

The First USGA Year Book

The original early records of the USGA were carefully preserved by the founders, and an historian can turn to the first minute book and read the proceedings of the earliest meetings in the flowing long-hand of the late Henry O. Tallmadge, the first Secretary.

But an historian could not always turn to a copy of the first USGA Year Book. The USGA office never had one.

Mr. John A. Level, of New York, a member of the Museum Committee, turned up one of the extremely rare volumes while pursuing his hobby of collecting old golf books. It would have filled a gap in his own library, but he generously donated it to the USGA Golf Museum and Library.

The volume is not dated, but it clearly was published in the spring of 1895. It lists as member clubs only the Chicago Golf Club, The Country Club (Brookline, Mass.), Newport Golf Club, St. Andrew's Golf Club, Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, Essex County Club (Mass.), Philadelphia Country Club and Richmond County

Country Club. The first five founded the USGA on December 22, 1894, and the latter three were admitted on March 28, 1895.

Things were simpler in 1895, the first Year Book reveals.

A Rule of Golf then read: "A ball must be played wherever it lies or may, under penalty of two strokes, be lifted out of a difficulty of any description, and teed behind the same."

Club dues for USGA membership are lower now than in the beginning, contrary to the trend of the times, the Year Book reveals. The original membership was divided into associate and allied clubs. Associate Members paid \$100 a year; Allied Members paid \$25. Dues now are from \$35 for Regular Members with 18-hole courses to \$15 for Associate Members with fewer than 18 holes.

The USGA Museum and Library lacks copies of several other early Year Books, and the Committee would be most grateful to receive volumes for the following years: 1896 through 1899, 1901-02-03-04-05-14-15.



The first President of the USGA was Theodore A. Havemeyer, and this is one of his earliest golfing photographs. It was taken on the first green at the Newport Golf Club in August, 1893. From left to right are Henry O. Havemeyer, Jr., Henry R. Winthrop, Theodore A. Havemeyer, Jr., Theodore A. Havemeyer, Sr., and Frederick C. Havemeyer.