

One of first golf courses was in NE

(Editor's Note: The following is one in a series of feature stories about northeast Los Angeles that will be published between now and July 4, 1976, the nation's 200th birthday.)

By Roger Swanson

The oldest existing golf course in the United States, if the Guinness Book of World Records can be believed, is St. Andrews in Westchester County, New York, which was built in 1888.

When the course was built golf had already been played for five years in the northeast area of Los Angeles at a course constructed at the behest of Andrew Campbell-Johnson, an Englishman of Scottish ancestry whose widow later built The Church of the Angels on

Ave. 64 as a memorial to him.

Campbell-Johnson's course does not hold the record because it no longer exists in Southern California.

Golf was relatively unknown when Campbell-Johnson, a citizen of England, visited the Annandale area in 1883 and was immediately attracted to the natural beauty of the land. He purchased 2200 acres from Prudent Beaudry, mayor of Los Angeles from 1874-76 and constructed the San Rafael Ranch Company, a working ranch which he later left in the care of three of his 10 sons when he returned to England.

Golf was already a popular sport in Scotland

and England and Campbell-Johnson was not a stranger to the joys and misery of the game. He expressed a desire to a friend, Captain E. P. Tomkinson, another Englishman, to play the game on the ranch. The captain volunteered to lay out a nine hole course for him.

While the rolling nature of the land was considered an ideal site for the course — it was located only a short distance from the present Annandale Country Club — Campbell-Johnson expected

Tomkinson to experience some difficulty in laying out the greens.

But one morning the captain saddled his horse, rode out and returned before noon to report that the greens were all staked. He reported to an exuberant Campbell-Johnson that he had simply drove a stake at each location, took a rope and halter from his horse and using them as a radius drew a circle around the stake.

Although the course has been described as crude, it is known that a great many people played it, often accompanied by Campbell-Johnson.

Nothing of the old course remains. La Loma Road now borders one edge of the land on which the course was laid out and the remainder is now covered by homes in the West Pasadena area above La Loma.