

# AN ALL-TIME RECORD COMES TO "GOLF HOUSE"

by

MISS NANCY JUPP

**T**HE United States Golf Association Museum in "Golf House" has become the richer by 3165 exhibits in one fell swoop!

The donation was made by Ralph A. Kennedy, of New York, N. Y., who has handed over his entire collection of score cards, signed, dated and numbered, from every course he has played in 43 years of golf.

It was not simply a generous gesture. It was a truly magnanimous gift, a triumph of sentiment over sentimentality.

To open one of the four safe deposit boxes was, for him, to unleash the genius of memory. Five cards grouped together from Peoria, Ill., represented one day's golf; four from different counties in Arkansas reminded him of an all-day dash that started at 5 a.m. and ended in pitch darkness with six fore-caddies endeavoring to locate the balls. His most vivid recollection of that day was holing out from the side of the green at the 18th for a par 5. Early the next morning he replayed the hole in daylight and took an 8!

These were not isolated instances. In 1933 he took in the eight Bermuda courses in two days. A seven day visit to Chicago the following year added twenty-one new cards to his collection. On a trip to Maine in 1935, Kennedy played thirty-one courses in nine days, averaging 87.

### *The Real Significance*

But statistics can never get to the core of this unique achievement which may well stand for all time.

This quietly spoken New Yorker, a founder member of the Winged Foot Golf Club, in Mamaroneck, N. Y., is no fanatic. He is a man who loves golf, and who made it his medium for recreation and a quest in life.

The story of how he started out to better the record of a British music-hall actor,

Charles Leonard Fletcher, in 1919 has often been told. The real significance of Mr. Kennedy's story lies deeper than that. He and his wife had always wanted children. They were never blessed with any. Instead they found a mutual and lasting interest in golf.

Now at the age of 75, Mr. Kennedy's eyesight is failing. Three years ago he was forced to lay aside his clubs, and it is perhaps appropriate that card number 3165 in his collection belongs to New York State (Hamilton Inn Golf Course, in Lake Pleasant) as does the initial one (Van Cortlandt Park).

He knows the intervening numbers as well as any philatelist knows his stamps. Hearing that my home club was Longniddry, in Scotland, he reached for the keys to one of his boxes.

"I'll make you feel homesick", he said, producing card 3007 almost as soon as the words were out of his mouth. Not merely did he remember his round there, but also a story of the sheep which were put to graze on the course during the war.

### *Memory Is Bright*

Although he has bequeathed the tangible evidence of his golfing travels, journeys which have taken him through the forty-eight states besides thirteen other countries, nothing can dim his legion of memories.

Foremost of all was his 3000th venture over the Old Course, St. Andrews, Scotland. Typical of his modesty, he was ready to step aside to let a celebrity, for whom photographers and a gallery had turned out, tee off before him. His knees shook and his hands trembled when fellow-countryman, Ellis Knowles, also of New York, pointed out to him that he was the man they had come to see. Mr. Kennedy had paid St. Andrews a high compliment. The folk of

## MR. KENNEDY'S MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT



Mr. Kennedy keeps a stiff upper lip as he drives off from the first tee on the Old Course, St. Andrews, Scotland, his 3,000th course. Flanked by a battery of cameras and in the presence of former British Walker Cup players, John B. Beck and Leonard Crawley, he hit a fine drive down the middle. The player on the right is Ellis Knowles, of New York.

St. Andrews had turned out in acknowledgment. He was the celebrity.

When he visited two sand courses laid out by an oil company in Peru, he had to sail into a bay and be ferried ashore by lighter to the Talara course. From there he went by truck through a tunnel in a mountain to neighboring Negretis.

On the lighter side Mr. Kennedy found himself placed astride a donkey to be transported up to the first tee at Uniontown Country Club, Uniontown, Pa. Less docile animals he encountered were the young bear at Jasper Park, Alberta, Canada, who mistook his ball for a mushroom and stood sniffing anxiously, and the stags at Cypress Point Club, Pebble Beach, Cal., who reared their magnificent heads and stood menacingly until their does and fawns had had time to escape.

His reflections are not confined to his

own activities. He values the time he has spent in the company of Bob Jones. He warms when he recalls the showmanship of Walter Hagen and the likeable personality which he still enjoys from time to time. He classes the late Harry Vardon, former British and United States Open Champion, among the finest stylists he ever saw, and as a lover of children his mind goes affectionately back to the day he played with a little Georgian 6 year old who grew up to be one of the biggest names in women's golf, Miss Louise Suggs.

Ralph Kennedy is already a legend in the golfing world. Now the testimony of his intensive crusade is on show for all to see. If any reader thinks he has played on a fair number of courses, he may get a shock to find that he will have to multiply that number by fifteen to reach Mr. Kennedy's total. Check and see for yourself.