



THE RIDGEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB

A MEMORABLE HISTORY OF THE RIDGEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB

April 28, 2012 – Before Paramus

In 1890 the US opened Ellis Island as an Immigration depot. In the same year another foreign import, golf, was taking root in New Jersey.



The Hermitage

The Hermitage, a national landmark on Franklin Turnpike in Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ was owned by the Rosencrantz family. William Rosencrantz would often be seen by his neighbors using sticks to knock small balls around his front yard. His cotton business included frequent trips to England where it is believed he had his first exposure to golf. He was considered eccentric until his neighbors began to join him on his lawn. In 1890 two golf holes were laid out across the street from his home. These were among New Jersey's first golf holes.

Within a few years the course expanded to 6 holes, a common number at the time. Land for the new holes was leased from a local farmer for \$50 per year and eventually raised to \$110. Farmer West was made an honorary member in 1898.

The 6-hole Ho-Ho-Kus Golf Club, organized in 1893, was one of the first in the country and was comprised of 53 members who paid annual dues of \$10. There was no clubhouse, and presumably, no minimum. A local barn owned by a member was used to store clubs and maintenance equipment. Club officer meetings were held at The Mansion House, the current Ho-Ho-Kus Inn.

Little changed as the economy was in the doldrums during the mid-1890s. But when the economy rebounded, so did golf enthusiasm. In 1897 the course expanded to 9 holes. Annual dues were \$10 men for \$5 for women and greens fees 25 cents. Handicaps were calculated on the spread between the club's best golfers and its average members. But the membership was growing restless as the 1.5 mile distance for members living in Ridgewood to the course was burdensome. Unable to purchase adjacent farmland, the Club looked elsewhere.

The renamed Ridgewood Golf Club in 1901 signed a 5-year lease at \$900 per year on property on Maple Ave in Ridgewood, adjacent to the present day village hall. A 9-hole course was constructed and \$700 was budgeted to build a clubhouse. This site quickly ran into problems. In 1908 a trolley line that would run through Club property and golf holes was approved. The following year the village tentatively approved a plan to condemn

Club property and build a parkway through the site. In 1910 the Club adopted the “Ridgewood Country Club” name and remained at the Maple Avenue location until 1913.

The next locale was 102 acres on Mountain Avenue, with a golf course extending down to Lincoln Avenue. The Clubhouse had a café, restaurant, bowling alleys, billiards, pool tables and a dance pavilion. The members for a variety of reasons decided to move to a less congested area and purchased the current facility in Paramus, NJ in 1929. “The Move to Paramus” article will cover this move.



The Ridgewood Country Club on Mountain Avenue

