



One Hundred Years:  
**A History of  
Essex Golf & Country Club:**  
1902-2002

by Jeff Mingay  
*with Richard H. Carr*

*Foreword*  
*Lorne Rubenstein*





*The Early Years*



**1902 - 1910**

# 1902

## OAK RIDGE GOLF CLUB

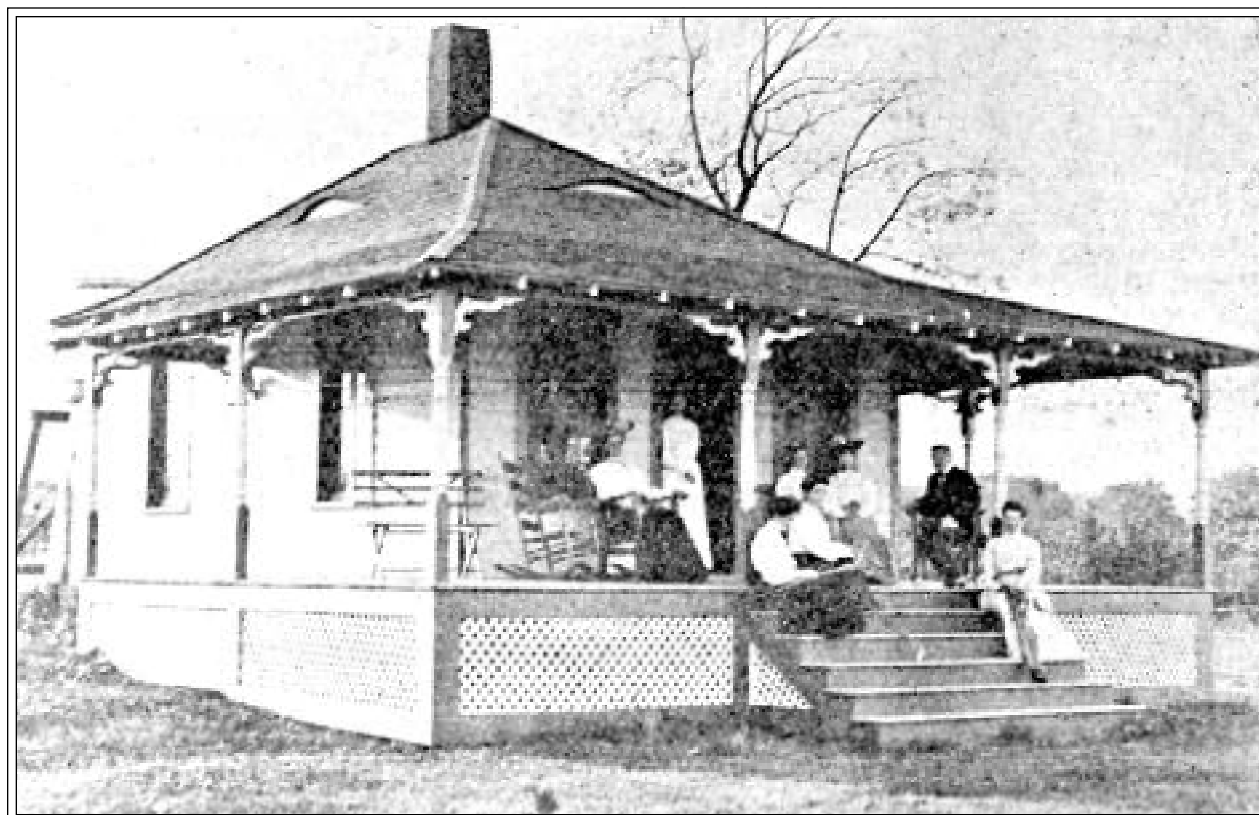
**E**ssex Golf & Country Club traces its roots back to the establishment of Oak Ridge Golf Club in the Town of Sandwich, Ontario in 1902.

Golf in Canada was in its infancy at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Recognized golf clubs had been established in Victoria, British Columbia, at Brantford, Toronto, Kingston and Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario, and Montreal and Quebec City. But there were few others. And those that did exist had a very difficult time recruiting members to sustain themselves.

Most of Canada's earliest golf clubs were established by men having recently arrived or returned from the British Isles where they had been introduced to the Royal and Ancient pastime. It is unknown whether George Mair had

recently returned to the Windsor area from Britain when he took the initiative to establish Oak Ridge Golf Club, circa 1900. Nonetheless, Mair and his cohorts were determined to have a quality golf course to play on— and a club to be proud of.

Mair was the manager of the Windsor branch of the Royal Bank in 1902. He was also a member of Walkerville Country Club. Primarily devoted to tennis and social activities, Walkerville Country Club had a less than acceptable nine hole golf course located on the present-day site of Walkerville Collegiate Institute and portions of the surrounding neighbourhood at the intersection of Monmouth Road and Huron Street (today Richmond Street) in the Town of Walkerville.



Source: Windsor Community Museum

*Members of Oak Ridge Golf Club lounging on the front porch of the clubhouse on the Yawkey Farm in Sandwich, Ontario, circa 1909.*



courtesy Windsor's Community Museum

Walkerville Country Club, circa 1902. The clubhouse can be seen at back left, with the club's tennis courts in the foreground. The spire of the original St. Anne's Church on Huron Street (Richmond Street today) is at far right.

## WALKERVILLE COUNTRY CLUB

In 1856-57, legendary American businessman Hiram Walker purchased 468-acres of land about two miles east of the City of Windsor, between what are today Kildare and Walker Roads.

There, on the shore of the Detroit River, Walker erected a flour mill and, about one year later, a vinegar and whiskey distillery that he nurtured into one of North America's most profitable enterprises.

Walker's Canadian Club brand rye whiskey, which continues to be produced at the same location today, quickly developed a fine reputation for quality and was soon in demand internationally. From the remarkable success of Walker's industry was born a prosperous little town bearing his name.

With success comes expendable time and monies that can be dedicated to recreation and leisure. In the late 1880s, Walker and his family established Walkerville Country Club.

Although the game of golf was by no means a popular activity at the time, Walker had a rudimentary nine-hole course laid out for members of his country club at some point prior to 1900, which makes it one of the first golf courses in the Windsor-Detroit area.

For the record, Country Club of Detroit, which is generally acknowledged as the oldest golf-related club in the area, was established with an 18-hole golf course in 1897. Two years later, Detroit Golf Club was incorporated.

Due to the absence of proper engineering, the Walkerville course drained very poorly and was unplayable for extended periods of time following rain. There was also an absence of ground contour, sand bunkers and other obstacles, which made golf in Walkerville rather bland.



courtesy David C. Newman/The Times Magazine

An early 1900s postcard featuring Walkerville Country Club.

Mair and a number of other disgruntled Walkerville golfers soon decided that a more suitable course was not only desirable, but necessary. By 1902, assisted principally by his wife and a "Mr. Greenhill", Mair had successfully solicited support from an enthusiastic group of Walkerville and Windsor area golfers; enough to warrant the establishment of a new club, which they called Oak Ridge Golf Club.

Appropriately, Mair was elected the new club's first president.

Men like Mair, involved with the organization of North America's first golf clubs, could not have imagined that one hundred years later historians would want to know how and when the game took root in their city. As a result, historical documents, photographs and other information regarding the establishment of many golf clubs are scarce.



courtesy: Hazel Walker of Sun archives

An aerial photograph of the Town of Walkerville, circa 1910.

More often than not, such records are non-existent.

Fortunately, the establishment of Oak Ridge was chronicled, albeit briefly, in the January 1916 edition of *Canadian Golfer* magazine.

*It was about fifteen years ago that Windsor and Walkerville had a joint club at Walkerville, but the course was not a very suitable one, becoming almost unplayable in wet weather. Mr. George Mair, Manager of the Royal Bank at Windsor — he is still the popular incumbent of the managerial chair — and Mr. Greenhill, Manager of the Merchants Bank there, decided that more suitable grounds were required and, joined by other Windsor golfers, formed a new club. Through the kindness of Mr. Thos. Austin of Detroit, son-in-law of the late Mr. Yawkey, a multi-millionaire, who owned a large tract of land in and adjoining Sandwich, Mr. Mair, the first President of the new club, and the members were most generously*

*offered the use, free of charge, of a thirty-four-hundred-yard golf course on his farm. The club was successful from its inception, and subsequently forty-four acres were rented adjoining Mr. Yawkey's farm from a Mr. Freeman, of Detroit. Largely through the efforts of the late Mrs. Mair, who secured subscriptions from members and friends, a small clubhouse was erected on this property and the game of golf prospered apace.*

Then, according to contemporary reports, came the “land boom”. The year was 1909, and landlords — Austin and Freeman included — became rapacious as regards rents, electing to give tenants no more than yearly leases, at high rates. “The club at this time faced a crucial period in its history,” continued the above quoted chronicle, “but, fortunately, its affairs were in the hands of very capable men, and an option was secured on what is known as the ‘Prince Farm’.”

## CHARTER MEMBERS OF OAK RIDGE GOLF CLUB

### GEORGE MAIR

Mair was manager of the Royal Bank in Windsor at the time Oak Ridge was chartered. A resident at what is now numbered 1209 Kildare Road in Walkerville, which years later was occupied by Essex past president James S. Clark (1985-86) and family, Mair was the club's founder and its first elected president.

### NOBLE A. BARTLET

Bartlet was a keen golfer who later became the first president of Essex County Golf & Country Club in 1910. Bartlet was one of the most prominent figures in the City of Windsor at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A barrister by trade, practicing in the firm of Clarke, Bartlet & Bartlet, he also served as an alderman of the City of Windsor, chairman of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, and Commanding Officer of the 21st Regiment, Essex Fusiliers from 1902 to 1908. At the time Oak Ridge was chartered Bartlet was 42 years old.



*Noble Bartlet*

### E. P. GOWEN

### CAPEL R. EMERY

Emery was manager of the Michigan Central Railway in Windsor.

### HARWOOD O. FLEMING

Fleming was born in Milton, Ontario in 1864. A pharmacist, he constructed the Fleming Block at the corner of Chatham Street and Ouellette Avenue in downtown Windsor, where, according to contemporary reports, he operated "one of the finest drug stores in Western Ontario." At the time Oak Ridge was chartered Fleming was 38 years old.



*R.M. Morton*

### R. M. MORTON

Morton was president of R.M. Morton & Co., a successful real estate and general insurance company in Windsor, established in 1885.

### ARMIT L. WILKINSON

Born in Goderich, Ontario in 1870, Wilkinson was a highly regarded businessman associated with the gas and electrical industry in a number of American cities, with headquarters in Detroit. At the time Oak Ridge was chartered Wilkinson was 32 years old.

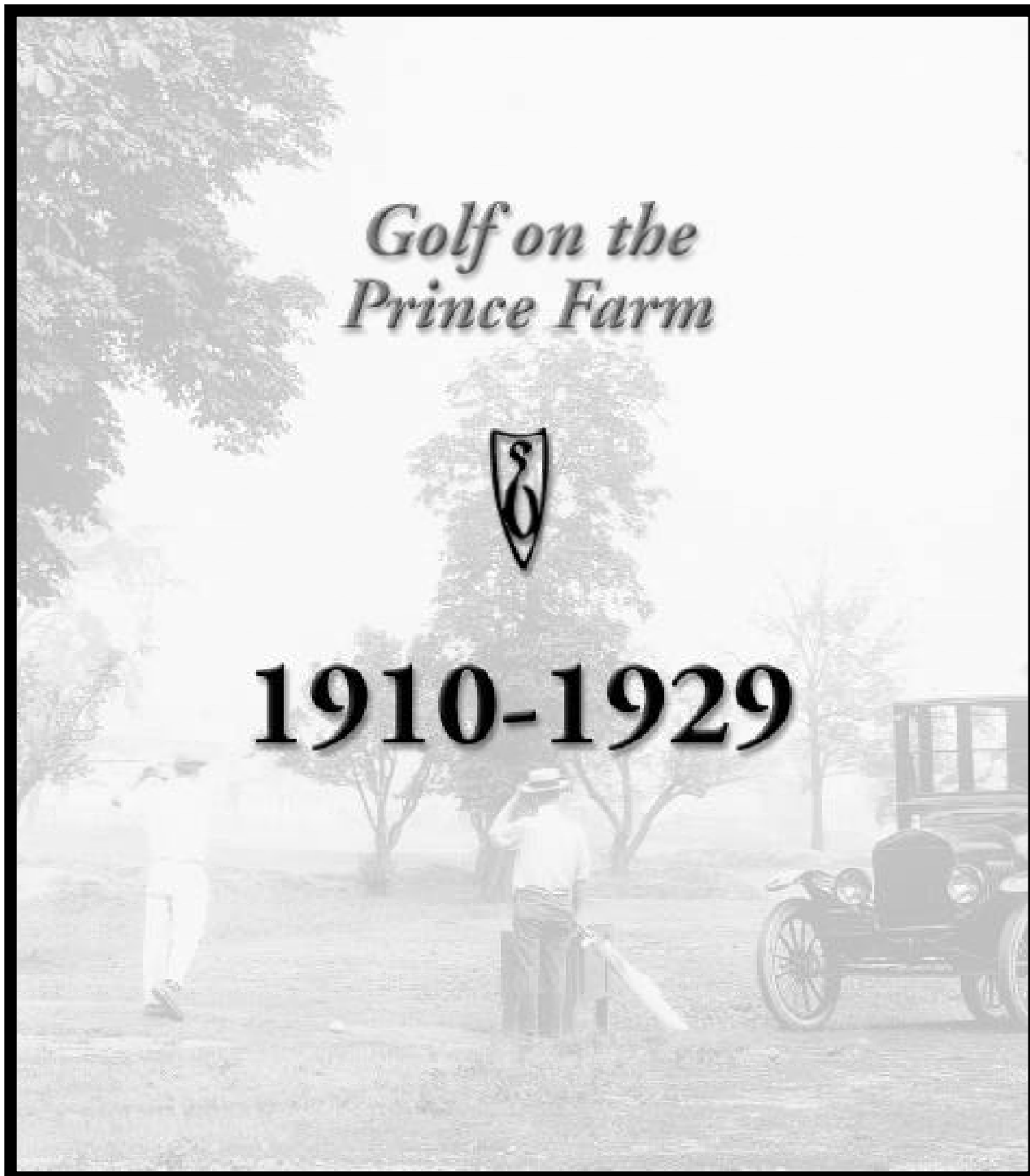


*On the porch at the Walkerville Country Club, circa 1905.*

*Golf on the  
Prince Farm*



**1910-1929**



# 1910

## GOLF ON THE PRINCE FARM

*There is no more delightful Golf and Country Club to-day in Ontario than that possessed by Essex County at historical Sandwich. The location is ideal, as it is within a few miles of the thriving city of Windsor and the growing towns of Walkerville and Ford, whilst just across the river is Detroit, and from all four of these places the Essex Country Club draws its membership.*

Excerpt from an article appearing in the January 1916 edition of *Canadian Golfer* magazine.

For nearly a decade, Oak Ridge Golf Club enjoyed great success on the Yawkey and Freeman Farms in Sandwich. Enthusiasm for the game of golf and the general activities of the club had grown tremendously in just eight years. Besides the fact Oak Ridge directors could no longer justify the exorbitant cost of leasing the Yawkey and Freeman lands, the golf course and clubhouse were quickly being rendered incapable of accommodating the increasing demands of a growing membership.

Plans to move the club were underway in 1909 when Oak

Ridge directors exercised an option to purchase a 53-acre property, located at the intersection of Centre Road (today Prince Road) and the Essex Terminal Railway line in Sandwich from the heirs of the late Colonel John Prince.

Having essentially been evicted from the Yawkey and Freeman owned lands, Oak Ridge members were granted permission to play golf on the old, hapless Walkerville course while their new layout on the Prince Farm was under construction.

During their first season spent golfing at Walkerville Country Club in 1910, Oak Ridge members exhibited a ripe, infectious enthusiasm for their ambitious plans. Soon, a significant number of Walkerville golfers opted to join Oak Ridge. The end result was a genuine amalgamation between the two clubs that warranted the creation of an entirely new club.

In October that year, with a formidable capital of \$40,000, Essex County Golf & Country Club was incorporated under an Ontario Provincial Charter. Despite this, Essex members were forced to play on the Walkerville



*courtesy Windsor's Community Museum*

*Colonel John Prince's farmhouse on Centre Road (today Prince Road) in Sandwich, Ontario shortly before it was renovated to become the clubhouse of Essex County Golf & Country Club.*



courtesy The Windsor Star

*The Prince Farm clubhouse following several renovations. Note the rugged sand bunker in the foreground.*

course for yet another season. The new Essex course opened for play on the Prince Farm in the spring of 1912, and the old Walkerville layout was happily abandoned.

## THE PRINCE HOMESTEAD

When Oak Ridge Golf Club purchased the Prince Farm in 1910, it had long been considered an important historical landmark in the Town of Sandwich. Club directors were cognizant of this fact and attempted to preserve the character of Colonel Prince's old farmhouse while converting it into a proper golf clubhouse.

For example, the Colonel's old wainscoted dining room was intelligently left intact. There, over the fireplace, hung a crayon portrait of Colonel Prince himself donated by Essex director Harwood O. Fleming, a charter member of both the Oak Ridge and Essex County clubs. This portrait served as a fitting reminder to all Essex members of the Prince Farm's historic roots.

Following a significant but otherwise sensitive renovation of the Essex clubhouse in 1915, *Canadian Golfer* magazine described it as follows:

*The Directors of the Club have dealt tenderly with the historical old house, but that does not say there is not every modern convenience. There is a fine music and dancing room, flooded with light; there are private dining-rooms and smoking-rooms, bright bedrooms-in fact every luxury of an up-to-date Country Club-plus the charm of old association, environment and atmosphere which possibly cannot be duplicated in the Dominion.*

According to a report that appeared in *The Border Cities Star* (today *The Windsor Star*) on October 31, 1911, the main entrance to the clubhouse was built of cobblestone reminiscent of an old English estate. There was also a tennis court and a lawn bowling green on the grounds. And it was the intention of the club to erect a log hut in a grove near the clubhouse, and also have a "lover's walk".

## COLONEL JOHN PRINCE

*John Prince practiced as a barrister in Cheltenham, England before immigrating to Sandwich, Ontario in August 1833. He came to Canada with his wife, three children, five servants and “a box of golden guineas so heavy two men were required to lift it”.*

*Prince was considered to be the first man of wealth and fortune to settle in the area. He was a stouthearted gentleman and an eloquent speaker, who immediately became involved with law and politics in the Western District, which then consisted of the present-day counties of Essex, Chatham-Kent and Lambton.*

*Not long after his arrival in Sandwich, there was a rebellion against British rule. Sympathetic groups in Detroit sided with a discontented faction of citizens in the Western District who were keen to oust the colonial British government. In 1838, a significant skirmish occurred on the shores of the Detroit River in Windsor between a United States force and a Canadian militia group led by Prince, who had been officially designated “Colonel”. In the end, the American forces were routed, and five captives were executed on orders from Colonel Prince.*

*Naturally, Colonel Prince was criticized for condemning men to death without a trial. According to The History of Essex County, this incursion brought a cloud over his popularity. However, years later, historians agreed “there is no doubt that his summary shooting of the prisoners taken at the Battle of Windsor... did more to put an end to the invasion of the western portion of the Province by the Patriots and sympathizers of that day than anything done by the Government or the regular forces.”*

*Amongst Americans, negative sentiment for Colonel Prince was strong. Soon after the Battle of Windsor, placards were posted along Detroit’s public streets offering a reward of \$800 for Prince’s dead body and \$1,000 for his live capture. In response, Colonel Prince himself placed advertisements in Detroit newspapers that warned all persons against coming to his homestead in Sandwich, as he had “spring guns and man traps” set for his protection.*

*Reportedly, the Colonel spent his money freely in beautifying his homestead, which, more than half a century later, would become home of Essex County Golf & Country Club. He purchased pheasants, peacocks and swans, and stocked his farm with thoroughbred cattle and his woodlot with deer and game.*

*In 1860, Colonel Prince was appointed to the Judgeship of the District of Algoma, Ontario, where he lived until his death in 1870.*

*Colonel Prince’s son, Alan C. Prince was an Essex member and Honorary Colonel of the Essex Scottish Regiment during the Second World War. He was made an Honorary Member of Essex in 1962.*

*Alan Prince’s son, Jack, was also an Essex member, captured as an officer of the Essex Scottish at the Battle of Dieppe during World War II. Jack Prince’s children, John, an Essex member since 1955, and Mrs. Connie McNulty, an Essex member since 1984, continue the Prince lineage at Essex today.*





This photo of golfers on the Prince Farm course was taken for an advertisement for Ford Motor Company of Canada in 1919. Note the church steeple through the car window.

## THE PRINCE FARM COURSE

*The 'Canadian Golfer' knows of no more enterprising and energetic golf club in the Dominion than that of Essex with its interesting 18 hole golf course of 6,000 yards and its charming clubhouse at historical old Sandwich.*

Excerpt from an article appearing in July 1919 edition of *Canadian Golfer* magazine.

It is unknown who originally laid-out the Prince Farm golf course, which consisted of just nine holes during its first two years of existence.

In 1913, Essex directors secured a \$20,000 loan from a "Mr. Arthur Dumouchelle" of the Township of Sandwich West in order to purchase a 54 acre property adjoining the existing course for the sole purpose of expanding it to 18 holes. No records have been discovered indicating who laid-out the nine-hole addition. Nonetheless, an 18-hole course was in play by the spring of 1915.

Yet, many Essex members were still dissatisfied with the overall quality of the Prince Farm course. There was a definite consensus that it had too many short holes and not enough in the way of sand bunkers and contour in the putting greens.

During the club's annual meeting held on January 24, 1916, Essex director Gordon M. McGregor read a letter received from Ernest Way, the professional and greenkeeper at Detroit Golf Club.

Earlier that year, Way supervised the construction of Detroit's present-day North and South courses, as per plans prepared by golf architect Donald Ross. In his letter to Essex, Way offered to personally remodel the Prince Farm course for a fee of \$300, contending that an expanded and improved course would undoubtedly attract new members to the club, and would also be able to handle the increased traffic that would inevitably result.

A majority of Essex members agreed with his assessment; and also with McGregor's opinion that more land was required if indeed Essex was to have "the best 18-hole golf course west of Toronto". But, at the time, the club could not afford to purchase more land, nor pay an expert such as Way to renovate the course as was being suggested.

This, however, did not discourage McGregor — a self-made millionaire who co-founded the Ford Motor Company of Canada along with Detroit industrialist Henry Ford in 1904. Shortly thereafter, McGregor personally purchased an additional seven acres of adjacent land owned by the Woollot family for \$5,000. He then agreed to sell

the property to the club at cost when appropriate funds were readily available.

McGregor also covered Way's fee and arranged for him to visit Essex in the spring of 1916 to survey the course and subsequently plan improvements.

In January 1916, prior to Way's renovation work, *Canadian Golfer* magazine briefly described the Prince Farm course as follows:

*There are two very long holes one 615 and one 620 yards, but the intention is to cut these down and get in a few more four to five hundred yarders. There are*

*some capital one-shot holes. Altogether the property lends itself to the making of a first-class golf course, and rest assured that the Directors will see that the members get it. They are just that kind of men. The par of the course is 70—35 out. 35 in—but it takes a bit of doing.*

Early in 1917, the following report from the Green committee detailing Way's work on the course was mailed to Essex members. It is the only known document providing some insight into the layout of the old Prince Farm course:

*To the Shareholders —*

*As you were advised at the last Annual Meeting Mr. Earnest Way (sic) of Detroit was retained as an expert, for another year, to assist in rearranging the course as well as trapping and bunkering the same. The arrangement finally adopted, we believe is the best that can be done with the limited amount of acreage at our disposal. The final arrangement with the number of traps and bunkers for each hole is as follows—*

- 1. Same as at present. 3 completed Traps and Bunkers. Length 240 yards*
- 2. New course with new green in new property. 7 completed Traps and Bunkers. Length 400 yards*
- 3. The Tee shot on new property, the Green as at present. 6 completed Traps and Bunkers. Length 500 yards*
- 4. Same as at present. 4 completed Traps and Bunkers. Length 410 yards*
- 5. Same as at present. Length 125 yards*
- 6. The Tee for this is on east side of the Club House and the Green same as present number 8. 3 Completed Traps and Bunkers. Length 330 yards*
- 7. A new Hole. The Tee is alongside the ditch, and the Green built on top of the old Brick Yard. Length 300 yards*
- 8. A new Hole. The Tee on top of old brick yard and the Green to the west of the present 15 tee. Length 190 yards*
- 9. Same as at present, except the Tee shot played from opposite side of ditch, immediately in rear of 8th Green; the second shot to cross ditch and play on to present 9th Green. 2 Completed Traps and Bunkers. Length 430 yards*  
*Out: 2,925 yards Par 35*
- 10. This hole is a combination of old number 6 and 10. The Tee is one used for old number 6. 2 completed Traps and Bunkers. Length 350*
- 11. Same as at present. To be planned. Length 550 yards*
- 12. Same as at present. To be planned. Length 260 yards*
- 13. Same as at present. To be planned. Length 360 yards*
- 14. Same as at present. 6 completed Traps and Bunkers. Length 350 yards*
- 15. Same as at present. Length 210 yards*
- 16. A new Hole on the new property. 2 Completed Traps and Bunkers. Length 180 yards*
- 17. A new Hole on the new property with the Green on top of bank immediately in rear of present number 18 Tee. 4 Completed Traps and Bunkers. Length 340 yards*
- 18. Same as at present, except Tee placed back 20 yards. 1 Completed Trap and Bunker. Length 330*  
*In: 2,930 yards Par 35 Total: 5,855 yards Par 70*

## ERNEST WAY

Mr. G.M. McGregor read a letter from Mr. E. Way of the Detroit Golf Club in reference to the course, and it was decided to have him look over the same with the Directors as soon as the snow is off the ground.

*From the minutes of an Essex Board of Directors meeting held on December 15, 1915.*

*Ernest Way, the professional and greenkeeper at Detroit Golf Club at the time, orchestrated a notable remodelling of the Prince Farm course beginning in the spring of 1916.*

*Having supervised the construction of Detroit Golf Club's Donald Ross-designed North and South courses, Way sent a letter to Essex directors in December 1915 in which he offered to remodel the Prince Farm course for a fee of \$300. His subsequent work, which included the construction of several new greens, the installation of many new bunkers and the addition of more than 300 total yards, significantly improved what was until then a very simple layout.*

*Shortly thereafter, Way resigned his position at Detroit Golf Club and embarked on a full time career as a golf architect. Curiously, he was replaced as Detroit's professional by Donald Ross' brother Alex, the 1907 United States Open champion.*

*During the 1920s, Way was an occasional design associate of Donald Ross.*

*Besides his remodelling of the Prince Farm course, Way is acknowledged as the designer of the original Edgewood and Pontiac Country Club courses in Michigan, as well as the Hotel Indiatlantic course in Florida, which no longer exists. Essex directors hired Way again in 1919 to remodel three greens that were untouched during the 1916 renovation.*

*Born in Devonshire, England, Way learned to play golf at historic Royal North Devon Golf Club — Westward Ho! — on Britain's southwest coast. His eldest brother Bert immigrated to the United States during the late 1890s and quickly established himself as a respected golf professional by finishing joint runner-up to Willie Smith at the 1899 United States Open at Baltimore. At that time, Bert Way was residing in Michigan, where he was in demand as a golf course designer. In fact, he laid out the first courses belonging to Country Club of Detroit and Detroit Golf Club. Both layouts no longer exist.*

*Ernest Way followed his older brother to America about 1899. Following stints as a golf professional in Pittsburgh and Richmond, Virginia, he headed west to Detroit to become the professional and greenkeeper at Detroit Golf Club.*

*A charter member of the Professional Golfers Association of Michigan, Way competed in five United States Opens between 1899 and 1908. He was also a lifetime member of the PGA of America and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.*

*Following mediocre success as a golf architect, Way returned to Detroit Golf Club in the early 1930s and resumed his duties as greenkeeper. However, ill-health forced his retirement in 1937. He moved to Miami, Florida, where he died in 1943.*



*Another photograph from the Ford Motor Company of Canada's 1919 ad campaign, taken on the Prince Farm course.*

Way added more than 300 total yards to the course. Contemporary reports indicate that upon its re-opening in the spring of 1917, its total length was 5,855 yards, with “the number of traps 52 and the number of bunkers 55”.

For the record, two-time British Open champion, famed author and renowned Scottish golf architect Willie Park, Jr. first differentiated between “traps” and “bunkers” in his book *The Game of Golf*, published in 1896. In part, an excerpt from his chapter titled “*Laying Out and Keeping of Golf-Links*” reads, “a bunker that is not visible to the player is always more or less of a trap.”

Presumably then, there were 52 bunkers on the old Prince Farm course that were more or less invisible to golfers.

It was also reported by the Green committee that:

*All Greens built this year are of the Raised type, that is to say the rear end of the Green is 4 or 5 feet higher than the front. This type of Green has been found far superior to the Flat Greens so common in this part of*

*the Country. It makes for better play as it is possible to pitch on and stay — a thing almost impossible on flat greens except in wet weather. The best thing about the raised Green, however, is its self draining feature. By draining water off as soon as the snow and ice melts in the spring the Greens are saved from being ‘Winter Killed’, etc., etc.*

Way most certainly learned this method of putting green construction from Donald Ross while supervising the construction of the Detroit Golf Club courses. Ross-designed greens are notoriously pitched from back-to-front— as evidenced in all eighteen greens on the present-day Essex course.

All told, the total cost of the 1916 renovation of the Prince Farm course was \$4,530.80.

Way, who became an associate of Ross’ for a brief time during the 1920s, was hired again by Essex directors in 1919 to design and construct new greens at the first, sixth and 10<sup>th</sup> holes,

which went untouched during the 1916 renovation. He completed this work with assistance from the club's greenkeeper, John Gray, and was paid his usual fee of \$300.

That same year, 1919, *Canadian Golfer* magazine reported that the amateur course record was 72, jointly held by Essex club president Charles S. King and fellow club member Arthur S. Fitzgerald.

The professional record of 68 strokes belonged to legendary Detroit touring professional Leo Diegel, who won consecutive Canadian Open championships in 1924 and '25, and again in 1928 and '29.

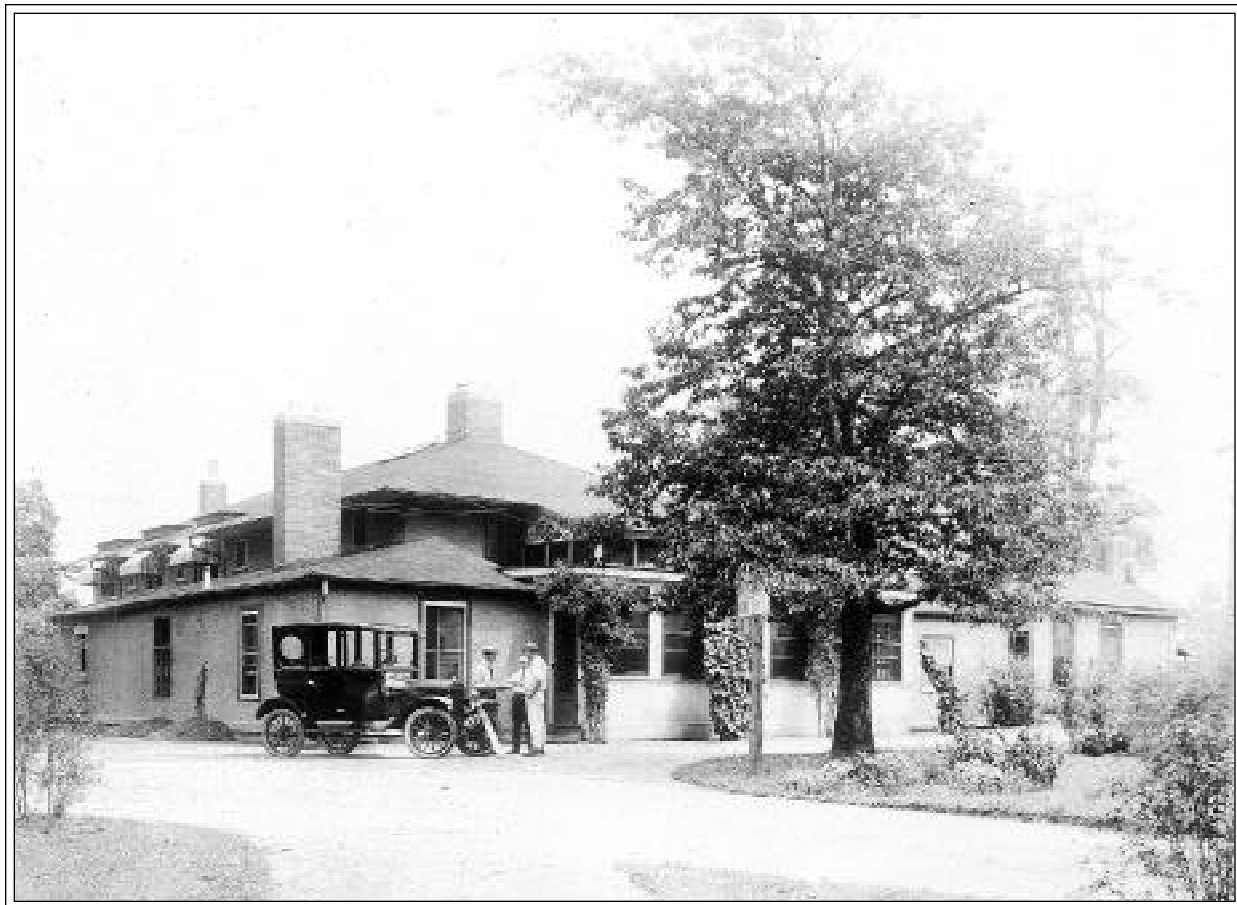
Unfortunately, very few photographs of the Prince Farm course have been located. And its exact layout is a distant, incoherent memory.

Stanley Burns, son of Essex professional Jock Burns,

learned to play golf on the old Prince Farm course as a boy during the mid-1920s. He lived in a cottage provided by the club for the professional and his family adjacent to the 11<sup>th</sup> fairway. Many years later, Burns vividly recalled tobogganing on the Prince Farm course, which suggests that there was some difference in elevation on the property.

Long-time Essex member W. Wallace Stuart also remembered the course as being relatively hilly. Curiously, Stuart and his brother, Essex past president John J. Stuart, played the Prince Farm course with their mother and father on the last day it was used by the club, before being handed over to the Great Lakes Land Company for residential development in July 1929.

The following day, the Stuart brothers played the new Matchette Road course on its first day opened for play.



*The Prince Farm clubhouse, 1919.*



## GORDON M. MCGREGOR



*During Essex' formative years on the Prince Farm, Gordon McGregor was a very influential member of the Board of Directors and Essex club president in 1917-18. His brothers were also very influential past presidents of the club: Walter L. McGregor in 1916 and again in 1932-33, and W. Donald McGregor in 1944-45. Walter L. McGregor, Jr., who joined the club in 1931, is today a Life member of Essex.*

*At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Gordon McGregor owned and operated the Walkerville Wagon Company, Ltd., which manufactured horse drawn carriages in a small shop at the foot of Drouillard Road and Riverside Drive in the Town of Walkerville.*

*In 1904, McGregor formed a new company with Detroit industrialist Henry Ford to manufacture Ford automobiles in Walkerville for sale in the British Empire, which, at the time, was not accepting foreign automobile imports. By manufacturing within the Commonwealth, Ford was accessing a new market. On August 16, 1904, the Ford Motor Company of Canada was incorporated under an Ontario Provincial Charter.*

*During the company's first year of operation, some sixteen employees produced 114 cars in McGregor's converted wagon works. Less than eleven years later, the Ford Motor Company of Canada had 2,300 employees working in a new 435,000-square foot assembly plant on the same site.*

*"It was Gordon McGregor's personal courage and zeal, his refusal to become discouraged, and his ability to convince others of the soundness of the new enterprise, which gave Ford of Canada the industrial breath and blood needed to bring vigorous health," wrote Ford historian Angus Munro. "He faced dire forebodings of men who had little faith in the new horseless carriage. He struggled with the native caution of his fellow- Canadians. He listened to predictions of certain failure. He walked the streets of Windsor, desperate to find ways of persuading prospective investors. He met all forms of adversity head-on. He was scorned by men of lesser vision. He persevered and fought on."*

*Gordon Morton McGregor was born in a house on Riverside Drive near Crawford Avenue in Windsor on January 18, 1873. His father, William McGregor, was a member of federal parliament for whom the Town of McGregor in Essex County is named. Gordon McGregor School in Windsor and McGregor Street in the city's Roseland District were later named in memory of his son.*

*A founder and chief executive officer of the Ford Motor Company of Canada, Gordon McGregor surprisingly never attained the position of company president. At the time of his death on March 22, 1922, he was treasurer and vice-president of the company. His last will and testament showed that he had become a millionaire.*

*Munro lists McGregor as one Windsor man who assumed top positions of leadership in the auto industry and who made lasting contributions to the world reputation of his city for getting things done.*



*A portrait of the McGregor family taken in the Prince Farm clubhouse, circa 1917. Essex past president Gordon McGregor is standing in the back row, second from the left; his brother and fellow past club president, W. Donald McGregor, is also standing in the back row, fourth from the right.*

*Standing second from the right is Malcolm McGregor, a member of Detroit Golf Club who established the Detroit District Golf Association (today the Golf Association of Michigan) in 1919.*

*Note the national flags of Canada's World War I allies on display above the fireplace in the background, and also the original men's club championship trophy on the mantel at far right.*

*Although this trophy is no longer in use, it continues to be displayed in the club's trophy case.*

*Absent is Essex past president Walter L. McGregor, who was serving with the Canadian Armed Forces overseas at the time this photograph was taken.*



*courtesy Ford Motor Company archives*

*Wallace R. Campbell, right, oversees the production of the 700,000<sup>th</sup> Model T engine at Windsor on October 5, 1926.*

### WALLACE R. CAMPBELL

*Wally Campbell was 23 years-old when he was hired by Gordon McGregor as a book keeper for the Ford Motor Company in 1905. In short time, he was considered McGregor's "right hand man."*

*In 1929, Campbell succeeded Henry Ford's son, Edsel, to become the first Canadian born president of the Ford Motor Company of Canada. He served Ford in that capacity until 1946.*

*Campbell was also a proud member of Essex: club president in 1925-26, and club champion for three consecutive years between 1917 and '19.*



1902-2002

## Milestones

### PRINCE FARM MILESTONES

#### 1915

In 1915, Kate Duncan joined Essex and became the first woman member of the club. A life-long resident of 179 Henry Street in Detroit, Duncan did not have an automobile. In order to get to the club, she would take the Woodward Avenue streetcar to the Windsor-Detroit ferry service, then later the Windsor-Detroit tunnel, and arrange for fellow Essex members to pick her up on their way to the golf course. A tiny, bespectacled woman, who played golf frequently right up until her death in 1967, Duncan was Essex ladies club champion in 1929, and runner-up in 1921, '22, '24, '26 and '31. Throughout her life, Duncan was heavily involved with a variety of activities at the club.

One of her favourite pleasures was to be with children. During the 1950s, Duncan obtained permission to convert the club's abandoned tennis courts into a children's playground.

In her memory, the ladies' golf schedule annually includes a "Kate Duncan Day".

#### 1916

A Gun Club was successfully tried out at Essex during the winter of 1915-16, "largely through the instrumentality of Mr. A.N. Lawrence, the well-known Captain of the Golf Club". In January 1916, *Canadian Golfer* magazine reported that "a large number of members have thoroughly enjoyed this 'trap-shooting on the links'."

#### 1917

It was in 1917 that Essex directors decided to affiliate with the Royal Canadian Golf Association.

The RCGA was established as the Canadian Golf Association in 1895. The following year, Queen Victoria granted the association its official "Royal" prefix. The RCGA is today recognized as the governing body of men's amateur golf in Canada.

#### 1919

In 1919, Essex was one of fourteen charter member clubs involved with the establishment of the Detroit District Golf Association, which, in 1961, became the Golf Association of Michigan. On May 7, 1919, during the first meeting of the new association at Detroit Golf Club, Essex director Walter G. Bartlet was elected one of five Governors on the first DDGA Executive Committee.

#### 1919

On October 23, 1919, Edward, Prince of Wales visited Windsor on a cross-country tour of Canada. That evening, "one hundred and twenty-five prominent residents of the Border Cities" toasted the Prince during a banquet held at Essex in his honour. Among the guests in attendance were Detroit industrialist Henry Ford and Essex club president Gordon M. McGregor, who gave the official toast. According to contemporary reports, the Prince arrived at the club on an Essex Terminal passenger train. He was then transported by automobile, across the fourth fairway, to the clubhouse.

~ WORLD WAR I ~

During the First World War, it was resolved by Essex directors that “all members of the regular army, navy and clergy, (who are) residents of Essex County, be admitted to club membership without initiation fee or stock and all regular dues.”

The club’s annual report for the year ending December 31, 1917 noted that “twenty-six of our members are in-training or serving with the overseas forces and are carried in good standing free after the war.”

Essex membership at the time totaled 240; comprising 190 golfing members, 29 country (social), 10 lady members, 8 non-residents, 2 juniors and 1 member under a “special” category.

In February 1919, Essex directors acknowledged that several club members had sons returning from the war, who had taken up golf after leaving Canada. Owing to their absence, these boys did not have the opportunity to take a membership prior to the war, before the club began to charge an initiation fee. So it was decided to allow veterans of the First World

War to join Essex without being charged an initiation fee.



*Lt. Foster Ambery, an Essex member killed in action during the First World War.*

*The following Essex members were awarded temporary honorary membership while serving in the Armed Forces during the First World War, 1914-18.*

Everett Ambery  
Foster Ambery (killed in action)  
L. Anderson  
Walter G. Bartlet  
E.B. Baxter  
K.M. Bour  
C.A. Bucknell  
G.S. Currie  
W.J. Davidson  
P.J. Donovan  
G.H. Emery  
F.E. Good  
Joseph G. Helliwell (killed in action)  
J.J. Jennings  
F.H. Joyce, Jr.  
W.N. Joyce  
O.S. Kelly  
Edward C. Kenning  
George King  
Walter L. McGregor  
A.E. Mercer (killed in action)  
T.C. Murphy  
Dr. H.W. Plaggemey  
Alan Prince  
H.E. Putman  
D.C. Robinson  
L. R. Scarf  
H.H. Scott  
H.A. Springle  
H.B. Trix  
B.W. Vallate  
Dr. George E. White  
E.S. Wigle

*(Source: club minutes)*