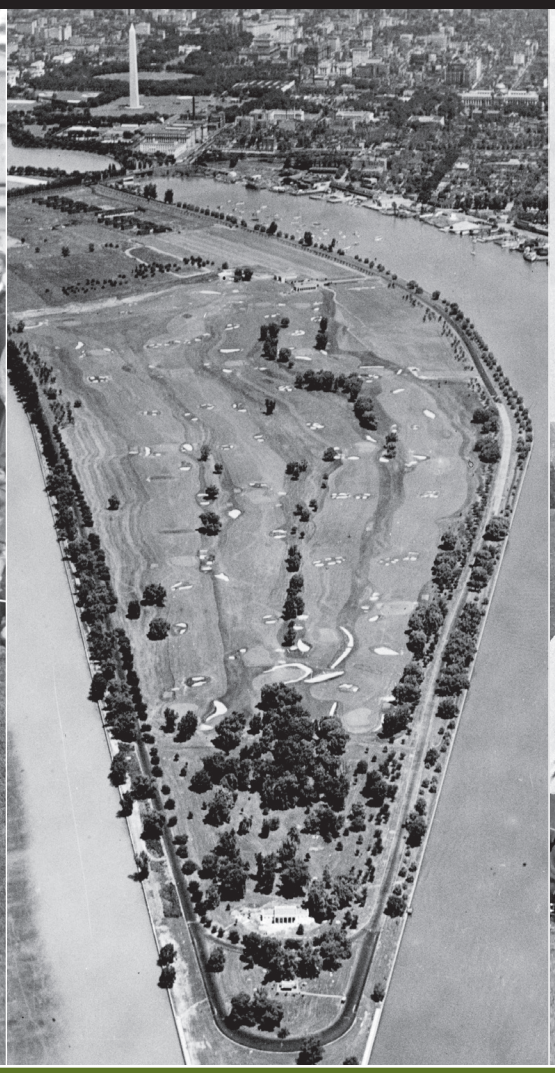
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Capital Region
Washington, DC







# Links to the Past:
# A Historic Resource Study of National Park Service Golf Courses in the District of Columbia

November 2017

Resource Stewardship and Science
Division of Cultural Resources, National Capital Region

*HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY*

# LINKS TO THE PAST:
# A HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE GOLF COURSES IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



EAST POTOMAC PARK GOLF COURSE ❖ ROCK CREEK GOLF COURSE ❖ LANGSTON GOLF COURSE


***Prepared by:***

Patricia Kuhn Babin
Historian



US Department of the Interior • National Park Service • National Capital Region • Resource Stewardship and Science • Washington, DC

2017

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**Cover Photo: (left to right) President Warren Harding congratulates winner of the 1923 tournament at Rock Creek Golf Course; ca. 1925 aerial view of East Potomac Golf Course; golf pro works with local youth at the Langston Golf Course in 1979. (Reprinted with permission of the DC Public Library, Star Collection, © *Washington Post*).**

**Title Page: Women Golfers at East Potomac Park, ca. 1923. Source: Library of Congress.**

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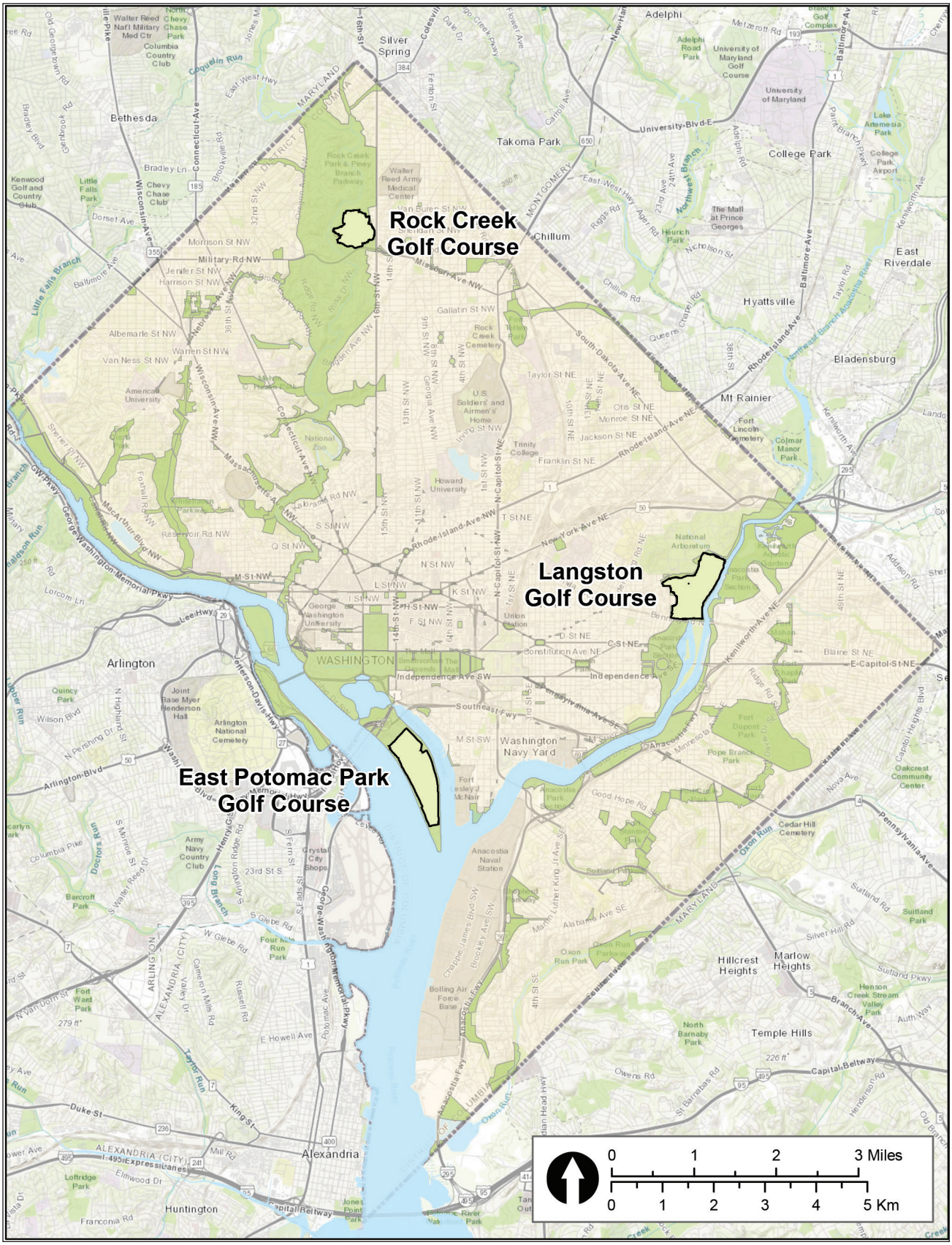
When I began as a historian with the National Capital Region in January 2016 and learned I would be working on a Historic Resource Study of the golf courses, I proudly touted that I was a former graduate of "Get Golf Ready" (Level One) at East Potomac Park Golf Course. I soon realized that in the sport of golf, I am what they call a "duffer." While my golf game has not improved over the last two years I have worked on this project, my genuine appreciation for the sport, its history, its landscape architecture, and above all the role of the golf courses in the city that I call home, has grown immeasurably.

Many people have aided and supported this endeavor. I would particularly like to thank Regional Historian Dean Herrin and Regional Historical Landscape Architect Maureen Joseph for their continuous assistance and guidance throughout the project, and Turf Management Specialist Michael Stachowicz and Cultural Resource Manager Michael Commisso (National Mall and Memorial Parks) for their unending enthusiasm and golf expertise, as well as their willingness to discuss the minute details of my research. In addition, thanks to Cultural Resource Managers Josh Torres (Rock Creek Park) and Kate Birmingham (National Capital Parks-East) and other park staff for their support and guidance. I would also like to thank Perry Wheelock, Associate Regional Director of Resource Stewardship and Science, Sam Tamburro, Chief of Cultural Resources, and my colleagues at the National Capital Region, who discussed, brainstormed, reviewed, and listened to me talk endlessly about the golf courses.

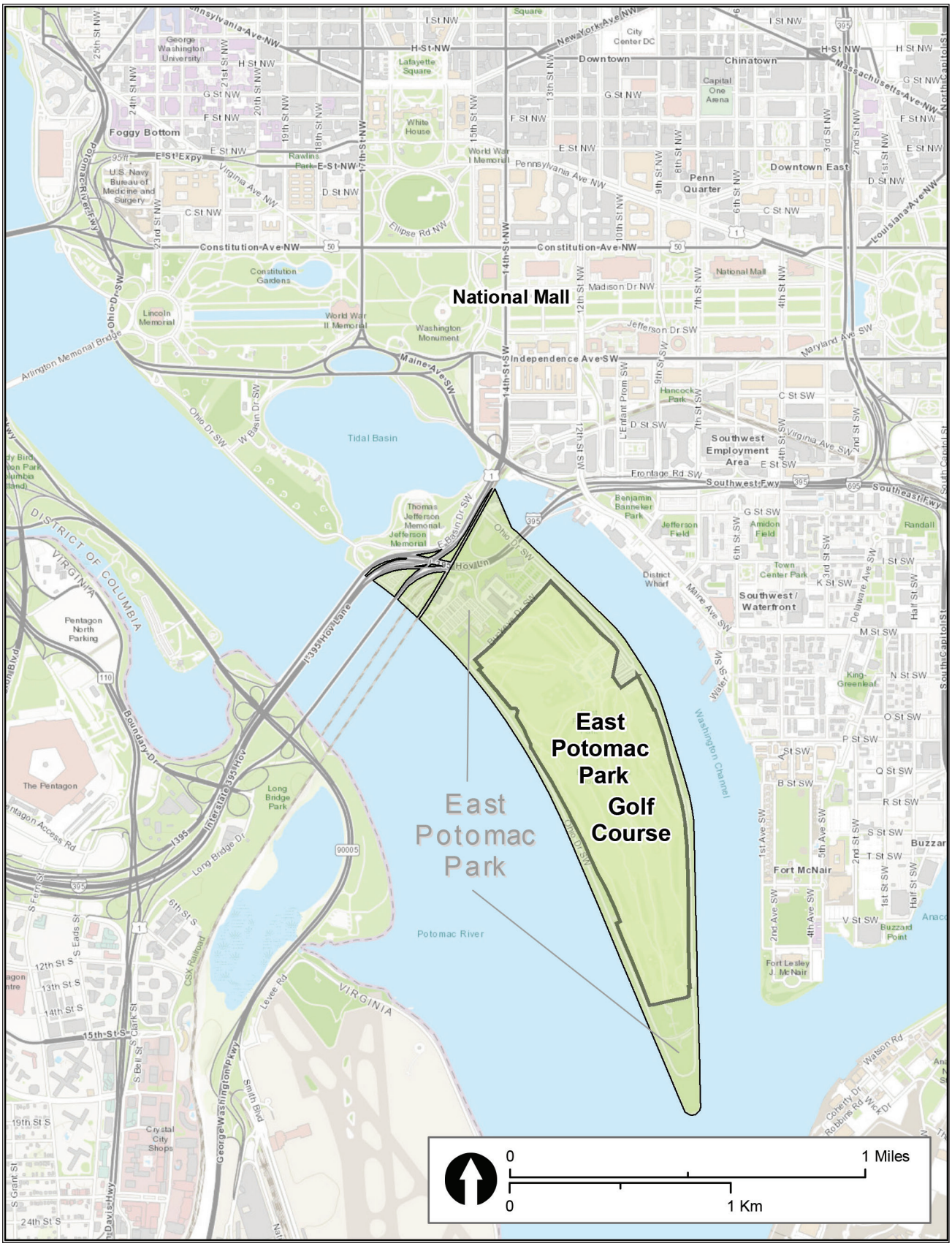
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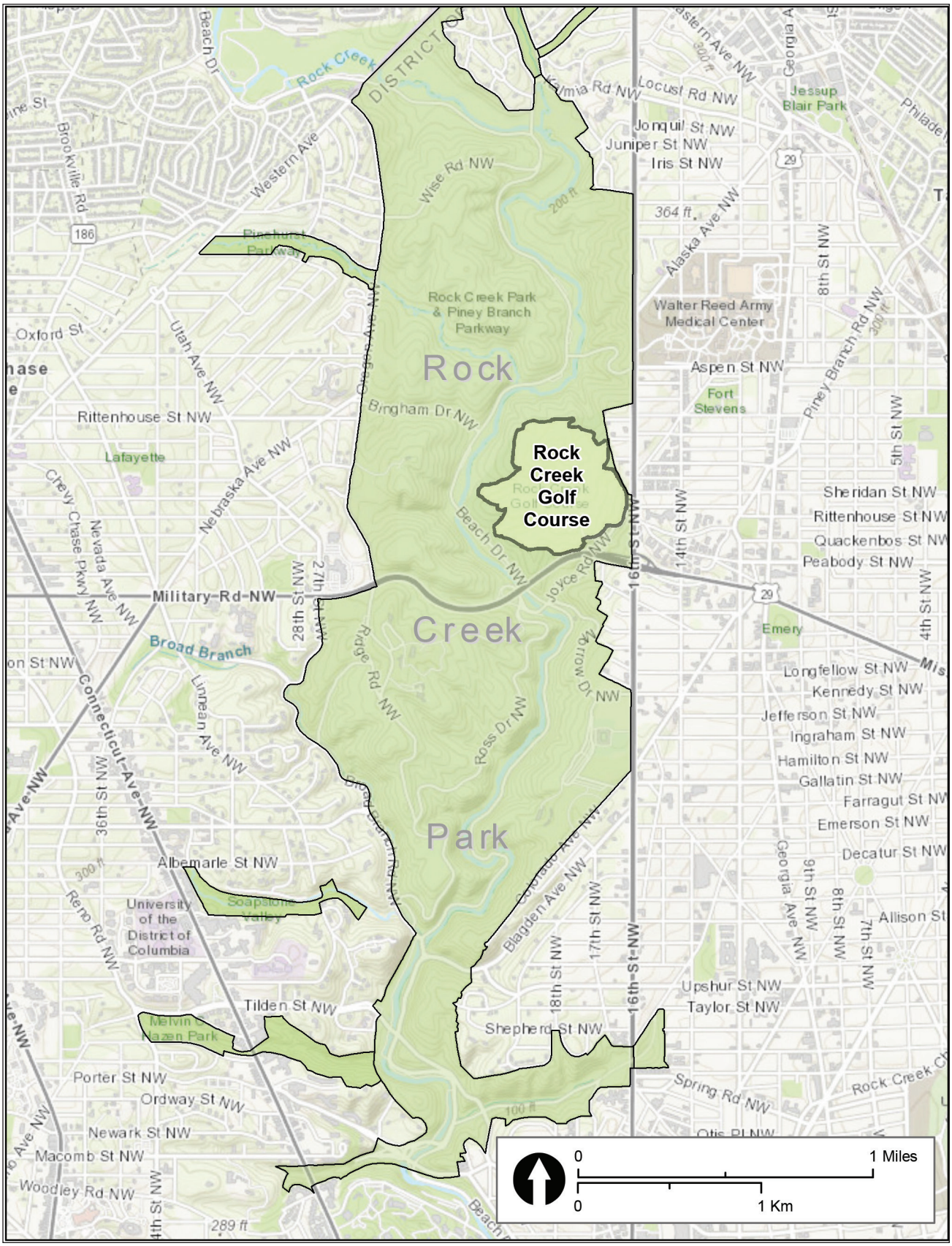
*Patricia Kuhn Babin*



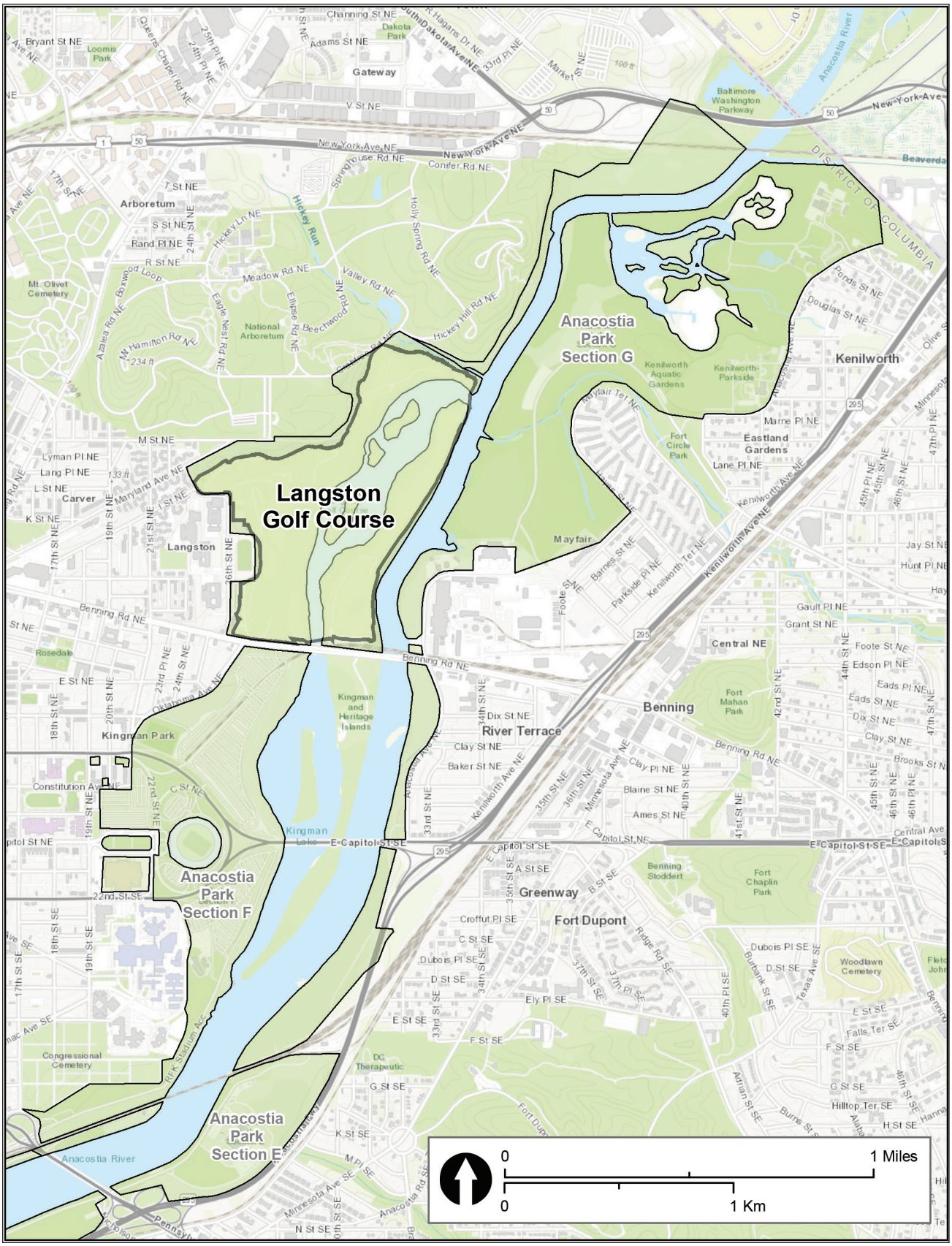

**Map 1.** National Park Service golf courses in Washington, DC.




**Map 2.** East Potomac Park Golf Course in East Potomac Park, Washington, DC.




**Map 3.** **Rock Creek Golf Course within Rock Creek Park, Washington, DC.**




**Map 4.** Langston Golf Course within Anacostia Park, Washington, DC.



# Introduction

**Section cover: Women Golfers at East Potomac Park, ca. 1923. Source: Library of Congress.**

# INTRODUCTION

## RESOURCE OVERVIEW

The National Capital Region of the National Park Service has three golf courses under its management authority: East Potomac Park Golf Course, Rock Creek Golf Course, and Langston Golf Course, all located in the District of Columbia. Between 1917 and 1948, the federal government built seven[1] public golf courses and three miniature golf courses on federal land in the District of Columbia, a testament to the rise in the popularity of the sport of golf and the demand for public golf courses for those who could not afford private memberships to exclusive golf clubs in the early decades of the 20th century. While reflecting the nation-wide trend of public golf, the courses also illustrate the effort of cities across the country to provide active or organized recreation facilities in public parks in the early 20th century, a trend that was not ignored by the federal government despite its somewhat complicated role in the development of recreation areas in the District of Columbia.

While public golf courses strove to provide facilities for those who could not afford private clubs and to emphasize the democracy of golf as a sport not only for the elite, the majority of public courses, particularly those in the southern states, were open to whites only. In Washington, DC, African American golfers established local and national clubs and associations, petitioned for a course of their own, and ultimately fought the Jim Crow segregation policies practiced within the city's recreation areas. The culmination of their efforts was the construction of Langston Golf Course, opened in 1939 to replace an inadequate course on the Lincoln Memorial grounds; the official desegregation of all of the public golf courses by the Department of the Interior and Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes in 1941; and the desegregation of all of the city's recreation areas in 1954.

The majority of the public golf courses in the District of Columbia were built during an era known as the Golden Age of Golf, a period beginning in the 1910s and ending around the Great Depression that produced some of the most innovative and influential courses in the United States. The popularity of the sport increased in this era as did the number of courses, which grew from around 750 in 1916 to nearly 6,000 in 1930.[2] The architects of the District of Columbia's public golf courses, including Walter J. Travis and William S. Flynn, were some of the most

[1] See Table 1.1 on page 14 for a list of the courses. This does not include the first golf course in Rock Creek Park that was built in 1909 by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia on federal land.

[2] PBS, "The Golden Age of Golf Course Architecture in America," Golf's Grand Design, accessed 29 September 2016, http://www.pbs.org/wned/golfs-grand-design/learn-more/golden-age-golf-course-architecture-america/.

noted golf architects of their time, illustrating the importance of the courses as well as the design philosophies instituted during golf's Golden Age.

### EAST POTOMAC PARK GOLF COURSE

East Potomac Park Golf Course, located within the National Mall and Memorial Parks, encompasses approximately 220 acres on a peninsula in Southwest Washington, DC, that is bounded by the Potomac River on the west and the Washington Channel on the east. Ohio Drive borders the course on its east and west sides and Buckeye Drive forms the northern boundary. Along the southern end of the course is Hains Point, the tip of the peninsula. East Potomac Park Golf Course consists of one eighteen-hole course (Blue Course, Par 72, 6,599 yards), a nine-hole beginner course (Red Course, Par 27, 1,142 yards), a nine-hole executive course (White Course, Par 33, 2,420 yards), and an eighteen-hole miniature golf course. All of the courses were initially constructed between 1917 and 1931. The course also has a 100-stall driving range, three practice putting greens, and a three-hole practice course. Since 1921, a concessionaire has managed the operation of the golf course, held through various contracts first by Severine G. Leoffler and later Golf Course Specialists, Inc.

Walter J. Travis designed the first eighteen holes of East Potomac Park Golf Course in 1917, today known as the Blue Course. The first nine holes of the reversible course (historically the A-B Course), were completed and opened to the public in 1920 and the remaining (historically the C-D Course) were completed by the summer of 1923. An adjacent fieldhouse, designed by architect Horace W. Peaslee and constructed using concrete aggregate mosaic developed by craftsman John Joseph Earley, was built concurrently with the first nine holes of the golf course between 1917 and 1920. Since its construction, changes have been made to the layout, the most notable being the shift to one-way play and the remodeling and/or removal of the two-way greens and obsolete hazards in the 1930s. Other changes to the course include modifications to the routing of the back nine due to the construction of the driving range in 1934, and general modernizations to the course.

An additional nine-hole reversible course (the E-F Course) designed by William S. Flynn was built in 1924-1925. This course, known today as the White Course, opened in 1925 and was rebuilt by Flynn in 1945 at its current location. William F. Gordon redesigned the course in 1956. It was later demolished and rebuilt in 1984-1985 to the routing designed by Gordon. The final nine-hole course (the G Course), today's Red Course, was built in 1930-1931 and likely not designed by a golf course architect. Similar to the White Course, this course has undergone many changes since its initial construction, including a redesign by William F. Gordon in 1950 and a more recent redesign in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The eighteen-hole miniature golf course was built and opened in 1931. While several of the course's novelty features are no longer extant, few changes have been made to the original layout of the course. In 1973 East Potomac Park Golf Course and the miniature golf course were listed in the National Register of Historic Places as contributing resources to the East and West Potomac Parks Historic District (updated in 2001).

#### ROCK CREEK GOLF COURSE

Rock Creek Golf Course, situated on the east side of Rock Creek Park at the intersection of 16th Street and Military Road on approximately 100 acres, consists of an eighteen-hole parkland-style course primarily built between 1921 and 1926 and designed by golf course architect William S. Flynn under the direction of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. The rerouting and widening of Military Road in the late 1950s required the modification of several of the holes on the front nine, designed by architect William F. Gordon. Between 1963 and 1965 the National Park Service built a new clubhouse at the golf course to replace the original building, a farmhouse that predated the construction of the golf course. After changes were made to several of the holes on the back nine in the early 1970s, the holes were brought back to their original configuration in the early 1980s. Rock Creek Golf Course was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the Rock Creek Park Historic District in 1991.

#### LANGSTON GOLF COURSE

Langston Golf Course stands on 145 acres in Section G of Anacostia Park within National Capital Parks-East. Located on the north side of Benning Road, the eighteen-hole course follows the perimeter of Kingman Lake, with several holes located on Kingman Island along the western shore of the Anacostia River.
The course replaced an inadequate sand greens course on the Lincoln Memorial grounds and was built specifically for use by African Americans. Planned as early as 1929 by the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, Langston Golf Course was built between 1935 and 1939 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) for the National Park Service. A "temporary" clubhouse, built concurrently with the golf course, was replaced by the current clubhouse between 1950 and 1952. In 1954-1955 the course was expanded to eighteen holes, designed by William F. Gordon. Several changes and improvements were made to the course in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including the addition of the driving range, when famed African American professional golfer Lee Elder and his wife took over the management of the course. In 1999 the concessionaire Golf Course Specialists Inc., who took over the management of the course in 1983, renovated the back nine holes to the design of golf course archi-

tect Edmund B. Ault of Ault, Clark and Associates. Langston Golf Course was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.

## SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY

This Historic Resource Study (HRS) is designed to provide a historic overview of the National Park Service golf courses in the District of Columbia and to evaluate the significance of the golf courses within their historic contexts. Specifically, the goal of the HRS is to document the connection of the golf courses to the larger historic context of the development of urban recreation and the segregation of recreational facilities in the District of Columbia. The HRS was completed in conjunction with a Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for each of the three golf courses. Together these documents will provide much-needed baseline documentation of the golf courses and will ultimately assist the National Park Service in planning for the management, interpretation, and public use of the three extant golf courses in the District of Columbia. The two studies will be available for incorporation into current planning efforts by the National Park Service.

## HISTORIC CONTEXTS AND THEMES

The HRS is divided into four parts. Part 1 contains the three primary historic contexts of the golf courses, divided into chapters. Chapter 1.1 explores the theme of Urban Recreation and Public Golf and provides a comprehensive history of the public golf courses in the District of Columbia. This chapter concisely discusses the history of each golf course within the larger context of urban recreation and public golf in the District of Columbia as well as how the courses reflect larger trends across the country. Chapter 1.2 focuses on African American golfers in the District of Columbia, issues surrounding segregation of the golf courses in the larger context of segregation and urban recreation in the District of Columbia, and the efforts by the African American community and the Department of the Interior to desegregate the golf courses in the District of Columbia. Chapter 1.3 discusses the architecture, architects, and others involved in the construction of the courses, their design philosophies and how the courses are reflective of these philosophies, and a brief discussion of how the courses evolved over time.[3]

Part 2 of the HRS provides a separate chapter for each of the three golf courses. The purpose of Part 2 is to provide a focused, more detailed history of each course's development. Part 3 of the HRS provides an evaluation of significance for the three golf courses and includes a statement of significance and application of National Register criteria, a description of the areas of significance, and a

[3] Although women's participation in golf is not the focus of this study, photographs and textual records indicate that from the beginning, women were a prominent presence on the private and public golf courses in and around the District of Columbia.

recommended period of significance. The last section of the HRS, Part 4, contains recommendations, research questions, and back matter, such as the bibliography and appendices.

## METHODOLOGY

National Capital Region Cultural Resource Specialist Patricia (Patti) Kuhn Babin began the Historic Resource Study in the winter of 2016. Primary research on the early history of the golf courses was conducted at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC, (NARA I), mainly in the textual records of Record Group 42, the Records of Public Buildings and Grounds. Additional textual records were referenced in Record Group 79, the Records of the National Park Service, at the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland (NARA II). Additional research at NARA II included cartographic research and still photographs research. Textual records from Record Group 79 were also referenced at the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, Maryland. The majority of the drawings and plans available at NARA II were accessed through the National Capital Region's Lands Resources Program Center Map Database.

Photographic research, which greatly aided in the understanding of the as-built conditions of the golf courses over time, was invaluable. In addition to NARA II, this photographic research was conducted at the Library of Congress, the Historical Society of Washington, DC, the Washingtoniana Collection at the Martin Luther King Memorial Library, the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University, and the National Capital Region Museum Resource Center. Aerial photographs from the United States Geological Survey were also referenced.

Extensive research was conducted through historic newspaper digital archives of the *Baltimore* and *Washington Afro-American*, the *Washington Evening Star*, the *Washington Post*, and other newspapers, all available online through the District of Columbia Public Library and other institutions.



# Part 1: Historic Context and Themes

**Section cover: Golfers waiting their turn at East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1920. Source: National Archives.**

# Chapter 1.1: Urban Recreation and Public Golf Courses in the District of Columbia

## INTRODUCTION

In support of a public golf course in Washington, DC, President William Howard Taft wrote in 1909:

> I favor a freer use of public parks by the people than we have had in the past. They should be available for tennis, baseball, skating, golf and like games, under reasonable restrictions. Golf is the least injurious of outdoor games to the landscape features of our public parks. I think all our parks should be opened for golf unless there is some specific objection in public needs. The parks of Washington are bought and maintained with public funds and are exempt from taxation. The use to which they are put should not be confined to driveways which are a boon to those who own carriages and motors, but should include health-giving games for the enjoyment of those who cannot afford to develop country clubs.[1]

At the time of Taft's letter, golf was relatively new to the nation's capital and mostly limited to the city's wealthiest residents. Over the next few decades, the Scottish game of golf quickly became one of the most popular recreational pastimes in the city, furthered by the establishment of public courses on federal parkland.

While Scotland has been credited as the birthplace of modern golf, there is much controversy over its origins, with the Romans and the Dutch playing stick-and-ball games as early as the 1st century BCE and the 14th century CE, respectively. As explained by golf historian Herbert Warren Wind, "One thing is certain, though: the Scots were the first to play a game in which the player used an assortment of clubs to strike a ball into a hole dug in the earth. This is the essence of the game we know as golf."[2]

The first written reference to golf in Scotland appears in 1457 when Scottish Parliament banned the game when men were playing the sport instead of practicing archery for military purposes. Despite this and later efforts to prohibit the sport, the game's popularity grew in Scotland over the next few centuries. In 1744 the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers drafted the first rules of golf. Ten years later a group of 22 noblemen and gentlemen established the Society of St. Andrews Golfers, later known as the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St.

1 "Golf Links for All," *Washington Evening Star,* 28 February 1913:3.
2 Herbert Warren Wind, *The Story of American Golf: Its Champions and Championships, 1888-1975* (Open Road Media, 2016).

Andrews.[3] By the mid-1800s several events helped further the popularity of golf in the British Isles. A number of publicized golf matches were held at St. Andrews and other Scottish links and the expanding British railway system allowed large crowds to travel and attend the exhibitions. The introduction of the gutta-percha ball in 1848 also revolutionized the sport with a cheaper and more durable ball, which made golf more affordable and less frustrating.[4]

Historical evidence indicates that golf was played in various towns and counties in colonial, revolutionary, and 19th-century America, but it was not until the late 1880s that the country had its first modern golf club. English and Scottish immigrants and Scottish Americans reintroduced the game of golf and helped drive its popularity in the late 19th century. While the St. Andrew's club in Yonkers, New York, established in 1888 by Scotsman John Reid, is generally recognized as the oldest golf club in the United States, the Dorset Field Club, established in 1886 across the Vermont border by several Scotsmen from Troy, New York, and the Foxburg Club, laid out by Joseph M. Fox in western Pennsylvania, have challenged this claim.[5] In 1894 the United States Golf Association (USGA) was established and between 1894 and 1895 at least fifty clubs laid out golf courses, the majority of which were located in the northeastern United States. By 1900 the number of courses had reached almost 1,000 and the game of golf had also become a popular attraction at vacation resorts, mostly patronized by affluent players.[6]

Suburbanization at the turn of the 20th century, made possible by the streetcar and the railroad, only increased the popularity of golf in the United States. As thousands of middle- and upper-class residents moved to the periphery of American cities, their desire for wholesome recreation and the availability of inexpensive land expanded the establishment of clubs devoted to sports such as fox hunting, horse racing, tennis, and especially golf, which needed adequate space for a course. These clubs, restricted for use by white men, created an outdoor lifestyle that was largely inaccessible to most and a means to illustrate social and class status.[7]

In the District of Columbia, the popularity of golf had grown enough by the end of the 19th century to prompt the establishment of several private clubs and

3 George B. Kirsch, *Golf in America* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 3; The National Library of Scotland, "Golf in Scotland: A Swing Through Time 1457-1744," accessed 9 August 2016, http://digital.nls.uk/golf-in-scotland/index.html.

4 Geoffrey S. Cornish and Ronald E. Whitten, *The Architects of Golf* (New York: HarperColins, 1993), 12-13.

5 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 3-4.

6 Ibid., 6.

7 James M. Mayo, "The American Country Club: An Evolving Elite Landscape," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 26; George B. Kirsch, "Municipal Golf Courses in the United States: 1895-1930," *Journal of Sports History* (Spring 2005): 25-26.



**Figure 1.1. Golfers at the Chevy Chase Club, ca. 1920. (Library of Congress)**

courses in the city's neighboring suburbs. The Chevy Chase Club, located just north of the District boundary line, was initially established in 1892 as a hunt club for Washington's prominent citizens and two years later offered golf along with tennis and polo to its members[8] (Figure 1.1). The Washington Golf Club was founded on January 1, 1894, in Arlington, Virginia, and the club built its first nine-hole course near Arlington National Cemetery. The club eventually moved to its current location off of North Glebe Road and in 1915 incorporated as the Washington Golf and Country Club.[9] The Columbia Golf Club was first organized in 1898 in the Northwest Washington, DC, neighborhood of Schuetzen Park (today's Park View) on the east side of Georgia Avenue.[10] Shortly after its establishment, the club moved to a site further north on the west side of Georgia Avenue (today's Petworth neighborhood) where they converted a vacant lot into a rudimentary nine-hole golf course. The club disbanded in 1910 and most of the members became supporters of the Columbia Country Club, which had purchased a site north of the Chevy Chase Club along Connecticut Avenue in 1909. The club's new golf course opened for play in 1911.[11]

These country clubs and others attracted many of Washington's elite white residents, including congressmen and several presidents. The Washington Golf and Country Club in particular was known as the "Club of the Presidents," with Presidents William Howard Taft, Woodrow Wilson, Warren G. Harding, and Cal-

8 "A Country Club," *Washington Evening Star,* 14 July 1894; Chevy Chase Club, "Club History," accessed 2 March 2016, http://www.chevychaseclub.org/club/scripts/library/view_document.asp?GRP=13004&NS=PUBLIC&APP=80&DN=HISTORY.

9 Washington Golf and Country Club, "History of Washington Golf and Country Club," accessed 3 March 2016, http://www.washingtongolfcc.org/Default.aspx?p=DynamicModule&pageid=350764&ssid=255312&vnf=1.

10 Columbia Country Club, "Club History," accessed 2 March 2016, http://www.columbiacc.org/Default.aspx?p=DynamicModule&pageid=397118&ssid=319837&vnf=1.

11 Ibid.

vin Coolidge, all as active golfing members.[12] President Taft was also a member of the Chevy Chase Club and President Wilson a member of all three clubs as well as the Washington Suburban Golf Club, which was established in 1913 and took over the nine-hole course formerly owned by the Columbia Golf Club along Georgia Avenue NW.[13]

Golf mania around the turn of the 20th century and the proliferation of the suburban country club for the elite greatly influenced urban residents who wished to play golf but were not financially able to join private golf clubs.[14] Ultimately many factors shaped the development of public golf in the United States between the 1890s and the 1930s including the shift in cultural trends, the rapidly growing middle class, mass consumerism based on rising disposable income, increasing leisure time, as well as changing attitudes toward work and the healthful benefits of recreation that made sports more acceptable and desirable for Americans.[15] During this time golf enthusiasts began an arduous crusade to convince skeptical public officials and citizens alike that golf was not just a game for the elite and that towns and cities should provide courses for the masses. While these residents may have been attempting to emulate the pursuits of wealthy suburbanites, they were also fascinated by the game of golf – "its test of character, the opportunity it provided for wholesome and healthy exercise for people of all ages and degrees of athletic talent, and the experience it provided for city folk who enjoyed walking for several hours through a scenic stretch of countryside."[16] Although the suburban country club greatly influenced the growing number of middle-class golfers, they still needed a more affordable and accessible place to play golf.[17]

New York City built the country's first public golf course in 1895 at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. The motivation behind the nine-hole course was a group of affluent residents of suburban Riverdale in the northwest Bronx who had searched for an appropriate rental site for a golf course, but as a last resort petitioned the New York City Parks Commissioner James Roosevelt to include golf in his plans for Van Cortlandt Park. The group developed the nine-hole course and hoped to build a private club, but although Commissioner Roosevelt agreed that the course would be useful to attract people to the new park, the city could not allow municipal land to be in private hands. Ultimately, the "Mosholu Golf Club" had exclusive

12 Washington Golf and Country Club, "History of Washington Golf and Country Club," accessed 3 March 2016, http://www.washingtongolfcc.org/Default.aspx?p=DynamicModule&pageid=350764&ssid=255312&vnf=1.

13 The address of the Washington Suburban Golf Club was 4809 Georgia Avenue NW. Woodmont Country Club, "Landmarks of our First Century," accessed 3 March 2016, http://www.woodmontcc.com/About-Us-Contact-Us-(1)/Historic-Woodmont.aspx.

14 Kirsch, "Municipal Golf Courses in the United States," 24.

15 Kirsch, "Municipal Golf Courses in the United States," 24.

16 Ibid., 26.

17 Ibid., 69.

use of the course for two afternoons a week and the remaining time the course was opened to the public free of charge to anyone who obtained a permit. The course officially opened on July 6, 1895, with immediate success, attracting large crowds on holidays, Saturdays, and Sundays after Sabbath restrictions ended.[18]

Boston established its first public course in Franklin Park in 1896 and Chicago followed in 1901 with a nine-hole course in Jackson Park. By World War I Baltimore, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Providence, Indianapolis, and other American cities had built public golf courses. In 1913 the *New York Times* reported,

> "[A] great wave of agitation for public golf links is sweeping through the United States, and in such decisive fashion as to make it only a matter of time when each city of large size will have a course of its own for the rank and file. Every day brings to light some fresh plea for a public links, making it apparent to all that the man of means in golf is not to be the only one to enjoy the many fascinations of the royal and ancient game."[19]

The newspaper explained that for the courses to be "within the reach of a man who is not rich," they should be well located for easy and inexpensive access. It also argued that the cost of upkeep of a golf course was not more than that of an ordinary park and that they provided "enjoyment of a healthful nature which cannot be obtained in regular parks, where people may walk on concrete and must touch nothing."[20]

It was this atmosphere that resulted in the construction of no less than eight public golf courses in the District of Columbia between 1909 and 1948, built for the nation's capital by citizen demand (see Table 1.1). The construction of these courses reflects the rising popularity of golf in the United States and the response of many communities to build public golf courses during the early decades of the 20th century. In 1917, the year that construction began on East Potomac Park Golf Course, a country-wide study indicated that 34 cities in the United States had municipal golf courses.[21] By 1924, a year after Rock Creek Golf Course opened to the public, the number had grown to around 140. The number of public courses across the country more than doubled to 291 by 1930.[22]

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18 Kirsch, "Municipal Golf Courses in the United States," 28-29; NYC Parks, "The History of Golf Courses in Parks," accessed 2 March 2016, http://www.nycgovparks.org/about/history/golf.

19 "Public Golf Links Growing Popular," *New York Times,* 13 April 1913:S3.

20 Biddle also discussed the golf course and other recreation areas including tennis courts at the Brightwood Reservoir site in 1905, see "Col. Biddle Wins Praise," *Washington Post,* 10 January 1905:2; "Public Golf Links Growing Popular," *New York Times,* 13 April 1913:S3.

21 "Col. Harts Plans to Help Golfers," *Washington Post,* 25 March 1917:S2.

22 Kirsch, "Municipal Golf Courses in the United States," 36.

| GOLF COURSE | YEAR OPENED | YEAR CLOSED |
|---|---|---|
| Rock Creek Park (south of Military Road) | 1909* | 1911* |
| West Potomac Park | 1914 | 1942 |
| East Potomac Park | 1920 | |
| Rock Creek (north of Military Road) | 1923 | |
| Lincoln Memorial | 1924 | 1939 |
| Anacostia | 1931 | 1958 |
| East Potomac Park Miniature Golf | 1931 | |
| Langston | 1939 | |
| Fort Dupont | 1948 | 1971 |
| Anacostia Park Miniature Golf | 1948 | 1971 |
| Langston Miniature Golf | 1948 | ca.1960 |

* This course was built by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia and never officially opened due to lack of funding to finish the course, but still physically existed as late as 1911.

**Table 1.1. Public golf courses built in the District of Columbia**

## LATE 19TH- AND EARLY 20TH- CENTURY URBAN RECREATION IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Organized sports were practically nonexistent in American cities during the early 19th century. By the end of the century, sports were one of the most popular pastimes for city residents with commercialized spectator sports such as baseball and horse racing and recreational sports such as croquet, skating, and cycling gaining widespread popularity. The development of both urban parks and the increase in sports were heavily influenced by the urban revolution between 1820 and 1870 when the population of Americans living in cities quadrupled.[23] By the end of the 19th century, 35 percent of Americans lived in urban areas and by 1920 the number of Americans living in cities outnumbered those in rural areas.[24]

The United States' first urban parks stemmed from criticisms of the crowded, polluted, and industrial atmosphere of cities. Thus, urban parks were initially designed as relief from these sordid conditions and conceived as great pleasure grounds to resemble the characteristics of the countryside. Large urban parks, such as New York's Central Park established in 1858 and designed by celebrated landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, created idealized natural scenery and countered the perceived unhealthiness and immorality caused by the uncontrolled growth of American cities. These urban green spaces provided fresh air, lakes, and meadows as an answer to the stress caused by the indoor work of the industrial city. Early recreation in these parks is often categorized as being passive

[23] Steven A. Riess, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 13.

[24] "Urbanization of America," accessed 6 September 2016, http://www.theusaonline.com/people/urbanization.htm.

or unstructured, and included horseback riding, bicycling, skating, walking, and picnicking.[25]

By the turn of the 20th century, urban reformers believed that organized recreation was necessary in public parks and newly planned urban parks shifted from the pleasure ground ideal to reform parks with structured activities. Larger incomes, shorter work weeks, earlier retirement, and longer vacations of the early 1900s left people with more free time. Advocates of the reform parks believed that this new abundance of time was a moral threat to society as it could easily be spent in saloons, dance halls, picture shows, and on other disreputable pursuits. As explained by Galen Cranz in *The Politics of Park Design*, "One main line of reform thinking . . .was that this gap of free time generated a demand for increasing recreational service, and during the first three decades of the century demand in itself justified the sudden creation of municipal facilities, beaches, golf courses, stadiums, tennis courts, and picnic areas."[26] Many cities, including Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Washington, DC, all built their first public golf courses within the cities' large urban parks around the turn of the 20th century, illustrating not only the shift toward organized recreation, but also the rise in the popularity of golf.

While generally speaking, public recreation in Washington, DC, reflected national trends, the city's unique management greatly complicated its public recreation system. As the seat of the federal government, many aspects of local recreation such as land acquisition and site development fell under the auspices of executive branch offices as well as congressional committees and other senators and congressmen who had a hand in the city's affairs. Yet the city also was a municipal entity, with three District Commissioners, the Board of Education, and other city agencies and organizations that had a stake in public recreation.[27]

The complexity surrounding the use and administration of recreation areas in the District of Columbia has a long, convoluted history. The establishment and management of the park system in the District of Columbia began in 1791 when President George Washington appointed three commissioners to lay out a district for the permanent seat of the Government of the United States. Among other duties, the commissioners were responsible for the protection and care of all public lands. Concurrently, President Washington appointed Maj. Pierre Charles L'Enfant, a

25 William Bushong, *Rock Creek Park Historic Resource Study* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1990), 61; Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1989), 5-7.

26 Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*, 62.

27 Martha H. Verbrugge, "Exercising Civil Rights: Public Recreation and Racial Segregation in Washington, DC, 1900-1949," in *DC Sports: The Nation's Capital at Play*, Chris Elzey and David K. Wiggins, eds. (Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press, 2015), 108-109.

French engineer, as the first United States City Surveyor to lay out the new capital city. While L'Enfant's resultant plan determined the layout of the streets and avenues, the locations of major buildings and open spaces, and envisioned many beautiful parks, the establishment of the city's park system languished until the late 1800s and early 1900s as the city lacked a comprehensive plan for public improvements and decisions about parks, public buildings, and other public projects were made on an ad hoc basis.[28] Exceptions in these formative years include the acquisition of land and the initial development of several of the city's most important parks, including the National Mall, the Washington Monument Grounds, the Capitol Grounds, and the President's Park.[29] In 1849 the Department of the Interior was created and given direct control of the park system of the nation's capital.[30]

Two important developments in the management of federal land within the District of Columbia occurred during the second half of the 19th century and shaped the management of federal lands in the early decades of the 20th century. Following an act of March 2, 1867 (14 Stat. 466), the Chief Engineer of the United States Army assumed the management, care, and improvements of all public lands within the District of Columbia under the Office of Buildings and Grounds. In 1898 a congressional act further clarified the federal and municipal control of land in the District of Columbia and placed the parks of the city under the exclusive control of the federal government through the Chief Engineer and the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. With this act, Congress recognized that the District's parks should be administrated by the federal government because they belonged to the entire nation.[31] The Office of Public Buildings and Grounds retained day-to-day management of the federal property in Washington, DC, until 1925, when an independent office of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, responsible directly to the President of the United States, took over the duties. In 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 6166 and federal lands within the District were transferred to the National Park Service under the Department of the Interior (see Table 1.2).[32]

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28 Verbrugge, "Exercising Civil Rights," 109; Cornelius W. Heine, *A History of National Capital Parks* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1953), accessed 1 November 2017, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/nace/adhi.htm ; Frederick Albert Gutheim and Antoinette J. Lee, *Worthy of the Nation: Washington, DC, From L'Enfant to the National Capital Planning Commission*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 77.

29 Heine, *A History of National Capital Parks*.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Alan H. Lessoff, "Building Managers for the Nation's City," accessed 22 April 2014, http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=12587; Heine, *A History of National Capital Parks*.

| AGENCY | DATE |
|---|---|
| War Department/Army Chief of Engineers<br>Office of Public Buildings and Grounds | 1914-1925 |
| Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital | 1925-1933 |
| Department of the Interior/National Park Service | 1933-Present |

**Table 1.2. Administration of the public golf courses in the District of Columbia[33]**

A pivotal event in the city's recreation system occurred in 1890 with the development of the city's first quintessential urban park, Rock Creek Park. While Washington, DC, lagged behind other cities in population size and physical growth, the park was a response to urban congestion and the proliferation of the late 19th-century urban park movement that was greatly influenced by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. With its establishment, the city followed the nationwide trend of large urban parks, such as New York's Central Park (1858), Philadelphia's Fairmont Park (1865), St. Louis's Forest Park (1876) and San Francisco's Golden Gate Park (1879).[34]

The enabling legislation for Rock Creek Park called for land to be set aside for the purpose of creating a "public park and pleasure ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States." In the 19th century, a pleasure ground was typically a naturalistic park designed for quiet contemplation of the scenery, offering fresh air, woods, and meadows in response to the city's unhealthy and crowded conditions.[35] Initially, visitors primarily picnicked in the park and used its many trails and roads for walking, riding, or driving.[36]

At the end of the 19th century, large recreation areas were also planned along the Potomac and Anacostia rivers on land reclaimed by the Corps of Engineers, today's East and West Potomac Parks and Anacostia Park. Theodore Bingham, Officer in Charge of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds (1897-1903) saw the parks as being connected by parkways to form a unified park system. As the District of Columbia approached its centennial, Bingham requested funding to develop a comprehensive study of the city's park system.[37] The resultant plan, known as the McMillan Plan for Senator James McMillan who commissioned the report, was released in 1902. The illustrious McMillan Commission itself included urban designer Daniel Burnham, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., architect Charles F. McKim, and sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens, all renowned in

33 This does not include the first golf course in Rock Creek Park that was built by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia in 1906-1909.
34 Bushong, *Rock Creek Park*, 61-62.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 106.
37 Sara Amy Leach and Elizabeth Barthold, *L'Enfant Plan of the City of Washington, D.C.*, National Register Nomination (Washington, DC: National Park Service/Historic American Buildings Survey, 1994), 8:31.

their professions. Greatly influenced by the City Beautiful Movement promoted by the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the grandiose plan of the McMillan Commission magnified and expanded the original plan of the city designed by Pierre L'Enfant with the creation of waterfront parks, parkways, an improved National Mall, and new monuments and vistas. In order to protect the goals of the McMillan Commission, Congress established the Commission of Fine Arts in 1910 as a consulting organization to the federal government on the design of bridges, parks, other artistic matters, and public buildings.[38]

Around the time of the development of the McMillan Plan, park ideals had shifted to follow the urban reform movements of the turn of the 20th century. Echoed in the plans for East Potomac Park, located along the Potomac River in Southwest Washington, DC, were the philosophies of the reform park and the need for organized recreation areas. As the 1916 report of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds on the development of the new park stated,

> Suitable public recreation facilities are now widely recognized as an essential factor in laying the foundation for good citizenship and for the healthful, moral, and physical development of the people. In recent years it has become more and more the duty of municipalities to provide wholesome outdoor recreation for the public in such a form as may be readily available for those who cannot otherwise have such opportunities.[39]

In contrast to the initial plans for Rock Creek Park, which included scenic roadways, bridle paths, and picnic areas, plans for East Potomac Park included these features but also numerous areas for organized, active recreation. East Potomac Park was meant to be a model "public playground" and Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds Col. William W. Harts's 1916 plan for the park was both ambitious and comprehensive. The plan called for a large stadium for 14,000 people, two sand beaches with bathing pools, a children's playground and wading pool, a 60-acre parade ground, a boat harbor, and four boat houses. In addition, Harts planned a canal that would cross the park from the Washington Channel to the Potomac River and provide opportunities for canoeing and a convenient way for small boats to get from the Washington Channel to the river without having to go around Hains Point. Recreation areas in the park were to be grouped around a fieldhouse and included tennis courts, basketball courts, croquet courts, and roque (a form of croquet played on a hard surface) courts. Three miles of bridle paths were planned for along the shores of the park and eight miles of walks with

[38] National Park Service, "The L'Enfant & McMillan Plans," accessed 8 July 2016, https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/lenfant.htm.

[39] United States Congress, House of Representatives, *Development of East Potomac Park, Letter from the Secretary of War Ad Interim Transmitting a Report of the Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, Presenting a Comprehensive Plan for the Development of East Potomac Park as a Public Recreation Ground*, 64th Congress, 1st Session, 1916, Doc. 1038, 6.

shelters and seats were planned to connect the areas and its many "natural vistas and landscapes."[40]

Paralleling the development of large, federally-owned parks in the District of Columbia around the turn of the 20th century was the playground movement. Like the coinciding urban and reform park movements, the playground movement was tied to larger social reform efforts that responded to the growing industrial, urban poverty inherent in the late 19th century. Distressed by the number of children killed or injured while playing in city streets, reformers believed that providing children with a designated place to play would protect the children from dangers associated with city life.[41]

In the late 19th century, Washington lacked neighborhood playgrounds; children typically played games in the street as lands within federal control were not used as play areas, with the exception of the Washington Monument grounds that received funding for a temporary children's playground in 1890. In 1901 the founders of the "Neighborhood House," a settlement house located near 5th and N streets, SW, opened their backyard to children, becoming the city's first supervised play area. With the help of the DC Commissioners and US Senator James McMillan, the Neighborhood House obtained a large, vacant city lot at 7th and N streets, SW in 1902 for use as an additional playground. These playgrounds, however, were only for white children. In 1903, Sarah Collins Fernandis, founder of the Colored Social Settlement, opened a playground for African American children at 1st and L streets, SW. At that time, the neighborhoods in Southwest Washington were perhaps the poorest in the city.[42]

In 1903 the newly formed Public Playgrounds Committee, which consisted of both the Neighborhood House and the Colored Social Settlement, created three new playgrounds. By 1906 the organization had reorganized as the Washington Playground Association and opened eight additional playgrounds. Concurrently, the District's Department of Education also opened public playgrounds for summertime use at 11 of the city's public schools. The District government took over the administration of the city's playgrounds in 1911 when Congress approved legislation and allocated funds to the District of Columbia Municipal Department of Playgrounds.[43] In 1917 a new Community Center Department was created to work with the Department of Playgrounds to provide recreational and education-

40 House, *Development of East Potomac Park*, 15; Laura L. Bobeczco and Judith H. Robinson, *East and West Potomac Parks Historic District*, National Register Nomination (Washington, DC: Robinson & Associates, 1998), 69.

41 Edna Johnston and Julia Claypool, *District of Columbia Parks & Recreation Master Plan Historic Preservation Review* (Washington, DC: History Matters, 2014), 5-6.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

al programs for children and adults. Between 1917 and 1942, when the District of Columbia Recreation Board was established, the Community Center Department and the Department of Education supervised the District's recreational programs and facilities.[44] In this complex atmosphere, the District of Columbia's recreation facilities and grounds were planned, built, and maintained by a myriad of city and federal agencies.[45] City departments included the Department of Playgrounds and the Department of Education, while the federal government had the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, followed by the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, and lastly the National Park Service.

Illustrating the complexity of the management of the city's recreation areas, Henry Litchfield West, golf editor for the *Washington Post* and former District of Columbia Commissioner, noted in 1925, after the golf courses at East Potomac Park and Rock Creek Park opened, how different the public golf courses in the District of Columbia were compared to other cities such as Baltimore. West reported,

> In the first place, although the two public links in the city are called municipal courses, they are nothing of the kind. They are entirely independent of the city government, which has nothing whatsoever to do with their management or support.
>
> This unique situation is due to the fact that Washington is under national as well as local control. The Federal Government owns and exercises jurisdiction over the parks and the public courses are located within the limits of these reservations. The officer in charge is an appointee of the President and is directly responsible to the Secretary of War.[46]

In 1924 Congress passed legislation to create the National Capital Park Commission to ensure the implementation of the McMillan Plan. Two years later Congress expanded the commission's duties. Renamed the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCP&PC) in 1926, the commission provided "comprehensive, systematic, and continuous development of the recreation system of the National Capital and its environs" and to direct land acquisitions for this purpose.[47] The resulting NCP&PC's Recreation System Plan, developed in 1929 and adopted in 1930, was one of the first steps in coordinating the recreation facilities in the District.[48] Further progress in the expansion of the city's park system was made in 1930 with the passage of the Capper-Crampton Act that provided federal funds

44 Ibid., 7.
45 Ibid.
46 Henry Litchfield West, "Problems of Capital City Municipal Linksmen are Negligible," *Baltimore Sun,* 22 March 1925:S3.
47 Fortner, *A History of the Municipal Recreation Department*, 421; Gutheim and Lee, *Worthy of the Nation*, 140, National Capital Planning Commission, "History," accessed 29 December 2016, https://www.ncpc.gov/ncpc/Main(T2)/About_Us(tr2)/About_Us(tr3)/History.html.
48 Fortner, *A History of the Municipal Recreation Department*, 129-131.

for the NCP&PC to acquire new parkland and create plans for new parks and recreation centers in the District of Columbia.[49]

In 1935 President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Recreation Committee of the District of Columbia, in part because land that was being purchased in accordance with the 1929 NCP&PC Recreation System Plan was not being used in a joint manner by the Department of Playgrounds, the Education Department, and National Capital Parks. As explained by Bernard Fortner in *A History of the Municipal Recreation Department of the District of Columbia (1790-1954)*, "what was designed as a single functional facility of school, park, and play area was being wrecked because of three different administrations and their insistence upon having their own facilities."[50] The new committee sought to unify the three agencies and consisted of District Commissioner George E. Allen, the Board of Education's Henry L. Quinn, and National Capital Park Superintendent C. Marshall Finnan and chaired by Frederick A. Delano, who also was the chairman of the NCP&PC.[51]

Duplication of efforts among the different agencies in charge of recreation increased in the late 1930s, causing wasteful repetition of overhead, confusion among the public, and a "spirit of petty rivalry."[52] The District of Columbia responded in 1939 by consolidating the Department of Education's Community Center Department and the District Commissioner's Department of Playgrounds to create Community Center and Playgrounds Department.[53] After much effort by the President's Committee, the NCP&PC, and testimonies in the House of Representatives from the Board of Trade, the Board of Education, and the Department of the Interior, a bill was passed on April 29, 1942, (Public Law 534) that established the Recreation Board of the District of Columbia. With its establishment, the various city and federal government agencies believed that the board would bring about the results initially intended by Roosevelt's "District of Columbia Recreation Committee in 1935," one of coordinated, efficient efforts in improving and increasing public recreation in the city.[54]

49 Johnston and Claypool, *District of Columbia Parks & Recreation Master Plan*, 2014, 7.
50 Fortner, *A History of the Municipal Recreation Department*, 181.
51 Ibid., 180-181.
52 Community Center and Playgrounds Department, "Some Aspects of the Coordinated Recreation Plan," 31 March 1941, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2827, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
53 Fortner, *A History of the Municipal Recreation Department*, 212.
54 Ibid., 181, 246.

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC URBAN GOLF COURSES IN WASHINGTON, DC

By the turn of the 20th century, District of Columbia residents began to show interest in establishing a public golf course in one of the city's parks. In 1907 the *Washington Post* remarked on public golf and asked:

> Is a public park a beautiful place to be merely looked at or is it a place to be used? This question has been answered by several American cities in whose parks public golf courses have been laid out … In nearly all city parks playing of lawn tennis, baseball, football, cricket, and croquet is permitted; but it is especially fitting that the public park provide a course for golf, for that is a game none can enjoy otherwise without belonging to a club. The public park can be put to no better use than to provide facilities for the people's pastimes.[55]

While Washington, DC, was somewhat behind other East Coast cities in establishing a public golf course, it benefited from having commissioners and other city officials who were avid golfers. The Commissioners of the District of Columbia began discussing a public course as early as 1904 and first announced their plans to establish the city's first public links in 1906.[56] The city commissioners were a three-member board appointed by the President that administered municipal affairs in Washington from 1878 until the enactment of Home Rule in 1974. One member of the commission was always a military engineer, who controlled all contracts for municipal public works and buildings. The remaining two commissioners were civilians, typically prominent local lawyers or businessmen.[57]

Behind the plan for the golf course was District Engineer Commissioner Col. John Biddle, District Commissioner Henry Litchfield West, Capt. Jay J. Morrow and Capt. William Kelly, both assistants to the Engineer Commissioner, and E. M. Talcott, the assistant engineer in charge of street extension. All of the men were golfers.[58] Colonel Biddle had been considering a course for some time and studied the success of public courses in New York, Indianapolis, and other cities. Biddle noted that these courses were always crowded with "those devotees of the game who are financially unable to afford a membership in an exclusive golf club."[59]

The commissioners' chosen location for the golf course was Rock Creek Park. At the time the responsibility for the management and improvement of the park was under the Rock Creek Board of Control, consisting of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia and the Chief of Engineers of the Army. The recommended

55 "Use Parks for Pastimes," *Washington Post,* 10 March 1907:R7.
56 Henry Litchfield West, "From Tee to Green," *Washington Post,* 24 August 1924:S4; "Public Golf Links Soon," *Washington Post*, 3 November 1906:9.
57 Bushong, *Rock Creek Park*, 78.
58 "Public Golf Links Soon," *Washington Post*, 3 November 1906:9.
59 "Public Golf Links Soon," *Washington Post*, 3 November 1906:9; "Want a Public Course," *The Baltimore Sun*, 5 November 1906:8.

site was along the south side of the Brightwood Reservoir, built inside the boundaries of the park between 1899 and 1900 west of the intersection of 16th Street and what is now Colorado Avenue, NW.[60] The site had several "natural hazards" and had been somewhat cleared during the construction of the reservoir, both factors that aided in lowering the overall cost of the project. Also reducing the construction costs was the use of a "chain gang," to clear the course of rubbish and underbrush.[61] The commissioners anticipated that they would be able to fund construction of the course without a special congressional appropriation, but noted that an appropriation for the ongoing maintenance of the greens was likely needed.[62]

The *Evening Star* praised Colonel Biddle's plan for establishing a public golf course for its use of public land "for the maximum benefit of the people."[63] As the chosen location of the new golf course, the newspaper not only commended Rock Creek for its picturesque qualities and natural landscape that were conducive to the game of golf, but it also felt that a golf course would respect the characteristics that were instrumental in the park's development. As reported in 1906:

> This beautiful stretch of country, including both the rugged scenery of the creek itself and the pastoral landscape effects of the higher land, is now held by law immune from spoliation, and the important consideration is to render it of the utmost value to the community … The suggestion of a public golf course does not necessarily involve any infraction of the excellent rule already established. It is possible to lay out links on the more level stretches in a manner to cause no disfigurement whatsoever, while such a use of the land will undoubtedly add decidedly to the public appreciation of this valuable reservation.[64]

On November 24, 1906, Findlay Douglas, a Scottish immigrant and winner of the 1898 United States Amateur title, accompanied Colonel Biddle to Rock Creek Park and approved the commissioner's site for the new course.[65] Plans called for eighteen holes that started south of the reservoir near Colorado Avenue, extended north along the east bank of Rock Creek, and crossed Military Road to a short distance above Milk House Ford. Here, the course would run east near 16th Street and then south to the final hole just north of the reservoir[66] (Figure 1.2).

Also benefitting the course was its accessibility from an extension of 14th Street streetcar line that terminated at Decatur Street, providing convenient and afford-

60 Thomas Chused, "Brightwood Reservoir," Crestwood History Blog, 26 June 1913, accessed 26 September 2016, http://www.crestwood-dc.org/history/crestwood-history-blog/brightwood-reservoir.

61 "Public Golf Links Soon," *Washington Post*, 3 November 1906:9; "Provide Free Sports," *Washington Post,* 6 November 1906:6.

62 "Provide Free Sports," *Washington Post,* 6 November 1906:6.

63 "A Public Golf Course," *Washington Evening Star*, 7 November 1906.

64 Ibid.

65 In the 1898 US Amateur Championship, Douglas defeated Walter J. Travis, who would later serve as architect of East Potomac Park Golf Course.

66 "Douglas Inspects Golf Course," *Washington Post,* 25 November 1906:S3.

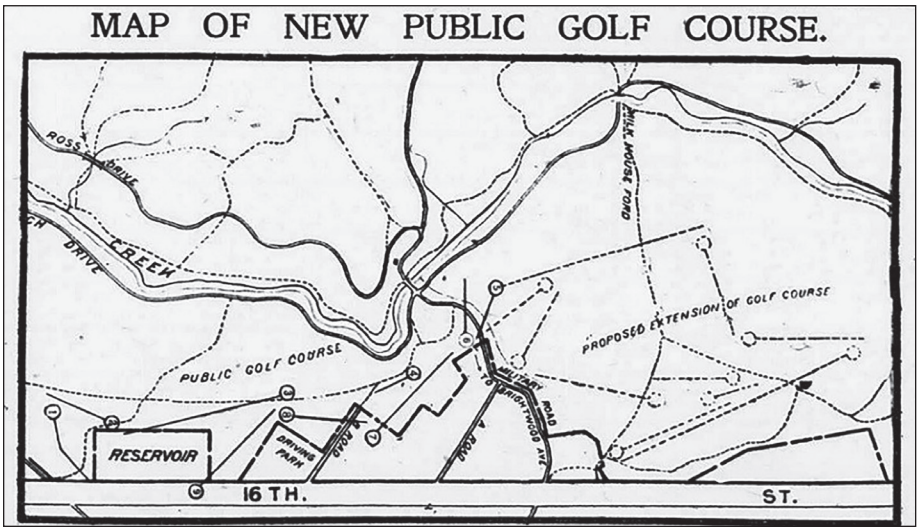



**Figure 1.2.** Map of Rock Creek Golf Course. (*Evening Star*, 1 September 1907)

able transportation to government workers and others, "many of whom are unable to afford membership in exclusive clubs."[67] Plans called for a clubhouse to be built by private funds on privately owned land near the course, and tennis courts, baseball diamonds, fields for football and croquet, and playgrounds in the vicinity of the reservoir.[68]

Like the other recreation areas in the city, Rock Creek Golf Course was for white use only. During the planning stages of the project, the *Washington Post* reported that, "Should the colored population of the city manifest interest in playing golf sufficient to warrant the construction of a public golf course for their use, the Commissioners believe that the links could be established on the flats south of the [Ellipse]."[69] A November 14, 1906, memo from Ormsby McCannon, a local attorney, golfer, and member of the Chevy Chase Club, to E. M. Talcott on the establishment of a public course in the District said, "The color question may arise. To avoid this, special permission [from] the D.C. golf committee should be obtained making it a question of 'red tape' or some special 'pull' with such a committee. If the Negro was allowed at all times, there would be much trouble and it would make it a loafing place for crap shooters. If deemed advisable a day certain[ly] might be set aside for Negroes. A definite regulation will be necessary"[70] (see Chapter 1.2 for more on segregation).

By September 1, 1907, the first nine holes of the golf course were nearing completion and the site only required clearing, plowing, a small amount of grading, and

67 "Provide Free Sports," *Washington Post,* 6 November 1906:6.
68 "District of Columbia: Casino and Athletic Grounds Are Planned for Rock Creek Park," *Washington Post*, 6 November 1906:11; "Provide Free Sports," *Washington Post*, 6 November 1906:6.
69 "Provide Free Sports," *Washington Post,* 6 November 1906:6.
70 Memo to E. M. Talcott, 14 November 1906, RG 42, Entry 311, Box 11, National Archives, Washington, DC.

planting of grass.[71] The remaining nine holes were to be built the following spring, when "the devotees of the sport will be able to indulge freely in this healthful and fascinating outdoor exercise."[72] District Commissioner West optimistically stated that the golf course "should prove very popular … The general topography and the scenery make it an ideal locality for all lovers of the good old game. Most of the hazards are natural, and they are 'great.' Everything about the course is excellent."[73]

The commissioners reported in 1908 that construction on the nine-hole course had been finished and "good growth of grass secured," yet a year later the city lacked the funds to cut the grass and keep the course in good condition, thereby delaying the course from opening to the public. Around $150 was needed to fully complete the course. The course required "only the minor finishing touches," a large lawn mower to maintain the grass, and targets to mark the holes.[74]

Even with so little needed to complete the course, the city commissioners still found it difficult to secure additional funds; all appropriations given by Congress during the last session had to be used for specific purposes. Without the necessary funds, the course stood "practically finished and a small amount of cost blocking many eager Washingtonians from play."[75] Ultimately the course was never completed. In 1911 the *Washington Herald* reported that the course still existed, but was not generally used due to lack of information to the public about who could play on the course. The course had been neglected, but would "require very little retouching to get the putting greens and bunkers in shape. Splendid hazards are afforded by the natural lay of the land in Rock Creek Park near Piney Branch Road and there is no reason why this course should not be re-established." The newspaper suggested that if proper interest was shown by the public and local golf clubs, the commissioners would improve the course.[76]

While golf was gaining in popularity across the country, the District of Columbia lacked the full support needed to secure a public course, particularly from Congress—some members of Congress did not support the public golf course and

71 "Golf Course to be Ideal," *Washington Post,* 1 September 1907; Commissioners of the District of Columbia, *Annual Report of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, Year Ended June 30, 1907, Vol. I Report of Commissioners Miscellaneous Reports* (Washington, DC: Washington Printing Office, 1907), 49.

72 "Golf Course to be Ideal," *Washington Post,* 1 September 1907:S3.

73 Ibid.

74 Commissioners of the District of Columbia, *Annual Report of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, Year Ended June 30, 1908, Vol. II, Engineer Department Reports* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1908), 189; "Talcott is Stymied," *Washington Evening Star*, 7 May 1909.

75 "Golf Course Tied Up," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 September 1909.

76 Tony Sousa, "Among the Golfers," *Washington Herald,* 16 April 1911.

even predicted its failure.[77] The demise of the course in Rock Creek Park was later explained, "In those days … anybody who mentioned golf as a public recreation was an object either of pity or amusement, and Congress put its foot hard down on the project."[78] Almost 20 years later, Commissioner West clarified, "The project finally fell through because Congress looked with disfavor upon golfing as a recreation at public expense."[79] The efforts were not entirely wasted; in 1916 playing fields, a large picnic area, shelters, and tennis courts were built adjacent to the reservoir in the area cleared for the golf course.[80]

### POTOMAC PARK AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF GOLF

The majority of Washington's public golf courses were developed during what is considered the "Golden Age" of golf architecture in America, loosely defined as beginning in the early 1900s and ending around the onset of the Great Depression, when some of the best known and most influential golf courses in the United States were built and designed by the country's greatest course architects.[81] During this time the number of courses grew exponentially from 742 in 1918 to a total of 5,691 by 1930.[82] The era from 1920 to 1930 is considered by many historians one of the most creative, daring, and innovative periods in American history, aided by rapid economic expansion. Geoff Shackelford, author of *The Golden Age of Golf*, said, "In no place was this more evident than in golf course architecture, where early layouts were transformed from mundane and geometrically-edged mediocrities, to grand-scaled, artistic and strategically designed masterpieces."[83]

During the Golden Age, American architects abandoned the primitive, geometric designs of the decades before and began to study the classic links of Great Britain and Scotland, incorporating their strategic principles into golf course design. Shackelford specifically defines the "Golden Age" as beginning in 1911, when Charles Blair Macdonald (who first coined the term "golf architect" in 1902) opened his ideal course at The National Golf Links of America on Long Island. After studying the best courses in Scotland and England, Macdonald set out to design a course that incorporated what he considered to be the best holes of courses

77 "Golf Course Tied Up," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 September 1909.
78 "Local Golf Plans Interest Washington," *Baltimore Sun,* 22 March 1925:S3.
79 Henry Litchfield West, "From Tee to Green," *Washington Post,* 24 August 1924:S4.
80 Bushong, *Rock Creek Park*, 117.
81 There is some discrepancy of when the Golden Age of Golf begins. Some sources include a separate development period known as the Landmark Period (1900-1918) when standardization of courses began and definitions of the ideal golf course took form with Charles Blair Macdonald's design for the National Golf Links of America. Geoff Shackelford defines the Golden Age as beginning in 1911 when MacDonald's National Golf Links of America opened since it began a wave of new thinking in golf course design. See the Cultural Landscape Foundation's "Landmark Period" at http://tclf.org/category/designed-landscape-types/golf-course/landmark-period and Geoff Shackelford, *The Golden Age of Golf* (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 1999), 3.
82 Shackelford, *The Golden Age of Golf*, 2-3.
83 Ibid.

found in the British Isles, had no weak holes, and could be played by golfers of all skill levels. Architects like Macdonald as well as the influx of English and Scottish greenkeepers and golf professionals furthered the understanding of the game, creating a shift toward better designs. The architects also often collaborated and shared information with each other and wrote about the principals that embodied the finest layouts. Finally, the era saw much improvement in construction methods, from horse-drawn slip scrapers and man-made elements of the early 1900s and 1910s to steam shovels and road scrapers of the 1920s and bulldozers of the 1930s. These advances improved the quality of the layouts and allowed for more dramatic features to be built. Better methods of drainage and tree removal all allowed for more courses to be built on inland sites that were once considered unsuitable for golf.[84]

Driving the golf boom during the 1920s was the rise of suburban country clubs for the upper and middle classes, which "both reflected and reinforced the latest rounds of suburbanization outside of the nation's major cities." With golf as the centerpiece, these clubs also offered social and other lavish amenities and spurred a boom in residential real estate values in areas surrounding the club.[85] In Washington, there were at least 14 country clubs in the surrounding suburbs by 1939: Argyle, Army and Navy, Beaver Dam, Belle Haven, Burning Tree, Capital, Chevy Chase, Columbia, Congressional, Indian Spring, Kenwood, Manor, Woodmont (formerly the Washington Suburban Golf Club), and Washington.[86]

The expansion of golf courses was not limited to country clubs. The municipal golf movement also inspired hundreds of new golf clubs in cities and small towns across the country for players of modest means. The September 1925 issue of *American Golfer* reported that almost every town in the country with eight to ten thousand residents had a golf course. As described by Kirsch in *Golf in America*, "The return of peace after World War I and the prosperity of the 1920s for many Americans generated new waves of enthusiasm for golf and led to fresh calls for municipal sponsorship of expanded and new courses. Supporters of public golf course links pointed to the game's popularity, its health benefits, and its potential for expanding American democracy in the realm of recreation." Municipal course players began to organize their own clubs and the United States Golf Association recognized the grassroots movement by sponsoring the first Public Links Championship in 1922.[87]

84 Ibid., 4-9, 31-32.
85 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 92.
86 "Thousands Find Their Sports Thrill on DC Fairways," *Washington Post,* 26 May 1939:10.
87 George B. Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 93-94.

Illustrating the growing popularity of the sport in Washington, DC, the *Evening Star* reported in 1922 that "Washington, although for years a leader in outdoor sports, quite recently has shown a distinct tendency to favor golf as its leading pastime." There were no less than 16 golf courses constructed or in the process of being constructed in the area immediately surrounding the city, "over which the fast-growing army of golfers do or soon will battle with par or knit their brows in an effort to learn fundamentals of the ancient Scottish game."[88] These courses consisted of private clubs and public courses in East and West Potomac parks. During the 1920s and 1930s, the federal government opened a total of 99 holes of public golf in the District of Columbia, spread over six entirely new golf courses. The rise in public golf was not limited to whites – black Washingtonians also sought their own course, proving that the sport crossed social and racial lines (see Chapter 1.2).

By 1911, less than two years after the demise of the golf course at Rock Creek Park, interest in a public golf course in the District once again gained momentum. Advancing the effort was the election of President William Howard Taft, who was an avid golfer and a strong supporter of municipal golf. During Taft's presidential campaign, President Theodore Roosevelt advised Taft not to play golf in fear that its patrician associations would offend western voters.[89] Taft ignored his recommendation and continued to play throughout his campaign.

After his election and at a dinner in December 1908 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the St. Andrew's Golf Club in New York, Taft emphasized his belief that golf was not just a sport for the elite. Taft said:

> Preceding the late election campaign there were many of my sympathizers and supporters who deprecated it becoming known that I was addicted to golf as an evidence of aristocratic tendencies and a desire to play only a rich man's game. You know, and I know, that there is nothing more democratic than golf; that there is nothing which furnishes a greater test of character and self-restraint, nothing which puts one more on an equality with one's fellows, or, I may say, puts one lower than one's fellows, than the game of golf.[90]

Golf champion, author, and architect Walter J. Travis, who later designed the East Potomac Golf Course, said of Taft's devotion to golf:

> I am a Democrat, but not a [William Jennings] Bryan Democrat, and when I saw how eagerly and how well, too, Mr. Taft played golf during the Presidential campaign, why, that was good enough for me. There is a broad free masonry in golf that makes all players king, and if a man plays golf it is pretty good evidence

88 "Golf Making Great Strides in Washington," *Washington Sunday Star*, 18 June 1922.
89 Michael L. Bromley, *William Howard Taft and the First Motoring Presidency, 1909-1913* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2003), 35.
90 "A Poor Man's Game is Golf, Says Taft," *New York Times,* 11 December 1908:3.

> that he is a cheerful, companionable individual, and possessed common sense ideas in the bargain."[91]

Shortly after he was elected, Taft told reporters, "I am going to do my part to make golf one of the popular outdoor exercises." As the first president who showed a "decided fondness for golf" many believed that Taft would "create a favorable influence toward a better appreciation of the merits of the game as a medium for exercise."[92]

Almost two years after Taft took office, the Washington Board of Trade held a meeting in February 1911 to discuss the prospects of a public golf course in the District of Columbia. At that time the Board of Trade, founded in 1889 at the height of the lobbying for Rock Creek Park, was one of the most powerful groups in Washington, DC, with exception only to Congress and the District commissioners. With the principal goal to strengthen the economy of the city, the board was also a strong supporter of the expansion and development of Washington's park system.[93]

The Board of Trade's committee on parks and reservations elected to invite the Washington Chamber of Commerce and other athletic organizations to support the effort for a public golf course. Col. Spencer Cosby, the Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds (1909-1913), noted that if there was sufficient demand from the public for a municipal golf course, he would "do everything in his power to see that it is brought about."[94] The committee recognized the number of government employees in Washington, DC, who would benefit from exercise outside of working hours and also noted the popularity of public golf in other communities across the country. Potomac Park was the recommended location for the new course.[95]

In February 1913 President Taft wrote a letter to the Chamber of Commerce in support of the public course in Washington, DC, and said:

> I am very glad to send you a few words in approval of your suggestion of public golf links in Washington. You know my tendency to golf, my sympathy with anybody who wants to play it, and my desire to spread a love for the game wherever I can.[96]

Although Taft's term ended the following month, when President Woodrow Wilson took office in March 1913, the country gained a new chief executive that

91 "Golf Boom Coming, All Due to Taft," *New York Times,* 22 November 1908:S2.
92 Ibid.
93 Bushong, *Rock Creek Park*, 79.
94 "Public Golf is Urged," *Washington Post,* 18 February 1911:5.
95 Ibid.
96 "Golf Links for All," *Washington Evening Star,* 28 February 1913:3.

rivaled if not exceeded Taft's enthusiasm for golf. Edith Galt Wilson, who married President Wilson in 1915 after the death of his first wife, became the earliest first lady to play golf. Both President and Mrs. Wilson's love for the game only furthered the country's and Washington's interest in golf.[97]

By the end of March 1913, the city's Chamber of Commerce established a special committee for the creation of a public golf course. It announced:

> We believe excellent nine-hole links can be laid [out] on the lower Potomac Park at little cost, and if the proposition meets with the approval of Colonel Cosby, superintendent of public buildings and grounds, we will urge the Chamber of Commerce to recommend the establishment of public golf links in that place.[98]

The committee recommended an area southeast of the Potomac Railroad Bridge in East Potomac Park as being well suited for the golf course. The chairman of the committee stated that while it was necessary to improve the site, which at that time was extremely rough, "the laying of a golf course will cost but a trifle more than if the ground is maintained as a lawn . . . The cost of erecting bunkers would be a matter of but a few dollars."[99] Once again Rock Creek Park was thought to be the best location for the course, but ultimately the committee decided that it was not favorable because of its inaccessibility. Unlike Potomac Park, which was to have streetcar access on the north side of the park, many areas of Rock Creek at that time were only accessible by automobile, and "a public course should be so located that the man or women without auto can get to it with ease. Such would be the case if a course is laid out in Potomac Park."[100] Rock Creek was therefore recommended as the location for an eighteen-hole course only after Potomac Park was built.[101]

One month later the committee met with Colonel Cosby to formally recommend the Potomac Park site. Although he did not golf, Cosby assured the committee that he supported the construction of the course and that the only reason that a course was not yet in existence was because efforts in the past had been "half-hearted." At that time the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) was using the recommended 50-acre site as an experiment ground. Construction was not expected to begin until after the transfer of the property in the fall. At that time it was anticipated that the course would "be laid out, grass sown, and everything prepared so that next summer the course will be in excellent condition."[102]

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97 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 59-62.
98 "Golf in Potomac Park Under Consideration," *Washington Sunday Star*, 23 March 1913:5.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 "Studies Public Links," *Washington Post,* 22 March 1913:5.
102 "Assures Golf Course," *Washington Post,* 15 April 1913:9.



**Figure 1.3.** Golfers on West Potomac Park Golf Course, November 1920. (National Archives)

In reality, incorporating the golf course into the overall plan of Potomac Park took more time. Under the direction of Colonel Cosby, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds developed an initial plan for Potomac Park "East and West of the Rail-Road Embankment" in June of 1913. The plan did not yet include the golf course, likely since the golf course was still in the initial stages of planning.[103] By July 1914 Col. William W. Harts, Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds (1913-1917), had updated the plans of East Potomac Park to include an eighteen-hole golf course. The map of the park, created by George Burnap, landscape architect of Public Buildings and Grounds, imagined a parkland-style course, with the fairways edged by large clusters of trees that guided specific vistas from the course, including ones toward the Washington Monument and the future Lincoln Memorial.[104]

While plans for the golf course at East Potomac Park continued, Colonel Harts opened a three-hole practice course in West Potomac Park, south of the Lincoln Memorial grounds, in 1914.[105] This course was "not laid out scientifically, but was designed simply as a test whether the [government workers] would patronize a public course if one were offered" to them (Figure 1.3). The test was successful – the course was packed with players and Harts decided that he would go ahead with the construction of the course at East Potomac Park as soon as Congress appropriated the funds.[106]

103 US Army Corps of Engineers, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, *Map of Potomac Park West and East of the Rail-Road Embankment, June 30, 1913*, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

104 George Burnap, Landscape Architect, *Preliminary Plan East Potomac Park, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds,* 1914, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

105 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 1914), 1528.

106 "Corn Versus Golf in Potomac Park," *Washington Evening Star,* 20 May 1918:21.

Harts presented an initial "comprehensive plan for the development of East Potomac Park as a public recreation ground" to the Commission of Fine Arts in October 1915 for approval. Landscape architect James G. Langdon prepared the plan under the direction of Colonel Harts and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., part of Olmsted's role as the landscape architecture member of the Commission of Fine Arts.[107] After its approval by the commission, the plan, published as *Development of East Potomac Park*, was presented to Congress in April 1916.

In the 1916 plan, Colonel Harts stressed the importance of public recreation for the citizens of the District of Columbia and its role in contributing to a "happy, healthy, and contended community." He argued that since District residents could not vote, it meant that the "District exists primarily for the United States." This, combined with the fact that residents paid the same taxes as the rest of the country, "indicates that they are enjoying no unusual privileges." Hart maintained that Congress "may properly provide for the District of Columbia all those park and recreation features which civilization has come to demand, with the firm assurance that it is providing for its own household instead of conferring a favor on any special body of citizens."[108]

Colonel Harts's plan specifically stated that the course at East Potomac Park would include an eighteen-hole course as well as a nine-hole course for amateurs. His vision for the courses took a naturalistic approach. Harts stated, "By taking advantage of the existing trees and those to be planted, portions of these courses are to weave in and about the groups of planting and groves of trees, presenting an appearance similar to natural countryside so desirable in every golf course."[109] The initial estimate for the golf courses was $2,400 and a "golf lake" at $7,200.[110]

Harts's dedication to a golf course in East Potomac Park was partially due to his love of the sport.[111] Defending the plans for a public course, he stated:

> At the present time golf is practically prohibitive to a large percentage of people residing here who, if they could, would take an active interest in the game, and who are, in fact, lovers of golf. The reason for this is the fact that at present the available links are either private or belong to clubs having already long waiting lists … The great expense comes in the maintenance of the course itself, an item which in a club links must be shared by the members and which consequently helps to make the necessary dues what they are …
>
> With the course to be constructed in the Potomac Park grounds the obstacles will be removed, for all care of the grounds will be done at government ex-

107 Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Park Historic District*, 68.
108 House, *Development of East Potomac Park,* 6.
109 Ibid., 15.
110 House, *Development of East Potomac Park*, 17.
111 "Plans Great Recreation Grounds," *Washington Sunday Star,* 29 August 1915:4.

> pense. And there is no reason why the course should not compare favorably with any about the city. To be sure, the ground at the present time is rather flat, but that is a feature which can be overcome. It is our intention in all the various fields to be built to make them as modern and technically correct as is called for by the most professional rules. Adjacent to the links will be a house containing all necessary lockers, showers, and all the other conveniences which constitute a well-equipped clubhouse.[112]

The total cost to fully implement Harts's plan for East Potomac Park was $1.5 million dollars and since funding was coming from congressional appropriations, the plan proved to be overly ambitious. The start of World War I shifted funding elsewhere and recreation was not given a high priority. Yet the plan was successful in establishing the importance for a public golf course, and the course, the fieldhouse, and eventually several recreation fields and courts, were built at East Potomac Park.[113]

#### The "Old Man" and East Potomac Park

During the initial planning of the East Potomac Golf Course, Colonel Harts consulted with Dr. Walter S. Harban who was instrumental in the improvements to the course at the Columbia Country Club in 1915. Harban recommended Walter J. Travis, former US amateur golf champion and the architect responsible for the 1915 redesign of the Columbia Country Club, to design the new public course.[114] In January 1917 Harts officially announced that Travis would design two courses at East Potomac Park, one nine holes and the other eighteen holes, which would "embrace all the necessary features of the modern golf course." The *Evening Star* described the grounds of the planned courses as being "overgrown with willows and underbrush," but that they could "be fashioned into something very nearly approximating a championship links with the up-to-date ideas of course construction of Travis."[115] While all hazards had to be artificial because of the flat terrain, there was plenty of open space for the golf course.[116]

Australian-born Walter J. Travis (1862-1927) immigrated to the United States at age 23 and did not take up golf until he was 35. By the age of 39 he was the top amateur golfer in the country, winning the US Amateur Championship in 1900, 1901, and 1903 and gaining him the nickname "The Old Man" or the "Grand Old Man."[117] The highest point of Travis's career was his win at the 1904 British Amateur Championship when he became the first non-British golfer to capture the tournament. Travis continued to play in his later years, but devoted most of his time and energy writing, editing *American Golfer* magazine, which he founded in

112 Ibid.
113 Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Park Historic District*, 69.
114 "Corn Versus golf in Potomac Park," *Washington Evening Star,* 20 May 1918:21.
115 "Travis to Plan Public Golf Links In This City," *Washington Evening Star*, 25 January 1917:17.
116 "Corn Versus golf in Potomac Park," *Washington Evening Star,* 20 May 1918:21.
117 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 43.

1908, and designing golf courses (See Chapter 1.3 for more information on Travis and his design for East Potomac Park Golf Course).[118]

With his stature and celebrity as one of the top amateur golfers in the country and arguably in the world, Travis's involvement in the project at East Potomac Park gained considerable attention. As reported in a 1917 issue of the British *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* magazine,

> For some time past [Travis's] services have been in great demand in laying out and improving courses in different parts of the country. Several of the most important courses and propositions for courses in the States have received his attention and recently he was commissioned to carry into effect the highly interesting project for a couple of courses in the East Potomac Park at Washington.[119]

In a 1917 article in *American Golfer*, columnist "Sam Solomon" noted,

> Thinking about public or municipal or people's golf, or whatever you like to call it, I must tell you that, apart from any trifling circumstances about personal association and that kind of thing, I for one – and there are many more – am uncommonly interested in seeing what the Chief of this magazine will do in the way of the highly important piece of golf course construction with which he has been entrusted. In one or two senses it might be said that the public courses that are to be made in East Potomac Park at the capital of this country will be the chief of all public courses …[120]

At East Potomac Park Travis designed a traditional links-style course, a term that derives from ancient Scotland and refers to a rough, grassy area of land along the coastline that includes sand dunes and few, if any, trees.[121] Its location along the Potomac River and its flat, predominantly treeless terrain made the East Potomac Park site naturally suitable for a links-style course. Travis published in *American Golfer* in 1911, prior to being hired as the course architect, that Potomac Park would be an ideal spot for a golf course because the "ground resembles 'links' and is flat."[122] Influenced by his respect for British links, Travis designed the first eighteen holes at East Potomac for reversible play. Travis's use of alternate courses,

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118 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 45, Walter J. Travis Society, "Who was Travis?" accessed 17 January 2017, https://travissociety.com/who-was-travis/golfer/.

119 *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 14 April 1917:176, also quoted in "Foreign Notes," *American Golfer* Vol. 18 No 2. (June 1917):701.

120 Sam Solomon, "Plain Truths," *American Golfer* 17, no. 6 (April 1917):479.

121 David W. Berner, "What is a Links Style Golf Course?", accessed 1 November 2017, http://golftips.golfsmith.com/links-style-golf-course-1451.html; Scottish Golf History, "'Links Golf Course' – Meaning," accessed at http://www.scottishgolfhistory.org/origin-of-golf-terms/links/; Mark Sandritter, "2013 British Open: What is a links course and how will it impact The Open at Muirfield," 17 July 2013, http://www.sbnation.com/golf/2013/7/17/4526986/british-open-2013-course-muirfield-scotland-links-golf

122 "Middle Atlantic Notes," *The American Golfer* 6, no. 1 (May): 48.



**Figure 1.4.** Boy Scouts "armed with hoes and rakes ready to begin work on their vegetable garden" in East Potomac Park, June 1918. (National Archives)

which prevented wear on the course, was likely influenced by the Old Course at St. Andrews, Scotland.[123]

When construction on the first nine holes began in the summer of 1917, the Boy Scouts were using around 300 acres of East Potomac Park as a garden for harvesting vegetables and other crops, part of an effort to increase the food supply during World War I[124] (Figure 1.4). By the following year the fairways had been cleared "of a wilderness of willow trees of spontaneous growth over an area of 67 acres, about 30 of which were plowed and harrowed." Construction on the course stopped in June 1918 when the Secretary of War once again granted the Boy Scouts use of the area, along with other cleared areas in the park, for war gardens. Workers installed fences around the greens to protect them.[125]

After the Boy Scouts were finished for the season, construction resumed and on March 29, 1919, Walter Travis visited the East Potomac Park to inspect the course. Travis "stated that the work had been carried out in accordance with his design and that the result was exactly what he wishes, and was very pleasing to him."[126] By the end of June 1919 construction crews had completed the first nine holes of the reversible course, added 14 sand pits and 19 hazards, and laid 2,752 feet of water pipe for use in watering the greens and other parts of the course.[127]

123 "Public Links to be Ready May 1," *Washington Post,* 5 March 1919:10.

124 "Boy Scouts Begin Farm Work Today," *Washington Post,* 21 April 1917:4; "Corn Versus golf in Potomac Park," *Washington Evening Star,* 20 May 1918:21.

125 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 1918), 1931; "Corn Versus golf in Potomac Park," *Washington Evening Star,* 20 May 1918:21.

126 Letter from Superintendent to the Officer in Charge, 29 March 1919, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.

127 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 1919), 2042-2043.



**Figure 1.5.** East Potomac Park Golf Course, ca. 1920. (National Archives)



**Figure 1.6.** East Potomac Park Golf Course looking toward fieldhouse, November 1920. (National Archives)



**Figure 1.7.** East Potomac Park fieldhouse, November 1920. (National Archives)

The first nine holes of the reversible course, known as the A-B Course, and the wings of the adjacent fieldhouse (originally to be part of a three-part structure with a center portion that was never built) were finally completed and opened to the public on July 8, 1920 (Figures 1.5 –1.7). Maj. Clarence S. Ridley, Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds (1917-1921), sent a telegram to Walter Travis prior to the opening and invited him to drive out the opening ball, but Travis declined citing a previous engagement.[128] The afternoon of the opening day, Major Ridley and Dr. Harban were present along with several onlookers. C.T. McIntyre from Northeast Washington made the first drive down the fairway and Miss C.M. Fuller of Northwest was the first woman golfer to take part in a game at the new course. While the first day of golf was free, when the course opened the next day at 6:00 A.M., the cost for an eighteen-hole round of golf was 25 cents, which included locker room privileges.[129] Initially this charge was not for revenue, but "only for regulation and control" of the golf course.[130] Proving the popularity of golf in Washington, the East Potomac Park course attracted 16,345 golfers during its first year of operation. By 1921 the total number of golfers had almost quadrupled to 65,345.[131]

In order to improve access to the park, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds received a $10,000 appropriation in 1918 to install and operate a ferry (a steamer named the *Bartholdi*) from the east side of the Washington Channel to East Potomac Park. A portion of the government-owned wharf at O and Water streets, SW, was transformed into a ferry house and provided a direct connection with two street-car lines. The office built two ferry landings on the East Potomac Park, one located near the fieldhouse. The ferry, which could hold up to 100 passengers, operated every half hour from noon until 8 P.M. and when service began on June 26, 1919, the fare for a one-way trip was 5 cents.[132] Bus lines also provided trips to East Potomac Park, which became a main source of public transportation to the course when the ferry operation ceased in 1922.[133]

#### Severine G. Leoffler and the Concessionaire Program

Despite the popularity of the sport, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds struggled to keep the East Potomac Golf Course financially viable. After operating

128 In 1917 Ridley was appointed as Colonel after becoming Officer in Charge but under the Army reorganization act of 4 June 1920, he reverted to his regular rank as Major. Various correspondence between Major Ridley and Walter J. Travis, June 1920, Record Group 42, Entry 97, Box 35, Subject File No. 312, National Archives, Washington, DC.

129 "Long Drive Today Opens Public Golf Course in District," *Washington Evening Star,* 8 July 1920.

130 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1921), 2068.

131 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (1921), 2087; "Selling the Game of Golf to the Public," *Washington Post,* 1 July 1928:SM3.

132 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (1919), 2042-2043, 3830.

133 "Potomac Park Ferry No Longer Operated," *Washington Evening Star,* 27 June 1922:16.

the course between July 1920 and July 1921, the total receipts from the operation (around $10,000) produced only 50 percent of the cost of maintenance, including the pay of employees.[134] The office found that it was difficult to operate at a profit since all fees collected at the course were directly deposited into the US Treasury and appropriations from Congress would be necessary to operate the courses.[135] Consequently, the office decided that the course would be better operated by a private concessionaire, a management strategy that continues to this day. Beginning on July 20, 1921, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds entered a five-year contract with the Park Amusement Company, operated by Severine G. Leoffler.[136]

Initially, the two concessionaires with contracts through the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, and later its successor the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, were the Welfare and Recreation Association and Leoffler's company, the Park Amusement Company, later known as the S. G. Leoffler Operating Company and the S.G. Leoffler Co. The Welfare and Recreation Association was originally established as the Joint Welfare Service under the jurisdiction of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds in 1917 to feed the large numbers of government workers in Washington during World War I. In 1927 it became a quasi-government agency known as the Welfare and Recreation Association.[137] Although it was a private corporation, all of its income went back to the federal government, its bills and employees were paid by the federal government, and it bought everything it needed at government contract prices. The corporation was entirely self-sustaining yet it sat in an office within the Navy Building, with the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks.[138]

When organized, the specific functions of the Welfare and Recreation Association were "to conduct tourist camps, bathing pools, and to provide lunch and refreshment stands and other recreational facilities for the health, safety and general welfare of Government employees."[139] A decade after its establishment, the organization held several concessionaire contracts with the federal government. It not only managed 80 percent of the federal cafeterias, but also the Tidal Basin Boat House,

134 *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks,* 1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC; US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (1921), 2059.

135 Letter from Colonel Sherrill to M. Lazaro, 12 May 1924, Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 30, Folder 619.21 (Golf Courses General), National Archives, Washington, DC.

136 Ibid.

137 The corporation eventually became Government Services, Inc. and then Guest Services Inc. and continues to operate concessions for the National Park Service. "Guest Disservices," *Washington City Paper,* 3 July 2012.

138 "Washington's Playground in Spring and Summer," *Washington Evening Star*, 8 May 1932; Fortner, *A History of the Municipal Recreation Department,* 126.

139 "Group Runs Boathouse, Pools, Golf Course and Tennis Courts," *Washington Post,* 20 September 1937:13.

Pierce Mill in Rock Creek Park, the Hains Point Tea House, the Anacostia Golf Course, and 45 tennis courts.[140]

Severine G. Leoffler came to Washington in 1908 and during World War I began a box lunch business known as "Liberty Lunches" that sold two sandwiches, fresh fruit, and dessert for 20 cents, primarily to the large numbers of government office workers. On a peak day Leoffler sold around 20,000 lunches, but after World War I the demobilization of the federal government and the opening of restaurants near many government buildings caused Leoffler's lunch business to decline. Following a suggestion to sell his lunch boxes to hungry golfers at East Potomac Park, Leoffler sold 400 lunches on the first day.[141] He soon learned that the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds was about to make a contract for the golf course concession and he was urged to submit a bid. Leoffler later recalled that he was the only legitimate business that provided a bid, "The other bidders apparently thought all they would have to do would be to roll down to the clubhouse each morning and hang up their hats. I made what I thought was a business offer and it was accepted."[142] Leoffler's five-year contract required him to pay for all costs for operating the nine-hole course at East Potomac Park and a total of $4,650 for the contract period.[143]

In November 1921 Leoffler also took over the operation of the West Potomac Park Golf Course at no additional cost to his existing contract with the condition that he would maintain the course in good playing condition.[144] Prior to Leoffler taking over its operation, the three-hole practice course was expanded to nine-holes and reopened on October 4, 1921, to great crowds. The course, constructed of sand greens, or greens of well-oiled sand that were easier and more economical to maintain, was considered a course for beginners who "after they have learned the rudiments of the game, will move to the course in East Potomac Park."[145] One local golfer later recalled, "To play East Potomac … it was necessary that you be 'qualified,' which as I recalled it banished you to West Potomac until you had proved your mettle, whereupon a little numbered tag was affixed to your bag. This tag was the sesame to the lush fairways and carpet greens of East Potomac, provided you had the Jobian patience to play in a mob scene"[146]

140 Ibid.
141 "Selling the Game of Golf to the Public," *Washington Post,* 1 July 1928:SM3.
142 Ibid.
143 *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks,* 1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.
144 "New Deal is Planned for Golfers," *Washington Post,* 31 December 1938:14.
145 "Swarm to New Golf Course," *Washington Post*, 3 October 1921:13; "New Public Golf Links For West Potomac Park," *Washington Post,* 30 September 1921:2.
146 Ev Gardner, "From Mr. Leoffler's Tees, Use Drivers Only, Please," *Washington Daily News*, undated found in Record Group 79, Entry 10, Central Classified Files, Box 2847, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.



**Figure 1.8. Women playing golf at West Potomac Park, ca. 1930. (Historical Society of Washington, DC)**

The excitement surrounding the newly expanded West Potomac Park course was so great that on its opening day "several scores of persons [braved] the chilly weather to make the round … All day long, waiting lines were maintained, so great was the crowd."[147] The enlargement of the course in West Potomac Park and the increasing popularity of golf resulted in a noted increase in the number of players. In 1920 16,838 golfers used the course and by 1921 the number had risen to 63,698.[148] In addition to the nine holes, the West Potomac course also had a small wood-frame lodge or clubhouse, which was later expanded[149] (Figure 1.8).

Although the golf course at East Potomac Park remained popular under Leoffler's management, the public links was not immune to criticism. Many felt that the cost of a round of golf was too expensive compared to other public courses and for the frequent player the cost was as much if not more as a country club membership. In 1922, the cost for a round of eighteen holes was 25 cents during the weekdays and 50 cents on the weekends. If the players played four times a week, or $1 a week, the total yearly cost was $52. The annual dues for at least three of the area's country clubs was less than $52 a year and the memberships came with the privilege of playing an unlimited number of times and with other benefits. Comparison was made to the public courses in Chicago, which charged 10 cents per game, and New York, where golfers paid $10 a year for a permit to play unlimited golf at the city's public courses.[150]

147 "Swarm to New Golf Course," *Washington Post,* 5 October 1921:13.

148 "Selling the Game of Golf to the Public," *Washington Post,* 1 July 1928:SM3.

149 *Shelter, West Potomac Park Golf Course (Extended)*, 1926, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database; Underwood and Underwood, *Five Women Pretending to Play Golf in Washington, DC., Concession Stand in Background*, ca. 1930, Image KC1371.PH.AC.M.U., Kiplinger Washington Collection, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

150 "Cost of Public Golf Here Higher Than in Other Cities," *Washington Sunday Star,* 22 January 1922:31.

The cost did not detract devoted golfers and those new to the sport from the course. The mere volume of players on East Potomac Park Golf Course made it difficult to keep the course in good playing condition. In 1921 the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds reported that the course was "taxed beyond the limits of its capacity." On busy days there were often over 600 players on the course, compared to around 200 a day on the local private courses. With these numbers the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds anticipated that it would become difficult to maintain the turf on the greens and fairways and additional golf facilities must be provided.[151] In 1922 an estimated 300 people played the course daily and on a Sunday it often reached 700.[152]

By the early 1920s the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds had become increasingly "recreation conscious," evidenced by its annual reports that devoted much space to the demands for more facilities, the inadequacy of the existing facilities, and requests to Congress for additional appropriations.[153] In 1922 the office reported that one of the most important recreational activities in the city was golf, based on the number taking advantage of the sport, and was only second to outdoor bathing at the Tidal Basin beach.[154] Lt. Col. Clarence O. Sherrill, Officer in Charge of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds (1921–1925), believed that the District of Columbia "should be placed in a condition to be an example to the entire United States" and that,

> [A]nything that is done for development of character, physical, mental, or moral well-being among the permanent or temporary residents or the occasional visitors in the Capital is money well spent, returning dividends many fold to the National Government. Even if no charges for these privileges [whatsoever] were made to those enjoying them, the return to the National Government would still be great and would fully justify the expenditures on account of the increased efficiency and contentment of the Government employees who are the principal users of the recreational privileges. But since the most important activities can be so operated as to be entirely self-supporting, then, it seems to me to be self-evident that the National Government is failing in its duty if it does not rapidly extend these privileges as reasonable expenditures make feasible.[155]

In April 1923 Leoffler's contract was modified once again, providing that he would take over and complete at his own expense the second nine holes at East Potomac Park, which the government had already started.[156] Two months later

151 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1921), 2087.
152 "Golf Making Great Strides in Washington," *Washington Evening Star,* 18 June 1922:69.
153 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia* (October 1942), 2.
154 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922), 2177-2178.
155 Ibid, 2179.
156 *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks*, 1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.



**Figure 1.9. Gallery at Public Links Championship, June 1923. (Library of Congress)**

Leoffler finished the second nine holes of the East Potomac Park course, known as the C-D Course, following Travis's original design.[157] Illustrating its prestige, the newly completed course hosted the second US Amateur Public Links Championship in 1923, organized by the United States Golf Association (USGA). The USGA first held the tournament in 1922 at the Ottawa Park Course in Toledo, Ohio, as a championship for the finest golfers across the country who played on public courses – members of private clubs were barred from entry.[158] Attracting 134 golfers representing 22 cities, the Public Links Championship at East Potomac Park began on Tuesday, June 26 with a 36-hole qualifying round. On the following days, 32 men went on to play the two match-play rounds of eighteen holes with the final 36 holes finals on Friday[159] (Figure 1.9).

On June 29, 1923, 19-year-old Richard Walsh of New York defeated J. Stewart Whitham, also of New York, to win the championship title of the public links tournament at East Potomac Park. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes presented the trophy to Walsh (Figure 1.10). Speaking to the crowd who gathered for the presentation of the trophies, Hughes said,

> I am glad to do anything in my power to emphasize the democratic character of this sport and I think we are fortunate in having in this city a course where everybody can find recreation. There is certainly no more noble or democratic

[157] Most contemporary resources on Travis's work only list the first nine holes at East Potomac Park as being designed by Travis. However, plans and aerial photographs indicate that his eighteen-hole plan for the course was fully carried out.

[158] The USGA held the annual Public Links tournament until 2014.

[159] "Public Links Meet Attracting Many," *Baltimore Sun,* 23 June 1923:12.



**Figure 1.10.** Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes presenting the trophy to winner Dick Walsh at the Public Links Championship, June 1923. (Library of Congress)

sport than golf, suitable as it is for all ages, and both sexes, and all sorts of conditions of men and women who can keep their eye on the ball."[160]

#### The Need for More Courses

Between July 1, 1921, and June 30, 1922, alone, around 80,000 people played on the courses at East and West Potomac parks.[161] In 1921 Colonel Sherrill requested an appropriation of $50,000 to build a new golf course in Rock Creek Park. Supporters of the expansion maintained that golf provided healthful benefits to the city's residents. As the *Washington Post* stated, "Golf on public courses has furnished the medium through which many dwellers here and in other cities have gained health and added years to their lives. If one public course isn't enough for Washington – and plainly it isn't – let us have two."[162]

The chosen location for the new course was on the north side of Military Road, west of 16th Street NW – directly north of the Brightwood Reservoir and the failed golf course in Rock Creek Park built by the District commissioners. In January 1922 Colonel Sherrill requested the services of golf course architect William S. Flynn of Ardmore, Pennsylvania. Flynn served as a consultant for the design of the golf course and spent two days on site going over the grounds to locate greens and trees.[163]

Similar to Travis, William S. Flynn (1890-1945) had no formal training as a golf course architect. Yet by the time he died in 1945 at the age of 54, Flynn had

160 "Shows Support with Mashie, Putter," *Washington Post,* 30 June 1923:18.
161 "Parks of Washington Excel Any of Whole World For Sport," *Washington Post,* 3 September 1922:17.
162 "Cheap Prescriptions," *Washington Post*, 6 July 1921:6.
163 Bushong, *Rock Creek Park*, 119.

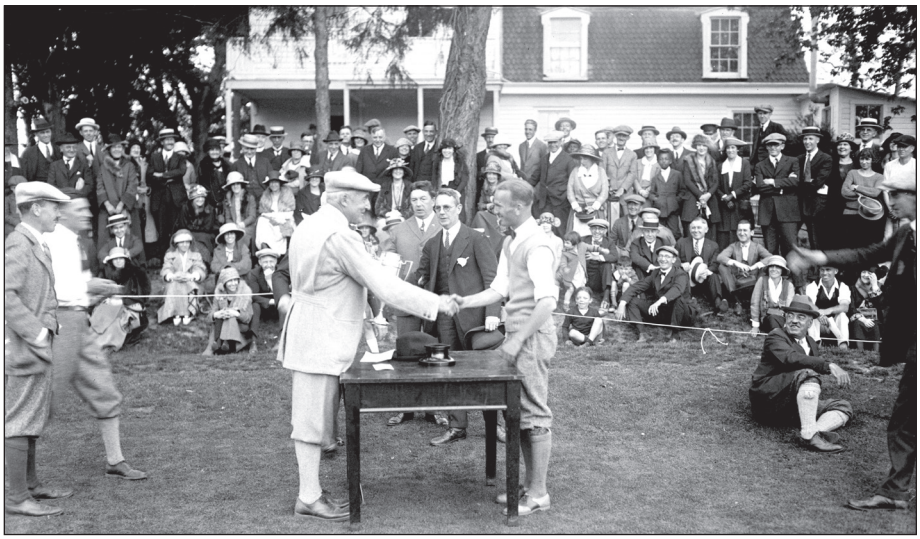


**Figure 1.11.** President Harding congratulating winner of the Washington Newspaper Golf Club Tournament, May 1923. (Library of Congress)

designed more than 35 courses and remodeled or expanded around 30 more. After World War I, Flynn formed the golf course construction firm of Toomey and Flynn with prominent civil engineer Howard Toomey and many of Flynn's most recognized courses are listed as "Toomey and Flynn" courses (for more on Flynn see Chapter 1.3).

Like the course at Rock Creek Park, most of Flynn's courses were parkland courses. Designed in the 1920s and 1930s "Golden Age of Golf" when real estate was plentiful, these courses were laid out across rolling terrain with mature trees.[164] The steep topography and wooded environs of Rock Creek Park created a stark contrast to Travis's flat and almost treeless links-style course at East Potomac Park and lent itself to a parkland-style course. Prior to its opening, William E. Brigham, the president of the Washington Newspaper Golf Club, praised the course as being "laid out under expert advice, and from the technical point view it will stand up under criticism. It will present difficulties wholly different from those of Potomac Park –which is not an easy course – but one object of the builders is to produce real golfers, and this course will do it."[165]

The nine-hole course at Rock Creek Park opened on May 23, 1923, with a tournament sponsored by the Washington Newspaper Golf Club and attended by President Warren G. Harding. The President's foursome included Supreme Court Justice Edward Terry Sanford and Speaker of the House Frederick Huntington Gillett. Several hundred people gathered near the clubhouse to watch the awards

[164] Cornish and Whitten, *Architects of Golf*, 262; Joe Logan, "Appreciating a Master's Legacy: William S. Flynn Designed Courses in the 1920s and 1930s. They Are Still Special," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 May 2000.

[165] "Superb Rock Creek Golf Course Needs Clubhouse," *Washington Sunday Star*, 10 September 1922.



**Figure 1.12. President and Mrs. Coolidge on the East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1924. On the right of President Coolidge is Colonel Sherrill. (Library of Congress)**

ceremony when President Harding congratulated winner Charles Schafer of the *Washington Herald*[166] (Figure 1.11).

The popularity of the course led to the construction of an additional nine holes at Rock Creek Golf Course between 1924 and 1926, also designed by Flynn. Initially operated by private concessionaires and then by the Joint Welfare Service, Leoffler took over the management of the course in 1926 and made necessary improvements to the layout of the course, including changes to the locations of some tees and holes and the widening of the fairways. The clubhouse was also renovated and enlarged.[167] The newly enhanced course opened to the public on April 3, 1926. The course was crowded throughout opening day and "the golfers universally commended the reconstruction of the course and the conveniences which have been installed in the remodeled clubhouse."[168]

President Calvin Coolidge and the first lady made the front page of the *Washington Post* in the summer of 1924 when they visited the recreation facilities at East Potomac Park, including the golf course. Accompanied by Colonel Sherrill and his assistant, Maj. Oscar N. Solbert, the President and Mrs. Coolidge "mingled with the players, asked many questions and had their pictures taken with the athletes." At the golf course, a foursome was just teeing off at the first hole when the group arrived and "the President and Mrs. Coolidge waited while the golfers endeavored to show their prowess, only to foozle their shots in the presence of the chief executive"[169] (Figure 1.12).

166 "Harding Helps Open Public Golf Course," *New York Times*, 23 May 1923:15.

167 *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks*, 1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC; "Leoffler, a Man of Many Firsts, Up Front in Celebs," *Washington Post,* 17 August 1952:C4; "Rock Creek Links Are Rebuilt," *Washington Post,* 24 March 1926:15.

168 "Rock Creek's Links Are Opened," *Washington Post,* 3 April 1926:13.

169 "President Thrills Capitol's Athletes with Surprise Visit," *Washington Post,* 1 August 1924:1.

Colonel Sherrill and Major Solbert took the opportunity to express to the President that the athletic activities in Washington, DC, were relatively more expansive than other cities in the country and that they were maintained on a small $15,000 annual appropriation from Congress. Any additional expenditures were raised by the nominal fees charged to use the facilities and through payments by the concessionaires. Sherrill and Solbert noted that while efforts were being made to expand the facilities, the limited funds and the amount estimated for 1925 would not be sufficient to cover any great increase in the number of recreation areas.[170]

Although the course at Rock Creek Park offered some relief, East Potomac Park Golf Course remained extremely congested. On Sunday, May 4, 1924, approximately 1,100 played at the East Potomac course.[171] Leoffler, whose contract was about to expire, built an additional nine holes at East Potomac Park in 1924 at his own expense and had William S. Flynn, who was in Washington working on the design and overseeing progress on the expansion of Rock Creek Golf Course, design the course.[172] The new course, located north and west of the fieldhouse, followed Travis's design for the first eighteen holes and was reversible. Known as the "E and F Course" the new course not only relieved congestion, but also allowed the eighteen holes of the A-B and C-D Courses to be played continuously.[173] Flynn visited the site in August 1924 and pronounced that the course was "in good shape to proceed with the work."[174] The course opened to the public in May 1925.[175] The *Evening Star* described the new E-F Course as "not as well trapped" as Travis's courses, but the most popular because "lower scores can be made on [it] by the class of players who use the public courses. And probably 50 percent of the public links golf devotees are duffers of the first water – beginners and others, who have been bitten by the golf bug, who after acquiring a degree of skill over the public links, will join private clubs."[176]

The rising popularity of golf was not limited to the city's white residents. After the opening of the golf courses in East Potomac and West Potomac parks, a group of African American golfers requested playing times on the public golf courses. In July 1920 the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds announced that African Americans could play at East Potomac Park on Monday afternoons from 4:30 until dark[177] The following summer African Americans could play at East Potomac

170 Ibid.

171 Memorandum for Colonel Sherrill from Capt. W.L. McMorris, 5 May 5 1924, RG42, Entry 102, Box 30, Folder 618.21 (East Potomac Park Golf Course), National Archives, Washington, DC.

172 "Selling the Game of Golf to the Public," *Washington Post,* 1 July 1928:SM3.

173 "Two New Golf Links to Open This Summer," *Washington Post,* 13 May 1924:S3.

174 "D.C. Muny Golfers to Receive Trophy," *Washington Evening Star,* 13 August 1924:27.

175 "More East Potomac Holes Open Saturday," *Washington Post,* 1925 May 21:15.

176 "Growth of Public Links Golf Has Been Rapid," *Washington Sunday Star,* 6 May 1928.

177 Memorandum for Colonel Ridley from the Superintendent, 15 July 1920, Record Group 42, Entry 97 Box 35, Subject File No. 312, National Archives, Washington, DC; "Golfers Have

Park on Tuesdays from 3:00 P.M. to the end of the day and West Potomac Park on Wednesdays from noon until the end of the day.[178] When the white players became unwilling to give up the courses during these times, several of the city's prominent African Americans began to petition the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds for a separate golf course.[179] As part of an amendment to his contract, Leoffler built a nine-hole course in West Potomac Park at his own expense under the Jim Crow principle of "separate but equal."[180] The nine-hole, sand-green golf course, located along what is now the intersection of Constitution Avenue and 23rd Street and known as the Lincoln Memorial course, officially opened at noon on June 7, 1924[181] (see Chapter 1.2 for more on segregation and African American golf in the District of Columbia). By the following month, over 1,000 golfers had reportedly played the course.[182]

Local residents commended Colonel Sherrill for what he had done "for the parks and the outdoor recreations and sports of the National Capital and how he has succeeded in improving and increasing the sports facilities in East and West Potomac parks and Rock Creek Park, thereby having many more residents of the Capital City taking to the open. … Probably his most notable achievement in increasing interests in outdoor sports has been in connection with golf."[183] In fiscal year 1924 alone, more than 280,000 people played on the city's public golf courses, proving that golf had "taken a position in the front ranks of the most popular and most frequently indulged in outdoor sports in Washington … Its devotees are not confined to those of residents of affluence but all classes, regardless of their position or their means."[184]

#### THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE NEW DEAL

The stock market crash of 1929 and the impending depression brought financial crisis to many country clubs as members resigned and waiting lists vanished. As clubs faced financial hardships and even closure, some members sought less expensive alternatives and began patronizing municipal courses. City, state, and federal relief programs responded to the growing number of players crowding onto the public courses by hiring laborers to improve and/or expand existing

Day on Links," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 30 July 1920:1.

178 "DC Interest in Golf Grows," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 22 July 1921:2.

179 William H. Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington, DC: A Sociological Analysis of the Negro in an Urban Environment* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1927), 31; "Muny Golf Course for Negroes Open," *Washington Post,* 8 June 1924:S3.

180 Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington, DC*, 31; *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks*,1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

181 "Muny Golf Course for Negroes Open," *Washington Post,* 8 June 1924:S3.

182 "Public Golf Courses Under Colonel Sherrill," *The Mid-City Pilot* (Official Monthly Journal of the Mid-City Citizens Association) 2, no. 11 (July 1924), 1.

183 Ibid.

184 Ibid.

links and build hundreds of new ones. As explained by George Kirsch in *Golf in America*, "The result was an increase in popular participation on public courses and the expansion of public golf facilities for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Thus the great cloud of the country's economic crisis contained a silver lining for the lovers of the Scottish sport."[185] Roosevelt's New Deal programs, especially the Civil Works Administration (CWA 1933) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA 1935) financed the building or improvement of 600 golf courses throughout the United States beginning in 1934. In its first two years alone, the WPA spent $10.5 million on 368 public golf courses across the country, including 62 new facilities. Local governments contributed another $1.5 million to this effort.[186]

A believer that sports benefitted Americans "physically, mentally, and morally," President Roosevelt himself was an ardent golfer before he was stricken with polio, particularly while serving as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (1913-1920) when he played almost every day, often at the Chevy Chase Club. During his break from politics and a period of recovery from his polio diagnosis in 1921, Roosevelt spent time in Warm Springs Georgia. When Roosevelt bought the property in 1926 and transformed it into a therapeutic center for polio victims, he built and oversaw the construction of a nine-hole golf course on the property in consultation with golf architect Donald Ross. Thus, it was not surprising given President Roosevelt's dedication to the game that golf became a large part of his New Deal programs, with the ultimate goal to provide jobs for thousands of laborers and to build much-needed public facilities.[187] According to H.W. Brands, author of *Roosevelt, Traitor to His Class*, Roosevelt's "inability to play made the game even more important to him, and he liked the idea that the government could make it possible for ordinary people to play."[188]

Illustrating the emphasis placed on the construction of golf courses, in 1936 WPA officials invited famed amateur championship golfer Bobby Jones to advise them on the construction of WPA-funded golf courses across the country. When meeting with WPA administrator Harry L. Hopkins and deputy administrator Col. Lawrence Westbrook, Jones was "dumbfounded" by what the WPA was doing for the game. Remarking on the construction of 600 golf courses across the country,

185 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 110.
186 Ibid., 116-117.
187 Don Van Natta, *First Off the Tee: Presidential Hackers, Duffers, and Cheaters from Taft to Bush* (New York: New York Public Affairs), 107-108; Kevin Kenny, *American Golf in the Great Depression: The Pros Take to the Grapefruit Circuit* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2014), 16.
188 Golf, "During the Great Depression, FDR Used the People's Money to Build Golf Courses, Employing Thousands and Democratizing the Game," accessed 6 December 2016, http://www.golf.com/tour-and-news/during-great-depression-fdr-used-peoples-money-build-golf-courses-employing-thousands-.

Jones said, "This means that golf is being democratized … This will make golf everybody's game even more than it is now."[189] Jones expressed to Hopkins and Westbrook his belief that the courses should be standardized to some extent and that certain criteria should be followed in constructing them. He also advised that the WPA should make an effort to only hire the best of the country's golf architects for the projects.[190]

Left with little work and dwindling business prospects during the Great Depression, many prominent golf architects designed and/or consulted on WPA golf courses across the United States. One of the largest and most notable WPA golf courses constructed was at Bethpage Park in Long Island, New York, that featured three new eighteen-hole golf courses, built under the direction of golf architect A. W. Tillinghast.[191] Other noted architects including Donald Ross, Robert Trent Jones Sr., and Perry Maxwell all took advantage of the available work and designed courses for the WPA program.[192] In order to maximize the number of jobs provided, most of the work on WPA golf courses was done by hand and each course often employed 200 or more workers.[193]

In Washington, DC, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, which took over the responsibilities of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds in 1925, continued to expand the city's public golf courses on federal land despite the economic downturn, responding to the continued popularity of the sport and growing use of the city's public courses. In 1930 construction on the city's fourth public golf course, also for white players, began in Anacostia Park, located along the Anacostia River in Southeast Washington. Similar to East Potomac Park, Anacostia Park was built by the Army Corps of Engineers by reclaiming the tidal flats of the Anacostia River beginning in 1898. In its 1901 report, the McMillan Commission recommended a park on the reclaimed land of the Anacostia flats known as the "Anacostia Water Park" and the Commission of Fine Arts emphasized in its 1914 annual report that the park would be an important element in restoring "the balance in development that has tended toward the northwest." The park was formally declared Anacostia Park in 1918 and dedicated on August 2, 1923.[194]

189 "Bobby Jones 'Dumfounded' At WPA Links Construction," *Washington Post,* 28 April 1936:17.

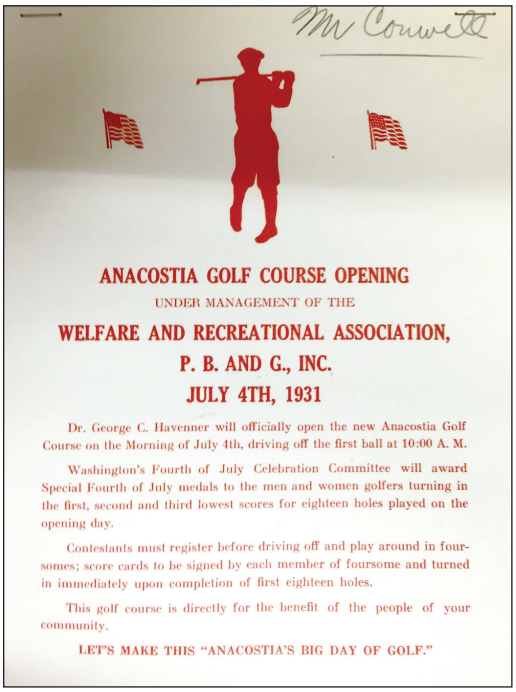
190 Ibid.

191 Tillinghast is best known for his work at Baltusrol Golf Club (1918) in Springfield, New Jersey, a National Historic Landmark, and Winged Foot Golf Club (1923) in Mamaroneck, New York.

192 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 106-108; John Berry, "Roosevelt's WPA a Boon for Sport of Golf," *Record-Bee Community News*, Lakeport, CA, 19 June 2009, http://www.record-bee.com/article/ZZ/20090619/NEWS/906199627; Rick Stedman, "WPA Golf Legacy," *RV Life Magazine*, accessed 11 January 2017, http://rvlife.com/wpa-golf-legacy/.

193 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 116; Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 108.

194 Frederick Albert Gutheim, *Worthy of the Nation: The History of Planning for the National Capital*, 1st ed. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), 141-142; Code of the District of Columbia, (31 August 1918, 40 Stat. 950, ch. 164, § 1.), accessed 6 March 2017,



ANACOSTIA GOLF COURSE OPENING

UNDER MANAGEMENT OF THE

WELFARE AND RECREATIONAL ASSOCIATION,

P. B. AND G., INC.

JULY 4TH, 1931

Dr. George C. Havenner will officially open the new Anacostia Golf Course on the Morning of July 4th, driving off the first ball at 10:00 A. M.

Washington's Fourth of July Celebration Committee will award Special Fourth of July medals to the men and women golfers turning in the first, second and third lowest scores for eighteen holes played on the opening day.

Contestants must register before driving off and play around in foursomes; score cards to be signed by each member of foursome and turned in immediately upon completion of first eighteen holes.

This golf course is directly for the benefit of the people of your community.

LET'S MAKE THIS "ANACOSTIA'S BIG DAY OF GOLF."

**Figure 1.13.** Flier announcing the opening of the Anacostia Golf Course, 1931. (Washington National Records Center)

Plans for a golf course in Anacostia Park developed as early as 1923 along with other structured recreation facilities such as baseball diamonds and tennis courts.[195] Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks Lt. Col. Ulysses S. Grant III noted in 1929 that the "growing Eastern section of the city calls for golfing facilities in that location under the supervision of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks."[196] Originally planned as a nine-hole course to be expanded to 18 if needed, the new course was located in Section D (also known as the Fairlawn Section) and Section E (also known as the Twining Division) of the park and straddled the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge, land which was initially used for public gardens.

Unlike the other public golf courses, the Welfare and Recreation Association built and operated the new Anacostia Course under the direction of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks. Therefore the course was in direct competition with Leoffler's courses at East Potomac Park and Rock Creek. The greenkeeper at the Columbia Country Club, O.B. Fitts, "directed the layout" of the course and Johnny Kearns, who "built a good many golf courses for Leoffler," supervised the work.[197] By October 1930 the course was under construction and Kearns "was there with his little bundle of blueprints under his arm, supervising a gang of workmen, who already had laid down the putting greens and … were in the process of getting the fairways ready for the seed that was to be sown today." Although Fitts was "disturbed" that the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds would not allow him to build cross bunkers, the greens were described as "sufficiently trapped to achieve the wished for result, by simply deferring the trouble to the second shot."[198]

https://beta.code.dccouncil.us/dc/council/code/sections/10-155.html.

195 "Plans to Push Park Work," *Washington Post,* 1 February 1923:12.

196 "Anacostia Links Proposed," *Washington Evening Star,* 4 October 1929:24.

197 "9-Hole Golf Course is Being Built Along Eastern Branch," *Washington Evening Star,* 21 October 1930:D3; *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks*, 1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

198 "9-Hole Golf Course is Being Built Along Eastern Branch," *Washington Evening Star,* 21 October 1930:D3.

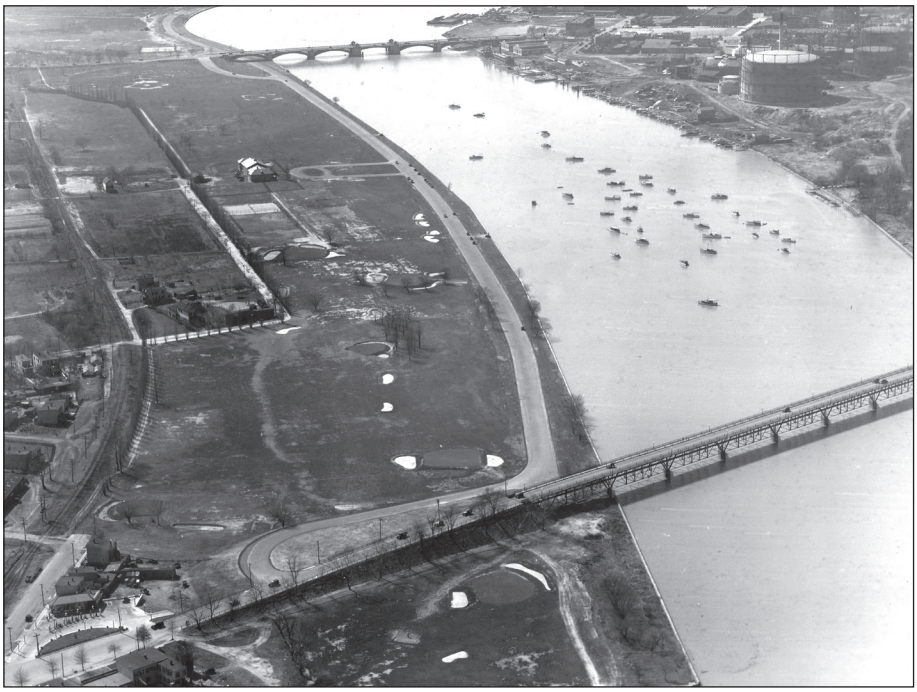


**Figure 1.14.** Aerial photograph showing the Anacostia Golf Course, looking southwest toward the fieldhouse, 1933. (National Archives)

On July 4, 1931, Dr. George C. Havenner, president of the Federation of Citizens Associations, drove the first ball on the new nine-hole golf course at Anacostia Park[199] (Figure 1.13). Work on the course's additional nine holes began in the spring of 1932. The full eighteen-hole Anacostia Golf Course, also known as the Fairlawn Golf Course, was dedicated on May 5, 1933, and officially opened to the public the following day. "Laid out over gently rolling country" the course included "a number of picturesque and tricky holes," that made the course "one of the finest public parks in this section."[200] A fieldhouse, built in 1932, also served the new golf course – the course started at the fieldhouse and extended northeast past the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge. The Welfare and Recreation Association held its first tournament at the new eighteen-hole course in August 1933, which was open to all amateur players[201] (Figure 1.14).

By the winter of 1938, the Welfare and Recreation Association was operating the Anacostia course at a loss of around $80,000. Severine G. Leoffler took over the contract in December 1938 and invested $25,000 in improvements.[202] Coinciding with Leoffler's management of the Anacostia Golf Course was the construction of the new Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge (the John Phillip Sousa Bridge) across the Anacostia River. In January 1939 the golf course was temporarily closed in order

199 "Sport Events Mark July Fourth Plans," *Washington Post,* 29 June 1931; "60,000 See Display of Fourth Fireworks On Monument Lot," *Washington Post,* 5 July 1931:M1.

200 Fairlawn is a residential subdivision located along the south side of Anacostia Park; "60,000 See Display of Fourth Fireworks on Monument Lot," *Washington Post,* 5 July 1931:M1; "Anacostia Dedicates New 18-hole Golf Links Today," *Washington Post,* 5 May 1933:15.

201 "Anacostia Sets First Golf Tourney," *Washington Post,* 30 July 1933:21.

202 "Leoffler, a Man of Many Firsts, Up Front in Celebs," *Washington Post,* 17 August 1952:C4.




**Figure 1.15.** View of the East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1932. (National Park Service)

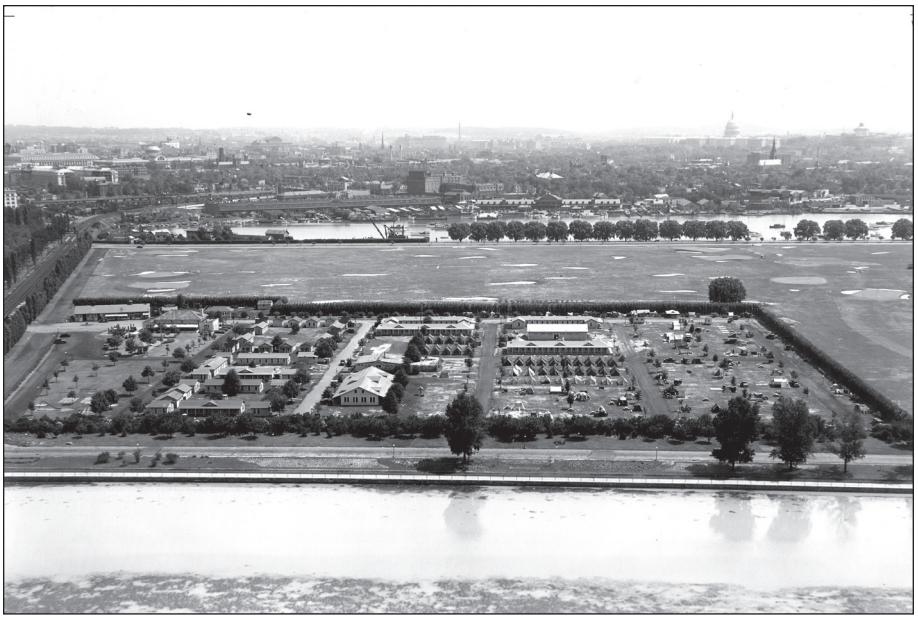


**Figure 1.16.** View of the G Course and the tourist camp (built in 1921), 1931. (National Archives)

to reconstruct two greens and one driving tee that were impacted from the bridge construction. During the closure Leoffler also made improvements to the fieldhouse by enlarging the lobby and rearranging the locker rooms to separate golf and pool (opened in 1937 adjacent to the fieldhouse) activities.[203]

The onset of the Great Depression also did not stop Leoffler from making improvements to East Potomac Park Golf Course. In 1930-1931 Leoffler added the final nine holes, known as the G Course, which were located on the north and south sides of the fieldhouse along Ohio Drive[204] (Figures 1.15–1.16). Leoffler built

[203] "Anacostia Golf Course Closed Temporarily," *Washington Evening Star,* 4 January 1939:B1.
[204] "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 July 1930:C2; "The Public Linksman,"

this course at his own expense for an estimated cost of $11,000.[205] The following year he added lights to the practice putting green, which had been built on the south side of the fieldhouse in 1927, and built a miniature golf course[206] (see Miniature Golf section).

In May 1932 the *Evening Star* praised Washington's municipal golf courses as "some of the most beautiful municipal golf courses in the country." In particular, it called out East Potomac Park Golf Course as "one of the scenic beauty spots in the District":

> Under foot is a grass turf of exceptional depth, watched and groomed as carefully as that of a country club. In the background are the lacy willows along the banks of the Potomac on one side and the War College, with its orderly array of Washington barracks nearby, stands across the other side … The Washington Monument breaks into the scene along the opposite perspective that ends at the channel edge, where the soft smoke of waiting steamers tells of a quiet activity below decks. This Potomac course is not difficult. There are lockers with shower baths and a cafeteria with a glorious outlook toward the city … There is a row of the cherry trees which makes the city so attractive in the springtime near the caddy house. A resplendent miniature golf course with a picket fence enclosure lies adjacent to the entrance driveway. The time-keeping rack in the club house office has the cards of 36 men, who are working on the course steadily.[207]

In 1934 Leoffler built a new driving range at East Potomac Park, which replaced an earlier range built in 1927 on the south side of the fieldhouse and removed during the construction of the G Course.[208] The new range, Leoffler's "pet and pride and joy" and hailed as the "newest and most complete range in this part of the country," had 45 tees and was flood-lighted for use at night.[209] The driving range helped offset some of the financial loss Leoffler incurred during the 1934 fiscal year. Leoffler also modernized the existing courses in 1934, ending the two-way play originally designed by Travis and Flynn. While the courses remained popular, they were not invulnerable to the effects of the depression. Leoffler's business had declined when the government cut wages and reduced the 30-day leave policy to 15 days. His boom years were 1929 and 1930 and although he made a small profit in 1931 and 1932, Leoffler said, "Since then times have been hard."[210]

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*Washington Post,* 3 July 1932.

205 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 4.

206 "Links to be Switched for D.C. Title Play," *Washington Evening Star,* 24 April 1931:D2; "The Public Linksman," *Washington Post*, 3 July 1932:M12; "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 7 April 1927:43.

207 "Washington's Playground in Spring and Summer," *Washington Evening Star*, 8 May 1932:9.

208 "East Potomac to Have One-Way Links," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 May 1934:D2; "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 July 1930:C2. Also see 1927 aerial photograph.

209 "East Potomac to Have One-Way Links," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 May 1934:D2; "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 30 April 1934:C3; No Title, *Washington Evening Star,* 4 May 1934:D3.

210 "East Potomac to Have One-Way Links," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 May 1934:D3; "Loss of Public Links Faced by DC," *Washington Post,* 11 December 1934:19.

### New Deal Funds and Improvements

Coinciding with the expansion and improvements of Washington's public golf courses during the Great Depression was the transfer of the city's parks on federal land from the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks to the Office of National Parks, Buildings and Reservations of the Department of the Interior in 1933. The bureau's cumbersome name was changed back to the "National Park Service" in 1934. Executive Order No. 6166, which expanded the National Park Service's responsibilities to include national military parks, battlefields sites, and national monuments previously administered by the War Department or the Department of Agriculture, ultimately transferred the federal parks in the city and region, including the National Mall, Rock Creek Park, George Washington Memorial Parkway, the Custis-Lee Mansion (Arlington House) and sixty other miscellaneous memorials, monuments, and structures around the city, to the National Park Service.[211] These were organized into the office of National Capital Parks, which assumed the responsibilities of its predecessors the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital.[212]

Executive Order No. 6166 brought many new types of properties to the National Park Service, which before consisted predominately of large wilderness areas and national monuments located in the western United States. As explained by an administrative history of the National Park Service in the 1930s:

> Important as it was in terms of numbers, the impact of Executive Order 6166 cannot be discussed in terms of size alone, for the location and diversity of the areas was just as important. Inclusion of the National Capital Parks brought the National Park Service into metropolitan urban parks.[213]

Until the District of Columbia Recreation Board was established in 1942, National Capital Parks had its own Recreation Division that was in charge of construction, maintenance, and operation on a permit basis of all recreational facilities of parks in the District of Columbia. Although it was the policy of the federal government not to engage in supervised recreation, National Capital Parks built and maintained facilities for 30 major sports, all open to individuals on permit basis. When Congress established the Recreation Board in 1942, a local government board, the new agency managed the program of supervised recreation in various parks using National Capital Park facilities. The establishment of the board resulted in the

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211 Lisa Pfueller Davidson and James A. Jacobs, *Civilian Conservation Corps Activities in the National Capital Region of the National Park Service, HABS No. DC-858* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2004), 8.

212 Heine, *National Capital Parks*.

213 Henry D. Unrau and G. Frank Williss, *Administrative History: Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s* (Denver: National Park Service 1983), 72.

discontinuance of the National Capital Parks Recreation Division[214] (See Chapter 1.2 for more on the Recreation Board).

Included in the purview of the National Park Service's office of National Capital Parks were East Potomac, West Potomac, Rock Creek, and Anacostia parks, which included all of the city's public golf courses. In general,

> [National Capital Parks] was charged with the design and development of park areas, the maintenance of all areas and facilities, protection of park property and park visitors, operation of recreational facilities and the general supervision and administration of recreational facilities, cooperation with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission in general planning of parks and parkways for the District of Columbia and surrounding territory as a major part of city and regional planning . . .[215]

National Capital Parks was unique compared to other units in the national park system in that it supervised a vast system of municipal parks and parkways, but also the park system of the nation's capital. On October 9, 1933, the Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes (1933-1946) , appointed C. Marshall Finnan as the first superintendent of National Capital Parks, who essentially took over the duties of Colonel Grant.[216]

Following the transfer of the golf courses to the Department of the Interior, additional improvements were made to the East Potomac Golf Course. In 1936 a swimming pool was built between the two wings of the fieldhouse, funded by the Public Works Administration (PWA) and one of six pools approved by Congress in 1929.[217] As part of the construction, the fieldhouse was remodeled to include basement dressing rooms for the swimming pool.[218] Meeting Olympic requirements at 164 feet long and 65 feet wide, the East Potomac Park pool was the largest of the swimming pools in the District and cost $131,440 to build. A flat parcel of land between the two fieldhouse wings was originally used as a grassy sunning area for swimmers[219] (Figure 1.17). Leoffler operated the pool for two years under a concession contract with the Recreation and Welfare Association. Subsequently the Recreation and Welfare Association operated the pool.[220]

214 Heine, *National Capital Parks*.
215 Ibid.
216 Heine, *National Capital Parks*; US Congress, House, Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill for 1935*, 1934, 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, 554.
217 Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Park Historic District*, 81.
218 Ibid., 76.
219 "Official Opens Pool With Dive," *Washington Post,* 6 June 1937:1; Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Park Historic District*, 52-53.
220 "Pools Open Today With Ceremonies," *Washington Evening Star,* 5 June 1937:A-14.

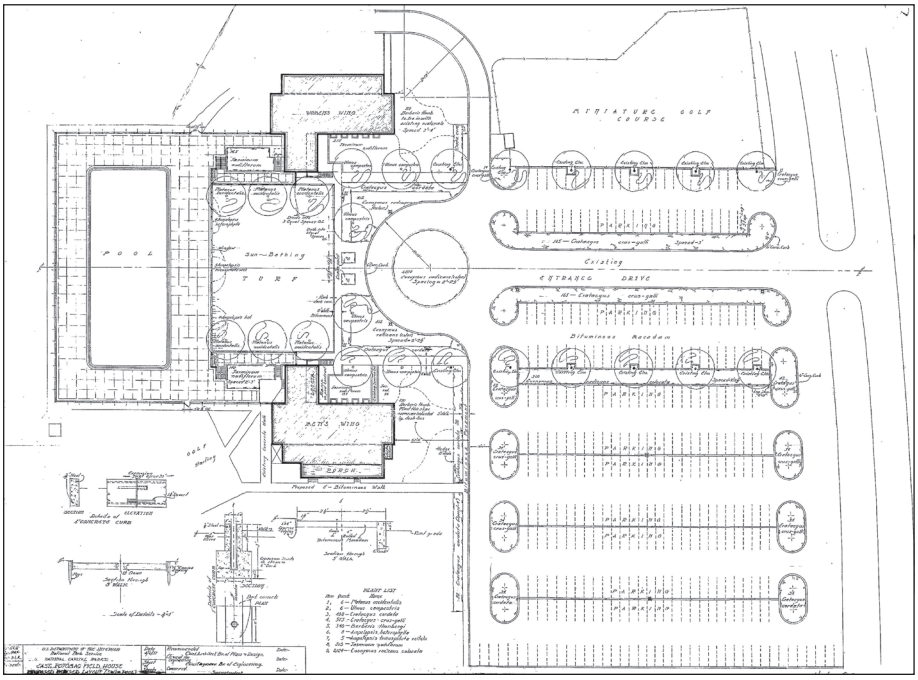



**Figure 1.17.** Plan of the fieldhouse and swimming pool at East Potomac Park, 1937. (National Park Service)

The new pool formally opened on June 5, 1937, with a ceremony attended by National Capital Parks Superintendent C. Marshall Finnan and Assistant Secretary of the Interior Theodore A. Walters. Instead of making his planned dedication speech, Walters "looked at the crystal water, dancing in the sun, and christened the pool with a swan dive." Finnan then jumped in followed by John Nolen Jr. and Thomas S. Settle, planning director and secretary, respectively, of the NCP&PC.[221]

With their transfer to the National Park Service, the city's federally owned recreation areas greatly benefitted from President Roosevelt's New Deal programs, in particular the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC. Roosevelt's ambitious CCC program was a prominent part of his New Deal legislation and aimed to provide unemployment relief to millions of unemployed young men throughout the United States. Between 1933 and 1942 the CCC operated twelve camps in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, with enrollees predominately working on National Park Service projects. As explained by Lisa Pfueller Davidson and James A. Jacobs in *Civilian Conservation Corps Activities in the National Capital Region*, "The variety of projects undertaken by the Washington-area CCC camps greatly expanded the recreational infrastructure of this region and formed the basis for later growth of the National Capital Region Park units."[222]

As part of their work in the region, the CCC aided in the construction and improvement of at least three of the city's municipal golf courses. At both East

221 "Official Opens Pool With Dive," *Washington Post*, 6 June 1937:1.
222 Davidson and Jacobs, *Civilian Conservation Corps Activities in the National Capital Region*, 2.

Potomac Park and Anacostia Park the CCC installed tile lines for surface drainage of the golf courses.[223] In addition, the East Potomac Park course received a "face-lifting program" that included the planting of 18 pairs of cedar trees, each 200 yards from each tee to mark the distance of a well-hit ball. The major task of the CCC at East Potomac Park was rebuilding a large number of the tees and greens, originally designed as reversible, for one-way play.[224]

The CCC also helped with the initial construction of a new course at Fort Dupont Park in Southeast Washington, DC, not far from the golf course at Anacostia Park. The 1901 McMillan Commission report identified a park at the location of Fort Dupont and Congress authorized the creation of the park in 1912. Plans for a golf course at the park began as early as 1928 and continued through the 1930s. In 1938, following a plan developed by then NCP&PC landscape architect Conrad Wirth, National Capital Parks proposed "the best 18-hole public golf course in the city, a handsome clubhouse, picnic areas, play meadows and parking facilities."[225] The new plan intended the Fort Dupont Golf Course to be connected to nine holes of the Anacostia Golf Course, and the remaining nine holes would be replaced with a recreation facility including playing fields and tennis courts. Between 1938 and 1940 a CCC camp completed the preliminary work for the golf course by clearing 16 acres of land and installing 450 feet of concrete pipe. Additional work to complete the golf course did not start until after World War II.[226]

By 1938 Washington had become a "hot bed" of golf and according to an *Evening Star* headline, was rated as a "Major Center in Links Sport."[227] More than 750,000 rounds of golf were played on both public and private clubs in Washington and the surrounding metropolitan area in 1938, and that number was expected to increase to almost a million the following year. While the number of rounds played at the country clubs was also high, the majority came from the public courses. At East Potomac Park, an estimated 300,000 rounds of nine-hole golf were played. Rock Creek came in second at 150,000 and Anacostia Park third at 32,000. While play in men's tournaments had declined, more women were playing golf with over 180 entrants in one tournament that typically drew 150.[228] Golf equipment companies viewed Washington as one of the "big golf towns" in the country in respect to its population. With a metropolitan population of around 650,000, Washington

223 Ibid., 86.
224 "Reconstruction by C.C.C. to Provide D.C. with Modern Public Golf Courses," *Washington Evening Star*, 4 February 1939:A15.
225 Robinson & Associates, Inc., *Fort Dupont Park Historic Resource Study* (Washington, DC: Robinson & Associates, Inc., 2007), 122.
226 "Dupont Park to be Made Play Center," *Washington Post*, 17 December 1938:X1; Robinson & Associates, Inc., *Fort Dupont Park Historic Resource Study*, 122-124.
227 "Close to Million Rounds of Golf Predicted for Capital Courses This Year," *Washington Evening Star*, 18 February 1939:A15.
228 Ibid.

boasted 15 private clubs and the four public courses (East Potomac Park, West Potomac Park, Rock Creek Park, and Anacostia Park) inside the District boundaries. In comparison, Baltimore, with a metropolitan population of around one million, had only seven private clubs "and less adequate public golf facilities than Washington."[229]

In 1939 the National Park Service's golf courses in the District of Columbia remained the only public golf courses in the city and in the metropolitan area. Two semi-private golf clubs, which allowed non-members to book tee times and play, were located in Garrett Park, Maryland (the White Flint Course on Wisconsin Avenue near Georgetown Prep School) and Bethesda, Maryland (the National Woman's Country Club near the Congressional Country Club), but their fees were slightly higher. According to the *Washington Post*, "that completes the selection for the District's non-club members, excepting some 200 who take advantage of the summer membership at the nine-hole course at Georgetown Prep." All other public courses were around 40 miles away from Washington, DC, including eighteen-hole courses in Columbia and Annapolis, Maryland, and Purcellville, Virginia.[230]

After more than 10 years of petitioning for a new golf course to replace the deteriorating course on the Lincoln Memorial grounds, the National Park Service finally built a new nine-hole course exclusively for African Americans in Section G of Anacostia Park between 1935 and 1939. Located in Northeast Washington north of Benning Road in a neighborhood that was predominately African American, Langston Golf Course opened on June 11, 1939, with a dedication ceremony and an exhibition match.[231] The *Evening Star* proclaimed that the new nine-hole course, which was built by WPA and CCC workers, would provide the city's African Americans "with golf facilities equal to the best."[232] The National Park Service awarded Severine G. Leoffler the contract to manage the new golf course[233] (See Chapter 1.2 for more on Langston Golf Course).

Months before Langston Golf Course opened, National Capital Parks announced in February 1939 that it would build another nine-hole golf course on government-owned property near Fort Hunt, along the Mount Vernon Highway in Alexandria, Virginia, to relieve the congestion on the other public courses. The planned course was to be built southeast of the fort over "ideal golf terrain, slightly

229 Ibid.
230 "Thousands Find Their Sports Thrill on DC Fairways," *Washington Post,* 26 May 1939:10.
231 "New Golf Course Dedicated in D.C." *Washington Afro-American,* 17 June 1939:21.
232 "Building Program Planned for Links Here Next Year," *Washington Evening Star,* 19 December 1938:A18.
233 "Contract Renewed, Leoffler Wants U.S. Golf Tourney," *Washington Evening Star,* 31 December 1938:A11.

rolling and cut up with woods and water hazards."[234] National Capital Parks was able to use CCC labor to help build the course and in July the men were clearing the site.[235] Although National Capital Parks produced the plans for the golf course and it was staked out, the course was never built, likely because of the fort's return to military use during World War II.[236]

With the continued increase in play and little relief, the condition of the courses suffered. Changes in Leoffler's contract over the years precipitated the decline. Between 1921 and 1928 Leoffler's contracts were primarily based on the improvements and the expansion of the facilities at all the golf courses under his purview. During this time the courses were reportedly kept in good condition. In 1929 Leoffler's former concessions agreements were canceled and his new contract required him to pay an annual rental fee of $5,596. Three years later Congress passed the Economy Act that required all funds from the rental of government property to be paid to the US Treasury and prohibited capital improvements projects by concessionaires in lieu of fees or rentals.[237] After this shift in the contract stipulations and when contract awards became based on cash return to the government, the condition of the courses reportedly began to suffer from "physical deterioration" and there was "mounting dissatisfaction by the golfers."[238]

In November 1939, even after the improvements made to the courses by the CCC, *Evening Star* columnist Walter McCallum reported that many men and women had stopped playing on the public courses and had joined country clubs because they could not improve their game on the inferior courses. McCallum reported, "These courses were not adequate in 1923. They are pitifully inadequate now." While the cost for a round of golf at the courses was low, the condition of the courses reportedly did not compare to those in other cities.[239]

As part of a four-part series on the public golf courses in the District of Columbia, McCallum stated:

> There is not much excuse for the inferiority of public golf courses. But they are greatly inferior and a lot of people seem to take it for granted that they can't

234 "Ideal Public Golf Course Near Fort Hunt, Va. Is Planned by Parks Office," *Washington Evening Star,* 12 February 1939:B8.

235 "Capital to Have Fine Public Golf Links at Fort Hunt," *Washington Evening Star,* 16 July 1939:E4.

236 "Enlarged Public Golf Facilities for D.C. Now Far Away," *Washington Evening Star,* 17 December 1939:B17.

237 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 3; "S.G. Leoffler Company and Golf Course Specialists, Inc. History," Concessions Files, National Park Service, National Capital Region. .

238 *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks*, 1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

239 Walter McCallum, "Profitable, Private Monopoly Controls Public Links Golf," *Washington Evening Star,* 16 November 1939:1.

> be anything else … Public links golfers want improved putting surfaces and better tees and there is no good reason why they should not be had. They want putting greens to which they can pitch a ball with reasonable hope it will stay there. They want grass tees instead of weather-scarred, eroded and flinty dirt tees they now have. They play the private courses, all well-groomed affairs with soft putting greens and well-sodded tees and they ask themselves: "What are we getting in comparison to this, for our daily fees on the public courses?"[240]

In a memorandum to the Director of the National Park Service, Superintendent of National Capital Parks Frank T. Gartside responded to the allegations posed by McCallum and stated that while his office was willing to admit that the layout of the golf courses could be improved through a reconstruction program, it would cost around $150,000 to make these improvements. While the expenditure could be justified, urgent projects, such as providing adequate recreation facilities for children, took precedent. Gartside also argued that McCallum's claims that the courses were poorly maintained and improperly operated were incorrect. Gartside said,

> More than 450,000 rounds of golf were played upon the park courses during the past year. The problem of maintaining courses subject to this intensive use is a most difficult one, and in the opinion of this office the operator has made a commendable effort to operate them in a manner that would be generally satisfactory to the players. This is attested to by the fact that despite the 450,000 rounds of golf played upon the park courses last year, not a single letter of complaint relative to the condition or operation of the courses was received by this office.[241]

Gartside also noted that a recent study found that National Capital Parks was one of three agencies in the country that provided golf at the low cost of 15 cents for nine holes on the weekdays and one of 18 maintaining a rate of 25 cents for Sundays and holidays – 49 cities charged a higher weekday rate and 28 a higher Sunday rate for the use of public golf facilities. Despite the higher fees, around 50 percent failed to obtain a sufficient profit to cover the operation of the golf course. As Gartside noted, "The fact that the operator of National Capital Parks' courses is able to produce an income of 110% of the operating expense is an indication of good business management."[242]

In April 1941 congressmen on the Committee on the District of Columbia attacked Leoffler and the operation of the public golf courses. Congressman William T. Schulte of Indiana believed "that the Federal Government [was] spending millions on golf and tennis courts which are handled by an individual," and that

240 "Inferiority of Public Courses Driving D.C. Golfers Away," *Washington Evening Star*, 18 November 1939:A22.

241 Memorandum to the Chief of Operations from Frank T. Gartside, Acting Director of National Capital Parks, 25 October 1939, Record Group 79, Entry 10 Central Classified files, 1907-1949, Box 2827, Folder 601-12, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

242 Ibid.

"Someone is living in the lap of luxury because of the generosity of the Federal Government." At that time, the golf courses, not the tennis courts, were operated by Leoffler under a five-year lease with an option of a five-year lease renewal. Members of the committee also doubted that the improvements made to the courses, the only "duty" of the lessee, were adequate.[243]

One month later the committee voted unanimously for Congress to investigate Leoffler and the Welfare and Recreation Association. At the committee hearing, McCallum testified that in 1939 Leoffler grossed over $259,000 from operating the golf courses and of this amount he only paid the National Park Service around $20,000. Operating costs were reported at around $133,000. McCallum stated that the $100,000 profit represented an "estimated excess" of gross revenue and described the courses as "entirely inadequate," and "ridiculously outmoded." In response, Leoffler called McCallum's figures "ridiculous" and stated that in 1939 his profit was a little over $5,000 and that in 1940 he actually lost $2,600. When questioned further Leoffler admitted that his annual salary was $18,200. In a written statement, Leoffler said that over the last ten years he paid the federal government over $110,000 in lease fees in addition to taxes.[244]

Efforts to establish the District of Columbia Recreation Board coincided with Leoffler's investigation, illustrating Congress's and the city's coordinated interest in having the board take over the management of the National Park Service's golf courses. Public Law 534 established the Recreation Board in April 1942 and the following October a report on "Public Golf in the District of Columbia" was released. The report openly criticized the operation and condition of the public golf courses and provided insight on the operation of the concessions program and how it impacted the design and maintenance of the golf courses.

The report noted that with the exception of New York and Minneapolis, Washington, DC, had more public golf courses than any other American city. In addition, the daily fees for the public golf courses in the District of Columbia were lower than any base rate of comparable municipal golf courses in the country. A recent "Recreational Fees and Charges Study" conducted by the National Park Service found that 92% of reporting municipalities charged a higher rate on weekdays and 70% charged more on weekends.[245] The report found, however, that in order to remain a profitable business and maintain low green fees, Leoffler's goal was to get as many golfers on each course as possible. It stated:

243 "Congressmen Attack Golf Links Setup," *Washington Post,* 22 April 1941:21.
244 "House Group Votes Inquiry Into Recreation Setup in District," *Washington Post,* 7 May 1941:8.
245 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 8, 11.

> This policy or plan of action [of the concessionaire] called for the elimination of all features, both natural and artificial, no matter how essential or valuable to the character and appearance of the courses, that would have a tendency to obstruct or delay play. In this way, many changes were made to the original eighteen at East Potomac, entire holes were eliminated and rebuilt in new locations, holes were rerouted, bunkers, hazards and mounds were obliterated, and the same idea influenced all subsequent planning for the new courses built by the operator.[246]

The report noted that during the development of the first eighteen holes at East Potomac, the federal government "showed much interest in procuring experienced advice, competent service in design, and consulting help in the planning and construction."[247] Even after the shift to concessionaire management, Leoffler's company initially showed some interest in the design and solicited professional advice in the expansion of Rock Creek Golf Course and adding the third nine holes to East Potomac Park Golf Course, all the work of William S. Flynn. Subsequently, the concessionaire made alterations to the courses from time to time "without adequate regulation or the provision of expert consulting service" from the federal government. Since golf courses lacked standardization like tennis and other sports, for the most part the changes went unnoticed. Thus, "the changes to the older courses, the poor planning and construction of the facilities during the expansion years, plus the more recent physical deterioration of the entire system has greatly affected the character of the courses and the type of golf offered to the public."[248]

> To say the least, the public golf courses in Washington are decidedly mediocre, poor more nearly describes most of the units, and this criticism includes both design and upkeep. Changes in some of the original lay-outs and inadequate planning and poor construction are responsible for a weak standard of golf, while overcrowding and lack of funds for rehabilitation and expansion are showing effects in the worn out turf conditions and the general run down appearance of the courses.[249]

The release of the study coincided with the onset of World War II and while the report recommended additional golf facilities based on the overcrowded conditions of the existing courses, including the course at Fort Hunt, it recognized that the extreme housing needs in the area made it impossible to select and recommend land within the District of Columbia for future golf courses.[250] The report did, however, recommend that the newly formed Recreation Board take over the management of the golf courses from the concessionaire. Since Public Law 534 also authorized the creation of a trust fund, all receipts from the golf courses could be deposited into the account for maintenance and general operations.

246 Ibid., 11.
247 Ibid., 10.
248 Ibid., 10-11.
249 Ibid., 11-12.
250 Ibid., 39.

Instead of being deposited directly into the US Treasury, the surplus funds above maintenance and operating costs could go directly toward improvements to the golf courses.[251]

With Leoffler's contract set to expire in December 1943, the Recreation Board met with the Department of the Interior officials to discuss taking over the operation of the golf courses at the termination of his golf contract. The board halted its efforts in November 1943, due to lack of funds and its refusal to operate the facilities under the Department of the Interior's non-segregation policies, which the department clarified following the actions of African American golfers to desegregate the East Potomac Park Golf Course in 1941[252] (see more in Chapter 1.2). On January 1, 1944, the National Park Service and Leoffler signed a new five-year contract for the golf courses.[253]

### WORLD WAR II AND THE EFFECT ON THE CITY'S GOLF COURSES

World War II created challenges for American golfers including a shortage of materials and gas, transportation rations and reductions, as well as a lack of caddies, golf professionals, and workers to maintain the courses. Perhaps the biggest challenge of all, as explained by George B. Kirsch in *Golf in America* was "a widespread assumption among the general public that playing golf was frivolous and perhaps even unpatriotic during wartime."[254] Yet writers and officials argued that golf could contribute to the war effort by promoting fitness and efficiency among the wartime workforce. As Herb Graffis, editor of *Golfing* and *Golfdom* magazines said in June 1942, "the only justification for golf or any other sport in these times is that of providing earned relaxation for war workers and protecting and renewing the keenness of those who are doing their full duty on the civilian front."[255]

Golf courses in the Washington, DC, area initially benefited from the influx of government workers in the years leading up to and at the onset of World War II. In August 1942 the *Evening Star* reported that the area's country clubs were experiencing tremendous prosperity and full memberships, even more so than during the boom years of the 1920s, "when green pastures around Washington turned overnight into lush fairways and blooming putting greens." Despite travel restrictions, gasoline shortages, and a lack of caddies, the clubs benefitted from the sud-

251 Ibid., 41.
252 "DC Refuses to Handle Golf Courses," *Washington Post,* 10 November 1943:B1; District of Columbia Recreation Board, "Compendium of Significant Factors Relating to the Transfer of the Operation of the Public Golf Courses to the District of Columbia Recreation Board," 18 January 1951, Harry S. Wender Papers, MS 379, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.
253 "Leoffler Gets Public Links for 5 Years," *Washington Post,* 1 January 1944:10.
254 Kirsch, *Golf In America*, 122.
255 Quoted in Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 122.

den growth of the Washington area's population of "hundreds of solid business and industrial men," who came to the city as part of the war effort.[256]

The courses remained crowded, so much in fact that the *Evening Star* reported that the city was "breaking at the seams of its golf pants." Hundreds who wanted to play on the public courses were being turned away on the weekends and "unless something soon is done about it starters at the public courses are going to give up in despair." At Rock Creek Park, the manager said "I don't know what we can do. We simply cannot handle any more people on the courses, and we haven't room to expand here. Dozens of people buy tickets and have to wait so long to play they turn them back, unable to spend the time they would have to wait to play."[257]

In the spring of 1941, the National Park Service removed five holes of the nine-hole G Course at East Potomac Park to make room for new tennis courts and ballfields to replace those lost by the construction of the Jefferson Memorial.[258] The US Army's installation of four anti-aircraft guns on the course in December 1941 further reduced the number of holes at East Potomac Park when it forced Leoffler to close the F Course and the driving range.[259] The reduction of the holes at East Potomac Park coincided with the complete closure and removal of the course at West Potomac Park in 1942 to make way for government worker dormitories, "thus cutting down the always inadequate municipal golf facilities."[260]

In addition to the closures, Leoffler encountered several difficulties in operating the golf courses during wartime. Rationing impacted the operation of the lunch counters and both the Anacostia and East Potomac Park were short a golf professional.[261] He also had trouble getting gasoline from the ration board to keep the fairways cut.[262] While the driving range at East Potomac Park reopened by the spring of 1942, Leoffler was short his usual reserve of range balls after he did not receive the 3,000 dozen balls he ordered the previous fall. There was also a ques-

256 "War Throngs Bring Greatest Prosperity Ever to Golf Clubs About Capital," *Washington Sunday Star,* 2 August 1942:C4.

257 Walter McCallum, "Public Courses Here So Packed Starts Close to Despair," *Washington Evening Star,* 4 May 1942:A14.

258 "18 Tennis Courts Planned for Park," *Washington Post,* 25 March 1941:28; "Anti-Aircraft Moves In on Golf, Cutting East Potomac Course," *Washington Evening Star,* 16 December 1941:A19' Three of Four Holes on Golf Course G Will Be Cut Off," *Washington Evening Star,* 21 March 1941:D2.

259 "Anti-Aircraft Moves In on Golf, Cutting East Potomac Course," *Washington Evening Star,* 16 December 1941:A19.

260 "East Potomac Links Slated to Open by May 1" *Washington Post,* 19 March 1943:14; "Recreation Group Agrees to Dorm Site," *Washington Post,* 11 July 1942:13; Chappell, Historic Resource Study East and West Potomac Parks, 144-145.

261 "East Potomac Links Slated to Open by May 1" *Washington Post,* 19 March 1943:14.

262 "East Potomac Golf Is Halted for Lack of Transportation," *Washington Evening Star,* 15 June 1943:A-15.

| GOLF COURSE | 1935 | 1936 | 1937 | 1938 | 1939 | 1940 | 1941 | 1942 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anacostia | 78,914 | 71,065 | 67,055 | 92,713 | 40,236** | 46,149 | 51,846 | 41,218 |
| East Potomac | 112,759 | 115,915 | 132,662* | 169,507 | 155,830 | 145,082 | 133,520 | 64,609*** |
| Rock Creek | 101,915 | 114,845 | 117,881 | 139,765 | 131,017 | 121,306 | 133,947 | 119,584 |
| West Potomac | 40,212 | 45,902 | 19,815* | 57,490 | 53,019 | 48,264 | 36,717 | 4,400**** |
| Lincoln Memorial | 16,885 | 19,601 | 24,266 | 34,077 | 10,614 | – | – | – |
| Langston | – | – | – | – | 34,857 | 43,252 | 39,374 | 39,263 |

* Nine holes closed during Boy Scout Jamboree, 1937
** Part of course not used because of construction of Sousa Bridge
*** Nine holes closed during 1942
**** Closed August-December 1942

**Table 1.3. Golf courses in National Capital Parks and number of players at each course (1935-1942)[263]**

tion if the range lights would be allowed so close to the river.[264] Additionally, the federal government work schedule, which had workers at government offices until 5:00 P.M. on the weekdays and on Saturday afternoons, impacted the number of golfers on the courses since fewer workers had time to play a round of golf (Table 1.3).[265]

By the fall of 1942 operational and other issues exacerbated the situation at East Potomac Park and Anacostia Park. A massive flood in October caused major damage to the courses and prompted their closure until spring 1943. While the East Potomac Park course finally opened to the public in May 1943, a month later bans on transportation had virtually isolated the course and forced Leoffler to close the East Potomac Park course for the duration of the war. Accessible by bus, Rock Creek, Anacostia, and Langston remained open, but still saw a reduction in players. Leoffler reported that the Rock Creek and Anacostia courses had 25 percent less business in April of 1943 than the same month of the previous year, even after the closure of East Potomac Park.[266] East Potomac Park Golf Course remained closed until the summer 1945.[267] A letter from Secretary of the Interior Ickes to Leoffler in June 1943 suggests that the miniature golf course and the fieldhouse at East Potomac Park, despite being located directly adjacent to the course, remained open.[268]

263 National Park Service, Report on the Claim of the S.G. Leoffler Operating Company Dated 14 May 1943, 4 June 1943, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2847, National Archives and Records Center, College Park, Maryland.
264 "Tee to Green," *Washington Post,* 22 March 1942:III-2.
265 "East Potomac Park Golf Course is Closed Until Next Spring," *Washington Evening Star,* 17 December 1942:C-1.
266 "East Potomac Golf Is Halted for Lack of Transportation," *Washington Evening Star*, 15 June 1943:A-15.
267 Walter McCallum, "Win, Lose or Draw," *Washington Evening Star,* 10 August 1945:A10.
268 Secretary of the Interior Ickes to S.G. Leoffler, 23 June 1943. Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-40 (Miniature Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

### POST WAR: EXPANSION, IMPROVEMENTS, AND THREATS TO THE CITY'S GOLF COURSES

In the fifteen years following World War II, the popularity of golf in the United States once again flourished as much as if not more than in the Golden Age of the 1920s. Post-war prosperity that brought an increased standard of living to blue- and white-collar workers, suburbanization that was ubiquitous with the post-war years, the promotion of golf by celebrities (such as Bing Crosby and Bob Hope), the introduction of golf carts, and the rise of golf on television all contributed to the golf boom following World War II. Aiding the effort was President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who played more than 800 rounds of golf during his two terms as President of the United States. In May 1953 the *New York Times* stated, "The game has been booming for years, but the chances are the golfing President has done it even more good than might normally have been expected."[269] *Golf Digest* reported two months later that Eisenhower created a "golfing fever" in the District of Columbia and reported that "thousands of government workers, from Vice President Nixon down to the lowliest office clerks, are rushing to learn the game." In Washington "equipment sales, lessons, daily fee play and applications for private club memberships" were "at an all-time high." A far superior player than Taft, Wilson, and Harding, Eisenhower mostly played at Burning Tree Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland, while in Washington or practiced on a special green built on the grounds of the White House near the Oval Office.[270] Eisenhower even had golf architect Robert Trent Jones Sr. design a small course at the president's weekend retreat, Camp David.[271] In 1953 Layne Leoffler, son of concessionaire Severine G. Leoffler and a partner in his company, told the *Washington Post* that sales were up on Washington's five public courses and that President Eisenhower was a big reason.[272]

After the end of World War II, National Capital Parks retained golf course architect William S. Flynn to rehabilitate East Potomac Park Golf Course after years of neglect and the loss of several holes. Flynn redesigned the F Course, which had been shuttered during the war, and made improvements to the B and D Courses. After his death in January 1945, Flynn's plans were carried out in the spring of 1945 by his assistant[273] (Figure 1.18).

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269 "3,265,000 Reasons for Playing Golf," *New York Times,* 31 May 1953:SM16; Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 128.

270 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 130.

271 W. Dale Nelson, *The President is at Camp David* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 34-35.

272 "Golf Salesmen, Pros Agree President Causes New Boom," *Washington Post,* 4 March 1953:16.

273 Letter from Irving C. Root, Superintendent of National Capital Parks to S.G. Leoffler, 26 January 1944, Record Group 49, Entry 10, Box 2847, National Archives, College Park, Maryland; "East Potomac Links Improved; Work at Rock Creek Planned," *Washington Evening Star,* 4 December 1945:A14.




**Figure 1.18.** View of East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1947. (National Park Service)

On Memorial Day 1948 the nine-hole course at Fort Dupont formally opened and was the District of Columbia's fifth operating public golf course. The National Park Service revived construction efforts on the golf course in the 1940s, but eliminated its original plans to connect it with the Anacostia Golf Course.[274] Leoffler not only served as concessionaire of the course, but also advanced National Capital Parks around $69,000 for the construction of the course and the clubhouse after Congress denied appropriations.[275] Although golf course architect William Flynn was initially consulted, his untimely death required Leoffler to employ the services of a different golf course architect. In 1946 Leoffler proposed another Pennsylvania architect, William F. Gordon, for the job. The National Park Service agreed and were "satisfied that Mr. Gordon is a competent golf architect."[276] The *Washington Post* praised the Fort Dupont Golf Course for its uncrowded conditions compared to the other public courses in the District that had long waits on weekends. It also stated that the course yielded "to no local course in the condition of its greens and its rolling terrain offer[ed] a challenge."[277]

The following year Leoffler once again faced criticism regarding his company's management of the golf courses. With Leoffler's contract about to expire, other management companies as well as the District of Columbia Recreation Board

274 "New Nine-Hole Golf Course Ready by Memorial Day," *Washington Post,* 7 March 1948:L6.

275 In 1949 Leoffler had estimated that he loaned the federal government $50,000. "Leoffler Loan 'Assures' Him Links Contract, *Washington Post,* 15 March 1949; "He Also Gets Pay Increase of $3,000 In New Pact," *Washington Post,* 15 March 1950:19.

276 Memo from National Park Service Associate Director A. E. Demaray to Acting Secretary of the Interior, 14 March 1946, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2847, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, College Park, Maryland; Robinson & Associates, *Fort Dupont Park,* 124.

277 "Fort Dupont Haven for Crowded Golfers," *Washington Post,* 8 July 1950:C3.

competed to take over the management of the course. Congressman Lucius Mendel Rivers of South Carolina initiated a new congressional investigation into the city's public golf courses in March 1949 and halted the issuance of a new contract for the management of the courses.[278] However, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior C. Girard Davidson admitted that in December 1947 he had made a commitment to renew Leoffler's contract after Congress refused to appropriate money for a new clubhouse at Fort Dupont and Leoffler agreed to "advance" the funds needed to National Capital Parks.[279] While under investigation, Leoffler continued to operate the golf courses, but without a contract.[280]

At a congressional hearing in late March 1949, Associate Director of the National Park Service Arthur Demaray told the House Subcommittee on Recreation and Parks of the Public Lands that Leoffler should be complimented for what he has done at the golf courses.[281] Demaray said:

> From the viewpoint of the National Park Service, a 'good operator' is one who has operated the golf course at the lowest greens fees that have been brought to our attention for the non-subsidized municipal bent grass green courses; whose operation has resulted in a substantial increase in public golf facilities in the District of Columbia; who has never refused to take any action which the National Park Service has requested; and whose achievement can be measured in terms of the fact that over 325,000 rounds of golf were played on public courses in 1948.[282]

Demaray also referred to a letter from Herb Graffis, editor of *Golfdom* magazine, that stated, "My observation of the public golf courses in Washington, D.C. area, is that the operation compares very favorably with most other metropolitan district golf operations … According to my observation around the country, the Washington job has been well done."[283] Congressman Rivers responded that it had been suggested that "large sums of money have been realized as a result of partiality to the present concessionaire … If there has been indifference, negligence, and dishonesty, this should be exposed." Demaray promised that Leoffler's books were being audited and that the findings would be provided to the subcommittee.[284]

As pressure mounted, Leoffler made immediate improvements to the golf courses. During an independent study of the condition and management of the golf

278 "Leoffler Loan 'Assures' Him Links Contract," *Washington Post,* 14 March 1949:1.
279 Ibid.
280 "Recreation Unit to Meet Tuesday on Krug Offer," *Washington Evening Star,* 2 July 1949:A12.
281 "Congress Tees Off on Golf Problem But Time Too Short," *Washington Post,* 30 March 1949:19.
282 Letter to Harry T. Thompson, Asst. Supt. National Capital Parks, from Herb Graffis, 28 February 1949, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2847, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
283 Ibid.
284 "Congress Tees Off on Golf Problem But Time Too Short," *Washington Post,* 30 March 1949:19.

courses paid for by the Cleveland Concessions Company, who wanted to take over Leoffler's contract, golfers at the courses said that more work had been done "in the last 90 days than in years." Charles A. Burns, a golf expert from Ohio who completed the study for the Cleveland Concessions Co. said, "I've played and inspected municipal courses in Toledo, Cleveland, Chicago, Dayton, and New York among other places. I believe if you asked those golfers to play the courses in the District of Columbia, they'd give up the game."[285]

As the congressional investigation continued into Leoffler's accounts, the *Washington Post* reported that Congressman Rivers, "in a fiery speech before the House" demanded that the Department of the Interior terminate its contract with Leoffler and said that Leoffler had "been able to handle the public's money like a 'drunken sailor.'" Rivers claimed that Leoffler owed the federal government around $200,000. Denouncing the National Park Service, Rivers said, "They have forfeited all right to the future handling of these lucrative facilities."[286]

In May 1949 Secretary of the Interior Julius A. Krug (who succeeded Ickes as Secretary of the Interior under President Harry S. Truman from 1946-1949) indicated that he was willing to enter an agreement with the Recreation Board to operate the golf courses if they were willing to continue the Department's policy of nondiscrimination and alter its bylaws to reflect this[287] (see Chapter 1.2 on segregation and the Recreation Board). One month later Congressman Rivers submitted a bill (H.R. 5071) that would prevent the Interior Department from renewing its contract with Leoffler and transfer control of the golf courses to the Recreation Board. Supporting the transfer was an audit of Leoffler by the Government Accounting Office and the Department of the Interior that revealed irregularities in the concessionaire's bookkeeping.[288] While the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands approved the bill, the full committee never acted.[289]

In July 1949 Secretary of the Interior Krug officially made a proposal to turn all of the Interior Department's recreation facilities in the District over to the Recreation Board.[290] Krug's proposal indicated that the National Park Service would give the board complete control of its recreation facilities, but in return the board had to remove the language from its bylaws that specified segregated play areas.[291]

285 "Expert Finds Faulty Golf Courses Here," *Washington Post,* 3 April 1949:C3.
286 "Rivers Asks Leoffler's Golf Course Operation Be Terminated," *Washington Post,* 21 May 1949:15.
287 "Golf Contract to be Held Up," *Washington Post,* 4 May 1949:17.
288 "House Group Votes to End Leoffler's Golf Concession," *Washington Post,* 9 June 1949:1.
289 "Recreation Unit Called to Confer on Golf Contract," *Washington Evening Star,* 16 January 1951:B1; "Compendium of Significant Factors Relating to the Transfer of the Operation of the Public Golf Courses to the District of Columbia Recreation Board," 18 January 1951, Harry S. Wender Papers, MS 379, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.
290 "Recreation Unit to Meet Tuesday on Krug Offer," *Washington Evening Star,* 2 July 1949:A12.
291 Ibid.

The Department of the Interior and the Recreation Board signed a basic agreement on August 26, 1949, that included an authorization for the board to operate the golf courses and that the facilities would "be open to use by all people irrespective of their race, creed, color, or national origin." However, the board could not officially take over their management until it was able to compensate Leoffler for the equipment and money he had invested in the courses.[292]

In the interim Leoffler continued to manage the courses without a contract. In March 1950 the Department of the Interior reached an agreement, also approved by the Recreation Board, that permitted Leoffler to continue to operate the courses and allowed for a substantial increase in the golf course fees: fees to golf at Langston increased from 20 cents to play nine holes on weekdays and 35 cents on weekends to 30 cents on weekdays and 50 cents on weekends. For nine holes at East Potomac and Rock Creek, fees went up from 25 cents on weekdays and 40 cents on weekends to 40 cents on weekdays and 60 cents on weekends. Fees for eighteen holes increased from 40 cents on weekdays and 75 cents on weekends to 60 cents on weekdays and 90 cents on weekends.[293]

The Recreation Board maintained its quest to take over the contract and asked Congress for a $275,000 loan to repay Leoffler for construction advances and stock inventory as well as to supply a revolving fund for the operation of the city's golf courses.[294] While the Recreation Board had high hopes that it would be able to take control of the courses' management in January 1951, the District of Commissioners withdrew their request for the appropriation because "Too many details remain to be straightened out. The whole thing is a complicated business."[295] The failure of the board to secure the necessary funding prompted the Department of the Interior to officially renew Leoffler's contract. The new four-year contract beginning in January 1951 included a clause stating that the Recreation Board could take over the golf courses over the next two years if it could pay Leoffler for his remaining investment in the courses.[296]

Leoffler and National Capital Parks continued to invest and make improvements to the golf courses. Architect William F. Gordon, who formerly worked as a construction foreman for William S. Flynn before branching out on his own,

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292 "Way Now Clear to Settle Details For the Operation of Facilities Here," *Washington Post,* 27 August 1949:B1.

293 "New Nine-Hole Golf Course Ready by Memorial Day," *Washington Post,* 7 March 1948:Ld; "Board Asks Fund to Run Golf Courses," *Washington Post,* 12 April 1950:1; "New Leoffler Contract Raises Fees For Golf," *Washington Evening Star,* 15 March 1950:B1.

294 "Board Asks Fund to Run Golf Courses," *Washington Post,* 12 April 1950:1

295 "Recreation Plan to Take Over Delayed," *Washington Post,* 19 July 1950:17.

296 "Recreation Unit Called to Confer on Golf Contract," *Washington Evening Star,* 16 January 1951:B1; "S.G. Leoffler Company and Golf Course Specialist, Inc. History," Concessions Files, National Park Service, National Capital Region.

redesigned the G Course at East Potomac Park for beginner golfers, reopening the course in the summer of 1950 after its closure from the construction of the tennis courts prior to World War II.[297] Gordon's new design rearranged the layout to allow for all nine holes of the course to be on the south side of the fieldhouse along Ohio Drive.[298] The most substantial changes to the layout of Rock Creek Golf Course since its construction occurred when Military Road was widened between 1946 and 1958 to a four-lane parkway and rerouted to the north within the southern portion of the golf course.[299] Gordon aided in the redesign of the course, which required moving and shortening several holes on the front nine.[300]

National Capital Parks also planned a new eighteen-hole golf course at Greenbelt Park in the 1950s and revived the idea of the golf course at Fort Hunt. The Department of the Interior acquired the land for Greenbelt Park in 1950, located along the Baltimore-Washington Parkway in nearby Prince George's County, Maryland. The NCP&PC recommended the golf course in a 1949 study for the park and also proposed a practice driving range and a clubhouse along with other recreational facilities.[301] In 1952 Severine G. Leoffler told the *Washington Post* that the Department of the Interior wanted to build a thirty-six-hole course at Greenbelt and an eighteen-hole course at Fort Hunt and was interested in building outside the District of Columbia since the population was "steadily shifting to the suburbs." Plans for both courses were in the "discussion phase."[302]

While the future of the courses at Greenbelt and Fort Hunt was uncertain, construction was underway for a new, permanent clubhouse at Langston Golf Course between 1950 and 1952. The National Park Service finally announced in January of 1952 that Langston Golf Course would be expanded to eighteen holes and by March, Leoffler had already received preliminary plans for the course from archi-

297 "New Nine-Hole Public Golf Course is Virtually Certain to Be Ready by July 1," *Washington Post,* 14 May 1950:C5; "New Nine-Hole Golf Course Ready by Memorial Day," *Washington Post,* 7 March 1948:L6.

298 William F. Gordon, *Additional Nine Holes, East Potomac Park GC, Washington, DC*, 1950, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

299 "Historic Military Road Is Going Modern," *Washington Post,* 26 January 1958:A17.

300 National Park Service, *National Capital Parks, Reconstruction of Tees, Greens and Fairways, Vicinity of Proposed Fort Drive, Rock Creek Park Golf Course*, April 1946, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

301 "Capital Park System Acquires 1,148-Acre Tract at Greenbelt," *Washington Evening Star,* 6 December 1950:1.

302 National Capital Parks continued to plan for the course at Greenbelt Park as part of Mission 66 improvements as late as 1962, but the National Park Service did not move forward with plans for the golf course at Greenbelt Park or Fort Hunt, likely because of lack of funding. "New Public Courses Planned for Greenbelt and Fort Hunt," *Washington Post,* 30 March 1952:C3; "Public Camp Sites and Golf Course Provided in Project," *Washington Post,* 3 June 1958:B1; Judith H. Robinson, Tim Kerr, Janel Crist Kausner, *Mission 66-Era Visitors Centers, Administration Buildings, and Public Use Areas in the National Capital Region of the National Park Service,* National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Washington, DC: Robinson and Associates 2012 DRAFT), E32.

tect William F. Gordon.[303] Two years later Leoffler signed an eight-year extension of his contract with the Department of the Interior. The contract, which ended in December 1963, was the longest ever granted to Leoffler and required the enlargement of Langston Golf Course.[304] Gordon and his son David designed the new nine holes at Langston, which were predominately located on the east and north sides of Kingman Lake and built between 1954 and 1955.[305]

After the Supreme Court's ruling on *Bolling v. Sharpe* on May 17, 1954, which invalidated the segregation of the District's schools, the Recreation Board officially removed its policy of segregated recreation areas and the National Park Service renewed its interest in transferring the management of the golf courses to the Recreation Board.[306] While Superintendent of National Capital Parks Edward J. Kelly expressed that he would be glad to be relieved of the supervisory responsibility of the play facilities operated by Government Services, Inc., the National Park Service had just signed the long-term contract with Leoffler and the golf courses would not be available for transfer until 1963. Then chairman of the DC Recreation Board Henry Gichner was not enthusiastic about the transfer and told a reporter, "We already have our hands full."[307] The Recreation Board eventually abandoned their efforts to take over the courses, and the courses remained under the administration of the National Park Service.

### THE GOLF COURSES AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY

The number of golfers in the United States grew exponentially during the 1960s – from 3.9 million in 1958 to 11.2 million in 1970. Yet of the 3,500 new courses built to accommodate the abundance of players, only 600 were municipal courses – the majority were semi-private, daily-fee courses.[308] In 1974 the National Golf Foundation reported that there were 4,720 member-owned courses, 4,710 profit golf courses, and 1,466 municipal facilities. While 45 percent of golfers (around 5.2 million) patronized municipal golf courses, they had to compete for space on only 14 percent of the courses. As explained by Kirsch in *Golf in America*, "As middle- and working-class golfers of modest means populated both municipal and semi-

303 "Langston Golf Course Will Add Nine Holes," *Washington Sunday Star,* 6 January 1952:B4; "New Public Courses Planned For Greenbelt and Fort Hunt," *Washington Post,* 30 March 1952:C3; "Langston Golf Course Will Add Nine Holes," *Washington Sunday Star,* 6 January 1952:B4.

304 "Leoffler Gets 8-Year Extension of Public Links Franchise," *Washington Evening Star,* 23 June 1954:C1.

305 "Leoffler Says Courses Paid In $1 Million," *Washington Post,* 24 March 1963:C4; William F. Gordon, *Preliminary Plan, Additional Nine Holes, Langston Golf Course, Washington, DC,* 1952, drawing; Langston Golf Course, 1954, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

306 "District Ends Racial Bars at Playgrounds," *Washington Evening Star,* 19 May 1954:A25.

307 "Recreation Officials Study Proposed Shift of Federal Facilities," *Washington Evening Star,* 14 July 1954:A21.

308 Semi-public golf courses sell memberships, but also allow non-members to book tee times for a fee.

private facilities during this era, many became dissatisfied with the simple layouts and the poor condition of fairways and greens. They demanded more exciting designs and superior facilities, service, and maintenance; in many cases they were rewarded, although at higher prices."[309]

Of the more than 60 golf courses in three counties surrounding Washington, DC, (Montgomery, Prince Georges, and Fairfax), in 1971, only five eighteen-hole courses were fully public – Northwest Park, Needwood, and Falls Road in Montgomery County, Maryland, and Twin Lakes and Reston South in Fairfax County, Virginia. While several new courses were under construction, county representatives acknowledged that the new courses would not eliminate the shortage of public golf courses in the area. As the *Washington Post* reported, "The area's public links golfers, meanwhile, will continue to fight the crowds, court disaster from shots by duffers in adjacent fairways, whacking their own wayward shots and yelling the golfer's favorite four-letter word: 'Fore!'"[310]

As municipalities and operators of daily-fee courses tried to upgrade their facilities, economic recessions in the 1970s and 1980s slowed down the construction of golf courses across the country due to inadequate financing for course construction.[311] Counties and municipalities responded to budget deficits by cutting funding for parks and recreational programs. The impact of the recession varied considerably across the country; while city, county, and semiprivate courses in Los Angeles and Chicago continued to flourish, in New York City maintenance of the city's 13 public courses drastically deteriorated from a cut in funding due to bankruptcy, mismanagement, and "just plain indifference."[312]

In Washington, DC, the public golf courses faced threat of closure due to development, dwindling patronage, and lack of maintenance. By 1956 construction of the Anacostia Freeway had "doomed" the Anacostia Golf Course.[313] In response the National Park Service expanded the Fort Dupont Golf Course to eighteen holes in 1957. The Anacostia course was finally forced to close in 1958 because of the freeway construction.[314] Not long after its closure, Leoffler and National Capital Parks intended to build a new golf center at Anacostia Park and plans included a driving range, a lighted eighteen-hole par three golf course, and a miniature golf course.[315]

309 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 225-226.
310 "New Construction to Ease Area Golf Course Shortage," *Washington Post,* 27 July 1971:D4.
311 Robert Muier Graves and Geoffrey S. Cornish, *Golf Course Design* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 7-8.
312 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 226-227.
313 "Golf Links Dot 3-State Area," *Washington Post,* 20 May 1956:K5.
314 "Anacostia Course Will Close Sunday," *Washington Post,* 7 June 1958:A14.
315 S.G. Leoffler Jr. to George B. Hartzog, 25 October 1969, Record Group 70, Accession No. 72A-6215, Box 12, Folder C3823 (Golf S.G. Leoffler Co.), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.



**Figure 1.19.** Golf concession building at Anacostia Park, October 1961. (National Park Service)

In 1961 National Capital Parks constructed a golf concession building in Section E of Anacostia Park (now part of the Aquatic Resources Education Center), located between the John Philip Sousa Bridge and the East Capitol Street Bridge (Figure 1.19). As of 1968 no additional progress had been made on the golf center. By that time, Severine G. Leoffler stated that the area around the park had "changed considerably" and recommended further study of the area's needs before continuing with the plan for the golf center.[316] The plans for the golf center never progressed beyond the concessions building.

Beginning in 1963 Congress began to once again question Leoffler's contract and management of the golf courses. Ohio Congressman Michael Kirwan, a chairman of a House Appropriations Sub-committee looking into the Department of the Interior budget, suggested that the Department might not be getting a fair return of profits from the golf course. Kirwan claimed that Leoffler's company had a profit of $414,000 over the past four and three-quarter years, giving the concessionaire a profit of $87,174 a year. During this time, Leoffler reportedly only invested $24,407 into the golf courses. Severine G. Leoffler Sr. called Kirwan's charges "ridiculous" and pointed out that the profits vary each year. Leoffler also stated that his company had invested over $400,000 into the golf courses over the years.[317]

Around the same time, Congress directed the National Park Service to conduct studies on how to improve visitor services and concession management in their parks across the country. During this period all expired concessions contracts were extended on an annual basis only. Thus, Leoffler's contract was renewed on

316 Ibid.
317 "Kirwan Tells Interior to Run Public Links," *Washington Post,* 23 March 1963:B20.



**Figure 1.20.** June 15, 1964: (from left) US Open participants Sam Snead, Julius Boros, Art Wall, Tony Lema, Tommy Jacobs, Bob Charles, Bruce Crampton, Billy Casper, and Chi Chi Rodriguez at a Time, Inc. event at East Potomac Park Golf Course. The US Open was held at the nearby Congressional Country Club. (National Park Service)

a year-to-year basis after the long-term contract expired in 1963, making it difficult for the company to commit to any long-term improvements to the city's golf courses.[318] Consequently, the condition of the courses suffered.

After meeting with National Park Service officials in the summer of 1967, Leoffler's company proposed a new 20-year contract that would require several improvements to the golf courses, including the redesign and reconstruction of Rock Creek Golf Course, a driving range in Anacostia Park, the addition of electric cart buildings and service to all of the golf courses, and a new clubhouse at East Potomac Park.[319] The contract was not implemented and one year later, in October 1968, Severine G. Leoffler Jr. met with the National Park Service to discuss the contract. Leoffler stated that the low rates charged at the golf courses resulted in low wages for many of the employees of the courses, deteriorated equipment, inadequate clubhouse facilities, and course maintenance below their preferred standards. The company had also experienced a radical drop in its profits and 1968 marked the worst year on record since 1952.[320]

The declining profits at the courses coincided with the riots in the District of Columbia following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968, which left many city neighborhoods devastated and hastened the city's

318 Letter to Representative Joel T. Broyhill from Regional Director T. Sutton Jett, 3 June 1966, Record Group 79, Accession No. 72A-6215, Box 12, Folder C3823 (Golf S.G. Leoffler Co.), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

319 S.G. Leoffler Co. to Fred W. Binnewies, Assistant Regional Director, National Park Service, 27 July 1967, Record Group 79, Accession No. 72A-6215, Box 12, Folder C3823 (Golf S.G. Leoffler Co.), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

320 Letter from Severine G. Leoffler Jr. to Director George B. Hartzog Jr., 25 October 1968, Record Group 79, Accession No. 72A-6215, Box 12, Folder C3823 (Golf S.G. Leoffler Co.), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

depopulation.[321] President Lyndon B. Johnson brought in over 13,000 federal and National Guard troops to bring order to the city and a number of these troops were bivouacked at East Potomac Park, on the west end of the golf course. Consequently the Army blocked access to Hains Point and the National Park Service was forced to close East Potomac Park Golf Course from Friday, April 5, until Monday, April 8. While the B and D Courses reopened at that time, the F Course remained closed until the morning of Wednesday, April 17. As a result, Leoffler Sr. claimed that the company lost thousands of dollars in revenue.[322]

By 1971 occasional violence and almost daily petty theft had taken its toll on the Fort Dupont Golf Course. Unlike the other courses in the District, the Fort Dupont course was never extremely popular with golfers due to its location and rugged terrain. In 1970 S. G. Leoffler Co. estimated that the course lost around $20,000. Layne Leoffler met with National Park Service officials in July of 1971 to discuss the future of the 125-acre, 5,300-yard, par-68 course and the possibility of turning the park and golf course into a recreation center for the surrounding community. He told the *Washington Post*, "It is my contention from our records that we are not catering to enough people to warrant the tie up of as many acres of land as we have out there. That's the only published excuse I can give."[323] The park was 393 acres, only second in the District behind Rock Creek Park. Over the Fourth of July weekend of 1971 the course at Fort Dupont only attracted 742 golfers. At East Potomac Park, more than 500 crowded onto the eighteen-hole course on Monday alone of the same three-day weekend.[324]

Leoffler also conceded that the threat of violence played into his decision to close the course. In 1969 three District policemen were robbed as they were putting on the ninth hole, only 200 yards from the clubhouse. The *Washington Post* reported,

> It was a Catch 22 situation. Fort Dupont was not getting as much play as the other District courses because it was more difficult (and, most players say, better) course. As fewer people played, it became less safe on its wood-lined hills. As it became less safe, even fewer people played.[325]

Some argued that the "horrid greens, unkempt fairways, and sandless traps" were from Leoffler purposefully not maintaining the course because of declining profits and that if he had taken care of the course and had it properly policed, it would

321 Jacob Fenston, "How the 1968 Riots Shaped Shaw," WAMU, posted 8 November 2013, accessed 27 September 2016, http://wamu.org/programs/metro_connection/13/11/08/how_the_1968_riots_shaped_shaw.

322 Letter from S.G. Leoffler Sr. to Secretary of the Interior Udall, 3 May 1968, Record Group 79, Accession No. 72A-6215, Box 12, Folder C3823 (Golf S.G. Leoffler Co.). Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

323 "Golfers Can't Fight Holdups," *Washington Post,* 25 July 1971:C4.

324 "DC Golfers Face Better Days," *Washington Post,* 7 April 1977:D10.

325 "DC Golfers Face Better Days," *Washington Post,* 7 April 1977:D10.

have attracted more golfers. Leoffler maintained that "A month ago, the course was in exceptionally good shape, and where was the play then? [The Park Police] have their horse stable right behind the fifth green. They're always patrolling, and it still has done nothing to prevent any of the problems."[326] Manus J. "Jack" Fish, Acting Director of the National Park Service National Capital Region (which replaced National Capital Parks in 1962), agreed that the golf course at Fort Dupont Park was underused and considering both the community needs and financial liability, decided to close the public golf course on December 1, 1971.[327]

In 1975 the *Washington Post* reported that since 1967, the use of the golf course at East Potomac Park declined by 12 percent, the driving range was down 37 percent, and miniature golf was down by 65 percent. During the same period the use of the tennis courts increased by 396 percent. The National Park Service began to question if the land occupied by the golf courses might be better used for other recreation rather than golf. At East Potomac Park fewer than 10 percent of park visitors were being given exclusive use of more than two-thirds of the park. Planners at the National Park Service National Capital Region stated, "Golf uses more land for fewer people than almost any sport. At peak use there are perhaps two or three golfers per acre of course. Picnickers go about 50 to the acre. And the East Potomac courses are used only 58 percent of their capacity, compared to 86 percent for the tennis courts, 92 percent for the pool, 100 percent for the softball fields." The National Park Service did recognize, however, that there were only three public golf courses left in the city and that no one wanted "to see the public courses wiped away."[328]

The course at East Potomac was also consistently plagued by drainage issues. After a heavy rainstorm in late October 1975, the course still had "lakes" nine days later. The roof on the clubhouse leaked and "Every time it rains people have to open umbrellas indoors." Despite these issues, Leoffler stated, "I won't give up the Washington public courses. We feel we owe the public courses something because they have been good to our family. Besides, we have some two dozen employees who have been with us for more than 20 years and we have to think of them too."[329]

In June 1977 Severine G. Leoffler Sr. died at the age of 89 of a heart condition. Up until two weeks before his death, he was still reporting to his office at East Potomac Park. While Leoffler owned or leased more than a dozen golf courses in his lifetime, he reportedly never played a round of golf. Reflecting on his life,

326 "Golfers Can't Fight Holdups," *Washington Post,* 25 July 1971:C4
327 "Fort Dupont Park to Close Golf Links," *Washington Post,* 26 November 1971:B4.
328 "The Timeless Lure of the People's Park," *Washington Post,* 7 August 1975:C7.
329 "East Potomac Play Down," *Washington Post,* 2 November 1975:29.

Leoffler once said "I've had a lot of headaches and heartaches over the years, but the fact that Washington has some of the finest (and cheapest) municipal courses in the country – and the fact that golf is for everybody, not the rich alone – is all the reward I ever needed."[330]

The same year of Leoffler's death, the National Park Service conducted a feasibility study on its three golf courses in Washington, DC, and a proposed a new golf course on Oxon Cove, marshy land acquired by the bureau on the east end of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge on the Maryland-District of Columbia border in the mid-1950s. The study determined that the Oxon Cove course would cause a severe impact to the use of Langston Golf Course; at only 20 minutes away, more skilled golfers would chose Oxon Cove over Langston, although the higher green fees at Oxon Cove could potentially lessen player loss. The course was also expected to reduce the rounds of golf played at East Potomac Park Golf Course, potentially resulting in the elimination of nine holes of the course. In the end the Oxon Hill project did not receive the $1.2 million in appropriations needed to build the course.[331]

The 1977 study also revealed that both the Potomac Park and Rock Creek courses were in "less than acceptable condition for player use and overall appearance because of poor maintenance." An inadequate number of sand traps existed on the courses and existing traps were in poor condition, were more patches than bunkers, and were not well-designed. Tees were often just bare ground. Improper use of herbicides, seeds, and fertilizers as well as poor turf maintenance programs allowed major infestation of foreign grasses and weeds on the fairways and greens. Most of the needed improvements required little or no capital investment, but rather just proper maintenance from a "competent operator." The report specifically noted that these issues were exacerbated by the fact that Leoffler's contract had been renewed on a short-term, annual basis since 1963.[332]

According to the *Washington Post*, an additional 1979 study conducted by an independent consultant for the National Park Service concluded that the three courses "have all been allowed to deteriorate over the last 10-15 years" and "constitute a real investment risk" to any concessionaire unless the federal government was willing to make at least $2.1 million dollars in improvements to the courses. At the time, the cost for a round of golf at the courses was still among the lowest in the

330 Severine Leoffler, "Never Stayed Down Long," *Washington Post,* 24 June 1977:E6.

331 National Park Service National Capital Region, *Marketing and Economic Overview, Rock Creek/Potomac Park Golf Courses* (National Park Service: Washington, DC: 1977), 18, 44; "D.C. Golfers Face Better Days," *Washington Post,* 7 April 1977:D10; "1 of 3 Public Links in D.C. Closed," *Washington Post,* 20 December 1981:C1.

332 National Park Service National Capital Region, *Marketing and Economic Overview, Rock Creek/Potomac Park Golf Courses*, 27-29.

country. At Rock Creek and East Potomac Park, the cost was $3.75 for eighteen holes on weekdays and $4.50 on weekends. At Langston, it was $5 for weekdays and $6 for weekends. The study concluded that each course had to attract at least 41,000 golfers to make a profit. While 79,200 played at East Potomac in 1980 (up 11,100 from 1979) and 41,500 golfers played at Rock Creek (up 9,500 from 1979), only 21,500 golfers played at Langston, 8,000 fewer than in 1979.[333]

Numerous management issues surrounded Langston Golf Course in the 1970s and several successive concessionaires found it difficult to operate the course for a profit. After being threatened by the construction of an inner loop highway system and a public housing area in the 1960s, Langston was once again in poor condition by 1970.[334] Describing the course, *Evening Star* columnist Dick Slay wrote, "What really gets you about Langston Golf Course is the fairways. If it weren't for dandelions and chickweed you'd be playing the ball on bare dirt in most places." One visiting golf pro said, "It's a joke. And it's too bad, too, because if they'd spend one nickel on maintenance this could be a helluva golf course. You can see they have the soil here."[335] After 35 years of management, Leoffler's company released control of Langston's concessionaire contract in July of 1974. While the company continued to manage the East Potomac and Rock Creek courses, Severine G. Leoffler Jr. estimated that his family lost between $300,000 and $500,000 in the years that they managed Langston Golf Course and that they "never made a nickel out of the course." Seven investors formed the Langston City Golf Corporation and took over the contract from Leoffler in 1974.[336] After only a year of managing the course, Langston City Golf Corporation ran into management problems, "lost a considerable amount of money," and shuttered the course. While the closure caused a level of deterioration of the course due to lack of maintenance, it also put a burden on the two remaining public courses at East Potomac Park and Rock Creek Park.[337]

The beleaguered Langston course caught the attention of PGA golfer Lee Elder, who became the first black golfer to play in the prestigious Masters Tournament at the Augusta National Golf Club in 1975. Elder was interested in an extensive rebuilding program at Langston and wanted to make it a first-class base for his Lee Elder Celebrity Tournament and the location for his golf camps for inner-city

333 "1 of 3 Public Links in DC Closed, Other Measures Eyed," *Washington Post,* 20 December 1981:C1.

334 Francesca Russello Ammon, *Southwest Washington Urban Renewal Area, Historic American Buildings Survey*, HABS DC-856 (Washington, DC: National Park Service 2004), 111-112; "Arboretum, Public Golf Course Eyed for Low-Rent Housing," *Washington Post,* 8 May 1969:B1.

335 Dick Slay, "Tee to Green," *Washington Sunday Star,* 10 May 1970:B5.

336 "Elder Asks Lease of Langston," *Washington Post,* 19 November 1975:H1.

337 "Closing of Langston Hurts Black Youths," *Washington Post,* 17 April 1976:C4.

children.[338] While the National Park Service and Elder negotiated the terms of the contract, the front nine holes of Langston's course reopened in September 1976 and the back nine reopened in April 1977.[339] In 1978, eight years after his first negotiations to take over the course, Elder finally received the contract as concessionaire of Langston Golf Course.[340]

Elder immediately began upgrading the course and by the spring of 1979 numerous improvements had already been made including resodding, the revamping of the tees and greens, and the refilling of the sand traps.[341] In 1980 Elder began construction on a driving range, and the reworking of several of the tees, fairways, and holes on the back nine.[342] When the course reopened under Elder's management, one of the course regulars remarked, "When Lee bought this course it was one of the best things that ever happened to black people in this city. Before he opened the course back up, hardly anyone came around anymore. Now it's like a tournament every day."[343]

In December 1981 Elder's company canceled the course's insurance coverage claiming that it had been unable to respond to contractual disputes with the National Park Service. The National Park Service was consequently forced to close the Langston course. The closure "came amid widespread reports that the golf course was again losing money, was in poor condition and was suffering a sharp drop in patronage."[344] Langston Golf Course remained closed until 1983, when Golf Course Specialists, Inc. took over the concessions contract. Five years later, the conditions at Langston had improved. Early on in the contract, "The greens were terrible, the fairways were terrible, and it just wasn't a fun place to play. Slowly, people became to come back to playing at Langston and patronage increased from 20,000 after the course reopened to 33,000 in 1986.[345]

In 1981 Severine G. Leoffler Jr. no longer wanted to continue the contract at Rock Creek Park. Although profits from East Potomac Park Golf Course had covered the losses from the other courses in the past, his family's company had lost money operating the Rock Creek course over the last six years. Leoffler believed that one of the issues was that the metropolitan area was saturated with around 70 golf courses and that there were "too many to survive. Even in 1968 I told the [Nation-

338 "Elder Asks Lease of Langston," *Washington Post,* 19 November 1975.
339 "DC Golfers Face Better Days," *Washington Post,* 7 April 1977:D10.
340 "Elder Dickering to Get Langston," *Washington Sunday Star,* 10 May 1970; B-5; "Elder Sees a Diamond in Langston's Weedy Rough," *Washington Post,* 25 August 1978:E1.
341 "City Welcomes Reopening of Langston Course," *Washington Evening Star,* 9 April 1979:36.
342 "Club at Word to Eliminate Sole Kemper Site Complaint," *Washington Star,* 12 October 1980:D12.
343 "City Welcomes Reopening of Langston Course," *Washington Evening Star,* 9 April 1979:36.
344 "1 of 3 Public Links in DC Closed, Other Measures Eyed," *Washington Post,* 20 December 1981:C1.
345 "Langston Golfers Hope Stadium Talks Fizzle," *Washington Post,* 20 September 1987:41.

al Park Service] there was no future for Langston … and that Rock Creek ought to be phased out too." If the National Park Service did not find a new operator, it would be forced to close Rock Creek Golf Course.[346] In 1982 partners Robert Brock, Franklin Coates, and William Torpey of Golf Course Specialists, Inc., who had recently modernized and rebuilt courses in Williamsburg, Charlottesville, and Reston, Virginia, took over the contract at Rock Creek Park.[347] The firm restored the back nine (Leoffler had shortened the holes in the 1970s) and cleared away a lot of the brush.[348]

After 60 years of management under the S.G. Leoffler Co., East Potomac Park Golf Course came under new management in 1983 when Golf Course Specialists, Inc. bought out Leoffler's interest in the golf course for between $300,000 and $400,000. The new manager planned "to make East Potomac a distinctive Scottish seaside-style course, more difficult and interesting than it is now, with new bunkers and greens," but also planned on keeping the course at a low cost for players. At that time, both Rock Creek and East Potomac Park were among the least expensive golf courses in the nation.[349]

In January 1983, shortly after the change in management, the National Park Service eliminated the nine-hole F Course at East Potomac Park as part of a $2 million dollar plan to relieve traffic congestion and increase open recreation space in the park. Plans for the area illustrated new ball fields located on the northeast corner at the intersection of Ohio Drive and Buckeye Drive, and new roads accessing the area. In the interim, the National Park Service created a picnic area at the location of the former course. With its easy access to the clubhouse and intermediate-length fairways, the nine-hole F Course was a favorite among the city's retired and senior golfers. Shortly after the removal of the course, a group of golfers that frequented the F Course organized the East Potomac Golf Association and began a campaign to have the National Park Service restore the course. The group circulated petitions, including one with over 1,200 names that was sent to the Secretary of the Interior James Watt (1981-1983), wrote letters, and made personal appeals to Congressmen.[350] In August 1984 Congress backed the golfers and provided $500,000 in the 1984 supplemental appropriations bill to restore the F Course. The National Park Service estimated that it would take over a year

346 "1 of 3 Public Links in DC Closed, Other Measures Eyed," *Washington Post,* 20 December 1981:C1.

347 "Park Service Seeking Operator for Langston Golf Course in SE," *Washington Post,* 5 May 1982:DC10; "E. Potomac Park Public Golf Course Gets New Manager," *Washington Post,* 5 January 1983:DC7.

348 Bob Arnebeck, "Heart-Attack Hill: Survival and Loathing on the Back nine at Rock Creek's Golf Course," *Washington Post,* 19 May 1985:SM18; "Park Service Seeking Operator for Langston Golf Course in SE," *Washington Post,* 5 May 1982:DC10.

349 "E. Potomac Park Public Golf Course Gets New Manager," *Washington Post,* 5 January 1983:DC7.

350 "Elderly Golfers in Turf Fight for Hains Point Course," *Washington Post,* 6 June 1983:D3.

to restore the course and that it would look for alternative ways to provide the much-needed ball fields and picnic areas that had been planned at the location of the course.[351]

The Langston Course was once again threatened in the late 1980s when Washington Redskins owner Jack Kent Cooke proposed to build a new stadium on the site of Langston Golf Course that would replace the nearby Robert F. Kennedy Stadium and move the course to an adjacent site. Although the plan was rejected by District of Columbia Mayor Marion Barry, revised plans moved forward that would keep the golf course and redesign a portion of it to make way for 18,000 parking spaces needed for the new stadium.[352] Long-time players formed the "Committee to Save Langston" and as a result of their efforts, Langston Golf Course was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.[353] While talks on the proposed stadium continued, the National Park Service was reluctant to make any improvements to Langston Golf Course until the plans were finalized. When Cook failed to meet Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan Jr.'s (1989-1993) deadline for negotiations on the stadium site, Lujan instructed the National Park Service to move forward with the "long-delayed renovations" to Langston Golf Course.[354] The new stadium was eventually built in Landover, Maryland (today's FedEx Field).

After the real estate slump of the late 1980s and early 1990s, golf course construction in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area once again took off in the late 1990s, buoyed by the growth of the local economy and furthered by the dramatic national increase in the game of golf. In 1988 the National Golf Foundation had ranked Washington near the bottom of its list of 300 metropolitan areas in terms of public courses per number of golfers. The unprecedented building boom followed the overall trend of creating public-access greens that offered a country club experience, "with first-rate layouts, professional service, plenty of amenities – and higher fees." With the general overcrowding of the public courses, many players were willing to pay the additional fees at these new courses. A downside of the courses was their location – since land close to the city was either already developed or too expensive, most of the new courses were built in the exurbs. As the *Washington Post* reported, "Even so, playing a terrific new course in the hinterlands is a far superior alternative to the status quo. And if nothing else, these developments are providing the Washington area with an ever-better mix of near-in, classically designed courses, and shiny moderns. That means, more than ever,

351 "F Course Saved: Golfers Win Fight for Hains Point Links," *Washington Post,* 15 August 1984:C3.

352 "Cooke Likes Open-Air Stadium at Langston Site," *Washington Post,* 14 July 1988:C01; "DC Stadium Called Boon for the Area," *Washington Post,* 31 January 1991:B3.

353 "A 2nd Stadium is 1 Too Many, Foes Say," *Washington Post,* 7 August 1991:D01.

354 "Minority Protest Hits Langston Contract," *Washington Post,* 20 February 1992:DC1; "Cooke Shift Sidelines Stadium," *Washington Post,* 3 April 1992:A1.

there is very likely a public course to suit the taste and budget of every Washington golfer."[355]

In August 1998 *Washington Golf Monthly* highlighted the East Potomac Park course in an article about public courses. It called East Potomac Park Golf Course "a green place of golf populism, a 36-island of egalitarianism … the home of the five-hour round and the wide-open fairways, possibly the best first date golf course in America … for all the talk about exclusive country clubs and luxurious new upscale layouts charging $100 a round, venues like East Potomac remain the face of golf for a majority of the country's hackers." The manager at East Potomac further promoted the appeal of the East Potomac Park course and said, "You're going to see everybody here from the guy who collects tin cans to pay his green fees to Supreme Court justices … the Swedish ambassador was a regular customer … We get the full spectrum.[356]

In 2007 District of Columbia Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton began working to improve the conditions at the three National Park Service Golf Courses and to preserve "these unique, valuable and historical D.C. attractions for the enjoyment of future generations." Norton introduced the "Golf Course Reservation and Modernization Act" to Congress that would allow the National Park Service to use public-private partnerships to modernize and rehabilitate its golf courses. Norton's bill mandated that all three courses be combined into a single competitive request for proposals that would generate ideas and alternatives to lead to renovations while preserving historic features. Norton said, "All three golf courses are treasures in their own right, but they must be matched with the private market that would be quick to recognize their value and act to make them worthy of the golfing public in the nation's capital."[357] In 2014 Norton renewed the bill and stated that it would transform one of the golf courses into a "world-class tournament-quality public course, with playing fees commensurate with such courses." Another plan introduced to the city council by member Vincent B. Orange proposed transforming Langston Golf Course into a "PGA Championship course" complete with museum, wine bar and a "Four-Diamond AAA rated restaurant."[358]

355 "Slicing Public Courses," *Washington Post,* 17 April 1992:7; John Holmes, "Reaching the Greens," *Washington Post,* 26 April 1996:6.

356 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 229-230.

357 Eleanor Holmes Norton, "Norton Golf Bills Aim to Improve Golf Courses in the District of Columbia," Press Release, 8 June 2009, https://norton.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/norton-golf-bills-aim-to-improve-golf-courses-in-the-district-of.

358 "An Upscale Future Pondered for D.C.'s Proletarian Public Golf Courses," *Washington Post,* 20 May 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/an-upscale-future-pondered-for-dcs-proletarian-public-golf-courses/2014/05/20/e149dc74-dc62-11e3-bda1-9b46b2066796_story.html.



**Figure 1.21.** View of the practice putting green and the East Potomac Park Golf Course fieldhouse, 2016. (University of Pennsylvania)

Improvements have been made to the courses in the last 25 years in order to keep them viable including remodeling of the holes, additional practice facilities, and a new two-tiered driving range at East Potomac Park in the 1990s, and a major renovation of the back nine and the addition of practice greens at Langston in the early 2000s. Yet the National Park Service golf courses in the District of Columbia continue the courses' original intent to allow golfers of all ages and skill levels to play at an affordable cost compared to private and even semi-private clubs in the area and remain extremely popular. As one frequent East Potomac Park golfer said, "We've got plenty of upscale in Washington as it is. Most people who play here know the course isn't going to be fancy. It's just a lot of fun. … This is our country club."[359]

### MINIATURE GOLF COURSES

In 1928 miniature golf was virtually unknown in Washington, DC. By the summer of 1930 there were 15 licensed miniature golf courses in the District of Columbia and another 15 or more that were unlicensed. The sheer number of miniature golf courses in the city gave the impression that there was "a golf course of this kind in every block."[360] Frequently located in vacant lots, the courses appeared in all parts of the city and were of varying types.[361] As the *Washington Post* noted,

359 Ibid.
360 "These are Not the Missing Links!" *Washington Post,* 31 August 1930:SM5.
361 "Tom Thumb Golf Appearing in Large Numbers – Vacant Lots Made Picturesque," *Washington Post,* 7 July 1930:4.

> They run in all sorts of classes – from the high and mighty to the humble and low. There are homemade and handmade, professionally designed and sketched by amateurs … Some courses are works of art. Some of them are for business purposes only; the business of sinking a little white ball in a small cup.[362]

Evidenced by the initial three-hole course in West Potomac Park, small practice courses were not uncommon during the surge in golf popularity following World War I as new and experienced golfers alike sought out places to practice and improve their golf skills. Around 1922 Thomas McCulloch Fairbairn invented and later patented the first artificial turf by using cottonseed hulls, sand, oil, and green dye, providing a durable and versatile putting surface that could be used by the masses in a variety of environmental conditions. Not long after two New Yorkers used Fairbairn's new turf to develop miniature golf as a commercial enterprise, creating over 150 putting courses on vacant lots and rooftops of Manhattan.[363]

Furthering the popularity of miniature golf were Garnet and Frieda Carter, owners of the Fairyland Inn at Lookout Mountain, Georgia. In 1926, the Carters created a miniature golf course in the front lawn of the inn with whimsical, cleverly constructed hazards. Garnet soon found that the miniature course was more profitable than their standard course at the inn and visitors asked him to install similar courses for their own private use. The tremendous success of the course led Garnet Carter to patent its design in 1929 and to obtain the use of Fairbairn's cottonseed hull turf. Courses, under Carter's patented name "Tom Thumb," were soon being manufactured and distributed across the country, which included a customized plan and prefabricated parts for $4,500.[364]

The popularity of miniature golf courses soared despite the stock market crash and the onset of the Great Depression. If anything, the courses offered a relatively inexpensive diversion. Many people as well as the federal government viewed miniature golf courses as an "economic miracle" in a time when Americans were struggling to recover from the depression. The courses not only provided jobs, but also created a demand for clay, sand, asbestos, rubber, concrete, steel, and other building materials.[365] In 1929 there were 15,000 miniature golf courses in the country valued at $45,000,000. By August 1930 the number grew to 50,000 miniature golf courses and were valued at $125,000,000.[366] Even President Hoover

362 "These are Not the Missing Links!" *Washington Post,* 31 August 1930:SM5.
363 Susan R. Chandler, "Lilli-putt-ian Landmarks: History and Significance of Miniature Golf Courses," *CRM* no. 10 (2000), 22; Jesse F. Gelders, "Why Midget Golf Swept the Country," *Popular Science Monthly* (November 1930):22-23.
364 Ibid.
365 Chester Leibs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 143.
366 "These are Not the Missing Links!" *Washington Post,* 31 August 1930:SM5.

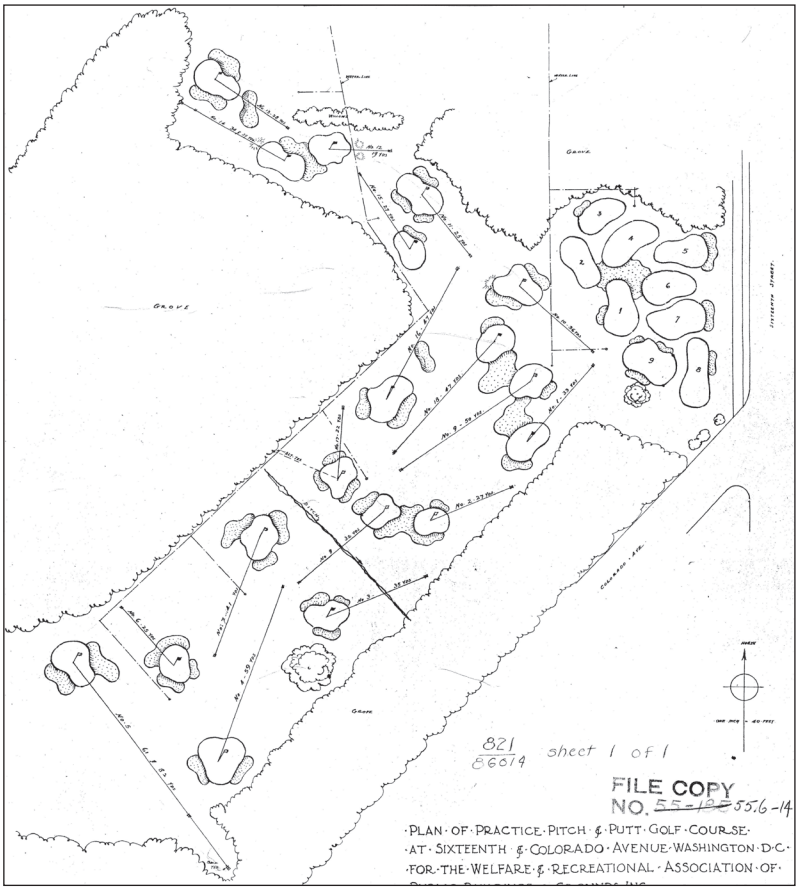



**Figure 1.22.** Plans for Pitch and Putt Golf Course at 16th Street and Colorado Avenue NW, 1930. (National Park Service)



**Figure 1.23.** "Summer Scene" at the 16th Street Pitch and Putt Golf Course, ca. 1930. (Historical Society of Washington, DC)

joined in on the miniature golf trend and had a miniature golf course at his weekend retreat Rapidan in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia.[367]

The novelty miniature golf courses led to several disputes in the District of Columbia regarding their operation. Similar to other cities across the country, the most popular time of the miniature golf courses in Washington, DC, was late in the evening after working hours, and many of the courses were lighted to extend playing time. Because the courses were considered public amusements, owners were required by local police regulations to close by 11:30 P.M. The popularity of night play prompted the association of owners of miniature golf courses in the District of Columbia to appeal to the city's commissioners in September 1930 to allow the courses to open past 11:30 P.M., but their request was denied.[368] Licensed miniature golf operators in the District of Columbia were also initially required to pay a $20 weekly tax since they charged an admission and fell into the category of "grounds used for horse racing, tournaments, athletic sports, baseball, football, polo, golf and kindred games." This tax added up to more than $1,000 a year for course owners. One District of Columbia miniature golf course owner, charged with a police court case for failure to pay the tax, took the case to the United States District Court where Chief Justice Alfred Adams Wheat gave an opinion that miniature golf did not qualify as golf and therefore owners did not have to pay the tax.[369]

Described as one of the "finest in the city" was the miniature golf course built directly south of the Brightwood Reservoir on 16th Street within Rock Creek Park, reported to have cost $35,000[370] (Figure 1.22). Designed and built by E.M. Fallon and W.E. Harries, golf architects of Baltimore, Maryland, in 1930, this course not only featured a nine-hole putting course, but also an eighteen-hole practice pitch course with holes varying in length from 26 to 90 yards. Unlike most miniature courses, the 16th Street course did not have artificial turf and boasted greens of Washington and Metropolitan bent grass (Figure 1.23). The Welfare and Recreation Association operated the course.[371]

367 "The Marines Hymn, Slightly Altered," *Washington Post,* 27 August 1930:6.
368 "Tiny Golf Courses Will Close at 11:30 P.M.," *Washington Post,* 27 September 1930:20.
369 "These are Not the Missing Links!" *Washington Post,* 31 August 1930:SM5.
370 Ibid.
371 E.M. Fallon and W.E. Harries, *Plan of Practice Pitch & Putt Golf Course at Sixteenth & Colorado Avenue Washington, DC*, 1930, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database; Welfare and Recreation Association, Notice to the Press, 30 June 1930, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-40 (Miniature Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland; Welfare and Recreation Association, Memorandum for the Press, 24 August 1932, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-40 (Miniature Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.



**Figure 1.24.** Miniature Golf Course at East Potomac Park, ca. 1931. (Historical Society of Washington, DC)

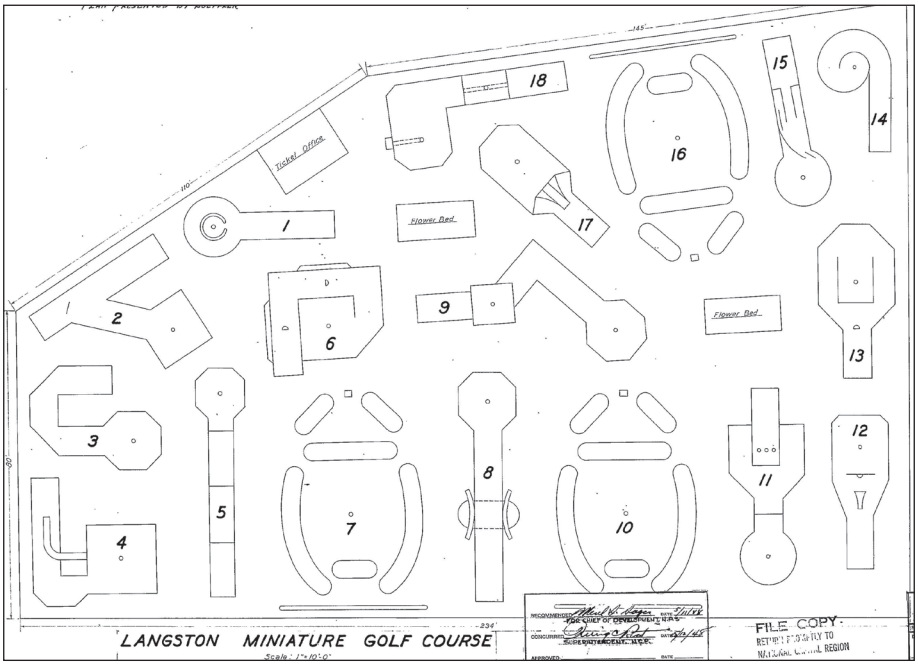



**Figure 1.25.** Plan of Langston Miniature Golf Course, 1948. (National Park Service)



**Figure 1.26.** View of Langston Miniature Golf Course —Langston clubhouse in background, 1949 (Historical Society of Washington, DC)

The association also operated a "midget course," also known as the "Lilliputian Golf Course," at 17th Street and Constitution Avenue on the Washington Monument Grounds. This course opened to the public on March 30, 1930, at a cost of 15 cents on weekdays and 25 cents on Sundays.[372] Like their larger counterparts, miniature golf courses built by and operated under the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks were segregated. In April 1930 a putting course for black residents opened near 25th and N Streets adjacent to the Francis Swimming Pool (also designated for African American use).[373]

Not one to miss out on a business opportunity, Severine G. Leoffler opened a miniature golf course at East Potomac Park in 1931. It was not Leoffler's first – he also operated an indoor pitch and putt course at Columbia Road and 18th Street NW in 1930.[374] Leoffler's eighteen-hole course at East Potomac Park opened in the spring of 1931 and quickly became one of the park's most popular attractions. The course featured miniature reproductions of prominent buildings around Washington, including the White House, the United States Capitol, and Mount Vernon, and other hazards. It also had overhead lights for nighttime use[375] (Figure 1.24).

At the time the East Potomac course opened, the miniature golf craze had already started to fade. Many courses across the country were abandoned or destroyed by the end of 1931.[376] The seasonal nature of the game contributed to its decline. During the warm, summer months the courses were extremely crowded, but in poor or cooler weather and during the daytime hours the crowds dwindled.[377] By 1932 the Welfare and Recreation Association closed all of its miniature golf courses except for the one on the Washington Monument grounds.[378] When the 16th Street course closed in August 1932, the Welfare and Recreation Association stated that it was due to "lack of sufficient interest to justify its continued operation."[379]

Despite the failure of the other miniature golf courses in the city, the East Potomac miniature golf course remained profitable. In 1939 the *Washington Post* reported

372 "Golf and Tennis Still Lead as City's Most Popular Sports," *Washington Post,* 3 December 1931:11; Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, Notice to the Press, 27 March 1930, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-40 (Miniature Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

373 "Course for Colored Golfers to be Opened," *Washington Evening Star*, 11 April 1930:A10.

374 Walter R. McCallum, "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 26 December 1930:11.

375 Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Parks Historic District*, 77; Clifton Adams, *Miniature Golf Course, Hains Point*, ca. 1930, Kiplinger Washington Collection, Image KC3766.PH.AC.L.F, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

376 Susan R. Chandler, "Lilli-putt-ian Landmarks: History and Significance of Miniature Golf Courses," *CRM* no. 10 (2000): 23.

377 "Winter Game Assured Tom Thumb Golfers, *Washington Post,* 23 August 1930:2.

378 "Uncle Sam Loyal to Midget Links," *Washington Evening Star,* 24 April 1932:2.

379 Welfare and Recreation Association, Memorandum for the Press, 24 August 1932, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-40 (Miniature Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

that the East Potomac Park course was "one of the few remaining" in the area and the last one within the District of Columbia.[380] At the onset of World War II, the miniature golf course was described as "one of the last courses from the boom days when there was a dinky-lit course every other block. The tricky putt-putt course is a money-making proposition most any summer night and it's strictly a wait-your-turn proposition."[381] In 1948 Leoffler built miniature golf courses at Anacostia Golf Course and Langston Golf Course[382] (Figures 1.25-1.26 on page 88). Each course reportedly cost around $25,000 to build. Leoffler also planned to open miniature golf courses at Fort Dupont and Rock Creek, but they were never built.[383]

Miniature golf once again gained popularity during the post-war years, when the baby boom and suburban sprawl brought a revival of the pastime.[384] In the summer of 1960, several new courses opened around Washington, DC, bringing the total to 15. Leoffler reported that the sport had been "getting stronger each year during the last five years" and that the East Potomac Park course had about 500 players at peak hours on weekends.[385] Despite this resurgence, the miniature golf course at Langston closed in the early 1960s due to lack of patronage.[386] The National Park Service approved Leoffler to discontinue the operation of the Anacostia Miniature Golf Course in February 1971 and both the miniature golf courses at Anacostia Park and Langston were demolished by 1980.[387] The course at East Potomac Park remains in operation and is one of the oldest continually operating miniature golf courses in the country.

380 "Thousands Find Their Sports Thrill on DC Fairways," *Washington Post,* 26 May 1939:10; "Miniature Golf Links Still Survive In State," *Baltimore Sun,* 24 September 1939:M2.

381 Merrell W. Whittlesey, "Tee to Green …" *Washington Post,* 22 March 1942:X2.

382 In Anacostia Park, the eighteen-hole miniature golf course was built in Section D on the southwest side of the circle drive leading to the fieldhouse and swimming pool. The Langston miniature golf course stood along the north side of Benning Road at its intersection with 26th Street NE and on the southeast side of the clubhouse.

383 "2 New Miniature Golf Courses to be Opened by June 1," *Washington Evening Star,* 15 May 1948:A7; "Summer's Almost Here," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 3 June 1950:7.

384 Chandler, Lilli-putt-ian Landmarks, 23.

385 "Miniature Golf Courses Going Over in Big Way," *Washington Post,* 14 June 1960:B1.

386 T. Sutton Jett, Regional Director, to Robert Wilson, 18 February 1963, Record Group 79, Accession No. 68A-3201, Box 14, Folder C3823 (Langston Golf Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

387 "S.G. Leoffler and Golf Course Specialists, Inc. History," concessionaire files, NCRO; Nationwide Environmental Title Research LLC, Historic Aerials, accessed 1 November 2017, www.historicaerials.com.

# Chapter 1.2: Segregation, Civil Rights, and Golf in the District of Columbia

## SEGREGATION OF THE CITY'S RECREATION AREAS

While public recreation facilities in the District of Columbia flourished in the early decades of the 20th century, the right and ability to use certain areas varied by age, sex, class, and race. In addition, few residents had the time or resources to apply for permits, pay for lockers, lease or buy athletic equipment, or travel by private or public transportation to get to recreation sites. Racial restrictions encompassed all municipal as well as many federal facilities. As explained by Martha Verbrugge in "Exercising Civil Rights: Public Recreation and Racial Segregation in Washington, DC, 1900-1949," "City officials sanctioned segregation [of the city's recreation areas] through willful neglect or by codifying it via formal policies."[388] Thus, most of the recreation facilities in the District of Columbia remained racially segregated throughout World War I and the following decades, either by social custom or administrative design.[389]

By the turn of the 20th century, the District of Columbia had the largest and most prosperous African American population in the country who were attracted to the city for the opportunities provided by federal jobs and other institutions, such as Howard University (founded in 1867). While the city had relatively few Jim Crow laws, *de facto* segregation and racism were widespread. The legislation establishing the city's public school system in 1862 created separate schools for black and white students and formalized a dual system of education that endured until 1954.[390] Anti-discrimination laws passed in 1872 and 1873 that gave African Americans equal rights in public accommodations had been surreptitiously removed from the DC code by the early 1900s.[391]

388 Verbrugge, *Exercising Civil Rights*, 111.

389 Ibid., 111-112.

390 Bryce Jordan Celotto, *Bolling v. Sharpe and Beyond: The Unfinished and Untold History of School Desegregation in Washington, DC* (BA Thesis, University of Massachusetts, 2016), 6.

391 Jackie Mansky, "How One woman Helped End Lunch Counter segregation in the Nation's Capital," Smithsonian Institution, 8 June 2016, http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-one-woman-helped-end-lunch-counter-segregation-nations-capital-180959345/?no-is; Wendell E. Pritchett, "A Local and National Story: The Civil Rights Movement in Postwar Washington, DC," The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, accessed 2 June 2016, at http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/civil-rights-movement/essays/local-and-national-story-civil-rights-movement-postwar-wl; Marya Annette McQuirter, "A Brief History of African Americans in Washington, DC," Cultural Tourism DC, accessed 23 August 2016 at http://www.culturaltourismdc.org/portal/a-brief-history-of-african-americans-in-washington-dc.

No official decree called for the municipal Department of Playgrounds to operate racially segregated facilities in the early 1900s. Yet in 1905 of the 19 city-operated playgrounds, 12 were for white children (six on schoolyards) and seven were for "colored" children (five on schoolyards). Playgrounds at neighborhood "separate but equal" schools, even during the summer months when they were open for general use, adhered to the schools' policy of segregation. By 1927 only six of the 25 municipal playgrounds supported and supervised by the city government were for African American children, all located adjacent to neighborhoods with predominately African American residents. In addition 12 school yards were opened to African American children during the summer.[392]

Segregation within recreation areas was not limited to playgrounds. A seminal 1927 study of *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington, DC*, by Howard University professor William H. Jones "confirmed the much-repeated statement that 'in Washington, a black man cannot get into the white man's social life.' Contacts of this sort between the two races in Washington are very much restricted by custom, tradition, and legislation. Hence, they can hardly be said to exist."[393] The study found that recreation and amusement among Washington blacks were almost entirely limited to activities with people of their own race. Unlike other large cities at that time, such as Chicago, New York, and Detroit, Washington retained a "more definite form of bi-racial organization. Here, the Negro group exists chiefly by the interaction of its members with themselves and not members of white society."[394]

Jones's study also found that only a small part of the recreation of blacks in Washington was organized – most leisure time was spent unorganized and undirected.[395] A 1946 report on race relations in the District of Columbia stated that in "earlier periods" Washingtonians "enjoyed recreation without restrictions because of race." Both white and African American boys and men played baseball together on vacant lots in parks, and all races swam together in the Potomac River and Rock Creek. "When recreation became organized in Washington, separatism became pronounced."[396]

In the 1910s and 1920s the city's African Americans comprised around one-quarter of the city's population, yet racial restrictions applied to all African Americans,

392 The city playgrounds in 1927 were Cardozo, Howard, Logan, Rose Park, Willow Tree, and Payne. Verbrugge, *Exercising Civil Rights*, 111-112; Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington, DC,* 40.

393 Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington, DC*, xiii

394 Ibid., 194.

395 Ibid., xiv.

396 Racial Relations Committee, "The Social Survey: A Report on Racial Relations," November 1946, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-110, Box 3, Folder 1525 (Race Discrimination & Segregation), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

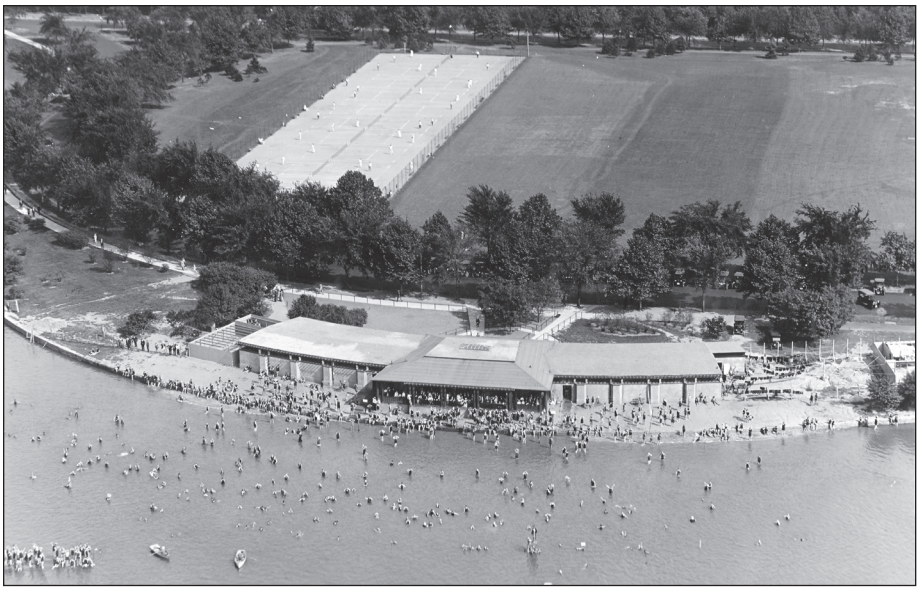


**Figure 1.27.** Bathing beach on the Tidal Basin. ca. 1920. (National Archives)

even foreign dignitaries, regardless of social class. Washington's black elite used their wealth and status to create their own forms of leisure and recreation areas. Since many private clubs and amusement parks, such as Glen Echo Amusement Park in nearby Montgomery County, were for whites only, middle- and upper-class African Americans bought, operated, and patronized their own sites, such as Suburban Gardens Amusement Park, located in Northeast Washington. Yet less privileged African Americans lacked the means for such activities and were limited to the few public facilities open to blacks. Discrimination often forced many blacks to swim in the city's polluted rivers and streams and play in dangerous streets and alleys.[397]

Federal recreation facilities in the District were also segregated in the early decades of the 20th century, a policy reinforced by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and its successor Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, the heads of the National Capital Park Commission and its successor the NCP&PC, and various members of Congress.[398] Illustrating the conflict surrounding "separate but equal" recreation facilities on federal land and differing racial attitudes and agendas was the battle over the bathing beaches on the Tidal Basin in West Potomac Park (Figure 1.27). Opening in the summer of 1918, the bathing beach on the southeast side of the Tidal Basin provided a swimming area for white children and adults and other aquatic activities. In the summer of 1921 Lt. Col. Clarence O. Sherrill, Officer in Charge of the Office of Public Building and Grounds, proposed a beach for "colored people" on the Anacostia River, east of the old James Creek canal. Although Congress eventually endorsed the idea, construction on the proposed beach did not move forward. The plan resurfaced

397 Verbrugge, *Exercising Civil Rights*, 107.
398 Ibid., 112-113.

in 1924-1925 with a proposed site on the western shore of the Tidal Basin, opposite the existing beach for whites. Debates over racial politics arose in both the House and the Senate. The local press voiced concerns about the location of the beach, how it would be used, if the facility would "compromise the city's overall health and beauty," and feared if a "colored bathing beach was not provided, the colored population of Washington would insist on using the beach for whites." Although construction on the beach for blacks started, continued arguments over the beach's location and District appropriations sabotaged the congressional funding for the maintenance of the white beach. Congress ordered the closure and dismantling of both beaches by July 1, 1926.[399]

In 1930 the practice of segregated recreation facilities was formalized by the adoption of NCP&PC's "Recreation System Plan for the District of Columbia," a plan that was based on the city's existing segregated school and playground system and supported by Lt. Col. Ulysses S. Grant III, who simultaneously served as the executive officer of the NCP&PC, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, and the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission.[400] The plan consisted of 25 recreation centers, each consisting around 10 or 20 acres, dispersed across the city along with smaller playgrounds within the area that each recreation center served. Where possible, the recreation centers were to be built near existing schools or branch libraries, and the local playgrounds near elementary schools. NCP&PC foresaw the recreation centers as comparable to the "common, courthouse, and meeting house of colonial days" and the sites selected in the "middle of areas that already have some neighborhood feeling or community of interest." With this in mind, the plan specifically called for segregated facilities depending on the location of the recreation center, following already established and racially segregated schools and neighborhoods.[401] Of the 25 proposed recreation centers, only six were designated "colored."[402]

## SEGREGATION AND GOLF IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

While Presidents Taft and Wilson advocated the democracy of golf, they did little to promote the opportunities for African Americans in Washington. Beginning with Taft and expanding dramatically though Wilson's administration, Jim Crow regulations increasingly restricted the opportunities of the District's black citizens. African Americans also became the target of actions taken by segregationists in

399 Ibid., 113-114.

400 "Gen. Ulysses S. Grant III Dies," *Washington Post,* 20 August 1968:B8; Green, *Secret City*, 263.

401 National Capital Park and Planning Commission, *Annual Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 1931), 34-35.

402 Although this number coincides with the number of African American playgrounds noted by Jones in 1927, the recreation centers were not in the same location as the playgrounds. These six identified city playgrounds were linked to the larger recreation areas. Plan published in Fortner, A History of the Municipal Recreation Department, 134-135.

Congress, "who oversaw the District's management with careful attention to the separation of the races."[403] The East Potomac Park, West Potomac Park, and Rock Creek golf courses allowed for all social classes the opportunity to golf, yet they were initially limited to white players. The Jim Crow practice of "separate but equal" that permeated the city's playgrounds and other recreation areas extended into the city's public golf courses.

Like in many cities across the country, African Americans in Washington who were interested in learning the game of golf often served as caddies since the city's and the surrounding suburbs' golf courses were exclusively for white players. Washington's African American community responded to their limitations by creating their own social network of golf clubs, petitioning for a course of their own, and effectively producing some of the country's most talented players. Unsatisfied by the playing conditions at the city's blacks-only course, these players also challenged the city's segregation policy that was established by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and perpetuated through social custom and NCP&PC's Recreation System Plan for the District of Columbia. As stated by Marvin P. Dawkins and Jomills Henry Braddock II in "Teeing Off Against Jim Crow: Black Golf and Its Early Development in Washington, D.C.," "the nation's capital deserves much more credit than sports historians have given for advancing the cause of black golf in the United States."[404]

The organization and activism among the city's black golfers beginning in the 1920s coincided with a shift in race relations in Washington, DC, following the end of World War I. Racial resentment was high among the thousands of returning black veterans who had fought for the right to serve in combat and hoped that their military service would earn them equal treatment when they returned. Yet veterans came home to find race relations had worsened under President Woodrow Wilson and that previously integrated departments such as the Post Office and Treasury had separate washrooms and lunchrooms for "colored only." Blacks were also moving into previously segregated neighborhoods around Capitol Hill and Foggy Bottom and securing low-level government jobs during a housing and job shortage across the city, much to the resentment of whites. On the evening of July 19, 1919, race riots erupted in Southwest Washington after newspapers reported that the Metropolitan Police Department had questioned and released an African American man suspected of sexually assaulting a white woman. The

403 Wendell E. Pritchett, "A National Issue: Segregation in the District of Columbia and the Civil Rights Movement at Mid-Century," *Faculty Scholarship* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Law School, 2005), 1322.

404 Marvin P. Dawkins and Jomills Henry Braddock II, "Teeing Off Against Jim Crow: Black Golf and Its Early Development in Washington, DC," in *DC Sports: The Nation's Capital at Play*, Chris Elzey and David K. Wiggins eds. (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 2015), 58.

riots continued over the next three nights and only ended when President Wilson intervened with 2,000 federal troops. Sociologist Arthur Waskow, who later interviewed blacks who experienced the riots, said that the experience gave African Americans new self-respect and "a readiness to face white society as equals … The Washington riot demonstrated that neither the silent mass of 'alley Negroes' nor the articulate leaders could be counted on to knuckle under." One of more than 20 race riots that occurred in the summer of 1919 across the country, the riots in Washington, DC, were unlike the disturbances that proceeded it, which were dominated by white-on-black violence. This time the riots were "distinguished by strong, organized and armed black resistance, foreshadowing the civil rights struggles later in the century."[405]

While admission of African Americans to public golf courses was often possible in Northern and Midwestern cities, courses in the South and in border states, including Washington, DC, operated segregated courses and often restricted blacks to use the courses only on certain days and times. After the opening of the golf courses in East Potomac and West Potomac parks, the city's African Americans collectively began to request playing times on the public golf courses. In July 1920 Francis F. Gillen, superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds, wrote to Officer in Charge Maj. Clarence S. Ridley about use of the West Potomac Park Golf Course by African Americans. The superintendent stated,

> I have had several conferences with a colored man representing the colored golf players of the District and they have furnished the accompanying list of golf players whom they are positive will use the courses whenever permitted.[406]

Attached to the letter were the names of thirteen African American men and women who wished to play on the public courses.[407]

By the end of the month the Office of Public Building and Grounds announced that blacks could play at East Potomac Park on Monday afternoons from 4:30 until dark[408] (Figure 1.28). The following summer, beginning in July 1921, blacks could play at East Potomac Park on Tuesdays from 3:00 P.M. to the end of the day and West Potomac Park on Wednesdays from noon until the end of the day. Colonel Sherrill announced that "During these periods, no white players will be allowed on these courses."[409] Sherrill even had "permanent and substantial" signs installed

405 Peter Perl, "Race Riot of 1919 Gave Glimpse of Future Struggles," *Washington Post,* 1 March 1999:A1.
406 Memorandum for Colonel Ridley from the Superintendent, 15 July 1920, Record Group 42, Entry 97 Box 35, Subject File No. 312, National Archives, Washington, DC.
407 Ibid.
408 "Golfers Have Day on Links," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 30 July 1920:1.
409 "DC Interest in Golf Grows," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 22 July 1921:2.

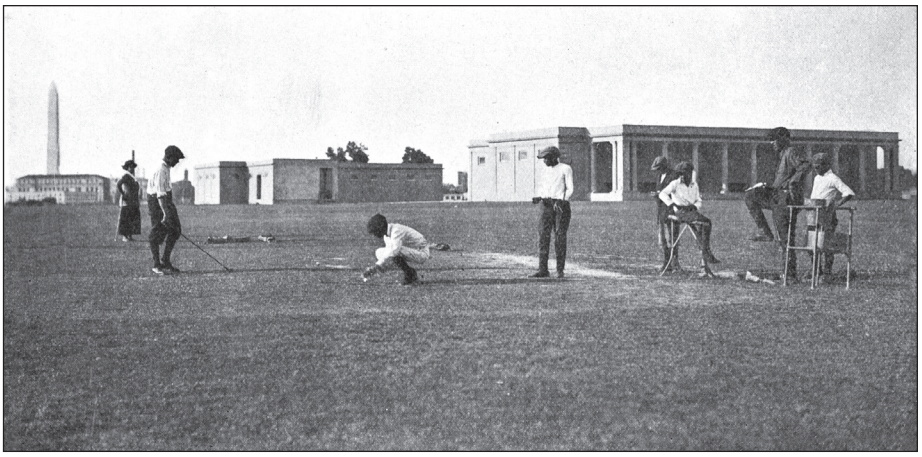


**Figure 1.28.** African Americans playing at East Potomac Park Golf Course in 1920. (*The Park International*)

at the West Potomac Park course at each of the tees to indicate the schedule.[410] While the schedule worked for a while, white players soon became reluctant to relinquish the courses to blacks even for a day. Consequently, prominent African American citizens began petitioning the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds for a separate golf course exclusively for blacks. Opposition to establishing such a course was based on the belief that it would be a waste of money since there were not enough African American players interested in the sport.[411]

After "much sentiment [was] aroused by the Negro press," a nine-hole course was built in West Potomac Park in 1924 under the Jim Crow principle of "separate but equal."[412] At this time, the contract of Severine G. Leoffler's Park Amusement Company, the concessionaire of the golf courses at East and West Potomac parks, was modified to include the new course and specified for Leoffler to build the course at his own expense.[413] The course, located along what is now the intersection of Constitution Avenue and 23rd Street, officially opened at noon on June 7, 1924.[414] Bounded "on one side by the [Lincoln Memorial] grounds, on another by the Potomac River, and on still a third by the Naval Hospital" the course had "an attractive, unique environment."[415]

While many saw the creation of the course as a victory, the *Baltimore Afro-American* criticized the acceptance of segregation by Washington's African American golfers. In June 1925 the newspaper reported:

410 Memorandum for Mr. Gillen from C.O. Sherrill, 21 June 1921, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 11, National Archives, Washington, DC.
411 Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington*, 31; "Muny Golf Course for Negroes Open," *Washington Post,* 8 June 1924:S3.
412 Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington*, 31.
413 *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks*, 1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.
414 "Muny Golf Course for Negroes Open," *Washington Post,* 8 June 1924:S3.
415 Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington*, 32.

> Casting aside their much vaunted self-respect, men in high business and professional circles have adopted "Jim Crow" golf as a sport and are submitting gleefully to segregation on account of race and are making ineffective the protests of others against other forms of segregation and discrimination.[416]

The newspaper implied that Colonel Sherrill was behind the segregation of the golf courses and blamed him for the segregation of the audience at the 1922 dedication of the Lincoln Memorial (seating at the ceremony was segregated by race). Sherrill was also reportedly behind the segregation of the picnic areas in Rock Creek Park and had signs erected to designate the areas as "white" and "colored," removed only after "leading citizens" threatened to go to the president and if necessary, picket the White House.[417] The newspaper stated that the continuance of segregation was "made possible by the very men who should be the leaders in a fight not only to remove every vestige of segregation in the national capital but to get rid of Colonel Sherrill. Their approval by their use of the course puts [Sherrill] in a position to say that he is giving the colored people what they want."[418] Many, however, felt fortunate to have daily access to a golf course and during the first three months of its existence, 1,000 rounds of golf were played at the course.[419]

Shortly after the opening of the Lincoln Memorial course, a group of prominent black Washingtonians established the Riverside Golf Club in October 1924, the first African American golf club in the city and one of the oldest in the country.[420] Victor R. Daly, a successful real estate developer who had played a large role in securing the Lincoln Memorial course, served as its first president. The organization increased the interest in golf among African Americans in Washington and soon after its establishment, the club had grown to 100 members, mostly attorneys, businessmen, and civic leaders. Prominent members included S. W. Rutherford, president of the National Benefit Life Insurance Company, and Charles E. Burch and Clarence Harvey Mills, both professors at Howard University.[421]

In late October 1924, the newly established Riverside Golf Club organized a golf tournament held on the Lincoln Memorial course. While the white press did not cover the tournament, the *Afro-American* announced the tournament and incor-

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416 "Two Golf Clubs in Washington: Citizens Club Formed as Split From Riverside Golf Body," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 6 June 1925:A8.

417 "Jim Crow in D.C. Park," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 21 April 1922:6; Barry Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park an Administrative History* (Washington, DC: National Park Service 1985), 25-26.

418 "Two Golf Clubs in Washington," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 6 June 1925:A8.

419 Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington*, 32.

420 The first African American golf club in the country was the Alpha Golf Club, established in Chicago in 1910. During the 1920s there were 14 black golf clubs in eight states and the District of Columbia, see George B. Kirsch, "Municipal Golf and Civil Rights in the United States, 1910-1965," *Journal of African American History* 92, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 375.

421 "Two Golf Clubs in Washington," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 6 June 1925:A8; Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington*, 32; "Washington, DC, Club to Hold First Colored Golf Tourney in US," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 17 October 1924.

rectly reported that it was the first of its kind in the country (the first black golf tournament in the country was held in 1915 on the Marquette Park Golf Course in Chicago, sponsored by the Alpha Golf Club).[422] Regardless, it was likely the first of such tournaments in the region and generated interest both locally and nationally. Several companies donated the trophies for the event, including the National Benefit Life Insurance Company of Washington, DC, the Supreme Life and Casualty Company from Columbus, Ohio, North Carolina Mutual, as well as "local white firms" that sold golf equipment. The tournament attracted more than 75 participants in the men's tournament and 30 in the ladies' tournament.[423] The following year the club again sponsored the tournament, drawing over 80 participants.[424]

The prominence of the Riverside Golf Club also attracted John M. Shippen Jr. (1879-1968), the well-known African American golfer from Washington, DC, and arguably the most influential black golfer in the early decades of the 20th century. Shippen was the club's first golf professional, hired "to render professional advice and help."[425] Born in the Anacostia neighborhood of Washington, DC, in 1879, Shippen moved with his family to Southampton, Long Island in 1889 when his father, a Presbyterian minister, was assigned to a mission on the Shinnecock Indian Reservation. When the wealthy Southampton residents built the Shinnecock Hills Golf Course in 1891, Shippen was among those recruited as caddies by well-known golfer Willie Dunn Jr., who had been hired to oversee the construction of the new course. Dunn taught Shippen to play and later encouraged him to golf competitively.[426]

In 1896 Shippen applied to enter the USGA second annual US Open Championship, resulting in several white players threatening to withdraw. While the USGA did not have a whites-only policy, the reaction was not uncommon at that time, particularly being that *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the landmark US Supreme Court case that upheld state segregation laws under the doctrine "separate but equal," was passed the same year as the tournament. USGA president Theodore Havemeyer resolved the incident by declaring that the organization did not discriminate based on race and Shippen ended up tying for fifth place – the best showing of any American entrant. Shippen went on to compete in at least four additional USGA US Open tournaments in 1899, 1900, 1902, and 1913.[427]

422 "Washington, DC, Club to Hold First Colored Golf Tourney in US," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 17 October 1924; Dawkins and Braddock, "Teeing Off Against Jim Crow," 60.
423 "Washington, DC, Club to Hold First Colored Golf Tourney in US," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 19 October 1924; Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington*, 32.
424 Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington*, 32.
425 "Washington, DC, Club to Hold First Colored Golf Tourney in US," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 17 October 1924.
426 Dawkins and Braddock, *Teeing Off Against Jim Crow*, 59-61.
427 Ibid., 59-61.

Shippen is not only recognized as the first black golf professional, but also the first American-born golf professional in the United States.[428]

After serving as the pro for the Riverside club, Shippen became an instructor and the greenkeeper of the Citizens Golf Club, an offshoot of the Riverside Golf Club.[429] The Citizens Golf Club was established in June 1925 after several members of the Riverside Golf Club were "dissatisfied" with founder Victor Daly's running of the club and reported mismanagement of its funds. The Citizens Golf Club was not only better organized, but responded to its member's desire to have accurate accounting of its finances, evidenced by the election of a bank president as its treasurer. Its leadership was also more representative of the city's black elite, "men who were better able to emulate their white counterparts in promoting golf and showing off the social status that normally accompanied the game."[430] During his acceptance speech, club president Dr. M. L. T. Grant proudly said, "I see no reason why the Citizens' Golf Club should not become the most wealthy Colored Golf Club in the world and produce champion players as well."[431] In 1927 the club changed its name to the Capital City Golf Club. Six years later in 1933 the club became the Royal Golf Club, which is still in existence today.[432]

On August 1, 1925, the Colored Golfers Association of America (CGAA), the first national organization of African American golfers, was established at the 12th Street YMCA in Washington, DC. Its mission was to gather all black golfers and golf associations into one national organization at a time when the USGA and the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA), established in 1916, excluded black members.[433] Officers included Dr. M. L. T. Grant and John A. Lankford, Vice Presidents, both from Washington, DC, and officers of the Citizens Golf Club. Earlier in the day, the organization held a tournament of 32 African American golfers at the Lincoln Memorial course with notable participants Robert E. Lee, golf professional at the Shady Rest Golf and Country Club in Scotch Plains, New Jersey, and Lorenzo Martin and Harry Jackson of Washington, DC.[434] Jackson had recently won the first "international colored golf championship" held over the Fourth of July weekend 1925 at the Shady Rest Golf and Country Club. Shippen was the

428 Ibid., 60.
429 Shippen left Washington, DC, in 1931 and moved to New Jersey, where he became the club pro at the Shady Rest Golf and Country Club in Scotch Plains. Dawkins and Braddock, "Teeing Off Against Jim Crow," 60.
430 Dawkins and Braddock, "Teeing Off Against Jim Crow," 61.
431 "Two Golf Clubs in Washington," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 6 June 1925:A8.
432 Marvin P. Dawkins and Charles Kinloch, *African American Golfers in the Jim Crow Era* (Westport Connecticut: Praeger 2000), 29.
433 "Negro Golfers Form National Association," *Washington Post,* 2 August 1925:13; Pete McDaniel, Geoff Russell and Martin Davis, *Uneven Lies: The Heroic Story of African-Americans in Golf* (Greenwich, CT: American Golfer, 2000), 48-49.
434 "Negro Golfers Form National Association," *Washington Post,* 2 August 1925:13.

runner up.[435] In October 1926 both Shippen and Jackson played in an exhibition match on the Lincoln Memorial course, sponsored by the Citizens Golf Club.[436]

The imposed segregation at golf courses and clubs across the country forced the growing number of African American golfers to establish separate organizations that resembled their white counterparts and the CGAA was one of these "parallel structures."[437] Over the next few years the CGAA reorganized as the United Golfers Association (UGA). The UGA also consisted of regional organizations of black golfers, including the Eastern Golf Association, founded by members of the Capital City Golf Club, the New Amsterdam and St. Nicholas clubs of New York, and the Fairview Club of Philadelphia in 1932. By the end of the 1920s, the annual UGA tournament was known as the "Negro National Open," and was considered a major sporting and social event for the black elite.[438]

With the limited number of public courses available and open to African Americans, black golfers also established their own private golf courses, one of which was the Shady Rest Golf and Country Club in Scotch Plains, New Jersey, that opened in 1921 and is the first documented club owned by African Americans.[439] Likely in response to the less than ideal conditions at the Lincoln Memorial course as well as the desire to emulate their white counterparts, Washington's black elite established their own private golf club, the National Capital Country Club, in May of 1926. Located between Muirkirk and Laurel, Maryland, approximately 20 miles northeast of Washington, DC, the club sought to establish a facility that not only reflected their prominent status but also provided recreation and leisure opportunities to like-minded people. While the membership solicitation brochure for the new club broadly stated that the organization would provide "appropriate entertainment as well as facilities for conferences and at the same time afford an opportunity for recreation and relaxation," the *Washington Post* reported that the property was "acquired by colored golf enthusiasts."[440]

By 1927 the 23-acre property contained a nine-hole golf course, tennis courts, and croquet courts, as well as a 23-room clubhouse. That October the club sponsored the CGAA's Southern Championship, including participants Harry M. Jackson, former national open champion, Beltran Barker, 1926 national amateur champion,

435 "Golf Tournament," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 20 June 1925:7; "Washington Cops First International Colored Golf Championship at Shady Rest," *New York Amsterdam News* 15 July 1925:4.

436 "Colored Golf Champ in Exhibition Sunday," *Washington Post,* 27 October 1926:13.

437 Calvin H. Sinnette, *Forbidden Fairways: African Americans and the Game of Golf* (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press 1998), 59-60.

438 "Golf Players Hold Meeting at Phila." *New York Amsterdam News*, 20 January 1932:13; Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 104; Sinnette, *Forbidden Fairways*, 73.

439 Sinnette, *Forbidden Fairways,* 59-60.

440 "New Country Club Opens at Edge Hill," *Washington Post,* 24 June 1926:24.

and John Shippen.[441] The National Capital Country Club was one of around 30 golf courses owned by African Americans across the country, most built before 1950. The majority of these courses did not succeed, likely from overly optimistic financial projections and other reasons.[442] The National Capital club was no exception; the club struggled during the Great Depression and closed in 1934.[443]

As more African American men began playing the game of golf, women soon followed. Women were invited to play in the Riverside Golf Club's tournament in October 1925, a tradition continued by the Citizens Golf Club in 1927.[444] The UGA permitted women to enter the annual national tournament for the first time in 1930.[445] In August 1936 Mrs. Helen Webb Harris, wife of prominent physician and founding member of the Royal Golf Club, invited twelve women to her house on 79 R Street NW to discuss starting a golf club exclusively for African American women. The founding members of the club, known as the Wake Robin Golf Club, were predominately the wives of Royal Golf Club members who were tired of staying home on the weekends while their husbands played golf.[446] The women formally established the club on April 22, 1937, becoming the first African American women's golf club in the United States. The group's primary objectives were to give women the opportunity to learn about the sport of golf, provide lessons to women to develop skills and cultivate golf champions, schedule women's tournaments, initiate golf programs for youths, perform community services, and to be politically active in the integration of golf courses and programs.[447]

For women golfers, initial acceptance into the sport was not easy. As Ethel Williams, one of the founding members of the club later recalled, "segregation was terrible," and "the men didn't want to play with you and they didn't want you in their clubs."[448] Timothy Thomas, a member of the Royal Golf Club remembered, "When I saw those ladies come out onto the golf course, I just hated it. They'd take so much time to hit the ball, just stand and wait, then hit it a few feet, run after it, stand, wait and hit it a few more feet."[449]

441 Patsy Mose Fletcher, *Historically African American Leisure Destinations Around Washington* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2015), 113-114; "Country Club Plans Handicap Tourney," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 24 September 1927:9.
442 Sinnette, *Forbidden Fairways*, 59-66.
443 Fletcher, *Historically African American Leisure Destinations Around Washington*, 133-114; "Country Club Plans Handicap Tourney," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 24 September 1927:9.
444 "Riverside Golf Club to Hold Spring Tournament," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 30 May 1925:6; "Women's Golf Title to Miss Eaton," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 20 July 1927:14.
445 Sinnette, *Forbidden Fairways*, 98.
446 Wake Robin Golf Club, "History," accessed 27 April 2016, http://wake-robingolf.org/History.html.
447 M. Mikell Johnson, *Heroines of African American Golf: The Past, the Present, and the Future* (Bloomington, IN: Trafford Pub. 2010).
448 "Beware of Little Lady Looking for a Game," *Washington Times,* 28 April 1992.
449 Courtland Milloy, "For Black Women, Golf Wasn't Easy," *Washington Post,* 26 April 1987:35.



**Figure 1.29.** Members of the Wake Robin Golf Club in 1947. (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University)

The leadership of the women of the Wake Robin club inspired the formation of several African American women's golf clubs in other major cities such as Baltimore, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York. The women also gained respect beyond women golfers, demonstrated by the election of Helen Harris as the first vice president of the UGA and of Paris Brown, a member of the Wake Robins and wife of Civil Rights activist Edgar G. Brown, as the first female director of UGA tournaments.[450] Reflecting on the impact of the club at its 50th anniversary in 1987, one commentator emphasized, "Under a system of racism, in an atmosphere of sexism, black women playing golf was not a light matter. It was a political act." Perhaps because of their tenacity from all the obstacles they had to overcome, no other black women's golf club produced as many champions as the Wake Robins[451] (Figure 1.29).

## CONSTRUCTION OF LANGSTON GOLF COURSE

By the late 1920s, it was well known that the construction of the approaches to the new Memorial Bridge across the Potomac River would require the closure of the Lincoln Memorial golf course, the only course in the District of Columbia where African Americans could play (Figure 1.30). The Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital (successor of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds) responded by creating a special board to study possible locations

450 M. Mikell Johnson, *The African American Women Golfer: Her Legacy* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers 2008), 43.

451 Courtland Milloy, "For Black Women, Golf Wasn't Easy," *Washington Post*, 26 April 1987.

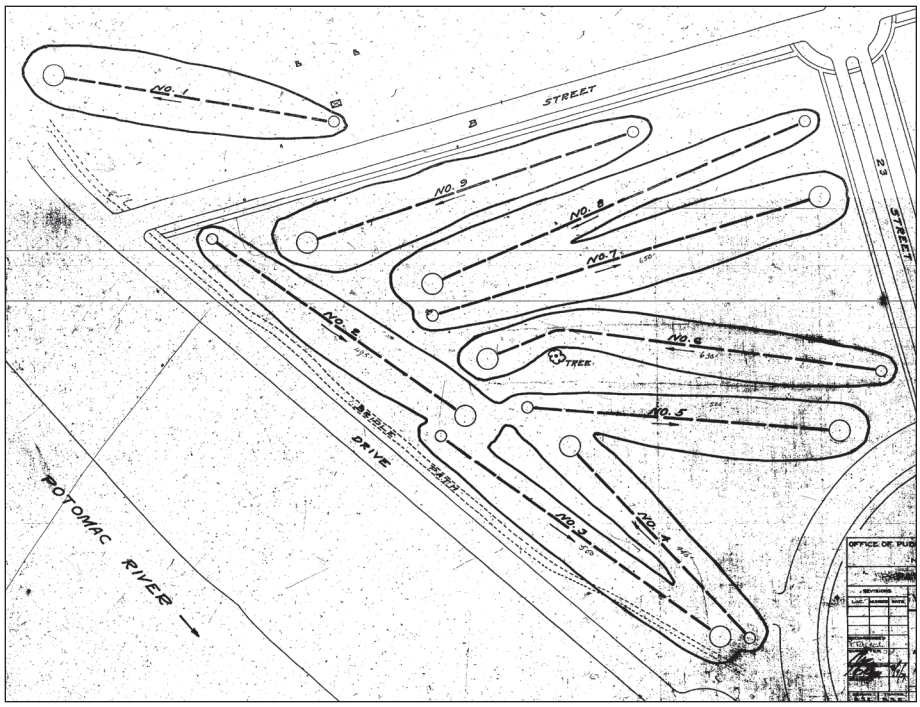



**Figure 1.30.** Layout of the Lincoln Memorial golf course in 1929. (National Park Service)

for a new course. Members of the board included Irving Payne, landscape architect for the office, and Conrad L. Wirth, landscape architect for the NCP&PC.[452]

Recognizing that the bridge construction and storage of granite used for the bridge approaches would result in the removal of several of the holes and would eventually require the complete abandonment of the course, the board recommended that the course be closed by July 1, 1930, at the latest January 1, 1931. Since a new course would not be able to be built in time, the board recommended that the existing course should be modified with new holes and that a temporary course needed to be constructed and ready for the spring of 1931.[453]

One site under consideration for the new course was along Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway in the vicinity of N and P streets, where a number of black residents lived. Since additional land would be required for this location at a cost of over $800,000, the site was taken out of contention. Also studied was Section C of Anacostia Park, located between what is now the Frederick Douglass Bridge and the 11th Street Bridge. The board did not recommend Section C because the site was considered too restricted and the course could not be expanded if increased use demanded a larger course.[454] It also felt that Section C was not near "any con-

452 Johnson, *The African American Women Golfer*, 43.

453 Board to Report on Colored Golf Course to the Director, Recommendations, 13 July 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

454 National Capital Park & Planning Commission, *Possible Temporary Golf Course for Colored Persons, Anacostia Park Section C,* June 1929, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database; *Annual Report of the Director*

siderable center of colored population" and that it would not meet the approval of the black community.[455]

The favored location for the new course and recommended by the board was Anacostia Park north of Benning Road, known as Section G, which had not yet been turned over to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks.[456] The site, adjacent to the intersection of 26th Street and Benning Road, NE, had been a city dump from as early as the late 19th century until 1920, when this use was discontinued in preparation for the reclamation project and moved farther north near M Street, NE, between 24th and 28th streets (now the southern boundary of the National Arboretum)[457] (Figure 1.31). When announced as the site for the new golf course, the reclamation of Section G had just begun and the proposed course would not be able to be built until the completion of the work by the Army Corps of Engineers – a project that was projected to take 10 to 15 years. Thus, the committee recommended Section C as the site of a temporary course to serve the community until Section G was available and the new course was constructed.[458]



**Figure 1.31.** View of Section G of Anacostia Park, looking north of Benning Road, ca. 1935. The site of Langston Golf Course is on the left. (National Park Service)

*of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1929):41.

455 Board to Report on Colored Golf Course to the Director, Recommendations, 13 July 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

456 US Congress, House, Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill for 1934*, HR 14643, 1933, 72th Congress 2nd Session, 179.

457 The earliest reference to the dump found in local newspapers was in "Benning Citizens," *Washington Evening Star,* 10 July 1895:10; "Park Plan Work on Benning Road to Begin Monday," *Washington Evening Star*, 30 July 1930:1.

458 Board to Report on Colored Golf Course to the Director, Recommendations, 13 July 1929,

Lt. Col. Ulysses S. Grant III, Director of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, was reportedly anxious to "have a golf course as near the center of colored population as possible so that they may have as many golfing facilities as are given [to] other golfers."[459] Section G of Anacostia Park fit this requirement – the committee considered the site well-suited for the course because it was near a section where a large number of African Americans lived, "namely, the area in the vicinity of Howard University, and from Florida Avenue, to the northeast corner of the District."[460]

The selection of Section G as the site of the new golf course reflects the overall trend of segregation in Washington, DC, to locate racially segregated schools, playgrounds, and other public facilities in neighborhoods that were predominately of a particular race. Charles Sager, a Washington, DC, real estate developer, began building brick row houses on the vacant land around Kingman Island and Section G of Anacostia Park in 1927. When white buyers were not interested in the houses, Sager sold them to the city's increasing African American residents, who struggled to find houses and were often confined to substandard, overcrowded housing because of restrictive deed covenants that prevented them from buying houses in certain neighborhoods.[461] Thus, the neighborhood, known as Kingman Park, became the first in Washington to offer single-family houses specifically for black families.[462] By 1930 the neighborhood consisted of 230 houses and Sager acquired more land to expand the Kingman Park development with 750 additional houses. The expansion of the neighborhood prompted the construction of three new schools for black children – the Hugh M. Brown Junior High School (1930-1931), the Charles Young Elementary School (1931-1932), and the Seth L. Phelps Vocational School (1935), all located adjacent to Kingman Park and the proposed golf course in Anacostia Park.[463] This area was also designated in the NCP&PC's Recreation System Plan as a proposed "colored" neighborhood recreation center.

Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland; Letter from C. L. Wirth to Colonel Grant, 4 November 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

459 "Grant is Seeking Site for Colored Golf Links," *Washington Evening Star,* 20 June 1929:17; "Remodel Golf Course," *Washington Evening Star,* 20 March 1930:B1.

460 Board to Report on Colored Golf Course to the Director, Recommendations, 13 July 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

461 "Kingman Park is Thriving on Community Spirit," *Washington Post,* 2 April 1988; E1; Mapping Segregation in Washington, DC, accessed 1 November 2017, http://jmt.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=061d0da22587475fb969483653179091.

462 "Home Team, Home Fears," *Washington Post,* 8 April 1991:D1; In 1952 the Royal Golf Club bought one of Sager's Kingman Park row houses for their clubhouse at 539 23rd Place NE, near Langston Golf Course (see District of Columbia deed records). The club house had a main dining room, a private dining room, and a bar. "Each member upon request will be given a key and may use the club house for private affairs if the time they desire is available," in "Public Golf Courses Plentiful in D.C.," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 28 August 1954:16. The house is still owned by the club and the transom above the door says Royal Golf Club.

463 "750 Homes Planned for Kingman Park," *Washington Post,* 15 February 1931:R1.

Also overlapping with the planning and construction of the new golf course was the construction of a new public housing complex, Langston Terrace Dwellings, located directly west of Section G. Erected between 1935 and 1938 under the Public Works Administration (PWA), which was headed by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, the Langston Terrace Dwellings complex was built predominately by African Americans for African American families. The 274-unit complex, designed by African American architect Hilyard Robinson, was the first public housing complex built in the District of Columbia and only the second built in the United States. The complex provided much-needed affordable housing for working-class families at a time of extreme housing shortages in the city. One of the reasons for the chosen site for the new complex was its location near the new public schools designated for black children. The new modern housing complex opened in the spring of 1938 and was named after John Mercer Langston, the first black man to represent Virginia in the United States House of Representatives and the founder of the Howard University School of Law.[464]

Residents on the north side of Benning Road tried to block the construction of Langston Terrace and maintained that Benning Road was intended to be a buffer with white families living north of Benning and black families living south.[465] Vice President of the Trinidad Citizens Association L. M. Selby wrote to Senator Millard Tydings of Maryland to oppose the location of the new housing complex, stating that "this section has always been strictly for people of the white race. There is plenty available land for such a project in a strictly colored section of the District known as Deanwood. Your assistance in keeping this section north of Bennings [sic] Road, NE and east of Bladensburg Road, strictly for white people is most earnestly desired and will be most sincerely appreciated." Secretary of the Interior Ickes received the letter, along with others opposing the site selection, but ignored the requests.[466] While no evidence was found to show that the residents also opposed the location of the golf course, the new housing complex, adjacent schools, and the Kingman Park neighborhood created a concentrated African American community in this area that would be strengthened by the presence of the golf course.

As the closure of the Lincoln Memorial course became imminent, conditions worsened and the recommended temporary course had not been built. The city's African American golfers began to write letters to and meet with the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, abhorring the condition of the Lincoln Memorial course and petitioning for the construction of a new permanent course that

464 Kelly Anne Quinn, *Making Modern Homes: A History of Langston Terrace Dwellings, a New Deal Housing Program in Washington, DC*. Dissertation, University of Maryland, 2007, 124.
465 Quinn, *Making Modern Homes*, 39.
466 Dave McKenna, "Links to the Past," *Washington City Paper,* 19 April 2002.

met the same standards as the courses for white players. On July 18, 1929, Dwight Oliver Wendell Holmes, sociologist, author, civil rights activist, and at the time the registrar and professor of education at Howard University, wrote to Colonel Grant about the "golf situation as it exists now." Holmes expressed that while he considered "any sort of segregation on the basis of color extremely unjust and undemocratic," he fully recognized

> [T]he practical difficultly which you face in adjusting the racial situation in the face of the southern sentiment of our nation's capital, which in some cases, I regret to say, goes even beyond our best southern cities in racial proscription. I believe, too, that there is not a single legal justification for excluding the colored persons from the public golf links, the baseball fields, the tennis courts, or any of the recreation facilities of this city …
>
> Every time a colored citizen looks upon the beautiful, well-kept golf links at East Potomac Park for example, whether he be a citizen of Washington or elsewhere, he naturally has a keen sense of the injustice of his exclusion, a feeling which is growing more pronounced and more wide-spread every day. I will not be surprised, therefore, to find a movement of protest very rapidly crystallizing in the very near future, unless you and the other officials in charge of affairs make adequate provisions for equal facilities …
>
> I wish to say that if we are excluded from such golf courses as those in East Potomac Park, the price of such exclusion should be the provision of equal facilities, equal in location, construction, care and facilities …[467]

Holmes suggested that the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks should build a new course for African Americans in East Potomac Park, north of the present golf course and east of the tourist camp (what is now the White Course) or if this was not possible, in Anacostia across from the Navy Yard. Holmes said, "Best of all, of course, would be the complete removal of any restrictions whatsoever in the use of public facilities on the basis of race, since such an act would be in full accord with the professed principles of Americanism and Christianity."[468]

Black citizens also formed a committee to object to the conditions of the Lincoln Memorial golf course and lobby for a new course. The chairman of the committee was John A. Lankford, a prominent architect, member of the Capital City Golf Club, and one of the founding officers of the CGAA. On August 17, 1929, 120 African Americans signed a petition to protest the unequal and squalid conditions of the Lincoln Memorial course and to request a new course built in East Potomac Park, Rock Creek Park, or Anacostia Park.[469] Conrad Wirth of the NCP&PC

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467 Letter to Colonel Grant from D.W.O. Holmes, 18 July 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

468 Ibid.

469 Petition to Colonel Grant, 17 August 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

found that the addresses of the petitioners supported the committee's recommendation that Section G was the best site for the new golf course. The majority of the petitioners, 60 of the 120, lived in a section of the city north of O Street and New Jersey Avenue, NW, and east of 16th Street, NW. The second concentration of petitioners (27) lived west of the White House and Connecticut Avenue, NW, and South of Massachusetts Avenue, NW. Wirth felt that the golfers would have to cross through a large portion of the city to get to a course in Section C of Anacostia Park, making it impractical as a permanent location for the new golf course.[470]

Colonel Grant's response to both Holmes's letter as well as the petition were similar. While Grant recognized the poor conditions at the Lincoln Memorial course, he stated that the course should be compared to the condition of the white practice golf course at West Potomac Park and not to the course at East Potomac Park – Grant asserted that the black course was kept in a similar condition to the West Potomac Park course. Grant also claimed that since the Lincoln Memorial course was "used so little," the concessionaire had to "carry it as a material expense to his operations" and therefore it was "necessary for this office to be constantly prodding him to keep the facilities up to standard." Because the Lincoln Memorial course was not profitable, Grant indicated that no concessionaire wanted to build a more expensive course knowing in advance that it would not provide a return on investment.[471]

Grant also recognized that it had been difficult to get congressional funding for a new permanent course and stated,

> In considering the likelihood of securing an appropriation for such a purpose, one must appreciate the fact that other golf courses have cost the Government very little in addition to the smoothing and seeding of ground already owned and the building of the two wings of a fieldhouse in East Potomac Park. This expenditure was authorized only after the West Potomac course had built up an enormous demand and the needs of the public were evidently greater than the facilities. This cannot be said to be the case in regard to the colored course now on the Lincoln Memorial grounds.[472]

While Grant stated in his responses that he had given the problems surrounding a new golf course for African Americans "a great deal of study and consideration" on his "own initiative,"[473] as executive officer of the NCP&PC he was also behind

[470] Letter from C. L. Wirth to Colonel Grant, 4 November 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

[471] Grant to Holmes, 28 July 1939, Grant to Lankford, 24 August 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

[472] Grant to Lankford, 24 August 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

[473] Grant to Holmes, 28 July 1939, Grant to Lankford, 24 August 1929, Record Group 79, Ac-

the 1929 Recreation System Plan that called for the segregation of the city's recreation areas. While serving as director of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks (1925-1933), Grant revived the segregation of picnic facilities at Rock Creek Park. Critics later charged Grant in 1949, then the chairman of the NCP&PC, of designing urban renewal plans that would move African Americans from central Washington to ghettoes beyond the Anacostia River.[474] As explained by Constance McLaughlin Green, in *Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital,* "To the city whose elected municipal officials had enacted two antidiscrimination laws during President Grant's first administration, his grandson announced that the NCP&PC would see that 'the colored population dispossessed by playgrounds, public buildings, parks and schools,' was relocated in a remote section 'in the rear of Anacostia.'"[475]

In 1930 bridge construction forced the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks to construct eight new sand greens and six new tees at the Lincoln Memorial course.[476] In order to fit nine holes on the shrinking site, the office removed four tennis courts associated with the Naval Hospital and completed substantial clearing. The office felt that the "work was justified, as this particular site was the best available at the present time and was easily accessible to those desiring to play."[477]

In the meantime, the golfers at the Lincoln Memorial course not only endured poor conditions, but also poor treatment. In August 1932 John Lankford, Dr. George T. Walker, and Dr. Walter Simmons issued a complaint to Colonel Grant about "Mr. Cooper," the greens keeper at the Lincoln Memorial course. The men stated that over the seven years that they played at the course,

> [We] have fostered, organized, and encouraged colored golf players in the District of Columbia. We have many times, as well as our friends, been insulted, mistreated, and quite often intimidated by Mr. Cooper, who seems to be void of anything like good manners, courtesy, culture or refinement. Many times he has been illmannerly [sic] to those who are restricted to play on this course.

On the morning of August 23, the men arrived at the golf course around 6:00 A.M. Since no one was at the fieldhouse, the men decided to begin to play with the intention of paying after they finished. When they reached the fourth hole, Mr. Cooper appeared and demanded that they return to the fieldhouse, start over,

cession No. 64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

474 "Gen. Ulysses S. Grant III Dies," *Washington Post,* 20 August 1969:B8; Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park an Administrative History*, 26; Green, *Secret City*, 223-224.

475 Green, *Secret City*, 279.

476 *Annual Report of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1930), 47.

477 Notice to the Press, undated, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

and pay for the holes they played while he was not at the course. Dr. Simmons explained that they had been at the fieldhouse twice looking for score cards and to pay for the rounds and that they would not return to pay until they had finished their round. As the men later recounted,

> Mr. Cooper then kicked Dr. Simmons's ball off the tee several yards, which he already teed up, striking Dr. Simmons's foot. Dr. Simmons again teed up his ball. Mr. Cooper again jumped forward, seemingly excited, and kicked Dr. Simmons's ball off the tee many yards into the woods and grass, losing the ball and striking Dr. Simmons on the leg with his foot.
>
> Mr. Cooper then went and brought a park policeman, who came up and told us that we were under arrest, but after hearing our side of the matter, he had us give him our names and addresses.
>
> We don't believe that this is fair, just or right. We feel that we have been humiliated, intimidated, and embarrassed, and we hope that you will look into this matter at once.[478]

Pvt. C. E. Rabbitt of the US Park Police confirmed the men's account and stated that it was custom for golfers who wished to play prior to the arrival of the greenkeeper to do so and pay on completion of the game. Pvt. Rabbitt concluded that there was "no disorder upon which I could make an arrest on the green keeper's complaint" and that the men agreed to pay and continued with their game.[479] On August 29 the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks wrote to Severine G. Leoffler, stating that the conduct of Mr. Cooper was "unjustifiable and insulting." Since the office had received a number of other complaints about Mr. Cooper, the office recommended that Mr. Cooper be removed from his position.[480]

African American golfers in the District of Columbia continued to write to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, inquiring about the construction of a new course and expressing concern about the deplorable conditions of the Lincoln Memorial course (Figure 1.32). On April 7, 1932, one golfer, M.C. Clifford, wrote to Colonel Grant,

> It would seem to be inconceivable that your office would be ignorant of the conditions [at the Lincoln Memorial course] existing, but, however, for your information I will state that the hazard of injury to player, pedestrian, autoist, and workman is far too momentous for any agency of the government to allow to exist. Secondly the facilities provided are a mockery when compared to those

478 Letter from John Lankford, Dr. George T. Walker, and Dr. Walter Simmons to Lieut. Col. U.S. Grant 3rd, 23 August 1932, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

479 "Disagreement between Mr. Cooper, Lincoln Memorial Golf Course Attendant and Three golfers," 24 August 1923, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

480 Letter from E.N. Chisolm, Jr., Assistant Director to the Park Amusement Company, 29 August 1932, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

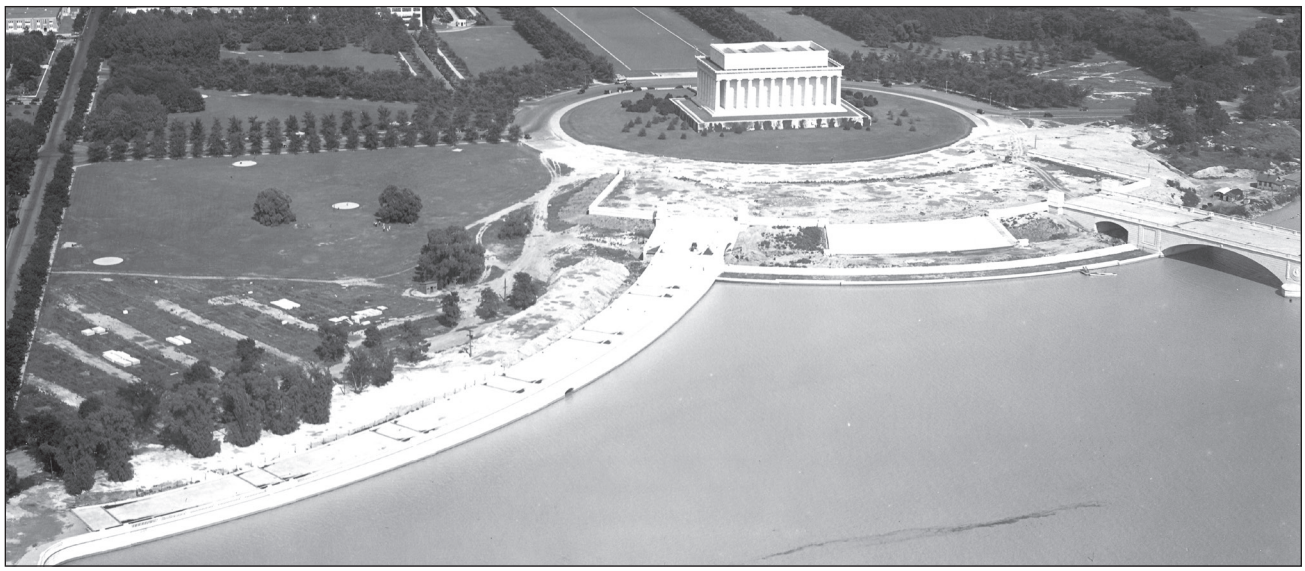


**Figure 1.32.** Lincoln Memorial course (left), July 1931 showing conditions during the construction of Memorial Bridge (right). (National Archives)

> that are provided the group of white citizens and taxpayers …
>
> There are large holes everywhere – deep wagon tracks over the greens, which have not been rolled or sanded; piles of dirt, pipe, and building materials on the fairways; and such a curtailment of playing space that the entire nine holes does not represent [an area of] space generally allotted to one hole on the courses provided for the white group …
>
> We have been patient, forbearing, and sympathetic with your position and the problems confronting your office during the improvements being made by the Federal government, but, I in common with hundreds of others of the more enlightened members of our group see the futility of such forbearance if there is not manifested on your part a keener appreciation of what we are entitled to – equality of opportunity, if not, as your office contends, identity of opportunity.
>
> Such treatment as this engenders hatred which in the end will militate against the fundamental principles of democracy.[481]

Grant responded to Clifford a year later and expressed that the conditions of the course were only temporary and that while the federal government had been able to purchase additional land for Section G of Anacostia Park, Congress did not approve the funding that fiscal year to grade the golf course. Grant appeared to have grown weary of the efforts to secure a golf course for African Americans and stated,

> I still have hope that progress may be made toward providing a golf course and I am sure I have done all I possibly could to secure this object. I regret to learn from you that apparently the efforts made by this office are not appreciated and

[481] Letter from M.C. Clifford to Colonel Grant, 7 April 1932, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

> that you mistakenly feel yourself justified in apparently finding fault with the office which is really trying to do the very thing you want.[482]

In August 1932 Grant addressed a delegation of 100 citizens, headed by John A. Lankford, and stated that his office would ask Congress to appropriate $96,852 for an African American public golf course in the District of Columbia. The NCP&PC had formally approved the project for Section G of Anacostia Park. Plans called for construction of a modern eighteen-hole golf course, a modern clubhouse with showers, restrooms, dining rooms, a kitchen, and a repair shop, as well as adequate parking.[483]

In January 1933, at a hearing on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, Grant told Congress that the project was "of sufficient urgency" and that it was felt that the new golf course was important to avoid "the possibility of race troubles … since the colored population have considerable equity in their claim for golf facilities." When asked by Congress why the concessionaire would not pay for the construction of the course, similar to the other courses in the city, Grant argued that since the site in Section G was a former city dump, it needed considerable fill and grading even before it could be turned over to a lessee to develop.[484]

After the January hearing, Grant wrote to Congressman Clarence Cannon of Missouri, responding to questions regarding the cost to grade the site in Section G and the need and desirability of the golf course. Grant included several letters of correspondence that he received from Lankford and others and stated, "This correspondence, of course, does not represent the interest taken by a large number of colored people in something being done for them, because most of the discussion of the matter has been with the committee and in personal conferences."[485] In support of the course, Grant argued that in his opinion,

> [I]t is of real importance that more adequate recreation facilities be provided for Negroes in the District of Columbia. They are proportionally more dependent upon public recreation than are the white people, and due to their lower economic status and other special conditions the value of suitable and beneficial recreation will probably be greater for them than for their white neighbors. I am so convinced of the economic value to the community of adequate recreational facilities from the standpoint of character building and the development of good citizens instead of bad, and the cost of bad citizens in crime and support at public expense is so clearly evident from the annual budget of the

482 Letter from Colonel Grant to M.C. Clifford, 3 April 1933, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

483 "Colored Golfers to Get Brand New Links," *Atlanta Daily News*, 23 August 1932:5A.

484 US Congress, House, Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill for 1934*, HR 14643, 1933, 72th Congress 2nd Session, 513, 520.

485 Letter from Colonel Grant to Representative Clarence Cannon, 26 January 1933, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

> District, that there seems to be a real cash argument for giving ample share to the group in the community which I understand contributes about 66% of the criminals and is using about 80% of the money expended in charity support and relief.[486]

In February 1933 John A. Lankford and Dr. Walter S. Simmons spoke at a congressional hearing on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill. The men were there to support the construction of the new African American golf course after Congress reduced the funding for the park by $50,000, the amount needed for the grading of the golf course site.[487] Lankford described the current conditions of the nine-hole Lincoln Memorial course in his argument for a new course:

> There is a small 9-hole and sand-green golf course near Lincoln Memorial bordering on the new bridge. On that course is a small 1-room frame building and two 1-room privies, without any sanitary plumbing or running water. This course has been set aside for the colored people. For the past three years or more on this course has been stored the material for the new Memorial Bridge … A few months ago a concrete road with curbs was cut almost through the center of the course … For the past three years heavy trucks, derricks, stakes, steel chains, have been on this golf links …
>
> This is the course where my wife and friends and the people of the District of Columbia play golf … [T]here are 130,000 or more colored people who live in the District of Columbia … Hundreds of them play golf. Thousands would play, but we have no conditions under which they can play.
>
> There is no law in the District of Columbia against colored people playing on the links used by the white group. Personally I do not care to discriminate; but if discriminations are made, I believe the colored group should have one golf links, at least, equal to one of the golf links which are used by the white people. At the present time they are about to eliminate that golf links.[488]

Simmons spoke after Lankford and emphasized the dangers of playing on the current Lincoln Memorial course, with its holes so close to public streets. Simmons also stressed that the African Americans of the city were not able to play "commercial golf." Simmons explained,

> We have no private clubs, we have no means if we had them to play in those places. It is necessary that we have a public golf course. It is necessary because of the fact that you cannot expect people to be healthy, you cannot expect people to pursue healthful exercises, if they are denied these facilities. The

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486 Ibid.

487 "Increased Funds Asked for Capital," *Washington Evening Star,* 25 February 1933:A1; US Congress, House, Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations, *An Act Making Appropriations for the Government of the District of Columbia and Other Activities. . . Hearings on HR 14643*, 1933, 288-289.

488 House Committee, *An Act Making Appropriations for the Government of the District of Columbia,* 288-289.

> Negroes really need a public golf courses, and I believe they would appreciate anything you can do in that direction.[489]

Despite their testimony, the bill did not pass and according to Colonel Grant, the House in particular objected considerably to the appropriation for the grading in Section G for the golf course.[490]

Minutes from a January meeting of the NCP&PC and subsequent letters indicate that the Office Public Buildings and Public Parks began consulting with landscape architect and city planner Earle Sumner Draper on the design of the course before Congress chose not to pass the appropriation bill.[491] Draper had his own firm in Charlotte, North Carolina and was involved with the planning of industrial towns as well as parks, universities, private estates, subdivisions, and golf courses.[492] In February 1933, right before the congressional hearing, Draper wrote to Colonel Grant regarding the location of the clubhouse and the general layout of the course. He also indicated that he was consulting with Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks architect Irving Payne and that he would be in Washington, DC, late February "in the field checking over the work."[493] There is no evidence that Draper continued to consult on the design of the course and kept his plan to meet with Payne after the office failed to receive the necessary congressional appropriation for grading the course.[494]

In 1933 the National Park Service took over the management of all of the federal reservations and parks in the District of Columbia and the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks was abolished. The members of the Royal Golf Club began meeting with C. Marshall Finnan, Superintendent of National Capital Parks, and others, to promote the construction of a new course. In 1934 Finnan attempted to solve the lack of congressional funding for the golf course by taking advantage of President Roosevelt's New Deal programs. Finnan hoped to acquire laborers from

489 Ibid, 289.

490 Letter from Colonel Grant to M.C. Clifford, 3 April 1932, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

491 Extract from the Minutes of the 73rd Meeting of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission held on 19-20 January 1933, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

492 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "The Earle Sumner Draper House," accessed 18 August 2016, http://www.cmhpf.org/Properties%20Foundation%20Reports/draper.html.

493 E.S. Draper to Colonel Grant, 15 February 1933, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

494 That same year, during a business trip to Washington, Draper met with Dr. Arthur Morgan, the new chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority and later accepted a position as the agency's Director of Town Planning and Housing. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "The Earle Sumner Draper House," accessed 18 August 2016, http://www.cmhpf.org/Properties%20Foundation%20Reports/draper.html, Cornell University, "Guide to the Earle Sumner Draper, Sr. Papers 1933-1969," accessed 1 November 2017, http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMM02745.html.

the Federal Emergency Relief Administration's Transient Relief Bureau and "turn them loose in Anacostia Park" to develop the first nine holes of the golf course in Section G.[495] Due to lack of transportation and suitable housing, the help of the bureau did not materialize.[496]

By 1934 the widening of Constitution Avenue and continued construction on the Memorial Bridge made the Lincoln Memorial course "almost unplayable." President of the Royal Golf Club Herbert Bethea noted that in 1933 "[club members] spent more than $1,500 going out of town to play golf on real golf courses. Some of us went as far as Chicago, Illinois."[497] Despite the conditions, the number of golfers using the Lincoln Memorial course continued to increase during the 1930s, illustrating the growing number of African American golfers in the city. In 1935 16,885 golfers played the course. By 1937 the number had grown to 34,077.[498]

In September 1935 C. Marshall Finnan sent a letter to Director Cammerer with a justification for the course, which National Capital Parks was proposing for a public works project. Finnan stated,

> We believe that this project has unusual merit and there are several reasons why construction should be started immediately. As you know, golf facilities for the colored in the District of Columbia are woefully inadequate, the only course available being a small nine hole makeshift affair in West Potomac Park. Not long ago Mrs. Roosevelt wrote to you asking if improvements for colored recreation could not be made in the Washington parks. This golf course would be the most important recreational contribution that could be to the colored residents of the District of Columbia.[499]

In October 1935 National Capital Parks submitted the golf course project to the WPA stating that it was "considered a most desirable project and adaptable to the use of emergency relief labor."[500] At an estimated cost of $150,000, it was the largest of six new WPA projects approved for the District and was projected to provide jobs for 167 men.[501] It may have also been one of the most difficult – a

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495 Letter from C. Marshall Finnan to Mr. Nolen, 9 February 1934, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

496 Letter from C. Marshall Finnan to Dr. George W. Adams, 12 December 1934, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

497 Letter to the Editor, "D.C. Colored Golf Courses," *Washington Post,* 2 February 1934:8.

498 National Park Service, "Report on the Claim of the S.G. Leoffler Operating Company Dated 14 May 1943," 4 June 1943, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2847, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

499 Letter from C. Marshal Finnan to the Director of the National Park Service, 9 September 1935, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

500 Letter from C. Marshall Finnan to Major Daniel J. Donovan, Acting WPA Administrator, 30 October 1935, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

501 "Building Toys Urged on WPA," *Washington Evening Star,* 14 November 1935:B6.

September 1936 issue of *Work: a Journal of Progress*, published by the District of Columbia WPA, stated, "This was one of the toughest jobs tackled by the WPA as the area formerly served as a dump for the District of Columbia."[502] The new golf course also may have been one of a few of the 600 golf courses built or improved by the WPA to be built specifically for African Americans. The only other known course was a nine-hole golf course built around 1935 at North Park in Gary, Indiana, reportedly the only instance where the WPA built two separate golf courses for white and black golfers.[503]

By June 1937 five holes had been built in Section G of Anacostia Park and by October the 120 men working on the course had almost completed the grading of the site.[504] By February 1938 the "36-acre tract of waste land" for the golf course was nearing completion by WPA and CCC workers, who added topsoil, graded and seeded, and planted hundreds of trees along the fairways. The workers also built a large parking area and a temporary clubhouse.[505] The *Evening Star* reported that "for years the only course open to colored [people] has been a dinky little layout near the Lincoln Memorial" and the new course would provide African Americans "with golf facilities equal to the best."[506] In December 1938 the National Park Service awarded Severine G. Leoffler the contract to manage the new golf course.[507]

After more than 10 years of effort, the new golf course formally opened on June 11, 1939. When the course opened, it took the same name as the adjacent housing complex and was known as Langston Golf Course. At the dedication ceremony the "course was doused with verbal champagne by an imposing array of speakers," including Frank T. Gartside, assistant superintendent of National Capital Parks, Garnet C. Wilkinson, Superintendent of Schools, and Mrs. Jerenia Reid, treasurer of the Wake Robin Golf Club. Master of ceremonies Edgar G. Brown, president of the United Government Employees and husband of Wake Robin member Paris Brown, "painted the new links as 'the finest of its kind in the country.'" After the ceremony, an exhibition match was played by District amateur champion and former runner-up for the national championship Beltran Barker along with John

502 "Improving Parks of Capital: Hundreds of WPA Workers Are Given Jobs Beautifying Recreation Areas," *Work: A Journal of Progress* 1 no. 1 (September 1936): 10.

503 The North Gleason Golf Course is no longer extant. http://eppley.org/wp-content/uploads/file/62/Gary_MasterPlan_Final_Compilation-1.pdf.

504 Letter from C. Marshall Finnan to Dr. George Adams, 7 June 1937, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland; "New Golf Course Here to be Ready By Spring," *Washington Evening Star*, 1 October 1937:B1.

505 "New Golf Course Nears Completion," *Washington Post,* 13 February 1938:4; "Golf Course Opens Sunday," *Washington Afro-American,* 10 June 1939:22.

506 "Building Program Planned for Links Here Next Year," *Washington Evening Star,* 19 December 1938:A18.

507 "Contract Renewed, Leoffler Wants U.S. Golf Tourney," *Washington Evening Star,* 31 December 1938:A11.

Thompson, Clyde Martin, and William Jones. Although the presidents of both the Wake Robin and Royal Golf clubs were scheduled to speak, the *Afro-American* reported that for unknown reasons they "declined" and that Ms. Reid spoke on behalf of the public golfers and was not officially representing the Wake Robin Golf Club.[508] A press release for the opening of the course noted that W. (Willard) McCollum, landscape engineer and architect, designed the course for National Capital Parks and that Irving W. Payne, who then worked as a landscape architect for National Capital Parks, was the greens designer[509] (see Chapter 1.3).

One year after its completion, Langston Golf Course was the site of the Eastern Golf Association's amateur championship in July 1940, attracting former boxing heavyweight champion Joe Louis who had taken up the sport of golf in 1935. Around 2,000 spectators reportedly followed Louis around the course, many of whom "did not know where the course was located until news leaked out that Louis was in the tournament"[510] (Figure 1.33). At the tournament, Langston's golf pro Clyde Martin caught Louis's attention and Martin soon left Langston to become Louis's personal golf tutor.[511] Joe Louis returned to play at Langston Golf Course several times, including after he beat Buddy Baer at Washington, DC's Griffith Stadium during the 17th defense of his heavyweight championship on May 23, 1941.[512]



**Figure 1.33.** Heavyweight champion Joe Louis at Langston Golf Course, July 1940. (Smithsonian Institution)

508 "New Golf Course Dedicated in D.C." *Washington Afro-American,* 17 June 1939:21.
509 Press Release, 6 June 1939, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.
510 Eddie Gant, "I Cover the Eastern Front," *The Chicago Defender,* 20 July 1940:23.
511 "To Play with Joe Louis," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 24 August 1940:20; Dawkins and Braddock, Teeing Off Against Jim Crow, 64.
512 "Three Stitches Required to Close Joe's Eye Cut," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 31 May 1941:20.

## GOLF AND CIVIL RIGHTS IN WASHINGTON, DC

On the eve of World War II, Washington's black golfers began to challenge segregation of Washington, DC's golf courses and push for better facilities. These efforts by members of the Royal and Wake Robin golf clubs occurred prior to a larger movement in the District of Columbia in the mid-to-late 1940s and early 1950s to attack Jim Crow segregation in the city. While the District of Columbia was a leader in the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaign of the 1930s that protested discrimination in employment, progress toward desegregation was inconsistent. Following the end of World War II activists increased their efforts to end Jim Crow practices in Washington, DC, and were aided by national organizations such as the America Council on Race Relations, founded in 1944 and led by civil rights leaders Walter White, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Lester Granger, and President Truman's Committee on Segregation, who argued that challenging segregation in Washington, DC, would bring attention to and set a precedent for ending discrimination across the country.[513]

When the National Park Service took over the management of the federal lands in the District of Columbia after President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 6166 in 1933, the agency had a policy of sanctioned "separate but equal" segregation in its southern parks. The National Park Service had little presence in the Jim Crow south until the 1930s when it acquired several battlefields and forts from the War Department and land to establish national parks such as Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains, where local Jim Crow laws were in place. Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes (1933-1946) explained the segregation policy of the Department of the Interior in 1937 when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) inquired about segregated facilities and the "establishment of a Jim-Crow project on Federal territory" in Shenandoah National Park. Ickes responded, "everyone regardless of creed, color, or race … is invited to visit the national parks and monuments [but] it has long been the policy [of the national parks] to conform generally to the State customs with regards to accommodation of visitors."[514]

Secretary of the Interior Ickes formerly served as president of the Chicago NAACP and was a staunch advocate for the desegregation of federal facilities. When Ickes resigned as the Secretary of the Interior in early 1946, the African American press noted that it removed "one of our few remaining friends in the na-

513 Wendell E. Pritchett, "A Local and National Story: The Civil Rights Movement in Postwar Washington, DC," The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, accessed 2 June 2016, http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/civil-rights-movement/essays/local-and-national-story-civil-rights-movement-postwar-w.

514 Harold Ickes to Walter White, 4 February 1937, quoted in Terrance Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government: W.J. Trent, Jr. and the Struggle to Desegregate National Park Campgrounds," *Environmental History* Vol. 14. No. 4 (October 2009):656.

tion's government … He as one of the squarest shooters the country has known and had the courage to speak his mind against injustice, dishonesty and crooked dealings."[515] Yet Ickes was a cabinet member in a Democratic administration that was reluctant to actively support Civil Rights. President Franklin D. Roosevelt in particular could not afford to offend Southern Democrats by challenging Jim Crow if he wanted his New Deal legislation to pass.[516] In this political climate, Ickes was initially reluctant to push the issue of desegregation of National Park Service-managed areas in southern states and in the District of Columbia, where the agency had inherited the de facto segregated recreation policy of its predecessors.[517]

In the late 1930s, Ickes hesitancy on desegregation within the national parks began to lessen with the influence of William J. Trent Jr., his advisor on Negro Affairs, and Nathan Margold, Department of the Interior solicitor and author of a 1933 NAACP study that detailed the inequality of "separate but equal" education facilities and became the foundation for the fight against segregation laws. Trent in particular, who was cautiously supported by Ickes and more strongly by Margold and others, was integral to the efforts to increase African American access to and end discrimination in National Parks.[518] Efforts by Ickes to end discrimination include his support of two of the Interior Department's black professionals, William Hastie and Robert C. Weaver, in their efforts to desegregate the agency's cafeteria in 1934.[519] With the urging of Trent and Margold, Ickes ordered one of the picnic areas in Shenandoah National Park be nonsegregated and that all the signs indicating race segregation be removed in 1939. No incidents resulting from the effort were reported.[520]

One of Ickes most recognized civil rights efforts occurred in 1939 after the Daughters of the American Revolution barred Marian Anderson, the famed African American contralto, from performing at Constitution Hall, the city's most prestigious venue. Along with Eleanor Roosevelt, Secretary Ickes was instrumental in finding Anderson an alternative venue on federal land. On Easter Sunday, Ickes introduced Anderson to a crowd of more than 70,000 at the Lincoln Memorial with a moving speech about race and justice, declaring "In this great auditorium under the sky, all of us are free. Genius, like justice, is blind. Genius draws no color lines"[521] (Figure 1.34). Anderson's performance to a diverse crowd dramati-

515 "Ickes Will be Missed," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 23 February 1923:4.
516 PBS, "The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow, Presidents and Their Role in Civil Rights for African Americans," accessed 3 May 2016, http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/struggle_president2.html.
517 Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 665-667.
518 Ibid., 664-667, 670-673.
519 Pritchett, "A National Issue," 1322-1323.
520 Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 666-667, 670.
521 Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, "Eleanor Roosevelt and Marian



**Figure 1.34.** Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes congratulates Marian Anderson at the Lincoln Memorial concert, April 9, 1939. (Library of Congress)

cally contrasted from the segregated dedication of the Lincoln Memorial almost seventeen years prior.

Ickes and his staff furthered civil rights in the city's recreation areas by many lesser-known decisions and events and began to reverse the rules that had been in effect since the 1920s under the auspices of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and its successor the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. In 1938 Ickes opened the picnic areas in National Capital Parks to biracial use and in 1941 he ordered the admission of black players to the lighted tennis courts in West Potomac Park and on the National Mall.[522]

Director of the National Park Service Arno B. Cammerer (1933-1940) did not follow Ickes's progressive stance against segregation.[523] In September 1939 Secretary Ickes asked Cammerer if it was necessary for the National Park Service to operate its tennis courts in National Capital Parks on a segregated basis. Ickes wrote, "Unless there are very strong reasons to the contrary, I desire that the issuance of permits for the use of any of the tennis courts administered by the National Capital Parks shall not hereafter be affected by the race or color of the applicant and that the forms now used as applications for tennis permits be altered to eliminate all

Anderson," accessed 3 May 2016, http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/aboutfdr/anderson.html; Susan Stamberg, "Denied a State She Sang for a Nation," National Public Radio, 9 April 2014, http://www.npr.org/2014/04/09/298760473/denied-a-stage-she-sang-for-a-nation.

522 Memorandum to the Secretary of the Interior from A.E. Demaray, Acting Director of the National Park Service, 14 June 1940, Record Group 79, Entry 10 Central Classified files, 1907-1949, Box 2827, Folder 601-12, National Archives, College Park, Maryland; Constance McLaughlin Green, *Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 262.

523 Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 658.

references to race or color."[524] Cammerer responded that the segregated use of the tennis courts followed the established NCP&PC Recreation System Plan for the District of Columbia.[525] He also stated that since the schools in the District were segregated and the tennis courts were generally located in recreation areas near schools, they adhered to the same segregation policies of the adjacent schools. Cammerer said,

> The National Capital Parks maintain recreational facilities for Negroes that are equal to those for Whites, and adequately proportioned according to the ratio of Negro population in the District of Columbia. With the single exception of the facilities located in the central area, all of the tennis courts and other recreational facilities provided for Whites are located in neighborhoods that are predominately or exclusively occupied by white residents; and the same is true of the facilities provided for Negroes.[526]

While Cammerer removed the reference to race or color on the tennis permits as Ickes requested, he recommended that "Further changes or attempts to bi-racial use of the facilities are believed to be inadvisable."[527] Cammerer's unsympathetic feelings about desegregated facilities also came forward in the discussions surrounding the development of African American camp grounds at Shenandoah and Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area in Prince William County, Virginia, where he repeatedly claimed that the parks were open to everyone and that campgrounds for blacks would follow "the public demand for them."[528] Cammerer held the same stance during the planning of Langston Golf Course in 1935 and stated that "These facilities are installed according by demand. A demand cannot be anticipated but must be proven by actual interest leading up to actual use . . . [The golf course] will be one of the best golf courses in the city and I hope that Mr. Daly (referring to Victor Daly who started the Riverside Golf Club) and his associates will see that it is used to full capacity once it has been constructed."[529]

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524 Memorandum for the Director, National Park Service from Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, 26 September 1939, Record Group 79, Entry 10 Central Classified files, 1907-1949, Box 2827, Folder 601-12, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

525 Cammerer states that the segregated recreation system was outlined by the President's District of Columbia Recreation Committee, the committee that sought to coordinate all of the local and government agencies that had a stake in the city's recreation areas.

526 Memorandum for the Director, National Park Service from Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, 29 September 1939, Record Group 79, Entry 10 Central Classified files, 1907-1949, Box 2827, Folder 601-12, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

527 Memorandum for the Director, National Park Service from Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, 26 September 1939, Record Group 79, Entry 10 Central Classified files, 1907-1949, Box 2827, Folder 601-12, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

528 Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 673; Memo, Director Arno B. Cammerer to Conrad L. Wirth and Arthur E. Demaray, 30 September 1936, Record Group 76, Entry 100, Box 17, National Archives, College Park, Maryland, see Patti Kuhn and John Bedell, *Prince William Forest Park Historic District*, National Register Nomination (Washington, DC: Louis Berger 2011).

529 Letter from Arno B. Cammerer to Mr. Weaver, 10 July 1935, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

In July 1939 the Washington Council of the National Negro Congress released a report entitled "A Report on the Adequacy of Public Recreational Facilities for Negroes in the District of Columbia," criticizing the segregation of the city's recreation facilities, including those of National Capital Parks. Acting Superintendent of National Capital Parks Frank T. Gartside "emphatically denied" the report's accusations that the "National Capital Parks adheres to the most flagrant of policies of racial discrimination." Gartside's response to the report in October 1939 illustrates that the Department of the Interior's non-discrimination policy for recreation facilities in the District was not fully formed and echoed Cammerer's policy of "separate but equal" facilities by public demand.

Gartside said,

> Facilities equal in quality and proportionately distributed according to the population ratio are provided for Negroes in the National Capital Parks. Every possible effort is made by administrative authorities to prevent discrimination or segregation that could be humiliating to members of either race.[530]

Although Gartside noted that all picnic areas were open to all races, he acknowledged that at that time there were more tennis courts for whites than blacks and no lighted courts for blacks "because it has been felt that the comparatively small demand for these facilities would not warrant the expense of installation." Gartside also stated that National Capital Parks followed the policies developed by the NCP&PC, which incidentally was one of segregated facilities.[531]

When Langston Golf Course opened in 1939 there were 5,209 golf facilities in the United States and 700 were municipally owned. Fewer than 20 of these municipal courses were open to African Americans and most if not all were located in Northern and Midwestern states, evidenced by the locations of the annual UGA national tournament[532] (see Tables 1.4–Table 1.5). Yet in an era of continuing "separate but equal," Langston Golf Course did not meet the same standards as the white public courses in the city. Langston Golf Course remained only nine holes despite continued interest and efforts by players as well as promises made by officials to expand the course to eighteen holes. The course was overcrowded, it lacked shelters for weather protection (East Potomac had 10, Langston had none), and reportedly officials from the Department of the Interior and the USDA inspected the grass and declared that it was in "terrible condition."[533]

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530 Memorandum to the Chief of Operations from Frank T. Gartside, Acting Director of National Capital Parks, 25 October 1939, Record Group 79, Entry 10 Central Classified files, 1907-1949, Box 2827, Folder 601-12, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

531 Ibid.

532 McDaniel et al., *Uneven Lies*, 59.

533 "Twenty-Eight Negroes Play on Exclusively White D.C. Links," *Atlanta Daily World,* 21 July 1941:5; Eddie Gant, "I Cover the Eastern Front," *The Chicago Defender,* 19 July 1941:22.

| YEAR | COURSE | LOCATION | COURSE TYPE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1925 | Shady Rest Country Club | Scotch Plains, NJ | Private |
| 1926 | Mapledale Country Club | Stowe, MA | Private |
| 1927 | Mapledale Country Club | Stowe, MA | Private |
| 1928 | Mapledale Country Club | Stowe, MA | Private |
| 1929 | Shady Rest Country Club | Scotch Plains, NJ | Private |
| 1930 | Casa Loma Country Club | Powers Lake, WI | Private |
| 1931 | Sunset Hills Country Club | Kankakee, IL | Private |
| 1932 | Douglass Park | Indianapolis, IN | Public |
| 1933 | Sunset Hills Country Club | Kankakee, IL | Private |
| 1934 | Rackham Golf Course | Detroit, MI | Public |
| 1935 | Lake Mohansic Golf Course | Westchester County, NY | Public |
| 1936 | Cobbs Creek Golf Course | Philadelphia, PA | Public |
| 1937 | Highland Park Golf Course | Cleveland, OH | Public |
| 1938 | Palos Park Golf Course | Chicago, IL | Public |
| 1939 | Griffith Park Golf Course | Los Angeles, CA | Public |
| 1940 | Palos Park Golf Course | Chicago, IL | Public |
| 1941 | Ponkapoag Golf Course | Boston, MA | Public |

**Table 1.4. Location of the Annual UGA National Open Tournament (1925-1941)**

**Table 1.5. Known municipal/public courses built for African Americans (1924-1952)**

| HISTORIC NAME | CURRENT NAME | LOCATION | YEAR BUILT | SIZE | NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lincoln Memorial Golf Course | No longer extant | Washington, DC | 1924 | 9 holes | Demolished in 1939. |
| Douglass Park Golf Course | Douglass Park Golf Course | Indianapolis, IN | 1926 | 6 holes | The course was expanded to 9 holes in 1928. |
| McKinley Park Golf Course | McAdams Golf Club | Wichita, KS | 1929-1930 | 3 holes | The course was expanded to 9 holes in 1941. |
| North Gleason Park Golf Course | No longer extant | Gary, IN | ca. 1935 | 9 holes | Built by WPA. |
| Eighth Street Negro Park Golf Course | No longer extant | Dallas, TX | ca. 1938 | 6 holes | Originally 6 holes and expanded to 9 holes between 1940 and 1945. Was located in what is now Moore Park. |
| Langston Golf Course | Langston Golf Course | Washington, DC | 1939 | 9 holes | Expanded to 18 holes in 1955. |
| Nocho Park Golf Course | No longer extant | Greensboro, NC | 1950 | 9 holes | Was located in what is now Barber Park. |
| Douglass Park Golf Course | No longer extant | Memphis, TN | 1951 | 9 holes | |
| Cooper Green Golf Course | No longer extant | Birmingham, AL | 1952 | 18 holes | |

In January 1940 members of the Royal and Wake Robin golf clubs met with concessionaire Severine G. Leoffler and the office of National Capital Parks to discuss the deficiencies at Langston Golf Course. The group "unanimously agreed" that the course needed to be expanded to eighteen holes, which would allow the Eastern Golf Association and the UGA to hold tournaments at Langston Golf Course and "stimulate public interest in golf and aid in the development of younger players." The course lacked a driving range and practice putting green, which made it difficult for golf professionals to provide proper instruction to players. Because of the course's shortcomings and lack of practice areas, beginners were slowing up the course and causing "an unnecessary hazard." Many players were forced to "go out of town to play after tiring of the long delay in starting and the unreasonable tie-ups on the tees."[534] While National Capital Parks concurred with this assessment and stated that they would be able to add a practice putting green during the upcoming season, funding was not available for the other improvements and the urgent need of play facilities for the city's children directed all CCC and other labor available that year to the construction of recreation centers and playgrounds.[535]

In June 1941 the poor upkeep of Langston Golf Course, as well as the ambiguous policy of segregation at the other federally owned golf courses, was raised during House of Representatives subcommittee meetings on the coordination of Washington, DC's recreation facilities. When asked by the subcommittee if African Americans could play at other public golf courses in the city besides Langston, Irving C. Root, superintendent of National Capital Parks, replied, "I do not know."[536]

Tired of the conditions at Langston, three members of the Royal Golf Club, Asa Williams (president of the Royal Golf Club), George Williams (a school teacher), and Cecil R. Shamwell (a government employee and high-ranking amateur golfer), challenged the racial segregation policy at the city's public golf courses on June 29, 1941, when they refused to be barred from East Potomac Park Golf Course because of their race. The trio had a "fair skinned" African American purchase their tickets, but when the men presented the tickets at the clubhouse, they were denied

534 Letter from H.A. Fisher, Royal Golf Club, to Edmund Rogers, Acting Superintendent National Capital Parks, 19 January 1949, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

535 Edmund B. Rogers to Dr. H.A. Fisher, 2 February 1940, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

536 "House Group Probes D.C. Golf Courses, Raps Bias," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 7 June 1941:23.



**Figure 1.35.** Dr. Edgar G. Brown, 1942 (left) (Library of Congress)





**Figure 1.36.** Asa Williams, George Williams, and Cecil R. Showell, along with Edgar G. Brown, Paris Brown, Delores Brown, and Emmett Sullivan challenge segregation at East Potomac Park Golf Course on June 29, 1941. (Washington National Records Center)

admission. The men were told that "colored persons are not allowed to play at the East Potomac course."[537]

Dissatisfied, the men sought the help of Dr. Edgar G. Brown (1898-1954), director of the National Negro Council, president of the United States Government Employees, and a member of Roosevelt's Black Cabinet (Brown's wife, Paris Brown, was a member of the Wake Robin Golf Club) (Figure 1.35). After recounting their story to Brown, the men returned to East Potomac Park, along with Paris Brown, Dolores G. Brown (who later married Cecil Shamwell), and Emmet A. Sullivan, where again they were turned down.[538] Park Police arrived and the lieutenant in charge ruled that since the men had tickets, they should be allowed to play.[539] The golfers then followed the starting procedures at the golf course and went ahead to tee off on the first hole. Anticipating trouble, park police dispatched six officers, working in three shifts of two, to accompany the golfers while they played (Figure 1.36). The men "triumphed over attempted interference and heckling by a group of dissenting whites" and played without incident until they reached the tenth hole near the swimming pool. "Then a chorus of boos and shouted insults arose from spectators, but the game continued." The men completed eighteen holes and played well despite the distraction: with a par of 72, Shamwell scored a 71, Asa Williams a 74, and George Williams a 76.[540]

The next day Arthur E. Demaray, then Acting Director of the National Park Service, recounted the episode in a memo to Secretary Ickes, who had been called at his home the previous day and notified of the incident. Demaray stated that "The Negroes conducted themselves in a dignified manner." He also wrote that "the Negroes present at East Potomac Park Course Sunday are reported to have indicated their intension of playing on the [golf course] next Sunday whether tickets are sold to them or not, and of swimming in one of the white pools." Concluding the memo, Demaray wrote that "It is believed that public dissatisfaction would result from any radical change in the present policy and might lead to disorders. This Service is of the opinion that the agitation for the joint use of the facilities for both races is the agitation of an 'outside' group and is not truly representative of the large majority of Negro residents of the District of Columbia." Demaray recommended that the "present policy" of segregated golf courses continue.[541]

537 "Six Cops Guard Golfers: 3 Players Break Jim Crow Rule," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 5 July 1941:1.

538 While the *Afro-American* reported that the fourth man, who did not play, was Emmet A. Sullivan, *The Atlanta Daily World* states that it was Elmer Swann. "Six Cops Guard Golfers," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 5 July 1941:1; "Twenty-Eight Negroes Play on Exclusively White D.C. Links," *Atlanta Daily News*, 21 July 1941:5.

539 Memo from Arthur E. Demaray to Secretary of the Interior Ickes, 1 July 1941, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

540 "D. C. Police Guard Trio Of Golfers," *New York Amsterdam Star-News,* 5 July 1941:19.

541 Newton B. Drury (1940-1951) took over the duties as Director of the National Park Service

Secretary of the Interior Ickes ignored Demaray's recommendation and issued an order on June 30, 1941, stating that the golf course was open to all players, regardless of race.[542] Two weeks later, the manager of East Potomac Park Golf Course asserted that tickets would be sold and have been sold to any American citizen.[543] Ickes also insisted that African Americans could purchase tickets at all of the District's federally owned golf courses, including Rock Creek and Anacostia.[544]

Ickes recounted the incident in his diary:

> I can see no reason why Negroes should not be permitted to play on the golf course. They are taxpayers, they are citizens, and they have a right to play golf on public courses on the same basis as whites. To be sure, we have maintained a golf course for Negroes in Washington [Langston], but the cold fact is that we have not kept it up and it is not surprising that Negroes do not care to play on it."[545]

On Sunday, July 13, 1941, seven foursomes from the Royal Golf Club arrived to play at East Potomac Park Golf Course, accompanied once again by Edgar Brown. The golfers bought their tickets, took their places, and started to play without incident.[546] Problems arose when the golfers sought refuge from a downpour that interrupted their game. While most stood under the eaves of the fieldhouse for shelter, a few attempted to enter the fieldhouse and a fight broke out. The police responded and most of the players retreated to their cars until the rain stopped.[547] Player Timothy Thomas, a member of the Royal Golf Club, later recounted "We rushed to get back in the clubhouse [to escape the rain] but they had locked the screen door on us. We were pretty belligerent and someone hit on that screen door and it went flying. We had a real free-for-all down there … they called the police, the reserves, and everything else, which didn't stop some of those blows."[548] Edgar Brown later stated that the efforts to play at East Potomac Park were "merely the first part of our program to obtain equal rights to all the facilities available in the district."[549] The June and July incidents made headlines in several African American newspapers including the *Chicago Defender*, the *New York Amsterdam Star-News*, and the *Atlanta Daily World*.

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from Cammerer in August 1940, Memo from Arthur E. Demaray to Secretary of the Interior Ickes, 1 July 1941, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland

542 "Negroes Prevented From Entering Golf Clubhouse," *Washington Post,* 14 July 1941:13.

543 "Ickes Order Opens Golf Links to All," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 19 July 1941:19.

544 "Golfers Take Advantage of New Courses," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 19 July 1941:21.

545 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 142, quoted in Harold LeClair Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes: The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941* (New York: Simon and Shuster 1955), 563.

546 "Twenty-Eight Negroes Play on Exclusively White D.C. Links," *Atlanta Daily World*, 21 July 1941:5.

547 "Negroes Prevented from Entering Golf Clubhouse," *Washington Post,* 14 July 1941:13; "Golfers Take Advantage of New Courses," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 19 July 1941:21.

548 Dawkins and Kinlock, *African American Golfers*, 125-126.

549 "Twenty-Eight Negroes Play on Exclusively White D.C. Links," *Atlanta Daily World*, 21 July 1941:5.

Not everyone approved of Brown's tactics. The *Atlanta Daily World* reported that "there are many who agree that Edgar is aiming at the right idea, but using the wrongest [sic] kinds of weapons."[550] Allegedly Brown had also been inconsistent. The newspaper reported that awhile back, Brown had been invited to attend a conference on "Jim Crow national parks." At the conference, Brown allegedly stated that blacks did not want to use the same parks as whites and only wanted equal accommodations and facilities as whites. "This stymied all efforts to eliminate the Jim Crow system in effect, leaving the proponents of the eliminations stranded high and dry."[551] The newspaper also stated that many who were unhappy with the conditions at Langston "had been merely waiting an opportunity to file some legal action against the government . . .But Mr. Brown took time by the forelock and acting on this own initiative staged a spectacle last Sunday [June 30 ] which has the town talking and the government officials stewing."[552]

Following the June and July incidents and the "first thrust at unlawful segregation in Washington," Brown, Asa Williams, and Dr. George Adams, also a member of the Royal Golf Club, met with Secretary of the Interior Ickes on Monday, July 14, 1941, to urge that all public facilities under the federal government "be made available to all Americans, regardless of race, origins, creed, or color."[553] At the meeting Ickes "reaffirmed the policy of his office – a law of equality for all Americans on the various courses about the District."[554]

Ickes was initially somewhat cautious of the protestor's methods and although he realized that the presence of black golfers on the course would elicit negative reactions from whites regardless, he urged them to use the course but to not command attention.[555] On July, 20, 1941, Ickes wrote in his diary:

> Late Tuesday morning a delegation of Negroes, headed by Edgar Brown and Dr. George W. Adams, the latter of Freedman's Hospital, came in to talk to me about Negroes playing on the East Potomac Golf Course. I told them that when the issue had been raised I announced, as policy of the Department, that Negroes were entitled to the privileges of the course just as whites were. There had been an incipient riot the preceding Saturday afternoon. Some twenty Negroes had gone to the course in a body, although only eight or nine of them wanted to play golf. I protested that going to the golf course in a mob was likely to provoke trouble. I said that we would protect these people in their rights as citizens but that they ought to go to the course in a normal way, point out that their use of the course would more likely to come to be accepted if this procedure were followed than otherwise. They agreed with me and said that they would do this.

550 "Interior Department Frets Over Brown's Golf Action," *Atlanta Daily World,* 9 July 1941:1.
551 Ibid.
552 Ibid.
553 "D. C. Police Guard Trio Of Golfers," *New York Amsterdam Star-News,* 5 July 1941:19; "Six Cops Guard Golfers," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 5 July 1941:1.
554 "Golfers Take Advantage of New Courses," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 19 July 1941:21.
555 Dawkins and Braddock, "Teeing Off Against Jim Crow," 66.

> Later in the week, on Friday, Dr. Brown and his wife went over to this course to play golf. They were followed by a jeering, booing group of whites. When I learned of this I called [Arthur] Demaray and told him to have enough police there to protect the Negro players and to lose no time in making arrest of those who were conducting themselves in an improper manner.[556]

Three days after his meeting with the players, Ickes wrote to the Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson to bring to his attention a rumor that a large group of black players were going to play at East Potomac Park the following Sunday, July 20. Ickes had also heard that soldiers stationed at 21st and C Streets NW who "had some difficulties with Negroes living in that vicinity" were going "to be on hand at East Potomac Park when the Negro golfers appear." Ickes told Stimson, "I am bringing this to your attention because it would be very unfortunate at this particular time if, as a result of this situation, a United States soldier should become involved in physical encounters with Negroes in the parks of the Nation's Capital."[557] Despite the warning, no incidents were reported.

The players' "quiet, but effective war against Jim-Crowism [sic] in public parks" continued. In August the *New York Amsterdam Star-News* reported that the players were developing plans to "invade" Rock Creek Golf Course in a similar manner that was used at East Potomac Park (no record of an effort at Rock Creek Park was found). The newspaper also indicated that Ickes had "to clamp down on members of his own official family in his determined effort to stamp out Jim-Crow customs which have prevailed on these courses." Brown was also receiving pressure to call off his efforts, but he continued "firmly believing that he was pursuing the right course" of action.[558]

The *Afro-American* optimistically saw Ickes's order as a turning point for African American golfers in Washington DC. It wrote,

> Out of this new arrangement may arrive a new golfing era in the capital of the nation. Long a pioneer in golfing activities, the city may now entertain hopes

[556] Ickes states that the meeting took place on Tuesday, but the *Afro-American* reported that it was on Monday. Likewise, Ickes stated that the incident occurred the previous Saturday, but the newspaper reported that it was on Sunday. Ickes, *Secret Diary of Harold Ickes*, 579, quoted in Dawkins and Braddock, Teeing off Against Jim Crow, 67.

[557] Harold L. Ickes to Henry L. Stimson, 17 July 1941, 79, Entry 10 Central Classified files, 1907-1949, Box 2827, Folder 601-12, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

[558] "Capital Fight on Discrimination in Public Parks Moving Ahead," *New York Amsterdam Star-News*, 2 August 1941:15.

> of bringing the fast-growing national tournament to East Potomac or a similar course in 1942 or 1943.
>
> Facilities for play will be unexcelled anywhere, and by the very nature of things, the capital is a natural hub of activity along the eastern seaboard. New faces will probably come to the fore under the impetus of a new and finer era.[559]

Following Ickes's recommendation, the newspaper also encouraged all African American golfers "to conduct themselves creditably on the various courses; observing the rules of etiquette."[560]

Despite the promising June and July developments and the order issued by Ickes that all of the city's public courses were integrated, many of the city's African American golfers quickly became discouraged. In September 1941 the *Afro-American* reported,

> White hoodlums, resenting the appearance of colored players on the hitherto lily-white courses, have been making things uncomfortable for adventuresome golfers; effecting malicious little triflings [sic], like filling carburetors with sand, deflating tires, removing spark plugs and other such things while the owners were out on the course.[561]

In the fall of 1941, the UGA announced that in August of 1942 it would hold its annual national tournament in Washington, DC, sponsored by the Wake Robin Golf Club. As the members of the club moved forward with plans for the tournament, skeptics questioned the location and showed concern that the tournament might not "match the excellence" of the past tournaments in Los Angeles (1940) and Boston (1941). Since African Americans often lacked the funds to erect courses of their own, they typically depended on the use of municipal courses for their annual tournaments. The past UGA tournaments had been held in metropolitan areas far away from the Mason-Dixon Line[562] (see Table 1.4 on page 124). Washington, DC, was the first exception.

Several of the veteran competitors were not happy with the choice of Langston, since an eighteen-hole course was paramount and the reports of the nine-hole Langston course had been unflattering. When Edgar Brown learned of the UGA's decision, he planned to "fashion a decree from the Department of the Interior, or, better, Secretary Ickes, providing one of the swank courses, now used by white people, for the event."[563] As the *Afro-American* reported,

559 "Ickes Order Opens Golf Links to All," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 19 July 1941:19.
560 Ibid.
561 "Golfers Skeptical of UGA's nationals in DC, Next Year," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 13 September 1941:23.
562 Ibid.
563 Ibid.

> The part Washington golfers may play as hosts to the 1942 meet may be marred by Jim-Crow tactics in the very shadow of the supposed world capital for democracy. Most of the veterans frown on the jaunt to Washington and in order to smooth things out, the Washington hosts must start an early crusade against the evil that these veterans logically fear.[564]

In April 1942 the Wake Robin Golf Club announced that Secretary of the Interior Ickes had officially and personally approved the tournament on the eighteen-hole Anacostia Golf Course. The course was to be reserved for four days for exclusive use by the UGA for the tournament. The National Negro Council donated the first prize, known as the Harold L. Ickes championship trophy, to be awarded by the Secretary himself.[565]

As late as July 1942, less than a month before the scheduled tournament, Ickes refused to pull the permit for the tournament, despite pressure from the Southeast Council of Citizen's Associations (a white organization in the District of Columbia) to cancel the tournament and to avoid holding large meetings or sports contests in the capital parks for the duration of World War II.[566] The organization had developed a resolution, adopted by eight other citizens associations in Southeast Washington, that stated that the Anacostia Golf Course had been predominately used "either by reason of recognized regulations or by accepted custom" by whites and because the course was surrounded by communities that were predominately or exclusively white, the proposed UGA tournament would likely "jeopardize the public interest, the public welfare, and the peacefulness of these adjacent, surrounding communities of White residents and of the whole southeast sector of Washington, D.C." The council demanded that Ickes cancel the tournament.[567] Regardless of Ickes's support, the UGA canceled the tournament in early August, citing transportation problems and the Office of Defense Transportation's request that all national events be curtailed for the duration of the war.[568]

While the war may have been a justifiable reason given to the public for the cancelation of the national tournament, the ongoing racial tensions over the desegregation of the courses also played a large role. Officials in Ickes's office revealed that hundreds of Washington, DC, residents, and even Congressmen, had protested the use of the white courses by blacks and threatened to prevent the interracial use of the courses.[569] According to *Afro-American* journalist Ric Roberts, UGA golfers

564 Ibid.
565 "Ickes Okays National Golf Tournament," *Chicago Defender,* 25 April 1942:21.
566 "Secretary Ickes Refuses to Pull Jim-Crow Stunt Gives Okeh to Golf Meet," *Atlanta Daily World,* 26 July 1942:8.
567 Letter from Frank P. Randolph, secretary, and William J. Smith, president, of the Southeast Council of Citizens Associations, to Secretary of the Interior Ickes, July 1942, Record Group 49, Entry 10, Central Classified Files, Box 2828, Folder 601-17, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
568 "National Negro golf Meet Off; War, Cause," *Atlanta Daily World,* 3 August 1942:5.
569 "White Haters Curse, Stone DC Golfers," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 1 August 1942:24.

were never happy with the announcement that the tournament was to be held in Washington, DC, in the first place and many of them regarded the cancellation of the tournament as "a blessing in disguise." Roberts stated that the players "expected to encounter rather nasty attitudes at Anacostia or Potomac Park, despite the warm invitation of [the] liberal-minded Secretary of the Interior [Ickes]. Washington is cluttered up with Southerners who are frightened by the sight of a colored American done up in golfing garb, carrying an outlay of clubs …"[570]

Opposition surrounding the desegregation of the public golf courses continued. At the end of July 1942, 40 white adults, children, and soldiers, tried to drive four members of the Wake Robin Golf Club from the Anacostia Golf Course. The *Afro-American* reported that when the women reached the third green, the crowd picked up the player's balls to prevent them from playing and used sticks, stones, and abusive language to drive them from the course. Police arrived and allowed the women to complete their round, but the crowd continued to harass the women. Near the 13th fairway, a group of soldiers looked on, some reportedly shouting, "Send them on down to Georgia and they will be cared for the right way down there."[571]

In the wake of the cancellation of the UGA national tournament, the Wake Robin and Royal golf clubs decided to hold an "All-Out For Victory Tournament" at the Anacostia Golf Course in August 1942.[572] Mrs. Helen Harris and members of the Wake Robin and Royal golf clubs visited Superintendent of National Capital Parks Irving C. Root and requested the use of the Anacostia Golf Course for the victory tournament. Two days later, Harris wrote to Secretary of the Interior Ickes restating their request to use the Anacostia Golf Course on the same dates as the cancelled national tournament.[573]

The use of the Anacostia Golf Course for the tournament once again caused complaints, this time from concessionaire Severine G. Leoffler who claimed that it would result in financial loss to his company "because of the closing of it to others and the racial complications involved. Its use by Negro players is clearly in violation of the spirit of the lease under which we operated, since it has always been reserved for white players under that lease, which provides for the operations of a colored course at Langston." Leoffler also stated that "The present facilities at Langston are adequate for the number of Negro golfers in the District of Columbia, especially compared to the proportionately greater number of white

570 Ric Roberts, "All Up in Washington," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 22 August 1942:23.
571 "White Haters Curse, Stone DC Golfers," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 1 August 1942:24.
572 Ric Roberts, "All Up in Washington," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 22 August 1942:23.
573 Letter from Helen W. Harris to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, 17 July 1942, Record Group 49, Entry 10, Central Classified Files, Box 2828, Folder 601-17, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.



**Figure 1.37.** All-Out for Victory Tournament at Anacostia Golf Course, August 1942 (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University)

players."[574] In a memo to Ickes, Acting Director of the National Park Service Arthur E. Demaray (no longer under Cammerer, who was replaced by Newton B. Drury in 1940) wrote, "This Service believes that the granting of the request of the Wake Robin Club for permission to conduct a local golf tournament in Anacostia Park is in keeping with the policies of this Department and recommends that it be granted."[575]

Ickes ignored Leoffler's objections and on July 27, 1942, signed a letter to Harris, accepting her request to conduct the local tournament in lieu of the UGA national tournament at the Anacostia Golf Course.[576] The tournament, held at the Anacostia Golf Course on August 18-21 and covered by the *Washington Post*, attracted 64 golfers from across the country with Los Angeles golfer Howard Wheeler winning the men's tournament.[577] Participants in the men's division included Clyde Martin, former instructor to Joe Louis. Winners of the tournament took home part of $500 in war bonds, a prize praised by Ickes as speaking "well for the patriotism of the officials and members of your organizations."[578] During the tournament, 24 members of the US Park Police were assigned to duty at the golf course to protect the players and to prevent any disorder, but no major disturbances were reported[579] (Figure 1.37).

574 Severine G. Leoffler to Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, 18 July 1942, Harry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

575 Memo from Arthur E. Demaray to Harold L. Ickes, 22 July 1942, Record Group 49, Entry 10, Central Classified Files, Box 2828, Folder 601-17, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

576 Letter form Harold L. Ickes to Helen W. Harris, 27 July 1942, Record Group 49, Entry 10, Central Classified Files, Box 2828, Folder 601-17, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

577 "Howard Wheeler Wins DC Golf Championship," *Chicago Defender,* 29 August 1942:9; Memorandum for Secretary Ickes, 29 August 1942, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-5 (Anacostia Golf Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

578 "Wheeler Paces Negro Links Tourney Here," *Washington Pos*t, 20 August 1942; Letter form Harold L. Ickes to Helen W. Harris, 27 July 1942, Record Group 49, Entry 10, Central Classified Files, Box 2828, Folder 601-17, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

579 Memorandum for Secretary Ickes, 29 August 1942, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-

Ickes's attempts to desegregate the national parks may have continued to progress slowly had it not been for World War II. In April 1942 Archibald MacLeish, director of the federal government's information/propaganda agency called the Office of Facts and Figures, sent a confidential memorandum to Secretary Ickes about "Negro Morale," urging the Secretary and other high-ranking federal officials to take steps to improve African American's view of the war. In his letter, MacLeish urged that "Every effort should be made to advance as far as possible, under war conditions, the Negro's aspirations to be freed from discriminatory restrictions."

In May, Ickes responded to MacLeish's letter and wrote:

> For several years I have been working with leaders of the Negro race in Washington to open up national park and monument areas in the Southern States to Negroes. In the Shenandoah National Park we experimented with several picnic areas and have no serious complaints. I expect to extend this non-discriminatory policy to other areas as rapidly as possible.[580]

While the National Park Service removed many of the racial tags from the picnic areas and campgrounds in the southern parks, World War II intervened and many of the concessions at the national parks closed for the duration of the war. In December 1945 Ickes issued new general rules and regulations mandating that proprietors, owners, and operators of public facilities in National Park Service areas could not discriminate based on "race, creed, color, or national origin" (Federal Register, 8 December 1945, page 14866). Desegregation, however, took years to complete. Dining rooms at Shenandoah, for example, stayed segregated until 1947, and other facilities were segregated until as late as 1950.[581]

## DESEGREGATION AND THE FIGHT OVER THE CITY'S GOLF COURSES

Although African Americans in the District of Columbia were successful in receiving an official edict from the Department of the Interior that the city's public golf courses were integrated, black golfers across the country continued to face barriers. One of the earliest known legal cases against segregated golf courses occurred in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1942 when African American golfers sued Baltimore City to prove that the single course available to blacks was not equal to those open to whites. While the verdict upheld the African American golfers' claims that the

64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-5 (Anacostia Golf Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

580 Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 671-672,

581 Robinson & Associates, *Skyline Drive Historic District (Boundary Increase), Shenandoah National Park, Skyland, Lewis Mountain, and Big Meadows*, National Register Nomination (Washington, DC: National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 2002); Reed Engle, "Laboratory for Change," Resource Management Newsletter (January 1996), https://www.nps.gov/shen/learn/historyculture/segregation.htm.

courses were not equal, the city responded by making limited improvements to the nine-hole Carroll Park course and not desegregating the city's golf courses.[582] In 1943 the PGA codified its whites-only policy, one that it had maintained since its establishment in 1916, by updating its constitution and requiring that members to be of the "Caucasian race."[583]

Regardless of these obstacles, the popularity of golf among African Americans surged during the years following World War II. An increase in media coverage brought the game to an expanded audience and the participation in golf by black celebrities resulted in more exposure to the sport, particularly to those of the black middle class. Black servicemen during and after the war also had more access to golf courses on military bases, spurring an increase of players. African American golfers established several dozen new clubs in cities across the country, joining the clubs organized in the 1920s and 1930s that survived the Great Depression.[584] Sports writer Wendell Smith, a future Baseball Hall of Fame member, indicated that 1947 "would be a banner year for Negro golfers and the number of big tourneys being held across the country indicates that the game is growing by leaps and bounds … where the game once attracted the idle rich and ex-caddies, it now has lured the likes of Joe Louis, Jackie Robinson, Ike Williams, Ray Robinson, and many others … When such luminaries as those are bitten by the golf fever, others catch it too.[585]

While great strides were made in desegregating professional sports, with Jackie Robinson breaking the racial barrier in baseball in 1947 and basketball following in 1950 with players Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton and Earl Lloyd, African Americans still faced challenges in the sport of golf. After World War II black golfers faced two main challenges: the struggle to desegregate municipal golf courses, particularly in the South and Southwest, and the fight to provide black professionals the opportunity to complete in PGA tournaments. During the 1940s and early 1950s African American golfers in Baltimore, Miami, Houston, and Nashville filed lawsuits to force the desegregation of municipal golf courses, each adjudicated under the "separate but equal" doctrine. In each of these cases, the plaintiffs argued that the facilities provided for blacks were either nonexistent or not fully equal as facilities for whites. While the federal judges in each case agreed, they still instructed

582 James E. Wells, Geoffrey L. Buckley, and Christopher G. Boone, "Separate but Equal? Desegregating Baltimore's Golf Courses," *Geographical Review* 98 no. 2 (April 2008), 160-161.

583 Thomas B. Jones, "Caucasians Only: Solomon Hughes, the PGA, and the 1948 St. Paul Open Golf Tournament," *Minnesota History* (Winter 2003-2004):386.

584 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 148-150.

585 Wendell Smith. "Top Golfers In Pittsburgh Tourney." *The Pittsburgh Courier* (City Edition). 5 July 1947:14, quoted in Sanjeev Baidyaroy, "Blacks, Golf, and the Emerging Civil Rights Movement (Honors Thesis, Carnegie Mellon University, 2011), 11.

the municipality to provide equal facilities for African American golfers while maintaining the overall segregation policy.[586]

In Washington, DC, the struggle over the desegregation of recreation facilities, including the golf courses, intensified during the 1940s as part of the city's and Congress's attempt to consolidate the management of the city's parks and playgrounds. At the time, the local recreation facilities were under the jurisdiction of several different agencies (the District of Columbia Commissioners, the Department of Education, National Capital Parks, and the NCP&PC) that were involved in the administration and planning of the city's recreation areas, each of which had varying procedures, standards, and rules and regulations. Additionally, the city's rapid population growth in the years leading up to World War II, the removal of park areas for war purposes, and the lack of experienced staff due to war demands left the city with inadequate recreation facilities.[587]

In 1942 Congress passed Public Law 534 (H.R. 5075), establishing the Recreation Board of the District of Columbia. The law authorized the new board to "determine all questions of general policy," to appoint a superintendent of recreation, and to establish a Recreation Department to replace the Community Center and Playgrounds Department (created in 1939 when the Board of Education's Community Center Department merged with the District commissioner's Playground Department). Together the board and the superintendent were expected to design a "comprehensive program of public recreation" and work out agreements with the federal government and the Board of Education for using facilities under their jurisdiction.[588]

The seven-member board consisted of four community representatives appointed by the District Commissioners that represented parent/teacher, citizen, civic, and business interests of the city. The remaining three members were representatives from the Board of Education, the District Commissioners, and the Superintendent of the Office of National Capital Parks. Harry S. Wender, one of the community representatives, served as the chairman of the board for the first decade. An established lawyer and civic leader, Wender was involved in the Federation of Citizens' Associations, an umbrella white organization for citizens associations, and the Southwest Citizens Association (the same organization that protested the use of the Anacostia Golf Course for the UGA tournament).[589] The sole black member of the board was Alice C. Hunter, a community representative who was the President

586 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 152.
587 Fortner, *A History of the Municipal Recreation Department*, 247-252.
588 Ibid., 241-242.
589 Historically, "citizens associations" were white only and "civic associations" were either African American or integrated, see Martha H. Verbrugge and Drew Yingling, "The Politics of Play," *Washington History* 27 no. 2 (Fall 2015): 59.

of the Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations. Other key members included James E. Schwab, a real estate developer and staunch segregationist who chaired the Board of Trade's recreation committee, and Irving C. Root, the Superintendent of National Capital Parks who supported the Department of the Interior's non-discrimination policy.[590]

Civil Rights groups hoped that the passage of the Recreation Bill alone would eliminate segregation in the city's recreation system. With urging from the National Negro Council, the local NAACP, the National Negro Congress, and other organizations, the bill included an anti-bias section calling for a recreation board membership "chosen without regard to race, color, creed, or sex," which was championed by Congressman John F. Hunter and Senator Harold H. Burton of Ohio. Senator Theodore G. Bilbo and Congressman Aaron L. Ford of Mississippi and Congressman Felix Edward Hebert of Louisiana all opposed its inclusion in the bill. When passed, the African American press expected the bill to clear the way "for equal participation of Negroes and whites in all playgrounds, public parks, golf courses, tennis courts, picnic grounds and community centers" and eventually, the public school system.[591]

While the passed bill included the anti-bias section, it did not pave the way for the desegregation of the city's recreation areas as anticipated. In fact, the board continued to follow the long-instituted segregation policy of its predecessors and the NCP&PC. The board's original by-laws vaguely referred to "separate programs" organized by "regions" and followed the pattern of segregation practiced in public schools in the District since 1862.[592]

Efforts to establish the Recreation Board also coincided with the criticism and investigation of concessionaire Severine G. Leoffler's management of the courses by Congress in 1941, demonstrating Congress's and the city's parallel efforts in having the Recreation Board take over the management of the National Park Service's golf courses. In 1943 the Recreation Board proposed to take control of the golf courses when Leoffler's contract ended on December 31, stating that the 1942 Recreation Bill gave the board the authority to operate any public facility once an existing agreement expired.[593] In November 1943 the Department of the Interior turned down the board's offer, specifically refusing the board's condition that "the public use of these facilities shall be in accordance with the designa-

590 Verbrugge, "Exercising Civil Rights," 117.
591 "Expect End of Bias in D.C. Public Play Centers," *The Chicago Defender,* 2 May 1942:4; "Signal Victory Against Jimcrow in Washington," *Atlanta Daily World*, 23 April 1942:2.
592 Verbrugge, "Exercising Civil Rights," 117; "Interior May Revoke Playground Permits in Segregation Row," *Washington Evening Star,* 13 June 1945:A13.
593 "Recreation Board Considers Operating Pools, Golf Courses," *Washington Evening Star,* 11 August 1943:B1.

tions made by the NCP&PC in relation to the DC Recreation System Plan" – the designations that instituted segregated recreation facilities. While not discussed openly by the board, one of the driving factors of the board's condition was the current Department of the Interior policy of unsegregated use of the public golf courses. The *Afro-American* reported that if the Recreation Board managed the golf courses, "there is little reason to believe that the golf courses would not be operated under the same Jim Crow system as are most of the facilities under the control of the board."[594]

In November 1943 the Recreation Board declined to manage the golf courses, providing two reasons for dropping their pursuit. First, the board claimed that they lacked the funds to purchase Leoffler's remaining investment in the golf courses. Secondly, the board believed it had the authority under Public Law 534 to determine policy and disagreed with the Department of the Interior's insistence that the board was not permitted to set up management policies without first securing approval from the Interior Department (i.e. policies mandating segregated recreation areas).[595] On January 1, 1944, the National Park Service and Leoffler signed a new five-year contract for the golf courses.[596]

Although the transfer of the golf courses was no longer being considered for the time being, the Department of the Interior and the Recreation Board continued to clash over the segregation of the city's federal recreation areas. In 1943 the National Park Service transferred the responsibility of issuing permits for the use of various federal facilities throughout National Capital Parks to the Recreation Board. In June 1945 the Department of the Interior threatened to revoke the Recreation Department's right to issue permits because of the board's continued racial segregation policies that directly conflicted with the Interior Department's policy of non-discrimination. At this time, the Recreation Board had clarified its racial designation in its bylaws with the explicit language: "Recreation programs for white residents shall be conducted in regions A-F and in designated city-wide centers. Recreation programs for Negro residents shall be conducted in regions G-K and in designated city-wide centers," following the areas adopted in the NCP&PC's Recreation System Plan.[597]

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[594] "Scheme to Kill Democracy on Golf Courses Blocked," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 20 November 1943:16.

[595] "DC Refuses to Handle Golf Courses," *Washington Post,* 10 November 1943:B1; District of Columbia Recreation Board, "Compendium of Significant Factors Relating to the Transfer of the Operation of the Public Golf Courses to the District of Columbia Recreation Board," 18 January 1951, Harry S. Wender Papers, MS 379, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

[596] "Leoffler Gets Public Links for 5 Years," *Washington Post* ,1 January 1944:10.

[597] Verbrugge, "Exercising Civil Rights," 118; "Interior May Revoke Playground Permits in Segregation Row," *Washington Evening Star*, 13 June 1945:A13; "200 Jam Hearing to Protest Play Area Segregation Legality," *Washington Evening Star,* 15 August 1945:B1; "Play Area Segregation Policy Adopted, 5 to 2 by Recreation Board, *Washington Evening Star,* 12 September

While some white citizens and members of Congress hailed the change, civil rights advocates condemned the continuance and classification of racial discrimination by the board. Its two biggest opponents were the Department of the Interior, with its nondiscrimination policy that conflicted with the board's bylaws, and the newly formed Citizens' Committee Against Segregation in Recreation, who contended that the board did not have the legal authority to segregate the city's play areas.[598]

Caught in an attack on its administrative structure, the Recreation Board responded that "Our policy has been that handed down to us by law and tradition. If it is not what most of the people want, it is for them to say so."[599] On the offensive, the Recreation Board openly criticized the Department of the Interior's non-segregation policy, claiming it was inconsistent. While the Department of the Interior threatened to withdraw the use of its recreation areas from the Recreation Board unless they were opened to all races, the Department had not yet issued a directive for the unrestricted use of its swimming pools. Additionally, while the Department of the Interior directed that the golf courses were non-segregated, it had not issued a policy insisting on unrestricted uses of shower rooms and other facilities at the golf courses. Harry S. Wender answered the Department of the Interior's threat with the question, "How would it be possible for the board to operate its program on a semi-segregated basis?"[600] Assistant Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman responded to the board's inconsistency question by stating that the Department of the Interior and "intelligent colored leaders" agreed that a slow, gradual approach to integration was appropriate and that "well-informed colored persons have called on me and expressed that conviction. They were in accord with our approach to the golf and swimming problems."[601]

On August 14, 1945, 200 citizens attended a meeting of the Recreation Board to protest the legality of the board's segregation policy. Several speakers testified against the argument by the Recreation Board that it was legally required to segregate its facilities. One speaker noted that "we are entitled to look to governmental agencies in Washington, the National Capital, to set an example of decent and democratic behavior for the nation." Another argued, "It is ironic, indeed, in a city set aside as the seat of the United States Government, that a public board should have a policy directly contrary to the established policy of United States

1945:B7.

598 African American physical educator, writer, civil rights activist, and community leader Edwin Bancroft Henderson formed the Citizens' Committee in 1945 to force the owner of the city's sports arena, Migiel Uline, to fully integrate the Uline Arena, see Dennis Gildea, "Shirley Povich and the Tee Shot," in *DC Sports: The National Capital at Play*, Chris Elzey and David K. Wiggins, eds., 81-82.

599 "Play Area Segregation Protests to be Heard by Board Tuesday," *Washington Evening Star*, 8 August 1945:B1.

600 Ibid.

601 "Play Area Legality Defended by Recreation Chief," *Washington Evening Star*, 10 August 1945:B1.

Government agencies."[602] Despite these objections, the Recreation Board formally adopted the segregation language in its bylaws and only two members, Irving C. Root, and Alice C. Hunter, cast dissenting votes.[603]

In response to the change in the board's bylaws, Acting Secretary of the Interior Abe Fortas wrote to Wender, expressing his disappointment and concern that they might be "construed as applicable to the facilities subject to the policy control of this Department." Fortas wrote,

> A policy of non-segregation has been in effect in areas under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of the Interior for a considerable period of time and has operated satisfactorily, within the District of Columbia as well as outside thereof. This harmonious use of park areas by members of both races has demonstrated the practicability of adherence to the principle of equal rights which is affirmed by the Federal Constitution. I fail to see any good reason why that American principle should not be applied to the use of recreational facilities in the Nation's capital regardless of jurisdictional distinctions.[604]

Until Leoffler's contract for the city's golf courses expired, the Recreation Board focused its attention on the Interior Department's six public swimming pools, including those in East Potomac Park and Anacostia Park, which were managed under a concessionaire contract with Government Services, Inc. or GSI (the former Welfare and Recreation Association). GSI had a clause in its contract forbidding racial segregation, but in practice the pools were segregated. Four pools were considered "white" (Anacostia, McKinley, Takoma Park, and East Potomac Park); blacks tended to use Banneker and Francis. The Recreation Board operated two city pools at Rosedale and Georgetown, both for white children only. Confusing matters even more, the Department of Recreation held free swimming programs at the Department of the Interior's pools in the mornings before they were open to the public, which it operated on a segregated basis. Accusing GSI of financial mismanagement and negligent supervision, the Recreation Board tried to take over full responsibility of all the swimming pools in the District in 1946. The Department of the Interior and the local NAACP recognized that municipal control would mean racial segregation and the Interior Department rejected the board's attempt and awarded another five-year contract with GSI.[605]

602 "200 Jam Hearing to Protest Play Area Segregation Legality," *Washington Evening Star,* 15 August 1945:B1.

603 Verbrugge, "Exercising Civil Rights," 118; "Interior May Revoke Playground Permits in Segregation Row," *Washington Evening Star,* 13 June 1945:A13; "200 Jam Hearing to Protest Play Area Segregation Legality," *Washington Evening Star,* 15 August 1945:B1; "Play Area Segregation Policy Adopted, 5 to 2 by Recreation Board, *Washington Evening Star,* 12 September 1945:B7.

604 Acting Secretary of the Interior Abe Fortas to Harry S. Wender, Chairman District of Columbia Recreation Board, 10 July 1945, Entry 10 Central Classified files, 1907-1949, Box 2827, Folder 601-12, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

605 "Recreation Instructors Quit When Negroes Enter McKinley Pool," *Washington Evening Star*, 27 June 1949:A-8; Verbrugge, "Exercising Civil Rights," 106, 119.

The use of the city's golf courses was at the time similar to the swimming pools – while they were officially desegregated, social pressures, custom, and white resistance forced blacks to mostly if not exclusively use Langston, which was also located in a predominately African American section of the city. In 1945 Leoffler reported that only four or five African American players used courses other than Langston in the past year.[606] Illustrating the uncertainty surrounding the integration of the golf courses, the *Washington Post* reported that when the Fort Dupont course opened in 1948, it, along with three other courses, was for "white residents." Langston was called out as a "nine-hole course for Negroes."[607] Two men later wrote to the editor of the newspaper claiming that this statement was "both erroneous and misleading." The men stated that during the previous summer, they and two friends attempted to play Rock Creek Golf Course and were able to play the first four holes of the course uninterrupted "except for a few derogatory remarks thrown our way." On the fifth hole the group encountered a "well organized plot arranged to discourage" the men from playing. After several threats, the men abandoned their game. The men later arranged for a meeting with the Department of the Interior for clarification and were told that the public golf courses in the District were located on federal property and therefore were "operated for the enjoyment of all citizens with no discrimination." The men reportedly went back and played the Rock Creek course on several occasions without incident.[608]

The Recreation Board once again attempted to take over the management of the golf courses after Leoffler's contract expired in December 1948, this time using the same tactic it tried for the swimming pools—asserting incompetency of the concessionaire. Congressman Lucius Mendel Rivers of South Carolina, an ardent segregationist, initiated a new congressional investigation into the city's public golf courses and halted the issuance of a new contract for the management of the golf courses.[609] In the meantime, Leoffler continued to operate the golf courses without a contract.[610]

The segregation issue between the Department of the Interior, Recreation Board, and the NCP&PC came to a head in 1949. In April Secretary of the Interior Julius A. Krug, who succeeded Ickes as Secretary of the Interior (March 1946–December 1949) and "advocated nondiscrimination at federal recreational sites around the District and vigorously opposed the city's policy of racial segregation at [recreation] facilities" during his tenure, wrote a strongly worded letter to President Harry S. Truman, explaining the situation he faced with the Recreation Board and

606 "Play Area Segregation Legality Defended by Recreation Chief," *Washington Evening Star,* 10 August 1945:B1.
607 "New Nine-Hole Golf Course Ready by Memorial Day," *Washington Post,* 7 March 1948:L6.
608 "Public Golf Courses," *Washington Post,* 9 May 1948:B4.
609 "Leoffler Loan 'Assures' Him Links Contract," *Washington Post,* 14 March 1949:1.
610 "Recreation Unit to Meet Tuesday on Krug Offer," *Washington Evening Star,* 2 July 1949:A12.

the NCP&PC and that their policies contrasted with the President's civil rights policy.[611] President Truman decided to make civil rights a national issue in 1946 when he established "The President's Committee on Civil Rights" and took a great political risk in February 1948 with a daring civil rights speech to a joint session of Congress, stating that "We shall not … finally achieve the ideals for which this Nation was founded so long as any American suffers discrimination as a result of his race, or religion, or color, or the land of origin of his forefathers." Although little civil rights legislation was enacted during his administration, Truman's efforts led to executive orders prohibiting discrimination in federal employment and the military in 1948.[612]

In 1948 Truman's committee published a report entitled *Segregation in Washington: A Report of the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital* that gave an honest and scathing account of segregation in the city and its impact. The 91-page report began by focusing on diplomatic implications of discrimination in the District and argued that "Few Americans appreciate what a shock Washington can be to visitors from abroad. It is to them, even more than to most of us, the symbol of America."[613] The report went on to specifically address the issue of segregation in the city's recreation areas. Calling to attention the policies of National Park Service-administered parks, the report stated, "There are still areas in Washington, beyond the reach of the District Recreation Board, where the American flag does not stand for race bigotry." These areas included the tennis courts, located on federal parkland, "where dozens of Negro and white adults can be seen playing tennis, often together" and Rock Creek Park, where organizations held "Large inter-racial picnics."[614]

While commending the federally controlled areas, the report vilified the activities of the Recreation Board, who had been "conducting an all-out campaign to gain control of all Federal recreation facilities in the District of Columbia with the intent of operating them on a Jim Crow basis. So far, these plans have been blocked by the Department of the Interior. However, the Board is now trying to get the properties transferred to it by an Act of Congress."[615]

611 Verbrugge, "Exercising Civil Rights," 105.
612 National Park Service, "Harry S. Truman and Civil Rights," accessed 1 November 2017 at http://www.trumanlibrary.org/dbq/res/civilrights/TrumanCivilRights_NatlPark.pdf, Harry S. Truman's Special Message to the Congress on Civil Rights, 2 February 1948, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=13006.
613 Kenesaw M. Landis, *Segregation in Washington: A Report on the National Committee on Segregation in The Nation's Capital* (Chicago: The National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital: 1948), 7; Pritchett, "A Local and National Story."
614 Landis, *Segregation in Washington*, 84.
615 Ibid.

The report received considerable national and local attention. The *New York Times* reported that Chairman Wender thought the report contained untrue statements and that "There are no plans to change the operation of the District playgrounds to a non-segregated basis."[616] Wender responded in the spring of 1949 with his own 12,000-word report on the status of segregation in Washington along with recommendations. The report notably did not include the question of segregated playgrounds, which he planned on covering in a separate report.[617]

In March 1949 the Recreation Board also prepared a report to the Department of the Interior entitled "Analysis of Public Golf Operation and Park Concessions in the District of Columbia" that provided a "thorough study of the golf course contract, annual financial statements, personal experiences and observations, and related information." In the report the Recreation Board argued that "while a few Negroes had played on the courses at Rock Creek and Potomac Park, use of indoor facilities [i.e. locker rooms] at the courses were reported to be unavailable to them and they were not encouraged to use the courses." The Board also stated that in Leoffler's contract there was "no requirement made on the concessionaire to operate the courses on a non-segregated basis, and for at least a part of the time during the past five years the unavailability to Negroes of the indoor facilities continued."[618]

On March 17, 1949, the *Evening Star* reported that the "secret report" had not yet been released to the public as the Department of the Interior prepared a rebuttal.[619] An internal reply from the Department of the Interior dated March 10, 1949, adamantly denied the board's claims and called the 21-page statement full of "half-truths, misconceptions and erroneous statements concerning the relationship between the board and the Interior Department, the provisions and background of the Recreation Board Act, the use of the facilities by all the people, the application of the Department's non-segregation policy, the ownership of the golf courses, and the alleged benefits which could be obtained for the public" if the Recreation Board operated the National Capital Parks golf courses and other recreation facilities, which were being operated by the Interior Department either directly or by concessionaires.[620] Specifically, the Department of the Interior stated:

616 "Attack on 'Jim Crow' Stirs Capital," *New York Times,* 19 December 1948:E7.

617 "Wender's Report on Segregation to be Released," *Washington Post,* 7 March 1949:9; Harry S. Wender, *An Analysis of Recreation and Segregation in the District of Columbia,* May 1949, Special Collections Research Center, George Washington University, Washington, DC.

618 DC Recreation Board, *Analysis of Public Golf Operation and Park Concessions in the District of Columbia*, 1949, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2849, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

619 "Recreation Board Sets Parley with Davidson on Golf Course Report," *Washington Evening Star,* 17 March 1949:12.

620 Department of the Interior, "Reply to the District of Columbia Recreation Board's Analysis and Criticism of the Public Golf Course Operations," 10 March 1949, Record Group 79,

> This Department cannot and will not permit racial discrimination to be the basis for the use of our park lands.
>
> The Recreation Board attempts to cast mud at this Department by charging that we, ourselves, have made many facilities on the golf courses unavailable to the colored people. This is entirely untrue. The facilities of the National Capital Parks are available to any and all citizens who care to avail themselves of the facilities as long as they abide by the rules and regulations.[621]

The Department also responded that in addition to a statement in Leoffler's contract that required him to operate the concession in a manner that abides by the objective for which the parks were created and established, Leoffler was "aware of the Department's non-segregation policy and we know of no instance in which he has failed to comply with the requirements of the contract and the Department's policy."[622]

Efforts toward the desegregation of the District's recreation facilities finally made some headway by the end of March. For the first time in its seven-year existence, the board made a formal vote on its racial policy and announced unanimous approval to operate the public golf courses on a non-segregated basis. Wender stated that the persistent press reports that the segregation was the main reason the Department of the Interior would not relinquish its control of the golf courses pushed the need for the vote. Wender said, "I certainly thought I made it clear in earlier discussions with the Interior Department that we'd follow its racial policy. This unanimous action should eliminate any ghosts, take out all ifs, ands, buts and make our intensions crystal clear."[623] Yet the Department of the Interior did not think the ruling went far enough since it only applied to the golf courses and not to all of the recreation areas and activities managed by the Recreation Board. Following the vote, a spokesman for the Department stated, "The action of the board is all right as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough to meet the situation."[624] Despite the objections of the Department of the Interior, the Recreation Board released its "highly controversial" report on the operation of the golf courses to the public in early April.[625]

On April 4, 1949, Secretary of the Interior Krug reached out to President Truman to express his frustration with the Recreation Board. Krug wrote,

Entry 10, Box 2849, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

621 Ibid.

622 Department of the Interior, "Reply to the District of Columbia Recreation Board's Analysis and Criticism of the Public Golf Course Operations," 10 March 1949, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2849, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

623 "Nonsegregation on Publix Voted by Recreation Board," *Washington Post,* 24 March 1949:1.

624 "D.C. Golf Talks Hit Snag Again Over Racial Issue," *Washington Post,* 25 March 1949:1.

625 "Releases 'Secret Report': Recreation Board Says Interior Neglects Golf Responsibility," *Washington Post,* 21 April 1949:18.

> As you know, the policy of the Department of the Interior is to administer recreational areas within its jurisdiction on a non-segregated, non-discriminatory basis. For a long time now, this policy has been seriously undermined in the District of Columbia by the policy of racial segregation which the District Recreation Board pursues on park lands assigned to it for the purposes of supervised recreation programs, as well as on areas assigned by other land-owning agencies … Since parklands within the District are associated in the public mind with this Department, I find myself inevitably identified with practices and policies which I do not approve and I know you do not approve since they are directly contrary to your Civil Rights Program …
>
> The National Capital affords an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the practicability and justice of the Civil Rights Program to the entire Nation. This cannot be accomplished, however, if the policy of racial segregation is permitted to dominate the use of public recreational facilities. The unwillingness of the District of Columbia Recreation Board to adhere to such a policy has been emphasized by its present operation of a segregated system and its thinly veiled efforts to extend the system through its claim to jurisdiction over areas in the Federal park system.[626]

Along with his letter, Krug included drafts of letters written to the NCP&PC and the District Commissioners from the President, urging them to change their policy of segregation.[627]

Krug's actions coincided with efforts by Congressman Arthur G. Klein of New York between the fall of 1948 and spring of 1949. Klein wrote to Ulysses S. Grant III, who had been promoted to Major General in 1943 and was serving as the Chairman of the NCP&PC, and specifically asked him to explain the commission's authority to dictate a policy of segregation to the Recreation Board. General Grant's reply was evasive and referred back to the law establishing the dual school system in the District, which did not satisfy Klein. Frustrated by Grant's equivocal answers, Klein wrote in March 1949,

> All I asked was whether or not the National Capital Park & Planning Commission had assumed the authority to lay down any such requirement [of racial segregation]. Since you will not state your position bluntly and briefly, I am obliged to state it for you as it emerges from the maze of words with which you have surrounded it.
>
> While acknowledging that your Commission has neither the power nor the authority to do so, you admit you have adopted a system of racial designation as to the use of certain facilities in your "Recreation Plan for the District of Columbia." The answer to my question, therefore, is "yes." I am neither impressed nor satisfied with your attempts to clothe a purely administrative decision with the sanctity of "precedents." Since you admit responsibility for having incorporated

626 Secretary of the Interior Krug to President Truman, 4 April 1949, Truman Library, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/trumancivilrights/documents/B19_08-03_01.jpg.

627 Ibid.

> these racial designations into your plan, I call upon you and your commission to remove them immediately.[628]

On April 29, 1949, the NCP&PC finally relented and removed all racial designations from its Recreation System Plan.[629]

Strengthening the Department's position, Assistant Secretary of the Interior C. Girard Davidson issued a regulation on May 20, 1949, formally stating that the swimming pools and other public facilities in the District of Columbia under its jurisdiction will be operated on a non-segregated basis. The regulation of National Capital Parks (36 CFR 3.45) stated:

> The operator of any public facility or accommodation in a park area and its employees, including the District of Columbia Recreation Board and its personnel, while using park areas are prohibited from (a) publicizing the facilities, accommodations or any activity conducted therein in a manner that would directly or inferentially reflect upon or question the acceptability of any person or persons because of race, creed, color, or national origin; and (b) discriminating by segregation otherwise against any persons or persons because of race, creed, color, or national origin by refusing to furnish such person or persons any accommodation, facility, service, or privilege offered to or enjoyed by the general public.[630]

Several days later, the *Evening Star* reported that within the last year or so the Department of the Interior had instructed Government Services, Inc., who operated the pools, to eliminate segregation at its swimming pools. Up to that point, no racial disturbances had been reported, but "This may be due in part, at least, to the admirable conduct of colored citizens themselves who had shown dignified forbearance in not attempting to exploit conspicuously every newly won privilege."[631]

In June 1949 Congressman Lucius Mendel Rivers of South Carolina submitted a bill (H.R. 5071) that would prevent the Interior Department from renewing its contract with Leoffler and transfer control of the golf courses to the Recreation Department. Supporting the transfer was an audit of Leoffler by Government Accounting Office and the Department of the Interior that revealed irregularities in the concessionaire's bookkeeping.[632] Eleanor Roosevelt later commented on

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628 Congressman Arthur G. Klein to General Grant, 7 March 1949, Also see various correspondence between Congressman Kline, General Grant, and Secretary Krug between October 1948 and April 1949, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2847, National Archives, College Park, Maryland; Green, *A Secret City*, 290.

629 Fortner, *A History of the Municipal Recreation Department*, 314.

630 Acting Director Arthur E. Demaray to Hon. E. Jacobson, Assistant Attorney General, State of Texas, 2 February 1950, Record Group 49, Accession No. 64A-110, Box 3, Folder 1535 (Race Discrimination & Segregation), Federal Record Center, Suitland, Maryland; Title 36 – Parks and Forests, Chapter 1 – National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Part 3 – National Capital Parks Regulations (36 CFR 3.45), Federal Register 14 No. 108 (7 June 1949), 3051.

631 "Segregation in Recreation," *Washington Evening Star*, 24 May 1949:A-10.

632 "House Group Votes to End Leoffler's Golf Concession," *Washington Post,* 9 June 1949:1.

the bill and the potential transfer in a May 1950 edition of her newspaper column "My Day" and said, "It sounds innocent, but what it really does is to place in the hands of officials the power to enforce racial segregation. This seems a pity in the nation's capital."[633] While the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands approved the bill, the full committee never acted and the bill was never passed.[634]

The following month Secretary of the Interior Krug made a proposal that would turn over all of the Interior's recreation facilities in the District to the Recreation Board. Krug's proposal would give the board complete control of the facilities, but in return the board would be required to remove the language from its bylaws that specified segregated play areas and substitute language adopted in its June meeting that stated:

> The board will make every possible and realistic effort toward the removal of racial segregation in public recreation in such sequence and at such rate of progression as may be consistent with the public interest, public order and effective administration.[635]

Even if the board changed its bylaws, the *Evening Star* reported that it was likely that the six pools that were currently operated by GSI for the Department of the Interior would become segregated once the Recreation Board took over.

Krug's offer came shortly after he ordered the indefinite closure of the Anacostia Pool due to racial disturbances, which made the Interior Department rethink turning over the pools to the board.[636] On June 25, 1949, a month after the Department of the Interior officially announced the non-segregation policy of its swimming pools, around 30 black youth attempted to use the Anacostia pool, which up until that time had been exclusively used by white patrons. Lifeguards "refused to work" in fear that "trouble may start" if the African Americans were admitted. Consequently, the manager closed the pool for several hours. For the next seven days, and after "failure of the Metropolitan Park Police to curb rowdyism [sic] and race rioting," Secretary Krug announced the closure of the pool. It did not reopen until the following summer.[637]

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633 Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day, 17 May 1950," The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Digital Edition (2008), accessed 22 November 2016, http://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/.

634 "Recreation Unit Called to Confer on Golf Contract," *Washington Evening Star,* 16 January 1951:B1; "Compendium of Significant Factors Relating to the Transfer of the Operation of the Public Golf Courses to the District of Columbia Recreation Board," 18 January 1951, Harry S. Wender Papers, MS 379, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

635 "Recreation Unit to Meet Tuesday on Krug Offer," *Washington Evening Star,* 2 July 1949:A12.

636 Ibid.

637 Verbrugge and Yingling, "The Politics of Play," 57; "Close Pool After Riot," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 9 July 1949:1; "Louis Among Golfers Due for National," *Washington Post,* 20 August 1950:C4.

Because the immediate desegregation of the swimming pools was questioned in wake of the riots, Krug's July 1949 proposal extended to all of the Interior Department's facilities except the swimming pools.[638] Finally, on August 26, 1949, the Department and the Recreation Board signed a basic agreement which included the authorization of the board to operate the public golf courses and other facilities on a non-segregated basis.[639] However, before the board could take over the contract, it needed the funds to buy out Leoffler's investment in the courses.

Oscar L. Chapman (1949-1953) succeeded Krug as Secretary of the Interior under President Harry S. Truman in December 1949 and continued to promote the nondiscrimination policy implemented by Ickes and furthered by Krug. In March 1950 Chapman wrote to Thurgood Marshall (at the time Marshall was the special assistant council for the NAACP in New York City) in response to Marshall asking about the experience of the Department in operating federal facilities on a non-segregated basis in the District of Columbia. Chapman wrote,

> I am happy to state that, under our policy of non-segregation, white and colored people have for years enjoyed our parks, golf courses, tennis courts, concerts, and festivals, and other recreational facilities and activities. White and colored people eat in our cafeterias and snack bars and are lodged at our Tourist Camp without distinction. They work together in harmony in this Department, and participate without friction in activities sponsored by our Departmental Recreation Association.
>
> The only difficulty we have experienced was in connection with one of the six swimming pools under the jurisdiction of this Department, all of which of course are non-segregated. I am convinced that the great majority of our citizens deplored the disturbances created by a few individuals at this one pool, and that this majority can be relied on to make our just policy work.[640]

In July 1950 Secretary Chapman promoted Edward J. Kelly as superintendent of National Capital Parks, succeeding Irving C. Root. Chapman said that Kelly's promotion did not involve "any change whatsoever" to the Interior Department's policy on segregation and recreation facilities. The *Washington Post* reported that "It was understood that Root had misgivings about the department's announced intention to open its six swimming pools here on a non-segregated basis. Sources close to the Interior also felt that Kelly would be more vocal in his support of Interior's policy than was Root."[641]

638 "Recreation Unit to Meet Tuesday on Krug Offer," *Washington Evening Star,* 2 July 1949:A12; "Agreement Opens Way to Transfer to District Rule; Pools Left Out," *Washington Post,* 19 August 1949:B1.

639 District of Columbia Recreation Department, "Compendium of Significant Factors Relating to Transfer of Operation of the Public Golf Courses to the District of Columbia Recreation Board," 18 January 1951, Harry S. Wender Papers, 1921-1965, MS 379, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

640 Oscar L. Chapman to Thurgood Marshall, 31 March 1950, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-110, Box 3, Folder 1525 (Race Discrimination and Segregation), Federal Record Center, Suitland, Maryland.

641 "Edward J. Kelly Is Promoted to Top Capital Parks Position," *Washington Post*, 29 July

After eight years of waiting and in the midst of the fight for integrated recreation facilities, the UGA's annual national tournament was finally held in Washington, DC, in 1950. Cosponsored by the Wake Robin Golf Club and the Royal Golf Club, the tournament was held at East Potomac Park Golf Course in late August.[642] Participants in the men's professional tournament included Charles "Charlie" Sifford, who went on to win the UGA national tournament six times and became the first African American to play on the PGA tour, and Howard Wheeler, who also won the UGA tournament six times and qualified for the US Open in 1950 and 1951. Winner of the 1950 men's tournament at East Potomac Park was Theodore "Ted" Rhodes, instructor to Joe Louis and the second African American to play in the US Open in 1948. Amateur Ann Gregory, who later became the first black woman to enter a USGA event, won the women's tournament. The tournament attracted 246 entries—40 pros, 171 amateurs, and 35 women – the second largest in the history of the UGA tournament at that time.[643]

The Recreation Board continued its quest to take over the golf course contract and asked Congress for a $275,000 loan needed to repay Leoffler for construction advances and stock inventory as well as to supply a revolving fund for the operation of the city's golf courses. Although Leoffler had been operating without a contract, in March 1950 the Department of the Interior awarded Leoffler a new one-year contract to operate the golf courses while the board attempted to secure funding. Concurrently the Recreation Board rejected the Interior Department's offer to turn over the management of its six public swimming pools if the board would operate them on a non-segregated basis. The motion severed the board's last connection with the pools – the Recreation Board also ordered the discontinuation of the morning swim lessons that it ran at the six pools. The board also turned down a recommendation that it eliminate segregation on all of the playgrounds based on the successful interracial use of two playgrounds the previous summer.[644]

The Recreation Board's repeated requests for funding to acquire the golf courses continued into 1951, prompting the need to once again renew Leoffler's contract. The new five-year contract included a clause stating that the Recreation Board could take over the golf courses during the next two years if it could pay Leoffler for his remaining investment in the courses.[645] In the interim, the Recreation

1950:A1.

642 While letters from Superintendent of National Capital Parks Irving C. Root implied that the tournament was to take place in Anacostia Park, newspaper accounts state that the tournament occurred at East Potomac. Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-5 (Anacostia Golf Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

643 "Ted Rhodes, Ann Gregory Win Golf Titles," *Chicago Defender,* 2 September 1950:17.

644 "Board Asks Fund to Run Golf Courses," *Washington Post,* 12 April 1950:1.

645 "Recreation Unit Called to Confer on Golf Contract," *Washington Evening Star,* 16 January

Board kept to its new bylaws, formed a Transition Committee, and began the gradual desegregation of its playground facilities. Yet in the three years following the announcement of the policy change, racial designations had only disappeared from 9 of 137 playgrounds operated by the board. As explained by Constance McLaughlin Green in *Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (1967), "At that rate, one Negro observed, playground desegregation would take 40 years."[646]

In January 1953 President Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed Douglas McKay (1953-1956) as Secretary of the Interior. Unsure if the new Secretary's policy on segregation would be the same as his predecessors, National Capital Parks Superintendent Edward J. Kelly wrote to the Director of the National Park Service Conrad Wirth in February 9, 1953, asking "whether or not it is Secretary McKay's wish that I continue to support the general policy of non-segregation" at the next meeting of the Recreation Board.[647] Secretary of the Interior McKay responded to Wirth and said, "Your action was absolutely correct that there should be no doubt in anyone's mind as to what our attitude will be now in regard to the Department's position with the President's clear-cut statement in his State of the Union Message. I think our procedure should be to go right along attending to our business as though we never heard of segregation."[648] President Eisenhower, in his first State of the Union address on February 2, 1953, had stated, "I propose to use whatever authority exists in the office of the President to end segregation in the District of Columbia, including the Federal Government …"[649]

Four months after Eisenhower's State of the Union, the Supreme Court ruled on *District of Columbia v. John R. Thompson Co., Inc.*, finally ending racial discrimination in public accommodations in the District of Columbia. Brought to the court by Thurgood Marshall and spearheaded by Mary Church Terrell, the ruling found that the decades-old provisions from the late 19th century that had disappeared from the record books remained "presently enforceable." While it did not overrule *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Thompson* sent a signal that the justices rejected the culture of Jim Crow. Following the ruling, Washington restaurants and movie theaters finally began to yield to integration.[650]

1951:B1.

646 Green, *Secret City*, 293.

647 Edward J. Kelly to Conrad Wirth, 9 February 1953, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-110, Box 3, Folder 1525 (Race Discrimination and Segregation), Federal Record Center, Suitland, Maryland.

648 Douglas McKay to Conrad Wirth, 1 March 1953, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-110, Box 3, Folder 1525 (Race Discrimination and Segregation), Federal Record Center, Suitland, Maryland.

649 President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, 2 February 1953, https://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/all_about_ike/speeches/1953_state_of_the_union.pdf.

650 Joan Quigley, "How D.C. Ended Segregation a Year Before Brown v. Board of Education,"

It was not until the Supreme Court's ruling on *Bolling v. Sharpe* on May 17, 1954, which invalidated the segregation of the District's schools and was given the same day as the court's ruling on *Brown v. Board of Education*, that the DC Recreation Board changed its policy and desegregated all of its recreation areas. As of May 18, 1954, the *Evening Star* reported that 38 of 125 playgrounds then under the board's jurisdiction were no longer segregated following its 1949 policy of gradual desegregation.[651]

The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling marked a turning point for many of the country's municipal golf courses. In 1955, the US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit applied the principles of the ruling to a case that involved public beaches and bathhouses near or in Baltimore. In *Dawson v. Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City*, the court specifically referred to the *Brown* decision in rejecting the argument that supported the separate but equal policy. The court's opinion stated,

> It is now obvious that segregation cannot be justified as a means to preserve the public peace merely because the tangible facilities furnished to one race are equal to those furnished to the other … racial segregation in recreational activities can no longer be sustained as proper exercise of the police power of the State; for if that power cannot be invoked to sustain racial segregation in schools, where attendance is compulsory and racial friction may be apprehended from the enforced commingling of the races, it cannot be sustained with respect to public beach and bathhouse facilities, the use of which is entirely optional.[652]

The court declared the segregation of the facilities unconstitutional and the Supreme Court affirmed the decision. Both the *Brown* and the *Dawson* decisions led to several federal rulings that outlawed racial discrimination on municipal golf courses in the south, including *Holmes v. Atlanta* in 1955 where the Supreme Court ruled against Atlanta's "separate but equal" law in public golf courses.[653] Ten years after *Brown*, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which ended segregation in public accommodations and public facilities such as municipal parks, finally led to the desegregation of all public golf courses.[654]

In 1961, after efforts by Charlie Sifford and others, the PGA finally rescinded its "Caucasian Clause," allowing blacks to become members of the PGA and paving the way for players such as Lee Elder, Calvin Peete, Jim Dent, Jim Thorpe, and Pete Brown. A major milestone in the desegregation of professional golf occurred

*Washington Post,* 15 January 2016.

651 "District Ends Racial Bars at Playgrounds," *Washington Evening Star,* 19 May 1954:A25.

652 Quoted in Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 152.

653 African American Registry, "Segregation on the Golf Course: Holmes v. Atlanta," accessed 7 September 2016, http://www.aaregistry.org/historic_events/view/segregation-golf-course-holmes-v-atlanta-ruled.

654 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 152-153.

in 1975 when Lee Elder played in the prestigious Masters Golf Tournament at Augusta National, becoming the first African American to play in the tournament. Fifteen years later in 1990, the PGA forced private clubs to have non-discrimination admission policies if they wished to host PGA tournaments.[655]

Seeking legal action through the courts to address racial discrimination in golf had occurred as early as 1932 in Chicago. But using direct-action tactics and then appealing to the courts or higher authorities first occurred when Asa Williams, George Williams, and Cecil R. Shamwell refused to leave the East Potomac Park Golf Course in 1941. Their actions became the model for other golf course discrimination fights in other cities across the country and led to the *Holmes v. Atlanta* ruling in 1955. As stated by Dawkins and Braddock in "Teeing Off Against Jim Crow," "The pioneering efforts of black Washingtonians paved the way for African American golfers in other locations seeking admission to public courses in the face of continued white resistance."[656]

Even after the official desegregation of the District of Columbia's recreation facilities in 1954 and the freedom to play at other courses in the area, Langston Golf Course remained a predominately black course and the primary course for numerous African American golf clubs, including the Royal Golf Club, the Wake Robin Golf Club, the Arlington Divot Golf Club (established in 1940), the Postal Golf Club (established in 1946), and the Oxon Blades (established in 1958). Once the course finally received a new clubhouse in 1952 and was expanded to a full eighteen holes in 1954-1955, Langston became the host of numerous tournaments, attracting locally and nationally renowned golf celebrities including Charlie Sifford, Calvin Peete, Jim Thorpe, Ethel Funches, and Lee Elder. As later explained by Langston manager Jimmy Garvin, "Langston is more than simply a golf course. I don't think the people that came to Langston really came for the course. I think it was more of an opportunity to be with like-minded people, and golf was the carrot. When Langston opened there were not a lot of meeting places for African Americans."[657] The significance of Langston Golf Course in the history of African American golf was underscored in 2013 when the course was inducted in the National Black Golf Hall of Fame.

655 Ibid., 189.
656 Dawkins and Braddock, "Teeing Off Against Jim Crow," 70
657 Farrell Evans, "Charting Their Own Course," USGA, accessed 3 October 2016, http://wakerobingolf.org/uploads/Chartering_Their_Own_Course.pdf.

# Chapter 1.3: Golf Course Architecture and the National Park Service Golf Courses in the District of Columbia

## INTRODUCTION

Golf courses vary in their setting, topographic features, layout, and design elements, yet all golf courses share certain characteristics. Typically nine or eighteen holes, a proper golf course is played on maintained grass with a combination of holes at various lengths and par (the number of strokes set as a standard for a particular hole). Each hole contains a tee, fairway, green, rough, and hazards. The tee typically consists of lower cut grass and is where the player hits the ball into play. Between the tee and the green is the fairway, where grass is characteristically maintained at a moderate length. The target of the golfer is the putting green, where the grass is cut low and fine to create an ideal surface for the ball to roll into the 4.25-inch diameter hole. Surrounding the tee, fairway, and green is the rough, which consists of less maintained grass, shrubs, and trees.[658]

Routing, or the infrastructure of a golf course, describes the sequencing of the holes. One of the most important parts of the design process, routing allows an architect to create variety of directions and lengths and to take advantage of the natural character offered by the site. Strategy is the element of thought in golf and allows players to make decisions on what they think is the best route to the hole based on their skill. Hazards, such as bunkers, water, mounds, trees, and other features, are part of the strategy of a course and are used to force the golfer to maneuver around the course. Working together with hazards, the shape, size, contouring, and the placement of the green makes each hole unique.[659]

The earliest Scottish golf courses were natural landscapes found on the Scottish linksland, public land along the coastline. Formed by wind and weather, typical links consisted of high, windswept sand dunes and hollows. Grass was typically bent grass interspersed with fescue; its stiff, erect blades were suitable for supporting a leather-bound, feather-stuffed golf ball. While the landscape was mostly devoid of trees and freshwater ponds, it had plenty of other natural hazards. Livestock would graze and seek shelter behind the hollows or hillocks, creating trampled, sandy areas that Scottish farmers called "bunkers." The soil was sandy

658 Susan E. Smead and Marc C. Wagner, "Assessing Golf Courses as Cultural Resources," *CRM* no. 10 (2000): 17-18;

659 Geoff Shackelford, *Grounds for Golf: The History and Fundamentals of Golf Course Design* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003), 7-13.

and well drained, a feature that continues to be an important aspect of a well maintained course. The most distinguished links from the early period of golf in Scotland is the course at St. Andrews, which existed in a primitive form as early as 1414.[660]

In the construction of early courses, even as golf rose in popularity in England and Scotland in the 19th century, little was done to change the existing landscape. Natural contours were seldom altered and hazards present on the landscape, including roads, hedgerows, stone walls, and the existing turf, were incorporated into the layout of the course.[661] Constructed before earth moving equipment was available, early golf courses were created by studying the land and selecting sites of naturally occurring short or stunted grasses. Once the routing was determined, the area for play was cleared of tall vegetation, exposing contours and sand pits and allowing native grasses to flourish and serve as fairways. To lay out a course, the designer would commonly use stakes to designate the location of greens and tees and a crude map with a connecting line to illustrate the proposed line of play.[662] The introduction of the gutta-percha ball, invented in 1848 from the rubber-like material extracted from a gutta-percha tree, revolutionized the sport. Not only less expensive than "featheries" (balls made of feathers and leather), "gutties" were also more durable. The gutty also permitted more use of ironheaded clubs, which led to unintentional widening of the fairways as irons repeatedly beat down the heather along the fairways, allowing short bent grass to grow in its place.[663]

At the turn of the 20th century, British golf course architects began to create inland courses in the "heathlands," well-drained, sandy soil with gently undulating terrain. Initially, courses built inland were considered inferior to links courses, a theory substantiated by their rock-hard turf in the summer and the mushy conditions in the winter. On the heathland courses architects cleared the undergrowth of heather and other shrubs for the greens and fairways. Perhaps the biggest contrast between links courses and inland courses was the incorporation of trees into their design – while many trees were cleared for the greens and fairways, the architects also used trees to create strategic and visual aspects that were not present in links-style courses. The architects moved and contoured the earth into greens, tees, and hazards, but when possible they took advantage of the natural features of the landscape. They also prepared the land with seed and sod, taking special interest

660 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 3-4; Robert Muir Graves and Geoffrey Cornish, *Classic Golf Hole Design: Using the Greatest Holes as Inspiration for Modern Courses* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc. 2002), 3.

661 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 15-16.

662 Shackelford, *Grounds for Golf*, 31; Michael J. Hurdzan, *Golf Course Architecture: Evolutions in Design, Construction, and Restoration Technology*, 2nd edition (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2006), 3-4.

663 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 12-13.

in the grasses planted.[664] With their heathland courses, architects such as William Park Jr., J.F. Abercromby, H.S. Colt, and W. Herbert Fowler, became the most prominent golf architects of their day, proving that "exciting and pleasurable golf could be produced in any locale so long as proper techniques in course building were used."[665]

The first golf courses in the United States around the turn of the 20th century have been described as "simply dreadful" and "primitive" compared to their Scottish and British counterparts.[666] Most of the first courses were built quickly and inexpensively, often with a golf course architect staking out the layout and leaving instructions to others on how to finish the course. These early designs often had geometric characteristics, recalling classical French 18th-century landscape architecture, with little response to the natural surroundings. Fairways often crossed one another, grave-shaped or geometric bunkers were common, and chocolate drop mounds (created by covering mounds of stones that were cleared from the fairways with dirt) frequently dotted the course. These geometric layouts also often favored the "penal style," the most severe philosophy of hazard placement, where designers placed hazards directly across the line of play, penalizing less-skilled players who could not carry the ball over the hazard[667] (Figure 1.38).

As more golf course architects in the United States began to study the finest courses in the British Isles, the geometric, penal-style courses fell from favor and naturalistic and strategic courses became prevalent. A new generation of golf course architects began to realize the advantage of creating alternatives that allowed a golfer to decide the best route based on their ability. British architects H.S. Colt and Alister MacKenzie led the strategic school of design in the early 20th century. In the United States, architects of golf's "Golden Age," including Charles Blair Macdonald and Donald Ross, shifted American design to the strategic approach and "influenced other aspiring architects, spreading the strategic school with an emphasis on natural-looking designs that provoked thought and, ultimately, proved the most fun to play over time."[668] Their work inspired others, including A.W. Tillinghast, Walter J. Travis, and William S. Flynn, who followed the strategic school of thought and believed that green and bunker placement enhanced the strategic nature of the game.[669]

664 Ibid., 21-22.
665 Ibid., 29.
666 Shackelford, *The Golden Age of Golf*, 4, Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 44.
667 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 45-46; Geoff Shackelford, *Grounds for Golf*, 3; Smead and Wagner, "Assessing Golf Courses as Cultural Resources," 18; European Institute of Golf Course Architects, *Golf Courses as Designed Landscapes of Historic Interest*, (2007), 13.
668 Shackelford, *Grounds for Golf*, 38.
669 Hurdzan, *Golf Course Architecture*, 51; European Institute of Golf Course Architects, *Golf Courses as Designed Landscapes*, 14.

# Twenty Years of Golf

## An Autobiography—(*Continued*)

### *The Advent of a New Era in Golf Course Construction*

By Walter J. Travis

THE year 1906 marked a new era in golf course construction in the United States. Up to that time the natural contour of the ground was followed in the construction of putting greens, little or no attempt at embellishment being made in artificially introducing undulations. In the fashioning of sites Dame Nature had not been so kind to us as to the golfers of Great Britain, where, especially on seaside links, greater diversity of putting surfaces obtained.

To remedy this defect I conceived and carried out the idea of reconstructing a number of the greens at Garden City. That was the first start. It led to what has since become the universal practice on all first-class courses. Hand in hand with the green changes was a departure from the orthodox method of bunker construction. These I not only made much deeper, but more natural in appearance.

*The Willie Dunn System*

THE system in vogue up to then had been very crude. Willie Dunn started it in the early days of golf on this side. His method was simply to select a suitable site for the putting green and to put in a cross bunker for the tee shot and another cross bunker for the second shot. These stereotyped creations extended clear across the fairway, and consisted merely of an excavation of uniform depth and width, the excavated soil forming a cap or face of uniform height. Not only were they offensively artificial, lacking wholly in artistic finish, but they placed all players on a dead level of equality. They rarely troubled the fairly long hitter, but they were a terrible trial to the weak player. There was no dodging them, except by playing short. I changed all this by so arranging the hazards as to open up an avenue of play for the weaker brothers by remodeling several of the greens and adding wing or side bunkers through the green, and, more especially adjacent to the putting greens, closer and deeper than before.

My paramount idea was to make it harder for the good player and easier for the poor one, excepting on the short holes I had my eye only on the good player, the good player who brought off what then were considered good shots . . . but not quite good enough. For I was looking ahead, knowing full well that improvement was bound to come (which *en passant* is the only correct way to design a hole—a hole that will be just as good ten years hence as it is to-day). The hazards are unchanged; they are there to stay. But a certain measure of elasticity is provided by alternative tees, two at least, in some cases three or even four.

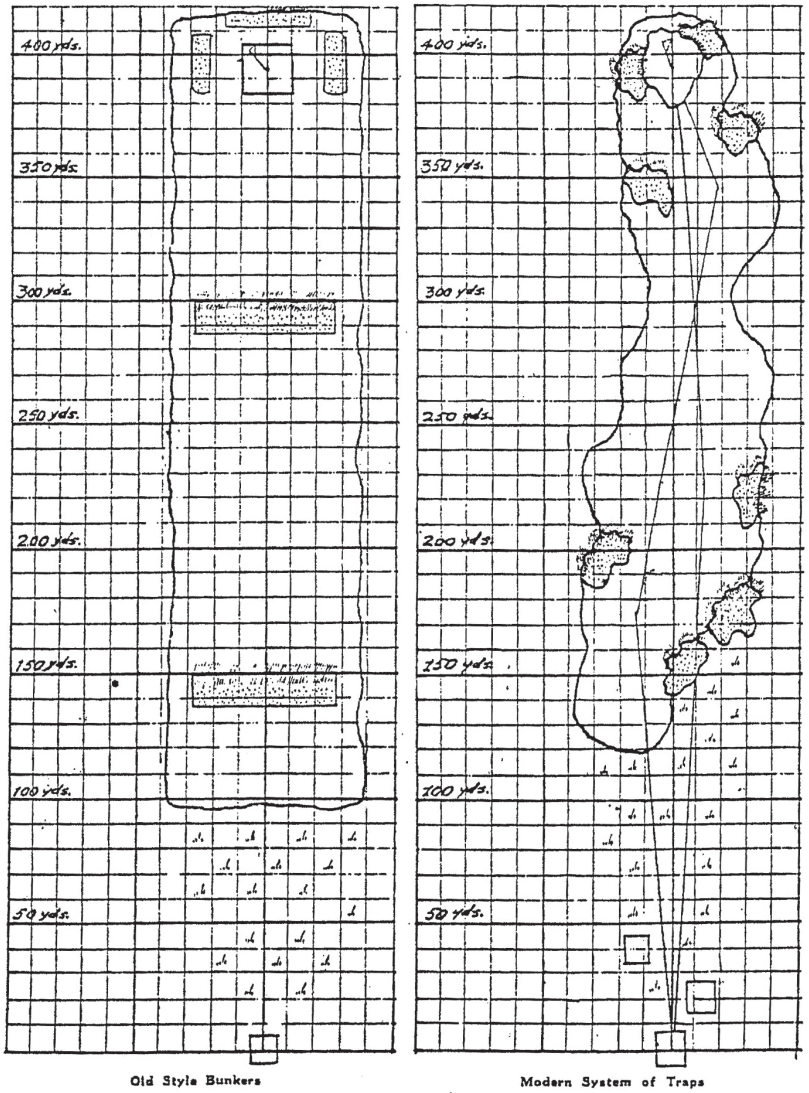
What was the result? More or less "kicking," of course. But after the protests simmered down it was no uncommon sight to see the leading protestants escorting their friends around to view the lions—the deep pits which had been the subject of their own objurgations and fierce anathemas at the start. Now they were proud of them! Proud because they belonged to a club which could point to such unique (at the time) hazards. It reflected credit indirectly on their own prowess.

Although the bunkers were put in nearly fourteen years ago, they have amply justified their existence in the interim and are to-day so well placed as to fit in and keep pace with the present higher standard of play.

Shortly after their installation I took part in a four-ball match in which the Mr. "Thomas" whom I referred to in a previous article was a member. He has a habit when on the green of getting up back of his ball and gradually retreating foot by foot for a distance of several yards, the better, I imagine, to get the line to the hole. On this occasion his ball was within a few yards of one of the newly constructed bunkers. Sublimely unconscious of its existence, he proceeded as usual to back away from the ball. The three of us and the four caddies watched him fascinatedly as he neared the edge of the pit, fearing and yet hoping expectantly that he would continue his backward march. He did, finally plunging in head over heels amid a chorus of shrieks and frantic yells of laughter from the whole gallery.

The changes at Garden City were made when H. H. Barker was the resident professional and many a talk I had with him regarding golf course architecture, which led to

(*Continued on page 23*)




Old Style Bunkers — Modern System of Traps

**Figure 1.38.** Illustration of "Old Style Bunkers" and "Modern System of Traps" from Walter Travis's "Twenty Years of Golf" *American Golfer Magazine*, 9 October 1920. (*American Golfer Magazine*)

Building courses on land that was not natural linksland was more complex and architects often had to draw detailed plans that showed existing site conditions and how they were to be modified to achieve the intent of the architect. Early 20th century architects, including Charles Hugh Alison, Donald Ross, Walter J. Travis, and William S. Flynn, developed a more formal and methodical practice of golf course architecture and had to learn to read and draw maps and develop plans with specifications on how the course was to be built. These plans, and often an on-site supervisor, greenkeeper, or design associate, freed the architect of having to be on site during construction.[670] Advances in turfgrass management, irrigation systems, and more precise mowers in the early decades of the 20th century also changed the design of courses as the relatively manicured conditions resulted in faster green speeds, which in turn required less severe elevation changes and slopes on greens. The use of more advanced equipment as well as dynamite allowed architects to work in and around more rocky and wooded terrain than their predecessors.[671]

The initial construction of the public golf courses in the District of Columbia illustrate this shift toward strategic golf course architecture during the Golden Age of Golf, influenced by Scottish and British precedents, and inspired by natural surroundings. Despite being built for markedly less wealthy clientele, several of the public courses were the work of prominent golf course designers, illustrating their importance as the golf courses for the nation's capital. In several instances, particularly at East Potomac Park, the greenkeepers and others who were involved in the design and construction of the public golf course were renowned in their field. These architects and greenkeepers often collaborated with each other, were protégés of, or studied under some of the best-known golf course architects of their era. Several were innovators in the field of agronomy and golf course turf management.

Like any landscape, golf courses are not static and are always in a constant state of evolution. As explained by contemporary golf course architect Jay Mingay, "By the 1960s, the majority of classic golf courses designed and constructed during The Golden Age of Golf Design, between the wars, were suffering the effects of evolution." Over time, trees grow, often encroaching on the original lines of play and causing agronomic problems, fairways become narrow compared to their initial widths, putting surfaces shrink, and sand bunkers deteriorate.[672]

670 Hurdzan, *Golf Course Architecture*, 4.

671 Kevin R. Mendik, "Cultural Landscape Assessment for the Restoration of the Golf Course at Sunnylands Estate," August 2011, http://golfclubatlas.com/in-my-opinion/cultural-landscape-assessment-for-the-restoration-of-the-golf-course-at-sunnylands-estate/.

672 Jeff Mingay, "The Evolution of a Classical Golf Course: Essex G&CC," Golf Club Atlas, accessed 28 September 2016, http://golfclubatlas.com/in-my-opinion/opinionmingay/.

Some of the biggest contributors to changes to golf courses include landscaping, architecture, and technological advances. Many early golf courses in the United States were planned with no trees and it was rare for a course to have a planting plan to accompany its construction. Trees and other plantings can entirely change how a hole is played and often impact the health of turfgrass due to lack of sunlight. Changes in grass seed over the years as well as improvements to moving equipment have made greens notably faster than when they were designed, often necessitating the removal of some of the mounds and swales that were part of the original design. It was also not uncommon during the Golden Age for architects to make changes to each other's courses; many of the architects working during the 1920s obliterated work of their contemporaries. According to Kevin R. Mendik in "The Challenges of Restoring a Classic American Golf Course," "There are many courses that can point to a half a dozen architects or more having worked at their course at various times … Others may only have a hole or two that retain any historic character. Some courses have nine or numerous holes legitimately attributed to a particular architect, but there is no direct proof as to which ones."[673] Finally, technological improvements to equipment and conditioning methods have resulted in the alteration of a golf course's layout or lengthening them to adapt to longer distances achieved by golfers. For example, while many courses during the Golden Age were around 5,000 to 6,000 yards, currently most courses that accommodate professional events are well over 7,000 yards.[674]

Similar to many golf courses across the country, the public courses in the District of Columbia suffered during the years of the Great Depression and World War II due to lack of funds for maintenance and in the case of East Potomac Park, the complete closure of the course. The courses also deteriorated from overcrowding and the subsequent removal of hazards and other features to keep players moving through the course, changes often made without the expertise of golf architects. Improvements made to the courses after World War II occurred during a new era in golf course expansion in the United States. The widespread use of golf carts by the mid-1950s permitted individual holes to be built out of sight of others since tees of following holes no longer needed to be adjacent to the previous green and cart paths became a new factor in golf course design. Once again, advances in machinery such as large-scale hydraulic earth moving equipment, changed the design of courses and resulted in significant changes to natural land forms. New composite metals allowed for lighter clubs which hit balls higher and further, ushering in the era of target golf (a style of golf that has specific landing areas, often marked by hazards, instead of a long stretch of continuous fairway between the tee and

673 Kevin R. Mendik, "The Challenges of Restoring a Classic American Golf Course," March 2007, http://golfclubatlas.com/in-my-opinion/kevin-mendik-challenges-of-restoring-a-classic-american-golf-course/.

674 Ibid.

green).[675] This era, roughly between 1949 and 1985, has been described as the "dark ages of course design when courses were based on length, lacked variety, and offered few options."[676] Characteristics of courses from this era include strategic bunkering in landing areas along the fairways and greens and large quantities of earth moved for tees and greens.[677]

The public golf courses in the District of Columbia are no exception to evolution; the landscape of the courses has changed since their initial construction as trees have been planted, greens have been shifted and rebuilt, and technology and trends in golf resulted in the removal and addition of hazards and other features. Yet in some cases the architects' original design intent is still visible and the original routing remains relatively intact, despite more than 80 years of improvements.

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF EAST POTOMAC PARK GOLF COURSE

### THE A-B AND C-D COURSE (BLUE COURSE)

#### Walter J. Travis and East Potomac Park

The choice of Walter J. Travis (1862-1927) as the architect of the eighteen-hole golf course at East Potomac Park is a testament to the prominence of the course. At the time of its construction, Travis was a three-time winner of the US Amateur Championship and a one-time winner of the British Amateur Championship (the first non-British player to capture the tournament). Travis not only dominated amateur golf during the early 20th century, but he was also a noted journalist, publisher, and innovator in the field of golf (Figure 1.39). His legacy is largely



**Figure 1.39.** Walter J. Travis playing golf, ca. 1909-1914. (Library of Congress)

675 Mendik, Cultural Landscape Assessment for the Restoration of the Golf Course at Sunnylands Estate; Mark Blakemore, "The ABC's of Golf," accessed 22 September 2016, http://www.pgaprofessional.com/golf_glossary/t.html#.V-PvCfkrLRY.

676 Golf Club Atlas, accessed 22 September 2016, http://golfclubatlas.com/.

677 Robert Muir Graves and Geoffrey Cornish, *Classic Golf Hole Design: Using the Greatest Holes as Inspiration for Modern Courses* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc. 2002), 27.

defined by the 50 known golf courses that he either designed or redesigned during his career. Along with East Potomac Park, these include several well-known and respected courses such as the Westchester Country Club, New York, Round Hill Club, Connecticut, and the Country Club of Scranton, Pennsylvania.[678]

Born in Australia Travis immigrated to the United States in 1885 at the age of 23 and did not take up golf until he was 34. By the age of 39 he was the top amateur golfer in the country, known as the "Old Man" for his skill in a sport that was dominated by his much younger opponents. Short in stature and with a slender physique, Travis was known as a courteous and calm competitor, always with a cigar in his mouth or hand. While he was never a long hitter off the tee, he was notorious for his accurate iron shots and a deadly short game.[679] Travis continued to play in his later years, but devoted most of his time and energy writing, editing, and designing golf courses. Travis was the founder and editor of *American Golfer* magazine (1908-1920) and authored *Practical Golf* (1901) and *The Art of Putting* (1904).[680]

Like most golf architects of his era, Travis received no formal training. Three years into his amateur career, Travis worked with Scotsman John Duncan Dunn to design the Ekwanok Country Club golf course in Manchester, Vermont, and continued to collaborate with Dunn on other golf course projects over the next few years. An extended stay in the United Kingdom in 1900-1901 greatly influenced his work. Travis specifically admired "the undulating terrain of British links, their lack of trees, the numerous and strategically dispersed bunkers, and the greens defined by natural contours of the land."[681]

Travis had a certain set of principles that he tried to follow in each of his courses. He believed that hazards should be placed in relation to the greens to require "thinking" golf. Certain holes should intentionally require slices, or a shot that curves from left to right, and others should intentionally require draws, or a shot that flies right to left. One or two tee shots per round should involve an exceptionally fine carry, the distance a ball will fly in the air usually to avoid a hazard or safely reach a target. Travis also believed that no two greens on a course should be alike and that greens should always be undulating, never flat.[682]

678 Ed Homsey, "Golf Course Architect," Walter J. Travis Society, accessed 6 May 2016, http://travissociety.com/whowastravis/golfcoursearchitect/; Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 418.
679 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 43.
680 Ibid, 45.
681 Ed Homsey, "Golf Course Architect."
682 Cornish and Whitten, *Architects of Golf*, 52-53; Michael B. Prystowsky, "Evolution of the Westchester Country Club Courses, NY, USA," Golf Club Atlas, accessed 23 September 2015, http://golfclubatlas.com/in-my-opinion/michael-b-prystowsky-evolution-of-the-westchester-country-club-golf-courses/.

When it came to hazards, Travis criticized the use of cross bunkers, or the use of bunkers across the entire width of the course, and preferred using small, deep pot bunkers. He believed that cross bunkers put too much emphasis on long game (the portion of the game played with substantial swings and where the ball covers longer distances) and punished the shorter, more accurate player.[683] In his 1901 book *Practical Golf*, Travis said that bunkers "should be arranged so as to compel a player to drive both far and sure, and yet to give the weaker player a chance to avoid being bunkered, provided he can play his ball wisely."[684] This reflected Travis's own skills as a golfer, as he spent his entire career as a "notoriously short hitter" and "kept himself alive in countless matches by keeping himself in play and mastering a deadly putting stroke."[685]

#### Links-Style Course

At East Potomac Park Travis designed the course as a traditional links-style course, a term that derives from ancient Scotland and refers to a rough, grassy area of land along the coastline that includes sand dunes and few, if any, trees. Modern links-style courses are typically located along a major body of water, often between the coastline and agricultural areas inland. The soil of the course is usually sandy, allowing for maximum drainage and a firm playing surface and both the slopes and greens feature many undulations, making them very challenging. In addition to having few trees, links courses do not have inland water hazards, such as streams or ponds, and hazards are typically in the form of deep, pothole bunkers, like those that Travis favored. The courses feature subtle, rolling terrain and the layout of a true links course characteristically has the first nine holes going out to the furthest point from the clubhouse and the second nine brings players back[686] (Figure 1.40). In addition to East Potomac Park Golf Course, Travis also designed notable links-style courses at the Cape Arundel Golf Course in Kennebunkport, Maine (1920), the Jekyll Island Golf Club, Georgia (Great Dunes Course, 1926), and the Sea Island Golf Club, Georgia (the Plantation Golf Course, 1927).

Its location along the Potomac River and its flat, predominantly treeless terrain made the East Potomac Park site naturally suitable for a links-style course. In 1911, prior to being hired as the architect for East Potomac Park Golf course, Travis noted in *American Golfer* that the park would be an ideal spot for a golf course

683 Walter J. Travis, "Hazards," *Golf*, *USGA Bulletin* (April 1902): 246.
684 Walter J. Travis, *Practical Golf* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1901), 187.
685 Cornish and Whitten, *Architects of Golf*, 54.
686 David W. Berner, "What is a Links Style Golf Course?", accessed 2 November 2017, http://golftips.golfsmith.com/links-style-golf-course-1451.html; Scottish Golf History, "'Links Golf Course' – Meaning," accessed 1 November 2017, http://www.scottishgolfhistory.org/origin-of-golf-terms/links/; Mark Sandritter, "2013 British Open: What is a links course and how will it impact The Open at Muirfield," 17 July 2013, http://www.sbnation.com/golf/2013/7/17/4526986/british-open-2013-course-muirfield-scotland-links-golf.

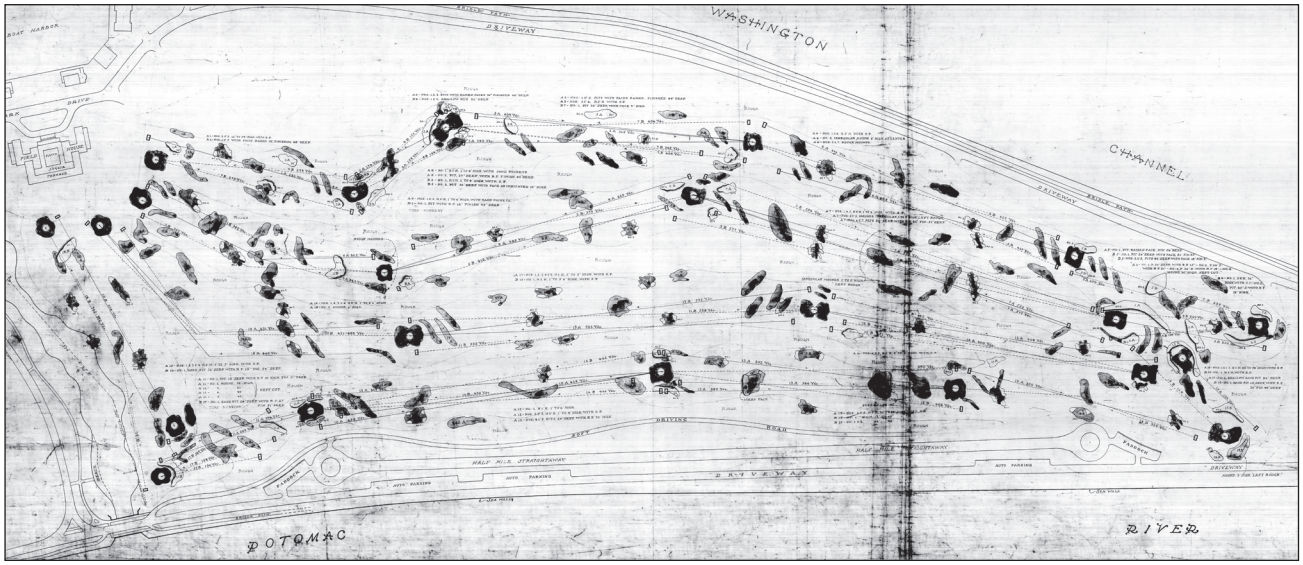



**Figure 1.40.** Plan of East Potomac Golf Course, 1918. (National Park Service)

because "ground resembles 'links' and is flat."[687] The first nine holes of the course were built directly south of the fieldhouse on the Washington Channel side of the peninsula and extended southeast out and back along the length of the Washington Channel. The second nine holes were designed to parallel the first nine, but were arranged along the Potomac River side of the park.

Travis's respect for British links decidedly influenced the first eighteen holes built at East Potomac as he designed the course for reversible play. Travis's original design consisted of two nine-hole courses (the A-B Course and the C-D Course) that had a total of 20 greens, the two additional greens necessary for the reverse play of the No. 1 and No. 10 holes.[688] Travis was likely inspired by the Old Course at St. Andrews, where the holes could be played both forward and backward to relieve wear and tear on the regular course.[689] At the time of the construction of East Potomac Park, modern scientific turf management was still in development and improved green-keeping methods and equipment were unknown. Thus, similar to the course at St. Andrews, Travis specifically planned the reversible course at East Potomac Park to allow for the course to be played in alternate directions on a weekly basis to prevent wear.[690] Travis also took the concept of the reversible course a step further. While the course at St. Andrews could be played in both directions due to its unique routing and wide fairways, its hazards were not spe-

687 "Middle Atlantic Notes," *The American Golfer* 6, no. 1 (May): 48.
688 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 18.
689 Robert J. Kennedy, "The New Biltmore Country Club," *Golfers Magazine* 35 No. 4 (October 1919):21; Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 12.
690 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 18; "Public Links to be Ready May 1," *Washington Post,* 5 March 1919:10.

cifically intended for dual play. At East Potomac Park, Travis designed hazards that made the strategy for each hole unique regardless of the direction it was played.[691]

Although Travis's capability of creating reversible designs was one that he advertised, charging $3,000 for an eighteen-hole layout and $4,000 for a reversible layout that could be played in both directions, the courses at East Potomac Park and Westchester Country Club in Rye, New York, are the only known reversible courses designed by Travis.[692] Travis consulted with George Crump on the course at the Pine Valley Golf Club in Pine Valley, New Jersey, and reportedly developed plans following Crump's original suggestion to make the course reversible, but the plans were never executed.[693] Crump's idea for a reversible course greatly impressed Travis and in an August 1915 article in *American Golfer* Travis wrote that at Pine Valley, "an unparalleled forward step has been taken by the [developers of the course] in arranging to make this the first course in the country capable of being played two-ways – the regular way and in reverse order, making practically two distinct courses in one …"[694] His design for East Potomac Park came two years later.

As explained by Bob Labbance in his biography of Travis, "By selecting one enlarged teeing ground as the target, and by positioning some of the bunkers so that they accommodated and influenced play from the opposite direction, Travis built two courses from one. It was a concept so far ahead of its time …"[695] In its October 1919 edition, *Golfers Magazine* described Travis's design of the reversible course at the Westchester Country Club:

> It is a scientific golf course architecture. The idea is simplicity itself. It is sort of a double-barreled course but with a single barrel shooting both ways … In short, there are 36 different holes in practically the same area as occupied by a regulation 18-hole course … This necessarily means that the greens and the

691 Robert J. Kennedy, "The New Biltmore Country Club," *Golfers Magazine* 35, no. 4 (October 1919):21; Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 12.

692 Bob Labbance, *The Old Man: The Biography of Walter J. Travis* (Chelsea, Michigan, Sleeping Bear Press 2000), 215; For his work at East Potomac Park, Travis charged much less. Reportedly Travis was led to believe that in order to promote the first public golf course in the District of Columbia, it was necessary to raise funds through private donations. Upon accepting his commission, Travis reduced his normal fee of $1,000 to $500, stating that the government should consider the $500 savings as his contribution. He was likely the only donor to the project, since the construction was funded through a congressional appropriation. An undated, hand-written note indicates that Travis was paid a total of $750 for his services at East Potomac Park—$500 for laying out the golf course and $250 for inspecting the work. A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia, 17; Undated, RG 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.

693 The Walter J. Travis Society, "Travis Course Projects," accessed 2 November 2016, https://travissociety.com/directory-of-travis-golf-course-projects/.

694 Thomas Macwood, "George Arthur Crump: Portrait of a Legend," Golf Club Atlas (March 2005), http://golfclubatlas.com/in-my-opinion/thomas-macwood-george-arthur-crump-portrait-of-a-legend/.

695 Bob Labbance, *The Old Man*, 215.

> hazards are all designed especially to suit this going and coming, this play in contrary directions – although not of course at the same time.[696]

As at the Westchester Country Club, the first, ninth, tenth, and the eighteenth greens of the East Potomac Park course were located adjacent to the clubhouse, allowing players to start from any of the holes depending on the route of play.[697] Sixteen of the 20 holes were oversize in length, raised slightly across the center, and gently sloped in both directions in order to be adapted for reversible play. While the greens were generally narrower in width than most traditional greens, they were "irregular enough in general shape and contour to afford sufficient variety in play and be pleasing to the eye."[698]

#### Trees

Many early golf course architects, including Walter Travis, believed that trees did not belong on a golf course and famously wrote about or commented on trees. Since many of the architects came from Europe or had studied Scottish and British examples, most of their experience was taken from links-style courses, which influenced their favoritism of treeless courses. Golf course architect Harry Colt, for example, called trees "flunky and unfair hazards." Colt's partner, Alister MacKenzie once said, "Playing down fairways bordered by straight lines of trees is not only unartistic, but makes tedious and uninteresting golf. Many green committees ruin one's handwork by planting trees like rows of soldiers along the borders of the fairways."[699]

While East Potomac Park was primarily devoid of trees prior to the construction of the golf course, the site did have some existing trees in 1917, as evidenced by early descriptions of the site and photographs of the course (Figure 1.41). Travis did not include trees in his detailed drawings of each hole and the 1918 detailed plan of the eighteen-hole course, drawn by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds likely from Travis's design, also does not illustrate trees. Yet during the construction some of the existing trees were retained, primarily to separate the two nine-hole (A-B and C-D) courses. Travis's characteristic lack of trees may have differed from Colonel Harts's initial plan for the course in 1916 that stated, "By taking advantage of the existing trees and those to be planted, portions of these courses are to weave in and about the groups of planting and groves of trees, presenting an appearance similar to natural countryside so desirable in every golf course."[700]

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696 Robert J. Kennedy, "The New Biltmore Country Club," *Golfers Magazine* 35 No. 4 (October 1919):21.

697 Ibid.

698 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 18.

699 David A. Oatis, "The Right Tree in the Right Location," *USGA Green Section Record* 53 no. 21 (6 November 2015): 2.

700 United States Congress, House of Representatives, 64th Congress, 1st Session, Document



**Figure 1.41.** East Potomac Park Golf Course ca. 1923 illustrating the trees on the course. (Library of Congress)

Harts's vision may have prevailed. By 1921 the Commission of Fine Arts had approved a planting plan for East Potomac Park Golf Course, completed after the construction of the first nine holes and after Travis's involvement with the design of the course. While the plan acknowledged the advantage of having long vistas of grass and water from various vantage points, the Commission stated:

> It was felt that it was essential to forego the use of shrubs and maintain the variety, interest and unity of the composition as a whole by the introduction of a pleasing variety of evergreen species varying in height, habit, texture, and color, in order to secure the most harmonious planting composition possible. Taking into consideration the existing deciduous trees (which were not to be superseded by the proposed trees until such existing trees were unfit for park use) the planting plan was mainly characterized by the use of American Holly, Austrian Pine, White Pine, and Douglas Spruce and in lesser amounts by the use of Canadian Hemlock, Western Hemlock, and Red Cedar.[701]

Planting plans for the golf course created in 1920 and 1925 by Office of Public Buildings and Grounds landscape architect Irving Payne illustrate numerous trees planned for Travis's eighteen-hole course, all located in between the fairways.[702] It is unclear if either of the plans were fully implemented, although a 1927

No. 1038, *Development of East Potomac Park, Letter from the Secretary of War Ad Interim Transmitting a Report of the Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, Presenting a Comprehensive Plan for the Development of East Potomac Park as a Public Recreation Ground* (Washington, DC: Washington Government Printing Office 1916), 15.

701 Memorandum for Public Buildings and Grounds, Extract from Minutes of Meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, Held in Washington, DC, 7 January 1921. Record Group 42, Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.

702 Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, *Planting Detail of Golf Grounds*, November 1920, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database; Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, *Planting Plan for Golf Course East Potomac Park*, 1925, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Re-

aerial photograph suggests that no additional trees had been planted by that time. A 1942 report noted that while there were several mature willow and poplar trees scattered throughout the course that were left from the original growth on the Potomac flats, the course would benefit from a planting plan that would improve the "barren" appearance of the course and help segregate different sports and uses in the park.[703] Photographs of the golf course do suggest that new trees were planted along the fairways by 1951.[704]

#### Greens

As a master of the short game, Travis's greatest strength as a golf course architect was in the design and construction of putting greens, with their challenging, undulating surfaces.[705] In June 1920 the *Washington Evening Star* described the completed nine-holes of the East Potomac Golf Course as "a true Travis creation. It is characterized by the rolling, undulating, well-trapped greens peculiar to a Travis-built course. This type of putting green makes for a very attractive course, but one that will be quite severe on the duffer – and most of the players who begin golf on the new course will be duffers for some time."[706] Another article stated, "At present the course is a little more than 3,000 yards in length and quite flat, but the architectural features incorporated in it by Travis and [Robert] White will make it very difficult for even a crack golfer … The putting greens have been installed after the Travis idea of undulating surface and the course has been pronounced by experts to be one of the best nine hole links in the country."[707]

Travis's attention to the surface of the greens at East Potomac Park is apparent in a letter from Travis to Francis F. Gillen, superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds, in December 1918. Describing the greens, Travis said:

> The Plans call for raised surfaces at various points. These are put in not only with an eye to the landscape effect – to break up the flat monotony of the surface – but also to add to the playing qualities of the holes.

Travis also described in detail the construction method used to create the undulating surface of the greens:

sources Program Center Map Database.

703 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 20-21.

704 USGS Aerial Photograph, 5 July 1951, accessed at https://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/.

705 Michael B. Prystowsky, "Evolution of the Westchester Country Club Courses, NY, USA," Golf Club Atlas, accessed 23 September 2015, http://golfclubatlas.com/in-my-opinion/michael-b-prystowsky-evolution-of-the-westchester-country-club-golf-courses/.

706 According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a duffer is "a person who plays golf without much skill;" "Public Links to Open by July 10," *Washington Sunday Star,* 20 June 1920:27.

707 "New Golf Course Opens Thursday," *Washington Evening Star,* 6 June 1920:2.

> Soil is simply deposited in the prescribed area to the given depth and knocked down in the process of plowing the fairway. These minor grade levels should be put in before plowing. If sufficient "fill" from adjacent sand pits is not available then a scoop may be used and depressions made on a large scale, i.e. covering a large space, so as not to form small hollows. Small hollows are objectionable 1) because they retain water and lead to "winter kill" and 2) because they cannot be mown properly. The latter is true also of the raised surfaces. They should gradually merge into the neighboring fairway …[708]

A little over a week later, Travis again wrote to Superintendent Gillen and requested extra undulations to be added to the greens. Travis described what he called "duplex upcurls" for a number of the greens:

> These are designed merely for artistic effect, to break up the downward slopes. They are more or less duplicates or echoes of the originals but only from two-thirds to one-quarter as high, with a space in between running from two or three or four feet … forming an undulation. Don't make them all exactly alike; vary the heights and spreads, for the sake of diversity.[709]

Travis also requested the construction of pathways from the greens to the neighboring tees "to facilitate egress from the greens and avoid their mutilation."[710] Describing the pathways, Travis said,

> Care should be taken to avoid making them look like walks, but rather that they just happen that way naturally … Vary the widths and general outlines so as to harmonize with the greens. Whatever you do, don't make them formal in appearance.[711]

One of Travis's signature features was a swale green, which he incorporated on nearly every one of his courses. Also called Biarritz green from the course in France where the first-known swale green was built, a swale green is a deep gully or swale that cuts through the surface of the green, dividing it in half.[712] Plans indicate that Travis may have incorporated a swale green into one of the greens at East Potomac Park. On Hole 12B the plans specify a "Depression at equator about 6 yards wide, followed by gradual rise to upper level 36 inches high from 0 inches"[713] (Figure 1.42).

In October 1918 Travis inspected the greens at East Potomac Park and changes were carried out under his personal supervision with the help of six men over

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708 Letter from Walter J. Travis to Colonel Ridley, 3 December 1918, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.

709 Letter from Colonel Ridley to Office in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, 10 October 1918, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.

710 Letter from Walter J. Travis to Superintendent Gillen, 13 December 1918, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.

711 Ibid.

712 Labbance, *The Old Man,* 245, Brent Kelley, "Biarritz," accessed 14 September 2016, http://golf.about.com/od/golfterms/g/bldef_biarritz.htm.

713 *Plan Showing Details of Greens. Golf Course – East Potomac Park,* 14 December 1917, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

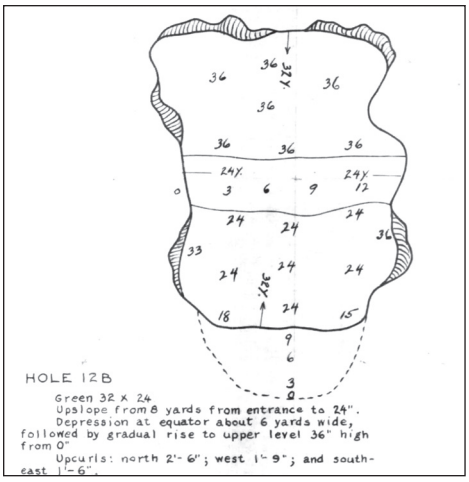



**Figure 1.42.** Swale green at East Potomac Park. (National Park Service)

two days. Superintendent Gillen stated that although the greens were not exactly how Travis wanted them, Travis was "very much pleased with all the work and considered that it was one of the finest pieces of work he had been connected with and a monument to the men connected with its construction." Gillen also reported that Charles V. Piper of the USDA (see more on Piper below) commented on the condition of the greens and "stated that in all his experience he had never seen greens constructed with such care and such excellent results as the greens in East Potomac Park."[714]

#### Hazards

Travis's design for East Potomac Park also reflected his characteristic use of hazards to create a strategic layout. Travis believed that hazards were an integral part of the strategic game of golf and that the majority of hazards should be placed in the landscape not only to force more skilled players to drive "far and sure" but allow weaker players a chance to avoid being bunkered. Although he used a variety of hazards, one of Travis's most common bunker techniques was to excavate the soil from the interior to create a sand or pit bunker and create mounds around the hazard, often in a predictable triangular pattern. He often placed deep sand bunkers around the greens while still allowing for a run-up shot and also often used mounds instead of bunkers as hazards to create variety.[715] These characteristics are evident in Travis's design for the course at East Potomac Park.

Similar to his reversible course at the Westchester Country Club, Travis used numerous hazards at East Potomac Park in elaborate shapes to direct players and provide alternate lines of play[716] (Figure 1.43). A 1942 report on the public golf courses in the District of Columbia stated,

> It was in determining the location and arrangement of the bunkers, traps, mounds, undulations and hazards where Mr. Travis showed his acumen and broad knowledge of the strategy in design so necessary to give variety to a well

714 Letter from Walter J. Travis to Colonel Ridley 3 December 1918, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.

715 Forrest L. Richardson and Mark K. Fine, *Bunkers, Pits & Other Hazards: A Guide to the Design, Maintenance, and Preservation of Golf's Essential Elements* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2006), 131.

716 Michael B. Prystowsky, "Evolution of the Westchester Country Club Courses, NY, USA," *Golf Club Atlas*, accessed 23 September 2015, http://golfclubatlas.com/in-my-opinion/michael-b-prystowsky-evolution-of-the-westchester-country-club-golf-courses/.

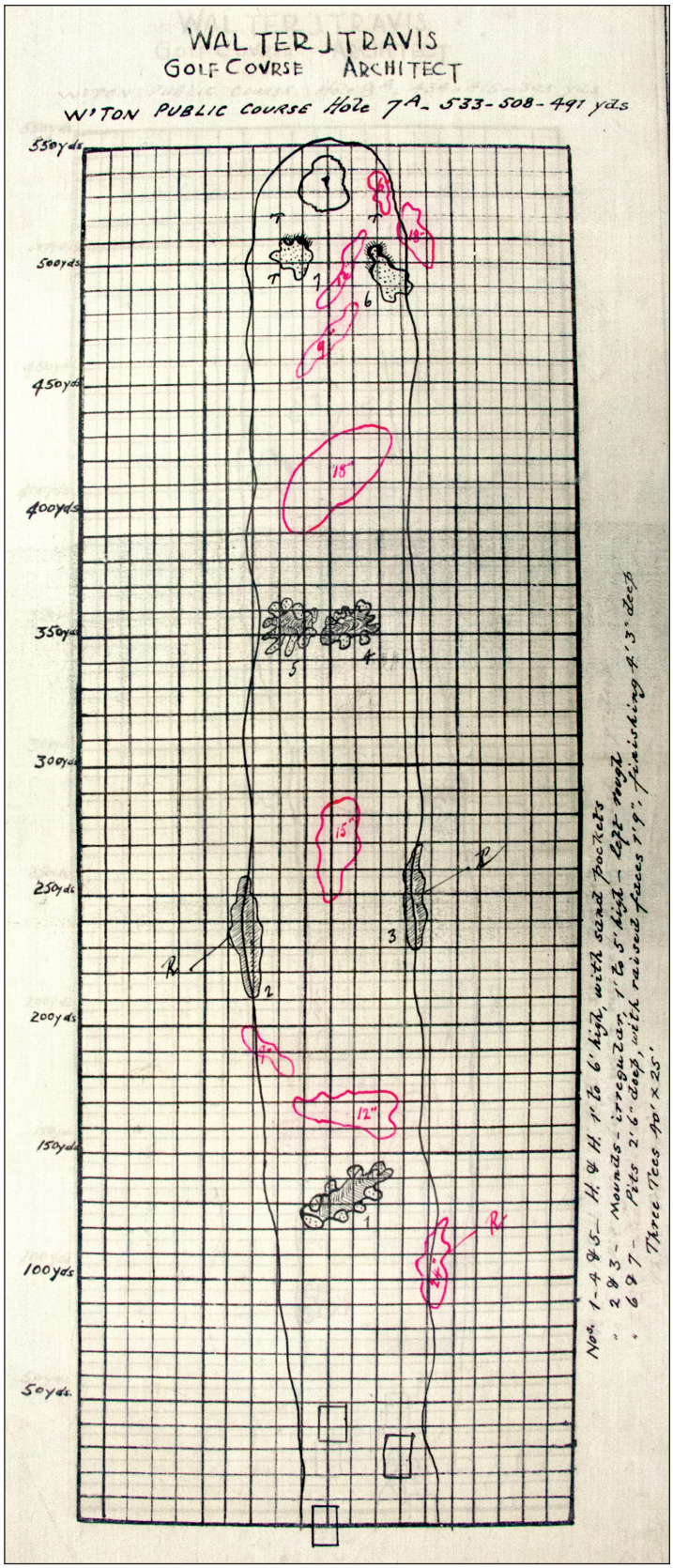



**Figure 1.43.** Hole 7a at East Potomac Park Golf Course by Walter J. Travis. (National Archives)



**Figure 1.44.** Image of hazards at East Potomac Park Golf Course, November 1920. (National Archives)

> designed course, and in this case his problem was doubly difficult, inasmuch as he had to view the entire scheme from the two opposite directions, being careful that no detail conflicted with the play when reversed.[717]

In a letter to Superintendent Gillen in December 1918, Travis specifically described in detail the character of the hazards at East Potomac Park, "sand pits, humps and hollows, and mounds," that were to be located in the fairway. The humps and hollows were "groups of irregular shaped mounds, of varying heights, with space in between running from one yard to three or four. Sometimes they have depressions, or sand pockets, on the outsides …" A mound was "an isolated heap of earth, not several, but just one." Travis defined the sand pits as "depressions of varying depth, with a deposit of sand of six to twelve inches. Sometimes they are alone, sometimes in connections with [humps and hollows]"[718] (Figure 1.44).

Travis also stated,

> The general fashioning of [the hazards] is an art … which few possess. Hence, the necessity, the absolute necessity of securing the services of an expert, a man with both technical knowledge and experience. There are perhaps three or four in the entire country. Robert White is one of them. It would be economy to get him at the start, so that a lot of the unintelligent work may not have to be undone"[719] (see below for information on White).

Travis's meticulousness toward his bunker designs is also evidenced by a letter from Travis to Superintendent Gillen that indicates that greenkeeper Robert

717 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 18.
718 Letter from Walter J. Travis to Colonel Ridley, 3 December 1918, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.
719 Ibid.



**Figure 1.45.** East Potomac Park Golf Course in April 1925, illustrating the vast number of bunkers and other hazards on the course designed by Travis. (National Archives)

White prepared "various clay models" of the bunkers as guidance for their construction.[720]

Photographs of the East Potomac Park Golf Course after its construction illustrate the vast amount of hazards on the course (Figure 1.45). This was partially from the reversibility of the course, which required hazards from both directions, but also likely from Travis's belief that a course without hazards would not furnish "good golf" and "would lack that degree of interest that can only be supplied by the negotiation of difficulties, natural or artificial, which really form an integral part of the game"[721] Since East Potomac Park lacked existing natural hazards, Travis had to add a tremendous amount of artificial features to make the course strategic. In fact, it was later noted that "This type of design could be easily accomplished on the flat topography of East Potomac, where every detail could be molded to suit the architect's plan, but would be found less practical on rolling or hilly terrain."[722] What is perhaps most apparent is Travis's use of bunkers to separate the holes (instead of trees), which is typical of designs by Travis.[723]

A veteran golfer described the new East Potomac Park Golf Course to the *Baltimore Sun* in 1923:

> There are bunkers to catch almost any deviation from the straight and narrow – traps for tops, half tops, hooks, slices, short approaches and over shots. The profusion of traps, perhaps, partly can be accounted for by the fact that

720 Letter from Walter J. Travis to Superintendent of Parks F. F. Gillen, 19 June 1919, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.
721 Walter J. Travis, *Hazards USGA Bulletin, Golf* (Vol X. No. 4), 245.
722 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 18.
723 "Hollywood Golf Club, NJ," Golf Club Atlas, accessed 14 September 2016, http://golfclubatlas.com/courses-by-country/usa/hollywood-golf-club.

there are four separate nine-hole courses, all in an acreage not larger than that devoted to an ordinary 18-hole course.[724]

#### Robert White (1874-1959)

At the time of the construction of East Potomac Park, few golf course architects stayed behind to supervise the construction of their designs. Greenkeepers hired by the club would supervise the construction and over the years refine it. Often greenkeepers or other hired experts had as much to do with the design of the course as the men credited with their design.[725] Travis and Dr. Walter S. Harban recommended Robert White to oversee the construction at East Potomac Park—both had previously worked with White in the redesign of the Columbia Country Club in 1917. In December 1918 Francis F. Gillen, superintendent of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, wrote to White asking if he would come to Washington, DC, to oversee the construction of the course at $75.00 a week for a month.[726] White accepted and assisted Travis in laying out the golf course at East Potomac Park.[727]

Born in St. Andrews, Scotland, Robert White (1874-1959) immigrated to the United States in 1894 to study agronomy and one year later became the golf professional at Myopia Country Club in Hamilton, Massachusetts. White went on to design several golf courses, including a nine-hole course at the Cincinnati Golf Course and a nine-hole course for the Louisville (Kentucky) Golf Course. In 1902 White became the greenkeeper for the Ravisloe Country Club near Chicago and remained at the club for 12 years. During this time, he helped organize the PGA and later served as the association's first president from 1917 to 1919. Like Travis, Harban, and William S. Flynn, White was a pioneer in scientific turfgrass management and in addition attended the University of Wisconsin's "Farmers' School" to learn about grass and turf management.[728] Over the course of his career, White laid out, planned, and rebuilt a number of courses, primarily in the Mid-Atlantic. He later went on to become one of the founding members of the Society of Golf Course Architects in 1946.[729]

At the time the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds approached White to work at East Potomac Park, he was working as the professional/superintendent at

724 "East Potomac Park Course Is Not Regarded As Sporty," *Baltimore Sun,* 29 June 1923:14.
725 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 44.
726 Various letters from Superintendent Gillen to White, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.; Walter J. Travis Society, "Travis Course Projects," accessed 19 April 2016, https://travissociety.com/directory-of-travis-golf-course-projects/.
727 "Chevy Chase Club Loses Pro: Notes of Golf and Golfers," *Washington Evening Star,* 4 January 1920:28.
728 "Robert White, Pro Pioneer, Dies in Myrtle Beach, S.C." accessed 1 November 2017, http://archive.lib.msu.edu/tic/golfd/article/1959aug30.pdf; Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 432.
729 American Society of Golf Course Architects, "About ASGCA," Accessed 3 June 2016, http://www.asgca.org/about-asgca; Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 432.

the Wykagyl Country Club in New Rochelle, New York. White left Washington, DC, in January of 1920, during the construction of the first nine holes of the East Potomac Park course, reportedly to take over the construction of a course on Long Island, New York.[730] After leaving Washington, White had the opportunity to visit East Potomac Park Golf Course in August 1920, not long after its opening. White later wrote to Maj. Clarence S. Ridley, Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, and congratulated him "on the excellent condition [the course] has been brought to in the short time since the seeding was done."[731] For his services as golf course expert and overseeing the construction, White was paid $450.[732]

John "Johnny" Kearns may have also played a role in the construction of Travis's layout at East Potomac Park. In May 1919 Travis wrote to Superintendent Gillen and asked if Gillen could spare "Johnny" for three months to look over the construction of a new commission of Travis's, although no last name was given.[733] Travis also noted in a letter to Superintendent Gillen that White had prepared clay models of the bunkers for "Johnny's guidance."[734] Later accounts name Johnny Kearns as a "greens construction man who builds all of [Severine G.] Leoffler's courses …"[735] Little else is known about Kearns except that he continued to work on the public golf courses as late as 1930, designing new greens at the Rock Creek Park course and working on the layout of the new golf course at Anacostia.[736]

#### Advances in Turf Management

The construction of the Travis-designed course at East Potomac Park coincided with important experimentation on and advancements in turfgrass management in the United States, and during its construction the course was used as a testing ground for a new method of turf propagation. East Potomac Park Golf Course's role in these advances was in part due to the involvement of Dr. Walter. S. Harban, who had initially recommended Travis to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and played a role in its design and construction (Figure 1.46).

In 1906, after encountering several problems with the turf at the Columbia Country Club, Harban sought help from scientists at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and began a working relationship with agrostologists Dr.

730 "Robert White, Pro Pioneer, Dies in Myrtle Beach, S.C." accessed 1 November 2017, http://archive.lib.msu.edu/tic/golfd/article/1959aug30.pdf; "Chevy Chase Club Loses Pro," *Washington Evening Star,* 4 January 1920:28.

731 Letter from Major Ridley to Robert White, 22 September 1920, Record Group 42, Entry 97, Box 35, Subject File No. 312, National Archives, Washington, DC.

732 Undated, RG 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.

733 Letter from Walter J. Travis to Superintendent of Parks F. F. Gillen, 27 May 1919, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.

734 Ibid.

735 "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 31 July 1930:C2.

736 "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 31 July 1930:C2; "9-Hole Golf Course is Being Built Along Eastern Branch," *Washington Evening Star,* 21 October 1930:D3.



**Figure 1.46.** Dr. Walter S. Harban, 1921. (Library of Congress)

Charles Vancouver Piper (1867-1926) and Dr. Russell A. Oakley (1880-1931). Harban's inquiry, along with another in 1908 by golf architect Charles B. MacDonald, prompted Piper and Oakley to undertake an investigation of problems at golf clubs across the country and publish a series of articles on turfgrass. After a formal request from the USGA for help with golf course turfgrass problems, the USDA established the Arlington Turf Garden in 1916 at its Arlington Experimental Farm in Virginia, where Piper, Oakley, and other USDA scientists grew, evaluated and selected improved grasses for putting greens[737] (Figure 1.47). In 1917, during Travis's initial design work on East Potomac Park Golf Course, Piper and Oakley published their most influential work on turfgrasses, *Turf for Golf Courses*.

Through the efforts of Harban, Piper, and Oakley, the greens at East Potomac Park Golf Course became the first vegetatively planted creeping bent grass greens in the country.[738] Prior to the construction of the golf course, Harban had recognized that the blockade of German shipping during World War I would result in a shortage of European bent grass seeds, believed to be the only practical grasses for putting greens in the northern United States. Working with Piper and Oakley, Harban tested if strains of creeping bent grass could be planted by stolonizing, a form of vegetative propagation that is commonly used in place of seeding for grass varieties that produce poor quality seed or insufficient amounts of seed. Samples were brought to the Arlington Turf Garden and the USDA scientists soon found that it was a much easier process than anticipated.[739]

By 1918 a sufficient amount of turf had been developed at Arlington to plant five of the new greens at East Potomac Park, the first putting greens to be planted with

737 John Monteith Jr., "Death of Walter Harban Great Loss to Greenkeeping," *Golfdom* 12, no. 4 (April 1938):23-25; USDA, "Charles Vancouver Piper (1867-1926)," accessed 1 November 2017, http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/Piper.pdf; USDA, "Arlington Turf Garden," accessed 1 November 2017, http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/Arlington.pdf; Bob Labbance, *The Old Man: The Biography of Walter J. Travis* (Chelsea, Michigan, Sleeping Bear Press 2000), 181.

738 Labbance, *The Old Man*, 182.

739 Harban is credited for developing the stolon method of planting bent grasses on golf course greens. John Monteith Jr., "Death of Walter Harban Great Loss to Greenkeeping," *Golfdom* 12, no. 4 (April 1938):23-25; USDA, "Charles Vancouver Piper (1867-1926)," accessed 1 November 2017, http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/Piper.pdf; USDA, "Arlington Turf Garden," accessed 1 November 2017, http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/Arlington.pdf; Labbance, *The Old Man*, 181.



**Figure 1.47.** Golf green experiments conducted at Arlington Farm, 1929. (Library of Congress)

this method.[740] The greens at East Potomac Park provided additional evidence on the feasibility and advantages of the stolon method. Unfortunately the greens, according to Oakley, were also "the victims of a combination of unfortunate conditions which resulted in their undoing. Those now responsible for the course, however, give assurance that the combination will never occur again, but with all the factors that operated against them … the greens would be in condition today, if only they had been left alone."[741] One of the problems was brown patch, a turfgrass disease caused by fungus. Dr. Oakley reported in 1923 that Hole 9A "The first green planted, promises to stage a comeback that will surprise some who thought it successfully dead and buried."[742] Letters between Piper, Oakley, and Superintendent Gillen indicate that both Piper and Oakley also provided advice to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds on the seeding of the East Potomac Park course's fairways and that both men showed much interest in the construction of the course.[743]

The failure of the greens at East Potomac Park prompted Harban to try the stolon method at the Columbia Country Club on its ninth green in the fall of 1919. This time different methods of planting and upkeep were followed and the green "attracted so much attention that it virtually 'sold' the vegetative method to the golfing fraternity."[744] The success at the Columbia Country Club led to general acceptance of the stolen method and even after the end of World War I, the use of the stolen method of propagating bent grass continued to be used for putting greens.[745] In 1920 the USDA and the USGA agreed to collaborate in the development of scientific information for golf course turf and the USGA officially established the "Green Section" on November 30, 1920, with Piper as chairman and Oakley as co-chairman. Dr. Harban served as one of the first members of the

740 R.A. Oakley, "Vegetative Planting of Bent Grasses: An Historical Sketch, *Bulletin of Green Section of the United States Golf Association* (21 April 1923): 119.
741 Ibid., 118-119.
742 Ibid., 119.
743 Various letters, RG 42, Entry 311, Box 11, National Archives, Washington, DC.
744 R.A. Oakley, "Vegetative Planting of Bent Grasses: An Historical Sketch," *Bulletin of Green Section of the United States Golf Association* (21 April 1923): 118.
745 John Monteith Jr., "Death of Walter Harban Great Loss to Greenkeeping," *Golfdom* 12, no. 4 (April 1938):23-25; W.S. Harban, "Why Some Greens Planted by the Stolon Method Have Been Unsatisfactory," *Bulletin of the Green Section of the United States Golf Association* 5, no. 8 (15 August 1925): 170.

committee. The Green Section continues today as the chief authority in turfgrass management for golf.[746]

### Changes to Travis's Course

Not long after the full eighteen holes of Travis's design were implemented, concessionaire Severine G. Leoffler made changes to two of the greens in 1924. Leoffler reported that he had made some "desirable changes, notably in reducing the excessive undulations on the fourth and fifth greens of course A." According to Leoffler, there was "considerable criticism of these greens, and we believe that, by flattening their surfaces, we have improved them."[747] These undulations were a key component of Travis's design.

The first major changes to Travis's A-B and C-D courses occurred in 1934, when the reversible courses were modified for one-way play. This shift likely resulted in the removal of a number of the hazards since they were no longer needed. As part of the 1934 improvements, Travis's greens at the course were modernized and rebuilt for pitch shots instead of run-up shots, following golf trends at that time.[748] Some changes were also made to the routing, particularly on the holes of the back nine closest to the driving range, which had to be moved when the range was built in 1934. Additional improvements were made to the course between 1938 and 1940, which continued the trend of removing many of Travis's original hazards designed for two-way play. The work by the CCC and the concessionaire involved the rebuilding of the fourth green of the B Course, all of the tees on the B Course, and most of the tees on the D Course. Afterwards, the course was described as being "toughened" and "lengthened" "into near-championship caliber"[749] (Table 1.6).

**Table 1.6. Length of the holes of the Blue Course (B and D Courses) at East Potomac Park Golf Course**

| HOLE | YARDS IN 1918* | YARDS IN 2017** |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 340 | 360 |
| 2 | 412 | 418 |
| 3 | 577 | 596 |
| 4 | 198 | 169 |
| 5 | 229 | 291 |
| 6 | 437 | 547 |
| 7 | 404 | 308 |
| 8 | 144 | 210 |
| 9 | 270 | 356 |
| * Based on 1918 Plan<br>** Based on Blue Tees | | |

746 USGA, "Green Section History," Accessed 20 July 2016, http://www.usga.org/course-care/green-section-history-ea67cd51.html.

747 "Both Muny Links Improved During the Off-Season," *Washington Post,* 18 March 1924:S3.

748 "East Potomac to Have One-Way Links," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 May 1934:D2.

749 Memorandum for Mr. Gable, Chief, Park Operators Division, Report on Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks of the District of Columbia, 17 December 1940. Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2847, National Archives, College Park, Maryland; "Thousands Find Their Sports Thrill on DC Fairways," *Washington Post,* 26 May 1939:10.

| HOLE | YARDS IN 1918* | YARDS IN 2017** |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | 489 | 311 |
| 11 | 532 | 167 |
| 12 | 421 | 456 |
| 13 | 169 | 371 |
| 14 | 329 | 410 |
| 15 | 402 | 174 |
| 16 | 462 | 432 |
| 17 | 167 | 563 |
| 18 | 372 | 393 |
| TOTAL | 6,354 | 6,532 |
| * Based on 1918 Plan<br>** Based on Blue Tees | | |

The removal of many of Travis's original features was aptly described in a 1942 report on public golf in the District of Columbia that stated that the concessionaire implemented a plan that "called for the elimination of all features, both natural and artificial, no matter how essential or valuable to the character and appearance of the courses that would have a tendency to obstruct or delay play." Consequently, "many changes were made to the original eighteen at East Potomac, entire holes were eliminated and rebuilt in new locations, holes were rerouted, bunkers, hazards and mounds were obliterated, and the same idea influenced all subsequent planning for the new courses built by the operator."[750] Additional circumstances, such as flooding in 1936 and 1942, as well as the closure of the course during World War II and subsequent lack of maintenance, also likely impacted the hazards on the course. A 1951 aerial photograph illustrates that a number of Travis's original hazards had been removed by this time (See Chapter 2.1 and the 2017 Cultural Landscape Inventory for more on changes to the course).

### THE E-F COURSE (WHITE COURSE)

#### William S. Flynn's Design

In 1924, at the same time golf course architect William S. Flynn was working on the design of the additional nine holes at Rock Creek Golf Course (see Rock Creek Golf Course below for more on Flynn and his design philosophy), Flynn also designed a new nine-hole course at East Potomac Park. Here, Flynn followed the lead of Walter J. Travis and designed the nine-hole E-F Course with a reversible layout. Severine G. Leoffler, concessionaire of East Potomac Park Golf Course, wrote to Colonel Sherrill in August 1923 about the new nine-hole course at East Potomac Park and said, "We will have Mr. Flynn make plans for a regulation nine hole reversible golf course in keeping with the other courses at East Potomac Park."[751]

750 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 11.

751 Severine G. Leoffler to Colonel Sherrill, 16 August 1923, RG 42, Entry 102, Box 48, Folder 680.481 (East Potomac Park Golf Concessions), National Archives, Washington, DC.

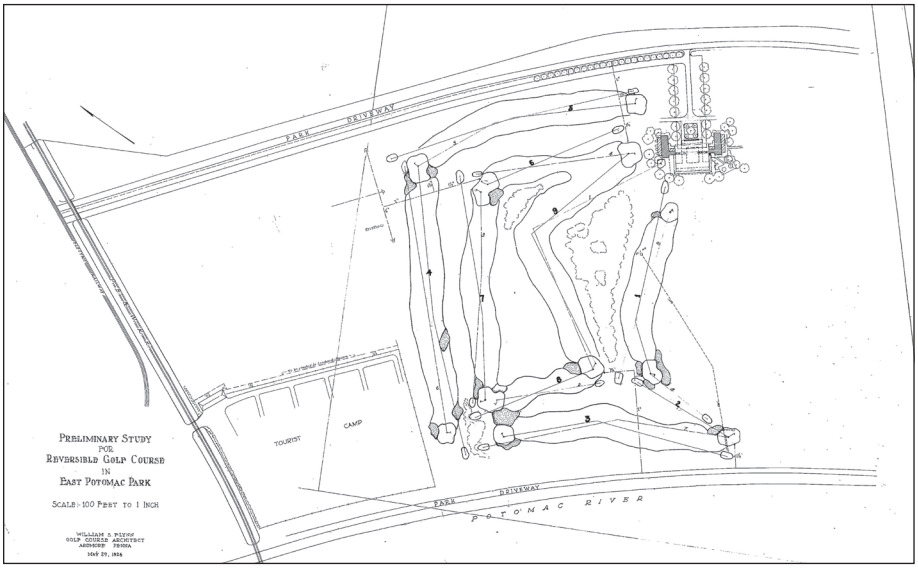



**Figure 1.48.** **Flynn's design for the 9-hole E and F Courses at East Potomac Park, 1924. (National Park Service)**

In 1919-1920 Flynn was in charge of the general construction of one of Travis's courses at the Westchester Biltmore Country Club, where Flynn observed firsthand Travis's design of a reversible course. Flynn later designed a reversible course for Edward McLean on his Friendship Estate in Washington, DC, in 1924, and a course for the Rockefeller family at their Pocantico Hills estate near Tarrytown, New York, in 1931.[752] Interestingly, Flynn designed the reversible Friendship Golf Course at or around the same time as he designed the reversible course at East Potomac Park.

Flynn's work on the E-F Course contrasted dramatically with his tendency to design parkland courses and his incorporation of trees in the layout of his courses (Figure 1.48). Compared to Rock Creek Golf Course, Flynn's nine-hole course at East Potomac Park had few trees and was limited by the flat nature of the reclaimed land. Trees that stood prior to construction were incorporated into the design, such as the grove of cherry trees that still remain, but few if any trees appear to have been added to the layout (See Chapter 2.1 for more information on the cherry trees). An aerial photograph from 1927 does not indicate any trees planted on the nine-hole Flynn course.

Although all features of the course had to be built, Flynn's emphasis on creating greens that harmonize with their natural surrounding is apparent in a description of his design for the greens for the E-F Course. In his instructions, Flynn said:

752 Wayne S. Morrison and Thomas E. Paul, *The Nature Faker: William S. Flynn, Golf Course Architect,* 6th Edition (2015), 555-558.

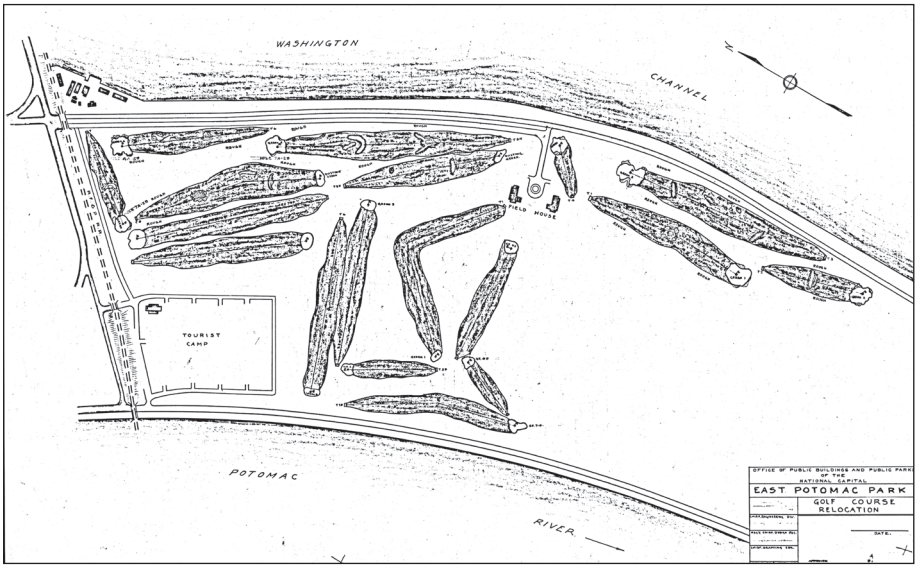



**Figure 1.49.** Plan showing the E-F and G Courses, ca. 1930. (National Park Service)

> In building new greens, it is necessary that great care be taken in their construction, the object view being to make them look as natural as possible.
>
> The slopes and outside edges of the greens should be drawn out to meet existing surface on a long grade except where a pit is close to the edge of the green.[753]

While Flynn followed Travis's lead and designed a reversible course, Flynn's E-F Course lacked the extensive dual hazards that Travis used on the A-B and C-D courses. Plans from 1924 and later aerial photographs indicate that Flynn mostly limited the hazards to greenside sand bunkers. Few other mounds or hazards are visible on the course.[754]

#### Changes to Flynn's Design

Flynn's routing for the E-F Course was modified in 1930-1931 when the G Course (today's Red Course) was built. Plans suggest that two of the holes designed by Flynn, holes five and six that were located along Ohio Drive and the Washington Channel, became holes for the G Course. Consequently, two new holes were built and the routing was modified[755] (Figure 1.49). It is possible that the course was also changed to one-way play at this time if not in 1934 when the A-B and C-D Courses were changed to one-way play and Flynn's nine-hole course became known simply as the F Course.[756] Additional changes to the routing were likely

753 Instructions from William S. Flynn, East Potomac Park Course, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.

754 William S. Flynn, P*reliminary Study for Reversible Golf Course in East Potomac Park*, 1924, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database; Tourist Camp in Potomac Park, 1931, Record Group 18-AA, Records of the Army Air Forces, Prints: "Airscapes" of American and Foreign Areas, Washington, DC, Box 150, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

755 Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, *East Potomac Park Golf Course Relocation*, 1930, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

756 "None is recorded on Three Courses," *Washington Evening Star,* 31 December 1931:B3;

made in 1934-1936 when the driving range and pool were constructed, which required removing Hole 9 and creating a new hole that used Green 18 of the D Course.

During World War II the F Course was closed when the Army used the course for anti-aircraft artillery. When Flynn redesigned the F Course in 1945 it appears to have been almost if not entirely rebuilt, although it may have reused some of the original fairways from the 1924 layout. Characteristic of his designs, Flynn's preliminary plans for the course depict numerous trees in between the fairways and around the greens. Once again a planting plan was prepared, this time by National Capital Parks.[757] Aerial photographs from the 1950s indicate that the planting plan was never executed and the course remained sparsely planted.[758]

In 1956 William F. Gordon, with his son David, was hired to make improvements to the F Course at East Potomac Park. Beginning in 1920, William F. Gordon (1893-1973) worked for the Carters Tested Seeds Company as its superintendent of its golf course construction division. In this capacity Gordon constructed courses for well-known golf architects such as Willie Park Jr., Donald Ross, and Devereux Emmet. In 1923 Gordon joined the firm of Toomey and Flynn as a construction foreman and remained at the firm until 1943.[759] After leaving Toomey and Flynn, Gordon formed his own company that was involved in seeding military installations during World War II and later constructed golf courses for golf course architects Donald Ross and J.B. McGovern from 1945 until 1950.[760] From 1950 until his death in 1973, Gordon designed and built courses under his firm William F. Gordon Co. and most of his layouts built after 1953 were completed in collaboration with his son David (see Appendix III for more on William and David Gordon).[761] As stated by Geoffrey S. Cornish and Ronald E. Whitten in *The Golf Course*, "probably no other architect in history received such broad practical experience before setting up his own practice, nor was any more imbued with the history of the art" as William F. Gordon.[762]

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Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, *East Potomac Park Golf Course Relocation,* 1930; "East Potomac to Have One-Way Links," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 May 1934:D2.

757 William S. Flynn, *Preliminary Study for Rehabilitation of Nine Hole Golf Course East Potomac Park*, 5 August 1944, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database; National Capital Parks, *Preliminary Planting Plan, 9-hole Golf Course,* 1945, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

758 United States Geological Survey, Aerial Photographs, 1951, https://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/.

759 Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 599.

760 American Society of Golf Course Architects, "About ASGCA," accessed 3 June 2016, http://www.asgca.org/about-asgca; Medford Village Country Club, "Course Designer," accessed 7 September 2016, https://www.medfordvillage.com/Golf/Course-Overview/Course-Designer.aspx.

761 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 276; Biography of William F. Gordon, accessed 6 June 2016, http://kingcrest.com/rivercup/wgordon.html-ssi.

762 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 123.

While little has been written about William and David Gordon's work and design philosophy, the overall characteristics of their designs can be gleaned from their large body of work. Some of William Gordon's more recognized courses include the Grace Course at the Saucon Valley Country Club in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, the Buena Vista Country Club in Buena, New Jersey, and the Stanwich Club in Greenwich, Connecticut. The Stanwich Club, for example, is described as "Long, tight, and relatively flat, with trees lining all 18 fairways … Perhaps its most memorable features are the Gordon-style greens … canted severely from back to front and bunkered tenaciously at their front corners, and the lakes and streams which come into play on eight holes."[763] The course is also known for William and David Gordon's "design hallmarks: big, bold, raised greens in the manner of William's primary influence, Donald Ross."[764] William Gordon was also heavily influenced by William Flynn and used greenside bunkering, particularly ones that diagonally flared out at the fronts of the greens and approaches.[765] In the description for the Medford Country Club, designed by William Gordon, the club states "William Gordon was a pioneer in the achievement of perfectly finished surfaces on greens, tees, and fairways. Many great architects realized Gordon's talents and looked to him to improve the functional and aesthetic designs of their courses."[766] Characteristic of the golf architecture of the mid-20th century, Gordon's courses also featured large greens and traps.[767]

While Gordon's redesign of the par 34, nine-hole F Course, which consisted of par three and par four holes at a total of 2,585 yards, incorporated several of Flynn's original holes, Gordon reversed the play of the holes and added several new greens. Gordon also moved the first hole of the course to the southwest side of the driving range (Figure 1.50). Aerial and oblique images illustrate few trees and only a few sand bunkers adjacent to the greens. Two of the greens were later moved in 1960 when Buckeye Drive was constructed in 1959-1963. The F Course was later demolished in 1984 and rebuilt by the late 1980s, maintaining the same routing as Gordon's 1956 design (See Chapter 2.1 and the 2017 Cultural Landscape Inventory for more on changes to the course).

763 Stanwich Golf Club, "History," accessed 27 September 2016, http://www.stanwich.com/history-new.

764 Hunki Yun, "Stanwich Golf Club," *Links* (April/May 2009), http://www.linksmagazine.com/golf_courses/stanwich-golf-club-9-28-12

765 Discussion on William F. Gordon on Golf Club Atlas, 28 December 2007, accessed 14 September 2016, http://www.golfclubatlas.com/forum/index.php?topic=32638.0%CD%BEnowap.

766 Medford Village Country Club, "Course Designer," accessed 7 September 2016, https://www.medfordvillage.com/Golf/Course-Overview/Course-Designer.aspx.

767 Discussion on William F. Gordon on Golf Club Atlas, 28 December 2007, http://www.golfclubatlas.com/forum/index.php?topic=32638.0%CD%BEnowap.

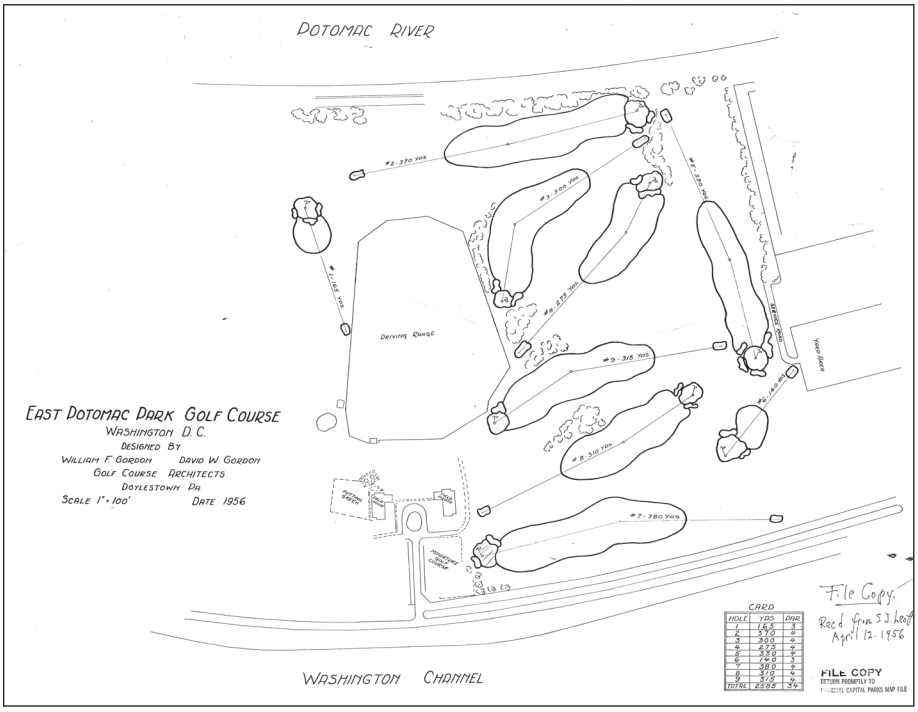



**Figure 1.50.** William and David Gordon's 1956 redesign of the F Course at East Potomac Park. (National Park Service)

### THE G COURSE (RED COURSE)

The G Course (currently the Red Course) was built by concessionaire Severine G. Leoffler between 1930 and 1931 on the south side of the fieldhouse. Although the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and Leoffler hired respected architects Travis and Flynn to design the initial courses at East Potomac Park, by 1930 Leoffler's primary concern was getting more players onto the course and making a profit. Consequently the course was likely designed without the expertise of a golf architect.[768] A circa 1930 plan of the course illustrates several interestingly shaped bunkers and mounds, perhaps inspired by Travis's design for the A-B and C-D courses. However, while a 1931 oblique photograph of the course illustrates several sand bunkers, the course appeared to lack mounds or slight undulations in topography within the fairways or along the greens.[769] Similar to the E-F Course, few trees and other plantings appear to have been added to the G Course after its construction.

In 1950 golf architect William F. Gordon redesigned the course after five of the course's holes on the north side of the fieldhouse were removed in 1941 to make room for new tennis courts and ballfields. Consequently, one of the four holes on the south side of the clubhouse was reconfigured into two holes, leaving the G Course a five-hole course during World War II (Figure 1.51). Gordon's redesign

768 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 10.

769 Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, *East Potomac Park Golf Course Relocation*, ca. 1930, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database; Tourist Camp in Potomac Park, 1931, Record Group 18-AA, Records of the Army Air Forces, Prints: "Airscapes" of American and Foreign Areas, Washington, DC, Box 150, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

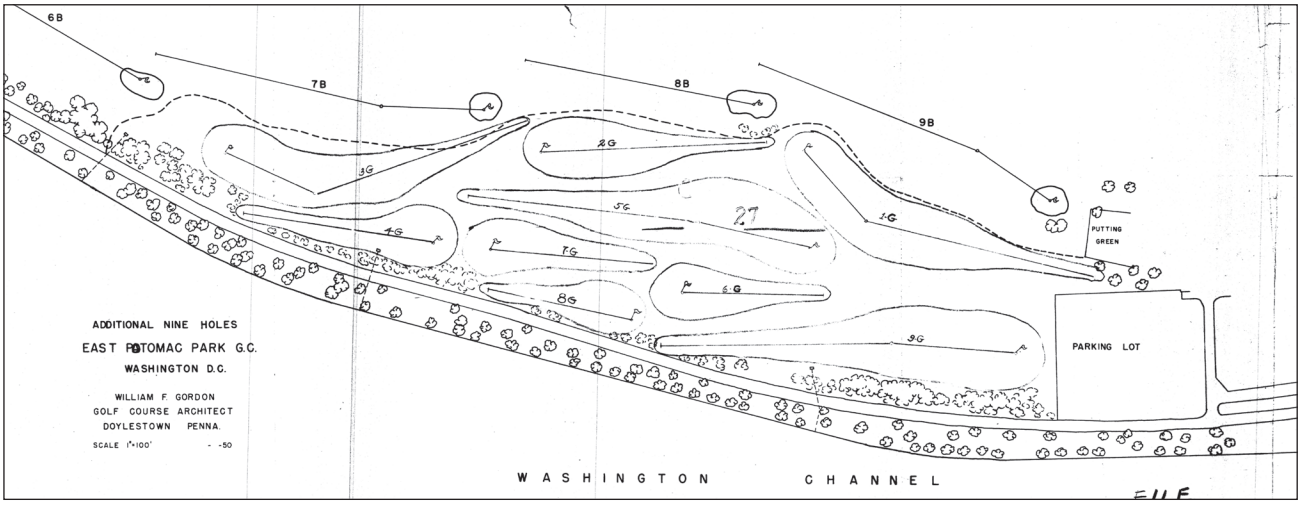



**Figure 1.51. Gordon's 1950 design of the G Course at East Potomac Park Golf Course. (National Park Service)**

for the par-three course squeezed nine holes into a relatively small area along the Washington Channel side of the B Course, south of the parking lot adjacent to the fieldhouse. The course was, and remains today, a pitch-and-putt course for beginners and lacks many of the elements that are characteristic of a Gordon-designed course. The course has also been heavily modified. The parking lot was expanded between 2001 and 2002, requiring the rerouting of several holes. In addition, the routing was altered when three practice greens were added to the course in 1998.

## THE EAST POTOMAC PARK FIELDHOUSE

### Initial Construction

Architect/landscape architect Horace Whittier Peaslee Jr. of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds designed the fieldhouse at East Potomac Park Golf Course, built between 1917 and 1920 of sculptural concrete aggregate developed by local craftsman John J. Earley. Over his career of more than 50 years in Washington, DC, Horace Peaslee (1884–1959) made a significant contribution in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, and historic preservation that fundamentally shaped the appearance and development of Washington, DC. While employed at the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, as landscape architect and later architect, Peaslee not only designed the fieldhouse at East Potomac Park Golf Course, but many other notable projects in the District of Columbia including Meridian Hill Park, "the crowning achievement of Peaslee's career and one of the country's most artistically notable urban parks"[770] (See Appendix II for more on Peaslee).

[770] Kim Williams, Historic Preservation Review Board Historic Landmark Case No. 15-15, 23 July 2015, http://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/publication/attachments/Historic%20Landmark%20Nomination%203020%20Albemarle%20Street%20NW%20%20Staff%20Report%20Case%2015%2014.pdf.

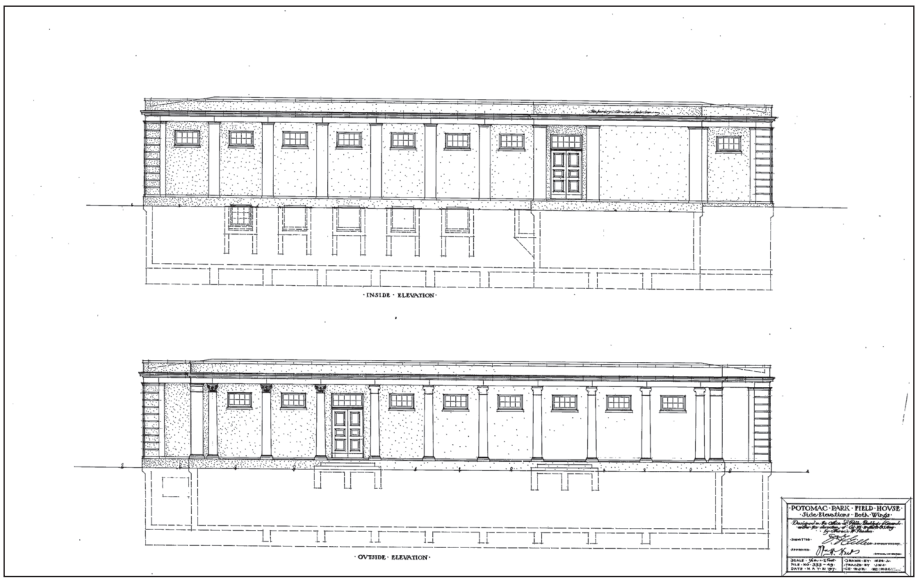



**Figure 1.52.** Drawing of the side elevations of the wings of the fieldhouse, 1917. (National Park Service)

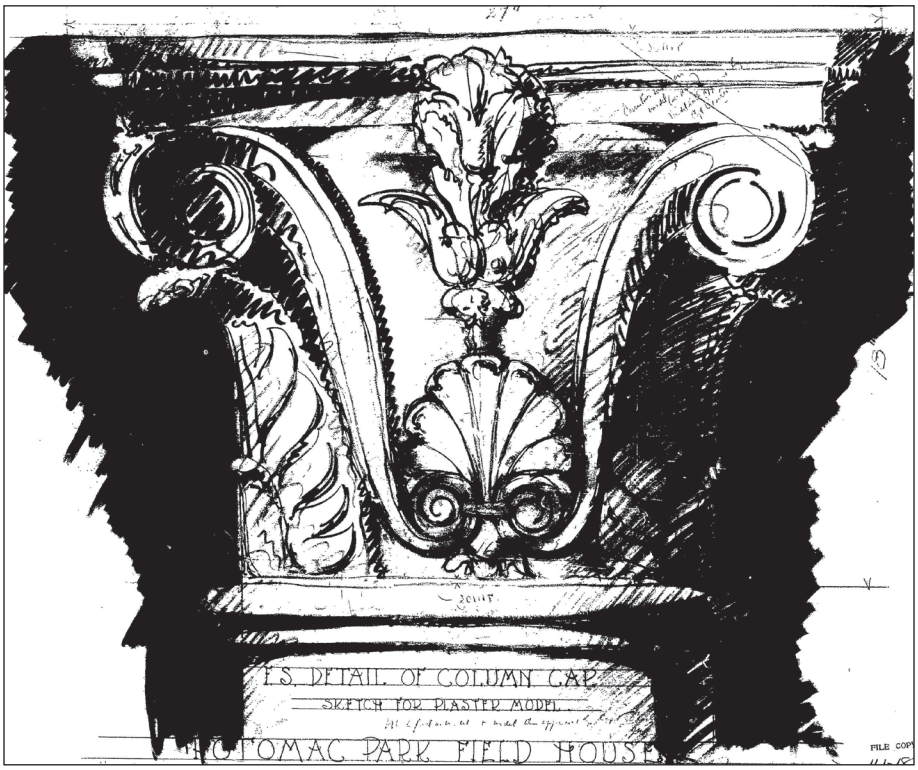



**Figure 1.53.** Detail of the column capitals of the fieldhouse, ca. 1917. (National Park Service)

For the East Potomac Park fieldhouse, Peaslee designed a neoclassical building that also incorporated landscape features, illustrating his background in landscape architecture. Facing the Washington Channel, the center block of the U-shaped building contained a large assembly room on one side and a refectory with counter and table service and a kitchen on the other. Connecting the two sections and the centerpiece of the building was a square-shaped open courtyard surrounded by an arched colonnaded loggia. In the courtyard's center was a round reflecting pool, gravel walks, and formal landscaping. Identical L-shaped wings on each side of the main block held men's locker room and women's locker room facilities and featured large, open porches with Corinthian columns that lined the side elevations of the wings (Figures 1.52–1.53).[771]

The total estimate for the fieldhouse was $200,000 and the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds received a $50,000 appropriation for fiscal year 1917 and another identical appropriation for fiscal year 1918. The construction of the two wings containing the locker rooms was around 50 percent complete by the end of the fiscal year 1918.[772] The central portion of the fieldhouse was never completed, likely due to lack of funding. Consequently, the wings consolidated the functions of the sections of the main block that were never built. The west wing held the women's locker rooms, offices, and storage rooms on the main floor, and laundry facilities and additional storage in the basement. The east wing had a dining room, lunch counter, men's locker rooms, and a golf professional shop on the first floor and the kitchen, pantry, and cold storage in the basement.[773]

To build the fieldhouse, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds awarded a contract to A.C. Moses Construction Company of Washington, DC, who in turn contracted with John J. Earley (1881-1945) to build the exterior, decorative features of the building.[774] A fifth generation craftsman, Earley became an apprentice in his father's studio in Rosslyn, Virginia, at the age of 17 and assumed control of the Earley Studio in 1906 after his father's death. The studio originally focused on stone ornamental sculpture, but under the direction of John Earley and his associate Basil Taylor, the studio shifted its focus to plaster and stucco work. Between 1911 and 1914 Earley became interested in experiments being conducted by the Bureau of Standards on the problems associated with Portland cement applied

771 Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, Various Plans of the Fieldhouse, 1917, drawings, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

772 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (1918), 1931.

773 Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Parks Historic District*, 76.

774 An estimate from the A.C. Moses Construction Company, who was contracted to build the fieldhouse, indicates that Early was contracted to construct many of the architectural details of the fieldhouse including the porch ceilings panels, columns, architrave, and columns at an estimated cost of around $18,000, A.C. Moses Construction Co. to Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, 18 September 1918, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.

over metal lathe. Earley's experiments with the Bureau of Standards coincided with his work with the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds at Meridian Hill Park where he experimented with a method of creating decorative exposed-aggregate concrete, a process that he later patented in 1921 and became the basis for the concrete work produced at the Earley Studio.[775]

Earley's work at East Potomac Park occurred shortly after his work at Meridian Hill Park and the Bureau of Standards and his concrete aggregate finishes for the fieldhouse were similar to those he created for the park. In 1920 the East Potomac Park fieldhouse was featured in a presentation entitled "New Developments in Surface-Treated Concrete and Stucco" given at the American Concrete Institute's annual convention by John Earley and J.C. Pearson. Pearson and Earley were both on the Advisory Committee of the Bureau of Standard's Stucco Investigation and on the Committee on Treatment of Concrete Surfaces of the American Concrete Institute. Earley's work at the East Potomac Park fieldhouse, Meridian Hill Park, and other locations were described in detail, explaining his method and experiments in his process.[776]

At East Potomac the wings of the fieldhouse were constructed of stucco on terra cotta tile while the portico was precast concrete. Both the stucco and the concrete were exposed aggregate of Potomac River gravel that were the same color and texture. On the portico, Earley used "an interesting combination" of "precast work, monolithic concrete (poured in place), and stucco, all the same color and texture." In their presentation, Earley and Pearson illustrated the corners of the fieldhouse that showed "the excellence of technique in the building up of the corner quoins" and the Corinthian capitals of the porch that were cast in one piece. They also noted that the surface treatment was applied to the undercuts as well as to the more exposed portions of the building and that attention should be called to the "close disposition of the larger pieces of aggregate and the evenness of the texture."[777]

One year after the conference, Earley patented his "new and useful Improvements in Methods of Producing a Predetermined Color Effect in Concrete and Stucco," a method that was primarily applied to stucco but could also be used for "concrete floors, ornamental urns, pillars, arches, balustrades, building details, etc." In his patent, Earley specifically listed the East Potomac Park fieldhouse, along with the entrance to Meridian Hill Park and three other buildings, as examples of where this method could be seen. The aggregate gradation developed by Earley and used

[775] Lori Renee Aument, *Experiment in Concrete: John J. Earley at Meridian Hill Park, Washington, DC, History, Technology, and Characterization of Exposed Aggregate Concrete* (Masters Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1999), 17-18.

[776] American Concrete Institute, *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention* (Detroit, Michigan: American Concrete Institute, 1920), 77-82.

[777] Ibid.

in the East Potomac Park fieldhouse was an important innovative technique used in the concrete work by his studio and "offered the artistic control desired by John Earley in his search for an expression of form, texture, and color in concrete."[778]

#### Changes to the Building

Early photographs of the fieldhouse at East Potomac Park indicate that the open porch or loggia on the south wing that faced Travis's eighteen-hole course was enclosed by large wood-framed windows (see Figure 2.3 on page 220). Both of the wings were remodeled in 1936 as part of the swimming pool construction that added dressing areas to the basements of both wings.[779] By the 1960s a lean-to had been built on the southeast elevation of the east wing, enclosing the porch and enlarging the seating area in the dining room. The lean-to was removed during the 1978 renovation of the building.[780] At this time the DC Recreation Department built a separate bathhouse for the swimming pool and the wings were no longer used in connection with the pool. Since 1979 the northeast wing of the fieldhouse has functioned as the District One Sub-Station for the US Park Police.[781] While little if no original features remain from the interior of the building, alterations to the exterior have mostly been limited to changes to the fenestration.

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF ROCK CREEK GOLF COURSE

### WILLIAM S. FLYNN AND ROCK CREEK GOLF COURSE

When the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds hired William S. Flynn (1890-1945) to aid in the design of the new nine-hole golf course at Rock Creek Park in January 1922, he had already designed, redesigned, or constructed around a dozen golf courses, primarily located in Pennsylvania[782] (Figure 1.54). Right before and during the planning of Rock Creek Golf Course, Flynn was involved in several projects in the Washington, DC, area, a result of his ties to Walter Travis, Dr. Charles Piper, Dr. Russell Oakley, and Dr. Walter Harban.[783] All of these connec-



**Figure 1.54.** William S. Flynn (1890-1945). (Courtesy Wayne Morrison)

778 Aument, *Experiment in Concrete*, 21-22.
779 Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Parks Historic District*, 8-76.
780 Photograph of Interior of the Fieldhouse at East Potomac Park Golf Course, 26 June 1964, National Capital Region Museum Resource Center; *Renovation of East Potomac Park Golf Course Clubhouse*, 1974, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.
781 Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Parks Historic District*, 8-76.
782 Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 2299.
783 Flynn, Piper, Oakley, and Harban, along with Hugh Irvine Wilson, were instrumental in forming the National Green Section of the USGA. Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 497.

tions also likely led to Flynn being hired to consult on the design of the first nine holes of Rock Creek Golf Course.

Letters from 1918 indicate that William S. Flynn may have initially been hired to oversee the construction or as a consultant for the first nine holes of Travis's A-B Course at East Potomac Park, prior to the hiring of Robert White. In a letter from Flynn in May 1918, with the letterhead "W.S. Flynn Consulting Golf Expert," Flynn states that he was trying to get a rate on mushroom soil for the course and suggested that soil from the proposed pits be used for the construction of the greens.[784] In late September 1918 Superintendent Gillen wrote to Colonel Ridley and indicated that Travis would be in Washington, DC, on October 2 to "inspect the golf greens" and that Dr. Harban had "offered the services of his expert to put the greens in final shape. It will therefore not be necessary for Mr. Flynn to send a man for this purpose."[785] In early December Superintendent Gillen asked the Chief of Engineers to approve hiring Robert White "in the position of golf expert for the work at East Potomac Park." Gillen stated that "Authority now exists for the employment of Mr. Flynn at $75.00 a week. Mr. Flynn will be unable to accept employment on this work . . ."[786]

One year later Flynn worked with Walter J. Travis on the redesign of the course at the Washington Golf and Country Club. According to the *Washington Herald*, Travis completed the original plans for the new course and Flynn, along with Hugh Irvine Wilson, "an authority on course construction," were hired to make changes to Travis's design and oversee the construction. The newspaper called Flynn "a protégé of Walter Travis."[787] Piper, Oakley, Wilson and Flynn were all working on improving the turf at the Washington Golf and Country Club as early as 1917. The club later hired Flynn to complete additional redesigns to the course in 1922.[788]

During the initial planning stages of the course at Rock Creek, Flynn was also working in the Washington, DC, area on two private golf courses. In 1921 Flynn worked with Travis and Dr. Harban on the redesign of the Columbia Country Club where Harban was a member and where he had helped both Oakley and Piper to conduct turfgrass experiments after the initial experiments at East Potomac Park. While it is unclear if Flynn's services were agronomic or architectural, the club's 1921 annual report states that both Travis and Flynn were paid $300 for

784 Letter from William S. Flynn to Mr. D.V. Stroop, 5 May 1918, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.
785 Superintendent Gillen to Col. Ridley, 28 September 1918, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 11, National Archives, Washington, DC.
786 Superintendent to Mr. Concklin, 11 December 1918, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.
787 "Local Golf Clubs Plan Improvement of Courses," *Washington Herald,* 16 December 1919, 10.
788 Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 494-497.

their services.[789] In 1921 Flynn also designed a new nine-hole course for the Town and Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland (formerly the Washington Suburban Golf Club and now the Woodmont Country Club).[790]

#### Flynn's Influences and Design Philosophy

Although he was born and raised in Massachusetts, Flynn is considered to be part of the "Philadelphia School of Golf Architecture," described by golf historian John Ott as "just a collection of primarily five to six close friends and golfing companions who became transfixed by golf architecture and the creative and adventurous possibilities of the art in the incipient years of golf architecture in America who collaborated freely with each other, as friends might, and with others of their day they respected."[791] In addition to Flynn, architects associated with the Philadelphia School are George Crump (1871-1918), Hugh Irvine Wilson (1879-1925), George C. Thomas Jr. (1873-1932), Henry C. Fownes (1856-1935) and his son William C. Fownes Jr. (1878-1950), and A. W. Tillinghast (1876-1942).[792] Flynn had moved to the Philadelphia area in 1910 to aid in the construction of the Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, and continued living in the Philadelphia area until his death in 1945.

While working at the Merion Golf Club, Flynn developed a close professional relationship with golf architect Hugh Irvine Wilson, who shared Flynn's interest in turfgrass and designed Merion's East Course. Flynn also learned from Wilson's time in the British Isles where he played and studied courses and sketched features that most impressed him.[793] During the 15 years or so that they worked together, Flynn and Wilson brought innovative changes to American golf course architecture by incorporating strategy and a natural aesthetic into golf course design and as two of the leading experts in the United States on turfgrasses.[794]

After World War I Flynn established a partnership with Howard C. Toomey, a civil engineer who had also played a role in the construction on the East Course at the Merion Golf Club. Toomey handled bookkeeping and the construction aspects while Flynn took care of the actual designs of the golf courses. By offering both design and construction, Toomey and Flynn had a competitive advantage over other firms. Several prominent designers worked for the Toomey and Flynn firm as construction foremen before branching out on their own, including Robert Lawrence, Dick Wilson, and William F. Gordon, who was later hired by Leoffler to

789 Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 582.
790 This course is no longer extant. "T. and C. Golf Course to Provide Real Test," *Washington Sunday Star,* 30 October 1921:27.
791 Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 18.
792 Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 18; Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 59.
793 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 67-70.
794 Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 39.

make improvements to the East Potomac Park and other municipal golf courses in Washington, DC.[795]

By the time of Flynn's untimely death in 1945 at the age of 54, Flynn had designed more than 35 courses and remodeled or expanded around 30 more. The climax and masterpiece of his career is Flynn's 1929-1931 redesign of the Shinnecock Hills Golf Country Club on Long Island, New York, praised for its beautiful routing and use of natural terrain and the site of several USGA tournaments, including the 1986 and 1998 US Opens.[796] In addition to the courses mentioned above, his work in the Washington, DC, area also includes the construction of the course at the Burning Tree Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland, (1924) and the course at the Beaver Dam Country Club (1927), in Landover, Maryland, and the redesign of the course at Indian Spring, in Montgomery County, Maryland (1945).[797]

Since most of Flynn's courses were designed in the 1920s and 1930s when open land was plentiful, his designs are known as being bucolic and beautiful as well as challenging. They tend to be parkland courses, laid out on rolling terrain with large mature trees. Since earth moving was challenging at the time, Flynn's courses also exhibit a natural, harmonious feeling – one of Flynn's most evident design features was his use of natural features in combination with areas that required heavy engineering to create a natural effect. Flynn termed his design process as "scientific" and limited his projects in order to spend ample time on site. He often produced several iterations of routing and hole designs until he came up with the ideal layout to meet his clients' requirements and what the topography and engineering capabilities of the day would allow. He was also known as an innovator, and routinely installed three separate sets of tee boxes on his designs and insisted that the shortest set be labeled "forward tees" instead of "ladies tees" so that men would not be discouraged from using them.[798]

In 1922 Flynn spent two days at the Rock Creek site going over the grounds to locate the tees and greens. The Office of Public Buildings and Grounds developed the plans for the course based on Flynn's recommendations for the first nine holes of Rock Creek Golf Course[799] (Figure 1.55). Flynn visited the golf course in early

795 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 71; Golf Club Atlas, Feature Interview with Wayne Morrison, December 2009, accessed 15 September 2016, http://golfclubatlas.com/feature-interview/wayne-morrison-december-2009/.

796 Alister MacKenzie Foundation, "Other Golden Age Architects," accessed 26 July 2016, http://alistermackenziefoundation.org/about/his-contemporaries/.

797 The courses at Beaver Dam and Indian Spring are no longer extant. The Indian Spring course was Flynn's last design before his death and the construction was completed by William Gordon. See *The Nature Faker*, 2214.

798 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 262; Joe Logan, "Appreciating a Master's Legacy: William S. Flynn Designed Courses in the 1920s and 1930s. They are Still Special," *Philadelphia Inquirer,* 14 May 2000; Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 45-46.

799 Bushong, *Rock Creek Park*, 119.

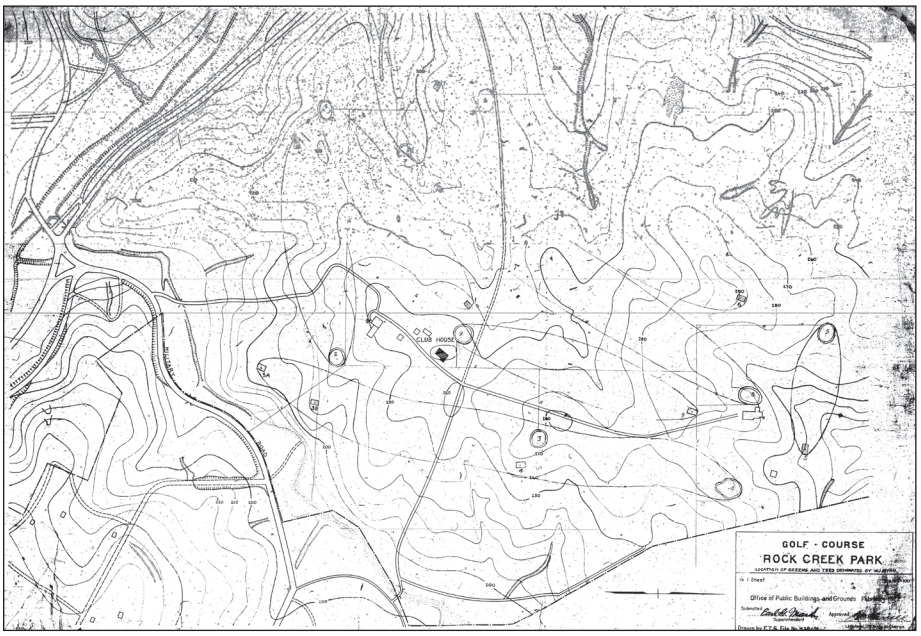



**Figure 1.55.** Plan of Rock Creek Golf Course, 1922. (National Park Service)

August 1924 to determine if an additional nine holes could be built on the existing golf course. During his visit, he also staked out the new course. Following the visit, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds surveyed the property and created a tracing of the golf course layout. After this was completed, Flynn developed the plans for the greens, tees, and fairways. When the Army Corps of Engineers had made enough progress on the tree clearing, Flynn returned to look over the work and make any necessary revisions to the plan. Once the detailed plans had been prepared, construction started on the greens and Flynn returned to inspect them.[800]

Flynn believed that the "topography of the ground should have a bearing in the outlining of the fairways, they being designed with the idea of producing character rather than the commonplace straight line effect of a decade ago."[801] He also said that "Natural topographical features should always be developed in presenting problems in the play. As a matter of fact such features are much more to be desired than man-made tests for they are generally much more attractive."[802] As explained by Wayne S. Morrison and Thomas E. Paul in *The Nature Faker: William S. Flynn, Golf Course Architect*, "Flynn designed courses offering a complete test of golf, one that tests both the golfer's strategic decision making as well as his physical ability to execute the shot … Flynn tested the player with a full variety of shot requirements throughout the round that flowed with the terrain and often reached a

800 Various letters from Flynn and Capt. E. E. Haring, Corps of Engineers, 1924, Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 30, Folder 618.21, National Archives, Washington, DC.

801 William S. Flynn, "Golf Course Architecture and Construction: Designing the Course – Part II," *The Bulletin of the United States Golf Association Green Section* (September 1927):176.

802 William S. Flynn, "Golf Couse Architecture and Construction, Analysis of Layout," *The Bulletin of the United States Golf Association Green Section* (October 1927):198.




**Figure 1.56.** Map showing Flynn's design of the expansion of Rock Creek Golf Course, 1926. (National Park Service)

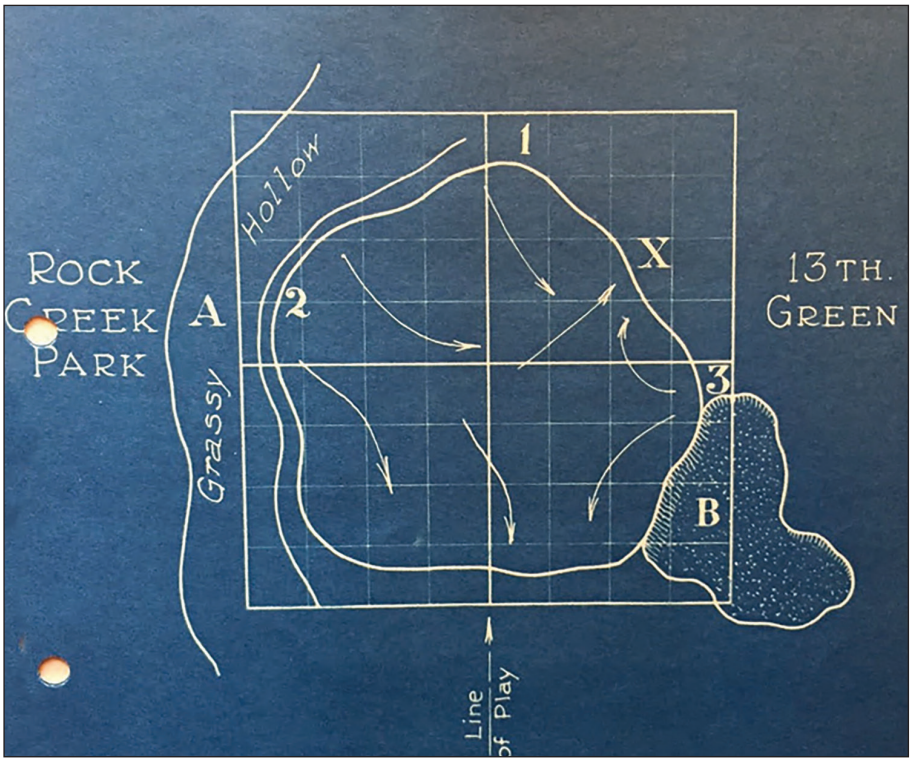



**Figure 1.57.** Flynn's design of the 13th green at Rock Creek Golf Course (National Archives)

crescendo on the final holes of the back nine."[803] Wayne Morrison also states that, "Flynn was the finest router of golf courses, electing to use bold lines of play into and across topographic features."[804]

Flynn's attention to and incorporation of topography is evident in his 1924 design of the eighteen-hole course at Rock Creek Golf Course (Figure 1.56). Here, particularly on the back nine holes, Flynn's layout traverses the hilly topography of the site and leads the player into several challenging downhill shots and then back with a narrow, 478-yard par 5 uphill shot. One hole in particular, today's Hole 16 (Flynn's Hole 6B), was often described as "cardiac hill" or "heart attack hill" with "a beautiful 370-yard downhill dogleg with a breathtaking tee elevated 80 feet above the wooded fairway."[805]

Flynn characteristically designed his greens with interplays of continuous slopes rather than obvious internal contours and often built the greens to tie in naturally to their surroundings, making it difficult to discern subtle slopes. As stated by Flynn himself,

> The principal thought in designing a golf course is to produce 18 interesting holes with variety of play. A course which has variety of play and character in its natural state can readily be made even more interesting by the installation of a limited number of man-made hazards.[806]

While detailed drawings of all of the holes at Rock Creek were not found, the drawings for Hole 13 illustrate Flynn's philosophy using continuous slopes, which differed from East Potomac Park Golf Course architect Walter J. Travis's use of undulations on the greens. Here, Flynn also included a greenside bunker and a natural grassy hollow as hazards around the green (Figure 1.57). Aerial photographs from 1927 and 1948 show very few bunkers and those built tend to be greenside bunkers on the front side of the green.

Although designed around six years apart, Flynn's design for the eighteen-hole course at Rock Creek Park drastically contrasted from Travis's design at East Potomac Park. The dramatic topography of the site along with dense trees was already in stark contrast to the flat, treeless links-style course at East Potomac Park. Yet perhaps the most noticeable difference was Flynn's limited use of sand traps and other hazards compared to Travis's reversible course. At Rock Creek, Flynn had the advantage of the natural topography and hazards to create a strategic

803 Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 47.
804 Golf Club Atlas, Feature Interview with Wayne Morrison, December 2009, accessed 15 September 2016, http://golfclubatlas.com/feature-interview/wayne-morrison-december-2009/.
805 The direction of play of "Cardiac Hill" has also been reversed. Thomas Boswell, "Cardiac Hill Goes the Way of the Niblick," *Washington Post,* 11 July 1975:D1.
806 Quoted in Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 47.

design and did not need to rely on the mounds, humps and hollows, and bunkers that were necessary on the links-style course at East Potomac Park.

Flynn's use of the natural landscape to challenge the player was evident in his design for the original Hole 5 for the 1924 expansion of the course. The short 175-yard par three hole was situated in the woods and required a short mashie (an iron used for lofting or medium distances equivalent to today's 5-iron) pitch across a ravine with a small creek at the bottom. This hole was located adjacent to the original path of Military Road and in 1924, Capt. E.E. Haring of the Army Corps of Engineers wrote to Flynn and stated that the hole was "very pretty and we have received some very flattering commendations on the location, but I presume we will have to screen the road in rear of green."[807]

Flynn also had a modern perspective on the use of trees in the design of a golf course that greatly differed from the architects in the decades prior. As explained by Morrison and Paul in *The Nature Faker*,

> Flynn's ideas represented a new approach to golf design and one that remains controversial today. In America there probably is no greater source of dispute on classic course restorations where trees have proliferated. There are tree huggers and tree haters and few philosophies in between. The fact is that Flynn spent a great deal of time studying trees and using them in both strategic and aesthetic ways on golf courses.[808]

As a design philosophy, Flynn often used trees to segregate holes, a design characteristic also used by George Crump at the Pine Valley Golf Club, where Flynn began consulting in 1919. While Flynn appreciated views and the effects of wind on play, he used the setting to determine his use of trees. In forested sites Flynn often cut corridors through the woodlands for the fairways instead of razing them. When the golf course covered a site that was previously farmland, Flynn often planted trees to enhance angles of play and separate adjacent holes. Flynn often had the trees planted 40 yards from the centerline, creating an 80-yard wide fairway. Flynn said,

> The pleasantest type of course is one where the holes are segregated, that is where the hole you happen to be playing is well apart from the others. In order to have this kind of course it is necessary to secure property that is already wooded or to do considerable planting of trees.[809]

While some of the Rock Creek Golf Course site was cleared from its previous use as farmland, it also contained areas that were heavily wooded. Flynn's use of

807 Letter from Capt. E.E. Haring to William S. Flynn, 16 October 1924, Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 30, Folder 618.21, National Archives, Washington, DC.
808 Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 89.
809 Morrison and Paul. *The Nature Faker*, 89.



**Figure 1.58.** Rock Creek Golf Course, looking east, 1950. (National Park Service)

wooded corridors to segregate holes is particularly evident in the back nine holes of the course, which are cut through the dense woods of the park on hilly terrain. As described by the *Washington Herald* in October 1924, "Groves of trees will separate the fairways on the new course. When completed the course, its designers believe, will be equaled for scenic beauty by few in the country"[810] (Figure 1.58).

### CHANGES TO THE COURSE

Changes to Rock Creek Golf Course from the rerouting of Military Road between 1946 and 1958 were completed by William F. Gordon, retained by the National Park Service in 1946 after the death of Flynn in January 1945. The rerouting of the road resulted in changes to several of the holes on the front nine – in particular, Holes 3 and 5 and part of Hole 4 were in the path of the new road. Since the project reduced the overall acreage of the front nine holes, Gordon had limited space to keep the course a full eighteen holes. Consequently he was forced to shorten Hole 3, move Hole 4 to the general location of Hole 5 and squeeze in a new Hole 5 between the new Hole 4 and the existing Hole. 6.

In 1975, the concessionaire at Rock Creek Golf Course drastically altered the scenic and challenging back nine by eliminating Flynn's original Hole 14 (or Hole 5B). Green 13 became the green for a new 128-yard, par-three Hole 15. In addition, the difficult uphill Hole 10 was chopped into two holes – an easy 265-yard par four and a 128-yard par three[811] (Figure 1.59). Between 1982 and 1985 the back nine was restored to its original form.[812] Since then a few changes have

[810] No title, *Washington Herald*, 18 October 1924, found in Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 48, Folder 680.481 (Rock Creek Golf Concessions), National Archives, Washington, DC.

[811] Thomas Boswell, "Cardiac Hill Goes the Way of the Niblick," *Washington Post,* 11 July 1975:D1.

[812] Bob Arnebeck, "Heart-Attack Hill: Survival and Loathing on the Back nine at Rock Creek's Golf Course," *Washington Post,* 19 May 1985:SM18; "Park Service Seeking Operator for Langston Golf Course in SE," *Washington Post,* 5 May 1982:DC10.

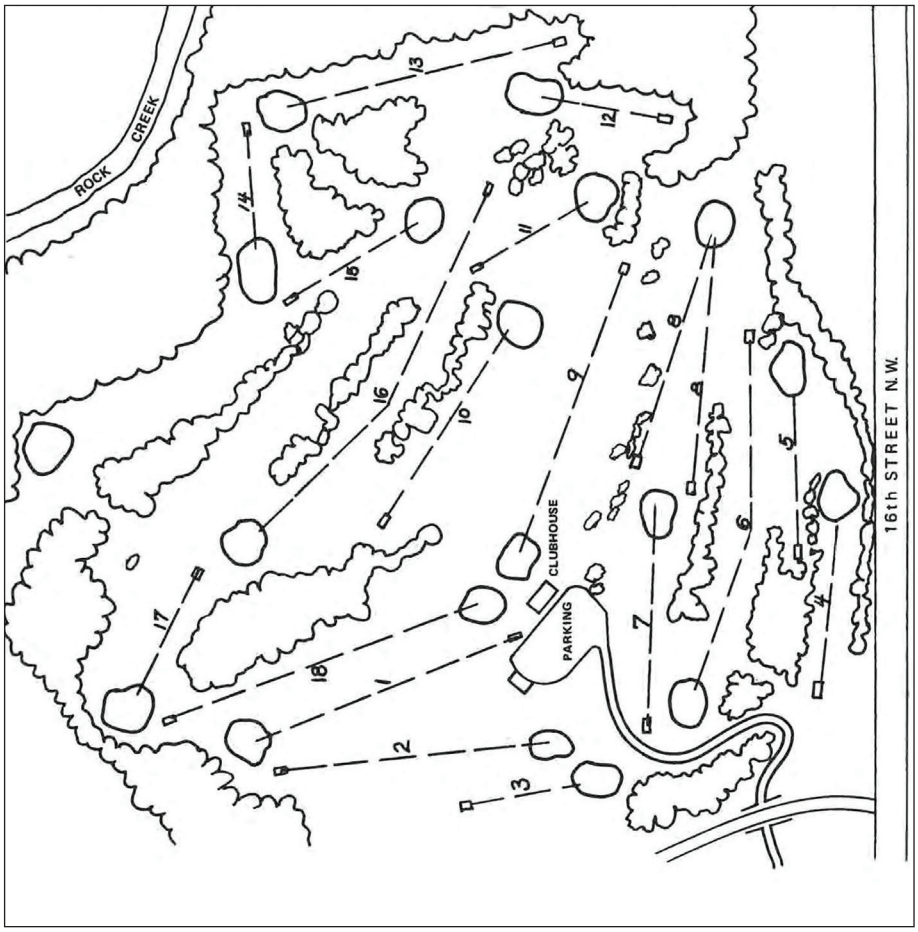



**Figure 1.59.** Map of Rock Creek Golf Course showing changes to the back nine, 1977. (National Park Service)

| HOLE | YARDS IN 1926 | YARDS IN 2017* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 334 | 302 |
| 2 | 278 | 285 |
| 3 | 175 | 160 |
| 4 | 340 | 173 |
| 5 | 92 | 202 |
| 6 | 225 | 360 |
| 7 | 334 | 303 |
| 8 | 481 | 270 |
| 9 | 334 | 330 |
| 10 | 508 | 400 |
| 11 | 164 | 169 |
| 12 | 325 | 315 |
| 13 | 174 | 170 |
| 14 | 330 | 339 |
| 15 | 478 | 371 |
| 16 | 437 | 370 |
| 17 | 162 | 200 |
| 18 | 374 | 342 |
| TOTAL | 5,545 | 5,061 |
| *Based on White Tees | | |

**Table 1.7.** Length of holes of Rock Creek Golf Course

occurred to its routing. Hole 15 and Hole 16 have been switched (Flynn's Hole 15 is now Hole 16 and vice versa) and the location of the greens are reversed (today's Hole 15 is now an uphill shot and Hole 16 is a downhill shot), a change that may have been recommended by Flynn in 1927[813] (See Table 1.7, Chapter 2.1, and the 2017 Cultural Landscape Inventory for more on changes to the course).

#### ROCK CREEK GOLF COURSE CLUBHOUSE

The current clubhouse at Rock Creek Golf Course was built in 1963-1964 and designed by the National Capital Parks Design and Construction Division and Washington, DC, architect John Hans Graham & Associates. The new building replaced the existing clubhouse, a former farmhouse that predated the golf course and had been substantially damaged by at least two fires in the 1930s.[814]

In 1955 National Capital Parks included the new clubhouse in its proposed improvements for Rock Creek Park under the Mission 66 program, a National Park Service directive that intended to modernize, enlarge, and improve the national park system by 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service.[815] Over the following decade, Congress spent over $1 billion for the expansion of buildings, parkland, and services across the National Park Service.[816] With its extensive building program, Mission 66 introduced a new architectural style that integrated the precedents of the National Park Service's rustic style of the decades prior with the characteristics of Modern architecture. Known as "Park Service Modern," the use of Modern architecture reinvented and modernized the National Park Service in the postwar era. National Park Service architects believed that since the landscape was one of the primary reasons for visitation at national parks, new buildings should be subservient to the landscape. Thus, using the principals of Modern architecture, buildings were typically stripped of decorative elements, had low profiles, and used exterior materials and colors that blended in with the surrounding landscape. Other characteristics included large window walls that allowed for expansive views and also integrated the exterior landscape into the interior of the building.[817]

813 Thomas Boswell, "Cardiac Hill Goes the Way of the Niblick," *Washington Post,* 11 July 1975:D1, *A Report on Public Golf*, 28.

814 The farmhouse was likely built by Horatio Plant c. 1820, see "Club, Now in its Second Year, Plans to be Busy," *Washington Evening Star*, 22 April 1923.

815 Judith H. Robinson, Tim Kerr, Janel Crist Kausner, *Mission 66-Era Visitors Centers, Administration Buildings, and Public Use Areas in the National Capital Region of the National Park Service National Register of Historic Places,* Multiple Property Documentation Form (Washington, DC: Robinson and Associates 2012 DRAFT), E:1.

816 National Park Service, *Our Heritage* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, 1956); Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2000), 3-5; Wirth, 238-254; Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 463.

817 Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers,* 23-24; Carr et al, *National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Santa Fe, New Mexico: National Park Service Intermountain Regional Office, 2015), 12-14.

National Capital Parks Division of Design and Construction completed the preliminary sketch of the new Rock Creek Clubhouse in 1958. The sketch illustrated a building that was almost 7,000 square feet with a pro shop, storage room, and repair area in one wing and a large open room with a snack bar in the adjacent wing. In a smaller attached wing was the men's restrooms and locker rooms below with women's locker rooms and restrooms above. The exterior of the building was a mixture of stone and concrete block with wood trim, overhanging eaves, a dramatic cantilevered awning over the entrance, and large window walls that allowed for views of the golf course. The estimated cost for the building was $101,000.[818]

A subsequent December 1961 preliminary sketch shows a much more modest building, likely forced by Congress's continued reluctance to fund the project.[819] The revised sketch illustrated a pro shop, a repair shop, and a much smaller lounge without a snack bar. Locker rooms for both men and women were in the lower level. The exterior features remained minimal, but consisted of brick and plywood siding instead of stone.[820]

John Hans Graham & Associates (see Appendix III for information on John Hans Graham & Associates) prepared the working drawings for the building in March 1962. With the influx of work created by the Mission 66 program, it was not uncommon for the National Park Service to rely on the expertise of outside firms, much as it did during the New Deal. In most instances, the National Park Service offices of design and construction would be in charge of the design concepts, creation of plans and specifications, and the preparation of the preliminary drawings for the buildings. The private architectural firms would then produce the needed construction drawings.[821] It is likely that John Hans Graham & Associates had little influence on the design of the building as the 1962 working drawings appear to be based on the Office of Design and Construction's 1961 preliminary sketch. For reasons unknown, the Office of Design and Construction (then part of the National Capital Region, created from National Capital Parks in January 1962) revised the drawings in August 1962 (Figure 1.60). The revised plans enlarged the pro shop and repair area wing, minimally changed the fenestration pattern on the main elevation, substituted the building's shed roof to a gable roof, and added a prominent cantilevered roof on the rear elevation that sheltered a large window wall.[822]

818 National Park Service, National Capital Parks, Proposed Club House, Drawing No. NCP 55.5-16, 1958.
819 "Rock Creek's Sad Tale," *Washington Post,* 23 April 1961.
820 John Hans Graham and Associates, *Rock Creek Park Golf Club House*, drawing, March 1962, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database; National Park Service, National Capital Parks, *Rock Creek Park Golf Club House*, February 1963, drawing, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.
821 Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers,* 25-36, 214.
822 National Park Service, National Capital Parks, *Rock Creek Park Golf Club House*, 1961, draw-

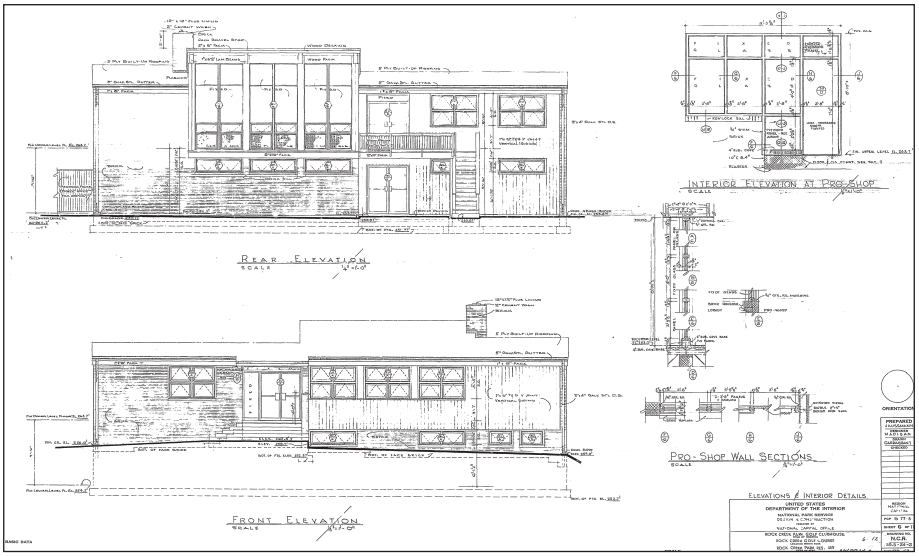



**Figure 1.60.** Elevations and interior details of the Rock Creek clubhouse, 1963. (National Park Service)

The National Park Service finally received the necessary funds for the building in 1963 and awarded an $87,744 contract to Neal Construction Company of Silver Spring, Maryland.[823] The building was built to the August 1962 plans. With its location northeast of the former clubhouse, the construction of the new clubhouse required the National Park Service to rework the existing Joyce Road. A circle drive was built at its terminus, directly in front of the new clubhouse. The adjacent parking lots were also rebuilt. By February 1964 the building was substantially complete and was open to the public the following October.[824] Few changes have been made to the building since its construction. The original windows have been replaced with vinyl and the original rear deck appears to have been replaced in kind.

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF LANGSTON GOLF COURSE

### FIRST NINE HOLES

While Walter J. Travis and William S. Flynn were noted in the press as the architects of the East Potomac Park and Rock Creek golf courses, the architects of the first nine-holes at Langston Golf Course did not receive as much attention. In fact, little is known about the level of involvement of the architects of the first nine holes of the course and their design intent. Initial efforts in the design of the course were completed by the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, prior to the transfer of the golf courses to the National Park Service in 1933. Minutes from a January meeting of the NCP&PC and subsequent letters indicate that the Office of Buildings and Public Parks began consulting with landscape architect and city

ing, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

823 "Clubhouse Contract," *Washington Post*, 25 June 1963.

824 Robinson et al., *Mission 66-Era Visitor Centers, Administration Buildings, and Public Use Areas in the National Capital Region*, 25.

planner Earle Sumner Draper on the design and layout of the course in 1933.[825] Although it is unknown how much of the implemented design can be attributed to Draper, he wrote to Colonel Grant, Director of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks in February 1933 regarding the location of the clubhouse and the general layout of the course. He also indicated that he was consulting with the office's landscape architect Irving Payne and that in late February he would be in Washington, DC, "in the field checking over the work."[826]

Draper had his own firm in Charlotte, North Carolina, and was involved with the planning of industrial towns as well as parks, universities, private estates, golf courses, subdivisions, and other projects.[827] With his planning background, Draper primarily designed golf courses as part of his subdivision plans and claimed to have introduced to the South the concept of interweaving golf fairways among suburban streets, particularly with his design for Farmington outside of Charlottesville, Virginia. In the early 1920s and 1930s, Draper's firm had around 20 to 30 employees in Charlotte and also had branch offices in Atlanta, New York City, and Washington, DC. Like many other golf architects, Draper's work diminished during the Great Depression. In 1933 Draper accepted a position as the Tennessee Valley Authority's Director of Town Planning and Housing and had his planning business managed by an assistant.[828]

When the National Capital Parks issued a press release announcing the opening of Langston Golf Course in 1939, it noted that W. (Willard) McCollum (1901-1993), landscape engineer and architect, designed the course for National Capital Parks and that Irving W. Payne, who then worked as a landscape architect for National Capital Parks, was the greens designer.[829] Payne had worked on the design of the first nine holes of Rock Creek Golf Course, prior to the hiring of Flynn as a consultant (see Appendix III for more on Payne). Little is known of McCollum,

825 Extract from the Minutes of the 73rd Meeting of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission held on 19-20 January 1933, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland; E.S. Draper to Colonel Grant, 15 February 1933, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

826 E.S. Draper to Colonel Grant, 15 February 1933, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

827 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "The Earle Sumner Draper House," accessed 18 August 2016 at http://www.cmhpf.org/Properties%20Foundation%20Reports/draper.html.

828 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "The Earle Sumner Draper House," accessed 18 August 2016, http://www.cmhpf.org/Properties%20Foundation%20Reports/draper.html, Cornell University, "Guide to the Earle Sumner Draper, Sr. Papers 1933-1969," accessed 1 November 2017, http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMM02745.html; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "Charlotte Planners: Earle Sumner Draper," accessed 13 September 2016, http://www.cmhpf.org/essays/Planning-Draper.html.

829 Press Release, 6 June 1939, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

except that he was born in Mahoning County, Ohio, attended Carnegie Institute of Technology, and graduated from the University of Tennessee. In 1931 McCollum moved to Washington, DC, and began working for the National Park Service. His obituary stated that in 1932 the National Park Service assigned him to Morristown, New Jersey, as engineer in charge of the "development and construction of a national park," likely the Morristown National Historical Park. McCollum returned to Washington in 1934 and began working as a mortgage banker.[830]

J.B. (Joseph Bernard) McGovern may have also played a role in making improvements to Langston Golf Course after it was constructed. McGovern began working for Donald Ross as early as 1916 when Ross formed the firm of Donald J. Ross and Associates along with Walter B. Hatch. McGovern spent most of his career as an associate for Ross, heading Ross's branch office in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania.[831] Scottish-born Donald Ross had been designing courses in the United States since the early 1900s and by 1920 was one of if not the most active golf course architect in the country. During the 1920s, Ross continually worked on at least eight courses at a time, made possible by a loyal crew of construction supervisors. J.B. McGovern was one of these supervisors who carried out Ross's designs.[832]

The Great Depression brought Ross's business, which during the boom years of the 1920s employed 3,000 across the country, to a near halt.[833] McGovern turned to President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs for employment. In July 1941 Acting Director of the National Park Service Arthur E. Demaray wrote to Conrad Wirth, landscape architect and assistant director of Land Planning for the National Park Service, requesting McGovern, then a state supervisor for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to help with the problems related to the new Langston Golf Course, which had opened in 1939.[834]

830 "Willard W. McCollum Mortgage Banker," *Washington Post*, 3 June 1993:B7.

831 McGovern's World War I draft registration card confirms that in 1917 he was employed by Donald Ross and worked in golf course construction, World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917, Pennsylvania; Registration County: Montgomery; Roll: 1894025; Draft Board: 1, Ancestry.com. US, World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2005; Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 343; Lee Pace, *The Golden Age of Pinehurst: The Story of the Rebirth* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 90.

832 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 93.

833 Matthew C. Jones, "In the Spirit of Scotland: Donald Ross and the Mark Twain Course," *Parks & Recreation* 32 No. 6 (June 1997), https://www.questia.com/magazine/1G1-19581897/in-the-spirit-of-scotland-donald-ross-and-the-mark.

834 While this letter indicates that McGovern worked for the CCC, other records suggest that he worked directly for the Department of the Interior. The 1940 census has McGovern living in Wynnewood and working as a "recreation supervisor" for the government. A 1940 city directory for Harrisburg, Pennsylvania lists McGovern as a state supervisor of a recreation study for the Department of the Interior. McGovern's World War II draft card states that his employer was the Department of the Interior, National Capital Parks and that he worked in the South Interior Building. Memorandum from Arthur E. Demaray to Conrad Wirth, 16 July 1941, Entry 10 Central Classified files, 1907-1949, Box 2827, Folder 601-12, National Archives, College Park, Maryland; United States Census, 1940, accessed at ancestry.com; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1940 City Directory, Ancestry.com. US City Directories, 1822-

After the end of World War II, McGovern continued to work for Ross.[835] Following Ross's death in 1948, McGovern designed and remodeled/expanded several courses on his own. Right before his death in September 1952, McGovern also designed the second nine holes at the Irondequoit Country Club, in Rochester, New York, (the first nine-hole course was designed by Ross) and William F. Gordon carried out McGovern's plans.[836]

While McGovern met with Conrad Wirth regarding Langston Golf Course in the summer of 1941, it is uncertain if McGovern's expertise was used to improve the general design and conditions of Langston Golf Course. A drawing from 1942 shows that McGovern aided in a plan to reroute and expand the existing Langston Golf Course in response to the proposed construction of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.[837] The connection between the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and the Anacostia Freeway was never built and McGovern's plan to expand the course was not executed.

Since few drawings exist from the construction of the front nine holes at Langston Golf Course and the involvement of each designer is unclear, it is difficult to ascertain the design intent of the course (Figures 1.61–1.62). The course was built along the west side of Kingman Lake, a man-made lake built as part of the reclamation project by the Army Corps of Engineers. An undated photograph, likely from the early 1940s, illustrates that the course had subtle topographical features, no visible mounds, and mostly greenside sand bunkers. Trees were scattered around the course, likely part of those planted by the CCC or trees that preexisted the construction of the course. In some instances, trees flanked the greens and were used to separate the greens from the tee to the next hole (Figure 1.63).

The routing of the front nine holes of Langston Golf Course remains relatively unaltered from its original configuration – the only noted changes to the course are a slight change in play of Hole 1 and slight modifications to Holes 2 and 6 when the course was expanded to eighteen holes (Table 1.8). Compared to the

1995 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011; The National Archives at St. Louis; St. Louis, Missouri; Draft Registration Cards for Fourth Registration for Pennsylvania, 04/27/1942 – 04/27/1942; NAI Number: 563728; Record Group Title: Records of the Selective Service System; Record Group Number: 147, Ancestry.com. US, World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

835 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 344.

836 McGovern, along with Ross and other prominent golf course architects, was one of the charter members of the American Society of Golf Course Architects in 1947, Herb Graffis, "Swinging around Golf," *Golfdom* (May 1952):22, http://archive.lib.msu.edu/tic/golfd/page/1952may21-30.pdf, Certificate of Death for Joseph B. McGovern, 29 September 1952, accessed at Ancestry.com.

837 J.B. McGovern, *Langston Golf Course Tentative Layout in Relation to Baltimore Parkway*, December 1942, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

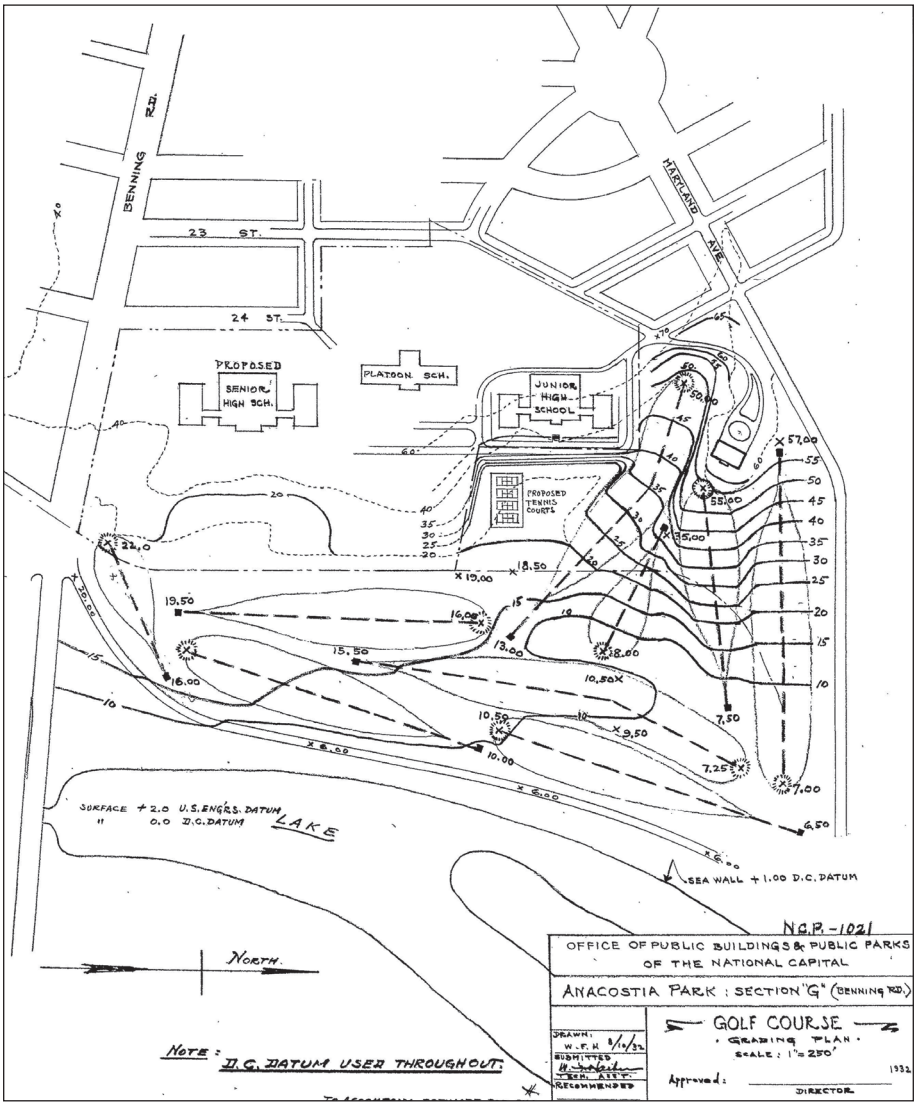



**Figure 1.61.** Preliminary plan of Langston Golf Course, 1932. (National Park Service)

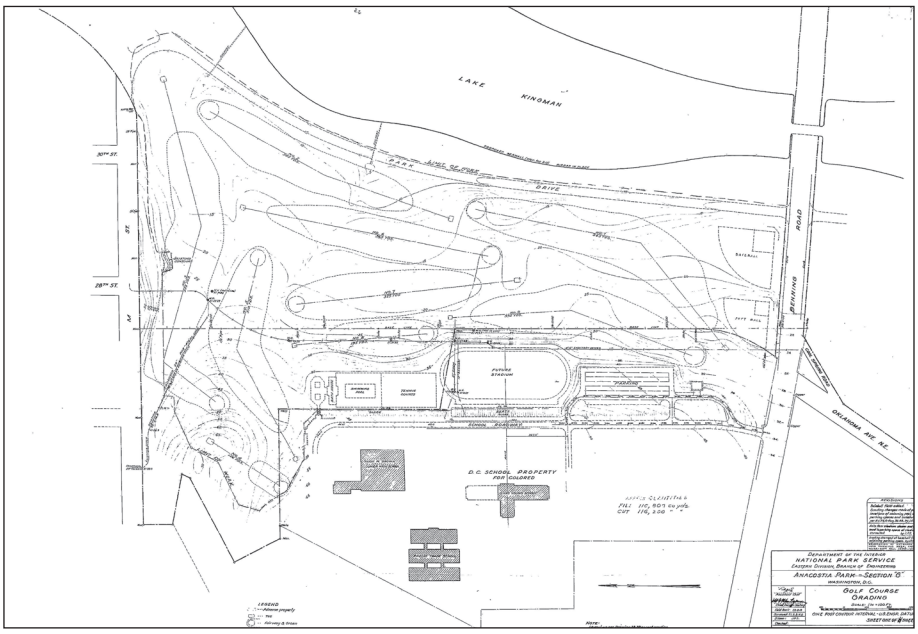



**Figure 1.62.** Grading plan of Langston Golf Course, 1936. (National Park Service)



**Figure 1.63.** Langston Golf Course, ca. 1940. (National Park Service)

back nine holes, which were renovated in the early 2000s when tons of new fill were added to the landscape, the front nine exudes a more natural, open parkland landscape, with wide, open fairways and relatively small greens – all characteristics of golf courses built during its era of construction. Both historically and today, the course offers a variety of three-, four- and five- par holes, including several doglegs.[838]

**Table 1.8.** Length of the front nine holes at Langston Golf Course

| HOLE | YARDS IN 1936 | YARDS IN 1954 | YARDS IN 2017* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 443 | 445 | 472 |
| 2 | 385 | 385 | 395 |
| 3 | 525 | 500 | 508 |
| 4 | 126 | 126 | 157 |
| 5 | 310 | 310 | 350 |
| 6 | 365 | 365 | 398 |
| 7 | 325 | 325 | 341 |
| 8 | 195 | 195 | 205 |
| 9 | 370 | 395 | 400 |
| Total | 3,044 | 3,046 | 3,226 |
| *From Blue Tees | | | |

### SECOND NINE HOLES

#### William F. Gordon

In 1954 Severine G. Leoffler and National Capital Parks hired William F. Gordon and David W. Gordon to expand Langston Golf Course to eighteen holes (see East Potomac Park above for more information on William F. and David Gordon). Wil-

[838] Leonard Shapiro, "Langston Hopes Obama to Make Tee Time," ESPN.com, 2 February 2009.

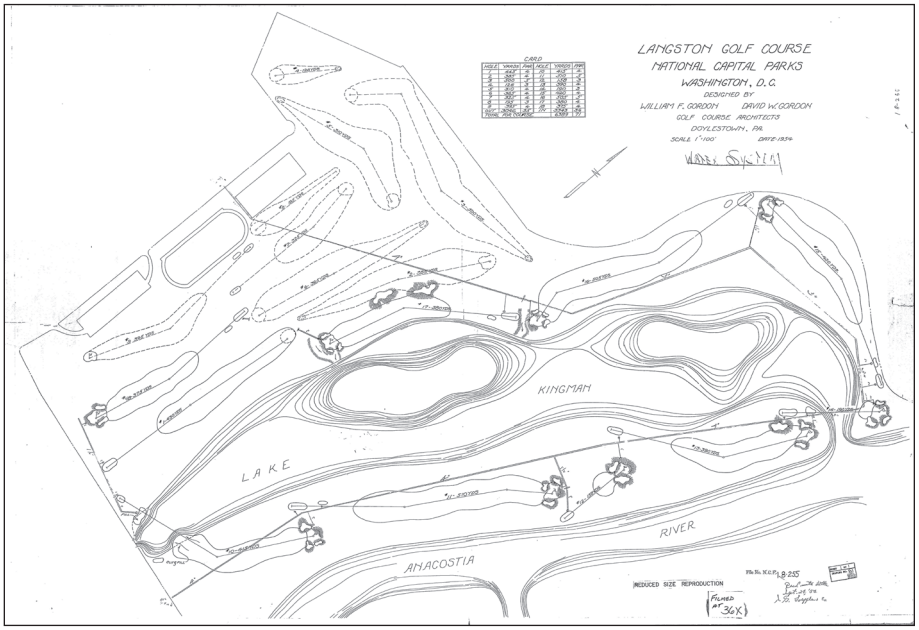



**Figure 1.64. Gordon's design for Langston Golf Course, 1954. (National Park Service)**

liam Gordon had recently designed revisions to Rock Creek Golf Course, the new golf course at Fort Dupont Park, and changes to G Course at East Potomac Park. While earlier plans for the expansion of the course used the two small islands in Kingman Lake as the location for new holes, Gordon's design used available land on Kingman Island as well as land on the north side of the lake that bordered the National Arboretum and was the site a former refuse dump.

Gordon's design kept the original routing of the front nine, but made minor modifications to a few of the holes (Figure 1.64). At Hole 1 the green was retained but the fairway was narrowed to make room for the new Hole 18, the route of play at Hole 2 was slightly modified because of the new adjacent Hole 17, and the fairway of Hole 6 was slightly narrowed to accommodate the changes to Hole 2. Three of the new holes were added to the west side of the lake, adjacent to the front nine (Holes 16, 17, and 18).[839] The remaining new holes were played on Kingman Island on the east side of Kingman Lake and on the north side of the lake. While variations in routing were limited due to space restraints, Gordon was able to achieve a mix of par three, par four, and par five holes and Holes 10 and 14 required tricky shots over Kingman Lake (Table 1.9). Sand bunkers were limited to

839 "Leoffler Says Courses Paid In $1 Million," *Washington Post,* 24 March 1963:C4; "Langston Concessions Under New Operators," *Washington Evening Star,* 24 July 1974; William F. Gordon, *Preliminary Plan, Additional Nine Holes, Langston Golf Course, Washington, DC, 1952,* drawing; William F. Gordon and David W. Gordon, *Langston Golf Course*, 1954, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

around the greens.[840] While it is difficult to tell from plans and aerial photographs the characteristics of the greens, they were predominately bunkered at their front corners, a characteristic of Gordon. An aerial photograph from 1964, almost 10 years after the construction of the back nine, illustrates few trees along the tees, fairways, and greens. For the most part, trees were limited to the boundaries of the course and along Kingman Lake.[841]

**Table 1.9. Length of the back nine holes at Langston Golf Course**

| HOLE | YARDS IN 1954 | YARDS IN 2016* |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | 415 | 538 |
| 11 | 510 | 406 |
| 12 | 158 | 444 |
| 13 | 390 | 175 |
| 14 | 190 | 341 |
| 15 | 420 | 203 |
| 16 | 505 | 540 |
| 17 | 380 | 396 |
| 18 | 375 | 383 |
| Total | 3,343 | 3,108 |
| *From Blue Tees | | |

#### Ault, Clark & Associates Renovation

In 1978-1981 concessionaires Lee and Rose Elder hired Edmund B. Ault to design improvements to Langston Golf Course, including the addition of a driving range. The driving range was built on the east side of Kingman Lake at the location of Gordon's Hole 10, which required the relocation and redesign of several holes on the back nine. The fairway and green of Hole 10 were shifted west toward the shoreline of Kingman Lake on fill that was added in the late 1960s. Hole 11 was shortened and slightly rerouted, but kept its original green.[842]

A Washington native, Edmund B. Ault (1908-1989) received an engineering degree from the Columbia (Maryland) Institute of Technology and later learned the principles of golf course construction from noted golf architect Alex Findley. Ault was a pioneer in designing economical municipal and public golf courses and believed that "Greens should be of adequate size and contoured in a subtle manner so that

840 National Park Service, National Capital Parks Engineering Branch, *Proposed Pedestrian Bridge, Upper End Burnham Barrier, Langston Golf Course*, 1954, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

841 William F. Gordon and David W. Gordon, *Langston Golf Course*, 1954; United States Geological Survey, Aerial Photograph (1964), accessed 10 January 2017, https://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/; Stanwich Golf Club, "History," accessed 27 September 2016, http://www.stanwich.com/history-new.

842 USGS aerial photographs, 1963, 1964, and 1968, https://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/; "Club at Work to Eliminate Sole Kemper Site Complaint," *Washington Star*, 12 October 1980:D12.

a good putt is a performance of skill not luck. The approach to the green should be sufficiently trapped to present some challenge, but seldom should be entirely blocked off."[843] He believed in using bunkers sparingly and using water hazards only if they were purposeful. Ault also avoided extensive sculpting of the land both because of cost and because it made the course less naturalistic. Because Ault was conscious of costs, particularly at a time when multimillion dollar golf courses were unheard of, his jobs typically came from municipalities that wanted to build inexpensive courses with low green fees.[844] Ault once estimated that he had designed or remodeled one quarter of the courses in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs around Washington, DC. After his death in 1989, the firm continued under Ault, Clark & Associates, headed by Ault's son Brian and Tom Clark (see Appendix III for more information on Edmund and Brian Ault).[845]

In 1999 Ault, Clark & Associates designed a renovation for the back nine of Langston Golf Course. Heavy rains had caused erosion and as a result, refuse from the site's former days as a dump site was being exposed. The project, which cost $8 million, included tons of new top soil.[846] This project involved the redesign of Holes 10 through 15, including the lengthening of several holes and the addition of large mounded bunkers around the perimeter of the driving range and along the fairways and greens of the back nine. The project also replaced Hole 13 with Hole 14 and the construction of a new Hole 14 and Hole 15. Consequently, the back nine as it exists today is notably different in character than the front nine, particularly with its mounded bunkers, which contrasts from the relatively open, flat, front nine (see Chapter 2.1 and the 2017 Cultural Landscape Inventory for more information on changes to the course).

#### LANGSTON CLUBHOUSE

The National Park Service built a new clubhouse at Langston Golf Course between 1950 and 1952, designed by architect Charles W. Lessig of the National Capital Parks Office of Design and Construction. Replacing the "temporary" wood-frame clubhouse that was built concurrently with the course between 1938 and 1939, the new building was built on the same site as the original clubhouse near the intersection of 26th Street and Benning Road Northeast.[847] Its one-story, T-shaped plan with a cross-hipped roof and brick exterior are very similar to standardized plans created by National Capital Parks for new recreation centers

843 "Edmund B. Ault," *SportsTurf*. Vol. 5 No. 9 (September 1989): 23.

844 "Leaving Their Mark," *Washington Golf Monthly* (September 2004): 65-69; Ault, Clark, and Associates, "Brian T. Ault," accessed 7 October 2016, http://www.acagolf.com/acagolf/pages/ResumeBA2.html.

845 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 194.

846 The firm is now based in Clarkesville, Maryland.

847 National Capital Parks Planning Division, *Golf Club House*, 1950, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database; "Langston Golf Course Will Add Nine Holes," *Washington Sunday Star,* 6 January 1952:B4.

or "shelter houses, " built in neighborhood parks in the District of Columbia after World War II. The new recreation centers typically consisted of a large open recreation room along with restrooms, storage areas, and offices for park staff. Rows of windows allowed for a well-lit interior and better air circulation. Unlike the Colonial Revival-style recreation centers of the 1930s, these new buildings displayed characteristics similar to residential housing constructed directly following World War II. These recreation buildings were more "Minimal Traditional" in style and form, with red brick exteriors and traditional floor plans and rooflines, and minimal ornamentation.

For the Langston clubhouse, the National Park Service enlarged the standardized plan to fit the needs of the golf course, but retained many of the overall features of the recreation centers built around this time, such as the T-shaped recreation centers built at Congress Heights in 1943 and Edgewood in 1945. The clubhouse consisted of a large open public space in the "leg" of the T and restrooms and locker rooms on the "arms" of the T. The front of the building faced east toward the golf course and two walls of the public area were comprised entirely of windows, allowing for views of the course. A covered porch also lined the building along the east window wall. Along the rear (west) side of the building was an attached storage area and additional restrooms[848] (Figure 1.65).

Few changes have been made to the clubhouse since its construction in 1950-1952. Around 1978 a golf cart storage shed was added along the southeast elevation of the clubhouse. The shed was among several improvements made to the course under Lee and Rose Elder's management of the concessions contract. Elder also renovated the interior of the clubhouse to include a snack bar that offered breakfast and lunch for patrons.[849]

[848] National Park Service, National Capital Parks Planning Division, *Golf Club House, Langston Golf Course, Washington, DC*, 1950, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

[849] "City Welcomes Reopening of Langston Course," *Washington Evening Star,* 9 April 1979:36.

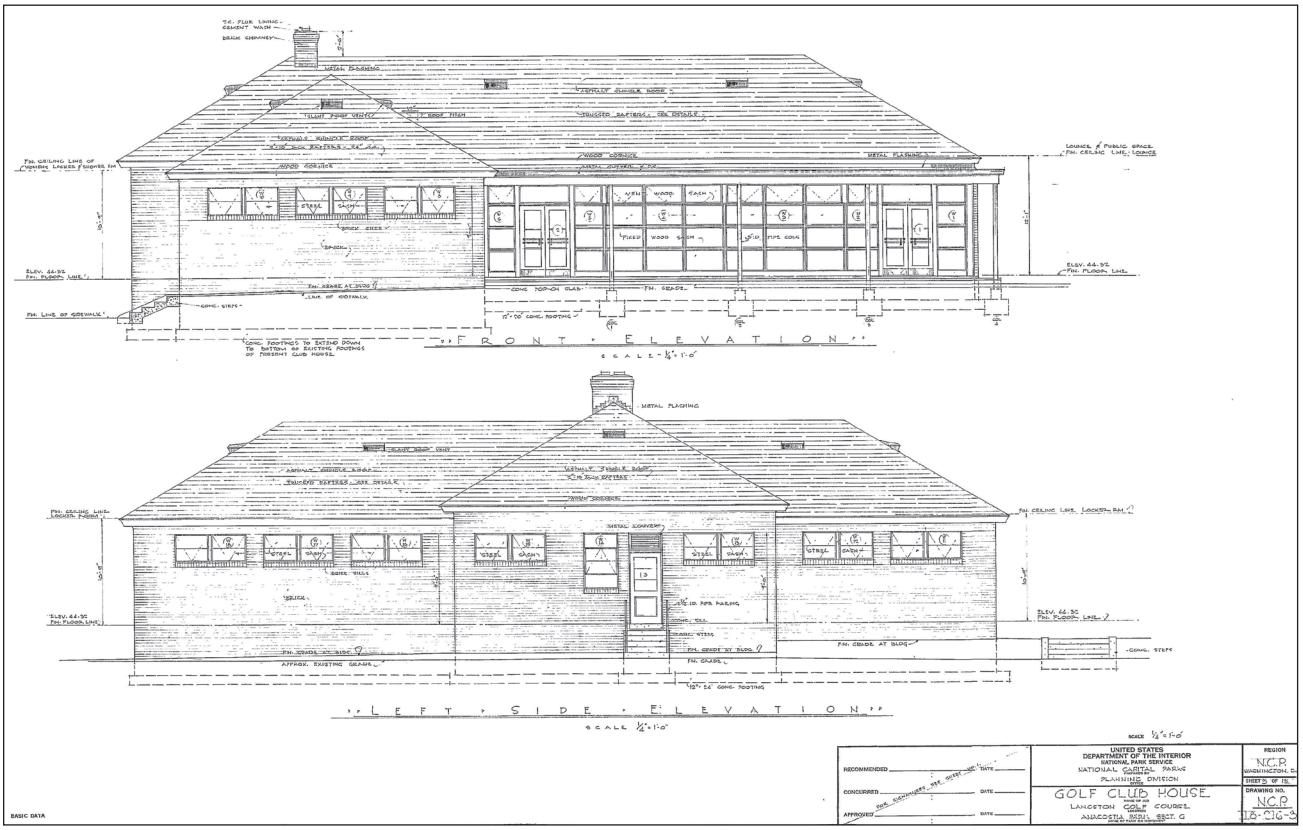



**Figure 1.65.** Langston Golf Course clubhouse, 1951. (National Park Service)



# Part 2: Narrative Histories of the National Capital Region Golf Courses

Section cover: View of Langston Golf Course, ca. 1940. Source: National Park Service.

# Chapter 2.1:
# East Potomac Park Golf Course

## INITIAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION: 1917-1930

While the idea for a golf course at East Potomac Park originated as early as 1911, the plans did not materialize until Col. William W. Harts, Officer in Charge of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, began developing a plan for the park in 1914. During the initial planning of East Potomac Golf Course, Colonel Harts consulted with Dr. Walter S. Harban, who had been instrumental in the organization of the Columbia Country Club and the design of its golf course in 1911. Harban recommended Walter J. Travis, former US amateur golf champion, to design the new course. At that time Travis was working on an extensive redesign of the Columbia Country Club course. Harban was the first to reach out to Travis after word spread that Travis was looking for architectural work after his retirement from championship golf.[1]

In January 1917 Colonel Harts formally announced that Walter J. Travis would design an eighteen-hole course at East Potomac Park that would "embrace all the necessary features of the modern golf course."[2] Travis designed the eighteen-hole course as a traditional links-style course, a style that was naturally suitable for the site with its location along the Potomac River and its flat, predominantly treeless terrain. With his respect for British links, Travis designed the course for reversible play, likely influenced by the Old Course at St. Andrews, Scotland. Travis designed both the front nine (known as the A-B Course) and the back nine (known as the C-D Course) each with 10 greens to allow for the courses to be played in alternate directions on a weekly basis to prevent wear (see Chapter 1.3 above for a more detailed discussion on Travis's design).[3] Travis's design placed the front nine holes directly south of the fieldhouse to extend southeast, out and back along the length of the Washington Channel. He designed the second nine holes to parallel the first, arranged along the Potomac River side of the peninsula, also with the first and last holes adjacent to the fieldhouse.

To oversee the construction and execution of Travis's design, Travis and Harban recommended Robert White as the first greenkeeper at East Potomac Park—both men had recently worked with White in the redesign of the Columbia Country Club. In December 1918 Francis F. Gillen, Superintendent of the Office of Public

1 Labbance, *The Old Man*, 181; "Corn Versus Golf in Potomac Park," *Washington Evening Star,* 20 May 1918:21.
2 "Travis to Plan Public Golf Links In This City," *Washington Evening Star,* 25 January 1917:17.
3 "Public Links to be Ready May 1," *Washington Post,* 5 March 1919:10.

Buildings and Grounds, wrote to White asking if he would come to Washington, DC, to oversee the construction of the course at $75.00 a week for a month.[4] White accepted and in February 1919, Col. Clarence S. Ridley, who took over as Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds from Colonel Harts from 1917 to 1921, requested White to come to Washington as soon as possible to supervise the "construction of Sand Pits, Humps, Hollows, and Mounds" on East Potomac Park Golf Course. Colonel Ridley expected the work to take four weeks.[5] According to the *Evening Star*, Robert White "assisted Walter J. Travis in laying out the municipal course in lower Potomac Park."[6]

In addition to White, Dr. Harban was greatly involved in the design and construction of the East Potomac Park course and is often credited along with Travis for its design. After retiring from dentistry (he was President Theodore Roosevelt's private dentist) Harban served as a member of the executive committee of the United States Golf Association (USGA) (1915 to 1919) and as Vice President of the association (1917 to 1919).[7] With his interest in golf course turf maintenance and along with USDA agrostologists Dr. Charles Vancouver Piper, Dr. Russell A. Oakley, and others, he helped establish the Arlington Turf Garden in 1916 at the Arlington Experimental Farm, located along the southern banks of the Potomac River in Arlington, Virginia, and the current site of the Pentagon. Here Piper, Oakley, and other USDA scientists grew, evaluated and selected improved grasses for putting greens (see Chapter 1.3 for more information).[8] In 1918 five of the new greens at the new East Potomac Park Golf Course were planted with turfgrass from the Arlington Turf Garden using the stolon method, a form of vegetative propagation, the first putting greens to be planted with this method.[9] Letters between Piper, Oakley, and Superintendent Gillen also indicate that both Piper and Oakley provided advice to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds on the seeding of the

4 Various letters from Superintendent Gillen to White, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.; Walter J. Travis Society, "Travis Course Projects," accessed 19 April 2016, https://travissociety.com/directory-of-travis-golf-course-projects/.

5 Major Ridley to Robert White, 1 February 1919, Record Group 42, Entry 311 Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.

6 "Chevy Chase Club Loses Pro: Notes of Golf and Golfers," *Washington Evening Star,* 4 January 1920:28.

7 John Monteith Jr., "Death of Walter Harban Great Loss to Greenkeeping," *Golfdom* 12, no. 4 (April 1938):23-25; USDA, "Charles Vancouver Piper (1867-1926)," accessed 1 November 2017, http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/Piper.pdf; USDA, "Arlington Turf Garden," accessed 1 November 2017, http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/Arlington.pdf; Labbance, *The Old Man*, 181.

8 Harban is credited for developing the stolon method of planting bent grasses on golf course greens. John Monteith Jr., "Death of Walter Harban Great Loss to Greenkeeping," *Golfdom* 12, no. 4 (April 1938):23-25; USDA, "Charles Vancouver Piper (1867-1926)," accessed 1 November 2017, http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/Piper.pdf; USDA, "Arlington Turf Garden," accessed 1 November 2017, http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/Arlington.pdf; Labbance, *The Old Man*, 181.

9 R.A. Oakley, "Vegetative Planting of Bent Grasses: An Historical Sketch, *Bulletin of Green Section of the United States Golf Association* (21 April 1923): 119.



**Figure 2.1. Boy Scouts gardening in East Potomac Park, 1917. (Library of Congress)**

East Potomac Park course's fairways and that both men showed much interest in the construction of the course.[10]

Construction on the course began in the summer of 1917, primarily on clearing the existing growth on the site, which was described as being "overgrown with willows and underbrush."[11] While all of the course's hazards had to be artificial because of the flat terrain, the *Washington Evening Star* reported that the site would "be fashioned into something very nearly approximating a championship links with the up-to-date ideas of course construction of Travis."[12] At the time construction began, the Boy Scouts were also using 300 acres of East Potomac Park as a garden for harvesting vegetables and other crops as part of the war effort. The *Washington Post* reported that on April 21, 1917, more than 2,000 scouts carried rakes and hoes to the park to cultivate the land (Figure 2.1). Travis and Harban initially regarded the scouts' takeover as beneficial since the land for the golf course would be cleared of weeds by the time the scouts left in October.[13]

By the end of June 1918, nine greens had been constructed with the exception of seeding. The fairways had been cleared "of a wilderness of willow trees of spontaneous growth over an area of 67 acres, about 30 of which were plowed and harrowed." Construction stopped in June 1918 by order of the Secretary of War, who once again granted the Boy Scouts use of the area, along with other cleared

10 Various letters, RG 42, Entry 311, Box 11, National Archives, Washington, DC.
11 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1917), 1931; "Travis to Plan Public Golf Links In This City," *Washington Evening Star,* 25 January 1917:17.
12 "Travis to Plan Public Golf Links In This City," *Washington Evening Star,* 25 January 1917:17.
13 "Boy Scouts Begin Farm Work Today," *Washington Post,* 21 April 1917:4; "Corn Versus golf in Potomac Park," *Washington Evening Star,* 20 May 1918:21.

areas in the park, for gardens.[14] Secretary of War Newton D. Baker advised the Senate that work on the golf course could wait and "in view of the war conditions existing" it was within his jurisdiction to withhold the expenditure of funds for the golf course and "turn the land over to the Boy Scouts."[15] In the interim, workers installed fences around the greens to protect them.[16]

Construction once again resumed after the fall and on March 29, 1919, Walter J. Travis visited the East Potomac Park course to inspect the work completed thus far. Travis "stated that the work had been carried out in accordance with his design and that the result was exactly what he wishes, and was very pleasing to him."[17] During fiscal year 1919 the final tenth green of the reversible course was built and 14 sand pits and 19 hazards were added. In addition, 2,752 feet of water pipe was laid for use in watering the greens and other parts of the course.[18]

In March 1919 the *Washington Post* described the new course:

> In laying out the course, effort was made to obtain a natural effect rather than the formal construction seen in so many club links. Winding hazards conforming to the general topography of the field have been built and sand traps, carefully located, will be added this spring.[19]

As construction continued 28 acres adjacent to the first nine holes of the golf course, located along the Potomac River and planned for the second nine holes, was being used by the garden committee of the Council of National Defense, which divided the area into 288 garden plots measuring 40 by 100 feet. At the same time, around 15 acres along the river (the current location of the National Capital Region headquarters) housed a camp of the detachment troops of the Army, assigned to guard duty in Washington during World War I. North of the golf course and along Ohio Drive were 57 buildings erected by the War Department as quarters for enlisted clerks of that department and later used as storage for War Department property[20] (Figure 2.2).

Built concurrently with the new golf course was a new fieldhouse, designed to hold the locker rooms and other facilities for the course. Funds for the building came from two equal appropriations of $50,000 each in fiscal years 1917 and

14 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1918), 1931.
15 "Potomac Park Land Awarded Boy Scouts," *Washington Evening Star,* 17 May 1918:7.
16 "Corn Versus golf in Potomac Park," *Washington Evening Star,* 20 May 1918:21.
17 Letter from Superintendent to the Officer in Charge, 29 March 1919. Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 10, National Archives, Washington, DC.
18 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1919), 2042.
19 "Public Links to be Ready May 1," *Washington Post,* 5 March 1919:10.
20 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (1919), 2039-2040; Historic American Buildings Survey, *Hains Point*, HABS No. DC-692 (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1993), 6.

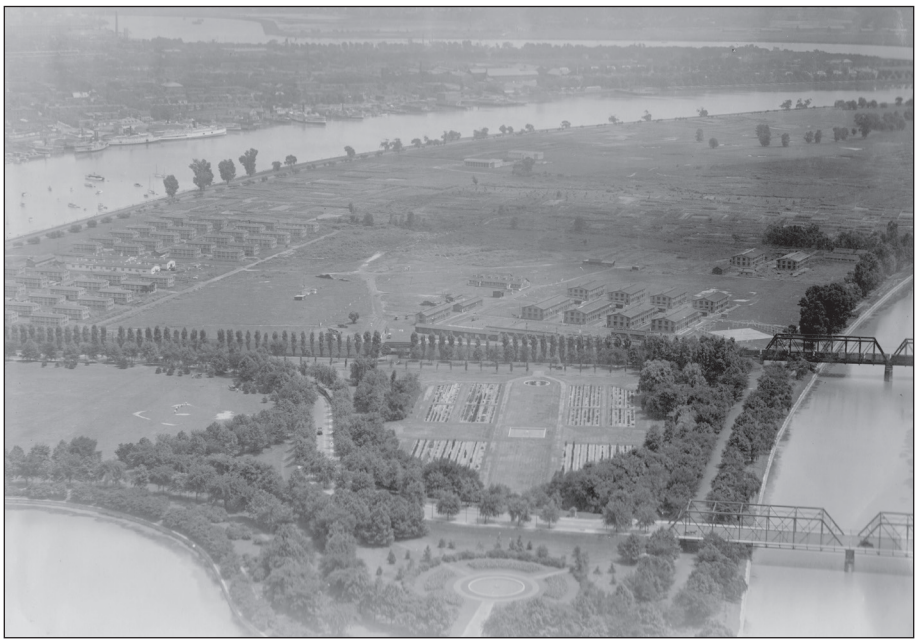


**Figure 2.2.** View of East Potomac Park looking southeast, c. 1920. (National Archives)

1918.[21] The design of the fieldhouse, by Office of Public Buildings and Grounds architect Horace Whittier Peaslee Jr. (1884-1959), consisted of two L-shaped wings, originally designed to hold locker room facilities for men and women. The wings were to be connected by a rectangular central portion that held a large assembly room, a refectory with a counter and table service, a kitchen, and a pantry. Illustrating Peaslee's landscape architecture background, the center portion also incorporated an open courtyard at its center with gravel walks and a central reflecting pool and formal landscaping. Due to lack of funding, the central portion and courtyard were never built.

Adapted to hold the facilities of the unbuilt central portion, the east wing held the men's locker rooms, a dining room, lunch room, and a golf professional shop on the first floor and a kitchen, pantry, and cold storage area in the basement. The west wing held the women's locker rooms along with office and storage areas on the first floor and laundry facilities and additional storage in the basement. The wings were built of exposed-aggregate concrete, a product of Washington, DC, craftsman John Joseph Earley (1881-1945). Earley's process, viewed by him as a combination of science and art, created a concrete product that resembled more costly mosaic work. The process started with forms that were filled with a concrete mixture that was studded with colorful pebbles. After the forms were removed, the surface of the concrete was scrubbed with acid to highlight the colored aggregates. Earley used this process, patented in 1921 as the "Earley Process," to create a wide range of products including murals, walls, as well as entire buildings like the wings of the fieldhouse. Earley specifically used the fieldhouse at East

[21] US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (1918), 1931.



**Figure 2.3. View northeast over sand bunker at East Potomac Park Golf Course, c. 1925. (Historical Society of Washington, DC)**

Potomac Park as an example of his process in his 1921 patent for "new and useful Improvements in 'Methods of Producing a Predetermined Color Effect in Concrete and Stucco.'"[22]

The first nine holes of the golf course covered approximately 80 acres and by October 1919 the first ten greens were completed, the entire fairways had been plowed and sowed with a mixture of blue grass, red top, and clover, and 44 hazards had been constructed.[23] The *Evening Star* described the course as "a true Travis creation. It is characterized by the rolling, undulating, well-trapped greens peculiar to a Travis-built course. This type of putting green makes for a very attractive course, but one that will be quite severe on the duffer – and most of the players who begin golf on the new course will be duffers for some time"[24] (Figure 2.3). Because of lack of funds, no work had started on the second nine holes of Travis's design and Superintendent Gillen did not expect any work to be completed for another year.[25]

On July 8, 1920, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds officially opened the A-B Course of East Potomac Park Golf Course to the public (Figures 2.4–2.9). Senator John Morris Sheppard of Texas was scheduled to drive the first ball, but was absent due to a storm earlier that morning that delayed the opening of the course. Major Ridley had initially invited Walter J. Travis to drive out the first ball, but Travis declined, citing a prior commitment.[26] That afternoon Major Ridley

22 Aument, *Experiment in Concrete*, 21-22; Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Parks Historic District*, 75.

23 Superintendent Gillen to Mr. Concklin, 23 October 1919, RG 42, Entry 311, Box 11, National Archives, US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920), 4123.

24 According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a duffer is "a person who plays golf without much skill;" "Public Links to Open by July 10," *Washington Sunday Star,* 20 June 1920:27.

25 Superintendent Gillen to Mr. Concklin, 23 October 1919, RG 42, Entry 311, Box 11, National Archives, Washington, DC; US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (1920), 4123.

26 In 1917 Ridley was appointed as the Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds as a Colonel, but after the passage of the Army reorganization act of 4 June 1920, he reverted to



**Figure 2.4.** Golfers on green at East Potomac Park with fieldhouse in the background, 1922. (Library of Congress)



**Figure 2.5.** Golfers waiting their turn at East Potomac Park Golf Course, November 1920. (National Archives)



**Figure 2.6.** East Potomac Park Golf Course ca. 1923. (Library of Congress)



**Figure 2.7.** Golfers at East Potomac Park, c. 1923. (Library of Congress)



**Figure 2.8.** Women golfers at East Potomac Park, c. 1923. (Library of Congress)



**Figure 2.9.** Mrs. Virginia Riter, Mrs. E.M. Allison, and Mrs. Helen Rutan at East Potomac Park Golf Course, May 1923. (Library of Congress)

and Dr. Harban were present for the opening along with several onlookers. C.T. McIntyre from Northeast Washington made the first drive down the fairway and Miss C.M. Fuller of Northwest was the first woman golfer to play the new course. While the first day of golf was free, when the course opened the next day at 6:00 A.M. the cost for an eighteen-hole round of golf was 25 cents, which included locker room privileges.[27]

Improving access to both the park and the golf course, Congress provided a $10,000 appropriation in 1918 to install and operate a ferry (a steamer named the *Bartholdi*) from the east side of the Washington Channel to East Potomac Park. The Office of Public Buildings and Grounds converted part of the government-owned wharf at O and Water streets Southwest for a ferry house, which was conveniently in proximity to two streetcar lines. A landing stood adjacent to the golf course fieldhouse and when ferry service began on June 26, 1919, the ferry operated every half hour between noon and 8 P.M. and the fare for a one-way trip was 5 cents.[28]

The Office of Public Buildings and Grounds operated the course between July 1920 and July 1921, but soon found that the total receipts from the operation only earned 50 percent of the cost of operation. Consequently, the office decided that the course would be better operated by a private concessionaire. Beginning on July 20, 1921, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds entered a five-year contract with the Park Amusement Company, operated by Severine G. Leoffler.[29]

The course quickly proved to be extremely popular and attracted notable attention. In the first year alone 16,345 golfers played at the East Potomac Park course. The following year the number had grown to 65,345.[30] The course even attracted the President of the United States, Warren G. Harding. Lt. Col. Clarence O. Sherrill, Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds (1921-1925), wrote to the president in March 1921, inviting him to play at the East Potomac course:

> Knowing your great fondness for the game of golf, I take pleasure in inviting your attention to the fact that this office has recently completed a first rate nine hole public course in East Potomac Park. If you can arrange to play at least one game this Spring on this course, I believe it would do much in bringing it to the

his regular rank as Major. Various correspondence between Major Ridley and Walter J. Travis, June 1920, Record Group 42, Entry 97, Box 35, Subject File No. 312, National Archives, Washington, DC.

27 "Long Drive Today Opens Public Golf Course in District," *Washington Evening Star,* 8 July 1920.

28 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (1919), 2042-2043, 3830.

29 *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks*, 1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

30 "Selling the Game of Golf to the Public," *Washington Post,* 1 July 1928:SM3.

attention of golf lovers in Washington, and throughout the country.

Although the course is on flat ground, you will find, I am sure that it is well laid out and interesting, and will afford you and your party much pleasure.[31]

On April 5, 1921, President Harding made headlines when he appeared unannounced at the fieldhouse at East Potomac Park, paid the quarter fee, and enjoyed a round of golf. The president's foursome consisted of Senator Frank B. Kellogg of Minnesota, Senator Joseph Sherman Frelinghuysen Sr. of New Jersey, and Senator Frederick Hale of Maine. The men played nine holes and Harding and Kellogg won the round.[32] The president reportedly admired the "carefully kept course."[33] Harding played at the course later on that summer and did not play as well, later saying that the condition of the greens was "like putting on a corrugated roof."[34]

Reportedly Harding golfed at East Potomac Park as much as four times a week during his two-years in office, always around 4:00 P.M. Severine G. Leoffler later remembered that "it was sort of a nuisance." Secret Service would call and Leoffler would have to clear the course a half hour before the president arrived and keep it clear a half hour after he left.[35] Harding's love for golf and his use of the public courses in the District (he helped dedicate the course at Rock Creek in 1923) had a tremendous impact on the city's golfers. After Harding's death in August 1923, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds discontinued sport activities on municipal fields for three days and closed the golf courses at East Potomac Park and Rock Creek Park for two days.[36]

In December 1922 Gene Sarazen, the national open champion and "unofficial [golf] champion of the world," gave an exhibition of mashie, midiron, brassy, and tee shots to a large crowd at East Potomac Park Golf Course. The exhibition was followed by a match with Sarazen, professional golfer and PGA champion Leo Diegel, 1908 US Open Champion Fred McLeod, and British professional golfer and golf course architect Wilfrid Reid (Figure 2.10). The event attracted the largest gallery ever assembled at East Potomac Park Golf Course since its opening and the "combined efforts of Col. Sherrill, Maj. Weart, Capt. McMorris, Manager Leoffler, H.D. Miller, the professional, and the entire force of the park, together with a squad of policemen, were necessary to handle the crowd."[37]

31 Colonel Sherrill to President Harding, 29 March 1921, Record Group 42, Entry 97, Box 35, Subject File No. 312, National Archives, Washington, DC.
32 "President Pays His Quarter to Golf on Public Course," *Washington Post,* 6 April 1921:1.
33 "Speedway Land an Ideal Playground for Rich and Poor of the District," *Washington Post,* 24 July 1921:41.
34 "Harding for Good Golfing Greens," *Washington Post,* 20 August 1921:12.
35 "Public Golf Escapes Crisis," *Washington Sunday Star*, 5 May 1968:C-7.
36 "Sport in Capital to Observe Long Morning Period," *Washington Post,* 8 August 1923:13.
37 Henry Litchfield West, "Low Medal Honors to Diegel, With 36," *Washington Post*. 10 December 1922:62.



**Figure 2.10.** National Open Champion Gene Sarazen gives an exhibition at East Potomac Park Golf Course, December 9, 1922. (Library of Congress)

Grading of the site for the additional nine holes at the East Potomac Park, the C-D Course, began in fiscal year 1921 and by the summer of 1922 five of the holes had been completed. Beginners were encouraged to use the short five-hole course until they could qualify to use the full nine-hole course. The new holes also relieved some of the course congestion and allowed for the more advanced players to move more quickly through the nine-hole course.[38]

By this time the course had attracted enough attention to be named the location of the United States Golf Association's second annual US Amateur Public Links Championship, to be held in June 1923. During the 1922 championship in Boston, the chairman of the USGA's public and municipal golf committee approached Dr. Harban and suggested that the next tournament be held at the Columbia Country Club. Harban thought that it would be more appropriate to hold the tournament at a public course and he believed the eighteen holes at East Potomac Park would be completed by next year in time for the tournament. Colonel Sherrill endorsed the proposition and promised that he would have the course ready if the tournament was held in Washington. At a meeting of the executive committee of the USGA in September 1922 at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, the committee officially announced the selection of East Potomac Park as the site of the 1923 tournament[39] (Figure 2.11).

[38] US Army, *Report of the Chief Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1921), 2059; "Extend Public Golf Links," *Washington Post,* 15 March 1922:2; "Add 4 Holes to Park Course," *Washington Post,* 16 March 1922:7; "5-Hole City Golf Course Will Be Open All Day," *Washington Post,* 31 August 1922:2; "Municipal Golf Is Popular Here," *Washington Sunday Star,* 12 November 1922:2.

[39] Henry Litchfield West, "Tee to Green," *Washington Post,* 2 October 1922:10; Henry Litch-



**Figure 2.11.** Raising of the flag at East Potomac Park Golf Course, December 9, 1922, after the announcement that it would be the site of the 1923 US Amateur Public Links Championship. (National Photo Company)

The announcement earned praise from the local press. In his column "From Tee to Green," former District of Columbia commissioner Henry Litchfield West noted that the decision of the USGA to hold its annual tournament in Washington was not only important "so far as golfers are concerned, but will unquestionably be received with general satisfaction by players on the public links throughout the country. It is expected by the officials of the [USGA] that a tournament of public links golfers in the National Capital will stimulate the development of municipal courses everywhere and will give a widespread impetus to the game."[40] The *Washington Post* noted that the "fact that this event will attract to the National Capital several hundred players who patronize public golf courses in various cities, and that will naturally expect to find perfect conditions in a course which is under government supervision, should be fully appreciated by Congress … Ample funds should be provided with the distinct understanding that they shall be used in placing the course in perfect condition …"[41] The *Evening Star* reported in October that local golfers would "receive an impetus from the tourney that will mean better things for the players who do not belong to a country club." One of the "immediate advantages" was the hurried completion of the second nine holes. The final four holes were practically completed. Despite the fact that the holes were newly constructed, the *Evening Star* noted that "grass grows so fast in the rich soil on which the golf course is laid out, that there is hardly a question that the new holes will be in good condition in time for the tournament."[42]

field West, "Chairman Standish Completes Details," *Washington Post* 19 February 1923:12.

40 "Tee to Green," *Washington Post*, 8 October 1922:52.

41 "Public Link Title Tournament Here," *Washington Post,* 31 December 1922:34.

42 "Municipal Golf Is Poplar Here," *Washington Sunday Star*, 12 November 1922:2.

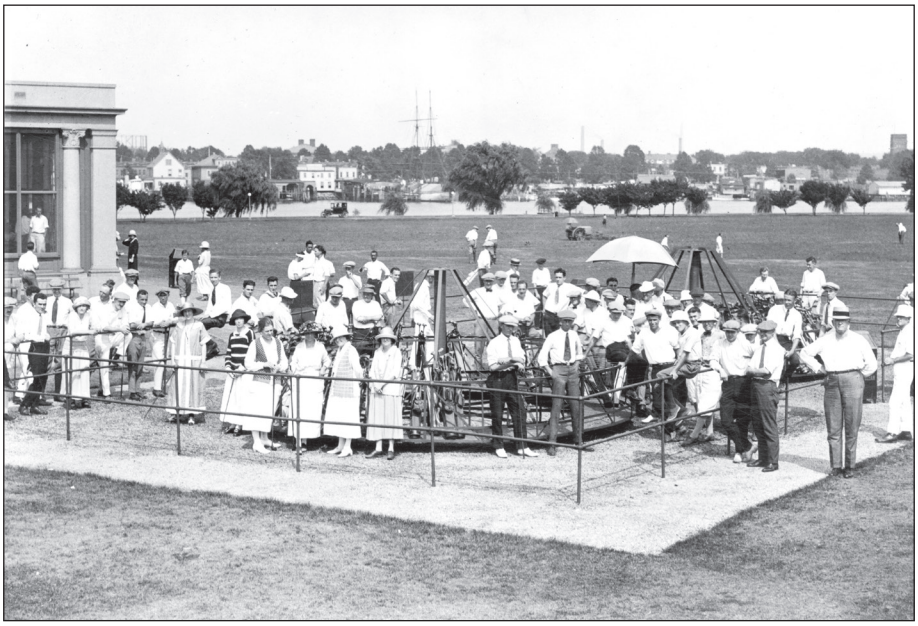


**Figure 2.12.** Group of golfers waiting at starting area at East Potomac Park ca. 1930. (Library of Congress)

By the spring of 1923 the new improvements to the course for the tournament were evident. The *Evening Star* reported that golfers would "hardly know the place." Leoffler also painted the interior of the clubhouse and installed a new starting system:

> Under the new plan the starting will be done from the clubhouse. There are to be two revolving racks placed behind the flag pole. Starter "Dave" Hardesty will operate from an elevated stand between these two racks (Figure 2.12). He will blow a whistle for you to drive off. He will use a pair of field glasses to keep an eye on the field.[43]

In April 1923 the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds modified Leoffler's contract to specify that he would take over and complete the final nine holes of the course at his own expense.[44] Leoffler completed the C-D Course by June 1923 in time for the second annual US Amateur Public Links Championship. Attracting 134 golfers representing 22 cities, the tournament began on Tuesday, June 26 with a 36-hole qualifying round. On the following days, 32 men went on to play the two match-play rounds of eighteen holes with the final 36 holes finals on Friday. The course had a total yardage of 6,244 with a par of 36 on the front nine and 37 on the back nine. The tournament also marked the first annual competition for the Warren G. Harding Trophy, played on eighteen holes by four-man teams.[45] On June 29, 1923, 19-year-old Richard Walsh won the championship title of the public

43 "Public Links to Have New Starting System," *Washington Evening Star,* 12 March 1923:23.
44 *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks,* 1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.
45 "Public Links Meet Attracting Many," *Baltimore Sun,* 23 June 1923:12.

links tournament at East Potomac Park. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes presented the trophy.[46]

While the newly completed course was not described as "sporty," primarily because of its flat terrain, the course, particularly the second nine, was not considered easy. The greens were described as "wonderful," "tricky," and "fast and splendidly grassed." As one veteran golfer noted, "there are few courses so broken out with traps as East Potomac," reflecting Travis's role in the design of the course and his love of bunkers.[47] Reporting on the Public Links Championship, the *Baltimore Sun* described the new course:

> There are bunkers to catch almost any deviation from the straight and narrow – traps for tops, half tops, hooks, slices, short approaches and over shots. The profusion of traps, perhaps, partly can be accounted for by the fact that there are four separate nine-hole courses, all in an acreage not larger than that devoted to an ordinary 18-hole course.[48]

Despite the positive attention of the course and Travis's design, the concessionaire of the course made changes to two of the greens before the course reopened for the season in the spring of 1924. Leoffler reported that he had made some "desirable changes, notably in reducing the excessive undulations on the fourth and fifth greens of course A. There has been considerable criticism of these greens, and we believe that, by flattening their surfaces, we have improved them."[49]

During the calendar year 1923 over 123,000 people played on the East Potomac Park course, once again prompting the need to expand the course. In 1924, with his contract about to expire, Leoffler offered to build an additional nine-hole course at his own expense. In return, Leoffler's contract was extended to 1929.[50] Announced in the spring of 1924, the new nine-hole course was designed by William S. Flynn, who was also working for the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds at that time on the design and expansion of Rock Creek Golf Course. The new course at East Potomac Park, located on the east and north sides of the fieldhouse, was known as the "E and F Course" and not only relieved congestion, but also allowed the eighteen holes of the Travis-designed course to be played continuously.[51] Flynn visited the site in August 1924 and pronounced that the

46 "Shows Support with Mashie, Putter," *Washington Post,* 20 June 1923:18.
47 "East Potomac Park Course Is Not Regarded As Sporty," *Baltimore Sun,* 29 June 1923:14.
48 Ibid.
49 "Both Muny Links Improved During the Off-Season," *Washington Post,* 18 March 1924:S3.
50 "Selling the Game of Golf to the Public," *Washington Post,* 1 July 1928:SM3; *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks,* 1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.
51 "Two New Golf Links to Open This Summer," *Washington Post,* 13 May 1924:S3.

course was "in good shape to proceed with the work."[52] The course opened to the public in May 1925.[53]

Similar to Travis's initial two courses at East Potomac Park, the new Flynn-designed course was reversible. The course had 11 greens in order to change the direction of the course and the first and the last greens were conveniently located adjacent to the fieldhouse.[54] Leoffler wrote to Colonel Sherrill in August 1923 and said, "We will have Mr. Flynn make plans for a regulation nine hole reversible golf course in keeping with the other courses at East Potomac Park."[55] Thus, Flynn's design for the course was influenced by the work of Travis and the initial reversible courses at East Potomac. Flynn also oversaw the construction of Travis's reversible course at the Westchester-Biltmore Country Club in 1920.[56] The new E-F Course was described as "not as well trapped as the first [courses built by Travis]" but "far the most popular because lower scores can be made on [it] by the class of players who use the public courses."[57]

The new course also had few trees, except for a grove of Japanese flowering cherries located near the southern end of the course, west of the fieldhouse, which are some of the oldest in the District of Columbia.[58] In addition to the cherry trees,

52 "D.C. Muny Golfers to Receive Trophy," *Washington Evening Star,* 13 August 1924:27.

53 "More East Potomac Holes Open Saturday," *Washington Post,* 1925 May 21:15.

54 "None is Recorded on Three Courses" *Washington Evening Star,* 31 December 1931:B3.

55 Severine G. Leoffler to Colonel Sherrill, 16 August 1923, RG42, Entry 102, Box 48, Folder 680.481 (East Potomac Park Golf Concessions), National Archives, Washington, DC.

56 "Local Golf Clubs Plan Improvement of Courses," *Washington Herald,* 16 December 1919, 10; Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker,* 555.

57 "Growth of Public Golf Has Been Rapid," *Washington Sunday Star,* 6 May 1928:2.

58 These cherry trees are thought to be the sole surviving specimens of the first trees donated by Japan, part of 2,000 cherry trees from the city of Tokyo that arrived in Washington in January 1910. It was long assumed that all of the trees had been destroyed by the USDA; upon arrival it was discovered that they were infected with insects, nematodes, and disease. However, a 2008 study by the National Park Service suggests that a small number of the trees were spared and that USDA documents state that some 24 trees were taken to be grown under observation by government entomologists. In fact, a letter to Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds Colonel Cosby from head gardener Charles Henlock on January 29, 1910, states that 1,794 of the 2,000 trees were destroyed by order of Colonel Cosby, 200 were destroyed by Dr. Howard, USDA chief entomologist, and only six were spared and delivered to the USDA by order of Colonel Cosby. The 2008 report identifies the species of the existing East Potomac Park Golf Course trees as *Prunus x yedoensis*, commonly known as the Yoshino cherry. A 1919 report recounting the 1910 incident and subsequent planting of Japanese cherry trees in the city states that the 1910 shipment included ten different varieties of Japanese cherry trees. The Yoshino is not among the species listed. The 1919 report does state that the 1912 shipment of trees included 1,800 Somei-Yoshino cherry trees or *Prunus x yedoensis*. The 1910 letter and the 1919 report do not state what became of the six trees from the 1910 shipment that were spared. While East Potomac Park is not an unlikely location since it was used by the USDA as an experiment ground prior to the construction of the golf course, this newly found information suggests that the golf course cherry trees were not part of the 1910 shipment and most likely planted as part of the 1912 shipment. Regardless, since only four percent of the 1912 trees remain today, the East Potomac Park Golf Course cherry trees are some of the oldest Japanese cherry trees in the District of Columbia. Letter from Charles Henlock to Col. Spencer Cosby, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, 29 January 1910, Record Group 42, Entry 97, Box 12, Subject File 52, National Archives, Washington, DC; "The Japanese Cherry Trees," November 1919, Record Group 42, Entry 97, Box 12, Subject File 52, National Archives, Washington, DC.; Jonathan Pliska, 1*910 Japanese Flowing Cherry Trees,* Historic American Landscape Survey HALS No. DC-8 (Washington, DC:

the course may have also had two small lakes at one time. In 1927 Leoffler announced that "the miniature rock-bound coast and the two lakes which now make fisherman out of those who seek their ball after a bad approach shot on the fourth hole, 'E' course" would be eliminated.[59]

After the completion of the E-F Course, Leoffler further improved East Potomac Golf Course in 1927 with a new practice putting green around 150 feet by 50 feet in size, located on the south side of the fieldhouse. Leoffler required a "small charge" to use the green, which had been "put in perfect condition for those whose putts go astray around the cup to remedy their faults."[60] To further entice government workers, he also provided a bus service from the Treasury Department to the golf course, which was particularly beneficial when the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds discontinued ferry service in 1922 due to lack of funding.[61] In 1922 the office also built a 1,200-foot-long ash footpath that lead from the tracks of the Washington & Alexandria Railroad to the fieldhouse, a flagstone walk at the entrance to the fieldhouse, and a 375-foot-long iron post and chain fence along the roadway leading to the building.[62]

By 1927 the course also boasted a "practice driving course," described as "the most commodious driving course in the city." The driving range stood southeast of the fieldhouse and along Ohio Drive, on the east side of Hole 1 of the A Course (Hole 9 of the B Course).[63] With the increasing amenities, the number of golfers that used East Potomac Park Golf Course in 1927 reached 155,318.[64] Illustrating the appeal of the course, in 1928 the *Washington Post* commended East Potomac Park Golf Course for its unparalleled scenery and views enhanced by the monuments of the capital city:

> It is doubtful if there is any golf course anywhere that surpasses in the beauty of its surroundings [as] the golf course in East Potomac Park. It is within a mile and a half of the White House and the Capitol and much nearer to the Lincoln Memorial and the [Washington] Monument, all of them within plain sight from every tee and every green. The hills of Arlington, with the Lee Mansion, the Memorial Amphitheater and the wireless towers, loom up across the Potomac,

National Park Service, 2008).

59 "The Public Linksman," *Washington Post,* 15 May 1927:24.

60 "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 7 April 1927:43; National Park Service, *Map Showing Land to be Vacated by Concessionaire*, 1934, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

61 "Potomac Park Ferry No Longer Operated," *Washington Evening Star,* 27 June 1922:16; "Golf Course Saves US Money, Sherrill Claims," *Washington Sunday Star,* 19 July 1925:2; "Capital Traction Buys Bus Routes," *Washington Sunday Star*, 6 December 1925:14.

62 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922), 2186.

63 "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 July 1930:C2.

64 "Selling the Game of Golf to the Public," *Washington Post,* 1 July 1928:SM3.

and the river itself may be followed by the eye of a waiting golfer for many miles southward.[65]

## IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COURSE: 1930-1942

Beginning in 1930 Leoffler added the final nine holes, known as the G Course, to East Potomac Park Golf Course. The *Evening Star* reported in July 1930 that "Sites for putting greens and bunkers now are under construction" and that the new course would "match in difficulty the other layouts in East Potomac Park and will be well trapped."[66] The only course that was not reversible, the G Course initially had four holes on the south side of the fieldhouse along Ohio Drive (the previous location of the driving range), paralleling the front nine of the A-B Course, and five holes on the north side of the fieldhouse, along Ohio Drive and the former site of World War I Army barracks. The architect of the course is unknown.

In addition to forcing the removal of the driving range, the construction of the G Course likely required modifications to the routing of the E-F Course. A 1930 map of the courses illustrates that two of the holes on the E-F Course, located directly north of the clubhouse, became part of the G Course and two additional holes were built for the E-F Course along the east side of the tourist camp, which had been built along the railroad bridge near the Potomac River in 1921. It is also possible that the E-F Course was modified for one-way play at this time. A 1931 article in the *Evening Star* reported, "Course E is not a reversible course, nor is the new nine-hole layout that was opened last May."[67]

Leoffler continued to make improvements to the East Potomac Park course and in 1931 he added lights to the practice putting green and built a miniature golf course adjacent to the fieldhouse (see Miniature Golf below).[68] With the loss of the driving range from the construction of the G Course, Leoffler built a new driving range at East Potomac Park, his "pet and pride and joy," in 1934 on the west side of the fieldhouse[69] (Figure 2.13). Leoffler held the grand opening for the "extravagant" new range, hailed as the "newest and most complete range in this part of the country" on May 4, 1934. The range featured 45 tees and was flood-lighted for use at night.[70]

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65 Ibid.

66 "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 July 1930:C2; "The Public Linksman," *Washington Post,* 3 July 1932.

67 "None is Recorded on Three Courses," *Washington Evening Star,* 31 December 1931:B3; Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, *East Potomac Park Golf Course Relocation*, 1930, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

68 "Links to be Switched for D.C. Title Play," *Washington Evening Star,* 24 April 1931:D2; "The Public Linksman," *Washington Post,* 3 July 1932:M12.

69 "East Potomac to Have One-Way Links," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 May 1934:D2.

70 "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 30 April 1934:C3; No Title, *Washington Evening Star,* 4 May 1934:D3; "East Potomac to Have One-Way Links," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 May 1934:D2; Leoffler later stated that the driving range had 66 driving tees and a 1951 aerial confirms this number; however, it is uncertain if the number changed after the



**Figure 2.13. "Women golfers receiving instructions on the fundamentals before they start playing." The East Potomac Park driving range, November 1954. (National Archives)**

The addition of the new driving range coincided with other modernizations to the course. In 1934 Leoffler changed the A-B Course for the first time in more than a decade, ending the two-way play installed by Travis's design when the course opened in 1920. The greens of the course were rebuilt for one-way play on what was course B. The *Evening Star* also reported that the greens on the C-D and E-F Courses would be rebuilt and would become solely courses D and F, indicating the two-way play was also eliminated at this time, if not earlier. Since the new driving range necessitated the removal of the ninth green of the F Course, the ninth green of the D Course was used in its place and a new ninth green was constructed for the D Course. In addition, the first tee on the D Course was changed to play the old ninth green on the obsolete A Course.[71]

As part of the improvements, Travis's greens at the course were modernized and rebuilt for pitching instead of run-up shots. The *Evening Star* reported that it was "just another sign of the changing times, but it will make for public links golf something like the brand afforded at our leading clubs, where the run-up is not as popular as the pitch." Run-up shots, which are typically played with a lower-lofted club relative to a wedge (an 8-, 7- or 6-iron, for example) produce a low trajectory, with the ball rolling along the ground and up to the hole.[72] At East Potomac Park, a run-up shot, with the course's "lightning-fast greens," often caused balls to go

driving range was shifted from the construction of the swimming pool in 1936. See *The Business Background and Experience of Mr. S.G. Leoffler Related to Operation of Golf Courses*, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2849, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

71 "East Potomac to Have One-Way Links," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 May 1934:D2.

72 See http://golf.about.com/od/golfterms/g/bumpandrun.htm.



**Figure 2.14. Flooding on the Potomac River at East Potomac Park, March 1936. (Library of Congress)**

bounding into the Washington Channel. On the new greens, "the lads will be able to fling 'em up according to the best country club traditions."[73]

A number of Travis's original bunkers were likely removed when reversible play on the courses was abandoned, since many of them would have been irrelevant when played from one direction.[74] It is also possible that the flooding of the Potomac River in March 1936, one of the region's most destructive floods, greatly damaged the course. A photograph of the flood illustrates that most of the B and D Courses and part of the G Course were almost completely underwater. Only the F Course was spared from complete flooding[75] (Figure 2.14).

Two years after Leoffler built the driving range, a swimming pool was built at East Potomac Park, requiring the relocation of the driving range further to the west. The construction of the swimming pool also forced the elimination one of the holes near the fieldhouse on the G Course. A new hole was constructed toward Hains Point to keep the course a nine-hole layout.[76]

Leoffler had proposed a swimming pool at East Potomac Park without cost to the government as early as 1927. The concrete pool was to be 150 by 80 feet, 1 to 10 feet deep, and located between the two wings of the fieldhouse. Plans also called for a "central entrance flanked by white stone colonnades and a pergola with a fountain

73 "East Potomac to Have One-Way Links," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 May 1934:D2.
74 Michael McCartin, *Making a Model Municipal Facility: A Case Study of East Potomac Park Golf Course* (Master's thesis University of Georgia, 2008), 54.
75 Harris & Ewing, photographer. [Flooding, Potomac River, Washington, DC]. Washington D.C, 1936. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013010438/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.).
76 "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 29 February 1936:C7.

in the middle of the pool."[77] Because the pool was a permanent structure, federal law required congressional approval, thus delaying the pool's construction.[78]

Congress approved the pool at East Potomac Park in 1929, one of six public "bathing pools" authorized on federal land that year. The pool, intended for white patrons, was considered "the show pool of the city."[79] Construction on the pool commenced in 1936, using Public Works Administration (PWA) funds. While the pool was scheduled to be completed in the summer of 1936, the March flood delayed construction after waters washed away the foundations of both the East Potomac pool and the new pool in Anacostia Park. In October 1936 C. Marshall Finnan, Superintendent of National Capital Parks, announced that a $37,000 contract had been awarded to Charles H. Thompkins Co., the original contractors, to complete the pool foundations. The cost also included improvements to the existing fieldhouse for use by both swimmers and golfers.[80] The new pool formally opened on June 5, 1937, with a ceremony attended by National Capital Parks Superintendent Finnan and Assistant Secretary of the Interior Theodore A. Walters.

In the summer of 1937 the Boy Scouts returned once again to East Potomac Park, this time for their 10-day national jamboree. Approximately 25,000 scouts came to Washington, DC, for the jamboree and camped at several parks around the city, including the Washington Monument Grounds and East and West Potomac parks. Consequently, the nine-hole practice course at West Potomac Park and nine holes at East Potomac Park were closed during the jamboree[81] (Figure 2.15).

Despite the improvements made to the course, by the late 1930s and early 1940s East Potomac Park Golf Course was not at the same caliber as it was when the Travis-designed course was the site of the annual public links tournament more than 15 years before. Concessionaire Severine G. Leoffler was particularly disappointed that the Mt. Pleasant Golf Course in Baltimore was chosen over East Potomac Park Golf Course for the 1938 US Amateur Public Links Championship and subsequently proposed several improvements to the course. As described by the *Evening Star*,

> The terrain in East Potomac Park does not lend itself to the usual run-of-the-mine course construction maneuvers. There are no topography problems there, for the entire Hains Point area is as flat as a pancake. But Leoffler plans, by judi-

77 "Pool is Project for Potomac Park," *Washington Post,* 2 March 1927:22.
78 "Potomac Pool Needs Consent of Congress," *Washington Post,* 3 March 1927
79 Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Park Historic Distric*t, 52.
80 "Finnan Approves $39,000 Pool Job," *Washington Post,* 20 October 1936:X3; Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Parks Historic District*, 76.
81 "Parks to Shelter 25,000 Boy Scouts," *Washington Post,* 4 March 1937:11.



**Figure 2.15.** Boy Scouts camping (upper left) on East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1937. Fort McNair is in the foreground. (National Archives)

> cious use of tees and bunkers, to convert the topographically uninteresting layout into a series of courses that will take the best shot making of the experts.[82]

Between 1939 and 1940 the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) helped make several improvements to East Potomac Park Golf Course. The men planted 36 cedar trees in the roughs, two at 200 yards from each tee, to mark the distance of a well-hit tee shot. In addition, the CCC rebuilt a large number of the putting greens. Tommy Doerer, the manager at East Potomac Park at that time, noted:

> We want to change around a lot of those greens that were built as two-way greens. They are humped in the middle and the trapping is obsolete. They get so hard in the summer that you can't pitch a ball to them, and in all they are away behind modern course construction ideals. We want to see most of the old ones rebuilt and we want to do some trapping around all of them. Personally I'd like to see two of these nine-hole layouts made into a really rugged 18-hole course, one that would come pretty close to country club standards.[83]

The work by the CCC and the concessionaire also included the rebuilding of Green 4 of the B Course, all of the tees on the B Course, Tees 1-8 on the D Course, and Tee 1 on the G Course.[84] In the spring of 1939, the *Washington Post* stated that the course had been "toughened" and "lengthened" into "near-championship caliber."[85]

82 "Public Golf Links Face Lifting at East Potomac Planned as Natural Meet Lure," *Evening Star,* 28 December 1938:A14.

83 "Reconstruction by C.C.C. to Provide D.C. With Modern Public Golf Courses," *Washington Evening Star,* 4 February 1939:A15.

84 Memorandum for Mr. Gable, Chief, Park Operators Division, Report on Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks of the District of Columbia, 17 December 1940. Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2847, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

85 "Thousands Find Their Sports Thrill on DC Fairways," *Washington Post,* 26 May 1939:10.

Despite the improvements by the CCC, East Potomac Park Golf Course remained in poor condition. In a series of articles on the District's golf courses in November 1939, *Evening Star* reporter Walter McCallum recalled how the East Potomac Park course was the scene of the 1923 US Public Links Championship and that "it was played over courses that have barely been changed from that day to this. These courses were not adequate in 1923. They are pitifully inadequate now."[86]

McCallum went on to describe the condition at East Potomac Park Golf Course:

> All [of the courses at East Potomac Park] are flat, uninteresting layouts which could be vastly improved under the supervision of a competent course architect. All have flinty-surfaced dirt tees, poorly trapped putting greens, and badly kept bunkers.[87]

McCallum noted that congestion was part of the problem at East Potomac, and that the course "takes a lot of beating … But the East Potomac Park course is outmoded and far behind the modern trend. It is too short, not well trapped, and in poor condition. The greens need complete rebuilding. All the tees should be sodded and elevated. Inadequate bunkering permits wild shots."[88]

One year later in December 1940 the conditions at East Potomac Park Golf Course remained poor and were described in a memo to the Chief, Park Operations Division of the National Park Service:

> Fairways too rough. Greens too hard, too small, improperly designed (due to the reversing of the courses in the past) with the result that the back part of most greens is pitched downward. Some of the greens are lower than the fairways and should be elevated.
>
> Traps appear to have no relationship to the holes and in many instances are located on the wrong side of the fairway so that a trapped ball, if played over the bunker, would be hit in a direction opposite to the direction of the green.
>
> Several new tees have been built or reconstructed during the years 1939 and 1940 and are in need of repair now.[89]

Many of the problems with East Potomac Park Golf Course were blamed on the concessionaire, who was able to keep the green fees as some of the lowest in the

86 Walter McCallum, "Profitable, Private Monopoly Controls Public Links Golf," *Washington Evening Star,* 16 November 1939:A1.

87 Walter McCallum, "Golf Layout at East Potomac Is Declared Outmoded," *Washington Evening Star,* 17 November 1939:B1.

88 Ibid.

89 Memorandum for Mr. Gable, Chief, Park Operators Division, Report on Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks of the District of Columbia, 17 December 1940. Record Group 49, Entry 10, Box 2847, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

country by packing as many players on the courses as possible. A 1942 report on public golf in the District of Columbia stated:

> This policy or plan of action called for the elimination of all features, both natural and artificial, no matter how essential or valuable to the character and appearance of the courses that would have a tendency to obstruct or delay play. In this way, many changes were made to the original eighteen at East Potomac, entire holes were eliminated and rebuilt in new locations, holes were rerouted, bunkers, hazards and mounds were obliterated, and the same idea influenced all subsequent planning for the new courses built by the operator.[90]

The report stated that during the development of the first eighteen holes at East Potomac Park Golf Course, the federal government "showed much interest in procuring experienced advice, competent service in design, and consulting help in the planning and construction." Leoffler's company also initially showed some interest in the quality of the course with its hiring of William S. Flynn to design the third nine holes at East Potomac Park Golf Course. However, in the years following, the concessionaire often made alterations to the courses "without adequate regulation or the provision of expert consulting service" from the federal government. Thus, "the changes to the older courses, the poor planning and construction of the facilities during the expansion years, plus the more recent physical deterioration of the entire system has greatly affected the character of the courses and the type of golf offered to the public."[91] In spite of the changes made to Travis's eighteen-hole course, including the elimination of the course's reversibility, the report noted that the "framework or backbone of that course still remains, although these changes have resulted in a series of rather monotonous holes."[92]

Among other recommendations to improve the course, the report proposed that the original eighteen-hole course designed by Travis should be "reconstructed and modernized, tees and greens rebuilt to conform to the orthodox method of one way play, some traps, bunkers and hazards restored, and last but by no means least an intelligent planting plan established and adhered to, not only to improve the general appearance of this rather barren area, but to offer protection and segregation to the various sports activities, parkways, walks and trails."[93]

## WORLD WAR II: 1942-1945

Any plans to improve the condition of East Potomac Park Golf Course were put on hold with the onset of World War II. With the exception of the nine-hole course at West Potomac Park, which was removed to make way for temporary dormitories, East Potomac Park was the hardest hit of the District's public golf cours-

90 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 11.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid., 19-20.
93 Ibid, 21.

es during World War II. In the spring of 1941, five holes of the nine-hole G Course located on the north side of the fieldhouse were removed when the Welfare and Recreation Association was given permission to build tennis courts and ball fields to replace those lost by the construction of the Jefferson Memorial.[94] In order to make up for the loss, Leoffler divided one of the par five holes on the south side of the fieldhouse into two holes. Instead of a nine-hole course, the small five-hole G Course was played twice as a ten-hole layout.[95]

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States' entry into World War II on December 7, 1941, the number of holes at East Potomac Park Golf Course was further reduced when the US Army installed four anti-aircraft guns on the F Course in mid-December, "their muzzles swinging in any direction to protect the Capital from invasion by air," and forcing Leoffler to close the course.[96] The anti-aircraft guns also caused the closure of the driving range, as one of the guns sat around the 300 yard mark in the middle of the range.[97]

The reduction of the holes at East Potomac Park coincided with the complete closure and removal of the course at West Potomac Park, "thus cutting down the always inadequate municipal golf facilities."[98] According to Merrell W. Whittlesey from the *Washington Post*, who took over the column "Tee to Green" from former Commissioner Henry Litchfield West, "Last year the play was reduced and now this season the golfers will have just two nine-hole courses and a five-hole merry-go-round which must be played twice for the money's worth."[99]

Whittlesey went on to criticize the city's public courses, particularly East Potomac Park:

> East Potomac, with a championship 18 which can be lengthened to better than 6400 yards, has distance only to offer, plus an occasional trap or tree. The only hill at East is an ant-hill on the second nine …
>
> [T]he flat [holes] at East Potomac which are pushovers for the experts will never be remodeled to suit the low handicapped players, however, even though

94 A 1942 article says that the F Course was reduced by four holes, but this appears to be a mistake and it was the G Course that was closed. See "East Potomac Keeper Seeks Way to Fill Out 'F' Layout," *Washington Evening Star,* 2 April 1942:C2; Anti-Aircraft Moves In on Golf, Cutting East Potomac Course," *Washington Evening Star,* 16 December 1941:A19; "18 Tennis Courts Planned for Park," *Washington Post,* 25 March 1941:28; "Anti-Aircraft Moves In on Golf, Cutting East Potomac Course," *Washington Evening Star,* 16 December 1941:A19, "Three of Four Holes on Golf Course G Will Be Cut Off," *Washington Evening Star,* 21 March 1941:D2.

95 "Three or Four Holes on Golf course G Will Be Cut Off," *Washington Evening Star,* 21 March 1941:D2.

96 "Anti-Aircraft Moves In on Golf, Cutting East Potomac Course," *Washington Evening Star,* 16 December 1941:A19.

97 Ibid.

98 "East Potomac Links Slated to Open by May 1" *Washington Post,* 19 March 1943:14.

99 "Tee to Green," *Washington Post,* 22 March 1942:X2.

> room would permit. Some 90 percent of the public links golfers are 90-and-over shooters, and they like the courses easy. That might be the reason [there is a lack] of good muny players, for after they master the local publinks courses they must join a private club to bolster their game.[100]

In addition to closure of the G and F courses, Leoffler faced several challenges in operating the golf courses during wartime. Wartime rationing impacted the operation of the lunch counters and the East Potomac Park course lacked a golf professional.[101] As a result of gasoline rationing, Leoffler was unable to get gasoline from the ration board to keep the fairways cut until the federal government loaned him 300 gallons to cut the high grass at the courses.[102] The driving range at East Potomac reopened in the spring of 1942, but once again suffered when Leoffler didn't receive the 3,000 dozen range balls he ordered the previous fall and it was unclear if the range lights would be allowed so close to the river.[103]

A massive flood in October 1942 once again caused major damage to the course and prompted the closure of East Potomac Park Golf Course from October until May 1943. By March 1943 numerous "lakes" still dotted the peninsula and mud covered a large portion of the course, requiring several greens to be rebuilt and the course rolled and seeded.[104] The course finally opened to the public in May 1943.[105]

In June 1943, shortly after the course reopened after the flood damage, Leoffler closed the East Potomac Park course for the duration of the war. While "Tee to Green" columnist Merrell W. Whittlesey predicted that the local public courses would become more popular during the war because gas and tire shortages would make the "90-mile round trip to Baltimore to play the far superior Oriole City layouts, including the championship Mount Pleasant course … strictly a luxury," bans on public and private transportation during wartime had virtually isolated the East Potomac Park course. Leoffler had planned to close the course in August 1943 in order to fully rehabilitate it from the flood damages with a $25,000 congressional appropriation, but the dwindling number of players caused by the gas restrictions prompted Leoffler to close the course early until the situation im-

100 Ibid.
101 "East Potomac Links Slated to Open by May 1" *Washington Post,* 19 March 1943:14.
102 "East Potomac Golf Is Halted for Lack of Transportation," *Washington Evening Star*, 15 June 1943:A-15.
103 "Tee to Green," *Washington Post,* 22 March 1942:X2.
104 "East Potomac Links Slated to Open by May 1" *Washington Post,* 19 March 1943:14; "Potomac Park Links Repaired, Soon to be Opened to the Public," *Washington Evening Star,* 3 May 1943:12.
105 "East Potomac Golf Is Halted for Lack of Transportation," *Washington Evening Star*, 15 June 1943:A-15.

proved. In the meantime, Rock Creek, Anacostia, and Langston remained open.[106] East Potomac Park Golf Course remained closed until the summer of 1945.[107]

## POST-WAR IMPROVEMENTS: 1945-1959

It is likely that the condition of East Potomac Park Golf Course greatly suffered greatly from the effects of World War II, not only from the residual damage caused by the flood, but also from lack of general maintenance and upkeep. As National Park Service Associate Director Arthur E. Demaray optimistically stated in 1949, "Even with the mounting disruption of the war years, the mounting costs of operation, the shortage of labor, the floods that have almost completely ruined the East Potomac Park and Anacostia courses, the shortage of chemicals and fertilizers and related difficulties that accompany this period of disruption and readjustment, our courses by and large are in good and continually improving condition.[108]

In 1944 the War Department agreed to pay the National Park Service $37,000 for the rehabilitation of the golf course and driving range at East Potomac Park due to the damage caused from the Army's occupation during World War II.[109] Leoffler secured the services of golf course architect William S. Flynn to rebuild the nine-hole F Course at Potomac Park, which had been closed since the Army's installation of anti-aircraft artillery. Rebuilt during the spring and summer of 1945, the new course was generally in the same location as Flynn's original 1924 E-F Course, except for the area along Ohio Drive and north of the miniature golf course (also formerly part of the G Course) that was being used as a landing pad for model airplanes[110] (Figure 2.16).The entire course had been newly vegetated, new greens, fairways, tees, and traps constructed, and drainage facilities installed to "make the course an all-weather affair." The 2,726-yard course "was considered by Mr. Flynn to be one of the best flat courses in the country." All of the changes were planned and designed by Flynn and carried out by his assistant after Flynn's death in January 1945. The newly rebuilt course opened in September 1945 with an exhibition match between the course's golf pro Cliff Spencer, Harry Greisner of Burning Tree Country Club, and Claude Rippey and Karl C. Marcey, past and present District of Columbia Public Links champions.[111]

106 "Tee to Green," *Washington Post,* 22 March 1942:X2; "East Potomac Golf Is Halted for Lack of Transportation," *Washington Evening Star*, 15 June 1943:A-15.

107 Walter McCallum, "Win, Lose or Draw," *Washington Evening Star,* 10 August 1945:A10.

108 Statement by Arthur E. Demaray, Associate Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, before the House Subcommittee on Public Lands Investigating the Public Golf Courses in the District of Columbia, 28 February 1949, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2847, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

109 Letter from the General Accounting Office to the National Park Service, 4 November 1944, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2828, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

110 "East Potomac Links Improved; Work at Rock Creek Planned," *Washington Evening Star,* 4 December 1945:A14; William S. Flynn, *Preliminary Study of Nine Hole Golf Course, East Potomac Park, Washington, DC*, 1944, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

111 "East Potomac Links Improved; Work at Rock Creek Planned," *Washington Evening Star,*



**Figure 2.16.** East Potomac Park Golf Course looking south toward Hains Point. Model airplane landing pads are in the foreground. August 1950. (National Park Service)

Flynn also designed improvements to the B and D Courses and the work was carried out in the fall of 1945 and into the winter of 1946. All of the greens on course B, with the exceptions of Holes 7 and 9, were rebuilt and planted with seaside bent grass, and seven new tees, larger than the old tees, were built. On the D Course, all of the greens were reconstructed and new tees installed. A new first hole that played to the old Green 2 and measured 300 yards in length was built. A new Hole 2 was built with a length of 225 yards, with the green opposite Tee 3. Hole 3 remained a par 5 but was lengthened from 475 to 525 yards.[112]

Flooding continued to be a problem at East Potomac Park. The Army Corps of Engineers began dredging the Potomac River and pumping the silt into the northwest section of Hains Point in the fall of 1948, hoping to build up the low spots in the park.[113] In 1949 the *Washington Post* reported that East Potomac Park had settled six feet since the park was established and that "Flood conditions in the city's most frequented park have become so serious in recent years that park officials say control measures should be applied to the whole area." The conditions

4 December 1945:A14; William S. Flynn, *Preliminary Study of Nine Hole Golf Course*, 1944; Press Release, 31 August 1945, Record Group 49, Entry 10, Central Classified Files, Box 2828, Folder 601-17, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

112 "East Potomac Links Improved; Work at Rock Creek Planned," *Washington Evening Star,* 4 December 1945:A14; National Park Service National Capital Parks, Press Release, 31 August 1945, Record Group 49, Entry 10, Central Classified Files, Box 2828, Folder 601-17, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

113 "Dredging of Channel to Stop Park Reverting to Swampland," *Washington Post,* 15 September 1948:14.

forced Leoffler to make drainage improvements at the course at the cost of around $7,000.[114]

National Capital Parks announced in September 1950 that "despite protests by golfers, the swamps of the East Potomac Park course" would be filled with four hundred cubic yards of dredged material from the Washington Channel by the Army Corps of Engineers. The *Washington Post* reported that in recent years golfers "have found the main hazards of the course the unexpected water holes that fill up to knee level after a heavy rain." Work was only expected to impact a third of the golf course.[115] Golfers opposing the plan petitioned Congress, stating that the funds and manpower could be better used in the Korean War effort than "in destroying for many years to come the principal outlet for recreation in the downtown area."[116] Less than three months later, a "freeze" on federal funds because of the war postponed the project indefinitely.[117] The project resurfaced once again in 1955, and this time would require the closure of two of the nine-hole courses over three years. Leoffler protested, stating that the project would "ruin" the two courses without substantially preventing flooding during storms.[118] Ultimately the project never went forward.

In 1950 the Doylestown, Pennsylvania, firm of William F. Gordon Co. began reworking the G Course, which still had only five holes since the reduction of the course just prior to World War II.[119] Gordon's new design rearranged the layout to allow for all nine holes to be on the south side of the fieldhouse. Consequently, the length of most of the holes was shortened.[120] The *Washington Post* reported that the course was being "revamped for beginning golfers. It will speed play on the other courses and give the tyros a chance to sharpen their game without embarrassment."[121]

In 1956 Gordon, along with his son David, began work on redesigning the F Course; plans called for two completely new holes and four new greens.[122] Gordon's plans indicate that the changes were substantial and that he changed the

114 "Leoffler to Install Drainage System on 2 Soggy Golf Courses," *Washington Evening Star,* 1 March 1949:B1.
115 "River Mud Will Restore Golf Course to Old Level," *Washington Post,* 14 September 1950:B1.
116 "Players Petitioned Against It," *Washington Post,* 18 October 1950:23.
117 "Fund 'Freeze' Halts Hains Point Flood Project," *Washington Evening Star,* 4 December 1950:B1.
118 "Land Fill May Close Hains Pt. Golf Courses," *Washington Post,* 10 October 1955:20.
119 In 1948 East Potomac Park Golf Course had 32 holes. "New Nine-Hole Golf Course Ready by Memorial Day," *Washington Post,* 7 March 1948:L6.
120 William F. Gordon, *Additional Nine Holes, East Potomac Park GC, Washington, DC*, 1950, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.
121 "New Nine-Hole Public Golf Course is Virtually Certain to Be Ready by July 1," *Washington Post,* 14 May 1950:C5.
122 Maury Fitzgerald, "Golf Links Dot 3-State Area," *Washington Post,* 20 May 1956:K5.

layout of Flynn's 1945 design by reversing the play of the course. By 1956 all of the land along the Washington Channel side of the course (the former location of the model airplane landing pad) was available for use by the golf course and the redesign added a new hole, Hole 7, at this location.[123] Gordon's layout was slightly modified in 1960 with the construction of Buckeye Drive along the northern end of the course. Consequently, Holes 5 and No. 6 were rerouted, a new green was constructed for Hole 5, and the former green for Hole 5 became the green for the new Hole 6.[124]

## THREATS AND OTHER CHANGES: 1960-1984

Since its construction, numerous projects threatened to eliminate or reduce the golf course at East Potomac Park. In the 1960s and 1980s, the threat once again was to the F Course. Plans for a new Washington Fisheries Center and Aquarium on the north side of the fieldhouse appeared in the press as early as 1962.[125] Supported by Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall (1961-1969), the project not only included the aquarium but also a pedestrian "Ponte Vecchio" bridge that would span the Washington Channel. The aquarium's parking lots were slated for the F Course site.[126] The plans for the aquarium and bridge coincided with several improvements to East Potomac Park in the 1960s, including the construction of a new headquarters building for the National Capital Region (formerly National Capital Parks) on the former site of the tourist camp, across Buckeye Drive from the F Course.

The threat to the F Course did not sit well with local golfers, who planned to protest the construction of the aquarium.[127] It also caught the attention of *Washington Post* cartoonist Herbert "Herblock" Block, who in June 1964 advocated for saving the F Course at East Potomac Park and challenged Secretary of the Interior Udall to play the nine-hole course with him. Herblock said "I have been with [Secretary Udall] all the way on preserving dunes, parks and wilderness areas – because as he says, once you have lost any part of these things, you have lost them permanently. Nothing more true or more apt could be said about a golf course in a large and growing city."[128] Herblock argued that removing the F Course would result in the

123 William F. Gordon and David W. Gordon, *East Potomac Park Golf Course*, 1956, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

124 Department of Highways and Traffic, Design Engineering and Research Street Design Section, *Buckeye Drive Relocation in East Potomac Park*, 1959, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database; S.G. Leoffler Co. to Superintendent Harry T. Thompson, 30 November 1960, Record Group 79, Accession No. 68A-3201, Box 14, Folder C 3823 (Leoffler Golf Concessions), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

125 "Golfers Plan Protest of Aquarium," *Washington Post,* 16 December 1962:C6; "Officials Say Aquarium Won't Hamper Golfers," *Washington Evening Star,* 19 December 1962:D3.

126 "Golf Course to Remain as Neighbor of Aquarium," *Washington Post,* 20 September 1964:B1.

127 "Golfers Plan Protest of Aquarium," *Washington Post,* 16 December 1962:C6.

128 "Herblock Challenges Udall to Golf at Doomed Course," *Washington Post,* 24 June 1964:B1.

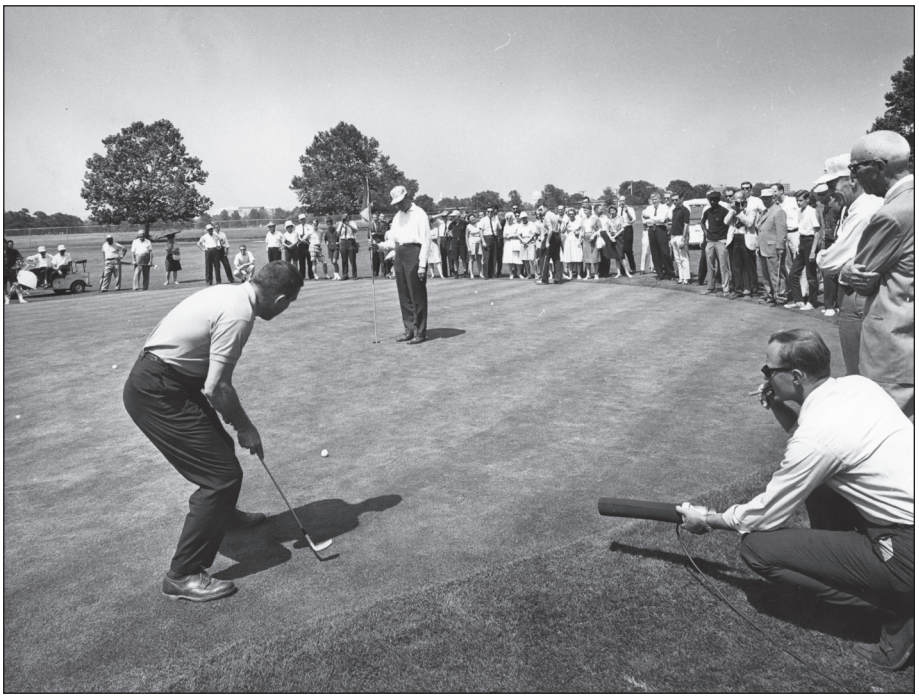


**Figure 2.17.** Secretary Udall putts on the F Course at East Potomac Park on June 26, 1950. (National Park Service)

loss of an easy-to-reach, inexpensive, integrated, recreation area and wanted Udall to see the course "from the players' standpoint and not just something on a planning table."[129]

Udall accepted Herblock's offer "not for the golf but for the conversation." Udall was a three-letter varsity man (in basketball, baseball, and football) but not a golfer. Herblock contested that Udall still had a "fair chance of beating me – I'm that bad."[130] In the end Udall won the match on June 26, 1964, outscoring Herblock 46 to 51 (Figure 2.17). After his win Udall said, "Herb, you were right and we were wrong; so we're going to save the course."[131] The Department of the Interior's new plan only included a small parking area for the aquarium. Golf course architect Edmund B. Ault redesigned the nine-hole course to make room for the much smaller parking area; however, the aquarium was never built and Ault's redesign was not implemented.[132]

Although the F Course was saved, the overall condition of all three courses at East Potomac Park once again began to decline. In 1977 the National Park Service completed a marketing and economic overview of East Potomac Park Golf

129 Ibid.
130 "Secretary Udall Accepts Herblock's Challenge to Golf Match on Imperiled Potomac Course," *Washington Post,* 25 June 1964:B1.
131 "Herblock Loses Battle to Udall But Wins War to Save Course," *Washington Post,* 27 June 1964:A1.
132 "Golf Course to Remain as Neighbor of Aquarium," *Washington Post,* 20 September 1964:B1; "Public Golf Escapes Crisis," *Washington Sunday Star,* 5 May 1968:C7.

Course. In addition to the general poor conditions attributed to all of the National Park Service golf courses in the District of Columbia, such as an inadequate number of sand traps and existing traps in poor conditions, tees that were void of grass, and lumpy greens, the report specifically noted that at East Potomac Park, "Approximately a half-acre area in the center of the [course] has been used as a dumping ground for cut grasses, tree limbs, and assorted junk. In addition, it is badly overgrown with weeds and is unsightly, distracting from the overall appearance of the area.[133] Lack of grading and fill, maintenance, and repair over the years caused swales and potholes to form on the golf courses, which in turn created drainage problems in several areas. The course's parking area was deemed not large enough to accommodate visitors, particularly since the lot was shared with those using the swimming pool and nearby tennis facilities.[134]

The report recommended that improved course maintenance, a general improvement program, and renovations to the fieldhouse, then in "deplorable condition," would have a beneficial impact on player use. It also recommended that the course should be shortened to 27 holes, particularly if the National Park Service built a new course at Oxon Cove in Prince George's County, Maryland. Since the F Course had the most problems with potholes and swales, particularly after rainstorms, one of the report's recommendations was to eliminate the nine-hole course and use the area for increased parking and to build a lake for drainage and irrigation.[135]

Following the development of the 1977 study, the National Park Service renovated the fieldhouse in 1977-1978, which upgraded the food and concession area and created a new pro shop and concessionaire's office. At a cost $165,000, the project provided year-round dining inside the fieldhouse and outdoor dining underneath the portico. Concurrently, the DC Recreation Department constructed a bathhouse on the open land between the two wings of the fieldhouse, removing the need for the basement of the fieldhouse to be used for dressing rooms for the swimming pool. Beginning in 1979 the west wing of the fieldhouse became the District One Sub-station for the US Park Police.[136]

After 60 years under the S.G. Leoffler Co., the East Potomac Park came under new management in 1983 when Golf Course Specialists, Inc., who also managed the Rock Creek course, bought out Leoffler's interest in the golf course for around $300,000 to $400,000. The new concessionaire planned "to make East Potomac

133 National Park Service National Capital Region, *Marketing and Economic Overview, Rock Creek/Potomac Park Golf Courses* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1977).
134 Ibid., 42-46.
135 Ibid., 42-46.
136 "D.C. Golfers Face Better Days," *Washington Post*, 7 April 1977:D10; Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Park Historic District*, 76.

a distinctive Scottish seaside-style course, more difficult and interesting than it is now, with new bunkers and greens," but also planned on keeping the course at a low cost for players. At that time, both Rock Creek and East Potomac Park were among the least expensive golf courses in the nation.[137]

In January 1983, shortly after the change in management, the National Park Service eliminated the nine-hole F Course at East Potomac Park. The removal was part of a $2 million dollar plan to relieve traffic congestion and increase open recreation space in the park. Plans for the area illustrated new ball fields located on the northeast corner at the intersection of Ohio Drive and Buckeye Drive and new roads accessing the area. In the interim, the National Park Service created a picnic area at the location of the former course.

The decision to remove the course came after the National Park Service conducted a two-and-a-half-year environmental assessment of various alternatives, consulted with city and federal planners, and held several public meetings. The National Park Service could not justify keeping the course as studies showed that it was underused and that there was a greater and growing demand for more open recreation space—golfers made up only 16 percent of the people using the park, but the entire 36-hole golf course occupied 65 percent of the land. The National Park Service also chose to remove the F Course since its location near the park entrance allowed part of its land to be used for a new road that would help divert traffic off of Ohio Drive SW, the main road running through the park. Around 150 additional parking spaces would be created off of the new road as part of a plan to add nearly 500 parking spaces throughout the entire park.[138]

With its easy access to the fieldhouse and intermediate-length fairways, the nine-hole F Course was a favorite among the city's retired and senior golfers. Shortly after the removal of the course, a group of golfers that frequented the F Course organized the East Potomac Golf Association and began a campaign to have the National Park Service restore the course. The group circulated petitions, including one with over 1,200 names that was sent to the Secretary of the Interior James Watt, wrote letters, and made personal appeals to Congress.[139]

In March 1984 Congressman Sidney R. Yates of Illinois, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Department of the Interior, wrote to National Capital Region Director Jack Fish asking that the National Park Service halt construction activities on the former golf course. Yates stated, "It is my

137 "E. Potomac Park Public Golf Course Gets New Manager," *Washington Post,* 5 January 1983:DC7.
138 "Elderly Golfers in Turf Fight for Hains Point Course," *Washington Post,* 6 June 1983:D3.
139 Ibid.

intention to propose to the subcommittee that money be added to the budget that will permit restoration of the course to its pre-January 21, 1983, condition."[140] In August 1984 Congress backed the golfers and provided $500,000 in the 1984 supplemental appropriations bill to restore the nine-hole F Course. The National Park Service estimated that it would take over a year to restore the course and that it would look for alternative ways to provide the much-needed ball fields and picnic areas.[141] When it was rebuilt, the course returned to its preexisting layout at a cost of $325,000. While the course was under construction, National Capital Region Director Jack Fish said, "Those nine holes are going to be the finest in the city when they're finished."[142]

## EAST POTOMAC PARK GOLF COURSE: THE LAST 30 YEARS (1986-2016)

With the increase in the popularity of golf and the inadequate number of public golf courses in the region in the 1990s, Golf Course Specialists, Inc. made several improvements to East Potomac Park Golf Course as part of its long-term contract with the National Park Service that extended from 1989 to 2008. The improvement program was estimated at $1.5 million dollars and the contract specified the design and construction of 12 new tees and the rebuilding of six old tees on the Blue Course (formerly the B and D Courses) to renovate all 36 fairways, to rebuild 15 existing sand traps and design and construct 35 new traps, and to design and construct mounds and swales throughout all three courses. It also specified the concessionaire to redesign, rebuild, and modernize the eighteen-hole Blue Course and the nine-hole Red Course (formerly the G Course) (Figure 2.18).[143]

In 1994-1995 the concessionaire improved the practice facilities at East Potomac Park by adding a new two-tiered driving range building. Designed by the Washington, DC, firm of Oehrlein & Associates, the facility was lighted for night play and provided 100 stalls, doubling the previous number. They also added two additional practice greens that have a total area of 40,000 square feet. In the early 1980s around 500 people used the practice area each week. After the renovations, the number increased to around 3,000 weekly.[144] Additional practice facilities were added in 1998 when a three-hole developmental golf course was added on the northern end of the Red Course for use by students of the Capital City Golf

140 "Congressman Trying to Keep Golf Course," *Washington Post,* 1 March 1984:A14.
141 "F Course Saved: Golfers Win Fight for Hains Point Links," *Washington Post,* 15 August 1984:C3
142 Terry Carlstrom, former Chief of Professional Services at the National Capital Region, phone interview with author, 25 October 2016; "Working Profile: Manus John (Jack) Fish Jr.; Tending the Capital's Parks," *New York Times,* 9 June 1985:A60.
143 Contract between the National Park Service and Golf Course Specialists, Inc., executed 18 September 1989, Concessions Files, National Park Service, National Capital Region.
144 "Driving Ranges: All Teed Up," *Washington Post,* 4 August 1995:56.



**Figure 2.18.** Hole 5 of the Red Course, 2016 (Photograph by author)

School.[145] This, and the construction of an additional parking lot on the southern end of the existing lot in 2001-2002, required the reworking of the Red Course. Golf Course Specialists also expanded the riverside dike along the course in 1996 to protect the course from flooding of the Potomac River. Several new buildings were constructed including a new golf course cart pavilion in 1996 and a new maintenance building and shed in 1999.[146]

Almost 100 years after it first opened in 1920, East Potomac Park Golf Course remains the most popular of the three public golf courses in Washington, DC, with its two nine-hole courses, eighteen-hole course, driving range, practice greens and holes, and the Potomac Grille (located in the fieldhouse). Golfers played over 88,000 rounds of golf at the course in 2016 and over 130,000 golfers used the driving range. The East Potomac Park Course is also the most profitable of the three courses, yet continues to provide affordable golf to all levels of players.

## EAST POTOMAC PARK MINIATURE GOLF COURSE

At the peak of the miniature golf trend in the District of Columbia and across the country, the concessionaire of East Potomac Park Golf Course, Severine G. Leoffler, built an eighteen-hole miniature golf course at East Potomac Park in 1931 at a cost of $9,600.[147] Erected adjacent to the fieldhouse on its north side and along

145 Contract between the National Park Service and Golf Course Specialists, Inc., executed 18 September 1989, Concessions Files, National Park Service, National Capital Region.
146 Ibid.
147 The Business Background and Experience of Mr. S.G. Leoffler Related to Operation of Golf Courses, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2849, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

Ohio Drive, the course featured numerous hazards, including miniature reproductions of prominent buildings around Washington, including the White House, the United States Capitol, and Mount Vernon. Several holes had stone features, such as a wishing well, bridge, pond, and walls. In order to attract players in the evening hours and after work, the course was lit for nighttime use. The course also featured several typical features of the time including bi-level holes, where a player had to send the ball into one or more cups connected by plastic pipes to another stage of the green, and a metal loop-di-loop. A small wood-frame ball house or ticket booth stood along the western edge of the course.[148]

Not long after its opening, the course reportedly began to attract people of "objectionable character."[149] In August 1931 Lt. Col. Ulysses S. Grant III, Director of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, wrote to Leoffler and said, "I very much regret that the miniature golf course has become a public nuisance, or at least apparently the nucleus of one, and that it may be necessary to ask you to close it entirely." Grant warned Leoffler that he did not want to take such a radical step unless necessary, but ordered Leoffler to close the course at 11:30 P.M. on weekdays and on 11:00 P.M. on Sundays.[150] Several days later, the Assistant Director of the Metropolitan Police Department's Commanding Detective Bureau wrote to Colonel Grant, stating that "Observations by members of my Bureau indicate that the miniature golf course in Potomac Park has been a gathering place at late hours of the night for men (and some women) who we know to be identified with professional gambling, selling of liquor, etc."[151] While no official complaints had been made, members of the bureau had missed the "gamblers, bootleggers, and others" from their "usual haunts" and learned that they were visiting the East Potomac Miniature Golf Course.[152]

The course's regular players were disappointed by the early closure and complained, "like hundreds of others, we cannot get down [to East Potomac Park] until late and this early closure deprives us of an evening's recreation and pleasure."

148 Clifton Adams, Miniature Golf Course, Hains Point, ca. 1930. Kiplinger Washington Collection, Historical Society of Washington, DC, also see images in "Pleasant Sunday Weather Lures Sport-Lovers to Washington's Park," *Washington Post,* 31 August 1936:X8; "Heat Fatal to One as Mercury Hits Year's High Here," *Washington Post,* 25 June 1940:1; "Call of the District's Wide Open Spaces," *Washington Post,* 6 July 1941:4.

149 Colonel Grant to Frank S. W. Burke, 14 August 1931, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-40 (Miniature Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

150 Colonel Grant to S.G. Leoffler, 7 August 1931, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-40 (Miniature Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

151 Frank S.W. Burke to Colonel Grant, 11 August 1931, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-40 (Miniature Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

152 Frank S.W. Burke to Colonel Grant, 20 August 1931, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-40 (Miniature Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

The players also stated that "We have been playing on these links all summer and have always found them to be extremely well conducted. In fact we have often remarked how orderly and quiet such a large crowd could be … We have never noted the presence of the lawless and rougher element."[153]

By the time the East Potomac course opened, the miniature golf craze had already started to fade; by the end of 1931 many courses across the country were abandoned or destroyed.[154] Despite the failure of the other miniature golf courses in the city, the East Potomac Miniature Golf Course remained profitable. In 1939, the *Washington Post* reported that the East Potomac Park course was "one of the few remaining" in the area and the last one within the District of Columbia.[155] At the onset of World War II, the miniature golf course was described as "one of the last courses from the boom days when there was a dinky-lit course every other block. The tricky putt-putt course is a money-making proposition most any summer night and it's strictly a wait-your-turn proposition."[156]

In the spring of 1949 Leoffler reported that the entire miniature golf course at East Potomac Park had to undergo a "complete renovation."[157] At a cost of $15,000, the course was rebuilt by April 1949 and due to the "sunken condition of the grounds," the entire golf course was raised at least 18 inches. Leoffler expected that this measure would improve playing during bad weather, as the course tended to flood in heavy rains. As part of the project, the original ticket booth/ball house was rebuilt with a new and larger one.[158] A photograph of the course was featured in a June 19, 1949, edition of *This Week*, a weekly Sunday magazine, and suggests that the original features and layout of the course were kept during the renovation. The caption read:

> Lily ponds with tropical gold fish, water hyacinths, fountains illuminated with vari-colored lights lend a fairy-like appearance to these 18 well-designed holes. Open from 8 A.M. to 1 A.M., miniature golf is always a good idea.[159]

153 J.M. Lownsend and E.F. Miller to Colonel Grant, 13 August 1931, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-40 (Miniature Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

154 Susan R. Chandler, "Lilli-putt-ian Landmarks: History and Significance of Miniature Golf Courses," *CRM* no. 10 (2000): 23.

155 "Thousands Find Their Sports Thrill on DC Fairways," *Washington Post,* 26 May 1939:10; "Miniature Golf Links Still Survive In State," *Baltimore Sun,* 24 September 1939:M2.

156 Merrell W. Whittlesey, "Tee to Green … "*Washington Post,* 22 March 1942:X2.

157 "Leoffler Sure He'll Get Public Links Contract, Goes Ahead with $20,000 repairs," *Washington Post,* 2 March 1949:18; "Leoffler Loan 'Assures' Him Links Contract," *Washington Post,* 15 March 1949:1.

158 "D.C. Miniature Golf course Opens After Reconstruction," *Washington Evening Star,* 27 April 1949:B1.

159 *This Week*, 19 June 1949, Image 5441, Washington, D.C. Historical Image Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Public Library, Washington, DC.



**Figure 2.19.** East Potomac Miniature Golf Course, 1964, (Washington National Records Center)



**Figure 2.20.** East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course, 1964. (Washington National Records Center)



**Figure 2.21.** View of East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course, 2016. (University of Pennsylvania)

In 1948 the cost for a round of miniature golf was 35 cents and by 1951 it was raised to 40 cents.[160] In 1960 Leoffler reported that miniature golf had "been getting stronger each year during the last five years" and at East Potomac Park, the course saw around 500 players at peak hours on weekends.[161] The course was renovated once again in the early 1960s and it is likely at this time that the original wooden borders were replaced with the aggregate concrete borders that currently surround the holes. Photos taken of the golf course in 1964 indicate that the concrete borders had been constructed by this time[162] (Figures 2.19–2.20).

The course exists today in its original configuration, although none of the wood apparatuses are extant. While the original wood borders of the holes have been replaced with aggregate concrete, the original geometric shapes of the holes and features, such as a stone bridge and well, appear to remain extant from the initial construction (Figure 2.21). The East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course is the only surviving miniature golf course in the District of Columbia and one of the oldest continually operating miniature golf courses in the United States.[163]

160 "Fees Increased at Four Public Golf Courses," *Washington Post,* 8 August 1951:19.
161 "Miniature Golf Going Over in Big Way," *Washington Post,* 14 June 1960:B1.
162 Bobeczko and Robinson, *East and West Potomac Parks Historic District*, 7:52; East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course, 1964. Source: RG79, Accession No. 68A-3201, Box 14, Folder C3823, Federal Record Center, Suitland, MD.
163 This is also claimed by Allison's Mini Golf, located in Geneva on the Lake, Ohio, which was reportedly established in 1924, accessed 1 November 2017, http://www.allisonsminigolf.com/index.html.

# Chapter 2.2: Rock Creek Golf Course

## INITIAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION: 1921-1926

By the early 1920s, the crowds at East Potomac Park Golf Course prompted the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds to not only expand East Potomac Park Golf Course to eighteen holes, but to also look elsewhere for an additional course. As the site of the city's first public golf course built by the District of Columbia commissioners in 1906-1909, Rock Creek Park was again viewed as the ideal location. By this time, Congress transferred the jurisdiction over the park from the city commissioners to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. In 1921 Lt. Col. Clarence O. Sherrill, the Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, requested an appropriation of $50,000 to build a new golf course in the park. Supporters of the expansion maintained the healthful benefits that golf provided for the city's residents. As the *Washington Post* stated, "Golf on public courses has furnished the medium through which many dwellers here and in other cities have gained health and added years to their lives. If one public course isn't enough for Washington – and plainly it isn't – let us have two."[164]

The chosen location for the new golf course was north of Military Road and west of 16th Street, near the original golf course built in Rock Creek Park in 1906-1909.[165] Prior to the establishment of the park in 1890, the site was mostly farmsteads. A camp for underprivileged children and their mothers, known as Camp Good Will, stood on the site beginning in 1905 and construction of the course required moving the camp to the west near Fort DeRussy.[166]

The 1918 master plan for Rock Creek Park, developed by the Olmsted Brothers firm (composed of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and John Charles Olmsted), illustrates the golf course site as open grass land surrounded by wooded areas, which may have contributed to its selection. The Olmsted Brothers plan described the site:

> It has an interesting topography of rolling hills; and it affords a sense of freedom, breadth, and outlook found nowhere else in the Park … It is old farm land in parts overgrown with scrub pine and more or less cut up by hedgerows – not now very attractive. And yet by some cutting of hedgerows and pines and by a little careful planning we believe it can be made beautiful and interesting. Because of its quality of openness it possesses a recreative value so different

164 "Cheap Prescriptions," *Washington Post*, 6 July 1921:6.
165 "Backs Rock Creek Golf Course Plan," *Washington Evening Star,* 5 July 1921.
166 "Will Move Camp Good Will," *Washington Post*, 20 October 1922.

> from that of other parts of the Park that no use of development in any way detracting from that quality should be permitted.[167]

The plan recommended the area around Brightwood Reservoir as an area for "intensive recreation" including tennis, basketball, baseball, cricket, football, and band concerts, which had already been allotted for this purpose. There was no mention of the golf course in the Olmsted plan.[168]

Not all were in favor of a golf course in Rock Creek Park. During the planning of the course, former President Woodrow Wilson wrote to Colonel Sherrill in June 1921 and despite being an avid golfer, strongly objected to the new course:

> Is it possible that it is true that a golf course is to be laid out in Rock Creek Park? I am loath to believe that such an unforgivable piece of vandalism is even in contemplation, and therefore beg leave to enter my earnest and emphatic protest. That park is the most beautiful in the United States, and to mar its natural beauty for the sake of sport would be to do an irretrievable thing which subsequent criticism and regret could never repair.[169]

Concerned about Wilson's position but confident that a new golf course was an appropriate addition to the park, Sherrill immediately wrote to Chief of Engineers Major General Lansing H. Beach, who had been instrumental in Rock Creek Park's early development. Sherrill asked Beach to request a small appropriation from Congress for the construction of the golf course out of fear that any effort to establish the course without the direct support of Congress might create "so much hostility among members of Congress as to jeopardize any future hope of securing funds to make a really first-class golf course."[170]

Not admitting that the plans for the course were already in the works, Sherrill responded to President Wilson and explained that the land considered for the golf course had been cleared of trees before its purchase by the government and was currently inaccessible to the public. He described the tract as "overgrown with brambles and poison ivy as to be entirely worthless." Colonel Sherrill also assured Wilson that a "golf course could be so constructed as not to affect the natural beauty of the tract while its use for this purpose is not apt to mar the appearance as much as constantly occurs at every picnic ground."[171] Wilson, apparently satisfied by the response, responded through his secretary and conveyed his relief regarding the choice of the site for the proposed golf course.[172]

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167 Olmsted Brothers, *Rock Creek Park* (Brookline, MA: Olmsted Brothers 1918), 14.
168 Ibid., 12.
169 Quoted in William Bushong, *Rock Creek Park*, 118.
170 Ibid.
171 Ibid.
172 Ibid.

Work on the nine-hole golf course started in October 1921 under the direction of Public Buildings and Grounds landscape architect Irving W. Payne, Colonel Sherrill's executive assistant Maj. Douglas L. Weart, and professional forester Smith Riley, who developed a rough layout for the course. Colonel Sherrill indicated that any necessary clearing for the course should be undertaken immediately and as quickly as possible before any work was started on the greens and fairways. He also instructed Major Weart to "indicate to Mr. Riley the disposition to be made of the valuable evergreens or other small trees that happen to lie in the fairway." As soon as the clearing was completed, Sherrill wanted the work to begin as soon as possible.[173]

In January 1922 Colonel Sherrill requested the services of golf course architect William S. Flynn of Ardmore, Pennsylvania, to aid in the design of Rock Creek Golf Course. Flynn served as a consultant for the design of the golf course and spent two days on site going over the grounds to locate greens and trees.[174] A February 1922 drawing of the course by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds indicates that the locations of the greens and tees were designated by Flynn.[175]

Despite being located on former farmland, it was necessary to clear 30 acres of woodland to build Rock Creek Golf Course and some of the course's cost was paid by the sale of the timber removed during construction.[176] Colonel Sherrill noted after the completion of the course that the fairways were rather narrow and in some cases would likely need to be widened at a later date. In order to cut down on maintenance, the greens were small and had been built as simple as possible. Sherrill also stated that the "undulating conditions of the ground eliminated the necessity for building artificial hazards."[177]

Prior to its opening in the spring of 1923, William E. Brigham, then the president of the Washington Newspaper Golf Club, praised the course as being "laid out under expert advice, and from the technical point of view it will stand up under criticism. It will present difficulties wholly different from those of Potomac Park

173 Barry Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park Administrative History*; Memorandum from Colonel Sherrill to Superintendent Gillen, 22 October 1921, Record Group 42, Entry 311, Box 11, National Archives, Washington, DC; US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1923); 2035.

174 Bushong, *Rock Creek Park*, 119.

175 Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, *Golf Course Rock Creek Park, Location of Greens and Tees Designated by William Flynn*, 1922, drawing, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

176 "New Rock Creek Golf Course Promises to Test Skill of Players," *Washington Sunday Star,* 18 February 1923:3.

177 Colonel Sherrill to Mr. Richard B. Watrous, 12 June 1923, Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 30, National Archives, Washington, DC.

–which is not an easy course – but one object of the builders is to produce real golfers, and this course will do it."[178]

In addition to being challenging, Flynn also designed the course to be beautiful and to take advantage of the natural surroundings of the park. In his description, Brigham also gave a sense of the natural character of the course and its picturesque qualities:

> Between the fairways of the second and third hole, at an elevated point stands a huge tulip poplar, with a spread of branches of perhaps forty feet. If a bench should be built around this tree and at times chairs be provided, a major part of the whole course would be visible from this spot – a point of great importance of tournament days.
>
> Directly in front are the fairway and approach of No. 2 hole, with the green at the edge of the woods. Only a short distance south is the tee of No. 3. Looking toward the west, the green of No. 8 is below, near the bank of a small brook crossed by a rustic bridge, with the tee on the side of the hill about twenty feet above the level of the green. To the right of the tee, on a slightly higher elevation, are the green and a good stretch of the fairway of No. 7, which emerges from a forest of pine.
>
> A slight turn of the head and we face northward, with the tee of No. 8 nearby, shaded in the afternoon by a group of tulip poplars and the fairway rising gradually until it is finally lost to view over the hill. To the east the eye easily follows the fairway of No. 3 to the green . . .[179]

Proud of his involvement, Colonel Sherrill described the new course in the February 1923 bulletin of the USGA's Green Section and said,

> This course is a notable one and compares favorably with the best in this section of the country. It has been constructed with the same care and attention to detail as that which characterized the building of the courses in East Potomac Park, but surpasses those both in appearance and playing advantages because of the natural undulating surfaces of the ground and the beautiful views which are unfolded along the entire course[180] (Figure 2.22).

President Warren G. Harding officially opened and dedicated the nine-hole Rock Creek Golf Course on May 23, 1923, at the Washington Newspaper Golf Club's spring tournament.[181] The president drove the first ball and played in a foursome with Supreme Court Justice Edward Terry Sanford, Speaker of the House Frederick Huntington Gillett, and President of the Washington Newspaper Golf Club Edgar Markham (Figure 2.23). Former President and Chief Justice William

178 "Superb Rock Creek Golf Course Needs Clubhouse," *Washington Sunday Star*, 10 September 1922.
179 Ibid.
180 Col. C.O. Sherrill, "Public Golf at the Capital of the Nation," *Bulletin of the Green Section of the U.S. Golf Association* (23 February 1923): 38-39.
181 "Harding Helps Open Public Golf Course," *New York Times,* 23 May 1923:15; "President, With 90, Out of Prize Class," *Washington Post,* 23 May 1923:18.



**Figure 2.22.** Rock Creek Golf Course, clubhouse and pavilion, ca. 1923. (Library of Congress)



**Figure 2.23.** President Harding putting at the Washington Newspaper Golf Club's Tournament, Rock Creek Golf Course, on May 23, 1923. (Library of Congress)

Howard Taft was expected to play in Harding's foursome, but "was prevented by a slight indisposition. Sanford took his place."[182] Harding shot a 50 on the first nine and 52 on second, with a total score of 90 after a 12-point handicap. The winner of the tournament was Charles Schafer of the *Washington Herald* who shot a 69. Several hundred people gathered near the clubhouse to watch the awards ceremony, where President Harding congratulated Schafer.[183]

The high scores of the tournament were attributed to the slow greens and the narrowness and rough condition of the fairways. As reported by the *New York Times*, "The players were constantly in difficulty and those who were unfortunate enough

182 "Harding Helps Open Public Golf Course," *New York Times*, 23 May 1923:15.
183 "President, With 90, Out of Prize Class," *Washington Post*, 23 May 1923:18.

to get in the rough had a hard time. The course, however, is scenically beautiful and sporty and in a short time will be in good shape for the hundreds of players who will be able to use it."[184]

Access to Rock Creek Golf Course improved when the Capital Traction Company announced that it would operate buses from 16th Street to Van Buren Street into the park to the new course the day of the tournament.[185] The course proved to be extremely popular. In the span of a little over a month, between the opening of the course on May 23 and the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 1923, 8,776 players used the course.[186]

When it first opened, beginners did not have to qualify to play, which often caused chaotic conditions that were exacerbated by the sheer number of players on the new course. An article published not long after the opening of the course described the common scene:

> [The players] yell "Fore." Fore, in Rock Creek is understood to be a sort of hoodoo word. All you have to do is yell, "Fore!" and drive off. "Fore" is automatic protection against hitting anybody. Hitting anybody? How can you help it? Looking off the tee down No. 5 fairway reminds one of Pennsylvania Avenue during a Shriner parade, with the fezzes missing Golfers (they are called that) here, there and everywhere.[187]

This spectacle prompted Colonel Sherrill to issue a notice in late June 1923 stating that only qualified golfers (a score of 60 strokes or better) were allowed to play on the course on Saturday afternoons, Sundays, and holidays. A metal tag identified qualified players.[188]

One piece missing from the golf course was a new clubhouse. In September 1922, less than a year before the course opened, Washington Newspaper Club President William E. Brigham believed that it was "inevitable that in due time Congress will back up Colonel Sherrill and the public course golfers with an appropriation for a rustic clubhouse …"[189] Brigham thought that the new clubhouse should be built on a small hill just north of the intersection of Military Road and Beach Drive. This location was not only advantageous because it was near the southern end of the course, which was "by far the most picturesque," but it was equally convenient

184 "Harding Helps Open Public Golf Course," *New York Times,* 23 May 1923:15.
185 "Buses to New Golf Course," *Washington Post,* 1923 23 May:14.
186 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (1923), 2035.
187 "No Place For Golfers, Course is Cluttered Up With Discourteous Dubs," newspaper unknown, 18 June 1921, clipping found in Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 30, Folder 618.21 (Rock Creek Golf), National Archives, Washington, DC.
188 Colonel Sherrill, Golf Notice, Rock Creek Golf Course, 29 June 1923, RG42, Entry 102, Box 30, Folder 618.211 (Rock Creek Park) Golf Rules, Fees, Regulations, National Archives, Washington, DC.
189 "Superb Rock Creek Golf Course Needs Clubhouse," *Washington Sunday Star*, 10 September 1922.

from adjacent neighborhoods, including downtown Washington, DC, in each direction. Additionally there was ample room for parking and the bus line passed by this area, making it accessible to the public.[190]

Congress did not approve the appropriation so an existing "farmhouse," also previously used by Camp Good Will and located near the start of the course, was renovated for use as the clubhouse. In March of 1923 the first concessionaires of the course announced plans to turn the building into a "real clubhouse" with a large lounge, locker and shower facilities, and a café.[191] Plans of the clubhouse and photographs of the building illustrate a two-story wood-frame structure with a rear addition and one-story wrap-around porch that was later enclosed.[192] In addition to the clubhouse, materials from an old barracks building that stood in East Potomac Park were used to build a pavilion across the road from the clubhouse.[193] A barn was also located on the site, southeast of the clubhouse.[194]

In early July 1924, Colonel Sherrill wrote to William Flynn, requesting his services to design nine additional holes at Rock Creek Golf Course.[195] At the end of the month, Flynn traveled to Washington and met with Sherrill to discuss the new layout.[196] Flynn quickly accepted the job and charged $600 for his work, a fee that also included five visits "to see that the work is being carried out in accordance with the plans and specifications."[197] Since Colonel Sherrill wanted the new course to be open by the following summer, work began immediately. In August Flynn visited Rock Creek, where work had started and wooded areas had been cleared to give Flynn "an excellent idea of the course."[198]

In his column "Tee to Green," former District Commissioner Henry Litchfield West, who aided in the construction of the first course at Rock Creek, noted that during the planning of the course expansion one of the holes from the failed course, built almost 20 years earlier, had been found. The hole (likely Hole 5) was situated in the woods north of Military Road. West said,

190 Ibid.
191 "Rock Creek Links Concessions Let," *Washington Post,* 8 March 1923.
192 Rock Creek Golf Course, ca. 1923-1928, National Photo Company Collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photograph Collection, http://www.loc.gov/item/npc2008013866/.
193 US Army, *Report of the Chief of Engineers* (1923), 2035.
194 *Golf Course at Rock Creek Park, Map Showing Existing Conditions*, 1 February 1944, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.
195 Letter from Colonel Sherrill to William S. Flynn, 5 July 1924, RG 42, Entry 102, Box 30, Folder 618.21 (Rock Creek), National Archives, Washington, DC.
196 "9 More Holes Planned on Rock Creek Links," *Washington Post,* 27 July 1924:14.
197 Flynn to Colonel Sherrill, 28 July 1924, RG 42, Entry 102, Box 30, Folder 618.21 (Rock Creek), National Archives, Washington, DC.
198 Colonel Sherrill to Flynn, 31 July 1924, RG 42, Entry 102, Box 30, Folder 618.21 (Rock Creek), National Archives, Washington, DC; Colonel Sherrill to Flynn, 6 August 1925, RG 42, Entry 102, Box 30, Folder 618.21 (Rock Creek), National Archives, Washington, DC.; "DC Muny Golfers to Receive Trophy," *Washington Evening Star,* 13 August 1924:27.

> The hole as then laid out by a couple of enthusiastic amateur golfers has met with the approval of William Flynn, the architect of the proposed addition to the course, and will be completed according to the original idea. The hole is a short one, a tee shot across a hollow to a green on the side of a hill opposite the tee. The discovery of the old tee and the decision to make use of it proves the truth of the old adage that time at least makes all things even.[199]

In the middle of its expansion, the course came under new management. When Rock Creek Golf Course opened in 1923, the course was operated by concessionaires Norman B. Frost, a well-known lawyer, and Harold D. Miller, the former golf professional at East Potomac Park.[200] In December 1924 the contract was canceled due to "unsatisfactory conditions and management."[201] The Welfare and Recreation Association took over the contract and construction on the second nine holes continued under its management.[202] Colonel Sherrill planned to open the expanded golf course on September 7, Labor Day, 1925. But in late August, shortly after Sherrill directed his office to notify the press of its opening, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds decided to delay opening the course until the following spring when it would be in better condition for playing; weather conditions had not been favorable and the peak playing season had already passed.[203] In the winter of 1926 the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds announced that it awarded Severine G. Leoffler, the concessionaire of East Potomac Park, the contract to manage Rock Creek Park after two years of "unsuccessful experience" by the Welfare and Recreation Association.[204] Under his management, Leoffler completed the expansion of the course from nine to eighteen holes and spent around $30,000 of his own money improving the course and clubhouse.[205]

The expansion of the course to a full eighteen holes required Flynn to make radical changes to the existing holes in order to create a cohesive layout. Some of the existing greens were abandoned and new ones constructed in their place while several of the new holes reused the fairways and greens of the existing holes.[206] The fairways were widened, which required blasting to remove rock, and a large number of stones that were still mixed in with the turf were removed.[207] In the spring of 1926 golfers at Rock Creek had "an entirely new course" and for the first

199 Henry Litchfield West, "From Tee to Green," *Washington Post,* 24 August 1924:S4.
200 "Rock Creek Links Concessions Let," *Washington Post,* 8 March 1923.
201 *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks*, 1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.
202 Ibid.
203 Memo for Colonel Sherrill from E. F. Concklin, 20 August 1925, RG42, Entry 102, Box 48, Folder 680.481-JWS (Rock Creek Golf Course), National Archives, Washington, DC.
204 S.G. Leoffler May Get Rock Creek Municipal Golf Links Concession," *Washington Post,* 17 January 1926:M21; "Rock Creek Opening is Delayed," *Washington Post,* 26 March 1926:15.
205 *A Brief History of Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks*, 1950, Henry S. Wender Papers, Container 5, Historical Society of Washington, DC.; "Leoffler, a Man of Many Firsts, Up Front in Celebs," *Washington Post,* 17 August 1952:C4.
206 "Rock Creek Links Are Rebuilt," *Washington Post,* 24 March 1926:15.
207 S.G. Leoffler May Get Rock Creek Municipal Golf Links Concession," *Washington Post,* 17 January 1926:M21; "Rock Creek Opening is Delayed," *Washington Post,* 26 March 1926:15.

time eighteen holes were provided, played as two nines. Henry Litchfield West described the changes to the course in the *Washington Post*:

> In the first place, the tee for the first hole has been removed so that the new tee is close to the clubhouse, but the first and second holes remain unchanged. The old third hole was abandoned and the new third hole will be played to the southward, while the fairway of the fourth hole comes back to a new green near the old No. 2.
>
> The fifth hole is one of the prettiest short holes on any course in the District. It is situated in the woods and is a short mashie pitch across a ravine, at the bottom of which is a small creek, the green being located near the Military Road. The sixth and seventh holes are both new, while the eighth green is new old No. 4. The ninth hole is to be played across the road that comes into the golf course from Sixteenth Street down to the old ninth green.
>
> The tenth hole follows the line of the old No. 8, but the tee has been advanced so that a ball does not have to be driven across the ditch. The eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth are all new holes while the sixteenth is the present No. 6.
>
> The old seventh hole, which was a favorite short pitch across a ditch, has been eliminated, and a new hole, the seventeenth, about 154 yards in length, has been constructed. The eighteenth hole plays back to the clubhouse.[208]

The clubhouse was also "reconstructed and enlarged" and only the exterior frame remained. Leoffler installed showers for men and women and built private dressing rooms in the women's locker rooms. Illustrating the disparity between the number of men and women who used the course, the renovation included 502 new lockers for men and only 125 for women. Steam heat was also added to ensure comfort for golfers during cold temperatures.[209]

The first golfers to play when the course reopened on April 3, 1926, were Senator Wesley A. Jones of Washington and Congressman William Bacon Oliver from Alabama, paired against Edwin A. Halsey of the Sergeant at Arms' Office of the Senate and James D. Preston, superintendent of the Senate Press Gallery. The course was crowded throughout opening day and "the golfers universally commended the reconstruction of the course and the conveniences which have been installed in the remodeled clubhouse."[210] Shortly after the course reopened, the Washington Rapid Transit Co. began operating a bus line to Rock Creek Golf Course, running on a 20-minute schedule from 6:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M.[211] The improvements to the course and accessibility only increased the number of players; in 1923, 47,031 played the course. In 1927 the number had grown to 94,416.[212]

208 "Rock Creek Links Are Rebuilt," *Washington Post,* 24 March 1926:15.
209 Ibid.
210 "Rock Creek's Links Are Opened," *Washington Post,* 3 April 1926:13.
211 "Buses Start Today to Rock Creek Links," *Washington Post,* 2 May 1926:M32.
212 "Selling the Game of Golf to the Public," *Washington Post,* 1 July 1928:SM3.

## CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS: 1927-1984

### IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COURSE

In the years following the expansion of Rock Creek Golf Course, additional improvements were made. According to a 1942 report, in November 1927 Leoffler consulted with golf architect William S. Flynn on additional improvements to the course and requested an extension on his proposed $25,000 investment to rebuild all the putting greens and make other major improvements.[213] According to the *Washington Post*, when Rock Creek Golf Course opened for the season in March 1928, the course had been "lengthened."[214] In 1929 Leoffler constructed a practice putting green along the course's eighth fairway, a duplicate of the putting green at East Potomac Park. He also laid out a three-hole pitching and putting course where golfers could "pass the time while awaiting their turn on the tee."[215]

While the course remained popular, its wooded terrain proved to be challenging for players as well as for upkeep. By 1939 the course suffered from lack of water in the summer months, which made it difficult to pitch to the greens. As reported by the *Evening Star,* the course could also "stand some trapping, but it is so infested with enveloping woods and the terrain is so cut up that perhaps some modern trapping would make it too tough for the players who use it regularly."[216] In November 1939 Walter McCallum of the *Evening Star* recommended that more length could be added to the layout by building new tees "back in the woods which enfilade the narrow fairways. The course would be appreciably improved by adequate and modern bunkering."[217] In fact, National Capital Parks had looked into the lengthening of holes on the back nine during the previous winter. In particular they planned to change the Hole 11 from one shot to two and eliminate the dogleg of the Hole 14. An engineer found, however, that the front nine could not be lengthened due to space limitations.[218]

Fourteen years after Leoffler took over the management of Rock Creek Golf Course, the "first real" improvements were made to the course since 1926. Although there is no evidence that any of the holes on the back nine were lengthened, in late 1939 and early 1940 Leoffler rebuilt several of the greens, responding to complaints from golfers about their "concrete-like consistency."[219] Five greens on the front nine (the A Course) were rebuilt and one was rebuilt and one was

213 *A Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 26-27.
214 "Public Golf Links Open Tomorrow," *Washington Post,* 9 March 1928:17.
215 "Straight Off the Tee," *Washington Evening Star,* 24 March 1929:2.
216 "Reconstruction by CCC to Provide with Modern Public Golf Courses," *Washington Evening Star,* 4 February 1939:A15.
217 Walter McCallum, "Inferiority of Public Courses Driving D.C. Golfers Away, *Washington Evening Star,* 18 November 1939:A22.
218 "Park Engineer Works on Plans for Lengthening Second Nine at Rock Creek," *Washington Evening Star,* 21 February 1939:C-5.
219 Walter McCallum, "Inferiority of Public Courses Driving D.C. Golfers Away, *Washington Evening Star,* 18 November 1939:A22.



**Figure 2.24.** Rock Creek Golf Course showing the condition of the tees in 1944. (National Park Service)

resurfaced on the back nine (the B Course). In addition, one tee on the front nine and seven tees on the back nine were rebuilt.[220]

Poor conditions at the course continued (Figure 2.24). A December 1940 National Capital Parks report stated that the greens at Rock Creek were "poorly designed; many of them drop off from the center to the back. Most of them are hard which indicates that the base has lost its springiness. They are also too small. All of the above factors make it practically impossible for shots directly on the greens to hold." The report also criticized the tees and indicated that they were "too narrow and in many instances too close to greens. Some tees are not facing in the right direction; also not level, which may be the reason for players teeing up alongside of greens and directly in line with approach shots."[221]

By 1942 Leoffler rerouted several of the holes on the back nine to improve congestion on the course.[222] While the rerouting may have helped with congestion, it was also responsible for creating several long walks in between holes. One in particular was between the new Hole 16 (formerly Hole 12) and Hole 17. A 1942 report on the public golf courses in the District of Columbia stated that the walk, "[c]oming in as late in the round of eighteen holes as it does … seems very arduous to the average golfer." The 1942 report recommended the "thinning out of a reasonable margin of woodland along those holes in between or bordering on the heavy

220 Memorandum for Mr. Gable, Chief, Park Operators Division, Report on Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks of the District of Columbia, 17 December 1940. Record Group 79, Entry 10, Central Classified Files, Box 2847, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

221 Ibid.

222 What was formerly Hole 16 became Hole 12 (today's Hole 15), Hole 15 became Hole 13 (today's Hole 16), Hole 12 became Hole 14, Hole 13 became Hole 15, and Hole 14 became Hole 16.

forest lands …" Along with this clearing, the "removal of dead and down timber together with a general cleanup of lose rock and debris and the filling and binding of wash gullies along the margin of the holes, will go far to remove many of the aggravating difficulties encountered by all classes of golfers playing Rock Creek."[223]

The most substantial changes to the layout of Rock Creek Golf Course occurred between 1946 and 1958 when Military Road was widened to a four-lane parkway and rerouted to the north within the southern portion of the golf course.[224] Pennsylvania golf course architect William F. Gordon was hired as early as 1946 to redesign the A Course (the front nine). The road project required the removal of the original Holes 3, 4, and 5, the construction of three new holes, and the reworking of several other holes.[225]

In May 1946 Gordon wrote to Leoffler after receiving updated plans for the proposed highway that projected further into the golf course than previously expected. Gordon explained that, "As it stands now, the only way we can still retain holes at Rock Creek will be to play the present #4 from a tee location about where the #3 tee is now, construct a new #4, #5 and a new tee on #6 all in the area where your present 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th holes are located." Gordon estimated that the work would cost $11,000.[226] Later that month, Gordon submitted his revised plans to Leoffler and wrote, "These proposed changes on the Golf Course will not alter the general routine of play and will prove just as interesting as the present layout. Work can be carried out on holes number 2-3-5 and 6 without interfering with play. However, when the green on number 4 is built that hole will be out of play for at least one week."[227] The highway project was not approved by the District commissioners until 1957. At that time the *Washington Post* reported that the reconstruction of the greens and fairways at Rock Creek Golf Course were underway[228] (Figures 2.25–2.26).

#### A NEW CLUBHOUSE

Despite the improvements to the clubhouse in 1926, the desire for a new clubhouse at Rock Creek persisted. Following fires in 1933 and in 1937 that damaged

223 *Report on Public Golf in the District of Columbia*, 29.
224 "Historic Military Road Is Going Modern," *Washington Post,* 26 January 1958:A17.
225 National Park Service, National Capital Parks, *Reconstruction of Tees, Greens and Fairways, Vicinity of Proposed Fort Drive, Rock Creek Park Golf Course*, April 1946, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database; "Military Road Project Wins Approval," *Washington Post,* 21 April 1957:A13.
226 William F. Gordon to S.G. Leoffler, 6 May 1946, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Folder 11-40-50 (Rock Creek Golf Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.
227 William F. Gordon to S.G. Leoffler, 27 May 1946, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Folder 11-40-50 (Rock Creek Golf Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.
228 "Military Road Project Wins Approval," *Washington Post,* 21 April 1957:A13.



**Figure 2.25.** Rock Creek Golf Course, showing the barren 1st tee and the maintenance barn in 1957. (National Park Service)



**Figure 2.26.** Rock Creek Golf Course, view from 11th green to 11th tee showing erosion in front of tee, 1957. (National Park Service)



**Figure 2.27.** Crowd watches firemen at the Rock Creek clubhouse, 1930s. (Library of Congress)

portions of the clubhouse (Figure 2.27), the National Park Service developed plans for a new clubhouse in 1937.[229] The plans illustrate a spacious rustic-style building, located on the site of the existing clubhouse, faced in stone with a high-pitched roof and a prominent stone chimney. Large windows along the rear of the building faced the ninth green. The clubhouse contained a dining room, lounge, and kitchen and a terrace lined the rear and side of the building. The Commission of Fine Arts approved the plans for the clubhouse in 1937, but for unknown reasons it was never built.[230]

In 1955 National Capital Parks proposed a new clubhouse for Rock Creek Golf Course as part of the Mission 66 program, a National Park Service directive that brought substantial improvements to the design, use, and interpretation of national parks after years of neglect.[231] Evolving from historical, demographic, sociological, architectural, and planning trends in the postwar United States, Mission 66 intended to "modernize, enlarge, and even reinvent the park system" by 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service.[232] Funding for the program began in 1956 and projects focused on improving the national parks with new roads, visitor centers, utilities, trails, and picnic and camping areas. Within National Capital Parks alone, the National Park Service planned approximately $70 million in improvements to its parks.[233]

The National Park Service developed plans for the new clubhouse for Rock Creek Golf Course in 1958. Following the trends of Mission 66, the clubhouse had modern features such as prominent, angled roof and a wall of windows that looked out onto the course. Although National Park Service Director Conrad Wirth approved the plans, funding deterred its construction. The *Washington Post* reported in April 1961 that for six years in a row the House Appropriation Committee ruled out the $176,500 needed for a new clubhouse. The existing "ramshackle" clubhouse remained in use, but was in great need of repair. The building simply could not accommodate the number of golfers that used the course; more than 88,000 rounds of golf were played at Rock Creek in 1960.[234]

229 "Fire Hits Clubhouse at Rock Creek Links," *Washington Post,* 21 January 1933:18; "Fire Destroys Rock Creek's Golf House," *Washington Post,* 18 March 1937:19.

230 National Park Service, Branch of Plans and Design, *Proposed General Plan, Rock Creek Park Club House, National Capital Parks,* 1937, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

231 National Capital Parks Preliminary Prospectus [Mission 66], Record Group 79, Entry 2, Box 14, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

232 Judith H. Robinson, Tim Kerr, Janel Crist Kausner, *Mission 66-Era Visitors Centers, Administration Buildings, and Public Use Areas in the National Capital Region of the National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form* (Washington, DC: Robinson and Associates 2012 DRAFT), E:1.

233 "Mission 66 to Face-Lift D.C. Parks," *Washington Post*, 16 July 1956.

234 "Rock Creek's Sad Tale," *Washington Post,* 1961 23 April.

By June 1963 the National Park Service finally received the necessary funds and awarded an $87,744 contract for the construction of the clubhouse to Neal Construction Company of Silver Spring, Maryland.[235] More modest than the 1958 design, Washington, DC, architect John Hans Graham & Associates prepared the working drawings for the clubhouse in 1962, based on preliminary designs by the National Capital Parks' Design and Construction Division. National Capital Parks made further revisions to the design in 1963. Built on a slope, the brick-faced building featured a lounge, kitchen, and pro-shop on the upper level and men's and women's locker rooms on the lower level. Large windows, shaded by a prominent overhang, and a deck located off the lounge looked over the course.[236] The site of the new building was northeast of the former clubhouse and as part of the project, the National Park Service reworked the existing Joyce Road and added a circle drive at its terminus, right in front of the new clubhouse. The adjacent parking lots were also rebuilt (Figure 2.28). The building was substantially completed in February of 1964, but was not open to the public until October of the same year.[237]

Not everyone welcomed the new, modernized clubhouse. The regulars who made the golf course their second home did not like the new building and "enjoyed



**Figure 2.28.** Rock Creek clubhouse under construction, ca. 1963. (National Park Service)

235 "Clubhouse Contract," *Washington Post*, 25 June 1963.

236 John Hans Graham & Associates, Rock Creek Park Golf Club House, 1962, National Park Service, National Capital Office, Design and Construction, *Rock Creek Park Golf Club House, "As Built,"* 1963, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

237 Robinson et al, *Mission 66-Era Visitors Centers*, 25.

sitting around [the old] battered frame [club]house. It was his place to go to, and thoroughly in keeping, architecturally, with the beautiful, natural surroundings of the park." In January 1965, prior to the demolition of the old clubhouse, the *Washington Post* reported that next to the new clubhouse, "Standing there silently, sadly was the aged, wooden clubhouse which served Rock Creek golfers so well for so many years. Dilapidated, it has been abandoned." The new building was criticized as being too small for the number of players at Rock Creek and "entirely out of keeping with the woodsy atmosphere of the course's rolling acres." Instead of a café that provided food and drink "that a man could relish," were vending machines, "fitted along the walls, shoulder to shoulder."[238]

### ADDITIONAL LAYOUT CHANGES AND NEW MANAGEMENT

Rock Creek Golf Course was always considered challenging because of its hilly topography, particularly on the back nine. Hole 13 (originally Hole 6B and today's Hole 16) was known as "Cardiac Hill," described as "back-breaking" and "probably the most testing hole on the course."[239] As the *Washington Post* reported,

> The narrow, dead uphill, 436-yard par-four taught humility to generations. Golfers reached its tiny green cursing, sweating, and gasping for breath, their scores in shreds and their lungs and hearts pounding."[240]

By the early 1960s the hill "was so steep it has forced many to ignore the [back] nine altogether."[241] With the changes from the expansion of Military Road, the front nine, also known as the A Course, had "been shortened to the point where it [had] become little more than a pitch-and-putt layout the last two years." Severine G. Leoffler, Jr., who helped run the golf courses along with his father and his brother Layne, was not discouraged by this and found that the front nine was played 80 percent more than the back nine, the B Course. Leoffler was not sure what exactly would be done to improve play on the back nine, but was toying with the idea of changing the direction of Hole 13 to play downhill to a new green, a change that the *Evening Star* reportedly would be a "great blessing, especially to the elderly."[242] Leoffler was also contemplating other changes to the course's layout, all to be completed by the spring of 1963 including a slightly shorter Hole 17, a new green on the Hole 2, and a new location for Green 9.[243]

238 "Rock Creek Golf Regulars Miss Homey, Rustic Touch of the Old Days," *Washington Post,* 21 January 1965:F4.
239 John Segraves, "Tee to Green," *Washington Sunday Star,* 18 February 1962:C4.
240 Thomas Boswell, "Cardiac Hill Goes the Way of the Niblick," *Washington Post,* 11 July 1975:D1.
241 John Segraves, "Tee to Green," *Washington Sunday Star,* 18 February 1962:C4.
242 Ibid.
243 Ibid.



**Figure 2.29. 8th hole of Rock Creek Golf Course showing conditions, 1965. (National Park Service)**

A decade later, few improvements had been made. The National Park Service completed an inspection of the facilities at Rock Creek Golf Course in 1974. A memo from the Superintendent of National Capital Parks-West to the Director of National Capital Parks wrote that the "overall impression one receives upon visiting the Golf Course is that of neglect. The concessionaire is not devoting sufficient manpower and attention to the proper routine maintenance of the grounds and structures."[244] Potholes were scattered throughout the fairways, the fairways and greens were full of weeds, and the majority of tees were worn to bare ground (Figure 2.29). The clubhouse needed painting on the exterior and the interior had dirty floors, filthy walls and ceilings, chipped paint, missing light bulbs, trash on the floors, and the restrooms were "repellent." The superintendent recommended that the National Park Service complete a rehabilitation plan and that in order to restore the golf course to standard condition, it would take $65,000 over a two-and-a-half-year period.[245]

So many golfers had given up on the back nine that in 1975 the "holes were chopped in half into par threes, [and] whole fairways left to the ravages of time … Eventually the greens began to erode. Often, to putt on the back nine was to calculate the ball's roll through crab grass, leached dirt and ruts from the runoff of the last thunderstorm."[246] According to the *Washington Post*, the S.G. Leoffler Co. decided in the summer of 1975 that "Cardiac Hill and its equally demanding

244 National Park Service National Capital Region, *Marketing and Economic Overview, Rock Creek/Potomac Park Golf Courses* (May 1977), 55, accessed National Park Service ETIC.
245 Ibid., 55-56.
246 Bob Arnebeck, "Heart-Attack Hill: Survival and Loathing on the Back Nine at Rock Creek's Golf Course," *Washington Post,* 19 May 1985:SM18.

brother, the treacherous 16th [today's Hole 14] scared away too much potential business. . . . The average golfer [did] not want to crawl back to the clubhouse."[247] Consequently, Leoffler drastically altered the scenic and challenging back nine. Hole 16 "a beautiful 370-yard downhill dogleg with a breathtaking tee elevated 80 feet above the wooded fairway" was eliminated. The old Green 13 became the green for a new 128-yard, par-three Hole 15. In addition, the difficult uphill Hole 10 was chopped into two holes – an easy 265-yard par four and a 128-yard par three.[248]

Many of Rock Creek's loyal players were not happy with the changes. One player claimed, "This was one of the best nines in the Middle Atlantic Section. Now it's gone." Another regular said, "It's just a pitch-and-putt course now." Severine G. Leoffler Jr. responded that he expected that the better players would be against the shortening of the course, "But we're in the business to serve the multitudes." The changes to the back nine made it shorter than the 2,216-yard front, with five par three holes and a total of 2,079 yards and a par of 31.[249]

The National Park Service completed a marketing and economic overview of Rock Creek Golf Course in 1977 and recommended extensive renovations to a number of the tees, particularly reestablishing the turf. It also recommended major renovations to four of the greens and creating a paved cart path around the back nine. The market summary stated that despite the fact that around 50,000 rounds of golf were played annually, the golf course was only marginally profitable to the concessionaire, likely due to the poor conditions. It also reported that "although no substantiation could be found, rumors as to the personal safety of golfers additionally create an atmosphere that discourages ingress of players."[250]

After the release of the report, the National Park Service held a public meeting to discuss the future of the golf course. Over 60 people attended the meeting and "everyone at the meeting wanted to keep the course…" A large percentage were also in favor of realigning the back nine holes.[251]

At the time, one long-time patron described the condition of the course and said:

> The greens are the worst they've ever been. They are full of crabgrass. The fairways are pretty good now but the benches are shot to hell. It's the management. The management stinks. A review and analysis of the Leoffler contracts

247 Thomas Boswell, "Cardiac Hill Goes the Way of the Niblick," *Washington Post,* 11 July 1975:D1.
248 Hole 13, "Cardiac Hill," is currently Hole 16 and the direction of play is reversed. Ibid.
249 "Rock Creek Critics Might Get Their Wish," *Washington Star,* 21 August 1977:D5.
250 National Park Service National Capital Region, *Marketing and Economic Overview, Rock Creek/Potomac Park Golf Courses*, 37-41.
251 "Rock Creek's Critics Might Get Their Wish," *Washington Star,* 21 August 1977:D5.

> with the [National Park Service] will reveal that as far as the Rock Creek Golf Course is concerned the Park Service management has not protected the public interest of golfers in the Nation's Capital.[252]

While the 1977 study recommended a total of $51,000 in improvements, $31,000 of which would come from the concessionaire, the S.G. Leoffler Co. was hesitant to spend that amount of money on the golf course without a long-term contract. Leoffler's records also showed that Rock Creek Golf Course had been losing money since 1970, after partner salaries were deducted. Even after the National Park Service waived the $48,000 rent in 1972 – a particularly bad year for the course – Leoffler still lost $51,000. The *Evening Star* reported that the company was losing its "patience with the growing number of critics."[253]

In 1977-1978 the National Park Service hired golf course architects Leon and Charles Howard of Austin, Texas, to propose design changes to the golf course. The firm's report stated,

> The greens are small and generally without character, and physical maintenance problems with the greens (several indications of poor drainage was evident) have almost eliminated the turn in many areas of the greens. The tees are small and in many instances are rough and slightly inclined providing a very poor teeing area. The sprinkler system is totally inadequate to give proper irrigation coverage and is in a bad state of repair.
>
> Foot and cart traffic without paved paths has created additional maintenance problems, including erosion and related problems to such an extent that many areas do not have sufficient soil to maintain turf. Trees have matured, without being pruned until they have now, in certain instances, almost closed off routes of play which surely were intended on the original golf course design.[254]

The firm recommended several improvements to the course as part of a three-phase renovation project, including a realignment of the back holes to return length to the golf course, rebuilding and enlarging all the tees and greens, rebuilding the bunkers, widening some of the fairways either by removing trees or pruning, and selective tree planting in open areas between fairways. Phase one of the project included the construction of three new greens – 14, 15, and 16. Nothing was completed from Phase two or three, which would finish the reconstruction of the back nine with new irrigation and a storage reservoir and address the difficulties with the front nine.[255]

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252 Ibid.

253 Ibid.

254 Leon Howard, *Preliminary Report of Proposed Improvement – Rock Creek Golf Course, prepared for National Park Service Denver Service Center* (1978), 7, as found in "Rock Creek Golf Course a Brief History," Concessions Files, National Park Service, National Capital Region.

255 Ibid., 14.

In 1981 Severine G. Leoffler Jr. no longer wanted to continue the contract at Rock Creek Park. While the profits from the East Potomac Park course covered the losses from the other courses in the past, Leoffler's company had lost money operating the course over the last six years. If the National Park Service did not find a new operator, it would be forced to close Rock Creek Golf Course.[256] In 1982 partners Robert Brock, Franklin Coates, and William Torpey of Golf Course Specialists, Inc., who had recently modernized and/or rebuilt courses in Williamsburg, Charlottesville, and Reston, Virginia, took over the contract at Rock Creek Park.[257] The firm restored the back nine, cleared away a lot of the brush, and improved the maintenance facilities with the demolition of the old barn and the construction of a new maintenance building in 1984.[258]

## ROCK CREEK GOLF COURSE: THE LAST 30 YEARS (1986-2016)

By the late 1990s the National Park Service began contemplating the future of Rock Creek Park and started the development of a General Management Plan. Four different scenarios were initially presented, ranging from the status quo alternative "Current Management" to the most radical "Urban Wilderness Emphasis." While the first alternative would have essentially kept things as they were, Scenario 4 would transform the park into a "refuge for people and wildlife apart from urban infringement." To accomplish this, the National Park Service would close Beach Drive to automobiles, convert most access roads to trails, increase natural forest cover, and eliminate structured recreational facilities – including Rock Creek Golf Course.[259]

At the time the *Washington Post* described the course as "vastly improved" but "an example of what is called in the industry a 'low-end, daily fee' golf course. The front nine is wide open and overstocked with painfully long par-3s and weirdly short par-4s, while the back nine tunnels through the dense forest of the park, roller coastering up and down steep hills, requiring thread-the-needle shots and a willingness to watch a perfect drive on No. 16 land squarely in the center of the sloped fairway and dribble down into the woods."[260]

256 "1 of 3 Public Links in DC Closed, Other Measures Eyed," *Washington Post,* 20 December 1981:C1.

257 "Park Service Seeking Operator for Langston Golf Course in SE," *Washington Post,* 5 May 1982:DC10; "E. Potomac Park Public Golf Course Gets New Manager," *Washington Post,* 5 January 1983:DC7.

258 Bob Arnebeck, "Heart-Attack Hill: Survival and Loathing on the Back nine at Rock Creek's Golf Course," *Washington Post,* 19 May 1985:SM18; "Park Service Seeking Operator for Langston Golf Course in SE," *Washington Post,* 5 May 1982:DC10; *Rock Creek Golf Course a Brief History*, Concessions Files, National Park Service, National Capital Region.

259 "Shaping the City: Rock Creek Park. Deciding its Role and Its Future," *Washington Post,* 19 July 1997:E1.

260 Ken Denlinger and Joel Achenbach, "Golf of Course: Pricey Clubs to Shaggy Fields, Duffers are in Their Element," *Washington Post,* 12 June 1997:B1-2.



**Figure 2.30.** View of the front nine of Rock Creek Golf Course, 2016 (University of Pennsylvania)

In June 1997 hundreds of citizens showed up at the Rock Creek Nature Center to voice their comments on the proposed alternatives for the park. After universal opposition, the plan to close the golf course was dropped and the National Park Service announced that it would develop new alternatives that did not include closing traditional recreation facilities. The chosen alternative known as "Improved Management of Established Park Uses" was considered the best response to the recreational, environmental, and traffic considerations for the future of the park without harming park resources.[261]

Of the three National Park Service golf courses in the District of Columbia, Rock Creek is the most challenging and the least played, with 15,723 rounds of golf played in 2016. Encroachment by the dense wooded areas of the course have dramatically narrowed the fairways on the already difficult holes of the back nine. The lack of sunlight caused by the trees have also caused agronomic issues, leading to weedy greens and bare fairways. In contrast, the more open front nine suffers from lack of an irrigation system and by mid-summer the grass is often dry and sunburned (Figure 2.30).[262] In 2016 the National Park Service completed trimming and selective removal of trees along the fairways to improve the health of the turf and playability of the golf course. Because of the low numbers and playability issues, the National Park Service continues to discuss how to improve the conditions and increase the number of visitors while maintaining the course's historic character.

[261] National Park Service, *Record of Decision, Rock Creek Park and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkways Final General Management Plan, Environmental Impact Statement* (Washington DC: National Park Service 2007).

[262] "D.C. Golf May Go Upscale," *Washington Post,* 25 May 2014:C1.

# CHAPTER 2.3:
# LANGSTON GOLF COURSE

## INITIAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION: 1935-1949

By the late 1920s it was clear that the construction of the approaches to Memorial Bridge would require the closing of the golf course in West Potomac Park, built in 1924 for African Americans on the north side of the Lincoln Memorial grounds and the only golf course in the city where African Americans could play. The Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital (successor of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds) responded by creating a special committee to study possible locations for a new course. While the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks considered several sites, including a location in Rock Creek Park, ultimately it settled on Section G of the newly planned Anacostia Park. According to the *Evening Star*, this section of the city was currently "accommodating the majority of the colored population, and is considered the best location for a permanent course."[263]

Lt. Col. U.S. Grant, III, Director of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, was reportedly anxious to "have a golf course as near the center of colored population as possible so that they may have as many golfing facilities as are given other golfers."[264] Section G, located north of Benning Road NE, satisfied this requirement and the committee considered the site well-suited for the course because it was near an area in the city where a large number of African Americans lived, "namely, the area in the vicinity of Howard University, and from Florida Avenue, to the northeast corner of the District."[265] The site, adjacent to the intersection of 26th Street and Benning Road NE, had been a public dump from as early as the late 19th century until 1920. In preparation for the reclamation project, use of the dump was discontinued and it was moved farther north near the location of M Street NE between 24th and 28th streets.[266]

While the site was ideal, Section G had not yet been turned over to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks; the reclamation of this area had just begun. The proposed course would not be able to be built until reclamation work by the

263 "New Golf Course Sites Are Studied," *Washington Evening Star,* 11 December 1929:17.

264 "Grant is Seeking Site for Colored Golf Links," *Washington Evening Star,* 20 June 1929:17; "Remodel Golf Course," *Washington Evening Star,* 20 March 1930:B1.

265 Board to Report on Colored Golf Course to the Director, Recommendations, 13 July 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

266 The earliest reference to the dump found in local newspapers is in "Benning Citizens," *Washington Evening Star,* 10 July 1895:10; "Park Plan Work on Benning Road to Begin Monday," *Washington Evening Star*, 30 July 1930:1.

Army Corps of Engineers was completed, a project that was projected to take 10 to 15 years.[267] As the closure of the Lincoln Memorial course became eminent and conditions worsened, the city's African American golfers wrote letters to and met with the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, deploring the condition of the course and petitioning for the construction of a new permanent course that met the same standards as the courses for white players.[268]

African Americans residents also formed a committee to object to the conditions of the Lincoln Memorial golf course and lobby for a new course. The chairman of the committee was John A. Lankford, a prominent architect, member of the Capital City Golf Club, and one of the founding officers of the CGAA. On August 17, 1929, 120 African Americans signed a petition to protest the unequal and squalid conditions of the Lincoln Memorial course and to request a new course built in East Potomac Park, Rock Creek Park, or Anacostia Park.[269]

Finally in August 1932, Colonel Grant addressed a delegation of 100 citizens, headed by Lankford, and stated that his office would ask Congress to appropriate $96,852 for a public golf course in the District of Columbia, exclusively for African Americans. The NCP&PC had formally approved the project for Section G of Anacostia Park, and plans called for construction of a modern eighteen-hole golf course, a modern clubhouse with showers, restrooms, dining rooms, a kitchen, and a repair shop, as well as adequate parking.[270]

In February 1933 John A. Lankford and Dr. Walter S. Simmons spoke at a congressional hearing on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill to support the construction of the new golf course for African Americans.[271] Despite their testimony the bill did not pass. According to Colonel Grant, the House in particular objected considerably to the appropriation for the grading in Section G for the golf course.[272]

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267 Board to Report on Colored Golf Course to the Director, Recommendations, 13 July 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland; Letter from C. L. Wirth to Colonel Grant, 4 November 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland; US Congress, House, Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill for 1934,* HR 14643, 1933, 72nd Congress, 2nd Session, 179.

268 See letters in Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

269 Petition to Colonel Grant, 17 August 1929, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

270 "Colored Golfers to Get Brand New Links," *Atlanta Daily News* 23 August 1932:5A.

271 "ncreased Funds Asked for Capital," *Washington Evening Star,* 25 February 1933:A1; US Congress, House, Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill for 1934,* HR 14643, 1933, 72nd Congress, 2nd Session, 288-289.

272 Letter from Colonel Grant to M.C. Clifford, 3 April 1932, Record Group 79, Accession

Minutes from a January 1933 meeting of the NCP&PC and subsequent letters indicate that the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks began consulting with landscape architect and city planner Earle Sumner Draper on the design of the course, prior to the office securing the necessary funding for grading the site.[273] Draper had his own firm in Charlotte, North Carolina, and was involved with the planning of industrial towns as well as parks, universities, private estates, subdivisions, and golf courses.[274] In February 1933, right before the congressional hearing, Draper wrote to Colonel Grant regarding the location of the clubhouse and the general layout of the course. He also indicated that he was consulting with Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks architect Irving Payne and that he would be in Washington, DC, late February "in the field checking over the work."[275]

In August 1933 the National Park Service took over the management of all of the federal reservations and parks in the District of Columbia and the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks was abolished. The members of the Royal Golf Club began to meet with C. Marshall Finnan, superintendent of National Capital Parks, and others, to promote the construction of a new course. In 1934 Finnan attempted to solve the lack of congressional funding by acquiring laborers from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration's Transient Relief Bureau. He wanted to "turn them loose in Anacostia Park" to develop the first nine holes of the golf course; however, because of the lack of transportation and suitable housing for the laborers, the project did not move forward.[276]

In September 1935 Finnan sent a letter to Director of the National Park Service Arno B. Cammerer, with a justification for the course, which National Capital Parks was proposing for a public works project. Finnan stated,

> We believe that this project has unusual merit and there are several reasons why construction should be started immediately. As you know, golf facilities for the colored in the District of Columbia are woefully inadequate, the only course available being a small nine hole makeshift affair in West Potomac Park. Not long ago Mrs. Roosevelt wrote to you asking if improvements for colored

No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-35 (Lincoln Memorial Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

273 Extract from the Minutes of the 73rd Meeting of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission held on 19-20 January 1933, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

274 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "The Earle Sumner Draper House," accessed 18 August 2016, http://www.cmhpf.org/Properties%20Foundation%20Reports/draper.html.

275 E.S. Draper to Colonel Grant, 15 February 1933, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

276 Letter from C. Marshall Finnan to Mr. Nolen, 9 February 1934, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland; C. Marshall Finnan to Dr. George W. Adams, 12 December 1934, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

> recreation could not be made in the Washington parks. This golf course would be the most important recreational contribution that could be to the colored residents of the District of Columbia.[277]

In October 1935 National Capital Parks submitted the golf course project to the WPA stating that it was "considered a most desirable project and adaptable to the use of emergency relief labor."[278] At an estimated cost of $150,000, it was the largest of six new WPA projects approved for the District and was expected to provide 167 jobs.[279] The site for the new golf course was described as a former "mosquito infested" dump where "tin cans and battered automobile bodies vied with black mud and tangled marah growth to create a public eye sore near Benning Road and Kingman Lake."[280] Future plans for the area adjacent to the golf course included a recreation center with a swimming pool and bathhouse, tennis courts, and a stadium, all to be located on school property adjoining the tract.[281]

In September 1937 the reclamation efforts in Section G of Anacostia Park were finally complete and the land, consisting of 86 acres, was transferred to the Department of the Interior.[282] Five holes on the new nine-hole golf course had been built by June 1937 and in February 1938 the "36-acre tract of waste land" for the golf course was nearing completion by WPA and CCC workers. The project reportedly required 65,000 yards of dirt to cover the public dump and 38,000 yards of topsoil.[283] In addition to the construction of the fairways, greens, and tees, the construction of the course included planting several hundred trees along the fairways. The trees included willow and red oaks, tulip poplars, sweet gums, sycamores, and American elms, varieties native to the area. The golf course also lauded a large parking area for automobiles that had been landscaped with flowering forsythia and a temporary clubhouse to be replaced by a permanent clubhouse at a later date[284] (Figure 2.31). Relief workers also installed 3,360 linear feet of drain pipes and built 1,000 feet of concrete walks.[285] In December the National Park Service

277 C. Marshal Finnan to the Director of the National Park Service, 9 September 1935, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

278 Letter from C. Marshall Finnan to Major Daniel J. Donovan, Acting WPA Administrator, 30 October 1935, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

279 "Building Toys Urged on WPA," *Washington Evening Star,* 14 November 1935:B6.

280 "New Golf Course Nears Completion," *Washington Post,* 13 February 1938:4; "New Golf Course Replacing Dump," *Washington Evening Star,* 13 February 1938:B1.

281 "New Golf Course Nears Completion," *Washington Post,* 13 February 1938:4.

282 "Langston Golf Course History," on file National Park Service, National Capital Parks East.

283 Letter from C. Marshall Finnan to Dr. George Adams, 7 June 1937, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland; "New Golf Course Nears Completion," *Washington Post*, 13 February 1938:4; "New Golf Course Replacing Dump," *Washington Evening Star*, 13 February 1938:B1; Davidson and Jacobs, *CCC Activities in the National Capital Region*, 86.

284 "Golf Course Opens Sunday," *Washington Afro-American,* 10 June 1939:22.

285 Davidson and Jacobs, *CCC Activities in the National Capital Region*, 105.



**Figure 2.31.** Clarence Pollard (left), manager of Langston Golf Course with course pro Clyde Martin, ca. 1940. (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University)

awarded Severine G. Leoffler, concessionaire of all the public golf courses in the District, the contract to manage the new golf course.[286]

After more than 10 years of effort by the city's African American golfing community, the new golf course formally opened on June 11, 1939. Among the speakers were Frank T. Gartside, superintendent of National Capital Parks, and Garnet C. Wilkinson, superintendent of schools. Edgar G. Brown, president of the United Government Employees, served as the master of ceremonies. During his remarks, Brown praised the new course as "the finest of its kind in its country" and lauded the Roosevelt Administration for providing African American golfers in the District a representative course. Members of both the Royal and Wake Robin golf clubs participated as part of the dedication committee, but failed to send official representatives to the dedication ceremony for unknown reasons.[287] The dedication concluded with an exhibition match between Beltran Barker, former winner of the District amateur championship and the runner-up for the national amateur title, and John Thompson, who defeated Clyde Martin and Willie Jones.[288]

Shortly after the formal opening of the course, 27-year-old Clyde Martin was named as Langston's first golf pro (Figure 2.31). Born and raised in Rockville, Maryland, Martin learned golf at the age of 15 while caddying at the Congressional Country Club, where he was able to take part in the caddy privilege of playing the course once a week.[289] In July 1940 the Eastern Golf Association

286 "Contract Renewed, Leoffler Wants U.S. Golf Tourney," *Washington Evening Star,* 31 December 1938:A-11.
287 "Golf Course Opens Sunday," *Washington Afro-American,* 10 June 1939:22; "A New Golf Course Dedicated in D.C.," *Washington Afro-American,* 17 June 1939:21.
288 "A New Golf Course Dedicated in D.C.," *Washington Afro-American,* 17 June 1939:21.
289 "Clyde Martin Named Pro at Langston," *Washington Afro-American,* 24 June 1919:22.

amateur championship was held at Langston Golf Course, attracting former boxing heavyweight champion Joe Louis. Around 2,000 spectators reportedly followed Louis around the course, many of whom "did not know where the course was located until news leaked out that Louis was in the tournament."[290] Louis was so impressed with Martin's skills that Martin left Langston and became Louis's personal golf tutor.[291] Louis returned to play at Langston several times, including after beating Buddy Baer at Washington, DC's Griffith Stadium during the seventeenth defense of his heavyweight championship on May 23, 1941.[292]

While Langston Golf Course was an improvement over the sand green course on the Lincoln Memorial grounds, it still suffered from poor conditions, even shortly after its construction. A 1940 memo to the Chief of the National Capital Parks' Park Operators Division described the conditions at Langston:

> This course has the makings of a fine golf links but is in wretched condition. A great many fairways and greens have no grass and are hard as stone. Drainage is very bad on many of the holes. Some of the greens are lower than the fairways which become flooded during and after a heavy rain.[293]

In January 1940 members of the Royal and Wake Robin golf clubs met with concessionaire Severine G. Leoffler and the office of National Capital Parks to discuss the deficiencies of Langston Golf Course. The group "unanimously agreed" that the course needed to be expanded to eighteen holes, particularly because the United Golf Association (UGA) and the Eastern Golf Association were not able to hold tournaments at the course because it was only nine holes. The course also lacked a driving range and practice putting green, making it difficult for golf professionals to provide proper instruction to players. Many players were forced to "go out of town to play after tiring of the long delay in starting and the unreasonable tie-ups on the tees."[294] While National Capital Parks concurred with this assessment and stated that they would be able to add a putting green during the upcoming season, funding was not available for the other improvements and the urgent need of play facilities for the city's children directed all available CCC and other labor to build recreation centers and playgrounds that year. Later plans of

290 Eddie Gant, "I Cover the Eastern Front," *Chicago Defender,* 20 July 1940:23.
291 "To Play with Joe Louis," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 24 August 1940:20; Dawkins and Braddock, "Teeing Off Against Jim Crow," 64.
292 "Three Stitches Required to Close Joe's Eye Cut," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 31 May 1941:20.
293 Memorandum for Mr. Gable, Chief, Park Operators Division, Report on Golf Courses in the National Capital Parks of the District of Columbia, 17 December 1940. Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2847, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
294 H.A. Fisher, Royal Golf Club, to Edmund Rogers, Acting Superintendent National Capital Parks, 19 January 1949, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

the course indicate that the practice putting green was built along the south side of the clubhouse, likely between 1941 and 1944.[295]

The conditions of the course led many of the course regulars, in particular members of the Royal Golf Club and Wake Robin Golf Club, to play elsewhere and to challenge the segregation of the public golf courses in the District of Columbia (see Chapter 1.2). In 1941 Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes wrote of Langston, "[W]e have maintained a golf course for Negroes in Washington [Langston], but the cold fact is that we have not kept it up and it is not surprising that Negroes do not care to play on it."[296] During a House subcommittee hearing on the District's recreation facilities in June 1941, Congress challenged Superintendent of National Capital Parks Irving C. Root's statement that Langston Golf Course was in good condition based on the number of players who used the course. Congressman Edward Herbert of Louisiana asked, "Where else would they play?" Root responded, "There are other golf courses in the city." Herbert then retorted, "What about the colored people? Where would they play?"[297]

Letters and memos suggest that National Capital Parks attempted to make improvements to and enlarge the course in the early 1940s. In July 1941 Acting Director of the National Park Service Arthur E. Demaray wrote to Conrad Wirth, landscape architect and assistance director of Land Planning for the National Park Service, stating:

> In connection with the golf course being constructed in Fort Dupont Park … and the Negro golf course at Langston, it appears that we have not had very competent technical assistance.
>
> I understand that Mr. McGovern, a CCC employee who works out of the Harrisburg district, has had a wide experience in designing and constructing golf courses before he came to the CCC.[298]

Demaray asked Wirth to arrange for McGovern to come to Washington "to go over our golf course problems" with National Capital Parks superintendent Irving

295 The practice putting green was rebuilt around 1950 or 1951, see Letter to S.G. Leoffler, 10 October 1950, Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-5 (Anacostia Golf Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland; USGA Aerial Photographs, 1951, http://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/; Edmund B. Rogers to Dr. H.A. Fisher, 2 February 1940, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland. National Capital Parks Planning and Construction Division, *Record Plan of Langston Golf Course and the Proposed Washington-Baltimore Parkway*, 1944, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

296 Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 142, quoted in Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*, 563.

297 "House Group Probes D.C. Golf Courses, Raps Bias," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 7 June 1941:23.

298 Memorandum from Arthur E. Demaray to Conrad Wirth, 16 July 1941, Entry 10 Central Classified files, 1907-1949, Box 2827, Folder 601-12, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

C. Root. McGovern, who was serving as the CCC's State Supervisor for Pennsylvania, was requested to report to Wirth's office on July 28, 1941.[299]

J.B. (Joseph Bernard) McGovern (1890-1952) was a design associate for famed golf course architect Donald Ross, whose name has "become synonymous with the very best in golf course design," and operated Ross's Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, office.[300] When the Great Depression drastically reduced Ross's business, McGovern began working for the federal government. While Demaray's letter to Wirth indicates that McGovern worked for the CCC, other records suggest that he worked directly for the Department of the Interior. A 1940 city directory for Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, lists McGovern as a state supervisor of a recreation study for the Department of the Interior.[301] McGovern's World War II draft card states that his employer was the Department of the Interior, National Capital Parks and that he worked in the South Interior Building.[302]

While it is unclear if McGovern's expertise was used to improve the general design and conditions of Langston Golf Course, existing drawings from 1942 indicate that McGovern aided in a plan to reroute and expand the existing Langston Golf Course due to the proposed construction of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. Initial plans for the parkway included a connection to the Anacostia Freeway that would bifurcate the original nine-hole golf course on the west side of Kingman Lake. McGovern's design included filling a portion of the lake, rerouting several holes, and adding new holes on the east side of the lake.[303] The connection between the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and the Anacostia Freeway was never built and McGovern's plan was not executed.

With pressure mounting from African American golfers, in January 1944 Superintendent Root asked Leoffler to study the possibility of expanding the course to

299 Memorandum for Director Demaray from Acting Assistant Regional Director (Region 1) A. B. Bursley, 24 July 1941, Entry 10 Central Classified files, 1907-1949, Box 2827, Folder 601-12, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

300 Cornish and Whitten's *The Architects of Golf* lists McGovern's names as James Bernard. The US Census Records and his death certificate states that his name was Joseph Bernard McGovern. Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 343-344; Helen Ross, "18 Things to Know About Donald Ross," accessed online 13 July 2016, http://www.pgatour.com/news/2014/06/11/donald-ross.html.

301 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1940 City Directory, Ancestry.com. US City Directories, 1822-1995 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011; Matthew C. Jones, "In the Spirit of Scotland: Donald Ross and the Mark Twain Course," *Parks & Recreation* 32 No. 6 (June 1997), https://www.questia.com/magazine/1G1-19581897/in-the-spirit-of-scotland-donald-ross-and-the-mark.

302 The National Archives at St. Louis; St. Louis, Missouri; Draft Registration Cards for Fourth Registration for Pennsylvania, 04/27/1942 – 04/27/1942; NAI Number: 563728; Record Group Title: Records of the Selective Service System; Record Group Number: 147, Ancestry.com. US, World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

303 J.B. McGovern, *Langston Golf Course Tentative Layout in Relation to Baltimore Parkway*, December 1942, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

eighteen holes and to have William S. Flynn, who had been retained to rehabilitate the public golf courses, to look into the feasibility of the expansion.[304] In the interim, Root wrote to Helen Harris of the Wake Robin Golf Club in March 1944 to inform her of improvements underway at Langston Golf Course. The plans included general course cleanup; renovation of the fairways, greens, and tees; the installation of facilities for proper drainage; and general improvement of all the facilities as funding would permit. Root also noted that the contract for the operation of the course also provided for the rebuilding of two greens, provisions for ball washers and benches at the tees, and other improvements.[305]

In 1948 Leoffler built a miniature golf course at Langston Golf Course on the south side of the golf course at the location of the putting green.[306] The eighteen-hole course reportedly cost around $25,000 to build and featured many of the same features as the course at East Potomac Park.[307] Following the construction of the course, a new putting green was erected on the east side of the miniature golf course by 1951.[308]

## IMPROVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES: 1950-1984

Langston Golf Course finally received its permanent clubhouse between 1950 and 1952, built on the site of the original clubhouse (Figures 2.32–2.33). The new building contained a large dining space and snack bar, a kitchen, women's and men's locker rooms, and a long wall of glass windows that looked out onto a covered porch and the golf course.[309] In January 1952 the National Park Service announced that Langston Golf Course would be expanded from nine to eighteen holes. Initially, the new, larger course was to include the use of two islands in Kingman Lake and a considerable amount of land had to be filled in for the expansion.[310] The additional nine holes at Langston were built between 1954 and 1955 at a cost of $117,000, financed by Leoffler as part of a new eight-year

304 Superintendent Root to S.G. Leoffler, 26 January 1944, Record Group 79, Entry 10, Box 2847, National Archives, College Park, MD.

305 Irving C. Root to Helen W. Harris, 22 March 1944, Record Group 79, Accession No. 79-64A-42, Box 38, Folder 1460-65-95-50 (Negro Courses), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

306 The Langston miniature golf course stood along the north side of Benning Road at its intersection with 26th Street NE and on the southeast side of the clubhouse.

307 "2 New Miniature Golf Courses to be Opened by June 1," *Washington Evening Star,* 15 May 1948:A7; "Summer's Almost Here," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 3 June 1950:7.

308 United States Geological Survey, Aerial Photograph, 5 July 1951, https://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/.

309 National Park Service, National Capital Parks Planning Division, *Golf Club House, Langston Golf Course, Washington, DC,* 1950, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database; "Langston Golf Course Will Add Nine Holes," *Washington Sunday Star,* 6 January 1952:B4.

310 "Langston Golf Course Will Add Nine Holes," *Washington Sunday Star,* 6 January 1952:B4; "Leoffler Signs to Run Public Golf Course Through 1963," *Washington Post,* 24 June 1954:25; "Leoffler Gets 8-Year Extension of Public Links Franchise," *Washington Evening Star,* 23 June 1954:C-1.



**Figure 2.32.** Langston clubhouse (front) in September 1954. (National Park Service)



**Figure 2.33.** Langston clubhouse (rear) in September 1954. (National Park Service)

contract.[311] The expansion of the course coincided with the US Supreme Court ruling of *Bolling v. Sharpe* and *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which ended segregation of the school system in the District of Columbia and extended to the city's recreation facilities (see Chapter 1.2).

Leoffler and National Capital Parks hired William F. Gordon and David W. Gordon to design the additional nine holes of the course. Gordon had also recently designed revisions to Rock Creek Golf Course, the new golf course at Fort Dupont Park, and changes to G Course at East Potomac Park. In May 1952 *Golfdom* magazine reported on Gordon's involvement in the expansion of the Langston course, stating that the expansion project would make "it probably the finest course for Negroes in the world.[312] Ultimately, Gordon's design did not incorporate the two islands in Kingsman Lake in the layout for the additional nine holes and for the most part, the front nine remained on the west side of the Kingman Lake in their original configuration. Hole 1 was rerouted and three of the new holes were added to the west side of the lake alongside the front nine, requiring slight modifications to Holes 2 and 6. The remainder were built along Kingman Island on the east side of the lake and along the National Arboretum property on the north side of the lake.[313] The expansion also required the construction of a small wooden pedestrian bridge across the lake on the northernmost point of the golf course near holes 13, 14, and 15 and the lake's mouth to the Anacostia River.[314]

Once expanded to 18 holes, Langston Golf Course became the site for numerous tournaments, hosted by the UGA, the Eastern Golf Association, and local clubs including the Wake Robin Golf Club, the Royal Golf Club, the Arlington Divot Golf Club (established in 1940), the Postal Golf Club (established in 1946) and the Oxon Blades Golf club (established in 1958). Beginning in 1957, the course was the site of the Langston Pro-Am tournament, that year attended by noted players Ted Rhodes, Charlie Sifford, and Howard Wheeler.[315] In August 1959 the UGA held its national tournament at the eighteen-hole Langston Golf Course for the first time.[316] Twenty-two-year-old Washingtonian Ray Botts won the men's

311 "Long-Delayed Funds For Anacostia Flats Cleanup Sought," *Washington Evening Star,* 21 February 1955:A-33; Dick Slay, "Tee to Green," *Washington Sunday Star,* 10 May 1970:B5.

312 Herb Graffis, "Swinging Around Golf," *Golfdom* (May 1952):22.

313 "Leoffler Says Courses Paid In $1 Million," *Washington Post,* 24 March 1963:C4; "Langston Concessions Under New Operators," *Washington Evening Star,* 24 July 1974; William F. Gordon, *Preliminary Plan, Additional Nine Holes, Langston Golf Course, Washington, DC*, 1952, drawing; William F. Gordon and David W. Gordon, *Langston Golf Course*, 1954, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Parks Planning Division.

314 National Park Service, National Capital Parks Engineering Branch, *Proposed Pedestrian Bridge, Upper End Burnham Barrier, Langston Golf Course*, 1954, drawing, National Park Service, National Capital Parks Planning Division.

315 "Rhodes Fires 69 to Take Lead in Langston Pro-Am," *Washington Post,* 2 September 1957:A18.

316 "Sparkling Golf Field Set for National Tournament," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 29 August 1959:14.

amateur division. In the pro division, Baltimore's Dick Thomas won by a 12-stroke margin over famed Los Angeles golfer Charlie Sifford, the first African American to play on the PGA tour. In the women's amateur division, the District's Ethel Funches won the tournament over Philadelphia's Lorraine Sawyer.[317] Funches, a member of the Wake Robin Golf Club, won the UGA national women's championship an unprecedented five times and was inducted into the UGA Hall of Fame in 1970.[318]

In 1960 the course became the site of the Capital City Open, hosted by the Oxon Blades Golf Club. The tournament, which continued at Langston until 1999, became one of the largest tournaments for African American golfers on the East Coast and attracted golfers from across the country, including noted players such as Charlie Sifford, Joe Louis, Jim Thorpe, and Lee Elder.[319]

Similar to East Potomac, several projects threatened the existence of Langston Golf Course in the latter decades of the 20th century. In 1961 a new "District of Columbia Stadium" (now Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium) was constructed south of the golf course along East Capital Street NE and several parking areas were built on its north side between the stadium and the golf course. In 1964 the National Park Service promised to save Langston after rumors spread that the course may be in jeopardy because of the planned eastern leg of the proposed 17.6-mile inner loop highway that would circulate within the center of Washington, DC. National Capital Parks Assistant Regional Director Raymond Freeman said that while the new roadway may be built through the course, "a full blown golf course architect [would be] hired to rearrange Langston's eighteen holes so that the golfers would not lose a day."[320] Only the first two of the original five segments of the highway were built – the southwest and southeast legs, known today as the Southwest/Southeast Freeway, and alterations to Langston Golf Course were avoided.[321]

Problems between Leoffler and the neighborhood arose in 1963 when the concessionaire built a six-foot high chain link fence bordering the golf course along Benning Road, upsetting local residents. Severine G. Leoffler Jr. stated that the fence was erected to prevent children from the adjacent schools from cutting across the course and getting hit by golf balls as well as to "stop the persistent problem of golfers who slip onto the course unannounced, play a few holes and stroll away,

317 "Dick Thomas Wins UGA by 12 Strokes," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 12 September 1959:18.
318 Sinnette, *Forbidden Fairways*, 115.
319 "Prime Field Eyes $1500 DC Golf Event," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 17 April 1965:10; "Capital City Open," *Washington Post,* 20 June 1999:D8.
320 "Park Service Promises to Preserve Langston," *Washington Post,* 26 June 1964:D6.
321 Ammon, *Southwest Washington Urban Renewal Area*, 111-112.

leaving the concessionaire in fee-less frustration."[322] In 1969 the city government attempted to convince the federal government to turn over Langston Golf Course property as well as other sites including the National Arboretum for large tracts of low-rent housing. Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin observed that the Federal tracts were "not being used for anything nearly so important as housing for the District."[323] Once again, the project fell through and the golf course remained.

Lack of patronage caused the National Park Service to close the miniature golf course at Langston by the early 1960s.[324] The course sat abandoned for several years and in December 1964 the members of the Royal Golf Club wrote to Cornelius W. Heine, Assistant Regional Director of the National Capital Region, expressing their displeasure in the appearance of the abandoned course. The secretary of the club wrote, "An area adjacent to Langston Golf Course that was at one time a well-kept and attractive Miniature Golf Course, and has long since been abandoned as such, is now a most unsightly spot to greet the golfers who frequent Langston. If no plans are in the making for further use of this area, we feel that a bit of landscaping would add materially to the appearance of things in this neighborhood."[325] Heine responded in January 1965 that arrangements had been made with the concessionaire to remove the miniature golf course and reestablish the area as grass. The work was to be completed in the next few months.[326]

By 1970 Langston Golf Course was once again in poor condition. *Evening Star* columnist Dick Slay reported,

> It's not so much the feeling that you're teeing off No. 1 from the middle of Benning Rd. traffic, or because you have to leave the golf course to cross the Anacostia River to reach your ball in the 10th fairway, or even the Secret Service target range behind No. 14 green which often sounds like a hot war in progress

322 "Golf Course Fence Angers Neighbors," *Washington Post,* 21 October 1963:A3.

323 "Arboretum, Public Golf Course Eyed for Low-Rent Housing," *Washington Post,* 8 May 1969:B1.

324 T. Sutton Jett, Regional Director, to Robert Wilson, 18 February 1963, Accession No. 68A-3201, Box 14, Folder C3823 (Langston Golf Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

325 Louis H. Bond to Cornelius W. Heine, 11 December 1964, Accession No. 68A-3201, Box 14, Folder C3823 (Langston Golf Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

326 An aerial photograph from 1968 shows that the course had been removed and the area brought back to grass by that time, USGS Aerial Photograph, 1968; Cornelius W. Heine to Louis H. Bond, 19 January 1965, Accession No. 68A-3201, Box 14, Folder C3823 (Langston Golf Course), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

> and can make you four-putt, with or without hangover.
>
> What really gets you about Langston Golf Course is the fairways. If it weren't for dandelions and chickweed you'd be playing the ball off bare dirt in most places."[327]

The troubled Langston course caught the attention of PGA golfer Lee Elder, who had been attempting to take over the lease since 1970 without success. Born in Texas, Elder (1934 – ) learned to play golf while working as a caddy in Los Angeles, where he lived with an aunt after the death of his parents. Elder's big break came while playing a match with amateur player Joe Louis. Elder's skill caught the attention of Louis's then instructor Ted Rhodes, who took Elder under his wing. Elder moved to the District in the early 1960s and met his wife Rose Harper at the 1963 UGA National Tournament, held at Langston. In the 1960s, Elder taught at Langston during the week and played tournaments on weekends. He won numerous UGA tournaments, including the championship, and competed in the Capitol City Open each year at Langston. In 1967 Elder joined Charlie Sifford, Pete Brown, and other first-generation black golfers on the PGA tour and in 1975 he became the first black golfer to play in the prestigious Masters Tournament at the Augusta National Golf Club.[328]

While attempting to take over the management of Langston, Elder and his wife Rose put $3,000 of their own money for a survey by local golf architect Edmund "Eddie" Ault and two other well-known designers Robert Von Hagge and Bruce Delvin to provide ideas on how to improve the course. Elder was interested in an extensive rebuilding program and wanted to make it a first-class base for his Lee Elder Celebrity Pro-Am Tournament, which funded the Lee Elder Scholarship Foundation, and the location for his golf camps for inner-city children.[329]

Layne Leoffler, Severine G. Leoffler Sr.'s son and then president of the S.G. Leoffler Co., stated that he had no problem removing Langston from the company's lease. Leoffler said, "I've felt for some time that Langston should be operated by a black concessionaire."[330] In order to take over the contract, Elder needed to pay Leoffler for the remaining investment of the additional nine holes – of the $117,000 cost, Leoffler was still owed around $35,000.[331]

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327 Dick Slay, "Tee to Green," *Washington Sunday Star,* 10 May 1970:B5.

328 "Elder Sees Happier Days for Negro Pros," *Washington Post* 12 June 1966:C4; "Lee Elder, Hottest Sophomore in Pro Golf," *Ebony* (September 1969): 63; Nathan Aaseng, *African-American Athletes* (New York: Facts on File 2003), 66; Dawkins and Braddock, "Teeing Off Against Jim Crow," 71; Hon. William H. Gray III, Tribute to Lee and Rose Elder in the House of Representatives, Extension of Remarks, 8 May 1990, http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?r101:E08MY0-375.

329 "Elder Asks Lease of Langston," *Washington Post,* 19 November 1975.

330 "Elder Offers Langston Bid," *Washington Post,* 29 June 1972:E6.

331 Dick Slay, "Tee to Green," *Washington Sunday Star,* 10 May 1970:B5.

After 35 years of management, Leoffler released control of Langston's concessionaire contract in July of 1974. While Leoffler's company continued to manage the East Potomac and Rock Creek courses, Severine Leoffler Jr. estimated that his family lost between $300,000 and $500,000 in the years that they managed Langston Golf Course and that they "never made a nickel out of the course." Seven investors, all African Americans, formed Langston City Golf Corporation and took over the contract from Leoffler.[332] The group, the first minority organization to operate a golf concession in the National Capital Region, planned on spending around $190,000 in the first year to make much-needed improvements to the Langston course. The funds were to go toward seed, fertilizer, and chemicals, new equipment, and bridges on holes 10 and 14. The corporation also wanted to get rid of the vending machines in the clubhouse and give Langston "more of a country club atmosphere."[333] But after only a year of managing the course, Langston City Golf Corporation ran into management problems, "lost a considerable amount of money," and shuttered the course. While the closure caused a level of deterioration to the course due to lack of maintenance, it also put a burden on the two remaining public courses at East Potomac Park and Rock Creek Park.[334] The National Park Service reopened the front nine holes of Langston's course in September 1976 and the back nine in April 1977.[335]

Eight years after his first negotiations to take over the course, Elder finally received the contract as concessionaire of Langston Golf Course in 1978. By that point, he had already invested $10,000 into the project and estimated that it would take around $250,000 over a four-year period to improve the course. Elder had big plans for the course and said at that time, "Give me a year. Come back next year at this time and judge me. Someday I hope to have this baby … in good shape, a first-class public golf course." He wanted to experiment with different grasses, add a sprinkler system, and remodel the clubhouse "so the players can have a nice breakfast and lunch and also relax." Elder also foresaw taking over as concessionaire of the courses at East Potomac and Rock Creek.[336]

Elder immediately set upon upgrading the course and by the spring of 1979, numerous improvements had already been made. The course was resodded, and greens and tees were refurbished, and the sand traps refilled. Elder offered electric golf carts and operated a restaurant and bar in the clubhouse.[337] A reporter from the *Evening Star* noted that he was "Still amazed at the drastic changes taking place in both the physical condition and the country club atmosphere of the many

332 "Elder Asks Lease of Langston," *Washington Post,* 19 November 1975:H1.
333 "Langston Concessions Under New Operators," *Washington Evening Star,* 24 July 1974:D6.
334 "Closing of Langston Hurts Black Youths," *Washington Post,* 17 April 1976:C4.
335 "DC Golfers Face Better Days," *Washington Post,* 7 April 1977:D10.
336 "Elder Seed a Diamond in Langston's Weedy Rough," *Washington Post,* 25 August 1978:E1.
337 "City Welcomes Reopening of Langston Course," *Washington Evening Star,* 9 April 1979:36.



**Figure 2.34. Golf Pro Al Green with local youth at Langston Golf Course in 1979. (DC Public Library)**

golfers moving around . . ." Rose Elder said that, "What improvements you see now are just the beginning and with the wonderful cooperation I am getting from the many golfers and friends I feel sure that by mid-summer everyone, players, as well as visitors, can be proud my husband gave something back to golf that less fortunate golfers could only dream about." The Elders hired Joseph Cole, former director of the DC Department of Recreation, to serve as the director at Langston, and the pro-shop was managed by Washington golf professional Al Green[338] (Figure 2.34).

Elder's goal was to have Langston serve as a community base for aspiring young golfers who wanted to earn extra income. As Rose Elder explained, "We are very youth oriented. We want to develop a first-class caddie program." The Elders also planned to continue the summer job program that would not only provide income, but cultivate interest in golf among local youth.[339]

By early September 1979 the course was ready for Elder's ninth annual celebrity tournament. Elder's foursome included entertainer Bob Hope, and actor Greg Morris, who was best known for "Mission Impossible" (Figure 2.35). The tournament attracted almost 50 foursomes, including basketball star Bill Russell, Joe Black of the Brooklyn Dodgers, and PGA pros Skeeter Heath and Calvin Peete,

338 Lee Elder Improving Langston Golf Course," *Baltimore Afro-American,* 8 April 1979.
339 "City Welcomes Reopening of Langston Course," *Washington Evening Star,* 9 April 1979:36.



**Figure 2.35.** Lee Elder, Rose Elder, Bob Hope, Greg Morris, and Buddy Clark at the Lee Elder Celebrity Pro-Am Tournament, Langston Golf Course, September 1979. (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University)

who won the tournament.[340] Shortly after the tournament, Elder was the first black golfer to represent the United States team at the Ryder Cup.

Elder's improvements to Langston Golf Course continued and in 1980 construction on a driving range began on the west side of Kingman Island along Benning Road. The site of the new driving range was on fill that had been added in the 1960s when Kingman Lake became the dumping ground for incinerator ash.[341] Because of its location, the construction of the driving range also required the reworking of several of the back nine holes. The design of the range and modifications were by local golf architect Edward Ault. At the time, the *Evening Star* reported that Elder had been busy "designing several new tees, rebuilding two fairways, relocating No. 10 green" along with the driving range. Elder's work on the Langston course coincided with his poorest performance in 13 years on the PGA Tour.[342]

In December 1981, citing apparent financial losses and the cancelation of the course's insurance coverage, the National Park Service abruptly closed Langston Golf Course. Rose Elder stated that their firm, Lee Elder Enterprises

340 "Practice Swings, Hopeful Putts," *Washington Post* ,2 September 1979:D1.
341 "Kingman Lake Under Consideration as Dump Area," *Washington Post,* 3 May 1965:A3, "Udall Orders District Off Ash Burial Site," *Washington Post,* 18 August 1967:B1.
342 "Club at Word to Eliminate Sole Kemper Site Complaint," *Washington Evening Star,* 12 October 1980:D12.

Inc., canceled the insurance policy "because of unresponsiveness" from the National Park Service in negotiating changes to their contract. In response, the National Park Service stated that there was a dispute over specific terms of the contract, which required the Elders to spend $160,000 in improving the course. Elder reported that the company had already made more than $260,000 in improvements to the course. The closure "came amid widespread reports that the golf course was again losing money, was in poor condition and was suffering a sharp drop in patronage."[343]

Langston Golf Course remained closed until 1983, when Golf Course Specialists, Inc. took over the concessions contract. The new concessionaire completed the work on the driving range and back nine holes that was started under the Elder's management and conditions at Langston improved.[344] Early on in the contract, "The greens were terrible, the fairways were terrible, and it just wasn't a fun place to play." The National Park Service was ready to once again close the course. Wallace (Sarge) McCombs took over as manager around 1985 and vowed to change the conditions of the course. He cleared all the trash off the greens and fairways and tackled the crime problem, "staking out the course late at night to catch the vandals who made off with the flags that marked the holes or took the golf carts on midnight joyrides." McCombs also installed water fountains and portable toilets at the tees. Customers no longer worried about their golf balls being stolen by neighborhood youths hiding in the woods along the 13th fairway. McCombs said, "I hired 'em. Put 'em to work shagging balls and all of it stopped." Slowly people returned to play at Langston and patronage increased from 20,000 after the course reopened to 33,000 in 1986.[345]

## LANGSTON GOLF COURSE: THE LAST 30 YEARS (1986-2016)

Beginning in 1987, just as things were improving from the new management of the course, Langston Golf Course was once again threatened by development, this time for a new football stadium for the Washington Redskins. Team owner Jack Kent Cooke thought that the current Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium (RFK Stadium) was too small and proposed to build a new stadium on Langston Golf Course and move the course to an adjacent site. District of Columbia Mayor Marion Barry rejected the proposal after receiving a negative reaction from golfers who played on the course.[346]

343 "1 of 3 Public Links in DC Closed, Other Measures Eyed," *Washington Post,* 20 December 1981:C1.
344 "History of Golf in the Nation's Capital," concessions files, NCRO.
345 "Langston Golfers Hope Stadium Talks Fizzle," *Washington Post,* 20 September 1987:41.
346 "Cooke Likes Open-Air Stadium at Langston Site," *Washington Post,* 14 July 1988:C1.

Plans moved forward to keep the golf course, but to redesign a portion of it to make way for 18,000 parking spaces needed for the new stadium, which would be built adjacent to the existing RFK Stadium. The District of Columbia government's Armory Board commissioned Rose Elder and Associates, a public relations, marketing, and promotions firm run by Rose Elder, to prepare a feasibility study for Langston Golf Course in conjunction with the new stadium. In 1991, Elder reached out to several internationally renowned golf experts, including Jack Nicklaus, Charlie Sifford, Chi Chi Rodriquez, and Alice Dye to each design a signature hole for the envisioned course. Led by Rose Elder, the resulting team consisted of South African professional golfer and designer Gary Player and celebrated American professional golfer and designer Arnold Palmer.[347]

Many long-time players, however, did not support the redesign and formed the Committee to Preserve Langston. The *Washington Post* reported that the players were happy with the current layout and "did not want to play holes on small islands in Kingman Lake – one redesign being contemplated." Elder, who favored the redesign proposed by her team, said that Langston was in "deplorable" condition and that only a redesign would "give Washington a quality course that will attract income-producing tournaments."[348] In 1991 Langston Golf Course was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, an effort led by the Committee to Preserve Langston.

While talks on the proposed stadium continued, the National Park Service was reluctant to make any improvements to Langston Golf Course until the plans were finalized. The clubhouse snack bar closed indefinitely in 1992 because of health concerns and the concessionaire was reluctant to make improvements since it was uncertain if the clubhouse would be torn down and rebuilt elsewhere if the stadium plans moved forward. When Cooke failed to meet Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan Jr.'s deadline for negotiations on the stadium site, Lujan instructed the National Park Service to move forward with the "long-delayed renovations" to Langston Golf Course.[349] The new stadium was eventually built in Landover, Maryland (today's FedEx Field).

Additional plans to improve the course surfaced in 1998 when the Nation's Capital Bicentennial Celebration Foundation, a non-profit established by Congress to celebrate the bicentennial of the District of Columbia as the official seat of the federal government, proposed the Langston Family Golf Center as one of its capital

347 Letters from Rose Elder to various golfers, May 1991, found in Rose Elder Golf Archives, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University; "DC Stadium Called Boon for the Area," *Washington Post,* 31 January 1991:B3.

348 "A 2nd Stadium is 1 Too Many, Foes Say," *Washington Post,* 7 August 1991:D1.

349 "Minority Protest Hits Langston Contract," *Washington Post,* 20 February 1992:DC1; "Cooke Shift Sidelines Stadium," *Washington Post,* 3 April 1992:A1.

projects. This included a modernized golf course with wildlife preservation zones and nature trails, a minority golf museum/community clubhouse, and a teaching and practice center with a three-hole beginning/instructional golf course.[350] In 1998 Golf Course Specialists, Inc. began stockpiling topsoil to be used in the redesign of certain portions of the golf course. In addition, six thousand loads of soil were brought in at a market value of $1.4 million. At the time heavy rains began to erode portions of the course, exposing trash from its former use as a dump site. As recounted by Bob Brock, president of Golf Course Specialists, Inc., "We had washing machines coming up through the fairways."[351] The renovation of the back nine began in 1999 from designs by Brian Ault of Ault, Clark, and Associates. Several projects were completed in the fall of 1999 including the revision of the irrigation system, ground work including regrading, and initial seeding of the back nine.[352] The project cost approximately $8 million.[353]

In 2002 the Langston Legacy Golf Corporation was formed, a subsidiary of Golf Course Specialists, and signed the concessions contract.[354] The *Washington Post* noted in 2003 that both the National Park Service and the Langston Legacy Golf Corporation wanted to build a new clubhouse with banquet facilities and a museum, replace the driving range, and expand its youth program at an approximate cost at $12 million to $17 million.[355]

While the full plan has not been implemented, steps have been made toward these improvements. In the early 2000s the course opened a putt-and-chip area for junior golfers and a four-hole course for novices. The course also opened an educational center in the clubhouse in 2001 with donated funds, complete with computer stations, a small library, and study programs for local students. Students who came in and studied for an hour were awarded with an hour of free golf. In 2003 around 200 students regularly participated in the program.[356] First Tee, a nationwide program formed in 1997 to make golf accessible and affordable to young people of all backgrounds, formed a local chapter in Washington, DC, in 1997, one of the original members of the program. Langston Golf Course was the original home of the First Tee of Greater Washington, DC.[357]

350 "The Langston Family Golf Center, Project Background," on file National Park Service, National Capital Parks – East.

351 "A Golf Mecca in Need of Green," *Washington Post,* 26 June 2003:T10; David R. Sands, "A New Legacy for Langston," *Washington Golf Monthly* (May 1998):50-51.

352 "Langston Golf Course History," on file National Park Service, National Capital Parks – East.

353 "Langston Golf Course to be Repaired," *Washington Post,* 23 February 1999:B3.

354 "Langston Golf Course History," on file National Park Service, National Capital Parks – East.

355 "A Golf Mecca in Need of Green," *Washington Post,* 26 June 2003:T10.

356 Ibid.

357 "First Tee Program Scores with Youths," *Washington Post,* 3 July 2003:D7; The First Tee of Greater Washington, "Locations," accessed 23 November 2016, http://www.thefirstteedc.org/locations/washington-dc/.

In June 2009 PGA legend Calvin Peete and several other noted African American golfers gathered in the clubhouse at Langston Golf Course to celebrate the course's 70th anniversary.[358] Coinciding with the celebration, District of Columbia Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton introduced the Golf Course Preservation and Modernization Act of 2009, which would allow the National Park Service to use public-private partnerships to rehabilitate Langston Golf Course as well as the courses at East Potomac Park and Rock Creek.[359] Congresswoman Norton also introduced to the House a simple resolution (H. Res. 526) "Recognizing the historical and cultural significance of Langston Golf Course and its contributions to racial equality." The resolution specifically recognized the 70th anniversary of the golf course and its past and continuing importance to the African American community in the District of Columbia. The text was updated and passed in a vote in the House on February 22, 2010.[360]

In 2013 Langston Golf Course was inducted into the National Black Golf Hall of Fame because it "stands as the enduring symbol of the struggle to find equality in golf for black Americans."[361] The Wake Robin Club was also inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2013 for its "long standing dedication to ensuring the presence of black women in golf."[362] The Royal Golf Club was inducted into the National Black Golf Hall of Fame in June 2015.

In 2016 Langston had approximately 17,000 visitors, less than a fourth of the number that visited East Potomac Park Golf Course and around 2,000 more than Rock Creek. Yet of the three courses, the Langston Golf Course is often considered to be the most gracious, with mostly open fairways but still some challenging water features and elevation changes. Like Rock Creek, the course suffers from turf issues, mostly due to the presence of the resident geese population. Regardless, the course continues to attract a large number of regular patrons, some of which have been meeting at the course almost daily for decades.[363] Despite numerous threats of closure since its construction, Langston Golf Course survives and continues to provide "an affordable, quality challenge and a true departure

358 "Council, Fenty Teams Trade Jabs in Budget Dispute," *Washington Post,* 11 June 2009:DE1.

359 "Norton Golf Bills Aim to Improve Golf Courses in the District of Columbia," Press Release, 8 June 2009, https://norton.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/norton-golf-bills-aim-to-improve-golf-courses-in-the-district-of.

360 "H.Res. 526 (111th): Recognizing the historical and cultural significance of the Langston Golf Course and its contributions to racial equality, accessed 19 December 2016, https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/hres526.

361 "Historic Langston to Enter National Black Golf Hall of Fame," *Washington Examiner,* 25 January 2013; "Langston Golf Course HOF Induction Video," accessed 4 October 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyj2WxCXbJw.

362 Wake Robin Golf HOF Induction Video, accessed 4 October 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnlgG4IjNSA.

363 "An Upscale Future Pondered for D.C.'s Proletarian Public Golf Courses," *Washington Post,* 21 May 2014.



**Figure 2.36.** View of Langston Golf Course, 2016. (National Park Service)

from the bustle of the city, teeming with wildlife ranging from geese, to red foxes, to turtles (Figure 2.36)."[364]

[364] Noah Frank and Mike Jakaitis, "Playing Through: Langston Golf Course," 16 August 2016, http://wtop.com/golf/2016/08/playing-through-langston-golf-course/slide/1/.



# Part 3: Evaluation of the National Park Service Golf Courses in the District of Columbia

Section cover: View of Rock Creek Golf Course, 1950. Source: National Park Service.

# Evaluation of the National Park Service Golf Courses in the District of Columbia

## INTRODUCTION

All of the National Park Service's golf courses in the District of Columbia meet National Register Criterion A, properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history and retain sufficient integrity to convey this significance. While both Rock Creek Golf Course and East Potomac Park Golf Course meet Criterion C, properties that embody the distinct characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, only Rock Creek Golf Course retains integrity of design, workmanship, and materials to express this significance. Areas of significance that apply are Recreation, Black Heritage, and Architecture/Landscape Architecture.

Below is a determination of eligibility for each of the golf courses. It includes a summary statement of significance, narrative statement of significance, and an integrity justification for each of the three golf courses and the miniature golf course. Since the golf courses have separate periods of significance for each of their areas of significance, the sections below also provide the justification of the dates associated with each area of significance.

## EAST POTOMAC PARK GOLF COURSE

### SIGNIFICANCE AND NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY

#### Summary

East Potomac Park Golf Course is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Recreation for its association with the early development of public golf in the District of Columbia and in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Black for its role in the desegregation of the city's recreation facilities. The fieldhouse at East Potomac Park Golf Course is locally significant under Criterion C, architecture, as an important collaboration of architect Horace W. Peaslee Jr. and craftsman John J. Earley.

While the original A-B and C-D Courses and the E-F Course are significant under Criterion C, as important local examples of the work of Walter J. Travis and William S. Flynn, respectively, the courses lack integrity to convey their significance as a result of extensive alterations made to the courses.

The recommended overall period of significance begins in 1917, when construction began on the first nine holes, and ends in 1950, marking the year that East Potomac Golf Course was the site of the annual UGA tournament.

#### Criterion A: Recreation

Initially built between 1917 and 1923, East Potomac Park Golf Course was one of the first public golf courses built in the District of Columbia, illustrating the growing trend of public golf in the United States and the District of Columbia during the early 20th century as activities in public parks shifted from more passive sports to organized, active recreation. Offering low greens fees and a playable yet challenging course, the course catered to local golfers who could not afford membership in private clubs and was responsible for introducing the game of golf to countless individuals at a time when no other public golf courses (with the exception of the practice course at West Potomac Park) were located in Washington, DC, and the surrounding area. The prominence and success of East Potomac Park Golf Course at the time of its construction is not only illustrated by the vast numbers of golfers who played the course during its early years and its expansion to 36 holes by 1931, but also as the site of the second annual US Amateur Public Links Championship in 1923 and by the use of the course by President Warren G. Harding during his presidency.

East Potomac Park Golf Course retains sufficient integrity to express its significance under Criterion A for recreation. Although changes have been made to the individual features of each course that have resulted in a loss of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, the course remains a 36-hole public golf course owned by the federal government. Slight changes have been made to its boundaries along the northern end of the course, yet the course retains its integrity of location and setting with its siting on the peninsula of East Potomac Park between the Potomac River and Washington Channel and its overall setting within the larger park landscape. The course also retains integrity of feeling and association as it remains a 36-hole public golf course available to golfers of all skill levels, anchored by the original fieldhouse along Ohio Drive.

The period of significance for recreation extends from 1917, when construction on the course began, and ends in 1941, the conclusion of the initial development and expansion of the golf course.

#### Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage/Black

East Potomac Park Golf Course is significant for its association with the efforts by black golfers to desegregate the city's golf courses and recreation facilities in the District of Columbia. In the summer of 1941, three African Americans and

members of the Royal Golf Club played a round of golf at East Potomac Park to challenge the segregation of the National Park Service's public golf courses and to protest the poor conditions of Langston Golf Course, the only golf course in the city available to African Americans. Their actions led Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to issue an order stating that all the golf courses under the National Park Service were open to everyone regardless of color. The desegregation of the golf courses by the Department of the Interior was one of the first steps toward the desegregation of all public recreation facilities in the District of Columbia. They became the cornerstone in the fight over the city's segregated recreation policies between the National Park Service, the District of Columbia Recreation Board, and the NCP&PC during the 1940s and early 1950s. The efforts of the city's black golfers and others culminated in 1949 when the Recreation Board agreed to end their segregation policy and in 1950 when East Potomac Park Golf Course was the site of the 24th annual United Golf Association's (UGA's) national tournament, the first time the tournament was held in Washington, DC. In 1954 the Supreme Court ruling on Bolling vs. Sharpe invalidated the segregation of the District's schools, officially ending segregation in all of the city's recreation areas.

East Potomac Park Golf Course retains integrity to its association with the efforts of African American golfers to desegregate the city's public golf courses. In 1941 the African American golfers played the eighteen-hole Blue Course at East Potomac Park and attempted to gain access to the fieldhouse, both of which remain extant on the landscape. Although the course has lost integrity of design, materials, and workmanship due to changes made to course's individual features since its construction (see Criterion C below) the course retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association to convey its historic identity and character during this important event.

The recommended period of significance for Ethic Heritage begins in 1941, when African Americans played on the course and Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes opened to the courses to all players regardless of race. It ends in 1950 to include when the Recreation Board agreed to discontinue its policy of segregation in 1949 and when East Potomac Park Golf Course became the site of the annual UGA tournament in 1950.

**Criterion C: Landscape Architecture**

***Blue Course***

Today's Blue Course (historically the A-B and C-D Courses) at East Potomac Park is a significant example of a links-style golf course designed by renowned golf course architect Walter J. Travis during the Golden Age of Golf. At East Potomac

Park, amateur golfer and golf architect Walter J. Travis recognized its natural features and designed a traditional links-style course that emulated the characteristics of the celebrated Scottish and British courses. Travis's implemented design illustrated these features as well as his overall design philosophy with its strategic design, general lack of trees, numerous hazards, and undulating greens. Once again influenced by the Scottish links, Travis also implemented a reversible design at East Potomac Park, a characteristic of the Old Course at St. Andrews and one of two eighteen-hole reversible courses designed by Travis and one of the only eighteen-hole reversible courses in existence at the time of its construction. The importance of East Potomac Park Golf Course is furthered by the work of greenkeeper Robert White, who oversaw the construction to Travis's specifications, and the involvement of Dr. Walter S. Harban, Dr. Charles Vancouver Piper, and Dr. Russell A. Oakley who used the greens at East Potomac Park to study the innovative technique of using the stolon method for growing bent grass. The success of Travis's design of the course at East Potomac Park was not only hailed in the press, but also emphasized by its use for the 1923 US Amateur Public Links Championship.

The Blue Course, however, does not retain essential features to convey its significant association with Walter J. Travis's design and the work of others involved in its construction. Many of the course's character-defining features, such as its distinctive hazards, mounds, and hollows and its undulating greens were removed as early as the 1930s when the course was changed from a reversible course as designed by Travis to one-way play. In addition, numerous trees have been added to the course, which detract from Travis's intent and the feeling of the course as a traditional links-style course. While Travis's routing is somewhat intact, additional changes have been made to individual holes over the years that have changed the overall yardage, par, and in some cases the location of individual holes. Therefore, the Blue Course lacks integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to be eligible under Criterion C.

#### *White Course*

While golf course architects William S. Flynn and William F. Gordon also designed (and redesigned) parts of today's White Course (historically the E-F Course) at East Potomac Park Golf Course, the course is not a good or representative example of their work and/or the course has been completely redesigned or demolished since its construction. Flynn's original reversible E-F Course, built in 1924, was one of the few reversible courses designed by Flynn as was likely inspired by reversible courses designed by Walter J. Travis. Although the course is likely significant as such, the reversibility of the course was removed in the 1930s and changes were made to the course after construction of the Red Course

in 1930-1931 and the driving range in 1939. It was also partially, if not entirely, demolished during World War II. Although Flynn redesigned the course after the completion of the war, the course was rerouted and redesigned by William F. Gordon in 1956. The White Course, in its current design, is not representative of Gordon's work. In addition, the course was demolished in 1984 and although rebuilt with a similar routing, the features directly associated with Gordon are no longer extant. Therefore, the White Course as it exists today does not meet National Register Criterion C due to lack of significance and integrity.

#### *Red Course*

The G Course, today's Red Course, has gone through numerous redesigns since its initial construction in 1931. While the original architect of the course is unknown, one hole of the course was moved in 1936 after the construction of the swimming pool and the consequent shifting of the location of the driving range. The course was also modified prior to World War II and remodeled in 1950 by William F. Gordon. Since then, the layout of the course has changed due to the expansion of the parking lot and the addition of three practice holes in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Therefore the Red Course does not meet National Register Criterion C for architecture as it lacks significance and integrity.

### Criterion C: Architecture

#### *Fieldhouse*

While never fully executed, the East Potomac Park fieldhouse is architecturally significant as part of the collaborative effort of Public Buildings and Grounds architect Horace W. Peaslee Jr. and local craftsman John J. Earley. The design of the fieldhouse illustrates Peaslee's balanced neoclassical design with details executed by Earley's decorative concrete and stucco with exposed aggregate. In particular, the building illustrates Earley's experimentation with the development of his "step gradation" process in concrete and stucco, which is also illustrated in Peaslee's masterpiece Meridian Hill Park in Washington, DC, built concurrently with the fieldhouse. In 1921 Earley patented his process and used East Potomac Park as an example produced by this "improved method" that allowed a greater variety of color and texture in stucco than any known process at that time.[1] Few changes have been made to the exterior of the fieldhouse since its construction, with the exception of the replacement of original windows and doors. Thus, the fieldhouse retains sufficient integrity to convey its significant association as a work of Peaslee and Earley.

[1] US Patent 1,376,748, 3 May 1931, http://pdfpiw.uspto.gov/.piw?PageNum=0&docid=01376748&IDKey=1AADAF82D5DD&HomeUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fpatft.uspto.gov%2Fnetahtml%2FPTO%2Fpatimg.htm.

The recommended period of significance is 1917 to 1920, the years that the fieldhouse was designed and constructed.

## EAST POTOMAC PARK MINIATURE GOLF COURSE

### SIGNIFICANCE AND NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY

#### Summary

The East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Recreation as the oldest and only remaining miniature golf course in the District of Columbia and under Criterion C, Architecture as a representative example of miniature golf course architecture of the 1930s.

#### Criterion A: Recreation

The East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course was built in 1931 during the height of popularity of miniature golf courses in the United States and the District of Columbia. At the time the course was built there were approximately 30 or more miniature golf courses in the District, providing affordable recreational entertainment that was a welcomed distraction from the hardships brought on by the Great Depression. After its construction the East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course became one of the park's most popular attractions. By 1939 most, if not all, of the courses in the city except for the East Potomac Miniature Golf Course, had been closed. The East Potomac Miniature Golf Course is the single remaining golf course from this era in the District of Columbia and the region and is one of the oldest continually operating miniature golf courses in the country. Although a few changes have been made to the course design since its construction, the course retains overall integrity to convey its significance.

The recommended period of significance for the miniature golf course for recreation is 1931, the year the course was built and opened to the public.

#### Criterion C: Architecture

The East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course meets National Register Criterion C as a local, intact example of a 1930s era miniature golf course. The miniature golf course has a combination of geometrical layouts, hazards formed by undulations and mounds, bi-level greens, and whimsical obstacles such as a well house, lily pond, bridge, and loop-di-loop that were popular during the height of the miniature golf fad of the 1930s. While the original borders of the holes, which were wood, were replaced with poured concrete in the 1960s and several of the wood hazards are no longer extant, the course remains a high level of integrity to illustrate the emblematic features of miniature golf course layout and design of the 1930s.

The recommended period of significance for the miniature golf course under architecture is 1931, the year that the course was built.

## ROCK CREEK GOLF COURSE

### SIGNIFICANCE AND NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY

#### Summary

Rock Creek Golf Course is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Recreation for its association with urban recreation and the development of public golf courses in the District of Columbia during the first half of the 20th century. The course is also locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture as an example of a parkland-style course designed by Philadelphia School golf architect William S. Flynn during the Golden Age of Golf.

#### Criterion A: Recreation

Initially built in 1921-1923 and expanded in 1924-1926, Rock Creek Golf Course illustrates the increasing popularity of golf in the District of Columbia and the efforts of the federal government to provide affordable and accessible public golf courses as a form of recreation, following the growing trend of public golf in the United States in the early decades of the 20th century. Rock Creek Golf Course also illustrates the shift in urban recreation around the turn of the century as activities in urban parks such as Rock Creek, originally designed as pleasure grounds, moved toward more active, organized recreation. The importance of the course was underscored by its official opening by President Warren G. Harding in May 1923 and its expansion to eighteen holes in 1924-1926.

Rock Creek Golf Course retains sufficient integrity for expressing its significance under Criterion A for recreation. Although changes have been made to the southern boundary of the site with the widening and rerouting of Military Road in the 1950s, the course retains its integrity of location and setting within Rock Creek Park. The course also retains integrity of feeling and association as it remains a public golf course under the ownership of the federal government. Despite some changes made to the course's individual holes since its construction, the course also retains a high level of material, workmanship, and design to convey its significance as a public golf course built in Washington, DC, during the early 20th century and the Golden Age of Golf.

The period of significance under recreation extends from 1921 to 1926, the years that Rock Creek Golf Course was designed and built.

#### Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage/Black

All of the golf courses in general were the focus of the stance of the National Park Service against the segregation of recreation facilities in the District of Columbia and the fight against the District of Columbia Recreation Board during the 1940s and early 1950s. Yet while newspaper accounts indicate that efforts by African American golfers to desegregate the golf courses in the District of Columbia were going to extend to Rock Creek Golf Course in the summer of 1941, there is no evidence that the golfers specifically challenged the Jim Crow practices there as part of their demonstrations. Therefore, Rock Creek Golf Course is not associated with the significance of the golf courses in the area of Ethnic Heritage.

#### Criterion C: Landscape Architecture

Rock Creek Golf Course meets National Register Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture as a representative example of a naturalistic parkland-style golf course designed by William S. Flynn, one of the Philadelphia School's leading golf course architects during the Golden Age of Golf. At Rock Creek Park, Flynn created a challenging strategic course with natural hazards and routed the course through tree-lined corridors that took advantage of the challenging topography, characteristics that are emblematic of Flynn's design philosophy.

Changes made to the course as a result of the widening and rerouting of Military Road have resulted in the loss of materials, design, and workmanship of several of Flynn's original holes on the front nine of the golf course. However, Flynn's original routing and intent of the course, with its tree-lined fairways, challenging topography, and few human-made hazards are apparent throughout the landscape, particularly on the back nine. In addition, William F. Gordon's redesign of the front nine between 1946 and 1958, although with less variety due to space constraints, was completed in a manner that was compatible with Flynn's design by using existing topography and trees. Therefore, the course retains sufficient integrity to illustrate Flynn's emblematic style and express its significance under Criterion C as a representative work of William S. Flynn.

Under the area of landscape architecture the recommended period of significance for Rock Creek Golf Course begins in 1922, when Flynn was first involved in the design of the course, and ends in 1926, when Flynn's redesign and expansion of the course from nine holes to eighteen holes was implemented.

## LANGSTON GOLF COURSE

### SIGNIFICANCE AND NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY

#### Summary

Langston Golf Course meets National Register Criterion A in the area of Recreation for its association with the expansion of public golf courses across the country by the WPA and CCC as part of Roosevelt's New Deal programs. It is also significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Black and Recreation for its association with the fight for equal facilities for black golfers during a time of de facto segregation of the city's recreation areas and the growth of golf as a popular recreational and professional sport for African Americans in the District of Columbia.

#### Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage/Black and Recreation

Built between 1935 and 1939 by the WPA and the CCC, Langston Golf Course is locally significant as the largest of six WPA project in the District of Columbia when it was approved in 1935 and one of the few, if any, black golf courses in the United States built with WPA funds.[2] The course was among 600 golf courses built or improved by the WPA across the country during the Great Depression, illustrating the efforts of the Roosevelt Administration to provide jobs for the unemployed and to expand the country's public recreation areas as part of the New Deal. Of the more than 700 municipal public golf courses across the country in 1939, only around 20 allowed African Americans to play and of those built by the WPA, only two known examples were built specifically for African Americans: Langston Golf Course and the North Gleason Golf Course in Gary Indiana, which is no longer extant. Thus, Langston Golf Course remains as one of the earliest public golf courses specifically built for African Americans and one of the few built by the WPA specifically for African Americans.[3]

Langston Golf Course is locally significant for its association with the development of public recreation, in particular golf, for African Americans and the struggle for equal and desegregated facilities in the District of Columbia. Langston Golf course opened in 1939 after over a decade of efforts by the city's African American golfers to secure equal public golf facilities in the District of Columbia and to replace the Lincoln Memorial course, which was slated for demoli-

[2] A nine-hole golf course was built at North Gleason Park in Gary, Indiana, by the WPA for black golfers. It was reportedly the only instance where the WPA built two separate golf courses for white and black golfers. The North Gleason Golf Course is no longer extant. http://eppley.org/wp-content/uploads/uploads/file/62/Gary_MasterPlan_Final_Compilation-1.pdf.

[3] McDaniel, *Uneven Lies,* 59; Other public golf courses built specifically for African Americans prior to 1954 include the Douglass Park Golf Course, Indianapolis, IN (1928), the McKinley Park Golf Course (later the McAdams Golf Club) in Wichita, KS (1929-1930), the Nocho Park Golf Course in Greensboro, NC (1950), the Douglass Park Golf Course in Memphis, TN (1951), and the Cooper Green Golf Course in Birmingham, AL (1952).

tion because of the construction of Memorial Bridge and in poor condition. The chosen site for the new golf course in Section G of Anacostia Park was adjacent to an area of the city that was recognized for its concentrated population of African American residents, furthered by available housing for African Americans in the Kingman Park neighborhood, one of the only residential neighborhoods without restrictive covenants and that offered single-family homes to black families. The District of Columbia and the federal government responded by building schools, public housing, and recreation areas specifically for African Americans around the neighborhood, including the golf course. The location of the course as a site for African American recreation was also reinforced by the 1929 NCP&PC recreation plan for the city. The planning and construction of these facilities and Langston Golf Course continued and even reinforced the de facto segregation of much of the District of Columbia during the first half of the 20th century.

When conditions of the new Langston Golf Course proved to be less than equal to the white courses in the District, African American golfers began to challenge the racial segregation of the city's golf courses, leading to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to issue an order that all the public courses in the District were open to everyone. African American players continued to fight for equal and improved conditions on the course until 1950-1955, when finally a new permanent clubhouse was built and the course was expanded to eighteen holes. Since its construction in 1939, and particularly after its expansion to eighteen holes, the course was the site of many local and national UGA-associated tournaments and was played by numerous noted African American golfers, including Joe Louis, Ted Rhodes, Calvin Peete, Charlie Sifford, Ethel Funches, and Lee Elder.

The course is also locally significant for its association with the Royal Golf Club and the Wake Robin Golf Club. Formally established in 1937, the Wake Robin Golf Club is the oldest black women's golf club and the Royal Golf Club, established in 1925 (as the Citizens Golf Club), is one of the oldest black men's golf club in the United States. Both clubs were instrumental in petitioning, lobbying, testifying in favor of, and securing a new public golf course for black golfers in the District of Columbia from the federal government. The clubs also actively fought to gain equal rights for black golfers in the District of Columbia and to desegregate the city's public golf courses. After Langston Golf Course was built in 1939, both clubs made Langston their home course and sponsored numerous tournaments at the course.

Langston Golf Course retains significant integrity to express its significance under Criterion A. The golf course has retained its original location and setting in Section G of Anacostia Park since its construction and the surrounding schools and

housing, originally built for African Americans, remain extant. The course remains a public golf course, owned by the federal government, that has strong ties to the local African American community, therefore retaining its integrity of feeling and association. While substantial changes have been made to the back nine holes of the golf course since its construction, the front nine holes in particular retains sufficient integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to convey the course's significance under Criterion A.

The recommended period of significance begins in 1935, when the course was approved by the WPA and ends in 1955, when construction on the second nine holes was completed, marking the improvement of the course after continued efforts by the African American community to gain facilities that were equal to the other public courses in the District of Columbia.

The legacy of the course continued into the late 1970s and early 1980s when Lee Elder, the first African American to play in the Masters Golf Tournament at Augusta National Golf Club, took over the concessions contract and made Langston the home of many of his celebrity golf tournaments and youth golf programs from 1978 to 1981. Elder's takeover of the course emphasizes its prestige within the African American golfing community as his management came shortly after his ground-breaking participation in the Masters. However, Elder's association with the site occurred less than 50 years ago and does not appear to meet National Register Criteria Consideration G for properties less than 50 years of age.

#### Criterion C: Landscape Architecture

Unlike the East Potomac Park and Rock Creek golf courses, Langston Golf Course was designed and built during the Great Depression with WPA and CCC labor and little is known about the architects or their specific involvement in the design of the course. While the front nine holes of the course are evocative of public golf courses designed during the first half of the 20th century with wide, open fairways, few hazards, and minimal earth moving, the course is not significant as a work of a master golf architect nor is it a representative example of a style, period, or method of construction. While the back nine holes were designed by recognized golf architects William F. and David Gordon in 1954, it does not appear to exemplify the design features that are emblematic of their courses nor does the course contain the distinctive characteristics that are representative of golf courses designed in the mid-20th century, particularly since the back nine holes of the course was redesigned in the late 1990s/early 2000s. Therefore, Langston Golf Course is not significant under Criterion C because of lack of significance and integrity.



# Part 4: Recommendations

Section cover: Golfer, East Potomac Park, ca. 1923. Source: Library of Congress.

# Recommendations

The following recommendations are made with the intention of encouraging preservation and/or rehabilitation of the National Park Service golf courses in the District of Columbia.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

While this study explores the history of the public golf courses in the District of Columbia, there were several topics that were not fully researched within the scope of the project.

The study focused primarily on the segregation of the golf courses while touching on the segregation of all recreation areas in the District of Columbia. A comprehensive historic context of segregation of the city's recreation facilities, such as picnic areas, tennis courts, and swimming pools, would provide a much broader perspective on the role of segregation in the federal recreation areas in the District of Columbia and how the Department of the Interior strove to eliminate the practice of segregation in its parks. This study could also tie in the practice of segregation in the city's local parks and playgrounds and explore further into the operation and policies of the NCP&PC and the Recreation Board of the District of Columbia, particularly the areas that were acquired through Capper Crampton but administered as playgrounds or recreation areas under the DC Recreation Department. It could also investigate how the Department of the Interior's decisions in Washington, DC, shaped the desegregation of all National Park Service parks and recreation areas as well as influenced the recreation policies across the country, particularly with the desegregation of the National Park Service swimming pools in the District of Columbia.

Research gathered during this study found that East Potomac Park Golf Course was closed in April of 1968 after the riots erupted in Washington, DC, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. President Johnson brought over 13,000 National Guard and federal troops into the district and a number were bivouacked at East Potomac Park, on the west end of the golf course, necessitating the closure of the course. Future studies could look into how the city's recreation areas were impacted by the riot, such as what role did the 1968 riots play in the decline of the golf courses and possibly other urban recreation facilities in the District of Columbia? Did urban depopulation after the riots and possibly the reduction of visitors to the city play a role in the decline of the golf courses during

the 1970s? Did changing neighborhood demographics and the riots affect those who used the facilities?

Additional research could also explore the numerous golf clubs established by players who frequented and supported the public golf courses as well as the role of women golfers.

### NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS

### NATIONAL REGISTER UPDATES

Because East Potomac Park Golf Course and East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course were listed as part of the East and West Potomac Park Historic Districts and Rock Creek Golf Course as part of the larger Rock Creek Park Historic District, the nominations lack specific information on the courses, such as character-defining features, and what makes them significant. It is recommended that an individual National Register Nomination Form be completed for each golf course using the information gleaned from the Historic Resource Study and the Cultural Landscape Inventories.

An individual National Register nomination for Langston Golf Course was completed and the course listed in the National Register in 1991; however, it is recommended that the nomination be updated to include new information found on the history of the course and to expand the period of significance to include the improvement and enlargement of the golf course in the early 1950s. Since Langston Golf Course's association with Lee Elder occurred less than 50 years ago, it is recommended that this area of significance be reevaluated around the year 2028.

### TREATMENT GUIDELINES

Treatment guidelines as part of a Cultural Landscape Report for each of the golf courses would encourage responsible maintenance and changes to the courses as well as foster improvements that reflect the courses' historic character. While acknowledging that improvements may be necessary to accommodate modern playing standards, the treatment guidelines would encourage modernization consistent with the original design intent of each course.



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**Section cover: Asa Williams, George Williams, and Cecil R. Shamwell, on East Potomac Park Golf Course, June 29, 1941. Source: Washington National Records Center.**

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# Figure Details

**Cover (from left)**

**President Harding congratulating winner of Washington Newspaper Golf Club Tournament, May 1923.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. Pres. Harding congratulating winner of Washington newspaper Golf Club tournament Charles B. Shaeffer. United States, 1923. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013013105/. (Accessed November 15, 2017.)

**"East Potomac Golf Club (East Potomac Park), Washington, D.C., aerial view from above Hains Point looking north toward the Mall," ca. 1925.**

Source: [East Potomac Golf Club East Potomac Park, Washington, DC, aerial view from above Hains Point looking north toward the Mall]. East Potomac Park Washington D.C, ca. 1935. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2005676856/. (Accessed January 11, 2018.)

**Golf Pro Al Green with local youth at Langston Golf Course in 1979.**

Source: "Al Green, pro at Langston Golf Course, works with Jeffrey Winchester (from left), Aundrelle Robinson and Anthony (Tony) Halmon," 9 April 1979. Washington Star Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, Washington, DC.

**Inside Cover: Women playing golf at East Potomac Park, ca. 1923.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. Potomac Park golf links. United States, None. [Between 1915 and 1923] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013000734/. (Accessed January 11, 2018.)

**Introduction: Women playing golf at East Potomac Park, ca. 1923.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. Potomac Park golf links. United States, None. [Between 1915 and 1923] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013000734/. (Accessed January 11, 2018.)

**Introduction: "East Potomac Golf Club (East Potomac Park), Washington, D.C., aerial view from above Hains Point looking north toward the Mall," ca. 1925.**

Source: [East Potomac Golf Club East Potomac Park, Washington, DC, aerial view from above Hains Point looking north toward the Mall]. East Potomac Park Washington D.C, ca. 1935. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2005676856/. (Accessed January 11, 2018.)

**Part 1: Golfers waiting their turn at East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1920.**

Source: Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 30, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.1: Golfers at the Chevy Chase Club, ca. 1920.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. [Golf, Chevy Chase Club, Chevy Chase, Maryland]. Chevy Chase Maryland, None. [Between 1915 and 1923] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013000055/. (Accessed January 11, 2018.)

**Figure 1.2: Map of Rock Creek Golf Course, 1907.**

Source: "Course Will Be Opened Before Winter Arrives," *Washington Sunday Star,* 1 September 1907:5-3

**Figure 1.3: Golfers on West Potomac Park Golf Course, November 1920.**

Source: Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 30, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.4: Boy Scouts "armed with hoes and rakes ready to begin work on their vegetable garden" in East Potomac Park, June 1918.**

Source: Record Group 165, American Unofficial Collection of World War I Photographs, 1917 – 1918, Image 165-WW-68A-2, National Archives and Records Administration, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/20808456.

**Figure 1.5: East Potomac Park Golf Course, ca. 1920.**

Source: Record Group 18-AA, "Airscapes" of American and Foreign Areas, Box 150, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

**Figure 1.6: East Potomac Park Golf Course looking toward fieldhouse, November 1920.**

Source: Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 30, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.7: East Potomac Park fieldhouse, November 1920.**

Source: Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 30, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.8: Women playing golf at West Potomac Park, ca. 1930.**

Source: Underwood and Underwood, Five Women Pretending to Play Golf in Washington, DC., Concession Stand in Background, ca. 1930, Image KC1371.PH.AC.M.U., Kiplinger Washington Collection, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.9: Gallery at Public Links Championship, June 1923.**

Source: Gallery, Pub Links Tournament, 6/29/23. Washington D.C, 1923. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/npc2007008993/. (Accessed November 15, 2017.)

**Figure 1.10: Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes presenting the trophy to winner Dick Walsh at the Public Links Championship, June 1923.**

Source: Hughes & Chicago group, 6/29/23. Washington D.C, 1923. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/npc2007008985/. (Accessed November 15, 2017.)

**Figure 1.11: President Harding congratulating winner of Washington Newspaper Golf Club Tournament, May 1923.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. Pres. Harding congratulating winner of Washington newspaper Golf Club tournament Charles B. Shaeffer. United States, 1923. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013013105/. (Accessed November 15, 2017.)

**Figure 1.12: President and Mrs. Coolidge at East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1924. On the right of President Coolidge is Colonel Sherrill.**

Source: Pres. & Mrs. Coolidge on golf links, 7/31/24. , 1924. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/npc2007011879/. (Accessed November 15, 2017.)

**Figure 1.13: Flier announcing the opening of the Anacostia Golf Course, 1931.**

Source: Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-42, Box 23, Folder 1150-40-5 Anacostia Golf Course, Federal Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

**Figure 1.14: Aerial photograph showing the Anacostia Golf Course, looking southwest toward the fieldhouse, 1933.**

Source: Record Group 18-AA, "Airscapes" of American and Foreign Areas, Box 141, Image 146-28, National Archives and Records Administration,

**Figure 1.15: View of East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1932.**

Source: NCR Photos, East Potomac Park Aerial Views 1928-1980, National Park Service Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland.

**Figure 1.16: View of the G Course and the tourist camp, 1931.**

Source: Record Group 18-AA, "Airscapes" of American and Foreign Areas, Box 150, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

**Figure 1.17: Plan of the fieldhouse and swimming pool at East Potomac Park, 1937.**

Source: National Park Service, National Capital Parks, "East Potomac Field House Proposed Layout," 1937, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.18: View of East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1947.**

Source: NCR Photos, East Potomac Park Aerial Views 1928-1980, National Park Service Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland.

**Figure 1.19: Golf concession building at Anacostia Park, October 1961.**

Source: NCRO Photos, Anacostia Park Golf Course 1954-1961, National Park Service Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland.

**Figure 1.20: June 15, 1964: (from left) US Open participants Sam Snead, Julius Boros, Art Wall, Tony Lema, Tommy Jacobs, Bob Charles, Bruce Crampton, Billy Casper, and Chi Chi Rodriguez at a Time, Inc. event at East Potomac Park Golf Course. The US Open was held at the nearby Congressional Country Club.**

Source: NCR Photos, East Potomac Park Golf Course 1950-1964, National Park Service Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland.

**Figure 1.21: View of the practice putting green and the East Potomac Park Golf Course fieldhouse, 2016.**

Source: University of Pennsylvania

**Figure 1.22: Plans for Pitch and Putt Golf Course at 16th Street and Colorado Avenue, 1930.**

Source: E. M. Fallon & W.E. Harris, "Plan of Practice Pitch & Putt Golf Course at Sixteenth & Colorado Avenue Washington, DC for the Welfare & Recreational Association of Public Buildings and Grounds Inc., National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.23: "Summer Scene" at the 16th Street Pitch and Putt Golf Course, ca. 1930.**

Source: Kiplinger Washington Collection, Image KC3768.PH.AC.L.U, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.24: Miniature Golf Course at East Potomac Park, ca. 1931.**

Source: Kiplinger Washington Collection, Image KC3766.PH.AC.L.F, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.25: Plan of Langston Miniature Golf Course, 1948.**

Source: "Langston Miniature Golf Course," 1948, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.26: View of Langston Miniature Golf Course —Langston clubhouse in background, 1949.**

Source: John P. Wymer Photograph Collection, Image WY 0581.12, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.27: Bathing beach on the Tidal Basin, ca. 1920.**

Source: Record Group 18-AA, "Airscapes" of American and Foreign Areas, Box 150, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

**Figure 1.28: African Americans playing at East Potomac Park Golf Course in 1920.**

Source: Ernest T. Attwell, "Playgrounds for Colored America," The Park International Vol. 1 (November 1920), 219.

**Figure 1.29: Members of the Wake Robin Golf Club in 1947.**

Source: Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University Archives, Howard University, Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.30: Layout of the Lincoln Memorial golf course in 1929.**

Source: "West Potomac Park Golf Course," 1929, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.31: View of Section G of Anacostia Park, looking north of Benning Road, ca. 1935. The site of Langston Golf Course is on the left.**

Source: Anacostia Park Aerial Views 1932-1937, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland.

**Figure 1.32: Lincoln Memorial course (left), July 1931 showing conditions during the construction of Memorial Bridge (right).**

Source: Record Group 18-AA, "Airscapes" of American and Foreign Areas, Box 152, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

**Figure 1.33: Heavyweight champion Joe Louis at Langston Golf Course, July 1940.**

Source: Scurlock Studio Records, Box 63, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.34: Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes congratulates Marian Anderson at the Lincoln Memorial concert, April 9, 1939.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. Interior Secretary Ickes congratulates Marian Anderson at concert. Washington, DC, April 9. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, who introduced Marian Anderson at her open-air concert at the shrine of the president who freed her race from slavery, congratulating her after the concert to which an estimated 75,000 listened. Washington D.C, 1939. April 7. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2009013149/. (Accessed January 11, 2018.)

**Figure 1.35: Dr. Edgar G. Brown, 1942.**

Source: United States Office For Emergency Management, Danor, George, Albert Freeman, and Alfred T Palmer, photographer. Dr. Edgar G. Brown, Director of the National Negro Council, shown with Leon Henderson, Office of Price Administration Administrator OPA, and Donald Gordon, Chairman of the Canadian Wartime Prices and Trade Board, at the announcement of the price control order. Dr. Brown is working with OPA on the price regulation as it affects the Negro race in America. Washington D.C, 1942. or 1943. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/oem2002009177/PP/. (Accessed January 11, 2018.)

**Figure 1.36: Asa Williams, George Williams, and Cecil R. Shamwell, along with Edgar G. Brown, Paris Brown, Delores Brown, and Emmett Sullivan challenge the segregation policy of East Potomac Park Golf Course on June 29, 1941.**

Source: Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-110, Box 3, Folder 1525 Race Discrimination & Segregation, National Archives, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

**Figure 1.37: All-Out for Victory Tournament at Anacostia Golf Course, August 1942.**

Source: Art Carter Papers, Box 170-41, Folder 9, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University Archives, Howard University, Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.38: Illustration of "Old Style Bunkers" and "Modern System of Traps" from Walter Travis's "Twenty Years of Golf" American Golfer, 9 October 1920.**

Source: Walter J. Travis, "Twenty Years of Golf," American Golfer, 9 October 1920.

**Figure 1.39: Walter J. Travis playing golf ca. 1909-1914.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. TRAVIS, WALTER. PLAYING GOLF. , None. [Between 1909 and 1914] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2008000722/. (Accessed November 16, 2017.)

**Figure 1.40: Plan of the East Potomac Golf Course, 1918.**

Source: Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, "East Potomac Park Details of Golf Course," 1918, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.41: East Potomac Park Golf Course ca. 1923 illustrating the trees on the course.**

Source: Record Group 18-AA, "Airscapes" of American and Foreign Areas, Box 150, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

**Figure 1.42: Swale green at East Potomac Park.**

Source: "Plan Showing Details of Greens," December 14, 1927, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.43: Hole 7a at East Potomac Park Golf Course by Walter J. Travis.**

Source: "Washington Public Course East Potomac Park Reverse Course," Record Group 79, Cartographic and Architectural Section, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

**Figure 1.44: Image of hazards at East Potomac Park, November 1920.**

Source: Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 30, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.45: East Potomac Park Golf Course in April 1925, illustrating the vast number of bunkers and other hazards on the course designed by Travis.**

Source: Record Group 18-AA, "Airscapes" of American and Foreign Areas, Box 150, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

**Figure 1.46: Dr. Walter S. Harban, 1921.**

Source: Dr. Walter S. Harban, 7/16/21. , 1921. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/npc2007004575/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 1.47: Golf green experiments conducted at Arlington Farm, 1929.**

Source: Golf green experiments, Arlington Farm, 8/12/29. , 1929. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/npc2007017759/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 1.48: Flynn's design for the 9-hole E-F Course at East Potomac Park, 1924.**

Source: William S. Flynn, "Preliminary Study for Reversible Golf Course in East Potomac Park," May 29, 1924, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.49: Plan showing the E-F and G courses, ca. 1930.**

Source: Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, "East Potomac Park Golf Course Relocation," National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.50: Gordon's 1950 design of the G Course at East Potomac Park Golf Course.**

Source: William F. Gordon, "Additional Nine Holes East Potomac Park G.C. Washington, D.C.," 1950, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.51: William and David Gordon's 1956 redesign of the F Course at East Potomac Park.**

Source: William F. Gordon and David W. Gordon, "East Potomac Park Golf Course," 1956, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.52: Drawing of the side elevations of the wings of the fieldhouse, 1917.**

Source: "Potomac Park Field house, Side Elevations, Both Wings," 21 May 1917, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.53: Detail of the column capitals of the fieldhouse, ca. 1917.**

Source: "F.S. Detail of Column Cap, Sketch for Plaster Model, Potomac Park Field House," National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.54: Photograph of William S. Flynn.**

Source: Courtesy of Wayne Morrison.

**Figure 1.55: Plan of Rock Creek Golf Course, 1922.**

Source: Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, "Golf Course Rock Creek Park, Location of Greens and Tees Designated by W.S. Flynn," February 1922, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.56: Map showing Flynn's design of the expansion of Rock Creek Golf Course, 1926.**

Source: Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, "Rock Creek Park Golf Course," 1926, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.57: Flynn's design of the 13th green at Rock Creek Golf Course.**

Source: Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 30, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

**Figure 1.58: Rock Creek Golf Course, looking east, 1950.**

Source: National Capital Region, S01 B093, Rock Creek Golf Course 1944-1965, Image 1326-D, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland.

**Figure 1.59: Map of Rock Creek Golf Course showing changes to the back nine, 1977.**

Source: National Park Service, Marketing and Economic Feasibility Study Oxon Cove Golf Course, Marketing and Economic Overview Rock Creek/Potomac Park Golf Courses, (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1977).

**Figure 1.60: Elevations and interior details of the Rock Creek clubhouse, 1963. .**

Source: Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, "Anacostia Park: Section 'G' (Benning Road) Golf Course Grading Plan," 1932, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.61: Preliminary plan of Langston Golf Course, 1932.**

Source: Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, "Anacostia Park: Section G (Benning Road) Golf Course Grading Plan," National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.62: Grading plan of Langston Golf Course, 1936.**

Source: National Park Service, Eastern Division Branch of Engineering, "Anacostia Park – Section 'G' Golf Course Grading," 1936, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.63: Langston Golf Course, ca. 1940.**

Source: National Capital Region, S01 B002, Anacostia Park Aerial Views 1932-1937, Image 614-AJ, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland.

**Figure 1.64: Gordon's design for Langston Golf Course, 1954.**

Source: William F. Gordon and David W. Gordon, "National Golf Course National Capital Parks Washington, DC," 1954, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**Figure 1.65: Langston Golf Course clubhouse, 1951**

Source: National Capital Parks Planning Division, "Golf Club House, Langston Golf Course," 1951, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Land Resources Program Center Map Database.

**PART 2: View of Langston Golf Course, ca. 1940.**

Source: Anacostia Park Aerial Views 1932-1937, Image 614-AJ, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland.

**Figure 2.1: Boy Scouts gardening in East Potomac Park, 1917.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. BOY SCOUTS GARDENING IN POTOMAC PARK. , 1917. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2008005984/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 2.2: View of East Potomac Park looking southeast, ca. 1920.**

Source: Record Group 18-AA, "Airscapes" of American and Foreign Areas, Box 150, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

**Figure 2.3: View northeast over sand bunker on East Potomac Park Golf Course, c. 1925.**

Source: Kiplinger Washington Collection, Image KC1409.PH.LV.M.U, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

**Figure 2.4: Golfers on green at East Potomac Park with fieldhouse in the background, 1922.**

Source: Public Golf Links. , 1922. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/npc2007007312/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 2.5: Golfers waiting their turn at East Potomac Park Golf Course, November 1920.**

Source: Record Group 42, Entry 102, Box 30, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

**Figure 2.6: East Potomac Park Golf Course ca. 1923.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. Potomac Park golf links. United States, None. [Between 1915 and 1923] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013000733/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 2.7: Golfers at East Potomac Park, ca. 1923.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. [Golf; Washington Monument in background]. United States, None. [Between 1915 and 1923] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013000780/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 2.8: Women golfers at East Potomac Park, ca. 1923.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. Potomac Park golf links. United States, None. [Between 1915 and 1923] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013000734/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 2.9: Mrs. Virginia Riter, Mrs. E.M. Allison, and Mrs. Helen Rutan at East Potomac Park Golf Course, May 1923.**

Source: Mrs. Virginia Riter, Mrs. E.M. Allison, Mrs. Helen Rutan, 5/4/23. , 1923. [May 4] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/npc2007008419/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 2.10: National Open Champion Gene Sarazen gives exhibition at East Potomac Park, December 9, 1922.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. [Gene Sa . . . lesson to the golf fans of Washington's Potomac Park]. United States, 1922. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013012679/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 2.11: Raising of the flag at East Potomac Park Golf Course, December 9, 1922, after the announcement that it would be the site of the 1923 Public Links Tournament.**

Source: National Photo Company, 9 December 1922, author's collection.

**Figure 2.12: Group of golfers waiting at starting area at East Potomac Park ca. 1930.**

Source: Public Golf Links. Washington Metropolitan Area, None. [Between 1909 and 1932] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/90715520/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 2.13: Women golfers receiving instructions on the fundamentals before they start playing." The East Potomac Park driving range, November 1954.**

Source: Record Group 306, Records of the United States Information Agency, Box 515 Image No. 54-11874, Still Picture Branch, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

**Figure 2.14: Flooding on the Potomac River at East Potomac Park, March 1936.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. [Flooding, Potomac River, Washington, D.C]. Washington D.C, 1936. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013010438/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 2.15: Boy Scouts camping on East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1937.**

Source: Record Group 18-AA, "Airscapes" of American and Foreign Areas, Box 150, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

**Figure 2.16: East Potomac Park Golf Course looking south toward Hains Point. Model airplane landing pads are in the foreground. August 1950.**

Source: National Capital Region Photographs, S01 B019, East Potomac Park Golf Course 1950-1964, Image 1326-P, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland.

**Figure 2.17: Secretary Udall putts on the F Course at East Potomac Park on June 26, 1950.**

Source: National Capital Region Photographs, S01 B019, East Potomac Park Golf Course 1950-1964, Image 8671-U, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland.

**Figure 2.18: Hole 5 of the Red Course, 2016**

Source: Patricia Kuhn Babin

**Figure 2.19: East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course, 1964.**

Source: Record Group 79, Accession No. 68A, Box 14, Folder C3823 E. Potomac Golf Course, Federal Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

**Figure 2.20: East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course, 1964.**

Source: Record Group 79, Accession No. 68A, Box 14, Folder C3823 E. Potomac Golf Course, Federal Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

**Figure 2.21: View of East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course, 2016.**

Source: University of Pennsylvania

**Figure 2.22: Rock Creek Golf Course, clubhouse and pavilion, ca. 1923.**

Source: Rock Creek golf course. , None. [Between 1918 and 1928] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/npc2008013866/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 2.23: President Harding putting at the Washington Newspaper Golf Club's Tournament on May 23, 1923.**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. Washington newspaper golf, May 27. Washington D.C, None. [Between 1905 and 1945] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2009016024/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 2.24: Rock Creek Golf Course showing the condition of the tees in 1944.**

Source: National Capital Region Photographs, S01 B093 Rock Creek Golf Course 1944-1965, Image 314-D, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland

**Figure 2.25: Rock Creek Golf Course, showing the barren 1st Tee and the maintenance barn in 1957.**

Source: National Capital Region Photographs, S01 B093 Rock Creek Golf Course 1944-1965, Image 4278-H, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland

**Figure 2.26: Rock Creek Golf Course, view from 11th green to 11th tee showing erosion in front of tee, 1957.**

Source: National Capital Region Photographs, S01 B093 Rock Creek Golf Course 1944-1965, Image 4278-G, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland

**Figure 2.27: Crowd watches fireman at Rock Creek clubhouse, 1930s.**

Source: Horydczak, Theodor, Approximately, photographer. Golf club on fire. Spectators watching firefighters at building. Washington Region, None. ca. 1920-ca. 1950. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/thc1995006583/PP/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**Figure 2.28: Rock Creek clubhouse under construction, ca. 1963.**

Source: National Capital Region Photographs, S01 B093 Rock Creek Golf Course 1944-1965, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland

**Figure 2.29: 8th hole of Rock Creek Golf Course showing conditions, 1965.**

Source: National Capital Region Photographs, S01 B093 Rock Creek Golf Course 1944-1965, Image 9262-B, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland

**Figure 2.30: View of the front nine of Rock Creek Golf Course, 2016**

Source: University of Pennsylvania

**Figure 2.31: Clarence Pollard (left), manager of Langston Golf Course with club pro Clyde Martin.**

Source: Art Carter Papers, Box 170-41, Folder 5, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University Archives, Howard University, Washington, DC.

**Figure 2.32: Langston clubhouse (front) in September 1954.**

Source: National Capital Region Photographs, S01 B002, Anacostia Park Golf Course, 1954-1961, Image 2754-S, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland.

**Figure 2.33: Langston Clubhouse (rear) in September 1954.**

Source: National Capital Region Photographs, S01 B002, Anacostia Park Golf Course, 1954-1961, Image 2754-R, National Park Service, Museum Resource Center, Landover, Maryland.

**Figure 2.34: Golf Pro Al Green with local youth at Langston Golf Course in 1979.**

Source: "Al Green, pro at Langston Golf Course, works with Jeffrey Winchester (from left), Aundrelle Robinson and Anthony (Tony) Halmon," 9 April 1979. Washington Star Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, Washington, DC.

**Figure 2.35: Lee Elder, Rose Elder, Bob Hope, Greg Morris, and Buddy Clark at the Lee Elder Celebrity Pro-Am Tournament, September 1979.**

Source: Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University Archives, Howard University, Washington, DC.

**Figure 2.36: View of Langston Golf Course, 2016.**

Source: National Park Service, Nathan King, 11 August 2016.

**PART 3: View of Rock Creek Golf Course, 1950.**

Source: National Park Service, on file, National Park Service, National Capital Region.

**PART 4: Golfer, East Potomac Park, ca. 1923**

Source: Harris & Ewing, photographer. [Golf; Washington Monument in background]. United States, None. [Between 1915 and 1923] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/hec2013000780/. (Accessed November 17, 2017.)

**REFERENCES: Asa Williams, George Williams, and Cecil R. Shamwell, on East Potomac Park Golf Course, June 29, 1941.**

Source: Record Group 79, Accession No. 64A-110, Box 3, Folder 1525 Race Discrimination & Segregation, National Archives, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

**APPENDICES: Three women wearing uniforms holding golf clubs at East Potomac Park Golf Course, June 29, 1923.**

Source: [Three Women Wearing Uniforms Holding Golf Clubs, 6/29/23]. Washington D.C, 1923. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/npc2007008991/. (Accessed January 11, 2018.)



# Appendices

**Section cover: Three women wearing uniforms holding golf clubs at East Potomac Park Golf Course, June 29, 1923. Source: Library of Congress.**

# Appendix I: Chronology

| DATE | GENERAL | EAST POTOMAC PARK | ROCK CREEK PARK | LANGSTON |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1906 | | | The Commissioners of the District of Columbia announce the establishment of the city's first public golf course, located in Rock Creek Park, south of the Brightwood Reservoir (Sixteenth Street and Colorado Avenue, NW). | |
| 1907-1909 | | | The first nine holes of the new Rock Creek Golf Course are built. The District commissioners lack sufficient funds and the support of Congress to fully complete the course. | |
| 1911 | | A special committee to promote the establishment of a golf course in East Potomac Park forms after a February meeting of the Board of Trade's committee on parks and reservations. | | |
| 1913 | | In April 1913, Colonel Spencer Cosby, Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, assures the special committee that a public course will be built in East Potomac Park. The committee recommends a 50-acre site that is currently used by the USDA as an experiment ground. | | |
| 1914 | A three-hole practice course opens south of the Lincoln Memorial grounds in West Potomac Park. | | | |
| 1916 | | Col. William W. Harts of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds publishes a plan for East Potomac Park and includes an eighteen-hole and a nine-hole "amateur" public golf course. | | |
| 1917 | | Walter J. Travis, former national and British amateur golf champion, is hired to design the golf courses at East Potomac Park. | | |
| | | Construction begins on the first nine holes of the course at East Potomac Park, following Travis's design. | | |
| 1917-1920 | | The fieldhouse is constructed at East Potomac Park Golf Course, designed by Horace Whittier Peaslee Jr. with exposed-aggregate concrete by craftsman John Joseph Earley. | | |
| 1918 | | Construction on the East Potomac Park course stops in June 1918 when the Boy Scouts are granted permission to use the area designated for the golf course for "war gardens." | | |
| 1920 | | The first nine holes of the East Potomac Park Golf Course, known as the A-B Course, are opened to the public on July 8, 1920. | | |
| | | African Americans are allowed to play at East Potomac Park on Mondays from 4:30 P.M. until dark. | | |
| 1921 | | In April, President Warren G. Harding plays a round of golf at East Potomac Park with Senator Frank B. Kellogg of Minnesota, Senator Joseph Sherman Frelinghuysen Sr. of New Jersey, and Frederick Hale of Maine. Harding continues to occasionally play at East Potomac Park Golf Course during his presidency. | | |
| | | Severine G. Leoffler's Park Amusement Company takes over as concessionaire of East Potomac Park Golf Course in July. | | |
| | The practice greens at West Potomac Park are expanded to nine holes and S.G. Leoffler takes over the management of the course. | | | |
| | Lt. Col. Sherrill announces that African Americans can play at East Potomac Park Golf Course on Tuesdays from 3:00 P.M. to the end of the day and at West Potomac Park on Wednesdays from noon until the end of the day. | | | |
| 1921-1923 | | | Lt. Col. Sherrill requests $50,000 from Congress for the construction of a golf course at Rock Creek Park. The new golf course is designed by golf course architect William S. Flynn. President Harding helps open the new golf course on May 23, 1923 during an annual spring tournament of the Washington Newspaper Golf Club. | |
| 1922 | | Five holes of Travis's second nine holes, known as the C-D Course, are completed by the summer of 1922. | | |

| DATE | GENERAL | EAST POTOMAC PARK | ROCK CREEK PARK | LANGSTON |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1923 | | The final holes of the C-D Course are finished by June 1923, completing Travis's eighteen-hole course at East Potomac Park. | | |
| 1923 | | The USGA holds its second annual US Amateur Public Links Championship at East Potomac Park from June 26-29. | | |
| | Plans for a golf course in the newly planned Anacostia Park are developed along with other recreation facilities such as baseball diamonds and tennis courts. | | | |
| 1924 | A nine-hole course is constructed on the north side of the Lincoln Memorial exclusively for African Americans. The sand green course officially opens at noon on June 7, 1924. | | | |
| 1924-1925 | | Leoffler builds a nine-hole course at East Potomac Park, west of the fieldhouse. The reversible course, known as the E-F Course, is designed by William S. Flynn and opens to the public in May 1925. | | |
| 1924 | | | Golf architect William S. Flynn is hired to design the expansion of Rock Creek Golf Course to eighteen holes. | |
| | A group of prominent African American men establish the Riverside Golf Club in October. | | | |
| | The Riverside Golf Club holds its first tournament at the Lincoln Memorial golf course in October 1924. | | | |
| 1924-1926 | | | The Welfare Recreation Association takes over as concessionaire of Rock Creek Golf Course from original concessionaires Norman B. Frost and Harold D. Miller. | |
| 1925 | Six months after the Riverside Golf Club was founded, some members split off and establish the Citizens Golf Club. This club changes its name to the Capital City Golf Club in 1927 and finally to the Royal Golf Club in 1933. | | | |
| | The Colored Golfers Association of America, later known as the United Golfers Association, is founded at the 12th Street YMCA on August 1, 1925. | | | |
| 1926 | | | Leoffler takes over as concessionaire of Rock Creek Golf Course from the Welfare and Recreation Association and completes the expansion of the course to eighteen holes. | |
| 1927 | | The practice putting green at East Potomac Park is constructed on the south side of the fieldhouse. | | |
| ca. 1927 | | Leoffler builds a "practice driving course" on the south side of the fieldhouse. | | |
| 1928-1929 | A golf course is included in a comprehensive plan for Fort Dupont Park. | | | |
| 1929 | | | A new practice green is added along the 8th Fairway at Rock Creek Golf Course. | |
| 1929-1931 | The first nine holes of the Anacostia Golf Course are built and open to the public over the 4th of July weekend 1931. | | | |
| 1930-1931 | | Leoffler builds an additional nine-hole course known as the G Course at East Potomac Park. The construction of the course, located on the north and south sides of the fieldhouse, requires alterations to the E-F Course and the removal of the driving range. | | |
| 1931 | | Leoffler builds the Miniature Golf Course at East Potomac Park and it is open to the public by the summer. | | |
| 1932-1933 | Work on the additional nine holes of the Anacostia Golf Course begins in the spring of 1932 and the eighteen-hole Anacostia Golf Course is dedicated on May 5, 1933. | | | |
| 1934 | | Changes are made to the A-B and C-D Courses at East Potomac Park Golf Course for the first time and the greens rebuilt and are modernized for one-way play. | | |

| DATE | GENERAL | EAST POTOMAC PARK | ROCK CREEK PARK | LANGSTON |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1934 | | Due to construction of the G Course at the former location of the driving range, Leoffler builds a new lighted driving range on the west side of fieldhouse. | | |
| 1935-1939 | | | | The National Park Service builds the nine-hole Langston Golf Course, located in Section G of Anacostia Park, exclusively for African Americans using CCC and WPA laborers. The course is dedicated and opened to the public on June 11, 1939. |
| 1936-1937 | | A swimming pool is constructed adjacent to the fieldhouse and requires moving the driving range further to the west. Improvements also include the enlargement/construction of a parking area adjacent to the fieldhouse that requires the elimination of a short hole on the G Course. A new hole was added to the course "down toward Hains Point." | | |
| 1937 | The Wake Robin Golf Club, an African-American women's golf club, is formally established. | | | |
| 1939-1940 | | The CCC makes improvements to East Potomac Park Golf Course, including the rebuilding of several tees and greens. | | |
| 1940 | | | | The Eastern Golf Association holds its amateur tournament at Langston Golf Course attracting heavyweight champion Joe Louis. |
| 1941 | | On June 29, 1941, three black players and members of the Royal Golf Club challenge the segregation of the public golf courses in the District of Columbia when they refuse to be barred from East Potomac Park Golf Course and are guarded by Park Police officers. | | |
| | Following the June 29 incident at East Potomac Park, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes issues an order which states that the federal golf courses in the District of Columbia are open to all races. | | | |
| | | African American golfers are prevented from entering the East Potomac Park fieldhouse during a rainstorm on July 13. | | |
| | The United Golf Association, with hosts the Wake Robin Club, plan to host its national tournament in Washington in August 1942. Secretary Ickes approves the tournament and authorizes the use of the Anacostia Golf Course. After complaints, the tournament is canceled with World War II cited as the reason. | | | |
| | Temporary dormitories are built on the site of the West Potomac Park Golf Course, eliminating the course. | | | |
| | | The construction of new tennis courts in East Potomac Park results in the loss of four holes on the G Course. | | |
| | | The F Course and driving range are closed in mid-December when the Army installs anti-aircraft artillery on the golf course because of the United States' entry into World War II. | | |
| 1942 | On July 26 four African American women golfers of the Wake Robin Club are harassed at the Anacostia Park course. Approximately "40 white children, adults, and soldiers using sticks, stones, clubs, and abusive language" try to drive the women from the course. Police are called to prevent a riot. | | | |
| | In the wake of the cancellation of the UGA national tournament, the Wake Robin and Royal golf clubs holds an "All-Out For Victory Tournament" at Anacostia Golf Course in August 1942. | In October a massive flood causes major damage to the golf course. The course reopens in May 1943 but promptly closes in June due to lack of transportation and other war shortages. The course remains closed until the summer of 1945. | | |
| 1944-1945 | | William S. Flynn redesigns the nine-hole F Course. The work was carried out by his firm after Flynn's death in January 1945. | | |
| 1946-1958 | | | William F. Gordon redesigns the front nine holes at Rock Creek Golf Course because of the widening and rerouting of Military Road. | |

| DATE | GENERAL | EAST POTOMAC PARK | ROCK CREEK PARK | LANGSTON |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1942-1948 | William F. Gordon is hired to design the Fort Dupont Golf Course and the course opens to the public in the spring of 1948. | | | |
| 1948 | Leoffler builds a miniature golf course at Anacostia Park. | | | Leoffler builds a miniature golf course at Langston. |
| 1948-1950 | The clubhouse at the Fort Dupont Golf Course is designed and built. | | | |
| 1949 | | East Potomac Park Miniature Golf Course is rehabilitated and the site raised approximately 18 inches due to drainage issues. The ticket booth/ball house is also rebuilt on the same site. | | |
| 1950 | | William F. Gordon develops plan for the rehabilitation of the G Course at East Potomac Park which becomes a course for beginners. | | |
| | | The United Golf Association holds its annual national tournament at East Potomac Park. | | |
| 1950-1952 | | | | A new clubhouse is built at Langston Golf Course. |
| 1954-1955 | | | | Langston Golf Course is expanded to eighteen holes, designed by William F. Gordon and David W. Gordon. |
| 1957 | An additional nine holes are built at Fort Dupont Park as a result of the imminent closure of the Anacostia Golf Course. | | | |
| 1958 | The Anacostia Freeway forces the closure and demolition of the Anacostia Golf Course. | | | |
| 1959 | | | | The United Golf Association holds its annual tournament at the Langston Golf Course for the first time. |
| 1959-1963 | | Buckeye Drive is constructed along the north side of the F Course, causing changes to two of the holes. The construction of the road coincides with the erection of the National Capital Region Headquarters in 1962-1963. | | |
| ca. 1960-1964 | | Concrete aggregate borders are added to the holes of the miniature golf course. | | |
| 1963-1964 | | | The NPS designs and builds a new clubhouse at Rock Creek Golf Course. The former clubhouse is demolished. | |
| 1964 | | The F Course is threatened by the construction of a new Washington Fisheries Center and Aquarium. Washington Post cartoonist Herblock challenges Secretary Udall to a golf match to save the course, held on July 26. Although Udall wins, he promises to save the F Course. Plans for the aquarium are never carried out. | | |
| | | | | |
| 1965 | | | | The miniature golf course is demolished after closing to the public several years prior. |
| 1971 | The National Park Service closes Fort Dupont Golf Course. | | | |
| | The National Park Service authorizes Leoffler to close the miniature golf course at Anacostia Park. | | | |
| 1974 | | | | The Langston City Golf Corporation takes over the contract of Langston Golf Course. |
| 1975 | | | Leoffler shortens several holes on the back nine into par three holes. | |
| 1975-1977 | | | | Langston Golf Course closes when the Langston City Golf Corporation runs into management problems. |
| 1976 | | | | The front nine of Langston Golf Course reopens. |
| 1977 | | | | The back nine holes of Langston Golf Course reopens. |
| 1977-1979 | | The East Potomac Park fieldhouse is renovated. Concurrently, the DC Recreation Department constructs a new bathhouse for the swimming pool, allowing Park Police to establish a substation in the west wing of the fieldhouse. | | |

| DATE | GENERAL | EAST POTOMAC PARK | ROCK CREEK PARK | LANGSTON |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1978 | | | | Lee Elder, the first black golfer to play in the Masters, and his wife Rose take over the concessions contract for Langston Golf Course. |
| 1979 | | | | Elder holds his 9th annual celebrity tournament at the Langston Golf Course, attracting Bob Hope, Calvin Peete, and others. |
| 1980 | | | | A driving range is added to the golf course, requiring the reworking several new tees, rebuilding fairways, and relocating Hole No. 10. |
| 1981 | | | | Langston Golf Course closes when the Elders run into management and contractual issues. |
| 1982 | | | Golf Course Specialists Inc. takes over the contract at Rock Creek Park and restores the back nine to its original form. | |
| 1983 | | Golf Course Specialists Inc. takes over the concessions contract at East Potomac Park. | | |
| | | The National Park Service demolishes the F Course as part of a $2 million plan to relieve traffic congestion and increase open recreation space in park. | | |
| | | | | Langston Golf Course reopens when Golf course Specialists Inc. takes over the concessions contract. |
| 1984-1985 | | After complaints and lobbying efforts by local golfers, Congress provides $500,000 to rebuild the F Course. | | |
| 1988-1992 | | | | Plans for the construction of a new stadium for the Washington Redskins threatens the golf course. Concerned citizens form the Committee to Preserve Langston. |
| 1991 | | | | Langston Golf Course is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. |
| 1994 | | A two-tiered 100-stall driving range is constructed. | | |
| 1998 | | Golf Course Specialists builds a three-hole practice course on the G Course. | | |
| 1999 | | | | Renovation begins on the back nine holes from designs by Brian Ault of Ault, Clark, and Associates. |
| ca. 2000-2001 | | | | A putt and chip area and four-hole practice holes open for junior and novice golfers, an education center opens in the clubhouse, and the First Tee program is formed. |
| 2000-2001 | | An additional parking lot is built and subsequent changes are made to the G Course. | | |
| 2009 | | | | Langston Golf Course celebrates its 70th Anniversary. |
| 2013 | | | | Langston Golf Course and the Wake Robin Golf Club are inducted in the National Black Golf Hall of Fame. |
| 2015 | | | | Royal Golf Club is inducted into the National Black Golf Hall of Fame. |

# Appendix II
# Glossary

# Glossary[1]

## A

**Amateur**
Amateurs or amateur golfers, whether playing competitively or for recreation, play golf for the challenge it presents, not as a profession of for financial gain.

**Approach**
A shot hit toward the green or toward the hole.

**Artificial feature**
A feature created by construction means.

**Artificial hazard**
Any hazard created by construction means.

**Artificial hole**
A golf hole constructed entirely, or nearly so, by shaping or earth moving efforts as opposed to being configured into a naturally occurring landscape with minimal or almost no grading effort.

## B

**Back Nine**
In an eighteen-hole course the last nine holes a golfer plays are called back nine, back side or last nine. Most of the time the round starts at hole one, so the back nine are the holes 10-18.

**Bent**
Used in British Isles to refer to clumps and areas of sea lyme grass growing with or without other varieties of links grasses intermixed.

**Biarritz green**
A biarritz, or biarritz green, is a putting green that features a deep gully, or swale, bisecting its middle. The name "biarritz" comes from the golf course in France where the first-known biarritz was constructed, Biarritz Golf Club.

**Bump and run**
A pitch shot around the green in which the player hits the ball into a slope to deaden its speed before settling on the green and rolling toward the hole.

**Bunker**
A hollow comprised of sand or grass or both that exists as an obstacle and, in some cases, a hazard.

## C

**Caddie**
A person hired to carry clubs and provide other assistance.

[1] Glossary terms were primarily taken from PGA, "Golf Glossary and Golf Terms," accessed 22 February 2017 at http://www.pga.com/golf-instruction/instruction-feature/fundamentals/golf-glossary-and-golf-terms; "Murdo Frazer Golf Course, Golf Glossary," accessed 22 February 2017 at http://murdofrazer.com/golf-glossary; Forrest Richardson & Assoc., Golf Course Architects, "Golf Course Terminology," accessed 22 February 2017 at http://www.golfgroupltd.com/golf_course_terms.html#l.

**CARRY**
The distance a ball will fly in the air, usually to carry a hazard or safely reach a target.

**CART PATH**
Improved surface on which motorized carts are intended to travel; typically gravel, asphalt or concrete.

**CHIP AND RUN**
A low-running shot played around the greens where the ball spends more time on the ground than in the air.

**CHOCOLATE DROP**
A mound with a pointed index resembling a drop of chocolate but much larger.

**COUNTRY CLUB**
Private club that only allows members and their guests to use facilities.

**COURSE FURNISHINGS**
The equipment used on a golf course for the purpose of playing the game of golf; examples are tee markers, flagsticks, flags, ball washers, hazard markers, etc.

**COURSE HANDICAP**
Represents the number of strokes needed to play at the level of a scratch golfer. A course handicap is expressed as a whole number (e.g. 12) and is determined by using charts located at the golf course where the round is to be played.

**COURSE PAR**
The score standard for a golf course comprised of the total of all of the pars assigned to each hole; the number of strokes that a scratch player may be expected to take in order to complete a round.

**CROSS-BUNKER**
Sand bunker that lies at a ninety-degree angle to the line of play, usually requiring a shot to carry it.

## D

**DIVOT**
The turf displaced when the club strikes the ball on a descending path. (Her divot flew into the pond.) It also refers to the hole left after play.

**DOG-LEG**
Descriptive of the shape of a dog's leg used to communicate the angled alignment of a golf hole.

**DRIVE**
A shot played from the tee to start a golf hole to any fairway other than that of par-3 hole.

**DRIVING RANGE**
Another term for a practice area. Also known as a golf range, practice range or learning center.

**DUFFER**
A person inexperienced at something, especially at playing golf.

## E

**EARTHWORK**
All operations that include the act of moving or shaping earth.

**Executive-length course**
Courses with an 18-hole par between 55 and 68; derived from the expectation that "executives" would be able to enjoy a round of golf within the business day and still meet their commitments.

## F

**Fairway**
Expanse of grass which serves as the connection between a tee and a green; the primary target for any shot that is not an approach shot to a green.

**Fairway bunker**
Sand bunker that has a direct impact on the play of a golf shot other than an approach to the green.

**Feature**
Any hazard, mound, depression, natural condition, area or portion of a golf hole or course which may be individually referenced.

**Fore**
Occurring before another, or coming before; warning yelled by golfers when a struck ball may endanger another golfer or spectator on a golf course.

**Forward tee**
The tee of a golf hole which is closest to the green (used now to replace "ladies tee," a mostly archaic term).

**Front nine**
The first nine holes of an 18-hole golf course; derived from the holes position on the "front" of a scorecard.

## G

**Geometric**
Term used to describe the look of many American golf course designs with their angular and hard-edged slopes and feature shaping; typically prior to 1915.

**Golden Age of Golf Course Architecture**
Began with the opening of The National Golf Links in 1911 by C.B. Macdonald and lasted until stock market crash of 1929.

**Grading**
The process of relocating dirt from one place to another with mechanized or hand tools; the result of such activity.

**Green**
Smooth grassy area at the end of a fairway especially prepared for putting and positioning the hole; all ground of a hole which is specifically prepared for putting.

**Green-side bunker**
Sand bunker that has a direct strategic or penal impact on the play of a shot to a green.

**Greenkeeper**
An older, outdated term for the course superintendent.

## H

**HAZARD**
Area of a golf course containing water, sand or other terrain which is subject to The Rules of Golf pertaining to play from such areas; also a term used loosely to describe features which are in the path of a shot (i.e., trees, hillsides, etc.).

**HEATHLAND**
An expansive area of interior land, usually wasteland that is relatively flat and poorly drained.

**HOLE LENGTH**
The distance as measured along the centerline of a given hole from any tee center point to the green center point.

**HOLLOW**
Depressed or low point of a surface; small valley or basin; usually subtle and fitting harmoniously into surrounding slopes or mounds; hollows are not always fully depressed and may drain to other areas.

**HUMP**
An abrupt rise in elevation concentrated on an isolated area.

## I

**INLAND GOLF COURSE**
Golf course not located within the vicinity of a sea or ocean.

## L

**LINKS**
A seaside golf course constructed on a natural sandy landscape that has been shaped by the wind and receding tides (from the Old English "lincas," meaning the plural of a ridge, a Scottish term to mean the undulating sandy ground near a shore); also used more generally as a synonym for a "seaside golf course" or a golf course that is configured with nine holes extending outward and nine holes returning to the clubhouse; often incorrectly used to describe any golf course. The Old Course at St. Andrews is the most famous links in the world.

**LINKSLAND**
Land located proximal to an open sea, or bay connected directly to an open sea, and possessing the characteristics of dunes or seaside vegetation that is composed of naturally rolling sand dunes formed by the wind and the ocean.

## M

**MAINTENANCE FACILITY**
The entirety of the facilities required to care for a golf course; usually a building and grounds for storage of equipment and supplies, and space for offices and maintenance of equipment.

**MAINTENANCE ROAD**
Improved road or path alignment developed only for use by maintenance personnel for their access to and around the golf course and maintenance facility.

**MASHIE**
Classic golf term for a middle iron with the loft of a 5, 6 or 7-iron.

**MOUND**
A single raised area of earth created by shaping; seldom used in reference to a natural rise in the ground, unless specifically a "natural mound."

**Municipal golf course**
Golf facility owned by local or city government and open to the public.

## N

**Natural feature**
Any individual feature or collective features of a course or hole which was not manufactured.

**Natural hazard**
Feature that existed on the site before the construction of the golf course and was incorporated into the design as a hazard; usually a body of water or natural sandy area.

## O

**Obstacle**
Any feature, tree or condition in the way of a golfer's pursuit of a target or lower score.

**Old course**
Shorter and common reference to Royal St. Andrews Golf Links Old Course.

## P

**Par**
The score an accomplished player is expected to make on a hole, either a three, four or five.

**Parkland**
Land located inland and partially wooded, but open enough to resemble a park area.

**Parkland course**
Course located on parkland or in such a setting.

**Partial paths**
Cart trails which are limited to only certain parts of a course and require use of fairways and roughs for cart traffic, such as from greens to tees.

**Penal design**
Golf course design focusing on penalizing a golfer for a poor or miss-hit shot in the form of either forced carries or fairways lined with hazards; a penal design is characterized by a lack of strategic concept other than to not miss-hit.

**Philadelphia School of Design**
Born out of a supply of talented golfers in the Philadelphia area with little or no skilled golf course architects; considered one of the more daring and creative schools; architects: Billy Bell, George Crump, William S. Flynn, A.W. Tillinghast, George Thomas, Hugh and Merion Wilson.

**Pitch-and-putt course**
A course on which all of the holes are significantly shorter than most par-3 holes and require "pitch" shots to reach a green or area defined for putting; such courses generally have holes ranging from 10 to 100 yards.

**Pitch-and-run**
A shot from around the green, usually with a middle or short iron, where the ball carries in the air for a short distance before running toward the hole.

**PITCH SHOT**
A "pitch shot" (or just "pitch") is a shot played with a highly lofted club that is designed to go a relatively short distance with a steep ascent and steep descent. Pitch shots are played into the green, typically from 40-50 yards and closer.

**POT BUNKER**
Small and round, especially deep sand bunker.

**PUTT**
Stroking a golf ball in such a manner that it rolls the entire distance it travels, usually in an attempt to achieve the final goal of hitting the ball into the hole either from the surface of a putting green or near proximity to one.

**PUTTING GREEN**
An improved surface for putting (see "green"); often used to refer to a practice green for putting, but the term can mean any green where putting takes place.

## R

**RAILROAD TIE EMBANKMENT**
A wall or slope stabilized with railroad ties which creates a formal appearance along a bunker or other slope.

**RAIN SHELTER**
A small structure provided in regions prone to rain outbursts in order to provide refuge to golfers during a round; typically located in areas accessible from multiple holes and often provided every few holes.

**REDESIGN**
A hole or course that undergoes a new design.

**RENOVATION**
Change(s) made to a golf course or hole to improve conditions.

**RESTORATION**
Careful rebuilding of a golf course, hole or area to return it to the form and character as designed and constructed originally.

**ROUGHS**
All parts of a golf course excluding greens, tees, fairways, hazards, and areas out of-bonus which, with the tees and tee banks, greens and green banks, fairways, sand traps and lakes make up the total area of the golf course.

**ROUTING**
The path of golf holes from the first tee of the first hole to the last green of the last hole of a given golf course; also used to describe the alignment of cart paths.

**RUN-UP**
A shot played purposefully to run along the ground and "up" to the green.

## S

**SAND GREEN**
Putting surface constructed of compacted sand and no turf, the surface is often oiled to keep the sand in place; sand greens are constructed where no water is available or where no means exist to finance standard turfgrass greens.

**SAND TRAP**
Sand-filled depression strategically placed as a hazard and a deterrent to making an unimpeded recovery shot; term used regionally in place of bunker (see "bunker").

**SCRATCH GOLFER**
A player who can play to a Course Handicap of zero on any and all rated golf courses.

**SHORT COURSE**
Usually a par-3 or executive-length course, but occasionally a regulation course that is shorter than average.

**STRATEGIC DESIGN**
Golf course design concept focusing on alternate routes from which a golfer may choose to proceed based on risk versus the reward; this approach also allows for players with different skills to negotiate a hole commensurate with their particular skill level.

**STOLONIZING**
The process of taking the stolon of the turfgrass plant which is a reproductive structure and spreading them over the surface of the dirt much like seeding. This type of propagation only works with grasses that are stoloniferous. The most common stoloniferous grass is the Bermuda grass and bent grass.

## T

**TARGET**
An area at which the golfer is expected to aim, land or end up; sometimes used interchangeably with "pin" or "flag."

**TARGET GOLF**
Coined in mid-1960s to define courses on which play is from area to area and the emphasis on the roll of the ball is diminished as a result of such lush conditions; also interchanged now with "target course."

**TEE BOX**
The area where players tee to start a hole.

**TEMPORARY GREEN**
A green or moderately improved area delineated for use as a green under the rules of golf that is temporary in play while the regular green is repaired or altered.

**TILE DRAINAGE**
Drainage by means of a series of tile lines laid at a specific depth and grade.

**TREE LINE**
The edge of a group of trees that defines a wooded area, especially so after clearing for a fairway or following growth of planted trees to maturity.

**TREE LINED**
A fairway lined with dense trees.

**TURFGRASS**
Grass specifically developed to serve as a playing surface for a recreational activity or for a residential or commercial law.

## V

**VARIETY**
The quality or state of having different forms or types of views, strategies and experiences on a course.

## W

**WELL-TRAPPED**
Hole, green or fairway that has many bunkers or bunkers which are especially well place.

**WOODLANDS**
Land covered with trees and shrubs (woody vegetation); usually a forest, but also plantations, farmland and other lands on which woody vegetation is established and maintained for any purpose.

## Y

**YARDAGE**
Length of a golf hole or point to point measurement on a golf course or golf facility.

# Appendix III: Persons Significant to the Development of the Golf Courses

# Persons Significant to the Development of the Golf Courses

## BRIAN T. AULT (1947– )

Brian T. Ault earned an associate degree in civil engineering and in 1973 joined his father's (Edmund B. Ault) firm as an associate architect. Under his father's guidance, Brian gained experience in all aspects of golf course construction including planning, routing, hydrology, shaping, and drainage. It was not until 1980 that Brian took his first role as lead architect, a redesign of the Sleepy Hollow Golf Course in West Virginia. Four years later he was the lead for his first new project, the Lakeview Inn and Country Club in Morgantown, West Virginia. Along with Thomas E. Clark, Brian Ault became a partner in his father's firm in 1984 and took over the business after Edmund's death in 1989. Over more than three decades, Brian has served as the project architect for hundreds of projects, many of which have received awards and recognition though *Golf Digest's* rankings, including the Wyncote Golf Club in Oxford, Pennsylvania.[1] Ault and Clark continue to run the firm as co-principals of Ault, Clark, & Associates.[2]

## EDMUND B. AULT (1908–1989)

A Washington native, Edmund B. Ault received an engineering degree from the Columbia (Maryland) Institute of Technology. A scratch golfer, Ault played in the US Amateur Championship on several occasions. He first entered the field of golf architecture in 1946 when he began spending weekends with and learning the principles of golf course construction from noted golf architect Alex Findley. For the next decade, Ault worked as a golf course consultant before partnering with Delaware club professional Alfred Jamison in 1956. After several years Ault worked on more and more solo projects and by 1962, Jamison had almost entirely stopped contributing to designs.[3]

Ault was a pioneer in designing economical municipal and public golf courses. He believed that "Greens should be of adequate size and contoured in a subtle manner so that a good putt is a performance of skill not luck. The approach to the green should be sufficiently trapped to present some challenge, but seldom should be entirely blocked off."[4] He also used bunkers sparingly and incorporated water hazards only if they were purposeful. Ault avoided extensive sculpting of the land both because of cost and because he believed it made the course less naturalistic. Conscious of costs, particularly at a time when multimillion dollar golf courses were unheard of, Ault's jobs typically came from municipalities that wanted to build inexpensive courses with low green fees.[5] He once estimated that he had designed or remodeled one quarter of the courses in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs around Washington, DC.[6] After his death in 1989, Ault's son Brian, along with Thomas E. Clark, continued the firm as Ault, Clark & Associates, which is still in existence today.[7]

1 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 194; "Leaving Their Mark," *Washington Golf Monthly* (September 2004): 65-69; Ault, Clark, and Associates, "Brian T. Ault," accessed 7 October 2016, http://www.acagolf.com/acagolf/pages/ResumeBA2.html.

2 Ault, Clark & Associates, "About Ault, Clark & Associates, LTD," accessed 24 February 2017, http://www.acagolf.com/acagolf/pages/About%20Ault%20Clark2.html.

3 "Leaving Their Mark," *Washington Golf Monthly* (September 2004): 65-69; Ault, Clark, and Associates, "Brian T. Ault," accessed 7 October 2016, *http://www.acagolf.com/acagolf/pages/ResumeBA2.html*.

4 "Edmund B. Ault," *SportsTurf*, 5 no. 9 (September 1989): 23

5 "Leaving Their Mark," *Washington Golf Monthly* (September 2004): 65-69; Ault, Clark, and Associates, "Brian T. Ault," accessed 7 October 2016, http://www.acagolf.com/acagolf/pages/ResumeBA2.html.

6 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 194.

7 Ault, Clark & Associates, "About Ault, Clark & Associates, LTD," accessed 24 February 2017, http://www.acagolf.com/acagolf/pages/

## WILLIAM S. FLYNN (1890-1945)

William S. Flynn was born and raised in Milton, Massachusetts, on a farm that was conveniently located across a meadow and a railroad from a golf course. At an early age, Flynn exuded a natural talent for athletics and a love for the outdoors. He learned the game of golf as a caddy and in high school became a scratch golfer while playing with and competing against Francis Ouimet, a boyhood friend of Flynn's and later winner of the 1913 US Open. In addition to being the captain of the Milton High School golf team, Flynn also served as the captain of the football and basketball teams and was offered an academic and football scholarship to Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, which he declined.

Around 1910 Flynn was hired to aid architect Hugh Irvine Wilson in the construction of the east course at the Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, outside of Philadelphia.[8] After the completion of the course, Flynn stayed on at Merion as the course's greenkeeper. He also found steady work laying out new courses and soon resigned his position at Merion to pursue a career as a golf course architect. Although Wilson and Flynn contemplated forming a design partnership, Wilson's failing health and premature death in 1925 at the age of 45 prevented the venture. During the 15 years or so that they worked together, Flynn and Wilson brought innovative changes to American golf course architecture by incorporating strategy and a natural aesthetic into golf course design and as two of the leading experts in the United States on turf grasses.[9]

After World War I Flynn established a partnership with Howard C. Toomey, a civil engineer who had also played a role in the construction on the East Course at the Merion Golf Club. Toomey handled bookkeeping and the construction aspects while Flynn took care of the designs of the golf courses. By offering both design and construction, Toomey and Flynn had a competitive advantage over other firms. Several prominent golf course architects worked for the Toomey and Flynn firm as construction foremen before branching out on their own. These architects include Robert Lawrence, Dick Wilson, and William F. Gordon, who was later hired by Leoffler to make improvements to the East Potomac Park and other municipal golf courses in Washington, DC.[10]

By the time of his untimely death in 1945 at the age of 54, Flynn had designed more than 35 courses and remodeled or expanded around 30 more. The climax and masterpiece of his career is Flynn's 1929-1931 redesign of the Shinnecock Hills Golf Country Club on Long Island, New York, praised for its beautiful routing and use of natural terrain and the site of several USGA tournaments, including the 1986 and 1998 US Opens. [11]

## DAVID W. GORDON (1922–2017)

David W. Gordon served as a pilot with the US Army Air Force during World War II and later graduated from Penn State University with a B.S. in Agronomy. From 1947 until 1952 David worked for his father as a construction superintendent. Beginning in 1952, David became a partner in his father's firm and was involved in all aspects of the business. David continued to maintain the practice after his father's death in 1974 until he retired in the mid-1980s.

About%20Ault%20Clark2.html.

8 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 67-70.

9 Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 39; Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 262.

10 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 71; Golf Club Atlas, Feature Interview with Wayne Morrison, December 2009, accessed online 15 September 2016 at http://golfclubatlas.com/feature-interview/wayne-morrison-december-2009/.

11 Alister MacKenzie Foundation, "Other Golden Age Architects," accessed online 26 July 2016 at http://alistermackenziefoundation.org/about/his-contemporaries/.

Along with his father William F. Gordon, David Gordon designed and redesigned hundreds of golf courses, primarily on the East Coast.[12]

### WILLIAM F. GORDON (1893-1973)

Born in Rhode Island, William Freeland Gordon started his career as a salesman at the Peterson Seed Company and joined the New York office of Carter's Tested Seed Company in 1920 as its superintendent of its golf course construction division. In this capacity Gordon constructed courses for well-known golf architects such as Willie Park, Jr., Donald Ross, and Devereux Emmet. In 1923 Gordon joined the firm of Toomey and Flynn as a construction foreman and remained at the firm until 1943.[13] As stated by Geoffrey S. Cornish and Ronald E. Whitten in *The Architects of Golf*, "probably no other architect in history received such broad practical experience before setting up his own practice, nor was any more imbued with the history of the art" as William F. Gordon.[14]

After leaving Toomey and Flynn, Gordon formed his own company that was involved in seeding military installations during World War II. He later constructed courses for golf architects Donald Ross and J.B. McGovern from 1945 until 1950.[15] Beginning in 1950 and until his death in 1973, Gordon designed and built courses under his firm William F. Gordon Co. and most of his layouts built after 1953 were completed in collaboration with his son David.[16]

After Flynn's death in 1945, William Gordon served as the architect for many of S.G. Leoffler's improvement and expansion projects for the public golf courses in the District of Columbia. Between 1946 and 1956, Gordon redesigned the front nine holes at Rock Creek (1946), designed 18 holes at Fort Dupont (1948, 1957), redesigned the G Course at East Potomac Park (1950), redesigned the F Course at East Potomac Park (1956), and designed the additional nine holes at Langston Golf Course (1954).

Gordon was also greatly involved in the founding of several golf organizations. As an advocate for public golf, Gordon started the Pennsylvania Golfers Association and served as the organization's first president from 1936 to 1940. He also served as the president of the Philadelphia Public Golfers Association in 1940. In 1947 Gordon, along with Donald Ross, Robert Trent Jones Sr., Robert White, and J.B. McGovern, was one of the founding members of the Society of Golf Course Architects and served as its president in 1953 and 1967. Gordon continued to design and construct courses until he retired in 1973. Gordon died at his home in Abington, Pennsylvania in 1974.[17]

### JOHN HANS GRAHAM (1912-1977)

Born in Vienna, Austria, John Hans Graham received his undergraduate degree in architecture and engineering from the University of Prague in 1937. Like many European architects such as Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Graham immigrated to the United States in the years leading up to World War II. Graham

12 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 275.
13 Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 599.
14 Cornish Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 123.
15 American Society of Golf Course Architects, "About ASGCA," accessed online 3 June 2016 at http://www.asgca.org/about-asgca; Medford Village Country Club, "Course Designer," accessed online 7 September 2016 at https://www.medfordvillage.com/Golf/Course-Overview/Course-Designer.aspx.
16 Morrison and Paul, *The Nature Faker*, 599; Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 276; Biography of William F. Gordon, accessed online 6 June 2016 at http://kingcrest.com/rivercup/wgordon.html-ssi.
17 Cornish and Whitten, *The Architects of Golf*, 276; Biography of William F. Gordon, accessed online 6 June 2016 at http://kingcrest.com/rivercup/wgordon.html-ssi.

completed his postgraduate degree at the University of Illinois in 1943 and worked for Washington, DC, architects Leon Chatelain, Jr., Louis Justement, and Frank Grad & Sons before starting his own firm in 1948. By the time he took on the Rock Creek clubhouse project, Graham was known for his Modern and International-style buildings and had completed several notable projects, including the Flamingo Apartments (Philadelphia, 1951) and the Park Towne Place (Philadelphia, 1957-1959), modeled on Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation, and the Wheaton Co-op Shopping Center (Maryland, 1953-1954) that he designed in association with architect Louis Kahn. Graham died in 1977 at the age of 65 [18]

### WALTER S. HARBAN (1857-1938)

Dr. Walter S. Harban moved to Washington, DC, in the 1870s and soon became one of the city's most prominent dentists, serving as the personal dentist of President Theodore Roosevelt. An avid sportsman, Harban aided in the organization of the Columbia Country Club and in the initial design of its course with architect Herbert Barker. Harban retired from dentistry in 1909 and from 1915 until 1919 he served as a member of the executive committee of the United States Golf Association (USGA) and as Vice President of the association from 1917 to 1919. In addition to his involvement at the Columbia Country Club, Harban also played a role in the organization of the Burning Tree Golf Club and served on its green committee.[19] Harban was responsible for bringing Walter J. Travis to the Columbia Country Club in 1915 and recommended him to redesign and make improvements the course. Later, in 1917, Harban recommended Travis to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds for the design of the eighteen-hole course at East Potomac Park.[20]

Harban's biggest contributions to the game of golf was through his work on the development of vegetative plantings of bent grass on golf courses, the establishment of the Green Section of the USGA, and the control of turf diseases and other turf maintenance problems. Along with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) scientists Dr. Charles Vancouver Piper and Dr. Russell A. Oakley, Harban developed and tested the practicality of planting strains of creeping bent grass by stolonizing, a form of vegetative propagation that is commonly used in place of seeding for grass varieties that produce poor quality seed or insufficient amounts of seed. Harban's interest in the stolon method was a result of the blockade of German shipping during World War I and the expected shortage of European bent grass seeds, which at that time were believed to be the only grasses suitable for putting greens in the United States. USDA scientists conducted their experiments at the Arlington Turf Garden, part of the USDA's Arlington Experimental Farm in Arlington, Virginia. The process was also tested at East Potomac Park and the Columbia Golf Club and Dr. Harban is often credited for developing the stolon method of planting bent grasses on golf course greens.[21] A tribute in *Golfdom* in 1938 after his death commended Harban for his dedication to the sport of golf and said, "His golf was more than a game for his enjoyment, for it included years of service to his fellow club members as well as to

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18 George S. Koyl, ed., American Architects Directory (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1955), 205; "John H. Graham, 65, of Architectural Firm," *Washington Post,* 15 May 1977:22; New York Social Diary, "Palm Beach Social Diary: Artful Exposures," 5 April 2017, accessed at http://www.newyorksocialdiary.com/across-the-nationacross-the-world/2017/palm-beach-social-diary-artful-exposures.

19 John Monteith Jr., "Death of Walter Harban Great Loss to Greenkeeping," *Golfdom* 12 no. 4 (April 1938):23-25; USDA, "Charles Vancouver Piper (1867-1926)," accessed online at http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/Piper.pdf USDA, "Arlington Turf Garden," accessed online at http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/Arlington.pdf; Labbance, *The Old Man*, 181.

20 Labbance, *The Old Man*, 181.

21 Monteith, "Death of Walter Harban Great Loss to Greenkeeping," 23-25; USDA, "Charles Vancouver Piper (1867-1926)," accessed online at http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/Piper.pdf; USDA, "Arlington Turf Garden," accessed online at http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/Arlington.pdf; Labbance, *The Old Man*, 181.

hundreds and thousands of players to him unknown. His was a democratic golf, reminding one of some of the traditions of the game."[22]

### SEVERINE G. LEOFFLER (1887-1977)

Severine G. Leoffler was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1887. In 1908 Leoffler left Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he worked for Westinghouse, and moved to Washington, DC, where he started an ice cream business selling the first roller ice cream cones in the city. Leoffler sold his ice cream business at a profit and began selling boxed lunches with two sandwiches, a piece of fruit, and a freshly baked pastry for 10 cents. He later sold the business for $100,000 and the man who bought the business went bankrupt in six months.[23]

Leoffler restarted his lunch business during World War I, selling "Leoffler's Liberty Lunches" to the influx of government workers for 20 cents and reportedly often sold 20,000 lunches daily. Although successful, he was also often overly ambitious. Leoffler also tried to make a business selling square donuts and spent a fortune on special equipment. The risk did not pay off—Washingtonians preferred round donuts and the venture bankrupted him. After the golf course opened at East Potomac Park in 1920, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds solicited a concessionaire that would manage the food concessions and take over the operation of the golf course.[24] Leoffler won the contract. First under the name the Park Amusement Company and later the S. G. Leoffler Operating Company and the S. G. Leoffler Co., the company continued to manage the East Potomac Park Golf Course until 1983. In addition, Leoffler managed the Rock Creek Golf Course (1926-1982), the Langston Golf Course (1939-1974), the West Potomac Park Golf Course (1921-1941), Anacostia Golf Course (1939-1958), and the Fort Dupont Golf Course (1948-1971).

In addition to the golf courses in Washington, DC, Leoffler also once owned the Beaver Dam Country Club (later the Prince Georges Country Club) in Landover, Maryland, the Annapolis Roads Club (later the Annapolis Country Club), and the Southern Manor Golf Club in Boca Raton, Florida.[25] He also brought the Washington Eagles, the city's first hockey team, to Washington, DC, in 1939 and constructed, along with a partner, Riverside Stadium, an open-air arena in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood. Despite managing more than nine golf courses over his lifetime, at the time of his death in 1977 at the age of 89, Leoffler never played a round of golf.[26]

### IRVING WHITTIER PAYNE (1883–1950)

Irving Whittier Payne was a native of Farmington, New York, and received a degree in landscape architecture from the University of Michigan in 1911. He later received a graduate degree from the Harvard University School of Landscape architecture in 1917, where he likely studied under Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and also completed post-graduate studies at Cornell University. Payne began working as a landscape architect for the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds in September 1918 and continued to work in this capacity for its predecessor agencies—the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital and National Capital Parks of the National Park Service—until his

22 Monteith, "Death of Walter Harban Great Loss to Greenkeeping," 25.
23 "Severine G. Leoffler: Never Stayed Down Long," *Washington Post,* 24 June 1977:E6.
24 Ibid.
25 "East Potomac Play Down," *Washington Post,* 2 November 1975:29; "Leoffler Continues to Hunt for Gold on District Links, Georgia Mine," *Washington Post,* 3 March 1968:D4.
26 "Severine G. Leoffler: Never Stayed Down Long," *Washington Post,* 24 June 1977:E6.

death in July 1950.[27] During his 32 years as landscape architect, Payne played a leading role in the development of the District of Columbia and was involved in beautifying many of the iconic landscapes of the city including the Lincoln Memorial, Arlington Memorial Bridge, Franklin and Lafayette Squares, Scott and Thomas Circles, and Rock Creek Park.[28]

### HORACE W. PEASLEE JR. (1884–1959)

Over his career of more than 50 years in Washington, DC, Horace Peaslee made significant contributions in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, and historic preservation that fundamentally shaped the appearance and development of Washington, DC. Peaslee received his Bachelor's degree in architecture with a minor in landscape architecture from Cornell University in 1910. In 1911 Peaslee came to Washington, DC, following his former mentor and professor at Cornell George Burnap and took a position as landscape architect in the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. When Burnap left the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds in 1917 to return to private practice, Peaslee replaced Burnap as architect in charge of design and remained in this position for the next 18 years. In his positions as landscape architect and architect, Peaslee designed the fieldhouse at East Potomac Park Golf Course and many other notable projects in the District of Columbia including Meridian Hill Park "the crowning achievement of Peaslee's career and one of the country's most artistically notable urban parks."[29]

In addition to his responsibilities at the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, Peaslee was also actively involved in several professional and civic affairs that had a great impact on the built environment in Washington, DC. Concurrently with his position at the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, Peaslee operated his own private practice, which he maintained for the next 40 years. Peaslee also helped organize the Committee of 100 on the Federal City in 1921, a local citizen's group concerned with planning, parks, and design. The following year Peaslee established the Architects Advisory Committee (AAC) to review the design of buildings for building permit applicants. Operating for 10 years, the AAC became a model for similar design review bodies in other cities. In 1936 Peaslee was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and was noted for "a distinguished record in the interest of civil and national government, years of effort for the institute's welfare, often at personal sacrifice."[30]

### WALTER J. TRAVIS (1862-1927)

Born in 1862 in the town Maldon, Victoria, Australia, Walter J. Travis enjoyed writing and outdoor sports at a young age. Not wanting to work in the local mines where his father was killed in a mining accident in 1880, Travis joined McLean Brothers and Rigg, ironmongery merchants headquartered in Melbourne, in the early 1880s. After rising up through the company's ranks, Travis took a job in 1885 at the age of 23 to head the company's new outpost in New York City.[31]

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27 "Irving Payne Dies; National Park Architect," *Washington Post,* 11 July 1950:B2; National Park Service, *Historic American Buildings Survey, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway,* HABS No. DC-697 (Washington, DC: National Park Service 1992), 80, accessed online at http://lcweb2.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/dc/dc0800/dc0806/data/dc0806data.pdf.

28 "Irving W. Payne Dies; Helped to Beautify City as Landscaper," *Washington Evening Star,* 11 July 1950:A12.

29 Kim Williams, *Historic Preservation Review Board Historic Landmark Case No. 15-15*, 23 July 2015, http://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/publication/attachments/Historic%20Landmark%20Nomination%203020%20Albemarle%20Street%20NW%20%20Staff%20Report%20Case%2015%2014.pdf.

30 Kim Williams, *Historic Preservation Review Board Historic Landmark Case No. 15-15*, 23 July 2015, http://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/publication/attachments/Historic%20Landmark%20Nomination%203020%20Albemarle%20Street%20NW%20%20Staff%20Report%20Case%2015%2014.pdf; Architrave, P.C. Architects, *Meridian Hill Park Cultural Landscape Report*, Volume I (Washington, DC: National Park Service 2001), A2-7, A2-8.

31 Labbance, *The Old Man*, 4-8.

Travis took up golf in 1896 at the age of 34 when the Niantic Social Club near his home in Flushing, New York, started a golf club. He won his first tournament a month later. By 1898 Travis had improved his golfing skills to qualify for match play at the prestigious Shinnecock Hills Open Tournament, where he lost in the championship match to Findlay Douglass, one of the top American golfers at that time. Travis went on to win the US Amateur Championship in 1900, 1901, and 1903, the Metropolitan Golf Association Championship in 1900, 1902, 1909, and 1915, and placed second in the US Open Tournament in 1902.[32]

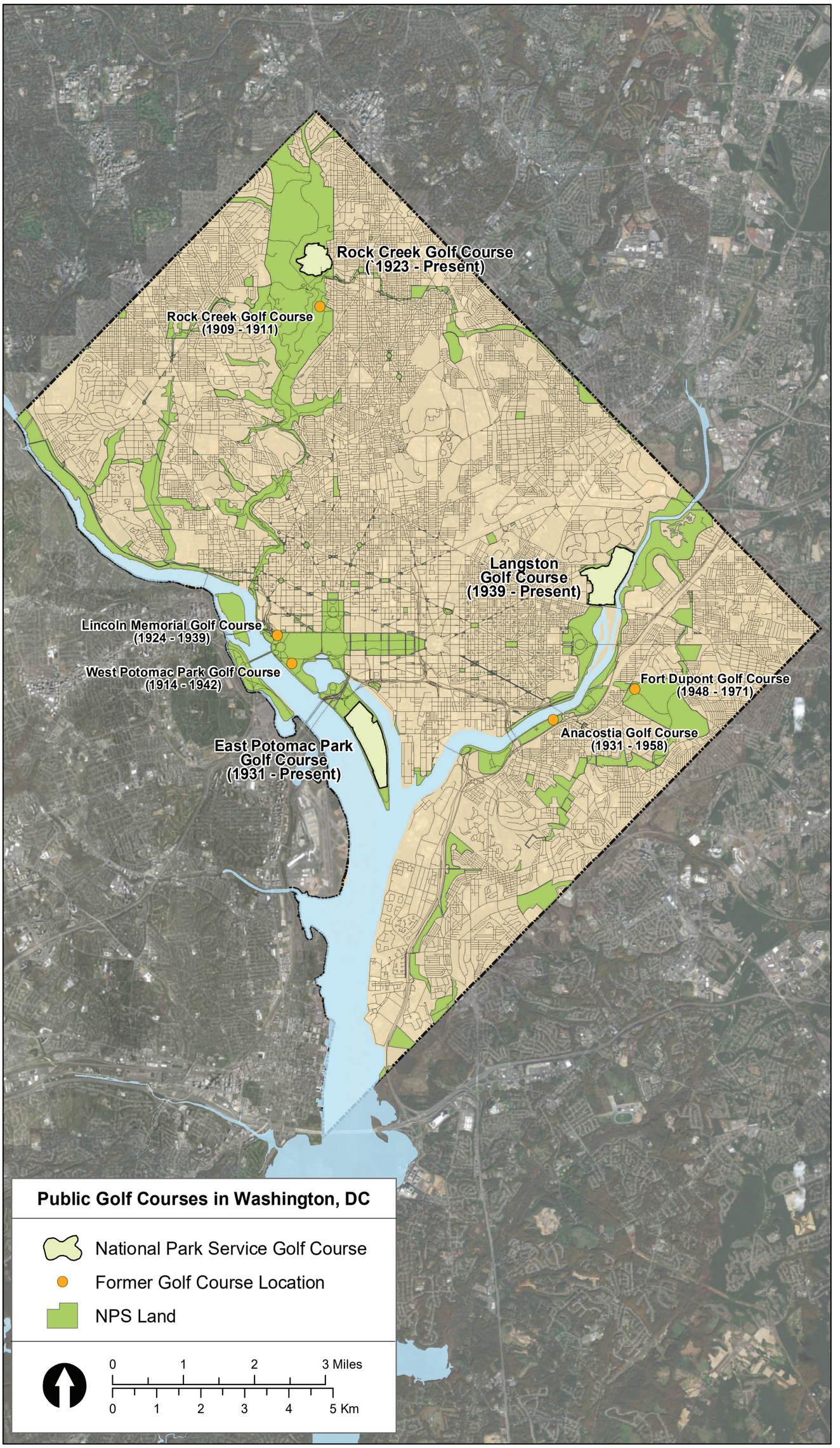
The highest point of Travis's career was his win at the 1904 British Amateur Championship, the first victory by an American in a British national championship. Despite a less then welcoming reception at the tournament, the British press and leading players praised Travis's performance after his win. The *New York Times* reported that "No international sporting event for a long time has created the widespread interest that has been exited by Travis's victory." The *Times* went on to say that "The great point of interest, however, to every man and woman who wields a golf club is that an American … has met the best golfers that England and Scotland can muster on their own ground and beaten them at their own game."[33]

His victories in the 1900 and 1901 national amateur championships provided Travis legitimacy as an author and in 1900 Harper & Brothers published his first book, entitled *Practical Golf*. Travis wrote the book with the aim "to diffuse some practical knowledge of the 'why and wherefore' of Golf, in order to better assist in working a general improvement of play" and dedicated the book to "all lovers of the game."[34] In 1908 Travis founded the magazine *American Golfer* and under his leadership as editor, the magazine became "one of the most respected and influential golf magazines of its time."[35] After Travis sold the magazine in 1920, Travis continued to write and publish throughout the early 1920s.

Travis's experience as a golf architect began three years into his amateur golf career when he collaborated with Scottish golf architect John Duncan Dunn on the layout of the golf course at the Ekwanok Country Club in Manchester, Vermont. Travis was also greatly influenced by his extended travels in the United Kingdom in 1900-1901 and later said "To visit the principal links in England and Scotland is a liberal education in itself. There you have golf – Golf in its best and highest form."[36] After retiring from amateur golf in 1915 and severing his ties with *American Golfer* in 1920, Travis devoted his time to golf architecture. At the time of his death in 1927, Travis had designed or redesigned around 50 known golf courses, primarily in the eastern United States.[37]

32 Walter J. Travis Society, Golfer, accessed 15 February 2017 at https://travissociety.com/who-was-travis/golfer/.
33 Quoted in Kirsh, *Golf in America*, 44.
34 Walter J. Travis, *Practical Golf* (New York: Harper & Brothers 1901).
35 Walter J. Travis Society, "Travis the Writer, Journalist and Publisher," accessed 22 February 2017 at https://travissociety.com/who-was-travis/journalistpublisher/.
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# Appendix IV:
# Golf Course Maps




**Map 5.** Public Golf Courses in Washington, DC, date from 1909 through the present.

Source: ArcGIS World Imagery 2016

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 26 April 2018




Source: 1927 Orthophoto - Library of Congress; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 19 January 2018

**Map 6.** East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1923 conditions (A-C Course direction of play).




Source: 1927 Orthophoto - Library of Congress; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 19 January 2018

**Map 7.** East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1923 conditions (B-D Course direction of play).




Source: 1927 Orthophoto - Library of Congress; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 19 January 2018

**Map 8.** East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1927 conditions (A-C-E Course direction of play).




Source: 1927 Orthophoto - Library of Congress; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 19 January 2018

**Map 9.** East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1927 conditions (B-D-F Course direction of play).




Source: 1927 Orthophoto - Library of Congress; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 19 January 2018

**Map 10.** East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1931 conditions (B-D-F-G Course direction of play).




Source: 1949 Orthophoto - USGS; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 19 January 2018

**Map 11.** East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1941 conditions (B-D-F-G Course direction of play).




Source: 1949 Orthophoto - USGS; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 19 January 2018

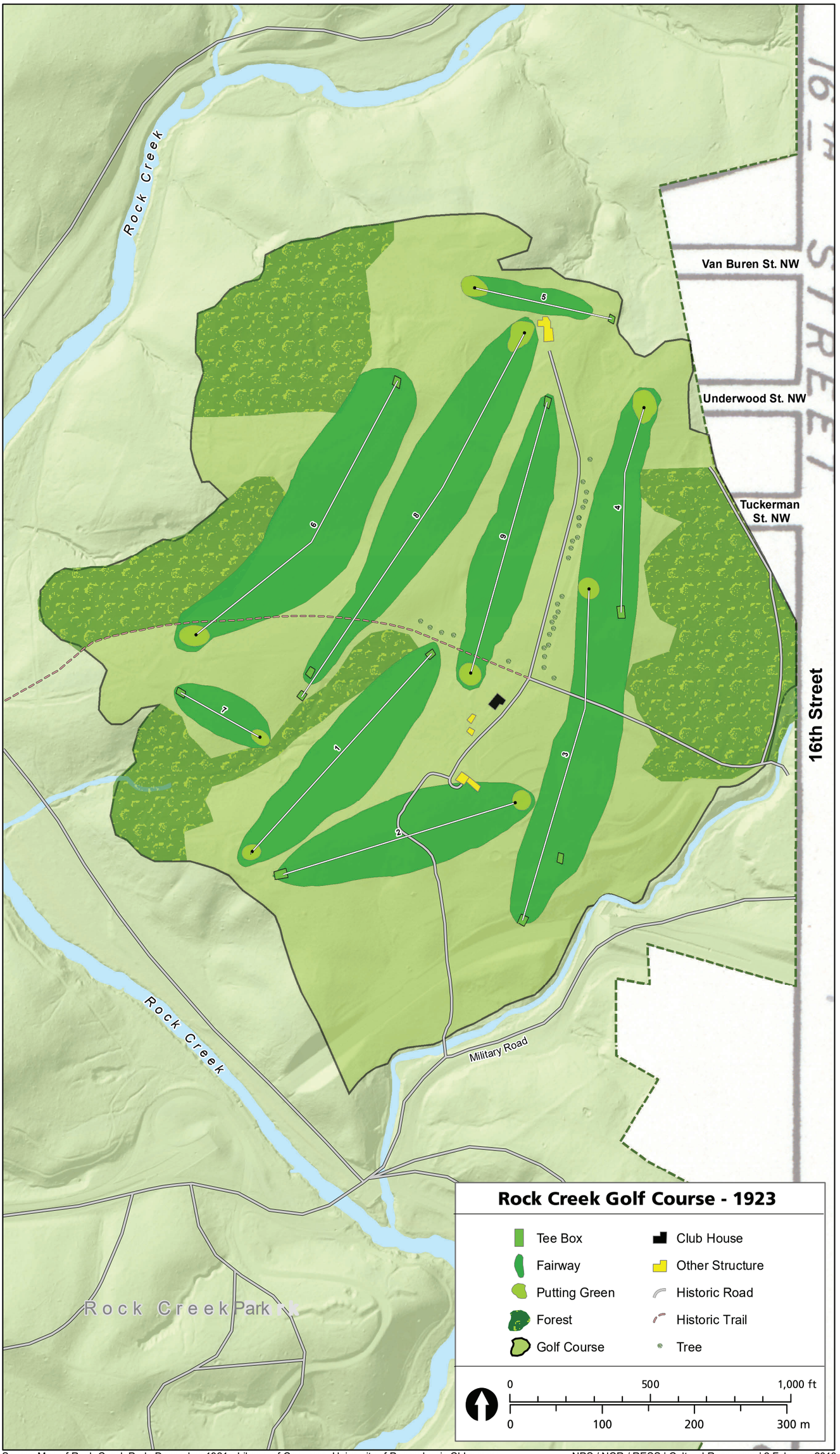
**Map 12.** East Potomac Park Golf Course, 1955 conditions (B-D-F-G Course direction of play).




Source: ArcGIS World Imagery 2016; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 19 January 2018

**Map 13.** East Potomac Park Golf Course, 2016 conditions.




Source: Map of Rock Creek Park, December 1921 - Library of Congress; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 2 February 2018

**Map 14.** Rock Creek Golf Course, 1923 conditions.




Source: Map of Rock Creek Park, December 1927 - Library of Congress; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 2 February 2018

**Map 15.** Rock Creek Golf Course, 1927 conditions.




Source: 2018 Imagery - ESRI/Digital Globe; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 2 February 2018

**Map 16.** Rock Creek Golf Course, 1964 conditions.




Source: 2018 Imagery - ESRI/Digital Globe; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 2 February 2018

**Map 17.** Rock Creek Golf Course, 2016 conditions.




Source: 1949 Imagery - USGS; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 12 February 2018

**Map 18.** Langston Golf Course, 1949 conditions.




Source: 1957 Imagery - USGS; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 12 February 2018

**Map 19.** Langston Golf Course, 1957 conditions.




Source: 2018 Imagery - ESRI/Digital Globe; University of Pennsylvania CLI survey

NPS / NCR / RESS | Cultural Resources | 12 February 2018

**Map 20.** Langston Golf Course, 2016 conditions.

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