

Hackensack's 12th Hole: Rich in History

By Bill Brightly

We all know that our twelfth hole is a Redan hole, but do we really know what that means? Do we know how the hole came to be built on so many golf courses in America? Do we know where the first known Redan in Scotland got its name? Our 12th hole represents so much more than a 184 yard golf hole with a sloping green! Would you be surprised to know that the hole's origins go back 150 years to the city of Sevastopol in Russia, where the British and French for a year-long battle against the Russians in the Crimean War?

Redan holes were inspired by a specific type of military fortification having V-shaped walls presenting a salient angle towards the point of expected attack. The word itself comes from Old French meaning "jagged notch" as in teeth of a saw. One of the most famous Redans was in Sevastopol, built by the Russians as they defended the city from a year-long attack in 1854. The British and French bombed the fort day after day, and the Russians would miraculously make repairs at night. It is believed that 100,000 Russians died defending the city, as many as 1500 per day, until they finally evacuated in 1855.

The first known Redan golf hole is believed to have been built by David Strath at the West Links at North Berwick in Scotland. However, the hole did not get its name until 1868 when John Whyte Melville, a retired British Officer, remarked how similar the 15th hole was to the fortifications he faced in the Crimean War!

Original Redan at North Berwick



Existing Redan at North Berwick



C.B. Macdonald so admired the hole that he would build it at the National Golf Links, Piping Rock, and all of his courses.

Seth Raynor and Charles Banks, disciples of Macdonald, would also build superb renditions of the hole, and HGC is fortunate to have one of the best!

The Redan at National



The Redan at Piping Rock

