

History Of Dorado Country Club Estates

In this 1946 photo of Stone Ashley, the desert above the mansion is the present-day Dorado Country Club Estates. Speedway can be seen to the far right and Wilmot Road was nothing but a dirt path that led to the cypress-lined entrance to the mansion.

In the mid 1930's Tucson was a small town, population of around 32,000. The eastern most boundary was Craycroft Road. Anything east of that contained ranches and isolated estates. One such estate was the home of Harold Bell Wright, the famous author who established his large domain at what is now the southeast quadrant of Speedway and Wilmot. In 1934 Miss Florence L. Pond, daughter of a distinguished lawyer in Detroit became enthralled with what Wright had built and desired a similar estate. She chose to build her mansion across from Wright's property. Construction on the large home was completed in 1936 and she named it Stone Ashley. The estate consisted of 318 acres that extended approximately one mile east on Speedway and a half mile north along Wilmot. Nearly 20 acres of carefully landscaped grounds surrounded the 17 room residence, the rest was natural desert.

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Miss Pond put the property up for sale in 1947, with an asking price of \$300,000 unfurnished. It was purchased for \$200,000 furnished. After approximately \$400,000 in renovations by architect Bernard J. Friedman and the M. I. Poze Construction Company the mansion was opened in 1949 as the El Dorado Lodge. Included in many of the changes and additions were an 18-hole golf course and a small residential community. It remained as such for twenty-three years.



Within a two-year period, the Country Club changed ownership twice being first sold to Alan Elias in 1973 and then in 1975 Elias sold it to Jerome Shull Partnership. Some years later it would be sold again to HSL Properties.

It would be during a four-year period from 1975 to 1979 that a more expansive community began to take form on the grounds surrounding the golf course. In 1979 the last home was completed by the builder Marved Construction under the company name of U.S. Homes and they turned control of the Master Association over to the neighborhoods. A year later the Master Association established its first board of directors made up of homeowners of Dorado Country Club Estates.

In 1982 it became necessary for the Master Association to hire a law firm to represent the Association in order to prevent a proposed redevelopment of the golf course. A law suit was filed and not until three years later was the suit settled in favor of the Master Association. An extensive agreement was worked out and a permanent injunction was imposed on the Country Club owner, HSL Properties, to retain the golf course as a golf course. Additional restrictions were also imposed regarding zoning, height, size, and setbacks of the development parcel.

Over the ensuing years Dorado Country Club Estates has developed into a haven for those who seek attractive, comfortable housing and convenience. Dorado has become amazingly positioned within minutes to major shopping, medical facilities, entertainment and easy access to public transportation. Over five hundred and fifty homeowners call Dorado Country Club Estates their home and many are active in the vital governing of its twelve associations. What began as a luxury retreat for a wealthy young woman from Detroit, wanting to be isolated in the warm Tucson desert some seventy-six years ago, has evolved into a thriving community within a thriving community. And that will be the continuing legacy of Dorado Country Club Estates.