

Bermuda

SUMMER 1996
DISPLAY UNTIL
SEPTEMBER 30

TRAVEL • PEOPLE • SPORTS • ADVENTURE • SHOPPING

TRADING PLACES

*At last, the truth
about Tucker's Town*
page 18

Up the Bermudiana

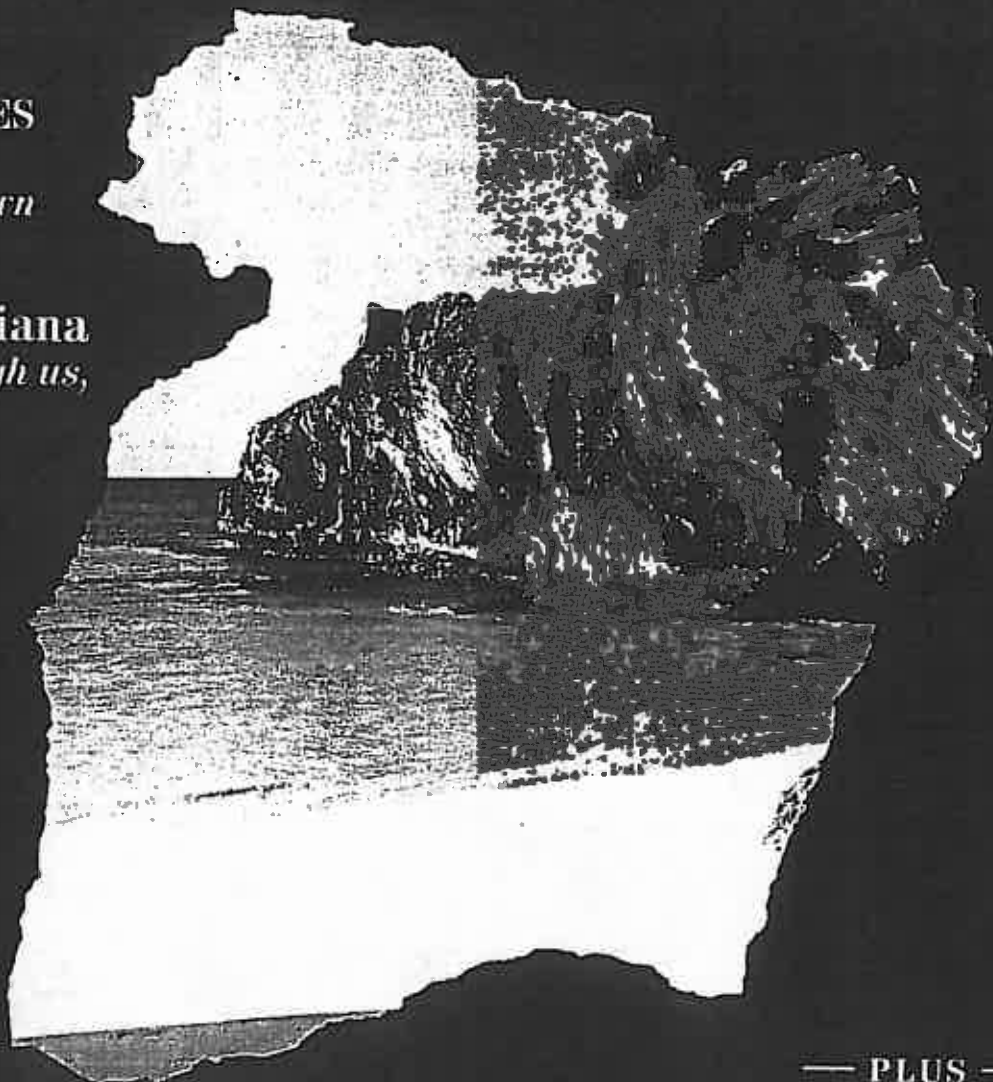
*A river runs through us,
sort of...*
page 34

BYE BYE BOREMUDA!

*But do those
naughty new ads
tell the truth?*
page 5

Yes, we do have a WILD NIGHT LIFE

And it's free
page 52

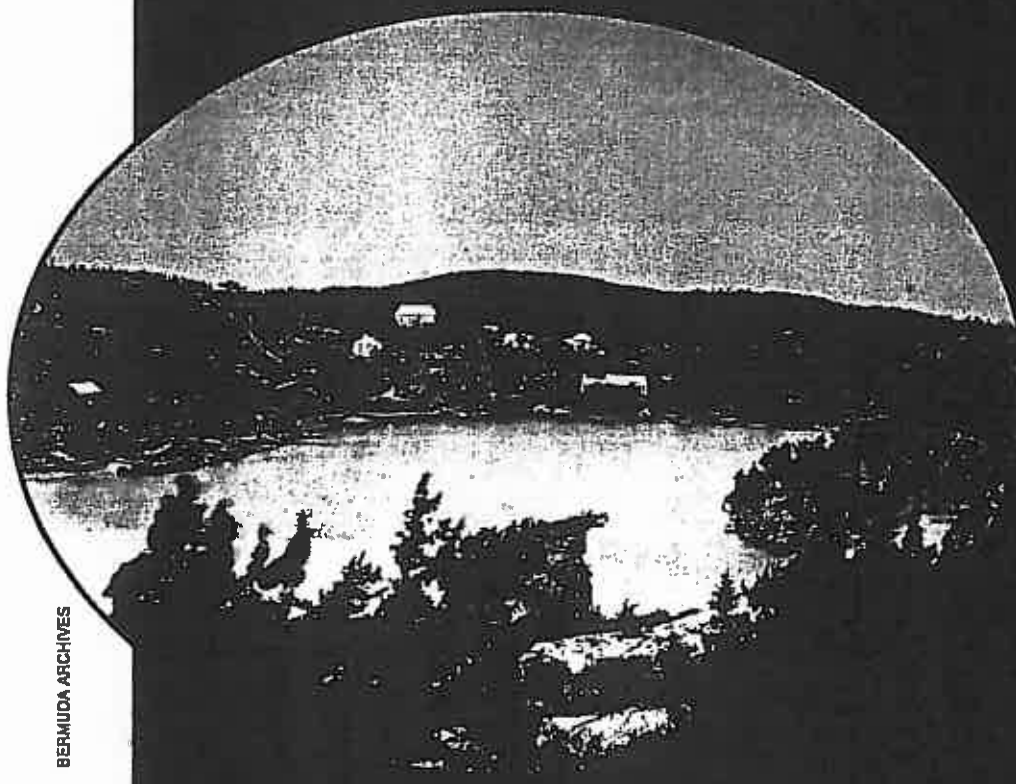


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The 1996 Bermuda
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TRADING



BERMUDA ARCHIVES

BEFORE THE BOOM A few humble cottages surround Tucker's Town Bay, and behind them a dense cedar forest. Supporters of the development claimed the area's inhabitants were in-bred and degenerate

PLACES

How a black "backwater" was transformed into a whiter-than-white millionaires' playground. Duncan McDowall reports on the breathtakingly brazen Tucker's Town land grab that, through altruism or otherwise, marked the beginning of Bermuda's golden age of prosperity

FOR IN-BRED, READ WELL-BRED
Tucker's Town today is as peaceful
as ever, but that is where the
similarity ends

ROLAND SKINNER / PICTURESQUE

Of all the tourist literature ever developed for Bermuda, the modest "handy map" is perhaps the most brilliantly conceived. Wilfred King, a vice-president of the New York advertising agency that held the Bermuda account, devised the map some 40 years ago in response to the embarrassing fact that visitors frequently lost their geographic bearings when touring the island by moped. Since King's flash of intuition, millions of handy maps have been distributed and reports of missing visitors have all but ceased.

However, the map is not completely perfect. It contains at least one omission — intriguingly, a deliberate one.

To find what's missing, trace the South Shore on the map to its easternmost reach, a spit of land that juts sharply into Castle Harbour. The spit appears to be roadless. Follow the same route in reality, and you will find that there is in fact a road, and much more besides.

Emerald waters lap the shores of a picture-perfect bay dotted with sleek boats at anchor. The homes of the rich and famous — Ross Perot and the former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi among them — occupy the shoreline before giving way to the velvet greens of one of

**A community
literally vanished,
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American affluence.**

the world's great golf courses.

This is Tucker's Town. Not on the map, nor really a town. Indeed, it doesn't have a single shop or even a street lamp. Tucker's Town is all about understated elegance, absolute discretion and total tranquillity. Nothing garish or self-important; it is, after all, as residents will tell you firmly, most definitely not Palm Beach.

As such, Tucker's Town was rubbed off the handy map on the basis of a decision in the late 1950s by the local tourism board that put the official stamp of disapproval on sightseeing there. It seems tourists had "abused" the privilege of visiting it and the nearby Natural Arches rock formation.

Those cartographically obliterated roads were, to be fair, privately owned and operated by the Bermuda Development Company, a holding company that, decades earlier, had

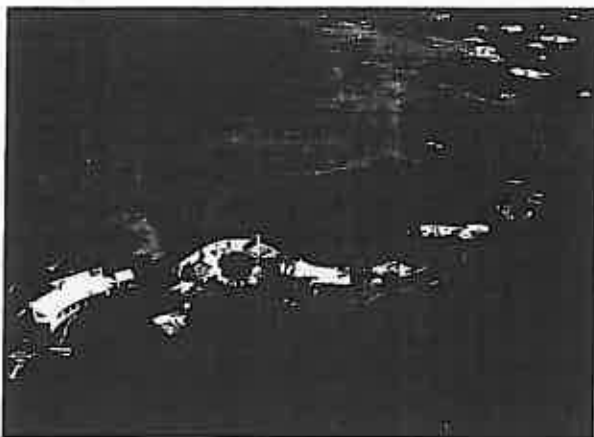
sold lots in the area to a select clientele of foreigners.

A century ago, however, a very different community called Tucker's Town home. Along its shores and centred around pockets of rich arable land, black Bermudians farmed, fished and built boats in humble but happy obscurity. Their peace was occasionally interrupted by carriage-loads of tourists on day trips from Hamilton, and picnickers from St David's Island who came to gaze in wonder on those Natural Arches. Otherwise, Tucker's Town lived in what an early movie travelogue might have described as a "sleepy contentment".

Normally, nothing happens precipitously in Bermuda. Indeed, there is an almost institutionalised gradualism, lest the island's various delicate equilibria be unduly disturbed.

But, in Tucker's Town between 1920 and 1923, everything changed utterly. A community literally vanished, its architecture erased, its inhabitants displaced and even the old landscape replaced with the trappings of North American affluence — oversized rural homesteads, a golf course, smooth roads and manicured gardens. Almost in the biblical "twinkling of an eye", old Tucker's Town lost everything but its name.

As with the handy map, the transformation of Tucker's Town has been left a blank space by Bermuda's historians. One looks in vain for any description of the process. But there are occasional hints. In 1938, Louisa Hutchings Smith entertained the Bermuda Historical Society with some "tales of old Tucker's Town". She gave them pirates and early governors and then — almost as an afterthought — mentioned that the community's early 20th century inhabitants were a "degenerate lot" whose "intermarriage for generations had undermined both



ROLAND SKINNER / PICTURESCUE

ROCKEFELLER RETREAT

The Round House, designed for the Rockefeller family in 1929 by the same architect they entrusted with the Rockefeller Center in Manhattan, is classic Tucker's Town: almost five acres of luxuriant growth and luxurious accommodation, wedged between a championship golf course and a world-class beach. The estate, including two guest cottages and a 75-foot long verandah for entertaining a few hundred of your closest friends, has recently been on the market for \$15 million

their health and morals". William Zuill's otherwise superb *Bermuda Journey* (1946) dwelt on the picturesque-ness of Tucker's Town. It was, he concluded, a "backwater . . . sparsely settled", a "little untamed hinterland [that] gave Tucker's Town a singular isolation". In 1953, *The Bermudian* magazine picked up this theme, depicting the area as "almost a wilderness" before the magic hand of development remade it into a paradise of golf and seclusion. Another *Bermudian* article hinted at the "highly ticklish business of buying out" the original landowners, some of whom were described as "trouble-makers". These few glimpses into the gentrification of Tucker's Town all seem to underline the fact that there is a missing chapter in Bermuda's recent history. "Of old Tucker's Town," Louisa Hutchings Smith rightly observed in 1938, "less has been written than of any other part of Bermuda."

Perhaps the first point to be made in any attempt to tell the story of modern Tucker's Town is that old Tucker's Town *was* a community, not a backwater or genetic time warp. Its roots were in fact as deep as those of any Bermuda community. In 1616, the Bermuda Company instructed newly-appointed Governor Daniel Tucker to establish a settlement on the rocky spit that reached out along the southern side of Castle Harbour. The location had both military and commercial advantages; ships could find shelter in its deep bays and reach open water with relative ease. As part of the company's "general lands", the site might even have become the young colony's capital. Tucker was instructed to lay out streets, establish a garrison and encourage settlers to support themselves through farming, whaling, pearl fishing and beachcombing for ambergris. However, the plan fizzled when the merits of other harbours became known. All that remained from this brief enthusiasm were a few cottages and the name — Tucker's Town.

Still, Daniel Tucker's hopes did not die completely. By the 18th century, the peninsula's coves sheltered local whalers, who built a whalehouse at Stokes Bay — now Tucker's Town Bay. At sea, the whalers chanted a ditty with the refrain

*All de way to Tucker's Town
Chaw de whale an' blow de horn.*

The sea touched the small community in other ways. One of Bermuda's most notorious pirates, Nathaniel North, grew up there before leaving in the 1690s. Along Tucker's Town shores, boat-

BABE'S BASE IN THE SUN

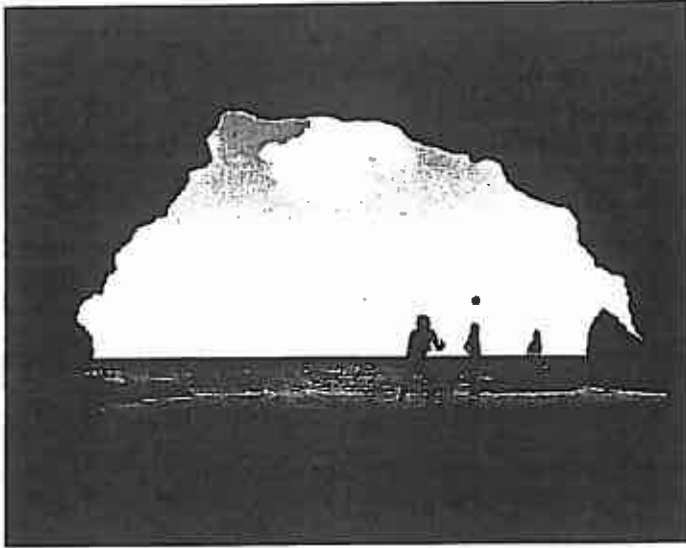
The newly-opened Mid Ocean Club attracted America's glitterati, including Babe Ruth. It still has a considerable cachet: George Bush and Michael Douglas are among many notables on the current Mid Ocean membership list

builders utilised the cedar trees that grew in the forests behind them. Militarily, Tucker's Town became part of heavily defended Castle Harbour. A battery was placed there in 1740. And, during the American Revolution, George Washington was advised that a surprise landing at Tucker's Town might open the door to the end of British "tyranny" in Bermuda. In fact, the only foreign incursion into Tucker's Town before the 20th century would be the Halifax-Bermuda cable, which was hauled on to land there in 1889.

Beyond the coves, Tucker's Town had a fitful existence. Although rocky and windswept in many places, the area — 345 acres, as indicated on the early maps — also had pockets of rich soil. In these, settlers experimented with crops as varied as cotton and pineapples but eventually found lasting success with onions, sweet potatoes, parsley and other market vegetables. At first, its agriculture was dominated by white landowners. Names like Harvey, Trott, Walker and Sayle dotted the parish



COURTESY OF THE BERMUDEAN MAGAZINE



ARCH HYPOCRISY

Bermuda's tourism chiefs wiped Tucker's Town off the official "Handy Map" for visitors, thus discouraging them from traipsing through it in search of the Natural Arches

register. The farming was, however, marginal and throughout the 19th century the white population of Tucker's Town gradually moved on to greener Bermuda pastures. Black farmers — Lamberts, Smiths and Talbots — took their place.

By 1900, Tucker's Town was a tightly-knit, isolated community. A few whites remained, but it was fundamentally a black society. There were two churches, a general store, a school, a cricket pitch, a post office and a cemetery on the knoll behind the church.

Boats were still being built. Pigs were slaughtered, potatoes graded. Vegetables were despatched by cart to Hamilton for sale. The rhythms of life were woven through these activities. Children were given the rudiments of education. When work ceased, the men of Tucker's Town loved to retrieve an old Frith's rum barrel, swish water through it and then sample the resultant screech down at the cove during an evening of chowder and cards. On Sundays, there were revival meetings. "We were", one Tucker's Town native remembers today, "like one . . . always sharing."

The new century brought two pressures — one North American and the other distinctively Bermudian — that would eventually intrude on this serenity. America's industrial revolution had created a new plutocracy — Fricks, Carnegies, Rockefellers, Morgans *et al.* For all their wealth and ostentation, they also craved seclusion, part of an urge to shelter themselves from the hurly-burly of commerce and the griminess of the industrial giant they themselves had created. They built great "camps" in the Adirondacks, sailed their palatial steam yachts to the Mediterranean and took refuge in exclusive country clubs. In all these activities, they sought to be with "their own". A nostalgic impulse was also at work: America's new aristocracy would apply its industrial

gains to the creation of unspoiled, rural enclaves where life was once again simple and tranquil. Golf, with its groomed pseudo-rural backdrop, quickly became the preferred sport of commercial kings. Thus, behind golf club gates and along the shores of Long Island, "select" communities sprouted in the late 19th century. Their names — like Tuxedo Park — became synonymous with wealth and privilege. Shrewd entrepreneurs were quick to sense the profit in building these Arcadias. In the 1890s, Henry Morrison Flagler, an oil associate of Rockefeller, created the resort town of West Palm Beach as an exclusive retreat for affluent northern WASPs. He was soon eyeing Nassau and Havana; only the choppy Gulf Stream spared Bermuda from similar attention.

At the same time as America's rich colonised themselves, Bermudians were discovering the profits of tourism. By 1911, the colony could boast more annual visitors — 27,000 — than citizens. A government-subsidised steamer service from New York made this lucrative invasion possible, and sailing to Bermuda was fast acquiring a glamorous aura. A vanguard of wealthy

Americans began wintering here, savouring the "Britishness" and the isolation from the excesses of the Gilded Age back home. A stroll down Front Street might provide a glimpse of a vacationing university president, Woodrow Wilson, or literary celebrity, Mark Twain, or the author of the children's classic *The Secret Garden*, Frances Hodgson Burnett. Many who wintered in Bermuda summered in the Adirondacks; the ambience and exclusivity seemed the same. Thus the weekly New York steamer became Bermuda's lifeline to a new and prosperous future.

And then the steamer stopped coming. The anxieties of war had already diminished Bermuda tourism, but the Admiralty's decision in 1917 to requisition the speedy steamer *Bermudian* killed the trade. Now the colony could no longer fetch its tourists, nor export its potatoes and onions to the greengrocers of America. Desperation gripped Bermuda. But the instinctive pragmatism of Bermuda's merchant class saved the day. A battered naval cruiser, the *Charybdis*, was obtained from the Admiralty, patched up and put on the New York run as a stop gap. Then the colony's Trade Development Board [TDB] set its sights on restoring a more efficient service when peace returned. The outlook was not promising. The U-boats had done their work well and, in February 1919, the TDB concluded that "there is not a single passenger ship to be had today". Nor was the Quebec Steamship Co, which had previously plied the route, interested in reinstating its service. The end of wartime spending and a failure to rekindle peacetime tourism, the TDB concluded, would hit the island's economy hard and ultimately impoverish the "poorer classes". Without a steamer, the colony faced "possible disaster". What to do?

The TDB decided to bait the hook. Why not offer

prospective steamship operators more than a subsidy? The Government should acquire "land for a golf course, polo ground and race track" and vest part ownership of it in the steamer company. Hints of a mid-Atlantic West Palm Beach? In June 1919, three wily members of the TDB — Arthur Bluck, Stanley Spurling and John Hand — were despatched to New York to seek a deal. Bluck was president of the Bank of Bermuda and mayor of Hamilton. Spurling was a hard-nosed St George's merchant and politician. Although American-born, Hand had become one of Front Street's toughest commission merchants. These men knew how to strike deals, but initial talks with an American promoter led nowhere. They then called on the offices of an English steamship company, Furness-Withy. Harry Blackiston, Furness-Withy's vice-president in the US, was initially cool to the Bermudian overture. Furness was a freight carrier with little passenger experience and a fleet ravaged by war. Still, it might consider buying the *Bermudian* (which lay stranded on an Egyptian sandbank), refitting her and placing her on the Bermuda run. But only if the colony guaranteed a five-year contract with a hefty annual subsidy.

Spurling, Bluck and Hand hesitated, but only momentarily. As the colonial secretary confided to the Governor,

No one was going to buy if there was the slightest chance that their serenity might be disturbed by Saturday night rum and chowder parties.

Furness-Withy was a "large and powerful organisation" upon which the colony could rely in the uncertain post-war world. Then, from Lord Milner, the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London, came the reassuring news that Lord Furness pledged his company would "spare no expense making the finest ship possible" available for Bermuda. The TDB hesitated no longer and on June 25, 1919 signed a letter of intent with Furness-Withy. This was to prove the most auspicious agreement Bermuda tourism officials would ever sign. Bermuda had found a partner for post-war growth. Almost immediately, Furness-Withy and the board began referring to each other as partners.

A month later, the TDB informed the Governor that it had agreed with Blackiston to the "immediate construction of best obtainable 18-hole course and clubhouse close to Hamilton". Later that year, the surveyors would wander away from Hamilton and find Tucker's Town.

To operate its New York run, the British company incorporated a subsidiary, the Furness-Bermuda Line. By early 1920, the *Fort St George* and the *Fort Hamilton* (the resurrected *Bermudian*) were weekly visitors to Hamilton Harbour. But, despite an annual subsidy of £27,500, Furness-Withy remained sceptical about the

HOME Bitter-Sweet HOME

Bermuda's "singing ambassadors" of yore, the Talbot Brothers, were all born in a one-room cottage in Tucker's Town. Ironically, the first song they mastered was *Home Sweet Home*.

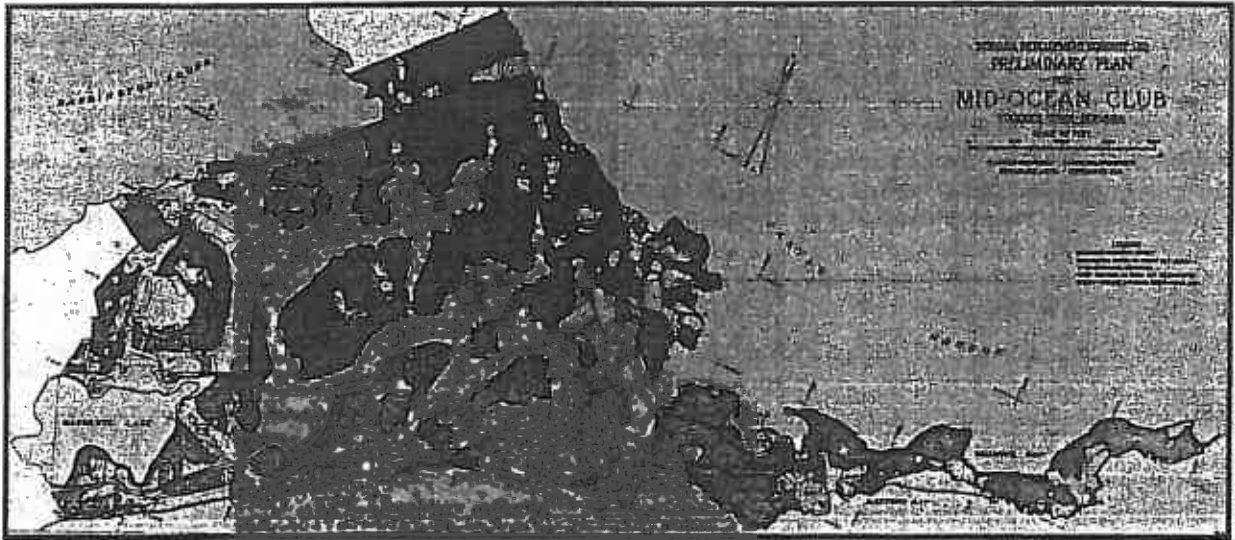
In 1920, their father, Osmond, signed the protest petition, but later struck a deal with Goodwin Gosling to sell the property. The family's subsequent move to Smith's Parish brought a better house and a precious piano.

Within a decade, the Talbots were back in Tucker's Town, singing at the Mid Ocean Club and serenading the wintering Americans in their homes.

Many other old Tucker's Town natives found work as cooks, maids and caddies in the place of their birth.



The Talbots went on to Smith's Parish and, later, stardom



BERMUDA ARCHIVES

DREAMS FOR SALE How the Bermuda Development Company subdivided their 510-acre Tucker's Town site. To give an idea of its scale, the spit at the far right of the map contains the "Billionaires' Row" pictured on page 26

profitability of the route. Sir Frederick Lewis, its president, candidly told the TDB that he saw "no large profit" in Bermuda — unless something could be done to ensure his boats a steady clientele of tourists. Here was the genesis of the new Tucker's Town. Lewis knew that Bermuda had dedicated its tourism industry to catering to "quality" tourists from the affluent eastern states. Bermuda did not want hordes of "trippers"; it wanted relatively few high-spending, repeat customers. As Lewis later told Governor Asser, Furness-Withy believed it was "essential" that Bermuda "should be kept free of the tripper element and not be allowed to degenerate into what is generally known as a Coney Island". To ensure that the "right kind" of tourist came, it was necessary to provide "some amusement for them".

Golf was the obvious answer. With an estimated four million golfers in America, the game exerted a magnetic power over those who had the time and money for it. Bermuda already had two nine-hole courses, but they were small and unchallenging. A large, professionally-designed course was the post-war order of the day. Build it, Lewis told the Bermudians, and they will come.

In December 1919, Sir Frederick acted on his hunch. He came to Bermuda on one of his freighters, the *Moorish Prince*. On board were his New York colleague Harry Blackiston, New York architect Charles D Wetmore, and the "father of American golf", Charles Blair Macdonald. Charlie Macdonald would design a course "built by golfers for golfers" and Wetmore would crown it with a splendid clubhouse. Macdonald wanted challenging terrain — rolling hills and ample open space — to work his magic.

Seaside links would be ideal. But Pembroke Parish, north of Hamilton, had little to offer.

Just what led Lewis and his party to Tucker's Town is not precisely known. Furness-Withy certainly had the intuition that to succeed in a tightly-controlled place like Bermuda, local allies were indispensable. Bermudians had always had a phobia about foreign companies: they were seen as potential monopoly octopuses ready to strangle the life out of the island's commerce. The Quebec Steamship Co had always been cast in this light and had never prospered in Bermuda. Anything involving acquisition of land also aroused Bermudian sensibilities. Lewis therefore needed island friends and he soon found them. There was Stanley Spurling, who already knew Furness-Withy from that postwar dash to New York. Nobody was more committed to making tourism the heart of the Bermuda economy, and as chairman of the TDB he had the power to achieve it. Lewis found a more active partner in F Goodwin Gosling. Scion of the prominent liquor-trading family, Gosling was another tourism booster who, in 1920, held the influential position of assistant colonial secretary. He also owned land in Tucker's

Town, 100 acres of it. In 1907, he had purchased a small house — "The Clearing" — on the edge of Tucker's Town Bay, to which he retreated in the heat of summer to fish and shoot skeet. Lewis thus found in Gosling both a Bermuda lieutenant and a location for his golf course. Within a year, Gosling resigned his colonial post and went into the company's employ.

Lewis added one last element to his development strategy. No matter how attractive his golf course, it would be miles from Hamilton, the

The words "happy" and "sharing" punctuate their reminiscences. So does "backward".

colony's tourist centre, and in a carless island there was a danger that the tourist might not bother to come. Furness-Withy would therefore make its development self-contained. It would transport Americans to Castle Harbour, tender them ashore, accommodate them in its own luxury resort hotel and offer them a mid-ocean playground. The crown jewel of this colony within a colony would be a posh residential community where wealthy Americans could winter among their own kind. Furness-Withy was thus offering to set in place the capstone of Bermuda's edifice of quality tourism.

There was, however, one nagging uncertainty. The entire strategy hinged upon the acquisition of real estate — not just some but *all* of the land in the Tucker's Town area. No well-heeled American, the developers reasoned, was going to buy an expensive mid-Atlantic building lot if there was the slightest chance that their serenity might be troubled by Saturday night rum and chowder parties. So began the great Tucker's Town land expropriation, with all its undertones of wealth, race and nationality.

On February 27, 1920, Stanley Spurling presented the elected Assembly with a petition on behalf of the steamship company and "certain capitalists", a petition signed by Watlington & Conyers, Furness-Withy's local agent. It painted a bold canvas of "the construction of first-class golf links and tennis courts, provision for sea-bathing, yachting, fishing, riding, and other outdoor sports, and the erection of a country club and hotels and cottages for winter and summer visitors to Bermuda". Tucker's Town was to be the site of this nirvana. A total of 510 acres was required. The land was "backward and undeveloped", of little economic value", only partly arable and "very sparsely populated". About three-quarters of the residents had already agreed to sell, but a minority were holding out despite a "liberal" offer of cash or a replacement home elsewhere. The hold-outs were motivated by "indifference" and "a failure to grasp the great advantages which will accrue to themselves and their neighbours" from the English company's beneficence. Furness-Withy therefore requested not just an act of incorporation but also "a limited measure of compulsion" by which the hold-outs could be dealt with in a "just and reasonable" manner.

The Assembly was mesmerised. A member from Sandys described Furness-Withy's plans as the "most stupendous project which has ever occupied the attention of those who control the destinies of our island home". Action was imperative. The Trade Development Board had heard that Nassau, an arch-rival tourist destination, was considering a similar scheme. Was Bermuda, one advocate argued, now "to pause

and shiver and shake on the brink lest the waters be deep or the current swift"? Egged on by Spurling, the Assembly prepared to take the plunge. In July 1920, the Bermuda Development Company was given its incorporation. Bermudian by law, the company was British in substance and American in purpose. Its board of directors was evenly split between Bermudians and foreigners; Lewis, Blackiston, Macdonald and Wetmore sat for New York and London. Four familiar Bermudian faces joined them: Spurling, Hand, Gosling and the steamship agent Henry Watlington. Gosling soon took up the plum job of company secretary,

For all its progress, Furness-Withy was pushing the limits of Bermudian sensibility. Locals regarded foreign enterprise as a trojan horse of monopoly. So far the saving grace had been that the colony's commercial elite equated the project with its own economic agenda. On July 23, however, other, less accommodating Bermudian opinions began to be heard. A petition signed by 24 freeholders in the Tucker's Town area was presented to the Assembly by Dr T H Outerbridge, who represented St George's Parish. Heading the protestors was the Anglican rector of Smith's and Hamilton parishes, L Laud Havard, whose glebe lands in Paynter's Vale fell within the company's ambitions. The other petitioners were all black. Together, they owned 100 acres, and none of them wanted to leave. They professed "a natural love and attachment for their lands, houses and homes"; here they had followed "vocations in some respects peculiar to the locality". No amount of money would compensate them for such a loss.

The petition jolted the Government into action. The Bermuda Development Company Act #2 was introduced and pushed hurriedly through the House. This huge, detailed piece of legislation set out three procedures by



FULL STEAM AHEAD

A contemporary postcard shows Furness-Withy's Bermuda gamble beginning to pay off. The trickle of just over 3,000 visitors in 1919, when Furness-Bermuda Line ships first docked here, reached above 43,000 in 1930



BILLIONAIRES' ROW Ross Perot's properties Vertigo (left) and Callban flank Silvio Berlusconi's Blue Horizons. The Italian media magnate and erstwhile prime minister supports a little local soccer team as well as his own mighty AC Milan. Perot, meanwhile, roars around the island in Bermuda's most potent powerboat. The combined value of the five or so acres in this picture might be in the region of \$40 million

which hold-out landowners could have their claims arbitrated. A three-man commission appointed by the Governor would be empowered to broker differences between buyer and seller and then suggest a "fair" price. Failing this, it could establish an arbitration panel to impose a price, or the complainants could opt for the selection of a jury of peers which would decide a binding price for the disputed land. The act exuded a sense of British fair play steeped in common law precedent. Yet, for all its due procedure, the act left no doubt that expropriation was the unavoidable fate of the Tucker's Town diehards.

There were only two voices of dissent in the Assembly. One member, W A Moore, feared within "30 or 40 years Bermuda will be practically owned by that company". T H Outerbridge stood by the sentiments of the petitioners in his constituency. Stanley Spurling, meanwhile, chastised Bermudians for their "lack of enterprise". Furness-Withy was doing the people of Tucker's Town a favour: "The population there were undoubtedly going backwards, the standard of morality, the standard of the people themselves were receding." A better life awaited them elsewhere. On August 6, the bill passed by 19 votes to two.

In debate in the upper house, the Legislative Council,

some deeper qualms surfaced. Receiver General Allan Smith said that he "would consider it wrong" if anybody had wanted to take *his* home. The bill went through by a vote of three to two, but the uneasiness lingered. In the fall of 1920, the Prince of Wales visited the colony. A Front Street merchant, A E Bourne urged him to take note of the "dark deed being enacted in Bermuda". The victims were "poor people, not able to take any action to defend their rights". The prince did nothing and it later became evident that Bourne was himself speculating in Tucker's Town land and that his defence of the "poor" was a craven attempt to sour his British rivals' chances.

The newspapers poked fun at the unseemly speed with which the foreigners had been given their way. *Royal Gazette* editor Arthur Purcell, under the pen name "Samuel Pepys Teucer", portrayed the development company's new secretary, Goodwin Gosling, as "the hot air behind the dollar . . . running about at the beck and call of a soulless corporation". But the die was cast and the expropriations now began. The "Tucker's Town twitters", as Purcell called them, would now have their hearing. Governor Willcocks appointed a three-man commission, headed by police magistrate Reginald Appleby, to begin arbitrating the cases. No records of the commis-

sion remain and the newspapers provide only a spotty record. About 150 acres of land seem to have been at stake. Of this acreage, one large parcel of 74 acres was held by Benjamin Darrell "BD" Talbot and was clearly going to be the linchpin in the proceedings. Talbot was probably the most prominent Tucker's Towner, a landowner, farmer and keeper of the general store. A former butler to one of the last white farmers, Seth Harvey, Talbot was renowned for wearing his butler's coat and top hat as he ploughed his land. He wanted £25,000 while the company was offering him £6,500. On this contest, the whole campaign would probably hang.

The commission established itself in a house on the edge of Mangrove Lake. From there the jurors it empanelled could walk into Tucker's Town to inspect disputed plots of land. Through the fall of 1920, a spate of small claims was dealt with, some by arbitration and others by jury. Gosling always represented the company. Sometimes he offered straight cash, sometimes cash plus land and a home elsewhere. The outcomes varied. In some cases, Gosling fattened his offer and an out-of-court settlement was reached. In others, the jury improved the company's offer: in December, Benjamin Prieth, who had originally been offered £2,900 for four acres, was awarded £4,000. In general, the commission seemed to result in recalcitrant Tucker's Towners receiving somewhat more generous treatment from the company, provided the initial offer and counter-offer were within reasonable striking distance.

The gap between Gosling's and B D Talbot's positions was enormous. Early in 1921, the company moved towards Talbot's £25,000 by offering £10,000, plus six acres of land and a house elsewhere. Talbot refused and a jury was selected. The commission urged the jury to award Talbot £7,500. After deliberating, the jury gave Talbot £8,200. The verdict was front page news in the *Royal Gazette*. The company appeared to have broken the back of the opposition. A month later, the champion of the original petition, Dr Outerbridge, himself proffered the company 40 acres on the edge of Castle Harbour and was awarded £4,750 for it. By his own admission, the land had cost him £1,940.

With each decision, another morsel of old Tucker's Town was bitten off. Many Tucker's Towners resettled in Smith's Parish, where the farm land was generally better and where the company had constructed a series of bungalows — along Sommersall Road — which constituted a part of the swap agreements. By spring 1923, Gosling could tell the Governor that the land acquisitions were "now almost completed". He declared that only a "lunatic and three hold-out land owners" remained. In the end, only one resident of Tucker's Town was actually physically evicted. Dinna Smith lived in a small house near Tucker's Town Bay. From the day she signed the original petition,

she had never wanted to leave. Legend remembers her as short and pugnacious, so devoted to her home that if caught away from it she would risk torrents of rain and gale force winds to reach her own bed. Through the commission, she was awarded a new Sommersall Road home in Smith's. Still she refused to go. Finally, late in 1923, the police were called. Smith's possessions were removed and, when she once again refused to go, she was carried out. Her home was boarded up and old Tucker's Town ceased to exist.

Dinna Smith remained embittered to her death. She seldom left the porch of her new "home", whiling away the hours sitting on an orange crate smoking a pipe. Whenever anyone passed, she was sure to recite a ditty that captured her version of the controversial events:

*Goodwin Gosling is a thief,
And everyone knows it.
He carries his whistle,
And Stanley Spurling blows it.*

Smith apparently took pleasure in harassing Gosling with this song whenever he was in the neighbourhood. An enraged Gosling invariably reacted by shouting: "Get that woman away from me!"

Even before Dinna was evicted, the new Tucker's Town was rapidly taking shape. Charlie Macdonald and a small army of landscapers worked through 1921 carving an 18-hole golf course out of what had once been farms and brush land. In July, Gosling treated the members of the Assembly to a picnic at the site. When the course was opened in early 1922, it met with rave reviews. The editor of the *American Golfer* called it "one of the most wonderful courses" he had even seen.

The golf course would become the centrepiece of what was to be called the Mid Ocean Club. As the fairways took shape, Charles Wetmore's clubhouse rose beside the sea. Tennis courts, beach houses and bridle trails followed. The company's second ambition was to sell up to 300 one-acre lots dotted through its new Tucker's Town domain. On these, "quality" residential tourists could build tasteful "bungalows" in which they could spend the winter months in Bermuda's warmth and seclusion. The first of these lots was sold with much fanfare to Theodore Roosevelt's nephew, George Roosevelt. Company publicity stressed that the new

Tucker's Town would conform to the decorum of Bermuda's white-roofed architecture. A Harvard architect, John S Humphreys, was embraced to ensure adherence to authentic Bermuda design. In 1923, Humphreys flattered the Mid Ocean Club's intentions by publishing *Bermuda Houses*, a book celebrating Bermuda's visual distinctiveness. The company also employed Olmsted Brothers — designers of New York's Central Park in the

**Had the bull market
in Bermuda driven
out the Mark
Twains?**

1850s — to groom the new Tucker's Town landscape.

Sir Frederick Lewis was always adamant that Furness-Withy was not engaged in a lucrative real estate flip in Tucker's Town. The golf course and the colony of wealthy North Americans were intended to act as a prestigious magnet to draw upscale tourists to Bermuda. Mid Ocean members were carefully screened by an admissions committee, a process backed up by the Government, which had the right to decide who could be an "alien" resident in Bermuda. Golfing memberships cost \$2,500 and "homesite" members paid \$500 plus the cost of their site. Despite this, Lewis doubted that Furness would ever get "an adequate return" on real estate sales. The profit for company and colony alike was in the steady flow of well-heeled visitors. This would fill the cabins of the Furness ships and populate the colony's hotels.

Furness-Withy's real profit would come from the third element of its grand strategy: building up the colony's hotels. In 1920, the company bought the St George's Hotel, renovated it, added an indoor swimming pool and began ferrying its guests directly from their liner to the hotel. A second hotel, the Bermudiana, was added in 1924. Designed by Wetmore, it sat in 15 acres of gardens on the Hamilton waterfront. In 1923, construction began on Furness-Withy's marquee hotel, the Castle Harbour. Perched on a bluff overlooking Castle Harbour, the hotel was built of Bermuda stone and welcomed its guests by tender at its own dock, from which an elevator lifted them to the hotel's grand foyer. The 400-room hotel allowed its guests to bask in the aura of the nearby Mid Ocean Club, if not in its facilities: a separate golf course, pool and tennis courts were built for Castle Harbour visitors.

The age of elegance had arrived in Bermuda's hotel industry. Foreign-owned and managed, the Furness-Withy hotels soon became synonymous with unparalleled resort living. Furness-Withy's *tour de force* was completed when the sleek new liner, the *Bermuda* — with its weekly load of 690 first-class passengers — entered service in 1928.

Some worried that all this was changing the essence of Bermuda. The American sportswriter John Tunis wrote in *Harpers' Magazine* in 1930 that Furness-Withy had brought the "American idea" to Bermuda. A "bull market in Bermuda" had driven out the "Mark Twains" who loved to "wander aimlessly" along the colony's coral roads. The new tourist "wants his liquor, his golf, his coffee with cream, his room with bath in a hotel complete with elevators and all American accessories". Few shared these reservations. The colony's New York advertising agent James Wales exuberantly reported in 1927 that Bermuda tourism had shown "the greatest progress" and that, for the first time, rich Americans were beginning to come here in the summer. "People taking vacations during the summer," he added, "like to reach the highest social scale possible and usually shun places which are considered cheap." The statistics said it all. In 1919, when Furness-Bermuda ships first arrived, there were only 3,010 tourists. By 1930, 43,249 walked down the gangplank.

In 1926, the Trade Development Board adopted a new slogan — "Come to Bermuda: Mid-Ocean Playground". The colony's gratitude to the English company was also expressed in other ways. Special legislation was passed to give Tucker's Town faster mail delivery so that its influential new citizens would not have to be kept waiting for their business correspondence. A new road was built to Tucker's Town, Crown lands were sold to the company, and Furness-Withy was allowed to dredge Castle Harbour. In one last special favour, the development company was permitted to own a car, an almost unique privilege that would enable it to oversee its large domain with ease.

One of the duties the company's resident manager took upon himself was to intercept young black boys — Talbot and Smith sons who had known their earliest years in old Tucker's Town — along the South Road at the edge of the new Tucker's Town. They were intent on swimming and gawking at the construction work while the manager in his Austin was intent on preserving the tranquillity of the Fricks, the Roosevelts and Lamonts who now lived up the road.

"What do you want?" he would ask.

"Just checking to see if everything's all right," they cheekily answered.

"Get away," he would invariably reply.

Bermudians have seen their lands grabbed throughout much of their history. In the 19th century, roads were expanded at the expense of individual landowners, and the British military similarly expropriated property to fortify the colony. This century, there have been two great land-based projects of colonial betterment: the building of the Bermuda Railway in the late 1920s and the construction of Kindley Field in the Second World War. Neither were altogether happy episodes in the colony's history. But in both instances, a greater good — better transportation for all Bermudians and the need to defeat fascism — could be demonstrated. Many griped, but very few rejected the overall principle. Moreover, the expropriations cut across racial and social lines.

But Tucker's Town was different: it required a minority group of largely black Bermudians to surrender their lands to a private company dominated by wealthy whites. The immediate gain was thus a private one. The expropriation did create an indirect benefit for all Bermudians: the spectacular take-off of the tourism industry. However, in doing so it created divisions in Bermuda society. Tucker's Town was curtailed off from the rest of the colony along lines of wealth and race. In a psychological sense, it almost ceased to be part of Bermuda. By





BERMUDA ARCHIVES

COLD COMFORT Swaddled in tartan rugs, Bermuda-bound passengers endure a bracing spell on deck

the 1930s, some Bermudian names — Trimmingham, Outerbridge, Butterfield, Pearman and Gorham — began to appear on the list of Tucker's Town ratepayers. But it was not until 1973 that the Mid Ocean Club accepted its first black member.

The people of old Tucker's Town are virtually all gone now. A few, children in the early 1920s, survive. The words "happy" and "sharing" punctuate their reminiscences. So does "backward". The fond memories of their childhood were carried to the new homesteads in Smith's but so too was the realisation that intermarriage and illiteracy were prevalent in their parents' generation. "A blessing," one now says of the trauma of the 1920s. "The whole of Bermuda benefited from us being pushed out." Another concludes: "We were not robbed."

In recent years, Tucker's Town descendants have taken to visiting their roots, quietly seeking out their old homesteads and the cemetery of the old Methodist

church. Bermuda has changed profoundly since the 1920s. No longer does a man in a little Austin turn them back at the gates, although there is still a security guard on duty to deter sightseers during the summer.

But despite all the progress, most descendants acknowledge that there is one thing they cannot retrieve from the past. The "sharing" is gone, one wistfully says.

And, when pushed, some will even recite snatches of Dinna Smith's disrespectful little ditty. ♦

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All historical material in this article is drawn from the Bermuda Archives, the Bermuda Library and interviews conducted by the author.

