 years earlier.<sup>72</sup>

Although one large condominium, The Renaissance, was constructed in the subdivision in 1993, beginning in about 1996, Golden Gate Point truly began to capture the attention of developers seeking waterfront locations for new development. Most of the homes and larger multi-family buildings were outdated and some were deteriorating. The subdivision began to see what many would call a glamorous makeover that would involve the loss of many older structures over the next ten years.

In July of 2005, developer and builder, Taylor Woodrow, offered a record \$46,000,000 to buy out the owners of the 1950s Golden Gate Point building, Pier 550 (a condominium converted from the former Seahorse Motel), in order to demolish the building and build a new 62 unit high end condominium. The deal for 2.5 acres set a land sale record for Sarasota County up until that time. Parker Capitol LLC, an Atlanta firm, offered even more for the property but that deal would have taken one year to go to closing.<sup>73</sup> Ultimately, neither deal took place and Pier 550 remains standing as one of the oldest buildings in the subdivision.

Another event put in motion in mid 2005, was an effort to beautify the circular drive that runs around the perimeter of Golden Gate Point. Following many years of discussion and planning, the project was approved by the voters in 2005 for \$3.8 million but actually cost \$1 million less due to the economic downtown taking place. Costs are to be paid by residents over a 25-year period. Improvements also included new electric, cable, water and sewer, addition of irrigation water, streetlights, doggie stations, benches, trash receptacles, sidewalks on both sides of the street and substantially enhanced landscaping. In addition to narrowing the Golden Gate Point Drive, the street now moves from side to side. Narrowing and the horizontal displacement slowed traffic and provided for on-street perpendicular parking. Groundbreaking for the project began on September 20, 2008. The first bricks for street paving were laid on April 13, 2009. The project completion was celebrated on November 14, 2009. Architect and Golden Gate Point resident, Brent Parker, served as the chairman of the streetscape project. Woodruff and Sons was the contractor and Wilson Miller, Inc. did the engineering.

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<sup>71</sup> “Golden Gate Point Association, Inc. Membership Roster, Brief History of Golden Gate Point,” 1996

<sup>72</sup> “Golden Gate Point Association, Inc. Membership Roster, Brief History of Golden Gate Point,” 1996

<sup>72</sup> Sarasota Journal, August 16, 1965

<sup>73</sup> Sarasota Herald-Tribune, July 6, and August 22, 2005



Since 2000, Golden Gate Point has undergone a tremendous transformation with new construction and enhanced landscaping. A few parcels of land are presently vacant awaiting future new development. Existing buildings are mostly newly constructed; however, more than a dozen buildings constructed from the 1940s into the 1970s have survived as of 2011.



Modern buildings, constructed after 1992, most replacing original structures on their sites, include:

Renaissance (1993)  
Hassan Manor (1996)  
Alta Mer (1996), replacing Bay Apartments  
Phoenix (2001)  
Golden Bay (2002)  
Majestic Bay (2004)  
Vista Bay Point (2004)  
Grande Riviera (2005, replacing the original 1940 Riviera Apartments)  
LaBellasara (2006) replacing Town and Beach and Tahiti Sands

(The Harbor View Apartments, constructed in 1962, was modernized, substantially altered, and converted to the Harbor View Condominiums in 2006)

Other Golden Gate Point residents over time have included: Ted Morton (1925-2010), a Sarasota institution in the early grocery and catering business, establishing and owning Morton's Market for over 40 years, Ted devoted his life to his family, faith and the improvement of Morton's Market as well as his community. (In 2002, he was awarded with the key to the city of Sarasota and a proclamation was made by the mayor recognizing him for his contributions to Sarasota designating June 2nd as Ted Morton Day);<sup>74</sup> Bob Johnson, former member of the House of Representatives in 1970s Senator in the 1980s, and Sarasota community and charitable cause leader, noteworthy for having written signed legislature in 1985 to protect the Sarasota section of the Myakka River; Gil Waters, a long time community leader who spearheaded the effort for a new bridge to the islands, the present (2011) John Ringling Bridge; Robert Roskamp, proudly along with wife Diane, created Roskamp Institute in Sarasota doing cutting edge research in neurological disorders which is also a global leader in efforts to understand and cure diseases of the mind. A CEO of a major airline serving on the Board of Governor of the Flight Safety Foundation is another resident as well as Jack Briley, recipient of an Oscar for the screenplay of the movie "Ghandi". Many attorneys, past and present, have historically also chosen Golden Gate Point as their home due to its quick access to downtown.<sup>75</sup>

The Golden Gate Point Association has a large cooperative membership which meets regularly. The group takes an active role in civic and affairs effecting Golden Gate Point Property owners, Sarasota Bay, as well as the entire Sarasota community.

Many Golden Gate Point property owners have sweeping views of Sarasota Bay, the marina, and the new Ringling Bridge. It has become an exclusive address and is truly a beautiful golden gateway to downtown Sarasota, St. Armands and Lido Beach.

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<sup>74</sup> [http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/heraldtribune/obituary.aspx?n=ew-morton-  
ted&pid=146911343&fhid=8480](http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/heraldtribune/obituary.aspx?n=ew-morton-<br/>ted&pid=146911343&fhid=8480)

<sup>75</sup> Sarasota County Property Appraiser



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