

# Community Background Report

## Little Gables

### County

Miami-Dade

### Boundaries

North: S.W. 8th Street

South: S.W. 16th Street

West: Cortez Street

East: S.W. 42nd Street

### Community Type

Neighborhood

### History

Born in the mid-1920s after an argument between two landowners, the Little Gables is an unincorporated Miami-Dade County community surrounded by the City of Coral Gables on three sides and the City of Miami on its northern most boundaries. Little Gables is bordered by Mendoza Avenue and Southwest Eighth, Salzedo and Cortez streets. More than 60 years ago, fruit grower John L. Stadler planted a sizable parcel of land with many orange trees and other fruits just north of the spot where a carefully planned “Mediterranean vision called Coral Gables was unfolding” (Macari 1984). The division between the two neighborhoods grew out of a dispute over orange groves. George Merrick, founder of the Gables, looked at incorporating John Stadler's acres of orange and fruit groves into his fledgling city. As Coral Gables inched northward, the man who envisioned the plan, George Merrick, set his sights on Stadler's groves. Stadler did not want to sell and neither did other adjacent property owners who originally had bought their land intending to sell it to Merrick. Much to Merrick's chagrin, the parcel went untouched, never to belong to his perfect city. Little Gables is surrounded on its eastern, southern and western sides by Coral Gables. It is a neighborhood of more than 700 homes and duplexes and 50 apartment buildings where little more than traffic on LeJeune Road's five busy lanes disturbs the quiet (Macari 1984). Banana plants and palm trees grace many of the neat, modest homes. New England style wooden frame homes abound in the strip east of LeJeune. Hurricane shutters are a common sight everywhere. A little bit of everything can be found inside the 44

blocks, predominantly Hispanic pocket, between Southwest Eighth Street and Mendoza Avenue and Cortez and Salzedo streets.

Incorporation efforts have been made in the past but fizzled over concerns with taxes and code restrictions. Coral Gables “doesn't allow the wooden-frame houses, shingle roofs and high fences that are in the Little Gables now” (Samuels 1994). The Little Gables Neighborhood Association (LGNA) was founded in 1983 by residents of the community in order to better represent the neighborhood’s need before county and state governments. Little Gables obtains its Police, Fire and Trash collection services from Miami-Dade County. The police and fire station supporting the neighborhood is located in the Doral area. The community has one police officer assigned to the neighborhood during the day, after which they share one police officer with the Schenley Park community (De Valle 2006).

On October 10, 2003, over 600 petitions signed by Little Gables residents were presented to the City of Coral Gables in an effort to be annexed to the City of Coral Gables which surrounds our community on three of our boundaries. In mid-2005, Commissioner Sosa decided to conduct a survey of the residents to see if the community was still interested in annexation. The Little Gables Neighborhood Association was to be responsible for getting the facts out to the community about annexation in preparation for that survey (LittleGables.com). About two-thirds of Little Gables residents who answered a recent survey want to be Coral Gableites instead, results show. While about half of the area's property owners returned the survey ordered by Miami-Dade Commissioner Rebeca Sosa, the majority of those did say they want their small enclave of unincorporated Miami-Dade bordered by the Gables on three sides annexed into the City of Coral Gables. On Monday April 17, 2006, Commissioner Sosa's survey was mailed to the Little Gables property owners by the Incorporation and Annexation Services Unit of Miami-Dade County. The results of the Survey were announced on May 23, 2006, and 63% of Little Gables property owners who voted were in favor of annexation; 37% of those who voted were against (De Valle 2006).

On May 28, 2006, an article appeared in The Miami Herald Neighbors section regarding the Survey: “The County received 433 by the May 13 deadline, Ingle said. Of those, 273 or 63 percent were marked in favor of annexation, and 160, or 37 percent, were marked against. “This is more or less what we expected,” said Karen Shane, president of the Little Gables Neighborhood Association. “We're really, really thrilled to have gotten favorable results.” Gables Assistant City Manager Maria Alberro Jimenez said the numbers are consistent with those in a 2003 petition to the city.

“Now the city can work with them and pay attention to them,” Sosa said. “The survey was to establish the reality of what the neighbors want. Their opinion is what counts.” The county has put all annexations on hold to seek more details about what it would cost in lost taxes. The county would have to charge cities a “mitigation fee” to compensate for those lost revenues from the annexation. Commissioner Sosa also said, “the County should also consider the work the city will have to do, the capital improvements she said the city must undertake to bring Little Gables up to par with the rest of the city's North Gables neighborhood”. That includes work on the water main, Gables City Manager Maria Alberro Jimenez, said the water pressure is too low for Gables

standards. A study conducted by the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization in 2003 said that the water pressure may be improved by the Florida Department of Transportation project along Le Jeune Road, part of which is to replace a water main.

Even if the Little Gables residents are busy with annexation issues other issues are not overseen. In the past members of the Little Gables Neighborhood Association won battles against a pawn shop to prevent gun sells in the community. The Little Gables Neighborhood Association opposed the pawn shop when it was first opened in 1993 but succeeded only in limiting its trade to products like paintings and necklaces. The pawn shop battle is only one fight the neighborhood is prepared to engage in, in order to prevent discordance and to preserve a safe community (De Valle 2006). ... The neighborhood has a park and a number of historic houses within its boundaries. Little Gables received a County grant for street tree plantings in 2001 and again in 2002. The first grant of 50 shade trees came through a non-profit organization called 'TREEmendous Miami'. The second grant of an additional 50 shade trees was from the Shade for Dade program. Both tree plantings were organized and completed by volunteers from 'TREEmendous Miami' and residents of Little Gables (De Valle 2006).

## Community Dynamics

As of the census of 2000, there were 592 people, 214 households, and 139 families residing in Little Gables. The racial distribution of the Little Gables was 88.81% White, .63% African American, 0.3% Native American, 0.21% Asian, 0.12% Pacific Islander, 1.01% from other races, and 1.36% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race was 29.76% of the population. There were 214 households out of which 47.6% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 57.1% were married couples living together, 9.4% had a female householder with no husband present, and 13.3% 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 Little Gables was \$48,943, and the median income for a family was \$31,289. Males had a median income of \$43,058 versus \$37,933 for females. The per capita income for Little Gables was \$31,887.

About 3.2% of families and 3.0% of the population were below the poverty line, including 2.4% of those under age 18 and 14.9% of that age 65 or over.

## Sources

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