

Who we are and where we came from

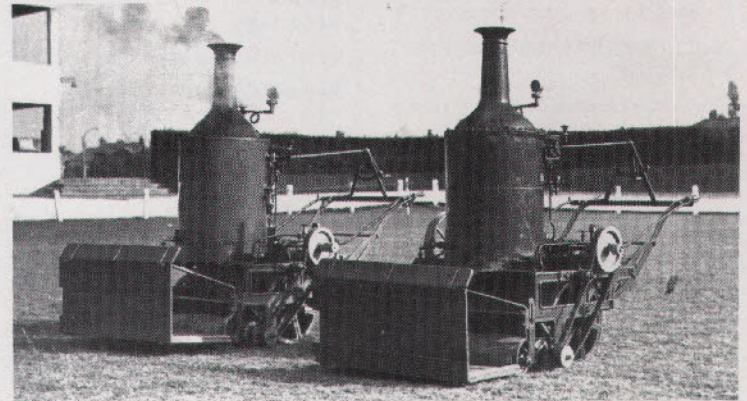
Last year the STMA Historical Committee met for the first time to log and develop the acquired collection of the late Dr. Kent Kurtz, STMA's first executive director. "Doc," as he was admirably referred to, also served as the association's first historian, and amassed an amazing collection of documents and photographs of the sports turf profession and STMA. Doc's collection included a kind donation from the estate of turf industry pioneer Dr. Fred Grau. In appreciation of Doc's contribution and the generous donation of the Kurtz family to STMA, we will be running a monthly account of the people, places, stories, equipment, and photographs that are important to the profession and association.

This photograph from the STMA Kurtz Historical Collection is of two Leyland Steam Motor Company steam powered mowers and was taken in the late 1890's. It is STMA's oldest evidence of mechanized sports field specific equipment in use.

Steam powered units were used but their heavy weight and complicated nature made them impractical, which led to the internal combustion engine finally winning the battle of sports turf mowers. According to legendary sports turf manager George Toma, who was in charge of the sports turf at Artillery Park in Wilkes-Barre, PA during the late 1940's, many sports fields were still using man-powered walk behind reel mowers

to mow infields at a height of 1 1/4 inches, equipped with hanger grass catchers. George would then borrow a Worthington tractor and five-gang reel mower from the city's parks and recreation to mow the outfield.

Hold on to your photos! In order to enrich Dr. Kurtz's collection, starting this spring the STMA Historical Committee will be running a contest each month to see who has the best pictures of sports turf specific equipment and significant STMA members. Look for details in this section in future issues! ■



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