

## EARLY HISTORY OF PRINCETON GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

Soon after World War I, (in the early twenties) when Dawson Springs was still recognized as a recreational and health center, the owners of the New Century Hotel, developed a golf course on the East edge of Dawson Springs on the North side of what is now U.S. Highway 62. A small farm house (torn down many years ago) near the entrance of a sub-division which has been developed in recent years (was Highway 109 until about a year ago when a new entrance of 109 was built to connect with U.S. 62) served as a residence for the grounds keeper and club house. The street in this sub-division is in the area of what was fairway number 1.

U.S. 62 between Princeton and Dawson Springs was graded and rocked in the Spring and Summer of 1928, reducing the driving time between the two cities from an hour to about twenty minutes. At that time a few people from Princeton, most of whom had never been on a golf course, decided to try their skill at the game and joined the club. There was no membership fee, dues were about \$25.00 per year.

About this time the New Century Hotel went into bankruptcy, so the total support of this Club was borne by the membership.

During the next two or three years, the Princeton membership in this Club grew to some 30 to 35. A golf course at the Veterans Hospital was made available to residents of Dawson Springs, so they were not too interested in developing a private club. Therefore, it appeared the primary support must come from interested people of Princeton.

At this time there had been enough interest generated in golf by Princeton people to enter the talking stage, regarding organization and building of a golf course. The primary interest was in golf, because of our very limited potential for funds, little consideration was given to anything else.

Marshall P. Eldred, then a resident of Princeton, a young attorney just out of law school at Ann Arbor, Michigan became acquainted with Perry Maxwell, a golf architect who was building a course at Ann Arbor when he was a student. He discovered that Mr. Maxwell was born in Princeton and lived here until he was two years of age. Evidently, Mr. Eldred mentioned about there being some interest in golf at Princeton, so Mr. Maxwell volunteered his services to lay out the course when we got ready to build.

By the Fall of 1930, there appeared to be sufficient interest in golf to make the effort to organize a Club in Princeton.

The leadership in the organization of the Club was shared by a number of people, however, the principal ones were Marshall Eldred, now a Louisville resident, the late Clifton Hollowell, a druggist and John Graham, then County Agent of Caldwell County, Hugh Cherry and Monroe Poole, J.B. Lester.

Sixty-five acres of land, owned by Gayle Pettit, located on the Eddyville Road, was available for \$6,500.00. It would be necessary to raise or borrow the money for the purchase of the land, building of the greens, fertilizer, seed, etc., and to run a water line from the city to the property, and over the course.

It was decided to go ahead in this venture, if we could get 100 members at \$50.00 as charter members. The membership then to immediately go to \$100.00. The one hundred members and perhaps a few more were secured in the latter part of 1930 and January 1931. We agreed to purchase the land and contacted Mr. Maxwell, the golf architect. He came to Princeton in February and the location of the greens were established. We contracted with him for one of his men experienced in building golf courses, to supervise the construction of the greens. We paid him \$80.00 per week, considered high wages then.

Financing this venture presented quite a problem, as it was during the beginning of the depression, there was very little money to loan. For the land we accepted the liability of an existing mortgage. We used our membership fees for building the greens, and our first year's dues, (\$40.00) for labor, fertilizer, seed, etc., to prepare the fairways, and for necessary maintenance, which was held to the minimum.