

# Golf Added to Historic Williamsburg's Charms

Veteran Leonard Biles calls his new location, the Williamsburg Inn course, "one of the most beautiful golf courses I have ever seen or been connected with," and Leonard's been around.

Biles took over as professional of the new course in historic Williamsburg, Va., in June and has outfitted a small temporary pro shop and caddie house in addition to supervising operation of the course and giving lessons. He considers the new course a little short but that it makes up for that in its toughness and beauty.

The 9-hole course with its yardage of 2,830 and par of 35 was first opened to guests of Williamsburg Inn and Lodge on a greens fee basis on June 16. It is conveniently located just off the south terraces of the Inn.

The need for a golf course to round out the recreational facilities available in the city restored to its 18th century appearance by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was recognized long before the war with the increasing numbers of visitors to the city but actual construction had to wait as one of the first post-war projects to be undertaken. Officials of Colonial Williamsburg, the organization set up by Rockefeller to carry forward the restoration of the one-time colonial capital city, engaged the well known architect, Fred Findlay, designer of many excellent courses in the middle Atlantic section, to design and supervise construction of a course in the rolling meadow and woodland south of Williamsburg Inn.

## Weather and Labor Delays

Findlay laid out an 18 hole course "by eye" in the summer of 1945 but it was decided to confine the project to 9 holes for the present with construction of the remainder to be scheduled at a later date. The area to be used was a 65 acre tract on the periphery of Williamsburg which was 30 percent wooded and the rest semi-woods or open fields. Clearing for fairway and rough began in the fall of 1945 and was completed in the late spring of the following year. Grading and drainage was started in the spring of 1946 and continued through the summer constantly beset by the shortage of suitable grading equipment and the scarcity of labor in the section. At one point the exasperated construction forces resorted to using mules and farm equipment to speed the grading process.



Leonard Biles, Williamsburg pro.

Further delay in the grading was caused by the extremely wet summer but a break in the weather in September enabled final cultivation and the start of seeding. The fairways received the usual fertilization and were seeded with a fairway mixture of red top, Kentucky blue, and Bermuda grasses.

Findlay had brought down bent stolons for the greens and started a nursery in the fall of the previous year although experts consulted were extremely pessimistic about the maintenance of bent grass in this area. It was made up of three varieties: C-1, C-7 and a special variety developed by Findlay. Mushroom soil secured from southern Pennsylvania was used in construction of the greens.

A special problem developed in that some of the traps were not readily drainable. Thirty foot holes had to be drilled, the bottoms dynamited and then filled with loose gravel. Another problem, and unusual to this Tidewater area, was that 3 of the holes of the course were across deep ravines. Bridges were discussed but substitute steps made from white oak logs were used with native marl for walks connecting the steps. Rustic benches for each tee were constructed out of oak logs sawed in half.

The signs were designed to harmonize with other directional signs throughout the restored area of the city with cream lettering on green background. Because of construction restrictions, the temporary caddie house and pro shop was made from a small building moved to the course. It has been attractively panelled in knotty pine.

The course was constructed at an ap-



Workmen remove roots from the seventh fairway of the new Williamsburg Inn course in the early days of construction of the nine-hole layout. The entire area shown in the picture above was heavily wooded and had to be completely cleared.

proximate cost of \$71,000, including the temporary clubhouse and the architect's fee, which officials consider reasonable in view of the unavoidable delays and high costs. Approximately \$5,000 has been allotted for maintenance equipment.

The greenkeeper, Robert L. Johnson, and

his force of 6 men, haven't met any unusual difficulties since the course was opened. Johnson, a native of the section, has had 20 years experience as manager and greenkeeper of the Yorktown CC course which was closed in 1941.

Maintenance costs of the course are ex-



Fertilizer is dumped on the fairway of the third hole of the new Williamsburg Inn Golf course preparatory to being spread. The fertilizer had to be used fairly heavily on some of the open fields where the topsoil had washed. In the background can be seen the bunkers and green of the third hole.

pected to be a little above the pre-war estimate of \$1,000 per hole per year for this area.

### Formal Opening in Fall

Following its limited use this summer, the course will be formally opened in the fall and reserved for guests of the two hotels serving the restored city and for members of a proposed Williamsburg Inn Golf club which will probably include membership for golf facilities or a joint membership with the Williamsburg Inn Swimming club incorporating the privileges of the beautiful outdoor swimming pool of the Inn located near the caddie house and first tee on the Inn grounds. Greens fees have been set at \$1 per day Monday through Friday and \$2 on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.

The golf course is operated under the direction of John D. Green, vice president of Williamsburg Restoration, Inc. and general manager of Williamsburg Inn and Lodge. He is assisted by a golf advisory committee of local citizens.

Leonard Biles came to Williamsburg as professional from the managership of the Holston Hills CC, Knoxville, Tenn. He has had extended experience as a golf professional and also in the construction and maintenance of golf courses in England, Wales and the United States. He came to this country from England in 1912 and worked for several years with the Sleepy Hollow CC in Tarrytown, N.Y. and Wianno Club on Cape Cod. For 15 years he was at the Homestead in Hot Springs in charge of the golf courses there. Prior to his association with the Holston Hills club he had been manager of the Watertown GC, Watertown, N.Y., and the James River CC, Newport News, Va.

### "HAGEN DAY" SEPT. 17; PARTY AT RED RUN

Michigan pros and amateurs will honor Walter Hagen with a gala afternoon of golf and evening of banqueting and talk at Red Run CC, Royal Oak, Mich., Wed., Sept. 17.

The Michigan PGA, headed by Pres. Frank T. Sproggell, engineered the affair. It is planned to have as a highlight an historic reunion of Hagen, Jones, Armour and Sarazen for a few holes of golf in the afternoon. Arrangements provide for 200 at golf and 300 at dinner. Shortly after the party was announced it was virtually a sell-out.

Response to the Michigan PGA affair for Walter indicated plainly what nation-wide success might have featured the "Walter Hagen Day" celebration pros proposed be

conducted by the national pro body in bringing to the attention of the American sporting public that it was an American golf pro who revolutionized the public attitude toward all professional athletes and opened the way into the big money class for them.

After the Hagen Day first was proposed by NY Metropolitan district pros as a national affair, baseball's alert promotion talent put on Babe Ruth day. Many pros still are hoping the PGA will get busy in planning and conducting a Hagen Day as a highlight of 1948 pro golfer publicity and promotion.

### HUGH MOORE LAUDED FOR SERVICE TO MACON

Macon (Ga.) Telegraph sports editor Sam Glassman lauded Hugh Moore, progkpr.-mgr. of Macon's Bowden munny course in a Telegraph column preceding the annual city championship.

Sam, who is not one to whack out complimentary paragraphs unless the subject is deserving, said: "Hugh Moore spends most of his time seeing that the Bowden course is kept in first-class playing condition and at the same time is rebuilding most of the greens.

"This is perhaps the main reason why Hugh doesn't have much time to stick around the clubhouse and listen to the woes and joys of the various golfers.

"There is no doubt but that Hugh Moore has made the Bowden course pay off. The play has been so good that the green fees turned in during the summer are more than the actual expense of the course.

"And to those who might feel inclined to criticize Moore because he does not spend more time back-slapping, they might take into consideration that he is doing jobs that other private and municipal courses hire three men to perform. \*\*\*The thing that puzzles me is how the man can be as friendly and as pleasant as he is."

Moore went to Macon two years ago when the 9-hole munny course was about to be abandoned as a waste of the taxpayers' money. It was in too poor condition to even be a grazing ground for goats.

Now the fairway turf is excellent, four completely new greens have been built, tees now are much better than the greens used to be, there are new traps, ice water on the course, a smartly well run pro shop and the place is in the black on a 40 cent green fee.

Greenkeepers and pros have marvelled at the job and consider that Moore's work long hours under that Georgia sun should have got him an unanimous great hand and stars in his crown in the hereafter.