



ANCC
FOUNDATION
Did You
Know?



Columbus Country Club

The newly formed Army, Navy and Marine Corps Country Club considered four sites for their campus before settling on the “Columbus Country Club” site in Arlington County, Virginia. Over the years various magazine and newspaper stories about the origins of Army Navy Country Club have not accurately portrayed the origins, ownership, and activities of the Columbus Country Club.

Columbus Country Club

The best way to describe Columbus Country Club and debunk some popular misconceptions about it is to provide in its entirety a letter written by George A. Daidy to the ANCC Secretary relative to an article published in the July 5, 1959 edition of the *Washington Sunday Star* entitled “The World’s Largest Country Club” (*available on the ANCC Foundation website history page*).

July 14, 1959

Edwin T. O’Connell, Lt.Col.
Secretary
Army Navy Country Club
Arlington, Va.

Sir:

In the historical article “The World’s Largest Country Club”, published in the *Sunday Star* of July 5th, a misstatement was made that the original clubhouse and part of the present site was formerly owned by the Knights of Columbus.

The fraternal order of the Knights of Columbus was never directly connected with the Columbus Country Club, Inc. That Club was formed by young members of the K. of C. who desired a place for entertainment of tennis, baseball, dining, dancing, etc.

The site of 31½ acres, from the hilltop to Army Navy Drive, was purchased in 1913 @ \$233.00 per acre. I was one of the 100 young fellows who each chipped in a dollar for a 30 day option on the \$7,400.00 site.¹ I am the only member of the old

¹ ANCC bought the 31.12 acre site from A.S. Gardiner and J. Rozier Biggs on September 21, 1925 for \$40,000

Columbus Country Club who has been a member for the past 28 years of the Army Navy Country Club.

The enclosed menu card (not available) is illustrated by architect Wilson's perspective, but the left wing was not completed. It had only a low roof over the well, pump, and generator for electrical illumination. Contractor Gaskins, in 1914, constructed a fine brick building, too costly for its intended use. Few members had autos 45 years ago. The Falls Church trolley line from 12th and Penna. Avenue ran specials on dance nights. A transfer at Hatfield, Va. to the trolley from Rosslyn Circle carried to Fort Berry Station (17th St. at Glebe Road) and downhill to Nauck terminal. The present two all-weather tennis courts were of clay surface. The baseball field was on the lower valley with home plate at the front of the golf shelter between the 7th and 13th fairways.

Present Chief Judge Leo A. Rover of the D.C. Municipal Court of Appeals was the first Club President for two terms. He was succeeded by Dr. J. Rozier Biggs now deceased. Over half of the young members entered the armed services in 1917, which brought on the closing of the bank trusts. A realty firm got the property and rented the clubhouse to gamblers. These were driven out by a raid of County police², which accounts for the pictured broken window sash, etc. Major Newman was able to purchase it cheaply and went after the surrounding acreage in a quiet and successful manner.

Due to the stigma of the realty firm renting the clubhouse and bringing on a raid, I hope no future reference will be made to the Knights of Columbus. No title papers contain the name of the K. of C., it being strictly incorporated as the Columbus Country Club. Had it been owned by the K. of C.; the banks notes would probably have not been called. The Knights of Columbus were very generous to the armed Services during World War I.

The above data may be acceptable to add to the history of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps Country Club I joined March 21, 1930. I had the pleasure to serve with Major Newman on the Planning Committee during the depression years and served 15 years on the Board of Governors. In 1939 I was the architect for the center wing extension of the ballroom, sun dining room, men's grille, and bar. And later the dance floor, cocktail porch, ladies wing, refrigerator wing, and tennis house.



Yours sincerely,

George A. Daidy³



² *The Washington Evening Star* reports on the raid in both its October 17 and 22, 1922 editions.

³ The letter and pictures were provided by George Daidy's daughter, Marcia Daidy Bald