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Chronology of Olympia Fields C.C....

(continued from page 10)

1917, the United States declared war on Germany after German submarines sank several unarmed merchant ships. As a result, the club, whose numbers had exceeded 700, lost almost half of the membership.

1918

Courses No.1 and No.2 opened for play in spring. Greens were seeded to fescue, the tees were turfless clay. During the summer of 1918, the war effort came first. Due to a food shortage, oats and wheat were planted on 175 acres of fairways with the women members' help in the harvest, and a Red Cross Day Golf Tournament featuring Chick Evans, Jock Hutchinson, Jim Barnes and Warren Wood was held to raise war funds. Women members were also given the chore of handweeding the greens which the club secretary described as a "waist-reducing exercise." November 11, 1918, Germany surrendered.

1919

In late December, Tom Kennet was retained by the club as golf professional, and James Foulis, Jr., stayed on as superintendent of grounds. Many members took the train from Chicago and stayed at the club in as many as 67 tents in an area known as the Terrace

Colony. No cooking was allowed, and quiet time started at 10:30 p.m.

1920

On January 16, the 18th Amendment was ratified outlawing the sale of alcoholic beverages. In August, the club hosted its first major tournament, the Western

with the game for more than 400 years. He won the British Open in 1887 and 1889 and was one of the most respected golf course architects of his time. Park laid out the course in 1920, but work didn't begin in earnest until 1922. He spent forty days at the club during construction. His fee was unknown.

1922

In January, Fred Kruger, a construction expert, was hired to supervise the construction of the No.4 course. James Foulis, Jr., left the club to pursue a career as a golf course architect. Kruger was named to the superintendent position where he stayed until his death in 1940. Kruger along with John McGregor from Chicago Golf Club, one of the founding fathers of the National Association of Greenkeepers of America (NAGA), were the two biggest names in Chicago greenkeeping. Through the years, Kruger showed up in several pictures in *The Olympian*, always wearing a tie and white shirt. In April, the initiation fee was raised to \$415, and 5,000 trees were purchased for planting on the grounds.

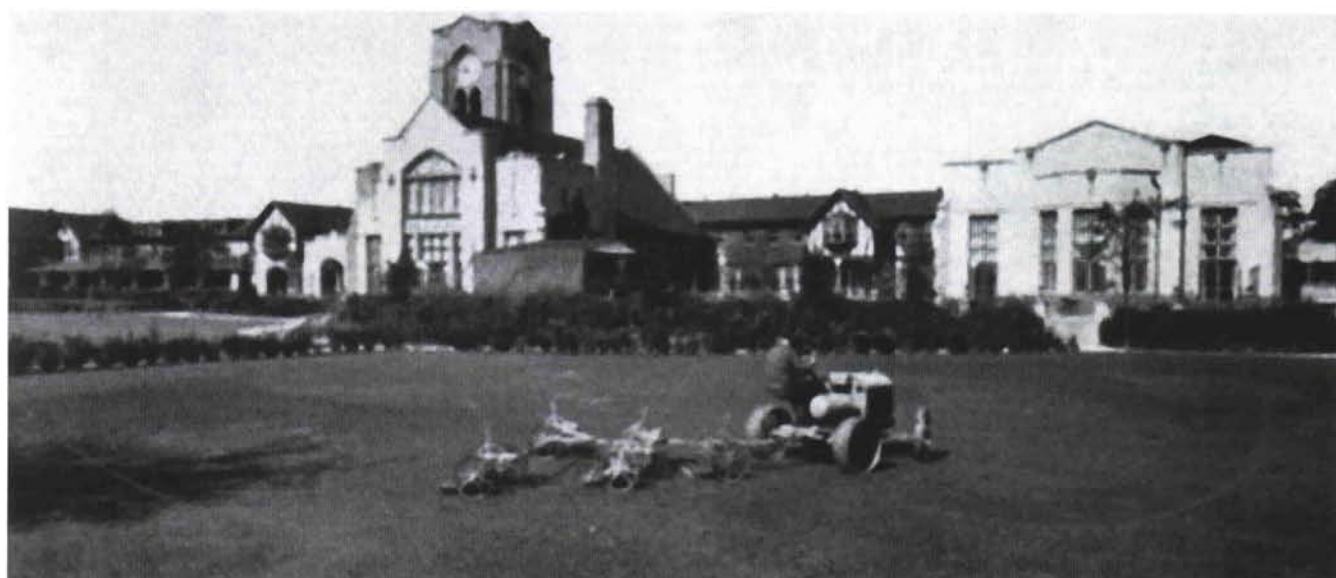
1923

In March, the members approved the construction of a new club-

(continued on page 14)

*Due to a food
shortage, oats and
wheat were planted
on 175 acres of
fairways with the
women members' help
in the harvest.*

Open, over course No.1 and No.2; and Jock Hutchison, another Scot from St. Andrews and the professional at the Glenview Club, won with a score of 296. In July, course No.3 was formally opened for play. On October 3, Willie Park, Jr. was retained by the club to lay out and supervise the construction of course No.4 (North Course). Park came from a long line of Scotch golfers, his family having been identified



Olympia Fields Country Club in 1925

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Chronology of Olympia Fields C.C....

(continued from page 12)

house. Two plans were proposed: the "Greater Olympian Plan," which called for spending \$1.2 million on a clubhouse and various improvements to the facility; and the more modest \$500,000 "Round Table" plan proposed by a group of members, who sat at a round table in the old wooden clubhouse. (To this day the club still has a Round Table group in the men's grill known as the 73rd Hole.) The "Greater Olympian Plan" was adopted, and the present-day clubhouse was constructed. A new grounds maintenance "shed" was also built as a part of the plan. The debt would later almost cause the demise of the club. On July 25, Olympia held its first 72-hole medal play, a one-day tournament to mark the formal opening of the No.4 course. Olympia Fields became the largest golf facility in the world, with the new No.4 course recognized by experts as one of the top five courses nationwide.

The golf course was designed with irrigated greens, tees and fairways. Pipes were buried in shallow trenches in the roughs. Hose connection valves were located every 100 ft. Some fairways required over 200 ft. of hose for proper coverage. Water was supplied by six engines pumping out of the creek and required six men from sunset to sunrise. In dry summers, the creek was an unreliable source of water. The greens were constructed in a layered system with 6 in. of cinders surrounding clay tiles on the clay subsoil. The next layer was 10 in. of clay subsoil with cinders disked in. Next was a 2-in. layer of rotted manure topped off with a 10-in. layer of good prairie loam soil mixed with about three tons of humus and six tons of torpedo sand per 1,000 sq. ft. Each green cost about \$1,600 to build. (The cinder layer can still be found on original greens and still seems to move water extremely

(continued on page 16)



Ralph Johnson Fred Krueger John McGregor Matt, Berzak
Medinah Olympia Fields Chicago Beverly C. C.

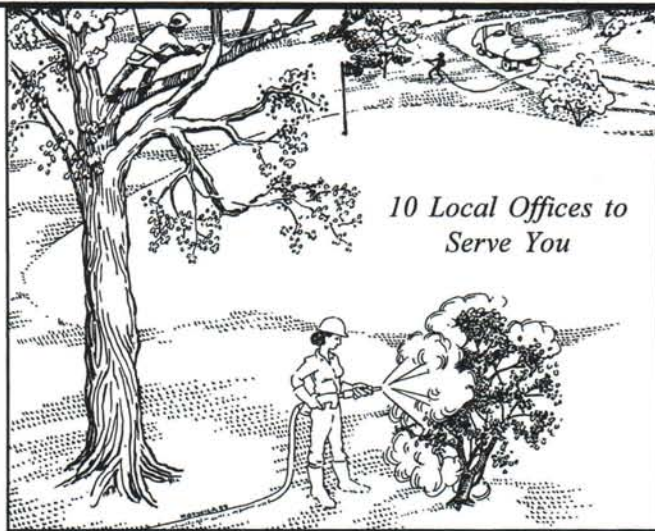
The keepers of greens and grounds have had their troubles this year. One could retire at night congratulating himself on having wonderful greens and awake the next morn to find something akin to tragedy was taking place on his precious greens.

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Chronology of Olympia Fields C.C....

(continued from page 14)

well.) Greens and tees were seeded to fescue and fairways to a fescue/bluegrass combination. The grounds budget was just shy of \$50,000 for four golf courses. The greens were topdressed five to six times per year and the fairways twice per year with compost. Also, the greens were topdressed once per year with torpedo sand.

The Good Years

1924 to 1930

These years were the most prosperous of the club's early history. By 1927, there were 1,064 members; initiation fees were \$1,210 with annual dues of \$180.

1924

In the fall, greens on course No.3 were stolonized with stolons purchased from River Road Nursery in Virginia. At the same time, a three-acre turf nursery was established near the 3rd hole of the No.4 course using Washington Bent stolons from Flossmoor Nurseries, Inc. The bent was to be used for sodding the greens on the No.4 course in the fall of 1925. The Flossmoor Nurseries, Inc., was owned by a Flossmoor Country Club pro/greenkeeper H.J. Collis and Olympia member H.B. Smead. Collis, born in England, came to Flossmoor in 1906. He patented a sod cutter and eventually developed a strain of bentgrass which he named after Flossmoor Country Club. He collaborated with Olympia pro Jack Daray to design and remodel several courses in the Chicago area. Prior to World War I, most bents planted in the USA were from seed harvested in Germany, a source that was shut off during and after World War I. The remaining clay tees on course No.1, No.2 and No.3 were planted to turf.

1925

John T. Scopes was arrested for teaching Darwin's Theory of

(continued on page 18)



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Chronology of Olympia Fields C.C....

(continued from page 16)

Evolution. The USGA Green Section challenged anyone to show them a fescue green more than five years old in good condition. The Olympia Fields Board voted to ban canvas tents in the Terrace Colony; all structures must now be wooden. The average grounds budget for a Chicago area 18-hole course was about \$20,000. The Olympia Fields grounds budget grew to \$75,299 (\$51,000 of which was labor). Fred Kruger's salary was \$4,772 plus a house on the course.

1925 was a tough year for green-keeping due to disease. Large brown patch and small brown patch (dollar spot) severely damaged greens in the Chicago district. USGA research found that mercury solutions controlled the disease but at \$15 per green per application was cost-prohibitive to most clubs. Interestingly, *pythium* is not men-

tioned. (I think it may have been lumped together with large brown patch since the diseases would occur under the same weather conditions.) In August and September, the No.4 course closed for play due

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most clubs.***

to the disease outbreak and the need to have the greens ready for the 1925 PGA. On September 25,

Walter Hagen defeated Bill Mehlhorn 6 and 5 in the match play finals of the PGA Championship on course No.3 and course No.4. Greens on the No.4 course were sodded to the Washington strain of the Flossmoor Nurseries bentgrass in late September and October.

1926

Following the lead of Ravisloe Country Club, the Board of Governors voted to switch from sand mound tees to the popular wooden tees, eliminating the need to keep a sand box on each tee.

1927

Charles Lindbergh flew solo from New York to Paris. Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs.

1928

Another disastrous year for Chicago area greenkeepers due to turf diseases. On June 21 through June 24,

(continued on page 20)

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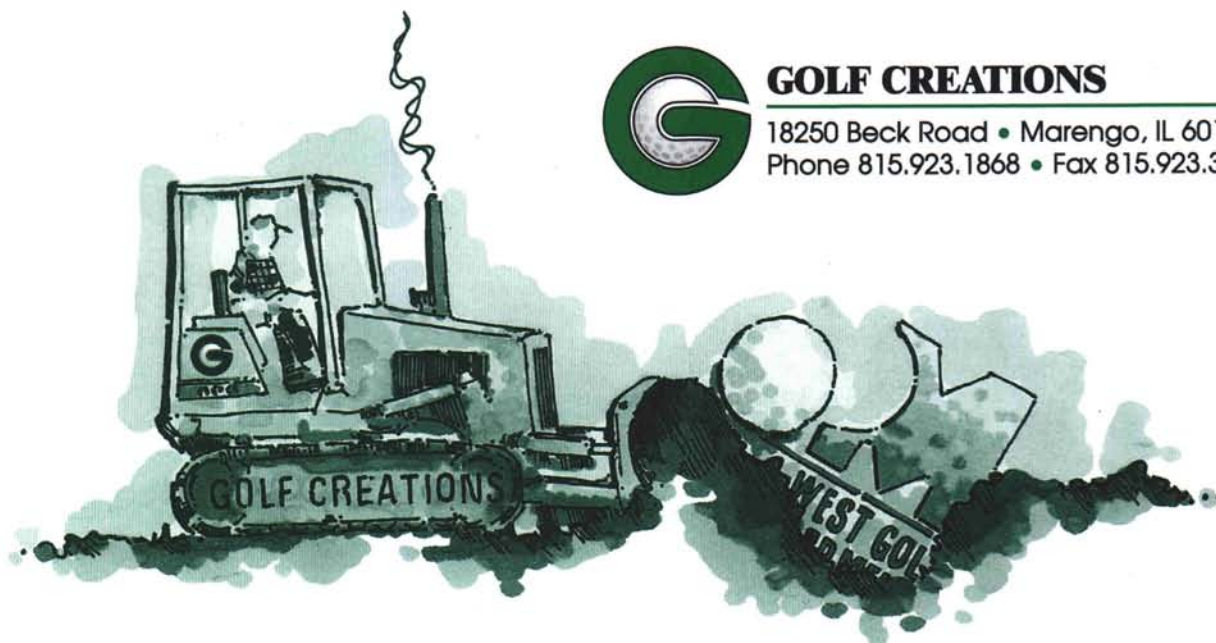
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the U.S. Open Championship was played on the Olympian's No.4 course. Johnny Farrell and Bobby Jones tied at 294 after 72 holes. Farrell won a 36-hole playoff by 143 to 144. Of the 141 contestants, Ed Dudley's 68 was the only score to break No.4's par 70.

1929

After the recent poor years for greenkeepers, the Chicago area got a greens laboratory. Guy Peters, Olympia green chairman from 1924 through 1928, newly-appointed Green Chairman of the Chicago District Golf Association, along with the Midwest Greenkeepers Association helped arrange for the installation of turf plots in the fall of 1928. The plots were laid out on the estate of A.D. Lasker, west of Lake Forest. (The estate included an 18-hole golf course with the highest handicap rating in the Chicago District.) Mr. Tregillus, the

head greenkeeper, maintained the plots under the direction of the USGA Green Section. In the words of Guy Peters, "The test garden is set up to serve two purposes:

**Midwest
Greenkeepers
Association helped
arrange for the
installation of
turf plots in
the fall of 1928.**

demonstration and experimentation. On the demonstration plots will be grown all the recognized and known strains of putting green grasses, propagated from stolons and seed, fescues, red top and blue-grasses in both pure strains and mix-

tures. Experimentation will occur on many smaller plots of all species and strains. On these plots will be tried different fertilizers, different methods of cutting and watering and different methods of treating brown patch and controlling worms, grubs and other insect pests. Weed and clover control in both fairways and greens will be studied."

In September, Guy Peters wrote an Olympian article on the problem of white clover on course No.4. Clover was a particular problem on irrigated clay soil fairways. On greens it was removed by hand labor, usually by groups of "immigrant ladies." At a joint meeting of the USGA and the CDGA Green Sections, Dr. Monteith of the Research Committee of the USGA Green Section was asked to prepare a talk on the control of clover on watered fairways. Dr. Monteith replied that since the present knowledge of the control of clover could be summarized in one word, "nothing," he would prefer a broader subject on which to speak.

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October 29 was Black Tuesday. The stock market crashed after a three-year Bull Market. October was also the last month of Guy Peters' five-year tenure as grounds chairman at Olympia Fields Country Club. The maintenance budget rose to \$72,500. The Virginia bentgrass on the No.3 course greens was removed, and the greens were resodded with Washington bent from Flossmoor Nurseries, Inc. In Mr. Peter's fifth and last annual report to the members, he challenged future committees with the following recommendations, which for the most part hold true today:

This is the fifth annual report submitted by the Chairman of this Committee. In turning over this department to my successor, I cannot resist the temptation to pass on

(continued on page 22)