



# ANCC FOUNDATION Did You Know?



## Herbert Strong

This article is a refreshed version of the October 2020 “Did You Know?”

Herbert Strong was born in Ramsgate, Kent, England in 1879. He spent his youth at Royal St. George Golf Club, starting as a caddy. By 1902 he had become the golf professional at the Gog Magog Golf Club (near Cambridge, England). In 1905 he immigrated to the United States to take the golf professional position at Apawamis Club (Rye, NY), moving to the same position at the Inwood Golf Club (NY on Jamaica Bay southeast of JFK Airport) in 1911. Two years later he finished solo ninth (75-74-82-79 310), six shots behind the Ouimet, Vardon and Ray playoff at the United States Open at The Country Club in Brookline, MA. This was the Open that was portrayed by the 2005 movie “The Greatest Game Ever Played.”

Although one of the founding members of the PGA of America (1916), the PGA’s first Secretary-Treasurer, and a fine player, Herbert Strong is best known as a golf course architect. At Inwood he remodeled the course over several years, improving it sufficiently to host the 1921 PGA (won by Walter Hagen) and the 1923 United States Open (won by Bobby Jones). His work at Inwood led to him being employed to design another 29 courses and the redesign of nine others. He was known as a very “hands on” architect who typically did his own surveys and remained on-site to supervise construction. His designs were characterized by their severity and minimal earth moving.



Herbert Strong

With the opening of the second nine holes of the original Major Richard D. Newman designed course at Arlington in 1929, attention turned to expanding the course. Given that Newman remained “in-residence”, it is likely that the course expansion plans developed over the next several years were authored by him. With Newman’s imminent departure in early 1932, the Chairman of the Green Committee requested that the Board of Governors consider hiring a professional golf course architect. Work on the third nine continued in “fits and starts” over the next several months until the Board of Governors appropriated funds to hire Herbert Strong in October 1933. Although initially tasked only with “the laying of one green”, his mandate soon expanded to designing an entirely new 27-hole layout. In December 1933, Strong briefed his plan to the Executive Committee which approved the plan in January 1934 along with \$9,000 in the 1934 budget. Construction started on six new holes on the north side of Memorial Drive in 1934, but it was a slow process due to the Great Depression-era funding constraints and the need

to keep the golf course open during construction. Construction on the new layout continued throughout the next several years and was not completed until at least 1940. It is obvious that Strong did not remain on-site to supervise the construction given the uncertain schedule/funding. However, certain characteristics of the original course configuration demonstrated his reputation for severity, the best examples of which were the original configurations of holes #1 (Red #1), #10 (White #1) and #17 (White #8), all of which were eventually addressed with additional earth moving.

While numerous changes have been made to the original Herbert Strong designed course, the basic routing remains the same.

Among the thirty courses Herbert Strong designed were:

- Engineer's GC, Long Island NY (1918)
- Sherwood Forest GC (1919), 9 Holes in Anne Arundel County, MD
- CC of Maryland (1925) in Towson, MD
- Woodholme CC (1927) in Pikesville, MD
- Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, Ocean Course (1928) in Ponte Vedra, FL

At Ponte Vedra, Strong's design for the par-3 ninth hole (pictured) may have been the first island green. Eat your heart out, Pete Dye (whose 17<sup>th</sup> hole two miles south at The Players Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass (1982) is technically a peninsula).

