



## He cut a path to better golf

*Worthington, an industrialist who loved the game, developed first mower-tractor combination for fairways.*

Charlie C. Worthington, an ingenious and handsome transplanted Scot, had a love for golf that produced the first of the gangmower and tractor combinations for cutting fairways. That outfit was made in one of Worthington's huge factories where were manufactured the gigantic pumps and other heavy equipment that made the Worthington name famous in American industry.

Mr. Worthington was the first of four generations of his family in golf business. His entry was the result of his activity as a golf club official. At his clubs he saw the inadequacy of the sheep-pasture type of mowing that had been effective in Scotland and realized that the American horse-drawn mower wasn't anything to produce a playing condition favorable to the development of the game. Early in his evangelism for golf he realized that looking for a ball in lush American meadow grass wasn't going to make his friends addicts of the game.

Mr. Worthington's background in golf was mentioned in his obituary which was printed in *The New York Times*, Oct. 21, 1944. In part, that review of his career read:

"Inventor and manufacturer of pumps, steam automobiles, mowers, etc., internationally known industrialist and sportsman who helped to organize the Professional Golfers Association, was a golfer in Scotland with the old feather ball

before the game was brought to this country. Mr. Worthington brought some feather balls back with him and built a six-hole course on his Irvington-on-Hudson estate. He collaborated in the organization of one of the first golf clubs in this country, St. Andrews in Mt. Hope, New York and later developed other courses in New York and Pennsylvania (among them the Ardsley Golf Club). His interest in mowing these golf courses led to the development of the Worthington Mower Co."

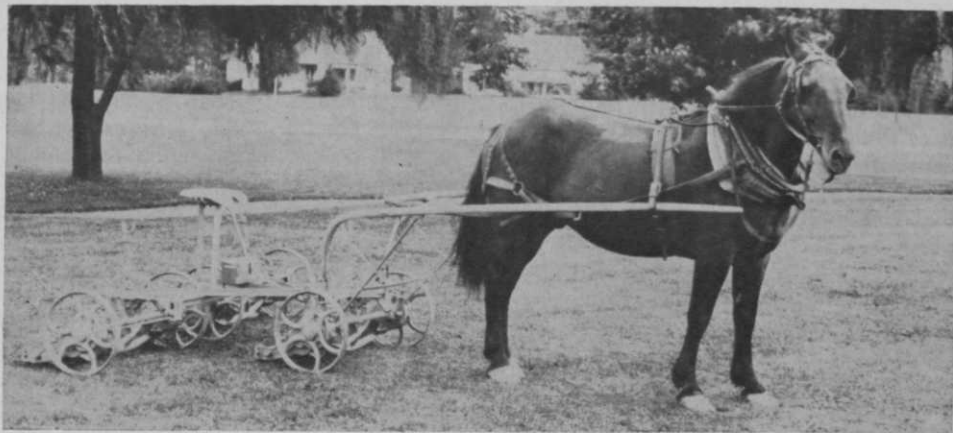
The New York *Herald-Tribune*, in telling of Worthington's association with golf and his contribution to its business growth, said:

"In 1898 on his estate at Shawnee-on-Delaware, Pa., Mr. Worthington designed and built a nine-hole course known as the Manwallimink course. Nine years later he designed and built in collaboration with A. W. Tillinghast, the famous championship course at Shawnee on which the Shawnee Open

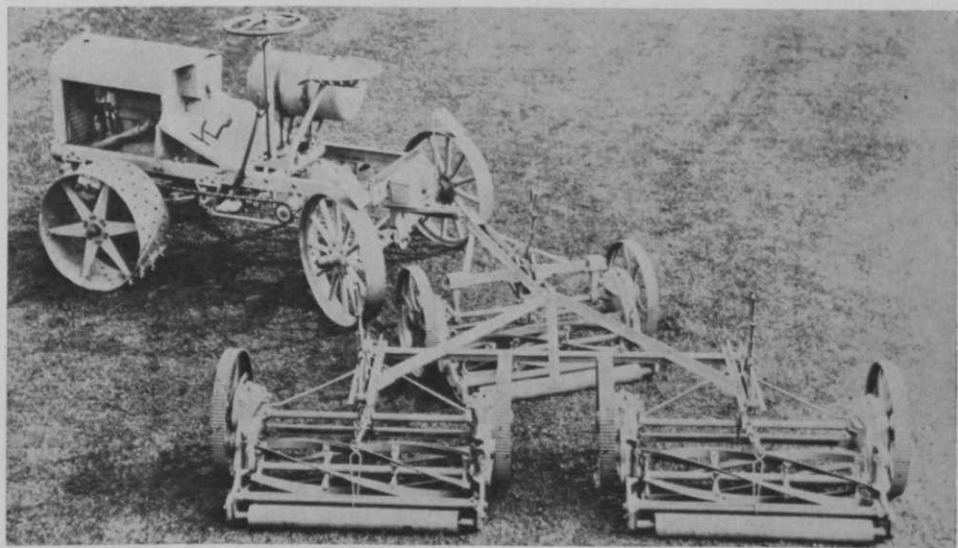
*It was the late  
Ross Sawtelle who  
adapted lessons  
of golf mower to  
airfield purposes  
in World War II.*



*This is the first of a series of articles on pioneers who contributed much to golf both as a sport and business.*



*This Dobbin-drawn mower was C. C. Worthington's contribution to course maintenance in 1914.*



*By 1919 horse had given way to Worthington's combined gang mower and tractor for course use.*

was played for many years.

"The Shawnee course and the Buck-wood Inn on his 15,000-acre estate were built and operated primarily as a recreation for Worthington Pump Co. executives and employees and for the company's customers and other friends of Mr. Worthington. His estate was believed to be the largest individually-owned area east of the Mississippi.

"On his first two courses, Mr. Worthington used sheep for mowing and imported shepherds, sheep dogs and sheep from Scotland for this purpose.

The sudden progress of golf presented a serious mowing problem. Progress was limited by the golf course horse with its leather boots pulling a single mower. In 1914 Mr. Worthington built the first so-called gang mower; a horse-drawn three-mower outfit used until after World War I.

"In 1919 Mr. Worthington designed and built a tractor especially for golf course use and that was the finish of "horse-power" as golf course maintenance equipment.

"The Worthington idea developed un-

*Continued on next page*

til five-gang, then seven-gang outfits were standard. One of Mr. Worthington's grandsons, Ross Sawtelle, as president of the Worthington Mower Co., directed the design and production of the nine- and eleven-gang 'Blitzer' supplied to U. S. airfields in the U. S. and overseas. Production of this equipment won military awards and influenced other wartime production operations.

"After the war these big gang-mowers with their rapid work and economy made possible a standard of golf course maintenance that figured importantly in a great expansion of golf course construction, hence in the sales of all golf playing and course maintenance equipment and supplies."

Harry Vardon and Ted Ray were Mr. Worthington's guests for the 1913 Shawnee Open, prior to that year's National Open at the Country Club of Brookline. At a dinner preceding the Shawnee Open Johnny McDermott, winner of the USGA National Opens of 1911 and 1912, remarked that the day of British victories in the U. S. Open had ended. The McDermott statement, in some manner, got publicized as crudely offensive to the visiting British professionals. Mr. Worthington maintained that this interpretation was inaccurate and that the McDermott view was politely, though positively, expressed.

**E**dmond Rossiter (Ross) Sawtelle, a Worthington grandson, became the Worthington Mower Co. president in 1938 after working his way up from New England sales representative for the company in 1928. In 1934 he became the company's sales manager, then its vice president and general manager. Ross Sawtelle not only brought the Worthington Mower business in sound condition through World War II by adapting the lessons of golf's large area mower to military airfield maintenance but kept the company's distributing organization on a standby basis so know-how, personnel and financing were available for return-to-peace business. Ross arranged the sale of Worthington Mower to the Jacobsen Manufacturing

Co. in 1945 and served as a director of the company and executive in charge of the Worthington division's manufacturing and sales. In 1948 Ross joined his brother Chester, who was established in golf course maintenance equipment and supply business in Boston. The two then formed Sawtelle Brothers, with headquarters at Danvers, Mass., which does business with golf courses, parks and other large turf interests.

Ross Sawtelle was one of the founders of the Turf Equipment Distributors' Association and it was at the banquet of this organization in 1964 that he died suddenly. Chester successfully continues the Sawtelle Brothers business.

Mr. Worthington's sons, Rossiter, Edward and Reginald all were good golfers and Edward especially took his father's hobby, the mower and tractor combination, and developed it into a substantial pioneering business in golf maintenance equipment. The Shawnee course, now owned by Fred Waring, was often used as a test ground for Worthington equipment. The course early was noted for superior condition. Edward's son, Ed. Jr., is in the golf course supply business with headquarters at Saranac Lake, N. Y.

The Worthington sons, like their father, were grand gentlemen and sportsmen. Another of their own kind came into the family as a Worthington son-in-law. He was Edmund (Ned) Sawtelle, an English engineer and golfer. In 1917 Ned began working on a higher speed mower for tractor hauling and in 1918 got patents that were fundamental in the development of faster mowing of fairways.

Ned Sawtelle's three sons, Charles, Chester and the late Rossiter, continued to contribute to progress in golf course maintenance. Charles is president of the Sawtelle Turf Equipment Co., Mamaroneck, N. Y., and has with him his sons, Robert and Chester, who are fourth generation representatives in the family's golf business. Chester Sawtelle has in his organization in New England another: his son-in-law Frank Marean, who keeps bright the tradition of one of the finest families of American golf business. •