

A HISTORY OF FOREST PARK GOLF COURSE
NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA



FOREST
PARK
GOLF COURSE
1927 - 1992

IN RECOGNITION OF FOREST PARK GOLF COURSE'S
SIXTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

BY ALAN PHILIP HINDS

NOBLESVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

JUNE 1992

For the Record . . .

This history of Forest Park Golf Course is a story of men and women, personalities, and events that are unique to Noblesville, Indiana. It is about a golf course, sixty-five years old this week but not ready to retire.

It is more than a story of a wheat field plowed and grass planted, dirt mounded and flagsticks placed in cups. It is about spirit, volunteerism, pride, persistence, devotion and affection for a sport unlike any other.

Each person has his or her own version of Forest Park Golf Course, based on events as they recall. These are my accounts, based on the memories of those who played and the reports of those who recorded them at the time.

With regard to this history I am reminded of what has been said about a John Wayne Western. "If it is not the way it was . . . it's the way it should have been."

Alan Philip Hinds
Noblesville, Indiana
June 20, 1992

Editor's Note: From time to time, throughout the following pages, voices from Forest Park Golf Course will flow into the script. I began to notice them a short time after the pages were typed. It just happened that way.

Down Through the Years . . .

It was in the era of Bobby Jones, America's golfing hero, Walter Hagen, and Tommy Armour that Noblesville citizens were inspired to build a golf course.

It was a Thursday afternoon in June, sixty-five years ago that Forest Park Golf Course opened for play, marking it as Hamilton County's first golf course. Since that time the people and personality of the course have helped make Forest Park the centerpoint of golfing tradition for some time.

Consistent with the spirit of volunteerism that marks our city today, the course was initially prepared by ten men engaging seven tractor teams. With plans from a prominent golf course architect in Chicago and the advisory assistance from popular course designer Bill Diddle, the course was prepared. Through the summer, money and labor were donated along the way.

On June 15, 1927, about a year after the start, the course was turned over to the city, free of debt. The course had cost just over \$4 thousand. A season pass was sold for \$7.50 and greens fees were 50 cents.

Dr. C. C. Allen, who was credited for the leadership in developing the course, noted in his dedication remarks that "many things remained to be finished and that those who play the course are charged to do their best to keep it in good condition". And these words ring true to us today!

Down through the years, Forest Park pros have entered Indiana's Golf Hall of Fame, struck the first ball in the first Masters at Augusta, and taught countless players how to play and improve their game. Its greenskeepers have worked with great devotion and its patrons have enjoyed thousands of rounds of wonderful golf.

Chapter One (The 1920's)

The Park Question Has Been Settled

To begin at the beginning, one must go to a December evening in 1925. It was then the Noblesville City Council approved the purchase of 118 acres just across the White River.

It was the property of former Mayor, Horace Brown, and the agreed price was \$225 an acre. Besides a purchase price of \$26,500, an additional \$15,000 was approved by ordinance in order to make improvements. After what seemed like years of debate, the LEDGER article proclaimed "the Park question had been settled." The very next day, the businessmen of Noblesville met at their Kiwanis Club and, as a group, spoke very favorably on the council decisions. After the luncheon, Major Lee Klotz talked of what the purchase of Park property could mean.

"Willard! Harry! C.C.! Hold up," shouted the Major.

"The bottom land of Brown's woods is an ideal size for a nine-hole course. There are 55 acres there and I think there is enough interest around to make it happen."

"You caught the golf bug when you were at Cornell, didn't you", joked Willard Hare.

"Yes, I'm afraid so", replied Major Klotz. "Some of my classmates took me to some very nice layouts. We can build one just as nice and I'll even get our horses from the National Guard Armory to handle the grading and leveling."

Two weeks later a notice in the LEDGER announced that local golf enthusiasts in the city and surrounding vicinity would be meeting about plans for building a golf course. Their proposals would be taken to the Park Commissioners as soon as the City Council named them.

On New Year's Day, 1926, the first Park Board meeting was held. Local dentist and member of the Audubon Club, Dr. Earl Brooks, was elected president. Sam Mott and Will Hayes were to serve as other Board members. In the audience sat several of the city golfers. They smiled. It was clear that the Park Board was in favor of building a golf course if an orderly plan was developed and funded through community resources.

With the approach of better spring weather, the clearing and cleaning of the 118 acres began in earnest. By mid-April 1927, the development had been rapid. Thousands of volunteer hours were spent trimming bushes, raking leaves, and piling discarded brush. In the bottom land, winter wheat planted in the fall was showing a glossy green color. This land was yet untouched as people knew larger plans were underway but, without funding, well, maybe it was still just a dream.

But some dreams need an angel and so it was for Forest Park Golf Course. This angel grew up in Noblesville, attended school here and had already established a reputation for good deeds in the community. The angel was in Chicago, but he could hear the sounds of clubs rattling and golf spikes clicking almost a year away.

On the last Friday in April, no one was late for the 7:45 p.m. meeting which was to form the Forest Park Golf Association. Frank Oursler rose

and held aloft a letter from his boyhood chum, Sol O. Levinson, a prominent international lawyer now living in the Windy City. In the letter, Levinson pledged \$1,000 for the purpose of building a golf course in Noblesville. This was not the first time he had looked back home and helped. Noblesville High School had scholarships to give and athletic equipment to use, thanks to Sol Levinson.

Excited now, the group set about putting structure and organization to their enthusiasm. Dr. Lee Klotz, a veterinarian by trade but better known by his National Guard military title, Major, was elected president. Harry Mills of a local automobile firm had financial experience and was elected secretary and treasurer. The membership committee was composed of John T. Kester, Harry Mills, Kenneth Meara, Harry Ludlum, and Frank Oursler.

The meeting continued with the decision to appoint nine greens committees with each committee to construct one hole. Barker Hardware would break some of the ground and McCoun Construction would move 1,500 yards of dirt onto the course.

Finances were the next order of business and an additional \$600 was raised. With ample funds and certainty that more would come, with countless hours of volunteer labor, and with "at cost" contributions from major vendors in the community, all that was needed now was a golf course architect and construction supervisor.

The basic plan for the course was initiated by the work of nationally prominent landscape architect, A. W. Brayton, Jr., of Indianapolis. From

Miami Beach to Riley Memorial Park, people have admired the work and consultant advice of Mr. Brayton. The Park Board had contracted his firm to develop the plan for Forest Park. Engineers were at Forest Park the first week in February and did a complete topographical map of the property.

Mr. Thomas ^{Bentlow}~~Bentlow~~, of Chicago, had been secured by Brayton as consultant for the golf course layout. Bentlow was one of the best golf course architects in the Midwest and had been involved in countless course projects when the Forest Park engineering papers were rolled across his drafting table.

Dr. C.C. Allen, a local chemist who worked at Hamilton County Chemical Plant, or serum plant, as it was called, seemed to be a consensus choice to direct the construction. A natural athlete, with boundless energy, he was a bachelor who everyone assumed had plenty of time to spend building a golf course. Allen rented a room from Frank Haines, Major Klotz's partner in the drug store business.

He was a scientist and could understand things like agronomy, civil engineering, grades, slopes - all that. He also knew the noted golf course architect, Bill Diddle. Yes, Dr. Allen agreed to give it a go and now the Park Board had all the plans and commitments they needed to allow a golf course to be built on new park property.

In early June, seven teams and 10 men began building greens. By mid-June the upper level of the park was open on Sundays. At the same time,

tractors began to plow the ground to allow seeding.

"Operator, please get me number #573 in Noblesville, it's the Haines' residence at 240 North 9th Street." Careful not to track dirt from the afternoon's grading on Stella Haines' floor, Forest Park's golf course builder answered the call he had been waiting for, "Haines' residence, Allen speaking".

"C. C., this is Bill Diddle, I will be at Lake Wawasee this weekend to talk with the North Shore Country Club." "Good", Dr. Allen replied, "I'll bring over ^{Bentlow's} ~~Bentlow's~~ Forest Park plans. I'll be in Lake Wawasee also. My sister is in the hospital there and I'm going up to visit."

As the drawings and sketches evolved, Bentlow's plans, and Diddle's liking for a "natural course" with few artificial settings and few sand traps, became part of the original Forest Park layout. During the rest of the summer, the activity on the bottom land was scattered but constant throughout the day as volunteers came and went.

Up in the more wooded area, the park was taking shape. A road was cut through the park and many of the 12,000 trees and shrubs that had been purchased in April were planted. Forest Park Inn and the unique stone fireplace and stone slabs for the verandas were under construction. By July there was enough room for family reunions to be held. The LEDGER's pictorial spread of the new park captured the excitement of the town.

For all, Forest Park seemed to produce a smile on everyone's face that didn't come off until dark.

The talent mix of this 1926 Forest Park construction crew was diverse. John T. Kester and Harry Mills would often leave their dusty construction clothes piled on the back porch, clean up, and dash to practice sessions for the Noblesville Military band. Several were in the automobile and garage business, there was a vice president of a bank, a druggist, and other professionals.

At the close of 1926, the Park Board President estimated the members of the board and others had spent an average of 3 to 4 hours a day on matters dealing with the park development.

Where possible, work on the course continued through the winter and by spring there was real progress as grass began to thicken and greens, top dressed and cut, began to form. Almost a year to the day when teams began clearing the fields, the Park Board announced the new golf course would be opened at one o'clock on the afternoon of June 16, 1927.

A special greens committee advising the Park Board was appointed: Dr. Allen, Willard Hare, Harry Mills, Kenneth Meara, and Don Jenkins. Bert Cottingham was appointed officer of the course and would be on duty from daylight until dark. His responsibilities would be to collect greens fees, set at 50¢ per day or \$7.50 for the season.

The Forest Park Golf Association had completed its task. The work had been paid for by the golfers and the course would soon be turned over to

the Park Board free of debt. There had been no shortage of help along the way.

Major sponsors, as we would call them today, were Fred C. Edward's Company, a plumbing concern, the premier road construction group, McCoun Construction, Noblesville Milling, Pinnell-Dulin Lumber, and Barker Hardware. Indianapolis sponsors were Western Oil Refining, Gibson Company, Baxter Company, Hayes and Whitaker, Central Motors Parts Co., Atlas Security, Central Rubber and Supply, and American Linen Supply. In addition to the Levinson donation, a substantial sum was also received from W. C. Essington of Orlando, Florida.

Now it seemed the next job was to organize a program for opening day. But what to do? Their instincts were correct. Before a major tournament you have a dinner. This was planned for the evening of June 15, 1927.

Long shadows had begun to stretch across the park as about one hundred guests of the Forest Park Golf Association milled about the east veranda looking down on their handiwork. It was an enthusiastic meeting, hands on shoulders, nodding smiles. Yes, they had done well.

Major Lee Klotz was master of ceremonies. Park Board President, Dr. Earl Brooks, stood to accept presentation of the course. In doing so, Dr. Brooks held an open hand toward Dr. C. C. Allen and credited him with directing most of the promotional and manual labor toward the golf project. The Park Board made him an honorary member of the board and presented him with a gift.

The standing applause subsided and Dr. C. C. Allen fiddled with the red bow of the package just handed him. He was touched. "My friends," he started, "there are many sorrows and pleasures of building a golf course. So many people to thank for helping us over so many hurdles. There are so many things that remain for us to do before we are finished. My hope is that those who play the course would do their best to keep it in good condition. I am not sure what folks will say about our project many years from now. Or even if the course will be around to be remembered, but you and I know we have been part of something special." His glistening eyes and dry speech gave hints he should keep it short. The father of Forest Park golf course sat down and the hurrahs started again.

Harry Mills then stood to give his treasurer's report. The largest expense was \$2,712 for labor. Grass seed had cost \$435 and grass sod another \$400. Freight and express was \$70. In all they had paid \$3,300 on the course and were in debt around \$550. There was an immediate call for cash donations to meet this indebtedness. The entire amount was raised and the course was turned over to the Park Board free of any incumbrance. In total cost, the original expense to bring the course to playable conditions was \$4,050.45.

Dr. Brooks said the Park Board hoped to eventually surround the course with trees and plant a great deal of shrubbery. Our goal, he said, was "to plant a thousand trees over the next ten years." There were several

agenda items to finish the course which were estimated at \$1,500. It was hoped that a good portion of the money could be obtained through fees in the coming season.

Before the tournament, the Haines and Klotz drug store ran a different ad than usual in the LEDGER. Normally, their ads were a genteel invitation to "try a drink at our soda fountain" or pointing out that fine toilet articles, stationery, wallpaper or paints were available. Supreme Golf would have been proud of the promotion.

FORE! Golf Headquarters is now open! Complete line of golf clubs, bags, balls and golf accessories. Get your golf outfit now! Be prepared for opening day's play!

--- Haines and Klotz

Cloudy skies in the morning cleared by mid-day and a large crowd was on the course to see the first play at the new facility. In all, 50 golfers teed off, led by Dr. C. C. Allen. His foursome included Willard Hare, Major Lee Klotz and Harry Mills. The second foursome was Don Jenkins, Kenneth Meara, John T. Kester, and Albert Haas. Other players followed and Forest Park Golf Course was officially opened.

The scores were considered very good in view of the fact the course was new, some of the players were out of practice and some had never had a golf club in their hand. Thirty-six golfers finished 18 holes and posted scores. These are listed on the following page with a handicap calculated for this particular tournament.

**OPENING DAY TOURNAMENT SCORES
FOREST PARK GOLF COURSE, JUNE 16, 1927**

<u>Entrants</u>	<u>Out</u>	<u>In</u>	<u>Gross</u>	<u>Hd'cap</u>	<u>Net</u>
C. C. Allen	50	48	98	16	82
W. J. Hare	56	51	107	28	79
J. Lee Klotz	52	56	108	30	78
H. F. Mills	60	49	109	28	81
Don Jenkins	55	50	105	30	75
Kenneth Meara	50	50	100	28	72
J. T. Kester	57	53	110	25	85
A. R. Haas	51	54	105	30	75
A. Craycraft	52	60	112	30	82
Ben Christian	57	49	106	20	86
Harry Ludlum	52	56	108	30	78
Frank Oursler	62	53	115	28	87
Albert Hare	64	49	113	22	91
Richard Harrison	48	47	95	20	75
Albert Hull	50	49	99	22	77
Scott Stevenson	50	48	98	20	78
Emmet Armstrong	64	63	127	35	92
Roy Heiny	61	58	119	35	84
Robert Harris	53	53	106	22	84
Walter Barker	63	62	125	35	90
Dr. Brooks	66	64	130	35	95
Harry Bolander	58	56	114	35	79
A. S. Mueller	58	61	119	35	85
Geo. Craycraft	78	73	151	35	116
Geo. Craycraft, Jr.	72	74	146	35	111
Ora L. Harrell	46	41	87	14	73
Jack Hayes	45	48	93	16	77
Jim Stevenson	44	42	86	12	74
A. R. Tucker	54	44	98	18	80
Bernie Mills	60	54	114	35	79
Joe White	71	75	146	30	116
Howard Whitcomb	92	69	161	35	126
C.O. Burton	53	50	103	24	79
P. N. Elliott	67	57	124	24	100
Dave McMurtry	62	60	122	24	98
Garner White	48	44	92	24	68

James Stevenson posted the low gross score with an 86 and Ora Harrell was second with an 87. There were several scores in the nineties, however, the average score for 18 holes on the opening day was 113. The low net winners were Garner White with a 68 and Kenneth Meara was second with a net 72.

"Albert Hull, who is that young caddy you have?" said Harry Ludlum. "Why, that is my nephew, Sam Weldy, Jr." "Well, son, what do you think of golf and caddying?". Young Weldy stood in the cool grass in his bare feet. "It is just fine, sir, but one should not wear brand new shoes. These Red Goose shoes sure look nice but, boy, are my feet blistered."

What followed was perhaps the coolest summer in the memory of many. Evenings were chilly. The pool was only opened 86 days, but it was great for newly seeded fairways dependent on nature's rain and temperatures to assist in the start. The average high temperature from June 21 to September 18 was just 81°.

But at the close of the first summer of play the golf operations were considered a success. Revenues were \$760 and the interest in golf at Forest Park began to soar.

In fact, over the winter of 1928 the golf fever had become contagious. Almost daily, park officials would find someone out on the course. On Sunday, March 18, 1928, the course opened for play, but with restrictions.

The permanent greens were not playable until they were better conditioned, rolled and settled. Temporary greens of sand had been laid out near each regular green and these were used.

In 1928, Bert Cottingham was once again in charge of the caddy house, selling season and daily tickets, balls, and other accessories. The new personality, however, was Fred W. Swain, Forest Park's first greenskeeper.

He had experience on courses along the east coast, Florida, and Indiana. Caring for the course conditions was his duty during the week. Weekends and holidays found him acting in the capacity of starter and course officer.

"Sir, may I see your pass?" Mr. Swain inquired of the golfer who seemed to have drifted on the course at the No. 7 tee.

"Well, let me see, ah, er, I seem to have misplaced it," stammered the interloper. "You're three holes away from the caddy shack and I'm sure Mr. Cottingham will gladly confirm your ticket at the \$1 rate for Sundays and holidays."

It was in 1928 that another of the Forest Park trademarks was installed. Baker Gravel provided the cement for molds to create posts which would run along the road to protect the fairways. Joined by cable and painted white, these posts still stand today, framing the course as they did during the early years.

Other major improvements were noted by patrons that spring. There were thirteen bunkers constructed, \$700 worth of trees and shrubs planted and major reconstruction work on No. 9 green. All the greens had been weeded by hand and sixty yards of dry compost were spread for top dressing.

Benches and the sand boxes were painted white and set at each tee area. Wooden tees were not used at that time and players would take small funnels of wet sand to construct a tee for their drive. All in all this may have been for the better as the players themselves top dressed the tee areas.

Chapter Two (The 1930's)

The Vitality of Forest Park Golf Course

The Depression touched just about all of the 4,805 citizens that lived in Noblesville. The Hamilton County Chemical Company, owned by the Ball Brothers, was disbanded. George A. Ball donated the 30 acre grounds to Forest Park which included the building that now houses the Hamilton County Park administration offices. The facility closed and so did the Noblesville employment of Dr. C. C. Allen.

Certainly not happy news, nor happy times, but the game of golf seemed to be unique in its ability to create a diversion. Interest by both men and women seemed to spark the growth of golf in Noblesville.

This growing trend and several years maturity for the course were causes for constant play by golfers in the surrounding area. That is, until the heavy rains in the summer of 1930 and confined drainage led to a golf course problem that prompted City officials to go all the way to Washington, D.C., to solve. A late summer epidemic of pesky mosquitoes had all but closed the course to only the most determined golfers.

In October, Attorney T. E. Kane, of the Kiwanis Club and the Forest Park Golf Association, hooked his thumbs in suspenders and looked squarely at the City Council. "We have lost \$1000 in revenue during the last 2 months," he intoned. "People have heard about the mosquitoes in Noblesville and will not come here to play golf."

Making his point loud and plain, he called on the Council to go as far as Washington, D.C., to consult with experts. "If General William Gorgas can control the mosquitoes in Cuba and the Panama Canal Zone, then surely we ought to be able to do something in Noblesville, Indiana."

On June 3, 1931, Lawrence M. Fisher, a sanitary engineer with the U.S. Public Health Service in New York City, stepped off the train in Noblesville. Twenty days later his report and plan were before the City Council. He did a fine job and the community carried out his suggestions to the letter. But, as you and I know, if you play an early evening round in August, well, Lawrence missed a couple.

The course continued, however, to prosper. There was the newly formed Noblesville Millers High School Golf Team in June of 1931 and a city golf team was proposed to play other central Indiana city course teams.

Young men in the city found the frequent play at Forest Park to be the quickest way to make over a dollar a day. Carrying golf bags for 18 holes could earn a top caddy 60¢. If his player won a wager, then there could be a 10¢ or 15¢ tip. More often than not, a caddy would be treated to a soft drink at the turn.

Soon Forest Park Golf Course was ready to take the next step up. Everyone knew what that required. The course needed to secure the services of a P.G.A. professional to teach and manage the overall operation of the course. That first pro was Massie Miller, an inspired professional.

The 5-foot seven inch redhead was well known in Indiana P.G.A. circles as a master with the "niblick" - a club generally comparable to our nine iron or pitching wedge today. This skill on the small greens served him well. His high arching approach shots sat still when they landed - and they always seemed to end up close to the cup.

Bill Moon, who was to become the greenskeeper for 14 years, had brought a meticulous attention to detail to his craft. He was noted for his painstaking dedication and pride in his work. He was especially intolerant of players who showed little respect for the care of the course. Poor course etiquette or a disregard for rules that served to keep the course in good condition could easily get a bark from this caring greenskeeper. Frequent offenders were asked to play somewhere else.

As with today, one of the fastest growing segments of golfers was the women's groups. By 1937, the interest had grown significantly enough for Forest Park to host a Women's Invitational Tournament with 84 contestants. Harriet Randall, the youthful Indianapolis city champion, captured the Noblesville title with a 77. Her last nine holes were a 37, one under the ladies' par.

Mary Neal, Pauline Harrell and Judy Christian were putting on the No. 2 green. "Look over on the No. 3 tee. That is the new eligible doctor in town, James Dillon," whispered Pauline. "Well, don't look at me," said Judy Christian, "I'm engaged!" Mary Neal glanced admiringly at the young doctor, next up to hit. She said, "I'm told he

doesn't drink, or smoke or swear." The three young women all watched him swing only to see him top his drive. In an instant, the errant tee shot was addressed with cuss words that were unmistakable. "Well, 2 out of 3 is not so bad," chuckled Judy Christian, who surprised almost everyone four months later when she became Mrs. James Dillon in November.

Over the winter Massie Miller had supervised the building of new bunkers and traps. It looked like the course would have another successful year guided by a golf professional. But, South Grove had heard about his work and offered him a position he could not refuse. Regretfully, he left Forest Park just as the pro shop doors were to open. It was thought the park course would go throughout the 1935 season without a pro.

Dr. J. D. Sturdevant, president of the Forest Park Golf Club, was following up on a rumor he heard. Ralph Stonehouse, one of the leading and best known professional golfers in Indiana, and president of the P.G.A., did not have a job and might be available. The Golf Club met at A. R. Haas' clothing store and passed a resolution favoring Stonehouse for the golf pro.

"Fellas, I am sure you have heard of Ralph Stonehouse," said Dr. J. D. Sturdevant. "He's a masterful player. He finished just one stroke behind Bobby Jones and Walter Hagen last year at Bobby Jones' Augusta National Invitational Tournament. He may be interested in Forest Park. Let's recommend to the Park Board that we hire Ralph Stonehouse as our pro."

Indeed, Ralph Stonehouse had played in the first tournament at Augusta National. In fact, at 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 22, 1934, he was the first player to hit the first ball in what we know today as the "Masters".

He would be the ideal pro at this stage of the golf course's development. Known throughout the country as a top notch player, he had won the Miami Open one year earlier and played in a number of national tournaments. His experience and contacts as a nationally known golfer would not only bring business to the local course but would also help make him an ideal instructor for local golfers.

Forest Park would be lucky to get such a professional. And it was! By May Ralph Stonehouse had said yes and was on duty running the pro shop, giving lessons, and repairing and making clubs. His skill in the latter was especially noted. The durability of his clubs matched his last name.

The diminutive, genial pro was also a favorite in the caddy yard. He often demonstrated great skill at marbles. His knuckles down on dirt marble shooting was as solid as his golf swing. Having come up the ranks as a caddy, he had a special interest in helping the young players with their game. Ralph Stonehouse was Forest Park's first golf professional to be selected to the Indiana Golf Hall of Fame. He was inducted in 1976.

Ralph Stonehouse motioned 16-year-old Joe Bennett over to the back of the pro shop. "Joe, I've seen you play and you're developing into a fine golfer. In your caddy match tournament today, I want you to try Mr. Albert Haas' clubs

here." "Oh, no sir, I couldn't do that," protested the slender lad. But the temptation of using the prestigious Jack White woods with the white ivory face plates and Kroyden irons and the reassurance by his mentor that "it will be all right" was too much. Joe Bennett won his match, broke 80 for the first time, went on to become city champion ten years later, and until this day no one was the wiser.

One of the most popular newspaper columns of the day was the LEDGER's Forest Park Divot Digs by Merritt Murphy. In it was all the golf gossip of the day. There was even a top ten ranking of local golfers each week. Spirited reports would tell of the Men's Club dinner tournaments, where the losers bought the dinner of the winners after the match. These matches would be massive choose-ups -- twelve on one side against twelve on the other. They were fond of even giving the teams names like Hinks vs. Dinks, Eagles vs. Birdies, Hornets vs. Bees, and North vs. South. Such was the spirit of the course in the 1930's.

In 1937, Forest Park had a new pro in Kenneth Welty. He was a quiet man, thoughtful, and a "nice looking chap," according to some of the ladies. He was also determined. A fad of that time was to get a hole-in-one. It seems that doing it in regulation play was not the issue. One evening, Ken Welty showed up at the Par 3, Number Two hole with several buckets of balls. He did not stop until he had his hole-in-one. You can bet that with Bill Moon looking on, he was hitting short of the green and rolling shots toward the cup.

Bill Moon continued to provide expert care to greens that were widely acclaimed. The course continued to be very open as extensive plantings had not taken place along the fairways.

The most notable excitement was the anticipation of installing the first fairway watering system on the Park course. Very little interference for the golfers was anticipated in that the water pipes would be laid entirely in the rough.

In 1938, with the help of W.P.A. labor, this elaborate underground water system encircled the entire golf course. Farmers in Hamilton County were contacted for permission to dig for and excavate old gas pipes. One farmer donated over 1,000 feet of pipe. Some of the pipe reclaimed had been in the ground for 40 years. But it was cleaned, painted and rethreaded. Water was pumped from the river for the course's irrigation. Ten years later, an estimated cost to install a similar system was thought to cost the City \$50,000.

Ten years after the course had opened, season tickets for half a season, April 4 - July 15, sold for \$6. Another \$6 would cover the period July 15 until the end of the season. Family passes could be bought for a dollar reduction for each member of the family added. The greens fees were 50¢ during week days and 75¢ on holidays and Sundays. A 9-hole 25¢ ticket was available after 4:30 p.m.

In 1939, Forest Park Golf Course closed its first full decade by hiring a slender professional who had won the Indiana State Open several years

earlier, edging Ralph Stonehouse in an 18-hole play off by one stroke.

"I was glad to take part in the tournament," said the gracious Stonehouse, despite the sting of finishing State Open runner up for the fourth time. "I was sorry to lose but not ashamed of losing to a golfer like Bill Heinlein. He was too good for me."

Chapter Three (The 1940's)

Forest Park Golf Course Has the State's Best Player

During the Forties, no Forest Park tree stood taller than the six foot two inch "Leaning Sycamore" that was at the pro shop during the 1940's.

Already an accomplished player before he moved his family to Noblesville, William Andrew Heinlein was the absolute best player in the state. The lanky Heinlein was noted as a long and straight hitter, however, it was his peculiar, but effective, putting method that earned him the title of the "Leaning Sycamore." Basically, his stance seemed to face in the opposite direction of his line of putt as he leaned over to putt. An arm's length list of credentials could be provided on his achievements. But it was what he did at Forest Park in his 14 years as pro that this history is all about.

Soon after he came, Bill set about developing and improving the game of golf for his patrons. Free golf lessons were provided for boys and girls under 18 on Saturday mornings at 9 a.m.

He was a family man and when he and Hilda came to Noblesville housing was scarce and their first years were spent in the parsonage of the First Presbyterian Church. It was here that Bill Jr., Carol and Bobby spent their time as kids.

"How are you feeling this morning?" said Bill. "I'm doing fine," replied Hilda, "but it could be any time now."

"Well, we have the big Pro-Am today. Whatever you do, wait until the tournament is over," joked Bill... About 5 p.m., Hilda calmly called Billy and Carol into the kitchen. "Go to the course and tell your Dad that I have called a cab and I am going to the hospital. I'll be back with a new member of our family." Little knees pumped peddles as fast as they could go through Noblesville and up Forest Park Lane. Breathless, Billy and Carol tumbled into the pro shop just as the awards presentations were to begin. "We are going to have a baby!" Billy shouted.

Bill's eyes brightened, "Gentlemen, the Forest Park Golf Course Tournament flag is down. The Pro Am is over. The course is closed. Come back for your prizes tomorrow." Obviously the Heinlein family got its prize that very evening - Robert Alan.

With World War II being fought, Americans were either in the armed services or, if they were not, they served to support the war effort with defense plant jobs back at home. So it was with Bill Heinlein, who worked in the Delco Remy plant in Anderson on the night shift. He would sleep until noon and his gracious wife, Hilda, would open the Pro shop in the morning. When Bill arrived in the afternoon, he'd plunge his hand deep in the icy water of the big red Coca-Cola cooler, grab a Nehi and continue the business of running Forest Park's golf operations.

After the War was over, the Noblesville lads came home, many to take up golf again. One such player was Joe Bennett, a Veteran and former Forest Park caddy, who was the first city champion after everyone had a chance to return home from the war. Joe and Sam Weldy, Jr., another veteran, were opponents in the 1946 championship match.

"Well, you don't have to worry about the score being right," said an observer. "That's Joe Bennett, he is an accounting major at Butler". "I'm not concerned about that," said the other watcher. "I'm worried about what might happen to Joe if Sam Jr. loses the match and gets mad. He was not only on the golf team at Purdue, but he also lettered in fencing!"

In the late 1940's, Forest Park G. C. was unique in all of Indiana. That Bill Heinlein was considered the best player in the state was seldom challenged. But, it was what happened at the Indianapolis Country Club that astounded Indiana's golfing community. Floyd Wilson, Forest Park's greenskeeper, had captured the state's Greenskeeper Tournament, shooting a 78 and then winning in a playoff.

Next the club competition was held. This tournament included the pros, greenskeepers and club officials. The Forest Park course sent Heinlein, Wilson, Andy Richardson, president of the Men's Golf Club, and Bill Hare, president of the Park Board. The Noblesville team shot a best ball score of 63, seven under par on the Country Club course to win the Indiana Club Championship. It was a clean sweep for Forest Park Golf Course.

While often they had been friendly, but fierce, adversaries, Ralph Stonehouse and Bill Heinlein would be tough to beat when paired together. It was at the Elks Course in Terre Haute that Byron Nelson, winner of 11 straight PGA tournaments, and Ralph Guldahl, who had won titles at both the U.S. Open and the Masters, took on the present and past Forest Park pros in a match play tournament.

With his feet pointed to the front of the green and his putter passing by his shoe striking a ball to the back of the green, Heinlein's putting style was unique, to say the least. But it was effective. The 12 foot birdie putt had won the match on the 17 hole. "Well, boys, that makes it 2 down with 1 hole to play. You have whipped us," said Byron Nelson. "Where did you say you played?" asked Ralph Guldahl. "Forest Park Golf Course in Noblesville, Indiana," replied the Leaning Sycamore. "Ralph was also pro there a few years before I came." "Wow, that must be one heck of a track up there in Noblesville," Byron Nelson remarked. Ralph Stonehouse smiled at Bill Heinlein, shook the hands of his famous competitors and said, "Yes, indeed. It is quite a course."

As the decade of the 1940's closed, the course record for 18 holes was the same as it had been at the start. The mark was shared by these two famous Hoosier golfers. Both Stonehouse and Heinlein had turned the course in 31 out and 33 in for a total of 64, eight strokes under par.

Chapter Four (The 1950's)

A Second Generation of Players

Now second generation players began to filter onto the course. These golfers had grown up watching from the grove of trees that shaded the upper park. As kids, they were content to play on the swing sets and at the pool, but they also watched with curious interest this game called golf, played on the lower basin of the park. Soon, with age, lessons, and encouragement, they came down out of the woods and stepped on the fairways of this sport to be played for a lifetime.

This local group, and the popularity of the course with out-of-town players, kept the course busy. The weekends had lines backed up for almost an hour as golfers, waiting to start on No. 1, were blended among those making the turn. Families would come into the park to spend the day. There was plenty of time to play golf - all day.

Efforts were made to keep the course in top condition, but it could stretch the time and creative talents of even the most gifted greenskeeper such as Forest Park G.C.'s Floyd Wilson. In the fall of 1951, he top dressed the fairways with residue from the sewage disposal plant. Fertilizer was expensive.

Three months later, in February of 1952, Bill Elder was appointed greenskeeper and became the dean of Forest Park's course superintendents, starting 22 years of service.

Absolutely not! I know what you are probably thinking. Floyd Wilson's fairway applications of the previous fall were not the reason he left. The Anderson Country Club liked the sandy haired greenskeeper and offered him a chance to move up in his profession and return to his hometown. He obviously learned his trade well in his nine years at Forest Park.

In 1952, Bill Heinlein was asked to start the new Carmel Country Club called Woodland. The Park Board looked first at Charles Merideth, one of the favorite Pro Am partners of Bill Heinlein. And with good reason, Merideth was an excellent player. You have to be in order to win the City Championship five times over the span of three decades. But his career was with the Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company.

Applications were in hand from as far away as Madison, Wisconsin, when the Park Board asked Paul Gross to be its fifth golf professional. Gross said yes to the offer of \$200 per month from April 1 to October 1.

Paul Gross was possibly the most versatile Forest Park golf professional. Gross was an excellent basketball player, hunter and later an airplane pilot. He had played semi-pro and professional basketball for nearly a decade before he took up golf around the age of 30. He had practiced his craft for about 10 years before Paul and Pat Gross came to Noblesville.

Like most wives of the Forest Park pros, Pat was the considerate assistant at the pro shop and operated the snack bar. She was good friends with many of the Forest Park G.C. ladies. But, it wasn't so much that she was a golfer. In fact, she played just a little. Her passion was cards, particularly Gin Rummy.

Often, Pat and other ladies would finish a day at the course with a card game in the Park. So friendly was she that when tournament time came for the ladies, Pat was in a dilemma as to which one of her card partners to cheer.

Expansion plans were first discussed in the 1950's, but they were not about the course. It was the clubhouse that needed enlarging. This was made possible by Mark and Grace Moore.

Item 13. The rest and residue of my estate, if any, I hereby devise and bequeath equally to the Riley Memorial Hospital of Indianapolis, Indiana, and the Park Board of Forest Park, of Noblesville, Indiana.

Grace Moore

Following the desire of her deceased husband, Grace Moore's generosity had been put in her will some 20 years earlier. Remembering a hospital and a golf course in the will provision shows the affection held for Forest Park Golf Course. A plaque honoring these Forest Park angels faces the entrance for all patrons to view.

In 1956, Park Superintendent Herb Andrews was asked to initiate plans for a Clubhouse addition. The steep slope to the east of the clubhouse was shaped to form a basement locker room with the clubhouse extended to the east and west.

Despite the fertile soil of the basin and the periodic top dressing of river silt whenever the White River flooded its banks, Bill Elder found the fairways in need of better conditioning. He requested that the course begin a fertilizer program for the fairways. It had been about 13 years since they were so treated.

"Don't do it, Paul," warned his playing partner. The typically calm Paul Gross had just taken 4 putts to handle a tricky cup placement on the upper slope of the No. 6 green. He was staring towards the river and he was still holding his extra-long hickory shaft Otey Crisman putter. Wisely, Paul gently slipped his 17 HB model back in the bag. His spared Crisman putter would go on to serve him well as Paul Gross became the third golf professional to go into the Indiana Golf Hall of Fame. He was inducted in 1983.

The new clubhouse addition sported about 50 men's lockers, available for \$7.00 a season, and a women's locker facility upstairs. It had cost about \$25,000. Many of the golfers were businessmen who came to have lunch and play a quick nine holes of golf. Shower facilities drew an even larger crowd. In the late 1950's, when these gentlemen talked of having a "Nooner" it meant 9 holes of golf as quickly as one could play and get back to work.

When Paul Gross left in the mid 1950's, another Heinlein came to Forest Park Golf Course, Ralph, younger brother of Bill Heinlein.

Ralph and Evelyn were familiar with Forest Park and Noblesville. They looked forward to the activity this popular course would have. Like the Heinleins a decade earlier, they also had a son born in Noblesville.

In what may have been the start of a tradition for the Men's Club spring meetings, Ralph introduced a golf film at the 1957 April meeting. It was a match between Sam Snead and Cary Middlecoff. Other business of the day was the review of the new clubhouse addition scheduled for the summer, the tournament schedule, and discussion on the Men's Club taking care of the golf course. Season tickets were still under \$25, thirty years after the course opened.

Forest Park continued to be a popular course. Daybreak would come and the course would have people already on the course. For Ralph and his starter, Bill "Jesse" James, came the challenge of managing over 200 players on the course on a typical weekend day.

It had been a long day. Perfect weather and several company picnics had the Park course absolutely jammed. "I think those are the last foursomes," said Ralph, pointing down to the group descending the hill. Jesse looked at his starter clipboard and box of white tickets. These were numbers 212, 213, 214 and 215. How popular was Forest Park Golf Course!

Chapter Five (The 1960's)

Growth and Expansion Desires

Second in tenure as golf professional at Forest Park was Morris "Red" Robison. His leadership spanned the length of the 1960's, a decade that changed the face of America and one that changed Forest Park as well.

After Ralph Heinlein left in late 1958, the Park Board had discussed their options on securing a new golf professional for the course. Forest Park had been successful with the men chosen to carry on its golf operations, but there was a thought that perhaps they should look close to home.

Outside of Bill Heinlein's 14 year tenure as pro, the average tour of duty for the other four pros had been just two or three years. Perhaps the Park Board was interested in some stability, perhaps there was a chance someone with Hamilton County ties could do the job - perhaps even stay a while.

Manson Shanks had agreed with Bill Klein. "We're looking for someone with Noblesville ties. Someone with a strong work drive, a solid respected golfer, the type of person with strong golf fundamentals who can teach fundamentals. Someone who knows our City and will make the investment in time and energy."

"I know who you are talking about," said Andy Richardson, secretary at the Park Board. "I know him well. He used to

work for me". "Who?" they replied. "Why, Red Robison, of course."

And so it came to be. On the motion of President Reed Hudler, the application of Morris Raygene "Red" Robison was accepted. Red had all the qualifications for the pro's job. He also had the wardrobe. He looked like a golf pro, always smartly attired in the fashion of the day.

It became a family affair. Red was running the pro shop and golf operations. Ruth Ann Robison was in charge of the new grill and Forest Park Golf Course Restaurant. The boys, Rick and Jon, were all about the place doing the things a golf course could ask of small hands.

If eight is enough and ten is too many, then don't even think about trying the long weekend days of 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Those were the hours the golf patrons could count on the Robison family to have Forest Park Golf Course running full tilt. A complete breakfast, eggs, sausage and hashbrowns. could start your day at 6 a.m. Lunch was there, of course, and dinner, too. Steaks were the specialty.

Often it would be 9:30 p.m. before the Robisons were able to sit down for their family dinner. A family growing up on such a golf course learns a great deal. Personal and business values merge. The exposure to so many people shape and influence. Forest Park Golf Course families each have a unique spirit all their own.

The family ties carried on to other parts of the Park operation. Bill Elder continued to handle the greenskeeping duties and his wife Maxine was in charge of the pool. Elder also served as the Park's Superintendent.

Activity on the course conditions during the 1960's centered on planting trees. Nearly all of the previously planted trees were done during this decade. The original No. 1 tee box was hard pan dirt and carts rolled across the surface as they zoomed down the slope, dropping from the Number One tee in a cloud of dust. Asphalt and mats came on in the mid-1960's. Buckets of water to clean clubs and balls soon were replaced by ball cleaners set at the tees.

The number eight tee box had a second back level that extended to the edge of the road. Over the years it became overgrown with shrubs and vines but the area was recently cleared in the 1990's renewal of the course.

Perhaps the major project of this era was handling the mushy bog of the pit area that sat in front of the tee on the No. 5 hole. However, there were limited funds to bring in dirt to completely fill the area. Soon there was the approval to deposit substantial debris in the pit before dirt was hauled in to cover it. The lump and bumps you see today may very well be a collection of rocks, concrete, old tires, furniture and even an old Westinghouse stove.

Noblesville had not yet been fully discovered. Growth would come in the seventies. During this decade, the network of families, husband and wife foursomes and junior golfers, began to solidify. It was in this era that

a continuation of the Forest Park Golf Club grew in numbers and talent and endless interest in playing golf. What evolved was the Men's Club, and the 1960's and Red Robison were instrumental in shaping the present structure and spirit of this strong golf club.

A club's strength may be centered on interest and play, but it is also anchored on the traditional discipline it takes to play the game as the Scots intended. There is no bumping, rolling or moving the ball to preferred spots. You play the ball as it lies. The Forest Park Men's Club had that discipline and marked themselves different from many others.

This interest and enthusiasm naturally grew to the point where nine holes was not enough. It was clear a full 18 holes was on the mind of the Park Board. In April 1962, the Park Board Secretary was ordered to contact Bill Diddle to look over the possible increase to 18 holes on the golf course. On June 5, 1962, a letter was addressed to a prominent golf course designer nearby, Mr. Pete Dye. It read:

"The Board members of Forest Park of Noblesville, Indiana have been discussing a nine hole addition to the present nine hole city course and we would like, at your convenience, to have you look at our Park and also the maps of our Park, to see if it would be possible to construct the additional nine holes without disturbing the present park facilities. We would appreciate hearing from you in the near future. The Park Superintendent's office is always open and the maps are there.

Thanking you very much, we remain yours very truly,...

Forest Park Board."

At first the plans were centered on how to join another nine holes to the original Forest Park course. That did not seem workable and gradually a separate 18 hole layout started being discussed.

In January 1966, the first design concept was to begin a new 18 hole course in the north end of the park, just up from Forest Park Golf Course. In relation to the park map today, our Grateful Dead fans would be camping on what was sketched to be the left side of the No. 1 fairway. Gradually the plans kept moving northward, across the railroad tracks into the area where Fox Prairie stands today. When that happened, attention at the 9 hole facility slowly began to diminish.

The Wilson Golf representative grinned broadly as he pushed the screen door open. "Ladies and Gentlemen," he announced, "may I present Patty Berg and Sam Snead." The Clubhouse was abuzz. Red had been alerted to this promotion visit by the Wilson Company spokespersons and Wilson golf equipment was in prominent display throughout the pro shop. Patty Berg and Sam Snead shook hands and inquired how the equipment was doing. "It is our top seller, Sam." said Red. Technically, he was correct, it was a high revenue item among the clubhouse's golf line, but the real top seller at the Forest Park pro shop were the breakfasts that came from the grill of Ruth Ann Robison.

Conducting golf lessons in the confined area of the golf course was interesting. Mid and short irons could be taught down at the practice tee, but where to go for long irons and driving? When the course traffic was slack, Red, resplendent in his white buck teaching shoes, would be directing his lessons from an area between the No. 9 green and the clubhouse. As Red's students worked to master the fundamentals of the Bobby Jones swing, young Rick Robison would be stationed in front of the No. 4 tee and shag balls driven from the No. 9 hill above.

Chapter Six (The 1970's)

The Forgotten Course

At the start of the seventies, all eyes turned to the Fox Prairie layout on 196th Street. It had everything that Forest Park Golf Course did not. It possessed 18 holes, had length in its long rolling fairways, creeks to cross, and massive greens.

The golf pro, greenskeeper, and players headed north to the championship layout. It got quiet. Very quiet. Small, traditional, 1920's charming Forest Park Golf Course bit its lower lip as it watched the crowd leave.

Dr. C. C. Allen had mentioned the possibility of this day in his opening remarks. Would the course be around in the years to come? What would now happen to Forest Park Golf Course, some forty years later?

While technically Red Robison was assigned golf pro at both courses, his attention, time and interest was centered on the new 18-hole facility. Had to be. There was so much to be done. To run the Forest Park clubhouse, Doc Freeman was brought on as club manager to work for Red. By the end of 1972, it was clear that other arrangements needed to be made. Starting in 1973, the Park Board hired Harold Thompson to handle clubhouse duties. He served in that capacity until 1985.

Perhaps the maintenance requirements for running both courses had been underestimated. Time demands for the new course stretched the hours.

Something had to give with a six-man crew responsible for 27 holes. And what gave was Forest Park G.C.

Gang mowers arrived once a week, the rollers were dropped at the corner of the course at the No. 5 hole and the entire course was swept from north to south. If tees were level enough, the same cut was given to all - fairways, rough, and tees. The 55 acres were cut in five hours. The greens might be done two or three times a week, with pin placements changed only several times a week.

The course began to decline. Grasses began to fill in where sand bunkers had once been neat and tidy hazards. The fairways became a shaggy mixture of bluegrass and buckhorn, with emphasis on the latter. There was simply not enough time to devote to Forest Park Golf Course.

Conversations drifted back and forth on what would be the future for the course. Conversion to a lighted Par 3 course enjoyed some support. One could imagine the heartache the course founders would have seeing their course sliced and divided, cut up with gas lights set on the west slopes along the No. 8 fairway. The No. 7 hole would be a softball field and several tennis courts.

What a travesty that would have been to the charm and dignity of the course. Fortunately, no one cared enough about Forest Park Golf Course to devote the time to carry out such a plan. While apathy and disregard had led to its sad state of disrepair, these were also reasons the course was saved from an expedient fad of the 60's and 70's.

Chapter Seven (The 1980's)

Revitalization, Renewal, Rediscovery

Greenskeepers are probably not noted for being exceptional church goers. But with their work so dependent upon the whims of nature, you can be certain that they learn to pray.

And so it was for young Mike Beadle, now assigned to give specific attention to repair and renewal after a decade of inattention.

During the winter of 1980, it became clear to new Course Superintendent, Mike Stiles, that the shuttle system to Forest Park G. C. was not suitable. Discussions were frequent on this point between Stiles and the new Park Director, Joe D. Sherrill.

They approached Mike Beadle, who had been with the golf courses since 1975. His work ethic and knowledge in a variety of course maintenance areas made him a natural for the job. Also, he was a quick study. He could learn and apply on his own. He'd have to.

When asked, he had mixed emotions. The first one was joy, the second one was elation. He liked the course, with its traditional charm and small greens. Given the condition of the course, Forest Park needed someone whose heart was in the right place. Restoration and repair would take all he had.

Perhaps a golf course is much like the grass plant that covers its fairways. In times of stress, the plant will shut down growth to the blades and wait for water and nutrients. It goes dormant. How long it can go without nourishment is amazing. How it can recover from a stiff, straw-like appearance is a special gift.

How long the plant can survive under adverse conditions depends upon how healthy the plant is, how strong and resilient is the crown, how strong are its roots. For Forest Park Golf Course, these were very strong. These roots went back to 1927. It would take a while, but this course would recover. Mike knew that. Renewal would follow repair. But, he was going to need assistance.

1980 was hot and dry and when the river pumps went out, Forest Park G. C. nearly lost its greens. The fairway irrigation from the 1938 installation of refurbished gas pipes had crumbled in parts, as well. The water from the park wells was used at night and kept the greens alive.

But, the impact had been severe and meetings between the Park Board and City Council soon resulted in the posting of bids. Tees and greens became the target of this new irrigation system. The watering of the fairways would come a decade later.

By the mid-1980's, the course had begun to return to a sense of order in its care of tees, fairways and greens.

On August 27, 1984, the Park Board made an on-site review of Forest Park Golf Course. Forest Park G. C. was noted to have about 14 projects and improvements required. But, there was another need that was addressed a month later. The renewal of the course would not be complete until a P.G.A. professional once again directed the operations. Forest Park's eighth golf pro would be John Mohler. A graduate of Indiana Wesleyan, he was a mathematics major and four-year starter on the college golf team.

Previously, John was an assistant at Fox Prairie for four years, was one spring away from his Class A P.G.A. card. He was ready to gain his first course and swiftly jumped into the renovation of the clubhouse and the golf course. One day he would be with Mike Beadle cutting grass out of the overgrown bunkers, the next day, handling tools and lumber for Bob Palmer as the clubhouse underwent renovation.

A new voice now projected on orderly competence in the clubhouse. The look of pride that a golf professional can give helped others become advocates for improved conditions.

John Mohler is still on hand today. Still a patient, respected golf teacher. Still a consistent player. Still an active competitor in the IGA/PGA state tournaments. He's the host professional for the 65th Anniversary celebration.

Revitalization and renewal had taken place in the 1980's. Now Forest Park Golf Course was ready to take the next step ... rediscovery.

Chapter Eight (The 1990's)

Sixty-Five Years Old and Not Ready to Retire

During the 1990's, Forest Park angels began to reappear. Things began to happen and no one really knew how they came to be.

Forest Park G. C. had come back into the discussion. During the care afforded the course during the 1980's came the realization that keeping the course in great shape was more than just a good thing for golfers.

The golf course served as the entree to Forest Park. It set the image for those who entered. There was a fit also as Noblesville sought accreditation as a Tree city, USA. With such a scenic view to the citizenry, Forest Park G. C. could have the natural beauty of an arboretum as well as host the absorbing game of golf.

In August 1990, the City Council put into place an ordinance that would be a vital link to ensuring the future of Forest Park and its sister course, Fox Prairie. Through this ordinance, the Parks Department was allowed to set aside 20% of all golf course revenues and place them in a non-reverting capital account.

Most of us have savings accounts for that rainy day. Now our courses had one for that non-rainy day. Terry Busby, Douglass McDonald, Barry McNulty, Christy Moore, James Swan, Nicki Trabilisy and C. Murphy White had seen to that. A six "aye" vote was recorded by the City Council. Stability and protection could be reasonably assured.

What was it that made the decision unanimous? Care, concern, good management? Yes, but perhaps there was a spirit of Dr. C. C. Allen about the Council Chambers. Perhaps Bill Moon, Floyd Wilson and Billy Elder whispered it was the right thing to do. Forest Park Golf Course does have its angels, you know.

On New Years Day, 1991, the White River continued its periodic, but always unannounced, top dressing of the course with rich river silt. This time, perhaps in recognition of the renewal of Forest Park G. C., the river did its most complete coating. Flood waters reached the left side slopes of the No. 8 fairway.

John Mohler's pro shop continued to be the popular spot for the area's seniors, women and juniors. Play had gradually returned where only the weather conditions of hot and dry kept patrons away. Patrons were treated with customer service attention. It mattered not whether the golfer wore Izod Club, Aureus, Mark Scott or a Russell Mills sweatshirt.

There developed a group of avid Noblesville golfers who would play until there was no more light to see. Their nickname matches their play. They are called "The Sundowners."

In May 1991, Greg Gegogaine, the Park's Department Course Superintendent, left to go to Harbor Trees. The superintendent's job at Fox Prairie was open. The Parks Department and Board saw the concern and care Mike Beadle had given to Forest Park G. C. over the 1980's. That kind of attention would be needed in ample amounts at the 18-hole facility. Mike Beadle

stepped up and Curt Brisco stepped onto Forest Park G. C. to become its tenth Greenskeeper.

It was a great break for a person new in the golf course maintenance career track. Mike had left the course better than when he found it, now Curt set out to do the same. What it would first take would be organization. Handling jobs in two and four hour segments would be different for Curt. Forest Park's nine holes cut the normal 18-hole job in half.

As Forest Park Golf Course's superintendent, he would be part business manager, part crew chief, part laborer, part troubleshooter, part civil engineer, part mechanic, part public relations director, part agronomist, part landscaper, and total environmentalist. But, such responsibilities needed the tools. A major one would be the certainty of fairway irrigation.

The Park Board walked in from the persistent heat for its July meeting. President Pat Reed had put a "review of irrigation plans for Forest Park Golf Course" on the agenda. What Wayne Glover, Alan Hinds, Mark Plecker, Pat Reed and Kathie Stretch heard from the Rainbird distributor that night made sense. Specifications and cost breakdowns were immediately requested.

The placement of irrigation on the course was a wise one. It was also cost effective. By breaking out the components of material and labor, the total cost would be just over \$40,000. This was significantly under the estimates of \$50 and \$100 thousand. In fact, it was under the competitive bids received in 1980. Where there is a well, there is a way! By late fall 1991, crews were installing a top line system.

Over the past year, Curt Brisco has coordinated the installation of automatic irrigation on the fairways, reseeded the fairways, continued the reclamation of the pit area, reclaimed old tees, built a new bunker on the fourth hole and put in cart paths in high-traffic areas.

With irrigation on the fairways, the course could now put its best foot forward even during the dry, hot months of August and September. With this in mind, and to focus on the players for the next sixty-five years, and to celebrate its heritage, Forest Park Golf Course introduced the first ever Hamilton County Junior Tournament, open to young golfers from ages 10 to 18. This is scheduled for August 5 and 6, 1992.

It had been quite a while since the Mayor of Noblesville had played golf at Forest Park. But Mary Sue Rowland put a stop to that, taking up the game in the summer of 1991. She had a smooth, coordinated swing. All that was needed was practice and play. But who has enough time when one is a mayor of an award winning city and works to keep it that way?

However, on this day she would have to sit out this 65th Anniversary Scramble. An automobile accident had given her a troublesome leg fracture. But in the spirit of the time, she leaned on her driver and addressed the gathering.

"Sixty-five years old and not ready to retire! That's the spirit of the Forest Park Golf Course. Today we honor the men and women who have made it so," Mary Sue started.

Back at the Clubhouse . . .





My Forest Park Golf Course may be different than your Forest Park Golf Course. But, then again, it does not have to be the same. Despite being just 55 acres, Forest Park Golf Course is large enough to hold different memories for thousands of its patrons..

This history has been great fun. I like golf. And history. And tradition. This project has been a delightful one. The golf I missed this spring and summer working on the 65th anniversary has been more than compensated by the imaginary rounds I have played through the pages. What started out as a thumbnail sketch kept going until 50 pages had been reached.

What a great time I have had being in the foursome of Dr. C. C. Allen, Dr. Earl Brooks, Massie Miller, Ralph Stonehouse, Ken Welty, Bill and Ralph Heinlein, Paul Gross and Red Robison. How I have enjoyed watching Fred Swain nurture the fledgling tees, greens and fairways, gaining the approval of Bill Moon after I fixed a ball mark, studying Floyd Wilson meticulously hand-mow the greens and being amazed at Bill Elder handling just about everything, it seems.

And, in closing, my thanks to the many who offered me stories, references and memories that have provided this history its spirit and charm. Special recognition must be given to those considerate persons who offered helpful advice as the copy was edited -- especially Susan Nelson, Jim Lyman and Carol-Anne Hale. Paula Tharp, who typed the many versions, is this document's angel.

**GOLFING PROFESSIONALS AND GREENSKEEPERS WHO HAVE
SERVED DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS**

	<u>PRO</u>	<u>GREENSKEEPER</u>
1927	No Golf Pro (1)	Bert Cottingham
1928	No Golf Pro	Fred W. Swain
1929	No Golf Pro	Fred W. Swain
		
1930	No Golf Pro	Bill Moon
1931	No Golf Pro	Bill Moon
1932	No Golf Pro	Bill Moon
1933	Massie Miller	Bill Moon
1934	Massie Miller	Bill Moon
1935	Ralph Stonehouse	Bill Moon
1936	Ralph Stonehouse	Bill Moon
1937	Kenneth Welty	Bill Moon
1938	No Golf Pro	Bill Moon
1939	Bill Heinlein	Bill Moon
		
1940	Bill Heinlein	Bill Moon
1941	Bill Heinlein	Bill Moon
1942	Bill Heinlein	Bill Moon
1943	Bill Heinlein	Floyd Wilson
1944	Bill Heinlein	Floyd Wilson
1945	Bill Heinlein	Floyd Wilson
1946	Bill Heinlein	Floyd Wilson
1947	Bill Heinlein	Floyd Wilson
1948	Bill Heinlein	Floyd Wilson
1949	Bill Heinlein	Floyd Wilson
		
1950	Bill Heinlein	Floyd Wilson
1951	Bill Heinlein	Floyd Wilson
1952	Bill Heinlein	Bill Elder
1953	Paul Gross	Bill Elder
1954	Paul Gross	Bill Elder
1955	Paul Gross	Bill Elder
1956	Ralph Heinlein	Bill Elder
1957	Ralph Heinlein	Bill Elder
1958	Ralph Heinlein	Bill Elder
1959	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder
		
1960	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder
1961	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder
1962	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder
1963	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder
1064	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder
1965	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder
1966	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder
1967	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder
1968	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder
1969	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder

**GOLFING PROFESSIONALS AND GREENSKEEPERS WHO HAVE
SERVED DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS - CONT'D**

<u>PRO</u>	<u>GREENSKEEPER</u>	
1970	Morris "Red" Robison (2)	Bill Elder
1971	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder
1972	Morris "Red" Robison	Bill Elder
1973	No Golf Pro (3)	Bill Elder
1974	No Golf Pro	Dennis Cook
1975	No Golf Pro	Shuttle from Fox Prairie
1976	No Golf Pro	Shuttle from Fox Prairie
1977	No Golf Pro	Randy Brehmer
1978	No Golf Pro	Bob Dailey
1979	No Golf Pro	Shuttle from Fox Prairie
██████		
1980	No Golf Pro	Mike Beadle
1981	No Golf Pro	Mike Beadle
1982	No Golf Pro	Mike Beadle
1983	No Golf Pro	Mike Beadle
1984	No Golf Pro	Mike Beadle
1985	John Mohler	Mike Beadle
1986	John Mohler	Mike Beadle
1987	John Mohler	Mike Beadle
1988	John Mohler	Mike Beadle
1989	John Mohler	Mike Beadle
██████		
1990	John Mohler	Mike Beadle
1991	John Mohler	Curt Brisco
1992	John Mohler	Curt Brisco

- (1) Bert Cottingham was appointed officer of the course during the early period. He also was superintendent of the grounds.
- (2) Doc Freeman served as clubhouse attendant during the period Red Robison was the Fox Prairie Pro but also responsible for Forest Park G. C. during the period 1970-1972.
- (3) Harold Thompson was contracted to serve as Forest Park G. C. club manager during the period 1973-1984.

FOREST PARK CLUB CHAMPIONS

1929 - 1970

NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA

1929	Jim Stevenson	1950	Clyde McEntire
1930	Jim Stevenson	1951	Cliff Greenisen
1931	Jim Stevenson	1952	Cliff Greenisen
1932	George Patterson	1953	Cliff Greenisen
1933	George Patterson	1954	Tom White
1934	George Patterson	1955	Cliff Greenisen
1935	Ken Mutter	1956	Tom White
1936	Charles Reasoner	1957	Tom White
1937	Dr. James Dillon	1958	Bill Elder
1938	Dr. James Dillon	1959	Charles Merideth
1939	Jack Hare	1960	Charles Merideth
1940	Gilbert Dashiell	1961	Dan Dillon
1941	Dr. James Dillon	1962	Dr. James Dillon
1942	Ed Harrah	1963	Pete Deakyne
1943	Charles Merideth	1964	Pete Deakyne
1944	Charles Merideth	1965	Carl Hash
1945	Albert Warren	1966	Charles Merideth
1946	Joe Bennett	1967	Dr. James Dillon
1947	Clyde McEntire	1968	Phil Shirk
1948	Gilbert Dashiell	1969	Tom Meeks
1949	Clyde McEntire	1970	Ray McDonald