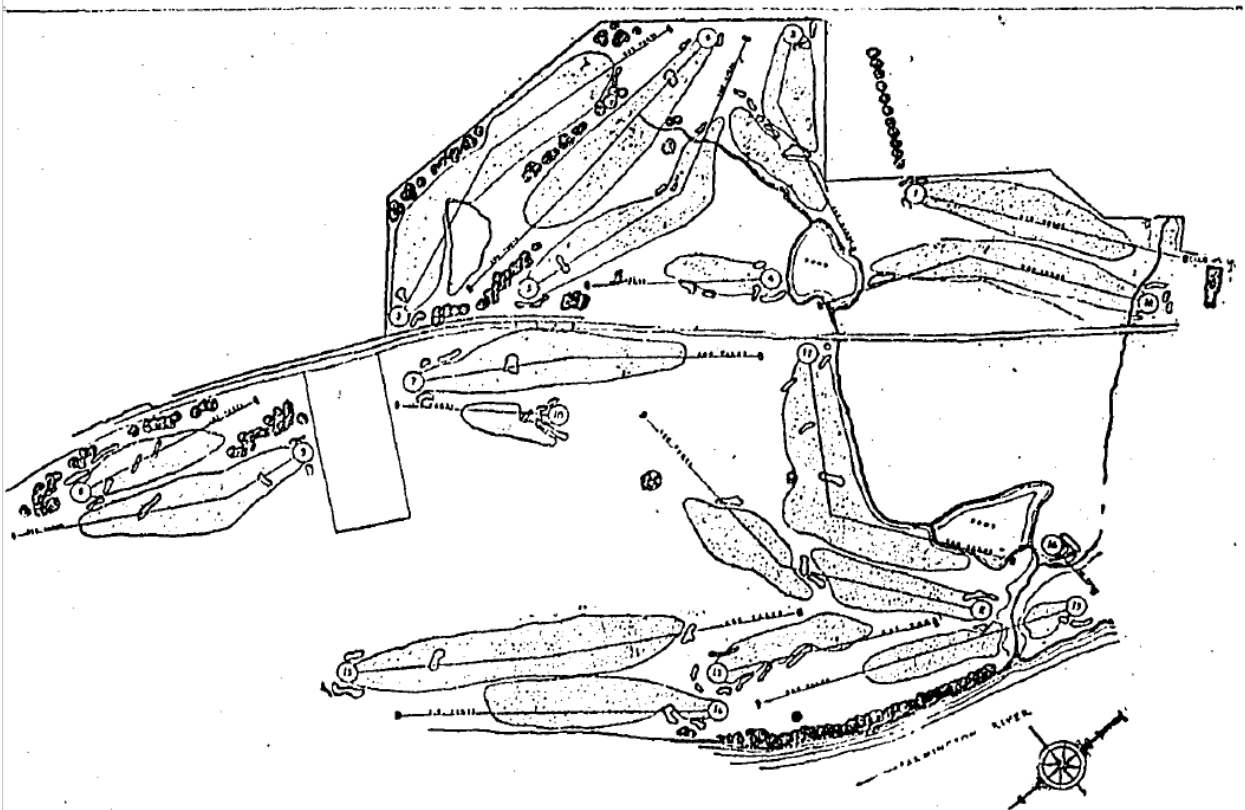


CCF Historical and Architectural Series, Volume 3
By Geoffrey L. Manton

\$750. That was the amount the Green Committee at The Country Club, Farmington reserved in 1916 to revise the existing 9-hole golf course. The architect they retained for the task was Devereux Emmet. The Club must have been pleased with the result because four years later, when the decision was made to expand to 18 holes, Emmet was again chosen for the job. This time, \$75,000 was allocated.

By 1921, Emmet had begun to make a name for himself as an architect and based on his routing plan, the course at CCF was projected by the Hartford Courant to become among the finest in New England. Emmet lauded the site for its natural topographical features and sandy soil optimal for the game. As was common for Emmet, and likely the result of his work on the National Golf Links of America in Southampton, NY, Emmet planned to incorporate template holes in the Farmington design. Two exist today. Can you identify them?

Farmington's New Eighteen-Hole Golf Course



Construction on the new 18-hole course began in 1921 and took approximately 2 years to complete. Much of the work was performed by the Green staff and local contractors under the leadership of the

Green Committee Chair, Josphe Alsop. During this time, additional land was acquired by the club to complete the project. The result is largely the same routing we play today.

Our course is best described as heathland in character and has classic Emmet features including blind shots and short par 4s contrasted with the occasional long 2-shotter. Also, in Emmet style, the holes at Farmington change direction often and no two holes are similar. Our push-up style, sharp edged greens are characteristic of the era in which they were built, and their postage-stamp small size provide considerable defense.



In typical Scottish form, the opening tee sits astride the patio of the clubhouse which lies in the center of town. The opening holes are engaging with the first 5 unfolding along the rolling topography of the western foothills of Talcott Mountain. As if foreshadowing, players are afforded a peek of the holes ahead when cresting a rise and descending to the green on the 3rd hole. Play continues in a counterclockwise fashion along the perimeter of the 140-acre property with a serpentine detour to cover the interior. Holes 6-13 are routed on the flat floodplain that flanks the Farmington River and provide a contrasting relief in both topography and perspective, with views of the Talcott Ridgeline above, rather than the Farmington Valley

below. Also, in step with the great Scottish courses, the turn at CCF is located at the furthest point from the clubhouse and is situated adjacent to the water with views of a town church steeple piercing the horizon beyond. The 10th and 11th holes then run south, paralleling the segment of the Farmington River which runs NORTH - a unique feature for a river in North America. The closing 5 holes work back into the foothills in crescendo, culminating with the finishing tee shot played directly toward the clubhouse - and in Scottish fashion - back into town. To be sure, CCF very much has a sense of place throughout the round.

Devereux Emmet remained the consulting architect for CCF from 1916 until his death on the second to last day of 1934. Emmet made several revisions to the course over that time, adding holes, moving greens, and creating his uniquely stylized bunkers. Layered in linear fashion, irregularly shaped or a string of pearls, teardrop or trenched necklace, bunkers were his signature. And, as demonstrated on an aerial view of the course taken in 1934, The Country Club, Farmington had its share of Emmet autographs. But perhaps the most dramatic of Emmet's revisions came as a recommendation made in 1934 when he outlined the conversion of the 18th hole into a par 3 and the 17th into a par 4. It would take about 15 more years for this suggestion to become a reality. As it turns out, the man who completed the project would be part of a trend that changed the course of golf architecture for decades.

(up next: What's become of The Golden Age)