

A History of

SUN CITY CENTER

1962 - 2002





Del E. Webb 1899 - 1974

January 1, 2002, marked the 40th Anniversary of the grand opening of Del Webb's Sun City, Florida. Through the memoirs of our earliest settlers, the work of archivists in the Historical Society and generous contributions of documents, photographs and memorabilia to the Community Association's Archive Committee, this booklet provides an anecdotal review of a few highlights of those years.

Del Webb's venture here was an experiment. He envisioned an entire self-contained community managed by volunteers. Over the years his concept has been fine tuned into the successful operation we enjoy today. Volunteerism is essential to our way of life, and it is now clear that the experiment is working.

**This commemorative booklet was made possible by a grant from
the Community Foundation of Greater Sun City Center.**

**Hillsborough Community
College LRC**

Del Webb's Sun City

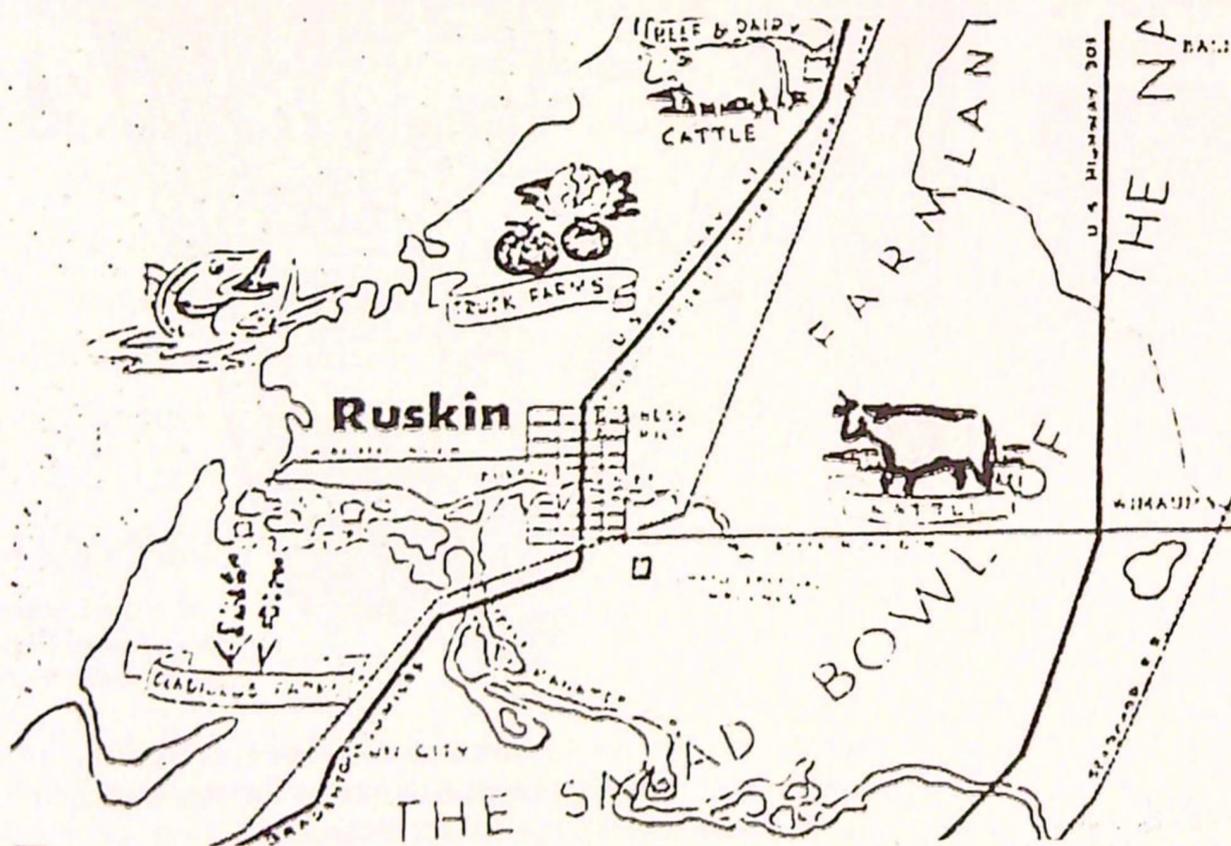
Our story begins with one of the largest traffic jams ever witnessed in southern Hillsborough County! The grand opening of Del Webb's Sun City had been advertised for weeks in the press and on radio and tv all over the country. And when that first opening week arrived, 41,000 people came to see what this retirement community "experiment" was all about.

Del E. Webb, Jr. was a remarkable entrepreneur. He had built a solid reputation in the heavy construction industry coast to coast and, in 1960, opened the successful first phase

of the Sun City retirement community in Arizona. The idea for a self-contained retirement community came to him, it is said, from a concept made popular in Scandinavia. The plan was to build a community of housing affordable to 5,000 professional and working class retirees surrounding a shopping center and recreational amenities. Encircling the retirement area would be an industrial park, with homes and schools for the employees and their families.

Later on, the workers employed in the industrial part of town would simply retire to the inner community with a minimum of upheaval. When the population of the retirement community reached 5,000, another similar community would be built nearby.

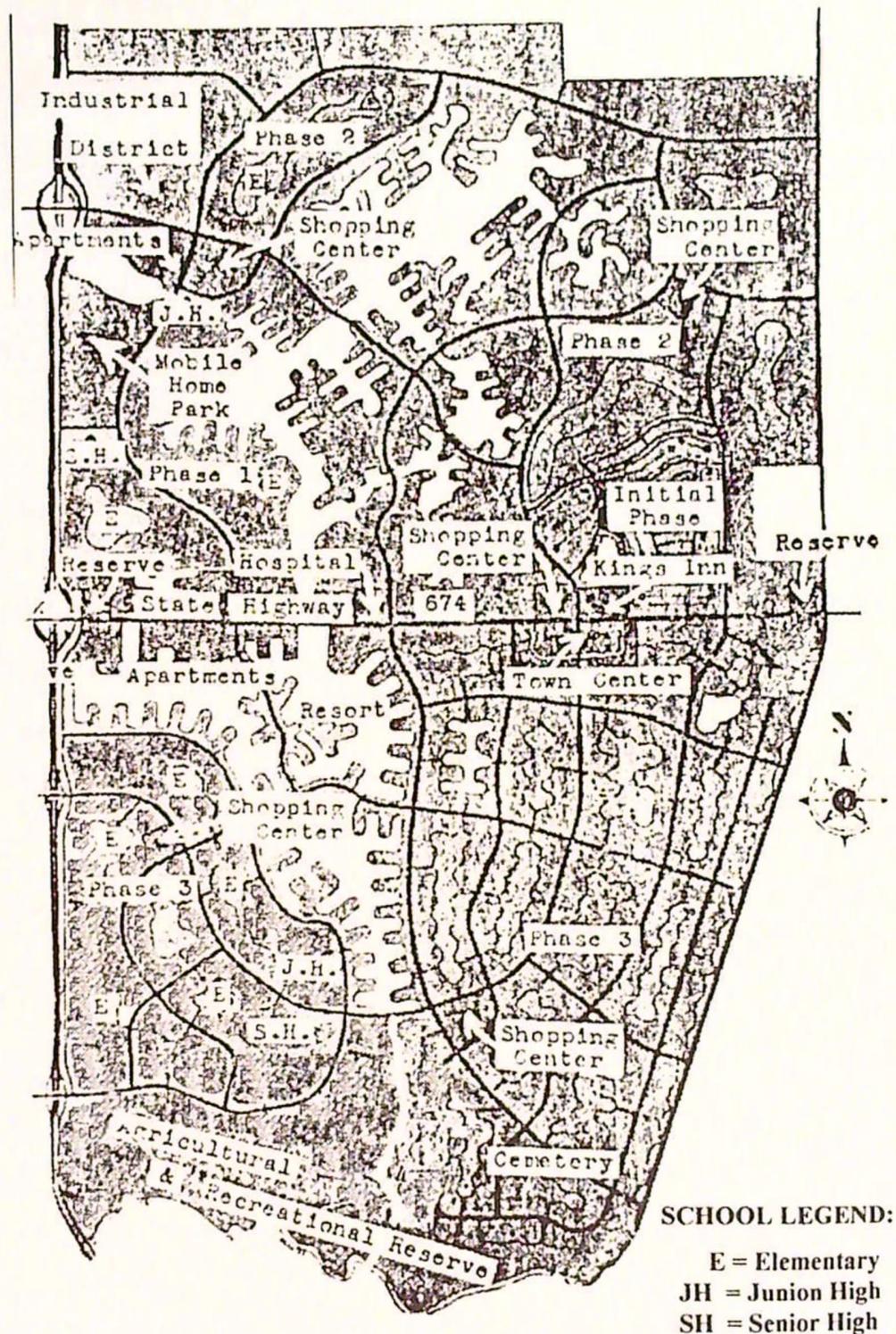
Another driving factor was the concept of volunteerism. The community would be overseen by volunteer leaders, boards and committees. Webb recognized that volunteers can "make it work" because they are sincerely interested in the results. It was already working in Arizona, so he knew it could work here.



This map from the late 1950s shows south Hillsborough County as "The Salad Bowl" and, where Sun City Center is now located, only cows were found.

But Del Webb did not visualize his Florida community as one strictly for retirees. His printed advertisements constantly referred to “Senior Americans” as his target audience. One sales map from 1963 clearly shows the location here for eight elementary schools, two junior high schools and two senior high schools — all on property that now encompasses Sun City Center, Kings Point, Freedom Plaza and the Villages of Cypress Creek near the Interstate highway.

The great success of his venture in Phoenix, Arizona, starting in 1960, had prompted Del Webb to seek out other sites in popular retirement regions. He admitted to a bias against building in Florida — his background was in the far west and he had heard of all the hurricanes here, the alligators and swamps. But he was told there was a swath of land extending from the Tampa Bay area across the peninsula of Florida to the Atlantic Coast near Cape Canaveral where no hurricane had ever been recorded. He also noted that the most densely populated area of the country was in the Boston-Washington corridor, and a retirement location closer to the east coast would be desirable. Florida would provide the climate that might just attract that huge northeast clientele.



Del Webb's plan would feature a retirement community, surrounded by an industrial park and homes for the workers and schools for their children.

I see eight elementary schools, two junior highs and two senior high schools on this 1963 sales map.

And legend has it that Del Webb's mother suggested that she would probably retire to Florida.

In late 1960, Del Webb visited here, a 12,000 acre cattle ranch land running from the Manatee River on the south to just above 19th Avenue on the north, and from U.S. 301 on the east to the approximate present alignment of Interstate 75 on the west.

Del Webb was escorted across the gently rolling fields here by a cow-hand named Berry Roberts (for whom Berry Roberts Drive is named), and additional orientation was offered to the Del Webb Corporate staff on weekends by Gene Smith, who later would be our Maintenance Department Manager for years.

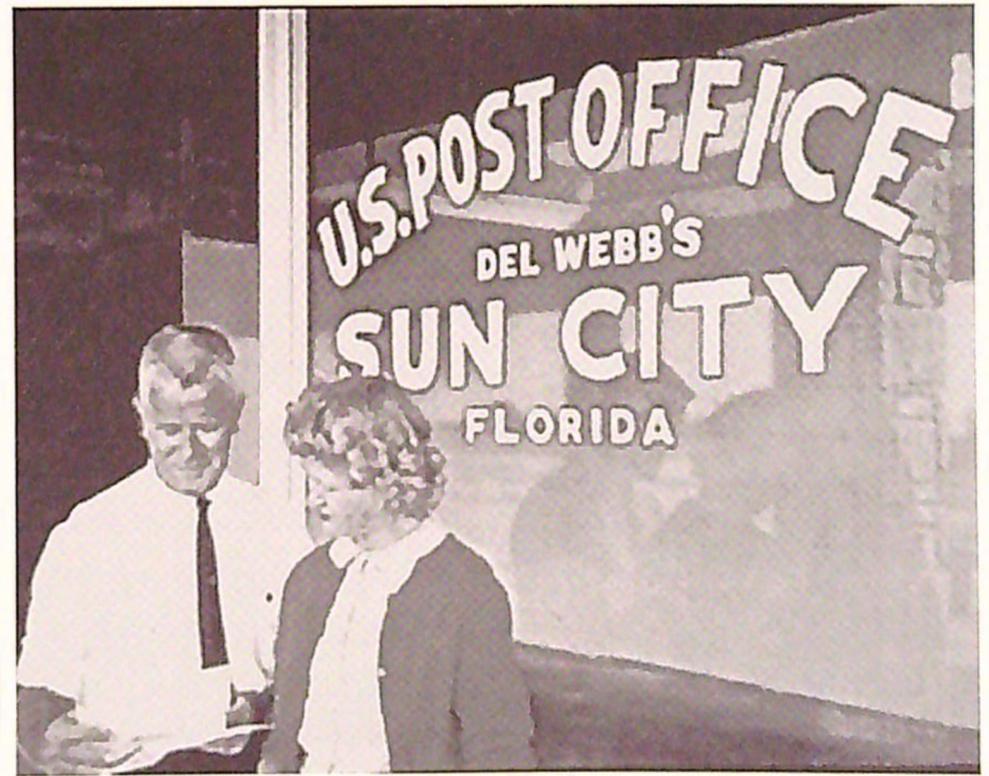
Webb saw miles of pastures, two watering holes, an enormous cow shed about where the outdoor pool near the Atrium Building is now, and great opportunity. Early in 1961, he purchased a substantial amount of the property from the Universal Marion Corporation of Jacksonville, Florida. Startup action was fast and furious.

Groundbreaking was on May 10, 1961.

Del E. Webb's birthdate was May 17. I've wondered why he didn't postpone the ceremony just a week later — you would think his staff might have insisted on this "good luck omen" or just as a tribute to the owner as a PR gesture.

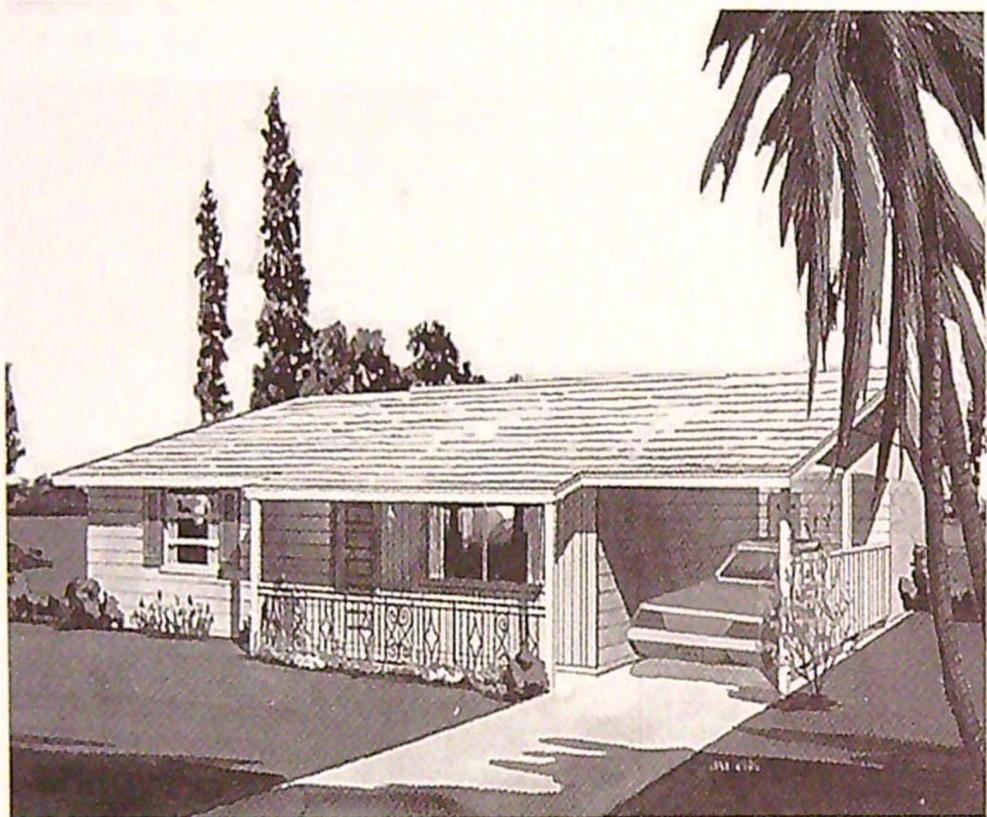
During the groundbreaking ceremony, Webb announced that the following New Year's day would be the official opening for "Del Webb's Sun City." He called for six property improvements to be completed during the re-maining seven and a half months to opening day:

- A variety of affordable model homes to be ready with paved and named streets,
- electric, water, sewer, stormwater-control and telephone utilities,
- arts and crafts hobby facilities,
- hotel with a good restaurant,
- post office,
- shopping center.



Our first post office was located at the corner of the Plaza, present site of the Sun City Center Travel Service.

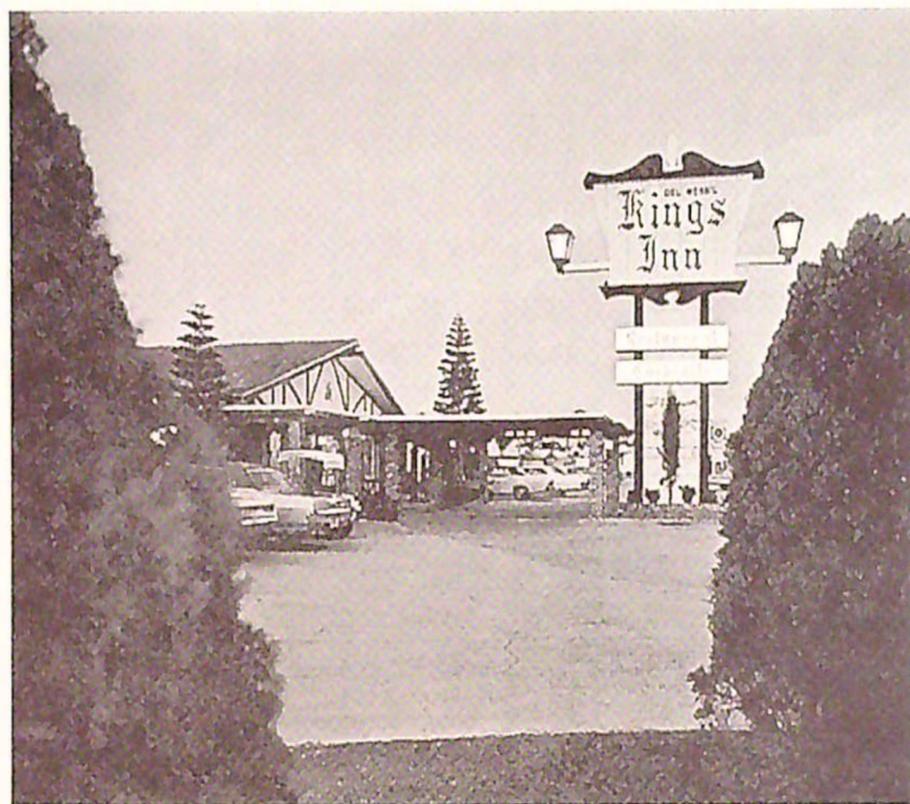
It was very fortunate that Webb had made the acquaintance of Ellsworth Simmons, Chairman of the Hillsborough County Commission. Both men were avid golfers and, once the 9-hole golf course took shape, the men could discuss any county matters that applied to the new community with ease. It is reported that, as long as Commissioner Simmons was in office, the Del Webb Corporation could pick up the phone, tell Mr. Simmons' office about the need to plat another block of homes, and the approvals were given a day or two later over lunch in Tampa.



Early houses such as this had a starting price around \$11,500; One "Towne House" was listed at \$9,450.

Architecture? Simple! Webb just took the plans for the Arts and Crafts building in Sun City, Arizona and copied it here. Our original hotel was a direct copy from his Arizona Sun City; same for the Town Hall and all the first model homes along Cherry Hills Drive! A 9-hole golf course, later to be named the North Lakes Golf Course, was also to be ready by New Year's Day — Webb put his new friend Berry Roberts in as Manager to be sure the course would be done right and on time.

The post office was installed in the corner location of the new shopping plaza - now



Like a beacon in the night, drawing the hungry and the curious alike to one of the best restaurants in the county.

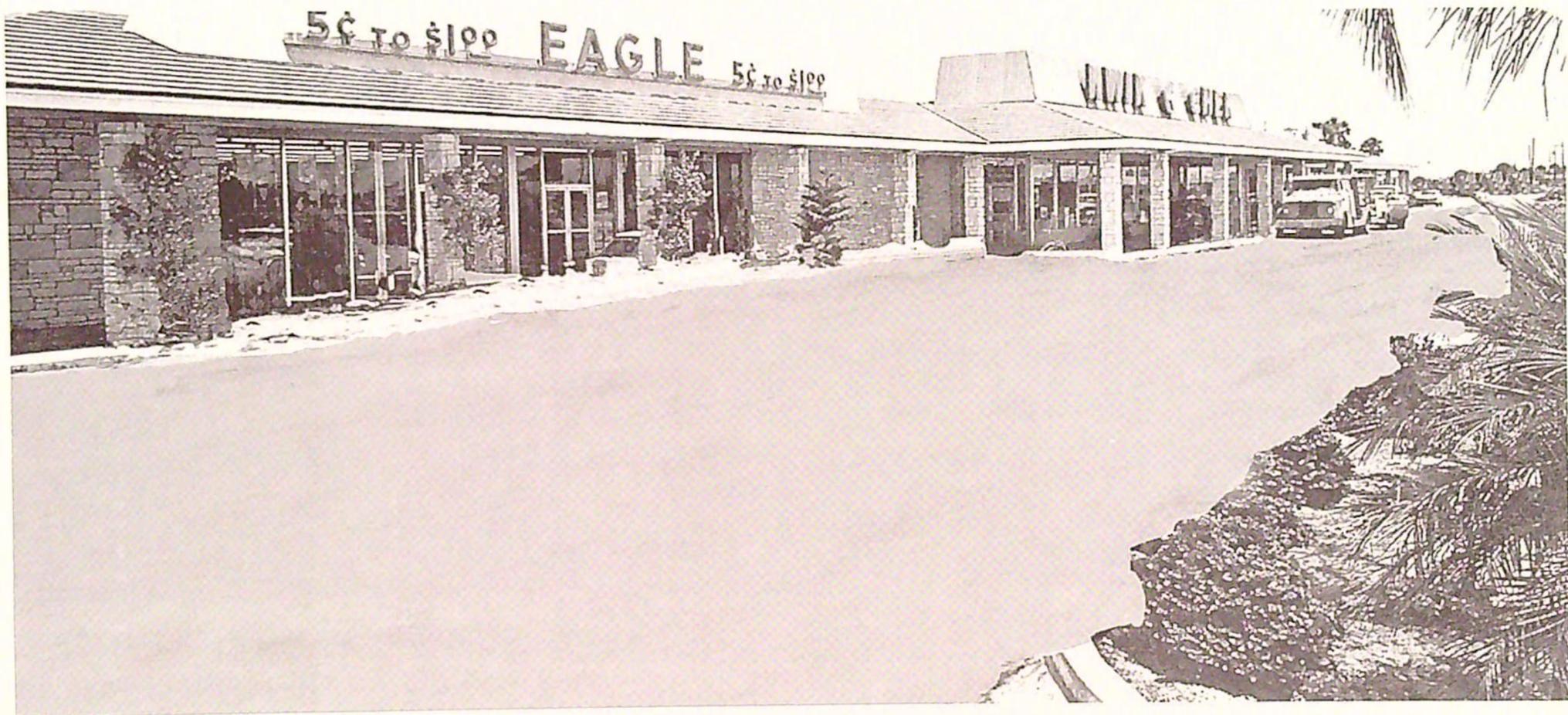
occupied by the Sun City Center Travel Service.

The only problem was what to call this new community since a town named 'Sun City' already existed just south of Ruskin. The compromise name "Sun City Center" was approved by the postal authorities. Nearly a decade later, some sales documents prepared by the developer still referred to this as "Del Webb's Sun City, Florida." People who bought a home here received a welcoming letter, usually mailed back to their northern address, cautioning them

to use "Sun City Center" as the mailing address, with the Ruskin ZIP Code of 33570. That letter also contained a membership card in the "Hi, Neighbor!" club. Webb felt that would establish the feeling of belonging here.

Later, two new ZIP Codes would be assigned to Sun City Center (33571 & 33573), but some mail services still placed us in Ruskin for years.

The construction of the town hall, the arts and crafts buildings and the model homes was on an unbelievable schedule.



Nearing completion of the 1962 Shopping Plaza. Shortly, the Kwik Chek would become a Winn Dixie. By 1972, that space would become a bowling alley when the Winn Dixie moved to new and larger quarters just down the block.

The Kings Inn, for example, was erected in five weeks! The architects' plans all came from Phoenix where the buildings and street layouts were similar to ours. Pre-cut lumber arrived by rail at the busy freight yards in Wimauma.

The editor of this booklet has searched for any remaining signs of this rail center in Wimauma, to no avail.

The weather in 1961 cooperated with the builders in every way and everything was in place right on schedule. In fact, things were so far ahead of schedule, they were in the midst of plans for a "Sneak Preview" on the weekend before January 1, 1962. Until then, all of the publicity releases* had stuck to Webb's statement at groundbreaking that the place would officially open on New Year's Day.

And then disaster struck. Shortly before Christmas, 1961, the temperature dropped into the teens. Most of the decorative flora had not developed root systems and

was destroyed by the freeze. Del Webb's Sun City was a mess with only a couple of weeks to go before the "doors" would open.

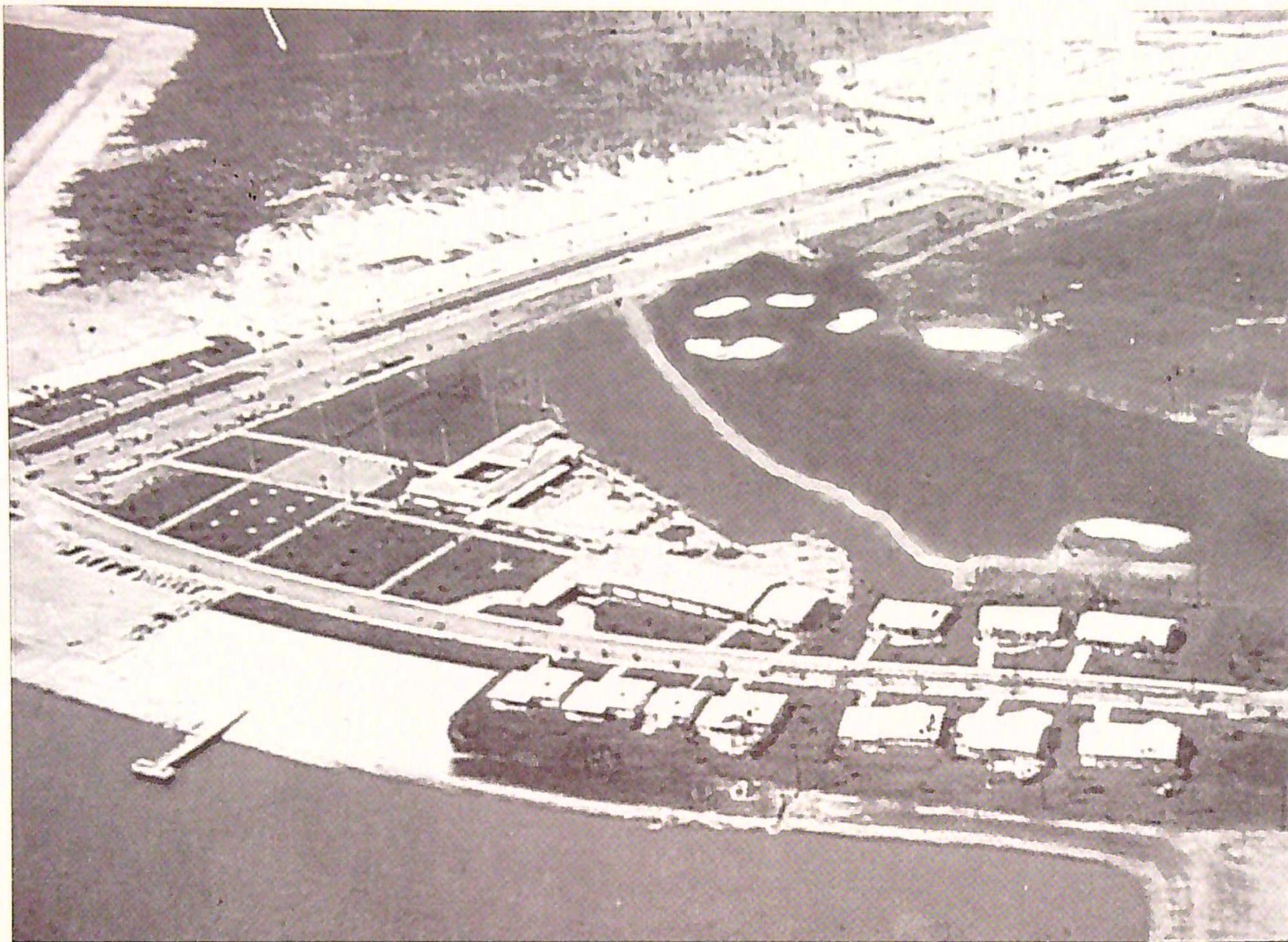
The local Hubbell Nursery Company took one look at the damage and rushed to the rescue. They sent trucks all over south Florida to locate replacement plantings that had not been frozen, brought them back and installed them all over the model home, the Kings Inn and recreational buildings. What they couldn't replant or replace, they sprayed with green paint! Laugh if you will, but in less than two weeks, the beauty of our community was restored!

Rickenbacker Drive was just being completed as a paved, two lane highway running from what is now Valley Forge Boulevard to Augusta Drive. At its intersection with North Pebble Beach Drive, there was a cut through the median so a driver could go straight across.

Spirits were high, holiday celebrations were the happiest and all was in readiness for the new year, and opening day.



An unfamiliar sight in Sun City Center. The temperature dipped to 17 degrees. The coldest day ever here had a low of 15°.



Aerial view of Sun City Center as the Grand Opening neared. Swan Lake is at the bottom of the picture, complete with fishing pier and sandy beach. Cherry Hills Drive is just above it. Town Hall (now known as "Old Town Hall") is clear, with its circular driveway and overhanging portico. The "North Course" (now North Lakes Golf Course) is at the very top.

Legend has it that 15,000 Large Mouth Bass were stocked in Swan Lake on Opening Day.

Newspaper reports confirmed excellent fishing there for years!

Opening Day

Opening day weather was just fine (it would rain for several days later in the week). The word was out that Del Webb's Sun City was a lovely retirement setting just far enough from big city traffic to let one relax on the way to the store, but near enough to Tampa and its bay to provide Northerners with both urban and shore amenities.

Of course, there wasn't any interstate in 1961; that would come in the 1980s. People could get here only by using the narrow Ruskin-Wimauma Road from U.S. 301 or U.S. 41.

It had been announced that the new community would open for business on Monday, January 1, 1962. But soon it became widely known that anyone visiting the area during the preceding weekend would find the developers sales offices open — a sneak preview as it were.



The North Pebble Beach Blvd entrance to the new community on Opening Day. 41,000 visited the first week!

The people who ventured into this rural part of Hillsborough County were amazed, after passing miles of cattle grazing fields and two-lane shell-gravel roads, to suddenly find a wide macadam highway (Rickenbacker Drive) lined with green foliage and lovely flowers, trimmed shrubbery and, most remarkably, the Kings Inn with its English Tudor styling and rich decor.

Of course, with traffic the way it was so frequently, it was most likely time for a quick snack or lunch for the visitors. The Kings Inn was the perfect first stop for many and, as you might imagine, plenty of literature on the tables describing what was in store for them.

Just up North Pebble Beach Boulevard was a large shopping plaza with a fully-stocked Kwik Chek supermarket and a Walgreen Drug store next to the United States Post Office, a barber shop, and laundromat! A bank would open shortly. Those anchor stores helped establish confidence in the slogan, “America’s Premier Retirement Community.”

When the visitors got out of their cars in the spacious parking lot at the corner of North Pebble Beach Boulevard and Cherry Hills Drive, they could ride in a golf cart provided by the developer, past shuffleboard courts, past the arts and crafts buildings past the large outdoor



Two of the stores in the new Plaza Shopping Center in 1962. Romine's Restaurant shared an entrance with a Walgreen Drug Store.



Right from the start, Del Webb arranged for dinners and other activities to remind visitors and home buyers alike that Florida winters offer outdoor activities

swimming pool and on over to any of ten model homes just beyond the large town center, now called the “Old Town Hall.”

But retirement is supposed to be fun. Note the sandy beach in the photo on page 7! The lake, a small cattle watering hole a year earlier, was enlarged to its present size and later named “Swan Lake” when two swans were brought in by a resident. See the fishing pier? The lake had been stocked with thousands of bass!



The outdoor recreation center as originally constructed by Del Webb. Homes were occupied on Beach Boulevard, near the top of this picture, and along Augusta Drive. In addition, new houses were being occupied on the “Ladder Streets” from Desert Hills Way to Torrey Pines Avenue.

There was croquet on the spacious lawn in front of the Town Hall, shuffleboard and horseshoes, lawn bowling near the large outdoor pool and picnic area. And the 9-hole golf course (the front nine of North Lakes Course), under the management of Mr. Berry Roberts, was the icing on the Del Webb’s Sun City cake!

Was it successful? The newspaper headlines reported 41,000 people here the first week!

The prices they paid ranged from just over \$10,000 for a two-bedroom, one-bath house, to \$17,350 for a house with three bedrooms and two baths on select lots. There were no garages, just carports. All the lawns and shrubs at each new home were in place.

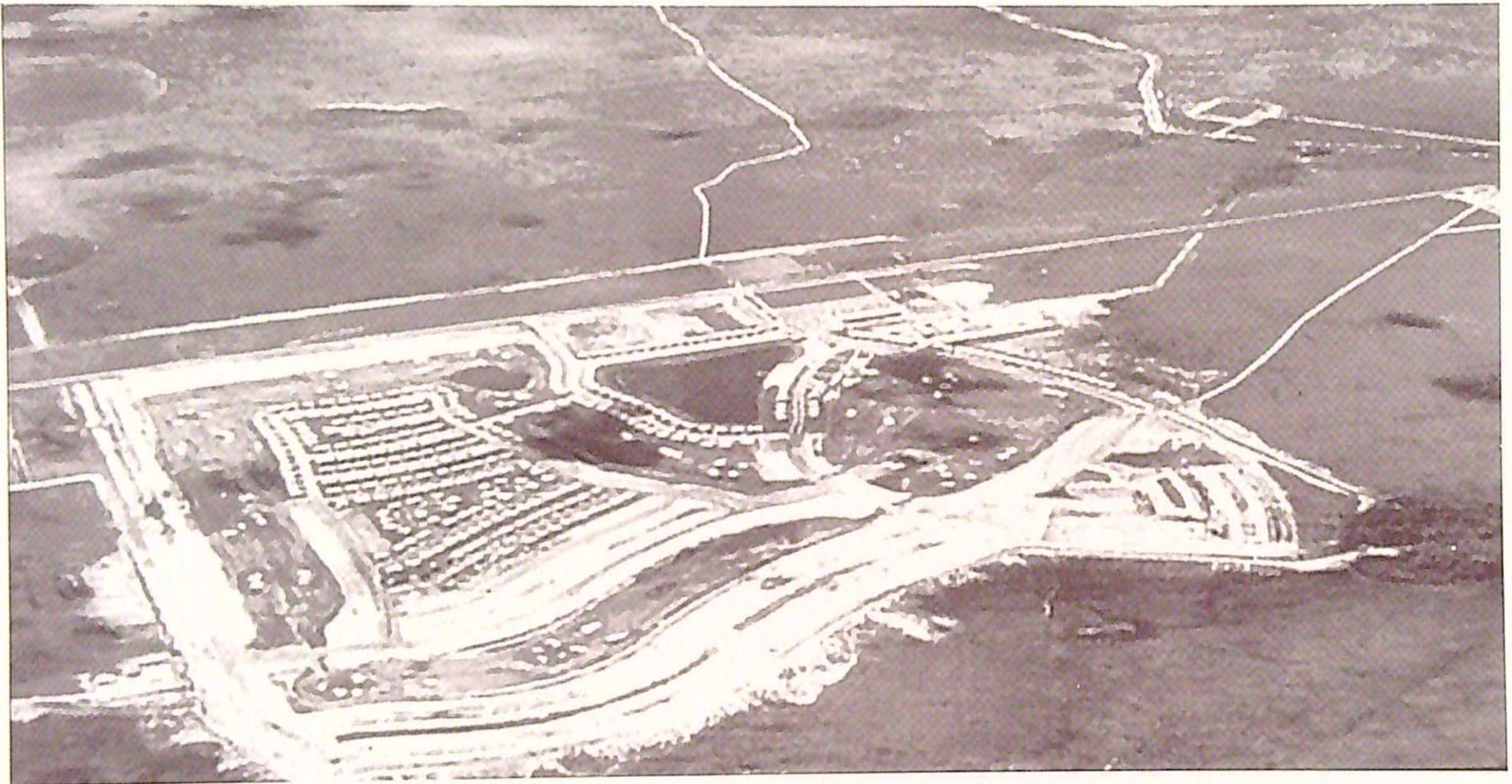
Real estate taxes were somewhat under \$200 the first year or two; water and sewage charges ran under \$10 a month. The craft rooms were open and “pioneers” (as the new residents were called) began to find each other and form new bonds in their common interests.

The new venture was off and running.

First Residents

The first day of home occupancy, was to have been April 20, 1962. On that day, several families performed the “key check” by walking through the homes they had ordered built. Each family noted things that needed to be fixed or changed before closing. For some this was a simple task. With typical foresight, Webb had

constructed a string of apartment units right on North Pebble Beach Drive (across from the Cherry Hills Drive intersection) to be occupied by purchasers of new homes while their houses were being built. Thus, newcomers could move in immediately and take part in the golf, swimming and other amenities and clubs while keeping an eye on their home’s construction. Since they were already living in town they



Aerial view looking to the southwest taken in 1963. You can see Swan Lake near the center with its fishing pier.

The top part of the picture is undeveloped land lying immediately to the south of State Road 674.

The fuzzy white line paralleling Route 674 was an airport landing strip used by Del Webb and others for several years.

People could fly in for dining at the Kings Inn right across the street!

were less apt to press the builder to rush things along. Others who were living out of town were, of course, anxious to move into their new homes as soon as possible.

Indeed, several families agreed to an early closing and, on Wednesday, April 25, 1962, two moving vans pulled up to houses on Desert Hills Way. The first was for Frank and Mildred Ward who moved into 715 Desert Hills Way. Later that same day, the Lindeman's moved

into their home at 904 Desert Hills Drive.

It is interesting to note that, for years after, whenever a new family moved into a house in town, Frank Ward was the first person on their doorstep with hand outstretched in welcome to Sun City Center.

Del Webb had learned an important lesson during his one year of experience in Sun City, Arizona. People were picking up from their homes of many years to move to their new

retirement home, many were leaving family and friends far behind. They needed a sense of belonging in their new home town. The first organization he started here, therefore, was the "Hi, Neighbor!" club. Club meetings were held monthly and they gave each resident a voice in how things ran here. Sun City Center quickly became "home."

Monthly pot-luck dinners were held on the patio just outside the Town Hall. The semi-circular brick stage you now see on the patio was used for calling meetings to order, and as a performer's raised entertainment



Celebrating our first birthday in May, 1963. This photo was taken from the stage of what is now the "Little Theatre." Later, a wall would divide this room with the further half for use by the Exercise Club and, more recently, the Weavers.



Looking across Central Campus to “Old” Town Hall in 1968. The totem pole commemorated our rich heritage, of course but, sadly, termites showed no respect for culture. Another interesting aspect of this photo: pictures taken of the buildings and grounds in Sun City, Arizona and in Sun City, California, except for the totem pole, are all virtually identical.

platform. In the spring of 1963, an enormous birthday cake was prepared by the Kings Inn staff for a party to which every homeowner was invited.

Sun City Center was a beehive of activity right from the start. Residents took to the new arts and crafts facilities -- new clubs were formed, a library was opened in the Town Hall, and the Woman's Club had been founded that established a Meals-On-Wheels program by mid-1963. The all-volunteer Emergency Squad was organized in 1964. The Minibus system



The Del Webb Corporation donated a new garage and the property to the Emergency Squad on Ray Watson Drive. The Squad then bought a used hearse as their first ambulance.

was inaugurated in 1971 and, shortly after, an all-volunteer fire company was started under the leadership of resident Ed Powers.

Del Webb had learned another wrinkle from his Arizona Sun City development. He insisted that all home owners belong to a volunteer resident "Civic Association" because it would be to this body, he wrote, "that all community facilities will be donated by the Del E. Webb Corporation."

By August, 1964, the residents incorporated the Civic Association ("CA") for representing all owners in contracts with the developer, and to maintain the ownership of recreational and communal property.

Six years later a Home Owners Association ("HOA") was incorporated to deal specifically with problems of home ownership and external relationships.

Del Webb was, by now, involved with retirement communities in Arizona and California in addition to ours in Florida. He was also the contractor for a major highway surfacing job in Illinois.

The sale of homes in Sun City Center had really not matched the early business plan Webb had established. His investment in the California Sun City was faring even worse.

Throughout the 1960s, Webb was able to control his expenses and thus remain with a comfortable balance sheet. But toward the end of the decade, development had slowed even further here.

1971 was not to serve Mr. Webb well. Prices of gasoline were escalating, fewer people

were able to travel to his three retirement centers easily, and then, on May 26, smoke was noted coming from our Kings Inn.

An immediate alarm was sounded to the nearest fire company shortly after the first flames had been seen coming from a closet inside the restaurant area used for storing a variety of cleaning agents.

Regrettably, the nearest fire company was stationed in Ruskin, five miles to the west. Nothing could be done to save the building, and the fine restaurant, lounge and hotel front desk were all lost in less than an hour.

Picture the scene: On May 23rd, 1971, people from miles around would come to Del Webb's Sun City to admire the landscaping around our community buildings, to shop in



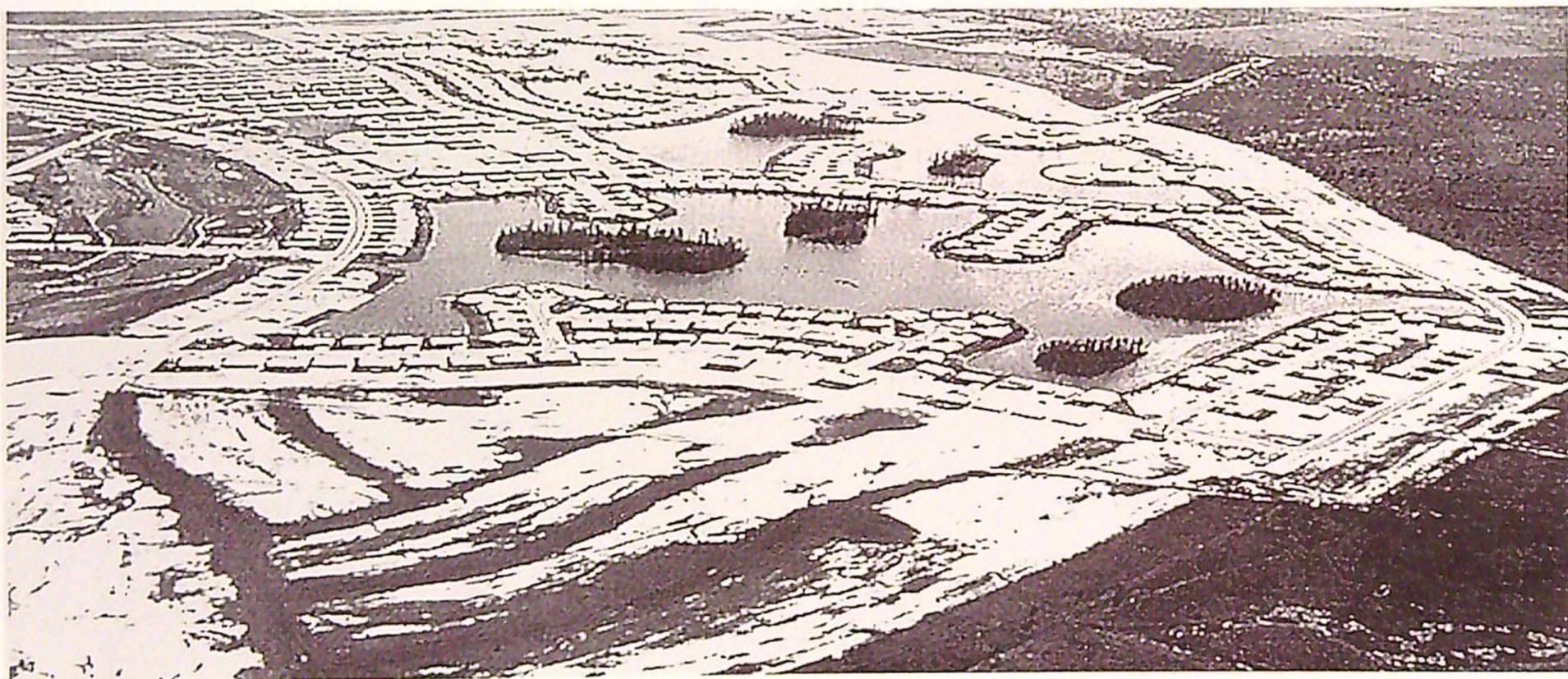
Fine food and drink, the brochure promised, at the Kings Inn of Sun City Center. This was a popular meeting place for dinner for people from Bradenton to Brandon. In fact, the decor in the lounge was elegant.

our plaza, and to dine in one of the finest restaurants south of Brandon or north of Bradenton. Tourists in search of a retirement home would come to the Pebble Beach intersection with State Road 674 and turn in where the Tudor-styled Kings Inn welcomed them.

And then, by dusk on the 24th, the intersection was littered with charred building remains. The scene continued for weeks, and then months. The sale of homes dropped precipitously.

At the same time, the construction contract in Illinois that Webb had recently undertaken was proving an even heavier financial burden due to rising petroleum costs. In August, 1971, in a letter to all residents of Sun City Center, the Del Webb Corporation announced that no further development would take place here. There were questions about who would operate the golf course and other attributes that had been funded by the Webb organization.

Finally, however, the Del Webb era in Sun City Center ended in January, 1972.



Looking south. North Lake with its 4 islands is just south of Allegheny Drive. Del Webb Blvd West is at the far right with North Pebble Beach Blvd ending at Allegheny. The land clearing at the bottom of this photo does not match later construction of Fort Duquesna Drive, Mirror Lake and Quail Lake. That work started in 1977, five years after Del Webb left Sun City Center.

AFTER DEL WEBB

In 1972, Jim Walter, a recognized builder in Tampa, and Gerald Gould, who had been active in managing a community near Lehigh Acres,

combined to incorporate W-G Development Corporation. The new company bought out Del Webb Corporation's interest here early in 1972 to continue the development of Sun City Center. In addition, W-G purchased additional



This aerial view of Simmons Lake at the time W-G took over development of Sun City Center.” That’s South Pebble Beach Blvd slanting across the photo. The homes on East Heron Drive are of an experimental architecture. New Bedford Drive and Blackhawk Circle had not been paved. Note the “Welcome Center” with the parking lot at the entrance to Heron Drive.

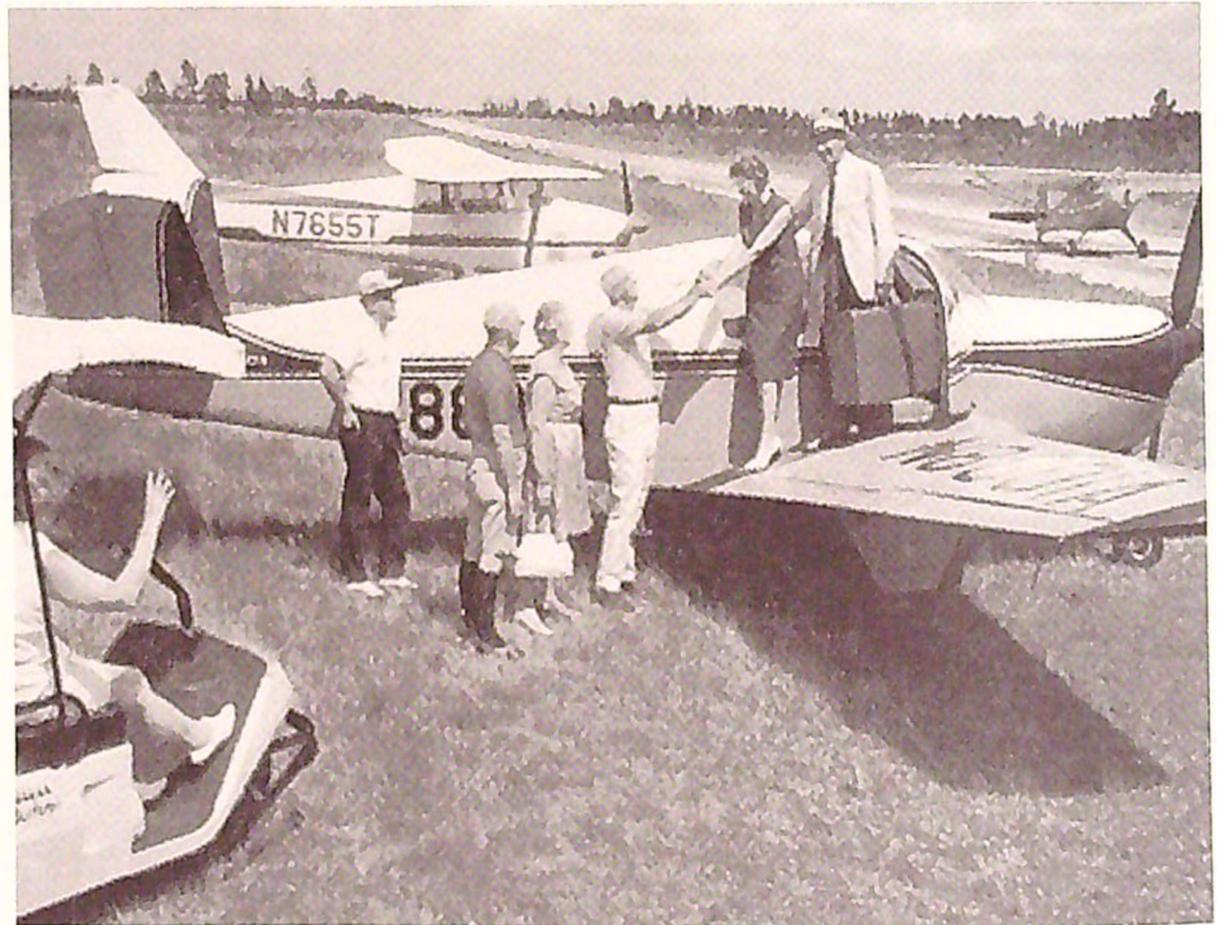
land adjacent to Sun City Center bringing its total land holdings to nearly 12,000 acres.

To finance their new venture, they turned to the First National Bank of Chicago (FNBC). Immediately the morale of the community picked up. The Tampa newspaper carried stories about the tremendous growth that would take place here under the new management: "Population of 80,000 predicted," shouted one headline. Best news of all? They rebuilt the Kings Inn to restore confidence, and it worked.

The community welcomed the new and innovative developers and it showed by the referrals they made to friends up north. Housing sales quickly returned to year-earlier levels.

Among the early accomplishments of the W-G Corporation was the establishment of Sun City Center as a "Planned Unit Development." That meant that any future variations in the development of the community from the specifications as a retirement community, and other details, would have to come before the members of the association for approval.

To help repay the loan from the bank in Chicago, they sold a portion of their new holdings to a housing company that was active in Delray Beach, Florida. That organization had been developing a condominium community called "Kings Point" on the east coast and were ready to expand to this side of the Florida peninsula. For financing, they turned to FNBC since that bank had already done its homework shortly before on behalf of W-G, so it knew the potential for this area.

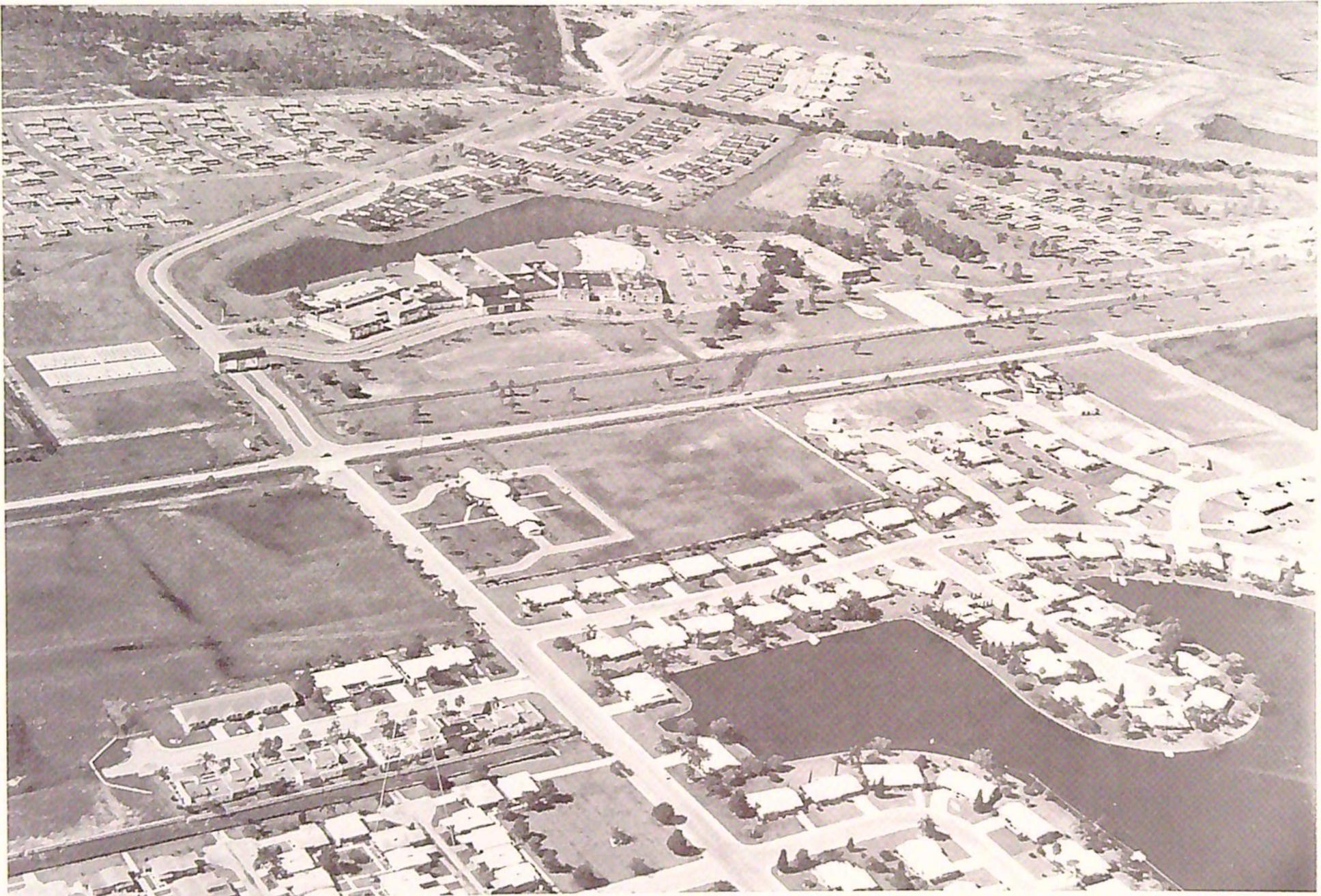


Among the ideas for promoting growth here was the concept of a fly-in community. This photo was taken at the airstrip running next to SR-674, across from the Kings Inn, during the time the plan was under serious consideration.

The new condominium development would become known as “Kings Point West”, then “Sun City Center West” and, at this writing, “Kings Point”. Life here was being restored after the jolt of Del Webb’s departure.

W-G met its obligations under the contract with the Civic Association to construct additional facilities for the Association in accordance with membership growth.

Unfortunately for W-G, and for the Kings



Looking to the southwest toward Kings Point at the top of this picture. State Road 674 runs from left to right in the middle, Valley Forge Blvd runs from the bottom, and up into Kings Point. A portion of South Lake is visible at the bottom.

Point interests, several economic factors were converging to make their businesses fail. There was a gasoline shortage that grounded the snowbirds and caused a resulting depression in real estate sales all over Florida.

By 1975, the situation was intolerable. It could not have come at a worse time for W-G; they had opened sales in an area just south of the main development area called Sundance that were really “ranchettes” .. up to 5 acres per home. The mood of visiting home buyers was for a simple home for retirement, a home they would come back to for cocktails after a day of golf or bridge. They didn't want a large estate in Florida. Del Webb had built some homes with unique architectural styling on Heron Drive that weren't selling as they had hoped.

Kings Point West was suffering the same fate. They were unable to meet the bank's demands and FNBC was forced to take over the property. Within a year, the W-G Corporation failed to meet its payment schedule too.

Now, since notes for both Sun City Center and Kings Point were held by FNBC, this action by the bank brought both

communities under common management for development for the first time,

The bank contracted with Punta Gorda Isles, Inc. (PGI) to manage the development of Sun City Center and to continue building and managing Kings Point.

Problems remained. In 1975, the PGI losses amounted to \$4 million. In late 1975, FNBC terminated that contract and brought in Stanley Whitcomb, Jr., an experienced developer in North Carolina and Fort Lauderdale, as Chief Executive Officer. FNBC continued to use the name of W-G Development Corporation here.



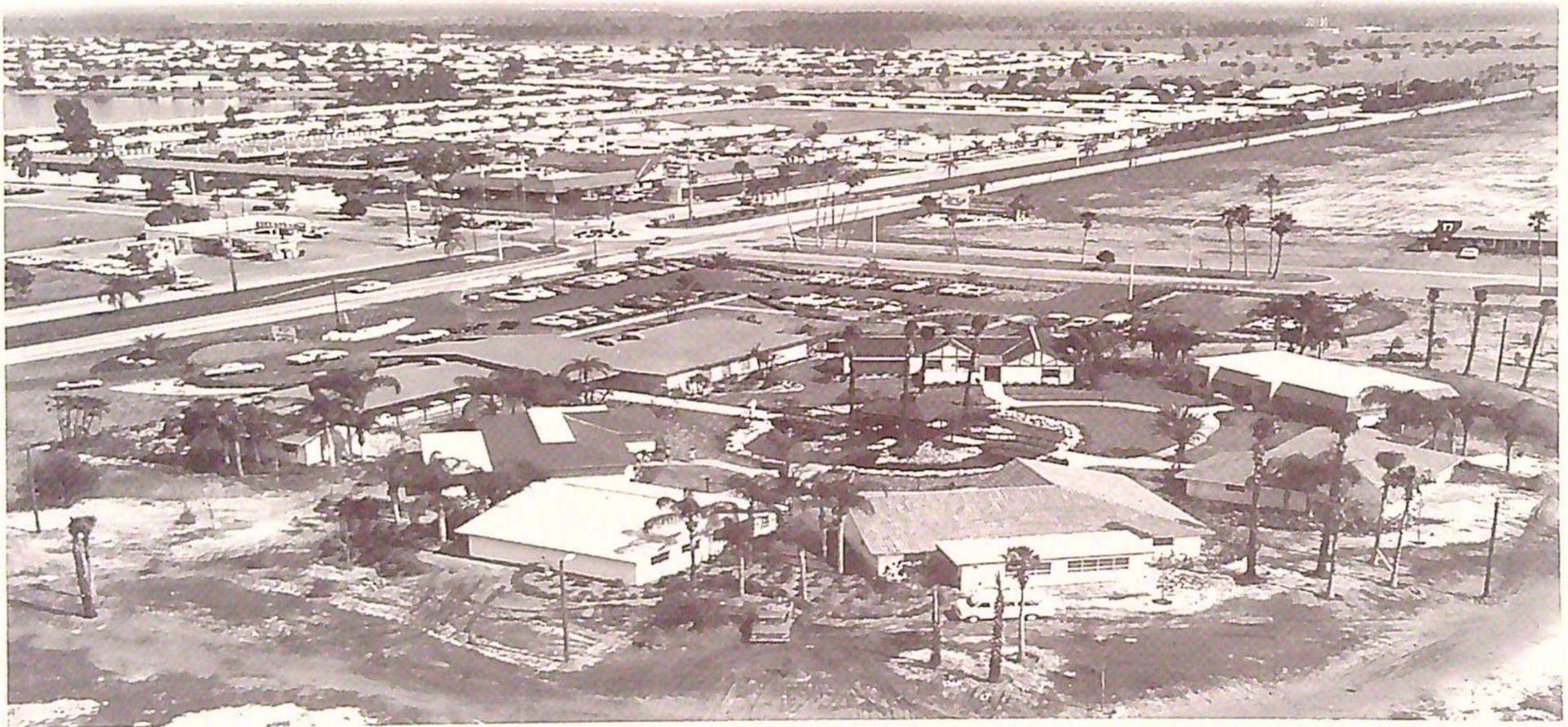
One of the first things done by the W-G Development Company was to double the size of this shopping plaza by adding stores at the far end.

It was during Whitcomb's administration that the J. Harvey Gallant wing was built on the original crafts building, along with the indoor pool and the Florida Room structures. In fact, By the end of the 1970's, home buyers were flocking to Florida.

During the late 1970's, the developer had built a Welcome Center at the southwest corner of the Pebble Beach Boulevard and State Road 674 intersection (pictured below). The Sales

Office building with five model homes was nestled into that corner and used to attract the curious home buyer.

By 1980, however, the architectural styles had changed enough that the site was abandoned — but not before two of the model homes were moved up North Pebble Beach Boulevard where one now serves as the Sun City Center Library and the other is the office building for the Community Association. The



The W-G Welcome Center located at S.R. 674 and South Pebble Beach Blvd (site of present Eckerds Drug Store). The model house at lower right was picked up and moved to North Pebble Beach Blvd to become our library; the house two doors away with the flat white "L" on the roof became our CA Office.

other three homes were moved to the newly developing New Bedford Drive.

These were good times in Sun City Center. Of course, the bank had been trying to sell the property ever since calling in the notes back in 1975. To make matters worse, the takeover by FNBC was stipulated by the FDIC as having a maximum 5-year duration. The properties had to be sold by the end of that period.

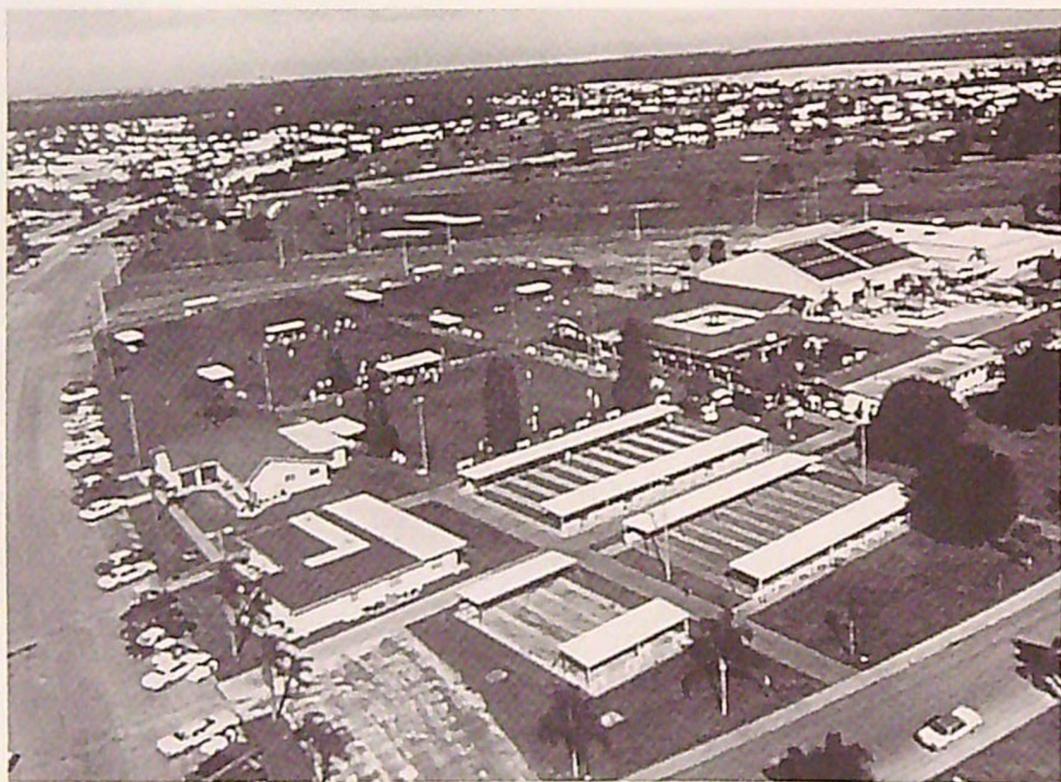
As the mandatory period ended, a buyer was found in the (Victor H) Palmieri Corporation, a company well known for its ability to rescue bankrupt organizations. That company, in

partnership with 7 pension funds, bought the development here in 1981 and the new CEO became Jay Krinsky. At first, the new company operated with the familiar name of W-G (Palmieri) Corporation, but soon the name was changed to Sunmark Corporation.

Ms. Lou Ellen Wilson, who represented the developers of both Sun City Center and Kings Point for some 17 years, described the humor in this change. Apparently, as relations with the residents was deteriorating, the company changed only one thing to restore calm and confidence, and that was the name of the company!

However, it was during this time that it became apparent to CA Members that Sunmark had little intention of abiding by the wording of the original Del Webb contract. It called for additional community buildings and amenities once the population of Sun City Center reached 5,000.

In 1982, the CA Members voted to limit the use of their community-owned facilities to the first 5,000 members who lived here. The matter brought the residents and the developer to the bargaining table. The residents wanted one main thing from the discussion: that the developer would guarantee a letter of



Looking to the north over our Central Campus in the mid-80s. There were parking spaces where our Security Patrol is now located, and can you count the number of shuffleboard courts?

credit to be used for construction of new amenities to accommodate the needs of purchasers of new homes. When the agreement was signed, that feature was prominent. Each time the developer plats 1450 “living units”, a Letter Of Credit is generated by the developer. In concert with the developer, the Civic Association was to determine what structures would be needed, the location and style, and construction details.

Two such “Letters of Credit” have been processed since the 1984 Agreement was signed as of this writing. The amount provided by the 2000 LOC was just over \$1.7 million. Soon after the Agreement was signed, the “Civic Association” and the “Home Owners Association” became the “Community Association.”

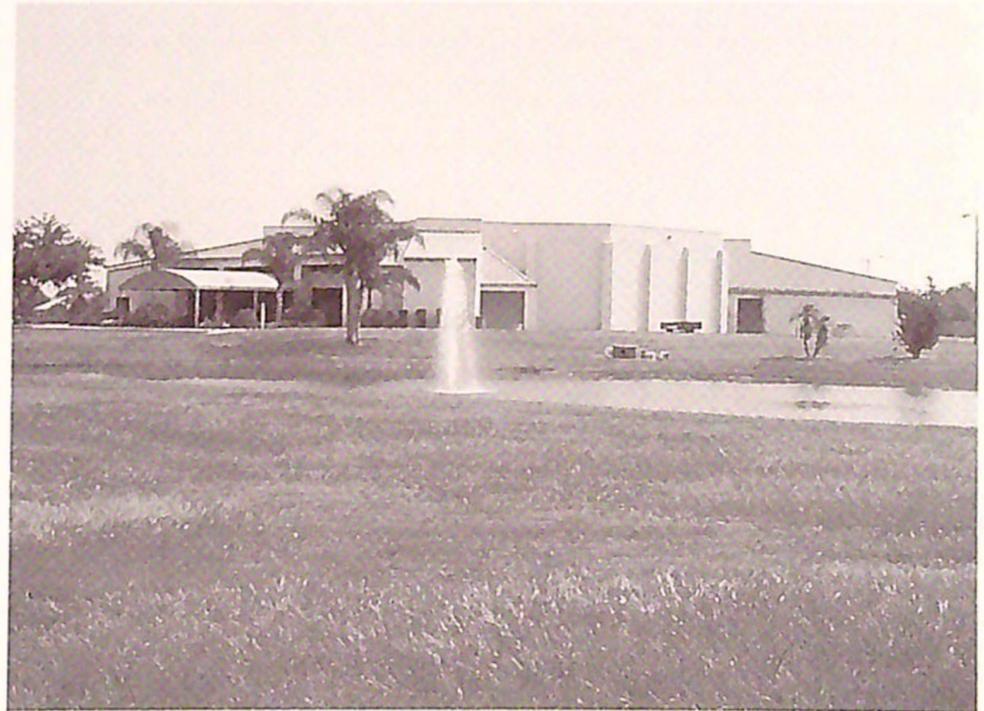
During the discussions, the developer was demanding that one organization be responsible for negotiations representing the residents, and that a Master Association Plan be developed to bring some uniformity to enforcement of the covenants and property restrictions.

Capital improvements were once again tied to growth of the CA Membership; the developer must supply funds for the construction of new facilities each time 1450 new housing units are added to Sun City Center. When the Agreement was reached, the developer gave the CA one million dollars for the construction of a new and

larger community meeting place. Community Hall on South Pebble Beach Boulevard thereby came into being two years later.

By 1986, the Civic Association and the Home Owners’ Association members voted to consolidate into the Sun City Center Community Association (SCCCA) and to incorporate the functions of both earlier groups.

At this writing, membership in the SCCCA is required of Sun City Center residents,



Community Hall was built in 1986.

including the CourtYards and Aston Gardens, and is also available to former residents who have maintained their SCCCA membership but who now reside in Lake Towers.

In 1988, the developer of Walden Lakes community, Al Hoffman, bought out the Sunmark interests and began operations here as the Sun City Center Corporation. The company was later renamed Florida Design Communities, Inc. and then became Watermark Communities, Inc. before a simplification in 2001 to WCI Communities, Inc. His purchase included both Kings Point and the undeveloped portions of Sun City Center and immediately set to work arranging for the beautification of the medians on State Road 674, and on Pebble Beach Boulevard, and other community enhancements.

A new corporation, Aston Care Systems, Inc. developed a presence here by opening the CourtYards, a retirement community of apartments with its own activity center and with assisted living facilities. In 1998 a portion of the northern section of Sun City Center was developed as Aston Gardens, a community fashioned in many ways after the CourtYards.

Del Webb's early vision of how to attract people to live here has been maintained. First-time visitors continue to admire our neat layout of the community and its attractive amenities. Many long-term residents note its continuing change while worrying about traffic.

Land once selling here for \$2.50 an acre can now bring over \$100,000 for a quarter of an

acre. Newcomers at age 55 in this computer age, are bringing their employment with them. Volunteerism has to be worked in around work schedules. It is encouraging to note, however, that the roll of our essential volunteer organizations such as the Security Patrol, and Emergency Squad are growing.

The vigilance of the Community Association members, and the dedicated efforts of its elected leaders, are the keys to the safe, comfortable and active retirement lifestyle we all visualized when we moved to Sun City Center.



State Road 674, February, 2002.

This booklet reports on our first 40 years. Plans for the 50th Anniversary book are already underway. Want to help with it? Just come to the CA Office and volunteer!

This booklet was prepared using photographs in the Sun City Center Archives Office. The sources include newspaper clippings, and photographs scanned from early sales literature, and a few live shots contributed by the editor.

The text was composed by copying copiously from the works of others, and from interviews conducted by the editor who accepts sole responsibility for the text in this booklet.

Special thanks is showered on the editorial review staff listed below, and especially to **Linda Bowker** who has read and re-read every word multiple times and assisted materially with the layout of pages, and to **Evelyn Lunsford** who has contributed so much to organizing the archival collections, and to **Phil Lange** who could have written this booklet much better than I, but I wouldn't let him near the computer.

Review Staff

Rosemary Clifton

Rex Fowler

Irene Lange

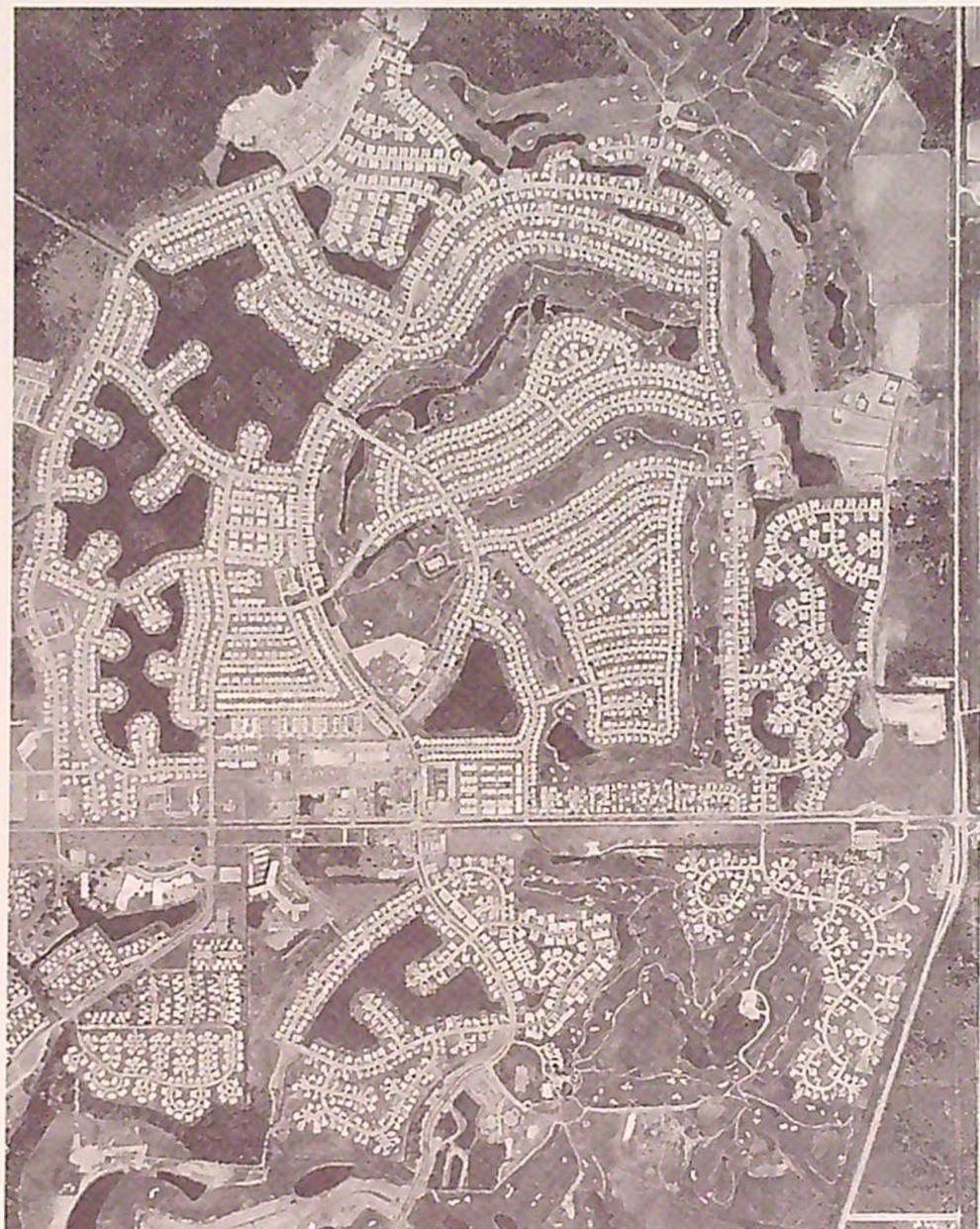
Dorothy Meloy

Jerry Milton

John Perkins

Doris Ragland

/ John Bowker, Editor



Greater Sun City Center - circa 1984

The Cover

The photograph that wraps around this publication was taken on December 8, 1999 by the editor. Also on that trip was Robert Wicklund who generously donated all his aerial photographs to the CA Archives. The Archives Room in Old Town Hall is usually open on Friday mornings from 9:30 - 11:00. You are cordially invited to visit and chat about Sun City Center.

