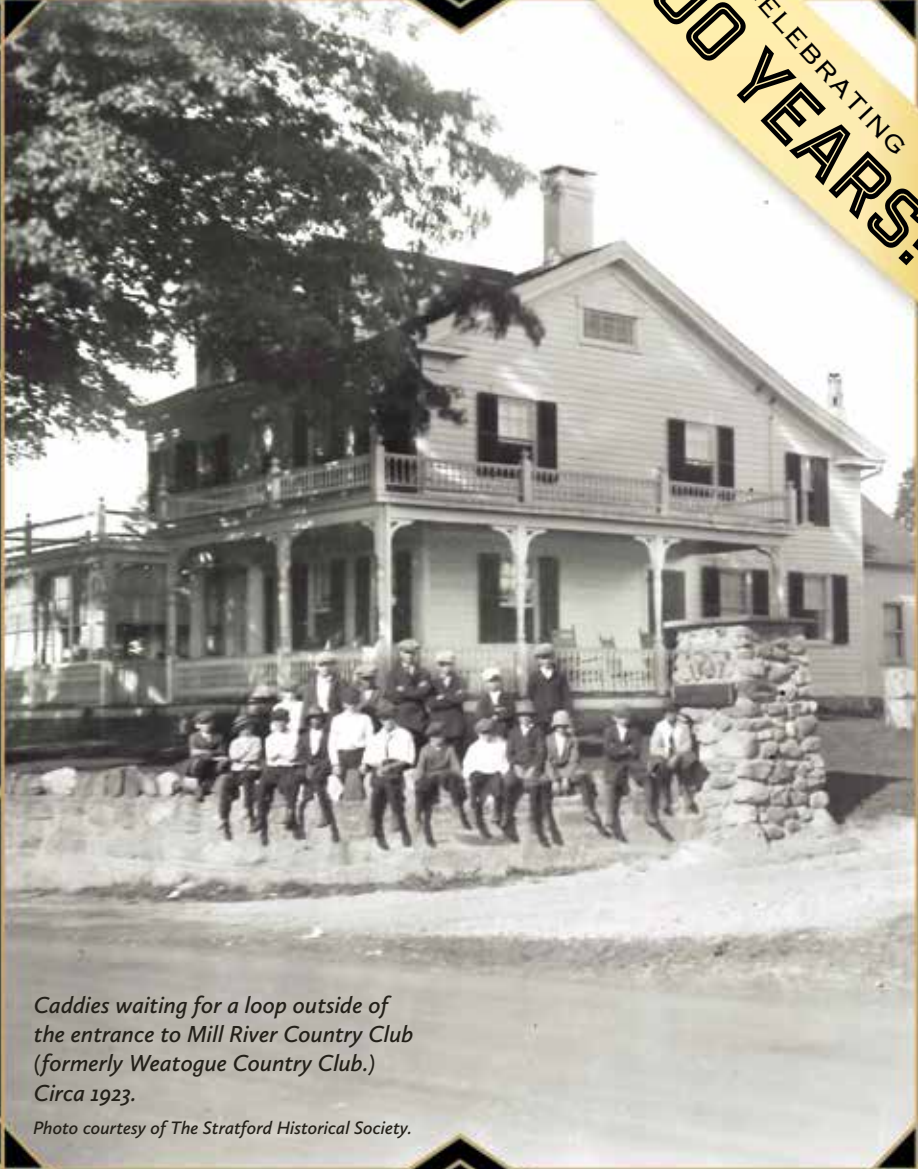


CELEBRATING
100 YEARS!



*Caddies waiting for a loop outside of
the entrance to Mill River Country Club
(formerly Weatogue Country Club.)
Circa 1923.*

Photo courtesy of The Stratford Historical Society.

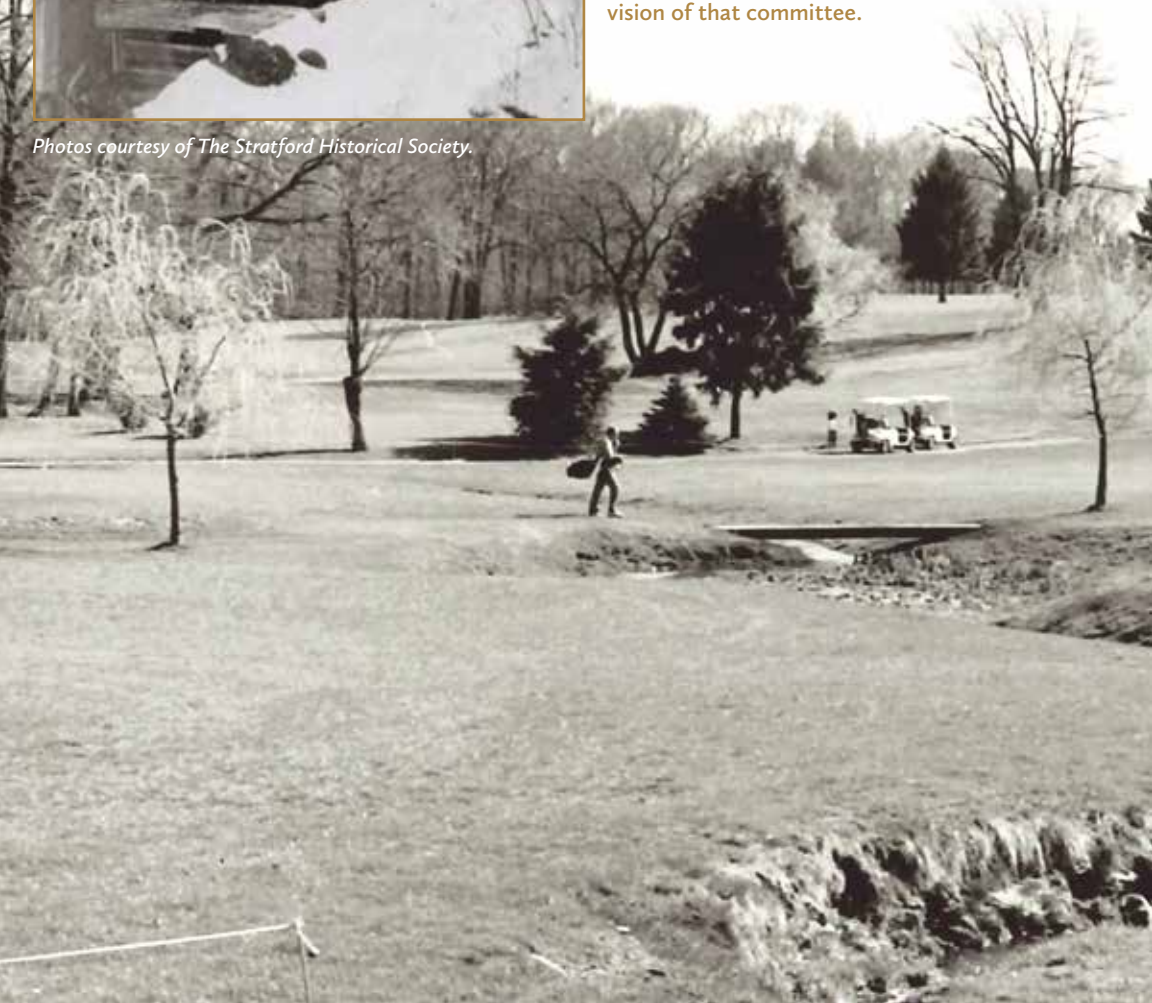
MILL RIVER  COUNTRY CLUB
-1923-



Left: View of abandoned Peck's Mill. Originally a flax mill, then a celluloid comb factory in the late 1800s before closing. The mill was taken down in the 1920s before a hurricane washed out the remaining chase. Peck Mill Pond is fed by Pumpkin Ground Brook which runs through the golf course at holes 2, 4, 7, 8, 17, & 12. We can only assume that the brook, which was more like a river in 1923, was the inspiration for the name "Mill River Country Club."

Below: As stated in the March 30, 1958 *Sunday Herald*, a Trees Committee was formed in 1942 with the purpose of beautifying the course landscape. A variety of deciduous and evergreen trees were planted. This view across the 14th & 15th holes from Whippoorwill Lane reflects the vision of that committee.

Photos courtesy of The Stratford Historical Society.



GOSPEL OF RECREATION

An excerpt from a 1913 sermon preached by
Rev. E. C. Carpenter, who was instrumental in the founding
of Weatogue Country Club – which 10 years later became
Mill River Country Club.

*“You know, there are some, that look with a little disfavor
upon country clubs, thinking they are a waste of time and
money, and only for the rich.*

*In these days, multitudes live in the city, and many are under
very great nervous strain. I believe if many of them had some
place where they could get out upon God’s green earth and
enjoy good wholesome sport, it would make for health,
happiness, saner and truer living. If I did not believe so, I would
not have taken the interest I have in the formation of the club.”*



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

As we celebrate our 100th anniversary, we can all share in the pride of our founding fathers' achievements. As a result of their vision and generosity, we have the privilege to gather as a community and kick off this yearlong celebration.

In 1923, a small group of men from the bygone Mill Hill Country Club had a vision that, through several iterations, became our beloved Mill River Country Club. However, it was not without many trials and tribulations along the way. There was the Great Depression, a devastating clubhouse fire, several economic hardships, and most recently, a pandemic. But through it all, the spirit of Mill River persevered and continues to flourish today.

Not many organizations make it this far. We share the celebration this year in some good company such as Winged Foot, Cherry Hills, and Chicago Golf Club amongst other championship venues. That is some pretty heady company!

It takes a lot of hard work, dedication, and love of golf to make it to this milestone. The list of people to thank is long. It starts with that initial group of men who formed the Weatogue Holding Company all those years ago and goes through the countless members who served on our committees, on the Board of Governors, and as officers. A special thank you to our Centennial Committee, who worked tirelessly to make this weekend special for all of us.

Let us embrace this Centennial year by spreading joy! Let us celebrate, connect and continue to build friendships and camaraderie through golf, events, food and drink. Let us embrace the responsibility of carrying this great tradition forward for the next 100 years.

Welcome to our Centennial year and to our future!

Todd Gallo

President, Mill River Country Club



100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2023

Couples Hickory Stick Tournament
Family Picnic
Clock Dedication
Fireworks

SATURDAY, JULY 1, 2023

Men's Hickory Stick Tournament
Roaring 20's Centennial Celebration
Cocktail Party & Dancing

SUNDAY, JULY 2, 2023

Family Fun Day at the Pool
Picnic
Games & Activities



PECK'S MILL POND

PUMPKIN GROUND BROOK

Digging for Clams

The dotted area indicates where past member and contractor, Don Barrett, improved the drainage across holes 14 & 15 by adding 20,000 yards of fill (at cost) – raising the grade of the fairway 4-5 feet.

Before Barrett's generous improvement, *"It was like digging for clams,"* recounts member Roland Wilson of his caddie days. *"The drives off 15 would plug 6 inches deep then fill with water. If we took our eyes off where the ball landed we would often dig up someone else's ball."*

Refreshments

During the late 1950's, before the halfway house was built, the young Parker sisters, who lived next to the course, would sell drinks and snacks over the fence on the 13th hole.

1934 Aerial View

MILL RIVER COUNTRY CLUB

- The original 9-hole course was designed by R. D. Pryde of New Haven in 1915 for the then Weatogue Country Club.
- In 1925, golf course architect, Tom Winton of Rye, NY, added 9 holes and reconfigured the course at a cost of \$20,000. According to the Bridgeport Telegram *"...it is expected that the 18 hole course will be in parallel, in and out and adjacent to the present holes so that some changes in the course now used will have to be made. When completed, hazards will make it one of the sportiest courses in the state."* Unfortunately we do not have the routing of the original 9 holes to compare the changes.



Flames Sweep Country Club Building

Fire Fails To Keep Players From Tourney

STRATFORD, Conn., May 13
— A locker room building was
burning down, but 80 professional
and amateur golfers stayed on the
Mill River Country Club course
today to compete in the season's
first Connecticut PGA Pro-Am-
ateur Tournament.

Record-Journal
May 14, 1957



Golfers Lose Possessions As Fire Destroys Mill River Locker Room

STRATFORD, May 13 (Spe-
cial) — Flames destroyed the
locker room and grill of the Mill
River Country Club today while
a field of professionals and ama-
teurs were out on the course
competing in the Connecticut
PGA's first pro-amateur tourna-
ment of the season.

The fire, which started shortly
before 3 p.m., caused an esti-
mated \$55,000 damage. Six fire-
men were overcome by smoke,
two requiring hospitalization.
The players lost their personal
possessions, money and private
papers being destroyed, in addi-
tion to the loss of clubs stored
in the room adjoining the locker
room. The fire apparently start-
ed in the store room. The cause
was not immediately deter-
mined. The fire was brought un-
der control at 4 p.m.

Hartford Courant - May 14, 1957

THE "FIRE"

Excerpts from The Bridgeport Post, May 14, 1957

"... Sweeping through the grill room in the front of the building, the fire went through the walls of the structure to the second floor, enveloping the 236 steel lockers in which golfers had stored their cashmere sweaters, sport coats, dress clothes, and other equipment. A check of the locker room after the blaze disclosed that approximately 140 pair of golf shoes valued at \$30 per pair had been destroyed."

"... Many of the 80 golfers participating in the Connecticut PGA Pro-Am tournament came in from the course during the fire, and when permitted to enter the building removed their burning clothing from the lockers and spread it on the lawn near the main clubhouse."

Wallet Destroyed

"... One golfer, who declined to give his name, upon approaching the locker room from the course said, 'I hope it didn't get as far as my locker - I have \$800 in my wallet.' When he opened the locker, he found the wallet charred, and in the bill compartment only a mass of burned paper which disintegrated in his fingers."

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Pamela Bashar
Lynne Fuchs
Andrea Burke
Brigette Gallo
Tere Newbauer
Lauren O'Leary
Patricia Woods

CLUB OFFICERS

President: Todd Gallo
Vice President: David Fuchs
Secretary: David LaReau
Treasurer: Pamela Bashar

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Pamela Bashar
James Benson
Michael Burke
John Del Vecchio
David Fuchs
Todd Gallo
Robert Hall
David LaReau
William Neary
Peter Nolan
John O'Connell
Lauren O'Leary
James Stupak



Caption: "Here is the spanking new \$325,000 Mill River Country Club, an edifice which proves what a hardworking membership can do if it tries."

Sunday Herald Magazine, March 30, 1958

THE "NEW" CLUBHOUSE

As early as 1928 the board contemplated building a new clubhouse. In 1941, architect and member Toby Vece presented a sketch of a rebuilt clubhouse that would eliminate the locker room building and dining porch, and include bowling alleys. The sketch, as told by a current member, was colonial in style and hung on the wall of the Men's Grill Room for years.

It took until 1954 for the Board to move forward with building a new clubhouse. But by then the Vece's colonial style building had turned into

something very different. As the story is told, the design of the clubhouse changed from Vece's colonial vision into the Board's practical commercial solution. Hence the brick box look. The thinking behind the design change was that if the club dissolved, a commercial building would be more valuable.



Souvenir Programs from the Dedication Gala of the new clubhouse on April 19, 1958. The formal attire event included dinner, the unveiling of the bronze plaque outside of the front door, and dancing until 1:00 AM to Eddie Wittstein's Society Orchestra.

Program photos courtesy of The Stratford Historical Society



At Mill River Country club among the merry-makers were (left to right) Mrs. Ewald C. Werner, Mrs. Frank Ogalin, Ewald Werner (standing), Rudy Knablein, Mrs. Rudy Knablein, Dr. and Mrs. George L. Gunther, and Frank Ogalin (seated right).

1960 New Year's Eve Celebration - *The Bridgeport Post*, Jan. 2, 1960

100 YEARS OF FUN!

During the 1970s, the club held a "Doo-wop" night. The Five Satins, famed for the song, "In the Still of the Night" and local to New Haven, were hired to perform. The leader of the group was Fred Parris, son of Mill River's chef, "Chef Fred".

(Chef Fred was a favorite of the caddies in the late 1950s. When the caddies were hungry they would knock on the kitchen door and Chef Fred would make them a sandwich for 5-10 cents.)



Mill River Club Plans 'Caribbean Night'

"Caribbean Night" will be observed at the Mill River Country club July 4. The committee has planned an evening of Latin-American entertainment, dancing and refreshments.

Cocktails will be served at 5 p.m., and a South American dinner will follow. The dance team of Ted and Alice Nicholas will give an exhibition of South American dances, and will instruct the guests, and a cha-cha contest is scheduled. Edmund J. Doran is chairman.

Bridgeport Post, June 16, 1957

'Shipwreck Party' Slated At Mill River Club

The Mill River Country club, Stratford, is arranging a "shipwreck" party for the Fourth of July, according to the dance committee officials. Tattered clothing will be the order of the evening, prizes to be awarded for the funniest, most original and outstanding "shipwreck" attire.

Cocktails will be served from 5 to 7 o'clock, dinner will be at 8 and dancing will continue from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Sutton have charge of reservations which must be made by Monday.

Bridgeport Post, June 28, 1958

Plan Winter Sports.

Although the season is at hand when, as the poet says, "the rust is on the niblick," there promises to be no falling off in activities at the Mill River country club during the next few months. Although golfing and tennis will not attract, winter sports will take their place. It is planned to flood the tennis courts for skating, and use the golf course as the site for ski slides and toboggan courses.

Bridgeport Post, December 6, 1924

AND THE SHOW GOES ON... FOR ANOTHER 100 YEARS!

From the 1990 "A Mill River Chronicle"

"In past years members not only played the course but also obeyed an instinct more or less innate in all of us... the pursuit of Terpsichore." Below is evidence of such pursuit.*

In 1980, '81 and '84 a troupe of very ambitious members produced a dinner theater that ran three nights each. The first was "A Taste of Broadway" that featured numbers from Cabaret (seen below), Mame, Hello Dolly and the like. In 1981 they produced "Another Taste of Broadway". And in 1984, it was "The Best of Times" with skits from the 1930's and "Our' La Cage Aux Folles".



** In Greek mythology, Terpsichore is one of the nine Muses and goddess of dance and chorus.*

Mill River Country Club, Stratford, CT 06614
2023

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