



Chasing Dreams in the Boondocks: A Golf Course Comes to Life

Bill Haney

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No one who thought about it twice would move into a century-old house on a failed farm with a mysterious history — just to pursue a quixotic quest to bring a childhood dream to life. No one with any sense would try to build a golf course by hand the old-fashioned way. Not on the slenderest of shoestrings. And certainly not by himself with only a young family to help.

But that's exactly what Bill Haney did.

Chasing Dreams in the Boondocks is the story of a family transplanted from a comfortable college town to a rundown popcorn farm in rural Michigan, "...all because I had to build a golf course," the author admits.

He had no money beyond a modest income as a writer. No formal training as a golf course architect and little experience with construction equipment. His greatest assets were a supportive and resourceful wife and four adventurous and helpful kids (the eldest aged six). Still he was determined to fashion a championship-length golf course on a failed farm that held secrets that had already destroyed many dreams and lives.

What Haney found in the quiet Michigan countryside was far more than he had bargained for. His goal had been to discover the ultimate golf course hidden in those gentle rolling acres, to "restore the land to the way the glacier left it and then build into it a course that fit so naturally it seemed it had always been there." As he went about discovering that, he began to sense that the old house, barns, and land held secrets only vaguely whispered about, mysteries unsolved for generations.

What started as a monumental solo task for one family grew into something greater. One by one, a collection of engaging characters— neighboring farmers, village craftsmen, and area businessmen—put their hands in "to help this fella realize his dream."

In those four years of fighting freakish weather, coping with a growing mountain of debt, and fending off other demons, Haney learned that his wife, children, and new friends taught him more and brought more to the adventure than he could ever have imagined.

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