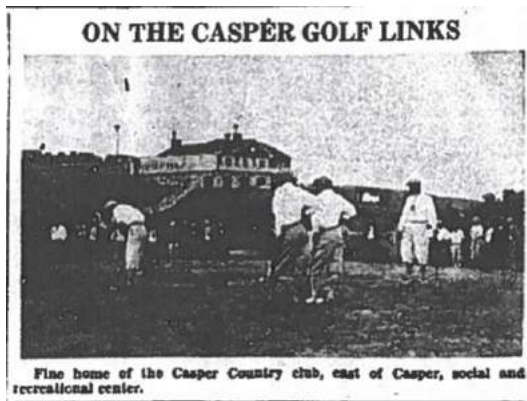


A Not-So Depressing Decade: Casper Country Club During the Great Depression 1930-1939

By Alena M. Wagner

The 1930's are associated with unemployment, dust bowls, food lines, and the alphabet agencies created by the Roosevelt administration. But there were so many more aspects to this decade that one can only discover when they delve deeper into a specific topic. I discovered so much more about the 30's than I realized when researching the Casper Country Club and Casper society itself. I'd like to thank Conrado, Betsy, Lisa and the rest of the staff of the Natrona County Public Library for helping me find resources and fetching printouts. They are an amazing resource and our community is lucky to have this facility. And always, the inspiration for this whole project, I'd like to thank Bounce Carlson as his book is still my #1 resource. Bounce was a young lad during this decade and I'd like to happily report that I did not see his name in association with any youthful wrongdoings!



For those of you who might have forgot my last presentation, and in the parlance of TV series cliffhangers everywhere, I'd like to begin thusly: last time on "The Casper Country Club"... it was the 1920's! The club was incorporated in 1921 and started at the site of the current municipal course. We moved to the current location along Elkhorn Creek in 1924. During the decade the membership established themselves, they held tournaments, and a few members proceeded to win several state tournaments year after year. Who here remembers

Mrs. Ott? It was a very optimistic decade and the Casper Country Club was regarded as a premier golfing destination. And then the crash of 1929 changed the thinking of everyone – or did it?

Casper woke up on Thursday, January 2, 1930, opened the *Casper Herald* and read the following: "Now 1930 begins – 365 nice new clean pages. What will be written on those pages by crime, by Wall Street, by prohibition, by the government, by industry, by YOU?" The paper reported an optimism for the coming year – there was an influx of people into the city as the 1930 census would report a population of 24,013 people in the county – an increase of almost 10,000 over the past decade. The building program in the county was continuing at a steady pace; by the end of the decade Natrona County would have a new reservoir and dam at Alcova, a new hospital, and the new country courthouse was under construction. The Civilian Conservation Corps would be headquartered in the county with projects being completed all over the state. And we were contributing to the building of the nation as reported in September 1930 "Casper Asbestos for Boulder Dam Houses is being Considered." Ok, maybe that is not such a great example.

Yes, Casper suffered hardships in the depression years; there were more programs to help the needy, more transients coming through town, and several businesses closed. Yet people were also looking for ways to escape the hardships as best they could – through recreation. Visits to Yellowstone National Park were at an all-time high during the decade, people went to the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, The Chicago Exhibition in 1933, and the World’s Fair in New York in 1939. And they also passed the time by chasing a little white ball on a patch of green five miles east of the city.

Golf and Other Amusements

Sunday, April 6, 1930 was the opening of play at the Casper Country Club. M.H. Forgey was our golf professional and would be through 1936. The paper reported that “bunkers were being built and tees replaced in preparation for season play.” And “large crowds of enthusiastic golfers responded to spring weather Saturday and Sunday to take advantage of the course.” On May 1st the Casper Community Course opened for the season too. But what if you were not a member either course? What if membership was out of your price range? What if you did not even know how to play? Not to worry, Casper had plenty of other options.



The miniature golf craze on the early 1930's hit Casper with a vengeance. In the summer of 1930 four miniature golf courses opened in and around downtown: Wee One Golf Course at the corner of 1st & Wolcott; “Putter” at the corner of 8th & Durbin; the Tom Thumb Miniature Golf Course at the corner of A & Wolcott; and the Casper Miniature on E. 2nd Street. The miniature golf craze started in Georgia in 1926 at a mountain top inn and it spread across the country over the next several years. In a report in August 1930 the commerce department estimated that of the 25,000 miniature golf courses in the country, more than half had been built since January. This was an inexpensive way to enjoy the game, perhaps be introduced to the game, and spend time with the family for only 25 cents or less per person.

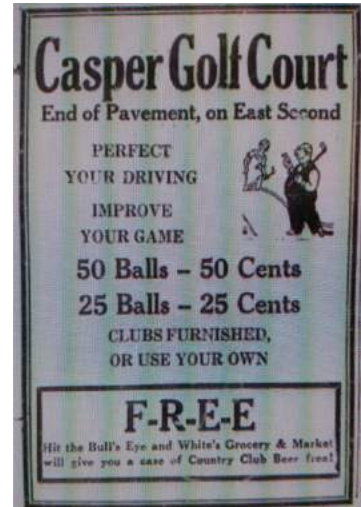


A day at the miniature course was not just for fun as there were a lot of tournaments held at and between the various courses. Looking at this ad for the Wee One Course you will notice that they are not only advertising an upcoming tournament, but that Herbert Forgey, the Casper Country club Pro, will be giving nightly golf instruction at the course. And the article right next to it is announcing the tournament results and pairings at the Casper Miniature Course on E. 2nd.

These tournaments were advertised all summer long in both 1930 & 31. Looking closer at a Putter add you

will see “In respect for churches in our Neighborhood, we will not open until noon Sundays.” This leads one to assume that this was a very popular pastime on peoples off-days.

What if your short game was spot-on but you really needed to work on your long game? The Casper Golf Court was your answer. This was a driving range located at the “end of pavement on E. 2nd” and that is the official address listed in the city directory. Does anyone here know “where the sidewalk ends” (ha ha) in the early 1930’s? The course covered two city blocks giving a range of 300 yards. There were floodlights installed too so if you were hitting at night you could easily track your ball. For 50 cents you could hit 50 balls using your own clubs, or a set of loaners if you did not yet own any. A point of interest in this ad is the incentive to hit the bullseye and upon doing so you would win a case of “Country Club Beer”. Remember this is during prohibition so beer is not legal. Goetz Brewing Company had brewed a “Country Club Beer” since the 19th century and during prohibition they made it near-beer. I am assuming that this is what was the prize for an excellent drive.



Casper Golf Court
End of Pavement, on East Second

PERFECT
YOUR DRIVING

IMPROVE
YOUR GAME

50 Balls - 50 Cents
25 Balls - 25 Cents

CLUBS FURNISHED,
OR USE YOUR OWN

F-R-E-E
Hit the Bull's Eye and White's Grocery & Market
will give you a case of Country Club Beer free!

There were cross promotions in *The Casper Herald* for All-Bran cereal and the local miniature courses. This ad has several rules governing the course for both women and men. Rule #1 for women reads “Should you miss an apparently easy putt do not indulge in loud profanity or blame the condition of the course. A few choice cuss words sort of under your breath is considered good form.” Even if you didn’t play at the Casper Country Club, golf was ever present around town and in the daily papers as you can see from all the clothing and merchandise ads.



ON THE COURSE - IN THE CLUB
As comfortable and proper as the club gear you'll find in the club house, with the same smart, sporty appearance that's the mark of a true golfer. Call today and we'll show you the lounge comfort of Saturday afternoon. See one.

KUPPENHEIMER
4-PIECE SUITS
Priced \$35 to \$50

Campbell-Johnson Co.
HEAD-TO-FOOT CLOTHIERS

Hurry! "End-of-the-Season" Values
Golf Clearance

"CLIFFER" GOLF BALLS—Nationally recognized under another name as 50c..... **25c**

GOLF SET—Four Hickory shaft clubs complete with bag either ladies or men's **\$3.75**

GOLF SET—Four steel shafted clubs and bag. Heads are chrome plated. Firmest price **\$8.75** \$2.25 new..... **\$8.75**

TERRA—Five Hole golf bag, bag of 100, reduced to..... **19c**

Take
STOCK OF YOUR SUMMER WARDROBE...

As you get your gear at a special price for the summer season, remember a complete stock of the latest styles and sizes. Call today. Sport clothes in the neighborhood. You see that's new!

- TERRA CLOTH WASH SWEATERS in White, Light Blue, Canary. **\$1.25**
- SPORT BELTS **\$1.00** up
- SPORT SLACKS in Checked, Plain, Plaid, **\$2.25** up to **\$3.50**
- SPORT SLACKS in Plaid, Stripes, Tan, Brown, **\$3.25** up to **\$6.00**
- FLORENCE and CEDONWELL Gold and Gray SPORT SHOES **\$4.00** up to **\$8.75**
- FURNISHINGS Men's Shirts, Collared, Knit, Stripes, Summer Weave

CAMPBELL - JOHNSON CO.
HEAD-TO-FOOT CLOTHIERS

The miniature golf courses and driving range were all gone by 1932/33. A “Putt-Around” course opened in the summer of 1938 at A & Wolcott but there was not the press we see in the early 30’s. Miniature golf would not become popular again until the 1950’s.

October 1932: not much going on in Casper – the golf courses are closing for the winter, football won't be played until the weekend for both NC and UW – how is one supposed to entertain themselves on a Wednesday night?

Simple, let's head to the Arkeon for a Horned Toad Race and Dance! Only 25 cents admission, ladies free, but dancing will cost you extra. Over 100 toads were entered and all with a local sponsor and a humorous name. The Casper Police Department entered "Flat Foot"; The Chase Café "Spare Ribs"; Midwest Grill "Chicken Pie"; Koler Furniture Co. "Overstuffed" and so on. This has absolutely nothing to do with golf or the country club as they did not enter a toad, but I include this because I find it totally hysterical and also to show what amusements were available when drinking wasn't a legal option and we were not distracted by cell phones & television.

Speaking of drinking...the people were not happy with the 18th Amendment and prohibition. In the 1932 election the states could vote if they wanted to go wet or stay dry. The country elected

Franklin D. Roosevelt and 22 states voted to go "wet", Wyoming being one of the twenty-two. 3.2 beer was legally available for sale starting April 7, 1933. Wyoming delayed legal sales until May 20th to work out the laws further, but at midnight there was a big party in Casper. In Casper alone that first month the city sold 13 wholesale licenses at \$300 each and 25 retail licenses at \$250 each netting \$10,400 in fees. Happy days are here again!! Neither the community course clubhouse, nor the Casper Country Club applied for a license at this time. But I'm pretty sure it was a BYOB policy for the membership.

National repeal of prohibition came the next year and in March of 1935 the state set liquor license policies for sales to start April 1st. Now a full retail liquor license was \$1500 for a business within city limits and \$500 for a license outside a 5-mile radius of Casper. There were a limited number of licenses available for sale and bars now had strict rules to follow regarding number of entrance & exits, seating and hours of operation. Some bars had to close down for several months for remodeling to meet the new standards.

The Casper Country club was granted a limited retail liquor license by the Country Commissioners on March 1, 1938. We paid \$100 for the license.

I think one can safely say that the 1920's came to an official end in 1934. Prohibition was repealed, Bonnie & Clyde were killed in May, John Dillinger was killed in July, Pretty Boy Floyd in October, and Al Capone was already serving time at Alcatraz. The country was moving forward and trying to recover from the Wall Street crash. Casper and the nation were collecting revenue and sales tax from alcohol sales, and a New Deal was being introduced to the people.

State Golf Tournaments

Tournaments are what drive golfers – who is the best? I'm not going to go year-by-year, tournament-by-tournament because, frankly, that is boring to pretty much everyone. If you do care, I have all the newspaper articles for your reading pleasure.

A table showing the decade of men's and women's Club Champions, the City Champions (played between the community course and the country club), the Wyoming State Tournament champion if they were from the club, and the club president during that year is included at the end of the paper. You will notice many repeating names during the 1930's – members who dominated the course and the press coverage: C.M. Bettinger, A.C. Riker, and W.B. Merrill



One of these members is Charles M. Bettinger and this is a photo of him from 1937. The *Casper Tribune-Herald* had an article about him on July 31, 1935 after he won the City Championship and before the state tournament in Cheyenne on August 7th. They reviewed his record stating "Bettinger is a top-flight player who, year by year, accumulates added laurels by his prowess on the links." He was city champion five times in '28, '30, '31, '35 and '36. It continued on to report that he was runner up in the tri-state tournament and won the Casper Country Club championship that summer.

He would repeat this feat by winning the championship in the summer of '36. To complete his trifecta he was the Wyoming State Golf Champion in 1937 and 1938. Bettinger was "an enthusiastic follower of the ancient Scottish game since boyhood...and he resumed active participation in the game since coming to Casper."

The 1932 Wyoming State Golf Tournament was held on the Casper Country club golf links and the qualifying rounds were being played on Thursday and Friday August 4th & 5th. An accident occurred on the course on that Thursday that is not amusing by what actually happened, but it is in the description of the incident that is amusing and totally in keeping with the verbiage of the

period. The headline reads: "Youth Struck by Golf Ball Suffers Fractured Skull". Thaddeus Walker was 14 years old and caddying for his father, O.L. Walker, proprietor of the O.L. Walker Lumber Company. The description of what happened reads like a cross between a commentary from the Golf Channel and an adventure novel.

"The accident occurred on fairway No. 5, known to the club members as the 'Dog Leg Fairway'...Mr. Walker and Mr. Tait had just teed off and Mr. Tait was preparing to make his second drive. He used his brassie. Thad and a fellow caddy, Mr. Tait's, were just ahead on the brink of a hazard.

"Fore!

"In response to the well-known cry of the links and a waring signal for the golfers, the boys ducked into the swale. They waited expectantly for the ball to fly overhead. It presumably seemed a long time in coming. Thad raised his head above the edge of the swale to see what was holding up the parade – just in time to stop the ball with his forehead.

"Evidently topped by the brassie, the ball had traveled the intervening 30 feet with the speed of a bullet."

The article reported that Thad required several stitches above his eye and was taken to the hospital for x-rays and was reported to be in a semi-conscious condition that Friday morning. Luckily for the lad, Dr. J.C. Kamp, a local physician and club president, was teeing off on #4 and rushed to his aid. He was credited with saving Thad's life due to the immediate first aid applied.

Two other state tournaments were held in Casper in 1936 and 1938 but nothing as exciting as this happened. Medical aid would not be required on the course until fall of '38 but that will be discussed later.

In 1937 we hired a new golf professional after Mr. Forgey left town. His wife of only a few years had passed away in 1932 and I'm surprised that he stayed on as long as he did. The club hired Mr. James Norton who came from White Plains, NY. He arrived in mid-April and was to start

work immediately. I am assuming he was not very good at PR as the 1937 papers are virtually empty of club golf news. The Community Club had excellent press coverage however, which is why I don't have the names of the 1937 Women's club champion or the club president. A Country Club member won the City Championship (W.B. Merrill) which is why I have his name and the State Tournament generated press coverage too. I don't think Norton enjoyed his time in Casper as in 1938 a new name appeared in the paper.

New Golf Pro Coming to Country Club April 20

Charles Davies also a Ping Pong Champ

Charles P. Davies, new golf pro at the Casper Country club, is scheduled to arrive here April 20. He will immediately take over his new duties and will begin preparations for the club's golfing season, officially starting May 1.

Davies is reported by those who have met him as a man of pleasing personality, a good instructor, a veteran pro with wide experience in his chosen field, and one the officials of the Country club rated themselves fortunate in having been able to obtain.

Last year Davies was pro for the Council Bluffs, Ia., club. Much of his experience was gained as an assistant to his cousin, Stanley Davies, famous pro at the Omaha Field club in Nebraska. In addition to his skill as a golfer, Davies is state ping pong champion of Nebraska and a professional teacher of badminton.

Davies, who is 34 years old, turned professional six years ago to join his cousin in supervising the Omaha



CHARLES DAVIES

course. Later he struck out as a touring pro. in southern Iowa, centering at Shenandoah and at Council Bluffs.

He succeeds Jimmy Norton, pro at the Country club last season.

Charles Davies was hired in 1938 and arrived in mid-April. He was from Nebraska where he was the 1934 State Ping Pong champion and also a professional badminton instructor. He was 34 years old at the time of his hiring and proceed to be very popular and

active in the club and the community. In the winter, he and Jerry Shaw, the professional at the community course, ran a ping pong league and held tournaments. Charley also gave ping pong exhibitions in the clubhouse after tournaments to entertain the players. And there specifically were a group of members that enjoyed his work on tournaments and promoting their activities.

And the Ladies of the Club

The wives of the club members were just as active, if not more so, on and off the golf course during the 1930's.

Going back to the champions list we see the same names repeating during the decade: Mrs. Costello, Mrs. Barnes and Mrs. Utzinger. The women held weekly sweepstakes golf events – they played on Wednesday mornings starting in May, weather depending of course. Following golf there would be a luncheon hosted by two or more ladies for their fellow golfers and card players, and then there would be bridge games played all afternoon. The *Casper Tribune-Herald* (and other papers) reported on these games every week in the society pages listing the attendees and the winners of the golf and cards. There could be up to 60 ladies in attendance. In the off-season there were book club discussions, bridge evenings with the men on Sundays, and luncheons at the Gladstone Hotel.



The society pages were places where a fashionable golfer could see the latest styles for the course. The national fashion spreads showed that golf was a popular pastime across the country and the local shops were sure to carry everything a lady duffer needed.

Dinner dances were very popular at the club all year round. They would be held on a Friday or Saturday night, or both, before a major Sunday tournament. For example, at the 1936 State Tournament Friday dinner was covered and reported on in the Saturday, August 15th paper: "The Casper Country club was gay last night as members and their guests gathered there for a banquet and dance, following a day on the golf course. Casper members were present in force and the visiting golf enthusiasts were given an evenings entertainment to remember, and Casper's reputation for gracious hospitality was upheld once more at this delightful affair." A dinner dance would be held that Saturday night too, repeating the favorable reviews.



READY FOR A ROUND OF GOLF
Summer sports frocks are casual and comfortable. Green and white silk shirting makes this dress ready for a round on the links. A darter green belt and silk bow tie and three pockets, capacious enough to hold tees, compact and handkerchiefs, are distinguishing features. It is worn with a round straw hat, white golf shoes and socks.

There were Halloween dances, Spring Banquets, Easter Dances, New Year's Eve parties until the wee hours of the morning, and once we obtained our liquor license we started hosting a lot more outside events. There was a baker's convention dinner, dude ranch convention dinners, Petroleum association groups, and a lot of dances for high school and college kids.

As I mentioned earlier, the club pro, Charley Davies, was popular with the members. He enjoyed challenging the members too as illustrated by the novelty tournament he held for the ladies in June 1939. "Contestants had to tee through a stovepipe on the ninth tee, use of a six foot driver was required on another, and on one of the greens a most unorthodox putter fashioned from a thick block of wood, which would send the ball at unexpected tangents was used." A large number of ladies participated with "many of them said to be plotting some form of retaliation against Davies." In case you were wondering, Mrs. Tom Weadick won the 9-hole event with a net 50,



To highlight one of the women golfers from the Country club links, here we see Mrs. T.T. Purdy, who was the Women's City Champion in 1938 and competed for the state title in '38 and '39 – coming in second both years. I have a feeling we will be hearing her name more often in the 1940's.

We can't forget about the junior golfers!! Without them there would be no new members to fill the ranks in the coming decades. Charley Davies was really instrumental in getting the junior program up and running. The young men were instructed on Tuesdays and the young ladies on Thursdays. In 1938 there were 15 young

ladies enrolled and they called themselves the "Fellow Clunkers Club". In 1939 they changed their name to the "Fellow Dubbers" and the *Casper Tribune-Herald* did a photo shoot with them. In the photos we see Lucille Purdy, Nona Neithammer, Barbara Byars, Barbara Johnson, Sally Rowlands, Dotty Marshall, Lois Clare, Thelma Housley, June Ann Trevett, Peggy Purdy, Mary Jo Schulte and Mary Rathvon. They met for instruction from 10:30 to noon, were served a luncheon in the clubhouse, and spent the rest of the afternoon playing the course and honing their skills.



The Not-So-Normal Golf Events

There are only so many ways to chase a little white ball around the course. Sometimes you have to liven things up, make it more challenging, or just go for broke and try something totally whacky. Things like the novelty tournament Davies held for the ladies. There were other such events during the 1930's and I'm going to cover three.

On Thursday, September 11, 1930 a Treasure Hunt was held on the property for the golfers. It started at 8:00 Thursday night and the hunt was confined to the limits of the golf course. "The thrills and lively competition are concentrated in one of those hunts, exceeding any other outdoor pastime, according to those who have participated in previous years." The parameters of the hunt were never discussed, but I'm sure a grand time was had by all.

In September 1932 another unusual golf outing was reported. On Thursday, September 15th Bill Merrill, Monte Dozler and W.H. "Post" McGrath, called "Cow Pasture Pool" aficionados, played golf by moonlight at the Country club course. They all claimed to only losing one ball apiece and as that was normal during daylight play they did not consider it a loss. And, "they used regulation balls without the benefit of radium similar to the composition employed on watch dials." I'm glad to know that their balls were not radioactive!! They said they used their ears instead to hear where the ball landed. It took two hours to play the nine holes and they finished shortly after midnight. They scored 41's and 42's with par being 36 so not so bad at all.

And finally, the coup de gras of golf events of the decade happened on Sunday, July 17, 1938. What started out, I'm fairly certain, as one of those late-night discussions you have over a few bottles of beer, became a reality because, why not?



city junior tournament. In the picture at right Bud Kadlick is shooting out of the rough on his way from the Casper Country club course to that of the Community club. Kadlick made the test to determine how many strokes city he would require. It took only 32.

July 15th, a Friday, it was announced that Bud Kadlick, a member of the community course, would drive a golf ball "cross country" between the Country club and the community club. Bets were being placed as to how many strokes and how long it would take. Jerry Shaw, the community club pro, was posting a prize for the best bet. Kadlick would tee off from the #9 hole at the Country Club and then play the 4-mile or 7000-yard distance over ravines, gulches and sagebrush to putt-in at the #9 green at the Community course.

"Equipment for the cross country tour will include a full set of clubs and a baseball bat for dispatching rattlesnakes which stand in the way.

A veteran sandlot baseball player, Kadlick can defend himself ably with the bat if the occasion arises." He would have a caddy, Ted Smith, and a scorer, Bud Rodgers, accompanying him on the tour. "Penalties will be exacted for loss of balls along the route and two mistrokes will be charged for every ball driven through a window of any houses in the outlying suburbs south of town." One can also hope that the replacement window would be paid for. Kadlick would start at 9am on Sunday at the Country club. So, what is your guess? How many strokes and how long did it take Bud?

The answer? 32 strokes total – that is what it took to go the four miles cross country. He made 26 of the strokes with a spoon (a scoop like head to give loft), three were iron shots, one a six-iron shot, and two putts. Three of his spoon shots went into sagebrush but he found all his balls. A spoon would be perfect for hitting out of the tall rough as you see in this photo. Most of the spoon shots were between 210 and 250 yards with two going nearly 300 yards. He started with 30 golf balls and finished the round with 31, and no windows broken either so he had no penalties. Kadlick gave credit to caddy Ted Smith for his vigilance on the 100% recovery rate of balls. And his time? – one hour, 55 minutes. Bets placed put his strokes ranging from 44 to 275. Kadlick continued his antics later that year by playing the Community club course blindfolded.

And They're Off!



HARD WORKERS: These draft horses were on the job for rough mowing in the years that John Strohecker (pictured) was groundskeeper. This picture was taken in 1930.

There have always been stories of horses and horse racing at the Casper Country club. The first horses were draft animals that were used for rough mowing the course. Bounce has a photo of these horses at their barn circa 1930 in his book. But the actual horse racing did not start until 1938, and that was the beginning of the racing days at the club.



The very first steeplechase held in Casper was scheduled for the Decoration Day holiday on May 30th over the Country club property. On May 11th the *Casper Tribune-Herald* declared that “caddies will be startled to see horsemen go flying by instead of golf balls, but the natural hazards on the course are just as adaptable for steeplechase thrills as for traps to daunt unlucky golfers.”

“The proposed steeplechase course is two miles in length, over barbed wire fences, creek crossings, stone walls, thick brush, rail fences and gullies. It will go the artificial perils of English steeplechase courses one better.”

This was an open event to all riders who were encouraged to register with B.E. Allen of Troy Laundry

or Bill Chamberlin of Chamberlin Furniture. The race was built up in the *Casper Tribune-Herald* over the next several weeks. To make the day more interesting the club would also be hosting a Decoration Day golf tournament on May 28, 29 & 30. Because why wouldn't you have horses racing around the course while you are trying to concentrate on your swing? The paper on May 27th detailed all the jumps and obstacles the riders would encounter over the two and a half miles, starting and ending at the clubhouse. About a dozen riders were registered and the public was invited to attend. And then...it was rained out! The golfing was delayed by an hour rain delay that afternoon and it was deemed too hazardous to hold the race.

Yet never fear everyone – the show must go on! On September 27, 1938 the paper announced that the Country Club Steeplechase would be held on October 16th. It is now a one-mile course “on the meadow east of the golf course and will include six solid timber jumps.” There were five races scheduled for the day – four being over the jumps and one “flat race” with cow ponies. Tryouts were held over the track on Sunday, October 3rd. To add to the drama of the day, two local businessmen were using the race to settle a feud. Harry Yesness and John Sessoms were the best of friends and avid horsemen. A “grudge match” was scheduled between the two men for one of the races to prove whose horse was better. The origins of the feud were foggy but apparently it had to do with the disposition of Sessoms horse and if it did or did not bite Yesness's horse.



The races included the Cavalry Show team of Headquarters Troop of the Wyoming National Guard, dude ranch cow ponies, steeplechase jumpers, and the Yesness-Sessoms grudge race. This would all start at 2:30 o'clock on the afternoon of the 16th.

For the most part the race day a complete success!! I mentioned earlier that medical attention was required at the course – well here it is. One rider, Earl Dowler, was thrown from his horse “Pal” on the next to last jump of the main steeplechase race. He suffered a severe concussion and lacerated his right ear in the fall and he was taken by National Guard ambulance to the hospital. The horse was not injured. The rest of the races were successful with no other injuries reported. Harry Yesness's horse won the grudge match, they each had jockeys to ride for them, and Yesness and Sessoms ended the feud.

Besides the Casper Country club committee in charge of the day, the Casper Polo Club and the Boot & Spur Club were all heavily involved in the planning and running of the day's events. It was reported that 100's of people attended, despite the “snappy” autumn weather. Plans were

already in motion for 1939 events and the need for a better starting area, horse facilities and barns.



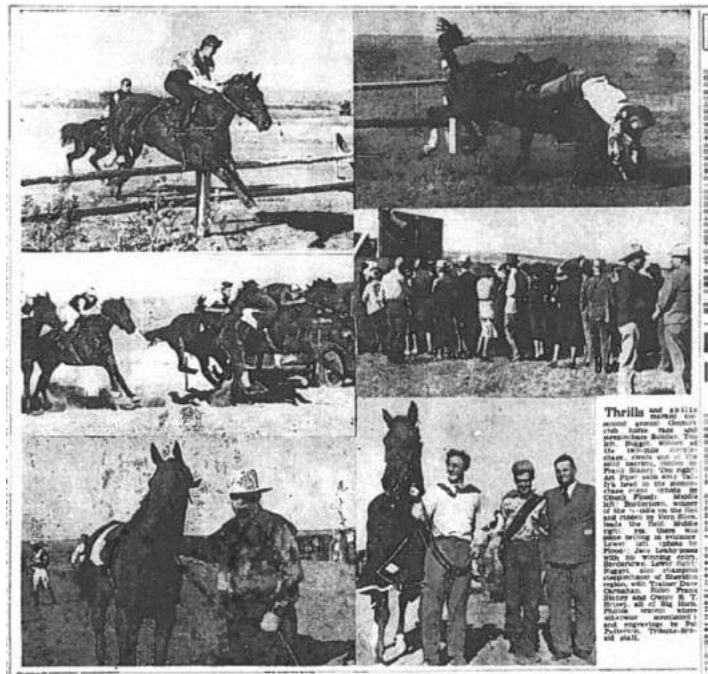
The first reported equine event of 1939 was a Treasure Hunt on horseback held Tuesday, June 27th. By this time stables had been built on the property “below and west of the club” – probably over by the current grounds facility. The hunt started at the stables at 6:30 pm and ended back at the clubhouse as the sun was setting. The riders went in teams to uncover clues cashed in secluded spots over the property. There were 45 riders and one lone spotted pointer. Members watched the activity from the club veranda and mingled with riders and guests, in both riding habits and formal wear, that evening for a steak dinner.

In late July a polo match was held “on the new grass field across from the #1 green” and was the first played at the club. Polo had been played in Casper over the past several years but was played on the eastern edge of the city. A buffet dinner on the lawn followed the match – and there was also a joint dinner with the Community club for the upcoming City Tournament.

The 1939 steeplechase races were scheduled for Sunday, September 17th. A newly completed stable and riding hall would have its grand opening that day as well. It was a 100’ by 150’ building and had 30 stalls and other amenities. It was thought to be one of the largest buildings in Wyoming (according to the paper). Now – here is the \$64,000 question – where was it?? And what happened to it?? The 1939 papers did not publish a photo nor say where it was exactly only that it was “immediately contiguous to the speedway.”

Events for the Race Day included a two-mile steeplechase over “dangerous hazards”, two cowboy races limited to cow ponies, and a National Guard race limited to Federally accepted horses and National Guard riders. A dinner dance would be held the Saturday night before and a special Sunday breakfast was planned.

Race day was very successful – no injuries and no mishaps!! 1500 people were in attendance to watch the races and



perhaps place a few bets on their favorite mounts. Estimates guessed at over \$1000 in bets waged. Consider that the winner of the 2-mile steeplechase collected a \$35 purse, the betters had a lot of money to spend. Due to the success of the races, the beautiful Indian summer weather, and record attendance, the organizers “predicted horse racing would grow in interest in these parts from year to year.”

The 1930’s ended on a high note for the Casper Country club and its members. Their members held many championship trophies, the club was a popular place to hold social events, and it was attracting new members with the horse and turf events. But there was a dark cloud on the horizon that could not be ignored, and it was on every front page of the paper. As one article on the steeplechase began in September 1939 “Outside the war in Europe, apparently the most interesting topic of conversation in Casper at present...is the forthcoming steeplechase and race meet...over the Casper Country club course.” What the next decade would bring was anyone’s guess but looking back at what was supposed to be a time of hardship and penny pinching we see that Casperites made due with what they had and found very unique ways to spend their free time and spare dollars. And despite what the headlines blared, good and bad, the members of Casper Country club were able to forget all that for a day, chasing a little white ball on a patch of green five miles east of the city.



Art Randall Collection, Casper College Western History Center

Country Club - clubhouse. Casper, Wyoming.

	Men's Champion	Women's Champion	City Champion	State Tournament	Club President
1930	R. A. Rowlands	Mrs. T.E. Costello	C.M. Bettinger (CCC)	Mrs. Wm. Utzinger	J.C. Kamp
1931	A.C. Riker	Mrs. J.B. Barnes	C.M. Bettinger (CCC)	Mrs. T.E. Costello	J.C. Kamp
1932	A.C. Riker	Mrs. T.E. Costello	W.B. Merrill (CCC)	Mrs. Wm. Utzinger	J.C. Kamp
1933	A.C. Riker	Mrs. J.B. Barnes	Walter McGrath (City)		J.C. Kamp
1934	W. B. Merrill	Mrs. J.B. Barnes	Gene Shaw (City)	Mrs. Wm. Utzinger	C.H. Carpenter
1935	C.M. Bettinger	Mrs. R.R. Rose	C.M. Bettinger (CCC) Mrs. J.B. Barnes (CCC)	Mrs. Wm. Utzinger	O.L. Walker
1936	C.M. Bettinger	Mrs. Wm. Utzinger	C.M. Bettinger (CCC)		J.F. Cowan (Mayor)
1937	F. Jochems	??	W.B. Merrill (CCC)	C.M. Bettinger Mrs. Wm. Utzinger	??
1938	P.G. McManus	Mrs. Larry Nelson	F. Jochems (CCC) Mrs. T.T. Purdy (CCC)	C.M. Bettinger	Pitt Covert
1939	F. Jochems	Mrs. Leora Foose	D. Webster (City) Mrs. Opal Nelson (CCC)		E.J. Kirch