

The Beginnings of Women's Golf at Princeton Golf Club¹

by Kristina K. Miller (August 2020)

Although information is scant, it is heartening to know that women's golf at Springdale had early beginnings.

What we do know is that there were women members of the Princeton Golf Club as early as 1898, when a list was published in the August issue of *The Golfer* of that same year.

The Princeton Club has twenty-one women golfers none of whom have yet done much in a tournament way. To be sure there have been some mixed foursomes but the women have not yet distinguished themselves. They are new at it, however, and the end of the summer will probably see creditable scores against many of their names. The women members are :

Mrs. Grover Cleveland	Miss Lucy Henry
Mrs. C. A. Sullivan	Miss Stockton
Mrs. H. B. Fine	Mrs. M. Taylor Pyne
Mrs W. Brenton Greene, Jr.	Mrs. Allan Marguand
Miss Isabella Hudnut	Miss Beasley
Miss Elizabeth D. Paxton	Mrs. George A. Armour
Miss Margaretta Paxton	Miss A.L. Frothingham, Jr.
Mrs. Frank Roberts	Miss Fine
Mrs. Bayard Stockton	Mrs. A. K. Macdonald
Miss Norris	Miss Fullerton
	Miss Henry

¹ Later to become Springdale Golf Club in 1922.

We also know from the 1899 Official Golf Guide that there was a separate dues structure for men and women and that the plans for the new clubhouse in 1902 included a "ladies' room."

PRINCETON.

PRINCETON GOLF CLUB.—On Penna. Railroad, one mile from depot. Organized, September, 1895. Annual dues, men, \$10; women, \$5. Membership, 200, more than half of which is composed of students of Princeton University. The course is of nine holes and was laid out in 1896 over old pasture land. The turf is very good. The lengths of the holes are: 1, 179; 2, 333; 3, 412; 4, 189; 5, 220; 6, 260; 7, 220; 8, 462; 9, 155; total, 2,430 yards. Amateur record, 84, by T. Stewart, May, 1898. Club prizes are: Payne Cup for undergraduates, now held by W. D. Vanderpool, and Spring and Fall Handicaps.

President, M. Taylor Payne; vice-president, Allan Marand; secretary, P. A. van Doren, Princeton, N. J.; greenkeeper, J. Glass.

Perhaps it is best to start out by putting these achievements in historical context. Thanks to our knowledge of the life of Mary Queen of Scots, we know that women were playing golf in Scotland as early as the 16th century. Although it wasn't until 1867 that the first ladies' golf club was formed at St. Andrew's, Scotland.

As women's interest in the game continued to grow there were challenges and resistance to be faced by women, both in the U.K. and the U.S. To illustrate this, when Miss Blanche Martin solicited advice in 1893 from Horace Hutchinson (a noted golfer and prolific author of the day) regarding the proposed establishment of a Ladies Golf Union in the U.K., she received the following response.

9th April 1893. North Berwick

Dear Miss Martin,

I have read your letter about the proposed Ladies' Golf Union with much interest. Let me give you the famous advice of Mr Punch (since you honour me by asking for my opinion). DON'T. My reasons? Well?

- 1) Women never have and never can unite to push any scheme to success. They are bound to fall out and quarrel on the smallest or no provocation; they are built that way!*
- 2) They will never go through one Ladies' Championship with credit. Tears will bedew if wigs do not bestrew the green.*

Constitutionally and physically women are unfitted for golf. They will never last through two rounds of a long course in a day. Nor can they ever hope to defy the wind and weather encountered on our best links even in spring and summer. Temperamentally, the strain will be too great for them. THE FIRST LADIES' CHAMPIONSHIP WILL BE THE LAST unless I and others are greatly mistaken. The LGU seems scarcely worthwhile.

Horace Hutchinson

Notwithstanding this dismissive response, it seems Mr. Hutchinson *was* greatly mistaken. Instead his letter was just the push these determined women needed to formally establish the Ladies Golf Union a few weeks later and to play the first British Women's championship on June 13, 1893, at the Ladies' Course of the St. Anne's Golf Club in Lancashire, England.

Across the Atlantic women in the U.S. were also playing golf and making headway. Most notably, in 1891 the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club on Long Island, NY, opened its doors to women members. This move proved to be so popular that the club opened a 9-hole course for women in 1893.

Further highlights from the 1890's include the first U.S. ladies golf tournament, played in 1894, at the newly founded Morris County Golf Club in Morristown, N.J.--then a 7-hole course which was unique at the time in that it was planned, organized, and operated by women (the club still exists today and is now a full 18-hole course). In 1895 the Amateur Golf Association of the United States (now the U.S.G.A.) was formed, and in that same year the first U.S. Women's Amateur championship was contested at the Meadow Brook Club in Hempstead, NY. The championship was won by Lucy Barnes Brown, with a score of 132 over 18 holes of stroke play. (The following year the championship was switched to match play format.) Many of the subsequent U.S. Amateur championships were played in the northeast, so Princeton found itself situated right in the middle of a burgeoning growth in the women's game.

It is also worth noting, given that 2020 is the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution giving women the right to vote, that during this period of American history women's suffrage and women's rights were at the forefront of the American consciousness. The first national suffrage organizations were established in 1869 when two competing organizations were formed, one led by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and the other by Lucy Stone. These two organizations merged in 1890 to become the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), with Anthony as its leading force. Clearly the stage was set for the expansion of women's golf.

So now circling back to more local matters, given this atmosphere of women's rights and an increasing interest in golf nationwide, who exactly were these early pioneers of women's golf at the Princeton Golf Club? What kind of women were they? Research indicates that most of the women (see list on the first page) were spouses, sisters, daughters, or other distaff family members of men affiliated with Princeton University (either as alumni or faculty members), the Princeton Theological Seminary, local businessmen, or venerable old Princeton families.

Finding information about the 21 ladies and the lives they led was not easy but information about twelve is provided below. Although I was unable to turn up anything about their golfing abilities, I thought knowing a bit about who made up this vanguard of Princeton women golfers might be of interest to current Springdale members.

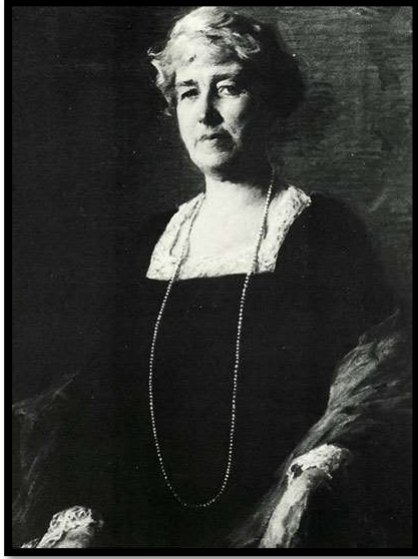
Mrs. George A. Armour (Harriet Cobb Foote Armour; 1859-1924) was the wife of George Allison Armour '1877, who was a dedicated alumnus and original member of the Princeton Golf Club's board of governors. The couple were early residents of Lowrie House from 1877-1930 (Lowrie House is now the Princeton University president's official residence).



Mrs. Grover Cleveland (Frances Cornelia Folsom Cleveland Preston; 1864-1947). It is, of course, easiest to find information about the young wife of President Grover Cleveland. Upon her marriage to the president Frances Cleveland became an instant celebrity. She could easily be considered the Princess Diana of her day as she was so mobbed by admirers at public events that the president often feared for her safety. Her clothing and hair styles were much copied and her image appeared in many newspapers and advertisements (almost always without permission as that was allowable at the time). As First Lady, Frances Cleveland wished to use her influence in ways to help boost her countrywomen and, somewhat shocking for the time, hosted Saturday morning receptions at the White House that were especially for working-class women. She also was a strong supporter of education for women. Surprisingly, however, Mrs. Cleveland did not support the women's right to vote and in 1913 was elected as vice president of the New Jersey Association Opposed to Woman's Suffrage, serving as president for the

Princeton chapter. The Clevelands settled in Princeton after the end of Grover Cleveland's second presidential term in 1897. Upon President Cleveland's death in 1908, Frances Cleveland remained in Princeton and subsequently remarried in 1913 to Professor Thomas Jex Preston, Jr., (both an alumnus and professor of archaeology at Princeton University). Also in 1913 Cleveland Tower was built and dedicated as a memorial to her first husband and the Tower remains a central focal point on the golf course to this day. Frances Cleveland Preston remained active in the university life of Princeton until her death in 1947. She chose to be buried next to her first husband, Grover Cleveland, in Princeton Cemetery.

Mrs. H. B. Fine (Philena Fobes Fine; 1864-1928) was the wife of Henry Burchard Fine '1880. While there is not much to be found about Mrs. Fine herself, her husband spent his entire career at Princeton University and was a much-beloved dean of the faculty and the University's first dean of science. Professor Fine was also among the group of young professors who taught at Evelyn College--the short-lived coordinate women's college in Princeton. Two of his children predeceased him and Mrs. Fine died in April 1928. Sadly, only seven months later, Dean Fine was killed in a tragic bicycle accident. However, his influence was so profound at Princeton University that Professor Fine is still remembered on campus by two buildings. Thanks to the generosity of Thomas Jones '1876 and trustee, Fine Hall was built with no expense spared in 1931 to house the mathematics department. In the 1970's this original building was renamed Jones Hall and is now used for other academic departments. The current Fine Hall Tower was built near the stadium to replace it and continues on as the home of the mathematics department.



Miss Fine (May Margaret Fine; 1869-1933) was the sister of Professor Henry Burchard Fine. Miss Fine's School was established in 1899 to recognize the importance of women's education and to prepare girls for college at a time when women were not expected to attend college. The school's curriculum included English, French, Latin, History, and Mathematics. Miss Fine herself was described as "A large shapeless figure [with] a pile of white hair dominated by a bun on the top, which usually slid over to the side of her head by the end of the day," but despite her appearance she was apparently a loved and respected figure. In 1965 Miss Fine's School merged with Princeton Country Day School to become Princeton Day School moving to its current location on The Great Road. To this day it continues Miss Fine's mission of providing students access to an excellent academic program, a premier arts curriculum, an array of high caliber sports teams, and community service.

Miss A. L. Frothingham, Jr. (Jerusha "Jessie" Peabody Frothingham; 1862-1949) was the sister of Professor Arthur Lincoln Frothingham, Jr. Prof. Frothingham was a professor of art history (ancient history) & archaeology at Princeton University. After some disputes with Professor Marquand and President Patton, Professor Frothingham left the faculty but remained a private scholar and resident of Princeton.

Mrs. W. Brenton Greene, Jr. (Katharine Porter Greene; 1858-1936) was the wife of William Brenton Greene, Jr. '1876, who was the Stuart Professor, Relation of Philosophy and Science to the Christian Religion, at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Miss Isabella Hudnut was undoubtedly related to Rev. William H. Hudnut Sr., who had a devoted and long affiliation with Princeton University. Rev. Hudnut graduated in 1886 and then later in 1962 became the oldest living alumnus of Princeton. Rev. Hudnut died in 1963 at the age of 98. Two of Rev. Hudnut's sons and seven of his grandsons also attended Princeton. Both his sons and two grandsons were Presbyterian ministers like him. His grandson, William Herbert Hudnut III, served four terms as mayor of Indianapolis, Indiana (1976–92).



Mrs. Allan Marquand (Eleanor Cross Marquand; 1873-1950; photo c. 1940) was the wife of Professor Allan Marquand, the first chair of Princeton's Department of Art and Archaeology and a curator of the Princeton University Art Museum. Much could be written about Professor Marquand himself but his wife had an equally interesting career. Although self-taught Eleanor Marquand became a respected, published expert in her own right on the symbolism of the use of flowers and trees in art. Eleanor Marquand belonged to the New York Botanical Garden, the Garden Club of America, the Horticulture Society of New York and the Garden Club of Princeton, frequently speaking and writing on the subjects of plant illustration and Pine Barrens vegetation. In 1948 Princeton University recognized Mrs. Marquand's contributions to the art history field with an honorary Master of Arts, she being only the fourth woman in Princeton history to be so honored. She was also the first woman to sit on the town's Board of Education, served as

a Trustee of Miss Fine's School, and engaged in local activism to successfully reform the police department. Princeton students remembered her as a friend whose door was always open, often taking them in for holidays.

Miss Elizabeth D. Paxton (1858-1914) and Miss Margaretta Paxton (1870-1950) were both daughters of William Miller Paxton, Professor at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1883-1904, & Caroline Denny Paxton.

Mrs. M. Taylor Pyne (Margaretta Stockton Pyne; 1856-1939) was the wife of Moses Taylor Pyne '1877 and the mother of Percy R. Pyne II '1903--both being gentlemen that have already figured heavily in the history of the Springdale Golf Club. Mrs. Pyne was daughter of General Robert Field Stockton, a Civil War officer, and thereby a member of the Stockton family which had already resided in Princeton for nine generations with many members of this illustrious family having been leaders in state and nation. After their marriage in 1880, the Pynes lived principally at the Pyne estate of Drumthwacket, which includes land on which the battle of Princeton was fought in the Revolutionary War. Drumthwacket has been the official residence of the governor of New Jersey since 1982. Mrs. Pyne belonged to the Colony Club, the National Society of Colonial Dames and the Daughters of the American Revolution, and numerous other clubs and organizations, including being a charter member of the Garden Club of Princeton as were many of the other ladies on this list.

Mrs. Bayard Stockton (Helen Hamilton Shields Stockton; 1865-1949) was the second wife of Bayard Stockton '1872 who was a lawyer and practiced in Trenton. Mrs. Stockton was a well-known hostess of the day and the couple was particularly noted for their Christmas party in period costumes. For many years they lived in Morven after purchasing the house from a third cousin in 1891. Morven is the ancestral home of the Stockton family, and has stood in Princeton since Revolutionary War times and at one time served as the official residence of the governor of New Jersey. The house can still be visited as a museum today.

Unfortunately, given there is so little to go on other than a last name, information about the remaining women on the list is likely lost to the annals of time. However, as noted earlier there was at the time a small women's college in Princeton named Evelyn College (1887-1897). This college was initially successful but had funding issues, so it closed once its founder, Reverend Joshua Hall McIlvaine, died in 1897. Below is a photograph of some of the students (c. 1890) and while we are unable to put a name to a face it's entirely possible that a **Miss Beasley, Miss Fullerton, Miss Henry, or Miss Norris** could indeed be pictured among them.



In closing, these vanguard female members of Princeton Golf Club lived in an exciting time for women and who, through persistence and courage, fought for new rights and opportunities not just on the golf course but in many areas heretofore restricted to them--for themselves and future generations. They are to be applauded.

Photo and source credits with links to further information:

Princeton Cemetery is a fascinating place to visit (particularly for a history buff) so if you go don't be surprised if you happen to stumble across some of the ladies' names mentioned above on the headstones. In fact, much of the information in this article (such as full names, dates, and relationships) was gleaned from there. I also found <https://www.findagrave.com/> an enormously helpful resource.

Timeline -- Important Events in the History of Women's Golf

- <http://nancyberkley.com/774892.html>
- <https://golfcollege.edu/history-womens-professional-golf/>

Horace Hutchinson

- <https://womensgolfjournal.com/golf/no-women-allowed/>
- https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/golf/most-british-open-sites-admitted-women-begrudgingly-birkdale-started-127-years-ago/2017/07/19/a5cd05ae-6c7e-11e7-b9e2-2056e768a7e5_story.html
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horace_Hutchinson

Women's Suffrage in the U.S.

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage_in_the_United_States

Frances Cleveland Preston

- <http://www.firstladies.org/biographies/firstladies.aspx?biography=23>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances_Cleveland
- <https://princetoniana.princeton.edu/campus/cleveland-tower>

May Margaret Fine

- <https://50.pds.org/history>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princeton_Day_School
- <https://www.pds.org/giving/planned-giving>

Eleanor Cross Marquand

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleanor_Cross_Marquand
- <https://blogs.princeton.edu/mudd/2019/11/faculty-wives-and-the-push-for-coeducation-at-princeton-university/>
- https://www.nybg.org/library/finding_guide/archv/marquand_ppf.html
- <https://www.gcprinceton.org/history.html>

Evelyn College

- https://web.archive.org/web/20060910045343/http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/njwomenshistory/Period_4/evelyn.htm
- <https://blogs.princeton.edu/mudd/2019/11/this-week-in-princeton-history-for-november-18-24/>
- <https://paw.princeton.edu/article/rally-round-cannon-well-coordinated>