

WAITING TO BE TOLD



MANITOBA LADIES GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS.
ST CHARLES COUNTRY CLUB, 1922.
PHOTO BAUSMAUGH & TAYLOR.

Stories of the St. Charles Country Club Ladies' Section 1905 - 1940

Eleanor Suderman





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Stories of the St. Charles Country Club Ladies' Section

1905 - 1940

*Written & Designed
by
Eleanor Suderman*

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Disclaimer:

To create this book I have attempted to use credible sources and to reflect history as I found it in them. I cannot guarantee that my sources are 100% accurate.



History is best told as stories
Rudyard Kipling



Shirley heading out for a
round of golf, circa 1950s
St. Charles Archives

Dedicated

to

Shirley Lush

(1924 - 2015)

*A storied legend
The keeper of our stories*

CONTENTS

Dedication	6
Preface	9
Chapter 1: Starting from Scratch	13
Chapter 2: Lost & Found	43
Chapter 3: Thoroughly Modern.	53
Chapter 4: Ties That Bind	65
Chapter 5: A Season of Firsts	75
Appendices & Sources	87
Appendix A: Name Key for 1926 Photo	88
Appendix B: Isa Beairsto Golf Hall of Fame Story	90
Appendix C: Mauriel Rogers Golf Hall of Fame Story	91
Sources	92
Acknowledgements	95

Preface

The rich history of the St. Charles Country Club is on display for all to see in the photographs, paintings, plaques, trophies, vintage golf clubs, and artifacts lining the foyer, hallways, dining and meeting rooms of its clubhouse. Its past has been compiled in two books: one, a small blue book named *St. Charles Country Club, 1905-1965*; the other, a coffee table book titled *St. Charles Country Club: A Centennial History, 2004*. The anniversary book tells the stories of some of its members, including a few noteworthy women. Listings in the back of the book name presidents, captains, and champions of Club, provincial, and national tournaments. The book is comprehensive, but still, there are stories waiting to be told.

One is the story about the first decades of the St. Charles ladies' section. In the early years of the Club there are only hints that women even golfed at St. Charles. Nonetheless, the 1905 and 1906 minutes of the Board of Governors name well over 100 women as Lady Associate Members of the Club. Who were they? The presidents roster of the ladies' section begins thirty-two years after the Club opened. Who organized the activities of the women in those early years? There are minutes and records of the women's executive that begin in 1960. What happened before then? There are names of champions. What did they look like? There are women's faces in photographs. Who were they? There are questions and the questions generate more questions.

Thankfully, long-time member and Club historian Shirley Lush left behind scrapbooks bursting with newspaper clippings about the ladies' section, some dating back to the 1930s. From them we learn about tournaments, champions and presidents. Shirley summarized highlights and taped them into one of her scrapbooks. One of her notations stands out: "In 1937 a newspaper social note identified Mrs. E.E. Henderson as President of the Ladies' Section." This, it seems was the source of information about the first known ladies' section president.

Shirley's note sparked an "archeological dig" for more information in the newspaper archives. The search began with a hunt for the names of early ladies' section presidents on newspaperarchive.com, but it resulted in a trove of articles about St. Charles, golf in Winnipeg, and women golfers at St. Charles. In the long forgotten pages of the *Free Press* and *Tribune* were an impressive number of short weekly clips highlighting upcoming or past events at all the local clubs. Plus, there were lengthy articles covering major tournaments with full listings of draws and often hole-by-hole descriptions of the leaders' games. This explosion of information, sometimes accompanied by photographs, fueled further research. And there was much more. Particularly relevant information was found on the websites of the Manitoba Historical Society and the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame which holds the *Canadian Golfer* journal.

The stories of the women of St. Charles in its first decades suddenly sprang to life. We discover that, although the ladies' executive started small in 1914, it soon became organized and progressive; associating itself with provincial and national women's golf organizations. In the world of golf, St. Charles women made headlines again and again, their names and faces becoming familiar in the local press. Apparently, from the earliest years of the Club's history its women were indeed alive and well. Their stories were just waiting to be found.



Woman & dog at the 1922 Manitoba
Ladies' Golf Championship.
St. Charles Archives

Note: The newspaper archives include newspapers from around the world, covering over four centuries of time. Two Winnipeg newspapers in the archives are the *Manitoba Free Press* which in 1931 became the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Winnipeg Evening Tribune* which eventually became the *Winnipeg Tribune*. In this book they are simply sited as the *Free Press* and *Tribune*.

The background of the image is a repeating pattern of interlocking diamonds. The diamonds are in two shades of teal: a darker, forest green and a lighter, seafoam green. They are arranged in a grid-like fashion, creating a textured, quilted effect.

Our St. Charles Stories . . .



Chapter 1

STARTING FROM SCRATCH

The Beginnings of the St. Charles Ladies' Section



Post card (1909)
of the first
St. Charles
clubhouse
built in 1905.
Archives of Manitoba

The sport was in its dawning days in Manitoba when the inaugural game of golf was played on the cow pasture-turned-golf course at the St. Charles Country Club on July 1, 1905. And yet, back in the 16th century, golf was enjoyed by Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, in her childhood and beyond. Centuries elapsed before the sport seeped into Canadian society. This is the story of the women of St. Charles in the early 20th century who started in the sport of golf from scratch (pardon the pun).

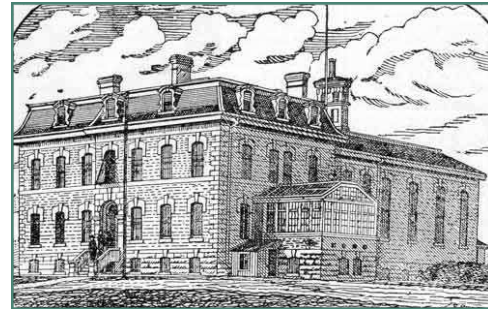
Before There was a St. Charles Country Club

Golf has been played on the links of St. Andrews, Scotland since the 1400s. With a long and rich heritage of golf it is no surprise that Canada's earliest golfers were transplanted Scotsmen who brought their passions and skills to our country. So it was with Scottish born Alexander Dennistoun who led the forces to found the Royal Montreal Golf Club in 1873, the first golf club in North America. Nine years later the club was home to the earliest ladies' section in Canada and in 1901, the site of the first Canadian National Ladies' Championship.

The first golf course west of Ontario had no regal designation but there was a Montreal connection. Samuel Bedson was born there. Bedson was a colourful character, a sports enthusiast, and more significantly for Manitoba, in 1877 when the Stony Mountain Penitentiary was established, he became its first warden. His belief in keeping prisoners out of mischief led to the construction of sports amenities such as a curling rink, a race track, and a nine-hole golf course – the first one in the province. Conveniently, the first tee box was located opposite the warden's residence. When the course opened in 1889, Bedson was in the foursome playing the first round.

Stony Mountain became a popular destination for more than just prisoners. But unfortunately, the golf course didn't last long. Shortly after Bedson passed away in 1891, the course followed suit.

The Winnipeg Golf Club was the first golf club in Winnipeg, opening in Norwood in 1894. The first president was Mr. William B. Scarth. He was said to have assumed the position rather reluctantly as he didn't know the details of the game. But he wasn't alone. Most of the other members of the executive were in the same predicament.



Stony Mountain Penitentiary –
site of Manitoba's first golf course.
Archives of Manitoba

Nevertheless, by the time the Club opened in Norwood on July 21, 1894, membership was at 73, with one third being women. On opening day of the nine-hole course, the Club president's daughter was given the honour of striking the first ball off the tee. Bursting with pride – or trembling with trepidation – Miss Scarth stepped up to the small mound of sand which served as the tee in those days, and hit the ball. She then went on to play a round of golf accompanied by Club treasurer, Mr. D. Simpson. It would appear that Miss Scarth was the first woman to play a round on Winnipeg's first golf course!

The Debut



"Tale of frocks and femininity"
Vanity Fair, 1906.
Wikimedia Commons

The St. Charles clubhouse was still under construction on July 1, 1905 when the Club held its course opening. The "rough and ready" fairways laid out earlier that year by prolific golf course architect, Tom Bendelow, were played for the first time. There were no females on the Club roster then so we don't know if any women were invited to golf that day. But women were present, in all their finery, sipping tea at five o'clock on the grounds of the Club along with the men.

Things were about to change for women at St. Charles. In September of 1905 the Board of Governors elected the first four women as Lady Associate Members of the Club. In the minutes of September 1905:

"RESOLVED that Shareholders and Associate members send in the names of ladies in their families as specified in the By-Laws, who wish to become Lady Associate Members of the club."

"RESOLVED that the fee for the current year be fixed to \$12.50 for Shareholder and Associate Members and \$3.50 for lady associate members."

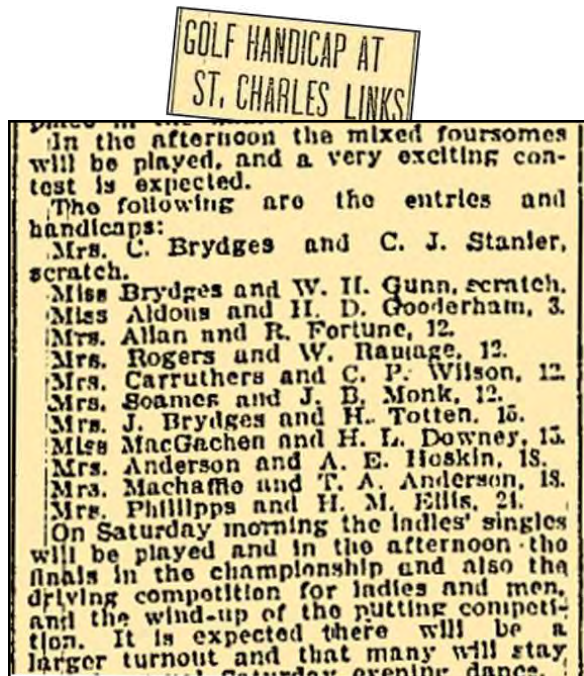


This book contains the earliest
Board of Governors minutes,
dating from 1904 – 1910.
St. Charles Archives

On September 29, 1905 the first four women were named to the Club roster:

"Miss Doyle, Miss Thom, Miss McArthur, Miss Dalton were elected Associate Lady Members."

The following year, on May 17, 1906, another 131 women (the mothers, wives and daughters of shareholders) were added to the roster. There was to be no limit on the number of lady members admitted to the Club and women were free to golf at any time except on Saturday afternoons between two and six. Suddenly the club had a sizable boost in its membership. The question is, how many of them could actually golf?



The pairings for the first mixed foursomes match.

Free Press May 25, 1906

One week after being elected as Lady Associate Members the "debutantes" made their appearance at a weekend Club event. Twelve were selected to play in a match of mixed foursomes on a Friday afternoon following an earlier men's competition. We don't know how the women were chosen but speculate that few had much experience in the game. No handicaps were given for the women while in contrast, the men's handicaps were all listed, ranging from scratch to 21. The following day there were more male and female competitions with a dance ending the evening. This, it appears, was the kick-start to women's golf at St. Charles.

In the two years that followed there was scant mention of women in the Board minutes, or elsewhere for that matter. We read that women were involved in decorating the original clubhouse. The 1907 Board minutes include a note of thanks to Mrs. S.P. Clarke and Mrs. G.A. Carruthers for their valuable services in decorating and furnishing the clubhouse. About how the women learned to golf, how they organized themselves, or how they played, is not known.

Of note, six years later, women were again called on for their decorating know-how. The 1913 minutes reflect that a committee of ladies appointed by the Building Committee were enlisted to furnish the new (third) clubhouse, the second one – like its predecessor – having burned to the ground (this time only three months after opening!). Their recommendation that the Hudson’s Bay Co. be given the contract was heeded by the board.



Right: The cover of *Woman's Magazine*,
May 1905.
Wikimedia Commons

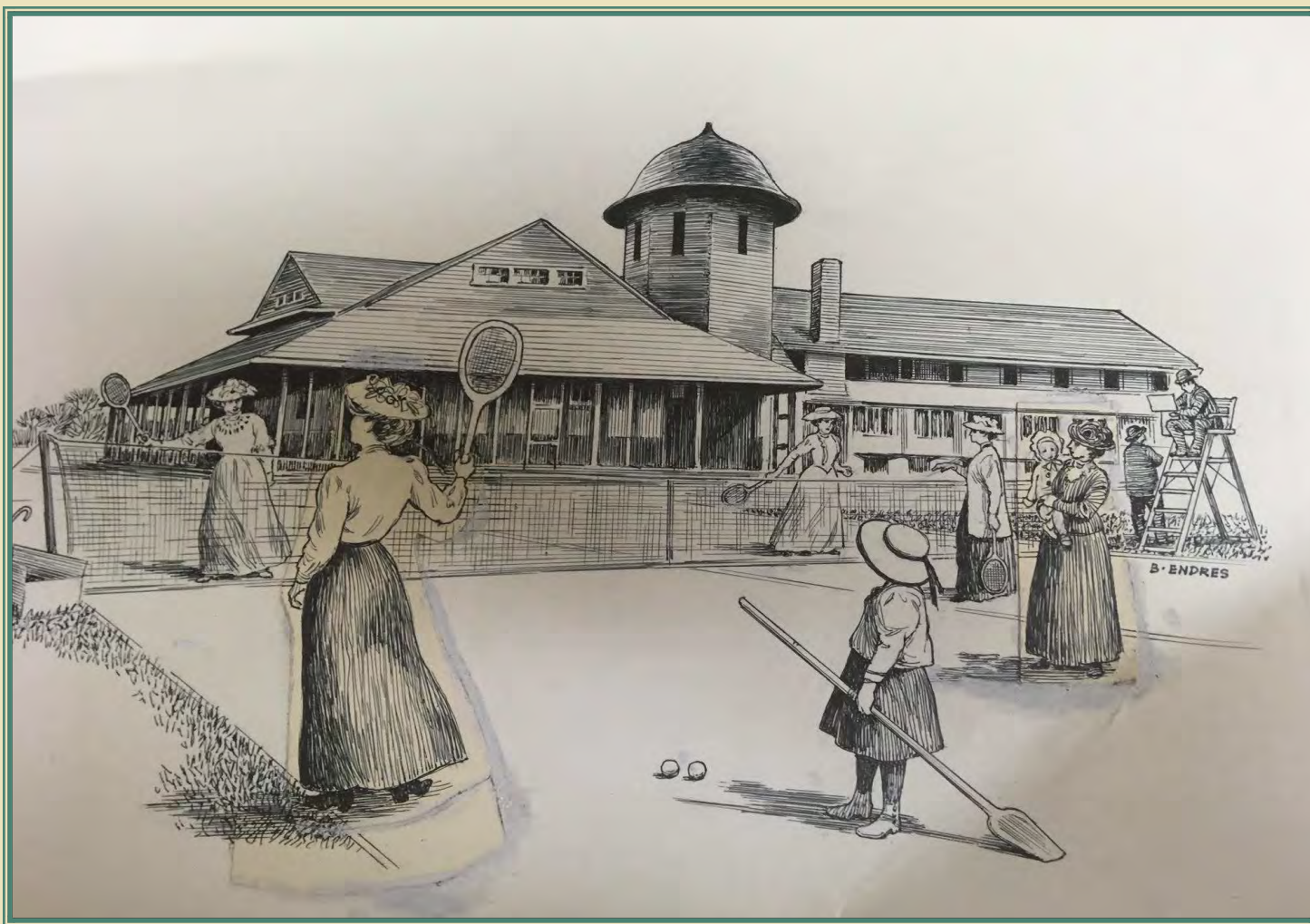


The entrance hall of the St. Charles clubhouse.
Free Press October 7, 1905

The Original 1905 Clubhouse

The clubhouse was described in detail in the October 7, 1905 issue of the *Free Press* as a “large structure of the quaint old English architectural design.” Detailing some of the interior spaces:

“The main entrance leads to a large hall, which is for the general use of ladies and gentlemen . . . The furnishings consist of broad natural oak settees, and chairs with maroon leather cushions. There are also a number of wicker chairs and several small tables for tea parties . . . Adjoining it in the main building is the dining room with a seating capacity for 100 guests. . . In the east wing is a spacious and bright ladies’ sitting room and at the rear of this is the gentleman’s reading and smoking room, well furnished and having a representative list of current periodicals and newspapers. Opening off the reading or lounging room, as it may be called, is the gentlemen’s card room, furnished with convenient tables.



Women and girls on the tennis court with the first St. Charles clubhouse in the background.
By Barbara Cook Endres
St. Charles Archives

Who were these women, the earliest female members of St. Charles? They were the wives, mothers and daughters of a cross section of the Winnipeg establishment in the early 20th century. They were listed in the minutes of the Board of Governors by their last names along with their husbands' initials . . . Mrs. F.S. Andrews, Mrs. W. H. Gardner, Mrs. H.B. Shaw, and so on. In the case of single women, they were usually listed as 'Miss' along with their last names. We only learn a few tidbits about these women if their husbands were later designated as Memorable Manitobans by the Manitoba Historical Society, in which case we may discover their first names and how many children they had.

These women at the turn of the 20th century, were born of the Victorian legacy, expected to support the endeavours of their husband, raise a family, and maintain a well-kept household. Leisure activities were usually traditional pastimes such as reading, embroidery, music, and handicrafts. It wasn't until the late 19th century that middle-class women were encouraged to participate in sports such as horse riding, rowing, skating, badminton, lawn tennis, and golf – activities that were considered graceful. Images such as the Gibson Girl in popular magazines enticed women to move beyond their traditional realms.



A ladies' golf outfit:
The Golf Girl
By H.C. Christy, 1906.
Wikimedia Commons

Want to be a Gibson Girl?

The alluring Gibson Girl appeared in popular publications like *Life* magazine at the turn of the 20th century. She was tall, with an hourglass figure and bouffant hair, always perfectly dressed, refined, and intelligent. Furthermore, she was sporty, engaged in horse riding, motoring, cycling, or golfing. She was also entirely a figment of the imagination of artist Charles Gibson.



The Gibson Girl.
Wikimedia Commons

For women entering sports it meant adjustments in ways we might not even contemplate. The local press tried to be helpful. One local newspaper ran an editorial meant to outline aspects of the game for the uninitiated. It addressed the proper garb and accessories required by golfers. Hairdos for ladies, for example, should be “dressed a la pompadour with a bun, which strikes us as very appropriate.” Celebrated American golfer of the early 20th century, Glenna Collett in her book *Ladies in the Rough* urged women to, “Cut off our hair to keep the flying ringlets from bothering us while we putt; train our muscles to obey the brain’s behest.”



Refreshments on the Fairway

The Clubhouse at St. Charles Country Club was burned down during the winter. This was a group in the spring, before the second clubhouse was built. That building was also later burned down.

The St. Charles clubhouse burned down on Good Friday, March 24, 1910. With no clubhouse to provide services, golfers provided their own refreshments. The women knew just how to deal with that!

Women featured in these photographs:
Mrs. Mildred (R.M.) Dennistoun, Miss Wilson,
Mrs. Leslie, Mrs. Irene Brydges, Mrs. J. R.
Jones, Mrs. Machaffie.

Photographs from the Dennistoun Collection
Archives of Manitoba



Waiting their turn on the first tee box.



Staving off hunger pangs with a hearty lunch on the third tee box,
followed by a swig of birdy juice?

Gaining Traction

In the second decade of the century the profile of the women of St. Charles began to take shape as we learn more about them from the press and the minutes of the Board of Governors. However, sometimes more questions are raised and our imaginations are left to fill in the gaps.

For example, on January 28, 1910, the Board of Governors proposed “. . . the following programme of expenditures for the improvements of the grounds and greens be recommended: Ladies' Golf Course \$1000,” topping the list. We don't know why it was felt that women should have their own course but in the end, the notion fizzled, presumably due to budgetary constraints.

When the Winnipeg newspapers began to increase their reporting of local women's golf we read in the *Free Press* that in May of 1910, inter-club matches between the women of St. Charles and the Winnipeg Golf Club were introduced. The first one was played at St. Charles and won by Winnipeg; the second one was played at the Winnipeg club in Norwood and won by St. Charles. The third and final match was held in September at St. Charles. According to the September 9, 1910 *Free Press*, “after a close contest the Country ‘Clubites’ were successful by three points.”



Four golfers at St. Charles, 1910.
L-R: Miss Wilson, Mrs. Leslie, Mildred Dennistoun & Irene Brydges. The streetcar in the background transported passengers from Portage Avenue to the Club.

Archives of Manitoba

Ladies Golf Clubs?

KARL KEFFER

Professional and Clubmaker
Royal Ottawa Golf Club
Ottawa, Canada.

Open Champion of Canada, also Open
Champion in 1909.

My Specialties:

CLEEKS	DRIVERS
MIDIRONS	BRASSIES
MASHIES	SPOONS
PUTTERS	DREADNOUGHTS
NIBLICKS	CADDY BAGS
JIGGERS	GOLF BALLS
DRIVING MASHIES	GLOVES, SHOES
MASHIE IRONS	HATS, SWEATERS
MASHIE NIBLICKS	AND ALL
RAY MILLS PUTTERS	ACCESSORIES
BRAID MILLS PUTTERS	CLUBS, RIGHT
ALUMINIUM PUTTERS	AND LEFT
ALL IRONS HAND FORGED	HAND
ALL CLUBS HAND	AND IN
MADE	LADIES' WEIGHTS

One wonders . . . were there women's golf clubs in those early years of golf in Canada? The answer is yes. In Ottawa, golfer and club maker Karl Keffer, designed and produced sets of golf clubs for women. The above ad is from the first *Canadian Golfer* journal published in May 1915. In the very last line we see, Keffer made clubs in "ladies weights."

LADIES' GOLF AT ST. CHARLES CLUB

The qualifying round of the ladies' golf championships of the St. Charles Country club was played over the course of the club yesterday. There were 15 entries, and eight ladies qualified for the first flight. Miss Aldous headed the list, returning a score of 108 for the 18 holes. Mrs. I. Brydges, last year's champion, occupied third place. The draws for the first round in the two flights were made last night, and the ties will be played off on Sept. 6 and 7.

★ Scores—Miss Aldous, 108; Mrs. Vere Brown, 111; Mrs. I. Brydges, 112; Mrs. K. T. Allen, 118; Miss E. Wilson, 119; Mrs. R. D. Stratton, 120; Mrs. Gordon Mackenzie, 120; Miss Vere Brown, 136. These qualified for the first flight.

Mrs. W. C. Russell, 145; Mrs. Northwood, 145; Miss Macdonald, 148; Mrs. H. A. C. Manning, 149; Mrs. Mather, 158; Mrs. W. H. McMillan, —; qualified for second flight.

Scores of the women in a qualifying ladies' club championship.

Free Press September 6, 1912.



The Dingwall Shield bearing the name of Irene Brydges on the Ladies' Club Championship Trophy.

St. Charles Archives

The press would sometimes list the names of competitors along with their scores, giving us some idea of the level of play of the women at that time. Two articles from the *Tribune* and *Free Press* from 1911 and 1912 give us a sampling. In one, the "Ladies' Open Golf Handicap," the names of the 11 players and their gross scores were given, ranging from 109 – 128. In another competition, the "ladies' golf championships of St. Charles," the scores ranged from 108 to 168 among 15 players listed (left). We see that women did not find golf an easy sport to learn.



Unknown golfer ready for a game circa 1906.

Wikimedia Commons

The year 1912 was a milestone for the women of St. Charles when the Club held its first Ladies' Club Championship. Mrs. Charles (Irene) Brydges won the championship. Six years previously Irene had played in the opening mixed foursome. Coincidentally, that same year (1906), the first Men's Club Championship was held and the winner was none other than Irene's husband, Charles Brydges.

Irene Brydges went on to win the Dingwall Shield four more times. Surely, Irene was one of the women in those early years whose successes would begin to shine a light on the women of St. Charles.

The start of the new decade brought about another major event for women's golf when in September, 1910 the *Free Press* reported that St. Charles hosted a three-day provincial championship. This was the pre-cursor to the Manitoba Women's Amateur Championship which formally began under the auspices of the Manitoba Ladies' Golf Union, formed in 1922.

A 1914 *Free Press* article announcing the same event, again played at St. Charles, reported that the event "is open to all lady golfers resident in western Canada." At the time it meant the championship was open to the seven courses in Manitoba and eight courses in the other western provinces.

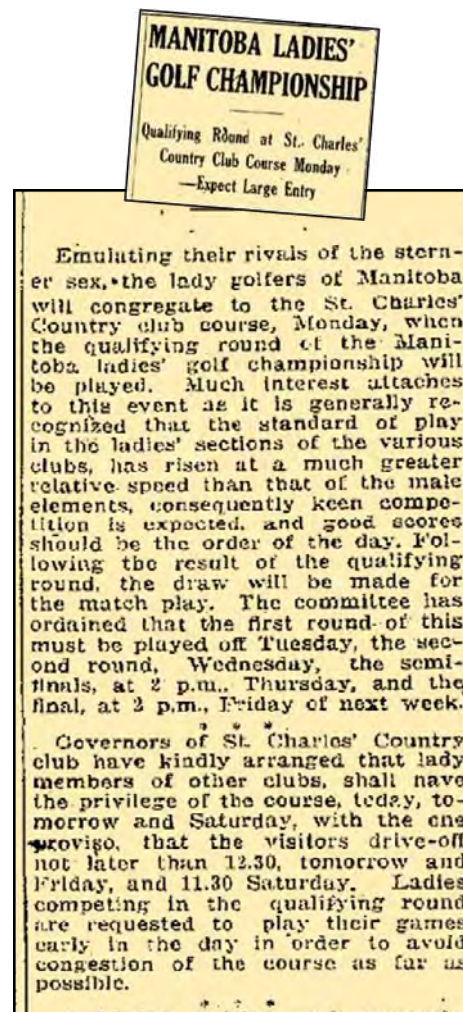
The event was presumably held annually although during the war years reporting on golf was somewhat sketchy and we don't know for certain. However, going forward there was mention of qualifying rounds for the provincial championship in a 1917 report and more details in a 1919 report (right) which spelled out the timelines for when matches needed to be completed.

It seems that women's competitive golf had stepped up a notch from earlier in the decade. The *Free Press* reported that there was much interest in the last provincial championship of the decade attributing it to the following:

"... it is generally recognized that the standard of play in the ladies' sections of the various clubs has risen at a much greater relative speed than that of the male elements, consequently keen competition is expected, and good scores should be the order of the day."



Ladies Open Golf
Championship of Manitoba.
Free Press September 9, 1910



"Good scores should be
the order of the day."
Free Press September 4, 1919

1919.
Manitoba Golf Championships.



Sixteen women participating in the 1919 Ladies' Open Golf Championship of Manitoba.
Third from left is Titeen Laird.

St. Charles Archives

The press predicted a large entry in the qualifying round of the 1919 championship. However the photograph on the preceding page of the event depicts only 16 women. We don't know if this is the full contingent or merely a sampling.

"Presented by Mrs. Douglas Laird" is written in the lower right corner of the cardboard frame of the photograph taken at the 1919 Ladies' Open Golf Championship of Manitoba. Mrs. Douglas (Titeen) Laird is shown with other contenders in the tournament.

There is no doubt that at the time Titeen was one of St. Charles's leading female golfers and a role model for others in the early years of the Club. In 1898 Titeen had won her first gold cup as an 11 year old in Morristown, New Jersey so she came to the club with a substantial golfing history. (As an aside, according to the Morristown County Historical Society, the Morris County Golf Club, established in 1894 was known nationally for being operated only by women.)

Titeen was born into a family in which both parents were golfers and she learned the game as a child. In 1909 she married Douglas Laird who was a pioneer of St. Charles and who, in 1905, was said to be the first person to score a hole-in-one at the Club.

While the first mention of Titeen in the local press was at the Manitoba Open Championship in 1910, it certainly wasn't the last. Her name appeared time and again as winner of the Club, City and District, and provincial championships. Her stardom went beyond golf. She was also a leader on the St. Charles ladies' executive where as early as 1915 she was secretary, later a captain, and eventually in 1938 she became president of the ladies' section.



Titeen Laird elected as president of the St. Charles ladies' section for 1938.

Free Press, October 2, 1937

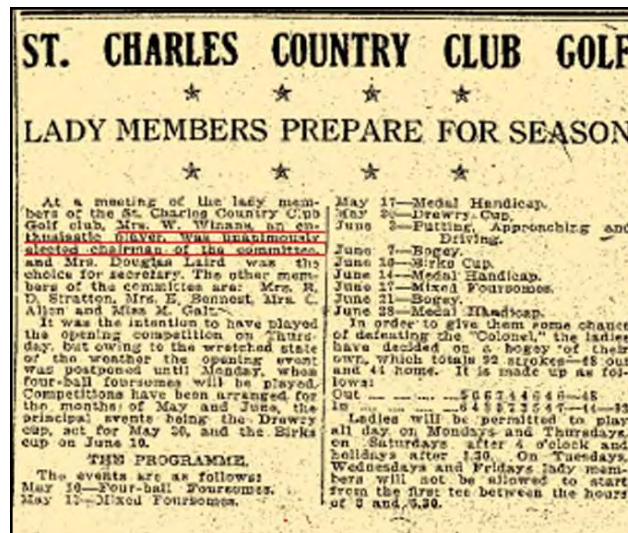
Taking Care of Business



The year 1915 was ground-breaking for women at St. Charles when they took matters into their hands and elected their first executive. The year before, according to minutes, the Board of Governors had appointed Mrs. Vera Brown as chairman of the Ladies' Golf Committee and requested that she nominate four other members for the committee. That was a start, but 1915 was different.

The May 8, 1915 *Free Press* reported: "At a meeting of lady members of the St. Charles Country Club, Mrs. W. Winaam, an enthusiastic golfer, was unanimously elected chairman of the committee."

The women then proceeded to elect a secretary and four committee members. At the same time, they announced The Programme – an ambitious schedule of women's golf events for May and June (right).



Mrs. W. Winaam is the first elected chairman of the Women's Committee.

Free Press May 8, 1915

THE PROGRAMME

May and June, 1915

May 19 - Four-ball Tournament
 May 17 - Mixed Foursomes
 May 17 - Medal Handicap
 May 20 - Drewry Cup
 May 26 - Putting, Approaching, and Driving
 June 7 - Bogey
 June 10 - Birks Cup
 June 14 - Medal Handicap
 June 17 - Mixed Foursomes
 June 21 - Bogey
 June 28 - Medal Handicap



World War I poster,
 "Canada and the Call"
 created by James Macdonald, 1914.
 Wikimedia Commons

The Great War (World War I) was in its third year when the women of the Club demonstrated that their organizational abilities went beyond organizing golf competitions. The June 15, 1917 *Free Press* reported that a fundraiser – a patriotic bridge, luncheon, and golf tournament – was held by the women of St. Charles for over 300 women. Golf included an “eighteen hole golf match” and a “ten hole match,” as well as a putting competition.

According to the report:

“Golf was played during the morning after which luncheon was served in the main dining room, which was artistically decorated with cut flowers and plants. Many of those who had secured tables for bridge motored out to the luncheon, then enjoying a few ‘rubbers’ during the afternoon.”

At 5 o’clock prizes donated by members were distributed to the bridge and golf competition winners. The \$125 (equivalent to \$2000 in 2023) raised was donated to *Secours National*, a relief organization that distributed humanitarian aid to civilians in German-occupied Belgium. The event, said the *Free Press*, was a “successful enterprise.”

The exact nature of what the women were intended to be doing in their committee came into question. A letter dated October 6, 1924 in the minutes of the Board of Governors raised a query about the mandate of the Women’s Committee. The Honorary Secretary of the Board wrote to the Secretary of the Ladies Committee saying:

“. . . that although the By-laws of the Club do not provide for a Ladies' Committee but some years ago the Board of Governors consented to the formation of a Committee of Ladies to deal with tournaments and competitions in which the Lady Associate Members participated and this arrangement is still in effect . . .”

The letter is interesting because over time the Women's Committee seemed to have broadened its scope. By 1923, press reports inform us that the women's executive was well organized and annual meetings were held. Meetings included the reading of reports and handing out of prizes to winners of competitions.

Furthermore, in the '20s an increasing number and diversity of offices emerged on the women's executive. For example, in 1923 there were "recording and corresponding secretaries" plus a captain; in 1924, treasurer and press secretary positions were added; and in 1925, a representative to the Canadian Ladies Golf Union was elected.

And so, it seems, the female membership of the club had morphed into a ladies' section with a full fledged executive. There was no going back. The genie was out of the bottle!

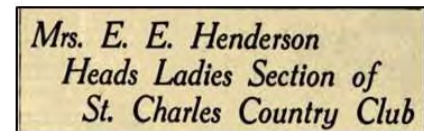


Tribune
March 19, 1924

Free Press
October 12, 1927



Free Press
October 24, 1928



Tribune
March 4, 1937

Newspaper headlines announcing election of heads of the St. Charles ladies' section.

Forgotten Faces





from the 1922 Manitoba Ladies' Golf Championship

The Big Boom

“The years spanning 1920 to 1935 have been described as a 'golden age' for Canadian women in sport,” according to the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame website. In the world of golf, forces aligned to set it ablaze among the women of St. Charles, as it did elsewhere. In 1923 the *Tribune* declared that golf in Winnipeg was in its boom years:

“Nothing in Canada’s annals of sport can begin to compare with the amazing spread of golf as a popular summer pastime among Winnipeggers . . . It is the premier sport of its citizens.”

As reported in the July 7, 1923 issue of the *Tribune* there were 6,379 golfers in active play in Winnipeg's eleven private and two municipal courses. Of the over 1300 women at private clubs, the largest group of women at any club in the city was that from St. Charles (right).

134 Ladies Enter
Title Golf Event

Manitoba Championship Con-
tests Start Monday at St.
Charles Country Club

Right: Data from
Tribune July 7, 1923.

Left: *Headlines from
Tribune*, August 31,
1923.

13 Courses Kept Busy
By Local Devotees

GOLF CLUB MEMBERSHIP IN WINNIPEG, 1923			
CLUB	YEAR STARTED	MEN	WOMEN
Winnipeg	1894	330	60
St. Charles	1905	425	355
Norwood	1914	240	200
Elmhurst	1914	250	85
Pine Ridge	1914	180	50
Alcrest (Charleswood)	1918	145	65
Southwood	1918	314	167
Assiniboine	1920	180	148
Canoe Club	1920	250	150
*Municipal (Kildonan)	1921	2090	
*Royaumont (Glendale)	1922	987	
Windsor Park	1922	175	
Deer Lodge	1922	193	46
*Denotes public golf courses			

In the summer of '23, there were 134 women entered in the Manitoba Ladies' Golf Championship held at St. Charles. Having the largest contingent of women in the city we assume that a substantial number of women from the Club competed in the tournament.

Listed among the entrants from St. Charles were women like Irene Brydges, Titeen Laird, Mrs. Ralph (Isa) Beairsto and Mrs. K.C. (Jean) Allen. These women excelled at golf and would have been an inspiration to their peers as time and again they made headlines on the sports pages of the *Free Press* and *Tribune*. By the mid '20s a fifth dynamo came along by the name of Mrs. Gordon (Margaret) Konantz. All were trailblazers who would make names for themselves at St. Charles and beyond.

With the increasing number of women golfing, the Board put limitations on when and how women were allowed to play. In January 1921, by-law 34 restricted the playing times for women:

"...on Monday and Thursday, ladies can play at all hours on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday they may not start playing between 2:00 and 5:00 PM; on Saturday they may not start to play between 12:00 and 4:00 PM; and on Sunday and holidays they may not start playing before 3:00 PM."

Furthermore the by-law said:

"On all days ladies commencing play after 12 noon shall start from first tee only and unless they are holding their place on the course they shall allow all faster playing matches to go through upon request."

LADIES' RECORD AT ST. CHARLES.
 Mrs. R. K. Beairsto, present holder of the ladies' city and district championship, broke the ladies' record of the St. Charles Country club course, when playing with Mrs. K. C. Allen last week, with a very fine card of 78.
 Playing flawless golf on the first half of the course, Mrs. Beairsto was out in 38, which is only one stroke over the men's par figures. An unfortunate seven on the long 14th was the only time that she made a mistake of any kind, but at that she was home in 40. She missed a par three at the short 11th, but made up for that by getting her par three at the 15th and a birdie three at the 17th.
 The details of Mrs. Beairsto's splendid round were:
 Out 445584445---38
 In 445573435---10

Isa Beairsto sets new course record for women "with a very fine card of 78."

Free Press August 25, 1925



Out of the sand trap, circa 1923

Wikimedia Commons

As women increased in the Club membership numbers, they also improved their game. One such example came in the summer of 1925 when Isa Beairsto set a new ladies' course record when, playing with Jean Allen, she scored a 78.

The Board amended its by-laws once again, this time bestowing special privileges on women with a low handicap. In 1928 they changed a sub-section for Lady Associate Members whose handicaps were under 11, although a fee was added:

"An additional fee of \$35.00 shall entitle the Lady Associate Member to play golf on all days and all times, except between the hours of 11:30 AM and 4:00 PM on Saturdays, and not until 2:30 PM on Sundays and holidays."

THE WINNIPEG FREE PRESS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1926
Eastern Lady Golf Stars Plan to Invade Winnipeg

In 1926 St. Charles made its first appearance on the national stage by hosting the Canadian Ladies' Close Championship. The Club was showcased for Canadian eyes while at the same time its members had the opportunity to watch some of the finest women golfers from across the country.

According to a February *Free Press* article the Canadian Ladies' Golf Union declared it would spare no effort to have a large number of eastern players attend. Indeed, top golfers descended on Winnipeg from cities from Montreal to Vancouver.

Not the least of these players was Ada Mackenzie who, having already won two Canadian Women's Open Amateur championships, came away with another win. Ada was the finest Canadian female golfer of her time. According to Canadian Sports Hall of Fame virtual museum:

"Canadian women first took to the fairway in the early 1890s, playing golf as 'Lady Associates' of men's clubs. However, their competitive efforts were often trivialized until Ada Mackenzie won the Canadian Open Championships and Close Championships five times each between 1919 and 1931. A true pioneer, her success defied convention in an era when 'women were supposed to know more about a cook stove' than a golf club."

The December issue of the 1926 *Canadian Golfer* illustrates this tension between the "cook stove" and the "golf club" philosophies. The cover depicts a male and female golfer on either side of the journal logo. On the inside however, is a poem that decries the intrusion of females in a male domain. It is titled *To the Hordes of Women who are Invading Men's Golf Clubs*.

Free Press
 February 16, 1926

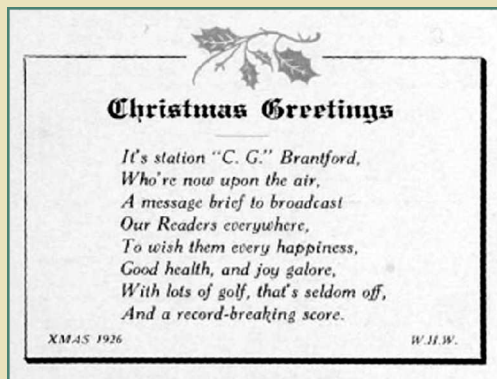
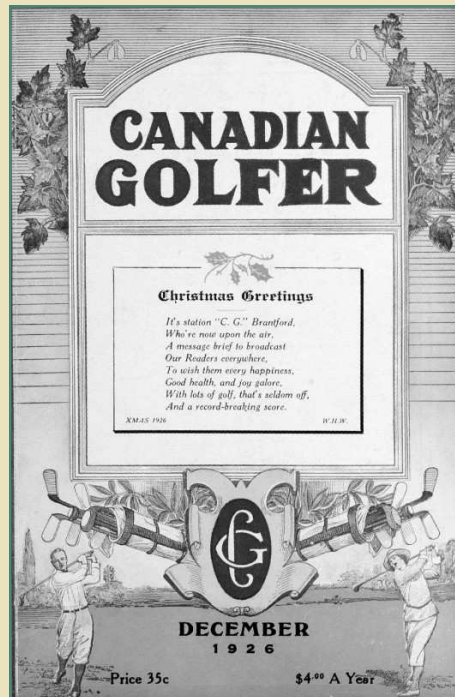


Ada Mackenzie, age 18, at the
 1919 Canadian Ladies' Open Championship
Golfing Herald

IN JEST OR IN LAMENT?

Right: The cover of the December 1926 Canadian Golfer issue depicting a male and a female golfer side-by-side, each in a full golf swing.

Below: Christmas poem on the journal cover.



TO THE HORDE OF WOMEN WHO ARE INVADING MEN'S GOLF CLUBS

O Eve, whate'er it was of old—
Those days of which our parents
speak—
When women did what they were told,
And stayed at home six days a week,
The wheel has turned full circle now,
And freedom with both hands you
seize,
And mocking model German frau,
You do as you please.

By force majeure you've opened wide
The portals of each male retreat.
Our clubs where once you were denied,
Now echo to your dainty feet.
Into our sports you've fought your
way,
Our billiards rooms, our courts, our
rinks;
But humble, suppliant, may I pray?—
Leave us our links.

Your golfing prowess, who would crab
it?
Your skill with putter, spoon, or
jigger?
Not I, for one, a noted rabbit,
A pulling, slicing, fozzling figure.
But, all the more, I look askance
At golfing Eve, and rightly jib,
She does not give a chap a chance
To curse *ad lib.*"

On the inside of the journal is this eyebrow-raising poem. Is the author lamenting the loss of male domains? Or is he having a little fun with it? Does he believe there is no valid reason to exclude women from golfing? Or is there a more serious concern? These questions are left for the reader to ponder.

Stepping Out

Winnipeg Women Golfers
Number 2,500, Estimates
By Club Officials Show

Free Press
July 30, 1932



Chic St. Charles golfer,
Barbara Northwood.
Free Press June 9, 1934

The 1932 St. Charles annual report listed the ladies' membership at 346. This, at a time when there were an estimated 2500 women golfers in Winnipeg according to a 1932 *Free Press* report. The article opened with:

"Fore,' and the loud click of a golf ball is heard, as Madame Winnipeg drives from the tee of one of the sixteen or more local golf courses and proceeds on her round, playing par golf and enjoying the thrill of the perfect putt, or well directed mashie (5 iron) shot, that only the heart of a golfer knows."

The article went on to describe the Winnipeg women's golf scene and concluded with a description of the contemporary woman golfer:

"Now, behold a sleeveless frock, matching tones in socks and beret, with the smartest of bright colored scarf or sweater decks the fair golfer, whose game has improved as her frocks have become more sensible and attractive. And then, pride of the 1932 golfing miss, behold her healthy coat of suntan!"

The 1930s saw a continuance of inter-club and City and District tournaments. In 1934 the Tribune Trophy Playdown was introduced when the newspaper donated a trophy. Provincially, the Manitoba Amateur championship continued. In 1933 there was a repeat of the Canadian Women's Close championship at St. Charles, and, again at the same venue, in 1937 the first Canadian Women's Open was held. Happily, St. Charles own Mrs. Johnnie (Mauriel) Rogers, was triumphant as winner.

The year 1932 saw the first of its kind tournament ever staged in Winnipeg, sponsored by the Manitoba branch of the Canadian Ladies' Golf Union. It was a three day international team match between eight Canadians and an equal number of American women from Illinois, Kansas, and Minnesota. The local team included one woman from Regina, two from other Winnipeg clubs, and five St. Charles players – Isa Beairsto, Jean Allen, Margaret Konantz, Titeen Laird and Lois McLaren.

When the tournament ended, St. Charles hosted a tea. Sadly, the prizes went to the American visitors.

Still, it is remarkable to think that less than 30 years after the women of St. Charles first stepped onto the fairway, they were playing in an international competition with their Canadian compatriots.

* * *

In honor of the players in the ladies' international golf tournament, which has been held this week, the ladies' section of St. Charles Country club entertained at luncheon, Friday afternoon, at St. Charles Country club. A lovely arrangement of peonies and Sweet Williams centred the table, at which covers were laid for twenty guests. Following luncheon Mrs. Iman Salberg, president of the Manitoba branch of the Canadian Ladies' Golf Union, presented the tournament prizes.

* * *

Left: Ladies' section entertains at St. Charles in honour of the players in the international tournament.

Free Press
June 25, 1932

AMERICAN LADIES ARRIVE TONIGHT

Eight American women golfers will arrive in Winnipeg tonight to prepare for the international team match with Manitoba stars Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of this week. The event will be played over Niakwa Country club, Pine Ridge and St. Charles Country club, and starts at the first mentioned course Wednesday morning at 9.30 o'clock.

Left: Announcing the arrival of the American competitors.

Free Press June 20, 1932

Below: The Canadian team.

Free Press June 23, 1932

Playing in International Tourney



The special international golf tournament arranged by the Manitoba branch, Canadian Ladies' Golf Union, opened yesterday morning over the Niakwa Country club course. Picture shows the Canadian team, which will oppose the United States team. From left to right, back row: Mrs. K. C. Allen, Miss Lois McLaren, Mrs. R. Rideout (Regina), Mrs. George Koester, Mrs. R. K. Beairsto. Sitting: Mrs. B. P. Pellenz, Mrs. Douglas Laird, and Mrs. Gordon Konantz.

Building the Future

In the early years of St. Charles, “Children, too, had a somewhat ambiguous place at the Country Club . . . The wants of youth, like the wants of women, would be treated with circumspection.” This, from the St. Charles 100 year anniversary book.

Admittedly, in those first decades of the Club the number of junior members was small. In 1919 there were only eight juniors listed in the annual report, which by 1932, had quadrupled to 82.

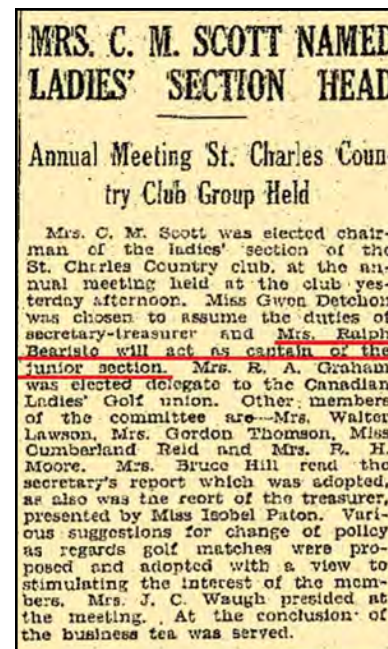
How many of these juniors were girls is not known. But by 1927, from newspaper reports of St. Charles ladies' section annual meetings, the women deemed that someone was required to have a person responsible for the juniors. Isa Bearsto was designated as captain of the junior section for the 1928 season. As winner of ladies' Club, City and District, and Manitoba championships Isa would set a fine example of the potential for girls in the sport of golf.



Left: Isa Bearsto, winner of the 1931 Manitoba Ladies' Golf Championship.
Tribune August 25, 1931

We don't know if Isa had an influence, but that same year (1928) there was a change in the St. Charles House Rule that applied to girls between the ages of 12 and 18. The regulation gave daughters permission to use the golf links on the days and at the times in the manner provided for junior sons. The stipulation was that this rule applied only during the times when women were allowed to play.

The women of St. Charles saw fit to instill in the girls some fundamentals of the culture of the Club. A 1932 *Tribune* article on the September trophy presentation reported: “A tea table centred with Michaelmas daisies was presided over by Mrs. A. Nares and Mrs. J.C. Green Armytage. A group of junior members assisted.”



"Mrs. Ralph Bearsto will act as captain of the junior section,"

Free Press October 12, 1927



The St. Charles clubhouse
designed by
George Northwood.
Watercolour by
Cyril Henry Barraud, 1914.
St. Charles Archives

Like Isa Beairsto, Mrs. George (Gussie) Northwood had an interest in the development of junior girls at St. Charles. Augusta Simson was 18 years old when she married George Northwood in 1906. They had four daughters – Mary (b. 1907), Margaret (b. 1909), Rosamund (b. 1911), and Barbara (b. 1915).

All the Northwoods were avid golfers. Furthermore, both George and Gussie made significant contributions to the Club. George was the architect of the St. Charles clubhouse which opened in 1914 and has stood for over a century.

Gussie built for the future in a less tangible way. Gussie Northwood was a leader. She served on the St. Charles ladies' executive in the early '20s and, in 1934, she was elected president of the ladies' section. She assumed this position again in 1939. Mary, the eldest of her daughters would follow in her mother's footsteps when in 1959, as Mary Bonnycastle, she also became president of the ladies section.

In a 1912 *Free Press* article Gussie appears as a young golfer in the qualifying round in the ladies' golf championships at St. Charles. She evidently became a distinguished golfer. In the 1920s and '30s she re-appears in a variety of competitions: in Club events, in the Manitoba Ladies' Golf Championship (1923), and in an inter-club match (1936). In the '30s she won the Ladies' Club Championship three times.

Gussie was remembered by Club historian Jack Moore in the St. Charles anniversary book, as a keen promoter of junior girls' golf. We can speculate this interest lay in her own passion for the sport combined with raising four daughters.

Gussie would enter tournaments with one or more of her daughters. For example, in 1925 she entered the Rogers trophy with her eldest daughter, 18 year old Mary. Three years later she entered the Konantz trophy, this time with Mary and 19 year old Margaret. Other times just the sisters would compete in the same tournament. One press report in 1931 mentions three sisters – Mary, age 24, Rosamund, age 20, and Barbara, age 16, entered in the Manitoba Ladies' Golf Championship.

ST. CHARLES LADIES

The St. Charles Country club ladies will inaugurate their season's fixture card today, when they commence play for the Konantz trophy. The next playdown will be staged May 28, when the first round in the Eclectic competition will be started. The following is today's draw: Mrs. R. M. Simpson, bye; Miss Eva Powley, bye; Mrs. Gordon Thomson vs. Mrs. Douglas Laird; Mrs. W. C. Russell vs. Miss Mary Northwood; Mrs. W. Anderson vs. Mrs. Ralph Beairsto; Miss Margot Northwood vs. Mrs. R. A. Graham; Mrs. Norman Leach vs. Mrs. R. G. Rogers; Mrs. F. McGratten vs. Mrs. Gerald Rutherford; Mrs. Reginald Lawson, bye; Mrs. Price Montague vs. Miss Lois McLaren; Miss Gwen Delton vs. Mrs. Fred Hart; Mrs. C. C. Balfour vs. Mrs. Gerald Aldous; Mrs. A. E. Snoll vs. Mrs. Gordon Konantz; Mrs. George Northwood vs. Mrs. Athol McBean; Mrs. H. H. Fleming, bye; Mrs. K. C. Allen vs. Mrs. G. C. Griffin.

Gussie along with two daughters, Mary and Margot all played in the Konantz trophy competition in 1928.

Free Press
May 14, 1928

Barbara would be the winningest golfer of the four Northwood sisters. Barbara appeared as an 18 year old in a 1933 *Tribune* article as contender in the City and District championship, a competition she won in 1936. As a competitive golfer in the 1930s Barbara was featured in the press on many occasions. In 1935 she won the inter-club championship in team play. And, the press sang her praises again when in the 1936 Tribune Trophy competition she scored an 82.

When Barbara passed away in Mill Valley, California in 2009, her golfing past was remembered in her obituary: “She was a top junior golfer before winning the Winnipeg championship in 1936 and later played with the Manitoba team in the national championships.”

Gussie Northwood, Isa Beirsto and women like them created an environment in which young golfers could develop and excel. Their belief in nurturing up-and-coming players was vital to developing future generations of golfers at St. Charles.



Barbara Northwood (right) at the 1938 Manitoba Ladies' Championship giving winner Mauriel Rogers a hug.

Newspaper clipping from a
Shirley Lush scrapbook



Mothers & daughters at the 1922 MB Ladies' Golf Championship.
St. Charles Archives

From fledgling to flourishing. Beginning with the four young women who became Associate Lady Members of St. Charles in 1905, the women of the Club learned to golf, took risks, broke through stereotypes, and blossomed into a cohesive ladies' section. These pioneers laid the foundation for the ladies' section we take for granted today.



Chapter 2

LOST & FOUND

The Story of the Early Presidents of the St. Charles Ladies' Section

Mrs. E.E. Henderson is the first name on the roster of presidents of the St. Charles ladies' section. The year – 1937. One wonders . . . were there no presidents before 1937? Was there no executive? Who was responsible for organizing events for women at the Club?

Unfortunately, any ladies' section minutes and reports that could answer these questions are nowhere to be found. However, thanks to online newspaper archives and the Manitoba Historical Society website, the story of a lost past can be told, at least in part.



Mrs. E.E. Henderson
President of the
St. Charles Ladies' Section
Tribune, March 4, 1937

THE EVOLUTION OF THE ST. CHARLES LADIES' SECTION

Women have been a part of the St. Charles scene from its very beginning. Four women at first, followed shortly thereafter by over a 100 women, and by the 1920s there were more than 300 women on the club roster. Clearly leadership was required; an executive was needed to orchestrate the golfing and social affairs for the women of St. Charles. The Board of Governors thought so too.

The Beginning

In 1914 the Board appointed Mrs. Vera Brown as Chairman of a ladies' golf committee. This information from the minutes of the Board of Governors:

"The matter of appointment of the Ladies' Golf Committee was then taken up (and it was moved and seconded) that Mrs. Vera Brown be requested to act as Chairman of the Committee and that she also be asked to nominate from the Lady Members of the Club, the four remaining members of the committee."

From notes by Shirley Lush we learn that Vera was granted \$75 for prizes for the season and advised that a trophy was available for the Ladies' Club Championship.

In the following year, the election of Mrs. W. Winaam was historic. The women of the Club then had an autonomous executive to govern their affairs.

Eight years passed with no known press reports of meetings of the women of St. Charles. But then, on February 21, 1923, the *Tribune* reported on an annual meeting of the St. Charles ladies' section at the Manitoba Club (opposite). The word "annual" suggests that such assemblies had occurred in past years.

Going forward there were years without reports of meetings. Fortunately there were a few newspaper articles that described the nature of annual meetings held in the 1920s and '30s.



Label on the first Minute Book
of the Board of Governors.
St. Charles Archives

The Annual Meetings

MRS. WILLIAM ROBINSON was elected president of the Women's committee of the St. Charles Country club at the annual meeting held Tuesday afternoon at the Manitoba club, when plans were discussed for the coming golf season. Mrs. Isaac Pitblado presided at the meeting and the president of the club, Mr. R. H. Baird spoke a few words. Mrs. Douglas Laird was chosen captain; recording and corresponding secretaries, Miss Margaret Gordon and Miss Nan Miller; committee, Mrs. Athol McBean, Mrs. George Northwood, Mrs. C. M. Scott and Mrs. L. P. Mason.

At the tea hour, Mrs. Fletcher Andrews and Mrs. R. H. Baird presided. The assembly included: Mrs. H. D. Gooderham, Mrs. H. Deaver, Mrs. R. M. Simpson, Mrs. H. T. Jeffery, Mrs. J. Y. Reid, Mrs. Geoffrey Griffin, Mrs. J. Stanley Hough, Mrs. Charles F. Pentland, Mrs. J. R. Jones, Mrs. Luke, Mrs. H. N. Baird, Miss Mollie McDermid, Mrs. Henry Detchéon, Miss Margaret Gordon, Mrs. Douglas Laird, Miss Gwen Detchéon, Mrs. Bruce Hill, Mrs. F. J. Hart, Mrs. C. M. Scott, Miss Nan Miller, Mrs. P. J. Montague, Mrs. T. Cuthbert Anderson, Mrs. David Drehmer, Mrs. J. C. Gordon, Mrs. Elswood Richards, Mrs. R. M. Simpson, Mrs. R. A. C. Manning, Mrs. F. Groff, Mrs. E. W. Mermagen and Miss Florence Windatt.

First documented report of an annual meeting of the St. Charles ladies' section.

Tribune February 21, 1923

Annual meetings of the ladies' section in the early decades of the Club were held at either St. Charles or the Manitoba Club. The location appears to have depended on the timing of the meetings. February and March annual meetings were held at the Manitoba Club, likely because of the seasonal nature of when the clubhouse would have been open for business.

Meetings included reports by the president and secretary, and often the awarding of prizes and trophies to the winners of competitions in the past year. The president or other representative of the Board of Governors participated in the meetings, but this practice seemed to end by 1927. When business was over a formal tea followed, with two women presiding. The tables were decorated with floral arrangements of either tulips or asters, depending on the season in which the meeting was held.

The Executive

In the early years, the body governing the women of St. Charles was called the "Ladies' Committee" or the "Women's Committee." In 1915 the executive included a chairman, secretary, and a committee of four women; by 1937 evolving into a president, secretary and a committee of eight women. In 1923 a golf captain was elected and in 1924 there was a press secretary to deal with reporters who covered the ladies' golfing and social events. There is also mention in 1924 that one of the executive would serve as representative to the Canadian Ladies' Golf Union. And so we learn that the women of St. Charles were evidently part of the country's golf organization.



The Tea Tradition



The first afternoon tea at St. Charles was served on July 1, 1905 on the grounds of the Club after the inaugural game of golf was played. In fact, virtually every occasion described in the Winnipeg newspapers about women's events at St. Charles in the first decades of the 20th century involved the serving of afternoon tea; from tea following the annual meetings of the ladies' section to tea at trophy presentation ceremonies.

The tradition of afternoon tea is a legacy of Victorian England although tea-drinking became popular in Britain in the 17th century. The Duchess of Bedford, one of Queen Victoria's ladies-in-waiting, is said to have started the ritual of afternoon tea sometime around 1840. At that time the wealthier classes in British society were having dinner at about 9:00 PM, with lunch at around midday. The duchess, describing a "sinking feeling" at about 5:00 PM, would request that tea, bread and butter, and cake be brought to her room. A new custom was born, and it soon spread across Britain as a fashionable convention.

Tea drinking for the wealthy meant fine porcelain teacups, decorative teapots, mahogany tea caddies, silver tea urns, exquisite table linens and personalized tea blends. From the British Museum website:

"The afternoon tea table was one of great opulence and refinement, a place to express your identity, interests and taste. . . . Afternoon tea allowed women to entertain mixed company at home without their husbands and was therefore liberating, both socially and practically. . . . it was a place where women took centre stage and were able to exchange ideas, opinions and a healthy dose of gossip."

Traditionally the tea menu included sweets and savouries. Served to this day are delicacies such as cucumber sandwiches, finger sandwiches with assorted fillings, savory tarts and pastries, a variety of fancy cakes, scones and, of course, tea.

Re-visiting a Tradition

In 1994, nine decades after the first afternoon tea at St. Charles Country Club, Shirley Lush hosted the inaugural Christmas Tea. These women poured tea that day . . .



Shirley Lush (1924 – 2015)
President in 1985
with
Donna Gould
President in 1994-95



Marg Turner
President in 1982



Jessie Lang
(1916 – 2018)
President in 1965-66



Daphne Lord
First Lady Captain
in 1985
(1927 – 2020)



Inez Trueman
(1917 – 2015)
President in 1961-62



THE PRESIDENTS



Above: Catherine Robinson
Tribune August 25, 1923

Below: Kathleen Fletcher
Tribune March 19, 1924



1914 – Vera Brown

Notes about Vera appear earlier.

1915 – Mrs. W. Winaam

Notes about Mrs. Winaam appear earlier.

1923 – Catherine Robinson

Catherine Robinson was 58 years old when she was elected president of the Women's Committee in February, 1923. She was born Catherine Ann Easton in 1865 and married William Robinson in 1886. Their three children were William, Kathleen, and Frederick. Catherine's husband was a successful businessman and the first man to run steamboats on Lake Winnipeg. He and Catherine enjoyed golf as members of St. Charles.

1924 – Kathleen Fletcher

Kathleen Johnson was born in 1875. She married Robert Fletcher in 1900 with whom she had two sons: James Gordon and Robert Vernon. They lived at 644 Gertrude Avenue. Robert worked as a civil servant for the Provincial Government, Department of Education, rising to become Deputy Minister of Education, the position from which he eventually retired. Kathleen was 49 years old when in March 1924 she became president of the Women's Section.

1925 – Evelyn Rogers

Evelyn Goodfellow Maw was born in 1888, marrying Robert Rogers in 1911. Their four children were Robert, William, Stanley, and Mary. Evelyn's husband was an insurance executive who belonged to many social and sports clubs, St. Charles being one of them. At 37, his wife Evelyn became Chairman of the Ladies' Committee.

1926 – Maude Waugh

Maude Moore was born in Vancouver and married John Waugh in 1897. They had three daughters. John was a financial agent who formed his own firm. He was a member of St. Charles, as was Maude.

1927 – Hattie Scott

Hattie was born in 1877, the daughter of George and Elizabeth Crowe. Her father was an early member of St. Charles, but there is no information about Hattie's husband C.M. Scott. Hattie would have been 50 years old when she became Chairman of the ladies' section at its annual meeting in October 1926.

1929 – Margaret Konantz

Margaret McTavish Rogers was born in 1899 to Robert and Edith Rogers. She went to school in Winnipeg followed by private girls boarding schools in Toronto and in New York. In 1920 her mother became the first female (and first Métis) MLA to sit in the Manitoba Legislature.

Margaret married Gordon Konantz, a lumber merchant who was involved in a number of sporting organizations, including St. Charles. When they married in 1922 Margaret had to vow to remain out of public life, which she did . . . until Gordon died in 1954. They had three children: Barbara in 1923, William in 1925, and Gordon in 1932.



Margaret Konantz
Tribune August 28, 1934

In 1929, with two young children at home, 30 year old Margaret, at the time President of the Junior League of Winnipeg, also became Chairman of the St. Charles ladies' section. As if that was not enough, that year Margaret won the Manitoba Women's Amateur Golf Championship.

1932 – Gertrude Moore

Gertrude Isabel Marshall married Ralph Moore, vice president and general manager of National Grain Elevators. Their two children were John and Robert. From the early '20s to the mid '40s they lived at 187 Montrose. The Moore House is designated as a historic site by the Manitoba Historical Society. Gertrude served her first term as president of the ladies' section in 1932, a position she would assume again in 1951.

1933 – Augusta (Gussie) Northwood

Augusta Campion "Gussie" Simson was born in 1888 in Ontario. Gussie would have been 45 years old when she became Chairman of the ladies' section in March 1933, a position she assumed once more six years later. Details of her story appear in Chapter 1.

1934 & 1935 – Mrs. E.E. Henderson

Mrs. E.E. Henderson was elected Chairman of the ladies' section in March of 1934 and served a second term the following year. We don't know details about her, such as her first name, age, husband, or children, but there are a multitude of references to her in both local newspapers. They tell of her social engagements, community activities, trips to the Lake of the Woods and Toronto, and of Club related events.



Mrs. E.E. Henderson
Tribune May 26, 1934

1936 – Mrs. S.M. Connolly

In September, 1935 Mrs. S.M. Connolly was elected president of the ladies' section. We know little of her personal life except that her husband Samuel was manager of the Lombard Street Branch of the Bank of Montreal. He died on November 5, 1935 at age 58. This means his wife would have served her presidency as a new widow.



Left: Mrs. S.M. Connolly
Tribune
September 27, 1935

Right: Report of the election of Mrs. E.E. Henderson, succeeding Mrs. S. M. Connolly at the March 1937 AGM of the St. Charles ladies' section.

Free Press March 6, 1937

1937 – Mrs. E.E. Henderson

In March 1937 Mrs. E.E. Henderson was elected president of the ladies' section for a third term. Her election brings us back to where we began, with her name at the top of the current roster of presidents.

Ladies of St. Charles Name New Officers

Mrs. E. E. Henderson was elected president of the Ladies section of St. Charles Country club at the annual meeting in the Manitoba club. Reports showed St. Charles players have taken a prominent part in golf events, Miss Barbara Northwood, champion, winning the City and District championship and both A and B teams winning the inter-club team matches. Two members of the club were members of the Manitoba team sent to compete in Montreal during the Canadian championship games. These games this season will be held in Winnipeg, and it is expected a large number of eastern players will take part.

Mrs. S. M. Connolly, president, was chairman, and in her report, paid a tribute to the officers and members of committees for their work. She urged members to make early donations to the "team fund," which last season was \$110 as St. Charles club quota. This fund carries the expense of sending a team from each province to the championship games, and funds are pooled.

Miss Mac Hayden, secretary-treasurer, announced total receipts to cover prize cost and fees was \$205.62, entirely donated by the lady members. She reviewed the golf events of the season, which she said had a gratifying entry in all competitions.

Mrs. Douglas Laird, chairman of the nominating committee, which was composed of Mrs. H. H. Fleming, Mrs. R. B. Graham, Mrs. Harry Deaver, Mrs. N. R. DesBrisay, Mrs. George Koester, presented the report, which was adopted by the meeting. Officers for the season 1937 are: President, Mrs. Henderson; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. C. L. McLaughlin; committee, Mrs. John Rogers, Mrs. George Northwood, Mrs. Stewart Searle, Mrs. H. H. Fleming, Mrs. W. S. Anderson, Mrs. George Heffelsinger, Mrs. N. R. DesBrisay and Miss Betty Allen.

An invitation was received from the Ladies Golf union, London, England, to an invitation meeting to be held as near Coronation date as possible, at Beaconsfield club, Buckinghamshire, Eng. It is expected many prominent lady golfers from the colonies and Britain will be present, and the committee is planning particularly to have members of touring teams. Announcement was made that on payment of a small fee members of affiliated clubs attending the Coronation may become members for a six months period of the L.G.U., London, club.

Introducing . . . Vera Brown and Evelyn Rogers; Catherine Robinson and Kathleen Fletcher; Margaret Konantz and Maude Waugh; Hattie Scott, Gussie Northwood and Gertrude Moore; Mmes. Winnam, Connolly and Henderson.

These women laid the foundation for future generations of presidents of the St. Charles ladies' section. The "finding" of early presidents along with a formalized and organized ladies' section reveals a history that extends well into the very beginnings of the Club. For the women of St. Charles the discovery means that their roots run deeper and stronger than we knew.



Chapter 3

THOROUGHLY MODERN

A Story of Women's Golfwear in the Roaring Twenties



Women in fashionable
golf dresses, 1929.
Wikimedia Commons

Family photographs. We all have them. Stashed away in our attics, basements and closets we find the oldest – envelopes of negatives, black and white snapshots, formal portraits – often of people we can't identify. And if we can, we know little about them. It's their clothing, however, that tells us a bit of their story.

Tucked away in a cupboard in the second floor storage room at St. Charles is an enormous album and in it is a unusually-shaped (16" X 4") photograph. This striking portrayal of a large gathering of women taken on the grounds of the Club in 1922 is featured on the cover of this book. The image inspired this story about several golf personalities of that era and about their attire.

Dressed for the Nines



Manitoba Ladies' Golf Championship
St. Charles Country Club 1922

PHOTO BY BOUSWAUGH-TAYLOR
St. Charles Archives

The scene above depicts women gathered for the 1922 Manitoba Ladies' Golf Championship. In it are 105 women, two small children and, huddled under a blanket on the far right, is a dog. We have glimpses of their apparel and wonder, did they golf in those outfits? We see a profusion of broad-brimmed sun hats and peering out from under them, unfamiliar faces. We ask, who were they?

Of all the women in the photograph, only one is recognizable. She is sitting on the ground, left of centre; one of the few women sporting an in vogue headband. Her name is Titeen Laird. We know it is her because she appears in a newspaper article from the *Tribune* a year later (opposite), wearing the same outfit. The caption under that picture reads: "Mrs. Douglas Laird, captain of the St. Charles Ladies' Golf Club and also Manitoba secretary of the Canadian Ladies' Golf Union." So we learn that a year after the Manitoba Ladies' Golf Association is formed in 1922, Titeen represented the province in the Canadian association.



Close-up of Titeen Laird
seated in the front row in the
group of women above.

Titeen (Augustine) Laird (1887 – 1980) is a St. Charles notable. We discover in the anniversary book, *One Hundred Years at St. Charles Country Club* that, in 1960, she was the first woman in the Club's history to become an Honourary Life Member.

Titeen became a member at the Club as a newly-wed in 1909. Having golfed since she was eight years old, Titeen soon achieved acclaim at both St. Charles and provincially. She won the St. Charles Ladies Club Championship in 1917 and 1925, and is listed as the first winner of the Manitoba Ladies' Amateur Championship on the Golf Manitoba website. She won the title again in 1923, 1932, and 1935. She went on to become president of the ladies' section in 1938, 1952 and 1953.

In 1958, 60 years after winning her first gold cup at age 11, Titeen was honoured with a diamond jubilee celebration at the Club. The event was marked with guests appearing in period costumes and a photo album to commemorate the celebration. In one of Shirley Lush's scrapbooks, we find a newspaper article that tells more of the Titeen Laird story.



"Club Captain" Titeen.
Tribune August 4, 1923



Titeen and daughter
featured on a social page.
Free Press October 10, 1925

Diamond Jubilee Marked On Links

A two-ball foursome was played at St. Charles Country Club today to celebrate Mrs. Douglas Laird's diamond jubilee of golf.

It was in 1898 that she won her first golf cup, when she was 11 years old. That was in Morristown, N.J. She had been playing since she was eight, the enthusiastic daughter of enthusiastic golfing parents. She's been a member of the St. Charles club since 1909. Pine Ridge also claims her as a member.

At St. Charles the senior memorial cup for men's competition is named for her husband, the late Douglas Laird.

Two weeks ago the junior cup for women was named the Mrs. Douglas Laird trophy.

Mrs. Laird was so good she played with her husband — only woman among three men. Women must be good to be included in their husband's games, she admits.

Her three daughters play but never made the game in championship play. Now a small grandson is following in her footsteps.

In 1910 Mrs. Laird won her first Manitoba championship, in 1935 her last.

The game has become easier, mechanically, in 60 years, she says: matched sets and a lighter ball have improved it. The old gutta percha ball, if you missed, could nearly break a woman's wrist. Long skirts and high laced shoes were worn, too.

Mrs. Laird has one club in her golf bag she's used for 50 years. She still likes a caddy, instead of dragging her own bag.

Left: Diamond Jubilee celebration of Titeen Laird's winning her first gold cup. "Mrs. Laird was so good she played with her husband - the only woman among three men. Women must be good to be included in their husband's game, she admits."

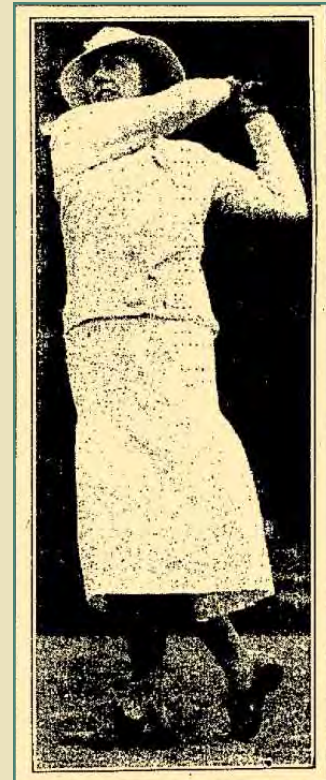
Newspaper article dated September 1958 in a Shirley Lush scrapbook

Wardrobe in Transition

During Titeen Laird's seventy-some years as a golfer, she experienced the transition in women's golf attire from tight-laced Victoriana in the 1890s to sporty Jamaica shorts in the 1960s. This 1958 photo was taken at Titeen's Diamond Jubilee Celebration of winning her first gold cup in a 1898.



At the Manitoba Ladies' Golf Championship in 1935, Titeen looked polished as she took a swing in her "business suit" style golf outfit.



Left: In the trap is Mrs. J. H. Forrester with Mrs. G. H. Ryan and Janet Carruthers looking on.

Newspaper clipping from a Shirley Lush scrapbook

Above: Titeen Laird.

Free Press, August 24 1935

At the 1958 celebration guests wore outfits that reflected the changing trends in feminine apparel over the decades.



Adding to St. Charles fashion lore . . .

In 1962 the Board of Governors agreed that women could wear shorts. But, they were to be no shorter than three inches above the knee. Long-time St. Charles member Signy Hansen remembers her days as a junior in the '60s when, on Friday nights after golf, on the verandah, Mrs. Laird would approach teenage girls wearing shorts with a measuring stick.

She would ask them to kneel as she measured to make sure the shorts were of appropriate length. There was Titeen, adapting to yet another transition.



Top: Titeen Laird (centre) with Mrs. Mar Hazelwood (left) and Margaret Konantz (right).

Bottom (L-R): Jesse Hansen (Lang), Helen Connacher, Lois Ryan, Titeen Laird, Peg Van Vliet, Jean Osler, and Amy Nettlefield.
St. Charles Archives

The Curtailment of Habiliments

At the time of the Manitoba Ladies' Golf Championship in 1922, the top female golfer in the U.S. was Glenna Collett. Glenna's writing about women's wear on the golf course and how it changed during in the '20s is compelling because it is contemporaneous with the women in the earlier photograph.

Glenna contends that women's performance in sports improved as their sportswear became less restrictive. In her words, their progress "kept pace with her curtailment in habiliments (clothing)." She maintains that although men will always be superior in sports because of their size and strength, forces in the early 20th century such as women's right to suffrage and their increased accessibility to sports in general were reflected in the shift in attitudes toward women. Changes in their wardrobe accompanied these societal changes.

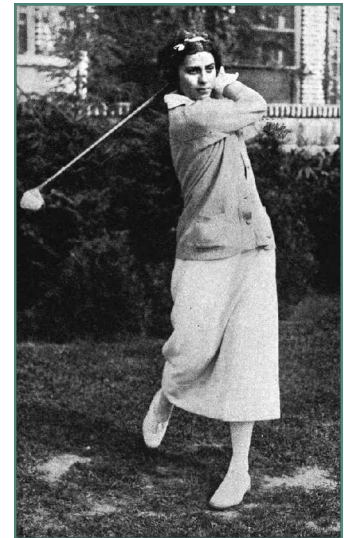
Glenna Collett (1903 – 1989) was an American golfer whom the American Hall of Fame calls the greatest female golfer of her day. In 1922 she claimed her first of six U.S. championships, dominating American women's golf in that decade. In 1928, at the ripe age of 25, she published a book, *Ladies in the Rough*, in which she offers interesting insights into being a female golfer in the 1920s.

Glenna claims that plus fours, popular men's sportswear of the day, were ideally suited for playing golf. She maintains however, that plus fours were simply not flattering on women's bodies. So it was just as well if they didn't wear them. After all, she says, "the resulting snickers at the women in knickers would so disconcert them that they would lose whatever gain in athletic efficiency the innovation would bring."



According to Glenna, a woman cares as much about her appearance as she does about her score. Thoroughly modern thinking!

Unknown golfers with the men wearing plus fours. 1920s.
Wikimedia Commons



Above: Glenna Collett, 1926.
Wikimedia Commons

Below: *Ladies in the Rough*,
1928 by Glenna Collett,



The Influencers

We think of the Roaring Twenties as the era of the flappers – young women with new ideas breaking away from the Victorian image of womanhood. Gone were the tight corsets, long straight skirts, blouses with high collars, and layers of clothing that restricted movement. Clothing was trimmed down and lightened, hems were shortened, and movement was made easier. Flappers created what many considered the “modern” woman.

A leading fashion influencer of the time was Coco Chanel (1883 – 1971). She popularized a sporty, casual chic. Along with the ever popular “little black dress” and other fashion statements, Coco was instrumental in introducing loose fitting clothing, two-tone shoes, and belts with everything.

Someone who took Chanel's fashion savvy to the golf course was one of St. Charles own. Margaret Konantz (1899 – 1967) is a well-known name to women at the Club. A trophy in her name was initiated in 1968, a year after her death, and the competition is being played at the Club to this day.

On the Manitoba Historical Society website she is listed as a Memorable Manitoban. Margaret attained acclaim for her charitable and political activities. She volunteered extensively for UNICEF, travelling around the world on behalf of the organization. In 1963 she became the first woman from Manitoba to be elected to the House of Commons. Posthumously she was awarded the Order of the British Empire for her volunteer work during World War II.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, she first became president of the ladies’ section in 1929, a position she assumed again in 1957 and 1958. Margaret was an avid golfer and won the Manitoba Amateur Championship in 1929 and 1934. In 1935 she was elected president of the Manitoba chapter of the Canadian Ladies’ Golf Union. Clearly a woman of influence.



A thoroughly modern Margaret who would do Coco Chanel proud.
St. Charles Archives



Someone who popularized the flapper look on the golf course was an American golfer named Edith Cummings Munson (1889 – 1984). Edith was renowned as a socialite who loved parties, dancing and drinking. She attained fame in the U.S. following her 1923 victory in the U.S. Women's Amateur Championship. She became known as "The Fairway Flapper" and is said to have inspired a character in *The Great Gatsby*. She was the first golfer, male or female, to appear on the cover of *Time* magazine.

Left: *Time* magazine featuring Edith Cummings, first golfer ever to appear on their cover. August 25, 1924.
Wikimedia Commons

Wardrobe Malfunction

Women's golfwear went through radical changes in the 1920s – by all accounts to considerable advantage. However, in the realm of golfing garb, another familiar name, Ada Mackenzie, has an unforgettable clothing story which throws this into question.

Ada Mackenzie (1891 – 1973) was the top female Canadian golfer in the 1920s. Her golfing achievements, described earlier, were many.

But, along with being a trailblazer in golf she was a pioneer in other ways. The *Golfing Herald* website gives a detailed account of Ada's life and her contributions to women's golf. Perhaps most notable was Ada founding her own golf club when she was unable to get weekend tee times at her club because



Ada Mackenzie at the Canadian Ladies' Close Championship held at St. Charles in 1926.
Wikimedia Commons

they were reserved for men only. In 1924 she opened her Ladies' Golf and Tennis Club of Toronto in Thornhill (north of Toronto). Only women were allowed to become members, and though men could play on the course, the most exclusive tee times were reserved for women.

A year after opening her course Ada played in the 1925 U.S. Women's Amateur Championship in St. Louis, Missouri at the St. Louis Country Club. She easily qualified for the knockout stage but in the Round of 16 she came up against none other than the great American golfer, Glenna Collett. The bout between the two women notoriously became known as "The Match." The following account is from an article in a 1926 *MacLean's* magazine.



It was a steaming hot day in St. Louis when Ada Mackenzie played Glenna Collett. Instead of her accustomed tweeds and spiked shoes, Ada wore a thin knitted suit and light, rubber-soled shoes. Ada started her game well and was leading, two up.

Suddenly, a blast of rain, wind and thunder shattered the calm on the course. Rain came down in torrents, soaking both players. But they played on! (Evidently thunder did not deter golfers in those days.)

Ada's knitted skirt, heavy with water, began to sag and to stretch until finally, it clung to her ankles. She tried hitching it up, but it continued to drag her down. As if that was not enough, the sleeves of her light coat drooped below her wrists. She rolled them up, but they slipped down, again and again. Her rubber soles wouldn't grip the drenched turf and so she sent for her hob-nailed shoes.

But the match went on and Ada lost the next three holes. Halves on the last two holes left Glenna one up and she won the competition. And so . . . a wardrobe failure cost Ada the U.S. Women's Amateur Championship.

Over the years, Ada admitted that her lack of preparedness against unseen circumstances constituted the greatest mistake of her golf career:

"It was an opportunity I may never get again and I wasted it through carelessness. I took chances with the elements I had no right to take. I learned my lesson and I will never play unprepared again."

The Aftermath

Mounted in a display case to the right of the fireplace in the foyer of the clubhouse is a photograph (opposite) of an assembly of women, also wearing sporty attire, this time posing in front of the clubhouse. The photograph was donated by the family of Titeen Laird and thankfully, someone numbered and identified the names of some of the women in the picture (see Appendix A: Name Key for 1926 Photo). From newspaper articles from that era we are able to associate some of the women named with clubs including Niakwa, Elmhurst, Southwood, Norwood, and most notably, Mississauga.

Hailing from Mississauga is Ada Mackenzie, who in this photograph is standing on the far right of the first row, leaning on a bench. She is sporting a light-coloured ensemble which is contrasted by a diagonally striped necktie. Her attire is identical to that worn in the photograph of her shown on page 60. In the earlier portrait she carries a slim pale golf bag with a dark band around the bottom. In the picture opposite, an identical looking bag lies in front of the women. All of this suggests that the photograph was taken at the Canadian Ladies' Close Championship held at St. Charles in September, 1926. And, it appears, the golf bag on the ground in the photograph below is that of the winner of that championship, Ada Mackenzie.

Until four years before her death in 1973, Ada Mackenzie went on to win championships and tournaments. She was inducted into the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame in 1971 at the Manitoba Club.

But again, there is more to Ada than her golfing feats. Five years after her soggy, calamitous loss to Glenna Collett in 1925, it comes as no surprise that the woman who founded a golf club because she couldn't get tee times, opened up her own woman's sportswear store, *Ada Mackenzie Ltd.* The store at 26 Bloor Street in Toronto catered to the needs of female sports enthusiasts. Ada imported quality clothes from Europe and even designed her own clothing – all fashionable and functional . . . of course. The shop operated for over 60 years before it closed in the '90s.



Brochure for Ada Mackenzie's Sports Wear Shop.
Golfing Herald



Canadian Ladies' Close Championship at St. Charles Country Club in 1926.

Titeen Laird, is standing in the front row, right of centre, wearing a dark coloured outfit and hat.

Winner Ada Mackenzie is leaning on a bench in the front row, far right, wearing a light coloured outfit and hat,.

St. Charles Archives

Fast forward to 2021. A young woman by the name of Mackenzie Knowles opens a shop selling fashionable golf apparel. She names her shop after her great-great-aunt, Ada Mackenzie. So nowadays, women who want thoroughly modern 21st century golf attire can head to *Ada's Golf Boutique* at 219-1000 King Street West in Toronto.



Chapter 4

TIES THAT BIND

Two Stories of Travelling Women

The story of St. Charles is one of associations with the Old Country – be they ancestors or professionals or competitions. For golfers the sport itself is where the connections are most apparent. Scotland is, after all, the birthplace of golf.

Featured in the anniversary book, *One Hundred Years at St. Charles Country Club*, are the men and women who shaped the Club's history. Two men personify the bonds between St. Charles and Britain. One is a surgeon-turned-golf architect born in Yorkshire, England. He is Alister MacKenzie, the designer of our north nine, the MacKenzie Nine. Another is a golfer and golf club maker who became a respected pro at the Club. He is Eric Bannister who was born on the Isle of Wight.

This is a story about two women from the 1920s and '30s who also embody the links between St. Charles and the Old Country. One is Jean Allen, a Ladies' Club Champion, who played in a top-tier British tournament. The other is Joyce Wethered, a world acclaimed British golfer, who played at St. Charles.



Jean Allen
Tribune,
June 19, 1923



Joyce Wethered
Free Press,
September 12, 1935

MRS. ALLEN GOES TO TROON

On May 15, 1925 the *Free Press* reported:

Mrs. C.K. [sic] Allen, of the St. Charles Country Club, Winnipeg, Canada's only representative in the British Ladies' Golf Championship tournament to be played here (Troon, Scotland) next week . . .

Who was this woman from Winnipeg who represented our country at this prestigious tournament?



Cartoon depiction of Alfred Andrews
Manitobans As We See 'Em, 1908 and 1909
Manitoba Historical Society website.

Jean (Mrs. K.C.) Allen
Tribune June 19, 1923



Jean Andrews Allen (1890 - 1976) was the eldest of four daughters born to Maude and Alfred Andrews of Winnipeg. According to the Manitoba Historical Society website, her father was a lawyer and politician; most notably, he was the Mayor of Winnipeg in 1898 and 1899.

Alfred was a member of St. Charles, as was his daughter Jean. Accompanying his distinguished résumé as a Memorable Manitoban on the historical society's website is a caricature (left) of Alfred wildly "whiffing" the ball sitting on the tee beside him!

Jean Andrews married Kenneth Carleton Allen, a Maritimer who moved to Winnipeg around 1910, where he became a member of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. They had one son, Carleton, who was born in 1916.

Jean made a name for herself as a golfer at St. Charles, winning the Ladies' Club Championship in 1921 and 1922. She also competed and won in the City and District championships. In 1927 Jean went on to win the Manitoba Women's Amateur Championship.

We don't know the circumstances that led Jean to entering in the British Ladies' Golf Championship in Troon, Scotland in the spring of 1925. We know there were family ties in Scotland, as her mother Maude was born there.

We also don't know what Jean knew about playing on a Scottish golf course or how she prepared for the competition. We can speculate that St. Charles golf pro, Eric Bannister, was a resource for her. He was a pro at St. Charles from 1921 until his death in 1947. He had experienced British courses, having himself played in the British Open in 1920.



Jean Allen
1927.

Tribune August 29, 1927

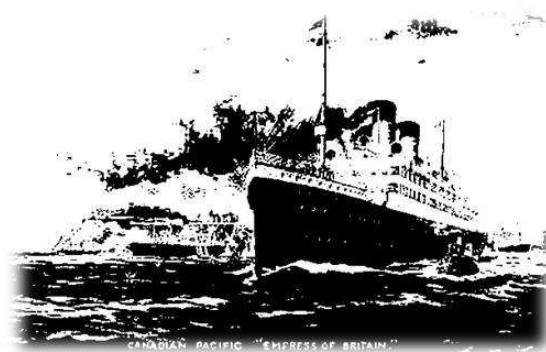


Glenna Collett
1924.

Wikimedia Commons

We have more information about another golfer who competed in the same British championship as Jean. In January 1925 the *Canadian Golfer* reported on the intention of Glenna Collett to compete in the British Championship. As the eminent American golfer she took her participation in the competition so seriously that, in preparation, Glenna was coached for two weeks at the St. Petersburg, Florida home of the British Open Champion Walter Hagen. After all, although some had attempted it, “so far no woman lady golfer, either Canadian or American, has ever made a showing in Great Britain,” reported the journal. Who knew, Glenna Collett could be the first!

Getting to Britain in the 1920s would have involved considerably more time than hopping on a plane and arriving at one's destination overnight as would be the case a century later. At that time it involved a trip of several days by train from Winnipeg to Quebec or other eastern Canadian seaport. This would be followed by 5 or 6 days on an ocean liner. Then, another journey by train to Troon, Scotland. No small feat!



Canadian Pacific “Empress of Britain”
a 1920s ocean liner.
[Wikimedia Commons](#)

Troon Golf Club, Scotland



Troon clubhouse built in 1886.
[Wikipedia](#)

Jean Allen was the only Canadian of the 92 entrants to play in the British Ladies’ Championship. We don’t know what it was like for her. But in *Ladies in the Rough*, Glenna Collett writes about playing at Troon, calling it “my first English invasion.” Glenna was struck by phenomena that were unique in her experience.

First, there was such a large number of women who were active in sports; many of the highest calibre. She notes that learning the sport as young girls, the majority of women were self-taught, making them “more self-reliant in all phases of the game.” Glenna comments on “how strict they are in England about being on time for the matches” and how, if you don’t show up when your name is called, you lose by default. She found the English gallery of spectators to be intensely caught up in the excitement of championship play. On the final day, for example, all the shops in the towns around Troon were closed and men and women alike flocked to the course for a “gala day.”

Glenna paints a picture of what Jean Allen would have faced. She concludes: “You see, a strange gallery in a new land has a tendency to take the wits away from one.”

Jean drew a bye in her first round and played her first match in the championship against Miss H.R. Ellison of Boston on May 19, 1925. She won! The following day however, she met her match in an English opponent, Mrs. Lionel Jackson of Chislehurst. She lost on the last hole.

The *Canadian Golfer* summation is that Mrs. W.K. [sic] Allen of Winnipeg, "did very well indeed in such high-class company." Jean Allen did St. Charles Country Club proud.

What happened to Glenna Collett? The *Canadian Golfer* offers this appraisal:

"Miss Golfing Queen Glenna Collett was possibly the best representative Uncle Sam ever sent over to try and lift the cup, but . . . She failed rather ignominiously because her 4 and 3 defeat at the hands of Miss Joyce Wethered was rather a withering one. . . There is not a question for an argument today about the supremacy in the feminine golfing world of Miss Wethered, who comes of a very fine old County family. She is the Golfing Queen."



Jean Allen at age 37
Free Press
September 3, 1927

The story of Jean Allen at St. Charles fades in the early 1930s. We learn from internet sources that her husband's work took him to Calgary and, in 1942, to Vancouver.

Sadly their son Carleton was a casualty of World War II, dying in France in 1944 at the age of 28. Jean's husband Kenneth passed away in Vancouver in 1956. Jean lived on to be 85 years old when she passed away in 1976.

Top right: "Canada's lone entrant . . . of St. Charles, Winnipeg, waged a successful battle . . ."

Free Press May 20, 1925

Bottom right: Glenna Collett defeated by Joyce Wethered "in one of the most thrilling games that has ever been played . . ."

Free Press May 21, 1925

MRS. ALLEN WINS IN BRITISH OPEN GOLF TOURNAMENT

(Associated Press Despatch.)

Troon, Scotland, May 19.—Canada's lone entrant in the British ladies' open golf championship, Mrs. K. C. Allen, of the St. Charles club, Winnipeg, this morning waged a successful battle by 2 and 1, against Miss H. R. Ellison, of Boston, and survived for the third round, which is slated for tomorrow. Mrs. Allen drew a bye in the first round played Monday.

Mrs. K. C. Allen Beaten on Last Hole in British Open

(Associated Press Cable.)

Troon, Scotland, May 20.—The number of contestants in the British ladies open golf championship has been whittled down to eight players, all of them belonging to the British Isles. None of the contenders from across the Atlantic was able to survive the third round. Mrs. K. C. Allen of the St. Charles club, Winnipeg, and Canada's solitary hope, succumbing this forenoon, as did Miss Glenna Collett, former United States champion. The latter was badly beaten by Miss Joyce Wethered, British titleholder by 4 up, in one of the most thrilling games that has ever been played, and a game that was featured by absolutely faultless golf on the part of Miss Wethered.

Close Game

Mrs. Allen of Winnipeg carried her losing match to the last cup, but here was bested by her English opponent, Mrs. Lionel Jackson of Chislehurst, one up.

MISS WETHERED COMES TO ST. CHARLES

Moving ahead 10 years from the 1925 British Ladies' Championship in Troon, the name Wethered appears in the Winnipeg press again. On September 11, 1935 the *Free Press* reported:

"The greatest golf attraction in years comes to Winnipeg Wednesday and will feature Miss Joyce Wethered, far-famed British player, in an exhibition match at St. Charles Country Club commencing at 2 p.m. Grouped in the foursome with the world's leading woman player will be Eric Bannister, professional at St. Charles, and Bobby Reith and Dan Kennedy, two of the finest players ever developed here."

"Golfing Queen" – the *Canadian Golfer*;

"Miss Wethered plays her game in the easiest possible manner. No strain, no effort – relaxed control. Every shot is a repetition of perfection in a varied degree. Every shot is a studied pendulum stroke with the timing and power needed for distance."

– Glenna Collett;

"I have not played golf with anyone, man or woman, amateur or professional, who made me feel so utterly outclassed."

– Bobby Jones, American golfing icon.

It seems there are not enough superlatives to describe the great Joyce Wethered. Who was this woman?



Joyce Wethered
Free Press September 12, 1935

Joyce Wethered (1901-1997), the leading British woman golfer of the inter-war period, learned to golf as a child. At 18 years of age she came out of nowhere to win the 1920 English Ladies' Amateur Championship. In the '20s Joyce won nine major English and British ladies' championships. Her grand finale as an amateur was in 1929, played in the British Ladies' Amateur Championship at the Old Course at St. Andrews, defeating none other than Glenna Collett. To this day, on YouTube, we can catch a glimpse of Joyce and Glenna tee off at the 1929 Championship.

Joyce's triumph was dimmed however when Wall Street crashed and her family lost its fortune. Joyce had to go to work and got a job as manager of the golf department at Fortnum & Mason. (Who knew they sold more than specialty foods!) In doing so she lost her amateur status, but in fact, this is how Joyce ended up in an exhibition match at St. Charles.



Joyce Wethered (left) shaking the hands of Glenna Collett after defeating her in 1929.
Internet image FANSIDED

St. Charles Country Club, Winnipeg



St. Charles clubhouse built in 1914.
St. Charles Archives

The Wall Street Crash experienced by the Wethered family reverberated around the industrialized Western World. It was the beginning of the Great Depression – the Dirty Thirties. St. Charles too experienced financial woes. Membership slumped. Coffers ran low.

Yet in that period there were landmark events at the Club that balanced some of the adversities. A major happening was the opening of the Alister MacKenzie Nine on July 30, 1931. St. Charles now had a second signature course to complement the Donald Ross Nine which had opened a few years earlier.

Furthermore, in 1933 the Ladies' Canadian Close Championship was played at the Club. As happened in 1926, the tournament was won by Ada Mackenzie. Three years later St. Charles hosted two national men's tournaments: the Willingdon Cup (Interprovincial Challenge Cup) and the Canadian Amateur Championship. Then in 1937, the Canadian Ladies' Open Championship produced a new star at St. Charles – Mauriel Rogers – who won the tournament.

In the middle of the decade however, a unique and historic golfing event took place. Joyce Wethered came to St. Charles.

A 2020 story by John Fischer in *Sports Illustrated* documents Joyce Wethered's great North American tour:

"Fortnum & Mason hooked up with the John Wanamaker Department Store in Philadelphia to arrange a series of matches over a period of nine weeks in 1935. The matches ended up stretching beyond three months, covering 15 states and three Canadian provinces. Wethered played 53 matches and set 34 women's course records."

Joyce's first match was on May 30, 1935 on Long Island, New York. Included in the four-person match was her former rival Glenna Collett Vare (who had since married). On her tour, Joyce played every course "blind" with no practice rounds and with caddies who didn't know her game. She travelled from city to city, each time facing new conditions and new competitors; great male and female golfers, hand-picked to challenge her.

The last leg of her journey was in Canada – the Victoria Golf Club, then St. Charles, ending at the Marlborough Golf Club in Montreal on September 15th.

**Miss Joyce Wethered
Will Tee Off at 2 P.M.**

The greatest golf attraction in years comes to Winnipeg Wednesday and will feature Miss Joyce Wethered, far-famed British player, in an exhibition match at St. Charles Country club commencing at 2 p.m. Grouped in the foursome with the world's leading woman player will be Eric Bannister, professional at St. Charles, and Bobby Reith and Dan Kennedy, two of the finest players ever developed here.

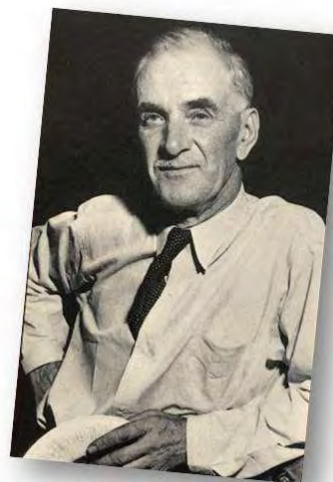
In her exhibition at St. Charles Country club Miss Wethered will pair with Eric Bannister against Reith and Kennedy. The distinguished visitor will be playing with three excellent golfers, and the game should be worth going miles to see.

Miss Wethered, moving towards the end of a tour, which has taken her to all leading centres of United States and Canada, has been playing outstanding golf in every appearance. Invariably she plays from the men's tees and in many cases has equalled men's par. She has broken ladies' records on almost every course during her extensive tour.

Bobby Jones terms Miss Wethered as the most perfect golfer he has ever seen. He says she plays exactly like a man—only better. So there should be a real treat for Winnipeg golf followers when she plays at St. Charles Country club. Her visit here is being sponsored by the Junior League of Winnipeg.

Left: "The greatest golf attraction in years comes to Winnipeg . . ." Bobby Jones says "she plays exactly like a man, only better." *Free Press*, September 11, 1935

Right: Eric Bannister, St. Charles pro who played with Joyce Wethered. St. Charles Archives



Miss Wethered Shows Unquestioned Class in Performance Here

By CAM MCKENZIE

Seeing is believing, and you cannot believe a woman golfer could shoot such a game until you have seen Joyce Wethered.

This spectator never enjoyed a sporting event as much as he did Wednesday at St. Charles Country club when Miss Wethered, world's most famous woman golfer, played in an exhibition match under the auspices of the Junior League, with Eric Bannister, Bobby Reith and Dan Kennedy. She paired with Bannister, professional at St. Charles, and wound up all square after a thrill-jammed fight against Manitoba's two leading amateurs.

Attractively slender, Miss Wethered literally opened the eyes of Winnipeg golf followers as she shot from men's tees on the long St. Charles layout and matched stroke for stroke with Reith, Kennedy and Bannister to whip out a 74, just one over men's par and tie with Bobby and Dan for the low medal honors. Bannister was 76.

Never straying from the well-groomed fairways, and pitching and putting with deadly accuracy the distinguished British visitor gave an outstanding display. More than 1,200 followed the match and time after time had opportunity to applaud Joyce as she made spectacular shots. Her irons were possibly the feature of her game, but her entire exhibition was almost perfect—one of the finest ever seen here.

Miss Wethered carded the low score on the outward journey, making the turn in 37 when Bannister, Reith and Kennedy all had 36's. Coming in she matched her 37 while Reith and Kennedy equalled par with 36's and Bannister took another 38.

All carded par fours on the first hole and on the second Miss Wethered and Bannister went ahead when Reith carded a four, one more stroke than the other three members of the foursome. Reith and Kennedy squared the match on the third, both having birdie fours when Miss Wethered played the hole in a regulation five.

The match then swayed in favor of one and the other and Miss Wethered gave the large gallery a rare treat on the eighth green by sinking a long putt for a birdie three to assume a lead over Kennedy and Reith.

On the tenth Kennedy and Reith squared the match, and then went to the front on the eleventh. The twelfth was halved and on the thirteenth Miss Wethered and Bannister squared all, both scoring birdie fours.

The next two holes were halved and on the sixteenth Kennedy dropped a fine putt for a birdie three to place Miss Wethered and Bannister one down. However the British player scored with a par three on the seventeenth and the last hole was halved although Miss Wethered just missed on a long putt for a win.

Cards follow:

Miss Wethered—

Out 435 553 435—37

In 444 453 535—37—74

Bannister—

Out 454 454 545—38

In 563 452 444—36—76

Reith—

Out 444 463 445—36

In 444 453 444—36—74

Kennedy—

Out 431 553 545—38

In 443 553 545—36—74

We don't know how St. Charles came to be selected for a stop on the Wethered tour, but we do know that it was sponsored by the Junior League of Winnipeg. By all accounts the exhibition match at St. Charles was a success. Over 1200 spectators showed up to watch the foursome play. They golfed on the Ross and MacKenzie courses; all four playing off the men's tees. The *Free Press* article (left) gives a hole-by-hole description. In the end, Joyce equaled Manitoba's best with a score of 74 – one over men's par.

Left: "Seeing is believing, and you cannot believe a woman golfer could shoot such a game until you have seen Joyce Wethered."

Free Press September 12, 1935.

Below: Joyce Wethered, 1935.
Wikimedia Commons



In 1937 Joyce married Sir John Heathcoat-Amory, becoming Lady Heathcoat-Amory. They lived in the mansion built by John's grandfather – Knightshayes Court in Tiverton, Devon. The couple shared an interest in gardening and developed an award winning garden on the land around their home, described in vivid detail in Joyce's obituary.

After World War II Joyce was reinstated as an amateur golfer and continued to play with her husband regularly, often at Tiverton, a club Sir John was instrumental in founding in 1932, built on his own farm land. Sir John died in 1972. Lady Joyce lived on, dying a day after her 96th birthday in 1997. Her memorabilia can still be found at Knightshayes Court which now belongs to the National Trust and is open to visitors.

We don't have to go all the way to England to find Joyce Wethered memorabilia, however. Mounted in a glass case to the right of the fireplace in the foyer at St. Charles is a scorecard that she signed on that day in September 1935 when the great Joyce Wethered came to St. Charles.

St. Charles score card signed by
Joyce Wethered on September 11, 1935.
St. Charles Archives

SOUTH NINE PLEASE REPLACE DIVOTS											NORTH NINE SMOOTH FOOT PRINTS IN BUNKERS													
Holes	Yards	Par	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	Out	In	Total	
1	351	4	13										10	363	4	10								
2	137	3	18										11	411	4	8								
3	430	4	6										12	284	4	14								
4	480	5	6										13	418	4	7								
5	530	5	2										14	513	5	3								
6	190	3	16										15	148	3	17								
7	360	4	11										16	395	4	9								
8	356	4	12										17	218	3	15								
9	495	5	4										18	537	5	1								
Out	3329	37											In	3287	36									
I CERTIFY ALL PUTS WERE HOLED (NOT)																								
Player <u>Joyce Wethered</u>																								
Attested																								
Date <u>September 11, 1935</u>																								
											HANDICAP													
											NET													

Chapter 5

A SEASON OF FIRSTS

The Stories of Three Winning Women



In the early years – the springtime – of an organization the opportunities for firsts are stacked in one’s favour. This was true at St. Charles in its first decades, where men and women blazed trails, achieved milestones and made history. This is the story of three remarkable St. Charles women: Irene Brydges, Isa Beairsto, and Mauriel Rogers, who broke new ground and left their mark, in a season of firsts.

Irene Brydges

Irene Brydges made St. Charles history in 1912 as the winner of the first St. Charles Ladies' Club Championship. She went on to own the women's Club championship crown for four more years, from 1913 to 1916.

While this is significant, Irene's story goes much deeper. The Brydges name is prominent in the history of the Club. Indeed, Irene Brydges was part of a family of firsts. But, her own story may be just as compelling.

The story of the Brydges family in Canada began when Charles John Brydges emigrated from England in 1852, becoming a Land Commissioner for the Hudson's Bay Company. One of his children, Frederick Henderson Brydges, was a founding member of St. Charles and the Club's first secretary. He started the firm F. H. Brydges and Sons specializing in land, insurance and commission agency. He and his wife had four children; two of them sons, John and Charles.

The younger son Charles, born in 1880, was Irene's husband. Like his father, he was a founder of St. Charles, as was his brother John. Of the 23 prominent businessmen who founded St. Charles, three bore the Brydges name.

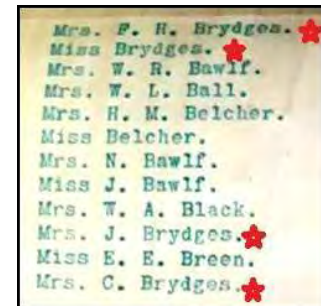
The female Brydges also reflect the history of women in the earliest years of St. Charles. Mrs. F.H. Brydges, Miss Brydges, Mrs. J. Brydges and Mrs. C. (Irene) Brydges are all listed as Lady Associate Members along with 127 other women entered into the May 17, 1906 minutes of the Board of Governors.

Right: Brydges names in the 1906 minutes of the Board of Governors: Mrs. F.H. Brydges, Miss Brydges, Mrs. J. Brydges, Mrs. C. Brydges.
St. Charles Archives



Irene Brydges
1910.

Archives of Manitoba



? Questions about Irene ?

There may be more to Irene's story. At the opening game of golf at St. Charles on July 1, 1905, the *Tribune* listed some of the attendees at the 5:00 o'clock tea that followed. Included were Mr. and Mrs. F.H. Brydges, Mr. and Mrs. J. Brydges, and Mr. C. Brydges. Eight single women were also mentioned with Irene Doyle being the only one with a first name given. Three months later, on September 29, 1905, the Board of Governors elected the Club's first four Lady Associate Members. The name, Miss Doyle, was first on the list.

Was this the Miss Irene Doyle at the Club opening? Could she also be the wife of Charles – the Mrs. C. Brydges listed eleven months later in the May 17, 1906 minutes? Is it just romantic speculation to think that the first person recorded as a Lady Associate Member of St. Charles was the same woman who won the first Ladies' Club Championship? Like family stories of long ago, we are left with more questions than answers.

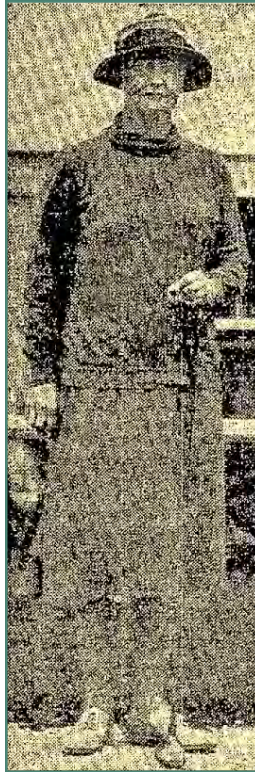
Right: *Tribune*. July 3, 1905

Opening Day at St. Charles July 1, 1905

The opening game of golf was played on the links at the country club Saturday. Among those who were present at the five o'clock tea served on the grounds were Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Sutherland, Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Brydges, Mr. and Mrs. Waghorn, Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Shaw, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Minty, Mr. and Mrs. G. M. Black, Mr. and Mrs. Munson, Mr. and Mrs. William Whyte, Mr. and Mrs. William Harvey, Mr. and Mrs. George Soames, Mrs. Tulluck, Miss Beckett, Miss Brough, Miss Brydges, Miss Irene Doyle, Mr. and Mrs. Morton Morse, Mrs. Fred Morse, Mrs. A. W. Ross, Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Fisher, Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Anderson, Mr. Stewart Tupper, the Misses Tupper, Mr. Charles Brydges, Mr. and Mrs. J. Brydges, Mr. Gordon McTavish, Mr. Toller, Mr. Monk, Mrs. W. H. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Jukes, Mrs. Phippen, Hon. Robert and Mrs. Rogers, Mr. and Mrs. C. V. Alloway, Mr. Dawson, Mr. and Mrs. Christie, Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Howell, Miss Gingras, Mr. J. D. Cameron, Mr. Putnam, Captain Macdonnell, Mr. MacGachen, Miss Joan MacGachen, Mr. Frank Flaher, Mr. Alan Stewart, Mr. and Mrs. Billett, Mr. and Mrs. Scott Griffin and many others.

While Irene made a name for herself by becoming the winner of the first St. Charles Ladies' Club Championship in 1912, she was an accomplished golfer before then. Her name is first on the list of female golfers at the "debut" golfing event of mixed foursomes for women back in May of 1906.

Four years later, in September 1910, the *Free Press* reported that Mrs. Charlie Brydges was the most notable absentee of the St. Charles women to miss a match with the Winnipeg Golf Club, which at the time was St. Charles's only rival. The press reported that at the time, Irene was in Toronto competing in the Canadian Ladies' Championship.



Irene Brydges
1926.

Free Press September 8, 1926

For Irene Brydges to be competing in a Canadian championship was significant because the Canadian Women's Amateur Championship at that time was primarily the domain of Ontario and Quebec golfers. The championships were held in either Montreal or Toronto with very few competitors from west of Toronto or east of Montreal. We don't know how Irene fared, but that she was there at all tells us something of her talent and competitive spirit.

In September 1926 the *Free Press* reported that Irene entered in a Canadian golf championship once again – presumably the Canadian Women's Close Championship which was held at St. Charles that year. According to the article, Mrs. Brydges, a “charming member of the St. Charles Country Club” was wearing “a most becoming costume of purple jersey cloth with a smart felt hat in beige tones.” They didn't mention how she golfed, however.

What became of Irene Brydges? We'll likely never know. But in the earliest years of women's golf at St. Charles, Irene's name will be forever first on the roster of names of the St. Charles Ladies' Club Championship.

Isa Beirsto

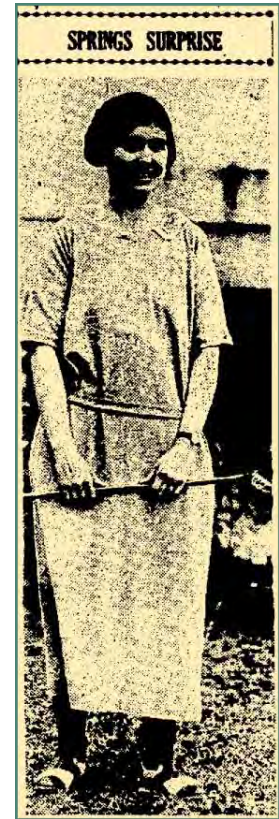
In the 1920s and '30s the name Mrs. R.K. Beirsto got repeated attention from engravers in Winnipeg. Time and again they found themselves etching Isa's name onto trophy plaques as she won one championship after another. Isa Beirsto was a woman of many firsts.

Isabella (Isa) Lee Johnston was born in Calgary on November 3, 1890. While nothing is known about her father, we know that her mother was Katherine Rebecca Young Johnston. Isa had one brother, James Judson Lee, who was five years her junior.

Isa married Ralph Keir Beirsto, a bank manager from Winnipeg who moved to Calgary in 1910 to manage the Calgary branch of the Dominion Bank. This is presumably where the two met. They moved to Winnipeg in 1916 where Ralph became manager of the Winnipeg branch of the Dominion Bank, eventually rising to become western branch supervisor in 1934.

We don't know if the two had any children; nor when they joined St. Charles. But we know that both Isa and Ralph were active in the affairs of the Club. During her earlier years as a member Isa was on the ladies' executive. In 1924 she was elected golf captain of the women's section and in 1926 she was captain of the junior section. Ralph was on the Board of Governors of St. Charles of which he was president in 1932-33.

Isa first made a name for herself in 1919 when she won the Ladies' Club Championship. This would be her first big win in a long string of championships – the St. Charles Ladies', the Manitoba Women's City and District, and the Manitoba Women's Amateur. Her achievements were more noteworthy because of the many competitive female golfers in the province during the '20s and '30s. At St. Charles alone were her prodigious contemporaries – talented golfers we've already met with last names like Brydges, Laird, Allen, Konantz, Northwood and Rogers.



Isa Beirsto, "St. Charles Country Club champion who played brilliant golf yesterday to defeat Mrs. Hutchings, Manitoba champion . . ."

Free Press August 31, 1923



Isa Bearsto (right) with Margaret Konantz at City and District Championships at the Niakwa Golf Course, June 1928.

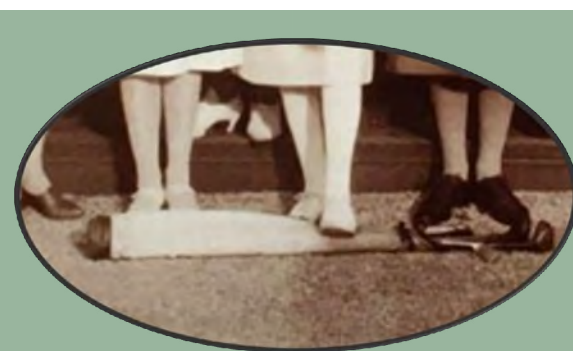
St. Charles Archives

With two Club championships under her belt, Isa stepped onto Manitoba's golf stage somewhat tentatively. In the 1923 Manitoba Women's Golf Championship she was pitted against clubmate Titeen Laird. In the final round, with a large audience in attendance, the *Free Press* reported that Isa was short with her mashie (5 iron) time and again. She went on to throw away even more valuable points with her putter. This was how Isa lost to Titeen.

Jack Cuthbert, the sportswriter covering the championship, attributed Isa's loss to her lack of experience in tournament play. He predicted, however, "Unquestionably when she gains more confidence, she will cut a large figure in local ladies' golf." Jack, himself a winner of multiple amateur golf titles, recognized Isa's skill. He proved to be right.

In the 1920s Isa won many titles, dominating in Club championships and attaining city and provincial titles to boot. These successes aside, as mentioned previously, in August 1925, Isa broke the ladies' Club record with a score of 78. Unfortunately she made one mistake – getting a seven on the 14th hole.

The big year for Isa was 1931 when she won the "Triple Crown" of golf – the Club, city, and provincial championships. After her provincial win that year the *Canadian Golfer* reported: "Playing a brand of golf that was consistently brilliant, Mrs. R.K. Beairsto, colourful Winnipeg golfer, for the third time captured the Manitoba Ladies' Championship." She was presented not only with the Championship Trophy, but also the Manitoba Canadian Ladies' Golf Union (C.L.G.U.) prize, the National C.L.G.U. prize, the Dingwall Trophy, the medal and prize for the lowest gross in the qualifying round, and the prize in the silver division for the driving competition.



IN THE BAG

Lying on the ground, under the foot of one Ella Murray, a competitor in the 1926 Canadian Ladies' Close Championship, is the skinny little golf bag of the great Ada MacKenzie! Ada, like Isa Beairsto, Titeen Laird and others in the competition needed only a small bag because they typically carried only seven clubs. All the clubs had names, but only two had ones we'd recognize . . . driver and putter. The other clubs were:

- a spoon (3 wood);
- a mid-mashie (3 iron);
- a mashie (5 iron);
- a mashie-niblick (7 iron);
- niblick (9 iron).

Keeping it simple was the name of the game!

See page 63 and Appendix A for the full photograph and player names.

In 1940, in her 50th year, when Isa won the provincial championship the *Canadian Golfer* had more compliments: "One must admit that Mrs. R.K. Beairsto's recent triumph for her sixth Manitoba Ladies' Championship marks her as one of the greatest ever produced in the Prairies. . . Mrs. Beairsto is a member at St. Charles in Winnipeg and seems to improve with the passing years." With the win of her sixth provincial championship, Isa set a record – a Manitoba women's feat that to this day, has been matched but never broken. (Of note, in 1996, another St. Charles golfer, Aileen Robertson also won the provincial championship for the sixth time.)



Right: Isa as winner of her fifth provincial championship in 1939. *Tribune* August 26, 1939



Isa receiving the trophy for her sixth provincial championship win from Mrs. J.W. Alves, president of the Manitoba Branch of the Canadian Ladies' Golf Union. Centre is Mrs. R.N. Wilson, immediate past president, 1940.

Tribune August 24, 1940

Isa's six provincial titles were exceeded in number by her seven wins in the City and District championships. Even greater was her success at St. Charles where she won the Ladies' Club Championship 13 times! Oh yes, in 1946 she also won the Manitoba Senior Women's Championship. There were only two years between 1919 and 1940 in which Isa did not have a major win. For all these successes, in 2015 Isa was inducted into the Manitoba Golf Hall of Fame (see Appendix B: Isa Beairsto Manitoba Golf Hall of Fame Story).

In 1946, Isa's husband Ralph retired from his position with the Dominion Bank and four years later, passed away in Victoria BC. Isa passed away in Kelowna in 1954 at the age of 63. Her prodigious record as a golfer in the early days of competitive women's golf, makes her a legend in the history of St. Charles.

Mauriel Rogers

“A Fighter Comes Through” was the headline in the September 1937 *Canadian Golfer* when Mauriel Rogers became the first woman from Western Canada to win the Canadian Women’s Open Golf Championship. She had other wins, but this is the one she is best known for.

Edith Mauriel Bremner was born in 1904. She married John A. Rogers, the younger brother of Margaret – known to women at St. Charles as Margaret Konantz. John was a businessman who worked at the Crescent Creamery Company, a firm founded by his father. John and Mauriel were members of St. Charles where, aside from golfing, Mauriel sat on the ladies’ executive committee for three years between 1933 and 1937.

Mauriel’s big win in 1937 was noteworthy for her as it was for St. Charles in its first hosting of a Canadian Women’s Open Championship. Furthermore, the event was played in western Canada for the first time in the 32 year history of Canadian Women’s Open.

The setting for the championship . . . “One of the most popular and most beautiful spots around Winnipeg in the summer season is the St. Charles Country Club,” said Dr. P.J. Gallagher in the September 1937 issue of the *Canadian Golfer*. He gave a vivid description of a garden behind the clubhouse which he said, replaced earlier tennis courts. The garden was quite different from the one we know today. From Gallagher’s description (next page), the garden was breathtaking.



Mauriel Rogers
“Mother of two, fine badminton player, athlete par-excellence, and the most popular member of Winnipeg’s golfing fraternity.”
Canadian Golfer September, 1937



*The Gardens of
St. Charles
in 1937*

"This is a beautiful garden, centred by a lily pond in which over 200 goldfish live, and on which the waters of a fountain play, making rainbows in the sunshine. Around it is a rockery, and in one corner, a birdbath. In the shelter of small oaks nearby the club aviary, where this summer a nest of tiny, big-mouthed canaries were born. There are as well as canaries, finches and love birds in a myriad of colours . . . To lovers of a garden the grounds are a rare treat. They may visit the flower gardens which surround the clubhouse, or may journey down to the fine vegetable gardens which keep the kitchen larder well stocked. In a quiet, little-travelled part of the property, is the tree nursery where over three thousand young Ontario maples, elms, honeysuckles' lilacs and Manitoba maples are being grown and cared for. They will replace dead trees or add their beauty to some treeless spots in the club grounds."

The *Canadian Golfer* summed up Mauriel's 1937 win at the championship. "The final saw the West defeat East to win its first Open title in women's circles. . . The play of the champion was a credit to her fighting ability and in view of her comparative newness at the game marks her as Western Canada's outstanding golfing product in some years."

Mauriel made a triumphant return to Winnipeg, with the Club holding a dinner in her honour. "The St. Charles Country Club was 'en fete' Thursday evening when its members gathered to honour Mrs. John A. Rogers, winner of the Canadian Ladies' Open Championship." The October 1, 1937 *Tribune* described the tables in the large dining room decorated with "autumn blossoms and lighted with tall green tapers." Following the dinner, Club president Mr. W.C. Casey, presented Mauriel with two engraved silver pieces. He told of the pride that members felt of the honour she had brought to the Club. Mauriel Rogers was the toast of St. Charles that year.

Mauriel was inducted into the Manitoba Golf Hall of Fame in 2016 for her Canadian championship victory along with her other notable wins (see Appendix C: Mauriel Rogers Manitoba Golf Hall of Fame Story). Her first major success was in the 1932 Manitoba Women's Amateur Championship. The *Free Press* called the final match "a stirring final and easily one of the best in Manitoba branch, C.L.G.U. tournament." She won the provincial title again in 1938.

On two occasions that we know of – in 1936 and 1938 – Mauriel played on the same St. Charles team with her sister-in-law Margaret Konantz (and two other team members) in inter-club team competitions. On both occasions the home teams were triumphant.

Two other prestigious successes for Mauriel were winning the City and District championship twice. In her 1940 win she defeated clubmate Isa Beirsto by only one stroke. Her 1942 victory would be her last major win.



"After the Battle."

Mauriel Rogers and Isa Beirsto, two competitors in the 1940 City and District championship relaxing after the competition.

Free Press June 15, 1940



In 1949 Mauriel's husband John passed away at home in Ottawa at age 44. Mauriel outlived her husband by over 50 years dying in 2001 at 97 years of age. The legacy win of Mauriel Rogers at the Canadian Women's Open Golf Championship lives on.

Mauriel Rogers (left) with Chick Stovel at the 1981 C.L.G.A. championship at St. Charles.
St. Charles Archives

Beginning over a century ago with Irene Brydges in 1912, the women of St. Charles have won championships at every level of competition, all the way from the club level to national tournaments. Isa Beirsto showed us what winning a dizzying number of Club, city and provincial titles looked like. Then Mauriel Rogers came along and she took St. Charles to victory at the highest rungs of women's golf in the country. In a seasons of firsts, these three women left their mark and are an inspiration to future generations of St. Charles golfers.

... On These Shoulders We Stand



APPENDICES & SOURCES

Appendix A

Name Key for 1926 Photo



#2 Mrs. Briggs	#19 Dora Darling	#30 Mrs. R. Beairsto
#5 Mrs. Koester (Niakwa)	#20 Vera Hutchings (Winnipeg)	#31 Eva Rogers
#9 Mrs. Hart	#22 Mrs. G. Ritchie (Southwood)	#36 Ella Murray
#11 Alice Ashworth	#25 Mrs. Campbell (Elmhurst)	#37 Kitty Rowe
#14 Mrs. Lawson	#26 Margaret Lard	#38 Mrs. Laird
#16 Mrs. Graham	#27 Mrs. V. Sifton	#40 Mrs. Alves (Norwood)
#18 Mrs. B. Hill	#29 Marg. Walsh	#41 Ada Mackenzie (Mississauga)

Appendix B

Isa Beirsto

Manitoba Golf Hall of Fame Story

Isa Beirsto

Isa Beirsto was inducted into the Manitoba Golf Hall of Fame in 2015 and the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame in 2019. No family was to be found and so Michelle Lee accepted the award on behalf of St. Charles.

Isa Beirsto was Manitoba's top female golfer during the 1920s and 1930s. She won the Manitoba Ladies Amateur Golf Championship six times with victories in 1925, 1926, 1931, 1933, 1939 and 1940. Her record of six has never been topped and only equalled by 1998 Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame honoured member Marg Homeniuk, who won hers between 1961 and 1972, and Aileen Robertson. Robertson's six came between 1989 and 1996. To add to her laurels, Beirsto doubled up with wins in the Winnipeg City and District Championship in 1925, 1931 and 1933. Four more City titles in 1932, 1934, 1935 and 1937 gave her a grand total of seven. She also won the Manitoba Senior Ladies Championship in 1946.

Beirsto was a member of the St. Charles Country Club and she and her fellow club members dominated at the highest level provincially and in inter-club competition. Her clubmates Titeen Laird, Margaret Konantz and Mauriel Rogers won seven provincials between 1921 and 1938. Beirsto represented the province at the national level on several occasions and reached the semi-finals of the Canadian Ladies Closed Championship in 1933.

At her home course, Beirsto won the club championship for the first time in 1919 and took 12 more titles with the last one coming in 1938. In 1934, she won the first championship at the Tuxedo Golf Club. In the newspaper style of the day, female golfers were never identified by their given names. Isa Beirsto was always known as Mrs. R.K. or Mrs Ralph Beirsto. Her husband was a prominent banker and the couple retired to Victoria, B. C. in the late 1940s. She died in Kelowna, B.C. on June 24, 1954.

Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame
(<http://www.manitobagolfhalloffame.com/index.php?page=honoured-members-2015>)

Appendix C

Mauriel Rogers

Manitoba Golf Hall of Fame Story

Mauriel (Bremner) Rogers

Mauriel Rogers was inducted into the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame in 2004 and into the Manitoba Golf Hall of Fame in 2016. Arlene Van Ruiten accepted the award on behalf of St. Charles as no family was found.

When Edith Mauriel Bremner of Ottawa, Ontario married John Rogers of Winnipeg in the summer of 1929 and they decided to live in Winnipeg, women's golf in Manitoba was about to become home to a new champion golfer. Although they moved back to Ottawa in 1942, she had a lasting impact on women's golf in Manitoba during those 13 years.

Born on August 31, 1903, upon moving to Winnipeg, Rogers joined St. Charles Country Club. She immediately had fine competition from club mate and Honoured Member of the Manitoba Golf Hall Of Fame Isa Beairsto who won six Manitoba women's amateur titles from 1925 to 1940.

In 1932 and 1938, Rogers won the Manitoba Women's Amateur Championship title. She added City and District championships in 1940 and 1942.

In 1937, St Charles hosted the Canadian Ladies Golf Union Open Championship which was the predecessor to today's Canadian Women's Amateur Golf Championship. Rogers won the Championship on her home course in decisive fashion, 8 and 7, in the final match Rogers thereby became the first woman from Manitoba to win the Canadian Women's Amateur Championship. Mauriel passed away on March 6, 2001.

Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame(<http://www.manitobagolfhalloffame.com/index.php?page=honoured-members-2016>)

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