

# CCF Historical and Architectural Series Volume 12

By Geoffrey L. Manton

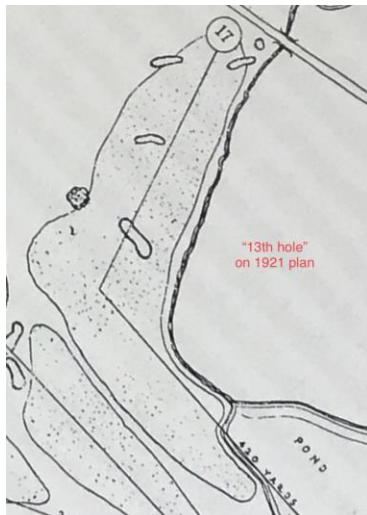
*Everything old is new again.*

Aside from "when will the COVID-19 situation end?", it's likely that one of the more popular questions around the club is regarding the status of our 13<sup>th</sup> hole. With help from 1892 Fund donors, Dusenberry Design began construction on the 13<sup>th</sup> hole in October 2019. Heavy rains, freezing temperatures, and other uncontrollable factors forced the project to be split into 2 phases. Matt Dusenberry, along with Scott Ramsay and his team, completed the second wave of construction over the past few weeks and the grass seed planted at the end of March began to germinate in the fairway during the second week of April. Time will tell, but it's possible that the 13<sup>th</sup> hole will be playable before all COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

There are 2 fundamental elements to the 13<sup>th</sup> hole project: drainage and architectural interest. Residing on one of the lowest portions of our property, the 13<sup>th</sup> hole has often been one of the "wettest" with perennial soggy walks up the fairway to the green and fairway bunkers that resembled ponds rather than sand filled penalty areas. Remediating these conditions was the primary objective when breaking ground, but an eye on design and sensitivity to our course's history was the supporting cast that will end up as the enduring lead character.



*Before: waterlogged bunkers on 13th hole*



*13th hole on 1921 Emmet plan*

Bunkers right of the fairway exist in our 1934 aerial photo and were renovated approximately 20 years ago by architect Ian Scott Taylor. CCF's 1921 routing plan depicts a similar row of bunkers, albeit in a centerline configuration. Ideally, the fairway bunkering element of Devereux Emmet's design would have been preserved, however, the lowlands and subsequent drainage difficulties demanded a new way of thinking.

In order to assist moving water off the property, new drain lines were placed in the right rough and connected to a new main drain line down the center of the fairway. Old drain lines that connected to the creek along the 13<sup>th</sup> hole were discovered to have incorrect

elevations and were, therefore, capped to prevent water moving into the turf as would occur whenever the water level in the creek rose.

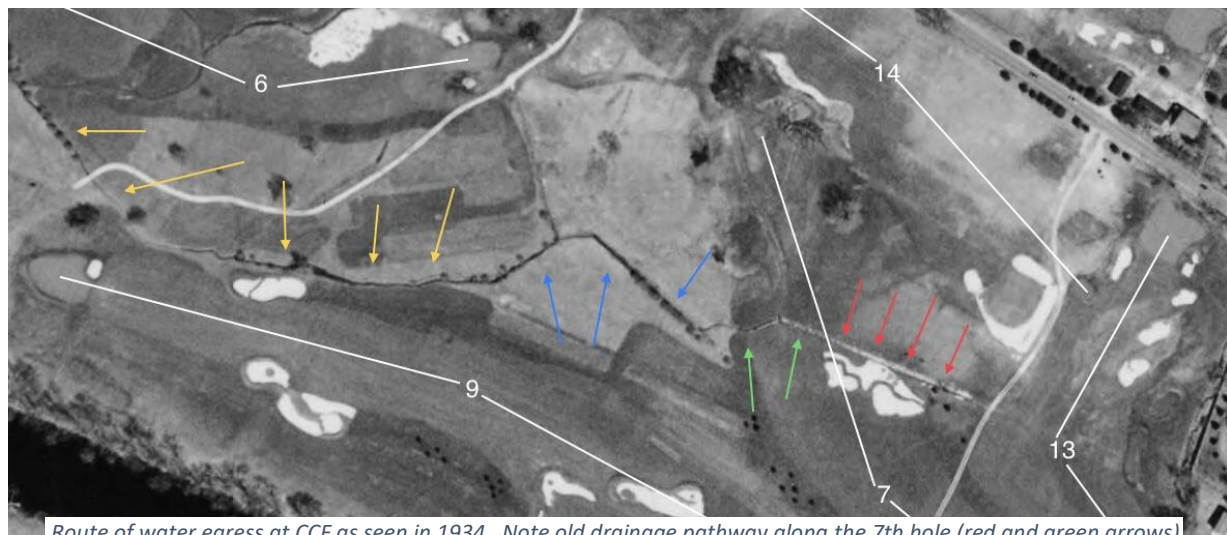
Since water flows with gravity, the new drain lines needed a path of egress. The simplest solution was to follow the existing topography. A drainage ditch was constructed along the cart path between the practice hole and our 7<sup>th</sup> hole to collect the water from 13 and move it north to the wooded area by the 7<sup>th</sup> tee (via underground pipe). From



Fairway expansion plan on 13 with drainage ditch and ridge (black hash marks) - Dusenberry Design

there, water makes its way to the culvert on 9, then to Pope Brook by the 6<sup>th</sup> hole, and eventually to the Farmington River.

Inspection of the 1934 aerial photograph demonstrates that a similar drainage ditch existed in approximately the same location 85 years ago. Just as form follows function, the spoils from the construction of the ditch were used to create a long ridge just west of the ditch.

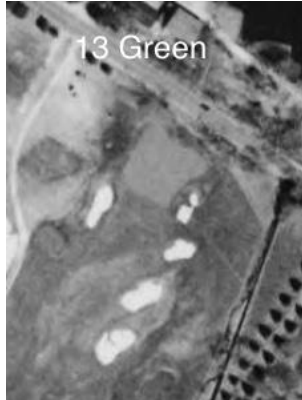


Route of water egress at CCF as seen in 1934. Note old drainage pathway along the 7th hole (red and green arrows)

This ridge serves several purposes. Not only does it act as a physical separation protecting the ditch, but it also obscures the view of the cart path on 7 from the tee. Additionally, the ridge is a nod to golden age architecture. Classic era architects often crafted vertical features with spoils from their projects and this "cop" is one such feature.



*Cop crossing foreground of fairway on the 5th hole at Sunningdale Old (England)*

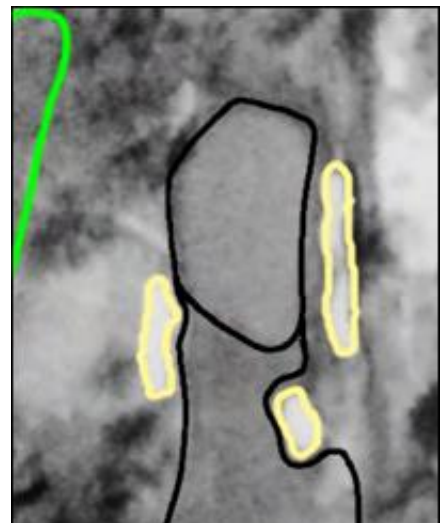


Once the drainage issue was solved, the strategy of playing the 13<sup>th</sup> hole came to the forefront of the design process. To understand the architectural thought process, it's best to inspect the hole in reverse, beginning at the dramatic changes at the green. Firstly, the green was expanded to its full green pad, as can be seen on the 1934 aerial photograph, thereby creating the opportunity for many new and exciting pin locations. Secondly, the front right greenside bunker was repositioned and replaced with an expanded, open green entrance connecting to a newly widened fairway.



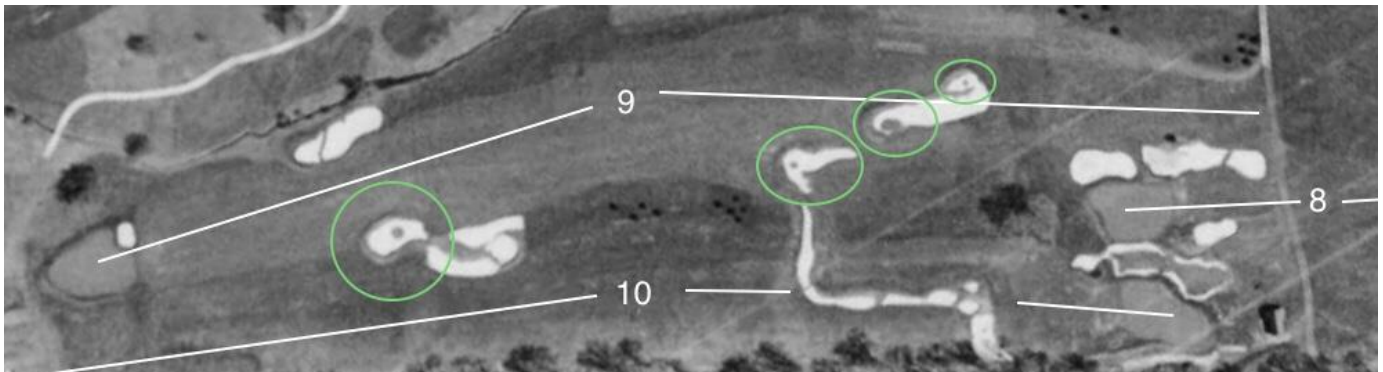
*Trench bunkers on the 4th hole at St. George's G&CC (NY)*

The newly repositioned bunker complex flanking the right side of the 13<sup>th</sup> green is a nod to our architectural heritage. This duo of narrow "trench" bunkers emulates a feature that Emmet not only employed on his other designs, including the striking encasing trench bunker complex on the 4<sup>th</sup> hole at St. George's G&CC (NY), but also at Farmington, including the now lost trench bunker seen on the 1934 version of CCF's own 5<sup>th</sup> hole.



*Right greenside trench bunker on the 5th hole at CCF in 1934*

Another nod to Devereux Emmet at CCF was the creation of the new left front greenside bunker on 13. Emmet was well known for the variety of his bunker designs and our 9<sup>th</sup> fairway once contained more than one bunker with grass islands of different shapes and locations. The mountainous grassy island within the new left bunker on 13 is a unique variant of the islanded bunker concept that would surely make Emmet proud. Trenches and islands: the Dusenberry Design team has artistically resurrected two different types of Emmet bunker features at The Country Club of Farmington.



*Menagerie of bunkering at CCF in 1934, a signature of Devereux Emmet. Note bunkers containing grass islands (green circles).*

Since the lowlands made restoring the bunkers right of the 13<sup>th</sup> fairway impractical, the decision was made to invert these features by constructing mounds and hillocks in their place. The sand pit discovered beneath our old tennis courts provided optimal material to construct these features and grow turf that can be kept both native and playable. Furthermore, the addition of these “up” features provides visual interest that can be equally appealing and distracting, depending on the mood and the position of the player.

With so many demanding features on and around the 13<sup>th</sup> green, placement of one’s approach shot is paramount. To gain the best angle to attack the green, however, requires correct positioning off the tee.



*Renovated 13th hole, ready for hydroseed. Expanded fairway in the foreground. Hillocks and mounds just beyond. (photo - S. Ramsay)*

If the pin is on the left side of the green, an approach from first half of the fairway will provide the best angle. Although this creates a longer second shot, one can attempt to shorten that distance by playing to an expanded right side of the first portion of the fairway. However, such gains do not come without risk since the native rough, mounding, and even the creek will be in play. Since the shorter hitter plays to the first portion of the fairway off the tee on 13 out of necessity, the fairway short right of the green was expanded closer to the native area to allow the shorter hitter more playing options other than hitting "around" the hazards. This open approach also invites the option a low running shot onto the green from this longer angle.



*Drone photo and post-construction rendering by Matt Dusenberry*

By contrast, if the pin is at the right side of the green, particularly at the recaptured back right location, a tee shot played further down the length of the fairway will result in the best angle to that side of the green. However, the extension of the ridge (cop) down the left side of the fairway puts added emphasis on accuracy. This cop will be a factor with any aggressive tee shot that misses left.

Despite the pin location, challenging the corner of this doglegged hole to gain a shorter approach shot now comes with risk of entangling the cop by missing left and the rough terrain on a miss right. Conversely, a more conservative, shorter tee shot will entertain the widest portion of the fairway. However, the risk then comes into play on the second shot by way of a longer approach to the green that must also contest with the interposed native covered mounding.



Drone photo and post-construction rendering by Matt Dusenberry

The renovation by Dusenberry Design has made our 13<sup>th</sup> hole one of the most strategic design holes at CCF. More than ever before, successfully thinking backward from the green on 13 will gain the player the most advantage. Converting that thought into action is the beauty of the game.

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***Postscript: A hearty thanks to the 29 members and our own Superintendent, Scott Ramsay, who have donated money to the 1892 Fund. None of these improvements would have been possible without their support. The future of our golf course is bright and continued contributions to this fund will help to secure our future. Please consider investing in our golf course by making a monthly pledge to the 1892 Fund. The Green Committee recommends a \$50 monthly contribution, but any amount (greater or lesser) would be appreciated.***