

ELLIS MAPLES: LOOKING BACK

by Joan O'Donnell

One of the most famous golf course architects in the Carolinas, Ellis Maples was born in Pinehurst, North Carolina, and as a boy worked on the golf course during the summer months. His father was construction superintendent and greenskeeper at Pinehurst for forty-eight years. His brother, Henson, was superintendent for thirty years. Ellis Maples' son, Dan, is a golf course architect like his father. The rest of the family tree has its roots set as deeply in the most ancient game.

For our annual look back, we went out to Eagle Nest Golf Club in North Myrtle Beach and talked to our most distinguished golf course architect. How was it at Pinehurst in the old days?

According to Maples, land clearing in those days was by brute force. Approximately 150 workers were employed to clear fairways and remove trees. Trees were felled by machete and hand-held pick. The average wage in that period was 7½ cents per hour. Men had to work 10 hours a day, plus 5 hours on Saturday.

Frank Maples first employed his son Ellis as a water boy. This involved carrying a bucket around with one dipper and providing the workers with a drink. Ellis recalls the buckets were heavy and the sun hot, and the further the courses were built away from the club house the further he had to walk.

During his years as assistant greens-keeper, he supervised the building of sand tees edged with native wire grass. Wire grass is akin to love grass, found on most courses today. In 1929 it was dug up piece by piece from a field and transplanted around the course. It gave an effect similar to the Scottish courses in the British Isles today.

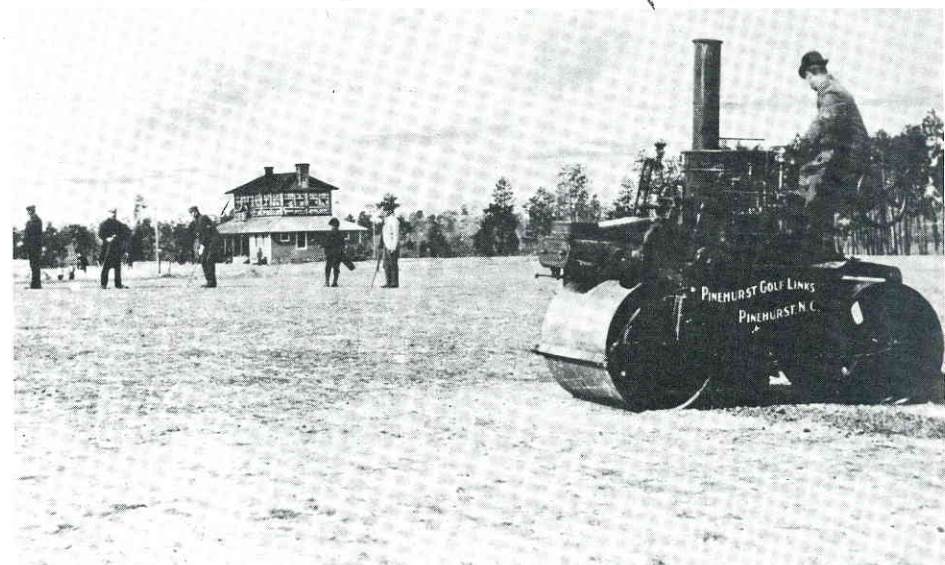
People teed off from square sand tees, complete with a sand box. (In those days you made your tee by taking sand from the box. There was no such thing as a wooden tee.) The fairways were rolled daily from tee to green as everything was sand; tees, fairways and greens. To make sand traps



Carving out one of the first fairways at Pinehurst.



Special scoop pan on wheels to dig out trap.



They rolled everything from tee to green.

required one horse and two men with a dragging device attached to it. The device lifted $\frac{1}{8}$ yard of earth with the two men operating different levers; one lever dug, one lifted. Compared with today's methods, 21 yards of earth can be removed at one time within moments. To protect the fairways the mules and horses had special covers designed to fit the animal's hooves. A fascinating sight must have been the ox drawing a cart with a water barrel on it. The barrel was sunk into the ground next to a green and this provided the water system to that green. The water was replenished daily by water from a larger barrel.

The reason for square tees and greens in the 1920's was that the leveling and grading implements were only designed for straight runs. Apart from the fascinating slides and pictures that Ellis still retains, one must admire the gentleman for his memory. He talked of the past fifty years almost as yesterday. Among his most prized collection of slides is an original score card from Pinehurst.

PINEHURST, N. C. - GOLF SCORE CARD.

| DATE | High Hopes 355 yards | Grove 375 yards | Dinky 116 yards | Deer Park 310 yards | Ridge 213 yards | Baron 386 yards | Nursery 487 yards | Punch Row 213 yards | Wind Mill 355 yards | OUT | Dam 325 yards | Ghost Walk 133 yards | Helen Hunt 317 yards | Westward Ho 288 yards | Wilderness 515 yards | Cross Roads 360 yards | Meadows 505 yards | Easy One 152 yards | Home Run 370 yards | IN | Total |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----|-------|
| No. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | | |
| Bogey Class A | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 39 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 41 | 80 |
| Holes on which H'd'p is All'd. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Players Score | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Opponent Score | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Player | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Out | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| In | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Handicap | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Net | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

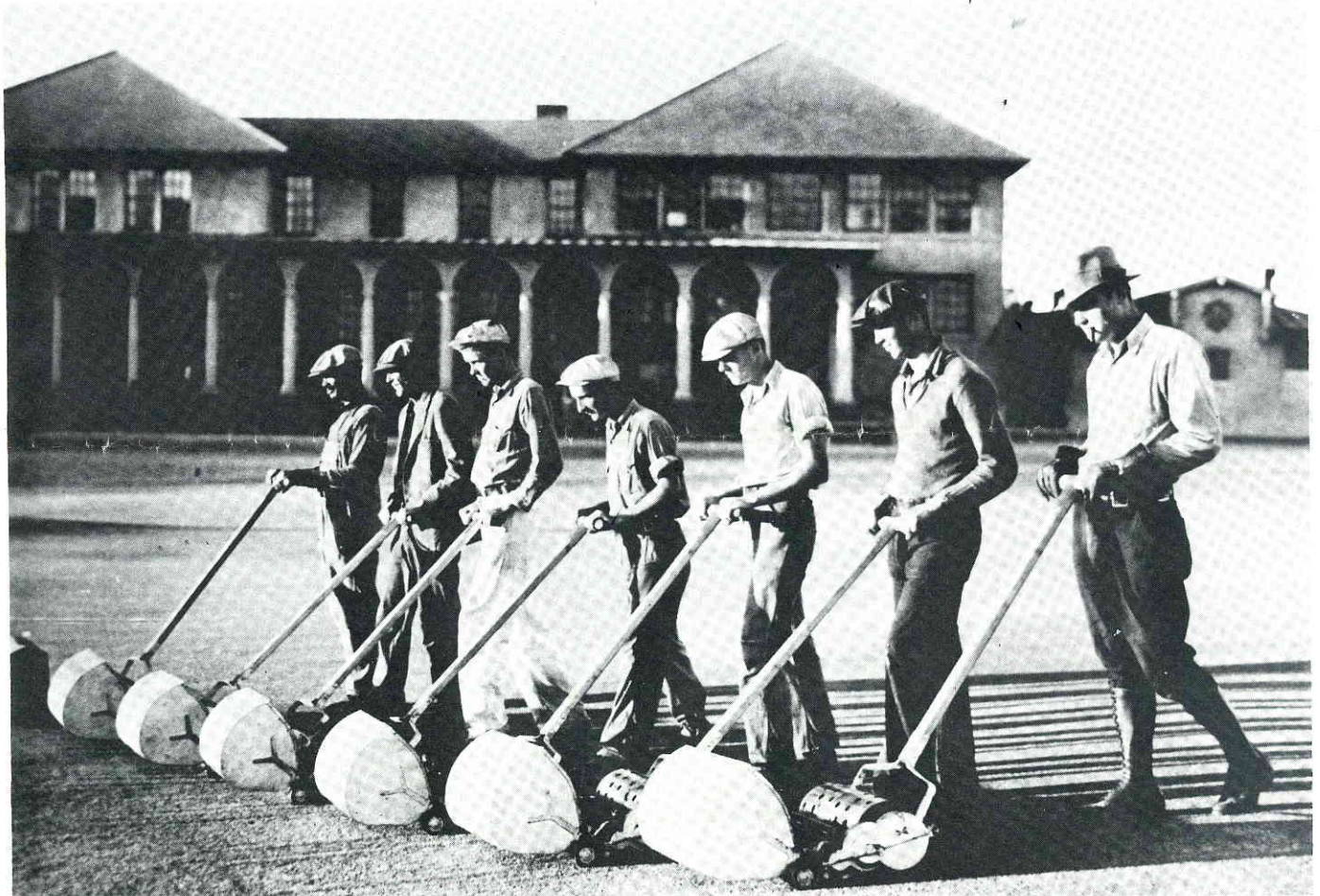
It is the duty of every Golfer to replace, or see replaced turf cut in the act of playing

Length Out, 2,790 Yards
Length In, 2,982 "
Total - - 5,772 "

..... Signature of Player.
 Signature of Opponent.

One of the initial Pinehurst scorecards. Note short total yardage.

Mowing the new grass green at Pinehurst.



Pinehurst, long ago. See page 21.

