

McKown Tavern

The old McKown tavern on the King's highway stood on what today is the 18th green of the Albany Country Club. In another memo, written earlier, I stated otherwise, quoting B. F. Witbeck as having said it was near Tee #7 (if I remember correctly). The correction is made by Mr. Davis, green-master, Albany Country Club, who personally took me to the one time tavern site, now a part of the 18th green.

On Saturday morning, October 12, I visited the Country Club driving over with John J. Vrooman, the capable photographer, as my guest. Vincent J. Schaefer, his wife, and two young children, were on the trip, in the Schaefer car. We had spent a couple hours at the Verreberg, tracing old locations, roads, etc. and photographing, and drove to the Country Club at 11 am. We inquired for the manager or the Green's Keeper, but neither was at the club at the moment. We then saw the Caddy-Master, put our question to him, and got the same answer as given by Witbeck, and then proceeded to the site (i.e. the wrong site) designated by Witbeck. There several photographs were made of the old roadway, the countryside and the supposed tavern site which now turns out to be the site of the old Enos place - the Enos family owned considerable land at one time which is now a part of the Country Club.

We sought to trace the course of the King's highway westward from the Enos place but did not succeed. Accordingly I put Vrooman into Schaefer's car, and proceeded alone to Fuller Road. Working men there directed me to

Madison Ave., as the site of the old road. So I proceeded to "Madison Ave." which I quickly recognized as old Lydius Street of the pine plains as I have visited the area some three years before. I stopped at the corner of Fuller Road and Lydius St. and made inquiries of a man standing alongside of a truck partly loaded with garbage, which truck had evidently just driven into the yard. I did not catch the man's name. I told him my mission and asked if he knew where Mr. Fry was - Mr. Fry resided on the hill opposite, the entrance to whose grounds was posted. I had been to Fry's house a few moments before, had approached the hill by road "B", returned to my automobile, and approached by road "A", which, I found had to garage or barn and the rear of his house. Finding no one at home, I made an endeavor to trace the old King's highway through the woods on the posted grounds, in time locating the course of the roadway among the trees, followed it, and came out possibly 500 - 1000 feet beyond at a wire fence, which was posted "Greens Beyond", etc. Directly beyond the fence was one of the Club's greens. It was the closing of this road, by the Country Club, that caused no end of bad feelings on the pine plains. (1) The reputed old road is clearly marked by old ruts and wear and a ditch alongside. It is the width of a single wagon track and is grown up to young trees. It abruptly ends at the fence after following a S.S.E. course.

(1) This turned out to be a later route, the original King's Highway going south of it a hundred feet or more. WBE

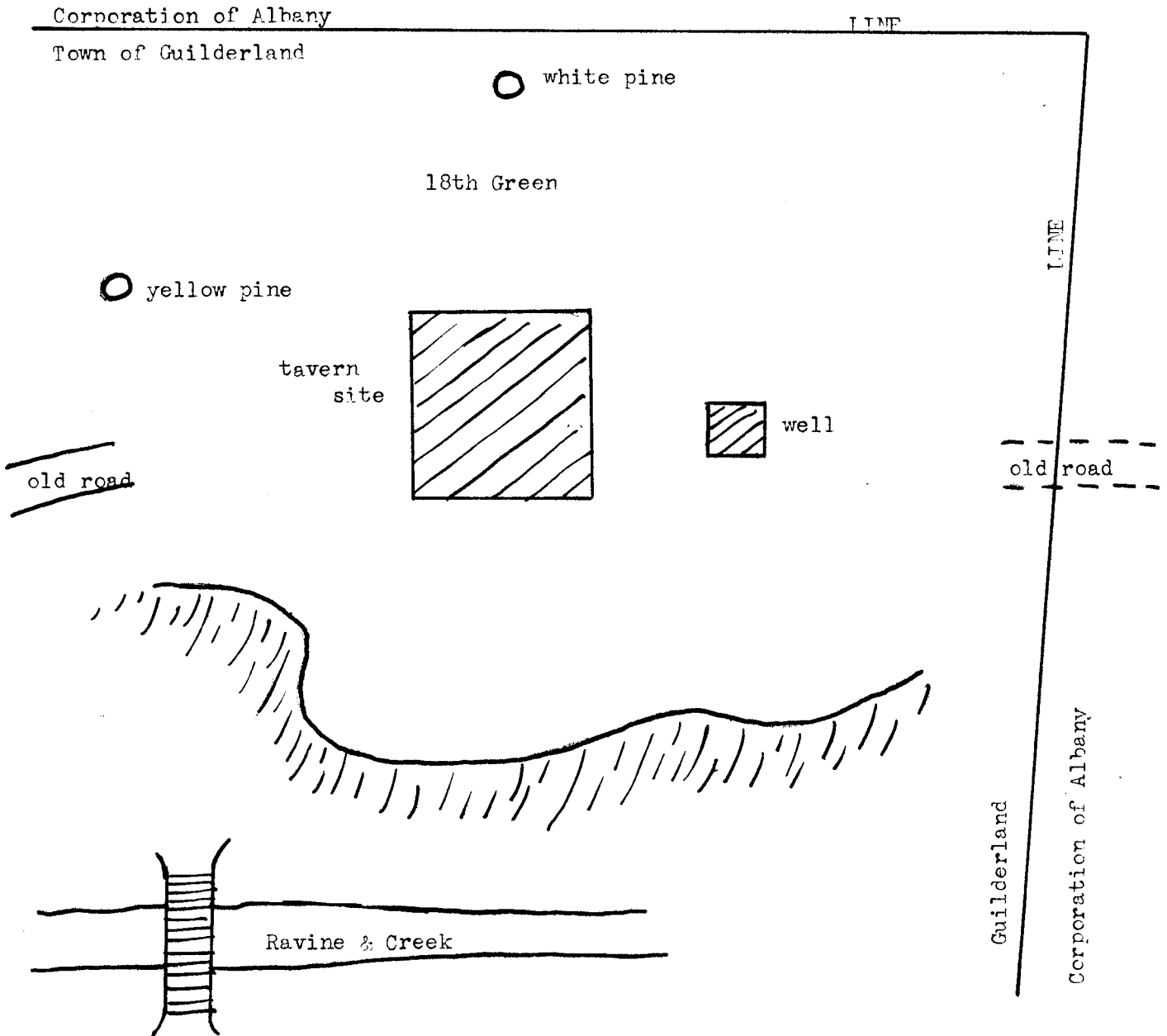
I was given the name of a Mrs. Gebhardt who lives on the Pine Plains, in the second street West of Fuller Road and leading southerly from "Madison Avenue"; also the name of a Mr. Enos who lives in Washington Ave. east of Fuller Road, who is over 80 years. Mrs. Gebhardt resided at one time in the old tavern building. The Enos family at one time owned considerable land now owned by the Country Club.

The people at the N.W. corner of Fuller Road and "Madison Ave." were very courteous, I received an invitation to call later, when the father would tell me pine plains traditions handed down by his grandfather.

It was this man who corrected me as to the location of the tavern site. It was he who directed me to another site, across the creek back of the Club House. He offered to accompany me to the place later, but I did not delay long. I returned to the Club property the following Monday (Oct. 14). I met Mr. Davis, the greenskeeper, who was at the Club garage. He was interested in my inquiry, we crossed the bridge over the creek to the 18th green. Almost directly ahead of us was a yellow pine. To the right of the pine, a short distance back from where the land sharply drops to the water level, he pointed out a slight depression in the green. He identified the spot as the site of the ancient McKown tavern which in the late 1880's became the first club house of the Club. If I remember correctly, Mr. Davis told me the old building was torn down about forty years ago. Repeat-

edly, since then, the sod has been removed, and the depression caused by sinking ground, filled in. Mr. Davis said the ground would fall about one foot in two years. He thought this was due to the springs which abounded underground all about the old tavern site. A similar depression was noticeable at the site of the old tavern well close by.

All these taverns were located on overflowing streams or springs it seems!

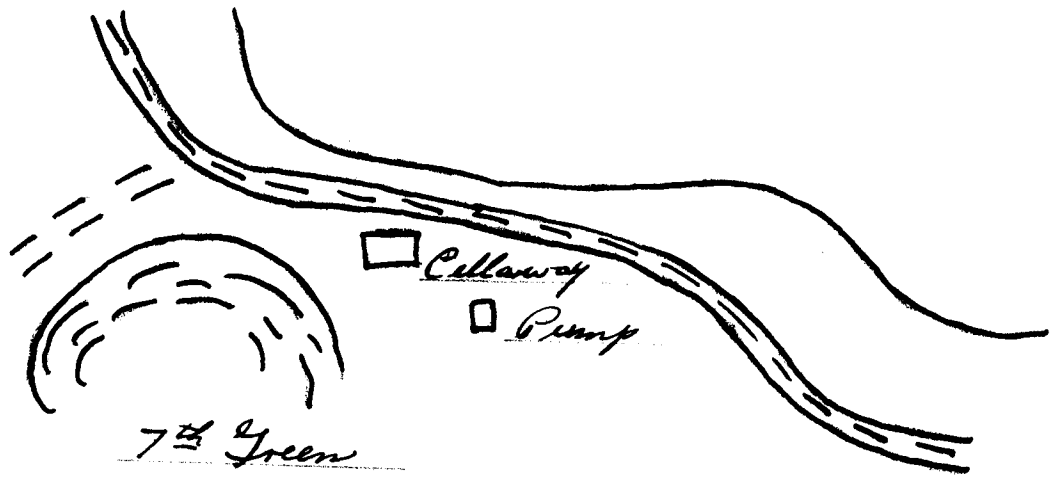


Mr. Davis called my attention to two old roads, one on each side, running into woods. He wondered if the two were parts of the old highway on which the tavern was situated. He also called attention to the road past the Enos place (Green #7).

I was called upon to leave, as it was late afternoon. I returned on Thursday (Oct. 17) and spent some little time on the road at the eastern end of the 18th green, taking compass readings etc! I feel quite certain this was a part of the old road, probably the continuation of Lydius St. I expect to return. The other road section is yet to be visited.

W. B. Efner

10/17/1940



ENOS' PLACE