

Our independent research, and a later call to the USGA Museum, has been unable to uncover a copy of the publication. Any further details have been limited, though we did learn from a report of the USGA Annual Meeting on January 16, 1912, that President Silas H. Strawn addressed the issue at that conclave:

“Apropos of the Secretary might also be mentioned his efforts toward the formation of a bureau of information concerning professionals. No great progress has been reported yet, but it was the sense of the delegates that there was a need for the work. Strawn took occasion to call attention to the woeful scarcity of competent greenkeepers in this country, and in his opinion an unusual opportunity presents itself for young men who are breaking into the professional game each year.”

The following year, as outgoing secretary and incoming president, Watson shared:

“The system of keeping records of professionals and greenkeepers looking for positions and also of clubs requiring the services of these men has materially assisted several clubs...”

In late 1914, Watson reported on the health of golf in a special correspondence to the New York Times, printed on December 20th:

“A prosperous present, still more prosperous future, and a glorious past, represent the conditions of golf in the United States. After four years as secretary, and two as president, which is really the statutory terms of the office for a United States Golf Association president, I will become a mere golfing layman, a private of the links...my office has for six years been really a clearing house for the worries and perplexities of all golf clubs.” Later in his text he wrote, *“The efforts to regulate the employment of professionals and greenkeepers instituted by the U.S.G.A. have proved very successful. I have taken great personal interest in the matter, and feel it a worthy action to get worthy jobs for worthy men.”*

His final paragraph lends insight to the state of golf in the United States,

“Illustrating the thriving condition of the game, there are now 88 active and 303 allied members in the U.S.G.A. Few outsiders realize the great sum invested in real estate and buildings by these golf clubs, or the enormous expense of maintaining them. The number of golfers is constantly increasing, and the game is played better now by more people than in any other country.”

The stage was set for a professional movement. The time was nearing for American professionals to band together for their mutual benefit, to take control of their destiny.

It Takes a Department Store

Tom McNamara, a former homebred caddie and Boston area golf professional, was working in New York City as a golf equipment representative when he gathered together a nucleus of prominent professional friends and distinguished amateurs for a lunch meeting on January 17, 1916. The midday affair grew out of his comment during a staff sales meeting a number of weeks earlier that his fellow-professionals were of the belief that the time might be right for a national professional association.

His boss, Rodman Wanamaker, thought the idea had merit for the professionals and their livelihoods as well as business and marketing potential for his line of golf products. He then asked McNamara to assemble that representative group from both the amateur and professional branches of the game to brainstorm the concept. An estimated 75 guests attended the first luncheon event on the 9th floor of the Wanamaker store in New York City, the tables decorated with real heather and Scottish plaid. And the group served as the crucial trust responsible for founding the new national professional organization - The Professional Golfers' Association of America.



Rodman Wanamaker





In this February 22, 1913 gathering Rodman Wanamaker is joined at the groundbreaking ceremony for the National American Indian Monument at Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island, New York. Over 30 chiefs were present for the ceremony from 189 known tribes. Among those shown are Cheyenne chief Wooden Leg, Cheyenne chief Two Moons, Crow chief Plenty Coups, Crow chief Medicine Crow, Crow Indian White Man Runs Him, and Oglala Sioux Chief Jack Red Cloud.

Wanamaker was a unique individual with a wide spectrum of interests who was born into the family life of retail merchandising. His father John was the founder of a chain of department stores based in Philadelphia that bore the family name. Educated at the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), Rodman was appointed resident manager of the Paris, France, location when he was 26-years-old. Ten years later, he returned to the United States and the New York City store location, where he revolutionized department store merchandising concepts by featuring high quality goods. He has been credited for establishing an American demand for premium French and European products.

Of special personal interest to Wanamaker was the plight of the American Indian. He underwrote three photographic expeditions to document what was termed a “vanishing race”. Among his goals for those treks was capturing their fading way of life and encourage a move to make them “first-class” citizens without any loss of their culture and traditions. That focus led to a book entitled The Vanishing

Race, by Dr. Joseph Kossuth Dixon, the photographer who headed the expeditions. From the book, published in 1913, come the following words:

The Concept

In undertaking these expeditions to the North American Indian, the sole desire has been to perpetuate the life story of the first Americans and to strengthen in their hearts the feeling of allegiance and friendship for their country. For this purpose two expeditions were sent forth to gather historic data and make picture records of their manners, customs, their sports and games, their warfare, religion, and the country in which they live.

As a result, on Washington’s Birthday, 1913, thirty-two Indian chiefs, representing eleven tribes, assembled with the President of the United States together with many eminent citizens and details from the Army and Navy to

