

The man was Wallace Groves, and the appointment he was keeping with His Excellency the Acting Governor, A.G.H. Gardner-Brown, was for the formal signing of the Hawksbill Creek Agreement, the legislation which made it possible to begin the creation of Freeport/Lucaya.

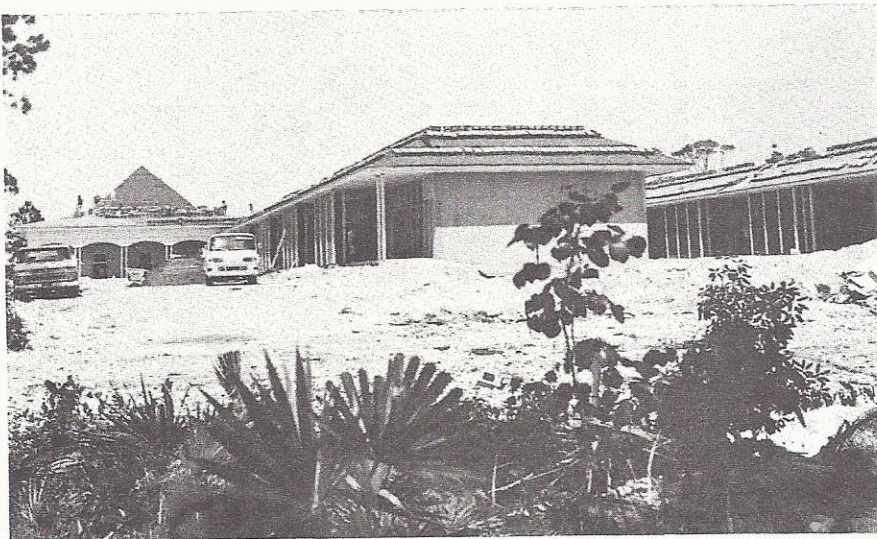
The Grand Bahama Port Authority, Limited was created as parent firm of the project.

Groves set to work at his huge undertaking soon after the Hawksbill Creek Agreement became law. Great amounts of Groves' capital were funneled into the project that so many outside observers looked upon with nothing less than pure skepticism. Investor's reluctance to participate in the project was well known. There were some



**Landscaping the Pub-on-the-Mall in May, 1964.**

**Freeport High School under construction in August, 1965.**



difficult obstacles to overcome. Freeport/Lucaya had no natural harbor, a consideration that weighed heavily upon all the parties to the development. Without a harbor, goods and supplies could not be brought into Freeport, nor could the cruise ships unload their precious cargoes of tourists and commercial prospects. Off-loading of goods and services was far more difficult than in those areas where port facilities

were part of the natural landscape.

Daniel K. Ludwig, an American financier who had earned keen respect for his lucrative investments in shipyards was encouraged to participate. Ludwig seemed to be the saviour of a project that had not moved very far. If he built a shipyard, there would be employment for thousands and at least one very substantial industry to attest to the

potential of the area for additional development. Ludwig joined the Groves enterprise and invested enough of his own capital to construct the harbor at Freeport which has, since then, been enlarged five times. Shipyard construction never progressed further than the planning boards, however. Ludwig renewed a lease on a shipyard in the Far East and decided to pursue his interests on the other side of the world, rather than wait for Freeport to catch up to him.

Soon after Ludwig came into Freeport, two important groups decided to invest in The Grand Bahama Port Authority. these groups consisted of Charles Allen, a well-known New York investment broker, and family, and Charles W. Hayward, who at the time was chairman of England's giant Firth-Cleveland group.

But by 1960 there was serious concern that Groves had made a premature if not outright poor judgement of the potential of the Bahamas. There was rumor Groves would pack it in and head for Little Whale Cay to

let time heal the financial wounds. There never was any substance to the rumors, for as they were flying as fast as the tabloids could hit the streets in London, Paris and New York, Groves was already considering new ways to enliven the dream.

But Groves had another idea. He appealed to the government in Nassau for more land. That move, on the surface, seemed incongruous with the state of the venture. Groves persisted and the government was persuaded. The additional lands would allow a further

development of the original plan so as to include more tourist oriented businesses and to permit the subdivision of land for resale to potential homeowners.

The idea clicked. In 1964 the first hotel, the Lucayan Beach, opened for business. The tourist trade followed in mighty surges. New Hotels opened. Investors dropped in on occasion to plunk fortunes into Freeport/Lucaya. The dream had been born, Groves had engineered the miracle and Freeport/Lucaya took its place alongside Nassau as a prime

center for international tourism. And, another dimension was added to the Bahamas that was non-existent before the growth of Freeport/Lucaya: Industry. From petroleum to pharmaceuticals, industrialists came to cash in on the golden sands of Grand Bahama.

Today, Groves' investment in Freeport/Lucaya is largely represented by his holdings in Intercontinental Diversified Corp., listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

Wallace Groves is still a shy, retiring man who never boasts of his wealth. As he passes through the International Bazaar from the parking lot to his office (which he still maintains), he has a friendly smile for those he meets, and likely as not he will stop and speak to someone he knew "back in the pioneering days" and most likely he will not only remember the name but also the names of the family members. His good deeds and contributions to various charities are usually given without fanfare, often secretly, sometimes even anonymously. This perhaps explains the character of the man who dreamed the dream of Freeport/Lucaya and made it come true. Although officially retired, Wallace and Georgette spend many months of the year in their lovely beach home in Lucaya. The rest of the time is divided between Little Whale Cay and the spacious manor the family owns at Devon, England.

Mr. and Mrs. Groves have five adopted children — Gene, 24 and Gayle, 20 are the girls; the boys are Gordon, 23, Graham, 20 and Gary, also 20. They, too, share their parent's belief that Freeport/Lucaya has reached a stature of maturity some communities never reach; it is a place where all people can live together without prejudice, without petty indifferences. That was the vision of Wallace Groves, founder. He made it work.

**Freeport in 1964. The Mall had become a 4-lane highway, more office buildings had been erected, and Ranfurly Circus (upper left) had been dedicated. East Sunrise Highway (upper road in photograph) led to Lucayan Beach Hotel, passing new residential areas, apartment buildings and more and more construction.**

