

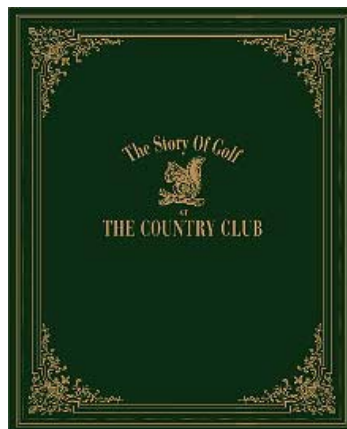
**Valuable Book Group, LLC**  
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### **The Story of Golf at the Country Club**

We have always taken an unusual approach to writing about golf books. Rather than just copying press releases or dust jacket blurbs, we actually read the book. It was with great anticipation that we bought *The Story of Golf at The Country Club*, which was published by the club in 2009. The Country Club (Brookline, MA) didn't really need another club history, having produced two before, in 1932 and 1982. Lovers of golf history should be glad they did.

Written by John de St. Jorre, the book raises the standard by which club histories will now be judged to a new level. The book is so well done it was the winner of the 2009 USGA Herbert Warren Wind Golf Book Award, the second time a club history has received this honor (the first was *Heather and Heaven* by Phil Pilley in 2003, regarding Walton Heath). We have written about books authored by de St. Jorre before, as they are some of our favorite golf books: *the Legendary Golf Clubs* series and the *Links Club* history. The winning streak remains in tact with this beauty.



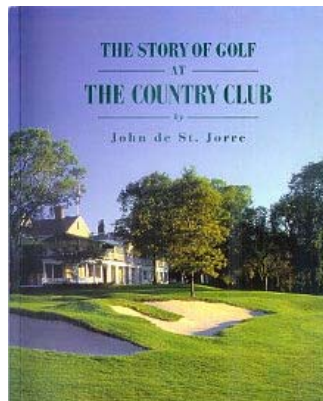
Larry Hasak designed the book, which is illustrated with more than 200 photographs, many of them not seen before in the previous histories. The book was published in a limited edition of 1,300 in a green hardcover with gilt borders and the Country Club mascot on the cover. It is accompanied by a hard green slipcase, also with gilt borders and the club logo on the front.

The book is chocked full of both black and white and color photos and illustrations. One that stands out is a crisp group picture of the 1910 U.S. Amateur held at The Country Club. Charles Blair Macdonald is seated in the center of the photograph with his fellow competitors surrounding him. They are all dressed very smartly in suits, wearing the

fashion of the times: straw hats and bowler hats. Macdonald looks so powerful you can almost understand how he was able to bully himself into a victory in the first U.S. Amateur. The other competitors around him look in awe. Macdonald is often described as larger-than-life and it is evident in this dramatic photo.

The Country Club has a rich history, which is detailed in the book. In addition to being a founding member of the USGA and hosting 15 USGA championships, the club has an interesting history aside from golf. In its early days, it had a racetrack with a grandstand and a steeplechase course. I have been fortunate to have played at The Country Club and fondly remember the breadth of the non-golf activities such as curling, ice skating and tennis and the book gives a good feel for them.

The amazing stories of Francis Ouimet's victory in the 1913 U.S. Open and the American victory at the 1999 Ryder Cup are well known, and they are given their appropriate place in the book. What gives the book depth is the rich history and detail Hasak and de St. Jorre present on lesser known, but still very important parts of The Country Club's history such as Amateur and Women's competitions.



A non-golfer who read this book without any prior history of the game would not only learn about the history of The Country Club, but also would have a very good history of the game itself in the United States. This is both a testament to the importance of The Country Club in the game and to the way the story is brought together.

I'm sure de St. Jorre and Hasak had thousands of pictures to draw from when compiling the book and their curatorial skills in selecting the appropriate ones is outstanding. The pictures are weaved into the text in a way that makes history come alive. *The Story of Golf* does a great job combining text and images seamlessly into one narrative where they feed off each other. Additional standout pictures in the book are: a full page image of Ted Ray with a pipe hanging out of his mouth; Ouimet shaking hands simultaneously with Vardon and Ray in a crumpled suit after his playoff victory; a picture of a young Bobby Jones with his wife, and a color photo of Francis Ouimet and Jack Nicklaus. The picture of the European Team at the closing ceremony of the 1999 Ryder Cup truly looks like it was taken at a funeral.

It has been a while since I turned every page of a golf book with rapt attention and a smile on my face at all times. What a book.