

Valley View Club History 1966-2002

Golf in Cambridge started at a small nine hole course within the confines of the Henry County Fairgrounds. The greens were sand and the cost of membership was \$19.00 per year. It was fun at a time when people had very little money.

In 1963 and 1964, the economy was better, and a group from that club began to think "green." Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a separate course with green "greens?" And a dream was born! As with anything new there were skeptics, but many volunteers believed in the possibility and held meetings explaining the plan. Several locations were being considered. One of these was west of Cambridge on Route 81. It was the farm on the left at the Andover-Osco Y.

Unfortunately, tragedy provided the site for the new club as the owners of this farm were killed in an auto accident. Five individuals purchased the 156 acre farm south of Cambridge from the estate of the Elmer Lindquist family. They had confidence that the needed membership could be obtained. The purchasers of the farm were Bill Munson, Dave Carter, Horton Lindburg, Leonard Telleen and Curt Edmund.

Committees worked to appeal to family life – not Country Club per^se, always referring to a recreational area. Many drives for membership were held with potlucks and informational meetings. Volunteers literally went door to door in Cambridge and the surrounding area seeking support. Even the purchase of a vacuum sweeper was made to insure one membership. Bush Anderson said in the end it was the community spirit that brought about the foundation of the club. It was a group of people working together. A name for the club was needed.

We don't know if there was a contest, but we do know that Leonard and Margaret Telleen were looking south from the club and Margaret remarked, "What a beautiful view of the valley." Hence – Valley View name was chosen.

A 150 member goal was reached by March 1, 1965 and plans for the club were started. Charter memberships were offered which allowed members' children and grandchildren to use the club at no charge as long as they were not living within a 25-mile radius of the club.

The original membership was \$300, and annual dues were \$100 per year. A membership of 150 would make the club eligible for a Recreational FHA loan available to build rural golf courses at 3% to 4%. A loan of \$85,000 was borrowed. The farm at purchase was large enough to accommodate more golf holes.

The farm was an operating farm with a large barn, silo, corn crib, cattle yard, machine shed, house and garage. The original house is the inner structure of the existing clubhouse.

Being a farm area, member farmers brought their tractors and equipment, and the town men brought themselves, shovels and rakes. The razing of the buildings was all done by volunteers. One man fell through the hay mow floor when the barn was being dismantled. Even the fairways were seeded by volunteers. All of this entailed months of work by club members.

The U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service men, after hours, donated their time and expertise and designed and surveyed the lake. Edwin Lewis, Eugene Gray, and Bush Anderson were on that team. Olin Cowser and Robert Johnson, contractors from Woodhull, did the earthwork and building of the lake and dam.

A campground was designed and started. The area was all timber in the beginning and was grubbed out by volunteer members.

Henry Nalvanko of Milan was employed as the contractor to build the original pool. What size to make the pool? That was the question. At a meeting to try to find an answer, over a hundred people formed a rectangle on the Community Hall floor. The space was measured and that determined the dimensions of the first pool.

J.B. Barnstedt of Kewanee was the contractor for the clubhouse renovation. A wing was built around three sides of the existing house and remains as our clubhouse today.

The contractor for the original nine holes was Gary Locke. He had built several courses in our area. The cost of construction at that time was around \$40,000.

Play started July 4, 1966. There was a big celebration opening day with fireworks across the lake in the evening. The members had blankets on the near hillside and enjoyed the reflections in the water.

Immediately, as today, everyone had to have a golf cart – so cart sheds began being built and built and built. And there went the tennis courts.

The Directors and Board at the time of inception were: President – Dave Carter, Vice President – Harley Schnowske, Secretary – Phyllis Johnson, Treasurer – Donovan “Bush” Anderson. Other board members were Eben Johnson, Richard Dybdal, Vince Brimley, Ed Lewis, Horton Lindburg, Lynn Morey, Ray Wells, L.W. Telleen, and Mrs. F.C. Swan.

A sort of windfall befell the club. Shortly after the club was constructed, the Natural Gas Pipeline was required to enforce the walls of the existing pipeline which ran through the north part of the course. A \$19,000 cash settlement was offered and accepted. The course was somewhat torn up across a line affecting holes 1, 5 and 6. This area was repaired by the Pipeline and the settlement money helped the club lower its debt for a short nuisance time on the course.

Many individuals and businesses contributed to our club, including the Henry County Highway Department – superintendents were Ray Wells and Nelson Taber at that time, and the Cambridge High School for publication efforts.

As the club continued, there were several formal dances and other money maker functions held. The dances were very elegant affairs with long dresses for the ladies (this was the dressy attire of the 60's and 70's). Holidays had breakfasts with committees of members in charge. Sometimes there were costume parties, especially fun at Halloween. You could never guess who some people were – they would remain incognito all evening. Sunday night potlucks were held on holidays. We also enjoyed card parties. There were all kinds of activities held – pork chop dinners, bake sales, morning coffees, etc. – all to raise funds for the club.

Horton Lindburg felt the club needed a bathhouse at the campground, especially because many public functions were held there. He personally signed a note at the bank to assure this project, and a bathhouse was built.

A group of campers desired to have a pavilion built, so they signed a loan for this project. Many, many fundraisers such as dances, 4th of July celebration with pork chop dinner, pit cooked, etc. were done by groups to raise money. These were a lot of hard work, but it was a lot of fun and joy for all members. Both notes of the campground were retired as a result of that labor.

The liquor side of the club has also had many changes. Originally some members had small refrigerators with beer and wine in their cart sheds. Then the concept of "group get-togethers" started in the old machine shed – dirt floor – no chairs – just comradeship. Next we graduated to a special room built by members called "Down Yonder." Howard Stahl was the "chief" of this project. When completed, we had tables, chairs, and refrigerators. We used the BYOB system for drinks and snacks and many happy times and fond memories remain from that era. In the late 1980's a plan grew to remove the men's locker room and the ladies showers, and this became the current lounge area we now have. At first we had individual lockers that were rented to keep our liquor. Next we had a volunteer committee that would buy and deliver the liquor. An honor system was used for that. In 1994 the laws changed, a liquor license was obtained, and the lounge was started. This all was a result so that we could annex to the Village of Cambridge.

In 1983 the entire Henry County had a severe drought. This affected the farmers especially, and several farm memberships were lost due to the economy. A membership drive was needed to continue the club due to lost memberships, and new members were obtained from Orion, Woodhull, Coal Valley, Andover and other surrounding areas. Many of these people still belong to the club, and we appreciate their support and membership.

Due to the drought, the lake got very low, and it had to be deepened. We also enlarged it somewhat at that time. Previously, in the late 70's, the club had bought a small acreage from the Wm Nelson family; so this did allow for increased area for lake and better management of hole #8 which became useful later also.

The club became debt free for a short time in 1989 when our original mortgage became paid. Not for long! The pool needed to be rebuilt in 1984 due to leaking and not meeting the State code. Wellborn Construction, Orion, rebuilt and expanded the pool as the membership was much larger now, approximately 300 members.

At this time the second dream of the club began to surface. Enough membership and a desire for a second 9 holes for the Back Nine came to light. The club had meetings and explained their plan and the membership accepted the concept at an annual meeting. The club went out to the membership seeking monies by cash donations, raffles, etc. to support the start of this project. The club has also experienced an unexpected repayment; so an additional loan was made against the club and work on the "Back Nine" was started. The expansion wheels started turning in 1997 and construction started in 1998. A new well for water had to be dug, as well as some digging out of the lake for water for the club and course. The Cutting Edge, a group out of Coal Valley, IL, headed by Troy Shattuck, was the firm hired to build the new course. Dan Halldorson served as the architect and consultant. Eight holes were constructed at a cost of \$400,000. The hole we know today as #11 was an alternate green for the

original #8. It was built in 1984 to add more interest when you were playing a second nine holes. Club members again did a lot of volunteer work shaping and filling bunkers, forming cart paths, and laying sod to help defray costs. The "Back Nine" opened July 4, 1999 and a dedication was held.

Hopefully, the club will be enjoyed for another hundred years. Enjoy your club!!

Research by:

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Original Expenses and Loans:

The land was purchased by Curt Edmund, Bill Munson, Dave Carter, Horton Lindburg, and Leonard Telleen for \$64,000 (159 acres) \$15,000 down + \$49,000 5-year loan at 5%.

The Club House (material & original) addition was \$9725.00. J.B. Barnstedt Contractor (bill not known) (est. shows \$20,000 for both on a report).

FHA Loan granted for \$85,000 for Recreational purposes @ 3% to 4%, also to operate the club for 30 years.

Before the opening, the women met to organize a ladies' day. They decided to meet on Wednesday for golf and cards and to call themselves the Valley Viewers. Sue Nelson was the first president. During the 1980's and 1990's, the Valley Viewers and their husbands had an annual turkey dinner for the public. The money earned was used for extras to improve the clubhouse and playground.