

*But a woman beat them to the green, says this historian*

# Stockbridge Puts In Its Claim-Fourth Oldest On Original Site

By ED TOOLE

One of the oldest in the United States . . . that is the way the Stockbridge (Mass.) Golf Club has oft been described! How old? . . . That is a question repeated many times by modern knights of the fairways. And now added interest in the question has been generated what with all the national publicity over claims and counter claims as to which club is the oldest in the country — Dorset-1886, Foxburg-1887, St. Andrews-1888, Middlesboro-1889!

John Dakin, president of the Stockbridge Golf Club, makes the claim that this South Berkshire layout is about the fourth oldest golf club in the United States which is still located on its original site!

Founded in 1895, Stockbridge is approaching its 70th golfing season. Expanded from nine to 18 holes for the season of 1901, it was the first 18-hole layout in Berkshire County.

## Woman Designs Course

While male golfers of the present era moan and groan about women golfers cluttering up the fairways, it is not only fair but highly interesting to note that one of the fairer sex, Katherine di Pollone, was the first individual to lay out a course in Stockbridge. That was a year before the formation of the Stockbridge GC!

While the USGA held its first U.S. Amateur in October of 1895, it is noteworthy that Stockbridge wasn't far behind with its Invitational Tournament — by only two years, as a matter of fact — in 1897! This big Invitational has continued to flourish and rates now as one of the great, great granddaddy tourneys with an uninterrupted history!

Also of interest is the established fact



This green has been continuously in use at Stockbridge for nearly 70 years. It may be the oldest in the U.S. It's now the 16th, was the original second and later No. 7.

that the first Berkshire County Championship was inaugurated at Stockbridge 63 years ago and here also was founded the Allied Golf Clubs of Berkshire County. This unique organization came into being in 1904, making it also one of the oldest in the country.

And 45 years ago, a member of today's board of Allied governors, Rossmund Sherwood, helped inaugurate the very first International Women's golf matches in the British Isles, a forerunner of today's Curtis Cup Matches!

It was on Sept. 26, 1895, that the Stockbridge GC was officially formed with Walter E. Nettleton as its first president. However, the previous year — 1894 — saw golf being played in the town on a 9-hole course laid out by Katherine di Pollone at her summer residence, "Bonny Brae".

The spirit of competition was born quickly. At the meeting forming the club it was voted to hold the Ladies Club Tournament on Oct. 3 (1895) and the men's championship on Oct. 4. Clubs used

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numbered but three — the cleek, lofter and putter! Interesting is the recorded fact that at the organizational meeting it was also voted to adopt the same constitution as was in use at Shinnecock Country Club on Long Island.

Modern day linksmen still play one of the original holes at Stockbridge. The current 16th was the original second and later the seventh before the course was lengthened to 18 holes.

### Annual Dues — \$10

The first mention of an annual tournament in the club's records is found in 1897. Incorporation of the Stockbridge GC was voted in 1900 and Dr. Charles McBurney, internationally known surgeon, was named president to succeed Walter Nettleton. It was also voted to expand to 18 holes and the annual dues were raised from \$5 to \$10.

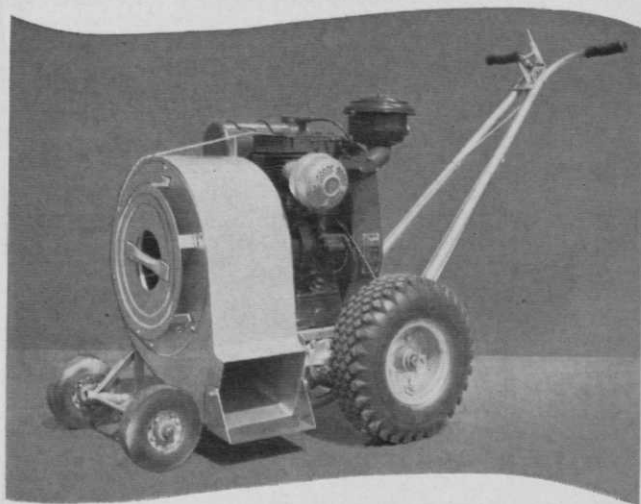
Books bearing the early minutes of the club's board of governors' meetings contain numerous clippings from the Springfield Republican. In fact, the Republican carried two column pictures of the Stock-

bridge course in April of 1901. The same edition made mention of fine courses also having been started in Pittsfield, Lenox and Great Barrington.

Gleaned from the early copies of the Republican is the fact that it was upon the return from a visit to the Richeleau in Murray Bay, Canada, that Joseph H. Choate Jr., son of the ambassador to Great Britain, laid out the first four holes for his new found golf hobby on his father's summer estate, and additional holes on the adjoining Tuckerman property.

### First Invitational

Five years after, the first invitational was inaugurated at Stockbridge — on Sept. 14, 1901 — the club held "the first county championship tournament — 36 holes of medal play". And from the impetus of this was formed the Allied Golf Clubs in 1904 at the Stockbridge GC. Thence the championship became known as the Allied 36-Hole Championship of Berkshire County. The first titlist was W. R. Tuckerman of the host Stockbridge



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Club. Incidentally, the first Allied president was Samuel Frothingham of Lenox, a member of the Stockbridge Club.

The first course records entered for the 18 hole Stockbridge course show Walter R. Tuckerman and Malcolm McBurney to have posted "fine 71s" for the amateur mark. The early professional record was that of Frank Peeble who scored a 67. Then, in June of 1914, John Cowan shot a record round of 33-32-65.

Records of note are an integral part of the Stockbridge history. For instance Miss Rosamond Sherwood, a current member of the board of governors, was a member of the first U.S. women's team to inaugurate international play against the gals of the British Isles away back in 1920. This was a forerunner to the present Curtis Cup Matches. And on that memorable international tour, Miss Sherwood was the cause of much amazement around Newcastle in County Downs because of the fact that she had the unheard of large number of golf clubs in her bag — seven to be exact.

## Field of 2,692 Competes for Public Links Title

The 39th USGA Public Links Championship will be held July 13-18 at the Francis A. Gross golf course in Minneapolis, Minn. A total of 2,692 golfers applied for entry in the 46 sectional qualifying rounds, played in June and which narrowed the field to 150. Eligible for entry were golfers who had been public course players since Jan. 1.

Included among 150 players qualified to compete in Minneapolis is last year's winner, Bobby Lund of San Francisco. A 36-hole medal play will narrow the field to 64 in Minneapolis. Match play will begin on July 15-16. The semi-final and final, at 36 holes, will be played July 17 and 18.

A team championship is held concurrently with the 36 holes stroke play qualifying rounds. The winner is the team with the lowest total score for three players. Thirty teams competed last year. Toledo, O., with 443 won by three shots over Long Beach, Calif.