

"Golf House"

By JOSEPH C. DEY, JR.
USGA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

When the good members of the Golf Club in Savannah, Ga., held a New Year's Eve Ball in 1811, they unwittingly set in motion an odd series of events.

The second stage in the sequence did not occur for well over a century. In April, 1935, George W. Blossom, Jr., was on a holiday at the Biltmore Forest Country Club, near Asheville, N. C. While writing letters he noticed above the desk an original invitation to the Golf Club Ball in Savannah in 1811.

That crystallized an idea that had been nebulous in his mind for some time. He became convinced that the United States Golf Association should establish a collection center to preserve and exhibit golf items of historical value, such as the invitation to the ball, famous clubs, old golf balls, books, photographs, paintings, medals. Mr. Blossom, a Chicagoan, was then a member of the USGA Executive Committee.

He immediately wrote the USGA President, Prescott S. Bush, proposing the matter. Less than a year later, in January, 1936, the USGA announced a plan to establish a Golf Museum and Library, and three months thereafter it moved its little office in New York to slightly larger quarters. First Chairman of the Museum Committee was Mr. Blossom, who, incidentally, later was USGA President, in 1942-43.

Since then hundreds of worth-while items have been contributed to the USGA Golf Museum and Library — such irreplaceable things as Bob Jones' putter "Calamity Jane" . . . Mrs. Glenna Collett Vare's famous spoon . . . several old feather golf balls of the early 1800s . . . a track iron used for playing out of wagon ruts in Scotland in 1815 . . . clubs used by scores of American champions.

Concurrent with growth of the Museum and Library, there has been marked increase in volume of USGA general work, and the size of the New York office staff has grown proportionately. Thus, in re-

cent years the USGA has found itself in serious need of larger quarters, both for its regular work and to house properly the Museum and Library. Many items and books cannot be exhibited but must be stored; the entire collection cannot be cared for as it deserves.

It is in the best interests of the game that there be a permanent exhibit, under USGA auspices, of items of historical value. It is equally desirable that the USGA's fine library, including the green-keeping lore of the Green Section, be available for easy reference by golfers generally.

"Golf House"

To meet all the needs, the Association plans to obtain a modest building in midtown New York City, to be known as "Golf House". It will be a place which individual golfers and USGA member clubs can feel is truly their own national golf headquarters.

It is hoped that "Golf House" will be bought and equipped with donated funds; the USGA's normal resources are not adequate for the purpose.

Consequently, Golf-lovers and clubs and associations are cordially invited to become Founders of "Golf House". Contributions of any amount will be very acceptable. All contributions will be devoted exclusively to purchasing, equipping and maintaining "Golf House". The names of all donors will be recorded on a permanent roll.

A nation-wide committee has been formed to invite golfers to become Founders, the Chairman being Daniel A. Freeman, Jr., of New York. First contribution was received from Lincoln A. Werden, Golf Editor of the NEW YORK TIMES. It is hoped to establish "Golf House" before autumn, and, if possible, within a few months.

Thus progresses the odd series of events. The old invitation to the Golf Club Ball in Savannah in 1811 carried a more lasting inspiration than was intended for it. Perhaps those who respond

to this invitation to help found "Golf House" will establish something even more inspiring.

State of the USGA

Decision to establish "Golf House" was announced by the Executive Committee at the Association's 56th Annual Meeting in New York late in January. The Annual Meeting is a time for stock-taking, as seen in the Executive Committee's report for 1949. Following are some of the report's main points, combined with new decisions:

The Rules of Golf Committee further clarified the Rules and issued a record number of 262 decisions. The Chairman, Isaac B. Grainger, noted adoption of a completely revised code by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland, for a two-year trial in 1950-51 and commented in part: "General liberalization of penalties, although doubtless a popular step in the eyes of many players, is not possible without serious complications and inequities." USGA representatives hope to confer with the R. and A. in 1951 on the possibility of a uniform code.

1950 Executive Committee

The following officers and Executive Committee were elected at the 56th Annual Meeting to serve the USGA in 1950:

PRESIDENT

James D. Standish, Jr., Detroit

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Isaac B. Grainger, New York

Totton P. Heffelfinger, Minneapolis

SECRETARY

Richard S. Tufts, Pinehurst, N.C.

TREASURER

John D. Ames, Chicago

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The above officers and

J. Frederic Byers, Jr., Pittsburgh

Frederick L. Dold, Wichita, Kans.

T. R. Garlington, Atlanta, Ga.

Charles B. Grace, Philadelphia

Lewis A. Lapham, San Francisco

Charles L. Peirson, Boston

Corydon Wagner, Tacoma, Wash.

James W. Walker, New York

GENERAL COUNSEL

Fraser M. Horn, New York

The Championship Committee's Chairman, Richard S. Tufts, pointed to golf's expansion in smaller cities and towns, especially in the South, and noted that in 1949 "every winner and every runner-up in our male championships except the Public Links came from southern territory, and usually from a small town (the same was true of the PGA Championship)." Regarding slow play, Mr. Tufts commented: "Careful play is commendable, but nothing is gained from the pernicious habit of dallying over a shot before its execution. A quick, firm decision and decisive action are always to the advantage of the player. As the number of capable golfers is constantly increasing, many a potential champion will never reach the site of the championship if players continue to limit the size of the field by unnecessary slow play." The first Walker Cup Match here since 1936 was a feature of 1949. Entry fee for the Junior Amateur Championship has been reduced to \$2 for 1950.

There seems to be growing understanding of the rules governing clubs; the Implements and Ball Committee received fewer inquiries than in many years, reported its Chairman, John D. Ames. One brand of golf ball was found to be consistently overweight, but the manufacturer made prompt correction. The Committee has considered recommending addition of a compression factor to rules governing the ball; no action has yet been taken.

The cause of amateurism was strengthened when several border-line cases were cleared up and by a new rule providing forfeiture of amateur status by one who takes "any action which clearly indicates the intention of becoming a professional golfer." A statement of policy was adopted regarding golf gambling: organized gambling is disapproved, but no attempt was made to pass judgment on friendly wagers or informal sweepstakes.

A Girls' Junior Championship made its first appearance on the USGA schedule in 1949, and sectional qualifying was instituted for the Women's Amateur Championship, with the tournament proper entirely at match play. These two innovations were considered successful

New Members of the Executive Committee



J. F. Byers, Jr.



F. L. Dold



T. R. Garlington



L. A. Lapham

to the point of warranting repetition this year, according to Miss Frances E. Stebbins, Chairman of the Women's Committee. For 1950, entry fees have been reduced to \$5 for the Women's and \$2 for the Girls' Championship.

The USGA Green Section further developed its regional cooperative work. The constant campaign to provide "better turf for better golf" will have fresh impetus with the publication this year of the Green Section's new book "Turf Management," edited by Prof. H. B. Musser.

USGA membership reached a new high of 1,395 clubs and courses at the end of the 1949 fiscal year. This is a net increase of 644 in the four post-war years. USGA JOURNAL circulation grew during the year from 4,294 to 7,472 subscriptions of which 5,332 were paid.

USGA operations produced an excess of income over expenses for the first time in three years. For 1947 and 1948 the Association sustained an aggregate net loss of \$24,095, caused mainly by financing trips abroad for the 1947 Walker Cup and the 1948 Curtis Cup Teams. This loss has now been balanced by excess income of \$24,155 in 1949. These marked fluctuations in expenses caused by international matches abroad have led the Executive Committee to create a reserve fund for such matches. Annual appropriations will be made to it, so that the impact of a team's foreign travel will not be felt entirely in one year.

Thus the Annual Report successfully

closed the stewardship as USGA President of a Georgia gentleman, Mr. Fielding Wallace. As one delegate remarked, "He left it even better than he found it."

1950 Committee Chairman

The following Chairmen of USGA committees for 1950 have been appointed by James D. Standish, Jr., President:

Rules of Golf:

Isaac B. Grainger, New York
Championship:

John D. Ames, Chicago

Junior Championship:

Richard S. Tufts, Pinehurst, N.C.

Implements and Ball:

Charles B. Grace, Philadelphia
Amateur Status and Conduct:

James W. Walker, New York

Membership:

Lewis A. Lapham, San Francisco
Green Section:

Richard S. Tufts, Pinehurst, N.C.

Women's:

Miss Frances E. Stebbins, Boston
Girls' Junior Championship:

Mrs. Charles Dennehy, Chicago.

Public Links:

Totton P. Heffelfinger, Minneapolis

Sectional Affairs:

Charles L. Peirson, Boston

Handicap:

William O. Blaney, Boston

International Relations:

Charles W. Littlefield, New York

Museum:

James W. Walker, New York

Public Relations:

John D. Ames, Chicago