



The Founding Father

BY LEN ZIEHM

Who was Francis Stuyvesant Peabody?

Coal industry magnate, avid golfer and the man whose vision and initiative launched the CDGA.

His name was Francis Stuyvesant Peabody, and he was a magnate in the Chicago coal industry. His name isn't mentioned much in connection with golf. Peabody, though, is the single individual most responsible for the creation of the Chicago District Golf Association.

Hinsdale Golf Club was one of Chicago's first clubs, having held its first tournament in 1899. Peabody was its president from 1912 to 1914, and it was during his tenure that he called together presidents and directors of 25 Chicago-area clubs with 18-hole courses for the purpose of forming an association. Peabody felt it beneficial for the clubs' leaders to discuss issues involving caddies and trade golf associations. He stressed that technical golf questions would not be addressed because they "are handled so ably by the National and Western Associations."

The first planning meeting took place at Hinsdale on September 25, 1913, with representatives from Beverly, Calumet, Chicago Golf, Edgewater, Evanston, Exmoor, Glen Oak, Glen View, Homewood, Idlewild, Lake Shore, LaGrange, Old Elm, Onwentsia, Park Ridge, Ravisloe, Skokie, Westward Ho, Westmoreland, Wheaton, Windsor and Winnetka attending. Midlothian and South Shore

were invited to send representatives, but didn't.

Those present supported the formation of the organization Peabody envisioned, and at a second meeting on March 18, 1914, at the Chicago Athletic Club, the CDGA's first officers were named.

Members elected Peabody as president and another Hinsdale member, A.E. Cleaves, as secretary. Other officers were vice president D.F. Kelly of Exmoor and treasurer C.N. Stevens of Westmoreland. The first directors were A.H. Revell of Chicago Golf, Abel Davis of Lake Shore, F.B. Eells of Westward Ho, J.H. Wood of Homewood and Irving Hartz of Midlothian. They adopted a constitution, determined that any club within 50 miles of Chicago with at least a nine-hole course would be eligible for membership and assessed annual dues of \$50.

Twenty of those 25 clubs are still in existence, though Homewood is now named Flossmoor and Winnetka is called Indian Hill. Those no longer in existence—at least as clubs—are Edgewater, South Shore, Westward Ho, Wheaton and Windsor.

As for Peabody, he was a busy man. Born in Chicago in 1859, he graduated from Yale University and was earning \$10 million a year by 1894. He became

Hinsdale's president only a year after purchasing a home in that suburb.

His uncle was the first Democratic governor of New Hampshire, and Peabody himself worked for Adlai E. Stevenson in his 1908 race for governor of Illinois. Peabody's name also surfaced politically in 1912, as a candidate for vice president of the United States. He didn't get the nomination, but he later built a 39-room Tudor Revival mansion on an 848-acre estate bordered by Ogden Avenue, 31st Street, Midwest Road and Route 83. The \$750,000 structure, built in 1919, was designed as a tribute to his first wife and daughter. Peabody called the estate Mayslake, but he lived there only two months. He died of a heart attack suffered while riding his horse during a hunting party on the grounds on August 27, 1922, and his family built a chapel on the spot where Peabody fell. Peabody was 63 at the time of his death, and he had amassed a personal fortune of \$35 million and had a business enterprise worth \$75 million.

Mayslake was later sold to the Franciscan Fathers of St. Louis, who operated a seminary and retreat there, and it is now property of the DuPage County Forest Preserve District. 🌳

The First Lady

Executive director of the CDGA from 1942 to 1982, Carol McCue was one of the first women in the golf industry to hold such a high-profile leadership role. This 1989 Illinois Golf Hall of Fame inductee remains an active player on the local golf scene through her work for the Jemsek family and as an advocate for the game.

Carol McCue wasn't a golf enthusiast when she applied to work for the Chicago District Golf Association just before the start of World War II.

"I got there just looking for a job," she recalls. "Jobs were hard to find. I started at \$22.50 a week, and was glad to get it."

The CDGA was nothing new back then, but it wasn't very big. McCue had finished business school and got an interview through an employment agency run by Royal Typewriter Co. in May of 1942. She got the job and had an exciting first summer, as the CDGA staged one of the year's biggest pro tournaments—the Hale America Open.

"After that summer almost everyone left because of the war effort," McCue says. "I stayed on and read all the books in the bookcase. I didn't even play golf then."

Her first offices were in the LaSalle Hotel, a building destroyed in 1968 by a tragic fire that claimed several lives. Then the office moved to the American Dental Association building, on Chicago Avenue a half-block east of Michigan. Those offices were in use until the late-1970s, when the CDGA—and McCue—moved to Oak Brook.

She simultaneously held the titles of executive secretary and executive director through December 1982. Her predecessor on the job was "a man named Davis," who had been the golf writer for the *Chicago Tribune* in the 1930s.

"There wasn't much to it," says McCue. "I was

about the only one there. All we did was tournaments and handicaps."

McCue is understating her accomplishments. She was one of the first women to hold a major administrative position in golf, and was an early inductee into the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame for her pioneering efforts.

"In the winter the only staff we had was three people," McCue says. "We did handicap cards for about 10,000 members and scheduled tournaments. Our cash flow was only \$10,000-\$15,000 a year."

This was no mean feat, considering the handicapping project started before the computer age. In season, the small staff calculated handicaps every two weeks, but the sheer number of players necessitated spacing the updating of handicaps over a four-day period. Later, as CDGA membership swelled, the clubs computed the handicaps of their members and the CDGA simply recorded the results.

Some things that seem basic procedure now weren't so then. McCue streamlined the tournament tee-off system, which accelerated play, and informed tournament players of their tee times via postcard. Before that, the information had been passed on through a seemingly endless barrage of telephone calls.

While the CDGA tournament schedule then topped out at only 18 tournaments annually, one was the Illinois Open—an event now greatly expanded and run by the Illinois PGA. McCue had little difficulty lining up courses for events.

"It's harder now, because people are conscious of the short season in Chicago and don't want to give up their course for three days," reflects McCue. "The courses used to call us, because their members wanted to see how the top players played their course."

When McCue left the CDGA, the organization had five or six full-time employees and its club membership was about 120 private facilities and only 20-25 public ones. McCue has stayed active in the golf industry, working in various capacities for the Jemsek family, owners of Cog Hill. She was, and remains, the "First Lady" of Chicago District golf. 🌿



◀◀ (Left to right) E.P. Peabody, Ticket Chairman; Carol McCue, CDGA Staff and Cliff Roberts, General Chairman, Masters Championship, experience the CDGA's first trip to the Masters, Augusta, 1959.