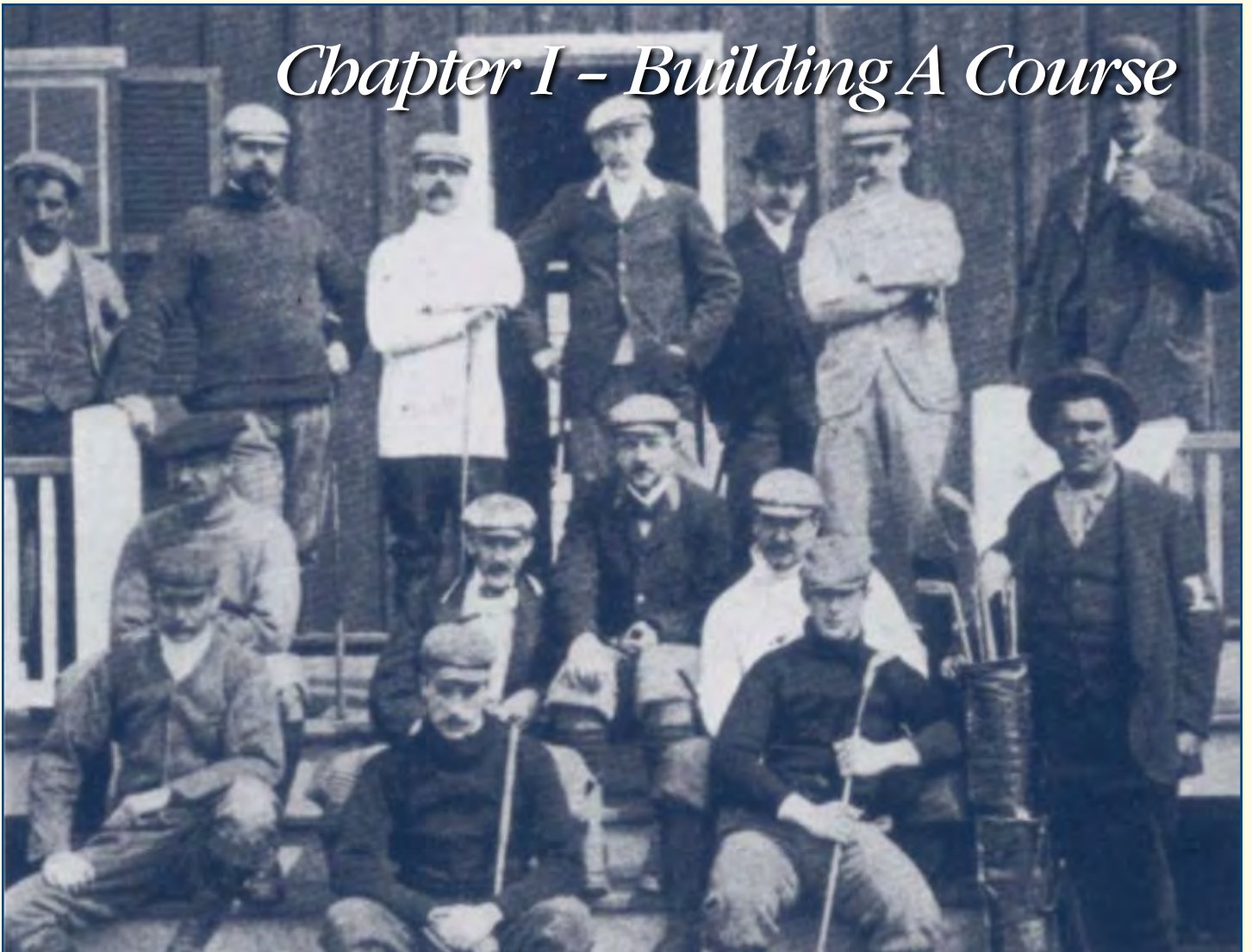




Washington Golf & Country Club

A HISTORY

Chapter I - Building A Course





Not long ago, to commemorate the 2006 Grand Opening of the renovated Club house, the Board of Directors of Washington Golf and Country Club commissioned publishing a special edition of the Tee. This project was started while I was Club president and completed while Paul Kincheloe was Club president. Bill Giglio, then a member of the Board, agreed to serve as editor of this special publication. I introduced Bill to a young woman named Jennie Rothenberg, whom I knew to possess considerable writing skills, and who was an associate editor at *The Atlantic Monthly*. Bill invited her to come on board with him to write the publication.

In the course of her research, Jennie uncovered a wealth of anecdotes and facts about Washington Golf, many of which were outside the scope of the special Tee project. She remarked that the history of the Club read like a historical novel, complete with fires, masked balls, and a host of colorful characters. Once the commemorative Tee was complete, I asked Jennie if she would like to continue her work with Washington Golf, updating the Club's history. She readily accepted. Bill Giglio had introduced us to his nephew David Baker, the talented artist who designed the commemorative Tee, and we were delighted when he agreed to join us in our new endeavor.

We began planning the project on an idyllic summer afternoon, sitting on the lower patio and sipping tall glasses of lemonade. Instead of rewriting the existing history book, published in 1994, we decided to retell the Club's history through a series of special-edition Tees. Each one would focus on a different facet of the WGCC experience — parties and dances, childhood memories, beloved staff members of yesterday and today. We would interview long-term members and staffers, dig through the Club's archives, and do our best to recreate not only the facts but the flavor of life at WGCC over the past 113 years.

As we outlined these ideas, our conversation was repeatedly interrupted by the sound of machinery on the area around the first tee and the eighteenth green. Heavy rains had washed over the golf course a few days before, and a trio of workmen, hired to rebuild the first tee, was struggling to get back on schedule. A heavy equipment operator was moving earth while others with shovels and rakes were completing the final grading. "Watch what those men are doing," I instructed Jennie. "They're making history right in front of our eyes!"

Golf has always been central to the WGCC experience, and the individuals who have shaped the golf course have played an enormous role in defining the Club's character. Most members of WGCC are aware that the course has been dubbed the "Playground of Presidents" in honor of the numerous U.S. leaders who have strolled across its greens. But while these national leaders have contributed richness

to WGCC, there are other presidents — Club presidents — who have added to the golf course through their vision and devotion. We have opted to begin our series of special-edition Tees by telling their story, as well as the story of legendary golf course architects such as Donald Ross and William S. Flynn who transformed acres of empty land into one of the loveliest courses in the mid-Atlantic region.

If certain details seem to be missing from this tale — profiles of favorite caddies, details of the Club's development, anecdotes about legendary visitors — look for them in future installments. Our next special-edition Tee will focus on social life, taking you back to the most memorable parties and events both on and off the golf course. Later on, we will introduce you to American leaders who have frequented Washington Golf and look at the Club through a child's eyes. In each case, our goal will be to bring history to life, giving you a sense of how it felt to play tennis with President George H. W. Bush or listen to the music of Howard Devron's band on a warm summer night.

Although the Club has an impressive collection of old photos and documents, our discussions with long-term members have brought these fragments to life. Mrs. Claudine Thomas, age 100, shared her memories of Admiral Rixey, the grumpy yet generous man who first developed the course in 1909. Clarke and Grace Daniel told us the entertaining tale of their daughter's first golf lesson with Clare Emory, the stunningly handsome golf professional. Griffin Garnett and his sons gave us a sense of how it felt to trudge up to the tenth tee on the now defunct "Cardiac Hill." Preston Caruthers recalled how he moved 63,000 cubic yards of dirt to build the present driving range. Don and Alma Peck recounted their favorite dances. And Bob Berryman offered his perspectives as a longtime staffer at WGCC.

Each of these individuals possesses a treasure chest of facts and stories, and we thank them for offering these so generously. We are also grateful to current Club president Jim Russell and his Board, along with the management staff, for lending their support as we translate these stories into print.

By the time you read these words, the first tee will have been long since rebuilt and the extensive storm damage to the golf course will have been repaired and covered with new grass. But for those who know the Club's history, every patch of ground and every corner of the clubhouse holds a story within it. Thanks to the generosity of many, we are able to share these stories with you.

— David Dodrill
*President of Washington Golf
and Country Club, 2004-2005*



WASHINGTON GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB A HISTORY

Chapter I: Building a Course

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Cover Photo: From the cover of *Golfing Magazine*, July 3, 1897 with Washington Club members.

RUSTIC BEGINNINGS



Anyone wishing to visit the site of Washington Golf's first course need only drive through Rosslyn on Lee Highway or Wilson Boulevard. Somewhere beneath the towering high rise buildings lies the ground on which Washington Golf members first teed off in their regulation green-collared coats and red knickerbockers.

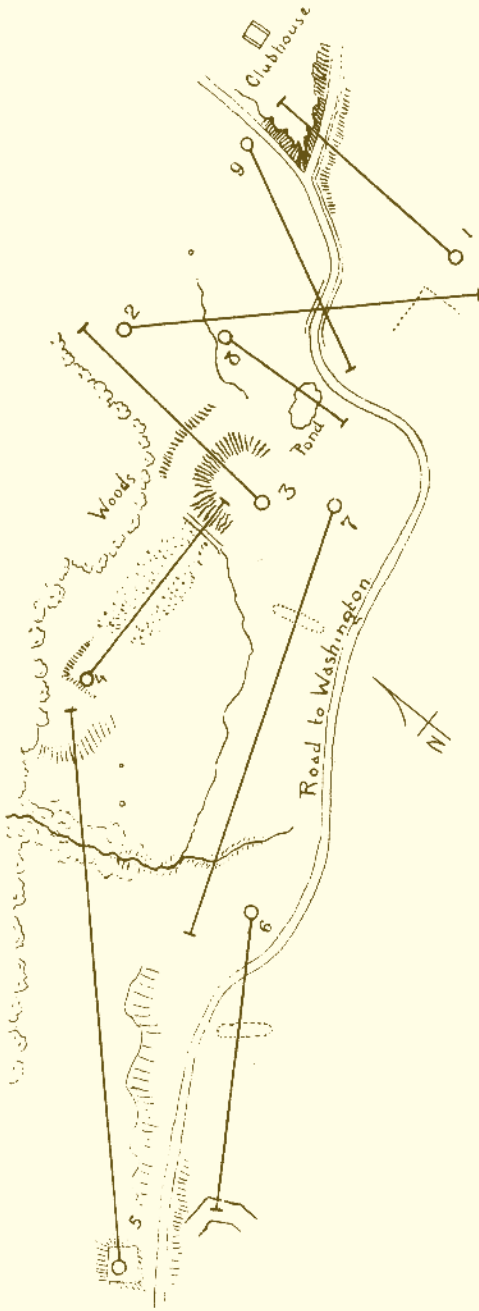
In order to complete the picture of this now-buried course, one must recall that American golf courses in the nineteenth century were not only rudimentary but also quite scarce. The first two golf clubs in the United States had formed less than a decade earlier in Foxburg, Pennsylvania, and Yonkers, New York. In 1894, when Washington Golf began construction of its golf course on property owned by the Hoover family, the course at Foxburg was little more than an abandoned cow pasture with only five playable holes. The Yonkers course was nearly as crude: its six holes lay scattered throughout an apple orchard, and its players called themselves the "Apple Tree Gang."

So it is easy to understand why golf enthusiast Arthur H. Fenn, writing in *The Golfer* in 1897, credited Washington Golf with creating "one of the finest natural courses in the world." Its position, 200 feet above the Potomac River, afforded players a stunning view of the nation's capitol, and the nine-hole course was highly sophisticated for its time and place, despite a number of rough natural obstacles.

According to Fenn's account, the first hole, dubbed "Arlington," was on the far side of a deep natural chasm. To reach it, a ball had to soar over gravel, mud, a number of small streams, and the road to the clubhouse. The second hole, "River," was situated on flatter and more accessible terrain, but bad shots — then known as "foozles" — were often lost forever in a neighbor's yard. The third hole, the "Round Top," was surrounded by woods and brush, while the fourth, the "Wood Hole," required players to tee from a steep, dry gash in the earth. The



*Arthur H. Fenn
(in background)*



MAP OF ORIGINAL ROSSLYN COURSE

*(from Golfing Magazine, Vol. 4, No. 12
January 23, 1897)*

Hole	Yds.	Par
No. 1 <i>Arlington</i>	197	4
No. 2 <i>River</i>	299	5
No. 3 <i>Round Top</i>	260	5
No. 4 <i>Wood Hole</i>	182	4
No. 5 <i>Far</i>	450	5
No. 6 <i>The Meadow</i>	243	4
No. 7 <i>The Monument</i>	367	5
No. 8 <i>The Tarn</i>	112	3
No. 9 <i>Home Hole</i>	202	4
Total	2312	39

fifth hole, appropriately named “Far,” lay a daunting 450 yards away, and the sixth and seventh — called “Meadow” and “Monument” — led players through rough terrain and over rifle pits and trenches left over from the Civil War.

The course’s most distinctive feature was the Tarn, a small natural hazard that Fenn euphemistically called “a romantic body of water.” Although the eponymous eighth hole was a short shot over its surface, Fenn noted that the lake was “sewn thick with balls.” Any player lucky enough to come out dry from this adventure then had to navigate a series of “ravenous, natural bunkers” before sailing the final fifty yards into the “Home Hole.” Considering the ruggedness of the course — and the fact that the rock-solid golf balls of 1897 could scarcely fly 150 yards — it is not terribly surprising that the course’s “total bogey score” was 39 and the best game ever played there (by Dr. Ralph Jenkins in 1896) was 90-10-80.



While the judges and ambassadors who founded Washington Golf were trudging across their muddy golf course, the game was enjoying a surge of popularity worldwide. In 1890, there were only 387 courses worldwide. Five years later, that number had more than tripled. By 1907, when the owner of the Hoover property decided to subdivide and build on its 165-acre property, the members of Washington Golf were ready for a change. Golf was no longer on the fringes of American life. New courses had been laid down across the nation, many with eighteen-holes. The Sunningdale course in England had introduced the practice of growing grass entirely from seed, and drainage problems were quickly becoming a thing of the past on both sides of the Atlantic. The master architect Donald Ross had begun unveiling his designs — his smooth, meticulous Pinehurst Course opened in North Carolina the same year the Hoover property went up for sale and Washington Golf members began looking for a new site. As one writer proclaimed in the popular magazine *Munsey’s Weekly*, “From Maine to California the land is studded with putting greens and humped bunkers!”



DONALD ROSS

Donald Ross, the Scottish-born golf course architect, came to Arlington after creating the famed course at Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina. By 1909, when Ross walked the hills of the Glebe Road property and planted stakes in the ground, he had a finely tuned sense of where the holes should be. His guiding principle — “Make each hole present a different problem” — ensured that the course would be varied and challenging, sharpening the skills of every golfer who played there.

ADMIRAL RIXEY

Admiral Presley Marion Rixey was a major figure in the early days of the Washington Golf Club and later the Washington Golf and Country Club. It was his farmland in Virginia that was purchased for development of a course. Admiral Rixey knew nothing about golf at the time but soon learned the game, joined the club, and spearheaded development of the first course.

Rixey was sometimes something of an ornery character and certainly dour. That said, Rixey devoted much time and energy to the Club and Club members deeply appreciated him for it. Rixey's contributions to the Club seem almost unending. Not only did he supervise construction projects at no cost, but he lent the Club his own machinery at no cost.

To show their appreciation for all his efforts on behalf of the Club, a dinner was held in his honor on May 26, 1920 "as a slight evidence of our appreciation and esteem." Rixey died unexpectedly on June 17, 1928, and obituaries appeared in newspapers across America, as well as the Paris edition of the New York Herald.



Chapter I – Building A Course

This proliferation of new courses, along with the invention of rubber-cored balls and grooved-faced irons, added up to a quantum leap in the game's advancement. Washington Golf was ready for its next phase.

THE MOVE TO GLEBE ROAD



On June 15, 1908, soon after moving to the 74-acre property on Glebe Road, Club president Joseph Taber Johnson asked Admiral Presley Marion Rixey to supervise construction of the Club's first 18-hole golf course. (See sidebar.) The two men had been neighbors for twenty years, and Dr. Johnson knew that the eccentric, often cantankerous Admiral would get the job done. Rixey accepted the responsibility rather grumpily and with an air of noblesse oblige. "Dr. Johnson, knowing something of my ability to get work done as a farmer, appointed me Chairman of the Greens Committee," Rixey later recalled, "and I accepted it with many misgivings, but realized that each must do his share."

As Rixey plotted the new course, he more or less followed the contours of his existing farmland. "Fortunately," he noted proudly, "my dairy cows had given us fairly good fairways." Rixey himself had little golfing experience at the time, so he left the actual plotting to other members who were avid golfers. A small group of workmen set about weeding, mowing, digging, moving stones, filling gullies, and cutting down trees. According to a 1947 Club history, the Admiral's incessant demands "nearly drove the workmen crazy."

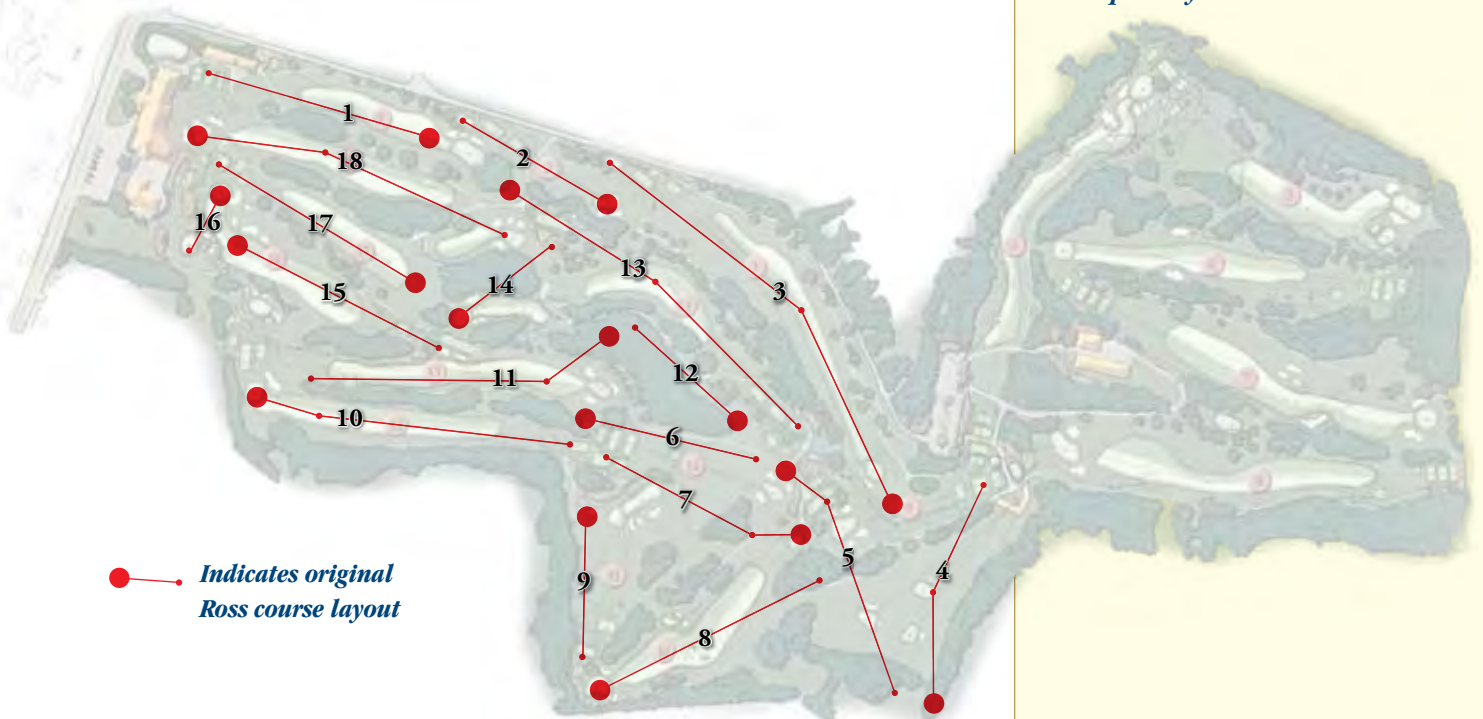
Once the course was finished, the Greens and Grounds Committee ran fairly smoothly under Rixey's direction. A frugal manager, he was able to pay the workmen and purchase all necessary equipment while remaining well under the \$2,575 greens budget. (Records indicate that as of May 1909, the Club owned two horses, one wagon, one cart, one horse mower, two hand mowers, one three-hundred-pound roller, three harnesses, and fifty-four tools.)

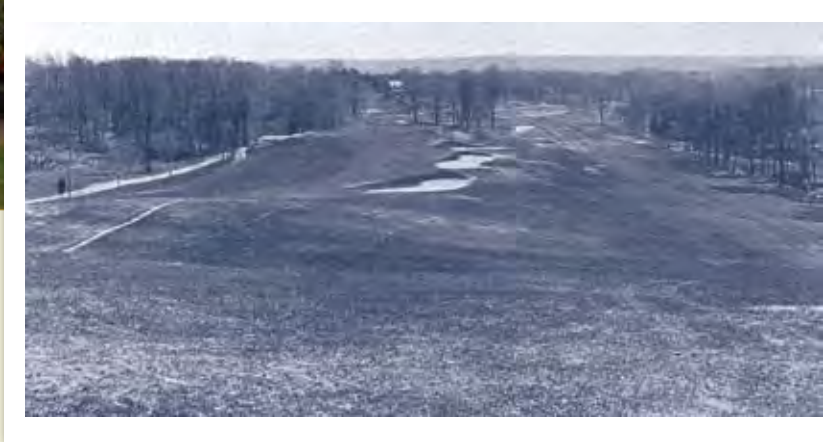
Even so, the Club's most serious golfers found Rixey's layout far from satisfactory. By 1909, they had their sights set on the nation's most state-of-the-art layouts and arranged to meet with Donald Ross, the superstar architect who had designed them. During his visit to Arlington, Ross offered the Club a choice between an expensive "deluxe" course and a budget "not-so-deluxe" one. The members opted for the latter, and accordingly, Ross skipped his most time-consuming practices and calculations. Instead, he simply walked the Club's grounds and planted poles where he estimated that the tees and greens should be.

Ross's creation, although a huge improvement over Admiral Rixey's, was tougher on the legs and lungs than the course is today. According to Club historian Dick Westwood who wrote an earlier version of the Club's history, the first through third holes were roughly the same as they are now, although bunkers crossed the first fairway "like Civil War breastworks." The fourth hole was accidentally laid down outside the bounds of the Club's property. Fortunately, the property's owner accepted a dues-free life membership in exchange for the small plot of land. The fifth hole played over two rolling hills to a green near a small springhouse. From there, the course grew more challenging as it climbed to the top of "Mount Rixey," a rise that would be leveled by future generations.

DONALD ROSS'S CREATION

Shortly after opening for play in 1909, Donald Ross was hired to renovate the course originally laid out by Admiral Rixey. Mr. Ross offered two design options: "deluxe" and "not-so-deluxe." The fledgling Washington Country Club opted for the "not-so-deluxe" version, which entailed Mr. Ross walking the grounds and planting poles where he thought tees and holes should be placed. The final product of Mr. Ross's consultation was a course that played across a portion of the current property (holes no. 1-3 and no. 9-18) in a somewhat jagged fashion. It is hard to imagine how tight this layout was considering how close the thirteen holes are that occupy that ground today. Below is the Ross routing based on a description by Dick Westwood.





Hole No. 1, in a current photograph and a 1929 photograph. This hole, as well as holes 2 and 3 have not changed significantly from the original designs by Donald Ross of 1909.

Hole No. 2 is a classic example of a Donald Ross designed hole, with a lack of visual references for golfers to judge distances.



Chapter I – Building A Course



No. 3, as Donald Ross designed it, is one of the more challenging holes at WGCC, with a dogleg to the right sloping towards a creek that runs along the right side.



Above is hole no. 5 in its current configuration with two distinct greens. Right is a photo from the late 1940's of the Grunwell tract with hole no. 5 in the upper left clearly visible. Note the unique placement of the sand bunkers behind the trees on no. 7 and fairway bunkers on no. 8.



Chapter I – Building A Course



This March 1929 issue of Golfers Magazine extolled the grandeur of the golf course at Washington Golf and Country Club, referring to it as “This Chosen Playground of Presidents.”

Holes No. 9 and 3, circa 1927



It was during this period that two of the Club’s charter members, Drs. Charles V. Piper and Russell A. Oakley, made a discovery that would impact golf courses everywhere. Longtime caddy Brick Wood recalled the day when he watched Dr. Piper, a grass specialist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, kneel down mid-game and carve chunks out of the fourth green. Although Brick found this behavior baffling, Dr. Piper and Dr. Oakley, both scientists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, were in the process of gathering and developing turf samples. Over the next few years, they introduced the famous Washington bent grass that now covers golf courses from St. Paul to Richmond.



Bent grass

THE PRIMARY CALL FOR GOLF



The golf course changed shape again after 1919, when the Club purchased forty-seven acres running lengthwise along the property from the Grunwell family. Instead of replotting all of Donald Ross’s holes, William Flynn and his partner Howard Toomey left the central holes in place and placed five new ones — the fourth through eighth — along the added strip of land. The ninth hole was set down at an angle from the old fourth hole, and the course resumed from there. The old eighth through twelfth holes became the tenth through fourteenth, and the remaining stretch was reconfigured to accommodate the fifteenth through eighteenth greens of today.

When the five new holes were put into play in 1922, Colonel James A. Drain, then the Club president, expressed his pleasure. In his annual report, Drain praised Toomey and Flynn and declared that the course’s “charm, quality, and sporting characteristics will be second to none, if it is given

the necessary care. It must have due attention to upkeep and small improvements. With this, it shall one day be well-nigh perfect.”

Over the next several months, these “small improvements” included refining the second, third, ninth, fourteenth, and eighteenth holes. Under the direction of Toomey and Flynn, the Club installed a putting course and removed “trick holes.” Greens were flattened to prevent balls from rolling unprompted, and the landscape was adjusted so each green would be in full view as players approached from the tee.

In his autobiography, Admiral Rixey described this improvement phase with typical exasperation. He insisted that the Club could have used its funds to pay off debts instead of moving greens, tees, bunkers, and fairways “as if they were checkers on a checkerboard.” Rixey resigned from the Greens Committee in a huff, although he continued to serve on the Board of Directors until his death.

For the Club’s most ardent golfers, workmen were less of a nuisance than the families who used the greens for hiking and picnicking. At that time, “golf clubs” and “country clubs” were still relatively distinct entities in the United States — the former tended to be havens for serious golfers, while the latter attracted those who simply wanted to relax, dine with friends, and enjoy quiet afternoons outdoors. Although Washington Golf and Country Club served both groups, its golfers insisted that the royal game receive the respect it deserved. Rules handed down in 1922 by the Golf Committee mandated that “all those playing golf should avoid the regular fairways and not endanger themselves in the lines of play while wandering around” and insisted that “anyone walking about remain still and quiet when they meet a player making a stroke.” Children, meanwhile, were “not allowed to use the greens or fairways of the course as a playground.”



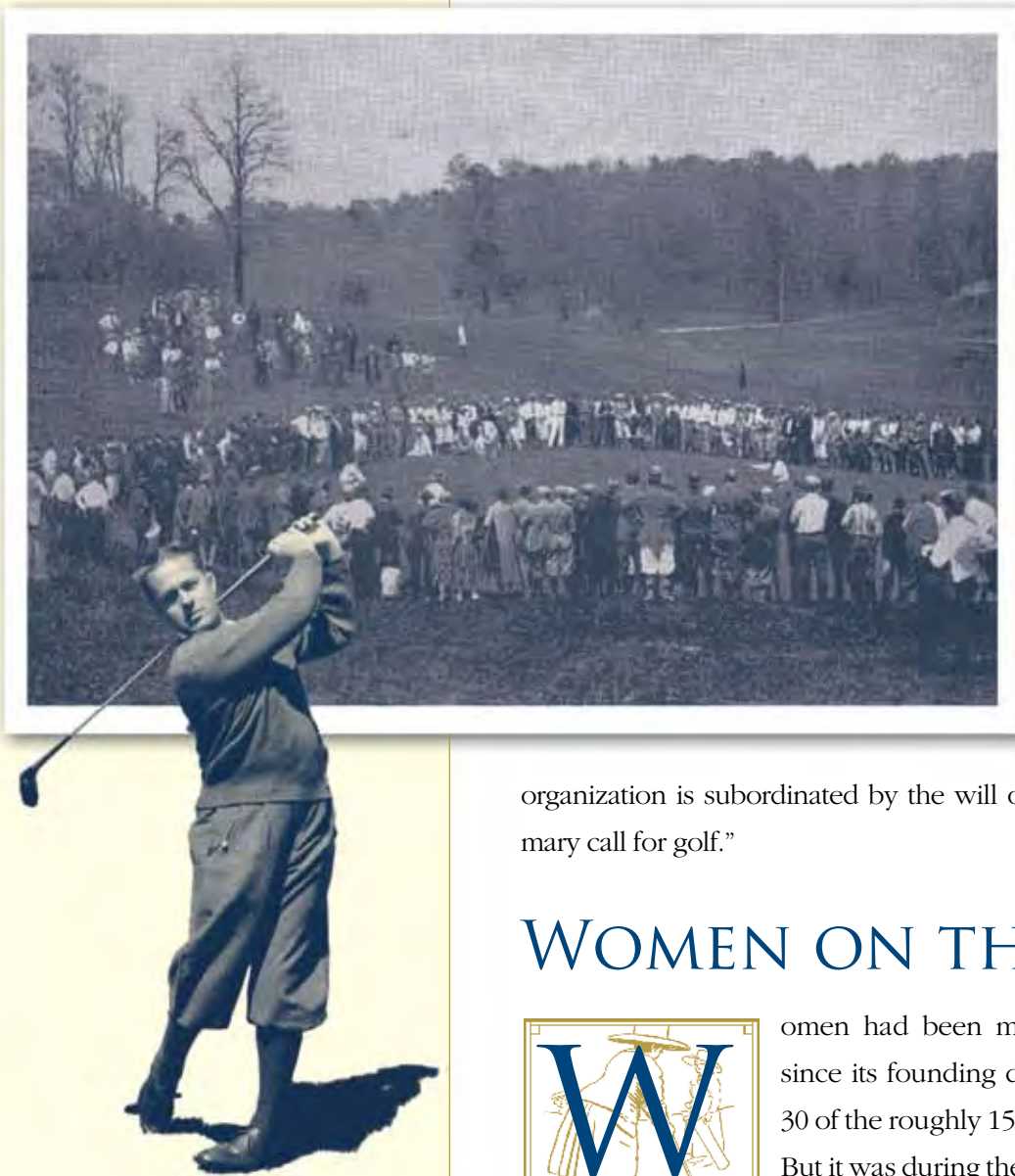
Disabled World War I heroes enjoying a round of golf in 1924. Above are fellow amputees Colonel Charles R. Crossfield (l) and Club President Colonel James A. Drain (r).

WILLIAM S. FLYNN

In the early 1920’s, Massachusetts native William Flynn made his mark on the course at Washington Golf, building five new holes on the newly acquired Grunwell tract. Like Ross, Flynn had a knack for placing holes in strategic positions that made use of the natural environment. His partner, a civil engineer named Howard Toomey, worked with him to ensure that each layout would be precise and flawless.

Although Flynn reworked Ross’s layout, moving several of the holes to the perimeter of the property, he took great care to maintain the core of the design. The holes closest to the clubhouse were left virtually unchanged, while the new holes were laid down in keeping with Ross’s style. Today, golfers on the WGCC move seamlessly between original Ross holes and those designed by Flynn. The work of the two men, more than a decade apart, complimented each other perfectly and provided WGCC with a clear road map that has guided generations of golf course improvements.





Bobby Jones played in a friendly exhibition match on our course in 1926. He was most enthusiastic about the layout and the variety of shots and holes. Here Bobby is putting on the eighteenth green, while a considerable gallery looks on. Al Howard is holding the pin. With arms on his hips and wearing white knickers is Walter McCollum, long a member of the Club and golf writer for the Washington Star. Note the sylvan setting along Rock Spring Road.

In 1923, the tennis courts were moved across the road to make room for a putting green. Despite the ever-rising popularity of tennis, bridge, and dancing, Colonel Drain spoke for many members when he restated his loyalty to the Club's founding sport in his 1924 annual report. "If I have seemed to talk too much about golf," he wrote, "my justification is that this is a golf club.

Every other activity of the organization is subordinated by the will of the membership to the primary call for golf."

WOMEN ON THE GREEN



Women had been members of Washington Golf since its founding days — in the 1898 directory, 30 of the roughly 150 names belonged to women. But it was during the 1920's that ladies' golf began to blossom. On Saturday afternoons beginning in 1920, the women of WGCC played in a series of putting tournaments. In 1927, the Board voted to enter the women players in the Ladies' Section of the U.S.G.A.

That same year, the Club's female members were asked to lend their elegant and sporty reputations to a Jergen's soap advertising campaign. The copy painted a vivid picture of the "distinguished women" who could be found on WGCC's golf course: "all the familiar figures of the social season flocking to the Washington Golf and Country Club; enchantingly pretty debutantes in new sports frocks from the Riviera; the lovely wives from the foreign embassies." According to the adver-

tisement, these women owed much of their grace and elegance to regular use of Woodbury's facial soap.

Whether or not the lady golfers were actually using Jergen's products, they were turning out on the course in larger and larger numbers. Sixty women took part in an 18-hole medal play in the fall of 1930, and that same season, Washington Golf won against a ladies' team from Baltimore by a score of 26 to 19. Over the years that followed, 14 other women's

championships were established at WGCC. These tournaments attracted women from far and wide; Patty Berg, founding member of the Ladies' Professional Golf Association, was among the pro golfers who played at WGCC during the height of their careers.



Patty Berg demonstrating good follow through.

As female members developed an ever-increasing interest in the sport, they owed a great debt of thanks to Mrs. Edith Sutton, the bold wife of Dr. Richard Sutton, who later served as Club president. The first woman elected to the Board, Mrs. Sutton was responsible for a number of improvements to the clubhouse, but she is perhaps best remembered for a bit of gardening that took place one spring morning. In the words of longtime member Sid Carroll:

For years, a hedge separated the ground floor terrace area. Women were required to view golf events from the pool side of the clubhouse; the men used the space in front of the men's grill and locker room. Edith Sutton was not pleased with the arrangement. William (Brick) Wood, longtime golf starter and caddie master, reported to the first tee one early spring morning to see Mrs. Sutton and her gardener scattering the side of the clubhouse with hedge and tools in hand.

The hedge was never replaced, and from that day onward, the ladies of WGCC had a clear view of all the action on the golf course.

Enticingly pretty situations, with a clear smooth as they, obtain as they please.

THE FASTIDIOUS WOMEN GUESTS
of the **WASHINGTON GOLF and COUNTRY CLUB**
tell how this soap has helped them
to gain a clear smooth skin

From May in Washington . . .
Maggie . . . they blossom forth in the
green . . .
And on the golf course, along the links paths,
laughing voices, the rainbow hues of bright
sunshine . . .
All the familiar figures of the social season flock-
ing to the Washington Golf and Country Club,
enthusiastically pretty dilettantes in new sport
dresses from the Riviera, the lovely wives from
the foreign embassies—
Among the distinguished women who make up
Washington society, one woman everywhere the
daintily soft, clear complexion that has given
Suzette luxury its name.

How do these women, whose lovely skin is their
greatest charm, take care of it day by day?
We asked nearly one hundred women guests of
the Washington Golf and Country Club what
soap they find best for regular care of their skin.
More than half answered, "Woodbury's Facial
Soap!"
"Delicate"—"Beautiful"—"Refreshing," they
said. "It purifies the skin." "Helps in unusual
roughness—large pores."
Women of fine traditions and distinguished every-
where—college girls, debutantes, society women
belonging to famous clubs and groups are represent-
ing in overwhelming numbers, their preference for

Woodbury's Facial Soap for the care of the skin.
A skin specialist would say the beauty by which
Woodbury's is made. This formula not only calls for
the purest ingredients, it also demands greater labor
in the manufacturing process than is usually
practicable with ordinary toilet soap.
It merely lathers a slice of Woodbury's, one is
sensation of its perfume bouquet.
A twenty five cent cake of Woodbury's lasts a month
or so, usually. Several cakes take a lifetime!
Containing special ingredients for softening sensitive
skin delicate.

When a woman of her class after beginning
to use it, you will never be disappointed in
your complexion. Get your Woodbury's today!
—a beautiful, the moment you see it!

Your Nearest Taxation for 30 days
free—in duplicate trial set!

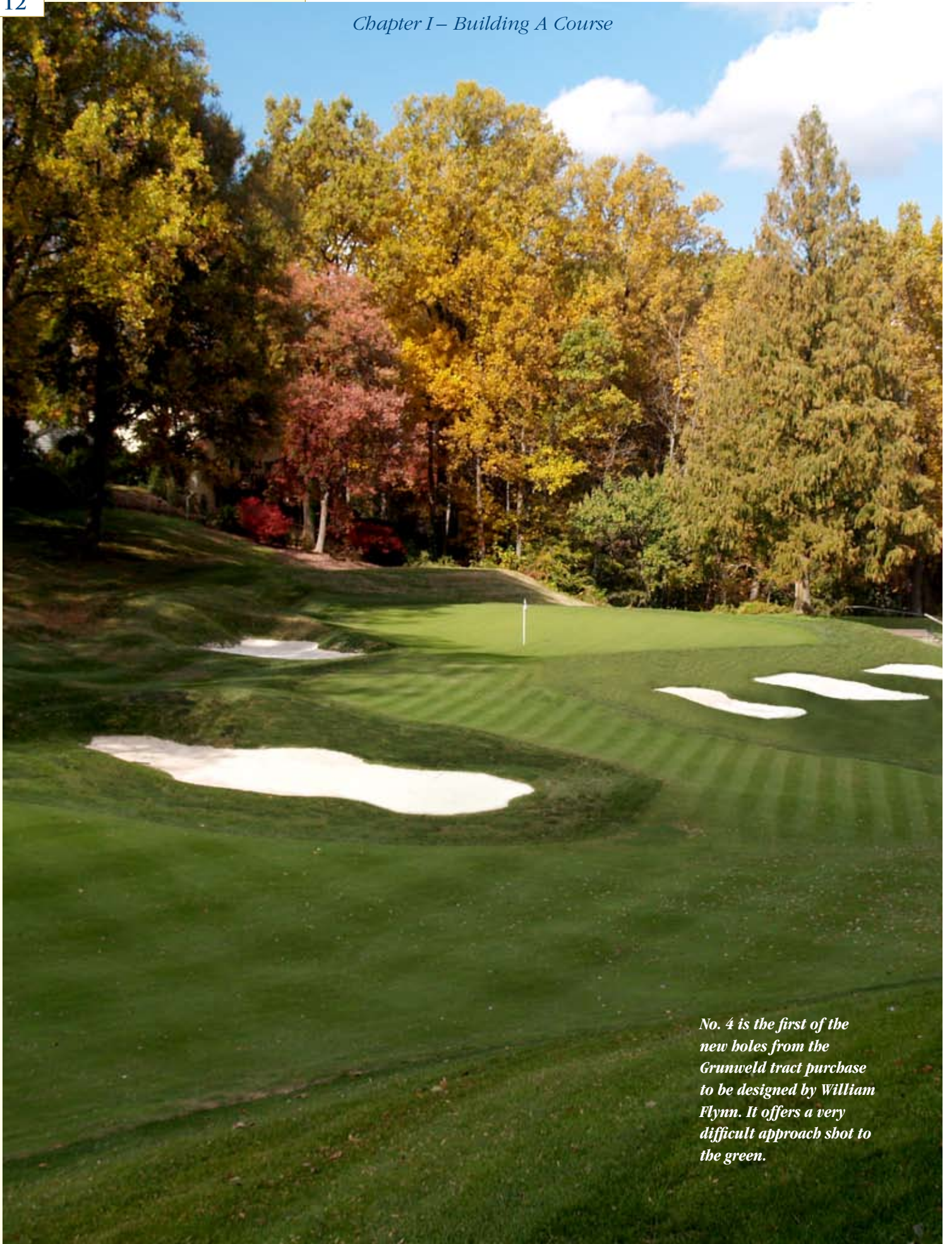
The Woodbury Soap Co.
For the method of use, please read the card
enclosed. The trial set is free. The trial set
includes one cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap,
one cake of Woodbury's Toilet Soap, and one
cake of Woodbury's Shave Soap. The trial set
is good for 30 days. The trial set is good for
30 days. The trial set is good for 30 days.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____

The Woodbury soap ad from 1927, featuring the fastidious women guests of Washington Golf and Country Club.



Brick Wood started caddying in 1917.



No. 4 is the first of the new holes from the Grunweld tract purchase to be designed by William Flynn. It offers a very difficult approach shot to the green.

No. 11 Hole. Over the years there have been three greens on this hole. The first green was destroyed by the flow of debris from the neighboring subdivision. The second green was constructed immediately thereafter. Both these greens are shown in the photo below, which we believe was taken in the late 1940's. The current green shown on the right was constructed by Preston Caruthers in 1962.



the eleventh green of the course with silt and debris. A small pond in front of the green overflowed, breaking the dam and ruining the green. The Club petitioned the court for relief and damages — as a result, the developer was ordered to stop the flow of debris onto the Club property, although no damages were awarded. The membership appealed to the Virginia Supreme Court, which eventually ruled in the Club's favor in a landmark decision

on November 26, 1956, and WGCC was compensated for destruction of the eleventh green.

During the 1950's, the greens thrived under the protective watch of W. W. McCollum, then Chairman of the Greens Committee. On one Saturday afternoon, McCollum recalls, he tried to stop an ambulance driver from pulling up onto the golf course to treat a golfer who had been walloped on the back of the head. It was no use, he remembers. The rescue wagon "plowed halfway into the green, with marks about a foot deep, because the green was soft. I was really upset. I had to call Coop [greens keeper Francis Coupe] and get him to get some men to repair the green. I don't think I was ever so mad in my life."



DEMOLISHING THE “BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER KWAI”



Despite the track marks on the carefully tended soil, the 1950's were a decade of vast improvement for the course. Anyone returning to Washington Golf in 1965 after a

fifteen-year absence would have noticed a multitude of changes: paved pathways, additional sand bunkers, filled-in ditches, and a series of new bridges. A watering system had been installed in 1950 to the tune of \$36,000. Bermuda grass now covered the landing areas and approaches of half the fairways. In 1957, the golf course architect Fred Findlay had drawn up a master plan to fine-tune the slopes and reduce climbs. At his recommendation, the Club spent \$50,000 to cut down the hill to the right of the thirteenth green, relocate and build the thirteenth green, lower the fourteenth tee, and level the sixteenth and seventeenth fairways.



Hole No. 9. During the late 1960's, Preston Caruthers supervised the move of 63,000 cubic yards of soil. These then-and-now images of the ninth green reflect the dramatic change in the landscape that resulted from his project.



The green on hole No. 13 sits atop Mount Rixey, named for Admiral Rixey. This indeed is one of our most beautiful holes with its spectacular views and crowned by a magnificent white oak. Beneath the tree is the memorial to Joseph Kirchner

But the most striking change on the course would have been the proliferation of plant life. Under the capable direction of member Joseph Kirchner, more than 400 trees had been introduced, along with several hundred azaleas donated by Frank Trent and other members. To honor Kirchner's efforts, a plaque was later placed at the top of Mount Rixey. Golfers pausing to rest near the 13th green can find these words of gratitude in the shade of a glorious native white oak:

*The groves were God's first temples,
Grandeur than stone cathedrals.
The trees, God's ancient structure, form
a suitable shrine for today's humble
golfer to commune with his maker.
Recognizing this, Joe Kirchner, a man of high
moral conduct, with a deep-seated faith in the
future, planted over 600 trees on these links.
This tablet, therefore, is dedicated
to him with our gratitude.
Sursum Corda 1976*

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These two photos of numbers 16 and 17, one taken in the mid-20th century and the other contemporary, show the massive impact of Joseph Kirchner's widespread tree-planting project.

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uring the height of Kirchner’s beautification project, the Club welcomed another devoted soul, Lee Dieter, the golf course superintendent who would care for the course over the next thirty-six years. Long-time member Preston Caruthers was there to greet Dieter when he arrived for work, fresh from the University of Pennsylvania School of Agronomy. “Lee was young and confident,” Caruthers recalls. “Standing in ten inches of snow on the eighteenth fairway, he said, ‘I can do a lot for this course,’ and he did.” Along with his heroic efforts to build up topsoil, Dieter is fondly remembered for teaming up with Joe Kirchner to attract birds. The two purple martin “apartment houses” they built behind the fifteenth tee and the sixteenth green helped drastically reduce the insect population on the golf course.



*Lee Dieter,
Course Superintendent*

Caruthers was himself a key player in the golf course improvements of the 1960’s. During his tenure as Greens Committee chairman during the late 1960’s, the Club moved 63,000 cubic yards of soil to build the present driving range. At that time, the site was a deep gully cut through by a stream. Caruthers and his workers diverted the stream by installing a pipe under the range; the water now flows past the third green. They then filled in the valley by carting in dirt from the western side of the course and packing it tightly until the ground rose to the proper level. In order to make way for the driving range, the tenth tee, then located at the top of the hill, was moved to its current location — much to the relief of members who had taken to calling the steep incline from nine to ten “cardiac hill.”

Caruthers’s bulldozer-like determination was on full display when it came time to demolish the high, narrow footbridge that then crossed the streambed. “The best mental picture would be to recall the movie *Bridge Over the River Kwai*,” says Caruthers. “It was very high and sound, but looked fragile. It wasn’t.” Once the ground had been filled in, Caruthers informed then-president Tony Siciliano that he would be tearing the bridge down the next day to make way for the new cart



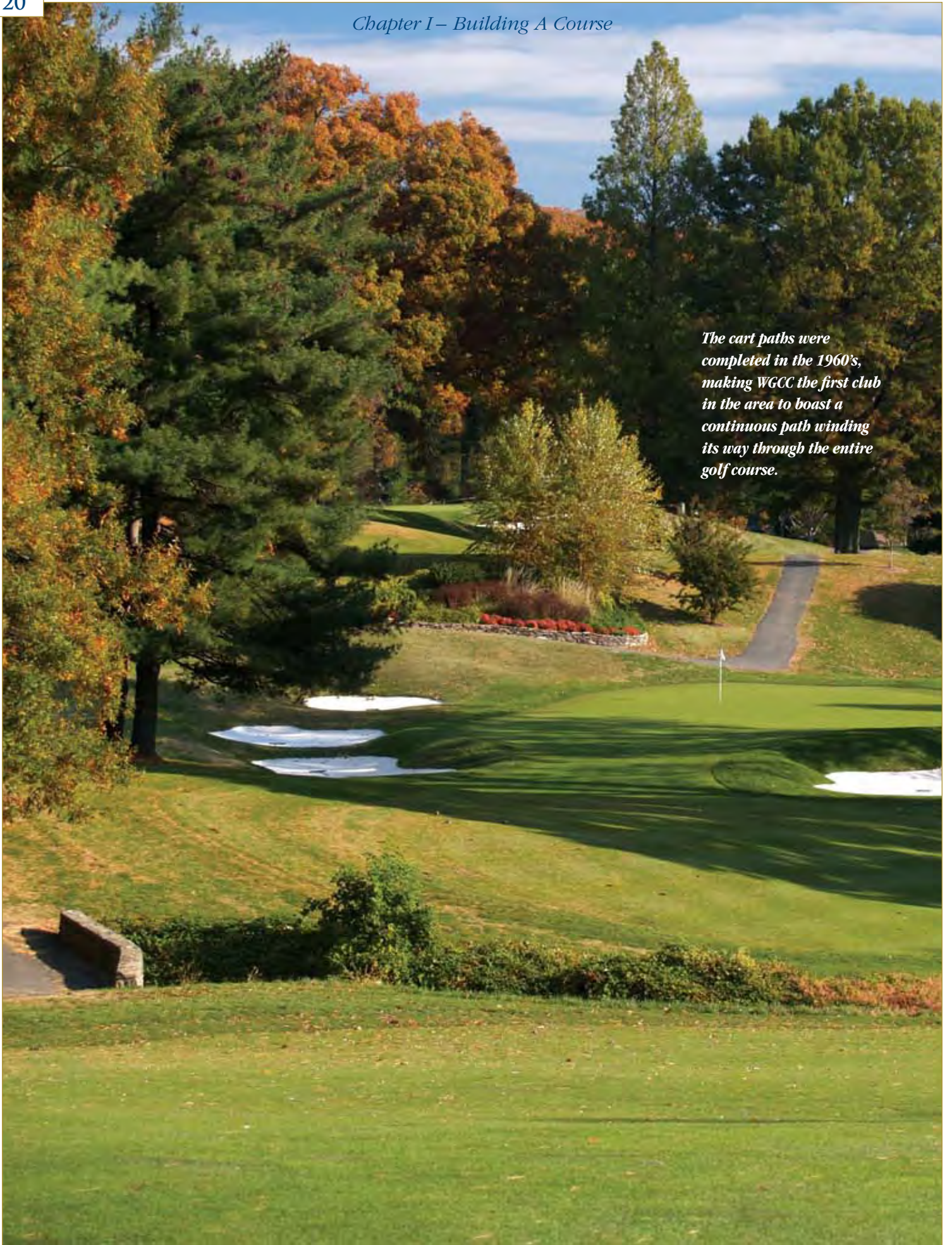
path. Tony insisting that he needed to secure board approval first — the bridge was, after all, listed as an asset on the Club’s books. Caruthers scoffed at the notion. “I said, ‘It has no purpose and therefore no value. By afternoon, we will have a dirt walkway.’” Tony rushed to set up a board meeting for the following evening, but Caruthers was one step ahead of him:

The next morning, I had all sorts of men and equipment standing idle, so I made a decision. Within two hours, the bridge was demolished, trashed, and buried deep under the present path, and the final shaping of the fill began. Someone told Nan Gebs, our wonderful club secretary, what I had done and that the bridge was gone. Tony, responsible Club president, lawyer, war hero, and the greatest friend a man could have, replied to Nan, “Well! Cancel the meeting.”

The cart paths were finished, making WGCC the first club in the area to boast a continuous path winding its way through the entire golf course.

Springtime at WGCC is a special time of the year. As you can see, No. 9 green is spectacular when the azaleas are in bloom.

The cart paths were completed in the 1960's, making WGCC the first club in the area to boast a continuous path winding its way through the entire golf course.





View of the 16th green from Clubhouse lower terrace.

A WORK IN PROGRESS



The past several decades have brought a nearly continuous flow of innovations and improvements. Some have been aesthetic, such as the carefully sculpted evergreen hedges that form the letters WGCC. Others have been purely functional, like the automatic watering system installed in 1978 or the irrigation system built in 1996. In one case, two gracious neighbors — Vince Tramonte and Colonel Robert Ware — significantly improved the golfing experience at WGCC when they allowed the Club to erect fences along the back of their properties in 1981. As a result, the Club was able to remove trees and allow better access to the rear portions of the 12th tee. But the vast majority

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of the changes have been incremental repairs: grading the land, fixing walkways, rebuilding greens, or enclosing ditches.



Like the game itself, golf course maintenance is always a marriage of human innovation and the natural environment. Those entrusted with caring for the course have learned which grasses flourish in the Virginia area. Throughout the 1970's, 80's, and 90's, the course was a patchwork of rye grass, Zoysia grass, and bent grass; in 2001, the course closed for the first time in modern history so all the fairways could be converted to bent grass. Trees have risen and fallen across the course, and birds have continued to thrive. In 2003, the course became a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, formally recognizing the Club's excellence in environmental planning, wildlife habitat management, resource conservation, waste management, and outreach and education.

Although the Club has sought to work with nature, the course has also faced a number of natural obstacles. During the late 1990's, a number of trees succumbed to disease, drought, and lightning, thwarting an ongoing program for selective removal and planting. On August 10 and 11, 2001, a storm swept over the Washington area, flooding the course and washing out a number of its sand bunkers. The Club decided to use this calamity as an opportunity to hire the esteemed golf course

architects McDonald and Sons. The firm redesigned most of the bunkers and completed a master plan laid out by golf course architect Craig Schreiner in 1993.

Even as they worked to improve upon the course, McDonald and Sons paid homage to the past. The fifth green had been both loved and hated by Washington Golf members ever since its construction during the 1920's. A short par four, it required a delicate approach, and

Construction was never allowed to get in the way of member duties. One has one's priorities.



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in 1992, the Club decided to replace it with a less complicated shot. But the new green lacked character, and after more than a decade of play, the Club opted to bring back the old model. In 2001, McDonald and Sons reconstructed number five, aiming to follow the original Toomey and Flynn design as closely as possible.

McDonald and Sons were called in once again in the spring of 2006 to renovate the eighteenth green and first tee. As the workmen drove their moving equipment over the mounds of earth, golfers made their way over the pathways and bridges built over the past century. The golf course, like a living entity, will always need to adapt to the elements and change with the times. Fortunately, devoted members and skilled workers always seem to be on hand to ensure that the game goes on.

The 18th fairway is a perfect way to finish a round of golf with a spectacular view of the newly completed Clubhouse.



A TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1890 to 1920

- 1894** Just after the Club's incorporation, construction begins on the first nine-hole golf course at the Rosslyn property.
- 1897** The Golfers Magazine credits Washington Golf with creating "one of the finest natural courses in the world."
- 1907** The owner of the Rosslyn property decides to sell, leading the Club to search for a new home.
- 1908** Club president Joseph Taber Johnson asks Admiral Rixey to supervise construction of the Club's first eighteen-hole golf course.
- 1909** Master golf course architect Donald Ross redesigns the course on Glebe Road, walking the grounds and planting poles where he thought the tees and greens should be.
- 1919** The Club purchases the 47.25-acre Grunwell Tract running lengthwise along the property. Golf course architects Toomey and Flynn relocate the fourth through eighth holes to this new strip.

1920 to 1949

- 1921** Two of the Club's charter members, Drs. Charles V. Piper and Russell A. Oakley, use samples from Washington Golf to develop their soon-to-be-ubiquitous Washington bent grass.
- 1922** The five new holes are put into play, along with reconstructed holes fifteen and sixteen.
- 1923** The tennis courts are moved across the road to make room for a putting green.
- 1934** A sewer leak is filled in at number seventeen.
- 1944** A ditch at the third fairway is graded and fixed with concrete.
- 1949** The twelfth green and the thirteenth tee are completely rebuilt and open for play in the late spring.



Drs. Charles V. Piper and Russell A. Oakley

1950's

- 1950** The third, fourth, and fourteenth greens are rebuilt. A new fourteenth tee is installed at the top of Mount Rixey. A new bridge connects the number eight green to the number nine tee, and the bridge over the fifteenth fairway is renewed. A bridge is installed between the new fourteenth fairway and the tenth fairway. A watering system is installed. Catch basins and storm sewers are put in place, a ditch is filled at number sixteen.
- 1952** Critical areas of the golf course are fenced. New tees are built on number three, four, five, seven, and twelve, and new ladies' tees are built on numbers seven and nine. A flood of water, pouring down from the construction of the Forest Hills subdivision, fills up a small pond and breaks the dam, ruining the number eleven green.
- 1957** Nearly 300 trees are planted. Golf course architects Findlay and Loving are hired to draw up a master plan for renovations. Members approve a number of improvements including a foot bridge across number nine from the level of the ladies' tee, a plateau below the green at bridge level, and a new number ten tee to the right of and slightly above the number nine green. In order to reduce climbs, the number ten fairway is scaled and filled in to make a gradual slope up to the number ten green. The hill to the right of the number thirteen green is cut down, the hollow in front of number thirteen is filled in, and number thirteen itself is relocated. The number fourteen tee is lowered, and hills are cut down on the sixteenth and seventeenth fairways.
- 1959** The large trap on the left of #13 fairway was filled in, the trees had made it obsolete.
- The number ten green is rebuilt. The ditch in front of the number eleven green is filled in and a storm sewer is installed. Bridges are built over fairway ditches at fifteen and seventeen. Paths are put in to accommodate the newly approved fleet of ten golf carts.

1980's

- 1981** We are most appreciative to Mr. Vince Tramonte, as well as his neighbor Col. Robert Ware, and his support in allowing the Club to erect a fence across the back of his property. This will allow us to remove a number of trees to allow us to use the rear portions of No 12 tee on a more frequent basis.
- 1984** Built a new tee complex at the fifth tee and a new blue tee built at the seventh tee.
- 1985** The sand bunkers adjacent to the 2nd green were rebuilt as was the bunker below the 18th green.
- 1986** Three of the original greens were rebuilt, namely Nos. 1, 5 and 8. The No. 2 tee was also rebuilt.
- 1988** We began the year with the building and completion of our new maintenance building. The new stone wall was built on No. 16 tee.
- 1989** A new bridge was built across the creek at the No. 15 tee, using funds from the Taylor Memorial fund to cover the cost of the project. The railroad tie walls on No. 13 tee and No. 4 tee have been replaced with stone walls.

1990's

- 1991** The bridge on No. 8 was rebuilt.
- 1992** Hired golf course architect Craig Schreiner to design Nos. 1, 5 and 8, which needed to be rebuilt. Established a committee under the guidance of architect Schreiner, to prepare a master plan for improvements to the golf course.
- 1993** The reconstruction of Nos. 1, 5 and 8 greens was completed, along with new tees for No. 3 and No. 11, storm sewer upgrade across No. 14, abolishment of the open storm sewer on No. 11 and redesign and establishment of the bunkers on No. 11. The renovation of all of the bunkers was completed, with improvement to slopes and drainage.
- 1994** A program of selective removal of trees to maintain the health of all trees was established, along with selective planting of new trees on the golf course. This program is expected to continue for several years.
- 1995** A new irrigation system for the golf course was built and should be in operation for the 1996 season.

- 1996** Instituted a permanent ban on traditional metal golf spikes, effective November 1, 1996.

- 1997** Golf course superintendent, Lee Dieter, retired after 36 years of loyal service to the club. Arlington County performed repairs and maintenance in the stream where the storm water and sanitary sewer easement areas are along No. 3 fairway. A new restroom facility was built near the No. 14 tee.

- 1998** The sprinkler heads in the newly installed sprinkler system proved to be defective and all were replaced by the manufacturer. The long term tree preservation program was updated.

- 1999** Completed construction of new practice pitching green near the No. 13 tee, using golf course design and construction firm of McDonald and Sons to do the work. A new project on the horizon is a new maintenance facility. Building location and construction feasibility studies are underway for this project.



1960's & 70's

1960 The putting green was rebuilt. Several members, headed by Frank Trent, donated several hundred azaleas for planting behind #11 green. The tree-planting program was continued under the direction of Joseph Kirchner and over 100 trees of many varieties were planted.

1961 Golf course architect Algie Pully redesigned greens No's 4, 9 and 18.

1962 The driving range was built; 63,000 yards of soil were moved and the county installed the storm sewer pipes. The No. 9 green was rebuilt. Number 11 green was built to the right of the old green. Some of the first bent grass tees in the metropolitan area were planted at WGCC on No's 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15.

The putting green is rebuilt. Several members, headed by Frank Trent, donate hundreds of azaleas for planting behind the eleventh green. The tree-planting program continues under the direction of Joseph Kirchner.

1963 Golf course architect Algie Pully redesigns greens four, nine, and eighteen.

White birch trees were planted as 150 yd. markers. The sides and bottom of the ditch along No. 3 green and No. 9 green were enclosed.

1964 The driving range is built; 63,000 yards of soil were moved and the county installed the storm sewer pipes. The No. 9 green was rebuilt. Number 11 green was built to the right of the old green. Some of the first bent grass tees in the metropolitan area were planted at WGCC on No's 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15.

The WGCC letters were planted and 144 Japanese yews were planted on December 23rd.

1965 The bent grass tee program continued with the rebuilding of Nos. 5, 13, 16 & 17 tees. New Blue trees were added to the area of Nos. 5 & 17.

1967 All fairways except #3 were planted to perennial rye grass; Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 to Pennfine and the rest to Manhattan.

1968 The bridges on #15 and #17 were given a face lift with addition of a stone facing.

1969 The bridge on #3 was built along with the headwall at the end of the ditch.

1978 Number 17 green was rebuilt to A. Pully plans. The installation of the automatic water system was completed. Five new electric water coolers were also part of the installation.

1979 A number of sand bunkers were rebuilt with satisfying results.



2000's

2000 Over the past three years we have been active in pruning, removing, and replacing trees on the course. Ironically, this year saw the deterioration in many of our trees in spite of these efforts. Unfortunately, more than a few desirable trees succumbed to either incurable disease, the drought of 1998-1999, or lighting.

2001 The golf course was closed for the first time in modern history so all the fairways could be converted from rye grass to bent grass, with play expected to resume in April 2002. A new hole No. 5 was built as a second alternate green, in the same area as the original No. 5. Also, the bump in the middle of No. 8 was removed and the front area regarded to better protect the area in front of the green. While this work was in progress, the next biggest happening was the rare violent rain storm of August 10-11 which dumped so much water on the course that a preponderance of the sand bunkers on the golf course were washed out, and therefore needed to be rebuilt. The club took the opportunity of having McDonald and Sons, a top golf course architect on site, and hired them to redesign some of the bunkers and replace the drainage and sand in all the affected bunkers. This year saw the effective "carrying out" of most of the changes suggested in the Craig Schreiner Golf Course Master Plan of 1993

2002 The members approved construction of a new 6,000 Sq. Ft maintenance facility to be placed on the top of the hill between No. 7 tee and No 8 green. To hasten the need, a major oak tree fell on the old facility during a storm in early August.

2003 Our golf course became a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, the 13th course in Virginia and the 429th course in the world to receive this certification from



the Audubon Society. The Club has received a formal demand from the United States Department of the Interior for alleged damages during the storm of August 10-11, 2001 from the use of the chemical Basamid as part of the process of the fairway grass conversion project. It is believed this matter can be resolved in a reasonable manner.

2005 A full settlement of the chemical runoff incident that occurred in 2001 was completed with the US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Services and the National Park Service. The terms of the settlement require the Club to complete a stream enhancement project and establish a Habitat Maintenance Area along some of the streams on club property.

2006 The first tee was built from the design of McDonald and Sons, who were the contractor that did the work



Washington Golf & Country Club



Hole	Yds.	Par	Men's		
			Hole	Yds.	Par
No. 1	290	4	No. 10	313	4
No. 2	159	3	No. 11	169	3
No. 3	424	4	No. 12	376	4
No. 4	439	5	No. 13	395	4
No. 5	310	4	No. 14	176	3
No. 6	348	4	No. 15	409	5
No. 7	403	4	No. 16	315	4
No. 8	407	4	No. 17	344	4
No. 9	160	3	No. 18	391	4
Out	2940	35	In	2888	35
			Totals	5828	70