

A large, dark wooden log cabin with a stone foundation and a porch, surrounded by trees and a lawn. The cabin features a prominent porch with a stone base and a dark wooden railing. A large tree with white blossoms stands in the foreground, partially obscuring the porch. The background is filled with tall, thin trees under a clear blue sky.

Tryon Country Club

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The First 50 Years



TRYON COUNTRY CLUB:  
THE FIRST 50 YEARS

## THE BEGINNINGS

Tryon Country Club owes its existence to a chance encounter between strangers in Asheville in the 1880s...

Charles Erskine and Emma Payne married in Racine, Wisconsin in 1873. He was 26, she was 19. Emma was the daughter of Englishman Alfred Payne who supported the family painting oil portraits and instructing at the the Art Institute of Chicago. Charles' father Massena was a Massachusetts carpenter who planned to get rich in the California gold rush but wound up in Racine instead. Massena went to work for the J.I. Case Threshing Machine Co., eventually rising to the position of superintendent and partner of the world's largest manufacturer of mechanical threshers. Charles followed him into

the business and became treasurer when the partnership was dissolved and Case was incorporated in 1880.

Charles always despised Wisconsin winters and when chilly air descended over the Great Lakes he began packing his family on the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway en route to the newly developing resort of Pasadena, California. The Erskinés purchased land in the Golden State but Emma never cottoned to the snooty high society that took root in Pasadena. In 1885, Emma talked Charles into forsaking California to see what the western North Carolina mountains had to offer as a winter retreat.

Asheville was also emerging as a vacation destination at this time, but less as a luxury resort than a place where doctors recommended fresh mountain air. Emma Erskine was not much more thrilled to be spending her holidays in the company of struggling consumptives as she had been with stuck-up socialites. It was in Asheville that a stranger suggested the McAbey House





**Southern Railway #4056 tackling the legendary Saluda Grade.**

*(photo courtesy of the Frank Ardrey Collection)*

outside a little village called Tryon.

It is likely that the Erskines had never heard of Tryon. Not many folks had. The town was not incorporated and formal streets laid out until 1885. The railroad had only arrived eight years earlier, and only with the greatest of difficulty. After decades of talk the Asheville & Spartanburg Railroad finally broke ground in Polk County to send trains across the Blue Ridge Mountains. To reach the town of Saluda required a three-mile stretch of track that would become the

steepest standard-gauge mainline in the United States - by a lot. Leaving Tryon, the Saluda Grade rises 4.7 feet every 100 feet in length. To find tracks as steep you have to go all the way to New Mexico and there the grade is only 3.5 percent.

It would take five years and necessitate the use of large scale convict labor in North Carolina for the first time to complete the Saluda Grade. So many workers were maimed

and killed in building the railroad that a special investigation by the state legislature would need to be called. The workers camped down below, in Tryon, on the site where one day golf balls would fly and golfers would try to keep rounds from going off the tracks.

The first train steamed up the mountain on July 4, 1878. The Saluda Grade was the only place in America where trains went faster going uphill than they did going downhill. Sitting at the bottom of the notorious grade Tryon became an ideal place to stop and allow workmen to hose down howling brakes and maybe grab a refreshment. It was here, just north of the village, that Leland Reid McAboy operated his guest house.

A preacher's son, McAboy entered the Presbyterian ministry himself in Pittsburgh. McAboy became active in the petroleum business during America's first great oil boom in western Pennsylvania in the 1860s which enabled him to move his ailing family to the Tryon Valley in 1869. McAboy purchased the homestead of Columbus Mills,



**Tryon was a railroad town from the beginning.**





**The McAboy House, in front of  
Tryon Mountain, circa 1890.**

*(photo courtesy of the Philadelphia Free Library)*

who had been a major player in the formation of Polk County in 1855, tacked on a third story, and welcomed guests to his inn until his death in 1885 at the age of 69.

By the time the Erskines arrived at the McAboy House there were six trains stopping daily at the Tryon depot. In addition to the inns in town, along Trade Street were a scattering of houses, a couple of stores and a livery stable. Writers and correspondents were beginning to spread the attractions of the area's "Thermal Belt" - a meteorological phenomenon that sees

mountainside temperatures at Tryon's 1,200-foot elevation remain warmer than points both higher and lower; lower because colder air is trapped in the valley.

Indeed, the lack of vine-killing frosts made the area renowned for growing prized grapes. The story goes that the Southern Railway's *Carolina Special* did not stop at little Tryon on its initial runs. The locals began flagging down the train and serving pas-

sengers some of its flavorful "Tryon Grape" wine. The fame of "Tryon Grapes" echoed across the nation and Tryon remained a much-anticipated stop for the *Carolina Special* until its final run in 1968.

Charles and Emma Erskine were indeed enchanted by the Pacolet Valley. Charles was soon scouting locations for a family winter residence. In the end he settled on land not far from the McAboy House, closing on his new property on July 12, 1892. More land was purchased and Richard Sharp Smith, an architect from England who was retained to supervise construction of the Biltmore Estate, was consulted on a new house. In the winter of 1897 the Erskines spent their first season in their rustic stone manor house, known as Lynncote.

The Erskines quickly became active in their new community, building a schoolhouse and a teacher's cottage. They financed the Congregational Church, designed by son Hal. Another son, Ralph, was instrumental in bringing electric power to the town.



**Tryon's climate in the "Thermal Belt" was  
ideal for growing grapes and playing golf  
365 days a year.**

Charles directed the construction of a three-mile road through his property which eventually became Lynn Road, SR 108. Erskine money fueled construction of a new building for the Lanier Library.

Emma Erskine meanwhile was making Lynncote the center of social and artistic life in Tryon. For her part, Emma painted watercolors and wrote books of poetry. She penned a novel, *When the Gates Lift Up Their Heads*, in 1901 and when her second novel, *The Mountain Girl*, was published it was serialized in *The Ladies Home Journal*. The popular story of a young doctor who comes to the area to be away from the hustle and bustle of a large city practice in Canada eventually went through 13 printings.



Lynncote, the original Erskine home in Lynn.

Charles Erskine died in 1908, in his 62nd year. The family home in Racine was sold and Lynncote became the full-time Erskine residence. Emma inherited her husband's land holdings and she was about to add another title to her bulging civic resume in Tryon - real estate developer.

## EARLY GOLF IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

The first golf clubs in America did not form until the 1880s. The first golfers were exclusively repatriated Scotsmen or American businessmen who had been to Scotland and returned with a few clubs and balls. The game was so intricately associated with Scotland that any Scot in the States named Willie was considered a golf expert and recruited to teach the game. Such was the case in Asheville when a fellow remembered as “McNorton” was observed banging balls around a field in West Asheville.

Among those intrigued were Joseph J. McCloskey and Thomas Cheesborough who had encountered golf while a medical student in Edinburgh. The young men were manager and master of hounds, respectively, at the Swannanoa Hunt Club. It so happens

that farmers in West Asheville were raising a fuss about the fox hunts tearing up their fields. The fox population was crumbling anyway so maybe golf holes could be a solution to fox holes. Golf indeed was a hit and a five-hole course was soon hacked out of the hilly terrain. In 1894 the Country Club of Asheville was chartered as the first golf club in the Old North State.

In 1901, *Harper's Official Golf Guide* listed only nine official courses in North Carolina. By then the new game of golf had become the province of the wealthy. Sometimes rich landowners simply built courses on their estates to play. One of the first things Captain Ellison Adger Smyth did after purchasing Connemara in Flat Rock in 1900 was to set about building a golf course on the property. Workers recruited horses and oxen to pull the drag pans to create the fairways



**Ellison Adger Smyth built the first golf course in Henderson County on his estate that is now the Carl Sandburg National Historic Site - here his daughter drives away.**

and wielded shovels and mattocks to hack out and level sites for tees and greens. In those early days of American golf (the first United States Open had only been played five years earlier) both the tees and greens were composed of packed sand laid atop hard clay. The work was carried out between 1900 and 1906. In the end there were nine tees and eight greens that made up Henderson County's first golf course.

But more often golf courses were built to attract the wealthy traveler. The Mountain Park Hotel in Hot Springs carved out a seven-hole course for visitors that was considered the first golf course in the Southeast. Up in Henderson County, the *French Broad Hustler* reported in 1908, "Hendersonville, next summer, at Kanuga Lake, will have golf links unsurpassed in this country, amidst surroundings of such wonderful natural beauty that no other place in the world may be compared with them. Some of the best known players of this country will be here next summer for the great golf tournament to be held at the lake and the nine-hole course will be the equal of any in the country."

The first golf course in Polk County was hotel-based. David Edwin Stearns was an Ohio quarryman said to have invented gang saws used to cut massive slabs of sandstone into portable sizes. In his 50s Stearns bought a gold mine at Skyuka Creek and moved to Polk County. Several years later, in 1894, Stearns built the Skyuka Hotel on White Oak Mountain, a rambling white clapboard guest house visible for miles.

Stearns and his half-brother Aaron Samuel French went on to purchase the McAboy House. French was a pioneer in the development of steel suspension springs for railroad cars who came to the area from Pittsburgh when he bought the Tryon Hosiery Mill on the Pacolet River in 1898. The new owners renovated the original structure, and added a hydraulic elevator and a casino for entertainment in the back. Modern amenities such as steam heat, running water, and gaslights were provided for guests. The McAboy was re-christened the Mimosa Inn for the abundance of graceful mimosa trees that grew on the property along the Skyuka Creek.

While in New York in 1901 the 78-year old French made the acquaintance of the 22-year old Robert Albert Leonard. Leonard had arrived in America three years earlier



The McAboy house was reborn as the Mimosa Inn and featured Tryon's first golf course.





**Bert Leonard, pioneer of  
Polk County golf.**

*(photo courtesy of the Tryon Daily Bulletin)*

to work with his brother Alf in Utica, New York at the Yahnundasis Golf Club, designed by Walter J. Travis, the first great American golf professional. Being from England it was no doubt assumed that Leonard was imbued with the golf gene and French invited the young man, known as "Bert," to come down to the Tryon Valley and build a course for his hotel.

Bert Leonard laid out the holes for Polk County's first golf course on the flatlands near today's Lynn and Skyuka roads. The new sporting venture got off to an inauspicious start when the golf steam roller ordered by Leonard wrecked on its way into town and delayed construction for several weeks. Eventually the *Polk County News* was able to report jauntily in January 1902 that "golf is the game at Mimosa these days."

But the Mimosa Links did not fire Tryon resi-

dents or sporting visitors with fire. By 1905 the *News* printed an invitation for townsfolk: "If you want to see a nice corn field take a drive or walk through the Mimosa golf links." By 1907 golf was no longer mentioned as a tourist house amenity in advertisements for the Mimosa Inn.



**The Mimosa Inn had a golf links but not necessarily golfers.** *(photo courtesy of the Tryon Daily Bulletin)*

By this time the competition - prodded by the Southern Railway - for the ever-expanding northern tourist dollar in western North Carolina was heating up. As *GOLF* magazine reported in 1913, "Golf has 'made' more winter resorts than all other games and athletic attractions rolled into one... Several Southern cities advertise their golf courses - Hot Springs, Arkansas, Asheville, North Carolina, and a few others." And Tryon was without a dog in the fight.

In order to start developing her family land in April of 1913 Emma Payne Erskine, along with Elia W. Peattie and W.B. Stone, incorporated the Holly Lake Hills Company with a capital of \$50,000. Mrs. Peattie was the art and society editor of the *Chicago Tribune* who stayed with the Erskines before moving to Tryon where she spearheaded the conservation of Pearson's Falls. Holly Lake Hills started

Every entertainment other than golf was on the menu at the 1902 celebration of the 4th of July at Mimosa Golf Links.

1913 ad for golf in resort towns of The Land of the Sky - but not in Tryon.



Magazine ad for Mrs. Erskine's Holly Hills residential golf community.

to build and sell houses and purchased more land. Mrs. Erskine wasn't a golfer, but she loved Tryon. If Tryon needed a golf course in order to prosper then she was going to make sure the town got a golf course.

Emma Erskine bought an old dairy farm and hatched plans for a residential golf community on 54 acres of land - a visionary idea at the time. She was not interested in building just any golf course. Since this was for Tryon Mrs. Erskine wanted to create the best golf course possible. And in 1914 that meant only one man.

## DONALD ROSS

Donald James Ross was born in a two-room stone cottage in Dornoch in the north of Scotland in 1872. He learned the golf business at St. Andrews under Old Tom Morris who had won the second Open Championship ever contested back in 1861. Ross was in the first wave of young Scots who came to America at the end of the 19th century to spread the gospel of golf. He arrived in New York City in 1899 with \$2 in his pocket. But he had a job lined up as professional of the Oakley Country Club in Watertown, Massachusetts, sponsored by a patron, Harvard astronomy professor Robert W. Wilson.

Ross first made his name in golf circles as a player. He finished fifth in the United States Open in 1903 and won the North and South Open at the Pinehurst Resort three



Donald Ross stayed at the Pinehurst Resort for 48 years.

times. Pinehurst had been started in 1895 by James Walker Tufts who made his fortune in drugstore soda fountains. Tufts brought Ross to the North Carolina sandhills in 1900 to create new courses at the nascent winter resort. Gradually, Ross's duties at Pinehurst superseded the time he spent playing.

In 1912, Ross did not even bother to defend his title as the Massachusetts Open champion. As the *Pinehurst Outlook* reported that year, "The services of Directing Superintendent Donald J. Ross of the Pinehurst Country Club are increasing in demand throughout the country as an expert and a national authority on golf course architecture and construction. At present he is engaged on nine different courses and over three hundred men are working under his supervision. As a natural result, Mr. Ross has been eliminated entirely from competitive play and for the same reason he is devoting no time to teaching."

Ross made his first appearance in western North Carolina in 1913. Pinehurst and George Vanderbilt's Biltmore Es-

tate both enjoyed the services of Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of New York's Central Park and the father of landscape architecture, and his associate Warren Manning. Leonard Tufts, son of James and an energetic cheerleader for paved motoring roads, made the introductions to bring Ross to Asheville. The *Asheville Citizen-Times* described the visit, "There is still other good news for the golf players and the Country Club. Donald Ross, regarded as the leading expert on golf courses in America, will come here soon to advise with the club officials as to the best methods of improving the golf course."

There is no documentation on Donald Ross's time in Tryon. How the golf architect came to Emma Erskine's attention is lost to history. Ross normally made detailed hole drawings of the courses he designed. No such blueprints exist. There are no copies of invoices or notation of fees.

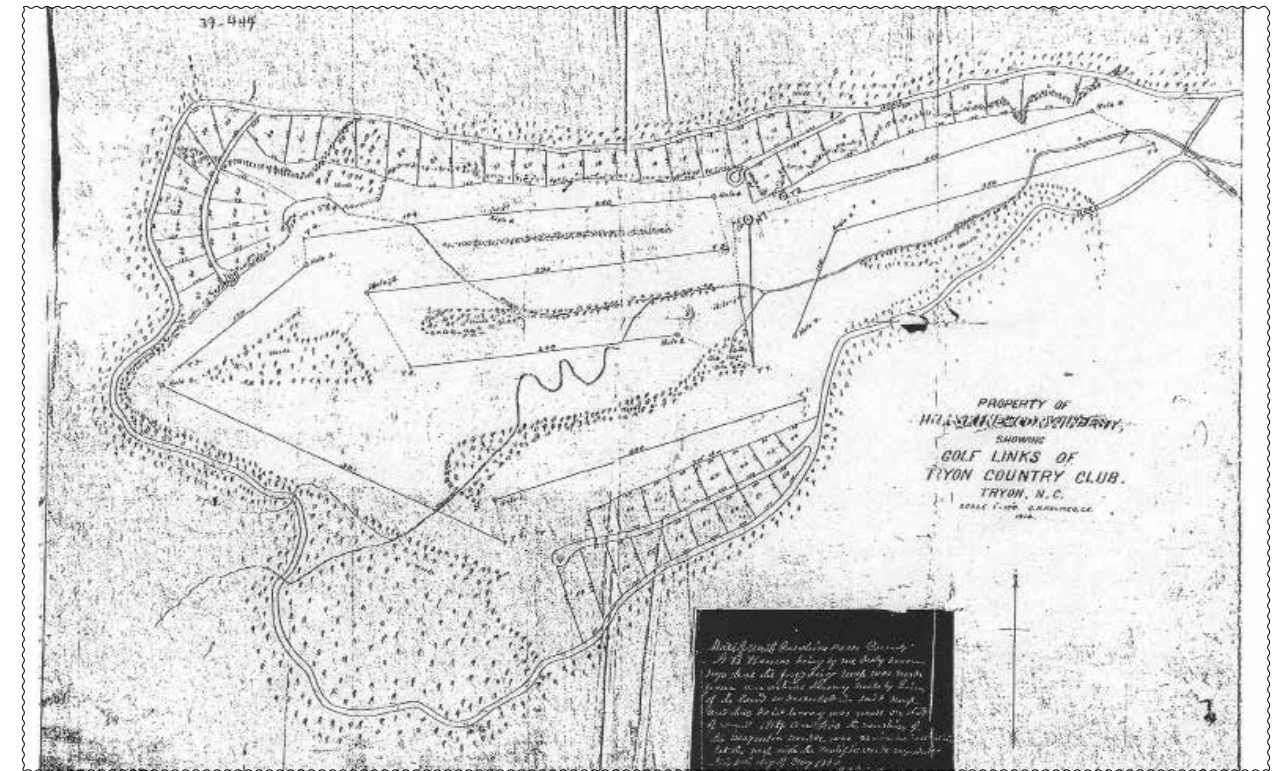
The only evidence that Ross designed the golf course at the Tryon Country Club is a scribbling in one of his notebooks. Ross would go on to design 413 golf courses, many



Ross first made his name as a player; he shot a 66 at the age of 62.

famous and some obscure. The Donald Ross Society works diligently to document the authenticity of claims to being a “Ross course,” which is a badge of honor. Several Society members have visited Tryon and have attested to the Ross “bones” evident in the layout. The links at Tryon has always been included as a “Ross course” by the Society.

It is estimated that Donald Ross never even saw up to one-third of his golf courses. Did he ever visit Tryon? There is no definitive answer. His design, however, would have been his first original work in the North Carolina mountains and he would later create many courses in the region: Biltmore Forest Country Club (Asheville, 1922), Green Park-Norwood Golf Club (Blowing Rock, 1923), Linville Golf Club (Linville, 1924), Hendersonville Country Club (Hendersonville, 1925), Asheville Country Club (Asheville, 1926), Beaver Lake Country Club (Asheville, 1926), Buncombe County Golf Course (Asheville, 1927), Mimosa Hills Golf Club (Morganton, 1928), Highlands Country Club (Highlands, 1928), Black Mountain Golf Course (Black Mountain, 1929), and Waynesville Country Club (Waynesville, 1932). Tryon Country Club is older by far than all.



Sketch of the original Tryon Country Club links with homesites from 1914 by George Holmes.

(photo courtesy of the Tufts Archives)



## EARLY GOLF AT TRYON

Work on the new golf course was underway and the Southern Railway, for one, could not have been more pleased. "Golf links now being constructed under the direction of a distinguished engineer for the citizens of Tryon may be used by guests of the hotels. Hunting, fishing, horseback riding, mountain climbing and tennis are other sports which may be enjoyed by visitors to this charming hamlet," enthused the Passenger Traffic Department in its annual tourist promotional pamphlet, *Autumn and Winter in the Land of the Sky*.

Construction supervision was assumed by local golf expert Bert Leonard who guid-

ed crews loaned by the Town of Tryon. The local government also provided heavy equipment to clear the land on the old dairy farm. One who was particularly pleased with the finished product was Emma Payne Erskine. For the January 1915 issue of Winston Salem's *Sky-Land* magazine Mrs. Erskine was profiled at her 680-acre Lynncote estate. The thrust of the article was to highlight her writing and painting but she sabotaged the interviewer during the visit.

"There is one accomplishment of which I am proud!" exclaimed Mrs Erskine to the reporter, "and which you must see-my golf course!"

"She had her carriage called, and drove me over her estate – one of the most beautiful estates in that very beautiful section. We drove past her tennis-courts, past cottages, which she herself



Early play on the sand greens of Tryon Country Club.

has designed, past an old cabin built in 1771 and still in good repair, and then came out on Holly Hills Valley, in which lies the golf course. A course of nine holes, its very situation makes its extension impossible, but it is one of the best nine-hole golf courses imaginable. Around the valley in which it lies, and entirely occupies, Mrs Erskine has built a three-mile driveway, no small piece of work in itself. But Mrs Erskine's energy and ability are almost unlimited."



**A Bert Leonard golf group putting out on the original 2nd green, today's 7th.**

*(photo courtesy of the Tryon Daily Bulletin)*

Meanwhile business leaders in Tryon began to agitate for a new golf links. The Board of Trade took to appointing committees to investigate the formulation of a club in March of 1915. In April the club had 15 members with an initiation fee of \$10. Five board of directors were selected from the group and work started on a constitution and by-laws. In May the *Polk County News* began urging readers to back the project:

"Tryon's public spirit in getting behind the Golf Club proposition is to be commended and it is hoped that sufficient encouragement is given to put this enterprise over. It will give Tryon the distinction of civic pride that most towns are shy of."

By June, the *News* was practically in a lather: "Can Tryon afford to let the Golf Links pass for another year? We think not. Incident after incident is before us to show that Tryon is losing out to other places by not having a golf course. It has been said that Golf is a rich man's game. So be it for argumentative purposes. We need more rich men. Some of them will invest in property, others may create new industries. Bring on more wealthy men. Polk County can use them. This Golf thing is all right and will add another to Tryon's many attractions. It is to be hoped that the promoters will ginger up, get a little 'pep' in the campaign and put it over. The major portion of the money (\$2700 in pledges from the local citizenry at that point) is in sight. Don't let it lag."

Later that summer there was activity reported at the golf links; incorporation of the Tryon Country Club took place on April 28, 1916 and included Eugene Brownlee, managing director of the Oak Hall Hotel; George Hamilton Holmes, President of the Peoples Bank and Trust Company; Broadus L. Ballenger, the town's leading merchant and President of the Tryon Chamber of Commerce; Francis Pickens Bacon, a grape grower and organizer of the Southern Mercerizing Company; and Ernest E. Missildine,

long-time mayor and proprietor of Missildine's Drug Store, exclusive agent for Carolina Cream, the Ice Cream Supreme. Missildine's frosty treats were so sublime they moved F. Scott Fitzgerald, who would later live at Oak Hall and occasionally try his luck on the club links, to break into verse:

*Oh Misseldine's, dear Misseldine's,  
A dive we'll ne'er forget,  
The taste of its banana splits  
Is on our tonsils yet.  
Its chocolate fudge makes livers budge,  
It's really too divine,  
And as we reel, we'll give one squeal  
For dear old Misseldine*

Local golf expert Bert Leonard became the first Tryon professional, looking after things on and off the course. Leonard had stayed in town following the demise of the Mimosa Golf Links and supported his family as a house painter and wallpaper hanger. He purchased a meat market for a time and found work in the hotel industry in Spartan-

burg, Greenville, and even Charlotte. He became a traveling sales representative for the Tryon Hosiery Company. Most recently before assuming duties at the country club Leonard had won election as a local justice.

Proprietor Stearns at the Mimosa had been selling off chunks of the old golf course for years; the guest house burned to the ground the year the Tryon Country Club opened. 1916 was a bad year for fires around town. Also destroyed in flames in April was the Erskine home at Lynncote. Emma Erskine lost her extensive collections of Oriental rugs, ancient door knockers, rare books - and, likely, any records pertaining to the creation of the Tryon golf course. On a happier note, Mrs. Erskine remarried on August 10, 1916. Her new husband was lifelong friend and architect Cecil



**Sheep, like these at Pebble Beach Golf Links, did the lion's share of early course maintenance at Tryon.**

Corwin, one of the few men who could claim a personal friendship with Frank Lloyd Wright.

What was it like to play golf on the early Tryon course? For one thing, in addition to the bunkers and the meanderings of Little Creek golfers had to navigate hazards such as the energetic flock of sheep that Leonard kept to manicure the fairways. Tryon also kept cows on the property but the bovines tended to do more damage to the course with their hooves. As a result Leonard was forced to place this want ad on October 15, 1920: *FOR SALE - Good milk cow. Cheap if taken at once. Apply, R.A. Leonard, Golf*



A look across a young Tryon Golf Links.

*Course*. Golfers could also expect to encounter townspeople out for a stroll on the links. The Boy Scouts would stage track meets across the golf course as well.

Visitor charges were \$1.00 per day. Play began on today's 6th hole with a west-facing drive into the surrounding mountains as the original clubhouse was a small house - long since torn down - on Horseshoe Curve Road. The turf would be plagued with worm castings, especially in times after some of Polk County's typical 65 inches of rain per year would fall. The rain would especially wreak havoc on the greens, which were constructed with a base of clay and covered with a sprinkling of sand from 1/16 to 1/2 inch thick. The sand would often be held in place with a covering of oil. Footprints could be smoothed with a turned over carpet, if necessary.

Golfers at Tryon Country Club were from northern towns, attracted by a steady stream of flowery prose from Polk County promoters. Chief among them was the local paper, *The Polk County News and Tryon Bee*, and its publisher George Edward Morton. Morton honed his plugging skills with Tryon grapes, of which he was an early cultivator. Rare was the issue without some mention of the charms of Tryon aimed at potential visitors. Once the golf course opened it was routinely featured prominently among area attractions: "In addition, there is a magnificent nine-hole golf course, which, by reason of its natural hazards, attracts many golf enthusiasts from all sections of the country. It

was first built by Mrs. Emma Payne Erskine and has been a major factor in attracting men to the little city."

The new club was also not shy about trumpeting its value as Secretary Gerald Stone pointed out in an interview, "The Tryon Country Club is a business asset to the community. At the present time, aside from a delightful climate, beautiful mountain scenery, riding and hiking, Tryon has little to offer the tourist in the way of amusement and recreation. The club offers a healthy form of recreation to the people of this community as well as to the seasonal visitor. Every merchant, every business man, and every citizen of Tryon should do his or her utmost to maintain a high standard for the club. The next few years are going to be telling years in the history of this town. We have one of the best and sportiest nine-hole courses in the Land of the Sky. Let us maintain it as such. The mountain resort towns that are growing the most rapidly today are those towns that are supporting one or more good golf courses. Our committees are planning a number of interesting and amusing activities for this season. We must have the support and cooperation of each and every citizen of Tryon if we are to live up to the standards of other mountain resort courses."

Certain days were designated at the club to welcome players from neighboring towns such as Gastonia, Spartanburg, and Greenville to try the course. One of the early

ways to attract attention in the community was to host noted "golf experts" who gave demonstrations of proper play. One of the earliest visitors to the links was J. Allen Stuart, "golf wizard, overseas veteran and all-around good fellow" from Charlotte. Upon his first go at the Tryon links it was recorded that, "Mr. Stuart made many friends and members of the Country Club say that he swings a wicked golf club."

Things were not so cheery a couple years later for Stuart in Tryon when his car collided with a Home Ice Company truck. "It was a narrow squeak for all concerned," read reports on the accident, "especially for the genial son of Bonny Scotland. However, surviving four years service on the Western Front with a fighting kiltie contingent as Mr. Stuart did, he might be expected to land right side up in an automobile collision. His chief hurt seemed to be that injuries to his hand might prevent him playing his usual game of golf on Thanksgiving Day."

Formal exhibitions were arranged at the country club and promoted to the public as professional tournaments. Carl Anderson of New York was a regular in these events and established the early course record of 39, one over the par of 38, in February 1919. The next month Anderson and Tom Boyd of New York were paired in a two-day match at the links against Jim Barnes and Jock Hutchison, both Brits playing out of Chicago. Barnes, known as "Long Jim" for his lanky 6'4" build, had won the first





**PGA Champion Jim Barnes performed at Tryon in an exhibition in 1919.**

PGA Championship in 1916 and would win it again later that year. In 1940 he would be in the first class of the PGA Hall of Fame. His partner Hutchison would win the PGA Championship the following year and eventually be voted into the World Golf Hall of Fame. Hutchison and Fred McLeod would be the first honorary starters at the Masters tournament, beginning in 1963. The players were stopping in Tryon on their way to Pinehurst

for the prestigious North-South Open, which Barnes won.

1919 was also the first year club officers decided to keep the course open during the summer. Bert Leonard, who was gaining regard for his golf instruction and winning way with the golfing visitors, thus added a popular Fourth of July tournament to his spring and fall events. The biggest happening in Tryon each year was the Thanksgiving

Tournament. Qualifying play of 18 holes took place on Thursday with the 64 best scores slotting into flights of eight. Match play would continue through Saturday until flight champions were crowned. Dancing would take place each night at Oak Hall.

Tryon Country Club was off to a fine beginning but there would be uncertain days ahead. In 1916, when the club was founded there were fewer than 750 golf courses in the United States. At the end of the decade the Carolina Golf Association, to which the club belonged, boasted only 13 members in the Old North State. By 1930, just ten years later, there would be nearly 6,000 courses in America. Clearly, Tryon would have to step up its game.

## GROWING PAINS

Club officials were looking towards the future right from the beginning. Following one of its exhibitions it was noted that, "The visiting professionals pronounced the course to be ideally located and one of the most picturesque they have ever played over. Tryon is proud of the fact that the 9-hole course is the longest in the South, being 3,300 yards in length. The present course winds over hill and dale, with two clear mountain brooks running through the course, forming many natural hazards. The New Yorkers made a few suggestions regarding changes on the course which will be followed out by the local committee under the direction of the club's professional, Mr.

Leonard. In time there will be an 18-hole course with a first-class clubhouse."

The expansion to 18 holes would never come to pass but the new clubhouse arrived in 1921, with a reported 300 people turning out for the opening in April. The Rustic Revival-style log building with concrete chinking reflected the relaxed conviviality of a mountain resort town. Local fieldstone was used to craft the steps, fireplace, and stone terrace that extended the full width of the facade. The new clubhouse was sited



The clubhouse was finished in 1921; the unattached pro shop arrived in 1935.

on the north side of the course, across from the original golf building so the numbering of the holes was changed to begin and end at the new facility. Number 8 became the first hole, number nine the second, number one the third, and so on. Tryon Country Club appeared in the *American Annual Golf Guide* for the first time in 1922.

With the new clubhouse in place discussions began on installing a swimming pool. But as big plans were being pursued Tryon Country Club received a blow when Bert Leonard resigned, effective May 1, 1923. After eight years as the club's only professional Leonard departed for the opportunity to build a new country club in Rutherfordton. It would actually require two men to replace Leonard as the club hired a superintendent for the first time - it would mark the beginning of eight members of the Burns family looking after the grounds until 2005. By the end of the summer Leonard would have 83 members signed up for his new venture. Back at Tryon the member roster numbered 39, 13 of them non-residents.

In response the club launched its first active drive to increase membership. "Any person who has given the matter the least thought, must realize the great value to any community of a good golf course," declared H.A. Wilkie of the membership committee in kicking off the Every-Member-Get-A-Member campaign. "This is especially true of Tryon, for here gather people from every part of the United States for rest and recre-

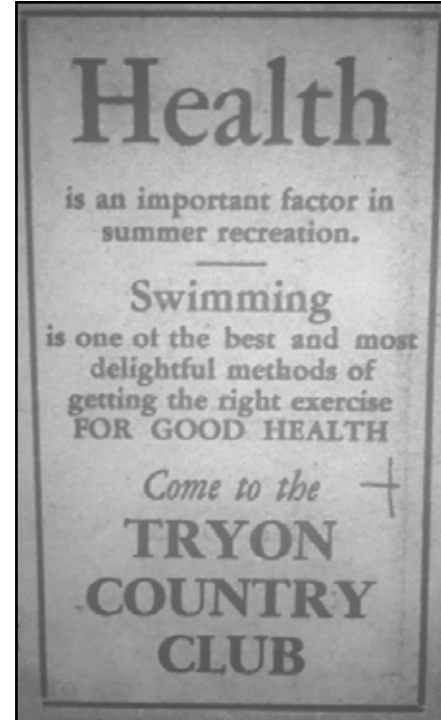
ation. The Board of Trade, the hotels and boarding houses say that one of the most important questions asked by prospective visitors is, 'Have you a good golf course?' Hundreds have come here because the above question could be answered in the affirmative."

It did not help matters that the club had difficulty filling Mr. Leonard's golf spikes. James L. Scott arrived from Southern Pines Country Club in Pinehurst toting a golf bag packed with excellent recommendations but he did not even last the summer in Tryon. H.H. Dean of the esteemed Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia was soon appointed as the club's third golf professional. Dean was a familiar face on the Tryon golfing grounds as he had established the course record of 35 with three birdies and six pars in an exhibition match two years earlier.

It seems the Tryon Country Club was bedeviled as much by the members it did have as the ones it did not. As money difficulties mounted Secretary Stone was moved to unleash a frustrated screed in the local press, "I mailed out statements for the quarterly dues on the first of April and so far only one-third of our members have forwarded their checks. Right now we face a shortage in the treasury and if we continue to operate members MUST pay their dues promptly. Our rules do not allow for procrastination - and neither do our finances. Work on the grounds has to be done, and current expense

met. If every member settles promptly there will be no trouble. Curiously enough, among the dilatory members are some who use the links daily. I want to warn every member of the seriousness of the situation, because I believe that no one thing is a bigger asset to Tryon, and I am sure every member receives full value for money expended in dues."

Secretary Stone's harsh words must have had the desired impact because at the annual club meeting in January 1924 he reported that, "The club was on a self-maintaining basis for the first time since its organization and has now a substantial balance in its treasury with no additional outstanding debts." The good news would be the last annual report that Emma Payne Erskine Corwin would receive. She passed away on March 4, 1924, two months shy of her 70th birthday. Mrs. Corwin had suffered a stroke in 1918 but remained active in her love and promotion of Try-



Plugging the new swimming pool to the Tryon public.

on to the end.

The swimming pool was officially approved on March 27, 1924 and opened in July. The concrete-reinforced pool measured 40 feet by 60 feet and was filled continuously with running water from a mountain spring. The water changed six times every day. Ten lockers for women and twenty lockers for men were installed with showers and a separate lavatory. The club offered a limited membership for the use of the pool that did not include golf privileges. Naturally, Secretary Stone was looking at the bottom line when he introduced the pool, "Tryon people should take advantage of the pool during the warm days as the season will only last a few months longer. The Club went to a heavy expense (\$2500) to install the present improvements and those extended invitations who have not already taken out membership are urged to do so."

Other country club amenities began to seep into Tryon. Dean's assistant, Miss Ann Healy, started a tea service each afternoon on the veranda from three to five o'clock. It was thought the feature would "prove most attractive to 'hikers' and to the visitors who may motor or drive to the club house in the afternoons for recreation or golf." The club also became involved in establishing Tryon as a national equestrian center.

In 1917 Carter Brown was 24 years old and running a small summer resort near Holland, Michigan. A year earlier Brown had jumped at the chance to leave the University

of Illinois three months before earning his degree and develop his uncle's Castle Rock Cottages. A man devoted to the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy and the Christian Scientist faith, Brown believed that earthly skills were imbued by a higher power and not formal training anyway. Brown did all the design and construction on his resort's guest rooms himself.

Around the fireplaces of Michigan winters his grandmother talked to Brown about a vacant tuberculosis sanatorium she had seen in Tryon on a recent visit that might make a nice location for a year-round inn. Brown came down to check out the property and by 1920 held the deed to four decade-old buildings on Godshaw Hill. Using a German-influenced style, Brown built four more cottages and a residence for his family, known as the Gatehouse. The Thermal Belt Sanatorium was now the Pine Crest Inn.

Carter Brown became a member of the Tryon Country Club and in 1924 he was elected vice-president. The following year he founded the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club and staged the first Tryon Horse Show. Brown worked tirelessly to attract equestrian exhibitors from Asheville to Savannah but the first show lost \$275 and the Chamber of Commerce declined to sign on for another go at the Southeastern Horse Show Circuit. Undeterred, Brown now convinced the Tryon Country Club to host and sponsor the fledgling event. By 1929 the club had backed away from sponsorship of the Tryon Horse

Show but by that time the Riding & Hunt Club was able to assume responsibility for what evolved into the biggest social event in town.

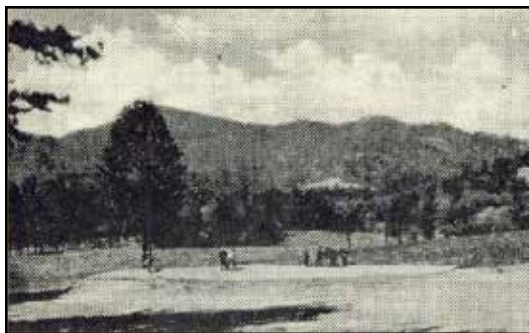
In the meantime, Tryon Country Club was losing its status as the only golf game in town. In 1924 Royal C. Remick, scion of a Michigan lumber family, purchased 72,000 acres - 26 square miles - on Hogback Mountain. Prior to Remick's arrival the round-topped, 3,226-foot mountain on the South Carolina border was known mostly as a practice artillery range for the Twenty-Seventh Infantry Division in World War I. Remick's vision was to create the Hog Back Mountain Club and make Tryon a "sportsman's paradise."

The mountaintop, located two miles southwest of Tryon, was accessible only by horseback but Remick got busy lobbying local officials to get seven miles of well-graded roadway built to the Hogback summit. Here he sited his Blue Ridge Forest development with plans for polo fields, equestrian trails, swimming pools, fishing ponds,



**Royal Remick's vision for Blue Ridge Forest in Tryon was to build a golf course at the top of the world.**





A golf scene at Tryon Country Club in 1929 - before a missed putt was the least of one's worries.

Emmet carved out a nine-hole course that measured 2,334 yards and played to a par of 35. He took pains to emphasize the "100-mile vistas" from the top of Hogback Mountain in his routing. The greens featured bent grass, unlike Tryon Country Club's sand putting surfaces. The sod arrived in Tryon in refrigerated box cars. But there was little time for TCC members to worry about the potential competition for visiting tourist greens fees - a greater threat to the existence of golf in Tryon loomed right around the corner.

trapshooting ranges, and, of course golf - "the St. Andrews of the Sky."

Before Remick's dream golf course could be built, however, he needed a place for prospective home buyers and club members to play so he made an arrangement to use the Tryon Country Club links. Remick then hired 64-year old Devereux Emmet to design his dream course. Emmet's golfing pedigree went back to the 1890s where he created some of the first courses in America around New York City.

## THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The Great Depression beginning in 1929 had a dramatic impact on the game of golf. Membership at clubs cratered everywhere. Pine Valley Golf Club in New Jersey, one of the most elite clubs in the nation, saw its membership roster fall from 500 to only 98. Many private courses were forced to become public. Many others simply went out of business. Royal Remick's Blue Ridge Forest was one that disappeared.

One facet of the game that thrived, however, was miniature golf. Garnet Carter was a traveling salesman with a promoter's soul. He left the road in 1928 to settle on Look-out Mountain in Chattanooga, Tennessee to build a resort and golf course. Carter's wife



The craze in America in 1930 was miniature golf.

called Tom Thumb Golf.

Tom Thumb Golf was so popular that the grass greens could not stand up to the foot traffic. GrassIt, a recently invented artificial grass composed of ground cotton seeds, was the ideal remedy. Carter added a patent for a miniature golf course design with hollow logs as hazards to the grass carpet patent and sold "Tom Thumb Golf" kits for \$2,000, including shipping. America was about to be swept up in miniature golf mania.

was way into fantasy and she ordered garden statues of gnomes and fairy-tale characters to be sprinkled around the resort, which was called the Fairyland Club. Some of those elves and princesses wound up on the fairways of a small miniature golf course on the property that Carter



Oak Hall had the Tom Thumb franchise in Tryon.

By 1930 there were an estimated 25,000 miniature golf courses across the United States. In Tryon, Oak Hall had an official Tom Thumb course, charging an all-day greens fee of \$1.00 for play up until 10:30 at night. A single game cost a quarter. Bert Leonard was back in town operating Leonard's Lucky Links miniature golf course. The Tryon players traveled to Spartanburg to take on the Hub City's best putters. There were regular matches with the wee linksters at Saluda's Arrow Head Golf Course. By 1931 the craze was over. The deepening of the Depression had something to do with it but mostly Americans had just moved on to the next fad. Almost all of the miniature golf courses were dismantled.

It was certainly not business as usual at the Tryon Country Club during the 1930s. There was no miniature golf but there were matches staged between teams of archers



Archery golf at Tryon? Absolutely, during the Great Depression.

and teams of golfers. It worked this way: "From the 'tee' the archer shoots to the 'hole' some 250 yards away. After his tee shot, he makes his approach shot, as in golf, from wherever his first shot lands; if his second shot hits the bull's-eye, he scores a hole in two; if it strikes the outer circle, he scores the hole in three; if it misses, he must shoot again from the 50-yard line, until he strikes the target, or makes the hole." Dues were kept low to staunch the flow of outgoing golfers. A sharp eye was kept on possible revenue opportunities. When the Southern Pediatric Seminar met in Saluda the medics were offered "a special play rate of \$5.00 for the two weeks on one of the best courses in the mountains."

It did not help that Prohibition was still the law of the land. One day about 5:00 in the afternoon in 1931 a team of revenuers showed up and captured a still just west of the club. An estimated 400 gallons of beer were destroyed. The 35-gallon copper still was taken into custody but apparently no club members were carted off along with it.

Activity was stepped up off the golf course to make the club more appealing beyond golf. The Country Club Tea Room was opened and fortnightly card parties started by the Tryon Innkeepers' Association at the club. Beans Tryon Richards, a three-and-a-half year old singing Fox terrier, made an appearance. Beans barked out his notes in accompaniment to a Rolmonica, a unique handheld harmonica that used dry waxed

## THE PERIPATETIC GOLFER

On March 16, 1929, a Sunday, Ralph Kennedy showed up for a round of golf at Tryon Country Club. Kennedy did not start playing golf until he was 28 years old, back in 1910 at New York's Van Cortlandt Park - America's first public golf course. Like many others Kennedy, a traveling salesman for a pencil company, caught the golf bug. In a big way. When he came to play at Tryon it was the 554th course he had played. Kennedy pronounced it, "the best 9-hole course I have ever played."



Ralph Kennedy would go on to play 3,165 golf courses before his last round in 1953, all recorded on scorecards signed by representatives of the club that he donated to the United States Golf Association. He would play golf in all 48 states and nine Canadian provinces. When he was born there were only 38 states and no golf courses. Kennedy's quest, which landed him on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1935, was aided by the fact that his wife Mary Alice also liked to travel and play golf. She tallied over 600 courses. After putting out at Tryon Kennedy was on his way to Spartanburg where he presumably would say for the 555th time, "This is the best course I have ever played."

**TRYON!**  
Population  
Now  
**3,160**

**TRYON!**  
**The Nation's All Year Round Resort**  
Swimming, Golfing, Horseback Riding, Quail Shooting,  
Camping, Hiking, Tennis and Mountain Picnics, Etc.  
**"LIVE THE YEAR HERE"**

**TOPOGRAPHY**  
Tryon's elevation is 1,500 feet and is surrounded on the north and west by these mountains.

White Oak .....	3,102 ft.	Melrose .....	2,639 ft.
Tryon Peak .....	3,231 ft.	Rocky Spur .....	2,500 ft.
Warrior .....	2,468 ft.	Hog Back .....	3,226 ft.

The activities at Tryon Country Club were critical to the town's Depression-era promotion.

paper "rolls" to created prepared musical tunes.

At the annual stockholders' meeting in January 1934 it was announced that "the club has passed the year 1933 without a deficit in its operating expense. The club has been maintained and the physical condition of the property is better than at this time last year." The Tea Room was singled out for its contribution to the bottom line and the club roster showed 20 new members. Also Larry Brooks had arrived in the pro shop from

Copper Hill Country Club in New Jersey to begin an eight-year stint as golf professional at the club, providing the longest era of stability since the Bert Leonard days.

The worst of the hard times appeared to be over. Feeling flush, a single-room building to function as a pro shop and storage building was constructed in 1935. The first of several expansions that continued into the 1970s took place a few years later to add another room for a snack bar.

While terrorizing existing golf clubs the Great Depression also shut down the building of new courses. With his design commissions drying up Donald Ross re-focused his attention on his beloved Pinehurst. For his pet No. 2 course he converted all the tees



Tryon's new grass greens were in place and looking familiar for this 1939 photo.

to grass and laid five miles of irrigation pipe down the fairways. He developed a strain of Bermuda grass that could withstand cold weather and heavy foot traffic and in 1936 converted all the greens from sand and clay to Bermuda grass.

With Pinehurst's conversion to grass greens the days of sandy putting surfaces were numbered. At the time roughly one-third of North Carolina's 84 golf courses, according to the Carolina Golf Association, sported sand greens - including Tryon Country Club. The greens committee set about planting grass on the links and was able to report in September 1937 that "its new grass greens are in fine shape for the winter golfers and the tournament committee is working on plans for tournaments with nearby towns." It was also the dying days of wooden-shafted golf clubs and five tee boxes were elongated or repositioned to accommodate longer hitting players with steel shafts.

By 1940, *Golfdom* magazine was able to trumpet, "BIGGEST BUSINESS AND GOLF PLAY SINCE 1928!" Private country clubs that had managed to dodge the minefields of the Great Depression found themselves in sound financial shape. Business was booming at winter golf resorts and records were being set for most rounds played and the number of golfers shooting them - 2,351,000. That was the rosy state of golf in the United States.

But not in Tryon.

## TENNIS TAKES CENTER STAGE AT TCC

Tennis assumed a greater role at the club during the Great Depression. In 1932, golf professional Claude Ballenger reported that "the two tennis courts at the country club are almost constantly in use as tennis is among the favorite sports with Tryon visitors."



Bryan "Bitsy" Grant

The Tryon Tennis Association began staging exhibitions on the club's two clay courts. The marquee match-up in 1932 featured Bryan Grant and Wilmer Hines, top-ranked players at the University of North Carolina. Standing only 5'4" tall Grant, who had won the 1930 U.S. Clay Court Championship in straight sets, was nicknamed "Bitsy." He would eventually win 19 senior national singles titles on four surfaces on his way to induction into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

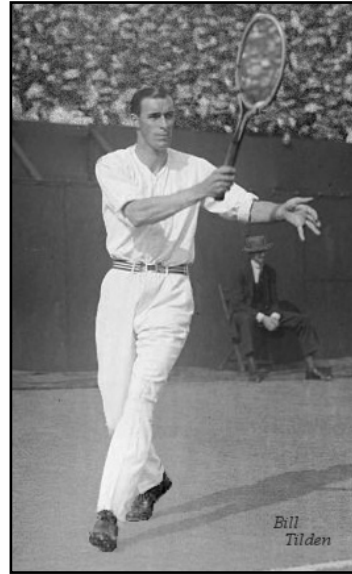
The stars of the 1933 spring exhibition were Cliff Sutter and George Lott. Sutter, a star for the Tulane Green Wave, was the reigning NCAA singles champion and had reached the semi-finals of the U.S. Open the previous summer. Lott was the current U.S. Clay Court champion and was considered one of the finest doubles players of all time. By the



time he appeared on the country club courts Lott had already won eight of his eventual 12 Grand Slam titles at the French Open, Wimbledon, and the U.S. Open.

The biggest crowds of tennis enthusiasts turned out at Tryon Country Club in 1934. Only amateurs were then allowed to compete in the sport's biggest tournaments so professionals were relegated to exhibition tours. After dominating tennis and winning eight U.S. Open singles titles in the 1920s Bill Tilden took to the exhibition circuit. In 1934 superstar "Big Bill" went on tour with Californian Ellsworth Vines, making his professional debut after years of being the world's top-ranked player.

Although 41 years of age at the time, Tilden still considered himself to be in top form. Indeed, after the first 27 matches Vines held only a 15-12 lead. The meeting at Tryon Country Club on April 5 would be their much-anticipated first outdoor meeting of the year. The players stayed in Asheville and received a motorcade escort from Covington's Sport Shop at 10:30 in the morning all the way to Tryon. A sell-out crowd estimated at 1,200 was on hand for the matches - said to be the largest crowd to ever attend such an event in the region.



Big Bill Tilden



Ellsworth Vines

Tilden was slow to get going, attributing his uneven early play to having "trouble finding the pellet after it struck the ground" in his first match on clay for the year. He recovered to win the first set 6-4 and, after again falling behind early in the second set, won again 6-4 to defeat the hard-hitting Vines. The day was cloudy and chilly but "the players were plenty hot and kept the crowd well-entertained." As one sports scribe summed up the clash of tennis titans: "Tilden's smooth play downed the Pasadena lad and former Davis Cup star, but not without a hard battle by the youngster who is expected to develop into the world's greatest player after Big Bill has finished teaching him all the tricks."

It is not known if Ellsworth Vines took the time to squeeze in a round of golf while at Tryon Country Club. In 1940, at the age of 28 Vines quit tennis and joined the fledgling PGA tour. He never won an official tournament but in 100 starts the tennis Hall-of-Famer compiled 47 top-10 finishes and reached the semi-finals of the 1951 PGA Championship.

## THE MODERN GOLF ERA AT TRYON

The swimming pool was remodeled in 1942 and that proved to be one improvement project too far. The club declared bankruptcy and at a special meeting that November at the Oak Hall hotel the club was reorganized as the Tryon Golf and Tennis Club which assumed the debts of the original club. A group of Tryon businessmen became the new incorporators.

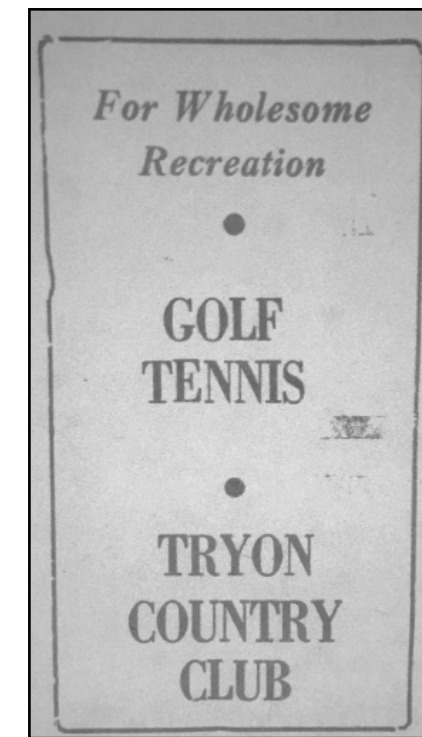
Following World War II America was in the mood to play. In Tryon the country club became the go-to host in town for entertaining visiting celebrities, staging local weddings, and hosting party celebrations. Women could count on bridge at the club every Tuesday afternoon at 1:15 sharp. Before that, the pool was reserved for a “women’s

swim” from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Golf at the country club had transformed as well. Before the 1940s golf professionals were not allowed to enter the clubhouse through the front door, if they were allowed in at all. The professional was responsible not just for the shop but also the grounds and anything else that cropped up at a club. Incomes could be supplemented by a loose collection of promotional tournaments. The top golfers would have agreements with clubs to represent them in these events.

By the 1940s the role of the golf professional became more specialized. The best players could try their luck as vagabonds on the nascent Professional Golfers Association Tour. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America had formed in 1926 and the club pro became more commonly scene in the shop or at the teaching range rather than on a tractor.

In 1946 Tom Rose took control of the pro shop,



With the end of World War II it was time to advertise for new family members.



tasked with promoting golf at the club. He put together an aggressive spring schedule as follows:

**March** 16-17, blind bogey; 23-24, blind bogey; 30-31, blind bogey. Six balls first prize; four second; two third.

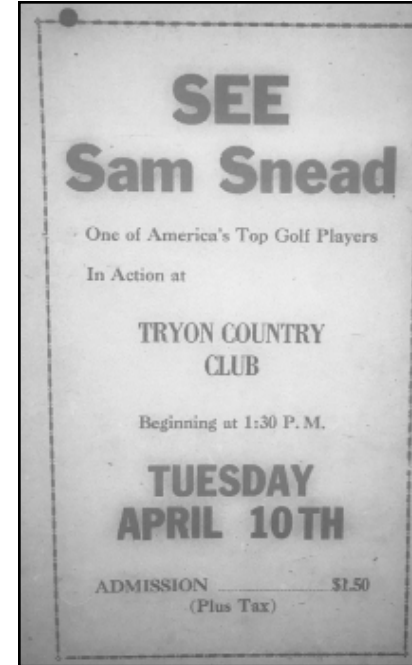
**April** President's Cup, match play, handicap. Low 16 net qualify. 6-12, qualifying round; low qualifier wins two balls. 13-19, first match; 20-26; second match; 27-May 3, third match. Winner gets name engraved on cup; runner-up wins four balls. (This popular tournament was the highlight of the spring golf season at Tryon and drew scores of competitors).

**April** 20-26; best ball handicap, medal. Winners, four balls each; runners-up, two balls each.

**May** 18, June 2; John Washburn Trophy, 36-hole medal play, handicap. Winner gets name engraved on trophy. Runner-up wins six balls.

Rose also re-started the Club Championship in 1946 after it had been suspended during the war. 25-year old Earle Rion had won the inaugural title in the first championship in 1939 and his older brother won the second event a year later. Rose started the Women's Club Championship in 1947 with Mary L. Palmer winning the honors.

Polk County and Tryon were ramping up the tourism publicity machine again as well.



Sam Snead became the most famous golfer to test his skill at the Tryon links when he appeared in a 1951 exhibition.

The country club was always at the center of the Thermal Belt attractions, available 365 days a year - "An attractive feature of golfing in Tryon is that when you take your eye off the ball it instantly rests on scenic beauties that are unsurpassed. The day, the view, and the play make teeing up a continuous delight." The town's two surviving inns - Pine Crest and Oak Hall - continued to have arrangements that permitted their guests to play golf on the Tryon golf links for a small fee.

Ted Fox became club professional in 1950 and began tapping his connections in the golf world on behalf of Tryon Country Club. He brought Sam Snead in for an exhibition to benefit St. Luke's Hospital. The Slammer was at the peak of his career when he came to Tryon, with a quick stop after playing in the 1951 Masters.

Snead was no doubt bringing his own heat on the drive up to the Thermal Belt from Augusta after being tied for the third round lead and shooting an 80 on

Sunday that included an 8 and a 7 on the scorecard. Joining Snead and Fox in the foursome were Joe Davis, the pro at Spartanburg Country Club, and Bill Etheridge, pro at Hendersonville Country Club.

An estimated 300 golf fans showed up to see the highly touted exhibition. The course proved up to the challenge as Snead shot even par with three bogies and three birdies for the 18 holes. The match, with Snead and Etheridge going against Fox and Davis, was a draw.

The next year the country club hosted an exhibition with Betsy Rawls, the defending U.S. Women's Open champion, and Betty MacKinnon. Rawls was a Spartanburg native who moved to Texas when she was 12 years old and became a Lone Star State golfing legend on her way to the World Golf Hall of Fame. The Women's Golf Association of the Tryon Country Club staged the clinic and exhibition for the benefit of St. Luke's Hospital.



**Snead was a master golf showman - here he prepares to hit a ball out of Wrigley Field in Chicago.**



Scene at the first tee in the 1950s.

## MEMORABLE FIRST BIRDIE

In 1953 Tryon Country Club leaked into the golf world at large when reports of an unusual lesson given by pro Ted Fox spread across the region. Seems the novicelinkster that day drove a hard fast one off the tee that caught a robin in mid-flight. The robin did not survive the unfortunate encounter.



It was widely reported that the “golf mathematician of the town” estimated that such a freak tragedy would not happen again in 1,482,389 times.

The name of the newcomer to the game was not released so as to protect his identity.



The arrival of Lou Hoskyns as golf professional coincided with several modernizations at Tryon Country Club.

Tryon women were busy promoting the game in the region. Later in 1952 Tryon was one of the founding members of the Western Carolina’s Women’s Golf Association along with Biltmore Forest, Asheville Country Club, Mimosa Hills in Morganton, Catawba Country Club of Morganton, Waynesville Country Club, Greenville Country Club, and Spartanburg Country Club. The women would get more than 100 entries for their one-day tournaments when held at Tryon.

Ted Fox resigned in 1957 to spend more time in Florida and he was replaced in the pro shop by Lou Hoskyns. Hoskyns, a Korean veteran, arrived at Tryon Country Club from Arbor Hills Country Club in Jackson, Michigan. He also had spent the previous four winters as a teaching assistant at the Boca Raton Club in Florida.

In 1958 Hoskyns was able to move into a new golf professional’s house, constructed above the parking



Play at Tryon Country Club in the 1950s - when caddies were still a common sight on the course.

lot. The same year a Summer House bathroom was built for the convenience of golfers between the then fourth green and fifth tee. The swimming pool, which received a chlorinating system in 1953, also received an upgraded pumping system to replace the manual pump that had been used to fill the pool with Little Creek spring water.

Also in 1958 an addition was tacked on to the pro shop building for the storage of walking carts. But very shortly the new space would have a revolutionary new purpose. In 1960 golf's ultimate showman, George May, replaced all the cadies at his Chicago Tam O'Shanter golf course with motorized golf cars. Reaction from the hidebound world of golf was swift.

Joseph Dey, the Executive Director of the United States Golf Association was quick



One of the last pictures of the Tryon links before the construction of cart paths.

to offer his evaluation of the new cars, "Tam O'Shanter must have its reasons, but this can't be done at all clubs. First, some courses are too hilly. Second, there are 6,000 golf courses. Half of them are public where most players can't afford carts. Third, the rules of golf recognize the caddie as a human being and permit a player to consult with him."

Entrepreneur May proved to be the golf visionary on this score. Tryon Country Club shortly had its own fleet of motorized carts and cart paths were installed to accommodate the vehicles. No design changes were made to the golf course to make way for their introduction. By this time that design included an alternate green on the third hole, added to help relieve stress on the heavily-shaded original green. Appropriately, Edward Sayre, 11-time club champion, made the first ever eagle on the lower green, using a driver and 9-iron.

The modern era of golf, with improvements in equipment and course care, ushered in waves of good scores. Hoskyns set the course record with a 30 and tied Sayre's 18-hole best mark with a 66. Sayre's son Bourne would win the club championship in 1965 after leading the Tryon High School golf team to an undefeated season.

The 1960s were a time in America when everything was bigger, faster, better. We were going to the moon after all. Some members at Tryon agitated for the club to jump on the progress rocket. A vote was taken to expand the course to 18 holes and when

it didn't pass displeased members left to form their own club. Red Fox Country Club opened in 1965 and the Ellis Maples-designed course between Tryon and Landrum quickly began receiving plaudits. Red Fox was regularly included in the lists of best courses in North Carolina and hosted the North Carolina Women's Amateur Championship in 1969.

Tryon Country Club would thus begin its second 50 years no longer as the only golf game in town. In 1966, the initiation fee was \$300 and annual family dues were \$160.

Pro Lou Hoskyns and greenskeeper Herman Burns left Tryon Country Club to join the venture at Red Fox. Burns had been tending to the greens for 19 years. Stepping in for Hoskyns was his assistant for the previous three-and-a-half years, Cecil Turner. Well before that Turner had caddied at the club before leaving for a four-year stint in the United States Air Force. Cecil Turner would never match his old boss's scoring record at Tryon but he did manage to set the front nine scoring record at Red Fox, also with a 30, while playing with Hoskyns in a round in 1982.


Turner, whose sister Margaret Turner Hannon won the Women's Club Championship 27 times, would ultimately be the last golf professional at Tryon in the 20th century - eventually serving 43 years in the pro shop.

*U.S.G.A. Rules govern all play unless modified by Local Rules.*

**ATTENTION:** The following rules must be observed by members and visitors alike.

1. Players should not engage caddies before arriving at the grounds.
2. Players are requested not to purchase balls from the caddies.
3. **SLOW PLAYERS MUST LET FASTER PLAYERS THRU.**
4. Out of Bounds – Country Club Road and Horseshoe Curve Road as marked.
5. Players are requested to repair ball marks, rake bunkers and repair divots.

	FRONT/BACK	
Men	Blue/Yellow	70.6/128
Seniors	Green/Brown	67.5/116
Ladies'	White/Red	72.8/128



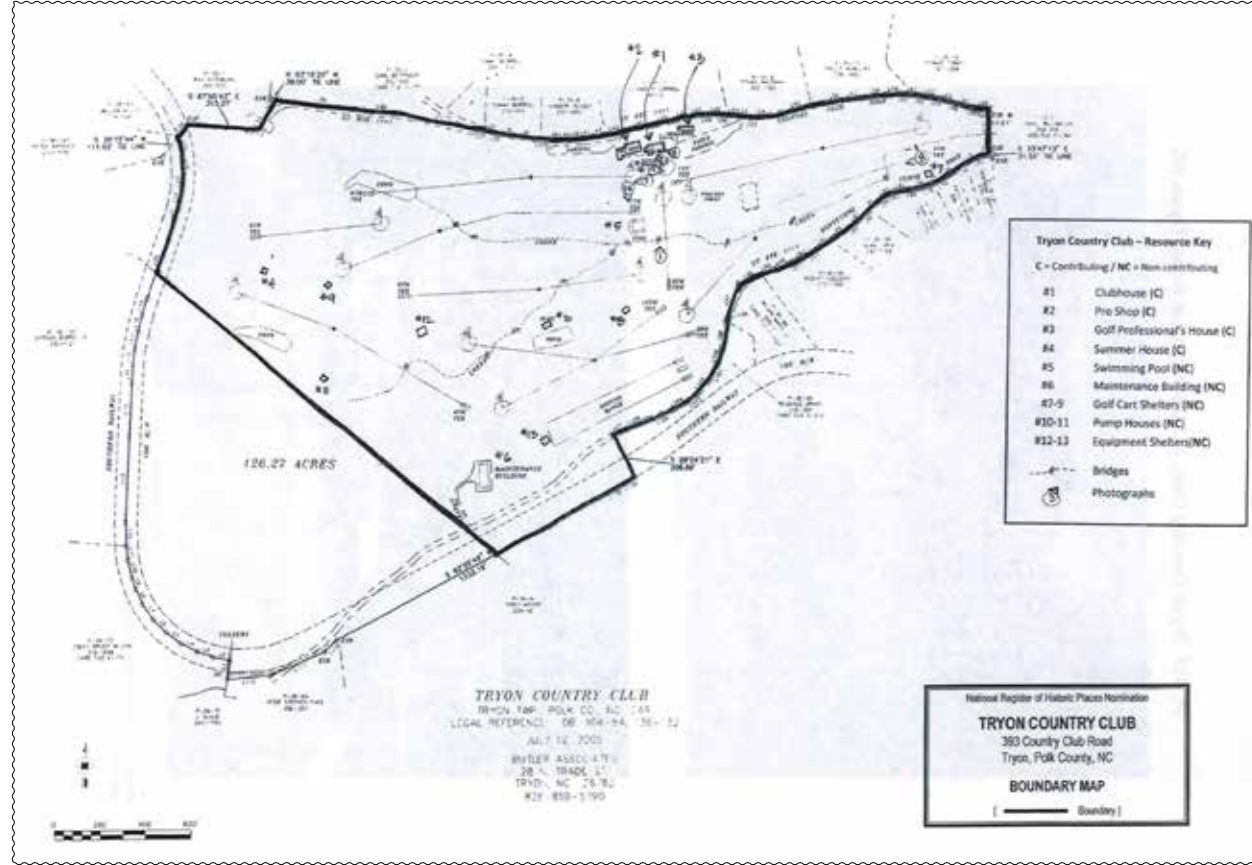
**TRYON**  
*Country Club*  
TRYON, NORTH CAROLINA  
1916  
COURSE ARCHITECT, DONALD ROSS

THIS CARD OPENED MEASURES 8 1/2 INCHES (STYMIE)

Date	Men				WE of 1 +	THEY HOLE	of 1 +	Women		
	BLUE YELLOW	GREEN BROWN	PAR	HC				WHITE RED	PAR	HC
	382	361	4	9		1		351	5	13
	477	436	5	5		2		407	5	1
	322	300	4	13		3		294	4	11
	394	339	4	1		4		298	4	3
	191	169	3	15		5		166	3	15
	401	372	4	3		6		338	4	7
	446	391	5	7		7		385	5	5
	380	346	4	11		8		299	4	9
	154	121	3	17		9		115	3	17
	3147	2835	36			Out		2653	37	
	360	358	4	10		10		360	5	18
	457	416	5	6		11		422	5	6
	300	304	4	14		12		300	4	8
	350	306	4	4		13		350	5	4
	218	169	3	12		14		191	3	10
	424	372	4	2		15		362	4	16
	461	417	5	8		16		461	5	2
	367	359	4	16		17		327	4	14
	146	119	3	18		18		146	3	12
	3083	2820	36			In		2919	38	
	6230	5655	72			Tot		5572	75	
SCORER:										HANDICAP
ATTESTED:										NET SCORE

"DON'T BE A LITTER BUG"





# TRYON COUNTRY CLUB MEMORIES...

