



Front view of Walnut Grove's attractive clubhouse, which overlooks the first tee and eighteenth green. Additions were made to the structure in 1936, '38, '40 and '42.

# WALNUT GROVE

## PROVES VALUE OF

**FORESIGHT • SOUND PLANNING • TEAM WORK**

This Dayton club almost hit bottom in 1935—  
then Senart and Simmons went into action

By **CALVIN POOLE**

"IT'S like rubbing Aladdin's Lamp to turn back to 1935 when Walnut Grove was wishful thinking and then look around at the plant we have today." That's how B. F. Senart, secy-treas., sums up the achievements of this thriving golf club seven miles east of Dayton, O. But the detailed story of Walnut Grove's development reveals plenty of elbow grease was put behind the rub before the dreams came true.

The club as it stands today exhibits the vision, sound planning and hard work of two graduates of Dayton's munny course, Senart and his bosom pal, M. H. "Dick" Simmons. When they joined the club in 1933 it was known as Greenmont CC, a tough enough layout to please any golfer but financially trapped too tough for its original organizers. The engineering training of these two men was such that they recognized both the cause of, and cure for the club's ailments.

In the spring of 1935 a reorganization committee was formed headed by Simmons. The club name was changed to Walnut Grove CC when a new corporation became effective in the spring of 1936. Simmons became pres. and Senart, secy-treas.; offices which they have held ever since.

An improvement program embracing both course and clubhouse was immediately launched. And, just as promptly, a revitalized membership roster began to grow. The engineering ability of Senart and Simmons undoubtedly is one of the chief reasons for the club's sound and rapid development.

The original clubhouse of field stone and cement construction provided for a small locker-room, showers, lounge, office and abbreviated dining room. Before the end of 1936 this had been enlarged to include a fine pro-shop, good-sized grille and bar, and kitchen. In 1938 a commodious dining room was added. In 1940 the ladies came into their own with a fine locker-room. This spring saw the completion of a substantially enlarged men's locker and shower room, the kitchen doubled in size, a men's card room and a modern heating plant.

The club was its own general contractor. A slate roof tops the field stone and cement walls of the attractive, one-decked structure, assuring permanence and low maintenance. Because much of the architectural and engineering features were the after-hours' work of Senart and Simmons;



The principal characters in Walnut Grove's SS team—Dick Simmons, president (left), and B. F. Senart, secy-treas.

because engineers are nose about even the smallest details and know costs and consequences, and because its board and executive committee really functioned, Walnut Grove got far more for its money and is today sitting pretty.

#### Simmons Gets The Members

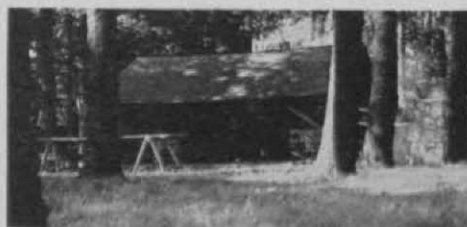
But it takes members to make a golf club and getting members has been engineered by Dick Simmons. Don't get the idea that these two men alone made Walnut Grove an outstanding administrative and operating success. They didn't, and insist they were lucky in having a working board and an unusually enthusiastic board and membership to help carry the torch. As Senart puts it: "In a club of growing membership such as ours, undergoing a rather ambitious program of improvement, we of course were offered many suggestions on what to do and how to do it. In the normal course of each season's operations all clubs get plenty of this 'fan mail.' In a way it's a healthy sign but it should never be permitted to get out of control. Some of our most enthusiastic members were especially insistent that their suggestions be adopted. In such cases we had to take a firm stand. It invariably saved us money and our would-be engineers, architects, managers, etc. were well pleased with the way things worked out."

Walnut Grove's board is composed of 15 members, most of whom are regularly on tap for the monthly meetings. Walter Blank, one of the oldest members is v-p and heads the executive committee of five responsible for the club's operations. Having the same experienced pilots guide their ship year after year has eliminated costly errors resulting from frequent ad-

ministrative turn-over. Fifty shares of stock were sold at \$100 each when the new corporation took over; 50 additional shares were sold in 1941. Since the original shares were issued, up to the present time, only 20 shares have changed hands and in every case they brought par. Today Walnut Grove has 95 shareholders. The shareholders dues are \$35.

The club's membership and annual dues are as follows: 136 regular (men) at \$50; 85 women and 23 juniors at \$20; 79 non-resident at \$20 and 3 intermediate (member's sons and daughters between 21 and 25) who pay \$25. In 1936, the first year following reorganization, the total income from all sources was \$6,718. Expenses that year were \$8,275; last year's income, including revenue from the sale of 50 shares at \$150, was \$46,857 with expenses totaling \$30,289. In the six year's since the Simmons-Senart team took hold in 1936 the club's capital investment has almost doubled and its mortgage reduced from \$21,000 to \$12,000.

The clubhouse is not pretentious but it is attractive, spacious and well-equipped.



One of Walnut Grove's cabin-style shelters, each of which is accompanied by a large field stone fireplace and grill.

The service features are streamlined to make life at Walnut Grove a pleasure instead of a pain in the purse. The food is good and servings abundant. A simple menu cuts costs and speeds service. Regular dinners are 85c. Chicken and steak dinners at \$1.35 may be ordered up to a certain hour only. With the enlarged dining room in service this year, business is running about double that of 1941. Outside group tournaments are limited to one a week and there's a waiting line.

Naturally, as one of the clubs located in or near a defense and military center, most of the play is concentrated on weekends, and in late afternoon or twilight, or at other times when attention can be given to golf without cutting into vital war effort hours.

The 6,500 yards of the golf course take

you over the rolling terrain of the old 135-acre Wenrick farm. Alva Wenrick, who helped build the original layout, is still on the job as greenkeeper. The step-by-step program of course improvement has been adhered to and is paying dividends in well-conditioned greens and fairways. What was the ruins of a hill-side barn when Walnut Hills was cracking its shell is now a practically arranged tool and equipment shed with space providing for the storage of fertilizer and compost. Five of the holes cut through a 40-acre tract of woodland in which log-cabin style shelters, out-door grilles and other facilities for picnics have been provided.

### 3 Pro Selling Ideas

**Putter Selling**—During Saturday, Sundays and holidays the practice putting green is always crowded with members waiting for their favorite foursome to arrive. A special rack with about 10 different styles of putters sitting on the green under a sign "Why miss putts" will always sell more putters. They will select one that hits their fancy and try it out. In most instances it will always putt better than their own on the first try—and another putter is sold. When a member sells himself a club by this method, he will never bring it back, because every man is ashamed to admit his judgment was bad.

**First Tee Lessons**—We have known pros who sold many lessons by merely standing on the first tee and looking over every member that went off. The pro would make a note of the outstanding fault of each member and then send a card telling him about it. A final line would say, "Let me show you how to correct this fault in just one lesson." This method will arouse curiosity to the point where he will want to correct it.

**Publish List of Pupils**—There are many members who are ashamed to admit they were forced to take lessons because their game "blew up." The pro should advertise his pupils and his pupils should advertise his teaching. Print a list of the members who have improved their game through lessons. When the entire membership realizes that all their leading players improved their games through lessons, they will become more lesson minded.—George Aulbach in Texas PGA News.



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