

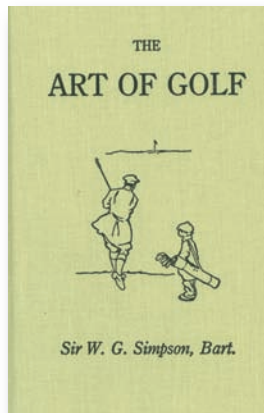
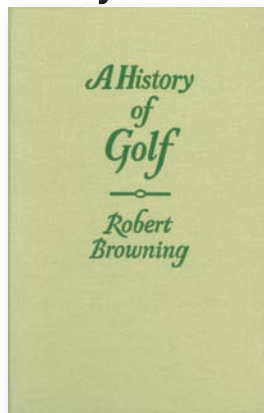


The Superintendent's Five-Foot Shelf

In late 1800's, Dr. Charles Eliot, president of Harvard University, stated on several occasions "the elements of a liberal education could be obtained by spending 15 minutes a day reading from a collection of books that could fit on a five-foot shelf." In 1909 with the help of professor of English, William Neilson, Eliot's editorial effort was published. A collection of classic works, made up of 51 volumes, accommodating 5 feet of shelf space called the Harvard Classics. This idea was continued in the 1930's when Mortimer Adler and Robert Hutchins at the University of Chicago thought concepts of education could be gained through study of the "great books" and "great ideas" of Western civilization. This led to the publication of a 54 volume series in 1952 called The Great Books of the Western World, also accommodating 5 feet of shelf space. So, I wondered, what collection of classic works should a Superintendent spend 15 minutes a day reading? Which books belong on the Superintendent's five-foot shelf?

No collection of books put together by me could ever supercede the *Harvard Classics* or *Great Books*. The goal was to use the same idea and provide a list of books that would be useful for a Superintendent to have as a reference through their career. By relating this to the collections of Eliot, and Adler, my only intention is to provide it with some level of elegance, whether it is warranted or not. The topics I considered useful included the history of golf, golf course architecture, agronomy, business management, and leadership. Here are the books that made it to the top shelf.

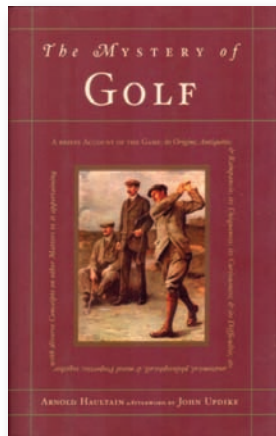
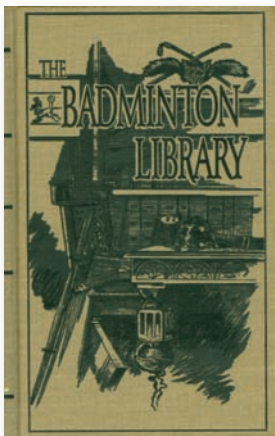
History



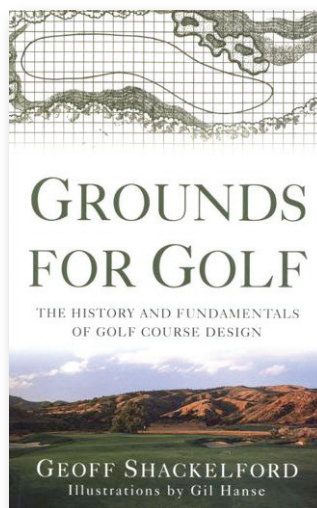
One very unique aspect of golf is it has lent itself to a collection of literature not rivaled by any other sport. Culling the list of books about the history and appeal of the game was not an easy task, but these titles are a short list of the best. *A History of Golf* – Robert Browning, 1955. It has been called the most complete history of the game of golf. Spanning from golf's antiquity in the 14th century to the early 20th century. *The Art of Golf* – Sir W.G. Simpson, Bart., 1887. A fantastic book, with wonderful writing, on the history and appeal of the game. Simpson writes:

"To some minds the great field which golf opens up for exaggeration is its chief attraction. Lying about the length of one's drives has this advantage over most forms of falsehood, that it can scarcely be detected. Your audience may doubt your veracity, but they cannot prove your falsity. Even when some rude person proves your shot to be impossibly long, you are not cornered. You admit to an exceptional loft, to a skid off a pal-ing, or, as a last appeal to the father of lies, you may rather think that a dog lifted your ball. 'Anyhow,' you add conclusively, 'that is where we found it when we came up to it.'"

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Architecture



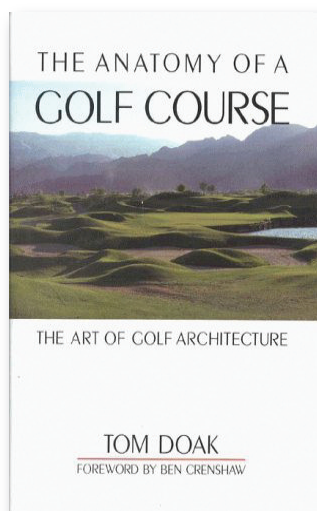
Golf: The Badminton Library – Horace C. Hutchinson, 1890. Another book with great writing on the history and appeal of the game. *British Golf Links* – Horace C. Hutchinson, 1897. This book provides descriptions and histories of 54 courses across Europe. The gem in this book is the large, crisp images of golf in the late 1800's. Show your members these pictures, and they will never be able to complain of bunker conditions again. *The Mystery of Golf* – Arnold Haultain, 1908. Some can argue this inclusion, but none can deny its uniqueness. Haultain philosophizes on all things golf related in an attempt to find answers:

"I have just come home from my Club. We played till we could not see the flag; the caddies were sent ahead to find the balls by the thud of their fall; and a low large moon threw whispering shadows on the dew-wet grass or ere we trode the home-green. At dinner the talk was of golf; and for three mortal hours after dinner the talk was – of golf. Yet the talkers were neither idiots, fools, nor monomaniacs. On the contrary, many of them were grave men of the world. At all events the most monomaniacal of the lot was a prosperous man of affairs, worth I do not know how many thousands, which thousands he had made by the same mental faculties by which this evening he was trying to probe or to elucidate the profundities and complexities of this so-called "game." Will some one tell us wherein lies its mystery?"

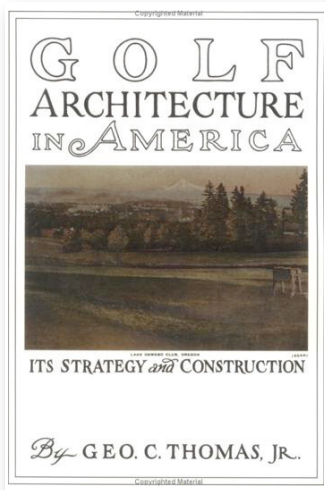
The Story of American Golf – Herbert Warren Wind, 1948. The masterpiece, from one of the masters of golf writing. The definitive history of golf in America. Absolutely necessary reading. *The Complete Golfer* – Herbert Warren Wind, 1954. This book is a collection of many different writers edited by Wind. Informative, very entertaining and covering a wide range of subjects. Be careful reading this, it could be the start of an incurable addiction to golf literature. No list of golf books will be complete without including something from Darwin, arguably the greatest golf writer to lift a pen. Not the same Darwin included in the two collections discussed at the beginning (Charles Darwin), but his grandson, Bernard Darwin. Anything by Darwin will do, but if you need a starting point, try *Golf Between Two Wars*, 1944, or *Playing The Like*, 1934. The next entry is only listed last because of its fundamental difference to the other books in this category, but is a requirement for any Superintendent, regardless of the size of shelf. The most recent edition of the USGA's *Decisions of the Rules of Golf* should be studied and understood on a regular basis.

Some study of golf course architecture is necessary to understand how maintenance of the course effects how the features of a course play. Becoming familiar with the ideas of the great golf course architects is another aspect of a liberally educated Superintendent. If you have read nothing of architecture previously, here are three books to provide a starting point. *Grounds For Golf* – Geoff Shackelford, 2003. Shackelford's book is a great overview of the history of golf course architecture and its philosophy.

"Genuine appreciation and passion for any art begins when you pick up some bit of insight that opens your eyes in unimaginable ways. Knowing just a little something about what goes into creating a work of art, a building or an innovative product adds to our lives and encourages us to explore hobbies. Enjoying any art form is not a matter of who can bewilder us with the most intellectual nonsense about angles and lines and the neo-nonexistential sensibilities of the architect."

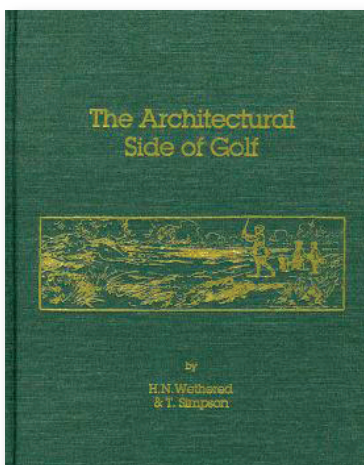


The Golden Age of Golf Design – Geoff Shackelford, 1999. This book tracks the great architects and their respective ideas regarding golf course design. It includes many early pictures from the greatest courses ever built. *The Anatomy of a Golf Course* – Tom Doak, 1992. One of the greatest books to outline the philosophies and elements used to design a golf course.



This next group of books is written by some of the greatest architects of all time. Though the content is similar, in that they are presenting their ideas regarding golf course architecture, they are all worthwhile reading to gain insight into the thought processes regarding the construction of their courses. *The Spirit of St. Andrews* – Dr. Alister Mackenzie, 1995. An unknown set of papers discovered 60 years after Mackenzie's death is what makes up this book. The literature of golf architecture is richer after finding them. *Golf Architecture in America: Its Strategy and Construction* – George C. Thomas, Jr., 1927. This is still one of the best books written about course architecture and construction. Thomas writes:

“Place the golf course on a level plane; have no traps of any kind; let every fairway be flat; the green unprotected and without rolls; let there be no rough; nothing between the tee and the green but perfect fairway, and the green itself absolutely level and what would be the result? – a thing without interest or beauty, on which there is no thrill of accomplishment which is worth while; a situation untrue to tradition, and apart from the spirit of golf as it was given birth among the rolling sand dunes of Scotland.”



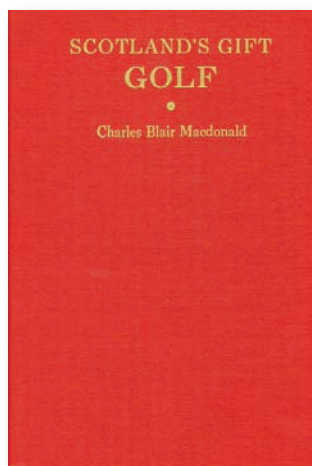
The Links – Robert Hunter, 1926. Very similar to Thomas' book, but is more peculiar, in that it was written before Hunter ever designed a single course. *The Course Beautiful* – A.W. Tillinghast, 1995. This is a fantastic collection of articles written by Tillinghast, and coupled with equally fantastic photos to supplement the written content. *Golf Has Never Failed Me* –

Donald Ross, 1996. Many short essays from Ross addressing his views on many aspects of course architecture. *Bury Me in a Pot Bunker* – Pete Dye, 1995. A very enjoyable set of stories about the construction of Dye's greatest courses. It is more unique in that we likely will not get much more from the notoriously unostentatious Dye. *The Architectural Side of Golf* – H.N. Wethered and Tom Simpson, 1929. This book is my favorite of this lot. Wethered's wonderful prose, describing his views of course architecture, make this a delight to read. Wethered writes of the ideal golf course:

“The pity of it all is that when we have succeeded in amusing ourselves in building up the ideal course, picking and choosing wonderful holes here and there – when we have, as we fancy, completed something rather wonderful, a string of pearls we admire individually, against which nothing can be said except collectively – we shall probably find ourselves saying with feelings amounting almost to repugnance, ‘Heaven forbid that we should be asked to play here! The strain of it would be intolerable.’ This is equivalent to saying that anything approaching a uniform degree of excellence is the one thing in golf which must be avoided at all cost. It smacks of standardization, which is abhorrent when it is applied to a game with the fine versatility of golf.”

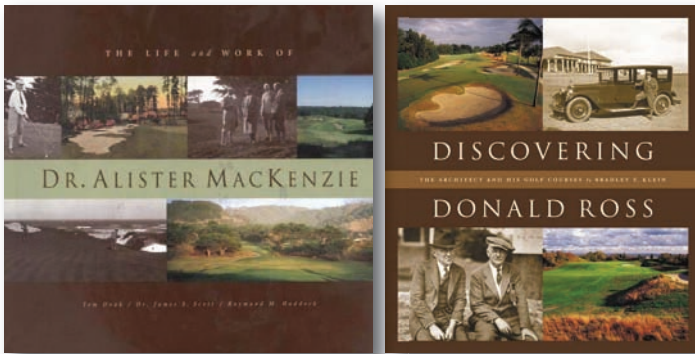
Concerning Golf – John Low, 1903. This selection could have easily been placed under the history and appeal of golf, but I have placed it here because Low sprinkled some principles regarding golf design throughout the book. As interesting as they are, they have been lost on present day courses. Low writes:

“There is hardly such a thing as an unfair bunker...It is a mistake to suppose that because you hit a shot straight down the middle of the course and find it bunkered you are to fill up the offending hazard...The greedy golfer will go too near and be sucked in to his destruction. The straight player will go just as near as he deems safe, just as close as he dare. Just as close as he dare: that's golf, and that's a hazard of immortal importance.”



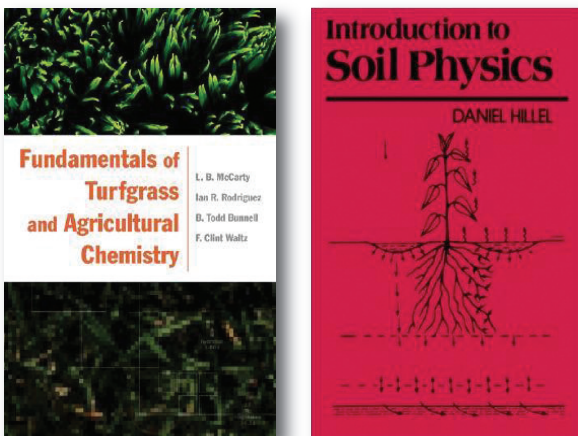
Scotland's Gift: Golf – Charles Blair Macdonald, 1928. This book is most accurately described as Macdonald's autobiography. However, regarding his place in the history of golf in America, and the profession of golf course architecture, it becomes a necessary read. You can miss the details of the beginning of the USGA that are included, but don't miss his justification for being the winner of the first “official” US Amateur
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Championship. *The Golf Courses of the British Isles* – Bernard Darwin, 1910. Darwin profiling the greatest courses of the British Isles, there's no question why it is one of golf's greatest books.



The following are biographies of great golf course architects. These books are great resources for the history and construction of their respective courses. *The Life and Work of Dr. Alister Mackenzie* – Doak, Scott, Haddock, 2001. *Discovering Donald Ross: The Architect and His Golf Courses* – Bradley Klein, 2001. *The Evangelist of Golf: The Story of Charles Blair MacDonal* – George Bahto, 2002. *A.W. Tillinghast: Creator of Golf Courses* – Philip Young, 2005. *The Captain* – Geoff Shackelford, 1996.

Turfgrass



Here is the category where I will deviate from the idea behind the *Harvard Classics* and the *Great Books*. In those collections, there are no textbooks. While considering the purpose of this list I decided it was necessary to include them to incorporate their content, and to help fill 5 feet of shelf space. I made these selections based on their effectiveness at covering a specific topic related to the science of maintaining a golf course. The first book I reach for is the Agronomy Monograph No. 32 *Turfgrass* – Waddington, Carrow, Shearman, 1992. This book is a necessary resource for any Superintendent. This book covers all aspects of physiology, soils, water, management and research methods. *Turfgrass: Science and Culture* – James B. Beard, 1973. Even though it was published in 1973, very little is outdated. *Fundamentals of Turfgrass and Agricultural Chemistry* – McCarty, Rodriguez, Bunnell, Waltz, 2003. An excellent resource for understanding of chemical processes related to turfgrass management.

A set of books spanning soil properties should be readily available, and I will acknowledge the wide variety of books that

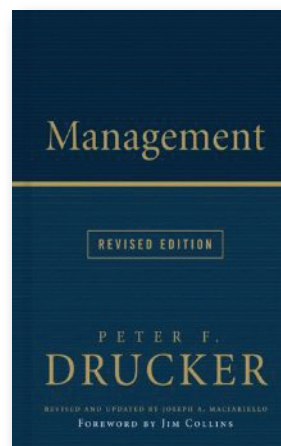
will suffice to cover the topic. I include this one because it is on my shelf: *Elements of the Nature and Properties of Soils* – Brady, Weil, 1999. *Introduction To Soil Physics* – Daniel Hillel, 1982. Regardless of how heavy the reading is, the information is indispensable. *Turfgrass Soil Fertility and Chemical Problems: Assessment and Management* – Carrow, Waddington, Rieke, 2001. There is no better book covering the fertility of turfgrass systems. If you do not already have a copy, stop what you are doing and buy one now.

Golf course irrigation is an area that does not have a lot of choices, but lucky for us we have two good selections from what is available. Both are different enough to be included. *Golf Course Irrigation: Environmental Design and Management Practices* – Barrett, Vinchesi, Dobson, Roche, Zoldoske, 2003. *Golf Course Irrigation System Design and Drainage* – Edward Pira, 1997.

When it comes to turfgrass pests, it is hard to believe there are three books that cover the subject, but, I rarely look any farther than these. *Diseases of Turfgrass* – Houston B. Couch, 1995. It is too bad this book is becoming so scarce, if you find a copy, do not pass it up. *Turfgrass Insects of the United States and Canada* – Vittum, Villani, Tashiro, 1999. This is the only insect book I have, and I do not remember a time when I needed another. *Color Atlas of Turfgrass Weeds* – McCarty, 2008. It is the best book dedicated to weeds.

In regards to the golf course and its environment, there is a useful book to have. *Sustainable Golf Courses: A Guide To Environmental Stewardship* – Ronald Dodson, 2005. I'll also include in this section a set of Peterson Field Guides to have a reference for wildlife on the golf course. *Peterson Field Guide to Eastern Birds* – Peterson, 2002. *Peterson Field Guide to Insects* – Borror, 1998.

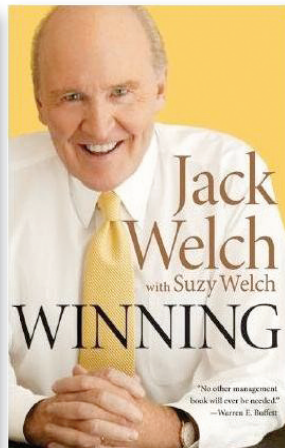
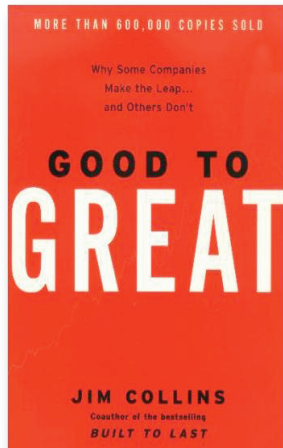
Business



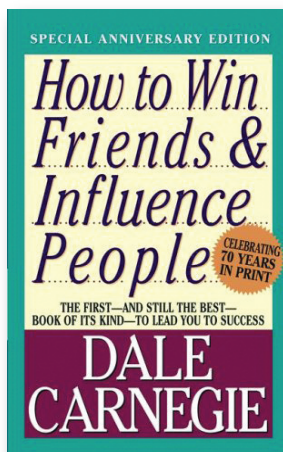
Business management and leadership are arguably the most neglected aspects of the education of Superintendents. Thankfully there is no shortage of books to help fill in the gaps. The books that follow are ones I have found useful and you may as well. *Effective Small Business Management: An Entrepreneurial Approach* – Scarborough, Zimmerer, 2003. *Financial Accounting: The Impact on Decision Makers* – Porter, Norton, 2001. These two books are textbooks, but are well organized and easy to follow. All the information contained in them is relevant to running a golf course. Be sure to get the most recent

editions, there is information from these topics that change regularly. *Management* – Peter Drucker, 2008. Over 500 pages of management philosophy-from the man who started the education of business management-it's a good starting point.

"The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say 'I'. And that's not because they have trained themselves not to say 'I'. They don't think 'I'. They think 'we'; they think 'team'. They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don't sidestep it, but 'we' gets the credit. This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done."



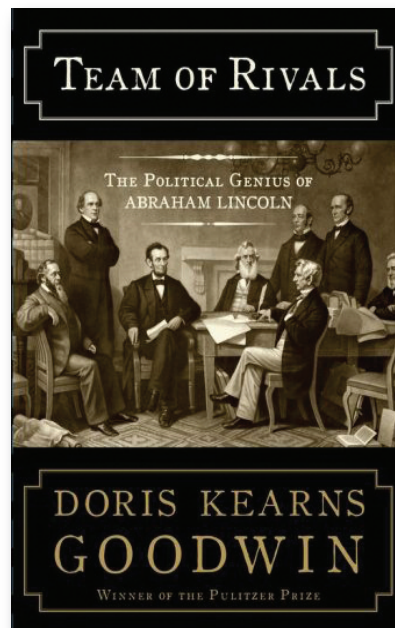
First, Break All The Rules – Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman, 1999. This book is a wonderful resource for anyone who manages people. *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't* – Jim Collins, 2001. This book has solidified itself among the best books regarding business. Collins starts, "Good is the enemy of great. And that is one of the key reasons why we have so little that becomes great." *Winning* – Jack Welch, 2005. Welch has a way of making you question how all aspects of your course are operated. *Toyota Production System: Beyond Large Scale Production* – Taiichi Ohno and Norman Bodek, 1988. Don't think for a second you can't learn anything for your course by studying the Toyota Production System Ohno implemented. This was the start of lean manufacturing processes.



The last set of books I have dedicated to your own personal development. *How to Win Friends and Influence People* – Dale Carnegie, 1937. This book was and instant

bestseller in 1937, and to this day has not lost its appeal. All the books about interpersonal communication strive to be like this one. This book is not a suggestion, but required reading, as is the next book. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* – Benjamin Franklin. This book is the quintessential self-improvement book whether Franklin intended for it to be or not. As he winds his way through his life, be sure to pick up on his plan of conduct, his efforts at achieving moral perfection, and his path to becoming a self-made man through frugality and industry. Franklin reflects on his plan of conduct:

"The mere speculative conviction that it was our interest to be completely virtuous, was not sufficient to prevent our slipping; and that the contrary habits must be broken, and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any dependence on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct."



The Effective Executive – Peter Drucker, 2006. The ability to manage you precludes any ability to manage other people. Drucker shows how to start with yourself to be effective at your position. *The Prince* - Niccolò Machiavelli, 1531. Machiavelli wrote to address any future prince and how they should conduct themselves. This is still useful advice 500 years later. *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* – Doris Kearns Goodwin, 2005. You can read this once for the history, but read it again to learn how Lincoln conducted himself while transforming from the underdog presidential nominee of his party, to the most respected US president before or since.

So, there you have it, 54 books, covering approximately 5 feet of shelf space and providing the Superintendent with a liberal education of golf course management. Having completed this list, I must confess, I feel I am in no way qualified to do so, I was merely satisfying a curiosity. But, having read this list, if it piques your curiosity, I flatter myself to think it may have served a greater purpose. Happy reading. -OC