



THE CLUB HOUSE OF THE PINE VALLEY GOLF CLUB

THE PINE VALLEY COURSE

By SIMON CARR

SOME few years ago, a dozen Philadelphia golf enthusiasts met in the Colonnade Hotel to discuss the project of establishing a golf course in the Jersey sands. They felt that the few summer months, during which the clay soils of the Philadelphia region keep in condition for playing golf, are not enough to satisfy those golfers who are truly fond of the game.

They desired a course where there would be practically no closed season throughout the year. In discussing the problem, they had the seaside in mind, chiefly the region about Atlantic City; but the great distance from Philadelphia, and the extreme difficulty of securing a suitable location, caused the project of a seashore course to be dropped.

The region outside of Camden was searched in all directions, until, finally, Mr. George A. Crump discovered a perfectly wonderful bit of golf land at Sumner Station, on the Atlantic City Division of the Reading Railroad, thirteen miles outside of Camden.

"I think we have happened on something pretty fine," he reported to his friends in Philadelphia. His friends hastened down to have a look at the discovery. The tract was heavily wooded with pine and oak, and had an undergrowth as dense as a jungle. For a month it was gone over carefully on foot; every detail of conformation was noted; the soil carefully examined in all parts, and, finally, in October, 1912, a tract of 184 acres was purchased. The golf club was then organized, a State charter secured, and title to all the property was taken.

This is the story in brief of how the Pine Valley Golf Club came into existence. It is an undertaking exclusively for the pleasure of golf; it is in no way whatever, not even indirectly or remotely, connected with any land scheme or business enterprise. To become a member, one is required to purchase a share of stock; the shareholders own all the property of the club.

During the following winter and early spring, enough of the land was cleared to reveal the main features of the property, and to disclose the contour of the ground.

In order to procure the very best design for the golf course, Mr. Crump secured the services of that brilliant master of golf architecture, Mr. H. S. Colt, of international fame.

Mr. Colt visited Pine Valley in May, 1913. After making a general inspection of the land, he declared his amazement that such a rare opportunity for a genuinely classical course should be found so near to Philadelphia. He spent a full week examining the ground thoroughly, and then submitted plans of an eighteen-hole golf course, which, in his opinion, would be the equal of any inland course in the world.

With the plans in hand, work upon the construction of the course was begun in earnest. Fairways were cleared and ploughed; roads were built; a vast amount of grading done; and many of the large bunkers were cut. A small army of men were set to work digging thousands of tons of humus out of the low places. A compost of this humus with sand and

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barnyard manure forms an almost ideal mixture for putting greens. All the greens and tees at Pine Valley are built of this mixture, to a depth of twelve inches.

A complete watering system has been installed, with a two-inch main laid over the whole course. In case of need, a plentiful supply of water will be available, not only for greens and tees, but for fairways as well.

The land on which the Pine Valley golf course is located is a unique formation, confined to the locality. There is nothing like it in South Jersey. It looks to have been some upheaval of the bed of the sea in bygone ages. There are ridges and rolls in every direction; big ones and little ones; long ones and short ones; hills and knolls, with every variety of shape and size. You could not fancy any contour of ground more admirably suited for golf purposes.

Mr. Colt was greatly impressed with it, and he has surely made the most of its opportunities in the superb plan which he designed. Nature made the golf holes. Mr. Colt discovered them.

The soil is pure sand of a heavy texture, which enjoys a natural drainage that is perfect. In the low places on the property were found rich deposits of pure humus, the decayed vegetation of a thousand

years. A mixture of this humus with sand and barnyard manure, has proved to be the most perfect composition for the growth of fine golf grasses.

The place has been a forest land, time out of memory; and as only the finest golf grasses have now been sown, it will be an easy task to keep it free from the growth of rank grasses and weeds.

The soil is naturally adapted for deep rooting. Seventy days after seeding one of the greens, the roots were found, upon examination, to have attained a uniform depth of four inches.

The Pine Valley course promises, in a few years, to possess a turf with a perfect mat of deep roots, the greatest desideratum for a good golf turf.

There is an abundant supply of water on the property. Two streams, which are fed by a thousand springs out of the hills, flow through the valleys. They continue to flow undiminished during the severest drought. These streams have been dammed up, and lakes formed, which add much to the natural beauty of the place. The largest of these lakes is irregular in shape, and covers an area of twenty acres.

It is planned to build on the highest point of the property, a concrete reservoir, with a capacity of 200,000 gallons, into which the water will be lifted by



THE THIRD HOLE, 183 YARDS, AT THE NEW PINE VALLEY COURSE, SUMNER, N. J.

183 yards. As slightly a hole as the golfing artist could wish to view; and as severe a test of golf skill as the expert iron-player could crave. The green, a perfectly beautiful natural conformation, lies about fifteen feet below the level of the tee, with every part of its surface fully in view. It is wholly surrounded by bunkers. The fore-part of the green is rather narrow, about thirty feet in width, with a sharp slope to the left, and a gentle up-slope toward the back, where it widens out. A weakly hit ball, or a slightly pulled ball, needs no urging to trickle, or to shoot, into the depths of the graceful, serpentine bunker that winds around the whole left side of the green. On the right side, just at the distance the ball should carry, the bunker pushes two hungry mouths partway into the green, ready to gobble a ball the least bit too far to the right. One is compelled to hug these bunkers closely to avoid slipping into the deep bunker on the left. There will be no awkward kick to the ball; it will go exactly as it is guided. There is no puzzle, no trick, no blind chance in the play. It just requires the skill and nerve of a very finely controlled long-iron shot.



THE SHORT TENTH, 140 YARDS, AT THE NEW PINE VALLEY COURSE, SUMNER, N. J.

140 yards to the center of the green. The tee is built out on the very edge of the ridge, with the valley on the left, 50 feet below. The green is located on a knoll in the side of a huge sand hill. In the distance the green looks like an uncut emerald, as it rests amid the yellow and white sands of the surrounding bunkers. It is the jewel of the round. There is no fairway; only the roughest kind of ground along the edge of the ridge for a distance of 100 yards, and then a sudden dip down 20 feet into a small ravine, through which a road runs, 25 yards in front of the green. A topped or scuffed tee-shot is in danger of slipping off the ridge, and bringing up in the bunkers of the eighteenth fairway in the valley below. The green is very slightly below the level of the tee, and has an upslope from front to back of three feet; so that every part of its surface is clearly in view from the tee. It is about forty feet in width, and sixty feet long, with a very irregular outline; it is entirely surrounded with bunkers. The wind always blows out on the edge of the ridge where the tee is placed; it tests one's judgment soundly to gauge this important factor accurately in playing the shot. Tee-shots at this hole are either good or bad; there is no margin for the least error. There is no secondary green, from which one may putt or chip his ball over obstacles, up to the hole-side. There is no fairway, no rough, in a word, no refuge for a nearly good shot, except the bottom of the bunkers. One must play the shot just right or fail.

its own power. For purposes of irrigation, water from these lakes is vastly more beneficial to the turf than water from artesian wells, and the process of securing it will be a matter of financial economy. An artesian well, with a flow of ninety gallons to the minute, and a water-tank of 20,000 gallons capacity, afford a plentiful supply of pure sweet water for household purposes.

Jersey pines, with a good share of cedars, form the chief native growth of the place. To these have been added hundreds of evergreen saplings from the nursery, white pine, Scotch fir, hemlock, etc. They thrive well in this sand soil. In exposed places, they have been planted to the north side of tees and greens, and will prove a comfortable protection against the chill north-winds of the winter season.

As one stands on the high places of the Pine Valley course, the most glorious views open out in all directions. For a nature lover, there is a wonderful fascination in this wild beauty of the landscape. It is a bit of mountain scenery in miniature.

The site of the club-house is on a spacious knoll by the side of the eighteenth green. It fronts on the lake, and looks out over the valley. The railroad station is about 200 yards from the club-house. Halfway between them, near the first tee, is the caddie-house and professional's shop, which is an exact replica of Bobby Burns' cottage in Ayrshire.

Plans for the club-house and locker-house were furnished by Charles Barton Keen. They are to be separate buildings, but closely joined together by a covered passageway.

The locker-house has now been completed; it will serve well as a club-house until the other is built. It is perfectly lighted and ventilated, with excellent arrangements inside; it is the cheeriest and most comfortable place imaginable. It is a thing of beauty and comfort. Its colors, green and white, are in the loveliest harmony with the surrounding landscape. Its simple, unbroken lines are in exquisite taste, and, in this way, they betoken the spirit of the Pine Valley Club, and of its founder.

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The Club has made arrangements to lease, at a nominal yearly rental, and to members only, a few sites for the building of bungalows of a high grade. Mr. Crump has already built one in the valley, on the margin of the lake. Every evening toward sunset, the swan, Canadian geese, mallard duck and wood duck, that dwell on the lake, come waddling up the little beach in front of his bungalow and call loudly for their evening meal. Out on the lake you can see and hear the trout noisily securing their repast.

The organization is not a Country Club; it is exclusively a Golf Club. It will be a place to go for the enjoyment of excellent golf, amidst the most picturesque and restful surroundings. To avoid the inconvenience and annoyance of an overcrowded course on golfing holidays, the membership has been limited to 200, which is now nearly completed. The directors of the club have in mind to afford to the members a club-house service that will be thoroughly good, but of virile simplicity. It will not be a place for social fetes, or luxurious entertainment. Golf is to be the feast at Pine Valley; all else, just tedious necessities.

The Club is located at Sumner Station, on the Atlantic City Division of the Reading Railroad. The postal address is Clementon, N. J.

The following are the officers and directors of the club:

President, Howard W. Perrin; Vice-president, Wirt L. Thompson; Treasurer, J. Walter Zebley; Secretary, Simon Carr; Board of Directors—C. B. Buxton, Simon Carr, J. S. Clark, George A. Crump, H. W. Perrin, A. H. Smith, W. P. Smith, W. L. Thompson, Herman Wendell, J. Walter Zebley.

NOTES CONCERNING THE COURSE

The original purpose in establishing this golf course was to get into the sands, in order to escape the serious inconveniences of clay soils, particularly in the spring and in the fall of the year.

When this present tract of land was secured and the club organized, it was resolved to construct a course of strictly classical character. Mr. H. S. Colt, of Sunningdale, England, the most noted golf architect in the world, was engaged to design it; he was informed of the character and quality of course desired; and he was given the whole 184 acres to work in.

The first and fundamental requisite for a good golf course is sufficient length of holes to provide a full variety of long, short and medium approach shots. Sufficient length of holes is a material necessity, the lack of which cannot be compensated for by the most profuse bunkering.

In the days of the gutta ball, and at the introduction of the Haskell patent, about 6,000 yards was regarded as the standard length of a good golf course. A drive of 200 yards was then looked upon as of magnificent length. The balls now in use have

changed all these measurements. According to the conservative estimate of such expert students of the game as Horace Hutchinson, Walter Travis, Harold Hilton, 230 yards is now about the length of a good drive, under what we might fancy to be normal conditions of turf, wind and weather. This is an increase in length of at least 30 yards over the old standard. When this is repeated from fourteen tees, with at least four brassie-shots to the round, we have already more than 500 yards additional distance, without taking into count the increased lengths of various cleek and iron-shots.

From this it is plain that if we hope to keep the standard of modern golf courses up to that of former times, and thereby to provide the same variety of approach shots, it is necessary to have a total length of at least 6,600 yards.

The notable courses abroad, that have been constructed in recent years all attain this length. Every effort has been made to lengthen the older classical courses to adjust them to the requirements of the game played with the new ball. Even Prestwick, the Gibraltar of tenacious tradition, has yielded. In preparation for the Open Championship this year the course was lengthened to 6,600 yards.

The total length of Pine Valley course is about 6,700 yards. It is not a sluggers' course in any sense, except in the opinion of those who fix their standards by parlor golf played only with a mashie and putter. The following is an analysis of the shots up to the green, based on the supposition of good driving from each tee:

Three brassie approach shots, at holes 4, 16, 18.

Four cleek approach shots, at holes, 1, 6, 9, 13.

Four midiron approach shots, at holes 2, 11, 12, 17.

Four mashie approach shots, at holes 7, 8, 14, 15.

The one-shot holes are: No. 10 for short iron, No. 3 for long iron, No. 5 full shot with wooden club.

This arrangement gives a full, well-balanced variety of approach shots as anyone could wish, and they are skilfully distributed over the round.

Mr. Colt was particularly interrogated concerning the drive and pitch hole, so popular with a certain class of golfers; he declared very emphatically that one in each nine holes is the most that should be allowed. He put them in his Pine Valley design at No. 8 and No. 14. With the advent of the rib-faced mashie-niblic, and the "stopum," the skilful feature of this type of approach shot has passed away.

In laying out the Pine Valley course, the whole 184 acres have been utilized; the course extends over all parts of the property.

The plague of parallelism which afflicts many courses so sorely, has no place at Pine Valley. The fairways are widely separated; only at one place on the course do they come close together, yet even here, there is no interference in play. Players at each hole are so well segregated that they enjoy only occa-

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THE FIFTH HOLE, 228 YARDS, AT THE PINE VALLEY COURSE, SUMNER, N. J.

The drive is diagonally across the Pine Valley to a green that has been cut into the side of the opposite hill. A lake rests at the bottom of the valley, the far margin of which is about 100 yards distant from the tee. The ground ascends steeply from the lake up to a road which winds around in front of the green. The face of the green is almost vertical, averaging 10-12 feet in depth, into which several sand bunkers have been cut. The green is rectangular in shape, 70 feet wide, and about 50 yards in length. To the left of the green, the face of the hill has been torn away, making a great sand bunker, that extends the whole length of the green. On the right of the green the embankment is almost vertical, 12-15 feet steep, with bunkers and the road below. The near edge of the green is slightly above the level of the tee. From front to back, the surface of the green slopes gradually upward, so that every part of it is clearly in view from the tee. The vista, as one stands on the tee, and gazes across the valley at the green in the far hillside, is such that the distance seems much greater than it really is, and, as a consequence, it constantly lures one into pressing the stroke. It is not a herculean shot, but it does require a really first-class drive; it must have a carry of 176 yards; the ball must be hit strongly enough to run 25-30 yards, after the carry, up the green to the neighborhood of the hole; it must have very accurate direction, for there is nothing but this 70 feet-wide green and bunkers. It is a charmingly picturesque hole to view; and to play it well brings a feeling of sweetest satisfaction.

sional glimpses of others, as they proceed on their round.

The wonderful topography of the place, together with Mr. Colt's skilful devising, has given an individual character and appearance to each hole. No two holes in the eighteen have the least resemblance, either in appearance or in the playing. For this reason the course will never stale on one, a new interest springs up at each tee.

Dog-leg and bent holes are an interesting feature of the course. They require very accurate placing of the drive, and they utilize the distances of the holes to greatest advantage. In order to cut off distance in the approach shot, the line of the drive must lie dangerously close to the bunkers that always guard the point where the hole bends.

The direction of the holes is constantly changing. Never more than two holes in succession follow the same direction. They are laid out to all points of the compass; so that whatever wind is blowing, one has a new problem at nearly every hole.

After holing out, you move away from the green, to reach the next tee, you never come back into

the line of play of the hole which is just finished.

The tees are very convenient to the greens, and require no long walks. They are so located that, in most cases, they can be put back 50 yards, if it become necessary in the future because of some new far-flying ball.

From every tee there is something to do in the way of a carry. Besides the bunkers to be carried, the ground for 150 yards out from each tee has been left uncared for, in a rough, lumpy condition. Topped or smothered tee-shots will come to grief with unfailing regularity.

A noteworthy and most excellent characteristic of the Pine Valley course is that a long driver is not compelled, because of cross-bunkers, to drive short from any tee. "Far and sure," was the description of good driving in the olden times, and it holds, and should hold, as well to-day. Nothing could be more stupid than to compel short driving from the tee. The shot up to the green is the restrained shot in golf, and not the tee-shot.

There are no blind approach shots on the course. The surface of every green, and the adjoining hazards,

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are in full view. This makes for skilful golf. Nothing is so unsatisfactory as to have a blind, or half-blind shot up to the hole. It leaves too much to chance, to guesswork, to local knowledge, particularly if bunkers are hidden. It has always been reckoned as very poor golf.

Although the ground is so rolling there are no severe climbs anywhere in the round. A sharp little ascent of 15-20 feet up to the second green is the only one on the course that you will notice. The others are gradual, spread out over long distances.

The average width of the fairways is 50 yards. The mere slugger has little chance of safety. About 150 to 260 yards from the tee, it has been top-soiled with a rich compost, and cared for in every way, so that a beautiful turf, with sweet lies, awaits the well-driven ball.

The drainage in this sandy soil is perfect. Even in the wet seasons there is no mud, no slime, to mar the pleasure of golf. There is no damp, chilly exhalation from the soil in the late season of the year, to give one that miserable cold feeling. It is always dry, crisp and velvety under foot. The run of the ball, after the carry, is nearly always uniform on this turf; it varies little with the weather of the seasons.

Bunkers at Pine Valley are the least expensive work in the construction of the course. It is so easy

to make them—big sizable fellows! They require no upkeep; leave them alone for a season or two, and the wind and weather will make them look as natural as if they grew there. Only the chief bunkers have been cut; the full bunkering of the course will be the work of years.

Throughout the year there will be no closed season for golf at Pine Valley. Some few days of mid-winter, after heavy snow storms, must be stricken from the golf calendar. The ordinary sunshiny winter day, amid these sands is as pleasant and bracing as the keen golfer could desire. The fall and spring months are the choicest times in which to enjoy a golfing holiday here. It is then a golfing Paradise. It is so peaceful, so secluded, so restful, that you feel as if you were a thousand miles from the noisy rout of the busy city. There is no dust, no grime, to befoul the sweet air; no-clatter of endless traffic on public highways to harass your nerves. As you wander over the Pine Valley hills and through its dales, your eye is feasted with nature's sweet, wild beauty; the odor of the wholesome pine delights your nostrils; you seem to gather health and cheerfulness at every step.

There is the peace of seclusion, nature's godly beauty, the pure joy of most excellent golf. With a sturdy old friend by your side to share it all—what more could an earthly Paradise be?