

# ORIGIN OF THE CURTIS CUP MATCHES

by

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*Co-Donor of the*

*Curtis Cup with her*

*sister, Miss Harriot S. Curtis*

A FEW YEARS after World War I—in 1924, to be exact—the women's inter-city team match among Boston, New York and Philadelphia was held in Boston. As was customary, a meeting took place in the afternoon to discuss any matters that might have come up in relation to the match or to the Women's Eastern Golf Association Championship, which had grown out of the practice rounds preceding the match.

These matches were great fun, and it was considered quite an honor to represent one's home city. We were a very congenial crowd. At this particular meeting someone said, "What fun it would be to play international team matches."

Several British girls had earlier come over to play in our Championship, including Miss Rhona Adair, Miss Dorothy Campbell (later Mrs. Hurd), and the extraordinary Miss Lottie Dod, who had been five times British tennis champion, retired unbeaten, took up golf, won that Championship in 1904 and also won the British figure skating championship.

Mrs. Hurd, who became a resident of this country, was going to England that summer and said she would take it up with the Ladies' Golf Union, in London. The Union reported that, while it liked the idea, its treasury was too depleted as a result of the war to consider it.

But the idea was started.

## **First Venture Abroad**

As a matter of fact, we had long since had a taste of the fun of international golf.

In the spring of 1905, Miss Frances C. Griscom, of Philadelphia, suggested that it would be fun to go over and play in the British Championship at Cromer, England. Eight of us went. The Championship was played early in the season. Since it was before the days of southern tournaments,

most of us had put our clubs in moth balls from November to May and hadn't much practice.

It was customary for the British to play their international matches, among England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, just before their Championship. A Britisher suggested that we play their combined strength. We were just eight friends, but in a gay, hopeless mood we took them on.

Miss Georgianna N. Bishop, of Bridgeport, Conn., then our Champion, was the only one of us to win, but we had a lot of fun. Of our eight, four had been or were to be United States Champions. They were Miss Griscom, Miss Bishop, my sister, Harriot, and I. Miss Molly Adams, of Boston, was a runner-up. The other members of our group were Mrs. Samuel Bettle, of Philadelphia, Miss Griscom's sister; Miss Emily Lockwood, of Boston; and Miss Ethel Burnett, of New York.

Miss Griscom, an ardent follower of our golf, also had arranged a team match with Canada in 1904.

## **Cup Is Offered**

So, in 1927, Harriot and I attempted to give the idea another push by offering a cup for an international match. Miss Fanny C. Osgood, of Boston, was appointed a committee of one to take up the matter once more with the LGU. While the British still felt the idea might be premature, a tentative plan was made for a match in 1928. This match never materialized, however, because of financial obstacles which could not be overcome.

In 1928, the USGA Women's Committee appointed a sub-committee to consider plans for conducting and financing an international team. Mrs. Charles Fraser, of New York, was chairman, and the other members were Miss Florence McNeely and myself. Although this committee found



*The first American women to participate in an international team match were photographed at Cromer, England, in 1905. The four in the rear were Miss Ethel Burnett, of New York, N. Y., now Mrs. Charles Clark; Miss Frances C. Griscom, of Philadelphia, Pa.; Miss Harriot Curtis, of Boston, Mass., and Miss Emily N. Lockwood, of Boston, Mass., now Mrs. William B. Wood. The three in the middle row were Miss Georgianna N. Bishop, of Bridgeport, Conn.; the late Mrs. Samuel Bettle, of Philadelphia, Pa., a sister of Miss Griscom; and Miss Margaret Curtis, of Boston, Mass., a sister of Miss Harriot. The young lady sitting in front was the late Miss Molly B. Adams, of Boston, Mass., later Mrs. Edward C. Wheeler. Only Miss Bishop won her match, but they started a ball a'rolling and one of the results was the series of matches for the Curtis Cup.*

interest among our golf associations favorable, it, too, was stymied by the financial problem abroad.

Although that committee was dissolved in 1930, the situation thereafter took a turn for the better. The USGA Executive Committee approved the match in principle.

On February 7, 1931, the LGU suddenly accepted an offer we had made to go to England for the first international team match. It also agreed to continue the matches here in 1934. Shortly thereafter, the USGA agreed to assume financial responsibility for our side.

The selection of the first team proved unexpectedly simple, probably simpler than any since. Each member of the USGA

Women's Committee was asked to submit the names of fifteen players whom she considered of international-team caliber. Eight, and only eight, names appeared on every list; and since they represented the unanimous opinion of the committee, they became the team. They were: Mrs. L. D. Cheney, Miss Helen Hicks, Mrs. O. S. Hill, Mrs. Harley G. Higbie, Miss Marion Hollins, Miss Maureen Orcutt, Miss Virginia Van Wie and Mrs. Edwin H. Vare, Jr. Miss Hollins was chosen Captain.

Wentworth, England, was the site of the first match and it was completed in one day—May 21, 1932—with three four-somes in the morning and six singles in the afternoon. It was a day of real gratification for us.