

# One hundred years of golf in Kansas City

The history of the  
Kansas City Golf Association  
as told by

Jimmy  
(the caddie)



## Introduction

The **Kansas City Golf Association** (KCGA) was founded in 1912 when just a few golf clubs existed in this area. There was the venerable **Kansas City Country Club** on the property now known as Loose Park; the **Evanston Golf Club** located outside the gates of Swope Park; **Elm Ridge Race Track and Golf Club** which later became **Blue Hills** at its original site on 63rd St.; a free public nine-hole course within the gates of **Swope Park**; and **Tomahawk Hills** in Kansas.

Plans were in the works for the **Jewish Progress Club** to build a course on land known as the Old Rule Homestead out south. It would formally open as **Oakwood** by 1913. Also in the time-frame of 1912 the first seeds for the development of a new course were sown by a group of Evanston members who were enamored with a piece of land they would come to call **Hillcrest**. Fits and starts resulted in the **Donald Ross** course finally opening in 1916.



Golf experienced a boom during these formative years of the association. New courses popped-up all over the area we now consider "Greater Kansas City".

Established courses sported membership numbers in the hundreds, and public golf was becoming so popular that the *Kansas City Star* noted that it was not uncommon for players to endure hours-long waits on the first tee of the public **Swope Park** links.

Names like **Walter Hagen**, **Jerome Travers**, **Chick Evans** and the young **Bobby Jones** were showing up on the sports pages of both major local papers: *The Star* and *The Journal*.

Also in 1912, three were born who would alter the face of the game in years to come: **Sam Snead**, **Ben Hogan** and **Byron Nelson**. Each was introduced to the game as caddies, much like our "Jimmy".

But nothing captured the golf-hungry nation's imagination quite like the story of a young caddie named **Francis Ouimet** winning the **U.S. Open** at **The Country Club** at Brookline in 1913.

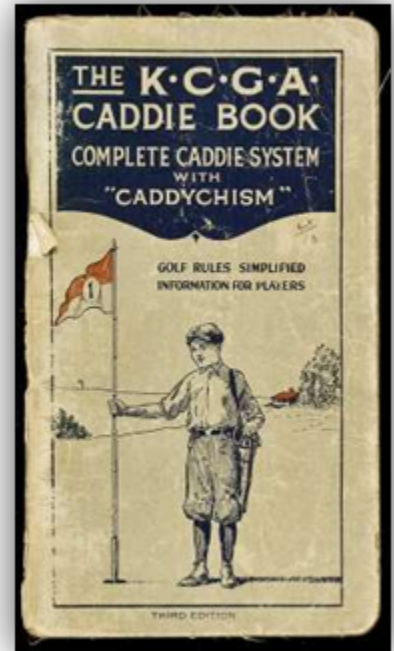
Young Ouimet lived with his mother in a small house just across the street from the course on which the Open was to be contested. In winning, he defeated two of the great international names of the time: **Harry Vardon** and **Ted Ray** from the Isle of Jersey, who had dominated golf on both sides of the Atlantic for several years.

Ouimet's brother, Ray, played at several clubs in Kansas City in the 'teens. In fact, **Ray Ouimet** won the **KCGA City Championship** more than once. Francis also won two U.S. Amateurs and was named Captain of the **Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews Scotland**. He, like Chick Evans, has his name on a scholarship foundation which benefits college-bound caddies.

While golf was finding its legs in Kansas City, courses were already established in **Topeka, Wichita, St. Louis, Excelsior Springs, St. Joseph** and **Independence**. There were 368 member clubs in the **United States Golf Association** and 174 in the **Western Golf Association** in 1912. The two groups were rivals at the time, with the WGA conducting its own championships for professionals as well as for amateurs.

As you will read later on these pages, women and minorities had their impact on golf in Kansas City as well. Names like **Miriam Burns Horn** and **Opal Hill** may not be as familiar to today's players as Paula Creamer or Michelle Wie, but, in their day they were top rank players who brought credit and attention to golf in this region.

The desire of African-American golfers to access quality courses in these parts pre-dated passage of the Equal Rights Acts and perhaps had its beginnings way back in the Twenties when a former slave, former sharecropper, named **Junius Groves** built the first course in America exclusively for use by his black employees near Edwardsville, KS. From there to the **Heart of America Golf Club** to today's equal access, the road was long and troubled.



Kansas City was home to any number of prominent players through the years: **Harold "Jug" McSpaden** and **Tom Watson**, to name just two of the most notable names, are products of local and regional golf organized and administered by the **Kansas City Golf Association**.

As we celebrate our first one hundred years, the KCGA conducts a full slate of local championships; assists member clubs with services ranging from course rating and slope calculations to tournament administration; runs local qualifying tournaments for all USGA Championships; conducts tournament events for junior golfers; administers the GHIN handicap system and serves as the chief "Keeper of the Game" in the Greater Kansas City area.





## The Beginning

My name is Jimmy. I was about nine years old when I started caddying. Not much bigger'n the wheel on my ol' man's ice wagon. When I was eight I was working at the local movie house. I got a penny for every bag of popcorn I sold... two cents for a box!

Back then there was only three golf courses in the whole city. **Kansas City Country Club** was one of 'em. They used to be in Hyde Park. Called it **Kenwood** back then. I heard it

was one of only 17 courses in the whole U.S. when it started. By 1896 they moved to the old **Ward** place... y'all call it **Loose Park** now. They wouldn't move over to Indian Lane until 1926. But I'm getting ahead of m'self.



Speaking of old courses that ain't around no more... the **Fairmont Club** was a six-holer that was part of an amusement park back then. It moved close to the old Evanston streetcar line in 1901. They kept that name, **Evanston**, even after they moved again in 1905, over by

the front gate of Swope Park. They used Colonel Swope's old house as a clubhouse and leased about 120 acres of ground for a golf course. Southeast High School's there now.

The third course was the **Elm Ridge Jockey Club and Fair Association**. They had golf, tennis and other stuff, but horse racin' was the big draw. I used to go there sometimes (just to watch the horses, mind you). I even tried being a stable boy once, but they didn't pay much and caddying was a lot easier. They ran it from 1903 to '07 when horse race gamblin' was outlawed. The place was bought by a bunch of golfers and reopened as Blue Hills in 1912.

I caddied at Evanston.



In those days, being a cute little kid in knickers and a wool cap wasn't enough to get you a loop... except with the ladies, that is. I kind a' specialized in loopin' for the ladies. And it wasn't bad dough, either.

My ol' man drove that ice wagon all day, luggin' blocks of ice up two or three flights of stairs and he made a few bucks a week. I worked carrying golf clubs... heck, some of them people didn't even have a bag to tote 'em in, and I made nearly as much: two-bits a round wasn't unheard of!

Golf was a big deal in Kansas City around 1912. There were 275 members at the Country Club, 300 at Evanston and between 300 and 400 at Elm Ridge. Courses were opening up in **Excelsior Springs** and **Tomahawk Hills**. There were already good tracks in Wichita and Topeka, Independence and St. Joseph. (We called 'em tracks 'cause of the Elm Ridge race course, I think.) And these people were serious, too. The Missouri Amateur championship was held at Evanston that year and Topeka hosted the Kansas state championship. Mr. Stewart Shockney won the Missouri championship... but I didn't caddy for him.

But all that was mostly for the rich folks. The rest played on a hardscrabble layout in Swope Park... a nine-holer not far from the front gate that started up in 1906. It was laid out by the local pro from Evanston; a Scotsman named **James Dalglish** who had his hand in a lot of stuff around here. He staked out courses, was the professional at a bunch of 'em over the years and competed in local and national tournaments, too. Even owned him a course for a time.

Regular folk was so taken up by the game that it was not unusual to see as many as *seventy* people lined up waiting to tee off on that old Swope links. Heck, it was free! In a few years the city Parks Board was going to have to decide about using some of old Tom Swope's park for two more courses, 'cause the people who come to promenade and picnic around the shelter house were tired of ducking golf balls on a Sunday afternoon.



In September of 1912, our Evanston Club hosted the annual **Kansas City Golf Association** city championship. You should have seen 'em. Teed off in twosomes, they did. And they went every three minutes! There was 76 of 'em that year and it was a sight to see. Some of them guys couldn't play a lick!

We was busy that year. A good caddy could make some real money when we had stuff like the city and the state tournaments at Evanston. And I heard that the big bosses were going to ask the **Western Golf Association** to clear a date for an invitational event the week before the **Trans Mississippi** tournament at St. Louis. That ought to bring in a bunch of big shots to play our course... and they'll all need caddies! Our Mr. John Fennell was a Board member of the Western, so they thought they had a pretty good chance of getting the dates they wanted.

Pa' most always found a newspaper somewhere along his ice route – either the *Journal* or the *Star* – and he'd bring it home so ma' could read it to us each evening after supper. Ma' was a good reader. That's how we got word 'bout that big Titanic ship goin' down. But lately, there's been reports 'bout the Olympics during the summer... all the way from Sweden. A guy by the name of **Jim Thorpe** – he was from Oklahoma – won eight gold medals for the USA! They called him “The World's Greatest Athlete”.



There's an outfit downtown called the **Jewish Progress Club** – some kinda' social club I guess – and I heard they'd bought a piece of ground they called the old Rule homestead... somewhere out south. Paid fifty thousand dollars for it! Old man Rule was a part owner of Elm Ridge.

Some guy named **Tom Bendelow** was coming in to lay out the course. He's an old Scot who works for A. G. Spalding Co. (they make golf clubs and balls and other sports stuff, so it's good business for 'em to send this guy around to build more courses).

They say Bendelow can lay out a course in a matter of hours. Most of the time all he does is drive stakes into the ground to mark places for tees and greens and mounds, and maybe say which trees to keep and which to cut.

Before he went out to do this course out south, Bendelow came to Evanston to play golf with Mr. German, who was president of the club in 1912 and Mr. Dalgleish, the pro. I caddied for him. During the round, when the men weren't talking golf business, Bendelow asked me if I wanted to work the next day. I thought he was talking about caddying, again. But he wanted a kid to help carry all of those stakes and poles he was going to need to mark up the Rule farm and turn it into “a first rate golf course”.

Well, heck yeah! He said he'd pay *two dollars*!

I met him at the streetcar line the next morning 'bout the crack of dawn, and we went out to Rule's. While we were breaking through the woods – the street car stopped nearly two

miles from the property – and walking off distances between tees and greens, Bendelow told me stories about some old Scot he knew before he came over here called **Old Tom Morris**.

Bendelow said this Morris fella' probably made more golf courses than any man alive. Got paid a Pound Sterling (whatever that is) and transportation costs, to lay out a links. In Scotland a "links" is the land between the ocean and good farmland... and that's the best land for a golf course, Mr. Bendelow said.

Men like Bendelow (that's him there) and Old Tom, and later **Eddie Hackett**, could claim dozens, heck, hundreds of courses to their credit. But to call them "architects" as you think of the term, would be a stretch. Some courses did



become a labor of love for these guys, and they not only saw them through from beginning to end, but they tweaked and fiddled with them for years; Old Tom with **Prestwick** and **St. Andrews**, Bendelow with **Medinah**, Hackett had

his **Waterville**. One of the other caddies said they call Bendelow the "Johnny Appleseed of American golf". He claimed to have "designed" somethin' like 600 courses.

That course me and Bendelow designed, turned out to be over 6,000 yards long when it got done. It dropped the Progress Club name and most folks just called it **Oakwood**. Me and him also drove the stakes for **Mission Hills** and nine holes

at **Excelsior Springs** while we were at it. I got pretty good at guessin' what he was thinkin'... if I do say so myself. But mostly I just carried them stakes and kept my mouth shut... 'less he asked me sumptin'.

Yep, 1912 was a heck of a time to be a caddy. The **KCGA** was just gettin' started and trying to help its courses any way it could and, of course, they ran the annual city championship. But as the decade wore on, the golf boom of the 'teens and twenties was something to see.



## The First Decade

Hey, did you hear about that kid named **Francis Wemet**, or **Ouimet**, or somethin' like that? This guy used to be a caddie, like me. He's from Massachusetts. Walked right across the street from his house to the golf course where he caddied and won the **National Open!** He whupped two of the biggest names in golf, he did: the old Brits from Jersey, **Harry Vardon** and **Ted Ray**.

Vardon has *only* won five **British Opens** and our National Open. And they say Ray, who beat Vardon to win the Open last year, hits a ball farther than almost any man alive. So here comes this kid from **Brookline** and he takes them both to the woodshed! Had his little buddy, **Eddie Lowery** caddying for him the whole time. Ten years old! Saw his picture in the paper, heck, he ain't no bigger'n me! Makes a caddy proud, it does. I think maybe *I'll* start playin' some golf.



Boy, there's a bunch of new golf courses popping up all over town. Ya' know **Elm Ridge** closed when they had to shut down the horse racin' – but they reopened in 1912... called **Blue Hills**, now. Some big shot by the name of **Jesse Nichols** opened his **Mission Hills** club in 1914. He hired the pro from **Oakwood**, Mr. **Jim Watson** to get it ready. They had a clubhouse in Missouri and a golf course across the street in Kansas!

The **Evanston** club is going to move to a new spot on high ground out south of the park... if they ever get the darn thing done. They got some fella name of **Donald Ross** to come and lay it out. I hear this guy Ross is quite the ticket. Our pro at Evanston, Mr. **James Dalglish** was supposed to finish out the Ross plans, but it took four years to get it going. Didn't get open 'till 1916.

You remember me tellin' ya' how popular golf was getting' in Kansas City? Well, so many *wives* of the rich folks started playin' the game that they made their own association in 1915. Called it the **Kansas City Women's Golf Association**. They even hosted the Missouri state women's championship at **Mission Hills** that year. Made some good money that week. I told you, I kinda' specialize in loopin' for the ladies.

They built a course way out at 75<sup>th</sup> street and State Line called **Meadow Lake** that opened in 1917, but I never caddied there. Another nine-holer opened that year, too. They call it



**Milburn**. Later on they hired a fella' name of **W. B. Langford** to add nine more. **Harry Robb** was their pro.

And in 1919 a bunch called the **Community Golf Club** started playing on some land they got from that guy Jesse Nichols. They became **Indian Hills**, but I don't want to get ahead of myself, that wasn't until almost a decade later.



There was another great golfer that passed through here in 1915. From Chicago. That's him in that picture. He goes by the name of "**Chick**" **Evans** and he's quite the sensation, I guess. This guy plays in every tournament he can find. When they was ready to open up the second nine at **Excelsior Springs**, Evans was there to hit the first tee shot.

I don't read the newspaper too good, but I had heard about this guy from some of the other caddies and I decided I wanted to see him close-up. So I took off real early that morning to ride on the **Interurban** to Excelsior. Man! I never knew a train could go so fast. On the flats they say we was goin' 70 mile an hour!

Evans shot a course record that day...76. The man can sure play. Maybe the best I ever seen. And he was real nice to the kid what was caddying for him, too. Wasn't much of a surprise when I heard he won *both* the **National Amateur** and the **National Open** the next year.

Anyway, them people that own the **Elms Hotel** ain't no dummies. They started an **Invitational Tournament** to kick-off to the golf season in this part of the country. And to get the best golfers to show up they gave *free* golf, *free* lodging and *free* meals to all of the players. I'd have gone up to caddie, but I couldn't afford to ride the Interurban every day and my mamma said she didn't want me sleepin' outdoors all week.

They say it wasn't uncommon for several rail cars of golfers to arrive in Excelsior every day from Chicago and St. Louis to "take the waters", play golf and relax. Rumor was floatin' around when I was up there that the Elms people are going to open up even more golf courses just to handle the crowds.

With all these private clubs opening around here, there's still not much in the way of public courses. The old course in **Swope Park** gets so much play that it's hard to get in more than nine holes. You can see men practicing putting and using their mashies and mid-irons in the parkway along Gillham Road and other places around town. Why there's even *indoor* places you can go to hit balls!



ROCKWELL BROWN  
The "Interurban," formally known as the Kansas City, Clay County & St. Joseph Electric Railway, had a direct impact on the growth of North Kansas City after it began using the ASB Bridge in 1913.

Members of the Park Board and some of the golf professionals have been lookin' over parts of the Swope Park land to try to find a place for more golf. I hear they like the old shootin' range pretty good.

Even after they opened a nine hole course down by the **Blue River**, people keep playing the old links by the front gate, so the board is thinking about adding nine more holes by the Blue, too.

My old man has been taking my older brother, Bobby, with him on his ice wagon. Bobby's learnin' the route and how to take care of the horse and harness – all that stuff pa's been doin' for years. He pays Bobby, but he don't make as much as me. I always give ma' half of what I make loopin' to help with the groceries and such.

Meantime, **President Wilson** has been trying to keep the U.S. out of the **Great War**, but it ain't lookin' too good. We huddle around the radio every night to hear what's goin' on over there. The Germans were sinking merchant ships in the Atlantic and by 1917 it looked like we were goin' in.



My old man enlisted in the army. We all went down to the new **Union Station** to see him off. He sure looked swell in his **Doughboy** uniform. Ma' was crying. Bobby knew he had the ice route to run and that he was going to be the "man of the house" now. I didn't know much about this war stuff, but I knew it wasn't good.

We never saw pa' again. Pvt. Robert McDonald died in the **Argonne Forest** in October 1918.

Now I really had to step it up with my caddying. We needed the money, so I started carrying doubles. Two bags wasn't much harder than one, and the money was better. Ma's job as a housekeeper didn't pay so good and the ice wagon was steady, but not so profitable.

I stayed at Evanston until they moved the club to the new land south of the park in 1916. When they moved they changed the name to **Hillcrest** and Mr. Dalgleish stayed on as pro. I went out there a few times, and it was a real nice place, but it was too far from home for me to go every day.

I kind of liked **Milburn**. Had some good players and nice members there. It wasn't too far from our house and the train stopped right there. Treated caddies real good too, they did.

So, by the end of the decade there were eleven courses around these parts – all part of the **Kansas City Golf Association: Kansas City Country Club, Blue Hills** (used to be Elm Ridge), **Hillcrest** (my old Evanston), **Mission Hills, Oakwood** (the Jewish Progress Club from downtown), **Meadow Lake, Milburn, Swope Park, Excelsior Springs, Independence** and **Tomahawk Hills**.



## The Twenties

Things was really hoppin' around here in what folks call the "**Roaring 20's**". More golf courses were opened and more players were learnin' the game. They say a lot of it has to do with them **indoor golf** courses that the pros opened during the winter months. Ya' ever heard of that?



The **Kansas City Indoor** school was down at the **YWCA**, the **Lakewood Indoor** golf school's in the Railway Exchange Building and there's the **Western Indoor** Golf School. Not only do the local pros give lessons all day, but each club has a special day when its members play tournaments and have inter-club matches. They's a bunch of social clubs that use 'em, too.

From November to March more than 500 people took up the game for the first time... just at the Kansas City "Y". They say over 1000 people play the nine-hole course in any week!

They got no use for caddies for this indoor stuff, so I never went down to one of 'em, but I hear they got water hazards and sand bunkers laid out and you basically use your putter to "play" 18 holes. Then they had mashie nets where you had to hit your ball through a small hole in a tarp. Since the public courses are so crowded during the season, some folks are hopin' the indoors stay open all year 'round.

The Twenties was a big time for golf in Kansas City. A bunch of courses opened and a lot of 'em closed during the decade and during the Depression.

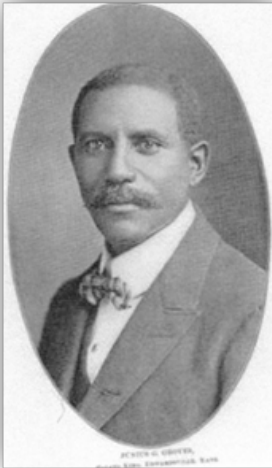
There was the **Automobile Club** in Hickman Mills that would become **South Ridge**. It closed in the 30s;

In '22 we had the little par-58 **Ivanhoe Country Club** opened by the Shriners at 86th and Holmes. It would become **Santa Fe Hills Club** some years later; **Crestwood CC** at Lake of the Forest in Kansas; **Witte Grove** in Independence; **Unity Village** started in '24, and **Log Cabin** was a James Dalglish course at 87th and Euclid. The next year Dalglish started his **St. Andrews Golf Club** at 89th and Summit. It was successful for a long time. And he built one called **Eastwood Hills** at about 50th St. that had lights for night play! One of only two in the country, they say.

There was some others, too, but I'll tell you about them separately.

Here's one I bet ya' ain't heard. There's this guy, name of **Junius G. Groves** that lives near Edwardsville...that's over in Kansas. They say he was born a slave in **Kentucky** or someplace. Anyways, after the war...ah, the Civil War... he ups and *walks* to Kansas City –

part of somethin' called the **Exodus of 1879**... some folks say the "**Exoduster Movement**" –and he starts workin' as a sharecropper and buyin' land.



He gets him enough land to start farmin' potatoes and he gets real good at it. They called him the "**Potato King of the World**" at one point, 'cause he growed more spuds than any farmer alive!

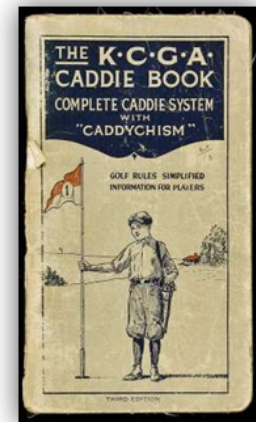
So I guess you're askin' yourself, "Jimmy, what's this got to do with golf?" Well, I'll tell ya'. This guy Groves starts his own town... called it **Groves Center**. Shipped 'taters from there all over the country. Anyway, he builds him a golf course just for the African-Americans that worked for him! Folks say there ain't another golf course jus' for black people anywhere in the whole United States! Whadaya' think of that?

I been trying to get better at readin' the newspapers, 'cause sometimes there's not much caddyin' to do and I gotta' stay busy doing somethin' 'cept playin' cards. One thing I did get to do for a couple a' days was help **Mr. Wickersham** and **Mr.**

**Lauder** from the **KCGA**. They was writin' a book about how to caddie... and who better to ask than li'l Jimmy? Whose picture do you 'spose they put on the cover?

They say the book's so good that they're sendin' it all around the country. Printed more'n 5300 copies, I hear. I was told they're gonna' use it to train the caddies who are working the **National Open** at **The Country Club of Brookline** in '23.

Ya' know that place you call Loose Park? Well, ya' know, it started out as part of Seth Ward's farm? Then in 1896, the **Kansas City Country Club** people used it for a golf course. When they thought Ward was going to cancel their lease, the Country Club moved to some of **Jesse Nichols'** land over on Indian Lane that had been used by the **Community Golf Club** since 1922.



See, Community already had bought 130 acres of land and hired a New York guy named **A.W. Tillinghast** to design them a new golf course. He got the place ready to open by the spring of 1927. They called it **Indian Hills**.

At the same time, "Tillie" – that's what I heard some of them rich folks called him – redesigned the old course on Indian Lane for the Country Club.

After the KCCC left the old Ward farm course, the city ran it for a short time as **Municipal Course #3**. It was real popular, too. Over 100 people a day were playing on it. You followin' all of this?



A new **#1** course on the old rifle range at **Swope Park** opened in 1917. It was only nine holes. To get the second nine ready it took water. And to get water to the greens it took three kinds of money: city money, a collection from a bunch of regular players and money donated by the **KCGA** from the proceeds of its tournaments.

The city thinks the new course will take care of some of the back-up on the original links by the front gate. Sometimes on Sundays it can take *hours* for a fella to get to tee off.

They got this “Volstead” thing now – call it **prohibition**. Supposed to stop folks from drinkin’ alcohol. But I ain’t seen much change around the golf course. The men lots a’ times carry a flask in their pocket or even put a whole bottle of hooch in their golf bag... just in case the weather turns cold...ha!

I seen that the **Kansas City Golf Association** is trying to help its clubs control their costs by gettin’ supplies for all the golf courses and for their clubhouses. They also want to have a uniform accounting system so the clubs can compare costs: see who’s spendin’ too much on this n’ that.

In 1923 two of the best players in Kansas City asked the **USGA** to reinstate them as amateurs. **Jess Stuttle** and **Henry Decker** got jobs workin’ for some sporting goods company and, ’cause of that, the USGA decides that they’re pros. These guys have won a bunch of city titles and played real good in the state championship, too. But, too bad.



Turns out both of ‘em are going to get good jobs as professionals at local clubs and play a few pro tournaments, anyway. Stuttle worked at **Armour-Fields** for a while and at **Meadow Lake**, and Decker hired on at Swope but he moved to **Shawnee** after Mr. Hoffman bought it.

I told you I left from **Evanston** when they pulled up stakes and moved out south and became **Hillcrest**. Started caddying at **Milburn**, I did. But when big tournaments come up, Jimmy goes where the action is. One of them is the annual **Excelsior Springs**



**Invitational.** That there's a picture of the original clubhouse with a bus from **The Elms Hotel** out front.



Since it started a few years ago, this has become one of the biggest tournaments in this part of the country. And in '23 it's the week before the **state amateur** at Milburn, so a lot of people used it for a warm-up. They had golfers from almost every state around here at the Invitational this year.

About 156 in all. And guess who won: Jesse Stuttle! Guess he was good enough to be a pro after all.

Back at my Milburn they are getting everything ready for the big championship. The course never looked better. They been makin' the members play to temporary greens for about two weeks just to be sure everything is top-notch. I hear the entry fee for the championship is \$2 and the winner gets a gold medal *and* a trophy.

The **Trans-Mississippi** was at **St. Joseph CC** in 1924, but I couldn't go 'cause it's too far and my ma's been feeling poorly. But did you know the first Trans-Miss (that's how they call it, mostly) was at the very same St. Joseph CC? Yep, back in 1901. Only two clubs was in it then, but it's a big deal now.

Man, when they say these is the "Roarin' Twenties" they ain't kiddin'. So much goin' on around here I can't recall it all. I think I'll just stop for now and tell you the rest another time.



## The 20's Roar on

Some big names played golf in Kansas City during the twenties. “**Lighthorse**” **Harry Cooper** won the big Los Angeles Open tournament and not long after, he took the head pro job at **Lakewood** (that's him in that picture there). **Chick Evans, Jock Hutchinson, Joe Kirkwood, Gene Sarazen, Johnny Farrell, Al Espinosa...** they all played exhibition matches here. I went to one of 'em just to see what it was all about. So many people was there I had to climb trees to get to see anything. Newspaper said more than 1200 people showed up. I never seen so many folks on a golf course before.



The **KCGA** combined the senior- with the father/son tournaments in 1924. They played it at **Blue Hills**. I got to loop for Mr. Roland Ford and his son from **Milburn**. Him and Junior tied for the championship with some family from **Mission Hills**, but Roland Jr. shot 149 for two rounds and won the junior championship outright. The old man was so proud he tipped me an extra fifty cents!

Another thing the **KCGA's** talkin' about is paying someone to be what they call a “ranger”. His job would be to roam around the course and promote the etiquette of the game and keep play moving. I tell you what, if he's going to enforce the rules and speed up play, he better be a really big guy!

Did ya' know there's a **Western Missouri Golf Association** now that includes clubs in little towns outside of KC? Places like **Butler, Independence, Trenton, Chillicothe, Nevada, Ft. Scott, Clinton** and **Plattsburg**. They plan to have inter-city matches starting in '24. Ain't no way I could caddy in any of them events... too far.

They also got a **Kansas City Kansas Golf Association**, 'cause they got a bunch of new courses over there, now, too. Most of 'em are sand greens, but I hear they are pretty sporty. Might have to get over there and see for myself. I could probably take the **Interurban**.

Lakewood got the okay from the **KCGA** to experiment with changin' one of their greens to a new kind of grass they call **Creeping Bent**, or somethin' like that. They say this stuff will stand up to the hard winters we get around here better'n the regular blue- and rye-grasses most places have. Said it'd be ready for play in '25. You can bet that in a few years they'll convert all of their greens to the new seed... if it works.

I heard Mr. Dagleish, my old pro from Evanston, is going to open up a public course called **St. Andrews**. It's down about 82<sup>nd</sup> street and State Line... on the Missouri Side.

It'll cost a guy \$50 for the year, or he can play for \$1.25 on weekends, or \$1 on weekdays and pay ten cents for a locker... with a bath!

Somebody said in the newspaper that there's about **20,000 golfers** in Kansas City these days. About 13,000 of them don't belong to any kind of private club. So they really need more public courses. We only got six. No wonder that **indoor golf** is so popular during the cold months.

Hey, they play some pretty good golf around here, too. The scores were so low at the **KCGA** city championship in '27 that the golf association started a fund of \$250 to send some of its young stars to the **US Public Links Championship** in Cleveland later in the year.

I heard 'bout some newfangled machine called a "pender gas"...didn't know what the heck that was... some kind of motor car, or sumptin'.

Then I found out it ain't no car, at all. **Tom Pendergast** (left) was a politician fella'. Had a bunch a' people workin' for him all over town.



When ma' was sick he helped pay her hospital bill. And one year we got a free Christmas dinner from one of the "machine's men" in our neighborhood. People talked bad about ol' Tom, but he did pretty good by us.

The city really took off during the Pendergast years. Lotta' folks got construction jobs 'cause of ol' Tom. A lotta' roads got paved. Some of the other stuff I hear my golfers sayin', I don't know much about: bribin' police, illegal

gamblin', fixin' elections. Don't hurt me none.

My older brother Bobby helped build the new courthouse downtown. He sold the ice business a couple a' years ago to some guy who didn't think these new electric ice boxes were going to work too good. Bobby got him a job workin' for a company Mr. Pendergast had a hand in.

The **KCGA** held the first annual **Mid-America Open** tournament at Lakewood Golf and Country Club – that's crost' the river, you know – in June of 1928. Over 200 players entered... pros and amateurs, didn't matter. They played for a purse of \$6,500!

I caddied for **Harry Robb Sr.**, my pro at Milburn. There was four **national open** champions in the field and just about every big name in the game (except **Bobby Jones**. He got held over in Chicago because he had a 36-hole



play-off for this year's national open the day before. He lost to Johnny Farrell).

More than 15,000 people came out to see the big names. Played 36-holes the last day. **Al Espinosa** (in that picture up there) won with a score of 289 for four rounds. He got \$1,500 for first place.

So, let me see. Best as I can recollect, before the big **stock market crash** of 1929, the **KCGA** was helping member clubs with buyin' supplies and equipment, deciding on turf grass experiments, holding successful inter-club matches, puttin' on a combined junior/ father-son/ senior championship, organizing a professional event of national significance and conducting its first 72-hole amateur medal tournament. Not too bad for an organization that was less than *20 years old*.



## Loopin' for the Ladies

Remember me tellin' ya' about my specialty: caddying for the ladies? I sorta' had this trademark: it was my knickers and my wool cap. The ladies thought it was "the bee's knees" – real cute – so I kept it up. *You* might call it a fashion statement... *I'd* call it hand-me-downs from my brother Bobby.



Well, after I moved to **Milburn** from the old **Evanston** club, I got to caddy for a bunch of really nice folks, but one day this young girl shows up... and she was a real knock-out.

Since I kinda' liked loopin' for the ladies anyway, whenever **Miss Miriam Burns** came to play, I elbowed the other caddies out of my way to be sure I'd get to carry her bag (had to split a fella's lip one day when he tried to take my loop). She had a swing as easy as a leaf fallin' off a tree, but she hit the ball a long way. Truth is, I was a little sweet on her. You can see why.

She was at **Northwestern University** for a time, but when she was home, she studied the game of golf real hard. Wasn't long before me and Miss Miriam was a team in almost every tournament she played in around

here. But when she traveled to national stuff, I couldn't go... that wouldn't a' looked right.

Miss Miriam – that's how I always called her – and me won five **Kansas City Women's Match Play** championships in-a-row startin' in 1920, then we won it again in '27 and in '29. She won the **Women's Western Amateur** in 1923 when she was just *nineteen years old*, and then won it again in '30. And we won the **Missouri Women's Am**, too.

She took a year off after she eloped and married that Horn fella'. Even had a baby in 1926. I could never get used to hearin' people call her **Miriam Burns Horn**... but it sure didn't change the way she played. She was a natural.



Her biggest win was the **United States Women's Amateur** in 1927. First woman from west of the Mississippi to win it, she was. Beat a famous gal 'name of **Maureen Orcutt**, 5



and 4 in the final. Some folks thought it was scandalous when she became the first *divorced* woman to win a major title – but that was just a sign of the “Roarin’ Twenties,” I suspect. As for me, I never much liked that Mr. Horn anyways. But she broke my heart again when she married a guy, name of **Tyson** in 1929.



When she came home on the train from New York with that big ‘ol Cox trophy from the Amateur, the **Kansas City Golf Association** and the **Women’s Golf Association** threw her a big reception down at Union Station and then a shin-dig here at Milburn. Had a big band from down on “**the Vine**”... Bennie Moten was the leader’s name... he was real famous all over the country. They played a style of music called the **Kansas City Stomp**. It was real purdy.

I stayed and peeped in the windows just to see how them rich folks could party. People were all around the clubhouse. Men in their fine clothes, women in their “flapper” dresses. Lots a’ music and dancin’.

Guess that *Mr. Prohibition* wasn’t workin’ that night ’cause about everyone in there had a glass of somethin’ or another in their hand. Miss Miriam never looked prettier to me.

But Miss Miriam wasn’t the only good lady player here 'bouts. No, sir. There was a lady who played over at **Meadow Lake** by the name of **Mrs. Opal Hill**. She and Miss Miriam had some real battles on the courses around here. They played each other in some of them national tournaments, too.

Mrs. Hill didn’t take up the game until she was a bit older. She got real sickly and the doctors told her she might only live a few years if she didn’t get some exercise and fresh air. Well, she got bit by that golf bug that was goin’ around in the twenties. The way I hear it she entered the **Tri-State tournament** at **Hillcrest** and qualified for the *Class D* flight in 1923.

Disappointed, she started taking lessons from **Al Lesperance**, the pro at Meadow Lake. She practiced every day...three or more hours.

The better she got, the healthier she was. Within a year she had won the **Meadow Lake** women’s championship. You know where Meadow Lake was, don’t you? On 75<sup>th</sup> Street and State Line, not too far from **Indian Hills**.

Anyway, she got so good that when they expanded that Tri-State deal into the women’s **Trans-Mississippi**



**championship** at Blue Hills in 1927 she entered with high expectations. But she lost to Miss Miriam in the finals that first year. Then she turned the tables on her the next year, won it again in 1929, then in '31 and a fourth time in 1934. She was runner-up another time: in 1938 she lost to **Patty Berg** in the final.

Mrs. Hill became one of the greatest players in the United States. Won the **Western Am** three times, the **North and South** in Pinehurst and won *fourteen* consecutive **KC Women's Championships**. She even played on the first three **Curtis Cup** teams – that's where the U.S. sends its best ladies to play against the gals from Britain and Ireland. That picture there is the 1936 team.

But she never won a U.S. Women's Amateur (like my Miss Miriam did).

A boy couldn't count the number of titles Mrs. Hill won over the years – a couple hundred, I guess. After a while there just wasn't any more things to prove, so she turned professional in 1938... just the third woman to ever do that. She helped establish the **Ladies Professional Golfers Association**. She put on clinics and gave exhibitions with some of the biggest names in *men's* golf. Gave lessons for years at **Hillcrest** and the **Country Club**... well into her 80s.

I don't want to give the impression that these were the only two women around here who could play good, no sir. There was Miss **Carolyn Lee** from Hillcrest, who won three Missouri Women's Championships and three KC crowns; and **Mrs. Marguerite Levy** from Oakwood; little **Virginia Bevan** at Lakewood who could hit drives over 200 yards when she was just 13 years old; and later, **Jean Pepper** of Oakwood who won five city match play titles and three Missouri women's titles in-a-row, **Marian Gault** from Indian Hills won "the city" six times, **Maxine Johnson** at Hillcrest, **Karen Schull MacGee** of Blue Hills and Brookridge, and **Levon Devers** at Lake Quivira. They was all real good.

See that picture there? That's Mrs. Opal when she was 69 years-old givin' some tips to Betty Houran and Maxine Johnson when they was at the Titleholders – that's a big ladies' tournament they played in Georgia in 1962.

But the tussles Miss Miriam and me had with Mrs. Hill were the talk of the town. In the twenties and thirties, the two of 'em was setting course records right and left. First, Miss



Miriam would get a record, like the one we set at **Excelsior Springs**. Then Mrs. Hill would go out and lower it. Mrs. Opal went on a run for a while there when she made new records at Excelsior, **Lawrence C.C.**, **KC Country Club** and **Meadow Lake**. And she wasn't just nippin' them... she was lowering them by two or three shots! Then Miss Miriam would top her back.

In 1937 they played the **Missouri Amateur** at Indian Hills. Mrs. Opal shot the lowest competitive round ever by *any* woman: a 66... *twelve-under* the women's par at the time! That record stood until 1952. Remember we didn't have no "women's" tees back then... they played from the regular tees.



Yep, when I wasn't caddying for the men at Milburn, I sure liked loopin' for the ladies. 'Specially for my Miss Miriam.

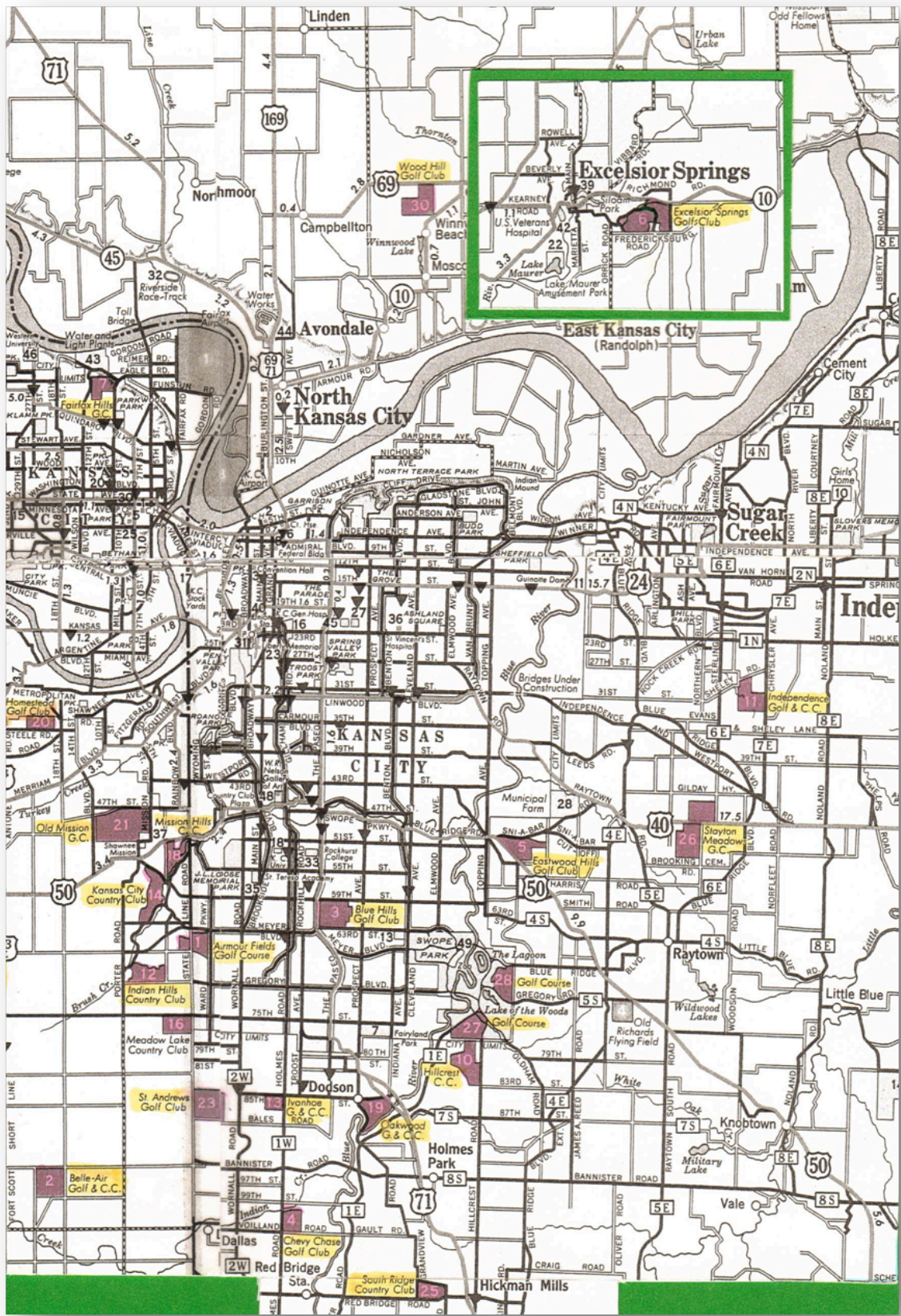
Now I'm goin' ta' show you where some of these courses were, so's you can understand what I been talkin' about. These here maps're from around 1930.













## The Great Depression

You know about the stock market crash in 1929, right? Talk around the golf course was that lotsa' people lost whole bunches a' money when the market started slippin' in September, but by the end of October the bottom just fell out. They called it "**Black Tuesday**". There was a rebound in early '30, but down it went again by spring. They say it was on account of "leveraging"... but I don't know just what that is.

I go to the movie shows quite a bit. Ya' know I started workin' sellin' popcorn when I was a little kid. Usually the manager lets me in for free 'cause he remembered me as a good worker. Well, they run these newsreels between the double feature and I learn a lot of stuff 'bout what's goin' on in the world from them. The big thing in '32 was the kidnappin' of Mr. Lindberg's little baby... and the Olympics in Los Angeles.



With people being thrown outta' work right and left, there was more caddies than any club could put to work. Not just kids, either. We had old men who used to own stores and who worked in banks showing up to loop. Heck, I hear a few of 'em used to be members at some of the other clubs around town. 'Course they couldn't go caddie where they used to play, so some of 'em came over here to **Milburn** and to the **Country Club**... places like that.

The **Great Depression** (don't sound too great to me, but that's what they been callin' it in the papers) made some of the private clubs open their doors to "public" players... need the money, I guess. And the people who want to keep playing during these tough times (didn't have much else to do) put even more pressure on cities and towns to build more public courses.

There was a building boom of sorts around here. Just to give you a picture of what happened, these are the courses that opened in the '30s:



**Old Mission** at 48th and Reinhardt, not too far from Mission Hills. They had 27 holes with bent grass greens, but poor fairways, I hear;

**Belle Aire** was way out on the Ft. Scott Short Line Railroad by Bannister Rd.;

**Stayton Meadows** opened up out east on Raytown Rd.;

**Fairfax Hills** looked down on the river in Kansas City, Kansas. Had bent grass greens from the day it opened with the sod shipped-in all the way from Chicago! When they opened the second nine they had to build a trestle over the Missouri Pacific tracks to get to it. Some golfers rode the MoPac right to the course;

**Lake Quivira Golf Club** out on Holliday Rd.;

**Chevy Chase Golf Club** was way south on Holmes near the town of Dallas. Never heard of Dallas? It was a little town almost on the State Line, just west of Wornall.

Fact is, by the middle of the 30s there was about thirty golf courses in the whole area, including Leavenworth and Independence.

Some of 'em didn't last too long, a few never grew past their days as sand greens courses, and there was a bunch that were just nine-holers. But I think it shows how much the people around here took to the game. Some say we got more players than any town our size in the whole country.

And the more players, the more work for caddies... like me. Some days there might be sixty kids (and men outa' work) lookin' for loops at the most popular courses. It could get pretty cut-throat at times.

Folks in Kansas City, Kansas have taken to the game in a big way, too. Sure, a lot of the better private clubs are in Kansas – close in to the new Plaza and the big expensive mansions along the boulevards. But more and more, regular folk have picked up the game.

There was a course west of Edwardsville, near Lake of the Forest...called Crestwood... but it didn't make it too long, 'cause it was so hard to get to. Between the drought (ya' know the **Dust Bowl** happened in '35), lack of paved roads and irregular service on the Kaw Valley Interurban, they just were too far out to make money. Had a real enthusiastic membership, but not enough of 'em.

They got **Westheight Manor** that sits smack-dab in the middle of town. A guy named of J. A. Hoel is a land developer over there and he's a pretty smart fella'. He hired James Watson, the guy from Mission Hills, to lay out a course so people would buy land nearby for houses. Ran it as a semi-public course...meanin' they had members and let other people play there, too.

But I think Hoel never planned for it to last too long. He sold the land to the city in '27 so they could build the new **Wyandotte High School** and the big athletic fields where the

course was. Westheight sat right on Washington Blvd. and Minnesota Ave. with a real nice clubhouse and a dance pavilion.

In 1926 they opened the **Old Homestead** club in the Argentine District. Built on the old Brown Farm. Nine-holes at first, then went to 18 in 1927. Pretty nice, I hear.

The **Wyandotte Country Club** has big plans for its course west of the city. Pretty easy to get to... ya' can ride the KC-WYCO electric car line and get right close to the course. They think they'll have 300 members by the time they open. Gonna' have bent grass greens, I hear.

But the biggest news was the opening of the new **Victory Hills** course. **James Dalglish**, the golf pro, sometimes architect, and owner of the **St. Andrews** course over on State Line road laid-out the course. It's over 6,000 yards and folks say it's a beaut.

'Cordin' to the paper, they had eighteen teams of horses, a tractor and fifteen men workin' long days to be sure the course would be ready for the spring opening in '28. Green fees was to be 50 cents a day and 75 on Saturday. If you want to play on Sunday it would cost you a buck and two bits.



Folks are almost as excited that the pro for the new course is going to be a local Rosedale kid name of **Harold McSpaden**. Most everyone knows him as "**Jug**". He won the city amateur a couple of times. After he turned pro he spent some time playing in tournaments around the country.

You heard of this fella' name of **Bobby Jones**, right? He won somethin' called the Grand Slam in 1930...that's the US and British Opens and Amateurs. Never been done before. Heck, they didn't even know what to call what he did. One guy called it the quarda... quadrilateral. That sounded pretty goofy.

But the newspaper guy from Atlanta, Mr. **O.B. Keeler** came up with the idea of calling it the Grand Slam, and it stuck. I kinda' like the sound of it, myself. With baseball being so big around the country, it seemed to fit.

Speakin' of baseball, every once in a while a bunch of us caddies goes down to **Muehlebach Field** to watch the Monarchs play. Man, those guys were sumptin'. My



favorite was "**Cool Papa**" **Bell**... fastest man you'll ever see on a ball field.

If they'd a' been able to play against the Blues, I don't think it would have even been close... heck, I bet they could beat them New York Yankees!

Well, another thing Mr. Bobby Jones did is, he started his own golf course in Georgia. He got **Alister MacKenzie** to help him build it over an old tree farm. Anyway, when he gets 'er done he starts this tournament called the **Augusta National Invitational** in 1934. And our kid "Jug" was invited to play in the very first one!

"Jug" got pretty darned good at playing in professional tournaments. He won in Pasadena, Los Angeles, Canada, Phoenix and other big events. Was on the Ryder Cup team a couple of times, too.

But, I guess he'll always be known as **Byron Nelson's** shadow. Seemed to come up just short whenever "Lord Byron" was in the field. Even though "Jug" won six times between '44 and '45, he finished second to Nelson thirteen times in '45 alone! The two of 'em partnered up in some tournaments, too. Somebody got to callin' them the "**Gold Dust Twins**".



I can read the paper pretty good now, and I always follow the pros – 'specially the ones who started out as caddies, like me. **Nelson and Ben Hogan and Sam Snead**... they was all caddies before they started playin' for money.

The Great Depression was tough on a lot of people in Kansas City, but the golf went on. There was more rounds played here in 1932 than in '30. And the number of courses kept growin', too.

But they was tough times for a kid trying to make a livin' as a caddie. Especially with my ma' gettin' up there in years and needin' more and more doctorin'. With Bobby workin' for the Pendergast people, buildin' offices and apartments and such, and me carryin' doubles every day, we made ends meet, as they say. But there wasn't much left over.

I thought about getting' one of them **WPA** jobs. That's a program President Roosevelt made up where able bodied folks who couldn't find work would help build stuff, like the **Wyandotte County Lake** and the new **City Hall**. But I didn't think I wanted to work that hard, and there was people who needed that kind a' work a lot more'n me.

WPA money even built that famous **Prairie Dunes** golf course out in Hutchinson. The guy in charge is named **Perry Maxwell**, and he is doing a lot of them WPA projects around the country. He uses horses and men with strong backs...not much machinery. But the whole idea is to get people work they can be proud of, not to get 'er done as quick as they can.

When folks ain't talking about golf, seems they's talkin' about how **Jesse Owens** poked his finger in ol' Hitler's eye at the '36 Olympics. Showed him. But I think they're really worried about all the fuss over in Europe. Might be a war, they say.

Lot of the people I caddie for still got relatives over there and things don't look too good. I hope we can stay out of it. I lost my pa' in the first war, I don't want to see any more people die over there.

In 1937 the talk was all about **Miss Amelia Earhart** from over in Atchison... a real daredevil, she was. Set all kinds a' records for flyin' airplanes: she was the first woman to fly solo 'cross the Atlantic, first to go from Hawaii to California, from Mexico City to New York... the woman was flyin' all over the globe.



But in July of '37 she was tryin' to go 'round the world and was on a leg from Hawaii to **Howland Island** when her Lockheed Electra plane went down somewhere in the Pacific. The Navy and private citizens tried to find her and the plane, but nobody never heard from her again. It was all over the papers, on the radio news and in the newsreels at the movie show.

The KCGA's still runnin' their tournaments every year and helpin' clubs with administrative stuff, but there wasn't much else for 'em to do, really. Most of the clubs are doin' things pretty much the way they like.



## The War Years

I'm glad I learned to read pretty good. There's so much goin' on in the world that a fella' can't rely on his mamma to read the papers to him. Besides, ma's eyesight ain't so good. Me and Bobby got her a new plug-in radio for Christmas last year. Gets AM, FM and even Shortwave.

There's so much talk about the U.S. goin' to war. Jus' because we're supposed to be "neutral" don't mean we can't get wrapped up in that stuff overseas. It's all anyone's talkin' about at the golf course these days. **Hitler** seems bent on takin' over the whole world. One country after another is either invaded or has already surrendered. By 1940 it just seems like there's no end in sight. Britain is under attack. Mr. **Churchill** called it their "finest hour..." I don't know exactly what he means by that. The paper says they's getting' bombed nearly every day and night.



They can't play the **British Open** or any of the other big tournaments in Europe 'cause of the war, but over here, we seem to be tryin' to put on a good face. **Ben Hogan** (left) won his first tournament in '40. It was the **North & South Open**. And **Jimmy Demaret** won that Bobby Jones' tournament down in Georgia. "Jug's" buddy, **Byron Nelson** (right), was the PGA Champion.

Around here folks keep playin' like nothing's goin' on. A fella' from **Mission Hills** called **Bob Busler** won the **KCGA Match Play**. For the rest of the decade – except for the war years of 1943, '44 and '45 when they didn't play – **Blue Hills** had a lock on the city tournament. **Tom Stephenson** won it three times, **Bob Kosten** snuck in there in '46 and **Wilbur Bartels** got three-in-a-row startin' in 1948.

You might say I had a hand in some of them city titles. Besides caddying in most of 'em, that young Tommy Stephenson fella' used to be a member at **Milburn**. I looped for him and his pop lotsa' times. I was there when he broke 90 for the first time when he was just 13, and I seen him break par... heck, I can't count the number.

Before he joined **Blue Hills**, me and him teamed up to win the Milburn club championship in '36, the **Excelsior Springs Invitational**, the city **Match Play** championship and a bunch of other stuff. Tommy had a heck of an amateur career, he did. We qualified for quite a few national tournaments. Best regular loop I had since **Miss Miriam Burns Horn** and me was a team back in the 20s and 30s.





On the women's side, **Jean Pepper** from **Oakwood** had a hot streak. She won five times in six years goin' back to 1936. And **Marian Gault** started her run in 1942 and ended up winning seven times! Pretty impressive. Mrs. Gault's from **Indian Hills**, ya' know. (That's a picture of her there).



Did I tell ya' that Bobby got married? Yep, him and his high school best-girl had a small wedding at our church. I got to be his "Best Man". Don't know exactly what all that means, but I was real proud. Ma' was really excited... I think she wants grandkids around pretty soon.

We all loved Mary Catherine. She's a sweet girl... and real pretty, too. They moved in with Ma' and me. It's a little crowded, but we get along. I usually don't get home 'till dark anyhow, and I hit the sack as soon as I get somethin' to eat, so we don't get in each other's way too much. Having Mary

Catherine around to keep an eye on Ma' is a big help, too.

We all listen to the news from overseas at night on ma's radio. When **President Roosevelt** came on and made his big speech we was all froze in place. I'll never forget it:

*"December 7, 1941, a date that will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and viciously attacked..."*

I could see it in Bobby's face, and I know ma' and Mary Catherine saw it too. Bobby was going to enlist. Nothin' we could say or do to stop him. Just about every other man his age had the same feeling. This was our country; we sat on our hands too long when Hitler started killin' and gasin' the Jews and marchin' all over Europe. We couldn't sit and wait for **Hirohito** and **Tojo** to try to conquer the world from Japan.

Pa' died in the first war – *that* was supposed to be "the war to end all wars" – and ma' couldn't face losing her oldest son in this one. But within a week, Bobby had gone down and enlisted. He was in the **4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division**. Him and his buddies shipped out from **Union Station**, just like pa' did a long time ago. They went to **Alabama** for their boot camp. Mary Catherine got a lot of letters from him. He loved the Army, but he hated the heat and humidity in Alabama.

You ever heard of **Craig Wood**? He won two of the big major tournaments in 1941... the Masters and the U.S. Open. That's him in that picture, there. A lot of the pros were going into the service, so the competition wasn't as good as it was before, but these guys could still play. All of the big tournaments were canceled for the duration of the war. Some of the pros who



couldn't get into the service started doin' exhibitions around the country to raise money for war bonds.

**Ben Hogan** was the big money winner on the tour in '41 with a little over \$18,000. That, my friends, is a lot of money. He won 63 times in his career, even though he went into the Army and had a car accident that nearly killed him. You know he started out as a caddie, don't you?

Hogan, Nelson and Snead, they was all caddies like me... and they was all born the same year as the **Kansas City Golf Association**: 1912. I followed them real close. I kinda' liked Nelson best 'cause he partnered with our local kid "**Jug**" **McSpaden** in a lot of them exhibitions and in some tournaments where two guys played together.

Hogan played into the '60s and Nelson, he retired as soon as he won enough money to buy him a ranch down in Texas.

But Snead lasted the longest on tour. He won 82 times, that's more tournaments than anybody. He even took time out to serve in the Navy during the war.

Anyhow, in '44 Nelson won about \$38,000 in war bonds to lead the "money" list. He won eighteen times in 1945...and he won *eleven in-a-row!* I don't think no one's ever goin' to do that again.



A couple of them wins was with "Jug" as his partner.

They was real close friends, even if they fought like dogs on the course.

"Jug" had a really good career...best to ever come out of Kansas City, Kansas... that's for sure. He set a record of 31 top-10s in one season. But he retired after the '47 season. He was the head pro at **Victory Hills** and at **Lake Quivira** and, much later, he designed **Dub's Dread Golf Course**.

During the war there was a lot of changes in Kansas City. People who didn't already have steel shafted clubs couldn't buy any 'cause of the war effort (seems like everything people want and can't get – like sugar and gas... and rubber golf balls – is "because of the war effort").

My brother, Bobby, was in the **D-Day** landing in France. Most of the attention went to them guys who hit **Normandy** at **Omaha Beach**, but Bobby and the **4<sup>th</sup> Infantry** kinda' caught them by surprise and they went in about six minutes before "Zero Hour" at **Utah Beach**. The leader of his invasion force was **Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt Jr.** By the end of that one day over 20,000 men were on land just at Utah.

Ma' was relieved when we finally heard that they got in with very few casualties. Guess the Germans didn't know somebody was knocking on the back door. We had an ear to that new radio every spare minute getting' the latest news.

Every once in a while, I'd treat Ma' and Mary Catherine to a movie with my caddie money and we'd see a newsreel picture show about what was goin' on over there. Later in the war, Bobby got wounded and spent several months in a hospital in England, but he got back with his buddies when they was in **Belgium**.

A few local courses closed from a lack of members. Folks kinda' looked down on anyone who took too much time playin' golf and not doin' whatever they could to help the war.

Part of the **Fairfax Hills** course, over 'cross the river, was taken over to build "Garden Apartments" where workers in the defense plants on the Kansas side could live. All of the auto makin' stopped for a time and the plants were converted to the war effort. They built the **B-25 bomber** in Fairfax.



You probably seen the posters of "**Rosie the Riveter**." It ran in the *Saturday Evening Post*, but after the *Kansas City Star* ran it, recruitment of women to the factories really took off. I heard that some 40,000 men enlisted just from Kansas City, but the population of our area actually *went up*

because so many women came here to build stuff for the war.

The war seemed to be nearly over when President Roosevelt died and our hometown guy became president. **Harry Truman** was a **Pendergast** man (that's the two of 'em there) when he got into politics and by 1945 he was one of the most popular Democrats in America.

How 'bout that, the President of the whole United States lived right here in Independence! He's the one who made the decision to drop the A-bombs on Japan. He was in the White House when the wars ended in Europe and the Pacific. Harry and Bess, they were about as "Kansas City" as two people could get.



With the G.I.s coming back home, thousands of women were thrown out of work. They say more than forty percent of the defense jobs were held by women during the war.

Mary Catherine worked at the **Darby Shipyards** on the Kaw. The **LCT Landing Craft** that took Bobby and his buddies to France was built right here at Kaw Point. It's kinda' funny, the same boat that Bobby rode to shore in Normandy just might have been built by his wife!

There were lots a' women workin' at **North American Aviation** building B-25 bombers and at **Pratt and Whitney** making engines for airplanes. They also build bigger stuff at the Darby Shipyards (left).



But when the boys came home, the girls had to go home. That's just the way it was back then.

It was tough for a caddie to make a living during the war, so I took up a part-time job washin' dishes in the kitchen at Milburn, where I caddied. Then they made me a waiter and the tips started rollin' in (they just can't resist the charms of little ol' Jimmy). I didn't get to see ma' and Mary Catherine much 'cause it seemed like we was

always working different shifts.

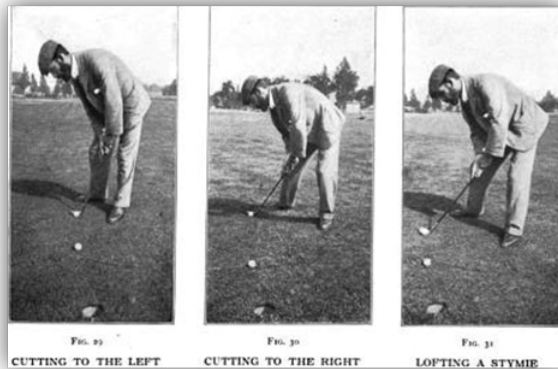
When the war ended the country was ready to get things back to normal. The pro tours took off again. Johnny Bulla (picture) won KC Invitational and Hogan won 13 times in '46; the women's tour was getting started with a few big names wining most of the titles. You've probably heard of **Patty Berg**, **Louise Suggs** and "**Babe**" **Zaharias**. During this time our **Mrs. Opal Hill** wasn't playing much, but she was teaching at **KCCC** and **Hillcrest** and doin' a bunch of exhibitions.

With things getting back to normal and G.I.s starting to earn good money, golf started to become popular again. What a great time to be a caddie!



## The Fifties

If there was one thing about the rules of golf that people talk about the most, it's the **stymie**. Folks cuss about it all the time. And in 1952, the people who make up the rules at the **USGA** finally said "enough".



Maybe you ain't never heard of the *stymie*. Well, Jimmy's goin' to tell ya' how it goes: say you putt your ball toward the hole and it stops just short... maybe 'bout a foot, and right in another fella's line.

Now, your opponent gets ready to putt. He's got to slice or hook his ball around yours – or chip it over your ball – to try to get to the cup. You can't never mark your ball unless it is

closer than six inches from his.

If he hits yours, you can either play it from the new place, or put it back where it was. Your choice. If he knocks your ball into the hole by accident, you're in the hole with your last stroke.

I've seen club championships lost to stymies on the last hole. Good players practice the little chips they need to get around stymies all the time. Ya' know, greens wasn't near as good in the Fifties as they are today, 'cause when folks had to chip off of the turf to get to the hole, sometimes they took tiny little divots. Made a mess of the greens, for sure.

The rule was a pain in the neck for caddies, too. Nothin' cut into a good tip like a fella' who just lost an important match because of a stymie.

There wasn't much course buildin' going on around here in the 50s compared to earlier times. There was the new **Rockwood** course that opened in Independence right after the war, and a few that came in the 50s. **Lakeside** was the original name of the course up north that later became known as **Mirror Lake** and then **Windbrook** – ya' know what's up there now? The Deuce at the National, that's what; **Meadbrook** opened in '53; the old **Crackerneck** was way east of Independence and it started in '54; **Southview** opened in '55; **Chapel Woods** got goin' in '58 and the famous club maker **Kenneth Smith** built his **Happy Hunting Club** next to his manufacturing plant the same year. The last course to get goin' during the '50s was **Shamrock Hills**.

One of the best clubs in town used to be **Lakewood**. Well, it ain't really "in" town, it's north of the river. It became known as **Wood Hill** during the Depression and operated as

a semi-private course. They shut 'er down in '54. Just couldn't recover from the hard times and the war years, I recon.



**Mrs. Marian Gault** from **Indian Hills** kept her hot streak goin' during the Fifties. She won the **city championship** three more times, that gave her six all together. And **Maxine Johnson** (picture) started a pretty spectacular run of her own with wins in the odd-numbered years from '53 to '59 and a streak in '60, '61 and '62. She played out at **Hillcrest**.

The **KCGA Match Play** was a real dog fight every year. No man was able to repeat as champion through the whole decade. But guys from **Blue Hills** kept hold of the trophy for the first four years, after that, it was up for grabs. In '56 I caddied for one of my **Milburn** members, **Mr. Bob Harvey Jr.** and we won it all. It was excitin' to be loopin' for the winner!

We got ourselves into another war overseas, ya' know. Jus' when we all thought we was goin' to have some quiet times, we get wrapped up in **Korea**. I'm glad Bobby's too old to go back. **President Truman** says it ain't really a war; it's a "**Police Action**". But the way I sees it, if our guys is dyin'... it's a war. They signed somethin' called an armistice to stop it in '53.

**Ben Hogan** and his wife, Valerie, was drivin' to a pro tournament in Texas in 1949 when his car hit a big Greyhound bus head-on. It was big news, 'specially around the golf course. "**The Hawk**" (that's what people called him) went into the service in 1942, and him and **Snead** and **Nelson** was the big three during the rest of the '40s. Hogan won *thirty-eight* times after he got home from the war.

His best year before the accident was '48. He won *ten* times and got the **National Open** at **Riviera** in Los Angeles and the **PGA Championship**, too. But he broke bones all over his body in that wreck. People wondered how in the world he was goin' to live, much less ever play championship golf again.



Well, I guess his will was stronger than folks gave him credit for. He came back from the hospital to win the **U.S. Open** three times, two **Masters** and the **British Open** the only time he played in it. They throwed him a ticker-tape parade in New York when he came home from England. All together he took *nine* **major** titles before he stopped winning and turned his attention to his golf club business.

On the new women's tour "**Babe**" **Zaharias** won all of the major titles in 1950 – clean sweep. She



had a tough time of it, too, ya' know. She racked up a bunch of titles – won 41 times as a pro and 41 as an amateur –and won the most money a couple of times, too, before she got cancer in 1953.



Before she started playin' golf “Babe” was a heck of a track star. Won two golds and a silver medal in the **Olympics** in 1932. In fact, there wasn't a sport she ever tried that she couldn't win at... pool, basketball, baseball. When she did take up golf she dominated almost right from the start. If the cancer hadn't gotten her, I bet she'da set records no one would *ever* touch.

1950 was the first year of the **LPGA**, and when they came to town, not many folks knew much about 'em. But the roots of the women's game was planted here: our own **Mrs. Opal Hill** was one of the founders, **Patty Berg**, the **Bauer** sisters (**Marlene** and **Alice**), **Helen Hicks**, **Betsy Rawls**...they was all here. The “Babe”, Berg and Betsy dominated the first decade winnin' the money title seven of those first years.

The men pros came here, too... for the **KC Open**. It was played on four different courses during these years: They started at **Swope Parkin'**49, then came to **Milburn**. That was the first time I got to loop for a professional in a big-time tournament. I don't need to tell you that Jimmy was just a little nervous.

In those days pros traveled together by car, went from city-to-city and they didn't keep the same caddies like they do nowadays. So when it came time to get a looper, they relied on the Caddiemaster at the local course to hook 'em up. At Milburn, that was **Mr. John Donahoe**. Since I been at Milburn almost from the beginning, I was always first up on the list.

**Lloyd Mangrum** won in '50, but I din't have him. **Dr. Carry Middlecoff** won the next two years and my buddy “Arkansas Bob” caddied for him both times. Made some real good dough, he did.



But, in 1953 I was on the bag for the guy they called “**Porky**”. His real name was **Ed Oliver**. He was a real good player, but I thought he was just a great guy... a little chubby maybe, but he had a way about him... lotsa' fun. You know he was runner-up to **Julius Boros** in the National Open the year before? He finished second a bunch of times, but he won *eight* times when he was on the tour, so he was a “pretty good stick”.

Jimmy knows as much about Milburn as any caddie out there, and “Mr. Porky” took advantage of what I told him. We was readin’ greens like the backs of our hands. When we won, it was my best payday – *ever*. I’m thinkin’ about getting one of them new television sets for Ma’ and me with the extra money.

Bobby and Mary Catherine got one last year. Screen’s about nine inches acrost. After he got home from the service, Bobby got him a good union job. They started havin’ kids and settled down like a real family (I’m “**Uncle Jimmy**” around here, now). He bought them a new house in ’53. Cost almost \$17,000!

The women pros were here for the **Heart of America Invitational Open** in 1955.

**Marilyn Smith** from **Wichita** was the first winner. They played at Oakwood, then the tournament moved to Hillcrest, Blue Hills and Brookridge over the next few years.

A lot happened during the 50s. Golf went from being a social event to being a *sport*. A lot a’ guys took up the game after the war and public courses and country clubs had to adapt to the big jump in the game’s popularity.



It was a sad day at Milburn when we lost our head pro in ’52. **Mr. Harry Robb Sr.** was the first and only pro we ever had. He saw the club through the clubhouse fire in 1932 and he was pretty much responsible for every change they made to the course.

He was from Scotland, ya’ know. So he knew a lot about the game: designed courses, gave lessons, developed the talents of a lot of players. A bunch of ’em followed in his footsteps and got club pro jobs, some went on to play professional. Some were happy just being great amateurs. Like Tommy Stephenson. But, for ol’ Jimmy, at least, the best of all of ’em was **Miriam Burns Horn**.

Without Mr. Robb’s teachin’, maybe me and Miss Miriam would never have hooked up as a team. I spent hours shaggin’ balls for her, and I never got tired of it. For sure, without Mr. Robb, she wouldn’t have been the great player she turned out to be.

There’s a skinny kid from Pennsylvania by the name of **Arnold Palmer** who won the ’54 National Amateur and turned pro for the ’55 season. This kid is takin’ the golf world by storm. He won the **Canadian Open** his first year out and by the end of the



decade he'd already won thirteen times, including the **Masters**.

They started showin' golf on TV in the early '50s, with the **Tam O'Shanter** tournament from Chicago, but when this Palmer guy started winning, folks really started to pay attention. Women loved him, guys all thought they could swing like him (they couldn't) and folks all over started trying to putt with their knees locked together like he did.

Most of America had this idea about Palmer makin' last round charges, hitchin' up his pants, flippin' the butt of his L&M cigarette aside as he stared down the golf ball and made it listen to what he was sayin'.

If it hadn't been for Palmer, players like **Dow Finsterwald, Doug Ford, Al Balding** and a bunch of other real good pros would hardly have been heard of. But with TV and Palmer everybody was payin' attention.

**Mission Hills** opened its new clubhouse in '56. This time they built it on the Kansas side of the state line.



In 1955, Dick Mayer (left) won the KC Open at Hillcrest and the **KCGA** started havin' its business run by a fella' by the name of **Loren Lamberth**. He takes care of settin' up all the tournaments and answers questions about rules and such. They liked what he did so good that they made him the president in 1957. I see Mr. Loren at 'bout every tournament I caddie in. He runs the **USGA** qualifiers, the city championship, the KC Open, the Trans-Miss and the Seniors Golf Association. Guy must never sleep!

The **KCGA** was really gettin' to be somethin' around here. They run all kindsa' tournaments and with Mr. Lamberth overseein' things, it seems like they got more of a handle on everything goin' on. The 60s is gonna' be even more excitin'.



## The Cloud of Segregation

Y'all think of golf in the 50s as a genteel sport... lots of rich folks playin' on well kept turf, families spendin' time at swimmin' pools and on tennis courts; public courses teemin' with golfers lookin' for exercise and good fun with their friends. A real "**Norman Rockwell**" kinda' setting.

But the truth is, golf was one of the first battle grounds in the **Civil Rights** movement that would spread through the country. Black folks wanted the right to vote, to have access to schools, hotels, restaurants and other public places. You could say the movement grew roots on our golf courses.



Remember me tellin' ya' about **Mr. Junius Groves** of Edwardsville? He's the fella' who *walked* to Kansas City in the **Exoduster Movement** in 1879... got here with less than a buck in his pocket and started workin' as a sharecropper. He worked and saved and bought land. By the early 1900s he was known as "**The Potato King of the World.**"

Well, this Mr. Groves built him a golf course in his little town of **Groves Center** and it was just for his black employees... folks say it was the first of its kind in the whole U.S.

**The Heart of America Golf Club** was a group of black golfers that could trace its roots back to Mr.

Groves' course. The **HoAGC** filed a law suit against Kansas City way back in 1938 sayin' they should be able to play the courses that *their taxes* was payin' for. See, the **Parks Board** was refusin' to allow minority golfers to play on its better golf course: Swope #1... I think you call it **Swope Memorial**, now.

Even though African Americans served in both wars and paid taxes like everybody else, cities and towns all over the country played tricks to keep blacks off of city owned courses. They'd "lease" 'em to someone for a dollar a year, then claim they wasn't really public, but was *semi-private*. That way they could make rules to keep black folks out. Kansas City was no exception.

Black golfers could only play **Swope #2** – and only on Mondays and Tuesdays.

They was barred from #1 altogether. Because of the lawsuit, in 1940 the city reluctantly agreed to let the **Central States Golf Association** – that’s kinda’ a black golf tour, maybe like the **Negro Leagues** in baseball – hold a tournament for coloreds (that’s one of the nicer things they would have called ’em back then) on Golf Course #2. Then in 1949 they gave the go ahead for an event on #1.



We had some pretty successful players from around here on the **Central States**, but they was hurt by not havin’ a good place to play and practice. See, #2 was still just nine-holes and the city didn’t spend no money to keep it nice. The eighteen-hole course was #1, and it was kept real good for the white folks who played there.

Swope #1 was like a country club for middle-class whites. The **A.W. Tillinghast** design was about as closed to the non-white public as Kansas City Country Club or Milburn was.

But even *after* the war, *after* **President Truman** integrated the services, *after* they laid their lives on the line for freedom – even after **Jackie Robinson** and some other black players started playin’ big league baseball – **segregation** still prevailed on our public courses. I guess they was fightin’ them wars for somebody else’s freedom.

Well, in 1950 the President of the HoAGC, **Mr. George Johnson** – he’s one of ’em who started playing on the potato farm back in the 20s – and three of his

buddies: **Mr. Reuben Benton**, who owned *The Call* newspaper, **Mr. “Pat” Johnson**, and **Mr. Leroy Doty** decided they was goin’ to go over and play Swope #1 and force the issue.



Mr. Benton’s paper was reporting ’bout every week that the same thing had been done in other cities around the country... probably more in the south and Border States. And there was other little “victories” in the

fight against segregation 'round that time, too. All writ' up in *The Call*.

In **Greensboro, Washington DC, Atlanta, Baltimore** and other places, the deal was like this: they'd go to one of these restricted courses, tell the guy behind the counter that they was goin' to play... and wait for him to say "no". Then, they'd leave their money on the counter and go to the first tee anyhow. Usually they'd be threatened with arrest if they stepped foot on the course, but that didn't stop 'em, they played anyway. Took some real guts, I'd say. Pretty hard to play good when you's lookin' over your shoulder for the cops to show up.



These non-violent protesters took things in their own hands – this was after the sit-ins in the auto plants in the 30s and before **Rosa Parks** rode that bus in Montgomery, it was even before the court ruled in the **Brown** school case from Topeka. Folks was just startin' to hear of that preacher from Atlanta, **Dr. King** and his non-violence movement. They was way ahead of their times.

When more and more black players started showin' up at #1 doin' the same thing as "the Foursome" (that's what they called themselves), it wasn't uncommon for them to get back to the parking lot and find the tires on their cars

slashed or windows broke. So they started comin' in groups of five...they'd roll dice to see who was going to watch the car while the others played the first nine-holes, then the guy with the highest score would sit out and he'd watch the car while the other four played the back nine.

I heard all about this stuff from my good buddy, "Mouse". He caddied at Swope a lot of times and he seen it all hisself.

These was the earliest tries by blacks to get to play wherever they wanted, but they wasn't the last. Folks in Kansas City, Kansas like to talk about their guy "**Jug**" **McSpaden**. They's real proud of him... and they should be. He did some good stuff. He's the fella' I told you about before: from Rosedale, played on the pro tour, partnered with **Byron Nelson**, was head pro at **Victory Hills** when it opened, later he built **Dubs Dread** over by Bonner Springs.

Well, as late as 1963 he was responsible for *personally* keeping blacks from playing his new course. Didn't matter if you was the Principal of **Wyandotte High**, a drug store owner, a lawyer or what, if you was black, you couldn't play



Dubs. Period. “Jug” called the sheriff to get a few of them throw’d off the property.

Don’t know about you, but Jimmy don’t much care for that kinda’ stuff.

We got a caddie who comes to Milburn every nown’ then, guy’s name is Tony, but we all calls him “Pasta”. When he ain’t loopin’ here, he works at **Blue Hills**.

He told me one day he was shaggin’ balls for the pro, **Mr. “Duke” Gibson**, and the fella’ hittin’ them balls was black! Pasta thought that was kinda’ strange, since the only African Americans he ever see’d there was workin in the kitchen or on the grounds crew. This guy showed up ’bout every week and took lessons from the pro— and Pasta would shag for him.

Pasta don’t care who’s hittin’ them balls, s’long as they land close together and the money folds in half!

So, anyhow, one day he screws up his courage and asks Mr. Duke what was goin’ on? Gibson says he seen this guy when they was both trying to qualify for the **US Open** and they had a talk. The golfer was **Mr. Tom Rhone** (later picture).



He told the pro that he never had a real lesson and taught hissself what little he knowed about playin' golf.

So, Mr. Duke offers to give the man *free* lessons! Free! Every week they’d meet at Blue Hills or at a local drivin’ range and work on the man’s game. Now, mind you, this was in 1958... when he couldn’t even get to play on a lot’a *public* courses without riskin’ goin’ to jail.

I think I might go over and meet this Mr. Rhone... maybe he might need a good caddie one day.



These Heart of America guys loved to play golf. They’d travel all over the country to find **Central States** tournaments on black-friendly courses. Go by the carload, they would. Had some real good players in the bunch, too. **Tommy Williams**, Mr. Rhone, **Ollie Gates**, **Reuben Benton** and some of the ball players like **Buck O’Neil**... I heard about all of ’em from different caddies I see at tournaments. Problem they had

was, they couldn't get their games top-notch jus' playin' on that #2 course. They was fightin' for better conditions so they could get better at playin'. Golf was what they loved to do.

The fifties was a strange time around here. Golf was a big thing, and the pro tours – with that Arnold Palmer fella' – was gettin' real popular. Black golfers couldn't play on the white tour until after 1952, and then it was only if they could qualify on Monday. But some real good players were tryin' it: guys like **Teddy Rhodes** (picture), **Bill Spiller**, **Charlie Sifford**, even **Joe Louis**, the boxer.

But with all the vets back from the war and startin' to earn good dough, and the women-folk who was workin' in defense plants becomin' housewives again, and minorities demandin' the right to play on city-owned courses, there was uneasiness in the air. I'm thinkin' the Sixties is gonna' be even more "interesting".



## The Modern Era Begins: 1960

Things are hoppin' for the **KCGA** since that **Mr. Lamberth** took over runnin' things. Since he started as the boss a few years ago there's more tournaments and it seems like all the clubs are doin' real good.

The **Men's Match Play Championship** has turned into a really big deal... had enough flights for about everyone to have a chance. Some pretty good players won the championship flight, including three of my **Milburn** guys, Mr. **Rod Horn** ('61), **Jack**



**House** ('58 and '62) and **Bob Harvey, Jr.** ('56 and '63). I was on the bag for Mr. Harvey when they played it here, at Milburn. There was a young, freckled-faced kid from the Country Club by the name of **Tommy Watson** who won it twice ('64 and '67). **Dr. Bill Toalson** took the title in '69 and interrupted **Charles Van Dyne's** run of three out of four years as champ ('68, '70 and '71).

This Watson kid looks like he might turn out to be somethin'. He won the **Missouri Amateur** in '67 and '68 and then doubled again in '70 and '71.

They say him and **Stan Thirsk** – he's the pro over at the Country Club – are workin' on his game all the time. I guess he's gonna' turn pro one of these days. Good luck with *that*.

In 1961 the **KCGA** changed "the Heart" individual tournament into **The Heart of America Four-Ball**. That's where two players only have to count their best score on each hole and they play match play against another team.

I love caddying in four-ball tournaments. You're usually carrying "doubles" and if your team gets hot, the tips can be real good. Ol' Jimmy gets to help with team strategy some... you know, if one guy's sittin' pretty, I can let the other fella' take some risks to shoot for birdies. 'Course, if the first guy is in trouble... well, I gotta' be sure the second player's pretty careful with pickin' a club and such.

Guys from all over to come play "the Heart"... a lot of college players team up with their school mates. In just the first decade, two guys you mighta' heard of, who would have pretty good careers in golf, were crowned as winners. They was **Grier Jones** and **Jim Colbert**. Oh, some guy from Texas named **Tom Kite** played in it, too.

Over in **Kansas**, the state golf association had some pretty darned good players winnin' its championship, too. **Johnny Stevens** (photo)



won twice in '60 and '61, Colbert and Jones each won it once and **Jim Vickers** added his name to the trophy in '64 to match his brother, **Bob**'s win in '59.

Did I tell ya' Bobby and me got one of them TV sets for my ma' last year? Since she's too old to work much anymore, she spends a lot of time watchin' stuff like "Gunsmoke" and "McHale's Navy", "The Untouchables" and she really likes "The Red Skelton Show" and "Ed Sullivan".



But the thing that really kept her "glued to the tube" as some people say, was the election in 1960. It was the first time they ever had the guys runnin' for president debeatin' on TV. Ma' thought that young **Senator Kennedy** from out East was a smart fella', and his wife was real pretty, too. She didn't much care for the other guy... **Nixon**. Thought he looked kinda' mean and a bit odd.

Ma' never misses a chance to vote. Don't matter if it's for President or Dog Catcher. If it's election day she's one of the first in line. Anyway, when Kennedy won, she was happy as could be. He had a famous line in his speech, somethin' like "*Ask not what your country can do for you... ask what you can do for your country...*" and he said we should put a man on the moon. Ma' just loved him.



Pro golf is getting' real popular – even with people who can't play. **Arnold Palmer** is gettin' most of the attention on TV. He won the most money of anybody in 1960 and when he went over to play in the **British Open**, he started something that picked up steam as the years went by. Before '60 there hadn't been *any* Yanks in the Open for several years – it cost a guy more to get there than he could win – but Arnie said he thought you wouldn't be a *true* champion unless you played (and won) the British Open.

A new foreign guy started showin' up in a lot of them TV tournaments. He dressed all in black and he was kinda' small compared to guys like **Julius Boros** or my ol' buddy "**Porky**" **Oliver** (I caddied for him when he won the **KC Open** in '53, remember?).

He was from South Africa... traveled all over the world playin' golf. His name was **Gary Player**. By the end of the decade he'd won all four of the "major" championships... they called it the "career" Grand Slam – wasn't the same as Mr. **Bobby Jones**' slam, but it was still a big deal.



On the women's tour, **Mickey Wright** swept all three of the big tournaments in '61 and before she was done she had 82 titles in all... including 13 majors! Hardly anybody could beat her. She was named "Player of the Decade" and was the most dominant player in America until **Kathy Whitworth** took over and won 88.



You could get into some pretty good arguments in the caddie yard whether she was the best player, or if it was Arnie. I kinda' favor Arnie, 'cause he had that swing that looked like he was mad at the golf ball, or like a fella' trapped in a phone booth with a bee! But he always seemed like he was havin' a good time.

Most folks never got to see Mickey play, 'cause there wasn't no women's tournaments on the TV. But she did win the **LPGA's** "Heart of America"

tournament at **Hillcrest** in 1962. I seen her play there. What a swing!

So just about the time you think that "Best Player" argument's been settled, along comes a fella' they was callin' "Fat Jack". He's a big kid out of Ohio who won the **National Amateur** in '61, then turned pro and beat Arnie to take the **National Open** the very next year. This **Jack Nicklaus** looks like he's the real deal. Members around here think he'll probably have a pretty good career playing golf. They say he hits it farther than just about anybody out there, except **Big George Bayer**.



Ya' know, before about 1960, a tour player just showed up at a tournament and got a kid out of the caddie yard to tote his bag. They said they jus' wanted him to show-up, keep-up, and shut-up. But since the "Big Three" – Palmer, Player and Nicklaus – was on TV so much with their regular caddies, people got to see what a good looper does for a player.

Palmer had "**Creamy**" **Caroline**, Player had "**Rabbit**" **Dyer** and Nicklaus had **Angelo Argea** (the guy with the big hair!). Made ya' proud to be a caddie. Sure did.

There's one thing Jimmy is a little worried about, though. They's started getting these motor carts that folks ride around in. At first only really old guys and the few with medical problems was allowed to use 'em. But I see more and more healthy people startin' to ride when they play.

Don't look good for us guys who make our livin' loopin'. Jimmy might have to find another line of work if this keeps up.





Used to be, caddies was kinda' low class, poor kids who just hung out at the golf course, the older ones was drunk most of the time, and smoked cigarettes, played cards and shot dice when we wasn't loopin'. Then the **Ouimet** and **Evans** scholarship programs took hold around the country and caddyin' became a way for poor kids to go to college. Got

down-right respectable around here with all them clean shaved college boys workin' their way back to school. But ol' Jimmy was the veteran around the caddie yard... been here longer than anyone... even the caddie master.

Two things happened in '63 that changed *everything*: there was a big turn-out for the **March on Washington**, when the **Civil Rights Movement** reached its peak and **Dr. King** made that famous "*I have a Dream*" speech. And in November, our President Kennedy was shot and killed in Dallas.



You just can't never forget where you was when the news came. I remember **Walter Cronkite** takin' off his horn-rimmed glasses and lookin' straight at me on Mom's TV and sayin' the president was dead. What a shock for the whole country.

The '60s was a time to remember, for sure: there was the **Beatles**, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Medicare, **Cassius Clay** (aka: Muhammad Ali), Vietnam, **Sandy Koufax**, the Six-Day War, **Bobby Kennedy**, the **Chiefs** in two Super Bowls, **Mantle**,

**Chamberlain**, Rowan and Martin's "Laugh-In", hippies; and we landed our men on the moon and brought 'em back home again just like President Kennedy promised. Wow!

Here's a trivia question for ya': who was the youngest player to turn pro and play professional golf?

In 1967, a *ten-year-old* named **Beverly Klass** turned pro, played in four events, including the U.S. Women's Open, and made the cut in three of 'em. Wasn't long after that the **LPGA**



passed a rule that you had to be at least 18 years-old to have a tour card.

I'm kind of a sucker for the amateur game, myself. I like the fact that **JoAnne Gunderson (Carner)** won five Women's Amateurs and even won a pro tournament before she eventually started playin' for money. **Bob Murphy, Bruce Fleisher** and **Steve Melnyk** won US Amateurs like Palmer and Nicklaus did, and **Michael Bonallack** dominated the British Amateur during the decade.



Around here, **Karen Schull (MacGee)** who played at different times at **Armour Fields, Blue Hills, Indian Hills** and **Brookridge**, could claim to be *the* dominant player. After all, she only won *seven* Missouri Amateurs and *five* in Kansas between 1960 and 1978. And she tacked-on *eight* city championships, too.

The **Kansas City Golf Association** is doin' real good. Hasn't been any clubs close for a while, and a few new ones has come along including **Lakeside Hills, Dubsdread, Brookridge, Minor Park, St.**

**Andrews, Blue Springs, Liberty Hills, Leawood South** and **Claycrest.**

The game's getting' more n' more popular and equipment's improvin' all the time. Some guy by the name of **Karsten** (never heard that one before) invented a newfangled putter called the **Ping**. Looks like it was designed by a plumber, but they can't seem to get enough of 'em in our pro shop.

And there's a couple of new golf balls out, too. One is made in two-pieces and another has some kind of plastic cover that don't cut like our Balatas. Someday, kids won't even know what a "smile" on a golf ball looks like. No tellin' what they'll think of next.



## Carts Done Me In

Man, it's really getting tough to make a living out here. More and more of them electric golf carts is showing up and that Karsten guy – you remember me telling ya' about his putter that became all the rage – well, now he's come up with a light-weight golf bag with legs on it. So, now people's getting' back to carryin' their own clubs like they used to years ago. Bein' a caddie is gettin' a hard way to survive. Ol' Jimmy's going to have to find another job.

I can tell ya' this though, the quality of players is getting' better and better. I kinda' think it's because we got so many really good pros teachin' the game. **Opal Hill** is still around teachin' at the Country Club and Hillcrest, "Jug" is still out at his new place near Lansing, "**Duke**" **Gibson** and **Stan Thirsk** have their stables of players. There's a fella' by name of **Andy Devers** at Lake Quivira that's got two boys playing real good. Clay and Ian are always out on the course, and their mom, Levon is a swell golfer, too.

The **Kansas City Golf Association's Match Play** has turned out some real stars lately: **Charles Van Dyne** ('70, '71), **Dale Kutz** ('73, '75) and **Billy Ludwig** ('78, '79) was the only ones to win twice in the decade. "Van" won in *three* decades, since he also took the title in '68 and 1980. But there was other good players who survived five rounds of matches to take the title: **Don Bell, Dick Lee, Richard Volding**.

The '70s was a bizarre time in this country. We had the war and the protesters; we had **Watergate** and the impeachment; double-knit and mood rings; bell-bottoms and hot pants; **Apollo 17** and **Atari**; affirmative action and **Rowe vs. Wade** and busing; **George McGovern** and **Caesar Chavez**; Saturday Night Fever and Star Wars; the **Beatles** broke up and **Elvis** died.



The anti-war protests are getting' bigger and bigger all the time. We even got some of them "hippies" here in Kansas City. The draft's got most young men worried they's goin' to have to fight in a war nobody really understands. Rich folks seem to have ways to keep their young'uns out of the war, but poor and minority kids is dying by the thousands.

My brother Bobby's oldest boy, Rob, has been loopin' with me here, at **Milburn**. The kid's getting' to be a

pretty good golfer, too. But he is old enough to be drafted and we's all prayin' every day that this war ends before that can happen.

Our local boy, **Tommy Watson** blossomed in the 1970s with 22 wins in a six year span starting with the '74 **Western Open**. In that decade, he won three major championships, including two of his five **British Opens** – 1975 and '77 – and the '77 **Masters**. I had my doubts when he was a kid, but I guess he'll make it after all.

Tommy had some tough competitors, too. He had to beat **Player, Nicklaus, Trevino** and **Johnny Miller** nearly every week. And behind them was **Hale Irwin, Billy Casper, Tom Weiskopf, Hubert Green** and the rest of the tour. Yeah, I guess he turned out better'n I thought.

In the '80s we had some real up and comers winnin' the KCGA Match Play. Fella's like **Bob Bezek, "Big" Jack Laurie, John Sherman, Clark Burroughs, John Sinovic** and the **Sedorcek** brothers: **Rob** and **Jeff**. Except for **Clay Devers** winnin' twice in '87 and '90, no one was able to double-up again before the Match Play came to an end in 2002.

That "**Heart**" was going full guns around this time, too. College kids still was showin' up, sometimes with their teammates, to try to claim one of the best four-ball tournaments

around. Some of them became pretty good professional players, too. I seen guys like **Payne Stewart** and **Mike Peck** and **Tom Pernice** play in it, and **Matt Gogel** and the **Sedorcek** brothers. There was even a few guys who tried playin' pro, then decided they liked eatin' regular better than being a golf pro, so they got "real" jobs and came back to the amateur game.



Back in the '70s and '80s there was some guys who would hang around for years and years playin' real good golf. You still hear about **Norton** and "**Brew**" and **Freddie**, "**Spinny**" **Sappington** and "**Toalie**" showing up in senior events here and around the country. And the first time we heard of a guy named

**Steve Groom** was in the '81 **Missouri Am**. Heck, he's still playin' top notch golf more'n 30 years later.

I doubt there's anybody in Kansas City who would argue that the best golfer we've ever produced around here was Tommy. I already told you what he did in the 1970s, but he wasn't finished, no sir. In the '80s him and Bruce Edwards had 19 wins and added five more majors to his record. Eight majors all together, 39 wins on Tour, six times **Player of the Year**, played on four **Ryder Cup** teams and was even Captain once. He was Golfer



of the Decade in the '80s. That don't even count what he's done as a senior player. Name anyone who can top that.

And he wasn't playing against no mullets in the '80s either. There was **Seve, Jack, Faldo, Curtis Strange, Larry Nelson, Floyd and Crenshaw. Payne Stewart**, from Springfield, won five times in the '80s including the PGA Championship in '89 and he

played on five Ryder Cups and two World Cups. We lost him in a terrible plane crash in 1999, you know. No tellin' how good he might've been.

Ya' know, I told you, I kinda' specialize in loopin' for the ladies around here. Ol' Jimmy hasn't lost his touch. The Women's Match Play was a toss-up affair for most of the '70s and '80s. Except for **Karen Schull MacGee** and **Levon Devers** who each won it twice, you couldn't say any one player had a hold on the trophy.

But there was also a **Country Club District Women's Golf Association** made up of **Kansas City CC, Mission Hills, Blue Hills and Indian Hills**. They fought it out in a three day stroke play tournament every year. Now there *was* a tight hold on that trophy for a while. **Karin Hayes Cooper** won eight times between 1974 and '84. She and **Patty Coe** kept the trophy at Blue Hills for all but one year during that span.



The KCGA had **Mr. Lamberth** as its head man for almost 30 years. He really worked hard to build the organization up. But in 1983, **Bob Reid** took over and he really kicked it up.

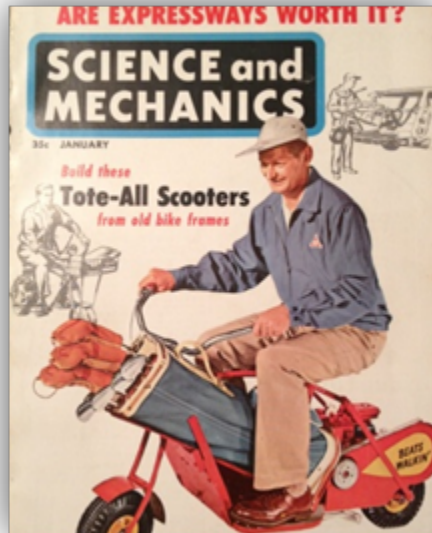
Mr. Reid was a retired airline pilot and is the only man to lead all three of our local golf associations: he was Executive Director of the **Missouri GA** from 1983-86; President of the **Kansas GA** from 1978-80 and the **KCGA** in 1975-78 and was its Executive Director until 1997. He also was a rules official for the **USGA** in 20 national championships and uncountable

regional tournaments. He even worked at the '82 **Walker Cup** in Scotland.

I don't think there's anyone who was around here during his time who wouldn't say Mr. Reid (and his assistant, Nancy Sedoreck) was the main reason the KCGA is the



pre-eminent golf association in the mid-west. Would they have made it to their **one hundred-year anniversary** without him? Well, probably. But it would have been a far different organization if he hadn't stepped up to lead the way.



Like I said, with so many people ridin' when they play... and carryin' their own bags, it's getting' to where Jimmy can't make it caddying. I lost my mamma' a year or so ago, and Bobby and his family has moved out to the suburbs, so I'm kinda' by myself, now.

I was thinkin' about trying to get a job in the clubhouse or the men's locker room, but that didn't work out. Then I thought maybe a job at **Armco Steel** or **Vendo**, but they ain't hiring right now. I kinda' want to have an outdoors job. You know, since I was a pup, I've always worked in the great outdoors... loopin' first at **Evanston**, then here at **Milburn**. Even during the Great

Depression when everybody was losin' their jobs, I was able to scratch out a living here... and ma' was still able to work as a housekeeper.

During the war (WW II) when Bobby enlisted and went to Europe with the **4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division**, we had Mary Catherine workin' buildin' landing craft in the defense plant down on the Kaw, Ma' with her housekeepin' and me workin' at the club. We was lucky.

I seen it all around here. From the earliest days when we had only a handful of courses, to today when there's near 70 places to play; from my **Miss Miriam Burns Horn** winnin' her **US Women's Amateur** to **Karen Schull MacGee** makin' her run on just about any championship in these parts; from the early days of professional golf in Kansas City to an era when amateurs can play in a well-run event just about any week from May to November; when a potato farmer 'name of Groves, scratched out a make-shift golf course that his former-slave employees could play, to the fight to open up local courses to any person regardless of their race (or ability to play). Ol' Jimmy's seen it all.

I've seen **Tommy Watson** and **Kathy Withworth** play. I helped stake-out the **Oakwood** course with **Tom Bendelow** and caddied for "**Porky**" **Oliver** when he won the **KC Open**. I was there when we started mowin' the greens with gas powered contraptions and when the Milburn clubhouse burned to the ground the first time in 1932.

I knew local pros from **Harry Robb Sr.** to "**Duke**" **Gibson**, from **James Dalglish** to **Stan Thirsk**. I seen Ms. **Opal Hill** play when she was sickly and just startin' out, and I

seen her when she was a pro playin' against "**Babe**" **Zaharias** and doin' exhibitions with the likes of **Patty Berg**.

I remember when the **KCGA** was just getting' its feet under it, when **Mr. Wickersham** and **Mr. Lauder** asked me to help them write their *Caddie Book* that was used all over the country; when there was indoor golf schools with so many people wantin' to learn the game during the winter, that some of the pros kept them open most of the year.



I recall "**Lighthouse**" **Harry Cooper** and **Al Espinosa** winnin' pro tournaments in Kansas City and amateurs like **Tom Stephenson** making a big splash in national tournaments. I went out to **Loch Lloyd** and saw **Jim Colbert** win on the **Senior Tour**. And I went to Tommy's **Children's Mercy Hospital** exhibition almost every year. I seen some of the greatest players of all-time playing for one of Tommy's favorite charities.

I remember when we had two newspapers competin' for news about local golf and golfers, and they'd actually send reporters out to cover amateur tournaments... not like today when a fella' can play in near anonymity. The local paper now don't even report the results when they's handed to them directly.

That makes it tough for Ol' Jimmy to keep up with the game and the local players who are doin' so good. I don't get around like I used to, car's broke-down more'n it's runnin' and there's so many good players today.

I don't know about all this new equipment, with big drivers, "hot" golf balls and such, but I know the **KCGA** has made it possible for young kids and talented school-aged players to have places to compete. They have good tournaments for scratch players and for club-level players. They say that **KC Cup** is a real popular thing. But, ya' know, we had inter-club matches in the **KCGA** seventy years ago.

They run a season-long "**State Line**" series and they have the **City Amateur** championship. Seniors – and even super-seniors— have a chance to stay competitive. When they say this is a game for life, they ain't kiddin'. It sure has been *my* life.

Yep, I'm real proud of what I've seen the **KCGA** do in the last hundred years. I'll just bet, that a hundred years from now, they's goin' to be tellin' stories about some of the same things I been tellin' you about all these months.

Golf's a big thing in KC... a real big thing. I'm proud of the part Ol' Jimmy's played in it.

But the damn carts done me in.



## Postscript

Much has happened in Kansas City golf circles since Jimmy “retired” in 2013. Most notably, the **Kansas City Golf Association** (established in 1912), the **Kansas Golf Association** (1908) and the **Kansas Women’s Golf Association** (1915) have merged to form **Central Links Golf (CLG)**. Covering the greater Kansas City metropolitan area as well as the entire state of Kansas, Central Links is committed to continuing the traditions of excellence golfers and member clubs in this region have come to expect for well over 100 years.

Part of the Centennial celebration of the former KCGA was this written history of golf in the area, another part was the creation of the **Kansas City Golf Hall of Fame**. Many of the people you have read about in “Jimmy’s” account have already found their way into the prestigious Hall of Fame.

"The Hall of Fame was created in 2012 as part of our celebration of the centennial of the KCGA," said Doug Habel, Executive Director of Central Links Golf (CLG). "Our goal is to preserve our past and honor the accomplishments and contributions of those who made golf in this area great. Central Links is committed to continuing this tradition established prior to the merger of the KCGA, the Kansas Golf Association and the KWGA."

"Over the first six classes of inductees," he said, "we have recognized amateurs and professionals, men and women, contemporary as well as historic figures, golf administrators and superintendents and players and teachers. We are very proud that our Hall of Fame is all-inclusive and has recognized the greatest of those who have contributed so much to the enjoyment of our game."

Previous inductees in the inaugural class of **2013** included professionals **Tom Watson**; **Stan Thirsk**; **Leland "Duke" Gibson**; 1927 US Women's Amateur Champion **Miriam Burns (Horn) Tyson**; founding member of the LPGA **Opal Hill**; long time KCGA Executive Director **Bob Reid**; and pioneering course superintendent **Chester "Chet" Mendenhall**.

In **2014** the honorees were local teaching and touring professional **Bob Stone**; amateur stand-out **Karen (Shull) MacGee**; and "**The Foursome**", a group of African-Americans who integrated the links at Swope Park in March 1950.

The **2016** class recognized "The Father of Kansas City Golf" **James Dalglish**; amateur player **Marian Gault**; and **Bill Ludwig**, long-time Board member, volunteer and champion player.

The **2018** class brought touring professional and outstanding amateur **Jim Colbert**; **Jean Pepper** who was the "player to beat" in the 1930's and 40'S; **Frank Kirk** who was instrumental in the establishment of the *First Tee* program and has served on the Boards of various golf organizations; and **Maxine Johnson** who dominated women's golf in the 1950 in the region.

In **2020** the class included amateur **Steve Groom**; long-time professional **Rob Wilkin**; the late **Dave Fearis**, who was Superintendent at Blue Hills for 40 years; and **Mary Jane Barnes**, the first woman to head the KCGA and 18 time Women's club champion at Kansas City Country Club.

The Class of **2022** featured the **Devers Family**: Matriarch, **Lavon Devers**, a multi-time local and state champion; **Andy Devers**, who served as Head Professional at Lake Quivira Country Club for 38 years; **Ian Devers**, a Junior Amateur Champion and outstanding college player; and **Clay Devers**, three-time Kansas Amateur Champion, twice KC Match Play Champion, and two-time KC Open winner before turning professional and touring throughout Asia and the United States.

Also in the 2022 class were **Fred Rowland**, who in addition to numerous Kansas Golf Association titles spanning some 56 years, was the 2003 Canadian Senior Amateur Champion; and **Don Kuehn** who not only wrote Jimmy the Caddie, but has won some 45 local, state and national tournaments over the past 22 years.

Nominees are selected by the Hall of Fame Committee in even-numbered years and voted on by a broad cross-section of local electors: all members of the CLG Board, living members of the Hall of Fame, the Executive Board of the Midwest Section PGA, representatives of the Golf Course Superintendents Association and emeritus members of the CLG Board.

The national profile of **Central Links Golf** continues to grow as Executive Director Doug Habel and his staff participate in more committee and board activities of the USGA. As an **Allied Golf Association (AGA)** of the USGA the activities and policies of CLG are often used by other state and regional golf associations as the template for their similar activities.

It has been well over one hundred years since golf clubs, both public and private, have organized under the umbrellas of KCGA, KGA and the KWGA. Central Links Golf will continue those traditions of excellence and golfers in this region are better for it.



## Chronology of Kansas City Golf Clubs

**Kenwood Golf Links** at Hyde Park (1894) became **Kansas City Country Club** at Ward farm (1896)... moved to present location in 1926 (A.W. Tillinghast)

**Fairmount Golf Club** (1897) became **Evanston Golf Club** in 1901, closed 1915

**St. Joseph Country Club** (1899)

**Leavenworth Golf Club** (1901-?)

**Topeka Golf Club** (1901-?)

**Lawrence Golf Club** (1901-?)

**Fort Leavenworth Golf Club** (1903-?)

**Elm Ridge Golf and Country Club** (1904-1908) part of Kansas City Jockey Club and Fair Association

**Topeka Country Club** (1906) (Tom Bendelow)

**Swope Park Golf Course** near front gate of park (1906/1917) (James Dalgleish)

**Swope No. 1** (1911) (A.W. Tillinghast renovations 1934) renamed **Swope Memorial**

**New Elm Ridge Golf and Country Club** (1910) later known as **Shawnee Heights, Shawnee and Tomahawk Hills**

**Excelsior Springs Golf Club** (1912) (Tom Bendelow)

**Oakwood Country Club** (1912) (Tom Bendelow)

**Blue Hills Country Club** (1912) moved to present location in 1963 (Robert Dunning)

**Gates Park Golf Club** (1912-1922)/**Independence Golf Club**

**Mission Hills Country Club** (1912) (Tom Bendelow) remodeled 2006 (Keith Foster)

**Lawrence Country Club** (1914) (Bob Peebles) remodeled 2006

**Hillcrest Country Club** (1916) included members from **Evanston** (Donald Ross)

**Shawnee Golf Club**, Topeka (1916) (Donald Ross)

**Meadow Lake Country Club** (1917-1941) merged with **Blue Hills** in 1933, became public until closing (William Boyce Langford)

**Milburn Country Club** (1917) (William Boyce Langford)

**Bruce Dodson** private club on estate (1919-?) (James Dalgleish)

**Country Club District Community Golf Links** (1919) moved to the present location of Kansas City C. C. in 1922, then moved to become **Indian Hills Country Club** (1927) (A.W. Tillinghast)



**Swope No. 2** (unknown) renamed **Blue River**, became **Heart of America Golf Academy** in 1993

**Lakewood Country Club** (1920-1954) later renamed **Wood Hill**

**Automobile Club** (1921-late 30s) later renamed **Motor Club**, then **South Ridge**

**Ivanhoe Country Club** (1922-?) later renamed **Santa Fe Hills**

**Leavenworth Country Club** (1922) (Tom Bendelow)

**Olathe Golf and Country Club** (1922) became **Lakeside Hills Golf Club** (1962) (John Nash)

**Crestwood Country Club** at Lake of the Forest (Edwardsville, KS) (1922-?)

**Witte Grove Country Club** (1922-30s) later renamed **Independence Country Club** (James Casey)

**Ft. Leavenworth Officers Club** (1923) renamed **Trails West Golf Club**

**Westheight Manor Golf Club** (1923-late 20s)

**Log Cabin Golf Club** (1923-mid 20s) (James Dalglish)

**Armour Fields Golf Club** (1923-1958)

**Paola Country Club** (1923) (James Watson)

**Unity Golf Club** (1924)

**St. Andrews Golf Club** (1925-1950s) (James Dalglish)

**Linda Vista Golf Club** (1925-?)

**Old Homestead Golf Club** (1926-late 20s)

**Wyandotte Country Club** (1927-?) (Orrin E. Smith)

**Victory Hills Country Club** (1927) (James Dalglish) renamed **Painted Hills**

**Lynnhaven** private club on estate (1928-40s) (Orrin E. Smith)

**Eastwood Hills Golf Club** (1928-?) (James Dalglish)

**Old Mission Golf Club** (1930-?)

**Belle Aire Golf Club** (1930-?)

**Stayton Meadows Golf Club** (1930) (John Gavin) renamed **Royal Meadows**

**Fairfax Hills Golf Club** (1930-?)

**Lake Quivira Golf Club** (1931) (Eugene L. Williams)

**Chevy Chase Golf Club** (1931-?)

**Hagerwood Golf Club** (1932-?)

**Rockwood Golf Club** (1946-2010)

**Lakeside** (1952) (E.E. Peele) later renamed **Mirror Lake, Windbrook** and now part of the **Deuce at the National**

**Meadowbrook Country Club** (1954)

**Crackerneck Golf Club** (1954-?)

**Southview Golf Club** (1955-?)

**Chapel Woods Golf Club** (1958-?)

**Happy Hunting Club** (1958-?) (Kenneth Smith)

**Shamrock Hills Golf Club** (1959) (Jim Weaver)

**Dub's Dread Country Club** (1963) (Robert Charles Dunning)

**Smiley's Golf Course/Sportland** (1964) (Earl "Smiley" Bell)

**Indian Creek Golf Club** (1957) became **Brookridge Country Club** (1960) (Charles "Chic" Adams)

**Minor Park Golf Course** (1964)

**Richards-Gebaur Golf Club** (1965) (R.E. Baldock) later renamed **Belton Golf Club**, then **Eagles Landing**

**St. Andrews Golf Club** (1966) (John Nash)

**Blue Springs Country Club** (1967) (Col. John Davis)

**Claycrest Golf Club** (1967) (Chester Mendenhall) renamed **Cardinal Hill**

**Liberty Hills Country Club** (1967) (Ray Pettegrew)

**Alvamar Hills Golf Club** (1968) (Robert Charles Dunning)

**Leawood South Country Club** (1969) (Robert Charles Dunning)

**Shirkey Golf Club** (1969) (Charles G. Sisler)

**Overland Park Golf Club** (1971) (Floyd Farley)

**Wolf Creek Golf Links** (1972) (Marvin Ferguson)

**River Oaks Golf Club** (1973) (Larry Runion, Mike Malin) renamed **Great Life at River Oaks**

**Valley Hills Golf Club** (1973-?) (Col. John Davis)

**Alvamar Country Club** (1973-front, 1979-back) (Robert Dunning/Mel Anderson)

**Hodge Park Golf Club** (1976)

**Sunflower Hills Golf Course** (1976) (Roger Packard)

**Lakewood Oaks Country Club** (1980) (B.J. Riviere)

**Bent Oak Golf Club** (1980-2012) (Robert Simmons)

**Paradise Pointe Golf Complex - Posse** (1982) (Edmund Ault) - **Outlaw** (1994) (Craig Schreiner)

**Longview Lake Golf Club** (1986) renamed **Fred Arbanas Golf Course** at Longview Lake

**Hallbrook Country Club** (1988) (Tom Fazio)

**Deer Creek Golf Club** (1989) (Robert Trent Jones Jr.)

**Shadow Glen Golf Club** (1989) (Jay Moorish, Tom Weiskopf, Tom Watson)

**Teetering Rocks Golf Course** (1990) (Harold Vance)

**Loch Lloyd Country Club** (1991) (Don Sechrest) remodeled 2010 (Tom Watson)

**Heritage Park Golf Course** (1991) (Don Sechrest)

**Country Creek – The Rock** (1991) – **The Quarry** (1995) – **Hoots Hollow** (2002) (Jeff McKee)

**Iron Horse Golf Club** (1995) (Michael Hurdtsen)

**Shiloh Springs Golf Course** (1995) (Gary Martin)

**Falcon Ridge Golf Course** (1997) (Craig Schreiner)

**Adams Pointe Golf Course** (1998) (Don Sechrest)

**Tiffany Greens Golf Club** (1999) (Robert Trent Jones Jr.)

**Sycamore Ridge Golf Course** (2000) (Baxter Spann)

**Shoal Creek Golf Course** (2001) (Steve Wolford)

**Prairie Highlands Golf Course** (2001) (Craig Schreiner)

**Nicklaus Golf Club at LionsGate** (2001) (Jack Nicklaus)

**Drumm Farm Golf Course** (2002) (Michael Hurdtsen)

**Staley Farms Golf Club** (2002) (Eric Iverson)

**Falcon Lakes Golf Course** (2002) (Carter Moorish)

**Falcon Valley Golf Course** (2002) (Craig Schreiner)

**Grand Summit Golf and Country Club** (2002) (Lindy Lindsey)

**Winterstone Golf Course** (2003) (Craig Schreiner)

**The Golf Club of Kansas** (2007) (Tom Jackson/Tom Kelley)

**The Golf Club at Creekmoor** (2007) (Thomas Clark)

**Stone Canyon Golf Course** (2009) (Greg Norman)



## About the Author

Like "Jimmy the caddie", **Don Kuehn** was introduced to golf when he began caddying as a youngster. And, like Francis Ouimet – winner of two U.S. Amateurs and the 1913 U.S. Open – the first course at which he caddied was across the street from his family's house... unfortunately, the similarities with Ouimet clearly end there.

Now retired from his career as a Senior National Representative for the American Federation of Teachers, he plays golf most days ("only those that end in 'y'") and also devotes some time to being a freelance writer, sculptor and an avid tournament player in Kansas City Golf Association as well as in state golf association events. He added "national" tournaments to his schedule in 2011.

His golf resume includes titles in forty-four state, local and national-level championships along with thirty-two runner-up finishes over the past twenty years. He has also played in two *U.S. Senior Amateurs* and two *British Seniors Open Amateur Championships* and one *Canadian Senior Amateur*. Kuehn was the Kansas Golf Association's *Senior Player of the Year* in 2004, '05, '06, 2021, '22 and 2023; and was the Central Links Golf *Legends POY* in 2022. He was inducted into the Kansas City Golf Hall of Fame in 2022.

Kuehn serves on the *Board of Directors of Central Links Golf* (KCGA) and chaired the *Centennial Committee*. It is in that role that he was drafted to write a series of columns on the hundred-year history of the association.

"Jimmy, the caddie" is, of course, a fictionalized reconstruction of the events surrounding golf and the KCGA, based on facts uncovered and borrowed from numerous sources. Key among them are the excellent volume *When Golf Came to Kansas City* written by Kenneth Krakauer in 1986; *100 Years of Kansas Golf* by Mal Elliott, written in 1996; various internet sources including the LA '84 Foundation, the USGA Library and the printed, on-line histories of various golf clubs in the area.

Special thanks go to Monte Gross, Museum Curator at the Wyandotte County Historical Museum for his contributions on the development of golf courses and prominent players from Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County; to Ernie Jones for several photos and other memorabilia; as well as to members of the Communications and Centennial Committees.

Great thanks go to Jack Garvin, a golf historian in his own right, for the many hours spent in the library verifying the establishment of the KCGA in 1912 and laying to rest the false assumption that the organization may not have been founded until some eight years later.

And, of course, none of these exploits would be possible without the support and encouragement of my wife, Pat. She puts up with my playing schedule, tales of woe after my rounds of golf and makes my life what it is... a joy to share with her.





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