

The Dayton Golf Club and Its “Oakwood Links”

by David Schmidt



People of all ages in the United States have enjoyed playing golf since it was first imported here. The game became firmly established in the northeastern part of the United States in the late 1880s, mainly by Scottish immigrants who'd enjoyed golfing in their native country. Enthusiasm for golf swept across the United States in the 1890s, with the sport becoming especially popular among the wealthier participants who could afford memberships in clubs, green fees, equipment, and suitably fashionable golfing apparel.

Golf arrived in Cincinnati in 1893 with the development of a five-hole course laid out in the affluent Hyde Park area of the eastern part of the city. Two years later, golfing enthusiasts in the Queen City organized the Cincinnati Golf Club and hired Robert W. (“Bob”) White as the club’s first professional. White was born in 1876 in St. Andrews, Scotland, which is widely considered to be the “home of golf.” White immigrated to Massachusetts in 1894, where he first worked as a professional and greenskeeper at a golf course on the grounds of a hunting club outside of Boston. White moved to Cincinnati in 1895 and laid out the course for the Cincinnati Golf Club on the present-day grounds of the Cincinnati Country Club.

Bob White also helped bring golf to Dayton. In 1897, Julia Patterson Crane hired White to establish a 4-hole course on the grounds of the Patterson family’s Rubicon Farm, which stood just south of the National Cash Register (N.C.R.) factory. A newspaper story from November 2, 1897 stated “[Crane] now has invited her friends to join in the healthful exercise of playing golf.” Yet the article went on to describe how becoming familiar with the standards of golfing was not always healthful for the participants: *The other day several girls were intensely interested in a game, and all were standing about the one whose turn was next; now these fair damsels had been told just before a stroke, it was necessary to cry “fore,” which they did every time. When this word is shouted, the bystanders are expected to move away to avoid the swinging stick, but these girls thinking the word was “four,” naturally did not move and one player, after crying the usual “fore,” swung the driver, and hit one of the interested spectators a terrible blow on the forehead.*

On November 9, 1897, Julia Patterson Crane hosted a meeting of local golf enthusiasts at the downtown home of her brother, N.C.R. founder and president John H. Patterson. The golfers organized the “Dayton Golf Club” and adopted a constitution based on that of the 1895-founded Misquamicut Club of Watch Hill, Rhode Island. The attendees also elected the following officers:

President: Robert C. Schenck, a Dayton businessman

Vice-President: Harold E. Talbott, an engineer and businessman living in Oakwood

Treasurer: Valentine Winters, a Dayton banker and street-railway executive

Secretary: George H. Wood, a Dayton attorney

The golfers also appointed members to Governing, Green, House, and Entertainment Committees. Committee members included: Frank Mills Andrews, a talented architect who was designing N.C.R.’s innovative “daylight factory” buildings; Julia Patterson Crane and her husband James S. Crane, who was N.C.R.’s Managing Director; Charles D. and George H. Mead, respective President and future President of the Mead Paper Company; and Frank J. Patterson, Vice President of N.C.R.

The Dayton Golf Club soon arranged to have Bob White make weekly trips from Cincinnati to Dayton and spend Tuesdays and Wednesdays “initiating the members into the intricacies of the game.” In early 1898, the newly-formed club welcomed Willie Dunn, another professional golfer of Scottish descent, to Dayton to demonstrate his skills at the golf links on Rubicon Farm. Dunn, who resided in New York, had designed a course for the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club of Long Island, which in 1891 had become the first incorporated golf club in the United States.

After officially incorporating in March 1898, the Dayton Golf Club hired Dunn to design for the club a new nine-hole course, which was to stand on property the organization leased from Oakwood’s Eliza Thruston Houk. Houk was the matriarch of Oakwood’s Houk family and owner of the expansive Runnymede estate in west Oakwood. She resided at her home Cherry Angle, which stood just north of the Five Points intersection at which present-day Far Hills Avenue, Oakwood Avenue, and East and West Thruston Boulevards converge. Other members of the Houk family lived nearby: Eliza Houk’s son Thruston Houk, a supervisor at N.C.R., resided at his home named The Pines; and Katharine Houk Talbott, Eliza Houk’s daughter, resided at the Runnymede mansion, which had been built on high ground to the southwest of Five Points. Katharine Houk Talbott was an accomplished singer and married to Harold Talbott, the engineer and businessman who was Vice President of the Dayton Golf Club.

The Dayton Golf Club’s new course stood to the northwest of – and a short walk from – the Oakwood Street Railway’s southern terminus at the “loop” at Five Points. The course, informally known as the “Oakwood Links,” also stood on high ground that offered scenic views of the Miami River Valley to the north and the “Soldiers’ Home” to the west. The links spanned approximately 30 acres and included 9 holes ranging in distance from 125 to 300 yards (Table 1).

Frank Mills Andrews designed a clubhouse that was completed in the spring of 1898 (Figure 1). The clubhouse stood on the hill to the west of “Lebanon Pike” in what is now about the 400 block of Far Hills Avenue. A newspaper article described the clubhouse: *Well up towards the top of the hill stands the quaint little Club House, recently constructed. It was built by Mr. Frank M. Andrews, and is a model country club house. A wide veranda across the front and sides, the hall for dancing and the two ante-rooms furnished in antique style, that, with the huge fireplace, and surroundings give a decidedly hospitable appearance to the interior. The view afforded from the portico of the links is perfect.*



Figure 1. The Dayton Golf Club's clubhouse as viewed from the north. (Oakwood Historical Society)

clubhouse became the first semi-public venue in Oakwood for large-scale socializing and entertainment, frequently housing dinners, dances, and musical performances. The society columns of the Dayton newspapers provided regular accounts of the gatherings at the clubhouse, with attendees comprising a "who's who" of high-profile citizens of Oakwood, Van Buren Township, and Dayton.

As of its June 4 opening, the Dayton Golf Club's membership roster included 130 associates (Figures 2 and 3). Club members honed their golfing skills under the instruction of Willie Hoare and soon formed an eight-member team that began playing competitive matches against teams from other cities. The first visiting team came from Cincinnati and played the Dayton team in games on the afternoon of Saturday, July 30, 1898. A large number of members of the Dayton club, dressed in their "natty golf costumes and caps," watched the games and followed the players around the course as the more-seasoned Cincinnati team defeated the Dayton team. After the match, members of the Dayton club served their guests an evening dinner at the clubhouse.

By the fall of 1898, the Dayton Golf Club's membership roster had expanded to 150 members, and the club had begun hosting twice-weekly suppers. The fall season also marked the onset of an annual tournament. The tournament opened on Friday, October 14 to enthusiastic contestants, although to poor conditions resulting from a strong wind. Further, "the rain of the day before had rendered the ground soggy to a certain extent and the balls upon falling after a drive, failed to roll to the satisfaction of the players." After making two circuits of the Oakwood links for a standard match of 18 holes, Dr. Harry E. Palmer, a Dayton physician and excellent golfer who had consistently placed high in games at the club, had the best score of 98 strokes. After the match, activities shifted to the clubhouse where . . . a large number of members partook of the semi-weekly supper. Mrs. S. J. Patterson, Mrs. Frank J. Patterson and Miss Marianna Lowe, constituted the committee in charge. The great, blazing fire in the fireplace, gave a warm welcome to the players and their followers, after several hours on the course. Mrs. D. D. Bickham and Mrs. R. R. Dickey, Jr. sang several pleasing selections. Dancing, of course, was enjoyed. It was a gay company assembled, and the evening was passed most delightfully.

Activities at the club went dormant with the December close of the 1898 golfing season. In early February 1899, the Dayton Herald reported: *Chill and cold is the exterior of the Golf Club House, and as the lockers have all been emptied – the clubs are gone and cold also is the interior. The Oakwood Water and Light Company will no doubt furnish electric light to the approach of the house, so that coming or going at night will be easier and pleasanter. They will also furnish water – so that pure and crystal liquid may be expected when the links and house open in the early spring with the coming of the swallows and the red birds. The Golf links will be the center of sport and fashion the approaching season.*

Preparations for the club's spring opening were underway in mid-March of 1899 with sodding on the greens and construction of an

The Dayton Golf Club officially opened on Saturday June 4, 1898. The day began with a well-attended match game – played "for a purse" – between the course designer Willie Dunn and Willie Hoare, who was the club's newly-hired professional. Dunn had tied for third place in the U.S. Open the previous year and ahead of Hoare, a twenty-two-year-old English immigrant who had placed fifth.

The match between Dunn and Hoare consisted of two circuits of the nine-hole "Oakwood links." Dunn won the match with 83 strokes, with Hoare needing 87 to complete his round. After the match, the club served a hot supper, charging 25 cents for each plate to help pay for the club's dinnerware. Dayton's Third Regiment Orchestra provided music for the supper.

In addition to serving the golfing needs of the club, the



Figure 2. Club members and caddies at the first tee. The edge of the clubhouse is at the right, and a portion of Eliza Houk's Cherry Angle residence is visible in the right background. (Dayton History)

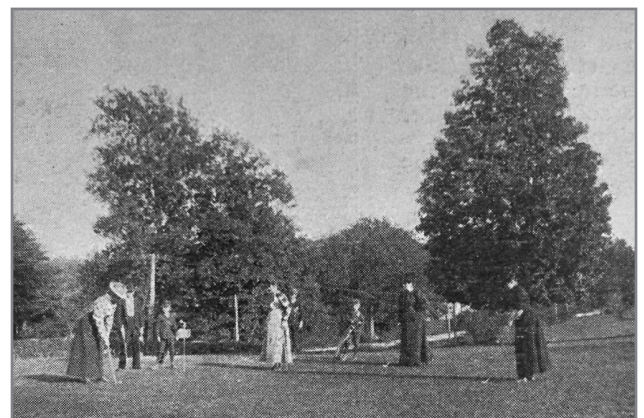


Figure 3. Golfers at the Oakwood Links ca. 1898. The view is toward the southeast and from near the western side of the present-day intersection of Rubicon Road and Far Hills Avenue. A portion of "Lebanon Pike" (future Far Hills Avenue) is visible in the middle background. (N.C.R. Sunday Afternoons)

extension to the club house for storing maintenance equipment. The club also expanded the course itself. Col. Eugene A. Parrott, an Oakwood farmer and businessman, permitted the club to expand the western edge of the course onto four acres of his Maysfield property. This allowed holes 4, 5 and 6 to be lengthened, which brought the total distance of the course to 2,460 yards. The increased length allowed the links to accommodate at least a dozen more golfers at any given time. The expanded section of the course included a small Indian mound that stood in the present-day area of the intersection of Haver and Maysfield Roads. The expansion and reworking of the course resulted in the renaming of holes 4, 5, and 6, with hole #6 being redubbed "Indian Mound" (Table 1).

A newspaper article anticipated the spring 1899 opening of the course and stated: *"The grounds are in fine shape, and it is likely that within another month the picturesque hills will be dotted with red jackets and brass buttons and nobby plaids."*

The spring of 1899 marked the onset of regular prize donations to the club by the Dayton-based Crawford, McGregor, and Canby Company. The company had its origins in the manufacture of wooden shoe lasts, which are forms shaped like a human foot and used for the production and repair of shoes. Edward Canby, a member of the Dayton Golf Club and a local businessman, had become a partner in Crawford, McGregor, and Canby in the early 1880s. In 1896, Canby hosted a visit from Bob White, the Cincinnati golf professional, who sought improved ways of manufacturing golf clubs via copying lathes of the type used in Canby's factory. Canby recognized a solid business opportunity in the burgeoning popularity of golf and, in March of 1897, he expanded his company into the manufacture of golf clubs. Canby also understood the marketing potential of using a trade name for his clubs that evoked golf's Scottish birthplace, so he trademarked the name "J. MacGregor" (after his business associate John McGregor) and began using that name on his products. Canby's company soon became a preeminent manufacturer of golf clubs and other golfing accessories.

The Dayton Golf Club's 1899 season included improved play by the club's members in competitive matches. Men's and ladies' teams, usually composed of eight or ten members, began winning some of their matches against regional teams. The 1899 season also saw more matches among mixed foursomes, and the club held tournaments more frequently. By then, a typical seasonal ebb and flow of activity had become established. Golfers began playing on the course in the early spring; then the club held a well-attended and official opening of the season mid-May. The official opening included golfing during the day, and supper, music, and dancing in the evening. Activity on the links and in the clubhouse slowed during the middle summer as the more well-to-do members of the club vacationed at mountains, beaches, and eastern resorts. Vacationers returned around Labor Day, which resulted in a marked increase in golfing on the links and entertainment at the clubhouse that continued through the end of the season in December.

Increased popularity of tennis through the 1890s prompted the Dayton Golf Club to begin constructing tennis courts on the north end of the club grounds in the spring of 1900 (Figure 4). The 1900 season also included the addition of a small club house for men that stood separate from the main building and housed lockers, dressing rooms and shower baths.

By September 1900, membership of the club had expanded to "275 persons, comprising old and young." By that same time, the increasing membership and an impending expiration of the club's land lease prompted the club to consider expanding the organization into a "country club" of wider activities and to seek permanent grounds: *The expiring lease of the grounds now occupied by the Dayton Golf Club makes it necessary to be looking around, and the land and residence of Col. E.A. Parrott has been regarded as very eligibly located. The old house could be made a very handsome and unique Country Club. Many favor it if the place can be obtained at a reasonable price. Other locations have been suggested, and it is now felt that certainly before another season a Country Club may be in sight.*

However, the golf club soon renewed its lease with Eliza Houk and temporarily set aside serious consideration of purchasing permanent land for a country club.

As the Dayton Golf Club grew, enthusiasm for golf also continued to spread across the country, and the development of golf courses frequently accompanied the platting and development of nearby tracts of residential real estate. Sales of real estate near golf courses soared as agents used the allure of golfing as a marketing tool to attract buyers. Sylvester H. Carr was a Dayton attorney and early member of the Dayton Golf Club who had been elected club president at the close of the 1899 season. Carr was also an enterprising businessman who held land standing to the west of the "Oakwood Links" and along a street-railway route that linked Carr's rural property to downtown Dayton. In the spring of 1901, Carr platted "Carrmonte" in what is now the northern end of the "Southern Hills" neighborhood of Kettering, and he began advertising the availability of housing lots in his developing suburban plat.

The Dayton Golf Club expanded its dedication to tennis in the spring of 1901 by constructing additional courts and scheduling tournaments more frequently. The spring of 1901 also marked initiatives to improve the club's facilities.



Figure 4. Postcard showing the Dayton Golf Club's "Oakwood Links" ca. 1907. Note the club's tennis courts in the middle background and the clubhouse at right. The view is looking to the north from about the present-day intersection of Southview Road and W. Thruston Blvd. (Oakwood Historical Society)

A newspaper article published on June 3 stated: *It is proposed to enlarge the ladies dressing room, making it one-half again as large as its present size, the porch, which now is much too small will be extended around on the west side of the building; the portion on the east side will be enclosed, on connecting it with the cuisine quarters, making this department more commodious, and a part of which will be fitted for cold storage purposes. A lattice will be built back of the club house to screen the kitchen from public view. Also the men's quarters will be enlarged, a much needed improvement, new and up-to-date lockers will be added, improved shower baths put in, and a neat and ornamental caddy house will be built; this will be attached to the men's quarters, but will still have no direct connection with them. Down by the entrance a large, well-ventilated horse shed will be erected for the benefit of the large number who drive out to the links so often. . . . In fact, the Dayton Golf Club will have, when the changes are completed, the appearance and advantages of a thoroughly modern and up-to-date country club, and an institution of which the lovers of the game can justly be proud.*

The 1901 season included some unfortunate events. On July 1, the Dayton Herald reported: *What might have proven a serious accident happened one evening last week at the golf club, and but for the presence of mind of Mr. L. G. Reynolds a fatality might have occurred. The Caddy Master, Mr. Charles Ganter, in trying to remedy some disarrangement of the electric light wires, became entangled in a live wire, which was in some manner coiled around his wrist, and both hands were quite seriously burned. Mr. Reynolds rescued him from his serious predicament, and very probably saved his life.*

On July 4, 1901, club member and N.C.R. Vice President Frank J. Patterson died of a heart attack at his downtown home. In the evening of the following day, . . . *quite a large number of Dayton people went out to the links to enjoy the playing, and later witness the beautiful fireworks. The music and dancing which had been arranged, were abandoned, out of respect to the great sorrow that has befallen one of the oldest and most highly respected families of this city. The committee in charge paid the members of the band and dismissed them, and the festivities of the evening were given up. Instead, little groups of families and friends congregated about the lawn and porch, and the evening was spent in conversation, and later admiring the display of fireworks. The supper was one of the most pleasant features of the occasion.*

On October 1, the clubhouse was burglarized of clothing and golf balls. After a naïve recipient of the stolen golf balls tried to sell them to a downtown sporting-goods store, police investigated and charged two suspects in the burglary. In an ensuing court appearance, “Geo. Smith and Charles Aultman . . . pleaded guilty and were sentenced to the Work House for thirty days and to pay costs. The Work House sentence was suspended, pending good behavior.”

In the spring of 1902, Robert R. Dickey, Jr., a Dayton businessman and one of the club's most devout golfers, rented Col. Parrott's property adjacent to the golf course for a summer residence. The spring of 1902 also marked the development of a “catering department” at the clubhouse that was established so that “members may put in a day of it at the links and spend the evening there without having to return to the city for meals or a luncheon, and so that they may drop in at the cottage any time and be served.” The catering department received more than two hundred orders for suppers that were served at the formal opening on May 12. Later in the month, the club formed an agreement for the supply of abundant water. A newspaper article reported: *The Dayton Golf Club has completed a contract with the Oakwood Water Company by which the cottages and club house will be furnished with this sparkling fluid. Water plugs will be placed in various places over the “Greens,” and the turf will thus be greatly nourished and sustained during the summer months or periods of drought. The old caddy house will be rebuilt and provided with all the toilet requirements for the ladies, including needle shower baths. . . . and with this grand water supply no city will excel Dayton in its golf links.*

Improvements in 1902 also included the placement of six new bunkers on the course.

Mixed foursome play continued to be popular in 1902, and golfing activities included increased focus on various types of tournaments. Team play continued, with the club hosting teams from other cities and also sending teams from the Dayton club to compete in matches with other teams in the Ohio-Indiana region. However, the time constraints imposed by travel sometimes required activities to be rescheduled. For example, a newspaper article on October 24, 1902 reported that “visitors from the Queen City could not remain over for the late train” so the Dayton club served an early luncheon to their guests rather than a later dinner.

January of 1903 saw continued consideration of expanding the golf club into a country club that would render the club “as attractive in winter as in summer.” Club officers and members contemplated merging the golf club with a newly-formed horseback-riding club that boarded its horses in stables at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds. The golf club also considered the prospects of adding such pastimes as polo, swimming, squash, and ice skating to the club's activities. Club members also enjoyed tobogganing. On the evening of February 19, 1903, a “company of happy men and maidens” enjoyed coasting “down the Oakwood hill” along Lebanon Pike. “[A]fter several fine toboggings they repaired to the clubhouse” for a “substantial supper” served by Anna B. Shoup, owner and manager of The Catering Company of downtown Dayton. After the meal, the participants enjoyed dancing, “and they were most sincere in their expressions of appreciation of [the evening's] pleasure to Mr. John Parrott, who arranged the event.” John Parrott was Col. Parrott's son and President of The Dayton Fiber Plaster Company.

With the approach of the 1903 season came the successful proposal for a “free supper and dance” the first and third Saturdays of the month for club “members who do not play golf but enjoy its social features.” The 1903 season saw the continued expansion of tennis courts and scheduling of tennis tournaments consisting of men's singles and doubles, ladies' singles, and mixed doubles. Golf outings included the club's continuation of team matches and tournaments. Along with holding tournaments in the established formats, the club held a “Married Couples' tournament” that pitted husband and wife pairs against other couples.

After the close of the 1903 season, the club's annual meeting included . . . *time devoted to the discussion of a permanent location, and it was decided that a committee of five should be appointed soon to look into the matter, so that everything may be in readiness for the club game when the weather opens. Mr. S. H. Carr was named as chairman of this committee, and the remaining four members will be named later. It is possible that some of the monied men of the club may unite and buy a large tract of land, and on it erect commodious structures for the use of the club.*

In the spring of 1904, the club announced its engagement with Edward Parsons as the caterer for the coming season. A newspaper article noted that Parsons "will be prepared to furnish ordinary meals on short notice" and that if he would be "properly encouraged and supported he will furnish table d'hote dinners during the season, and will keep on sale ice cream, cake, lemonade, ginger ale, mineral waters, cigars, etc." The article also mentioned a proposal for the coming season "that on the first Saturday of each month the club will give a free supper and dance, thereby continuing the very pleasant social affairs inaugurated last year."

The 1904 season included an increase in handicap tournament play. Club member Dr. Harry E. Palmer continued to excel at golfing, and in June he was the club's only "scratch" player for an upcoming tournament, meaning he would be the club's only player in the tournament with a handicap of zero. The 1904 season also included frequent and well-attended tennis tournaments.

The established activities of golf, tennis, dinners, and entertainment continued through the 1905 season, with club's schedule continuing to follow a seasonal ebb and flow of participation. A newspaper article on August 14, 1905 noted: "About forty members of the Golf Club enjoyed supper there on Saturday evening, the number being smaller than usual because of the exodus of members to seashore, lakeside, and mountain resorts."

By the spring of 1906, a committee of golf club members had established a court near the clubhouse for playing "clock golf." This game had been introduced to the golfing world during the late 1890s as a small and novel putting game. Clock golf involved players gathering around a circular lawn that was marked with "hourly" positions (like the face of a clock) around the perimeter of the court. Players took turns putting inwardly from each of the twelve positions to a hole that was offset from the center of the circle, thus providing different distances for each putt. A newspaper article published on May 15, 1906 noted:

The chairman of the clock golf committee, Dr. A. A. Plotner, has had the court practically rebuilt, and it was never in better condition for playing. The doctor has had the lights turned on and finds that everything is in working order, and those who do not dance [during the evening activities at the clubhouse] can engage their idle moments in playing golf by the moon-light that is generally furnished by Mr. Clegg, president of the Oakwood Street Railway.

Through 1906, members of the club continued to consider the prospects of expanding the organization to a country club and establishing a permanent location for its activities. The club selected a committee to review possible sites for a permanent location, and the committee narrowed its consideration to three prospective sites: (1) a farm of 102 acres standing about three miles north of the city of Dayton along present-day Old Troy Pike; (2) a dairy farm of 59 acres situated just to the southwest of Carrmonte, and also about three miles from the center of the city; and (3) a farm of 92 acres just to the west of the "Oakwood Links" that formerly included the Kramer Winery and Pleasure Gardens.

With the club's interest in the Kramer property running high, several club affiliates formed the Dayton Oakwood Realty Company and purchased the Kramer property to protect it from other development. The syndicate included Sylvester H. Carr, Daniel W. Allaman (a law partner of Carr's), Edward Canby, Hugh Chalmers (Vice President and General Manager of N.C.R.), John H. Patterson, Robert R. Dickey, and others.

In December 1906, a newspaper article reported: "*The lease that the Golf Club has on its present beautiful grounds has been extended for another five years from January 1, 1907. Plans, under way for some time, for the club to move onto the Kramer farm nearby, are materializing . . .*" *The following spring, the club considered a proposal to change the name of the organization to "Dayton Country Club" and increase fees for initial membership and annual dues. The club officially opened the 1907 season on May 25 with a golf tournament and band concert in the afternoon and dinner and dancing in the evening. "[B]efore the dance there was an important business session of the club members. At this time a unanimous vote was taken for the change of the club location to the Kramer site and for the increase of initiation fees and dues commensurate with the increased facilities of the club. Everyone was enthusiastic over the prospects of a new country club on the Kramer property."*

By the late summer of 1908, the club had hired the noted Dayton architect William Earl Russ to design a clubhouse for the new property; the Dayton Golf Club had officially reorganized as the "Dayton Country Club" and sold shares of preferred stock; and The Dayton Oakwood Realty Company had transferred its landholding to the Dayton Country Club, purportedly "at a nominal profit of 10% over the cost paid to the Kramer heirs." The new Dayton Country Club maintained a roster of officers that was similar to those of the Dayton Golf Club, with Sylvester Carr continuing as the club's president.

In the meantime, golf, tennis, and social activities continued on the club's old grounds as plans materialized for the club's new grounds. A newspaper article published on April 2, 1909 provided updates, stating that contracts had been made for the construction of the new club house; "all of the old Kramer buildings have been demolished;" excavation for the new clubhouse was nearly complete; and "stone masons will start the foundation next week." The article continued: *Contracts have also been let for eight double tennis courts, which will be built upon the most approved plans. They will be picturesquely located in a depression in the land just north of the club house, and will present the decorative feature of sunken gardens.*

Work on the new golf course has also commenced and will be pushed vigorously. A splendid 9-hole course over 3,000 yards in length has been laid out. The layout is so arranged that it can be increased to an 18-hole course later if desired.

The article also stated that unlike the existing club, which “was only open during the warm months,” the new club “will be open throughout the year.”

The Dayton Country Club formally opened its new clubhouse on June 18, 1910 with an afternoon tea and dinner and dance in the evening. “Autos and carriages lined the roads leading to the grounds and each car was met at the [Oakwood Street Railway’s] loop by motors and carriages.” These vehicles transported guests from the loop over “a new macadamized road” that had been built “from the end of the Oakwood car line to the club house.”

After all of the Dayton Country Club’s activities had been established at its new location, a newspaper article published in the summer of 1912 announced: *The opening of the Oakwood Athletic Club was held Saturday afternoon [August 24] at 2 o’clock at the old Golf grounds on the Houk estate. This is a new club just organized, its members are sixty children of Oakwood, the older people of the village being the associates. . . . The tennis grounds and the two croquet grounds are in good condition, sand piles and hammocks and swings are provided for the little ones. The older people will have the privilege of the tennis court and the croquet grounds.*

Daisy Talbott Green, daughter of Harold and Katharine Houk Talbott, chaired the club’s advisory board and directed its activities on the former grounds of the golf club, which had been repurposed into “a happy playground for the children of Oakwood” (Figure 5).

Two years later, Harold and Katharine Houk Talbott and Thruston Houk incorporated the “Houk Estate” with the intention of developing much of the family’s landholdings in west Oakwood. In the summer of 1914 and shortly before Eliza Houk’s passing, the Houk Estate acquired from her “91 acres in Van Buren township and lots in the Houk plat.” The following spring, a newspaper article stated that “Attractively curving streets are . . . being made across the old golf course. H. E. Talbott, on behalf of the heirs of Mrs. Eliza P. T. Houk, is directing this development.” Within a few years, the development would include some of Oakwood’s finest homes.



Figure 5. Children playing croquet in the spring of 1913 on the grounds of the Oakwood Athletic Club. (Oakwood Village Record)

Many of the Affiliates of the Dayton Golf Club Would Continue to Establish Notable Places in Local History

- Frank Mills Andrews continued to design buildings for N.C.R. He also designed the St. Henry’s Memorial Chapel at Calvary Cemetery, the Dayton Arcade, homes for several prominent Daytonians, and many other significant buildings in the eastern United States.
 - Sylvester Carr continued as President of the Dayton Country Club through 1916. He also continued his law practice and served as Vice President of the Davis Sewing Machine Company. In the 1920s, residents of his Carrmonte plat and those of the neighboring Berkeley Heights plat formally combined the two plats to form the neighborhood of “Southern Hills.” In 1946, Southern Hills became a prime target of annexation by the city of Dayton; this prompted the citizens of Van Buren Township in November 1952 to vote in favor of incorporating the Village of Kettering.
 - Robert R. Dickey remained an avid golfer and high-profile member of the Dayton Country Club. In 1928, Dickey, his wife Myrtle, and The Mutual Home and Savings Association of Dayton established “The Brooklands” plat, which borders the western grounds of the Dayton Country Club and is cross cut by a brook that flows into the plat from the golf course. The plat includes “Brooklands Road” and “Robert Dickey Pike.”
 - John H. Patterson continued as President of N.C.R. and achieved widespread recognition for organizing the company’s rescue and relief efforts during the Great Dayton Flood of 1913. Although Patterson referred to playing golf himself in at least one of his letters, he much preferred horseback riding as a recreational activity. As plans were materializing in May 1907 for the development of the grounds of the Dayton Country Club, Patterson wanted to see the lower-elevation land on the southern end of the property used for horseback riding rather than for playing golf. An employee of the Olmsted landscape design company wrote: “[Patterson] scoffs at this idea [of using any of the “low land” for golfing] as he says only 40 members will play golf while hundreds will want to ride.” Yet Patterson later supported local interest in golfing by donating the Community Club to the city of Dayton in 1917. By the early 1920s, Patterson also established – and made freely available – a small golf course on a portion of his Far Hills estate. The course stood on several acres of ground just to the northwest of the present-day Oakwood Community Center.
 - Patterson’s younger sister, Julia Patterson Crane, took on much of the responsibility of raising her brother’s two children (Frederick and Dorothy) after the children’s mother, Katharine Beck Patterson, passed away in 1894. Crane and the two children frequently accompanied John H. Patterson on his travels for business and pleasure.
- Frank Patterson’s widow, Julia Shaw Patterson Carnell, co-founded the Dayton Foundation in 1921. She was also a major

patroness of the arts and helped establish the Dayton Art Institute by donating artwork, the Kemper mansion in downtown Dayton that served as the museum's first home, and \$2 million to help build the institute's current facility on Grafton Hill.

- George H. Wood left his law practice in Dayton in 1898 to serve in the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars. In 1901, he returned to Dayton and formed a partnership with Henry Loy in the brokerage business. Gov. James M. Cox appointed Wood adjutant general of Ohio in 1913 and placed him in charge of troops of the Ohio National Guard that maintained martial law in Dayton for several weeks after the Great Flood. Wood performed active military service in France during World War I. After the war, he served in administrative positions in the housing and hospitalization of military veterans. Wood was also active in various civic affairs in the Dayton area, including the development of the school system in Oakwood.
- Harold and Katharine Houk Talbott continued to reside at Runnymede and they remained prominent citizens in the Miami Valley area. Harold Talbott continued in a variety of manufacturing businesses, utilities, and contracting. In the wake of the 1913 flood, Ohio Governor James M. Cox tasked Talbott with heading up cleanup efforts in Dayton, appointing him with the title of Colonel in the face of martial law in the city. Katharine remained active as a singer, supporter of music, and philanthropist. She also continued to remain prominent in Dayton's social life and constructed the "Runnymede Playhouse" to house family and community activities. In reflecting on the "Oakwood Links," Katharine's daughter Elsie Talbott Mead recalled of her mother: "Mother never had time to walk the course so she'd get a whole bag of balls and drive them out the back of the Runnymede house. Then we children would have to chase after them." Elsie Talbott married her first cousin George Houk Mead in 1914, and the couple would later move to their Little Woods estate off Runnymede Road. George Houk Mead, who had begun working at his family's paper company in 1897, took charge of the faltering Mead Paper Company in 1905 and eventually expanded it to become a world leader in the production of paper, pulp, and paperboard. Mead also founded and led a wide variety of other industrial, governmental, and philanthropic organizations.

Table 1. The nine holes on the "Oakwood Links" (1898 data from "Golf and Golfers;" 1899 data from Harper's Official Golf Guide, 1900, as quoted in Heck, 1997).

**This might be a typographical error. Other post-1900 references indicate the first hole remained at its original length of 235 yards.*

Hole #	Name		Distance (yards)		Par	
	1898	1899	1898	1899	1898	1899
1	The Maples	The Maples	235	285*	4	4
2	The Turnstile	The Turnstile	220	275	4	5
3	Runnymede	Runnymede	235	220	4	4
4	The Hedges	The Orchard	250	385	4	5
5	The Knoll	The Bunker Hill	300	400	4	5
6	The Prairie	Indian Mound	230	310	4	5
7	The Devil's Chute	The Devil's Chute	265	235	4	4
8	Little Misery	Little Misery	125	140	4	3
9	Home	Home Again	225	260	4	4

Notes

- “[Crane] now has invited her friends”: Dayton Herald, November 2, 1897.
- Julia Patterson Crane hosted a meeting: Dayton Herald, November 10, 1897.
- “initiating the members into the intricacies of the game”: Dayton Herald, November 23, 1897.
- “Well up towards the top of the hill”: Dayton Herald, June 6, 1898.
- “for a purse”: Ibid.
- “The game was closely contested down to the last hole”: Ibid.
- “natty golf costumes and caps”: Dayton Herald, August 1, 1898.
- “the rain of the day before had rendered the ground soggy”: Dayton Herald, October 15, 1898.
- “a large number of members partook of the semi-weekly supper”: Ibid.
- “Chill and cold is the exterior of the Golf Club House”: Dayton Herald, February 4, 1899.
- Col. Eugene A. Parrott . . . permitted the club to expand: Dayton Herald, May 5, 1899.
- “The grounds are in fine shape”: Dayton Herald, April 3, 1899.
- “J. MacGregor”: “MacGregor Golf Clubs: The Early Years”
- “275 persons, comprising old and young”: Dayton Herald, September 29, 1900.
- “The expiring lease of the grounds”: Ibid.
- “It is proposed to enlarge the ladies dressing room”: Dayton Herald, June 3, 1901.
- “What might have proven a serious accident”: Dayton Herald, July 1, 1901.

Notes *(Continued)*

- “. . . quite a large number of Dayton people”: Dayton Herald, July 5, 1901.
- “Geo. Smith and Charles Aultman”: Dayton Herald, February 4, 1902.
- “catering department”: Dayton Daily News, May 28, 1902.
- “The Dayton Golf Club has completed a contract”: Dayton Herald, May 29, 1902.
- “visitors from the Queen City could not remain”: Dayton Herald, October 24, 1902.
- “as attractive in winter as in summer”: Dayton Herald, January 7, 1903.
- Club members also enjoyed tobogganing: Dayton Daily News, February 20, 1903; Dayton Herald, February 20, 1903.
- “free supper and dance”: Dayton Herald, May 7, 1903.
- “Married Couples’ tournament”: Dayton Herald, August 22, 1903.
- “. . . time devoted to the discussion of a permanent location”: Dayton Herald, February 27, 1904.
- “will be prepared to furnish ordinary meals”: Dayton Daily News, April 11, 1904.
- “About forty members of the Golf Club enjoyed supper”: Dayton Herald, August 14, 1905.
- “The chairman of the clock golf committee”: Dayton Herald, May 15, 1906.
- three prospective sites: Dayton Herald, July 27, 1907.
- “The lease that the Golf Club has on its present beautiful grounds”: Dayton Herald, December 1, 1906.
- “[B]efore the dance there was an important business session”: Dayton Herald, May 27, 1907.
- “at a nominal profit of 10%”: Joseph D. Chamberlain to Messrs. Olmsted Brothers, November 4, 1915, Olmsted Associates, 1915.
- “all of the old Kramer buildings have been demolished”: Dayton Herald, April 2, 1909.
- “Autos and carriages lined the roads”: Dayton Herald, June 18, 1910.
- “a new macadamized road”: Dayton Herald, June 10, 1910.
- “The opening of the Oakwood Athletic Club”: Dayton Herald, August 24, 1912.
- “a happy playground for the children of Oakwood”: Dayton Daily News, August 24, 1912.
- “Houk Estate”: Dayton Daily News, May 6, 1914; Dayton Herald, May 7, 1914.
- “91 acres in Van Buren township”: Dayton Herald, August 26, 1914.
- “Attractively curving streets”: Dayton Daily News, April 11, 1915.
- “[Patterson] scoffs at this idea”: Report of Mr. Jones to Olmsted Brothers, May 15, 1907, Olmsted Associates, 1907.
- “Mother never had time to walk the course”: Heck, 1997, 16.

References

- “Golf and Golfers.” Dayton Daily News, September 24, 1898, p. 10.
- Heck, Phyllis F., 1997, *History of the Dayton Country Club: One Hundredth Anniversary Edition*, Dayton Country Club, Oakwood, Ohio, 236 p.
- “MacGregor Golf Clubs: The Early Years.” Retrieved from Northwest Hickory Players, <http://nwhickoryplayers.org/2016/03/macgregor-golf-clubs-the-early-years/>
- Olmsted Associates, 1907, Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, -1971; Files; 3121; Patterson, J. H.; Subdivision, "Hills and Dales"; Dayton, Ohio; 1894, 1906 to 1907. [Manuscript/Mixed Material] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss5257102257/>.
- Olmsted Associates, 1915, Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, -1971; Files; 125; Oakwood Land Co.; Subdivision; Dayton, Ohio, 1901 to 1919. [Manuscript/Mixed Material] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss5257100217/>.



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