

How Golf Came to Town and Country

When the women golfers gather at the Town and Country Club in St. Paul, Minn., for the USGA Women's Amateur Championship, August 20-25, they will compete at a club with one of the most interesting histories in the nation.

The Championship will be played in what is regarded as one of the warmest months of the year—but the club owes its origin to snow and ice and the Winter Carnivals for which St. Paul has been famous.

The course is laid out over the same ground where the Town and Country Club first introduced the game of golf to that section in 1893 and which has been used for that purpose continuously ever since.

Although not originally organized as a golf club, Town and Country is one of the oldest in the country and claims its course is the second oldest continuously played in the United States, preceded only by Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, of Southampton, N. Y. And it owes the introduction of golf to its membership to the laziness of a newspaper reporter.

These intriguing facts are revealed in a letter written in 1930 by William F. Peet, a charter member of the club who started its golf in 1893 on the same grounds the course has occupied ever since.

Organized in 1887

The club was organized by a group of young men in December, 1887, planned as another carnival club. Even in the beginning they had ideas for something more, as evidenced by the name they chose. The first clubhouse was a brick house rented on Lake Como, with grounds extending to the water's edge. About two years later the club acquired several lots on the site where the present clubhouse is located, issued bonds and raised enough money to build a new clubhouse.

The Town and Country Club was not overwhelmed with members, however, because although it attempted a few sports, such as bowling, billiards and bicycling, there was really not a great

deal for its members to do once they got out into the country.

In the summer of 1893, a reporter on the St. Paul Dispatch, Charles Hawkes, was assigned to do a column of social items twice a week. He was not keen on the job and gave it a lick and a promise, merely calling on a few young men who managed to dig up items for him.

In June, he called on Mr. Peet, who gave him what items he could think of, and then suggested Hawkes write an article about the game of golf which was just beginning to take hold in the East. Neither knew much about it, and Hawkes was too lazy to look up much on it, so he simply did a story to the effect that Mr. Peet planned starting golf at the Town and Country Club.

The Scottish Influence

The next day one George McCree, from Scotland, visited Mr. Peet, expressed hearty approval of his plan and offered his help. After thinking it over for a day or two, Mr. Peet took McCree out with him, and they mowed the grass on what Mr. Peet claimed was the first golf green west of New Jersey. That became the ninth green after McCree laid out the other eight, and Mr. Peet praised it as a cracking good nine.

"There were few obstacles other than the cattle, which were our first and most serious hazards," he wrote in that letter.

The club's first golf appropriation was for \$50, to buy a set of real golf holes and flags to replace the tomato cans and fish poles with red rags attached which were then in use. A year or two later the club leased the pasture land on which it was playing by paying the taxes on it and a few years later acquired it for \$40,000.



The First Obstacle

The game is not so easy as it seems. In the first place, the terrible *inertia* of the ball must be overcome.

LORD WELLWOOD
IN PRAISE OF GOLF