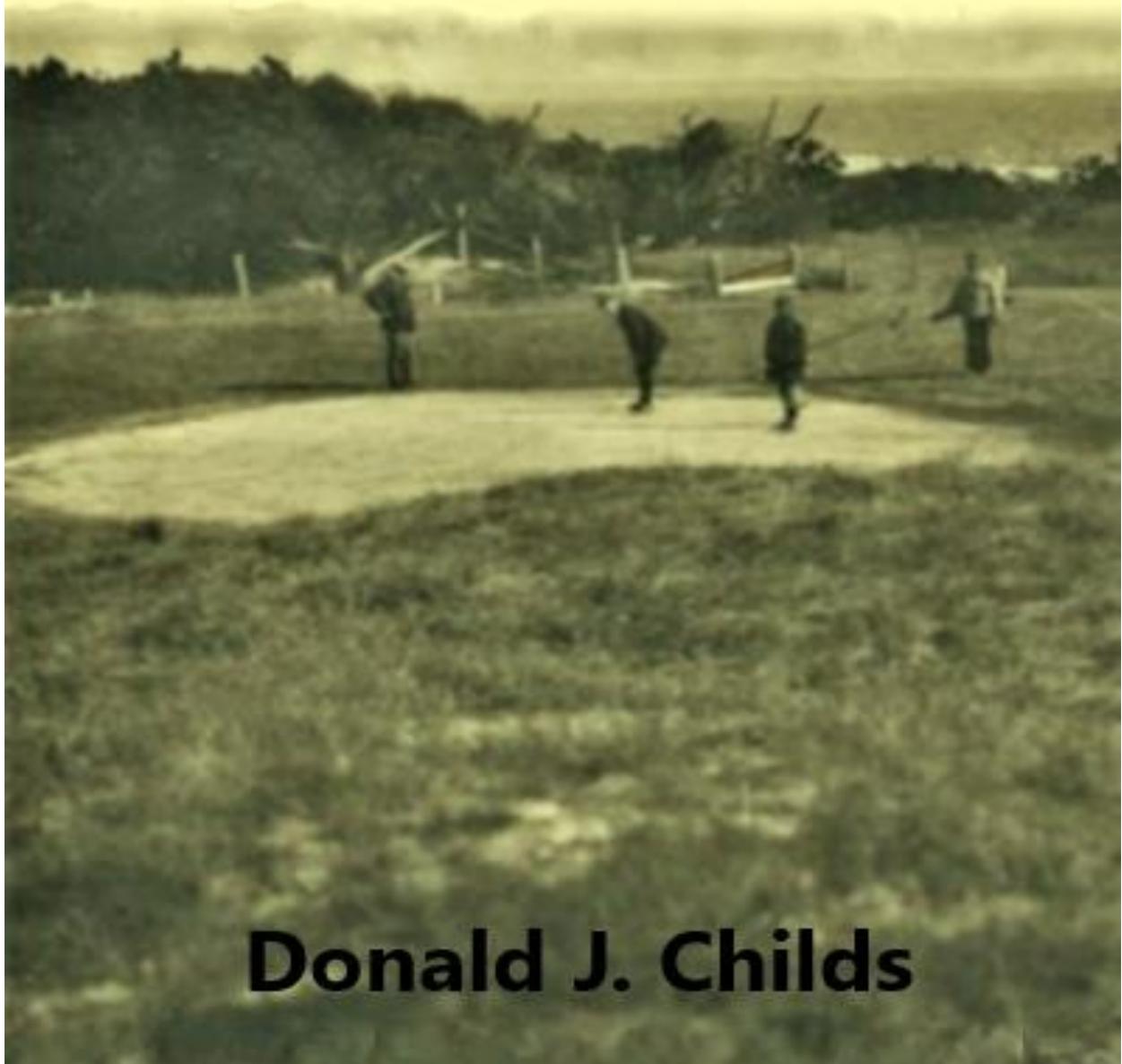


# **Forgotten Golf Courses of Jekyll Island**

**Designs from the 1890s to the 1920s**



**Donald J. Childs**



# Forgotten Golf Courses of Jekyll Island

Designs from the 1890s to the 1920s

*In memoriam*

Justin Bisson (1985 – 2020)

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,  
Nor the furious winter's rages;  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:  
Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great;  
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;  
Care no more to clothe and eat;  
To thee the reed is as the oak:  
The scepter, learning, physic, must  
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning flash,  
Nor the all-dreaded thunder stone;  
Fear not slander, censure rash;  
Thou hast finished joy and moan:  
All lovers young, all lovers must  
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!  
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!  
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!  
Nothing ill come near thee!  
Quiet consummation have;  
And renownèd be thy grave!

William Shakespeare, *Cymbelline*

# Contents

- Foreword..... 11
- Acknowledgements..... 13
- Preface ..... 14
- Introduction ..... 16
- Jekyll Island Golf Club Origins: A Mysterious Myth ..... 19
- Golf Club Versus Golf Course ..... 22
- First Golf..... 23
- First Golfers..... 24
- A Golf Convenience..... 26
- Locating the Golf Ground..... 27
- Island Landscape North of the Clubhouse ..... 31
- Open Ground ..... 33
- Fields ..... 36
- Quail Meadows ..... 38
- The Gamekeeper’s House ..... 40
- Rating the Golf Convenience ..... 43
- Jekyll and Hyde ..... 47
- Golf-Mad Jekyll Islanders ..... 51
- George Jay Gould ..... 52
- J. Pierpont Morgan, Sr ..... 55
- William Bayard Cutting, Sr ..... 58
- Arthur Brigham Claflin ..... 63
- Southern Resort Rivalry ..... 66
- “The Thing” to Do ..... 69

A Golf “Convenience” Designer? .....	73
Sniping.....	75
The Hunting Imperium of Dean Hoffman .....	76
The Best Quail Land .....	79
The Sniping King.....	81
Gunners versus Golfers.....	84
Compliments of Charles Lanier .....	86
Not Hyde-Bound to Hunting Grounds.....	88
Wherefore a Dunn Deal? .....	90
The Unknown Golf Courses of Willie Dunn, Jr .....	93
Dunn’s Twice-Told Tale .....	94
The One Tale .....	97
The Other Tale .....	101
Untold Tales .....	103
Two Visits .....	105
Scouting Jekyll Island Golf Sites .....	107
Showing the Club .....	110
The Timing of a “Temporary Arrangement” .....	112
Harder Than Expected .....	117
The 1897 Willie Dunn Course.....	119
About “Bogey” .....	121
About Six Inches of Scorecard.....	125
“Between the Morris Home and the Bridge” .....	127
Charles Stewart Maurice.....	136
Hi-Ho the Dairy! Oh ... ?!.....	138
How long did this “temporary” golf course last?.....	142

Rating Dunn’s 1897 Riverside Course .....	144
The Honest Son of Abe.....	146
John D. Rockefeller .....	148
Two Towers and a Windmill.....	151
Flagging a Location.....	154
Present Arms.....	159
Caddie Identification.....	160
Underwood and Underwood .....	163
Jekyll Caddies .....	167
William Inglis and William Hemingway.....	169
“Oily John” and the Two Willies.....	171
Rockefeller Lets President-Elect Taft Play Through .....	175
Sartorial Signals.....	180
Shadowy Information.....	183
Tee Box Northward .....	184
Tee Boxes Southward .....	188
Fairways .....	191
Sand Greens Generally.....	193
Sand Versus Grass in the South .....	196
“Riverside” Sand Greens Particularly.....	197
The Mystery of the White Caddie .....	200
That’s Rough .....	203
Aim Line: First House or Second House? .....	206
Dunn’s “Savanna” Course .....	208
Dunn as Designer .....	210
Not Doing Anything Not Necessary Now .....	217

Construction.....	219
The Fickle Finger of Fate .....	220
Bermuda Grass.....	224
Horace Rawlins.....	228
Dunn’s “Savanna” Undone.....	231
The Experience of the Hurricane on the Riverside .....	233
Dunn’s Savanna Course Legacy.....	235
The Travis Consultation.....	236
Whence Travis?.....	238
Travis versus Dunn .....	243
Caught Between a Penal Rock-Wall and a Strategically Hard Place .....	247
Travis Modifications?.....	251
A New Course.....	254
Before Donald Ross, Jock Hutchinson.....	258
The Ross Design .....	264
The Eighteen-Hole Course .....	266
The Nine-Hole Course .....	268
Construction.....	270
Earliest Photographs of the Ross Course .....	272
Pinehurst and Jekyll Island Greens .....	276
Photographs of the Layout .....	278
Ross and Dunn Ditches .....	283
“Dunn” and “Ross” Played the Same Day?.....	286
Ross Course Reviews.....	287
Between a Ross and a Travis Place .....	289
Karl Keffer .....	290

Keffer and Travis .....	292
Designing Ambitions .....	295
First Two Dunes Holes.....	298
Niblick and Beers.....	302
The Par Three by the Sea .....	304
Keffer and Francis Ouimet .....	308
Keffer, Travis, and Ross.....	312
Golfing to War.....	317
The War Pro Shop at Royal Ottawa .....	322
World War I and Golf Course Design .....	328
Back in the Game .....	332
The Jekyll Island Pro Shop.....	339
Earl Hill .....	342
More Dunes Holes.....	349
Three More Dunes Holes .....	355
Three More Not-So-Dunes Holes.....	362
A Grand Opening.....	365
Balls to Jekyll Island.....	366
Algernon P. Grass, Not.....	371
Grass Greens .....	374
Reviews .....	376
Another New Course? What Gives?.....	381
The Changa Crisis of 1925 .....	384
Plus ça changa.....	387
The Scorecard of the Oceanside Course (a.k.a. Great Dunes) .....	389
The Lost Nine .....	395

A Review of the 2/3 Travis, 1/3 Keffer Oceanside Course ..... 404

Post-War Keffer and His Part of the Dunes Course ..... 406



## Foreword

Not long ago, I discovered that the course record at the club where I am a member, the Napanee Golf and Country Club (founded in 1897), was held before World War I by a young Canadian professional golfer from Toronto by the name of Karl Keffer, who would win the Canadian Open in 1909 and 1914.

I then discovered that while Keffer was the head pro at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club (where he served from 1911 to 1942) he laid out two of the other golf courses that I play most frequently in the Ottawa Valley. Almost 100 years later, the holes that he designed remain a great pleasure to play.

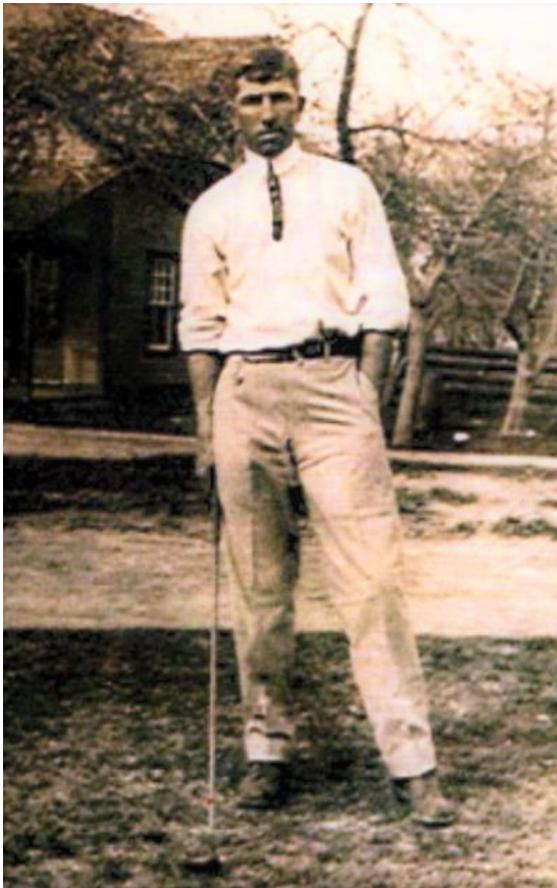


Figure 1 Karl Keffer, circa 1909.

Deciding to look further into the history of this golfer and course designer, I immediately discovered that Keffer had a winter career in Georgia parallel to his summer career at Royal Ottawa. From 1910 to 1942, he enjoyed a thirty-two-year residence as head pro for the millionaires of the Jekyll Island Club located on Jekyll Island, Georgia.

What else I eventually discovered surprised me and will surprise others familiar with accounts of the development of golf on Jekyll Island.

It turns out that Karl Keffer designed a nine-hole golf course for the Jekyll Island Club, whose multi-millionaire members were said to possess one-sixth of the world's wealth at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Very few people know about the Keffer course today. It never had a name. Yet, as we shall see, it received a stellar review from the editor of *Golf Illustrated* in 1925. Although it was combined with a nine-hole course by Donald J. Ross to form an eighteen-hole circuit, the Keffer course built in the Jekyll Island dunes was described hole-by-hole by the magazine's well-respected, links-loving, golf-savvy editor – he said one hole was a “great hole” and that the next hole was “the best he knew” of in the world – and yet

## Foreword

he said nary a word about the other nine holes designed by one of America's greatest golf course architects.

I call this glorious unknown golf course "Keffer Dunes."

This book tells the story of the early golf courses designed on Jekyll Island between the 1890s and the 1920s – a story that culminates in an account of "Keffer Dunes."

## Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude to Janet M. Childs, who provided instrumental assistance in the production of this book through her formatting skills, her proofreading efforts, and her perspicacious criticism.

I thank U.S.G.A. Historian Maggie Lagle for generously sending me the Jekyll Island scorecards possessed by the U.S.G.A. and the U.S.G.A. file on the history of the Donald J. Ross course on Jekyll Island by James S. Brunner: "Jekyll Island Golf History – The 1910 Donald Ross Course," June 1998, U.S.G.A. Archives.

Also quite helpful has been feedback from Andre Marroquin, Curator, Mosaic, Jekyll Island Museum, who read the manuscript.

I am especially grateful to Kyle Keffer and members of the Keffer family for information about Karl Keffer and Evelyn Alice Keffer (née Freeman).

## Preface

The story of golf course design on Jekyll Island before World War II is rich with the names of renowned architects: Willie Dunn, Jr, Donald J. Ross, Walter J. Travis.

Furthermore, equally celebrated golf course architects such as Charles Blair Macdonald and Albert Warren Tillinghast came to Jekyll Island to play its earliest golf courses.

And after World War II, when the state of Georgia took over Jekyll Island, no less an authority than Robert Trent Jones, Sr, was brought in to assess the condition and viability of its golf facilities, which had been totally neglected since the evacuation of the island in 1942 as a safety precaution during World War II.

But despite the golf world's great interest in such figures, the story of early golf course design on Jekyll Island – as told so far – is in important respects incomplete, uncertain, and confused.

How many courses were built before World War II? Who designed them? When was each course built?

How long did the various courses last? When were they remodelled and who remodelled them?

Did these courses have nine holes or eighteen holes?

In the nineteenth century, there was a plan for a twenty-seven-hole two-course development: what became of it?

In the early 1920s, there was a fourteen-hole course: what is the story behind that?

Initially all putting “greens” were made of sand. Then they were made of “oiled sand.” When were they converted to grass?

The answers to these questions are not easy to find, but such answers as can be found are always interesting, and often fascinating.

Research reveals that the story of golf course design on Jekyll Island largely leaves out the most enduring contribution – that of its golf professional from 1910 to 1942: Karl Keffer. Perhaps this omission is understandable given how well-known and historically significant the other golf course architects are, but Keffer was a designer of golf courses, too. He designed at least two courses in Canada – a nine-hole golf course for the Arnprior Golf Club (Ontario) in 1924, and an eighteen-hole golf course

for the Glenlea Golf and Country Club (Quebec) between 1929 and 1934 (it is today called the Champlain Golf Club). He will also have been responsible for design changes at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club during his tenure there as head pro from 1911 to 1942. But before his Canadian ventures in golf course architecture, he built a nine-hole golf course on Jekyll Island between 1913 and 1923 that literally linked the 1909 Donald Ross course to the Great Dunes course of Walter J. Travis, begun in the fall of 1926. Travis went on to incorporate most of the Keffer course into his Great Dunes course.

It seems to have been the popularity of the nine-hole Keffer course located in the Jekyll Island dunes along the Atlantic coast that led to the commissioning of Travis to develop a full eighteen-hole dunes course. The Keffer dunes course had already supplanted the nine-hole Ross course as the favorite nine-hole circuit on Jekyll Island (especially in the opinion of the younger members). Travis seems to have been made aware that Club members were very happy with their existing Keffer dunes holes; he was to add to it.

Travis kept five of Keffer's holes exactly as they were, divided one of Keffer's holes in half to create two holes, and then added eleven brand new holes to create a new eighteen-hole course that Club members called the Oceanside course, but that is now known by the name Travis himself used: Great Dunes.

Ironically, however, although only nine holes of Great Dunes survive today, and Keffer designed by far the majority of them, the prominence of Travis as a golf course architect has obscured Keffer's connection with what became a very famous golf course. In 1947, there was no mention of Keffer in the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* reference to the golf course about to be acquired by the state of Georgia: "An 18-hole golf course, laid out by Walter J. Travis, one-time United States amateur champion, is one of the finest dunes courses in North America" (*Everybody's Weekly, Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 July 1947, p. 10).

As we shall see, however, the fact remains that Karl Keffer was the designer of the oldest golf holes still in play on Jekyll Island today.

## Introduction



Figure 2 Willie Dunn, Jr, 1894.

Willie Dunn, Jr, is sometimes honored as the first U.S. Open champion, having won the open championship held in 1894 several months before the United States Golf Association was formed and undertook to conduct the official U.S. Open ever afterward, but he is also a key figure in the development of golf on Jekyll Island.

Soon to become an ubiquitous architect who would design many dozens of golf courses throughout the American Northeast and Midwest during the 1890s, he actually claimed that he had turned the focus of the late nineteenth-century sporting clubs of America's wealthiest men (like the millionaires' club at Jekyll Island) from hunting and fishing to golf several years before he even set foot in North America.

By Dunn's telling of the tale, he did so with a golf shot heard round the rich man's world:

*It was in France that three American sportsmen, W.K. Vanderbilt, Edward S. Meade, and Duncan Cryder, first became interested in the game and got the idea of building a course in the States. In 1889 I was engaged in laying out an 18-hole course at Biarritz, France. Biarritz at that time was a small village, and there were few tourists from America. I had nearly completed the Biarritz links when I met Vanderbilt, Meade and Cryder. They showed real interest in the game from the beginning; I remember the first demonstration I gave them. We chose the famous Chasm hole – about 225 yards and featuring a deep canyon which has to be cleared with the tee shot; I teed up several balls and laid them all on the green, close to the flag. Vanderbilt turned to his friends and said, "Gentlemen, this beats rifle shooting for distance and accuracy." Soon afterwards these men asked me to come to America and build a golf course there. ("Early Courses of the United States," Golf Illustrated, vol 41 no 6 [September 1934], p. 24)*

Note, however, that when Dunn, in his older years, recounted self-aggrandizing stories of his contributions to golf history in the 1890s (as he does in this 1934 *Golf Illustrated* article), he was often

inaccurate in regard to details of dates, places, and people. In the case of the article quoted above, he gets many things wrong as he goes on to explain his role in the early development of the Shinnecock Hills golf course, but his anecdote about Vanderbilt and friends is accurate in marking the general trend in the 1890s of the shifting preference of America's millionaire sportsman away from rod and gun to golf club – a trend that is certainly observable in the history of the Jekyll Island Sportsmen's Club.

And not coincidentally, Dunn and Vanderbilt are part of the story of the earliest development of golf at Jekyll Island, for the latter was among the founding members of the Jekyll Island Sportsmen's Club in 1886 and the former was the club's first nine-hole golf course architect in 1897.

Although Dunn's claim that Vanderbilt brought him to Shinnecock Hills to design a golf course is inaccurate, his claim to have enjoyed the friendship and patronage of Vanderbilt during his first years in America is accurate enough. Similarly, Dunn is inaccurate in suggesting that he built the first golf course at Jekyll Island "at the instance of Stanford White," for White – the architect of the famous clubhouse at Shinnecock Hills – was never a Jekyll Island Club member ("Early Courses of the United States," 25).

But Dunn also wrote that in addition to White, "several other New Yorkers, who owned hunting lodges on this Island," invited him to design a golf course for the Club ("Early Courses of the United States," 25). This claim is probably true. Dunn mixed up his millionaires – true to his working-class caddie roots in Scotland, he may have found it hard to tell one rich American from another – but he liked millionaires well enough and could easily tell them apart from non-millionaires.

Yet among the Jekyll Island millionaires, it is likely that Dunn's commission to design and build a golf course at Jekyll Island arose from his connections not just with "New Yorkers" who were Club members, but also with those who were also members of the earliest golf clubs established in the American Northeast – and not just casual or social members, but also club owners, builders, presidents, golf captains, and committee chairmen.

At a high percentage of the early New York and New Jersey golf clubs in question, the designer of their golf courses had been Willie Dunn. As such, he was known by reputation to millionaire members of these clubs' boards of directors, and yet he was also known to many of them personally through his work as the head professional at a number of these top golf clubs, ranging from Shinnecock Hills in 1893 to the Ardsley Casino Club in 1897.

## Introduction

It was in 1897 that Dunn received the call from the Jekyll Island Sportsmen's Club to lay out its first proper golf course. But the beginning of golf on Jekyll Island actually predates by at least a year the construction of the Dunn course in question.

## Jekyll Island Golf Club Origins: A Mysterious Myth

Apart from inaccuracies in any tale told by Willie Dunn about golf in the 1890s, inaccuracies also abound in accounts by others of the beginnings of golf on Jekyll Island in the 1890s.

In “History of Golf in the Golden Isles” on the “Golden Isles Georgia” website, we read that “The Golden Isles' first official recognition as a golf venue came in 1894, when the Jekyll Island Golf Club was registered with the United States Golf Association” (<https://www.goldenisles.com/discover/golden-isles/history-and-heritage/history-of-golf-golden-isles/>).

This claim cannot be true.

Technically, and perhaps trivially, since the U.S.G.A. was not known as such until 21 February 1895, it is impossible for the Jekyll Island Club to have been registered with it in 1894. The first national golf association in the United States was indeed formed in 1894, but it was first called the Amateur Golf Association and then for a few weeks in 1895 the American Golf Association.

Yet objection to the above claim about the first official U.S.G.A. recognition of golf on Jekyll Island involves more than a quibble about nomenclature.

To claim that the Jekyll Island Sportsmen’s Club was registered in 1894 with the first national golf association formed on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1894, is virtually to claim that it is in the august company of the five charter members of the association at that late December meeting: Newport Golf Club, St. Andrew’s Golf Club, Chicago Golf Club, Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, and The Country Club in Brookline. It was not.

Alternatively, since the New York newspapers had mentioned as early as October of 1894 that a meeting to organize a national golf association was planned for the end of the year, perhaps it is conceivable that the Secretary of the Jekyll Island Sportsmen’s Club sent a letter applying for association sometime between December 23<sup>rd</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>. He did not.

There was no golf course or practice facility for golf on Jekyll Island before the end of 1896, and there is no sign of interest in making golf one of the Club’s sports before this. As early as 1887 the Club had anticipated that it might take up horse racing and so indicated in its charter that it might “maintain a race course” on the island (an eventuality that never came to pass), but there was no mention of a golf course (*Jekyll Island Club: Charter, Constitution, By-Laws and Members’ Names* [New York: A.C. Cunningham, 1887], p. 4).

## Jekyll Island Golf Club Origins: A Mysterious Myth

Yet the myth of an 1894 start for golf on Jekyll Island is out there.

In the essay “Golf, United States and Canada” in *Sports Around the World* (ed. John Nauright, Charles Parrish [Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2012]), John Nauright says that “The first southern club was the Swannanoa Golf Club in Asheville, North Carolina, which appeared in 1893, followed by the Jekyll Island Golf Club near Brunswick, Georgia, the next year” (Vol 3: “History, Culture, and Practice,” p. 240).

And there are other claims that refer to some sort of early official recognition of golf on Jekyll Island by the U.S.G.A.

In her account of the Jekyll Island Club in her article “Millionaire Village,” in *Outdoors in Georgia* (July 1977), Susan K. Wood takes the tack of revisiting Jekyll Island in the 1920s via “imagination,” and, in imagining club members playing the “oceanside” course designed in 1926 by Walter J. Travis, observes in passing that the Jekyll golf club “was only the thirty-sixth to be registered in the country, in 1894” (vol 7 no 7, p. 6). Similarly, in *3181: The Magazine of Jekyll Island*, Charles Bethea writes that “The Jekyll Island Golf Club was chartered in 1894, the thirty-sixth in the nation” (“Closer to Nature,” *3181: The Magazine of Jekyll Island* [Fall/Winter 2017], p. 56).

What of the new claim here that the Jekyll Island Club was the thirty-sixth golf club chartered by the U.S.G.A.?

The *New York Times* lists twenty-five golf clubs “Associated” or “Allied” with the U.S.G.A. at the time of the second annual meeting on 8 February 1896 (10 February 1896, p. 6). (The dues for Associate clubs were \$100 per year; the dues for Allied clubs were \$25 per year.) In *The Golfer* of March, 1896, the list of Associated and Allied comprises thirty clubs (vol 2 no 5, p. 133). In neither case, however, is the Jekyll Island’s Sportsmen’s Club listed as either an Associated or Allied member, so it is clear that the Club was not registered with the U.S.G.A. before the spring of 1896.

Perhaps the Jekyll Island Sportsmen’s Club was on the waiting list?

When the Golf Club of Lakewood invited golfers to play in its opening spring tournament in April of 1896, it advised potential competitors that “events are open to all members of the United States Golf Association, and, at the discretion of the Greens Committee, to the members of clubs that have applied for admission to the national union and are on the waiting list” (*Sun* [NY], 8 April 1896, p. 4). The new national golf organization was struggling to keep up with the emergence of fledgling golf clubs.

If the Jekyll Island Club was indeed the thirty-sixth golf club to have registered with the Association, this event must have happened between March of 1896 and May of 1897, for a report in the New York *Sun* states that at the U.S.G.A. Executive Committee meeting of May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1897, six new Allied golf clubs were admitted: thereby “The strength of the Association was increased to **eighty-four clubs**” (7 May 1897, p. 5, emphasis added).

## Golf Club Versus Golf Course

In considering this question about the beginning of golf on Jekyll Island, one must use terms precisely and bear in mind the important distinction between the concept of a golf “club” and the concept of a golf “course.”

A golf course is a piece of land, a geographical location fixed on the earth. A golf course does not change its location: course and location are identical.

A golf club, however, is a social and legal organization of people, and so a golf club can change its geographical location without becoming a different club. Golf clubs often move from one piece of land where golf is played to another, as conditions may require or suggest. In Scotland today, for instance, some of the oldest golf clubs in history find themselves playing on land not just remote from where the club began to play, but also on layouts developed hundreds of years after the club was formed.

And so a golf club may be the same age as the golf course upon which it plays golf, or it may be older or younger than the home golf course on which it happens to play the game at any particular time.

Note also that many a golf club has been founded before it even built or located a golf course on which to play.

That the Jekyll Island Club had no golf grounds before 1896 does not necessarily mean that it had not formally declared itself a golf club before 1896. Theoretically, for instance, it could very well have registered as a golf club with the U.S.G.A. before its first golf course was built (although this seems unlikely).

## First Golf

Apart from the question of when golf was recognized by the U.S.G.A. as one of the sports of the Jekyll Island Club, there is the more interesting question of when golf clubs first struck golf balls on the island?

John Companiotte writes in *A History of Golf in Georgia* that “While the first golf course at Jekyll Island did not open until 1899, the wealthy residents who built large cottages there certainly played golf before then, hitting balls on the lawns” (12). Details here are incorrect. As we shall see, the year 1897 – not 1899 – is when the first golf course opened on Jekyll Island. And the earliest golf was probably not played on the cottage lawns, which were smaller and much closer together than Campaniotte might have imagined, but rather on open ground north of the clubhouse and cottages. The lawns of the clubhouse and cottages were landscaped early and relatively densely with gardens, hedges, and trees, inhibiting anything but chipping and putting practice by the mid-1890s when golf had gathered some devotees among the Jekyll Island Club members. Without risking harm to persons or property, no one could have swung a club at a ball with full force within the Jekyll Island clubhouse “enclosure” or “compound” (as the area of clubhouse, cottages, and related buildings that was surrounded by a fence to keep out wild animals was called).



Figure 3 Richard T. Crane, circa 1920s. In Tyler B. Bagwell and Tyler E. Bagwell, *The Jekyll Island Club* (Mount Pleasant, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 1998), p. 74.

But Companiotte is no doubt correct that golf was played on the island in some form before a proper golf course was built. Devoted golfers have always taken whatever opportunities are available to them to practice their short games in unusual places.

We see in the photograph to the left that even relatively late in the history of the Jekyll Island Club, when it boasted an excellent eighteen-hole layout, one of the long-time members, Richard T. Crane, was photographed practising his putting on a path running across his lawn. Yet there was a proper putting green dedicated to just such practice less than a mile from where Crane stood!

As we shall soon see, it turns out that a year before Willie Dunn built a nine-hole golf course on Jekyll Island, there had already been a golf “convenience” built for the earliest of the Club’s ardent devotees of the ancient game.

## First Golfers

What do we know of the mid-1890s interest in golf among the first generation of Jekyll Island Club members, apart from Vanderbilt?

Several Jekyll Islanders were golf mad by 1895. In January of 1895, Arthur B. Claflin (a Club member since 1889) was in the gallery of a large crowd following a match at the Golf Club of Lakewood, New Jersey, between the club's professional golfer and a visiting professional golfer named Samuel Tucker, the nephew of Willie Dunn.

In December of 1895 (the year in which he joined the Club), George J. Gould donated a silver loving cup as a prize for competition at the same Golf Club of Lakewood where Claflin was in the gallery eleven months before, and a few days later Gould bought the land where within months he would have 1895 U.S. Open winner Horace Rawlings build a nine-hole course for a rival club, the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club.

While Claflin and Gould were at the center of golf developments in Lakewood, original Jekyll Island Club member William Bayard Cutting, Sr, hired Willie Dunn in the spring of 1895 to lay out a private nine-hole golf course for him at his country estate called Westbrook, on Long Island.

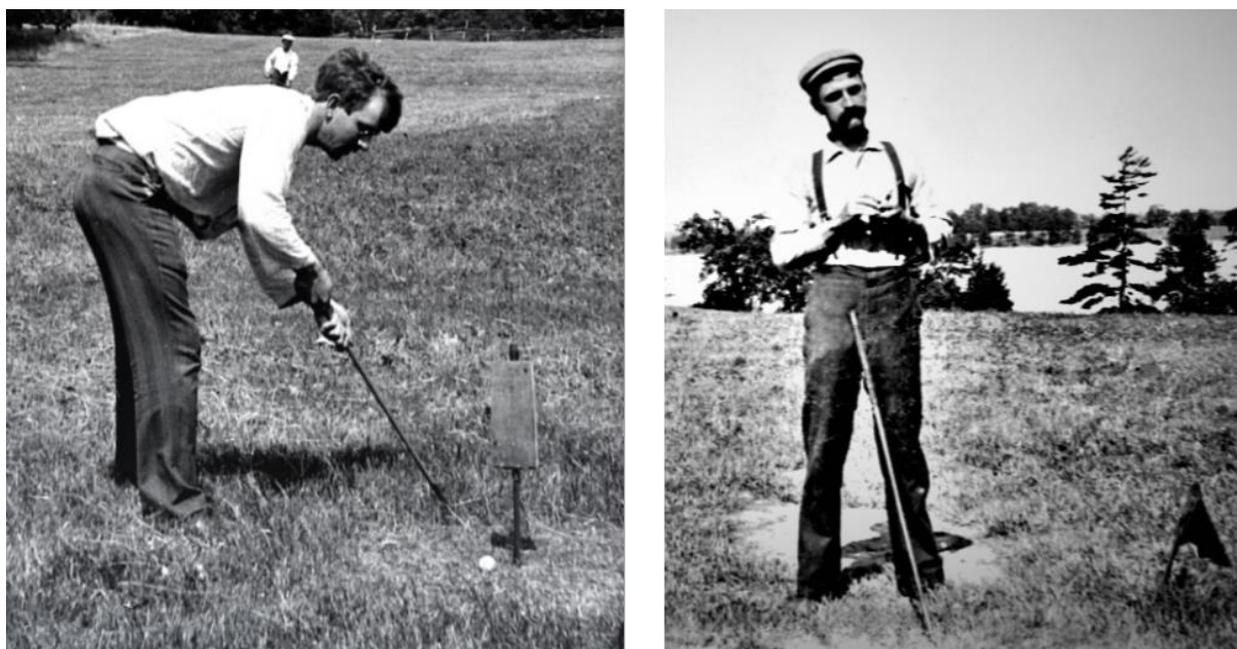
By then, fellow original Club member J. Pierpont Morgan had already had a shorter practice course of his own laid out on his estate at Cragstone on the Hudson River.

Any of these golf-mad Club members (or perhaps golf-mad members of their families, particularly sons and daughters) might have brought golf clubs south to Jekyll Island by the mid-1890s and hit balls about in the open ground north of the clubhouse compound. If some of them did so, they may even have selected an area of open ground where they could plant flagpoles to mark out a rudimentary golf course.

In fact, the history of the beginnings of golf in North America is rife with accounts of just such practices: individuals and small groups of people fashioning rudimentary golf courses of three, four, or five holes in open fields near their homes or places of business. Such is the origin of many a community's first golf course, which was often simply referred to as a "links," "golf field" or "golf ground."

See the images below of the primitive golf course laid out in the early 1890s at Camp Le Nid on the shores of the Bay of Quinte on Lake Ontario by Walter S. Herrington, leader of a summer camp where

law graduates from Victoria College in the year 1883 gathered annually from all across North America for rest and recreation.



*Figure 4 Camp Le Nid Golf Links, Bay of Quinte, Ontario, circa mid-1890s. Photograph item N-02691 (left) and photograph N-11016 (right) reproduced courtesy of the County of Lennox and Addington Museum and Archives.*

The fairway is a field “mowed” by cattle or sheep. The green is a circle of pasture grass cut low to a diameter of three feet, with a hole at the center marked by a small pole and plaque. Over the shoulder of the man putting in the foreground we see a man finishing play at the previous hole not far away. The tee at each hole is marked by a small flag-topped pole stuck in the ground, seen to the right of the man waiting to tee off in the photograph above on the right.

Camp Le Nid Golf Links was not much of a golf course, but It sufficed as a starter course for the golf pioneers in that area.

Something like the sort of rudimentary, provisional golf course we see in the photographs above may have been set up on Jekyll Island by the mid-1890s whenever two or more of Jekyll Island’s early ardent votaries of the ancient game gathered in golf’s name.

## A Golf Convenience

The first indication that there was an actual area on Jekyll Island dedicated to golf comes in a newspaper article that points to 1896 as the year when golf was officially recognized as one of the sports of the Jekyll Island Sportsmen's Club.

The *Morning News* of Savannah reports at the end of December of 1896 on busy preparations for the 1897 season: "On Jan. 15 the Jekyl Island Club will open for the reception of guests. Preparatory to the season's round of pleasure, the finishing touches are being put on the grounds, club house and apartment cottages" (29 December 1896, p. 6). A particular aspect of this work stemmed from the fact that earlier in 1896 the Club's Executive Committee had approved plans for development of a golf facility at Jekyll Island:

*The club house season will begin on Jan. 15, but the cold weather north has caused an advanced guard of millionaires to seek the genial climate off Georgia's coast.... The younger set will take much more interest in the club this season than for many past. The necessity for having this so was made plain to the executive committee many months ago, and plans for bringing it about started. The completion of extensive improvements ... was the vital point accomplished.... A remodelling and enlargement of the ballroom ... [and] improvements in the billiard and pool room, stables and equipments, and conveniences for water sports, tennis, golf, etc., have added all that is desirable for the young" (11 January 1897, p. 3).*

For the sake of "the younger set," lo and behold, there was a "convenience" for golf ready by the beginning of the 1897 season!

## Locating the Golf Ground

In the photograph below, we see a field marked by a sign reading “Golf Ground.”



*Figure 5 Undated photograph from William Barton McCash and June Hall McCash, Jekyll Island Club: Southern Haven for America's Millionaires (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1989), p. 46.*

There are no identifiable golf course artifacts visible in the photograph: no tee boxes, no flagpoles, no putting surfaces. It is possible that this undated photograph of an apparently minimalist ground for golf is in fact a photograph of the “convenience” for golf built in 1896.

Along the left side of the photograph is River Road, running north and then curving slightly eastward in the distance. River Road ran along the west side of the island with Jekyll Creek and the tidal marshes to its left and open ground to its right. It was built by the Jekyll Island Club shortly after its foundation.

## Locating the Golf Ground

Running parallel to River Road for about three miles was one of the oldest roads on the island, Old Plantation Road. To the east of Old Plantation Road was largely forest.

These roads ran north of the clubhouse enclosure about 100 to 130 yards apart for a bit less than a mile until they reached Captain Wyllly Road, which intersected each of them on a generally east-west axis, at which point they gently turned northeast and continued to run parallel, still about 100 to 130 yards apart, for about two miles, at which point they converged several hundred yards beyond Horton House (familarly known as “the old Tabby House”).

Occasionally, a short road ran perpendicularly across the generally open ground between them – one of which can be detected at the very bottom of the photograph above.

On the left of the photograph we can see the scrub brush that formed between River Road and the tidal marsh along the west side of the north part of the island. On the right of the photograph we can see the forest that was on the east side of Old Plantation Road. In the far distance, we can see signs of a line of trees between River Road and Old Plantation Road: they may mark one of the roads that ran between them, where what we might call “tree fences” grew up or were planted over the years, informally segmenting the land between River Road and Old Plantation Road into distinct fields (unfenced).

In the foreground of the photograph above is a rack for parking the bicycles, which had just recently become an ubiquitous part of island life. Tyler B. Bagwell and Tyler E. Bagwell say that “By the 1890s bicycles were the island rave” (*The Jekyll Island Club* [Mount Pleasant, S. C.: Arcadia Publishing, 1998], p. 68). Near the end of the 1897 season, a newspaper report introducing readers to the Jekyll Island Club brought its concluding focus to the topic of this new bicycle rave:

*Jekyl Island is owned by a club of wealthy men, who go there at intervals for rest. The place which is known as “Millionaires’ Island” contains fourteen hundred acres laid [out] in lovely parks and drives, with fifty-one miles of the most beautiful shell roads for carriages and nearly twice that distance in bridle paths, with ten or fifteen miles of the most perfect wheel roads in the world, for nearly every one on the island, old and young, has a bicycle. Indeed ... nearly all of them [have] two wheels that they might be sure to have one of them always in readiness for use. (Huntsville Weekly Democrat [Alabama], 31 March 1897, p. 2)*

William Rockefeller said, “The bicycle craze is extending, and no telling where it will end” (McCashes p. 50). Bicycle paths were paid for by Jekyll Islanders like Rockefeller himself – and named accordingly.



*Figure 6 The Rockefeller bicycle path, dating from the early 1900s, was located on the east side of the island.*

In the background on the right side of the photograph of the “Golf Ground” several pages above, we can just make out a light-coloured fence and the bottom part of a light-coloured building.



*Figure 7 A detail from the photograph above of the golf ground.*

The building in question is obscured by the bottom right edge of the sign. There were many such whitewashed buildings around the island dedicated to various functions: the mule shed, stables for

## Locating the Golf Ground

horses, farmhouses and hen houses, laundry buildings, and so on. Most of them had a white fence associated with them.



*Figure 8 White buildings on Jekyll Island in the early 1900s. Left to right: laundry; farmhouse and barn; mule shed.*

The number and variety of these buildings proliferated over the years. As early as the first season (1888), for example, it was necessary for the Club to build a house for the gamekeeper's assistant (McCashes p. 21).

The best clue to the location of the "Golf Ground" is the crossroad between River Road and Old Plantation Road that appears at the bottom of the photograph of the "Golf Ground." It suggests that the "Golf Ground" was located at one of three locations: the unnamed crossroad on the north side of Hollybourne Cottage, the part of Captain Wyllly Road that crossed between River Road and Old Plantation Road, or the crossroad named Palmetto Road.

The fence and white building in the photograph could be associated with the area alongside Old Plantation Road known as "the Plantation." If so, the photograph of the "Golf Ground" would seem to have been taken at the intersection of River Road and Captain Wyllly Road.

Support for this possibility comes from the fact that the photograph shows River Road bending slightly toward Old Plantation Road, just as it did in the Club's days as it ran north from its intersection with Captain Wyllly Road.

## Island Landscape North of the Clubhouse

The state of the land on the west side of the island running north between River Road and Old Plantation Road alongside Jekyll Creek and its marshes is described in an article written in 1897 by John R. Van Wormer, who was a guest on the island in January of that year: “To the north [of the clubhouse], for the space of a quarter of a mile from the bank of the creek, are open ground, cultivated fields, quail meadows, with a scrub palmetto growth fringing the shore and marsh; the gamekeeper’s house, the kennels, the pheasant pens, and stretching north and west, forest, vale and marsh” (“An Island on the Georgia Coast,” *The Cosmopolitan*, vol 24 No 3 [January 1898], p. 293).

The open ground that Van Wormer describes is shown on a map published in 1893 as part of the Thirteenth Annual Report of the Geological Survey for 1891-92.

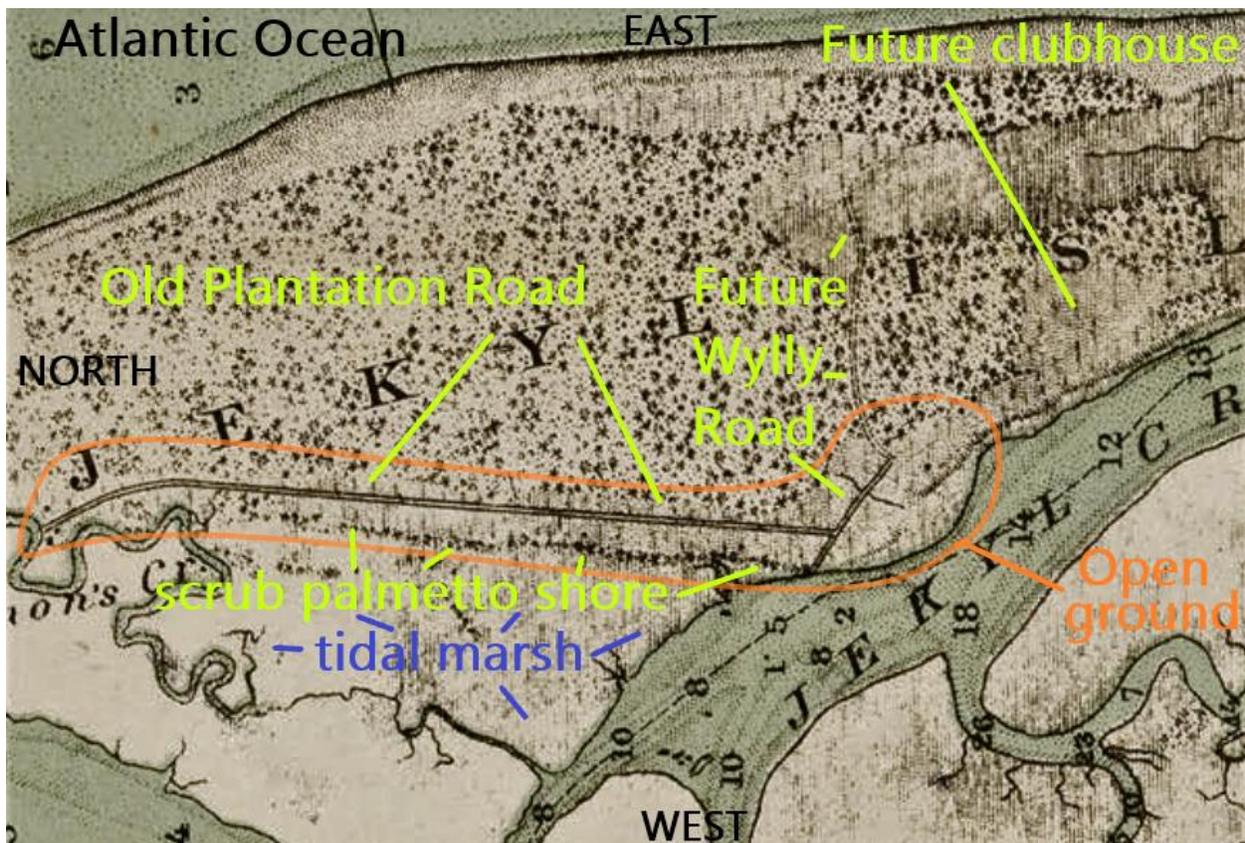


Figure 9 Jekyll Island before construction of Jekyll Island Club clubhouse or the du Bignon house, as seen in a detail from a map in the Thirteenth Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey for 1891-92, published in 1893. The “open ground” described by Van Wormer is contained within an orange line. It is three miles long, and “a quarter of a mile” wide from “scrub palmetto growth” along the shore (of creek and marsh) to the woods on the east side of Old Plantation Road.

## Island Landscape North of the Clubhouse

The survey from which the map was produced no doubt dates from several years earlier, as the Clubhouse does not appear on the map, nor does the du Bignon house built in the early 1880s. The only structures marked on the map seem to be Horton House at the north end of the island, the western-most part of what will become Captain Wylly Road, and Old Plantation Road, which runs from Horton House south to Wylly Road but does not even reach the open area where the Clubhouse would be built.

Note that in describing what one encounters along the Jekyll Creek side of the island as one proceeds from south to north, Van Wormer not only describes the area in detail, but also describes it in order: first, you encounter “open ground, cultivated fields, quail meadows”; second, at the end of the relatively open area, you encounter “the gamekeeper’s house, the kennels, the pheasant pens”; finally, “stretching north and west” from the gamekeeper’s compound, you encounter “forest, vale, and marsh.”

We can consider the nature of each of these areas below – in order.

## Open Ground

The original state of the flat, relatively treeless ground where the cottage compound was located, at the northern end of which the Maurice cottage was built, is suggested in the photograph below, which is an 1887 view looking northeast from south of the newly built clubhouse and the du Bignon house – the only two buildings that existed in this area at the time.



*Figure 10 The open ground stretching north from the clubhouse along the west side of the island was flat, with a slightly rougher landscape along the shore of Jekyll Creek and the tidal marsh. This photograph from 1887 is taken from near the shore of Jekyll Creek looking northeast.*

A few years after the photograph above was taken, Charles Stewart Maurice built the house that would mark the northern limit of the clubhouse compound until the 1920s. In 1888, McKevers Bayard Brown had built a cottage along the edge of Jekyll Creek in the open ground north of the clubhouse (it was the first cottage built on the island), but since it was located so far from the clubhouse, it could not be enclosed within the compound. The Maurice house, completed in 1890, was initially called “the famous Maurice cottage, ‘Les Trois Pin[s]’” [The Three Pines] in a Georgia newspaper (perhaps because some Georgians thought of it as “the French chateau of the Maurice family”), but it has traditionally been known as Hollybourne Cottage (*Morning News* [Savannah, Ga., 19 January 1896, p. 12; William S. Irvine, *Brunswick and Glynn County, Georgia* [Brunswick, Ga.: Board of Trade, Brunswick, 1902], pp. 18-19).

The flat, open ground on which the cottage was built, as well as a glimpse of the flat, open ground beyond the cottage to the north, is visible in one of the earliest photographs of it.

Open Ground



Figure 11 The Maurice house Hollybourne Cottage circa 1890. The photographer looks from south to north at the back of the house. The front of the houses faces west, toward the pine trees and Jekyll Creek on the left side of the photograph. Past the right side of the house, once catches a glimpse of the open ground that runs uninterrupted up to the trees at Captain Wyllly Road well to the north.

Twenty years of tree growth north of Hollybourne Cottage can be seen in the photograph below.



Figure 12 A detail from Jekyll Island Club (1911) shows the view north from the clubhouse tower. River Rd and Old Plantation Rd run north and cross Captain Wyllly Rd. The employees' residence known as "The Quarters" can be made out on the right.

Similarly, a sketch of the brand new McKevers Bayard Brown Cottage at the edge of Jekyll Creek and its marshes reveals in the background how wide was the treeless grassland that Van Wormer described stretching “a quarter of a mile” from the shore of Jekyll Creek and the tidal marsh to the forest east of Old Plantation Road.



Figure 13 The sketch of the cottage of McKevers Bayard Brown from 1888, and the photograph of the cottage from a couple of years later, each show the open ground behind the cottage.

The treeline of the forest that runs northward on the east side of Old Plantation Road is visible in the background of both images above. The drawing appeared in *Scientific American* as an example of the work of architect William Burnett Tuthill (vol vi no [July 1888], p. 1). It is likely that the drawing was sketched from an actual photograph of the house like the one on the right and that the depiction of the flat, open ground behind the house is as accurate as the depiction of the house.

## Fields

The “cultivated fields” that Van Wormer mentions may have been the legacy of the directions of the first gamekeeper, W.A. Dolby, who had been brought to the island from Yorkshire, England, in part because of his expertise with the non-native English pheasant that the Club hoped to establish on the island.

His 1887 report to the superintendent of the Jekyll Island Club had recommended certain measures for the open ground: “Jekyll Island offers unusual facilities for the preservation of all descriptions of game ... Winged game of most kinds can be raised in unlimited numbers at small cost, as natural feed abounds in great profusion, whilst the open ground can be cultivated and planted with such crops as millet, buckwheat, cow peas, broom corn, turnips, etc., that will afford all that is necessary for their maintenance in very large quantities” (“Report of Supt. Ogden: To the Board of Directors Jekyll Island Club, in *Jekyll Island Club: Charter, Constitution, By-Laws and Members’ Names* [New York: A.C. Cunningham, 1887], p. 7).

Dolby seems to have acted quickly on these plans. In the same month that Dolby submitted his recommendations, the *Morning News* of Savannah reported on preparations for making a habitat hospitable to quail: “with a view to their support and propagation, fields have been cleared and sown with grain” (12 December 1887, p. 3).

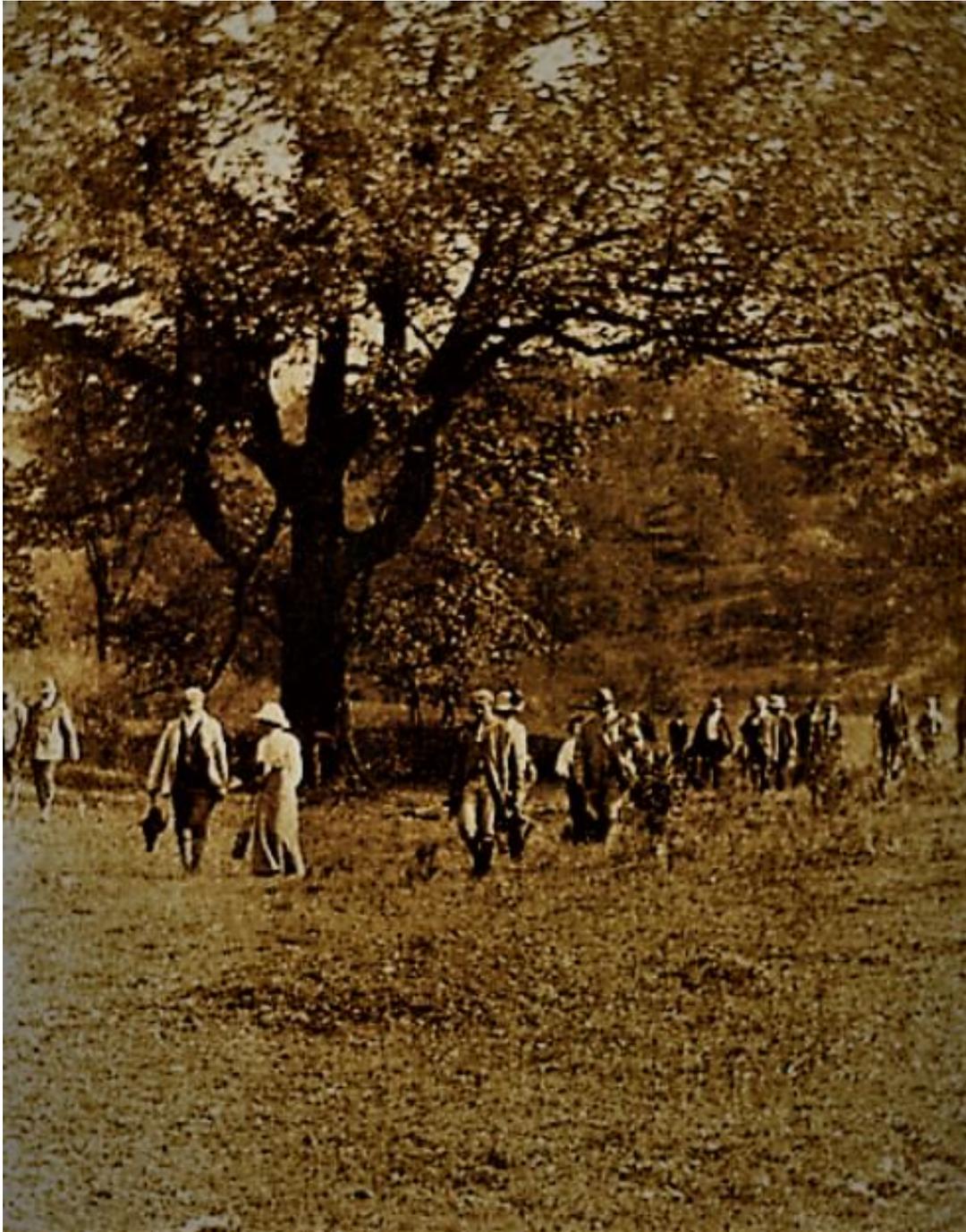
On January 16<sup>th</sup> of the same year, however, the Jekyll Island Club “treated ... with genial cordiality” and “gave ... the freedom of the island for shooting” to a “sportsman tourist” who sailed to the island while the clubhouse was under construction (“the brick walls are already up to the fourth story,” he observed), and the tourist was told by Dolby of his plans, prompting the following observations:

*The Jekyll Island Club proposes ... to stock the island with quail, a project which may succeed if the quail do not prefer to leave for the mainland, as very likely they may. I much doubt if they will find the requisite food here; and I could not repress a rather broad smile at the proposition of one gentleman, to sow buckwheat at various points on the island to “feed the birds.” I hope he may live to see a bushel of buckwheat raised on any island between Savannah and Key West. When that happens we shall raise fine crops of bananas on Cape Cod. (Nessmuk, “Unofficial Log of the Stella, II,” *Forest and Stream*, vol 28 no 1 [3 February 1887], p. 22).*

Almost ten years to the day later, Van Wormer writes of “cultivated fields” north of the clubhouse, but whether Dolby’s plan was still in operation is not clear. In 1897, the Executive Committee had approved supplementary grain growing plans “such that a tide-gate [was] ... built in the ditch at Shell Road in 1898 ‘to enable the planting of upland rice and other bird food cereals’” (See James S. Brunner, “Jekyll Island Golf History – The 1910 Donald Ross Course,” June 1998, U.S.G.A. Archives, p. 2).

## Quail Meadows

An example of the “quail meadows” to which Van Wormer refers appear in the photograph below.



*Figure 14 A hunting party returns south to the clubhouse circa 1890. McCashes, p. 43.*

The success of the hunting expedition organized by Club member William Struthers around 1890 is indicated by the birds swinging in the hands of the hunters. Perhaps we can see why these open grounds were jealously protected by the Game Committee when in 1897 a proposal was made to use this part of the island for development of a golf course.

At the same time, a golfer can look at this photograph and see why Club members looking for a site for a golf course would have been interested in the gently undulating ground of such a meadow.

## The Gamekeeper's House

According to Van Wormer, beyond the quail meadows were the gamekeeper's house, the kennels, and the pheasant houses.

Were these buildings all grouped together, or were they distributed from south to north like the other parts of the open ground that Van Wormer describes?

Tyler B. Bagwell and Tyler E. Bagwell locate the gamekeeper's house at the area to become known as "the dairy" as of the early 1900s: "three employee houses, adjacent to the dairy, were used by the gamekeeper, assistant gamekeeper, and the dairyman" (*The Jekyll Island Club* [Chapel Hill, N.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 1998], p. 114).

The photograph below seems to show the gamekeeper's house and grounds around 1903.



*Figure 15 The figures above, circa 1903, are probably gamekeeper Charles Brinkman and his three children: Conrad (aged seven), Carl (aged six), and May (aged three).*

A photograph in the Lanier book *Jekyll Island Club* (1911) may show the gamekeeper's pheasant houses and kennels further north on the open ground where Jasmine Road crosses from River Road to Old Plantation Road.

Jasmine Road ran on an east-west axis alongside a stream that crossed Old Plantation Road and then River Road before emptying into the tidal marsh located between the west shore of Jekyll Island and the open water of Jekyll Creek. Jasmine Road is marked clearly on an early 1920s Club map of Jekyll Island.

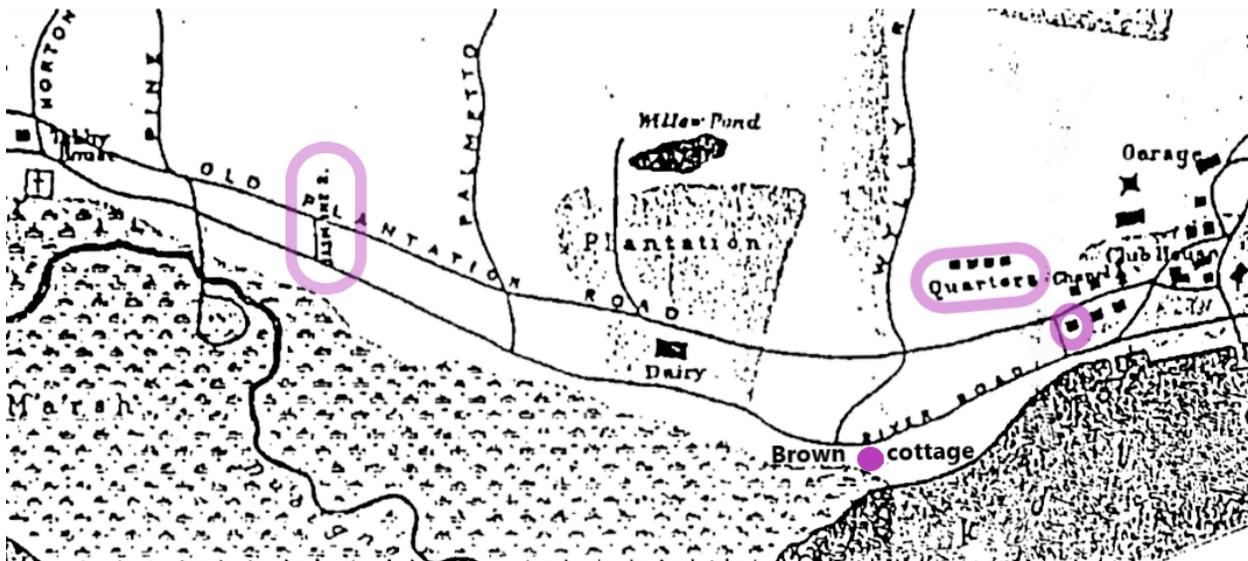


Figure 16 Jasmine Road is circled in purple on the left side of the map. The word "Dairy" is printed in the center of the map. Brown Cottage is marked. Hollybourne Cottage is circled in purple at the north end of the clubhouse compound, as are "The Quarters." Map found in Brunner, n.p.

The same stream flows today, rising in a swampy area on the east side of the island and flowing west to the tidal marsh, crossing the same two roads along the way. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Jasmine Road extended further east than the above map shows, running right into the center of the island.

Today, the part of Jasmine Road that crossed between River Road to Old Plantation Road no longer exists, but the part of Jasmine Road that ran east from Old Plantation Road toward the swampy pond where the stream in question arose still exists. It is an unnamed dirt road that follows the same stream that Jasmine Road paralleled, as shown in the photographs below.



Figure 17 Left: "Jessamine Road" as shown in *Jekyll Island Club* (1911); right: a contemporary image from the same vantage point as shown in the photograph to the left.

The photograph below is labelled "Jessamine Road" in *Jekyll Island Club* (1911).

## The Gamekeeper's House



*Figure 18 "Jessamine Road" in Jekyll Island Club (1911). The photographer looks from River Road toward Old Plantation Road. In the far distance, three figures can be seen, perhaps the people who have just trimmed the hedges. In the top left corner of the photograph is a building with columns supporting a gable roof, along which a gutter running to a downspout.*

The photographer looks along Jasmine Road from River Road toward Old Plantation Road. In the upper-left corner of the above photograph, one can see a substantial building, perhaps part of the gamekeeper's compound of pheasant houses and kennels.

As I shall suggest in sections to follow, the compound of kennels and pheasant houses seems to mark the northern end of the first nine-hole golf course built on Jekyll Island.

## Rating the Golf Convenience

For the most part, silence prevails in evaluation of the “convenience” for golf built sometime in 1896.

Was it more than a pitching and chipping area? Was it more than a glorified driving range?

One presumes that the golf “convenience” will have had at least a few poles stuck in the ground to mark out some golf holes. Golfers need something to aim at. The teeing area, as according to the original rules of golf, could simply have been a spot within a club-length of the hole. Such was the case with many a rudimentary golf course in North America in the 1890s.

For the sake of comparison with one of the earliest golf courses in the South, consider the photograph below of the Swannanoa golf course (Asheville, North Carolina) in one of its 1890s iterations. It was no more than an open field with flags stuck in the ground.



*Figure 19 Swannanoa Golf and Country Club, Asheville, North Carolina, circa mid-1890s.*

The woman in the foreground, attended by her caddie, has finished play on the fifth hole, marked by the short white pennant-flag behind her. She tees off from an area close to the hole at which she has just putted out. At the bottom of the hill, another golfer, also attended by a caddie, having completed the

## Rating the Golf Convenience

fourth hole, marked by a nearby flag, prepares to drive up the hill to the fifth hole. Other golfers and other flags are also visible in the same field.

It is easy to imagine that the golfers who used the golf “convenience” of 1897 did something similar. Flags to mark holes may have been placed in the field only when people arrived at the Club who were interested in knocking golf balls about. If early ardent votaries of the ancient game did this sort of thing during the 1897 season, then the “convenience” for golf that the Executive Committee ordered to be built in 1896 would technically count as the first golf course on Jekyll Island.

Has anyone left to posterity an evaluation of this “convenience” for golf?

Is intentional silence an evaluation?

Van Wormer wrote his article during the summer of 1897 having visited the island in January of that year. For all his detail in describing the open ground north of the clubhouse, he does not mention a golf ground or a golf field, let alone a golf course. He may not have noticed it, especially if there were no flags installed to mark golf holes.

Or perhaps in the context of his determination to celebrate the magnificence of what the Jekyll Island Club had accomplished – “At the landing on Jekyl Creek, one debarks from the club steamboat at a well-built dock which terminates in a vista of trees. Opening out in wide prospect beyond is a fairy scene” – Van Wormer decided that the paltry “Golf Ground” was not worth mentioning as part of such a scene.

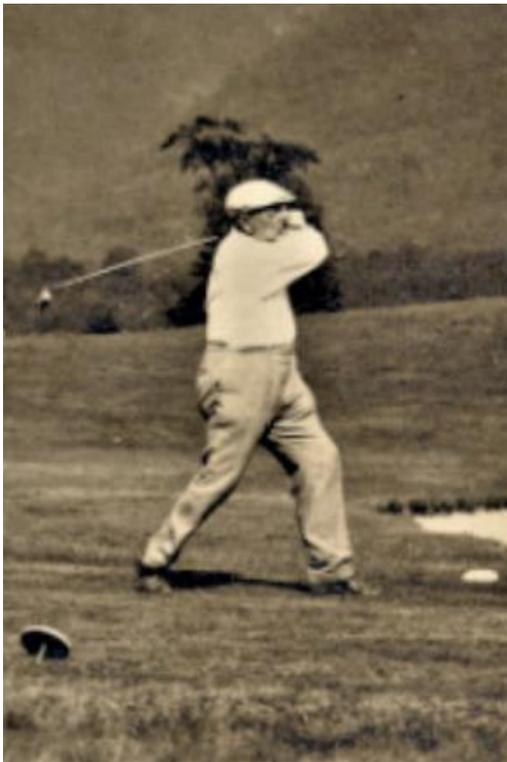
If so, Van Wormer’s silence about the golf “convenience” is implicitly the first review.

It is also interesting to note that according to the *Atlanta Constitution*, Robert Todd Lincoln (a devotee of golf) was a guest at the Jekyll Island Club in March of 1897: “Robert T. Lincoln, the son of Abraham Lincoln, passed through the city last night with a party on a trip to Jekyl Island. The party will spend about two weeks on the famous little island and expect to have a great time down there” (12 March 1897, p. 8). His visit was just after the original “convenience” for golf was introduced but before the Willie Dunn course was built later in 1897.

The eldest son of President Abraham Lincoln and Mary (Todd) Lincoln, he was born in Springfield, Illinois, in 1843, graduated from Harvard before the end of the Civil War, served on the staff of Ulysses S. Grant as a captain in the Union Army, married the daughter of a U.S. senator, completed law school in Chicago and then practised law there. In due course, he accepted appointments as secretary of war

(1881-1885) in the administrations of Presidents Garfield and Arthur, and he was then appointed U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom (1889-1893) in the Benjamin Harrison administration.

So of course as Lincoln and his entourage passed through Atlanta on their way to Jekyll Island, the reporter for the *Atlanta Constitution* asked him for his opinion on the prospects of the new administration of President William McKinley (who had been inaugurated president exactly one week earlier), and of course Lincoln offered a diplomatic response. Informing us that “Mr. Lincoln never took any prominent part in politics until he was given a cabinet portfolio by President Garfield in 1881 ..., and there made a reputation which will ever do him honor,” the reporter explains that “Mr. Lincoln would say nothing more concerning politics other than that he was pleased with the McKinley administration and thought that prosperity and good times were ahead” (12 March 1897, p. 8).



*Figure 20 Robert Todd Lincoln playing golf in the early 1900s in the U.S. northeast where he maintained a summer home.*

Less than four years before his 1897 visit to Jekyll Island, Lincoln had been introduced to golf by Charles Blair Macdonald, a leading figure in early American golf as both a player and a golf course designer. Macdonald invited Lincoln to join a group of men in July of 1893 to organize the Chicago Golf Club, which had the first eighteen-hole golf course in North America. Knowing nothing about golf, Lincoln nonetheless accepted this invitation and became one of the golf club’s founding members.

When Macdonald introduced him to golf, Lincoln was fifty. Perhaps he was too old to have become a scratch golfer, but he quickly developed proficiency at the game by taking lessons from Macdonald (who was one of the top two or three amateur golfers in the game at the time) and Jim Foulis, Jr, the Chicago club’s resident professional golfer and the winner of the second U.S. Open championship (1896). By the time Lincoln first visited Jekyll Island in

March of 1897, he had become quite enthusiastic about the game and was sufficiently popular as the celebrated son of the former president to have been frequently invited to play with top golfers and professionals, despite his merely average skills.

## Rating the Golf Convenience

Lincoln cut short his visit in March of 1897. The *Morning Times* of Savannah reported that he was in Atlanta the evening of March 11<sup>th</sup>, apparently travelling to Jekyll Island on Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup>: they expect “to spend about two weeks on the famous little island and expect to have a great time down there” (12 March 1897, p. 8). In the event, the *Morning News* reports, that Lincoln left the island on Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup> – after just five full days on the island (21 March 1897, p. 12).

Did he not “have a great time down there”? If not, was an inadequate “Golf Ground” the occasion of his disappointment?

Many years later, Lincoln actually commented on golf facilities at Jekyll Island: “[Jekyll Island] is a very pleasant place, but in one particular it is not what I want as a Winter Resort; that is, in the matter of golfing. There is, it is true (or was) a place where one could make a pretence of knocking balls about, but it was not at all interesting as a golf course” (Robert Todd Lincoln letter to Cyrus McCormick, 14 February 1911, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, cited by William Barton McCash, *Southern Haven*, p. 47).

Whether or not Lincoln refers to the 1896 “convenience” for golf in this criticism is not clear, for Lincoln had also since visited the island in 1902, when the “convenience” for golf had been replaced by a golf course built by Willie Dunn. If Lincoln had not in fact been able to play golf on his 1902 visit to the island, his derogatory comments about the Club’s golf facilities may well have been about the golf “convenience” built in 1896.

Note, by the way, that if the photograph above of the “Golf Ground” is indeed a photograph of the “convenience” for golf built in 1896, such nomenclature does not necessarily insult the golf facility as unworthy of the name of “golf course.” The phrase “Golf Ground” was used interchangeably with the phrase “golf course,” “golf links,” and “golf field” in North America in the 1890s and early 1900s when describing land on which golf was played. Early newspaper writers simply treated the area where golf was played as analogous to a cricket ground or a baseball field. For instance, when the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* announced that William Bayard Cutting, Sr, was having a very expensive private golf course built by the best designer in the land, Willie Dunn, the headline was: “Bayard Cutting’s Golf Grounds” (24 May 1895, p. 7).

## Jekyll and Hyde

So the first “golf course” on Jekyll Island may have been a golf ground of a very rudimentary nature. It was probably not much more than a field dedicated to golf with flags planted here and there as targets. Although such a field might have proved to be uninteresting as a golf course for experienced golfers, it was better than nothing, and it was obviously offered merely as the first response of the Executive Committee to pressure put upon it by certain Club members to do something to make possible the playing of golf on Jekyll Island.

We know that the Executive Committee felt this pressure in 1896. As articles in the *Savannah Morning News* at the beginning of January of 1897 indicate, much earlier than this there had been some sort of approach to the Executive Committee by certain Jekyll Island Club members requesting that “conveniences” for certain sports be built on the island in order to interest the younger generation in vacations at the Club: “The necessity for having this so was made plain to the executive committee **many months ago**” (11 January 1897, p. 3, emphasis added).

Who was on the Executive Committee that was told to get moving on this project?

According to the constitution of the Jekyll Island Sportsmen’s Club, there would be an annual shareholders meeting on the second Wednesday of June each year. Shareholders would annually elect as officers of the Club a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Shareholders would also annually elect a Board of Directors of thirteen Club members. Directors would elect an Executive Committee to consist of five members, two of which were to be the President and Treasurer, the other three being Directors. The *Morning News* informs us that the Executive Committee for 1896-97 comprised President Henry E. Howland, Secretary Frederic Baker, Treasurer D.H. King, Jr, Cornelius N. Bliss, and Henry B. Hyde (13 January 1897, p. 6; see also the *New York Times*, 4 October 1896, p. 33).

The *Morning News* also indicates that “Bliss and Hyde are very active in club affairs. Both are on the Executive Committee as well as the committee on purchases and supplies” (2 January 1897, p. 2). Henry Hyde seems to have been the member of the Executive Committee who took charge of the matter of arranging for a golf course to be developed on Jekyll Island. June Hall McCash notes that Hyde was the one “seeking to raise funds for the first Jekyll Island golf course” (*Jekyll Island Cottage Colony* [Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1998], p. 118). He wrote to fellow Executive Committee member Treasurer Frederic Baker about some of his preliminary conversations with regard to funding any such

project via subscriptions: "I have talked the matter over with Mr. Pulitzer and Mr. McKay. My idea was to raise \$10,000. I think Pulitzer would have given two or three thousand and Mr. McKay would have been very liberal" (Hall McCash p. 118, note 25).



Figure 21 Statue of Henry B. Hyde in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

Hyde was the prime mover and shaker in the Club at this time, supported by Baker and King. William Barton McCash and June Hall McCash refer to the three members as "the Hyde-Baker-King coterie" (*Jekyll Island Club: Southern Haven for America's Millionaires* [Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1989], p. 85). A Club member referred to Hyde's personal network of supporters within the Club as "the machine" (McCashes p. 85). June Hall McCash describes him as "the executive committee member who had taken control of club affairs" (p. 86). It was Hyde who had the most at stake, then, when Henry Howland gave up the presidency in 1897, to be replaced by Charles Lanier – "handpicked by Hyde and elected without opposition" (McCashes p. 85). Hyde's machinations had succeeded, and, as expected, Lanier "endorsed the plans Hyde was then promoting for improvements at Jekyll" (McCashes p. 85).

And as of 1896, we know, Hyde's plans for improvement included a "convenience" for golf.

Golf course design and construction for the Jekyll Island Club seems always to have been via the kind of subscription plan that Hyde began to work on around 1896. Constitutionally, the Executive Committee would have been responsible for building a golf course, but it was not allowed to incur significant debt in fulfilling this responsibility. On the one hand, the constitution

indicates that the Executive Committee "shall have the management and care of all the real estate, waters, buildings, live stock, game, improvements, fixtures, and all other property of every kind and nature, belonging to or controlled by the Club," and it also indicates that it "shall have the sole power of making purchases and sales of every description, excepting real estate," but, on the other hand, "in no case shall [it] contract debts or incur any pecuniary responsibility in any one year, to exceed one

thousand dollars, over and above the annual income of the Club from yearly dues and entrance fees” (Article V, items 2, 4, and 4, respectively, in *Jekyll Island Club: Charter, Constitution, By-Laws and Members’ Names* [New York: A.C. Cunningham, 1887]).

Generally, then, the big projects of the Jekyll Island Club were funded by subscriptions – projects including not just golf courses and tennis courts, but additions to and renovations of the clubhouse, preservation of Horton House, construction of Faith Chapel, and so on. By the 1920s, as the McCashes point out, “club members were expected to support a variety of subscriptions” (p. 122). Furthermore, maintenance of big new “conveniences” for sports was financed by subscription. The Donald Ross course built in 1909 subsequently proved costly to maintain, and its maintenance costs were covered by subscriptions, leading Almira Rockefeller to complain about inequities in this method of financing: “The golf course is a great expense and kept up by voluntary subscriptions. We never use it but pay more for its upkeep than many” (McCashes, p. 54).

Jekyll Island Club records at the Jekyll Island Museum show that Henry Hyde maintained many of these subscription lists, confirming the 2 January 1897 report in the *Morning News* that he was “very active in club affairs” (p. 2). The same article that tells of Hyde’s work for the Club also mentions the “necessity” “made plain” to the Executive Committee that there be immediate work on building “**conveniences** for water sports, tennis, golf, etc.” (p. 2, emphasis added). The word “conveniences” comes right out of Article V, item 3, of the constitution of the Jekyll Island Sportsmen’s Club which describes the “Powers and Duties of the Executive Committee”: “They shall make and enforce all needful and proper rules and regulations for the care, improvement and maintenance of the real estate, waters, buildings, fixtures and **conveniences** of the Club” (p. 11, emphasis added). Such language in the newspaper may indicate that it was Hyde himself (a member of the Executive Committee, a member of the committee on purchases and supplies, and so a person “very active” in Club affairs who would have been well-versed in the Club’s constitution) who spoke to the reporter for the *Morning News* about the topic of “major improvements” undertaken by the Executive Committee (2 January 1897, p. 2). That is, we may hear an echo of Hyde’s own words in the reporter’s words.

Recall that the *Morning News* indicates that as soon as “the necessity” of building “conveniences for ... golf” was “made plain” to the Executive Committee in 1896, “plans for bringing it about started” (11 January 1897, p. 3). From the look of the “Golf Ground” in the photograph above, we can conclude that it would not have cost \$10,000 to make such a golf “convenience.” Approximately the same amount of money was raised more than a decade later for the design and construction of the nine-hole Donald

## Jekyll and Hyde

Ross course in 1909. Hyde's discussion of a subscription plan clearly had in view a state-of-the-art nine-hole golf course, not a mere field where one could make a pretense of hitting balls about. Presumably the Executive Committee undertook the construction of a "convenience" for golf as a temporary, short-term way to address the need for a golf course that had been "made plain" to it. Such a facility was perhaps all that could be built in short order before an official, long-term plan could be formally agreed upon and financed.

## Golf-Mad Jekyll Islanders

The New York *Sun* announced in January of 1898 that “The Jekyll Island Sportsmen’s Club, probably the most noted gunning and hunting organization in the South, has taken up golf. It is about the greatest victory accomplished by the game in its missionary progress over the American continent. An inclination in favour of the game amongst its members ... is back of the adoption of golf by the club” (16 January 1898, p. 8).

A prime list of some of the most notable Club members with “an inclination in favor of the game” has already been offered: George Jay Gould, John Pierpont Morgan, Sr, William Bayard Cutting, Sr, and Arthur Brigham Claflin.

They are the prime suspects with regard to the question of which club members might have communicated to the Executive Committee the “necessity” of including golf facilities among the new “conveniences” for sport to be constructed during 1896.

## George Jay Gould



Figure 22 George J. Gould in yachtsman uniform circa mid-1890s.

Gould became a member of the Jekyll Island Club in 1895 – the same year he donated a silver loving cup as a prize to the Golf Club of Lakewood, New Jersey, and the same year he purchased sixty acres of land for the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club, which would become a rival to the former. The founding and support of golf clubs was very much on his mind in 1895-96. Perhaps he was a factor in what may have been something of a campaign by the Club’s ardent votaries of the ancient game in 1896 to “make plain” to the Executive Committee the need for development of a golf course at Jekyll Island.

Lakewood’s village of millionaires was one of the first areas of golf’s development in New Jersey, where Dunn was invited to lay out a course in the fall of 1893. His account of the initial survey of the land for the nine-hole course of the Golf Club of Lakewood is the stuff of legend:

*Robert Bage Kerr and Jasper Lynch, two well-known New Yorkers [the former became club president and then Secretary of the U.S.G.A.; the latter, the club’s golf captain], got me to look over some grounds at Lakewood, New Jersey, which they thought might be suitable for a golf course. The day we went to look over this place was rather chilly, so I wore my velvet-trimmed, gold-braided scarlet golfing jacket – no golfer’s wardrobe was complete without one in those days. However, had I known that the ground I was going to look over was being used for a cattle pasture, I certainly would have worn something more soothing to the eyes. As it was, we had just started on our tour of inspection when we were charged by an angry bull. I ripped off my jacket and threw it aside, distracting the bull’s attention so that we were able to scramble over the nearest fence. We had a good laugh over it, but my snappy jacket was a total loss. The actual construction of this course did not offer many problems. The fields were flat, so we used road scrapers and made little inclines and undulations. There were a good many trees, so that some had to be taken out, but we left as many as possible and, in the end, made a very picturesque eighteen hole course of it. (Golf Illustrated, vol xxxi no 6 [September 1934], p. 25)*

This story of the origin of the course at the Golf Club of Lakewood once again shows the perils of relying on Dunn's memory: the golf course that he designed in 1893-94 comprised not eighteen holes, but nine: it was not until 1896 that it was extended into a neighbouring field and made an eighteen-hole course.

Of course the point of the story was the bull, and there was often some "bull" in Dunn's accounts of his exploits as a golf course architect. As we shall see shortly, at Jekyll Island he confronted an alligator: a "Crocodile" Dunn deed!



*Figure 23 George Gould and caddie conferring with tournament officials (in broad-brimmed hats) while playing at the Greenwich Golf Club in Connecticut in 1897.*

Gould would certainly have known of Dunn's work in golf course design, both at the Golf Club of Lakewood and at the many other golf courses in the U.S. Northeast where Gould played golf. He would no doubt have been one of the Club members ready to recommend Dunn as the designer of the Jekyll Island Club's first golf course.

In fact, Gould was part of a sporting cabal at Lakewood that included all sorts of men who new Dunn's work. They played golf together, and they hunted foxes together. In 1895, for instance, the Lakewood Hunt Club comprised Arthur B. Claflin as president, Gould as vice-president, and as Stewards both Jasper Lynch and Robert Bage Kerr – the men who along with Dunn had been chased by a bull

George Jay Gould

while laying out the nine-hole golf course for the Golf Club of Lakewood in the fall of 1893.

## J. Pierpont Morgan, Sr



Figure 24 J. Pierpont Morgan, Sr, in the late 1890s, then Commodore of the New York Yacht Club. He sailed his yacht *Corsair* up the Hudson River to his home, Cragstone.

Recalling that the Jekyll Island Club's Executive Committee had been confronted sometime in 1896 with the "necessity" of providing "conveniences" for various sports for "the younger set" (golf being part of the list of "all that is desirable for the young"), we should note that Morgan was a Jekyll Islander with golf-mad children (*Morning News*, 11 January 1897, p. 3).

J. Pierpont Morgan, Sr, an original member of the Jekyll Island Club, found that at least two of his children were passionate about golf: his son J. Pierpont Morgan, Jr, known as "Jack," and his daughter Anne, six years younger than Jack. Although Jack was twenty-six and Anne was twenty, their dad did what any multi-millionaire dad would do when the new game of golf began to establish itself amongst the well-to-do classes in

America in the mid-1890s: he built them a golf course.

The *New York Sun* wrote an article about the phenomenon of wealthy men building private golf courses, commending Morgan's practice as one that would help to establish the game in America and help with the development of golf skills:

*Golf is outstripping all the outdoor games just now in its rapid growth. It took years to fully acclimatize tennis, and, with the exception of baseball, which is a home product, the other fresh-air games and recreations have only become popular by slow degrees. But golf is advancing with seven-league strides, like Jack in the fairy tale, and will soon travel the continent over, from the Arctic line to the Mexican border, for the game is spreading through Canada as well as the United States.*

*One cause of the popularity of golf is the many ways the game may be taken up and because all can play at it, from the minors to the graybeards, with varying degrees of skill, of course, but with universal enjoyment. The links may be laid out on a lawn, with only two or three holes and the dirt walks or carriage drive the only hazards, or*

J. Pierpont Morgan, Sr

*thousands of dollars may be expended on the formation of a course. In the latter case the links will be for the membership of a large club, as a rule, but some of the private courses have cost large sums and are planned on a large scale as though intended for open tournaments.*

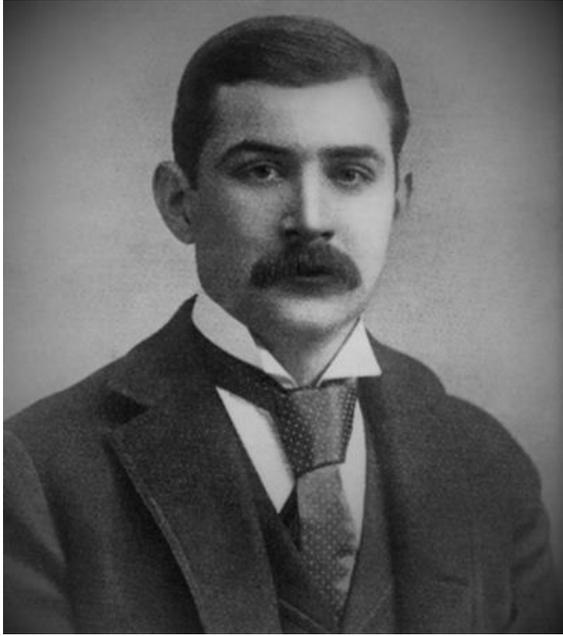
*A fine practice course is laid out on the lawn of Cragston, J. Pierpont Morgan's place on the Hudson. It consists of only a few holes, without any artificial hazards. Similar links are laid out at many country houses, and they are a good model to follow by the residents of country neighborhoods who want to take up golf. A start can be made in a small way, and when the pioneers in the game have learned to play in good form a better course can be laid out. (8 March 1896, p. 9)*

So for the sake of his kids' love of the game, a loving father turned the front lawn at Cragston into a fairway in the mid-1890s



*Figure 25 The front lawn at Cragston made a fairway, as seen in the 1930s.*

At Cragston, bliss it was on that lawn to be alive. But to be young was very heaven for Jack and Anne.



*Figure 26 Golf brats: J. Pierpont Morgan, Jr, known as "Jack," and Anne Tracy Morgan, circa 1900.*

If Jack and Anne did not prompt their father to initiate a conversation in 1896 among Jekyll Island Club members about the need to build at least a rudimentary “Golf Ground” on the island for the younger set, we can guess that since Morgan had already built his kids a golf course on his front lawn at Cragstone, he would have put his two cents’ worth into any such conversation of which he became aware.

“Jack” Pierpont Morgan would become president of the Jekyll Island Club in the 1930s and play some of the happiest rounds of his life on the Walter J. Tavis “Oceanside” course.

## William Bayard Cutting, Sr



Figure 27 William Bayard Cutting, Sr.

William Bayard Cutting, Sr, another original Jekyll Island Club member, was even more passionate about golf than Morgan — and he had a child even more passionate about golf than Morgan’s children. His son William Bayard Cutting, Jr, was a golf prodigy. In the *New York Sun*’s 1895 discussion of private golf courses that “have cost large sums and are planned on as large a scale as though intended for open tournaments,” the writer singled out the course that Cutting had made for his son as the one that represented the state of the art: “One of the best private links was laid out last season by Willie Dunn for W. Bayard Cutting on his place at Islip. The country there is very flat, and

earth bunkers have been built on an extensive scale” (p. 9).



Figure 28 The Willie Dunn Westbrook course appears in the shape of a diagonal “L” through the middle of the image above, paralleling the Westbrook estate of William Bayard Cutting, Sr, to its right. Aerial photograph circa 1930.

William Bayard Cutting, Jr, was born in June of 1878 into a family descending from prominent families in New York dating from colonial times. Both his father and his uncle Robert Fulton Cutting (who would become a Jekyll Island Club member in the 1920s) were wealthy financiers who had started the sugar beet industry in the United States in the late 1880s. Bayard Cutting, Sr, also ran railroads, created the New York City ferry system, and developed a significant portion of the real estate along the Brooklyn waterfront.



Figure 29 The golf clubs of William Bayard Cutting, Sr, are on display in his Westbrook Estate.

William Bayard Cutting, Sr, and his brother Robert Fulton Cutting were both passionate golfers. In the summer of 1896, for instance, they were both competitors in an amateur tournament at Lenox Links in Massachusetts. This 4<sup>th</sup> of July contest was a handicap event involving dozens of amateurs. In this tournament, William Bayard Cutting, Jr, the eighteen-year-old Lenox Links club champion, was one of only two golfers required to play off a scratch handicap. By comparison, his uncle Robert was in 1899 accorded a handicap of fifteen by the Metropolitan Golf Association. The *New York Journal* reports that “There was a very large and fashionable attendance, the whole of the cottage colony in attendance” (5 July 1896, p. 10).

Presumably, most of the spectators had come to see the young phenomenon William Bayard Cutting, Jr.

Robert Fulton Cutting was closely associated with this golf club, where his wife had donated a silver loving cup for a very prestigious amateur match-play championship competition that became known as the Lenox Cup.



Figure 30 The Lenox Cup.

Later in the summer of 1896, their nephew Bayard Cutting, Jr, contested the Lenox Cup final against Arthur Harris Fenn, an all-round athlete twenty years older than Bayard Cutting, Jr. Fenn was in fine form. He had recently turned down a contract to play professional baseball, preferring to play golf. He would use his 1896 winning of the prestigious Lenox Cup over the young golf prodigy as the springboard for a remarkable 1897 season in which he won more golf tournaments – including once more the Lenox Cup championship -- than any other golfer.

Shortly after the Lenox Cup competition, Bayard Cutting, Jr, entered the 1896 U.S.G.A. Amateur Championship and graduated from medal play with one of the best scores, meaning that he qualified for the match-play part of the competition amongst the top sixteen players. He was then defeated in the match-play round, but he went on that

fall to become one of the founding members of the Harvard Golf Club during his first semester at the university.



Figure 31 William Bayard Cutting, Jr, circa 1898.

Such was young Bayard Cutting's standing in the world of amateur golf that, although a student at Harvard for less than three months, he was made part of a Harvard committee of two – along with outstanding senior Joseph H. Choate, Jr (who would win the medal round at the U.S. Amateur Championship of 1898) – sent to represent the new club's interests at the intercollegiate conference at the Ardsley Casino Club that Christmas. They helped to set up an intercollegiate championship, which Bayard Cutting, Jr, won in due course.

Within a year or two, he became the Harvard team's best player and captain, winning both individual and team intercollegiate championships, as well as continuing to compete in U.S.G.A. championships and other top amateur competitions in the American Northeast. He engaged in match-play contests, widely reported in American newspapers, against some of the top players in the United States, such as Walter J. Travis – who came to Westbrook to compete against him.

Travis recalled the match, sixteen years later, a few years after learning that Bayard Cutting, Jr, had died in Egypt when only in his early thirties. Travis called his essay, "Reminiscent – Just Casually":

*September 11, 1897, was an excessively hot day. The curious may be interested in looking this up. The sight of a very handsome cup – in the old days golf prizes were handsomer than they are nowadays – with the inscription: "WESTBROOK GOLF CLUB, President's Cup, Open Tournament, Sept. 8-11, 1897," which just happened to catch*



Figure 32 Walter J. Travis, circa 1898.

*my eye, recalled the final  
between young Bayard Cutting,  
since deceased – alas! – and the  
present writer.*

*That was over fifteen years ago;  
in the days of the old hard ball –  
before the Haskall was even  
dreamt of. Hot summers, even  
abnormally hot summers, do not  
prejudicially affect the present-  
day ball. Rather, they tend to  
improve it. Not so with the old  
guttie. Composed as it was  
entirely of gutta percha, it was so  
susceptible to extreme heat as to  
show a distinct tendency toward  
a melting mood, as on the  
occasion under notice. So much  
so that it was impossible to play  
a single hole without knocking  
the ball out of shape. And thus  
we were reduced to the extremity  
of having spare balls carried  
around in a pail-full of ice!*

*(American Golfer, vol 9 no 4 (February 1913), pp. 328-29).*

The golf course on which Bayard Cutting, Jr, honed his skills as of 1895 was widely discussed in the newspapers. Under the headline “Bayard Cutting’s Golf Grounds,” we read that that “Extensive golf grounds are being laid out at the country seat of W. Bayard Cutting east of this village. The grounds will be a mile and a half in length and 12,000 feet of pipe are being laid and three large wells are being dug to conduct water through the grounds for the sprinkling purposes” (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 24 May 1895, p. 7). This work had been underway since early in the spring of 1895, for on April 6<sup>th</sup> we find a reference

William Bayard Cutting, Sr

to “Bayard Cutting’s course at Islip” in *Brooklyn Life* (p. 6). Willie Dunn, Jr, had obviously staked out the course weeks before this. And by the middle of the summer of 1895, the *New York Times* reported that the golf course was ready for play and would be the home of a new golf club: “A new club at Islip, L.I., has just been organized, called the Westbrook Golf Club, and its directors are W. Bayard Cutting, Harry Hollis, and J.M. Knapp. Mr. Cutting’s private course, at Islip, is now finished and is one of the finest private courses in the country, the hazards having been arranged with great care and expense” (28 July 1895, p. 6). Father and son were the first members of the new golf club and no doubt drove the first shots down the first fairway.

As we have seen, the Dunn’s Westbrook golf course was immediately recognized as one of the best new golf courses in the United States. When he undertook this project at the beginning of 1895, after having laid out more than a dozen courses in the Northeast since he had been hired in the summer of 1893 as the golf professional at Shinnecock Hills, Dunn had just finished expanding the Shinnecock layout to eighteen holes – his most important design work to date. By the fall of 1895, he would be felling trees, blasting rock with dynamite (one of the first golf course builders to do so), and moving large quantities of earth in the creation for the Ardsley Casino Club of what was to be the most expensive golf course built up to that time.

In hiring Dunn, Bayard Cutting, Sr, had secured the services of the man who was regarded as the best golf course designer and builder of the day. Money was no object in his determination to nurture the golf development of Bayard Cutting, Jr.

The father also hired one of the best teachers to instruct his son – George Straith, a Scotsman just arrived in the United States. According to Rochester’s *Democrat and Chronicle*, “George Straith ... is one of the best-known professionals in the country, and particularly strong as a coach.... His first coaching was at Westbrook on his arrival from Scotland in 1894, and “among the youths he taught to drive far and true” was “W.B. Cutting, Jr” (17 February 1902, p. 13). If Straith was indeed hired at Westbrook in 1894, this means that Bayard Cutting, Sr, had hired him even before the golf course was built.

So if for no other reason than to have a place for his son to play golf at Jekyll Island whenever he should visit there, one presumes that Bayard Cutting, Sr, would have added his voice to the voices of club members asking for a golf course at Jekyll Island.

## Arthur Brigham Claflin

Younger brother of original Club member John Claflin, a Club member himself since 1889, Arthur Claflin was a stockbroker when he joined the Club. June Hall McCash describes him as “a banker” (*The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony*, p. 204). Newspapers in Lakewood, New Jersey, referred to him as a New York “merchant price.” On his father Horace Brigham Claflin’s death in 1885, Arthur had inherited his share of the dry-goods company built by his father, the largest such company in the United States, and perhaps the world. His brother John became president of the company and expanded its interests and profits enormously, although troubled markets eventually led to the company’s bankruptcy in 1914. Arthur Claflin was involved in the ownership and management of many other companies, however, and remained a wealthy businessman throughout his life.

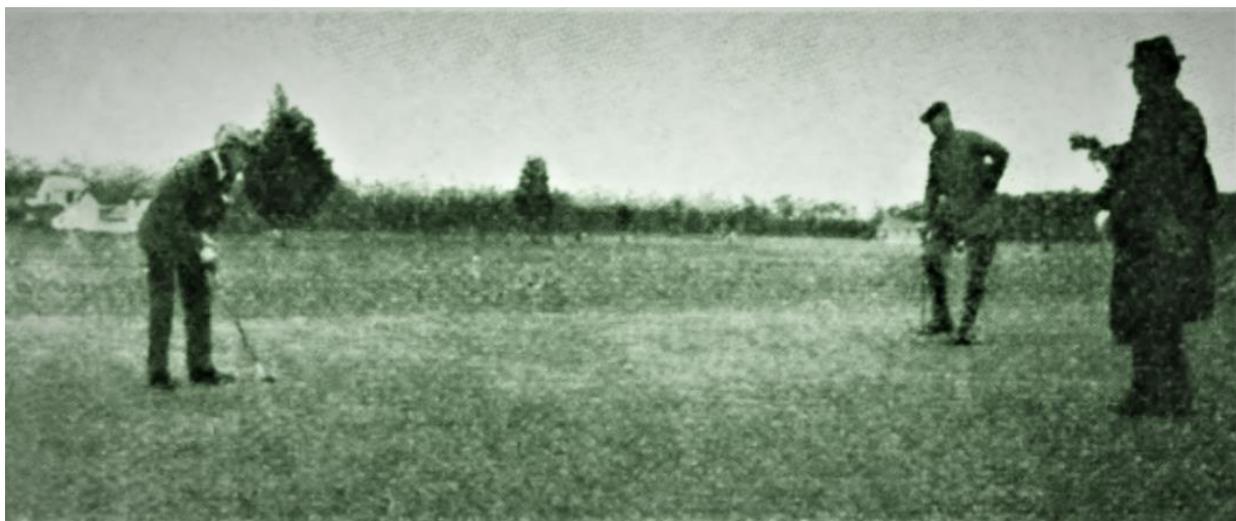
Claflin had initially expressed his sporting interest via fox-hunting and competitive horse-driving, becoming president and secretary of hunting clubs and driving clubs, as well as purchasing expensive trotters for harness racing. But he became an avid golfer from around the end of 1894, when he was thirty-five years of age. In October of the year before, as we know, the Golf Club of Lakewood was formed for play on a nine-hole course laid out by Willie Dunn in the fall of 1893.

Arthur Claflin lived in the village of Lakewood, New Jersey, where he and his wife Minnie were active members of the community and participated without fail in its winter recreations: skating, tobogganing, and golf! The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* records that Arthur B. Claflin was a member of the gallery on Saturday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, for a much anticipated match between Willie Norton of the Lakewood golf club and Samuel Tucker, the nephew of Willie Dunn, Jr, who was then the professional at the St Andrews Club, of Yonkers. The newspaper explained that amid all “the usual New Years Sports at Lakewood,” this match meant that “the Mecca of most of the men was the links” (5 January 1895, p. 2).

As of 1895, Claflin is regularly recorded as competing in many tournaments and club competitions at the Golf Club of Lakewood and the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club. He played in the weekly Converse Cup competitions well into December in 1895. Throughout 1895 and 1896, in both medal play and match play, he competed in Lakewood tournaments against golfers from virtually all of the golf clubs then in existence in the Northeast: Ardsley, St. Andrews, Shinnecock, Richmond County, Queen’s County, Fairfield County, Philadelphia, Lenox, Westchester, Morristown, Sadaqueda, Staten Island, and

## Arthur Brigham Claflin

so on. As of 1896, he knew not only the relatively new game of golf, but also most of the best amateur golfers of the American Northeast, as well as their courses and their clubs.



*Figure 33 Arthur B. Claflin is shown putting in a Lakewood tournament held 22-23 February of 1901. The photograph appeared in Harper's Weekly, vol 45 (1901), p. 265.*

Claflin usually submitted scores for nine holes ranging from the high forties to the low fifties. He won the series of weekly competitions at Ocean County Hunt and Country Club during the winter of 1897 with such scores: "At the last weekly handicap for the Converse Cup at the Country Club last Friday, the trophy became the property of Arthur B. Claflin. Mr. Claflin's best score was 98 net, with a handicap of 8" (*New York Times*, 28 March 1897, p. 11). A memorable score came in January of 1898: "The Ocean County Hunt and Country Club of Lakewood held one of the series of games for the Mrs. George J. Gould Cup yesterday. Arthur Claflin, who is also the donor of a cup, won with the low score of 89" (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 8 January 1898, p. 4). The next year, he recorded his best tournament finish:

*The annual spring tournament of the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club was brought to a close to-day with a thirty-six hole handicap, in addition to the finals at thirty-six holes, for the chairman's cup and the vice president's cup. The links were in fine condition and some excellent golf was played. The finals for the chairman's cup was between F.J.J. de Raismes, Golf Club of Lakewood, and Arthur B. Claflin, Ocean County. Claflin put up a great game and de Raismes was kept on the anxious seat throughout, although he finally won by 3 up and 2 to play. (Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 9 April 1899, p. 30)*

In 1899, Claflin was accorded a handicap of twelve by the Metropolitan Golf Association. In the same rankings, William Bayard Cutting, Jr, was accorded a handicap of three and Walter J. Travis was accorded a handicap of two. (By 1900, the handicaps of Travis and Bayard Cutting, Jr, had remained the same, but Claflin's had risen to 14).

Although many had taken up golf in the mid-1890s because it was a fad (for a while, it was "the thing to do" for the rich and the famous), Claflin's interest in golf would be no passing fancy. He became vice-president of the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club when it was formed in January of 1896 and also served the club on its Golf Committee and Greens Committee in the following years. In 1902, he was instrumental in leading to the merger of the rival Golf Club of Lakewood and the Country Club of Lakewood (formerly the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club) by purchasing land where the two organizations could build a common clubhouse golf course.

The man was seriously into golf.

At Jekyll Island, not surprisingly, he became a member of the Club's Committee on Golf and Sport.

## Southern Resort Rivalry

Regarding the decision by the Jekyll Island Club to build a golf course, the New York *Sun* reports in January of 1898 that “back of the adoption of golf by the club” was not just “an inclination in favour of the game amongst its members,” but also “a wholesome spirit of rivalry with some other resorts in the South” (*Sun* [New York], 16 January 1898, p. 8).

The members of the Jekyll Island Club felt rivalry not with southern resorts generally, I suspect, but rather with one resort in particular: that of the Carnegie family on the island to the south of them, Cumberland Island. In the 1880s, Andrew Carnegie’s brother Thomas purchased a property on the island called Dungeness and built a mansion there, completed in 1885.



*Figure 34 Dungeness Mansion, Cumberland Island, circa late 1800s.*

After Thomas Carnegie’s death in 1886, his widow Lucy continued to reside on the island and bought more property on which to build grand estates for her children. She soon owned ninety percent of Cumberland Island, and her golf-mad son William C. Carnegie built a golf course on his Stafford Place estate. It was often referred to as the Stafford Place Golf Links.

Just as Bayard Cutting, Sr, wanted to create, own, and display one of the best and most expensive private golf courses in the country, built by the best golf course designer of the day, so the Club of which he was a member (with other like-minded millionaires) was dedicated to a similarly “conspicuous consumption” in its “adoption of golf.”

As Frank Graham, Jr, observes, around the turn of the century, golf was “still almost the exclusive domain of the rich and powerful”: “During the early years of this century [the twentieth, that is], when the editor of a New York newspaper asked Francis Albertanti, his sports editor, to print some golf news, Albertanti refused. ‘But there are many wealthy and influential men interested in golf,’ the editor persisted. Albertanti, a true plebeian, closed the conversation with the logical reply: ‘Then let them print it on the *financial page*’” (*The Adirondack Park: A Political History* [New York: Random House, 1978], p. 147).

Ironically, mind you, it was revolutionary newspaper magnate Joseph Pulitzer (who, we recall, told Hyde that he was willing to subscribe thousands of dollars for the building of a proper golf course on Jekyll Island) who had invented the sports page when he told the editor of the *World* to gather all sports stories together in the same pages – precisely as modelled in the financial pages!

A sign that it was the neighbouring golf course on Cumberland Island that Club members expected their golf course to match is that when construction of a golf course for the “many wealthy and influential men interested in golf” on Jekyll Island got under way in the spring of 1898, Superintendent Ernest Grob travelled to Cumberland Island to inspect the Carnegie golf course at Stafford Place. Unfamiliar with the game of golf and the nature of such a thing as the “golf field” or “golf ground” that Willie Dunn was then constructing for the Club, perhaps Grob wanted to acquaint himself with the real thing at nearby Cumberland Island so that his reports to Club members on the progress being made on their own course would be more informed than otherwise. But he must also have wanted to apprise himself in person of the “southern resort” standard that the new Jekyll Island golf course would have to meet or, preferably, exceed.

After his visit to the Carnegies’ golf course, Grob may have been confident that the new golf course would meet Club members’ expectations. There was not much competition on Cumberland Island.

The photograph below shows Lucy Carnegie (widow of Thomas, sister-in-law of Andrew) apparently making a stroke on the Stafford Place golf course around 1900 (although no golf ball is in sight).



*Figure 35 Lucy Carnegie on the Stafford Place Golf Links, Cumberland Island, in the early 1900s.*

By the look of the turf here, the condition of the grass on the Cumberland Island golf course was not a significant improvement over what we saw at the Jekyll Island "Golf Ground." And the ground was just as flat as the open ground north of the clubhouse on Jekyll Island, and looks today just as it did then.



*Figure 36 The Stafford Place Golf Links was eventually replaced by an airstrip, which remains in use today for private airplanes. Before pilots land their planes, they buzz the airfield (seen above as bright green mowed grass) to scare wild horses into the un-mowed field visible in the background. Sometimes, pilots say, the ghost of Lucy Carnegie can still be heard calling, "Fore!"*

## “The Thing” to Do

Note also that even Jekyll Island Club members who did not play golf, and perhaps knew almost nothing at all about it, might have been favorably disposed toward the development on Jekyll Island of “conveniences for ... golf.”

First, the game was widely reported in newspapers as a healthy outdoor pursuit for businessmen and professional men. In May of 1890, for example, an article in the Toronto *Globe* introduced the game of golf to its readers in precisely these terms, outlining its history, its nature, and its many healthful benefits: “Golf has a language of its own”; it is “evolved, refined, decorous, filled out with dignity, but not altogether unlike the sanguinary games that used to fill the playgrounds” (“The Game of Golf—Another Scotch Athletic Exercise Becomes Popular,” *The Globe* [Toronto, Ontario], 17 May 1890, p. 2). More interestingly, the article explains the value of the game for the kind of professional men and leaders of society who played it:

*Golf is a manly and eminently healthful recreation. The walk is a tonic, and the clear air that blows over the heights gives zest ... and surely it promises pleasure enough—an afternoon of healthful pedestrianism in the pure country air.... The pace can be made easy or smart ... and thus the exercise adapts itself to the age and exuberance of its players... The brain is used, too, for calculation is required and one must make allowances for wind and a dozen other things. (2)*

The article also described the best location for a golf course: “The game may be practiced on any good stretch of land where the grass is not too rank” (2).

In response to this kind of publicity for the game, three well-to-do women in Amherst, Nova Scotia, who knew nothing about the game beyond the favorable publicity it had received in newspapers, decided that founding a golf club was necessary for the greater good of the businessmen and professional men of their community. An Amherst doctor equally unfamiliar with the game nonetheless subscribed \$100 towards the building of a golf course, declaring that he would learn the mysterious game in due course. (His \$100 was the same as the original Jekyll Island Sportsmen’s Club annual membership fee.) That apparently not a single person in town knew how to play the game was not an impediment. They would all learn the game and become healthier for it.

## “The Thing” to Do

Perhaps a similarly golf-friendly atmosphere existed among the members of the Jekyll Island Club’s Executive Committee and Board of Directors. If so, it was not because any of them was a golf fanatic. As of June of 1896, when the Directors who would handle the request for a golf “convenience” were elected, no members of the Executive Committee (Howland, King, Baker, Bliss, Hyde), nor any of the other members of the Board of Directors (Vice-President N.K. Fairbank, John Claflin, Cornelius N. Bliss, Gordon Mackay, W.P. Anderson, E.A. Hoffman, M.K. Jessup, C.S. Maurice), seems to have taken up the game by 1896. Unlike Gould, Morgan, Bayard Cutting, Sr, and Arthur B. Claflin, none was ever mentioned either in the Northeast golf publications of the 1890s or in the newspaper sports sections in relation to golf club membership, let alone golf competitions. Yet because of the good publicity that golf was receiving in the world of the wealthy and the influential, it may not have taken much argument to persuade the non-golfers of the Executive Committee to support a proposal for the development of a golf course on the island.

Second, golf became a fad in the 1890s.

Recall phrases from mid-1890s newspaper stories about golf that we have already encountered. Golf is “advancing” and “spreading” like an invader:

*Golf is outstripping all the outdoor games just now in its rapid growth. It took years to fully acclimatize tennis, and, with the exception of baseball, which is a home product, the other fresh-air games and recreations have only become popular by slow degrees. But golf is advancing with seven-league strides, like Jack in the fairy tale, and will soon travel the continent over, from the Arctic line to the Mexican border, for the game is spreading through Canada as well as the United States. (Sun [New York], 8 March 1896, p. 9)*

The invader is like an army of crusaders:

*The Jekyll Island Sportsmen’s Club ... has taken up golf. It is about the greatest victory accomplished by the game in its missionary progress over the American continent. An inclination in favour of the game amongst its members, coupled with a wholesome spirit of rivalry with some other resorts in the South, is back of the adoption of golf by the club. (Sun [New York], 16 January 1898, p. 8).*

Predictably, this new golf fad frequently prompted gently humorous mockery in the newspapers:

RESULT OF A FAD

*Golf Is Everywhere Now the Game of the Moment*



Figure 37 "Attitudes in Golf"

*As golf is just now the game of the moment, having shouldered tennis to the back seat, the artists have turned their attention toward picturing and caricaturing the types to be met with on the green golf field.*

*There is no denying a man's character is cruelly displayed by his actions on the golf links and the numerous remarkable attitudes people strike are a cause for amusement to lookers-on. Here are some of the positions witnessed at a recent golf game. (Crawford Avalanche [Grayling, Michigan], 21 October 1897, p. 3)*

## “The Thing” to Do

Of course, by definition, fads do not last. And so the faddists dropped the game as quickly as they had picked it up. Yet the game endured.



Figure 38 Robert Bage Kerr, circa 1901.

In 1901, Robert Bage Kerr, having been appointed U.S.G.A. Secretary in February of 1897 (just three and a half years after escaping the charging bull at Lakewood with Willie Dunn), was asked about golf’s transition away from its late-1800s growth as a fad to its early-1900s growth as a serious sport:

*Possibly there is not so much furor about the sport, but this is because it is no longer a novelty. It is taken as a matter of course now that a man plays golf in his leisure moments and not so much talk is made of it. Another thing is that the faddists have left the game for good. And, I might add, for the game’s good also. This is another reason why there is less talk about it. The man who played because it was “the thing,” and not because he liked it, has given way to those who love the sport for its own sake. There are just as many players and just as many links, but the game has assumed a more rational and permanent basis.*  
(Tribune (New York), 25 November 1901, p. 9)

Golf was about to assume a permanent basis on Jekyll Island.

## A Golf “Convenience” Designer?

The *Savannah Morning News* says in January of 1897 that the Executive Committee of the Jekyll Island Club was told of the need for certain sports “conveniences” “many months ago” and that “plans” were made almost immediately to address this need.

The constitution of the Jekyll Island Sportsmen’s Club indicated that Executive Committee meetings could be held at “any time or place,” quorum for business requiring just three of its five members be present. I wonder if the “necessity” of building “conveniences for ... golf” was “made plain” to Hyde during the 1896 season and whether he called a meeting of the Executive Committee early in 1896 – whether in New York or on Jekyll Island itself – such that “plans for bringing it about started” right away (*Morning News*, 2 January 1897, p. 2).

Neither the *Savannah Morning News* nor the *Brunswick Times* – which listed many of the members and guests present at Jekyll Island during the 1896 season – mentions that any of Gould, Morgan, and Bayard Cutting, Sr (to say nothing of Junior), was on the island at this time. Of Executive Committee members, only King was said by the newspapers to have been on the island.

Curiously, however, as of the end of January, there was certainly a golf-mad Club member on hand: Arthur Clafin arrived at Jekyll Island shortly after the official opening of the winter season (*Morning News* [Savannah], 2 February 1896, p. 2). He had interrupted his full golf calendar at the Golf Club of Lakewood to be on an island without a golf course.

What is curious is the fact that he was on his own. So far as I can determine, he was rarely without his wife when he visited the island.



Figure 39 “Minnie” Clafin, early 1900s.

Minnietta (*née* Anderson) Clafin was known to family and friends as Minnie. She remained at their home in Lakewood during the winter of 1896, where she played in weekly golf competitions for the Converse Cup, frequently winning it. She played right through February and March (see the *New York Tribune*, 23 February 1896, p. 8). As part of the full social life of the wealthy Lakewood community, she continued to host get-togethers in her home during the winter season in the village (see, for example, the reference to her March 3<sup>rd</sup> party in the *New York Tribune*, 8 March 1896, p. 9).

A Golf “Convenience” Designer?

So why was her golf-mad husband Arthur “baching it” on golf-less Jekyll Island?

My suspicion is that Claflin’s 1896 visit was not for pleasure first and foremost, but rather for the purpose of reconnoitering potential sites for a golf ground.

Perhaps Henry Hyde had identified him as the Club member with the most practical knowledge of the game and its requirements and so had asked him to advise the Executive Committee about what needed to be done to provide a minimal “convenience” for golf in time for the next season.

It is possible that Director John Claflin, a member of the Game Committee, volunteered to ask his golf-obsessed brother Arthur to visit the club that winter precisely to seek his advice about where a “Golf Ground” might be located and about what it might take to build one.

The common understanding in the 1890s was that “the game may be practiced” on “any good stretch of land where the grass is not too rank” (“The Game of Golf—Another Scotch Athletic Exercise Becomes Popular,” p. 2). So had he been asked to identify an area where golf balls could be knocked about, Arthur Claflin would no doubt have suggested open ground somewhere in the area north of the Maurice cottage between River Road and Old Plantation Road. Perhaps he even marked out the area where the local work crews would have to mow the grass to prepare an area so that members could make a pretense of playing golf during the 1897 season.

Intriguingly, McCashes say that the first golf course on Jekyll Island was “laid out by Arthur B. Claflin” (47).

When they then write, however, that Claflin’s course “was under way by the spring of 1898,” they are inaccurate, for it was actually the course laid out by Willie Dunn that was under way then (47).

Superintendent Grob’s communications with Claflin about matters concerning construction of the Dunn course show Claflin’s important role in the process (presumably he was Chairman of the Committee on Golf and Sport), but it is not correct to say that Claflin “laid out” the 1898 course. Have the McCashes simply misused the term “laid out”?

Or have they perhaps elided something that Claflin did in 1896 with something that he did in 1898?

Was it perhaps the first “convenience” for golf that had been “laid out by Arthur B. Claflin”?

## Sniping

Presumably interested to see how his plans for improvements had turned out – and how they would be received by Club members and guests – Henry Hyde was one of the first to arrive at Jekyll Island for the 1897 season. He arrived, in fact, in December of 1896. The *Atlanta Constitution* noticed this fact on Wednesday, December 30<sup>th</sup>, 1896:

*Opening at Jekyll Island*

*Advanced Guard of Wealth Now Enjoying the South's Luxury*

*Georgia, Dec. 29. – (Special)*

*The Jekyll Island Club on January 1<sup>st</sup> will be open for the reception of members and guests. The finishing touches are now being put on the grounds, clubhouse and apartment cottages. In advance of the regular season a few guests who are fond of ease and quiet have come down.*

*They [include] Mr. H.B. Hyde of Equitable Life Insurance company, New York.... Mr. Hyde bears the reputation of being one of the ... men who receive the largest salaries in the world.... Mr. Hyde receives \$75,000 annually, and the directors vote him a bonus of \$25, 000 in addition to that for each twelve months.*

*Unlike many clerks who work for \$25 to \$75 per month, Mr. Hyde does not sleep well at night. (p. 3)*

Welcome to the South!

Alas, whether or not such a newspaper report made for uncomfortable reading, there was another reason that Hyde was neither to enjoy “ease and quiet” nor to “sleep well at night” on the island for very long.

It turns out that hunting birdies of one sort on Jekyll Island promised to interfere with hunting birdies of another sort. Hunters and golfers were about to claim the same land. Hyde would need the wisdom of Solomon to arbitrate the sniping between them.

## The Hunting Imperium of Dean Hoffman

The McCashes write that “Jekyll officers did not begin putting in links until they ran afoul of the chairman of the game committee – 1897” (47).

However unimpressive the “convenience” for golf would have seemed to an ardent devotee of the ancient game, it seems to have impressed the Reverend Dean Dr. Eugene Augustus Hoffman, chairman of the Game Committee, as a portent of dangerous things to come. The prospect of golf’s incursions into the domain of hunters unsettled him during the 1897 season.

And so did his brother’s health. The Reverend Dr. Charles Frederick Hoffman came to the island at the end of February, not feeling very well, but hoping that island life would be the tonic for what ailed him – as it had been in the past. Yet just a week after his arrival, he died (*Brunswick Times*, 5 March 1897, p. 1). A big funeral ceremony would follow in New York City.

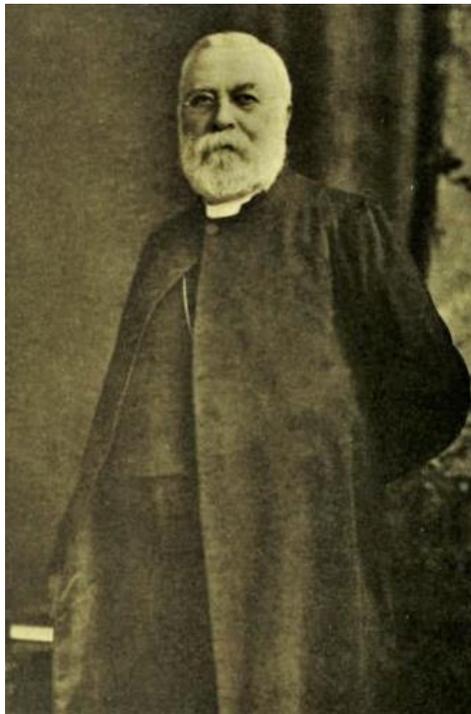


Figure 40 The Reverend Dean Dr Eugene Augustus Hoffman, circa 1902.

Dean Hoffman, in addition to serving as Chairman of the Game Committee, was also one of the thirteen directors of the Jekyll Island Club for the 1896-97 administrative year, so he was in touch with most of the developing issues and initiatives within the Club.

Hoffman was a well-known and widely respected leader in the Episcopal Church in the states of New York and New Jersey. He eventually became the very influential Dean of the General Theological Seminary in New York.

He and his brother, who was Dean of All Angels’ Protestant Episcopal Church in New York, owned some of “the most valuable business blocks” in New York City (*Sun* [NY], 5 March 1897, p. 5). The Hoffman family had owned property in New York City since it was called New Amsterdam, so the brothers were born into enormous wealth.

Reverend Eugene Hoffman began as a parish priest, however, seeking strategies to overcome an alienation that he perceived between the Episcopal Christian Church and working-class people in the

late Victorian period. When he was fifty, he became Dean of the church's General Theological Seminary, which was then relatively poverty-stricken. Thereafter, he used some of his great wealth to endow the Seminary, to construct new buildings for it, and also to build churches in New Jersey.

Such was his vocation.

His avocations, however, were varied, ranging from the collection of insects and the collection of Latin editions of the Bible to serving (until his death in 1902) as President of the New York Historical Society. But his favorite activities outside of work were hunting and fishing. A eulogist said of him that despite what some regard as "the curse of a city's life," "Hoffman had, to the end of his days, a sportsman's instincts. He was fond of the woods and streams, and thoroughly at home with rod and gun" (Rev. Dr. William R. Huntington, *Address Commemorative of Eugene Augustus Hoffman* [New York: New York Historical Society, 1903]).

At Jekyll Island, Dean Hoffman vigilantly garded his hunting turf – both metaphorically and literally. The McCashes depict him as an emperor determined to use all the resources of his empire to maintain hunting as the Club's pre-eminent sport: "Hoffman's imperious attitude spilled over into his administration of the game committee, which paid little attention to its authorized budget and spent liberally and at will ... 'thousands of dollars without the by your leave of the Executive Committee'" (pp. 45-46).

He was roused by a threat during the 1897 season: "in 1897 plans to introduce golf to the island threatened Hoffman's little empire, as devotees of the game contemplated usurping certain hunting grounds for their course" (p. 46). He had been on the island from the beginning of the 1897 season. He had seen the new "convenience" for golf developed since the end of the 1896 season. It had apparently not caused him immediate concern.

During the course of the 1897 season, however, plans for a proper golf grounds emerged, and it seems that these plans anticipated a lay-out on the old hunting grounds north of Hollybourne Cottage much more extensive than that represented by the "convenience" for golf. This plan must have been discussed fairly widely amongst Club members, and the discussion must have been quite serious, for Dean Hoffman wrote a letter expressing his opposition to it: "Dean Hoffman objected. In his opinion, it would be 'unwise to take ... ground now used by gunners for the purpose of making golf links.' The area was much too small and too rough, he protested" (p. 46).

## The Hunting Imperium of Dean Hoffman

Be that as it may, this leader of the hunting devotees was concerned less about the welfare of golfers and more about the welfare of gunners: the point was not that golfers deserved a better golf links than the one being planned, but rather that hunters did not deserve to be displaced from “the best quail land” on the island (“Jekyll Island Conservation Plan Natural History,” Draft 13 June 2007, p. F6).

## The Best Quail Land

Perhaps we see justification of Hoffman’s claim that the area of open ground running along the north-west side of the island was “the best quail land” in the photograph above of the Struthers’ hunting party returning across a quail meadow, dead birds in hand.

The problem with the development of a golf course on the land in question was not just a matter of two groups of people walking on the same land at the same time for different purposes – each capable of accidentally injuring the other. There was the problem of how the land was to be managed agronomically.

An early photograph of Horton House before its renovation began in 1898 shows the long grass growing in the open ground running along the north-west side of the island. The fields of grass just like this stretching northward from Brown Cottage were essential to provide both food and cover for a variety of the island’s game birds.



*Figure 41 Horton House before 1898. Grass two- to three-feet high covered much of the open ground stretching more than two miles north from Hollybourne Cottage along the west side of the island.*

On the one hand, Dolby had originally recommended in 1887 that the open ground be cultivated with plants intended to sustain a varied population of game birds. Van Wormer’s 1897 description of this part of the island suggests that Dolby’s plans were still being followed ten years later.

## The Best Quail Land

On the other hand, the grasses growing in this area of open ground north of the clubhouse alongside Jekyll Creek and its marshes were annually burned to renew them. In the spring of 1896, the *Morning News* reports that, “All the guests having left Jekyll Island, the annual burning of woods is taking place to make room for the new crop of grass for the game” (18 April 1896, p. 6).

Even if he knew little of golf, Dean Hoffman would have known that golf course grass is not burned annually.

## The Sniping King

Complicating Hyde's attempt to navigate between the competing claims of hunters and golfers was the fact that a member of his "coterie" – one of the Jekyll Islanders who helped him to run his "machine" – was Club Secretary David H. King, Jr, perhaps the prime example of a man with a gunning passion. And as fate would have it, during the very season that land north of the Maurice cottage once part of the snipe grounds would debut as a "convenience" for golf, King was featured coast to coast in January and February in newspaper articles about his invention of a mobile device for hunting snipe on Jekyll Island:

*Gunner's Bicycle Blind*

*How Mr. King Seeks the Snipe on Jekyll Island*

*There are new things under the sun, in spite of the proverb. The man who made it didn't know David King, Jr. Mr. King was once a park commissioner of New York city, and he was always a sportsman. He is a sportsman yet, and a capital shot, too, and that is how he came to devise this new thing that puts the maker of that proverb – or his ghost – to the blush!*

*They say – we won't vouch for it – that Irishmen used to dress themselves in donkey skins and pretend to graze along the shores of the Emerald Isle's estuaries in order to get within shooting distance of the big Irish snipe. We don't believe the story. It sounds fishy. But there's nothing fishy about Mr. King's method of accomplishing the same purpose as the fabled Irishman. Listen:*

*Mr. King is shooting snipe on Jekyll Island, a sandy waste at the mouth of St. Simon's sound, on the coast of Georgia, about ten miles from Brunswick as the boat sails. Jekyll Island is famous for its birds, and there is a clubhouse there for the use of sportsmen. The beach is very broad and shelving and very hard. The snipe are plentiful but timid. They know man, and they know his gun, and it takes skill to make a good bag.*

*One way of shooting snipe is from a blind, built of grass and twig so cunningly arranged as to look like a clump of natural vegetation. The sportsman lies behind it, and when the snipe don't come within shot he goes home empty handed.*

## The Sniping King

*Mr. King has a blind, too, but it is movable and follows the birds. It is nothing more or less than a tricycle specially built for the purpose, upon whose frame grasses and green things are so disposed as to lead the fated snipe to see no guile therein.*

*Behind the screen sits Mr. King on a comfortable spring seat, his feet on the pedals and his armament conveniently disposed around him. He wheels from the clubhouse to the shooting ground, awaits his game, brings it down, gathers it in, and moves slowly off to the next good locality. When birds alight out of gunshot he moves toward them at a practically imperceptible rate until he finds himself within range.*

*Mr. King deserves the excellent bags he is reported to be making. But it's hard on the snipe. (Morning News [Savannah], 3 January 1897, p. 19).*

King's invention depended upon the very roads bounding the proposed golf course: River Road and Old Plantation Road stretched all the way along the old hunting grounds to the north end of the island.

The photograph below shows the gamekeeper stopped on River Road, near a boardwalk.



Figure 42 Photograph from Jekyll Island Club (1911).

The gamekeeper is perhaps stopped at the bridge where the creek bordering Jasmine Road empties into the tidal marsh visible on the left side of the photograph. Behind the gamekeeper to his left is some sort of boardwalk that presumably gave gunners deeper access into the marsh in their hunting of the snipe – access either on foot or on modified snipe-hunting tricycle!

The “sniping” King will have been “all ears” when Hyde read to the Executive Committee Dean Hoffman’s letter warning of golf’s threats to “the best quail land.”

## Gunners versus Golfers

In the long run, Dean Hoffman may have proved right about the incompatibility between game birds and golf grounds along the north-west side of the island.

As we shall see in sections to follow, over the Dean's objections, a nine-hole golf course was built on the old hunting grounds at the end of 1897. Although never intended to do so, it remained in play as the Club's golf course for at least fourteen years afterwards.

As time passed, and despite the optimism of a succession of gamekeepers, the number of game birds killed annually on Jekyll Island steadily decreased. On the one hand, there were fewer birds; on the other hand, there were fewer hunters. The popularity of hunting steadily declined within the Jekyll Island Club until by 1919 there was just one member willing to serve on the Game Committee: Canadian Welland DeVeaux Woodruff (McCashes, p. 47). Over the years, old hunting grounds across all parts of the island were converted to golf courses, tennis courts, and even a polo field (first referred to in 1900 [*Morning News* (Savannah, Georgia), 31 December 1900, p. 2], and still in existence in 1947 [*New York Times*, 5 June 1947, p. 51]).

And so, the fall of the Hoffman empire was complete.

In this regard, as noted in the "Introduction" above, what happened at Jekyll Island in this long-term contest over land use between the Game Committee and the Committee on Golf and Sports was representative of how the development of golf in America was impacting wealthy sportsmen generally at this time. As the McCashes observe, "The decline of hunting and the rise of golf seem directly related in Jekyll's history" (p. 47).

We recall what William K. Vanderbilt, a founding member of the Jekyll Island Sportsmen's Club in 1886, declared to his friends in 1889 after Willie Dunn had demonstrated his golfing skills in France: "Gentlemen, this beats rifle shooting for distance and accuracy" (Willie Dunn, "Early Courses of the United States," p. 24). Similarly, in "Out of Harness: How Well Known Golfers Divide Their Time Between Links and Other Sports," H.L. Fitzpatrick observes that "Until the advent of golf, the New York men who took it up had often been accustomed to visiting Canada each season for the salmon fishing and many of them owned rivers there or belonged to clubs that controlled the preserved water" (*American Golfer*, 10 April 1920, vol XXIII no 7, p. 12).



*Figure 43 Charles Blair Macdonald.*

Ironically, Fitzpatrick's first example of a man who illustrates this trend is not just a man who hunted on Jekyll Island, but also a man who was one of the pre-eminent golfers and golf course architects in American history: Charles Blair Macdonald.

Fitzpatrick writes that Macdonald once told him that "golf was his only outdoor pastime"; Macdonald confessed: "I may hardly claim to be a sportsman, aside from golfing.... Although once I went hunting on Jekyll's Island and shot a wild pig" ("Out of Harness: How Well Known Golfers Divide Their Time Between Links and Other Sports," p. 12).

It is not recorded when Macdonald, the first winner of the U.S. Amateur Championship in 1895, visited Jekyll Island, but, as we know, he was closely associated with Robert Todd Lincoln in the founding of the Chicago Golf Club in 1893, and he was at the same time Lincoln's first golf instructor, so he may well have come to the island as part of Lincoln's entourage in 1897 or 1902.

In its experience of this late-nineteenth-century shift of interest from hunting and fishing to golf, the Jekyll Island Club was clearly a typical sportsmen's club of its day – even if atypical in the astronomic wealth of its members.

## Compliments of Charles Lanier

The 1911 Lanier book *Jekyll Island Club* subtly depicts the displacement of hunting by golf. There is a photograph (seen above) of the fifty-seven-year-old gamekeeper, widower John Brett, posing on his wagon with three of his dogs, and it is followed by another photograph (also seen above) of nineteen pheasants strung on a rope between trees. These are the only photographs explicitly depicting hunting. A couple of pages later, there are two photographs of a small deer, which allowed the photographer to get very close to it, making these photographs seem to suggest more the tameness of the deer than its sporting potential for hunters. So whether there are four photographs devoted to the topic of hunting, or just two, is not clear.

Be that as it may, of the fifty-eight remaining photographs in the book, nine of them refer either to the old golf course or to the new golf course: the imbalance between representations of hunting and golf is remarkable.

More subtly, the book shows the gamekeeper symbolically marginalized to the northern part of the island – hemmed in by the old golf course on the old hunting grounds since 1897 and by the new golf course on the savanna as of 1909.

The book does this by arranging its photographs so as to depict the nature of a guest's visit to the island in a loosely chronological and geographical order, as we can see from the photograph captions quoted below. The book and a visit to the island both start with "The Jekyll Landing and Steamer." The island activities start on the clubhouse lawn, with a view looking back at the wharf, and then a view looking forward to the clubhouse and apartments: our next destination. We go up to the top of the clubhouse tower for a view looking south. In the next set of photographs, we see Sans Souci, a number of cottages, various grounds and roads: all part of the "South End of Club Enclosure." Then we leave for the south of the island on Oglethorpe Road, ending with a final photograph of the "Turn in Oglethorpe Road."

We are back at the clubhouse, at the top of the tower once more, but this time we see "From Club House Looking North." We see the cottages and chapel to be found in that direction, as well as the open ground north of the Maurice cottage and the tidal marsh between Jekyll Creek and River Road. We move north via photographs showing north-facing views of the two roads that run north from the clubhouse: "River Road" and "Old Plantation Road." Then we see individual images of some of the buildings along these roads.

As we know, these two roads framed the 1896 “convenience” for golf and, as we shall see, they also framed the golf course that Willie Dunn laid out on the old hunting grounds in 1897. Since one of the messages of the Lanier book is that the “Old Golf Course” has been replaced by what it calls the “New Golf Course,” no photograph of the old golf course is presented (although it was still open for play in the spring of 1911 when the photographs for the Lanier book were taken). We pass the old golf course on our virtual tour without a mention of it until we are past it: two photographs are captioned “View From Old Golf Field” and “Jessamine Road At Old Golf Course.” The photographer stands on the “old golf course” and the “old golf field” to take his photographs, but they do not show the golf course. We are to look elsewhere, away from it, beyond it.

The photographic journey across the old hunting grounds ends at Horton House, from which we implicitly return to the compound again and now head out to the east along Shell Road to the new golf course on the savanna, where we pause for seven photographs, and then continue along Shell Road, Lanier Road, and the beach.

Heading back to the north of the island via the beach and Lanier Road, we meet the photograph we have seen above showing the gamekeeper in his carriage with his dogs. He holds his gun poised beside him. He is figuratively presented in the book, and is perhaps literally situated on the island at that moment, standing vigil with his dogs well to the north of the “Old Golf Course” and the “New Golf Course,” guarding against further incursions onto the old hunting grounds!

The book then ends with photographs of the “Good Bye on Jekyl Wharf.”

## Not Hyde-Bound to Hunting Grounds

One presumes that a number of negative reviews of the “convenience” for golf made their way to Hyde, especially since it would have been known to everyone that he was the author of the “plans” that produced all the new and improved “conveniences” for the 1897 season.

For all the home-runs he had hit in regard to renovations of the clubhouse and its grounds and in relation to other sports, he had struck-out at golf.

Hoffman’s letter about a proposed “golf links” suggests that the Hyde “machine” had at least a nine-hole course in mind for the old hunting grounds north of the Maurice cottage. It is also quite possible that the Executive Committee may have been contemplating laying out an eighteen-hole golf course, which would have had to stretch about three miles through the old hunting grounds all the way up to Horton House and back. After all, Hoffman would not have been concerned about a less-ambitious plan limiting the northward stretch of a golf course to open grounds much nearer the clubhouse compound.

Ready-to-hand on Jekyll Island during the 1897 season as debate about golf “conveniences” developed were at least four members of the Executive Committee (Hyde, Bliss, King, and Howland), one more than the number necessary for business quorum. Its discussions of plans for building a golf course seem to have advanced far enough for Hyde to begin beating the ground to identify possible subscribers to a golf course construction fund. He wrote to Club Secretary Frederic Baker about his progress: “I have talked the matter over with Mr. Pulitzer and Mr. McKay. My idea was to raise \$10,000. I think Pulitzer would have given two or three thousand and Mr. McKay would have been very liberal” (June Hall McCash, p 118, note 25). Gordon McKay and Joseph Pulitzer were both on the island with Hyde, so the latter’s writing that he “talked” with them confirms the idea that planning for building a golf course was under way on the island during the 1897 season – a suspicion further confirmed by Dean Hoffman’s alarm at what he was hearing about this planning while he was on the island that winter.

I presume that the Executive Committee, led by Hyde, decided that it would be necessary to hire a professional golfer to give the Club expert advice on where a proper golf course could and should be laid out on the island and that the Committee authorized Hyde to begin to raise a subscription for this costly undertaking. Given that the 1909 Donald Ross course would cost \$11,000, Hyde’s target of \$10,000 for golf course construction in 1897 seems pretty well-informed: he may have already sought expert advice regarding the likely costs of a new course.

A plan to seek professional advice on the question of the location of a golf course may have assuaged Hoffman's objections to talk of building a golf links on the old hunting ground. Recall that Hoffman had said that the hunting ground that the Executive Committee was targeting for golf course construction was "too small and too rough," and so he might well have expected a professional golfer to confirm his judgement about its unsuitability for golf.

Later that year, when Willie Dunn inspected Jekyll Island with a view to determining the best location for a golf course, he chose not the old hunting grounds, but an area known as the "savanna."

I wonder if Dean Hoffman said, "I told you so!"

Wherefore a Dunn Deal?

## Wherefore a Dunn Deal?

Willie Dunn was the most important and the most prolific golf course designer in the United States in the 1890s. Even most of those who were among the next-most important and most prolific golf course designers in the land were nephews of his such as John Duncan Dunn, William Tucker, Samuel Tucker, and a few more Tuckers and Dunns that came along in the late 1890s and early 1900s. The Dunn was the gold-standard when it came to laying out golf courses in the 1890s.

For instance, when John D. Rockefeller took up the game in March of 1899, he enquired as to who should build him a golf course on his newly acquired Pocantico estate in north Westchester County, and of course Dunn was the man recommended to him. So by December of 1899, Dunn had laid out a nine-hole course for Rockefeller, and he was supervising construction work on it by January of 1900.

With collective financial resources, and individual member's passions for the game, similar to Rockefeller's, the Jekyll Island Club would have undoubtedly received the same advice that Rockefeller received regarding the question of who would build a rich man the best golf course.

Recall that Dunn accounts for his Jekyll Island commission as follows: the "project on Jekyll Island" was "undertaken at the instance of Stanford White and several other New Yorkers, who owned hunting lodges on this Island" ("Early Courses in the United States," p. 25). Dunn's suggestion that the famous architect Stanford White was responsible for commissioning him to lay out a golf course on Jekyll Island makes no sense, since White was not a member of the club. Rather, he was associated with Shinnecock Hills, having designed its iconic clubhouse in 1891. Also a playing member at Shinnecock, he would have known well a number of Jekyll Island Club members who were also members of Shinnecock Hills, such as William Vanderbilt. And White would have known Dunn both through the latter's re-design of the Shinnecock golf course from 1893-95 and through his serving as the professional golfer there during those years.

As mentioned above, the most accurate part of Dunn's late recollection of his commission regarding the project on Jekyll Island is that it came from "several other New Yorkers, who owned hunting lodges on the island." White may well have recommended Dunn to the New York cottage owners of the Jekyll Island Club as the man for their job. But such a recommendation would have been redundant, insofar as Vanderbilt, William Bayard Cutting, Sr, George J. Gould, Arthur B. Claflin, and J. Pierpont Morgan were concerned, for all of them had already formed a very good impression of Dunn as a golf course architect.

As a board member at the Ardsley Park Casino Club, Morgan was the one most familiar with Dunn's most recent work. Dunn had built for this Club the most expensive golf course in history. \$60,000 was spent on the more difficult first nine (*Sun* [NY], 20 October 1896, p. 5). Its eighteen holes ended up costing a total of \$75,000 (*Sun* [NY], 1 November 1896, p. 21). When it opened in 1896, after extraordinary feats of golf course engineering required to cope with certain landscape features, the new course and its elite membership received loud newspaper coverage coast to coast.

Any number of Club members would have recommended Dunn before all others as the man for the job at Jekyll Island.

Since Dunn identifies the "lodge" owners who approached him as New Yorkers (as opposed to the substantial number of other Club members who lived elsewhere, such as Philadelphia, Chicago, Minneapolis, St Catherines, and so on), Dunn may have been approached by Club members person-to-person in New York. Although he lived in Dobbs Ferry near the Ardsley Casino Club, where he was the head pro, he had his own golf shop in downtown Manhattan where other wealthy men who had wanted him to design a course for them had approached him before.

Alternatively, the "New Yorkers" in question may have approached him at Ardsley. Not only did he have his own golf shop at the Club, but he also played golf with Club members and their guests, especially with members of the Greens Committee (*Sun* [NY] 23 November 1896, p. 8). He remained head pro there until the beginning of March of 1897, as he completed the second nine holes of the golf course. Sometime later in 1897 he was following wild hog trails all across Jekyll Island trying to identify the best location for a golf course.

Was Claflin the one who chose Willie Dunn to lay out Jekyll Island's first proper golf course?

Like the other golfers in the U.S. Northeast who were also members of the Jekyll Island Club, Claflin knew from the formation of the New Jersey golf clubs of which he was a member in the mid-1890s that a professional golfer was necessary if one wanted to lay out a golf course capable of attracting and satisfying a membership of wealthy devotees of the royal and ancient game. And he knew as well as anyone that Dunn would be the designer to give the Club a course that would match or exceed the standard of the one built by the Carnegies.

One presumes that Claflin was Chairman of the Golf and Sport Committee by at least June of 1898, given Grob's communications with him about golf course construction on the island during the spring, summer and fall of that year. Perhaps he had been Chairman of this committee in 1897 when Dunn was

## Wherefore a Dunn Deal?

chosen to be the designer of the Club's first golf course; he may even have been the first and only member of what could have been a newly constituted committee. The McCashes say that the first golf course on Jekyll Island was "laid out by Arthur B. Clafin," presumably because Clafin's name is the one on Club documents concerning the laying out of the Dunn golf course.

## The Unknown Golf Courses of Willie Dunn, Jr

Willie Dunn is usually identified as the builder of the first golf course on Jekyll Island. Unrecognized is the fact that between 1897 and 1898 he built two golf courses for the Jekyll Island Club: a temporary one and a permanent one. Ironically, the “permanent” golf course never opened for play and the “temporary” one lasted at least fifteen years. In fact, for twelve years, the supposedly temporary golf course was the Club’s only course.

In 1897, Dunn was asked to build two golf courses on Jekyll Island: the first, a nine-hole course designed according to the standards of the day; the second, something more ambitious that could serve as a golf course of which the Club could be proud, given its rivalry with a certain other resort in the South. It would have twenty-seven holes: a nine-hole course for ladies and an eighteen-hole championship course. Like the Ardsley course, it would require engineering feats to make it possible. Like Shinnecock, it would be built in dunes commanding views of the Atlantic Ocean.

How did the Jekyll Island Club, in less than twelve months, go from a plan in 1896 for a mere “convenience” for golf to a plan in 1897 encompassing golf course construction on two different parts of the island, leading to the development of three different golf courses, which together would offer a total of thirty-six holes?

## Dunn's Twice-Told Tale

Willie Dunn told the story of his design work for the Jekyll Island Club in two instalments: first in 1898, and then in 1934.



Figure 44 Willie Dunn, Jr, circa 1898.

In January of 1898, recently returned from Jekyll Island, and planning to go to the island again in the near future, Dunn told the *New York Sun* about his recent work there: on the one hand, he had already designed a nine-hole golf course – “now in play” – as a “temporary arrangement”; on the other hand, he had staked out both an eighteen-hole course for men and another nine-hole course for women (16 January 1898, p. 8).

As we shall see, the *New York* reporter's account of Dunn's work on the island is confusing in relation to the timeline and the location of the events described. Apparently having written up his story after having had a conversation with Dunn that overwhelmed him with information about an island with which he was unfamiliar, the reporter seems to have conflated two different visits to the island.

Thirty-six years later, when Dunn was seventy years old, he wrote an article for *Golf Illustrated* focusing largely on what he had come to think of as the *annus mirabilis* of his golf course designing career: 1895.

Always self-promoting and always self-aggrandizing, Dunn invariably embellished his autobiography to make himself the hero of his own narrative. He spoke of his golf course work in a similar way. As one reads contemporary newspaper accounts in communities where he built or proposed to build golf courses in the late 1890s (Baltimore, Philadelphia, Elmira, Poughkeepsie, Detroit, Dayton, and so on), one finds each golf course owner or golf club president proudly telling a reporter that Dunn had predicted that when he was done, he would leave local golfers one of the best golf courses in the United States.

It is necessary to read Dunn, then, with an awareness that he never let facts get in the way of a good tale about his achievements.



*Figure 45 Willie Dunn, Jr, circa 1933, showing off his latest invention: a perfectly counter-balanced "four-faced putter" that could be used by either right-handed or left-handed players.*

For instance, as we know, he begins his 1934 essay, "Early Courses in the United States," with a story of how he converted William K. Vanderbilt from hunting to golf, after which Vanderbilt "asked me to come to America and build a golf course there.... I arrived in March of 1890, and Vanderbilt took me out to Long Island to the site of the proposed course.... I laid out plans for twelve holes and started to work with one hundred and fifty Indians from the reservation" (*Golf Illustrated*, vol 41 no 6 [September 1934], p. 25). Well as David Moriarty points out, Vanderbilt seems to have had nothing to do with the laying out of the golf course at Shinnecock Hills, it was a different Willie (golf professional Willie Davis from Montreal) who laid out nine holes in 1891, and Willie Dunn did not arrive in the United states until 1893, when he was appointed the golf master at the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club (after which he expanded the golf course) (*The Origins of Golf inn Shinnecock Hills, A Confused History,*" on [GolfClubAtlas.com](https://www.golfclubatlas.com/forum/index.php?topic=46842.0;wap2) <https://www.golfclubatlas.com/forum/index.php?topic=46842.0;wap2>).

## Dunn's Twice-Told Tale

Having begun his essay with such fundamental errors about (1) when Shinnecock Hills golf course was first laid out, (2) when he himself arrived in the United States, and (3) when he himself first designed golf holes at Shinnecock Hills, what should we make of Dunn's claim later in the same essay that he first came to Jekyll Island to lay out a course in 1895?

## The One Tale

Dunn reflects in this *Golf Illustrated* essay on “the outstanding courses [he] built between 1890 and 1895.” He describes in particular a magical year of course building in 1895. First there was “the famous Ardsley Casino Links”: “I started this in November of 1894 and had it completed by May, 1895.” Laying out next the Baltimore Country Club and the Philadelphia Country Club, he says, “presented practically the same problems as Ardsley-on-the-Hudson.” Dunn then explains: “my next effort was very interesting and different. This was a project on Jekyll Island, Georgia” (p. 25).

Was Dunn really called to Jekyll Island as early as 1895?

Well, he gets virtually all of his dates wrong in his 1934 essay.

He started the Ardsley golf course at the end of 1895 (not 1894) and he finished the nine-hole course in the spring of 1896 (not 1895). He started a second nine holes at Ardsley in the fall of 1896, which he completed in the spring of 1897. We read in the New York *Sun* in March of 1897 that “Willie Dunn ... has finished the work on the full eighteen-hole course at the Ardsley Casino” and that he “will not remain longer, it is said, in charge of the links” (1 March 1897, p. 9).

So his story of Ardsley compresses into seven months between November of 1894 and May of 1895 what actually took seventeen months between November of 1895 and March of 1897.

Similarly, a newspaper article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* makes clear that Willie Dunn was making improvements to the Philadelphia Country Club in April and May of 1896, not 1895:

*The Philadelphia Country Club, which has become the favorite resort for the smart set every afternoon, Sundays included, was visited yesterday by quite a number of people despite the threatening appearances of the sky.... The visitors yesterday spent most of their time in inspecting the extensive improvements which have been made to the golf links.... The work of altering the local links is being done under the supervision of Willie Dunn, the champion golfer, and will cost several thousand dollars. The throwing up of “bunkers,” and creating “hazards,” extending putting greens and establishing one new hole in order to abolish another, will certainly make the Country Club course the finest in this country. (4 May 1896, p. 5)*

## The One Tale

W.G. van Tassel Sutphen confirmed that this work had been successfully completed: “In the spring of 1896 the club employed Willie Dunn to rearrange the [rudimentary old] course in conformity with recognized golfing conditions, and this was done at a cost of over \$3000. The change was a great improvement” (*Harper’s Weekly*, vol 41 no 2133 [6 November 1897], p. 113).

So Dunn was out by a year on his recollection of events in his Philadelphia story.

The golf course of the Baltimore Country Club, according to *The Official Golf Guide*, was built by Dunn in March of 1897 (1899, p. 148). This is true enough, but the full story of its design and construction is a bit more complicated.

In the 1930s, the club itself said that “when the Baltimore Country Club was finally organized it possessed a golf course already constructed, and its foundations had been securely laid in the formation of the Roland Park Golf Club on November 28, 1896.... Willie Dunn, a well-known Scotch professional, laid out the Roland Park course, which was recognized as one of the finest in the country, surpassing anything that Baltimore had possessed heretofore” (“Baltimore Country Club’s Foundation Was Laid in Old Roland Park Organization, “ in *Official Souvenir Book and Program of the United States Golf Association Thirty-sixth National Amateur Golf Championship Held at the Baltimore Country Club, Five Farms Course, Baltimore Maryland, September 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, 1932*, p. 11).

The golf course at Roland Park was laid out between 1896 and 1897 in two different stages, and by different designers.



Figure 46 William H. Tucker, circa 1900.

It turns out that Willie Dunn’s nephews, Samuel and William Tucker, were on the scene at Baltimore in the fall of 1896. These nephews were sons of Willie Dunn’s sister Katherine. William Tucker had served as Dunn’s assistant at Biarritz and afterwards had started to lay out golf courses on his own. He became a member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, estimating that he had laid out, re-designed, or renovated over 120 golf courses before his death in 1954.

By 1896, William and Samuel went by the name of the “Tucker Brothers” and together ran a company of Grass and Turf Specialists. *The Baltimore Sun* reported on the state of course construction in December of 1896:

*The Roland Park Golf Club, which was organized some weeks ago with fifty-eight members, began playing on the club's links at Roland Park on Saturday last. There were a number of informal contests among members of the club, but no scheduled games. The course is laid out on a fine tract of about thirty acres. At present there are but seven holes, but two more will be added in the spring, making the full course. The course was laid out by the famous Tucker brothers of the St Andrews Club, New York. Mr. Tucker said that the Roland Park links promised to be among the finest in the country. At present, temporary holes have been made and the playing done on them, in order that the permanent holes may be given time to properly 'settle' and harden by next spring. (8 December 1896, p. 6)*

The Tucker brothers had learned from their uncle to promise a layout “among the finest in the country,” and so they virtually foretold his coming in the spring by their prophesy!

The New York *Sun* announced on March 1st, 1897, that “Willie Dunn ... has finished the work on the full eighteen-hole course at the Ardsley Casino” and that he “will not remain longer, it is said, in charge of the links”: “Dunn will go to Baltimore this week to lay out links for the Roland Park Company” (p. 9). He completed the course in about a week, for we read in the *Baltimore Sun* on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1897, that “Willie Dunn, champion golfer, 1894, yesterday completed the new links at Roland Park” (p. 6).

One might have presumed that he had merely finished the course by adding a final two holes to the seven laid out in the fall of 1896 by his nephews. But it turns out that Dunn laid out another eleven holes to make a full eighteen-hole course for the Baltimore Country Club. The *Baltimore Sun* reports in October of 1897 that “a large force has been at work since early last spring” on “the fine 18-hole golf course”: “The course was laid out by Willie Dunn, the well-known Scotch professional, and it is said by experts that it surpasses any course the Baltimore players have hitherto had, and in point of natural beauty, length and adaptability to the game, will soon be recognized as one of the best in the United States” (12 October 1897, p. 6).

One of the best in the United States!

A few months later, the New York *Sun* concurred in this judgement: “The course will be one of the finest in the country. Willie Dunn has laid out an eighteen-hole course well-provided with underdrainage and natural and artificial hazards” (23 February 1898, p. 4).

## The One Tale

So we cannot trust at all Dunn's assertion that he was on Jekyll Island in 1895: all the other golf course construction projects that he says were part of a year of golf course work in 1895 that ostensibly concluded with his design work at Jekyll Island that year actually occurred between 1895 and 1897 – none it being completed before the fall of 1896 and spring of 1897.

The most we can hope for, it seems, is that Dunn is correct in remembering the order of this work. And there is reason for such a hope, for although his dates are wrong, he accurately describes the general order in which he did his work at Ardsley, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. So perhaps we can proceed with a moderate degree of confidence in the assumption that Dunn visited Jekyll Island at some point in 1897 after his spring work at Baltimore.

It is possible, moreover, that Dunn recalls the Ardsley-Baltimore-Jekyll Island nexus of course building in the spring of 1897 with a certain chronological accuracy precisely because he travelled from one to the other to the other within just a few weeks. Recall that the *New York Sun* says at the beginning of March that "Willie Dunn ... has finished the work on the full eighteen-hole course at the Ardsley Casino" and that he "will not remain longer, it is said, in charge of the links," and so "Dunn will go to Baltimore this week to lay out links for the Roland Park Company" (1 March 1897, p. 9). Finished at Baltimore by the middle of March, he may have gone on to Jekyll Island very shortly thereafter.

Perhaps, then, the Club contacted Dunn in the spring of 1897. Hyde may have got his ball-park figure of \$10,000 as the cost of constructing a golf course from communication with Dunn at that time, and he might then have arranged for Dunn to visit the island to offer his professional advice about how and where the Club should go about building a golf course.

## The Other Tale

Dunn's other tale of his adventure on Jekyll Island was told by the *New York Sun* in January of 1898:

*The Jekyll Island Sportsmen's Club, probably the most noted gunning and hunting organization in the South, has taken up golf. It is about the greatest victory accomplished by the game in its missionary progress over the American continent.... An inclination in favor of the game among its members, coupled with a wholesome spirit of rivalry with some other resorts in the South, is back of the adoption of golf by the club. At present a nine-hole course is in use, laid out on the old hunting grounds between the Morris home and the bridge, but this is only a temporary arrangement. The course was planned by Willie Dunn, the maker of the Ardsley, Westbrook, and many other links, and he will be in charge of further work, which includes an eighteen-hole course for the men and a nine-hole course for the women.*

*It was a hard problem to find a suitable place for the full course, for the island consists mainly of barren sand and shells. Dunn fixed on a meadow of coarse salt-water grass, surrounded by trees, known on the island as the "savanna." After a week of planning he was able to show the club that by a system of ditching and the placing of a dike and floodgate the meadow could be easily drained, so that the surface water would float into the ocean, and there would be a fine ground ready for a circular eighteen-hole golf course, with the women's course in the middle field. The first tee will be about 300 yards from the clubhouse. The line of play will be bounded throughout the entire circuit by the woods, on the one side, and by the main ditch, which will run on a line about 100 yards from the woods and form the inner boundary of the circle. Cross ditches and earth banks will form the hazards, for the most part. Another ditch will be cut through the "savanna" from end to end, into which all the drains will flow. The meadow is the highest land, and, with a floodgate to ward off the inflowing tide, there will be a constant flow into the Atlantic. The ocean is in view from many of the tees and greens. The "savanna" is really an oval a mile and a half long and averaging a mile wide. The women's course will cross and re-cross the central ditch, and also be diversified by bunkers. The soil is a rich loam, with traces of sand, and, when the meadow grass is mowed, Dunn believes it will grow a fine, thick*

## The Other Tale

*turf. The present nine-hole course will be used this winter. Dunn has staked out the new courses and the ditch lines, and, should all go well, he believes that the "savanna" will be transformed into one of the grandest golfing grounds in the country by next autumn. (16 January 1898, p. 8)*

## Untold Tales

The *Sun's* story is not quite *Macbeth's* "tale, / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing." Rather than signifying nothing, it signifies much, but jumbles it all together: it does not tell of events fully, or discretely, or in the right order.

From the *Sun's* (which is implicitly Dunn's) account of matters as they stood at the beginning of January of 1898, I note several important points about Dunn's activities in 1897:

*Dunn was invited by the Club to visit Jekyll Island to identify a location for a new golf course.*

*To identify a location for the golf course was not easy and required thorough inspection of the island.*

*Dunn presented plans for two golf courses on the "savanna," one for men and one for women.*

*The Club challenged Dunn to prove that the savanna location was viable given that it was prone to flooding at high tides.*

*Dunn spent a week drawing up plans for controlling water-flow by drainage ditches and a floodgate.*

*Dunn re-presented his plans, as amended.*

*Dunn's plans indicated a completion date in the autumn of 1898.*

*The Club decided that it was not willing to forego golf from January to April of 1898.*

*The Club and Dunn agreed to address this problem by a "temporary arrangement": laying-out a nine-hole course on the old hunting grounds north of the Maurice cottage.*

*Dunn was engaged as designer and builder for courses on the "savanna" and on the open ground north of the Maurice cottage.*

*Dunn completed the "temporary" nine-hole golf course by the end of 1897.*

## Untold Tales

We know from the story in the *New York Sun* that as of the middle of January of 1898, Dunn expected later in 1898 to build an eighteen-hole course for men and a nine-hole course for women on the “savanna.”

## Two Visits

We can infer from this information that Dunn made at least two visits to Jekyll Island.

His scouting out of the location for the new Jekyll Island golf course must have preceded not only the building of the temporary course, but also the very determination that a temporary golf course would be needed. Only if the golf course planned by the architect would take longer to open for play than the Club was willing to wait would the question of the need for a temporary golf course even arise.

We know that when in 1897 the Club invited Dunn to draw up plans for a golf course, it would certainly not have been clear either to the Club or to Dunn that the plan he would draw up would take more than six months to complete. As we have seen, in the 1890s, a golf course laid out by Dunn was often ready-for-play within a single season. This was the case at the very highly regarded Westbrook Golf Club, where Dunn had built a golf course from scratch between March and July of 1895: he put in miles of water pipes, built a large number of hazards, and had the course seeded and the grass grown ready for play by mid-summer. In 1897, the very year that the Jekyll Island Club engaged him, the president of Whitehouse Knolls Golf Club in Poughkeepsie, New York, visited Dunn in New York City in February and engaged him to lay out links in Poughkeepsie as soon as weather permitted. At the beginning of May, Dunn visited Poughkeepsie: “Willie Dunn in Town: He Lays Out Whitehouse Knoll Golf Links” (*Poughkeepsie Eagle News* [5 May 1897, p. 6]). The course was opened for play before the end of the summer, and at the beginning of the fall, Dunn invited the Lenox Links club pro Bernard Nichols to the newly name Knollwood Country Club for a celebrated match-play event to mark the official opening of the new course.

In cases where club members could not wait for the scheduled completion of their new golf course, temporary courses were indeed built. Recall that at Philadelphia in the fall of 1896, the Tucker brothers set up a temporary golf course while grass grew on the new seven-hole golf course they had just laid out.

The decision to build a temporary nine-hole course at Jekyll Island would have been made only after Dunn had presented his plans for his two “savanna” courses to the Club, and only after the Club had decided in favor of building its golf courses there (rather than as had been anticipated earlier in the year – much to Dean Hoffman’s chagrin at the time – on the old hunting grounds), and only after it became evident that the savanna courses would not be ready for play until the 1899 season (unlike a course on

## Two Visits

the old hunting ground, which clearly would have taken less time to build and could have been in play from the start of the 1898 season – as a nine-hole course subsequently was).

## Scouting Jekyll Island Golf Sites

From his two accounts of his work on the island, we can put together a good idea of what Dunn did on his first visit.

We read in the 1898 *Sun* article that “It was a hard problem to find a suitable place for the full course, for the island consists mainly of barren sand and shells. Dunn fixed on a meadow of coarse salt-water grass, surrounded by trees, known on the island as the ‘savanna.’”

Dunn was much more expansive about the “hard problem” of finding a suitable place for the golf course in his recollection of the experience almost thirty-seven years later in his *Golf Illustrated* essay of 1934:

*It was a wild, swampy place, covered with tall, rank marsh grass, and the trees were festooned with grey Spanish moss. All kinds of game lived there: ducks, geese, deer, foxes, several varieties of fish, alligators, and wild pigs. I remember the pigs especially, because the only way we could get about certain parts of the island was to follow along their trails. The spot selected for the course was near the center of the island. It was rolling, but fairly level, sloping toward the center like a huge saucer. The grass was so thick and tall I could not see the ground and did not know whether it was swampy or firm. I took a long bamboo pole and followed along the various pig-paths, poking the stick into the grass every few feet to see if the earth was hard. It was all fairly dry, however, and when I got near the center, I found a stream of clear running water, so I knew the place was well drained. Walking along this stream, I just missed tripping over an alligator which was dozing in the sun. The alligator started threshing about and so startled me that I ran blindly through the grass back to the higher ground. (25)*

We can see from both of Dunn’s accounts of his first visit to the island that it had indeed taken quite some time to find a suitable location for the golf course. There was extensive travel around the island to identify the best location for a golf course. To cover all areas, even if only to disqualify most of them as potential sites for a golf course, would have taken many days. The building of as many as nine different golf courses on Jekyll Island since the mid-1890s (at five or six different locations) shows that Dunn had many options to consider – and many decisions to make – with regard to the question of where he would build his golf course. Sorting through his options will have taken time.

## Scouting Jekyll Island Golf Sites

Given the thoroughness of Dunn's survey of the entire island for possible golf course sites, one presumes that he included the area north of Hollybourne Cottage in his considerations. On the one hand, a designer ideally needed to present several options to a Club (ranging from the more expensive option the designer might prefer to the less expensive option that a Club committee might prefer), and laying out a course on the relatively open ground of the old hunting grounds would be the quickest and least expensive option (as events would subsequently prove). Felling trees and blasting out stumps and roots (as Dunn had just done at Ardsley) was expensive, for instance, and so a golf course designer was always interested in areas free of trees. On the other hand, the Club talk during the 1897 season had been of a golf course laid out on the old hunting grounds north of the clubhouse (hence Dean Hoffman's alarm), so it seems likely that even before Dunn set out on his own exploration of the island he would have been apprised by the Club of its prevailing ideas about the old hunting grounds when it explained generally what it had in mind.

This three-mile long strip of mostly open ground was relatively flat compared to the saucer shape of the savanna. Dunn might not have preferred flat land for a golf course, but he was quite experienced in developing golf courses on such land. At both Westbrook in the spring of 1895 and Lakewood in the fall of 1893, he had shown himself adept at introducing artificial hazards to provide challenges on flat fields.



*Figure 47 Chased here by a bull in 1893, Dunn designed a nine-hole course on flat land for the Golf Club of Lakewood. On the right side of the photograph are visible the earth walls that he built, with sand pits on the green side of them, to challenge golfers. The open ground running north of Hollybourne Cottage on Jekyll Island was similarly flat.*

But once Dunn ambitiously conceived the possibility of building on the savanna a creatively-designed twenty-seven-hole complex – perhaps spurred on by the thought that he might have just as much money backing a Jekyll Island project as had backed the Ardsley adventure – he would have lost interest

in the area where he subsequently built the temporary nine-hole course because there was no way of putting twenty-seven holes in this area. Still, he would have retained from his original assessment of the island's golf course possibilities his awareness of how golf holes could be laid out north of the Maurice cottage.

As shown by so much of his work elsewhere at this time – as at Baltimore in March of 1897 – he seems to have been able quite quickly to design and lay out a nine-hole course on such land.

## Showing the Club

Dunn must have made a presentation of his plans to the Club subsequent to his first visit to the island, rather than on the island itself during his visit. If he had been on the island during the season of 1897 and been able to conduct there and then his back-and-forth discussions with the club, there would have been every expectation that the course could have been completed by the fall – just as a golf course was in fact built precisely one year later between May and October of 1898.

Whether he submitted his plans via a letter and accompanying drawings or via a personal presentation to the relevant committee is not clear. But part of the article in the *Sun* reads as though Dunn may have spoken to the reporter in terms of the presentation he might have made to the Club as part of his “sales pitch”: “The first tee will be about 300 yards from the clubhouse. The line of play will be bounded throughout the entire circuit by the woods, on one side, and by the main ditch, which will ... form the inner boundary of the circle. Cross ditches and earth banks will form the hazards.... The ocean is in view from many of the tees and greens.” The conclusion to the article is the same as the conclusion to his sales pitch: “should all go well, ... the ‘savanna’ will be transformed into one of the grandest golfing grounds in the country by next autumn” (16 January 1898, p. 8).

At some point, Dunn seems to have received push-back with regard to whether his chosen site was viable, given potential drainage and flooding problems. Such questions presumably led to the week of work that he mentions. Clearly he had to supplement his proposal with further detailed plans in order for it to be accepted. We read in the 1898 newspaper article that “After a week of planning he was able to show the club that by a system of ditching and the placing of a dike and floodgate the meadow could easily be drained, so that the surface water would float into the ocean, and there would be a fine ground ready for a circular eighteen-hole course, with the women’s course in the middle field.”

But then there seems to have been further push-back about the timeline to completion. The Club was not willing to forego golf during the 1898 season. Again, there must have been some back-and-forth. The problem, we know, was addressed by the “temporary arrangement” of a nine-hole layout north of the Maurice home.

Dunn’s negotiations with the Club about these matters must have taken time – and not just the week he mentions that it took to think through the drainage problem. Whether the back-and-forth between Dunn and the Club was conducted via the post office or via presentations to the Executive Committee, it

would all have taken weeks – or even months if Dunn’s week of work regarding ditch and floodgate engineering had actually required him to return to the island to have a proper survey of the savanna conducted.

Note also that it was only after he came up with his system of drainage ditches that he could have devised his final hole routing plans in relation to these ditches:

*The line of play will be bounded throughout the entire circuit by the woods, on the one side, and by the main ditch, which will run on a line about 100 yards from the woods and form the inner boundary of the circle. Cross ditches and earth banks will form the hazards, for the most part. Another ditch will be cut through the “savanna” from end to end, into which all the drains will flow.... The women’s course will cross and re-cross the central ditch. (Sun [NY], 16 January 1898, p. 16)*

Each layout is oriented with regard to these ditches. There is no final sales pitch to the Club without this explanation of the routing of the holes in relation to the ditches and without his explanation of the extra serviceability of these ditches as strategic hazards.

After all this, Dunn went back out onto the savanna and staked it all out: “Dunn has staked out the new courses and the ditch lines” (Sun [NY], 16 January 1898, p. 8).

So we have good reason to assume that the process by which Dunn and the Club agreed to a contract with regard to his designing and building of the “savanna” courses and the nine-hole “temporary arrangement” was relatively long and complicated, involving at least two visits to the island.

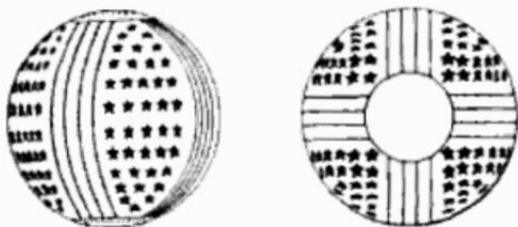
## The Timing of a “Temporary Arrangement”

When might Dunn have built the temporary nine-hole course?

A consideration of Dunn’s whereabouts throughout 1897 as tracked by newspaper reports shows a limited number of weeks when he could have undertaken the scouting work, surveying work, and construction work described above.

During the winter of 1897, Dunn was busy in New York until March. He remained the head pro at Ardsley, where he was completing the additional nine holes that he laid out to bring the course up to eighteen holes. He was still playing golf through the winter, and doing so at a high level: he set a course record in January at the Westchester golf course. He was also in full entrepreneurial flow. He ran a club-making company in New York City (in partnership with his nephew John Duncan Dunn). He designed and developed a golf ball that winter with a special “stars-and-stripes” design, patenting it in the spring.

27,441. GOLF-BALL. WILLIE DUNN, Dobbs Ferry, N. Y. Filed  
May 15, 1897. Serial No. 836,800. Term of patent 7 years.



. Claim.—The design for a ball, substantially as represented in the drawings and herein described.



Figure 48 Patent application for, and photograph of, “Willie Dunn’s Stars and Stripes” golf ball, 1897.

He ran an indoors winter golf school illuminated by electric lights. He set up an indoor golf course at the Sportsmen’s Show at Madison Square Garden. *Golf* announced in February that “The Country Club, of Elmira, has secured a plot of ground adjoining the club house, on which Willie Dunn has laid-out a nine-hole course” (vol 2 no 2 [February 1898], p. 48). In February, E.N. Howell of Poughkeepsie travelled to Ardsley to engage Dunn to lay out a nine-hole course in Poughkeepsie “as soon as the weather permits” (*Poughkeepsie Eagle-News*, 22 February 1897, p. 6).

Dunn was clearly extremely busy in New York from the beginning of January to the end of February.

In the first week of March, Dunn left New York. The New York *Sun* announced on March 1st, 1897, that “Willie Dunn ... has finished the work on the full eighteen-hole course at the Ardsley Casino” and that he “will not remain longer, it is said, in charge of the links”: “Dunn will go to Baltimore this week to lay out links for the Roland Park Company” (p. 9). It took him about a week to complete the layout: we read in the Baltimore *Sun* on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1897, that “Willie Dunn, champion golfer, 1894, yesterday completed the new links at Roland Park” (p. 6).

I can find no information about Dunn’s location in any newspapers between the middle of March and the beginning of May, at which point we learn that the weather has finally permitted him to begin work at Poughkeepsie (*Poughkeepsie Eagle-News*, 5 May 1897, p. 6). Between the middle of March and the first week of May, he does not seem to have played in any golf tournaments or to have played in any match-play contests with fellow professional golfers, nor is he recorded as laying out any new golf courses.

Was he trekking along the wild pig trails of Jekyll Island at this time?

He may have gone right down to Jekyll Island at the end of the 1897 season in response to a call from Hyde.

Similarly, after the reference to him in the Poughkeepsie newspaper in the first weeks of May, there is not another reference as to where he can be found until mid-summer. We learn then that he has planned a training programme to prepare himself for September’s U.S. Open: “Willie Dunn will ... be a prominent factor this year [in the U.S. Open]. The tour he has planned among the clubs in Connecticut and Massachusetts will put him in fine condition for the championship. It will be the first time he has trained for the event” (*Sun* [New York], 14 July 1897, p. 4). A September newspaper reference to this tour makes it clear that he had been on the road for quite some time between the two newspaper references to his activities, playing a series of exhibition matches against New England club professional golfers:

*Willie Dunn, Jr, has just returned from a long golfing trip. Some of the special features included a match at the Misquamicut Golf Club, Watch Hill, when Dunn beat Anderson, the local man, by 6 up and 5 to play; a match at Seapuit Golf Club, Osterville, Mass., when Dunn defeated Will Crawford, who is a nephew of Ramsay Hunter, the well-known Sandwich professional, in three out of a series of five*

## The Timing of a “Temporary Arrangement”

*matches, and a few days ago Dunn played a match with Singer at the Larchmont Golf Club, in which the four nine-hole rounds were made in the following order:*

	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>
<i>Dunn</i>	36	39	36	39
<i>Singer</i>	46	45	46	44

*These figures constitute records. (Sun [New York], 13 September 1897, p. 9)*

Was Dunn at Jekyll Island – perhaps for a second time – sometime after his construction work at Poughkeepsie in May and sometime before he set off on his long “beat a local pro” money-making tour sometime in July or August?

We know that shortly after this tour ended Dunn went to Chicago to play in the U.S. Open from September 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>. Dunn returned to the Northeast for a contest at Lenox Links with its club pro Bernard Nichols – a match that had been hyped in the newspapers since the beginning of September. This was the first of two match-play contests between them. Dunn won the first, but he lost the second, played at Knollwood Country Club on September 30<sup>th</sup>. In the *Detroit Free Press* of October 10<sup>th</sup>, we read that Dunn had “recently visited Detroit” and assured prospective golf developers that they were blessed with land that could be developed into one of the best golf courses in the United States (10 October 1897, p. 15). During the last week of October, Dunn was in Elmira, New York, laying out a golf course, assuring the citizens of the town that he found “the Country Club’s grounds admirably adapted for golf links” (*Star-Gazette* [Elmira, New York], 28 October 1897, p. 7).

As of the beginning of November, there are no more newspaper references to Dunn until the middle of December.

Had he gone south to Jekyll Island?

In December, over the course of two weeks, it was given out in the newspapers that he could be expected to take part in one of the biggest professional golf competitions hitherto staged in the northeast:

*Lakewood, Dec. 17 – The golf match scheduled for to-day was a series for the cup offered by Mrs. George J. Gould, and the course of the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club was in prime condition. The result was that the competition had a close*

*and sporty finish. Jasper Lynch played in the series for the first time, and captured first place, but his net card was only one stroke better than C.T. Richardson’s. The latter defeated Messrs [A.B.] Claflin and Coles, who tied for third place, by only one stroke ....*

*The Golf Committee of the club has decided upon a New Year’s event which should prove to be a drawing card. It will be an open handicap tournament for professionals, in which the club offers a purse of \$150. This will be divided into four prizes for the best quartet in the field. That the game will be a fast one is apparent, for among those who have announced their intention of competing are Horace and Harry Rawlins, Willie Dunn, Willie and Samuel Tucker, Willie Norton, H. Way, and Fitzjohn. All of these are in the front rank of professional golfers. (Sun [New York], 18 December 1897, p. 9)*

Up to the very eve of the tournament, organizers at Lakewood were still confident that Dunn would be a participant in the tournament:

*The outlook is that there will be twelve to fifteen starters in the professional tournament at the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club at Lakewood on New Year’s Day. The two Tuckers. Willie Dunn, Bertie Way, Willie Anderson, and the two Rawlins, Val Fitzjohn, Griffiths and Straith are among the sure starters, while James Foulis, open champion of 1896, may also start (Sun [New York], 29 December 1897, p. 4).*

As of December 29<sup>th</sup>, Dunn is still one of the “sure starters” for a tournament that starts in two days’ time.

The very next item in the newspaper was about the “busy and enjoyable day on the links of the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club” in relation to “the match in the Claflin cup series,” in which “Arthur B. Claflin” was himself a competitor (*Sun* [New York], 29 December 1897, p. 4). If he had had any idea that Dunn would not be able to play in the big tournament, surely he would have communicated this information to his friends on the tournament committee.

New Year’s Day arrives: “The more important of the golf competitions to be held to-day is the professional match at the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club of Lakewood. There are old rivalries as well as new ones to be settled, and each player will do his best in the hope of winning” (*Sun* [New York],

## The Timing of a “Temporary Arrangement”

1 January 1898, p.4). The newspaper then provided a list of the twenty-three professionals entered in the tournament, including “Willie Dunn, ex-champion” (p. 4).

But Dunn is a no-show at this event, and there is never any explanation as to why:

*The professional golf tournament, which the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club of Lakewood arranged as a holiday attraction for its members and their guests yesterday, brought out some close, energetic, and exciting play. It was the first contest in which professional talent figured exclusively that has been held in the East since 1894. The prize offered was a purse of \$150, 50 per cent of which went to the winner, 25 per cent to the runner up, 15 per cent to the third man, and 10 per cent to the fourth. The contest ended in a tie between Val Fitzjohn and his brother Ed, both of the Ardsley Golf Club. The play-off was at one hole, and resulted in victory for Val. Willie Dunn, the ex-champion of 1894, was entered, but did not appear. (Sun [New York], 2 January 1898, p. 8)*

Clafin was no doubt in the gallery at this tournament. He looked forward to this sort of New Year’s golfing event at Lakewood: recall that he had followed the New Year’s match involving Dunn’s nephew Samuel Tucker and the home club pro at the Golf Club of Lakewood in January of 1895. Both of Clafin’s Ocean County pros were entered in this event: Harry and Horace Rawlins (the latter of which Clafin would send down to Jekyll Island to work on the golf course there at the end of the year). There is no way that Clafin would have missed this event.

When Dunn did not show up, Clafin must have been surprised. But I expect that he will have assumed that Dunn had been delayed at Jekyll Island while laying out a temporary nine-hole course there on the old hunting grounds.

My hypothesis is that whatever the sequence of back-and-forth negotiations that led the Club to hire Dunn to build its golf courses, and however long that process took, and however many times Dunn may have had to visit the island (perhaps once in the spring, once in the summer, and a final visit in the fall), Dunn was at Jekyll Island in December laying out the temporary nine-hole course.

The work took longer than expected, so he missed the big Lakewood tournament.

## Harder Than Expected

The day before the *Sun* article about his work at Jekyll Island was published, Dunn was on the afternoon and evening of Saturday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, one of the many prominent sportsmen in attendance at New York's Madison Square Garden in connection with the Sportsmen's Show. At Madison Square Garden the year before, Dunn had laid out an indoor golf course, 75 feet long and 30 feet wide. He may have done so again in January of 1898 upon his return from Jekyll Island.

Perhaps it was at the Sportsmen's Show that Dunn told the *Sun* reporter about golf developments at the Sportsmen's Club on Jekyll Island. The information that we find in the article seems to have come from a conversation with Dunn. The reporter writes that Dunn's recently-completed nine-hole course begins at "the Morris home." This is Charles Stewart Maurice's cottage, a building known since as Hollybourne Cottage. Dunn had clearly never seen the Maurice name written down, but rather had merely heard it spoken. So the *Sun* reporter cannot know that his transcription "Morris" of the name that Dunn has pronounced is incorrect.

Perhaps the conversation with the reporter even preceded the Sportsmen's Show, for the article uses a "cut" diagram to illustrate graphically Dunn's design for the course of the Elmira Country Club that he had laid out at the end of October. Before or after his talk with Dunn, the reporter will have had to have asked Dunn to give him a copy the Elmira layout. Bearing in mind also that train travel back to New York from Jekyll Island took more than twenty-four hours, it would seem Dunn had been back from Jekyll Island for several days – perhaps a week – before he showed up at the Sportsmen's Show on January 15<sup>th</sup>.

We read as follows in the January issue of *Golf*: "Willie Dunn leaves at the first of the year to lay out some courses in the South, and he is then contemplating a trip into the West" (1898, vol II no 1, p. 48). Note that this item was written sometime in December. It is clear from other items in the January issue of *Golf* that the editor has received much of the information that he publishes in that issue from communications received in his office throughout December of 1897. He writes, for instance, "I hear that The Country Club [in Jacksonville] has a membership of over one hundred .... The finishing touches are now being put to the new club-house, and New Year's Day, 1898, will witness the formal opening" (p. 16), so he is clearly writing well before the end of 1897.



*Figure 49 William Gilbert van Tassel Sutphen, editor of Golf, circa 1900.*

As we know, what the editor William Gilbert van Tassel Sutphen announced here regarding Dunn's intentions for January of 1898 proved premature and inaccurate.

Sutphen seems to have published information about Dunn's plans that Dunn himself had given him, presumably after the December issue of *Golf* had been sent to press sometime in November. All sorts of professional golfers visited the office of editor Sutphen to give him news of their accomplishments and plans just as Dunn had done.

In the item about Dunn, there is no mention of the big professional tournament at Lakewood, so perhaps when Dunn talked to Sutphen it had not yet been announced. Dunn does not tell Sutphen that he will be in the South during December, nor that his work in the South will be for the Jekyll Island

Sportsmen's Club.

My assumption is that Dunn's contract with the club had not yet been finalized when he talked to Sutphen at the end of November or beginning of December. Never one to miss an opportunity to advertise his business, Dunn would have dropped the name of the Jekyll Island Club into his conversation with Sutphen if he had been able to. The most he could do at that point – or perhaps the most he could allow Sutphen to do at that point – was mention a likely trip South in the New Year.

I suspect that Dunn found that quite unexpectedly he had to visit Jekyll Island one last time in December to clinch the deal with the Club, part of which involved a hurried laying-out of a nine-hole "temporary arrangement" on the old hunting grounds north of the Maurice home.

Everything involved in his negotiations with the Jekyll Island Club had been harder than expected, and so was his work on the island in December. Consequently, Dunn missed the Lakewood tournament, and rather than heading South at the beginning of the year, and then perhaps going West, he went South in the spring, and did not go West at all.

## The 1897 Willie Dunn Course

In the already quoted article in the *Sun* from January of 1898, we learn that there was already a nine-hole golf course in play at Jekyll Island and that Dunn had designed it: "At present a nine-hole course is in use .... The present nine-hole course will be used this winter."

Dunn was not shy about this temporary course. He cannot have downplayed it to the reporter, who promotes it as Dunn himself might have promoted it in an advertisement: "The course was planned by Willie Dunn, the maker of the Ardsley, Westbrook, and many other links."

Note that we have a scorecard for this golf course as it existed a few years later in the early 1900s.

<b>JEKYL ISLAND CLUB</b>																				
																	DATE <i>14<sup>th</sup> March</i> 190 <i>0</i>			
This card measures six inches diagonally from corner to corner																				
Player .....										MEDAL PLAY HANDICAP						LENGTH <del>2078</del> YDS				
Opponent .....										MATCH PLAY HANDICAP 3-4 THAT OF MEDAL PLAY						BOGIE <del>4</del>				
* FRACTIONS OF 1-2 OR MORE COUNT AS 1																				
*										TOTAL OUT										TOTAL IN
HOLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Distance	250	200	200	200	350	300	450	150	240		250	200	200	200	350	300	450	150	240	
Bogie	4	4	4	4	5	5	6	3	4		4	4	4	4	5	5	6	3	4	
Player																				
Opponent																				
Gross 9 Holes										Player		Opp't		*IN this line put a mark over holes where strokes are received. If hole won put X. If lost put —. If hole halved put O						
Less Handicap																				
Net Score																				
																	SCORER			

Figure 50 Golf card for the Jekyll Island Club, Woodruff Family fonds, Brock University, St Catherines, Ontario.

The course had nine holes, ranging in length from 150 yards to 450 yards, for a total of 2,340 yards.

## The 1897 Willie Dunn Course

Such a length was quite typical for nine-hole courses being developed in the 1890s and early 1900s.

The nine-hole course that Horace Rawlins designed for the new Ocean County Hunt and Country Club in 1896 – the one on which was played the big professional tournament that Dunn missed – was 2,532 yards long, with no hole shorter than 200 yards and no hole longer than 375 yards. So there is no reason to think that the “temporary” 1897 course designed for the Jekyll Island Club by Dunn was inadequate with regard to its length. Certainly its longest hole made sure that there was more variety in the play of the Jekyll Island course than was the case at the Rawlins Ocean County course.

Note also that eleven years later, in 1909, when Jock Hutchinson, the professional golfer at the Carnegies’ Stafford Place Golf Links on Cumberland Island was asked to submit a design plan in competition with Donald Ross’s design plan for a new eighteen-hole Jekyll Island golf course, one of his nine-hole layouts was just 2,390 yards in length.

It is also important to remember that when this golf course was laid out in 1897, consistently driving a gutta-percha golf ball over 200 yards was something only the best golfers could do. When the golf writer for the New York *Sun* named the professional golfers most likely to have a chance of winning the US Open in 1897, he reserved his final comment to name as a dark horse Alfred H. Ricketts, an English professional golfer situated in upstate New York, who was “said ... to have a great chance” because he had recently been observed in a demonstration of driving prowess to “drive 100 of 114 balls 200 yards or better” (30 August 1897, p. 9). Earlier the same year, it was observed of a round played at his home Oakdale Golf Club that Walter J. Travis, who would three years later win the U.S. amateur Championship, “had made some long drives, one being 175 yards from the last tee to the last green” (*Sun* [New York], 1 March 1897, p. 9).

## About “Bogey”

Note also that the number under the yardage for each hole is the “bogey” or bogey score.

For the first 500 years of golf history, there was no such thing as a par score for a golf hole or for a golf course. The goal of the golfer with regard to any particular hole was not to complete it in a particular number of strokes regarded as the theoretically ideal or normal number. One simply aimed to take as few strokes as possible.

So it was until the 1890s.

Then, as Robert Browning points out in *A History of Golf: The Royal and Ancient Game* (1955; reprinted Pampamoa Press, 2018), the concept of “ground score” was invented. At the golf club in Coventry, England, in 1890, the Club Secretary worked out a score for each hole, and thereby for a complete round of golf on the course, that first-rate golfers would achieve if they made no mistakes: he called it the “ground score.” His purpose was to create an ideal score that club members could try to match in their individual rounds of golf: a form of match play for a single golfer.

Within a year, the idea of establishing a “ground score” was adopted by the Club Secretary at the golf club in Great Yarmouth, England. There, one of the Club Secretary’s regular playing partners reacted in jocular frustration to his failure to match the “ground score” of the club’s theoretically ideal player: “This player of yours is a regular Bogey man!”

He was alluding to a song popular in the early 1890s, “Hush! Hush! Hush! Here comes the Bogeyman!” whose lyrics about a mischievous, timorous, hard-to-catch goblin or bogey ran as follows:

Children, have you ever met the Bogeyman before?

No, of course you haven't for

You're much too good, I'm sure;

Don't you be afraid of him if he should visit you,

He's a great big coward, so I'll tell you what to do:

Hush, hush, hush, here comes the Bogeyman,

Don't let him come too close to you,

He'll catch you if he can.

## About “Bogey”

Just pretend that you're a crocodile  
And you will find that Bogeyman will run away a mile.

The popularity of the club member’s witticism meant that the “ground score” at Great Yarmouth immediately became known as the “Bogey” score, and the practise of establishing a ground score and naming it the Bogey score spread like wildfire as Great Yarmouth club members played other golf courses throughout southern England. Soon, golfers referred to the ideal player whose score they were trying to match as “Mr. Bogey.”

The Club Secretary at the military’s United Services Club in Gosport added one more wrinkle to this practice in 1892. Since all members of this club were required to have a military rank, their opponent could not be a civilian: so golfers at this club replaced “Mr. Bogey” with “Colonel Bogey.” The latter was made famous in the “Colonel Bogey March,” the British army bandmaster who wrote it having been inspired by a golfer who, rather than warning other golfers of a wayward ball with a shout of “fore,” instead loudly whistled two notes: the two notes of the descending musical phrase that begins each line of the “Colonel Bogey March” melody.

When Jekyll Island head pro Karl Keffer played golf in Ottawa in 1919 with the Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VIII), the newspaper reported on the score achieved by the Prince as follows: he “equalled Col. Bogey practically for every one of the 18 holes played yesterday with Karl Keffer” (*Ottawa Citizen*, 2 September 1919, p. 11).

By the early 1900s, problems began to emerge regarding Bogey scores. What criteria should be used to determine the Bogey score for a hole?

In the United States, the Ladies Golf Association began searching in 1893 for a way of applying a standard in the determination of how many strokes it should take to complete a golf hole. This was to be a standard applicable no matter where the golf hole was found – regardless of the golf course, regardless of the country, regardless of the golf club’s traditions or wishes. The idea was to determine a proper score for every hole by means of its measured length.

The United States Golf Association took up the idea and decided upon its standard in 1911: all holes up to 225 yards in length should take three strokes, all holes between 226 yards and 425 yards should take four strokes, all holes between 426 yards and 600 yards should take five strokes, and any hole longer than 601 yards should take 6 strokes.

One can see that the Bogey scores of the Jekyll Island scorecard above were quite different from the standards that the U.S.G.A. would adopt: three holes of less than 226 yards are given a Bogey of four (rather than the three stipulated for such holes in 1911); holes of 300 yards and 350 yards are each given a Bogey of five (instead of the four stipulated in 1911). The 450-yard hole is given a bogey of six, instead of five. On only three holes of the Jekyll Island course are the Bogey scores in accord with the U.S.G.A. standards of 1911.

For these universal standards scores for holes of particular lengths, American golf associations borrowed a term that traders in the stock market had long used to name the proper or normal value for a stock between the extremes of its high and low prices over time: "par."



*Figure 51 Young Tom Morris wears the Open Championship belt given to him to keep after his fourth victory in a row, leading to its replacement by today's Claret Jug.*

This term "par" had been used in a similar context once before in golf history, but its use did not catch on.

At the 1870 Open Championship at Prestwick, Scotland, a golf writer reporting on the tournament had asked two golf professionals familiar with the twelve-hole golf course what they thought the winning score for the tournament might be. They worked through a theoretical playing of each hole and suggested that a perfect score for a golfer who made no mistakes would be forty-nine. The golf writer for the first time invoked the stock-exchange metaphor to inform readers that forty-nine strokes would be "par" for the Prestwick course.

In the event, with a score two under the theoretically "perfect score" that the writer called "par," twenty-year-old "Young" Tom Morris won the third of the four Open Championships he would win in a row.

Latent here in 1870 was the concept of a "ground score" and the possibility of using the word "par" to indicate it, but nothing came of it.

Despite the American declaration in the early 1900s in favour of standard par scores, golf clubs in Britain and Ireland maintained their use of the term Bogey, and individual golf clubs maintained their traditions of establishing their own Bogey scores according to the whims of the membership. Where club members found a 400-yard hole very difficult to play, for instance, they were free (perhaps in service of

## About “Bogey”

nothing more than the vanity of influential club members) to declare its Bogey score to be five, rather than four (as according to the American standard).

By the early 1900s, the scores of the best golfers in the game – both professionals and amateurs – were coming down dramatically. Golf swings were improving as tournament play increased at amateur and professional levels, allowing golfers to learn from each other better swing techniques in general and better swings for particular shots, to say nothing of better strategies for playing golf with the swings and shots that golfers now had in their arsenal. Furthermore, the new Haskell wound-rubber-cored ball (invented in 1898) was widely used by 1900 and was being hit about twenty percent further than the gutta-percha ball.

In the United States, where the practices of golf clubs in converting from their old Bogey scores to the new standard par scores was in flux, the best golfers regularly began to complete many of the golf holes graded with the old Bogey score in one stroke less than that score. So the terms “par” and “Bogey” began to diverge in American golf, as the best American golfers began to use the word “par” in reference to the perfect number of strokes for a hole and the word “Bogey” for one stroke more than the perfect number.

The 1900 and 1901 U.S.G.A. American amateur champion Walter J. Travis explained his understanding of the two terms in 1902:

*Par golf, it may be remarked, is perfect golf, determined according to the distance of the holes and with two strokes allowed on each green, while bogey simply represents the score of a good player who occasionally makes a mistake, not very glaring, but sufficient to make a difference in the round of four or five strokes. Bogey is an elastic quantity, however, so much so, indeed, on some courses, as to furnish no true criterion of the game of the player who now and then beats the Colonel! (Practical Golf, p. 173)*

British golfers were understandably upset to learn how the word Bogey was coming to be used as a score meaning one stroke more than it took an American player to complete a hole!

By 1914, just before World War I broke out, many British golf writers began to agitate for adoption of the U.S.G.A. standards for determining the proper number of strokes for golf holes, but the war deferred further work on this idea. So it was not until 1925 that British and Irish golf Unions (as their golf associations are called) agreed to establish Standard Scratch Scores for all golf holes and golf courses.

## About Six Inches of Scorecard

Note also on the Jekyll Island Club scorecard above the indication that it measures six inches. This ready-to-hand six-inch ruler was necessary for adjudicating stymie situations.

A "stymie" was a part of match play when one golfer's ball sat on the green between the opponent's golf ball and the hole, such that Golfer A's ball blocked the hole for Golfer B's putt. Unless the two balls were within six inches of one another, the golf ball closer to the hole was not lifted. Golfer B was said to be "stymied."

The six-inch scorecard made adjudicating such situations easy and quick.



*Figure 52 Facing a stymie, the golfer chips his ball over the intervening ball and into the cup.*

The golfer whose ball was away could attempt either to hit down at an angle of forty-five degrees on his or her ball with the putter to pop the ball up into the air and over the interceding ball, or the golfer might chip the ball over the blocking ball with a lofted club – perhaps even knocking his ball into the hole. A golfer might even try to slice or hook a putt around the intervening ball.

If Golfer B hit the intervening ball of Golfer A, Golfer B played his or her ball wherever it ended up, but Golfer A had the option of playing from the new location of his or her ball, or replacing it at its original location.

You had to be careful, mind you, in trying to extricate yourself from the stymie: if your opponent was on the green in one shot and you accidentally knocked his or her

ball into the hole with your own putt, your opponent scored a one for the hole!

Stymies typically occurred by accident. Often, however, when lagging a long putt close to the hole, golfers would aim to leave their ball in a position to block their opponent's putt. That strategy was called "laying a stymie."

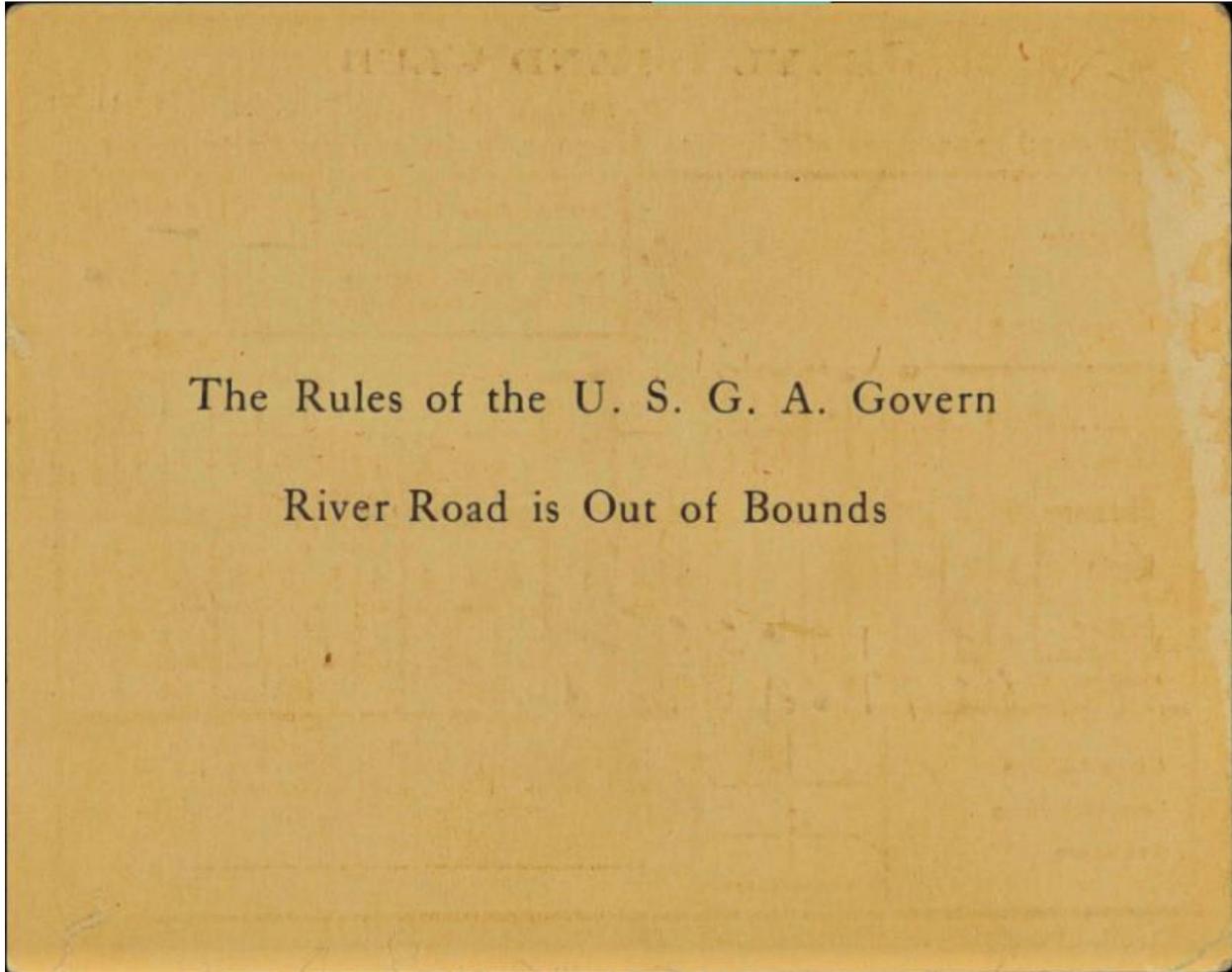
## About Six Inches of Scorecard

Stymies were part of golf from the time of the earliest written rules in 1744 when lifting one ball to allow another ball to be played was permitted only when the balls were touching. Lifting was extended in 1775 to include balls within six inches of one another.

Stymies remained part of match play until revisions to the Rules of Golf in the early 1950s.

## “Between the Morris Home and the Bridge”

Also printed on the scorecard, on its back, was a warning that “River Road is out of bounds.” We know, then, that the western boundary of the course was marked by River Road.



*Figure 53 Golf card for the Jekyll Island Club, Welland Family fonds, Brock University, St Catharines, Ontario.*

There was perhaps no official “out-of-bounds” along the east side of the golf course. Instead, the woods would have constituted a practical boundary.

We can also surmise that since it receives no mention at all, Old Plantation Road was regarded as “in play,” and perhaps constituted one of the “hazards” to be encountered on the course. In the 1890s, the kind of hazard that golfers expected to find on the golf course included things like roads that would not be tolerated today.

## “Between the Morris Home and the Bridge”

In 1895, Henry Howland (not the judge who was president of the Jekyll Island Club!) reviewed golf courses in the New York and New Jersey area for *Scribner's Magazine*: St Andrews “at Yonkers on the Hudson .... is an inland course of stone-wall hazards, rocky pastures bordered by ploughed fields and woods, and is prolific in those little hollows known as cuppie lies”; at Shinnecock Hills, “The hazards are mainly ... some stretches of sand, railroad embankment, and deep roads, that are tests of skill and temper”; the hazards at the Tuxedo Club include “hills, stone walls, railroad embankments lined with blast-furnace slag, apple trees, ... brook, boulders, and road”; “at the Essex County Club of Manchester-by-the-Sea,” “The hazards are nearly all natural, consisting of fences, barns, roadways ...” (May 1895, vol XVII no 5, pp. 531-33). In 1896, when the Kingston Golf Club of Ontario played a match against the Ottawa Golf Club on the latter’s course in Hull, Quebec (the club where Jekyll Island golf professional Karl Keffer would serve as professional for seven months a year from 1911 to 1942), the *Daily British Whig* noted that “the grounds were interesting and picturesque and several novelties were presented to the Kingston team in the shape of walls and old houses over which they had to play” (26 May 1896, p. 4).

To regard ploughed fields, fences, stone walls, old houses, barns, deep roads, and railroad embankments lined with blast-furnace slag as “natural” hazards defines the “natural” not just as what Mother Nature provided but also as whatever was on the land before the golf course was built. So Old Plantation Road would not have struck golfers in the late 1890s as either a very unusual or a particularly difficult hazard.

We know the boundary of the course on the west and east, and we know that the southern boundary was the Maurice property.

What was the northern boundary?

The *Sun* reporter says the course started at the “Morris home” – the reporter’s spelling here showing his misunderstanding of the name “Maurice” as Dunn had spoken it to him. When Dunn laid out his first nine-hole golf course on the island in 1897, Maurice’s Hollybourne Cottage was the last in the row of cottages north of the Clubhouse between River Road and Old Plantation Road. The photograph below shows the area north of Hollybourne Cottage as it appeared in 1911. Although, as we recall from a photograph above, the cottage had no trees around in when it was built in 1890, we can see below that many trees have grown tall and wide in the twenty-one years since, especially at Capatain Wyly Road.

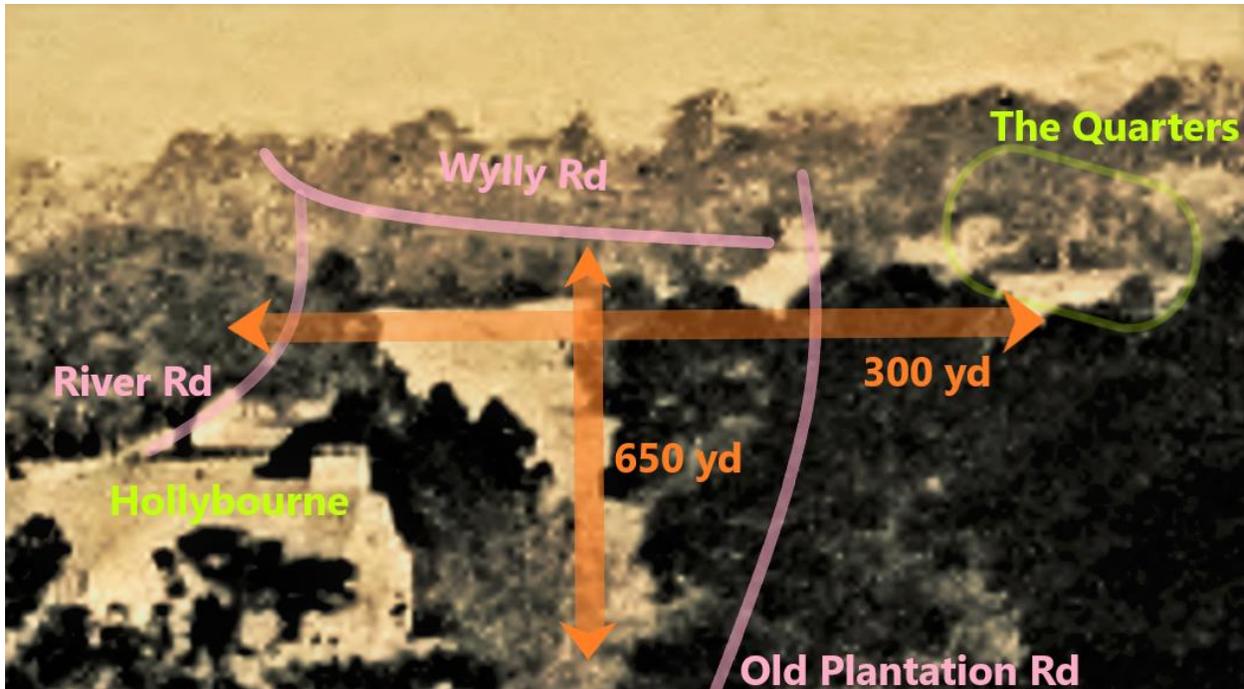


Figure 54 Detail from a photograph in Jekyll Island Club (1911).

One presumes that the area shown above is where Dunn laid out the first and last holes of his 1897 “temporary arrangement”: the open ground was about 650 yards from south to north, and about 300 yards from west to east. The first two holes of Dunn’s 1897 course added up to 450 yards in length (250 yards + 200 yards); the last two holes added up to 390 yards in length (150 yards + 240 yards). These four holes could easily have fit into the open ground north of Hollybourne Cottage bounded by Captain Wylly Road in the distance, River Road to the west, and “The Quarters” and the woods to the east.

Dunn indicated that the golf course stretched from the Maurice home up to “the bridge.” What bridge was this?

McEvers Bayard Brown had built a bridge to access the knoll by Jekyll Creek where he would build the first cottage on Jekyll Island in 1888. This bridge crossed a small creek that still flows into Jekyll Creek today. A map of the island published by the Jekyll Island Club sometime after 1928 shows this creek, and it suggests that there were probably two little bridges in a row on Old Plantation road to cross the two tributaries of this creek (which still exist today). Old Plantation Road swerved slightly to the east at this point, probably to make it easier to bridge the two little tributaries of the stream that it had to cross. These tributaries combined into one stream before they reached River Road and so caused a wider gap between the banks of this water course near Brown’s property, meaning that the bridge that Brown built had to be much more substantial than the ones on Old Plantation Road.

“Between the Morris Home and the Bridge”

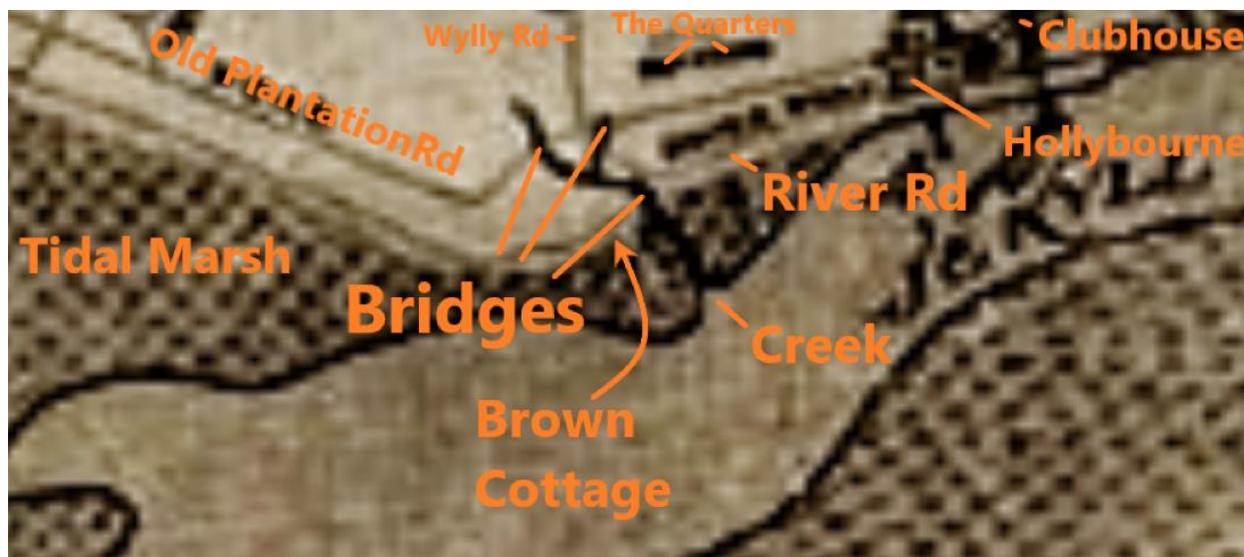


Figure 55 A detail from a post-1928 Jekyll Island Club map. On it are marked the locations of the bridges that enabled River Road and Old Plantation Road to cross a creek crossing the open ground between Hollybourne Cottage and Brown Cottage.

None of these bridges can be “the bridge” to which Dunn refers as the northern boundary of his golf course: there is not nearly enough room for Dunn’s nine-hole golf course in the space between Hollybourne Cottage and these bridges.

The bridge to which Dunn refers was probably located where River Road and Old Plantation Road cross a second creek. This creek still flows today, although it seldom ever appears on maps of the island.



Figure 56 Left: the creek approaches Old Plantation Road from the east; Center: the creek approaches River View Road at the bottom of the photograph from Old Plantation Road; Right: the creek crosses from River View Road under the bridge of the path along the tidal marsh shore.

Today, the creek crosses under Old Plantation Road and then under River View Road via culverts before emptying into the tidal marsh after crossing under a little footbridge that is part of the path along the island shore. In Dunn’s day, however, the creek was crossed by several bridges, and seems to have had a

road running alongside it from River Road to Old Plantation Road on both its north side and its south side.

We have seen the road that ran along the north side of this creek in the photograph above called “Jessamine Road” from *Jekyl Island Club* (1911). I associated the building visible on the north side of “Jessamine Road” with the gamekeeper’s compound. Recall that “Jessamine Road” was bounded on both its north side and its south side by a hedge (which had apparently been trimmed the day that the photograph was taken).

The same book presents a view of the road that parallels “Jessamine Road,” also running from River Road to Old Plantation Road, but on the south side of the creek.



*Figure 57 This photograph from Jekyl Island Club (1911) is captioned "View From Old Golf Field."*

The photograph above is captioned “View From Old Golf Field.” If I am correct in suggesting that the road in this photograph runs on an east-west axis, then the photographer stands at the northern limit of Dunn’s 1897 golf course.

“Between the Morris Home and the Bridge”

That the bridge in the photograph above crosses to “Jessamine Road” (as studied in the photograph above that shows a building along the north side of the road) is suggested by an enlargement of the area seen in the background of this photograph just over the bridge.



Figure 58 Detail from "View From Old Golf Field" in *Jekyll Island Club* (1911).

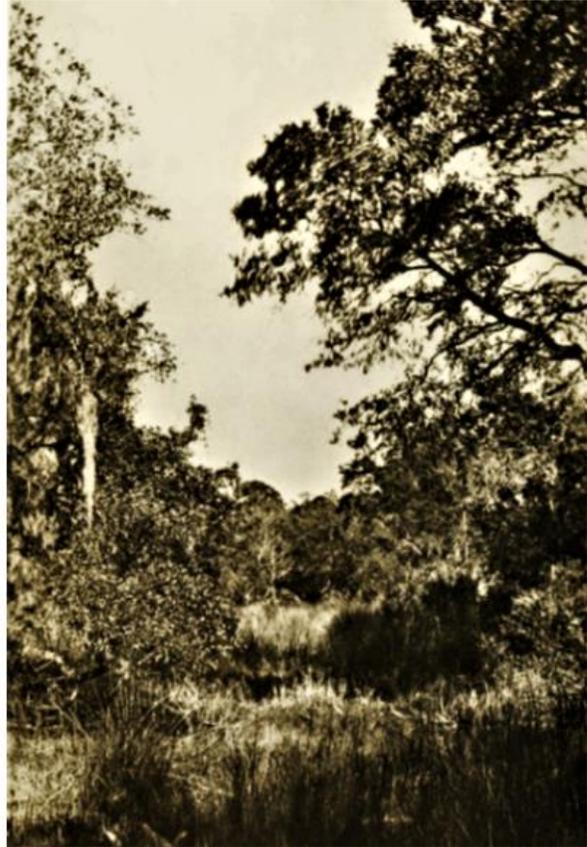
We can make out a road on the far side of the bridge that parallels the road on the near side, and we can make out a hedge that parallels the far road in question on the far side of it. Beyond the hedge and through several trees we can make out the vertical lines and rectangular shapes of windows or doors or columns, and perhaps even the hint of a roofline or gutter, that are part of a building. I judge this building to be near the building that we saw on the north side of “Jessamine Road.”

In Willie Dunn’s day, it is possible that the bridge in the photograph above was the only bridge over the creek at Jasmine Road – which would account for his description of his nine-hole golf course as having been laid out “between the Morris home and the bridge.”

If so, we can understand why there was a road on each side of the creek. Traffic coming along River Road would turn up a road along one side of the creek to cross the bridge in question and then travel down the road on the other side to get back to River Road. Traffic on Old Plantation Road would do the same sort of thing. By 1911, when the photographs in *Jekyll Island Club* were taken, the bridge from

Dunn’s day would have been a relic, since River Road and Old Plantation Road would each have had their own bridges.

The view from the bridge that crossed this creek on Old Plantation road by 1911 is actually shown in *Jekyll Island Club*. Parallel to the marshy creek that we see below, running along the north side of it, was the part of Jasmine Road that travelled to the interior of the island (and still does so today).



*Figure 59 The photograph above on the right is captioned "Looking East From First Bridge Jessamine Road: we see the creek that flows along Jasmine Road from a marshy pond on the east side of the island. The photograph above on the left shows Jasmine Road running along the north side of the creek. This photograph is captioned "Jessamine Road At Old Golf Course."*

The outline of the remains of the Dunn golf course can be seen below in an aerial photograph taken some time after 1928, and perhaps as late as 1945 (according to the website of Tyler E. Bagwell). It shows the complete Oceanside course of Walter J. Travis (which was opened in 1928-29), the remaining nine holes of which are now known as “Great Dunes,” the remains of the nine-hole golf course of Donald J. Ross (laid out in 1909 but abandoned after 1929, and thoroughly obliterated when Dick Wilson built the Oleander Course in the early 1960s), as well as the area where the Willie Dunn course was laid out in 1897.

“Between the Morris Home and the Bridge”

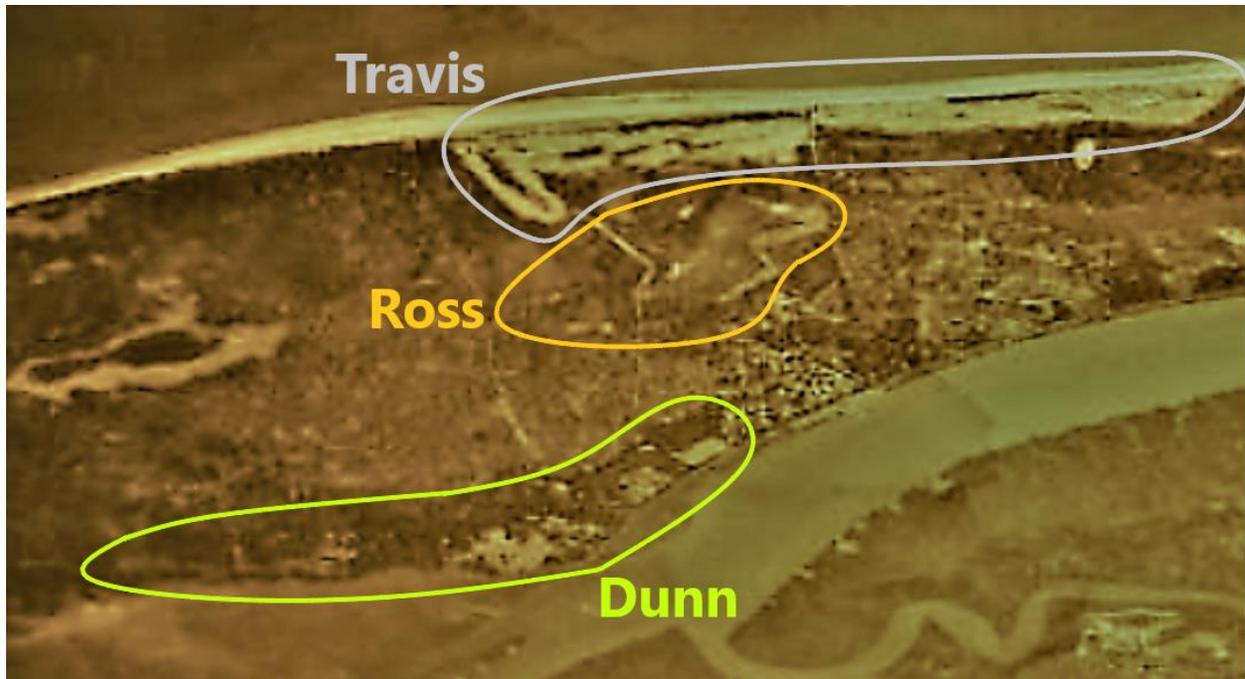


Figure 60 A detail from an aerial photograph taken some time between 1928 and 1945, showing the golf courses of Dunn, Ross, and Travis.

An enlargement of the photograph seems to show the main sections of the Dunn “riverside” course.

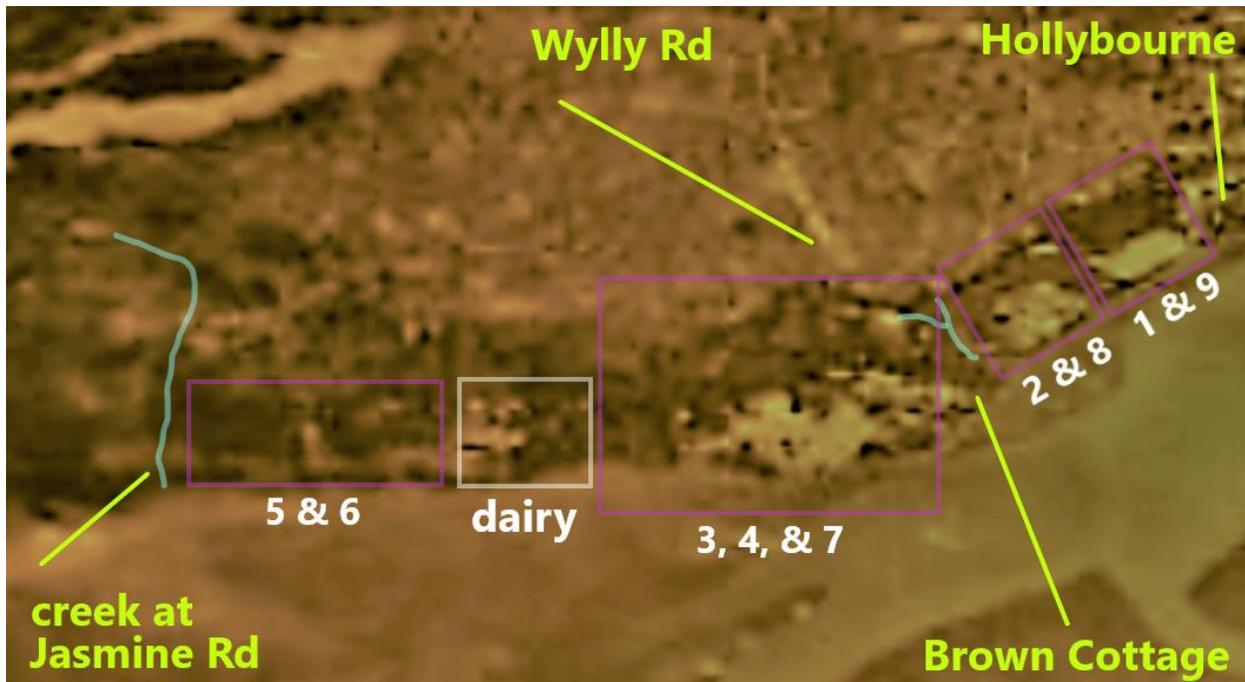


Figure 61 Main segments of the Dunn "riverside" course, as divided by the dairy and creeks.

It may well have been that one proceeded north for five holes to the creek at Jasmine Road and then turned around to play back south for the last four holes, for the first five holes added up to 1,200 yards,

and the last four added up to 1, 140 yards – a geographically convenient symmetry. An outward “half” of five holes followed by an inward “half” of four holes would have worked very well.

## Charles Stewart Maurice

Charles Stewart Maurice, who owned Hollybourne Cottage where the Dunn course began and ended, was a bridge builder, and his cottage remains famous for its use of bridge-engineering principles in its house architecture.



Figure 62 Charles Stewart Maurice, circa 1910.

Maurice (1840 – 1924), a Philadelphia resident during his Club membership from 1886 to 1924, was a civil engineer who served in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War and afterwards became a bridge builder. According to *Golden Isles Magazine*:

*After the war, Charles focused on the business world. He designed engines for the Lower Hudson Steamboat Company, established and sold a tannery, and eventually sold timber for the construction of bridges. It was this work that sparked his interest in bridge building. He formed a partnership with Charles Kellogg, a patented wooden and iron bridge builder, creating the firm of Kellogg and Maurice. Their firm became one of the pioneers in iron bridge building and was only the second company to build them with steel. They built bridges throughout the United States, Nova Scotia, and Brazil before merging with other firms to create the Union Bridge Company. Together with these men, Maurice was able to build some of the most notable bridges of their time, such as the*

*Poughkeepsie Bridge over the Hudson River, the Cantilever Bridge over the Niagara, the Cairo Bridge over the Ohio, and the Memphis Bridge over the Mississippi.”*

[https://www.goldenisesmagazine.com/features/rebuilding-a-legacy/article\\_e57ce046-2473-11e7-81c6-db69a12fb811.html](https://www.goldenisesmagazine.com/features/rebuilding-a-legacy/article_e57ce046-2473-11e7-81c6-db69a12fb811.html)

In one of those curious ironies that history offers, the 1897 Dunn “riverside” course ran from the incarnation of the most sophisticated principles of bridge engineering in what Dunn called the “Morris home” to a simple structure that Dunn simply called “the bridge.”



*Figure 63 Charles Hill, caretaker at Hollybourne Cottage from 1891 to 1942.*

America’s master bridge-builder took advantage of the golf course built on his doorstep. He took up the game, played it regularly when on the island, and even watched tournament play among Club members.

Curiously, however, his adoption of the game also led to an infamous development in relation to his personal hygiene.

The head caretaker of the Maurice home, Charles Hill, loved to tell the story of how the service staff in Hollybourne cottage prayed for rain whenever Maurice played golf. Maurice could not tolerate getting wet and so he left the golf course whenever it rained. He would return to Hollybourne Cottage and ask Hill to draw him a bath. On such occasions, mind you, not just any old bath would do: Hill was to empty into the water a bottle or two of Scotch Whisky!

The part of the story that Hill most enjoyed telling was the part when he explained that to make sure the bath was perfect, he carefully opened each bottle, but before pouring it into the tub, he tasted the contents to make sure the whisky was as it should be.

Hi-Ho the Dairy! Oh ... ?!

## Hi-Ho the Dairy! Oh ... ?!

The people who saw more golfers on the Willie Dunn “riverside” course than anyone else may have been the farmer in the dell, William Burnett Gildersleeve, and his young stepsons Cecil and Andrew, who grew up on the Club’s dairy farm, which occupied a substantial tract of land in the middle of the Dunn “riverside” golf course.

Gildersleeve had come to the island from Brooklyn as an unmarried young man, but the year after he arrived the farmer took a wife: “Mr. W.B. Gildersleeve, formerly of Brooklyn, N.Y., now holding a responsible position with the Jekyll Island Club, and Mrs. Lida McGonegal of Floral Bluff, Fla., were united in marriage ... on Monday evening last.... At Jekyll the bride and groom were most cordially welcomed, and they have been the recipients of many pleasant calls and presents” (*Brunswick News*, 8 December 1901, p. 18).

Thirty-year-old seamstress Lida Catherine Singleterry McGonegal (née Wright) – known to friends as Lydie – had a ten-year-old son named Cecil and a seven-year-old son named Andrew. Cecil had been born out of wedlock in October of 1891 just after his mother Lida C. Wright turned twenty. He bore the last name of the man his mother married in January of 1893, twenty-one-year-old L.A. McGonegal. Son Andrew was born the next year.

The McCashes note that “Fresh cream and butter were imported from Franklin, Tennessee, and elsewhere until the early twentieth century when the club established a full-scale dairy of its own” (p. 37). Thirty-five-year-old “Dairy Man” William B. Gildersleeve was recorded at work on Jekyll Island in early in 1900, however, so it seems that there may have been a dairy farm built – certainly it must at least have been in the planning stages – by 1899.

I note that in the spring of 1899, a newspaper mocked the Jekyll Island millionaires for their preference in terms of dairy cows: “There is a herd of highly bred Holstein cows. No Jekyll Islander would demean himself and insult his auriferous companions by drinking Jersey or Hereford milk. Jerseys and Herefords are low” (*The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 2 April 1899, p. 21).

Rather than go to Tennessee for its fresh cream and butter, the Club would now bring the source of the butter and cream to Jekyll Island, and so we find Gildersleeve in Tennessee in 1901 buying some of the top dairy cows in the nation for the Club’s farm: “William B. Gildersleeve, at the head of the dairy interests of the millionaire Jekyll Island syndicate, was in Cuthbert yesterday endeavoring to purchase

several of the blooded cows belonging to Crystal Lake dairy, at that place. Crystal Lake dairy ... products have won for them an almost national reputation" (*Chattanooga News* [Tennessee], 10 August 1901, p. 6).

No Jekyll Islander would drink Jersey milk, eh? O, the calumny! The *Atlanta Constitution* reported in the spring of 1904 that "a model dairy with a herd of fine Jerseys is maintained" by the Jekyll Island Club (3 April 1904, p. 7).



Figure 64 Silo constructed of tabby, some time between 1900 and 1910.

Gildersleeve oversaw improvements in the dairy farm, including the construction of the still-standing tabby silo. He left Jekyll Island in 1913 and moved with Lida and their four young children (aged ten, seven, four, and two) to Jacksonville, where Lida had lived more than a decade before. Lida was pregnant again. William became a foreman in the Jacksonville shipyard, where he may have helped his stepson Andrew to a job there as a boat builder. Son William, born in June of 1913, was the couple's last child.

Paterfamilias William died in the early 1920s, and his widow Lida re-married in 1925, taking Earl F. Chase as her third husband. Earl was a twenty-five-year-old ship carpenter and electrician marrying for the second time. Lida was fifty-five years old, but the marriage registrar recorded that she was thirty-six. By the time of the 1930 census, she acknowledged an age of fifty – ten years closer to her actual age. (Living with the couple was her son Andrew McGonegal, a boat

builder). By the time of the 1940 US census and the 1945 Florida census, time was passing: for each census, she volunteered an age just five years off her actual age. She died at an accurate ninety-two years of age in 1962, living in the same place she had been living before the dairy man of the Jekyll Island Club had invited her to live with the farmer in the Jekyll dell.

Hi-Ho the Dairy! Oh ... ?!

An interesting question is whether the farm where Gildersleeve looked after some of the best dairy cows that money could buy was part of the golf course, so to speak, from the beginning. If it did not exist by December of 1897, when Dunn completed his nine-hole "temporary" golf course, was it at least in its planning stages – allowing Dunn to plan around it?

Or, since Dunn was building what everyone regarded as a temporary course that ought not to have been used beyond 1898, did his course run right through the land where a farm was about to be built – both Dunn and the Club being confident that there would never be a conflict between golfers and cows?

Note that the dairy's buildings and fields extended between River Road and Old Plantation Road.



*Figure 65 The dairy circa 1930. The Bagwells point out that "the main section of the building was used for milking cows and the smaller part for churning butter. The silo stored feed for the cows" (The Jekyll Island Club, p. 107).*

In terms of the photograph above, River Road was near the trees on the left side of the photograph behind the silo; the photographer was probably standing on Old Plantation Road when the photograph was taken. So there seems to have been insufficient space to run golf holes past the dairy on either side of it.

A map produced by the Jekyll Island Club in the early 1920s reinforces this conclusion.

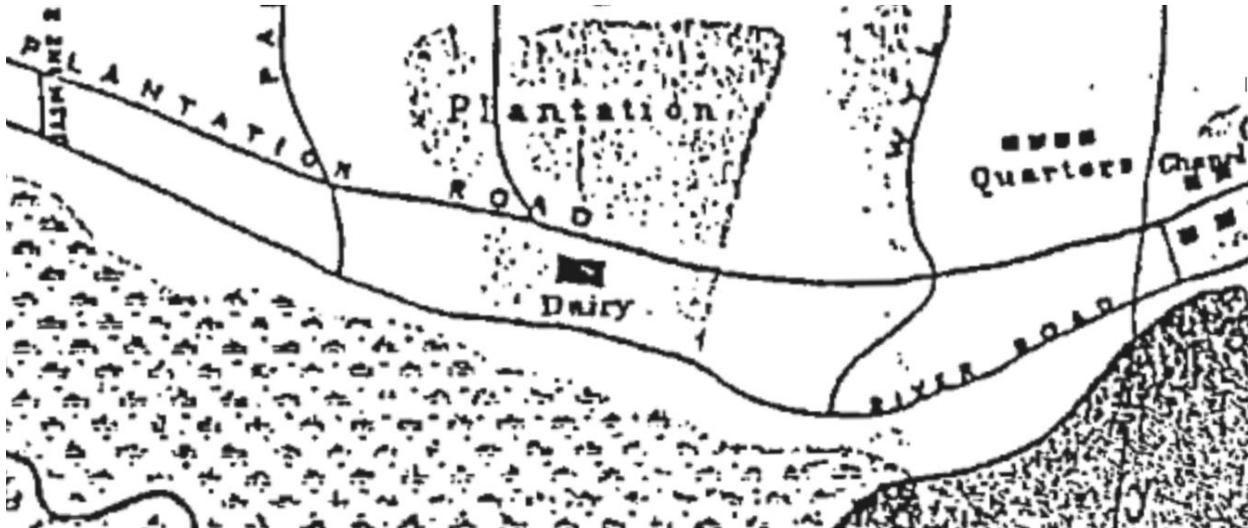


Figure 66 Detail of a Jekyll Island Club map from the early 1920s, as in Brunner, n.p.

Golfers would have played up to the dairy farm from the south side of it, walked a couple of hundred yards to the holes on the north side of it, turning around at Jasmine Road to play southward again, once more walking past the dairy to reach the remaining holes leading from the dairy back to Hollybourne Cottage.

If Dunn had not anticipated having to route golf holes around a dairy farm, then the construction of such a farm around 1899 or 1900 would have necessitated a re-design of several golf holes. One wonders if such a problem was why Walter J. Travis was invited to Jekyll Island in 1900 to give the Club advice about its golf course.

How long did this “temporary” golf course last?

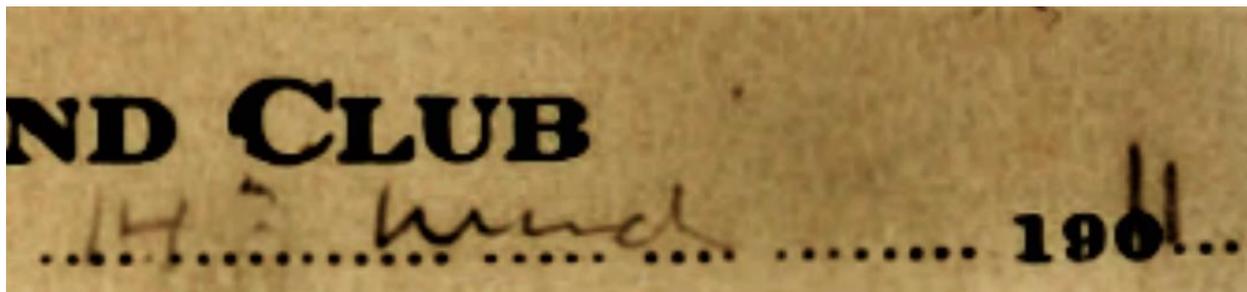
## How long did this “temporary” golf course last?

Does the reference to the “old golf course” in the caption above mean that the golf course was no longer in play?

No.

The scorecard has the pre-printed date “190\_” on it. We can infer from this open-ended date that the golf course had not been supplanted by the Dunn “savanna” course of 1898 and that it was not anticipated that it would be displaced by another golf course anytime soon. In fact, we might read the continued existence of the “temporary” Dunn course of 1897 as confirmation that the “savanna” course was never put into play, since Dunn indicates that it was understood his nine-hole “riverside” course to have been “temporary” entirely with reference to the 1898 course intended to replace it during the 1899 season.

If we inspect a little more closely the 1897 course scorecard, we find evidence that suggests that the 1897 Dunn course not only did duty as the main Jekyll Island Club golf course much longer than was originally envisioned, but also continued in play after the Donald Ross course was opened during the 1910 season. Note the date indicated on the Woodruff family scorecard discussed above.



*Figure 67 Golf card for the Jekyll Island Club, Woodruff Family fonds, Brock University, St Catherines, Ontario.*

The Woodruff scorecard was dated 14 March 1911! A “1” was written over the “0” and another “1” was written after it.

Amazingly, it turns out that this golf course may have remained recognizable as a golf course until the last season of the Jekyll Island Club in 1942. Club property was largely untended after that. Various army, navy, militia, and coastguard personnel were on the island throughout World War II, but there was no resort activity. After the state of Georgia took over Jekyll Island in 1948, it brought in Robert

How long did this “temporary” golf course last?

Trent Jones, Sr, in 1951 to assess the existing golf facilities acquired by the state. He was to determine what the state might be able to renovate and return to play.

According to Nic Doms, the gist of Jones’ report on the 1897 Dunn course was as follows: “The Club Golf Course on the riverside and north of the Jekyll Island Hotel is in disrepair due to overgrowth and neglect after the 1949 storm” (*From Millionaires to Commoners*, n.p.). Doms describes the final demise of a recognizable course here in the early 1950s: “The underbrush between the wharf and the north end is removed, which is the exact location of the golf course of 1898 that was so overgrown and damaged by hogs and palmetto roots that removing the underbrush meant demolishing one of the oldest courses in the U.S.” (n.p.).

One wonders if the 1897 Dunn “riverside” course might have assumed a new but different life after the Club opened its Donald Ross course in 1910. Consider what happened to the latter after the opening of the Walter J. Travis Oceanside course in 1928-29. The 1975 article “Tales of Jekyll” says that “When the millionaires ... built the [Travis] course in 1927, they turned over the original [Ross] 9 holes to the use of their employees” (*The Golden Islander*, February 1975).

Did the Jekyll Island Club do something similar in 1910 with the Dunn course?

## Rating Dunn's 1897 Riverside Course

This long-lasting, continuously-played, "temporary" golf course did not necessarily receive good reviews over the years.

In "History of Golf in the Golden Isles" on the "Golden Isles Georgia" website, we find a rather derisive account of the course: "Accounts of the day note that the course was 'absolutely flat with sand greens' and caddies used mats to drag and even up the green after play was completed on a hole.... The exact layout of the course is unknown, though one account said, 'It wasn't even the quality of a cow pasture'" (<https://www.goldenisles.com/discover/golden-isles/history-and-heritage/history-of-golf-golden-isles/>).

Although this passage seems intended to cast aspersions on the primitive nature of the first golf course on Jekyll Island, the only comment here that counts as negative criticism is the claim that the golf course was not even of the quality of a cow pasture. And that comment may have been motivated by the location of a dairy farm in the middle of the golf course!

Of the relative flatness of the land there is no doubt. It was flat then; it is flat today. Topographical information suggests that along the route that the 1897 golf course followed, the land along River Road was from 10 to 13 feet above sea level and the land along Old Plantation Road was from 16 to 25 feet above sea level – flat indeed. Yet flat land does not prevent the building of an interesting golf course. Golf course architects prefer undulating land, but one can always introduce mounds strategically around greens and landing areas to introduce potential variety to the lies from which golfers will play their shots.

Note also that to observe that the golf course had sand greens is no comment about its sophistication, per se. Sand greens were the norm in the American South until the late 1920s and early 1930. Laying out underground water pipes for irrigation that would counteract hot and dry stretches of weather was expensive, so almost all golf courses in Florida and Georgia chose to use sand greens. Even the greens at Pinehurst, North Carolina, including Donald Ross's famous Pinehurst # 2, remained sand until the early 1930s.

Not even the Donald Ross course at Jekyll Island had grass greens before 1922.

Actually, there are more positive than negative comments about the 1897 Dunn course.

During the winter season of 1900, the *Tampa Tribune* used the high amount of traffic on the golf course to mock "Jekyll's Nabobs" who would not allow people from Brunswick to land on the island for fear of contracting the smallpox reported in that city: "There are now quite a number of islanders on hand, and Jekyll is daily presenting gay scenes of golf by day and brilliant balls at night" (25 February 1900, p. 2). Presumably these gay scenes of golf by day can be seen from the water, since the game is being played on the "riverside" course right along the edge of Jekyll Creek, through which a great deal of boat traffic moved on tours of Georgia's sea islands.

Later the same year, just before the opening of the Jekyll Island Club for the winter season of 1901, Superintendent Grob assured the *Atlanta Constitution* that "The golf grounds are in excellent condition" (30 December 1900, p. 5). In 1904, the *Atlanta Constitution* capped off a list of the island's advantages – from its fine beaches to its fine roads – with the observation that "A fine golf links is also here, looked after by a special committee" (3 April 1904, p. 7). The same newspaper notes a year later that for "Uncle Sam's club of millionaires," "Everything in the sporting life is afforded" at Jekyll Island: "There is the shooting, the fishing, the yachting ..."; and of course there is "the perfect golf links" (23 January 1905, p. 7).

None of these comments is consistent with the denigration of the golf course as below the quality of a cow pasture.

## The Honest Son of Abe

Robert Todd Lincoln, the son of a very honest president, may also have reviewed the course, and, if so, he was not favorably impressed at all.

The *Brunswick News* notes that Lincoln returned to Jekyll Island during the 1902 season (15 March 1902, p. 1). The *Savannah Morning News* reported that “Mr. Lincoln would be the guest for some time of Mr. Otto Fields” (16 March 1902, p. 18). The *Brunswick News* indicates he left the island on the evening of March 24<sup>th</sup> (25 March 1902, p. 4). He was on the island for about a week and presumably had some time for golf.

By 1902, he had ventured even further into the realm of celebrity golf. He now had under his belt a match from 1900 in which he played as the partner of previous U.S. Amateur champion C.B. Macdonald against reigning British Open Champion J.H. Taylor and judge Morgan J. O’Brien of New York (a regular guest at Jekyll Island). Macdonald later wrote about the match, noting that despite Lincoln’s wild drive on the last hole, forcing Macdonald to play a recovery shot from a tennis court, the match was halved when Lincoln sank a birdie putt on the eighteenth green.

By 1902, then, Lincoln had been playing the best courses in the United States with some of the best players in the world.

When Jekyll Island Club member Cyrus McCormick, as part of a targeted recruitment effort in 1911, wrote a personal letter to Lincoln inviting him to consider joining the club, Lincoln wrote back and recalled his impressions of the facilities for golf: “[Jekyll Island] is a very pleasant place, but in one particular it is not what I want as a Winter Resort; that is, in the matter of golfing. There is, it is true (or was) a place where one could make a pretence of knocking balls about, but it was not at all interesting as a golf course” (Robert Todd Lincoln letter to Cyrus McCormick, 14 February 1911, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, cited by William Barton McCash, *Southern Haven*, p. 47).

Nine years after Lincoln’s 1902 visit to Jekyll Island, when McCormick wrote to him about joining the Jekyll Island Club at the beginning of 1911, Lincoln had been elected president of the Ekwanok Country Club, as of 1904 (a position he held until his death in 1926), which was one of the best golf courses in the United States at the time – a masterpiece laid out in Vermont in 1899 by John Duncan Dunn and Walter J. Travis (the course was not far from Lincoln’s summer home in Manchester, Vermont). Such was Lincoln’s enthusiasm for golf in the early 1900s, in fact, that even though serving as president at

Ekwanok as of 1904, he also agreed to serve in 1905 and 1906 as the president of the Chicago Golf Club. So when he wrote to McCormick on Valentine's Day in 1911, after seven years of experience as steward of two of the best golf courses in the United States, Lincoln seems to have recalled his contemporary impression of the old Dunn course with a retrospectively enhanced disdain.

McCormick no doubt pointed out to Lincoln that in 1909 the club had built a new nine-hole golf course according to the design of Donald Ross, and that in the opinion of many, as the book *Jekyll Island Club* claimed, "The new golf links of the club are ... the finest in the South" (p. 5).

But whatever the case may be with regard to further correspondence between them, Lincoln never became a member of the club.

Mind you, as I pointed out above, if Lincoln did not in fact have time to play golf during his short visit to the island in 1902, his derisive comments about the "place where one could make a pretence of knocking balls about" will have been about the 1896 "convenience" for golf, rather than the 1897 Dunn course.

## John D. Rockefeller

Another kind of review is offered by John D. Rockefeller, who played Dunn's 1897 course frequently, although he had only discovered golf when he was fifty-nine years old. Having accumulated more than a billion dollars of personal wealth (becoming the world's first billionaire, and some say the world's richest person of all time when inflation is taken into account), Rockefeller had retired. It was the spring of 1899: thereafter Rockefeller played a round of golf virtually every day until he was ninety-four.

His son, John D. Rockefeller, Jr, immediately noted his parents' obsession with golf: "Mother and Father are crazy over golf," Junior told a college chum in 1900. "Father plays from four to six hours a day, and Mother several hours" (Ron Chernow, *The Life of John D. Rockefeller*, p. 402). And from the beginning, Rockefeller, Sr, relied on the Dunn family to get him started. To develop a reliable golf swing, says his biographer Ron Chernow, "William Tucker, a golf pro from nearby Ardsley, coached Rockefeller regularly" (p. 402). It would be Tucker's uncle Willie Dunn who laid out a nine-hole golf course for the world's first billionaire less than nine months after Rockefeller took up the game.

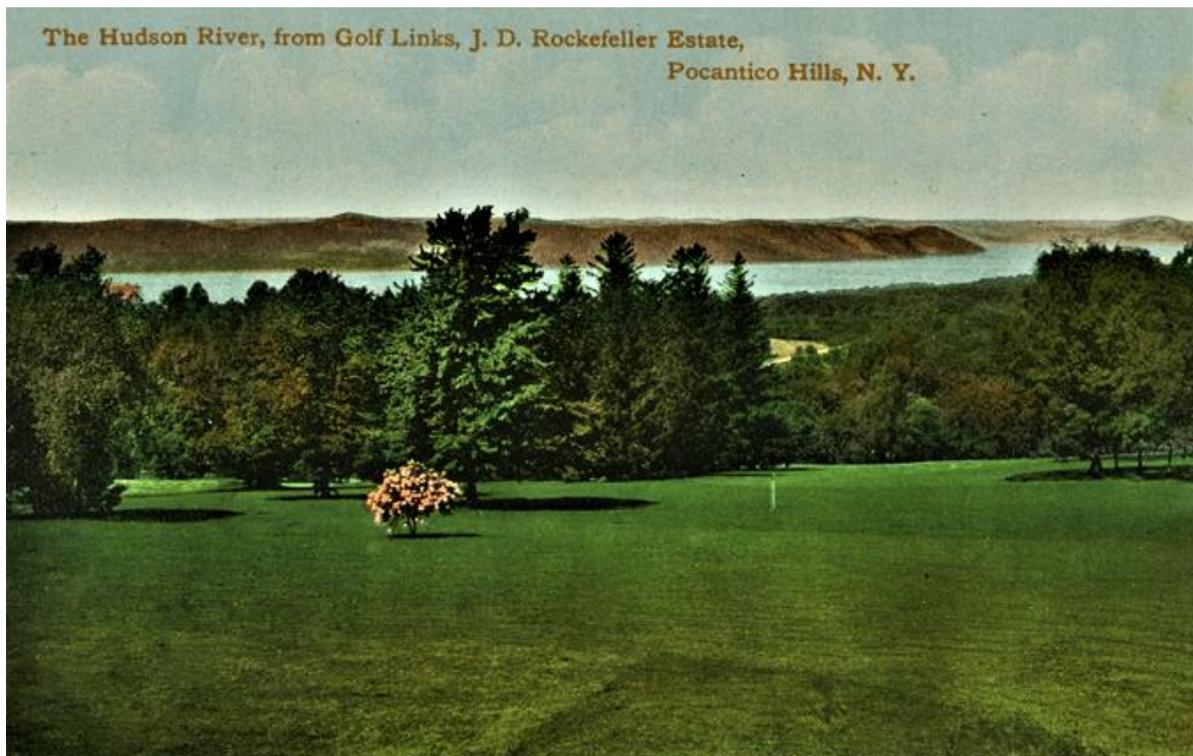


Figure 68 A postcard shows the nine-hole golf course built by Willie Dunn for John D. Rockefeller.

Dunn laid out the course at the end of 1899 and was on the site supervising construction work during the next three months: "John D. Rockefeller is having a nine-hole golf course laid out at his country seat near Pocantico Hills, in Westchester County. The links are designed by 'Willie' Dunn, the expert, and workmen are now engaged in laying out the course, which will be a mile and a half long [about 2,650 yards, that is] .... Mr. Rockefeller will spare no expense" (*Tribune* [New York], 6 January 1900, p. 3). The familiar ring of another newspaper report hints that Rockefeller may have dealt personally with Dunn: "Mr. Rockefeller is quoted as saying that he hopes to have one of the finest nine-hole links in the country" (*Tribune* [New York], 10 January 1900, p. 5).



Figure 69 Elias Johnson, on the left, and John D. Rockefeller, in the early 1900s.

Chernow illustrates Rockefeller's spare-no-expense obsession with daily golf as follows:

*Rockefeller decided that he had to play golf daily at Pocantico. In early December 1904, after four inches of snow had fallen on Westchester County, Elias Johnson was taken aback to receive a call from Rockefeller, inviting him up for a foursome. When Johnson objected that they could not possibly play in the snow, Rockefeller said, "Just come up and see." Even as they spoke, a team of workmen with horses and snowplows were assiduously clearing snow from five fairways and putting greens; the next morning, Johnson found a shimmering green course, carved from a wintry landscape. "We never had a finer game," said Johnson. Rockefeller played in all kinds of weather. "Yesterday morning I played with the thermometer at 20 in the shade," he boasted to a niece in 1904.*

*"It was cold indeed on these Pocantico Hills, but a good thing for my health." To keep his partners warm, he distributed paper vests, which became a trademark gift. (p. 402)*

John D. Rockefeller

Rockefeller was a regular guest at Jekyll Island, invited to stay there not just by his younger brother William, a long-time Club member, but also by a number of other members. He stayed on Jekyll Island with James Stillman “for some days” in March of 1901 before and after their meeting there with J. Pierpont Morgan (*Morning News* [Savannah, Georgia], 21 March 1901, p. 7). Stillman was a fellow businessman, but he was also “family”: his two sons had each married a Rockefeller daughter. Of course Rockefeller will have indulged in a daily round of golf on the Dunn “riverside” course while on the island.

A year later we read that “Mr. John D. Rockefeller and a party are looked for on the island today. Mr. Rockefeller is a regular visitor to Jekyll and comes down every winter to spend some time” (*Morning News* [Savannah, Georgia], 16 March 1902, p. 18).

Rockefeller came south to Georgia every winter in the early 1900s, and whether he had rooms at the Hotel Bon Air in Augusta or was staying with a friend on Jekyll Island, his purpose was to play golf. The first thing that he did when he arrived in Augusta was to buy a season ticket for the golf links. At Jekyll Island, he played daily golf on the Dunn “riverside” course.

Rockefeller’s habit of following the sun south during the winter endured for the rest of his life, and a stop at Jekyll Island was a regular feature of his southern vacation. The *Chicago Examiner* reported in 1914 that “John D. Rockefeller will leave tomorrow for Jekyll Island ... where he will join his brother, William Rockefeller, in a daily game of golf” (4 March 1914, p. 1). He then played the Ross course. He continued to visit Jekyll Island to play daily golf until the mid-1920s, when he and some of his Jekyll Island Club playing partners were in their mid-eighties and playing the third and fourth versions of the Club golf course by Karl Keffer and Walter J. Travis, respectively.

That the richest man in the world, who could play any golf course he liked, not only had you build him a golf course at his New York home, but also regularly travelled south to play a golf course that you designed on Jekyll Island amounts to a good review of your design skills.

## Two Towers and a Windmill

I suspect that one of Rockefeller's rounds of golf on Jekyll Island was preserved for posterity by journalist William Otto Inglis in an article called "John D. Rockefeller at Play" (*Harper's Weekly*, 13 February 1909, pp. 16-17).



Figure 70 Photograph of John D. Rockefeller playing a fairway shot in *Harper's Weekly*, 13 February, 1909, p. 17.

Inglis does indicate that he interviewed Rockefeller on the golf course of the Jekyll Island Club, either in the text of the article or in his captions for the photographs, like the one to the left. In his article's account of the round of golf that he played with Rockefeller some time at the beginning of 1909, Inglis says only that although Rockefeller "owns a course on his estate at Pocantico Hills," and "another at Lakewood," "just now he is playing in Georgia" (p. 17). The best evidence that Rockefeller was playing golf on Jekyll Island's 1897 Dunn "riverside" course can be seen along the treetops marking the horizon in the photograph to the left.

## Two Towers and a Windmill

We can see above Rockefeller's hands and shoulder, to the right of his club's upright shaft, the three tallest structures of the Jekyll Island Club's clubhouse compound rising just above the treetops.

The photograph below shows the three structures in question – the windmill, the water tower, and the clubhouse tower – as they would appear to a guest approaching the clubhouse from the west.



*Figure 71 Left to right: clubhouse tower (with flag), windmill, water tower, circa 1900.*

In the photograph below, these three structures appear in the left-to-right order they would assume when seen from Rockefeller's location on Dunn "riverside" course to the north of them.



*Figure 72 Viewed from a location to the north-west of them, the windmill is to the left, with the water tower close to it on the right, and the clubhouse tower much further to the right.*

A greatly enlarged detail from the photograph above of Rockefeller's fairway swing (as the image appeared in the *New York Tribune* on 4 April 1909) shows these three structures in the order above.



*Figure 73 A detail from a photograph on the front page of the New York Tribune, 4 April 1909 (p. 1).*

Given this photographic evidence, there seems little doubt that Rockefeller was playing golf on Dunn's "riverside" golf course.

## Flagging a Location



Figure 74 Jekyll Island Club emblem from the 1890s to the 1920s (Bagwells p.8).

There is other evidence that suggests that Rockefeller was indeed playing on the Dunn course, such as a flag that appears on the pole of one of the golf holes where Rockefeller is photographed about to putt. The flag flying on the golf pole seems to be the same as the flags that flew from the clubhouse tower and the flags that flew on the Jekyll Island Club steamers. And whether they were dark-colored or light-colored, all the Jekyll Island Club flags of the late 1800s and early 1900s had at the center of them the emblem depicted here on the left.

A flag generally flew from the top of the clubhouse tower (perhaps it is visible on the tower appearing above the treetops in the background of the photograph of Rockefeller's fairway swing above), and a flag also generally flew at the wharf and on the steamer sailing between Brunswick and Jekyll Island.



Figure 75 Depending on the quality of the camera lens, the light conditions, distance from the flag, and whether the flag was folded in the wind, the Club emblem might be a faded swirl of black lines, as on top of the clubhouse (left), clear and recognizable, as at the wharf (center), or a mix of black and grey lines in the folds of a drooping flag, as on the steamer (right).

One of the photographs in *Harper's Weekly* shows Rockefeller's caddie holding a similar flag.



*Figure 76 Photograph from Harper's Weekly, 13 February 1909, p. 17.*

## Flagging a Location



*Figure 77 This photograph is the same as the one above, with the flags enhanced by the addition of a partial white border.*

In fact, there are two flags tied to the pole that the caddie holds, one positioned above the other.

Unfortunately, the flags are difficult to see because a large pine tree behind them constitutes a dark background into which they blend and seem to disappear. Here to the left, in the re-presented image of the photograph above, I have outlined with a white border the dark part of the flags that are difficult to distinguish from the dark tree behind them.

Now that we can see the two flags more distinctly, however, we recognize that they are both similar to the flags seen above on the clubhouse tower, the wharf, and the steamer. On all of them, a light-coloured circle appears in the center of a dark-coloured rectangle.

Most importantly, we can also make out faint dark lines printed within the light-colored circle in the center of the flag – at least insofar as the top flag is concerned.

We can also see that on the day Rockefeller and his caddie were on this green, there was sufficient wind to blow the flags out from the pole to a certain extent. But they nonetheless droop, and so the material of which the flag is made waves and folds slightly, as in the case of the flag flying on the steamer in the photograph above. This fact makes the faint dark lines in the light-colored circle at the center of the flag difficult to interpret.



Figure 78 A greatly enlarged detail from the photograph being studied.

Still, by greatly enlarging the image of the golf course flags, and enhancing the contrast between dark and light elements in the photograph, we can make out an image within each light-coloured circle that is consistent with the Jekyll Island symbol of the early 1900s, which appears at the center of the other flags above.

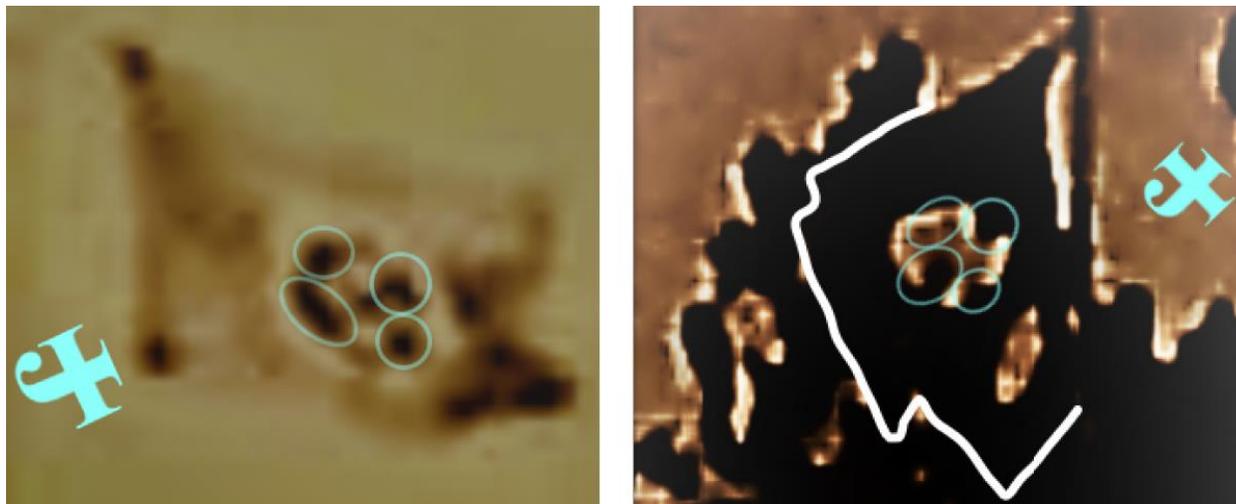
Note that the Jekyll Island Club emblem produces a visual concentration of black colour (whether it is caused by dye, ink or thread) at four points around the emblem's edges.

Amidst many shapes of fleurs-de-lys symbolizing the French heritage of the island (via the du Bignon family), the Jekyll Island Club symbol crosses a capital "J" and a capital "I." From a distance, this pattern produces a primary concentration of black at the bottom of the "J," because the bottom curve of the

## Flagging a Location

letter makes it larger than the bottom and top of the letter “I.” A secondary concentration of black occurs at the top of the “J” and at the top of the “I,” where a bar crosses the top of each letter.

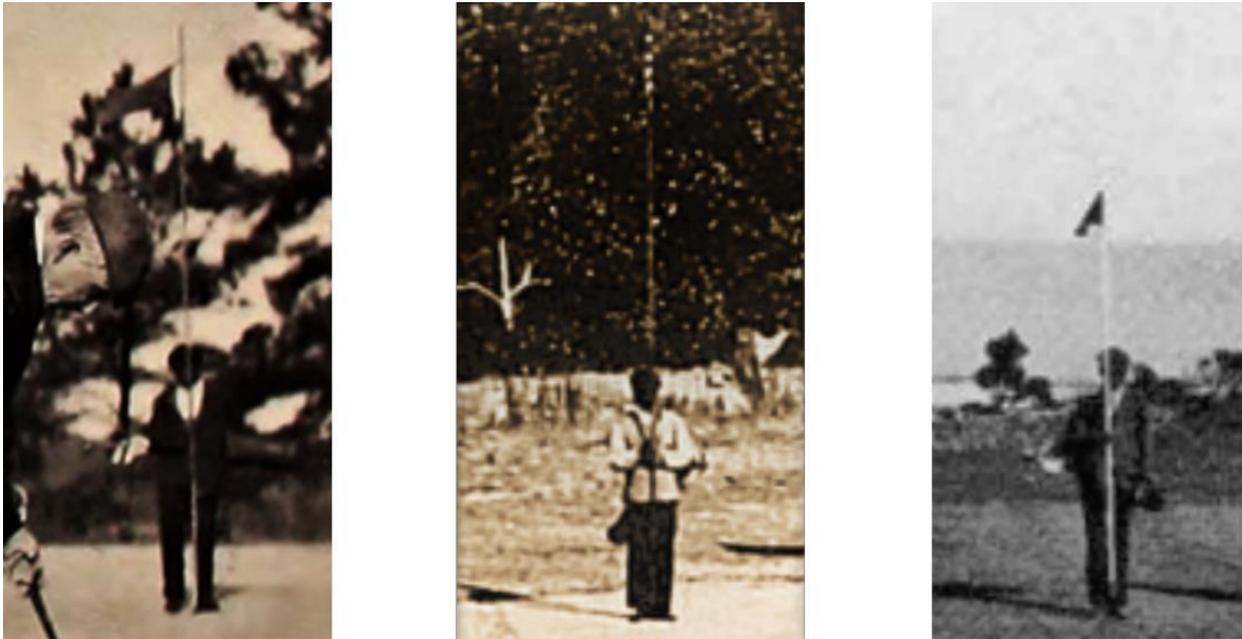
A comparison of the photograph of the wharf flag and the golf flag illustrates this point.



*Figure 79 The concentrations of black in the Jekyll Island Club emblem are circled, and the orientation of the Jekyll Island Club emblem within the flag is indicated by the crossed letters at the left and right margins of the image above.*

## Present Arms

The way that Rockefeller's caddie holds the flag also suggests that these two people are on Jekyll Island. Note that he holds the flag for Rockefeller in 1909 in exactly the same way caddies held the flag at Jekyll Island in 1921 and 1925.



*Figure 80 Left: Rockefeller and caddie, 1909; center: Jekyll Island caddie in Golf Illustrated, vol 14 no 4 (March 1921), p. 27; right: Jekyll Island caddie in Golf Illustrated (April 1931), p. 8 (photograph from 1925).*

The position of the flag at the center of the caddie's body resembles the position of the rifle at the center of the soldier's body in the "present arms" position of the military rifle drill.

It would seem that this aspect of caddie culture at the Jekyll Island Club was relatively constant from 1909 to at least the mid-1920s.

## Caddie Identification

Finally, regarding evidence that Rockefeller plays golf on the Dunn “riverside” course at Jekyll Island in photographs above, it may be that his caddie is the same Jekyll Island caddie who appears alongside the Jekyll Island professional Karl Keffer shortly after the latter’s appointment in January of 1910.



Figure 81 Karl Keffer, Jekyll Island Club professional golfer appointed in January, 1910, and seven caddies.

There is a photograph of Rockefeller and a caddie published in the *Boston Globe* on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1909, just nine days before the photographs that appear in *Harper’s Weekly*. The accompanying article implies that the photograph was taken at Augusta, Georgia: “John D. Rockefeller finds the golf links at Augusta well-suited to his game and none enjoys a round more than he does” (4 February 1909, p. 4).

Rockefeller sits on a bench, presumably waiting for his turn to tee off. On the bench to his left, one can make out a piece of clothing, perhaps the jacket that he wore in other photographs. Beside him stands his caddie, putting one of Rockefeller’s golf clubs back in the golf bag, listening to Rockefeller as the latter speaks.

Is the caddie in the photograph below the same caddie standing two people to the left of Keffer in the photograph above?



*Figure 82 John D. Rockefeller, Keystone-Mast Collection, UCR/California Museum of Photography, University of California at Riverside.*

## Caddie Identification

Compare the presentation below of side-by-side images of the caddie in each photograph.



*Figure 83 Left: Keffer caddie circa 1910-11; right: Rockefeller caddie circa January of 1909.*

The face on the left is seen fully from the front, whereas the face on the right is seen from an angle, with the left eye and forehead obscured by shadow and hat brim, which makes comparison difficult. But one can nonetheless make out many similar features.

## Underwood and Underwood

Rockefeller was engaged in a media exercise with William Inglis that would eventuate not just in an article in *Harper's Weekly* magazine, but also in photographs appended to news stories about him over the next several years – just like the one in the Boston newspaper.

Each photograph acknowledged the copyright of Underwood and Underwood.

Bert and Elmer Underwood founded their company for producing and disseminating stereoscopic photographs in 1881 and eventually became the largest publisher of such photographs in the world, publishing as many as 25,000 images per day of people, buildings, events and scenes from around the world. They also sold the stereoscopic viewers needed to produce a three-dimensional viewing experience from looking at their photographs (they were selling 300,000 viewers per year in the early 1900s, using door-to-door salesmen to do so). The company sold boxed collections of stereographic images with themes such as education, travel, religion, sports, historic images, contemporary news makers, celebrities, and so on. The company also developed a photojournalism division that disseminated photographs of world events and important news makers like Rockefeller.



*Figure 84 The Underwood and Underwood stereoscopic camera of the early 1900s.*

The Underwoods' stereoscopic method presents two offset images separately to the left and right eye of the viewer.

Their camera took two photographs simultaneously, the lenses separated the same distance that human eyes are separated. The camera produced two perspectives of the same object with a minor deviation equal to (or nearly equal to) the difference in perspective that human eyes naturally transmit to our brains via our binocular vision.

The difference between the photographs produced can be seen in a comparison of the photographs of Rockefeller that show the Jekyll Island windmill, water tower, and clubhouse tower in the background. One of the two photographs was sent to

Harper's Weekly; the other was sent to the New York Tribune. Notice the difference in the location of the club's shaft in relation to two treetops seen next to it on the horizon.



*Figure 85 Photograph on the left from Tribune [NY], 4 April 1904, part 2, p. 1. Photograph on the right from Harper's Weekly, 13 February 1909, p. 17.*

In the one photograph, the shaft is left of the two treetops; in the other photograph, it is to the right of them.

Rockefeller was a favorite subject of photographers who worked for Underwood and Underwood, as well as for freelance photographers who sold photographs to the company. He was the subject of endless gossip and speculation in his day. People found his love of golf fascinating. Even the photograph of Rockefeller and his caddie appeared in an Underwood and Underwood boxed collection along with several paragraphs of educational information about the famous businessman and his activities.



Figure 86 This image is from the Keystone View Company to which Underwood and Underwood sold some of its images after 1912. The information printed under the photographs incorrectly indicates that Rockefeller was eighty years old when the photograph was taken. In fact, he was sixty-nine.

Stereographic images required a stereoscope for viewing.



*Figure 87 Underwood and Underwood stereoscope, circa 1905.*

Every item that the eye can discern in a stereoscopic pair of photographs like the one above deviates to some degree between the two photographs, a fact that allows a stereoscope to do its work.

A stereoscope simultaneously shows one eye one photograph, and the other eye the other photograph.

This artificially-created experience induces our brain to produce a three-dimensional image from the distinct information provided by each eye – just as our brain always does in our natural binocular vision.

## Jekyll Caddies

Most caddies at Jekyll Island were black.

As Lane Demas observes, in *Game of Privilege: An African American History of Golf* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2017):

*Caddies were common features on America's first golf courses, particularly at the more exclusive clubs and private courses that required players to employ them.... Caddying was not fundamentally racialized; nearly all caddies in Britain were English or Scottish boys, and American clubs employed many white caddies. Yet many of the first U.S. clubs considered it an especially suitable endeavor for black boys ....*

*It is difficult to estimate just how many African Americans served as caddies before World War I. Although some boys left school in order to do it permanently, caddying was more often seasonal, a part-time work scheduled around school, farm work, or other jobs....*

*Not only did the first U.S. clubs tolerate African American attendants and caddies; many explicitly desired them, especially in the South.... Whites in the industry who travelled south (sometimes seasonally) for golf work also had to be ready to serve alongside black laborers. (pp. 9-10)*

For the African American community in the Brunswick area, work on Jekyll Island generally paid relatively well, and so jobs on the island were sought after.

One presumes that caddies were paid at least the going rate. Black and white caddies in Montgomery, Alabama, were paid twenty-five cents per day in the early 1900s, presumably a useful contribution to a household's income from kids as young as ten years of age. Note that a full-time employee of the Jekyll Island golf ground-keeping staff was still earning just two dollars per day in 1938, so the twenty-five cents per day that caddies earned thirty-five years before that – adjusted for inflation – was nothing to sneeze at (Bagwells p. 105).

## Jekyll Caddies



*Figure 88 Young men at the wharf, perhaps as porters. Enhanced detail from a photograph in Jekyll Island Club (1911).*

The caddies also probably had other odd jobs, too.

In the background of one of the photographs in *Jekyll Island Club*, for instance, we can see some young men sitting on a bench as members of the Jekyll Island Club are preparing to leave the island at the end of the 1911 season. Some of them probably also appear in the photograph of Karl Keffer and his seven caddies.

I wonder if the young man who carried Rockefeller's golf bag in 1909 was a caddie superstar: one presumes that the Jekyll Island caddie master made sure that Rockefeller had the best caddie.

## William Inglis and William Hemingway

Of course Rockefeller and his caddie were not out on the golf course on their own. They were accompanied by William Inglis, his caddie, and at least one photographer who worked for Underwood and Underwood.



Figure 89 William Otto Inglis, 1909.

Inglis signed his *Harper's Weekly* story about this round of golf with Rockefeller with the nom de plume "William Hemingway," an alias that he frequently used. Inglis worked for several New York newspapers and magazines over the years, and often undertook special assignments for Joseph Pulitzer, a Jekyll Island Club member. He also wrote regular golf articles in which he would present himself as having played golf with a well-known person. He would always write in a very complimentary way about his subject's golf game, career accomplishments, life philosophy, and character. The article would recount some of the golf shots played, relay some of the conversation that was had, and show photographs taken during the round. Guaranteeing a puff-piece, Inglis was able to secure interviews with men like Rockefeller who usually received negative news coverage and therefore tended to shy away from the press.

In 1915, six years after the 1909 round of golf documented in *Harper's Weekly*, Inglis was the person chosen by Rockefeller's son, John D. Rockefeller, Jnr, to become his father's official biographer. He wrote to his father to propose that he play a round of golf with Inglis to see whether or not he might get along with him. Unaware that Inglis had played golf with his father six years before and become a regular playing partner of his father's, Rockefeller, Jnr, described Inglis in glowing terms in order to encourage his father to

consent to the idea. He carefully explained why their family adviser Ivy Ledbetter Lee was confident that great good would come of it:

*Mr. Lee says this Mr. Inglis is a very high class newspaper man, that he has played golf with many of the leading men of the country and has enjoyed writing these games up for publication. He is an excellent golfer and a charming companion. Anything that he might write he would submit to Mr. Lee and me before publication, so that you could be sure the article would be in every way satisfactory. This being the case, I can see no possible harm in your acting on Mr. Lee's suggestion. Mr. Lee assures me you would enjoy playing golf with Mr. Inglis, and I quite agree with Mr. Lee that whenever, without inconvenience to yourself, the more intimate sides of your character can be presented to the public in a fair and just way, it helps just that much to put you in your real light in the public eye. I should think it an excellent idea to act upon Mr. Lee's suggestion. (John D. Rockefeller, Jnr, to John D. Rockefeller, Snr, 21 October 1915, in "Dear Father"/"Dear Son": Correspondence of John D. Rockefeller and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., ed. Joseph W. Ernst [New York: Fordham University, 1994], Rockefeller, pp. 63-4).*

I do not know whether Rockefeller, Sr, ever confessed to his son that Inglis was already a well-known golf buddy trusted for his discretion, or whether Senior simply enjoyed listening to Junior preaching to the converted.

For Rockefeller certainly knew very well both the golf game and the publicity game that Inglis played. It should be no surprise that what came out of the 1915 round of golf was what came out of the 1909 round of golf: a puff piece celebrating the admirable personal character, the robust physical fitness, and the simultaneously cautious and daring golf game of the world's richest man. In fact, certain paragraphs in the 1915 article come right out of the 1909 article! And one of the photographs accompanying the 1915 article was actually recycled from the 1909 round of golf on Jekyll Island.

Ron Chernow describes Inglis as Rockefeller's "appointed Boswell, the affable ... newspaperman recruited from Rockefeller's old nemesis, the *World*" (*Titan: The Life of John D Rockefeller*, xix). The round of golf that Inglis and Rockefeller played on Dunn's "Riverside" course in 1909, then, was the first chapter of a long relationship between the two men.

## “Oily John” and the Two Willies

So under his nom de plume William Hemingway, William Inglis writes an account of their round of golf and publishes it in *Harper’s Weekly*, alongside five photographs, on 13 February 1909.

When was the round of golf actually played? And why?

Inglis does not specify the time or location of the round:

*Mr. Rockefeller, now in his seventieth year, is a hale and hearty athlete, bronzed by daily play in the sun, ruddy-cheeked and clear-eyed, as brisk and powerful and enduring as most men of fifty years. He follows golfing weather up and down the Atlantic coast and spends most of the hours of daylight on the grassy links. He owns a course on his estate at Pocantico Hills, New York, another at Lakewood, New Jersey, and just now is playing in Georgia. (vol LIII No 2712, p. 17)*

By 1909, it was well-known that Rockefeller spent the winter months golfing in the South, for several years choosing the Hotel Bon Air as his base – often renting a large number of rooms there for his guests. The hotel had its own golf course, built in 1897. It was a treeless course with minimal features visible in its open landscape. Only the sand greens stick out.



Figure 90 Early 1900s view of the golf course at the Hotel Bon Air, Augusta, Ga., from the heights on which the hotel was located.

## “Oily John” and the Two Willies

It had a sister hotel and golf course in New York on Round Island in the Thousand Islands at Frontenac, New York, where the last green of the golf course was on the hotel’s front lawn (as can be seen in the image below). Between them, the hotels catered to the extremely wealthy members of the leisured class who – like Rockefeller – moved their golf games north and south according to the seasons.

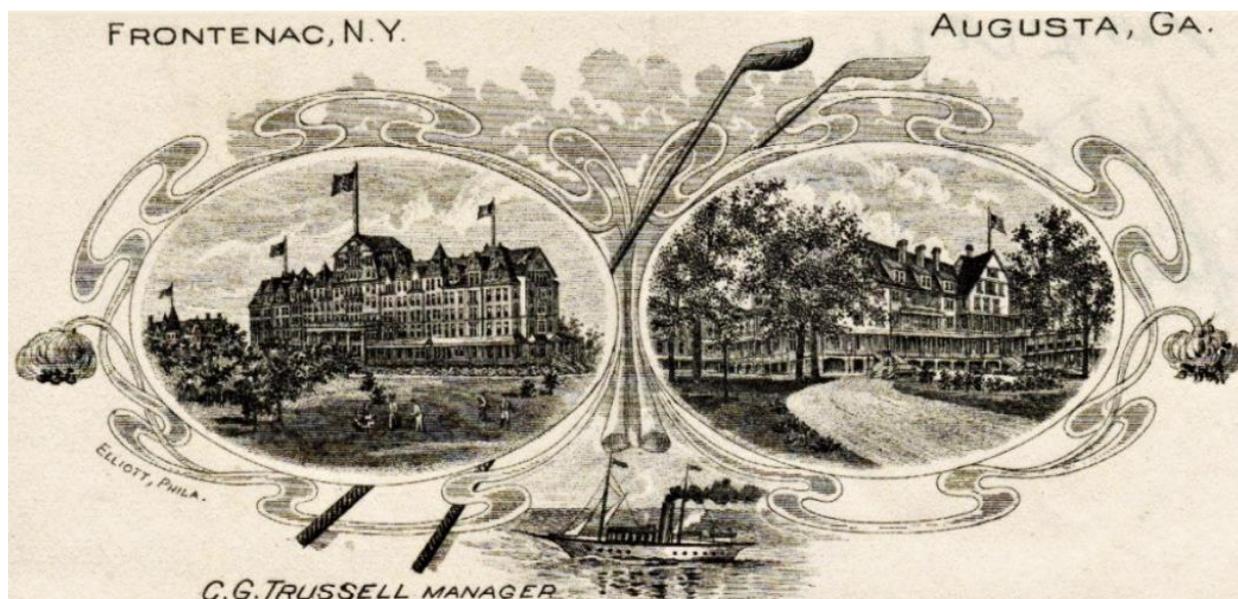


Figure 91 Advertisement circa 1900 of sister golf hotels in Augusta, Ga., and Frontenac, N.Y.

The photograph above of Rockefeller sitting on a bench talking with his young caddie standing beside him was published in the *Boston Globe* on February 4<sup>th</sup>. This means that the Underwood and Underwood photographer who had documented Rockefeller’s golf with Inglis had returned from his stay near the golf course to a studio where he could develop the negatives, and then give them to the Underwood and Underwood offices, where the company’s news bureau obviously offered some of them to newspapers. The process by which the *Boston Globe* would have been offered the photograph in question must have taken at least a week, if not considerably longer. So the photo shoot that produced the photograph published on February 4<sup>th</sup> must have occurred well before the end of January.

And for the last two weeks of January, we know that Rockefeller was playing golf daily at the Hotel Bon Air: “‘Oily John’ ... has been in this vicinity for the past two weeks. Mr. Rockefeller is stopping at the famous Bon Air Hotel which is situated on the heights overlooking this city. He can be seen almost any fine morning on the golf links adjoining the hotel ground. Coal Oil Johnnie is strong on golf” (*Central New Jersey Home News* [New Brunswick, New Jersey], 1 February 1909, p. 5)

Rockefeller arrived in Augusta to begin his winter residence in the Hotel Bon Air on Monday morning, January 15<sup>th</sup> (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 24 January 1909, p. 8). Apparently, “Mr. Rockefeller’s first purchase on arriving in Augusta was a season ticket to the Augusta Country Club, and he may be seen daily enjoying his favorite outdoor pastime” (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 24 January 1909, p. 8). So we have him in Augusta, Georgia, from January 15<sup>th</sup> right through to the end of the month.

It is possible that he slipped away from Augusta for several days to visit Jekyll Island precisely for the purpose of the photo shoot with Inglis. Jekyll Island would have offered privacy that the Hotel Bon Air could not: its guests watched the links daily for any sign of the match between Rockefeller and Taft that the newspapers had mentioned as a possibility.

It is also possible that Rockefeller visited Jekyll Island before arriving at Augusta.

Beginning in December of 1908, newspapers began to give out contradictory and changing information about when Rockefeller intended to arrive in Augusta. Judging by the many newspaper reports that I have read about his impending arrival in Augusta, I believe that the newspapers were simply reporting what the management at the Hotel Bon Air was telling them. If so, the newspaper reports indicate that Rockefeller kept changing his plans.

We read in one newspaper on December 18<sup>th</sup> of 1908 that Rockefeller will arrive at the Hotel Bon Air on 20 January 1909 and spend the rest of the winter there, just as he had done the year before (see the *Baltimore Sun*, 18 December 1908, p. 1). The next day, however, we read in another newspaper that “John D. Rockefeller has engaged rooms at the Bon Air Hotel, beginning on January 22. [President-elect] Mr. Taff will probably have left on his Panama trip before then” (*Sun* [N.Y.], 19 December 1908, p. 1).

Then on January 3<sup>rd</sup> of 1909, we read in the New York *Tribune* that “John D. Rockefeller, whose custom it has been for several years to spend some time at the Hotel Bon Air, has engaged rooms there for Jan. 7” (3 January 1909, p. 3). Then on January 5<sup>th</sup>, we read in the *Pittsburgh Press* that “John D. Rockefeller will arrive in Augusta either Thursday of this week [January 7<sup>th</sup>] or Thursday of next week [January 14<sup>th</sup>], and it is proposed that one of his first arrangements of his visit will be a game of golf with Taft” (p. 4).

The newspapers always reported on Rockefeller’s travel to various parts of the country, but they seemed particularly interested at this time in the possibility that the richest man in the world and the newly-elected President of the United States would meet in Augusta and perhaps play golf together.

## “Oily John” and the Two Willies

There is no reference in biographies of Rockefeller to his stay on Jekyll Island at the end of 1908 or the beginning of 1909, but the information reviewed above suggests that he was on the island sometime before he left New York City on January 14<sup>th</sup>, travelling by train on the Atlantic coast Line for Augusta, or sometime shortly after he arrived in Augusta on January 15<sup>th</sup>.

These dates would be suitable for a secret interview and a secret round of golf on Jekyll Island.

Jekyll Island Club members tended not to arrive on the island in large numbers before the middle of January. The official opening date was usually January 15<sup>th</sup>. Virtually while Rockefeller and Inglis were on the “Riverside” golf course in 1909, for instance, George Henry Macy – appointed to the committee of golf and sport the year before – began to campaign “for another, more modern course” and argued that it must be open for play by 1 January 1910 to attract new members to the club, “as we might be able to attract a good many people to Jekyll during that month, when there are few members” (June Hall McCash 150). So Rockefeller may have arranged to play his round of golf with Inglis on Jekyll Island some time in January to take advantage of an empty golf course for the purposes of their extensive photo shoot.

## Rockefeller Lets President-Elect Taft Play Through



Figure 92 Charles D. Lanier, circa 1887.

After William Howard Taft won the presidential election in November of 1908, Charles Lanier, the President of the Jekyll Island Club, invited him to spend the winter at Jekyll Island in advance of the inauguration, which in those days occurred in March. Although Taft expressed regret on November 18<sup>th</sup> that his schedule would not allow him to visit the island, the *Brunswick Times* reported that same day that the President-elect would indeed spend a week on the island – and he would have to pass through Brunswick to do so (18 November 1908, p. 1)!

Taft explained to Lanier, with regret, that he had already booked rooms for the winter at the Hotel Bon Air in Augusta. His winter in Georgia would be a working vacation: he would be studying the question of whom to appoint to cabinet positions in his new administration.

It was immediately and widely anticipated that since the two greatest golf addicts in the United States – Taft, the President-elect, and Rockefeller, the richest man in the world – were about to be in the same place at the same time, they were bound to play golf together.

Rockefeller had endorsed Taft in advance of the 1908 election. Taft seems to have liked Rockefeller personally, although he supported the anti-trust prosecutions of various Rockefeller companies that were under way, having begun under the previous administration. It seems that Taft and Rockefeller had actually made an informal arrangement to play golf together, their intention simply being to share their passion for golf.

But the newspapers built up the potential match as virtually a political and legal contest. The following headline was typical: “Taft Confident He Can Win On Links If Not In Court” (Norfolk Weekly News [Nebraska], 8 January 1909, p. 5). So anticipation built to a fever pitch: “Every other event in the sporting world now pales before the prospective game between Taft and Rockefeller on the links at Augusta” (Cincinnati Enquirer, 10 January 1909, p. 4).

## Rockefeller Lets President-Elect Taft Play Through



Figure 93 President William Howard Taft, circa 1909.

As the time of their anticipated meeting at the Hotel Bon Air approached, however, Taft seems to have got cold feet.

As mentioned above, he was assembling a cabinet in advance of his March inauguration, and there was talk in the newspapers that Taft might have invited Rockefeller to play golf in Augusta merely as a pretext for asking for his advice on Cabinet selections.

Was the new President taking advice on how to run the country from the worst of the robber barons?

Taft's wife is credited with having convinced him that it would be a mistake for him to be pictured in the newspapers as having played what most voters saw as a rich man's game with the man the newspapers depicted as the most ruthless of the rich. Perhaps she showed him news items like the following: "Now that John D.

Rockefeller has once more beaten the government back in its attempt to check his robbery of the people, he is about to go down to Georgia, and play golf with the next president of the United States" (*Rock Island Argus* [Rock Island, Ill.], 5 January 1909, p. 5).

Whatever the case may be, their game together was canceled and it was given out by Taft's handlers that a match on the links was impossible to arrange because poor old Rockefeller was not up to it:

### *Rockefeller-Taft Game Is Called Off*

*John D. Rockefeller is due to arrive in Augusta tomorrow, but the quest of the Bon Air Hotel, who have been looking forward to seeing a contest of golf between President-elect Taft and the great mogul of predatory wealth, are doomed to disappointment. There will be no golf game between Rockefeller and Taft.*

*The trouble comes from the fact that the great John D. has been represented as not having sufficient golf ambition to carry him around the entire eighteen holes of the Bon Air Course. The gossip here is that at the ninth hole he sighs wearily and quits.*

*Mr. Taft will not play with any man who does not make it around the entire course.*

*(Washington Times, 14 January 1909, p. 1)*

I suspect that Rockefeller was actually quite up for an eighteen-hole match and that the purpose of his secret retreat to Jekyll Island was not just to arrange for an easy interview with William Inglis and the friendly publicity it would bring, but also to sharpen his golf game for the match that he was anticipating with President-elect Taft.

Every story about the potential match was predicting that Rockefeller would lose. The following was typical: “No Doubt That President-Elect Could Win Golf Contest” (*Rutland Daily Herald* [Vermont], 7 January 1909, p. 3). Perhaps Rockefeller did not intend to lose.

Still, some newspapers made sure that the match happened virtually. The *Boston Globe*, for instance, recounted Rockefeller’s brief exchange of greetings with President-elect Taft after an Augusta Chamber of Commerce event that they had both attended on the evening of January 20<sup>th</sup>: “Mr. Rockefeller is a steady player. He was never more disturbed than when, in his first meeting with Taft at Augusta, the President-elect, in answer to Mr. Rockefeller’s ‘How are you?’ replied, ‘I’m feeling pretty good, thank you; I’ve just gone round in 88.’ Mr. Rockefeller said sadly, ‘Well that’s quite beyond me’” (4 February 1909, p. 4).

Alas, there is a good chance that this report was an instance of “fake news”!

Most newspapers did not report that Rockefeller had said those words. The *Atlanta Constitution* and the *Washington Post*, for instance, agreed that Taft spoke about his golf score, but they report that Rockefeller did not respond with an observation about golf. These newspapers indicate that Rockefeller ignored the boast about going “round in 88” and report instead as follows: “‘I wanted to hear you speak this afternoon,’ was the reply of Mr. Rockefeller, who added with a tone of regret in his voice, ‘but I could not get near enough’” (*Atlanta Constitution*, 21 January 1909, p. 5; *Washington Post*, 21 January 1909, p. 1).

Still, it only took a small fib for the *Boston Globe* to show Rockefeller defeated at golf by Taft.

Loyal to Rockefeller, Inglis seems to have tried to counter some of the negative things said about Rockefeller’s golf game when he published his article about their round of golf together. He made sure, for instance, to report that Rockefeller regularly played eighteen-hole rounds of golf, so at least the gossip about Rockefeller’s insufficient golf stamina was scotched.

## Rockefeller Lets President-Elect Taft Play Through

Perhaps disappointed that the match had been abandoned, the *New York Tribune* presented a pictorial image of a virtual match on the front page of its second section a few months later, where photographs of each man playing golf were placed side-by-side.



*Figure 94 Taft and Rockefeller are shown side-by-side on the front page of the second section of the New York Tribune on 4 April 1909 – a slight compensation, perhaps, for the fact that the anticipated match in January was called off.*

Ironically, although never identified as such, the photograph of Rockefeller used by the *Tribune* was, as we know, taken on Jekyll Island, and Rockefeller may have been captured in this photograph practising for the match against Taft that did not happen.

## Sartorial Signals

The photographs of Rockefeller playing golf with Inglis may not have been taken on the same day, or even in the same place.



*Figure 95 John D. Rockefeller, Keystone-Mast Collection, UCR/California Museum of Photography, University of California at Riverside.*

In each photograph, however, Rockefeller is shown wearing the same trousers, the same shoes, the same cap, and the same golf gloves.

Inglis writes: “He is very correct in his attire: gray striped trousers creased to the minute and rolled up above soft, buff golfing shoes whose rubber-studded soles give him a good grip on the turf in his stance; a green or gray sweater-coat with silken sleeves, and a round, gray, peaked cap. He wears golfing-gloves to give him a surer grasp on the shaft of his club” (16). The photograph to the left shows the items mentioned by Inglis.

In most of the photographs, Rockefeller is wearing the sweater-coat to which Inglis refers, but in several of the photographs, he is not. Instead, he is shown wearing a sleeveless vest over a shirt, as in the photograph of Rockefeller sitting on a bench talking with his caddie.



*Figure 96 Details from photographs above showing Rockefeller's vest and shirt. An article of clothing is visible on the bench to the right of the shaft that the caddie inserts into the golf bag (it may be the lined inside of the sweater coat that we see).*

In the photograph of Rockefeller at the top of his backswing with the clubhouse structures in the background, we can see that the shirt and vest that he is wearing seem to be the shirt and vest that are visible under his sweater-coat.

It may be that Rockefeller began playing a round of golf wearing his sweater coat and then removed it at some point during the round. Most January mornings on Jekyll Island are cool. Temperatures generally warm up considerably during the course of the day, allowing the removal of jackets worn in the morning.

My assumption is that Rockefeller began his round of golf in the morning, probably around his preferred and habitual starting time of 10:00 am. He wore his sweater-coat at the beginning of play because of the cool morning temperature but removed it when the temperature had risen significantly.

Although later in life Rockefeller confined himself to nine holes of golf per day, and played unvaryingly between 10:00 am and noon, Inglis observes in 1909 that Rockefeller these days “spends most of the hours of daylight on the grassy links” (16). So it is possible that Rockefeller and Inglis completed two or three circuits of the Dunn “riverside” course. Furthermore, although the photographs published in *Harper’s Weekly* give the impression of being genuine “action” shots, they were probably choreographed so that Rockefeller’s club would not be blurry because of its motion during an actual swing. So Rockefeller’s play on the day in question may have been prolonged because of the additional people and the additional purpose that were involved in this unusual round of golf. If he played golf all day and allowed the photographers to follow him from beginning to end of his day on the links, then some photographs could be from the morning and some photographs could be from the afternoon.

## Shadowy Information

In addressing this question, we can take directions from shadows cast.

The direction of shadows cast by the sun will have changed over the course of the day, and the length of the shadows will have shortened and elongated as well. Note also that if Rockefeller was indeed on Jekyll Island during January, then the sun will have been almost as low on the horizon as it ever gets in Georgia, and so his shadows will have been relatively elongated at all times during the day.

Unless the photographer used a powder flash to illuminate a photograph, we can regard Rockefeller as the perpendicular point of reference on a sundial.

We know that the golf course ran more or less north and south, and that two roads paralleled the fairways along the course's north-south axis (River Road and Old Plantation Road). Consequently, when Rockefeller is on a teeing ground setting out on a fairway that parallels one of these roads, a shadow lying ninety degrees to his left or right as he addresses the ball is pointing in a northerly or southerly direction. Because the sun cannot cast a shadow in a southerly direction on Jekyll Island, we can be sure of the following: (1) if a road is visible behind Rockefeller and his shadow falls perpendicularly to his left, he is playing a hole from south to north along River Road; (2) if a road is visible behind Rockefeller and his shadow falls perpendicularly to his right, he is playing a hole from north to south along Old Plantation Road.

Tee Box Northward

## Tee Box Northward

The first photograph in *Harper's Weekly* shows Rockefeller on a tee box at the top of his backswing.



Figure 97 *Harper's Weekly*, 13 February 1909, p. 16.

The teeing ground is rectangular, has a sand surface, and is slightly elevated above the surrounding turf. It looks well used.

Rockefeller stands much too far from his golf ball to hit it from where he is standing – unless he were to use the running approach of “Happy Gilmore.” It is likely that he is posing for the photographer – holding his backswing in a frozen position so that the club does not become a blur in the photograph being taken.



*Figure 98 Rockefeller's golf ball seems to be set on top of a metal or ceramic tee mold, like the brass mold shown on the right.*

The position of the ball on the tee is also unusual for another reason. It seems to have been set on an object resembling an egg cup. The device on which the ball rests was presumably a sand-tee mold.

It was the practice at all golf courses in Britain and North

America in the early years of the twentieth century (and would remain so well into the 1920s, as at Jekyll Island) to make a tee from a pile of sand for any ball to be hit from a teeing ground. The sand was kept in a container (usually a wooden box) at the teeing ground. It was kept wet in this box, or it was moistened as necessary with water from a container, so that the wet sand could be compressed into a metal or ceramic cone (like the one shown above), from which the sand would be dumped (or pressed out by means of a plunger) onto the teeing ground, where it would hold its conical shape, thus forming a sand tee.

The metal or ceramic tee mold itself did not rest under the ball to tee it up for a strike by a golf club, despite the impression created by this photograph. The fact that it rests under the ball as Rockefeller holds his club at the top of his backswing is another sign that Rockefeller was not swinging here to hit the ball.

The world's richest man does not stoop to tee his ball himself, mind you. Inglis notes that Rockefeller “is not made fidgety by grains of sand sifting into the fingers, because he allows the caddie to tee the ball for him” (p. 16).

## Tee Box Northward

Note that there is a road visible behind Rockefeller, and that his shadow falls ninety degrees to his left. The road visible behind him must be River Road, which marks out of bounds along the east side of the golf course, and he must be driving his ball northward. Visible through the trees behind Rockefeller is an apparently large treeless expanse: presumably the tidal marshes of Jekyll Creek are just beyond the road behind him.

Perhaps the outward holes were along the River Road (west) side of the golf course.

To Rockefeller's right as he addresses the ball, and so between him and any previous hole played along River Road, seems to have been a row of trees. We can see shadows of trunks and treeless branches falling across the tee box from behind Rockefeller, right across the tee box, and onto the ground in front of him.

The long stretch of golf grounds from Hollybourne Cottage to the bridge at Jasmine Road was intersected by a number of obstacles: there was the creek and its tributaries at Captain Wylly Road, there was the dairy farm, there was Palmetto Road, and there was the creek at Jasmine Road. Rockefeller would seem to have behind him a row of trees associated with one of these breaks in the open ground.

It seems likely that Dunn located greens and tees at points where pre-existing natural and artificial obstacles interrupted the open ground running northwards from the Maurice cottage. After all, since Dunn understood himself to have been laying out a temporary golf course in 1897, one that would not be used after 1998, one presumes that he would have worked around these barriers in laying out tees and greens – rather than going to the expense and trouble of eliminating obstacles and barriers and modifying features of the land, as he had so famously done at Ardsley just a year before – at the cost of \$75,000!

Indeed the aerial photograph from 1945 that we reviewed above suggests that both natural and artificial barriers found between River Road and Old Plantation Road motivated the articulation of Dunn's golf holes in 1897. Although almost fifty years had passed between the laying-out of the "riverside" golf course and the taking of the photograph in question, the major divisions of the open ground running north of Hollybourne Cottage on Dean Hoffman's "old hunting grounds" seem to have remained relatively constant.

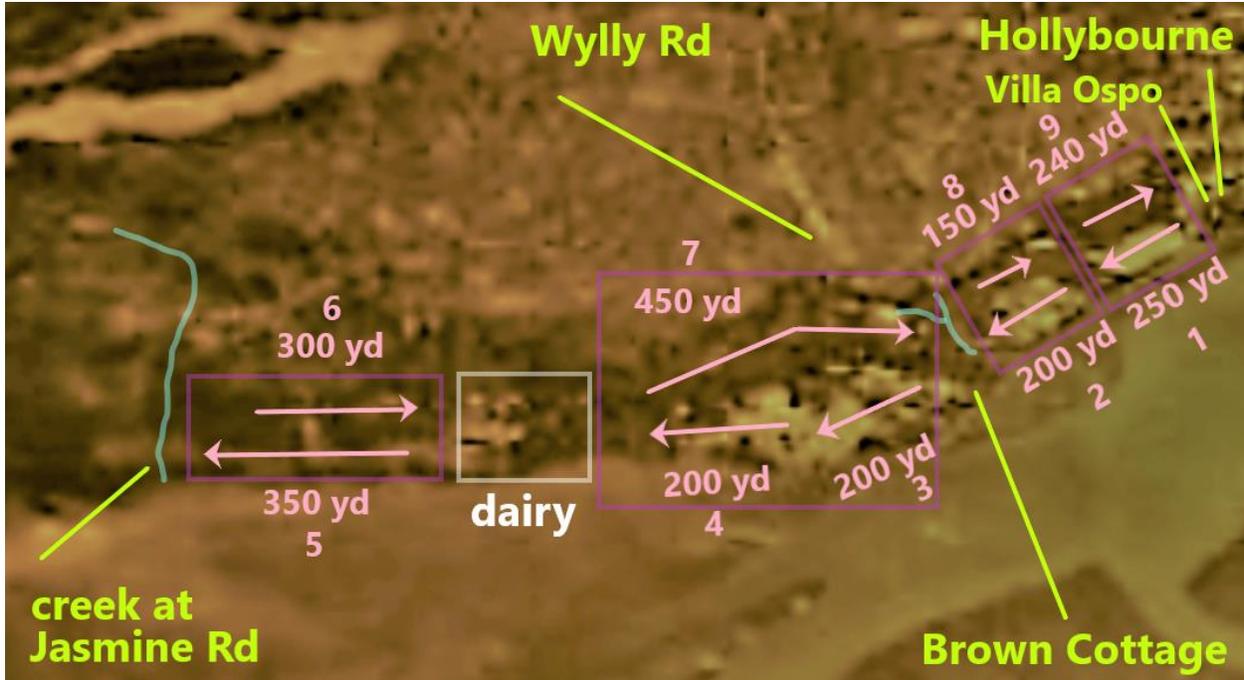


Figure 99 Likely routing of Dunn's "riverside" course if the holes going "out" were the ones closest to the shore.

In this photograph we can see that first golf holes must have begun and ended near the cottage built next to Hollybourne Cottage in the 1920s: Villa Ospo. Dunn's 1897 course would have begun closer to Hollybourne cottage, presumably where Villa Ospo sits.

We can also see that a section of golf holes seems to begin and end where Captain Wylly Road crosses both Old Plantation Road and River Road near where these roads encounter a creek, which was bridged by McEvers Bayard Brown so that his cottage property could be reached.

Similarly, golf holes seem to begin and end at the location of the dairy farm.

And we know that the golf course ended at the bridge at Jasmine Road.

## Tee Boxes Southward

The *Harper's* photograph that is the companion to the one above shows Rockefeller's follow-through.



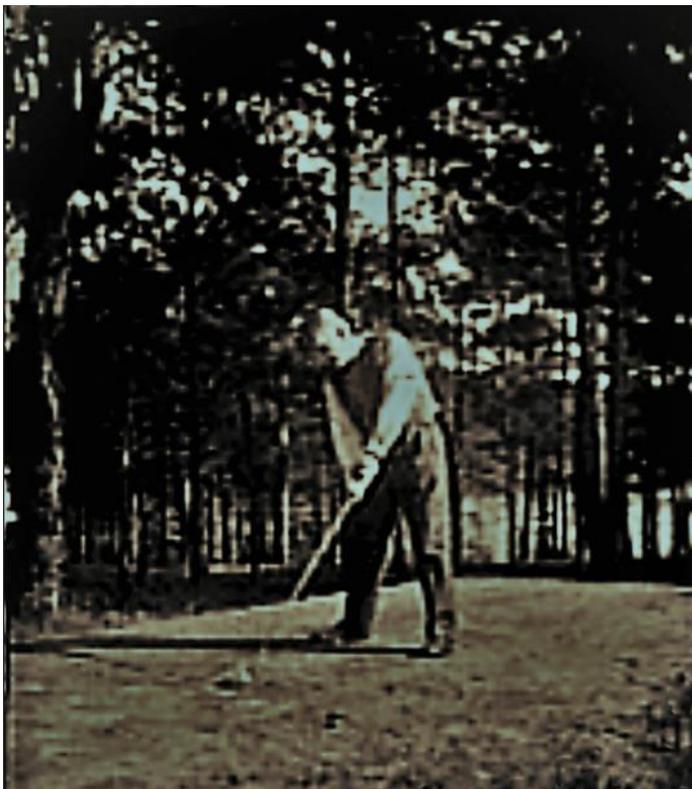
*Figure 100 Harper's Weekly, 13 February 1909, p. 16.*

There is a road behind Rockefeller. His shadow falls ninety degrees to the right of his address position (before the violence of his swing pulled his left foot off the ground and caused him to twist). The road

must be Old Plantation Road. Only trees and more trees, with virtually no open space at all, are visible in the background of the photograph, as would be consistent with most areas east of Old Plantation Road.

Rockefeller must be driving the ball more or less south. He is heading back toward the clubhouse compound.

The final photograph of Rockefeller on a tee box is of poor quality. (It is an orphaned item on the internet, once associated with the Smithsonian Institution, which may have the original photograph.) This is the only photograph of Rockefeller teeing off while not wearing his sweater-jacket. Rockefeller wears the same clothes that we see him wearing as he sits on the bench beside his caddie.



*Figure 101 Image apparently possessed by the Smithsonian Institution.*

Despite the poor resolution of the image, we can see another well-made rectangular tee box with one of its sharp corners visible behind Rockefeller. Like the other tee boxes, it has been elevated slightly above the level of the fairway.

We can make out through the trees behind Rockefeller a flat, treeless area of grass, marsh, or pond, beyond which is a thickly wooded forest on the side of a hill gently rising in the distance from right to left.

If this is indeed another photograph of Rockefeller's round on Jekyll Island with Inglis, we seem to be looking into the interior of the island, suggesting that this tee box is located along Old Plantation

Road – perhaps even between the road and the woods to the east of it. A tree immediately behind the tee box might be an indication that this tee box is located at another of the breaks in the contiguity of the open ground between Hollbourne Cottage and Jasmine Road.

Incidentally, a golfer cannot move on from analysis of this photograph without noting that it represents what is probably the best-looking address position of Rockefeller (as he prepares to drive the ball) that was ever captured on film. Head behind the ball, shoulders tilted upward to his left, arms dropping from

## Tee Boxes Southward

the shoulders, ball slightly ahead of the center of the stance, feet slightly splayed, slight flex in the knees: any golfer could make a good swing from this starting position.

## Fairways

In another photograph of relatively poor quality (it is another orphaned internet photograph associated with the Smithsonian Institution), we may see Rockefeller hitting his next shot after the tee shot depicted immediately above. He is again dressed in his vest and shirtsleeves.



*Figure 102 Image apparently possessed by the Smithsonian Institution.*

The shadow he casts is just as long as in the previous photograph.

We can just make out in the bottom left of the photograph the bag of golf clubs that the caddie rests upright on the ground.

In the background to the east is forest. We seem to be looking at the forest along the east side of Old Plantation Road. If so, Rockefeller appears to be heading south in the direction of the clubhouse compound.

In this forest, just above the golf bag in the photograph, we can make out what seems to be a light-coloured building

behind the tree trunk and branches of what is perhaps a live oak. There may be other buildings hinted at in the forest seen on the right side of the photograph. (The photograph is of such poor quality that it is hard to tell.)

## Fairways

It is possible that Rockefeller is playing the ninth hole across the open ground just north of Hollybourne Cottage and that in the woods in the background are buildings associated with the employees' residence known as "The Quarters."

We had a good view of another fairway in the *Harper's* photograph that shows the Club's windmill, water tower, and clubhouse tower in the background. Does it show another flag in the background?



*Figure 103 Greatly enlarged, enhanced detail from Harper's Weekly, 13 February 1913, p. 17.*

Whether the black shapes on the right side of the photograph, one of which has a light-coloured circle in the center of it, are golf flags on a pole in the middle of a sand green is hard to tell.

## Sand Greens Generally

Sand greens such as all Jekyll Island golf courses had until 1922 were the norm in the South. Anywhere in the country, however, where the requirement of finding a ready source of water, building a pumping station, and laying miles of water pipes to maintain grass greens was found impractical or too expensive, sand greens were used.

They were circular, square, or rectangular, and they had a permanent hole placed at their center. All putts were straight. For golfers who could hit a putt on the desired line, judging the pace of a putt was the key factor.

Construction of a sand green could be simple or sophisticated.

As Michael J. Hurdzan explains, "Oiled sand greens were developed by simply excavating a green cavity perhaps six to eight inches deep, filling it with medium to fine sand, then drenching it with used motor oil. The oil kept out the weeds and burrowing insects, as well as helped to bind the sand particles together to resist wind erosion" (*Golf Greens: History, Design, and Construction* [Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley 2004], p. 20)

With time, however, techniques for constructing oiled sand greens became more sophisticated, as explained by the following summary of Wright D. Taylor's explanation of rebuilding Texas sand greens in the mid-1920s ("How We Built Our Oiled Sand Greens," *Bulletin of the Green Section of the United States Golf Association*, vol 11 no 7 [July 1931], pp. 145-46).

To kill all grass, weeds, and plants of any sort under the green, heavy oil was allowed over several days to soak several inches deep into the natural soil. This layer of heavy oil would help to prevent oil from being drawn downward out of the layer of putting sand.

A permanent metal cup, attached to a hollow tube as much as three feet long, was placed in the center of the green, the bottom part of the tube filled with crushed rocks to allow water to drain below quickly. The edge of the cup was raised above the outer edge of the green by perhaps three-quarters of an inch so that the putting surface sloped gently down from the cup to the edge of the green, ensuring that water would drain in a consistent way and at a good speed to the edges.

Around the edge of the green might be placed a metal rim into which water running off the green would gather and be carried away to a drain. Sod would be placed around the green slightly raised near the

## Sand Greens Generally

edge of the green to ensure that water did not flow from the fairway or rough onto the green. This raised edge would also prevent sand from running away during heavy rain and helped to prevent oil from spreading onto surrounding grass and killing it.

The putting sand had to be prepared with great care. Sand had to be sifted many times to get just the right coarseness of particle for effective mixing with heavy oils. The oil was so heavy that it could only be mixed with the sand in warm weather or if heated. Oil was mixed into the sand until the latter was saturated. About one inch of this sand was applied to the green and then levelled and smoothed, tapering upward slightly but consistently from the edge of the green to the cup. The putting surface was slightly crowned.

After several days in place, the excess oil would drain down somewhat from the surface of the putting sand toward the base below so that the oil would no longer stick to the golfer's shoes. The one-inch depth of this sand was found to allow pitch shots hit from as far away as fifty yards to hold the green. The putting sand could be irrigated regularly, perhaps to a depth of three-quarters of an inch (and then smoothed again), to help the green to remain receptive to pitch shots.

The putting surface had to be smoothed not only after such maintenance procedures, but also after each group had concluded play on it.



*Figure 104 Smoothing a sand green at the Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina circa 1930 by pulling a drag mat around it.*

Smoothing a one-inch layer of sand with a special tubular “rake, carpet or drag-mat was effective in covering the ball mark made and the footprints made during a group’s play on the green, leaving it in proper shape for the next group. A one-inch depth of packed putting sand putted true after the smoothing procedure. The green could be quickly smoothed after play on it by dragging the mat in expanding concentric circles from the hole out to the edge of the green.

As Walter J. Travis noted in 1912, local rules for putting on these greens varied in the South:

*It is very interesting to note the various local rules which obtain at the principal Southern golfing resorts in respect to sand greens. At Palm Beach, for instance, a ball on the sand may be lifted and freed from any accumulated sand, and the line of putt may be lightly brushed across. At Augusta the ball may be lifted, cleaned, and placed on any part of the green, not nearer the hole; but the line of putt must not be interfered with. At Pinehurst they do things differently. There the ball must be played as it lies and the line of putt must not be touched. (American Golfer, vol 7 no 6 (April 1912), p. 46).*

Travis further observes, however, that because of the requirement at Pinehurst that the ball be played on the green as it lies, “there arose a demand on the part of the players for well-kept greens; constant brushing to keep the surface smooth, and systematic watering to keep the sand properly damp. And it must be acknowledged that the Pinehurst greens are excellently cared for. There is really no necessity for any local rules if proper care is bestowed on the greens” (p. 46).

## Sand Versus Grass in the South

Travis went on to note that there was no consensus in the South as to which type of putting surface – grass or sand – was to be preferred:

*The green committee of the Savannah Golf Club have decided to do away with their grass greens and to substitute oiled sand greens in their places, while at the Charleston Golf Club they have about made up their mind to put in grass greens to take the place of the oiled sand greens, which they have at present. Truly golfers are never satisfied. (American Golfer, vol 7 no 6, [ April 1912], p. 46)*

In the case of the debate about whether sand greens or grass greens were preferable, one golf course designer in the South became extremely creative:

*Work has been started on the new Druid Hill course, which is situated on the Ponce de Leon road about three and a half miles from the center of the City of Atlanta. This course was planned by H. H. Barker, and will be about sixty-four hundred yards in length. There will be four one shot holes, two going out and the same number coming home, and the course has been so arranged that both sides are exactly equal in length.... The greens will be made of Bermuda grass with the exception that in the center of each green will be a fifteen foot circle of sand, which will give a player a good chance to hole his six and seven-foot putts, while the rest of the green being grass will allow a ball to be played to the green and held, which is extremely difficult on sand greens. (American Golfer, vol 8 no 4 [August 1912], p. 384)*

## “Riverside” Sand Greens Particularly

Rockefeller putts on a Jekyll Island sand green in the *Harper’s* photograph studied above in which the caddie holds the Jekyll Island flags fluttering in the wind.



Figure 105 *Harper’s Weekly*, 13 February 1909, p. 17.

The caddie presumably stands near the center of the sand green, where the hole was permanently located. The green seems to have been circular (as opposed to the sand greens built on the 1909 Donald Ross course, which were square).

Although the 1897 Dunn golf course was said to have been flat, we can see that this green is at least somewhat elevated relative to its surroundings since the base of the trees beyond the green cannot be seen. Hitting a ball either over this green or left of this green would have made for a relatively tricky shot back onto the putting surface.

Can Robert Todd Lincoln have found this green complex “uninteresting”?

Beyond the trees visible behind the caddie seems to be open space. This green could be located at one of the breaks in the

contiguity of the open ground between Hollybourne Cottage and Jasmine Road marked by trees growing along roads or creeks running between River Road and Old Plantation Road. If so, the open space in the distance that is visible beyond the trees in question may mark the next segment of the golf course.

Rockefeller and Inglis play on sand greens in two other photographs in which Rockefeller is dressed in exactly the same clothing that he wears in the photographs accompanying the *Harper’s Weekly* photographs. Perhaps these photographs were also taken on Jekyll Island.

“Riverside” Sand Greens Particularly

The photograph below shows Rockefeller, Inglis, and their two caddies finishing up on another green.



Figure 106 Another orphaned photograph on the internet, not tethered to a site or institution.



Figure 107 Detail from photo above.

Inglis has just missed a putt, so he proceeds to tap in the short one that remains. Rockefeller is already stepping away from the green in the direction of the next tee, his caddy about to follow him. The caddy is ready to replace the flagpole in the hole. The blurry image makes it hard to tell, but the flag the caddy holds may have the Club's emblem on it.

Note that on the fringe of the green in the left bottom third of the photograph, right at the margin, we can see an object that seems to have four light-coloured letters of the alphabet printed on it. The quality of the image is so poor that the letters are hard to make out (perhaps they spell the word “BELT” or “FELT”). My suspicion is that we see here the matt or piece of carpet that was dragged over the putting surface to erase the footprints just made on the surface and to leave it smooth for the next players.

The final image of Rockefeller putting on a sand green presents an “action shot”: Rockefeller is in the middle of a putting stroke. The previous image of Rockefeller putting shows that his putter rests behind the ball when he addresses it. Now we see either the putter being drawn back or the putter moving forward in the striking motion.



*Figure 108 Inglis and caddie with John D. Rockefeller, Keystone-Mast Collection, UCR/California Museum of Photography, University of California at Riverside.*

Note that the fringe of the green is well-defined by grass. The grass seems full, maybe even lush. The grass surrounding the green is higher than the putting surface, so water does not run onto the green from the fairway and rough, and sand and oil do not run off the green onto the grass. The construction of this green complex seems to reflect some of the techniques described by Taylor later in the 1920s.

The golf course appears well-maintained. The greens seem as good as any at Augusta or Pinehurst in 1909.

## The Mystery of the White Caddie

Presuming that the Jekyll Island caddie master made sure that the richest man in the world was assigned the best caddie, one might also presume that the well-known journalist William Inglis who would have a national audience for his article about golf on Jekyll Island was assigned the second-best caddie.



Figure 109 Details from photographs above of the caddie for William Inglis.

If so, it turns out that he was white.

Lane Demas observes that while “A 1928 study of child labor in Mississippi noted the prevalence of young black caddies at courses .... The report did note that white children also caddied in Mississippi, yet apparently not as often” (p. 9).

In Montgomery, Alabama, in the early 1920s, a reporter asked an early member of the Montgomery Golf and Country Club named Hardwick Ruth about the first days of the club, and Ruth recalled that around 1903 “Caddies were paid twenty-five cents for an afternoon, no matter how many holes were played. Caddies, as now, were both negro and white” (*Montgomery Advertiser*, 26 August 1923, p. 6).

Perhaps the caddie who carried the golf bag of Inglis was the dairy man’s

stepson: Cecil McGonegal. He would have been seventeen years old when Rockefeller and Inglis played their round of golf.

When William and Lida Gildersleeve left Jekyll Island for the latter’s old home of Jacksonville in 1913, Cecil decided to remain behind, but he must have had to leave Jekyll Island when his father left his job

as dairy man. The *Brunswick News* notes that “his father ... Wm. Gildersleeve, a former dairy man at Jekyll Island ... recently removed to Jacksonville,” and “it seems that young McDougal ... has been living across the river” (26 August 1913, p. 1). The reporter gets young McGonegal’s last name wrong. Perhaps he was unable to find any friends of Cecil in Brunswick who knew it. In any event, for some reason Cecil did not stay long on his own in Brunswick: after several months he decided to join his family in Jacksonville.

On his own, he set out from Brunswick to Jacksonville by sea, sailing in a small gasoline-powered launch, towing a lighter behind him with all his furniture in it. The newspaper says that he was going to “Jacksonville via the inside route” (p. 1). That is, he was sailing along the west side of Jekyll Island, Cumberland Island, and Amelia Island.

The reason that a Brunswick reporter was discussing this information about Cecil McGonegal’s itinerary is because of what happened next:

*Three or four days passed and he did not turn up, but it was thought he was making the trip slowly and he [had] been expected in Jacksonville every day.*

*After a week had passed and he did not turn up his family started a search, but nothing at all could be learned until a few days ago when a Fernandina [Amelia Island] fishing smack picked up the lighter which was being towed by McDougal out at sea. The lighter was towed into Fernandina and has been identified as that which was being towed by the young man when he left Brunswick.*

*What has become of the young man and the launch is not known, A thorough investigation has been made and nothing whatsoever has been learned. His mother, who was in Jacksonville, went to Fernandina Sunday in an effort to locate her missing son, but no one in that place had seen him. It is now the belief that the young man struck a squall during the windy days last week and that some accident happened to him and his launch. The fact that the lighter load of furniture was picked up at sea is pretty good evidence that he had some sort of accident while en route to Jacksonville.*  
(p. 1)

## The Mystery of the White Caddie

On September 5<sup>th</sup>, about three weeks after Cecil had set out, the *Atlanta Constitution* pronounced a final word on the story: the “general opinion” is that “the launch went to the bottom, carrying its only passenger with it” (p. 3).

Poor Cecil.

He was never a Gildersleeve. When he was two, his mother gave him the name McGonegal. He may have been born Wright. And during his fifteen minutes of fame, the newspapers gave him the one name that was definitely wrong: McDougal.

I think of him in terms of lines from Shakespeare’s *Tempest*:

Full fathom five young Cecil lies.

Of his bones are coral made.

Those are pearls that were his eyes.

Nothing of him that doth fade,

But doth suffer a sea-change

Into something rich and strange.

Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell.

## That's Rough

We have an excellent *Harper's Weekly* photograph of Rockefeller playing from the rough.



*Figure 110 Harper's Weekly, 13 February 1909, p. 17.*

Rockefeller has apparently played a shot toward the white flag (with a dark circle in the middle of it) visible mid-way up the extreme right side of the photograph.

## That's Rough

Is this different flag an indication that Rockefeller has been photographed playing a different golf course? Or is this flag another version of the Jekyll Island Club flag – with the colours reversed?

A white flag with the Jekyll Island Club emblem in the center of it was used on the Donald Ross course in 1911. In the photograph below, a caddie can be seen through the slats of a bench for spectators watching the conclusion of a match. The caddie tends the flag, and it blows across his face.



Figure 111 Detail from a photograph in Jekyll Island Club (1911).

One can see in the darkened photograph on the right that the white flag has the four dark nodes that we would expect to see from the pattern of the crossed “J” and “I” in the Jekyll Island Club emblem.

It is possible, then, that the dark circle in the center of the white flag toward which Rockefeller aims his shot has been caused by the thick black lines of the Jekyll Island Club emblem: at the angle from which the camera photographed it, the black lines would all have blended together.

The Harper’s photograph above is another action-shot: Rockefeller has struck the ball, having played a pitch-shot, and is shown anxiously watching the result of his effort.

The putting surface seems to be well above him: notice how he stands right up to get a view of his ball landing on the green. Note also that he has had to play his pitch shot from the side of a significant mound or ridge – belying the claim that the golf course was absolutely flat.

The rough is thick, a proper penalty for having missed the green by such a wide margin.

To his left we see a thick hedge and two nearby trees of some size. Had his shot been slightly more off-line, he would have faced more serious trouble yet.

Again, is this the kind of golf hole that Lincoln found uninteresting?

Aim Line: First House or Second House?

## Aim Line: First House or Second House?

In the background of the above photograph, two buildings are visible.

In the detail from this photograph shown below, a relatively dark-colored house appears to the left of Rockefeller's back. Trees to the left of the house partially obscure it, as does a shiny fold in Rockefeller's sweater-coat that cuts off our view of the part of the house that extends to the right.

Visible just in front of Rockefeller's right elbow is a relatively light-colored house, nestled amongst trees on the horizon.



*Figure 112 Detail from the Harper's photograph above.*

It is possible that the white house is a farmhouse associated with the dairy. Recall that the Bagwells say that in the early 1900s, “three employee houses, adjacent to the dairy, were used by the gamekeeper, assistant gamekeeper, and the dairyman” (p. 114).

It is possible that the house on the left is Brown Cottage, as seen in the photograph below, which was taken about thirty years after it was built – as is evident from the number of trees having grown up around it since its treeless beginnings.



Figure 113 Brown Cottage, Bagwells p. 26.

If it is indeed Brown Cottage seen in the *Harper's* photograph above, it will have been the back part of it that was captured by the camera, for the front faced Jekyll Creek.

And if the houses in the photograph above are indeed Brown Cottage and a farmhouse at the dairy, the photograph shows Rockefeller to be on the north side of Captain Wylly Road and the north side of the creek that crossed Old Plantation Road and River Road before emptying into Jekyll Creek.

Note also that there could be another flagpole visible in the photograph, appearing diagonally just to the right of the whitish house, in front of it and above it. The image is indistinct, to say the least, but it could show two Jekyll Club flags – one light-coloured, one dark-coloured – attached to the same pole and being blown away from the pole. If so, there was clearly another green near the one to which Rockefeller played.

## Dunn's "Savanna" Course

We read as follows in the January issue of *Golf*: "Willie Dunn leaves at the first of the year to lay out some courses in the South, and he is then contemplating a trip into the West" (1898, vol II no 1, p. 48).

We know, however, that Dunn was still in New York as of the middle of January, telling the reporter from the New York *Sun* about his Jekyll Island plans.

Just over a month later, he shows up in Dayton, Ohio, laying out a nine-hole golf course in the latter part of February. The New York *Sun* reports on the completion of his work there in an item published 1 March 1898. Could this have been the "trip to the West" that he had mentioned to Van Tassel Sutphen? As a consequence of the delay caused by work on the temporary nine-hole course, did he simply reverse the order of his trips: West first; South second?

The McCashes write that "The course ... was under way in the spring of 1898. It was anticipated that the links would be ready for play by the opening of the following season" (p. 47). We know from Ernest Grob's correspondence with Club members that construction was under way in May and June.

The work planned by Dunn after for the spring of 1898 is outlined in the same article:

*The first tee will be about 300 yards from the clubhouse. The line of play will be bounded throughout the entire circuit by the woods, on one side, and by the main ditch, which will run on a line about 100 yards from the woods and form the inner boundary of the circle. Cross ditches and earth banks will form the hazards, for the most part. Another ditch will be cut through the "savanna" from end to end, into which the drains will flow. The meadow is the highest land, and, with a floodgate to ward off the inflowing tide, there will be a constant flow into the waters of the Atlantic. The ocean is in view from many of the tees and greens. The "savanna" is really an oval a mile and a half long and averaging a mile wide. The women's course will cross and re-cross the central ditch, and also be diversified by bunkers. The soil is rich loam, with traces of sand, and, when the meadow grass is mowed, Dunn believes that it will grow a fine, thick turf.... Dunn has staked out the new courses and the ditch lines, and should all go well, he believes that the "savanna" will be transformed into one of the grandest golfing grounds in the country by next autumn. (The Sun [New York] 16 January 1898, p. 8)*

As we shall see, what Dunn planned was a combination of the Donald Ross, Walter J. Travis, and Dick Wilson courses that were built later in the twentieth century. The area targeted for his nine-hole course for women is where in 1909 Donald Ross located his nine-hole course. The location of Ross's nine-hole course is now taken up mostly by the lake that Dick Wilson dug in the savanna in the early 1960s. Wilson's course around this lake is where Dunn intended to build most of his main eighteen-hole course. But Dunn planned that his eastern-most holes would run a bit further east than Wilson's – somewhere in the area of the northernmost holes of the Oceanside course built by Walter J. Travis.

The assurance that "The ocean is in view from many of the tees and greens" shows us the scope of his plans. From none of Donald Ross's tees or greens was a view of the sea available. Only from the tees and greens of today's Great Dunes course would the sea have been visible in 1898. Dunn, that is, planned for a golf course that would run up to the dunes on Jekyll Island's Atlantic coast.

## Dunn as Designer

Dunn's use of the terms "ditches" and "bunkers" must not be confused with how golf architects use such terms today: they have a unique meaning in relation to Dunn's distinctive design style and strategies.



*Figure 114 Tom Dunn, circa 1900.*

Willie Dunn no doubt learned this style of design from his older brother Tom Dunn (1849-1902), with whom he built the golf course in Biarritz where he met Vanderbilt. Tom Dunn died young, but he passed his construction philosophy on to his greatest pupil: his much younger brother Willie Dunn, Jr, who had been apprenticed to his brother at age thirteen and who would bring his brother's "penal" ditches and dykes to North America in the 1890s.

English golf professional Tom Dunn (1849-1902) has been called "the father of penal golf course design." He was a leading figure in the late 1800s movement of golf course building from the traditional home of golf on seaside links land to inland sites, leading to the development of heathland and parkland golf courses. His designs are

distinguished by his tendency to put a row of bunkers thirty to forty yards wide across fairways (they came to be called "cross bunkers").

He was the son and nephew of noted mid-1800s professional golfers William Dunn, Sr, and twin brother Jaimie Dunn, respectively. In due course, he became more famous than his father and uncle because of his instrumental role in the building of new golf courses around London as the popularity of golf spread from Scotland to England. His style of golf course architecture derives from the difficulties he faced in attempting to develop the traditional challenges of the existing links-land golf courses on land that had been tamed and developed to serve as fields, meadows, parks, and so on.

Golf historians suggest that the rudimentary cross-bunker hazards for which Tom Dunn became famous – and then infamous when they went out of fashion – were the simplest and most economical way for him to introduce hazards onto otherwise featureless land where he was asked to build the majority of

his golf courses: “Tom Dunn's courses were rudimentary given the lack of earth moving equipment available at that time. His standard design feature was to lay out a ditch or bunker on the near side of the green, often right across the course which had to be carried from the tee. It was the same kind of carry for the second shot and if the player had to hack out of the first bunker, the next hazard was in reach” (Famous North Berwick Golfers <http://www.northberwick.org.uk/dunn.html>). Tom Dunn was not the only architect to do this, but he “is believed to be the first to use turf dikes (dug up earth piled high to form a wall) .... often placed ... about 30 to 40 yards in front of greens, occasionally placing sand at the base” (Forrest L. Richardson and Mark K. Fine Bunkers, Pits & Other Hazards (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2006], p. 104).

The Dunn family was among the most influential families in the history of golf course construction.

Willie Dunn, Sr, had the two golf-course-building sons we have met already, Tom and Willie, Jr. But as we know, one of his daughters married a man named William Tucker, and all four of their sons became golf professionals in the United States – Willie Tucker becoming John D. Rockefeller’s instructor. Stories in the sports sections of newspapers in the American Northeast in the late 1800s and early 1900s are full of references to golf courses being built by “the Tucker brothers” (William and Samuel). Willie Dunn, Jr, also worked with his two nephews in building a number of these golf courses, as at Philadelphia.

Another of his Tucker nephews, John Dunn Tucker, extended the Pinehurst Number One course to eighteen holes in 1901. Another of his nephews, John Duncan Dunn, joined him from Britain in 1897 and served as his assistant professional at the Ardsley Country Club. John Duncan Dunn became his Uncle Willie’s partner the next year in a New York City golf club company. He built golf courses, too, designing Ekwanok Country Club’s course in 1899-1900 with Walter J. Travis. This was the first golf course in North America to be compared favourably to golf courses in Britain.

So although Willie Dunn did not invent the “earth banks” for which he became even more famous than his brother (whom he out-lived by fifty years), he had come by his fondness for them honestly: they were as close to being in Dunn family blood as possible. We can see an example of them on the private golf course that he built in 1895 for William Bayard Cutting. The relatively flat, featureless land of Bayard Cutting’s Long Island estate, called Westbrook (at Islip), was made more challenging for golfers by the artificial hazard that was the distinctive feature of Dunn courses – the turf dike, earth bank, ditch, trench, or cross bunker (it went by many names).

Dunn's drawings for the golf courses that he built in the 1890s show his determination to force golfers to carry the ball in the air across hazards – whether natural or man-made.

For all to see, he published in the *New York Sun* his plans for what would become for the time the most expensive golf course ever built: the Ardsley Country Club in Ardsley Park, Irvington, New York.

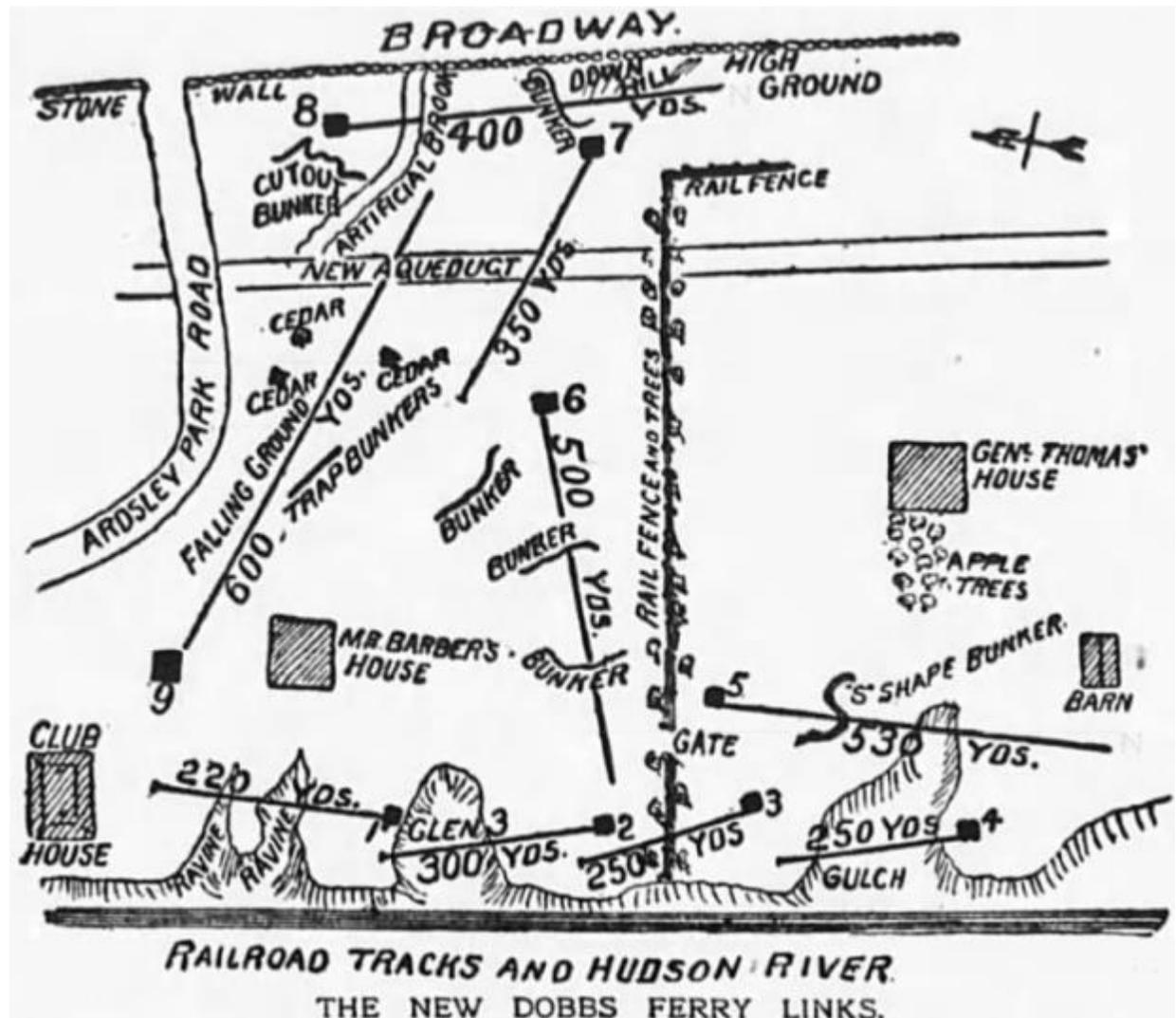


Figure 115 *Sun* (N.Y.), 24 November 1895, p. 20.

Eight holes on the then nine-hole golf course cross a deep hazard of some sort. Dunn takes advantage of the fact that the golf course borders the Hudson River: so, along the river's edge, his first hole crosses two ravines, his second hole crosses a "glen," and his fourth and fifth holes cross a gulch. The golfer on the fifth hole also has to cross an S-shaped cross bunker. Dunn builds two cross bunkers on the sixth, which was his brother's standard practice. The seventh hole crosses an aqueduct. The eighth hole

crosses a cross bunker and an “artificial brook.” The ninth hole crosses an aqueduct. The golfer on the third hole merely faces an above-ground hazard: a “rail fence.”

Two years later, Dunn published similar plans for the more modest course for the Elmira Country Club.



**THE ELMIRA LINKS.**

Figure 116 Sun (N.Y.), 16 January 1897, p. 8.

Eight of the nine holes of the Elmira golf course were made to cross ditches, pits, or small ponds, and the other hole was made to run for 315 yards with a ditch as its left boundary. Note that Dunn ignores the land at the center of the lot owned by the Elmira Country Club: he is uninterested in it because ditches exist only around the perimeter of the property.

## Dunn as Designer

We have seen an example of among the earliest of Dunn's artificial hazards for flat land at the Golf Club of Lakewood that he designed in 1893 (while bullfighting).



*Figure 117 Three earth banks or turf dikes, with ditches or bunkers or pits or trenches parallel to them, at the Golf Club of Lakewood, New Jersey, designed by Willie Dunn, Jr, in 1893. One earth bank can be seen in the far distance, crossing the entire fairway. Two are seen in the foreground, crossing part of the fairway.*

His celebrated Westbrook course built two years later for William Bayard Cutting, Sr, used the same artificial hazards for similarly flat land.



*Figure 118 Westbrook golf course, designed by Willie Dunn, Jr, in 1895.*

Because of the influence of the Dunn family, by the late 1890s, building a golf course in North America according to any other philosophy than that of "penal" design was not easily conceivable.

For instance, in *Golf: A Handbook for Beginners* (1895), one of the first books ever published on North American golf, James Dwight offers his complete advice on "Laying Out Links" in just seven sentences, and his focus is on hazards: "It should be understood that links vary greatly in length as well as in the character of the ground. There is no definite distance between the holes. If you possibly can, get some

competent person to lay out the course for you. It is hardly likely that a beginner can take all advantage of the different natural hazards, etc. **The distance between the holes must vary according as open places occur with some hazard in front.** As to distance, an average of 300 yards makes a good long course. Some of the holes should be 400 to 450 yards apart, and one short hole of 100 to 120 yards” (p. 41, emphasis added). Note that laying out a golf course is all about making golfers cross hazards: one needs a competent person to take advantage of the natural hazards, and to recognize how to put a hazard between golfers and their targets.

Similarly, in his advice on how to build a golf course in his 1898 book *Golf*, Garden G. Smith writes as though “penal” design is the only design possible: “supposing a hole be 250 yards in length measured from the teeing-ground, **there should be a hazard of some sort extending right across the line of the hole**, about 100 or 130 yards from the tee. Beyond this the ground should be good; but, guarding the hole again, and **some 30 or 40 yards in front of it, there should be another hazard** which the player would have to carry before reaching the putting-green” ([New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co, 1898], p. 10, emphasis added). Smith channels the spirit of the Dunns.

In its 1897 second edition, Wright & Ditson’s *Guide to Golf in America* includes a new section on how to build a golf course, and in it we see the same penal assumptions. First, golfers must carry the golf ball over hazards: “the hazard to be surpassed ... should be sometimes near the teeing-ground and sometimes at nearly a full drive’s distance from it.” Second, “there should be always some hazard or bunker to trap a poorly played drive.”



Figure 119 Alexander Findlay, early 1900s.

The Wright & Ditson *Guide* presumably reflects the ideas of Alex Findlay, hired by Wright & Ditson in 1897 to design and sell their golf clubs. The company also promoted Findlay’s work as a designer of golf courses in the American Northeast from 1897 to 1900: the company’s plan was to provide golf courses where consumers could use their products. He designed over 100 early American golf courses and thereby earned a place as one of the fathers of American golf.

Findlay clearly endorses the Dunns’ philosophy with regard to the creation of hazards on inland courses: “Where nature, by some oversight, has forgotten to provide hazards or bunkers, they should be built by man.”

Reading his *Guide*’s account of the kind of obstacles that these early golf

course architects dreamed up to force golfers to carry the ball over hazards is shocking: one option was “wooden hurdles with sloping sides” (a problem being that the obstacle does not always work, for “the ball often strikes them and bounds over on the other side”); another option is “building hedges of branches, such as are used in hurdles of steeple-chasing” (the problem being that “the ball is apt to be lost in them or creep into such a nook as to be unplayable”). In the context of such desperate attempts to create hazards on otherwise featureless land, the *Guide* sees the Dunns’ cross-bunkering system as much more preferable: “The best [hazards] are made by building a pile of earth work, about waist high and with sloping sides.... The trench behind the mound should be filled with loose sand, if possible, as ... it is less unpleasant to play a ball out of sand than out of the mud that is sure to collect in such a place in wet weather. This bunker may be either in a straight line across the course, or in a zig-zag pattern like the lines of a fortification” (29-35).

So now we know what Dunn meant when he told the Club that “Cross ditches and earth banks will form the hazards, for the most part.... The women’s course will cross and re-cross the central ditch, and also be diversified by bunkers.” His golf holes were to be oriented perpendicularly to artificial banks of earth stretching about waist-high from side-to-side of each fairway. The banks would either lie behind the trench created by digging up the dirt that formed the banks or lie behind the drainage ditch whose dirt was piled beside it in a bank.

## Not Doing Anything Not Necessary Now

Whether what Dunn proposed to build for the Club would have made “one of the grandest golfing grounds in the country” is not clear. He made such a promise to everyone.

Although he had always suggested that finding the place to build the Jekyll Island course was arduous, he recalled the construction of it as relatively easy and quick, and as totally successful: “We brought in Negro workers and cleared off the land, finding that few alterations in the landscape were necessary. In a short time we had put in a fine course – one of the most picturesque courses I have ever seen” (“Early Courses of the United States,” 25).

Alas, however, “the best laid plans o’ mice an’ men / Gang aft agley.” Dunn’s picturesque vision was never fully realized.

The first problem was that the Jekyll Island Club seems to have abandoned Dunn’s plan for a twenty-seven-hole golf complex rather quickly. Less than two weeks after *The Sun* described Dunn’s projected pair of eighteen-hole and nine-hole courses, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* indicated that just eighteen holes were to be built: “The Jekyll Island Sportsmen’s Club, one of the most noted organizations in the South, has arranged to build an eighteen hole course this spring” (28 January 1898, p. 5).

Golf publications, however, only ever reported the existence of a nine-hole “savanna” course at Jekyll Island. The following report in *The Golfing Annual* (1897-98) is the first reference to this course that I have found: “JEKYLL ISLAND SPORTSMEN’S GOLF CLUB: The course, of nine holes, is on Jekyll Island, off the Georgian coast, and is laid out on what is known as the ‘Savanna,’ but it will require a lot of draining to bring the ground into anything like good condition” (337). Editor David Scott Duncan, who lived in Scotland, signed his Preface (thanking contributors and club secretaries for providing the information contained in his book) in May of 1898, so the information about the Jekyll Island golf links must have been submitted early in the spring of 1898 (if not even earlier). Construction clearly had not yet begun; the problem of drainage still stands in the way of success. Duncan records not what the Club possesses in the way of a golf course, but merely what the Club hopes to have.

Editor Duncan must have received his news about the nine-hole course from Dunn himself. Duncan was a well-known Scottish sportsman who was friends with most of the notable Scottish golfers of the day, including Dunn and other members of his family. So it would seem that well before Dunn actually showed up at Jekyll Island during the spring of 1898, he had told Duncan that no more than nine holes were

## Not Doing Anything Not Necessary Now

authorized for construction. And so Dunn must have significantly adjusted his routing of golf holes for the savanna.

Dunn's plans to build twenty-seven holes for "one of the grandest golfing grounds in the country" may have run up against the abiding culture of developmental minimalism that prevailed at the Jekyll Island Club: "the principle of doing all that is necessary and doing it in the best manner possible, and not doing anything now which is not necessary" (McCashes 48).

In their professional or business vocations, members of the Jekyll Island Club were successful, in part, because they never did anything by halves. In the case of their golf courses at Jekyll Island, however, they almost always did things by halves – except in the case of Dunn's design, which they did by a third.

## Construction

Construction was under way during the Spanish-American War (which lasted from the end of April to the middle of August in 1898), for the McCashes note that “Despite the onset of war, construction work continued on the club’s first golf course. When it was nearly done, Grob remarked, “I don’t think the ‘Spaniards’ will want to play ‘golf in our yard, they will have all they can do to play will Dewey” (88).

The report the next year in *The Golfing Annual* (1898-99) omits reference to the drainage problem but is otherwise the same: “The course, of nine holes, is on Jekyll Island, off the Georgian coast, and is laid out on what is known as the ‘Savanna’” (317).

The *Official Golf Guide* published in 1899 also refers to the new golf course. We know that this book was printed early in 1899 because the editor Josiah Newman was handing out signed copies of the guide to friends at the beginning of March of 1899. His information about the status of the golf course may have been no more up to date than Duncan’s information was the year before. He writes as follows: “JEKYLL ISLAND SPORTSMEN’S CLUB – In 1898 Willie Dunn laid out a nine-hole course here, which is now becoming a very fair green” (123). The next year, the *Official Golf Guide* of 1900 said exactly the same thing.

The problem with the reports in the *Official Golf Guide* of 1899 and 1900 is the same as the problem with the report in the *Golfing Annual* of 1898: what is reported about the Dunn course is more out-of-date hope than up-to-date fact.

The fact is that much more went “agley” for Dunn’s “best laid plans” than the reduction of his vision from twenty-seven holes to nine.

## The Fickle Finger of Fate

What happened to Dunn’s 9-hole 1898 golf course?

The worst hurricane in Jekyll Island’s history. To this day, it is ranked the worst hurricane ever to hit the state of Georgia; it is recorded as the sixteenth worst hurricane in U.S. history.

On 2 October 1898, what today we call a “category four” hurricane struck Jekyll Island with winds reaching between 130 and 135 mph. Fifty miles north of the eye of the hurricane, it blew into place a long, high sand ridge on Ossabaw Island where there was no such thing before; it still exists today.

The image below shows the path of the eye of the hurricane, in comparison with other hurricanes in the 1800s that approached the island. It passed through the narrow strait between Jekyll Island and Cumberland Island.

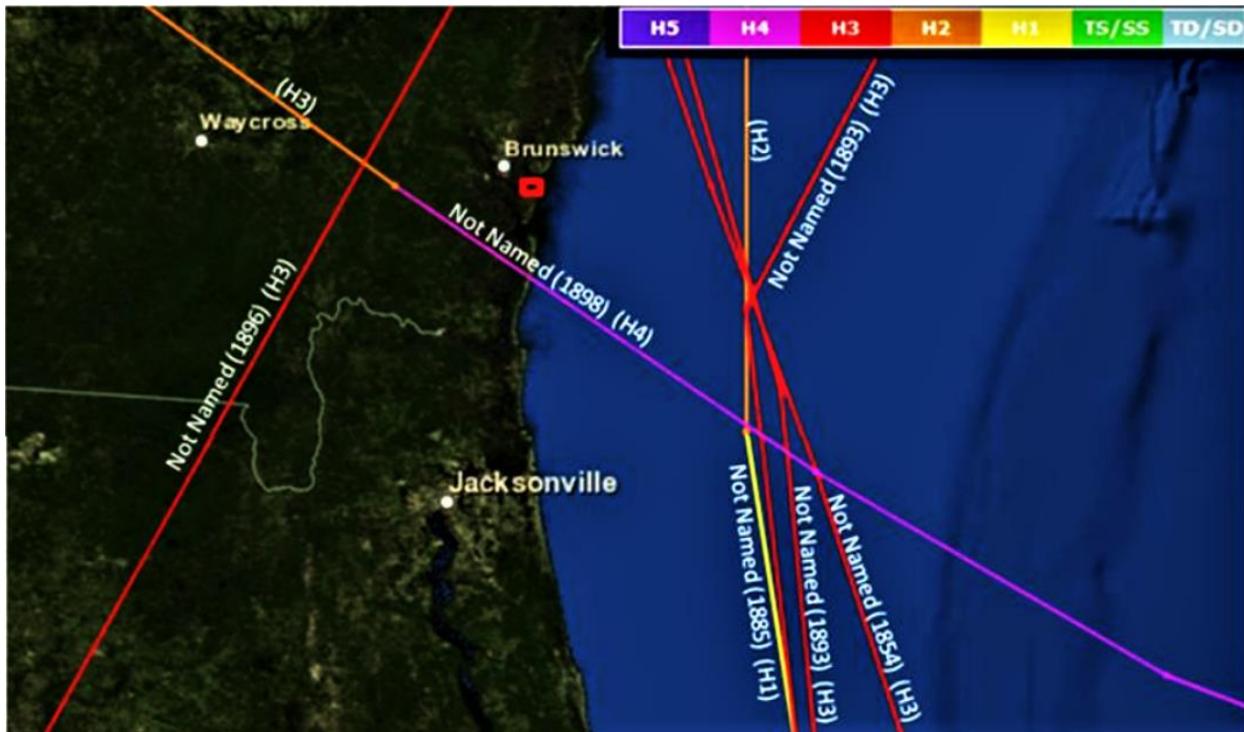


Figure 120 The 1898 hurricane is marked by a purple line, passing the southern tip of Jekyll Island as a category four hurricane on its way to Brunswick, Georgia. Map from Daniel McCarthy, “A Hurricane Record of Jekyll Island, Georgia” (21 November 2013, Department of Geosciences, Georgia State University).

Hundreds died. Many were swept from islands, including Jekyll Island, and never found.

The problem for Jekyll Island was less the wind than the storm surge. The highest level of the hurricane's storm surge along the Atlantic coast – almost twenty feet above sea level – occurred at Jekyll Island, which was just to the northeast side of the eye, the most dangerous location in a hurricane.

The 1898 hurricane's impact is described in "Laurens County Georgia – the Early Years: A Hurricane Comes":

*The moon had been full on September 29, 1898. Horace Gould, of St. Simons Island, reported that the wind had been blowing steadily out of the northeast for three days prior to the arrival of the storm. The "northeaster" added to the water level in the marshes and estuaries, which is normally higher in October along the Georgia Coast. The storm struck late in the evening of the 2nd. The inhabitants of St. Catherine's, Campbell, Butler, Wolf, and Chapney Islands to the north of St. Simons Island suffered the most damage - being on the deadly northeastern edge of the storm. All but one person on St. Catherine's was killed. All fifty something residents of Campbell Island were washed away in the storm surge. A little to the south, residents of Darien reported that the storm surge was thirteen feet high.*

*J.A. Falk, assistant superintendent of the Jekyll Island Club, reported that "we had the most severe storm ever known here - it was a tidal wave." The dunes along the beach were washed away. The fisherman's houses and the northern and southern ends of the island were washed away. The village of millionaire's cottages survived the storm virtually unharmed, despite the fact that the entire island was covered with water and many oaks were blown down....*

*Twentieth century studies of archival data have concluded that the eye of the storm may have passed thirty miles more to the south than was originally thought. With a pattern of increasing storm surges, which peaked on Jekyll Island at 19 feet, it appears likely that the hurricane made landfall on Cumberland Island.*

*(<http://laurenscountygeorgiatheearlyyears.blogspot.com/2010/12/hurricane-comes-to-laurens.html>)*

Contemporary newspaper accounts that were widely distributed by news services contribute more to this picture. In one widely carried story on 8 October 1898, we read that "Meager reports from the Sea Islands, on the coast, are far from reassuring. At Jekyl Island, where the club houses of New York

## The Fickle Finger of Fate

millionaires are situated, much damage has been done” (*The Kansas Optimist*, 8 October 1898, p. 3). The *Atlanta Constitution* reported that “Jekyll’s dock is on Joseph Pulitzer’s cottage porch” (6 October 1898, p. 3). Another story widely carried on the same day presented much more detail: “At Jekyll Island, the millionaires’ resort, the tide rose to the first floor of the clubhouse and inundated the handsome cottages. The pier was partly carried away. The damage to the clubhouse and cottages is estimated at \$20,000. The launches and steamers of the Jekyll Island Club floated from the landing place into the clubhouse grounds” (*The Democratic Advocate* [Westminster, Maryland], 8 October 1898, p. 6).



Figure 121 A man stands in the middle of flooded downtown Brunswick after the category four hurricane of 2 October 1898.

The McCashes summarize the impact of the hurricane on Dunn’s 1898 golf course: Jekyll Island Assistant Superintendent “Falk reported the entire golf course ‘covered with tide water.’ He predicted that there would be no grass and the course would not be in condition for the coming season” (47).

The state of the grass was the big question. Dunn had burned off the savanna’s natural sea grass and reseeded the area “using Bermuda grass” (Clive Aslet, *The American Country House* [New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1990], p. 255). Although it was late in the growing season for

Bermuda grass, the new grass was still growing on October 2<sup>nd</sup> when the hurricane hit and its accompanying storm surge submerged the new grass for days under very warm salt water.

## Bermuda Grass

As this tender new growth of grass remained “covered with tide water” at the time Falk wrote, there was a real question as to whether the new golf course grass would survive its inundation by salt water. His prediction that there would be no grass and that the course would not be in condition for the coming season was no doubt reasonable.

The “savanna” was at about three feet above sea level in its center where the stream flowed (today the lake that Dick Wilson created at the center of the Oleander course on the savanna is three feet above sea level). The savanna is about ten to thirteen feet above sea level at the higher edges of its saucer-shaped meadow. So with a tidal surge reaching nineteen feet, all of the “savanna” was covered by the ocean’s water at the height of the storm. As the marsh sea grass had been burned and the remains of it hoed off the “savanna,” the meadow had been seeded sometime in the late spring or summer of 1898 with the preferred golf course grass: Bermuda.

Note that as overnight temperatures drop during the late fall and winter in Georgia, this grass becomes entirely dormant. The grass stops growing and turns a beige or brown colour.

Furthermore, newly planted grass needs a good season of growth to survive its first winter:

*Bermuda seeds planted too late in the year run the risk of not producing and storing enough food reserves to last through the winter dormancy period. Basically the plants starve and then die because not enough growth occurs after planting to store the needed food in the root system. Dormancy is not a complete stopping of activity, so even when dormant the plant still needs nutrients and water to survive.*

*(<http://www.bermudagrass.com/info/whentoplant.html#.Xo2va8hKjIU>, “When to Plant Bermuda Grass,” Seedland)*

Entering its dormant period right after an October salt-water inundation must have really set back the establishment of proper grass coverage on the new fairways, as the following suggests:

*If your Bermuda grass is subject to flooding, the good news is that it is more likely to recover than any other grass seed type. However, that doesn’t mean that it will come out completely damage-free .... The reason that flooding is so damaging to lawns is*

*that it limits the amount of oxygen and sunlight that the grass can access, thereby limiting photosynthesis and the breakdown of sugars.*

*Your lawn will be more damaged if:*

*The floodwater is stagnant rather than fast moving.*

*The grass is completely submerged, as opposed to the floodwater covering just the roots, crowns, or only partway up the leaves. The deeper the floodwater, the more damage will be done to the grass.*

*The lawn is actively growing. Dormant lawns will incur less damage from floods.*

*The water temperatures exceed 50°F. A lawn that is submerged in 50°F water or less can last up to 60 days, while a lawn that is submerged in water whose temperature is greater than 50°F will be able to survive only 4 to 6 days.*

*Once the floodwaters have receded, ... remove any debris and any silt that is thicker than ½". Clean up the lawn, and then try to till the remaining silt into the soil. A good aeration can help increase oxygen levels in the soil, which the lawn desperately needs at this time.*

*Observe your lawn carefully for the next few weeks. If more than 60% of it is recovering, you can probably do a partial renovation by reseeding or re-sodding the bare areas in the late spring or early summer. If less than 40% of the lawn has recovered, it would be more economical to do a complete renovation of the lawn. Kill and remove all remaining grass, and till any extra plant material well into the soil. ("Repairing Flood Damage in a Bermuda Seed Lawn," Nature's Seed <https://www.naturesseed.com/grass-seed/bermuda-grass/repairing-flood-damage-in-a-bermuda-grass-lawn/>)*

So Falk's fears seem entirely reasonable, according to twenty-first-century expertise on the matter. Yet his boss disagreed: the McCashes note that "By December, ... Superintendent Grob seemed more optimistic about getting the links for at least part of the season. 'You can send a man down to lay out the putting greens and ... bunkers at any time,' he notified Claflin" (p. 47).

## Bermuda Grass

These “bunkers” were not to be the sand traps of modern golf architecture, we recall, but rather the artificial earth-walls and accompanying pits of the Dunn style.

Were these “putting greens” to be grass or sand?

If Grob thought that grass could be planted on the Dunn greens in December, he had another thing coming. Bermuda grass will not germinate in Georgia during the winter, and a cool-season variety of bent grass would take three to four months to establish itself.

Had Superintendent Grob made the right call?



Figure 122 Ernest Gilbert Grob, circa 1890s.

Grob had been away from Jekyll Island when the hurricane hit. The *Savannah Morning News* reported in September that he had visited the Adirondacks on a “lengthy trip North and East” and was “now touring Europe” (11 September 1898, p. 12). At the end of October, we read that “General Superintendent E.G. Grob is now in Europe recuperating from a severe illness” and that the other “superintendents of the various departments at the Jekyll Island Club property are working to get things in shape for the coming season: the problem is that “It will take about thirty to sixty days to get everything in proper shape, but before the expiration of that time the guests will begin to arrive” (29 October 1898, p. 9).

Finally, on December 6th we read: “Supt. E.G. Grob has just returned from a European trip, where he was the guest of Mr. Frederic Baker, secretary of the Jekyll Island club” (p. 11). Grob had just one week on the island before the Club opened on December 14th.

Did Grob underestimate the damage done to the golf course by the storm surge? Grob may not have understood how severely the new golf grass had been stressed by the period of inundation. Bermuda grass submerged under water that reaches eighty-six degrees can die within twenty-four hours. The average water temperature around Jekyll Island at the beginning of October is almost eighty degrees to begin with, and shallow floodwater covering the savanna may well have been quickly heated to a higher temperature by the sun.

When he returned to Jekyll Island in December of 1898, what grass can he have seen growing on the savanna that would have given him confidence that the golf course could be made playable during the coming winter? Bermuda grass will have been long a dormant brown before he saw the savanna during the second week of December.

One wonders if Grob felt guilty about being unable to supervise the Club's recovery from the hurricane's damage, leaving the other superintendents to clean things up as quickly and as best they could. Was he in denial about the state of Dunn's 1898 "savanna" course when he wrote to Clafin, hoping that he could make a heroic salvaging of the new golf course his own special contribution to recovery effort?

## Horace Rawlins

The McCashes write that in response to Grob's suggestion that Clafin send a man down to do greens and bunkers, "by the first week of January 1899, a golf professional named Rawlins from Lakewood, New Jersey, was on the scene and hard at work on the course" (p. 47).

John Companiotte writes in *A History of Golf in Georgia* that "Willie Dunn Jr.... was influential in bringing Horace Rawlins" down to the course (p. 12).

Perhaps.

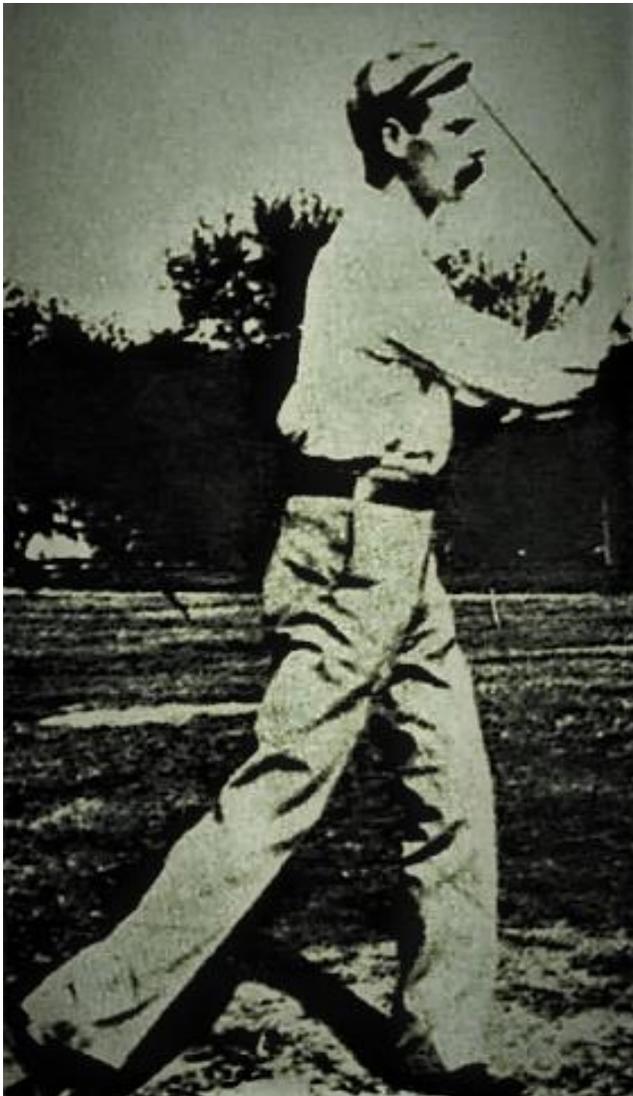


Figure 123 Horace Rawlins, circa 1899.

Horace Rawlins was certainly well-known to Dunn. He was the surprise winner of the first U.S.G.A. organized US Open in 1895, reducing the favoured Dunn – the previous year's winner of the pre-U.S.G.A. US Open – to second place. Both were famous as golfers, and both laid out golf courses. Rawlins laid out a number of courses in the states of New York and in New Jersey, but his work at Lakewood is most relevant to this study.

W.G. van Tassel Sutphen, editor of *The Golfer*, discussed his golf course design work and declared him "one of the best professional authorities, whose painstaking work upon and development of the Ocean County links at Lakewood has made them among the best in the country" (July 1898, vol 7 no 3, p. 135).

The Ocean County Hunt and Country Club was of course where Arthur B. Clafin was Club vice-president at this time, as well as member of the Golf Committee and Member of the Green Committee.

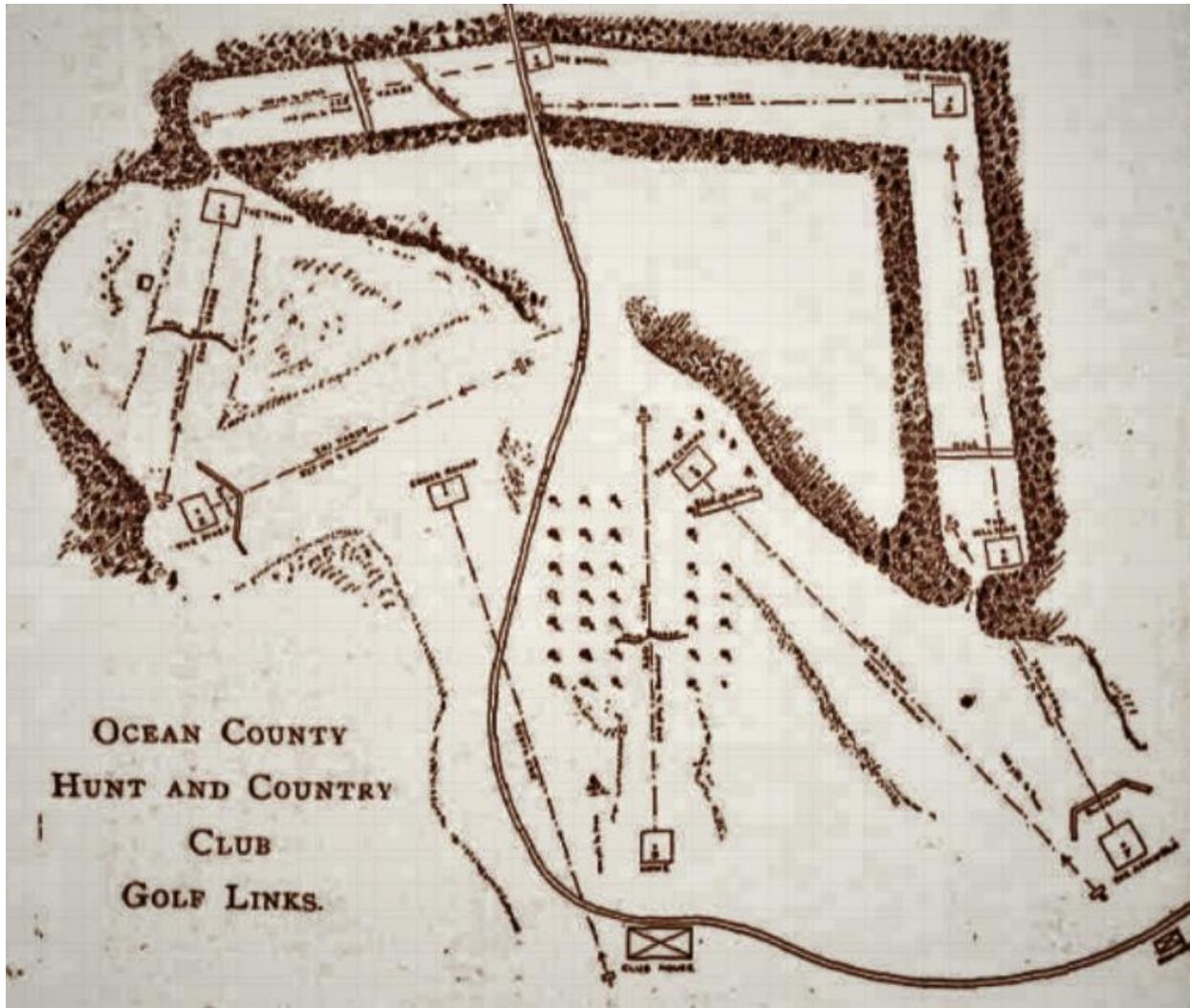


Figure 124 Horace Rawlins' 1896 design for the golf course of Ocean County Hunt and Country Club, Lakewood, New Jersey. Official Golf Guide of 1899, p.190.

Rawlins followed the Dunn school of golf course design: on seven of the nine holes where there was no natural hazard at the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club, Rawlins introduced a Dunn-style cross bunker.

At the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club during the winter of 1899, there was a Rawlins to spare, for serving alongside Horace Rawlins as Ocean County professional golfer was his brother Harry. They had both represented Ocean County at the big professional tournament on New Year's Day the year before when Willie Dunn did not show up because he had apparently been detained on Jekyll Island. So if Dunn was unavailable to undertake the laying out of greens and bunkers at Jekyll Island this year (after the hurricane had compromised whatever work he had already done in this regard), he may well have

## Horace Rawlins

recommended to Claflin that Rawlins should be the man to replace him, but it is just as likely that when Claflin received Grob's letter he decided on his own to send down one of his own Club's professionals.

Horace Rawlins had certainly returned to Lakewood by the spring, for in May he set a new professional scoring record at Ocean County's sister course: "Horace Rawlins, the professional in charge of the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club links, made a record on the Golf Club of Lakewood links to-day that will probably stand for some time. The course record for amateur play is 80, made by Findlay Douglas last fall, and Willie Norton has this year made a 77. Rawlins went out with F.J.J. De Raismes this morning and made a new record of 76" (*Sun* [New York], 19 May 1899, p. 9)

At the end of 1899, Rawlins was off to California for the winter, so his stint at Jekyll Island was brief.

Rawlins is sometimes referred to as the Jekyll Island Club's first professional golfer. Yet whether he served as anything more than a golf course builder during his months on Jekyll Island is not clear. Grob refers to him, we recall, simply as the man who will lay out bunkers and greens.

## Dunn's "Savanna" Undone

I wonder what Rawlins thought when he saw the state of the Bermuda grass on the savanna.

Did he inform Claflin that there was no hope of doing anything with the savanna course unless it was re-seeded in the spring of 1899?

Could a period of heavy rainfall have apprised him that the drainage system was not able to keep the savanna in a sufficiently dry condition to enable golf?

Could Rawlins possibly have succeeded in making the Willie Dunn course of 1898 fit for play sometime during the 1899 season?

*The Official Golf Guide* of 1899 provides the only comment that I can find on the state of the golf course when Rawlins was in residence on Jekyll Island during the winter season of 1899. We recall that editor Josiah Newman writes sometime before March of 1899 that "In 1898 Willie Dunn laid out a nine-hole course here, which is now becoming a very fair green" (123). "Fair green" was the phrase in the late 1800s and early 1900s for what today we call the "fairway." The "fair green" was of course distinct from the "putting green."

Newman most likely wrote his blurb about Jekyll Island before Rawlins had even arrived on the island to begin his work. That is, he probably did not even know that the course had been flooded the previous fall. His information is probably an echo of what Dunn seems to have told him when he left Jekyll Island in the summer of 1898 – something along the lines of what Dunn recollected in 1934: "In a short time we had put in a fine course – one of the most picturesque courses I have ever seen" (p. 26).

As of 1899-1900, references to the golf course at Jekyll Island are less specific than the two references in *The Golfing Annual* of 1897-98 and 1898-99 that mention the "savanna" course, and less specific than the references in the *Official Golf Guide* of 1899 and 1900 that mention the "fair green" of the Dunn course.

The *Official Golf Guide* changed hands after 1900 and did not mention the Jekyll Island Sportsmen's Club after that. For the next ten years, we find in *The Golfing Annual* only the simplest of entries about Jekyll Island: "JEKYL ISLAND SPORTSMEN'S GOLF CLUB (Georgia): 9 holes." Such entries could refer to any nine-hole golf course.

## Dunn's "Savanna" Undone

It seems unlikely that Rawlins would have produced a golf course fit for play by mid-March, when the 1899 season would begin to wind down. Grob indicated that as of the middle of December, greens and bunkers needed to be done, and we know that for Dunn and Rawlins "bunkers" were turf walls with pits of dirt or sand on one side of them. So for Rawlins to have made a playable golf course, he would have had to have prepared nine sand greens (there would have been no possibility of getting grass greens opened for play) ,and perhaps one or two fairway-wide earth walls for each of the nine fairways.

And if the state of the dormant Bermuda "fair green" gave rise to any doubt about whether the 1898 savanna course was going to be viable in the long run, Rawlins would have been honor-bound to explain to Grob and Claflin that they might be wasting time and money on the savanna course, or at the very least needed to devise a new comprehensive plan to make it viable.

I doubt that the Dunn course of 1898 ever entered play.

Given that Walter J. Travis was brought to the island in 1900 to give the Club advice about how to improve its golf course, we might infer from such a fact that a decision by the Club to abandon the "savanna" course is what occasioned its invitation to Travis. As the Club understood Dunn's golf course design to represent the state of the art in 1898, it hardly seems likely that it would have asked Travis to "improve" the Dunn design in 1900. Travis is likely to have been asked by the Club to advise it regarding how it might improve its 1897 "riverside" that was no longer merely "temporary": its scorecard with the open-ended date "190\_" on it indicates that the Club foresaw using it for ten years.

Perhaps Rawlins did not do any work on the "savanna" course at all while he was on Jekyll Island: he may instead have worked on getting the "temporary" course back in shape after the hurricane.

## The Experience of the Hurricane on the Riverside

When the October hurricane hit the island, the golf course already “in play” as of 1897 was in a different situation – literally and figuratively – from that of the “savanna” course under construction. It was not on the Atlantic Ocean side of the island, which faced the hurricane’s wind-driven tidal surge. More importantly, the “riverside” golf course was higher than the “savanna”: its low point near Jekyll Creek was similar to the high point of the “savanna”: about thirteen feet above sea level. Its high points (comprising most of the open ground running from the Maurice cottage to Jasmine Road) were at least twenty feet above sea level – higher, that is, than the maximum tidal surge.

This variation in height corresponded to the variation in this regard between cottages along River Road – ranging from Moss Cottage in the south part of the compound, about thirteen feet above sea level, to Hollybourne Cottage in the north part of the compound, about twenty-one feet above sea level. The McCashes report that the Maurice cottage was one of only two that were not damaged by the hurricane (90). So we can take this as an indication that the 1897 “riverside” course was not inundated as badly as the “savanana” course was – and perhaps not inundated at all.

Falk wrote that the new “savanna” course was “covered with tide water,” apparently meaning that it remained covered with water long after the hurricane had passed, but Dunn’s “riverside” course was no more covered with tide water in this way than were the cottages or clubhouse, although the tidal surge had momentarily covered parts of them. The 1897 Dunn course certainly would not have lain under large pools of water for some time as the “savanna” course apparently did. Since the tidal surge crested at less than twenty feet, it seems unlikely that much of the 1897 Dunn course had been submerged at all. And the tidal water that covered it would have receded within hours – just as the tidal water that brought launches and steamers onto the clubhouse grounds quickly receded and left these vessels behind.

Trees were uprooted, mind you, and all sorts of branches and palm fronds will have been blown across the “riverside” course, so much clean-up work would no doubt have been needed to make the “riverside” course ready for play.

The sand greens and elevated sand tee-boxes may have been damaged by the run-off from torrential downpours during the storm. But its “fair green” will not have been seriously impacted by the hurricane, and both tee-boxes and greens could have been put back into playing condition relatively quickly.

## The Experience of the Hurricane on the Riverside

Although Rawlins was sent to work on the 1898 Dunn “savanna” course, it is possible that he found further work on that course pointless and instead helped to renovate and improve the 1897 “riverside” course.

## Dunn's Savanna Course Legacy

But regardless of whether or not the 1898 Dunn course ever entered play (or, if it did, stayed in play for more than part of the 1899), as many as three aspects of the 1898 Dunn "savanna" course endured.

First, Dunn's choice of the "savanna" as the best location for a golf course on Jekyll Island was affirmed in 1909 when the Jekyll Island Club decided to build a new golf course. The Committee on Golf and Sport commissioned competing designs from Donald J. Ross and Jock Hutchinson, the professional golfer at the Carnegies' "Stafford Place Golf Links," but it presented them with a *fait accompli*: their golf course must be designed for the savanna.

Second, after Ross won the design competition, he laid out his golf course more or less within the system of drainage ditches described by Willie Dunn eleven years before, and he routed his golf holes across the main ditch and the secondary ditches in a way reminiscent of Dunn's original routing of his planned nine-hole course for ladies.

Third, the grass that Dunn planted on the savanna may have endured, or mixed with the native savanna marsh grass that Dunn had hoed off, in such a way as to have enabled Jock Hutchinson to advise the Club that the grass on the savanna that he inspected in March of 1909 would be suitable for golf turf if it were simply mowed as such and salt water were kept off it (See James S. Brunner, "Jekyll Island Golf History – The 1910 Donald Ross Course," June 1998, U.S.G.A. Archives, p. 2).

## The Travis Consultation

We read in *Beachscape*, a Jekyll Island magazine, that “Aside from his skills on the greens, Travis was also a famous golf course architect who encouraged the development of golf on Jekyll Island from the beginning. He first visited the island in 1900 to suggest improvements after Willie Dunn, Jr., completed Jekyll’s first links” (“An Historic Course, An Old Man,” *Jekyll Island Beachscape*, October 2013, p. 6). Similarly, the historical plaque erected at the Great Dunes course by the Jekyll Island Authority says that Travis “offered improvement suggestions” (the plaque indicates that the Jekyll Island Museum is the source of its information). And the Travis Society Newsletter of 12 September 2016 chimes in: “Reports indicate that Travis offered suggestions for improving the early Jekyll Island golf course in 1900” (<https://travissociety.com/society-news/>).

Was Travis to suggest improvements for Dunn’s 1898 “savanna” course or his 1897 “riverside” course?

We recall that the printed “Riverside” scorecard is pre-dated “190\_.” We might infer from this fact that by the time this scorecard was planned and printed, the 1898 Dunn course had been given up for dead. Presumably if the 1898 Dunn course had been put into play, there would have been no more need for what Dunn called his “temporary” course and there would have been no planning for and purchase of “Riverside” scorecards that could be used for the next ten years.

Furthermore, since the Dunn design of the 1898 “savanna” course had been acceptable to the Club as likely to produce “one of the grandest golfing grounds in the country” by January of 1899, it does not seem likely that Travis would have been called in a year after Rawlins had brought Dunn’s course into play to offer suggestions for improvements to it. The hurricane and tidal surge had affected the grass, not the design of the course or the disposition of its hazards.

Finally, when Travis first referred to Jekyll Island’s 1909 Donald Ross course in *American Golfer*, he wrote as though there had never been a golf course on the savanna before this one: “The Jekyll Island Club has within the past year put in a new golf course, having taken in the Savanna land which runs through the center of the island. It has been drained and seeded with Bermuda grass and already is in excellent condition” (vol 5 no 6 [April 1911], p. 486). If he had given suggestions for improvements regarding a Willie Dunn golf course on this same savanna site eleven years before, surely he would have said something to that effect, especially since he would have had to have dealt with the same drainage problems that the new course developer had apparently overcome.

One must presume that Travis was called to Jekyll Island in 1900 to offer advice on how to modernize Dunn's "Riverside" course of 1897. That is the only Jekyll Island course that would have needed "improvements" in 1900.

On the one hand, Dunn himself had characterized the first course as a temporary one, implying that no unnecessary imaginative resources on his part and no unnecessary financial resources on the Club's part had been expended on its design and construction. Remember the Club's philosophy: do nothing now which is not necessary."

On the other hand, this 1897 course was now going to be neither a temporary course nor a secondary course, but rather the Jekyll Island Club's only course. Dunn's "riverside" golf course was probably due an infusion of imagination and money to make it the Club's one and only golf course for the foreseeable future (perhaps for as many as the ten years allowed by the scorecard that the Club commissioned and printed).

Another factor likely to have made necessary the advice of a golf expert with regard to changes on the 1897 "riverside" course was the Club's plan to bisect the open ground across which the golf course was laid by the building of a modern dairy. Travis was probably brought in to advise the Club about how it should go about modifying the nine-hole golf course so as to make sure that it properly represented the standards that the Jekyll Island Club strove to maintain in all things.

Whence Travis?

## Whence Travis?

Never having played golf in his native Australia, and taking up the game in the United States in the fall of 1896 (when he was thirty-five years old), Travis became obsessed with golf and applied a scientific attitude to developing his golf swing, such that within two years he reached the semi-finals of the U.S. amateur Championship, losing to the eventual winner Findlay S. Douglas. After semi-final losses in 1898 and 1899, Travis won the championship in 1900 (and would repeat as winner in 1901 and 1903, before becoming the first person ever to win the U.S. and British amateur championships in the same year in 1904).

His 1900 victory immediately earned him entry into the inner sanctum of the U.S.G.A. itself, such that when a new president of the U.S.G.A. was to be chosen at the end of 1900, and Robert Bage Kerr (the man from Lakewood who was Secretary of the U.S.G.A.) would not tell the press whom the Association had in mind, reporters approached “Walter J. Travis, who stands close to those in power”:

*but, while admitting that a certain man was under consideration, he was disinclined to mention names. “The trouble is not to pick out a good man,” he said, “but to get him to accept. It means a lot of work, and only a few men are capable of doing it so as to satisfy all elements. When the proper time comes I believe that a candidate will be presented who will be acceptable to everybody.” (Tribune [New York], 19 November 1900 p. 8).*

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the elite amateur golfer was generally a gentleman, as opposed to the working-class golf professionals. Travis was not wealthy (he was the son of an Australian miner, found work in a hardware company that became so big in Australia it decided to open an office in New York City and offered Travis the job of managing it), but his golf skills won him the acquaintance of a good number of wealthy, powerful, socially prominent men who fancied themselves seriously competitive amateur golfers. Take, for instance, the field in 1899 at “The annual tournament of the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, which in importance is excelled only by the National Championship Tournament”: Travis competed alongside both William C. Carnegie, eldest nephew of Andrew Carnegie and owner of the Stafford Place Golf Links on Cumberland Island, and Arthur B. Clafin, member of golf committees at the Lakewood Country Club and the Jekyll Island Club (*New York Journal and Advertiser*, 26 July 1899, p. 8). But for his achievements in golf, Travis would never have met such men.

Travis not only knew Claflin from competition on the golf course, but also came to socialize with him in elite Lakewood society. In 1901, for instance, we read in *Brooklyn Life* of the Thanksgiving events at Lakewood village among the millionaire residents, called “cottagers,” and the guests at the village hotels who came to visit during Thanksgiving festivities. Much of the news explicitly or implicitly involves golf and noted amateur golfers who socialize with the millionaires:

*The Lakewood Hotel, which owns the land on which the Lakewood Golf Club are laid out, has decided to take over this land at the expiration of the lease .... Land for the new links of the club has been purchased ... by Mr. Arthur B. Claflin.... Thanksgiving was a great day in Lakewood, and the principal indoor attraction was the concert given morning and afternoon at the Lakewood Hotel by the fine orchestra of the house. The music at the hotel is so excellent that all the cottagers as well as the guests from the other hotels make a practice of attending the concerts.... Mr. Findlay S. Douglas spent Thanksgiving at the ... Laurel-in-the-Pines .... Mr. Walter J. Travis visited Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Lynch at their attractive house, Lynx Hall, on Forest Avenue. Professor and Mrs. Charles A. Strong took possession last week of their new house on Lake Drive, until this season the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur B. Claflin, who have built a magnificent new home. (Brooklyn Life, 7 December 1901, p. 27). At the 1899 Golf Club of Lakewood Thanksgiving tournament, “Jasper Lynch cared for the following few of his golfing friends during the tournament: Herbert M. Harriman, Walter J. Travis, James A. Tyng, Samuel Frothingham and John Miley” (Tribune [New York], 10 December 1899, p. 20).*

The Lakewood millionaires formed a tight group: starting in 1898 the daughters of Claflin, Gould, and Lynch all attended the same dance class at the Laurel hotel put on by instructors that they paid to come out weekly from New York. So when Travis was staying in the home of fellow amateur competitor Jasper Lynch, he was also seeing Gould and Claflin socially.

Travis had won the U.S. Amateur championship for the second time before receiving that 1901 invitation to spend Thanksgiving with Lynch. At Christmas the year before, Lynch used his friendship with the two top amateur golfers Travis and Douglas to bring them to Lakewood: “The Golf Club of Lakewood is making special preparations for its Christmas Day tournament. Jasper Lynch, the club’s secretary, said yesterday that Findlays S. Douglas expected to spend the holiday there and would probably be one of

Whence Travis?

the prominent competitors. Walter J. Travis has also promised to appear" (*Tribune* [New York], 20 December 1900, p. 5).

The success of Travis and Douglas as amateur gentleman golfers had earned them admission to the social world of the Lakewood golfing millionaires. They both played golf regularly in Lakewood. The local newspaper described their match in the spring of 1903 at the Golf Club of Lakewood as an appropriate final event before the clubhouse and golf course were taken over by the Lakewood Golf Club: "In the golf tournament here last week, Walter J. Travis again triumphed over his old rival, Findlay S. Douglas, in the final match. They had a close contest, Travis finally winning by one hole. Travis and Douglas have played in eleven tournaments on the Lakewood club's links. Travis has won six of the engagements and Douglas five" (*New Jersey Courier*, 23 April 1903, p. 3).

Although there was said to be "enmity" between the Golf Club of Lakewood and the old Ocean County Hunt and Country Club (when Gould and Claflin, among others, lost interest in fox hunting, the club dropped the "Hunt" from its name and became the Country Club of Lakewood, of which Arthur B. Claflin was that year Chairman of the Golf Committee), of course Claflin would have been in the "tremendous crowd" that made up the large Lakewood galleries following the Travis-Douglas contests in the 1898-1900 period when the two amateurs were challenging each other for the top ranking in the United States (*Tribune* [New York], 2 December 1900, p. 13).

When did Travis visit Jekyll Island?

It seems to me that given Claflin's role on the Committee in charge of golf and his role in the construction of golf courses hitherto on the island, it is quite likely that Claflin was the one who invited Travis down to Jekyll Island to get advice from him on how to improve the Jekyll Island golf course. And Claflin was certainly on the island at the beginning of 1900. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* announced at the beginning of January in 1900 that "A.B. Claflin is going to Jekyll Island for two months. In his absence, E. Robbins Walker will probably act as head of the golf committee at the Lakewood Country Club, formerly the Ocean County Hunt and Country Club" (4 January 1900, p. 13). The *New York Times*, however, said that Claflin was going for a shorter visit, to spend "two weeks on Jekyll Island at the noted club for golf, shooting and fishing" (5 January 1900, p. 9). The *Times* mentioned a few weeks later in its list of the officers of the Jekyll Island Club that A.B. Claflin was at that time a member of the Committee on Golf and Sports (20 January 1900, p. 7).

Travis seems to have been away from home for an extended period during the winter in question. In January, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* notes that Travis has not appeared in any competitions since December 2<sup>nd</sup> of 1899. Although during winters before and after the winter of 1900 Travis played golf tournaments in the Northeast, his first tournament of 1900 was the Atlantic City tournament at the beginning of April of 1900. The only golf-related reference to Travis in the New York newspapers before that tournament was an item published at the end of March noting that he had been elected Captain of the Garden City Golf Club.

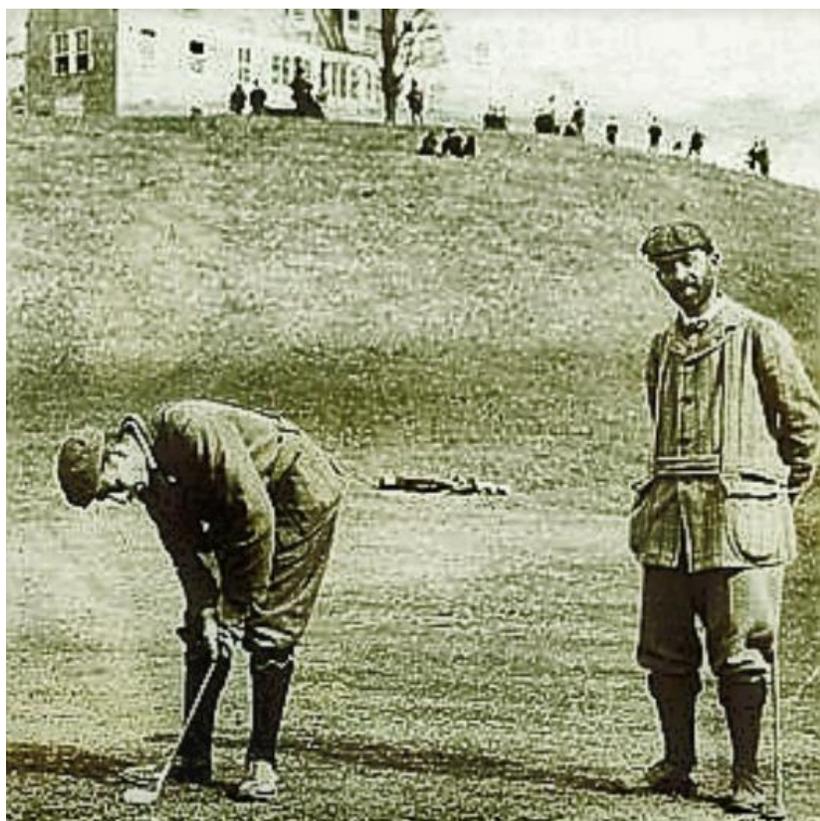


Figure 125 Harry Vardon (left) and Walter J. Travis at Oakland Golf Club, Bayside, Long Island, 24 April 1900.

Travis had not only been absent from golf tournaments from January to March; he had been entirely removed from his usual social circle. When he literally showed his face again in public, it was a dramatically changed face: “Walter J. Travis, one of the best known of the American golfers, who heretofore has had a smooth face, has raised a full black beard during the winter and at present not one of his old associates will recognize him except under very close inspection” (*Brooklyn Daily Eagles*, 1 April 1900, p. 10).

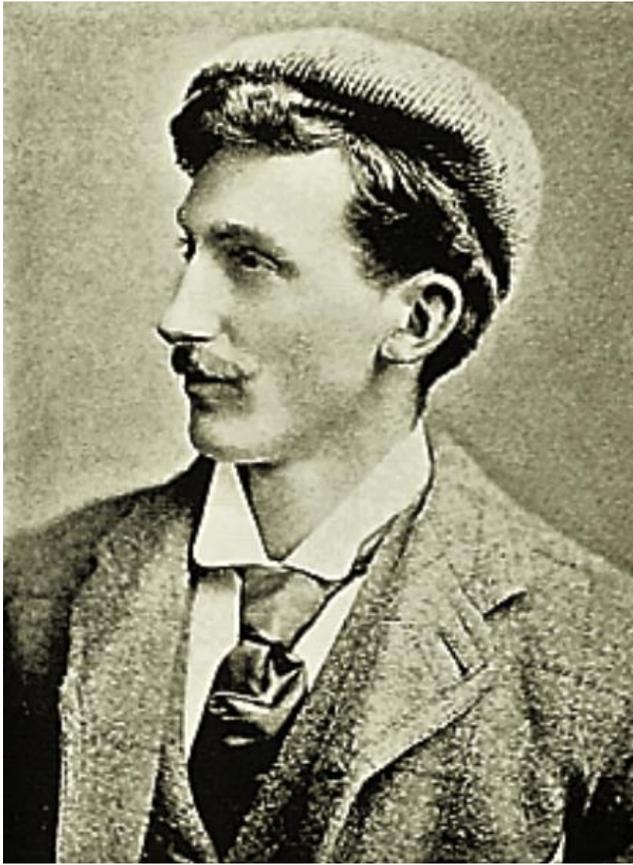
He wore the new beard in his April match against Harry Vardon at the links of the Oakland Golf Club, of Bayside, Long, Island, which was the home course of Travis. Travis partnered the club’s professional golfer, James Douglas, in a match-play competition against British superstar Harry Vardon: their best score on each hole was pitted against Vardon’s score. Vardon won by six holes. After such a shellacking, I wonder that Travis did not shave off the beard.

Whence Travis?

I like to imagine that Travis grew that beard on Jekyll Island, so that he could scratch it as he contemplated how on earth the simple 1897 Dunn “riverside” course could be improved sufficiently to meet the Jekyll Island Club’s standards.

## Travis versus Dunn

Travis was stimulated to some of his most creative innovations as a golf course architect by his intense reaction against the style of Willie Dunn, Jr.



*Figure 126 John Duncan Dunn, circa 1900.*

Travis had worked with Willie Dunn's nephew John Duncan Dunn (whose father Tom, Willie's brother, was the father of penal design) throughout the fall of 1899 and spring of 1900 to build America's best course to date: Ekwanok. He may well have heard of the problems that had plagued the Dunn course on Jekyll Island from John Duncan Dunn, who had come to the United States just two years before in 1897 to serve as assistant professional to his uncle at Ardsley. Willie Dunn almost immediately set him up in New York as the assembler of their golf clubs imported from the U.K. By 1898, however, John Duncan Dunn had set up his own business. Travis collaborated with John Duncan Dunn on several occasions at the turn of the century, such as at the Flushing Country Club on Long Island, New York, in 1901.

The golf course built by Travis and John Duncan Dunn, Ekwanok, was one of the first American golf courses to be compared favorably with British golf courses. Although Travis did not win the U.S. Amateur title until the summer of 1900, well before that victory Travis would have been a golfer that Clafin's Committee on Golf and Sports would have been very happy to bring to Jekyll Island for a consultation about how to improve their "riverside" golf course.

Travis was ahead of the curve in advocating for "strategic" design philosophy, which not only replaced penal design philosophy; it rejected it.

## Travis versus Dunn

This reaction against penal design began long before the ideas associated with strategic design coalesced in the early 1920s. It began with a reaction against the idea that the game should belong only to the scratch players and that the high handicappers were of no account – that the latter should be penalized for virtually every mistake they made. Their topped and skulled shots should always end up in a hazard so as to cost them strokes. A golfer who played two perfect shots onto a green should not suffer the indignity of finding an opponent in the same position after two topped shots. The “duffer” had to be stopped literally: by hazards.

In 1920, Travis looked back to the work of Dunn as the spur to his own reaction against penal design’s bias against high handicappers: "Whereas the Willie Dunn system called for compulsory carries for both tee and second shots, I was an advocate of optional carries: that is to say, I believe in the principle of giving the player a choice of carrying a bunker or playing safe" (“Twenty Years of Golf, An Autobiography – (Continued): The Advent of a New Era in Golf Course Construction,” *American Golfer* vol 23 no 33 [9 October 1920], p. 4).

Yet almost twenty years before this, in his book *Practical Golf* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1901), when Travis described his ideal golf course, virtually every one of the eighteen holes he described had a Dunn-like hazard that had to be carried in the air:

*Such is a brief sketch of a course that ought to bring out all the good golf there is in a man to do it in a decent score. An endeavor has been made to arrange the distances and likewise the hazards so that it is practically impossible to get off a poor shot and make a recovery on the next, save by some phenomenal stroke.*

*The large majority of courses have too many levelling holes, of from two hundred and twenty to two hundred and sixty yards, and with the hazards so arranged that the player may top a drive and yet get the green on the next shot by simply taking a full stroke with some club, in the same number of strokes as the man who has played the hole perfectly. (p. 153)*

Here is the essence of penal philosophy! The duffer who has misplayed a shot must be kept from arriving on the green in two shots.

Travis’s book had been written over the course of many months during 1900 and 1901, the chapters appearing as separate articles in a golf magazine. His mind was sorting through these ideas just when he

was called down to Jekyll Island to give advice about improving the golf course there: Jekyll Island might have been a crucible for some of Travis's practical experiments with regard to strategic design.

By the end of this period of writing and reflection on golf course design throughout 1900 and 1901, Travis felt that he had to return to the topic of golf hazards to offer his further thoughts, and so at the end of his book we encounter the outlines of the "strategic" school of golf course design:

*On none of the sea-side links has Nature made it necessary to arrange the hazards of an artificial character on the same general lines as those in this country, and which, from Maine to Oregon, may be said to all bear the same family resemblance as to suggest a common origin. This is due partly to ... an imperfect appreciation of the real needs of hazards and their refinements and artistic application in other than the regular stereotyped patterns, which tend largely to disfigure so many of our courses....*

*Usually they are represented by huge embankments thrown up transversely the full width of the course, resembling rifle-pits, of uniform height throughout – hideous excrescences on the fair face of Nature. There is a line of these fortifications confronting you from nearly every tee, ranging in distance from 80 to 130 yards, and another line for the second shot, and so on, with little or no diversification throughout the round. (pp. 184-85)*

Clearly Travis refers to the work of the Dunns. Indeed, he seems to allude to them by a play on words in his reference to the existence of earthwork hazards coast to coast that so much "bear the same family resemblance as to suggest a common origin": the common origin is the Dunn family! He used the same joke earlier in the book: "Endeavor to construct the hazards as to furnish some diversity, rather than have them all of the same family type" (157).

He published this advice: "vary these artificial creations at each hole" (185); "make them more picturesque and in keeping with their surroundings" (185); "No bunkers on a first-class course should ... be made with perpendicular and precipitous faces so as to make it almost impossible to get out in one stroke. Instead of the array of steep cops with narrow ditches which disfigure so many courses, aim rather to make the cops more semicircular in shape" (157)

And give up the insistence on cross-bunkers:

## Travis versus Dunn

*Too much importance is attached to the putting in of bunkers across the entire width of the course .... Most hazards should be arranged so as to compel a man to drive both far and sure, and yet to give the weaker player a chance to avoid being bunkered provided he can play his ball wisely.... Take, for instance, the regulation bunker for the tee shot. This almost invariably stretches across the entire width of the [fairway]. Instead of this, I should put in one, irregularly outlined, of about one-third the width across, leaving clear spaces on either side for the shorter player who cannot comfortably carry it. (pp. 187-89).*

Shorter-hitting and more timorous golfers could thus plot their way to the hole by a route around hazards, but it would normally take them more strokes than par to do so.

So should one imagine Travis on Jekyll Island in 1900, having cycled along Shell Road to get a look at Dunn's work on the savanna, looking across a relatively flat and level field marked by a zig-zag of earth-wall cross bunkers, rubbing his beard, and then shaking his head with a sigh of disgust?

Not necessarily.

## Caught Between a Penal Rock-Wall and a Strategically Hard Place

The fact that Travis's book *Practical Golf*, written between 1900 and 1901, endorses penal design philosophy at one point and then endorses strategic design philosophy at another point shows the ferment of ideas that was entering the world of golf course architecture at this time.

If we inspect Travis's design work at the Flushing Country Club (Long Island, New York) in 1901, where the two-time U.S. Amateur champion was still a member, and where he was invited, along with John Duncan Dunn, to lengthen and re-design the course in the fall of that year (just over a year after his visit to Jekyll Island), we can see that Travis was still beholden to the principles of the Dunn family in practice – principles that he protested against in theory as he finished his book *Practical Golf* in the evenings after design work at Flushing during the day.

*Golf's* anonymous reviewer was pleased that Travis and John Duncan Dunn had renovated the links of the Flushing Country Club, a course that had been in play on Long Island since 1887, when it was known as the Old Country Club:

*Besides its natural advantages, intelligent care and time have added much to the excellence of the course, for it is one of the oldest on Long Island.... Hitherto the only drawback has been the length of the course, 2228 yards, but last fall the club acquired the necessary adjacent ground it long wanted, and the course has been extended to the proper standard length of 3075 yards. The course was remodelled upon the excellent advice of Champion Walter J. Travis, one of the oldest members, and John Duncan Dunn, and so scientifically laid out that it calls for true golf from the first tee to the home green. (Golf, vol 9 no 1 [July 1902], p. 10)*

The reviewer's suggestion that the golf course has been "scientifically laid out" reminds us that Travis was regarded as having been able to win U.S. Amateur championship just four years after having taken up the game because of his scientific attitude toward the golf swing. Perhaps he was beginning to enjoy the same reputation regarding golf course design.

In 1901, however, it is clear that Travis still concurred with the Dunn family that the cop-bunker with a precipitous face and a sand pit on the other side of was a legitimate obstacle for golfers to be forced to

## Caught Between a Penal Rock-Wall and a Strategically Hard Place

carry in order to reach the green, as seen in the photograph below, which shows the green of the par-three eighth hole, “well-guarded by a high cop-bunker directly in front” (p. 11).



Figure 127 The eighth hole at Flushing Country Club. *Golf*, vol 9 no 1 (July 1902), p. 11.

The reviewer’s description of the hazards requiring a forced carry on the first two holes confirm that the Dunn family strategy was also followed here: “From the first tee ... the ground rises gently to a bunker distant some 120 yards. A brassey second should easily carry the road, 140 yards further, and a cleek or iron clear the second bunker, 140 yards more, which guards the green” (p. 10). Willie Dunn could not have done better: three hazards crossing the fairway that must all be cleared before a golfer can reach the green. From the second tee, we read, “the player is confronted by a ‘nerve’ hazard in the shape of a deep lane between two stone walls some fifty yards away, but safely over this, the only obstacle is a sand bunker 230 yards further” (p. 10). The same penal strategies are in play: there are two fairway-crossing obstacles to be carried.

Interestingly, however, the third, fourth, and fifth holes are quite different:

*The third and fourth holes are shorter, and require straight play more than anything else. They lie side-by-side, separated by cop and sand-pit bunkers which lie in wait for the sliced or pulled ball. The greens too are well guarded, a narrow neck of woods to the left of the third, a stone wall and hill awaiting an overplay on the fourth.... The fifth hole is all down hill and rolling. Its dangers, long grass on the right, a stone wall and out of bounds, on the left.... The green ... is well guarded on three sides. (p. 10)*

It is as though John Duncan Dunn did his family's work on the first two holes and then Travis was allowed for the next three holes to deploy his developing ideas regarding strategic design.

The apparent removal of an old stone fence that seems to have crossed the third and fourth fairways at a ninety-degree angle supports this hypothesis. It would have been properly positioned to serve as a "nerve" hazard, just as the fence and lane did on the second hole. There was to be no arbitrary "nerve" hazard here.



*Figure 128 The fourth hole at Flushing Country Club. Golf, vol 9 no 1 (July 1902), p. 9.*

Interesting from this point of view is that we can make out the remains of the old stone fence on each side of the fairway, where they serve as a hazard for a shot played offline. Effectively, they are located where Travis would eventually place the bunkers he devised by eliminating Dunn's cross bunkers: "I simply cut Dunn's cross bunkers in half, now to the right and again to the left" ("Twenty Years of Golf," p. 24). There would seem to be a connection between cutting "cross fences" in half and cutting cross bunkers in half.

The remaining four holes return to the Dunn-family strategy of requiring at least one forced carry over a fairway-wide hazard on every hole. The typical "cop and sand-pit bunker stands guard" in front of the green at the end of the long par-five ninth hole, as seen in the photograph below.



Figure 129 There is no access to the ninth green at Flushing Country Club except by playing over the fairway-wide cross bunker seen just short of the green in the middle ground above. *Golf*, vol 9 no 1 (July 1902), p. 11.

If my hypothesis is correct that Travis was allowed to stretch his “strategic” legs as a designer on the third, fourth and fifth holes, this moment in his development as a golf architect is a small step in the direction of his full-blown “strategic” practices over the next twenty-five years.

Perhaps more important is the advance he makes in *Practical Golf* toward articulating the principles of “strategic” design philosophy – a small step for Travis, but a giant leap for golfing kind. With it, we are on the way to the declarations of strategic designers like Stanley Thompson, who said in 1923 that “The most successful course is one that will test the skill of the most advanced player, without discouraging the ‘duffer,’ while adding to the enjoyment of both. This is not an easy task, but [it] is by no means an insoluble one. The absence of cross bunkers has largely made it possible” (“About Golf Courses: Their Construction, and Upkeep” [pamphlet privately printed 1923]).

## Travis Modifications?

If Travis re-worked the holes that were interrupted by the building of the new dairy farm, we have only the scorecard to show of his re-routing, and since we do not have a scorecard showing the original 1897 layout, we cannot know the difference that Travis made.

Still, one wonders whether the scorecard that we have effectively represents a Travis-Dunn co-design.

Are there any signs of possible Travis contributions to the Dunn course in our 1909 photographs?



Figure 130 Harper's Weekly, 13 February 1909, p. 17.

In this regard, consideration should be given to the mound from which Rockefeller plays his recovery shot in the *Harper's* photograph. If the golf course was as relentlessly flat as early criticism indicated, where did this mound come from? Did Travis recommend its construction?

Note that on Long Island a year later, whether he built it or found it, Travis utilized a similar defense of the green on his fourth hole at the Flushing Country Club – a “hill awaiting an overplay” (p. 10).

The article that Inglis published suggests that the photograph above represents just such an over-play by Rockefeller.

He is on the side of a small hill that lies between him and the putting surface. The grass is entirely uncut: it is a deep, thick rough. He has not come up short of

the green on his approach shot, for had he done so he would still have been on the “fair green,” rather than in the rough. It would seem that Rockefeller has hit his approach shot long or wide of the green that was his target.

The caption for the photograph in the Inglis article reads: “When he slices the ball into the rough he usually gets out in one stroke” (p. 17). Similarly, in the text printed immediately to the right of this photograph, Inglis also writes about Rockefeller’s inaccurate approach shots: “With approach shots of a

## Travis Modifications?

hundred yards or so Mr. Rockefeller is not always fortunate, but in short approaches and putting he is deadly. If he happens to slice or pull the shot off into the rough, he cheerfully takes the mashie or the niblick and hews the ball out to safety" (17).

So the photograph in question seems to have been chosen to illustrate Rockefeller's celebrated ability to hew the ball out of rough to safety after he has mis-hit a shot from 100 yards or more out from the green.

Strategic mounding by building up what Travis called "chocolate drops" would become a distinctive feature of his golf course design over the next twenty-five years.



*Figure 131 Harper's Weekly, 13 February 1909, p. 17.*

Similarly, the location of one of the greens on the "riverside" course very close to a slope descending to the woods both to the left of the putting surface and over the back of it makes one wonder whether we are looking at a green location that Travis may have recommended – if he had indeed been asked by the Jekyll Island Club to develop a golf hole to replace one that would be lost during the construction of the dairy.

As appears to have been the case regarding the green seen here to the left, so the main defense of the third green at Flushing Country Club (designed a year after Travis's visit to Jekyll Island) was apparently the "narrow neck of woods to the left" (p. 10).

Note that Travis would have been confined in any green designing work at Jekyll Island to

whatever the landscape provided. As he later explained, until he began to reconstruct greens for his own Garden City golf course in 1906, "the natural contour of the ground was followed in the construction of greens, little or no attempt at embellishment being made in artificially introducing undulations" ("Twenty Years of Golf," p. 4).

Yet whether or not there is evidence in any of the *Harper's Weekly* photographs of Travis's recommendations for improvement, I think it is reasonable to assume that it was Dunn's 1897 "riverside" course that the Club asked Travis to "improve."

## A New Course

Agitation amongst Club members for a new golf course was evident by 1909. At this time, the McCashes write, “The correspondence relating to the new golf course is voluminous” (p. 232).



Figure 132 George Henry Macy (left) and Cyrus Hall McCormick, jr, circa 1910.

The prime mover among the millionaires in this enterprise was George Macy, aided by Cyrus Hall McCormick, Jr. June Hall McCash says that “It was George Henry Macy, who, in 1909, spurred the committee on golf and sports, to which he had been named in 1908, to plan for another, more modern course” (p. 150).

At the same time, “Cyrus Hall McCormick, Jr, ... was appointed to the committee on golf and sports in 1908 and for the next five years played a significant role in developing Jekyll’s golf and tennis facilities” (McCashes 120).

The Committee on Golf and Sport decided even in advance of consulting any architects that the new golf course would be laid out on the savanna that Dunn had begun to develop for golf eleven years before. It seems that the Committee actually reviewed Dunn’s old proposal and considered whether what he had planned was feasible. As James S. Brunner notes, “At first they considered a golf course which crossed sand dunes, roads and bicycle paths and then went through the woods” (“Jekyll Island Golf History – The 1910 Donald Ross Course,” June 1998, U.S.G.A. Archives, p. 1). We recall that Dunn’s eighteen-hole course theoretically begins at the edge of the woods that stretch east from the clubhouse (“The first tee will be about 300 yards from the clubhouse”) and that the holes then run in a circle around the savanna as far as the dunes, such that “The ocean is in view from many of the tees and greens” (*Sun* [NY], 16 January 1898, p. 8). In 1909, the Committee worried that a golf course of this sort would mean that “A lot of trees would have had to be cut down and a great deal of ‘very expensive’ work done ... [T]he committee realized that the savanna, if useable, was the least expensive alternative” (Brunner p. 1). The 1908-1909 committee seems to have reprised the reasoning of the 1897-98 committee that reduced Dunn’s plans for a twenty-seven-hole double course to a more modest nine-hole design.

And so a month before Donald J. Ross visited the island, the Committee hired fifteen men to burn the grass off the ninety acres of the savanna where it intended the golf course to be located, presumably to give the architects a good look at the land they would have to work with (Brunner, p. 1). We recall that Dunn had done the same thing back in 1898.

Alas, the burn was “not successful,” apparently because the savanna was “too green and full of water” (Brunner p. 1). Water on the savanna would prove to be the bane of the subsequent golf course. But the burn was successful enough for Macy to determine an answer to a question he had in mind regarding a cost-saving possibility.

Macy intended to have the new golf course ready for play by the start of the 1910 season. He argued to the Committee that it must be open for play by 1 January 1910, “as we might be able to attract a good many people to Jekyll during that month, when there are few members” (June Hall McCash 150). And so Macy studied the question of whether the new golf course would need to be seeded with new grass, taking advice from various people, ranging from local farmers to the local Cumberland Island golf professional Jock Hutchinson.

Again, Macy seems to have been interested in information related to Dunn eleven years before, for the latter had told the club that the savanna “soil is a rich loam, with traces of sand, and, when the meadow grass is mowed, ... it will grow a fine, thick turf” (*Sun* [NT], 16 January 1898, p. 8). Macy came to the conclusion that “the present savanna grass and sod was useable after the burn. The requirements were that the grass be kept mowed and that no further salt water be allowed on it” (Brunner p. 2).

Also in advance of inviting course proposals from architects, the Committee undertook to drain the savanna in the way that Dunn had suggested in 1897: “by a system of ditching and the placing of a dike and floodgate the meadow could be easily drained, so that the surface water would float into the ocean ... The main ditch ... will run on a line about 100 yards from the woods and form ... [a] circle.... Another ditch will be cut through the ‘savanna’ from end to end, into which all the drains will flow.... The meadow is the highest land, and, with a floodgate to ward off the inflowing tide, there will be a constant flow into the Atlantic.” We also read in 1898 that “Dunn has staked out the new courses and the ditch lines” (*Sun* [NY], 16 January 1898, p. 8).

Macy brought in Glynn County Surveyor Edward Augustus Penniman and Glynn county Civil Engineer J. Benton High to construct the drainage system that the 1909 golf course required:

## A New Course

*The committee decided immediately that there would be an intercepting ditch adjoining the woods and circling the entire savanna. This was for the purpose of carrying the water away that came from the woods during heavy rains. Without flooding the golf course, the water would be taken away by the large trunk ditch and its branches. To this end they hired E.A. "Gus" Penniman, Glynn County Surveyor, to take levels and locate ditches.*

*Within a month (March – April, 1909) there were twenty men at work opening the main ditch from Wylly Road to the river running through the center of the savanna. About two weeks later E.G. Grob ... reported "we now have the ditch completed from Wylly Road to the river, it is ten feet wide and varies in depth, and looks as though it will carry off all the water that can ever come down from the heavens above."*

*(Brunner p. 2)*

Still, according to Brunner, "The ditching required to drain the savanna proved complex. To strengthen and take over the project J. Benton ["Ben"] High, Brunswick City Engineer, was called. (Brunner p. 2)

The work described above is so similar to what Dunn planned that I wonder if Dunn had brought in Penniman to assist him with this work back in 1898. Presumably to convince the Jekyll Island Club of the feasibility of his drainage system, he would have had to have employed a professional surveyor to endorse his plans. If so, Penniman may have taken up in 1909 where he left off in 1898.

High installed a new floodgate on the river well south of Shell road, as well as a dike that he dug on a more direct route to Jekyll Creek, and at the same time he removed the original floodgate where the savanna river-ditch flowed under Shell Road. Brunner notes that "a tide-gate had been built in the ditch at Shell Road in 1898" (p. 2). According Executive Committee minutes from January of 1897, this was to "enable the planting of upland rice and other bird food cereals" (cited in Brunner, p. 2). It seems likely that Dunn got wind of this 1897 tide-gate-for-rice project on his visit to Jekyll Island in 1897 and realized that the floodgate could be re-purposed to the needs of draining the savanna for the purposes of building and maintaining a golf course there.

Born in 1845, Penniman was a New York resident who had moved to Georgia just before the Civil War. Nonetheless, he joined the Confederate Army. After the war, he studied civil engineering and soon set his sights on the job of Glynn County Surveyor. He ran for the post as early as 1877, losing by just fourteen votes out of more than 750 cast. He won the next election, however, and he thereafter held

the post for over fifty years – thought to be a record for holding public office in Glynn County. He was active very early on the Sea Islands of Georgia, for instance, platting a subdivision on St Simon’s Island by 1889. June Hall McCash notes that he conducted a survey on Jekyll Island for the Club around 1900 (p. 283). He had probably been involved with the Club since its construction projects began in the late 1880s. One might have thought that he was nearing retirement when he came to Jekyll Island in the spring of 1909, when he was sixty-three years of age, but he continued to work as a civil engineer for another twenty years, right up to his death in December of 1928.

A young pup compared to Penniman, Joseph Benton High had been born in Madison, Georgia, in 1883. The McCashes note that High was “an engineer who had worked on the Panama Canal” (48). As an engineer in 1904 in the town of Cristobal on the Gulf of Mexico coast in Panama, his official position was that of “Levelman” (paid \$115 per month). He resigned his position in Panama in November of 1906, after more than two years there, and returned to Georgia. By the spring of 1907 he had a new position as the City Engineer and Director of City Works for Brunswick. As such, he was its chief map maker, his most lasting achievement in this regard being his “Map of Brunswick, Glynn County, Georgia,” published in February of 1916. He later moved to Flagler Beach, Florida, where he represented Flagler County on a commission in 1929 responsible for the development of inland canals and waterways in Florida (canals to be used for both military and commercial purposes). High Bridge over the F.E.C. Canal south of Flagler Beach is named after him. He died in 1944 in Duval County, Florida, a neighbor of Lida Chase – a former Jekyll Island resident said to be older than she let on.

## Before Donald Ross, Jock Hutchinson

Donald J. Ross was invited to submit a design proposal to the Club and duly “visited the island for two days in April, 1909, and was expected back in November” (Brunner p. 4). But the Stafford Place Golf Links professional Jock Hutchinson had already been on the island, consulting with Macy about the savanna turf. He was also invited by the Committee to submit a design proposal. From each, the Committee on Golf and Sport requested a plan for an eighteen-hole course, including also an optional routing for a nine-hole plan.

Jekyll Island Club members always had half an eye on what was going on to the south of them on Cumberland Island, and so it is not surprising that Macy availed himself of nearby professional expertise with regard to the prospects of growing good golf turf on the savanna. They had followed with interest the development of golf on Cumberland Island, with Grob visiting in 1898, we recall, to compare the golf course there with the one that Dunn was then building on the savanna at Jekyll Island.

Two golf professionals from St Andrews, Scotland, had worked on improvements to the Stafford Place Golf Links at Dungeness over the previous decade, and they happen to have been brothers. Alas, only one was alive in 1909 to visit Jekyll Island.

Brunner and the McCashes each identify the professional golfer who gave the 1909 Committee advice regarding the savanna as T. Hutchison. There must be a mistake or an illegibility in the Jekyll Island Club documents, however, for T. Hutchison died in 1900. A “T” has been mistaken for a “J,” presumably, for it was the brother of Tom known as “Jock” or “Jack” Hutchinson who was at Cumberland Island in 1909 and accepted the invitation to visit Jekyll Island.

Tom Hutchinson was born in St Andrews, Scotland, in 1877. (His last name is variously spelled Hutchinson or Hutchison, the latter being the spelling on his grave marker in the Stafford cemetery on Cumberland Island). At least a dozen caddies from St Andrews who became professional golfers in the 1890s, some winning the British Open, others soon to win the U.S. Open, came to the United States to help establish the game by instruction, club making, and course building: the New York *Tribune* described Hutchinson as “one of the last of the famous St. Andrews clique to cast his luck with the game on this side of the water” (13 December 1900, p. 5). He was hired to serve as the golf professional at Shinnecock Hills in May of 1900. Although just twenty-two years old, he was already being spoken of as worthy competition for Harry Vardon and J.H. Taylor, winners of multiple British Open championships

between them. In his short career, he played golf with them several times. When just nineteen years of age, in a match-play tournament at Carnoustie, he beat the top players in Britain, including James Braid and “Sandy” Herd, before losing a close match to Taylor.



Figure 133 Tom Hutchinson on the porch of the Shinnecock Hills clubhouse, summer of 1900.

The day he arrived at Shinnecock Hills, he played the course for the first time and shot a score just one stroke off the course record. In a series of “sensational” match-play contests during his summer at Shinnecock Hills, playing golf that those who saw it “will not soon forget,” he vanquished top American professional golfers in the Northeast by lopsided scores, and outplayed Vardon himself in an exhibition match during the latter’s 1900 North American tour (*Tribune*, 13 December 1900, p. 5).

At the 1899 British Open, Hutchinson had finished twenty-second. At the 1900 U.S. Open in Chicago, he finished seventh.

American newspapers were unanimous: “Mr. Hutchinson was only 21 years of age, but was regarded as one of the most promising professionals in the world” (*Democrat and Chronicle* [Rochester], 13 December 1900, p. 2). J.H. Taylor wrote a remembrance of him in 1901, wondering, along with the rest of the golf world what Hutchinson might have accomplished had he lived, remarking that he had become the best practitioner of the new full turn of what was called the “St Andrews swing” and celebrating his aggressive style “the long slashing swing, the quick nervous snap in all the irons, the bold determination to be up with all his putts” (*Golf Illustrated* 1901).

By his exceptional play during the summer of 1900 he so impressed William C. Carnegie that the latter prevailed upon him to serve as the professional golfer at Carnegie’s private golf course on Cumberland Island.

William Carnegie, the eldest nephew of fabulously wealthy Andrew Carnegie, was a serious amateur golfer who played in the top amateur competitions of the day, including the U.S. Amateur championship of 1898, and won several significant tournaments in Pennsylvania. He pursued Hutchinson throughout

Before Donald Ross, Jock Hutchinson

the summer and fall of 1900 and finally secured his services as instructor for the winter of 1900-1901 at Cumberland Island.



Figure 134 The Tom Hutchinson grip shown in *Golf*, vol 10 no 5 (May 1902), p. 351.

Yet Carnegie wanted more than a personal instructor: he also wanted this precocious young golf talent to improve his Stafford Place Golf Links. The *Tribune* observed that although “Nothing had been heard from [Hutchinson] since the latter part of October ... it was generally understood among his friends that he was making important alterations in the Carnegie links” (p. 5).

In fact, it seems to have been while inspecting the work underway on the golf course at the beginning of December that Hutchinson was thrown from his horse and seriously injured. He is reported to have endured thirty-six hours of

intense suffering before passing away.

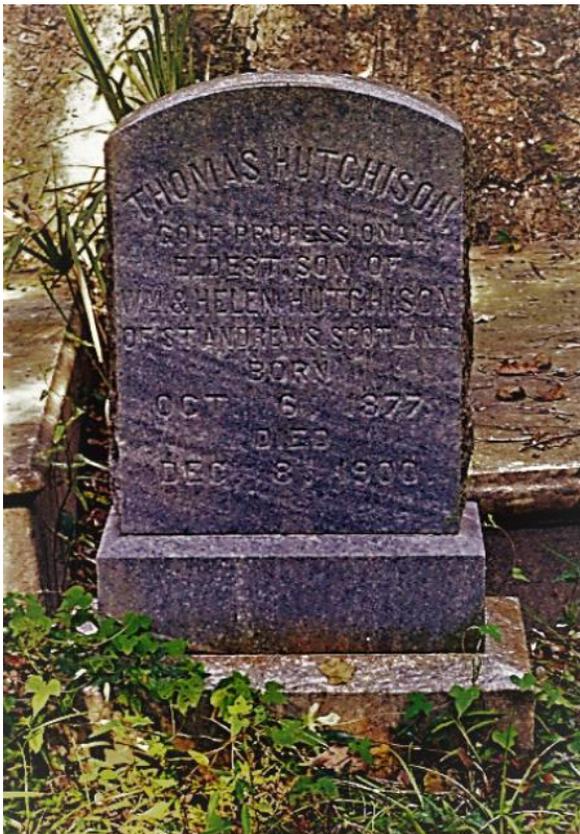


Figure 135 Stafford Cemetery, Cumberland Island, Ga.

Tom Hutchinson was buried in the Stafford Cemetery, near where he fell from his horse, although the golf course he was redesigning is now an open field where wild horses graze and an occasional private airplane lands on a portion of the field mowed to serve as an airstrip.

Back in Scotland, Jock Hutchinson, a brother seven years younger than Tom, traced the same career at St Andrews as his sibling, beginning as a caddie and eventually graduating from apprenticeship to the rank of professional golfer. He was forming the same ambition as Tom to cast his luck with the game in America when his older brother died. When he travelled to the U.S. a few years later, he quickly gained employment as the head professional golfer at important golf clubs, such as St Andrews, one of

the founding members of the U.S.G.A. in 1894. More importantly, he soon found his way to Pittsburgh and the home course of Andrew Carnegie, who had never forgotten Tom Hutchinson.

Carnegie's support of the Hutchinson family back in St Andrews after their eldest son died on his estate was instrumental in enabling the younger brother to follow Tom's path, Carnegie's generosity only became known when another Scottish professional golfer immigrated to the United States and spoke to the press about it:

*David McIntosh, ... who has just arrived in this country from Scotland, brings pleasant news regarding the generosity of W.C. Carnegie toward the widowed mother of "Tom" Hutchinson, who was killed on Mr. Carnegie's private links at Cumberland Island not long ago. According to McIntosh, "Tom" was her only support, and as he made a good deal of money as professional he sent her liberal sums. Since his death these contributions have been continued by Mr. Carnegie, who has asked her to let him know should she be in need of more. (Tribune [N.Y.], 11 February 1901).*

Jock also followed a model that Tom was one of the first to establish among professional golfers in North America: seasonal migration between a summer of work at a prestigious northern club and a winter of work at a prestigious southern resort. As we know, Karl Keffer followed this model for thirty-two years. By 1908, Jock Hutchinson had adopted it, too: "Among the Eastern professionals who are now putting Southern greens in order for the army of Visitors after the first of the year is Jack Hutchinson, professional of the St Andrews Club and who has charge of Carnegie's splendid private course at Dungeness" (*Washington Times* (D.C.), 13 Dec 1908, p. 21).

William Carnegie had given Tom's old job to Jack.

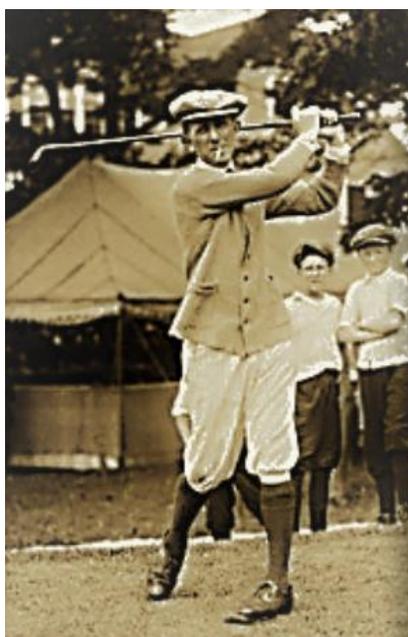
Shortly after that 1908 winter season, he was hired by the Allegheny Golf Club in Pittsburgh – Carnegie's northern club. Hutchinson soon afterwards made a commitment to professional tournament play, and he began to see excellent results: "[Jock] Hutchinson is considered one of the best golfers in the United States and for the past few seasons he has captured the open championship of Western Pennsylvania" (*Pittsburgh Daily Post*, 21 August 1910, p. 18).

No one knew it at the time, but Jock Hutchinson was on the way to becoming an early American golf superstar.



*Figure 136 Jock Hutchinson follow-through during tournament play circa 1910.*

Hutchinson moved from Pennsylvania to golf club in Illinois during World War I, but he shortly thereafter decided to move from the world of the club golf professional to the young professional golf tour and became a member of the PGA.



*Figure 137 Jock Hutchinson circa 1930.*

In 1920, he won the PGA championship.

In spring of 1921 he became a U.S. citizen.

In the summer of 1921, he won the British Open.

Hutchinson was the first American citizen to do so, but of course he would not be the last. When he sailed back to New York, “After leading a group of eight Americans off the ship, he is quoted as having said ‘I’m glad to get home,’ before producing the Claret Jug for the small crowd of fans, and adding, ‘Well, here it is’” (Peter Cox, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/92465923/jack-fowler-hutchinson>).

Jock Hutchinson immediately became famous, a golf superstar of the 1920s and 1930s with other major winners Walter Hagan and Jim Barnes.



Figure 138 Left to right: Jock Hutchinson, Hollywood actor Richard Dix, and Jim Barnes, *Screenworld* (April 1922), p. 46.

He competed in ninety-nine PGA Tour events from 1916-1961, winning fourteen. He also won the inaugural Senior PGA Championship in 1937, which was held at Augusta National. He won a second Senior PGA in 1947. In later years, Augusta National recognised his achievements and made him one of the first two honorary starters of the Masters.

In the 1920s and 1930s, superstars Jack Hutchinson, Walter Hagen and Jim Barnes were known as “The American Triumvirate.” All long gone, they

were re-united in 2011 when Jack Hutchinson joined the other two in the World Golf Hall of Fame.

Tom Hutchinson had lived just six months in the United States, but he was buried there, as we know, and his tombstone still faces Stafford field where once the golf course on which he fell from his horse was laid out. Jock Hutchinson lived more than seventy years in the United States, but he lies buried in the graveyard of St Andrews Cathedral, about half a mile from a golf course grander than the one the brothers tended in Georgia: the Old Course at St Andrews, the home of golf.

Their fates could not have been more different, but they were inextricably linked: Tom’s misfortune at Cumberland Island would prove to be Jock’s good fortune. The one died full of potential; the other died fully accomplished.

## The Ross Design



*Figure 139 Donald J. Ross, circa 1905.*

Golf course architect Donald J. Ross was still at the beginning of his career when he designed a golf course for the Jekyll Island club in the spring of 1909.

Born in Dornoch, Scotland, in 1872, Ross was a greenkeeper at the Royal Dornoch Golf Club when he encountered Old Tom Morris making design changes on the course. He subsequently apprenticed under Morris at St Andrews. After a period as the professional golfer at Dornoch, Ross immigrated to the United States in 1899, with just two dollars left after spending his life's savings on the Atlantic crossing.

After finding a short-term appointment in Massachusetts, he was appointed the golf professional at the Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina in 1900. He was destined to become one of America's most important golf course designers.

Ross initially had ambitions to succeed as a professional golfer, competing regularly in professional tournaments (including the U.S. Open, which his brother Alec won in 1907), but he was encouraged in the early 1900s by Walter J. Travis to become a golf course architect. Travis was confident that the game would boom in America and that Ross would have a lucrative career ahead of him if he devoted himself to developing his talents for course design. Ross's famous design of the Pinehurst #2 course in 1907 was the proof of that pudding.

Eighteen months after this, the Jekyll Island Club invited Ross to visit the island.

Ross's notes for both an eighteen-hole and a nine-hole course on the savanna at Jekyll Island were the basis for a blueprint drawn up in 1909. The blueprint provides the following four lines of information:

*Boundary by E.A. Penniman*

*Layout by J.B. High, C.E.*

*From Notes by D.J. Ross.*

*Apr. 26<sup>th</sup> '09*

Brunner says “Ben High made a linen blueprint tracing showing a savanna outline by Gus Penniman with the Ross course drawn to scale” (p. 3). The original linen blueprint is possessed by Tufts University and is housed in the Tufts Archives of the Given Memorial Library, which shows an image of it on its website.

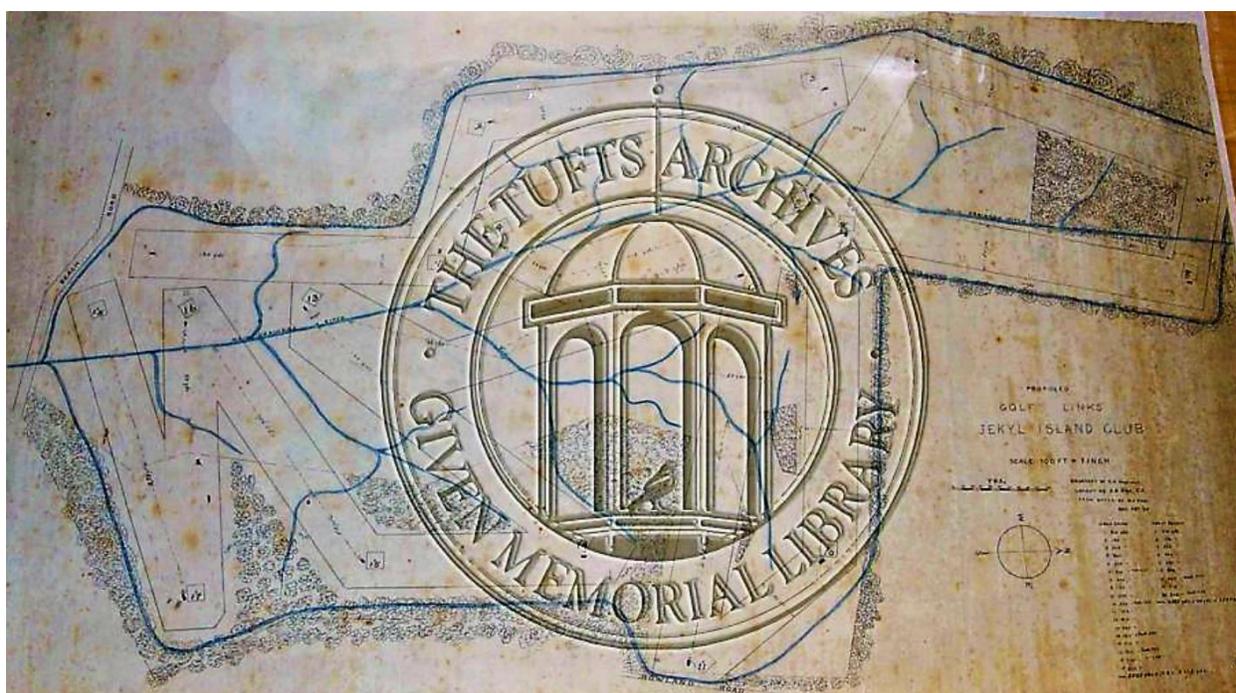


Figure 140 Tufts Archives, Given Memorial Library.

## The Eighteen-Hole Course

Brunner indicates that High composed the blueprint and “was assigned to stake out the tees and greens accordingly” (p. 3). The closest that Ross’s eighteen-hole course ever came to reality was when High staked it out.

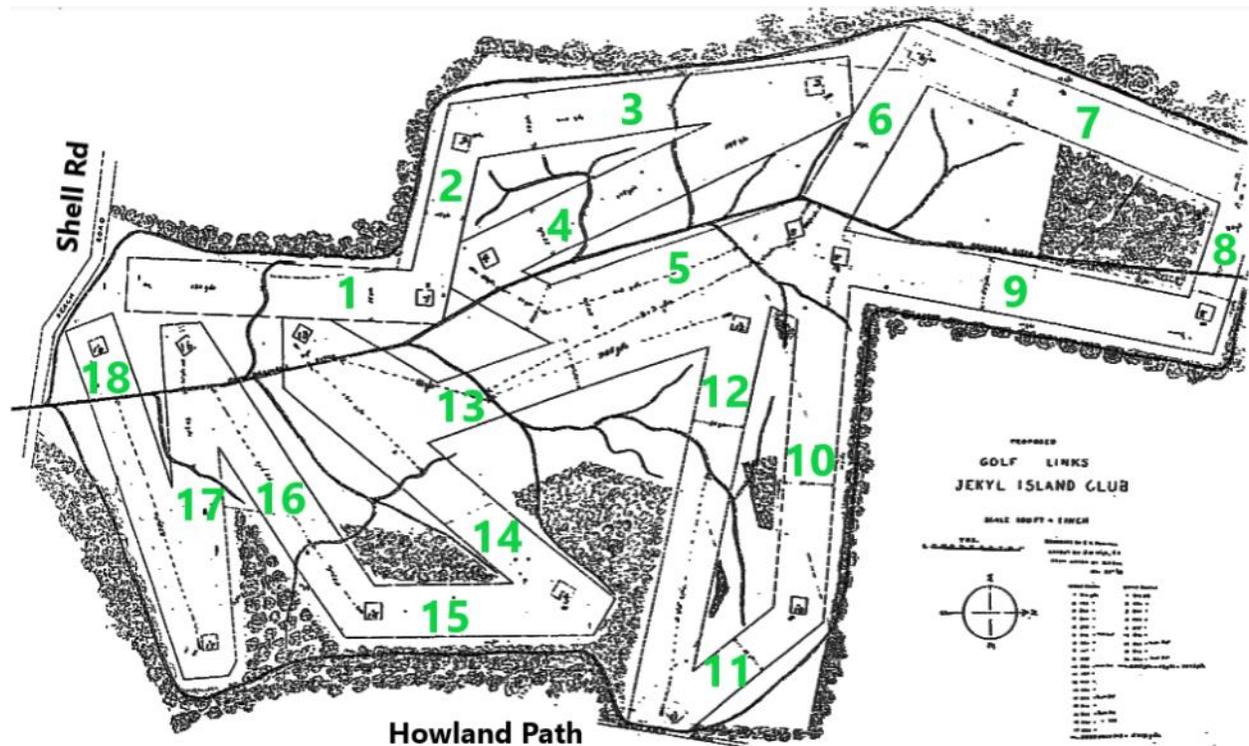


Figure 141 “Golf Links, Jekyll Island Club,” “Boundary by E.A. Penniman, Layout by J.B. High, C.E., From Notes by D.J. Ross, Apr. 26th '09,” in Brunner, n.p.

High noted on the blueprint (in the bottom right corner above) several modifications that he had made to Ross’s plans when he did so. He indicates that the yardages of four holes were “made” longer than Ross had planned: 18 hole course (in yards): 1 310; 2 150; 3 360; 4 400; 5 375; 6 200 (made 225); 7 350; 8 125; 9 385; 10 320 (made 350); 11 160; 12 410; 13 480; 14 360 (made 375); 15 210; 16 300 (made 333); 17 280 (made 285); 18 330.

These changes, however, were not substantial – adding a total of just 108 yards to Ross’s eighteen-hole course: “Total 5505 yds. + 108 = 5613 yds.” (Brunner n.p.). These added yards would not have significantly affected the strategy required to play any of the four holes in question.

Not indicated on the blueprint, but indicated in Ross’s notes, were the dimensions for the various components of the design:

*Size of Tees – 15 ft X 9 ft*

*Size of greens 50 ft square [Ross must have meant 50 ft X 50 ft]*

*Width of fair green:*

*Holes in length from 125 yds to 150 yds – 40 yds*

*Holes in length from 150 yds to 200 yds – 45 yds*

*Holes in length from 200 yds to 500 yds – 55 yds*

*Clear all brush along grass for 10 yards on each side of fair green. (Brunner n.p. “File No. 155”)*

A putting green was eventually built for practise near the golf shed built that was built on the Ross course near Shell Road in 1913. This green is located where Ross had located the final green on his eighteen-hole layout and may have been built according to his original specifications. Like all the other greens on the Ross course, the practice putting green was made of oiled sand.



*Figure 142 Practice putting green beside golf shed (built 1913), with sand and an oil drum seen in the background.*

## The Nine-Hole Course

Asked to present the Club simultaneously with an option for both an eighteen-hole course and a nine-hole course, Ross did not simply offer two nine-hole routings, from which one or the other might have been chosen, nor did he design a completely different nine-hole course within the eighteen-hole space on the savanna. Instead, he selected nine holes from within the existing eighteen-hole design – some from the first nine, and some from the back nine.

The list of holes for the “9 hole course” (all with the same yardages they had on the eighteen-hole course, with the same two holes’ yardages lengthened by High), appears on the blueprint: 1 310; 2 150; 3 360; 4 400; 5 375; 13 480; 14 360 (made 375); 15 210; 16 300 (made 333) (Brunner n.p.). The change to the overall yardage was minimal: “Total 2945 yds. + 43 yds. = 2993 yds.” (Brunner n.p.).

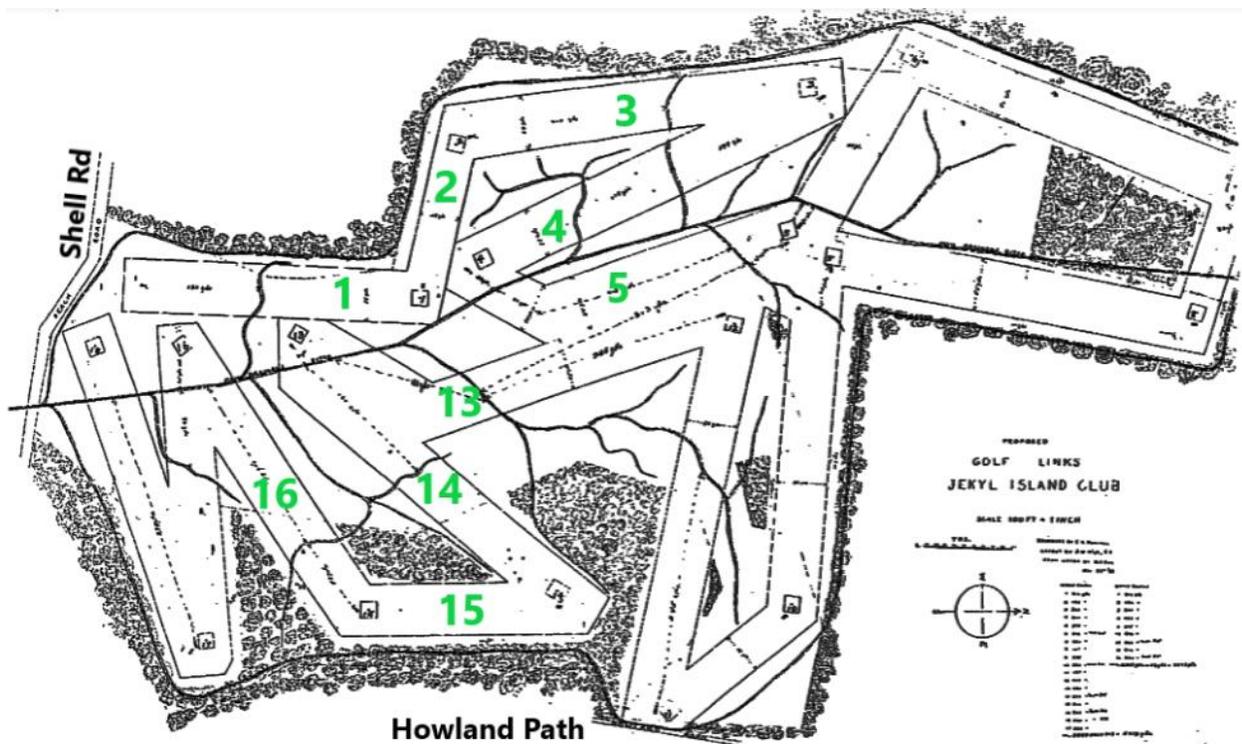


Figure 143 Ross's routing for the nine-hole course.

The holes that Ross grouped together for the nine-hole course located play on the west side of a line between the north-west and south-east corners of the savanna.

The Club built the nine-hole course that Ross recommended, but it may or may not have added the extra yards that High staked out.

There is suggestive evidence in the *Annual Golf Guide* of 1917 that the Ross plans were followed precisely – even to the extent of ignoring High’s two minor amendments. The *Guide* indicates that the golf course of the Jekyll Island Club is indeed nine holes. Interestingly, its length is given as 2, 845 yards. This number is curious, for Ross’s plan for his nine-hole course indicated a length of 2, 945 yards.

I suspect that the Club gave the figure 2, 945 to the editor of the *Annual Golf Guide*, after which, during the preparation of the *Guide*, an error was introduced by typewriter or by type-setting by which the “9” became an “8.”

If so, one wonders whether the Club reversed High’s changes, or simply used Ross’s notes as the source of the information it used on its scorecard – unintentionally neglecting to amend Ross’s figures in light of the two minor changes that High had made.

Note also that Karl Keffer built two golf holes in the dunes in 1913 as a supplement to the Ross course. It is possible that the yardage of the two holes he built was precisely 100 yards less than two holes on the Ross course, and that his two holes replaced the two holes on the Ross course in question – producing the 100-yard difference between the Ross figure of 2,945 yards and the *Guide*’s figure of 2,845 yards.

This seems unlikely, however, for the difference between the two longest of Ross’s holes on the nine-hole course (the fourth was 400 yards and the sixth was 480 yards, totalling 880 yards) and Keffer’s new holes (450 yards + 373 yards = 823 yards) is just fifty-seven yards, not the 100-yard difference between the 1917 *Guide*’s figure and the Ross figure. Besides, there is no way to remove the two longest holes in question (parallel fourth and sixth holes) from the Ross course and retain a workable routing. And removing any other two holes from the Ross course in favor of Keffer’s holes would have made the difference in length even less.

Rather, it seems likely that the Ross course remained the official golf course of the Jekyll Island Club, with the Keffer holes not being incorporated into the scorecard – however much they were incorporated into everyday recreational play.

Nine more holes would be built on Jekyll Island after the Ross course was built in 1909, beginning with the Keffer dunes holes of 1913, but none of them would be the holes that Ross had planned as the other nine holes of his eighteen-hole design, nor would any of the future holes be built on the savanna where High had once staked-out those other Ross holes.

## Construction

Construction of the Ross nine-hole course was under way by the summer of 1909: “While it will be a month or more before the Jekyll Island Club will formally open for the season, the island is now the scene of much activity. In fact a large force of men has been at work on the island during the entire summer, repairing and overhauling some of the cottages, building new golf links and tennis courts and making other improvements on the island” (*Brunswick News*, 19 October 1909, p. 1).

The newspaper article above was published about a week after “James A. Clark, acting as construction superintendent for the Club, wrote the committee that he expected to have ‘all the golf course cleared up, planted and rolled by the 21<sup>st</sup>’” (Brunner p. 5).

James Agnew Clark was Captain of Boats and summer manager of the Jekyll Island Club for over forty years after his hiring in 1888. He became famous amongst service staff and Club members alike during the hurricane of October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1898, when he risked his life as the storm intensified to secure the boats at the Club wharf. In acknowledgement of this service, the Club awarded him a large bonus at the end of the year. When he married in 1900, the Club build him a cottage to live in on the island year-round.

Clark was a jack of all trades at the Club. During the winter season, he was in charge of the ferry, but during the summer, he quietly kept an eye on things as Grob’s surrogate until the fall. In fact, during the summers he did everything from buying turtles for the Club (which maintained pens in which they were raised, with future servings of soup in mind) to tending to the sick during the yellow-fever epidemic of 1893-94 (Bagwells p. 92, McCashes p. 71, respectively). He made repairs to the cottage of McEvers Bayard Brown that were authorized by the famous architect Tuthill himself, and he supervised the construction of the golf course designed by the famous architect Donald Ross (June Hall McCash p. 48).

Clark was also well-known in Brunswick. The newspaper regularly noted when he came into town and reported his observations about events on the island: how the hunt was going, for instance, and whether or not many guests had yet arrived. He was probably a source for many of the hundreds of news items about the goings on at Jekyll Island that one comes across in the Brunswick newspapers over the years: who better to ask about the comings and goings on the island than the ferry captain?

While building the golf course in 1909, he took a day off to compete at the Brunswick Gun Club, of which he was president for many years, for “the solid silver cup” that went to the winner of the championship competition: Captain Clark tied for first place and then won the shoot-off (*Brunswick News*, 14 August

1909, p. 1). Ten years to the day earlier, in August of 1899, when black citizens rioted to block the removal of a black man from the Darien jail out of fears that he would be lynched, Clark volunteered to wield a gun in a different way: he answered the call of a Brunswick politician to become a deputy sheriff and sail with seven others to Darien in response to a plea there for reinforcements to restore order (*Atlanta Constitution*, 28 August 1899, p. 1).



Figure 144 James Agnew Clark, circa 1926.

The photograph to the left shows Clark around 1926, sitting on his motorcycle near the time of his retirement – apparently in the middle of a fairway on the golf course he built for Donald Ross.

Back in 1909, despite Macy’s initial hopes, Clark had apparently found it necessary to plant new grass on the savanna after all. He wrote to the Committee on October 11<sup>th</sup> that on most of the holes the “grass is coming up nicely” (Brunner p. 5). Evidently unfamiliar with golf terminology, he referred to fairways as “drives”: “all

the drives were planted with the exception of 4, 5, and 6” (Brunner p. 5). Still, he assures the Committee, he will have “all the golf course cleared up, planted and rolled by the 21<sup>st</sup>” (Brunner p. 5). Knowing that Ross was expected to return in November to inspect the state of the new course, Clark hoped that the designer would come sooner rather than later and “make such criticism as he thinks right” (Brunner p. 5).

## Earliest Photographs of the Ross Course

We have photographs of the new Ross golf course taken about sixteen months after Clark's letter was written to the Committee about the prospects for completing the course by the fall of 1909.

The grass has grown in. The rectangular tee boxes have been built and supplied with a box (on four legs) containing the sand for making tees for the ball. The fifty-foot by fifty-foot sand greens have been laid out in perfect squares. A flag with a Jekyll Island Insignia on it is found in each hole.

In six photographs contained in the Lanier book *Jekyll Island Club* (1911), we see that a golf tournament is reaching its climax, and spectators have come to watch events unfold. A photographer captures the scene.

At first glance, five of the six photographs are virtually indistinguishable from each other: each presents a similar view from behind the spectators, whose backs are shown as they mill about or watch the last twosome in a match hole out on the ninth green. The photograph below is typical.



Figure 145 *Jekyll Island Club*, p. 109.

One of these photographs shows the assembled crowd beginning to break up and form groups for walking and cycling back to the west toward the clubhouse, but it is not the last photograph in the sequence of the six photographs, so the presentation of the images lacks internal coherence.

If these photographs are simply meant to represent the fact that large numbers of Club members are interested in golf, then any one of these photographs would have met this end. It may be that the

redundancy of these photographs was acceptable in the face of a different priority: simply to give over a substantial portion of the book to an emphasis on the fact the Jekyll Island Club had a brand new golf course. After all, the book was designed to be used as a publicity tool for recruiting new members for the Club

McCormick will have recognized that Lincoln's disparaging reference to the golf course on Jekyll Island in his letter dated 14 February 1911 was out of date: Lincoln clearly knew nothing of the new course. McCormick will no doubt have replied to Lincoln's letter to inform him that a new Donald Ross golf course had opened on the island during the previous winter season. But Lincoln's ignorance about the new course must have nonetheless alarmed McCormick and club president Charles Lanier, who were members of a committee charged with recruiting new members for the Jekyll Island Club. Lincoln's Valentine Day's letter about his un-Valentine-like lack of love for golf on Jekyll Island may have prompted the relatively high proportion of golf-related photographs in *Jekyll Island Club*.



Figure 146 Jekyll Island Club (1911).

This book was privately printed in 1911 by the Photogravure and Color Company of New York, with the "Compliments of Charles Lanier." There is evidence that many of the photographs were taken during the 1911 season. In a diary entry on March 8<sup>th</sup> of 1911, Mary Hill says, "As I went to luncheon today I saw string 18 golden

pheasant being photographed" [sic] (Mary T. Hill Diary, 1911, p. 9, in the collection Mary T. Hill Papers, Minnesota Historical Society). We apparently see these pheasants in the Lanier book strung out on a rope between two trees (I count nineteen birds, mind you, rather than eighteen, but counting dead birds on a rope is not as easy as one might think).

Hill also refers to two golf tournaments played during the 1911 season. First, on February 24<sup>th</sup>, she writes: "There was a golf Tournament this forenoon of 12 gentlemen M. Vail won the cup" (p. 8). Second, there seems to have been a two-day tournament in March. On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, she says, "A gentlemans golf tournament going on today" [sic]. The next day we read: "Senator Aldrich won the Golf

## Earliest Photographs of the Ross Course

Tournament to day” (p. 9). The result of the latter tournament also reported in *American Golf* by Walter J. Travis. He had not written about the first tournament, but he knew that there had been a previous one: “The second golf tournament, which was held the early part of March, was won by Senator Aldrich” (*American Golfer* vol 5 no 6 [April 1911], p. 486).

The importance of communicating a message about golf on the island to prospective new members is emphasized in *Jekyll Island Club* by two things.

First, there is the introductory essay. A writer giving only his initials JAS reports that “The new golf links of the Club are, it is claimed, the finest in the South” (p. 5). Then, as though replying to Lincoln’s letter, he quotes an unidentified “recent visitor” who wrote his hosts at the club about his stay: “I thank you for my two weeks at Jekyll Island. They were most enjoyable and how could they be otherwise, surrounded as I was with charming, well-bred people, with **an interesting golf course**, and men to play with whose keen interest in the game and spirit of fun made eighteen holes a real treat” (p. 6, emphasis added). This letter stands out in the way its claim that Jekyll Island has “an interesting golf course” so directly contrasts Lincoln’s recollection in February that the earlier one “was not at all interesting as a golf course”! It is quite possible that the editor of this book was privy to the contents of Lincoln’s letter and had been told to be sure to counteract ignorance about the new course.

Second, nine of the sixty-two photographs in the book are captioned with a reference to golf. Such a proportion is extraordinary: no other activity – whether hunting or sports on the beach – comes close to this level of representation in the book. A clear intention of the book is to show the centrality of golf to life at the Club.

And the point is made that Club life focuses on the *new* golf course in a way that it never did on the *old* one.

Two of the photographs that are captioned with golf references pointedly mention the “OLD GOLF FIELD” and the “OLD GOLF COURSE.” Yet that course is not shown, although two golfers were playing it on virtually the same day as the tournament captured in the other photographs was played. Readers are invited to think that golf’s ancient (and implicitly inadequate) origins on Jekyll Island are now safely and securely locked away in the past.

Other photographs are captioned with references to the “NEW GOLF COURSE.” One is tempted to conclude that the producer of this book was so keen to emphasize that a new golf course had been laid

out at Jekyll island that virtually the same scene was shown over and over again just so as to be able to deploy one important caption over and over again: "NEW GOLF COURSE"!

## Pinehurst and Jekyll Island Greens

At the beginning of March in 1909, Macy was again thinking about what was necessary to make the course ready for play by the opening of the 1910 season and wrote to McCormick about his hope to build grass greens: “Of course, on the putting greens, we might have some trouble in getting these in shape for the first season, but the soil is so very rich that everything here grows quickly” (Brunner p. 4). Brunner says that the Club planned to seed the greens with Bermuda grass, and not only developed a water system to irrigate them but also bought mechanical mowers to cut them (p. 4).

In the end, however, the greens were in fact made of sand, as at another Donald Ross course: Pinehurst # 2. The photograph below shows play on a sand green at Pinehurst # 2 in the spring of 1914.



*Figure 147 A green on Pinehurst #2 during the 1914 United Championship. Pinehurst Outlook, 4 April 1914, p. 1.*

Compare the photograph above to the photograph below of a sand green at Jekyll Island in 1911.



*Figure 148 Jekyll Island Club (1911), p. 99.*

Each sand green is square, the edges just as sharp in turf as drawn by pencil on J.B. High’s blueprint.

The photographs of the two golf courses are strikingly similar. One might say, tongue in cheek, that the difference between the photographs concerns not the golf courses depicted, but rather the people depicted: at the Pinehurst course, the golfers are professionals who have emerged from the working class, watched by well-off Pinehurst Resort spectators, of whom a few might be millionaires; at Jekyll Island, golfers and spectators alike are not just millionaires, but multi-millionaires.

## Photographs of the Layout

The six photographs in the 1911 Lanier book *Jekyll Island Club* provide glimpses of five of Ross's nine holes. In terms of the nine-hole course built, what we can see in these photographs is the green and part of the fairway on the ninth hole (this is the sixteenth hole of the eighteen-hole plan), the green of the sixth hole (the thirteenth green of the eighteen-hole design), the first fairway (common to both designs), the second green and part of the second fairway (common to both designs), and the tee box of the seventh hole (the fourteenth hole of the eighteen-hole design).

On the detail from the copy of the blueprint illustrated below, I have marked the photographer's vantage point for the six photographs taken, and I have also marked the approximate field of vision produced in each photograph from the vantage point in question. Jekyll Island Club has no pages, but the photographs occur on what I take to be pages 99, 101, 103, 105, 107, and 109. I refer to them below according to these numbers. They are taken from three vantage points, two of them almost identical.

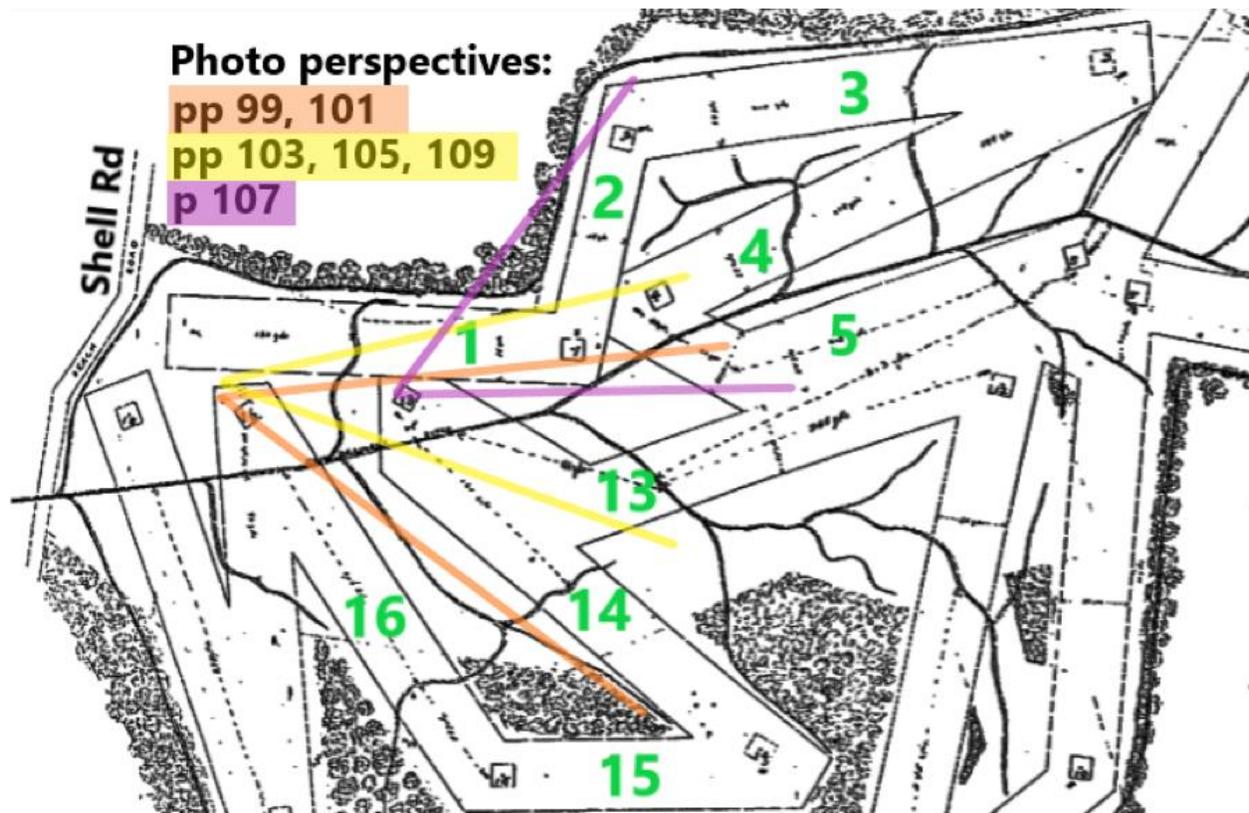


Figure 149 Approximate field of vision from the three perspectives represented in the six photographs of the Ross golf course in Jekyll Island Club (1911). The woods at the corner of the first and second holes was cut back further than the blueprint indicates.

The photographs on pages 99 and 107 combine to give us the best glimpse of the golf course.

The photograph on page 99 was taken from a vantage point between the ninth green (the sixteenth green of the eighteen-hole layout) and Shell Road (which High calls “Beach Road”).



Figure 150 Photograph on p. 99 of Jekyll Island Club (1911).

We get our most complete image of the Ross greens here: the ninth. Although Ross indicated that the widths of fairways should vary depending on the length of the hole, he saw no need to vary the size of the greens according to the length of the anticipated approach shot: each was fifty feet by fifty feet.

Beyond the green (on the right side of the photograph), we see the earth wall produced by the digging of the main ditch. The enlarged detail below shows the wall and what may be a bridge over the ditch.

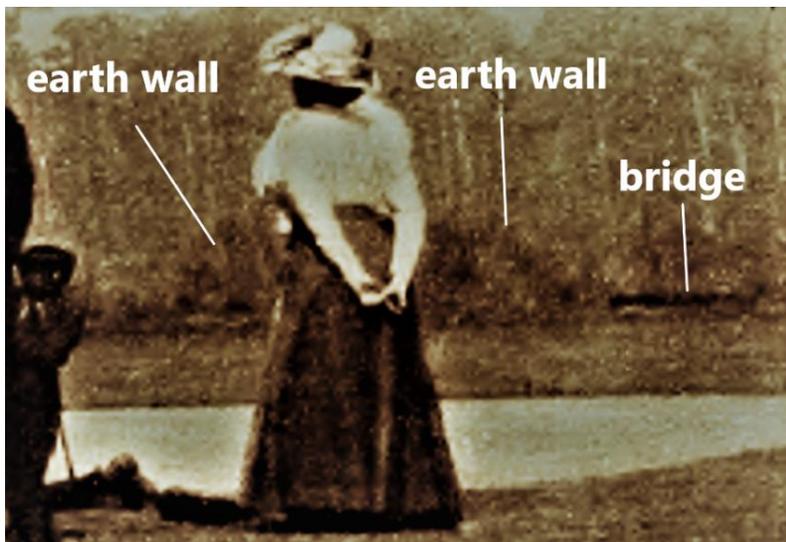


Figure 151 Detail from p. 99 of Jekyll Island Club (1911).

The fairway comes to the green from a tee 333 yards to the east (and would be well right of the bridge marked in this photograph), with both the ten-foot wide main ditch (and the earth wall related to it) having to be crossed on the way to the green. This earth wall is a feature of the course that comes right out of the design manual of Willie Dunn, Jr.

## Photographs of the Layout

Also visible on the left side of the ninth green is the seventh tee. We can make out the box next to the tee that contains the sand for making a tee for the ball. We can also make out an area of sand that constitutes the tee box, which Ross indicated was to be fifteen feet wide by nine feet deep. The same ditch and earth wall that had to be crossed before reaching the ninth green had to be carried with the tee shot from the seventh tee. We can see in the photograph below the earth wall as it stretches away to the north across the seventh fairway, which runs from west to east.

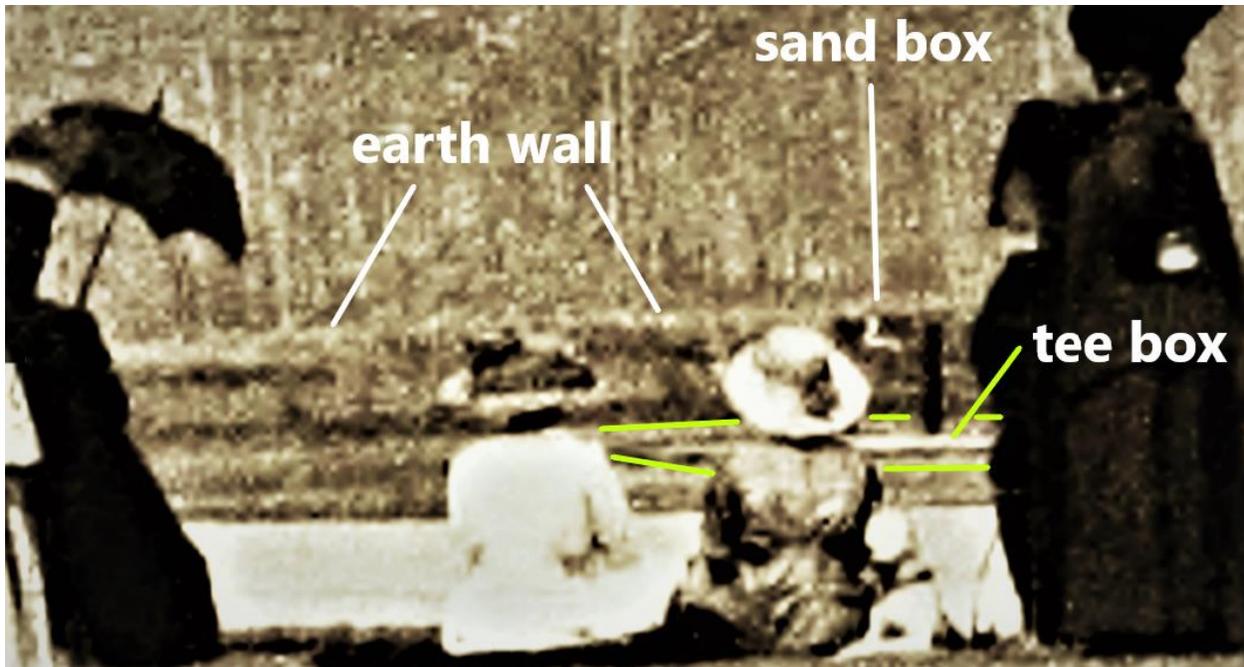


Figure 152 Detail from photograph on p. 99 of Jekyll Island Club (1911).

We see a virtually identical tableau at Pinehurst #2 in a contemporaneous photograph.

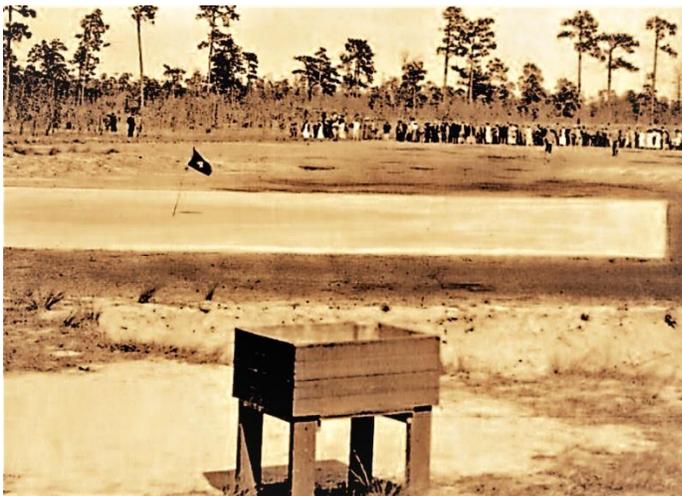


Figure 153 View of the 4th green at Pinehurst #2, circa 1910.

Note the sand box in the foreground, the plain sand teeing ground beside it, and the square sand green beyond them. It is as though we were looking at the Jekyll Island ninth green from the position of the seventh tee.

Pinehurst's sand box, sand tee, and sand green in 1910 each seem to be the same size and shape as their 1910 counterparts at Jekyll Island.

Another photograph presents us with a view of the sixth green (what would have been the thirteenth green on the eighteen-hole layout). It seems to be the same square shape as the ninth green, and it is presumably the same size as the ninth green, as according to Ross's instructions, although the sixth hole was the longest hole on the golf course: 480 yards (eighty yards longer than the next longest).



*Figure 154 Photograph on p. 107 of Jekyll Island Club (1911).*

Visible in the distance is the second green. The second hole ran from east to west, starting at a tee near the first green, which ran from south to north. The second fairway took the course to the western edge of the savanna and so was the part of the course closest to the clubhouse.

The fairway of the first hole runs diagonally through the background of the photograph above. The front wheel a bicycle is visible on the left edge of the photograph, resting against a tree on the west side of the first fairway. (It is seen just below the black part of the garment worn by the person cut off by the left edge of the photograph.)

Not visible in the photograph are the first and fourth greens, the two greens closest to each other on the golf course, but their approximate locations are indicated on an annotated version of this photograph below.

Photographs of the Layout

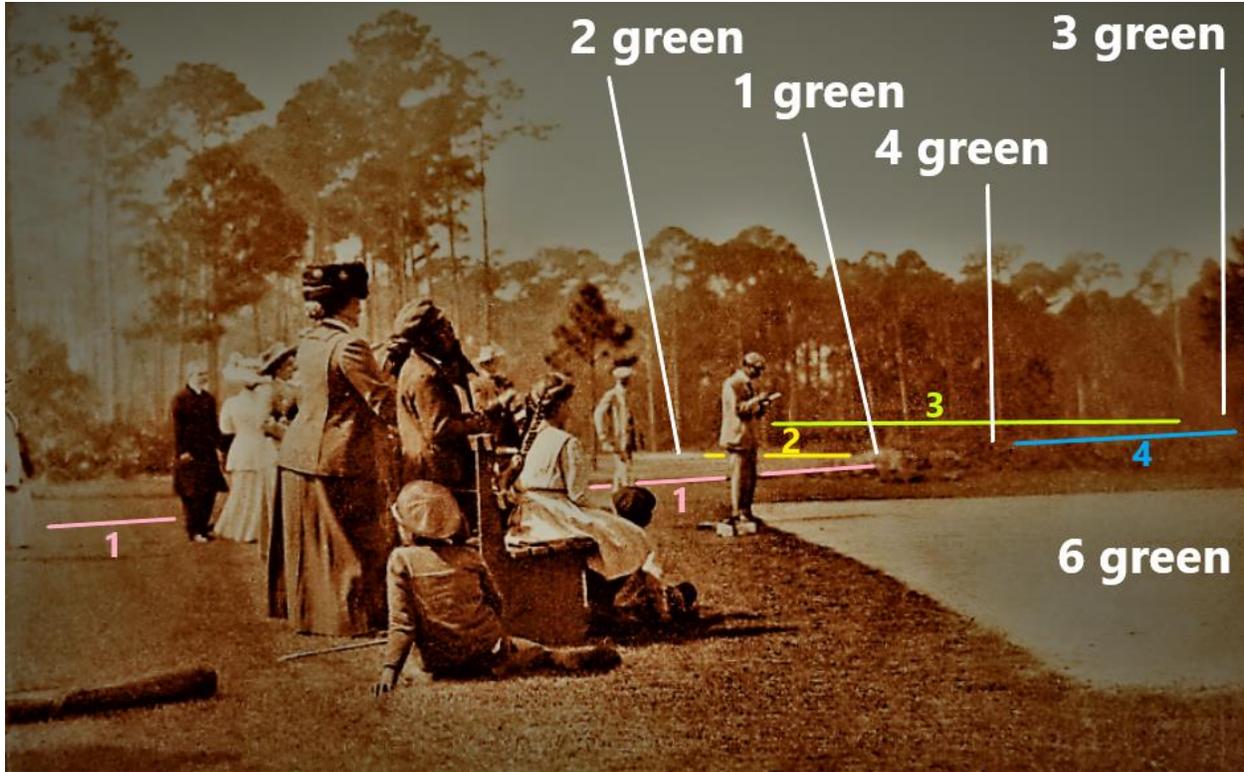


Figure 155 The location of the first four greens and the location of the first four fairways are marked on the photograph of the sixth green from p. 107 of Jekyll Island Club (1911).

The remaining holes can be marked on the photograph of the ninth green.



Figure 156 The location of holes five to eight are marked in relation to the location of the ninth green on the photograph from p. 99 of Jekyll Island Club (1911).

## Ross and Dunn Ditches

Although the Committee bequeathed to Ross the main ditches and cross-ditches as a *fait accompli*, he nonetheless used them in a way distinctly different from Dunn's.

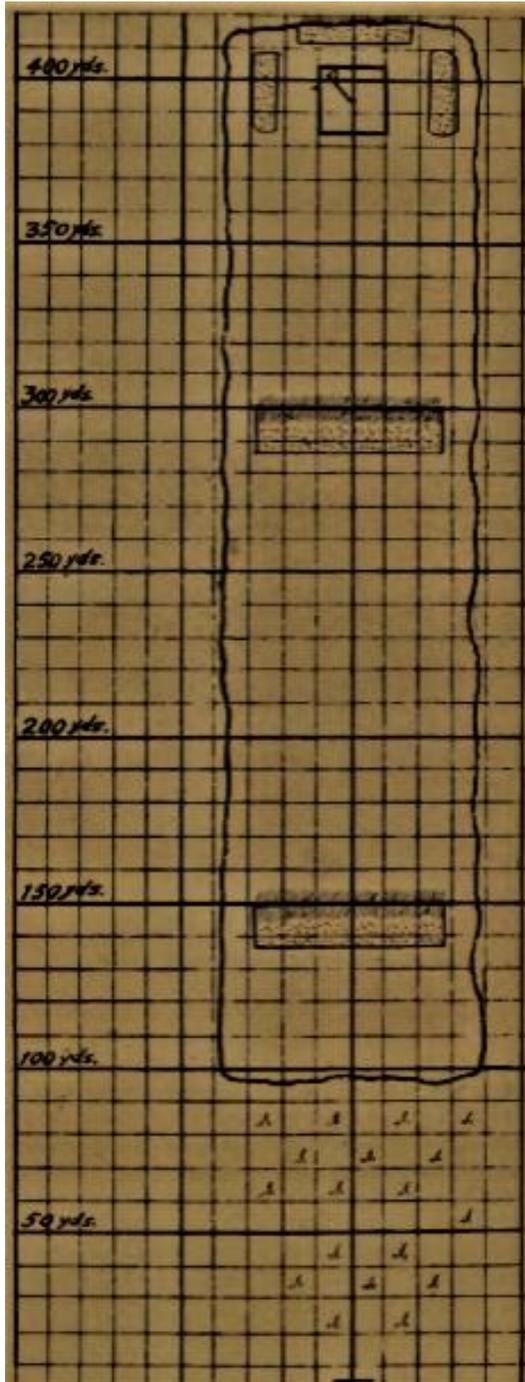


Figure 157 Travis, "Twenty Years of Golf," p. 4.

In the construction of the Elmira golf course, almost contemporaneous with his work at Jekyll Island, Dunn utilized cross ditches in an entirely conventional way according to his family's theories of penal golf course architecture. He introduced these hazards as simple barriers for golfers to surpass on their way to the green. Travis illustrated Dunn's technique by means of the drawing on the left.

Dunn's own drawing of the Elmira course (seen above) shows at least six ditches fully crossing fairways. Some are natural or "wild" (to use Dunn's term); others are man-made. In every case, however, the ditch is placed absolutely perpendicular to the line of play, like ditches and hurdles in a steeple chase. Whether on the jockeys' course or the golfers' course, everyone clears the hurdle – or does not! – at the same location.

Ross, however, orients the line of play on many of his par four and par five fairways at an angle to certain of the cross-ditches on the "savanna." He works hard to do so by introducing a dog-leg routing, or by angling a fairway diagonally to a cross ditch.

His reasons for doing so are strategic.

For instance, his 480-yard sixth hole uses the main drainage ditch in a very interesting way from the point of view of strategic design philosophy.



Figure 158 Annotated detail from a copy of the J.B. High blueprint from Ross's notes (Brunner n.p.).

There are conventional Dunn-like ditches across the fairway: the first about fifty yards from the tee, the second about 310 to 320 yards from the tee.

The most interesting hazard on this hole, however, is the savanna's main ditch located near the green (which is marked "13," with reference to the eighteen-hole layout, but is in fact the sixth green of the nine-hole layout).

The golfer who wishes to reach the green in two shots might play along the right side of the fairway to shorten the distance to the hole that its dog-leg construction otherwise prescribes according to the line down the center of the fairway. (This golfer's shots are shown in purple on the diagram to the left.) An approach to the green from this position, however, decreases the hole's tolerance of a shot that veers left of its intended line (represented by the shaded purple area). The golfer has chosen to make the main ditch function as more of a diagonal hazard than a perpendicular hazard.

By contrast, the golfer who plays a second shot (shown in blue) well past the corner of the dog-leg can turn the main drainage ditch into a much more perpendicular hazard, which is then all the more easily

coped-with by the short club to be used from such an approach location.

Placing a hazard such that its impact on play varies according to a golfer's decisions about how to play a hole is a classic principle of strategic design.

“Dunn” and “Ross” Played the Same Day?

## “Dunn” and “Ross” Played the Same Day?

With two nine-hole golf courses available for play as of the 1910 season, interesting options were now available to Jekyll Island Club golfers:

*play nine holes on the “riverside” course of Willie Dunn;*

*play nine holes on the “savanna” course of Donald Ross;*

*play eighteen holes by playing either course twice;*

*play eighteen holes by playing the two courses in sequence on the same day.*

If it ever became usual at the club to play the two courses in sequence to make up an eighteen-hole round of golf, then the Dunn-Ross course of 1910 would have been the Jekyll Island Club’s first eighteen-hole course.

The anonymous guest quoted in *Jekyll Island Club* (1911) implies that he regularly played eighteen holes of golf with the well-bred people whose company he enjoyed so much. In the course of his stay, perhaps he did all of the above.

I would have.

## Ross Course Reviews

Donald Ross was not at first sold on the idea that the savanna was the best place to build a golf course: “His first assessment of the savanna location was restrained, but he concluded that it would become one of the finest courses in the South and ‘a pretty addition to the island.’ He stated that it is particularly well adapted on account of its being sheltered on all sides” (Brenner p. 4).

As the golf course neared completion, Macy worried that it had been built in too small an area: rather than building nine holes on half of the savanna (leaving the other half for the other nine holes that Ross had planned in his design for the eighteen-hole layout), “it would have been better to have covered more ground for the nine holes” (Brunner p. 5). McCormick disagreed: “It would seem to me better to have the nine holes just as they will ultimately be in the eighteen hole course rather than now to stretch out the nine holes over all the ground and then have to take them up and re-lay the whole course for eighteen holes” (Brunner p. 5).

In February of 1911, during the second season that the Ross course was in play, Grob noted that “the new course was being praised by all who play on it” (Brunner p. 6).

Similarly, in April of 1911, Walter Travis wrote that from what he had heard he could tell that the recently laid out course was “already is in excellent condition” (*American Golfer*, vol 5 no 6 [April 1911], p. 486).

We recall JAS in the book *The Jekyll Island Club* (1911) quoting a guest’s statement that the Club has “an interesting golf course,” and we recall JAS himself observing: “The new golf links of the Club are, it is claimed, the finest in the South” (pp 6, 5).

The *Brunswick News* reported in 1912 that “The Brunswick Golf Club will enjoy a game on the beautiful links of the Jekyll Island Club next Tuesday .... The Jekyll links are among the best in the South” (13 April 1912, p. 1). The next year, when the Jekyll Island Club extended an invitation to the golf clubs of Brunswick and Savannah to play the third and deciding contest in their match-play competition over the Club’s Donald Ross course, the *Brunswick News* observed that large numbers of people from each city were eager to visit “the handsome links of Jekyll Island”: “A long distance message from the secretary of the Savannah club yesterday stated that between 15 and 25 members of the club of that city would come on the trip [as players], and they will be accompanied by a large number of members. All members of the local club are invited to attend and each member has the privilege of taking one lady

with him, while the same privilege has been extended to the Savannah club.... A special boat will carry the crowd from this city" (2 April 1913, p. 8).

The Ross course proved to be such a success that its charms attracted John D. Rockefeller away from Augusta. The Evening World reported in 1916 that with his Pocantico Hills estate covered with ten inches of snow, "Golf Lures John D. South": "With his golf clubs and trunks packed ... he will leave to-day for Jekyll Island, Ga., to remain until spring. Mr. Rockefeller is in excellent health, but feels golf is absolutely necessary to keep him in condition" (8 February 1916, p. 11).

On the other hand, one comes across an implied (but unintended) insult from A.W. Tillinghast, who was the editor of *Golf Illustrated* when Willie Dunn wrote his 1934 article about the circumstances of his construction of early golf courses like the one at Jekyll Island. To Dunn's article, Tillinghast added his own note:

*The editor of Golf Illustrated has been for thirty years very actively engaged in golf course architecture, and after planning and building hundreds of courses in every part of our continent he, perhaps to a greater extent than others, can appreciate the difficulties encountered by this first pioneer. Familiar with each course mentioned by Dunn, we know how exceedingly difficult some of that early work was .... Dunn worked understandingly and with such crude tools and materials as came to hand. As he says, "there is a great difference between course construction then and the present day." Let us respect his labours. (Golf Illustrated, September 1934, vol 41 no 6, p. 25)*

Tillinghast had obviously played Donald Ross's savanna golf course, but he had not recognized that it was the work of Ross: he thought it was the 1890s course that Willie Dunn had described making in his *Golf Illustrated* article.

To have had such a respected architect as A.W. Tillinghast mistake his work for that of Willie Dunn: Donald J. Ross rolls in his grave!

## Between a Ross and a Travis Place

The McCashes write that “The existing golf course, built in 1909 largely through the efforts of Cyrus McCormick and George Macy, had been gradually expanded, as planned, from nine to eighteen holes” (p. 160).

Unfortunately, this sentence is misleading. Expansion of the existing nine-hole course had been planned. What the Club had in mind in 1909 was to build nine of Ross’s eighteen holes and then later to build the other nine. The latter plan, however, was never realized. Instead, the plan changed: no more golf holes would be built on the savanna; golf holes would instead be built in the dunes.

In *The Story of Great Dunes Golf Course – A Walter Travis Masterpiece* (Jekyll Island Museum), Andrea Marroquin and John Hunter write that Karl Keffer was instrumental in designing and supervising the construction of “Jekyll’s first ‘holes in the dunes’ in 1913. This began a period of course construction along the ocean, intended to shift play from the damp Donald Ross Course” (p. 1).

Whatever occasional problems with dampness the Donald Ross course may have had, it remained in play until the Travis course was opened in 1928-29. It was supplemented, however, by nine holes in the dunes designed by Karl Keffer. Together, these two nine-hole courses comprised the Club’s first official eighteen-hole golf course, complete by 1923 and officially opened with great fanfare at the beginning of the 1924 season.

It turns out that the Keffer dunes holes built between 1913 and 1923 made the links – literally and figuratively – between the courses of two of America’s greatest golf architecture icons: Donald J. Ross and Walter J. Travis.

## Karl Keffer

When Karl Keffer retired after thirty-two years as the head pro at each of the Jekyll Island Club and the Royal Ottawa Golf Club, he said, “32 years is a pretty long stretch as professional at one golf club, but I’ve enjoyed it all” (*Ottawa Journal*, 13 May 1943, p. 25).

He was more than a club professional. He won the Canadian Open in 1909 and 1914, as well as the Quebec and Manitoba provincial opens, and many other professional tournaments in Ontario. He played with all the great players of the day from Canada, Britain, and the United States.

Keffer was interested in a wide number of sports from childhood onward. Until he was almost forty years old, he kept a scrapbook in which he collected newspaper accounts of the great sporting events of the day. He “played a great deal of hockey and baseball in his younger days” (*Ottawa Journal*, 13 May 1943, p. 25). He loved hockey particularly, playing senior hockey longer than most did in those days, enjoying competition at the highest level in Toronto until he was twenty-seven, when “a deep skate wound in his left foot became infected” (p. 25). It always bothered him, and toward the end of his professional golf life “bothered him considerably” (p. 25).

Karl (or Carl) Caspar Keffer was born 1 March 1881 in Tottenham, a small village about forty miles north of Toronto. He was the first-born child of twenty-one-year-old Sarah Brown, whose family background was said to be Irish, and twenty-nine-year-old contractor, carpenter, and stair-builder Benjamin Keffer.

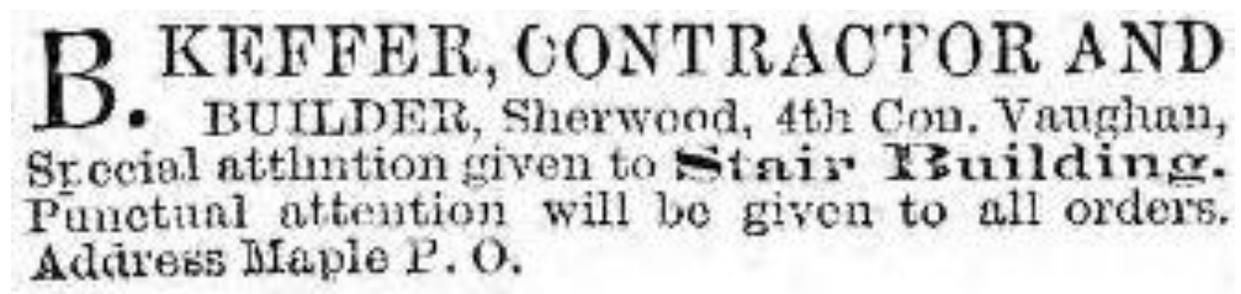


Figure 159 York Herald, 18 October 1877, p. 3.

The Keffer family proudly claimed German heritage, but Karl’s closest relatives were part of a large network of Keffers who had migrated to Ontario from Pennsylvania in the early 1800s.

Before Karl was five, his parents had moved to an eastern suburb of Toronto known as Norway, living very close to the Toronto Golf Club, then located in the Leslieville area of the city. Caddying was a way for boys in the area to earn a bit of money. When it came to playing the game, he proved as much of a

“natural” at golf as he had at hockey and baseball. He won the first caddie tournament ever held at the Toronto Golf Club, and he did so in a competition with a number of caddies who also went on to become professional golfers.

In those days, when club golf professionals discovered that one of their caddies was not only good at the game, but also the son of a carpenter, their interest was piqued: club-making was one of the golf professional’s primary jobs, so a caddie like Keffer would have appealed right away to the Toronto head pro George Cumming as a potential apprentice.

When he retired, Keffer said that “as far as his own development was concerned, it came from caddying and watching the good ones in action.... That should be a good start for anyone” (*Ottawa Journal*, 13 May 1943, p. 25).

Still, despite his early start in the game and the early promise shown from his winning of the caddie tournament, he long deferred his apprenticeship to George Cumming at the Toronto Golf Club. He did not take up Cumming’s invitation to become his apprentice until 1906, when he was twenty-four years old. Keffer’s father had died at just fifty-four years of age in 1893, when Karl was just eleven. His mother was thereafter on her own (she would never re-marry), with Karl not yet in high school and one sister, Ettie, just eight years of age and his other sister, Alice, not quite six. It was a difficult time. Karl’s youngest sister, Alice, died of diphtheria at ten years of age in 1897. Karl was still in high school. To help make ends meet, it is likely that Sarah Keffer took in lodgers. Karl himself, after finishing school, stayed with his mother as a lodger in their home on Gerrard Street.

No doubt Karl worked at a variety of jobs as a teenager to help out with the family’s finances. When he was twenty years old, he told the 1901 census taker that he was a “confectioner.” It seems that “He worked for a while in a candy factory but a boiler blew up and that ended his candy career” (Golf Quebec, <http://www.golfquebec.org/en/pages.asp?id=394>).

If his fellow apprentices had ever got hold of that information, they surely would have christened him Karl “the Candy Man” Keffer!

## Keffer and Travis

While still an apprentice, Keffer won the Canadian Open of 1909 which was played on his home course at the Toronto Golf Club. This victory was entirely unexpected by the Canadian golf world. But it launched Keffer on his way.

Perhaps the most important consequence of his victory was that it brought him to the attention of Walter J. Travis, who had launched *American Golfer* just the year before Keffer's win. Travis noticed Keffer's championship: "It was generally conceded that some of the well-known pros would win .... But all calculations were upset, for a dark horse came to the front and beat them all, and that by good, steady golf .... Karl Keffer, assistant pro to G. Cumming, of the Toronto Golf Club, was little heard of previous to this, but those who had seen him play and had played with him were not surprised" (*American Golfer*, August 1909, vol II no 3, p. 191).

One wonders if Travis was one of those who had played with Keffer and knew that great things were in store for him, or whether he had just heard others talking about him.

Fatefully, a few months after this, Keffer arranged to run advertisements in Travis's *American Golfer*, beginning in February, announcing that he was available for hire as a professional golfer:

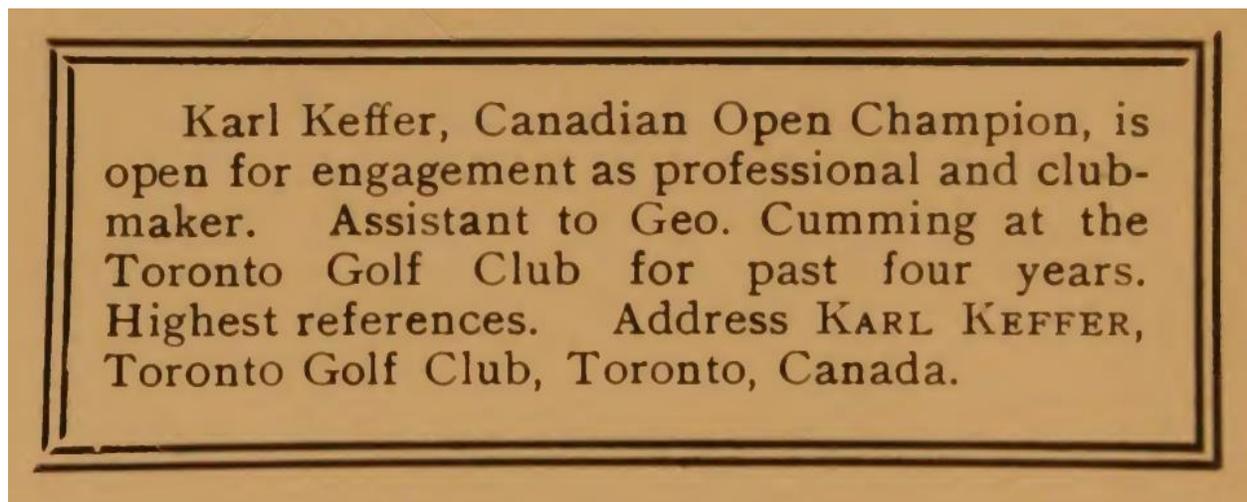


Figure 160 *American Golfer*, vol 3 no 4 (February 1910), p. 319.

Keffer seems to have written to Travis at the end of 1909 to arrange for the publication of this advertisement. As fate would have it, he thereby alerted Travis to the fact that he was on the job market at just the right time, for Macy had simultaneously written to Travis seeking advice about who might be

appropriate to appoint as professional golfer at the new course of the Jekyll Island Club. Travis suggested Keffer; when Macy told McCormick of the advice he had received from Travis, McCormick replied: “Any man recommended by Mr. Travis would, I am sure, be entirely agreeable to the members of the Club” (<https://travissociety.com/society-news/>).

So in January of 1910, the apprentice who was reigning Canadian Open champion was hired right out of the shop of Toronto Golf Club professional George Cumming to be the professional golfer at perhaps the most famous sportsmen’s club in the world (a position he would hold until the closure of the club in 1942). New York newspapers reported the news, as in the following item from the *Tribune*: “Karl Keffer, the professional golf champion of Canada, has been engaged by the Jekyll Island Club, which has recently laid out a new course on its beautiful grounds at Jekyll Island, Georgia. It is understood that Keffer was recommended to the club by Walter J. Travis” (14 February 1914, p. 8). Similar items appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Sun*.

In the spring of 1910, after his first season at Jekyll Island, backed by the recommendation of George Cumming, the recommendation of Walter J. Travis, and perhaps the recommendation of George Macy, and well-respected in the United States as well as Canada as a young golfer likely to become amongst the foremost members of the profession, Keffer secured a position at the Albany Country Club for the rest of 1910. Keffer competed that summer in the US Open of 1910 as a representative of the Albany club (finishing far back in the pack).

Travis continued to promote Keffer, seizing an opportunity later in 1910 to compare him to Harry Vardon: “Karl Keffer, the Canadian pro in charge of the Albany Country Club links, played a good round during September which was a stroke better than Harry Vardon did over the same course, which at the present time is a stroke and a half harder to the nine holes than at the time Vardon visited the club” (*American Golfer*, October 1910, vol iv no 5, p. 403).

Keffer now had references from the Albany Country Club, the Jekyll Island Club, Walter J. Travis, and George Cumming. It is not surprising that after the 1911 season at Jekyll Island he received one of the most prestigious appointments in Canada: head pro at the Ottawa Golf Club, which became the Royal Ottawa Golf Club the year after Keffer arrived. Yet when Keffer “made application,” he was initially approved for just “a term” as acting professional (*Ottawa Journal*, 26 October 1911, p. 28). He passed the examination, of course, and stayed for a further “term” of thirty-one years.



Figure 161 Karl Keffer, 1912.

Keffer probably stayed in touch with Travis. In the spring of 1911 Travis reported again on golf news from the island: “The Jekyll Island Club has within the past year put in a new golf course, having taken in the Savanna land which runs through the center of the island. It has been drained and seeded with Bermuda grass and already is in excellent condition. The second golf tournament, which was held the early part of March, was won by Senator Aldrich” (vol 5 no 6 [April 1911] p. 486). Keffer may well have been the source of the news about the local tournament and the news about course conditions. Recall the concerted effort at the Club in 1911 to get the news out about the new course: getting the new club mentioned in *American Golfer* was a good way of disseminating this news.

Keffer and Travis also played in the same United Championship Tournament at Pinehurst in the spring of 1914, and at the end of the year, Travis printed news of “the 36 holes professional competition which was played at the Brunswick Golf Club, Brunswick, Ga, on Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>”: “Karl Keffer, of the Jekyll Island Club, being third” (*American Golfer*, vol 9 no 4 [February 1915], p. 312). I doubt that Travis would have printed news about such a minor tournament unless Keffer had written to him about it, just as he had probably indulged Keffer by writing about the news of the entirely insignificant Club tournament at Jekyll Island that Aldrich had won in 1911.

My assumption is that Keffer and Travis stayed in touch.

## Designing Ambitions



Figure 162 Edwin Gould, circa 1920.

By 1913, George Gould's younger brother Edwin began to take a great interest in extending the conveniences of the Club, putting up his own money to do so. For instance, he commissioned the building of "the island's first indoor tennis court, designed by New York architect Walter Blair... [a] huge structure, costing more than \$25,000" (McCashes p. 109). He allowed Club members to use this facility until 1920. Also, as June Hall McCash notes, "At the end of 1913, Gould expanded his holdings in the Brunswick area and the club's hunting options by purchasing a small island known as Latham Hammock" (173). This was "a marshy island of approximately 3,000 acres located on Jekyl Creek within sight of the club house" (McCashes p. 111). Incorporated under the name "Latham Hammock Club," it became one of the Goulds' "favorite hunting grounds" and was made available to other Club members (McCashes p. 111).



Figure 163 The "golf house" financed by Edwin Gould in 1913.

Gould also concentrated money and attention on the opposite side of the island, "funding ... two new golf holes overlooking the sea and prefiguring the famous 'dune' course built in 1926" (Hall McCash p. 173). And he financed a golf house where the first tee and the ninth green converged at Shell Road.

As suggested by the photograph above, it seems to have been a combined pro shop and caddie shack.

## Designing Ambitions

Keffer would have been ready to design golf holes in 1913. Not only had he played on top golf courses as a competitor in many professional tournaments, to say nothing of the U.S. Open and Canadian Open venues on which he had competed, but he would have been instructed by golf professional George Cumming in how to lay out a golf course.



Figure 164 George Cumming, golf professional, Toronto Golf Club, early 1900s.

The head professional golfer at the Toronto Golf Club was George Cumming, known ever since as the “doyen” of Canadian golf professionals, for he trained as apprentices a majority of the first generation of golf professionals who would subsequently fan out across golf courses from coast to coast in Canada during the first third of the twentieth century, becoming the primary agents in the establishment of golf as a game in Canada. In recognition of his role as progenitor of at least thirty golf professionals from his pro shop at the Toronto Golf Club between 1900 and 1950, another name given to Cumming was “Daddy of them all” (*Canadian Golfer*, October 1919, vol 5 no 6, p. 341). When he won the Toronto and District Professional Championship in 1919 by five strokes, vanquishing very accomplished former apprentices while doing so,

*Canadian Golfer* wrote: “George Cumming’s victory was a particularly popular one. He has done much for golf in Canada, having trained Karl Keffer, C.R. Murray, A.H. Murray, Nicol Thompson, W.M. Freeman, Frank Freeman, and the majority of the younger pros in Canada. He and his pupils have won the Open Championship of Canada no fewer than seven times and been runner-up on six occasions – certainly a most unique record” (October 1919, vol 5 no 6, pp. 341-42).

Cumming was just as much a golf course architect as a head professional at Toronto Golf Club from 1900 to 1950. From the early 1900s on he went across Ontario designing and building dozens of golf courses, taking his apprentices along with him to teach them this aspect of the golf professional’s craft. With them he discussed the art of routing a golf course, the identification of possible green locations, the value of elevated plateaus for tees and greens, and so on. He mentored not just his apprentices, like Karl Keffer, but also the Thompson brothers, Nicol and Stanley, with whom he formed a golf designing

company after World War I. Keffer's fellow apprentices with Cumming in the 1905 to 1910 period all went on to design significant Canadian and American golf courses.

Cumming had taught them well.

## First Two Dunes Holes

An early Jekyll Island postcard shows the first of the Keffer dunes holes. The figures in the photograph appear in another photograph of this green published in *Golf Illustrated* in March of 1921.

The view out over the Atlantic Ocean is spectacular.



Figure 165 Postcard showing Keffer's first dunes hole, circa 1920.

Keffer's sand green is a notable departure from those on the Donald Ross course. It is oval-shaped, rather than square. Detectable is a slight slope upward to the middle of the green, which we recall was a design strategy on sand greens that was necessary to ensure that the putting surface shed water away from the cup, which was permanently located in the center of the green.

In 1925, this hole was described as a 450-yard par five. In that year, a review of all nine of the Keffer holes was published in *Golf Illustrated*. The review revealed that the Keffer holes were played after six holes of the savanna course were played; then one returned to the savanna course and completed a final three holes to make up an eighteen-hole circuit. The Keffer dunes holes were therefore numbered from seven to fifteen. The first of Keffer's dune holes was numbered ten in 1925. In the discussion that follows, I will use the hole numbers that prevailed in 1925.



Figure 166 Robert S. Brewster, *Golf Illustrated* vol 25 no 6 (March 1925), p. 21.

The tee for the tenth hole was located at the closest point to the savanna course on the latter's eastern side near the Howland Path marked on the blueprint.

We have an image of Robert S. Brewster, Secretary of the Jekyll Island Club, playing from this tee in 1925. The hole plays from west to east; he faces the rising sun as he drives. Visible in the background over his shoulders is the open area of the savanna golf course, with the forest along the far side of the first, second, and third holes visible on the horizon.

Gently but steadily rising from the tee box, the tenth fairway ascended to the higher elevation of the dunes along the coast. In 1925, the hole was described as follows: "450 yards. Green out in the dunes on an elevation. Tee shot a testing one over a diagonal line of traps. Possible, but not probable, to get home in two. The green is about fifty yards from the ocean" ("Down on Jekyll Isle," p. 12).

The green was reached by threading the ball between the peaks of two dunes, as seen in the photograph below from 1925.



Figure 167 Keffer's tenth hole, circa 1925. Photograph in the possession of the Jekyll Island Museum (similar photographs hereafter marked JIM).

Locals knick-named the hole "Mae West" ("Tales of Jekyll," *The Golden Islander*, February 1975).

Who was Mae West, and what was her connection to the Jekyll Island Club? Was she a famous golfer? Perhaps she was just another well-endowed millionaire.

## First Two Dunes Holes

As confirmed by the photograph below, the caddie holds a flagpole that is exceptionally long, usually an indication that neither the surface of the green nor a flag on a pole of normal height can be seen from the fairway below.



Figure 168 *Golf Illustrated*, vol 14 no 6 (March 1921), p. 27.

The reviewer's reference to Keffer's "diagonal traps" here is echoed by a similar observation of "diagonal traps" on the second par five of the nine-hole circuit. This feature of golf course design is what Robert Trent Jones, Sr, would identify in 1935 as characteristic of what he called a new "type of architecture": "the heroic style, combining certain features of both the penal and strategic types. Diagonal traps from 170 to 220 yards in front of the tees permit the golfer to bite off whatever he thinks he can chew, and an alternate route around the hazard is always furnished" (*Golfdom*, vol 9 no 3 [March 1935], p. 22).

The first hole that Keffer created in 1913 ran from west to east for 450 yards. The second hole paralleled it, running 373 yards from east to west. Beers described it as follows: "373 yards. A great tee shot from an elevated dune down an avenue of high pines. Green in grove of small palms. Sand traps on side and back. Diagonal trap 40 yards in front" ("Down on Jekyll Isle," p. 12).

As mentioned above in discussion of the Ross course, it is not clear how Keffer's dune holes were incorporated into play at Jekyll Island.

The *Annual Golf Guide* of 1917 indicates that the golf course of the Jekyll Island Club was nine holes. Were two of the Ross holes abandoned in favor of the Keffer holes? This seems unlikely, since the nine Ross holes eventually combined with nine Keffer holes to make the Club's first eighteen-hole course in 1923. It seems likely that the Club simply maintained eleven holes, members perhaps playing all eleven holes when the Ross course was dry, but just nine holes when the two most troublesome holes on the Ross course were wet.

Note also that the 1917 *Guide* listed Karl Keffer as the Club's professional, although he was actually in France. James Clay was the professional in residence on Jekyll Island. Had the Club provided Keffer's name to the *Guide*, symbolically affirming that he remained their head pro even while in the Canadian Army? Or was the *Guide's* information at least a year out of date? If so, its information about the number of holes and the course yardage may be out of date by at least a year, too.

Keffer's dunes holes must have been a regular feature of play by the members, whether replacing certain of the Ross holes or supplementing the nine-hole course with extra holes, for in 1914 the New York *Sun* referred to the golf course at Jekyll Island in the following terms: "The golf links are described as the nearest approach in America to the links of Scotland" (15 November 1914, p. 42). The following year, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported along similar lines: "The golf links are said to be the closest approach in America to those of Scotland. The sandy stretches and the tough grass give the game surroundings and difficulties like the land of its birth" (9 May 1915, p. 74). One has to assume that the dunes holes built by Keffer prompted this comparison of the Jekyll Island course to the links of Scotland; it is unlikely that the holes of the flat savanna course would have prompted such a comparison on their own.

Virtually identical to their earliest form, Keffer's first two dunes holes remain in play at the northern end of the course known as Great Dunes.

## Niblick and Beers

The author of *Golf Illustrated*'s hole-by-hole analysis of the newly completed Keffer dunes course used a pseudonym: "Niblick." I believe, however, that the author of this 1925 review was William Henry Beers, "editor of *Golf Illustrated* and recognized golf authority," (*Lompoc Review* (19 February 1929, p. 3). He was an influential figure in American golf. When Dr Alister Mackenzie came to the US in 1926, on his way to building such American classic courses as Cypress Point and Augusta National, he made sure to call on Beers in his New York offices to introduce himself by way of a display of photographs of his recent work in the United Kingdom.



Figure 169 William Henry Beers, late 1920s.

At the beginning of his review, Niblick" writes of receiving an invitation while in New York: "The Governors of the Jekyl Island Club cordially invite you to join a golfing party leaving New York on January 20<sup>th</sup>. The trip will last about ten days" ("Down on Jekyl Isle," p 13). This invitation to try out the Club's new course would have been sent to the offices of *Golf Illustrated*: I have to suspect "Niblick" is Beers himself. In fact, the relatively large man appearing in the white trousers near the left dune by the tenth green is probably Beers. The same person figures in many of the photographs of the Keffer holes.

Invitations were received "on a cold December morning" in 1924 by a large group of influential devotees of the ancient game ("Down on Jekyl Isle" p. 12). In a story from January of 1925, headlined, "Noted

Golf Party Will Visit Links at Jekyl Island," we read: "Shortly after the annual meeting of the United States Golf Association, a party of about fifty devotees of the game, including J. Pierpont Morgan, George F. Baker and E.S. Harkness, will leave this city for the Jekyll Island golf course near Brunswick, Ga. It is their intention to be gone about ten days and all are looking forward to better conditions than have ever been enjoyed there before" (*Montgomery Advertiser* [Alabama], 5 January 1925, p. 6).

Beers was excited by the company he kept: "A private Pullman or two and one private car – there were two railroad presidents in the party – made the trip of twenty-six hours far to short, indeed. Between bridge, poker, looking over new clubs, and telling golf yarns, the time slipped by with lightning-like rapidity. Far, far too quickly, at any rate!" ("Down on Jekyll Isle" p. 12).

## The Par Three by the Sea

Just when the first par-three dunes hole was built is not clear.

This short hole, which became known as the eleventh, may well have been in play at the same time as the first two dunes holes, playing its own part in the observations made in 1914 and 1915 about the similarity between the golf course at Jekyll Island and the golf courses of Scotland.

A photograph of this hole appears in *Golf Illustrated*. It accompanies the photograph of the first dunes hole. In fact, the same two players and the same caddies appear in each photograph.

So this hole was certainly in play by 1920-21.



Figure 170 Keffer's second dunes hole, the eleventh, in *Golf Illustrated*, vol 14 no 6 (March 1921), p. 27.

This little hole seems well-established in its setting. There are no signs of recent construction. In particular, the edge of the green is no sharper than the edge of the green at the previous hole: the geometrical precision of its original edge has been encroached upon by growing grass.

We can see the tee for this par-three hole in the background on the right side of the photograph of the previous hole. Again, there are no signs of recent construction activity in this area: no signs either of soil piled up to make a level surface for the tee box, or soil recently scraped off the top of a little dune to

make a level surface for the tee box. Grass is well-established all around the tee box. Perhaps most importantly, there are no signs in either photograph of tree-felling and stump removal. Any construction activity of that sort occurred some while ago.



*Figure 171 Eleventh tee box outlined in white in this detail from postcard of tenth hole above. The same tee box remains in play on the sixth hole of the Great Dunes course today.*

So this little par-three hole could well have been contemporaneous with the first two dunes holes.

The walk from the green of the par-five dunes hole of 1913 to the tee for the parallel par-four dunes hole was about 100 yards. On the Ross course, although there is hardly any space shown between greens and tee boxes on the blueprint, tee boxes must in fact have been separated from greens by a space of twenty or thirty yards. Although the 100-yard walk from par-five dunes green to the par-four dunes tee would perhaps have been longer than preferred in those days, there was not necessarily an architectural imperative that a par-three hole take up the space between them.

Still, it is quite possible that Keffer built this par-three hole at the same time as he built the first two in order to move golfers from the par-five green to the par-four tee. The amount of extra construction work – and the amount of extra money from Gould required to pay for it – would have been minimal.

## The Par Three by the Sea

Beers described the hole as follows: "130 yards. A gem. Green in a depression of the sand dunes. Only a perfect shot will escape disaster" ("Down on Jekyll Isle" p. 12).



*Figure 172 Golf Illustrated (April 1931), p. 8.*

When Beers (on the left) played the eleventh hole in 1925, the green had been converted from oiled-sand to grass.

All three of Keffer's first dunes holes remain in play today on Jekyll Island's "Great Dunes" course, and they are virtually unchanged.



*Figure 173 An image from Google Maps of Keffer's first three dunes holes today.*

After Keffer's first work on these early dunes holes, further development of golf holes in the dunes seems to have been stopped, perhaps because the Club was happy with what it now had, or perhaps because of World War I.

## Keffer and Francis Ouimet

After his adventures in golf course design on Jekyll Island during the winter season of 1913, Keffer was involved at the end of the summer in an unforgettable golf experience at the U.S. Open.

At the Country Club of Brookline in September, unheralded Francis Ouimet, twenty-year-old amateur, son of immigrants, won a playoff over six-time major winner Harry Vardon and reigning British Open champion Ted Ray. The golf worlds of Britain and America were equally shocked and awed.

This contest has gone down as one of the greatest U.S. Open championships in history, and Keffer had a front-row seat as history was made, for Ouimet's playing partner for the first two rounds was none other than the former Canadian Open champion Karl Keffer.



Figure 174 Ten-year-old caddie Eddie Lowery (left) and Francis Ouimet walking down a fairway at the Country Club of Brookline on the first day of the 1913 U.S. Open, playing alongside Karl Keffer. Members of their gallery, one of the largest on the first day of play, can be seen behind Ouimet.

Keffer and Ouimet had perhaps the third largest gallery of the first two rounds:

*More than a thousand golf enthusiasts watched the start of the two day play in the national open championship here early today, while rain pelted down. By the time half a dozen pairs had gotten away another 500 rain coated figures had arrived and the crowd began to split into as many parties as there are leading players.... John McDermott, the present title holder, and Gilbert Nicholls of Wilmington, Del., were the first pair to carry a large gallery. W.C. Fownes, Jr., of*

*Pittsburgh, former amateur champion, and Elmer Loving, Hackensack, N.J., followed closely. Francis Ouimet, the Boston boy ..., and Karl Keffer ... were popular .... (The Daily Gate City [Keokuk, Iowa], 18 September 1913, p. 6)*

Play on the early holes of Ouimet's rounds with Keffer is discussed in Mark Frost's *The Greatest Round Ever Played: Harry Vardon, Francis Ouimet, and the Birth of Modern Golf* (New York: Hyperion, 2002):

*On the eve of the tournament, a fascinating confluence of complex rivalries met in The Country Club locker room. The most obvious division pitted American players versus the foreign delegation: Vardon, Ray, Wilfrid Reid, Frenchman Louis Tellier, and top Canadian pros Karl Keffer and George Cumming ....*

*Francis waded into the mob that swarmed around the clubhouse scoreboard posting [of the] pairing for the Open's first official rounds .... When he finally worked his way close to the board, Francis found his name listed in Thursday's twenty-eighth twosome, scheduled for 10:30, paired with ... Karl Keffer.*

*Francis and [his ten-year-old caddie] Eddie moved to the first tee .... He shook hands with his playing partner Karl Keffer as they waited for the first fairway to clear. Keffer mentioned that Francis had caddied for him once years before ... Francis vaguely remembered Keffer ....*

*[On the par-five first hole, Ouimet was in a green-side bunker after three shots.] Keffer had reached the green in two, waiting patiently for Francis to catch up. He dug in his feet and blasted the ball out of the bunker and onto the front of the green, more than twenty feet from the hole. His first putt came up a foot short; Francis tapped in for a slack bogey six. Jaw tightening, he quietly handed the ball to Eddie as they walked toward the second tee.... Francis wasted no energy in the niceties of social lubrication with playing partner Karl Keffer.*

Frost describes events from Ouimet's point of view.

An Ottawa newspaper reported on the day's play with a focus on the hometown hero: "Keffer's good play was loudly applauded at times by a gallery of Canadian admirers who followed the youthful Ottawa man around the course. He drove splendidly and ran down several putts in fine style" (*Ottawa Citizen*, 18 September 1913, p. 9).

But it is important to note that as it became clear to Keffer that he would not make the cut, he knew enough to stay out of Ouimet's way as the young amateur climbed his way up the leaderboard.

Karl Keffer always said that he respected just such a business-like approach to the game as Ouimet showed. Keffer suggested that golfers could take a lesson from baseball players: "a ball player learns to keep his mind on the game even though the crowd is razzing him.... [T]hat training is important in golf. The golfer has to concentrate and let nothing disturb him" (*Ottawa Journal*, 13 May 1943, p. 25).

Keffer did not stay in Brookline, a suburb south-west of Boston, to watch the eighteen-hole play-off between Ouimet, Vardon, and Ray. Perhaps he did not fancy a four-hour walk in the rain jostling with 8,000 spectators for a view of the great golf being played.



*Figure 175 Francis Ouimet crouches to read his putt on the eighteenth green of the Country Club of Brookline, a suburb south-west of Boston, on the last hole of the September 20th, 1913, play-off against Harry Vardon, standing right of Ouimet, and Ted Ray, standing right of Vardon.*

Whatever the case may be, Keffer was back in Ottawa when word of Ouimet's victory came. The Ottawa newspapers asked Keffer for his opinion of the young champion. His reply was succinct: "Ouimet is a wonder" (*Ottawa Citizen*, 22 September 1913, p. 9).

The incredible achievement was front-page news all across North America. The impact on Keffer of having played the first two rounds of that tremendous U.S. Open with Ouimet can be seen from the fact that for years afterwards he collected newspaper stories about Ouimet for his scrapbook. Keffer appreciated the fact he had been a participant in an important event in golf history.



*Figure 176 Karl Keffer Scrapbook, Canadian Golf Hall of Fame and Museum, Oakville, Ontario.*

This was the beginning of a period when Keffer found himself consorting with some of the greatest golfers and golf designers of the early twentieth century.

## Keffer, Travis, and Ross

Whether or not Keffer had played golf with Travis before the latter's recommendation landed him his job at Jekyll Island, Keffer subsequently crossed paths with him in the inaugural playing of "The United Championship" in the spring of 1914 at the Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina. Playing in the same tournament with them was the designer of the Pinehurst #2 course on which the tournament was played: Donald J. Ross.



Figure 177 Walter J. Travis circa 1914.

Gathered together for a week of golf were some of the best amateur and professional golfers in the United States. The largest golf resort in the world, Pinehurst had for more than a decade held "North and South" championships separately for amateurs and professionals. In 1914, the resort organized an "Amateur-Professional" competition (teams were formed combining an amateur with a professional), as well as an Open tournament for the whole field of amateurs and professionals combined. The professional field included future Hall of Famer Walter Hagen, former U.S. Open champion J.J. McDermott, former Canadian Open champion Keffer, the Ross brothers Donald and Alec (the latter of whom had won the 1907 U.S. Open), as well as a large number of others.

The resort was most excited about the amateur field: "Gathered for the Amateur is unquestionably the fastest and most representative field in the history of the classic – a tournament of National importance which from the standpoint of quality is only exceeded by the National Amateur. Heading the field is Walter J. Travis" (*Pinehurst Outlook*, 4 April 1914, p. 1).

Keffer travelled to Pinehurst from Jekyll Island, arriving a little bit early for the tournament.

I suspect he was on a delayed honeymoon.



*Figure 178 Evelyn Alice Freeman, now Mrs. Karl Keffer, and her husband Karl Keffer at Jekyll Island, presumably during the winter season of 1914.*

On the second-last day of 1913, Keffer had married Evelyn Alice Freeman, sister of two of his fellow assistant professionals at the Toronto Golf Club. Keffer's best man at the wedding was another of his fellow Toronto Golf Club assistant professionals. The world of golf professionals in Canada in 1913 was a small one. In 1909, while still an apprentice, Karl had been the best man at the wedding of his friend, professional golfer Fred Rickwood. The wedding was in the same Anglican church in the Norway suburb of Toronto where Karl was to be married to Evelyn four years later.

When the Keffers arrived at Pinehurst, Evelyn was one-month pregnant. Their only child, Howard, would be born at the end of November.

Karl had presumably arranged leave from his duties at Jekyll Island so that he could play in the prestigious golf tournament on Pinehurst #2 – and he had perhaps arranged a little bit of extra leave so that

he and Evelyn could enjoy time together at America's top golf resort.

Winner of the Canadian Open five years before in 1909, Keffer was sufficiently a celebrity in both the Canadian and the American golf communities for the local newspaper to note that he was at the resort: "Mr and Mrs Karl Keffer of Ottawa are making a short stay" at the Holly Inn of Pinehurst, North Carolina (*The Pinehurst Outlook*, 28 March 1914, p. 11).



*Figure 179 Karl Keffer, Jekyll Island, circa 19914-15.*

Flying the Canadian flag in the combined professional-amateur team event, Keffer paired with amateur Richard F. Robinson from St Catherines, Ontario. The Canadian duo played solid golf, but still finished in a tie for thirteenth, nine strokes behind Walter Hagen and his amateur partner.

Robinson would enlist in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force before the beginning of the next golf season. Keffer would do so a year later. But in the spring of 1914, there was no sign of impending war.

Gilbert Nichols, who had also played well in the 1913 U.S. Open, won the Pinehurst Open event, ahead of Hagen, McDermott, and Alec Ross (brother of Donald Ross). Keffer did not play as well as he had played in the earlier competition, finishing well down the leaderboard, trailing Donald Ross himself by four strokes. Travis had finished second among the amateurs in the medal play qualifying round that preceded the amateurs' match-play championship, but he lost his first-round match after that. In the Open tournament, perhaps he played poorest of all: he refused to submit his scorecard.

One wonders whether Keffer have a chance to talk golf with Travis and Ross?

Travis arrived at Pinehurst on Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, so there was plenty of time for Keffer to have found an opportunity to thank Travis in person for having recommended him to the Jekyll

Island Club four years earlier (if he had not had an opportunity of doing so before). Donald Ross lived in Pinehurst. Keffer would probably have wanted to consult with him about the changes that he was making at Jekyll Island to supplement Ross's earlier work there. If Ross had already heard that changes were underway on Jekyll Island, he might have been curious to ask Keffer what was going on.



Figure 180 Donald J. Ross, circa 1914.

If Keffer had been able to join a conversation between Travis and Ross, what wonders he might have beheld. For Travis and Ross had long discussed golf design theory, and the Pinehurst #2 course is where their conversation had begun about seven years before.

Travis regarded himself as Ross's mentor:

*For some time I had been pouring into Donald's ears my ideas; in point of fact, I had urged him to take up the laying out of courses, as with the certain development of the game a fine future was assured for one having a bent in this line. In those days Willie Dunn had ceased to figure .... Donald heeded my advice ... and golf has been tremendously benefited by his many very fine creations since. ("Twenty Years of Golf, An Autobiography – (Continued): The Advent of a New Era in Golf Course Construction," American Golfer vol 23 no 33 [9 October 1920], pp. 23-24)*

At Pinehurst, Travis had campaigned to have the ladies' course at Pinehurst known as #2 lengthened and made more difficult so that it became suitable for championship play:

*A history of the number two or championship course at Pinehurst may not be inappropriate. For several years I had been at Mr. Tufts, the proprietor, to make this an exacting test. The course was originally designed for ladies. The distances on the holes were fairly good and capable of extension, but there wasn't a single bunker. It was so tame and so insipid that there was practically no play over it. Everyone preferred the number one course, which, comparatively speaking, had some teeth in it....*

*Finally in 1906 I won him around to my way of thinking and he gave me carte blanche to go ahead. I knew the changes that I had in mind would result in a big uproar at the start, and I didn't feel like shouldering the whole responsibility. So I suggested that*

*Donald Ross and I should go over the course together and, without conferring, each propose a separate plan. (p. 23)*

According to Travis, he “knew what the result would be” (p. 23). He was absolutely confident that their plans would be virtually identical since “At that time [Ross] was merely an echo of my own views regarding the fundamental principles of golf course architecture” (p. 24). And he was right, says Travis. They had disagreed about strategy on just one hole, where Ross had his way. Otherwise, “Donald and I were a unit. And the course was bunkered accordingly” (p. 24).

If Travis’s account of his influence on Donald Ross at the time of the design of Pinehurst # 2 is correct, then Travis’s fingerprints will have been all over the Jekyll Island golf course that Ross designed two years later.

From this point of view, whether or not Keffer had the opportunity to hear Travis and Ross discuss their architectural principles at Pinehurst in the spring of 1914, he had already had the opportunity by five years of play on Jekyll Island to discover those principles as applied to the Club’s golf course.

## Golfing to War

In the summer of 1914, when war was declared in Europe, with Canada joining the war at the beginning of August, Keffer returned to the Toronto Golf Club once again to compete in the national championship.

The tournament at Pinehurst had stoked Keffer's enthusiasm for golf at the beginning of the 1914 season. He was amazed by the sport's surge in popularity: "There is greater interest now in the game than ever before. Why, at Pinehurst they have three courses and they are crowded from 8 o'clock in the morning until darkness" (*Ottawa Citizen*, 11 April 1914, p. 6). He was not just a competitor at Pinehurst, but also a spectator at the amateurs' competition and the women's competition: "Keffer was at Pinehurst two weeks ago where he witnessed some of the big games in the annual spring tournament for the championship of the north and south" (*Ottawa Citizen*, 11 April 1914, p. 6). Most importantly, Keffer had overcome "the rheumatism, which handicapped him last season" (*Ottawa Citizen*, 11 April 1914, p. 6).

The Toronto Golf Club had just opened a new golf course, one designed by Harry Colt to replace the one on which Keffer had won the Canadian Open championship in 1909. He had won his first Canadian Open on a course that he knew well, having caddied on it for many years and having played it for three years as George Cumming's assistant professional. His win in 1914 was on a golf course that was completely new to him. He beat the host pro, his mentor Cumming, by one stroke.

The Canadian Open tournament was held one week after Canada had entered the war.

Initially, most people in Europe and Canada expected the war to be over within months. So the next golf year began as it always did for Keffer, with him supervising golf activity for the Jekyll Island Club during the 1915 season. Here, all was in very good order. His first dunes holes were a big hit. In fact, he secured time away from Jekyll Island for the last two weeks of February to join fellow Canadian professionals in a tournament in Oakland, California.

But when he returned to Canada in April, the golf world changed. As a leading member of the Canadian Professional Golfer's Association, he had to turn his attention to the shutting down of professional golf tournaments, including the CPGA championships. The CPGA made a well-received donation to the war effort, organized by its Secretary-Treasurer, Karl Keffer. Of course the 1915 Canadian Open was cancelled, too. Keffer would remain defending champion indefinitely.

## Golfing to War

But golf did not cease absolutely, and Keffer was instrumental in keeping it in the public's eye.

Keffer played a big role in the development in 1916 of a popular contribution to the war effort:

"Patriotic Golf" (see *Ottawa Journal*, 19 August 1916, p. 9, and *Gazette* [Montreal], 26 August 1916, p. 13). Charity matches between Canada's most prominent professionals were arranged to raise money to support the Red Cross. Keffer and fellow professional Davie Black played two celebrated matches against the Murray brothers (Charlie and Albert) home and away in Ottawa and Montreal in August and September of 1916 to get the whole thing started. For the rest of the war, golf clubs across Canada celebrated "Patriotic Day" golf matches between the well-known professional and amateur golfers alike, all proceeds being donated to the war effort.



Figure 181 Karl Keffer in uniform, *Canadian Golfer*, vol 2 no 8 (December 1916), p. 438.

By November, however, Keffer decided to enlist in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force. The news was reported widely across Canada and the United States as an example of commendable patriotism.

The following is a typical example from the *New York Sun*:

### *Canada Champion Enlists*

#### *Karl Keffer, Golf Leader, Joins the Allies in War*

*Another star of the golf firmament has laid aside his clubs and shouldered a musket in the cause of the Allies. He is Karl Keffer, twice open champion of Canada and professional at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club. Keffer recently enlisted with Col. C.W. McLean's Ottawa battalion and will go overseas with that unit.*

*Keffer is the present open champion of Canada, having won that title in 1914, the last time a professional tournament has been held across the border. He came to the Ottawa club in 1911. For the last few winters he has acted as professional to the Jekyll Island Club, and is well known among New York amateurs.*

*Keffer won international fame by his driving. When Harold H. Hilton visited Canada some time ago he played with Keffer and remarked that the professional was the most accurate driver he had met on this side of the Atlantic. He is an officer in the Canadian Professional Golfers Association, which recently made a big donation for patriotic purposes. He enlisted as a private. (26 November 1916, p. 21)*

*Canadian Golfer* magazine informed readers that “Karl Keffer is popular alike with his brother pros and with golfers generally. He is a fine player and good sport, and his patriotic stand in enlisting will make him hosts of additional friends and admirers throughout the Dominion” (vol 2 no 8 [December 1916], p. 438).

Keffer used the celebrity that his status as reigning Canadian Open champion accorded him to make an appeal in the pages of *Canadian Golfer* to his fellow professionals, enjoining them to enlist, too, and show the enemy what a professional golfer was made of:

*Perhaps you have been thinking of enlisting for active service. I have already done so with the 207<sup>th</sup> Battalion of Infantry, Ottawa, and I extend an earnest appeal to all who can and will to join in the big work over in France. I feel sure that all of our clubs will think a great deal more of us, and will extend us every consideration, and will be glad to put up with less efficient service in the workshops at the hands of our assistants, if we try to do our share until the country is assured of more prosperous times. Can you see your way clear to make the break? It seems to me in view of the appeal made to the country by the Premier, Sir Robert Borden, a few days ago calling upon every man of military age to place himself at the disposal of the Canadian Army the golf professional should not be found wanting. How many of us can and will respond, and what better place than the capital of your country to enlist in? There is room in the 207<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion which is now recruiting in Ottawa and is booked to go across around the New Year – a grand chance to get in a live battalion and go across right away. Golf professionals are always in training and a squad of golfers could hold their own with anyone. Let us get together and make up one or two sections in the above well-known battalion. Frank Locke and Fred Rickwood are already there. Let us join them. Did you ever think as I have what your feelings would be after the war is over and you might have helped and didn't try? Suppose we should lose the war because those could help did not do so. Also, it is far better to enlist*

## Golfing to War

*voluntarily than to be conscripted. Golf professionals, please give the above your earnest consideration and for any information, write,*

*Karl Keffer, Open Champion of Canada (vol II no 1 [November 1916], p. 5).*



*Figure 182 Sapper Karl Keffer, Canadian Royal Engineers Reserve Battalion, circa 1918.*

As he had expected, Keffer was soon sent to Britain for extensive training, and then to France for active service at the front, “where he was primarily a runner of messages between the trenches” (Golf Quebec, <http://www.golfquebec.org/en/pages.asp?id=394>).

In the Canadian Army, “runners” had among the shortest life expectancies of any soldiers: they were a favorite target of enemy snipers.

Before the war, Keffer had heard the millionaires at Jekyll Island comparing his golf holes to those on the links of Scotland and England, and he had read the same sort of thing in the newspapers as early as 1914 and 1915. He had not known exactly what they meant, for he had never been to Britain, let alone played its golf courses. Now however, both while training in Britain and when on leave from the front in France and Belgium, he would find out just what they had meant: he was determined to try the links of England and Scotland.

Many of the Canadian professional golfers, and a good number of the top Canadian amateur golfers, who joined the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force between 1914 and 1919 took advantage of their long period of training before being sent to France and Belgium, and later took advantage of their regular leaves from the front, to play golf in Britain. Fred Rickwood, at whose wedding Keffer had served as best man, played many of the famous courses. So did Stanley Thompson, who would become Canada’s most famous golf course architect, well-known champion of “strategic” design philosophy.

As we shall soon see, like Rickwood and Thompson, when visiting the famous old courses of Scotland and England, Keffer was not just playing golf; he was taking notes with a view to future golf course designs.

## The War Pro Shop at Royal Ottawa

In support of the war effort, both of the golf courses where Keffer served as the professional golfer – the Royal Ottawa Golf Club and the Jekyll Island Club – kept him on as the clubs' professional golfer for the duration of his war service. The Jekyll Island Club did so even though the United States had not yet entered the war. But since Keffer would not be on hand to look after golf operations, he had to put together a pro shop staff that could cover for him while he was in the army.

As soon as he took up his position at the Ottawa Golf Club in 1911, Keffer had advertised in local newspapers for caddies: "Wanted – A number of respectable, well-mannered boys, ten to fifteen years old, with references, to act as caddies (carrying clubs) afternoons during season at the Ottawa Golf Club, Aylmer Road. Take Hull electric car and apply Karl Keffer, Club House" (*Ottawa Journal*, 28 April 1911, p. 1).

Michael and Ida Mulligan had boys who fit this description. In the early 1900s, they had brought their young family from Montreal to Hull, the city in the Province of Quebec across the river from Ottawa. When Keffer published his caddie call, William was fifteen and already working in a store. Harry was ten, ready to work "during the summer holidays," he recalled (*Ottawa Citizen*, 3 May 1955, p. 9). Michael and Ida had raised their children to be "well-mannered," no doubt, and as for "respectable" -- well, that went without saying. Willie presumably was armed with a letter of reference from the owner of the store where he worked; perhaps the priest had written one for Harry. Someone in the family had seen the advertisement: it ran for several days in both of the big Ottawa newspapers. Their father would have given them the fare for the electric car so that they could call on this Mr. Keffer, who was described in the newspapers as a "champion" golfer that the Ottawa Golf Club was fortunate to employ. An opportunity for boys like Willie and Harry to meet the Ottawa Golf Club members who were the lawyers, doctors, judges, captains of industry, ministers of government, and foreign diplomats at the top of Canadian society did not come along every day.

So although most golfers are happy to get one Mulligan: Keffer got two!

And the Mulligan boys were two of the best caddies that he ever had. Willie was with Keffer for the long term. He caddied for five years and then was taken on as an apprentice clubmaker for five more years (*Montgomery Advertiser*, 14 December 1922, p. 3). The photograph below shows examples of wooden and iron clubs made in Keffer's pro shop.



Figure 183 Left: ladies' wooden driver with imprint on top of the head reading "Karl Keffer" over "Royal Ottawa." Right: Mashie iron club with the imprint on the back reading "Karl Keffer" over "Ottawa Golf."

After caddying, club-making was the next step in the young golfer's professionalization. Apprenticeship in club-making in the early 1900s required young people to learn not just how to assemble golf clubs, but also how to make the driver heads from a block of wood. They learned how to join hickory shafts both to the wooden heads they had made and to the forged irons generally imported from Scotland in those days.

Harry Mulligan started caddying with Keffer at Royal Ottawa, but when another top Ottawa club called the Rivermead (established in 1911) hired a new golf professional named David L. Black in 1915, Harry moved there for several years.

First, he caddied at Rivermead. Then he began an apprenticeship as clubmaker under the head pro Davie Black, who had become a good friend of Karl Keffer. When Harry was nearing eighty years of age and was interviewed by a reporter about his long career, he made a point of mentioning that like his brother Willie he was a "one-time club maker" (*Ottawa Journal*, 11 August 1978, p. 16).

In 1915, Keffer may well have "loaned" Harry to his friend to help Black get things started at his new club in the right way. Harry later recalled that his preference had always been to work under the two-time Canadian Open champion Keffer: "Keffer was the king pin of Canadian golf in those days, winning

just about everything in sight" (*Ottawa Citizen*, 3 May 1955, p. 9). In due course, Harry returned to Royal Ottawa when Black moved to British Columbia in 1920. Thereafter, he served as an apprentice under Keffer at Royal Ottawa, graduating to his first position as head golf professional in 1924.



Figure 184 Harry Mulligan, late 1960s.

Keffer also taught the Mulligans how to instruct, taught them how to play golf, and not only introduced them to tournament golf, but also encouraged them to have ambitions of winning. Harry played in a number of Canadian Opens, his success never matching his ambition. Willie won the Assistants' Championship of Quebec, and when he wrote to the local Ottawa newspaper in the spring of 1920 that upon his return from Jekyll Island he was determined to compete for Canadian Open championships, the newspaper noted that as Keffer's assistant, "He was a student of the Ottawa expert who taught him all the fine points of the game" (*Ottawa Journal*, 26 March 1920, p. 20).

And Keffer made sure that their golf résumés were golden!

When Willie Mulligan enjoyed a winter season at Jekyll Island when he seemed to score 76 every time he played the Donald Ross course, Keffer made sure the newspapers back in Ottawa knew that his apprentice was achieving

great scores on a difficult course. He was no doubt burnishing his assistant's reputation with a view to placing him in a head pro position.

Harry actually kept as one of his prized possessions a letter of reference dating from his days as Keffer's assistant professional at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club. As Harry prepared to leave Royal Ottawa in 1923 and set up as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1924, as the first professional golfer at the Chaudière Golf Club just down the street, Keffer made sure that he had a letter of reference from a figure whose recommendation carried weight – Governor-General Viscount Byng of Vimy (who had led the Canadian Army at the Battle of Vimy Ridge in France in 1917):



Figure 185 Lord Byng of Vimy, Governor General of Canada, 1921-26.

*I have known Harry Mulligan for the past two years as a Professional and club maker at the Royal Ottawa Club. I have always found him extremely obliging and helpful in any matter connected with the game and the care of golf clubs. I believe him to be a first-rate instructor and a fine player.*

*I have pleasure in recommending him, and I have confidence he will give others the same satisfaction that I have received.*

*[Signed]*

*Byng of Vimy*

*(Ottawa Citizen, 3 May 1955, p. 9)*

Keffer had pulled the strings necessary to get Mulligan the job as head pro at the Chaudière Golf Club, Ottawa's first ever pay-as-you-play golf course in the Ottawa area. Mulligan thought the event was historic: "It was the greatest thing that ever happened to golf in Ottawa. It gave the young players in the city, those with not too much money, a chance to play the game" (*Ottawa Citizen*, 3 May 1955, p. 9).

In the long run, the Mulligans' association with Keffer led them to regular employment in Canada and the United States as golf professionals.

Yet there was another assistant of Keffer's at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club who was senior to both of the Mulligans: James Clay.

When Keffer was hired by the Ottawa Golf Club in 1911, he brought "Jimmie" Clay with him to serve as his assistant. Clay had been born in 1884, so he was just three years younger than Keffer. He lived in the same area on the east side of Toronto where Keffer grew up. Each boy's father was a carpenter, so there may have been some connection between them through their fathers. But both boys also lived close to the Toronto Golf Club and may well have met there as caddies. Clay is another in the long line of carpenters' sons who became golf professionals.

## The War Pro Shop at Royal Ottawa

Keffer also took Clay with him to Jekyll Island, probably around the time he started to build the first golf holes in the dunes. Clay was appointed as Keffer's replacement at Jekyll Island during the war. Keffer's backing also helped Clay to a position as the golf professional at the Jefferson County Golf Club in Watertown, New York, around 1917. Clay married a young woman from New York state and settled into the rhythm of work in Watertown during the summer and work at Jekyll Island during the winter. But when the United States entered World War I, he registered in September of 1918 for the U.S. army draft. Clay was not called to serve, however, and so was able to continue to cover for Keffer at Jekyll Island.

After his appointment as golf professional at the Montgomery Country Club in Alabama at the end of 1922, Willie Mulligan told the local newspaper that "He was clubmaker at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club, of which he was the professional when the world war broke out. Mr. Keffer, though born in Germany, enlisted in the Canadian army and fought the full four years in the allied cause. Mr. Mulligan was too young to go across and filled the place of Mr. Keffer as instructor" (*Montgomery Advertiser*, 14 December 1922, p. 3). There is more fiction than fact in Mulligan's account of the period in question at Royal Ottawa: Keffer was in the Canadian army for just over two years, not four; Keffer was a third-generation Canadian, not a native of Germany; Mulligan was nineteen years old when the war started and twenty-three years old when it ended, not too young to serve; Mulligan was not "the" professional at Royal Ottawa while Keffer was overseas, but was rather an assistant professional serving under the acting golf professional: Mrs. Karl Keffer. Mulligan's story scants the role of Evelyn Keffer.

Evelyn took the initiative in the matter of her replacing Karl: "she volunteered to 'carry on' in her husband's absence" (*Ottawa Journal*, 7 October 1918, p. 3). The Club was grateful that she was willing to do so: "her willingness ... elicited many praiseworthy comments" (*Ottawa Journal*, 7 October 1918, p. 3). In fact, Evelyn's resolve to "carry on" was celebrated in the newspapers in the same way Karl's resolve to enlist had been: exemplary patriotic spirit had been demonstrated by exemplary Canadian manhood and exemplary Canadian womanhood. The *Ottawa Journal* deemed Evelyn "a devoted, loyal wife" who took on Karl's work at Royal Ottawa "in order to permit her husband to go overseas" (7 October 1918, p. 3). The *Ottawa Citizen* observed that "Since her husband's enlistment about two years ago, Mrs. Keffer has very patriotically carried on his duties at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club.... Her willingness to 'carry on' allowed her husband to fulfill his ardent desire to serve his country overseas" (7 October 1918, p. 7). As the newspapers saw it, just as other women supported the war effort by replacing enlisted men in factories and offices, Evelyn supported the war effort by replacing Karl in the pro shop.

*Canadian Golfer* averred that “Mrs. Keffer possessed a particularly bright and clever personality. In the pluckiest manner possible, after her husband’s praiseworthy departure for overseas, she took over the management of his golf shop and business at the Royal Ottawa Club, and with an assistant looked after the wants of the members in a very capable manner, indeed” (*Canadian Golfer*, vol 6 no 6 [October 1918], p. 312.). The editor of the magazine implied that she was to the professional golfer’s manner born: “Mrs. Keffer was not only the wife of a champion, but a sister to such well-known professionals as Frank Freeman, of Rosedale, and W.M. Freeman, of Lambton. From young girlhood she had, therefore, been more or less brought up in an atmosphere of golf” (p. 312).

In those days there was no requirement for a professional golfer to achieve a certain score on a designated golf course in order to qualify as a certified professional. To be regarded as a professional golfer, one simply had to earn one’s living from golf-related activities – activities precisely such as those “Mrs. Keffer” undertook: running the club-making shop, managing the apprentice, managing the caddies, arranging for golf instruction of members, organizing and running tournaments.

I nominate Evelyn (Freeman) Keffer as Canada’s first female professional golfer.

## World War I and Golf Course Design

Like many veterans of the trenches, Keffer was reticent about speaking directly of his experiences in France and Belgium. He wrote to the editor of *Canadian Golfer*: “I have now been five months in France and at present am following the fortune of the Canadians in the big push, which was launched some days ago. We are now resting after a very strenuous ten days, and I have seen some sights which are not in any way connected with the game of golf” (vol 4 no 6 [October 1918], p. 311). For many soldiers, “some sights” were never talked about, and yet never forgotten. Understatement was a typical way of coping with the extraordinary conditions: “I am now with the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division Signal Co. and find life with them quite exciting enough at times” (p. 312). Yes, the life of a “runner” carrying messages from one trench to another could be very exciting, indeed (as the film *1917* suggests).

While he was overseas, Keffer received *Canadian Golfer* and other publications on golf, even when he was in the trenches of France and Belgium. And during his time at the front he received a vivid reminder of what golf means to golfers: “Not long since I was much interested in an old Frenchman who used to come out from an old ruined town into a vacant field and knock a golf ball about. There may have been a small golf course there in better days and the old chap could not resist having his game” (p. 311).



Figure 186 Most golfers did not forget the game when they entered the army. Here Francis Ouimet demonstrates his technique to fellow soldiers in the U.S. Army in 1918.

Despite the often atrocious conditions in the trenches, Keffer found himself thinking about how technology developed during the Great War could be applied to golf.

Keffer had noticed that to avoid having to raise their heads above the top of the trenches when required to observe the opposite trenches, an action that would leave them susceptible to sniper fire, soldiers used periscopes. Two years after his return to the Royal Ottawa Golf club, the local paper trumpeted a golf invention by Keffer that had been inspired by his war experience: “Keffer Invents Periscope for Guidance of Ottawa Golfers: Only One of Its Kind in America – Is Adapted from Trench Telescope” (Ottawa Journal, 6 August 1921, p. 20). Fortunately, the paper observed, to be dealing with “bunkers instead of trenches, golf balls instead of shells, and golf bags instead of that beloved pack,” Keffer had turned his attention to the problem of the blind tee shot over a hill on the seventh hole of Royal Ottawa’s early 1920s layout: no one was ever sure when the previous golfers were out of the way of the next group’s tee shots (p. 20). Keffer’s solution became wide-spread: he built a “huge periscope twenty feet high” that allowed golfers on the tee to see clearly not just the progress of the group ahead, but also the flight of the group’s tee shots – helping to prevent lost balls (p. 20).

To Jekyll Island, Keffer brought no new technology, but he brought new ideas about golf course design. It is no accident that the holes that Keffer added after he returned to Jekyll Island in 1920 produced more comparisons to genuine British links courses – Beers said that the island’s new links “call to mind the dune holes at Formby, near Liverpool” (“Down on Jekyll Isle” p. 12) – for while serving in the Canadian Army during World War I, Keffer unofficially continued his development as a golf course architect by paying attention to what made links golf courses strategically effective.

Two years into his war service, Keffer wrote to the editor of *Canadian Golfer* to say that he had played many golf courses in Scotland and England when on leave:

*My first golf in Britain was at St Andrews, Scotland, that being the first place I made for when I got my leave.... There is great golf to be had over those links, although I must confess to that I was a little disappointed, due to having heard so much about the famous links.... My next golf was at Crowborough, Sussex .... The course there is a long and very difficult one to play. The fairways narrow and there is gorse and heather in abundance for the player who does not keep straight.... We had a team which played ... the links of the Royal Ashdown Forest Club .... Our camp was then moved to Seaford and I found golf within a few minutes’ walk. The course there is*

## World War I and Golf Course Design

*finely located overlooking the English Channel and is a very fine place to play over.... I played a number of matches for my unit there, also one at Bexhill and one at Crowborough and was not on the loser's end once. Bexhill is another pretty seaside course, a little on the short side, but with some very fine holes.... The outstanding feature of them all is the putting greens. They are well nigh perfect in that respect and are far and away ahead of our greens in Canada. (October 1918, vol vi no 6, p. 311)*

When Keffer returned to Canada in April of 1919 and was discharged from the army, he sat down with the editor of *Canadian Golfer* for an interview and repeated the substance of his observations about British golf courses. What he was most concerned to impress upon the editor, however, was that “the greens ... were a revelation to him” (April 1919, vol vi no 12, p. 638). Keffer’s voice would have been among the foremost at Jekyll Island in the early 1920s advocating for the Club’s conversion of its greens from sand to grass.

All of these observations are relevant to an appreciation of the nine-hole dunes course that Keffer created at Jekyll Island, for we can see that Keffer played his golf in Britain with an eye to the architecture of the seaside links and heathland courses that he played. He was assessing how length of fairway and width of fairway factored in the design of any course where “there is great golf to be had.” He observed that heathland and links-land vegetation such as heather and gorse could be as effective as hazards left and right of a fairway as ditches and bunkers dug by an architect. Holes along the seaside particularly captured his attention as attractive – showing that he was alert to the aesthetic dimension of golf course design (Stanley Thompson began his career with the same observation). The relatively short but beautiful Bexhill seaside course taught him that “very fine holes” are not necessarily long holes.

Confirmation that Keffer played these courses not just to maintain some semblance of his golfing form, but also – and most importantly – to understand and assimilate architectural lessons that he could take back to the dunes land of Jekyll Island is suggested by what he did after fighting for his life for eight weeks in a London hospital where the Spanish flu brought on severe pneumonia.

Finally pronounced fit for the ocean trip back to Canada, where he would be discharged from the army, he did not take the first ship back to Canada.



Figure 187 John Henry Taylor in 1912. He won his fifth and final Open Championship in 1913.

He delayed his departure because before leaving Britain for good he had one more thing to do: “After his discharge from the hospital he went up to London for a few days and counts one of the most enjoyable experiences of his overseas experience a visit to the great ‘John Henry’ Taylor at Mid-Surrey. The five times Open Champion entertained him in his home” (*Canadian Golfer*, April 1919, vol vi no 12, p. 638).

Of course they will have talked about their golf games (Keffer’s most recent wins were the 1909 and 1914 Canadian Opens, Taylor’s most recent wins were the 1909 and 1913 British Opens), but it is certain that Keffer will also have talked to him about golf course design, for Taylor was by 1919 very far advanced in his career as a golf course architect. In those days, a regular topic for debate amongst golf devotees was the question whether the architect to whom the invention of the “dog’s leg” hole should be attributed was J.H. Taylor

or his friend and fellow five-time British Open champion James Braid.

One knows that Keffer would have talked golf with Taylor as long as Taylor was up for it.

## Back in the Game

Keffer looked forward to his return to golf when the war was over, but he was not confident that his golf game would survive the war: "I have not hit a golf ball now for over six months and will feel like a beginner when I start again if this war continues to last a great deal longer" (*Canadian Golfer*, vol 6 no 6 [October 1918], p. 312).

He had written in September of 1918 those words about his fears for the future of his game because of not having played golf for more than six months; it turned out that he would not play golf again for at least eight months more.

When he returned to Canada from Europe in April of 1919, demobilized Karl Keffer was a widower and now a single father of a four-year-old toddler, for at virtually the same time as Keffer was writing his letter to the editor of *Canadian Golfer* about his experiences during the war, his wife Evelyn contracted the Spanish Flu.

As the editor explained to his readers,

*A particularly sad incident has to be recorded in connection with this letter. The day it was received, Saturday, Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>, the champion's wife, after an illness of but a few days from pleuro-pneumonia, passed away at Ottawa. On Thursday afternoon, Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>, she was laid to rest at Mt. Pleasant cemetery, Toronto – her old home town, the obsequies being attended by many sorrowing friends.*

*Mrs. Keffer possessed a particularly bright and clever personality. In the pluckiest manner possible, after her husband's praiseworthy departure for overseas, she took over the management of his golf shop and business at the Royal Ottawa Club, and with an assistant looked after the wants of the members in a very capable manner, indeed.*

*Mrs. Keffer was not only the wife of a champion, but a sister to such well-known professionals as Frank Freeman, of Rosedale, and W.M. Freeman, of Lambton. From young girlhood she had, therefore, been more or less brought up in an atmosphere of golf.*

*Her mother and father are still living, and six sisters and three brothers. One dear little boy of four years of age is also left to mourn the loss of a loving mother. A cable was sent to the bereaved husband, but up to the time of the funeral no answer to the sad message had been received from him. Until the champion's return the little boy will be taken charge of by the [paternal] grandmother, so he will be in excellent keeping.*

*To the brave husband and bereaved family, the general sympathy of golfers throughout Canada will go out, in which sentiment the Editor, as an old friend, begs leave personally, and most sincerely, to join. (p. 312)*

When the army learned of the situation that had befallen Keffer, and its enquiries showed that the relative with whom the boy was residing was Keffer's widowed mother, it ordered Keffer back to Canada so that he could look after his son.

Keffer's war was over.

But Keffer was not out of danger.

As noted above, like his wife back in Canada, Keffer also contracted the Spanish Flu. And just as it brought on pneumonia for her, which proved fatal, so it threatened her husband's life with the same pneumonia. He was confined to a London hospital bed for eight weeks, lying between life and death. Only in February of 1919 was he pronounced fit enough to take the ocean voyage back to Canada.

In March of 1919, the editor of *Canadian Golfer* gently warned golfers in Canada that it would be too much to expect Keffer to defend successfully his Canadian Open title:

*Karl Keffer, Open Champion of Canada, on his way back to this country from serving in France, was taken down in London with a very serious attack of pneumonia and was in very critical condition for some time. Canadian golfing friends will be glad to hear that from last accounts, Keffer, who it will be remembered was called upon to suffer the great loss of his wife from the same disease a few months ago, is now on the mend. He was to have resumed his professional duties at the Royal Ottawa the beginning of next month, but it will probably be some time yet before he can take up active work on the links. It will be the general wish that at any rate by August he will be in his usual good form to defend his championship title at the Open Tournament*

## Back in the Game

*which is being revived after five years, and which will probably have entries from all over Canada and the United States. (vol 6 no 11 [March 1919], p. 6170*



Figure 188 Greying Karl Keffer, circa 1919.

Similarly, while welcoming Keffer back from Europe, the editor of *Golf Illustrated* also gently reminded American and Canadian golf fans that they must not expect him to be the golfer now that he had been before his experiences in the Great War:

*Sapper Karl Keffer, who but a week ago returned from France, where he has seen nearly three years' hard fighting, won the open title in 1914 and therefore still retains it. He is professional at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club, Ottawa, and one is pleased to say that he has come through the thick of it without any serious injury although his hair is much grayer than before he enlisted. (vol 11 no2 ([May 1919], p. 44)*

Yet despite the toll illness had taken on him (he said he felt that the war had aged him considerably), Keffer returned to the game in spectacular fashion.

As the editor of *Golf Illustrated* had pointed out, since there had been no Canadian Open championship contested since 1914, Keffer would of course be the defending champion when the 1919 tournament was held at the Hamilton Golf and Country Club at the end of July and beginning of August.

Keffer put up a spirited defense.

Douglas Edgar, mentor of the famous amateur from Atlanta, Bobby Jones, won the 1919 championship by a margin that has never been equalled. But the battle for second place between seventeen-year-old Bobby Jones and the defending champion thirty-eight-year-old Keffer also gained a prominent place in press coverage of the competition:

*Atlanta Golfer Sets World Mark*

*Edgar Plays 72 Holes in 279 in Tourney for Canadian Open Championship*

*Hamilton, Ontario, July 30. – The world's competitive record for seventy-two holes medal play of 283, tied last week at Cleveland by James Barnes of St. Louis, was broken here today by Douglas Edgar of Atlanta, Ga., who with a score of 279 won the Canadian open golf championship here.*

*The English professional and former French open champion, who represented the Druid Hills Golf Club of Atlanta, played one of the most sensational games yet witnessed on American or Canadian links and came out of the two day tournament here sixteen strokes ahead of Barnes, "Bobby" Jones of Atlanta and Karl Keffer of Ottawa, all of whom tied for second place ....*

*Although eclipsed by the spectacular play of the Georgian professional, the trio tied for second place all put up great exhibitions, "Bobby" Jones, who had the honor of leading the amateurs, engaged throughout the tournament in a sensational duel with the holder of the open championship, Karl Keffer of Ottawa. (Sun [New York], 31 July 1919, p. p. 18)*

To tie Jones, Keffer had to come back from a big deficit after just one round:

*Jones Has Low Score*

*Atlanta Boy Golfer Leads Field in Canadian Open Championship Tourney*

*A big surprise was sprung yesterday when Robert T. Jones, the young amateur of Atlanta, Ga., had the lowest score, 71, in the first round of the Canadian open golf championship tournament, which began over the course of the Hamilton Golf and Country Club. Another Atlanta golfer, Douglas Edgar, former French open champion, took one more stroke than Jones.*

*Jones' feat was accomplished by almost errorless golf, only one hole not coming up to the mark.... Jones was paired with Karl Keffer of Royal Ottawa, Canadian open champion. Both were out in 35, but Keffer, having trouble with his approach shots, fell off for a 76. (Evening Star [Washington, D.C.], 30 July 1919, p. 18)*

## Back in the Game

Perhaps Keffer drew on his experience of playing with America's other amateur golf prodigy back in 1913, Francis Ouimet. He kept out of the way of "boy" Jones, but Keffer made headway himself in the next round: "At the end of the first round Jones led by five strokes, but at the end of play yesterday, the Canadian champion had effaced this advantage and was leading by one" (*Sun* [New York], 31 July 1919, p. 18).



Figure 189 Bobby Jones, a year after his battle with Keffer.

The thirty-six holes that Keffer and Jones played together on the final day of the championship was an epic struggle, coming right down to the last hole to decide between them the contest-within-the-contest that so many in the gallery and in the press were watching.

Many years later Keffer recalled for a reporter that on the seventy-second hole of the tournament, Jones had had a putt on the eighteenth green to beat him by one stroke: "the first time Bobby Jones came to Canada from the U.S. Karl played with him in the Canadian Open at Hamilton and he said that then Jones had not mastered a hot temper. He told of Bobby missing a putt on the last green and putting on a display" (*Ottawa Journal*, 26 October 1955, p. 28).

Jones would put on a similar "display" the first time he played in the Open Championship on the Old Course at St Andrews, where, after failing to get out of one of its notorious bunkers after many strokes, he ripped up his scorecard in disgust and stalked off the course.

His "display" on the last green of the 1919 Canadian Open shows that Jones had wanted very badly to beat Keffer.

Keffer made sure to point out to the reporter that Jones soon addressed the problem of his bad temper: "Jones ... mastered that as well as practically everything about the game": he "ranked second to none in Karl's estimation" (*Ottawa Journal*, 26 October 1955, p. 28).



Figure 190 Edward, Prince of Wales, shown playing golf in Montreal, a few days before his visit to Ottawa, 1919.

Fresh from four rounds of intense competition with the royal prince of the American golf world at the beginning of August, Keffer was called upon at the end of the month to host several rounds of golf at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club with a real prince: Britain's Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VIII, who would abdicate to marry Wallace Simpson).

On an extended visit to Canada, the Prince played golf at every stop of his tour, but particularly enjoyed playing golf with Keffer, coming back for one more unexpected

round at the beginning of September, and playing quite well (for him), and enjoying the brisk walking pace set by Keffer (*Ottawa Citizen*, 2 September 1919, p. 11).



A Great Golfer. Karl Keffer, of The Royal Ottawa, Twice ex-Open Champion of Canada and Runner-up this year, who won Chief Honours at the big Manitoba Tournament

Figure 191 *Canadian Golfer*, vol 5 no 6 (October 1919), p. 363.

Later in September, against an international field, Keffer won the \$500 prize for first place in the Manitoba Open. George Sargent, former U.S. Open winner (1909), and Keffer's predecessor as the Ottawa Golf Club head pro, finished third.

After his big win out west, the end of the year was a busy one for Keffer on the domestic front. While he was travelling to the Manitoba tournament, bad news arrived from home: "the residence of Karl Keffer, Aylmer Road, was robbed of a large quantity of household goods" (*Ottawa Journal*, 16 January 1920, p. 2).

But the news was better when someone stole his heart.

Keffer married Isabella MacIver. She had been born in Dornoch, Scotland, in 1884, where she was a neighbor of Donald J. Ross. She was raised and educated in Dornoch and, like Ross, lived her early adult life in the small village with the big golf course. She did not

## Back in the Game

immigrate to Canada until she was twenty-seven years of age, arriving in Ottawa in 1911. When she married Karl at the end of 1919, she became stepmother to five-year-old Howard, but Howard seems to have been raised by his grandmother and aunt in Toronto, presumably so as not to interrupt his education with sojourns in the American South each winter.

In December of 1919, Keffer headed down to Jekyll Island for the first time in three years. Awaiting him was “an employee house constructed specifically for him and his wife, Isabella” (Bagwells p. 115). Once again, Keffer would assume the full responsibilities of the head pro, earning about \$50 per month for his regular duties (Bagwells p. 115).

And for free, so to speak, he would design another six holes to create for the Jekyll Island Club its first eighteen-hole golf course.

## The Jekyll Island Pro Shop

Keffer's pro shop at Jekyll Island seems to have been just like his pro shop at Royal Ottawa: the same assistant professionals served him at each club; golf instruction was a staple of pro shop service at each club; he made golf clubs at each.



*Figure 192 A putter made by Karl Keffer at Jekyll Island in the late 1920s. The putter is owned by David Stockwell, past president of the Larrimac Golf and Tennis Club of Quebec.*

The photograph above shows a rare example of a golf club made at Jekyll Island by Karl Keffer.

The club is a putter with a forged head made by the Spalding Company (as part of its "Kro-Flite Sweet Spot" line, with "Mild English Feel"). To it, Keffer would have attached the hickory shaft, according to the specifications of the Jekyll Island Club member for whom he made the club (specifications reflecting the member's preferences with regard to the length, stiffness, and weight of the shaft). Keffer purchased a putter head from the Spalding Company that left room for him to hammer into it his own name and affiliation, which he seems to have taken the time to paint with a gold color. Since the club head indicates that the patent for it was registered "Sept 13 1927," and since the spelling of the island's name

## The Jekyll Island Pro Shop

was officially changed to "Jekyll" in 1929, the fact that Keffer's imprint spells the name the old way ("Jekyl") suggests that the club was made between 1927 and 1929.

While he was in Europe during World War I, Keffer deputized James Clay to take his position at Jekyll Island. Clay was a good golfer, but never won tournaments the way Keffer did. Still, he kept up the Jekyll Island Club's reputation as a place where serious golf was played. In 1919, he hosted accomplished professional golfers Carl Anderson and Tom Boyd on their tour of Southern resorts. With a partner, Clay played the Northeastern professionals in a match-play contest over the Jekyll Island golf course (*Tribune* (New York), 4 January 1919, p. 15).

Clay continued to come to Jekyll Island throughout the early 1920s to serve as Keffer's assistant. Apprentice William Mulligan also came south to Jekyll Island, at least once to help Jimmie Clay in 1919, and several more times to help Keffer in the early 1920s. And after he got his own winter job in Montgomery, Alabama, his brother Harry Mulligan spent winters on the island as Keffer's assistant – perhaps for twelve years in a row!

Keffer seems never to have had less than two assistants from 1920 to 1925. The reason, I suspect, is that he was often called away from his head pro responsibilities to work on the development of new golf holes. If so, he was no doubt confident in the ability of his pro shop staff to cope without him. Their work at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club with the elite of Canadian society had prepared Keffer's assistants for their interactions at the Jekyll Island Club with the elite of American society.

In Ottawa, Harry had caddied for the future King Edward VIII of England when he was still the Prince of Wales, and he had caddied for Winston Churchill several decades before the British Prime Minister stood alone against Hitler at the beginning of World War II. He also caddied for two of Canada's Governors-General (the Duke of Devonshire and Viscount Byng of Vimy) and one of Canada's Prime Ministers: Sir Robert Borden.

Willie apparently impressed his employers at the Country Club of Montgomery, Alabama, in the early 1920s by telling them that "when the winter season was over at the southern resort [Jekyll Island] he returned to Canada and was connected with the Yarmouth Country Club of Nova Scotia. At this club he had some golf games with the Prince of Wales who was on a visit to Canada, as well as with some 'government house' people" (*Montgomery Advertiser*, 14 December 1922, p. 3).

So the Mulligans took the wealth and glamour of Jekyll Island in their stride. In the winter of 1920, Willie "gave golf lessons to sons of such notables as William Rockefeller, George F. Baker, Ed. Gould and

Vincent Astor” (*Montgomery Advertiser*, 14 December 1922, p. 3). A few years later, younger brother Harry also gave lessons to “the Rockefellers” (Joe McLean, “An Impressive Mulligan – Harry Mulligan,” *Flagstick*, 23 March 2016).

After they left Jekyll Island, Keffer’s assistants were not reluctant at all to drop the names of the wealthy and powerful people they had met at the Club. But I have never found that they told tales about these people. They seem to have taken the lead of Keffer in this regard. A reporter who had come to know Keffer well at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club told of the habitual “reticence” of “the kindly Karl” and how he occasionally “seemed on the verge of a story,” but always held back:

*As a young professional in 1911 he had taken over a professional’s post at the Jekyll Island course off the coast of Georgia. It was one of America’s most exclusive golf clubs and Karl had taught golf [to] and enjoyed the friendship of scores of leading men there just as he did at Royal Ottawa. He taught J.P. Morgan, the Rockefellers, W.K. Vanderbilt, Vincent Astor, G.F. Baker and many others at Jekyll Island.*

*On one occasion while chatting, J.P. Morgan’s name came up. Karl mentioned an incident with the late industrialist and then stopped. He never finished it. It was one of the very rare breaks when Karl discussed anything having to do with one of his members. It was not in his code to do that even though it was years afterwards and Karl himself had retired. (Ottawa Journal, 26 October 1955, p. 28)*

Keffer had changed the lives of the Mulligans. He had taken the “respectable” and “well-mannered” boys raised by Michael and Ida Mulligan and polished them with the discretion required to consort with the high and mighty of two countries.

Keffer also did right by Jimmie Clay. When he returned from the war, he helped Clay to get the position as head pro at another of Ottawa’s elite golf clubs, the Rivermead, when its professional golfer, Davie Black, regular winner of Canadian PGA championships and a personal friend of Keffer’s, moved to British Columbia. Clay flourished at Rivermead well into the 1930s, retiring in 1936, and regularly played in professional tournaments in Canada, including the Canadian Open, although without ever achieving results in any way comparable to those of his mentor Keffer.

And he maintained his relationship both with Keffer and the Jekyll Island Club, travelling south in December of 1932 for another full season at the Club with Keffer.

## Earl Hill

The pro shop was more than a head pro and assistants: there were the Jekyll Island Club caddies.



Figure 193 Scott Denegal, late 1930s, in Bagwell p. 105.

In the photographs above of play in the early 1920s on Keffer's first dunes holes, the young caddies accompanying Beers may have been either of or both of Earl Hill (1910-1983) and his cousin Scott Denegal (1907-1983).

Earl became a professional golfer.

Born in 1910 in Kingsland, Georgia (just north of the border with Florida), about forty miles from Jekyll Island, Earl Lee Hill was the nephew of Charles Hill, who had worked for the Maurice family since Hollybourne Cottage was built. In fact, Charlie Hill worked for the Maurice family from 1891 to 1942, helping the remaining members of the family shutter the home when the island was evacuated during World War II. Charlie Hill probably used his influence to get Earl a job as a caddie.



Figure 194 John Cain, in Jekyll Island Club (1911).

The Hill family was part of a network of related families working and living on the island from the early 1900s until the Club closed. Few employees were pictured in Lanier's *Jekyll Island Club* (1911) – there was the gamekeeper; there were Keffer and his caddies – but Earl's uncle John Cain was actually shown in two photographs, and he was the only one other than Keffer who was named.

Earl Hill was living off the island in his parents' home in Ward 4 of Brunswick at the time of the 1920 census: he was the ten-year-old son of Myers and Onie (Miller) Hill. Myers' occupation was listed as that of "laborer." He indicated on the 1910 census, when he was living in Pickets, Duval, Florida, that he did "odd jobs." He registered for the World War I draft in September of

1918, at which time he worked as a carpenter for the American Ship Building Company.



Figure 195 1923 Lee Street, Brunswick, Ga., circa 1920.

The family lived in Brunswick at 1923 Lee Street, an address that still exists.

In the 1911 census, Earl, as well as his mother and father and younger brothers Arthur and Charles, were all listed as “Mulatto.” There would be two more children born to Myers and Onie: Evelyn and Walter Ray.

Eventually, like his brother and son, Myers got a job working for the Jekyll Island Club, and so

he and Onie moved their family to employees’ quarters on the island. Myers worked as a woodcutter in the Club’s forests and Onie worked in the laundry.

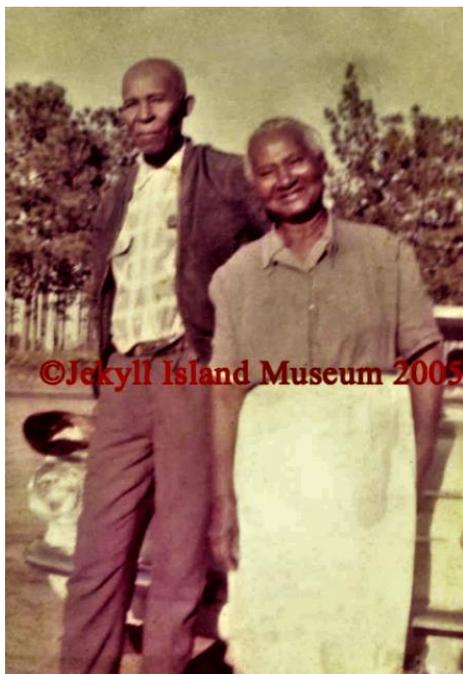


Figure 196 Myers and Onie Hill, 1950s. JIM.

Earl said that he started to work at Jekyll Island when he was just nine years old, which would have been during the last year of World War I. This was before Myer and Onie moved the family to the island. Earl did a lot of jobs. He worked in the clubhouse, as well as in both the yards and the homes of Club members. His most important job, however, was that of caddie.

When his parents moved to the island, Earl found that he had an extraordinary golfing opportunity. After his caddying duties were done for the year, he had an opportunity to play golf himself: “It was only three months of the year that [the club members were] there. The rest of the year, why only the employees had the use of the island. That’s where I got my jump in golf, because the millionaires would use the course

three months out of the year, the other nine months I would use it” (Bagwells, p. 85).

Walter J. Travis always argued that difficult courses make good golfers, and in the case of Earl Hill he was right: the Oceanside course was the making of Earl’s golf game.

## Earl Hill

Earl dated Alice Matilda (“Tilly”) Denegal in the 1930s, daughter of a revered community leader named Sam Denegal, the foreman of road crews and forest workers.



Figure 197 Sam (“Sim”) Denegal, Bagwells, p. 102.

According to the McCashes, “Sim” Denegal was “one of the few blacks entrusted with supervisory status” (p. 34). The Bagwells say he supervised fifteen to eighteen men, one of them being Myers Hill (p. 101). He was also the person who ran the commissary, and he was the one whose advice the Jekyll Island Club sought regarding the need to build more housing on the island for service workers.

Earl Hill and Matilda Denegal married in the mid-1930s and had a daughter named Barbara. After the State of Georgia took over the island, Matilda did light housekeeping duties for Tallu Fish, who operated the Jekyll Island Museum in the 1950s and 1960s.

One can see what the McCashes mean when they say that “Jekyll society, stratified though it was, had been composed not just of Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, and Goulds, but of ... Denegals ... and Hills as well. With the closing of the club a way of life had come to an end” (p. 214).

Earl Hill’s experiences as a caddie for the Jekyll Island Club bear out a number of general observations made by Lane Demas.

Against the background of longstanding stories in American culture about the “uneasy intimacy” required by the nature of “black domestic service in white homes,” Demas notes how one kind of story – that of “the black servant exposed to white incompetence” – was given new life by the caddying experience.

On the one hand, since “golf was a difficult game that few mastered and most managed to attempt only awkwardly,” caddies witnessed wealthy white failure every day at work. On the other hand, “unlike other service duties that called for silence and acquiescence, golf usually encouraged caddies to offer their opinions and instruction, sometimes directly challenging their employers’ discretion” (pp. 11-12).

Demas gives an example of an item from the *Baltimore Afro-American* about an encounter between the world’s richest man and one of his caddies at Augusta’s Hotel Bon Air: “John D. Rockefeller tried a game of golf on the links near Augusta. On a rather difficult shot Mr. Rockefeller struck too low with his iron,

and as the dust flew up, he asked his caddie” ‘What have I hit?’ The boy laughed and answered: Jaw-jah, boss” (*Game of Privilege: An African American History of Golf*, p. 14). The anonymous black caddie witnesses the failure of the wealthy white employer, brings that failure into relief by means of his wit, and simultaneously instructs the world’s He worked as a caddie, but he also billionaire not to hit the ground before hitting the ball.

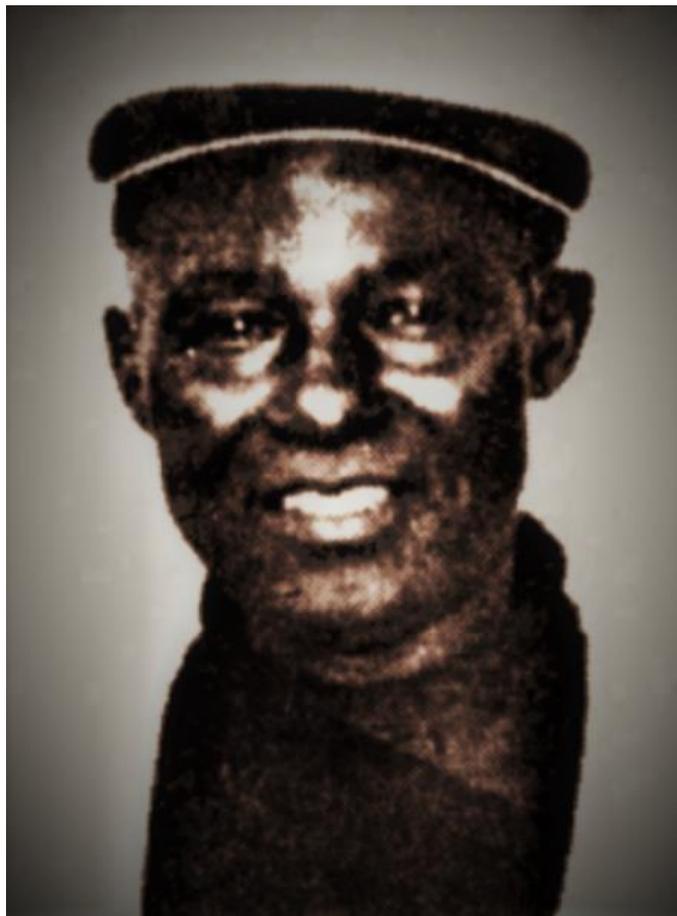


Figure 198 Earl Hill, 1910 - 1983.

In stories that Earl Hill regularly told to tourists staying at the motel on Jekyll Island where he worked as the transportation manager in the early 1960s, we can still detect, after the many decades since the closing of the Jekyll Island Club, Hill’s gentle laughter at the behaviour he witnessed by some of his millionaire employers.

When asked by a reporter representing the *Atlanta Constitution* what he thought money had meant “to these men who had made so much of it,” Earl Hill said , “It was hard to tell,” but he then proceeded to answer the question with two stories about golf.

Although he had “worked in their houses, the clubs, their yards,” he explained that he “best remembers the millionaires from the golf course where he caddied” (1 February 1962, p. 3).

And so we get delayed versions of the *Baltimore Afro-American’s* caddie story half a century earlier about the caddie and the rich white man.

First, Hill says, “There was one player who did something different. Each time rain would catch him on the course he would go back to his cottage and take a bath. That may not seem like much. Until you hear what he took the bath in. He took it in Scotch Whiskey. A bathtub full of it.” The reporter continues: “Earl said yes, the household servants prayed for rain, especially an uncle of his cause it was

Earl Hill

he who sampled the bottle before it went in the tub” (*Atlanta Constitution*, 1 February 1962, p. 3). Here the caddie story and the story of the domestic servant overlap.

Second, the reporter says, was Earl’s story of “the most memorable money game” that he ever witnessed, “one that figures J.P. Morgan and Frankie Goodyear.” The *Baltimore Afro-American* story was about a caddie and the richest man in the world; Hill’s story was about a caddie and “Two of the world’s richest men”:

*It was an 18-hole match. It was our job as caddies to get out there with the ball and make sure they had made a good shot.*

*They played up and down, in and out, and as we get to No. 17, with just one more hole to play, Mr. Morgan says to Mr. Goodyear, “I believe we are all even.”*

*“That’s the way I count it,” replies Mr. Goodyear.*

*Well, on the 18<sup>th</sup> hole, Mr. Goodyear knocks in a putt to win.*

*“That gets the money,” says Mr. J. P. Morgan. And to me he says, “Caddie, give Mr. Morgan a nickle, I don’t have that much on me to pay the bet.”* (*Atlanta Constitution*, 1 February 1962, p. 3)

I wonder whether Earl Hill had a nickle in his pocket.

We recall that in 1903 caddies earned twenty-five cents per day in Montgomery, Alabama, regardless of how many rounds per day the caddie might carry the bag. At the beginning of 1924, the *Washington Star* (Washington, D.C.) reported on the outrageous rise in the cost of caddies:

*who remembers a few years back, when ... caddie hire never exceeded 60 cents per round of eighteen holes? Nowadays caddies are not satisfied unless they get a dollar a round – sometimes more. Even the poorest sort of boy, who usually is nothing more than a bag carrier, expects this sum. A good caddie is worth his hire, while a poor boy is worse than useless, for he is a positive hindrance to the player who has to wait for him to catch up and hunt his own ball in the rough. (13 January 1924, p. 4).*

Some context for these figures may be provided by noting that by 1938, Earl Hill's cousin Scott Denegal had become a golf course worker for the Jekyll Island Club, earning two dollars per day (Bagwells p. 105).

Demas notes that caddying in some instances led to upward-mobility for young black men. As opposed to "servers in other industries," "golf attendants spent considerably more time in intimate contact with their wealthy employers and could forge deeper, more sustained relationships" (p. 11). One of the people for whom Earl Hill caddied, for instance, was Frank Goodyear, and because of their regard for the Hill family, the Goodyear family gave Earl Hill's little brother Ray a French poodle (Bagwells p. 125). This visible interaction between Club family and service family was echoed at the end of the dog's life by an invisible interaction: "The dog, named Frenchy, was secretly buried after its death in the club members' pet cemetery" (Bagwells p. 125).

The caddie's relationship with a wealthy golfer, Demas observes, might see the caddie eventually rise to "a high-level position at an elite, modern club" (p. 11). As a rule, however, "most African Americans working in the golf industry did not acquire substantial money or prestige," although "Many older workers did eventually secure better positions, such as clubhouse attendants, groundskeepers, or instructors" (p. 11). Such seems to have been the case for Scott Denegal.

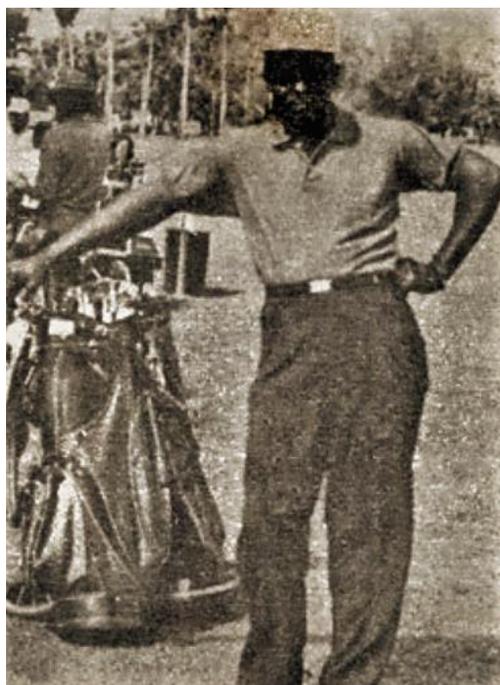


Figure 199 Earl Hill at a golf tournament, undated.

As far as Scott's cousin Earl was concerned, he graduated from caddying (and perhaps greenkeeping) to playing the game at a high level: he became a scratch golfer on the Oceanside course and eventually played the game professionally.

In 1964, he founded The Southeastern Tournament on Jekyll Island. As Tyler E. Bagwell explains in *Jekyll Island: A State Park* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia, 2001):

*To help manage the golf competition ... Earl formed a social organization called the Frontier Club. They found financial sponsors, created a souvenir program, and organized the tournament. The tournament, sometimes nicknamed "The Classic" by Hill, attracted numerous professionals*

Earl Hill

*to the island, including Lee Elder, Jim Dent, Zeke Hartfield, George Johnson, Ted Rhodes, Charlie Sifford, Nate Starks, and Jim Thorpe. Lee Elder won the tournament in 1966 and 1967. (p. 103)*

His Frontier Golf Club also organized the Frontier Golf Tournament, and Hill also supported the Skyview Golf Tournament in Asheville, North Carolina, and the Skyview Golf Association, “founded and incorporated as a not for profit effort to promote golf competition among African American golfers throughout the United States,” and “also intended as a stepping-stone for getting Black golfers ready for the PGA” (Billy Eugene Peter Gardenhight, “African American Golf in Asheville, North Carolina,” *Minority Golf Magazine* [8 March 2019]).

Earl Hill had attended the Selden Normal and Industrial Institute in the late 1920s and became quite an entrepreneur after the Jekyll Island Club closed. Bagwell notes that he “co-owned the Blue Inn nightclub on St. Simon’s Island, operated a taxi service, and worked for the Wanderer Motel” on Jekyll Island, where he was *raconteur extraordinaire* (Jekyll Island: A State Park, p. 103). He was an active owner of the Blue Inn helped to make it “a popular night spot for many of Glynn County’s African Americans during the 1940s and 1950s” (Benjamin Allen, Glynn County [Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia, 2003], n.p.).

Earl Hill supported the “Classic” until he moved to Springfield, Massachusetts, the year before his death in 1983, having married again after Matilda’s death in 1977.

## More Dunes Holes

The *Annual Golf Guide* of 1920 defined the Jekyll Island Club golf course as having nine holes and it still had the same 2,845-yard length indicated in the 1917 *Guide*. Although the Club seems to have regarded its course as officially a nine-hole course for regulation play, we can surmise that the golf course in everyday recreational play from 1913 to 1920 was in practice a hybrid blend of the 1909 golf holes of Donald Ross and the 1913 golf holes of Karl Keffer.

The *Annual Golf Guide* indicated in 1921 that the course still had just nine holes, but it now indicated that its length was 3,000 yards. It is not clear whether some alteration had taken place, or whether it was recognized that the yardages given in earlier years were incorrect: the figure of 3,000 yards is just seven yards longer than the 2,993 yards that High had indicated that the Donald Ross course was when he laid it out in 1909.

By 1922, the *Guide* says that the Jekyll Island golf course had fourteen holes. The length of the course was said to be 5,800 yards and the par was 71. Since a par of 71 for fourteen holes would require, say, thirteen par-five holes and one par-six hole, we can assume that the par score of 71 was for eighteen holes and that four holes must have repeated in a round of golf to produce an eighteen-hole score.

In 1923, the *Guide* says that there are eighteen holes and that they add up to 5,500 yards.

Within three years, the course had gone from nine holes to fourteen holes to eighteen holes. The greens had gone from “sand” to “oiled sand.” They would soon be grass. The yardage had gone from 3,000 to 5,800 to 5,500.

Things were happening.

Who knows how accurate any of these pieces of information in the *Annual Golf Guide* may be? And who knows whether accurate information that happens to have been published in the *Guide* in a particular year, say 1922, was actually accurate for that year, or rather was accurate the year before?

The three figures for the course yardage are all suspicious. The yardages of the individual holes of a golf course seldom add up to a total yardage in double zeroes. For this to have happened three times in a row, as the Jekyll Island Club apparently changed its course dramatically from year to year to year, is extremely unlikely. Rather, it is more likely that the Club was giving the *Annual Golf Guide* approximate yardages. It was giving ballpark estimates of what its new holes would add up to. The Club probably did

## More Dunes Holes

not have a set scorecard during this period of re-design and construction. The only thing that seems clear is that the golf course was in flux.

Keffer was designing six more golf holes in the dunes, and perhaps eighteen greens for the entire course as the Jekyll Island converted from oiled-sand greens to grass greens. No wonder he needed assistant professionals like the Mulligans and Clay alongside him during these years. Someone had to man the pro shop and give the members lessons while Keffer was managing design and construction in the field.

In the fall of 1920, an Ottawa newspaper indicates that Keffer left for Jekyll Island about four to six weeks earlier than he had ever done before and that it is likely he will be taking “William Mulligan” with him (“Keffer Going South,” Ottawa Journal, 3 November 1920, p. 16). He may have done so because he had begun building more golf holes in the dunes and needed to supervise a good deal of work in this regard before the Club officially opened for the season.

There is an early aerial photograph of Jekyll Island that seems to show the eighteen-hole golf course that would be finished in 1923 at a stage of active construction well before its completion.



Figure 200 Undated aerial photograph of Jekyll Island.

I have found no date associated with the photograph, but internal evidence suggests that it was taken around 1922.

Compare the aerial photograph above with the aerial photograph below that Tyler E. Bagwell says dates from 1945.



Figure 201 1945 aerial photograph from Tyler E. Bagwell website.

There is a telling difference between the two photographs with regard to the area around what was the tee box for Keffer's first dunes hole. In the first aerial photograph above, the area in question where the tenth tee was located is forest-covered. In the second photograph, the area is treeless.



Figure 202 Comparison of the tenth tee as depicted in the two aerial photographs above.

## More Dunes Holes

The approximate time when this area became treeless is suggested by a photograph of Club Secretary Robert S. Brewster, who is shown driving from the tee in question in a photograph published in *Golf Illustrated* in 1925.

The tenth hole runs from west to east. After his drive, Brewster holds his follow-through as he watches the flight of his ball heading east. Over his shoulder, the camera has recorded an area to the south-west. The area in question is treeless – as in the later aerial photograph. In fact, we see hundreds of yards beyond Brewster – all the way across the savanna to the forest that constitutes the Ross course boundary west of the first, second, and third holes.



*Figure 203 Robert S. Brewster on the tenth tee, Golf Illustrated, vol 22 no 6 (March 1925), p. 21.*

The photograph of Brewster was probably taken by Beers and his *Golf Illustrated* photographer when they visited the island in January of 1925. The trees that used to grow behind him had clearly been removed well before the start of the 1925 season.

The course that Beers had been invited to play had been opened with a similar golf outing exactly twelve months before. The eighteen-hole course that people were invited to Jekyll Island to play had

been completed in 1923. It seems likely that the pre-1925 aerial photograph shows this course under construction in 1922 or 1923: the trees between the tenth tee and the savanna course would be removed between 1922 and 1924.

It seems that sandy areas show up in the pre-1925 photograph below, but no sand greens are visible on the savanna. No fairways or tee boxes are identifiable either, although there may be signs of the main ditch running through the center of the savanna.



*Figure 204 Detail from the pre-1925 aerial photograph.*

The absence of such distinguishing golf course features on the savanna may mean that sand greens were being replaced by grass greens when this photograph was taken. A complete re-seeding of the course may have been under way.

Six more golf holes were constructed between 1920 and 1922, such that in April of 1923 McCormick was able to broadcast news of the Club's new "eighteen hole golf course, well planned and excellently equipped" (cited in Brunner, p. ).

The pace of the construction work and the order in which new holes were constructed and brought into play are not clear. We know, however, that at some point, two more holes were brought into play alongside Keffer's first three dunes holes to bring the Jekyll Island Club course up to fourteen holes (a course configuration that apparently lasted for just one season).

These two golf holes may not have been built separately from the rest of the six holes that would complete the Keffer dunes course. They may simply have been the first two holes ready for play among

## More Dunes Holes

the six new holes that were being constructed – perhaps because the construction of these two holes had been relatively easy and quick (perhaps requiring less tree removal).

What is clear from the completed nine-hole circuit added to the Ross course in 1923, however, is that the Keffer dunes course consisted of three groups of three holes.

## Three More Dunes Holes

Just as the first three dunes holes were capable of functioning as a three-hole circuit on their own, so were the holes that became the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth.

The par-five hole twelfth hole departed from a tee-box on top of the same dune where the tee box for the 1913 par-four tee box was located. These tee boxes were on a dune above the par-three seaside hole that preceded them.

The photograph below shows the tee box of the par-five twelfth hole. This photograph illustrated Beers' review of the Keffer dunes course in "Down on Jekyll Isle."



*Figure 205 "Down on Jekyll Isle," p. 12.*

The two golfers and the two caddies have climbed to the top of a dune from the eleventh green, which is located to the left of the golfers, down an incline. The driver aims his ball to the south-west.

Another photograph shows play from this tee box in the same year, but with a different player teeing off: Judge Morgan J. O'Brien, a golfer long familiar with Jekyll Island. He was also a golfing pioneer in the American Northeast who used to play against Clafin in tournaments at Lakewood around the turn of the

century. He was also the partner of Open champion J.H. Taylor in an early 1900s match against Robert Todd Lincoln and C.B. Macdonald (described above).

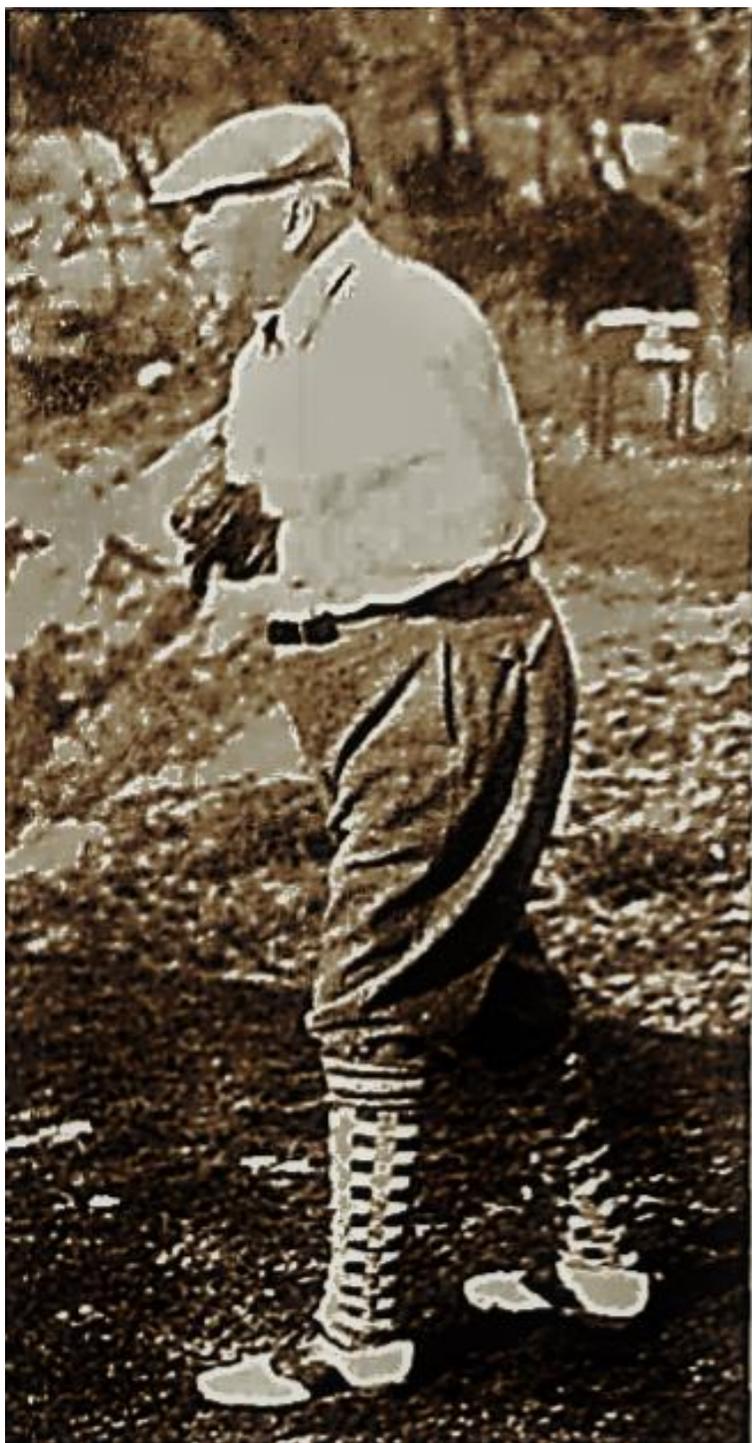


Figure 206 *Golf Illustrated*, vol 22 no 6 (March 1925), p. 21.

In the photograph to the left, we see the twelfth tee-box from a different angle, one that shows behind O'Brien the tee box of Keffer's 1913 second dunes hole, now the par-four fifteenth hole. We are looking from south-east to north-west. The fifteenth hole's tee box is slightly higher up on the dune, where the tee shot is played toward the west. One can see the sand box with the hole number and the hole's yardage written on it: it was still the custom in 1925 to use sand to make a tee for the ball.

The twelfth fairway was designed in the shape of a dog-leg turning left.

Beers describes the new par-five hole as follows: "450 yards. Dog leg. Tee on a high dune. Drive over edge of small pond gives considerable advantage in gaining distance. Second shot over diagonal traps to green well guarded" ("Down on Jekyll Isle" p. 12).

The same hole exists today, as a par-four hole, rather than as a par-five, but it poses the same challenge for the drive with regard to the same pond.

After a tee shot played south-west from the twelfth tee box, the golfer played a fairway that ran from north to south.

To the west of the twelfth fairway were three other holes that Keffer designed, to be discussed in a section below. On the east side of the fairway, the twelfth hole was separated from the par-four fourteenth hole, which ran from south to north alongside it, by a stand of pine trees.

Although their yardages are slightly shorter, the same two holes are separated by the same stand of trees today.

The fourteenth fairway rises steadily from its tee-box to a green elevated on the side of a dune, slightly below where the tee-boxes for the twelfth and fifteenth holes were located.

Beers regarded the fourteenth hole as not just the best on Jekyll Island, but as the best hole in the world:

*420 yards. The best hole I know. Tee shot over rolling dunes into a beautiful grassy valley. Green perched on narrow plateau. Big bunker in the face of hill and traps on either flank. A four here brings joy to the golfer's heart. ("Down on Jekyll Isle" p. 12).*

Sadly, I have only poor quality contemporary photographs of the fourteenth hole, but they are at this point better than nothing. (The Jekyll Island Museum presumably has better copies of such photographs.)

The photograph below shows the fourteenth fairway looking from the tee box toward the green.

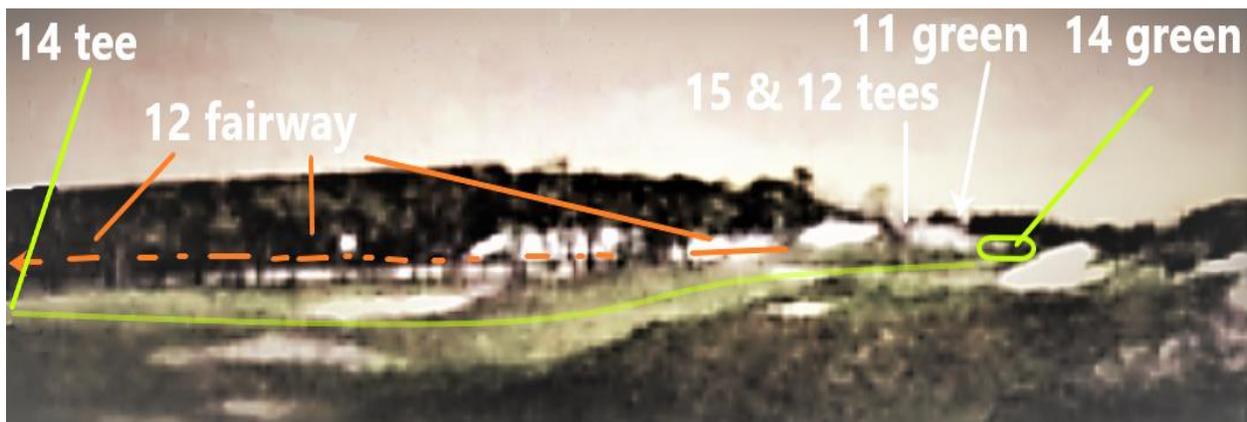


Figure 207 Keffer's fourteenth hole on the 1923 Jekyll Island eighteen-hole course. JIM.

The photograph below shows a similar perspective of the same hole in the twenty-first century.

## Three More Dunes Holes



*Figure 208 Contemporary view of fairway approach to green on what was Keffer's fourteenth hole.*

The photograph below shows a group of players and caddies on Keffer's fourteenth green.



*Figure 209 Keffer's fourteenth green circa 1925. It may be Beers in white trousers. JIM.*

Below is a photograph of the same green from a similar twenty-first century perspective.



Figure 210 A contemporary perspective of what was Keffer's fourteenth green.

One could have played these two holes in succession, walking easily from the green of the par-five hole twelfth hole to the tee of the par-four hole fourteenth hole: the distance would have been less than 100 yards. These two holes could have functioned with the first three dunes holes to create the five-hole circuit that gave the Jekyll Island Club the fourteen-hole golf course reported in the *Annual Golf Guide* of 1922.

Whether or not these two holes ever functioned in such a way for the year that the Jekyll Island Club advertised that it had a fourteen-hole golf course, there must have been a plan all along to join them in the same way that the seaside par-three hole had joined together Keffer's first two dunes holes.

Beers thought that the par-three thirteenth hole was exceptional: "195 yards. This is a great hole. Either a three or a possible six or seven. Green on the apex of two big dunes" ("Down on Jekyll Isle" p. 12).

Incidentally, I should point out that the captions for the photographs accompanying the review by Beers were not as carefully written as the review: the caption for the photograph of the thirteenth hole published in *Golf Illustrated* indicated that the hole was 185 yards rather than 195 yards; the caption for the photograph of the twelfth tee inaccurately described the location of the pond on the twelfth hole.

A photograph of Keffer's thirteenth hole was a big feature of the *Golf Illustrated* review.

## Three More Dunes Holes



*Figure 211 Keffer's thirteenth hole. "Down on Jekyll Isle," p. 2. Beers putts.*

Note that Keffer's thirteenth green, at the apex of two dunes, still exists today.



*Figure 212 A contemporary view of Keffer's thirteenth green, as approached from the south, instead of the west.*

Travis positioned Keffer's thirteenth green on a par-four hole: the second hole of the Oceanside course.

Keffer's hole can still be played today, however, since Keffer's tee box seems to have been used as the tee box on Travis's eighth hole.

## Three More Not-So-Dunes Holes

Three more holes combined with the ones described above to make the nine-hole circuit of the Keffer dunes course, and they were played as the first three: the seventh, eighth, and ninth holes of the Club's 1923 eighteen-hole layout.

To develop these holes, Keffer used an area between the seventh green, eighth hole, and ninth tee of the 1909 Ross course and the six holes of his dunes course.

Played as the seventh hole, the first of Keffer's three holes in this triangle of land was described by Beers as follows: "430 yards. Drive over the edge of a swamp, second shot over large sand trap, green closely guarded by traps right and left." This hole was played from north to south.

To get back to the tee of the first hole that he built into the dunes in 1913 (the uphill par-five hole that became the tenth hole), Keffer built two holes that ran more or less from south to north. Both were par-three holes.

Routing two par-three holes consecutively is unusual, but not unheard of. Old Tom Morris had done this on the links course at Tain in Scotland in the 1890s, and so it was certainly not without precedent in significant golf course design when Keffer did it. Alister Mackenzie would do the same in the late 1920s at Cypress Point (a course consistently ranked as among the ten best courses in the United States). Perhaps most importantly, in the early 1900s, Tom Bendelow had designed consecutive par-three holes at the Ottawa Golf Club where Keffer was the head pro.

Beers describes the first of these consecutive par-three holes as follows: "145 yards. Fine one-shotter. Terraced green surrounded by traps." The next par-three hole was longer: "190 yards. Opening in front. Traps on all other sides."

A year before Beers played the par-three ninth, the hole was apparently a little bit shorter when Keffer recorded his first ever hole-in-one on it: "Though Karl Keffer has been playing golf many years, and has been in many tournaments, up to Thursday he had never 'holed in one.' Playing on the Jekyll Island Club, Georgia, where he is pro, he succeeded in playing the ninth hole in one. This hole is 170 yards long. He played from the tee with a midiron. The ball rolled straight and true for the flag, and went in the hole" (*Ottawa Journal*, 21 February 1914, p. 13).

The detail below from the pre-1925 aerial photograph shows these three holes in relation to the other six. The area for the seventh hole had been cleared of trees by the time the photograph was taken, but the area for the two par-three holes was still forested.

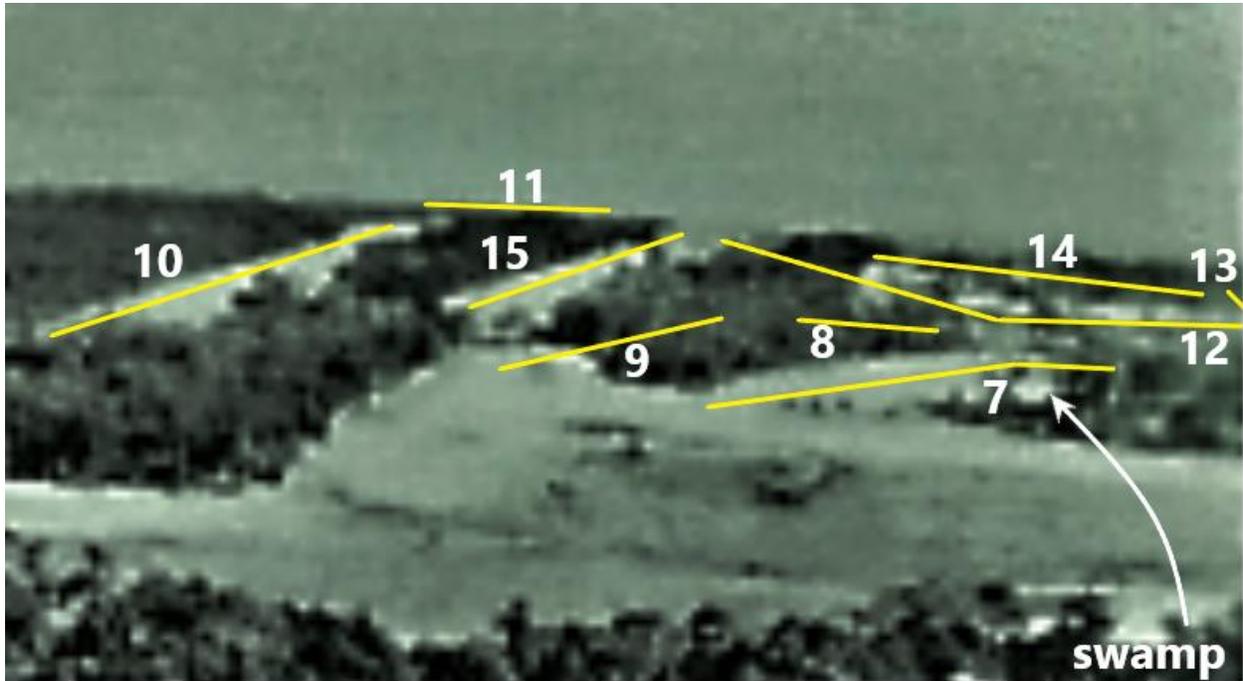


Figure 213 Detail from the pre-1925 aerial photograph showing the Keffer dunes course in the middle of the development of the final six holes, circa 1922..

The area that Keffer opened up for his three golf holes was later used by Dick Wilson when, between 1961 and 1964, the latter redeveloped the savanna as what is today called the Oleander course. Wilson placed his fourth hole here, and the green of this third.



Figure 214 Keffer's nine-hole course is marked by yellow and orange lines on a Google image of the parts of today's Oleander and "Great Dunes" courses where it was laid out.

We see above Keffer's nine-hole dunes course in relation to the golf holes in the same area today.

### Three More Not-So-Dunes Holes

Keffer's tenth, eleventh, twelfth, fourteenth and fifteenth holes are identical to the "Great Dunes" holes five, six, seven, three, and four, respectively. Keffer's thirteenth hole is today divided between the "great Dunes" eighth tee and second green.

Keffer's seventh, eighth, and ninth holes were laid out in the area of the Oleander course's fourth hole. What Keffer integrated into his design as a natural swamp, Wilson redeveloped as a much bigger pristine pond.

## A Grand Opening

The *New York Times* announced in a headline on December 8<sup>th</sup> of 1923: "Jekyll Island Club Will Open New Links with Week of Golf" (8 December 1923).

It was time for a party.

The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported the next day on the Club's big plans, the party-organizers, and the prestigious list of partiers:

*On Jan. 16 a train of special Pullmans will pull out of Pennsylvania Station, New York, southward bound, its formal destination being Jekyll Isle, situated a few miles north of the Florida border.*

*A large delegation which goes to open the Jekyll Island Club will include among its number such prominent citizens and golfers as J.P. Morgan, George F. Baker, Dr. Walter B. James, Alvin Krech, T.T. Crane, J. Harris Harding, and Cornelius S. Lee, the Secretary of the United States Golf Association.*

*There will be about 300 included in the party which will arrive at the little island the following day ....*

*The Secretary of the U.S.G.A. has been active in completing the last nine holes and those who have seen the course say it is a reminder of the Scotch seaside courses....*

*Reports say that the soil on the island is a rich humus with a sand subsurface which makes a fairway not equaled anywhere in the South. (9 December 1923, p. 25)*

The newspaper reports between 1914 and 1923 are unanimous: the Jekyll Island Club had brought British links golf to America.

This was Keffer's doing.

## Balls to Jekyll Island

Jekyll Island Club member Cornelius S. Lee, Secretary of the U.S.G.A., had sailed back from Britain at the beginning of December in 1923 to participate in this grand opening of the eighteen-hole Jekyll Island Club course.



Figure 215 Cornelius S. Lee, *Golf Illustrated*, vol 20 no 3 (March 1923), p. 12.

Recall that the newspapers indicated that the “Secretary of the U.S.G.A. has been active in completing the last nine holes.” He had evidently worked closely with Keffer.

Lee seems to have been in Britain to inform the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews of the experiments that the U.S.G.A. was about to undertake at Jekyll Island, as soon as its big golf party was over.

Newspapers widely reported that with a view to making decisions that would profoundly impact the international future of the game of golf, the U.S.G.A. was taking a delegation to Jekyll Island to gather information about the effect of size and weight on

the performance of a golf ball:

*Tests which may determine possible changes in specifications of the standard golf ball will be conducted soon by the United States Golf Association at the Jekyll Island Country Club, situated off the Georgia coast, it was announced today.*

*A party of 35 players, headed by Howard F. Whitney, chairman of the rules committee, and Cornelius S. Lee, secretary of the U.S.G.A., expects to leave next Wednesday for the resort. A score of varieties of balls, including several of English make, will be tested as to length of flight, roll and general service ability. (Star Tribune, [Minneapolis, Minnesota] 13 January 1924, p. 29)*

Debates about the impact of technological developments on the game were as vigorous in the 1920s as they are now in the 2020s, so the following newspaper account of the matters at stake will sound familiar to many a golfer:

*The days of the long-flying golf ball, making necessary the building of courses of approximately 7,000 yards in length, with the resultant heavy financial drain upon clubs and players, appear to be numbered. No definite action has yet been taken by the United States Golf Association, which has for some time been investigating the golf ball situation, but it is understood that the question will be settled at an early date, and that a new ball, weighing approximately 1.55 ounces avoirdupois and having a diameter of 1.66 inches, will be adopted as a standard ball for competitions in America. It is also anticipated that the action taken by the United States Golf Association will be followed by the Royal and Ancient Club of Great Britain, although there is no definite assurance of this.*

*Those are the opinions of Secretary Cornelius S. Lee of the United States Golf Association, who has just returned from a trip to Jekyll Island, Ga., where he and a number of other golfers ... spent more than a week testing out golf balls of various sizes and weights for the purpose of ascertaining data that would be helpful to the governing body in making a definite decision at an early date. (Evening Star [Washington], 29 January 1924, p. 25)*

Lee reported that the tests “were not made under the most auspicious conditions of weather”: “We were handicapped in our experiment making by the fact that a gale blew out of the northeast practically all the time that we were at Jekyll Island,” said Lee. “Furthermore, it rained intermittently all the time we were there. Nevertheless we did get some useful data” (p. 25).

As a pool of players for conducting the tests, Lee had recruited amateur players from the New York area who all had a handicap of six, like him. Their ball-striking was the source of the largest body of data. But Lee implies that perhaps the most important data came from the performance of the Jekyll Island pro. For after the amateurs had done their best, “Then the Jekyll Island Club professional, Keffer, former Canadian open champion, and a player of some note in England, made some tests for us, driving into a stiff head-wind which had little effect either on the carry or run of the heavy ball, but a tremendous

effect on the lighter ones which dropped almost perpendicularly and stopped almost where they hit the ground” (p. 25).

How had Keffer become a golfer “of some note” in Britain?



Figure 216 Harold Forsfall Hilton, circa 1904.

Certainly Keffer had been known for his whole career as a wonderfully controlled driver of the golf ball. “The outstanding feature of Keffer’s game was its machine-like accuracy, which argues well for his nerves” (*Toronto Globe* 1914). A New York paper also noted that before World War I “Keffer won international fame by his driving. When Harold H. Hilton visited Canada some time ago he played with Keffer and remarked that the professional was the most accurate driver he had met on this side of the Atlantic” (*Sun* [NY], 29 November 1916, p. 21).

Harold Horsfall Hilton, who had marvelled at the accuracy of Keffer’s driving, was the British version of America’s Bobby Jones, a generation before the latter’s exploits. In the early 1900s, Hilton won two British Open championships, four British Amateur championships, and a U.S. Amateur championship – all by the time he played golf with Keffer in Ottawa. His views of Keffer’s driving prowess were therefore reported widely in Britain.

Recall also that Keffer had played golf in Britain during World War I, and that he had made a pilgrimage to St Andrews. He was in St Andrews just one day, but he spent that day with St Andrews royalty: “On making myself known to Tom Stewart, the famous club maker, he saw that I lacked for nothing, gave me his clubs to use and fixed up a game over the old links with

Tom Auchterlonie, who beat me in a very close game.... I also met and chatted with Andrew Kirkcaldy” (*Canadian Golfer*, vol 4 no 6 [October 1918], p. 311).



*Figure 217 Postcard of Andrew Kirkcaldy on the Old course of St Andrews, early 1900s.*

Andrew Kirkcaldy, veteran of many an epic British Open championship, was the St Andrews head pro when Keffer visited. Tom Stewart was the most famous club maker in the world from the 1890s to the 1930s, patronized by greats of the game such as James Braid, Harry Vardon, Sandy Herd, and Bobby Jones, all of whom came to Stewart when they needed a special club made for them. Tom Auchterlonie was a member of one of the royal families of golf in St Andrews, the Auchterlonie brothers, club makers and golfers of renown (one of them won the British Open in the 1890s).

And recall that before he returned to Canada for demobilization, five-time British Open champion and one of the pre-eminent British golf course architects of the day, J.H. Taylor, had invited Keffer to spend a day with him at his home.

Although he played only in military golf tournaments, Keffer clearly made a lasting impression during his time in Britain.

Lee's statement that Keffer was "a player of some note in England" suggests that Lee had mentioned to the officials at the Royal and Ancient Golf Club that Keffer would be the professional golfer participating in the tests. Keffer's name seems to have been recognized by the British officials. Lee's apparent hint to the newspapers that the R & A was likely to accept the result of his tests may be based on his observation of British confidence in Keffer.

## Balls to Jekyll Island

Perhaps because of their consultations during the completion of the nine-hole dune supplement to the Ross course (consultation that would have had the professional golfer explaining to the six-handicapper the various factors to be taken into consideration in designing a golf hole), Lee and Keffer seemed to have been of like mind with regard to the need to legislate with regard to the size and weight of the golf ball:

*According to Secretary Lee, Keffer, the professional, stated that the new-dimensioned ball would bring back the old-time swing, which has also disappeared in the case of the "punch" which is quite generally used by the long hitters of today.*

*"We feel that something should be done to equalize matters by putting back the emphasis on skill instead of brawn. Things have come to a place where youth, strength and endurance are essential to the winning of championships. No championship within the last five or six years, either here or abroad, has been won by a player of the older type." (p. 25)*

We hear the same arguments today. Déjà-vu all over again!

One wag implied that there was a simpler way to determine the best ball for golf:

*It will be interesting to read the report promised from the pleasant winter jaunt of Howard Whitney and a score or more of men en route to Jekyll Island, the millionaire's winter club, to test golf balls. But there are other tests which might be more enlightening on the advisability of shortening the distance a golf ball will fly. A simple one would be to put on sale at any club two kinds of ball, one the present ball and the other guaranteed to fly less – and keep a record of the sales. (Evening Star [Washington], 14 January 1924, p. 27)*

The U.S.G.A. decided to conduct further tests of golf balls at the end of March and beginning of April at Pine Valley (Sumner, New Jersey) and at Pinehurst (North Carolina). The results of the drives by Karl – the driving machine – Keffer were to be supplemented by results from an actual "driving machine"! (*Montgomery Advertiser* [Alabama], 7 March 1924, p. 6).

## Algernon P. Grass, Not



Figure 218 Cornelius S. Lee, *Golf Illustrated*, vol 31 no 3 (June 1929), p. 65.

Cornelius Lee was very interested in the practical aspects of golf course design, construction, maintenance, and repair.

He seems to have told the newspapers that he had worked closely with Keffer in the design of “the last nine holes” of the new eighteen-hole course.

Since Lee did not join the club until 1919, mind you, we know that he can have had nothing to do with at least the first three dunes holes. So we should take the newspaper’s statement that he was “active in completing the last **nine** holes” of the Keffer dunes course with a grain of salt (emphasis added).

It seems clear, however, that he was inspired by his work with Keffer to build a golf course of his own. In 1927, on the basis of what he had learned over the previous years while working with Keffer, he built his own nine-hole course at Martha’s Vineyard.

Known as Edgartown Golf Club, the club’s website about its history comes across as a loving tribute to Lee:

*The Edgartown Golf Club was founded in 1926 by Cornelius S. Lee...*

*Mr. Lee paid for the land and retained the title.... Mr. Lee was very much impressed with the layout at St. Andrews, and he copied it as much as he could. No architect was used and the only help he had*

*was ... the first greens keeper.... The Club officially opened on July 7, 1927....*

*As time progressed more land was acquired to keep the growing number of golfers from trespassing on neighbors’ property. Mr. Lee purchased a strip ... on the west side of the eighth hole .... Another acquisition by him was a piece ... along the seventh fairway.... An interesting anecdote as to the pitfalls encountered in land purchases, was that it developed, after Mr. Lee had bought the Chase Pease Farm, that Orin Norton had a two-year lease to graze his cows on the land. This crisis was solved by*

*paying him two hundred dollars a year to keep his cows off the course. This was cheaper than fencing off the greens.*

*The very auspicious start of the Club was somewhat dimmed by the great depression of 1929 when, Mr. Lee said, "most of the Founders are stone broke." In 1930 he wrote to the Club's two employees requesting them to take a 35% reduction in salaries so that the Club could survive. They both acquiesced....*

*In 1958 [members] ... became concerned as to what was going to happen to the property that the golf course was on if something should happen to Mr. Lee. His reply was always that the land would go to Mrs. Lee who would always maintain it as a golf course. This seemed far too uncertain a fate for the future of what was now a thriving nine-hole golf course.... It took two years of constant pleading before Mr. Lee finally gave in and agreed to sell the property to the Club.... By December, 1961, ... [the] assistant Treasurer had written the largest check in the Club's history to the order of C.S. Lee. It is interesting to note here what happened to the mortgage. At the first Board meeting after the reorganization, Mr. Lee, who was Chairman of the Greens Committee, requested the purchase of a new greens mower. The president pointed out that the Club was under a very heavy burden of expenses, due to the change over, and the fact that it now had the interest on **his** mortgage to pay each year. The reply was typical, "well XXX\*\*XXX\*\* it. I'll give you the XXX\*\*XXX\*\* mortgage." Mr. Lee got his mower....*

*Cornelius Smith Lee was not only a man with a brilliant mind, but also a man of vision and a man of action. He stood resolute in his principals and these were always of the highest. Many of the fine things that he did for Edgartown go unsung but that would not bother Connie; he never wanted applause. He just wanted the people and especially the youth of Edgartown to have a chance to become good citizens of the town, and of the country.... [W]ithout his love of the game, his foresight, his perseverance and generosity, there would be no Edgartown Golf Club. Let us hope that Connie knows that it is still going strong.*

<https://edgartowngolfclub.com/page.php/2/History/History---1926-to-2012>

Lee's interest in the agronomical aspects of golf course construction and maintenance actually seems to have been greater than his interest in golf course design.

In the 1930s, he spoke at the annual meeting of the Greens Section of the United States Golf Association, giving advice on golf course maintenance, both in relation to over-seeding dormant Bermuda greens in the South and with regard to coping with pests that could destroy the grass on golf courses.

In 1932, he took a job with the venerable old New York company, Stump and Walter, which since the mid-1850s had been selling seeds, bulbs, plants for fruit, vegetables, flowers, and grasses, including turf for landing fields, runways, and golf courses, as well as all kinds of lawn and garden tools and equipment. The company published a book called *Golf Turf*, and also published regular supplements to their book to furnish greenkeepers with "a complete list of implements, requisites and machinery for golf courses" (*Golfdom*, vol 2 no 3 [March 1928] p. 47) Lee took this job not because he needed money (he needed no more money at all!), but because he loved the work.

*C.S. Lee with Stump & Walter as Consultant*

*New York City. – Cornelius S. Lee, chairman of the green-committee of the Tuxedo club, Jekyll Island club and Edgartown G.C. now is associated in an advisory capacity with Stump & Walter Co.*

*Lee is a veteran in golf course maintenance work from the club official and practical viewpoints and ought to bring some positive help to both clubs and greenkeepers in his new connection. He is in high practical standing with greenkeepers for although his club connections always have been strictly gold coast, he has been plenty willing to accept and credit good ideas no matter how close to the dirt their origin, and has never taken the attitude of being Mr. Algernon P. Grass, Himself in Person. Quite a citizen and a welcome addition in his present spot. (*Golfdom*, vol 6 no 3 [March 1932], p. 95)*

Lee was just the man to work with Keffer in converting the "oiled sand green" of the Jekyll Island Club to Bermuda grass. Macy's dream of 1909 was about to be fulfilled.

## Grass Greens

The *Annual Golf Guide* indicates the following with regard to the greens: “sand greens” (from 1917 to 1922), “Oiled sand greens” (1923), “Grass greens” (1925). (I cannot find a copy of the 1924 *Annual Golf Guide* to see what was indicated at that time.)

Still, it is clear that the greens will have been converted from sand to grass some time between 1922 and 1923. The Jekyll Island Club is listed in the *Bulletin of the Greens Section of the United States Golf Association* as a member of the “Greens Section” in June of 1922 (see Volume II, Number 6 [17 June 1922], p. 193: the “Greens Section Membership” list ). This fact suggests that the conversion of the greens from oil-stabilized sand to grass was underway, or it was very soon to be underway. By the end of 1923, a grand celebration is planned to open the new golf course, presumably showing off (among other things) its new grass greens. In April of that year, McCormick wrote to James Simpson of Chicago celebrating the Jekyll Island Club’s new “eighteen hole golf course, well planned and excellently equipped” (Brunner, p. 1), so the greens may well have been converted to grass by then.

The initial preparation of greens for conversion to grass will have been labor-intensive. For a start, thoroughly removing the deep oiled-sand complexes would have been necessary so that no trace of oil-contaminated sand and soil remained to kill the Bermuda grass that was to be planted.

And building a grass green had become more complicated in the 1920s than it had been at the turn of the century. Originally, greens were laid out on the natural surface of the ground more or less as the surface was found to be. That surface was usually pounded and rolled flat, but it was not elevated relative to the surrounding turf, and no slopes or mounds were added to it. All this changed, says Walter Travis, with greens that he built in 1906 (“Twenty Years of Golf,” p. 4).

The U.S.G.A. and the Department of Agriculture agreed in 1920 to form a Green Section within the U.S.G.A. to investigate the best conditions for growing grass for golf greens, but present standards date back only to the 1950s. Still, from the very beginning, the U.S.G.A.’s Green Section shared its information about the best practices known to it. In 1930, for instance, Lee says, “I want to express my thanks for the invaluable advice in the use of fertilizers, preparation of soil, and other matters given to us by the Green Section when we built our new course. By following their recommendations we saved a large sum of money and obtained most gratifying results” (p. 12).

Lee refers to gratifying results regarding the construction of the greens for the new Travis course, but one presumes that he had also availed himself of Green Section advice during the construction of the grass greens for the 1923 Ross-Keffer course. These first grass greens on Jekyll Island would have been built on top of the natural layer of soil. The built-up green surface might have been as much as sixteen inches higher than this natural surface. There would have been coarse soil, or perhaps gravel or crushed stone, used to cover the natural soil where the green was located. On top of this would have been the “root zone” soil (nowadays twelve inches deep, but probably less deep in the 1920s), and this soil would have been a careful mixture of just the right proportions of top-soil, sand, and clay.

Lee seems to have accumulated a high degree of personal expertise in these matters, especially with regard to the grasses used in the 1920s on the Jekyll Island golf courses: Bermuda grass and the grass used to over-seed it in the fall, “redtop” – a form of bent grass that has “a creeping habit,” “comes on quickly and vigorously to form a compact turf .... Redtop has an outstanding ability to grow under a variety of conditions. It is one of the best wet-land grasses and it also resists drought” (Max M. Hoover, *et. al.*, *Yearbook of Agriculture 1948*, p. 647).

In 1930, Lee reflected on his experience with the greens of the Jekyll Island golf course over the previous seven years:

*Our playing season lasts from the middle of December to the middle of April. During this period the temperature ranges from 25 to 80 degrees above zero. These extremes of temperature make it difficult to insure good putting greens, and, as is the case throughout the South, the greens have to be planted anew each fall. Experience and experiments have convinced us that a Bermuda grass base, top-dressed and sown in September with redtop gives the best putting surface. The main problem lies in maintaining a proper balance between the base of dormant Bermuda grass roots and the surface of active redtop. If the Bermuda base is not scraped off sufficiently deep and the redtop is sown too early in the fall, a subsequent wet season will result in the Bermuda's crowding out the redtop. If, on the other hand, the redtop is sown too late or too much of the Bermuda base is removed, frost will damage the redtop and the light sandy soil with its insufficient base will afford a poor putting surface. (“Two Serious Problems on Southern Golf Courses,” *Bulletin of the Green Section of the United States Golf Association*, vol 10 no 1 [January 1930], p. 10)*

## Reviews

Beers made no comments about the Ross course in particular, but his general comments about the eighteen-hole Ross-Keffer course are complimentary:

*The course I found to be wonderfully laid out, combining a great variety of golfing architecture. The first six and last three holes are built around a large savannah. The middle holes are laid out in the dunes near the sea, and offer a pleasing contrast. They call to mind the dunes holes at Formby, near Liverpool. A brief description of them follows, which will give an idea of the most interesting ones. ("Down on Jekyll Isle," p. 12)*

Beers was clearly quite a fan of the Keffer dunes course, regarding the Ross course's design as contributing its share to the wonderful variety of golf architecture at Jekyll Island, but perhaps not worthy of hole-by-hole analysis because Beers was used to such architecture on other good American courses. The middle nine holes were different.

Beers seems to have acquired the impression that the nine savanna holes had recently been added to supplement the dunes holes.

A few months after his review, he wrote an article about the marvels of modern golf course construction projects: "The golf-course engineer, the grass expert, and the golf-club architect are a trinity that work as a harmonious whole with an efficiency that is mystifying to the uninitiated. Examples of their magic can be found on every side" (*Golf Illustrated*, vol 23 no 2 [May 1925], p. 19). He pointed to recent wonders in the south, west, north, and east: we have had coral being blasted away in Florida to make room for a course, we have had whole forests in California being felled to make room for a course, we have had snow and ice being cleared away in New York to allow for building a course in winter, and "in Georgia we have the exclusive Jekyll Island Club draining a savannah and converting it into nine additional holes" (p. 19).

Beers seems to have thought that the savanna had only recently been drained.

We have seen that Beers thought one of Keffer's holes "a great" one, and another, "the best" he had ever seen. The McCashes note that the Club members seemed unanimous in their admiration for the

course: “In describing the attractions of Jekyll, club members invariably referred to the excellence of this course” (p. 160).

Perhaps the biggest promoter of the golf course was the Club’s new president as of 1919, Dr. Walter Belknap James. The McCashes point out that “Upon learning that Cyrus McCormick, who had not been on the island since 1915, might be considering the purchase of the cottage that Walter Ferguson had previously obtained from the N.K. Fairbank estate, he wrote encouragingly to tell him ‘how glad I am if you are thinking of taking to Jekyll and making more use of it ‘ ... Perhaps remembering McCormick’s fetish for golf, he threw in for good measure: ‘Our golf course has been steadily improving and is now good enough for anyone’” (McCash pp. 159-60).

Note that McCormick knew very well the golf course up to 1915, when it comprised the nine Ross holes and two or three of the Keffer dunes holes. James, who became Club president in 1919, seems to have been alerting McCormick to developments since then; presumably the golf course had at least fourteen holes when James wrote to McCormick.

The McCashes observe that, “Unfortunately, McCormick’s wife died in 1921, thus undermining his incentive for buying Jekyll Island property,” yet McCormick indeed returned to the Club and also touted the merits of the new golf course (160). As we know, he told a friend that it was “well planned and excellently equipped” (Brunner, p. 1).

The Jekyll Island Club’s pride in the course produced golf party after golf party. We recall that 1924 had started with a grand opening to which a couple of Pullman railway cars delivered a host of New Yorkers. The same thing happened in 1925.

Again, the Club’s plan to bring its new eighteen-hole golf course to the attention of the golf world’s *connoscenti* made newspaper headlines: “Noted Golf Party Will Visit Links at Jekyll Island.” As the reporter explained:

*Shortly after the annual meeting of the United States Golf Association, a party of about fifty devotees of the game, including J. Pierpont Morgan, George F. Baker and E.S. Harkness, will leave this city for the Jekyll Island golf course near Brunswick, Ga. It is their intention to be gone about ten days and all are looking forward to better conditions than have ever been enjoyed there before. (Montgomery Advertiser [Alabama], 5 January 1925, p. 6).*

## Reviews

Morgan and Baker stayed on at the island for much more than ten days. A news story about a big match they had tried to arrange went coast to coast under headlines that gently mocked the failure of the match to come off as though one of these men's big financial plans had "failed" or "flopped":

*Two Billion Dollar Foursome Plans on Georgia Links "Flop"*

*Wall street learned today of the failure of a two billion dollar foursome on the golf links at Jekyll Island, Ga.*

*J.P. Morgan, George F. Baker, Charles F. Mitchel, president of the National City Bank, and Alvin W. Krech, Chairman of the Equity trust Company, were involved in the plans for the match. Efforts were made last week to bring together the four who represent institutions with assets well above two billion dollars. But the proposal failed through the opposition of Mr. Krech, who is sceptical regarding the merits of golf as a pastime. The other three are enthusiastic about it. (Fort Lauderdale News, 10 March 1925, p. 1)*

*Although Baker had taken up golf late in life (he was seventy years old when he took his first lesson), he nonetheless became addicted both to playing the game and to playing it on Jekyll Island: "Although he will soon be 85, he is looking forward with keen interest to swatting a golf ball over his favorite course on Jekyll Island, recently extended to an 18-hole course" (The Pittsburgh Press, 17 January 1925, p. 14).*

About two weeks after the "Two Billion Dollar Foursome ... 'Flop,'" Baker invited another friend to play a round on the new Jekyll Island golf course, and this friend – John D. Rockefeller – was richer than all those in the "Flop" foursome put together.

Back for the umpteenth time to play golf on Jekyll Island, Rockefeller had been at the Club since the middle of February, no doubt playing golf every day (*The Times* [Montgomery, Alabama], 16 February 1925, p. 2). Newspaper reports told of one of the matches between eighty-four-year-old Rockefeller and eighty-five-year-old Baker: "George F. Baker is reported to have played eight holes of golf with John D. Rockefeller while the latter was his guest at Jekyll Island. While strict secrecy was pledged concerning the result of the match, it is reported that Mr. Rockefeller was the winner" (*Asheville Citizen-Times* [North Carolina], 27 March 1925, p. 2).



Figure 219 George Baker (left), eighty-five years old, and John D. Rockefeller, eighty-four years old, in *Popular Science Monthly* (march 1926), p. 41.

People who could afford to go anywhere in the world to play golf on any course that might interest them were clearly very interested in playing the new Jekyll Island golf course.

The 1925 review of Keffer's nine-hole dunes course by Beers in *Golf Illustrated* suggested that the course was most like Formby. The golf course of the Formby Golf Club was (and remains) famous in England for combining links land with pine forest in the same way that the Keffer dunes course did (and still does). First laid out in 1884, the Formby golf was redesigned by Willie Park in 1912 and then James Braid in 1922.

## Reviews

The photograph below suggests that Beers may have been reminded of Formby by the similarity of the approach shot between the dunes depicted below and the approach shot between the dunes of Keffer's tenth hole ("Mae West").



*Figure 220 Early twentieth-century photograph of fairway between dunes at Formby golf course, near Liverpool, England.*

Beers may also have noticed a resemblance between Keffer's thirteenth hole (which Beers thought "a great hole"), with its green nestled amongst dunes, and the par-three twelfth hole at Formby, seen below.



*Figure 221 Contemporary view of the par-three twelfth hole at Formby golf course, near Liverpool, England.*

## Another New Course? What Gives?

In November of 1926, four years after the completion of the Ross-Keffer hybrid course, the Jekyll Island Club hired Walter J. Travis to build an eighteen-hole golf course in the dunes along the island's Atlantic coast.

Keffer had created a magical nine-hole links course for the millionaires of Jekyll Island. The contemporary photographs and painted postcards that we have reviewed above give an idea of how "linksy" the Keffer course would have felt. Perhaps club members simply wanted more of the magic: not just nine holes of dunes golf, but a full eighteen holes of it.

Yet the McCashes say that "golfing zealots wanted more and craved a new, modern, first-class course set in picturesque surroundings" (p. 160).



Figure 222 Walter J. Travis, circa 1926.

Perhaps the younger visitors to the island indeed wanted a new course, a situation echoing the agitation in 1896 on behalf of the younger set that resulted in the first "convenience" for golf being built that year. A story widely distributed by a news service in November of 1926 gives credence to this idea:

*Walter J. Travis, famous golf architect, has two new 18-hole courses of his design under construction here within sight of each other. On Jekyll Island the nine-hole course of the Jekyll Island Club long known as "Old Man's Delight" is being replaced with a modern 18-hole course which will give the young members of the club opportunity to display their skill ... [The other course was to be built on St Simons Island] Mr. Travis will spend the winter here supervising the construction of these new courses.*

(Atlanta Constitution, 24 November 1926, p. 9; see

*also Knoxville Journal [Tennessee]. 24 November 1926, p. 11; Tampa Tribune, 25 November 1926, p. 15)*

## Another New Course? What Gives?

We must be careful in assessing the phrase “Old Man’s Delight,” however, for not only has it been a widely used phrase in English for centuries (becoming very widely used in the early twentieth century after an Irish jig by that name became popular around 1903), but it also had a particular context in relation to golf on Jekyll Island in the 1920s.

When Jekyll Island still only had its nine-hole Ross course, as supplemented by Keffer’s three dunes holes, George F. Baker founded the Old Man’s Golf Club of Jekyll Island. Baker, who had only taken up the game when seventy years old, made sure that there was always a tournament-within-a-tournament on the island to acknowledge the senior players of the Club: “Mr. Baker is the champion of the Old Man’s Golf Club at Jekyll and always offers a cup for the best medal score in a tournament for players over 70 years old” (*Charlotte Observer* [North Carolina], 23 March 1923, p. 23).

The “nine-hole golf course of the Jekyll Island Club long known” as “Old Man’s Delight” was obviously not the new nine-hole course of Karl Keffer. Rather, it would seem that “long” dissatisfaction with “Old Man’s Delight” was as much part of the motivation for the Keffer dunes course as it was for the Travis dunes course.

When members of the younger set stood on Keffer’s first dunes hole and contemplated “Mae West,” they must have thought: “That is no country for old men!” They wanted more of the Keffer dunes experience.

An article in the *Brunswick News* indicates that Travis was apparently asked to change “eight of the sixteen holes” (cited in Marroquin and Hunter, p. 2). Such an instruction reads very strangely in light of the fact that the Club’s golf course had eighteen holes, but it nonetheless jibes with the idea that half of the Club’s holes (those by Ross) were to be replaced with new holes designed by Travis, which were to be added to those designed by Keffer – most of which were apparently to be retained.

As the newspaper article above says, Travis intended to spend the winter season of 1926-27 on Jekyll Island and St Simons Island. How long he stayed in the area is not clear. He had long been suffering from bronchial illnesses, but he remained active supervising work on his golf course designs well into 1927. He was back in New York in the early summer, until his health declined: he found himself too weak even to get out of his car to watch play in a golf tournament, so his doctors advised him to go to Denver for better air.

He died two weeks later at the end of July.

During Travis's time on Jekyll Island at the beginning of the year, one has to imagine that Keffer and his early benefactor would have discussed Travis's plans for the dunes. And Cornelius Lee would surely have wanted to discuss with Travis the plans for using the latest advice from the U.S.G.A. to grow the new dunes greens. Golf talk would have flourished amongst the three of them.

Since the newspaper story above is about the latest projects of Walter J. Travis, it would seem that Travis himself was the source of the information in the article, rather than the Jekyll Island Club. If so, then Travis will have been the source of the idea that dissatisfaction with "Old Man's Delight" was responsible for the commission to build a new course.

Yet the new Travis golf course was actually paid for by members of the Old Man's Golf Club: "Among those who donated funds to construct a new golf course were George F. Baker, J.P. Morgan, Jr., Richard T. Crane, Cyrus McCormick, Jr., Edwin Gould, Cornelius Lee, and Dr. and Mrs. Walter James. Travis was hired to oversee the project. He redesigned existing holes and added several new holes that offered breathtaking views of the nearby Atlantic Ocean and beach" ("An Historic Course, An Old Man," *Jekyll Island Beachscape*, October 1913, p. 5).

My guess is that Travis revealed to the newspaper just one of the Jekyll Island Club's motivations in building a new course: dissatisfaction with the old Ross holes. And he may have been asked to confine himself to such an explanation by the Club itself. For its main motivation – indeed, its real motivation – was something that deeply bugged the Club, literally.

That is, a bug.

The relative hurry to build a new eighteen-hole oceanside golf course is explained not by aesthetic or architectural concerns. Rather, the Jekyll Island Club faced an entirely unforeseeable agronomic apocalypse: the future of golf on Jekyll Island was at risk.

## The Changa Crisis of 1925

Cornelius Lee addressed the Green section of the U.S.G.A. in January of 1930 about the near-death experience that golf on Jekyll Island had recently suffered through:

*The Jekyll Island golf course, situated off the southeastern coast of Georgia, has gone through a trying period the last few years.... Six or seven years ago our old course was suddenly attacked by the mole cricket, which is one of the worst pests Southern golf courses have to contend with. Overnight this insect practically destroyed entire fairways for us.... Had the Green Section not rendered us ... invaluable service in securing the cooperation of the United States Department of Agriculture in attempting to solve our problem, I know that there would be no golf course on Jekyll Island today. ("Two Serious Problems on Southern Golf Courses," Bulletin of the Green Section of the United States Golf Association, vol 10 no 1 [January 1930], p. 11).*

It was the mole cricket, also known as the changa, "Porto-Rican mole cricket," or "ground puppy," that led to the demise of the Ross course: "Our old course had been utterly destroyed by the mole cricket" (p. 11). And so, explained Lee, "We abandoned our old course three years ago and built a new one out in the sand dunes" (p. 11). All nine holes of the 1909 Ross course were abandoned, as well as three holes of the Keffer dunes course.

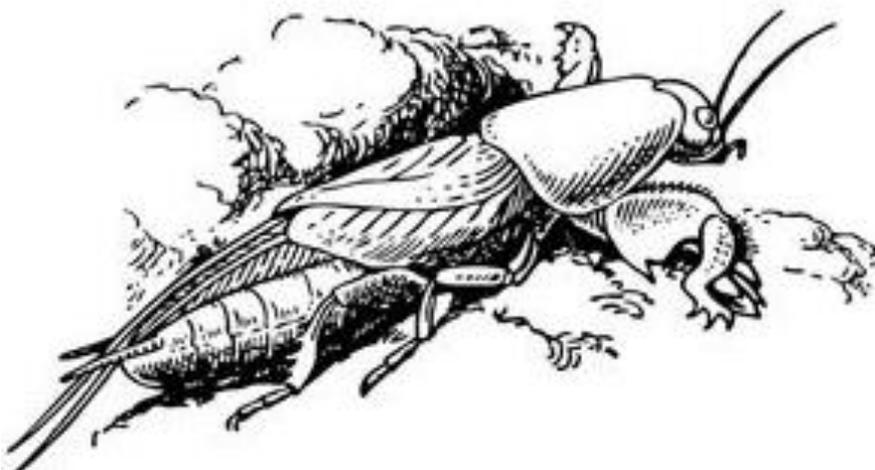


Figure 223 Changa, Puerto Rican Mole Cricket, "Ground Puppy."

The U.S.G.A. was not entirely unfamiliar with the changa problem. There had been a brief article about this voracious insect in the very first volume of the *Bulletin of the Green Section* back in 1920: "The Changa or West Indian Mole Cricket as a Pest on Golf Courses" (vol 1 not 6

[April 1920], pp. 104-107). What the long-known problem required was an immediate solution.



Figure 224 A handful of mole crickets.

For Cornelius Lee, the “ground puppy” came to loom as large in his psyche as did the gopher in *Caddy Shack* (1980) for Carl Spackler.

In other words, Lee’s long, exasperating battle against the mole cricket became intensely personal and drove him to seek extreme solutions to the infestation:

*Let me solemnly warn anyone building a southern golf course to make adequate provision for combating the mole cricket before he does anything else. In time the insect will unquestionably work farther north .... At Aix-les-Bains, in southeastern France, a place almost surrounded by high mountains, the mole cricket suddenly appeared .... I dug a few*

*up and was surprised to see that they were at least three inches long....*

*The cricket somewhat resembles a long, brown grasshopper, with short legs. Its head is covered with an armored shield. It has a powerful pair of claws, like a lobster, which it uses in cutting the grass. It flies, jumps, springs, swims, crawls, and burrows.... As its burrows consist of countless passages, the use of poison gas is rather ineffective in combating it. We waged a short and hopeless war against the insect. (pp. 11-12)*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture put an enterprising young entomologist on the case: “W.A. Thomas, Junior Entomologist, Chadbourn, N.C., visited Brunswick, Ga., to investigate an outbreak of Porto Rican mole crickets attacking the greens of the Jekyl Island Golf Club” (*The Monthly Letter of the Bureau of Entomology*, United States Department of Agriculture, no 130 [February 1925], p. 3).

## The Changa Crisis of 1925

Junior Entomologist Thomas, a Carl Spackler wannabe, threw everything at the changa that he could think of. He came up with two solutions, literally: thirty pounds of cyanide dust was mixed with 500 gallons of water and poured over the whole green with a hose; a carbon disulfide emulsion was mixed with water and applied at the rate of two quarts per square foot to the entire green. Both treatments worked. Sort of ...

The next year we read that Thomas, no longer Junior, but now “assistant Entomologist in charge of the Chadbourn, N.C., Laboratory, visited Jekyll Island Golf Club, at Brunswick, Ga., May 26, to check up his experiments on the control of the mole crickets on golf greens. Mr. Thomas found the fairways and greens free from these insects, but the heavy vegetation surrounding the fairways showed some infestation” (*The Monthly Letter of the Bureau of Entomology*, United States Department of Agriculture, no 145 [May 1926], p. 5).

The first treatment lasted about a month; the second, from four to six weeks. Then re-infestation occurred.

Finally, “thinking like a changa,” Thomas came up with a killer recipe: “a poison bait consisting of 100 lbs. of cottonseed meal, 100 lbs. of rice flour, and 10 lbs. of calcium arsenate, moistened with a cheap molasses solution ... to make the bait crumbly” (*Experiment Station Record*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, vol 56 January – June 1927], 359). “Three applications” – “late afternoon” – “gave excellent control.” Importantly, “Although the effect was not as immediate as with the carbon disulfide and calcium cyanide treatments, the low cost of the material and ease of application made it practicable to treat not only the greens but also the adjacent fairways, thus preventing early re-infestation of the green” (359-60).

Thomas was thinking of farmers when he came up with his most cost-effective treatment. The members of the Jekyll Island Club were not economizing farmers. As Lee explains, they simultaneously applied all three treatments: “three methods of poisoning the crickets were finally adopted .... After using these methods of warfare against the mole cricket, I am pleased to say we are comparatively free from the pest” (pp. 11-12).

## Plus ça change

Yet many years later, after the Jekyll Island Club was long gone, the mole cricket problem returned to the golf courses of Jekyll Island with a vengeance.

Richard L. Duple, a turfgrass specialist writing about year-round mole-cricket infestations at Florida golf course, notes that “Near the Florida state line at Jekyll Island, Georgia, mole crickets a few years ago escalated to such enormous proportions that ‘folks were going to lose their jobs unless something was done and done fast,’ says entomologist Dr. Leon Stacey” (Aggie Horticulture <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/turf/publications/mole.html>).

The year was 1978.

*Golf Business* reported on the matter in 1981 in an article called “Use Spray and Bait to Control Mole Crickets”:

*According to Leon Stacey, an Extension Entomologist with the University of Georgia, there is an economical means of controlling mole crickets....*

*“We have conducted the majority of our testing at the golf courses on Jekyll Island, just off the Georgia Coast near Brunswick,” says Stacey. “In 1978, superintendent Leslie Gretchell was facing perhaps one of the worst populations of mole crickets seen in the Southeast” ....*

*Stacey even claims that their four-year research and demonstration program has found the right product at a reasonable price, and can even tell you the correct time of day to apply it for optimum results. (Golf Business, April 1981, p. 30)*

*Golf Business* seemed entirely unaware that fifty years before Cornelius Lee and W.A. Thomas had been there, seen that, and done that!

The problem arose again in the late 1980s, so Dr. Stacey went back to the island:

*Oceanside was used to evaluate candidate insecticides .... The standard insecticide used for mole cricket control on Jekyll has been Mocap. It is almost 100% effective on young crickets, but became less effective as crickets mature. Applications of Mocap made during August and September provided poor to fair control. An alternate*

Plus ça change

*treatment has been found to fill the need for good cricket control in August and September.... [It] was used on Oceanside in November with excellent results. (Report to Jekyll Island Authority: Mole Cricket Research Project, 15 December 1987, in Board Minutes, Jekyll Island Authority, 1988, p. 36).*

By 1989, Stacey had decided to conduct “intense research activity” into the sex life of the pest, with the hope of “isolating and utilizing pheromones to affect mole cricket population dynamics on the golf course” (Dr. A. Leon Stacey, “1990 Annual Research Report Prepared for: United States Golf Association,” 26 October 1990, p. 2). Although jointly funded with private companies, his study cost the Jekyll Island Authority more than \$11,000 per year – the entire cost of the construction of the Donald Ross course in 1909 (Board Minutes, Jekyll Island Authority, 1988, p. 25).

In 1990 on Jekyll Island, “On Apr 8, a pheromone release trap ... was placed on the northernmost hole (5) of the southernmost course (Oceanside)” – that is, Keffer’s first dune hole, “Mae West” (p. 7). The sexual attraction of the pheromone was so potent that “By Apr 15, the entire 9 holes of Oceanside needed blanket treatment” (p. 7).

Oh My! Lee and Thomas would have been very interested in this work.

Stacey describes “encouraging” signs that scientific application of attractive and repellent pheromones will be capable of “concentrating crickets into one area while repelling them from others. Such uses could reduce our total dependence on insecticides” (p.2)

Insecticides and change sex! Is there no end to the contribution of Jekyll Island golf courses to success in the change wars?

## The Scorecard of the Oceanside Course (a.k.a. Great Dunes)

Shortly after the state of Georgia acquired ownership of Jekyll Island in 1947, Governor Melvin E. Thompson began a search for the right person to operate the hotel facilities on Jekyll Island. He found Thomas H. Briggs, Jr.



Figure 225 Thomas H. Briggs, circa 1948, in Bagwell, *Jekyll Island: A State Park*, P. 26.

Briggs was then 39 years old, married, with two young children. He had been born in Augusta, Georgia, but worked until his appointment at Jekyll Island at the Hotel Fort Raleigh on Roanoke Island, Manteo, North Carolina. His reputation as a capable manager was well-established: in fact, he was recommended to Governor Thompson by the Georgia Hotel Association. Thompson said that he accepted this recommendation in part because the place where Briggs worked, Roanoke Island, “is similar to Jekyll” (*Atlanta Constitution*, 1 February 1948, p. 9).

The Governor was determined to open the island to paying guests on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1948 – just a month after Briggs’ appointment. Briggs was officially an employee of the State Parks Department and was given “a small crew on the island to maintain the facilities and make such expansions of the hotel facilities as may be needed or become advisable” (*Atlanta Constitution*, 1 February 1948, p. 9). He

had 300 rooms available, comprising the Clubhouse, its Annex, and the former homes of the millionaires. The newspaper reported that “Briggs will receive an annual salary of \$6,000 in addition to 10% of the net profits”; “Under the terms of the agreement, the hotel manager would pay all costs of operating the facilities and would give the State 90% of the net profits” (*Atlanta Constitution*, 1 February 1948, p. 9).

Briggs did not last long in the job. Governor-elect Henry Talmadge announced on the last day of summer in 1948 that he would replace Briggs with his own man.

From our point of view, the most important thing about Briggs is not that he was briefly the hotel manager at Jekyll Island, but rather that on 24 October 1948 he was a golfer. On that day, he played a round of golf over the Jekyll Island Club’s Oceanside course (also known by Travis’s nickname for it, “Great Dunes”) and his scorecard for that round made its way into the possession of the U.S.G.A.

The scorecard was the same one used up until 1942 by the Jekyll Island Club.

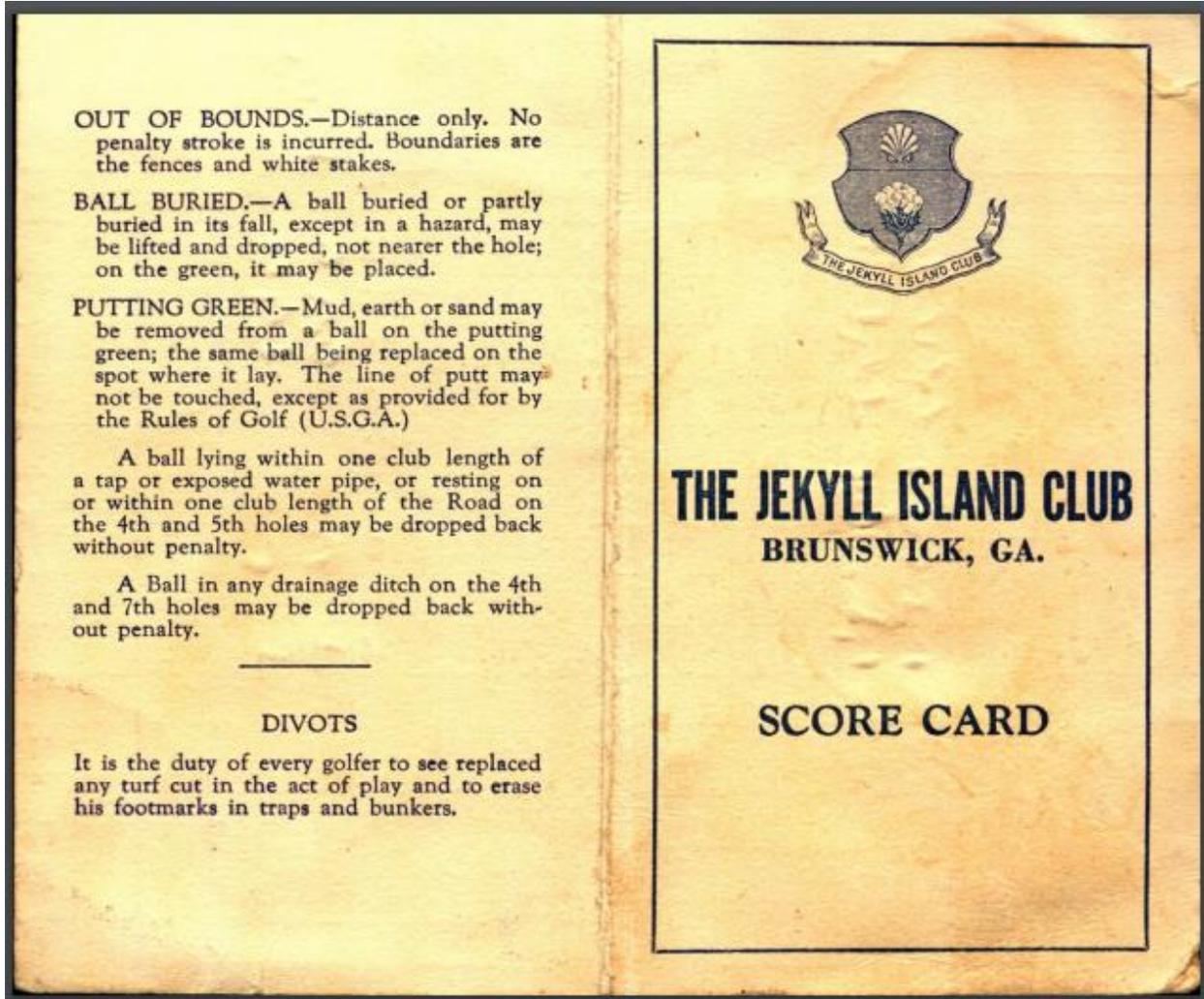


Figure 226 Left is the back of the Jekyll Island Club scorecard for the Oceanside Course; right is the front cover. It was folded in half.

The front nine of the Oceanside Course remains today as the nine-hole Great Dunes course. It comprises five holes by Karl Keffer, and another green by Karl Keffer; three holes and another fairway were designed by Walter J. Travis.

The notes on the back of the scorecard refer to “the Road on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> holes.” This was Howland Road. Originally a bike path, it was marked on the Ross course drawing as the eastern boundary of the nine-hole Ross course on the savanna.

In the photograph below, we can see a car on what I believe to be Howland Road as golfers putt on what I take to be the green of the par-four second hole of the Oceanside Course (originally the green for Keffer’s par-three thirteenth hole on the Ross-Keffer course, that Beers called “a great hole,” but now the green on par-four second hole of the Great Dunes course).



*Figure 227 A late-1930s photograph of golfers on the front nine of the Oceanside Course.*

If the photograph above indeed shows the second green of the Oceanside course, the photographer is positioned on the east side of the Oceanside course and looks to west, such that we see in the background to the west a car running along Howland Road from south to north. On the west side of Howland Road, paralleling the road on a south-north axis, we see a row of trees marking the boundary between the Oceanside course and the savanna where the old Ross course was located. Howland Road continues northward marking the boundary of the Oceanside course until it crosses the bottom of the fourth fairway and the top of the fifth fairway.

Just out of the picture to the left of the car would be the eighth tee, and beyond the dunes in the background seen above the head of the golfer who is putting on the second green would be the seventh green.

Note that in the photograph above the flag held by the caddy is red. We shall see the same group of golfers and caddies on the back nine, where the flags are yellow.

The Scorecard of the Oceanside Course (a.k.a. Great Dunes)

The other side of the Oceanside scorecard, seen in the photograph below, shows the yardages for each of the holes. We can see that the Keffer holes (numbered three to seven on the scorecard) have roughly the same yardages that they had when Beers played them in 1925.

STAND BY MARK UNTIL CADDY REPLACES DIVOT					TAKE A STROKE AT EVERY HOLE HAVING A FIGURE EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN YOUR HANDICAP IN THE "STROKES" COLUMN.																
LEVEL FOOTPRINTS IN BUNKERS.																					
Holes	YARDS	Par	Bogey	H'cap B'cks	Self	Part'r	Opp.	Opp.	Won	Lost	Holes	YARDS	Par	Bogey	H'cap B'cks	Self	Part'r	Opp.	Opp.	Won	Lost
1	415	4	5	5	5						10	300	4	4	12	5	5				
2	375	4	5	11	5						11	155	3	3	16	5	5				
3	370	4	5	1	5						12	325	4	4	10	5	4				
4	375	4	5	13	5						13	520	5	6	4	6	7				
5	510	5	6	7	2						14	140	3	3	18	3	4				
6	165	3	3	17	4						15	505	5	6	2	6	6				
7	420	4	5	3	6						16	370	4	5	8	5	6				
8	230	3	4	15	4						17	410	4	5	6	5	6				
9	475	5	5	9	6						18	205	3	4	14	4	4				
Out	3335	36	43		46	48					In	2930	35	40		44	47				
Player _____										Out 3335 36 43											
Attested _____										Total 6265 71 83											
Date 10/24/48										HANDICAP _____											
										NET _____											

Figure 228 The obverse side of the cover of the scorecard shown above.

Note that what Beers judged to be the best par-four hole that he had ever seen (Keffer's par-four hole that served as the fourteenth hole of the Ross-Keffer course) was ranked as the hardest hole on the Oceanside course.

Incidentally, the scorecard also shows that the stymie rule was still in effect in 1948: the card was made to be six inches wide when unfolded so as to be able to serve as a "stymie gauge." And it also shows that the Jekyll Island Club still felt that the distinction between par and bogey was worth preserving.

Although the yardages for the Keffer holes that Travis incorporated into the Oceanside course remain virtually unchanged, Travis seems to have added his own touches to some of these holes. In the photograph below, for instance, we see the sixth hole of the Oceanside course, which was originally Keffer's third hole in the dunes, his par three by the sea, which became the eleventh hole of the Ross-Keffer course. Travis has added to it.



*Figure 229 Groups play the Oceanside sixth hole in a late 1930s tournament.*

We view the hole from its tee. To the left is the Atlantic Ocean. The caddie entering the picture on the right has just come from the green of the par-five fifth hole. We can see that Travis added a bunker in front of Keffer's green, forcing golfers to fly the ball all the way to the green. This hole today remains the sixth hole of the Great Dunes course, with the same Travis bunker – slightly reduced in size.

And yet however much such a bunkering strategy by Travis increased the level of difficulty of some of Keffer's holes, it is also the case that at the same time the Jekyll Island Club's increasing sophistication in its grass growing and management techniques was taming the front nine's originally wilder dunes grass.

The Scorecard of the Oceanside Course (a.k.a. Great Dunes)

The photograph below was published in *Golf Illustrated* in 1931 to accompany an article extolling the grass maintenance techniques of the Jekyll Island Club.



Figure 230 Photograph of a lime spreader used to spread fertilizer on the Oceanside course at Jekyll Island, *Golf Illustrated*, vol 36 no 1 (October 1931), p. 30.

I believe that the photographer looks from south to north and that the photograph shows the seventh fairway in the foreground, with a glimpse of the third fairway through the trees.

## The Lost Nine

Although today nothing remains of the back nine of the Oceanside course in regard to its physical layout (it is covered with pavement and concrete), we have at least a partial photographic record of it.

The Oceanside scorecard can be combined with photographic evidence presented below to identify a plausible routing of the lost holes of the back nine of the Oceanside course. On the 1945 Jekyll Island aerial photograph that has been used on several occasions in the preceding pages, I have marked the known routing of the holes on the front nine and the likely routing of the holes on the back nine.



Figure 231 Annotated aerial photograph circa 1945 showing the routing of the 18 holes of the Oceanside course designed by Walter J. Travis in the late 1920s.

Both the front nine and the back nine commenced at a building known as the Tea House.



Figure 232 Postcard shows Tea House beside golf shed.

Originally located near the golf shed, the Tea House had been moved to a point near where Shell Road reached its eastern terminus at the beach along the Atlantic Ocean. Members could arrange to have the Clubhouse kitchen serve a “tea” at the Tea House, but the building also served as an

## The Lost Nine

unofficial clubhouse, the focus for various social activities related to golf.



*Figure 233 The Tea House in its new location between the two nines of the Oceanside course at the end of Shell Road. Bagwells, Jekyll Island Club, p. 73.*

Here golfers began their rounds on the 300-yard tenth hole, as seen in the photograph below.



*Figure 234 A foursome tees off on the tenth tee of the Oceanside course. The Tea House is visible behind the golfers and caddies. Bagwells, Jekyll Island Club, p. 73.*

From the vantage point of the Tea House, one could see the first two holes of the back nine, and from the vantage point of the eleventh green one could see back up the tenth fairway to the Tea House.

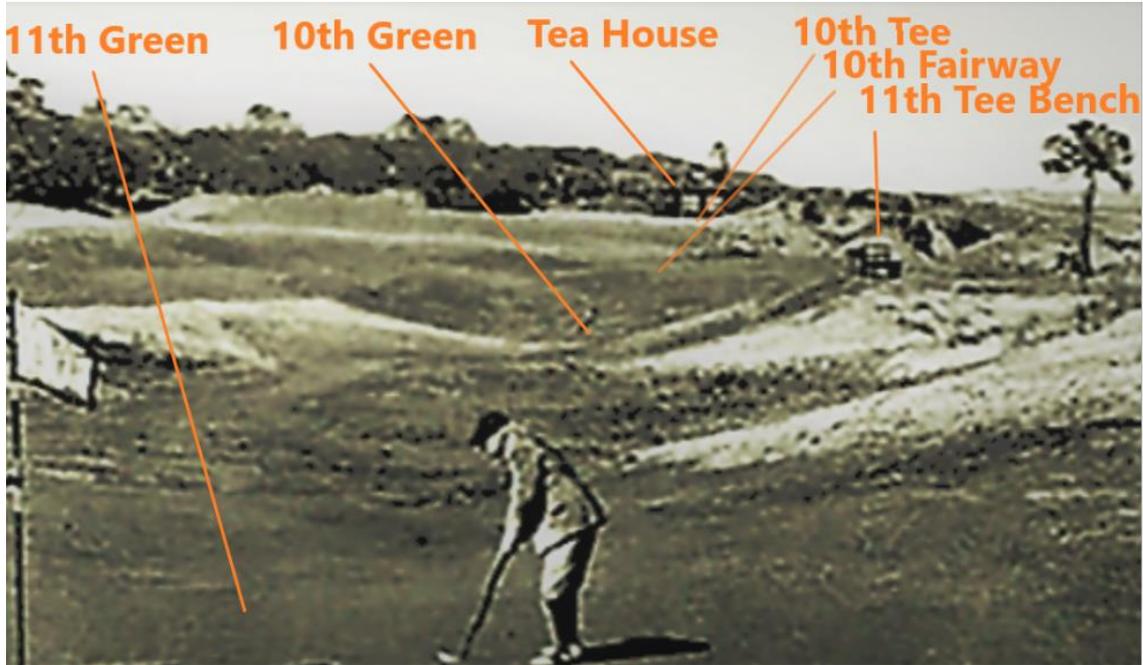


Figure 235 A view from the 11th green, where a man putts, back up the 10th fairway to the Tea House.

The tenth green seems to have been in a hollow with exposed sand all around it. Is it seen below?



Figure 236 Unidentified back nine green, possibly the 10<sup>th</sup>, with the 11<sup>th</sup> tee to be found on top of the dune seen in the top right corner of the photograph.

## The Lost Nine

From the Tea House, one could not only see the tenth and eleventh holes; one could also see the two holes with which the back nine concluded. The photograph below shows the same people putting on the green of the 155-yard par-three eleventh hole that we saw above teeing off on the tenth hole



Figure 237 In the foreground of the photograph are golfers putting on the eleventh green. They have played to the green from a tee in the dunes. The Tea House at the start of the tenth hole is visible in the distance. The seventeenth and eighteenth holes run south to north on the left side of the photograph.

The 325-yard twelfth hole had scrub palmetto bushes on its beach side, as in the photograph below.



Figure 238 Perhaps a photograph of the twelfth fairway of the Oceanside course, found in Cornelius S. Lee, "Two Serious Problems on Southern Courses," p. 10.

A fence appears in the photograph above between fairway and beachside brush, as in the one below.



*Figure 239 U.S. army horse on the back nine of the Oceanside course during World War II. Bagwell, Jekyll Island: A State Park, p. 16.*

The photograph below may also show this hole, looking down the fairway from north to south.



*Figure 240 Unidentified fairway during World War II. Bagwell, Jekyll Island: A State Park, p. 25.*

## The Lost Nine

The thirteenth hole was a par five of 520 yards. It seems to be the hole seen in the photograph below, which shows the same golfers and caddies appearing above on the front nine of the Oceanside course.



Figure 239 Photograph of the thirteenth green of the Oceanside course?

The 140-yard par-three fourteenth hole probably concluded the run of holes along the Atlantic Ocean.

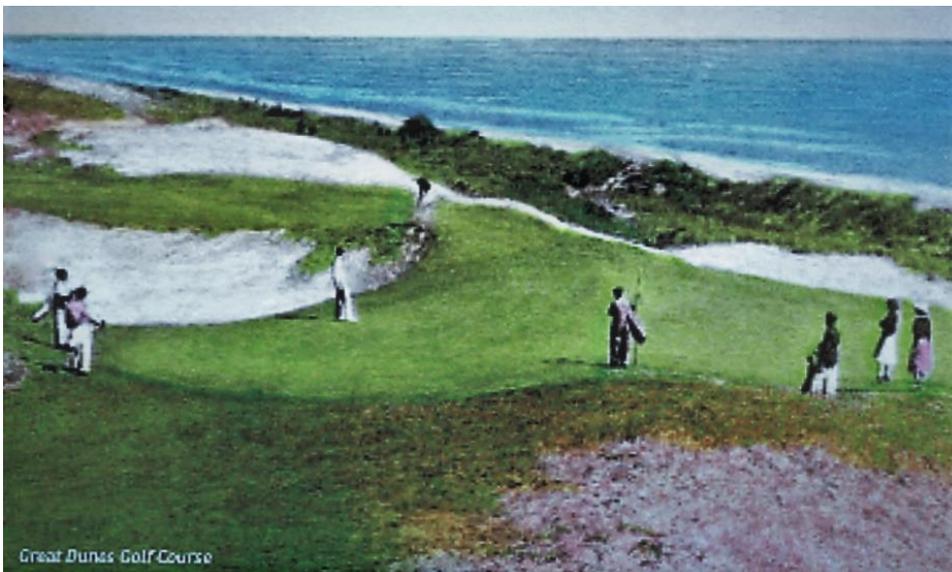


Figure 240 Unidentified back-nine green depicted on a Jekyll Island postcard, circa 1930s.

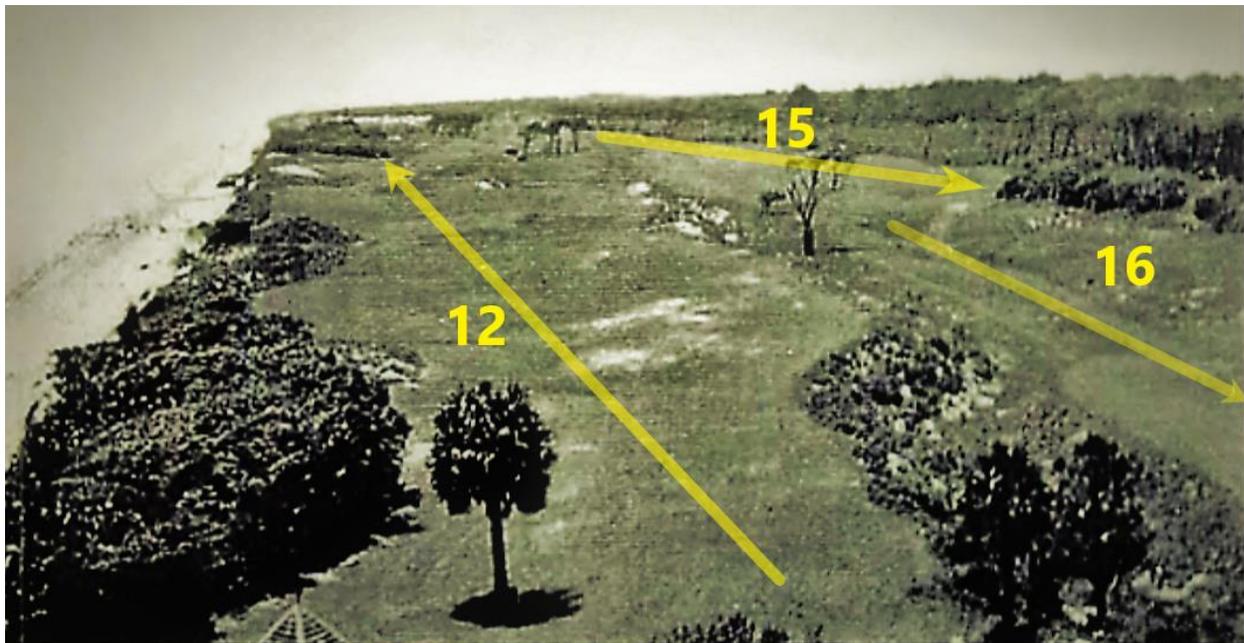
We may see in the postcard to the left an image of the hole in question. The green, extremely well-defended by a long beachside bunker on one side, a deep bunker short of it, and what appears to have been a waste area of dune grass

and sand over the back, would have been an appropriate target for a forced carry on a 140-yard par-three hole.

The green shown here appears to have had a high ridge running across its center, effectively dividing the putting surface into two halves. Such a design feature would have made it very important for the golfer to place the ball on the side of the green on which the pin was placed.

I presume that the par-three fourteenth hole marked the southernmost point of the Oceanside course. Here, golfers would have turned around and headed north on the four remaining holes of the back nine. These four holes were bounded on the west side by woods and paralleled on the east side by the five outward holes running alongside the Atlantic Ocean.

The fifteenth hole was a 505-yard par five, rated the most difficult hole on the back nine. I suspect that in the photograph below we see the last part of this hole as it approaches its green.



*Figure 241 Photograph of the back nine of the Oceanside course circa 1943, in Bagwell, Jekyll Island: A State Park, p. 25..*

In the photograph above, the fairway for the hole marked “15” seems to end in a nook created by a curving wall of trees where the green was located. The tee for the next hole, marked “16,” seems to be to the east of the green in question, and requires the drive to carry perhaps fifty to seventy-five yards before it will find fairway grass.

It may be the tee in question that we see in the photograph below.

## The Lost Nine



*Figure 242 Unidentified tee in a circa 1930s photograph of the Oceanside course.*

This photograph shows the same kind of path from tee to fairway seen in the preceding photograph.

What I take to be the seventeenth green appears in the photograph below.



*Figure 243 Unidentified green appearing in a photograph of the Oceanside course in Cornelius S. Lee, "Two Serious Problems on Southern Courses," p. 11.*

On the right side of the above photograph, stretching from the relatively leafless trees on the right side of the photograph across open fairway to the line of trees that constitute the horizon of the photograph, we presumably see where the 205-yard par-three eighteenth hole runs from south to north, with its green located near the Tea House.

## A Review of the 2/3 Travis, 1/3 Keffer Oceanside Course

Frank Walsh played the Oceanside course of the Jekyll Island Club in the spring of 1939. He was so impressed by the quality of the golf course that he wrote the Club to say so. By then, the name “Great Dunes” had caught on and Walsh wrote that its “Dunes” course compared with the greatest golf courses in the United States.



Figure 244 Frank Andrew Walsh (1902-1992), circa 1933.

And Walsh had played the greatest courses in the country as a member of the American professional tour that developed from the mid-1920s onward. Before the organization of the P.G.A. tour, professional golfers played winter tournaments in California, Texas, and Florida, playing from west to east over the winter months. This tour culminated during the first weeks of spring in a tournament at Pinehurst No. 2 in North Carolina.

Born in Chicago in 1902, Frank Andrew Walsh and a number of his brothers became quite good at golf; in turn, they each became a professional. In the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, Frank won several state Open championships, as well as the Illinois PGA championship. His closest brush with immortality came in the United States P.G.A. championship of 1932, in which he placed second. After his testing round on the Oceanside course at Jekyll Island in 1939, Walsh went on to place tenth in the next year's U.S. Open.

Based on his ten years of experience as a touring pro, Walsh listed for the Jekyll Island Club what he thought were the best golf courses in the United States: Pine Valley, Cypress Point, Seminole, and

Pinehurst No. 2. Then he volunteered that “I feel, after a round over your Dunes course, that I have found a new gem, and easily as fine a test as these courses mentioned” (cited in Marroquin and Hunter, p. 1).

Kudos to the designers.

Walsh concluded his review of the course with a tongue-in-cheek criticism: “You should really have a little clover in the fairways and some grain on the greens, so that when a Professional misses a fairway shot, or pushes or pulls a putt, he will be able to blame it on the clover or the grain” (cited in Marroquin and Hunter, p. 2).

Kudos to Cornelius S. Lee and the greenkeeping staff for their commitment to growing the best grass in the South.

## Post-War Keffer and His Part of the Dunes Course

Keffer's second wife Isabella had enjoyed life alongside him at Jekyll Island from their first season there after their marriage in the fall of 1919 right up to the last season in 1942. The Jekyll Island Club had built a cottage especially for them.

In March of 1943, however, when but for World War II the Keffers would have been back at Jekyll Island for a twenty-third season together there, Isabella suddenly died at fifty-nine years of age. She had not been in good health for some time, but she had been relatively active until suddenly becoming unwell and dying in hospital that spring.

Isabella's death seems to have taken a lot out of Karl: just over a month later he retired from his position of thirty-two years at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club. The newspaper said that he had retired "due to ill health" (*Ottawa Journal*, 18 June 1943, p. 21).



Figure 245 Lieutenant Howard Keffer, *Ottawa Journal*, 25 August 1943, p. 22.

In addition to the emotional turmoil caused by his wife's death and his own subsequent retirement from the Royal Ottawa Golf Club, Karl also experienced worry at this time because his only child was being posted overseas during World War II.

His son Howard had been educated in Toronto, attending Norway Public School as his father had done, then Malvern Collegiate Institute, ultimately becoming a mining engineer. He was employed before and after the war by Teck Hughes and Omega Mines of Kirkland Lake, Ontario.

But he had joined the Canadian Army soon after the outbreak of war, and he was finally posted overseas in the summer of 1943. He was now known as Lieutenant Howard Keffer of the Royal Canadian Engineers – his father having been a "sapper" in the Royal Canadian

Engineers twenty-seven years before.

In December, Karl Keffer married for the third time: widow Rose Constance Dick (née Alexander), born in 1889 into a family with deep roots in the Ottawa-Carleton area. The reception for family and friends

was held at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club. Rose outlived Karl by eleven years, passing away in 1966 at the home they had shared in Aylmer Quebec.

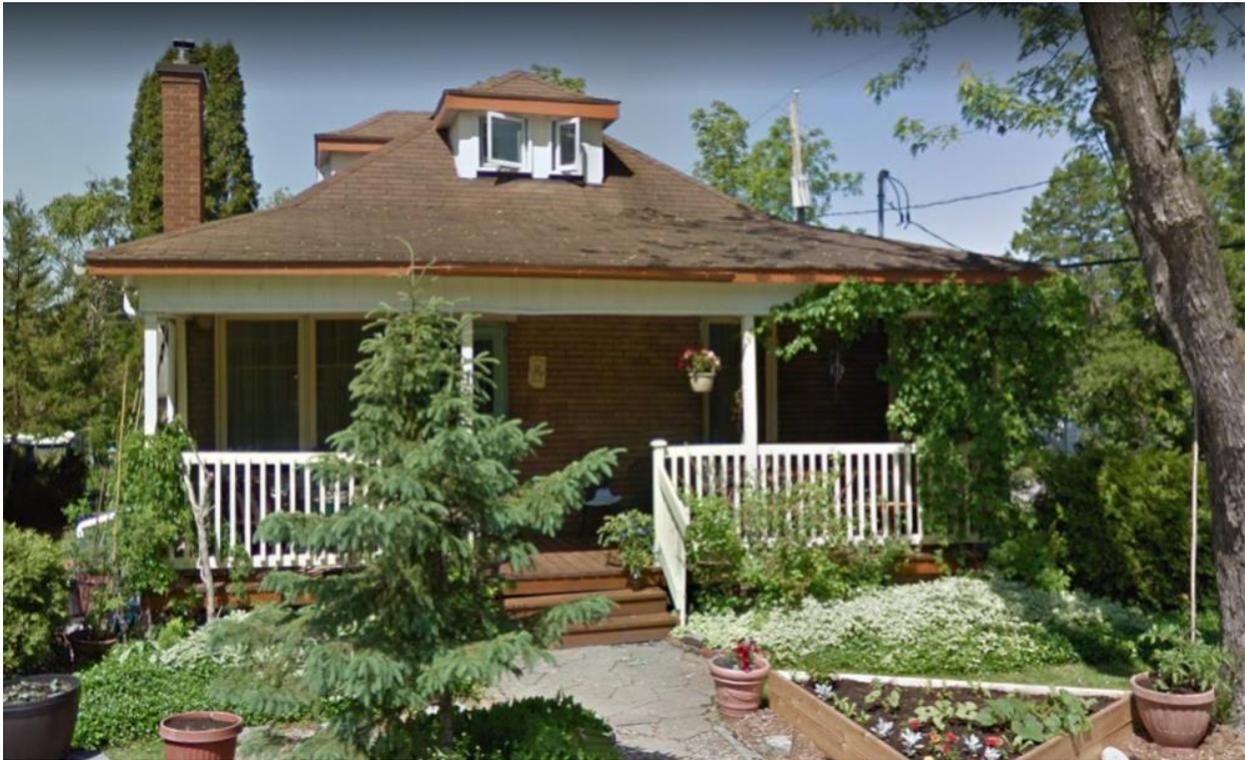


Figure 246 The Keffer residence as it appears today: 17 Bancroft Street, Aylmer, Quebec.

After World War II, Karl and Rose Keffer regularly returned to Brunswick in November of each year.



Figure 247 Karl Keffer, 1950s.

Although they would eventually drive further south to Florida so that Karl could watch baseball's spring training camps, Karl was for at least the first few years of his retirement able to maintain the habit of spending the winter in Georgia – if not on Jekyll Island, then at least in Brunswick. There, they joined Karl's long-time friend from his Jekyll Island days, George W. Cowman, whom the McCashes describe as also a "close friend" of Ernest Grob [ p. 152]. Grob, in fact, resided in Cowman's home for eight years after his retirement and died there Sunday night, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945 (*Bar Harbor Times*, 13 September 1945, p. 1).

Keffer had known Cowman from the beginning of his employment on Jekyll Island, where Cowman regularly worked on construction projects, ranging from the building of the commissary in 1916 to the remodelling of Indian Mound cottage for William Rockefeller (McCashes pp. 152, 165).

## Post-War Keffer and His Part of the Dunes Course

Cowman and his wife Josephine had built a home for their retirement on the Coastal Highway at Cottage Point, and that is where the Keffers joined them. They no doubt commiserated with the Cowmans on the death of their common friend Ernest Grob just two months before. Sadly, less than two months later, Josephine Cowman, who had survived the yellow fever epidemic of 1893 and gone on to be an officer in the Brunswick Women's Club and chairperson of the local committee representing the Red Cross Society, died – just before Christmas.

Still, the following November, the Keffers once more returned to the Cowmans' Cottage Point home to spend another winter with George. One imagines that Cowman appreciated their company that winter more than ever.

One wonders if Keffer and Cowman ever went across to Jekyll Island.

They shared many old memories. They might have been tempted to relive them by visiting their old haunts. If they ever visited the island, surely they would have sighed in the face of the decay that was setting in. Karl might have been particularly prone to mourn the retreat back into nature of the remaining holes of his dunes course.

The hole where Keffer had scored his first hole-in-one had been abandoned back in the late 1920s, but now weeds were growing in the fairways and on the greens of the holes that had formed the northern third of the Oceanside course.

Perhaps worse still, wild hogs were everywhere rooting away at anything and everything that appealed to them.

Around this time, the greatest American architect of the post-war period, Robert Trent Jones, Sr, was called in by the State of Georgia for advice about the viability of the golf holes that remained, "specifically the nine holes below Shell Road" (Nic Doms, *From Millionaires to Commoners*, n.p.).

The holes in question made up the back nine or south nine of the Oceanside course. They were in the worst shape. As the State of Georgia was preparing to take over Jekyll Island in 1947, a newspaper observed: "The present owners laid out an 18-hole golf course, but the sea has claimed a great chunk out of the south nine. Most of the rest is under weeds" (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* [Missouri], 18 June 1947, 33).

As we know, however, 18 months later, in October of 1948, Jekyll Island hotel manager George H. Briggs Jr. was able to play all 18 holes of the Oceanside course. So some level of course renovation must have occurred in response to the damage to the back nine caused by the sea.

Jones apparently regarded the Oceanside course was worthy of renovation, in whole or in part. But work on the Oceanside course was not high on the State of Georgia's list of priorities.

Ultimately storms, erosion, and neglect had their way with the back nine holes. They were abandoned. Only the remnant of the Oceanside course known today as Great Dunes survived.

Finally, in 1955, the Jekyll Island Authority sent out a press release regarding that year's 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations on Jekyll Island: "A reconditioned nine-hole golf course will be ready for weekend golfers" (*Atlanta Constitution*, 2 July 1955, p. 1).

Karl Keffer died less than four months later in October of 1955. He was seventy-four years old.

Did he know that his golf holes had been saved? Did his friends in Georgia still write to him about Jekyll Island news, or chat with him on the telephone? Did he subscribe to a Brunswick newspaper? One hopes that he had heard the good news.

I suppose one could say that Karl Keffer's spirit lives on at Jekyll Island so long as golfers play the Great Dunes course. And many thousands do so each year. Five of the holes are his. The dunes are not as wild as they once were, with exposed sand and long sea grass along the edges of bunkers and fairways, but the layout of these holes is virtually unchanged.

And it is possible to revive a bit more of Keffer's spirit by reviving a sixth hole, his old par-three thirteenth – the one that Beers called "a great hole."

If you play the course some day, when it is not too busy, stand on Travis's eighth tee, but instead of playing south as his eighth hole requires, turn east toward the "Great Dunes" second green, and fire a shot at the flag 195 yards away. The green is nestled in a nook of the coastal dunes, awaiting just this kind of shot – the shot it was built for. As you admire the flight of the ball, remember Karl Keffer, who was the first to hit that shot 100 years ago, even if only in his mind, as he walked the dunes of the Jekyll Island Club in search of a routing for the golf holes that would complete the Club's first eighteen-hole course.

## Post-War Keffer and His Part of the Dunes Course



*Figure 248 Karl Keffer's great-grandson Kyle Keffer and his great-great-granddaughter Seren Keffer at his induction into the Quebec Golf Hall of Fame at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club on 29 June 2016.*

Karl Keffer was inducted posthumously into the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame in 1986.

He was inducted into the Ontario Golf Hall of Fame in 2000.

He was inducted into the PGA of Canada Hall of Fame in 2014.

At a ceremony held at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club in the summer of 2016, great grandson Kyle Keffer and great-great-granddaughter Seren Keffer stood beside a photograph of Karl Keffer, under which rested a set of golf clubs and a golf bag that he had made, as he

was posthumously inducted into the Quebec Golf Hall of Fame.



Perhaps some day there will be a similar ceremony on Jekyll Island – held somewhere fitting, let's say on the green of the first dune hole, which since 1913 has offered many generations of golfers, rich and otherwise, its spectacular view of the Atlantic Ocean – a ceremony at which Karl Keffer's lasting contribution to the heritage of golf in the state of Georgie will be officially recognized by his induction into the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame.