

THE NATIONAL MONTHLY NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE BAHAMAS

THE BAHAMIAN REVIEW



MRS. WALLACE GROVES

A City Looks for Culture

Living in Freeport

—Photo-etching by Sy Fox,
Lucaya Studios, Freeport

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Royal Recognition for Freeport

Nowhere in what little remains of a once global British Empire nor in today's more flexible British Commonwealth is anything happening which is quite as significant as the development of the City of Freeport.

A few men of greatness are responsible for carving this modern city out of the virgin pine forests and laying the groundwork for a truly great city; a city with industrial stability as well as a resort trade.

Already the Treasury of the Bahamas Government is accruing the benefits of this imaginative, bold move. Thanks to an intrepid developer, Wallace Groves, and to those who have thrown their own resources and personal futures behind him, and thanks as well to farsighted Government leaders who made all this possible, the annual income of the Bahamas Government is being swelled and thousands of Bahamians look to a much brighter tomorrow than could have been dreamed of a generation ago.

With this new city, the Bahamas have taken a giant step towards a well-balanced economy, one which will not always be dependent upon the tourist trade.

The Mosvold interests, we understand, are planning to increase their already-substantial investments by creating ship repair facilities capable of handling the largest carriers on the seven seas. Freeport Bunkering ranks among the great bunkering stations of the world and the \$50 Million cement plant put up by US Steel has blazed an economic trail to the Bahamas for large industrial investments.

Mr. Groves recently appointed a proven "salesman" to bring more multi-million-dollar industrial investments here.

How can one express appreciation to those with vision, determination and business acumen who saw this project through? Money is not sufficient return. There are easier and less chancy ways of making a profit than putting millions of pounds into an island which had little going for it except a good geographical position. Further, it would be impossible to assess in terms of dollars or pounds-shilling-and-pence the invaluable service done to this section of Mankind by the creator of Freeport.

Fortunately the British system does provide a more appropriate means of expressing gratitude and admiration. Already, four Bahamians have been granted such recognition.

We would like to take this opportunity to suggest that inclusion of Mr. Wallace Groves on Her Majesty's next Honours list would be very much in order. A second person's name also should be considered; that of Charles Hayward, a leading British industrialist who along with Mr. Groves played a major role in the most exciting contemporary development in Her Majesty's realm.

MRS. WALLACE GROVES; FREEPORT'S FIRST LADY

The enthusiasm with which Freeport is seeking to better itself as a community, to mould itself into an interesting and desirable place in which to raise a family, is best seen perhaps in the personality of its First Lady, Mrs. Wallace Groves.

Better known to her friends as Georgette, this warm Montreal-born and American-raised mother of five is a pacesetter for Freeport home-makers.

Whether she's entertaining one of her husband's internationally famous guests in their magnificent beachside home, or having lunch at Freeport/Lucaya's beautiful golf club, she is gracious and thoughtful of the other person.

Although there are few at Grand Bahama who would pretend that the creator of Freeport and president of the Grand Bahama Port Authority, Limited, is popular with everyone, there is unanimity in praise of his wife.

This is no reflection on Mr. Groves except that as president of the Port Authority he is sometimes required to make decisions and stick by them despite the loss of some goodwill.

As for his wife, one licensee when he heard that she was to be on the magazine cover commented: "Everybody has a good word for Georgette Groves."

Another person, a receptionist in one of the new city's busy offices, told of the friendly reception she and her fellow-singers got when they went caroling outside the Groves home at Christmas of 1961.



Primarily a homemaker, Georgette Groves, Freeport's first lady, is most herself in the relaxed companionship and warmth of the family circle. The happy Groves children gather in the entrance court with their mother. They are Gary, 9, Gene, 15, Gayle, 9, and Graham, 10. Standing is fourteen-year-old Gordon.

"She gave us a complete tour of the house and was very hospitable. And then they served us champagne." The next Christmas the Freeport International Choir dropped by to sing carols they got the same treatment.

Seventh in a family of ten — four boys, six girls — Georgette Groves is

By Terry McLaughlin

looked up to at Freeport as a sterling example of a devoted mother.

Obviously well brought up, the Groves' three boys and two girls are said by one close friend to be "well behaved at critical moments".

Although a person of her social and economic position easily could have left to a battery of servants, including nannies, the time-consuming responsibility of bringing up a family, she has let no one come in between.

She is the first to point out a son's collection of marine life or to speak of a daughter's fondness of riding. When a city-bred reporter comments on "the sailfish" and is shot down by a carrot-topped nine-year-old with "That's a Marlin!", she nods her head and commiserates with the non-fisherman.

She herself in fact is an avid fisherman and has landed several prizes — the marlin in the children's spacious ground-floor playroom, the wahoo over the cozy bar and sailfish.

The results of her attention to the

children's upbringing are obvious in their demeanor. "She has really painted their character," comments a friend.

The three boys, Gordon, Graham and Gary, all go to Eaglebrook, a boarding school at Deerfield, Mass., during the winter months. Their daughter Gene, eldest of the children, is going to Stoneleigh Prospect at Greenfield, Mass., and Gayle is at Lake Placid's North Country School. All raised at Little Whale Cay, the Groves home since 1937 and still used on holidays, they decided to stay in Freeport this summer. "There's so much for them to do," said their mother.

Poised and confident, Gordon is 14; Graham, 10, seems sensitive and introspective, while nine-year-old Gary is personality-charged, inquisitive, and stresses that he's really nine-and-a-half. Gene, 15, and nine-year-old Gayle are just what one would expect of daughters, with Gene using the latest teenage idiom to express her likes and dislikes.

In addition to fishing Mrs. Groves is particularly fond of gardening and is said to have transformed their once bush-covered property at Little Whale Cay into its present lushness.

At their Freeport home verdant gardens and leafy conversation areas abound, interspersed with appropriate and exquisite "objets d'arts". Lavish use of water in a swimming pool, an entry court pond and decorative indoor pool, complement the shrubbery.

Designed by Alfred Browning Parker



Luxuriant foliage surrounds marble walkway of the pool-flanked entry court of the residence.

of Coconut Grove, the large home is very tropical in decor and though elegant maintains the casual welcoming feel of home.

Approached on a long roadway, it is marked by Spanish-style arches over the drive, and the sea-coloured green tiled roof of the house is pointed out to most Freeport tourists as an outstanding example of local architecture.

A button set into a small lion's head sculpture in the wrought iron gates sets chimes off inside the house and floating back along the partly-covered entry court.

Marble flooring, modern archway and the pond festooned with rich green shrubbery provide contrast and an intimate refreshing look for the entry court.

The vastness of the split-level living room, illuminated during the day by natural light filtering through hundreds of louvres, is broken up tastefully with several conversational groupings, massive furniture including a large room divider, and tall candelabra. Rock crystal wall fixtures, classic paintings, a magnificent staircase and small decorative detail, give the home untold vistas on which to focus.

A large refectory table and chairs give an air of antiquity and permanence to the dining room area as does the baronial fireplace in the living room.

In the bar, guests sit in handsome wood and leather chairs and an aquatic theme is suggested by one of Mrs. Groves' prize catches as well as by two rope-entwined glass fish balls. The un-



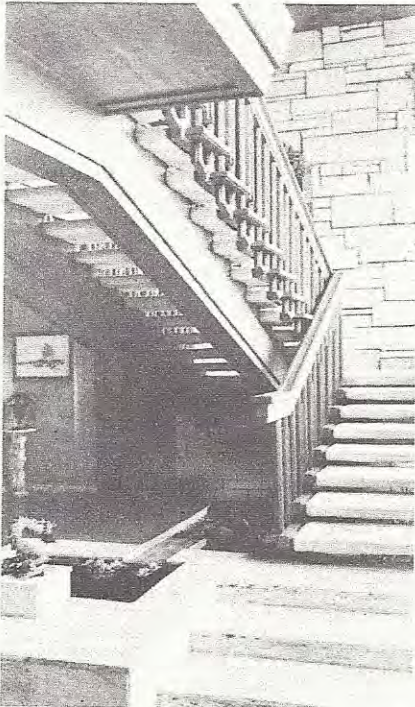
Seen at a distance, the most remarkable feature of the Groves home is the green tile roof that blends with natural colouring of surrounding sea, sky and landscaping.

COVER SUBJECT

usually-large balls, used by commercial fishermen with their nets, were found on the beach near the home.

Off the enclosed swimming pool area is the indoor playroom for the children, with bedrooms on the second floor.

Taking Cultural Lead: Conscious of her role in fostering and encouraging community projects, Mrs. Groves is particularly interested in the development of a cultural centre for the City of Freeport—an amenity not yet conceived in



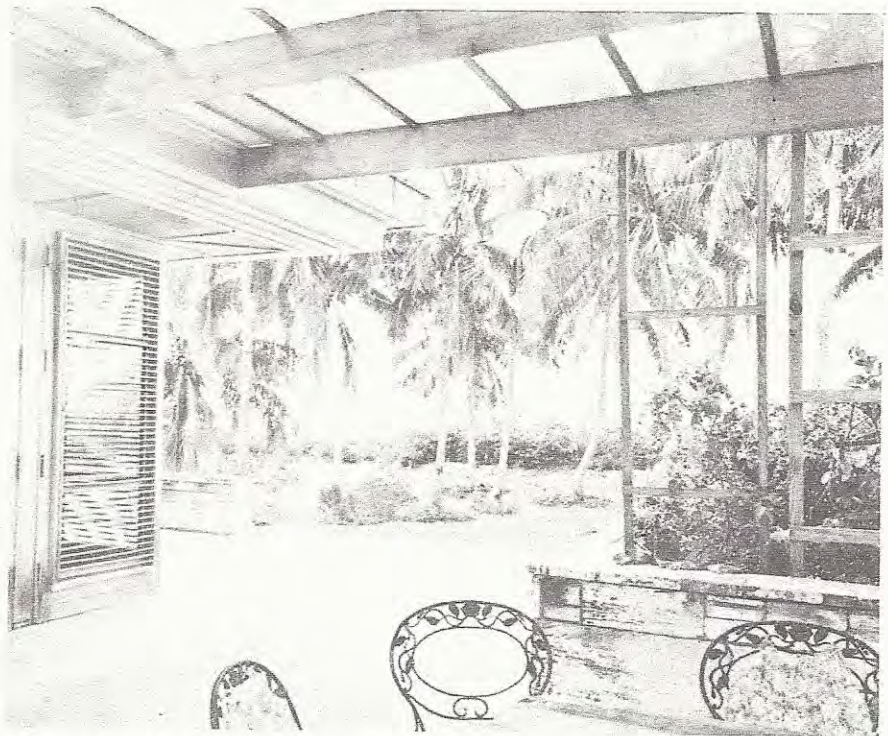
Another unique space-creating feature is the staircase design angled above an interesting pool and garden arrangement. The dragon figurine is typical of attention given to detail in tasteful decor throughout the home.

the much older and larger capital, Nassau.

A gracious chatelaine, she hosted some 150 people in her living room one evening to hear a recital by a visiting European pianist.

She feels the time has come when public accommodations suitable for such concerts and for the highly-successful productions of the Freeport Players Guild are constructed.

Music rooms, dance studio, galleries for paintings and sculpture as well as studios for training budding artists, are being considered as part of the new building. A museum, she hopes, also



A breeze-swept patio facing the tropical sea-side landscaping is an ideal breakfast locale.



Substantial wood and leather accent the nautical tone of the bar. One of the family's prize catches decorates the bar. Both oversize glass fish-balls were found on the beach near the Groves home.

will be included and "when we expand, it will be the first to move".

The theatre likely will be in the 500-seat range, with provision being made for addition of a balcony at a later date.

A non-profit project, it is expected by city planners to tie in well with the proposed redevelopment and expansion of the downtown commercial area. It is expected to cost well in excess of half a million dollars.

Set up for this purpose is the Freeport Foundation in which Mrs. Groves is determined to play an active part. Its aims, set out in the papers drawn

Photographs by
Roy Newbold, Jr.

up for its incorporation, are "to provide a community centre for Freeport, in order to promote culture so that the individual finds purpose, achieves self-expression in service to the community and learns to live a fuller life."

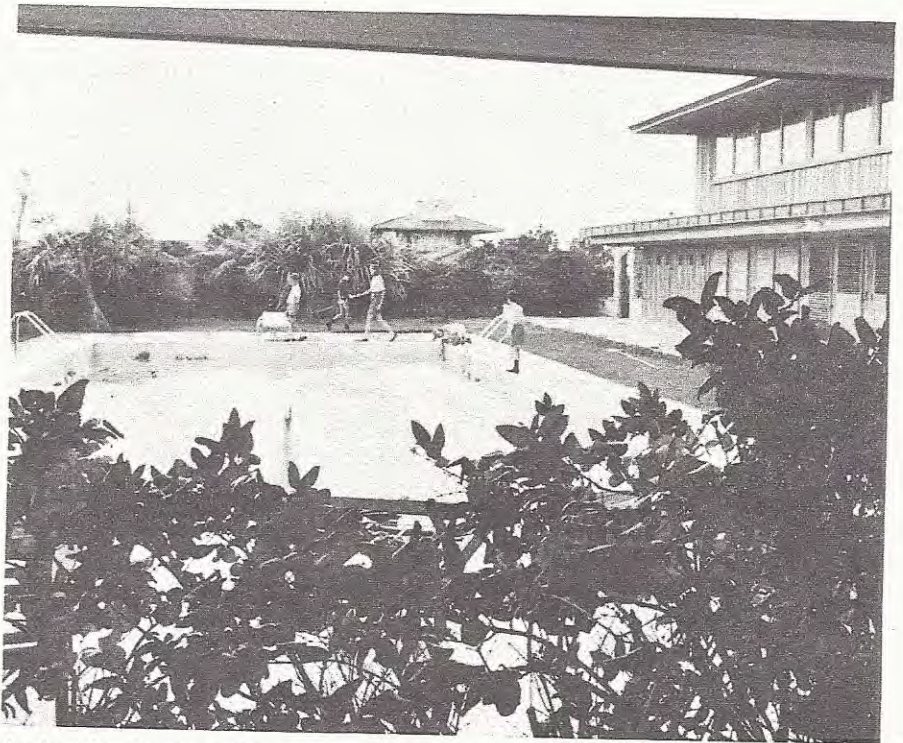
Spreading out papers concerning the project on one of the massive living room tables, Mrs. Groves informed us that she has been thinking of this project for the better part of the year and credited orchestra leader Tito Fuentes of Freeport with helping to spark initial interest.

She also praised a Mrs. Melrose of Florida, a lawyer who helped set up the Foundation, and Jack Hayward, Keith Gonsalves and Gordon Mosvold of Freeport, for their active support in these initial stages.

Interest in the fine arts in the Groves family is not limited to the parents.

Beams Georgette: "Graham is the artist in the family . . . he was awarded a medal at school for creativity . . . that's out of 250 children. Gayle and Gene are learning the piano. Gordon used to play beautifully but he gave up the piano and now he plays the melophone.

"Am I pleased!"



A close family, the children enjoy each other's company, in the outdoor pool area as well as in the adjacent indoor playroom. The home seen beyond the shrubbery is that of neighbour Jack Hayward.

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A year ago Bahamian Review Magazine asked the question "Will Freeport Succeed?"

Since that time, editorial staffers have been making frequent trips to Grand Bahama to keep tabs on the spectacular growth of this second Bahamian city — growth which leaves no doubt as to the success of its future.

Vast changes have been seen in the past twelve months. More important perhaps than the physical improvements — the move to high-rise, the new hotels and office buildings, the new bank buildings — is the social change that seems to have come about during this period.

A year ago many of the people earning their living at Grand Bahama regarded it as a get-rich-quick place requiring little or no community interest on their part. A high percentage of them lived abroad, "commuting" to Freeport during work weeks to make their money and take it back home on weekends.

Of course there weren't as many amenities even that recently as there are now. Roman Catholic and non-sectarian schools, churches, recreation, good housing, and attractive community social life are all amply accounted for at Grand Bahama today.

Mrs. Wallace Groves is looking forward to starting construction shortly on a cultural centre costing well in excess of half a million dollars and tying in with the planned redevelopment by the Grand Bahama Port Authority of the central commercial centre as a prime pedestrian area.

The two service clubs, Rotary and Kiwanis, have embarked on ambitious programs to make this city a well-rounded one and suitable for bringing up children. Rotary is putting the accent on youth, while Kiwanis is encouraging people to landscape and has undertaken the landscaping of the most-frequently seen areas of Freeport for its own project.

A year ago, Ed Brown of Bellevue Stationers on what is now called Queen's Highway, mentioned that he could always tell who planned on staying and whom he could look to as potential regular customers.

"You just have to look at their lawns," he said, noting that those who intended to live here more or less per-



manently were making their homes as attractive as possible, while the confirmed transients paid little attention to their surroundings. Mr. Brown said at that time that the number of those keeping up their properties already was becoming significant.

Today there exists little doubt about "esprit de corps" of the Freeporters. People are moving in with their families, young adults are getting married and settling down to family life in new homes, and small businessmen are asking for more say in the life of the city.

THE PAST: A year ago talk centered largely on gambling and on

the fast money it would bring to a tourist economy. Today, the serious far-sighted tone of conversation once heard only in Grand Bahama Port Authority headquarters is becoming the rule amongst the average man.

Talk centres now not on roulette, dice and one-armed bandits, but on the wooing of light and heavy industry to the tax-privileged area. The average man now points out in conversation that his future and that of his family lies in stable, permanent employ such as industrial expansion would bring.

A chamber of commerce is in the planning stages and a panel of ten well-known bankers and licensees headed by Edward J. Davies has been selected to make the Chamber a vital force in Freeport's business life. Mr. Davies is founder at Freeport of Anglo-American Electrical Co. Ltd., a firm of electrical suppliers.

There are those in Freeport who say their city will rival Nassau in the not too distant future as a banking centre for the Western Hemisphere.

POPULAR WITH BANKS: Although the two large American banks represented in Nassau, Chase Manhattan and First National City Bank, have not yet moved into Grand Bahama, four of the capital's principal banking houses have. The Royal Bank of Canada, Canada's largest and the first international bank in the Bahamas, recently opened handsome new Robjohns Melich-designed quarters just a few feet from the new Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce bloc put up this year. Across the street from Port Authority headquarters are their bankers, Barclays D.C.O., in a newly-expanded branch put up only a few short years ago. In the downtown Parker Building, the Bank of Nova Scotia set up shop towards the end of the winter season.

Nassau's Trust Corporation of the Bahamas is represented with a branch in The Royal's new building.

Significant private banks include the Mercantile Group's Mercantile Bank & Trust Co. Ltd. and Mercantile Bank of

FREEPORT

SPECIAL REPORT

the Bahamas Ltd., with offices in their own building — of which the third floor is Port Authority headquarters.

With deposits close to a million dollars at time of writing is another financial firm, Freeport Savings and Loan Association, headed by genial Southerner William Mizelle. Freeport Savings and Loan has just built what is probably the most attractive new building on The Mall as its headquarters. The firm accepts both sterling and American Dollar accounts.

MODERN FACILITIES: Across The Mall stands the modern hospital and medical research complex created by philanthropist James Rand, American inventor of the dial telephone and financial giant who led Remington Typewriter Company to its present pre-eminent position.

Opened in July was a new shopping-centre with total floor area of 34,000 sq. ft. and carrying more than eleven thousand different items. The expansion forms part of the Port Authority's plans to redevelop the central commercial area to meet the new needs of a growing population and to create an aesthetic pedestrian area downtown.

Although still quite expensive, apartment housing has become much more plentiful, the most outstanding example being the two-million-dollar Bellevue Court on The Mall, a four-wing block which encloses a landscaped court with swimming pool and which offers tenants a high percentage of leisure space. Rent runs from \$250 to \$275 for two bedrooms, two bathroom units. The Mall, in fact, is becoming quite popular as an apartment house area, with "Buddy" Goodwin of Freeport Inn putting up a large block next to Bellevue Court along with American associates; the Sea Sun Manor, for a while the biggest and most expensive unit doubling its tenants with an almost identical building next door. The Racket Club is another furnished apartment block on the main street.

A FOCAL POINT: The Mall and recently dedicated Ranfurly Circus — only the fourth circus in the world and named after former Governor Lord Ranfurly — play a prominent role in the future of the city.

Fronting on the beautifully-landscaped Circus and its illuminated fountain are the English-style Pub on The Mall and Daniel K. Ludwig's King's Inn Hotel.

Multi-millionaire ship owner Ludwig, whose net personal worth is said to be in excess of five hundred million dollars, is planning the major features of his hundred-million-dollar development on the circus, including the fabulous international shopping centre, with architecture and goods from all over the world. A Moorish-style casino is also being put up there by the Freeport gambling interests.

A project which has been announced and which, if actually followed through, would bring tremendous prestige to Freeport is the development of a movie colony with homes, recreation facilities, studios, etc. Perhaps the tax-free status of life in the Bahamas would encourage a return to the carefree days of old Hollywood when a star was really a star and money was no object.

Those who have experienced the most change in mode of living as a result of

Freeport are the Grand Bahamians who until a decade ago were still very much geared to a meagre agricultural and fishing economy.

Father of the Freeport Miracle, Wallace Groves recently undertook a survey of living conditions throughout the neighbouring areas of Freeport on Grand Bahama. Though cost of living, tastes, and salaries have increased tremendously amongst the local people, conditions reported by the survey left much to be desired in the way of decent housing and educational facilities.

A MODEL CITY: Late in June, Mr. Groves proposed the construction of a model city which would "blaze the way for low-cost housing in the Bahamas". To have one thousand three and four-bedroom homes, — all outfitted with power, telephone, sewerage and water facilities — the model city will also have full school and recreation facilities as well as a clinic and commercial area. Mr. Groves said he will donate a £100,000 school accomodating 1,200 pupils in the new town, as well as a £20,000 school at Eight Mile Rock and two health clinics costing £20,000 each.

A bonanza in better living for Grand Bahama, this gift from the creator of Freeport perhaps best answers the question we asked a year ago "Will Freeport succeed?"



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