

A SLICE OF HISTORY

Our History

Just imagine the scene at the Arsenal Island Golf Course and Clubhouse in its early years, beginning in 1897. Imagine 19th Century Soldiers moving boulders and earth to create bunkers and sandpits and horse-drawn mowers grooming the course. Imagine Club members and spectators arriving in horse-drawn carriages wearing their 1800s finery.

It all began over 115 years ago, when Colonel Stanhope E. Blunt, the Rock Island Arsenal Commander, learned about the game of golf from a fellow officer. Blunt recruited several officers to form Rock Island Arsenal Golf Club, and they held an inaugural event to introduce the game to the Quad Cities.



Colonel Stanhope E. Blunt, founder of Rock Island Arsenal Golf Club, 1897



Colonel King presents the tournament trophy to R. C. Scott.



Women were included in the game of golf at Arsenal Island from the very first game — two decades before women had the vote.

In the course's first year, Blunt designed five holes, which were constructed by U.S. Soldiers. They finished the initial nine holes in 1898 and marked the completion of the 18-hole course in 1902. With a convenient out-and-back, links style arrangement in the Scottish tradition, spectators followed play from the comfort of their carriages.

Following a devastating fire at the original clubhouse and stables, Colonel Blunt built a new \$17,000 clubhouse in 1906 to host social

and sporting events. In 1920, the club added the Grand Ballroom, a popular place for members to gather.

In 1997, Rock Island Arsenal Golf Club commemorated its centennial. Following its acquisition by the U.S. Army's Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Directorate in 2010, the Arsenal Island Golf Course and Clubhouse marked another major milestone when it opened to the public. It will forever be known as the Quad Cities' first and most historic golf course.

Colonel Blunt rebuilt the clubhouse in 1906 after a devastating fire. Here it is in 1920, following the addition of the Grand Ballroom.

