

CCF Historical and Architectural Series Volume 6

By Geoffrey L. Manton

If you've played golf in New England, chances are good that you've played a golf course either designed by or renovated by Geoffrey Cornish. Originally from Canada, Cornish was a University of Massachusetts trained agronomist who made his way into golf course design without any formal landscape architecture education. Having designed or renovated over 200 courses, Cornish is known for being one of the most prolific golf architects of the 20th century and has been involved with more courses in New England than any other architect in history. However, Cornish's legacy is lauded more for the economies of his designs, which brought golf to many areas that otherwise could not have afforded it, rather than the architectural design quality of his product.

At Farmington, we know that Cornish was retained to complete Devereux Emmet's vision of a par 4 - par 3 finish. Our present 17th hole is a Geoffrey Cornish creation and although we don't have documentation of its exact date of construction, there's evidence to suggest that the project was completed shortly after the end of World War II. It's also likely that Cornish completed other projects at Farmington. A 1951 aerial survey photo shows the 17th hole in its current configuration, but also a drastically different appearance to the lower sections of the golf course when compared to the aerial photo taken in 1934.

Like a true Golden Age architect, Devereux Emmet utilized the natural topography of the land to dictate his design on the hillier sections of our golf course. As such, there are relatively few bunkers on these holes. However, on the lower, flatter sections of the golf course, Emmet had to manufacture features in order to develop strategy and interest. As the 1934 aerial so boldly illustrates, there are multiple clusters of uniquely Emmet styled bunkers of various shapes draped across the golf holes on this section of our property. Over the course of the following 17 years however, all but one of these stylized bunker complexes were eliminated.



1934 aerial of The Country Club, Farmington focused the 10th & 8th greens (top) and old 7th green (bottom).



Hole 10
1934

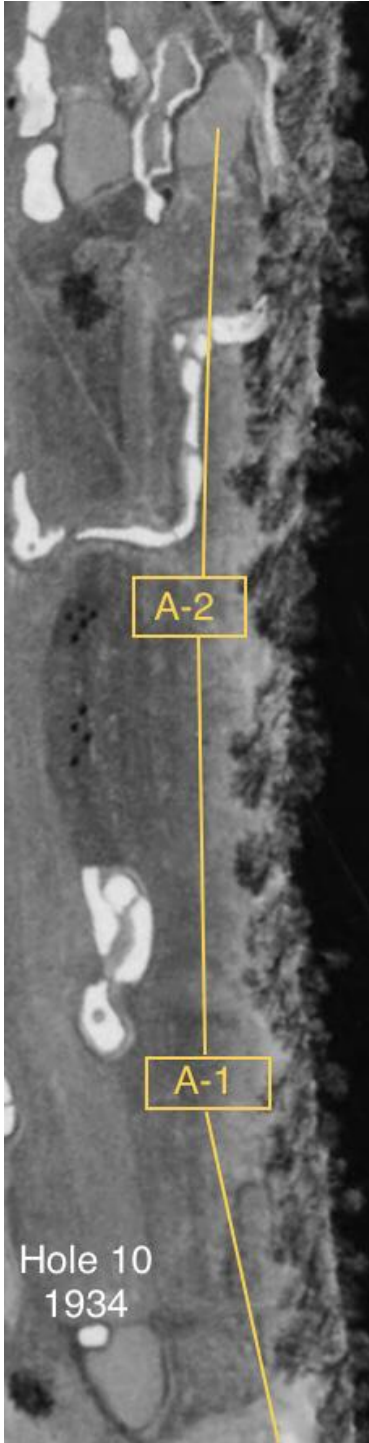
The most imposing bunker complex in the 1934 aerial lay on our 10th hole. A close inspection of its shape and configuration, along with a knowledge of strategic architecture, reveals its importance.

In general, the most memorable par 5 golf holes employ some element of risk vs. reward to dictate how the 3 (or 2!) shots to the green are played. On the opening hole of the inward 9 at CCF, Emmet chose to build cross bunkers on opposing sides of the fairway positioned 50 yards apart and connected by a long, slender string of bunkers down the center length of the fairway.

Furthermore, the fairway to the right of this centerline bunker complex is a foot or 2 higher than the half of the fairway to the left. In a rather bold fashion, Emmet is saying to the golfer: *when you play this hole, you have a decision to make.*

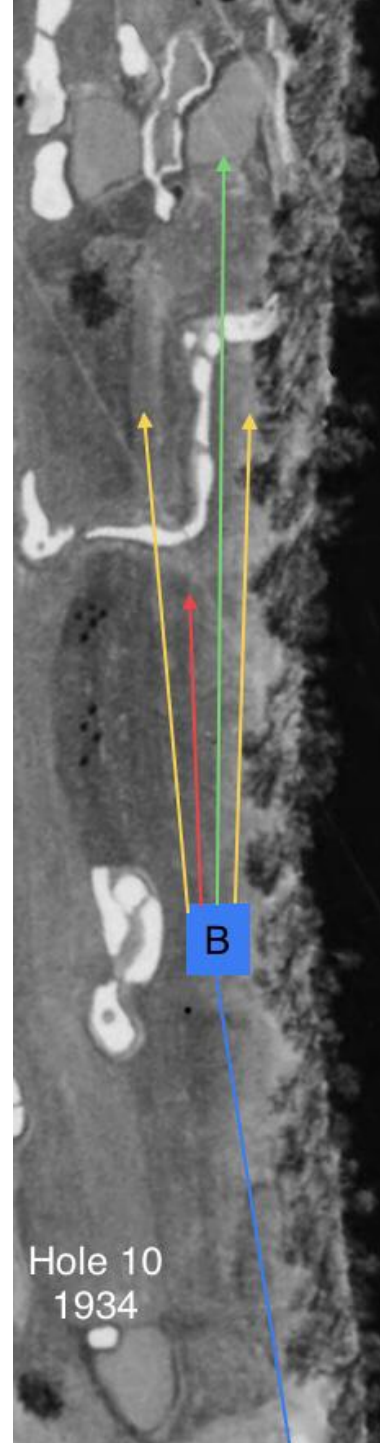


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As the diagram to the left demonstrates, the most conservative choice in playing the 1934 version of our 10th hole is to take the bunkers out of play. A tee shot played short of the left-sided fairway bunker complex (which contains the only original Emmet bunkers that remain today - see color photo above) allows for a wide landing area [A-1]. Then, a second shot played short of the second bunker complex that crosses the fairway is not only a short layup, but it also has a wide landing area [A-2]. From here, a carry over the centerline bunker complex to the green is the least imposing, even if the player is unable to reach the green. In fact, the shorter hitter has the option of choosing at what point to cross the hazard.

The diagram to the right illustrates the many options available to the golfer in 1934 if a strong tee shot is played. From this landing area [B], located in the fairway



between the left-sided bunker complex and the property's boundary (Farmington River), the player would have 4 distinct options to choose from. The most conservative play [red arrow] would have a result the same as the second landing area [A-2] chosen in the previous diagram. The bravest option from [B] takes on the most risk [green arrow] by attempting to carry the entire second bunker complex and take on the green. However, a mid-length option is also available, albeit with its own degree of peril. For those that desired a shorter approach shot to

the green than from [A-2] but did not have the strength or fortitude to attempt to carry the entire bunker complex, a mid-range second shot to either the right or left of the longitudinal centerline bunker [yellow arrows] could have been played. The choice of direction for this mid-range selection may have been dictated by the preferred angle towards the pin position of the day or congruency with one's natural shot shape.

We have no evidence to prove that it was Cornish that eliminated this cross/centerline/cross bunker complex on the 10th hole, but based on his traditional style of design, it's reasonable to think that he was involved. Cornish and those of his era generally believed in having a straightforward path to the hole and these bunkers would have seemed much too imposing. The result of their removal is a one-dimensional golf hole. At present, the sole objective on the journey from tee to green is to keep your golf moving forward, on terra firma, in-bounds, and out of the Farmington River. Not much thought is required when selecting a club for the second shot today; simply - what can be hit the furthest and straightest. However, wouldn't it be nice to have another par 5 at CCF that makes you think; a hole that gave you pause when reaching in your bag to select a club? After all, that's what the best par 5s are made of - the opportunity to risk something to gain a reward.

The next time you play the 10th hole, take a close look at the fairway around 150 yards from the green. To the left, you'll see a shallow swale that crosses a portion of the fairway and extends into the rough. Then look forward and you'll notice that the right half of the fairway rises rather abruptly compared to the left. You're looking at the ghostly remains of the sentinel bunker complex from the 1934 aerial photograph. Now ask yourself: would the hole be more interesting if these bunkers still existed in some fashion today?