

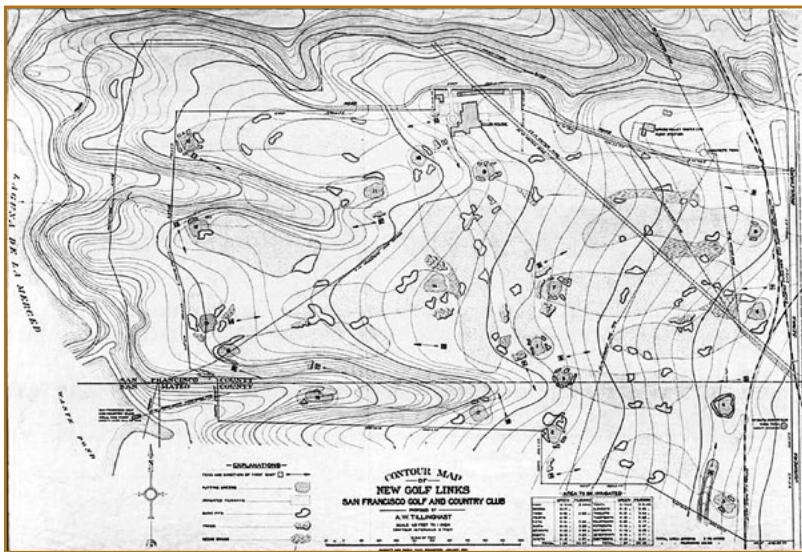


TILLINGHAST ILLUSTRATED

The Official Publication of The Tillinghast Association

Course Evolution History of the San Francisco Golf Club

The Course of the Golden Fleece



**Contour Map of NEW GOLF LINKS
SAN FRANCISCO GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB
Proposed by - A.W. Tillinghast - January 1920**

THE DOCUMENTED HISTORY OF GOLF in America traces back to at least the mid-1700s when a number of accounts record both a rudimentary form of the game being played nearby Savannah and advertisements for the sale of "golf equipment" appeared in New York City newspapers. There are even some newspaper references made to it being introduced here as early as 1686 on Long Island at a spot that the local Indians called "Rim of the Woods." As this is the location today of the 13th fairway of Bethpage Black it seems only appropriate; unfortunately this is most likely more myth than any-

thing approaching fact.

What can be stated as fact is that by the late 1800s golf was the game being played on rudimentary courses across the United States, usually introduced by those who enjoyed it on the other side of the Atlantic before crossing the ocean to settle here in hopes of finding peace and prosperity. One of these Scottish Immigrants who would play a major part in the explosive growth of the game in America was Alexander Findlay.

In the early part of 1887, Findlay, along with his business partner Edward Millar, on the Merchiston Ranch in Nance County, Nebraska, some 130 miles west of Omaha, built what some golf historians believe was the first golf course in America. It was only 6 holes, and on April 4, 1887, he is reported to have played our nation's first round of golf. Whether this account is accurate or not, he

would go on to enjoy a long and highly distinguished career as a professional player and golf course architect.

As a player Findlay would compete at every level from local and regional tournaments to the United

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States Open Championship. As a golf course architect he would design and build hundreds of courses, among them East Lake in Atlanta, Brae Burn in Massachusetts, Omaha CC in Nebraska and the Greenbriar in Virginia, to name but a few.

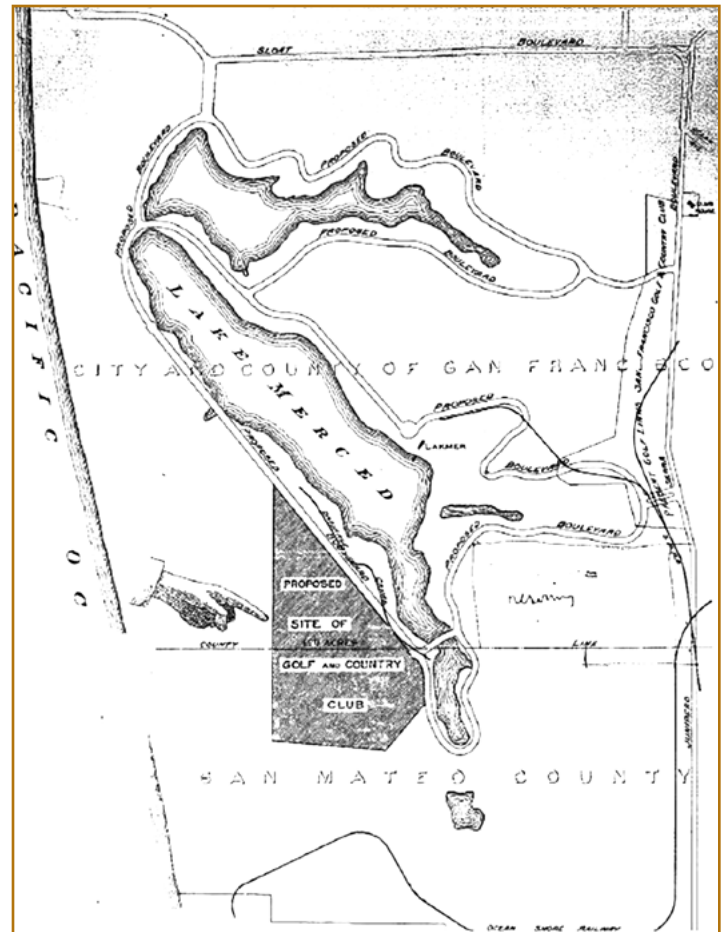
In 1913 he was hired by the San Francisco Golf Club to examine a plot of land that they were considering as a site upon which to build a new golf course. He walked the property with several members, and then, on October 27th, he sent a report of his opinion on the suitability of the property for the building of a championship golf course of 18 holes. Little did anyone expect that his recommendations would decide the fate of not one, but two of the greatest golf clubs in the world.

To the right is a map that accompanied the letter he sent and identifies the proposed site he examined. Anyone who has played golf in the San Francisco area will immediately recognize it as the location of today's Olympic Golf Club, the site of numerous national championships. Yet with SFGC looking at it first, why did they turn it down? It was because Alexander Findlay recommended that they do so. What he wrote and recommended in his report today can be looked back on as an example of irony at its greatest depths.

He would note how, "We proceeded by automobile as far as possible to gain the same [proposed course site], going to that portion of the tract west and south of the Lake. leaving the machine at this point, we walked over the entire tract of land, proceeding westward as far as the Pacific Ocean, examining the possibilities of this entire section of the tract... We found that no portion of the tract was suitable for your purpose, for the reason that there was not sufficient good land available for the purpose upon which to lay out a full 18 holes on any portion of this tract..."

They would return the next two days and make a diligent trek throughout the entire area. On the third page of the report, he concluded, "In making this examination, I made no examination of the tract north and east of the Lake, as I was advised that this was not available for your purposes owing to the possibility of a price being placed upon it which would be without your ability to meet, although I am frank to say that as we went along I could see large tracts of land at different places there that would be eminently desirable for golf links. I therefore recommend for your consideration the piece above mentioned, running south and west of the Auxiliary Pumping Station.

"In arriving at the conclusion I have, I wish to state that for a quarter of a century I have devoted a large por-



1913 Proposed New Site for the San Francisco Golf Club

tion of my time in the selection of real property available therefore and in laying out golf courses in Scotland, England, America, Canada, Mexico, Cuba and the Bahamas, and I feel that, with the expenditure of a considerable sum of money in making your improvements upon the tract you mentioned you can have one of the best golf courses in the country."

Eventually SFGC would follow Findlay's advice in all details, but not before putting a great deal of money into the Club's existing course at the Old Ingleside site. It would be received with great and lavish praise by all who participated in the various golfing competitions of the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exhibition.

The following year, in 1916, the Club would learn that it would have to spend even more money and move to a new location because the Spring Valley Water Company from whom the Club leased the land for its golf course had decided it needed the property. Once again they followed Findlay's earlier advice and after examining the site he saw from far off, the Club purchased four acres of land upon which they built a new clubhouse and once again leased the land for the golf course from the owner, ironically the same Spring Valley Water Company who had just forced them to move from the

previous site.

To this day the golf course has proven itself to be worthy of every word of praise he made about it and much more. Donald Ross praised it and Alister Mackenzie waxed poetically about its challenges. On August 20, 1999, the great professional player and consummate golf course architect, Tom Weiskopf, wrote, "The golf course is unquestionably in my Top Ten golfing experiences in the world... I am still amazed why I cannot come up with anything close in design to what exists

aesthetically and strategically on your marvelous piece of property. I still marvel at the brilliance of Tillinghast."

Before the land that Findlay saw across the lake would become the course that Weiskopf and others would so admire, a fascinating story behind the course that was first built by the club, how Tilly became involved and how it has evolved through the years would play itself out until it is today recognized as one of the finest golf courses ever designed and built.

From Tragedy to Triumph

THE NEXT CHALLENGE OF MOVING THE CLUB to a new site involved the design of the course itself. The membership believed the Club had within its membership the talent and ability to design a true championship caliber golf course. After all, the members had just redesigned and lengthened the Old Ingleside course to unanimous acclaim and triumph for the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition Golf Championships. And so beginning in 1916 the new course was designed, laid out and built by A.P. Welch, Green Chairman; John C. Augsbury and George S. Garritt, both committee members. They would also use the expertise of newly hired Head Professional Willie Lock in August 1917 giving him the responsibility for the creation of the bunkers on the back nine.

According to an article published in the March, 1920 issue of *Pacific Golf and Motor*, "Andrew J. Welch, now, as then, chairman of the San Francisco Golf and Country Club's Green Committee, put the course into play at New Ingleside for about \$45,000, a very remark-

able achievement even in those days, when the cost of labor and everything else was far lower than at present. But this initial outlay has proved almost a bagatelle in comparison with the cost of subsequent improvements."

The new golf course of the San Francisco Golf Club opened for play on February 23, 1918. It was described by "Will Lock" the new Head Professional in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of January 20th as follows:

First -- A fine getaway hole, a good drive and brassie opens up the green.

Second -- A dog-leg, a good drive and cleek shot to the green, the drive must be well placed, as there is trouble to the right and left of the course.

Third -- A two-way hole requiring a well-placed drive. A bunker 160 yards from the tee enables the long player to run up to the hole. There is a carry of 125 yards for the short player and an accurate second for the green.

Fourth -- A good two-shot hole, a difficult par-4.

Fifth -- A fine one-shot hole, bunkers catch slice, pull or overplay.

Sixth -- A two-shot hole, slice heavily penalized, canyon on right of fairway.

Seventh -- A very fine mid-iron shot, with ditch guarding the green.

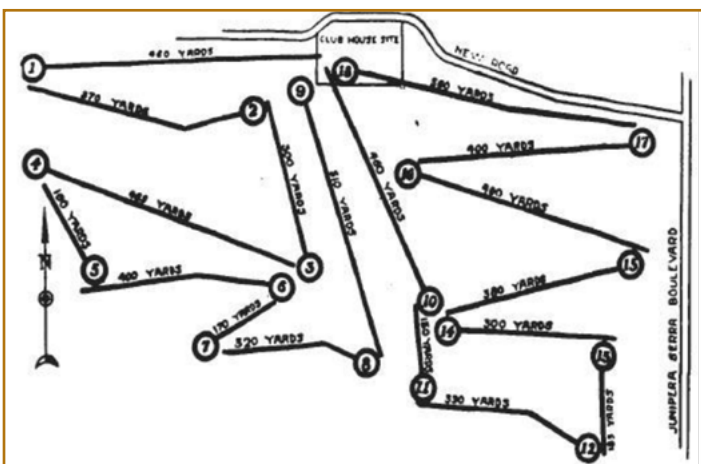
Eighth -- A good drive and spoon for the average player, drive and mashie for the good player must be accurate shot to the green, which lies over the top of a hill.

Ninth -- A good drive, brassie and mashie pitch over pond, which is in course of construction.

Tenth -- A very fine hole. It is possible to reach the green in two long shots. For the ordinary player a drive, brassie and mashie.

Eleventh -- A mid-iron shot, with mounds guarding the green.

Twelfth -- A good drive and mid-iron to reach the



Stick Figure Routing of Original Course Drawn by Willie Locke for the January 20, 1918 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle*

green, a high bank guarding it.

Thirteenth -- An island green requiring a very well-placed mashie shot.

Fourteenth -- Under favorable conditions the green might be reached with an accurate tee-shot.

Fifteenth -- A drive and mid-iron, green guarded by ledge and pot bunkers.

Sixteenth -- A drive, brassie and mashie, bunker 300 yards, will catch many a topped second shot.

Eighteenth -- Will require three good shots.”

What should have been a grand new course that would test the greats of the game was anything but. On May 24, 1918, not even three months after the course opened for play, the *San Francisco Chronicle* would report that the course was to be redesigned and that “Work Will Start at Once on First Nine Holes..”

“The council of the San Francisco Golf and Country Club has decided to make radical changes in the layout of the new Ingleside links. The players have never been satisfied with the first nine holes, especially the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh, and the powers-that-be have taken the bull by the horns without any delay and the new holes will be in course of construction in the next few days. In the meantime the course will not be closed, and players may use the links until the new five holes are ready...”

“Altogether the changes are beneficial to the links, though the members will have to put up with a couple of indifferent greens for a few months.”

It seems hard to appreciate how the same club that was able to design a golf course capable of hosting what many considered the greatest golf championship in the world up to that time, a tournament contested by the great players of the world, the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exhibition Championship, would but a short time later design and build a course that was so quickly criticized and considered an immediate failure. Below is a photograph of the original 13th hole with its “Island” green. The “Island” was formed by simply raising the putting surface several feet above the fairway leading up to it. No water, bunkers or anything else that one would expect to find as the usual features surrounding a green to create an island, this was actually one of the more acceptable holes. From this photograph alone it is easy to understand the well-intentioned but ultimately poor quality of the member-designed course.

While the Club began making plans to “immediately” redo the course, possibly due to financial, material and labor constraints caused by America’s quickly growing involvement in World War I, the redesign of the course neither began “at once” nor was it designed by the members themselves.



Tillinghast Arrives

IN THE VERY LATE PART OF THE FALL OF 1919, A.W. Tillinghast arrived in California seeking work. He would be hired by a number of clubs to help bring their courses up to modern standards of design. Newspaper accounts mention his being engaged to change sand greens to grass ones, for example the municipally-owned Midwick Golf Club in Los Angeles. After Tilly designed Midwick’s new greens, he made arrangements

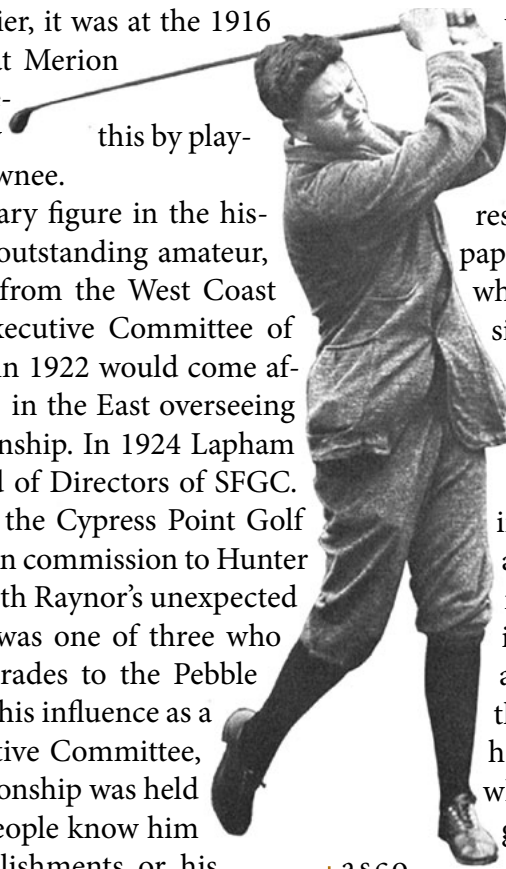
for George Low, Baltusrol Golf Club’s head professional, to spend the winter in California overseeing the building of them and on other courses where Tilly had also been engaged.

As so often happened throughout Tilly’s design career, his timing in being in California could not have been better. Tilly and Roger Lapham had developed a good friendship several years before. Although they had

probably met a year or so earlier, it was at the 1916 U.S. Amateur championship at Merion where their friendship was cemented. Lapham would follow this by playing at Tilly's first design at Shawnee.

Roger Lapham is a legendary figure in the history of golf in California. An outstanding amateur, he would be the first person from the West Coast appointed to serve on the Executive Committee of the USGA. This appointment in 1922 would come after having spent much of 1921 in the East overseeing that year's U.S. Open championship. In 1924 Lapham would first serve on the Board of Directors of SFGC. Later, as the first President of the Cypress Point Golf Club, he would award the design commission to Hunter and Mackenzie in 1927 after Seth Raynor's unexpected death. The following year he was one of three who oversaw the changes and upgrades to the Pebble Beach Golf Links and through his influence as a member of the USGA's Executive Committee, the 1929 U.S. Amateur championship was held there. Today, although most people know him for either his golfing accomplishments or his many years serving as mayor of San Francisco, it was his heroic actions as a Captain in France during World War I that would directly bring about the great Tillinghast masterpiece that the club so enjoys today.

With patriotic war fervor sweeping the country, in 1918 Lapham enlisted in the Army and received an immediate commission as a Captain. The unit he would lead was made up by volunteers from New York. In September of 1918 his unit was involved in a heated battle in the trenches. He led them into the heart of enemy fire with many falling dead. A retreat was sounded and Lapham was able to lead most of his unit back to the safety of the trenches. However there were a number wounded who were unable to get back on their own lying out in the midst of the battle field. With no regard for his own

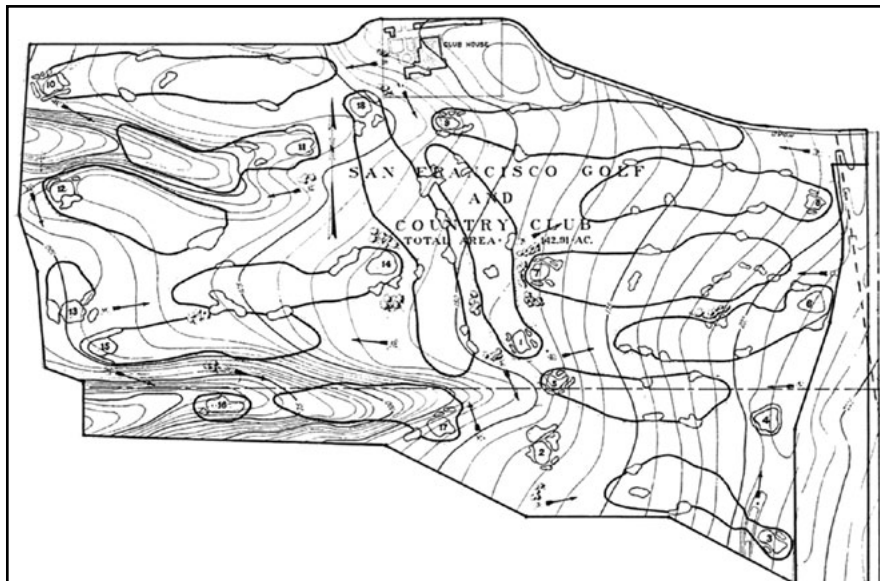


welfare, in an attempt to rescue them, he courageously went back out into no-man's land several times. On his last attempt he was struck down by a release of mustard gas. Near death himself he was rescued by others from his unit. The newspaper accounts of this battle stated that for a while it appeared as if he might lose his eyesight. Roger Lapham, above all else, was a bonafide war hero.

As a result of his injuries and long recovery Lapham was released from duty early and returned to San Francisco in late 1919. His return was quite timely as with the War being over, the Club was now about to finally do the redesign of its golf course. Lapham had always been an influential member before the war and the family has letters between himself and his father and brother while he was away in which they discussed the condition of the golf course. The SFGC Board, after the fiasco of the new member-designed course, had already decided to engage the services of a professional architect. Lapham had come home just in time to recommend that the Club engage his friend Tillinghast who happened to be in California working on other courses, and he was the influence behind SFGC's decision to bring Tilly in to do the redesign of some of the holes on the front nine.

Tilly would write of this work from the West Coast and even include a sketch of one of SFGC's "new holes"

for publication in the February 1920 issue of *Golf Illustrated*. It didn't take SFGC long to recognize that he was creating something very special and asked him to give a proposal for a brand new golf course to replace the existing golf course. In January of 1920 the Club voted on his "Proposed New Golf Links," (a partial copy of which



Original 1920 Tillinghast Design Approved by Members

can be seen here) and approved its construction. Expecting the work to continue on, Tilly left the task in the hands of the Club's Green Committee and came back East.

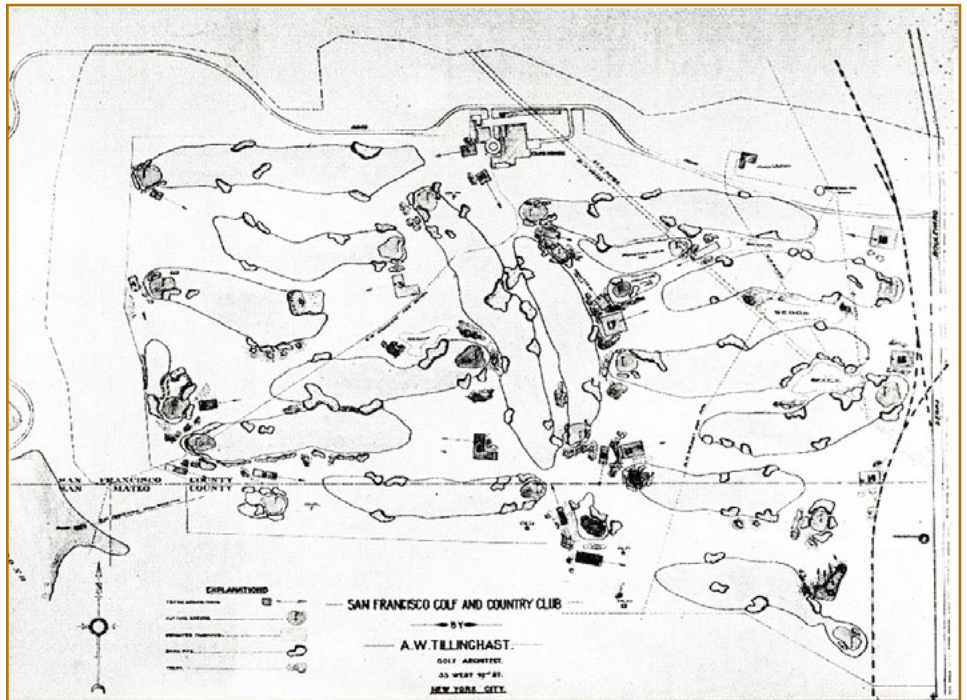
Anyone who has ever played San Francisco will note several interesting things about that drawing. First of all the routing isn't the same as the course that exists today. Also, the nines were reversed. What is the story behind why Tilly's approved design is not the same as the course that we know today?

Shortly after Tilly returned home, all work on this new design came to a halt. The Spring Valley Water Company had now decided to sell the land they were leasing to SFGC. The Club now faced the decision of finding a new location or coming up with the money to purchase the land. Having already spent many thousands of dollars building a new course and now beginning the construction of another new course on the very same land, they were loath to simply move and lose their investment. In addition, when the Club had moved to this New Ingleside site, they purchased four acres of the land upon which they built the new clubhouse and entrance. The decision was very easy to make and so all work on the course was halted. Despite the work that had already taken place, the course was still in condition to be played upon and used as the site of tournaments. It would take nearly a year to raise the capital after the membership committed to the purchase.

Now just as Lapham's arrival proved most beneficial in the hiring of Tilly, it would be his temporary absence that would now prove detrimental to the execution of Tillinghast's design. Yet despite this, it would also eventually result in the creation of the Tillinghast masterpiece we see today.

By the beginning of 1921 SFGC raised the monies to buy the property and also to build the course that they wanted. At the same time, Roger Lapham had travelled back East to where he would accept a temporary position with the USGA to oversee the running of that year's U.S. Open championship.

Throughout its long history, SFGC has enjoyed a very proactive membership led by strong-willed persons making up the different Boards. Although this can



The 1924 Tillinghast Masterpiece

be quite advantageous, in 1921 it turned out to be the opposite. With Lapham away, a portion of the membership which had previously agreed to the Tillinghast plans the year before, now chose to ignore what Tilly had designed and built a course of their own design. By the time Lapham returned from the East coast where, having done such an outstanding job overseeing the championship at the Columbia CC in Chevy Chase, Maryland, the new member-designed course had been almost completed with only the turf needing to grow in on the greens.

Roger Lapham was quite disheartened upon seeing the newly-built golf course upon his return. He immediately recognized that it bore little resemblance to the plans that Tilly had drawn and, as it stood, was of poor quality. Unfortunately, since he was on neither the Board nor the Green Committee, he wasn't in a position



The 7th Hole also known as the Dual Hole

at the Club to be able to do anything about what he considered a huge debacle, especially after the large expense that was made in building it. But just as the members who had changed the plans were strong-willed and determined, so was Lapham and he decided to take a different approach.

He began by writing an article that appeared in the Pacific Golf and Motor magazine of May 1922, with the benign-sounding title, "The Paths of Improvement." Within it he did not hold back in criticizing the newly-opened course and the Club itself. The article was about improving bad golf holes and he cited as an example the brand new work just done at SFGC. For example, he wrote, "To further illustrate this idea and to be more concrete, [I] am taking the liberty of criticizing a move recently made at my own home club, the San Francisco Golf and Country..."

The article included drawings which illustrated Lapham's view of just how poorly one of the holes was designed and how to go about "improving" it. He continued his criticism's in discussions with other members until, in January of 1924, he was appointed to both the Board and as the head of the Green Committee. That very month he convinced the Board that they needed to invite Tillinghast back and to have him re-do the course once again and hopefully for the final time.

Upon his arrival, now four years after he originally first designed a course for the Club, Tilly created what he would himself refer to as a new original design, as it not only completely changed what the members had done but also differed in many aspects from what he had originally proposed.

Every green was reshaped, each tee relocated, fairways were either re-shaped or moved entirely, the course was lengthened and 76 bunkers were added to a layout

that already had more than 100 on it. Lapham himself personally oversaw the rebuild and made certain that this time it was constructed "according to the plans" of the architect Tillinghast.

How was the new course received?

Writing in the September 1925 issue of Fairway Magazine, Dr. Alister Mackenzie wrote the following article about the course:

"Now, fellow-golfer, you will admit that golf is subject to as many human influences as any game or sport you know, and until humanity rests on a bed of roses, why aim to put your golf ball there?

"Getting down to the mundane and bringing the eleventh hole (below) of the San Francisco Golf and Country Club into view -- a 170-yard iron of some description to a green unusually wide horizontally, but not so much in depth; the green built with a slope rising from front to back trapped well in front and to one side and rough behind with a putting surface much keener than the average. On the right back quarter a mound moulded into the green where a ball well pitched will roll to the lower level.

"Now a ball well struck will stick, and if it lands near the cup, unless on the short side, leaves a ticklish putt to hole. But the player who reaches the green and is wide of the cup, say, thirty or forty feet, has a problem; to stay within holing distance on the second putt he has got to get the exact line, hit with the right speed, and if he knows how, hit with a drag. The usual remarks here after this shot is played and the ball ends ten feet over is, It's impossible to stay anywhere near that cup!..

"Does it ever occur to that golfer, when he steps on that green again and finds that thirty-foot side hill putt to make, to 'Coue' himself along these lines -- 'Well, here is something out of the ordinary -- something real



San Francisco, California
March 5th 1936
(Note;- Yesterday's Report was erroneously dated March 5th.)

President of the P. G. A.
Dear Sir:

Today I drove to Ingleside at the request of P. G. A. member William McEwan. His assistant, Harold Stone, is also P.G.A. I made a complete inspection of the course of the San Francisco Golf Club, and inasmuch as planned this lay-out it may not seem entirely proper for me to praise it too much. But as it is regarded out here as a truly great course, I will string along.

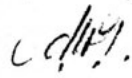
I was accompanied throughout the day by McEwan, Knox Maddox (President of the club) Dixwell Davenport (Chairman of the Green Committee) Frank Dolp (California Champion) Jim French Jr. (another clubmember and rated one of the best players in the state) and other officials. At noon, President Maddox presided at a fine luncheon, at which were additional club officials. Altogether it was a wonderful reception.

It must be mentioned that greenkeeper George Paulson accompanied us throughout the day, and I must compliment this man especially for the able manner in which all of my plans have been carried through, particularly the new first and second holes, as well as the new twelfth, which I designed when here last winter. Today I gave them a rearrangement of the trapping of the fairway of the fourteenth, which has been the only weakness of the course. The new plan will bring it up properly. While I made numerous suggestions for refinements on nearly every hole, they were of minor character and not at all expensive to accomplish.

Dixwell Davenport is also a member of the United States Golf Association's Green Section and he told me that in a recent letter to national president, John G. Jackson, he told him that, in his opinion, the P.G.A. had "put one over" the U.S.G.A. in sponsoring the course service. Truly it was a day of wonderful compliments.

Very truly yours

A. . . Tillinghast.



to overcome -- my opponent confidently expects to witness three, possibly four putts -- let's fool the beggar? Why not strive to cultivate that spirit for all problems that face you on the links, rejoice in the number and variety of shots you can develop from different lies and stop this moaning cry that it is the duty of the golf architect and the green committee to create the links of the Golden Fleece.

"Let us return to Kipling and repeat with him:

**And only ourselves shall praise us, and only
ourselves shall blame,
And all shall shoot for distance, striving for
putts of fame,
And each for the joy of playing, and each for
a separate par,
Shall play the shots as he sees it, for the Gods
of Golf as they are."**

Despite this praise from one of the great architects of the day as well as general acclaim from all who played the course, Tilly was not finished with it.

Tillinghast would return to the Club in 1927 to "tinker" with it, making a few minor adjustments. In 1929, in response to the technological improvements to both

the golf ball and clubs and the abilities of players, the Club made the decision to improve the course once again. Late in the year Tilly redesigned 14 of the greens, lengthened several holes, rebuilt a number of bunkers while also adding a few others and even relocated the 1st green. He recommended that the club hire a trusted friend and fellow architect for whom he had great respect, Billy Bell, to oversee the construction. Together they would form an architectural partnership in 1937.

Yet Tilly was still not done with the course. In the winter of 1934 he would return to SFGC and this time he would redesign the 1st, 2nd and 12th holes. He mentioned this in his letter to the PGA written after another site visit on March 5th 1936. (See copy of letter).

On this visit he tinkered once more, re-trapping the 14th fairway and with suggestions for "refinements on nearly every other hole."

Tilly would visit the Club the following year on February 6th during his final California trip for the PGA. Once again he made recommendations for a few changes as he also inspected the progress of the work from the previous year's visit. In his letter to the PGA he wrote, "Here I contacted P.G.A. members William McEwan and Harold Stone. I checked on all work, which I recommended last March. Of course I am particularly fa-

miliar with this course as I laid it out some fifteen years ago. However some of the construction work has not altogether pleased me and gradually this is being corrected. They have applied for the U.S. Open for 1939 and by that time the course should be altogether satisfactory.

“Today I additionally instructed them concerning the raising and contouring of the right side of the 3rd green; the left-front of the 5th and located a new site for

the 10th green to the right of the present (one of their own making, which has left much to be desired.) All other opportunities for improvements were made note of on my last visit and definite records made at that time by the committee...”

Tilly made a final visit to the course in late 1939, just a few months before suffering the massive heart attack that would lead to his death in 1942.

Protecting Tilly’s Masterpiece

IN THE YEARS SINCE THE COURSE has seen a number of changes, most of which were unplanned, yet because the Club has maintained the goal of protecting their Tillinghast design, today one can walk the fairways and see it as Tilly did shortly before he passed away

The City of San Francisco would exercise their right of eminent domain in 1950 and take a portion of the Club’s property for the building of a new highway, so in 1949 they preemptively rerouted and redesigned holes 13-15. The Club hired Harold Sampson who created three outstanding holes to take the place of the ones the Club believed it would lose. In a bit of governmental irony, the City would end up using less land than it had originally thought was needed, so the original holes needn’t have been touched.

It would be more than 50 years later when the sug-

gestion was made to restore the holes to the original Tillinghast design. At the time the Club had engaged Renaissance Golf Design and Tom Doak and Jim Urbina were in the process of restoring the putting surfaces after a severe nematode infestation nearly destroyed them. They also restored most of the bunkers at the same time. When the decision was made to restore 13-15 they were able to do so because the Club still had Tilly’s drawings, aerial photographs from the 1930s & 40s and photographs of the holes themselves that were both at the Club and found through research.

Today the members of San Francisco Golf Club take justifiably great pride in their Tillinghast masterpiece. It is their mission to preserve and protect it so that future players of this great game may see the brilliance of a true Tillinghast design.



The short 13th in 1934, probably the shortest hole in California, about 85 yards



11th Beautiful Contoured Green

Recommended Reading

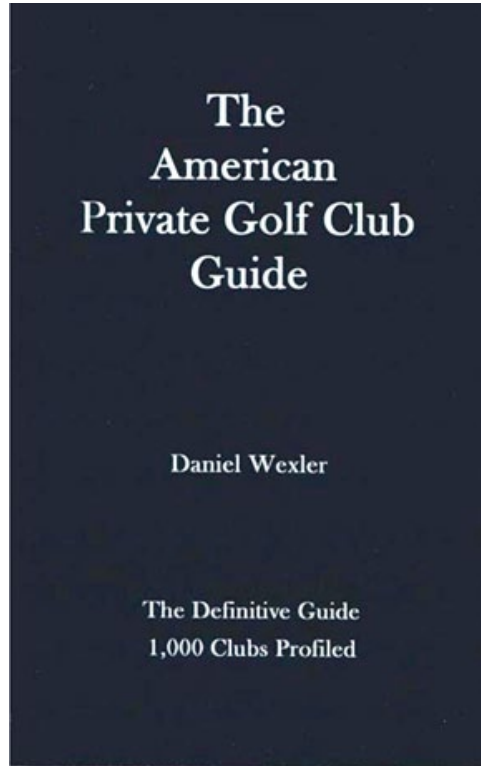
THERE ARE FEW, if any actually readers of golf's finest written works during the last decade or so who would not recognize the name of Daniel Wexler. "Missing Links" and "Lost Links" have already reached both Classic and Collectible status among all who recognize the difference between a book and literature.

His latest work: *"The American Private Golf Guide,"* is certain to be accepted as their equal.

This is not simply a listing of private golf clubs, but rather a celebration of the game and the courses upon which it is played. Consider how Daniel speaks of what his book contains:

"Among the many qualities that make golf unique, none stand out further than the limitless variety of the playing fields.

Indeed for most any avid golfer, the chance to experience the games endless array of courses -- layouts built by all sorts of those designers, and all manner of styles



and geographic settings -- represents the linchpin of golf's visceral, lifelong appeal.

"In this light, we are all, in effect, collectors of the golf courses, hoping to add as many significant facilities for personal portfolios as time and circumstance will allow. It is with this acquisitive sense in mind that "The American Private Golf Club Guide" provides its original collectability ratings, a unique one to five diamond evaluation of each profiled club assessing its relative importance to one's personal collection..."

Each of the 1,000 clubs that he highlights is given a candid assessment whether it should be viewed as a "Five Diamond" which Daniel describes as "One of the game's absolute elite. A must see," or a "One Dia-

mond," simply a club with a course that "Beat's a driving range."

The average golfer will never have the opportunity to play even a few of these clubs, but after reading Daniel's descriptions, he most certainly may want to.

Tillinghast Courses By State That Are Covered

California

San Francisco Golf Club

Connecticut

Brooklawn Country Club

Country Club of Fairfield (Raynor/Tillinghast)

Kansas

Kansas City Country Club

Maryland

Baltimore Country Club (Five Farms)

Suburban Club of Baltimore (Pikeville)

Massachusetts

Berkshire Hills Country Club

Minnesota

Golden Valley Country Club

Rochester Golf & Country Club

New Jersey

Alpine Country Club (Aldegress)

Baltusrol Golf Club

Essex County Country Club (Tillinghast/Raynor)

Forest Hills Field Club

Glen Ridge Country Club

Ridgewood Country Club

Shackamaxon Golf and Country Club

Somerset Hills Country Club

Spring Lake Golf Club

Suburban Golf Club

New York

Fenway Country Club
Metropolis Country Club
Niagara Falls Country Club
(Nichol Thompson/Tillinghast)
North Hempstead Country Club
Old Oaks Country Club
Quaker Ridge Golf Club
Scarsdale Country Club
Sand Point Golf Club
Sleepy Hollow Country Club
(CB MacDonald/Tillinghast)
Southward Ho! Country Club
Winged Foot Golf Club

Ohio

Lakewood Country Club

Oklahoma

Oaks Country Club
Tulsa Country Club

Pennsylvania

Fox Hills Country Club
New Castle Country Club
Philadelphia Cricket Club
Sunnehanna Country Club

Rhode Island

Newport Country Club

Texas

Brook Hollow Golf Club
Oak Hills Country Club

Questions... and Answers!

FROM TIME TO TIME THE ASSOCIATION receives questions from members, readers and others interested in learning about Tilly's work and life. Quite often these involve technical questions about specific original design Features.

Recently we received a question from a person who regularly plays at Brackenridge Park in San Antonio, Texas. He has been thrilled with the recent restoration/renovation done to bring the original Tillinghast design features back to the golf course, but was greatly surprised to see that a number of the restored greens were square in shape. And so this is what he asked:

Question: "I am a San Antonio Local and golfer at Brackenridge Park, an original Tillinghast design. As you may know, the course was redesigned and 'restored' back to the original Tillinghast layout in 2008. "One of the features added to the course during the re-design was square greens. Six holes at Brackenridge Park have square greens, and local newspaper articles claim it was a 'design' or 'signature' of Tillinghast. I was hoping that you or someone in the organization could shed some light on this issue. I have searched online and I can't find any link between Tillinghast and square greens. "I would really appreciate any info you could provide on this topic. Brackenridge is the only course I have played that has square greens and I would like to know if Tillinghast actually used this feature on other courses."

Answer: From the earliest days of when golf greens were shaped by hand they were typically cut in a square or rectangular pattern. It was considered "scientific" and "modern" to do so as the game was evolving from a time where sheep and goats were used to cut grass. As the game grew and more courses were designed and built this usage of square greens continued and was employed by most of the early architects either great or unknown, and this includes Tilly.

The person who may be the most responsible for the evolution away from square greens is CC Worthington, the man who hired Tilly to design and build his first course at Shawnee. He had several estate courses and despite being exceedingly wealthy, hated to spend money that he didn't think he had to. He was an engineer and inventor and in 1906, in order to cut down on the number of employees he had to simply cut the grass on his golf courses, created the first gang (multiple heads) lawn mower specifically designed for use in cutting golf course turf. This was a horse-drawn apparatus and so using it on greens would not come about until another of his inventions, the motorized gang-mower in 1919. This would enable putting surfaces as well as fairways to be mown mechanically. Because the mower was towed by a tractor, turns had to be made and so the corners of existing greens changed from 90 degrees to being circular.

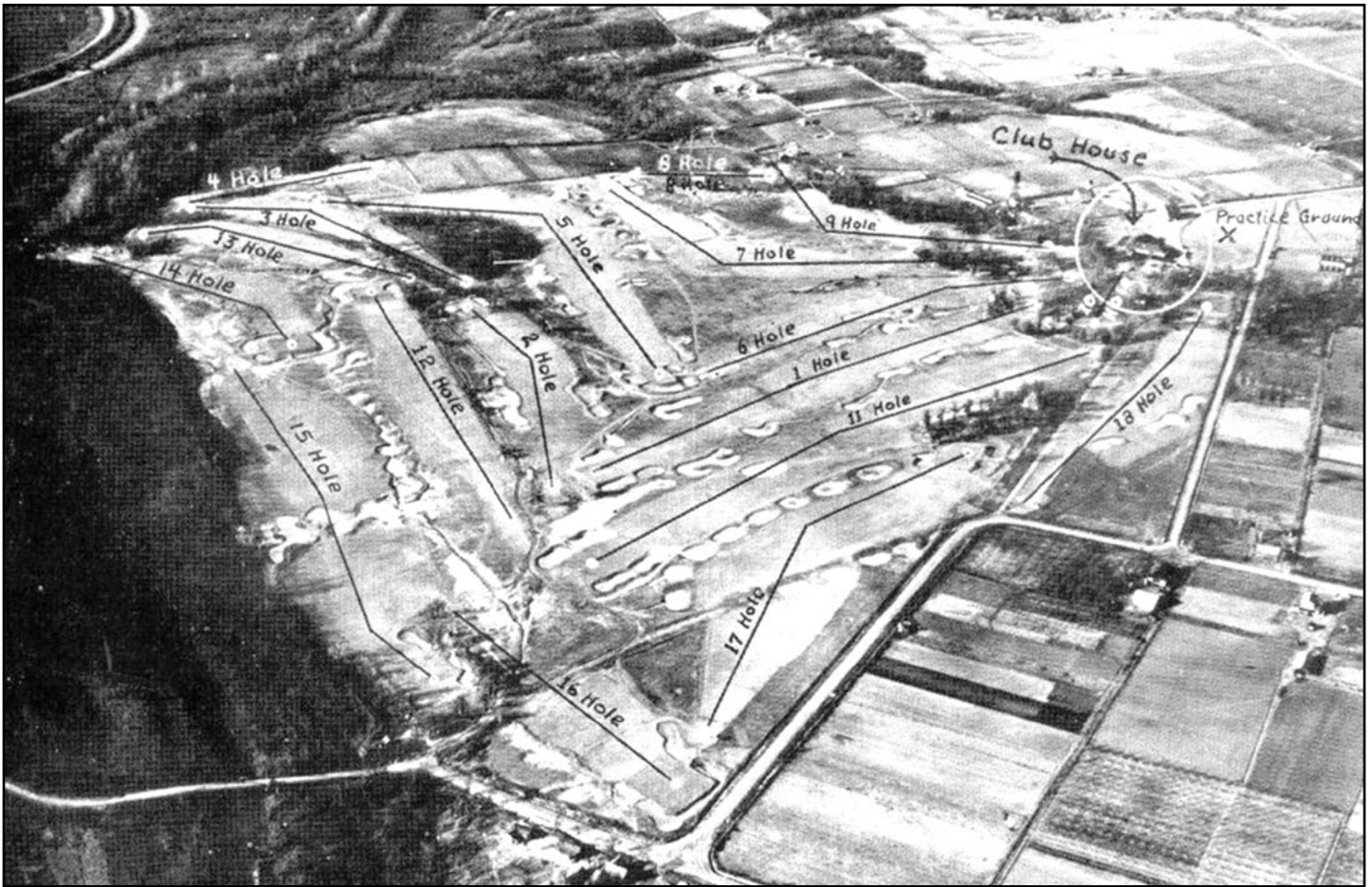
Still, while many greens built during the early years were square, many others during these same years

were also designed and built in a curving fashion and cut by hand to remain that way. It was quite expensive to do and so many municipal courses such as Brackenridge opted to have the less expensive for maintenance square-type greens.

So the answer to your question is yes, Tilly designed square greens but they weren't a Tillinghast 'signature' style; rather they were the product of a combination of the time and the finances of the course being designed and built.

Below is a 1926 aerial photograph of another well-known Texas Tillinghast design, Brook Hollow Golf Club in Dallas. They had the finances to have any style green designed and yet opted for square-shaped greens. This may have been due to the members who had started the club being mostly talented players who learned

the game during the height of the square green era. Tilly designed BH in 1920 and then did a redesign without changing many of the greens (he mostly added bunkers and lengthened the course by 300 yards) in 1923. Note how clearly the square shape of the greens can be seen despite the angle of the early aerial. Greens on 1, 2, 12, 14, 15, 16 & 17 really stand out. These would be redesigned into the curved type in 1936. Interestingly, though Tilly was unable to do the work himself, he recommended to the club that they hire a relatively young and unknown architect out of Oklahoma to do this for them, Perry Maxwell. The club liked the work so much that when it was completed in 1939 they had him basically start all over again and change the grass from Bermuda to Bent! It was completed in 1941.



Other questions that we receive are of a more personal nature, yet often times are quite fascinating on their own. For example, we were recently asked:

Question: "I've seen some spell Tillinghast's nickname "Tillie" while others use "Tilly." What is the proper spelling?"

Answer: Tillinghast had a number of nicknames which trace back to his youth. Evidently these types of nicknames were fairly common and expected during that time. To

understand why the use of the nickname "Tilly" is the preferable version, one must know the progression of the nicknames that he went by throughout his life. His earliest one was "Bertie"; an obvious reference to his first name "Albert" and which very well may have been bestowed upon him by one of his parents. He stopped using this either shortly before or after he was married. It was at that time that he began using the "Tillie" moniker. The reason for spelling it "Tillie" most likely had to do with the way

“Bertie” was spelled; in other words, both ended in “ie.” By the time that he was designing courses in the early teens he was using “Tilly” and before the decade was out it was almost exclusively “Tilly.” After the teens it is exceedingly rare to find his use of “Tillie” in anything he signed where as he commonly used “Tilly” in many of his correspondences. Below is an example of one from late in his life that is dated July 18, 1936. It was a gift to his good friend Tom McNamara and is an original sketch drawing of the 8th green at Fenimore (Fenway).



Note how you can clearly see how he signed it. A.W. Tillinghast “Tilly”. That is why “Tilly” is the easiest, most consistent and accurate one to use, especially as that is how he specifically referred to himself during the last 25 years or so of his life.

Do you have a question about Tilly’s work or him as a person? Feel very

free to email us and all will be answered. Hopefully yours will also find its way into a future issue of Tillinghast Illustrated!

The Tillinghast Association

The Tillinghast Association was founded in 1998. Its primary goals are to share the accumulated research and knowledge on A.W. Tillinghast -- his fascinating life, his remarkable golf courses, his charismatic and humorous writings, and his foundation principles to Modern Golf Course design and construction.

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E-mail is the primary means of communicating news and announcing upcoming events to the members of the Tillinghast Association. It is the responsibility of each Tillinghast Association member to notify us of e-mail address changes. If you have not been receiving membership e-mails, your e-mail address may not be correct in our membership files.

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