

Valuable Book Group, LLC
Specialists in Rare and Antiquarian Golf Books
Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

A review of golf books published by and about The Country Club in Brookline, MA

In this issue we review books published about The Country Club in Brookline, MA. One of the founding members of the U.S.G.A. and scene of many historic events in golf history, including Francis Ouimet's victory in the U.S. Open of 1913 and the controversial American Ryder Cup victory of 1999.

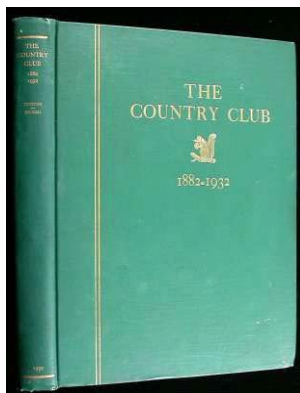
While not a classical history of the club in any fashion, we very much enjoy various handbooks published by The Country Club over the years. A fine example is the 1934 book *Constitution, By-Laws and List of Members of the Brookline Country Club* and is 90 pages, green cloth with gilt lettering and the club logo on the front cover. This small book is a charming piece of history regarding the famous Brookline, MA club. This handbook is typical of the annual handbooks that were published by the club throughout the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s.

Although not exclusively devoted to golf, we find it a fascinating look back into the customs and traditions of the game as it has evolved over time. Among the house rules listed in the book: "Bell boys may not be sent on errands out side of the Club House" and "No one with spiked or hob-nailed shoes is permitted in any part of the Club House." The club was apparently very broad-based since the book includes rules for hockey, lawn tennis, skating, skiing, squash, curling, trap shooting and golf. At that time, the club house also served as the home for some members and visitors are asked to obtain permission before visiting. Also interesting from a historical standpoint is that during this time golf handicaps were set by the Golf Committee: "Members desiring a change in handicap should submit their three best scores for 18 holes." Annual dues at the time were \$135 for a family. Guests greens fees were \$3 on weekends. The nomenclature used to describe guests is also interesting, if now considered politically incorrect. Unaccompanied guests are referred to as "strangers." There is a distinction made between married sons of members and unmarried sons in the setting of rules.

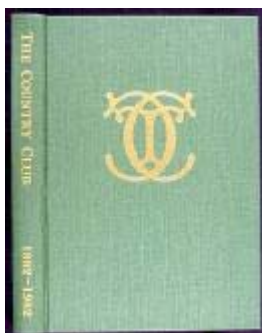
An entire chapter is devoted to Garage Rules and discusses how the manager has the discretion to move cars at any time including towing them by horses! It appears as if the club also had its own fleet of cars that were used to pickup and drop off members. It really gives a good sense of pre-war America when there was still a big division between being in the city and being out in the country. The Country Club was obviously used for all types of activities. At this time The Country Club's practice range was the club's polo field. Members were also not allowed to buy balls from the caddies.

Club Histories

The Country Club 1882-1932 by Frederick H. Curtiss and John Heard, published in 1932 in hardcover with decorative cloth by the Plimpton Press is a large volume, measuring over 9¾ inches by 12 inches tall and 213 pages. It was printed in green cloth with gilt lettering with the club emblem of the time, which is a squirrel, done in gilt. The book is done in the style of a large paper edition book with wide margins. It is one of the best of any of the golf club histories in our view. It contains many black and white pictures including the grandiose clubhouse, people curling during the winter, horse racing and lots of golf.



The *Centennial History of the Country Club 1882-1982* was published by The Country Club in 1981 and was written by Elmer Osgood Cappers. The book is in dark green cloth and was issued with a slipcase. There is a fold-out view on page 45 of an early version of the historic clubhouse.



For the Diehard Country Club Fan

The three titles listed below are for those who are serious collectors of this great course:

The Country Club, 1882-1932: Speeches and Remarks Made at the 50th Anniversary Dinner at the Club House on Thursday Evening April 21, President James A. Lovell Presiding. Published by the club in 1932 it is 48 pages and we wouldn't even consider it to be a softcover book: more like papers stapled together.

A 300 Year Land History of the Country Club published by The Country Club in 1982, written by William B. Tyler.

The Country Club Physical Evolution 1882-2001 is 80 pages and contains many color and black and white pictures and illustrations of the clubhouse and property.

Generalized History

The Greatest Golf Tournament of Them All: The 1913 United States Open Championship, Held at The Country Club, Brookline, MA, September 16-20, 1913 by Jean Poindexter Colby, published by the club in 1988. This is a softbound volume, 126 pages and contains eyewitness accounts of the tournament by members of the press.

A more recent volume written by Mark Frost titled *The Greatest Game Every Played* was published by Little, Brown in 2002. While not strictly about The Country Club it recounts Ouimet's victory at the 1913 U.S. Open in detail and prominently features The Country Club. This is an award winning book and is well written and easy to read. It does use a technique we find a bit annoying, however. While the book is accurate from a historical perspective, the author makes us imagined conversations that Ouimet probably had. While this is fully disclosed to the reader, it gets old after a while.

Finally, we mention a book that we have mentioned over and over again, and will continue to do so. *Legendary Golf Clubs of the American East* photographed by Anthony Edgeworth and written by John de St. Jorre. While this book covers additional courses we find the chapter on The Country Club shows off the historic nature of the club. Edgeworth's photography and the accompanying text have the ability to transport you inside the club. There is something about the way they put the book together than gives you the sense that you are behind the scenes. His photographic images contain such a depth and clarity due in large part to his skills as a photographer and because no expense was seemingly spared in the design and production of the book. There are thirty pages dedicated to The Country Club. *The Legendary Golf Clubs* book was published in 2003 in two versions: a hardcover with a dustjacket and in a deluxe edition in green leather with a matching slipcase. As an added bonus the book contains extensive chapters on Merion, Seminole, Shinnecock Hills, the National Golf Links, Oakmont, Pine Valley and several other courses.

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