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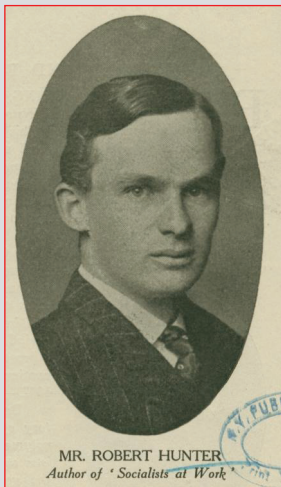
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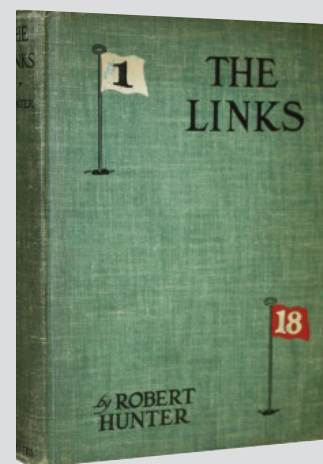
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# FORESTNEWS

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## Robert Hunter: An Influential Student of Both Golf and Society



Seventh in a series of articles on the history of Del Monte Forest by Neal Hotelling

Socialist, writer, teacher, millionaire, golfer, and golf architect; such dichotomy describes Robert Hunter, an active resident of Del Monte Forest in the 1920s. His books included *Poverty* (1904), *Socialists at Work* (1908), *Labor in Politics* (1915), *Why We Fail as Christians* (1919), *The Links* (1926), *Inflation and Revolution* (1934) and *Revolution: Why, How, When* (1940).

Robert Hunter was born at Terre Haute, Indiana on April 10, 1874 to an affluent family. He graduated from the University of Indiana in 1896, in the midst of an economic depression. He eschewed his family's business and moved to Chicago to work with the Bureau of Charities and volunteer at Hull House, helping to bring opportunities to the disadvantaged. In 1899, he moved to Toynbee Hall in England, and interacted with George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells and Russians Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky and Peter Kropotkin at meetings of the Fabian Society.

In 1902 he moved to New York City and managed the University Settlement, which shared socialist philosophies with Hull House and Toynbee Hall. While working on a committee to end child labor, he met Caroline M. Phelps Stokes, the daughter of multi-millionaire banker Anson Phelps Stokes. They married in 1903. The next year, he published his first book, *Poverty*.

While working to bring about reforms to help the poor and disenfranchised, Hunter's physician advised he needed to make time for outdoor physical activity. Golf was his solution; he joined the Weeburn Club of Stamford, Connecticut, near the country home he shared with his wife. He often competed at Pinehurst, North Carolina, where in 1911 he finished runner-up to Chick Evans at the North-South Amateur, and in 1914 he defeated three-time U.S. Amateur Champion Walter Travis in the Mid-April championship.

In 1917, Hunter moved west with his wife and three children ages 10 to 14, and taught Economics, English and Sociology at UC Berkeley. He joined the Claremont Country Club in Oakland, and then gathered interest in establishing a University club. Initially working with Claremont pro John Black and later Willie Watson, he created a routing on the scenic hills overlooking the San Francisco Bay. The course opened in 1921 and is known today as Mira Vista Golf & Country Club.

Hunter regularly competed on the Monterey Peninsula and in 1920, Hunter was medalist in the State Amateur. In 1922, Hunter left teaching, rented a home in Monterey, won the Pebble Beach Gold Vase tournament and finished runner-up to Jack Neville in the State Amateur. The family traveled to Europe in 1923, where Hunter made a study of

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golf courses, competed at the British Amateur, and likely first met his future partner, Dr. Alister Mackenzie.

While overseas, a blaze leveled their Berkeley neighborhood, so on return to California the family moved into a home on the second fairway of Pebble Beach Golf Links. There Hunter compiled his golf course studies. *The Links* was the first American book on golf course architecture. Curiously, while he references both Jack Neville and Douglas Grant, co-designers of Pebble Beach Golf Links, the references are to their play at the 1923 British Amateur, and not their work on the course on which he lived.

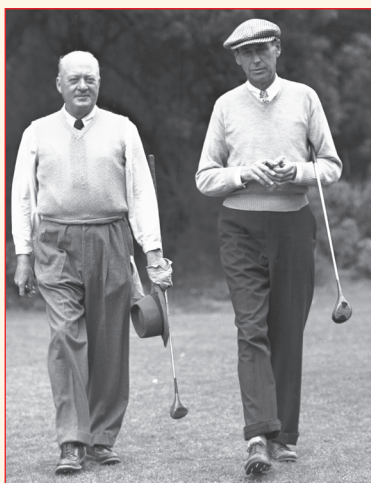
In 1924, S.F.B. Morse began expanding golf at Pebble Beach, retaining Seth Raynor to layout the Monterey Peninsula Country Club and providing an option on 150 acres at Cypress Point to Marion Hollins for a second club. Both of these projects would soon involve Hunter. In late January 1926, Alister Mackenzie met Hunter in San Francisco to discuss opportunities in California including the Meadow Club, in Marin County. Hunter brought the news that earlier that month Raynor had died, and the two clubs at Pebble Beach needed an architect; the MPCC Dunes Course was just short of completion, and Raynor had completed preliminary routings of the Shore and Cypress Point courses.

In 1926, Mackenzie and Hunter conferred on Cypress Point, completed The Dunes course, and then added bunkers to holes 8 and 13 to show the difference proper design would make at Pebble Beach Golf Links. Mackenzie traveled the globe designing courses while Hunter supervised their projects in California, with his son's American Golf Course Construction Company executing the designs.

In addition to working with Mackenzie, Hunter was retained to work with H. Chandler Egan to prepare



Dr. Alister Mackenzie  
Photo from the Cavendish Golf Club web site



Jack Neville and Douglas Grant circa 1950  
Julian Graham photo / Pebble Beach Company  
Lagorio Archives

Pebble Beach Golf Links for the 1929 U.S. Amateur. They added dozens of bunkers, rebuilt most of the green complexes, yet retained the basic routing of Neville and Grant. Hunter is credited with assists on nine courses in California. One of his last was the Valley Club at Montecito which opened in 1929 and drew him to leave Pebble Beach for Santa Barbara.

Hunter continued to be active and outspoken in helping the poor and disenfranchised—a class that grew dramatically as America entered the Great Depression. Largely remembered for the great golf courses he helped develop, his efforts to improve society also had long lasting effects; helping to bring about Minimum Wage, Worker's Compensation, and even Roosevelt's "New Deal."

Still, his socialist views tempered as Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler rose to power. In his final treatise, *Revolution:*

*Why, How, When*, he wrote: "the Bolsheviks now rule Russia while Fascism, Nazism, New Deals and Planned Economy are gaining grounds on all fronts. State Socialism or State Capitalism, whichever one may prefer to call it, is having its day." He cited that over millennia, "Wherever the State has attempted to control the hours, wages and prices of private enterprise, capitalism has languished, the people have been impoverished, and the government has become more despotic." He added, "areas which have permitted democracy and capitalism to bear their fruit have given to the people of high and low degree the highest standard of living ever known to the inhabitants of the earth."

Robert Hunter died in 1942, without seeing the end of World War II, but a study of his thoughtful and evolving social views is nearly as interesting as playing the courses he helped create.