

## KHAN-TOM-A-TIS GOLF CLUB

IN THE YEAR 1893, a number of the residents of the town of Westerly, R. L., who were members of the Misquamicut Golf Club at Watch Hill, five miles away, and who were much interested in the game of golf, were having a dinner as a climax of the golfing season. This dinner was a rather jolly affair, and distinctly of a golfing character, the diners wearing the red coats that were so much in vogue at that time. Much regret was expressed, however, that the Misquamicut season was so short, and it was suggested that a local club be organized and a few holes laid out in order to allow the members to continue play far into the autumn. This suggestion was enthusiastically received by all, and it was determined that no time should be lost in arranging to lay out a few holes and organize a club. They knew that it would take some time to get the proper paraphernalia, and it was decided that for a time at least they would use empty tomato cans for the holes so that there would be no delay in getting the course in commission.



The original "green-keepers" of the Khan-tom-a-tis Golf Club.

Several of the Cottrell boys were at this dinner, and, as they had just bought a farm of 300 acres, consisting mostly of huckleberry bushes, brier bushes, and stones, offered the necessary land for the purpose of laying out a course, and as the membership would necessarily be small, 6 holes were determined upon as being quite sufficient, 3 rounds making a full 18 hole course.

It was necessary that a suitable name should be found, and many suggestions

were given, but all finally decided on Khan-tom-a-tis, with the accent on the "tom," named after the humble tomato cans that were to be temporarily used for the holes.

As the members of the committee selected to get the club in operation were pretty active, no time was lost, in fact, the very next day the course was laid out and the cans planted, the holes named, and cards printed, at the top of which appeared in large type the word "KHAN - TOM - A - TIS," and when one of the cards got into the hands of an old lady sojourning at Watch Hill, on seeing the name she observed, "How nice it is to preserve these old Indian names, Misquamicut, Quonachontaug, Wequetecquoc, Khantomatis. It takes one back to the days when this part of the country was overrun with Indians of the Narragansett tribe." Let us hope that this good old lady never knew the origin of this name, "Khan-tom-a-tis."

In a way this course was quite celebrated for the difficulties encountered and the ingenious method by

which they were overcome.

The ground was thickly covered with rocks, huckleberry bushes and brier vines of every description and variety, and the removal of them presented a very difficult problem. As far as the rocks were concerned, they could remain and make natural hazards, but the bushes and vines must be removed, and how to do it without great expense and much labor, was the question. However, Yankee ingenuity came to the rescue.

The Cottrell boys, who were members of the club, informed the committee that they intended to buy a herd of Angora goats to clear off the farm, and they would put them on the golf course first and see what the effect would be. Two hundred goats composed this herd, and when they arrived and were left to feed on the course, the experiment was watched with a great deal of interest. In three weeks' time the land looked as though it had been swept by a devastating fire; not a bush or vine was left, and the owners of the herd found it necessary to buy extra feed for the animals, as they were consuming not only everything easily reached, but the tops of small saplings that could be easily bent, and to provide them food enough, it was necessary to buy from one to two tons of hay each week in addition. In fact, it was believed that this herd could have cleaned the brush off the whole state of Rhode Island in a year's time. The feeding capacity of these animals was simply miscalculated. There was a time, however, when it was thought that the owners would lose this interesting herd, for they discovered some sheep laurel which they devoured with avidity, and some sickened and died, which worried the owners a great deal; but a well-known physician, not a veterinary, a member of the club, was seriously consulted in the matter, and he said that he thought whiskey would be beneficial if given in sufficiently large quantities. "What do you mean by 'sufficiently large quantities'?" was asked. "Enough to get them as 'full as goats'," he replied, and no time was lost in following his advice. We sent to the village and bought 4 gallons of so-called whiskey, such as is sold in small towns, put it in a washtub, slightly diluted it with water, and placed it before the herd. There was no hesitancy in tackling this, and the sick and weak immediately began to show signs of returning health and strength, the deaths ceased,—and we kept on buying hay.

The owners of this herd, considering that they had learned sufficient about the ability of goats to clean off land, and it being an expense to keep them properly fed, determined to sell them, and the fortunate purchaser was a farmer whose land was located about five miles away. He, with a small boy to assist, determined to drive the herd to his farm, and they started very early one morning, and the farmer arrived at his farm about four o'clock in

the afternoon, hot, tired, and worn, driving one lone ram, all that was left of the herd. The rest were roaming the country side and having the time of their lives. It was rumored, however, that he recovered most of them, one at a time, after infinite patience and labor.

So much for goats as green-keepers.

We heard later that sheep would have been more gentle and leisurely in their work, and we now know that wild rabbits are the best animals of all for this purpose, as the golf course at Machrihanish on the Mull of Cantire in Scotland, is kept in fine condition by these animals; they eat close and are careful feeders, and the course looks as though the fair green was mowed by good, sharp cutters.

The Khantomatis Club flourished for several years, but with the advent of electric cars and automobiles, furnishing quicker means of transit to and from Watch Hill, and the Misquamicut course itself being so interesting, and the season lengthened, the Khantomatis Club was abandoned, but it did serve a special purpose, and it is true that some of those who learned the game on this course turned out to be quite above the average player for efficiency.

William Clark, the veteran golfer of Rhode Island, and the present champion of the Misquamicut Golf Club, played his first game on this course, and it took no little coaxing to get him interested. It would take a lot more than coaxing now to get him to give up the game.

Others who learned the game on this course got to be well-known in the golfing fraternity, and can give good account of themselves on almost any course; amongst these are James M. Pendleton, banker; Chas. P. and Arthur M. Cottrell, of the firm of C. B. Cottrell & Sons Co. of Westerly, R. I.

When the Khantomatis Club first came into existence, it was an unpretentious affair, but it grew to be more of an institution than the promoters anticipated, and a very convenient little club house was built, and many club events were held, and the interest in the course for several years was very keen. It must be remembered, however, that in those days the number of the courses in the country was comparatively few, and the opportunities for playing the game were more or less limited, but the number of courses now in existence shows the remarkable growth of this game in the last fifteen or twenty years.