

Carolina Hotel ^[1]

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Carolina Hotel

by Julian M. Pleasants, 2006

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In June 1895 James W. Tufts, a successful Boston manufacturer, came to North Carolina seeking a healthy and mild



Carolina Hotel, built 1901. Image courtesy of Flickr user Mike Renlund, 2008.

^[3]climate. After purchasing 5,890 acres for approximately \$1.00 per acre in the Sandhills area of [Moore County](#) ^[4], Tufts hired [Frederick Law Olmsted](#) ^[5], the distinguished landscape artist who designed Central Park in New York City and the grounds of [Biltmore House](#) ^[6], to draw up plans for a village named Pinehurst. Tufts put in cottages, a power plant, a post office, a department store, and the 250-room [Carolina Hotel](#) ^[7]. The huge structure, the largest frame hotel in the state, contained 49 suites with bath and a music room for 400 guests, which featured daily concerts by the hotel orchestra. The hotel opened on 1 Jan. 1901 and boasted every modern comfort and convenience, including electric lights, elevators, and telephones in each room. Tufts also built a trolley line from the [Seaboard Railway station](#) ^[8] in nearby Southern Pines to transport passengers to the Carolina Hotel.

In 1898 Tufts hired golf architect [Donald J. Ross](#) ^[9] to build a nine-hole golf course. By 1919 Ross had designed four courses, including the famed [Pinehurst Number 2 course](#) ^[10], and golf became the essential pastime for Pinehurst's tourists. The hotel also provided tennis courts, horseback riding, polo, croquet, and trap shooting. Sharpshooter [Annie Oakley](#) ^[11] ran the Pinehurst Gun Club for ten years. Guests of the Carolina Hotel included [Warren G. Harding](#) ^[12], [J. Pierpont Morgan](#) ^[13], [Amelia Earhart](#) ^[14], [John D. Rockefeller Sr.](#) ^[15], [Theodore Roosevelt](#) ^[16], [John Philip Sousa](#) ^[17], and [Will Rogers](#) ^[18]. From 1895 until 1920, James Tufts ran Pinehurst and the hotel as a sole proprietorship. In 1920 a charter for Pinehurst, Inc., was obtained from the state. By 1980 Pinehurst was a municipality, no longer a "company town."

In 1980 [Malcolm McLean](#) ^[19] of Diamondhead Corporation purchased Pinehurst, Inc. McLean built a new front entrance and thoroughly refurbished and repaired the hotel, now known as the [Pinehurst Hotel](#) ^[20]. Diamondhead defaulted on bank loans in 1982, and the [Club Corporation of America](#) ^[21] bought the hotel, golf courses, and clubhouse two years later. Restored to its former splendor, the [Pinehurst Resort and Country Club](#) ^[20] was in the early 2000s a AAA Four-Diamond Resort, with eight golf courses, a tennis complex, and other amenities.

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[Great Depression \(1929-1941\)](#) [23]

[World War II \(1941-1945\)](#) [24]

[Post War 20th Century \(1946-2000\)](#) [25]

[21st Century \(2001-present\)](#) [26]

[Pastimes](#) [27]

[Places](#) [28]

[UNC Press](#) [29]

Authors:

[Pleasants, Julian M.](#) [30]

Origin - location:

[Pinehurst](#) [31]

From:

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