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## Westview

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# Community Background Report

## Westview

### County

Miami-Dade

### Boundaries

North: N.W. 135th Street

South: N.W. 106th Street

West: N.W. 36th Avenue

East: N.W. 17th Avenue

### Community Type

Neighborhood

### History

According to the United States Census Bureau, Westview has a total area of 8.4 km<sup>2</sup> (3.2 mi<sup>2</sup>). The topography is divided by numerous neighborhood lakes. Lake Henry and other ‘golf course man made lakes’ are the predominant water features in the community. 8.1 km<sup>2</sup> (3.1 mi<sup>2</sup>) of the neighborhood’s land and 0.3 km<sup>2</sup> (0.1 mi<sup>2</sup>) of it (3.41%) is water.

The neighborhood of Westview is better known for its central development “The West View Country Club”, also referred as “The Secret Garden” because of the club’s exclusivity. The Westview Country Club opened in 1924, marking an important day in the future life of the community. During the 1930s, the country club became a gambling casino. A faint paper trail suggests mobster Al Capone may have run the place, using the building's fairy-tale tower as a lookout (Yardley 2002).

Westview’s unique past is linked with its famous clubhouse. It was used as a housing facility for U.S. Navy wives during World War II. After the building served as a bunkhouse during World War II, a group of Jewish businessmen bought the property, creating the only private country club in Miami that accepted Jews. In 1954, the Westview community and its Country Club hosted an international dinner celebrating Israel’s sixth Anniversary as a young country. The dinner honored James McDonald, the United States’ first Ambassador to Israel. Today, Westview boasts a new look with its 6,786-yard, 18-hole Championship Golf Course (Price

1993). Doug Fields, who lives in Weston and handles insurance for the club, said its Jewish roots are “part of the reason” he joined in the mid-1990s. But golf was the real draw, as it has been for many newer members (Yardley, Martinez 2002).

Today, eight decades later, Westview and its country club are celebrating their 80th Anniversary. After completing a multi-million dollar redesign and renovation, the course features “contoured fairways, rolling slopes, deep-faced bunkers, undulating greens, and 13 holes interspersed with water, makes Westview one of the most challenging and imaginative private courses in Florida” (WestviewCountryClub.com: History).

Norman Jaffe, an eye surgeon who moved to Miami in 1952, said he can remember when the surrounding neighborhood was predominantly white. “Members more than once encountered. Nazi swastikas etched into the greens”. For the most part, the trees of the golf course also hide the neighborhood that surrounds Westview, home to a demographic different from the club's membership. Mostly black (75.63%) and Hispanic (19.76%), the middle-class residential area is tidy and pleasant, but the commercial streets can become nighttime crime scenes. Mrs. Cheryl Young, a retired Miami-Dade police officer, lives directly across from Westview's driving range and only two blocks from Club Rolex, a strip club on Northwest 27th Avenue (Yardley, Martinez 2002). Mrs. Young says that “the golf balls that sometimes fly over the high range net do not worry her as much as stray bullets from drive-by shootings”, she further says that “you get some shots fired every other weekend, and this is the escape route,” pointing to the road between her home and Westview (Yardley, Martinez 2002). General Manager Mr. Tate and other members say crime has not been a problem at the club. Rangers keep an eye on the course, and a remote-controlled gate keeps the Mercedes-Benzes, BMWs and Jaguars safe inside the parking lot (Tate 2006). Recently Mrs. Young was surprised when a golf ball broke through the window and landed on her floor. She contacted the club, armed with Polaroids of the damage: “There was somebody here within half an hour, fixing the window”

Young said that the country club has been beneficial to the small community of Westview. On thanksgiving the country club gives hams to residents as a peace offering for putting up with all of the renovations and traffic caused by the country club, but she further admits that she has never been on the other side of that high hedge (Yardley, Martinez2002).

## Community Dynamics

As of the census of 2000, there were 9,692 people, 2,914 households, and 2,235 families residing in Westview. The racial distribution of the Westview was 17.01% White, 75.63% African American, 0.43% Native American, 0.41% Asian, 0.13% Pacific Islander, 3.01% from other races, and 3.36% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 19.76% of the population.

There were 2,914 households out of which 37.6% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 37.1% were married couples living together, 31.4% had a female householder with no husband present, and 23.3% were non-families. 19.0% of all households were made up of individuals and 7.7% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older.

The median income for a household in Westview was \$28,943, and the median income for a family was \$31,289. Males had a median income of \$23,052 versus \$22,933 for females. The per capita income for Westview was \$11,887.

About 23.2% of families and 26.0% of the population were below the poverty line, including 32.4% of those under age 18 and 24.9% of those age 65 or over.

## Sources

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Yardley William, Martinez Draeger. *Country Club Preserves Oasis*. The Miami Herald. January 13, 2002. Edition: Final. Section: Local, Page: 1B.