

Sportswashing in the Cold War: 1950s American Golf

By

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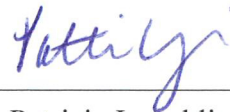
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Abstract

The conclusion of the Second World War brought immense power to the United States of America. The Cold War was the ideological conflict between capitalism and communism; the United States versus the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Both nations were actively seeking to impose their own social and political practices on developing and recovering countries. Propagandic advertisement of each society was one of the means by which both the USA and the USSR tried to sway other governments. In America, the sport of golf served as a representation and reflection of society as a whole. However, the United States did not effectively use the institution of American golf to successfully sportswash its national image during the Cold War.

Literature surrounding golf and the Cold War in the 1950s seldom intersect. It is at this crossroads between sports history and political/diplomatic history that this project finds academic relevance. Many have created works devoted to telling the story of professional and leisure golf during the 1950s but none other than Catherine Lewis come close to wedding golf and the Cold War. There is research done about Black golfers, women golfers, white male golfers, and the country club, but none seek to achieve what this project does.

The United States failed to utilize organizations such as the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour and the United Golfers Association to enhance its national image for political reasons. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev was impressed by President Eisenhower's passion for golf. So much so that he picked up the sport himself. However, the connection made no lasting impact for the United States' Cold War efforts. The strict adherence to rigid social norms, including sexism and racism, prevented the United States from utilizing the luxuries of their society to sell capitalism on a global scale.

Analysis of primary sources such as interviews, tournament records, government documents, speeches, letters, magazine articles, and advertisements served as crucial materials on which this research has been based. Secondary materials also aided in providing historical context to various chapters and made it clear what set this project apart from those before.

Upon evaluation of these sources, my thesis was confirmed. American golf in the 1950s was largely reflective of American society at the time; both in a positive and a negative manner. Segregation of professional organizations led to an exclusive representation of the sport as a whole. Images of relaxation and luxury in American popular media catered to the white home exclusively; this extended to golf media. Black Americans had their own country clubs and communities that enjoyed golf together and the lifestyle that came along with it. Those stories were not told and were perceived to hold no value to the public mission of fighting communism and promoting capitalism.

This research is significant in large part because of the geopolitical environment of today. The act of sportswashing has been continuously crafted and modified since well before the 1950s and is ever-present currently with the Saudi Arabian involvement in sports such as golf and soccer.

Future endeavors into this subject area should aim to include the practice of sportswashing into a larger project about the employment of soft power tactics utilized by the United States during the Cold War. Personal interest in golf led to this project's creation but research questions surrounding other sports and the Cold War could also be asked and followed up on.

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Chapter One: Introduction and Historiography

Golf in America has long been seen as a pastime enjoyed by wealthy men who were white. This was intentional and was applauded in American media outlets such as the *Golf Digest* magazine. In the 1950s, the United States was in the early years of the Cold War. The government urgently encouraged media that displayed Americans living lives of luxury and comfort; lives full of free time and tight-knit families. They did this to market capitalism and democracy to the rest of the world.

In 1959, Vice President Richard Nixon represented the United States at the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM). At this event, there were numerous exhibits on display for the public including model homes, cars, and videos intended to depict the ideal lifestyle of an American family. It was the intent of the American government to sell capitalism to the world. After examining the exhibits, Soviet Premiere Nikita Khrushchev and Nixon engaged in the “Kitchen Table Debate.”¹ Khrushchev was heavily critical of the way Nixon and the Americans had depicted Soviet society. He called out the United States for its treatment of African Americans as well as American women. Khrushchev argued that those groups who tended to not have much of a public voice in America would be better suited in the Soviet Union.

The United States failed to utilize the institutions within the sport of golf to effectively sell capitalism and democracy to the rest of the world and particularly to the Soviet Union. This practice is called sportswashing: utilizing a sport, such as golf, to portray a more favorable image of a country for political gain. Positive connotations of golf in the 1950s as an affluent sport furnished the global image of the United States. Had the stories of the Ladies Professional Golf

¹ Central Intelligence Agency, “Kitchen table debate – transcript, July 24, 1959,” accessed March 20, 2023. <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/1959-07-24.pdf>

Association (LPGA) and the United Golfers Association (UGA) been included, the characterization of the United States might have been enhanced.²

Golf did not exclusively help or hinder America's image. Rather, it was largely a representation of 1950s American society. The Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) Tour was on the front page of *Golf Digest* and other media. This tour was characterized by wealthy white men, the ideal American in the eyes of American media at the time. The UGA and the LPGA tours were largely overlooked by the same media and as a result, were not utilized to their full political potential for sportswashing.

The exploration of 1950s American golf and 1950s Cold War history has had very little intersect among historians. Many have devoted large portions of their careers to the study of African American, women, and certainly white male golfers. Yet, historical cross-analysis of American golf and America's Cold War image/stance has not been intimately studied. The exact details of tournaments and careers are entertaining and certainly important to athletes' personal stories. However, this research illustrates how golf contributed to America's Cold War image/mission in the 1950s. By studying the socio-political ecosystem surrounding the sport at the time, historians, politicians, and golfers alike can see how golf represented American ideals during the 1950s.

Pete McDaniel's book, Uneven Lies: The Heroic Story of African-Americans in Golf (2000), was printed at a time in which there was a seismic shift in the game of golf. Tiger Woods had taken the sport to heights never before imagined. Golf being changed and American history along with it.

² Formerly known as the United States Colored Golf Association.

McDaniel argues that the new excitement surrounding Tiger Woods would not have been possible if not for a long list of golf pioneers that came before him.³ Uneven Lies was not a project done without any sort of personal connection for McDaniel. An African American man himself, McDaniel grew up caddying at Biltmore Forest Country Club in North Carolina. It was in his youth that he noticed the racial disparities in the country club world. There were no African American members at the club and the only Black individuals inside the building were workers. McDaniel states, “Caddies weren’t allowed in the clubhouse... I knew for sure the only faces like mine in that clubhouse were either mixing whiskey sours or tossing shrimp salad. The kind of people who were members of Biltmore Forest didn’t mingle with the kind of people who worked there, except in a service relationship. The service people knew their place. We carried golf bags, cleaned mansions, and babysat pampered progeny. When nightfall came, only the club’s employees and domestics could be caught in the Forest.”⁴

What McDaniel offers readers is a roadmap of how golf got to the point that it was at the time of publication. The timing of publication is an essential part of the historiography of this work because it shows that McDaniel, although excited about Tiger Woods’ ascent to stardom, was keenly interested in telling the whole story of the African American golfers who came before.

Though every chapter is full of valuable information about the entire story of African American golfers, “Public Battles, Private Wars,” discusses key 1950s events in the golf landscape. These events included the enforcement of the PGA Tour’s white-only clause in its bylaws as well as the *Holmes v. Atlanta* Supreme Court case. This case enforced the

³ Pete McDaniel, Uneven Lies: The Heroic Story of African Americans in Golf (Greenwich, CT: The American Golfer, 2000), 15.

⁴ McDaniel, Uneven Lies, 13.

desegregation of public golf facilities in Atlanta, Georgia and eventually all the United States. It is this chapter that my own chapter on African American golfers will build upon.⁵

McDaniel does an excellent job of utilizing primary sources to tell the story of African Americans in golf during the 1950s. McDaniel's work is an excellent read for anyone interested in the topic. It certainly serves a valiant role in providing young African American golfers with stories of other golfers with the same skin tone making their place in a society that has historically been discriminatory and exclusive. Where Uneven Lies struggles as a history is in the practice of the writing itself as a bibliography is nonexistent.

Uneven Lies is a must-read for common golf enthusiasts but should be utilized only in tandem with alternative secondary sources when used for scholarly research. It is written by a trained golf journalist and in the ways of a golf journalist. McDaniel helps a new crowd of African American golfers understand that they have been a key force in the sport long before 1996 when Tiger Woods made his debut on the PGA Tour.

In 1998, Calvin H. Sinnette published his book, Forbidden Fairways: African Americans and the Game of Golf. Like Uneven Lies, Sinnette's work came to the world in the infant years of Tiger Woods' professional career on the PGA Tour. Just one year prior to the publication of this book, Tiger Woods became the first African American to win the Master's Tournament; the most coveted major championship in men's golf.

A passionate golfer himself, Sinnette's reasoning for writing Forbidden Fairways has a very personal connection. Sinnette wrote about a time in the 1950s when he was in his twenties and witnessed the racist nature of many American country clubs and resorts. Sinnette recalled an experience, "When the doors opened, two elderly white women stepped in. Visibly taken aback

⁵ McDaniel, Uneven Lies, 89-91.

to find themselves in close quarters with a group of Black men (those were the days when we referred to ourselves as Negroes), each of the women gave a short, soft, but distinctly audible gasp. Their eyes darted about and their lips quivered as they tried to maintain their composure. The elevator doors closed and the car renewed its descent. At this point, the more intrepid of the two women looked at us with a tentative smile and asked, ‘Do you boys play in the band?’ The looks on our faces betrayed a mixture of perplexity, anger, disgust, and resignation.”⁶

Sinnette’s thesis is easy to find and is well reiterated from beginning to end. He argues that despite the discrimination and racial injustices suffered by African American golfers, they have persevered and continuously made strides to force their way into a society that was not welcoming to them. Sinnette introduces readers to his first chapter by first stating, “Another important milestone was reached in the waning days of the 1996 summer season with the spectacular arrival of Eldrick ‘Tiger’ Woods on the world’s golf scene. His presence has the potential to drive another mighty nail into the moldering coffin of racial prejudice. Its burial is long overdue.”⁷

Rather than focus on a specific period of African Americans in the sport of golf, Sinnette begins his book in the late 18th century and finishes just before the turn of the 20th century. The reasoning behind the immense coverage of time is to provide evidence that African Americans have been in the world of golf just as long as their white counterparts. However, literature and historical coverage of Black golfers has been incredibly limited. Sinnette claims, “Were it not for the existence of the black press, it would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to trace the history of black golf. Not only did those accounts in the black newspapers provide

⁶ Calvin H. Sinnette, Forbidden Fairways: African Americans and the Game of Golf (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 1998), 2-3.

⁷ Sinnette, Forbidden Fairways, 3.

information about what took place, but they also defined the social and cultural contours of the events. The black press became my guide and opened the broad vistas of black golf history to my vision.”⁸

It is Sinnette’s usage of primary sources that makes his work a rich secondary source for golf historians and Civil Rights historians. Though a trained pediatrician, the historical practice and methods utilized by Sinnette ensure that his work is respected and valued by a wider audience than just enthusiasts. Sinnette also employs numerous secondary sources including journal articles and newspaper articles alike. He also references Rhonda Glenn’s work, The Illustrated History of Women’s Golf (1991), several times. Sinnette shows historical craftsmanship in connecting his focus on African American golfers with Glenn’s focus on women in the sport.

The timing of Sinnette’s project, 1994, is important to note. Tiger Woods would not step onto the professional scene officially until 1996 which means Sinnette’s research was well underway by the time hysteria surrounding Woods had taken the sport by storm. As a result, Forbidden Fairways is the first work of history entirely focused on African American golfers.

To cap off his groundbreaking research, Sinnette reiterates his argument by stating, “The African American tried to the utmost to participate in all areas of human endeavor, and some excelled in the process. That applied to golf as it did to everything else. Certainly, there were blacks who caddied, but that was not their sole involvement with the sport. As the African American golf experience becomes more widely known, the world will recognize the many contributions African Americans have made to the game. African Americans are here to stay. And they will continue to play and compete on fairways that were once forbidden.”⁹

⁸ Sinnette, Forbidden Fairways, x.

⁹ Sinnette, Forbidden Fairways, 189.

With his work, Game of Privilege: An African American History of Golf (2017), Lane Demas built upon Calvin Sinnette's Forbidden Fairways. In doing so, he also filled the void left behind by Pete McDaniel in the historiography of African American golfers in the United States. Written in 2017, Demas acknowledges in his bibliography that the emergence of Tiger Woods' professional success inspired numerous publications about Black golfers. However, he challenged that no complete history of African Americans in golf had been written.¹⁰

Demas argues that "African Americans played a significant role in shaping modern golf from its origins in the late nineteenth century to today."¹¹ In a larger context, Demas believes that it was not large organizations that aided Black golfers in their mission to gain access to the sport of golf, but private citizens with their legal battles, grassroots campaigns, and even jail time in efforts to desegregate their local public courses.¹²

The structure of Game of Privilege is that of six chapters: African Americans and the origins of golf in the United States, Golfing the Great Migration and the Harlem Renaissance, the United Golfer's Association, golf and the Post-War Civil Rights Movement, Black Power in golf, and golf in the time of Tiger Woods.¹³

In "Real Democracy is Found on the Links: African Americans and the Origins of Golf in the United States," Demas explains to his readers that when the sport came to colonial America, some slaves were utilized by their masters as assistants during play. He says, "Not only did America's first golfers in Charleston and Savannah likely own slaves, but they also needed substantial assistance to play. Since the clubs used shared park space with no designated greens,

¹⁰ Lane Demas, Game of Privilege: An African American History of Golf (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 321.

¹¹ Demas, Game of Privilege, ix.

¹² Demas, Game of Privilege, x.

¹³ Demas, Game of Privilege, Table of Contents.

holes were dug impromptu, and ‘finders’ were employed to locate balls, watch for foot traffic, and carry equipment--thus, the first golf ‘caddies’ in America were probably black slaves in Charleston.”¹⁴ By providing historical context to the role of the caddie in golf, Demas offers readers a starting point in the story of African Americans in golf.

Demas provides a rich bibliography to support his project. As he makes note, trained historians have not entertained the subject matter in an in-depth manner. Thus, secondary sources for Game of Privilege are, for the most part, not scholarly. However, his exploration of primary sources is vast. He did a service to future historians of the subject matter by providing archival sites as well as interviews, newspapers, and numerous other forms of primary sources.

Where previous publications have not quite fulfilled the appetite for a study done by a historian and in the total practice of a historian, Demas does. His work is thorough in its effort to not only connect African Americans to the origins of golf in America, but also to illustrate their existence in the contemporary state of golf. Demas’ goal was to highlight the story of African American golf as an institution both in the professional and personal leisure realms.¹⁵ His focus was African American golfers in the fight for Civil Rights in America. As a result, there is room for future works to build upon this work by placing narrower guidelines and historical markers on this story.

In 1991, Rhonda Glenn published The Illustrated History of Women’s Golf. This book serves as one of the few dedicated studies to the history of women in the game. Glenn herself was a sportscaster, author, and manager of communications for the United States Golfer’s Association from 1996 to 2013. The Illustrated History of Women’s Golf aims to tell the story of

¹⁴ Demas, Game of Privilege, 3

¹⁵ Demas, Game of Privilege, x.

how and where women got started in golf, and how the professional game was born and developed for women in the United States.¹⁶

Though the entire book is important for research on women in golf, two chapters stand out for this historiography: “The Freckled Fireplug” and “Barnstorming.” It is Glenn’s coverage of the birth of the Ladies Professional Golf Association and the women who established it which is of elevated interest to this project. Though there were thirteen co-founders of the LPGA Tour, there were really two women who were the ignition for the success of the project: Patty Berg and Babe Zaharias. It is for this reason that Glenn devotes an entire chapter to talking about the relationship between the two women.

Glenn’s stance on Patty Berg is easy to identify as she lays out it clearly to readers. She states,

Patty Berg transcended generations: She was a friend to Babe Zaharias and a mother hen to Kathy Whitworth. One of her fans was Nancy Lopez. More than that, she was a wholesome, fresh-faced woman of great kindness and, without doubt, a great player with one of the most sound and powerful swings in the history of the game. Mickey Wright believed that Patty Berg was the finest woman golfer she ever saw... Miss Berg's contributions to golf and to humanity earned many awards that, in the end, overshadowed her greatness as a player. Several believed that her skill was overlooked because she played in the era of Babe Zaharias... Among Miss Berg's qualities, perhaps the most admirable is her cheerful acceptance of her longtime role as Babe's second banana.¹⁷

In this chapter, Glenn showcases her collection of interviews and first-hand accounts of Berg. Though the usage of scholarly secondary sources is few and far between, the fault can be excused because of the lack of those sources existing. Historians had not taken much interest in women’s golf which left Rhonda Glenn to rely heavily on primary source material to substantiate her arguments throughout her book. To Glenn’s credit, she uses primary sources exceptionally.

¹⁶ Rhonda Glenn, The Illustrated History of Women’s Golf (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1991), xiv.

¹⁷ Glenn, The Illustrated History of Women’s Golf, 123.

The importance of highlighting Babe Zaharias according to Glenn was because she was “a remarkable female athlete...”¹⁸ Glenn highlights Zaharias’ numerous athletic achievements, which were many, and she does this because she wants it to be clear to the readers that without Zaharias’ star power, the LPGA would not have survived.¹⁹

There is a level of bias in Glenn’s work which is evident in her recounting of hearing speeches in person or in the level of relationship that she had with numerous athletes. However, this bias does not hinder the overall work but rather boosts its credibility. The Illustrated History of Women’s Golf is woven in such a manner that primary sources seep into each other, and secondary sources are used effectively but without much scholarly discussion. When reading this book, it is evident that Glenn remembers many of the conversations well and has them kept in a special place in her heart.

The eighth chapter, “Barnstorming,” discusses the early days of the LPGA Tour and the stories of the trials that the women who helped found it faced. It is evident that Glenn wants readers to analyze these women as individuals rather than as a collective unit. By encouraging such thought, Glenn helps remind historians that we must work in the spectrum of grey and not the definitive black and white. Primary source accounts from some of the founders are the backbone of this chapter and Glenn tends to prioritize supporting these stories with historical facts while allowing the stories themselves to be the main point. It is because of that practice that readers can read and thus imagine the voices that helped cultivate the current ecosystem of women’s professional golf.²⁰

¹⁸ Glenn, The Illustrated History of Women’s Golf, 136.

¹⁹ Glenn, The Illustrated History of Women’s Golf, 141-142.

²⁰ Glenn, The Illustrated History of Women’s Golf, 150.

Rhonda Glenn takes on a massive undertaking with her work, The Illustrated History of Women's Golf, but she does a respectable job. She tells the story effectively, with passion, and with historical accuracy. There is ample opportunity for historians to take Glenn's work and both build upon it as well as redo it if one wishes. In the two chapters discussed, Glenn offered valuable insight into the thoughts of some of the founding women of the LPGA Tour as well as the trials that those women went through. A side effect of the stories told about golf is that there is evidence that can be pieced together to help illustrate the life of a white woman in the 1950s. It is the job of future historians to analyze these women as individuals, know their stories, and tell them in the history of the United States and of the Cold War as well.

In 2008, David Hudson published, Women in Golf: The Players, the History, and the Future of the Sport. Hudson's argument at the beginning of the book is that most literature about golf has excluded women. He further claims that women have just as much if not more passion for the sport than men do. Hudson wants to make it clear to readers that women have been playing golf since the sport began and that women will continue to play for years to come. He states, "The usual accounts of the development of golf make it appear as though no female ever placed a hand on a golf club to take a swing at a golf ball. However, women have loved the game of golf as much as, if not more than, men have. One American newspaper reported near the end of the nineteenth century: 'Golfing women are said to be more enthusiastic over their favorite game than half the men who play on the links.'"²¹

The structure of Hudson's work allows readers to understand that he is not trying to focus on any time frame of women's golf. Instead, he is interested in telling the story of how women's golf got to where it was in 2008.

²¹ David L. Hudson Jr., Women in Golf: The Players, the History, and the Future of the Sport (Wesport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2008), 3.

The chapter, “The Babe and the Berg... And Louise Suggs,” is written to highlight the fact that Babe Didrikson Zaharias, Patty Berg, and Louise Suggs were the pillars on which professional women’s golf were supported. Like Rhonda Glenn, Hudson sees Berg and Didrikson Zaharias as enormous reasons as to why the LPGA Tour was able to get off the ground and take flight. Unlike Glenn, Hudson includes Louise Suggs into the mix. As Rhonda Glenn’s An Illustrated History of Women’s Golf (1991) is in the notes and bibliography of Hudson’s work, it is evident that he is aware that he is slightly adding onto an idea that has already been put forward by Glenn. Patty Berg and Babe Didrikson Zaharias are paired together seamlessly but Louise Suggs’ name is only added after consideration, as though Hudson wants readers to pick up on the fact that what he is saying is different than others.²²

Hudson focuses entirely on the tournament records and athletic achievements of Patty Berg, Louise Suggs, and Babe Didrikson Zaharias. His argument that Louise Suggs should be included with the other two women is only supported by her tournament records as well as the fact that she was inducted into the LPGA Hall of Fame in 1951 alongside Patty Berg, Babe Didrikson Zaharias, and Betty Jameson. It is for this reason that Hudson’s argument is not necessarily weak, but it also is not strong. It reads more of a soft opinion than that of a historical fact that he wishes to implement into the historiography. A simple rebuttal to his inclusion of Louise Suggs with Babe and Berg would be asking why not Patty Jameson as well? Had he dug deeper into the actual relationships between these three players, his argument would have been better understood as these three women were staunch competitors and often bitter rivals. That is a storyline he did not quite build up.²³

²² Hudson, Women in Golf, 29.

²³ Hudson, Women in Golf, 44.

“Forming the LPGA and Other Greats of that Era” is Hudson’s fifth chapter and is useful for historians who are interested not only in the players who made up the LPGA in the early days but also in how it came to be in general. Hudson discusses numerous other founders of the LPGA tour in this chapter but because of the organization he uses, it is clear that he views these players to be of lesser quality than that of Patty Berg, Babe Didrikson Zaharias, and Louise Suggs.

Hudson references Rhonda Glenn’s work several times in this chapter and throughout this book but he never gets into scholarly discourse with her. Rather, he uses Glenn’s work to support his own via the numerous interviews Glenn was able to conduct in The Illustrated History of Women’s Golf (1991).

Ultimately, Hudson’s goal was not to write a definitive history of women’s golf in the 1950s. There are holes in Hudson’s work but it should be respected as a piece of the historiography of golf in the 1950s and women’s golf. This project builds upon Hudson’s research by making a connection to the United States’ Cold War mission and women’s golf in the 1950s. By taking this approach to history, future historians will be able to see that sports history has a wider audience than sports enthusiasts. Sports are a rich aspect of American society and are a lens through which American history can be viewed.

Catherine Lewis takes the historiography in a new direction with her book “Don’t Ask What I Shot”: How Eisenhower’s Love of Golf Helped Shape 1950s America (2007). Lewis aims to answer a key question: how did the media’s portrayal of Eisenhower as a golf addict affect the thoughts of the American people and foreign governments?²⁴

Early in the book, Lewis gives President Eisenhower enormous credit for the growth of golf in the 1950s in the United States. She makes the argument almost immediately that even

²⁴ Catherine M. Lewis, “Don’t Ask What I Shot”: How Eisenhower’s Love of Golf Helped Shape 1950s America (New York: McGraw Hill, 2007), ix.

though he was constantly pictured playing golf and sometimes criticized in the media for doing so, Eisenhower's popularity ratings were high throughout his entire presidency.²⁵ She states, "Photographs of Eisenhower enthusiastically playing his favorite courses during his presidency also kindled the nation's interest in the sport. If golf was worthy of Ike's participation, then it must be good for anybody. Ike was widely popular among the American people, regardless of their political persuasion. 'I Like Ike' was not only a political slogan but the consensus concerning the president. His obsession with the game- combined with the postwar rise in leisure time, the availability of new equipment, the advent of televised sports, and the popularity of players such as Ben Hogan and a young Arnold Palmer--proved influential in the sport's second renaissance."²⁶

In her chapter, "The Part-Time President," Lewis discusses the issue of racism in America. The nature of the Professional Golfers' Association and its relationship with African Americans is described by Lewis: "The Caucasian race clause made things crystal clear for PGA members of color like Dewey Brown. A light-skinned African American golfer from North Carolina, Brown joined the PGA of America in 1928 and remained an active member until his affiliation was unceremoniously terminated in 1934 when the clause went into effect. With new rules freshly printed in black and white, so to speak, Brown-like other non-Caucasian members - was a persona non grata. The game of golf--at least the game Ike played--would remain white-only until Ike left office."²⁷

²⁵ Lewis, "Don't Ask What I Shot", 2.

²⁶ Lewis, "Don't Ask What I Shot", 3.

²⁷ Lewis, "Don't Ask What I Shot", 197.

What makes “Don’t Ask What I Shot” important to this project is the close connection that Lewis makes between the United States, golf, and the Soviet Union. We can see how the capitalist natured sport of golf infiltrated the Soviet Union and was utilized by Eisenhower to try and cultivate a relationship between himself and Nikita Khrushchev. Lewis is able to use key primary and secondary sources throughout the entire book. Specifically, in “The Part-Time President,” she uses primary source accounts from Khrushchev to give perspective about matters of national emergency such as the U-2 spy plane incident in 1960. She allows Khrushchev’s voice to be heard by quoting his feelings of betrayal and disappointment that despite the appearance of Ike’s supposed friendship, the president was still untrustful and was approving intelligence missions over the Soviet Union. Lewis then uses a news report which says, “He (Khrushchev) was definitely looking forward to entertaining Ike in Russia, had built a Bijou palace for him overlooking Lake Baikal, had learned golf so that he could play the president, and had even planned to construct his own version of Disneyland outside Moscow.”²⁸ In the following pages, Lewis utilizes numerous primary sources to show readers that the sport of golf had definitely infiltrated the Soviet Union.

Lewis sets herself apart from other historians of golf by devoting the entirety of her book to the political impact that golf had through one of America’s most influential presidents. Rather than focus on the professional aspect of the sport, Lewis is more interested in how golf can be used as a lens through which to view American society. Her intimate discussion of class and politics in American golf in the 1950s, specifically in the life of President Eisenhower, is what makes Lewis’ work a critical inclusion in this historiography. Unlike those before her, Lewis dares to view golf in a wider perspective.

²⁸ Lewis, “Don’t Ask What I Shot”, 216.

In 2009, George B. Kirsch had his work Golf in America published. His book would be cited in almost every history of golf in America from that point forward and rightfully so. Early on, Kirsch comments on a *Golf Digest* article that claims that golf had overtaken baseball as “America’s national pastime.” He cites the billions of dollars spent on the sport as evidence for such an argument. Kirsch makes it clear that his work is not intended to be a comprehensive history of golf in America but rather a “concise narrative and social history of the sport in America from the 1880s to the present.”²⁹

In the chapter, “The Post World War II Boom,” Kirsch largely credits America’s strong economy as a key factor in the rise in popularity of golf. He states, “Men and women of modest means could afford to play a round a week on municipal, daily-fee, or industrial company courses, despite rising green fees.”³⁰ He acknowledges the importance of President Eisenhower’s influence on the sport, which Catherine Lewis would appreciate, but he hesitates to give Ike all of the credit as Kirsch cites a boom in golf that came a few years before Ike took office.³¹ This boom, Kirsch argues, was a result of the strong economy after the Second World War, the business world valuing country club memberships, and resort and retirement communities with golf courses added to the national appeal to vacation at golf destinations. Though he discusses Eisenhower’s relationship with golf extensively, Catherine Lewis’ work “Don’t Ask What I Shot” (2007), is excluded from his selected bibliography.

A large issue many might have with Golf in America is the lack of endnotes. Kirsch opts to include a selected bibliography that is divided by topic. Although this points readers in the

²⁹ George B. Kirsch, Golf in America (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), ix.

³⁰ Kirsch, Golf in America, 128.

³¹ Kirsch, Golf in America, 129.

general direction of where he discusses or utilizes those sources in the text, endnotes would be much preferred and would do a more effective job of placing his sources accurately in the text.

The discussion surrounding African American golfers in the 1950s centered around two issues according to Kirsch: “the struggle to desegregate municipal golf courses in the South and the Southwest and the battle to provide black professionals a fair chance to compete in tournaments sponsored by the PGA.”³² In his eighth chapter, “African Americans at Mid-Century,” Kirsch focuses heavily on the desegregation of public golf courses. He discusses several court cases dealing with the issue including arguably one of the most well-known cases, *Holmes v. City of Atlanta*, which eventually led to the desegregation of public golf courses in America as the case made its way to the Supreme Court.³³

In his ninth chapter, “Women at Mid-Century,” Kirsch adds a new perspective to the historiography of women’s golf: that of the woman African American golfer. Kirsch states, “While white women became a major force in private golf clubs and leading female players founded the LPGA, African American women struggled to gain respect within the black golfing world and equal opportunity in national golf organizations that were still restricted to whites.”³⁴ At the end of this chapter, Kirsch gives credit to the giants of women’s golf across racial lines and states that they endured many of the same struggles and many separate struggles. Kirsch makes it clear that without these women, women’s golf today would look much different but that gender and racial discrimination in golf would continue to remain prevalent past the post-war period.

³² Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 147.

³³ Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 153-154.

³⁴ Kirsch, *Golf in America*, 174.

It would make sense that any history written about golf in America should refer to the work titled Golf in America. As he says in his introduction, Kirsch did not set out on a mission to write the comprehensive history of golf in America, but rather the social history of the sport from 1880 to today. This project builds upon Kirsch's research by making a political connection to the United States' Cold War efforts and the way that golf sometimes benefited but mostly hindered those efforts.

Chapter Two: Black Golfers in the 1950s

African Americans were not represented in golf media in the 1950s. Despite this, Black golfers had careers playing in the United States Colored Golf Association and brought the battle against Jim Crow to the golf course. At the time, the image of the United States was carefully constructed by the media as well as the United States government. This was done to promote democracy and capitalism to paint America in a more favorable light than the Soviet Union. Despite how many African American's fought for their civil rights and forged careers in professional golf, popular media in the United States did not utilize those stories to promote American ideologies in the Cold War. Rather, Black golfers were ignored in favor of a vision of white America and white golf.

Golf was largely gatekept from members of the Black community and the advertisements of the 1950s reflected the public opinion that golf was a sport to be played by "gentlemen," who were depicted as white men. Popular images of golf in the 1950s aligned with the common cultural themes of the era. Like many other cartoons and magazines at the time, golf was portrayed as a sport that was played by middle to high-class white individuals. Despite these representations of the sport, Black golfers forged their own paths in professional golf and eventually made it to the PGA Tour.

There are four people in an April 1950, United States Brewers Association advertisement: one older man, one younger man, one older woman, and one younger woman. The women are chatting, fitting the stereotype of women's pension for idol gossip rather than golf, while the two men are practicing their putting strokes in the living room. Everyone in the image has a beer either in their hand or very close by on a silver platter. The advertisement reads:

Beer belongs... enjoy it. In this home-loving land of ours... in this America of kindness, of good-humored tolerance... perhaps no beverages are more 'at home' on more

occasions than good American beer and ale. For beer and ale are the kinds of beverages Americans like. They belong—to pleasant living, to good fellowship, to sensible moderation. And our right to enjoy them, this too belongs – to our own American heritage of personal freedom.³⁵

Although the women seen in the image are drinking beer, they are in the background and the men are the focus of the ad. As a result of the appeals to personal freedom, “good-humored tolerance,” well-furnished living room, and conservative nature of the decade, this advertisement was meant to be seen by white Americans who were of at least middle-class economic qualification. The “good-humored tolerance” referenced in the ad is likely referencing white encounters with Black Americans, and the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement.

White masculinity, as evidenced in the advertisement, was not offered to Black men. Though Black and white men alike shared similar interests and views on the household, American idealism at the time preferred the white family to be the model.

A 1951 Wilson golf ball advertisement shows a white man with slicked-back hair, a collared shirt, vest, trousers, and spiked golf shoes that look like dress shoes, walking with his golf club with the message, “It’s a long walk. . . But it’s a happy, light-hearted walk when you hit a Wilson Top Notch or K-26 ball those extra yards far down the fairway. . . It costs no more to play the best.”³⁶ This advertisement catered to white middle-class men who wanted to play the same golf balls as the professionals of the time. Golf is represented by a middle-class white man who is well dressed even in the act of sport, and is made to believe that he could play at a talent level like the professionals if only he were to play the branded ball that is being sold. Once again, Black golfers are not included in these images of golf. The social norms of America at the time

³⁵ United States Brewers Association, “Beer belongs” advertisement, April 1950.

³⁶ Wilson Golf Balls, “It’s a long walk” advertisement, 1951.

are represented by the access to golf for middle-class white Americans and the exclusion of any representation of Black golfers.

On the cover of the August 1953 edition of *Lifetime Living*, a white man and woman are playing golf. The clubhouse in the background resembles old plantation homes of the deep south, a characteristic of many golf clubs that is done intentionally to provoke the “good ole days” sentiment that many Americans held. The tone of this cover is joyful, playful, relaxed, and not concerned with work or earning a dollar. It shows a woman putting a ball towards the hole, and the man grabbing the flagstick for her as they laugh and giggle about how much fun they are having on their day free from responsibility. The words, “For those who plan ahead,” are on the top of the page followed by the selling question, “Want to retire on an island?” By stating, “For those who plan ahead” and then having an image of two white individuals playing golf indicates that Black people are not thought of as those who “plan ahead” to retire to an island and play golf. The message is subliminal but clear when analyzing this magazine cover with other artistic creations of the period. Once more, the themes on this cover coincide with the themes previously presented: white, middle to high class, and consumerist at the root.

A Wings Shirts advertisement from 1950 continues the trend of advertisements that utilize images of golf to sell their merchandise. The image shows three white men standing on a putting green with a woman in a red dress standing in the background holding the door of a Chrysler Town and Country vehicle. The ad reads, “New Wings sport shirts, fashioned for town and country wear – just as much at home behind a desk as on the green. Hi-test colors and long-mileage fabrics are standard equipment with all these models. And they have ‘fast pick-up’ interest with the ladies!”³⁷ This advertisement sells a 1950s traditional version of masculinity and

³⁷ Wings Shirts, advertisement, 1950.

social living. Once again, this American ideal of white masculinity is not offered to Black men. The positioning of the woman in the background in a beautiful dress, standing next to a brand-new Chrysler vehicle symbolizes the heterosexual normativity of the 1950s and presents viewers with what could be theirs, the woman, if they bought Wings sport shirts and had a Chrysler Town and Country vehicle. Consumerism, whiteness, traditional masculinity, and sexism are all three symbols of the sport of golf at the time and the 1950s in general.

In his book, The Affluent Society (1958), Harvard economist John Galbraith provides insight into the culture of the 1950s and the reasoning behind the consumerist-based economy:

Poverty was the all-pervasive fact of that world (Great Depression). Obviously, it is not of ours (the 1950s). One would not expect that the preoccupations of a poverty-ridden world would be relevant in one where the ordinary individual has access to amenities—foods, entertainment, personal transportation, and plumbing—in which not even the rich rejoiced a century ago. So great has been the change that many of the desires of the individual are no longer even evident to him. They become so only as they are synthesized, elaborated, and nurtured by advertising and salesmanship, and these, in turn, have become among our most important and talented professions. Few people at the beginning of the nineteenth century needed an adman to tell them what they wanted.³⁸

Galbraith offers a professional economic analysis of the era in which he was living, a glimpse into how he interpreted the society he was living in and a comparison of that society to a much different reality less than twenty years prior. Galbraith explains that the consumerist nature of the 1950s is representative of the minds of Americans at the time. They had the money and they spent it even if they did not have reason to unless they were targeted by advertisements.

Furthermore, in his chapter on inequality, Galbraith states, “The great houses, the great yachts, the great balls, the stables, and the expansive jewel-encrusted bosoms were all used to identify the individual as having a claim to the honors of wealth.”³⁹ What Galbraith does not

³⁸ John Kenneth Galbraith, The Affluent Society and Other Writings (New York: The Library of America, 2010), 356.

³⁹ Galbraith, The Affluent Society and Other Writings, 424.

mention, and what remains evasive to popular media of the fifties, is the representation of people of color.

American society during this time has commonly been referred to as an affluent society. William Leuchtenburg states in his book A Troubled Feast: American Society since 1945 (1973), “The booming economy enabled millions of Americans to take part in the burgeoning consumer culture. With unprecedented amounts of disposable income, consumers devoted much of their time to institutions that catered to their needs and whims-shopping malls with hanging baskets of flowers and piped music, suburban department stores with civic auditoriums, supermarkets with row on row of brilliantly colored cartons.”⁴⁰ The American promise of the pursuit of happiness was directly correlated to consumerism. The United States government knew that and intended to let the rest of the world know what kind of life they could have in a democratic and capitalist society such as the U.S.

The image of America that had the stamp of approval from the government was one that was white, married, had children, lived in suburbia, and loved to spend money. African Americans were not included in this advertisement of a country that prided itself on life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The lack of inclusion of African Americans into American society was a trend that was not limited to the American National Exhibition in Moscow or magazine advertisements. African American golfers were routinely ignored in golf media and were discriminated against in golf both professionally and recreationally. However, Black golfers in the 1950s were forging careers in the sport and were also fighting for access to public courses across the country. Although America’s intended portrayal of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in propaganda excluded African Americans, the people themselves were actively

⁴⁰ William Leuchtenburg, A Troubled Feast: American Society since 1945 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 55.

living lives that would have benefitted the United States' Cold War image, had the stories of those people been showcased or even included at all.

Though they are not represented in the popular media of the 1950s, Black Americans most certainly enjoyed playing the game of golf. In fact, Dr. George Grant, son of formerly escaped slaves, invented the wooden golf tee in 1899.⁴¹ Born in 1879, John Shippen was the first African American to play in the United States Open in 1896, a tournament hosted every year by the United States Golfers Association. In his book, Uneven Lies: The Heroic Story of African-Americans in Golf (2000), Pete McDaniel states,

They told Havemeyer (President of the USGA), in no uncertain terms, that if Shippen and Bunn were allowed to play in the championship, they would not. Havemeyer was just as adamant that Shippen and Bunn would be allowed to play, even if their inclusion inspired the rest of the field to withdraw. It is believed that the president assuaged the dissidents by claiming Shippen was half Shinnecock Indian, a less distasteful racial cocktail in a country drunk on Jim Crow at a time when the Supreme Court would uphold a prior ruling of separate but equal. Whether Havemeyer was motivated by a desire to right civil wrongs or a devotion to fair play is of little consequence. The fact remains that he stood his ground in the crimson face of adversity. The next day Shippen and Bunn teed it up with the world's best, including Charles Blair Macdonald.⁴²

One year after the Supreme Court decided separate was not equal with the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, the court faced a challenge to their ruling. In 1951, the men of the Holmes family, a prominent Black family in Atlanta, Georgia, decided that they were tired of playing their rounds of golf at Lincoln Country Club, which was a Black-run golf course. The conditions of Lincoln Country Club had deteriorated significantly, and the course was simply not kept up with. Charles T. Bell, who was a golf partner with the Holmes', commented on the condition of Lincoln, "The greens looked like someone had taken a lawn mower, cut an area and

⁴¹ Kylie Garabed, "Dr. George Grant and the Evolution of the Golf Tee," United States Golf Association, July 3, 2018.

⁴² Pete McDaniel, Uneven Lies: The Heroic Story of African-Americans in Golf (Connecticut: The American Golfer, 2000), 25.

put some sand on it. Most of us were former caddies, so we knew how a golf course should look. We became discontented and went to the board of directors seeking improvements.”⁴³

It was at that point that the Holmes’ and Bell attempted to play a round of golf at Bobby Jones public golf course. At the time, public golf courses were segregated in Atlanta. The only way many Black golfers were touching the course was if they were caddying for white golfers. The Holmes’ and C.T. Bell were not purely interested in playing golf, but rather taking the fight for civil rights to the golf course. The golfers were denied access and negotiations for them to be allowed to play were unsuccessful. As a result, with future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall on their side, they filed a lawsuit that eventually made its way to the Supreme Court in the fall of 1955. The case was closed in November of the same year with a ruling in favor of the Holmes’. In December, the Holmes family played two public golf courses in Atlanta, including the Bobby Jones course, ultimately ending the segregation of public golf in Atlanta.⁴⁴ On December 24th, 1955, *The New York Times* announced the success:

Negroes will begin play on the city's public golf courses tomorrow with the approval of Mayor William B. Hartsfield, but with the disapproval of Gov. Martin Griffin. The Mayor yielded to a United States District Court decree implementing an early Supreme Court decision against golf course segregation. He said that as an alternative the city could have sold its parks and closed the links, but this would have deprived 70,000 white players of the game and 100 city employees of their jobs just to deny "a few dozen Negro players" the use of the courses.

The Governor issued a statement deploring that the city "has chosen to throw in the towel" but saying there was nothing he could do about it. He said he had offered to help Atlanta with legislation to sell the courses as an alternative to integration but had been spurned.⁴⁵

Desegregation was being heavily resisted at every turn to preserve a society that reinforced racism daily. The federal government and many local governments wanted to maintain a

⁴³ McDaniel, *Uneven Lies*, 91.

⁴⁴ Author Unknown, “Holmes v. Atlanta: Changing the Game,” Georgia Tech University, accessed April 7, 2022.

⁴⁵ Author Unknown, “Atlanta to Open Links: Governor Deplores End of Golf Course Segregation,” *The New York Times*, December 24, 1955.

propagandistic national image of racial purity, luxury, and national superiority. This was the fight of the Cold War.

The same year, six Black golfers in Greensboro, North Carolina defiantly paid their green fees and started their round of golf without permission at Gillespie Park golf course, a city-owned course, but one that operated as a private course. The group made it through five holes of golf before the head pro of the course caught them and demanded they leave. Dr. Simkins, the leader of the group of golfers, was asked why they were out there knowing they were not permitted because of their skin color. One of the golfers replied, “We’re out here for a cause—the cause of democracy. We’re taxpayers. This is a city golf course funded by our taxes and we should be allowed to play it.”⁴⁶ The group kept going and played nine holes of golf before they went home for the evening. They would be arrested that night for trespassing and would lose every court hearing they had regarding the matter.⁴⁷ Once again, the reality of life in America for Black Americans was opposite of life in America for a white man. While American media and the federal government were pushing life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to the Soviets and the rest of the world, African Americans were being actively rejected from taking part in this model representation of the riches of democracy and capitalism.

Black golfers found a home for their profession in the United States Colored Golf Association. Founded in 1925 and renamed the United Golfers Association in 1930, the UGA gave a platform for Black golfers at a time when they were fighting for much more than just the right to golf.⁴⁸ The initial purpose of the UGA was to gather golf enthusiasts and provide a social circle where Black golfers could meet and play golf together. Unlike the PGA, where white

⁴⁶ McDaniel, *Uneven Lies*, 95.

⁴⁷ McDaniel, *Uneven Lies*, 95-96.

⁴⁸ United States Golf Association, “Significant Moments of African-Americans in Golf,” accessed April 7, 2022.

golfers were playing, the UGA had twenty-six clubs that played at whatever local public courses they were permitted.⁴⁹

An organization like the USCGA/UGA was imperative for the Black golf community. The PGA Tour had always made it essentially impossible for Black golfers to infiltrate white tournaments, but they made it official in 1934 with a white only clause in its bylaws. The clause stated, "Professional golfers of the Caucasian Race and their assistants, over the age of eighteen years and residing in North America or South America, who have served at least three years in the profession (either in the employ of a golf club or as an assistant to a qualified professional), shall be eligible for election to membership, and in addition thereto the Association, in representative assembly, may elect any number of honorary members and from said honorary members may elect an honorary president and not to exceed two honorary vice-presidents."⁵⁰

In his journal article, "African-American Golfers in the Age of Jim Crow," Marvin Dawkins shows that from 1926 to 1961, there were only twelve different champions of the UGA National Open. Dawkins states, "Representation at the national level tournaments increasingly drew from a wider area of the country. . . By 1941, participation in the UGA National Open included representation from the South, Midwest, West, and East."⁵¹

The UGA was the professional home of Black golf and helped shape the careers of legends such as Charlie Sifford, Lee Elder, Teddy Rhodes, and Bill Spiller. Not only did the UGA provide a professional foundation on which Black golfers could base their careers on, it also became an integral part of African American culture as it attracted mega stars such as Jackie

⁴⁹ John H. Kennedy, *A Course of Their Own: A History of African American Golfers* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 22.

⁵⁰ McDaniel, *Uneven Lies*, 48.

⁵¹ Marvin P. Dawkins, "African-American Golfers in the Age of Jim Crow," *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 20, no.1 (Spring, 1996): 42.

Robinson, Sugar Ray Robinson, Joe Louis, Jim Brown, and even Duke Ellington.⁵² The African American community had successfully forged a social haven in a sport that was actively discriminating against them and attempting to force them out. Golf, according to golf media, the PGA Tour, and many private country clubs and public courses, was meant to be enjoyed by white individuals only.

Golf was symbolic of the ideal American lifestyle: affluent, exclusive, and hypocritically honor bound by rules. The institution of golf in the 1950s was a direct reflection of how American society was at the time. The United States appeared to be a wealthy place to live that promised opportunities and luxuries because of democracy and capitalism. Underneath that mask, the United States was actively discriminating against Black Americans and limiting the pursuit of happiness to whites only. Despite civil rights infringements both on and off the golf course, African Americans came together to form communities that enjoyed golf together and fought daily for a more inclusive America. The actions of Black golfers and their communities exhibited a resiliency and steadfastness that, if promoted intentionally, would have served the United States' Cold War efforts and image favorably by showcasing that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was not just for whites.

Legendary boxer Joe Louis has had his story told about life in the boxing ring. However, Louis had a significant role in the fight for civil rights on the golf course. Louis is most well-known for his 1936 fight against German boxer Max Schmeling. At the time, Louis knew his fight was against the Nazi regime and he was fighting on the behalf of the United States, democracy, and the rest of the free world. Introduced to golf just months before the famous fight, Joe Louis had developed a pretty intense golf addiction. He loved to gamble on the course but

⁵² McDaniel, Uneven Lies, 54.

most importantly he loved the game and the people he played with. John Kennedy recalls one of Louis' gambling stories: "At Chicago's Wayside Golf Course, he (Louis) lost \$10,000 one day to a friend who owned a small cleaning establishment, only to come back to end up ahead \$17,000. When the man was short \$7,000, he wrote Louis an IOU with his cleaning business as collateral. Louis later tore up the IOU rather than take the business away from his friend."⁵³

Joe Louis' love affair with the sport followed him into the 1950s where he found himself to be an above average amateur golfer. A competitor in everything he did, he routinely played in amateur events hosted by the UGA. In 1951, he would go on to beat future Master's Champion Lee Elder; the first African American to be permitted to play in the prestigious tournament hosted annually in Augusta, Georgia.

In 1952, Louis found himself in another fight, this time with the PGA Tour. Louis claimed, "We've got another Hitler to get by. They're all working the same way. Horton Smith believes in the white race—Hitler believed in the super race."⁵⁴ Though a hyperbole it may have been, the PGA Tour's devout commitment to discrimination makes Louis' metaphor an understandable one. As a result of his stardom and genuine golf talent, Joe Louis' presence was highly requested at many events. This was the case when he was requested to come play as an amateur at the San Diego invitational by the sponsors of the tournament, the San Diego County Chevrolet Association. They saw the attention he had on him, and they wanted the spotlight on their event. However exciting it may have been to be given the opportunity to play, Louis' excitement was soon brought to a halt when he was made aware that the PGA Tour rules committee had banned Louis and two other Black golfers from playing.

⁵³ Kennedy, A Course of Their Own, 68.

⁵⁴ Kennedy, A Course of Their Own, 73.

Upset, Louis wanted to make sure that this story was not going to go unnoticed, so he went to radio host Walter Winchell in New York. On January 13, Winchell told the story:

I have an exclusive I think on one of those unhappy discrimination stories. This time, concerning Joe Louis, the ex-champion. San Diego, California—Joe Louis, the former heavyweight champion, has just been dealt a very hard blow. Joe was invited to play in the San Diego Open from January 17th to January 20th at the San Diego Country Club. The golf tournament proceeds going to the crippled children in San Diego. However, Horton Smith, the PGA President, would not give an OK to the ex-champion to play in that Open, because Joe Louis told me on the long distance telephone only a few moments ago, he is a Negro. Joe, thanks for telling me about it. . . You of all people have known where I stand on such miserable things for a very long time.⁵⁵

Louis knew his fight was much larger than just himself. There were countless Black golfers that were relying on him to fight on their behalf. He would do so proudly.

Louis explained, “I’m not asking for anything simply because I’m Joe Louis. I won’t let them lift the restrictions for me alone. Either the others [Spiller and Clark] will be permitted to play, or I won’t play either.”⁵⁶ Ultimately, Spiller and Clark would not play in the tournament because they were not amateurs, did not have status on the PGA Tour, and because of the whites-only clause in its bylaws. Joe Louis decided that one is better than none and he became the first Black golfer to play in a PGA Tour event in January of 1952.⁵⁷ It would take another nine years for the PGA Tour to remove its discriminatory clause from its structure.

Charlie Sifford was among those Black golfers who cultivated careers with the UGA during the 1950s. Sifford entered the world of golf as a caddie at a whites-only country club in North Carolina and went on to win six championships in the UGA throughout the 1950s.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ “*Mr. and Mrs. North*”: Winchell radio scripts, January 13 and January 20, 1952, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the Billy Rose Theatre Collection.

⁵⁶ Kennedy, *A Course of Their Own*, 76.

⁵⁷ Kennedy, *A Course of Their Own*, 79.

⁵⁸ Marvin P. Dawkins, “African-American Golfers in the Age of Jim Crow,” *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 20, no.1 (Spring, 1996): 42.

Sifford described his early experiences with the game in an interview with Terry Gross of *NPR* in 1992:

I guess it's just a gift from God, you know? Because I used to get out and I used to - I'm from a very, very poor family. I had my father and mother, they had six kids, and my father was a laborer. And when I'd get out of school in the afternoon I would go to the golf course, and I just picked the game up. And when I was 13 years old I could shoot 70 - even-par 71, one over par and then something like that. I just took a liking to the game.⁵⁹

Of course, working at a whites-only country club did not mean that Sifford was welcome to play the course whenever he pleased. As previously mentioned in this paper, the mindset of many of the elites of these country clubs was that Black men were caddies (a service position), and white people played. Charlie goes on to explain the circumstances that led to him furthering his golf adventure:

Well, we had a day we called Caddie Day Monday. (Laughter). But sometimes I would slip out on the golf course and that's why the gentleman that owned it, Sutton Alexander, a very nice man - and God bless him, he passed - and he used to let me - take me out and we'd play, you know? But after, all the members of the golf course got to talking about it. So he asked my mother and father if they would let me go somewhere where I could play golf, and that would be Philadelphia. I had an uncle up there and I went to Philadelphia in 1939.⁶⁰

The Professional Golfers' Association's whites-only clause remained in its bylaws until 1961 when it was withdrawn at their annual meeting.⁶¹ Charlie Sifford became the first Black man to receive full membership on the PGA Tour in 1961 and became "the first Negro to compete in a Southern tournament sponsored by the Professional Golfers' Association."⁶²

⁵⁹ Charlie Sifford, "Fresh Air Remembers Charlie Sifford, Who Broke Barriers in Golf," interview by Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*, NPR, 1992.

⁶⁰ Charlie Sifford, "Fresh Air Remembers Charlie Sifford, Who Broke Barriers in Golf," interview by Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*, NPR, 1992.

⁶¹ Rhonda Glenn, "Charlie Sifford: A Hard Road to Golf Glory," *United States Golf Association*, February 6, 2012.

⁶² Author Unknown, "Sifford to Compete: North Carolina Club Accepts Negro Golfer for Open," *The New York Times*, April 5, 1961.

Undoubtedly, Sifford was threatened numerous times. He recalled a phone call he received the night after his first round of the tournament:

After the first round of the tournament, I shot 68 and led the tournament on the first day. And as I went back to these friends' house I was living with - I wasn't in a hotel - and the phone rang and they asked to speak to Charlie Sifford, so I answered the phone. So, this guy said, 'you Charlie Sifford?' So, I said, yep. So, he said, 'you'd better not bring your - back to the golf course tomorrow.' So, I told him, I said, well, I tee off at 9:40 and whatever you're going to do, you'd better get ready to do it because I'll be there. So, I went out, teed off and about ten to twelve guys started on number one and took them before the 14th hole before they could arrest them all.⁶³

Charlie Sifford was a trailblazer for Black golfers in America. In an era in which Black representation in golf was minimal and popular media never showed Black individuals playing golf, Sifford and many other Black individuals fought for their right to enjoy the sport.

It was not until 1975, when Augusta National Golf Club, in Augusta, Georgia, first extended an invitation to Lee Elder to become the first African American to tee it up in the most prestigious golf tournament in the world, The Masters.⁶⁴ Elder received numerous threats regarding his participation in the Masters Tournament. He recalled, "It was stuff like you shouldn't be in golf, you better watch yourself, you better look behind every tree because you're gonna have a big surprise. The letters were always unsigned, and I kept getting these phone calls wherever I was. They'd say, 'You don't deserve it, you need to be carrying the bag, not playing like the rest of the niggers.' It was pretty bad stuff, but I expected it."⁶⁵

In April of 1997, fifty years after Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in baseball, Tiger Woods became the first Black man to win the Masters Tournament. Without the dedication and perseverance of the Black golfers before him to break through the rigid color barriers of the

⁶³ Charlie Sifford, "Fresh Air Remembers Charlie Sifford, Who Broke Barriers in Golf," interview by Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*, NPR, 1992.

⁶⁴ United States Golf Association, "Significant Moments of African-Americans in Golf," accessed April 7, 2022.

⁶⁵ Leonard Shapiro, "Bittersweet Memories for Elder, The Pioneer," *The Washington Post*, April 6, 2000.

sport, Tiger Woods' path to golf glory would inevitably look much different. When Charlie Sifford was asked, "How much pride do you have when you watch Tiger Woods?" He responded, "I am so proud of that young man. Because he made my dream come true. I told him a long time ago that someone of color was going to rise and master this game of golf."⁶⁶

Charlie Sifford was asked why he thought the game of golf was so resistant to change and inclusion. His response was undoubtedly felt by Black golfers throughout the nation:

That's what at first - when I was 13 years old and I had to leave North Carolina to come to Pennsylvania to play golf, I always wondered why they didn't want a black man to play golf. I've proved everything. I proved to the world that a black man could play golf and be a gentleman. I never - they saw me out on the tour with three or four different women. They have never seen me with no women, and I've never been with any - they've never seen me bothering any of their wives. So, I don't know what they're afraid of. And we're outnumbered anyway. If they had 20 blacks out there well, hell, you've got 4,500 whites. So, I mean you know, well, what is it? We don't have any tails. I just don't understand it.⁶⁷

The 1950s was a decade of affluence for many, and a decade of segregation and discrimination for more. Advertisements and artwork during that time depicted cultural themes of the era that carried into golf. That is, advertisements largely represented a white, consumeristic, heterosexual, affluent society which failed to include representations of people of color. The United States government was actively trying to paint the country in the most favorable light as possible to the rest of the world. While many countries, particularly the Soviet Union, were critical of the United States' treatment of African Americans, the government and American media could have utilized the UGA and Black golfers in America to push back against the argument that America was only great for white citizens. The opportunity to sportswash the American image by advertising Black golfers and their level of professionalism, talent, and culture was missed by the United States government during this time. Golf and the Cold War

⁶⁶ Charlie Sifford, "A Conversation with Charlie Sifford," interview by Fran Charles, PGA Tour, 2005.

⁶⁷ Charlie Sifford, "Fresh Air Remembers Charlie Sifford, Who Broke Barriers in Golf," interview by Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*, NPR, 1992.

may seem to be entirely separate subjects, but this paper has shown that the two belong in the same conversation. The stories of Black golfers in the 1950s adds a rich historical context through which to examine one of the most unique periods in United States history.

Today, the PGA Tour prides itself on diversity and inclusion in the sport of golf. In the 2021 to 2022 PGA Tour season there were ninety active international members from twenty-eight different nations.⁶⁸ While people of color were excluded from popular media representations of golf in the 1950s and faced unwavering discrimination in the arena of professional golf, it is thanks to men such as Charlie Sifford, John Shippen, Dr. George Grant, Lee Elder, and Tiger Woods that the sport of golf has seen a sharp increase in its diversity and inclusion.

⁶⁸ Author Unknown, "About Us," PGA Tour, accessed April 7, 2022.

Chapter Three: On the Course, Not Always the Kitchen: Women Golfers in the 1950s

The United States found itself in a position of geopolitical dominance following the Second World War. This status did not come without outside pressure and threats to American society. The Soviet Union was keen on challenging the United States' role as the leader of the free world as it began expanding what Winston Churchill called the Iron Curtain; a group of countries that cushioned communism in the Soviet Union including Poland, Eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania.⁶⁹ The Cold War began before the 1950s but as a result of American economic affluence, the United States would wage their fight through luxurious lifestyles and propaganda of American success as a result of democracy and capitalism. One such lifestyle was that of the American golfer. In the 1950s, more individuals had access to the financial means to engage in leisure activities such as golf. The American woman golfer most certainly aided the United States' image of capitalism and democracy in the 1950s. Although the government intended on advertising American patriarchy, women golfers found a home for themselves in golf both professionally and leisurely. American women golfers in the 1950s showed the world that America's riches were not limited to men.

In his book, American Culture in the 1950s (2007), Martin Halliwell focuses on fiction, poetry, drama and performance, music, radio, film and television, and "visual arts beyond modernism." Halliwell analyzes the 1950s through a cultural lens. Though his approach to entertainment does not include sport, his work has parallels to this project's analysis of American golf in the 1950s. Halliwell also includes a social class aspect which is imperative due to the Cold War nature of the research. That is, class and living standards are essentially what the Cold War was about in its purest form.

⁶⁹ Winston Churchill, "Sinews of Peace" (speech, Fulton, Missouri, March 5, 1946), America's National Churchill Museum, <https://www.nationalchurchillmuseum.org/sinews-of-peace-iron-curtain-speech.html>

Halliwell claims that, “Cold War ideology is central to understanding 1950s culture but it was also a period in which the economic prosperity that began during World War II started to have tangible effects on middle-class life.”⁷⁰ Halliwell argues that “American culture in the 1950s in this broader sense, where a notion of national culture – with ‘One nation under God’ added to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954 – jostles with a range of other cultural expressions and practices.”⁷¹ This project branches off and offers an additional lens through which to view American society in the 1950s as it pertains to the Cold War.

Richard Moss is a golf historian who must be referenced in any research in which golf is a centerpiece. In his book, Golf and the American Country Club (2001), Richard Moss deals exclusively with the private aspect of golf in America rather than include the public realm. Moss’ research offers a look into the practices and societies that revolved around the private country club. Moss shows readers what the landscape of golf looked like for an entire century. This research builds upon Moss’s work by placing American women’s golf in a Cold War discussion. While Moss devotes an entire book to the major American institution of the country club, this research views golf through a political as well as cultural lens. Moss’ chapter, “An Endangered Species,” argues that private country clubs were in the minority when it comes to where Americans played their golf. He states, “Exactly when the total number of public and daily-fee courses began to outnumber private clubs is hard to estimate, but it was probably some time in the 1950s.”⁷²

In 1995, Marcia Chambers wrote The Unplayable Lie: The Untold Story of Women and Discrimination in American Golf. The organization of Chambers’ book is strategic in that she

⁷⁰ Martin Halliwell, American Culture in the 1950s (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 2.

⁷¹ Halliwell, American Culture in the 1950s, 3-4.

⁷² Richard Moss, Golf and the American Country Club (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 141.

gives a brief history of women golfers to make the connection to women's golf today. While that is inevitably a byproduct of this research, it is not the focus like it is in Chambers' work. Marcia Chambers was a leader in the fight to urge Augusta National Country Club to admit women to its membership. However, the main goal in The Unplayable Lie was not to write a history. It is important to view Chamber's work not only as a secondary source but also as a primary source as it provides insight into the landscape of women's golf in the 1990s. Golfers today must be reminded that it was not centuries ago that many courses discriminated against individuals based on sex. Chambers puts into words what many have experienced by saying, "Unfortunately for today's women golfers, the sport they love, which has been growing here for a century, has always been deeply connected with the country club world of elitism and exclusion."⁷³

The beauty of history can be found quite easily in amateur golfer Terri Leonard's book, In the Women's Clubhouse: The Greatest Women Golfers in their Own Words (2000). Leonard's work is a collection of stories told by many legends of women's golf from Mabel E. Stringer and Cecil Leitch to Patty Berg and Babe Didrikson Zaharias. In the Women's Clubhouse is a rich secondary source because of its significant reliance on primary sources. Leonard explains why she went about this project, "I thought that these insightful and significant tales were told richly and complexly, but more important, they gave a woman's point of view on golf."⁷⁴

Golf is not simply hitting a white ball with a stick into a hole four hundred yards away; it served as a propaganda tool for the United States during the 1950s whether the government knew it or not.

⁷³ Marcia Chambers, The Unplayable Lie: The Untold Story of Women and Discrimination in American Golf (New York: *Golf Digest* / Pocket Books, 1995), 4.

⁷⁴ Terri Leonard, In the Women's Clubhouse: The Greatest Women Golfers in their Own Words (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 2000), 259.

Eric Foner gives context to the living situation for Americans during the 1950s in his chapter “An Affluent Society.” Foner states, “In every measurable way—diet, housing, income, education recreation—most Americans lived better than their parents and grandparents had.”⁷⁵ When thinking about the 1950s, it is important to understand what the United States had just been through in the first half of the twentieth century: two world wars in which they lost hundreds of thousands of men; the American Midwest was crippled by one of the largest environmental disasters in recorded history, the Dust Bowl in the thirties; and most famously the Great Depression whose impact was felt across the entire globe. Many Americans were enjoying a time of economic prosperity, enjoying life, and building families. When American troops got home from the Second World War, they immediately began taking advantage of the G.I. Bill which gave most of them, the white troops, significant opportunities to buy homes as well as pursue degrees at universities.⁷⁶

The household was one of the pillars the United States government relied on to help promote capitalism and democracy across the globe.⁷⁷ Elaine Tyler May says in her article “Tupperware,” “The ideal of American life promoted around the world focused on the white, middle-class, suburban family, raising upstanding citizens, preparing themselves for any eventuality -- nuclear war (with a safe shelter in their home) or any kind of social problem.”⁷⁸

While there were opportunities for women to serve their country during the war, the national attitude in the 1950s was that women were meant to be at home being housewives and

⁷⁵ Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!: An American History* 6th ed. Vol. 2 (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2020), 736.

⁷⁶ Seventy-eighth Congress of the United States of America, Servicemen’s Readjustment Act. Public Law 346, Chapter 268, District of Columbia, U.S.A., June 22, 1944. <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/servicemens-readjustment-act>

⁷⁷ Matthew Williams, “The American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959: How the A.N.E.M influenced the Cold War,” May 11, 2016.

⁷⁸ Elaine Tyler May, “Tupperware.” Interview by unknown source. *American Experience*, PBS, accessed on March 20, 2023.

mothers. Women still went to work in the fifties, but their main priority was certainly not to provide for their families economically, that role was delegated to their husbands.⁷⁹ This national attitude is identifiable through popular media at the time. Bridget O’Keefe states in her article “Happiness, Womanhood, and Sexualized Media: An Analysis of 1950s and 1960s Popular Culture,” “Popular culture and media outlets of the 1950s and early 1960s raised young women to be sexually charged and hyperaware of their public appearances, but ultimately women were told to channel their sexuality into marriage and procreation.”⁸⁰

Baylor University graduate student Courtney Catt further explained the nature of advertisements and domestic life for women in the 1950s. She claims, “For most white middle-class women of the 1950s, domesticity was the main goal. Their whole life consisted of training to find Mr. Right and reigning over their domestic castle. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly how this image of women started, and it ends up reduced to the classic situation of ‘which came first—the chicken or the egg?’ However, it will be argued that advertising and mass media perpetuated and further stereotyped the role of middle-class women in America versus created gender roles and expectations. While advertising did shape culture, it also worked off the inherent social values of the time and could only sell products that realistically fit into desires the target audiences already held.”⁸¹

The June 1952 edition of *Golf Digest* offers several portrayals of preferred gender roles and the sexualization of women on the golf course. On the cover, former model Catherine Fox Park stands with a golf club as baseball player Bobby Thompson towers over her and holds onto

⁷⁹ Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 740.

⁸⁰ Bridget O’Keefe, “Happiness, Womanhood, and Sexualized Media: An Analysis of 1950s and 1960s Popular Culture,” *New Errands* 2, no.1 (October 2014), 56.

⁸¹ Courtney Catt, “Trapped in the Kitchen: How Advertising Defined Women’s Roles in 1950s America,” (Master’s Thesis, Baylor University, 2014), 3.

her arms to teach her how to golf. This example does not completely depict sexism or misogyny but what it does intend to show is that this woman that made her living off the male gaze and she required man's guidance to learn how to golf.⁸² The usage of a model and a professional baseball player for the cover illustrate that this magazine was primarily marketed toward men. This is no surprise as it was men who primarily filled the tee sheet for golf courses.

Though the cover was simply insinuating gender roles, a few pages later the sexualization of women on the golf course becomes evident. *Golf Digest* was offering golfers instruction on how to improve their game, but they were also offering male golfers a lustful peek of beautiful women on the course. On the eighth page, the editors place a woman wearing no shoes and shorts in a sand bunker while she looks back at the camera with an "oh no, you caught me" look on her face. The description reads, "Is this cheating? In the picture above, pretty Lee Whitney is not trying to improve her lie. . . she's just trying to improve her life. You see, Lee is a rising young Chicago singer and this is a publicity picture of her."⁸³ The woman is not made to look like a serious golfer in this image. As the description states, Lee Whitney utilized the image as an opportunity to get her name out there and for people to know that she is a singer.

The most obvious example of the sexualization of women in the June 1952 edition of *Golf Digest* appears on the eighteenth page. No image description is needed for this cartoon as it speaks for itself. The cartoon pictures a woman wearing a shirt with cleavage showing and shorts with slits in the side, insinuating that they could show more than what they currently do. The woman is walking away from a man who appears to be speechless as he is still holding the flag for the eighteenth hole while he watches her prance away. She says, ". . . and tomorrow, I'm going around in even less!," a witty play on words as the image implies that the woman might

⁸² *Golf Digest* cover, June 1952, Chicago Edition.

⁸³ *Golf Digest*, June 1952, 8.

dare to go around the course tomorrow in even less clothing than she wore today but without the image of her, the words alone would imply she simply had confidence that she would score a better round of golf the following day.⁸⁴

Women golfers were largely made to seem as though they needed supervision or guidance on the golf course. On the sixteenth page of the same issue of *Golf Digest*, there is a picture of a woman getting ready to start her round of golf. The magazine chose an actress to play the role of the golfer because, as previously mentioned, the consumers of this magazine were largely male. If the magazine continually placed attractive women on their pages, more men with hungry eyes would hopefully choose to turn the pages every month. The description reads, “At the ‘Idle Hour’ night golf course, Saugus, Mass., film actress Shelley Winters pays her \$1.00 greens fee and receives a scorecard and the standard bag of 17 balls for a 9-hole round.”⁸⁵ On the same page, Shelley is seen in another picture with the course professional Milt Schmidt squatted down behind her examining her and her golf swing intently. In neither image is Shelley Winters dressed in a manner that the men at the time might deem as scandalous and worthy of a studious gaze, but her interest in golf and lack of skill offers Milt Schmidt the opportunity to show her how much of an athlete and skilled man he is. The language of the image suggests that the innocent and beautiful woman needs the masculine man to show her how to play golf.

Not every image of a woman in the above-mentioned issue of *Golf Digest* is portrayed as an oblivious darling who is desperate for a man’s attention. The reason for those depictions was not to belittle women or insult them as much as it was intended to sell copies of their magazine

⁸⁴ *Golf Digest*, June 1952, 18.

⁸⁵ *Golf Digest*, June 1952, 16. The standard bag of balls for a round of eighteen-hole golf would not be seventeen balls, let alone seventeen balls for a nine-hole round of golf. This is a clear example of the mindset of the magazine at the time as well as their clientele.

to much of their clientele: white men who had the disposable income and free time to not only read a golf magazine but also to play golf.

Golf Digest did not completely ignore legitimate women golfers. The magazine has historically been generous in its teaching of golf mechanics to its readers. On the sixth page of the same June 1952 issue, David Bauer analyzes his daughter, Marlene Bauer's golf swing. He goes incredibly in-depth about Marlene's swing and cautions other golfers of a long backswing.⁸⁶ A few pages later, women's golf fashion is genuinely brought up as a topic of concern. An article draws attention to the length of golfer's skirts in correlation to their golfing abilities: the shorter the better. The article says, "Almost as startling as the change in styles is the change in scores which has marked the progress of women's golf. In a general way, it can be said that as the skirts went higher the scores went lower."⁸⁷ The article attached a series of pictures of previous club women's championship winners from previous decades, each progressing winner wore a shorter skirt than the last.

These images of women golfers can be placed within the context of the Cold War. The United States had a very distinctive image to uphold and promote. Life in the United States was not made to look like anywhere else in the world. Quite frankly, life was not as comfortable for citizens of the rest of the world as it was for many Americans during the 1950s. In 1959, President Dwight Eisenhower and Vice President Richard Nixon were of the same understanding that the United States was the shining city upon the hill; a model for the rest of the world, when Eisenhower sent Nixon to the Soviet Union to represent the United States at the American National Exhibition in Moscow. It was there that Nixon went to fight for the United States, democracy, and capitalism in what is known as the "Kitchen Table Debate."

⁸⁶ *Golf Digest*, June 1952, 6.

⁸⁷ *Golf Digest*, June 1952, 15.

In this debate, Nikita Khrushchev and Richard Nixon discussed housing in each of their countries. Nixon took this opportunity to point out the technological conveniences of the American kitchen. Nixon stated as the two approached a model of an American kitchen, “This is our newest model. This is the kind which is built in thousands of units for direct installations in the houses. In America, we like to make life easier for women...” Nixon was then cut off by Khrushchev who showed his attentiveness to both Nixon’s language as well as American gender roles and their advertisement. He said, “Your capitalistic attitude toward women does not occur under Communism.” Nixon doubled down on his tone towards women by reinforcing his vision for the American woman by saying, “I think that this attitude towards women is universal. What we want to do, is make life easier for our housewives...”⁸⁸ Nixon’s response to Khrushchev’s criticism is evidence that Nixon very vividly saw the woman’s role solely in the kitchen. Eric Foner helps illustrate Nixon’s sentiment. Foner states, “His stance reflected the triumph during the 1950s of a conception of freedom centered on economic abundance and consumer choice within the context of traditional family life—a vision that seemed to offer far more opportunities for the ‘pursuit of happiness’ to men than to women.”⁸⁹

It was the main goal of the United States during the 1950s to fight communism. Diplomats and government officials used drastic measures as weapons against their enemy, communism. As a result of the desperate attempts to promote capitalism and democracy, American women were made to look like domestic pets whose lives were to be lived purely in the household; a clear mistake considering that a more supportive advertisement of American women would have been to highlight women’s involvement in the workforce. However, it was

⁸⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, “Kitchen table debate – transcript, July 24, 1959,” accessed March 20, 2023. <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/1959-07-24.pdf>

⁸⁹ Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 736.

the national attitude that it was a luxury in the United States that because of capitalism, women did not need to work.

Many women refused to let the men speak or act on their behalf. In 1950 thirteen women including Alice Bauer, Patty Berg, Helen Dettweiler, Marlene Bauer Hagge, Helen Hicks, Opal Hill, Betty Jameson, Sally Sessions, Marilynn Smith, Shirley Spork, Louise Suggs, and Babe Zaharias founded the Ladies Professional Golf Association.⁹⁰ This created a professional home for women's golf that still exists in 2024.

Patty Berg is a name that is sure to be heard when discussing the origins of women's professional golf. Like many, golf was an addiction for Patty Berg. She reflected upon the early days of her adventures in the sport, "I was about twelve years old when I started swinging a club. I would swing away in the backyard, and my father was always wondering who was taking the divots--see, my sisters also played a little golf. Well, Dad caught me out there one day knocking up the grass and said, 'How would you like to get that clubhead in the back of a golf ball?' I said I'd like that, and that's when it really began."⁹¹

Berg's first golf competition came in 1933 when she shot 122 in the Minneapolis City Championship at the age of fifteen.⁹² Seventeen years after she participated in her first competition, Patty Berg began serving as the first President of the LPGA Tour in 1950. Before this appointment, Berg served as a recruitment officer for the United States Marine Corps which helped her build up social skills as well as rapport among her peers. In 1949 a reporter from The Coronet described Berg's service in the Marines: "Patty gave a good deal to the Marines—and

⁹⁰ LPGA Editors, "About the LPGA: Our Founders," accessed March 20, 2023. <https://www.lpga.com/careers-about/about-our-founders>

⁹¹ Terri Leonard, *In the Women's Clubhouse: The Greatest Women Golfers in their Own Words* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 2000), 120.

⁹² Kevin Kenny, *Patty Berg: Pioneer Champion of Women's Golf* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2019), 14.

got back as much. She developed poise and social bearing, learned to face crowds outside the shelter of her golfing paraphernalia.”⁹³

Patty’s service to the sport of women’s golf went beyond just her performance on the course and her commitment to her leadership role. Patty Berg spent much of her time on the golf course hosting clinics. She fell in love with golf clinics even before becoming a professional as she was once the little girl being taught. Her father, Herman Berg, was the one who first guided Patty into the realm of clinics when she was an amateur. Berg took that passion for clinics that she developed as a child and turned it into an incredible investment in the growth of the sport for decades to come.⁹⁴

Rhonda Glenn, no stranger to the women’s golf scene, had this to say about Patty Berg’s impact through her golf clinics: “The clinic (Patty Berg Swing Parade) was originally founded by Patty in the 1950s to promote the LPGA tour. Patty was always the emcee, and various players would hit balls while Patty joshed them and gave solid golf knowledge, and it was a way to lure more spectators to sparsely attended events. The USGA reinstated the Swing Parade at the 1995 Women's Open, the 50th anniversary of the championship, and it was a huge hit. They've done it every year since. I began my spiel, ‘Welcome to the 2008 Patty Berg Swing Parade, which is conducted by the USA every year to honor Miss Patty Berg.’ I was prepared to go on but had to stop. Some 500 people sitting on the hillside burst into applause.”⁹⁵

Golf was not something that just took over a portion of Patty Berg’s life; it was a passion and calling to which she devoted her entire life to. In 1977, she decided to author an instructional golf book titled Inside Golf for Women. Berg found it incredibly important to not only make sure

⁹³ *The Coronet*, July 1949.

⁹⁴ Kevin Kenny, Patty Berg, 153.

⁹⁵ Kevin Kenny, Patty Berg, 153.

women had access to the golf course but that they also had access to golf instruction so that they can enjoy themselves and have respectable games. Leaving nothing to question, Patty Berg wrote fifteen chapters in her book, ranging from “Golf and the Nervous System” to which equipment to choose for one’s game.⁹⁶

Despite the treatment of women in magazines such as *Golf Digest*, Patty Berg’s experience with men on the golf course was anything but negative. She recalls, “I guess a woman athlete in my younger days had to deal with the tomboy image a little more than nowadays, but I never got ragged for being an athlete. I had a tremendous amount of support from everybody. I never had any problem with that, whatsoever. And the men pros always welcomed us with open arms when we played a tournament or gave a clinic at their clubs. In fact, I would get a lot of good instruction from some of the men.”⁹⁷ By the end of her career, Berg had won sixty LPGA tour events and an additional fifteen major championships. She won the *Associated Press* Female Athlete of the Year Award in 1938, 1943, and 1955.⁹⁸ Patty Berg had made a living playing professional golf and refused to be socially restricted to the household like American politicians such as Nixon would have loved to have seen. Berg reflected on a conversation with Mickey Wright, “Some years ago, Mickey Wright asked me what I would change if I had to do it all over again. I said I wouldn’t change a thing; I couldn’t be this lucky twice. I did it myself. It’s the life I chose, and it has brought me a lot of happiness.”⁹⁹

When discussing the founding of the LPGA Tour, there is no more dynamic duo than that of Babe Didrikson Zaharias and Patty Berg. Born Mildred Didrikson, her athletic ability in baseball led to her nickname “Babe,” in reference to Yankees legend Babe Ruth. Babe Didrikson

⁹⁶ Patty Berg, *Inside Golf for Women* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1977).

⁹⁷ Kevin Kenny, *Patty Berg*, 127.

⁹⁸ “Patty Berg”, LPGA.com, accessed April 29, 2023.

⁹⁹ Kenny, *Patty Berg*, 175.

Zaharias was an incredible athlete and in 1950 she achieved the Woman Athlete of the Half-Century Award given by the *Associated Press*. Babe's athletic success was not limited to golf. She was a member of the 1932 United States Olympic Track and Field team where she took home gold medals in the javelin throw as well as the eighty-meter hurdle and a silver medal in the high jump.¹⁰⁰ *The Los Angeles Times* had this to say about Babe's Olympic performance:

While the greatest collection of bulky-muscled behemoths and iron-limbed luminaries the world has ever known struggled all afternoon in their futile efforts to crack world records, it remained for a mere slip of a girl from Texas to prove that the female of the species is not only more deadly than the male but also more reliable when it comes to shattering official standards. Mildred (Babe) Didrikson, 128 pounds of feminine dynamite, came through yesterday when all competitors of the so-called stronger sex failed in their world-record attempts.¹⁰¹

Once the 1932 Olympics concluded, Didrikson then focused on golf.

Babe Didrikson Zaharias first played golf in 1927, at the age of sixteen. However, it was not until 1933 that she took the sport seriously and gave it her undivided attention.¹⁰² Like all the other sports she played she excelled and in 1950 she was one of the co-founders of the LPGA Tour. Patty Berg described the importance of having Didrikson on the Tour, "The Babe—Zaharias, was a tremendous asset in the early days of the ladies' tour. She starred in the 1932 Olympics and people wanted to come out and see her play golf. She was a household name. She gave them a show too- a great competitor, a great player, and fun."¹⁰³

Throughout her career, Babe actively fought against the common stereotype for women athletes which was that of the "tom-boy." She was always going out of her way to prove that she was a "lady" and that she was certainly not trying to break any household gender roles. Her

¹⁰⁰ Debra Michals, "Mildred 'Babe' Didrikson Zaharias," *National Women's History Museum*, 2015.

¹⁰¹ Braven Dyer, "Five Marks Broken in Olympics: Babe Didrikson Cracks World Javelin Record," *The Los Angeles Times*, August 1, 1932, 9.

¹⁰² Rhonda Glenn, *The Illustrated History of Women's Golf* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company), 135-136.

¹⁰³ Leonard, *In The Women's Clubhouse*, 126.

counterparts often thought she went a bit overboard with it in the way she dressed on the course and how she talked with reporters. The Babe was more than happy to play the role of the American housewife in her time away from the course. In her biography of Babe, Susan E. Cayleff described Babe's chosen femininity within her marriage, "Babe much preferred to turn the focus to their domestic harmony. 'Marriage woke the Babe's latent passion for domesticity' one reporter began. 'When George bought a two-story, English-style home in Denver's Lakewood section, she made her own floral chintz curtains, complete with pleated valances, her own cream lamp shades with green ruffles, planted her own rose garden.' This characterization was accompanied by another posed kitchen photo of Babe, in front of the stove, dressed in a gathered shirtwaist dress and apron. She's holding a fish over the frying pan for the photographer. George is in the foreground rinsing dishes at the sink. The caption reads: 'With a few assists from her amiable husband, Mrs. Zaharias does all her own housework. Here she is frying trout which they caught in the Rockies.'" ¹⁰⁴

Without Babe, the LPGA Tour would have struggled to survive in its infancy. She served as President of the LPGA from 1952-1955, near the very end of her life. In 1953, she had a portion of her colon removed because of colon cancer. Despite the procedure, the cancer rampaged onwards and overtook her body. In December of '55, a weakened Babe was driven by her friend Bertha Bowen to Colonial Country Club in Ft. Worth, Texas to visit the golf course for what the two of them knew might be Babe's last time. Bertha said, "She could barely walk. She just went over and knelt down and put her palm flat on the green. Then she got in the car, and we went home." ¹⁰⁵ Less than a year later, Babe Didrikson Zaharias passed away.

¹⁰⁴ Susan E. Cayleff, Babe: The Life and Legend of Babe Didrikson Zaharias (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 155.

¹⁰⁵ Glenn, The Illustrated History of Women's Golf, 133.

Former PGA Tour tournament director and close friend of Babe's, Fred Corcoran, had this to say about the legend: "I can't shake the suspicion that the Babe, on any given day, could beat any of them by sheer force of will. She had that special quality of champions. She could be as good as she had to be... Babe was a grand showman. She had a flair for the dramatic and a raw, earthly sense of humor. She loved life and loved people. She loved the color and the glory of the passing parade and wore her role of champion as naturally as Walter Hagen did. I never expect to see another one like her. Someday I suppose another woman super athlete will come along to send another generation of sportswriters digging back into the yellowing pages of the record books to make a comparison. But it will be a long time after your time and mine."¹⁰⁶

During the first half of the 1950s, Babe Didrikson Zaharias' biggest rival was none other than Louise Suggs, another co-founder of the LPGA Tour. Suggs was from Atlanta and had been a star amateur golfer for years, winning the Georgia State Amateur Championship at the age of fourteen. Louise described the event in an interview, "It was at Druid Hills in Atlanta. That night I went home and I was practically in tears. I qualified; I was the last one in the championship flight. Shot a 92."¹⁰⁷ Louise Suggs' golf career was certainly not in its infancy by the time the LPGA Tour was founded as she had won several amateur tournaments throughout the 1930s and 40s and was a part of the 1948 Curtis Cup team as well.¹⁰⁸

As for the rivalry between Babe and Louise, it was staunch. Fred Corcoran described the differences between the two women: "Babe could do anything play the mouth organ, dance, kid around with the press. Louise was always in her shadow. I'd set up a tournament and try to

¹⁰⁶ Fred Corcoran with Bud Harvey, Unplayable Lies: The Story of Sport's Most Successful Impresario (New York: Meredith Press, 1965), 166.

¹⁰⁷ Golfweek, "Golfweek Presents: A Conversation with Louise Suggs," YouTube, September 6, 2013, 00:15-00:26.

¹⁰⁸ The Curtis Cup is a women's team golf event that sees the best American golfers face the best United Kingdom and Irish golfers. The event takes place every other year and is scheduled to be played again in 2024.

promote them with flashy gimmicks. You know, I'd bring Humphrey Bogart out to kiss the winner of the tournament... Babe loved it, but Suggs? Once she won, and instead of standing there to be kissed, she screamed and ran into the locker room.”¹⁰⁹ Louise herself was not one to mince words about her feelings towards Babe. Louise once had this to say about Babe: “She wasn’t a golfer, she was a marketer. She had that cheap-ass Texas hook and would roll it out there on hard-baked fairways. On a wet course, I’d fly it by her all day—all day.”¹¹⁰

Just because Louise and Babe were founders of the same tour and were facing some of the same societal obstacles, that connection did not automatically connect the two in a way that they would have had rich personal friendships with one another. Just as Babe Didrikson Zaharias’ expression of her femininity showed individual nuance on the Tour, so too does the relationship between these two women who were fundamental in the berth and survival of the LPGA tour. The raw feelings seen here prove that the athletic competition was intense, and these golfers were to be taken seriously. Even though American women were often advertised as submissive oversexualized keepers of the house, these women demanded a place in society for a sustainable environment for women’s professional golf.

Two years before she passed away, Louise Suggs reminisced about her time on the LPGA. She said, “It was a different era. People were nicer. One thing that I’ve appreciated more, as much, if not more than anything, it’s amazing how many women have come up to me, men too, but mostly women, and said ‘We really appreciate what you’ve done for women. Not just in golf, just what you’ve done.’”¹¹¹ Suggs was the recipient of numerous awards and honors. She was inducted into the LPGA Hall of Fame in 1951 along with Patty Berg, Betty Jameson, and

¹⁰⁹ G.B. Kirsch, *Golf in America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 173.

¹¹⁰ Ron Sirak, “The Indomitable Miss Suggs,” *Golf Digest*, October 2015.

¹¹¹ Golfweek, “Golfweek Presents: A Conversation with Louise Suggs,” YouTube, September 6, 2013, 04:52-05:22.

Babe Didrikson Zaharias.¹¹² The LPGA biography of Louise Suggs states, “In spite of the loss of early LPGA records, Suggs is credited with 58 LPGA career wins and 11 major championships. In 1957, she won the Vare Trophy (for low scoring average) and became the LPGA’s first player to complete the career grand slam, which included the U.S. Women’s Open, the LPGA Championship, the Western Open and the Titleholders Championship, at that time.”¹¹³ In 1966, Suggs became the first woman to be inducted into the Georgia Athletic Hall of Fame. The LPGA named its Rookie of the Year award the Louise Suggs Trophy in 2000. The United States Golfers Association honored Suggs with the Bob Jones Award in 2007 which is the highest honor the USGA bestows upon a professional golfer who demonstrates the spirit, personal character, and respect for the sport which was exemplified by legend Bob Jones. In 2015, Suggs was one of seven women that were granted honorary memberships to The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews in Scotland.¹¹⁴

Betty Jameson was part of what Fred Corcoran called the “Big Four” on the LPGA.¹¹⁵ Betty was born in Norman, Oklahoma in 1919 but her family moved to San Antonio, Texas early in her childhood.¹¹⁶ Jameson picked up the game of golf at age eleven and two years later ended up winning both the Texas Publinx as well as the Texas State Championship. Two years later she won the Texas Women’s Amateur at just fifteen years old. Altogether, Jameson won fourteen amateur championships before she turned professional.¹¹⁷

Betty Jameson was known as the LPGA’s first “Glamour Girl” because of the way she dressed both on and off the golf course. Jameson herself credited the way Dallas women dressed

¹¹² Hudson, *Women in Golf*, 44.

¹¹³ LPGA, “Louise Suggs Bio,” <https://www.lpga.com/players/louise-suggs/81922/bio>.

¹¹⁴ David Shefter, “LPGA Pioneer, Three Time USGA Champion Suggs Dies,” August 8, 2015.

¹¹⁵ Kenny, *Patty Berg*, 90.

¹¹⁶ Hudson, *Women in Golf*, 48.

¹¹⁷ Del Lemon, “Jameson, Elizabeth May (1919-2009),” in *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*.

for her style.¹¹⁸ Forget about how she looked, Betty Jameson was a very solid golfer who gave the legends of Patty Berg and Babe Didrikson Zaharias plenty of trouble during her time on tour. Rhonda Glenn had this to say about Jameson, “A tall blonde with a vibrant smile, Betty had a strong, classic swing. She possessed superb timing, solid fundamentals, and a fine intellect that allowed her to understand the intricacies of the game. Her great hands were another key to her success, hands that gripped the club softly and allowed her to play a variety of shots.”¹¹⁹

Jameson did not remain as much of a household name as Patty Berg and Babe Didrikson Zaharias, but she had a successful career on the LPGA Tour. Jameson ended up winning twelve LPGA events including four in 1952 and five in 1955.¹²⁰ Jameson also tallied a respectable three major championships during her career, which tends to be the way golf careers are measured. In 1952, she donated a trophy to the LPGA that was to be named in honor of her idol, Glenna Collett Vare, the Vare Trophy. This trophy continues to be awarded to the LPGA player with the lowest average score at the season’s end.¹²¹

The LPGA had a pair of sisters known as the Bauer sisters. Marlene and Alice Bauer were daughters of German-born golf professional and were from Eureka, South Dakota.¹²² Their father, Dave Bauer, got the two sisters to start golfing at the age of three and taught both his trade their entire childhood. In the 1940s, he paraded his daughters around the country so that they could perform golf exhibitions.¹²³ By 1950, the two had established impressive amateur careers and became founding members of the LPGA Tour. At that time, Marlene was just fifteen years old, making her the youngest founding member on the tour. A photograph of the two

¹¹⁸ “Betty Jameson,” in Texas Golf Hall of Fame.

¹¹⁹ Glenn, *Illustrated History of Women’s Golf*, 100.

¹²⁰ “Betty Jameson: Pioneer of Women’s Golf,” in *Golf Compendium*, accessed May 4, 2023.

¹²¹ Hudson, *Women in Golf*, 48.

¹²² Kenny, *Patty Berg*, 90.

¹²³ LPGA Editors, “Marlene Bauer Hagge,” accessed May 5, 2023.

women appears in Rhonda Glenn's The Illustrated History of Women's Golf (1991). The picture shows the two on a putting green wearing curled hair. Glenn makes the claim, "Alice and Marlene Bauer were the tour's first glamour girls."¹²⁴ The term "glamour girl" gets placed upon several of the LPGA founders. The heavy emphasis on the way these women looked and presented themselves offers insight into the way not only the LPGA Tour operated but the nature of golf in general.

Alice Bauer tends to get overlooked when talking about the founders of the LPGA Tour because her career was less successful than her sister Marlene's. Marlene won her first tournament on tour at the age of eighteen at the Sarasota Open in 1952. She was the youngest winner in LPGA history. She ended up having twenty-six wins on the LPGA including the 1956 U.S. Open¹²⁵ Marlene played on the LPGA Tour for five decades and won her last event in 1972 at the Burdine's Invitational tournament.¹²⁶ She reflected on the founding of the LPGA, "I never thought of myself as a pioneer. We were just a bunch of stubborn women who loved golf and figured we could make it happen."¹²⁷

To pretend like the LPGA was a booming success immediately would be inaccurate. The star power of names like Ben Hogan and Sam Snead on the PGA Tour carried much more weight for the golf fan than the names of players like Marlene Bauer Hagge and Patty Berg. In its infancy, the LPGA Tour relied heavily on the Olympian in their midst, Babe Didrikson Zaharias, to bring people out to watch them play. Marilyn Smith recalled, "Babe Zaharias, people came out to watch her play because she was recognized as an Olympic champion. When she passed away in 1956, we almost went down the drain. So, several of us kind of became public relations

¹²⁴ Glenn, Illustrated History of Women's Golf, 157

¹²⁵ Hudson, Women in Golf, 49

¹²⁶ Hudson, Women in Golf, 49.

¹²⁷ Hudson, Women in Golf, 45.

minded.”¹²⁸ The onus was on the players to market themselves and bring fans out. This did not always work well.

A tournament in Oklahoma could be pointed to as a low point in the LPGA Tour’s early days. The LPGA signed an agreement to bring the Tour to the course in exchange for a percentage of the gate ticket sales. According to Rhonda Glenn, there was a dust storm as the players made their way to the first tee. “No gallery showed up. There were no gate receipts, and no paychecks.”¹²⁹ The way to make money for the players of the LPGA Tour was through equipment sponsorships. Future World Golf Hall of Famer Peggy Kirk Bell stated, “If I hadn’t got a contract with a company like that (Spalding) there was no way I’d have gone pro. There was no way to make a living. You wouldn’t turn pro until you got that contract.”¹³⁰ It was not easy to make a living on the LPGA Tour. Co-founder Betsy Rawls explained the money situation on tour, “In the beginning, a woman could get on the tour by just showing up. She would apply to join the LPGA and come out and play. She was either good enough to stay on tour or she wasn’t. Money was the only limiting factor. If she ran out, she had to get some more or not play.”¹³¹

Public enemy number one in the 1950s was communism in the eyes of the United States government. In February of 1950, Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy did all he could to trigger a war between capitalism and communism. He believed that war had already been started and that the enemy had embedded itself in American politics. McCarthy had this to say in his speech:

Today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity. The modern champions of communism have selected this as the time, and ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down—they are truly down... The reason why we

¹²⁸ Golf.com, “LPGA Takeaway: 67 Years Later, the Founders Look Back,” YouTube video, November 4, 2016, 00:45-01:00.

¹²⁹ Glenn, *Illustrated History of Women’s Golf*, 168.

¹³⁰ Kenny, *Patty Berg*, 86.

¹³¹ Kenny, *Patty Berg*, 86.

find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our only powerful potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores . . . but rather because of the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this Nation. It has not been the less fortunate, or members of minority groups who have been traitorous to this Nation, but rather those who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest Nation on earth has had to offer . . . the finest homes, the finest college education and the finest jobs in government we can give. This is glaringly true in the State Department. There, the bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been most traitorous. . . . I have here in my hand a list of 205 . . . a list of names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department.¹³²

The government ended up fighting the Korean War, or the “Conflict in Korea,” in the first half of the 1950s to save South Korea from the communists in China and North Korea.

In 1959, President Dwight Eisenhower sent Vice President Richard Nixon to the Soviet Union to represent the United States at the American National Exhibition in Moscow, ANEM. Nixon went on to showcase American technology such as the automobile, laundry machine, and refrigerator. In his conversation with Nikita Khrushchev, Nixon talked about the American woman in one fashion: that of the housewife. Nixon used the terms woman and housewife interchangeably when describing women’s role in American society. Khrushchev pointed out that despite America’s technological advancements and capitalistic motives, women and people of color were living a different life in America than the luxurious life advertised for the American white man. Susan Reid states, “One of the American guides, Joan Barth, ended her report to the United States Information Agency (USIA), ‘Did our Exhibition jive with basic Russian impulses? No!’ A USIA postmortem concluded that although the U.S. press back home had represented the fair as a smash hit that had “wowed” Moscow, ‘it wasn’t’ and ‘it didn’t.’”¹³³

¹³² Joseph McCarthy, “Enemies From Within” (speech, Wheeling, West Virginia, February 9, 1950), University of Texas at Austin, <https://minio.la.utexas.edu/webeditor-files/coretexts/pdf/195020mccarthy20enemies.pdf>.

¹³³ Susan Reid, “Who Will Beat Whom?: Soviet Popular Reception of the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959,” 857.

The LPGA not only survived, but it also thrived. Currently, the LPGA hosts tournaments almost every week of the year and the golfers are winning more money than they ever have before. Annika Sörenstam still leads the all-time money list on the LPGA Tour with a total of over twenty-two million dollars.¹³⁴ While the group of golfers who started the tour in 1950 played for a combined purse of fifty-thousand dollars for twelve tournaments, the LPGA Tour boasts a one-hundred and one million three hundred thousand dollar purse total for 2023 for playing thirty-three events.¹³⁵ Thirteen-time LPGA Tour winner, Stacy Lewis, had this to say about the founding women while she was at the 2022 LPGA Cognizant Founders Cup, “It’s been eye-opening for all of our players to realize the history and what those women went through to create our tour. With the sacrifices that they’ve made, it’s really fitting that this purse is our highest purse other than our majors. It deserves that. Our founders deserve that. They deserve to be on this platform and we’re going to continue to honor them as long as possible.”¹³⁶ Though the beginnings of the LPGA Tour were far from luxurious, it did more for the image of democracy and capitalism in the long run for the United States than its government did with ventures such as the American National Exhibition in Moscow.

¹³⁴ LPGA Editors, “Career Money,” accessed April 23, 2023, <https://www.lpga.com/statistics/money/career-money>.

¹³⁵ John Schwarb, “2023 LPGA Tour Schedule: Dates, Purses, Winners,” *Sports Illustrated*, April 23, 2023.

¹³⁶ New Jersey State Golf Association, “LPGA Cognizant Founders Cup at Upper Montclair CC is More Than Your Ordinary Professional Tournament,” May 12, 2022.

Chapter Four: Politics and Class in 1950s American Golf

In the Spring of 1950, *Golf Digest* published its first copy of its golf magazine. The company has since become the standard by which golf journalism is held. Many circumstances made 1950 the ripe time to put forth such a magazine into the American public. However, the foundational reason that this was the right time was because most Americans had found themselves in an economic position that allowed them to engage in recreational activities, such as golf, now more than ever before in many of their lives. It was this new wave of middle-class Americans that were seeking affluence that led to the boom in golf in the 1950s. As a result of the newfound affluence in the 1950s, golf crept its way not only into the lives of many average Americans, but also into the Oval Office and the trenches of the Cold War.

The 1930s were a time of trial and tribulation for most Americans. In 1933, 24.9% of the American workforce, 12,830,000 people, had become unemployed. Those who had maintained employment saw their wages cut by an average of 42.5%.¹³⁷

Isolationism was the cry of many Americans in the infancy of the 1940s just as it was before the First World War. Despite their plea, the United States would be drug into the Second World War by way of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. By the time peace had been reached in September of 1945, American casualties in the Second World War totaled 1,078,594.¹³⁸

The mindset many Americans had in the 1950s was that of fertile rejuvenation and consumerism. William Leuchtenburg explains the relationship between consumerism and

¹³⁷“Great Depression Facts,” Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, accessed December 11, 2023, <https://www.fdrlibrary.org/great-depression-facts#:~:text=throughout%20the%201920s.-,At%20the%20height%20of%20the%20Depression%20in%201933%2C%2024.9%25%20of,economic%20disaster%20in%20American%20history.>

¹³⁸ “Research Starters: US Military by the Numbers,” The National World War Two Museum, accessed December 11, 2023, [https://www.nationalww2museum.org/students-teachers/student-resources/research-starters/research-starters-us-military-numbers.](https://www.nationalww2museum.org/students-teachers/student-resources/research-starters/research-starters-us-military-numbers)

conception, “The consumer culture thrived on a rapidly augmented home market. As the shrunken ambitions of the 1930's gave way to the great expectations of the postwar era, the two-child family came to seem inappropriate to the more expansive lifestyle of the middle class, just as the confining coup   gave way to the station wagon. A Harvard senior who said his aim was six children explained that it was ‘a minimum production goal.’ Economists even suggested ‘that babies are viewed as a consumer durable good expected to yield a stream of psychic income through time.’ The burgeoning population, a source of grief in preindustrial nations, guaranteed steadily growing demand, most immediately for diaper services and supermarket items like baby food.”¹³⁹ Family and the household was paramount to American society in the 1950s.

At the time, common gender roles saw the husband in the workforce and the wife in the home raising the children. Men were supposed to be providing economic support for the family and wives were supposed to offer peace and stability within the home. Though work and the home were two pillars of American society, it was consumerism and capitalism that were the driving forces. This consumerism extended to recreational activities such as golf.

Golf in the 1950s was more than just a pastime. It was a common ground that connected Americans from Joe from the factory, Arnold Palmer on the PGA Tour, and President Dwight Eisenhower. Golf became a symbol of the ideals of American society. An analysis of the impact of golf in American society and politics in the 1950s would be best initiated with a glimpse into who some of the most popular professional golfers on the PGA Tour were at the time.

By the 1950s, Ben Hogan was a name that was well known on the PGA Tour. He had been one of the best players in the country since 1940 and was the highest earner on the tour

¹³⁹ William E. Leuchtenburg, A Troubled Feast: American Society Since 1945 (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1973), 39.

from 1940-1942.¹⁴⁰ Like several other professional athletes such as Ted Williams of the Boston Red Sox, Joe DiMaggio of the New York Yankees, and Patty Berg (a founder of the LPGA Tour), Hogan served his country in the armed forces during the Second World War. Hogan's golf game had not dulled in wartime because in 1946 he won his first major championship, the standard to which professional golfers are held, by winning the PGA Championship. Between 1946 and 1953, Hogan had won nine major championships and had cemented himself as one of the greatest to ever play the sport. In 1953, Hogan was inducted into the PGA Hall of Fame and the World Golf Hall of Fame in 1974.¹⁴¹

Sam Snead was born in Virginia in 1912 and began his career on the PGA Tour in 1936. His name would come to symbolize dominance on the golf course as he would have a career that lasted over forty years and included 82 PGA Tour wins (a record that he shares with Tiger Woods), and seven major championships, just a U.S. Open win away from the Grand Slam.¹⁴² Jack Nicklaus said of Sam Snead, "Sam could pop it pretty good. I always ended up copying Sam's rhythm. I always ended up watching what he did. I thought Sam was just a marvelous player."¹⁴³

Whereas Snead and Hogan were well established members of the PGA Tour by the 1950s, Arnold Palmer turned professional in 1955. In 1954, Palmer won the U.S. Amateur tournament and then went on to win the Canadian Open in his first year on the PGA Tour.¹⁴⁴ A clean cut, dapper, and bright smiled Palmer can be seen clutching his Canadian Open trophy

¹⁴⁰ George Peper, *Golf in America: The First One-Hundred Years* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, INC, 1988), 251.

¹⁴¹ Peper, *Golf in America*, 252.

¹⁴² "Sam Snead," PGATour.com, accessed December 12, 2023, <https://www.pgatour.com/player/02119/sam-snead>.

¹⁴³ PGA Tour, "The Slammer: Sam Snead," YouTube, August 13, 2014, 0:36-0:45, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAShGxaYgEM>.

¹⁴⁴ Peper, *Golf in America*, 262.

tight in a photograph by *Golf Digest*.¹⁴⁵ Arnold Palmer came to represent a new era in golf. He was young, popular, and symbolized a new generation. From 1951 to 1954, Arnold Palmer served in the United States Coast Guard.¹⁴⁶ Despite being in the military, Palmer made time for golf. Grateful for a period of leave in April of 1953, Arnold Palmer went to Pinehurst Country Club in North Carolina to compete in the North and South Amateur Championship. A photograph of Palmer taking the club back for a swing at the ball shows him in his white military uniform.¹⁴⁷ It is this image of Arnold Palmer that speaks not only to what kind of man he was, his profession, or his passion, but also the relationship that many Americans had with the military, pride in their country, and recreational activities and competition.

For the first two years of *Golf Digest*'s publication, a woman was on the cover of the magazine. These initial offerings were not meant to garner the attention of women golfers. Rather, they were intended to grasp the male gaze to entice the reader to buy next the month's issue for more sexualized depictions of women. Women were to be physically sought after and romantically hunted. They were depicted as fawns or prey and the male readers were to be the hunters. This portrayal of male dominance and female submissiveness were the gendered norms.

In the article, "Mrs. America: Women's Roles in the 1950s," the author states, "In the 1950s, women felt tremendous societal pressure to focus their aspirations on a wedding ring. The U.S. marriage rate was at an all-time high and couples were tying the knot, on average, younger than ever before. Getting married right out of high school or while in college was considered the norm. A common stereotype was that women went to college to get a 'Mrs.' (pronounced

¹⁴⁵ "Arnold Palmer: Images of a Legend," *Golf Digest*, September 10, 2023, <https://www.golfdigest.com/gallery/arnold-palmer-images-of-a-legend>.

¹⁴⁶ David Vergun, "Sports Heroes Who Served: From Coast Guardsman to Golf Legend," U.S. Department of Defense, August 25, 2020.

¹⁴⁷ U.S. Coast Guard Photo, VIRIN: 530420-O-ZZ999-002, accessed December 12, 2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/2319378/sports-heroes-who-served-from-coast-guardsman-to-golf-legend/>.

M.R.S.) degree, meaning a husband. Although women had other aspirations in life, the dominant theme promoted in the culture and media at the time was that a husband was far more important for a young woman than a college degree. Even though employment rates also rose for women during this period, the media tended to focus on a woman's role in the home. If a woman wasn't engaged or married by her early twenties, she was in danger of becoming an 'old maid.'"¹⁴⁸

As previously mentioned, gender roles were rigid and American society was intended to be uniform. The goal was the same for many: make money, spend that money (and more with consumer credit), have a large family, buy a white picket fence house, and live happily ever after in middle-class America. In her 1955 article, "Income Distribution in the United States, 1950-1953," Selma F. Goldsmith claims that, "Most of the postwar period was characterized by an upsweep of money incomes which reflected in part the advance in the price level. From 1947 to 1953 total family income, both on a before- and after-tax basis, rose by almost 50 percent. Average current dollar family income, shown in the accompanying chart, rose by about 30 percent, as the number of families increased one-eighth over the period." She then goes on to explain that this increase in income could partially be explained by the rising cost of living in the 1950s but that did not account for the entire increase. She states, "Although in part the increase in family income from 1947 to 1953 reflected the rise in prices, the growth of real incomes was also substantial over the period. In terms of aggregate amounts, real income (measured in constant dollars) increased by one-quarter, both on a before- and after-tax basis, and the increase in real income per family was about 10 percent."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ "Mrs. America: Women's Roles in the 1950s," PBS.org, accessed December 12, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/pill-mrs-america-womens-roles-1950s/>.

¹⁴⁹ Selma F. Goldsmith, *Income Distribution in the United States, 1950-1953*, March 1955, 17-18, https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/files/docs/publications/SCB/pages/1955-1959/5012_1955-1959.pdf.

Vance Packard argues for a two-dimensional class structure in the 1950s in his book, The Status Seekers (1959), “We have, then, a two-dimensional class system. The horizontal levels are based on prestige deriving principally from such social-class factors as wealth, job, education, style of life. The vertical divisions are based on the seeming differentness of people caused by their ethnic background, their religion, etc. For most of us, the horizontal rankings have by far the larger impact on our lives, perhaps because they have a hard economic base and because they affect everybody. During the Depression, for example, many working-class people began to realize for the first time that their common social-class interests as workingmen were far more important to them than the religious, racial, and ethnic rivalries that had separated them.”¹⁵⁰

The status symbol in the latter half of the 1950s shifted from a car to a house. There was a targeted marketing strategy from home builders and realtors that preyed upon the “status seeking” mindset that Packard discusses thoroughly in The Status Seekers. He provides multiple examples of advertisements for homes that had less to do with what the home was, a place of residence, and more to do with how much it cost and what it meant. He explains, “American families in the past few years have been giving more and more thought to the problem of establishing a home that adequately reinforces the status image they wish to project of themselves. And home builders have happily helped the trend along by emphasizing status appeals. William Molster, who directs the merchandising activities of the National Association of Home Builders, confirms this new trend in home selling. He points out that postwar builders who erected minimum-shelter mass communities to answer the war-stimulated demand are being

¹⁵⁰ Vance Packard, The Status Seekers (New York: David McKay Company Inc, 1959), 56.

replaced by the builders who are carefully sizing up the desires and needs of their market. Today, he states, the status symbol in home selling has become a key to large-volume business.”¹⁵¹

Buying houses was not the only method of exercising consumerism that many Americans enjoyed. Leuchtenburg states, “The booming economy enabled millions of Americans to take part in the burgeoning consumer culture. With unprecedented amounts of disposable income, consumers devoted much of their time to institutions that catered to their needs and whims - shopping malls with hanging baskets of flowers and piped music, suburban department stores with civic auditoriums, supermarkets with row on row of brilliantly colored cartons. Shopping, while still often a chore, also became a kind of avocation. Husbands found release in ‘impulse buying,’ and the poet Randall Jarrell wrote of a housewife ‘Moving from Cheer to Joy, from Joy to All.’ After the advent of television in the late 1940’s, millions each week turned their dials to a show that featured contestants who raced through the aisles of a supermarket competing to see who could accumulate the greatest value of goods in his shopping basket, and Life rejoiced at customers who wandered around a ‘\$5 million grocery store, picking from the thousands of items on the high-piled shelves until their carts became cornucopias filled with an abundance that no other country in the world has ever known.’”¹⁵²

It was July 24, 1959, when U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev met at the American National Exhibition in Moscow. The Soviet Premier visited New York City the previous month and had placed the emphasis of his presentation on the Soviet’s Sputnik satellite.¹⁵³ While the social intent of these exhibitions may have been to “share

¹⁵¹ Packard, *The Status Seekers*, 62-63.

¹⁵² Leuchtenburg, *A Troubled Feast*, 55.

¹⁵³ “USSR Exhibition in New York Booklet,” National Museum of American Diplomacy, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://diplomacy.state.gov/items/ussr-exhibition-in-new-york-booklet/>.

cultures,” the political intent was to sway Eastern Europeans to smile upon the Americans favorably and for the Eastern world to look upon American life with eyes of envy. On display at the exhibition was a model home, Splitnik, in which new American television sets and kitchen appliances were presented to the Soviet crowd.¹⁵⁴ American voting booths were also displayed to show the Soviets how Americans voted, a freedom that the communist government did not grant its citizens. These voting booths were reprogrammed and called “comment books” and were used at the exhibition to poll the Soviets on what they thought of what they had seen so far at the exhibition. This was a strategic move by the U.S. government to get a feel for the level of receptivity the Soviets had to American culture. However, this was planned for by the Soviet Union as they chose the individuals who could have tickets to the exhibition.¹⁵⁵

Another exhibit displayed at ANEM was Charles and Ray Eames’ film, *Glimpses of the USA* (1959). In this slide-show film, images were presented of well-dressed, white, wealthy Americans. The voice-over described the environment in the United States as one in which children went to school to learn and adults went to work during the week.¹⁵⁶ Images of elegant American cars were a strategic inclusion in the film as the comment books indicated that American cars were Soviet viewer's favorite part of the exhibition.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Matthew Williams, “The American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959: How the A.N.E.M influenced the Cold War,” May 11, 2016.

¹⁵⁵ Susan E. Reid, “Who Will Beat Whom? Soviet Popular Reception of the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 4 (2008): 880.

¹⁵⁶ Eames Office, “Glimpses of the U.S.A. (1959) [excerpt],” *YouTube* video, 4:23. June 19, 2012.

¹⁵⁷ Reid, “Who Will Beat Whom?: Soviet Popular Reception of the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959,” 872.

Vice President Nixon took Khrushchev to a model house/kitchen and proceeded to spew the capitalist mindset which was so abundantly engrossed in his mind and in the minds of millions of Americans. This is a brief dialogue between the two men:

Nixon: I want to show you this kitchen. It is like those of our houses in California.

Khrushchev: We have such things.

Nixon: This is our newest model. This is the kind which is built in thousands of units for direct installations in the houses. In America, we like to make life easier for women...

Khrushchev: Your capitalistic attitude toward women does not occur under Communism.

Nixon: I think that this attitude towards women is universal. What we want to do, is make life more easy for our housewives....

Nixon: This house can be bought for \$14,000, and most American [veterans from World War II] can buy a home in the bracket of \$10,000 to \$15,000. Let me give you an example that you can appreciate. Our steel workers as you know, are now on strike. But any steel worker could buy this house. They earn \$3 an hour. This house costs about \$100 a month to buy on a contract running 25 to 30 years.

Khrushchev: We have steel workers and peasants who can afford to spend \$14,000 for a house. Your American houses are built to last only 20 years so builders could sell new houses at the end. We build firmly. We build for our children and grandchildren.

Nixon: American houses last for more than 20 years, but, even so, after twenty years, many Americans want a new house or a new kitchen. Their kitchen is obsolete by that time.... The American system is designed to take advantage of new inventions and new techniques.

Khrushchev: This theory does not hold water. Some things never get out of date-- houses, for instance, and furniture, furnishings--perhaps--but not houses. I have read much about America and American houses, and I do not think that this is exhibit and what you say is strictly accurate.¹⁵⁸

There is debate as to who won the “Kitchen Table Debate” or how effective the exhibition was in “sharing American culture.” Susan Reid describes the sentiment of the attendees, “One of

¹⁵⁸ “The Kitchen Debate – Transcript,” Central Intelligence Agency, accessed December 12, 2023, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/1959-07-24.pdf>

the American guides, Joan Barth, ended her report to the United States Information Agency (USIA), 'Did our Exhibition jive with basic Russian impulses? No!' A USIA postmortem concluded that although the U.S. press back home had represented the fair as a smash hit that had 'wowed' Moscow, 'it wasn't' and 'it didn't.'"¹⁵⁹

Despite the common image of affluent America being exclusively white, the reality was slightly different. The 1950s is commonly referenced as the time in which the Civil Rights Movement began; crediting individuals such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Jackie Robinson, Rosa Parks, Joe Louis, and Clara Luper for their contributions to the movement. Although Jim Crow had segregated white from black in most of America, African Americans had still enjoyed a level of affluence which had not been known before to many. Dr. King was a reverend, Clara Luper an educator, Mr. Louis and Mr. Robinson professional athletes, and Malcolm X was a key minister for the Nation of Islam. Though their occupations and the financials of such were not what made these individuals famous or noteworthy, these leaders reflected the increasing American middle-class. In A Troubled Feast (1979), Leuchtenburg explains further, "The government announced in 1956 that white collar workers outnumbered blue collar workers. Most employees were engaged not in turning out tangible goods like coal and steel but in professional capacities or in distributive or promotional occupations - sales clerks, office workers, advertising personnel —to provide services to the consumer. From 1947 to 1957 the number of factory operatives fell 4 percent, clerical ranks grew 23 percent, and the salaried middle class increased 61 percent."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Reid, "Who Will Beat Whom?: Soviet Popular Reception of the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959", 857.

¹⁶⁰ Leuchtenburg, A Troubled Feast, 79.

Vance Packard's work, The Status Seekers (1959), offers insight into the racialization of social classes in the 50's. In a fascinating manner, The Status Seekers is both a primary and secondary source. It is critical to view it in its historical context.

Packard attempts to offer an observation about the increasing number of affluent African Americans by saying, "What some can do, however, is seek to separate themselves as far as possible from the general run of lower-class Negroes: through achievement and style of life. Across their caste line they have set up a horizontal social structure based on the white model. And many Negroes have been able to move up from the bottom (Class V) to Classes IV, III and in a few cases to Classes II and I. They have been moving into skilled, clerical, managerial, and professional jobs. Some have built fortunes. *Ebony* magazine estimates that several hundred Negroes now have assets of more than \$100,000. They have built their fortunes in real estate, the beauty business, owning restaurants, insurance, baseball, boxing, medicine, and so on. Some of these new-rich Negro businessmen with an all-Negro clientele feel something of a vested interest in segregation."¹⁶¹ Packard paints an incredibly overgeneralized and biased picture of African American affluence but what can be understood of his statements is that many, not all, Black Americans were forging their way into middle and upper-class America.

This conversation of class in America was extended into the world of golf undoubtedly. Primarily, the sport of golf is an expensive sport today just as it was yesterday. Unlike baseball and football, two of the most popular sports in American history, golf required more than just a ball and a field. The upfront cost to golf has always been substantial. The player needs a set of golf clubs, which can be no more than sixteen in number, balls, clubs, and appropriate clothing (many courses have historically had dress codes). Additional expenses begin to accrue when a

¹⁶¹ Packard, The Status Seekers, 54.

player realizes how difficult golf is and requires private lessons. The financial demand of golf climbs and climbs. In his article, “Implications of the Rise and Decline of Golf,” John L. Crompton describes the ecosystem of golf courses, “In 1950, there were approximately 4,900 18-hole equivalent golf courses (18-HEQ) in the United States. Most had been commissioned by exclusive private clubs to serve the upper class, and only 3 percent had any residential real estate around them. In the post-World War II economic boom, the number of players increased from 3.5 million in 1950 to 11.2 million in 1970. During this period, the game was embraced by the new middle class who had the time, money, and desire to engage in more recreational activities.”¹⁶² Golf and spending power have historically gone hand in hand. As seen in the conversations had and exhibits on display at ANEM, America was the home of capitalism and consumerism. Golf was a habitat for communities of power and wealth. Not only was the golf course a place to play golf but it was a place to conduct business as well as network professionally.

It should come as no surprise that golf has been incredibly popular among the most powerful of Americans. President Dwight Eisenhower was one of the largest ambassadors of the sport and made it a significant aspect of his life. It is through President Eisenhower that one can most directly display the connection that golf had between social classes in the United States and the tie to the Cold War in the 1950s.

For Dwight Eisenhower, golf was a lifelong passion and he had started playing well before the 1950s. Ike first picked up a golf club in 1912 and played for the rest of his life.¹⁶³ Before he was the President of the United States, Dwight Eisenhower was a five-star general in

¹⁶² John L. Crompton, “Implications of the Rise and Decline of Golf,” National Park and Recreation Association, June 25, 2020, <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/july/implications-of-the-rise-and-decline-of-golf/>.

¹⁶³ Catherine M. Lewis, “Don’t Ask What I Shot”: How Eisenhower’s Love of Golf Helped Shape 1950s America (New York: McGraw Hill, 2007), 27.

the U.S. Army. In 1925, Eisenhower enrolled in the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff School and finished first in his class a year later. By 1928, Ike had finished first in his class at the Army War College in the nation's capital and was also playing decent golf as he was shooting in the 80s fairly consistently.¹⁶⁴ Ike's golf score might not sound like a big deal or a fact worth mentioning, but as players of the game know, golf is incredibly difficult and, like any other sport, takes time and practice to get better. By shooting in the 80s during graduate school, a time that requires great mental focus on academia, and with Ike being in military graduate school, it is evidenced how much Eisenhower valued his time on the course.

During the Second World War, the stressors which Eisenhower faced stacked one on top of the other. He was named chief of staff of the Third Division of the United States Army in 1940. In 1941 he was named the chief of staff of the Third Army. In 1942 he was promoted to major general and became the commander of the European Theater of Operations.¹⁶⁵ Like many who flee to golf, Eisenhower found mental peace in the sport and the golf course soon became a safe-haven where he could relieve stress.

Eisenhower's role in the Second World War made him an incredibly influential man. Stephen Ambrose helps depict Ike's prominence in his book Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect (1983), "Eisenhower was destined to be a world figure from June 1942 until January 1961. In those two decades, virtually his every move, decision, habit, friendship, and action were observed and reported. No other public figure in America of this century, not even Franklin Roosevelt, spent so long a time under such scrutiny; no other public figure, save only Roosevelt, was so popular with the working press; and no other public figure, save the two

¹⁶⁴ Lewis, "Don't Ask What I Shot", 37-38. In golf, one aims to "shoot par" and in most cases "par" is between 70 and 72. This means that a "scratch" golfer should be able to complete 18 holes of golf around par.

¹⁶⁵ Lewis, "Don't Ask What I Shot", 39-40.

Roosevelts [Franklin and Theodore], enjoyed such widespread and deep popularity with the American people."¹⁶⁶

It was Ike's popularity that ushered him into the White House upon swiftly defeating Democrat candidate Adlai Stevenson in the 1952 election. Eisenhower won 83% of the electoral vote and 54% of the popular vote.¹⁶⁷ Nineteen fifty-three would begin Dwight Eisenhower's time in office. Ike knew he needed to continue to ride the wave of popularity with the American public and to do that he needed to play nice with the media. A little less than a month after his inauguration, President Eisenhower gave a speech. He described his relationship with the press, "Now, one of the topics that made an interesting subject for speculation during the past few months was a thought that I would develop a great deal of antagonism for the press. I wouldn't know why. I feel that no individual has been treated more fairly and squarely over the past many years now, that I have been dealing with them, than I have by the press. Through the war years and ever since, I have found nothing but a desire to dig at the truth, so far as I was concerned, and be open-handed and forthright about it. That is the kind of relationship I hope we can continue."¹⁶⁸

Ike's passion and commitment to golf followed him to the Oval Office. According to *Golf Digest*, President Eisenhower played roughly eight hundred rounds of golf and had nearly one thousand days in which he picked up a golf club for either practice or play.¹⁶⁹ The president's golf addiction was both a blessing and a curse; the public both loved it and hated it. Catherine

¹⁶⁶ Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), 170-172.

¹⁶⁷ "Statistics- 1952," The American Presidency Project, U.C. Santa Barbara, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/elections/1952>.

¹⁶⁸ Dwight Eisenhower, "The Presidents News Conference," February 17, 1953, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-news-conference-491>.

¹⁶⁹ Ron Sirak, "Founding Father," *Golf Digest*, November 1, 2009, https://www.golfdigest.com/story/golf_eisenhower_sirak.

Lewis explains, “For the most part, however, Americans during the 1950s embraced middle-class values and had confidence in a president who typified middle-class virtues. Even Ike’s hobbies—painting, cooking, golf, and fishing—were perceived as solidly middle-class...”¹⁷⁰ To many, President Eisenhower was relatable and seemed to be a representative of the American middle-class. A head golf professional at one of Ike’s home courses had this to say about the president, “By his courage in returning to the golf course after his series of illnesses-heart attack, ileitis, and mild stroke-Mr. Eisenhower showed the sickly and handicapped they could play golf—and play it well. He also showed what a tonic golf can be for the busy executive or professional man, burdened with the problems and pressures of a busy, active life.”¹⁷¹

For some, seeing their president in the news playing golf every chance he had made many Americans question Eisenhower’s effectiveness in Office and his commitment to the nation. Holly Caldwell states in her article, “Eisenhower: From ‘Do-Nothing’ to ‘Did-Everything,’” “People mistook the still waters of his time as an indication that nothing was really happening and became frustrated with him for appearing to be an unengaged leader. Critics utilized the lack of observable action coming from the White House to perpetuate the characterization of Eisenhower as lazy and politically inept.”¹⁷² John Fitzpatrick from *Golf Digest* added, “Needless to say there has been some criticism of Eisenhower’s golfing proclivities. Political opponents have inferred that he seems more interested in breaking 90 on the golf course than breaking the deadlock in Korea.”¹⁷³ Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy was critical of Ike’s golfing habits as well. A *New York Times* article reported, “Senator Joseph R. McCarthy said tonight President

¹⁷⁰ Lewis, “Don’t Ask What I Shot”, 105.

¹⁷¹ Norman Palmer, *Five Star Golf* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1964), 84.

¹⁷² Holly Caldwell, “Eisenhower: From ‘Did-Nothing’ to ‘Did-Everything,’” *Channels: Where Disciplines Meet* 5, no.1 (Fall 2020), 53. <https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1068&context=channels>.

¹⁷³ John Fitzpatrick, “Ike Likes Golf... And It Booms,” *Golf Digest*, July 1953, 33.

Eisenhower should spend ‘less time with golf’ and should give more attention to freeing American citizens held by the Chinese Communists.”¹⁷⁴

The criticism levied towards Ike certainly frustrated him. When asked during a news conference in 1957 if he could do without having helicopters take him to and from the golf course, Eisenhower responded, “Well, I don’t think very much of the question because no helicopters have been procured for me to go to the golf course.”¹⁷⁵

President Eisenhower had deep relationships with many private country clubs across the country and particularly on the east coast in areas surrounding the nation’s capital. No course offered the experiences and memories that Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia would provide the president and his wife. The relationship between Augusta National, the home of the Master’s Tournament, and the Eisenhower family is one of the most acknowledged and celebrated within golf communities still today. Augusta National had, and still does, offer its very few members an experience and an environment that is of upmost luxury and a history rich with legends of golf. Today, the club serves as a holy ground for golf lovers across the world. Engrossed in the beauty, lure, history, and commitment to golf excellence, Eisenhower fell in love with Augusta National in April of 1948. The same year, he would have the honor of joining one of the most exclusive memberships in the country.¹⁷⁶

Throughout his time in office, Ike would visit Augusta National twenty-nine times. Before he was president, he visited forty-five times.¹⁷⁷ Immediately after winning the election, President Eisenhower’s escape was Augusta. Ike himself stated in his memoir Mandate For

¹⁷⁴ Horican, “McCarthy Criticizes President on Yalta,” *New York Times*, March 27, 1955.

¹⁷⁵ British Pathé, “Eisenhower Angered by Golf Query (1957),” YouTube, April 13, 2014, 0:45-1:14, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izQQo1ewHec>.

¹⁷⁶ Lewis, “Don’t Ask What I Shot”, 134.

¹⁷⁷ John Boyette, “Eisenhower Loved Augusta National, and city loved him back,” *The Augusta Chronicle*, March 24, 2012, <https://www.augusta.com/masters/story/history/eisenhower-loved-augusta-national-and-city-loved-him-back>.

Change: 1953-1956 (1963), “On the day following the election, November 5, I went to Augusta, Georgia, for a degree of peace and quiet in which to make selections for future Cabinet positions and to devise plans for using to best advantage the time for preparation until Inauguration Day.”¹⁷⁸ In the heat of the Cold War, golf and Augusta was Eisenhower’s medicine. In a speech given in April of 1953, Ike called for international control of atomic energy and universal prohibition of atomic weapons. It was at Augusta National that he finished writing this speech.¹⁷⁹

Eisenhower’s influence on Augusta National was significant. In 1953, the Eisenhower Cabin was built and paid for by Augusta National to safely house the president. “Ike’s Pond” was added to the club upon Ike’s request and is now a part of the Par Three Contest that The Masters hosts annually.¹⁸⁰

Times at Augusta National were not always sublime. The Cold War was not the only issue Ike was managing. He also had the Civil Rights Movement on his hands, despite how hard he tried to avoid the matter. His responsibility to uphold the 1954 Supreme Court decision on *Brown v. Board of Education* put him in an uncomfortable position as he had many ties to places in the segregated south, including Augusta National. Augusta would take a back seat to this domestic issue and in 1957 Eisenhower would go against his personal feelings by ensuring the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. American racism was a kryptonite to abounding success in the Cold War. The Civil Rights Movement and the Cold War go hand in hand. Domestic issues evolve into international crisis and the chains of Jim Crow turn into the same chains holding the United States back from being authentic representatives of

¹⁷⁸ Dwight D. Eisenhower, The White House Years, Mandate For Change: 1953-1956 (New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1963), 83-84.

¹⁷⁹ Eisenhower, Mandate For Change, 146-147.

¹⁸⁰ John Boyette, “Dwight D. Eisenhower’s influence on Augusta National remembered,” *The Augusta Chronicle*, March 29, 2019, <https://www.augusta.com/masters/story/news/2019-03-28/dwight-d-eisenhowers-influence-augusta-national-remembered>.

liberty and freedom across the globe. Lewis states, "Ike believed that Communists would use evidence of racial strife in the United States as propaganda to persuade countries that had not yet declared their political allegiance to reject the democratic ideals advanced by the United States."¹⁸¹

Ike knew his decision in Little Rock would rock the boat in Augusta. Feelings towards the president's commitment to integration in Little Rock made residents upset. Mayor Hugh Hamilton had this to say about the situation and Ike's return to Augusta, "I think there is a great deal of ill-feeling toward the president in Augusta as a result of Little Rock... I may not agree with the president on some occasions, but he is the President of the United States and I certainly respect the office he holds."¹⁸² Eisenhower's relationship with Augusta remained intact and thrived well past his presidency.

Golf followed Eisenhower wherever he went and infiltrated most relationships he had, including the one he held with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. Just before Ike was supposed to attend a summit between U.S. and Soviet representatives in May 1960, a U-2 spy plane was shot down in the Soviet Union. This became an immediate crisis and was a huge blow to Soviet-American relations. Nikita Khrushchev felt incredibly betrayed and was furious with Ike. Khrushchev stated, "This man Eisenhower comes here posing as my friend. All the time I was at Camp David, he pretended to be my friend. At the same time, he was directing overflights of our territory by American U-2 airplanes to gather Intelligence information. He calls me a friend. Actually, he stands there with blood dripping from his hands down to his elbows and falling in pools to the floor."¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Lewis, "Don't Ask What I Shot", 200.

¹⁸² Pat Kelly, "President Receives 'Usual' Welcome," *Augusta Chronicle*, November 16, 1957, 2.

¹⁸³ Virgil Pinkley with James F. Sheer, *Eisenhower Declassified* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1979), 336.

Khrushchev valued his relationship with Ike and had thought there was promising progress being made between the two men and their respected countries. In preparation of hosting Ike in the Soviet Union, Khrushchev had learned how to golf so that the two men could enjoy a round in Moscow.¹⁸⁴ Golf had popularized to some extent in the Soviet Union. *The New York Times* reported, “If East-West exchanges are accomplishing nothing else, they seem to be popularizing the old Scottish, and now bourgeois game of golf in the Soviet Union. In fact, Moscow is publicly hinting that President Eisenhower and Premier Khrushchev may be able to hold a summit meeting next spring on the first tee of a Moscow golf course.”¹⁸⁵

America in the 1950s was an incredibly complex society despite the government’s desire that uniformity be the standard. Golf had blown up in popularity as most Americans found themselves with more money than ever before and access to lines of consumer credit that allowed them to engage in spending and activities they may or may not have been able to afford. The middle-class saw someone they could relate to become president from 1953 to 1961 in former General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Ike, like many Americans, was obsessed with golf and his image became attached to the golf course, and particularly Augusta National Golf Club. Golf found its way into the Oval Office, and both helped and hindered the performance of the president. It offered him an escape from the stressors of the free world which he found himself largely responsible for, but his addiction to the sport was highlighted so often in the media that the American public grew uneasy with his perceived prioritization of golf over America. While many events surrounding the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement occurred, Ike could typically be found figuring out his next political decision in Augusta, Georgia. The presidential practice of golfing did not begin or end with Ike and the criticism of presidents who took up the

¹⁸⁴ Lewis, “Don’t Ask What I Shot”, 216.

¹⁸⁵ “Random Notes in Washington; Kremlin Adopts Bourgeois Golf,” *The New York Times*, January 4, 1960, 15.

hobby did not end with him either. Class, golf, politics, and the Cold War, as evidenced in these pages, are inextricably linked, and provide a unique lens through which Americans can view not only the 1950s, but also the world still before them.

Chapter Five: Sportswashing: Connecting 1950s American Golf and the Cold War to Contemporary Sports Culture and Politics

The Cold War had many diplomatic battlefields and weapons including the American household, the chess board, the hockey rink, the newspapers, and Sokolniki Park where the American National Exhibition in Moscow was held in 1959. Golf in America is a relatively unexplored territory that influenced the Cold War. In the 1950s, golf had experienced a boom in popularity because of increased living standards and household incomes for most Americans. Golf then went on to become a reflection of American society at the time. As the practice of consumerism and opulence carried over into the country clubs and public courses, the United States government was able to add another weapon in its arsenal to resist communism and advertise capitalism. With the creation of magazines such as *Golf Digest* in 1950, the ideals of American life were taken onto the golf course and onto the pages of golf media for the rest of the world to see and to desire. Affluent, consumerist, “gentlemanly,” honorable, and exclusive are just a few of the terms that encapsulated American ideals at the time. During the 1950s, the institution of American golf both aided and hindered the United States government in their fight for democracy and capitalism against the enemy, communism.

The term sportswashing is used to describe the practice of using sports as a tool to support a group or nation’s political image to other groups, particularly groups or nations that do not smile upon the group intending to sportswash favorably. This project places this term on United States government’s diplomatic benefit, both knowingly and unknowingly, of the nature of golf in the U.S. during the 1950s.

During the middle of the twentieth century, African Americans were actively opposing the racist chains by which they were bound by the United States. Blood sacrifice in both the First and Second World Wars was not enough to break the shackles of Jim Crow. The Civil Rights

movement of the 1950s was about much more than Black Americans wanting to walk through the front door of a restaurant, take a seat at the bar, and have access to the same movie theatres as their white counterparts. The Civil Rights movement had an international impact on the Cold War and America's reputation among those whom they were politically and idealistically trying to defeat. As was pointed out by the Soviet newspapers and politicians, how could the United States government advertise a playground of opulence and freedom for all when African Americans and other people of color were treated as second class citizens? Images of American life in the media seldom included African Americans enjoying the riches of the affluent society regardless of their inclusion in the average increase of income during the 1950s. It was always the white golfers that made the front page of *Golf Digest*.

Despite their exclusion from portrayals of affluence and American society, African Americans enjoyed recreational activities just like white Americans. The Civil Rights movement was brought onto the golf course in 1955 with the U.S. Supreme Court case *Holmes v. City of Atlanta* (1955). This led to the desegregation of public golf courses in the state of Georgia and eventually throughout the country. Though access to public golf courses was legally granted in 1955, country clubs were a different story. The wealthiest golfers were not playing public golf courses; they found their recreational home at private country clubs such as Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia, and hundreds of other clubs. Despite their racial exclusion from many of these white only clubs, African Americans created country clubs of their own across the country. They enjoyed the same dinner parties, networking opportunities, and other activities that country clubs advertised. African Americans' impact in golf during the 1950s went further than just the recreational realm of the sport.

Since the 1920s, Black golfers in the United States had formed a professional home for themselves to play golf. The United States Colored Golf Association (USCGA) was formed in 1925 and was renamed the United Golfers Association (UGA) in 1930. It was an option for elite African American golfers to play professionally since the PGA Tour (Professional Golfers' Association), had a whites-only clause in its bylaws until 1961. It was then that Charlie Sifford became the first African American to play on the PGA Tour as a full time professional. Men came before Mr. Sifford to play on the PGA Tour. In 1952, Joe Louis, the boxer, became the first African American to play in a PGA Tour sanctioned event. His status as an amateur golfer created an avenue by which the sponsor of the tournament could invite him to participate without going against the racially exclusive bylaw that the PGA Tour enforced. African American resistance to being pushed out of the golf world in the United States was a continuation of the Civil Rights movement being fought in sports. The international impression of the United States could have benefited from the advertisement of the consumerist and opulent nature of golf being enjoyed by people of other colors than white. In this instance, the United States failed to use African American golfers to sports-wash its image on a global scale.

Nineteen-fifty was a pivotal year in American golf not just because it marked the beginning of *Golf Digest's* publication, but also because in that year, thirteen women founded the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA). Alice Bauer, Patty Berg, Helen Dettweiler, Marlene Bauer Hagge, Helen Hicks, Opal Hill, Betty Jameson, Sally Sessions, Marilynn Smith, Shirley Spork, Louise Suggs, and Babe Zaharias were the trailblazers that forged a path for future women golfers to play the sport professionally. At the time, the popular portrayal of the American woman was that of a damsel in distress, a being that needed supervision and guidance.

During the Second World War, many women were granted opportunities for career advancement that had been unheard of before. Men went to fight, and the women stayed home and filled the jobs left behind. When the men came back, women were then encouraged to return to the kitchen and play the ideal American housewife to their war hero husbands. Making their husbands happy and giving birth were the ultimate duties that American society had placed upon its women.

In 1959, Richard Nixon reinforced this role of the American woman to the Soviets and the rest of the world while he was at the American National Exhibition in Moscow. As he was showcasing new technological advancements in home appliances such as refrigerators and dish washers, Nixon referred to women in America as housewives and used the term almost exclusively. A representative of his country, Nixon's attitude towards women at the time was the popular mindset for most Americans.

This restrictive placement of women in the household was part of the American advertisement of democracy and capitalism. Depictions of America intended to sway those under threat of communism was meant to show the men of those threatened areas what their life would look like if their country took on the ways of the United States or if they moved to the United States: two kids, white picket fence, a pretty wife, a cold beer in front of the television, and a weekend round of golf at the local country club. It was also meant to show women that in a capitalist society like the U.S., they did not need to go to work.

As evidenced by the actions of those thirteen founders of the LPGA Tour, several women were not content with living every hour in the confinement of their four bed, two bath home in suburbia. Women wanted to make a career out of golf just like Arnold Palmer and Ben Hogan had made careers for themselves on the PGA Tour.

While it was true that many women wanted to challenge the gender roles of the era and forge these professional careers in golf, that was not uniform among all women. Babe Didrikson Zaharias, the most famous of the thirteen LPGA founders, had despised the popular stereotype of women athletes as “tom-boys.” She went out of her way to dress as feminine on the golf course as possible, constantly fixing her hair and makeup throughout her rounds of golf. Zaharias also made it a point to be photographed in her kitchen to prove to everyone following her that she was more than happy being the traditional housewife for her husband whom she loved dearly. Women golfers during the 1950s were more often represented in golf media than African American golfers, the representation of them was not as frequent nor as mainstream as the representation of white male golfers.

American popular media advertised visions of a consumerist, patriarchal, and white American society because they believed that version of America was going to win them the hearts and minds of those under threat of communism. Even though the United States could have utilized the founding of the LPGA Tour to better sell the rest of the world on how women in America had professional opportunities, even in the golf world; they did not. Portrayals of the American woman would continue to be centralized around their position in the home and the sexualization of their bodies for the male consumer.

Golf has always been an expensive sport enjoyed by the wealthy members of society, including those in the most powerful of positions of authority. President Dwight Eisenhower quite famously enjoyed the luxurious compounds of a country club. While he was in office from 1953-1961, Ike was at the forefront for key Cold War events such as the U-2 Crisis, the Red Scare in Congress, the American National Exhibition in Moscow, and much more. He began golfing before he was in the Army but his addiction to the sport was allowed to amplify during

his time in office. He became a member of Augusta National Golf Club, one of the most exclusive memberships one could acquire then and still today in private golf.

His love affair with golf both aided and hindered Eisenhower's popularity. On one hand, it made him relatable to the American people; at least those who could afford to golf. On the other hand, it concerned many Americans that their president was seemingly spending more time on the golf course than he was in the Oval Office. While the office of the President of the United States is the Oval Office in the White House, President Eisenhower's was most of the time the fairways and greens of the private country clubs he was a member of. The consumerist, elitist, exclusive portrayal of golf in the 1950s was synonymous with the ideals of American society at the time and that extended to the office of the president. Golf was so engrained in Eisenhower's life that Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev even took up the sport so the two could play a round. As Khrushchev and Ike grew closer, there was hope that a future summit meeting could be held at a golf course in Moscow. Ike's obsession with the sport and its spread to the Soviet Union proves that golf belongs not just in the cultural discussion, but in the political discussion of the Cold War as well.

American golf in the 1950s is a fascinating topic not only because of its attraction to golf fanatics, but because of its role in large scale global events such as the Cold War. Both the United States and the Soviet Union were actively propagandizing their respective societies in attempts to sway more vulnerable nations to side with one or the other superpower. While the United States government was partially benefitting from President Eisenhower's use of golf as a diplomatic tool to get closer to the Soviets, they were not using golf as effectively as they could have to sportswash their image.

Though images of the wealthy elite enjoying their days at the country club and private dinners may have been attractive, many saw through this façade. Racism in the United States was detrimental for international image just as it had been for almost four-hundred years since the first slave arrived in 1619. The obsession with exclusively placing the American woman in the kitchen withheld the LPGA Tour from reaching the international spotlight. The United States media and government failed to effectively sportswash its image in the 1950s for the advancement of its Cold War mission.

Sportswashing has grown in usage since the Saudi Arabian government started the LIV Golf League in 2022. The Public Investment Fund (PIF) of the Saudi government is listed as the owner of the golf league but the fund has its hand in much more than just professional golf. The PIF is the funding behind many sportswashing campaigns such as the ownership of English Premier League Football teams Newcastle United Football Club as well as Manchester City Football Club. The purpose behind these campaigns is to allow the Saudi government to have a seat at the table in “Western” sports such as golf and soccer. As a result, consumers of these entertainment products will, in the mind of the Saudi government, begin to view the Saudis as not that different than the nations of the United Kingdom or the United States. Saudi Arabia seeks cultural acceptance through sports; an attempt to revive a reputation that has been tarnished for various reasons including harboring the terrorists responsible for the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, murdering dissident Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, and various other human’s rights offenses.

Sportswashing is not a new thing. It has been proven useful for decades. As evidenced throughout this paper, there is passion and political attention that surround sports. The United States failed to effectively use golf to sportswash their image in the 1950s during the Cold War.

Today, sportswashing is a strategic diplomatic tool that is being utilized tirelessly by the Saudi Arabian government. Gone are the days of diplomatic battles being fought exclusively at exhibitions and debates in front of a television set.

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