

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places Registration Form****1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Lions Municipal Golf Course  
Other name/site number: NA  
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

**2. Location**

Street & number: 2901 Enfield Road  
City or town: Austin State: Texas County: Travis  
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☐ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official / Title State Historic Preservation Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Texas Historical Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register.  
\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

<input type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

### Category of Property

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	-	buildings
1	-	sites
4	11	structures
1	-	objects
9	11	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:** Recreation and Culture: sports facility

**Current Functions:** Recreation and Culture: sports facility

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification:** Other: golf course  
Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Colonial Revival  
Modern Movement: Moderne

**Principal Exterior Materials:** Stone/limestone, Brick, Wood

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 6-14)

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>A</b>	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>B</b>	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>C</b>	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Entertainment/Recreation, Social History

**Period of Significance:** 1924-1954

**Significant Dates:** 1924, 1954

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** Rowe, B. F.; Kreisle, Edwin C.; Tillinghast, A.W.; Page, Charles H.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 15-35)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheet 36-40)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other -- Specify Repository: Austin History Center

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** 141.35

### Coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 30.293672 | Longitude: -97.783571 |
| 2. Latitude: 30.293889 | Longitude: -97.779065 |
| 3. Latitude: 30.290609 | Longitude: -97.772085 |
| 4. Latitude: 30.283261 | Longitude: -97.776804 |
| 5. Latitude: 30.291616 | Longitude: -97.783039 |

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The nominated property includes approximately 141.35 acres. The property is bounded by Enfield Road to the north, Exposition Boulevard to the east, and Lake Austin Boulevard to the south and west. The property deed is recorded in Volume 10968, page 386, of the Real Property Records of Travis County, Texas.

**Boundary Justification:** The nomination includes all property historically associated with the golf course.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Ken Tiemann and Charles Page  
Organization: Save Munny  
Street & number: P.O. Box 5745  
City: Austin State: Texas Zip code: 78763  
E-mail: historicmuny@gmail.com  
Telephone: 512-589-7323  
Date: June 24, 2015

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheets 41-46)  
**Additional items** (see continuation sheets 47-83)  
**Photographs** (see continuation sheets)



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

## Photograph Log

(SEE PHOTOS IN SEPARATE PDF)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

## Description

Lions Municipal Golf Course lies in west central Austin on 141.35 acres heavily wooded with heritage oak trees. The nominated property includes three Contributing buildings, four Contributing structures, one Contributing object, and eleven Non-Contributing structures. The eighteen-hole course was designed by Austin Lions Club member B.F. Rowe. Course construction was completed nine holes at a time during 1924 and 1925. On the grounds is a Colonial Revival style Clubhouse designed in 1930 by local architect Edwin C. Kreisle. As evidenced by aerial maps, the property's current appearance is nearly identical to its appearance in 1954 with the exception of a few adaptive changes to the golf course layout as well as minor alterations and additions to the three Contributing buildings. The Non-Contributing structures, added for continuing maintenance and modern convenience, do not diminish the integrity of the property and are primarily located out of sight from the course itself.

---

Lions Municipal Golf Course is located in west central Austin, just two miles from the State Capitol, on 141 heavily-wooded acres with many heritage oak trees. The nominated property includes three Contributing buildings, four Contributing structures, one Contributing object, and eleven Non-Contributing structures. Despite minor modifications to the Clubhouse and Keeper's Quarters, property features retain a high degree of historical integrity with regards to location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. As at other legacy courses, evolving changes have occurred throughout Muny's lifespan. Yet the course layout has stayed remarkably consistent for the past 60 years, as evidenced by aerial photographs. The historic integrity of the course endures.

The property is located on the Brackenridge Tract and is leased to the City of Austin by the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System. The driveway leads to a parking lot adjacent to the centrally located clubhouse. Contiguous to the property are single family residential areas in the Tarrytown neighborhood across Exposition Boulevard to the east and across Enfield Road to the north. The West Austin Youth Association baseball fields and headquarters is located to the northeast of the property, the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) headquarters to the west, and University of Texas student housing to the south across Lake Austin Boulevard.

The primary entrance, identified by a pair of contributing limestone masonry gateway piers, is located to the south of Enfield Road. Limestone, quarried locally, has been a popular material since the earliest days of Austin architecture. A secondary, private entrance is located north of Lake Austin Boulevard. The private driveway rises north up a hill by the thirteenth green, passing by the Contributing limestone rock Keeper's Quarters and Maintenance Building behind the eighteenth green and then up to the Contributing Clubhouse. The Lions Municipal Clubhouse was designed in 1930 by local architect Edwin C. Kreisle. Today, the Colonial Revival clubhouse is often rented out to citizens of Austin for special events.

The golf course also features three Contributing limestone rock Storm Shelters near the eighth tee box, eleventh green, and thirteenth tee box. A commemorative plaque and cast concrete Lion Statue was donated and installed in 1937 by the Austin Lions Club. The statue, a Contributing object, is located on the practice putting green outside the clubhouse. The Gateway Piers, Storm Shelters, Keepers Quarters, and Maintenance Building were under construction in 1938 and completed by 1939, funded by the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) program and the City of Austin. Design of these structures is attributed to Charles Henry Page, a prominent courthouse architect and Austin Lions Club member. A limestone starters shed was also constructed in 1938-39, later to be razed in the 1960s. Lions Municipal was granted a Texas Historical Marker in 2009 to commemorate the breakthrough desegregation that occurred on the course. The marker was installed in the right of way near the entrance to the golf course. In 1926, Lions Club member John H. Tobin described the grounds: "Raising your eyes you behold the beautiful scenery which is an inspiration to the player."<sup>1</sup> To be sure, the eighteen-hole course offers scenic views of surrounding

---

<sup>1</sup> Reed Badger, "Muny Golf Course Makes Record Growth In Two Year: \$45,000 Spent On 18-Holes Here," *The Austin*

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

hills. Today, Lions Municipal remains an urban green space. The grounds evoke a park-like setting enjoyed by walkers and golfers alike.

Fairways are lined on both sides with trees, some centuries-old. Areas which are not maintained as part of the golf course generally have thick coverage, primarily massive live oaks and juniper thicket. Other trees scattered on the property include post oaks, Spanish oaks, cedar elms, hackberry, and mesquite. The terrain slopes gently downhill from north to south, with maximum elevation of 573 feet above sea level (just east of the entrance on Enfield Road) and minimum elevation (500 feet above sea level) east of the Lake Austin Boulevard entrance.

**Golf Course** (*Figures 1 - 4 and Photos 1 - 56*)

The design and playability of each of the eighteen distinctive holes have given this par-71 course a beloved status among golfers in the Austin area and beyond. It is the most-played course in Austin, hosting an average 72,000 rounds each year. It is a classic straightforward course, yet filled with subtle features that can take years to master. Notably, the direction of the growth of the putting surface grass is pronounced. On each green, this “grain” grows toward the nearby Lady Bird Lake; putts moving away from the lake are relatively slow. Outside the golf course area, the playing rough consists of native buffalo and buffel grasses.

The course offers measurements for tee placement at three levels: red (4,931 yards total), white (5,642 yards total), and blue (6,001 yards total).

1. **Hole 1** (369 / 359 / 330 yards; Par 4) faces south with a 90 degree dog leg right to the west. The tee shot plays slightly downhill into the prevailing wind. A precise lay-up will leave a 140-150 yard shot to a small elevated green. Errant approach shots find trouble close by on all three sides. *See photos 1 and 2.*
2. **Hole 2** (505 / 487 / 402 yards; Par 5) faces south/southeast. Lake Austin Boulevard parallels the right side of this hole and the traffic is protected by a tall mesh fence. Playing into the prevailing wind and uphill, this par 5 is challenging. A large tree in the middle of the fairway protects and adds to the difficulty of the approach shot. There are sand bunkers to the left and right of the large and deep green. *See photos 3 – 5.*
3. North/northwest-facing **Hole 3** (400 / 378 / 306 yards; Par 4) doubles back parallel with Hole 2. Grass bunkers protect the left side of the fairway. A sand bunker is at the front left of the green. The length of the hole and trees on left and right make this a challenging par. Added to the difficulty is the unreceptive green which runs away and to the left. *See photos 6 – 8.*
4. **Hole 4** (155 / 138 / 124 yards; Par 3) is a deceptive east-facing par three, protected on the left by a large sand bunker. The green slopes almost imperceptibly from the left to the right. *See photos 9 and 10.*
5. **Hole 5** (375 / 308 / 290 yards; Par 4) faces east from the back tee and north/northeast from the front tees. It is a sharp dogleg left with hydrangeas to the right of the back tee. From the back tee, large oaks on the left prevent cutting the dogleg for all but the better players. Any shot from the tee that is right of the center of the fairway will usually end up in the trees to the right. A large oak that extends into the right fairway further penalizes tee shots to the right. Any shot down the middle of the fairway that does not cut the dogleg may provide a long approach shot to the green. *See photos 11 – 14.*
6. **Hole 6** (380 / 363 / 263 yards; Par 4) faces south/southwest and parallels the prior hole. This hole features a brief resting place with a stone bench behind the back tee box and a stone bench alongside the front tee box. There is a

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

large oak on the right of the fairway about 70 yards from the tee box. The hole is a soft dogleg to the right and this tree often comes into play. The right side is further protected by rocky soil that quickly slopes to the deep woods. The hole is downhill and the grain of the green runs away from the approach shot, adding to the difficulty of this hole. *See photos 15 – 17.*

7. Dense woods encroach to the left of the south/southeast-facing **Hole 7** (161 / 146 / 128 yards; Par 3). Two sand bunkers (front and back) guard the right side of the green. The entrance to the green is very narrow requiring a precise tee shot to reach the putting surface. One of several limestone lightning shelters may be found just beyond this hole near the eighth and third tees. *See photos 18 – 20.*
8. The driving area of the northeast-facing **Hole 8** (445 / 430 / 425 yards; Par 5) is tight and the hole is a visual challenge from the tee. Exposition Boulevard parallels the hole to the right. There are heavy woods in the landing area of the tee shot on the right as well. In the landing area on the left is a well-placed fairway bunker. The second shot then doglegs left with a large grove of tall oaks lining the left side. Protecting the right side of the green is a large sand bunker. A long approach shot to the sloping uphill green most often requires a shot that draws or curves right to left. *See photos 21 – 24.*
9. **Hole 9** (370 / 355 / 303 yards; Par 4) faces north and then turns sharply to dogleg to the west. Though not particularly long, even better players aim for the middle of the fairway with a layup shot. There is a heritage oak that takes up much of the right side of the potential landing area. The approach to the green must navigate the two smaller sand bunkers to the right and left sides of the sloping green. Dense woods beckon errant shots just to the left of the green. However, a well-placed layup sets up a relatively simple 100-yard approach, which provides any level of golfer a decent shot at birdie. *See photos 25 – 28.*
10. **Hole 10** (295 / 276 / 255 yards; Par 4) faces due north with tee box located just beyond the clubhouse. Two water hazards are at the front right and front left of the green. A very narrow strip of fairway separates the two hazards. Oaks and cedars line each side of fairway. The fairway slopes down from the tee and up to the elevated green. While most golfers choose to lay up with an iron, the better players will often go for the green from the tee. This either requires a 250-260 yard carry or a lucky shot that hits the 10-15 yard opening between the two water hazards. *See photos 29 and 30.*
11. West-facing **Hole 11** (325 / 319 / 302 yards; Par 4) slopes sharply down from the tee to the landing area. It then slopes uphill to a somewhat elevated green. It is a slight dogleg right with a blind shot toward the green. Large trees protect the dogleg to the right. And heritage oaks are left of the fairway. The very large green slopes from back to front. Another limestone lightning shelter is placed just beyond the eleventh green and close by the sixteenth tee. *See photos 31 – 33.*
12. The south/southeast-facing fairway of **Hole 12** (500 / 472 / 424 yards; Par 5) is wide and inviting. But just to the left is a grove of the largest of the ancient oaks that are a part of Lions Municipal. These extraordinary trees help make the course feel even older than its 91 years. The elevated and large sloping green is well protected by a natural creek that creates a hazard to the right and a pond dissecting the fairway. The green is reached by a bridge to the left of the fairway. The green slopes from back to front and is further protected by three sand bunkers on the right. Another limestone lightning shelter is located between the twelfth green and the thirteenth tee box. *See photos 34 – 39.*
13. **Hole 13** (161 / 139 / 108 yards; Par 3) faces west. The tees are well above the level of the green and present a challenge in club selection. The hole is protected by a large water hazard that fronts the entirety of the green. The green is then elevated just beyond the hazard. Any shot short of the green will be most likely be in the hazard, but

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

playing it safe by going long is not an option. Just beyond the green is a row of trees that separate this hole from Lake Austin Boulevard. *See photos 40 and 41.*

14. **Hole 14** (525 / 508 / 405 yards; Par 5) faces north/northwest. Lake Austin Boulevard parallels the hole to the left. The hole is a slight dogleg right and the ideal shot from the tee is just to the left of center. Shots further left end up in the trees or up against the large screen that protects the busy street. The approach shot must find a narrowing fairway and dense trees and vines are left and right of the fairway. The green is elevated more than it appears and slopes back to front. *See photos 42 – 44.*
15. **Hole 15** (139 / 126 / 105 yards; Par 3) faces east. A large oak encroaches upon the entrance to the green on the left. Trees to the right are mostly out of play. The green slopes uphill and to the right. Pin placements on this hole affect the playing difficulty. With a back left pin placement, the best tee shot will often fly over the oak on the left and to the flag. Just beyond the green is a large heritage oak that has survived a lightning strike. *See photos 45 and 46.*
16. The south-facing fairway of **Hole 16** (403 / 381 / 363 yards; Par 4) is protected by a large overhanging oak on the left and a forest of scattered trees on the right. Ben Hogan is said to have found this hole particularly difficult. The fairway begins flat and then falls sharply downhill to a blind landing area. A water hazard, 240-280 yards from the tee, fronts the entire entry to the green. An added difficulty is that even a good tee shot often has a severe downhill lie. The green is very elevated and is 100 yards beyond the hazard. One of the most difficult shots in golf is to an elevated target from a downhill lie. Add the large water hazard and it's easy to see why even Mr. Hogan seemed intimidated. *See photos 47 – 50.*
17. The water hazard fronting the previous hole continues via a natural creek to **Hole 17** (183/165/118 yards; Par 3), the most challenging of the five par threes at Lions Municipal. The green to the north is fully protected by a large water hazard (pond) that takes up most of the fairway. The green is elevated and requires a long carry to avoid the water. Trees crowd the green on the right and just off the cart path on the left. *See photos 51 – 53.*
18. **Hole 18** (310/292/280 yards; Par 4) faces south and is into the prevailing wind most of the year. This is an excellent finishing hole and is drivable by the long hitters. Many tournaments and friendly games are decided by the decisions the golfer makes from this tee. The fairway is wide, but it slopes uphill and to the right. A drive just to the right will find rocky terrain in a grove of trees. A drive to the left may find the cart path and bounce into the trees on the left. The green slopes left to right and the grain runs left to right. Even a well-placed tee shot or a good approach shot is often far from the pin. *See photos 54 – 56.*

As with all enduring historic golf courses, Lions Municipal has evolved. Yet the course retains an exceptionally high level of integrity with regards to location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A few modest design changes – both natural and manmade – should be noted. A natural change, for example, is the growth or death of trees near the course. Manmade changes can occur from renovation or even inadvertently through regular course use and maintenance. For instance, mowing patterns can slowly change the shapes of fairways and greens. Putting surfaces located near sand traps will see their slope altered over time due to an accumulation of sand that results from shots played from the green-side bunkers. Practically speaking, all golf courses experience change — unintentional and/or planned — over time. A famous example of this includes Augusta National where an intentional change has occurred at least once on all eighteen holes.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Wexler, "The Evolution of The Golf Course at Augusta National: What Would The Good Doctor Say?," (March 2011). <http://golfclubatlas.com/in-my-opinion/wexler-daniel-augusta/>.

## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Assessing the level of design integrity of a golf course is probably best done from an aerial or macro perspective. Thickets of trees define Muny's essentially unchanged playing surface. Although adjustments to the course have emerged over the years, the footprint of the playing surface has not changed.<sup>3</sup> Updated hole numbering that accompanied the 1970's renovation does not affect playability or the integrity of design. Muny looks remarkably the same in aerial photos from 1954 and 2014 (*see Figure 1*).

### 19. Clubhouse, Contributing Building *(Figures 5 - 7 and Photos 57 – 64)*

The Lions Municipal Clubhouse was designed in 1930 by local architect Edwin C. Kreisle. The clubhouse is a one-story building situated near the first and tenth tee boxes on a flat hilltop, surrounded by mature oak trees. Constructed in 1930 at a cost of \$15,000, the Colonial Revival clubhouse consists of load-bearing brick masonry and a composition shingle roof. The building faces north and is configured in a T-Plan; a central corridor connects the ballroom bay to the pro shop bay. Next to the ballroom are a meeting room, storage room, and women's restroom. The central corridor divides the men's restroom and golf club storage to the east from dining room and kitchen to the west. The wheelchair ramp was added in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The corridor walls are filled with plaques commemorating past tournament champions. The pro shop is now situated in the original lounge area. An office for the head professional was constructed in place of the old pro shop. The current dining room and kitchen occupy the other part of the old pro shop. The building maintains its integrity and original character, in spite of the renovations and addition completed in 1989.

The primary clubhouse elevation serves as the entry to the ballroom and faces the practice range to the north. This elevation is identified by a small accentuated gabled entry portico. The pedimented crown is supported by slender ionic columns. The portico emerges into a commodious concrete slab porch surrounded by crepe myrtles. The primary clubhouse entrance doors were added during the 1989 renovations. These doors have pane glass inserts and are topped with four transom windows. The entry doors open into the original wood-floored ballroom and separate meeting room to the right. The ballroom also maintains its original hanging light fixtures. Single hung windows are paired adjacently in four sets with 12/12 multi-pane glazing. However, the original design specified 6/6 multi-pane glazing windows throughout. The moderate pitched side gable roof is flanked by five symmetrical gabled dormers with slatted ventilation windows.

The east clubhouse elevation faces the practice putting green and is adjacent to the parking lot. This elevation shows the connection of the side gabled front bay to the cross hipped bay; these form the T-plan central corridor. The east elevation of the gabled front bay reveals a simple molded wooden cornice with shallow eaves. The moderately pitched roof line is close raked with a pair of cornice returns. A small arched slatted window provides ventilation to the attic above the ball room. The windows are single hung and paired adjacently in four sets with 12/12 multi-pane glazing. The cross hipped bay reveals where six continuous small ribbon windows (now bricked and boarded) were originally located. A small window that broke from the other six ribbon windows was also bricked near the original Lions Club building plaque. The pro shop entry doors, identical to the primary elevation doors/transom windows, were added in 1989. However, unlike the primary clubhouse elevation, the pro shop entry doors are embellished with unpedimented

---

<sup>3</sup> In general terms, each golf hole consists of three segments: a teeing area; a fairway; and a green. Of those components, the fairway — or the area of grass between the tee-box and the putting surface — represents the vast majority of the playing surface. For example, a hole that is 400 yards long and 30 yards wide would represent a total playing area of 12,000 square yards. Of that 12,000 square yards, approximately 9,600 — or 80% — would typically be fairway. When a hole experiences a change where the tee box and the green are reversed, that change affects roughly 20% of the hole's playing area. Since six holes at Lions Municipal have experienced this phenomenon, it would be fair to say that those holes only retain 80% of design integrity from 1954. When averaging the six reversed holes with the twelve that remain intact, the unchanged playing surface is calculated at 93%.



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

entablature and decorative pilasters. Next to the pro shop entry on the southeast corner are two single hung windows with 12/12 multi-pane glazing consistent with the window pairing on the side gabled front bay.

The south elevation looks out to the first and tenth tee boxes, facing the wooded golf cart path and golf cart staging area. When the clubhouse was built in 1930, the gabled entry portico on the south elevation- identical to the ballroom portico on the side gabled front bay- led to the lounge and pro shop. Renovations in 1989 included enclosure of the south portico with wooden base boards and installation of seven smaller single hung 8/8 multi-pane glazing windows. Today the south portico is used as a starter's window. Unlike the primary elevation, the south elevation roof line is cross hipped. The windows are single hung and paired adjacently in three sets with 12/12 multi pane glazing; the fourth set was enclosed with brick during the 1989 renovations.

The heavily-wooded west elevation faces the tenth fairway and the practice range. Large heritage oaks provide ample shade to this elevation. While the overall effect of the west clubhouse elevation endures, this side of the building has seen the most modification. The side gabled front bay originally had two sets of paired single hung windows with 12/12 multi-pane glazing and one single small window. The 1989 renovations included removal of one paired window set in the center, boarding of the small window to the right, and an addition of a window air conditioning unit. The west elevation of the gabled front bay reveals a simple molded wooden cornice with shallow eaves. The moderately pitched roof line is close raked with a pair of cornice returns. A small arched slatted window provides ventilation to the attic above the meeting room. Of the four building elevations, the cross hipped west bay is least symmetrical with regards to placement of windows and doors. A pair of single hung windows with 12/12 multi-pane glazing and one of the entry doors are extant. The bracketed eaves on the entry doors have been dismantled. The most significant change to the cross hipped west bay elevation is the continuous shed roof porch addition, along with a new set of paired doors with glass panes and transom windows. The porch roof addition is supported by spindled columns and balustrade atop a poured concrete slab. An additional door and a single hung window with 12/12 multi-pane glazing were also added to the dining room and corridor during 1989. Two smaller paired windows with nine pane glazing were enclosed with brick on the far southwest corner of the cross hipped west elevation.

## **20. Keeper's Quarters, Contributing Building** *(Photos 65 and 66)*

The Keeper's Quarters were built between 1938 – 39 with funds and labor from the WPA and City of Austin. Design of this one-bedroom cottage is attributed to Austin architect Charles Henry Page. The quarters are located next to the Maintenance Barn to the south of the Clubhouse behind the eighteenth green. The asymmetrical cottage is clad in hand-cut native limestone blocks. The gabled composition shingle roof features a rustic limestone rock chimney on the right. The front elevation reveals exposed raftering on the low pitched roof with shallow eaves and extended bracketed eave over the wooden door on the right side of the elevation. A small concrete patio fronts half of this elevation. Two sets of paired single hung 6/6 multi-pane glazing windows are supported by heavy cut limestone sills and topped with heavy cut limestone lentils. A bedroom was added to the left of the front elevation, replacing the wooden sleeping porch. Like the original cottage, this addition was also constructed of wood with three 6/6 multi-pane windows and a low pitched roof with exposed raftering. The west side elevation shows a pair of single hung 6/6 multi-pane windows and one single hung 6/6 multi-pane window. The cut limestone lentils and sills are replicated on all windows. The rear elevation to the south has been altered with additions made after 1937. The Keeper's Quarters is a fine early example of rustic Modern Architecture and Depression-era craftsmanship.

## **21. Maintenance Building, Contributing Building** *(Figure 8 and Photos 67 – 70)*

The Maintenance Building was constructed during 1938 – 39, as per a bronze WPA Administration plaque on the west elevation. Design of the building is attributed to Austin architect Charles Henry Page. The building was used to store equipment and tools for the daily upkeep of the golf course. Like the nearby Keepers Quarters, the Maintenance

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Building is also clad in hand-cut native limestone blocks and features a gabled sheet metal roof with an extremely low slope to the south elevation extending four feet above the foundation. The east elevation has a large metal retracting door above which the pediment is painted wood siding. The south elevation reveals exposed raftering on a low-pitched roof line with shallow eaves. Six recessed single hung glass paned windows are arranged symmetrically, supported by heavy cut limestone sills and topped with heavy cut limestone lentils. The west elevation is identical to the east elevation with a large wooden sliding door and painted wood siding on the pediment. The foreshortened load-bearing wall on the south elevation consists of hand-cut limestone blocks. The handsomely constructed Maintenance Building is exemplary early rustic Modern Architecture.

**22 – 24. Storm Shelters, Contributing Structure** (*Photos 71 – 83*)

Three storm shelters are located strategically around the golf course to provide shelter from thunderstorms. The shelters were completed with WPA-funded labor in 1938-1939; their design is attributed to Austin architect Charles Henry Page. While not identical, each of the three Storm Shelters is open-aired, constructed of native field limestone and equipped with permanent benches. The low pitched gabled roofs are composition shingle with floors of poured concrete. The shelters' most unique feature is large ocular windows. These structures are notable examples of Depression-era WPA architecture and craftsmanship.

**25. Entry Gate Piers, Contributing Structure** (*Photos 84 and 85*)

Labor to erect entry gate piers was funded by the WPA and the work was completed in 1938-1939. Design of the entry gate piers is attributed to Austin architect Charles Henry Page in 1938. The rustic limestone piers are constructed of native field limestone. The right pier is arranged geometrically with three projecting courses of stone blocks rapping around a central pier. The left pier, by contrast, is foreshortened and less ornate. Both piers are connected to rock retaining walls that frame the perimeter of the property entrance. Smaller limestone rock piers are located at each segment of the retaining wall. While the right pier remains intact, a dislodged chunk of the left pier is now located several yards away. The entry piers are good examples of the Depression-era architecture and craftsmanship that characterizes WPA parks and recreation structures.

**26. Lion Statue, Contributing Object** (*Figures 7 and 11 and Photo 86*)

A commemorative plaque and cast concrete Lion Statue, donated and installed in 1937 by the Austin Lions Club, is located on the practice putting green outside the clubhouse.

**Noncontributing Features**

**27. Entrance Road, Noncontributing structure**

An asphalt entrance road was installed. No date.

**28. Parking Lot, Noncontributing structure.**

An asphalt parking lot was installed for parking. No date.

**29. Picnic Tables, Noncontributing structure**

Several picnic tables were installed behind the ninth green. No date.

**30. Pump House, Noncontributing building**

A replacement Pump House was constructed in 2002 on the 13<sup>th</sup> hole.



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

**31. Service Entry Road, Noncontributing structure**

An asphalt service entry road was installed. No date.

**32. Maintenance Shed, Noncontributing structure**

A new metal storage shed was constructed in the 1980s.

**33. Diesel Pump Station, Noncontributing structure**

A new diesel pump station was installed near the Keepers Quarters in 2002.

**34. Open Car Port, Noncontributing structure**

A Car Port was installed behind the old Maintenance Building. No date.

**35 - 36. Restrooms, Noncontributing structures**

Two permanent restrooms were installed on the course in 2002 between the 6<sup>th</sup> green (#35) and 7<sup>th</sup> tee and near the 16<sup>th</sup> tee (#36).

**37. Cart Path, Noncontributing structure**

Paved cart paths throughout course were added during renovations in 1975 and 1978.

**Demolished Buildings and Structures**

**Two Room Rock House:** A two room rock house was originally located on the property. The simple house of limestone rock featured four windows, a middle door and a gabled composition shingle roof. In 1924 the house was renovated and used by the Lions Club. It was demolished in 1930 to make way for the new clubhouse.

**Starter's Hut:** The Starter's Hut was built during 1938-1939 and razed during the early 1960s. Constructed of limestone, the hut had a gabled wood shake roof with an entry and window opening.

**Negro Lounge:** In late 1950, Lions Municipal became the first racially integrated golf course in the south and a "negro lounge" was constructed south of the clubhouse. This small concrete structure was built in 1951 at a cost of \$2,999. The lounge featured a large wooden sliding door and a flat roof stacked upon exposed raftering. There were no windows. A small bathroom was attached to the right of the lounge. (*Figure 9*)

**Caddy Shack:** A small "caddy pen" was located east of the eighteenth green, about fifty yards from the clubhouse.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Hole Numbers		Yardage		Shape		Noteworthy Changes
2015	1954	2015 (total 6,001)	1954 (total 6,251)	2015	1954	
1	10	369	311	Dogleg right	Straight	1975: tee box moved south; fairway bent sharply to the right; green relocated
2	12	505	511	Straight	Straight	
3	13	400	445	Straight	Straight	
4	11	155	160	Straight	Straight	1978: hole direction reversed and green moved
5	14	375	393	Dogleg left	Dogleg left	
6	15	380	399	Dogleg right	Dogleg right	
7	16	161	156	Straight	Straight	
8	17	445	487	Double dogleg	Double dogleg	
9	18	370	350	Dogleg left	Dogleg left	1975: modified shape of hole and green location 1991: returned to original 1954 design
10	1	295	329	Straight	Straight	1975: water feature added
11	2	325	385	Dogleg right	Dogleg right	
12	6	500	505	Straight	Dogleg right	1975: reversed direction; green moved; water feature added
13	5	161	145	Straight	Straight	1975: reversed direction; green moved
14	4	525	520	Slight dogleg right	Straight	1975: reversed direction; green moved
15	3	139	190	Straight	Straight	1975: reversed direction; green moved
16	7	403	427	Straight	Straight	
17	8	183	199	Straight	Straight	
18	9	310	339	Straight	Straight	

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

## Statement of Significance

*“It is proposed to have a modern up-to-date golf course  
where all citizens of Austin interested in golfing can play...”<sup>4</sup>*

Lions Municipal Golf Course (“Muny”), the first municipal golf course in Austin, was established in 1924 by members of the Austin Lions Club who envisioned a modern, inclusive golf experience. A Lions Club association executed a lease with the University of Texas on May 31, 1924, for a portion of the Brackenridge Tract in West Austin. In 1936, they transferred the eighteen-hole course and clubhouse to the City of Austin. While Muny’s course layout has evolved alongside the game of golf, the property retains its historical integrity and character. The renowned American golf course architect A.W. Tillinghast consulted at Lions Municipal in 1936. Funding and labor from the Works Progress Administration program led to course improvements and new buildings in 1937-39. Many notable golfers have played at Muny including World Golf Hall of Famers Ben Hogan, Bryon Nelson, and Tom Kite. A fourth World Golf Hall of Fame member, Ben Crenshaw, credits the course as instrumental in his development. Lions Municipal Golf Course, then, is part of Austin’s golf legacy.

Muny is also part of a broader, national story of social and cultural developments around race relations. In late 1950 – following the Supreme Court’s decision in *Sweatt v. Painter* but well before *Brown v Board of Education* – Muny quietly became the first desegregated municipal golf course in the southern United States. African Americans routinely played at Muny thereafter. In July 1953, Joe Louis (former heavyweight-boxing champion and, at that time, golf’s ambassador to black America) played at Muny. The desegregation of Muny and then other local facilities during 1950 – 1954 occurred without conflict and with minimal public debate, in contrast to the hostile resistance of many communities in the South. Litigation arising from other southern cities demonstrated that (outside of the events in Austin) meaningful changes in the desegregation of city-owned golf courses would only happen after *Brown* was decided in 1954. Through this legal lens, the desegregation of Muny reflects enlightened aspects of our national culture and history before the advent of the post-*Brown* modern Civil Rights movement.

The property is nominated to the National Register at the national level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Social History. The property is nominated at the statewide level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Social History. The property is nominated at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment and Recreation.

---

## Statements of Support Summary (see pages 71-83 for statements)

A number of national experts, prominent individuals, and one national golf organization have formally supported the nomination of Lions Municipal Golf Course to the National Register. Letters and statements validating the property’s national significance to civil rights history have come from:

1. Ben Crenshaw, the two time Masters Champ and member of the World Golf Hall of Fame;

---

<sup>4</sup> "Lions Club to Build Municipal Golfing Course: Regents Consent to Locate Links on Varsity Land," *Austin Statesman*, April 16 1924.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

2. Marvin Dawkins, Professor of Sociology, University of Miami, co-author of *African American Golfers during the Jim Crow Era* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000);
3. Lane Demas, Associate Professor of History, Central Michigan, *The Game of Privilege: An African American History of Golf* (under contract, University of North Carolina Press, John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture);
4. Professor Glenda Gilmore, the C. Vann Woodward Chair in History at Yale University;
5. Renea Hicks, prominent constitutional and civil rights lawyer and former Solicitor, Office of the Attorney General, State of Texas;
6. Professor Jacqueline Jones, Chair of the History Department and Walter Prescott Webb Chair in History at the University of Texas, Austin;
7. Professor Sanford Levinson, the prominent constitutional scholar and W. St. John Garwood Chair at the University of Texas Law School;
8. Robert J. Robertson, author of *Fair Ways: How Six Black Golfers Won Civil Rights in Beaumont, Texas* (Texas A&M Press 2005);
9. Professor Paul Stekler, the prominent documentary film maker (Two Peabody Awards; two films for *Eyes on the Prize II*) and Chair of the Radio/Television/Film Department at the University of Texas, Austin;
10. The United States Golf Association.

The statement of Professor Gilmore squarely places the desegregation of Muny in the context of the “birth of the civil rights movement” and the “long movement for civil rights” before *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955. Professor Jones shows Muny’s desegregation from the perspective of the marginalized laborers and caddies residing in the historically black community of Clarksville near the course. She argues that Muny’s desegregation was a source of “pride and hope” for them showing the desire of African Americans to “partake of all the rights and privileges in American life” and obtain equal treatment as a “customer, not as a laborer or server” at Muny well before they could “ride without restriction on a bus, sit at the lunch counter, or share a public drinking fountain” perhaps anywhere in the South. Mr. Hicks notes that the desegregation was achieved without a court order and stresses the non-violent and peaceful nature of the desegregation, as do several others of our experts including Professors Stekler and Levinson. Professor Robertson, along with Professor Gilmore, emphasizes the grass roots nature of the effort to desegregate Muny. Professor Demas, currently writing a book on the history of African Americans in golf, confirms the finding of Professor Dawkins that Muny was the first municipal course in the former confederacy to desegregate and concludes the course is of “immense historical value.” These scholarly sources confirm both golf legend Ben Crenshaw’s and the USGA’s description of the desegregation as a “milestone” for the course and the game of golf.

---

Lions Municipal Golf Course was established in 1924 by Austin Lions Club members with a vision for a modern, inclusive municipal golf course. The Lions Club chartered an organization of their members (known as the Austin Municipal Golf and Amusement Association) to handle fundraising and development.<sup>5</sup> On May 31, 1924, a lease for a portion of the University of Texas-owned Brackenridge Tract in West Austin was executed between the Board of

---

<sup>5</sup> "Austin Golf Club Is Granted Charter," *Austin Statesman*, May 28 1924.

## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Regents and the Association.<sup>6</sup> Lions Municipal was the first municipal golf course and clubhouse in Austin<sup>7</sup> and would remain the only city-owned course until July 1949 when the “North Side” Municipal Golf Course opened on the grounds of the old Austin Country Club.<sup>8</sup> Opening in 1924, Lions Municipal was fifth among the early municipal courses in Texas. Brackenridge Park Golf Course in San Antonio, the first eighteen-hole municipal course in Texas, opened in 1916.<sup>9</sup> Next were three municipal courses in Dallas: Oak Grove, in 1923, then Tennison Park and Stevens Park in 1924.<sup>10</sup>

B. F. Rowe, recognized as the first Lions Club member to propose the municipal golf course, volunteered to oversee its design and construction.<sup>11</sup> By the fall of 1924 the heavily wooded tract had been converted into an attractive nine-hole golf course.<sup>12</sup> Construction of the back nine holes completed the course by September 1925.<sup>13</sup> The course clubhouse opened in 1930.<sup>14</sup> The clubhouse architect was Edwin C. Kreisle,<sup>15</sup> who also designed noteworthy residences in Central Texas.<sup>16</sup> He is credited with design of approximately 5,000 houses in Austin alone and the first local use of an attached garage.<sup>17</sup>

On December 17, 1936, the Austin Municipal Golf and Amusement Association transferred their lease for the course to the City of Austin (*Figure 10*).<sup>18</sup> The Association also deeded to the City a brick veneer clubhouse (including furniture and fixtures such as a piano, soda water equipment, a beer dispenser, and merchandise), a two-room dwelling for the groundskeeper, lawn and fairway mowers, a mule shed, and two mules.<sup>19</sup> Ever since the Association was dissolved on April 21, 1938, Lions Municipal Golf Course has been known by several names but often summarized with the nickname “Lions Muny”<sup>20</sup> or, more succinctly, “Muny.” After assuming the lease from the Austin Lions Club, the City of Austin initiated a series of improvements to the course and grounds in 1936 – 39.

Albert Warren “Tilly” Tillinghast (1876 – 1942), eminent golf course architect, contributed to course enhancements at Muny. Tillinghast is best known for his work at host courses for professional major championships: Bethpage Black, Winged Foot Golf Club, and Baltusrol Golf Club, a National Historic Landmark.<sup>21</sup> Tillinghast began a national tour of golf courses in the summer of 1935 as a consultant for the Professional Golfers’ Association (PGA) of America. He

---

<sup>6</sup> *University of Texas Board of Regents Minutes* (University of Texas: May 31, 1924).

<sup>7</sup> A private golf club, the Austin Country Club, was founded in 1899.

<sup>8</sup> Morris Williams, “North Side Municipal Golf Course Opens,” *Austin American*, July 24 1949.

<sup>9</sup> J.C. King and Frances G. Trimble, “GOLF,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, (2010) (accessed June 23, 2015). Brackenridge Park was designed by notable course architect A.W. Tillinghast.

<sup>10</sup> “Early history of golf in Texas,” *Dallas Morning News*, March 8 2010.

<sup>11</sup> “Final Services Held for Rowe,” *Austin Statesman*, January 17 1952.

<sup>12</sup> “New Municipal Golf Course to Be Opened for Play Saturday,” *Austin Statesman*, October 31 1924.

<sup>13</sup> “Golf Course Now Complete: Lions Will Celebrate This Morning on the Links,” *American-Statesman*, September 6 1925.

<sup>14</sup> “Clubhouse and Golf Course Result of Prolonged Effort,” *Austin American*, January 16 1930; “Lion Golfers to Hold Meet Sunday,” *Austin American*, January 4 1930.

<sup>15</sup> “Lions Will Open Clubhouse Bids: How New Club for Austin Lions Will Look,” *Austin Statesman*, August 28 1929.

<sup>16</sup> “Kreisle Plans Model Home,” *Austin American*, June 12 1927.

<sup>17</sup> *Austin: Its Architects and Architecture (1836 - 1986)* (Austin Chapter American Institute of Architects, 1986).

<sup>18</sup> “Muny from Lions to City,” *Austin Statesman*, December 30 1936.

<sup>19</sup> Alan W. Ford, *Historical Notes: Austin Lions Municipal Golf Course* (Austin Downtown Lions Club, 1936).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Geoff Shackelford, “The Best Holes Ever Designed by Winged Foot Architect A.W. Tillinghast,” *Sports Illustrated*, June 13 2006.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

was hired by his friend and PGA President George Jacobus to provide architectural recommendations (free of charge) on golf courses where active PGA members were retained.<sup>22</sup> Over two years, Tillinghast would make two complete loops of the United States and would visit over 500 courses.<sup>23</sup> The Austin golf community highly anticipated Tillinghast's "suggestions as to how local courses may be improved for the average player – the chap who habitually negotiates the distance in the 90's."<sup>24</sup>

He consulted at Lions Municipal in December 1936, praising the course as "very prettily situated" and suggesting changes to tees and greens on the third, seventh, and eighth holes.<sup>25</sup> Tillinghast is said to have "emboldened" the seventh hole (now sixteenth and still a signature hole, famous for perplexing Ben Hogan) by moving the green up a hill and adding space for a water hazard.<sup>26</sup> In a letter to PGA President Jacobus, Tillinghast described his visit to Lions Municipal along with PGA member Tom Penick:

"There I was met by City Manager Guiton Morgan, the city engineer J.E. Motherall and Walter Seaholm, also of the City's engineering department. After discussing the proper fairway irrigation system with them, I investigated particularly certain holes, which they find necessary to improve and at the same time open up additional lengths. The course at present measures but 5737 yards. I recommended a new teeing ground and green for the two hundred yard third hole; a new green back of the present fourth, lengthening that hole 40 yards to 470; a new teeing ground and green for the seventh, lengthening the hole some 30 yards to 435; sketches for contouring the sixteenth green and drawing pits into the greens of the seventeen and eighteen. The city officials expressed their great satisfaction and heartily commended the assistance of the P.G.A., coming to them through their professional."<sup>27</sup>

Tillinghast was inducted to the World Golf Hall of Fame on July 13, 2015, at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.<sup>28</sup>

Tillinghast's design suggestions and other improvements to the course were made during 1937 – 39 with support of funds and labor from the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) program. The WPA was the largest and most ambitious American New Deal agency, employing millions for public works projects. By 1936, the WPA had allotted \$10.5 million in emergency relief funds to build and improve municipal golf courses across the nation.<sup>29</sup> In April 1937, the WPA administrator in San Antonio announced the allotment of \$9,568 in federal funds for new fairways and a sprinkler system at Lions Municipal; these funds were matched with \$13,319 from the City of Austin. The project

---

<sup>22</sup> "PGA Course Service" [http://www.tillinghast.net/Tillinghast/Tour\\_Service.html](http://www.tillinghast.net/Tillinghast/Tour_Service.html) (accessed June 21, 2015).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Morris Williams, "Here's Golf For You," *Austin American*, December 8 1935.

<sup>25</sup> "Muny from Lions to City."

<sup>26</sup> Jim Apfelbaum, "'Muny': 85 Years and Counting at Austin's Lions Municipal Golf Course," (2009).

<http://usga.org/news/2009/November/A-Texas-Muny-For-Everyone>.

<sup>27</sup> Personal correspondence from A.W. Tillinghast to President of the PGA (January 7, 1936). Golf Club Atlas: Golf Course Architecture forum, <http://golfclubatlas.com/forum/index.php?topic=12519.325;wap2>

<sup>28</sup> Mike McAllister, "Class of 2015 Hall of Famers receive surprise calls," (PGA Tour.com: 2014).

<sup>29</sup> "Uncle Sam Spends Ten Millions for Muny Golf Layouts," *Lubbock Morning Avalanche*, December 18 1936.



## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

was to provide employment for 119 workers.<sup>30</sup> The WPA constructed and enhanced course fairways on 2,600 acres in seventeen Texas cities by 1938.<sup>31</sup>

WPA funds and labor also supported construction in 1938 - 39 of the Entry Gate Piers, Storm Shelters, Keepers Quarters, and Maintenance Building on the Lions Municipal property.<sup>32</sup> Design of these structures is attributed to local architect Charles Henry Page. Page is recognized as a Director of the Lions Municipal Golf Club on a commemorative plaque on the Lion Statue installed in 1937 outside the clubhouse (*Figure 11*). In 1933, Page and Tom Penick chaired a Lions Club committee to install a paved street connecting Enfield Road and Lions Municipal.<sup>33</sup> The Civil Works Administration and the city park board funded Page's development of Zilker Park<sup>34</sup> and other Austin-area improvements, including allocation of \$4,400 in 1934 to complete construction of the Lions Municipal entry road. Page also designed the Austin Country Club clubhouse, now the Historic Hancock Recreation Center (National Register of Historic Places, 2014) as well as the Littlefield Building and the Brown Building in downtown Austin. He was the founder of Page Brothers, Architects; the firm was active from 1898 until his death in 1957. C.H. Page is known for an illustrious career designing more than fifteen courthouses (including the Travis County Courthouse and U.S. Federal Courthouse in Austin) and 300 public schools.<sup>35</sup>

### Local History and Golf Legends

The University of Texas golf team competed in a Southwest Conference tournament for the first time at Lions Municipal in May 1928.<sup>36</sup> Inaugural coach of the Longhorns golf team, Tom Penick earned two conference titles during his 1927 - 30 tenure.<sup>37</sup> He also served as the head golf professional at Lions Municipal from 1927 – 1961. He was succeeded at the University of Texas by his brother Harvey Penick, the legendary golf coach who earned twenty NCAA conference titles during 1931-63.<sup>38</sup> Lions Municipal would remain a favorite hometown course for the UT Golf Team. In April 1948, the UT golfers voted to play home matches with other Southwest Conference schools, as well as their own weekly challenge matches, at the Lions Municipal course.<sup>39</sup>

The Keepers Quarters housed full-time course superintendent Roy Kizer and his wife Viola from 1937<sup>40</sup> until Roy's retirement in 1973.<sup>41</sup> In the small one-bedroom cottage located behind the eighteenth green, the couple raised seven boys (Edwin, R.D., Hubery Ray, Gib, Milton, Emil, and Joe) and one girl, Suzie. All became golfers. Edwin Kizer also worked as greenskeeper at Austin municipal course Morris Williams and elsewhere; his family remains friends

---

<sup>30</sup> "Austin Granted WPA Golf Fund," *Austin Statesman*, April 14 1937.

<sup>31</sup> "WPA Golf Courses Brighten Acres of Landscape in Texas Towns," *Lubbock Avalanche Journal*, April 3 1938.

<sup>32</sup> Edwin Kizer, interviewed by Charles Page (June 19, 2015). A bronze WPA Administration plaque also appears on the Maintenance Building.

<sup>33</sup> "Austin Lions Will Seek Paved Street to Links," *Austin Statesman*, June 29 1933.

<sup>34</sup> "Page Architect for Building: Long-Time Experience in City of Austin," *Austin American-Statesman*, July 29 1937.

<sup>35</sup> *Austin: Its Architects and Architecture (1836 - 1986)*.

<sup>36</sup> "Conference Golf Teams Open Tourney," *Austin Statesman*, May 14 1928.

<sup>37</sup> TexasSports.com, "Texas Golf History", TexasSports.com [http://grfx.cstv.com/photos/schools/tex/sports/m-golf/auto\\_pdf/golf-history.pdf](http://grfx.cstv.com/photos/schools/tex/sports/m-golf/auto_pdf/golf-history.pdf) (2015).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Morris Williams, "Longhorns Choose Muny," *Austin American*, April 4 1948.

<sup>40</sup> "Muny Grounds Man Still 'Temporary'," *Austin Statesman*, July 5 1950.

<sup>41</sup> "Golf Notes, Ol' Roy's Gone Fishing," *Austin American-Statesman*, February 4 1973.

## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

with Ben Crenshaw.<sup>42</sup> Gib played along with Randy Petri on the 1957 Austin High 4-A championship golf team (*Figure 12*), helping to earn Austin's first state title in any sport. Gib Kizer won the 1960 Men's City Championship, as did R.D. Kizer in 1962 and 1963. Roy Kizer's legacy was such that memorial plaques at four Austin courses recognize his contributions (*Figure 13*). In 1994, the City of Austin Parks and Recreation honored Roy Kizer by naming a new municipal course in southeast Austin after him, believed to be the first golf course in the U.S. named after a superintendent.<sup>43</sup>

Lions Municipal has hosted the Firecracker amateur tournament every year in July since 1945. Notable past champions include: Bill Penn (Texas Golf Hall of Fame), Randy Petri (PGA Tour), Ben Crenshaw (World Golf Hall of Fame), Tom Kite (World Golf Hall of Fame), and Omar Uresti (PGA Tour).

Muny has hosted (and drawn praise from) numerous distinguished golfers. In 1948, World Golf Hall of Famer Byron Nelson played at Lions Municipal and declared it to be "one of the finest courses in this part of the country".<sup>44</sup> Another World Golf Hall of Famer, Ben Hogan, played with Harvey Penick (against Ed Hopkins and Morris Williams Jr.) in an exhibition match at Muny in 1950.<sup>45</sup> During the match, it is said that Hogan stood on the tee box of the daunting seventh hole (currently #16) and asked "Where's the fairway?"<sup>46</sup> He went on to birdie this now-famous Par 4, known as 'Hogan's Hole'. After the match, Hogan apparently signed a few autographs and commented that the course was "so good, it makes you think you're not in Texas."<sup>47</sup> One month later, Hogan would win the U.S. Open at Merion, his fourth major championship. In 1950, a local news article referred to the high praise that Nelson and Hogan ("two of Texas' most famous professional stars") had bestowed on the municipal course. It is interesting to note that both Hogan and Nelson were born in 1912, raised in Ft. Worth, and spent their youth caddying and playing at the Glen Garden Country Club.<sup>48</sup> Both men are considered among the best players in the history of the game.

World Golf Hall of Famer Ben Crenshaw grew up in Austin, just blocks from Lions Municipal where he honed his game as a youth.<sup>49</sup> He was the youngest player to win the Austin Men's City Championship in 1967, earning two more victories in 1968 and 1969 before retiring from the event. He played golf at the University of Texas, supporting team championships in 1971 and 1972. Crenshaw is the only player to win the NCAA individual championship in three consecutive years (1971 – 73).<sup>50</sup> In 1972 he shared the honors with teammate Tom Kite.<sup>51</sup> Winner of nineteen PGA Tour events and two-time Masters Tournament champion in 1984 and 1995, Crenshaw still returns regularly to play at Muny where he shares the course record at sixty-one.<sup>52</sup>

Crenshaw has stated that he played his best golf in high school and college, and that his best stretch of swings occurred at age seventeen at Muny's Firecracker Open:

<sup>42</sup> Beth Geraci, "The Kizer Touch", *Golfdom*, December 12 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Del Lemon, "Kizer course should please environmentalists," *Austin American-Statesman*, November 6 1994.

<sup>44</sup> Williams, "Longhorns Choose Muny."

<sup>45</sup> Apfelbaum.

<sup>46</sup> Kyle Dalton, "Lions Municipal Golf Course in Austin: Well known course, unknown designer," *GolfNow*, December 3 2001.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Randall Mell, "Byron Nelson, Ben Hogan And The Legends Of Texas Golf," (2012).

<sup>49</sup> Doug Smith, "Legends of Lions will be honored Saturday," *Austin American-Statesman*, April 14 2010.

<sup>50</sup> "Crenshaw, Texas Win NCAA Golf Titles," *Daytona Beach Morning Journal*, June 28 1971.

<sup>51</sup> Jeff Williams, "Crenshaw, Mickelson share record: Golf legends are only two to win three D-I individual titles," (2012).

<sup>52</sup> Dalton.



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

“In the span of four holes, he either drove or narrowly missed three 350-plus-yard par-fours and started the streak by reaching a long par-five in two with a driver and a five-iron. ‘I’d never done that before nor since,’ Crenshaw said. ‘I’ll never forget those four holes. I shot a sixty-four that day and won the tournament by seven or eight.’”<sup>53</sup>

Tom Kite is another World Golf Hall of Famer who developed as a player at Lions Municipal.<sup>54</sup> After moving to Austin at age 13, he was Crenshaw’s friend and All-American teammate at the University of Texas where he was coached by Harvey Penick. Kite won nineteen events on the PGA Tour, including the 1992 U.S. Open, and played on seven U.S. Ryder Cup teams, serving as captain in 1997.

### Historic Desegregation at Lions Municipal

While Lions Municipal was formative in the evolution of golf in Texas, Muny was also the first public golf course in the South to desegregate. As such, the course played a pivotal role in the history of race relations in public recreational spaces. The story of Muny’s desegregation and its historical context strongly reverberates in our nation’s culture and democratic traditions.

African Americans, of course, helped construct Muny. A photograph from the private collection of Tinsley Penick (*Figure 14*) shows African American laborers clearing a fairway during course construction. This is not surprising given that the golf course was located less than a mile from Clarksville,<sup>55</sup> a historically black community built on plantation land given by Governor Elisha M. Pease to his emancipated slaves with the hope that they would remain near his mansion for further service.<sup>56</sup> African Americans also caddied at Muny (*Figure 15*). In the mid-to-late 1940s and early 1950s, General Marshall (now a retired African American educator but then a teenager; *Figure 16*) and his friend Dr. William Bacon (now a retired African American orthopedist living in Nashville) used to walk from their homes in the Clarksville neighborhood to caddie at Muny.<sup>57</sup> Neither General Marshall nor Dr. Bacon was allowed to play the course until Muny’s desegregation in late 1950.

In accordance with the “almost uniform practice” at public recreational facilities throughout the South during the Jim Crow era, Muny was racially segregated from its inception.<sup>58</sup> Despite African American participation in World War II, racial relations in the post-war South were still governed by the Supreme Court’s doctrine of “separate but equal” set

---

<sup>53</sup> Melanie Hauser, ed., *Under the Lone Star Flagstick: A Collection of Writings on Texas Golf and Golfers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997): 88.

<sup>54</sup> Smith. “Legends of Lions will be honored Saturday.”

<sup>55</sup> Clarksville is part of a historic district entered into the National Registry in 1976.

<sup>56</sup> John Henneberger, *Clarksville: A Short History and Historic Tour* (Austin: Clarksville Community Development Corporation, 1978).

<sup>57</sup> General Marshall, interviewed by Robert Ozer and Ken Tiemann (November 22, 2008): Marshall noted that he was paid 85 cents for eighteen holes or 50 cents for nine holes. He also had to pay 5 cents at the clubhouse to cover any medical costs if he was injured while caddying. He could carry two bags and get double the fee and frequently received tips. Also: William Bacon, interviewed by Robert Ozer (November 22, 2008).

<sup>58</sup> Robert McKay, “Segregation and Public Recreation,” *Virginia Law Review* 40, no. 697 (1954). The leading post-war case applying this well-established doctrine to a golf course was *Law v. Mayor and City Council of Baltimore*, 78 F. Supp., (District Ct. Maryland 1948). See also: George B. Kirsch, “Municipal Golf and Civil Rights in the United States, 1910-1965,” *Journal of African American History* 92, (2007).

## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

down in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).<sup>59</sup> Before late 1950, Austin's African American golfers were relegated to places like Rosewood Playground in East Austin where there were complaints of golf balls hitting children as well as breaking windows and windshields.<sup>60</sup>

In cases such as *Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 U.S. 629 (1950) legal theories developed by Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP helped to substantially erode racial segregation in the context of higher education.<sup>61</sup> The *Sweatt* case did not explicitly overrule *Plessy*, but the Supreme Court ruled that separate facilities provided to Herman Sweatt at the University of Texas Law School did not provide him educational opportunities equal to those of white students.<sup>62</sup> Because the case originated in Austin, the *Sweatt* decision received extensive press coverage, as did developments at the University in the aftermath of the *Sweatt* and *McLaurin* cases (*Figure 17*).<sup>63</sup>

It is in the shadow of *Sweatt v. Painter* that early events leading to the desegregation of Lions Municipal Golf Course must be viewed. After *Sweatt*, probably in late 1950, African Americans began quietly playing at Muny.<sup>64</sup> During this time period, Mayor Taylor Glass recalled rushing to City Hall to consult with two other council members (Mayor Pro Tem Bill Drake and Will Johnson) about whether to arrest two young African Americans who had walked on to play Lions Municipal Golf Course (*Figure 18*).<sup>65</sup> Together they decided to let them play, and the two youths completed their round without interference or arrest.<sup>66</sup> This round marked the desegregation of Muny, well over three years before *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

---

<sup>59</sup> Jim Crow enshrined in *Plessy* "put the authority of the state or city in the voice of the street-car conductor, the railway brakeman, the bus driver, the theater usher, and also the voice of the hoodlum of the public parks and playgrounds. They gave free rein and the majesty of the law to mass aggressions that might otherwise have been curbed, blunted, or deflected." C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (Oxford University Press, 1955): 107-108.

<sup>60</sup> *Minutes of the City Council* (Council Chamber, City Hall: City of Austin, Texas, September 7, 1950). City Council Minutes are on file at the Austin History Center.

<sup>61</sup> Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice; the History of Brown V. Board of Education* (Knopf, 1976). at pp. 256-84; James T Patterson and William W Freehling, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy* (Oxford University Press, 2001): 16-19.

<sup>62</sup> On the same day, two other case decisions also weakened Jim Crow. *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, Et Al., 339, (U.S. Supreme Court 1950) overturned policies segregating classrooms, libraries and other facilities at the graduate school of the University of Oklahoma. *Henderson v. United States* 339, (1950) declared that under ICC rules blacks must have equal access to dining facilities on railway cars.

<sup>63</sup> "Sweatt UT Plea Upheld," *Austin American*, June 6 1950; Lyman Jones, "Two Negroes Enter UT," *Austin Statesman*, June 7 1950; "UT Approves 3 Negroes for Immediate Entrance," *Austin American*, June 7 1950. See also: Almetris Marsh Duren, "Overcoming: A History of Black Integration at the University of Texas at Austin," (1979).

<sup>64</sup> "Negro Golfers Plans Ordered," *Austin Statesman*, March 12 1951. Press accounts suggest that African Americans were playing at Lions Municipal in the second half of 1950. A local news article in early March 1951 reported a recent discussion between City officials with regards to plans for African Americans' use of the west side municipal course, i.e. Muny. They also noted that "Negroes have been playing on the Lake Austin Boulevard course for several months. Reportedly they have been denied use of the municipal Hancock course...". See also: "Negro Golfers to Get Lounge," *Austin Statesman*, May 18 1951.

<sup>65</sup> One of the two African American youths who played that day was Alvin Propps. Dr. William Bacon, interviewed by Robert Ozer (October 30, 2015) was a caddie at Muny at the time. Bacon indicates that Propps was actually arrested but the Mayor instructed the police to let him go. Roy Kizer, the groundskeeper at Muny, initially caught Propps. Propps became a highly regarded African American golfer in Austin. "Alvin Propps No. 1 Negro Golfer Again," *Austin American Statesman*, January 16 1961: 16. Apfelbaum, Jim, "Muny": 85 Years and Counting at Austin's Lions Municipal Golf Course, USGA Website, November 19, 2009. It should be noted that Propps was about nine years old at the time of his now-historic round.

<sup>66</sup> Mayor Taylor Glass, interviewed by Joe O'Neal (May 23, 1974): 9-10. Interview transcripts are on file at Austin History Center.

## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

According to interviews with former African American caddies, blacks could play freely thereafter at Muny.<sup>67</sup> The course regularly attracted black golfers from the region and across Texas.<sup>68</sup> Joe Louis (*Figures 19 and 20*), the former heavyweight-boxing champion and golf's ambassador to black America, played the course in July 1953, shooting near par.<sup>69</sup>

In the spring of 1951, African American community leaders such as Dr. Everett Givens and Henry Pryor wanted support from Mayor Taylor Glass (1949-51) and the City Council for construction of a public golf course for African Americans in East Austin.<sup>70</sup> However, Councilmember Emma Long thought it was not cost effective to build a separate course for African American golfers when the city had other pressing demands on its budget. Instead, she suggested in a council session on April 5, 1951 (*Figure 21*), that African American golfers play on the city's existing courses.<sup>71</sup> By not constructing a separate course for blacks in East Austin, the Council effectively ratified Muny's desegregation.

Despite the integration of the course, a separate lounge or clubhouse was constructed for black golfers at Muny around June of 1951. That structure no longer stands, but council records, contractor bids, and newspaper articles allow us to pin down the approximate date of its construction and thereby provide further evidence for the date of the

---

It is important to note that in the transcribed interviews, Emma Long recalled that the desegregation took place during the term of Mayor Tom Miller (1933-49 or 1955-61). This is the case although during her June 3, 1981 interview with Anthony Orum, Long correctly dated the event squarely in Mayor Glass's term in 1950 or 1951. Orum, relying on his interview with Long, did not catch her mistaken recollection of Mayor Miller; in his book he referred to the desegregation events taking place during Mayor Miller's term when in fact they occurred during Mayor Glass's term. See Anthony M. Orum, *Power, Money and the People: The Making of Modern Austin* (Resource Publications, 1987): 213.

<sup>67</sup> It is unclear how long tee times were restricted for blacks after the desegregation. Del Lemon, "Remembering an era when city's golf facilities weren't open to all," *Austin American-Statesman*, February 24 2000.) quoted Doc Curry, a local African American golfer (now deceased), as saying black golfers teed off between 6:30-7 a.m. General Marshall indicates in his interview with Robert Ozer and Ken Tiemann (November 22, 2008) that any time restrictions – possibly for tee times only, not access to the course – that did occur did not last long. In an email to Tiemann on August 24, 2008, Marshall recalled that African Americans had access to the course every day without restriction. See also at p. A1: "Muny's Past Might Yield New Future, Backers Say," *Austin American-Statesman*, October 26 2008. William Bacon who also caddied at Muny while growing up corroborated that account. Phone interviews with Robert Ozer (November 22, 2008 and October 30, 2015). He recalls that after a period of about 90 days there were no restrictions on play and that African American golfers from Dallas and Houston often played on Sunday afternoon, not early in the morning. Bacon also noted that Doc Curry, a professor, didn't come to Austin until 1952 or 1953 and wasn't in Austin when the course was desegregated. Given that the February 2000 article appears to be somewhat inaccurate, it should be noted that another newspaper article mistakenly dated the desegregation of Muny in 1959 rather than the correct date of late 1950 as demonstrated herein: "Playing Through," *Austin American-Statesman*, February 26 1995.

<sup>68</sup> Del Lemon, "Science of Golf: Game a distraction, then satisfaction, to Curry," *Austin American-Statesman*, October 16 1994.

<sup>69</sup> Mark Batterson, "Joe Likes Show Biz But---'Pay Days Aren't as Big," *Austin Statesman*, August 1 1953; William Bacon, phone interview with Robert Ozer (November 22, 2008). Joe Louis became something of a "black golf ambassador" attracting black celebrities to the game, increasing its visibility among blacks, and fighting racially exclusionary practices by the white golf establishment. Marvin P Dawkins and Graham Charles Kinloch, *African American Golfers during the Jim Crow Era* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000): 65-84. See also: John H. Kennedy, *A Course of Their Own: A History of African American Golfers* (Bison, 2005): 65-81.

<sup>70</sup> *Minutes of the City Council* (September 7, 1950) and *Minutes of the City Council* (Council Chamber, City Hall: City of Austin, Texas, January 25, 1951).

<sup>71</sup> "Golf Course for Negroes Is Protested," *Austin Statesman*, April 6 1951. *Minutes of the City Council* (Council Chamber, City Hall: City of Austin, Texas, April 5, 1951).

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

desegregation of the course itself.<sup>72</sup> The existence of the clubhouse (*Figure 9*) is also established by interviews with Emma Long and by City Council minutes.<sup>73</sup> Interestingly, General Marshall (a Muny caddy and an Anderson High School sophomore in the spring of 1951) asserts that the separate lounge was not frequented by African American golfers: "We never accepted it...it went unused".<sup>74</sup> The Lounge was ultimately used as a storage shed until it was razed in 1989.

The relatively quiet manner in which Muny was desegregated without broadly publicized council action or debate reflected the desire of Austin's public officials to avoid a backlash in the white community.<sup>75</sup> In addition, Mayor Glass was close to the end of his term and could mostly avoid the political costs of the potentially controversial decision.<sup>76</sup> However, it should be noted that the desegregation of other public facilities in Austin also occurred well before *Brown v. Board of Education*.<sup>77</sup> In December 1951, the Austin public library system was integrated.<sup>78</sup> And in 1952, three "precedent-breaking Negro fireman" were appointed and assigned to an integrated fire station on Lydia Street.<sup>79</sup> This persistent pattern of desegregation of Austin's public facilities<sup>80</sup> in the early 1950s illustrates a city in the South of the old confederacy with an unusually progressive attitude on issues of race.

Other cities routinely fought desegregation of golf courses and other public accommodations even after *Brown*. Dates of court case decisions in Miami, Houston, Beaumont, Atlanta and Nashville all demonstrate that Austin was earlier than these jurisdictions in desegregating its golf course. Austin's lack of legal battles against integration was also unusual.

No case contrasts with the trajectory of Austin's desegregation more so than litigation that arose in Miami in the early 1950s. In the *Rice v. Arnold* case finally decided in 1952, the Florida Supreme Court affirmed the 'separate but equal'

---

<sup>72</sup> Austin City Council Resolution signed by Mayor Drake and dated June 8, 1951; "Rundell Low Bidder for 3 Shelters," *American-Statesman*, June 10 1951; "Contracts Due on Three Jobs," *American-Statesman*, June 10 1951; *Minutes of the City Council* (Council Chamber, City Hall: City of Austin, Texas, June 14, 1951).

<sup>73</sup> Emma Long, interviewed by Joe O'Neal (Austin History Center: June 10, 1974): 11. "They built this little clubhouse 20 X 18, cement blocks, for the blacks to use for changing clothes; for the black people who played at the Municipal golf course. I don't know how long they used that, but they were going to have a lounge and dressing rooms. And I guess it was built. I think we took contracts for it, and I guess I went along with it because I certainly thought that after all they needed a place to dress and I guess they'd be too timid to dress in the clubhouse." See also Emma Long, interviewed by Anthony Orum (Austin History Center: June 3, 1981): 7-8. "And they built them—about several feet from the clubhouse, they built a little house where they could dress."); *Minutes of the City Council* (Council Chamber, City Hall: City of Austin, Texas, July 3, 1952).

<sup>74</sup> General Marshall, interviewed by Ken Tiemann (June 16, 2015).

<sup>75</sup> One such backlash occurred in Beaumont. In the summer of 1954 after the decision in *Brown* and the desegregation of municipal courses in nearby Houston, the Mayor of Beaumont sought to open the Tyrell Park municipal golf course to blacks. He was forced to revoke his decision after community reaction. Robert J Robertson, *Fair Ways: How Six Black Golfers Won Civil Rights in Beaumont, Texas* (Texas A&M University Press, 2005): 84-89; Kirsch, "Municipal Golf and Civil Rights in the United States, 1910-1965," 384.

<sup>76</sup> "First Term Will Be Last, Mayor Glass Announces," *Austin Statesman*, February 7 1951.

<sup>77</sup> *Oliver Brown, et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka, et al.*, 347, (U.S. Supreme Court 1954).

<sup>78</sup> "City Council Opens Library to Negroes," *Austin Statesman*, December 27 1951.

<sup>79</sup> "13 Rookie Fireman Are Appointed; Group Includes Three Negroes," *Austin Statesman*, August 29 1952.

<sup>80</sup> The early desegregation of some public accommodations does not exonerate Austin from other policy decisions that were far from progressive. See "Austin Revealed: Civil Rights Stories," ed. KLRU Presents (<http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/shows/list/austin-texas-civil-rights/>).



## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

rationale used to allot use of a golf course in Miami to African Americans on only one day a week.<sup>81</sup> The U.S. Supreme Court vacated and remanded to the Florida Supreme Court for reconsideration in light of the *Sweatt* and *McLaurin* cases. On remand, the Florida Supreme Court affirmed its previous judgment by distinguishing golf courses from institutions of higher education. The Supreme Court did not disturb this result. Hence, both Florida's highest court and the United States Supreme Court were unwilling as a matter of law to integrate a municipal golf course in Florida at almost the same time that the Austin City Council integrated Muny voluntarily and without incident.<sup>82</sup>

Cases arising from Houston, Beaumont, and Atlanta demonstrate that – outside of the events in Austin – meaningful changes in the desegregation of municipal golf courses would only transpire after *Brown* was decided in 1954. In *Beal v. Holcombe*, the Mayor of Houston appealed to the Supreme Court in June 1952 with a case that allowed African American access to municipal golf facilities (although "preserving segregation").<sup>83</sup> The case was pending for almost two years until certiorari was denied on May 24, 1954, a little more than a week after the *Brown* decision.<sup>84</sup> Shortly after, the City of Houston integrated its three municipal golf courses because its city attorney believed that as "a practical matter" Houston's segregated facilities would not survive further judicial scrutiny.<sup>85</sup>

More than a year later, in September 1955, the Tyrell Park municipal golf course in Beaumont was desegregated pursuant to litigation brought in federal court earlier in the summer.<sup>86</sup> Atlanta continued the fight even longer, until November 7, 1955, when the Supreme Court in *Holmes v. City of Atlanta* finally put the issue squarely to rest.<sup>87</sup>

Even after the *Brown* and *Holmes* cases, court decisions indicate active resistance to integration across the South in the form of the transfer or leasing of municipal facilities to private golf clubs, or by opening municipal courses only to members of a secondary, private association that excluded African Americans.<sup>88</sup> Even other parts of Texas were slow

---

<sup>81</sup> *Rice v. Arnold*, 45 So. 2d 195 (Fla. 1950), judg. vacated, 340 U.S. 848 (1950), judg. of Fla. Cir. Ct. aff'd 54 So. 2d 114 (Fla. 1951), cert denied 342 U.S. 946 (1952).

<sup>82</sup> A result similar to the *Rice* case (though not directly referencing the *Sweatt* decision) was reached in a lower court decision arising out of Nashville at about the same time in 1952. *Hayes v. Crutcher*, 108, (Dist. Court, MD Tennessee 1952) in golf course case defendants required "while maintaining segregation, to afford equal facilities, apportioned to the need, to the segregated groups".

<sup>83</sup> *Beal v. Holcombe*, 193, (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1951). Cert. denied, 347 U.S. 974 (1954).

<sup>84</sup> McKay, "Segregation and Public Recreation." at p. 715.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* at p. 716, fn. 97; Robertson.

<sup>86</sup> *Fayson v. Beard*, 134, (Dist. Court, ED Texas 1955); Robertson, 155-63.

<sup>87</sup> *Holmes, et al. v. City of Atlanta, et al.*, 350, (1955). cert. granted and decision vacated 350 U.S. 879 (1955): post-Brown Supreme Court order eliminating segregation of municipal golf facilities. Discussing *Holmes*: "40 Years Ago: A Drive Down the Fairway for Integration," *New York Times*, November 5 1995. See also: "Desegregation Slowly But Surely Gaining New Ground," *New York Times*, November 18 1956: "Sixteen Southern cities have opened public golf courses to Negroes...in the past two years."

<sup>88</sup> *Simkins v. City of Greensboro*, 149, (Dist. Court, MD North Carolina 1957): municipality cannot avoid giving equal treatment to Blacks by leasing to private non-profit club. *Griffis v. City of Fort Lauderdale*, 104, (Fla: Supreme Court 1958): sale of public golf course to private golf association for adequate consideration did not violate 14th amendment rights even though course was under federal court decree to integrate. *Wesley v. City of Savannah, Georgia*, 294, (Dist. Court, SD Georgia 1969): city golf championship played on public course (but sponsored by private association that excluded blacks from play) violated Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 14th Amendment; See also: Dawkins and Kinloch, 137-52.

## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

to catch on. Former Travis County Commissioners' Court Judge Sam Biscoe remembers that African Americans were not allowed to play municipal courses in Tyler, Texas where he caddied in the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>89</sup>

Given this background of white resistance to desegregation of municipal recreational facilities throughout the 1950s and 1960s, two conclusions seem inescapable.

First, what occurred at Muny in late 1950 and early 1951 is without question the first instance in the Southern states of the old confederacy when a municipal golf course was integrated.<sup>90</sup> This conclusion has been confirmed by Professor Marvin Dawkins, the leading academic authority on African American golf during the Jim Crow era. Dawkins noted that "the evidence which has now been assembled substantiates the contention that Muny was the first municipal golf course in the South to formally desegregate" thereby displacing other courses formerly thought to have held that distinction.<sup>91</sup>

Second, the actions of the Austin City Council in late 1950 and early 1951 seem all the more remarkable given the reluctance of the United States Supreme Court to apply *Sweatt* and *McLaurin* to golf courses as well as stiff resistance to integration of public golf in other jurisdictions. Austin's public officials seem to have gotten it right by allowing all golfers to play at Muny. The City's decision represented a long stride toward racial equality in Austin and the South by providing from an early date (*Figure 22*) a public recreational setting allowing friendly interaction among different races. Those interactions endure and are woven into the fabric of the community alongside Lions Municipal Golf Course.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> Former Travis County Commissioners' Court Judge Sam Biscoe, interviewed by Robert Ozer (July 11, 2008). See also Kirsch, "Municipal Golf and Civil Rights in the United States, 1910-1965," 388-389: noting "mixed results" in desegregating municipal golf courses in southern cities in 1950s and early 1960s with changes in some cities not manifest until after passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In public remarks preceding the Muny Interfaith Golf Tournament (held on October 26, 2008 to celebrate course history), Judge Biscoe recalled that during his time as a caddie, caddies typically earned \$1.00 per nine holes per bag. This is somewhat better than what caddies received at Muny in the late 1940s and early 1950s. See fn. 56 *supra*.

<sup>90</sup> The Oso Golf Course in Corpus Christi, Texas was the second municipal golf course in the South to desegregate in March of 1953 according to notes from the NAACP Board of Directors provided by Professor Lane Demas on August 11, 2015. 1953 NAACP Board of Directors, Mary McLeod Bethune Papers, The Bethune Foundation Collection, Part 3, Subject Files 1939-1955 at page 112. See also: Jeffrey T Sammons, *Beyond the Ring: The Role of Boxing in American Society* (University of Illinois Press, 1990): 186, fn. 16.

<sup>91</sup> Dawkins' remarks during the Muny Interfaith Golf Tournament on October 26, 2008. In an email to Robert Ozer (November 26, 2008), Dawkins also noted that a course such as Muny, located in a jurisdiction that did not actively resist desegregation, is less likely to be the subject of scholarly attention. ; See also: "Muny's Past Might Yield New Future, Backers Say." There are several useful journalistic accounts dealing with African American golf and American culture: John H. Kennedy, *A Course of their Own: A History of African American Golfers* (University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Pete McDaniel, *Uneven Lies: The Heroic Story of African-Americans in Golf* (Amer Golfer Incorporated, 2000); Calvin H Sinnette, *Forbidden Fairways: African Americans and the Game of Golf* (Gale Cengage, 1998). See also: Marvin P. and Tellison Dawkins, A.C., "African Americans and Golf," in *African Americans and Popular Culture*, ed. Todd Boyd (ABC-CLIO, 2008). Marvin P Dawkins, "Race relations and the sport of golf: the African American golf legacy," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 28, no. 1 (2004).

<sup>92</sup> Dr. Roger Paynter, "Email to Robert Ozer," (2008). Roger Paynter, pastor at First Baptist Church of Austin, notes that Volma Overton, Sr. played golf every Friday at Muny. Overton was the long-time head of the NAACP in Austin and the first African American congregant at First Baptist, where he was a member for over forty years. Dr. Paynter joined Overton on occasion and sometimes was the only white player in the foursome. Dr. Paynter celebrated Muny's history by playing in the Muny Interfaith Golf Tournament on October 26, 2008, as did Volma Overton, Jr., son of now-deceased Volma, Sr.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

## 8. National Significance

NHL Theme: Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations

NHL Sub-theme: Birth of the Civil Rights Movement, 1941 – 1954

Period of National Significance: 1950 – 1954

### Statement of National Significance:

Muny's history is *nationally* significant because it was the first municipal course *in the South of the old confederacy* to desegregate. Conditions in the South concerning race and Jim Crow were much more virulent than conditions in the rest of the country. By looking at Muny's desegregation in the context of Supreme Court decisions that would overturn Jim Crow, the desegregation meets Criterion 1 of the National Historic Landmarks Registration Guidelines of National Significance because it "outstandingly represent[s] the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained..." These events occurred at a time when the struggle for racial equality, *even in Southern states like Texas*, is not adequately recognized or appreciated.<sup>93</sup>

A number of national experts, prominent individuals, and one national golf organization have supported the national significance of Muny's desegregation (see pages 71-83).

As Mr. Hicks notes, intrinsic to the national significance of Muny's desegregation is that it "happened in the immediate wake of a U. S. Supreme Court decision, *Sweatt v. Painter*, which issued in the summer of 1950, but *before* the U.S. Supreme Court's historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which ended the separate-but-equal doctrine laid down in *Plessy v. Ferguson*."<sup>94</sup> This provides the constitutional framework for assessing the national significance of Muny's desegregation within the broad contours of our nation's civil rights history.

In looking at this broader picture, the statement of Professor Gilmore at Yale is particularly powerful, placing the desegregation of Muny in the context of the "long movement for civil rights" :

"The fight to desegregate Lions Municipal Golf Course resounds beyond Austin and 'outstandingly represent(s) the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained.' Historians searching for the impetus of the 'classical phase of the Civil Rights Movement,' preceding *Brown v. Board* in 1954 and the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, have posited a 'long civil rights movement' that preceded those iconic struggles. (footnote omitted) In other words, Lions Municipal Golf Course is representative of the "birth of the civil rights movement."

Professor Gilmore, along with Professor Robertson, stresses the grass roots nature of the desegregation of Muny as particularly significant, noting it should be the subject of future scholarly study.

---

<sup>93</sup> Few properties significantly associated with the birth of the civil rights movement have maintained high integrity. Only one property from our chosen NHL sub-theme has been cited in the National Historic Landmarks Study List; just three others have been designated as Properties Removed from Further Study. Matt Garcia et al., *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations*, (National Park Service: 2004, revised 2009), 130, 135, 140-41.

<sup>94</sup> See also: Statements of Professors Stekler and Levinson.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Professor Jones of the University of Texas at Austin ties Muny's desegregation to broad national patterns concerning the kinds of labor and work available to African Americans under Jim Crow. This is illustrated by the marginalized lives and limited employment opportunities available to African Americans residing in the historically black community of Clarksville (in the National Register) located near the golf course. Both for the laborers who helped to build Muny and African American caddies working at the course, Muny's desegregation symbolized a way out of their economic marginalization and illustrated "the eagerness of African Americans to partake of all rights and privileges in American life." Professor Jones notes that:

"For young caddies like William Bacon and General Marshall, before African-Americans in the South could ride without restriction on a bus, sit at the lunch counter, or share a public drinking fountain, they could access a golf course in Austin, Texas, as a customer, not as a laborer or a server. Other blacks came from anywhere within driving distance to experience this unprecedented freedom...."

The desegregation of Muny — four years before *Brown* — represents the beginning of the unraveling of Jim Crow, and clearly is worthy of both national recognition and scholarly study. To my knowledge, it represents one of the first instances of a southern municipality's disregard for Jim Crow in *any* public facility and certainly the first such instance at a municipal golf course.

The National Register should embrace this site, not only for its obvious place in golf and civil rights history, but as an asset of immense historical and educational value. Muny is a living civil rights landscape that retains its historical integrity. It is as much of a piece of the American story — and potentially as powerful as a teachable experience — as the historic battlefields we protect and embrace."

In short, Muny's desegregation should become "a source of pride and hope" not just "for the entire City of Austin" but also for the country as a whole.

Professor Demas, whose research is perhaps the most current since he is writing a book (under contract) on the subject of the history of African Americans in golf, confirms Professor Dawkins' claim that Muny was the first municipal course in the former confederacy to desegregate and concludes the course is of "immense historical value." Mr. Hicks notes that the desegregation was achieved without a court order and stresses the non-violent, peaceful nature of the desegregation as do Professors Stekler and Levinson.

Still, in many ways the desegregation of Lions Municipal Golf Course simply represented the prosaic ebb and flow of local politics with us today.<sup>95</sup> In the spring of 1951, an African American community leader wanted City Council support for construction of a public golf course for African Americans in East Austin. A progressive member of the Council, Emma Long,<sup>96</sup> objected on the grounds that public funds could be better spent meeting other East Austin

---

<sup>95</sup> The current Austin City Council has before it a proposal to develop a municipal golf course in East Austin. An African American Council member who represents the East Austin district supports this course as a spur to economic development. Objections have been lodged over issues ranging from water usage to whether the proposal must be submitted to the voters in a public referendum. Alberta Phillips, "Council Should Avoid Race Card, Let Austin Vote on Golf Proposal," *Austin American Statesman*, March 5 2015; Andra Lim, "Panel Probes Decker Details," *Austin American Statesman*, April 14 2015.

<sup>96</sup> For Emma Long's background as a progressive see Orum, 205-225.



## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

community needs.<sup>97</sup> Such an expenditure seemed ill conceived given the existing municipal golf course in West Austin where blacks were already playing.

Few may have guessed that this seemingly typical city governance debate would come to have national significance. At the time, the separate but equal doctrine established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had not been explicitly overturned by the Supreme Court. Jim Crow (state and local segregation laws) still prevailed and would remain in some form in the southern United States for years. Technically, black golfers playing on a municipal golf course in the early 1950s were committing nothing less than criminal trespass in Texas and across the South.

Yet the futility of a separate and segregated municipal golf course in Austin was implicit in Emma Long's argument. And when two black youths walked on to Lions Municipal Golf Course ("Muny") probably in late 1950,<sup>98</sup> Mayor Taylor Glass quietly and informally convened his majority at City Hall. Together they decided to let the black golfers play, and the two youths completed their round without interference or arrest. There at least on the golf course, Jim Crow died in Austin more than three years before the Supreme Court would decide *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).<sup>99</sup>

Muny was the first municipal golf course in the South to desegregate (*Figure 22*).<sup>100</sup> Shortly after, in December 1951, the Austin public library system was integrated. In 1952, three Negro fireman were appointed and assigned to an integrated fire station on Lydia Street.<sup>101</sup>

One case with far reaching ramifications made this all possible. Just prior to Muny's desegregation, the United States Supreme Court decided *Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 U.S. 629 (1950), a case that arose out of Austin.<sup>102</sup> The *Sweatt* decision shook the foundations of segregation, sending Jim Crow into a death spiral from which it never recovered. Through implicit, almost coded language, this case rocked the Texas political landscape (especially around the flagship state university based in Austin). In *Sweatt v. Painter*, the Court held that a black man, Heman Sweatt, should be admitted to the University of Texas Law School because the university had not provided an equal educational opportunity through a separate law school.<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> *Minutes of the City Council* (April 5, 1951); Emma Long, interviewed by Joe O'Neal (1974), 11; Emma Long, interviewed by Anthony Orum (1982), 7-8; Emma Long, interviewed by Ken Tiemann, Peter Barbour, General Marshall, and Robert Ozer (July 17, 2008). Transcribed interviews with Emma Long are on file at the Austin History Center.

<sup>98</sup> Press accounts suggest that blacks were playing at Muny as early as the second half of 1950. In early March 1951, City officials discussed plans for African American golfers use of the west side course and noted that blacks had been using the course for "several months." Play at another municipal course was not anticipated. "Negro Golfers Plans Ordered." See also: "Negro Golfers to Get Lounge."

<sup>99</sup> The *Brown* Court concluded that "the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place" in the field of public education and that facilities separated by race are "inherently unequal."

<sup>100</sup> Other jurisdictions routinely fought desegregating their golf course even after *Brown*. See 32 - 34 *supra*.

<sup>101</sup> "City Council Opens Library to Negroes"; "13 Rookie Fireman Are Appointed; Group Includes Three Negroes."

<sup>102</sup> For *Sweatt v. Painter* see generally: Gary M Laverne, *Before Brown: Heman Marion Sweatt, Thurgood Marshall, and the Long Road to Justice* (University of Texas Press, 2010); Jonathan L Entin, "Sweatt v. Painter, the End of Segregation, and the Transformation of Education Law," *Rev. Litig.* 5, (1986): Paper 444. ; Kluger, 255-283.

<sup>103</sup> Two other cases were decided the same day that also weakened Jim Crow. *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, et al., 339, (U.S. Supreme Court 1950) overturned policies segregating black and white students in classrooms, libraries, and other facilities at the graduate school of the University of Oklahoma; *Henderson v. United States*; under ICC rules

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

The *Sweatt* case did not explicitly overrule *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896) which had articulated the principle of separate but equal and served as the constitutional bedrock of segregation and Jim Crow. Sweatt's counsel, Thurgood Marshall, and the NAACP lawyers working on the case adopted a nuanced approach in their briefing at the Supreme Court, exploring the consequences of segregation while somewhat muffling a direct attack on the *Plessy* ruling.<sup>104</sup> Instead, they primarily argued that the facilities offered to Sweatt to obtain his law degree were not equal (as per both *Plessy* and subsequent cases). Marshall argued that the separate law school was academically and physically inferior with regards to the quality of staff, the library, and other facilities. But more importantly, a separate law school was inherently unequal under essentially intangible constitutional notions of equal protection. This broader, subtle argument finessed the notion of directly overruling *Plessy v. Ferguson* while at the same time substantially undermining it.<sup>105</sup>

The Supreme Court, in a unanimous opinion written by Chief Justice Vinson, seemingly adopted this strategy in a style and language of their own.<sup>106</sup> First, the Court ruled that the University of Texas Law School was physically superior to the proposed law school for blacks in terms of the number of faculty, courses, opportunities for specialization, and facilities. However, the Court also noted:

“What is more important, the University of Texas Law School possesses to a far greater degree those qualities which are incapable of objective measurement but which make for greatness in a law school. Such qualities, to name but a few, include reputation of the faculty, experience of the administration, position and influence of the alumni, standing in the community, traditions and prestige.”<sup>107</sup>

This intangible notion of inequality “incapable of objective measurement” constitutes the core of the *Sweatt* decision. And this language was explicitly cited in *Brown* when the Court overruled *Plessy*.<sup>108</sup>

Justice Tom Clark, a former U.S. Attorney General, was a friend and ally of Chief Justice Vinson.<sup>109</sup> He was also a native Texan and alumnus of the UT Law School. Through an internal memorandum to the Court, Justice Clark appears to have heavily influenced the ultimate structure and philosophy of the *Sweatt* opinion. The memorandum seems to have moved the Court from “considering equality only as measurable mathematical construct” to one focused

---

blacks must have equal access to dining facilities on railway cars.

<sup>104</sup> Entin, “Sweatt v. Painter, the End of Segregation, and the Transformation of Education Law.” Since 1931 the NAACP had utilized a conservative but evolving strategy, developed by Nathan Margold, to attack segregation as practiced, rather than to go head on against *Plessy*. Kluger, 134-136.

<sup>105</sup> An Amicus Brief filed by the Committee of Law Teachers against Segregation in Legal Education made a frontal assault directly on *Plessy* the centerpiece of its argument. Entin, “Sweatt v. Painter, the End of Segregation, and the Transformation of Education Law,” 45-46; Kluger, 274. Entin (61 – 63) thinks this brief was important for the decision in *Sweatt*. Specific arguments in the brief about equality in legal education (Amicus Brief, 40-46) appear to have influenced both the decision and Justice Tom Clark’s memorandum to the Court (see text *infra*).

<sup>106</sup> In conference after oral argument Chief Justice Vinson would have voted against *Sweatt* but at least seven of his colleagues disagreed. Dennis J Hutchinson, “Unanimity and Desegregation: Decisionmaking in the Supreme Court, 1948-1958,” *Geo. LJ* 68, (1979), cited in *The End of Segregation*, 60. However, Justice Clark may have swayed the Chief Justice to abandon his early opposition to Sweatt’s case (see text *infra*).

<sup>107</sup> Heman Marion Sweatt v. Theophilus Shickel Painter, 339, (U.S. Supreme Court 1950), 634.

<sup>108</sup> Brown v. Board of Education, 493.

<sup>109</sup> Kluger, 614.

## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

on “intangibles.”<sup>110</sup> And the memorandum was comfortable with a decision that “undermines” *Plessy*.<sup>111</sup> Years later, Clark emphatically noted how the Court addressed *Plessy* via *Sweatt*: “In fact, not in *Brown* as people say, did we overrule *Plessy*. We implicitly overruled *Plessy*... in *Sweatt and Painter*...”<sup>112</sup>

The *Sweatt* decision received widespread and extensive press coverage in Austin. Local news articles speculated about the impact of the case on segregation.<sup>113</sup> Citing the Court’s language quoted above, one article captured the conundrum facing segregationists in the South: “If the Court is going to consider any new Negro school unequal to its white counterpart because it lacks the latter’s ‘traditions and prestige,’ then how can a new Negro school ever be considered equal to an old-established white school of high standing?”<sup>114</sup> Austin City Council members may not have read the *Sweatt* decision or been particularly versed in the intricacies of constitutional precedent. However, as elected officials engaged with their constituents and community, the City Council would have been aware of press commentary about the case. In addition, they would likely have been aware of some local witnesses’ highly anticipated testimony during trial court proceedings.<sup>115</sup> Also of note were large public meetings in support of *Sweatt*’s cause.<sup>116</sup>

And, perhaps most importantly, local officials would have known about the makeshift black law school, located slightly below street level at 104 East 13<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Austin. The law library was the Supreme Court library at the State Capitol, a somewhat inconvenient, though short walk for students from the nearby interim law school. Known derisively by *Sweatt* supporters as the “Austin Jim Crow Law School” or more often the “Basement School,” this law school was presented by the University as a temporary way station to a separate law school for blacks in Houston. Presumably, this separate school was to be equal in facilities, stature, and prestige to the University of Texas Law School in Austin.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Laverne, 248-250.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 249-250; Tom Clark, Memorandum to Supreme Court Justices (Tom Clark Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas at Austin).

<sup>112</sup> Laverne, 255; Justice Tom Clark, interviewed by Joe Frantz (LBJ Library: October 7, 1969): 21, <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/Johnson/archives.hom/oralhistory.hom/Clark-T/Clark-T.pdf> (accessed June 12, 2015).

<sup>113</sup> James Marlow, “Single-Shot Decisions Add Up to Big Results,” *Austin Statesman*, June 6 1950; “Daniel Says Segregation in Lower Schools Stands,” *Austin Statesman*, June 7 1950; James Marlow, “Courts Chipping Away at Segregation,” *Austin Statesman*, June 7 1950; Jones, “Two Negroes Enter UT,”; James Marlow, “Segregation Being Eased Out by Supreme Court Decisions,” *Austin Statesman*, June 8 1950.

<sup>114</sup> James Marlow, “Equality Issue Holds Fate of Segregation in Schools,” *Austin Statesman*, June 9 1950.

<sup>115</sup> Lower Court *Sweatt* proceedings received extensive local press coverage: Lorraine Barnes, “Experts’ Opinions Conflict in Closing *Sweatt* Testimony,” *Austin Statesman*, May 16 1947; “*Sweatt* to Appeal Ruling Denying Him Entry at UT,” *Austin Statesman*, May 17 1947; “Brief Asks Unsegregated Professional Education,” *Austin Statesman*, February 10 1947; “Attorney General’s Brief Upholds State Segregation Rights,” *Austin Statesman*, November 16 1947.

<sup>116</sup> Laverne, 133-134.

<sup>117</sup> On the “Basement School” see *ibid.*, 148-151. It should be noted that recent changes in key University personnel may have influenced the University’s approach to the *Sweatt* case, in which the named defendant was Theophilus S. Painter. He replaced Homer Rainey as University President in April 1946, shortly before *Sweatt* filed suit in Travis County. The Board of Regents had fired Rainey on November 1, 1944, after he stood up for the academic freedom of UT economists who supported Roosevelt’s New Deal policies. John Moretta, “The Battle for the Texas Mind: The Firing of Homer Price Rainey and the Fight for the Survival of Academic Freedom and New Deal Liberalism at the University of Texas, 1939-1945,” *Houston History*, October 14 2010.

Rainey was also progressive on racial matters. *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*, 305, (Supreme Court 1938) established that states must either integrate schools or provide substantially equal schools. Rainey with others convened an education summit

## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

*Sweatt v. Painter* drove a stake through the heart of the segregated “Basement School.” And the City Council also let the blade pass through the heart of Jim Crow, at least with regards to some public accommodations.<sup>118</sup> It would cost Austin’s local government a great deal to maintain separate but equal public accommodations, and separate golf courses might be particularly expensive. There was no reason to do so if the Jim Crow doctrine being enforced was headed toward extinction.

These implicit sentiments around the decline of Jim Crow crystallized with the debate surrounding construction of a separate golf course for blacks in East Austin. The result was the desegregation of Austin golfers at Muny. African American golfers could quietly play at Muny while the city applied the savings derived from integrating the course for other public purposes particularly in East Austin. Before *Plessy* was even overturned, the City Council was ready to quietly integrate Muny without even saying the word.

In this light, subsequent events at Muny enhance the *national* significance of the desegregation above and beyond its striking impact locally and across the state of Texas.

As a course open to black golfers Muny became a magnet for such golfers in both the Austin area and the region.<sup>119</sup> But in late July of 1953,<sup>120</sup> Joe Louis, the former heavyweight champion, and national icon for the symbolic blow he delivered against German racism<sup>121</sup> by knocking out Max Schmeling, played Muny while in Austin on other business. Photos of this event are attached on continuation sheets and a brief home film of Joe Louis at Muny is available upon request.<sup>122</sup>

This event is important for at least two reasons. First, the course was available for Joe Louis to play at a time when he would have had extremely limited access to play on any course in the South, let alone a municipal course. Second, and

---

during the summer of 1942 on the issue of educational opportunities for blacks in Texas. This resulted in the Bi-Racial Conference on Negro Education in Texas whose work was seemingly supported by Governor Coke Stevenson. Laverne, 78-79. However, after Rainey was fired rumors were spread that Rainey was variously a “communist,” “homosexual sympathizer,” or wanted to put “Negroes in the University.” Moretta, 62 and 65. After the *Sweatt* decision was handed down, the local press was not hesitant to remind the public about Rainey’s efforts on race in higher education. R. O. Zollinger, “Rainey was Prophet on Ruling, Got Called Red,” *Austin Statesman*, June 8 1950.

As for the defense of segregation in the *Sweatt* case, the Attorney General himself, Price Daniel (later to become Governor) handled the case. He directly attacked Heman Sweatt, Thurgood Marshall, and the role of the NAACP in the litigation in the trial court. Laverne, 177-186.

<sup>118</sup> Desegregation of public education involved a much more complicated range of issues that would require the explicit overturning of *Plessy* in *Brown*.

<sup>119</sup> General Marshall, interviewed by Robert Ozer and Ken Tiemann (November 22, 2008).

<sup>120</sup> Batterson, “Joe Likes Show Biz But---‘Pay Days Aren’t as Big’; “Rhythm and Blues Show to be Here Friday Night,” *Austin Statesman*, July 30 1953.

<sup>121</sup> In the post war era the NAACP was quick to draw the connection between the fight against Nazism abroad and the struggle against racism at home: “Today we are just emerging from a war in which all of the people of the United States were joined in a death struggle against the apostles of racism.” Brief of Appellants, *Morgan v. Virginia*, 328 U.S. 373 (1946): 28. When Joe Louis fought for black access to compete in the San Diego Open in January, 1952, his rhetoric was couched in terms of the fight against Nazism: “I want the people to know what the PGA is... We’ve got another Hitler to get by.” “Joe Louis Insists on Entry in Golf: PGA Group to Weigh Rule Barring Negroes - Co-sponsor Wants Them to Play,” *New York Times*, January 15 1952.

<sup>122</sup> Please see Ken Tiemann’s contact information on page 8 for Joe Louis film inquiries.

## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

perhaps most importantly, it is hard to view Joe Louis's round at Muny as anything other than a consecration of the fact that the course was available to play for blacks.<sup>123</sup>

Louis had fought hard to bring the game of golf to African Americans in the post war period.<sup>124</sup> He did this not only by fighting for black participation in professional golf tournaments such as in San Diego (in which Louis played) and Phoenix.<sup>125</sup> He also used his celebrity to serve as golf's Ambassador to the African American community.<sup>126</sup> In doing so he would have tried in the North to open up more access to play for a small but expanding black middle class in the post war era. And in the South he would have fought for a poorer African American population that may have had access only through caddying.<sup>127</sup>

"History has always been far more engrossed by problems of origins than by those of decline and fall."<sup>128</sup> The desegregation of Muny did not arise in the wake of a new constitutional vision, the clarion call for simple justice sounded by Earl Warren in *Brown v. Board of Education* that would drive our progress as a nation toward equality. Rather, the desegregation of Muny unfolded in the shadow of the *Sweatt v. Painter* decision, a coded signal of the decline of Jim Crow. Yet even in the shadows, the Austin City Council did make history when they began quietly to desegregate Muny followed by other city facilities shortly thereafter.

---

<sup>123</sup> Dr. William Bacon indicates that Joe Louis played the course twice. He saw Joe Louis play at Muny shortly after the course was desegregated and before he went to college in September of 1952. Louis played the course with Ted Rhodes, the great African American professional golfer who tried to break into the PGA and who taught Joe Louis to play. Joe Delancey, who played on the "black circuit" (United Golf Association sanctioned events), also played with Louis and Rhodes. Dr. Bacon believes this round was played in 1951. Ozer, Bacon Phone Interview, October 30, 2015. This would mean that the round that Louis played in 1953 was his second at Muny.

<sup>124</sup> It is important to note the effect that desegregation of the military, especially in post war America, had on access to golf for blacks: "During and after the war, black soldiers and sailors enjoyed more access to courses on military bases, while black middle class citizens joined a number of private (although still segregated) clubs." George B Kirsch, *Golf in America* (University of Illinois Press, 2009), 150, cited in Sanjeev Baidyaroy, "Blacks, Golf, and the Emerging Civil Rights Movement, 1947-1954," (Honors Theses, Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences: Carnegie Mellon University 2011): 10. In this light, "together with Major League Baseball, the armed forces led the way in toppling Jim Crow in the immediate postwar period." Garcia et al., *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations*, 40.

It should also be noted that during the war segregation in the military presented glaring contradictions in the fight against the Nazis. At some military posts "black pilots were segregated in the mess halls and movie theatres, while German prisoners of war who were quartered at the camps took seats in the 'whites only' areas of these accommodations, and outraged black soldiers protested. Indeed, enemy prisoners of war could attend shows, movies, and dances, sponsored by the United Services Organization (USO) and local Chambers of Commerce, which were barred to black soldiers." Ibid., 38.

Protests against these practices are noteworthy. On January 6, 1944, at Fort Hood, not far from Austin, Texas, Lt. Jackie Robinson, a non-southerner unfamiliar with Jim Crow, boarded a city bus and refused to heed the instruction when ordered to the back of the bus. He faced a court martial but the military acquitted him. Id. at pp. 37-38; see also: protests of Tuskegee Airman, Ibid., 38.

<sup>125</sup> Baidyaroy, 15-18. Joe Louis's efforts concerning the San Diego Open were extensively reported in the Austin press. "Louis Attacks Ban on Negro Golfers," *Austin Statesman*, January 14 1952. "Joe Louis Partial Victor in Golf 'Color Line' Fight," *Austin Statesman*, January 16 1952. "Joe Louis Takes Spotlight in San Diego Golf Tournament," *Austin Statesman*, January 17 1952.

<sup>126</sup> Dawkins and Kinloch, 65-84; Kennedy, 65-81.

<sup>127</sup> Baidyaroy, 26-37.

<sup>128</sup> Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages: A Study of the Forms of Life, Thought and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Dawn of the Renaissance* (Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954): Preface, i.



## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Examining this twilight era of Jim Crow, it is important to note that its decline was not necessarily irreversible. *Sweatt v. Painter* provides an important precedent for understanding the end of Jim Crow and the eventual overturning of *Plessy*. However, the leading authority on *Brown* suggests the momentum to overturn *Plessy* could still have run aground on the complexities of desegregating public schools in the South.<sup>129</sup> *Brown* still had to be decided, just as the Austin City Council had to decide how to respond to blacks playing golf at Lions Municipal during the latter part of 1950 and early 1951.<sup>130</sup> History still has to be made by living, breathing men and women both at the Supreme Court and in Austin, Texas.<sup>131</sup>

Consideration of Mayor Taylor Glass and his background are useful in understanding this history. Glass would not echo the trumpet blast that Thurgood Marshall sounded in his *Brown* brief and argument. That wasn't where he was coming from. Glass was a white man born in Manor, a small town outside of Austin. Although he left high school to work, Glass obtained his G.E.D. and founded Polar Ice Cream Company. As mayor, his majority controlled the City Council. Yet nothing in Glass' background suggested that he would dismantle the traditional racial, legal and cultural mores that governed Austin communal life at the time. However, years later, reflecting on the desegregation of Muni he noted:

“Well, I personally was raised on a farm with them, we played ball together, worked in the cotton patch together, we were doing just about anything you can think of together, rode horseback together, anything you can think of. They never did bother me and that old golf course is pretty big open space out there and I don't see why it ought to bother anybody out there and I'm for leaving them alone and not even calling the newspaper and see what happens.”<sup>132</sup>

Mayor Glass's daughter recalls her father as having “an accepting background for that time.”<sup>133</sup> And he wasn't the Mayor of Selma or Birmingham; much of the South fought integration tooth and nail even after *Brown*. Glass was the Mayor of Austin, where Heman Sweatt got his day in court, shortly after a war against German racism.<sup>134</sup> In Austin, Taylor Glass chose not to enforce a Jim Crow system on a golf course where two young black kids were trying to get in a round.<sup>135</sup> He just let them play.

---

<sup>129</sup> Kluger, 585-619, richly details the individual views of each Justice of the Court during a conference in December of 1952 and concludes the court was “at loggerheads “on the *Brown* case and overturning *Plessy*. Around the time of the end of the 1952 term Frankfurter thought the vote was 5-4 to overturn *Plessy*, Burton had it as 6-3 to overturn but many of the law clerks at that time felt the Justices would not overrule *Plessy*. Ibid., 618.

<sup>130</sup> Both the *Rice* and *Beal* cases have complicated histories before the Supreme Court and were pending when *Brown* was pending or moving up on appeal (see *supra*). The Court probably wanted to decide issues as monumental as the overturning of *Plessy* in the context of public school desegregation rather than in the context of desegregating public golf courses.

<sup>131</sup> It is interesting to note that one native Austinite, Charles Black, a professor at Columbia Law School, played a significant role in drafting the NAACP brief for the Supreme Court in *Brown*. Kluger, 647-648.

<sup>132</sup> Mayor Taylor Glass, interviewed by Joe O'Neal (Austin History Center: May 23, 1974), 9.

<sup>133</sup> Laura Ellen Glass Hensley, interviewed by Robert Ozer (June 8, 2015).

<sup>134</sup> Recent press coverage concerning Anthony Kennedy, whose vote on a range of cases dealing with gay rights has proved pivotal, stresses the sources of tolerance rooted in his hometown of Sacramento. Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Justice's Tolerance Seen in His Sacramento Roots," *New York Times*, June 22 2015. The evolution of the law concerning gay rights in Supreme Court cases over the past several years to some extent mirrors developments in civil rights law for blacks in the period before *Brown*.

<sup>135</sup> The changes in attitudes exemplified by Mayor Glass in Austin mirror to some extent the depiction of Texas in the 1956 motion picture *Giant*, about a wealthy ranching family in West Texas and the evolution of their attitudes on race, class and gender over

## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

From the titans of American black civil rights history to the black workmen and caddies who built a golf course in West Austin and carried the bags of the whites who played on it. From the shrewd progressive woman who helped “integrate” Muny without even mentioning the word to the black heavyweight champion who then played the course along with other blacks from all over the state. From the Regents and administrators of a powerful University who defended Jim Crow when it came to their law school to a small businessman and Mayor who wouldn’t keep it going when it came to a couple of black kids on a public golf course. And, lastly, there are the Supreme Court Justices who finally ended Jim Crow once and for all.

Theirs is the story of Muny. It is an American story. The events that unfolded quietly at Lions Municipal Golf Course during late 1950 up until the *Brown* decision in 1954 were significant. And the way these events happened was significant not only for the city and state but also for our nation. The story is alive each day on the course at Muny and ready to be acknowledged by the National Register of Historic Places.

---

twenty-five years (1920s to the post war period). Director George Stevens won an Academy Award for the picture. He also helped liberate a concentration camp (Dachau) in Europe during the war, producing documentary footage used for the Nuremberg Trials. He took sensitivities gained from that experience into his examination of the relationships between Anglos and Hispanics in the movie. See Hector Galan, *Children of Giant*, (PBS Documentary: 2015). See also: Robert H. Abzug, *Inside the Vicious Heart: Americans and the Impact of the Liberation of Nazi Concentration Camps* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) (impact of camp liberations on the American mind).

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

## Bibliography

- "Austin Granted Wpa Golf Fund." *The Austin Statesman*, April 14 1937.
- "Austin Muny Golf Course One of Nations Best." *Austin American-Statesman*, June 25 1950.
- "P.G.A. Course Service" [http://www.tillinghast.net/Tillinghast/Tour\\_Service.html](http://www.tillinghast.net/Tillinghast/Tour_Service.html) (accessed June 21, 2015).
- "Plessy v. Ferguson." 163, 537: U.S. Supreme Court, 1896.
- "Austin Golf Club Is Granted Charter." *The Austin Statesman*, May 28 1924.
- "Lions Club to Build Municipal Golfing Course: Regents Consent to Locate Links on Varsity Land." *The Austin Statesman*, April 16 1924.
- "New Municipal Golf Course to Be Opened for Play Saturday." *The Austin Statesman*, October 31 1924.
- University of Texas Board of Regents Minutes*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas 1924.
- "Golf Course Now Complete: Lions Will Celebrate This Morning on the Links." *American-Statesman*, September 6 1925.
- "Kreisle Plans Model Home." *The Austin American*, June 12 1927, B2.
- "Conference Golf Teams Open Tourney." *The Austin Statesman*, May 14 1928.
- "Lions Will Open Clubhouse Bids: How New Club for Austin Lions Will Look." *The Austin Statesman*, August 28 1929.
- "Clubhouse and Golf Course Result of Prolonged Effort." *Austin American*, January 16 1930.
- "Lion Golfers to Hold Meet Sunday." *Austin American*, January 4 1930.
- "Lions Set To Dedicate New Clubhouse Here Tonight." *The Austin Statesman*, January 16 1930.
- "Lions To Open New Clubhouse Monday." *The Austin Statesman*, January 12 1930.
- "Muny from Lions to City." *The Austin Statesman*, December 30 1936.
- "Uncle Sam Spends Ten Millions for Muny Golf Layouts." *Lubbock Morning Avalanche*, December 18 1936.
- "Austin Granted WPA Golf Fund." *The Austin Statesman*, April 14 1937.
- "Page Architect for Building: Long-Time Experience in City of Austin." *Austin American-Statesman*, July 29 1937.
- "WPA Golf Courses Brighten Acres of Landscape in Texas Towns." *Lubbock Avalanche Journal*, April 3 1938.
- "Law v. Mayor and City Council of Baltimore." 78 F. Supp., 346: District Ct. Maryland, 1948.



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

"Heman Marion Sweatt v. Theophilus Shickel Painter." 339, 629: U.S. Supreme Court, 1950.

"Henderson v. United States " In *U.S.*, 339, 816, 1950.

"McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, et al.", 339, 637: U.S. Supreme Court, 1950.

"Muny Grounds Man Still 'Temporary'." *The Austin Statesman*, July 5 1950, 23.

"Sweatt UT Plea Upheld." *Austin American*, June 6 1950.

"UT Approves 3 Negroes for Immediate Entrance." *Austin American*, June 7 1950.

*Austin City Council Minutes*. Austin, Texas, 1951.

"City Council Opens Library to Negroes." *The Austin Statesman*, December 27 1951.

"Contracts Due on Three Jobs." *American-Statesman*, June 10 1951.

"First Term Will Be Last, Mayor Glass Announces." *The Austin Statesman*, February 7 1951, 1.

"Golf Course for Negroes Is Protested." *The Austin Statesman*, April 6 1951.

"Negro Golfers Plans Ordered." *The Austin Statesman*, March 12 1951.

"Negro Golfers to Get Lounge." *The Austin Statesman*, May 18 1951.

"Rundell Low Bidder for 3 Shelters." *American-Statesman*, June 10 1951.

"13 Rookie Fireman Are Appointed; Group Includes Three Negroes." *The Austin Statesman*, August 29 1952.

*Austin City Council Minutes*. Austin, Texas, 1952.

"Final Services Held for Rowe." *The Austin Statesman*, January 17 1952.

"Joe Louis Insists on Entry in Golf: P.G.A. Group to Weigh Rule Barring Negroes - Co-sponsor Wants Them to Play."  
*The New York Times*, January 15 1952.

"Oliver Brown, et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka, et al.", 347, 483: U.S. Supreme Court, 1954.

"Crenshaw, Texas Win NCAA Golf Titles." *Daytona Beach Morning Journal*, June 28 1971.

"Golf Notes, Ol' Roy's Gone Fishing." *Austin American-Statesman*, February 4 1973.

"Interview with Mayor Taylor Glass." edited by Joe O'Neal, 1974.

*Austin: Its Architects and Architecture (1836 - 1986)*. Austin: Austin Chapter American Institute of Architects, 1986.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

"Playing Through." *Austin American-Statesman*, February 26 1995.

*Under the Lone Star Flagstick: A Collection of Writings on Texas Golf and Golfers*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.

"Interview with Travis County Commissioners' Court Judge Sam Biscoe." edited by Robert Ozer, 2008.

"Muny's Past Might Yield New Future, Backers Say." *Austin American-Statesman*, October 26 2008.

"Early history of golf in Texas." *The Dallas Morning News*, March 8 2010.

"Interview with Edwin Kizer." edited by Charles Page, 2015.

"Interview with General Marshall." edited by Ken Tiemann, 2015.

"Interview with Lloyd Morrison, head professional at Lions Municipal." edited by Charles Page, 2015.

*Austin City Council Minutes*. Austin, Texas, April 4, 1937.

*Austin City Council Minutes*. January 25, 1951.

*Austin City Council minutes*. September 7, 1950.

"Here's Golf For You." *The Austin American*, December 8 Williams, Morris.

Apfelbaum, Jim "'Muny': 85 Years and Counting at Austin's Lions Municipal Golf Course." (2009).  
<http://usga.org/news/2009/November/A-Texas-Muny-For-Everyone/> [accessed November 19].

Bacon, Dr. William. "Telephone Interview with Dr. William Bacon." edited by Robert Ozer, 2008.

Badger, Reed. "Muny Golf Course Makes Record Growth In Two Year: \$45,000 Spent On 18-Holes Here." *The Austin Statesman*, April 18 1926.

Batterson, Mark. "Joe Likes Show Biz But---'Pay Days Aren't as Big." *Austin Statesman*, August 1 1953.

Boyd, Todd. *African Americans and popular culture*: ABC-CLIO, 2008.

Dalton, Kyle. "Lions Municipal Golf Course in Austin: Well known course, unknown designer." *GolfNow*, December 3 2001.

Dawkins, Marvin P. "Race relations and the sport of golf: the African American golf legacy." *Western Journal of Black Studies* 28, no. 1 (2004): 327.

Dawkins, Marvin P and Graham Charles Kinloch. *African American golfers during the Jim Crow era*: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000.

Duren, Almetris Marsh. "Overcoming: A History of Black Integration at the University of Texas at Austin." (1979).

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

- Entin, Jonathan L. "Sweatt v. Painter, the End of Segregation, and the Transformation of Education Law." *Rev. Litig.* 5, (1986): 3.
- Ford, Alan W. *Historical Notes: Austin Lions Municipal Golf Course*. Austin Downtown Lions Club: Austin Lions Club, 1936.
- Geraci, Beth. "The Kizer Touch". *Golfdom*, December 12 2012.
- Henneberger, John. *Clarksville: A Short History and Historic Tour*. Austin: Clarksville Community Development Corporation, 1978.
- Jones, Lyman. "Two Negroes Enter UT." *Austin Statesman*, June 7 1950.
- Kennedy, John H. . *A Course of Their Own: A History of African American Golfers*: Bison, 2005.
- Kirsch, George B. "Municipal Golf and Civil Rights in the United States, 1910-1965." *Journal of African American History* 92, (2007): 371 - 379.
- Kluger, Richard. *Simple Justice; the History of Brown V. Board of Education*: Knopf, 1976.
- Lavergne, Gary M. *Before Brown: Heman Marion Sweatt, Thurgood Marshall, and the Long Road to Justice*: University of Texas Press, 2010.
- Lemon, Del. "Kizer course should please environmentalists." *Austin American-Statesman*, November 6 1994.
- Lemon, Del. "Science of Golf: Game a distraction, then satisfaction, to Curry." *Austin American-Statesman*, October 16 1994.
- Lemon, Del. "Remembering an era when city's golf facilities weren't open to all." *Austin American-Statesman*, February 24 2000.
- Lim, Andra. "Panel Probes Decker Details." *Austin American Statesman*, April 14 2015.
- Marlow, James. "Equality Issue Holds Fate of Segregation in Schools." *Austin Statesman*, June 9 1950.
- Marlow, James. "Single-Shot Decisions Add Up to Big Results." *Austin Statesman*, June 6 1950.
- Marshall, General. "Interview with General Marshall." edited by Robert Ozer and Ken Tiemann, 2008.
- McAllister, Mike. "Class of 2015 Hall of Famers receive surprise calls." (2014). PGAtour.com.
- McDaniel, Pete. *Uneven lies: The heroic story of African-Americans in golf*: Amer Golfer Incorporated, 2000.
- McKay, Robert. "Segregation and Public Recreation." *Virginia Law Review* 40, no. 697 (1954).
- Mell, Randall. "Byron Nelson, Ben Hogan And The Legends Of Texas Golf." (2012).
- Orum, Anthony M. *Power, Money and the People: The Making of Modern Austin*: Resource Publications, 1987.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

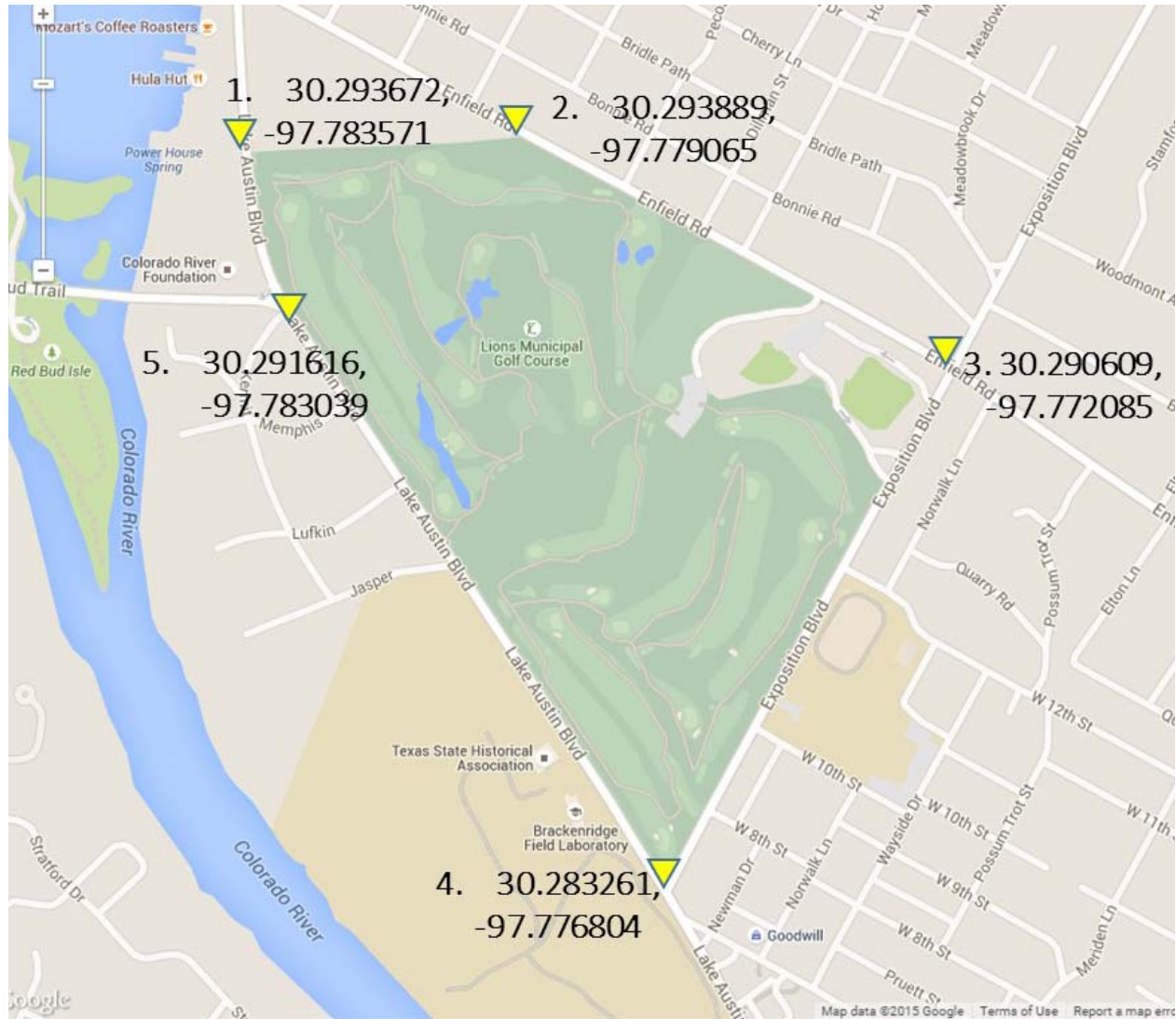
- Patterson, James T and William W Freehling. *Brown v. Board of Education: A civil rights milestone and its troubled legacy*: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Phillips, Alberta. "Council Should Avoid Race Card, Let Austin Vote on Golf Proposal." *Austin American Statesman*, March 5 2015.
- Robertson, Robert J. *Fair ways: How six black golfers won civil rights in Beaumont, Texas*: Texas A&M University Press, 2005.
- Sammons, Jeffrey T. *Beyond the ring: The role of boxing in American society*: University of Illinois Press, 1990.
- Shackelford, Geoff. "The Best Holes Ever Designed by Winged Foot Architect A.W. Tillinghast." *Sports Illustrated*, June 13 2006.
- Sinnette, Calvin H. *Forbidden fairways: African Americans and the game of golf*: Gale Cengage, 1998.
- Smith, Doug. "Legends of Lions will be honored Saturday." *Austin American-Statesman*, April 14 2010.
- TexasSports.com, "Texas Golf History", TexasSports.com [http://grfx.cstv.com/photos/schools/tex/sports/m-golf/auto\\_pdf/golf-history.pdf](http://grfx.cstv.com/photos/schools/tex/sports/m-golf/auto_pdf/golf-history.pdf) (2015).
- Tillinghast, A.W., edited by President of the P.G.A. <http://golfclubatlas.com/>; Golf Club Atlas: Golf Course Architecture forum, 1936.
- Trimble, J.C. King and Frances G. "'GOLF', Handbook of Texas Online." (2010). [accessed June 23, 2015].
- Wexler, Daniel. "The Evolution of The Golf Course at Augusta National: What Would The Good Doctor Say?" (March 2011). <http://golfclubatlas.com/in-my-opinion/wexler-daniel-augusta/>.
- Williams, Jeff. "Crenshaw, Mickelson share record: Golf legends are only two to win three D-I individual titles." (2012).
- Williams, Morris. "Longhorns Choose Muny." *The Austin American*, April 4 1948.
- Williams, Morris. "North Side Municipal Golf Course Opens." *The Austin American*, July 24 1949.
- Woodward, C. Vann. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*: Oxford University Press, 1955.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

## 10. Geographical Data

### Map of Lions Municipal Golf Course with coordinates

Google Maps, accessed June 22, 2015

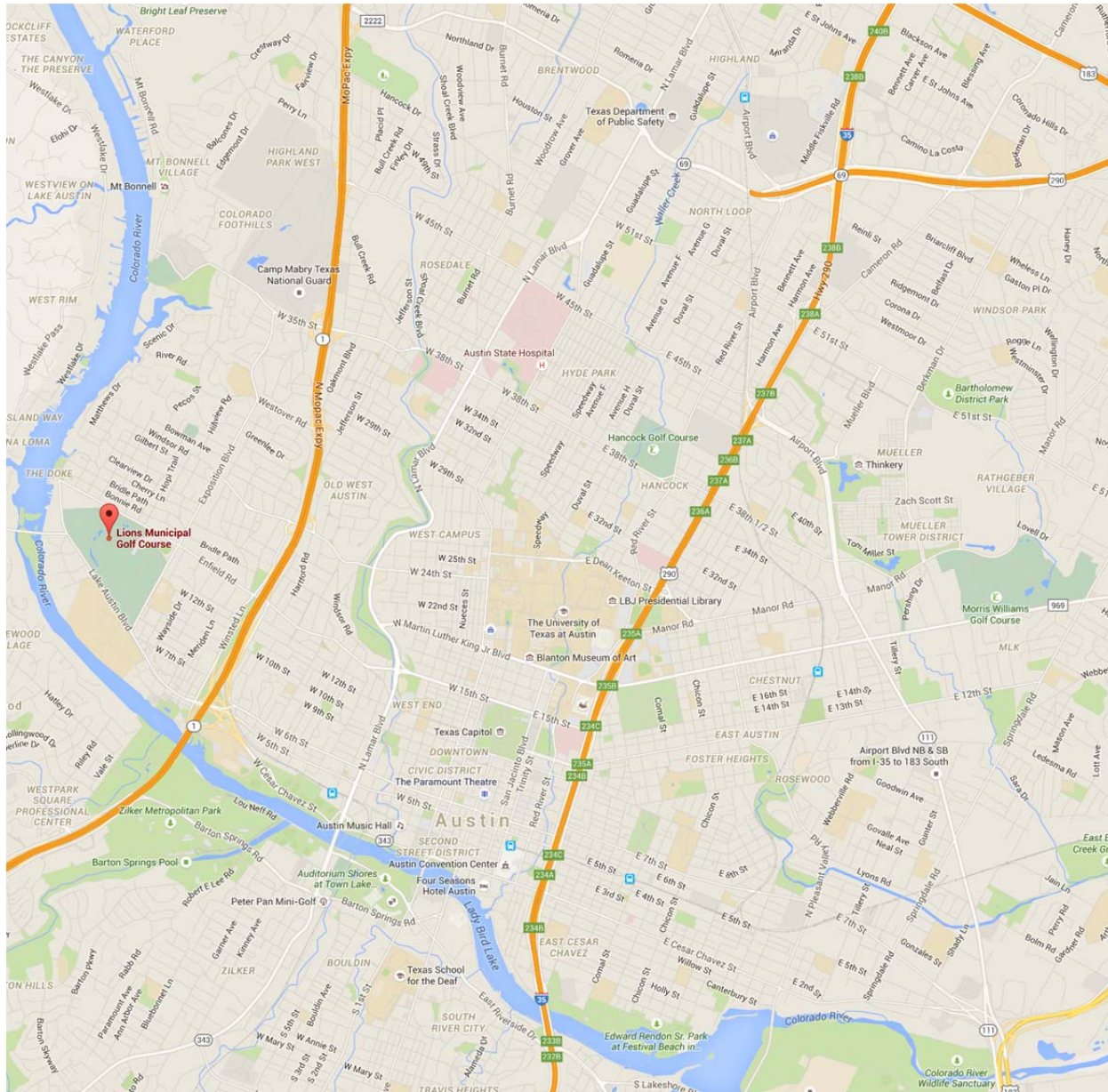




## Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

### Lions Municipal Golf Course in relation to central Austin.

Google Maps, accessed June 24, 2015.



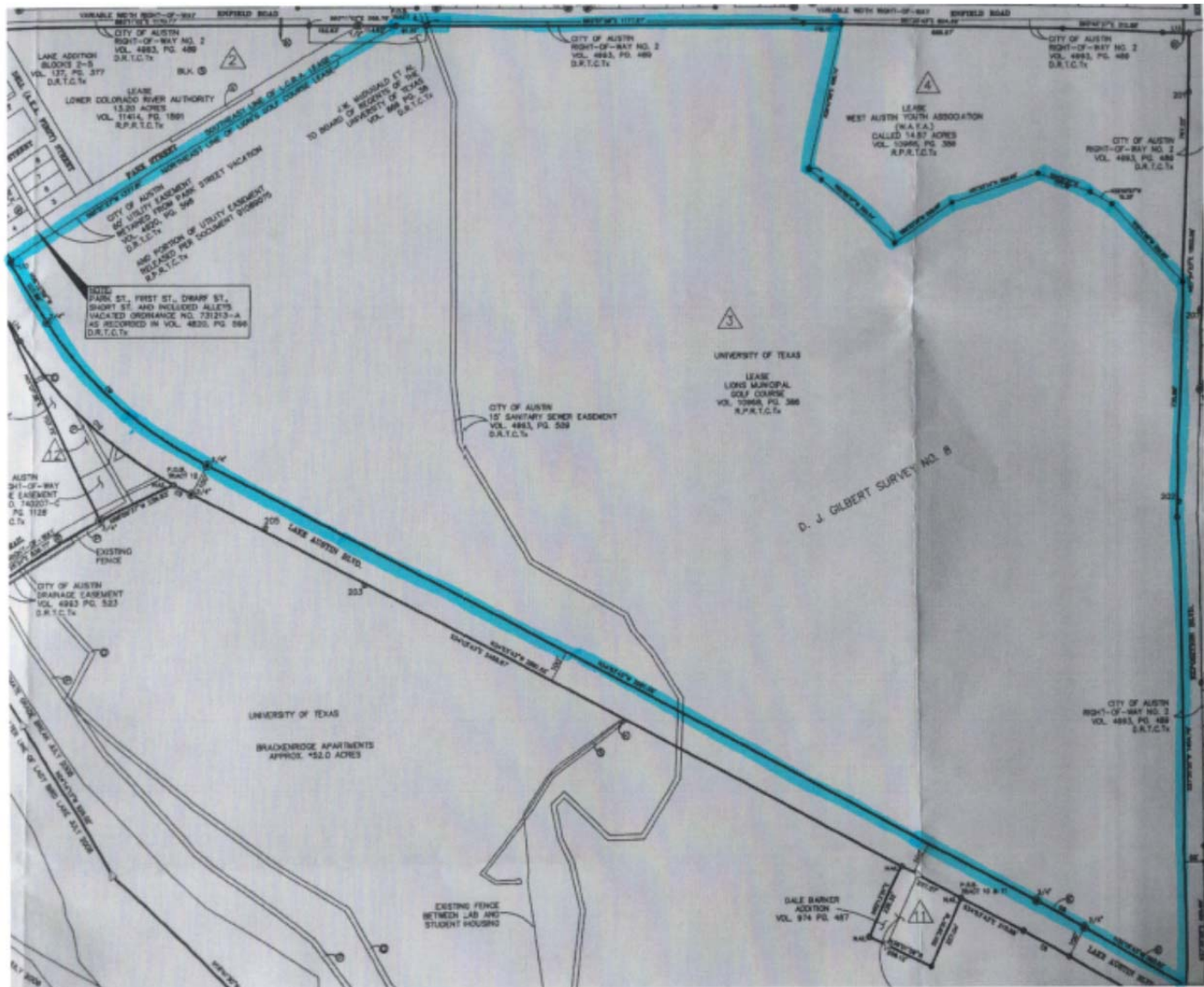


Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

## Course Diagrams, 1954 and 2015



### Boundary Justification: Survey map with coordinates





Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

## Graphical Map: Contributing and Non-Contributing Features

*Lions Municipal Golf Course*

2015



### Contributing Structures

- |                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 19 ..... Clubhouse            | 23 ..... Storm Shelter    |
| 20 ..... Keeper's Quarters    | 24 ..... Storm Shelter    |
| 21 ..... Maintenance Building | 25 ..... Entry Gate Piers |
| 22 ..... Storm Shelter        | 26 ..... Lion Statue      |

### Non-Contributing Structures

- |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 27 ..... Entrance Road      | 33 ..... Diesel Pump Station |
| 28 ..... Parking Lot        | 34 ..... Open Car Port       |
| 29 ..... Picnic Tables      | 35 ..... Restroom            |
| 30 ..... Pump House         | 36 ..... Restroom            |
| 31 ..... Service Entry Road |                              |
| 32 ..... Maintenance Shed   |                              |

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 1: Aerial photos of Lions Municipal Golf Course in 1954 and 2014





Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 2: Austin History Center (PICA 19508): "Putting green with flag", Date unknown.



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 3: Austin History Center (PICA 21293): "View of course; man in foreground, 5 men in background", Date unknown.





Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 4: Austin History Center (PICA 21282): "Sprinklers on watering greens as a tractor mows", Date unknown.



Figure 5: Austin Lions Municipal Clubhouse opening discussed in Statesman article, January 16, 1930



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Figure 5 continued: Austin Lions Municipal Clubhouse opening discussed in Statesman article, January 16, 1930



## LIONS CLUB

### NEW MUNICIPAL GOLF CLUB HOUSE



WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC THURSDAY EVENING AT 7:00 P. M.  
THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO THIS RECEPTION—MUSIC—REFRESHMENTS—AND A GOOD TIME



**THEN COME BACK OUT AND PLAY GOLF**  
IT IS A REAL PLEASURE TO PLAY  
ON THIS WONDERFUL 18 HOLE COURSE WHICH IS OPEN THE YEAR ROUND.

NEW UP-TO-DATE CLUBHOUSE  
LUNCHEONETTE SERVICE  
SHOWER ROOMS  
DRINKS



PROFESSIONAL IN CHARGE  
EXPERIENCED CADDIES  
GOLF EQUIPMENT  
INSTRUCTION

THIS ADVERTISEMENT MADE POSSIBLE BY COURTESY OF THE FOLLOWING:—

<i>J. R. Reed Music Co.</i>	<i>Nick Linz Cleaning Co.</i>	<i>Griffith Drug Co.</i>
<i>A. C. Baldwin &amp; Sons</i>	<i>Fromme Motor Co.</i>	<i>Werkenthin Bros.</i>
<i>Bustin-McCutcheon Motors, Inc.</i>	<i>Gugenheim-Goldsmith Produce Co.</i>	<i>Duplex Adv. Co., Ed St. John, Mgr.</i>
<i>Johnson Rubber Co.</i>	<i>Texas Bank &amp; Trust Co.</i>	<i>Deep Eddy Bathing Beach</i>
<i>McKean-Ellers Co.</i>	<i>Republic Bank &amp; Trust Co., Austin, Texas</i>	<i>The Stacy Realty Co.</i>
<i>Austin National Bank</i>	<i>American National Bank</i>	<i>Citizens Industrial Bank</i>
<i>General Realty Co.</i>	<i>Abe Frank Cigar Co.</i>	<i>Walter Tips Co.</i>
<i>Greenwood Drug Co.</i>	<i>Clyde Halley Co.</i>	<i>J. C. Bryant Creamery Co.</i>
<i>Riverside Floral Co., Inc.</i>	<i>Texan Garage</i>	<i>American-Statesman</i>



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

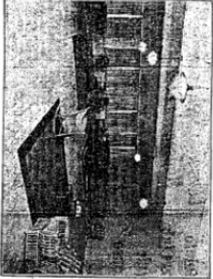
Figure 6: Collection of advertisements/accolades for Lions Clubhouse opening (*Austin Statesman*, January 16, 1930

All the News That's Fit to Print—Since 1871.

THE AUSTIN STATESMAN

Thursday, January 16, 1930—Page 11

We feel that the new Municipal Club House is a great benefit to Austin people, and the Lions club is to be congratulated for their activities in making this possible.



We are proud to say that the club rooms were completely furnished by this store.

**HOME FURNITURE COMPANY**  
412 Congress  
Phone 9522

**CONGRATULATIONS  
TO THE  
LIONS CLUB**

BY  
**Patton Transfer Company**  
OPERATORS  
*Rent-A-Car Yellow Cab*  
*Baggage-Moving Vans Auto Livery*

We have many cars as low as 10c a mile in our Drive-Up-Self Fleets

417-18-21 Congress Ave.  
Phones 2-1111-7777  
116 East 7th St. 25th and Guadalupe St.  
4829 7777

**Congratulations  
to the  
LIONS CLUB**

We wish to compliment you on your accomplishments of 1929. May your good work never cease.



**THE RENFRO'S STORE**  
The Renfro's Store, Austin, Tex.

**CONGRATULATIONS**



*Lions, We Are Proud of You*



A  
Store of  
Friendly Relations  
For the Lover of Sports

There is nothing so business-like as this. In fact, that every one of our customers is a friend—that is why our service is so good. — The day after tomorrow.

**LUEDECKE-MOFFATT CO.**  
THE FRIENDLY STORE

**GOLFER'S**

Ride the street car out to the Lions Municipal Golf Course. It takes you right to the gate, and saves you money.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LIONS

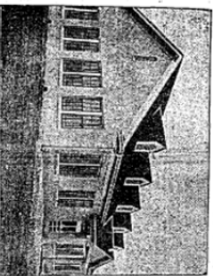
"Courtesy and Service"

**Austin Street Railway Company**

**THE LIONS CLUB**  
*Activities Lead Much to the Welfare of This Community.*


**THE MUNICIPAL CLUB HOUSE**

Is commendable evidence of civic spirit that will afford much enjoyment for the public.



**ELGIN-BUTLER BRICK CO.**  
201 CONGRESS  
SINCE '73  
PHONE 8210

**CONGRATULATIONS**



You are to be congratulated upon the achievements in the building of your new club house, as well as the promotion of civic interests in the City of Austin.

**THE DRISKILL HOTEL.**  
W. L. STARK, Mgr.

**VISION**  
*The Success of Man Lies In His Vision.*

Congratulations Lions on the achievement of one of your many visions.

Better vision than Optical Lenses in which we have to sell.

**J. G. Shelton, Optometrist**  
125 E. 6th  
Phone 7222



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 7: Austin History Center (PICA 21287):  
“Municipal Golf Course Clubhouse with lion statue in foreground”, 1937



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 8: Austin History Center (PICA 21285): “Tool house”, July 14, 1939.  
WPA-constructed Maintenance Building





Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 9: "Negro Lounge" constructed at Lions Municipal in 1951. Photograph from the private collection of General Marshall.



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 10: Austin History Center (PICA 21281): “Guiton Morgan (left), City Manager, accepting deed from John H. Tobin of Austin Lions Club”. December 1936.



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 11: Commemorative plaque on Lion Statue, installed in 1937 by the Austin Lions Club.



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 12: Austin High's 1957 Class 4A state championship golf team members: Robert Dorsett, Gib Kizer, Tommy Wilson, and Randy Petri.





Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 13: Roy Kizer, Sr. commemorative plaque at Lions Municipal, where he served as superintendent from 1937 – 1973.



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 14: African Americans supporting construction at Lions Municipal: Date unknown. The photograph is in the private collection of Tinsley Penick, son of the legendary golf instructor Harvey Penick.





Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 15: Austin History Center (PICA 21294): "Putting green with 4 people and man on tractor". Date unknown.  
African American caddy at Muny.



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 16: General Marshall. Photo by Ralph Barrera, 2008, *Austin American-Statesman*.

Austin American-Statesman **WORLD & NATION** Sunday, October 26, 2008



**Ralph Barrera** AMERICAN-STATESMAN

General Marshall, a retired Huston-Tillotson University professor, is among those pushing to preserve Lions Municipal Golf Course. Though the course was thought to have been integrated in 1959, he said he remembers African Americans from other cities coming to play the course earlier than that.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Figure 17: Local press coverage in *The Austin Statesman* and *The Austin American* of the Supreme Court's decision in *Sweatt v. Painter* (June 6, 1950) and subsequent desegregation of The University of Texas Graduate School (June 7, 1950).



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 18: May 23, 1974 - Taylor Glass Interview by Joe O'Neal, pages 9 – 10. Transcript re-typed:

*I remember one day I got a call from City Hall wanting to know-there were two colored boys playing golf on the golf course. This was before there was any mixing of races in restaurants, schools, or anywhere was going on. So I said, "Well, I'll be right up there."*

*I called Bill Drake before I left my office, didn't tell him what it was 'till I got up there. He said, "Well, what is it?" I said, "Well, we've got two colored boys playing golf on the golf course; went up there on their noon lunch hour and they got their equipment and they're half way around the course and they want to know what to do about it." He said, "Well, what do you want to do about it?" I said, "Well, I personally was raised on a farm with them, we played ball together, worked in the cotton patch together, we were doing just about anything you can think of together, rode horseback together, anything you can think of. They never did bother me and that old golf course is pretty big open space out there and I don't see why it ought to bother anybody out there and I'm for leaving them alone and not even calling the newspaper and see what happens." And he said, "I'm with you."*

*I had to call one other member of the council to see that we had a majority and I called Mr. Johnson. I knew Mr. Johnson was just like us and we told him how we felt. He said, "It's the wisest thing you have ever done. Don't call that press either." So we went on and them play and never heard a word.*

*Finally, six to eight weeks later I was walking down the street out here and a friend of mine stopped me and said, "Hey did you know there's niggers playing on the golf course?" I said, "Sure, I know there's niggers playing on the golf course...I know they're playing on the golf course." I said, "Did they bother you?" He said, "No, they didn't bother me." I said, "Well, they don't have a golf course. I knew they were playing out there; in fact they got my Ok. They are going to play out there as far as I am concerned. Now if they're truly bothering you, I want to know it. I said, "It will cost half-a-million dollars to build them a golf course and it'll come out of your pocket. You're part of the taxes. And you'll pay the upkeep. Now up to this time they haven't played a lot of golf. Maybe because they didn't have a place to play, but they're going to play golf out there if I have anything to do with it." He said, "You know, I believe you're right." They don't like to get hit in the pocket.*



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 19: Heavyweight Champion and African American golf ambassador Joe Louis played a round at Muni in July 1953. Photos from short film by Robert Pugh, shot on the course in Austin, Texas .





Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Figure 19 continued: Heavyweight Champion and African American golf ambassador Joe Louis played a round at Muny in July 1953. Photos from short film by Robert Pugh, shot on the course in Austin, Texas.



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Figure 20: Joe Louis: "I want the people to know what the PGA is... We've got another Hitler to get by."<sup>136</sup> Quoting *San Diego Union*, January 14, 1952, p. b3. *The New York Times* picked up the story and on January 15 did a story with a picture of Louis holding up a golf club in one hand with the caption "Brown Bomber Fights Again"



<sup>136</sup> John H. Kennedy, *A Course of Their Own: A History of African American Golfers* (Bison, 2005).

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Figure 21: Minutes from a City Council meeting on April 5, 1951, convey Emma Long's belief that it was not cost effective to build a separate course for African American golfers when the city had other pressing demands on its budget. Instead, she suggested in this council session that African American golfers play on the city's existing courses.

<p>CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS</p> <p>MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL</p> <p>CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS</p> <p>Regular Meeting</p> <p>April 5, 1951. 10:00 A.M.</p> <p>Council Chamber, City Hall</p> <p>Dr. EVERETT GIVENS made several inquiries: (1) about the location of a fire station in East Austin; (2) about a golf course in east Austin, and suggested a site on East 12th Street across from the cemetery and another on 19th and Webberville; (3) about playgrounds and equipment on the two schools in west and south Austin; (4) about street lights at 12th and Rosewood and at 18th and Ulit. In answer to his requests, it was stated that the fire station location was set at 12th and Airport Boulevard. Regarding the golf course, Mayor Glass asked that work be started on this project as soon as possible; but Councilman Long felt that with other needs in east Austin, a golf course would be too expensive now, and that there were two golf courses already in existence now. She stated with reference to the playground equipment, she would talk with the President of the School Board and with the Director of Recreation and would make a recommendation to the City Manager if something could be worked out with the School Board. The City Manager thought lights were already installed at the two requested locations, or if not at those locations, in the vicinity. He thought every church had been furnished street lights, and that these churches, WALNUT STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, 18th and Ulit, and ZION HILL BAPTIST CHURCH were included in the list.</p>
---



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

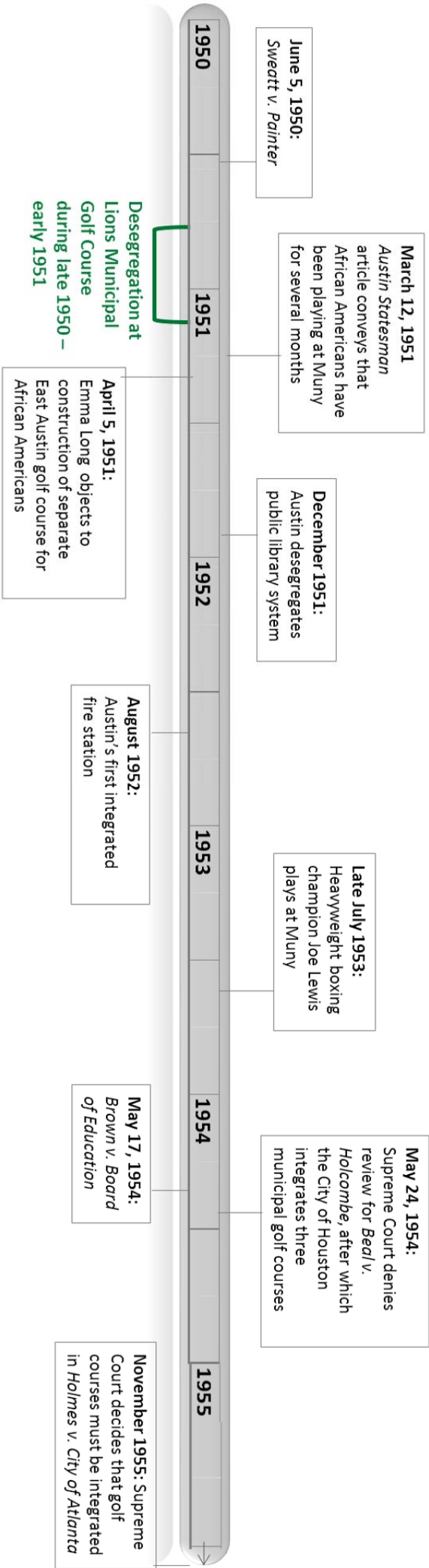
Figure 22: Brief Remarks by Marvin P. Dawkins at the Opening Ceremony of the Muny Interfaith Golf Tournament in Austin, Texas, October 26, 2008.

The place that the Lions Municipal Golf Course (Muny) of Austin, Texas occupied during the first phase of the Civil Rights Movement in the early 1950s has not been documented as a part of the historical literature of that period. Scholars who have examined efforts to desegregate public facilities during that period tend to focus on situations where open resistance was encountered when African Americans attempted to gain access to segregated public facilities, including recreational parks, beaches and golf courses. Therefore, the scholarly research literature on efforts, both successful and unsuccessful, to desegregate public golf courses in cities throughout the South during the 1950s and 1960s has tended to concentrate on cities where massive, open, and ongoing resistance took place. As a result, when desegregation occurred without this type of resistance, which was the situation involving Muny, less attention has been focused on these cases. Thus, the desegregation of the Lions Municipal Golf Course in 1951 has not part of the historical record involving the push to desegregate municipal golf courses, which has tended to focus on cases where law suits were filed to end segregation.

I believe that the evidence which has now been assembled substantiates the contention that Muny was the first municipal golf course in the South to formally desegregate, thus, replacing the public courses in Atlanta which currently hold this distinction. The tournament today can be viewed as a celebration of Muny's unique place in history and a testament to the role it has played and continues to play as a venue for creating positive interaction among people of various racial and ethnic backgrounds and in nurturing a sense of community cohesion. Thank you and enjoy the tournament.



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

## Statements of Support

Ben Crenshaw

### BEN D. CRENSHAW

---

Professional Golfer

Email: sayers@bencrenshaw.com  
512/482-8900/Fax: 512/473-2447

1800 Nueces Street  
Austin, Texas 78701

National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW (2280)  
Washington, DC 20240

To Whom It May Concern,

Muny, as most people call it, or Lions Municipal Golf Course, is an enduring asset to our city. It is a meeting place for people of like-minded means to play golf, recreate with their friends, to meet new ones and to enjoy the game in a beautiful setting. As very young golfers, we noticed that its practitioners were in fact, young and old alike. And we learned so many things: to compete, watching different styles of play, to play by the rules, and probably, most importantly, in retrospect, we learned to be somewhat friendly to our competitors, and to get along with everyone. That last component is what we golfers are most proud of; the social fabric of our game.

Around 1950, our city fathers saw to it that Muny should be open to all races, thus being the very first course in the South to do so. In fact, in 1953, the great boxer Joe Louis, a keen golfer, came through town and enjoyed a round at Muny. Obviously, these were important and lasting milestones in the development of Muny, which after all, had been a public golf course since 1924.

I started my golf as a youngster at Muny in 1960, when I was 8-years-old. My brother, Charlie, who is one year older, and all of our friends who were starting to play golf had a haven in Muny. All we could tell is that everyone loved playing there. For golfers everywhere, I think it would be entirely appropriate for Lions Municipal Golf Course to be given status in the National Register of Historic Places.

Also, I might add that if one was to try to measure the worth of this wonderful place and what it has meant to so many people, that worth would be incalculable.

Sincerely,



Ben Crenshaw

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

## Marvin Dawkins

Brief Remarks by Marvin P. Dawkins, at the Opening Ceremony of the Muny Interfaith Golf Tournament in Austin, Texas, October 26, 2008.

Co-Author with Graham Kinloch of *African American golfers during the Jim Crow era*: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000.

The place that the Lions Municipal Golf Course (Muny) of Austin, Texas occupied during the first phase of the Civil Rights Movement in the early 1950s has not been documented as a part of the historical literature of that period. Scholars who have examined efforts to desegregate public facilities during that period tend to focus on situations where open resistance was encountered when African Americans attempted to gain access to segregated public facilities, including recreational parks, beaches and golf courses. Therefore, the scholarly research literature on efforts, both successful and unsuccessful, to desegregate public golf courses in cities throughout the South during the 1950s and 1960s has tended to concentrate on cities where massive, open, and ongoing resistance took place. As a result, when desegregation occurred without this type of resistance, which was the situation involving Muny, less attention has been focused on these cases. Thus, the desegregation of the Lions Municipal Golf Course in 1951 has not part of the historical record involving the push to desegregate municipal golf courses, which has tended to focus on cases where law suits were filed to end segregation.

I believe that the evidence which has now been assembled substantiates the contention that Muny was the first municipal golf course in the South to formally desegregate, thus, replacing the public courses in Atlanta which currently hold this distinction. The tournament today can be viewed as a celebration of Muny's unique place in history and a testament to the role it has played and continues to play as a venue for creating positive interaction among people of various racial and ethnic backgrounds and in nurturing a sense of community cohesion. Thank you and enjoy the tournament.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

**Lane Demas**

Greetings,

I'm currently writing a book titled *The Game of Privilege: An African American History of Golf*, to be published by the University of North Carolina Press in 2016. Like other historians before me – including Marvin Dawkins – I've found no evidence other than Lions Municipal of a municipal course in the former confederacy that fully integrated before Atlanta's links in 1955.

Before the 1950s African Americans had gained limited access to some courses – and even separate, segregated, or part-time access granted by city officials. But the full access black golfers appeared to have at Lions Municipal in 1950 (or even the later date of 1951) would easily be the first instance. The course is therefore of immense historical value to both African American heritage and sport history.

Lane Demas, Department of History, Central Michigan University



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

**Glenda Gilmore**

August 11, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

While the general public recalls the Civil Rights Movement as centered on schools, buses, and lunch counters, local black communities often sought access to recreational facilities as a fundamental civil right. As symbols of exclusive white privilege, the fight to desegregate public golf courses united local black communities and served as a training ground in activism for middle-class African Americans. Lions Municipal Golf Course, the first municipal golf course desegregated in the southern states of the old Confederacy, qualifies as nationally significant Historic Landmark.

The fight to desegregate Lions Municipal Golf Course resounds beyond Austin and “outstandingly represent(s) the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained.” Historians searching for the impetus of the “classical phase of the Civil Rights Movement,” preceding *Brown v. Board* in 1954 and the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, have posited a “long civil rights movement” that preceded those iconic struggles.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Lions Municipal Golf Course is representative of the “birth of the civil rights movement.”

The desegregation of Lions Municipal Golf Course is an important chapter in the long civil rights movement, and its recognition will give the local community a living memorial to those who fought for civil rights before there was a formal “civil rights movement.” It points to a different narrative surrounding the African American freedom struggle, one in which local people acted on their own to gain access to human rights in the aftermath of World War II. The course’s very nickname, Muny, signifies that the people of Austin, Texas, believed that the golf course belonged to the municipality, that is, to all of the people.

Almost every southern city underwent desegregation campaigns of recreational facilities, many lasting through the 1960s, following the successful desegregation of Muny in 1950. For example, National Public Radio broadcast a story on the desegregation of Birmingham, Alabama’s municipal golf course—a full thirteen years after Muny.<sup>2</sup> Wells, Buckley, and Boone demonstrate the importance of golf course desegregation in their article on the desegregation of Baltimore’s golf courses, six years after Muny.<sup>3</sup> Texas A&M University published Robert Robertson’s book, *Fair Ways: How Six Black Golfers Won Civil Rights in Beaumont, Texas*, postdating Muny’s desegregation by five years. Much has been made of the struggle to desegregate a municipal golf course in Atlanta, the year following Muny’s desegregation.<sup>4</sup>

This partial list of the extensive scholarship on southern golf course desegregation demonstrates deep scholarly and public interest in the topic, but more importantly, it proves that Muny was *the first golf course to desegregate in the states of the former Confederacy*. Memorializing that first, finding out the ways in which activists made it happen, and researching the way in which a desegregated golf course affected social relations in Austin, Texas, will teach us much about the birth of the civil rights movement.

Muny exists today as it did when desegregated, possessing the high degree of location, design, setting and association that it did when local African Americans decided to win the right to play golf there.

Nationally significant figures are associated with Muny. For example, Joe Louis understood the significance of desegregated Muny when he played there in 1953 in a region with extremely limited access to play for African Americans. As early as 1950, it provided a place that black and white children could play golf on the same course, and it produced the great white golfer Ben Crenshaw.

This is the kind of successful desegregation story—indeed, the kind of example of human relations—that local citizens need to understand race and racism in the twenty-first century.

Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore

Peter V. and C. Vann Woodward Professor of History

Departments of History, African American Studies, and American Studies

Yale University, New Haven, CT

---

<sup>1</sup> Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* (March 2005).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.npr.org/2013/06/20/193999764/the-desegregation-of-birminghams-golf-courses>

<sup>3</sup> James E. Wells, Geoffrey L. Buckley, and Christopher G. Boone, “Separate but Equal? Desegregating Baltimore’s Golf Courses,” *The Geographical Review* 98 (April 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Andy Ambrose, Brooke Barger, and Alexis Oliver, “‘Negroes Cannot Play Here’: The Desegregation of Atlanta’s Golf Courses,” *Atlanta History* 43:1 (1999): 21-32.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

## Renea Hicks

The City of Austin established Lions Municipal Golf Course, or Muny as many locals refer to it, in 1924 and, for just over a quarter century, the city operated it as a racially segregated public facility. African-Americans could serve as caddies there, but they weren't allowed to play the course.

Then, according to fairly recent historical work, things quietly changed in late 1950. A few African Americans began openly playing the course. This quickly came to the attention of the city's Mayor, who hurriedly consulted with two other council members about whether to take action to enforce the rule of segregation. With the mayor, himself white, explaining that he'd worked and played together with African Americans in all sorts of situations so why not golf, they decided to let the matter pass and, with this, Muny became what appears to be the first public golf course in the South to desegregate. A few months later, in the spring of 1951, the Austin city council denied a request from African American community leaders to build a public golf course in East Austin, then the home of most of the city's African American residents. The view of the City leaders was that, as evidenced by the quiet acquiescence to Muny's desegregation a few months before, African Americans didn't need a racially separate course. They could already play at a public desegregated course such as Muny.

This groundbreaking action of desegregating a public facility for what was traditionally viewed as a "white man's game" was—and is—noteworthy for more than the simple reason that it was the first time this had happened in the South. What makes it particularly noteworthy, especially from the historical perspective, is that it happened in the South without judicial intervention and without active opposition from the local powers that be. And it happened in the immediate wake of a U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Sweatt v. Painter*, which issued in the summer of 1950, but *before* the U.S. Supreme Court's historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which ended the separate-but-equal doctrine laid down in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

Like Muny, the University of Texas School of Law was located in Austin. Unlike Muny, though, the law school's handling of desegregation produced both an adverse Supreme Court ruling *and* much local notoriety. *Sweatt v. Painter* invalidated the law school's establishment of a physically separate law school for African Americans and indicated that equal treatment of the races had to be based on something more than simple "objective measurement." This decision was well publicized in Austin in the summer of 1950.

The "soft" desegregation of Muny is an example in the heart of the capital of a Southern state, Texas, of something strikingly different from the massive Southern resistance so widely chronicled during that era, and, significantly, it came nearly four years before *Brown*. It did not happen, by any means, on a blank slate. *Sweatt* had signaled that the federal judiciary was honing in on the South's big problem. What happened at Muny from late 1950 into the spring of 1951 was a first for the South, but, also, an example of how the "first" doesn't have to be absolutely *compelled*, but can be the product of a civic education. The very fact that, along with with being the first, it also was, comparatively speaking, quietly done, without all the sound and fury of other places is what, to my mind, makes it of national significance and worthy of inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The course of desegregation and improved race relations in Austin was by no means smooth and trouble-free in the 1950s and later, but the Muny experience does show that it wasn't unrelievedly bad.

Renea Hicks,  
July 31, 2015

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Jacqueline Jones

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
The University of Texas at Austin

128 Inner Campus Drive • B7000 • Austin, Texas 78712-1739 • 512 471 3261 • FAX 512 475 7222

October 28, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I write in my capacity as a scholar of African-American history in support of the nomination of the Austin, Texas, Lions Municipal Golf Course ("Muny") for National Register of Historic Places status. Certain aspects of this course—including its relation to the nearby black community of Clarksville, the construction of the course, and the social division of labor among the people who worked there—illustrate historical realities of national significance related to African-American life and labor. In this context, the early desegregation of the course illustrates how grassroots civic activism in the wake of *Sweatt v. Painter*, including even youthful disregard of well-established laws governing racial exclusion in public recreational spaces, served to challenge discrimination at the local level.

Muny lies directly west of Clarksville, a ten-block area in West Austin, and an historic black neighborhood that is itself currently on the National Register of Historic Places. The physical proximity of the golf course and the neighborhood is relevant to the histories of both. When Austin Lions Club established Muny in 1924, Clarksville was a city under siege from Austin politicians and developers.

To understand Clarksville, one must go back in time to the period of Reconstruction, immediately after the Civil War. Throughout the South, freedpeople sought refuge from the violence enveloping the countryside, where vengeful former owners used harsh tactics to try to keep black men, women, and children hard at work in the fields. Texas was a particularly violent state in this regard, and Central Texas a particularly violent region of the state. Clarksville was founded by a former slave, a man named Charles Clark, who in 1871 established what was called a freedomtown—a refuge for other freedpeople living in the area and for black in-migrants fleeing the brutality that reigned in the surrounding rural areas. The first black church in Austin, Sweet Home Missionary Baptist, was founded here in the 1870s. Clarksville is one of the oldest surviving settlements of its kind west of the Mississippi. And yet the founding of the town

reveals a key theme of Reconstruction throughout the South—the desire among blacks to achieve autonomy from whites whenever and wherever they could do so.<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning, Clarksville was some distance from downtown Austin; by the early twentieth century, though, city officials, planners and economic developers had come to appreciate the value of the land on which it was built. These men attempted to force out the black population. For example, in 1918, the Austin School Board tried to close the local school, and a decade later the city began to withhold municipal services (such as street paving) from the neighborhood, in an effort to get residents to move to East Austin, a newly designated "Negro District." The history of this beleaguered community, then, illustrates the tremendous challenges faced by freedpeople and subsequent generations of blacks who wanted to control their own productive energies and live as best they could on their own, without white interference. Again, this is a larger, national story about blacks' efforts to create their own communities and cultural institutions in the years after the war.<sup>2</sup>



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Muny is rightly famous because it was the first municipal golf course in the former Confederate states to desegregate, and it did so peacefully. At the same time, the construction of the course illustrates larger truths about the nature of employment available to African American men from the time of emancipation through World War II. During those years for the most part black men and women were barred from factory work, and black women from retail sales or clerical work. The jobs available to blacks were primarily unskilled, ill-paid, and out-of-doors. Thus we see in figure 14 of the formal nomination black workers holding a long chain attached to a tractor; they are probably removing tree stumps. (If the history of tractors in the South is any indication, that vehicle was driven by a white man.)<sup>3</sup>

The construction of Muny involved shoveling and hauling large amounts of dirt (probably by wheelbarrow), removing obstacles such as trees and rocks, and grading the land—all of this to transform a heavily wooded tract into a lovely golf course. It is also probable that black men performed much of the heavy lifting necessary to move limestone building materials around the site, for many black laborers lived nearby and they could be paid less than white men for the same work. This kind of heavy outdoor work was made even more arduous by the intense heat of Austin's summers. Nevertheless, in all likelihood the citizens of Clarksville, for the most part relegated to unskilled labor and domestic service in Austin's private homes, restaurants, or hotels, grasped at the opportunity to make cash wages, no matter how meager. During the Great

---

<sup>1</sup> Nolan Thompson, "Clarksville, Texas (Travis County), *Handbook of Texas Online* <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hpc01>; William D. Carrigan, *The Making of a Lynching Culture: Violence and Vigilantism in Central Texas, 1836-1916* (Urbana, Illinois, 2006); Kenneth W. Howell, ed., *Still an Arena of Civil War: Violence and Turmoil in Reconstruction Texas, 1865-1874* (Denton, Texas, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> John Henneberger, *Clarksville: A Short History and an Historic Tour* (Austin, Texas, 1978); Ki Gray, "A History of Austin's Oldest Neighborhood: Clarksville," *Austin Chronicle* (Feb. 13, 2008); Michael Barnes, "Authentic to the Bone: Old West Austin and Clarksville," *Austin American Statesman*, Jan. 24, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Jacqueline Jones, *American Work: Four Centuries of Black and White Labor* (New York, 1998).

Depression, the federal government (*via* the Works Progress Administration) provided substantial funding to pay for improvements to the course (1937-39), and here again, the wages must have proved a boon for black breadwinners (most of whom would have otherwise been unemployed) in nearby Clarksville. However, further research on this topic is needed; federal works projects administrators in the South were notorious for discriminating against black men and women. The rationale was that black men could always find jobs as sharecroppers, black women could always work as cooks or laundresses for whites. So it is quite possible that the symbiotic relationship between Muny and Clarksville faltered during the 1930s.<sup>4</sup>

Some of Clarksville's black men (teenagers and older) also worked as caddies on the golf course (see the formal nomination, p. 20, note 58; and figure 15), receiving 85 cents for 18 holes and 50 cents for 9 (and double the fee if carrying two bags). These workers had to pay 5 cents for medical care if injured on the job. Figure 15 is evocative in its rendering of a black man caddying for a white woman.

Others have written eloquently about the iconic status of Muny as the first southern golf course peacefully integrated in the early 1950s. That fact alone would warrant the inclusion of the course on the National Register of Historic Places. However, it is significant that two black youths essentially desegregated Muny on their own by trespassing on the course in order to play. This act of defiance echoes the efforts of Dr. Charles Simkins to desegregate the Gillespie Park Golf Course in Greensboro, North Carolina on December 7, 1955; Simkins simply played the course when blacks were not permitted access. The inevitable charges of trespass brought against him for trying to play a round of golf inspired him to become active in the fight for racial equality through the NAACP. For example, he led the way in the court case *Simkins v. Cone*, which led to the desegregation of a private hospital that had been provided public funds.<sup>5</sup>



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Similarly, General Marshall, one of the young caddies from Clarksville who saw black golfers from all over the state come to Muny to play went on to resist segregation in the South after college. Eventually Marshall became a mathematics professor at Huston-Tillotson University, an historically black college in Austin, and the coach of their golf team. Another caddie from Clarksville, William Bacon, became a surgeon in Nashville.

Their youthful experiences at Muny, including witnessing its peaceful and early desegregation, could only help to build a vision of life that would be different from that of the marginalized African American laborers who helped to build Muny in the 1920s, or even from that of their own early lives as caddies for white golfers.<sup>6</sup> In that sense Muny's desegregation was as much a source of pride and hope for them then, as it is today for the entire City of Austin.

---

<sup>4</sup> Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *To Ask for an Equal Chance: African Americans in the Great Depression* (Lanham, Maryland, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Usher, Jess, "The Golfers": African American Golfers of the North Carolina Piedmont and the Struggle for Access, *North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (April 2010): 172-175.

<sup>6</sup> General Marshall notes that after the desegregation it was "good to see some of our own playing golf" at Muny. And the African Americans who played were "businessmen" who were well dressed and "had clubs of their own." They served as "role models" for General Marshall

Muny then, when examined in conjunction with Clarksville's history, tells us much about the social division of labor in the South in the Jim Crow era—the jobs deemed appropriate for black men and the lower pay accorded them. While the jobs provided by the golf course helped to create and sustain vital social and cultural institutions in a freedomtown like Clarksville, in critical respects life there remained isolated from the economic mainstream. Muny's desegregation, when seen in this context, had the effect of disrupting the sense of marginalization that clouded the ambitions of Clarksville's youth.

For young caddies like William Bacon and General Marshall, before African-Americans in the South could ride without restriction on a bus, sit at the lunch counter, or share a public drinking fountain, they could access a golf course in Austin, Texas, as a customer, not as a laborer or a server. Other blacks came from anywhere within driving distance to experience this unprecedented freedom. Certainly relatively few black people (or whites for that matter) played golf at that time; but the proximity of Muny to Clarksville, and the role of black workers in constructing the course and in caddying, brought African Americans to the game in mid-twentieth century Austin. This is why Muny is nationally significant. The desegregation of the site suggests the eagerness of African Americans to partake of all rights and privileges in American life: The exceptional case of Muny proves a larger rule about the baneful effects of prejudice on the aspirations and opportunities of African Americans in general.

The desegregation of Muny — four years before *Brown* — represents the beginning of the unraveling of Jim Crow, and clearly is worthy of both national recognition and scholarly study. To my knowledge, it represents one of the first instances of a southern municipality's disregard for Jim Crow in *any* public facility and certainly the first such instance at a municipal golf course.

The National Register should embrace the site, not only for its obvious place in golf and civil rights history, but as an asset of immense historical and educational value. Muny is a living civil rights landscape that retains its historical integrity. It is as much of a piece of the American story — and potentially as powerful as a teachable experience — as the historic battlefields we protect and embrace.

These are themes that resonate within the broad sweep of American history. For all these reasons, then, I believe that Muny is nationally significant and fully deserving of National Register of Historic Places status.

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Jones

Professor and Chair of the History Department  
Mastin Gentry White Professor of Southern History/  
Walter Prescott Webb Chair in History and Ideas  
University of Texas, Austin

---

and the other African American caddies who worked at the course. Save Muny Interview of General Marshall, October 25, 2015. "These [African American] golfers came with their state-of-the-art equipment, nattily attired, some of whom used caddies and tipped them well." Remarks of General Marshall, Muny State Historical Marker Dedication Ceremony, October 28, 2009. If anything, Marshall's remarks suggest a correlation between the desire for equal rights and an aspiration for economic justice, the opportunity to participate in the economic mainstream of American life. See Gavin Wright, *Sharing the Prize: The Economics of the Civil Rights Movement in the American South* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2013).

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

**Sanford Levinson**

## Lions Municipal Golf Course Statement of Significance

Although, as a non-golfer, I don't have the personal familiarity with the Municipal Golf Course in Austin, I have been truly educated by discovering the rich history of the Course with regard to desegregation. As a professor of constitutional law, I was intrigued to discover many years ago that one of the first law suits filed after the Supreme Court's momentous decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* involved the Baltimore, Maryland municipal golf course, which was then segregated. It was not, of course, that the city provided truly "separate but equal" courses for whites and African-Americans; instead, African-Americans were forced to play on inconvenient days and inconvenient times. The Court held, without even writing a full-scale opinion, that the principle of *Brown* applied to the golf course as well. Given that Texas scarcely led the way in moving toward a more inclusive vision of American society—at least until Lyndon B. Johnson, fully aware of the costs of segregation to Texas and the nation, led the way as President—it is truly noteworthy and worthy of commemoration that Austin *did* lead the way with regard to desegregating MUNY. Indeed, it is important to realize (and note) that Austin made this move even before *Brown*. This is certainly worth recognizing in the National Historic Register. So many of the commemorations in recent years have involved shameful events, like the oppressive violence at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma. It would be good to be reminded, whenever visiting the Municipal Golf Course for whatever reason (including, most importantly, to play golf), that it was the site for a nationally significant decision that we can truly be proud of. I'm happy, therefore, to endorse its inclusion in the National Historic Registry.

Sanford Levinson,

W. St. John Garwood and W. St. John Garwood Jr. Centennial Chair in Law, University of Texas Law School;  
Professor of Government, University of Texas at Austin

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

## Robert J. Robertson

Quote from statement by Robert J. Robertson on August 9, 2015

Author of *Fair Ways: How Six Black Golfers Won Civil Rights in Beaumont, Texas* (Texas A&M 2005)

Established by the Austin Lions Club in 1924, and transferred to the city of Austin in 1936, the Lions Municipal Golf Course has enriched the civic, racial, and recreational history of Austin for more than 90 years. Especially important in this history is the desegregation of "the Muny" golf course in 1950, a story of importance not only for Austin, but also for Texas and the Nation. And in this history, please let the record show that "the Muny" is also widely known as "the Lions."

Certainly, "the Muny" (aka "the Lions") golf course in Austin is a historic place. It was here, we believe, that black golfers in the South first won the right to play a previously "all white" public golf course. It is an important and early part of the national story about fighting Jim Crow Segregation, when during the 1940s and 1950s, black and white Americans began fighting racial discrimination and segregation that white Americans had imposed against black Americans for more than sixty years. For example: President Harry Truman ordered the desegregation of US military forces; Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr. and other black citizens organized "direct action" campaigns and carried out peaceful demonstrations against segregation; Thurgood Marshall and other NAACP lawyers along with black plaintiffs filed desegregation law suits in Federal courts; and the US Supreme Court issued decisions outlawing segregation on a case-by-case basis.

Early in the NAACP litigation story was the case, *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), where the Supreme Court ordered the admission of Heman Sweatt, a black applicant to the previously all-white University of Texas law school in Austin. This case was decided in 1950, the same year that the Austin "Muny" course was desegregated by "direct action," when two unnamed black golfers played "the first round" on a date not recorded. The Austin mayor and other city officials conceded the desegregation of the golf course itself, but later constructed a separate lounge or "club house" for the black golfers, thus continuing a more limited form of Jim Crow segregation.

The national importance of the desegregation of "the Muny" golf course was highlighted in 1953 when Joe Louis, the black boxing champion turned professional golfer, came to Austin and played a symbolic round at "the Muny." In those days, Louis was a national golfing figure, as he was campaigning for the desegregation of the Professional Golf Association and admission of black golfers to PGA Tournaments. At the same time, Louis, Charles Sifford, and other black golfers were avid members of a black organization, the United Golfers Association, and played "black" tournaments in Philadelphia, Chicago, and other cities.

In 1954, four years after "the Muny" course was desegregated by the City of Austin, desegregation of public golf courses was accomplished elsewhere in Texas. As outlined in my book, *Fairways* (Texas A & M Press, 2005), courses in Fort Worth, Houston, and Beaumont were opened to black players. On June 26, 1954, the Fort Worth Negro Golf Association won a partial victory, when the city opened one of five municipal courses to black players. In Houston, in an ongoing Federal case, *Beal v. Holcomb* (1954), the city of Houston conceded victory to black plaintiffs and on June 2, 1954, opened public golf courses to black golfers after the Supreme Court issued its desegregation ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* on May 17, 1954. And in Beaumont, US District Judge Lamar Cecil cited the *Brown* decision and issued a ruling in *Fayson v. Beard* (1954) in favor of black golfers and their NAACP lawyers, and on September 13, 1954 ordered the immediate and complete desegregation of the Tyrrell Park Public Golf Course. Some whites threatened violence against the black lawyers and black plaintiffs, while others proposed creation of an all-white private club to take over and manage the public golf course, but in the end, the City complied with the ruling issued by Judge Cecil, and the Tyrrell Park course in Beaumont was fully desegregated.

Over the years, during 1955-1959, when I was a student at the University of Texas, I had the pleasure numerous times of playing "the Lions"(aka "the Muny") course with Robert B. Wall, then of Beaumont and now of Houston, and in recent years, I have enjoyed playing the course with Lipscomb Norvell, once of Beaumont and now of Austin. When playing "the Lions," I've always known it was a good course, complete with handsome fairways and greens, and a friendly pro-shop, but until recently I did not realize that "the Lions" is a "historic place."



Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

---

## Paul Stekler

*Eyes on the Prize*, a television documentary I worked on as the producer of two of its films, focused on the civil rights movement from 1954 through the mid 1980s. For much of the period, well into the 1960s, including the murder of Martin Luther King in 1968, it was a period filled with segregationist intransigence, racial hatred, harsh resistance by local officials including police dogs, tear gas, beatings, bombings and abductions followed by disappearances ending with recovered bodies. The courage of the movement was often matched by the vitriolic response of local officials seeking to squelch the plea for simple justice contained in the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 US 483 (1954) and the federal government actions, spurred on by the bravery of civil rights movement people, that followed.

How extraordinary is it then to see how Austin, Texas, a municipality in a southern state of the old confederacy, undertook, through quiet official action, to desegregate a golf course in late 1950 and early 1951. This was then followed by the desegregation of the public library system in late 1951 and the desegregation of a fire station in 1952. What drove a city government to undertake these decisions at such an early date well before the separate but equal doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 US 537 (1896) was overturned by the Supreme Court in *Brown*? The answer of course was *Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 US 629 (1950), the Supreme Court's shot across the bow of the Southern segregationists that integrated the University of Texas Law School based in Austin. How did separate but equal, particularly for public recreational spaces like a golf course, make sense after *Sweatt*? At long last Jim Crow itself was at the end of a rope and the Austin City Council was smart enough to understand it.

This action by the Austin City Council was historic and perfectly captures the broad patterns of our country's aspirations for racial justice that characterizes our nation's struggle with race even today. Before *Brown* and the rest of the South, Austin was willing through official action to desegregate Muny. And they did it in a quiet way that was more reflective of common sense than great courage although some of that was involved as well. It is time to acknowledge the national significance of their wisdom and courage and enter Muny in the National Register of Historic Places.

I've spent much of my life making documentary films about our country's path from racial oppression to the level of racial acceptance that led to the election of an African-American President. The cliché is that those who forget the past are doomed to repeat that past. Muny is an important part of our shared past in Austin, Texas and needs to be remembered, as both an historical moment in the long process to break racial segregation and as a living memorial, where people can learn about that history and still afford the same round of golf that those first African-American golfers enjoyed in 1950.

Dr. Paul Stekler  
Chair, Department of Radio-Television-Film  
The University of Texas at Austin

Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Travis County, Texas

## United States Golf Association

United States Golf Association  
PO Box 708, 77 Liberty Corner Rd., Far Hills, NJ 07931-0708  
T 908.234.2300 F 908.234.9687



August 13, 2015

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Washington, DC

To Whom It May Concern:

As the national governing body for golf in the United States and its territories, the United States Golf Association has been dedicated to the preservation and advancement of the true spirit of the game of golf since 1894. We foster the best interests of the game and champion a community that is accessible to all, regardless of race, age, gender, religious beliefs or physical ability, for we truly believe that a game that is open to all is a game that will prosper for generations to come.

A central function of the USGA's mission is the preservation and celebration of the game's rich history, which we accomplish through the USGA Museum. Established in 1936, the USGA Museum is proud to be the nation's oldest sports museum. In 2010, in partnership with the PGA of America, the USGA Museum formed The African-American Golf History Archive to recognize the many contributions that African Americans have made to golf for more than a century. One important goal of the Archive is to honor and celebrate the compelling stories and inspirational individuals who advanced the game during a time of racial inequality.

***We are writing today to offer our strongest support for the nomination and inclusion of the Lions Municipal Golf Course, located in Austin, Texas, in the National Register of Historic Places.*** Based on research conducted by the USGA Museum, as well as the work of scholars within the academic community, we believe that the historical significance of this municipal golf course warrants our firm endorsement. Specifically, this research suggests that Lions Municipal in late 1950 became the first course in the South to desegregate shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Sweatt v. Painter*. This was more than three years before the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. This action to desegregate Lions Municipal gave African-American golfers access to the game that was rare in the South; moreover, it marked an important milestone in opening up the game to players of all races.

The history of the African-American golf experience is filled with men and women whose passion for the game transcended many obstacles placed before them during periods of significant social injustice; we believe that the Lions Municipal Golf Course has earned a special place in this history.

We thank you for your kind consideration of Lions Municipal for inclusion in the National Register.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. O'Toole, Jr.  
President

Mike Davis  
Executive Director

For the good of the game®