



Monroe Miller is a retired golf course superintendent. He spent 36 years as superintendent at Blackhawk Country Club in Madison, Wis. Miller can be reached at groots@charter.net.

A GOLF COURSE FAMILY TREE

On one of my trips across Wisconsin this summer, trying to gin up interest in our Wisconsin Turfgrass Association and the WTA Summer Field Day, I stopped at Pine Hills CC in Sheboygan. Rod Johnson has been a premier superintendent for some time and recognized early in his career the importance of participation in professional organizations.

Rod drew inspiration from his friend and colleague Wayne Otto to organize the Wee One Foundation. Its mission is to offer financial help to superintendents who have suffered serious medical problems. He was commenting on what an excellent addition Steve Cook has been to the board and added that Steve came out of Danny Quast's shop.

Every superintendent comes out of someone's shop and, in turn, likely has people leave his shop for their own golf course. It was then that I tried out on Rod an idea I have had for quite a while – each golf course should develop its own golf course family tree. It's an interesting idea although I haven't had the time to complete one for my career yet. You could call such a project "superintendent genealogy."

My interest in genealogy goes back to the time my mother wanted to join the DAR. I was involved in a lot of the documentation and was quickly immersed in the rhythms and themes of history through our family. It was also the time of Alex Haley's book "Roots," a story that inspired a whole generation of genealogists. Understanding your past and how it was influenced by religion, politics and other factors puts current events into perspective. It is also a fascinating hobby, especially in a country of immigrants like ours is. My mother successfully completed DAR requirements through two different ancestral families. And now I am ready to go to Europe and see where

those immigrant ancestors of mine came from – Scotland, Cornwall, Norway and Germany.

After doing some quick research on how I would arrange and present my golf course family tree, it seems the best way to start would be to develop a simple descendent chart. My plan would be to start with myself at the top of the chart and in long horizontal line below that begin to list the employees by year, starting at the left side. Under each of them would come the subsequent generations that gained a professional foothold at their individual golf courses. They, by generation, become the children, grandchildren and beyond of my shop. All kinds of creative modifications to this descendent chart will be required as there will be individuals coming from a couple of operations. Some will

that have national stature and men who have been mentors to so many turf students.

Golf course architects could develop a family tree because nearly all started out in someone else's shop. Turfgrass faculty, particularly at the large research institutions, could put a twist on it by creating a chart of students who have gone on to positions at other colleges and universities.

Really interesting trees would be those involving the same family in our golf turf profession – grandfather, sons and grandsons, for example – have occurred any number of times. Merging those relative trees with individual golf course trees would give an interesting look at our history.

My first name was my mother's maiden name, and we are descended from the Munro Clan in Scotland,

After doing some quick research on how I would arrange and present my **golf course family tree**, it seems the best way to start would be to develop a simple descendent chart.

end quickly as individuals leave our profession for an allied group.

My golf course family tree will be quite extensive because I had a long career at the same club and was privileged to have so many UW – Madison turfgrass interns on my staff. A faculty person told me that number was around 100, most of whom went on to successful careers in golf. They also participated in mentoring programs, saw students graduate and enter the profession and carry on that internship tradition. It boggles the imagination to think about the task that would face men like Bob Alonzi or Paul R. Latshaw or Ted Woehrlé – successful long-time superintendents at clubs

near Inverness at Foulis Castle. I am in the 10th generation in America. The Aberdeen Golf Links is less than 100 miles from Foulis Castle and in 1820 the AGL paid Alexander Monroe four pounds sterling for the care of the links. He was their greenkeeper and a little research will tell me how we are related. It might also reveal if he ever worked with Old Tom Morris; the possibilities there take my breath away.

It is rough being retired and trying to find time for all the projects that merit that time. But developing a golf course family tree that could, just maybe, include Old Tom Morris, is something I am going to get started on right away. **GCI**