

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, December 31, 2012

Trapshooting at Resort Hotels: Today it's hard to realize what measures were taken by resort properties to increase business. My experience is mostly from the Depression years of the 1930s. Even though hotel rates were usually less than \$10 per day American Plan (three meals a day included), these resort locations and their managements were willing to spend money to build special facilities, such as trapshooting grounds, and to feature annual tournaments, including quality prizes for the participants.

There were many "Indian" organizations or clubs to which a prominent trapshooter had to be invited in order to take part. The Atlantic Indians, established in the New York-Philadelphia area at the end of World War I, was possibly the first and certainly the longest-lasting, still going strong. This organization first moved its "shoot" from place to place but in 1930 settled on the Buckwood Inn at Shawnee-on-Delaware, Pennsylvania, where almost all three-day tournaments were held until about 1980 (in 1936, the tournament was held at Briarcliff Manor, New York). At Shawnee, the temporary traps were on the river bank in front of the hotel, and the clay targets and lead shot landed in the Delaware River. I shot here many times with my father. The Atlantic Indians moved to Pocono Manor over 30 years ago, where more permanent shooting grounds were built a short distance from the hotel.

The California Indians held their tournaments at O. N. Ford's Del Monte Club, where six or eight permanent trap fields faced Monterey Bay. The Okoboji Indians shot annually at Cedar Point, Ohio, where the shooting grounds were about one mile from the rambling Breakers Hotel, all on a tiny peninsula in Lake Erie. To get back and forth, a 15"-gauge steam train with passenger cars carried happy trapshooters. There was also the Southern Indians organization that held their shoots on the resort property of Radium Hot Springs in Georgia.

Back in the Northeast, registered shoots open to all were promoted at famous hotel properties as well. Four temporary traps were constructed annually (and sometimes twice annually) on the beach at Asbury Park, New Jersey, with the shooters standing on the boardwalk immediately in front of the Berkeley-Carteret Hotel. The "Westy Hogans" organization held its annual September tournament there over a 15-year period (1936-51 approximately), and the Atlantic Indians often held a two-day spring shoot at this location. The shot fell in the Atlantic Ocean. The Skytop Club, a prestigious hotel in the Poconos of Pennsylvania, held trapshooting tournaments in 1935 and 1936, with three or four traps located on the front lawn of the hotel.

Two of the longest-lasting and most popular tournaments were sponsored at Pinehurst in the North Carolina sand hills and at the Maplewood Club in New Hampshire's White Mountains. The Tufts family of Boston built their first hotel, the Holly Inn, at Pinehurst in 1895, followed by the huge Carolina Hotel 10 years later (the Carolina is now named the Pinehurst Hotel in one of many "golf capitals of the world"). A five-day Midwinter Championship tournament in late January was started at Pinehurst just before World War I and lasted until World War II. Annie Oakley and her husband Frank Butler were employed by Pinehurst before and after 1916 to teach interested guests how to shoot. I think the trapshooting grounds, at least one mile from the hotels, are still intact, but my recent knowledge of Pinehurst is lacking. The Maplewood Tournament, started about the same time as Pinehurst, lasted until World War II, but did not survive that war. In 1916 at Maplewood, a five-man squad of expert shooters, including Alden B. "Doll" Richardson of Dover, Delaware, established a world squad record of 497 x 500, which record stood until it was broken at Yorklyn in 1935. My father and I attended the Maplewood shoot from 1937 through 1940, and my father shot at Pinehurst during World War I, and again in the 1930s. The hotel at Maplewood burned to the ground a few years after World War II, but the Pinehurst properties are going strong.

Important resorts like the Greenbrier at White Sulphur Springs and the French Lick Springs Hotel in Indiana had small permanent gun clubs and an expert shooter on the staff to teach trapshooting, but they never held major tournaments.