

According to the club's bylaws: *The Golf Committee is in charge of the club links, the water supply and all building and equipment pertaining to the management and upkeep of said water supply, and make and enforce rules for their use. It shall engage and control the club professional, such professional greenskeepers, their workmen and other employees as may be necessary, and subject to the provisions of Article X (Finance Committee) hereof, incur such expenses relating to the club links as may be necessary. It shall also have charge of all golf tournaments and matches and prizes to be awarded therefore.*

With information gathered from the *Cragsmoor Free Library* (many thanks to the Cragsmoor Free Library for their assistance), I arrived at **Old Inn Road** and proceeded up the long drive. I have done this before but, unable to find any remnants of the long-abandoned golf course, I left, wondering if it ever really did exist. I reached the top of the hill and looked to the southwest. From pictures and postcards I have studied, I knew that, without question, I was looking down the sixth hole of the **Cragsmoor Country Club**.

I let my imagination take me back to the halcyon days of the *Cragsmoor Inn*:

"Young man, would you fetch my clubs? I'll be playing a round this morning." The man is a frequent guest of the Inn.

"Certainly, sir. Will you be playing eighteen holes?"

"I think I shall play fourteen, have lunch, and play the inward four after."

"Very well, sir."

The putting clock is located off the porte-cochere of the Inn. A covered rustic walkway connects the ninth hole to the Inn. The man strikes a few putts, and is off to the first tee. He plays the first five holes briskly and stops briefly for a refreshment, and continues.

He draws a handful of sand from the box on the sixth tee and makes a small mound on the ground. He gently places his Haskell ball on the sand tee and methodically goes about his address routine. (The Haskell ball replaced the gutta percha ball at the turn of the century, and added twenty to forty yards of carry to the average golfer.) He makes a good strike, but misses the green to the right, and strides down the expansive fairway carrying the mashie (the predecessor of today's 5-iron) he has just struck from the tee.

It is mid-July. As a frequent guest, he had paid his annual fee of \$85 to the club professional in the spring. (The links opened May 1<sup>st</sup> and will close October 30<sup>th</sup>.) A local young boy, serving as his caddie, accompanies him. They engage in small talk as they reach the man's ball. The boy is tough and sinewy from carrying the canvas and

leather bags of the many guests who have traversed over the rolling links this season.

The stately man is dressed in tattersall knickers, a white, long-sleeved shirt with a double-knotted Windsor tie, and sports a tam atop his balding head. Adjacent to the sixth hole, the boy sees two elegant women walking side-by-side towards the seventh green. They wear long white dresses; one dons a bonnet, and the other carries an open umbrella that provides welcome shade from the summer sun. A boy he knows is toting doubles (both bags) for the distaff golfers. The boys wave to each other. A church stands like a small cathedral beyond the seventh green. The boy will attend morning services tomorrow, with his tip – a gleaming new silver dollar – safely tucked in his pocket.

The lie is inspected; the ball has nestled down in the lush native grass adjacent to the 133-yard par three – a poor lie – (in 1931, changes in the club rules allow for play of preferred lies on the sixth and eighth fairways) and the man opts for a niblick (a 9-iron). The eager caddie hands him the club. The man addresses the ball and, after a couple of waggles, a shifting of the feet, the ball is arcing towards the flagstick. It lands softly on the green, takes two hops, and rolls to a stop eight feet from the hole. As they rise to the green the man turns to the boy and asks, "So, what will you be when you grow up?" "I don't know yet, sir. For me, it will be hard to leave this place."

The man gazes at the surroundings. "I can understand why, son."

In December 1936, Austa Densmore Sturdevant passed away at the age of eighty-one. Three years later, the *Cragsmoor Company, Inc.* purchased the property. In July 1958, the Inn became a boy's school, but heating the building in the winter proved too costly, and the school relocated.

The **Cragsmoor Country Club** closed in 1967.

Razing the *Cragsmoor Inn*, as part of a controlled fire drill, took place in the early 1970s. 



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