



## CHAPTER 3

# BONNIE SCOTLAND

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT NO GOLFER'S EDUCATION IS COMPLETE without a trip to the birthplace of the ancient game: St. Andrews, Scotland. And so it is that the Dyes complete their "education" with a trip overseas as Pete vies for the 1963 British Amateur

Championship crown, at the Old Course in St. Andrews.

The week goes well for Pete and Alice, both in and out of competition. A quick study of the quirks involved with links golf, Pete advances to match play competition after successfully negotiating

*Pete and Alice's trip to Scotland in 1963 exposes them to a range of unusual course features and design quirks, such as railroad tie buttressing at Prestwick . . .*



a 36-hole qualifier. He emerges victorious in his first two matches, advancing to the third round before falling. In all, Pete plays seven rounds—two in practice, plus five in competition—over the fabled Old Course.

Despite an unflattering initial reaction to the course's curious routings, hazards, and contours (he describes it as a "goat ranch" to one Scottish reporter), Pete quickly sees the Old Course for the masterpiece it is.

"The rumpled fairways, the semi-blind shots—I saw things I'd never seen in the United States," recalls Pete. "That's where those ideas started for me."

... rumpled fairways at Western Gables (below left), ... and huge greens, like the 18th at the Old Course in St. Andrews (below right).



From the standpoint of their design business, Pete and Alice take full advantage of their time in Scotland, playing more than 30 courses, including: Turnberry, Prestwick, Troon, Western Gables, Carnoustie, Muirfield, Gullane, North Berwick, Nairn and Royal Dornoch, among others. In *Bury Me in a Pot Bunker*, Pete describes the experience:

Thirsty for new concepts, Alice and I studied and photographed as we played and began a library of ideas and concepts for future designs.

One such future design begins to take shape even before their



trip to Scotland. As accomplished competitive golfers, Pete and Alice yearn for a true “golfers club” in their hometown on which to play and compete. They envision a testing championship layout resplendent with new ideas they garner from their many travels, a membership of true lovers of the game, with a core of high level amateur players (men and women alike), and a modest clubhouse (with no swimming pool or tennis courts). Together, these simple features would say to all, “This is a club for golfers.”

Alice explains: “Although our courses in the area were nice—Meridian Hills, CCI, Hillcrest, and Highland—they weren’t what we considered “championship,” like what we had seen elsewhere in the world. And as far as good players, the Speedway golf course had the most; for private clubs, it was CCI. Pete wanted good players and a top-notch course—something really special. But he also had a whole land plan in mind.”

Pete envisions “just a club” with a small golfing membership—and a layout much different from the many he and Alice play in competition.

*“When we first got in the design business, we went up to Chicago to study the courses, because those were the best we knew of. I had played a lot of tournaments there and people considered them the real greats. But to my eye they all looked the same—all of them green, green, green—carefully manicured . . . tree-lined—and every single green had the same back-to-front slope. I remember thinking: ‘This is not what I want to build.’”*



Instead, Pete has a different mental picture: “I had Camargo in mind, mainly because of the greens. They were just so dramatic and different than anything I’d seen in Chicago.”

Camargo is the fabled circa-1920 club—a dramatic Seth Raynor design whose wide fairways and undulating greens wind their way through gentle hills of an affluent Cincinnati suburb. Raynor, non-golfer and surveying engineer by trade, learned his craft as protégé to Scotsman C.B. Macdonald—winner of the first U.S. Amateur Championship (1895), creator of the country’s first 18-hole course (Chicago Golf Club), and of the country’s first pur-

*The par three 11th at Seth Raynor’s Camargo Club*

posefully designed strategic golf course: The National Golf Links of America (1911). It is a layout in which he recreated the flavor of many great holes of his native Scotland. In his own words, Macdonald conceived it to be, “the ideal golf course.”

Americans were eager to play a game already wildly popular across the pond. Yet prior to the “National,” design novices, usually accomplished amateur and professional players—transplants from the British Isles—created the country’s first crude “jigsaw puzzle” layouts. The method they used was surprisingly simple compared with today: first, find/acquire a sizable piece of vacant land, and second, hire one of the well-known Brits (William H. Tucker, Herbert Strong, H.J. Tweedie, etc.), or Scotsmen (Tom Bendelow, Willie Dunn, Jr., brothers Willie Jr. and Mungo Park, etc.) to stake out locations for tees and greens. These “designers” happily obliged (for a fee), sometimes spending but a single day hammering in post markers to mark tees and greens, wherever they could be fitted into the landscape. Often a hired “greens keeper” was given the task of quickly constructing the course. This design approach later came to be known as the “18 stakes on a Sunday afternoon” technique. Macdonald changed all this.

He introduced a new mode of attack. He formulated elaborate configurations—adorning holes with natural and man-made hazards conceived to force the golfer into making careful, well-thought-out decisions on how to approach each fairway and green. He pioneered the idea of intricate constructions carved into the land, directed by detailed engineering drawings. In the process, Macdonald, with the help of surveyor and engineer Seth Raynor, created the modern craft and profession of golf course design.

Raynor, who supervised construction at the National, worked alongside Macdonald for nearly 20 years on no less than 16 different layouts. Later, Raynor followed in his mentor’s footsteps to create

nearly 100 courses, including some of the country’s most famous and enduring classics such as Fishers Island (1917), Shoreacres (1921), Camargo (1921), Yeaman’s Hall (1925), and Monterey Peninsula (with Charles Banks) in 1926.

Pete Dye plays Seth Raynor’s Camargo often—many times with accomplished amateur and future USGA Vice President Gene Pulliam (captain of the DePauw University golf team in 1935 and 1936, future publisher of the *Indianapolis Star* and *News*, and uncle to U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle). Pete and Gene even chat from time to time about the idea of creating such a club in Indianapolis.

Camargo’s many alluring aspects capture Pete’s fancy: the dramatic and challenging Raynor design, the small golfing membership, the understated clubhouse, and the club’s swimming “crib”—not a concrete-festooned pool, but a wood-slatted, fenced area cordoned off in a lake, that is located far from the clubhouse. Pete explains: “I liked the way Camargo had its other facilities away from the golf course, so the golf could be strictly about golf.” Playing alongside his friend, Gene Pulliam, Pete begins makes mental notes to be used in the creation of a Camargo-type club, complete with crib—some day.

Raynor, Mackenzie, Scotland, Ross’s Pinehurst Course No. 2—the pictures jumble and meld until ideas for a new design take shape in Pete’s mind. Yet before his “some day” can arrive, one important and fundamental task must be completed. As in the early days of golf course creation, Pete must first find and acquire a sizable piece of vacant land. ■

# LAND...HO!



## CHAPTER 4

THE INDIANAPOLIS OF THE EARLY 1960S SPREADS ITS geographic wings, becoming a true metropolis as it stretches northward to the Marion county border. Pete and Alice, now homeowners at 530 West 79th Street, quite naturally begin their search for undeveloped land in the farmland immediately north of their home, just beyond the city limits. Since Pete's Camargo-like idea includes golf plus a residential development around the perimeter, he will need plenty of land. He reckons on 400 acres. The golf course will occupy some 200 acres, the securing of which appears daunting, but not entirely impossible. It is the 200 additional contiguous acres for residences that requires Pete to tap into dormant salesmanship skills fashioned during his earlier days in the insurance business.

"It took us two to three years of fussing around to buy the land—and we had a few false starts that fell through. The trick was putting all that land together in one piece." So difficult is the task that local real estate man (and future Crooked Stick member) Fred C. Tucker tells Pete at the time: "Even Houdini couldn't put 400 acres together in this town!"

Undaunted, Pete continues his search. He homes in on an area to the north of 86th Street (the end of the city limits for all practical purposes) and west of Ditch Road (a dirt road at the time). Eventually, Pete learns of a sizable parcel of ground in the vicinity owned by gentleman farmer Wells Hampton (portions of the current back nine). "Everybody in Indianapolis knew him. He was a member of

Woodstock and the Hunt Club. Wells wasn't really a farmer, but he had a good bit of land . . . way out past the city." Pete strikes a deal, securing an option to buy 120 acres at \$1,200 per.

One hundred twenty acres down; roughly 300 to go. Adjacent landowner Daniel Stuckey is Pete's next target.

"Stuckey owned the farm to the north—just a flat cornfield." (That ground now occupies part of the current front nine.) "I went to see him and got an option for around \$1,000 an acre." Mr. Stuckey's granddaughter, Cynthia Moffit remembers, "My grandfather told the story that Pete Dye knocked on his front door and asked him if he would sell his land. Evidently the timing was right, because grandpa agreed to the sale."



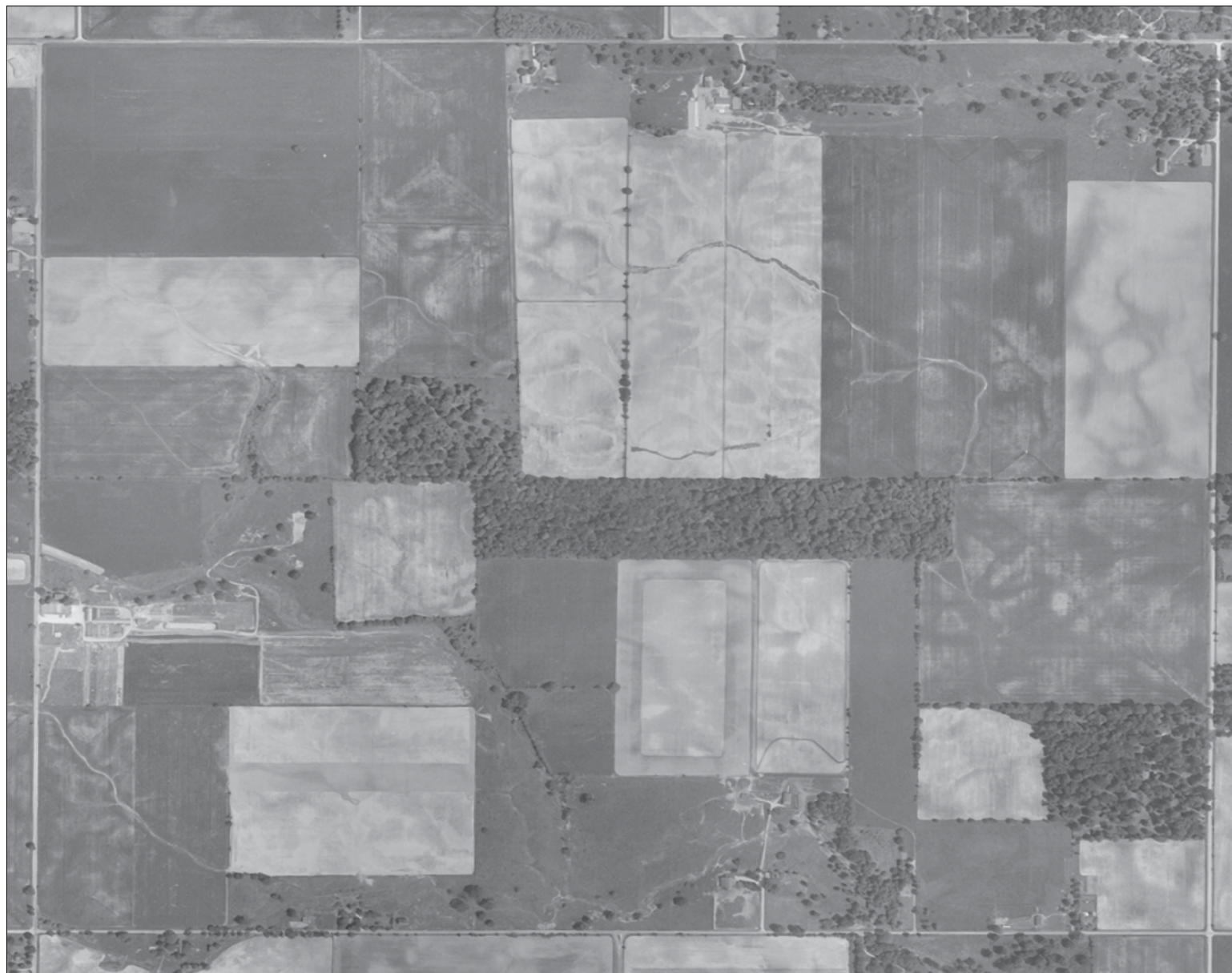
Two parcels secured, Pete sets his sights on neighboring land owned by Mrs. Mae L. Kerns.

"She owned 40 or so acres, which is where 15 and 16 are today. It was really the only piece of land parcels that had any roll or topography to it." According to Pete, the acquisition of Mrs. Kerns's property takes more than just salesmanship.

"I was out there at Mae's house to talk about this thing. She serves elderberry wine. I keep trying to give her something to drink,

*The farmstead of Daniel and Martha Stuckey once stood on land bordering the fifth fairway to the north.*

*The land that will become  
Crooked Stick—airial  
photo, 1956*





*Same view in 2005*

but instead of her getting drunk . . . it turns out to be me! And all the time, instead of the price going down like I wanted, it just goes up and up.” (For the record, Pete has long since sworn off all manner of spirits!) “It was at midnight before she finally signs the damn thing! And she ends up charging me more money per acre than anybody.” They strike the agreement at \$1,350 per acre.

Sensing completion, Pete snaps up options on two more nearby parcels: 80 acres from the estate of Dessie M. Heather for \$96,000; and 69.3 acres from the estate of William H. Haston at \$1,100 per acre. Dye, now an apparent real estate “Houdini,” achieves the unlikely: options on 400 acres of previously undeveloped, contiguous land with a city of half a million people (potential members) nearby. Pete is optimistic; all he lacks at this point is money, a golf course, and a full roster of members. Nearly 20 years pass before he achieves all three.

### **A man, a plan . . .**

With land acquisition out of the way, Pete knows his idea will now take money, members, and a golf course—in that order.

“Once I had the land, I go to (Robert) Sweeney—he was with Merchants Bank—to see if he can put this deal together. Sweeney wants the land paid for first. He tells me if I can get 60 people at \$6,000 a piece, he will loan me money to build the golf course. He won’t lend me anything unless the land is sitting out here scot free.”

Pete’s approach, now with the financing slant from Sweeney, begins to look quite similar to one conceived some years earlier by famed amateur golfer Bobby Jones, as the March 5, 1951 issue of *Life* magazine reports:

The Peachtree course in Atlanta, Ga. is the brainchild of golfing’s great Bobby Jones . . .

Robert Tyre Jones, Jr., who quit competitive golf in 1930 when he won the “grand slam”—the British Open, the British Amateur, U.S. Open and U.S. Amateur—always wanted a championship course for his home town, Atlanta. In 1945, with two golfing friends and a golf course architect named Robert Trent Jones, he selected a 230-acre tract of land. Architect Jones drew up a plan for the proposed course. Then golfer Jones entertained 20 wealthy Atlantans, showed them the plan and asked them to buy a share of stock—at \$3,000 a share. He sold 20 shares right away, then another 50. It took nearly three years and \$500,000 to finish Peachtree and its clubhouse.

With prospects for success looking more favorable by the day, Pete, along with friends Gene Pulliam (a seven-time Club Champion at CCI), Bill Wick (whose wife Lucy is Alice Dye’s cousin) and Ike Cummings, plus banker Sweeney, put their heads together. They coalesce their notions into a formal plan designed to capture the imagination (and investment) of local golf enthusiasts.

The group sketches out an initial approach and makes arrangements to introduce the concept at a dinner meeting of interested parties. After much discussion, Gene Pulliam documents the details in a February 10, 1964 letter, which he circulates to the others. “Messrs. Cummings, Dye, Sweeney and Wick:” he begins, “Pete has suggested and I’ve attempted to get down on paper the various ideas we’ve discussed about our venture. It is an attempt to jell our thoughts in advance of our Feb 17 dinner.” He describes key components of the idea they intend to take forward.

Excerpts of the Pulliam letter include the following notations:

LAND AND FINANCING:

Land – 420 Acres – \$502,500

Golf Course – \$360,000 which includes 10% architect's fee for Pete

Club House – \$200,000 maximum. (Pete now thinks he can bring it in at a lower figure)

Equipment for course and land maintenance – \$35,000

We're assuming the course, clubhouse, roads and service area will take 180 acres, leaving 240 acres for real estate development.

We need a minimum of 100 investors at \$6,000 each by April 1, 1964. We are approaching investors with the hope that land sales might permit the return of better than half their money in 5 to 10 years. We are not going to paint this prospect in glowing terms and we don't want investors if their primary interest is just making a profit.

CLUBHOUSE OPERATION: We plan a relatively small clubhouse, the design for which already has proven attractive and economical in Florida. We will not have a swimming pool. We hope to use a man-made lake with a sand beach for swimming.

DUES: We believe we can operate a first class club at \$50 a month with 150 members and at \$40 a month with 200 members. Payment of dues would start with the opening of the golf course to regular play and the club-house to regular usage. The target date for this is July 1, 1965.

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT: Once the road to the club-house is constructed, a total of 40 lots, adjacent to the golf course and serviced by the road, will be available for sale.

CORPORATE STRUCTURE: We are considering a for profit realty corporation. . . . Actual incorporation details must await the reaction at our dinner.

MEMBERSHIP: We will have a top limit of 200 members. We will not necessarily insist on a full membership. We want desirable members, not just 200 members. Sale of lots is NOT to be connected to club membership. Each of us is interested in this club primarily because we want to be able to play a good course with our friends without waiting and without delay. An interest in golf, not just financial success or social status, is our primary requisite in considering an invitation to membership.

With agreement in principle, Pulliam sets things up for the dinner at the Indianapolis Athletic Club, which he describes by letter to the four. In addition to particulars about the meal, Gene adds: "I ordered for drinks (6 to 7 p.m.), scotch, bourbon, martinis, manhattans, and beer. We pay by the bottle, not by the drink." And, "I told Maurie we'd estimate between 90 and 100 but would confirm with his catering man, Mr. Clark, a final figure the weekend prior to the event.

"I asked him to put us in the Green Room," he continues. "Not more than six to a table, not to have a speaker's table as such but to have available a lectern and the public address system. I don't think we'll need the latter but it wouldn't hurt to have it handy if any of us has laryngitis."



*Pete and Alice had this drawing made to convince potential members to invest. The finished course and the club name bear no resemblance to the blueprint. While traveling in Scotland in 1963, Pete came upon the Muir of Ord (gold) Golf Club (James Braid, 1875). He liked the name and considered a variation for his new venture.*

In addition to preparing thoughts for their comments, the group begins a membership canvass, soliciting interest among family, friends, associates and golfing companions. Pete, armed with some rough sketches and a detailed imagination, takes their story on the road. Their early efforts meet with some success.

*“I went around town—personally around town—and scrounged up people. I joined. Alice joined . . . along with all of her family: her brother, her father—and his friends, her uncle Jack, two cousins . . . folks from CCI . . . and people that didn’t even play golf joined!”*

Founding member John Claycombe (a classmate of Alice’s at Shortridge High School) remembers: “I was a member at CCI. My brother (Bob) and I had a two-man law firm. Pete came in with drawings under his arm to our office in the Merchant’s Bank Building downtown. Thinking back, all I can say is Pete’s one hell of a salesman!” The brothers say yes.

All told, Pete and the others secure 39 commitments by the weekend prior to the presentation at the Athletic Club. According to C. Harvey “Buck” Bradley (one of the 39), Sweeney’s assistance in securing commitments proves invaluable. “He loaned many of us the \$6,000 we put in!” Founding member Charlie Van Tassel has his own recollection of the banker: “Sweeney was a bad golfer, but he was a heck of a swell guy.”

### **Let the meeting begin**

By all accounts, the meeting at the Athletic Club goes off without a hitch. Pulliam runs the event, and a few days later writes a report of the happenings:

Plans for a combined real estate development and golf club were presented Monday night at a private dinner at the Indianapolis Athletic Club.

... Investors in the proposed venture will be asked to purchase \$6,000 of stock in a corporation which would construct the 18 hole golf course, build a club house and then develop the adjoining real estate. Total cost is expected to exceed \$1,000,000.

... Membership in the golf club would be limited to 200 members and the course would be constructed by Paul Dye, Jr., former district and state amateur champion and golf course architect.

... It was announced at the meeting that 38 local men already have signed agreements indicating their interest in the proposal.

The land for the golf course, according to Dye, is ideally suited for an inland course, which from the back tees would be a championship test for top amateurs and professionals. From the regular tees, the design of the course would also provide a fair but not impossible test for the regular club members. Two streams, several wooded areas and the rolling contour of the ground provide natural terrain for the golf course and construction plans include the building of two lakes which would provide a reservoir for watering the golf course, hazards for several holes and a swimming area for members.

The discrepancy between the 38 investor names announced and the 39 printed in "The Golf Club of Indianapolis" booklet Pulliam distributes that Monday evening is unclear to this day. Yet what is known is that the principals leave the meeting convinced of their ability to obtain the 60 commitments needed to secure financing.

Bill Wick immediately begins preparing an official "Prospectus for Real Estate Development and Golf Course," a draft of which he

circulates to the other four on February 26, 1964. Wick clarifies a number of details missing from earlier writings, and also manages to work in a bit of his dry sense of humor as the document shows:

In brief, these are our modest objectives:

To build the finest golf course in this area, so designed as to challenge the most accomplished golfer, while providing from the middle tees shorter and less hazardous routes to the greens which will permit the general run of us to enjoy ourselves and test our inadequate skills without too much rooting or splashing about in woods, streams, thickets, sand dunes and bodies of water.

... The Club will have a man-made lake with a white sand beach for swimming, which may well be considered to provide pleasanter swimming conditions than the usual concrete, chlorinated bathtub found at every motel.

Conclusion. Those of us who are involved in this project are bound together by one common interest: an interest in golf.

... We want a golf club, not a social club. We want a center for outdoor sports, not merely a place to drape ourselves around a swimming pool or to dance and drink tea.

Bill further describes the clubhouse explaining, "It has been designed by Ben Boleman and has been modeled after the club house at the Country Club of Florida." Finally, the prospectus explains the actual incorporation details, which Pulliam has said "must await the reaction at our dinner." In short, Wick describes the legal structure thusly:

A realty corporation for profit will be organized to hold title to the 420 acres, including the golf course and club house. The realty corporation, of course, will be owned by



An unidentified observer jotted notes on the back of the booklet distributed at the February 17, 1964 dinner meeting, capturing details about the golf course, the club, the real estate venture and the budget.

its stockholders. Subscriptions for the capital stock of the realty corporation will be open until January 1, 1965, at a cost of \$6,000 per share . . .

Only the golf course (including lakes, beach, etc.) and the club house will be built by the realty corporation, whose objective will be to pay off its indebtedness and return its profits to its shareholders.

A not-for-profit club will be organized to lease the golf course property from the realty corporation, with option to purchase.

The prospectus also describes two types of membership: Class A and B. Class A members own stock in the realty corporation via their \$6,000 investment and have voting rights until such time as the mortgage loan of the realty corporation is paid off. The club will create Class B memberships in the event 200 Class A memberships are not obtained by January 1, 1965. B memberships are to be offered at a “substantial initiation fee to be determined in the future.” After retirement of the mortgage loan, both classes of members will have voting rights in the club. The document also discusses sale of lots, explaining that 39 one-acre lots will be made available for sale on the “entrance road” and an additional 37 “on Ditch Road and 116th Street, which will not involve any road-building or development cost.”

Gene Pulliam is the only one known to object to any part of Wick’s draft, replying to him (and copying the others) in a letter dated February 18, 1964: “I don’t like calling our objectives ‘modest’ in the second paragraph. What is modest about wanting to build the best club and residential area in a community of three quarters of a million people? I think we have a right to be proud of what we propose and therefore I would change the second paragraph. . . . It would then read: “These are objectives:” Records shows Wick enacts the suggestion.

Pulliam concludes his letter to Bill Wick with: “I think you did a good job of getting the information into orderly form and I hope we can get some agreement so that this can get out in the mail. We aren’t going to get our 100 signers until we mail this out and the Ides of March are upon us.”

The next few months bustle with activity, as Gene Pulliam continues to document by letter:

MARCH 20, 1964: I’m sending each of you a report on the people I’ve called on and their status as far as the golf club is concerned. . . . B.A. is interested. The same is true of Alex Carroll. B.D. should be called back. . . . Dr. James Katterjohn is still a possibility and Ike Cummings has promised to follow up on him. Another one of my neighbors, Malcolm McVie, definitely is interested and should be contacted. Dr. Ricks Madtson is still a possibility. Dr. Louie Nie also is a possibility and I think we can get him with a little push. Bruz Ruckelshaus I hope is a definite possibility and Bob Sweeney, I presume, is following up with him. And Bob Bowen, Jr. is an outside possibility but we will have to sell his father on the idea if we want to get him.

MAY 6, 1964: To keep the record straight and avoid duplicate calls, I have talked to and/or sent our latest literature to the following: C. Harvey Bradley, Jr., Robert Claycombe, Donald Fobes, Sam Fuller, James Katterjohn, Malcolm McVie, Williams Stout, F.C. Tucker, Jr. and Bruz Ruckelshaus. I have also talked to and sent material to the following who are interested but did not sign a commitment: D.M., Ricks Madtson, Louis Nie and Alex Carroll. . . . Everyone I talked to expressed interest and I feel sure we’ll be in business next Friday.

By “in business” he refers to the 60 subscriptions Sweeney requires to issue the construction mortgage. Another Pulliam letter, dated June 11, 1964—this one to prospective investors—shows the group indeed achieves the objective:

We reached our goal of 60 initial subscribers and are exercising our land options. Pete has begun staking the golf course, we’ve engaged an accountant and have a competent man at work laying out a lot plan. (As a side note, Pete plowed up an acre of his front yard and has bent stolons for the greens growing like mad.)

We have informal agreements from half a dozen individuals which will guarantee sale of lots if we require cash.

Those of us interested in the venture hope that you and your friends who expressed an interest will give it further consideration. We believe we have a desirable group of men with a common interest in developing a fine club and we think our community will provide the support to make its construction and operation possible.

The following Monday, Gene, again by letter, poses a new question to the group.

JUNE 15, 1964

MESSRS. CUMMINGS, DYE, SWEENEY AND WICK:

If I am to act capably as publicity man for our venture, we have to have a name for it. We’ve thrashed around and never made a decision, having more important things to decide. But now is the time to get this settled.

I am listing below some possibilities. Will you please indicate your first and second choices on this letter and mail it back

to me? If we have anything approaching a consensus, that will be the name. If not, I guess we’ll have to hold a meeting. (If you have other suggestions, list them and I’ll recirculate this memorandum.)

The “Spring Run Golf Club” is based on a determination by Pete that one of the streams that runs through the property is known as Spring Run. The others, I hope, are more or less self-explanatory. It does seem to me we should pick a name which is distinctive, emphasizes golf and also has something to do with the unusual features of our club. My suggestions are as follows:

The Golf Club of Indianapolis

The Golfer’s Club of Indianapolis

The Spring Run Golf Club

The Creek Club

The Springs Golf Club

The Beech Golf Club

The Burn Club

Others \_\_\_\_\_

Best regards,

ESP

*P.S. For reasons too lengthy to discuss here, I omitted the Muir of Golf.*

Pulliam’s postscript refers to a permutation of Pete’s earlier suggestion: “Muir of Ord,” a James Braid–designed course in the Scottish Highlands that Pete and Alice played in 1963. Despite Pulliam’s urging, the name question lingers unanswered for many more months. In the meantime, “more important things” take precedence . . . ■



## CHAPTER 5

# SO THE LAST WILL BE FIRST



“CONSTRUCTION WILL BEGIN SOON ON A NEW PRIVATE golf club near 106th Street and Ditch Road in southern Hamilton County,” trumpets the lead sentence of an early 1964 local newspaper story. According to Pete, however, the course has been taking shape for many months prior.

“Immediately after we got the land purchased, in my own mind, I had the whole 18 holes laid out as it is today. I always could see it being finished. Nobody else could.” When it comes to course construction, Pete sees something different as well.

In the decades before Pete and Alice entered the business, Robert Trent Jones pioneered efficient golf course construction methods using heavy earth moving machinery, and standardized, repeatable processes—an approach Pete foregoes.

“(Robert) Trent Jones was really smart,” says Pete, “Smart enough to figure out how to get big machinery to build a golf course. He worked out where a certain type of bulldozer could build a tee and green—things like that. He had a style and a method. And he didn’t change that whether it was in Paducah, Kentucky or Columbus, Ohio. They were good courses, but it was the same way everywhere.”

Pete admires Jones but he has his own ideas: “Now when I first got into this thing, I figured you had to go back to the way they were built by hand. Only problem was, at the time, I didn’t even know how to fill a bucket with sand. I’d never moved any dirt. Hell, I’d been peddling insurance!”

To learn the craft, Pete buys a bulldozer and a tractor with a front end loader. And he sets about to practice. “He did his practicing in our front yard!” Alice recalls.

“I had holes all over the damned yard,” says Pete, “trying to figure out how to improvise things with the machinery to make it look right. But it dawned on me that a lot of the things I wanted to do, I couldn’t do.

“So somehow I figured out to take an old farm disk—and a farm disk is rigid—and crack the frame so it would float over the ground. Then I’d take the loader, dump some dirt, and get on the tractor and just pray to God when I go over those hills that something good would happen. Well, that disk would ride on the surface and you’d end up with all these different undulations that you couldn’t get with a bulldozer. That’s how the fairways got rumpled. All the fairways out here—and all the bunkers—are dragged out by a farm disk.”

Eventually, Pete succeeds in replicating Scotland’s subtle natural rolls, humps, and hillocks caused by the recession of the sea. And Crooked Stick gives Pete the perfect blank canvas to try out his new skills.

“Most of the land at Crooked Stick was flat as a pancake, farm fields for corn and wheat. But there were a few natural features—some topography on what’s 13, 14, 15, and 16—and the woods where the clubhouse is now.”

Heading south from those woods, the work begins; the back nine

is constructed first. “We started on the back because we couldn’t get the wheat off the front nine. The crop wasn’t done,” recalls Alice.

Arrangements for the necessary earth moving equipment are made thanks to one of the club’s new members: John Geupel of Geupel Construction. As Pete explains, “At the time, they were the best commercial builders around. Well, John decides to go in the road and dirt business, big time. He went to Bill Diehl who was the head of Caterpillar locally. He sold Geupel a bunch of Caterpillar equipment really cheap. Diehl was way overloaded on the stuff at the time. Well, Geupel didn’t have any customers. So he and Diehl worked things out to take all the machines to Crooked Stick and let John try them out and learn how they worked. Between the two of them, they never charged us a dime to use that equipment. All we ever paid was for fuel and some operators. John Geupel’s name ought to be on a pedestal out here!”

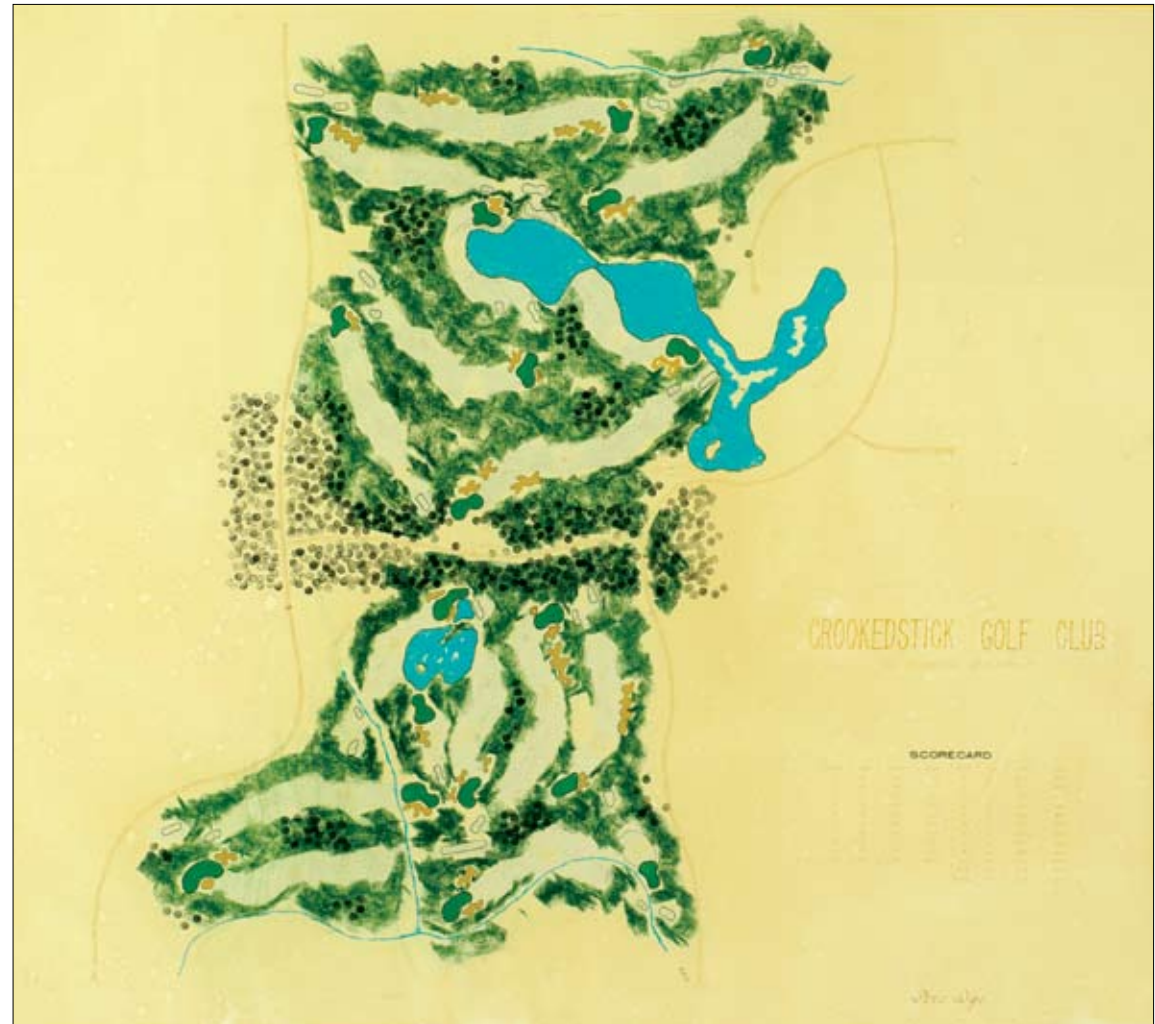
Most of the Crooked Stick workers—including Pete and Alice—are relative novices in the golf business. And so, trial and error education occurs daily.

Geupel and his gang, barely comfortable with the equipment, handle the big earth moving jobs. A worker from the El Dorado crew, Cliff Compton, plus a handful of laborers he hires, takes care of course shaping, often with Pete alongside helping to perform the work. “Those boys and I shaped everything,” says Pete.

Compton possessed an important credential that convinced the Dyes to engage his services at their first course, El Dorado. “He had a tractor,” Alice recalls.

It makes perfect sense: Compton has been farming the Nordsiek brother’s ground prior to its links transformation. “He was the farm hand,” says Alice. As he did at El Dorado, Compton again, hires a troupe of vagabond workers for the Crooked Stick assignment.

“Cliff brought in all these guys from Kentucky,” says Pete. “They



*Pete and Alice commissioned this course layout drawing, dated November 18, 1965, shortly after construction was completed on the back nine and more than a year before front nine work begins. The layout, direction, and length of holes are fairly accurate to the finished course. One major difference: the lake on No. 8 (at top of drawing) extends in front of No. 3 green.*