

PEN PORTRAIT OF A SENIOR

by

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IT was spring, like this, and young Georgie Studinger decided to play hookey from Farragut Grammar School, in San Francisco.

"My chum talked me into cutting classes that day. I didn't need much urging," Stud recalls. "We strolled over the sand dunes and through the vegetable gardens of Ingleside.

"We saw a lot of people going into the San Francisco Golf Club. We sneaked in to see what all the fuss was about. That was the first round of golf I ever saw in my life.

"Know who the foursome was? Only Harry Vardon, Ted Ray, John Black and Macdonald Smith. I started at the top and worked down. That was in 1913.

"Know who my chum was? Mel Smith, now the pro at Santa Barbara's Valley Club. He finally got out of the eighth grade at Farragut."

Stud was recently lionized by the Lake Merced Golf and Country Club at a luncheon and dinner. They kept him busy all day long.

What was the occasion? Nothing special, except the Lake Merced people wanted to do something nice for one of the nation's best senior golfers. Stud is 56, and still a formidable opponent. Last September, at Nashville, Tenn., he lost in the final of the USGA Senior Amateur Championship to J. Wood Platt, of Philadelphia.

Not Country Club

Stud isn't country club, and neither is golf any more. He is the embodiment of public links and "City" players. Back in 1928, when the San Francisco City tournament was primitive, he won the title and

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GEORGE STUDINGER

was in the final three times subsequently, as recently as 1945.

This man doesn't look like the delineation of a golfer. He could pass for a middleweight pugilist. Stud is no beauty. He has the homely ruggedness of face common to so many likeable guys.

But Lake Merced people love him. They described him as "kindly, generous and thoughtful," and that's why they threw him a day.

Stud talks like a man from the Mission. Fresh off the sound track of Runyon's "Guys and Dolls".

"Why not?" he asks, "I was brought up in the Mission. Lived at Twenty-sixth and Castro and later on Bartlett Street off Valencia. Fifty years ago next month, I climbed the Castro hill to Twenty-second street and saw the city burning below me. I was six years old, but you don't forget something like that."

Studinger was born in North Beach, Broadway and Kearny. His father was a German immigrant who earned his keep as a baker. Stud remembers the American Biscuit Co., where he bought a gunny sack of broken cookies for 25 cents.

He played his first formal eighteen holes in 1924, either at Ingleside or Lincoln, he forgets which.

"I shot in the low eighties the first time out, but I should explain that," Stud wants

it known. "I had been caddying on the Coast for such as Gene Sarazen and Walter Hagen. Mac Smith took me back to Oakland Hills, in Detroit, for the USGA Open Championship, and there I saw Bobby Jones.

Jones the Best

"Jones will do as the best in my book."

There was very little opportunity for kids to play golf when Studinger was a truant from Farragut Grammar.

"In nineteen hundred and thirteen, there were only two courses in this town—the Presidio and the San Francisco Club," Stud minds. "I wasn't interested in golf as a game. I wanted to earn a buck to bring home to my mother.

"The going rate was forty cents for eighteen holes. I brought home as much as sixty cents some days. This bought bread and milk."

The junior tournament for high schoolers and younger at Lake Merced in Easter week is the best thing that ever happened to golf, Studinger preaches.

"So what if the kids take over the course for one week of the year?" he asks. "Adults can afford to lay off. They have fifty-one weeks left. Are they parents or aren't they? Parents should make a sacrifice."

In his day, Studinger observes, golf was for wealthy jokers in knickerbockers. No attention was given to 'teen-agers.

"Golf was learned the hard way by caddies, and they are a vanishing race," he says. "Nowadays, golfers use carts to cut down the expense of shooting a round, and the caddie is virtually a dead duck.

"The best golfers are coming out of college. I thought I was good. I once shot sixty-six at Harding, sixty-three at Lincoln and my best at Lake Merced was sixty-seven. The younger generation disregards par."

A Versatile Athlete

Studinger is no one-sport man. He was a nifty outfielder in the Mission.

"I could box a little," Stud admits, "I won the one hundred sixty pound championship of the Union Iron Works in World War I. We worked seven days a week, from nineteen hundred and sixteen through nine-

USGA FILM LIBRARY

Latest addition to USGA's Film Library is "Inside Golf House," a guided tour through the shrine of golf in America. The viewer is given an opportunity to see the many interesting exhibits in "Golf House," USGA headquarters in New York, and to re-live golf triumphs of the past with many of the game's immortals. Lindsey Nelson, Assistant Sports Director of the National Broadcasting Company, is the narrator. The film is a 16 mm. black and white production with a running time of 28 minutes.

Thus far, more than 460 bookings have been made for USGA's motion picture, "The Rules of Golf—Etiquette." The film stresses the importance of etiquette by portrayal of various violations of the code in the course of a family four-ball match. Ben Hogan appears in several scenes, and Robert T. Jones, Jr., makes the introductory statement. A 16 mm. Kodachrome production, the film has a running time of 17½ minutes.

The distribution of both prints is handled by National Educational Films, Inc., 165 West 46th Street, New York 36, N. Y., which produced the films in cooperation with the USGA. The rental is \$15 per film or \$25 in combination at the same time, including the cost of shipping prints to the renter.

teen hundred and twenty, and I was so well-heeled that I bought silk shirts and a Buick with the top down."

Studinger is a graduate of the Yellow Cab system. He was a driver and later a supervisor of Yellow's service.

"I was on the night shift," he says, "I needed exercise, so I turned to walking the six thousand yards. Today, there must be a couple of hundred cabbies on local courses."

Stud is proud that he was in on the beginning of public links golfing. He was a member of the San Francisco team that won the President Harding trophy at St. Paul in 1931.

The late Charlie Ferrera won the individual title, and with him on the team were Arthur Sato, a Japanese; Bob Oppenheim—and Studinger.

It was a relief for Stud to shed his leather puttees, at that time the cab driver's badge.