

# WINGED FOOT AND ITS GOLF FAMILY

by

LINCOLN A. WERDEN  
*Golf Writer,  
The New York Times*

OVER the years, the Winged Foot Golf Club, in Mamaroneck, N. Y., has been the scene of many important golfing events. The Open, the Amateur and a Walker Cup match have been played over one of its two courses, and this month the Women's Open is to be played over the other.

On the stone terrace in front of the clubhouse, a Winged Foot president led a happy gathering in song after Bob Jones had scored his 1929 Open victory. On display near the main lounge are trophies of many Champions. Occasionally on a bulletin board you may also see photographs of youngsters swinging golf clubs.

They are all hallmarks of a club where everyone seems to have more than a casual interest in golf. One of those who spurs the spirit of activity now is Claude Harmon, the club's professional.

### *A Handshake From Jones*

A native of Georgia, Claude recalls the days when his, as well as everyone's hero was Bob Jones. In the crowd at the Atlanta railroad station in 1925 when Jones returned home after losing the Open title in a play-off with Willie Macfarlane was a small, dark-haired lad. Claude rushed up and asked his idol for an autograph. He beamed when Jones not only signed his name but also shook hands.

Harmon never did forget the handshake. Living across the street from the Piedmont public course in Atlanta, Claude became more and more interested in golf. Before he became a professional, at the age of 19, he often played the game for as much as ten hours a day.

"But they were wasted hours," com-

*Reprinted by permission of The New York Times.*



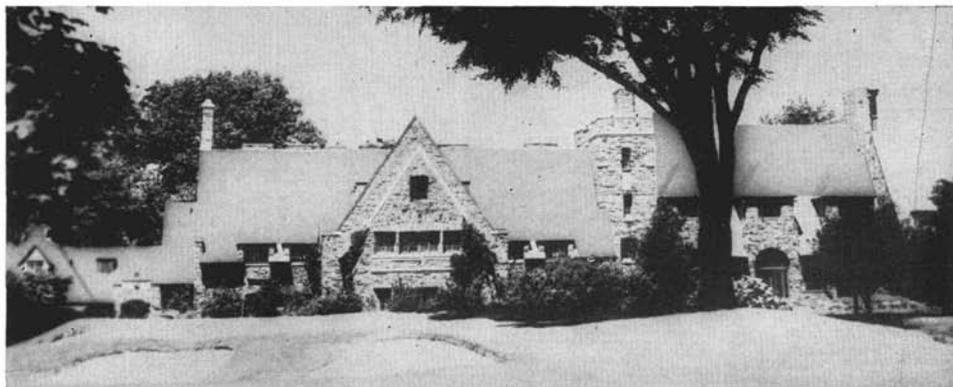
CLAUDE HARMON

mented Harmon the other day. "I had little guidance and I learned nothing. It was not until later that I realized what a difference good coaching meant. Craig Wood hired me as his assistant in 1941 and taught me how to hit a golf ball."

### *Stepping Stone to Greater Things*

One of the successes attributed to Harmon is that those who have served as his assistants have gone on to greater things in golf. "I do spend a lot of time with them, trying to improve their games. And I also emphasize that there are lots of qualities that go into the making of a top-flight professional golfer," admits Harmon. When the Open Championship comes to Winged Foot in 1959, many of these former assistants will return as famous players.

An assistant must conform to Harmon's idea of gentlemanly behavior. He must be able to withstand taunts or disappointments if he is to become a proficient tournament competitor. And Harmon also believes that a pro must look and dress the part. "He



The Winged Foot clubhouse forms a stately background to the tenth green on the East course where the Women's Open Championship will be held at the end of this month. It will be the first time that Winged Foot has played host to a women's event.

must know how to select his clothes with good taste," is a Harmon precept.

"Yes," added Harmon, "and his language must be such that I can take him home to supper with the kids and no one will feel the least embarrassed." Harmon and his wife Alice have four sons, ranging in ages from 8 to 13. And the Harmons have a knack of making everyone feel at home.

"Winged Foot is the reason why my assistants have done so well," said Harmon. "The members are pretty wonderful to them. They take an interest in their golf game and in their ambitions. It isn't long after an assistant of mine comes from the South or West that he is immediately adopted into the Winged Foot family. It helps him a great deal."

It is easy to agree with Harmon after inspecting a list of his former aides

Jack Burke, Jr., now the Professional Golfers' Association Champion, worked on his game constantly and never wanted to take his regular day off while at Winged Foot. His youngest brother, Jimmy, along with Jay Revere, are Harmon's current assistants.

Mike Souchak is a graduate of the Harmon shop. "His football training at Duke was a great help in my opinion," observed Harmon. "Mike was an adept golf pupil. He absorbed everything you told him."

The list of ex-Harmon aides is formidable. It also includes Otto Greiner, Shelley

Mayfield, Al Mengert, Buck Worsham, George Schoux, Harry Dee, Tom Burke, Dick Mayer, Ed Draper and Dave Marr. "We're always sure that when they leave us, they will go on to good jobs," Harmon stated.

Besides the professionals, there are amateurs, business men and youngsters who come under Harmon's golfing tutelage. Some of the ranking tournament players who have been Harmon pupils include Jimmy McHale, former Walker Cup player; Dick Chapman, former British and United States Amateur Champion, and Joe Gagliardi, ex-Metropolitan Champion.

#### *Clinic for Youngsters*

Harmon also runs a clinic for youngsters. That project receives his attention as well as that of the assistants on his staff. Once a week, the free instruction for club members' children goes to some twenty to thirty potential stars of varying ages from 5 to 18.

In addition to his unusual record as an instructor, Harmon has an imposing tourney record. He won the Masters at Augusta, Ga., in 1948 and three times has been a semi-finalist in the Professional Golfers' Association Championship. That puts him in the unique class of being both a teaching and playing pro. "I don't know anywhere I could accomplish all this, except at Winged Foot," noted Harmon. "There's no other club quite like it."