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By Geoffrey L. Manton

Devereux Emmet was born December 11, 1861 in Westchester County, NY. The 4th of 9 children, Emmet attended Columbia College and Columbia Law School. Although he dabbled in law, then real estate, sport was Emmet's true interest, particularly hunting. Having been raised in a well-to-do family, Emmet had means to explore various pursuits. However, his marriage to Ella Smith and her family fortune afforded him the privilege of the life of leisure. Golf was rapidly gaining popularity with the socialites in the 1890s and given his knowledge of the game and successes in amateur championship play, Emmet was selected by his wife's family to lay out a golf course as part of the planned community they were building in Garden City, NY. "Island Golf Links" was built in 1897 and this original 9-hole routing by Devereux Emmet was his first project as an architect and eventually became what we know today as Garden City Golf Club.



Emmet's foray into golf architecture was likely linked by his passion for hunting, and hunting dogs in particular. Hunt clubs were popular in the late 1800s and were the predecessor of many current golf clubs. For a time, Emmet made a vocation of breeding and training hunting dogs in the U.S. before traveling to the U.K. to sell them. While overseas, Emmet visited many golf courses. In fact, Emmet was likely enlisted by Charles Blair MacDonalld to survey and sketch golf holes on the British Isles as part of his quest to build a composite course on Long Island consisting of the greatest golf holes from the U.K. The result was the National Golf Links of America and not only was Devereux Emmet one of the 70 founding members, but he also assisted C.B. MacDonalld in its design and construction.



Emmet's golf architecture firm consisted of his son, Devereux Jr., and Englishman Alfred Tull who continued the firm well after Emmet Sr.'s death (December 30, 1934). Emmet wasn't the most outspoken architect compared to his peers, but the fact that he was able to command a place in history while working during the Golden Age of architecture with contemporaries such as A.W. Tillinghast, Donald Ross, William Flynn, George Thomas, and C.B. MacDonalld/Seth Raynor speaks to the

quality of his work. Employing design features that reflected his experiences overseas, Emmet was known for creating variety within his courses by utilizing varying length of holes (particularly short par 4s), blind shots, elaborate and unusual bunkering and other "quirky" features. In order to expose the player to varied conditions, Emmet often routed his courses to change direction over short loops. He also emphasized the need for width to allow different angles and player choice in route of play.



Over his lifetime, Emmet's design portfolio included approximately 130 golf courses, albeit many of them at private estates including Marion Hollins' Women's National Golf and Tennis Club. (*Hollins also developed Cypress Point Club and Pasatiempo and convinced Bobby Jones to hire Alistair MacKenzie to design Augusta National.*) Many of Emmet's designs lie in the Northeast. Aside from Garden City, one his earliest courses was Leatherstocking GC in Cooperstown, NY (1909). Long Island holds most of his works, from Bethpage State Park to Rockaway Hunting Club to Huntington CC. On the other side of the L.I. Sound, Emmet designed Wee Burn CC in Darien (1925), Ridgewood CC in

Danbury (1922), Hartford's Keney Park (1926) and Hartford Golf Club (redesign - 1921). Although the most famous course holding the Emmet name is Congressional Country Club in Washington, D.C. (1924), the course he held most dear was St. George's Golf and Country Club in Stony Brook, NY (1917). It's here at St. George's that Emmet kept a home and tinkered with his craft. In the process, St. George's became his masterwork. Few of us know, however, that The Country Club of Farmington and St. George's Golf and Country Club share more in common than its original architect. Close to 100 years after their founding and separated by 75 miles, our clubs would travel parallel roads.

(up next: Emmet and CC Farmington)