



MONTEREY

AT THE LAS VEGAS COUNTRY CLUB

THUNDERBIRD DOWNS (Part II)

Las Vegas, Nevada



Thunderbird Downs racetrack was located on the back grounds of the Thunderbird Hotel in Las Vegas. Joe Wells, the father of Dawn Wells (who played the character Maryanne on Gilligan's Island), was instrumental in getting the racetrack off the ground. He was an investor in the Thunderbird Hotel. The five-eighths of a mile racetrack hosted both thoroughbreds and quarter horses. It had pari-mutuel betting and bleachers for those who wanted to watch. Sam Steiger, a congressman from Arizona, often called the races. Later another track known as Las Vegas Downs opened across Paradise Road. Prior to its closing in the mid-1960s, it was known as the Joe W. Brown Racetrack. Joe W. Brown had taken over the Horseshoe Club on Fremont Street when owner Benny Binion was sent to prison for tax evasion. He even put his name on the facade of the building while Binion was in jail. Joe W. Brown sold the property, and the track was razed to make room for the exclusive Las Vegas Country Club Estates (*where the Monterey Community resides*).

Monterey Homeowners Association