

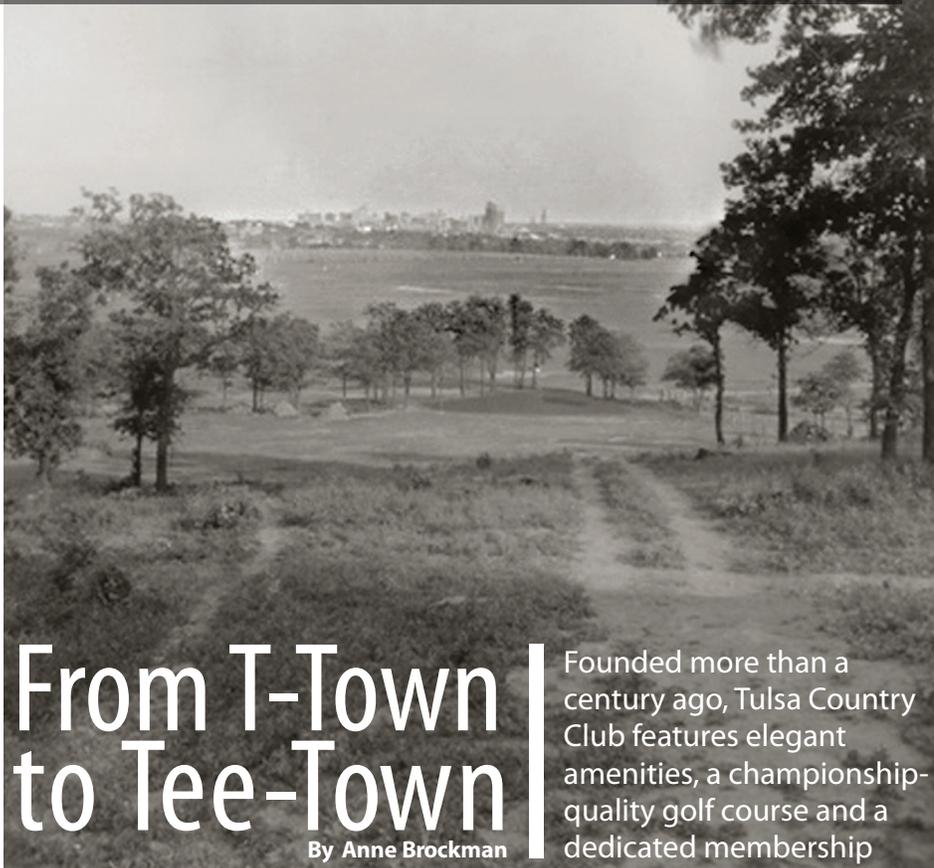
A panoramic view of the Tulsa city skyline, featuring several prominent skyscrapers, with a dense line of green trees in the foreground.

**T**  
**TULSA COUNTRY CLUB**  
1908



**COMBINING TRADITION, PRESTIGE AND HOSPITALITY  
FOR OVER 100 HUNDRED YEARS**

An early view of Tulsa Country Club, whose course originally doubled as a dairy pasture and had been used to hold cattle awaiting shipment on the Frisco Railroad.



# From T-Town to Tee-Town

By Anne Brockman

Founded more than a century ago, Tulsa Country Club features elegant amenities, a championship-quality golf course and a dedicated membership

More than a century ago, when Tulsa was nothing more than a 10,000-plus-population town finding its way in the oil-boom craze, Tulsa Country Club was founded to provide citizens and guests with big-city charms in the beautiful Osage Hills landscape.

Now known for its spectacular downtown views, a nationally recognized

golf course, elegant and casual dining options, an array of sports activities and a history that tells the story of Tulsa, Tulsa Country Club has helped make Tulsa T(ee)-Town.

The club has hosted numerous national tournaments on its greens and has seen greats such as **Byron Nelson**, **Sam Snead**, **Miller Barber** and **Bill Mehlhorn** tee off.

For more than 100 years, members have been making Tulsa Country Club's 150-plus acres their second home — and why wouldn't they? With family activities, social events, sports tournaments, swimming, dining and more, Tulsa Country Club strives to provide an atmosphere of casual elegance for all its members and guests.

## THE EARLY YEARS

In 1908, Tulsa Country Club was founded on land leased from the Kennedy family for a yearly fee of \$4 an acre.

A nine-hole golf course was built with holes named Profanity Creek, Climax,



High Ball and Outward Bound. These clever and quirky labels became legendary among golfers of the era, who also had to contend with hazards such as Kennedy's dairy cows.

A fire in 1916 destroyed the log cabin where members gathered. A new clubhouse opened the following year.

## GROWTH AND CHANGE

The 1920s brought considerable change to the club. Renowned golf course architect **A.W. Tillinghast** was hired to design a new 18-hole course, with grass greens replacing sand greens.

The addition of a swimming pool in 1935 and a dining room and cocktail lounge a decade later, extended the club's services to golfers' families. A new clubhouse was built in 1968 on North Union Avenue to accommodate the club's growth.

## GREENS IN NEED

In 1988, the golf course underwent a renovation headed by Tulsan Jay



Tulsa Country Club course architect **A.W. Tillinghast**, right, looks over plans with a foreman, circa 1920.

A view of the Tulsa Country Club golf course after noted architect Rees Jones restored and enhanced the classic A.W. Tillinghast layout.



Morrish, resulting in greater recognition and prestige for Tulsa and club members. Morrish's work brought notoriety to the club, with the U.S. Golf Association hailing the work as "one of the best jobs ever."

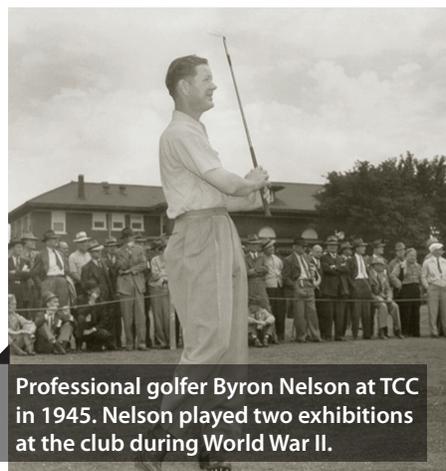
## MASTERING THE FIELD

Approaching its centennial, Tulsa Country Club underwent a thorough review process to create a master plan that would improve the clubhouse, swimming pool and golf course. In 2007, a new resort-style pool complex was completed, followed by pool locker rooms and a café a year later.

Acclaimed golf course architect **Rees Jones** signed on to rejuvenate the club's course. This project created new green complexes, tees, bunkers and fairways; state-of-the-art irrigation; additional ponds and water features; and enhancements to the overall design of the Tillinghast course.

After finalizing the course redesign plans, the club's board set its eyes on

enhancing the clubhouse and hired **Tom Hoch**, one of the most respected clubhouse designers in the country, for the renovation. Hoch put in place a plan to allow for the clubhouse to be renovated while staying within the footprint of the existing facility. The first phase of the renovation is complete. Two more phases will follow.



Professional golfer Byron Nelson at TCC in 1945. Nelson played two exhibitions at the club during World War II.

Rees Jones undertook the \$6 million project, which included the installation of a new irrigation system and pump house, to produce myriad updates, including:

- Building 18 new greens to USGA specifications
- Rebuilding greenside complexes and bunker surrounds
- Planting new and, in some cases, relocating trees to improve shot variety
- Creating strategic fairway bunkering at all the par 4s and 5s – 41 new bunkers in all
- Regrading the fairways to improve surface drainage
- Replacing the majority of the cart paths
- Enlarging and redefining all ponds, including a new 1.5-acre irrigation pond.
- Replacing all bridges, subterranean drainage pipes and other infrastructure.

## Rees Jones: "The Open Doctor"

Jones was nicknamed the "The Open Doctor" for his redesign work at seven U.S. Open host courses as well as six PGA Championships, four Ryder Cups, two Walker Cups, one President's Cup and the PGA's Tour Championship.

Jones has been listed every year to Golf Digest's Top 5 Golf Course Architects list since its inception.

Jones has designed or redesigned the following renowned golf courses:

- Baltusrol, Springfield, NJ
- Bethpage State Park (Black), Farmingdale, NY
- Cog Hill #4-Dubsdread, Lemont, IL
- Congressional Country Club (Blue), Bethesda, MD
- East Lake Golf Club, Atlanta, GA
- Hazeltine National Golf Club, Chaska, MN
- Medinah Country Club (Course Three), Medinah, IL
- Oakland Hills Country Club (South Course), Bloomfield Hills, MI
- Pinehurst Country Club (Nos. 2 and 7), Pinehurst, NC
- The Country Club, Brookline, Mass.
- Torrey Pines Golf Course (South Course), La Jolla, Calif.
- Waldorf Astoria Golf Club, Orlando, Fla.

A Tulsa Country Club golf event in the 1940s.



# The course of history

Tulsa Country Club's greens evolve to meet tournament and member needs.

By Randy Krehbiel

Golf was just becoming a truly national game in 1919 when two of the sport's leading personalities visited Tulsa. One was **Charles "Chick" Evans**, winner of the 1916 U.S. Amateur and U.S. Open. Largely forgotten now, Evans remains the only player — the Great Immortal, **Bobby Jones**, being the other — to win both tournaments in the same year, and he did it with just seven hickory-shaft clubs in his bag. Evans would play in every U.S. Amateur from 1907 to 1962, winning again in 1920, and was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 1975.

Evans' companion, however, was an even bigger name in golf. **Albert Warren Tillinghast** — generally known as A.W. or, more often, "Tillie" — was a mid-dling golfer at best but an imaginative and prolific designer of golf courses. Strong willed, alternately surly and charming, and prone to alcoholic binges, Tillinghast could turn a raw piece of land into an artist's canvas. He would design or redesign more than 250 courses in his lifetime, including Baltusrol, Bethpage, Winged Foot, Ridgewood and Cedar Crest.

Tillinghast was brought to Tulsa to redesign the Tulsa Country Club (TCC) course northwest of downtown. TCC

was started in 1908, on land leased from Dr. **Samuel Grant Kennedy**, a pioneer physician who had given up medicine to concentrate on oil and real estate. Located in the very southeast corner of the old Osage Reservation, now Osage County, the club was actually located on the allotment of Kennedy's wife, **Agnes**, daughter of a French-Osage trader.

This was actually the second Tulsa Country Club. An earlier version, opened in 1905 on 80 acres near where Hillcrest Medical Center now stands, had included a clubhouse, nine-hole golf course, tennis courts and a shooting range. According to the October 1905 *Sturm's Statehood Magazine*, the shooting range was the most popular feature.

"Marksmen were in the majority," the magazine reported. "A few had played lawn tennis or read of golf."

By late 1906, the first Tulsa Country Club was out of business, its leased course subdivided and sold off in residential lots.

The second Tulsa Country Club's course seems to have been built more or less by committee, although most of the work was at the direction of **William Nichols**, a "true Scotsman" and, to perhaps damn him with faint praise, the best golfer in the state. The Oklahoma Golf

Association was formed at TCC in 1909, and the first state championship was held there a year later.

Tillinghast's visit a decade later indicated how much Tulsa had changed. A big share of the oil that fueled the Allied armies and navies of World War I had come through Tulsa, and it had made the city rich. The golf course that was patched together willy-nilly a decade earlier would no longer do. The best in the business had to be brought in. Some of the most famous names in golf have played Tillinghast's course.

It has endured Oklahoma summers, blizzards, ice storms and floods. Like all of us, it has suffered a fair number of indignities. In 2010, the club membership decided to bring Tillinghast's genius back to life. In July 2011, members cut the ribbon on a **Rees Jones** redesign that evokes the day, long ago, when two of golf's early giants walked the hills and streams of Tulsa Country Club.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Randy Krehbiel is the author of "Breaking 100: Tulsa Country Club's First Century of Good Times and Good Friends."*

A foursome tees off during the early days of Tulsa Country Club.

# Timeline

**1908** Tulsa Country Club (TCC) is formed in March on land leased by Dr. **S.G. Kennedy**. A clubhouse and nine-hole golf course with sand greens are built on 80 acres located near the present site at West Edison Street and North Union Avenue.

**1909** Country club members from Oklahoma City, Shawnee, Muskogee and Tulsa meet at TCC to form the Oklahoma Golf Association.

**1910** TCC hosts the first Oklahoma State Amateur and First Oklahoma Open.

**1916** A fire destroys the original log cabin clubhouse.

**1917** A new clubhouse is completed.

**1918** The TCC golf course expands to 18 holes.

**1920** A new lease is signed with the Kennedy family. Famed golf course architect **A.W. Tillinghast** is tapped to design a new course and install grass greens.

**1923** **Bill Mehlhorn** wins the Oklahoma Open (a PGA Tour event) on the TCC course. Mehlhorn previously served as TCC head pro and later played on the first U.S. Ryder Cup team.

**1927** Oklahoman **Dick Grout** edges out **Gene Sarazen** and other tour pros to win the Oklahoma Open at TCC.

**1930** TCC hosts the Trans-Mississippi Women's Amateur.

**1935** A swimming pool is added.

**1946** The clubhouse is remodeled to include a small dining room and cocktail lounge.

**1954** A watering system is installed for the greens and grounds.

**1960** TCC hosts the U.S. Women's Amateur tournament.



Noted golf course architect **A.W. Tillinghast's** design at TCC has stood the test of time.

**1968** A new \$1 million clubhouse opens on the west side of the grounds; holes are numbered.

**1984** **Miller Barber** wins the Roy Clark Senior PGA tournament, a forerunner of the senior tour, at TCC.

**1988** A **Jay Morrish**-led renovation of the golf course is completed.

**1999** TCC hosts the NCAA Women's Golf Championship.

**2001** The first of three consecutive years Tulsa's stop on the LPGA Tour is played at TCC.

**2005** TCC begins formalizing a master plan for renovations of the clubhouse, swimming pool and golf course.

**2008** Acclaimed golf course architect **Rees Jones** signs on to restore the golf course, including new green complexes, fairways, irrigation, additional ponds and overall design changes. Respected clubhouse designer **Tom Hoch** makes plans to renovate the clubhouse in three phases.

**2008** TCC hosts the U.S. Senior Women's Amateur Championship.

**2008** TCC celebrates its centennial.

**2010** The \$2.5 million clubhouse renovation is completed.



**Diane Lang** celebrates her 2008 USGA Senior Women's Championship at TCC.

**2011** The \$6 million Rees Jones golf course renovation is completed.

**2014** TCC hosts the NCAA Women's Golf Championship.

**2015** TCC hosts the U.S. Junior Girl's Golf Championship



# What Women Want | transforming tradition

by Nehemiah Taylor

Traditionally, country clubs are thought as a sanctuary for male golfers to compete and bond over a game of golf. Today, the Tulsa Country Club (TCC) puts a spin on tradition with the inclusion of family-friendly activities for both male and female golfers and non-golfers alike. From social activities to golf events, TCC offers women the Club experience that they desire and women have emerged as a very active force in the member community.

“TCC has a great reputation in the community and that is what drew us to the Club. Everyone is so welcoming and friendly.”

- Terri Lowell, Social Member

“From Ladies’ organized play days every Tuesday morning, group play on Thursday evenings and Friday afternoons, and Women’s Clinics in the evening coached by Golf Pro, Jeff Combe, to couples events such as scrambles and horse races. There are so many opportunities to play golf, either competitively or recreationally.”

- Maren Lively, Intermediate Golf Member

“When the weather is nice, we enjoy dinner on the patio while the kids play on the activity lawn; sometimes it is just our family and other times we meet friends and enjoy a cocktail while the kids run. I love TCC during the summer; we can grab our swim bag anytime and head to the pool!”

- Tiffany Culver, Intermediate Golf Member

“What makes TCC unique is its ability to provide upscale facilities to a membership community which embraces strong family morals and ethics. Members take pride in being a part of a club that offers the best with a feeling of comfort and camaraderie not necessarily embodied by other clubs in the area.”

- Lauren Allen, Junior Golf Member

## THE SOCIAL BUTTERFLIES EMERGE

Country Clubs are only for golfers. FALSE. In recent years, TCC has emerged as the place to be for social events such as wine dinners, holiday events, dining, pool parties and more. TCC Intermediate member, Tiffany Culver is familiar with the family-friendly environment that the Club provides to all its members. Culver has been a member since childhood and was eager to join again once she started her own family.

“My favorite thing to do in the summer as a kid was to swim at TCC,” says Culver. “I was anxious to join so I could take our children to the pool,” she says. After renovations on the pool completed in 2007, the pool has become the hub of family fun for all members, attracting a high volume of Social members. Each year the TCC pool hosts an Adults Only Luau, as well as water activities on the 4th of July.

Terri Lowell joined as a Social member in May of 2014 and says attending TCC’s 4th of July celebration will become a tradition for her and her family. “We invited friends and family to join us and spent the entire day,” says Lowell, “This will become a tradition for us!”

The social scene at TCC is not confined to the Clubhouse doors either. Maren Lively has created connections within the member community that have resulted in extended friendships and an increase in social activities beyond the Club. “My husband and I have received invites to attend art events, black-tie affairs, dinner parties and several other social gatherings through the wonderful friends we have made at TCC,” says Lively. Whether it is sipping on cocktails on the deck, working out in the gym or laying by the pool, social butterflies fit right in at Tulsa Country Club.

## LADIES HIT THE COURSE

While golf has been a predominantly male-dominated sport, it’s time to make room for the ladies. The ladies of TCC have been making their presence known on the golf course, and the golf staff welcomes the emerging groups of lady golfers. Lauren Allen originally joined TCC as a social member, but after becoming familiar with other members, she realized the blossoming presence of lady golfers of the Club. “For a lady golfer claiming TCC has nothing to offer, I would ask them to come and witness the women who play Interclub and see that the Club has women of all levels who play together in competition and just for fun,” says Allen.

Whether you don’t know how to swing a golf club or you just want to brush up on your putting skills, the golf staff offers Women’s Clinics for those ladies who are looking to improve their skill set and understanding of the game of golf. Before 2013, Allen had never played 18 holes, but after attending the Women’s Clinics and receiving lessons from TCC’s PGA Professional, Jeff Combe, she was able to master the course. “Jeff and his staff are always available for lessons or small tips which can be the difference,” says Allen. “TCC has allowed me to practice and play on a course that is kept pristine and make me want to get better each time I step onto the first tee.”

It has become one of TCC’s missions to foster an environment where all club members and guests feel embraced. From the staff to the members, this mission echoes throughout the club. “The members are inviting and the staff is always quick to accommodate requests,” says Allen. “The level of respect between the members and the staff really make a working culture that is core of TCC.”



## A COMMUNITY OF MEMBERS

Golfers. Socialites. CEOs. Parents. Empty nesters. With a variety of social activities, holiday events and amenities, Tulsa Country Club has something for everyone no matter the season. Since the renovations of the swimming pool, Clubhouse and golf course, the membership at TCC has become a melting pot of generations and personalities which has created a welcoming community.

## FAMILIES WELCOME

One of TCC's greatest provisions is the family friendly atmosphere we deliver to our members. With the change in the club's culture, the Board of Directors decided to commit Club resources to the growing number of young families at TCC. Through our abundant amount of club events, meeting new acquaintances are never ending. Each month, events are planned for the inclusion of our member's families.



## FOR ADULTS ONLY

While Tulsa Country Club prides itself on its activities for the whole family, we also offer events for Adults Only. Each summer 80+ members gather around the TCC pool for a Luau Party featuring a DJ or band, roasting pig, tropical food and fun drinks. This social event is a great way to meet new people and kick off the summer. In the fall the Costume Karaoke Contest showcases the musical talent from the members. This event requires costumes and is a fun way to break out of your shell and

have fun with friends, family and other members.

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM TCC

Whether it's the extravagant fireworks in front of the skyline at the 4th of July celebration, the pounds of candy dropping from the helicopter for the Easter Egg Hunt or the haunted hayride and costume contest on Halloween, Tulsa Country Club holidays can't be beat. Adults can enjoy a unique dining experience as they celebrate Valentine's Day and families can decorate Gingerbread Houses at Christmas time.



"I want to thank you and your staff for a lovely wedding reception. Many people complimented the service, the amazingly delicious food and of course your lovely venue... **You absolutely accomplished what you said.** It was a delightfully memorable evening." -Christy Andrews

**W**alking down the aisle, throwing off heels, popping the champagne, marveling at the Tulsa skyline...all activities that can be witnessed when Tulsans and visitors gather at Tulsa Country Club to celebrate. Tulsa Country Club has established a long-held tradition of excellent dining, polished service and elegant entertainment for any celebration. Our staff is professionally trained to assist in every step of event planning and is dedicated to the highest standards of quality, ensuring that events are occasions for all to remember. Our banquet rooms offer a wide array of cuisines which may reflect the casualness or the elegance of your event.

"No doubt you have a beautiful facility and delicious food, but **it is the wonderful people of Tulsa Country Club that really keep us coming back!** Jerry has been remarkable to work with, and everyone is just so warm and professional." -Kulsum Siddiqui

# ONE CLUB FOR EVERYONE . ONE MILE FROM EVERYTHING



**ENJOY  
THE VIEW**



Resort-Style Pool

**BRING THE  
FAMILY**



Kid's Klub



Cocktail Lounge



Signature Sixth Hole

**GET AWAY  
FROM IT ALL**



Skyline Grill

**CONNECT  
WITH OTHERS**

