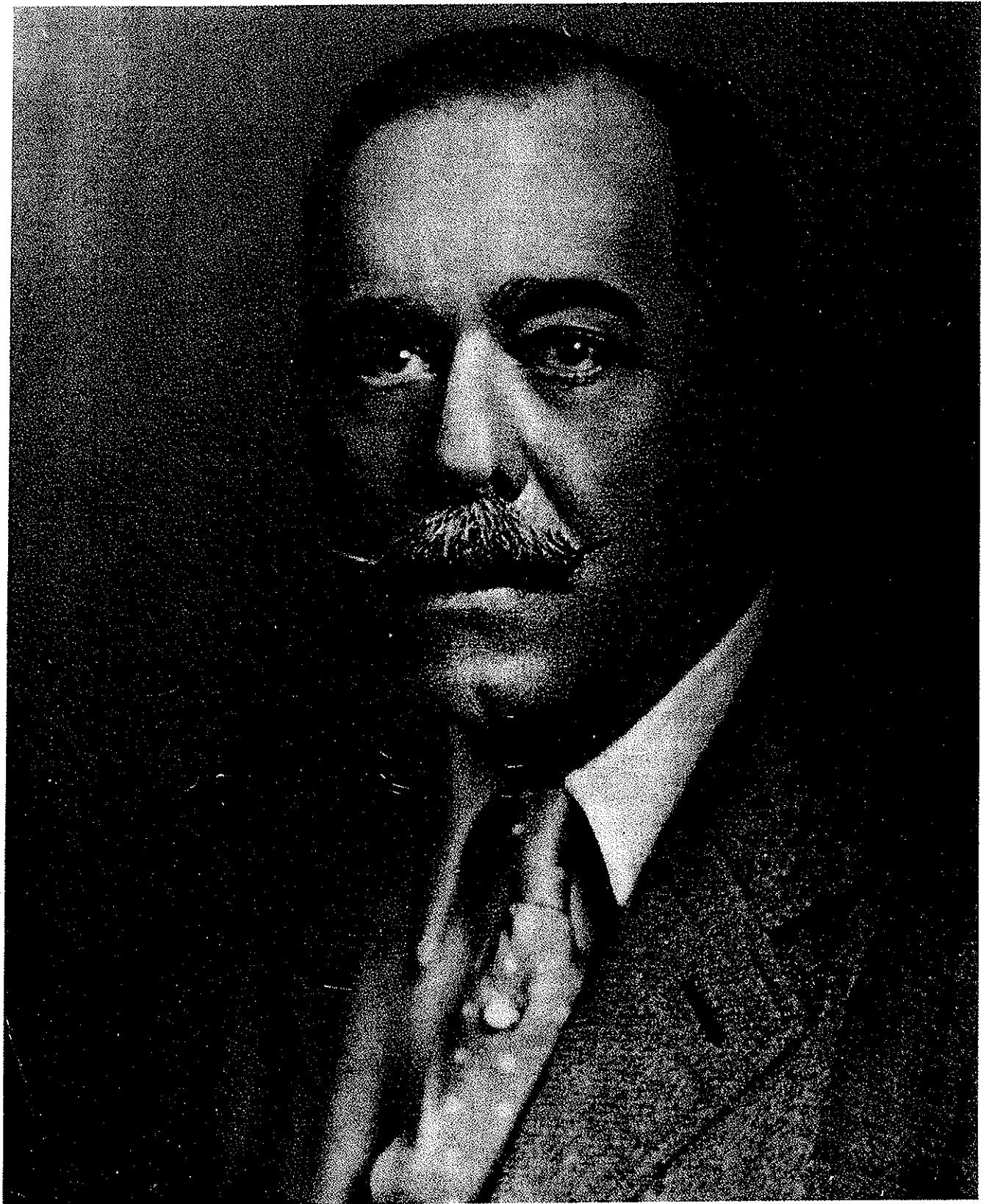


A.W. TILLINGHAST



An excerpt from The Golf Journal, May 1974: "Golf's Forgotten Genius" by Frank Hanigan.



Tillinghast has a marvelous conception of beauty in the design of his holes. This is the short par 4 10th hole at Five Farms, a striking scene that resembles a Japanese Garden.

His Work

The cornerstone of Tillinghast's career is his courses. It would be better to let them speak for themselves, but since it's unlikely few readers have seen more than a couple, an analysis of his work is inevitable.

To begin with, Tillie—though he loved Scotland and the traditions it gave to the game—was not entirely enamored of the traditional Scottish links as he saw them near the turn of the century. For one thing, he abhorred “blind” shots and hidden hazards; for another, he felt that some of the venerable courses abroad had overly large putting greens which he insisted tended to discourage sharp iron play and, instead, put too much emphasis on putting. His inclination was to be generous in the width of the landing areas in the drive zone (he was not himself a great driver) and then tighten things up. His putting greens, at their best, were exciting and innovative. They tended to be small, tightly bunkered, slanted and very racy, indeed. He liked to think that the design of his par-4 holes gave the player an easy and hard side to approach from the fairway. He was always bullish on mounds and toward the end of his career he toyed with grassy hollows in place of sand-filled bunkers, feeling that the introduction of the sand wedge had robbed bunkers of their sting.

There has been a tendency to associate him with elevated, pear-shaped greens, but this may be because Winged Foot has those characteristics. Baltusrol, on the

other hand, does not. At Winged Foot, Tillinghast was told in no uncertain terms that he was to build two big, strong golf courses. His reaction was to design narrow greens with very small entrances. Besides, the site had drawbacks with respect to sub-soil and drainage, and it seemed all the more natural to get those greens up above normal ground level a bit and tilt them to avoid the collection of water.

Tillinghast's greatest assets were his rich intelligence, imagination and sense of aesthetics. He did not repeat himself; his best courses are marked by variety, and he could be audacious. Who else would think of finishing a course with consecutive par-5s, *vis*, the Lower Course at Baltusrol?

He could and did build beautiful golf holes! It is no accident that the USGA Green Section Award (“for distinguished service to golf through work with turfgrass”) is surfaced by a cast bronze impression of a Tillinghast hole—the lovely, willowed 10th of the East Course of the Baltimore Country Club at Five Farms.

Weakness as an architect? Well, perhaps he sometimes went beyond the pale in the sloping of his greens and one of his critics, a contemporary, has said Tillie had a distinct weakness when it came to envisioning par-5 holes—that there is no such animal as a great Tillinghast par-5 hole. On the other hand, he was at his best as a designer of

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par-3s. In fact, he made no bones about saying that the par-3s were the keystones of his overall designs. Such a viewpoint helps to explain why the two most celebrated Tillinghast holes, the 10th on the West Course at Winged Foot and the 4th of the Lower Course at Baltusrol, are sure to appear on lists of outstanding American holes (like that of Dan Jenkins for "Sports Illustrated"). Fair enough, but not many of the pickers have seen dozens of other glorious one-shot holes by Tillie, like the 2nd and 12th at Somerset Hills in New Jersey, the 13th and 17th at Five Farms. The architect himself never hesitated in listing the 7th at the San Francisco Golf Club as his personal favorite. He was proud of its playing characteristics, but what truly endeared him to the hole was the romance of its location. The hole sits right up against the site of the last deadly duel fought in these United States, in 1859. The combatants were U.S. Senator David Broderick and California Supreme Court Justice David S. Terry. Broderick, who had been challenged, fired first and was short—some say deliberately and others because his weapon had been rigged with a hair trigger—whereupon Judge Terry coolly plugged Senator Broderick in the chest. Broderick expired two days later.

Tillinghast was one of a group of Philadelphians who came of age together, played the game together as young men, and went on to great things as course designers. George Thomas, who went West and has already been mentioned, was one; another was Hugh Wilson, who as a young man, and a Merion member, simply laid out—as an avocation, mind you—the East Course at Marion, a masterpiece; and then there was George Crump, who had the genius to conceive of Pine Valley, first with the English architect Harry S. Colt as his aide, and then, after Crump had died prematurely, with Hugh Wilson in charge of finishing four holes on the second nine. Tillinghast revered Crump. He said he often walked the Pine Valley property with his friend before the construction job (and there exists a photo by Tillinghast, showing Crump playing a stroke at Pine Valley under construction). Tillinghast properly labeled Pine Valley as Crump's design, but he claimed he had helped sell the "concepts" of the 7th (another of the perennial All American holes), and the 13th (a majestic par-4 hole) to his friend.

These men, and their work, in turn, undoubtedly influenced younger Philadelphians, notably Dick Wilson (a water boy on the construction job at Merion), whose chef d'oeuvre may be Pine Tree, at Delray Beach, Fla., and the tandem of Toomey & Flynn, who were responsible for the current and revised version of Shinnecock Hills and the brilliantly-conceived Cascades Course at the Homestead Hotel in Virginia. In other words, it is plausible to talk in terms of a Philadelphia School of golf course architecture, with Tillinghast very much at its hub and in a position of profound influence. (Opinion: There are courses thought of as indifferent in the realm of the Golf Association of Philadelphia which would be considered works of art if transplanted to many another section of the country.)



The seventh at the San Francisco Golf Club. An obelisk nearby marks the site of a duel that might have changed American history.

Why is Tillinghast so little known today? Well, the matter of timing seems to be critical in determining an artist's reputation, along with some other factors of fortune he may or may not control. He was not the *first* top-notch American architect (that distinction belongs to the bumptious Charles Blair Macdonald, designer of the National Golf Links of America at the tip of Long Island); he was not the most prolific (Donald Ross, by a long shot); he never had the luck to work on a dramatic ocean-side site, such as Cypress Point, by Dr. Alister Mackenzie, Seminole, by Ross, or the lost Lido Course on Long Island by Macdonald; he did not settle down, as Ross did, in the case of Pinehurst No. 2, near one course and hone it to the point of perfection; and none of his courses were destined to serve as the perennial site of a great occasion, as was the case with Dr. Mackenzie, who worked with Bob Jones on the design of Augusta National.

In any event, we are fortunate to be left with so many of his courses and even to have a legacy of his thoughts on the subject. Here is a smattering of Tillinghast on golf courses:

On golf holes in general—"If a hole does not possess a striking individuality through some gift of nature, it must

be given as much as possible artificially and the artifice must be introduced in so subtle a manner as to make it seem natural."

On behalf of the old custom of belatedly naming, rather than numbering, holes—"The plains Indians never named their children until some incident in the child's life suggested a fitting one. Frequently the real name waited until the individual was advanced in youth or even a warrior, as was the case with Plenty Coups, a young man who was afraid of horses."

On holes with water hazards—"Certain it is that the water holes are popular. There is the mental hazard as the great factor, and the average golfer likes to court danger occasionally, provided the architect gives him a safer way around if desired, but probably they meet with so much favor because they generally are attractive to look upon, with a marked individuality. To be sure, there are so-called water holes, little more than frog ponds, covered with slime and stagnant, where the larvae of the mosquito thrive. These represent faulty construction and usually reveal outlets clogged with vegetation."

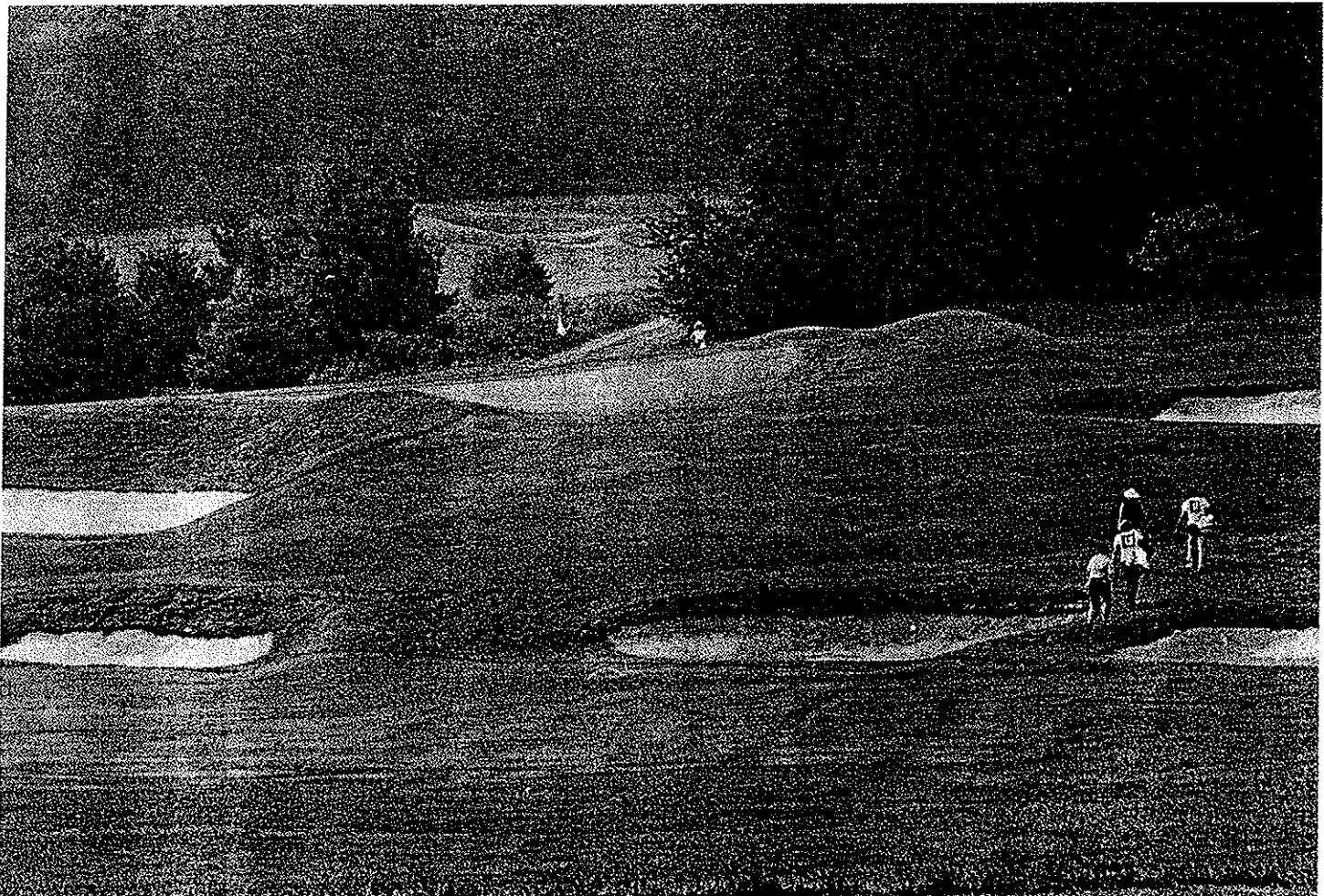
On aesthetics and human nature—"A round of golf should present 18 inspirations—not necessarily thrills, because spectacular holes may be sadly overdone. Every hole may be constructed to provide charm without being obtrusive with it. When I speak of a hole being inspiring, it

is not intended to imply that the visitor is to be subject to attacks of hysteria on every teeing ground. It must be remembered that the great majority of golfers are aiming to reduce their previous best performance by five strokes if possible, and if any one of them arrives at the home teeing ground with this possibility in reach, he is not caring too much whether he is driving off from a nearby ancient oak of majestic size, or from a dead sassafras. If his round ends happily, this is one beautiful course. Such is human nature."

On planning a course—"In planning 18 holes there are thousands of combinations, each offering a mute appeal for recognition. It is necessary to decide on the collection which will work out economically and satisfactorily from many angles. But this is sure: Every hole must have individuality and must be sound. Often it is necessary to get from one section to another over ground which is not suited to easy construction, but that troublesome hole must be made to stand right up with the others. If it has nothing about it that might make it respectable, it has to have quality knocked into it until it can hold its head up in polite society."

On building courses in Texas before World War I—"The presence of rattlesnakes here was rather disturbing at first, but after seeing a little Mexican child at an adobe house toddling and playing fearlessly around a brushheap from

Tillinghast's conception of a redan hole, the second at Somerset Hills.



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which issued the sound of more than one set of vibrating rattles, the feeling wore off. But the moccasins and copperheads are different; they are not gentlemen who give warning."

On the future of golf, in 1924—"As one of the very early American players, I have seen the game pass from the state of a fad of the red-coated few through a sturdy, healthy growth. Ten years probably will find this sport doubled in numbers. For the masses have taken golf into their lives and there it will remain as a vital factor of health and pleasure."

On teeing grounds—"Years ago teeing grounds were almost invariably small and mathematically formal, but early in my career I ruthlessly tore away from those and wherever possible graded large teeing ground areas which permitted of a constant change of the tee plates to suit weather conditions and to lend variety by playing from different angles. The short 4th, the water hole at Baltusrol, with its irregularly shaped teeing ground, somewhat after the fashion of an immense horseshoe, is a sample of this."

On revising courses—"Perhaps 75 per cent of the demands for my services involve reconstruction. Frequently the changes are made after the acquisition of

adjoining land for the purpose of adding land to measure up to the distance of the modern 'rabbit' ball and generally to improve play. But more often, the desire to change the course is the direct result of the realization that the existing layout is faulty, passe, uninteresting, or downright bad."

The 7 deadly sins of architecture—"Greens that don't drain; greens that drain too much; greens too large for small shots; greens too small for long shots; greens too freakish for any shot; holes playing directly into the slopes of hills; holes requiring climbs to higher levels too suddenly."

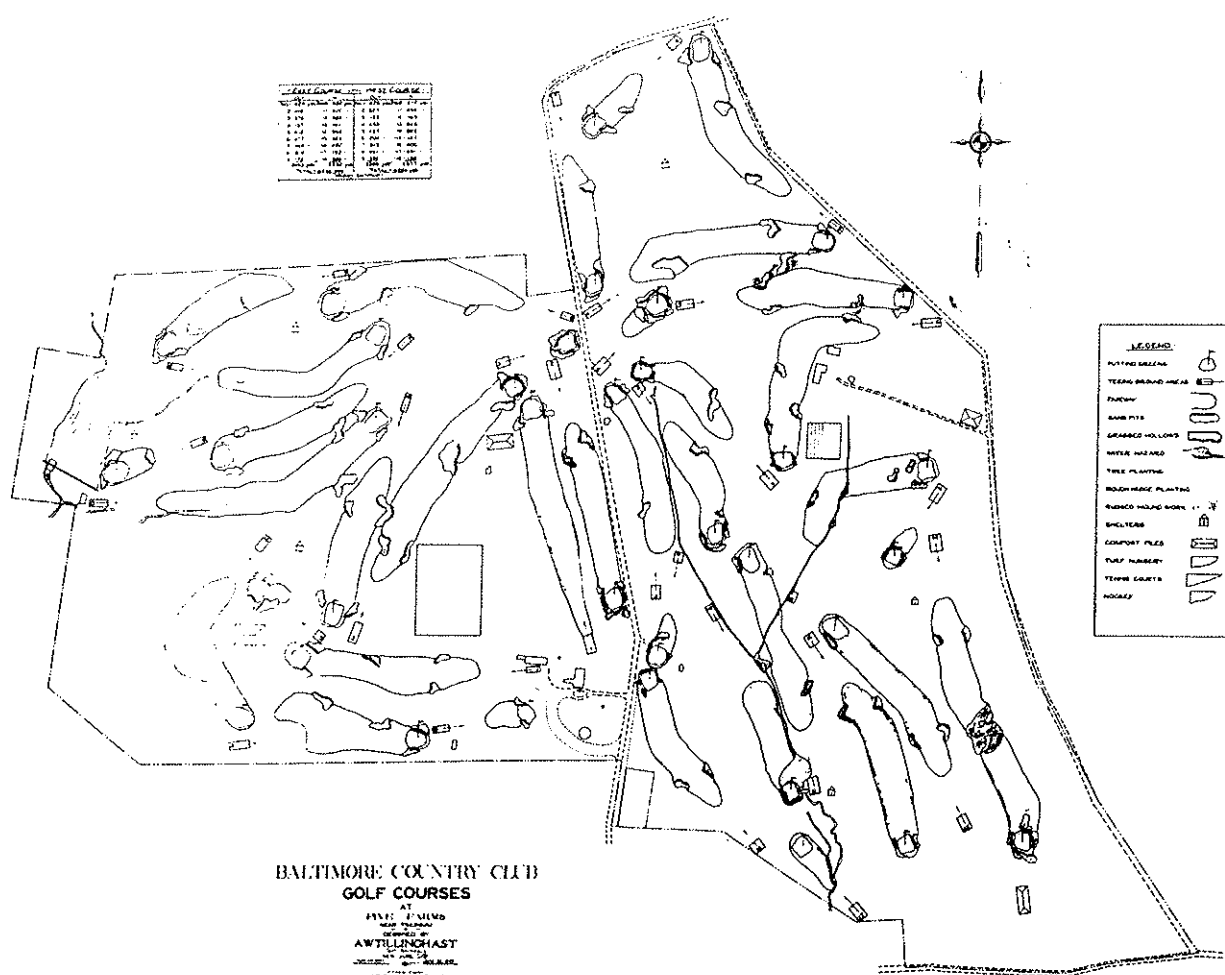
Approaches to putting greens—"I feel that I have never attempted a more important contribution to golf course construction than this: the immaculate preparation of approaches to greens. In recent years I have devoted almost the same attention to contouring these as to the putting greens themselves."

On building Winged Foot—"It was my good fortune to be retained to select a site and design the 36 holes, generally directing the construction. I well recall that the only order I ever received from these gentlemen was brief and easily understood: 'Give us a man-sized course.'"

About Winged Foot in 1929—"As the various holes came to life they were of a sturdy breed. In a nutshell, this generally describes the course over which the Open Championship will be played. The contouring of the greens places great premium on the placement of the

Again, his sense of beauty resulted in this quiet pool beside the third tee at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club.





It is possible that the fine art of schematic drawings was refined by Tillinghast. Here is his conception of the East Course of the Baltimore Country Club at Five Farms.

drives, but never is there the necessity of facing a prodigious carry of the sink-or-swim sort. It is only the knowledge that the next shot must be played with rifle accuracy that brings the realization that the drive must be placed. The holes are like men, all rather similar from foot to neck, but with the greens showing the same varying characters as human faces. If the shots home are wide of the green centers, the boys will be using niblicks rather than putters."

On low scores—"Just why the fact that one of several players succeeded in getting around any course in the 60s should be regarded as a reflection on the demands of the course is difficult for me to appreciate. But undoubtedly there are many who regard such performances as calamities. These are confined to members of the club whose course has been humiliated (as they think) and more particularly by members of the committee who have groomed their course for the big shows of golf. Such reaction to sub-par scoring is foolish. There is no reason in the world that will prevent the right player from breaking 70 if it is his day to get all the breaks of the game. Any great course will now and then take a good beating from good men and there is nothing that can be done fairly to stop it nor any reason why there should."

The supreme test—"I think that I always will adhere to my old theory that a controlled shot to a closely-guarded green is the surest test of any man's golf."

We conclude with the promised listing of Tillinghast courses. These are presented in three groupings. The first are those used for national or international events, and these events are indicated parenthetically. The second is a list of courses surely his, in some cases of a quality as high as those in the first, but which have not been available as championship sites; the third list has been dug up from a variety of sources, but lacks absolute verification—in some cases as to their very existence.

GROUP I

Winged Foot West (1929, 1959, and 1974 U.S. Opens, 1940 Amateur and 1949 Walker Cup Match)

Winged Foot East (1957 and 1972 Women's Open)

Baltusrol Lower, Springfield, N.J. (1954 and 1967 Open, 1926 and 1946 Amateur, 1961 Women's Open)

Baltusrol Upper (1936 Open)

Fresh Meadow Country Club, Flushing, N.Y. (now a housing development—1932 Open and 1930 PGA)

Baltimore Country Club's Five Farms East Course (1928 PGA, 1932 Amateur, 1965 Walker Cup Match)

Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club (reconstruction job—1953 Amateur)

Shawnee Country Club, Shawnee, Pa. (1919 Women's Amateur, 1938 PGA)

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Tillie's courses always featured broad expanses of sand. This is Ridgewood Country Club just before the Ryder Cup Match of 1935. The 1974 Amateur Championship is to be played at Ridgewood.

Myers Park Country Club, Charlotte, N.C. (Tillinghast laid out nine of the 18 holes—1955 Women's Amateur)

Tulsa Country Club, Tulsa, Okla. (1960 Women's Amateur)

Bethpage Black Course, Farmingdale, N.Y. (1936 Amateur Public Links)

Cedar Crest Golf Club, Dallas, Texas (1927 PGA, 1954 Public Links)

Somerset Hills Country Club, Bernardsville, N.J. (1973 Girls' Junior Championship)

Ridgewood Country Club, Ridgewood, N.J. (1935 Ryder Cup, 1957 USGA Senior, 1974 Amateur)

San Francisco Golf Club, San Francisco, Calif. (1974 Curtis Cup Match)

Brooklawn County Club, Hartford, Conn. (reconstruction—1974 Junior Amateur)

Hermitage Country Club, Richmond, Va. (1949 PGA)

Pittsburgh Field Club, Pittsburgh, Pa. (reconstruction—1937 PGA)

Westmoreland Country Club, Wilmette, Ill. (reconstruction—1938 Women's Amateur)

GROUP II

Quaker Ridge Golf Club, Scarsdale, N.Y.

Golden Valley Golf Club, Minneapolis, Minn.

Rochester Golf and Country Club, Rochester, Minn.

Philadelphia Cricket Club, Flourtown, Pa.

Brook Hollow Golf Club, Dallas, Texas

Newport Country Club, Newport, R.I.

Fenway Golf Club, White Plains, N.Y.

Swope Park Golf Course, No. 1, Kansas City, Mo.

Elmwood Country Club, White Plains, N.Y.

Berkshire Country Club, Pittsfield, Mass.

Breckinridge Park Golf Course, San Antonio, Texas

Alpine Country Club, Alpine, N.J.

Shackamaxon Golf & Country Club, Westfield, N.J.

Country Club of Ithaca, Ithaca, N.Y. (now a Cornell dormitory site)

Binghamton Country Club, Endwell, N.Y.

Essex County Country Club, West Orange, N.J. (club has since moved to different site)

Cedarbrook County Club, Philadelphia, Pa. (club has since moved to different site)

Elm Ridge Country Club, Montreal, Canada

Wyoming Valley Country Club, Wilkes Barre, Pa.

Myosotis Country Club, Eatontown, N.J. (extinct)

Sunnehanna Country Club, Johnstown, Pa.



The 14th at Winged Foot, site of the 1974 Open. This is a par 4 hole of 435 yards, a slight left-to-right dogleg with fairway bunkers, sidehill and downhill lies, a brook slashing across the fairway, billowing shade trees, and a saucer-shaped green.

Irem Temple Country Club, Wilkes Barre, Pa.
 Norwood Country Club, Long Branch, N.J. (extinct)
 New Castle Country Club, Johnson City, Tenn.
 Johnson City Country Club, Johnson City, Tenn.
 Southward Ho Country Club, Bayshore, N.Y.
 Port Jervis Country Club, Port Jervis, N.Y. (nine holes)
 Oswego Country Club, Oswego, N.Y. (nine holes)
 Rock Hill Country Club, Rock Hill, S.C. (nine holes)
 Lakewood Country Club, Westlake, Ohio
 Cherry Hill Club, Ft. Erie, Canada
 North Hempstead Country Club, Port Washington, N.Y.
 St. Albans Country Club, St. Albans, N.Y. (extinct)

GROUP III

Anglo-American Club, Lec, L'Achign, Canada
 Kingsport Country Club, Kingsport, Tenn.
 Atlantic Beach Country Club, Atlantic Beach, Fla.
 Bluff Point Country Club, Lake Champlain, N.Y.

Marble Island Golf Club, Essex Junction, N.Y.
 St. Petersburg Country Club, St. Petersburg, Fla.
 Knollwood Country Club, White Plains, N.Y.
 Davis Shores Country Club, St. Augustine, Fla.
 Kansas City Country Club, Shawnee Mission, Kansas
 (the following are all thought to be courses he reconstructed or extended)
 Upper Montclair Country Club, Clifton, N.J. (which has since moved to a new site)
 Meadowbrook Club, Westbury, N.Y. (since removed to Jericho, N.Y.)
 Scarboro Country Club, Toronto, Canada
 Williamsport Country Club, Williamsport, Pa.
 Fox Hill Country Club, Exeter, Pa.
 Mount Kisco Country Club, Mount Kisco, N.Y.
 Valley Country Club, Conyngham, Pa.
 St. Davids Golf Club, Wayne, Pa.
 Elmira Country Club, Elmira, N.Y.

Indian Hills Country Club, Prairie Village, Kansas
 Rockaway Hunting, Club, Cedarhurst, N.Y.
 Jackson Heights Country Club, Jamaica, N.Y. (extinct)
 Old York Road Country Club, Jenkintown, Pa. (club
 has since moved to different site).
 Nemacolin Country Club, Beallsville, Pa.
 Spring Lake Golf and Country Club, Spring Lake, N.J.
 Suburban Golf Club, Union, N.J.
 Wanango Country Club, Reno, Pa.
 Bonnie Briar Country Club, Larchmont, N.Y.
 Roanoke Country Club, Roanoke, Va.
 Sleepy Hollow Country Club, Scarborough-on-Hudson,
 N.Y. (through 9 holes only)
 Scarsdale Golf Club, Hartsdale, N.Y.

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One of the finest municipal golf facilities in the nation, Bethpage State Park, in Farmingdale, on Long Island, N.Y., the site of the 1936 Amateur Public Links Championship.

