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World History

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Beeson Clubhouse and Winchester Golf Course

Charles Beeson, a resident of Winchester, Indiana, made a final contribution to his community as he left his land to the city within his final will. He intended for the land to be used for recreational facilities for the people of Winchester. Mr. Beeson had specifically written in his will that he wanted the Clubhouse to be built on the property where his home had stood and that he would also fund the entire project including the construction of the Clubhouse. In July 1935 the city of Winchester took the first steps of building the golf course and completing Charles' final boon¹

On May 6th of 1939 the Beeson Clubhouse and Winchester golf course had its opening day. On the night of May 5th the Beeson Clubhouse held its first social event which was a dance open to the public with \$1 admission per couple. For entertainment Paul Kring and his 7- piece orchestra played for the opening night dance. The following day, May 7th, the Winchester golf course was officially open until 12 pm. Mayor Oran E. Ross gave a short dedicatory address and presented the Beeson Clubhouse and Golf course opening.²

Following the opening the course ran for a week with no costs to any players in respect to Charles. After the first week the fee was \$0.25 and remained popular among the township. It was opened with the freshly cut grass and the newly punched goals. The flags had been freshly

¹ Randolph County Historical Society ,1935, Binder 59/ Goodrich Pool, Park,Golf Course and Beeson Clubhouse

² Randolph County Historical Society , 5-6-1939, Binder 59/ Goodrich Pool,Park,Golf Course and Beeson Clubhouse

placed and it was opened for the public's enjoyment. The local paper had described the golf course as any other brand new course. There was also an option to buy a season's pass for the new Winchester Golf Course. This pass was advertised to be sold at \$10, The pass was able to be used for the entire rest of the year.³

Gene Stiles, a new professional, had taken over doing the course's chores for Mr. Charlie Veal as Mr. Veal had signed to move to Union City's Country Club. At the time he started he was 21, had a wife and a three year old child. Mr. Stiles had aided Mr. Lloyd Mitchshell in coaching the Winchester Community High School Golf Team in his free time. Gene had reactivated the Winchester Golf Club, which had been more or less dormant in the previous years. It is said that after Mr. Stiles reactivated the team that more people joined in. He had actually moved to Winchester from Indianapolis, where he had originally done assistant work for the Broadmoor and Woodstock clubs.

Gene had started on a golf course at around age seven where he worked as a caddy. The newly local golf pro had been working since March 1, 1956. He believed that the fairways would be in great enough shape to play and be open by that Sunday. Stiles had decided that by adding a few new trees near the fairways and with smoothing out the rough spots on the new trees, it was believed that the club would greatly increase in attendance thanks to the Council head.

Mr. Allen White, a high school student at Winchester Community High School, would assist Mr. Gene Stiles in overseeing the golf course. Stiles had planned on running either a team or an individual tournament each weekend during the summer. He had commented that the

³ Winchester Newspaper, 7-19-37, Randolph County Historical Society Binder 59/Goodrich Pool, Park, and Golf Binder, the back of the 7th page

tournaments would not cause any interference with any persons who had wished to play their own separate matches with family or friends. ⁴

In November of 1964, Mrs. Glenfield, who was the caterer, suddenly resigned. After she resigned the fair committee hired a temporary caterer until they were terminated January 19, 1965. As the fair board committee looked back on the business loss, it was determined that they had lost around two-thousand to six-thousand dollars over each season. This information is what led them to terminate the catering services.

Due to the termination of the catering services at the Beeson Clubhouse they had pushed back the February board meeting, which was going to be used to renew the contract for the Clubhouse. Golf pro Allan White was chosen by the fair board to deal with the renewal of the contract. At the February board meeting Charles Vale, a resident of Richmond, Indiana, was employed as the pro greens keeper. He served this role from 1965-1972. Charles Vale succeeded Fred Brant who became pro at the New Green Hills Club Golf Course near Muncie, Indiana.⁵

⁴ Winchester Newspaper, 4-7-1956, Randolph County Historical Society Binder 59/Goodrich Pool, Park, and Golf Binder, the 4th page

⁵ Randolph County Historical Society, 1-5-1965, Binder 59/ Goodrich Park, Pool, Beeson Clubhouse, golf course