

Golf Was Forbidden Here, Too

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Since "golf" is now a household word and strokes have been played on the lawn of the Executive Mansion in Washington, it seems strange that the earliest written records of the game to reach "Golf House" are decrees forbidding the playing of the game in both Great Britain and the United States.

Last month the USGA JOURNAL mentioned that the Library in "Golf House" had received from J. C. Earle, of Los Angeles, Cal., a volume published in 1597 and containing the Acts of the Scottish Parliament up to that year. This reveals that, during the reign of James II of Scotland, his XIII Parliament issued the following decree in March, 1457:

"It is decreeted and ordained, that the weaponschawings be halden be the Lords and Barrones Spiritual and Temporal, foure times in the zeir. And that the fute-bal and golfe be utterly cried downe, and not to be used."

Again, while James III was on the throne of Scotland, his VI Parliament in 1471 decreed: "that the fute-ball and golfe be abused in time cumming, and that the buttes be maid up, and schuting used, after the tenour of the acts of Parliamente maid thereupon."

The third mention of "golfe" in this volume comes in another parliamentary act of 1491, during the rule of James IV, when a decree stated: "it is statute and ordained that in na place of the Realme there be used fute-ball, golfe or uther sik unprofitable sports, for the common good of the Realme and defense thereof."

It is clear from these three references that golf was catching on to such an extent that the young men were neglecting their practice of archery for national defense.

First Mention in United States

It is a curious fact that the earliest document containing a reference to golf in this country which has been brought to our attention is also one which prohibits the game. The translated text, a copy of which hangs in "Golf House", follows:

"The Honorable Commissary and Magistrates of Ft. Orange and the village of Beverwyck, having heard divers complaints from the burghers of this place against the practice of playing golf along the street which causes great damage to the windows of the houses and also exposes people to the danger of being injured and is contrary to the freedom of the public streets;

"Therefore, their honors, wishing to prevent the same, hereby forbid all persons to play golf in the streets, under the penalty of forfeiture of Fl. 25 for each person who shall be found doing so.

"Thus done in Ft. Orange, at the meeting of the honorable court of the said place, on the 10th of December, anno 1659."

Fort Orange was in New York State.

Contributions to the "Golf House" Fund continue to come slowly, but the Fund is now within \$9,000 of the goal. At press time, 5,500 Founders had given \$101,072. Those whose names have not previously been listed in the USGA JOURNAL are:

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