

**Early History of
Glen Acres Golf and Country Club, Seattle, WA**
Established 1-16-1923, Course Opened: 7-1-1925
Course Architect: A. Vernon Macan

At first glance, it may seem odd to find two private golf clubs, only a quarter mile apart, being conceived and built in the same McKinley Hill neighborhood of South Seattle at nearly the same time during the years 1919-24. Yet such was the case of the two clubs: Glendale (later Glen Acres) Golf and Country Club, founded in 1923, and Rainier Golf and Country Club, founded in 1919. The two clubs were organized by some of the most prominent businessmen of Seattle. The two also shared a common architect, A. Vernon Macan, a noted golf course designer from British Columbia.

This apparent oddity is explained when examined in the context of discriminatory practices against racial and religious minorities in the early part of the twentieth century – practices common among golf clubs in Seattle and elsewhere. These practices were usually more covert than overt. The by-laws of these clubs typically did not contain any discriminatory clauses, however, they existed in practice. One simply did not write it down or talk about them. A golfer seeking membership in a private club typically had to complete a two-step process: first, he/she had to be sponsored by a current member, and then his/her application must be approved by the Club itself. In some clubs, the objection of just one member was enough to reject the applicant. Effectively excluded from joining any of the established Seattle golf clubs at the time, the Jewish community decided to form its own club and build its own course.

Conceived in 1921, the idea for a golf course for the Jewish community in Seattle became a reality with the founding of the Washington Golf & Country Club (later renamed the Glendale Golf & Country and later renamed yet again to the Glen Acres Golf and Country Club) on January 16, 1923. The Seattle Times introduced the club with the following announcement on October 21, 1923:

MET the new member of Seattle's family of golfing organizations, the Washington Golf & Country Club! The tenth member of the family. First thought of about two years ago; then, actively agitated for the first time just one year ago; temporarily organized on January 16, last; incorporated two months later, and finally reaching a state of permanent organization last week, the newest member of this city's golfing colony is going to show a mature growth so promptly as to make one dizzy.

Seattle Daily Times – 10-21-1923

Leo S. Schwabacher was named the president, Albert Schubach, the vice president, and Herbert A. Schoenfeld, secretary. The board of governors included Nathan Eckstein, Victor Staadecker, Arthur Cohen, J.C. Lang, E. Rosenberg, and later Joe Gottstein, the founder of Longacres Race Track. The club began with fifty-three charter members. Interestingly, this lengthy Times article makes no mention that the course was being built by and for the Jewish community.

The Club's intent, as was common at the time, was to begin with a nine-hole course, and then expand to eighteen at a later date. The board examined twenty-five prospective sites in the Seattle area before

settling on the current location. Eighty acres were purchased from the South Seattle Land Company with options for additional acreage. The selected site was described thus: "Situated on the commanding McKinley Hill, a fine view of the Duwamish Valley, the Cascade Mountains and the city of Seattle opens up from the course of play. The site is removed from strong winds and strong air currents, while it is outside the fog belt." (Seattle Daily Times 10-21-1923). The board hired noted golf architect from British Columbia, A. Vernon Macan.



Golf Architect A. Vernon Macan (1882 – 1964)

Arthur Vernon Macan, whose designs included Rainier, Inglewood, Broadmoor, Fircrest, and many others, gave the new course a strong endorsement: "A course that shall be the last word in modern features of scientific construction, but at the same time one that shall not be too difficult; a course that is going to give lots of interesting golf for all classes from the expert to the duffer. In a word, a course that will be a grand addition to the golfing areas of the Pacific Northwest." (Seattle Daily Times 10-21-1923)

Construction of the golf course began in January, 1924. By November the work had been completed, and only needed time for the grass to grow. The course officially opened on July 1, 1925 to much acclaim. "The Gem of Golf Courses" was how one described it. Another said, "More shots on nine holes than is offered on any eighteen-hole course in Seattle." Surveying the hole from the tee box on the 185 yard second, leading amateur golfer Bon Stein said simply, "The best-looking one-shot hole I have ever seen."

Course Yardage in 1925

Hole	Yards	Par
1	460	5
2	185	3
3	380	4
4	340	4
5	135	3
6	435	4
7	545	5
8	440	5
9	385	4
	3305	37

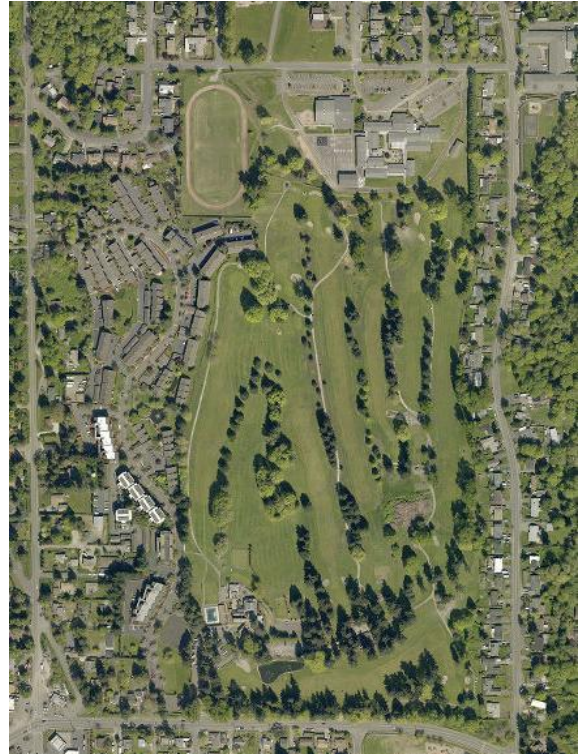
Course Yardage in 2015

Hole	Yards	Par
1	437	4
2	120	3
3	375	4
4	541	5
5	328	4
6	317	4
7	457	5
8	165	3
9	320	4
	3060	36

Macan's original routing of the holes changed considerably when three holes (the then holes 2, 3, 4) were lost with the sale of the north end of the property to the Seattle school district in later years. However, a before and after aerial photos of the course shows that current holes 1, 3, 4, 7 and 9 are substantially the same.



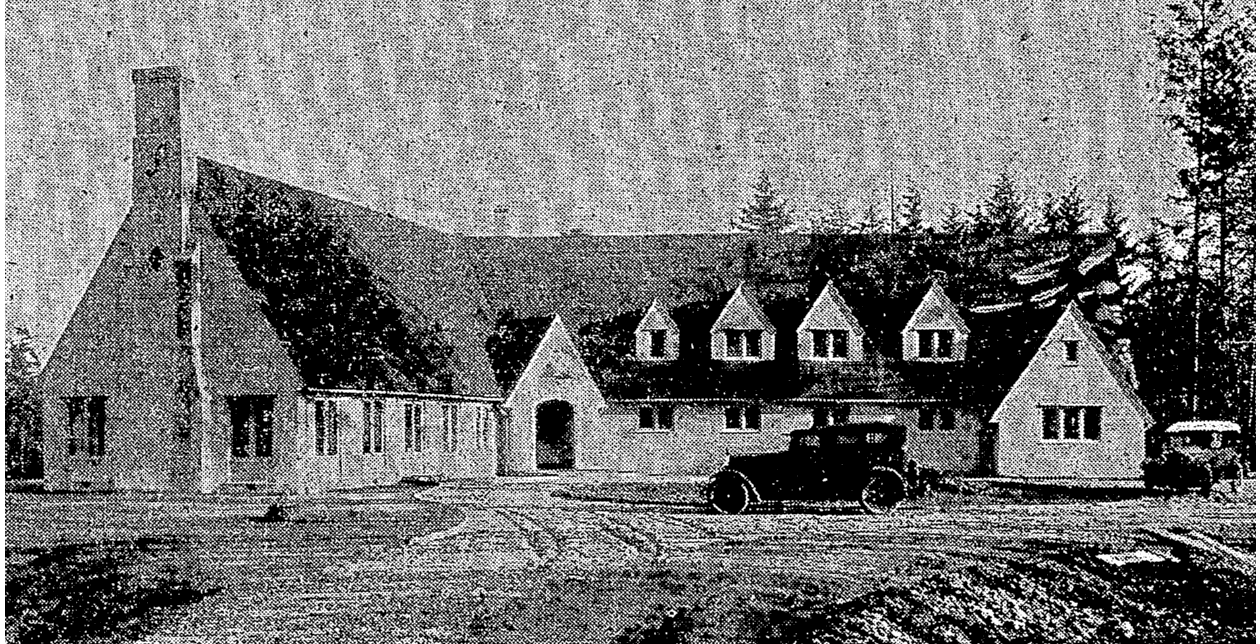
Glendale (Glen Acres) G&CC in 1936



Glen Acres G&CC in 2015

With the opening the course, the board renamed the club to Glendale Golf & Country Club. The name derived from the King County voting district of Glendale on which the course was located. They also hired their first golf professional in 24 year-old Nebraskan Perry Gail. Gail would only stay for two years, moving on to California in 1927. Johnny Jones, from Cowlitz County Golf & Country Club, was hired as the next pro.

Work on the construction of \$50,000 clubhouse soon commenced. Described as "Modern English" in design, it sat on a knoll with a sweeping view of the golf course and the Seattle skyline beyond. The clubhouse officially opened on New Year's Day, 1926.



Glendale (Glen Acres) Golf & Country Club (Seattle Daily Times – 12-13-1925)

The following year, the club purchased forty additional acres with plans for expanding the course to eighteen holes. These plans never materialized as the course has remained a nine-hole layout to this day.

Historically speaking, Glen Acres has always been considered a tough test of golf with its tight fairways and elevated, sloping greens. The best players of the day in 1926 learned this lesson for themselves in the first real test of the golf course:

The score card of Glendale (Glen Acres) Golf and Country Club indicates that perfect play should bring a 72. Try and get it. Forty young men, prominent among the professional and amateur divisions of the city, tried yesterday and not one broke 80 When such really excellent professional players as Johnny Jones, Frank Noble, Walter Pursey, and Curley Hueston ... can't produce a single man capable of getting closer than eight strokes to the par of a course, it must be the course and not the man. It wasn't the tees, which are all turf; nor the fairways, which offer better than ordinary lies, nor the greens, which are without superiors and, probably, without equals in the whole Pacific Northwest. It was – or is – the course ensemble. The towering trees which border the fairways bring golfing lanes that stagger the golfing mentality. That's the answer, the explanation. Glendale is a mental course far superior as such as any we know of hereabouts. The long hitter considers his tee shot or his long approach with a sinking sensation in his stomach and a nervous mental twitching all over. He knows that failure to place his shot means ruin. (Seattle Daily Times – 5-11-1926)

The top member player in the early days of Glendale was Kermit Rosen. Long-hitting Rosen, a highly rated amateur and a student at the University of Washington, captured the Seattle City Amateur in 1930. Mrs. Myron (Ruby) Aronson and Mrs. Max Block were the top women player, both having won numerous club championships.

A popular form of competition in the 1920s and 30s were interclub matches, now commonly known as home and away matches. The results of these matches would be invariably reported in the local newspapers. However, except for one instance, no account of matches involving the Glendale G&CC could be found. Was this an act of discrimination on the part of other clubs? The one exception? It was a match against Tualatin Golf Club, the other Jewish club, located in Portland, Oregon.

In 1955, faced with the inevitable encroachment of new homes and businesses in its adjoining properties, the membership sought to relocate the club. In 1958, the club moved to its new 18-hole course in Bellevue and retained the name Glendale Country Club.

The old property was purchased by a Northwest developer Kinney Leonard who intended to turn the course into a housing development. However, golfers persuaded Leonard, a golfer himself, to preserve the golf course. A new club, the Glen Acres Golf and Country Club, was formed on December 1, 1958.

Written by Martin Pool
February, 2017
fas1863@hotmail.com
www.nwhickoryplayers.org