



From left, Architect Bill Diddel, G. T. Myers, Jack Wilson and Kenneth Holmes helped to furnish the brain, brawn and spark that brought golf to Rockville, Ind.

## How They Built the Course in Parke County, Indiana

*After Bill Diddel donated his architectural services nearly everyone for miles around rallied to the cause to push the project through . . . Even the undertaker helped!*

By JULIET SNOWDEN

FOR SOME 10 or 15 years golf enthusiasts in Parke County, Ind. talked of having their own course. After the people of the county had successfully raised funds and built a swimming pool largely with volunteer labor (opened in 1958) they started dreaming seriously about a course. Now it is a beautiful 9-hole reality.

Before any actual planning was started a campaign was launched to secure pledges for donations. Parke County has many forward-thinking men and women who realized what a great asset a golf course could be. The Mansfield Reservoir, an artificial lake with some 40 miles of shoreline and covering about 2,000 acres during summer months, will be filled by 1961. Always noted for its scenic beauty, these added recreational facilities greatly enhances the county as a location for small factories, summer cottages, etc. Vacationers at Turkey Run State Park (only 10 miles from the site selected) also would be served as

well as tourists traveling U. S. 41 and U. S. 36. These highways intersect at Rockville, the county seat, a mile south of the golf course.

By January, 1959, enough money was pledged to warrant serious estimates on building and maintaining a course. A suitable tract owned by the county was arranged for by the commissioners, a nominal yearly fee being charged on a lease basis.

### Bill Volunteers Services

Since good courses do not just occur, the services of a skilled architect are needed. They don't come cheap! Parke County's dream might have evaporated if it hadn't been for William Diddel of Indianapolis who is a nationally known course architect with many outstanding jobs, both public and private, to his credit. The late Mrs. Diddel had been a Rockville girl and when Bill learned of the Parke County project he offered to design the course — gratis! It was, as he said "Some-

thing his wife would have heartily approved."

Volunteer labor, borrowed machinery and a lot of donated material had been a prime factor in the building of the pool. Inexperienced labor can be utilized with fair efficiency in a constricted area. But scatter it over 65 acres and see what may happen! Fortunately one of the Rockville volunteers was a civil engineer, so it was possible to avert chaos. Volunteer work was out of the question for the big jobs of bulldozing and grading but the contractor who did the rough grading and ditching shaved his charges. That was the story thereafter.

### Machines Come In

Actual labor was begun in the spring of 1959. In August a Field Day was held at the fairgrounds which adjoins the golf course. During the county fair all farm machinery dealers displayed their entire lines and, following it, converged on the course which had already been graded. In that one day the course was almost entirely plowed, disced, harrowed, fertilized and seeded. The use of 60 machines, the man-power and even some of the fertilizer was donated! Volunteer work was used on just about all jobs. Most of the work had to be done on weekends when business and professional men could get out and pitch in. Their wives were recruited to bring out noon meals. Later the women were assigned the humble but important job of pulling weeds.

Meanwhile, various organizations in the county sponsored money-making projects with proceeds pledged to the golf course. Merchants, farmers and private citizens were besieged for donations. Some grumbled, some were evasive, but most gave. One fellow, low on cash, gave lunch meat for the workers' noon meal. A donation of 35 or 40 utility poles was gratefully accepted and used in bridge construction work.

### Digger Goes to Work

One of the most faithful of the volunteer workers was discovered digging a good-sized hole on the western edge of the course. Since he is an undertaker this activity provoked a little bantering. "No," he said solemnly, "this isn't what you think it is at all. Somebody gave us a hell of a fine gene's room and we really need one over here. So I'm getting ready for it."

This summer the state highway department reluctantly announced it was going to replace one of Parke County's famous

old covered bridges. At this writing the people of Parke County are trying to raise funds to move the bridge to the golf course. With the stream that runs through the course it is needed.

Last winter a Florida pro, a native of Rockville, was invited to take over operation of the course and pro shop. He and his wife decided to accept the invitation, installed a trailer behind the shop and now claim to have the largest front lawn in Indiana. Bringing this dependable couple in was another boon to the project.

### Invigorating New Interest

Parke County's goal had been a May 30, 1960, opening with everyone to be warned that fairways and greens were still far short of perfection. The goal was achieved. In June a flash flood took two of the bridges so the course was closed for a day or two, but otherwise everything has gone well. A surprising number of people who never had played golf have now found an invigorating new interest. Getting material for this article was, in fact, difficult. All the people who had the answers were out playing golf.

Here are some figures on Parke County's costs:

Sprinklers, mowers, seeders,	
2 tractors .....	\$ 2740.00
Labor .....	1768.29
Equipment expense & fuel ....	1075.23
Sand, gravel, etc. ....	766.14
Fertilizer & seed .....	2398.00
Moss .....	509.00
Pipe, tile etc. (includes machine labor) .....	8258.32
Misc. ....	1030.00
	\$18,544.98
<b>TOTAL DONATIONS .....</b>	<b>\$18,664.88</b>

That impressive balance \$119.90 was earmarked for insurance; then somebody donated it!

### New Kind of Hazard

Air Force golfers saw a new hazard on the fifth hole at the Randolph AFB, Tex., course recently when a C-47 crashed into a lake there while the Air Force's 1960 World Wide tournament was in progress. Luckily golfers and crew members were uninjured. The last day of the tournament had just gotten underway when the crash happened. After a 45 minute delay, the service golfers were able to play through.