



Opened in 1901, Glen Echo Country Club is the oldest 18-hole golf course west of the Mississippi.

Comprising 138 acres in Normandy, its front entrance is on Lucas & Hunt Road, just south of Natural Bridge, exactly where it was in 1901. It's a parcel of land whose historical interest to St. Louis dates back to 1812. At that time, an earthquake in New Madrid, Missouri, caused extensive flooding by the Mississippi River. The territory of Missouri, realizing the plight of the landowners, offered them land elsewhere in Missouri to replace the flooded acreage.

One of the landowners, John B. Chartier, chose the 160 acres that eventually became Glen Echo. Then the Lucas family, in the process of moving their successful farm from what is now 4th and Market in St. Louis, acquired the land in 1817, along with other acreage in what became Normandy. Wilson P. Hunt later inherited the property from his mother-in-law, Mrs. Anna B. Lucas. Hunt established an estate there, building a two-story mansion and planting hundreds of beautiful

trees imported from France. For many years, he lived the life of a country gentleman with his family at this elegant estate.

At the turn of the century, a group of prominent St. Louisans became interested in establishing a golf club similar to those that had become popular in the East, and they recognized the Hunt estate as an ideal location. Since automobiles were not a widely used form of transportation in those days, its convenience to rail transportation made the Hunt property particularly appealing. A Wabash Railroad station was located just to the west of the 2nd tee, with the Kirkwood-Ferguson line (one of the few main streetcars) within walking distance.

The golf enthusiasts succeeded in negotiating a six-year lease with Hunt calling for \$1,000 a year for five years and \$2,000 the sixth year. The agreement also included an option, later exercised, to purchase the property for \$100,000. The mansion was converted to a clubhouse, and a golf course was built, with the larger imported trees lining the fairways.

Glen Echo was formally opened on May 25, 1901, by the proud organizers: George S. McGrew, Murray Carleton, Herman C. G. Luyties, Festus J. Wade, Julius H. Koehler, S. C. Edgar, and George A. Meyer. Col McGrew was the first president and under his leadership the club achieved national prominence in 1904. It was the year of the World's Fair, and the Third Olympic Games were also being held in St. Louis as a subsidiary attraction. McGrew succeeded in obtaining the recognition of the Olympic Games Association to hold an Olympic Golf Tournament at Glen Echo. The event produced Olympic Golf Gold Medal Winner, George S. Lyon of Toronto, Canada. After that year, golf was abandoned by the Olympics. In 1904, however, the Olympic Golf matches did bring national attention to the beautiful Glen Echo course. On the way to winning the championship, Lyon established a new course record with an 18-hole score of 77. Today the holes are essentially the same except that the course has been lengthened from 6,200 to approximately 6,500 yards. The current USGA rating is 71.0 with a par of 36-35, 71, and the course record of 63 is now held by both the club's former pro, Dick Shaiper, and the club's current pro, Nash Haxel.

In 1913, Harry Vardon and Ted Ray, the most prominent golfers of that era, played an exhibition match at Glen Echo, again focusing considerable public attention on the club. In 1927 the original clubhouse, which had been the Hunt mansion, was taken down. A new \$250,000 structure was completed in 1928, and still serves as the clubhouse. Tennis courts were later added where the original building stood before being taken down.

Through the years this fine private club has witnessed the gradual change of golf from a "rich man's game" to a sport which practically anyone can enjoy. The members have changed accordingly, from wealthy chauffeur-driven gentleman to corporate executives, professional people, and small business entrepreneurs.

Except for the few instances noted here, Glen Echo had remained in the background as a quiet retreat for its members.