

DICK WILSON

(1904 - 1965)

BACKGROUND

Born in Philadelphia, PA. As a youngster, worked as water boy for the construction crew building Merion Golf Club. Attended the University of Vermont on a football scholarship. Then returned to Philadelphia, worked on Toomey and Flynn's crew during the revision of Merion's East Course in 1925.

Remained with Toomey and Flynn, became a construction superintendent and later a design associate. Moved to Florida in early 1930s to construct Indian Creek Country Club in Miami Beach. Depression forced Wilson to take a job as pro/greenskeeper at Delray Beach Country Club.

Spent World War II constructing and camouflaging airfields. In 1945, formed his own golf design company. His work at West Palm Beach Country Club and NCR Country Club in Dayton, OH, established his reputation. Assembled a staff of loyal and talented assistants including Joe Lee, Robert von Hagge, Bob Simmons, Ward Northrup and Frank Batto. Died in Boynton Beach, FL of a pulmonary embolism at age 61.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

A firm believer in heroic architecture, Wilson considered golf to be an aerial game, and often required golfers to hit high tee shots to carry water hazards and high approach shots to carry onto his greens. Convinced that equipment was making courses obsolete, he built a number of courses that exceeded 7,000 yards from the back tees.

IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS

Long, long tees. Very large, elaborately-shaped bunkers, guarding both sides of fairways and all sides of elevated greens. Doglegs guarded by clusters of bunkers. Several shots over water hazards to reach targets. Often one hole with water extending all along one side from tee to green.