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Chicago Golf Club

The Chicago Golf Club is a below-the-radar, historic course located in Wheaton, Illinois, due west of Chicago. The Chicago Golf Club was founded in 1892 by Charles Blair Macdonald. Before he moved to New York and helped organize the Links Club and the National Golf Links of America, Macdonald lived in Chicago. Although Macdonald was born in Canada, he grew up in Chicago and was a successful businessman and a member of the Chicago Board of Trade.

As it turns out, Chicago Golf Club is a club of many firsts - not only did it establish the first eighteen hole course in the U.S., it was the first to adopt out-of-bounds as a rule in the United States, and it was the first club that organized a "caddy-shack" for its caddies to stay in. At the time Chicago built its first eighteen hole course, many clubs in the U.S. were still experimenting with courses of various length - some built six hole courses, others nine, and still others twelve hole courses. Oh yea, and by the way, it was one of the five founding member clubs of the U.S.G.A.

C.B. Macdonald designed the original golf course in Wheaton in 1895. Seth Raynor supervised its construction and made subsequent changes to the course. Macdonald was a famous slicer of the ball so he built the course to favor a slice. The course sits on roughly 200 acres on a rectangular piece of property. The holes essentially are routed in two loops that run clockwise around the property. There is an old, unused polo field in the middle that now serves as a very large driving range. Chicago hosted the U.S. Open in 1897, 1900 and 1911, the Amateur in 1897, 1905, 1909 and 1912 and the Walker Cup in 1928 and 2005.



Their club history, *Chicago Golf Club 1892-1992* (Donovan & Jerris G31420) was published in 1991 and written by Ross Goodner and is 157 pages. Aside from an extensive history, the book also includes a color hole-by-hole pictorial analysis of the course and shows off many of the "prototype" holes Macdonald was famous for designing such as a "Redan", "Biarritz", "Punchbowl", and two "Cape" holes.

Goodner was a senior editor for *Golf Digest* and also wrote a club history for Shinnecock Hills in 1966. Obtaining a copy of the club history is like getting invited to play the course itself: difficult to do.

A previous club history of Chicago Golf was produced in 1967 to celebrate the club's seventy-fifth anniversary and was written by Charles Bartlett: *Chicago Golf Club Diamond Jubilee 1891-1967*. It was privately printed. It is only 28 pages and was done in illustrated wrappers (D & J B7450). Bartlett was the golf editor for the *Chicago Tribune*. The book contains pictures of the club house and of many famous players that have played at Chicago Golf but is not as comprehensive as the 1991 edition.



Macdonald discusses Chicago Golf Club extensively in his *Scotland's Gift: Golf* including some pictures of the original course from 1894. George Bahto's biography of C.B. Macdonald *The Evangelist of Golf* also includes a nice chapter on Chicago Golf Club.