



Historical Review

Chicago Golf Club

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For More information, see
<http://www.chicagogolfclub.org/cgc-foundation.html>

Overview

The Chicago Golf Club was founded in 1892, by Charles Blair Macdonald and other prominent Chicagoans who wanted to play the game they had experienced during their travels to Scotland. The USGA recognizes the original course they built in Belmont (now Downers Grove) as the first 18-hole course in the United States.

In 1895, Chicago Golf opened Macdonald's new course, built on more spacious land that the Club had acquired in Wheaton. Macdonald, who also became the first U.S. Amateur Champion, wanted the course built in keeping with the style and tradition of the great courses in Britain. Macdonald's belief that trees were not an appropriate hazard opened great vistas across the course and subjected play to the vagaries of the wind. Macdonald evolved this style over the next quarter century as he became the first golf course architect of renown in the U.S.

At Macdonald's suggestion, Chicago Golf was redesigned by his protégé Seth Raynor, with the new course opening in 1923. Chicago Golf's 21st century course is still Raynor's original design. The "modern" course features several prototype Macdonald/Raynor holes that are considered among their best – the "Road Hole" 2nd, the "Biarritz" 3rd, the "Redan" 7th, "Punchbowl" 12th were modeled on the great holes in European golf, while the "Cape" 4th and 14th holes were based on an original Macdonald/Raynor design.

James Foulis from St. Andrews, Scotland, was the Club's first professional. An excellent player and clubmaker, Foulis won the 2nd U.S. Open in 1896.

Chicago Golf has hosted 3 U.S. Open and 4 U.S. Amateur championships, 2 Walker Cup Matches, the U.S. Women's Amateur, the USGA Senior Amateur, and the inaugural U.S. Senior Women's Open. The Open champions crowned at Chicago Golf include Joe Lloyd, Harry Vardon, and the first American-born winner, Johnny McDermott. The

Amateur champions include H.J. Whigham, H. Chandler Egan, Robert Gardner, and Jerry Travers. Bessie Anthony was the champion of the U.S. Women's Amateur. The 1928 Walker Cup was won by a U.S. team including Bobby Jones, Chick Evans and Francis Ouimet, while the 2005 Walker Cup match was again won by the U.S. in a closely contested match. Bill Campbell, former USGA President and R & A Captain, won the 1979 USGA Senior Amateur. Laura Davies won the inaugural U.S. Senior Women's Open in 2019.

Key Figures in Chicago Golf's History

- **Charles Blair Macdonald** – Chicago Golf's founder was also the driving force behind the formation of what is today the USGA. Macdonald also won the first U.S. Amateur championship, and was a pioneer in American golf course architecture. He is a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame.
- **Robert Todd Lincoln**, the eldest son of Abraham Lincoln, was an early member and early club President; he became Secretary of War under both James Garfield and Chester Arthur. **James B. Forgan**, a native of St. Andrews Scotland, was President of the First National Bank of Chicago. **Judge Barton Payne**, another early member, served as Secretary of the Interior under Woodrow Wilson. **Marshall Field** was the most prominent Chicago retailer. **Silas Strawn**, at one point the President of the USGA, was a prominent Chicago attorney. **Robert S. McCormick**, American ambassador to Austria-Hungary and Russia, was the father of future Chicago Tribune publisher Robert R. McCormick and son-in-law to Joseph Medill the then-owner of the Tribune. **Dr. John B. Murphy** was a renowned surgeon and medical inventor.

- **James Foulis** is engaged in 1895 from Scotland to be first professional at Chicago Golf. His brother David subsequently joined James at Chicago Golf. James Foulis won 1896 U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills. The brothers built a successful clubmaking business from Wheaton, and earned several patents. They and their family are buried approximately 200 yards north of Chicago Golf's entrance.
- **Chick Evans** and **Robert Gardner** – Both Evans and Gardner became members in 1916 and remained members for several years (1919 for Gardner, 1923 for Evans). The two Chicago Golf members met in the finals of the 1916 U.S. Amateur, in which Evans defeated Gardner to become the first double-winner of the U.S. Open and Amateur championships. Evans lived in the clubhouse and cottages for several years beginning in 1912 – he would practice early in the morning, take the train to work in Chicago, and practice in the evening. Gardner of course had won the 1909 U.S. Amateur at Chicago Golf, several months prior to setting the world pole vault record while an undergraduate at Yale. Evans is a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame.
- Olympians – **Margaret Abbott**, part of a Chicago Golf family, won the 1903 Olympic Games for golf while studying art in Paris; amazingly she died in the 1950s not even aware that she was an Olympic champion. Future Chicago Golf Club members **Mason Phelps** and **D.E. (Ned) Sawyer** were part of the winning team in the 1904 Olympic Games for golf held at St. Louis.
- **Ben Crenshaw** – A two-time Masters champion, Ben began staying in the Chicago Golf cottages in the late 1970s during the Western Open. His sense of history and expertise in golf course architecture not only drew him to Chicago Golf, but have helped the club maintain an effective stewardship of its golf course.

Clubhouse

Chicago Golf Club's "new" clubhouse opened for its first public use in October, 1913 a mere sixteen months after fire destroyed the original clubhouse that had been in use since the Club moved to the Patrick farm in 1894-1895.

This clubhouse was designed by architect and Chicago Golf member **Jarvis Hunt**. Hunt is best known for his work in Chicago and in train stations around the United States including in Kansas City, and locally in Joliet. A proponent of the traditional Beaux-Arts style, Hunt also designed the iconic clubhouse at the National Golf Links of America in Southampton, NY. His projects were widely published when completed.

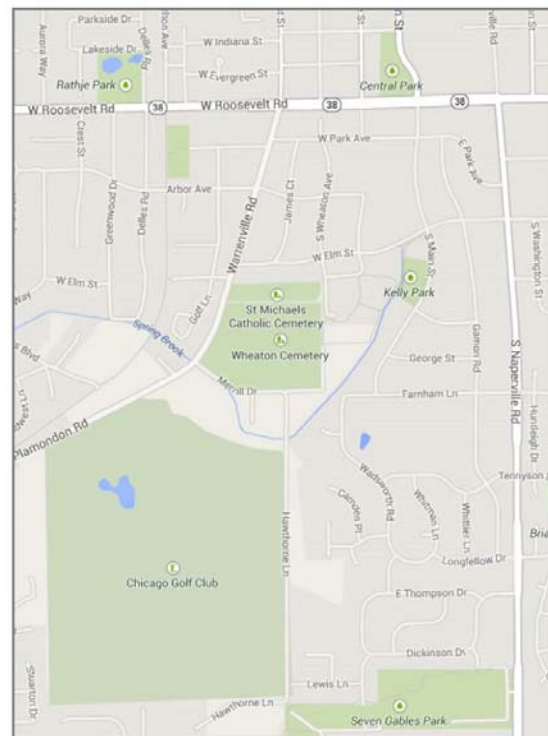
The first public mention of the opening was in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on October 16, 1913. Another *Tribune* article on October 19, 1913 described the new clubhouse this way:

“The new building, not yet completed, is situated on a slight rise of land commanding a view of the golf links and polo field. The general color scheme is white, gray and red. An odd feature is the interior construction of the dining room and ballroom, the walls of both rooms being of red brick. The motif is that of a Pennsylvania manor house in the time of William Penn. The building comprises three stories. The first embraces the men’s locker room, women’s dressing room, shower baths, and storerooms. On the second are the dining room, ballroom, women’s living room, kitchen, and the office of the club. Twelve bedrooms and the gray room, which is to be used as a library, are on the third floor. Wide rambling verandas, 250 feet of them, run along the southern side of the building. They connect the structure with the old clubhouse [casino].”

Directions

The Chicago Golf Club Foundation will coordinate public tours of its clubhouse once per month, by appointment from April through November. Special appointment tour requests from

interested individuals or groups will be accepted, subject to availability of Foundation personnel and Club events. To request a tour, please contact us through Chicago Golf Club, at 630-668-2000.



From East or West:

I-88 to Naperville Rd. Exit North on Freedom Drive East on Warrenville Rd. North on Naperville Rd. West on Roosevelt Rd. (Route 38) South on Warrenville Rd. to Chicago Golf Club

From North or South:

I-294 to I-88 West (Aurora) to Naperville Rd. Exit North on Freedom Drive East on Warrenville Rd. North on Naperville Rd. West on Roosevelt Rd. (Route 38) South on Warrenville Rd. to Chicago Golf Club