

“A Good Walk Spoiled”

THE EYES OF THE GOLF WORLD will be on Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska this fall as Team USA squares off against Team Europe for the 2016 Ryder Cup. The Minnesota Historical Society is marking the occasion by celebrating local history connections with the sport sometimes described as “a good walk spoiled.”

Combining the serenity that can be found in nature with the competitiveness of sport, golfing seems tailor-made for the stereotypical Minnesota disposition. Proof may be found in the fact that it takes 600 golf courses to satiate the appetites of Minnesota’s linksmen and -women. Some courses have long and significant histories. St. Paul’s Town & Country Club, for example, is the second-oldest golf course in the United States still being played on its original land, behind only Shinnecock Hills Golf Club on Long Island in longevity.

MNHS documents golf and golfing, as it does all popular and leisure activities, by collecting ephemeral printed material such as country club bylaws, lists of members and officers, and descriptions of various country clubs. *Golfer and Sportsman*, one especially beautiful serial in MNHS’s Gale Family Library, documented (under a couple of name changes) the social aspects of the sport through the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.

MNHS’s museum holdings range from fun artifacts, such as golf clubs belonging to Minneapolis-born legend Patty Berg and a cutout display of Bing Crosby in a Munsingwear polo golf shirt, to serious reminders of the



A sample of the ephemeral printed material and artifacts in MNHS collections that document golf and golfing, from fun artifacts such as golf clubs belonging to Minneapolis-born legend Patty Berg to serious reminders of the sport’s segregated past. PHOTO BY JASON ONERHEIM/MNHS.

sport’s segregated past. The MNHS library also has more than 500 images of Gopher State golfers and courses. MNHS supports scholarly research in this area of sports history, such as the article “Caucasians Only: Solomon Hughes, the PGA, and the 1948 St. Paul Open Golf Tournament,” by Thomas B. Jones in the Winter 2003–04 issue of this magazine.

MNHS hopes to add to its golf collections by acquiring documents from this year’s links battle between Europe and the United States, September 30 to October 2, on Minnesota home turf.

—Patrick Coleman,
acquisitions librarian



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