



# A GLIMPSE AT THE T.A.S. OF THE SIXTIES

Memories of the early days by a USGA Green Section agronomist from 1962 to 1976.

BY HOLMAN GRIFFIN



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In the sixties it might have been a record that I spent 206 nights on the road in one year. I could not even reply to the census, which was slipped under the motel door, as a resident of my own home. Most of us Green Section agronomists were flying about 100,000 miles a year, and when on the ground it was not unusual to drive 1,600 miles a week. There were some close calls, but in 15 years on the road I never had to spend the night in the car, even once.

We were going to run Monty Moncrief, then Green Section South-eastern Director, for President because he was so well liked. Monty became my boss in 1968 and at my first meeting working with him he said, "Holman, you have been with the Green Section almost as long as I have. Now, I am going to travel these states and you are going to travel those. If you can't handle it, you are in trouble. Now, let's go play golf."

We all revered and respected Dr. Marvin Ferguson as our leader and felt he had a handle on the answer to any turf question as much as any man alive. Marvin began with the Green Section in the fifties, and he and Joe Dey (USGA Executive Director from 1934 to 1969) discussed whether our automobiles should have radios and air-conditioning. You'd think that should have been obvious!

One year I studied the possibility of all agronomists becoming pilots and traveling the country in our own airplanes. The conclusion was that it would be feasible only if we parachuted a man out and picked him up on the return. The plan for the year, which consisted primarily of a budget total for each Director, was discussed behind the potted palms in the Biltmore Hotel at the USGA Annual Meeting in New York for about five minutes each year. So much for input! My starting salary was \$5,500 a year, and when I reached \$24,000 annually, the world was my oyster.

I can only look back on those days as a wonderful learning experience and a wonderful life experience. I was privileged to visit and travel many times with some of the pioneers of turf, including Eb Steiniger, O. J. Noer, Tom Mascaro, Joe Duich, Fred Grau,

Bill Bengeyfield, Al Radko, R. C. Potts, Jim Latham, Charlie Wilson, Jim Watson, and so many others.

Congratulations to the past and present Green Section agronomists on 50 years of service, and I offer some words from Monty Moncrief as sage advice for the future: "Stay on the side of the grass."

