

# Our Story of Harris Estates

By Erik Swindlehurst

## Happy Birthday Harris Estates!

The Harris Estates Homeowner's Association Declaration was signed on a blustery windy day on November 26, 2007 by our developer, Jeff Lindsay Communities Inc.<sup>1</sup> In 2022, we are turning 15 years old (from the date of the signing).

However, the Harris Estates neighborhood was planned years before that point. What was it like in this area 15 years ago? Or long before that?



Our story involves Indians. Lottery winners. Farmers. An airline pilot. A forgotten road. And being split off from a large neighborhood. Refresh that coffee and let's go on a journey into time about a small Coweta County neighborhood called Harris Estates.

## Coweta County : Creek Indian Territory

Long ago, the first settlers in Georgia and throughout Coweta County were the native Indians. They lived a primitive life with stones serving as both tools and weapons. At least 11 different Indian tribes were located in Georgia. The native Indians had conquered the land for thousands of years<sup>2</sup>.

A 1776 Map titled "A General Map of the Southern British Colonies in American" features "neighbouring Indian Countries" including the "upper towns of the Creek Country"<sup>3</sup>.

With the arrival of explorers from Europe, opportunities opened up for trade among the natives of the land. However, this also brought an influx of European diseases like tuberculosis, influenza, cholera, smallpox, and measles to the Indians, decimating the tribes. Exploration and forced removal of the Indians further depopulated the area in the 19th Century<sup>4</sup>.

Major Caleb Swan made a visit through Coweta County in 1795. Caleb started his military career in the Continental Army and was appointed as "Paymaster of the Troops" by President George Washington<sup>5</sup>. During his visit through our county, he wrote to the US Secretary of War that Coweta was:

*"well timbered, mill-seats of constant water to be had. ...There are useful mines and minerals.. [A]t present it is but a rude wilderness, exhibiting many natural beauties.. The country possessed every species of wood and clay proper for building, and the soil and climate well suited to the culture of corn, wine, oil, silk, hemp, rice, wheat, tobacco, indigo, and every specifies of fruit."*<sup>6</sup>

By the early 1800s, all of western Georgia was still Indian territory. Colonists and explorers continued to make their way into the area. The Scotch-Irish settlers named the Indians Creek due to the area's plentiful streams in the county<sup>7</sup>. The "Creek Indians" were a confederacy that formed the largest

division among the Muskogean family of Indians. They occupied a large portion of Alabama and Georgia<sup>8</sup>.

In 1825, the “Creek Indians” had a chief named Chief William McIntosh Jr. William was born during the American Revolutionary War to a Scottish Captain in the British Tory Army and a native Creek Indian woman. He became influential in his later life through his involvement with negotiating treaties on behalf of the Creek Indians, State of Georgia, and the US Government. He even negotiated with President Thomas Jefferson in Washington DC on behalf of the Creek Indians<sup>9</sup>.

He was instrumental in getting the “Creek Indians” to relinquish their lands including Coweta to the state of Georgia. However, this treaty cost him his life<sup>10</sup>.

### Georgia Land Lot Lottery

In 1825, the Creeks ceded their land to the State of Georgia and five counties, including Coweta. Coweta County, named for the “Cowetas” or Lower Creek Indians, was officially created by the “Georgia Land Lottery Act of 1825.” The Act called for the area to be surveyed and to establish “land lots” the size of 202.5 acres. The Act also created a “land lot” lottery. Generally, the eligibility for the lottery was limited to:

- US citizens residing in Georgia for at least three years prior to the Act
- At least 18 years and older
- White males, widows, guardians of orphans, Revolutionary soldiers
- Wounded or disabled soldiers who fought the British or Indians upon taking a special oath
- No previous land lot winner, convicts, deserters, tax defaulter or absconded for debt<sup>11</sup>



Names were recorded on tickets and placed in one wheel. Another wheel had the “prizes”. Some tickets were blank. If drawn the winner gained nothing. “Fortune tickets” were marked with the land lot number. If the winner paid the \$18 grant fee, the land was theirs. Otherwise, the land went to the State to be sold to the highest bidder<sup>12</sup>.

‘The land lottery for the territory in Coweta was the 5th of 8 land lotteries the state of Georgia held. Though a few other states had land lotteries, Georgia had the largest implementation from the years of 1805 through 1833<sup>13</sup>.

The 1827 "draws" for Coweta lands began on March 6 through May 25th<sup>14</sup>.

### Land Lot Lottery Winners

The Harris Estates neighborhood sits partially on surveyed land identified as land lots 168 and 185. A small area sits on land lot 184 at the front entrance. A land lot lottery was held in 1827.

LUCINDA CUTLIFF (ORIGINAL LAND LOT OWNER 185)

Lucinda Ragan Mabry (1795-1867) was the land lot lottery winner in 1827 for Land Lot 185. Lucinda was a widow residing in Lincoln County, Georgia in late 1827<sup>15</sup>. She remarried in 1830 to Jamerson Mabry<sup>16</sup>. She kept the land until 1850 before selling. She passed away at the age of 72 in 1867. It is unknown at this time if Lucinda ever lived or visited Coweta county or their land.

**WILLIAM ANDERSON (ORIGINAL LAND LOT OWNER 168)**

William Anderson also won the land lot lottery in 1827 for Land Lot 168 according to the historical records. In 1827, he resided in Columbia County, Georgia<sup>17</sup>. The historical records on William are nearly non-existent.

### **Original Settlers**

**MOSES WITTS STAMPS JR. (1803-1853) FARMER, CARPENTER, & BLACKSMITH**

The first settler in our neighborhood's land was Moses Stamps Jr<sup>18</sup>. He was born on April 9, 1803 in Jackson County, Georgia. His father was Moses Witt (photo below; served in the War of 1812) and Sarah Ann Eason Stamps, Sr.

Moses married Sarah Freeman on December 5, 1826, in Jackson County, Georgia<sup>19</sup>. They moved to Coweta County and purchased large swathes of land, including portions where Harris Estates resides (Land Lots 168, 184, and 185). The US Census in Coweta County in 1830 shows that Moses Stamps had two daughters under the age of 5 and one male slave under 10 years old<sup>20</sup>.

Moses farmed the hundreds of acres he owned. He also was a carpenter and blacksmith. He and his wife had six daughters and two sons. Moses was unwell early in his life and the management of his plantation fell into the hands of his wife<sup>21</sup>. He eventually sold off this land in 1838 and 1849.

He passed away at the age of 50 on April 18, 1853. He is recorded among the "first settlers" in Coweta County<sup>22</sup>.

Moses was survived by his wife and his many children. 12 years later his wife Sarah met Jacob Redwine. This is the same "Redwine" on the other side of Happy Valley Circle. Jacob Redwine was a wealthy planter from Fulton County. Years earlier, he took his family and slaves to his brother's farm in Coweta. It was then when he met Ms. Sarah Stamps. They married on January 31, 1865 and moved to Ben Hill county, Georgia. Sarah passed away in either 1881 or 1883<sup>23</sup>.

Both Moses and Sarah are buried at Mount Paran Primitive Baptist Church cemetery located in the woods on Happy Valley Circle just south of Buddy West Road on the western side<sup>24</sup>. The church is long gone.

### **GIBSONS: Farming Coweta County**

**JACOBUS GIBSON (1805-1874) PIONEER & PLANTER**

Jacobus Gibson was a pioneer settler of Georgia<sup>25</sup>. He came from Greene County to Coweta County in January 1837<sup>26</sup>, settling in the Cedar Creek District (where Harris Estates resides).

On January 31, 1838, Jacobus made his first land purchase of 298 acres, reaching from Lake Redwine to beyond Roscoe Road out west. This included Land Lot 185 (northern half of our neighborhood's land). He continued on his buying spree until he was among the top land owners of Coweta County. He

eventually purchased 101 acres on Lot 168 (southern half of the neighborhood's land) on January 2, 1849<sup>27</sup>.

By 1840 he had four children under the age of 10, and 3 slaves (two under the age of 10 and one from 11-24 years old)<sup>28</sup>. Jacobus' family grew to 9 children that consisted of 5 sons and 4 daughters, two of whom died in infancy<sup>29</sup>. History records that by 1861, he was a wealthy planter, owning the fourth largest estate in Coweta of over 2,550 acres. He owned 60 slaves that toiled on his plantation and farms. Five of his sons and three of his sons-in-laws served in the Confederate army during the civil war.

Jacobus was active in his community school in Macedonia and an engaged member at Macedonia Baptist Church. He is said to have been a "kind husband, loving father, and a true citizen, loved and respected by all who knew him." He died in 1874 and his buried in the Macedonia Baptist Church cemetery<sup>30</sup>.

JOEL W. T. GIBSON (1843-1917) SOLDIER, TEACHER, & BUSINESSMAN



Jacobus' 6th child with his wife Sarah Freeman was Joel W. T. Gibson<sup>31</sup>. Joel Wingfield Terrell Gibson was born in Coweta County on February 20, 1843<sup>32</sup>. Joel grew up with his siblings in assisting his family with the plantation. Joel attended school in Newnan in 1859.

When the civil war broke out on April 12, 1861, Joel was only 18 years old. A few months later he enlisted in Company D, Georgia Phillips' Legion Infantry Battalion on June 15th. He saw combat the next year with his unit in the Battle of Seven Pines in Henrico County, Virginia on May 31 through June 1, 1862<sup>33</sup>. The battle result was inconclusive. However, the losses from the Battle of Seven Pines was terrible on both sides. Two days of battle resulted in 11,565 soldiers were either killed, wounded, missing, or captured<sup>34</sup>. Afterwards, Private Gibson transferred to a Macon light artillery unit which he remained to the end of the war.



Afterwards, Joel Gibson returned to Newnan and worked initially as a farmer. The next year he taught school in Franklin and Heard County up to 1868<sup>35</sup>. During the teaching years, he married Louisa Jane Faver in August 1867<sup>36</sup>.

After the passing of his father in 1874, Joel is recorded as owning the vast majority of his father's land<sup>37</sup>. He became a "leading cotton merchant and warehouseman of Newnan". He held the position of Director of Newnan First National Bank. He was an active member of Central Baptist Church in downtown Newnan, teaching Sunday School for years.

His first wife Louisa died in July 1910<sup>38</sup>. Joel spent a few years briefly in Cocoa, Florida where he married Ms. Mary J. Thomas. He suffered a stroke that left him a degree of paralysis<sup>39</sup>. He returned to Newnan and passed away on February 8, 1917 in his daughters house off of Jefferson Street in downtown Newnan. He is buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Newnan<sup>40</sup>.

In total, he had eight children. He was well known through the community and beloved by many.

Without access to the final will and testament of Jacobus or Joel, the land where Harris Estates resides was left in either Joel's mother name or his daughters name - Sarah Gibson.

#### MOTHER SARAH GIBSON (1811-1851)

Details are sparse on Sarah Freeman Gibson. She was born August 7, 1811. Noted as a "loving a tender mother" and "very religious". She bore four sons and two daughters, one of whom died as an infant. She passed away at the age of 39 years old on February 11, 1851<sup>41</sup>.

#### DAUGHTER SARAH GIBSON (1874-1894)

Sarah Foster "Sally" Gibson Stallings was born on November 30, 1874 (see photo below). She graduated Newnan High School and attended Shorter College in Rome, Georgia. She married Thomas Orville Stallings in 1894 at the age of 20. They had three children, Mary, Robert, and an infant that died at birth<sup>42</sup>. Sarah passed away on November 30th, 1894 at the young age of 38.



At the time of the 1940 survey, the Sarah Gibson Estate shows the area with only a few scattered trees with some named such as Cherry, Gum, Pine, Hickory, and Poplar. Also noted are a few sheds, a rock, a few hedges, creeks, and some roads (Buddy West and Happy Valley Circle)<sup>43</sup>. It can be assumed from the historical records that the land of Harris Estates was part of a very large plantation and farm from 1837 to at least 1940, a period of over 100 years.

Over time, the 2,550 acres of the Gibson lands were sold off. Land in our area was harvested for its timber<sup>44</sup>, then eventually sold to develop neighborhoods and hundreds of homes<sup>45</sup>.

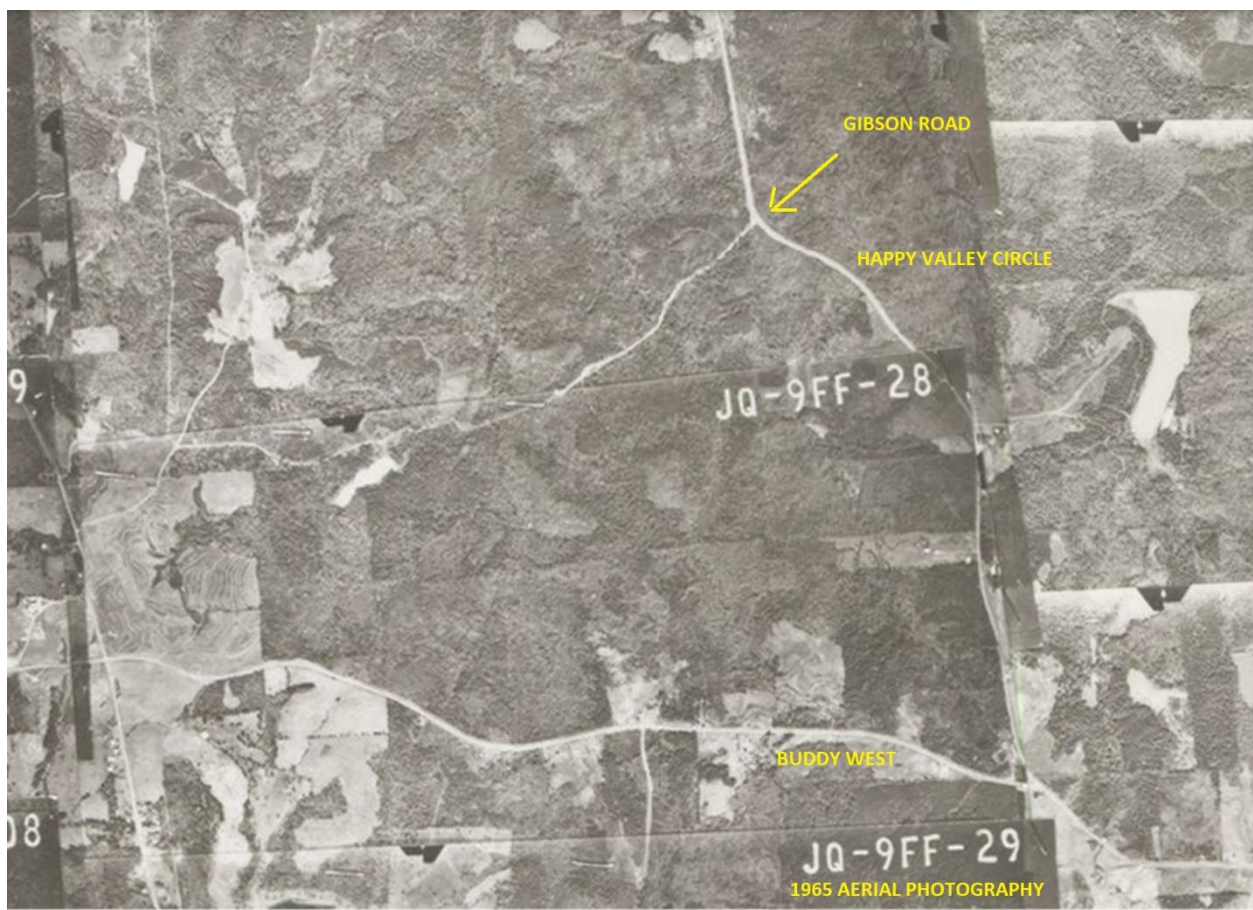
#### GIBSON ROAD: OUR FIRST ROAD

From the earliest recorded maps and up to the early development of this subdivision, the first road running through this area was named "Gibson Road". The United States Geological Survey maps

marked it as “light duty” road that linked Happy Valley Road (now Circle) to Roscoe Road (Georgia State Route 70)<sup>46</sup>. The road is long gone, but the absence of mature trees can be seen at the front entrance on the left of Harris Estates Drive (pictures below)<sup>47</sup>. Gibson Road had two bridges over Cedar Creek that are long gone.

Getting to Roscoe Road was an advantage for this area. It helped farmers, families, and travelers get to either Newnan or further north, eventually to Atlanta. At the time, only two roads connected Newnan and Coweta County to Atlanta: Georgia State Route 70 (SR 70) and US Route 29 (US 29). After the completion of Interstate Highway 85, this freeway would become the fastest way to travel into Atlanta or southbound to Alabama.

Picture below shows the western end of Gibson Road. Another shows a derelict house on Gibson Road that exists at the publication of this story. In 1968, Ms. Sarah Gibson’s estate sold Tract 7 of her land to a man named David A. Harris<sup>48</sup>.



### **David A. Harris – Eastern Air Lines Pilot**

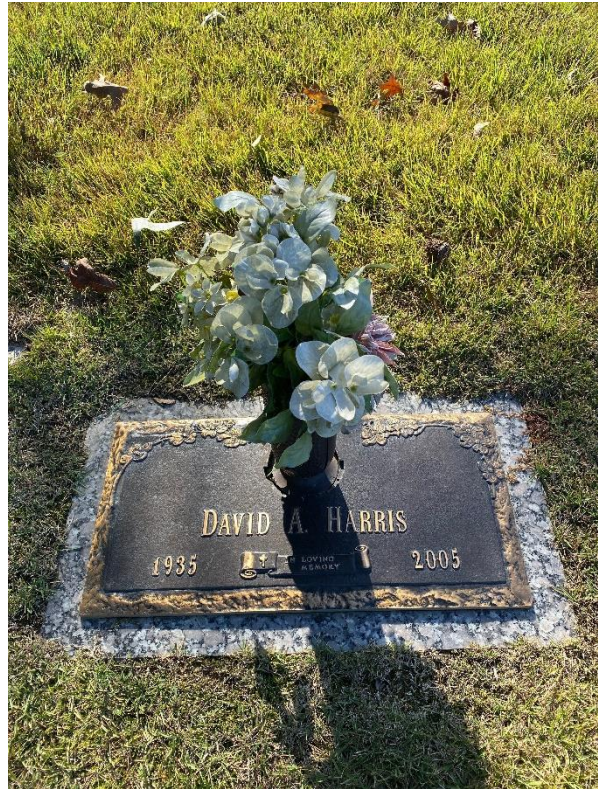
David Harris was born in 1935 to Clyde and Amelia. He had one brother. At likely the age of 17, he joined the military and served in the Korean War and Tennessee Air National Guard. He later flew missions during the Vietnam War.

He got married to his wife Mary and had one daughter, Joni. In either 1966 or 1967, he joined Eastern Air Lines and flew for them for 23 years. He retired just before Eastern ceased operations on January 17th, 1991<sup>49</sup>. His name came be seen on the Eastern Air Lines Pilot Memorial in the domestic terminal at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Airport.

At the age of 33, David purchased 61 acres in this general area for \$16,381. He signed the contract on November 26, 1968<sup>50</sup>. Ironically, 39 years later Jeff Lindsay would sign the Declaration for Harris Estates on the same date in 2007. An aerial photo in included below, featuring the area was taken three years prior to his purchase.

David had divorced and got married again, this time to Pauline. He had four more children: Jill, Allen, Tim and Tal. He farmed the land here and had a reputation as being “Coweta County’s Goatman”. He had an affinity of the wildlife and enjoyed the purple martins that migrated each year through Georgia.

David passed away in 2005 from assumedly cancer. At his passing, he was survived by his wife Pauline, children Jill, Allen, Tim and Tal, and many grandchildren. He is buried in Memphis Memorial Gardens in Tennessee<sup>51</sup>.



### **Maple Creek Plantation**

David at some point during his life sold his land. By February 1999, our area including about 200 acres had been cleared of most of its trees by a packaging products company for it’s wood and pulp<sup>52</sup>.

On December 31, 2003, “R C Development Inc” purchased a rectangular plot around 462 acres at a sale price of \$2.4 million to develop a new neighborhood that was called “Maple Creek Plantation”.

The plan for residential development had multiple phases. Phase I started on the southern end in 2004, ending the year with 8 completed homes and four paved streets. Phase II was the northern half.

One future phase of Maple Creek Plantation was to the northeast of Cedar Creek. Gibson Road had a bridge running across Cedar Creek. As some point, it is said that the county required a bridge to be built over this creek. The developer opted not to invest in that bridge and kept the area beyond Cedar Creek as a separate neighborhood to be called “Harris Estates”.

RC Development sold the Phase I and II land to Parkside Residential LLC aka “Scenic Homes” on July 13, 2006 for \$2.3 million. Final plats were completed by Advanced Geodetic Inc and signed off by November 30, 2006<sup>53</sup>. Satellite photos show fresh concrete had been poured that year, creating our two roads – Harris Estates Drive and Harris Court<sup>54</sup>.



On February 12, 2007, R C Development sold off its remaining land purchase in this area to Jeff Lindsay Communities for \$1.68 million. Jeff Lindsay had detailed plats developed by McLain Surveying Inc. that are on file with the Coweta County Superior Court. After the final plats were approved, construction began.

### Building the Harris Estates Homes

By December 2007, 15 homes had been completed. By April Of 2008, all 28 homes were completed with white shiny driveways seen from space. Six types of “craftsman” style homes were built – Ascot, Avery, Camden, Camden II, Langford, and Montreal<sup>55</sup>. One homeowner had Jeff Lindsay build their own designed home<sup>56</sup>.

Jeff Lindsay described Harris Estates on their website in 2008 as follows:

“Style, Location, and Excellence simply just begin to describe Harris Estates. This community is nestled in a quiet country setting on Happy Valley Circle featuring 28 homesites 1.6 acre and larger. Presales have begun in this signature community featuring craftsman and European house plans that start at 2700 square feet and go up to 3400 square feet. Granite countertops in the kitchen and master bath highlight this extraordinary list of standard features in this community.”<sup>57</sup>

JEFF LINDSEY

Home | Communities | Events | Testimonials | Virtual Tours | Gallery

**Harris Estates**

**\$15,000 Buyer Bonus to be used towards upgrades, additional closing costs or price reduction --- only five homes remain!**

Style, Location, and Excellence simply just begin to describe Harris Estates. This community is nestled in a quiet country setting on Happy Valley Circle featuring 28 homesites 1.6 acre and larger. Presales have begun in this signature community featuring craftsman and European houseplans that start at 2700 square feet and go up to 3400 square feet. Granite countertops in the kitchen and master bath highlight this extraordinary list of standard features in this community. The showcase model home is ready to tour, come in and see our homes that possess the "WOW" factor.

- Hard-plank siding
- Granite Countertops in Kitchen and Master Bath
- Hardwoods in Foyer, Dining Room, Kitchen and breakfast area
- Stainless Steel Appliance Package
- Side Entry Garage

**Directions:** Take I-85 South to Exit 51. Turn Right. Travel to Hwy 29 South and turn Left. Go approximately 5 miles to Hwy Jones Road and turn Right. Go 2 miles to Happy Valley and turn Left. Continue straight thru 3-way stop to Harris Estates on the Left.

**Contact Us**

Janice Crisp 770-231-7465

**RE/MAX ADVANTAGE**

**Floorplans:**

- The Camden
- The Camden II
- The Avery
- The Ascot
- The Montreal
- The Langford

**Schools:**

- Northside Elementary School
- Madras Middle School
- Newnan High School

This information is subject to changes, errors omissions and prior sales. Builder reserves the right to approve any house on any lot. Finished home details may vary slightly. Dimensions, elevation and features are approximate and subject to change. Some lots have additional premiums that must be added into the base price. See agent for details.

[Back to Communities Page](#)

Jeff Lindsay Communities  
120 Village Circle Suite A  
Seneca, GA 30276

### 15 Years of Neighborhood Life

The final house was being completed at Lot 1 in 2008. All the trees were short back then, and one could easily see smoke stacks from the Yates Steam Electric Generating Plant off of the Chattahoochee River. By then, most of the homes were sold, save two homes that took years before homeowners were found.

The neighborhood over its 15 years has experienced multiple extreme weather events such as ice and snow storms, strong wind events knocking down trees and damaging roofs, and at least one lightning strike to a home.

Middle school children in 2008 are now married with kids of their own. Children typically outnumber the adults as they play in yards, playgrounds, and pools. Our neighborhood is home to many dogs, cats, birds, bees, deer, squirrels, and bats along with a few occasional pests of armadillos, and moles.

Holidays are always fun as many neighbors go all out in decorating for the holidays featuring graveyards, spooky spiders and ghosts, an army of blow-up characters, festive lights and displays. And there is never a shortage of fireworks on New Year’s Eve and Independence Day.

Life moves forward day to day. We celebrate together the birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and promotions. We comfort one another on hearing the sad news and loss of loved ones.



Harris Estates has beautiful craftsman homes. But it is really the people that make it an enjoyable place to live, grow up and grow old in.

“Our Story of Harris Estates” written by Erik Swindlehurst. Please send corrections to [harrisestates@gmail.com](mailto:harrisestates@gmail.com). © 2022 Harris Estates Homeowner's Association, Inc.

## SOURCES AND CITATIONS

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56. Pam Kesselring, Harris Estates Homeowner
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