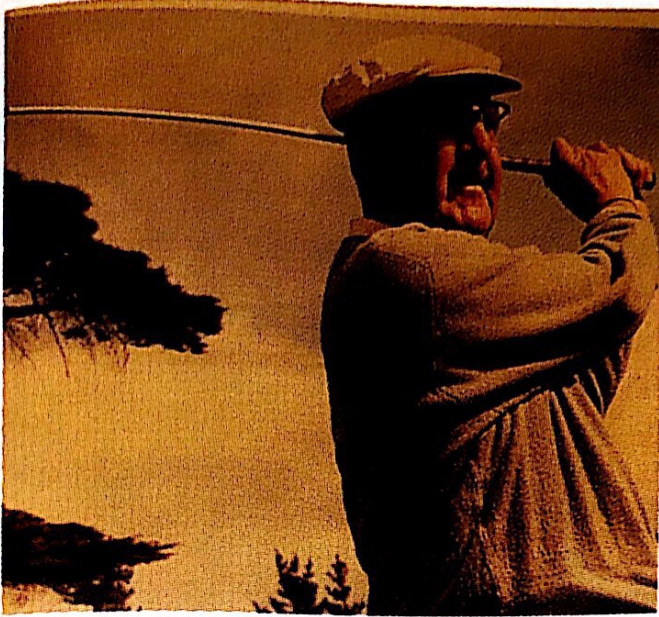


# Bobby Locke



Bobby Locke

From the collection of Bob Labbanace

Arthur D'Arcy Locke was born in Transvaal, South Africa in 1917, and went on to become one of the greatest golfers in history, winning the British Open four times—in addition to nearly 80 other events around the world. In 1959, he made one appearance at the New Hampshire Open and added that title to his long list.

Locke first came to the United States in 1947 at the urging of Sam Snead, who he had defeated in 12 of 16 matches played in South

Africa. Locke found instant success on the PGA Tour, winning seven times in his first season.

But scheduling conflicts, unfulfilled commitments and some say jealousy from American pros, led to his banning from the United States for two years. When he returned in the 1950s, he continued to win tournaments, but he shunned away from the press and hid from the limelight. By 1959, Locke was known to seek refuge in Vermont where he met Mary Fenton of Rutland.

Fenton was a player in her own right, reaching the finals of the Vermont Women's Amateur Championship three times. Locke and Fenton married and played their golf at the Rutland Country Club whenever they were in town. Locke enjoyed a celebrity and camaraderie there that made him a comfortable part of the golfing scene.

Locke was a dapper dresser and believed in white shirts, ties and plus fours whenever he went about his business on the links. Not a long hitter, he developed a sweeping hook to take advantage of the accelerated roll when the ball made contact with the fairway. He often aimed as much as 45 degrees off line to the right in order to place the ball in the middle of the fairway. But Robert Hackett, who played with Locke on occasion, remembers an exhibition he gave at Rutland. "Locke overheard someone say 'I bet he can't fade the ball,' whereupon he hit a fade that landed right at the caddie's feet [turning as dramatically as his hooks had from the opposite direction]. He could maneuver the ball any way he had to." Locke also was known as one of the greatest putters of all time—and some claim he even hooked his putts.

Locke set the course record at Rutland in the 1950s, firing a 62 on the 18-hole layout—a mark that remains intact today. He visited several other clubs in the area when in residence, playing at Proctor Pittsford and Montague, among other courses. Locke continued to visit and enjoy recreational golf in Vermont into the early 1980s, before he died in South Africa in 1987.

by Bob Labbanace