

MINNESOTA'S GOLFING HERITAGE



NORTHLAND COUNTRY CLUB

FIRST IN A SERIES Part 2

by W. K. Montague
President 1936-37

Northland went through the usual growing pains. In September of 1899 the Treasurer reported that the "club was somewhat in debt but otherwise in a flourishing condition." Have you ever heard that

refrain before? The Officers were authorized to borrow \$1,500 and give a mortgage for security.

The first recorded Captain of the Club was W. B. Silvey whose duties were to "arrange all matches and general charge of season's play." He was succeeded by Howard T. Abbott, and following him came Ward Ames, Jr., who, incidentally copped the Club's permanent trophy in 1903 after three victories. While this was probably the first Club championship, Cavour Hartley for years had a leather medal which his father won as the first Club champion.

The upkeep of the course was a problem, handled in very much the same way similar problems were handled in Scotland 300 years ago. The financial statement of 1901 showed a bill for "expense of keeping sheep on the links \$252.32." In a pessimistic report for that year, the President complained of the condition of the course, and said: "Unless we can manage other arrangements, we will again be obliged to pasture cattle."

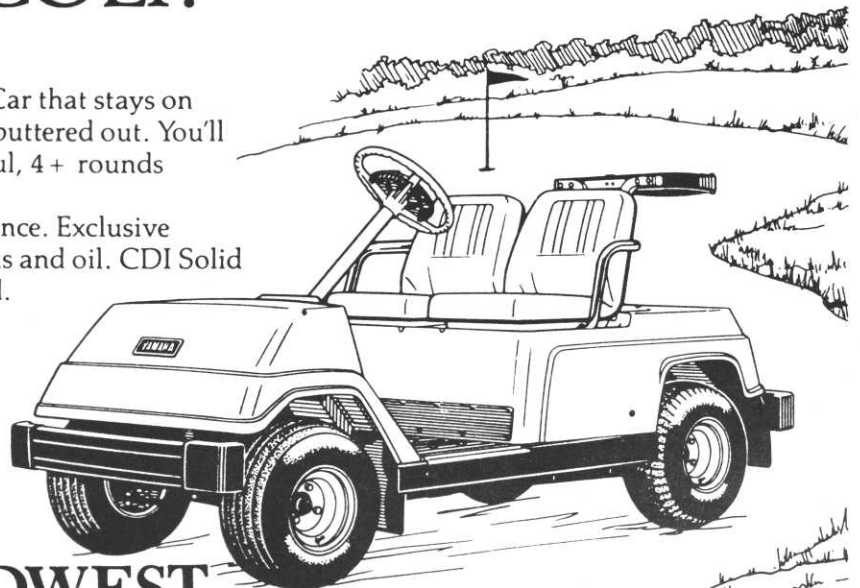
By 1902 things had improved, and the

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President reported that: "In taking care of the grounds, the herd of sheep, the horse mower, and scythe work, in the ravine kept the grounds in fairly satisfactory condition."

In the late fall the caddies herded the flock of sheep down Superior Street to a West Duluth packing house.

A few more extracts from the minutes of those early days might be interesting. The controversy over the rubber cored ball hit Duluth, and a resolution of May 7, 1901 provided: "That the use of the so-called Haskell ball is prohibited by the Club in tournament matches."

The days of the gutta ball were numbered, however, and on April 14, 1902 the resolution was rescinded.

The Club voted to apply for membership in the Minnesota Golf Association in 1902 and in the U.S.G.A. and the Western Golf Association on November 4, 1903. I believe the Club has maintained its memberships quite consistently ever since that time.

As showing that the Club kept up its progress, on May 15, 1903, \$100 was appropriated to build a tennis court; on June 11, 1902, they decided to put electric lights in the Club House. In the President's report of that year, he recommended that: "water could be brought to the house and dining room and kitchen. ***the partition between the ladies' locker room and the men's old locker room taken out and a larger club room made with fireplace in the center. The ladies could use the back part of the men's locker room and a toilet built on." Sounds like a cozy arrangement!

The swimming pool was not built until 1957.

The Club really grew up in 1904. The name changed to "Northland Country Club." The old "lodge" across the ravine had been long outgrown; membership and enthusiasm had been increasing. A new Club house was in order. Instead of the simple committee-of-one procedure of 1899, with results in six weeks, the Club spent about a year, beginning early in 1903, in figuring out what to do and how to do it. The inevitable assessments were levied;

mortgages were executed, and a handsome Club House was erected on the site of the present building. The extant photographs show that it was a credit to the Club. It stood until 1918, when it burned in the disastrous Cloquet-Moose Lake forest fire which, but for a change of wind, would have burned down a lot more of Duluth. It was replaced in 1919 on the same site by the present rambling structure, originally estimated at a cost of \$115,000. In the meantime, the course itself was growing, In 1912, it had been expanded to eighteen holes, which, however, were all below the site of the present fourth tee, and made use of ground on both sides of Superior Street.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

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