

EARLY HISTORY

As the hotel was undergoing major renovations after World War II, Edward A. Roberts, CEO of Waterman Steamship Company and owner of the Grand Hotel, was busy planning the gala opening of a beautiful eighteen hole golf course...his dream and passion. Henry C. Slaton, an executive with Waterman Steamship Company, and J. Finley McRae, CEO of Merchants National Bank, were instrumental in the realization of this dream.

They commissioned renowned golf course architect, Perry Maxwell of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to begin laying out the course in 1944. Maxwell, probably best known for designing the Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, site of the 2001 U.S. Open, positioned a trail extending through magnificent old oaks, magnolias, pines, and clusters of dogwoods. The two original nine-hole courses, Azalea and Dogwood, were completed in May of 1947 and the dazzling opening took place the following month. Language falls short in describing the panoramic view of green corridors of grass flowing like a huge green carpet all the way down to the water's edge of Point Clear Creek that runs through the property. A large island off of Azalea #1 was covered with vibrant azaleas that reflected their splendor on the water around them. The sight of this menagerie of hues dancing in the water was bewitching. Maxwell was a master at blending beauty with danger on almost every hole. Using his trademark design, Maxwell integrated an array of massive bunkers to safeguard the greens and challenge even the finest golfers.