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Larisa Luloff
DePauw University

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An Untold History:
The Emergence and Development of Women's Golf in Scotland and
North America, 1870-1930

Larisa Luloff
DePauw University Honor Scholar Program
Class of 2019
Professor Gellman
Vince Lazar and Harry Brown

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It is “a tradition unlike any other.”¹ As spring slowly emerges after a dull and cold winter, so do the famous green jackets of the Masters, the first major tournament of the professional golf season. Owning a special place in the hearts of both fans and players, to don the green jacket at the end of the day is an esteemed privilege coveted by many and possessed by few. While every major is special and prized, the Masters holds an intangible sense of something greater, something more profound. Also, unlike other majors in the golf season, the Masters is held at the same club each year: Augusta National in Georgia, creating an atmosphere of tradition and history. Smaller than other fields, it is an honor to even be invited to play. The course, famous for its deceptively difficult holes and beautiful azaleas as a backdrop, has offered both spectacular moments of triumph and defeat. Tiger Woods’ unforgettable chip shot that helped him clinch his fourth Masters victory is equally matched with Jordan Spieth’s breakdown after hitting two balls into the famous Rae’s creek in front of the 12th green while attempting to win his second consecutive Masters. Every moment is charged with energy, every spectator holds their breath, waiting to see who will next wear the green jacket. However, there is one kind of person who will never wear it: a woman.

As a tournament steeped in tradition, the Masters, and Augusta National Golf Club, is conservative and guarded. The course itself, despite inviting thousands each year to the Masters and televising the tournament to millions, is extremely private and membership was closed off entirely to African American men until 1990 and women until 2012, meaning that the course also refuses to host any female tournaments, professional or otherwise. It is known that only three women are members today, but the membership list is a closely guarded secret. Augusta is only

¹ Jim Nantz, “The Masters,” CBS.

one of several well-known clubs throughout the country that court a men-only policy, but Augusta is the most famous due to its involvement as a course on the professional golf circuit. This policy claims to be a part of the tradition of the game, a game which men have typically dominated and to which women are newcomers.

However, the members of these clubs fail to understand the full history of golf and how integral women have been in the development of the game. Even more than players, women designed courses, gave lessons, progressed athletic fashion, and participated in the United States Golf Association long before many country clubs were founded. Women's involvement goes back further than Annika Sorenstam in the 1990s or even Babe Zaharias in the 1940s; it goes back to Scotland, where some of the first women to play the game were humble fishwives in the small village of Musselburgh in the early 19th century. In order to create a tradition that legitimately represents the game, the history of the sport must first be understood, and women must be equally represented and credited with their part.

Where does tradition come from? When does a habit, ideology, or even system of power or privilege suddenly become a timeless tradition? Today, golf is often associated with Scotland; it is seen as an intrinsic part of Scottish sporting culture, but how did that develop? In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with nationalism on the rise, countries and peoples felt it was important to not only create national identities, but to legitimize them through supposed long-held traditions. Creating these identities and traditions helped people have a sense of national unity, something to hold on to that was different and unique from any other country. As Benedict Anderson states in the introduction of his famous *Imagined Communities*, "nation-ness is the

most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time.”² In analyzing the complete lack of definition or understanding of what a nation is, Anderson offers up his own definition: that a nation is “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”³ This definition is important in understanding the fragility of tradition; just like a nation itself, traditions are born out of imagination and humanity’s willpower to accept an act, object, or ritual as sacred. However, many ramifications grew out of the nationalization process, including the past becoming highly romanticized and the emergence of a sharp distinction between tradition and modernity. According to Eric Hobsbawm, author of *The Invention of Tradition*, the term invented tradition refers to “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.”⁴ The last part of the definition is the most striking: the idea that simply repeating an action enough and injecting it with symbolism can somehow insert it into the historical narrative assumes that potentially anything can become a tradition. Thus, golf being seen as a traditionally male sport and associated solely with Scottish origins is a product of invented tradition.

As far as cultural influences go, few actions, people, or events have had quite the overwhelming effect on changing human culture as sports have, especially in the last century. Sports have been a source of entertainment for cultures for thousands of years; even the gladiatorial contests of ancient Rome were seen as sporting events, entertainment for the crowds.

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 3.

³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

One sport seemingly not given enough credit is that elitist, stuffy game of golf. As one of the oldest modern sports in the world, it has a rich history, but the last century seems to be the only part anyone remembers, or cares to remember. Great players like Bobby Jones, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, and Tiger Woods punctuate the game's history but over-represent the more recent decades. The writing genre of golf is well saturated, but most of the books are either instructional or memoirs written by and for the most legendary players. Few books focus on the origins and development of the game, and even fewer focus on another important and influential aspect of the sport: women. Despite popular belief, women have been involved in the game for nearly two centuries. In Scotland, women formed an official golfing organization, the Ladies' Golf Union, a year before the United States Golf Association was founded. A woman developed and implemented the handicap system to make golf more fair for all players. Female golf course architects existed and had success as early as 1900. Not only did they assist in the development of the game, but these women also acted as role models and leaders in gaining independence and more rights for women in society. Few books exist highlighting these women and their accomplishments, extending the stereotype that golf is not only elitist, but sexist. Bringing the stories of these women, and the accompanying cultural changes, to light will help to bring more depth to the game of golf.

America in the 1870s was a growing economy. Despite the depression of 1873, the country was growing at an alarming and transformative rate. Undergoing a transformation from an agrarian society to an industrial and urban one also ushered in new institutions, values and ideas. A flood of European immigrants brought different customs and languages.

While sports such as baseball or soccer have rich histories, no sport has the longevity of golf. St. Andrews Golf Club in Scotland is today referred to as the home of golf, but its roots can be traced back to the game of *kolf* in the Netherlands in the 13th century, and there is significant debate that surrounds the true origins of the sport and what actually led to the development of the modern game.⁵ *Kolf* was not a direct ancestor to the game known today, meaning that it was likely not the only sport that influenced how golf is played today, but the idea of hitting a ball with a stick over a certain distance is shared by the two sports. However, as the early form of golf spread throughout Europe and eventually to Scotland through Scottish merchants, the modern game began to change and develop. Mary, Queen of Scots, is known today to be the first woman to play golf in the later 16th century, but the game had existed as a favored pastime for so long that it had been banned before due to the military being distracted by the new game.⁶ This demonstrates how ingrained the game is in the culture of the Scottish people, and that it was the everyday man, as well as the aristocracy, that was in love with the game.

The game began to migrate to America through traders and immigrants that sailed to America. There is some evidence that golf arrived in America as early as the 17th century. Written evidence exists of a complaint by a person or persons playing golf or *kolf* in the streets, but the first golf club established seems to have been in the 1780s, particularly in the Carolina region, but no golf clubs still exist from that time. There is also evidence of an advertisement from a newspaper during the American Revolutionary War of Scottish soldiers playing golf in

⁵ Robert Browning, *A History of Golf* (London, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd.), 14.

⁶ Browning, *A History of Golf*, 2.

New York.⁷ It is also clear that interest in the game declined following the war in 1812 and would not surface again until the late 1870s.

With the founding of St. Andrews Golf Club in New York in 1888, golf in America began to grow. St. Andrews, and four other early clubs, would go on to found the United States Golf Association, the governing body for golf. The game would grow and legitimize through the USGA, moving across the Atlantic as men and women from both countries would meet for tournaments and exhibition matches. While the Brits initially far out-matched the Americans, by the early 1900s, the Americans could hold their own, and eventually grew to be dominant in the sport. According to Genevieve Hecker, a renowned British golfer in the early 1900s, she “must admit that American women seem better able to handle a bad situation and play ‘better than they know how....’”⁸ Seeing as golf had really only been in America for half a century, this was a high compliment and demonstrates not only how quickly the game grew and became a part of America’s culture, but how much women began to embrace the game as well.

Beginning in Scotland

Scotland is as famous today for the game of golf as it is for their kilts and the bagpipes, but the game takes on a different shape there than it does anywhere else in the world. St. Andrews, while today considered the home of golf and the most famous course in the world, is only one of hundreds of world famous courses located in Scotland, known for their rugged beauty and rolling hills. The golf courses themselves have always been very natural, seemingly developing out of the ordinary shape of the land, rather than changing the land to create

⁷ Browning, *A History of Golf*, 114.

⁸ Genevieve Hecker, *Golf for Women* (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1904), 206-207.

something that only looks natural, as was the process in America. Relying on the weather elements to make the courses challenging, the courses were designed based on weather patterns and wind direction. Between their wishes to keep the courses as natural as possible and the lack of motorized technology at the time, “the only greenskeepers were the rabbits.”⁹ This casual approach to golf meant that there was also a lack of authority or regulation to the game. Playing golf was no different than taking a stroll in a field, except for the bag of clubs one carried. The rules were inconsistent, and the idea of keeping a score of any type was unknown. In fact, there would be no real regulation to the game until the foundation of the Royal and ancient Golf Club at St. Andrews in 1754; one of its primary objectives was, and still is, the administration of the Rules of Golf, which they would eventually run in conjunction with the USGA. The original courses were often composed of no more than five or seven holes, and many of them had to move locations to develop into 18-hole courses due to the rise of urbanization and industrialization in the 18th century.¹⁰ For example, Bruntsfield Links began as only a 5-hole course in 1761, but added six more holes in 1818. Even St. Andrews, considered the home of golf, originally consisted of twelve holes, “ten of which were played twice, making a round of twenty-two holes in all.”¹¹ Historically speaking, “golf had been declared unlawful in Scotland three times, but under Mary’s reign it experienced a sort of revival.”¹² Popular with commoners and the military, it was often seen as a distraction by the noble class. Despite the assumption,

⁹ Browning, *A History of Golf*, 35.

¹⁰ Scottish Golf History, , accessed March 27, 2019, <http://www.scottishgolfhistory.org/>.

¹¹ Scottish Golf History, , accessed March 27, 2019, <http://www.scottishgolfhistory.org/>.

¹² Rhonda Glenn, *The Illustrated History of Women's Golf* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing, 1991).

golf was not an immediately beloved pastime and it would be centuries before golf was played in any organized fashion.

Other than Mary Queen of Scots, the first trusted evidence of women playing golf is at Bruntsfield Links in 1738 with their husbands as caddies, and then again at Musselburgh in 1811. Musselburgh Links appears to have become a center for the early days of women's golf; Musselburgh hosted the first women's tournament of any kind. Musselburgh was a fishing town and it appears that most of the female golfers were the fisher wives. These women were tough and strong, often doing men's work, so playing golf was not a strenuous exercise for them. For their first competition, the prizes were silk handkerchiefs and a fishing basket, but this is significant because it is one of the first examples of organized women's golf in history. The next women's golf organization developed was the Ladies' Putting Club at St. Andrews. It is safe to say that this was truly the starting point for women becoming a part of the game. Founded in 1867 by many of the wives and daughters of the male members of the R&A, the miniature course consisted of nine holes to which the women could putt. In many ways, the construction of this putting course seems progressive for women, but the course was really built only because caddies were annoyed that the women were using their own putting green for recreation. The new green would move the women "out of the public gaze and away from the caddies."¹³

Even in Scotland, women did not have a true footing in the golf world until the Ladies' Golf Union was formed in 1893, even though by this time 63 Ladies' clubs existed around Great Britain, but they were isolated to their courses. The formation of these Ladies' clubs alone is an

¹³ "St Andrews Ladies' Putting Club," History of the St Andrews Ladies' Putting Club & the Himalayas Putting - St Andrews Ladies' Putting Club, , accessed March 27, 2019, <http://www.standrewsputtingclub.com/history/>.

understated achievement. Around the same time, women all over Britain were also coming together to form the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, so women, despite their limited opportunities outside the home, were willing and able to organize themselves cohesively. Many clubs, unlike those today, were entirely independent from the men's clubs, even if they were at the same course; in the case of Lundin Links, women had come together to have their own course. When compared to the relative lack of freedom women had anywhere else in society, the accomplishment of having independent clubs, clubhouses, and even courses, is astounding. It is a rarity to find one even today since most clubs are combined, especially in America.

This union, formed by 10 ladies' clubs, was perhaps the most significant step forward for women's golf in either Scotland or America because it allowed women to show a united front and create a name for themselves. They were no longer simply the wives of men who just also happened to play, or daughters who practiced putting while their fathers played the course; they became serious and relatively independent women looking to change the game. In the first year, 19 clubs joined, and by 1914, there were 400. One of the most significant details about this union is that it was founded before both the USGA in America and before the R&A in Scotland took over as head of the rules of golf. Women in Scotland were organized and legitimate a full year before men were in America, and yet the women's organization is all but unknown. The LGU was instrumental in expanding women's golf throughout Great Britain and at its height represented over 200,000 golfers. Along with developing its own tournaments, as the union expanded it began collaborating with the USGA and other entities to create international

tournaments and matches. This sharing of people and traditions, and the publicity gained through the matches, helped grow the game in both America and all around Britain.

The Ladies' Golf Union, or LGU, created opportunities for women that a golf course could not provide, and they helped develop one of the most important aspects of the game today: the handicap system. After it was formed in 1893, the LGU wasted no time in developing the first British Ladies Amateur Championship. Developing this tournament was not only a way of legitimizing their cause and organization, but it would also serve to prove to skeptical men that women were competent and capable of running a golf tournament and organization. Announcing their intention to establish an all-female organization produced an outcry from many of their male counterparts. Mr. Horace Hutchinson, a leading amateur in Britain at the time, wrote this letter in response to a request for advice from the future chairwoman of the LGU:

“Dear Miss Martin,

I have read your letter about the proposed Ladies' Golf Union with much interest. Let me give you the famous advice of Mr. Punch (since you honour me by asking for my opinion).

DON'T. My reasons? Well?

- 1) Women never have and never can unite to push any scheme to success. They are bound to fall out and quarrel on the smallest or no provocation; they are built that way!
- 2) They will never go through one Ladies' Championship with credit. Tears will bedew, if wigs do not bestow the green.

Constitutionally and physically women are unfitted for golf. They will never last through two rounds of a long course in a day. Nor can they ever hope to defy the wind and

weather encountered on our best links even in spring and summer. Temperamentally, the strain will be too great for them. THE FIRST LADIES' CHAMPIONSHIP WILL BE THE LAST, unless I and others are greatly mistaken. The LGU seems scarcely worthwhile.”¹⁴

In the entirety of this letter, there are no legitimate reasons for women not to establish their organization. It is also a great example of exactly the kind of pressures and obstacles women faced in establishing themselves in the sporting world. Hutchinson attacked every perceived character flaw in women, including both physical and intellectual qualities. At the same time, these sentiments were not unique to Hutchinson; they were somewhat common opinions in society, and hence this letter also demonstrates how progressive and brave these women were to attempt such a daunting feat against such stiff resistance.

The inaugural tournament, played at Royal Lytham and St. Annes Golf Club, fielded 38 players and consisted of match play. Won by an English woman by the name of Lady Margaret Scott, it is important to note that it would be four years before any Scottish woman won the tournament. Lady Scott would become an early celebrity of the game when she went on to win the championship both of the next two years, well known for being a natural athlete and self-taught golfer. It was not until she retired in 1897 that the tournament would move up to Scotland and finally have its first Scottish winner in Edith C. Orr at Gullane Golf Club. The tournament helped create a standard and blueprint for the first U.S. Women's Championship held in 1895 by

¹⁴ Lewine Mair, "Gentlemen Only, Ladies Forbidden - a History • Women's Golf Journal," Women's Golf Journal, August 01, 2017, , accessed April 14, 2019, <https://womensgolfjournal.com/golf/no-women-allowed/>.

the newly formed USGA. Significantly, the scores in the British Championship were significantly lower than in America, although it would not be long before American women would begin to catch up.

Today the handicapping system is trusted to make the game of golf as fair for people as possible. While many other sports do not have such a system of fairness, the handicap system is unique because it not only ranks a player's ability, but can also be used in play to even out a match, although not at the professional level. Handicaps existed prior to the LGU, but they were incomprehensible and useless due to the wide variety of courses and difficulty levels around the country, but the women wanted the game to be accessible to as many people as possible. They created a surprisingly efficient and reliable system that, with modifications, is essentially the same one used today. Unfortunately, they did at first fall into the same trap they were attempting to escape. The largest issue with handicaps at the time was that clubs would have their own systems, and would usually develop it with their best player as scratch, or 0, and everyone else would be compared to them. However, that scratch player might not be considered scratch at another course, perhaps a more difficult one. The universal system looked to alleviate the confusion. However, when the LGU began their system, they initially used their best women as scratch players, most of whom had played or won the recently created Amateur Championship, not realizing that better players would likely come along and change the standards. Miss Issette Pearson, the first honorary secretary of the LGU, was instrumental in developing the system, particularly the early form of uniform course rating, and is often credited with it. The system utilized course ratings, separate categories of players, and the lodging of scorecards. Men were

initially skeptical towards the system, likely because it was developed by women, but when they saw how it helped the game they began to support and work to improve it.

At the same time, attempting to standardize golf through the handicap system would have unintended consequences and would taint the spirit of the game. Of course, it is difficult to say that a game could have a spirit or essence, but one could say that it would alter the way the game was played and thought about. Golf in many ways developed out of a desire to experience something peaceful and natural, a resistance against the movement towards modernism. Yet when systems like handicapping and record-keeping began appearing, especially as professionals began to emerge, players and proponents of the game essentially bowed down to modernist ideals. Golf today looks almost nothing like the game played originally in Scotland, and has been shaped by modern ideals and changing times. The paradox of quantifying the game through handicapping is that it would not have been possible without women. A game that is so dominated by men was given one of its most defining features by a group of women attempting to improve the sport. The ladies of the LGU were not only necessary but transformative to the game of golf, and they were themselves a part of the paradox of golf's struggle with anti-modernism. This obsession with quantifying and standardizing every aspect of life is what would drive America forward in the latter 19th century.

Modernism in America

While Scotland may be the home of golf, the rest of the world has risen to take on the game, specifically North America. The game first emigrated from Scotland through course architects who wanted to move to America. They brought their ideas and knowledge of the game with them and were the first ones to build courses in the states. The first golf course in North

America was the Royal Montreal Golf Club in Canada. Founded in 1873 first as the Montreal Golf Club, it was a pioneer for golf in North America. Similarly to many of the original clubs in the states, the Royal Montreal Golf Club was one of the founding members of the Royal Canadian Golf Association, the Canadian equivalent to the USGA. The addition of Mrs. William Wallis to the club as a member demonstrated the club's relative progressive attitude; Wallis was the first female member of any golf club in North America, and she would be partially responsible for the Ladies' Branch of the club that would soon follow.

Golf became popular in America so quickly because it came at a time when the country was experiencing a great expansion in industry and wealth, creating a growing class of people that could afford time for leisure activities. According to John Rickards Betts, who wrote an article on the rise of sports in the latter 19th century, "industrialization and urbanization...were more fundamentally responsible for the changes and developments in sports during the next generation than any other cause."¹⁵ Reconstruction after the Civil War was in full swing by 1870; the country was attempting to put itself back together after the Civil War tore it in half. In many ways, the Reconstruction period saw America begin to reinvent itself from the ground up. The Constitution, the heart of the country, was challenged and amended multiple times, and the political parties vied for power for years. Despite these governmental challenges, industry was also slowly emerging from the ashes. While the Southern economy had been destroyed in the war, the North expanded their factories and cities. Despite the depression in the early 1870s, in general "Americans by 1880 were far more able—and eager—than their ancestors to avoid both

¹⁵ Steven A. Reiss, *The American Sporting Experience: A Historical Anthology of Sport in America* (West Point, NY: Leisure Press, 1984), 141.

physical and emotional discomfort.”¹⁶ As the 19th century began drawing to a close, the country was once again thriving. Not only was the country on the path to recovery, but new innovations were turning the still young nation into a powerhouse of industry.

Between industrial expansion and the ever-growing influx of immigrants at this time, the cities were expanding at unprecedented rates. Everyone, especially the immigrants wanted to live not only in the land of opportunity, but the city of opportunity. Immigration, a steadily growing contributor to population growth since the 1820s, suddenly exploded in the late 19th century. With advanced steam power to make the journey shorter and safer, immigrants flooded in from all over the world, including the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Eastern Europe, whereas immigrants had previously emigrated mostly from Britain, Ireland, and the German Empire.¹⁷ According to statistics from Ellis Island, “in the 1880s alone, 9% of the total population of Norway emigrated to America.”¹⁸ Over 27 million people entered the United States between 1880 and 1930, but a large majority of these people came prior to World War I because attitudes towards foreigners, once mostly welcoming, began to shift at the outbreak of war (Ellis Island, website). Cities quickly became overcrowded and unpleasant; the upper classes profiting from the industrial expansion began wanting to spend their time and money elsewhere, preferably somewhere quiet.

¹⁶ T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: The Quest for Alternatives to Modern American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 10-11.

¹⁷ History.com Editors, "U.S. Immigration Before 1965," History.com, October 29, 2009, , accessed April 13, 2019, https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/u-s-immigration-before-1965#section_2.

¹⁸ Immigration Timeline - The Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island, , accessed March 25, 2019, <https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/immigration-timeline>.

Industry and the concept of modernity developed simultaneously. While the original industrial revolution of the 18th century was responsible for ushering the world into modern times through significant advances in technology, the industrial boom of the late 19th century pushed the world even further into the future and at a much faster pace than before. According to T.J. Jackson Lears in *No Place of Grace*, his study of American Antimodernism of the late 19th century, “the second industrial revolution was entwined with the shift from the disorganized entrepreneurial capitalism of the earlier 19th century to the organized corporate capitalism of our own time.”¹⁹ Prior to the expansion of corporate capitalism, it was relatively simple for a person to own their own business and make a living. Once industrialization exploded and businessmen took advantage of the potential for growth, many businesses and entire industries consolidated under one name, leaving the small businessman with no chance of success. This shift in business from individual entrepreneurship to monopolies led to immense wealth, but it was all new money. Men like Rockefeller and Morgan were new to the elite circles and were not always welcome. As social clubs began to emerge, the line between old and new wealth would be important in determining the types of clubs created and who was welcome.

Similarly, the rise of urbanization and industrialization would help expand the desire for sports and other leisure activities across all classes. According to Betts, “urbanization brought forth the need for commercialized spectator sports, while industrialization gradually provided the standard of living and leisure time so vital to the support of all forms of recreation.”²⁰ In the

¹⁹ T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: The Quest for Alternatives to Modern American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 9.

²⁰ Steven A. Reiss, *The American Sporting Experience: A Historical Anthology of Sport in America* (West Point, NY: Leisure Press, 1984), 142.

context of golf of course, most average factory workers could not afford to play the game, but they could afford to watch and follow along in the papers. Time was also a factor; the average factory worker had eight to ten hour days and no time for such a lengthy leisure activity. Industrial innovations such as the Atlantic cable, laid in 1866, was instrumental in sharing the culture of Britain with America and vice versa, and thus assisting in bringing golf over to the states. Technology created more access to information, an asset in developing the game of golf as a popular pastime, while also helping develop the game's equipment. The vulcanization of rubber by Charles Goodyear in the 1830s would not only eventually be essential to the construction of automobiles, it also allowed the golf ball to modernize and improve the game by lengthening the courses.²¹ When newspapers realized that sports were becoming more popular topics of conversation in the 1880s, they expanded their coverage of sports readily and spread information over long distances. An excerpt from a *New York Times* article in 1891. Titled "Golf is Growing in Favor," the article portrays a favorable tone towards the game. It is difficult to know how influential an article like this might have been at the time, but since it was printed in the *New York Times*, it can be assumed that only a select group of intellectual readers would have been informed. At the time of the 1890s, the *New York Times* was a no-nonsense moral paper that preferred to cultivate a cultured readership rather than appeal to mass audiences.²² Because of this, and the heated newspaper competition in play at the end of the century, the paper was

²¹ Reiss, *The American Sporting Experience*, 152.

²² The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "The *New York Times*," Encyclopædia Britannica, April 11, 2019, , accessed April 14, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-New-York-Times>.

losing readers quickly. Hence it is likely that many of the people still reading the *New York Times* were already playing golf.

One of the most significant developments in this era that assisted in this economic transition was the standardization of time. At face value, the idea is not complex; however, when considering the national and global impacts, it was completely revolutionary. Trains could run on a real and reliable schedule, people could clock in and out of work at the same time of day as other businesses, and standardization helped increase efficiency in the factories. Most importantly, however, standardizing time led to an exponentially more rigorous lifestyle for urban people. Time, seen as necessary for business at first, began to permeate and control the average person's life. People began living their lives according to the clock; time itself became a commodity to be carefully spent. Since so many people were moving to the cities from the country for greater opportunities, most of these people had previously worked on farms, their day only structured by the sun. Moving into a factory setting where every second of the day was carefully accounted for caused the workers to resent the discipline of the factory setting.

As the developed world hurtled toward efficiency, a new movement began to develop in opposition to modern industrialism: antimodernism. In both Europe and America, there existed a growing sentiment that people were living an "overcivilized" existence. People were living better than their ancestors ever had, and more modern conveniences were available than ever before. With new innovations and an increasing number of people working in factories, life was slowly becoming easier for the average person. At the same time, "the urgency of physical exercise as

life became more sedentary was readily recognized.”²³ The uber-wealthy in particular had money to burn, but there was a sense of superficiality to the culture. Officially, the mood of the time was endless optimism and the feeling that progress couldn’t be stopped; there was no slowing down. At the same time, remnants of the inescapable past could still be found; often these were veterans of the recent war that had torn the country apart and reminded people of human finitude and the realities of life. With the emphasis on efficiency and machinery, some people felt as though life was no longer being enjoyed. There was a slow, haunting realization that modernity had not produced greater autonomy but rather a sense of cultural sterility—the feeling that life had become somehow curiously unreal.²⁴ People, in this case the wealthy elite that could afford free time, began searching for a more authentic experience, an escape from the concrete jungle and the demands of the clock.

From Dining Clubs to Country Clubs

Golf offered the kind of escape that antimodernism called for. Country clubs already existed in America before golf popularized the term; in fact the idea for social clubs originated in the city so the wealthy could escape the business side of life without having to leave the city. As the wealthy began wanting to leave the cities, however, the clubs in the country quickly became vacation destinations. They offered hunting for the men and games and lounging for the women. While considered resorts rather than clubs in the early days, they were ancestors and examples for how golf clubs would be established. Many of the original members of these clubs, when

²³ John Rickards Betts, *The Technological Revolution and the Rise of Sport, 1850-1900* (Organization of American Historians, 1953), 141.

²⁴ T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: The Quest for Alternatives to Modern American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 4-5 .

they began appearing in the cities around the 1830s, were the social elites rather than wealthy businessmen.²⁵ Social elites were the old and established families of the country. They had acquired their fortunes through land ownership and businesses that had existed since the founding of the country; new businessmen, on the other hand, were making their fortune in the new industries of the country. They were often younger and not used to, or welcome in, the social circles they were vaulted into with their newfound wealth. However, the Civil War altered the power dynamics in the country and wiped out many of the elitist traditions. Growing numbers of businessmen either joined city clubs or formed their own, and clubs began to flourish following the war. These “provided the eventual organizational structure for the country club” and would also be used as examples for membership policies and architecture for the first golf clubhouses.²⁶

City social clubs were the epitome of wealth, class, and masculinity in 19th century America. Developed out of a need for wealthy businessmen to escape work while remaining in the city, the clubs were very private and often housed in unassuming but stately buildings “in a fashionable, economically stable part of town.”²⁷ In the early days as America was beginning to prosper around the 1820s, the average person could not separate their home life from their work life because work often revolved around a farm or a small private business. The wealthy, on the other hand, were able to separate work from home. They built large mansions in private neighborhoods that they could go to at the end of the day. These homes were comfortably close

²⁵ James M. Mayo, *The American Country Club: Its Origins and Development* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 12.

²⁶ Mayo, *The American Country Club*, 35.

²⁷ Mayo, *The American Country Club*, 7.

to the center of town, but isolated enough to be quiet. As cities grew and suburbs were increasingly far away, the social club would act as an intermediary between home and work. For elite men, it could be seen perhaps as a second home, or at least a comfortable gathering place of peers.

Dining clubs were some of the first to appear. Long before having established buildings, the members would rotate hosting the club at their homes, and the men would enjoy a sense of camaraderie and companionship. More importantly, these dining clubs “enabled wealthy men to form a collective identity of prestige and leisure that did not exist elsewhere.”²⁸ However, the membership of these clubs was very limited, and men soon wanted a greater number of participants. It was with this realization that American men looked to Great Britain for inspiration, just as they would later with golf courses and clubhouses.

As membership in these clubs grew, the need for separate spaces became apparent. Looking to Britain for guidance in both building design and membership prestige, American elites found their answers in the landed gentry of the British aristocracy. While “wealthy businessmen who could afford a club demonstrated some status, the landed gentry gave a club collective status that could not be bought.”²⁹ The American men wanted to establish the city clubs in the same way that “an English club was an expression of social elitism.”³⁰ However, it would not be until at least the 1830s that a club with a separate building would appear. Economic prosperity, urban growth, and the desire for membership had to combine to launch city social clubs. Of course, most of these clubs sprouted in the Northeast, where the cities were the largest.

²⁸ Mayo, *The American Country Club*, 9.

²⁹ Mayo, *The American Country Club*, 11.

³⁰ Mayo, *The American Country Club*, 10.

The plantation economy flourishing in the south stunted the growth of these types of clubs, and those that did form in cities like New Orleans were more influenced by French models.

At the same time that city clubs were flourishing, summer country resorts grew in popularity with the middle and upper classes. The idea of the resort was more than just a fun excursion for the rich; it offered them an escape from the pressures of city life. The resorts were founded, perhaps unknowingly, with antimodernist principles in mind. Leaving the city for the country signified taking a step back from civilization, and entering a world where time and efficiency no longer mattered. The authentic experience people looked for could be found, and, most importantly, the wealthy found privacy. As summer resorts continued to grow in popularity, however, and more and more people were making decent livings in the cities, the elites wanted more privacy. This wish was granted in the form of invitation-only resorts, essentially the very beginnings of the country club. Between the idea of membership exclusivity and the growing popularity of certain individual sports, the wealthy classes were slowly able to develop “a landscape that reflected their values.”³¹ Resorts were never meant to be open to all; the concept was to create a playground for the rich. The country club “was the upper-class American equivalent of the English country house and the French chateau.”³² The clubs attempted to emulate both the culture and design of the country estates of the great European families.

Just as most of the city clubs had been designed after their British equivalents, American country clubs took on European looks as well. Why did they look to Europe as an example? The social and business elites in America saw themselves as superior to the average American,

³¹ Mayo, *The American Country Club*, 46.

³² Allen Guttman, *Women's Sports: A History* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1991), 127.

similarly to the nobility of Britain. This imitation of European social classes can clearly be seen in the way country clubs were formed administratively and physically constructed. Placed on sprawling estates with massive, imposing buildings dominating the landscape, the clubhouses acted as more than a getaway for the rich; they sent a message of superiority and exclusiveness to anyone not invited. The attempt to imitate European estates can be clearly seen in the architecture of the clubs. When golf, country clubs, and clubhouses began to grow in popularity, designing a clubhouse was “evidently a coveted assignment.”³³ Some of the earliest clubhouses were nothing more than converted farmhouses that would eventually simply have additions; Augusta National in Georgia is famous for its square, columned entrance with a long drive through a tunnel of magnolia trees; in many ways it resembles the wealthy, stately plantations of the Old South. According to Richard Diedrich, author of *The 19th Hole: Architecture of the Golf Clubhouse*, the most significant clubhouse built in the 19th century was the one built for the Newport Country Club in Rhode Island. It is certainly an imposing building. Designed in the Beaux-arts style by the same firm that would go on to design New York’s Grand Central Station, the clubhouse looks more like it belongs to a noble in the French countryside than on a golf course in Rhode Island, but the design still creates the desired effect of wealth and power. The two images below show distinct similarities between the Newport clubhouse on the left and an

³³ Richard J. Diedrich, *The 19th Hole: Architecture of the Golf Clubhouse* (Australia: Images Publishing Group, 2008), 10.

English country estate, another influential design for the original American country clubs. Both images capture the long drive up to the building, attempting to create a kind of grand entrance; it



is easy to imagine entering a different world once crossing through the imagined gates. Each building has a center with wings emerging out of each side, creating an elegant symmetry, appearing more like a palace than a club or home.

While in Scotland, anyone could form a golf club that could have a partnership with a golf course, the style of country clubs that emerged in America were golf courses and clubs combined into one entity. Scotland's system of individual clubs allowed for blue collar workers, such as the men of the St. Andrews Golf Club, to have a place next to the elites of the R&A and find common ground on the golf course. The clubs were social groups for whom golf was a common interest, while the American clubs grew into businesses run by the wealthy. Because of this system, like the nobility of Europe, the American aristocrats could consolidate themselves and create separate groups; each course was a domain with a crest to proclaim its importance and status.

As country clubs began to spread around the northeast, a distinctive culture of style and exclusiveness began to develop, and more importantly, the sport of golf began to be associated with the elite classes, but the game also provided the answer and the escape for the

antimodernists. The most important aspect of golf was its natural feel. In a world becoming increasingly industrial and superficial, golf provided a natural landscape to which people could escape; golf, and the clubs, embodied everything the city was not. Similarly, the sport provided an escape for women. Not only was the city a place of pressure and disgust for the wealthy men, many women, especially those that considered themselves “New Women,” felt that the bourgeois home was a stifling prison.³⁴ The term “new woman” referred to independent women of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that pushed for radical changes in women’s equality. These women advocated for everything from autonomy to physical changes such as appropriate attire, especially since many women were becoming increasingly athletic. These women are sometimes credited with sparking the Women’s Movement of the early 20th century. Of course, this independent and progressive group of women were all part of the upper class because they were the ones with the time and education to pursue the movement. Country clubs provided a new type of freedom for these bourgeois women. Though far from the standards of today, clubs allowed women freedom of movement and the time and space to develop a presence in the sporting world.

While sports had historically been popular, especially among the social elite who had the leisure time to indulge in athletics, it was sports that once again pulled the elites away from the cities in the late 19th century. Sports acted as a social divide in the same way that fashion or neighborhood did because they “demanded leisure time, space, and equipment, all of which

³⁴ T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: The Quest for Alternatives to Modern American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 74.

required personal wealth.”³⁵ Sports such as equestrian, sailing, and hunting required equipment, space, and skill not available to the average person, and even the more accessible sports such as croquet and the newer sports of tennis and golf could be distinguished into different statuses based on the quality of equipment and playing field. These were also the sports where women would be able to make their mark. While the late 19th century was certainly “a time when it was almost as unusual for a woman to watch as to play a game of baseball,” it was also a time when the country clubs encouraged women to join in their games.³⁶ Another important reason that golf was such a popular sport among the clubs was its appropriateness for both sexes. Since no physical contact was necessary, and the game could still be played in traditional and modest dress, men and women were free to play together without worry for scandal. Victorian standards of dress and behavior were still prevalent even at the turn of the century, so any new sport or activity had to fall within these standards. Many of these younger women and girls likely considered themselves to be “new women” and saw how sports could be an important bridge to relative independence and equality.

Challenging Traditions

As golf emerged in the late 19th century, it had to compete with the strict standards of Victorian culture, especially those regarding women. The Victorian era, named for Queen Victoria of England, lasted from 1837 to 1901 and is known for being a time of strict religious beliefs and limited opportunities for women, despite a powerful and independent woman on the

³⁵ James M. Mayo, *The American Country Club: Its Origins and Development* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 46.

³⁶ Richard J. Diedrich, *The 19th Hole: Architecture of the Golf Clubhouse* (Australia: Images Publishing Group, 2008), 128.

throne. Women were expected to be mild in public and to acquiesce to a husband's or father's wishes; similarly, a woman's intelligence was limited to conducting polite conversation. The idea of separate spheres for men and women developed during this period, cementing the idea that men were dominant in any public or political sphere, including athletics. Wealthy women did not work, but working women were often limited to being a governess, servitude, or factory work once the industrial revolution spread. Generally, however, a woman's place was in the home. Women of all statuses displayed their level of wealth through the ostentatious outfits they wore; the more fabric involved, the wealthier the woman. Comprised of bustles, hoops, hats, and multiple layers of fabric, the outfits were not only formidable, but fairly cumbersome. The conservative fashion trends would be one of the more severe deterrents to women playing golf.

While tennis was the first to truly liberate women from the confines of Victorian fashion, golf played just as important a role in creating lasting changes. Skirts and shoes saw the most significant alterations made to modify for the course, but even the types of fabric used would be improved over time to adjust to different weather. As golf became more regulated and popularized in American culture, women began to take advantage of their newfound freedoms and helped create significant changes in many aspects of public life. According to Glenna Collett, possibly the most prolific golfer of the 1920s, "golf was an important force in changing the fashions of woman's dress. For many years doctors lectured on the evils of tight lacing, but it took good old Dr. Athletics to abolish this practice."³⁷ When women began playing the game, both in America and in Scotland, they would be fully dressed in the Victorian fashion befitting the period, including corsets, hats, multiple layers of fabric, and hoop skirts. When the Ladies

³⁷ Glenna, Collett, *Ladies in the Rough* (London: Garden City Press, 1929), 133.

Putting Club, the first organized women's golf club, was founded at St. Andrews in Scotland in 1873, they wore typical attire acceptable for society at the time. The women did not alter their dress for golf, likely because they were only putting and were not hindered by their clothes. However, as women began to take up the game in later years, the layers of fabric and hoop skirts were completely useless when trying to swing a golf club. Yet, changing fashions was easier said than done, and this aspect of golf was one men would use to criticize women's involvement in the game. At first, the transformation was slight; "walking skirts," like the ones listed in the advertisement from a Philadelphia newspaper below, came into being due not only to golf, but to the increased physical activity of women in general. This ad is significant because of its mainstream use and approval even by people outside the golfing world. More specifically, this was a major newspaper advertising athletic clothing to women. Considering golf had at this point

PHILADELPHIA, Tuesday, October 30, 1900.

WALKING SKIRTS

No. 21.

Talks to Women

PARIS HATS

You've been to Paris, or you long to go. If you haven't been you are just too certain for anything that you'd buy the loveliest things there for next to nothing. Do you realize that Paris has no more big stores than you have in Philadelphia, and that the great dressmakers or milliners wouldn't show you (in their little shop, palace or studio) a dozen costumes or hats? Travelers find that out pretty soon, and a lady remarked, yesterday, that she never thought now-a-days of buying a hat in Paris—"I can see more beautiful Paris hats at Gimbel's," said she. And so she can—and even the most swell dressmakers depend on the big stores for their fabrics now, though they must go to Paris once in a while to study dress.

But French hats—charming ones left of our very latest imitations—are reserved a full third. They'll be snapped up in a twinkling. Today, to be sure; tomorrow, maybe

Most sensible thing in the world to wear a walking skirt (we don't limit them by the name "rainy-day skirt" now). It came of cycling and golf and tennis, and their requirements. It has met those requirements—and more; has met the views of doctors and healthy-minded women far and near. It wasn't easy to cut them right—you find it next to impossible to make them correctly at home. There's knack required and tailor skill—we've worked hardest at the problem—and have succeeded best; just as we have succeeded with women's tailoring generally, and with dressmaking. Some price hints follow—

<p>\$2.75 for \$3.95 tailored walking skirts of double-face cloth, lap seams, deep hem, well stitched.</p> <p>\$3.75 for \$4.75 tailored walking skirts of double-face cloth homespun finish, five gores, lap seams, deep hem tailor stitched. Others have hip pocket.</p> <p>\$4.75 for \$3.90 walking skirts of double-face cloth, five gores, stitched pleated back, tailor lap seams.</p> <p>\$5.50 for \$7.50 tailored walking skirts of black and blue chevot; five gores, lap</p>	<p>seams, flounce bottom, finished with clusters of stitching. Flare is just right.</p> <p>\$5.90 for \$7.50 walking skirts of double-face cloth, seven gores, well cut and tailored, lap seams and deep hem; attached belt of self material.</p> <p>\$6.90 for \$8.50 tailored walking skirts of double-face cloth, one-inch strappings on seams; hip pocket, stitched.</p> <p>\$8.00 for \$10.90 tailored walking skirts; five gores, strap seams, hip pocket, 6-inch circular flounce, tailor stitched.</p>
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—Second floor.

only been around for approximately a generation, this was positive progress. However, throughout the first decade of the 20th century, golfing fashion would not evolve much. It was

not until the 1920s that women's golfing fashion would really begin to evolve at the same time that female golfers were making considerable advances in the professional world.

Cecil Leitch was one of the most prominent female golfers of the early 20th century, so famous that she wrote her own instructional books and thoughts on the game. Of course, anyone can write a book, but because she was a woman it was more significant. She wrote one book titled *Golf* that covered many aspects of the game, but it was so popular that she republished a simplified version covering just the instructional aspects of the game. Among other topics, she was fascinated with the differences in Scottish and American styles of dress on the golf course. In Scotland, the women mostly wore tweeds no matter the weather, but female golfers in America were far more concerned with their looks, as long as the outfit was still functional. For women, it was essential to find the correct balance between wearing socially acceptable and fashionable attire, and clothing practical enough not to disrupt the swing. For example, heels were fashionable, but "high heels are inclined to throw the player forward on to her toes at the top of the swing"³⁸ and they were hazardous to the condition of the course, particularly when the ground was soft. At the time, the closest any player, male or female, got to spiked shoes was inserting nails into the soles of ordinary shoes or heels. Despite the discomforts of heeled shoes,

³⁸ Cecil Leitch, *Golf* (London: J.B. Lippincott and, 1922), 120.

they would remain in use for several years. Skirts, on the other hand, slowly underwent the greatest transformation.



The photo above is from the cover of the *Ladies Home Journal*, and this was an edition from 1900. Two important pieces of information are portrayed through this picture: one, men and women are playing golf at an equal level, and are seemingly enjoying each other's company. Second, the women are dressed in fashions far removed from the Victorian standards of the previous decades. While they are far from the scandalous dresses of the 1920s, these skirts are shorter to allow for more movement, and the jackets are more form fitting to help with the swing. As the 1920s came along, however, the skirts began to shorten to allow for more powerful movements. In the words of Collett, “[older women’s] skirts used to sweep and flounce in large and voluminous folds round their feet...it would have been impossible to swing the club on a windy day...waists were pinched to the smallest dimensions.”³⁹ A few decades later the skirts

³⁹ Glenna, Collett, *Ladies in the Rough* (London: Garden City Press, 1929), 180.

were shorter and wider. When designing skirts, not only was the length a factor, but also enough width around the knees for them to bend during the swing. There were initial outcries that skirts were so short and simplified, however the magazine seemingly endorsing the change would help to settle the situation. Furthermore, that golf is on the cover also shows how popular the sport had become, especially for women, by 1900. Not only was it a growing hobby, but it had to be deemed socially acceptable and even necessary for polite society to have an appearance, since the Ladies Home Journal was the leading magazine for women during the late 19th century.

Golf as Exercise for Women

Golf, and more athletic outerwear, also brought up the question of appropriate physical fitness for women. Far more than a question regarding simple health, this debate attempted to determine what type of activities were appropriate for women, how often they should be performed, and the overall healthy appearance for the female body. In both Scotland and America, the amount of physical exertion required for women in the upper classes was almost embarrassingly low. In Rhonda Glen's *The Illustrated History of Women's Golf*, she highlights the comical appearance of women on the golf course during the inaugural women's golf championship in 1893 in Scotland. Despite the fact that "most women in their [social] class had never been encouraged to try anything more physical than climbing into a carriage,"⁴⁰ here they were, marching around the golf course in massive and heavy outfits. In Scotland particularly, the Victorian norms that were still ingrained in society had never encouraged women towards any type of all-out physicality.

⁴⁰ Rhonda Glenn, *The Illustrated History of Women's Golf* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing, 1991), 6.

In America, women enjoyed a little more freedom, but many men and women still debated the socially acceptable standards for women's physical fitness, and what exactly their place was in the golf and country club setting. An article titled "The Game of Golf for Women" from the *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1894 conveys all the benefits of golf for both men and women, and is clearly in support of women playing. However, towards the end of the article the author, a man, praises the mild nature of women that would be beneficial to men containing their tempers and impulses to cheat on the golf course. In the same breath that he is encouraging women to take up the game for its physical benefits and longevity, the author asserts that adding women to the sport will also make it that much more enjoyable and respectable for the men. Similarly, an article printed in the *Chicago Tribune* in 1894 examines the growth of women in sport over the recent years, including in golf, but is careful not to be too encouraging towards women becoming "sporty."⁴¹ Rather, the author assures the reader that "the American girl... is kept in balance by too many other things and... makes sport serve the ends of physical health and well-developed womanhood."⁴² This article is important due to its appearance in a major newspaper, and its positive view of golf and women's involvement is progress, but the article still questions just how much physical activity is ok for a woman, and what changes the activity will make to her body.

Concern for the female body has often overshadowed the great accomplishments of female athletes. The proper female shape and effects on the reproductive system were all considered by men when discussing women's roles in sports. The female body is often seen as

⁴¹ "Devoted to Sport: American Women Are Growing More and More Athletic," *Chicago Tribune*, August 25, 1894, accessed February 3, 2019.

⁴² "Devoted to Sport," *Chicago Tribune*.

somehow more fragile than the male body and sports could potentially place too much stress on a women both mentally and physically. As one very well-known female golfer of the 1920s would say, “For many years doctors would lecture on the evils of tight lacing, but it took good old Dr. Athletics to abolish this practice.”⁴³ At the same time that men would feign concern for the female body, there is no doubt they often enjoyed the appearance of a beautiful woman with a slim waist. This “prejudice against women athletes derived from Victorian attitudes about porcelain-doll femininity...it was not direct hostility against women so much as overprotectiveness.”⁴⁴ Comparing women to porcelain dolls would explain why women playing sports received initial backlash and constant scrutiny. Holding women to such high standards of perfection made it difficult for women to challenge those ideals. Medical advances would be instrumental in helping challenge these stereotypes. While today we know that women who lose too much body fat while training can threaten their reproductive health, this only occurs in extreme circumstances and was not understood for a long time.

Yet, there is still a fascination with the female body and its uniqueness. A doctor published an article in the *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1912 proclaiming his thoughts on the proper form and amount of exercise for women over the age of forty.⁴⁵ It is an intriguing article because of its scope; it covers, exercise, diet, and answers questions about weight issues. The doctor, Dudley Sargent, is in favor of women exercising, but cites housework as an acceptable form of exercise due to its accessibility to women and its less strenuous movements. He also asserts that

⁴³ Glenna Collett, *Ladies in the Rough* (London: Garden City Press, 1929), 133.

⁴⁴ Allen Guttmann, *From Ritual to Record*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 34.

⁴⁵ Dudley A. Sargent, "After a Woman Is 40: What Form of Exercise Is Wise for Her to Take?" *A Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1912, , accessed January 6, 2019.

“this is work, not recreation, and unless these powerful aids to health and happiness can be taken in moderation by those who are over forty it is better to leave them for the younger persons to enjoy.” (New York, 1912) Of course, this is coupled with the belief that women belong in the home as a part of the separate spheres ideology that not only distinguished between private and public life, but also places women squarely in the private sphere at home. This ideology had existed for centuries, but became popularized in the beginning of the 19th century following the industrial revolution because the rise of factories gave men the opportunity to leave the home to work, and left women in charge of the home and family. Decades later, and sports were helping women find a reason to leave the home and have a social life. This article, however, expresses how the separate spheres ideology still permeated many aspects of society.

At the same time, women also had their own thoughts on the benefits of golf and general exercise. Many women, even professional golfers, did not actually see golf purely as a form of recreation, but as a way to accent their own natural beauty. Glenna Collett, the most dominant female golfer of the 1920s, wrote her own book on women in golf, titled *Ladies in the Rough*. A distinct chapter in the book is dedicated to the idea that “golf, as compared with dieting, cosmetics, and sleep, can hold its own as a real aid to beauty.”⁴⁶ In her opinion, golf was beneficial to women and really suited their bodies. In a very unique take on the industriousness of her time, Collett argues that the new mechanical inventions of the day such as the automobile, airplane and even steam-heated apartments have “reduced the muscular activity of women to nothing at all,”⁴⁷ which is an odd statement when it had not been historically socially acceptable

⁴⁶ Glenna Collett, *Ladies in the Rough* (London: Garden City Press, 1929) 129.

⁴⁷ Collett, *Ladies*, 129.

for women to be overtly physically active unless it related to work. One ever important feature for women is their complexion. The ideal standard for beauty is always changing, but the idea of a porcelain complexion was an important one, especially in the upper classes. Staying out of the sun was important for any woman of status to maintain a perfectly smooth and pale complexion, usually accentuated by just a touch of blush. Involving women in sports, and especially golf, would begin to change that image. Suddenly a woman that showed evidence of physical activity, either through a slight tan or showing “grace and correct posture”⁴⁸ due to the increased muscle usage, was an attractive quality and beneficial to the woman’s health.

She also advocates, As Dr. Sargent did in the *Ladies Home Journal*, that golf extraordinarily benefits older women, stating that if they do not use golf to fill their time, they will become “suddenly old and useless.”⁴⁹ While a harsh statement, her support of the game as a lifelong hobby is very important in helping to develop the character of the game. Golf is known for not only its health benefits but also the access the nature of it provides to older generations, and helps golf remain popular through the decades because it can be enjoyed by people of all ages.

Tournament Golf

The foundation of the USGA in 1894 transformed golf from a hobby for the rich to a game that most people could access, whether they were players or spectators. While still an expensive sport to play, requiring lots of equipment, creating universal tournaments that did not require a club membership allowed for more access and fairer play. The USGA also began to

⁴⁸ Collett, *Ladies*, 129.

⁴⁹ Collett, *Ladies*, 135.

regulate the game, initiating a complete set of rules along with the first tournaments to create a more competitive environment. Seen as the American equivalent to the R&A in Scotland, the USGA acts as the governing body for golf in the United States. Although the founding members were the five oldest country clubs at the time – Newport Country Club, St. Andrews Golf Club, The Country Club, Chicago Golf Club, and Shinnecock Hills – the USGA’s tournaments brought golf out of the country club setting. It was no longer just a game for the old men of the clubs, but rather one for anyone who could prove themselves competent, man or woman; significantly, it would take several more years for any high level golfers to be considered professionals since the first tournaments held were considered amateur championships. The organization was founded mainly to resolve a dispute over which club had the most legitimate tournaments; creating an unbiased third party was the best solution.

However, the USGA was not necessarily the same solution for women as it was for men. As could be expected, the USGA was founded and run initially by men due to the fact that men founded the five original member clubs, even though they also hosted women’s tournaments. Theodore Havemeyer, whom the U.S. Amateur trophy is named after, was the first president and a co-founder of Newport Country Club. Initially, there was no complaint with how the USGA was run, or that it was run by men only, but as women became more involved in the game they felt they should have a voice in the organization that made all the decisions. A *New York Times* article from 1916, titled “Women Want Voice in National Golf,” discusses the desire women had to have a say at least in how their own tournaments were run. At the time, the Women’s Metropolitan Golf Association was partnered with the USGA, but the women still had to submit requests for any changes they wanted to make to their tournament. According to the paper and

Mrs. F. E. Donohoe, the newly elected president of the Women's Metropolitan Golf Association, "the women were willing and anxious that the USGA should continue to take charge of the women's national championship, but that the women themselves should take active interest in the selection of the course and the date."⁵⁰ From around this time forward, women's golf would begin to distinguish itself through more tournaments and better players; some of the best would even rival the male golfers of the day. However, it would still be some time before American women truly had an organization they could call their own. That would come with the formation of the LPGA in 1950.

The USGA retains its reputation even today for primarily providing amateur tournaments for emerging golfers, while the PGA and LPGA focus on the professional stage. This discrepancy is important due to the significant differences between professional and amateur players and tournaments. When tournament golf began, both in Scotland and America, there was no such person as a professional golfer. People played the sport and competed for the enjoyment of it and the entertainment it provided for both players and spectators. Even today, amateur sports are often seen as the purest form of athletics because there are no politics, money, or professional pressure affecting the game. For people to play golf at such a high level as to compete in national and international tournaments but to not expect something in return means that they are truly playing because they love the game. The USGA to this day still hosts more amateur tournaments than it does professional ones because they recognize the value of amateur golfers and encouraging people to play the game they love. These amateur tournaments are also

⁵⁰ "Women Want Voice in National Golf: Think USGA Should Consult Them," *New York Times*, January 28, 1916, accessed December 5, 2018.

important stepping stones for players who do aspire to become a professional. The trophies alone tell the story of which tournaments that the USGA hosts are more esteemed. The two pictures below portray the U.S. Women's Amateur Championship trophy, also called the Robert Cox trophy on the left and the Women's U.S. Open trophy on the right.



While the Open trophy is large and shiny, and definitely worthy, the ornateness and true beauty of the amateur trophy cannot be mistaken. Unlike the Open trophy, the amateur one simply cannot be replicated. The woman shown at the top in 19th century dress pays homage to the early days of women's golf and reminds people that the trophy has been presented annually since the second women's amateur championship back in 1896. Scenes of St. Andrews pays homage to the home of golf, as does the tartan pattern covering the bottom of the trophy. On the other hand, the Women's Open trophy, or at least the one used today, was not created until 1953, and was again replicated in 1992. While it "continues to represent the most prestigious title in the

women's game,"⁵¹ the trophy does not garner the same type of reaction or even recognizability as does the amateur trophy.

Despite amateurism's emphasis on pureness and love of the game, amateurism has always been an expression of class and social privilege. Only those who could afford land, equipment, and leisure time could afford to devote themselves to amateur golf. At the time the USGA was founded, it acted as an arbiter for questions regarding amateur status. Professional golfers were afforded a limited standing, meaning that they were respected and used for advice on golf, but "amateur golfers were revered." (USGA museum) Due to the Victorian social codes of the time, especially among the elite classes, early golf professionals were relegated to working-class status; as a result, professionals were not even allowed in most of the clubhouses. Amateurs embodied the game; they demonstrated its etiquette and essence. Both then and today, people believe the highest accomplishment of sports should be the effortless expression of grace. It was all about the game; only someone who needed money would stoop to such a level as to play sports for money, and this opinion was widely shared. Sports scholar Kevin Jones published an article on the development of amateurism and professionalism in early 20th century Canada. In the article, he quotes a prominent doctor and promoter of amateurism who stated:

"Amateur organizations have their ideals and principles which they must maintain, but they would infinitely rather see a man declare his intention openly to go into the professional ranks, than see the individual who is a cheat and a sneak thief, masked under the guise of amateurism,

⁵¹ "The Harton S. Semple Trophy," USGA Media Center, , accessed April 3, 2019, <http://mediacenter.usga.org/trophies?item=30036>.

but who directly or indirectly receives material gain for his ability as an athlete. That individual is a menace to all the true ideals of Amateurism and Sportsmanship..."⁵²

This statement clearly demonstrates the high standards to which amateurism was held all around the sporting world. To receive material gain from a sport, in this case golf, was completely unacceptable to the point where that person would not be respected in the sporting or golfing community. It could also be argued that sports in general were perhaps not seen as the most respectable activity, but they were tolerable as long as the person was not gaining from the sport.

Of course, this idealistic approach does not necessarily persist today, with the explosion of and obsession with professional athletes. Even the Olympics, long used as a representative for the highest level of amateur athlete, grew steadily more professional- and commodity- based throughout the 20th century. Jones makes another interesting point in his amateurism article by stating that "the American influence was the main factor in the spread of professionalism into Canadian athletics [in the 20th century]." (Jones, 35) Why did professional athletics take off in America? Perhaps due to the popular concept that sports, even expensive ones like golf, were a vehicle for social mobility. Not only did it offer the potential for financial gain, it also assisted young people in going to college even if they could not afford the school. In sports like baseball and football, if an average person happened to be talented, and had the opportunity to make money playing a sport, that meant they could attempt to move up in the world, both through monetary gain and potential fame. This would be the case with golfers such as Bobby Jones and

⁵² Kevin G. Jones, "Developments In Amateurism and Professionalism In Early 20th. Century Canadian Sport." *Journal of Sport History* 2, no. 1 (1975), 29-30.

Francis Ouimet, and Joyce Wethered and Glenna Collett on the women's side, although they were never actually considered professional golfers. Through golf they achieved fame and wealth, and thus achieved the all-important American dream that so many aspired to, including college students.

Universities played a huge role in promoting new sports, including golf. It was not only rich middle-aged women that took an interest in golf, but also young girls and teenagers who were more open-minded than their parents. Already before 1900, several universities had established both men's and women's teams, developing early versions of the competitiveness of the sport to come. An article by Ronald A. Smith, titled "The Rise of Basketball for Women in Colleges," discusses and praises the immense influence collegiate-level sports had on the development of girls and women in school. According to Smith, "basketball was one of a number of sports which had begun to change the feminine image in the nineteenth century from that of 'taper-fingered, narrow-chested, lily-cheeked girls' to that of a more vigorous outdoor-sporting type."⁵³ While he is talking about basketball, Smith's assertion can also be applied to golf, especially since golf is exactly the type of outdoor sport that would change physical expectations for girls. He also asserts that these sports, and the changes they introduced, would affect women's physical education for the rest of the 20th century, a huge accomplishment a step forward for women in that they, and their bodies, were treated physically similar to men's.

However, universities were also the perfect atmosphere to perpetuate the "separate but equal" ideology regarding gender and sports. In the past, sports had been used as a way to

⁵³ Steven A. Reiss, *The American Sporting Experience: A Historical Anthology of Sport in America* (West Point, NY: Leisure Press, 1984), 239.

promote both femininity and masculinity. “masculine” sports and “feminine” sports are considered by social science researchers to be social constructs, the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity have also traditionally been reproduced in the sporting world. Universities, through their control over sporting programs, could easily reinforce these stereotypes through what programs they allowed and how supportive they were. In the book titled *Sex Segregation in Sports* by Milner and Braddock, this paragraph brings to light many of the problems girls face in sports: even today:

“These constructions [masculine and feminine] of sex appropriateness encourage most youth to engage in only sports that are assumed to be ‘appropriate’ for themselves, as boys or girls, where these traditional gender norms socialize boys to be aggressive and competitive, and girls to be graceful and docile. In this manner, perceived innate differences between boys and girls are ‘translated into the natural supremacy of males in the larger social order.’ Thus, girls and boys are encouraged to play particular sports that maintain sex differences, and sex-appropriate gendered expectations within sports are perpetuated, reproducing traditional gender views.”⁵⁴

Returning to Victorian ideals, golf was popular among the elites of America, the very people who were sending their kids to the universities, because golf followed appropriate behavioral and social expectations for the day. Women could play with men because golf was a no-contact sport, but they were also allowed to play it because the game reinforced feminine ideals. Even

⁵⁴ Adrienne N. Milner and Jomills Henry Braddock, II, *Sex and Segregation in Sports: Why Separate Is Not Equal* (Santa Barbera, CA: Praeger, 2016), 80.

though women were allowed to play and even build teams in college, they were often not given the same credit or support as men's teams.

Some of the earliest universities to have women's golf were both Wellesley and Vassar. At Vassar, the creation of the Athletic Association in 1894 also brought about the start of golf. Several other sports had already existed, but they were much more focused on the exercise aspect of athletics than the competitive side. The picture below shows female Vassar golfers on the newly opened Vassar golf course in 1895. Keeping in mind that these girls would have been part



of wealthier families to be able to go to college, it does not negate the fact that they are clearly interested and invested in the sport. Their attire is both typical for the era and altered enough that they could play golf with relative ease. As a school that has always praised physical fitness and the ideal of a “sound mind in a sound body”⁵⁵ it was the perfect place for women to join in on sports because it was a requirement for every student to participate in physical exercise. At the

⁵⁵ Sarah J. Warner and Kristyn Tempora, "The History of Athletics and Physical Education at Vassar College - 150 Years, Vassar's Sesquicentennial - Vassar College," Vassar College 150th Anniversary, March 2011, , accessed April 15, 2019, <https://150.vassar.edu/histories/athletics/index.html>.

same time, the school did not approve of competition in the early days. When other schools would ask to play matches, the administration denied them because they were nervous about the students' spending too much time on sports over academics.

Professional golf requires a different level of skill, attention, and consideration. It also requires sustained interest in the game through sponsorships, audiences, and people working and developing the industry. Until the days of Bobby Jones, golf professionals of any kind were few and far between; most of the people considered "professionals" were the people managing the golf clubs. At the same time, there were some ground-breaking female professionals in the early 20th century that helped pave the way for future female playing professionals. One of these leading females was May "Queenie" Gourley Dunn Webb.

Migrating from Scotland in 1915, May Dunn Webb descended from a long line of golfers in Scotland and England. Her family had been known for helping develop and grow the game through course, club and ball design, and teaching golf. Both her father and grandfather had been golfers and course architects, and her mother was the first woman to give lessons in England; May would be the second. She quickly established herself as a professional in America by writing instructional articles for women on golf, most of which were published by the *New York Herald* while she was in New York. She was also very vocal and passionate about women in golf, saying that "women are quite capable of handling their own links and clubhouses."⁵⁶ Proving her point, she founded the Reno Golf Club, designed the course, and managed it for the first few years. With this accomplishment, not only was she the first and only female

⁵⁶ May "Queenie" Gourley, Section in USGA Museum, USGA Museum, Far Hills.

professional in America, she was the first female course architect in the world, a true trailblazer for women to follow.⁵⁷

As professional golf began to replace amateur golf, the way the game was understood, processed, and enjoyed also had to adapt. For women, this change also meant that men moved officially into the spotlight as the women were pushed aside. Looking back, it is very clear that men's golf is more accurately and prominently recorded. Whereas a simple google search for legendary golfers brings up legends such as Bobby Jones, Francis Ouimet, and Gene Sarazen, all famous in the 1920s and 30s, the same search for female golfers is noticeably different in that all but few of the photos are colored, clearly designating them as being from recent decades. A few women from before the 1950s, including Patty Berg and Babe Didrikson Zaharias, who was also an Olympic athlete, make their way to the top of the list, but they are not the first names to appear. Yet, clearly women had not only been playing, but also competing, in the golf world for decades. Even though records and whole books exist on female greats like Glenna Collett or Joyce Wethered, they are not readily known names in golf history. Whether this is due to a lack of publication or access, or simply a lack of interest, this contradiction to men's golf publicity makes an important statement. Do these records, or lack of, affect our remembrance of women's golf? Perhaps understanding that women's golf has more history and substance to it than is believed would change how we see the game and many of its traditions. Returning to the Masters ideal, a club that only recently opened its gates to women in any significant capacity and yet is

⁵⁷ Kitty Falcone, "Isabella May "Queenie" Dunn-Webb Hupfel," Nevada Women's History Project, , accessed April 14, 2019, <https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/isabella-may-queenie-dunn-webb-hupfel/>.

seen as the epitome of golf, it is easier to appreciate where the bias comes from when we understand that almost half of golf's history has been largely ignored, including some very important people that helped develop parts of the game. Another question is whether or not women's professional golf could be seen as more anti-modern because of the lesser obsession with quantifying the sport.

The first women's championship in America was held in 1895 at the Meadow Brook Club in New York, one year after the first championship held in Great Britain. The first ever women's tournament was held the previous year at Morris Country Club in New Jersey, but it was only a seven-hole course. Soon after, several more tournaments were added, and within a few years, international matches were being organized by the USGA and the LGU. This international competitive environment helped spread the popularity of the game and demonstrated that women could be and were just as serious about athletics as men.

The 1920s were an explosive time for women. Stepping out of their shells in many ways, women began showing individuality and independence in their public lives. The suffrage movement won its case in 1920 after decades of protest, and a middle class was steadily rising due to the prosperity following the war, allowing for more women to enjoy leisure activities. At the same time, attitudes towards women in sports were improving, encouraging them to try new activities such as golf or tennis with less fear of ridicule. Sports in general were rapidly growing across the country, and it was not long before female golfers from the south, traditionally a less wealthy part of the country after Reconstruction, began to rise up and challenge the athletic supremacy of the northeast.

The first female golfer to rise from relative normalcy was Alexa Stirling. A child prodigy, she was gifted both athletically and musically. Her swing teacher at the Atlanta Athletic Club had emigrated from Scotland to teach in America. She quickly demonstrated her prowess at age 13 as the low qualifier in the Women's Southern Golf Association Championship in 1911, and then won the U.S. Women's Amateur in 1916 at the age of only 19. During World War I, she became one of the "Dixie kids,"⁵⁸ a group of southern golfers including the great Bobby Jones that toured the country playing exhibition matches to raise money for the Red Cross. Returning from the war, she then successfully defended her title in both 1919 and 1920. She would also later go on to claim multiple titles in the Canadian Open. Her most striking accomplishment, however, was how well-rounded she was as a woman. Embodying the new mood of the 1920s, along with being both a golfer and concert musician, she was a skilled auto mechanic and furniture maker. She is only one of many women that embraced the 1920s as a chance to make a name for themselves.

Similarly, women took advantage of the 1930s as a time for growth. Despite the nation facing impossible economic struggles, women's golf actually surged throughout the decade. According to the USGA, "each year between 1930 and 1936, the population of women golfers increased some twenty percent."⁵⁹ Simultaneously, men's golf declined at a drastic rate, likely due to many men needing to find work. This change allowed women's golf at all levels to advance, especially on the professional tour.

⁵⁸ UpClosed, "About Alexa Stirling | Biography | Golfer | United States of America," UpClosed, , accessed April 12, 2019, <https://upclosed.com/people/alexa-stirling/>.

⁵⁹ "Women's Golf Surged During the 1930s, Despite the Difficult Economic Times," Section in USGA Museum, USGA Museum, Far Hills.

One of the most eccentric golfers of the 1930s, and a symbol of how far golf had come for women in the last sixty years, was Gloria Minoprio. Born into an Italian family, her parents were not in her life for long, and she was raised by a grandmother and aunts. Coming from obscurity due to not taking up golf until she was an adult, Minoprio quickly became a sensation in the golfing world. In 1933 at the English Women's Golf Championship, having never competed before and only taking up the game three years earlier, Minoprio pulled up minutes late to her tee time in a sleek limousine. Stepping out of the car a mere two hundred yards from the first hole, the spectators only became more astonished as she drew closer. Striding confidently up to the tee, "the realization took hold. Never mind trying to compete with one club; this was an absolute affront: the woman was wearing trousers."⁶⁰ Gloria played that tournament, and every one after, with a single golf club. It was the equivalent of a modern-day two iron, and very unusual. The newspapers had a field day with this unconventional woman who was brave enough to completely defy appropriate dress codes, and some papers were more friendly than others. Other golfers, particularly the men, were very curious as to how she could possibly hold a ball on the fast greens with such a club. As it turns out, they would be right. Gloria played for six years with her single club and trousers with only limited success. She lost that first match in 1933 by the fifteenth hole, and to solidify her mystery, she walked straight off the green back into her waiting limousine and was driven away. Still a mystery to this day, Minoprio helped launch women's golf into the modern era and was a role model for future hopeful women golfers.

⁶⁰ Rhod McEwan, "The Extraordinary Tale of Gloria Minoprio (part I)," Rhod McEwan, May 06, 2015, , accessed April 12, 2019, <https://www.rhodemcewangolf.com/the-extraordinary-tale-of-gloria-minoprio/>.

Just prior to the beginning of the 2003 Masters tournament, a group consisting mostly of women led by Martha Burk stood down the road from the front gates of Augusta National and protested the club's male-only member policy. Patrons headed to the course slowed to gawk at the protestors, but the mobs of police officers quickly shooed the cars along, ticketing anyone who stopped. Other protestors eventually showed up in support of the male-only policy, citing the club's right to privacy. Burk had planned on bringing a few hundred supporters with her, but the turnout was closer to 50; there were more reporters at the scene than protestors. Burk's protest was not only against the all-male policy of the club, but against the executives of major companies that were members, stating that "today, we are protestors with placards. Tomorrow, women will protest with their pocketbooks."⁶¹ A bold statement for a woman with few supporters, the protest was ultimately deemed a failure by her opponents and the press. Even fewer people inside the gates cared about the demonstration. The great Jack Nicklaus, a 6-time winner of the event, argued that "none of these people [inside the grounds] really care about what's going on outside the gates of this club. Come on, it's a golf tournament." Despite the lack of immediate interest, the protest did bring up a good point about the prejudices held by such an esteemed establishment. How ingrained in culture does that prejudice have to be for a respectable establishment and group of people to support it so fully, and to ignore the history of a game that they were built upon?

Today, the LPGA tour is recognized and respected, and hosts tournaments all over the world. Female golfers are taking up the game at all ages, and not only appreciate the sport, but

⁶¹ Sue Chan, "Masters Protest Falls Short," CBS News, April 14, 2003, , accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/masters-protest-falls-short/>.

also welcome the competitive environment. At the same time, men-only clubs still exist, and it is often assumed that women either do not know the game, or are not good at it even when at the golf course. One age-old argument that still assists many prejudices against women, including their athletic ability, is that golf is easier for women due to them playing from shorter distances. However, this is only the case because women for the most part lack the same strength and speed as men so to make the game fair the course must be shortened. The game is not made easier, just more fair, but there is still the need to make women feel inferior in the sporting world.

The only way to bring equality to golf is to bring to light all the women that helped make the game what it is today, from the fisher wives of Musselburgh to the ladies of the LGU, and to Gloria Minoprio, a woman who did not listen to any conventions or standards. Golf is one sport that, due to its nature and its introduction in a country club setting, was always deemed socially appropriate for men and women to enjoy together. More than most other sports, it has the potential to bridge the gap between gender differences and stereotypes, but the willful ignorance of golf's history inhibits that connection. Women's golf and history should be more acknowledged and celebrated because they contribute to the game's history just as much as men. The sporting world remains a male-dominated one, and women must often force their way in, as is the case with the Augusta National protestors. As much progress as women have made in the past century and a half, they are still relegated to a form of second-class professionalism in the golf industry. Women's and girls' clubs are harder to find, women's golf clothes are only beginning to have their own sections in stores, and even the professional tour takes a back seat to any men's tournament. It is of course arrogant to assume that golf is the only sport struggling

with the gender equality problem, but golf is unique in its rich history and early participation of women in the game, and their contributions must be recognized.

Understanding the dynamics between gender, power, and sports is essential to comprehend how society works. Golf grew first out of a love for the sport, but secondly out of a desire for social dominance and separatism. From the beginning, money was an essential component to the sport, especially in North America. Desiring to separate from the modern struggles of the city, elites also distanced themselves from everyday people, forever setting the standard for golf. It remains a stuffy and elitist game with many traditional ideals, most of which are discriminatory to certain groups of people. The sport itself is what it is: a sport, yet the people that play and promote it often tie themselves up in some higher purpose for the game. At least in America, the golf course was originally a playground for the rich, including rich women, and the game is still perceived that way. Bringing to light the involvement of women in the sport may help to allay some of those misconceptions. Knowing the history of the sport is the only way to move forward and make progress, and bring equality to the sporting world.

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