

A Short History of the Pine Crest Inn

"THE INN LIKE A HOME"

When New Englander James Walker Tufts began developing Pinehurst in the late 1890's, the first hotel built in the village was the Holly Inn and the Carolina Hotel followed shortly after. As the resort gained in popularity after the turn of the century, it became obvious that more hotel rooms were needed and Mrs. E. C. Bliss of Edgewood, Rhode Island, saw an opportunity to become a hotel owner.

Mrs. Bliss had first come to Pinehurst in 1903 and was the manager of the Lexington Hotel, which essentially was a hotel for employees of Pinehurst, Incorporated. The Lexington stood where the Manor Hotel stands today.

After ten seasons of operating the Lexington, Mrs. Bliss decided to go out on her own and on February 5, 1913, construction began on the Pine Crest Inn with over 50 area residents witnessing the ground breaking ceremony with both great interest and concern. Their concern was because a baseball field was situated between the Holly Inn and the soon-to-be Pine Crest Inn. Baseball was played with great fervor in the early days of Pinehurst and the locals did not want their game or field to be compromised. Fortunately, it was said that a foul ball never struck the side of the Pine Crest Inn and both baseball and the Inn continued to flourish.

After eight months of construction, the news media was greeted at the completed Pine Crest Inn which opened on November 1, 1913. The local newspaper, The Pinehurst Outlook, reported as follows:

"The most marked evidence of growth in Pinehurst is noted as Mrs. E.C. Bliss' new hotel, the Pine Crest Inn, which comes as a delightful addition to the list of hotels; its comfort is suggested by the charm of the exterior.

Spacious colonial pillared verandas, glass entrance doors, and the decorative treatment of the building itself make it a sparkling note of color against the distant sky and pines."

The Pine Crest, considered an independent hotel as it was not owned by Pinehurst, Incorporated, became very popular among seasonal guests and was an immediate success. This success caught the eye of Pinehurst Country Club's golf professional, Donald J. Ross. After several years of negotiation with Mrs. Bliss, Ross and close friend, W. J. MacNab, purchased the Pine Crest Inn in 1921. With Ross' purchase of the Pine Crest, he was, in effect, competing against the Tufts' family as it pertained to hotel rooms in Pinehurst.

Upon Donald Ross' purchase of Pine Crest Inn, Mrs. Bliss returned to her position at the Lexington hotel. She later purchased the property and soon demolished the building in order to build the Manor Hotel which remains today. Mrs. Bliss worked a total of 33 years in the hotel business which made her one of the most prominent figures in the hospitality industry. She died in Pinehurst in 1936.



Donald Ross—Innkeeper

Donald Ross' fame as a golf professional and golf course architect only enhanced the reputation and popularity of the Pine Crest Inn. Ross had the reputation of being a very stern boss and ran the Pine Crest Inn with an iron fist. It was actually Mr. and Mrs. MacNab who managed the day-to-day operations of the Inn.

"Mr. and Mrs. MacNab who manage the Inn, have built up an excellent reputation for cleanliness and good food. The guests are a nice class of people and evidently like the house as they return year after year." (see Donald Ross Letter)

Donald Ross built the existing east wing of the Pine Crest Inn in 1926 at a cost of \$35,000. Ross and Mr. MacNab owned the Pine Crest until Ross' death in 1948. For reasons unknown, Ross' estate leased the hotel to the Arthur Roberts Hotel Company of Minneapolis for four years until it was purchased by Mr. Carl Moser in 1952.

Carl Moser, a New York City hotelier of Waldorf Astoria pedigree, had been in the hotel business his entire professional life. Pine Crest flourished through the 1950s with the reputation of serving quality food as its hallmark. Mr. Moser later managed The Carolina Inn in Chapel Hill.



Donald Ross



Carl Moser

Letter from Donald Ross

(The original letter was in too poor condition to reprint. As follows, is an exact word-for-word replica of the letter.)

Pinehurst, No. Carolina,
February 13, 1939.

Mr. George D. Murphy,
Mayflower Cottage,
Pinehurst, N. C.

Mr. Murphy: -

At the request of Mr. Frank Cosgrove I am sending you the following particulars about the Pine Crest Inn, which I own.

There are forty-four (44) rooms for guests, balanced between rooms with and without bath, which have proven satisfactory for a house the size of the Inn. During the busy season approximately sixty guests can be accommodated. In addition to the guest rooms there are adequate accommodations for all the employees. The kitchen and storage space is ample and well arranged. The dining room is large and attractively furnished. The lobby is very attractive and cheerful with plenty of seating space for a house full of guests. The out-door porch is large and on the sheltered sunny side of the house and much enjoyed on pleasant days. There is also an extra room adjoining the dining room which can be used as a cocktail lounge, it has a convenient entrance from the outside porch. The heating and hot water system is adequate and operates satisfactorily.

Ever since I purchased the property I have put back every cent earned and also some additional cash in the furnishing and maintenance of it, so that as far as I know it is all in excellent condition. Among the improvements I made are a telephone in every room and a Grinnell fireproofing sprinkler system. I also purchased an additional lot of land so that there is room for parking and if desired an extension to the house.

Mr. and Mrs. MacNab, who manage the Inn, have built up an excellent reputation for cleanliness and good food. The guests are a nice class of people and evidently like the house as they return year after year. During the summer Mr. MacNab manages very successfully a private Club Hotel in Northern Michigan. The class of people he has there are the kind who spend their winters in California or Southern Texas, so that he gets no business from his summer connection which is a drawback. In the case of Mr. and Mrs. Cosgrove, it would be different; they are a delightful couple, as fine as I have ever knew, and they have a connection in the north where they have made hosts of friends who undoubtedly would follow them to Pinehurst.

The Inn with such a delightful and efficient couple as Mr. and Mrs. Cosgrove to manage it, would, I believe, prove to be a sound financial success and they are the kind of people I like to see permanently



A BED ROOM

Mr. George D. Murphy—#2

located in Pinehurst. I have had an opportunity to sell the Inn, but refused to do so because I wasn't favorably impressed with the party who wanted it and the only reason I have for wishing to sell it is that my connection with Pinehurst, Inc. makes it impossible for me to give it any personal attention.

For your information I give the following figures taken from my books as to the money I have in the property, exclusive of the cost of maintenance and furnishings, etc.

Original Cost (Inn and Goodwill)	\$52,500.00
New Addition	35,000.00
Additional Lot	2,000.00
Sprinkler System	10,268.72
Telephone System	1,448.59
Iron Fireman	776.25
Frigidaire	839.08
	<u>\$ 100,872.64</u>

Yearly County Taxes	\$422.14
Yearly Village Taxes	324.80
Yearly Insurance	650.00

I will sell the property for \$65,000.00, one half cash, remainder on notes at 4% over a period of ten years, one \$3,000.00 note to be paid yearly.

Thanking you for asking me to send you the above information and my cordial personal regards.

Very sincerely yours,

Donald J. Ross

The Barrett Family

In 1961, a young newspaperman from Erie, Pennsylvania named Robert Barrett and his wife Betty and in-laws were on a golf vacation in Pinehurst staying at the Manor Hotel across the street from the Pine Crest. The Barretts had been to Pinehurst several times and fell in love with the place. Bob Barrett had worked his way up to the position of managing editor of the Erie Times and although he loved the newspaper business, he would find himself day-dreaming of having some type of business in Pinehurst and leaving the cold winters. He got wind of the fact that Carl Moser wanted to sell the Pine Crest Inn and the two men met for the first time in March of 1961. With the help of Mrs. Elizabeth Dailey who was Betty Barrett's mother, the Barretts purchased the Pine Crest Inn in May of 1961. With most hotels in Pinehurst closed for the summer months in that era, Bob Barrett went to hotel school for several months and re-opened his hotel for the fall season on October 12, 1961.

Betty and Bob's children, Bobby and Peter were 9 and 5 years old at the time and soon assumed various positions in the day-to-day operation of the hotel—bus boys, waiters, dishwashers, and whatever else needed to be done. Betty ran the front desk and Bob did most of the marketing and public relations. It was a true family business and life was good for the Barretts all through the 1960s. Betty Barrett passed away at a young age in 1975 and Mr. B left us in 2005.

Today's ownership of the Pine Crest includes Peter Barrett and brother Bobby who is a local CPA in Pinehurst. This once small family business has grown considerably hosting

annually over 7,500 guests, serving 15,000 meals and pouring 45,000 drinks. The Pine Crest operates 12 months a year with 50 employees on any given day. The year 2011 marks the 50th Anniversary of Barrett ownership.

The Pine Crest has been blessed with four caring owners since its opening in 1913. It has also been blessed with loyal employees who continue to make a difference. With the rich history of Pine Crest Inn, we like to think of our staff as stewards of a landmark institution.

The hallways of the Pine Crest have been graced by the likes of Bobby Jones, Henry Cotton, Francis Ouimet, Annie Oakley, Frank Stranahan, Harvie Ward, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Ben Crenshaw, Roger Maltbie, Curtis Strange, Payne Stewart, and Cory Pavin, just to name a few. Baseball greats Sparky Lyle, Graig Nettles, Ralph Houk, Lew Burdette, Tommy Davis, and Warren Spahn all visited in 1992 while participating in a local golf outing.

Welcome to the Pine Crest Inn, which Mrs. Bliss so accurately described in the first ever advertisement for the property in 1913: ***"The Inn Like A Home."***

We hope you will agree.