

Pencil of the Week Chronicles 5

03/24/2021 Valley View



As noted last week, i found 3 boxes of pencils stashed away. First one out of the box was Valley View RIP. Just a plain old photo for the next month or so because my gators are packed away for next month's move.

Valley View is no more, having been sold for parkland in 2016. It is one course that won't be missed . Some details of the purchase of the course can be found here:

<https://metro-parks.medium.com/district-purchases-valley-view-golf-club-in-akron-292939de699a>

This is interesting as well

<https://metro-parks.medium.com/fact-or-myth-local-lore-and-history-investigated-at-valley-view-df4ad8f6cc9d>

The course had 27 holes; 18 decent golf holes and an extra 9 of crappy golf. It sat right along the Cuyahoga River in the Valley. I suppose that is why it was named Valley View. I was here a fair number of years and had never played it. When i began playing golf with John T he suggested we play there now and then. He played it with he son John Jr. often. I remember him telling me his son could hit it long but was never able to beat him for some reason. That fell by the wayside eventually though.

It was an old course with small green with most holes being short par 4s. I remember the opening hole was a very short par 4 with a bank on the left side to guard the parking lot. Lots of back and forth. There were a couple of holes along the river where i hit tee shots into now and then. There was a hole or two along the scenic Cuyahoga Railroad and a couple that crossed the river as well. The toughest hole was one that crossed the river to an elevated green.

Well, i played there several times with John, and then later when we were all retired. The Cisco League played there also for a couple of seasons. I don't remember having any great scores there but i believe I was in the mid 80s playing there.

Memories? Boy do i have some strange ones from there. Perhaps the most vivid is playing the 3d nine when a nasty storm hit. It poured and poured and there was a fair

amount of lightening and thunder. We ran in, as we all were walkers and found a shelter. The sky turned really dark. When there was a short break, I ran back to the car, threw my stuff in and headed south on the road toward Tallmadge Ave. All hell was breaking loose and a huge tree limb fell just to my right and dinged up my trunk as it fell into the road. I stopped for a minute to pull myself together and i could see the traffic going the other way was stopped with the road blocked off. Off i went in a hurry to get the heck out of there. Somehow i was spared but it was a close call.

On a lighter note, there was a women's league out there on an adjacent nine and for the first and last time, we saw one of them squatting in the woods as the rest of the foursome stood as to shield her from prying eyes.

On a not so light note one week there was a helicopter traveling overhead going up and down the river for quite a long time as we played. Found out later there was a manhunt on. Perhaps someone escaped from the correctional facility just down the road.

Finally, it was pretty awesome hearing the coyotes howling away as the sun began to set. That is all i have for Valley View.

I hope you enjoyed today's memories and it brings to mind some of your rounds played there.

3/31/2021 Turkeyfoot Links



Mary selected a pencil from the old box and it was from Turkeyfoot Lake Golf Links. It is a pretty nice black pencil with gold lettering.

From their website:

Turkeyfoot Lake Golf Links is the first and the finest public golf course in the Akron area, located in scenic Portage Lakes. We are in country club shape while offering public prices. We are the driest course in the area and always let out our carts, even when some other courses may be closed due to wetness.

The proud recipient of a 4-Star rating from Golf Digest Magazine, Turkeyfoot Lake Golf Links has a long reputation as the finest golf facility in the Portage Lakes area of Akron, Ohio. Established in 1925 our public golf course has upheld a tradition of great golf for many generations.

The 27-hole, public golf course of Turkeyfoot Lake Golf Links is the perfect venue for your next golf outing or golf tournament. Our gorgeous tree-lined fairways and well-manicured greens are a delight for any golfer.

I got a kick out of the statement that it is the finest in the Portage Lakes, cause it is the only golf course in the Portage Lakes, LOL.

That is a pretty fancy name for one dog of a golf course. Never did like it. Played there a long long time starting with the neighborhood gang back in the 70s.

Also played there a few times with my first boss at Goodyear Aerospace, Charlie Blust RIP. John T and Charlie, along with Sherwin Ruben RIP and super boss Lou Fulmer RIP were a regular foursome. I got to join when someone was out occasionally. Not sure if John was a regular either.

John T has a favorite story about Charlie playing there on number 4, a long par 5 that he has told countless times. Back then, you had to tee off over the weeds to reach the fairway. They have since removed the weeds and added fairway there. Apparently Charlie missed his drive and was in the weeds. They did find the ball and Charlie took a whack at it. No one saw it come out and there it was exactly where it started as Charlie fumed and turned red, while there was roaring laughter causing an ever redder tint to old Charlie. I am sure this will jog John's memory and he will correct any misstatements or omissions.

Even though they cleaned up this area it remains one of the toughest holes on the course. The entire right side of the fairway drops off into weeds and the right is guarded by trees. Number 5 is up a steep hill to an elevated green. As to the rest of the course, there are just too many weird holes to describe.

The finishing holes are pars 5, 3, and 5. #16 par 5 has an approach shot where no green is visible. Go long and your bombing the guys on the #15 tee.

Fifteen is my favorite memory hole. I was playing there 2 to 3 years back with the Lockheed guys and Dick Miller scored an Ace there. Dick was one of the best golfers back in the day with a single digit handicap. At this time he was 89 years old and maybe hit the ball 120 yards. He surely loved the game. He had taped his grips to a diameter on an inch or more because the arthritis in his hands kept them from closing more than that. God Bless him! He hit some kind of wood on this 120 yard hole and it hit the green curving to a back right pin. Up it ran and dropped into the hole. After the round he refused to tell anyone about it as he was embarrassed to have used a wood on such a short hole. He hasn't played lately. I guess old age eventually halts ones play.

The final hole is a 600+ monster. I am positive I have never gotten there in three ever. Even from the senior tees i can not get there. I think i was instrumental at getting the

Lockheed guys to finally switch to the senior tees. I looked at them and said " You have Dick Miller at 89 years old who can only hit it 120 yards teeing it up from 600 yards? Does that make sense to any of you?"

As to their 3d nine, the less said the better. I think i played it once. All I remembered is there is water on it and on the final hole i chipped and putted the ball uphill to the pin several times, each time the ball rolling back to my feet. Picked it up and said goodbye forever in a decisive moment.

As i am pretty busy getting ready to move, i did not look back over any scores. I am pretty sure I never broke 80 there anyway. The greens are small and nasty fast and many have huge slopes. If i dropped a ball on the edge of every green in regulation, i am positive i still would not break 80.

That is it for this week. I have had several of you relate their stories.for these courses. If you have a good story don't be too shy to share with the rest of us.

4/7/2021 Beaver Island State Park



Mary selected another pencil from the old box and it was from Rolling Greens Miniature Golf. OMG, I even saved those! I figured that would be a bonus pencil so she picked another, Beaver Island State Park GC. Both are green with gold lettering.

No, I do not have scorecards for either. It has been a long time since i played either. I would imagine all the Ohio golfers have played Rolling Greens with their kids. They have 2 unique courses on 619 less than 10 minutes from here. Google... Rolling Greens Miniature Golf to see pictures of some of the holes. We took many of visiting guests there. Aunt Kim powered one through the fence one day through the parking lot and into the weeds. We never found it, so we assessed her a two stroke penalty and DQ'd her as she had no ball to play the rest of the round with. Only person I ever played with that ran out of golf balls before the round was over. If you have never played it, you owe it to yourself to tee it up there and get it by the clown, giraffe, penguin, windmill, rocket ship,and monkey.

Beaver Island State Park GC is located on Grand Island NY and has been there ever since i was a kid. We always went to the park to swim in the Niagara river as kids. Dad would pack the car up with the Coleman stove, folding chairs, food, towels, and drinks and off we would go. Swim, walk the beach, cook, play horse shoes. You drive by the course on the way in. Jim and I couldn't wait for the day we would get to play there.

It was a very long golf course. Forward tees are now 6201 yards par 74! with the long tees at 6645. And that was after the remeasured it. I know of one par four where they ended up moving the tees about 80 yards forward without changing the yardage. No wonder we could never get there in two. It was always on the list of toughest holes in the area.

I do not remember much as it has been so long. I do remember playing it after many years in Ohio and marveling at how slow the greens were. You almost need to chip some of them to get to the holes. Holy Cow! After whacking the ball around on those greens, your putting technique is completely destroyed.

I also remember that it took a long time before it opened in the spring. Being right on the river, the water table was so high you couldn't even walk it early spring without boots on. Do you know how long 6200 yards are when the ground is soaking wet? Brother Jim and George played there a lot after i had left for greener pastures in Ohio. Some of the courses here could be compared to pastures but i am sure i will get to them another day.

Golf in Buffalo is rough. The courses open late in the spring and close early in the fall and there are nowhere near enough of them. If you should happen to be in the area and think about playing nearby, do just that. Find another nearby course to play and stay away from this one. Maybe it has been improved since i last played?

One last thought today: Happy Birthday to me. Today is number 73.

04/14/2021 Seneca GC



Mary selected another pencil from the old box and it was from Seneca Golf Course. Not a very exciting pencil; black with white lettering.

Wow, it has been such a long time since i played there, i had forgotten about it. I believe it may have been the first course the Cisco guys switched to after moving and deciding Chippawa was too far. I do remember it was a dog of a course and was very wet in the spring.

The only hole i can remember is this monster par 5. In the spring, i found out that all my drives carried exactly 180 yards before plugging in the Seneca muck. Now if i could just hit my 3 wood another 180 yards and plug in the muck, i would have covered 360 yds. Once more and i could have covered 540 yards in all! Too damn bad, the #&*^! hole is 605 yards long.

Throw in a 560 par 4 ninth and 3 par fours at 457 407 and 402 and two par 3s at 200+ yds and you can just forget it. 6559 par 71, Yikes! On top of it all, they closed up the snack bar before we ever finished. After an agonizing 9 holes of golf, there we were slinking off to our cars in a pretty much empty parking lot.

On the plus side it is part of the Cleveland Metropark courses and you can play it for a reasonable price. Don't believe I ever had a good score there. I believe we threw in the towel after 1 or perhaps 2 seasons there an moved to Boston Hills. From one dog course to another. Take my advice and pass on this one.

04/21/2021 Boston Mills? Hills?

Mary selected another pencil from the old box and it was from Boston Mills Golf Course. Not a very exciting pencil, but with the move and all, i can't find the dang thing. No picture this week but if i happen to find it i will add it to another email down the line.

This pitiful excuse for a course was located on old route 8 perhaps 35 minutes away. It has thankfully bit the dust so it is no more. Just one more of the old ones that are gone. Except this wasn't one of the good ones.

I remember this as the 2nd course the Cisco League tried after leaving Chippawa. First was Seneca, the topic of last weeks email, then Boston Mills. Before looking at the pencil I would have sworn it was Boston Hills, not Mills. Oh well. As it was a Cisco league I have very few memories from the course.

I do know that it became a sad time when Randy, who ran the league, passed away from

CO poisoning while working on his lawn mower in his garage. We all had to wonder, as we all figured he knew better. He was a jolly guy with a good sense of humor. At our yearly outing he always had prizes for things like shortest drive on #1, drive nearest the big pine on hole #3, worst score on #7 and so on. He figured everyone had a chance at those awards.

There were a few memorable holes. First off, i recall a very short par 3, maybe 100 yds, over the water to a small green. Most hit an extra club to stay dry which gave you a tough comeback shot if you went over the green. There were a lot of big scores on that one. The other I recall was the one that went south along side route 8. Seemed like in every group one guy who whacked it into the road. Very scary! I remember one time when there was a police cruiser pulled up along the next hole looking for the guy who hit it. One of the guys owned up to it. Not sure i would have.

The other memory involved a storm that was predicted. My group was about halfway through the round. I could see the storm. Black storm clouds with mucho electric activity coming north right up route 8. I abandoned my ball and started walking in, as we were way out from the clubhouse. The others were asking what i was doing? I just pointed down the road and said "I am out of here". A few years before that, Bagger Mel had talked me into playing on when a bolt zipped over my head and hit 100 yards away. Not gonna happen again.

I got within 100 yards of the clubhouse when they blew the siren and the rest of them had to hustle in scared and soaked.

Not sure why they closed. Perhaps for a housing development that never happened. I don't see it anymore as they routed traffic on route 8 to the east of there several years ago. From there, the league (down to a couple of foursomes) moved to Ellsworth which I have already covered in these emails. So I have covered all the Cisco league courses except for the first one Chippawa. When that ones comes around, i will bend your ear with more gripes that you can shake a stick at.

Update.....I passed by the old Tam o Shanter last night. It was sad to see that they had planted trees on the green of Bagger Mel's favorite hole out there on the Hills course down by the edge of the road. So sad.