

Pencil of the Week Chronicles 10

1/19/22 Seneca Hickory Stick



#71 is Seneca Hickory Stick. This one is blue with white letters.

This one I believe is owned by the Seneca Nation and likely built with Casino profits. It is a little north of Buffalo near Lewiston NY. Prestigious architect Robert Trent Jones design. Great course that you have to play a few times before you have any clue. Very demanding and challenging course!

They have a great gallery slide show on their home page here:

<https://www.senecahickorystick.com/>

They also have a hole by hole layout where you can see the challenging aspects of the course. The second slide with water is one of my nightmares and requires you to play the percentages or take some real risks. It is a par 5 with a nasty approach to the green. We play it as part of the Parker Tournament. Brother Jim, Jim Jr, George and I. Jr always insists we play from the regular tees which puts me at a severe disadvantage. All i can hope is that they have some of the tees up that day.

I see i shot 87 in 2019 which likely is the last time i played there. They must have had the tees up. Prior scores were 94 and 98 indicating i have either improved my play there or the tees were getting pushed up.

Cost is about double the usual fees but it is worth it. If you get up to that area be sure to give it a try.

1/26/22 Whirlpool



#72 is Whirlpool This one is black with gold letters.

The photo also shows a pencil from Frenchman's Reserve, a course i don't think i have ever played. Looks like it is near Miami; somewhere i have never been. Maybe i picked

it up at one of the Florida courses i played?

Today is only Friday, but as i noted, there are many memories to put down on "paper". Well, here goes. This course was the ultimate place to play when i was a kid. Dad took us with him to a Buffalo starter course called South Park in the late 50s to introduce us to the game. First I went with him and later brother Jim. It was a real treat to get out with our Dad and whack it around a little. When we got older, and i am thinking high school age, he took us over to Canada to play on Sunday mornings at what was then called Niagara Parks. We skipped church of course, so i called it going to the Church on the Green. Remember the big loop around the reservoir. Dad would always say. "This is a long curve" as we drove around it.

Paying for three tee times was tough on Dad, but he did manage it now and then. The course was very popular and we showed up way early in the morning to get in line. No reservations back in the day. We got there so early, we used to make up 18 holes, one at a time, on their huge putting green, and hold a mock competition. It should be no surprise that i usually lost. Most of the time we were able to finish before we got called to the first tee. In those days it wad Dad and I with Uncle Frank on occasion, Then brother Jim came along and then later George. We played it many times before i moved away after college.

The course was and is likely still maintained by an agriculture school at the north end of the course where there are some public flower gardens oft visited by the Niagara Falls tourists (more on that later). Being close to the Falls you play with the constant whir of Tourist helicopters flying by all round.

When we got called, we walked up there with pride and anticipation of a good round (something that usually was squashed by the time we got to the 4th hole). There was some concern on the first tee, as the parking lot went along the left side of the first fairway. That was a direction we all wanted to line up on given the whole family had a natural slice to deal with. More than one time we bonked a car off that tee. The first hole was a pretty wide open slight dogleg to the left but it was long. Bogey was the usual score and a double was possible. Pars were rare.

By the way, I have not played there for at least 10 years, but we played there so many times, I know the holes by heart. Hole 2 had 2 greens. The short green was tucked in left against the trees with the long green straight out in a valley. Par was possible with the short green. the shot to the long green was usually blind and we had to search around for our ball. Par was unlikely but bogey was the norm. The 3d hole was a long par 3 and required a 3 wood. The tee was back into the woods with a slight shoot to come out of. To make matters worse there were bunkers guarding the green, OB left, and trees right. With my slice I could count on a double here.

#4 and #5 were back to back long par 5s. Par was rare, but Dad seemed to roll in a 40 footer on one or the other to score a par. #6 was another long par 3. It had an elevated tee, so we had to climb a boatload of stairs to get up there and then down again. There were no carts back in the day. Everyone walked. #s 7, 8, and 9 were back and forth par 4s. #9 was to a way uphill green and if you went too long you ended up near the putting green. When you got done with the front nine, the walking and climbing were starting to get to you. I will leave it here for today and get back to it this weekend.

It is Sunday and I am waiting for the Bills game. So #10 is the first beast on the back nine, It is an impossible par 4 over 400 yds to a green hidden over a slight hill. #11 heads back to the elevated tee area and is manageable where you have to do the stairs again to hit to a longish par 3 fully surrounded by bunkers. It is long but the elevation helps. I remember getting a birdie there. I was in the right bunker and absolutely bladed it out of there (my usual bunker shot). It was a smoking liner but thankfully hit the pin solid and dropped in the hole. Not pretty but it was a 2 on the scorecard. If i remember correctly it was the first time i ever had 3 straight birdies, so i must have done something spectacular on #10 that day?

#13 is a reachable par 5 of 475 dogleg left. I always tried to cut the corner through the trees but most times i was blocked out and had to come back to the fairway. #14 was a hoot. A short par 3 over water, it is at the north end of the course adjacent to the flower gardens there. There was always tourists mulling around and they made an impromptu gallery for the tee shot. I remember warning Jr about that the first time he played there and he didn't believe me. When he saw this old lady with a big purse standing by the tee box he was amazed. It is the easiest hole on the entire course unless you get nervous with a gallery.

After that you hit the monster 575 yd #15 followed by 2 reasonable holes, a par 4 and par 3 before heading to the picturesque 18th. I remember Jim always parring 16 while i usually struggled there. I also recall the par 3 17th. Last time i played it, i chunked one off the tee into the bunker halfway down the fairway and ending up with a par after a awesome wedge to the green. Sweet!.

#18 is a wonderful hole with the parkway on your left. It is tight and uphill to the green where those on the clubhouse patio can watch you finish. We were always proud if we made a good go at a putt in front of the gallery. From there it was put the clubs away before enjoying a Tender Trap sandwich in the clubhouse. Many rounds there with Dad, Jim, George, and later Jim Jr with great memories.

The best way to view the course in in google maps here:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Whirlpool+Golf+Course/@43.1292665,-79.0678553,475m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x89d35cdeb0c5cd21:0xc58430f5b7d8dca1!8m2!3d43.1250181!4d-79.0701159>

The course sits right on the river below the Falls and right at the Whirlpool as the river flows into Lake Ontario. I looked for scores but did not find any. I do remember playing pretty well last time i was there; likely in the high 80s.

1/31/22 Brookledge



#73 is Brookledge. This one is black with gold letters.

I am surprised I have not already done this one as it is still one i basically tolerate but still play. Perhaps i have been amiss in gathering pencils from this damn course. I will tell you right up front I don't like the course.

It is located in Cuyahoga Falls not too far from where i landed in Ohio in 1970. When i first moved here i hit balls down the hill from the driving range off the top entry road off of the 5 points intersection. There was no golf course there till 1992 and i am not sure when exactly i knew it existed nor when i played it the first time.

My issue with the course is the greens. They are normally very fast and there are a couple with insane mounds on them. They do keep the course well manicured. Several years back they let some of the natural areas grow creating extra hazards in those spots. On the plus side they did take out a lot of trees that slowed play and hid golf balls. The city owns the course. Not sure if they built it or purchased it.

Do have a couple of bad memories there, Two involved slow play. The first was a 90 degree day maybe 10 years back. I was not playing well and when we had a long wait on the 9th fairway i had had enough. Unloaded the clubs after 9 and headed home to cool off. The second time was with the Lockheed guys. We started on the back and it took oh so long to play the first 2 holes. Turns out the high school tryouts for the girls team was ahead. I packed it up after 2 and got a rain check.

The other nasty incident was last April when we played. For some reason, i was careless coming off the 7th green. If you have played there it is an upwill par 5 with the green tucked into the woods and up on a mound. There is a steep rise to the green and we are always careful heading back to the carts, looking for a safe way down. Well i was standing on the ridge considering my way down when my feet slipped out and i landed on my rump. Embarrassing but it was not painful. I played again a couple days later and

my ankle swelled up. Missed about 10 days of golf. Walking to ease pressure on the ankle caused my sciatica to flare up and it aggravated me pretty much all the rest of the year. My scoring suffered and my handicap went from 13 to 18 before slightly improving at years end.

I am not sure i am done dealing with it and can only hope things will improve this spring. Right now I have a left heel pain which eventually has me limping in the back nine and an ingrown toenail on the right foot that should be easy to cure. The left hip must have some damage as pain flairs up there more often than i would like. Let me tell you falling is no good for us seniors and especially not those of us that golf.

I truly believe that playing this course is hazardous to my health and may eventually facilitate the end my golfing.

I believe the DST played some there along the way. Denny and Clyde (RIP) were regulars there so we play it several times a year with the Monday Group. I tried to schedule some Friday rounds there but calling even 2 weeks early all they offer me is times after 11:30. I gave up calling in the middle of last year as this was all i got time after time. Perhaps they have my number called out or screened for no early tee times? Most of the Friday guys love the course. Since we can play 5 there it is a good fit, but they seemed to have me screened out.

#1 is a pretty easy par5 and par is likely. #2 is a short par4 guarded by a bunker and features a sloped green and a likely bogey. #3 is an uphill par4 with a super nasty green. You can count on a bogey or double there. #4 is a well guarded par 3 but par is possible. #5 is a tight downhill par4 with a par or bogey likely. Six is a par3 and par or bogey. Seven is that EVIL par5 up the hill that will do me in some day and a likely bogey. #8 is a long par 3; bogey likely. The finishing par4 has a creek in front of the green and we can not reach in 2, Count on 5 or 6 here. Likely score for the front nine is 9 over and 5 over is a great score.

I wont go over the entire back nine, but there is a nasty 150 carry over a ravine par 3 and one par 4 no one can ever reach. On top of that, there are at least 4 greens that are a likely 3 putt. A great score on the back is 5 over; decent score is 7 over. Total great is 10 over 81, decent is 16 over 87 from the 5400yd whites. Looking back at scores i shot an 85 and 86 last year, 87 and 91 the year before, 83 84 85 the year before.

This one will be played Mondays next year, and i doubt i will ever be able to get a Friday time there unless its off season. That is OK with me because i would like to keep playing for years and not have this EVIL one do me in.

2/9/22 Buffalo Tournament Club



#74 is the Buffalo Tournament Club. This one is blue with white letters.

This one i played with Texas Bro-in-law John and Buffalo Bro-in -law Dennis a couple of times.

John is a Texas transplant from Lancaster if i remember correctly. His sister still lives there and was involved in a fundraiser for a local law officer. Always held the Saturday after the 4th. She lives on the course and her yard was one of the food and drink stops for the outing. There were lots of give always before you started including a great lunch, some golf balls, and free range balls. I believe it was a long standing fundraiser that ended with the Covid shutdowns. I played in 2 or 3, missing one for some reason that kept me back.

It was a scramble format and we never had much of a chance since i hit the longest drives. I don't believe the rest of the foursome could muster a bogey round. I think John has improved since then and Dennis has had to hang up his clubs due to medical issues. We did have fun though and enjoyed the atmosphere. Don't think I have played in a fundraiser with as many drink and eat stops along the route in addition to the lunch and dinner too. After dinner, your number was called and you got to grab whatever was available on the massive prize table. Seems like the last few numbers always got some less desirable golf balls or a golf towel. If you were early there were golf bags for the taking.

I remember it being a very nice course and well maintained. I recommend a round there. Reguler tees are 5900 and long for Seniors but the forward tees are only 4700. The Intermediate, championship, and tournament tees are just absurd.

2/16/22 Glenmore



#75 is Glenmoor Country Club. This one is green with gold letters.

This one i played with another (ex) brother-in-law George. His golf league had somehow got on the course on their year end fall outing. I believe we played our own ball with skins and and a side wager proposed by the other 2 members of the foursome. I remember we crushed them thanks to George's stellar play. I think he won a couple of skins and other prizes and needed a security escort out to his car after the banquet. Think

i won a skin somewhere as well. Found the score; 98 back in October 2013.

That tells you something; 98 is not pretty but it is under 100. The course played way above my skill level and was very long for a senior. It is a Nicklaus course and one must have a referral to join, not that i could afford to. I am thinking we played the black tees at 6200. There were many that i could not get to in regulation. I recall playing a pretty decent round with many bogeys and some doubles but i must have thrown in some stinkers to get up to 98.

Since this was 2013 i do not remember the holes but can tell you it is an excellent course. I would love to play it again from a more reasonable tee box. The course was built in 1992 and has a hotel, banquet rooms and a spa. Quite the high end place. Good thing i know George or they would have never let me in. It is only 3 miles from my new place. Lots of developments were built around that area.

2/23/22 West Virginia



#76 is Golf Cub of West Virginia. A bonus pencil #77 is also attached. Never played that one and don't know how i would have come across it since it is from the Indianapolis area where I have never been.

Played the WV Course whilst we were doing a mini vacation with ex neighbors Kathy and Polka Matt Shafer who does the polka show on WZIP every Saturday morning. Doesn't come in at the new place but we can still listen online and email requests in every now and then,

The four of us went for short weekends now and then till he gave up the game after his shankfest at the infamous Avalon Lakes Old Course. This trip we had a great time on a visit to Marietta in the mid summer perhaps 25 years ago? We took in a play, toured the city, went down to the river and watched the river paddle boat pull in. They have flood marks on the buildings you just can't believe.

Anyway, Matt and i played two courses just over the river that weekend. They were both in terrible shape because there was a severe drought that year and the courses were prohibited from watering. As long as i can remember this is the only time i have run across such a ban. Too long ago for me to remember a dang thing about the course. Looks like a very nice course with lots of trees. I expect i hit several of them back during my slicing days.

3/2/22 Metroparks

#78/#79 is Cleveland Metroparks Golf, Green with gold letters.



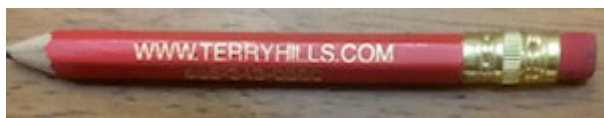
Well, I already covered the Senaca course and the majestic difficult Metropark gem Sleepy Hollow. The other 2 played are Manakiki and Shawnee Hills.

BTW, got an email about Pleasant Valley opening for walking only so it won't be long. Bittaker likely has already 4-6 rounds in down in Florida, the lucky guy. We did not go south in Feb. Stayed in Ohio to bus my grandson to KSU Stark and work for the semester so I am jealous.

Manakiki we played once and did not like it. We had liked Shawnee Hills and Sleepy Hollow so gave it a try. All i remember were big hills. You hit up the hill and the green was somewhere over the hill top. We were still in our younger days and were walking the courses, so it was a chore to climb the hill and look to see where the green is and make sure the group ahead was clear every time. What a pain. Not so bad if we were in carts but a real pain on foot. I do remember it was not an easy tract. George has played there recently and has said it is a good course. Expect it to be well maintained but i bet there are still many blind shots.

Shawnee Hills is in Bedford. Mel lived around there for 20+ years early in life and suggested it. Why Hills is in the name is beyond me. I think there is two big hills at the start of the front nine and the rest of it is flat. It is a fun course and can be had. Hard to imagine shooting over 90 there. This one is very popular and has some great programs for kids. Lots of people just show up and get paired up. It is a tight course so you have to be yelling "Fore" quite often. Guys I played with there would be Mel, JohnT, Dick Lott, Bill, Neil, and Rudy.

3/7/22 Terri Hills



#80 is Terry Hills with a nice red pencil with gold letters.

Terry Hills is located in Batavia NY and a great course with 27 holes. It is super popular and gets lots of play from all around. The starter there is a hoot. He runs the place with an iron hand and barks orders at everyone nearby. He does a heck of a job keeping

things moving. Yes sir, and no sir are good phrases to use around him.

This one is one of the courses oft used for our family tournament. I have had some darn good rounds and some real stinkers there. One of the funniest ones is playing there with bro-in-law Dennis. We get to the course and he bends over and rip, there goes his new jeans splitting down the back. Must have got a defective pair. We kind of walk behind him to the first tee and he plays the round. Then we stop out for dinner and we kind of walk behind giving him some cover in and out of the restaurant. Great food there and we stop in all the time when we can.

The other one happened on July 4th long ago. We were set up for 2 rounds that day and i kid you not, I had my winter gear on and my ski cap. Had to be in the 30s. After that year, i never go to Buffalo without my winter gear. Holy cow it was cold.

The hole that will make you pucker up is the short par 3 on the front:

<https://www.terryhills.com/hole-by-hole> #3

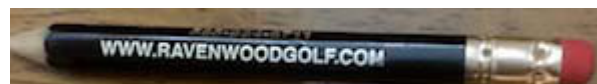
It is about 100 yds and straight down the hill. Short and you are in the pond. Long, and you are in the bushes behind the green with an unplayable lie. Right and you are in the water. Left, and you have an impossible chip. I would take a bogey there every day of the week. They follow that with a monster par 5 and anything to the right is in the woods and lost forever.

One needs a straight ball to play here. If it isn't, you will have a few punch outs to get back into play.

Anxious to play a first round this year but there is a lot of water on the ground.



3/16/22 Ravenswood



#81 is Ravenswood a nice black pencil with silver letters.

Bonus pics of the sad destruction of Skyland Pines RIP are also included. I stopped by Monday after dropping Mary off for her Redhat lunch. There is some massive construction going on there.

Ravenswood is located in Victor NY right off I90 south of Rochester NY. It is a very nice course so it is a must play it if you are in the area. Reasonably priced as well.

Jim jr took George, brother Jim, and I out there last year for the family tournament and we made a day of it.

<https://www.ravenwoodgolf.com/course/tour>

The link above takes you thru the 18 holes. There is a full set of tee boxes ranging from 5600 to 7083 and there are some nice elevation changes. Looking back i find i scored an 89.

We played behind a slowish group and there were a couple of groups of ladies behind us.

It was enjoyable though. Jr googled to find a restaurant nearby and we ended up at some hole in the wall place on a hillside in the middle of nowhere. We got there and headed in and lo and behold the 2 ladies groups were right behind us again. We had a good laugh. The food was pretty good and we headed back to Buffalo with our belly full and discussing the course till some of us dozed right off.