

Kavanagh, L. V. *History of Golf in Canada* (Toronto: Fitzhery and Whiteside Limited, 1973).

This is a book which contains many delights and several disappointments. Generally, the frustrations relate to the author's treatment of the early history of the game of golf in Canada (or the nineteenth-century period, mainly), whilst the merits are mainly found in his coverage of more recent developments. Mr. Kavanagh is obviously far more comfortable in the twentieth-century than he is when delving backwards into the game's origins and earlier development,

As the first history of golf in Canada produced in book form it will fill a gap and its appearance will be welcomed by many people. As befits a book which costs \$17.50 (Canadian), it is a large (8 3/4" x 11 1/4") and lavish and well-illustrated production of impressive quality. To quote from the jacket:

The *History of Golf in Canada* is the first and only complete record of Canadian Golf. Its pages are richly illustrated with photographs taken from provincial archives and private collections in Canada and many have never been published before. No matter what you want to know about Canadian Golf, it is probably here.

As a work of reference for golfing Canadiana, it will be supremely valuable, containing as it does complete records to 1972 of Canadian Open Championships, Canadian Amateur Championships, Willingdon Cup Matches, Senior Championships of Canada, Canadian Junior Championships, Canadian Juvenile Championships, Interprovincial Senior and Junior Team Matches, Canadian Ladies' Open, and the Canadian Professional Championships.

The brief chapters on certain golf clubs and Provincial Golf Associations are well-written and quite informative and interesting, as is the chapter entitled "Great Canadian Golfers". There is a photograph or drawing on nearly every page which adds to the enjoyment of the text. Unfortunately, there is no list of illustrations (although they are all well-titled) and no bibliography, footnotes, or index, which can be aggravating for the serious reader.

Despite the Publishers' endorsement, however, it is hardly a complete history of Canadian golf. One might have expected, for example, that this first history might settle the vexing question of whether or not the assertion that golf in Canada began with the Scottish soldiers in General Wolfe's army at Quebec in 1759-60, made by other authors without documentation, can be supported with evidence. But the author evades the issue with alacrity and in even briefer fashion than others, merely paraphrasing Henry Roxborough's opinion made in 1966, that so many sports in Canada have been traced back to Wolfe's soldiers it is difficult to understand how they found time to pursue their military duties. Concerning the game of golf played by Scottish settlers on Priest's Farm, near Montreal, on Christmas Day, 1824, (referred to in this new

book as '1924') Mr. Kavanagh again meekly accepts the view of Roxborough and others that this mid-winter date seems an unlikely one for golf; whereas Peter Lindsay pointed out nearly four years ago that temperatures were actually extremely mild then, with little snow upon the ground, so that a game of golf was indeed possible. In fact, Lindsay's dissertation on the history of sport in Canada, and several others, provide evidence for early golf in Canada which is lacking in this text.

With no bibliography given it is impossible to know exactly where the author obtained his information for early golf in Canada, but it seems likely that material from many nineteenth-century Canadian magazines and newspapers was either not discovered or ignored. Few will quarrel with the excellent illustrations in the book, but not many of these relate to earlier golfing activity in Canada. Yet there are many significant articles and illustrations in the periodicals of the time which could have served Mr. Kavanagh and his readers well. Not all of them can be mentioned here (although most can be located in the dissertations referred to in the previous paragraph), but the *Canadian Illustrated News*, October 16, 1880, for example, published an article on golf plus a full page of drawings depicting "The Golf Match Between the Montreal and Quebec Golf Clubs on Fletcher's Field, Montreal". The picture of the Challenge Trophy which is depicted could also have been included with the Illustrations of other Canadian Golf Trophies on pp. 156-57. And the *Scottish-American Journal* is another excellent source which does not seem to have been consulted. Besides reporting in prominent fashion the Caledonian Games and curling throughout the North American Continent, this Journal naturally contained much evidence of golf as well. (The issue for October 18, 1877, for example, reported a very one-sided victory for the Quebec Golf Club over the Montreal club, by 45 holes to 2!)

The lack of attention to available earlier sources seems evident in the brief chapter on Ladies' Golf in Canada. Kavanagh appears to contradict himself slightly when he states that "it was in 1913, with the founding of the Canadian Ladies' Golf Union, that women began playing on a continuing, organized basis", after stating that they were playing the game soon after it was imported, and that by 1891 women were paying annual dues of \$3 to the Royal Montreal Golf Club, holding monthly competitions, and playing inter-club matches from 1893 onwards. W. A. H. Kerr, writing in 1901, noted that the female members of the Royal Montreal Golf Club in 1897 numbered no less than 150 and significantly: "built themselves a club-house adjoining that of their husbands and brothers at Dixie". His evidence and that of other contemporary writers such as Joseph T. Clark, Charles Hunter, and John P. Roche indicates that women's golf was a Dominion-wide fact on what could well be described as a "continuing, organized basis" long before 1913, although of course the founding of the C. L. G. U. represented a major landmark.

But if he does not answer many riddles pertaining to the game's early

history in Canada, the author certainly poses an intriguing question--"that Westerners may want to research"--in his first chapter, where he quotes from a brochure issued by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1918, which stated:

In days lang syne the distant posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, now more often than not populous cities and towns on the Canadian Pacific Railway, were almost all manned by Scotchmen. Many of them were certainly followers of the Royal and Ancient. Many of them undoubtedly brought out with them their golf clubs with which to enjoy even in a most primitive fashion the exhilarating living and the 'fair follow through' so dear to the heart of the golfer. It is (sic) an unfair supposition to venture that golf was therefore first played in North America in the far west?... Scotchmen from time immemorial almost, have remained firm in their adherence to the national game of 'gowff'. What more likely then that the Scotch factors of 'The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay'-- Pro Pelle Cutem--nearly four centuries ago were the pioneer golfers of America? That the strident 'Fore' was first heard in the spacious West and that its echo, centuries old, has travelled Eastward only of recent years? Supposition is strongly in favour of this contention. Proof of course there is none.

Imagine! The Orkneymen and Highlanders of the Old Company teeing up their featheries in the vast emptiness of the North West Territories in the seventeenth-century . . . It is a thought to boggle the minds of many, comfort some, and possibly disturbothers. The suggestion is made even more intriguing by Kavanagh's statements elsewhere that the first municipal course in Canada opened in Edmonton, Alberta on 156 acres originally owned by the Hudson's Bay Company, and that "Western Canada took the lead in establishing public courses." Bearing in mind that it is a well-documented fact that golf was being pioneered by Scotsmen in Eastern parts of the United States before the close of the eighteenth-century, there are obviously still many unanswered questions regarding the game's origins on this continent.

In summary, Mr. Kavanagh has produced a colourful, de-luxe and interesting scrapbook of the development of this game in the Dominion (which will be especially useful as a reference work of various Championship results) but a definitive 'History of Golf in Canada' remains to be written. When it is, the author concerned will be grateful in many ways for this 1973 compilation, which will undoubtedly find a place on many shelves.

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