Bumblepuppy Days

The Evolution from Whist to Bridge

Julian Laderman

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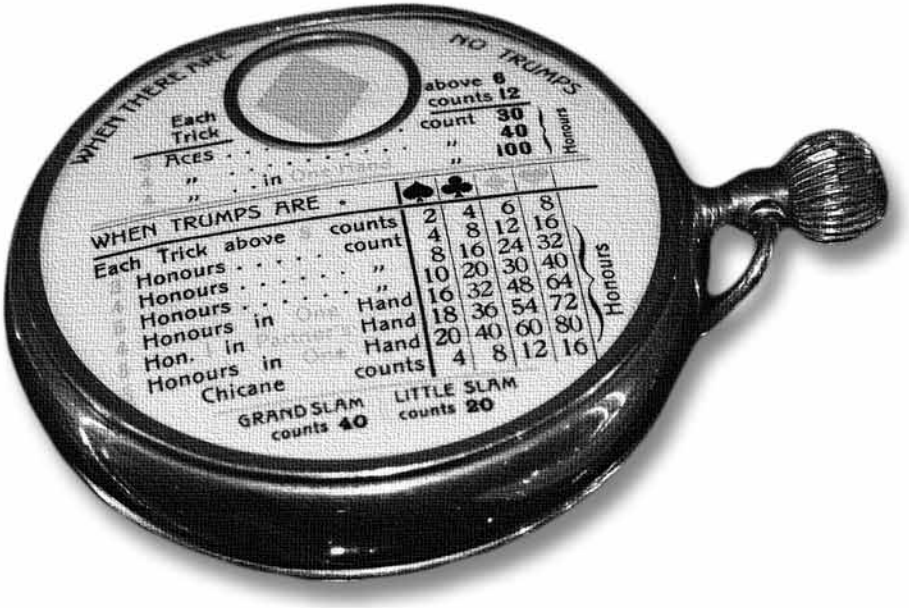

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To all the whist and early bridge writers who have left great tales and a wonderful trail.

Foreword

While unfamiliar today, the word 'bumblepuppy' was well-known to whist players and early bridge players. It was used to describe three things: a table composed of poor whist players, a poor play at whist, or a poor whist player. (Some writers felt the proper word when referring to poor players was 'bumblepuppist'.) The term became very popular after the classic book *Whist; or Bumblepuppy?* appeared in 1880, defining the term as follows: 'Bumblepuppy is persisting to play whist, either in utter ignorance of all known principles, or in defiance of them, or both.'

Upon entering a private club, as a member or by invitation, one might discreetly ask, 'Which are the strong tables?' I can imagine the response, 'At these three, they are playing whist; at the other two, they are only playing bumblepuppy.'

The word 'bumblepuppy' was so popular it generated several spin-offs: 'bumbledog' (an elderly, stubborn bumblepuppy), 'bumbledame', 'bp', and the informal 'bumblepup'. None of these offshoots of the word were able to approach the popularity of the original. Even though the term 'bumblepuppy' was used for decades, its usage diminished once bridge began to dominate whist. I don't believe the expression 'bumblepuppy days' was ever used, but I chose it as the title in order to convey the sixty-year period (1880-1940) that is the central focus of this book. These years take one from the glory days of whist to the mature state of its ultimate successor, contract bridge.

I have tried to write a book on the history of bridge that highlights the aspects of our past that would be of interest to present-day bridge players, like long-forgotten modes of play that appear 'peculiar' today. For example, suppose we take you back to 1910. Your opponents bid six spades while you possess a fine heart suit and a spade void. Not willing to allow them to make their likely slam, you leap in with a bid of two hearts. Not a misprint! No one shouts 'Director!' or even gives you a strange glance. You did not make an illegal bid. The opponents do look a little frustrated; you sense that they want to bid seven spades but cannot — in 1910, when playing auction bridge, seven spades was an insufficient bid over two hearts! It was simply not high enough. We will see that this seemingly strange situation, which arose from

the scoring system in use at that time, was entirely logical. I cannot resist one more teaser. During the early decades of duplicate, each board was played in the same contract at all tables. This requirement resulted in an excellent comparison of cardplay ability.

It is pleasurable to celebrate birthdays of important events, and it is common to write history books to commemorate a centennial. Many historians are presently busily writing books on World War I. I am kind of doing things backwards by writing the book and then selecting the event. Since bridge evolved with several small steps, I had many very fine choices. I decided that this book would commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the philosophy of contract bridge. On July 15, 1914 an article appeared in *The Times of India* that was the first written document describing a primitive version of our game with the contract approach. Considering that my book is being released just prior to that date, I fear many readers will be hurt that they missed out on the festivities. Those readers should please focus on June 1915 when a new set of laws for American auction bridge went into effect. This was the first set of laws to describe the exact mechanics of our present-day game of bridge. (I am not counting the scoring as part of the mechanics. The scoring system was heading for major revisions that would completely change the strategy used by players.) England had a different set of laws so they cannot take part in the merriment. Sort of like July 4th — no firework displays in London.

Note that these two major events do not mean that present-day bridge is one hundred years old. The philosophy and the mechanics must first be introduced, and a marriage must result. The exciting courtship lasted a dozen years, most of them being spent in Paris living with the Plafond family, and the marriage was finally formalized in New York. The scoring changes were nothing more than selecting furniture for their new home, for which they hired a very upscale designer: Harold S. Vanderbilt. (I promise that by the end of this book, this silly paragraph will make complete sense.)

A Pre-apology and Money-back Guarantee

I feel this book uses the words 'I' and 'my' far too much. Particularly in the Introduction and Part I. I apologize. Sorry. My excuse is that this is not a traditional bridge book trying to teach a clearly defined topic. I am guessing at what readers will find interesting and entertaining. My bridge partners will recognize the technique I have just used: I first apologize and then give my reasoning (excuses). You will notice that I

use a considerable amount of self-deprecating humor. I just have so much material available to me. (There I go again.)

This book comes with a money-back guarantee from the author. If you're an unhappy reader, you don't even have to return the book or produce a receipt. You do, however, have to find me at a bridge event and answer some basic question about the book to prove you actually have read it. Do not apply by either email or regular mail. The guarantee is only the cost of one book to a customer — if you bought five more as gifts for friends who also did not like it, that does not count. I figure if this guarantee gets too expensive, I can just give up going to bridge tournaments. Oh, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett are excluded from this offer.

Julian Laderman
January, 2014

Acknowledgements

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Ljiljana Vasovic took most of the photos of whist/bridge objects. Alex Alberts did the back cover photo.

Cliff Nebel writes a column on bridge history for the Westchester Contract Bridge Association and has a wonderful collection of old bridge books and journals. I want to thank him for our numerous discussions and allowing me to regularly visit his bridge library.

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The National headquarters of the American Bridge Association is located in Atlanta, Georgia. I want to thank Willetta Phipps, the ABA National Secretary, for showing me their room devoted to bridge

achives/memorabilia and describing the Association's history and their present activities.

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With other books I thanked my non-bridge playing life partner, Antoinette Blum, for her patience, support, proofreading of non-bridge parts, and tolerating a full room of whist/bridge books and objects in our home. With this book she also provided me with important advice since she is a historian. She did most of the work on the large online bibliography and the two-page limited bibliography in the book.

I want to thank Ray Lee for all of his input, editing, and suggested modifications. Linda Lee first suggested the idea of writing a bridge history book. I also wish to thank Sally Sparrow for her great copyediting and layout.

Contents

Introduction

Many whist books and journals published between 1880 and 1900 dealt with the good and bad of whist, and the direction it was taking. Many of the disagreements and discussions among the leading writers during that period are still relevant in today's bridge world. At times, while reading articles and books written in the 1890s on the robust health of whist and the status enjoyed by the game, I was reminded of the several movies about the *Titanic* disaster. The first part of any *Titanic* movie introduces the audience to the individuals on the ship as various characters discuss its invincibility. The audience, possessing the ability to foresee the future, anticipates their loss of smugness when faced with the inevitable reality. Almost all whist writers were no different: they could not imagine the imminent decline of whist. They certainly had no fear of bridge, which they dismissed as being simplistic and amoral, particularly for women. However, a few had misgivings about all the new conventions and partnership agreements that were altering the character of whist. They correctly feared that these developments might sink their game.

The Four Generations of Whist/Bridge

This table illustrates the four major periods of bridge evolution. Please, please read the disclaimer that immediately follows it.

Game	Very Popular
Whist	1670-1905
Bridge (Bridge Whist)	1897-1910
Auction Bridge	1908-1930
Contract Bridge	1927-present

DISCLAIMER: I am very uncomfortable providing the dates in this table. Since games evolve and dissolve, they almost always lack both a date of birth and a date of death. I am therefore providing a more limited range that roughly corresponds to 'very popular'. I can justify, but not truly defend, my choice of dates. If any reader feels strongly that I should have used different dates, I will agree with him without even waiting to know the dates he prefers.

I'm sure some readers are surprised by the existence of a form of bridge from 1897-1910. This period is much less known than the other three periods. Most people think there was a jump from whist to auction bridge. When I gave a talk on that form of our game to the American Bridge Teachers' Association a few years ago, I titled it "The Missing Link in Bridge History". As we shall see, the earliest known written document in English containing the rules for the first form of bridge dates from 1886. Games with very similar features appeared in various countries decades earlier. It is generally believed that these rules, after traveling to many parts of the globe, were introduced to the United States in 1893 and reintroduced to England in 1894.

Labeling the column 'very popular' instead of 'exists' also conveys more useful information. There are still millions of people today who regularly play some form of whist. In effect, the whist players are on a different branch of the family tree than the one taken by bridge players in the 1890s. In his *History of Card Games,* David Parlett reports that in 1981 the Waddingtons Playing Card Company in Great Britain conducted a survey. Surprisingly, it found that whist was played by 28% of those surveyed and bridge by only 8%. Of course, it is hard to measure the popularity of a game like bridge. If someone is asked whether they play bridge, they may give a positive response because they play once a year at a family reunion or because they played for a year or so in college forty years ago. It is much easier to measure the popularity of a game where one must buy equipment. For example, one can measure the popularity of Monopoly by the number of games sold. However, a standard deck of cards can be used for hundreds of games.

Perhaps the best way to measure the popularity of a technically complex game is to look at how many books are being published on its play. That way we can separate the once a year casual player from the player who is interested enough to study the game and strives to raise his level of ability. Between 1880 and 1900, over a hundred whist books were either first published or released in new editions. After 1900 only a few books on whist were published, and most of them were on greatly modified forms of the 1900 game. Between 1900 and 1910, approximately sixty books of 100 pages or more in length were published on the earliest form of bridge. Almost none were written on that form of the game after that decade. The next two decades, 1910-1930, were totally dominated by auction bridge books. Towards the end of the 1920s, contract bridge books started appearing, and new auction bridge books totally disappeared. The same authors kept moving on, surmising that their readers would want to learn the latest form of the

game. Some writers produced major works in all four generations from whist to contract. Cynics even accused writers of creating new forms of the game in order to sell more books.

The result was that whist and early bridge writers left a wonderful trail describing the game they played. In the late 1980s, I was in a used bookstore, just looking around, when an old bridge book caught my eye. It was a book containing the official International Laws of Bridge, published in 1948. Possibly I was drawn to it since I was born in 1948. I thought it might be interesting to compare the rules and terminology at that time to the rules of the game I was playing in the 1980s. I was surprised to discover that not much had changed. It aroused my curiosity about bridge history, and I started collecting old whist and bridge books. I discovered that many modern bridge terms (like 'finesse', 'tenace', and 'slam') had the identical meaning for whist players 250 years ago. I found maxims on etiquette that were followed 150 years ago and are still relevant. Collecting these old books became a surprisingly pleasant hobby.

Presentation

Two recent books related to bridge that enjoyed some success are *The Backwash Squeeze* by Edward McPherson and *The Devil's Tickets* by Gary Pomerantz. The former describes the author's personal experience of learning bridge, taking lessons, and getting started at duplicate bridge; it contains not one bridge hand. The latter is a history of the Culbertson period with an excellent description of a famous bridge-related murder. That one only includes one bridge deal. I suddenly realized the winning formula — one should write a bridge book that does not try to teach bridge. It should not include a single hand. I set out to do that in this book, and in the first draft of this Introduction, I guaranteed readers that they would not learn one iota of bridge while reading the book. After the book took shape, I realized that a reader might accidentally learn something about bridge. I swear it was not my intent, but a few whist and bridge hands are included in order to demonstrate how the early books described and illustrated deals. As well, many of the maxims that whist players were taught in the 1700s are still applicable at the bridge table.

I believe that very few non-bridge players would ever want to read about the evolution of bridge. Therefore I shall assume that all readers are familiar with the basic mechanics and general rules of the present-day game: bidding, tricks, trumps, etc. This enables me to compare and contrast the earlier forms of the game with modern bridge. It

makes it much easier to describe the earlier generations. Likewise, when it comes to terminology, I can list terms that already existed in whist without defining them if they have retained the identical meaning in bridge. Sometimes, however, the same terms now have entirely different meanings or have slightly changed their meaning over time. And, of course, the earlier games used terms that would not be heard at a modern bridge table, such as 'flag-flying', 'seesaw', 'dumby' and others. Duplicate bridge evolved from duplicate whist. I believe that most of my readers will be duplicate bridge players and will find that aspect interesting. It will be helpful if a reader has played duplicate bridge, but it is not essential.

As I stated earlier, I am trying to describe the interesting, surprising and curious aspects of our common bridge history. One problem is selecting what readers will find interesting. The more one knows about something, the more interesting one finds it. After reading over one hundred whist and bridge books, I find *everything* interesting. Indeed, I might have overeducated myself to the point where I have become the worst person to tackle this type of book.

Part I: Forces for Change discusses the forces that keep bridge as well as all forms of competition in continual flux. The next four parts of the book cover the four generations of bridge. At times I will be referring to whist as the first generation of bridge, as I feel we should not lose those 200+ years of whist history. Most early bridge writers actually saw the game simply as another form of whist.

Part V is titled Early Contract Bridge, and it will take us up to the year 1948. Earlier, I mentioned that the first old book I bought was a 1948 book on the International Laws of Bridge. Actually, I only recently have come to realize the full significance of that book. Throughout the 1940s, the newly-formed ACBL in the USA sought to meet with equivalent British and French organizations to codify International Laws for bridge. With a world war raging and a few extra years required for relative normalcy to return, that first set of international rules involving the ACBL was delayed until 1948.

At the end of this book, readers will find a short list of suggested readings. This list only includes a few important books and articles on the history of whist and bridge. The full bibliography of all source documents quoted (more than 200 books) is available on the publisher's website at www.masterpointpress.com. A table of the pseudonyms of authors also appears online with the bibliography.

Relatively little space will be devoted to the rules of the old games and the techniques required to play them well since I'm sure readers will never play these games. When I discuss a version of a game it is

because I found the form of play particularly interesting, or because it exhibits some features that were seeds for some future generation. My emphasis will be on how whist players viewed and enjoyed their game, what it added to their lives, and its role in society. Actually it was common to refer to it not merely as 'whist' but to call it 'the noble game of whist' or 'the royal game of whist'. Both expressions reflect the great affection whist writers felt for their game. However, personal disagreements over the direction of its development were the source of much of their writing. The transition periods between the four generations were often contentious times, and the battles for and against change broke up many a friendship. Certainly the popularity of the game was driven by the whist/bridge writers, and my account of each period includes brief biographies of its two or three 'greats'. In their day, most of them were referred to as the 'king' of the game. I tend to use their well-earned royal titles.

Many 'firsts' in our literature will be encountered: the first maxim in the first written lesson, the first illustration of a thirteen-card hand, the first full deal, the first bidding convention, etc. Of course, defining some of these depends on whether one wishes to view the whist period as a form of bridge. If one does, the first full bridge deal appeared in a book in 1742; if one does not, the first full bridge deal appeared in 1897. At times I have found it useful to present history in a reverse chronological order. Even though it may seem backwards, it can be helpful to climb the bridge family tree by first understanding where a target branch is located. I learned this from watching squirrels climb trees — a tree squirrel certainly seems to know which branches must be targets on the path to the nest. (I am really going out on a limb for this analogy.)

I hope you enjoy your journey through the bridge family tree.

Part I

FORCES FOR CHANGE

It seems to be the natural tendency of all card games to… slough off the parts that militate against their popularity, and to take on features that make them attractive to a wider circle of players.

Foster's Pirate Bridge (1917)

CHAPTER 1
Gambling, Ethical Play, and Fairness

Let me first digress into my toddler days. As a three-year-old, the sandbox was my bridge club. My mother would command, 'Play nicely with your friends!' I found her admonition quite troubling. I realized that I needed clearly delineated rules of play. Since I found it quite pleasurable to bang my toy dump truck into the forehead of my playmate, I hoped that was an acceptable action in the 'sandbox game'. Likewise, I needed to understand the punishments for accidentally or purposely violating the rules. I was not going to curtail my enjoyment without serious consideration of the consequences. In time, I learned that the pack of mothers was not only the sanctioning organization with total authority to set the laws but were also the 'directors' enforcing their laws. My only appeal option was crying and that never resulted in a reversal of the verdict.

Intelligent, honest, decent law-abiding players will have widely differing opinions on what is the best way for a game to be played. However, any serious game requires laws that describe how to play and how to rectify the situation when an infraction occurs. Whist/bridge has had a written code of laws since the mid-1700s. Some of those laws have changed relatively little in almost 300 years; for example, in the 1740s the somewhat official laws of whist already stated, 'No revoke to be claimed, till the trick is turned, or the party who revoked, or his partner, have played again.' This short law was already concerned with the issue of when a revoke was established. Punishment was dished out in the next law, which was sophisticated enough to provide the non-revoking side with a choice of penalties.

Most law changes in the last three centuries have been generated in attempts to address issues of fairness, gambling, and ethical play. These forces have not only altered bridge, but in fact have actually altered all games, contests, and sports.

Deciding on the 'Appropriate' Level of Gambling

Games and gambling have a complicated relationship. There are always some players who want to modify a game in order to make it better for gambling while others want to do the opposite. Actually, all governments try to control gambling. They have two incompatible

objectives: to limit the amount of gambling and at the same time to obtain a sizeable piece of the action. An enormous amount of revenue can be generated by taxing gambling. Thus non-players can alter the development of games.

In 1910, bridge players in Reno, Nevada, could be arrested. Playing any card game, even if no gambling was taking place, was illegal at that time. In Reno of all places! As recently as the 1960s, a rubber bridge club in Toronto was raided and the proprietor charged with running a gaming house. World-class bridge player Eric Murray, a prominent lawyer, appeared for the defense, and was able to get the charges dismissed on the grounds that bridge is a game of skill.

The present-day version of bowling is the result of non-players' aversion to gambling. Ninepins (also called Dutch skittles) is a traditional old Dutch game. It received great fame from Washington Irving's classic, *Rip Van Winkle*. In one scene, Rip meets a group of men wearing traditional Dutch dress (Henry Hudson's crew). They are playing ninepins, and the sound of the ball hitting the pins echoes through the Catskill Mountains like thunder. In reality, the Hudson Valley was originally settled by the Dutch, among whom ninepins was a popular game. In several cities and states, various factions objected to the amount of gambling that took place on ninepins, and laws were passed making the game of ninepins illegal. Players found a simple solution: they added one pin and named this new (legal) game 'tenpins'. Eventually it became the standard form of bowling. This was not the first time that a form of bowling was outlawed: in 1365, King Edward III of England outlawed an early version of the game, so that his troops would spend more time practicing their archery.

The relationship between games and gambling is a complicated one. Ruling bodies have had a hard time legislating gambling, the fundamental question being: what is legal and what is illegal? The answer is usually illogical and often based on location. For example, the government of New York State spent a good part of the eighteenth century kicking the natives off their land. Now New York State wants them to return to their old reservations and open casinos. These casinos would be outside the jurisdiction of New York State's anti-gambling laws, and they would nicely provide a great source of income for the state tax collectors. Most cruise ships profit by offering a casino for gambling. Some ship captains offer a one-day cruise just to get far enough from a dock to make gambling legal. On some rivers a casino can be placed on a barge: gambling would be illegal on land but is perfectly legal on the permanently-docked barge. This location issue has become much more complicated with the rise of internet gambling.

The morality of gambling, and even the image of a gambler, is also very dependent on society and culture. Some greatly respect the gambler as a risk taker — someone analogous to an entrepreneur in business. Some see gambling as the hobby of the rich — horseracing is often called 'the sport of kings'. Others view gamblers as being one step away from Skid Row. Not only do different nations view gambling differently but the legal issue in any nation is often greatly in flux. During my childhood in New York, state lotteries and off-track betting did not exist. Illegal number running was a thriving industry.

I am extremely happy that I have received great pleasure from bridge without playing for money, and, indeed, the idea of winning masterpoints adds greatly to the pleasure of bridge for many. Of course, masterpoints are not a great gauge of true ability; they simply keep a running record of lifetime successes. Since masterpoints are not really a tangible reward system that can be displayed on a mantel, it is difficult for non-players to see any value in them. A few decades back, when club masterpoint slips were handed out, some players tried to make them tangible by proudly displaying to their guests a shoebox full of their slips.

As a professor of applied mathematics, I often had my classes study the mathematics of actual games and sports: roulette, craps, poker, etc. My students invariably enjoyed the games much more than the underlying mathematics required to study them. No great surprise. One of my favorite courses was a general liberal arts seminar where students would write and present papers related to gambling in the domain of their major. (As gambling is such a rich broad subject, it worked for any major.) Here is a listing of majors with some potential topics.

Politics/Law	Pros and cons of legalizing different forms of gambling
Economics	The revenue generated by gambling
Psychology	Addiction to gambling
Sociology	The role of gambling in society
History	How gambling games have changed and reflect society
Literature	Gambling as a key plot element
Music/Opera	Many operas create drama through gambling
Science/Biology/Medicine	Brain chemistry changes while gambling
Art	Paintings of card players and gamblers
Philosophy	The morality of gambling

Some faculty members would question the importance of studying gambling. I would point out that we are all gamblers. Investing in the stock market is gambling. Buying fire insurance on your home is gambling. Since you only get any return when your home goes up in flames, it is clear that you have placed a bet on having a fire. Of course, not having fire insurance is a much greater gamble. Bookmakers (sorry, I meant to type 'actuaries') work out the insurance company's odds. I don't have life insurance: that is one bet I never want to win.

Games and Gamesters of the Restoration (1930) is composed of two books: *The Compleat Gamester* (1674) by Charles Cotton and *Lives of the Gamesters* (1714) by Theophilus Lucas. In his Introduction to the 1930 publication, Cyril Hughes Hartmann states:

> Unless one gambled freely it was quite impossible to be accounted a gentleman, or, for that matter, a lady of fashion at the Court of Charles II. Gambling, dancing, and the theatre were almost the only occupations of the Court when it was at Whitehall, so that to show an interest in all three was actually considered an indispensable part of good breeding.

This is a far cry from the more common religious and governmental attempts to ban gambling. Many famous people took a more moderate, liberal view on gambling: their view was that gambling was fine for them but not for others! We will see that whist/bridge history and gambling are intertwined. One entertaining book on gambling is *The Only Game in Town: An illustrated History of Gambling* by Hank Messick and Burt Goldblatt. The title is based on a common story of one person warning another that he should not play in a particular game since it was crooked, only to receive the response, 'I know, but it is the only game in town.' This book contains an interesting quote from the July 29, 1713 issue of *The Guardian*:

> All Play debts must be paid in Specie, or by an Equivalent. The Man who plays beyond his income, pawns his Estate; the Woman must find something else to Mortgage when her Pin Money is gone. The Husband has his Lands to dispose of, the Wife her Person.

This theme will often appear in the days of both whist and bridge. Its goal was to scare women away from the gambling tables and to warn their husbands about the potential for wild behavior.

Features of Great Gambling Games

All games can be modified to make them either better or poorer games for gambling. The three very important features that make a game great for gambling are:

1. The rules of play make chance much more important than skill.
2. A player can quickly increase the size of his wager.
3. Individual games are completed very quickly.

Certainly, casino games are excellent at all three. Some definitions of gambling go overboard in emphasizing the importance of Feature 1: 'When chance predominates, a game or bet is gambling; when skill predominates, it is not gambling' (*Corpus Juris*, quoted in Davis). Even when a game has no obvious chance factor like dice or cards, some element of chance is introduced by human performance. Athletes and game players all can have a bad day. For gambling purposes it is necessary to offset the advantage of the more skilled side. This can be done by objectively figuring out the appropriate odds for betting on the competitors or by creating a situation where the favorite must win by at least a specific amount. These odds are often determined by a combination of expert opinion and/or based on incoming bets (example: pari-mutuel betting on horses). A few days prior to the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics, *The New York Times* listed the odds. The extensive table included much more than the mere sporting events. It provided the odds on dozens of chance occurrences. Some were: rain causing the Olympic Stadium flame to go out during the opening ceremony, the British transportation union calling a subway strike during the Olympics, record high temperature being set in London during the Olympics, the McDonald's in Fan Village running out of Big Macs, and a BBC commentator apologizing for inappropriate language during the Olympics.

As a child my mother would get together with her girlfriends once a week to play bridge. I never understood their wagering, as they played for a penny per one hundred points. These women would be defined as upper middleclass. At those stakes, a very bad evening would only result in the loss of 30 cents. What was the purpose of gambling at such a low level? Why risk a police raid on our apartment? I later realized these 'gamblers' were not really gambling but were quantifying their

successes and failures. They were giving the game meaning. The following morning I was able to ask my mother if she had been a winner. Learning that she had won 16 cents or lost 9 cents was a complete answer. Without the ensuing financial transactions, I am sure that they would not even have bothered to add up their scores.

Certainly at those stakes, Feature 2 listed above was totally missing from their game. Another way to control Feature 2 is to have all participants pay into a pool and then award monetary prizes to the first few finishers. Poker has used this very successfully in recent years with Texas Hold'em. The traditional movie, novel or opera script, where an individual overbets and loses all his possessions including his spouse, is not possible in this setting. In a prepay tournament, the majority expect to lose their buy-in amount. Even though it is basically anti-gambling to limit betting, it may make it more acceptable to society and therefore actually be pro-gambling.

We will see that some of the major modifications to whist/bridge were the result of a continual tug of war between those who wanted to make it a better game for gambling and those who wanted to move it in the opposite direction. The gambling issue often caused a split or was used as an excuse for a split. When a group of wild radicals began to modify a traditional long-standing form, the old regime would spread rumors about this undesirable group. The major attack was to say that the new game would only appeal to immoral gamblers. Whist players certainly used the g-word to soil the reputation of pioneer bridge players and their new game. At every transition between periods, there were several justifications. One justification that would always work was based on the scoring inflation. For example, consider the value of a spade trick above book: whist used 1 point, bridge whist 2, auction 9, and contract 30. The great accomplishment of a grand slam was even more extreme: whist 0, bridge whist 40, auction 100, and contract 1000 (non-vulnerable). With each increase, the stakes per point had to be adjusted appropriately. Macho men do not like to look like cowards, so the stakes were usually not adjusted sufficiently, resulting in large wins and losses. No gambling game that is a mix of chance and skill is a pleasure for the first-time player. A newcomer is guaranteed to be the least experienced of the group and can only hope the other players will take his personal check. The resulting bad first impression of any new skill-based gambling game should be expected, as well as the resulting wallet damage. Indeed, any successful first-time player is probably being set up by hustlers.

If one wishes to broaden the standard concept of gambling, duplicate players are really gambling too. The currency they risk for po-

tential gain is 'short-term self-esteem'. This may seem to be of greater value than any financial wager, but self-esteem is easy to replace. A pair with three 40% games followed by a 65% game will have won back all of their self-esteem and then some. While walking to their cars after the 65% game, they will exhibit a triumphant bounce to their step. If financial wagers had been involved, they would have still been well in the red. Actually, if one's supply of self-esteem ever falls too low, one can take a vacation from bridge for a month or two. Self-esteem rejuvenates without even playing. After all, how many players can say that they did not make a mistake in the last month? Giving away one's self-esteem to others at a duplicate event is like giving blood at a local hospital: it quickly replenishes itself.

Ethical Play and Cheating

Back in 1880, the great whist authority Cavendish wrote:

> There is a popular belief that card-laws are intended to prevent cheating. This belief, however, is altogether erroneous. The penalty of cheating is exclusion from Society. Card-laws cannot touch cheating, nor punish it. The intention of card-laws is: 1. To preserve the harmony and to determine the ordering of the card-table; and 2. To prevent any player from obtaining an unfair advantage.
>
> By 'unfair' is not meant *intentional* unfairness. By accident or carelessness any player may gain an advantage to which he is not entitled. Here the law steps in, and seeks to prevent the gaining of such an advantage. And, be it observed, the law does not attempt to *punish* the accidental or careless offender, but only to obtain *restitution (Card Essays, Clay's Decisions, and Card-Table Talk)*.

This quote makes a very clear statement that if one pair gains an unfair advantage it does not mean that either player cheated. I believe many duplicate beginners unfortunately quickly become former duplicate players by not appreciating this notion. Often the process of calling the director feels like an accusation of cheating. Even though the rules can't address outright cheating, they do have to provide guidelines on a variety of ethical issues.

Intentional cheating is a problem faced by most forms of competition. Drugs that boost performance have plagued many athletic sports, and cause individual records to be questioned or even struck from the recorded history. The mathematician in me squirms when I hear a TV interview in which an athlete states, 'Coach said to give

110%'. Recently, I have noticed an even higher goal of giving 150%. I wonder if the effort in excess of 100% is achieved via illegal drugs. My wife has little interest in sports, and whenever I report a great athletic accomplishment she asks, 'Did they take drugs?' In many sports any great achievement is met by suspicion, which is clearly unfair to an honest athlete. Coffee seems to be the only potential performance-enhancing drug for bridge players. I suppose it could, however, lead to overbidding.

The alleged goal of several whist/bridge books was to warn readers of techniques used by cheaters. Of course, making those techniques public may create more cheaters. Recently, I have been the victim of identity theft. The government has a website telling the public how identity theft is committed. Their purpose is to warn us so to be prepared, but I fear that their website might function as a potential educational tool for the corrupt.

The first use of the word 'bridge' in any game context was way back in the early 1700s. In Richard Seymour's 1739 edition of *The Compleat Gamester,* there is a chapter on whist which is actually on techniques that were being used by cheaters. One such involved marking certain cards by slightly bending them in the middle, a technique called a 'Kingston-Bridge'.

Duplicate certainly is a deterrent to certain forms of cheating. What is the point of dealing yourself great cards when your competitors will get the same great cards? And if one is playing for short-term self-esteem rather than money, what does one win by cheating? Unfortunately, there is money in the game, even if mostly not in the form of prizes, so the incentive to win by fair means or foul is often still present.

Whist/bridge cheating has produced many humorous tales. I will mention them in time, but there is one very descriptive term I cannot resist explaining at this point. The term 'dog rigged' was occasionally used, in the days of whist, to describe a type of peeper. It was appropriate for a large man, particularly with a large upper body, who had the ability to sit down with his head remaining at virtually the same height as when he was standing. Whenever I see a dog sit, I now think of this term.

A Sense of Fairness

The participants of any game *must* feel that they are not being cheated. However, this is not the same as playing a fair game. The question of what is fair is often a personal matter.

I have heard players lament that their team has a total of about 500 masterpoints and they are heading into a match against a team with over 20,000 masterpoints. I have been asked if I think this is fair. I would respond, 'Certainly.' I concede that they are unlikely to win but I ask them if a victory would make them very happy. They usually respond that they would be thrilled, on cloud nine. They acknowledge that they would savor the victory for years. I then ask if they think their opponents would be equally ecstatic. They respond, 'Of course not.' I point out that one can therefore argue that the match is not fair to their opponents.

I still remember my victories decades ago in seven-board Swiss Teams matches against much stronger teams than mine. All of them would probably win nine out of ten matches against my team, but on that particular day they lost. That is all that counted. Nowadays, I may be on the team that is favored, but I can get an unusual bonus if my team is upset. While watching our opponents celebrate their success, I see them scurry over to the bookseller to buy my bridge books. They want to boast to their friends that they beat the author of those books. Sometimes they even ask me to sign the books. They probably will not read them, but in my case, losing has its rewards beyond being character building.

The intuitive notion would be to consider a game fair if competing players or teams are playing by the same rules, no matter how peculiar. Fairness does not imply that each player has an equal chance of winning each individual play. In a game that is a mix of skill and chance, clearly the more skilled players should have an advantage and be more likely to win.

The popularity of stratified and bracketed events unfortunately shows a strong desire among players to play against opponents at the same skill level as themselves. In other sports, the opposite seems to hold. Middle-aged men can attend a very expensive summer camp to meet and play with famous retired professional baseball players. I recently heard of a cash-strapped soccer team offering, for a large fee, to let amateurs play for a few minutes in actual league games. (The league prevented it in order to protect the integrity of the sport.) Bridge is remarkable in this regard. Not only does one have the chance to play against the best but there is a real chance of beating the best — at least on one deal!

The issue of fairness was often discussed in the days of whist. In a 1785 work, *Paley's Moral Philosophy*, the author writes:

> The proper restriction is that neither side have an advantage, by means of which the other is not aware, for this is an advantage taken without being given. If I sit down to a game at Whist, and have an advantage over the adversary by means of a better memory, closer attention, or a superior knowledge of the rules and chances of the game, the advantage is fair.
>
> But if I gain an advantage by packing the cards, glancing my eye into the adversaries' hands, or by concerted signals with my partner, it is a dishonest advantage, because it depends upon means which the adversary never suspects that I make use of (quoted in Pole, *The Evolution of Whist)*.

The expression 'concerted signals with my partner' opens up a Pandora's box as to where skill ends and other aids begin. Even though by 1785 whist players had some ability to describe their hands via the cards they chose to play, it is clear that Paley was referring to signaling by prearranged gestures, movements, table tapping, smoke puffing, etc. But what about prearranged understandings between partners regarding card signaling? These might not be mentioned to their opponents, or even if they are disclosed, the opponents cannot possibly quickly understand the system and any related negative inferences. Is this skill or is it an unfair advantage?

In baseball the catcher and pitcher decide what pitch to throw and where to locate the pitch. They signal each other with hand and head movements. The batter tries to outguess them. This is an essential part of baseball and considered completely fair.

Bridge is very different. The July 2012 issue of the *ACBL Bulletin* contained an editorial by Brent Manley, 'Order or Chaos', that deals with this issue. Here are some excerpts:

> I occasionally hear from players wondering why bridge requires disclosure. Some liken it to a football coach being required to reveal his game plan to the opposing team. That is the ultimate apples-to-oranges comparison.
>
> If no partnership had to tell the opponents what their bids and defensive signals mean, the winners of 'bridge' games would be those with the most destructive and indecipherable systems.
>
> […]
>
> If there were no disclosure, you could make up any crazy system you wanted and it would be effective — at least for a time — because only you and your partner would know what was going

> on. Sooner or later, of course, your opponents would have their own homemade systems. The result would be total chaos.

I personally *totally* agree with this editorial and the laws. I am pleased that Manley never said it would be 'unfair' but instead that chaos would result. Since both partnerships would have identical rights to create their own secret personal agreements, it would be arguable whether the resulting game would be fair or unfair. I certainly feel it would not be desirable for bridge.

The moral issue of partnership agreements was analyzed and fought over by several dozen of the top whist authorities and writers in the 1880s and 1890s. Total agreement was never reached. We will see in Part III that the first form of bridge was initially perceived as an escape from these battles and, even more importantly, an escape from most signaling conventions.

All sports have questions on what is fair, honest, appropriate behavior, and ethical. The less a sport is regulated by on-site referees/umpires/directors, the more the participants have to self-monitor their actions. The golfer is held to a high personal standard since often no witnesses are available. At times tennis players purposely miss shots if they feel a line judge gave them a point that they did not deserve. In many other sports, however, there is a spirit that a play is acceptable if the possible foul is not caught by an official. It is often acceptable for players to pretend to be fouled or injured. In American football, if a player commits a foul and does not get caught, it is an outstanding play. My first television experience with soccer ('football' to most of the world) was very disturbing. After a collision, a player was rolling in agony on the field. It looked like a career-ending injury, and he had to be removed on a stretcher. How awful for the young man! Five minutes later I saw the same player charging back onto the field. I wanted to know the name of his miraculous doctor on the sideline. As I witnessed this same scenario played out several times in the following 20 minutes, I began to catch on. Clearly this was considered an ethical play. It was too obvious to be unethical. Somewhere between ethical play and cheating is gamesmanship. Ely Culbertson seemed to be able to get under the skin of his opponents. He took pride in his knowledge of psychology and in recognizing weakness. He was an expert at what present-day athletes call 'trash talking'.

Jeff Rubens has written at length in *The Bridge World* about the ethics of 'sportsmanlike dumping' — deliberately losing a match to gain an advantage later in the event, perhaps by eliminating a strong opponent and thereby getting an easier draw for one's own team. At

the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, this issue was brought into the headlines when four pairs of badminton players were tossed out of the competition. These pairs chose to lose a match purposely in order to improve their chances of winning a gold medal or at least some medal. The issue of whether those badminton pairs were playing fairly drew considerable debate in newspapers and on the internet. Both sides had very good arguments. As Rubens has pointed out, the same thing can occur in some major bridge events, and the WBF has recently changed some of its competition rules in an attempt to avoid it. The differing opinions on what is fair play will be a continuing seed for game evolution.

If a game consists only of chance, a mathematical definition exists for labeling it a 'fair' game: a fair game is a game where each side's expected winnings (or 'value') are zero. For example, suppose two people are playing a game and one player wins one-third of the time and the other two-thirds. If the player who wins less often gets $2 for a win and only loses $1 for a loss, this is a fair game for the player since his expected value is zero: (2 x 1/3) + (-1 x 2/3) = 0. The payoff of $2 made the game fair. A $3 payoff to the player who only wins one-third of the time would have made the game favorable to the player who loses the majority of the individual plays. The expected value does not help predict individual outcomes but is useful for predicting the gains and losses over many plays. It is an excellent way to study casino games such as roulette and craps. These are obviously not fair games: the odds are against the players, who in the long run will lose. A mathematician would say that the expected value of the game to the players is negative. Maybe the excitement of the activity makes up for that difference. I doubt it in the long run. Casino games are virtually always honest but they are not fair — the odds are in favor of the house. Often the words 'honest' and 'fair' are mistakenly used interchangeably.

At the start of this section I described my response to bridge players who felt it was unfair not to have an equal chance to win a match. Basically, my answer extended the expected value analysis by using pleasure as a payoff rather than a monetary amount. They might rarely win but when they earn a victory, the payoff is wonderful.

CHAPTER 2
The Evolution of Games, Sports, and Contests

Even though most games evolved within the last few hundred years, the specifics of their history are often quite murky. There are three main reasons games have many variations and continue to evolve.

1. Arbitrary rules and scoring.
2. Attempts to balance the level of skill and chance (luck).
3. The variations have different goals.

Arbitrary Rules and Scoring

The rules/laws of games are quite arbitrary. They do not resemble rules of science or mathematics. They do not conform to any physical real world principles. The sole important requirement is that all participants agree on the rules of play. If a group of kids are playing poker and they are confused as to whether a straight ranks higher than a flush, the game can still proceed as long as they make their own agreement on the issue. Their agreement on the rules is important. Even if they don't make an agreement, until that situation occurs, no violence will erupt.

Prior to every major-league baseball game the two managers and all the umpires meet at home plate. Supposedly they are discussing the 'ground rules' — local variants which result from the design and characteristics of that particular ballpark, such as the giant green wall in Boston's Fenway Park. It seems a bit excessive to do this at every game during a 162-game season, and sometimes I seriously doubt that's what they are actually discussing.

Scoring rules are even more arbitrary than are the rules of play, and this opens up the door for easy modification. As long as the rules, no matter how strange, apply equally to all contestants, the game is playable. Both whist and bridge were often altered by manipulating the scoring method but rarely by changing the playing method. Indeed, the mechanics of play are a century old.

A contest will usually consist of many individual games. Does the margin of victory in a game play any role in arriving at the final winner? When Swiss teams first became popular in the early 1980s, most

such events were scored as win/loss rather than by victory points. Computers have played a role in this change. Win/loss events required less bookkeeping for the directors. That is no longer important. But which is better? Win/loss events produce the excitement of 'all or nothing' results, but end in ugly ties for contending teams.

Rubber bridge has always had an unusual scoring method. A partnership can win two games out of three, thereby 'winning' the rubber, but still be behind on total points. Indeed, this was one of the many objections whist players loudly voiced about their offspring, bridge.

Balancing Skill and Chance (Luck)

A lottery is a game of pure chance. Choosing the numbers requires no skill even though most players have a rather well thought-out method behind their picks. Roulette is also a game of pure chance. There are many ways the player can choose a combination of numbers, but all schemes are equally bad for the player. Skill plays no part. The great Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky was confident that he had a winning system for roulette, and he boasted of it in letters to his family. When he won, it proved his system was great. When he lost, he would conclude that he had not followed the system well enough. If he had been a mathematician, he would have realized that in the long run his system would lose him slightly over 5 kopeks for every ruble he bet.

Chance enters games and sports in many ways, for example:

1. Dealing cards
2. Rolling dice
3. Human performance
4. Tiny differences in measurements
5. Computer random number generators (duplicate bridge)
6. Miscellaneous wheels and devices (roulette)

Cards and dice are the traditional favorites. Children are introduced early on to board games that use dice. Two-thousand-year-old dice, found in the ruins of Pompeii, closely resemble modern day dice. Actually, one can even go back more than four-thousand years, to a time when an animal bone (from near the heel) was used as a random device. Playing cards have a shorter history, arriving in Europe from Asia or the Middle East in the late fourteenth century, although those early cards did not have our familiar suits. Cards with our standard suit symbols started appearing in the fifteenth century in France. The

simplicity of the symbols and French manufacturing know-how made these the standard.

Human performance varies too, perhaps depending on the state of mind of the athlete and the pressure of the situation. Consider a basketball player taking foul shots, a situation in which no opponent is trying to block the shot. He may be a 70% foul shooter, or perhaps he is an 85% shooter. In any case, chance will determine the outcome on any given shot: regardless of an athlete's skill level, he will still have good days and bad days.

In tennis a fraction of an inch may determine whether the player hit a great shot or merely lost a point. In baseball mere inches often separate a home run from a foul ball. In outdoor stadiums wind and weather may be chance factors that are partially related to item 4 above.

An important trait of any random factor is whether the next result has any relation to the last or any earlier result. For example, the roll of a pair of dice is totally independent of any previous roll. One can say that dice have no memory. When cards are dealt the situation is quite different. The chance that the first card you are dealt is an ace is 4/52 (approximately 8%). If the first three cards dealt to you are aces, the chance that the fourth card is also an ace is only 1/49 (approximately 2%). Clearly a dealt card is not independent of previous known cards (a fact made use of by card counters at the blackjack table). However, after a hand is finished, assuming the cards are properly shuffled, the next deal is independent of any previous deals. With human performance, in contrast, any result is psychologically influenced by prior results — we have all seen a bridge player have a bad board, then, obviously upset, compound the felony with more errors on the next two or three deals.

Chess is often thought of as a game of pure skill. Human performance is rather steady but if player A is only a little stronger than player B, you should not expect A to win every game of a ten-game match, just the majority. If only one game is played, then deciding who gets the advantage of making the first move (i.e. playing the white pieces) requires some random method.

Both whist and bridge involve a mix of chance and skill. The mix can be adjusted surprisingly easily. Consider the role of honors in these games[1]. Gaining points through holding honors is no great accomplishment: it is luck. Some games reward the winner of cards that are designated as special. Whist and bridge both reward a side merely

1. Honors are not scored in modern duplicate bridge, of course.

for being dealt them even if they are then played on losing tricks. Winning tricks, however, involves both skill and chance. The greater the numerical reward for honors, in any form of whist or bridge, the greater the chance element and the less the skill.

Obviously, at rubber bridge, the side with the preponderance of high cards will be the favorite to emerge from the session as winners. Playing duplicate largely removes this factor from the scoring. Indeed, the main purpose for the duplicate form is that it increases the importance of skill and decreases the importance of chance. Increasing the length of bridge matches is another way to alter the balance between chance and skill. In a seven-board match, a poor team can upset a great team, but this is virtually impossible in a long match.

Enjoyment and Entertainment: for Whom?

As we saw in Chapter 1, it is hard to get universal agreement on what is or isn't fair. Likewise the appropriate level of gambling is an individual decision for any game, let alone society. These factors make it hard for any committee or organization to generate a body of laws. Even after laws are drawn up, the same or a partially new laws committee will convene in a year or two. Players unhappy with the laws will certainly encourage changes at their next opportunity. Here is a list of several other conflicting goals.

1. Having the most skilled contestant win
2. Making it fun for the experienced player
3. Making it easy to learn for the new player
4. Making it enjoyable for the spectator

It would seem that having the best player win should be the primary goal. But ability can adequately be demonstrated by winning more often than anyone else, though not necessarily each time. The luck factor in bridge enables even a very poor player to taste victory occasionally. I suspect that players on the strongest bridge team would not derive as much pleasure from the game if they always won (although I am not sure about this since I have never faced that problem).

I labeled these as conflicting goals in the sense that improving one aspect may hurt another. For example, suppose we changed the rules of baseball so that every run scored by either team in the ninth inning would count as two runs. Doubling the value of ninth inning runs would make comebacks easier and make the game better for the spectators. Nothing is more exciting for fans than a comeback as long as it

is achieved by the team that they support. However, putting such an exaggerated value on ninth inning runs would slightly reduce the value of earlier play and, even worse, reduce the likelihood of the stronger contestant winning. So by clearly increasing #4 and maybe improving #2, the contest sacrifices #1.

This tweaking of the scoring system can be applied to virtually every sport in some fashion or another. In the fourth quarter of a football game or basketball game, the third period of a hockey game, or the last few minutes of a soccer game, the point value awarded can be increased. I am not for these changes. In North America, professional sports put a heavy premium on #4. They create a broad interest by having many teams compete for a championship, with the league season itself merely determining which teams enter the knockout phase, known as the 'playoffs'. The hockey and the basketball playoffs each involve sixteen teams. Since each league consists of only thirty teams, more often than not a team with a losing record will make the playoffs. Baseball originally did not have playoffs, only the World Series. They have gradually expanded the number of teams competing in postseason play, and now they are up to ten teams (after a 162-game season!). March Madness, the college basketball tournament, currently involves sixty-eight teams. Spectator interest increases when almost everyone has a team in the hunt for a championship. An average team in the regular season may end up as champions.

In effect, even though most of these sports have not changed their scoring system at the late stages of a game, they have added importance to the last part of a season. On a seasonal basis the method provides great comeback potential. Many ripple effects are generated by putting this great value on the postseason. Recently we have seen elderly star players retiring to avoid most of the regular season and coming out of retirement toward the late stages of the regular season and thereby being fresh for the postseason.

Bridge did not miss out, either, on this principle. In traditional rubber bridge scoring a pair becomes vulnerable after making a game. As one or both pairs become vulnerable, the points tossed around increase as the game progresses. Actually, the main idea behind vulnerability was the increased undertrick penalty for the vulnerable pair. The vulnerable pair was put at a clear disadvantage by the risk involved in trying to outbid a pair that was not vulnerable. This increased the potential for comebacks. My above ideas on scoring for sports might seem ridiculous, but bridge adopted a system that is much more extreme — it greatly punishes the leaders when they fail. It almost resembles taking away a point for every missed shot by the

leading team in a basketball game. We will discuss vulnerability, and the controversies surrounding it, in Part V.

In the Spingold or Vanderbilt knockout team events, many teams concede their matches before the last quarter. They are just too far behind. Doubling the IMPs values in the last quarter would reduce the dropout rate but at the great expense of minimizing the importance of skill. This change would certainly not be a desirable option for those events.

Tennis, with its 'game, set, match' scoring system, enables exciting comebacks. In a best-of-five-set match, a player who dominates the first two sets cannot coast. Playing slightly below average the rest of the way will end in defeat. It would be a much less interesting game if the winner was the first player to win 100 points. The tennis scoring system invites comebacks without reducing the interest of the early play. In a close match there is a preponderance of 'crucial points' — break points, set points, even match points. To some extent they are generated by that comeback potential.

The popularity of poker has been a great success story in the past fifteen years — indeed, nowadays Texas Hold'em is almost synonymous with poker. When poker evolved on the Mississippi River and in New Orleans around 1830, no one dreamt of this version of the game. Around 1970, Hold'em started surfacing in a few Las Vegas hangouts, but only around the year 2000 did the world realize how photogenic it could be on television (at least in a version which shows only edited highlights). Its great exposure has created many players and followers. Large bookstores typically have several shelves covered with books on poker, but fewer than a dozen bridge books. I'm jealous of poker's popularity. Even though I strongly feel bridge is much more intellectually challenging and pleasurable than poker, I am afraid that we are being trumped on points #3 and #4.

Changing technology has created many issues for all spectator sports. As television coverage and replay technology has improved, the 'couch potato' can view a close call better than an official. This has created a conflict on point #4. The spectator does not like continual interruptions of the action for officials to meet and watch video replays, but he wants his desire for fairness to be satisfied.

Simple Versions

Games often evolve that are very simple forms, almost childish versions, of an established game. They function as a stepping stone and they create interest in the standard version. Sometimes this creates

an easy way for children to be exposed to a game. A fine example is miniature golf. What kid does not enjoy miniature golf? But even if one lacks an extensive miniature golf background, it is easy to understand the goal of golf: hit the ball into the hole in as few strokes as possible.

Recently I was in an elementary school gymnasium and I noticed that the basketball hoops were several feet lower than the ones an NBA player would use. This is a necessary step to enable kids to play the game. Lowering the baskets had not been thought of at the time I was in school — at least not in my school. I remember being lined up with my classmates and told to shoot the ball at the ten-foot high basket. This was an exercise in futility. I pointed out to my teacher that since none of us could throw a basketball to the height of the basket, we had no hope of getting it in. Her response was to keep trying. Many years later I realized that the purpose of this exercise was to keep us occupied so she could flirt with the teacher of Class 3-2. I believe she eventually married him, so my basketball career was perhaps less futile than I had originally thought.

When I was a kid, seven- or eight-year-olds in the Bronx played punchball, our version of baseball. We would punch a pink rubber ball, using street manholes (hopefully closed) as bases. We did not need gloves, bats, more than three kids on a side, or much playing space. We adapted baseball to our needs. It was a simplification to meet our limited resources. Both sides played by the same rules but the team with the larger kids would settle all disputes.

Since chess is a game that lacks a simple form, it is challenging to introduce the game to children. One basic problem is that kids only enjoy winning: they are even worse losers than duplicate bridge players. Between the ages of eight to fourteen, I was heavily absorbed in chess. I learned the game from my father. He had the fine judgment to let me win every game I played against him for the first two years. This resulted in my developing a great love for the game. When I was ten, and he started winning, I was shocked at how much he had learned from playing against me. After considerable success in junior tournaments, I retired from the game at fourteen. My glory days were behind me. I realized chess was a young man's game.

We will see that one of the few good things the whist community had to say about bridge was that its simplicity made it potentially an excellent instructional tool for new whist players. Actually the opposite is occurring. Many present-day bridge teachers start beginners off with a modified form of whist. Indeed, if one combines the scoring of whist, the trump selection of bridge whist, and the mechanics

of auction, one can have a playable game after a ten-minute lesson. Teachers might find it useful for complete beginners and for the very elderly who are beyond the point of learning how to bid. I devised such a game, named it Bumblepuppy Bridge, and made it available online at the various websites of Master Point Press.

Unnatural Numbers of Players, Breaking Ties, and Unfinished Games

For most competitive activities, these three topics have generated many forms of the standard game. In their own way they all contributed to the bridge of today.

Games are often modified to accommodate an 'unnatural' number of players. More than four bridge players can be handled by some sitting out. More than a hundred years ago a six-player (three partnerships) form of bridge was played (see Foster, *Complete Hoyle* 1909). Two card tables would be pushed together so no player would have to sit in the lap of an opponent. Fewer than four is a different story. Many variants of bridge have been tried for three, two and even one player. The results have not been great. The same is not true of Whist. Some writers claimed that the French actually preferred a three-person form of whist to the standard four-person game. We will see that some of the three-person forms of whist and bridge played an essential role in the evolution of bridge.

Just as bridge created several two-person forms, chess created a four-person form. Some editions of *Hoyle's Games* published in the mid- and late-1800s illustrated a chessboard with 160 squares and four sets of chessmen, colored white, black, red, and green. In spite of having four colors, it was a partnership game with the partners sitting on opposite sides of the board. Players could not move their partner's pieces, and the order of making moves went around the board in a clockwise fashion.

In some parts of the world, it is considered undesirable to have a game end in a tie. Some sports allow it. Most sports organizations are continually changing their tie-breaking mechanism because of unhappiness with any of the options — for example, unlimited overtime, fixed overtime, overtime till one side scores (sudden death), shootout, combination of fixed overtime and shootout, and so on. A common objection in American professional football has been that the teams flip a coin to see which side gets the first opportunity to score in sudden death overtime. Recently this has been changed to a modified sudden death overtime where each team usually gets the ball at least once. About forty years ago, some major soccer events that ended in

a tie were decided by a coin flip. It was fair but, since no skill was involved in determining the winner, it must have felt unfair to the losers. Today, soccer makes use of the penalty shootout — still something of a lottery, but at least a game-related skill is involved. We will see that as early as 1700, whist players felt they needed a tie-breaking mechanism.

Gambling games that are interrupted before completion require a set of scoring rules. Suppose a player must leave a game due to an unanticipated emergency. If that player is far behind, should the remaining player be declared the winner with the departing player losing any opportunity to catch up or should the partially completed portion be voided? If the partially-completed portion were voided, unanticipated emergencies would be a regular occurrence. Baseball games are often interrupted by rain. Baseball uses both techniques. If the trailing team has completed five full innings of batting, the game is over and they lose the opportunity to catch up. If that team has completed fewer than five innings, the action in those innings is voided and the whole game replayed. Even if one team is winning by a dozen runs, nothing counts. A player's personal accomplishments or failures are stricken from the record. This can create a situation where one team moves very slowly and the other quickly. The fans receive a free pass to a future game, called a 'rain check', a term which has developed into a more general expression implying deferring something to a later date.

In the rules of rubber bridge, if play must be stopped, the partnership that is up one game to none receives a reward of 300 points, the same as a non-vulnerable game at duplicate. After a long night of bridge, it is not unusual to hear someone say, 'Let's start a new rubber if it does not take too long.' As illogical as this suggestion is, I'm sure the other three players all agree that it is an excellent plan.

The main advantage of playing Chicago over traditional rubber bridge is the predictability of the length of play. One knows each four-deal segment will last only twenty minutes or so. This deals with the issue of unfinished games by avoiding the problem. In 1892, the leading whist journal was already suggesting a form of play equivalent to Chicago.

Evolution Driven by Fashion and by Ruling Organizations

Some people love change and enjoy keeping up with the latest fashion. Others hate change: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Most people are some combination of both. Remarkably, our present-day bridge can satisfy all views. Our rules of bidding and modes of play are one hun-

dred years old and our scoring system is almost as old. So the 'hate change' crowd is happy. The fashionable crowd can find comfort in the continually changing bidding systems and conventions. Fashions even vary by country, or by geographic regions in the USA. We are far from the Goren system that the American bridge world played in the 1960s. Top players, playing a new convention, bring it into fashion. It might not fit well on the average player but many will want to have it hanging in their mental closet. Whoever said bridge players are not fashionable?

Publishers of books on games in the late 1700s and 1800s appreciated the importance of fashion. Many books referred to as *Hoyle's Games* for simplicity had a full title playing on the notion. One book's full title was *Hoyle's Games: Containing the Rules for Playing Fashionable Games.* A competitor did slightly better: *Hoyle's Games Containing All the Modern Methods of Playing the Latest and Most Fashionable Games.*

We think of card games as our competitive outlets, but card games are themselves in competition with each other. It is a battle for survival in a "game eat game" world. The popularity of a game can only grow quickly if it steals people from other games. The normal road to success is to steal desirable features, rules, and terms from other games; some games are even despicable enough to steal from their own children.

Typically a game develops as a variant of an existing game. Often it is formed by the marriage of several existing games. Enthusiastic players start passing it along to their friends like a virus. Since nothing resembling official rules exists, players must create their own reasonable rules, usually based on other games that they are playing. Many versions are born. After all, when anything is in fashion, others will try to copy. Eventually books start appearing that help standardize play and scoring. The books may not always be in agreement. If the game is very popular, a ruling body for it comes out with an official version. The ruling body might be members of a particular club or a committee of representatives of several clubs. The more clubs the better. Unfortunately, however, often several official bodies publish their own standard versions. As games are often played rather differently in different countries, the ruling organizations must work together in order to develop international events.

Games often stabilize without any clearly established written laws. In this case the laws are usually localized and the game never successfully crosses national boundaries. As Parlett states in *A History of Card Games*: "Traditional card games, at root, are essentially prod-

ucts of folk art comparable to ballads, legends, and (more similarly) dances."

Often when a new game is born it pays respect to its parents by using an adjective in front of the name of the old game. Over time, when dominance prevails, it will usually lose that two-word name. For example, the first form of bridge was usually called either 'bridge' or 'bridge whist'. When auction bridge appeared, it used the adjective 'auction' to avoid confusion with the form of bridge that existed prior to auction bridge. It was quite common to refer to it by just the one word 'auction' rather than the word 'bridge'. The single word 'auction' could only work when that form of bridge was very popular. There were many games with the word auction in their name before anyone dreamed of auction bridge. The original form of bridge was occasionally called 'straight bridge' to distinguish it from auction, duplicate or any of the over twenty versions of bridge. In the heyday of auction bridge, even after straight bridge had been dead and buried, it was still rarely called by the single word 'bridge'. In the early contract days it was not uncommon to refer to the new game as 'contract auction bridge'.

Sometimes game evolution can stall in a partially completed state with undesirable consequences. In 1973 the American League introduced the designated hitter to baseball, so the pitcher (usually a poor hitter) would not have to appear at bat. I believe it was labeled as an experiment. At that time, I assumed that either the National League would follow suit in a few years, or the American would completely abandon the experiment. Surprisingly, forty years later neither has occurred. Both leagues still use different rules. When they play an interleague game, the rules of the league of the home team determine whether or not to have a designated hitter in that game. Even though the two leagues have merged into one organization, they still do not agree which is the better form of baseball.

In 1945, Columbia University and Fordham University played an experimental basketball game where three points were awarded (rather than the usual two) for baskets scored from outside a certain distance. The National Basketball Association made a significant change during their1979-80 season by instituting the three point-shot. This increased the chance of an exciting comeback by the losing team, a big bonus for spectators. Many initially thought of it as a gimmick.

Ignorance of the rules of a game will often result in either simplifying the rules or adapting rules from another game. My father taught his mother-in-law bridge, and she immediately wanted to share and play it with her canasta gang. Her first lesson to them involved a call

to my father with an important question: 'How many cards does each player receive?' I still wonder about the rest of the lesson and the form of bridge she made up. It may not have resembled bridge very closely but I'm sure it was a playable game. Since my grandmother was the all-powerful governing body and rule maker, the players achieved mutual agreement on the rules. After all, if they were just meeting and playing amongst themselves, the actual laws were not important but only the mutual agreement on the laws. We will see that errors in communication or incorrect understandings actually played a role in the evolution of bridge. None were generated by my grandmother.

New technology has resulted in significant changes. Online bridge has become popular. Many clubs now use computer-generated hands and computer scoring. Any English dictionary will start out by defining bridge as a card game, but in fact today cards are unnecessary. The technology exists to enable players to use handheld devices: they can display their 'cards', make a bid, and play a 'card'. I certainly would not welcome this change. Technology can make cards obsolete but we still need clubs for their social importance. Not to mention the egg salad and bagels.

In summary, games are continually being modified and changed. They branch out with different rules. Usually the best versions survive, and the poorest versions gradually die off. Certainly that is the crux of evolution, and we shall see it at work not only in the development of bridge from whist, but in the life cycle of whist itself.

Part II

WHIST

There is a strong tendency among some of the would-be authorities… to introduce a variety of "applications" and "extensions of principle" with a view of making a game more "scientific".

Foster's Whist Manual (1891)

CHAPTER 3
The Rules and Strategy of Whist

The most popular form of whist differed from bridge in four significant ways:

1. There was no bidding in order to select the trump suit
2. There was no dummy
3. There was no option of playing in notrump
4. The scoring was very simple

The trump suit was determined by pure chance. The cards were dealt out as they are in bridge but the dealer was required to place his last card face up on the table. The suit of that card would become the trump suit. The face-up card (called 'turn-up') was returned to dealer's hand at the point where dealer had to play to the first trick.

The player to the left of the dealer made the opening lead. The opening leader was called the 'eldest hand', a term used at that time in many card games. The name was derived from the standard dealing pattern where the first card of every round is dealt to the player sitting to the left of the dealer. There was no dummy: after the opening lead all four players selected their own cards. Just like in bridge, the goal was for a partnership to win as many of the thirteen tricks as possible.

Whist scoring was much simpler than present-day bridge. The first partnership to win two games won the rubber. A game consisted of 5 points ('short whist' scoring method), and a point was gained for each trick won above the sixth trick. For example, if a partnership won nine tricks, they received 3 points and the other side none. If a partnership won eleven tricks, they received 5 points and the other side none, so winning eleven tricks resulted in scoring a game. These points were called 'trick points' in order to differentiate them from 'honor points'. If one partnership had three of the four honor cards between the two players (the ace, king, queen, and jack of trumps) they received 2 points; holding all four honors was worth 4 points. Points gained by winning tricks and points from honors were treated almost identically. Since whist did not have a declarer or defenders, there was no concept of undertricks or overtricks.

There were two other very common methods for whist scoring that will be described in Chapter 4.

Basic Strategy

Without a declarer or dummy, the roles of both partnerships were essentially identical after the opening lead. In effect, both partnerships played as defenders. As dealer's last card selected the trump suit totally by chance, the dealer always had at least one trump, but the opposing partnership could conceivably hold the remaining twelve. Not very likely, but possible: less than once in every ten thousand hands. That one certain trump meant the dealer and his partner tended to have a slight trump advantage. The probability that they had exactly seven trumps between them is 26%, and this was the most likely case. The probability that they had exactly six trumps between them is 22%. The probability that they had eight trumps is 20%. The trump selection process also meant that one of the dealer's cards was known to his partner and the opposing partnership. It depended on the specific deal which side gained a greater advantage from this public information.

When present-day bridge players choose to play in a trump contract, it usually means that they have found at least an eight-card fit in some suit, so declarer and dummy generally hold a substantial majority of the trumps. Therefore, unless declarer has a good reason not to, trumps are drawn in order to prevent the defenders from winning tricks with their few trump cards. In the days of whist, neither side had the opportunity to choose a desirable trump suit. Based on the above figures, 26% of the time the dealer's partnership had a 7 to 6 trump advantage and 22% of the time they faced a 6 to 7 trump disadvantage. Combining these figures, we see that about half the time the trumps would be split almost evenly, 7-6. This means that usually neither partnership had a substantial trump advantage.

The really big question on every whist hand was, 'Who holds the majority of the trumps and by how much?' The strategy for the side richer in trumps was to draw their opponents' trumps and then play a long strong suit and thereby win tricks with low cards in that long suit. If trumps were split pretty evenly between the partnerships, the goal was to shorten your opponents' trumps by forcing ruffs and create the majority situation. If your opponents held a significant majority of the trumps, then you would try to win a few trump tricks by ruffing, thus making the best of a bad situation. But how could one ascertain the trump situation? Each partnership had to try to infer who had the trump advantage and by how much.

Contract bridge players have five ways of gaining information for cardplay decisions:

1. Observing the dummy
2. Inferences from partner's bids
3. Inferences from the opponents' bids
4. Inferences from the cards partner plays
5. Inferences from the cards the opponents play

At the whist table, the lack of a dummy or bidding meant points 1, 2, and 3 did not exist. A player was left with just points 4 and 5. But boy, were they great at 4 and 5! Their signaling evolved into an extremely intricate form by the late 1800s. Many authors wrote large books, sometimes over 600 pages, basically on signaling. The most important signal was to inform your partner of your trump length. Players would indicate trump length of four or more with two honors in order to encourage their partners to lead a trump card at their first opportunity. The signal was accomplished by playing high-low in a plain (non-trump) suit, called a 'Blue Peter' or just 'peter'[1]. After the peter first appeared in 1834, even though some thought using it was unethical, many other signals followed; they were referred to as 'conventions'. By the late 1880s and 1890s many authors felt the whole thing had gone way too far. Their complaints could be classified as follows.

1. Signals had become far too complicated, thereby chasing away beginners
2. Some players were creating secret agreements
3. Signaling helped your opponents more than it helped your partner
4. Expert players would know all four hands
5. Automatic signaling was replacing common sense and thought

Points 1 and 2 were definite issues and proved to be major reasons for the move to bridge. Point 3 generated a great deal of discussion on falsecarding. Much was written describing the correct time to falsecard and when to give honest signals. A common tongue-in-cheek comment was that one should always falsecard since there are two opponents who can be fooled but only one partner. Point 4 was really not

1. A Blue Peter is actually a nautical signal flag, indicating that a ship is ready to sail. The term 'peter' is still used in the UK, but in North America the term 'echo' is used for a high-low signal.

a problem: even with a dummy and bidding, our present-day bridge is still far from a game of complete information. Point 5 expressed the concern that the game was losing its intellectual nature. Some feared that players would not have to think, but could just follow their partner's signals.

When discussing opening leads, present-day bridge books often contain tables that list suit combinations and the standard lead from each. Whist books included tables that indicated not only the opening lead (which they called the 'original lead') but the follow-up after a winner was led. Even more important, the inferences based on what was led and which card partner played to the first trick were thoroughly studied. Of course, this led to the more complicated topic of negative inferences, and that term appeared often in the whist literature. Chapters in whist books often had titles such as 'Leads and Inferences' rather than just 'Leads'.

One example of whist players' signaling sophistication is their appreciation of the power of the deuce. Many articles, rhymes and sections of books educated whist players on when to play the deuce and what inferences to draw from when a deuce was revealed by partner. When expert whist players picked up their hand, they not only searched hopefully for aces and kings but also for deuces. Since it was common to lead fourth best of one's longest suit, the original lead of a deuce guaranteed that no five-card suit was held by the leader. 'The Song of the Two-Spot' was the name of a poem that appeared in the journal *Whist* (June 1895). I am only providing the first two stanzas since the other verses are not as relevant in the modern bridge world.

I'm just a little two-spot,
And yet I'd like to tell
Of uses I am put to
By people who play well.

If first I make my entrée
Each one will understand
The leader has no long suit,
But only four in hand.

Around 1900, whist players felt their game was much more difficult to master than the new game of bridge. Their argument was that whist players had less information available for making their cardplay decisions. No dummy was visible to the participants. No bidding by either side helped to provide inferences. However, to compensate, their

techniques for cardplay, signaling and making inferences were very well developed. Whist players saw the dummy in bridge as a way to simplify the game, similar to training wheels on a bike. Their argument is sound. For example, a common maxim in cardplay is, 'Lead through strength and up to weakness'. Consider how much harder it would be to follow that principle without a dummy. Think, too, about the problem of deciding whether to discard from the suit where you hold Jxxx. If you are playing bridge and dummy holds AKQxx, you will be well warned. At whist, with nothing to help you, you can easily make the wrong play.

The essence of most card games is imperfect information. Whist/bridge players start with only the knowledge of their own hand. Gradually more cards are revealed until the deal concludes with all players having total information. However, the existence of the dummy in bridge means that a large amount of information becomes known early. At the completion of the first trick all players have seen 28 of the 52 cards. Playing a game of cards is rather like a striptease, in which the other three hands are gradually exposed.

Terminology

Many terms used in the glory days of whist are used in a virtually identical fashion by present-day bridge players: coup, cover, crossruff, deal, dealer, Deschapelles Coup, discard, doubleton, echo, exposed card, falsecard, finesse, follow suit, force, fourth best, fourth hand, game, guarded, hand, holding up, honors, lead through, long suit, long trump, losing card, low cards, master card, misdeal, revoke, rubber, ruff, rule of eleven (known then as the 'eleven rule'), second hand, sequence, short suit, shuffling, signal, singleton, small cards, strong suit, tenace, third hand, trick, trumps, weak suit, yarborough.

Obviously there is enough of a common language that if present-day bridge players ever found themselves transported to a whist table in the 1890s, they would be able to discuss hands. Actually the word 'hand' is a bit of a nuisance for bridge writers with its dual meanings. It can be used to refer to either the thirteen cards held by one player or the entire deal consisting of all four hands. Some advocate always using the word 'deal' when referring to all four hands. Purists can argue that players do not go over 'hand records' but rather they go over 'deal records'. This sounds strange, though. Anyway, whist writers shared the problem of the dual meanings for the word 'hand'. In the days of whist, a deal or hand was sometimes referred to as a 'game' — another dual meaning. When whist writers provided an example, they would

call it a 'specimen': that's a word I only use in a conversation with a doctor.

Some terms had similar but slightly different meanings in the days of whist. I included the word 'honors' in the above list, but one should note that the ten in the trump suit was not considered an honor. The term 'convention' was used to refer to what presently is called 'signaling' or a 'signaling convention'. Since there was no bidding, clearly there were no bidding conventions.

'Call' referred to a conventional play asking your partner to lead trumps; obviously this had nothing to do with bidding. 'Eldest hand' referred to the player to the left of the dealer. The word 'make' referred to winning a trick. Present day bridge players use the expression 'make a contract' but not 'make a trick'. To 'underplay' was to hold up a high card: bridge players use the term 'duck' but rarely 'underplay'. The word 'pass' referred to ducking a trick. Bridge players refer to the non-trump suits as 'side suits'; as already mentioned, whist players used the term 'plain suits'.

There were several very colorful terms used by whist players. The term 'seesaw' or simply 'saw' was used to describe the back and forth motion involved in what today we would call a crossruff. Even though I listed 'crossruff' as a term that existed in whist, it only came into existence around 1890. The term 'saw' appeared in Edmond Hoyle's 1743 book on whist.

When a pair had a score of zero it was always referred to as 'love'. When both sides had a score of zero, the term 'love-all' was used. A common theme in early whist books was that a player must base his decisions on the score, and many maxims start with a supposition about the score. The word 'love' still lives on with tennis scoring and tennis players.

The seventh trick won by either partnership was labeled the 'odd trick'. With thirteen tricks contested for on each hand, it is certain that one partnership will win at least seven tricks. We will see that when bridge players arrived on the scene, they immediately changed this definition.

Three cards in sequence were called a 'tierce'. A four-card sequence were called a 'quart', and a five-card sequence was a 'quint'. The sequence ace, king, queen, and jack in any suit was called a 'quart major'.

When setting up a suit and needing an entry to enjoy it, whist players would use the term 'reentry'.

My favorite whist term is, of course, 'bumblepuppy'. When I tested it on people, I found that the term would always produce a smile.

Probably the player being called a bumblepuppy did not smile. I defined it in the Foreword and explained why I chose to use it in the title of this book. The term 'mongrel whist' was a similar pejorative term. It referred to a game where the players could not follow any one system but could only play a mixture of systems, hence the word 'mongrel'.

'Dumby whist' and 'double dumby whist' were terms used prior to the 1870s. They referred to three- and two-player versions of whist. The shorter versions 'dumby' and 'double dumby' were common. In the 1870s, writers changed the spelling to 'dummy' and 'double dummy'. Whist players occasionally said that they were playing triple dummy bridge, a humorous term to imply that one of the players was trying to look at the hands of both opponents.

Many of the above whist terms were not used until the late 1800s. The word 'slam' is older than whist itself, since it was the name of a much older game, and it appeared in the earliest whist books to signify winning all 13 tricks, not just 12. Even though winning 13 tricks at whist was much rarer than at bridge, the rules committees had very high standards. Of course, the rarity of making a slam was due to the inability to choose the trump suit or to play partner's hand. Only a few forms of whist, such as French dummy (*le mort*), bothered to give a point bonus for making a slam.

After a round of whist at a fine scientific club an expert would set up at a table and analyze hands. This was called very colorfully the 'coroner's table'. The process of going over the hands was called the 'post-mortem'. The term post-mortem is still alive and healthy after over 125 years but the coroner's table disappeared in the early days of contract.

CHAPTER 4
The Kings of Whist: Hoyle and Cavendish

As I mentioned in the Introduction, I have selected from each period two writers who clearly stood out above the rest and greatly influenced the development of their game. The first decision was easy, since the whist world was dominated in turn by two Englishmen, Edmond Hoyle and Cavendish, commonly referred to as the 'kings of whist'. Hoyle's reign was from 1743 to the 1860s; when Cavendish took over in the 1860s, he was starting a reign that would last almost 40 years.

Depending on the source, Hoyle is said to have been born either in 1672 or in 1679; I think the scales are tipped for the later date. He definitely died in 1769. With either date of birth he had a very long life, even by present standards. It is not a mistake that I indicated his reign as king of whist continued for ninety years after his death. How many kings can justify a similar claim? He certainly earned the title of 'the father of whist' as well as 'the king of whist'. For that matter it would be appropriate to give him the title of 'the father of all games'. Since games usually evolve as opposed to being born, that might seem an exaggeration, but he did the essential job of creating the first documents containing the laws and the strategy of play for many games. His groundbreaking 1742 work on whist, with its lengthy title, *A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist containing the Laws of the Game: and also...*, was only 86 pages. The author is indicated by one word: 'Gentleman'. Hoyle's name does not appear, but this was more than rectified over the next 270 years. The manuscript was entered at Stationers Hall in November 1742 and a version probably was available later that year. My references are to the extremely popular early 1743 version that became the standard, but most history books use the 1742 date. Both were first editions with 86 pages so I believe they were identical.

Prior to the existence of any organized governing body, it was essential for whist authors to codify the rules of the game. Hoyle included a set of laws, but never really discussed the basics of play. He was not writing his book for beginners. His motive in writing the book was his annoyance at feeling ripped off. Apparently, he was a well-respected professional whist teacher and his students were distributing his fine lessons to their partners and friends. To counter that, he decided to go public with his lessons for serious students. The book

starts out with a letter stating that the intended purpose of the work is to make readers aware of the techniques that sharpers employ. The word 'sharper' sounds familiar since it has evolved into the terms 'card sharp' and 'card shark': a sharper was a professional gambler looking to take advantage of less-informed players. This would usually involve a form of cheating. Basically the book covers advanced play and not the techniques of cheating, but of course, by revealing these techniques, Hoyle might have unintentionally turned potential victims into potential sharpers.

Hoyle's book was very expensive for its time: it cost one guinea (about $150 in today's money), more than ten times an appropriate price. Clearly Hoyle was a better thief than any card sharper. That high price did not prevent him and his publisher from trying to squeeze a little more out of the readers. The publisher wrote on page 2, 'And also, He will explain any cases in the Book, upon payment of One Guinea more.' The downside of this high price was that the market was immediately filled with counterfeit copies. Hoyle again felt ripped off. It is ironic that he wrote the book to prevent his individual lessons from being stolen, and now all of his lessons could be ripped off at one time. Hoyle was trumped: he no longer had a monopoly. He was in stiff competition with himself.

In order to combat the counterfeit copies, the price was lowered to two shillings for the second edition, which appeared later that same year. This was slightly less than 10% of the original one-guinea price: an indication of how overpriced the first edition had been. I believe he chose the original high price to match the cost of equivalent private lessons. Another technique Hoyle employed to fight counterfeiters was to sign every book, the way an artist would sign an original painting. Fig. 1 (photo insert) shows a 1750 book with both Hoyle and his publisher's signature.

Hoyle's books were also illegally published in French and German. He may have taken pride in the book becoming an instant classic but probably he was initially quite frustrated. It did not prevent him, however, from writing similar volumes on the games quadrille, piquet, chess, and backgammon within a few years. By about 1750 these were being sold as a 200+ page combination package: for example, the 1763 edition contained the thirteenth edition of the whist volume, the fifth of quadrille and piquet, and the sixth of backgammon. His success at writing books on games led to his name becoming a household word. Almost everyone has heard the expression 'according to Hoyle' — Hoyle articulated the concept of 'playing a game by the rules'. Many recent books on the rules of games still carry his name. Famous bridge writ-

ers combined their names with his: there was Foster's *Hoyle* (1897), Culbertson's *Hoyle* (1939), and Goren's *Hoyle* (1950). Richard Frey, Albert Morehead and Geoffrey Mott-Smith wrote a *Hoyle* in 1947. This is quite a list! All six were very successful bridge writers.

It is hard to measure popularity, but Hoyle's sales numbers over the past 270 years have often been described as second only to the Bible. The Bible has a lock on hotel and motel room markets, but perhaps in Las Vegas hotel rooms, Hoyle's book would be more appropriate. It is thought that before finding his true calling Hoyle worked as a lawyer, which seems like an ideal background for writing the laws of games. His whist laws functioned as the rulebook until the 1860s. In the next chapter, we will look at some excerpts from his 1743 edition since it contains the first lesson, the first hand and first full deal. All of Hoyle's great books were published after he had become a senior citizen. Very inspirational.

Hoyle was an impossible act to follow, and over one hundred years passed before Cavendish leaped onto the stage. Cavendish (1831-1899) was the top whist authority and writer in London from 1863 until 1899, and his *nom de plume* was derived from the club where he played regularly. His real name was Henry Jones, and prior to 1863 he was a surgeon. He felt he did not have enough time to function as a surgeon and also to write and play whist. He decided to cut out the surgery (no pun intended — okay, attempted pun) and devote himself full-time to whist. I'm sure this choice did not make his mother very happy.

Cavendish's classic 1862 book, *The Laws and Principles of Whist Stated and Explained and its Practice Illustrated on an Original System by Means of Hands Played Completely Through*, is usually referred to by the shorter title *Cavendish on Whist*. It starts with the laws and etiquette of play, then in the main body of the book discusses strategy, and finally covers thirty-nine hands. As you see, its lengthy title contains the words 'illustrated' and 'played completely through'. Surprisingly, early whist books did not illustrate and study actual hands; their texts focused on maxims of play. It was this feature that made Cavendish's book special. This book ran through twenty-four editions in England.

The 1880 Cavendish book, *Card Essays, Clay's Decisions, and Card-Table Talk*, is of great interest to present day bridge players as it contains essays that are as relevant nowadays as they were a hundred and thirty years ago: 'Whist versus Chess', 'On the morality of Card playing', 'On the Origin and Development of Cards and Card-Games', 'On the Etymology of Whist', and 'The Duffer's Whist Maxims'. This

work also contains more than one hundred pages called 'Card-table Talk', which reveals much about the values and lifestyles of whist players.

Evolution During the Whisk/Whist Period

In the late 1800s, several excellent books appeared on the history of whist. The first book *Whist: Its History and Practice* was written by an anonymous author in 1844. Cavendish, in his classic *The Laws and Principles of Whist*, devoted almost thirty pages to history and William Pole's *The Evolution of Whist* contains over 200 pages on the topic. Pole broke 300 years of whist into three periods. The first period was before Hoyle (pre-1730), the second period was before Cavendish (1730-1860), and third was the period of Cavendish (1860 to 'present'). Since Pole's book was published in 1895, 'present' meant that year.

Notice that the heading of this section uses the word 'whisk', which was actually the original spelling of whist. It first appeared in 1621 in *Taylor's Motto*:

> He flings his money free with carelessness,
> At novum, mumchance, mischance (chuse ye which),
> At one-and-thirty, or at poore-and-rich,
> Ruffe, slam, trump, nody, whisk, hole, sant, new cut.
> (Quoted in Pole, *The Evolution of Whist*.)

My spell checker is not at all pleased by these four lines. The poem includes an apparent attack on gambling and then gives a long list of over a dozen games that were played at that time. 'Whisk' appears in the list, as do several games with names that are part of the vocabulary of bridge. One explanation for the derivation of the name 'whisk' was the rapid sweeping motion for gathering up completed tricks. According to Cavendish, the first appearance using the later spelling 'whist' was in the second part of the satirical narrative poem *Hudibras* by Samuel Butler published in 1663:

> But what was this? A Game at *Whist*,
> Unto our *Plowden-Canonist*.
> (Quoted in *The Laws and Principles of Whist*.)

One explanation for the change was that this new spelling made these lines rhyme. The more accepted derivation is that it indicates that the game involves significant mental effort and therefore requires silence

(the expression 'Whist!' was an exhortation to quiet, like our modern 'Shhh!'). The original spelling, 'whisk', was not immediately dropped, however, and was often seen until the late 1700s.

It would seem that whist was not well known in the 1670s. No books had been written on techniques of play and even its name was new. Surprisingly, Charles Cotton states it was very popular in his well-known book *The Compleat Gamester* (1674):

> *Ruff and Honours* (alias *Slamm*) and *Whist*, are games so commonly known in England in all parts thereof, that every child almost of eight years old hath a competent knowledge in that recreation, and therefore I am unwilling to speak any thing more of them than this, that there may be a great deal of art used in dealing and playing at these games which differ very little one from the other.

Any book on the history of whist contains this famous quote. It implies that whist or at least a close relative was extremely popular. Later in the book, Cotton explains that whist only differs slightly from the game of ruff and honours. Actually, whist descended from ruff and honours; we shall look at these slight differences shortly.

Charles Cotton published his book anonymously in 1674, and it was not until 1734 that he was recognized as the author. His frontispiece shows people playing five popular games. The only game that included women players was whist.

The form of whist played before approximately 1720 differed in a few ways from the rules described in Chapter 3.

1. All four deuces were removed from the deck, so only the remaining 48 cards were dealt out
2. One of the four deuces was randomly drawn to indicate the trump suit. None of dealer's cards were revealed, and therefore dealer's side did not rate to have a trump advantage
3. A game was not won by winning 5 points but by winning 9 points

Cavendish's history chapter traces editions of Cotton for information on the changes. The 1709 edition of Cotton indicates a 9-point game, the 1721 a 10-point game, the 1725 returns to a 9-point game, 1734 a 10-point game. The 5-point game described in our Chapter 3 still had to wait for almost a century.

Cavendish states that players started using all fifty-two cards around 1730. Thirteen cards to each player meant thirteen tricks, so

the primary goal was to win seven — the 'odd trick'. When only forty-eight cards were used, if both sides won six tricks then neither side would score. With fifty-two cards (thirteen tricks), one of the partnerships always had to win at least a point by winning the odd trick. The point requirement for game was set at 10, which became the standard for a century. The idea was that a partnership could win enough points for game on one hand, provided they were dealt outstanding cards. For example, it could be done with 4 points for honors and winning at least twelve of the thirteen tricks (called '6 by tricks').

Seymour's 1739 version of *The Compleat Gamester: In Three Parts* includes ten pages on whist. I am sad to report that most of those pages are on techniques used by cheaters. The section title uses both words 'whisk' and 'whist' so it sheds a great deal of light on their relationship. It states that whist was vulgarly called whisk and that whist is the desirable name since it indicates that whist is a silent game of cards. The silence principle is questioned in Cavendish's 1880 essay 'On the Etymology of Whist' in his book *Card Essays*. The argument is that since the word whist is a corruption of whisk it was not chosen for the game to denote silence: it cannot have both derivations. I like a middle of the road explanation. I believe that when a word is corrupted it will tend to be corrupted to a meaningful word (a sort of language evolution); the word whist with its appropriate image of silence worked like a magnet. I will make the case that the game of bridge did the same almost two centuries later.

The recognized purpose for requiring silence at the whist table changed over its 200-year life. Some revisionist history was involved. In the late nineteenth century, the requirement of silence was considered a necessity to enable a player to devote his total concentration. This is a worthwhile goal for the noble scientific game, and I am sure all proper gentlemen happily believed that theory. But, prior to Hoyle, even though the game required some thought, it wasn't 'rocket science'. There is considerable evidence that originally the desire for silence was for the less refined purpose of preventing cheating through verbal coded messages by a partnership. Seymour's 1739 book reveals how obsessed whist players were with the sharpers. Seymour imagines a whist table without silence and even provides an example of a conceivable oral coded system: 'indeed' for diamond strength, 'truly' for heart strength, 'upon my word' for clubs, 'I assure you' for spades. Seymour's book states that honest whist players need curtains to prevent hand signals and facial expressions from being exchanged. Screens are required at major bridge events in the present-day. Apparently this innovation is almost three hundred years old.

When Hoyle's classic work appeared in 1742-1743, rules using the full fifty-two-card deck and the 10-point game were already in use. It is impossible to overstate the value of this book in the history of our game. Hoyle's work generated a great interest in the game, and his laws were adopted by the major whist and general social clubs in England. With the many translations of Hoyle's work, the same laws quickly spread to several other countries, and whist entered a long period of stability.

A major change took place shortly after 1800. Legend has it Lord Peterborough was having a bad night at the card table, sustaining great losses. The friends (?) with whom he was playing suggested a change in the rules to provide him with a 'fine' opportunity to quickly recoup his losses: they recommended changing the requirement for a game from 10 points to a mere 5 points. This version of whist was quickly embraced by gamblers. The 5-point game was a faster game, thereby a better gambling game. Even more important, it was more heavily dependent on chance. One could achieve game by the good fortune of being dealt the four honor cards and the slight skill needed to win just seven tricks. It is hard not to take seven tricks when holding all top trumps. What a great game for gamblers! This resulted in two major branches in the whist family, named 'short whist' and 'long whist'.

During the first half of the nineteenth century both games coexisted but eventually short whist won out. Cavendish and most major writers expressed regret that short whist, with its support of the gambling crowd, had become the standard. Pole remarked that short whist was equivalent to always playing the second half of a close game of long whist. It was as if both sides started with a score of five. The bridge analogy is the seven-board team game, compared to the thirty-two or sixty-four- board match: faster turnover, and more chance of an upset.

We already noted that long whist required an exceptional hand to reach game on one deal. This would be sort of the equivalent of a bridge small slam. The short whist requirement for game could be accomplished by winning nine tricks with 2 points for honors or eleven tricks without any points for honors. There is already a resemblance to modern-day bridge where the requirement for game, depending on the denomination, can be either nine, ten, or eleven tricks.

Between 1860 and 1900 there was an explosion of whist books that catered to the scientific aspects of whist. For the last 120 years Hoyle's Laws had been used. The major scoring change to short whist did not require a new set of rules, and Hoyle's laws for long whist were adapted

for short whist until 1864. At that time a book appeared that was actually a combination of two books, John Loraine Baldwin's *Laws of Short Whist* and James Clay's *A Treatise on the Games*. The Laws were written by a committee consisting of members of several major whist clubs. By the second edition in 1870, they proudly listed all sixty-one major whist clubs where the Code of Laws had been adopted as their legal rulebook. With this stability, the English whist world was ready for a golden period of growth. Cavendish's excellent books, with illustrated hands, provided eager beginners with the necessary skills to become fine whist players.

Gambling was very popular in France during the 1700s and 1800s. The French played whist but preferred several relatives of Hoyle's version: Boston, quadrille, and *le mort*. We will briefly look at some of these games in Chapter 6. Even though England was clearly the heart of whist, Clay, Cavendish and other top English players felt that the Frenchman Alexandre Deschapelles was the most brilliant whist player ever to hold a hand of cards. His name is still familiar thanks to the Deschapelles Coup.

In the United States the mechanics of whist were identical to England but the scoring was quite different, as American players preferred having a game requirement of 7 points without honors counting toward game. Even though the number seven is numerically closer to five than ten, not counting honor points towards game made it virtually the same game as long whist. A partnership had to make all thirteen tricks in order to achieve game on one deal. Not counting honors was an easy way to tip the game more toward skill than chance, so this change was consistent with the non-gambling spirit at that time in the ascendance in the States. England did not follow the American lead. In the twenty-first century, books on modern whist still list the 7-point game requirement in the USA but only the 5-point game in the UK.

Prior to 1880, most American whist books were counterfeit English books. American whist made great advances in the 1880s and 1890s, and several outstanding authors emerged. Cavendish visited America in 1893 and was very impressed by the quality of play in the American whist world. Clearly the two great American contributions to whist were promoting the duplicate form of play and forming the American Whist League in 1891. The League's main purpose was to organize whist clubs in America, and it became the first powerful law-making organization for whist. England, with its long impressive whist history, never developed the equivalent organization. The AWL published a journal, the first solely on whist; it had the title *Whist* and the subtitle *A Monthly Journal Devoted to the Interests of the Game*. It

was the forerunner of the ACBL *Bulletin*. The League held yearly meetings in different cities in order to review and revise the laws, as well as play whist. The journal only ran from 1891 to 1903 but the American Whist League existed for fifty years. Duplicate whist and the American Whist League will be fully described in Chapter 6.

Games Leading to Whist

On page 58 a quote appears from Charles Cotton's 1674 book *The Compleat Gamester*. It states that the three games, ruff and honours, slamm, and whist differ very little from one another. When playing ruff and honours, the deuces were not removed from the deck. Only forty-eight cards were dealt out and the remaining four were placed face down on the table. One was turned over to reveal the trump suit. The player who held the ace of trumps had the right to exchange any four cards from his hand for the four undealt cards. This exchange maneuver, which required reaching an arm out across the table, was called either 'ruffs' or 'ruffing'. The game called slamm was identical to the game ruff and honours, slamm being just an alternative name.

Ruff and honours itself was descended from the game 'ruff'. Based on the game's name, it has been conjectured that this game was played like ruff and honors with points being awarded only for tricks won and not for honors. This game had the alternative name of 'trump', trump being probably an older name. A still older name for what appears to be basically the same game was 'triumph', referred to in a published sermon by Bishop Latimer in 1529. This was a very early written reference to a game with a trump suit. Fortunately, that sermon provides us with considerable information on the mode of play of the game. Some quotes are, 'You must mark also that the Triumph must apply to fetch home unto him all the other cards, whatever suit they be of', and, 'Now turn up your trump, your Heart (Hearts is Trump, as I said before), and cast your Trump, your Heart, on this card' (quoted in Pole, *The Evolution of Whist*). These statements show that the games of triumph and Whist/Bridge had a considerable amount of DNA in common.

There were French and Italian games that were distant foreign cousins of triumph: *la triomphe* was the name of the French game, *trionfi* was the Italian. Their names were mentioned in print a few years before Bishop Latimer's sermon used the name triumph.

Even though these games are now extinct, their names certainly live on. It would be impossible to play a few hours of bridge without the words ruff, honors, slam, and trump being heard numerous times.

CHAPTER 5
Whist — the Golden Years

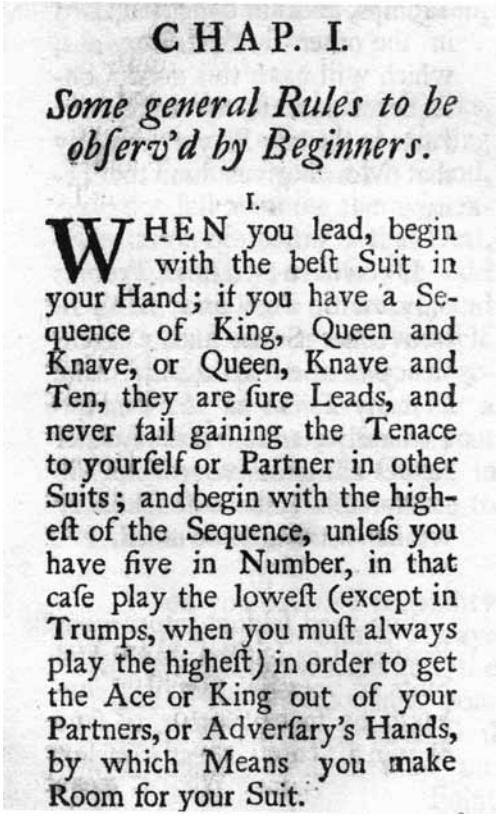
Whist was the first card game to develop a substantial technical literature, and these books and articles provide invaluable information on the game and its place in society. Writers gradually developed methods to describing hands and cardplay, eventually arriving at the format with which we are familiar today. Bridge players might well be surprised at how much familiar advice on cardplay technique these old whist books contain. Modern reprints of many of these old books are easily available today. The collector must be cautious, however: titles are often long and many titles are similar. Therefore I tend to use the author's name as my book identifier. However, whist authors had a propensity to use pseudonyms for some editions and their actual name for others. Many chose military ranks: Captain, Major, and Admiral (whist being a gentleman's game, they would always be high-ranking officers, not privates or corporals), and it was not uncommon for two writers to choose similar pseudonyms. A table of pseudonyms for whist and early bridge writers appears online at www.masterpointpress.com.

Hoyle is King (1743-1863)

Edmond Hoyle continued to reign as king of whist for almost one hundred years after he died. The literature starts with his classic *A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist: Containing the Laws of the Game and...* The introduction was devoted to calculations and odds. Present-day bridge authors try to hide mathematics in an appendix in the back of their books for fear of frightening off readers, but I guess if you have written the only whist book in existence, it doesn't hurt sales. Hoyle's book then lists the laws of the game. As I previously mentioned, it was

written for whist players who were already familiar with the method of play and scoring, so it does not describe basic play. However it clearly lists laws indicating the penalties for common infractions, such as playing out of turn, revoking, and misdealing. When Hoyle lists the laws of the game he uses the layout of a legal document.

As this was the first book aimed at teaching whist/bridge, everything in it was a first. After the mathematics and laws in the introduction, it has fourteen chapters composed of maxims and case studies. Most of the book's maxims are on card combinations, finesses, and tenaces. What was in essence the first written maxim of bridge is illustrated here. (Remember that in the 18th century the printed letter 's' often looked like 'f').



CHAP. I.

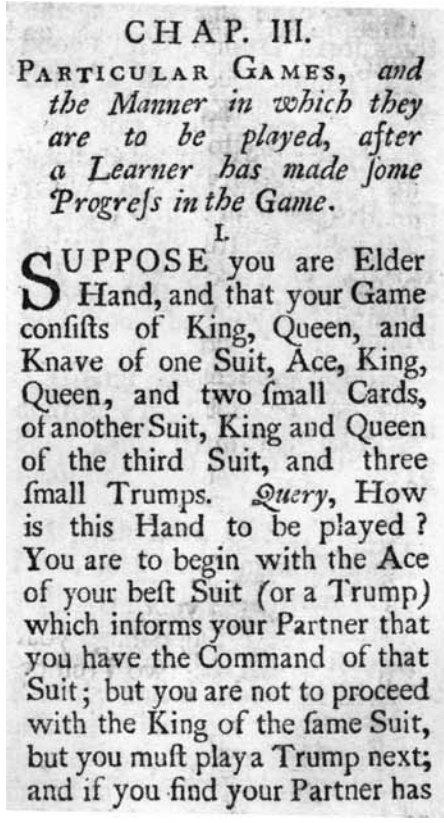
Some general Rules to be obſerv'd by Beginners.

I.

WHEN you lead, begin with the beſt Suit in your Hand; if you have a Sequence of King, Queen and Knave, or Queen, Knave and Ten, they are ſure Leads, and never fail gaining the Tenace to yourſelf or Partner in other Suits; and begin with the higheſt of the Sequence, unleſs you have five in Number, in that caſe play the loweſt (except in Trumps, when you muſt always play the higheſt) in order to get the Ace or King out of your Partners, or Adverſary's Hands, by which Means you make Room for your Suit.

This maxim contains a lot of information. Actually too much information, as it covers leading from a long suit, leading top of a sequence, establishing a suit and unblocking — all advice still appropriate for modern bridge players.

The first thirteen-card hand appears at the beginning of Chapter 3. Notice that it uses the word 'game' when present day bridge players would use 'hand'. The 'elder hand' is the opening leader.



CHAP. III.

PARTICULAR GAMES, *and the Manner in which they are to be played, after a Learner has made ſome Progreſs in the Game.*

I.

SUPPOSE you are Elder Hand, and that your Game conſiſts of King, Queen, and Knave of one Suit, Ace, King, Queen, and two ſmall Cards, of another Suit, King and Queen of the third Suit, and three ſmall Trumps. *Query*, How is this Hand to be played? You are to begin with the Ace of your beſt Suit (or a Trump) which informs your Partner that you have the Command of that Suit; but you are not to proceed with the King of the ſame Suit, but you muſt play a Trump next; and if you find your Partner has

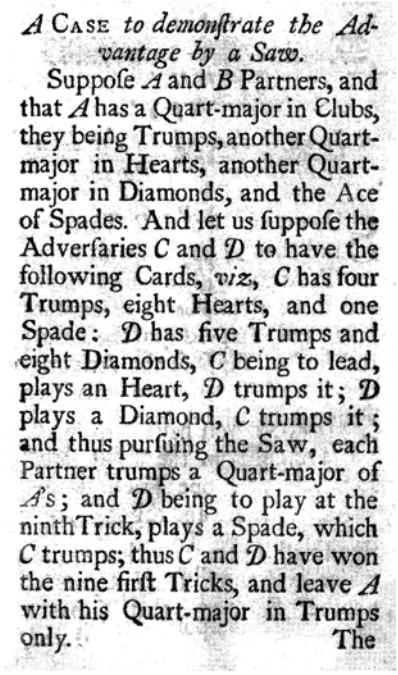
It is interesting to note that the actual suits are neither mentioned nor implied by the order of their description. Modern bridge players would imagine the hand as:

♠ K Q J ♥ A K Q x x ♦ K Q ♣ x x x

with clubs as trumps, but Hoyle is not so specific about the other suits.

The analysis continues for a second full page. Hoyle's recommendation was to play the ace (to inform partner of your excellent suit) and then shift to trump at Trick 2. This description was written almost 100 years before the trump signal (the 'peter') was invented. If the trump signal had existed, the heart card partner played would have indicated whether or not he held four trumps to an honor.

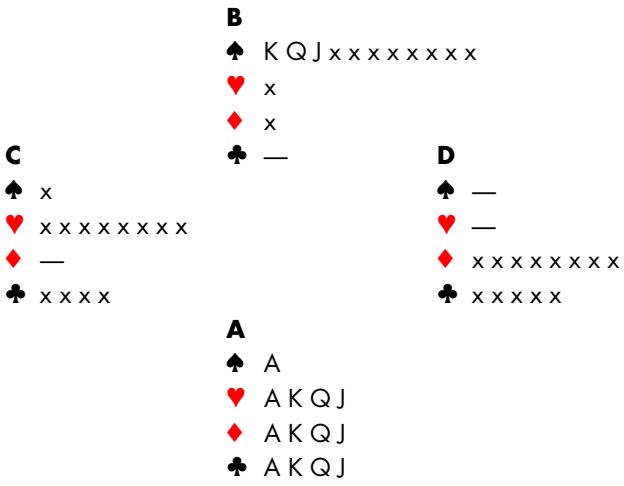
The first full deal appears in Chapter 8. The players are labeled A, B, C, and D. This is one of the few times in the book that suits are mentioned. This also is the first full deal containing an error in the narrative. See if you can spot it.



A Case *to demonſtrate the Advantage by a Saw.*

Suppoſe *A* and *B* Partners, and that *A* has a Quart-major in Clubs, they being Trumps, another Quart-major in Hearts, another Quart-major in Diamonds, and the Ace of Spades. And let us ſuppoſe the Adverſaries *C* and *D* to have the following Cards, *viz*, *C* has four Trumps, eight Hearts, and one Spade: *D* has five Trumps and eight Diamonds, *C* being to lead, plays an Heart, *D* trumps it; *D* plays a Diamond, *C* trumps it; and thus purſuing the Saw, each Partner trumps a Quart-major of *A*'s; and *D* being to play at the ninth Trick, plays a Spade, which *C* trumps; thus *C* and *D* have won the nine firſt Tricks, and leave *A* with his Quart-major in Trumps only. The

Hoyle's verbal description is hard to digest. Here is a representation of his deal using modern notation.



After C and D take the first nine tricks on a crossruff, A can proudly claim the last four. Hoyle used this example to illustrate the power of a seesaw (saw). It is an extreme example of the destruction of an outstanding hand by a crossruff. Hands A and B have all the high cards between them, but despite all that wealth they win only four tricks. There is a peculiar pleasure in seeing the mighty fall. Hoyle clearly appreciated that back in the days of whist.

The error in Hoyle's description occurs where he explains that on trick 9, D plays a spade and C trumps. It should be C plays a spade and D trumps. Present day whist or bridge writers all would sympathize. It is a very easy error to make and overlook even with endless checking. Hoyle corrected it in later editions. As his book was so popular, he was probably flooded with emails.

Hoyle's book was so successful that within a few months it was satirized in the wonderful play, *The Humours of Whist: A dramatic Satire as Acted Every Day at White's and other Coffee-Houses and Assemblies.* The author is unknown. This play has it all: humor, moral questions, and romance. Hoyle's lofty goal and sense of mission are attacked throughout. The play opens with two sharpers (professional gamblers, usually cheaters) discussing Hoyle's book. They are in agreement that their profession will not take a hit but should actually profit since poor players will read Hoyle and think they are fine players. More lambs for the slaughter. They discuss their perfect victim, Sir Calculation Puzzle. He is a terrible player who feels he has talent and believes he is just unlucky. They routinely win his money but make a point of complimenting him on his ability. We meet him early in the play describing his brilliant analysis on a hand to a friend, of course tossing Hoyle's mathematics around. He explains:

> I had Queen and two small Clubs, with the Lead. Let me see—It was about 222 and 3 Halves to—'gad, I forgot how many—that my Partner had the Ace and King—let me recollect—ay—that he had one only was about 31 to 26.—That he had not both of them 17 to 2,—and that he had not one, or both, or neither, some 25 to 32.—So I, according to the Judgment of the Game, led a Club, my Partner takes it with the King. Then it was exactly 481 for *us* to 222 against *them*.

Even though in the next few lines we learn that his analysis did not lead to success, at least he could tell his friend: 'But they both allow'd I play'd admirably well for all that.' Later in the satire the reader realizes Sir Calculation is indeed a very unlucky fellow. He had a wonder-

ful hand sweeping in many tricks but *somehow* one of his adversaries' cards was eaten by a dog thereby forcing a misdeal. Who can question his bad luck? I wonder if this was the origin of the lament, 'The dog ate my homework'? He is a very decent sort and does tell others that they are poor players and warns them to give up the game since they will never be successful at it. But he is blind to taking his own advice.

Sir John Medium is the voice of understanding, reason, and moderation. His ideas are consistent with his name. He plays whist but when all his friends and family are raving about Hoyle's book, he states:

> I rather think it will make the Generality of them worse Players. It may confirm the Adept, but will only confound the Unskillful. And with respect to its Utility, where one will use it to prevent his being impos'd upon himself, I dare say a Hundred will study it in order to impose upon others.

In a later conversation he says, 'You mistake me, Sir *Calculation*. I like Play but am an Enemy to Gaming. I make it my Diversion, as a Relaxation, but not as a trade to impose upon, or create a general Spirit of Avarice in Mankind.'

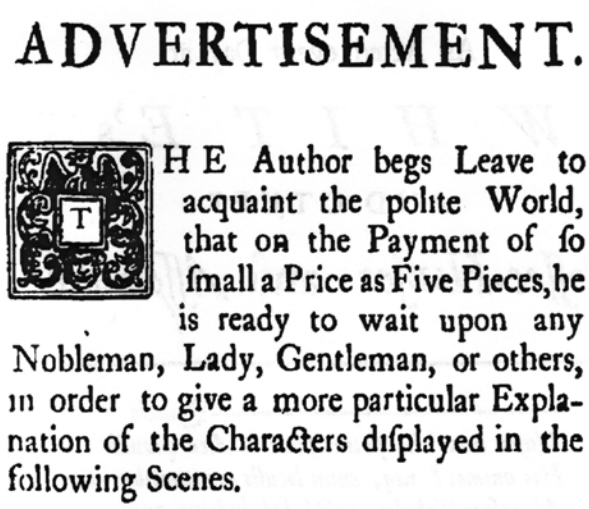
Hoyle, depicted in the play as Professor Whiston, has an interesting exchange with Alderman Jobber over gambling's role in society. The Alderman finds it a very personal topic since his son has demonstrated a great ability to lose money by gambling. Here is part of that exchange.

> Prof. [Whiston]: [...] Indeed you are under wrong Notions concerning *Whist*. It is one of the noblest and most useful Games in the Universe, Sir. All good Citizens ought to study it... It shows how much depends upon good Partnership, and I will venture to say, that a good Whist Player will make both a good Partner and a good Merchant.
> [...]
> Alderman [Jobber]: Yes, Sir, — Every Thing that tends to the weakening our Morals, is a Weakener of Liberty, and so far may be said to be a Plot against it. Thus by your inculcating the Doctrine of *Whist* in a Scientific Manner, it will become constitutional in our Youth, and by becoming constitutional, eradicate usefuller Studies; and by eradicating usefuller Studies, vitiate our Morals, and by vitiating our Morals, open a Door to the Destruction of our Liberties, as I said before.
> [...]

> Prof : Pray, Sir, what is all the World but a Game if you go to that? Religion, Government, Law, Physics, are all a Sort of Game, and the principal End, like Commerce, is to get Money. They have all their Chances too, like the Game of War, and like Commerce again, they have all their several Tricks too— Ha, ha, ha!

Of course there is romance. Arabella is a very desirable young lady, but unfortunately she has a weakness for whist gambling. She is a student of Prof. Whiston and the sister of Sir Calculation Puzzle. In spite of her gambling, she has many suitors, and in one scene she is seeking advice from a girlfriend about her options for marriage. I was struck by the wise advice the girlfriend gave her: 'A man who proscribes Rules to himself, will certainly lay his wife under the same.' She falls victim to a card sharper, Capt. Rookwood. His stated goal is to have her owe him a great deal of money and thereby get her into a compromising situation. However, Sir John Medium learns of her debt and secretly pays it off. Upon learning of this payment, Arabella falls for the good guy, Sir John, and they live happily ever after. She has learned her lesson and gives up gambling. Even her brother, Sir Calculation Puzzle, swears off gambling.

Early in the written form of the play, this request for more money appears:



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author begs Leave to acquaint the polite World, that on the Payment of ſo ſmall a Price as Five Pieces, he is ready to wait upon any Nobleman, Lady, Gentleman, or others, in order to give a more particular Explanation of the Characters diſplayed in the following Scenes.

This is an obvious shot at Hoyle's requesting a payment for a fuller explanation of his cases. The text of the play is available on Amazon and Ebay. I think some excerpts could provide fine late night entertainment at a bridge tournament.

Hoyle's thirty-page book, *An Artificial Memory or, an Easy Method of Assisting the Memory*, published in 1743, can best be described as a continuation of his prior work. It contains just one chapter numbered Chapter XV (the earlier Hoyle book had fourteen chapters). In addition, the top of each page has the heading 'A Treatise on Whist'. Chapter XV contains two parts. The first part gives techniques for remembering what has occurred on a hand, and the second part lists new maxims on play. The memory part deals with how to position cards between your hands in order to retrieve information, such as the suit first led, and the plays by each opponent (whist players used both hands to hold cards and then would pass them back and forth). Part of the silliness of these recommendations is that they are supposed to aid poor memories but they are impossibly complicated to memorize and follow.

Only two principles in this book on artificial memory were repeated in other whist books. Maxim I states that the cards in the trump suit should be placed on the left of other suits and Maxim VI that the turned-up card should be placed at the right end of the trump suit. Maxim I lives on in present-day bridge: when dummy is placed on the table, it is standard to place the trump suit on the left side from declarer's perspective.

The maxims on play contained in Chapter XV are excellent additions. They point out the principle of trying to avoid giving your adversary what present day bridge players call a ruff and a sluff, and clearly explain that the goal is to prevent the adversaries from using their trump cards separately. One useful maxim on signaling is that if you have a solid long suit and have to discard, discard the ace of that suit. If the ace of your solid long suit has already been played, discard the king.

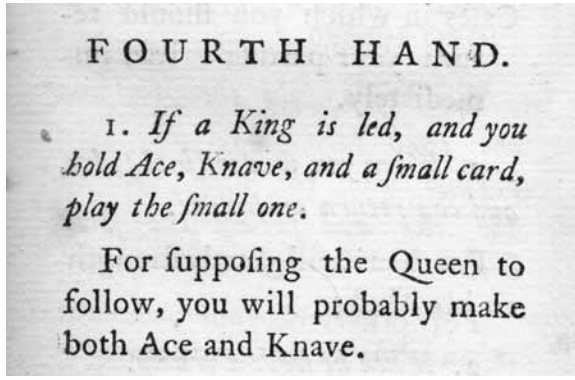
We have already encountered a game called slamm in the long list of antecedents of whist. In one example where pair C and D win all thirteen tricks Hoyle writes, at the end of the description, 'and consequently Slams A and B'. This expression reveals the basis for the whist word 'slam' in Hoyle's eyes.

The first edition of William Payne's *Maxims for Playing the Game of Whist* was published anonymously in 1773. This book is primarily a list of maxims providing advice on advanced play. It resembles Hoyle's work but it is much better organized and provides the reasoning behind most maxims. The first sentence in the preface of the 1785 edition is certainly true of bridge.

> The Game of Whist is so happily compounded betwixt chance and skill, that it is generally esteemed the most curious and entertaining of the cards, and is therefore become a favourite amusement to persons of the first consequence, and the most distinguished abilities, the great variety of hands and critical cases, renders the game so nice and difficult, that much time and practice has heretofore been necessary to the obtaining a tolerable degree of knowledge in it.

In spite of this run-on sentence, Payne wrote a very clear book with short maxims. The book breaks the maxims up into the following sections: Leader, Second Hand, Third Hand, Fourth Hand, Of Leading Trump when You Turn Up an Honour, Of Playing for the Odd Trick, and General Rules. This was a great improvement over Hoyle.

This illustration is from the section titled, 'Fourth Hand':



FOURTH HAND.

1. *If a King is led, and you hold Ace, Knave, and a ſmall card, play the ſmall one.*

For ſuppoſing the Queen to follow, you will probably make both Ace and Knave.

I chose this example since most readers will recognize it as a description of the famous Bath Coup. I did not find it in Hoyle, which makes Payne the first to put it in print. Other authors who wrote generations later have mistakenly received credit. The format of this maxim followed by a short rationale is extremely clear.

Maxim 12 (section 'Second Hand'):

> 12. *If a Queen is led, and you hold the King, put it on.*
> For if your partner holds the Ace you do no harm, and if the King is taken, the adversaries have played two honours to one.

This is a very good way to explain the purpose of covering an honor, something bridge beginners tend to resist. They hate wasting an honor

on a losing trick. Payne clearly explains that even if you lose, you have made your opponents play two honors to your one.

Maxim 6 on unblocking (section 'Third Hand'):

> 6. *If you hold the Ace and one small card only, and your partner leads King, put on the Ace and return the small one.*
> For otherwise your Ace will be an obstruction to his suit.'

Maxim 42 (section 'General Rules'):

> 42. Be careful how you sort your cards, least a sharp and curious eye should discover the number of your trumps.

No explanation for this maxim was provided. None is necessary.

The book ends with two sections. One is an expansion of the mathematics section in Hoyle, the other gives the laws of whist. The mathematics is actually better stated in Hoyle, since Payne's attempt at simplification actually introduces ambiguity. Surprisingly, there is some indication that he may have been a mathematics teacher. I will discuss this in Appendix 1, The Mathematics of Whist.

Alexander Thomson's 1791 work, *Whist: A Poem in Twelve Cantos*, consists of twelve lengthy poems totaling almost 200 pages. They cover virtually all aspects of whist: history, laws, playing well, memory, temper, bad luck, and bad partners. Even in 1791 he correctly referred to Hoyle as 'immortal Hoyle'. He could not have realized how correct he was with that label. Thomson was a big fan of Hoyle but he did not respect Hoyle's work on artificial memory. Who could?

On several occasions Thomson expresses great national pride in whist:

> Let India vaunt her children's vast address,
> Who first contriv'd the warlike sport of Chess;
> Let nice Picquette the boast of France remain,
> And studious Ombre be the pride of Spain;
> Invention's praise shall England yield to none,
> While she can call delightful Whist her own.

Canto X on temper is one of the most entertaining, as Thomson describes the common problem of marital strife generated by a spousal whist partnership:

At first the husband peaceful measures tries,
And warns her only with his hands and eyes;
Then gentle language — "Pray my dear, take care —
"Do think a little — What have you put there?"
It rises next to — "Play not then so quick —
"The *trick* was mine — why did you trump my *trick*?"
Then "Bless me girl, you're always going wrong —"
"If thus you play, we cannot stand it long."
And last of all, while starting up, he cries,
"Death, hell, and fury! Has the b—- no eyes?"
Reverse the picture now, and view the strife
Of henpeck'd husband, and imperious wife.

Don't overlook the last sentence, where we learn that this scenario can equally well be played out with a wife yelling at a husband.

Canto X contains another charming tale on whist anger. Pusillo is very much in love with a sweet, demure beauty named Smilinda and plans to ask for her hand in marriage. But prior to proposing, he decides to run a little experiment: play whist with her and at a crucial time make a truly terrible mistake. When the test is conducted, this gentle creature is gentle no more. Even with her sincere apology, Pusillo feels her true character has been revealed.

An interesting footnote indicates that in the Florence opera house it was quite common to play whist in the large upscale boxes during the performance. It states that the music was thought to heighten the pleasure of a whist party. In spite of the game's name, apparently silence was not as important as pleasure.

The *Cantos* end with a postscript:

Thus Britain still, to all the world's surprise,
In this great science shall progressive rise,
Till ages hence, when all of each degree
Shall play the game as well as Hoyle or me.

Anne Lætitia Aikin's 1792 book *Hoyle Abridged: or Short Rules for Short Memories at Whist* was the first whist book by a woman author. It was, however, published under the name of Bob Short. That pseudonym fits well with the title and the purpose of the book, since its goal was to simplify and shorten Hoyle's maxims. The author's stated hope was that the short version would be better for both the head and the pocket. It sold seven thousand copies in its first year.

Thomas Matthews' 1804 book, *Advice to the Young Whist Player: Containing Most of the Maxims of the Old School…* was very successful: at least eighteen editions came out. (Some editions spell the author's name with only one 't' in Matthews.) It is easy to be fooled by the word 'young' in the title. One might think it was a way to get young people involved in the game, but in fact 'young' was a standard term for a beginner at whist. So the word was based on years of whist experience rather than years of life. The colorful writer John Petch Hewby carried this terminology further and used the word 'children' for beginners, but this word was never used elsewhere.

The main body of *Advice to the Young Whist Player* consists of 109 maxims. Prior to this list, in a section labeled 'To the Reader', Matthews states:

> Beginning to play with bunglers, will not only prevent their *present* improvement; but, as experience shows, once they have acquired erroneous ideas, they will find it next to impossible to eradicate them in *future*.

This is certainly very true. It is why so many of the great young (in the age sense) players in the present bridge world are the offspring of great players. It is much harder to unlearn than it is to learn. This principle carries over to other skills, sports, art, etc. My brother-in-law traveled a great deal as a child and had over a dozen piano teachers. The only thing they agreed upon was that he should forget everything he had learned from his prior teachers.

Often Matthews encouraged the reader to deal out cards. This is particularly important since his book, like all others at that time, did not display the cards. All hands and card combinations were verbally described in his text.

The maxims in this book are not organized; they are just listed under Roman numerals from I to CIX. The fine job Payne had done was ignored by Matthews. The maxims do get into rather advanced stuff even though it is inconsistent with his title. Here are a few examples:

> XVIII — Always force the *strong*, seldom the weak, but never the *two*; otherwise you play your adversaries' game, and give the *one* an opportunity to make his small trumps, while the *other* throws away losing cards.

> XLVI — With ace, knave, and another, do not win the king led by your left-hand adversary. You either force him to change his lead, or give you tenace in his own suit.
>
> LV — With *three*, return the *highest*; with *four*, the *lowest* of your partner's lead. This answers two purposes, by giving your partner an opportunity to finesse, and to shew him you have but three at most in his suit.

I included Maxim XVIII since it explains the desire to make the long trump hand ruff and not to concede a ruff and a sluff. Maxim XLVI is the Bath Coup again. Maxim LV gives partner count information.

At the end of his book, Matthews includes a short section on calculations and a section on the laws of whist. He often uses the expression 'old school' when referring to the Hoyle period. I thought he was unnecessarily harsh to Hoyle:

> It may not be unnecessary to inform the reader, that most of Hoyle's maxims were collected during what may be called the infancy of whist; and that he himself, so far from being able to teach the game, was not fit to sit down even with the third-rate players of the present day.

An Essay, by way of Lecture, on the Game of Whist by Admiral James Burney was published in 1821. It is unclear as to whether he was a real Admiral. There was an Admiral James Burney who apparently sailed with Captain Cook, but we don't know whether the author was that admiral or merely an admirer. Two years later a second edition came out with the new title, *A Treatise on the Game of Whist.* It contains a modified version of Hoyle's Laws, and after the laws section, it has a section called 'Of Improprieties'. This was the first time that a body of laws relating to proper behavior was affixed to the body of laws for proper procedure. In this section on behavior, Number 3 states:

> It is improper to pretend to hesitate when there is no cause for hesitation, as when the person who is to play has only one card in his hand of the suit led.

The first edition of *Short Whist: Its Rise, Progress, and Laws* by Major A. (Charles B. Coles) appeared in 1834, and the last — the eighteenth — in 1865. The book is written in a very humorous style; it was probably the first book on short whist. The legend of Lord Peterborough's in-

volvement in the invention of the game appears in the last chapter, but Major A. also gives a different theory for the change from the long game to the short. He first refers to it as a major revolution, as significant as the French Revolution of 1789! (As an Englishman he probably feared his humor would not work as well if he chose to cite the American Revolution.) He then describes four members of the House of Commons trying to get in a quick rubber before their cook serves a lobster meal: the solution was a primitive version of short whist. He creates a wonderful dialog where they eventually hammer out the complete rules for short whist over their lobster dinner. As his tongue-in-cheek story appears in a section titled 'Historical facts, moreover, true facts', how could one doubt its veracity?

The 1844 *Whist Player's Hand Book...*, published anonymously in Philadelphia, listed the author as 'An Experienced Player'. It certainly is one of the first, if not the first, whist book published in the USA. However, it should generate embarrassment rather than any great national pride since the first 60+ pages are word for word from Matthews' book. The laws of whist are slightly updated. The book has only routine coverage of whist but a very interesting description of the French game Boston. We will return to Boston in later chapters because this game played a major role in the evolution of bridge.

One hundred years had passed since Hoyle shook up the world of whist, years dominated by the three instructional books by Hoyle, Payne, and Matthews. All three books were silent on certain topics that were necessary for beginners: information on how to play, terminology, scoring, and what constitutes winning. All three assumed their readers were beyond that level. Fortunately, these gaps were filled by general books on games. *Hoyle's Games: Containing the Established Rules and Practice of...* appeared in 1845 but no author is listed for this book published in Philadelphia. The first page warns the readers:

> If ever they feel an anxiety to meet a card party in the hope either of retrieving losses or repeating gains, however small, they are then on the verge of a precipice which has hurried thousands to irretrievable ruin — to despair — to madness — and to death.

Most books try to be much more encouraging on the first page. The second page isn't much better, since it describes some techniques sharpers used to cheat. This book claims to include 46 games, but if one considers all the relatives and variations of these 46 games described in the text it contains over 100 games. Whist is the first game to appear in the book, an indication of the game's popularity at that

time (certainly not alphabetic order). The section on whist starts with the following subsections: 'Mode of playing', 'Method of scoring', 'Explanation of terms'. These sections would enable a beginner to pick up the book and learn how to play. Of course, for a first lesson nothing can compare to the learning experience of a group of people being introduced to the game by an experienced player. It is much easier to play four cards, forming a trick, than to learn from a description what makes a trick and how it is won. This book contains a section called 'Short Rules for Learners', which is in fact a copy of the book written by Bob Short (Anne Lætitia Aikin). It is not clear if the word 'short' is being used to be descriptive or to give credit to the author. There is a section called 'Mr. Payne's Maxims' that also contains part of Hoyle's work on artificial memory, laws, and calculations. I would have thought that artificial memory was dead and buried one hundred years before. The book includes several variations on the most popular form of whist, some of which we shall look at in Chapter 6.

This work is typical of books that cover several dozen games. Such books are wonderful for information about the method of play/scoring and provide information about popular variations of any game, and they are fantastic for the historian. But for learning the strategy of a specific game, one's time is better spent by going directly to the top books on that particular game.

Cavendish is King (1864-1898)

In the 1850s a group of very bright Cambridge students, with Henry Jones ('Cavendish') as their leader, started a rigorous study of whist. At a later date they became known as the Little Whist School. After completing their degrees, they worked in London and continued studying the game. In London they had access to the experts at the famous Portland Club, none more respected than James Clay. They conducted systematic experiments and looked upon whist as a science. I'm sure many feared that their academic approach had the potential to remove the fun of the game. From a modern bridge perspective, the most interesting study dealt with measuring the importance of skill for whist success. Was whist basically a game of chance? The search for the answer to this question led to the invention of duplicate whist in 1857, something that we shall revisit in Chapter 6.

William Pole, an important whist and game writer, wrote an article, 'Games at Cards for the Coming Winter', published in the December 1861 issue of *Macmillan's Magazine*. In it he included the following suggestion: 'It would be a great boon if some good authority would

publish a set of Model games at Whist, with explanatory remarks, such as are found so useful in Chess, for example' (quoted in *The Evolution of Whist*). Cavendish read the article and appreciated the importance of illustrating all four hands and playing deals through all thirteen tricks. Indeed, analyzing complete chess games is at the heart of most instructive chess books. Every move in a chess game is given, enabling a reader to replay the entire game.

In his 1862 classic, *The Laws and Principles of Whist Stated and Explained and its Practice Illustrated on an Original system, by means of Hands Played Completely Through*, Cavendish set out to create a display that would include every card played on each trick. This was the book that made Cavendish the king of whist. The 21st edition came out in 1894, and by that time the book had grown from fewer than 100 pages to more than 300 pages. The method of illustrating hands improved greatly over those years. The D. Appleton and Company fifth edition (1873) used diagrams with the partnership α (alpha) and γ (gamma) competing against β (beta) and δ (delta). The illustration here shows one of these diagrams, although I warn you it is quite hard to follow. If you try, you should ignore all numbers and letters in parenthesis since they refer to other parts of the book. The three of spades was turned up.

HAND V.

	Spades.	Hearts.	Clubs.	Diamonds.
α	A, 9, 6, 2.	4, 2.	Kg, 10, 7, 4.	8, 6, 4.
β	8, 7, 4.	Q, 10, 7, 3.	9, 8, 6.	Kn, 10, 9.
γ	Q, 10, 5.	Kn, 8, 5.	A, Kn, 3.	A, Q, 3, 2.
δ	Kg, Kn, 3.	A, Kg, 9, 6.	Q, 5, 2.	Kg, 7, 5.

Trump card, 3, s.

Trick.	First Player.	Second.	Third.	Fourth.	Won by
I.	4, c.	6.	A.	2.	γ.
II.	Kn, c (5).*	Q (7, *b*).	Kg.	8.	α.
III.	10, c.†	9.	3.	5.	α.
IV.	2, s.‡	4.	Q.	Kg.	δ.
V.	Kg, h.	2.	3.	5.	δ.
VI.	A, h.	4.	7.	8.	δ.
VII.	6, h.	4, d (14, *a*).	Q, h.	Kn.	β.
VIII.	Kn, d (3).	A (7, *b*).	5.	6.	γ.
IX.	10, s (5).	Kn.	A.	7.	α.
X.	9, s.	8.	5.	3.	α.

* *Trick II.*—γ prefers to return his partner's lead to opening a fresh suit in which he has a tenace (4, *b*). Mark the advantage of returning the strengthening card (knave), as also at Trick IX.

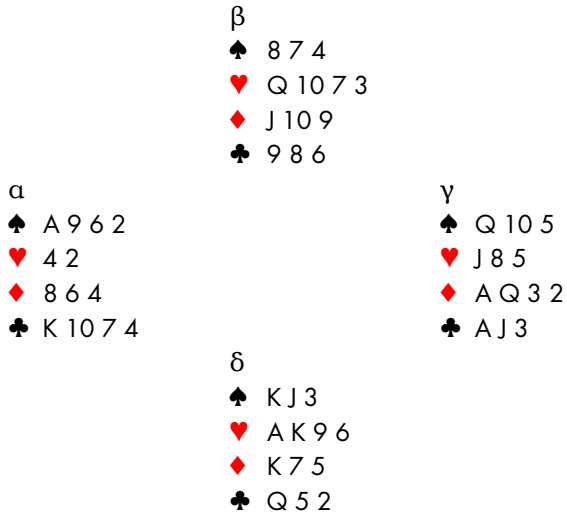
† *Trick III.*—There is nothing to show that δ has not all the other clubs, so α cannot lead trumps as his suit is not yet established (13, *e*). α continues the club in preference to opening another suit (4).

‡ *Trick IV.*—α leads from his four trumps in preference to opening a weak suit (13, *a*).

Tricks XI. and XII.—α makes the thirteenth club and the last spade.

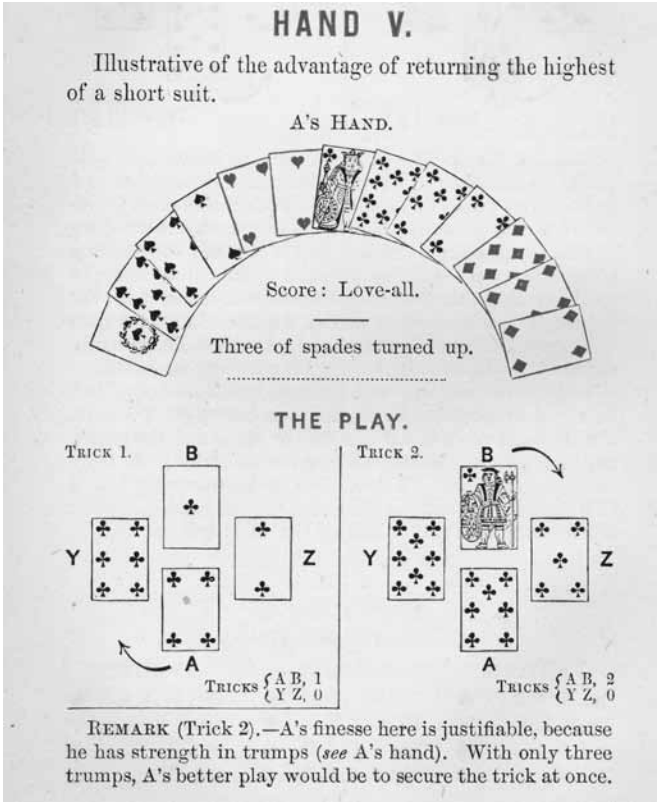
α γ win two by cards.

Only ten tricks are depicted since the last three tricks are obvious. If you suffered in your attempt to decode the display, but still care, here is the corresponding present day display.



The diagram indicated that α,γ took the first three club tricks. α then switched to a small trump. After δ won, β,δ were allowed to cash three heart tricks. After γ won a diamond trick, a trump shift enabled α,γ eventually to win eight tricks ('two by tricks' or 'two by cards'). Since each pair held two honors, no honor points were dished out.

The 10th edition, Thos. De La Rue & Co. (1874), used much more readable diagrams. Here is the same example in this edition.



The four players are no longer Greek. The partnership α, γ is now A, B and β, δ is now Y, Z. Initially only one hand was displayed. The play was analyzed trick by trick. I am only presenting the first two tricks since the full example took up several pages. On Trick 2 the club jack is not covered by the queen even though Cavendish did cover in the Appleton edition.

At the end of the example the other three hands would be shown:

This full example is beautifully displayed. The diamond and heart suits are depicted in red. It indicates what is known and when it is

known. You first learn of only your own hand, and more information is revealed trick by trick till the other three hands are known. However, this type of display never became the standard. It took three pages to represent each example, which is a key reason the Appleton editions were approximately 100 pages and the De La Rue editions were approximately 300.

The standard diagram method was a compact table that represented the four hands and every trick played. I will use it to display an extremely famous whist hand, called the Duke of Cumberland hand. The Duke was dealt a rigged hand. Clubs were trumps and the Duke led the seven of clubs. The purpose of this standard lead was to try to draw trumps, thereby allowing side-suit winners to cash. He had plenty of winners in his 30-point hand, or so he thought. An opponent correctly bet him that he would not win a trick. Here is the display. When a card is underlined it signifies that the card won the trick. The next lead was the card beneath it. The Duke had hand A.

Tricks.	A	Y	B	Z
1	♣ 7	♣ 8	♡ 6	♣ 2
2	K ♢	3 ♢	J ♢	♣ 3
3	♣ 9	♣ 10	6 ♠	♣ 4
4	A ♢	2 ♢	Q ♢	♣ 5
5	♣ J.	♣ Q	♡ 7	♣ 6
6	♣ K	♣ A	7 ♠	2 ♠
7	♡ J	10 ♢	♡ 8	♡ 2
8	♡ Q	9 ♢	8 ♠	3 ♠
9	Q ♠	8 ♢	♡ 9	♡ 3
10	♡ K	7 ♢	9 ♠	4 ♠
11	K ♠	6 ♢	♡ 10	♡ 4
12	♡ A	5 ♢	10 ♠	5 ♠
13	A ♠	4 ♢	J ♠	♡ 5

Score : A-B, 0; Y-Z, 13.

This type of display is compact and a great improvement over the previous table. The cards of each player now appear in a specific column. This was not done in the earlier table where the columns indicated the order that cards were played on each trick. For a modern version of this famous hand, you can look up Ian Fleming's James Bond novel, *Moonraker*.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, until the early 1860s the laws of whist at the English clubs were merely significantly modified versions of

Hoyle's original laws. After over 100 years of use, however, they were showing their age. By 1860 the 5-point game had far surpassed the 10-point game in popularity. Hoyle's old laws were crudely adapted to handle short whist. John Loraine Baldwin was a catalyst for the creation of a committee of the leading whist players at the prominent London clubs to revise these laws. Clay was the chairman of the committee and Baldwin functioned as the editor of the resulting document, titled *The Laws of Short Whist*. As already mentioned, this 1864 publication quickly became the standard at the English clubs. Following the 91 laws, the document contained a section on the 'Etiquette of Whist'. That section starts with the following statement:

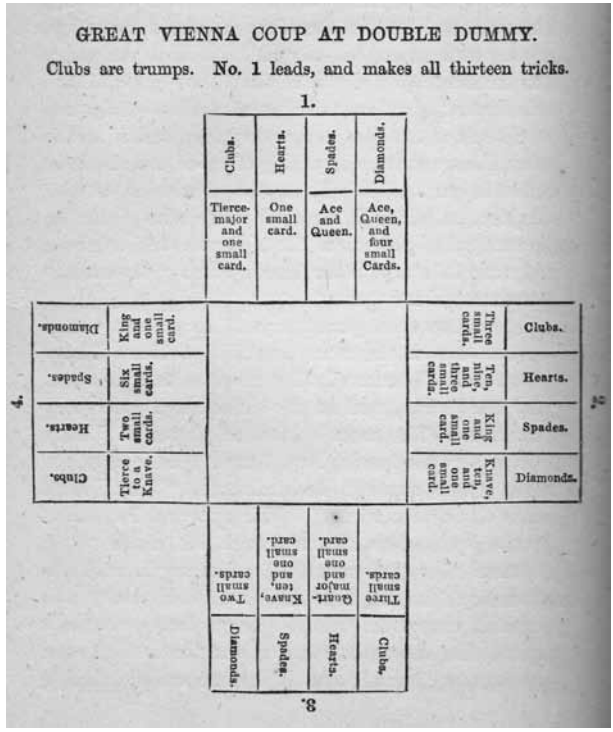
'The following rules belong to the Established Etiquette of Whist. They are not called laws, as it is difficult, in some cases impossible, to apply any penalty to their infraction, and the only remedy is to cease to play with players who habitually disregard them.'

The most interesting sentence in this section is: 'No player should object to refer to a bystander who professes himself uninterested in the game, and able to decide any disputed question of facts.' I assume the term 'uninterested' means having no bets on the game (i.e. 'disinterested'). If the bystander is truly uninterested in the literal sense he will not be very helpful. This rule of etiquette persisted well into bridge. One can conclude that the modern-day kibitzer was called a bystander and the modern-day director was also called a bystander. If any of my director friends are reading this quote, I want them to know that I feel they cannot be replaced by an uninterested bystander.

Etiquette is too nice of a term; it sounds like a description of proper manners. But some infractions of etiquette were severe breaches of ethics. For example, the Laws would cover revokes but the etiquette section would cover purposely revoking. In the etiquette section one finds, 'It is unfair to revoke purposely; having made a revoke, a player is not justified in making a second in order to conceal the first.' This section on proper behavior is an expansion of what Admiral James Burney had written in the 1820s. I think Burney's title 'Of Improprieties' is more appropriate than Baldwin's 'Etiquette of Whist'. We already saw that Burney listed hesitations in his book. Baldwin never mentions hesitations but covers them indirectly by the catchall statement: 'No intimation whatever, by word or gesture, should be given by a player as to the state of his hand, or of the game.'

Since the laws only formed an 18-page booklet, they were usually published with James Clay's book, *A Treatise on the Game*. James Clay was generally considered the finest player in London. His treatise was only 100 pages, but in spite of its small size it covers a great deal

of material. It only contains one illustrated hand but it is a remarkable deal, requiring two squeezes and a Vienna Coup. Actually, it was the source of the name Vienna Coup. It certainly sounds hard but there is some good news: the solver is provided with all four hands and is expected to look at them all (commonly called double dummy). How can you win thirteen tricks on the following deal?



GREAT VIENNA COUP AT DOUBLE DUMMY.

Clubs are trumps. No. 1 leads, and makes all thirteen tricks.

1.

Clubs.	Hearts.	Spades.	Diamonds.
Tierce-major and one small card.	One small card.	Ace and Queen.	Ace, Queen, and four small Cards.

4.

Diamonds.	King and one small card.
Spades.	Six small cards.
Hearts.	Two small cards.
Clubs.	Tierce to a Knave.

2.

Clubs.	Three small cards.
Hearts.	Ten, nine, and three small cards.
Spades.	King and one small card.
Diamonds.	Knave, ten, and one small card.

3.

Clubs.	Hearts.	Spades.	Diamonds.
Three small cards.	Quart-major and one small card.	Knave, ten, and one small card.	Two small cards.

Entertaining Whist Writing

In the Foreword, I referred to the classic *Whist; or Bumblepuppy?* by John Petch Hewby (Pembridge), which added the word 'bumblepuppy' to the vocabulary of any serious whist player. The 1880 book had the subtitle, *Ten Lectures Addressed to Children*. Later editions had thirteen lectures. As already mentioned, the word 'children' in context was an extension of the whist word 'young' and meant 'new players'. However, it was rather inappropriate since the book covers a great deal of advanced whist play. His satirical style is at times confusing. Pembridge stated that the best way to win an argument was to 'throw something at the speaker's head' but lamented that such a useful act has been made impossible by 'the present reprehensible practice of screwing candle-sticks, match-boxes and all reasonable missiles into the table be done away with.' I had to read this quote several times in order to conclude that he was not serious. (To be honest, I am still not sure.)

Present day bridge players can be heard to disparage the level of other players. Not nice. They might say that someone 'doesn't play anything resembling bridge', meaning he or she is a poor player. In the days of whist, the same arrogant type of reference to a poor player was common. Pembridge carried it one step further by affixing the name 'bumblepuppy' to the game they played instead of whist.

Creating the word 'bumblepuppy' was a useful pedagogical tool for the author. The later editions include a section called 'Practice of Bumblepuppy' where he indicates what whist players should not do. For example, 'Rule 7: Open a new suit every time you have the lead.' Cavendish had done something similar when he published 'The Duffer's Whist Maxims' in *Card Essays*.

Here's an amusing excerpt from Pembridge's1895 edition:

> Bad play is any kind of solecism perpetrated by somebody else; if by yourself, it may be either just your luck, *pardonable* inattention, playing too quickly, drawing the wrong card, or — in a very extreme case — carelessness, but it is never bad play; sometimes the difference is even greater than this, and what would be bad play in another, in yourself may be the acme of skill.
> […]
>
> Fortunately, overpowering cards do not always win. A hand of thirteen trumps has been known to make only one trick… A, B, Y, and Z were playing in a train, and A dealt himself the whole suit of hearts: Y led the king of spades; B played the ace; Z followed suit, and A ruffed. B, 'an arbitrary gent', ejaculated 'Trump my ace!' at

> once took up the trick and, with his own twelve cards, threw the lot out of the window.

If they were playing bridge, B's hand would have been the dummy and he would have had to gather them before overreacting, possibly saving the situation.

Pembridge did have strong views against some whist practices, which we will look at shortly. Pembridge's satirical manner caused him to take the opposing view and carry it to the extreme until it resulted in a ridiculous conclusion. As an American, I found his dry humor at times difficult to understand since I was reading an English work written more than one hundred years ago. I was temporarily heartened by the epilogue, where he states that readers have requested he use a different type or print color for the humorous parts since they have trouble judging when he is being serious. I was comforted by not being alone in my plight, and I enjoyed the image of Englishmen in the 1890s being equally confused. I reread the epilogue and decided that it was written in jest.

Pembridge's other well-known book, *The Decline and Fall of Whist: An Old Fashioned View of New Fangled Play* (1884), shared the same humorous satirical style. One attack was on the modern form of signaling, in particular what were known as American leads. He felt play was getting wooden. His general complaint was that whist players liked and were being fed short and easily-remembered rules, which he felt were replacing common sense. As he stated in his book, 'To substitute signals which convey information, without troubling the brains, must tend to spoil the game.' He also objected to signaling because he feared it provided too much information for the opponents. He expressed his opinion very visually when he declared that he did not want 'to disclose [his] vital parts to a powerful and remorseless enemy.' *Whist; or Bumblepuppy?* also included the following tale: 'I *have been told* that some time after a table had broken up, and three of the party had left the house, one of the club servants, entering the card-room, found the fourth still sitting at the table, and continuing to signal.'

Pembridge's puritan background prevented him from playing card games as a youth. As an adult, however, in spite of his chores as a surgeon, he devoted a great deal of time to the game. Since he died in 1896, at the age of 60, he probably never played bridge.

Whist of the Future (1898) by Barzillai Lowsley focuses on the author's take on what must be done to improve the whist experience. Bridge is never mentioned: if Lowsley knew of bridge, he certainly didn't think it would have significant bearing on the future of whist.

The book starts with a comparison of the 91 laws governing English short whist and the mere 37 laws of American whist. He advocated many changes in the 91 laws, recommending creating international whist laws and controlling the growth of signaling. He clearly was a fan of the recently deceased Pembridge and joined him in his attack on Law 91:

> Any player may demand to see the last trick turned, and no more. Under no circumstance can more than eight cards be seen during the play of the hand, viz., the four cards on the table which have not been turned and quitted, and the last trick turned.

We saw that Baldwin's *Laws of Etiquettes* clearly indicates that one cannot make a second revoke to cover a first. Lowsley states:

> Certainly one who makes a revoke should be bound by *Whist Law* as well as in honour to announce the fact as soon as he may discover it, and not tacitly pocket the proceeds of his sinful conduct if his unobservant opponents may happen *not to find him out*.

He wanted a ten-second rule as a control on hesitations. This certainly is unworkable. Who runs the clock? Ten seconds pass much more quickly when one is trying to make a decision than when admiring wallpaper.

Lowsley was also probably the first to call for any sort of smoking ban. He states the obvious with this idea:

> *Any who look over hands of players* should, when smoking, take note as to whether the holder of the hand they look over is also a smoker, and see that the smoke cloud created does not envelope a non-smoker to his confusion.

However, the author does not want to appear as an extreme radical and tempers his statement with:

> Whist is perhaps more a smoker's game than is any other; it is only from lookers-on that non-smokers can reasonably ask forbearance that way.

The bridge community has certainly changed its attitude to smoking over the last century.

Newspaper and Magazine Articles

Whist was sufficiently popular that it was common for newspapers to carry columns on the game. In my research, I encountered several newspaper columns that described a popular version called 'living whist'. This would involve a large gathering at a very upscale manor house. Fifty-two guests would either arrive dressed as playing cards or were provided with outfits by their host. Some select individuals would decide which card to play during the game. Most of the large crowd were spectators. The newspapers loved these top society social events and would run photos, like the one that appears in the photo section in this book. Since the columns were of interest to non-players, it was great publicity for whist.

Many journals and magazines contained articles on whist or related to whist: gambling, cheating, card playing, charitable whist drives, and social amusements. Most were published in London, some in New York. Many of these articles were about the game and its role in society rather than on the analysis of a specific deal.

The *Whist* journal was a monthly publication devoted solely to whist. It has been mentioned already, and will be referred to again throughout this book.

CHAPTER 6
The Whist Family and the Birth of Duplicate

Many games were spun off from the main whist family tree. Indeed, one can argue that all modern trick-taking games are descendants of whist. It's a matter of opinion as to when an offspring has its own identity, and in some ways present-day bridge players are just playing a version of whist. Many forms of whist have names associated with countries or locations: for example we find Chinese whist, German whist, Prussian whist, Scotch whist, Cayenne whist, and French whist. However, this does not necessarily mean the game was popular in that region. In some cases, a spinoff itself had many versions: 'Boston' gave rise to variations such as Boston of Fontainebleau, French Boston, Russian Boston, etc. Some games had names referring to the feature that made the game unique and original, such as duplicate whist and drive whist.

In this extensive list of games the most interesting are those that exhibited features that would eventually turn up in bridge. In particular, there were games that involved some form of dummy, as well as games that used some sort of bidding in order to determine the trump suit. Of course, one cannot ignore games that contain elements of the scoring for the first form of bridge. These games had many variations, and studying even the main form of them is like chasing a moving target since they were continually evolving. The 1850 description of a game usually differed considerably from that of 1900.

Dummy, *Le Mort* (*Mort*), and Double Dummy

As we have seen earlier, 'dummy whist' was originally called 'dumby whist'. The rules of dumby whist appeared in whist books and general books on games from the 1840s. By around 1880 the common spelling had changed to 'dummy'. This game was typically played when the famous whist/bridge question, 'Can we find a fourth?' could not be answered affirmatively. For obvious reasons this game was sometimes called 'three-handed whist'. The method of play was almost identical to standard four-person whist except that one hand was dealt face up on the table, and the partner of the dummy played both hands as in modern-day bridge. Dummy was not penalized for revoking but dummy's partner was penalized for playing a card from the wrong hand. This penalty was carried over into early bridge days.

There were several variations of this game in both the mode of play and scoring. Obviously, dummy's partner had a clear advantage in knowing the combined assets of his side. Therefore, in some crowds, the partner of dummy lost 1 point per hand in order to equalize that advantage. In many circles, just rotating the dummy around the table was considered a sufficient equalizer. The opening lead was made with the dummy exposed on the table. When the dummy was actually in the role of the dealer, the opening lead was made with that visible dummy as the fourth hand, a form of the game that tended to prevent embarrassing opening leads.

Sometimes this game was called English dummy, since the French played a version called *le mort*. The dummy was called *mort* ('dead' in English) and dummy's partner was called *vivant* ('alive and well' in English). Some quotes indicate that the game was as popular as whist and that it was often played with four players by having one person sit out. The players would rotate every hand for the honor of being the *vivant*. The only significant differences from the English version were in the scoring. First, in the English version points were awarded for honors, but not in the French. We have seen that a slam in whist involved winning all thirteen tricks. It provided a partnership with a sense of accomplishment but no bonus points were awarded for it. *Mort* made the reward tangible by awarding 20 points for a slam, but those 20 points were not treated as trick points. Foster indicated that the reason standard whist did not award a bonus for slam was that it was extremely rare. Playing *mort*, the *vivant* was playing with the exposed hand so the likelihood of winning all thirteen tricks, though still rare, increased significantly. When bridge lowered the standard to twelve tricks, slams became an important part of the game. The third scoring difference was generated by the idea of one player competing against two. Each of the players on the non-*vivant* side (called adversaries) would have to be rewarded by that one player. Therefore that player would pay double and, likewise, when making seven tricks or more would receive double.

Double dummy (double dumby) is as old as dummy whist. As the name indicates, it was played by two players with two exposed hands on the table. Since all cards were known it made the game very chess-like, and it was considered an excellent learning tool for the four-handed whist game. One variation of double dummy, called 'humbug whist', had the two players facing each other as if they were partners rather than competitors. I am only mentioning this game because I like its name.

I always believed that it was possible to gamble on any card game but while writing this book I came across a gambling-proof game: a two-player version of German whist. No sane person would have played for stakes; it was just too easy for your opponent to cheat in this two-player game without a dummy. After thirteen cards were dealt to each player the remaining twenty-six cards were stacked in the middle. A trick consisted of only two cards. After a trick was completed each player drew a card from the stack. This meant that if your opponent led, say, a diamond, you could revoke and ruff. Even if you later played a diamond, you could defend yourself by saying that you had just picked it up. Rather than playing this twenty-six-trick version, some played a form that just counted the last thirteen tricks for scoring. This solved little since one would still not want to follow suit with a high card during the useless first thirteen tricks. When bridge took over, a version of German whist was still being played with some bridge features; it was often called by the wonderfully descriptive name 'draw bridge'.

The 1898 *Whist Reference Book* lists three versions of dummy whist: the English game, the French game (*mort*), and the recently imported game of bridge. The author, William Butler, did not appreciate that this was only the tip of the bridge iceberg.

Dummy whist was a common subject for artists and early photographs of card players. Four people playing whist resulted in an artist depicting either the full back of one of the players or two partial backs. A three-person game nicely avoids this problem.

Boston, Solo Whist, Cayenne, Preference, and Yeralash

In order to study the emergence of any game one must study all the popular games that preceded it. The large number of books published under the generic title 'Hoyle's Games' made such a search possible. At cocktail parties or similar social events where one is introduced to new people, I find myself often asked, 'What is/was your profession?' Recently I have answered, 'I am a big game hunter.' For about a minute, people find me very interesting; not that they like my profession, but they quickly ask many questions. When the full truth is revealed, and they realize that I am a mundane retired professor of mathematics, they are usually disappointed.

Whist players took the admonition to silence ('Whist!') quite seriously. They held fast to the procedure of discreetly turning over dealer's last card to determine the trump suit. It may have been the game's undoing. Other games were developing where players could proudly

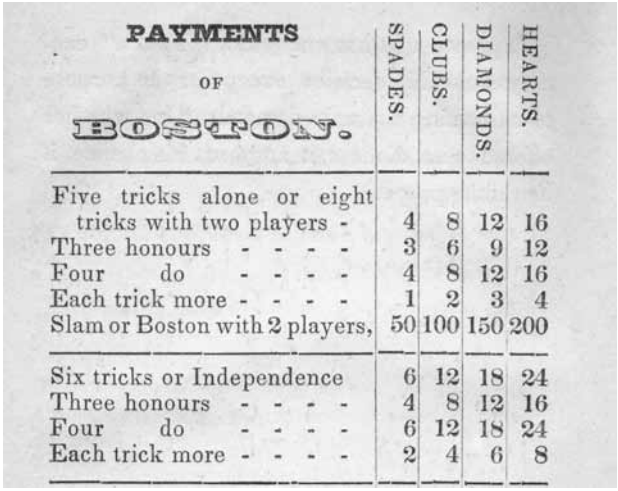
boast about how many tricks they were going to win before a card was played. In this section I will just mention a few features of these early games; in all of them, trump selection involves some free choice by the players.

The game Boston, in spite of its name, was a French game that came into existence in the 1770s. All fifty-two cards were dealt out to the four players. Trump selection was usually performed via a second deck being cut by the player opposite the dealer, to expose a card. The suit of that card was not automatically trumps but was called 'first preference'. The other suit of the same color was called 'second preference', and the other two suits were called 'common suits'. The bidding started with the eldest hand. He could either say 'pass' or claim that he could make a certain number of tricks if he was given the power to name the trump suit. If the others all passed the bidder would be playing alone against the other three players. The minimum possible bid was five tricks. During the bidding, each of the other three players had the option of joining the bidder and playing in a partnership, but now they needed a minimum of 8 tricks (5 for bidder + 3 for partner). The tricks were played like whist. A weird feature in the partnership game was that a player could be sitting next to his partner, rather than across from him. The partner was often called a 'whister', an open acknowledgement to the partnership game that was a parent of Boston.

The choice of first preference, second preference and a common suit as trumps determined the scoring and also determined whether a player was making an allowable higher bid or an insufficient bid. In the 1850s, the term 'grand slam' was used when playing Boston, and a large bonus was given for the achievement. One could also receive an excellent score for losing twelve or thirteen tricks; these contracts were called '*petite misère*' or '*grande misère*' respectively. (Books in English often used the term 'misery' to avoid the accent.) A '*grande misère ouverte*' was an attempt to lose every trick playing with one's hand exposed on the table. An interesting feature was that the *misère* options were played without a trump suit. Most modern bridge players would have trouble relating to a game where the goal is to lose tricks rather than win tricks, but we shall see that bridge seriously experimented with that option 100 years ago.

Some of the many versions of Boston assigned specific values to the suits so that no card had to be turned. Rather than using first preference, second preference, and common suit to determine suit rank, one version used a fixed order: from lowest to highest, spades, clubs, diamonds and hearts. We will see that the order of the suits and the scoring is in some ways identical to the first form of bridge. The

illustration shows a small part of the payment table in the 1844 book, *The Whist Player's Hand Book*. Before you ignore the table completely you might want to note its similarities to the table on the front cover.



PAYMENTS OF BOSTON.	SPADES.	CLUBS.	DIAMONDS.	HEARTS.
Five tricks alone or eight tricks with two players -	4	8	12	16
Three honours - - - -	3	6	9	12
Four do - - - -	4	8	12	16
Each trick more - - - -	1	2	3	4
Slam or Boston with 2 players,	50	100	150	200
Six tricks or Independence	6	12	18	24
Three honours - - - -	4	8	12	16
Four do - - - -	6	12	18	24
Each trick more - - - -	2	4	6	8

In summary, these were the features in Boston (mid-1800s) that later appeared in bridge:

1. Competitive bidding where bids were ranked by the number of tricks to be won and the trump suit
2. The term 'grand slam' was used to mean winning thirteen tricks
3. Playing without a trump suit after certain bids (the *misère* options)
4. Playing with a player's own hand placed face-up on the table after certain bids
5. A scoring table that strongly resembles the scoring table for bridge whist

'Boston of Nantes' allowed players to play a hand without a designated trump suit. This denomination ranked above the four suits, as it does in bridge, and the payment was 10 for every trick above 6. It was called *quatre couleurs*, literally meaning 'four suits', but was the equivalent of today's notrump.

There are several theories why the French game Boston received its American name. *A History of Card Games* by David Parlett suggests that it might have been the result of American and French anti-English sentiment. The French fleet was docked near Boston (actually near the

town of Marblehead and two islands called Little Misery and Big Misery) during the Revolutionary War. Rather than playing the English game whist, they purposely changed both its name and the rules. Another theory is that Benjamin Franklin introduced the game to France while he was there during the Revolution. Parlett lists several other ways the game might have received its name that have nothing to do with the New World.

The mode of play, however, is relevant to the period of the American Revolution. Boston is an 'alliance game', meaning that one is neither always playing alone nor always playing as a fixed partnership. After a player claims he can make a certain number of tricks playing alone, any other player has the opportunity to join him. Of course, in this case the trick requirement has to be raised. Wasn't that the story of the American Revolution? After the thirteen colonies demonstrated some strength at the Battle of Saratoga, in 1777, France was willing to form an alliance with the colonies. We shall see that in 1917, bridge almost became an alliance game.

Looking through my old *Hoyle's Games* from the mid-1800s, I found that the game was often spelled 'Boaston' in American books of that time. I first thought that was a typo, but the same spelling appeared from the 1840s to the 1880s. How could a typo remain in books for so long? Boston was and is a major city. Even as a New York Yankees baseball fan, I would find it disrespectful to misspell Boston. At no time did either the French or Americans spell the city with the extra letter 'a'. I now believe American writers thought the name was a contraction of 'boast' and 'on', which would be consistent with the game names that existed in the mid-1800s. For example, popular games in the poker family had names like 'brag' and 'bluff'. The game whist reflected its element of silence, in sharp contrast to these other games. Playing Boston (Boaston), players would boast about how many tricks they could win before play commenced.

Solo whist was a descendant of Boston. The trump suit was determined by the turn-up card as in whist, and the options were simplified and greatly reduced from Boston. The name of the game reflected that a player had the option of bidding 'solo' with the requirement of winning five tricks while playing alone. No other player could partner with the solo player on that hand, unlike Boston where another player could join with an eight-trick partnership requirement. Solo whist was still an alliance game, though. It included an option of bidding 'proposition' (proposal); another player could then accept, forming a partnership with an eight-trick requirement.

Between 1850 and 1880, solo whist was particularly popular among Jews of Dutch origin. When several books on the game appeared in the 1880s and 1890s, the game became well known outside that small community. It was simpler than Boston while retaining the competitive bidding element. The players were not competing to name the trump suit, since that was determined by a turn-up card, but were competing to make the highest bid. Many whist authorities felt solo had some potential to replace the standard form of whist. Many also saw it as a gambling game, or at least wanted to depict it as a gambling game. If bridge had not waltzed onto the scene a decade later, it might have eventually become the standard form of whist.

'Cayenne' ('Cayenne whist') is a game that apparently evolved in the 1860s. The method of deciding on trumps was similar to Boston, as a turn-up card from a second deck was used. The suit of that card was not automatically trumps for the hand, but that card determined the value and rank of each suit. The game did not involve competitive bidding. The dealer would either select a trump suit, select a 'grand' (play in notrump), select a 'nullo' (play in notrump with the goal of winning as few tricks as possible) or 'pass'. Any selection other than pass would end the bidding. After a pass, dealer's partner had to make a choice, but passing was no longer an option. Parlett's *A History of Card Games* indicates that a close relative to Cayenne, sturmwhist, involved a dummy and above/below the line scoring.

Two features in Cayenne later appeared in bridge:

1. The first form of bridge allowed only the dealer or his partner to select the trump suit
2. Even though trick-taking games had already been played without a trump suit, none had a word for that denomination

'Preference' is approximately 200 years old and many forms of the game are still played. Different old forms used a variety of schemes for selecting the trump suit. Some techniques for play and trump selection were very similar to Boston and it is generally believed that the name 'preference' comes from the use of that term in the game of Boston. When two games are popular concurrently over a lengthy period of time, they tend to steal features from one another. It can be hard to determine which game first honestly originated the feature and which game is the crook. The three dominant popular games in Europe divided the region into three sections: English whist in England, Boston in Western Europe and preference in Eastern Europe. When

we discuss the earliest form of bridge, we will see how it incorporated features from each of these games.

'Yeralash' was apparently a descendant of a form of preference. Books and articles on bridge history have variously spelled it 'ieralasche', 'ieralasch', 'ieralache', 'jarolasch', 'jarolasj', 'teralache', 'yelarash' and 'geralasch'. (My automatic spellchecker does not like any of these.) Between 1905 and 1910 several writers guessed that the game might have played an important role in the evolution of bridge. Some recent articles provide a strong basis for the validity of these century-old guesses, and we'll revisit the topic in Part III.

Duplicate Whist

It is logical for present-day bridge players to believe that the game of bridge is older than the method of duplicate play. After all, how could duplicate bridge come into being without bridge existing first? Well, the idea of duplicate play not only existed in the days of whist but was extremely popular, particularly in America. That popularity almost saved whist in America, and was certainly the primary reason why it took many more years for bridge to conquer whist in the USA than was the case in England.

The first well-documented duplicate whist event took place in 1857. After a dinner party, a poor whist player commented that whist was a game of luck where skill was rather unimportant. In the group were two expert players who disagreed and wanted to create a way to test that principle. Fortunately for history's sake, one of those top players was Cavendish's brother, Daniel Jones. He relayed the conversation to his brother and duplicate whist team competition came into being. The idea was to have four experts play against four poor players, while eliminating the effects of luck.

Four experts formed a team: Henry and Daniel Jones, Matthias Boyce (who wrote on whist under the name 'Mogel') and Edward Wilson. However, it was hard to find representative poor players. Who would want to be known for all eternity as a lousy whist player? Four were found, however. They all had fine personal resumes, but not at whist; one of them, John D. Lewis, even became a Member of Parliament. Two rooms were used for the event. Since duplicate boards had not yet been invented, just the concept of duplicate play, the players switched rooms and the cards were not moved. They played thirty-three hands, and the more skilled players won comfortably.

The results of this match were first reported in a weekly British paper, *Bell's Life*, on March 6, 1857 by Cavendish under the name

'Experto Crede'. It was his first publication on whist. In the section 'Card-Table Talk' of *Card Essays*, he gives the results and explains their significance:

> The most important result is, that at both tables the superior players gained a majority of tricks. In room A, they won on the balance nineteen by tricks; in room B, they won two by tricks.
>
> It will be observed that this experiment does not altogether eliminate luck, as bad play sometimes succeeds. But by far the greater part of luck, viz., that due to the superiority of winning cards, is, by the plan described, quite got rid of.

Cavendish does not state whether the same turn-up card for trumps was used at both tables, but I believe that is implied. Duplicate whist never allowed different tables to have different trump suits; it would have defeated the purpose of reducing luck in order to measure skill.

It is interesting that the first use of duplicate play was not to test player ability but to test the chance/skill mix in whist. In the 1800s authors often disagreed as to whose system was best. Many would try to justify their approach by saying that various systems were tested at duplicate and their system came out the winner. This scientific approach with experimentation was respected, and duplicate provided a great tool for conducting rigorous experiments. In 1894, C. D. P. Hamilton wrote a 600+ page book called *Modern Scientific Whist*, and four years later, C. J. Melrose used the exact same title for a 300-page book. Many other whist books had titles or subtitles indicating theirs were a 'scientific' approach.

Three important books were published that described the alternative movements for pairs or teams playing duplicate whist. In 1891, John T. Mitchell wrote *Duplicate Whist: Its Rules and Methods of Play*, a book that led to his lasting fame since all duplicate bridge players have heard of a Mitchell Movement, usually today shortened to just 'a Mitchell'. Mitchell (1854-1914) was born in Scotland and moved to the U.S. in 1875. After a few years in Connecticut and Michigan, he settled in Chicago. He represented Chicago in several whist tournaments and won a national championship in 1895. Can you imagine the fear a director would have of a movement going awry? According to the many books that give biographic information on him, Mitchell did not take up whist until 1888. Considering the date of his book (1891), this is surprising. Based on his date of death, we know he never played contract bridge but his movement keeps moving along.

R. F. Foster was already a highly respected whist writer before he published *Duplicate Whist and Whist Strategy* in 1894. He went on to write many of the most significant books in the periods of bridge whist, auction, and contract. Much more will be said about his productive life later in this book.

The third important book on duplicate — *Whist and Duplicate Whist* — appeared in 1900 and was published by the U.S. Playing Card Company. My copy of this book is supposedly an eleventh edition, revised and corrected by Walter H. Barney. The U.S. Playing Card Company had published many books on card game rules, and they counted those as earlier editions even though they were not duplicate whist books. This book is a quick guide to the duplicate movements, and contains many advertisements for playing cards and duplicate trays. At that time, several playing card companies in England and the States were publishing books to provide concise, clear guides to games. These books were sold cheaply or given away. The companies were not being charitable; their goal was to create a world of card-playing addicts.

These three duplicate books introduced some new terminology required for duplicate, presented some slight law changes, scoring techniques, and most importantly the complicated pair movements. Very little new terminology was required. Team events were quite simple with deals being played twice. The first was called the 'original play' and the second the 'duplicate play' or 'overplay'. If a deal was played twelve times, all but the first would be called the duplicate play or overplay. Trays and other devices held the cards and served the purpose of our present-day duplicate boards. 'Up and back' referred to the original and duplicate play occurring with two tables in a four-person team event. 'Indicators' (movement cards) were cards placed on the table to tell players where to go for the next round when a complicated movement was used. The expression 'traveling scoreslip' came into existence. 'Compass whist' referred to the new idea of calling the four players North, South, East and West. 'Straight whist' was the term used in duplicate books to refer to the non-duplicate form of whist.

In most respects, the laws for the duplicate version of whist were unchanged from straight whist. Some penalties, however, were slightly modified. As mentioned earlier, it was essential for each table to play each hand with the same trump suit. Usually a card was turned up by the appointed dealer during the first round, and this card became the automatic turn-up card for that deal at all tables. A slip indicating the turn-up card was usually inserted into the board with the dealer's hand. It might have seemed simpler to just expose the turn-up card in dealer's hand when passing the boards, but it was found that whist

players, preoccupied with arguing with their partners, would often expose the wrong card, and then the remaining tables would play in the incorrect trump suit. A second option avoided using a turn-up card by having a designated trump suit for each board. For example, Board 1 — hearts, Board 2 — diamonds, etc. A still simpler option was to have a designated trump suit for the whole session: every table on every deal would use that particular trump suit.

Keeping track of tricks won by each pair became a challenge. Often during the original play, the players recorded their own hand. The played cards were thrown into the middle of the table and then grabbed by the winners of each trick. Even though the trick gathering was identical to straight whist, this involved duplicating the hands for the overplay. As one can imagine, a great amount of time and effort was required for recording and duplicating the hands. An early alternative was to have every player retain each played card face down on the table and to keep track of won tricks by using counters. At the start of a deal, thirteen counters/chips were placed in the middle of the table. When a trick was won, a member of that partnership would grab a chip from the center of the table. This had the advantage that the four hands were not jumbled together. The downside was that it required chips and forming the habit of grabbing the chips. Often a hand would be finished with a few chips remaining unclaimed in the middle of the table. If a question arose over how many tricks were won, chaos ensued. There had been no record of which tricks were won, but only how many. When I first learned that early duplicate boards were sold with chips, I mistakenly thought the chips were used for gambling.

Today's duplicate bridge players are familiar with the technique of positioning their cards on the table to indicate which tricks were won and lost. Another advantage of this system is that all four players are keeping a record. The credit for this innovation goes to James Allison, who reported its successful use during a Glasgow competition in the *London Field* magazine of 1888.

The main contribution of the three books I have mentioned was to present and explain the new movements. At that time dozens of movements had been suggested and were being used in different clubs. Almost all have now disappeared from the planet. One popular one was a four-player duplicate movement. A couple could invite their neighbors over, and the two couples could play duplicate! The technique was simply to play any number of boards and then turn them 90 degrees. The cards that North held were now being played by East, East cards went to South, etc. I know, you are thinking that they had already played the hand so they knew who had which cards. Not really true.

Remember at whist there was no dummy so during the original play of each hand the players only saw their own hands. Playing four-player duplicate, no card was turned up for trumps so no card was visible to jar memories. Instead, the trump suit was decided before the session started and remained the trump suit for the whole session. Therefore neither the dummy nor the trump suit would provide any reminder of the original play of the hand. Well, what about the tray number; wasn't that a major clue? No, because the trays manufactured for whist and early bridge were numbered not on top but on the bottom. After the hands were played the first time the trays themselves were shuffled, so that they would be played in a different order the second time.

Another way to prevent the players from remembering the deal was to have a time lag between the original play and the duplicate play. The players could have the original play one week and the duplicate play the following week. This could be done in a staggered fashion. For example, the first week they play twelve original boards. The following week they could play those twelve boards again and play a new set of twelve original boards. This way every week a winner and loser were determined. The four-person (single table) duplicate was called 'memory whist' or 'mnemonic duplicate'. Many experts felt this form of play was an abomination. For experts it would be undesirable, but for poor players I think it was a viable form of duplicate whist. A few early contract bridge players still used this movement under the name 'replay bridge' or 'replay duplicate'. Boards were still numbered on the bottom rather than the top.

It was quite common to have movements for some individual events where partnerships only existed for a board or a round. The most respected event, the four-man teams, often even broke up partnerships. In a twenty-four board match, every team member had to play eight boards with each of his teammates.

Whist clubs would often compete, and rivalries developed between clubs. This would create great interest and bring excitement to all club members, even if they were not competing. It was a matter of pride to play at the strongest club in town as the quality of the top players at a club reflected on the ability of the average player. A club might be represented by twelve or sixteen players. In one match the Milwaukee Club had a team of fifty-two players. Club members felt these large teams really represented their club. A four-person team would involve just the top few players, not a great test of the level of the club as a whole, but these larger events would certainly have been more representative. It was easy to create such a large competition. I can envision two clubs competing where each club is represented by, say,

twenty players. You can merely have five team-of-four matches. The individual matches wouldn't even have to take place at the same time.

In straight whist, the tricks won in excess of six were recorded. In duplicate all tricks won by each side were recorded. Mitchell's book warned in a footnote, 'The gain or loss must not be computed by deducting the score of one side from that of the other, as that would double the actual difference.' He made a very good point. Subtraction is not as simple as it seemed in elementary school. I think the most common 'bridge' error may be using subtraction incorrectly. Suppose at a tournament, after enjoying dessert you say to your partner, 'I paid $50 for our entry, you just paid $38 for our dinners; since the difference is $12, that's what you owe me.' *Wrong, wrong, wrong!* This scenario is particularly tricky when it occurs in the middle of a discussion of why on Board 23 you were the only pair to allow your opponents to make 3NT.

Mitchell, Cavendish and Foster all pointed out that many players claimed to have played a primitive form of duplicate in the 1830s and 1840s. Mitchell believed this occurred in Berlin, Paris, Philadelphia, and New York. However, there is no record of duplicate play prior to the well-documented 1857 event.

Mitchell's book does more than describe the movements, however. For example, he states:

> No talking in regard to cards held or leads made must be indulged in while the original hands are being played. Every word might emphasize a point which would tell for or against the player in the duplicate, and the player who breaks this rule should be fined a point. Duplicate whist must be a game of 'whist' indeed.

It was an interesting turn of events. The prevailing theory was that whist received its name based on the requirement of silence, intended to maximize concentration. Now with duplicate whist, silence was truly needed to conduct the game.

In all whist books prior to 1891, players were designated by arbitrary letters. Mitchell's book casually introduces the compass directions to identify players:

> The players are reversed prior to the commencement of the game, the players of one four sitting, say, north and south at the first and east and west at the second table, while the players of the other four sit, say, east and west at first table and north and south

at second table; then, when they change tables, each takes the corresponding seat at the other table.

This was the only use of compass directions for labeling players in Mitchell's work, and in fact I believe it was the first such use in bridge/whist literature. Foster avoided using compass directions. The only time he referred to a direction was when he stated that some marker on the trays should be directed toward North. The 1900 U.S. Playing Card Company book explains the movements using compass directions, but duplicate trays were not labeled with them, and it actually took several decades before they started appearing on the trays.

Modern day players are also familiar with the Howell Movement for pairs games. It was first used in 1897, but Edwin C. Howell (1860-1907) actually created some similar movements several years earlier. According to *The Whist Reference Book*, Howell was the son of a clergyman in Nantucket, Massachusetts who did not allow him to play cards at home. It was only when he entered Harvard in 1877 that the world of games opened up. He quickly excelled at chess but was humble about his early whist ability saying, 'Poker first, and then bumblepuppy.' But his whist ability quickly improved, and he graduated with honors in mathematics while becoming Harvard's finest whist player. The only blight on his fine academic record was that he graduated seven years after he had started. Those late-night poker and whist sessions had taken their toll. I'm sure his father had trouble deciding whether to be proud of his son or ashamed of him.

Foster used his 1894 book to air his strong objection to the name 'duplicate whist'. He felt it was appropriate in the 1880s when players tossed their cards into the middle of the table and the winner would grab them up, since this method of play would require actually duplicating the deal. At times they tried to play the same hands simultaneously in both rooms, and obviously this required duplication. Using counters or Allison's method of keeping the four hands separate during play, it was no longer necessary to duplicate the hands — they could simply be replayed. Foster therefore suggested that the name 'duplicate whist' should be changed to 'overplay whist' or possibly the fancy French word '*rejoué*' ('replay' in English). In his 1894 book he often referred to the game as *rejoué*. If he had envisioned future multi-section pair events and the amount of time players would spend duplicating boards from hand records, he would not have complained. Of course even that has changed in the past few years since machines are replacing human duplication. Foster never anticipated that man would

become obsolete in the duplication process. I never heard a player complain about this last turn of events; and I doubt I ever will.

If you are interested in the history and development of duplicate movements at whist and bridge, I refer you to Ian McKinnon's recent book *Duplicate Bridge Schedules, History and Mathematics* (Master Point Press, 2012), for which he received the prestigious Alan Truscott Award from the IBPA. The book also contains many photographs of whist and early duplicate bridge devices as well as key players.

CHAPTER 7
Toys and Apparatus

During the second half of the nineteenth century, all games were going through a very healthy period. Many very attractive board games were being manufactured by Parker Brothers and other companies. The whist/bridge world actually did not really require any equipment other than a deck of cards. And, of course, a deck of cards was not unique to whist: the same deck could be used for countless games. Both children and adults like toys, however. In this chapter we will look at some of the paraphernalia used by whist players: cards, trump indicators, counters and markers for scoring, duplicate trays, and trophies. References throughout are to the photo insert in the center of this book.

Cards

Playing cards have a long, rich history. As already mentioned, cards with our standard suit symbols were manufactured in France in the fifteenth century. The classic book on the history of playing cards is *A History of Playing Cards* by Catherine Perry Hargrave. Since its publication in 1930, numerous books have been written on playing cards — many of them quite beautiful since early cards were often viewed as art objects and most books use color photos to do justice to their examples.

Following are cards from a typical deck used for whist before 1850. There are several significant differences from the modern deck of cards.

I purposely depicted the jack in an upside-down position. It is tempting to turn it over, isn't it? Fine whist players would realize that they should not turn them over; after all why tell your opponents that you were dealt a court card? There was no reason to turn a spot card since the spots could be counted upside down. *The Whist Table* (ed. 'Portland') has an essay on techniques to prevent other players from learning what cards you hold. It includes the following warning about turning over court cards, 'Some players turn all their court cards, for fear the blood should run to their heads…' In the mid-1800s many manufacturers started producing reversible (double-headed) cards. Of course this limits the aesthetics of the diagram. In a book titled *Stacked Decks: The Art and History of Erotic Playing Cards* in the Rotenberg collection, none of the decks contained reversible cards. The depicted scene on each card was considerably more important than the card itself.

A present-day bridge player actually never really looks at the full cards in his hand. He fans the thirteen cards and just looks at the index in the top left corner of each card. Before 1870, cards lacked that index. Two large companies in the U.S. started manufacturing such cards in the 1870s. The New York Consolidated Card Company created decks with indices quite similar to those on present decks. Such decks were called 'squeezers' since the cards could be held together and fanned out. The Andrew Dougherty Company called their card decks 'triplicates'. Each card contained a very miniature version of itself in two corners so there were actually three diagrams of the card on each card. With the addition of indices it was no longer necessary to manufacture reversible court cards, but they still are in fashion.

Cards from the mid-1800s lack the plastic coating of modern-day cards. They feel like heavy paper or cardboard. This made them much less durable. One can argue that card durability played a major role in world history. Are you intrigued? I'll explain in the next chapter. Now how was that for a cliffhanger?

Cards have slightly changed their size and shape. Very old cards had sharp corners. That shape was easy to cut from large sheets, called 'cardboards'. In the late 1800s, rounded corners became popular. That change increased the life span of cards since the sharp corners would more easily get bent out of shape. It also improved appearance and eliminated paper cuts. In the 1890s, cards took on what was known as the 'whist size'. The standard size changed from 3½ by 2½ inches to 3½ by 2¼. The new trimmer size made it easier for whist players to fan their hands.

A deck of playing cards in the 1700s and 1800s would often have a short life. After a few members of their fifty-two-card team were soiled by coffee, beer, any other liquids or assorted household pets, the deck was ruined and the survivors became scrap paper. They were useful as personal invitations, business cards, greeting cards, and index cards. The Museum of Games in Switzerland has a large display of playing cards used for these purposes.

Collecting Playing Cards by Sylvia Mann provides the following piece of card history. At one time Canada used playing cards as currency.

> In 1685 the authorities were desperately short of money with which to pay troops who were threatening to mutiny, and so all playing cards were confiscated and reissued as paper money. This prac-

tice continued for nearly seventy-five years — the cards were used whole, in halves or in quarters and were signed by the governor who also wrote on them the proposed value.

I'm sure this currency produced a class of wealthy whist players who forged the governor's signature.

Trump Indicators

The oldest and most annoying question in whist/bridge is 'What's trump?' This question must have predated whist. I'm sure ruff and honour players in the 1600s were often annoyed by it. Since bridge players today usually place dummy on the table with the trump suit on the left, the question is simply whether the contract is being played in notrump or not. Hoyle's 1743 book *Artificial Memory* suggested placing the trump suit on the left of one's hand. Of course, after a player had played all of his trump cards, this technique could be very misleading.

The laws of whist in the 1800s were very concerned with this 'trump' question. After the turned-up card was turned down, it was improper to ask what that specific card was. It was acceptable to ask what suit was trumps as long as the asker was requesting this information for himself. The etiquette rules prevented this question from being asked with the intention of waking up a sleeping partner. However, as we all know, it is often hard to divine intent, and the damage is done.

One solution to this problem was to place an object on the table that would indicate which suit was trumps. These objects were named 'trump indicators' and often were quite esthetically pleasing and whimsical. Thanks to Joan Schepps' donation of over 650 trump indicators, the ACBL Bridge Museum in Horn Lake, Mississippi has several large glass cabinets displaying these colorful devices. Most Americans are not familiar with trump indicators, partly because they were used and manufactured almost exclusively in England. Obviously the trump indicators that do not include an option for notrump are only appropriate for whist. When they do include notrump, they reflect their English upbringing by using two words with a plural form for trump, 'no trumps'.

Trump indicators had three popular forms that I would classify as the pointer type, the flag type, and the wheel type. Fig. 5 (photo insert) shows a pointer, Fig. 6 shows a wheel, and the one in Fig. 7 is a flag. It was quite common to find a trump indicator on the top of card cases or ashtrays. They were both decorative and practical. The pointer

type often depicted an animal or human body part pointing to a trump symbol, as in Fig. 5. Some trump indicators for auction and contract bridge would use two pointers (possibly two arms). One would point to the level of the bid while the other pointed to a trump symbol. The front cover of this book features a beautiful wheel trump indicator in the form of a pocket watch, presently indicating that diamonds are trumps. In the lower right you can see part of a small pointer type indicator, presently undecided between diamonds and notrump but leaning toward diamonds.

Trump indicators did eliminate the question 'What's trump?' But that was replaced by the longer, equally annoying question, 'Did anyone reset the trump indicator for this hand or is it still set for the last one?'

Counters/Markers for Scoring

If 'What's trump?' was the oldest question, the second oldest question was equally annoying: 'What's the score?' This created the same ethical problem as the trump question. Every player had the right to know the score but no player had the right to bring it to the attention of their partner. That could influence play by reminding partner how many tricks were needed by your side or your adversaries for game. Again, the answer was a simple scoring device. For long whist, the device had to represent a number from 0 to 10. Short whist was even simpler: only 0 to 5 had to be represented. Obviously any counter capable of representing 0 to 10 was also capable of representing 0 to 5, and, of course, a counter was needed for each partnership.

The simplest method was just to lay out coins or special tokens. Only four tokens were typically used. The illustration shows a score of 6 points. The single token on the upper level represented the numerical value 3 while those on the lower level each represented 1. The photo

shows common tokens from the 1840s that each illustrated a person at the whist table and a caption saying 'KEEP YOUR TEMPER'. This was the forerunner of the ACBL's zero tolerance policy.

Turning devices like those in Fig. 9 were quite common. Some pointers had a needle that could be read for either the 5- or 10-point games as in Fig. 10. Very often these devices were combined with trump indicators.

A flip-up device with tabs became very popular in the 1880s. Usually they were called whist markers. A typical model appears in Fig. 11. The four wide tabs on one side represent points won. The three slender tabs on the other side represent games won. The one wide tab on that same side represents 5 points won. In Fig. 11, if we assume long whist, the side represented has not won a game but has 7 points. Of the many similar markers, by far the most beautiful was the Shibayama whist marker (Fig. 12). Note that the existence of Japanese whist markers does not imply that Japan was playing whist. In the late 1800s, trade was quickly growing between Japan and Europe, and the Japanese were happy to create wood lacquer objects that would be useful in Western Europe.

Duplicate Trays

In the final analysis, trump indicators and whist markers were more esthetic and entertaining than useful. By contrast, the early duplicate trays were essential to the game. Before duplicate trays were invented, either every card was recorded during the first play and then duplicated for replay, or the players would move but the cards would stay at a table.

During the 1890s many different designs were tried for the perfect duplicate tray. The need was obvious, and a spirit of invention was gripping the world. All scientists and inventors, at the turn of the century, were looking to build the best horseless carriage, the first flying machine and, most importantly, the first duplicate tray that did not deposit hands on the floor. The eventual clear winner was the Paine Duplicate Whist Tray. As a mark of its accomplishment its backside flaunted eighteen patents, which were obtained, between 1891 and 1900, by swallowing up the other tray manufacturers. The Paine tray became the standard most popular tray of the American Whist League. It did not hurt that Cassius M. Paine was probably the most important member of the AWL. Fig. 13 shows the front and back of a Paine tray.

The Paine Duplicate Whist Tray greatly differs from modern trays. One immediately notices the lack of compass directions (labels North,

South, etc.). Instead, an arrow was used to indicate a special direction. This was convenient for the popular 'memory duplicate' (Chapter 6) where the board would be turned 90 degrees in order to have the replay. One could think of the direction of the arrow as indicating North. Modern boards, with compass directions, have retained that redundant arrow from the past.

Notice, too, that the Paine tray carried the board number on the backside. This was quite inconvenient but essential for memory duplicate, as knowing the board number made it much more memorable for the replay. This way, however, the first result could be inserted into the tray without any mention or knowledge of the tray number. Of course, turning over a tray to see the number would increase the chance of cards flying out. Not a pleasant sight. All of the early trays had their numbers located on the backside and only an arrow on the front rather than compass directions.

Most of the trays in the early 1890s did not indicate the dealer, but instead indicated the position of the eldest hand. This reflected the whist play mode where the dealer did not take the first action, but instead the eldest hand started the play. (By 1900 most trays would indicate the dealer.) Obviously, vulnerability information did not appear since that concept applied to bridge, and was still thirty years away.

The square shape of the tray was a bad idea. Modern bridge players often place a board 180 degrees out of position, so that North and South switch hands as well as East and West. An error, but not a fatal one. The old square trays can easily result in switching North and East, generating problems that could challenge Solomon.

A large variety of shapes and ideas were tried in the early and mid-1890s. Some looked like four small wallets sewn together; they were compact when folded and easy to transport. A set of deals called 'tramp trays' were sent out on a three-year, twenty-thousand-mile journey to be played in over a hundred clubs located in twenty-six states. One design was shaped like a box for a deck of cards with a slit opening on each side. In order to get one's hand out a player would have to tap on the side of the box. The motion was identical to getting a cigarette from a pack. Another design was an eight-sided box, called an Octagon tray. Each player was identified by a suit symbol on the tray — the red suits played against the black suits. An arrow pointed to the opening leader and indicated which suit was trumps for that deal — a built in, non-movable trump indicator. There were some very rich-looking luxury trays. Some were made out of a very fine quality wood with a beautiful walnut case to transport 16 trays. The neighbors might have been impressed but I'm sure these would not please present-day direc-

tors. This fine wood was heavy, so a director carrying a large number of trays for a multi-session event would need considerable strength.

Trophies and Trinkets

Success at whist or bridge is a source of pride, but in order to extend the length of that pleasure some reward is necessary. Gamblers solved this problem by having the winners walk away with a substantial monetary reward. Non-gamblers would imitate gamblers by playing for meaningless stakes — we saw on page 25 how my mother's penny stakes made her bridge game meaningful.

With the growth of clubs and duplicate whist, non-gamblers needed a form of reward. One option was to award trophies for fine results — for a specific event or maybe just for the best results for a week or a month. However, a successful player can easily find these trophies a burden. First, they can take up a considerable amount of shelf space and even room space. Second, they are often designed as cups, the perfect shape to catch all possible room dust. I believe that a professional housecleaning service must have originally invented the cup shape. The life cycle of these trophies is pretty predictable: they move from the family room to the attic and eventually become a burden to one's heirs.

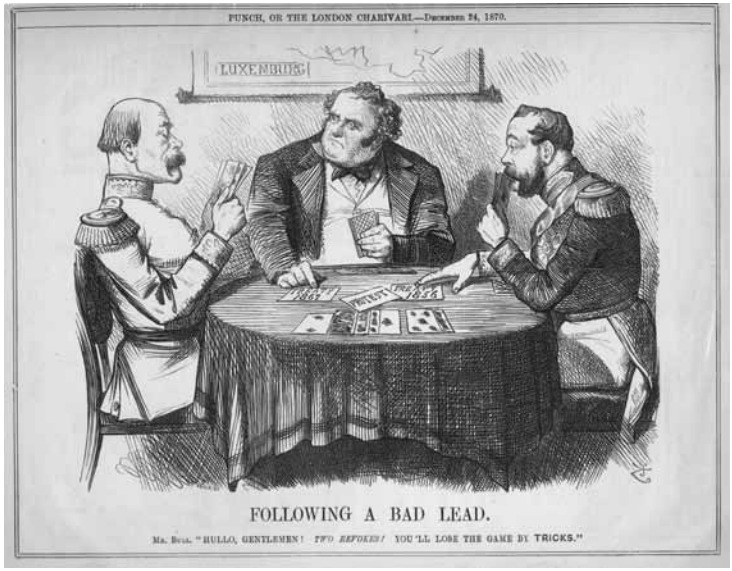
In the late 1800s it became common to award prizes that would acknowledge a player's accomplishment and at the same time would be useful. The most popular example was a teaspoon. The engraved spoon part would indicate one's success. After a guest would pour sugar into her tea, she would be able to read the inscription on the spoon and admire the host's whist ability. Teaspoons were very popular since they were physically small and the more one won, the better. If one won four teaspoons, it would now be possible to have four guests for tea and they would all become aware of one's whist success.

CHAPTER 8
The World of Whist

The language of whist introduced many terms and expressions into the English language. It is very common in the modern world to hear that someone 'followed suit', that some action 'trumped' some other action, or that someone 'does not miss a trick'. The expression 'strong suit' refers to a person's great ability or advantage in an area.

There are many other card-game-related expressions. For instance, people must 'play the hand they are dealt.' A person fortunate enough to be born into a life of privilege might say, 'I was dealt a wonderful hand.' These expressions could correspond to any card game but since the whist/bridge family was so popular, we probably can claim at least partial credit for their existence. After contract bridge took over, the return of whist to its previous popularity was not in the cards.

The dual usage of expressions at both the whist table and the world of politics led to a variety of political cartoons. Here is an example that plays on the idea of not following suit and not following treaties (the Luxembourg agreements of 1856 and 1867).



I'm sure it was much funnier and insightful when it appeared in Punch in 1870. Cartoons that reflect current events, of course, age poorly.

I have previously mentioned that Hoyle's fame led to the expression 'according to Hoyle', meaning to play according to the correct rules. The word 'discard' also appeared in Hoyle's 1743 book, its whist heritage revealed by the syllable 'card'. Nowadays it can be used in almost any context: one can discard a book, clothes, even a spouse. The same can be said for word 'cardboard'. As I mentioned earlier, cards had long been manufactured by creating a large thick sheet (board) printed with card patterns and then cutting it up to make individual cards. When boxes were first made with a similar material, the name 'cardboard' was adopted.

The word 'sandwich' has an interesting history, if legend is to be believed. Not just the word but the whole philosophy of placing meat between two pieces of bread supposedly came into being in the eighteenth century during a game of whist. The story goes that John Montagu, better known as the Earl of Sandwich, was a keen whist player, and one evening hunger interfered. Unwilling to stop play, or to pick up a slice of meat with his hands and transfer grease to the cards, he found the perfect solution. He not only invented the sandwich but the whole fast food industry.

The Dickson Baseball Dictionary (3rd edition) has the following entry for the etymology of 'grand slam' in baseball. 'The term which is now used in many other sports was first used in the game of contract bridge, where it was applied to taking 13 tricks.' Apparently the expression 'grand slam' was first used by a baseball journalist in 1929, and in the 1930s both golf and tennis adopted the term. I am sure the popularity of contract bridge led to the use of the term in other sports, but that was not where it was first used. It was used in all earlier forms of bridge and even some forms of whist. As we have seen, grand slam was used in the very popular game Boston at least as early as the 1840s.

At times I have been told that bridge is only a game. I counter that with, 'Without the bridge family tree, the U.S. might not have fought for its independence.' After receiving a confused look, I make my argument. In 1765 the Stamp Act was passed by the English Parliament. This was a tax on printed materials, newspapers, legal documents, playing cards, etc. The American colonies united to resist this tax. Prior to that time the thirteen colonies had never cooperated; they were all separate entities, not part of a team, and were happy to keep it that way. The Stamp Act was repealed by King George III in March 1766, but a major step toward American independence had taken place. The

colonies felt empowered. It was hard to separate how much of the outcry was over the principle of the tax, and how much was over the financial burden of paying it. Playing cards were not durable, and the popularity of whist and other card games meant that a tax on playing cards could be quite substantial. In *The Whist Reference Book*, Butler wrote: 'Whist-players were among the chief aversions of that prosaic monarch, George III. No wonder he lost the American colonies.'

Card Essays includes a twenty-page essay, 'Duties on Playing-Cards', where Cavendish addressed the topic of the high tax on playing cards, its history, and its consequences. As he pointed out, England has a long history of taxing cards: the first tax was imposed by James I in 1615. Proponents tried to justify the tax as a means of controlling gambling, but it was really a way for the government to take its cut of the action. Individual manufacturers were not allowed to print the Ace of Spades — at times only the Commissioner of Stamps had the power to print that card. Cavendish pointed out his dissatisfaction with this tax but admitted that it was a big moneymaker for the government. In his essay, he applauded 'speculators' who started successful junk playing-card businesses. They would buy many very cheap soiled decks and select the best cards to form good decks. Playing cards have always been perfect for recycling. Look at the math: 51 acceptable cards + 1 unacceptable card = 1 unacceptable deck.

One more note on this: the American founding fathers were card players. Record keeping is certainly an important skill for any administrator, and George Washington kept a very detailed record of his gains and losses. Entries in his diary written between 1765 and 1771 indicate that he was losing most of the time. I am sure after he became President, he did much better. He was a bit of a hypocrite, though. On May 8, 1777 at the Morristown Headquarters he proclaimed:

> The commander in chief in the most pointed and explicit terms forbids ALL officers and soldiers playing at cards, dice or any other games except those of EXERCISE for diversion; being impossible if the practice be allowed at all to discriminate between innocent play for amusement and criminal gaming for pecuniary and sordid purposes (quoted in Hargrave).

Benjamin Franklin was a whist player, and it has even been speculated that he may have been a card printer. While partying in Paris he sent an interesting letter dated Sept. 14, 1767 to his wife. That letter ended with, 'By the way, now I mention cards, let me tell you that quadrille is quite out of fashion and English whist all the mode at Paris

and the court' (also quoted in Hargrave). Since part of the letter dealt with the cost and inconvenience of sending it to her, perhaps he would have been wiser to write a more personal and loving last sentence.

Whist players were in love with their game and boasted of the mental skills it required. They argued its potential value as a general educational tool, not as an outside activity but as part of the required curriculum. They pointed out that the whist table demanded close observation, accurate recording, correct inference, trust, social intercourse, patience, knowledge of character, judgment, and estimating likelihood. The July 1894 *Whist* journal carried an article by P. J. Tormey titled 'Whist in Our Universities'. He pointed out that no university course taught the skills that whist did. Whist instruction was also advocated in lower-level public schools and law schools. The virtues of whist were also articulated by Chief Supreme Court Justice Samuel Warren. He wrote in his *Popular Introduction to Law Studies*, 'It can induce habits of patient and vigilant attention, cautious circumspection, accurate calculation, and forecasting of consequences' (quoted in *The Whist Reference Book*). The present-day bridge world is certainly well populated with players holding law degrees. This view that whist could be used to teach many skills actually dated back to 1743 when the fictional character, Mr. Whister, argued the merits of the game in *The Humours of Whist*.

By the 1800s, the time was ripe for whist to become very popular, and the growth of the game enabled it to influence the values of society. It certainly opened up many doors for women, as we shall see shortly. The industrial revolution and the resulting urbanization enabled all games to prosper. Leisure time was a new and wonderful concept, and whist had much less competition than bridge does today for filling it. Lack of television, internet, movies, and good transportation created the perfect environment for the greatest card game of the time to flourish. And for stiffer whist competition than your preteen children offered, you could visit the local club.

The Club Scene

The club structure was extremely important to the great popularity of whist in the nineteenth century, as the whist club provided a meeting place for good players to congregate and learn from each other. Equally important were the club committees, which had the power to generate a set of whist laws for all club members. These laws would be drawn up by a committee of respected players at the club, or possibly the club would simply adopt rules that had appeared in a book or had

been generated by another club. This copycat mentality for creating a club's laws was condoned and useful for standardization. Sometimes several clubs would work together to form a body of laws, and we have already seen several examples of the dynamics. White's and Saunders's Chocolate-Houses adopted Hoyle's laws as their code of play. The Portland and Turf Clubs formed a joint committee to iron out the laws for short whist. Other clubs followed suit and adopted the same laws for short whist. This opened the door for interclub competition. Later we shall see how the desire for an umbrella of laws for competing clubs culminated in the formation of the American Whist League.

Clubs were usually membership clubs, and this had several advantages. We already saw how interclub matches created excitement for all club members. Even non-whist players in a social club would have a sense of loyalty to their fellow members. Another great advantage of the club system was that gambling was unofficially governed by club policy. The legal governing body of the state would look the other way and allow clubs to police themselves.

Clubs created a sense of belonging, and their membership tended to be homogeneous. The rather high membership dues restricted the clubs to the reasonably upper-class. A good feature was that the wealth of the members implied that they could handle 'reasonable' gambling losses. Of course, some people can always lose enough to feel pain. Big gamblers will only feel that they are gambling if the stakes are high enough that pain may result.

Some serious whist clubs even implemented a whist examination in order to ensure that minimum competence was possessed by all players. They wanted to guarantee that all tables in the club were playing whist and not bumblepuppy.

A negative feature of the private clubs' desire to be homogeneous was that they tended to prohibit 'the other' from joining. Since this policy has, to a lesser extent, continued to the present, these membership restrictions certainly should not be a surprise. Present day clubs are perhaps more subtle about such restrictions, if they exist; certainly they would no longer be articulated in essays. *The Whist Table* contains an essay, 'Whist Snobs — A Story' by the author 'M', that appeared in *The Westminster Papers*. The author describes traits that he believed were 'common in Jews'. He may have thought many of his listed traits were great compliments to Jews, but the clear message is that the wise and safe policy was to keep them out of the London clubs.

Each club would have its own individual atmosphere. Some were primarily for big gambling while others offered a more social game. Most would offer a mix of both, where one could choose a table reflect-

ing one's inclination. The club system formed a social network: it was the Facebook of its day, at least for the elderly. In the late 1800s, the whole whist club scene was described in many essays; for example:

> Whist is useful to that other very large class who hate to be alone, and yet when in company have nothing particular to say. Sitting with one's fellow-creatures in silence is always very depressing, and sometimes very awkward. The situation among men is mitigated somewhat by smoking. To be sure, smokers need to talk, but they do not need to talk as much as people who have nothing to do but twirl their thumbs. But smoking is of no value in a company composed in part of women or of non-smokers. There must be some other refuge from sheer vacuity, and Whist furnishes it better than any other amusement ('Teaching Whist', *The Whist Table*).

This extract clearly reveals a unique aspect of whist and bridge. One can take part in a social function with a group of people without feeling any pressure to make conversation and be sociable. Quite remarkable!

In whist literature the word 'gentleman' was used extensively. It apparently meant someone with the trait of courtesy; honesty was of secondary importance. On page 27, I included Cavendish's perceptive quote about laws and cheating. There were however some laws that were aimed at avoiding a suspicion of cheating. I find LAW 26 rather humorous, 'The pack must neither be shuffled below the table, nor so that the face of any card can be seen.' If anyone witnessed shuffling out of their line of sight, I think an objection was more than appropriate.

The old term 'card sharper' from Hoyle's day implied ability and probably cheating. The motive for cheating was certainly greatest when large amounts of money were at stake. A common form of cheating in the 1700s was 'piping': an individual would kibitz (a modern word that did not exist until the twentieth century) and smoke a pipe. The way he held the pipe would signal a player's holding to an accomplice.

However, whist in a club tended to be a relatively honest game. At least one knew the other players, and certainly no club member would want to earn the reputation of being a cheater. The duplicate version of whist was the most honest form. With its high premium on skill and the relative unimportance of chance, it was not attractive to gamblers. The main technique of cheating was to deal oneself desirable cards, and duplicate entirely removed that factor. It is interesting, though, that changing partners was common in whist in order to reduce the

chance of private signaling. Even a husband and wife who wanted to remain a fixed partnership would arouse some suspicion.

The essay 'Whist at Our Club', published in the May 1877 issue of *Blackwood's Magazine*, provides an insightful description of the atmosphere in the author's club. It seems that the club had gone through a change in the previous twenty years. There was a time when a considerable amount of gambling had taken place. Now the club was inhabited by an elderly crowd where one could still gamble but for a relatively insignificant stake. The typical club member was retired from a very fine professional career. He tended to study the game — or at least his club contained every book written on whist. Even though it was a club of gentlemen, ugly arguments were not uncommon. Surprisingly, the author did not see this as a negative but rather a positive: the arguments demonstrated passion and created excitement.

> The old man likes excitement if he can find it; and they who frequent the next room to the whist-room at our club say that we have been successful in our search. Voices could not be so loud, contradictions so frequent, rebukes so rife — there could not be such rising storms, nor then such silent lulls, unless the occupation in hand were one on which those occupied were very much intent. The silence is as notable as the voices — and they are very notable; a dozen men could not be suddenly and so awfully silent unless engaged on something which fills their very souls with solicitude. And certainly no dozen men could make such a row — gentlemen too, old gentlemen, respectable old gentlemen — unless they were very much in earnest.

The present-day bridge world often promotes bridge as a mental exercise for the senior citizen. One cannot question that argument. This essay promotes whist as being healthy merely for generating excitement and passion — certainly an interesting slant.

The importance of whist in the lives of seniors was remarked in many publications. At least a dozen whist books quote the French diplomat Talleyrand: '*Vous ne savez pas le Whiste, jeune homme? Quelle triste vieillesse vous vous préparez!*' ('You do not know whist, young man? What a sad old age you are preparing for yourself!')

It is hard to find humor in death but whist players managed. A common tale in whist essays was of a player expiring at a card table and the other players forming a plan to keep the session going without any interruption.

Since we are on the topic of aging and death, it seems appropriate to end this section with a very moving whist poem titled 'Dumby' included in James Payn's publication *Some Literary Recollections*. The author's name is not mentioned but he was known to be a novelist.

I see the face of the friend I lost
Before me as I sit,
His thin white hands, so subtle and swift,
And his eyes that gleam with wit.
I see him across the square green cloth
That's dappled with black and red;
Between the luminous globes of light
I watch the friend long dead.
It is only I who can see him there,
With victory in his glance,
As, the cross ruff stopped, he strides along
Like Wellington through France
He died years past in the jungle reeds,
But still I see him sit,
Facing me with his fan of cards,
And those eyes that beam with wit.
(quoted in McGuckin, *Whist Nuggets*)

Bumblepuppy Days

We have seen that the word bumblepuppy originally referred to poor playing and eventually was used as a label for poor players. This naturally brings up an unanswerable question: how many whist players were poor players?

In an 1885 article, 'Bumblepuppy', published in *Longman's Magazine*, R.A. Proctor airs his opinion:

> It is singular that, being so fine a game as it is, Whist should be so little known. It is often said, indeed, that everyone in England loves Whist. It is truer to say that everyone loves a game which is supposed to be Whist. But ninety-nine out of one hundred of those who suppose they play Whist hardly know what the game is. The game at which they really play has been called by the ingenious 'Pembridge', Bumblepuppy. It is a sort of blunder-blindfold game, which must be interesting, I suppose, since so many play it (quoted in *The Whist Table*).

Throughout my life I have felt that everyone older than me was rather old and everyone younger was rather young. I think this feeling is really universal. Bridge ability is not very different. All players rate better players than themselves as very strong and weaker players than themselves as very poor. Therefore when the word bumblepuppy was defined by an expert, Pembridge, it included the majority of players.

The poor players took a considerable amount of abuse in whist literature, most of it humorous but still cutting. The novelist James Payn classifies poor players. Here are some excerpts from his piece, 'Varieties of Plays: Bad Partners':

> There is the thoughtful partner, whose mind is in a chaotic state, who fingers every card in the pack, and finally selects the wrong one.
>
> Then there is the musical partner, who plays an overture on the green board, imagining that it is a piano, and after a brilliant overture comes a most unsatisfactory performance.
>
> […]
>
> Then there is the partner who begins rubbing his forehead, as if by any imaginable possibility intelligence of any kind could be transmitted from that quarter (quoted in *The Whist Table*).

Much of the humor was based on mocking traits of obnoxious players. Often the literature would describe partners that one would like to avoid either because of their ability or their behavior. I encountered the word 'naggleton', which was used to refer to a nagging partner.

Male whist players in the late 1800s were usually very accomplished, professional, financially secure individuals. Often they had retired after a lifetime of respect from fellow members of their circle. However, sitting down at a whist table would immediately change the measurement of their accomplishments. The whist overachiever would receive admiration in the card room even if he had been an underachiever in life — and vice versa, of course. Some of the attacks on poor players were uncomfortably harsh. The much-respected magazine, *The Field*, reviewed Pembridge's classic *Whist; or Bumblepuppy?* on Jan 17, 1880: 'We have been rather lengthy in our remarks on this book, as it is the best attempt we have ever seen to shame very bad players into trying to improve, and also because it abounds with most sensible maxims, dressed up in a very amusing and palatable form' (quoted in Pembridge, *Whist; or Bumblepuppy?*).

Was it Pembridge's goal to shame very bad players? I hope not.

Bumblepuppies fought back with their own name calling. Average players would occasionally complain to the journals that the scientific game was taking the fun away. They labeled the scientific game 'nightmare whist'.

The American Whist League and the *Whist* Journal

The Milwaukee Whist Club was a very large and successful club in the 1880s, and many of the top American players honed their skills there. In order to promote interclub matches, which it usually won, the club invited whist enthusiasts to hold a whist congress in Milwaukee. Eugene S. Elliot, the founder of the Milwaukee Club, became the founder of the American Whist League (AWL) in 1891. Representatives of thirty-nine clubs took part in their first congress, and two immediate issues surfaced. One was gambling, which they concluded was immoral and bad for the game, but they would not go so far as to prohibit wagers. The other was whether to require or merely to suggest certain types of standard signals for interclub play. These two issues would be discussed at virtually every congress over the next dozen years.

One great stroke of genius was to make Cavendish an honorary member, even though he was an Englishman. This encouraged the king of whist to attend the 1893 Convention in Chicago. By 1897 the AWL, just six years old, had 156 member clubs and claimed 32,000 members. The membership dues were $10 per annum. Don't start multiplying! These figures are very misleading, as the $10 fee was for clubs, not individuals. The membership number was also inflated since it represented the total membership of those 156 clubs, many of which were social or athletic clubs where the majority of the players probably never played whist. Only 66 clubs were exclusively whist clubs. A more reasonable guess for AWL whist players would probably be about 9000. Considering that the total U.S. population in 1897 was in the neighborhood of 70 million, that is still very impressive.

The AWL produced the American Laws of Whist, which closely followed the English Laws. The main departure was the 7-point game without honors mentioned on page 61. An equally important milestone was the birth of the *Whist* journal, which first appeared in June 1891. It was the first journal devoted solely to whist — in England many journals carried whist articles but none were exclusively on whist. Without this journal, the AWL would not have achieved the great success that it did.

The content and goals of *Whist* were identical to the modern ACBL *Bulletin*. It carried editorials, articles on top players, letters to the edi-

tor (usually complaints), news of member clubs, lessons, announcements of upcoming events, and results of recent major events. The letters to the editor is probably the most interesting section to the modern reader, since it reveals the thoughts of the average whist player in the 1890s. Often the questions dealt with ethics, fairness, and civilized behavior on the topic of enforcing penalties. If a friend carelessly revokes and gains nothing, should the opponents shout, 'Forget about it!'? After all, if a guest were to knock over and break your wine glass, wouldn't it be proper manners to say just that? Enforcing penalties was a troublesome issue for fledgling players at the tournament form of the game. Present-day bridge players know the awkwardness after an irregularity of balancing being gracious to table opponents and trying to be fair to the other contestants. The pen-names created by the authors of letters to the editor were also sometimes quite amusing: False Carder, Jim Bumblepuppy, Demon, Almost A. Whister, etc.

For the first three years the biggest issue revolved around the use and fairness of private conventions. The journal published over fifty letters from leading experts worldwide on this topic. Remember that when the peter surfaced in 1834, many called that unfair. It was an abnormal way to play cards in a suit. If one could not win a trick, many felt it was unethical to play anything but the smallest in that suit. In the *Whist* journal, the majority were against private signals. The leading authority in favor of allowing private signals was Milton Work, who wrote:

> If a man, or a combination of men, have the ability to devise a new system of leads or plays which increases their trick-taking ability, why should they not be allowed to benefit by the inventive powers of their brains, without being compelled either to disclose their invention to the whole world or abandon it?... I believe, therefore, that it would be wise for the American Whist League to officially declare that all private conventions (that consist, of course, merely of plays and combinations) shall be considered legitimate. I believe this, because to pursue the opposite course with practical benefits at present, seems impossible, and, even if possible, to be contrary to the best interests of the game (quoted in Pole, *The Evolution of Whist*).

Milton Work's minority opinion is quite surprising. His view of fairness was very important since he would go on to become the most powerful authority on auction bridge and both a positive and negative influence on the development of contract bridge.

Cavendish certainly loved his signals but was against secret signals. He writes:

> My partner and I refrained from leading from intermediate sequences, as we considered that mode of leading would amount to a private signal and would not be fair to opponents not acquainted with it... As others dropped in we were obliged in honor to explain the method we were adopting, leaving them to play it or not, as they pleased. This was, of course, to avoid a charge of unfairness owing to a private system of leading (quoted in Pole, *The Evolution of Whist*).

I guess Cavendish invented the pre-alert, but the first attempt to produce a 'convention card' will be discussed in the next section. There was a movement for experts to create a 'standard system'. Some even felt that it should be mandatory for all players in major events to play a standard system. One such system was drawn up and published in the October 1899 issue, but not only was it not made mandatory, it was universally ignored. Some partnerships did claim to play a 'modified standard system' but they had a long list of modifications.

The Journal enabled the finest players to communicate their conventions to the masses. For strong experienced players this was heaven; for bumblepuppies, not so much. I have often alluded to the scientific signaling methods that were surfacing in the late nineteenth century, but I have not given any concrete examples. I feel I should provide at least one but let me first warn readers that they might wish to skip the next paragraph.

Players realized that they did not want to discard from their long suit to signal their holding to partner. The rather even trump holdings in whist (48% of the time the partnership split was 7-6) meant that often trumps would be exhausted early in the hand and a long side suit could be fully enjoyed. Many scientific players used a system called rotary discards. It required the four suits to be assigned an arbitrary order. Some books recommended the alphabetic order: clubs, diamonds, hearts, and spades. Now a discard in any suit would show strength in the next higher suit. But what about signaling club strength? The rotary principle, implied by its name, enabled a spade discard to signal clubs. Since one could not discard in a trump suit, that suit had to be skipped over. For example, if spades were trumps, one would have to discard a heart in order to signal club strength. This method has survived to modern bridge, under the name revolving

discards, with the ranking of suits making the order obvious, but is not commonly played.

In Part I, the ethical problem of private agreements was mentioned. Did one have to divulge to the opponents their chosen arbitrary suit order? A partnership could use a different arbitrary order for each trump suit rather than merely skipping over the trump suit. How could their opponents decipher such communications?

Foster wrote several newspaper columns where he would answer questions from readers. He complained that readers did not send him questions about expert card play, but rather about new conventions that they had invented.

Women Become Competitive

Our game has certainly played a role in the changing place of women in society over the past 300 years. Politics, the law, business and most professional endeavors are very competitive, and in the 1700s and 1800s women were thought to be lacking in that trait. Along came the world of games and particularly whist. A woman with the fine upbringing necessary for an upper social class needed gaming skills in order to entertain and socialize. Running a household required this social grace. Many women who took up whist for social reasons began to play very competitively. The artificial domain of the whist table demonstrated that women had similar competitive desires and abilities to men. This revelation was not only eye-opening for men, but just as much so for women.

Catherine Perry Hargrave's *A History of Playing Cards* covers card game culture. Her survey includes the following 1753 quote from a London newspaper:

> There is a new kind of tutor lately introduced into some Families of Fashion in this Kingdom, principle to complete the education of the Young Ladies, namely a Gaming Master; who attends his Hour as regularly as the Music, Dancing and French Master; in order to instruct young Misses in Principle of the fashionable Accomplishment of Card playing.

This certainly demonstrates that young ladies were not only involved in card games but encouraged to study and excel at their play. Clearly, game-playing ability was seen as an important social skill. Hoyle's *Short Treatise on the Game of Whist* had been published only ten years earlier. The success of his books brought the game of whist into fash-

ion. It must have been a required textbook for young ladies taking courses from a 1753 gaming master.

Women seem to have played whist from the earliest days of the game. As already mentioned, the frontispiece of the 1674 classic by Charles Cotton, *The Compleat Gamester*, illustrates five games being played. Whist is the only game where women are depicted taking part. Accompanying the frontispiece is a poem that includes the lines:

> Lastly, observe the women with what grace
> They sit, and look their partners in the face.
> Who from their eyes shoot Cupid's fiery darts

Richard Seymour's version of *The Compleat Gamester* was a greatly enlarged publication of Cotton's work. The sixth edition (1739) has on the title page, 'Written for the Use of the Young Princesses.'

We have already encountered many eighteenth-century women whist players in two entertaining books. Several women are depicted in the 1743 *Humours of Whist* and the 1791 *Twelve Cantos*.

The most famous woman whist player was Sarah Battle. Even though she was English, several women's whist groups in America named their clubs after her. She was born in 1823 at approximately the age of 80 (she never revealed her true age at birth), and after almost 200 years she is still alive but much less active. I suppose an explanation of that is in order: she is the fictional offspring of the famous essayist Charles Lamb. He created this powerful woman in 'Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist', which appeared in his collection, *Essays of Elia*. Sarah Battle is competitive, intelligent, honest and very direct:

> She fought a good fight: cut and thrust. She held not her good sword (her cards) 'like a dancer'. She sate bolt upright; and neither showed you her cards, nor desired to see yours. She had no patience for the player who treated the game as merely amusement. To her it was war (quoted in *The Whist Table*).

Charles Lamb must have been a serious whist player himself. He describes whist through Sarah Battle's eyes:

> You glory in some surprising stroke of skill or fortune, not because a cold — or even an interested — bystander witnesses it, but because your *partner* sympathises in the contingency. You win for two. You triumph for two. Two are exalted. Two again are mortified; which divides their disgrace, as the conjunction doubles (by

taking off the invidiousness) your glories. Two losing to two are better reconciled, than one to one in close butchery (quoted in *The Whist Table*).

Sarah also is a doughty defender of card games in general:

> To those puny objectors against cards, as nurturing the bad passions, she would retort, that man is a gaming animal. He must be always trying to get the better in something or other; that this passion can scarcely be more safely expended than upon a game at cards; that cards are a temporary illusion; in truth, a mere drama; for we do but *play* at being mightily concerned, where a few idle shillings are at stake; yet, during the illusion, we *are* as mightily concerned as those whose stake is crowns and kingdoms (quoted in *The Whist Table*).

Many tales and jokes were written demonstrating the enormous love women had for the game. Rudolf Reinhardt's *Whist Scores and Card-Table Talk* has the following story:

> A lady fond of gaming was confessing her weakness and receiving the reproval of her priest. Among other arguments against gaming, he spoke of the great waste of time; to which the lady eagerly replied: 'Ah! That is just what vexes me — so much time lost in shuffling the cards!'

W. P. Courtney's book *English Whist and English Whist Players* (1894) relays that women felt an obligation to take up whist for a variety of reasons that had nothing to do with enjoyment. Women felt it was a necessary skill for purposes that ranged from controlling their husbands' gambling excesses to entertaining homebound husbands, fathers, and brothers.

The first woman whist writer was Anne Lætitia Aikin, the author of *Bob Short's Rules* (1792) described on page 77. Her pseudonym resulted in her authorship not being well known for almost one hundred years and even then, some felt she was not the author.

The next known whist publication written by a woman was not until 1887, almost one hundred years after *Bob Short's Rules*. Kate Wheelock was the author but, again, her name does not appear on the title page, where the book is described as 'compiled by a Milwaukee woman'. In this case, however, even if the name of the author was not known, at least her gender was. Her twenty-two page book,

The Fundamental Principles and Rules of Modern American Whist, was published by Western Railway, which may at first seem like a strange publisher but in fact it was perfect. They printed thousands of these booklets for their passengers. What an environment for whist to flourish! Multiday trips across the U.S. were perfect for learning and playing whist. It was much less distasteful than the common 'sport' of trying to shoot a buffalo from the train windows. Kate Wheelock would go on to become the most successful and respected woman teacher, writer, and player in the history of whist. Her 1899 book *Whist Hands Illustrated* is the most esthetically pleasing whist or bridge book that I have ever seen. I'm not even going to attempt to describe the beautiful colorful displays, since I cannot do them justice. After the floodgates had been opened by Kate Wheelock, within the next fifteen years over a dozen books were written on whist by women.

The success of the American Whist League generated tremendous enthusiasm for whist. Although women whisters were welcome to play in their events, a movement developed to create an auxiliary to the American Whist League for women players. This led to the founding of the Woman's Whist League in 1897, organized along the same lines as the American Whist League. At least fifty clubs were represented at their first congress in Philadelphia — they were off to a great start. The *Whist* journal covered the Woman's Whist League and devoted a great deal of space to it. The *Whist* journal had many articles on the fine ability of women whist players. Teams from women's whist clubs were beating teams of men. However, even though these articles truly complimented the ability of women, there was always an air of surprise expressed by both male and female writers.

In 1900 at the third congress of the Woman's Whist League, each team was required to have a large placard describing their method of play: overall system, leads, discards, etc. This was the first attempt at what would become the modern convention card. The June 1900 issue of the *Whist* journal reported that even though they liked the concept, the information was too vague to be useful. Only seven of the fifty-seven teams used the 'AWL Standard System' that had been generated in 1899, and six of those seven listed altered versions of the standard system. One New York team played a system called 'modified common-sense'.

Our present day games more closely match the atmosphere of a women's club. Men's clubs were smoked-filled rooms where considerable amounts of alcohol were consumed. I'm sure many male nonsmokers and minimal drinkers wished to join women's clubs. Thankfully, our 'civilized world' has enabled men to play in a more pleasant environment.

Whist Travels the Globe

The English game whist was quite a world traveler, and its charming nature enabled it to produce offspring all over the globe. It did not hurt that the British Empire was itself all over the globe. The desire not to 'go native' refers to keeping English customs and traditions rather than picking up the local lifestyle. What better way than to play the distinctly English game of whist? Often a local would be needed for a fourth, and then either started playing the game with their own countrymen or more likely indulged in a corruption of whist and local games. Later in this book, we will see how bridge was greatly shaped in India and the Middle East.

The Americans completely followed their English ancestors, and they originally played the 10-point game with honors counting. As already mentioned, when gamblers in England switched to the 5-point game with honors counting, the Americans felt enough was enough. They revolted and took up a compromise game: the 7-point game without honors. This suited the American mentality which did not look upon whist as a gambling game but rather as an intellectual competition. American gamblers were very content with poker. When I was a child in the 1950s, television and movie theaters were overrun with the cowboy movies. I think most movies had a bar scene with a poker game ending in a shootout. Before the guns started blazing, a common dialog would involve one player calling another a cheating four-flusher, accusing him of displaying four spade cards and a small part of a club card while dishonestly claiming a spade flush. I never heard someone yell, 'You revoked twice on that hand', just prior to the gunshots.

It's not possible to give a date for the American switch to the 7-point game since it was a gradual changeover. Prior to 1890 the American books on games were basically pirated versions of the English classics. Even the very popular *The American Hoyle*, with its descriptive subtitle on the cover page 'ALL THE GAMES PLAYED IN THE UNITED STATES' and 'ADAPTED TO THE AMERICAN METHOD OF PLAYING' does not mention the 7-point game until editions published in the 1890s.

With the American view that whist was primarily a test of skill, the AWL immediately flourished. Frank W. Crane wrote a famous paper in 1895, *Whist in America*, partially about Cavendish's reaction to American players after he attended the 1893 Chicago Whist Congress. Cavendish supposedly stated that the level of whist was higher and more scientific in the United States than in England. He may have just wanted to be a polite guest since this was a far cry from his much earlier comment, 'French players are dangerously addicted to falsecards,

and the Americans rarely play the right card, if they have one to play which is likely to deceive everybody.'

The French loved their game of Boston and its many spinoffs. On page 89, we saw that the three-person game of *mort* was played not out of necessity, but out of love. Even though the English form of whist was not very popular in France, we saw that did not prevent the French from producing the greatest whist player in all history, Alexandre Deschapelles (1780-1847). He was a true legend. James Clay called him, 'The finest, beyond any comparison, the world has ever seen.' Cavendish, who idealized Clay, shared all of Clay's opinions, something that resulted in Cavendish and all whist authors adopting Clay's opinion of Deschapelles' brilliance. Deschapelles was also an outstanding chess and billiards player. His billiards skill was remarkable since he could only play with one hand, having lost the other in a battle. He wrote several whist books but his brilliance did not shine through in his writings. Actually, he wrote parts of several books since he would start books but never finish them. However, his reputation as a player was so great, publishers were willing to issue anything they received from him.

The Good and the Bad

The Cavendish reign was a period of great growth for whist. Pole's *The Philosophy of Whist* (1884) presents some powerful remarks on the game's popularity:

> It is a singular but an unmistakeable testimony to the popularity of Whist, that in none of the books on the subject is it thought necessary to give any elementary description of the game; it is taken for granted that everybody, man, women, or child, knows generally how to play Whist, the only object being to improve the mode of play; just as works on grammar assume a general knowledge of how to read and write, and only aim at improving the style of composition.

This statement is reminiscent of Cotton's proclamation (see p. 58). That statement I believe was a great exaggeration while this one is only a substantial exaggeration.

A one-word summary of the health of whist in the Gay 90s would be 'excellent'. It had taken two different paths, separated by the Atlantic. In America the AWL was a great success. The Canadian Whist League and Woman's Whist League both got off to equally fine starts.

The journal *Whist* was a wonderful monthly publication. It functioned as the central nervous system for whist, thereby enabling law changes to be passed on to over one hundred clubs, and it allowed individual clubs to suggest changes for the whole network. Interest in the game was growing at a phenomenal rate, and duplicate whist was the most important factor behind this growth. Well-thought-out movements were created during the 1890s. Since all hands were played with the same trump suit, duplicate whist was actually a better test of cardplay than duplicate bridge has ever produced. One can envision a duplicate bridge event where all players are handed a slip with the identical required bidding for each board. That would be a pure test of cardplay ability. One of my teasers in the Foreword alluded to a duplicate event where all pairs were playing in the same contract; duplicate whist achieved that.

English whist was also healthy. It was not experiencing the great growth that was seen in the New World, but it had been a stable game for several centuries. Other games were often labeled as fads and disappeared after a few years, but whist was no fad. Writers used adjectives such as 'noble' or 'royal' to indicate its strength and society's respect for it. It had survived the one great change in its history: the transition from long whist to short whist. Gamblers, we saw, had welcomed this innovation. It was actually consistent with the overall historic principle that 'faster is better than slower'. *Short Whist* by Charles Coles ('Major A'), the first book written on the new form, has a wonderful frontispiece with two diagrams, each showing four whist players on the roof of a stagecoach. The top sketch has a slow-moving coach with the caption, '1715. LONG AND LINGERING.' The lower sketch has a fast-moving coach with the caption, '1815. SHORT AND SWEET.'

Not everything was perfect, however. The *Whist* journal highlighted the wide range of opinions on private conventions. It also represented three alternative opinions on the best way to select trumps on a duplicate bridge hand: turn over a card, have a designated trump suit for each board or have a designated trump suit for all boards in a session. The serious duplicate players in the American Whist league relished their very challenging game. But, with whist's increased complexity and the introduction of more conventions, casual players were losing confidence in their own ability. They would look in the mirror and see a bumblepuppy!

Part III

BRIDGE WHIST

Some of these days it is to be hoped that a satisfactory method of playing bridge in duplicate will be found.

Foster's Bridge Manual (1900)

CHAPTER 9
Rules (Laws) and Strategy

When bridge was first played, it was thought of simply as a variation of whist. Indeed, the game was often referred to as 'bridge whist' or 'bridge-whist'. Many authors used the name 'bridge whist' in their book titles, but usually would simply call it 'bridge' in their text. We will see that virtually all of the key features of this first form of bridge existed in some member of the whist family. Bridge stole its method of play and scoring from those games.

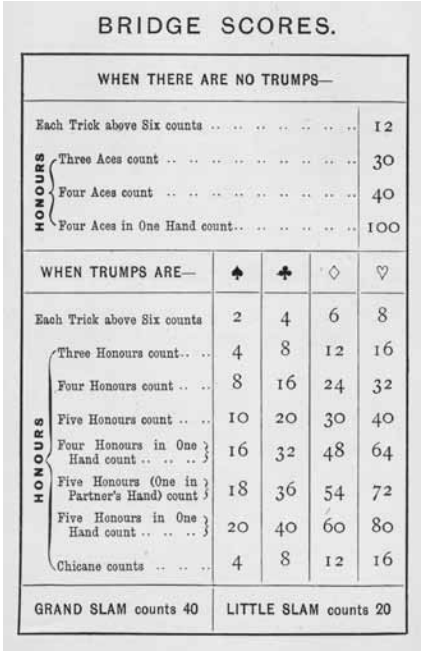
Method of Play

The rules of play were very simple. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for the scoring, since the way points were dished out for possessing honors was far from simple.

1. The dealer's options were to select a trump suit, select notrump, or pass the choice to partner.
2. If the dealer passed the choice, dealer's partner had to select a trump suit or notrump.
3. There were no levels when bidding. In effect, all bids were at the one-level but full credit was awarded for number of tricks won plus bonuses for game or slam.
4. The dealer always played the hand even when the dealer's partner (dummy) selected the denomination. No need for the word 'declarer' since it was synonymous with dealer.
5. The non-dealing pair could double but could not name the trump suit.
6. Doubling and redoubling could continue indefinitely.
7. Play was identical to contract bridge: the player on left of the dealer (declarer) made the opening lead before the dummy appeared.

Scoring

1. A horizontal line was drawn for scorekeeping. Points earned by winning more than six tricks were placed below the line. Honor, slam, and rubber points were placed above the line.
2. Scoring per trick above six (book): spades 2, clubs 4, diamonds 6, hearts 8, and notrump 12.
3. Scoring was identical for both the dealing side and the non-dealing side. For example, if either side won nine tricks with diamonds as trumps, they received 18 points (6 x 3) below the line. To win a game you had to accumulate 30 points below the line.
4. The first side to win two games won a rubber and received a bonus of 100 points.
5. The bonus for a little slam (twelve tricks) was 20 points and for a grand slam was 40 points.
6. The system of bonuses for honors was complicated since the value depended on the choice of the trump suit. Since spade tricks were worth less than club tricks, the awards for spade honors were less than for club honors. Both pairs were entitled to receive points for honors and the ten had been promoted to an honor.



BRIDGE SCORES.

WHEN THERE ARE NO TRUMPS—	
Each Trick above Six counts	12
HONOURS: Three Aces count	30
HONOURS: Four Aces count	40
HONOURS: Four Aces in One Hand count	100

WHEN TRUMPS ARE—	♠	♣	♢	♡
Each Trick above Six counts	2	4	6	8
HONOURS: Three Honours count	4	8	12	16
HONOURS: Four Honours count	8	16	24	32
HONOURS: Five Honours count	10	20	30	40
HONOURS: Four Honours in One Hand count	16	32	48	64
HONOURS: Five Honours (One in Partner's Hand) count	18	36	54	72
HONOURS: Five Honours in One Hand count	20	40	60	80
HONOURS: Chicane counts	4	8	12	16
GRAND SLAM counts 40	LITTLE SLAM counts 20			

This table appeared in *The Laws of Bridge and a Guide to the Game* by Boaz. A similar table appeared in virtually every bridge book published before 1910. The values are identical to those on the pocket-watch trump indicator on the cover of this book. The Boaz book was the first book of Laws. The preface of the first edition dated January 1895 indicates that the laws were prepared by a committee at the famous Portland Club, and the second edition's preface, dated July of that year, indicates that the book contains the joint work of both the Portland and Turf clubs. The efforts of these London clubs to establish a clear and complete set of laws was extremely important in the history of the game.

The table appears quite complicated due to the numerous values for honors. I personally find the whole concept of honors distasteful. One side receives wonderful cards. They will be able to win the majority of the tricks with them. Why give them the additional reward of points for honors? It is the old story of the rich getting richer. One peculiar word in the table is 'chicane'. Chicane referred to one of the players holding a void in the trump suit. A reward was given to offset that unfortunate occurrence. Actually it is possible for two players to be void in the trump suit. If they were opponents, their gifts would cancel out. However, if they were partners, it was called 'double chicane' and the partnership received 8, 16, 24, or 32 points, depending on the suit value — actually, a meager reward when one considers the extremely small chance of the event occurring. I like the spirit of chicane and double chicane. The downtrodden without any trumps are being rewarded for their plight. In the early bridge days, they were considerate enough to award the poor and needy.

As I already mentioned, the dealer would always play the hand, irrespective of whether he or his partner chose the trump suit. I am repeating this point since the method is so unnatural to present-day players. Choosing trumps was a very difficult decision: there was virtually no information relayed between dealer and his partner. Dealer's decision was totally binding. The only communication of information occurred when the dealer passed the right of trump selection to his partner. In that case, dealer's partner did learn that the dealer did not consider his hand appropriate either to name a trump suit or to play in notrump.

Basic Strategy

When playing contract bridge, a player often chooses to play in one suit over another since the payout for success is much better. Bidding

and making nine tricks in hearts scores better than winning ten tricks in diamonds. This was an even greater concern for bridge players around 1900, as the points awarded for the different denominations varied from only 2 for spades to 12 for notrump. Ignoring slam and game bonuses, making thirteen tricks with spades as trumps was only 2x7=14 points whereas nine tricks in diamonds was worth 6x3=18 points. Meanwhile, making just eight tricks in notrump was even better: 12x2=24 points. These differences were further exaggerated by the points for honors being proportional to the suit values. Even though they did not count for game, the points for heart honors of any type were four times the corresponding award for spade honors. One could make game by winning nine tricks in notrump (12x3=36), 10 tricks in hearts (8x4=32), or 11 tricks in diamonds (6x5=30). It was impossible to make game in either clubs or spades on one deal, unless you were doubled.

The extreme point spread strongly dictated the trump choice, and would usually be a greater factor in the selection of trumps than the number of trump cards held. Consider a hand where dealer has 0 high-card points and possibly no spades. In such a case, it is not insane to make spades trumps. Remember there was no concept of an undertrick penalty. If your partner's hand can win three tricks, thereby holding your opponents to ten tricks, they receive only 2x4=8 points based on tricks. They won four tricks above book (6 tricks) at a gain of only 2 points per trick. Even if the opponents were to double you, they would receive only 16 points — still less than the 30 required for game. You used the spade suit to minimize the damage when dealt a really awful hand. Passing would open up the possibility that your partner would make hearts trumps. Even if your partner's hand now made four tricks, the opponents' nine tricks would be worth 8x3=24. If they doubled it would be 48, enough for game.

Different authors held very different opinions about the virtue of dealer making spades trumps simply because he held no winning cards. Their views included:

1. Don't prevent your partner from naming trumps, he may have a very powerful hand or a great red suit.
2. Call spades and prevent partner from getting into trouble.
3. Don't do it, because a convention like this would easily be abused. Once people use it successfully on a hand with no winners, they will start bidding spades on a hand with one winner, and so forth.

Authors did agree that if dealer passed the decision to dummy and dummy held a very weak hand, dummy should name spades as trumps.

On the brighter side, suppose you are the dealer and find all four aces in your hand and a bunch of other nice picture cards. Great — shout notrump. No matter what your shape, you want to make the most of your good fortune. Notrump pays the best. You start out with 100 points for honors. Present-day contract bridge books encourage players to play in a major suit over a minor suit. In 1900 books would encourage players with a good hand to bid notrump or a red suit and with a poor hand to bid a black suit.

In whist, we saw that the word 'convention' referred to signaling understandings during the play. The first bidding convention was born before 1900, even though it would seem impossible to have a bidding convention when the 'auction' ended with the first bid. In fact, the Heart Convention was a well-known lead-directing double. If the opponents were playing in notrump and your partner doubled, you were asked to lead your highest heart. This convention made a lot of sense. Since choosing hearts as trumps produced a large payout, the selection of notrump rather than hearts carried some suggestion of weakness in that suit.

This thought process has carried over to present-day contract bridge. If Stayman is bypassed, the opening leader usually chooses a major over a minor. There is no older convention that is used during the bidding, at least in America. In Europe the earliest bridge book attached a different meaning to a double of a notrump bid: it called for the lead of the opening leader's shortest suit. When no suits have been bid by either side, modern-day bridge players often agree to use a double of 3NT to request the opening leader to lead his shortest suit. Not much has changed.

Terminology

Virtually all of the whist terminology was carried over to the bridge world. However, the term 'odd trick' changed its meaning during the transition. As we have seen, the whist world used it to indicate winning a seventh trick. The bridge whist world used it to indicate how many tricks were won over book. For example, they might say that the side that took ten tricks had won four odd tricks.

Even though the word 'declarer' did not exist, it almost existed. The most popular word in those early bridge books was probably 'declaration'; authors would write 'club declaration' or 'notrump declaration' to indicate the choice of trump for a hand. However, the expressions

'declared by dummy' or 'dummy declared' would mislead present-day players. They only indicated who did the selection of trumps, but the hand was of course still played by the dealer. The expression 'non-dealers' referred to the partnership that today we would call the defense.

New terminology was needed for the method of selecting the trump suit. The dealer would say either 'Pass' or 'I pass' in order to allow dummy to make the selection. If the dealer chose to select diamonds as trumps, he would usually say 'I make it diamonds' or simply 'Diamonds.' In 1900 the following expressions were common for trump selection: 'make by dealer', 'make by dummy', 'diamond make', 'notrump make', etc. Another way to refer to a make by dummy was to refer to it as a 'passed make'. A make by dealer was sometimes called an 'original make'. The word 'make' had different meanings during each of the bridge periods. In whist it meant winning a trick, but in early bridge it meant naming the denomination. The latter meaning is not used today, although we do often say we 'make a contract' or 'make nine tricks'.

The eldest hand would then say either 'I double' or 'May I lead, partner?' The latter would enable the other non-dealer to say either 'No, I double' or 'Play, please.' Many arguments were generated by eldest hand varying his terminology or hesitating; we will return to this issue shortly. After a double by the non-dealer side, the maker and then the maker's partner would have to say either 'I redouble' or 'I am satisfied.' Of course, some simplifications took place. Often 'I am satisfied' was replaced by a mere tap on the table. Double and redouble were important terms in bridge. Double was often referred to as 'going over' and redouble as 'going back'.

Bridge players were already using a high-low signal (echo) to indicate a doubleton and the ability to ruff the third round. They called it by the cute and very descriptive name 'down-and-out echo'.

Hand Evaluation Methods and Hesitations

Since whist players never had the power to choose trumps or double, there was no real need for a player to evaluate the strength of his hand. This changed when bridge came into existence. Dealer's side had to decide what should be chosen for trumps and the non-dealing side had to decide whether to double. Doubles were very common, since the process of trump selection resulted in the non-dealing side holding superior cards on half of the deals. An interesting feature is that players evaluated their hands with full knowledge of what strain they would be

played in. If dealer bid hearts, all could be certain that hearts would be trumps on that hand. Neither dealer's partner nor the opponents could change the choice. Dealer was literally *declaring* what trumps would be for that hand. Similarly when a non-dealer would double, he knew that neither dealer nor dummy could change the trumps; their only option other than passing was to redouble.

So the bridge world needed a way for players to evaluate their hands, preferably numerically. Methods were suggested to aid the decision process when selecting trumps or doubling. A common rule used when considering a heart declaration was as follows: number of trumps + number of trump honors + plain-suit aces and kings. If this added up to 8 or more, the dealer had enough strength for a heart make.

When considering notrump, some books recommended the following high card point system: ace 7, king 5, queen 3, jack 2, and ten 1. With the average hand containing 18 points, most books felt that 21 points was sufficient for an experienced player to choose notrump. This point count system was described by Edmund Robertson in his twenty-one page booklet, *The Robertson Rule and Other Axioms of Bridge Whist* (1902). The booklet went on to indicate several adjustments that were required for making the system more accurate. A singleton ace should be reduced to 4, a singleton king to 2, and an unguarded queen to 1. A doubleton ace should be reduced to 6, a doubleton king to 4, a doubleton queen to 2, and a doubleton jack to 1. Not that simple any more, but the real complication is on the way. Robertson describes what he calls the threefold value of any card:

1. Its aggressive or trick-taking value
2. Its obstructive value, i.e. its power to prevent one or more adverse tricks
3. Its protective value, i.e. its power to help other friendly cards to take tricks

After some very questionable reasoning and some equally questionable mathematics, he comes up with the following more accurate point count system: ace = 81, king = 54, queen = 36, jack = 24, and ten = 16. He never describes the minimum point count needed to open notrump but since the average hand holds 211 high card points it must be in the neighborhood of 300. In 1902 they did not even have a calculator to pass around the table. If any players used this system, I am sure as the cards were being dealt they were hoping for a yarborough.

Hesitations were a major problem in this old form of bridge. Consider the information conveyed by a slow pass ('May I lead?') by eldest hand. He had only two options, to double or not to double. If eldest hand decided not to double but dwelled on that decision, his partner had an easy time doubling with a marginal hand. At least in modern-day bridge a hesitation may not be quite as revealing, since usually, in a competitive bidding situation a player faces a three way decision: pass, double, or bid higher. The thought process of a player who passes slowly is not quite as transparent because his partner may not know which option was being considered. Even a double may be ambiguous as to whether it is intended mainly for penalty or for takeout. Likewise, in the modern game, the preceding auction provides a player with some information about partner's hand. In the old days, when a player had virtually no knowledge of his partner's hand, that hesitation was all the more meaningful.

The 1902 Club Code for American Laws of Bridge does not cover hesitations in their 106 laws but in a supplementary section of thirteen rules of etiquette it is covered by Rules 2 and 4.

> Rule 2: There should be no undue hesitancy in passing to partner, as such hesitation might influence the make.
>
> Rule 4: A player who has a right to double, if he intend passing the option to his partner, should not indicate any doubt or perplexity in regard to exercising such right (quoted in *Elwell on Bridge*).

Listing these rules in the etiquette section rather than in the laws section was not intended to minimize the severity of infractions. The introduction of the etiquette section declares:

> To offend against one of the rules of etiquette is far more serious than to offend against any law in the code; for, while in the latter case the offender is sure of punishment, in the former the offended parties have no redress other than refusal to continue to play with the offender (quoted in *Elwell on Bridge*).

Today's bridge administrators still struggle with the problem of how to handle hesitations. It's interesting to see that the problem goes back to the beginnings of the game itself.

CHAPTER 10
The First Kings of Bridge: Elwell and Foster

For this second generation, the two great writers that I selected were Joseph Bowne Elwell and Robert F. Foster. They each wrote several excellent books on this first form of bridge during the first decade of the twentieth century — *Foster's Bridge Manual*, first published in 1900, and *Elwell on Bridge* in 1902. Both books became instant classics. Proudly I can say not only were both authors Americans but both could be identified as New Yorkers. Don't get jealous, England — you had Hoyle and Cavendish. Actually, in the interests of full disclosure, I should add that Foster was born in Scotland.

In the section on whist I complained about the use of pseudonyms by the authors, something which at times made book attribution difficult. No such problem with Elwell and Foster. Not only did they use the names their parents bestowed on them, but they even worked their names into several of their book titles. Elwell seems to have been a little more humble than Foster since his books often had subtitles that did not include his name.

Joseph Bowne Elwell (1873-1920) was an excellent whist player and had successfully represented The Whist Club of New York in many duplicate events before bridge reached New York. He had not written any books on whist but had taught the game. When bridge burst onto the scene he immediately became a very successful bridge teacher and writer. His client list included royalty, or at least people with royal-sounding titles. He had style and grace and mixed well in high society — possibly, as we shall see, too well. His very successful regular partnership with Harold S. Vanderbilt lasted from 1910 to1920. After 1910 he went on to write several auction bridge books. He apparently was a very successful gambler on a variety of games, horse racing, and the stock market. In fact, he owned over twenty racehorses and had a home in Saratoga, NY where he lived near the famous racetrack and gambling center.

As well-known as he was while he was alive, he even became more famous through his death. On June 10, 1920 he was on a 'date' with Viola Kraus; her divorce had become official that very day, and they were celebrating. They had dinner and attended a show with another couple. At another table during dinner they ran into Mr. Kraus, who was celebrating for the same reason. This could have been awkward

as Mr. Kraus was also on a date but no fights erupted. By a twist of fate, Mr. Kraus and his date attended the same performance after dinner, but throughout the evening only civilized behavior was exhibited. Elwell returned home about 2:00 AM. When his housekeeper arrived that morning, she found him shot to death in his parlor, and the house locked from the inside. He had been murdered. Neither money nor valuables were removed so it seemed that it must have been a crime of passion. Apparently, at first the housekeeper had trouble recognizing him, as his appearance had deteriorated more quickly than usual after death. Even though he was only forty-seven he had used both fake hair and fake teeth to maintain his good looks. This was the housekeeper's first and only opportunity to see the real Elwell.

The murder case caught the attention of the public, and the notoriety was fed by the newspapers. Elwell's address book contained the names of at least one princess and one countess. The general public's fascination with high society, and particularly their scandals, was unlimited. The bridge expert's life and death was the perfect story — a 'locked-room mystery' worthy of Sherlock Holmes. The inability of the police to solve the case kept it newsworthy. Many writers wrote books about their theories of who did it. Was it a jilted lover? Was it the spouse of a non-jilted lover? There was significant evidence that Elwell had been involved with gambling and organized crime. Was that it? Even as recently as 1987 a book on the subject was published — *The Slaying of Joseph Bowne Elwell* by Jonathan Goodman. Many murder cases go unsolved because no one has a motive for the crime. In this case there may have actually been too many individuals who had a motive.

Did I leave out that he was married? His estranged wife was not a suspect in his murder. She was both bridge player and teacher too, and claimed after his death that she was actually the author of all of his successful books. Maybe she *should* have been a suspect.

Robert F. Foster (1853-1945) lived through four generations of whist/bridge, and was able to write successful books on all four games. One can argue that he wrote the first significant book during all three transitions. You probably have noticed that each part of *Bumblepuppy Days* begins with a Foster quote. I wanted to highlight his vital role in bridge evolution.

He wrote some of the most successful whist books in the 1890s: *Foster's Whist Manual, Foster's Whist Tactics, Foster's Duplicate Whist*, and *Common Sense in Whist*. These and some lesser works made him clearly the top whist writer in America and, indeed, one of the top whist

authorities in the world. One of his major theoretical whist discoveries was the 'Eleven Rule', known to modern players as the 'Rule of Eleven'.

In 1900, *Foster's Bridge Manual* made this important prediction about the future of bridge:

> Some of these days it is to be hoped that a satisfactory method of playing bridge in duplicate will be found, and when it is we shall have something which the world has long waited for, a perfect game of cards, in which skill and judgment are more important than luck, and in which the intellectual pleasure of the play is more attractive than any stake.

This statement appeared in the last paragraph of the book's introduction, and was certainly a great endorsement of the new game. While the majority of top whist writers in America were strongly attacking this new perversion of whist, the greatest whist authority in the country was embracing the new game. Embedded in his statement were defenses against two major criticisms: bridge cannot be played in duplicate and bridge can only be enjoyed for its gambling element.

After writing a half-dozen books on whist in the 1890s, and a half-dozen books on bridge whist, Foster was far from finished. When auction bridge reigned supreme, he wrote over a dozen books on that and eventually wrote some of the first contract bridge books. Yes, he still promoted his name — in 1927, he published *Foster's Contract Bridge*.

His greatest work may be the 1897 *Foster's Complete Hoyle*. It was extremely well organized and clearly written. Prior to this time the great Hoyle books tended to be a compilation of essays by an assorted number of different authors on various games. A truly new and original work, *Foster's Complete Hoyle* became a classic. Without exaggeration I can state that it will live on forever since a copy was placed in a time capsule at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Shortly after the 1897 publication, a version was published in London under the name *Comprehensive Handbook to the Card Games*. In short, Foster was not only a whist/bridge authority but a general games authority.

Rather than being rivals, as you might expect, Foster and Elwell seem to have had a fine relationship. They often played on the same team and Foster even wrote in 1900 that Elwell's reputation as a successful teacher and player was second to none in this country. These two kings seemed to have been able to rule the kingdom of bridge jointly. It is a historical anomaly to have two kings without one murdering the other. Then again Elwell was murdered, so who knows? I do not know the cause of Foster's death, but considering that he died

at the age of 92, I am sure it was not a crime of passion based on a lover's triangle.

Evolution During the Bridge Whist Period

The first known document describing this game was published in 1886. It was titled *Biritch, or Russian Whist*. The English document was only four pages and it did not include the name of the author. A copy of this document appears in Appendix 3. This document is extremely important to any study of the history of bridge, as it established that by 1886 the earliest form of bridge was being played. It differs in a few ways from the game described in the last chapter. The mode of playing was identical. The two most significant scoring differences were that each trick won in notrump was 10 points rather than 12 points and the game bonus was only 40 points rather than 100. That bonus of 40 was called a *consolation*. It seems like an odd choice of words, but it had a logical base for whist players. In whist, if players won two games they always won the rubber. In bridge whist it was possible to win two games but still be behind on total points. This could result from the large awards for honors and the small bonus for winning two games. Which side had the right to boast that they had 'won' the rubber was not really determined by the Laws until 1915.

This English document is laced with French terms: *contre* (double), *sur contre* (redouble), *chicane* (trump void), *grand* and *petit*. This raises the question of the French background of this infant game. Did it have a French parent or a French nanny?

The question is only one of many raised by this first bridge document. Even its exact significance to the development of bridge is not clear. No doubt this form of the game was important to future bridge but we do not know whether this particular written record played any role. Was it even known by early players and writers? In the 1895 edition of *The Laws of Bridge and a Guide to the Game*, Boaz recounted one version of how bridge arrived in England:

> Bridge found its way into England by an accident; in 1894 Lord Brougham, on returning from the South of France, was dealing in a game of Whist at the Portland Club, and instead of turning up the last card, deliberately placed it face downwards on his packet.
>
> He explained apologetically to his partner that he thought he was playing Bridge, whereupon several voices asked what Bridge was. With the enthusiasm of a novice for a new game, he expressed

unbounded surprise at the ignorance around him, and offered the boon of general enlightenment.

His offer was promptly accepted, and the game caught on at once.

This tale of how bridge landed in England, which may or may not be true, has been repeated in dozens of books on bridge and general game history. It clearly is true that in 1894 bridge arrived at the right doorstep: the Portland Club. There, this wandering game could be nurtured, developed, and established in the English society. But what about the role of the biritch document? It seems the English bridge world was unaware of it.

Almost the same scenario had taken place at the New York Whist Club. After returning from Paris in 1892, Henry Barbey introduced bridge to the club. He had created a set of notes on the game. Bridge became an immediate success at that club. Actually, it was too great a success for most members. On December 10, 1893, *The New York Times* carried an article titled 'Couldn't Stand Bridge Whist'. It describes the immediate chaos generated by the new game:

> The introduction of bridge whist in the New York Whist Club has led to the withdrawal of a number of members and the formation of a new whist club. [...] Some of the members thought that bridge whist fostered a gambling spirit on too large a scale for the good of the club, besides, in a certain degree, being the means to cast the old-style whist into the background. So, eventually the split came, and there is now a new whist club in the city, situated at 28 West Thirtieth Street, just a few doors from the old clubhouse.

After a lengthy description of the officers of the new club and some of its prominent members, the article concludes: 'No bridge whist will be played, and the stakes will be very small.'

This article leaves the reader with the incorrect impression that the new club was formed by the old whist players who refused to be in the company of bridge whist players. In fact the new club, called the Whist Club of New York was formed by the bridge whist players who felt unwelcome at the old club. This 1893 article was probably the first column on bridge in an American newspaper or journal containing an error. It was the start of a long tradition of newspaper bridge errors, to which I am able to say I contributed while writing my own columns in *The Bronx Journal*.

Both London and New York clearly received their bridge game through a French connection. A 2011 article by Beauchêne, Bodard,

Counil, and Depaulis discusses the world of French bridge around 1890. Their thorough investigation yielded many references to the game under the name 'britch'. They found this spelling, without the 'i', to be more common than the spelling 'biritch' used in the 1886 document. More surprisingly, they found the spelling 'bridge' used in a December 18, 1886 article in the British weekly newspaper, *The Graphic*. This is the earliest known use of that spelling.

Back to the earlier question: who knew about the 1886 biritch document and when did they learn of its existence? In 2003, this question was nicely answered in an article by Depaulis and Fuchs. They indicate that after the 1894 *The Pocket Guide to Bridge* by Boaz was published, it was reviewed in *The Field*, a popular magazine that was the primary source of information on whist in England. Its wide readership included a John Collinson, who wrote to the magazine in order to set the record straight. On August 4, 1894, *The Field* published his letter, which included the following information:

> Bridge, Biritch, or Russian Whist — My attention has been called to your notice of Bridge Whist. It may interest your readers if I enclose a copy of the rules of 'Biritch' which I published about ten years ago, at the request of some friends (quoted in Depaulis and Fuchs).

Collinson also included a comparison of the rules of biritch and bridge in order to indicate their great similarity. In spite of his efforts, the above 1895 quote from Boaz reveals that the biritch document was unknown to most early bridge historians.

In 1905, Frederic Jessel, a librarian at the Bodleian Library at Oxford, published *A Bibliography of Works in English on Playing Cards and Gaming*, a work of more than 300 pages that gives an exhaustive list of all whist and very early bridge writings. It lists the entry:

> Biritch, or Russian Whist. 4pp. 8vo. 1886. (No place of printing or publication mentioned; apparently the first printed description in English of the game of bridge).

Jessel fully appreciated the importance of this document when he found it mentioned in a 1904 article. Biritch was becoming known. At least temporarily.

William Dalton was becoming the most successful English writer on the first form of bridge. He wrote articles for *The Saturday Review* magazine as well as a half dozen bridge books. On May 19, 1906 he

mentioned biritch in *The Saturday Review*. Finally the biritch document was achieving some of the fame it rightfully deserved. But what about John Collinson? Upon seeing this article in *The Saturday Review,* he again wrote a letter to the editor and it was published in the June 9th issue. In the letter he stated that during the years from 1880 to 1884, he played biritch in Constantinople and Asia Minor. In England he had written copies of the rules for his English friends and in 1886 obtained a copyright at Stationer's Hall under his name. As proof he sent his one remaining copy and mentioned that his other copy had been sent in 1894 to *The Field* magazine. He begged *The Saturday Review* to return this last copy. I don't know whether he got that copy back but he certainly did not get his place in history. Dalton's two books, *Dalton's Bridge Complete* (1906) and *Bridge and Auction Bridge* (1910) have an identical seventeen-page chapter titled 'The Evolution of Bridge'. Dalton describes the biritch document but states that he did not have any information as to who framed the laws. It is a shame that Dalton could not include Collinson's name in his books.

According to Depaulis, in 1913 an Englishman, O. Paul Monckton, found the copyright record for the biritch document. He probably was the first to look for it. In his 1913 book *Pastimes in Times Past*, Monckton indicated that the copyright holder was John Collinson and that Collinson was probably also the author. He could not ask Collinson as he did not have his current address. In the 1967 English publication *The Bridge Players' Encyclopedia*, under the entry 'history of bridge', the game biritch is mentioned but not John Collinson. Even late twentieth century publications often state that the biritch document was written anonymously.

John Collinson was the bridge version of American comedian Rodney Dangerfield: he got no respect. He repeatedly had to remind the bridge world who he was and even of the existence of the biritch document. The Depaulis 2003 article reveals that Collinson was not in hiding but trying to establish his authorship. It describes John Collinson's life and contains the full text of the letters he sent to correct the historical record. If not for those letters, the world may never have discovered the existence of biritch.

As we saw, the biritch document and the version of bridge I described in Chapter 9 did have two scoring rule differences. One was the change for notrump from 10 points per trick (biritch document) to 12 per trick. This modification probably was the result of poor communication of the scoring values.

In his *Dalton's Complete Bridge*, Dalton writes:

> There can be no doubt that the score for No Trumps ought to be 10 points per trick and not 12, as that is following the regular upward sequence of the suit declarations, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10.

It would also be more consistent with the way honor bonuses are handed out in trump contracts. Honor bonuses were always a multiple of the trick value. Notrump should be the same. If each trick value for notrump is 10, the honor rewards, 30 and 40, would all be multiples. In his book, *The Bridge-Fiend* (1909), Arthur Loring Bruce writes that a club in France was considering returning to 10 points. He conjectures on the cause of the original change:

> Somebody who had learned the game, and learned it imperfectly, taught it to a class of players who did not stop to think about the matter very seriously, and the mistake has spread all over the world.

We will see that the notrump trick value did return to 10 in the early years of auction bridge.

In 1895, The Portland and Turf Clubs in England jointly published their rules for bridge (the Boaz document) and in 1897 The Whist Club, New York, published its rules. Both contained over 100 rules and about a dozen rules under the title Etiquette. Fortunately, the set of rules created in England and America were almost identical, and clearly they were not created independently. These laws were remarkably well-drawn and complete for such a new game. But then again, one cannot really call bridge a new game. The set of well-known whist rules that had been developed over 150 years provided a wonderful starting point. Most of the new bridge laws were well-established whist laws.

The American Laws were revised in 1902, 1905, and 1908. The changes were minor. In 1897, there was a penalty if the dealer/declarer played from dummy when the lead was in his own hand or played from his own hand when the lead was in dummy. The penalty was removed by 1902.

The minuscule value awarded for tricks won when the spade suit was trumps led to the Spade Convention. By pre-agreement of all players, should the spade suit be named trumps and the opponents not double, if neither side had 20 points toward game the hand was tossed in. It was not worth the trouble of playing it out.

Games Leading to Bridge Whist

Bridge whist involved five significant changes from the major form of whist:

1. A very primitive form of bidding
2. Placing an exposed hand on the table
3. The ability to play in notrump
4. The scoring rules
5. The ability to double and redouble

These five major modifications all existed in some variant of whist. The games mentioned in Part II prepared players for these modifications, but I'll remind you briefly of them again.

Whist prevented any free choice of the trump suit. Whether via the standard way of turning up the last card dealt, or cutting a second deck, or even choosing a suit to be trumps for the whole evening, trump selection was totally by chance. Possibly whist players placed too much importance on the supposed origin of the word *whist*. That 'vow of silence' was taken very seriously, and it prevented any form of bidding. Perhaps if bidding boxes had been invented by 1890, whist might have adapted better. Boston, solo whist, and a long list of other trick-taking games allowed players to decide on the trump suit.

Exposing a hand on the table was not new. The play in dummy whist and *mort* strongly resembled the bridge mechanics of a declarer playing dummy's hand. The game Boston had some options where a player could choose to play with their hand exposed on the table.

Playing without a trump suit was an option in several versions of Boston. The game Cayenne used the word 'grand' for playing without a trump suit. The name is logical since it was the highest ranking and most valued choice for trumps. The 1868 scoring table for the game — *Boston de Lorient* — is reproduced in J. -L. Counil's *La Naissance du Bridge*. In this table notrump is called '*quatre couleurs*' ('four suits'). It gives a greater payoff than playing in any trump suit.

On page 92, I showed part of a scoring table for an 1844 version of Boston and on page 134 the scoring table for bridge whist appears. In both tables, the column for the club suit consists of values that are twice the spade suit values, the column values for the diamond suit are three times the spade values, and the column values for the heart suit four times the spade values. Consider now the last line of the Boston table and the first line under the suit symbols of the bridge table. Both lines contain the trick values for each trick won above the sixth trick. Those two lines have identical values: 2, 4, 6, 8. Consider now

the seventh line of the Boston table and the second line below the suit symbols of the bridge table. Both lines contain the value of holding three honors. Those two lines also have identical values: 4, 8, 12, 16.

In many card games, players have the ability to increase their bets. Poker is the current popular example. A relative of poker is the game brag, which is as old or even older than whist. That is a great name for a card game where the players are making bets that say, 'My hand is better than your hand.' The double in bridge says almost the same thing: 'Our partnership can prevent you from doing what you claim you can do.'

It is in interesting to find games prior to 1886 that combined many of these features. *Dalton's Complete Bridge* mentioned the document *Biritch, or Russian Whist*. Dalton considered this strong evidence that the game arose in Russia. He went on to write:

> Many years ago the Russians played a game called 'ieralasch' or ieralache', which closely resembles the game of short whist without a trump suit. From this foundation, arose the more scientific games of 'Siberia' and 'preference', both of which had certain points in common with our game of Bridge, but there the connection ceases. There is no record whatever of the transformation of any of these Russian games into anything approaching modern Bridge.

In *The Bridge Blue Book* (1906) by Mottelay, two alternative spellings were listed, teralasche and yelarash. A similar spelling, yeralash, has proved to be the most popular choice. Many bridge historians over the past 100 years have searched for more evidence of the link. *The ACBL Encyclopedia of Bridge* (7th ed.) contains information about a recently surfaced old article that provides evidence of the link. In June 2011, Hans Secelle, a Belgian, found an 1869 article by Christian Vanderheid that dealt with the game referred to as yeralash or Russian whist. It was a thirty-two-page German publication. There are a number of similarities between yeralash and bridge, so apparently Dalton and Mottelay were on the right track.

A Missing Brother, Swedish Whist

I searched for the variant of whist, described in English, that best combined the new features of bridge. Ideally it would be described in a book or an article published prior to Collinson's biritch document in 1886. I found a wonderful fit in Klas August Linderfelt's *The Game of*

Preference or Swedish Whist (1885). The name itself is intriguing since it closely resembles *Biritch, or Russian Whist*. Actually the word 'preference' meant playing the hand in notrump, just like the word 'biritch' did. Preference and biritch were the two highest bids in their respective games. Linderfelt's fifty-two-page book was privately published in Milwaukee, where only 75 copies were printed.

This game was actually further evolved than bridge whist and more closely resembled early auction bridge. It had a competitive form of bidding and it contained some advanced bidding features. I hope you are sitting down: it had invitational bids in order to maximize the chance of getting to game! It also had what modern-day bridge players would refer to as artificial bids and transfer bids!

I trust that whet your appetite for a brief description of the method of play. There were no levels in the bidding and the rank of clubs and spades were the reverse of bridge whist. Here is the order with the corresponding trick value: clubs 3, spades 4, diamonds 5, hearts 6, and preference 8. Game required 20 points and only points won by tricks counted. This meant that in order to make game on one hand, that partnership had to win thirteen tricks in clubs, eleven tricks in spades, ten tricks in diamonds, ten tricks in hearts or nine tricks in notrump (preference). A partnership was awarded 10 points for winning the first game and 20 points for winning the rubber. Regular whist awarded no points for slam even though the term was used to indicate winning thirteen tricks. Swedish whist (preference) used the terms little slam and grand slam and awarded the bonuses of 10 and 20 points. Points awarded for honors were a multiple of the trick value so the awards were greater in higher-ranking suits. Just like bridge, the ten-spot in the trump suit was treated as an honor and the honor awards were almost identical to bridge. There was no process for doubling, but if the high bidding side was not successful in making seven tricks, their opponents would receive double the trick value for each undertrick. There was a version of the game where players could select 'nullissimo'. That meant playing without a trump suit with the goal of losing tricks. The partnership who won fewer than seven tricks gained 8 points for each extra trick lost. Obviously Boston provided a model for this losing trick selection. It seems very un-bridge-like, but many versions of auction bridge later allowed that option.

Both sides could take part in the bidding, which started with the eldest hand, then went around the table once, ending with the dealer. If any player bid preference, the bidding would come to a screeching halt, as no higher bid was possible. In bridge whist the bidding stopped as soon as either dealer or dummy made any bid. In Swedish whist, a

bid by your partner did not prevent you from bidding. Players did not like to play in clubs or spades since the return was poor. The notrump (preference) reward of 8 points per trick was almost three times the reward of 3 per trick for clubs. Therefore, it was understood that in first or second seat, a club bid was artificial. It did not say anything about the bidder's club suit. The club bid told partner that you had some strength but not more than two certain tricks. A spade bid in those seats was also artificial and told your partner that you had a very good hand and were quite certain of four tricks. These bids were described as 'invitations' to partner to bid preference, where game could be made by winning only nine tricks. If partner had a weak hand and could not respond to the invitation, he would pass.

Why then bother to bid a club or a spade rather than call preference oneself? If preference was the final bid, as opposed to one of the suits, the opening lead was made by the player to the *right* of the bidder. So if you bid spades, and forced partner to bid preference, the lead would run around to the stronger hand. Sounds like the first transfer bid! It had the same motivation.

The game was usually played without a dummy, but a few pages in Linderfelt's book are devoted to playing with a dummy. In the games of *mort* and dummy whist, the dummy was exposed as soon as the cards were dealt. In the form of preference using a dummy, just like in bridge, the dummy was not exposed until the opening lead hit the table.

Even though only seventy-five copies of this book were published, it did get recognition in the card playing world. Horton T. Horr's 1892 *Bibliography of Card-Games* and Jessel's 1905 *Bibliography* both mention Linderfelt's book. The game expert Jessel includes the following note: 'An interesting and, in English, the only account of this game, which deserves to be better known.' Actually this is not correct. In 1887 Rudolf Rheinhardt described this game in *Whist Scores and Card-Table Talk*, and Butler described it in his 1899 *Whist Reference Book* under the name 'Swedish whist'. He comments that it is more popular in Sweden than English whist. This statement I'm sure comes from the preface of Linderfelt's book. In this preface, Linderfelt states this game is a variation of a game very popular in Sweden, but he has no idea where or when it originated. Culbertson's 1935 *Encyclopedia of Bridge* provides a description of the game.

Even though I have pointed out many similarities between preference (Swedish whist) and biritch, I do not want to imply that one evolved from the other. Probably both were on neighboring branches of the same family tree.

The main reason I have devoted so much space to this game is not because of its role in bridge history but because of its non-role. By that I mean that if this game had found its way into a major club in London or New York in the late 1880s, there would not have been any room for bridge whist to find a home. Card players might have been modifying Swedish whist (preference) for the last 130 years. In 1885, this game represented a real threat to the very existence of present-day bridge. Perhaps it was fortunate that Linderfelt only ran off seventy-five copies.

Where and How the Name 'Bridge' Originated

The 1895 Boaz book on the laws of bridge also included the first few pages ever written on the history of bridge. That history section starts with:

> Bridge, though English by name, is not of English origin; and its birthplace, so far as can at present be ascertained, is uncertain. Bridge (pronounced Britch) appears, however, to have been introduced, about thirty-five years ago, into the Clubs at Constantinople, and since then little else has been played in the Clubs of that city. 'Khedive', a game identical with that of Bridge, was played some twenty years ago in the French Clubs on the Riviera, whither it is said to have been brought from Alexandria. It was afterwards introduced into Paris, and there it took the name of 'Bridge'. In Paris it developed into its present form, and from thence it went to America, and lastly arrived here early in 1894.

This paragraph has to be considered the most important ever written on bridge history by virtue of being the first attempt to describe it. Boaz never mentions, and almost certainly had no knowledge of, the Collinson biritch manuscript. Much of what was stated in this paragraph was repeated by other early authors as fact. The recent article by Beauchêne et al. sheds a great deal of light on the correctness and possible inaccuracies of this Boaz quote. They could not find any hard evidence that bridge was played on the Riviera or in Alexandria, nor any evidence of the existence of a game named 'khedive'.

Certainly, the history of Collinson's travels supports that bridge was played before 1880 in Constantinople. Until other evidence is found, it should be accepted that it took on its name in France. Probably it was the result of a corruption of the word 'biritch/britch', although it always seems to me that a more plausible word corruption would end up with 'British' rather than 'bridge'.

Over the years, many other authors have proposed reasonable theories of how bridge got its name. One is that during the Crimean War, English troops had to cross the Galata Bridge in order to leave their barracks and play cards in coffeehouses on the other side. The location of Istanbul is consistent with where the game was probably played in the early days of its history. However, although there is indisputable evidence that bridge was played in France around 1890 and Turkey even earlier, I don't want readers to jump to the conclusion that either country can claim to be the place of birth. At best, they can claim to be the adopted home of a very wild child.

Even accepting the mainstream theory that 'bridge' is a corruption of the word 'biritch/britch', it then leads to the question, where did biritch/britch come from? Depaulis feels that may be a corruption of the serbo-croatian word *brc*. That word means 'summit' or 'highest', which is consistent with the bid of biritch (notrump) in the 1886 document.

In 1906, William Dalton pointed out that the words 'biritch' and 'bridge' have the same sound when spoken quickly. In his 1964 book *The Bridge Player's Bedside Book*, George Hervey wondered if bridge historians have it backwards. He presented an argument that 'bridge' is not an English corruption of 'biritch' but rather that 'biritch' was a Russian corruption of 'bridge'.

The word 'bridge' certainly was an excellent choice in light of the mechanics of the game. Whist was played in a totally clockwise fashion. The dealing and play had been clockwise for over 200 years. In present-day bridge all bidding is likewise clockwise. Bridge whist was far from clockwise: if the dealer did not name trumps, that power jumped over the table to dummy. Whoever named trumps, the next opportunity to act went to the eldest hand. He either doubled or passed the right of doubling over the table to partner. Actually, when dummy named trumps and the eldest hand had the first right to double, the bidding moved counterclockwise. Even though the play to every trick was clockwise, the decisions for dummy were made by the player across the table from dummy. This feature of bridge was clearly not lost on early players. Many expressions involving the word 'bridge' started appearing in the bridge literature. The 1907 *Hoyle's Games* includes in the glossary the expression to 'bridge the make'. This is defined as 'A vulgarism at bridge, meaning to pass the declaration. To bridge it, really means to make it no trump'. The expression 'bridge the make' has a logical base while 'to bridge it' seems strange, but the latter is actually consistent with biritch and preference (Swedish whist). For both games, the name of the game had the second meaning of playing in notrump.

Books, Magazines, and Newspapers

During the dozen years in which bridge whist flourished, almost one hundred books were written on the game. The successful bridge books were often written by well-known authors converted from whist. Many short (twenty to fifty pages) pamphlets and booklets were published by the companies that manufactured playing cards, trump indicators, duplicate boards, bridge scorers and other gadgets. They were aimed at providing readers with a free or very cheap quick introduction to the new game. Only bridge players will buy bridge paraphernalia.

Most books were of an instructional nature and they tended to be quite similar. They emphasized the scoring, rules of play, and the aspects of bridge that were totally new to whist players, such as dealer makes and dummy makes (passed makes). Authors would assume the reader was new to bridge, which was a safe assumption since bridge was new to the world. They all claimed that they were providing the readers with the first simple, easy introduction to bridge. Most of the books did provide an easy introduction but they could not all be first. I will not mention which authors I feel failed to live up to their claim of simplicity. I don't like making enemies, even when they are dead enemies.

In 1902, H. C. DuVal published a miniscule seven-page booklet titled *Bridge Rules in Rhyme*. The idea of bidding and doubling was new to whist players so almost all of his rhymes were on those topics. This struck me as particularly useful for modern day players:

> Doubling's wisest in the fight
> If the maker's on your right.

Carolyn Wells' *The Rubaiyat of Bridge* (1909) presents a rhyme on one page and a corresponding red and black illustration on the opposite page. Her rhymes do not try to provide lessons but rather depict the culture of bridge. For example:

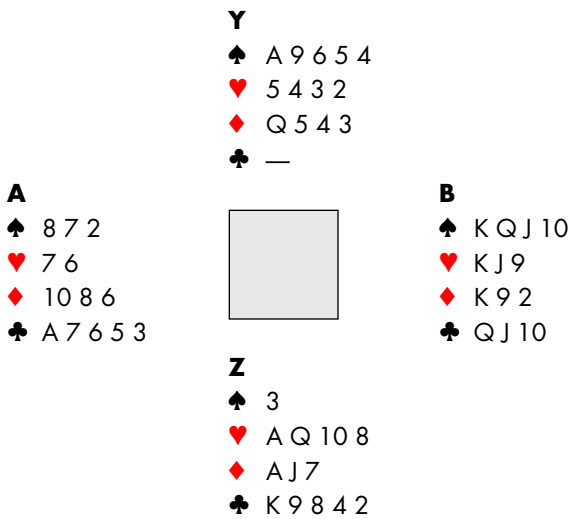
> For I remember stopping by the Way
> To watch Four Celebrated Champions play.
> They Differed on their Discard, Make, and Lead.
> Whatever One Said, — Said The Others, "Nay !"

Wells' book was in competition with Mabel Allen Avery's book of rhymes, *Mother-Goose on Bridge*, published the same year. Even though there was only one bidding convention, they had inherited numerous play conventions. All present day players can relate to this:

There was a good man at a tension,
Whose partner forgot the "convention."
He didn't seem riled,
He placidly smiled,
But his thoughts, they won't do to mention.

Several bridge whist books did not try to instruct but tried to entertain by describing early players and the atmosphere of the game in a humorous light. These are my favorite old bridge books. Magazine articles from that period describe how bridge was changing society, or more correctly, how they feared it would change society. They discuss both the social and non-social aspects of bridge, and are the source of much of the material that appears in Chapter 12.

The first hand to appear in the bridge whist world did not appear in a bridge book but in Foster's 1897 massive work on all games. This book was published in London under the name *Comprehensive Handbook to the Card Games* and in New York under the name *Foster's Encyclopedia of Games*. It was illustrated with the common whist display of all tricks. I pointed out earlier that there was an obvious error in Hoyle's description of the play in the first full whist example. Foster did him one better by making two errors in the first bridge whist hand. Opposite is a scan of the original with the equivalent modern display below.



ILLUSTRATIVE BRIDGE HANDS

The dealer, Z, names Hearts in both instances, and A leads. The underlined card wins the trick, and the card under it is the next one led.

First Example.

	A	Y	B	Z
1	♣ A	♥ 2	♣ 10	♣ 2
2	6 ♦	Q ♦	2 ♦	7 ♦
3	8 ♦	3 ♦	9 ♦	J ♦
4	♣ 3	♥ 3	♣ J	♣ 4
5	♥ 6	♥ 5	♥ 9	♥ 10
6	2 ♠	A ♠	10 ♠	3 ♠
7	♥ 7	♥ 4	♥ J	♥ Q
8	10 ♦	4 ♦	♥ K	♥ A
9	♣ 5	5 ♦	♣ Q	♣ K
10	♣ 6	4 ♠	J ♠	♣ 9
11	♣ 7	5 ♠	Q ♠	♣ 8
12	7 ♠	6 ♠	K ♦	A ♦
13	8 ♠	9 ♠	K ♠	♥ 8

In the first example, the dealer is almost strong enough to announce a grand. After Dummy's hand is exposed, the dealer's object is to establish the Club suit by allowing Dummy to trump the high cards. After the successful finesse of the Diamond Jack, a little slam is possible. If the trump 10 wins, a grand slam is possible. At trick 9, as A led Ace originally, he can be counted for three more Clubs, no Diamonds, and two Spades; so B must have one Club, which must be the Queen.

The dealer and his partner score 56 and game for tricks; 16 for honours, and 40 for grand slam.

Hearts are trumps and the ♣A is the opening lead.

One error was his use of the word 'grand' when he meant notrump (*sans atout*). He mistakenly used the word for notrump when playing Cayenne. The other was not having B cover the diamond queen with the king on the second trick. He should have read Payne's 1773 explanation for covering. Foster had titled this diagram the 'First Example', not because it was the first bridge hand to appear in print, but rather since it was the first of the two hands in his book.

A journal exclusively for bridge whist started publication in February 1906 and lasted till January 1910. It was titled *Bridge* with the subtitle *A Monthly Magazine Published for Lovers and Students of the Game*. It actually was an excellent journal for lovers of advertisements. The first issue alone had full page advertisements for men's clothes, shirts, cigarettes, theater plays, country homes for rent, apartments for rent, and even wallpaper. It had partial page advertisements for tailors, leather goods, cameras, soap, sugar, and a fire-proof hotel. It is hard to find any bridge columns, but I did learn something about bridge players. There was a large announcement on the first page for potential advertisers: 'BRIDGE PLAYERS ARE PEOPLE WHO SPEND MONEY'. However, each monthly issue was smaller than the previous month, so I guess bridge players did not spend money on that particular journal.

CHAPTER 11
Versions of Bridge Whist

Duplicate and Progressive Bridge Whist

Duplicate bridge whist was not a success story. Recall Foster's quote where he predicted duplicate bridge would become the perfect game of cards. That certainly was not achieved during the bridge whist period. The required movements for duplicate bridge were not a problem: duplicate whist had done a great job working those out, and they were fine for duplicate bridge too. The trays required for duplicate whist were easily adapted to duplicate bridge. The problem was with bridge itself. The spirit of duplicate is to provide a true measure of skill. In duplicate whist, every hand was played at every table with the same trump suit. This resulted in a wonderful comparison of cardplay skill. When playing duplicate bridge, every table had a free choice of the trump suit. Since honors were counted and the bonuses for honors were extremely high, the game had the major luck factor of picking the trump suit that paid the most in honors for your partnership. Even if one were to ignore points for honors, there was still an enormous amount of luck introduced by the trump selection process.

Foster's Bridge Manual devotes seven pages to describing how to play duplicate bridge, and it is the same 1900 book that contains the author's extreme endorsement of duplicate bridge. Foster's 1894 duplicate whist book had made him an authority on duplicate whist, so this very early bridge book became the bible on scoring for duplicate bridge. Four deals were played against an adversary, which enabled each player to be the dealer once. On the first round, each player was required actually to deal the cards for the specific board for which that player was marked the dealer. I'm sure that rule was quickly ignored. Ideally a large group would be divided into sections of seven tables. Both sides would keep the score on separate scoreslips. Even though that information was redundant, it would help settle disputes. There was no bonus for achieving 30 points in tricks (game) on one hand or even in total on the four hands. In some versions, the partnership that won the most points in tricks for the four hands received a bonus of 50 points. The results of the seven rounds would be totalled to determine the winners.

Our modern method for keeping track of whether a trick was won or lost has not changed since the start of duplicate bridge; it is the one introduced in 1888 by James Allison for duplicate whist. Again, the redundancy of each player keeping a separate record works very well. The word 'director' was not used, but various others were. I have seen the term 'secretary' used for the person running the event. One of my favorites is 'master of ceremonies'.

The very successful bridge whist book, *Elwell on Bridge*, contains a section on duplicate bridge. The author writes in the 1902 edition:

> Bridge, when first introduced, was played almost entirely for a stake; but, in the last few years, many players have taken up the game — *per se* — on account of its interesting possibilities and the intellectual pleasure it gives. Duplicate and Progressive Bridge have, therefore, become very popular.

We saw that Foster was very enthusiastic in his 1900 book *Foster's Bridge Manual*. He was equally optimistic in his 1903 book, *Foster's Bridge Tactics*:

> This form of the game has become very popular among fashionable people in America, as it is peculiarly well suited to large gatherings, such as subscription parties for charity, house parties, etc.
>
> […]
>
> This game will undoubtedly become universally popular wherever it is introduced. The betting element is entirely eliminated, but the keenness of the competition is in no way diminished.

Foster was much less enthusiastic in his 1909 edition of *Foster's Complete Hoyle*: 'The problem of duplicate bridge remains as yet unsolved, so far as a popular game is concerned.'

Even though it seems the duplicate version of bridge whist was not very popular, its potential popularity made the gambling game of bridge more respectable. Foster did a great service by simply being so optimistic in the early days of bridge whist.

'Progressive bridge' was a nice way for a large group of players to partake in the same event. Partnerships were either fixed for the whole event or would change every round. When partnerships were reformed every round, it was like one big square dance. Progressive bridge was much simpler to run than a duplicate bridge event as it did not involve a complicated movement or scoring method. Duplicate trays were not

required, since hands were dealt at every table throughout the event. An even number of hands were played each round in order to enable both partnerships to have an equal number of opportunities to name trumps. After the first round was completed, the winners changed to the next table and the losers remained at the same table. If partnerships were reformed, the winning partners moved in opposite directions. The final winner was based either on the number of rounds won or on total points won. Sometimes progressive bridge was called 'drive bridge'. It was a natural adaption of progressive whist (or 'drive whist') to the new game of bridge.

Three-handed Bridge (Cut-throat Bridge)

There were several ways for three players to play bridge during the first decade of the twentieth century. The three-person bridge game reached its glory days at that time, as bridge whist was easily adapted from four to three players. Playing the four-person game, the dummy was always in the seat opposite the dealer so the position of the dummy was known before any bidding took place. In the four-person game, the dummy did nothing or at most made one bid. If dealer named trumps and the opponents didn't double, the dummy did nothing at all. In the three-person game, when dealer did not name trumps but passed the privilege to dummy, there was no actual player to decide on trumps for that hand. Dealer therefore looked at dummy's hand and named trumps.

With these rules, it would seem wise for dealer never to name trumps but always to pass the right to dummy, as he would have the great advantage of knowing both his own hand and dummy's hand before naming trumps. Don't worry, the players solved that problem. When dealer passed the trump selection to dummy, he lost the right of free choice. There was an automatic procedure for naming trumps that the dealer was forced to follow. If dummy's hand contained three or four aces, notrump had to be named. If dummy did not have three or four aces, the longest suit in dummy had to be trumps. If dummy's hand had two or more suits of equal length, dummy had to bid the suit with the highest numerical pip value by counting an ace as 14, king 13, queen 12, jack 11 and spot cards by their pips. In the unlikely event there still was a tie, the higher-ranking suit had to be picked. An alternative system counted the aces as 11 and all honor cards as 10; the arithmetic is a little easier. Even though this compulsory make was done solely by the dealer, after the opening lead the defenders could check that no funny business had taken place. After

dealer had seen both hands, if a defender were to double, the dealer usually did not have the right to redouble. An alternative method was to have dealer's right-hand opponent examine dummy for the compulsory make. When that method was used, only the opening leader had the right to double.

The popular three-player versions were called dummy bridge, three-handed bridge, and cut-throat bridge. They all used the compulsory dummy makes just described. I feel the best version was cut-throat bridge. It was called cut-throat bridge because all three players had their own individual scores, so when competing as a temporary partnership, it might be a wise strategy to lose tricks in order to hurt one's partner. More will be said on this in the next chapter. After each deal, the player to the right of the last dealer moved into dummy's vacant seat so that the new empty seat for dummy was opposite the new dealer. Therefore, this game combined mental exercise with physical exercise and required four chairs for the three players. There were many versions to the scoring at cut-throat bridge. Often there was a 50-point bonus for achieving a 30-point game. Undertricks were often scored for the opponents above the line rather than below, a feature we take for granted in modern bridge.

Most of the early bridge books include a section on how to play some form of three-handed bridge. We already saw that three-handed whist (dummy whist) was a prototype for bridge whist. In a similar fashion, three-handed bridge whist functioned as a prototype for auction bridge. In some forms of the three player game, players experimented with competitive bidding methods to determine who had the right to play with the dummy.

Cut-throat bridge was probably the most popular form of three-handed bridge. I devoted considerable space to this game since I feel it still is a good option for present-day players when only three are available. With compulsory makes by dummy (appropriately modified for our modern game), no decisions have to be made by the missing fourth player. As an only child of two bridge-playing parents I wish we had known of this form of the game. Of course, my grandmother would have suffered. She was thrilled that her nine-year-old grandson was so overjoyed to see her. I became her favorite. Little did she know, I never saw her as a grandmother, but rather as a fourth for bridge.

Two-handed Bridge (Double Dummy)

When only two players were available, the players would alternate the job of being dealer; no great surprise. All four hands were dealt face

down. Either the dealer chose trumps or the decision was passed to dummy. Dummy would then have to use the same compulsory makes that were employed in the three-handed game. After the opening lead both 'dummy' hands were usually exposed on the table. An alternative was to expose on the table only the hand belonging to the partner of the dealer, while the other dummy hand was revealed only to its human partner. This was accomplished by placing that hand in a holder, similar to the type presently used by players who have trouble holding cards. Still a third option was to expose both dummy hands only to their living partners. No hand was exposed on the table so both dummy hands were placed in holders. In 1905, Gertrude Foster Wedderburn got the copyright and manufactured a game that was called Double Dummy: Two-Handed Bridge Whist Board. It contained a board with two attached card racks for this two person game. The game included instructions and, inside the box, an illustration of two players enjoying it. The woman's eyes reveal that she is concentrating on her cards and the game. The man, however, seems to be anticipating an amusing time after the game ends.

Prenatal Auction Bridge

This section may seem out of place, and to belong in Part IV: Auction Bridge. But this earliest, very primitive form of auction is more like bridge whist than the game that eventually became the standard form of auction bridge. *Foster's Bridge Tactics* (1903) describes this game, and it is actually almost a dead ringer for the wonderful 1885 game called preference or Swedish whist described in Chapter 10.

Auction bridge introduced competitive bidding to the bridge world. After the opening bid, either opponent could make a higher bid. If your partner made the highest bid you would be forced to pass, but if an opponent bid over your partner, you would regain your right to make a higher bid. This game did not have levels when bidding so making a higher bid simply meant naming a higher-ranking suit. The suits and notrump trick values were the same as bridge whist but there was an additional option, valued at 14 points per trick, called 'misery' (or sometimes 'nullo'). The selection of misery meant there was no trump suit and the goal was to lose tricks rather than win them. This feature was common in games that were members of the Boston family. If any player bid misery the auction ended, since there was no possible higher bid, and doubling was not allowed. For undertricks there was an automatic penalty of twice the trick value.

Here are some of the ways this game resembled Swedish whist (preference).

1. No levels but competitive bidding.
2. Undertricks cost double the trick value.
3. Often Swedish Whist was played with a bid called 'nullissimo'. It was the highest bid, played without a trump suit and with the goal of losing tricks

Swedish Whist was a more advanced game: as we have seen, partner's bid did not bar you from bidding again.

CHAPTER 12
The World of Bridge Whist

Whist Players Attack Their Offspring

Most of the top whist players certainly did not embrace bridge. Even though bridge was recognized as an offspring of their beloved game, they attacked many of its features.

Their strongest complaint was that it was such an excellent game for gambling. They thus saw the game as leading the general population, and, worst of all, fine decent whist players, down an immoral path. In an encyclopedia one usually expects information, but Butler's *The Whist Reference Book* included this editorial opinion:

> Now we come to the most objectionable feature of the game. The dealer or his partner having made a declaration, the opponents have the privilege of going 'over' or 'doubling' the value of the tricks, if they do not think the other side can make the odd trick. The latter may 'redouble' and then the others again have the say; and thus the thing may go on, like the 'raise' in draw-poker, until one side or the other backs down. Here is where 'bridge' reaches the level of poker.

The fact that this new game was well suited for gambling cannot be denied. In Chapter 1, I listed three important characteristics of great gambling games: bridge had all three. The unlimited doubling and redoubling feature enabled wagers to grow to ridiculous levels in a few seconds. Your partner, who might be both a stranger and a lunatic, could place you in a very high stakes game by doubling or redoubling numerous times. You lacked the ability to shut him up. It was quickly obvious to the bridge world that a cap on doubling was needed, and etiquette rules were modified to limit the doubling and redoubling to 100 points per trick. This was adopted as a rule at many clubs, but hardly solved the problem. You could name spades at 2 points a trick and end up watching your absurd partner and opponents make you play for 64 points per trick. Bets still could grow way too quickly. That feature alone made it a great gambling game. But in addition, the large values associated with honors made bridge results very depen-

dent on luck. The score obtained by winning tricks was secondary to the points received for honors. Being dealt great cards was much more important than skill.

Whist historians around 1900 fully appreciated the appeal of gambling. Almost one hundred years earlier, whist had gone through its greatest revision. The sole motive behind the transformation from the long game to the short game was to make whist a better game for gambling. That change, which only made the game quicker, was enough to create a whist revolution. Bridge gave up nothing in quickness and also greatly improved on the other gambling features. Surprisingly, as we shall see later, individuals holding a strong moral objection to gambling saw a virtue in bridge. They correctly figured it would take the gamblers to the bridge tables and away from their whist tables, which would therefore become pure and clean. They had not foreseen that they would be unable to get four players at the purified whist table.

Another very common complaint was that many whist experts objected to exposing one hand on the table. They felt this greatly simplified the game and lessened the skill required to draw proper inferences in the play. The mental reconstruction of the three unseen hands was a source of great pleasure to the whist expert; it required sophisticated signaling and communication with partner. Archibald Dunn was an early bridge enthusiast who conceded that point. In his article 'Bridge v. Whist' in the *Badminton Magazine* he compared the two games and pointed out the virtues of bridge. He did, however, include the sentence: 'But for what it is worth we may admit that the exposed hand at Bridge does simplify matters, and on this point Whist has the advantage.'

The exposure of the dummy certainly enabled decent cardplay by relative beginners. From the days of Hoyle it was understood that the most important principle of play for beginners is: play through strength and into weakness. Exposing the dummy certainly made it much easier to follow this maxim, and it also lessened the importance of the sophisticated signaling practiced by the top experts. The expert advantage was also reduced in this new game because of the great luck factor in choosing trumps and the large rewards for holding honors.

Many top experts did see some virtue in the game of bridge: it could be useful as an instructional tool for whist. C. R. Keiley was a well-known whist player, teacher, and writer. In a letter dated Oct. 11, 1897, he wrote, 'An exposed-hand game may not be whist, but one must learn to crawl before he can run, and "bridge" gives an opportunity for acquiring this primary knowledge' (quoted in *The Whist Reference Book*).

A third criticism of bridge was based on its complicated method of scoring, and particularly the way points for honors varied with the trump suit. George Fitch wrote a humorous book making fun of bridge. He primarily attacked the scoring system but also talked about the gambling problem and the large luck factor. Here are some excerpts from his 1910 book, *Bridge Whist*:

> Bridge Whist is ordinary whist with a wheel-of-fortune attachment. It is a cross between double-entry bookkeeping and roulette, and is played with a deck of cards, an adding machine, and a promissory note. It is listed as a game, but generally varies between a vice and a life-calling…
>
> The participants generally play a rubber of three games, and spend the rest of the evening doings sums in simple addition, to find out who won...
>
> Just how bridge whist got its name is not generally known. It is possible that it is called 'bridge' because so many people get 'cross' over it…
>
> When the evening's play is over the players retire for refreshments, leaving their secretaries and tellers to post up the books and compute the returns…

Whist writers had several other minor criticisms of bridge. As already mentioned, some whist players found fault with the idea that one could win two games, thereby winning the rubber, but still be way behind on points and owe a good deal of money. Slam bonuses, doubled contracts, and honor values could be large factors. It was strange that one could make a grand slam in spades or clubs, receive the 40-point bonus, and still not make enough trick points below the line for game.

In summary, the major criticisms of bridge whist were:

1. It reduced the importance of skill by exposing a hand, thereby simplifying cardplay
2. It reduced the importance of skill by attaching a very large value to honors
3. The unlimited doubling and redoubling features made it too appealing for gamblers
4. Tabulating the score was a great burden

Bumblepuppies Rush to the Bridge Table

In light of all these negative comments from whist experts, how did bridge manage to survive? Actually, it did not so much survive as reign supreme. Obviously, serious gamblers loved the game. But what about players who played solely for amusement or small wagers? Why would bridge appeal to them?

Mostly, they had a new sense of competence and pride in their ability. No longer were they playing bumblepuppy. At this new game, former whist players got a fresh start. The mediocre whist players and the top whist players were on relatively equal footing. This new game had the potential of being the beginning of a long and very happy relationship. Whist had become just too complicated: for a player to be competent, he had to devote a great deal of time and energy to the study of the game. Whist had become less like amusement and more like work. The top experts kept improving the game for themselves. The complicated signaling techniques were making the average player, who was merely hoping for an evening of amusement, feel capable of only bumblepuppy play.

The Boaz/Badsworth book states:

> Intelligent men do not care to accept a permanently subordinate position in a partnership of two, and to have much of their amusement taken out of a game by feeling that a little more knowledge on their part would have materially altered the result of many a hand. The elevation of Whist from a game to a study lessened its general attractiveness.

In his October 1901 article 'The Chaos of Bridge', Archibald Dunn writes,

> It is an offshoot of whist, which has been with us now for many generations, and which has been discussed and rediscussed until its theory and practice has been reduced to an exactitude almost equal to that of mathematics.

As a mathematics professor, I can assure you that Dunn was not complimenting the game.

I have not mentioned how Cavendish, the king of whist, reacted. Apparently, not well: 'It is disgusting to think that the temple of whist has been thus desecrated' was his view (quoted in *The Whist Reference Book*). Cavendish avoided the Portland Club for over a year because bridge was so popular there. Yet many whist writers pointed to

Cavendish as the major culprit in the growth of bridge. They felt he had destroyed whist by encouraging a very sophisticated game. The Boaz/Badsworth book states, 'Whist was carried to such a high scientific point by the researches and writings of Dr. Pole and 'Cavendish', that it is doubtful if there are one hundred men in England who are indisputably admitted to be really fine players.' It must have been very painful for Cavendish that his whist innovations were often blamed for destroying the game. As we shall see, by 1898, he was ready to hoist a white flag in face of the onslaught of bridge.

In his *Whist Reference Book*, Butler writes,

> It is to be regretted that 'bridge' has found its way also to America, and that many of our whist-players have yielded to its temptations. They will undoubtedly live to regret it, and more especially its introduction into whist clubs, where it is as much out of place as poker or other games of chance; especially as the by-laws of nearly every club prohibit play for money, and the American Whist League is on record as opposed to such play.

In the late 1890s the *Whist* journal speculated about an international match where a team representing The American Whist League would compete against an English team. It would have required an organization (proposed name, British Whist League) to be formed to select a team. The editorial comment in the Nov. 1899 issue of *Whist* states: 'The chief hindrance to the formation of the English League seems to be the declining interest in Whist, due chiefly to the prevalence of "Bridge".' The editorial includes a letter from an English correspondent who laments, 'I am sorry to say that Whist in London — and, I hear, in the Provincial Clubs, also — is nearly defunct. The recent innovation, "Bridge", has supplanted it.' He goes on to write that at his club, '… the chances of a rubber at Whist were infinitesimal.' He adds: 'The Portland Club, always considered the headquarters of Whist in Great Britain, has succumbed to the fascinations of the invader, and I am told that Whist is seldom played there.'

The very popular *Punch* magazine ran the following full page cartoon titled 'DISCARDED' on April 17, 1901:

Fashion (to 'Mr. Bridge'): 'Come along partner! That dear old Mister Whist is such a bore! He is vieux jeu*!'*

[The book held by the old man reveals that the title starts with HOYLE.]

Even the most adamant whist lover and bridge hater had to confess that bridge was a great success. Their only hope was to label it a fad. They truly hoped, and somewhat believed, that bridge players would come to their senses and return to the whist tables. The whist literature often described bridge using the expressions 'passing fancy', 'passing whim' and 'passing game'. Since bridge involved bidding and passing, these expressions had a cute double meaning.

Actually, two interesting entries in the *Whist* journal did not merely speculate that bridge was a passing fancy: they said it had already died! In the Nov. 1899 issue the following letter appeared:

> Bridge Whist is being driven out of some of the New England clubs by what is called 'Auction Whist,' a new game in this section, and no one get-at-able knows its origin. You bid for the trump, same as auction pitch, and if you fail to make the number of points bid, you are set back. It is quite interesting, and does not vary from strait Whist after the bid. The buyer makes the first lead and the game ends when forty points are scored.

I can't help but wonder how closely this game resembled the game of Swedish Whist that was being played in the Midwest. No edition of *Hoyle's Games* contained auction whist until several decades had passed.

The July 1899 issue had an even more interesting letter saying that bridge was dead. In this letter, bridge supposedly thrived and then died of its own failings. It was sent from Belgaum, Western India over the signature 'Ace of Spades', and included the following:

> 'Dear Sir — I don't think Mr. Tormey need torment himself about the approaching extinction of Whist. "Bridge", which he thinks is going to do the killing, is, as its name imports, a very ancient pastime, but it is little curtailed now — it was formally, and *should* still be, known as the Pons asinorum — preeminently the asinine game [...]
>
> Pluck up your spirits, Mr. Tormey. Bridge will never kill Whist. Even as a gambling game it is a showy fraud.'

Throughout this book, I have mentioned my annoyance with pseudonyms. An Indian author wrote several bridge books under the name 'Ace of Spades'; was it the same person?

Dunn's 1902 article 'Bridge v. Whist' in *Badminton Magazine* was written by a convert to bridge, and was an endorsement of bridge rather than a fair comparison. The same *Badminton Magazine* carried a rebuttal in its August 1902 issue. It was written by C. B. Harrison and titled not surprisingly 'Whist v. Bridge'. This attack on bridge included a very perceptive prediction about the game's future. Harrison did not simply dismiss it as a temporary fad. He recognized that bridge was much simpler to play than whist and therefore whist could not compete with bridge in the arena of popularity. But bridge was simple only because it was in its infancy: given time it would become every bit as complicated as whist:

> Bridge will soon be as scientific and specialised as Whist. [...] Already we have Bridge-experts who feel aggrieved at having to play with inferior players, and Bridge-novices who, when asked to play, say, 'they are so frightened of playing with Mr. A. — he is so awfully good.'

Bridge in the Whist Clubs

Bridge had an interesting relationship with the whist clubs in England. It was like having an unwanted relative visit for a few days, fall on a broken step and successfully sue you. Your only option to avoid becoming homeless is to move into the basement and turn the house over to the relative. At least all the neighbors don't have to know about it since you share the same last name — 'Whist'. Clubs would try out bridge at a table, usually in a separate small room. As more players left the whist tables for the bridge tables, bridge took over. Bridge got the large room. There was no choice but to keep the unwanted bridge players if the club was to remain viable.

Bridge was fortunate to have many immediate homes ready to accommodate its needs. Even if these homes did not completely welcome them, they were otherwise perfect. They were set up with the whist player's card tables, chairs, and playing cards. What more could bridge players want? No wonder many whist lovers labeled bridge an 'invader'.

We have already seen that at the New York Whist Club the transition was not at all smooth. The bridge-hating whist players and the bridge lovers could not coexist, resulting in two separate clubs. In most clubs the transition was much less dramatic. The Americans had less of a gambling spirit than the English, a more established

duplicate whist, and the American Whist League. In America the gambling 5-point game never found an audience: the 7-point game without honors dominated the scene. During the 1890s duplicate movements had been improving as well as the necessary equipment: trays, scoreslips, etc. The duplicate game was seen as a fine measure of skill. Duplicate whist even had a playable one-table version: memory duplicate. Meanwhile, duplicate bridge had its weaknesses. Straight whist had already lost many players to the duplicate form, so the American clubs were less vulnerable to bridge. However, the strength of American whist only delayed the inevitable.

While the American Whist League did nothing directly to prohibit bridge in its member clubs, it did so indirectly: it passed legislation in 1899 prohibiting playing for stakes at any of their clubs. Bridge players resented the official interference, which was clearly aimed at them. The August 1899 issue of *Whist* made the following editorial comment:

> If a party of players, pining for the excitement that 'a little gamble' affords, want to play 'Bridge', let them. That is their private affair and nobody objects to it. But let it be elsewhere than in a League club. That is where the objection comes in.
>
> The 'Royal Game' should be, like Caesar's wife, 'above suspicion'. It has been the strenuous effort of the League to keep it so — To keep the game and all its associations so clean that there should be no valid bar to its introduction to the purist home circle, and no woman should have a moral scruple at avowing herself a 'Whister'.

I am sure most clubs in America were not that righteous. Private membership clubs were not above the law but authorities tended to look away. Early in the twentieth century, boxing was illegal in New York, so private clubs opened up and staged boxing matches. It was illegal but the authorities ignored it. Probably some payoffs were involved.

The New York Whist Club was not the only bridge whist club to make *The New York Times*. On August 7, 1906, a column appeared under the heading 'Saratoga Police Raid the Bridge Whist Club'. At that time, Saratoga, New York was a Mecca for horse racing and assorted forms of gambling. It was the Las Vegas of America before Las Vegas existed. Some of the illegal Saratoga gambling houses used the unusual discriminatory practice of prohibiting residents of Saratoga from gambling. The town prospered from rich New York City and Boston gamblers without turning locals into victims. The article on the Bridge Whist Club describes the seizing of gambling paraphernа-

lia, proprietors, and employees. It is possible that this gambling club never had any connection to bridge whist other than its name.

Articles like this helped soil the name of bridge whist and fed the image that it was basically a gambling game. Some bridge whist players responded with the argument that it was such a mentally challenging game, it would help wean men away from gambling games. In fact, bridge whist players were so clearly destined for victory in their takeover of the whist clubs they could remain above the fray. Rather than responding to their attackers, they were quite content to bask in their victory — one typical comment was that the only problem bridge whist players created for whist clubs was where to build a new card room for their growing membership.

King Cavendish Surrenders

We have already seen that Cavendish had exiled himself from his beloved Portland Club. He could not endure seeing the collapse of whist at the hands of bridge. The worst part was that the old whist lovers were blaming him for their game's demise. He must have been blaming himself as well. In light of this, it is surprising to find an article by Cavendish in the December, 1898 issue of *The Cornhill Magazine*. The title was just one word, 'Bridge'. Here are the first three paragraphs:

> About fifteen years ago a leaflet was published in England on 'Biritch or Russian Whist.' The game did not 'catch on' here at that period; the leaflet, however, is interesting as indicating that bridge is probably of Russian origin.
>
> Bridge travelled over the Continent, and was especially taken up in France, whence, in 1894, it found its way once more to England.
>
> And now comes the surprising part of the story. In a few months, whist, our national card game, which had held undisputed sway in our card-rooms for at least a hundred and fifty years, was put to the rout, and bridge reigned in its stead. Of course, a rubber of whist can still be obtained at many clubs; but at others, with the Turf and Portland at their head, bridge is played to the exclusion of whist.

At this point Cavendish provides his readers with an extremely clear six-page introduction to the method of play, scoring, and basic strategy of bridge. He seems to be an experienced bridge player. He even defends bridge from the common gambling attack, and points out some ways to control the gambling element. He recommends that doubling

and redoubling should be limited to one time and provides a specific way for the stakes per point to be reduced in order to combat the point inflation of bridge over whist.

One of the interesting oddities in this article occurs in the first paragraph. Cavendish is referring in 1898 to Collinson's 1886 biritch article, even though until 1905, the books on the history of bridge seemed to be unaware of the biritch document. Cavendish implied the game was well known but did not 'catch on' and that it returned to England in 1894. He doesn't consider the possibility that it was known and played by so few, so it never had an opportunity to catch on. Prior to this article, he certainly did not do anything to promote the game.

Cavendish was a general game authority, and he was the editor of the card column for *The Field* magazine from 1864 till his death in 1899. You will recall that in 1894 Collinson sent a letter and the biritch document to that journal, so apparently, Cavendish was one of the few people to have seen it. He again implies that biritch was common knowledge when he writes in his article 'Bridge':

> At the Russian game, a player making no trump says 'biritch.' Possibly this may give a clue to the etymology of the word 'bridge,' which has hitherto eluded the efforts of the British philologist.

Cavendish died two months later on February 10. I am unaware of anything else that he wrote about bridge. It is surprising that when he chose to write about bridge, his article appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine*. Since the prestigious *The Field* had been sending him a paycheck for 34 years, I would have expected him to publish such an important article in their pages and nowhere else.

Gambling, Cheating, and Debauchery

The Bridge-Fiend: A Cheerful Book for Bridge-Whisters (1909) by Arthur Loring Bruce was a tell-all book about the world of bridge gambling. It is a mix of the author's personal experiences and tales he had heard. He acknowledged that some may be tall tales, but the emphasis was on humor and entertainment. This 289-page book was one of my favorite finds, and it gave me insight into the atmosphere at the bridge table in early clubs. The clubs in London, Paris, and Vienna did nothing to hide or interfere with gambling. They actually functioned as 'the house'. They created an atmosphere where players did not feel like they were playing against other individuals but rather against the

club. After playing a session, the players filled out slips or cards that indicated they owed the club money or the club owed them money. The slips were initialed by an opponent, placed in a box and at closing time the card-room steward gave them to the card bookkeeper. Once a week the club would mail checks to winners and receive checks from losers. Being a defaulting player meant significant disgrace. Supposedly, it led to several suicides. One's honor and status in a membership club was sufficiently important that there was no need for goons to enforce payment.

I have read that some psychologists and psychiatrists believe that the big gambler has a hidden desire to lose. I never bought into this theory, but while reading of the enormous losses suffered by the extremely wealthy at the turn of the century, I began to have a different slant. Income tax did not exist prior to WWI and many millionaires were being created. That was a period of great wealth and conspicuous consumption — wasteful spending in the hope of enhancing one's social prestige. That was a proof of extreme wealth. What is more wasteful than a great gambling loss? You walk away with nothing for your money. One may even justly argue that bragging about a fortune lost is in better taste than bragging about a fortune won.

Being caught cheating would, of course, bring disgrace. Unfortunately it is hard either to prove cheating or to disprove a false charge of cheating. At one club several members were certain that a member was cheating. None wanted the distasteful chore of accusing him. The doorman was given a note to hand to the suspected cheater the next time he came to the club. It read, *'The house committee has reason to believe that the governors of this club would accept your resignation if you were to hand it in before their next regular meeting' (The Bridge-Fiend).*

Another well-known story is that Lord Hertford was asked what he would do if he saw a man cheating at cards. His Lordship immediately responded, 'Bet on him, of course' (*The Bridge-Fiend*). There were several similar tales where the humor was the opposite of his Lordship's opinion. One player warns another that an opponent is cheating and receives the response that he knows that but also realizes that the cheater is so busy cheating that he misses all of the finer points of the game, so loses anyway.

The Bridge-Fiend contains a tale about one bridge player who, upon asking another whether he cheats, receives the following response: 'With my family, *always*, but at the club or in a friend's house, never — unless, of course, the cards are running *very* badly against me.'

Women Bridge Players, Authors, Teachers, Gamblers, and Entrepreneurs

In Chapter 8, I described the enthusiasm with which women embraced whist, and how they played an essential role in the development and popularity of the game. Their transition to bridge was a natural step. Some male writers brazenly made a variety of stereotypical comments about why women should prefer bridge to whist. In Dalton's two almost identical books, *Dalton's Complete Bridge* and *Bridge and Auction Bridge*, the author writes:

> The scientific conventions of the game, its solemnity, and, above all, the enforced silence from which 'Whist' probably derived its name, were not at all to their liking, but here was a very different matter. Here was a game at which it was not considered wicked to smile, or to make a harmless irreverent remark. Here was a game at which they could meet men on even terms and hold their own with them, a game at which their naturally quick sense of intuition was of the greatest service, a game which offered that greatest of all charms to the female mind — infinite variety.

Of course the *Whist* journal had a very different view. They not only attacked the game of bridge but the type of women that might switch over. In the April, 1899 issue a report on the bridge fad in London states, 'Society women with more money than brains and more vanity than both, are paying as high as $75 to $100 for a course of six lessons from professors in the art of Bridge playing…' The last paragraph then serves as a warning: 'The expert players who introduced it have been reaping golden harvest from the learners. The losses have already been heavy in the cases of some smart young married women, and the rage cannot fail to end in scandal.'

Assuming their names or titles indicated their gender correctly, there were at least a dozen women who wrote books on this first form of the game. But just like during the whist period, many books were written under pseudonyms. In these cases, it is impossible to guess at the gender of the authors, but some were probably women. The two most successful known women writers were Annie Blanche Shelby and Eleanor A. Tennant, both of whom wrote basic instructional books.

The idea of women being attracted to this wonderful gambling game was not overlooked. Mabel Warren Sanford wrote an article in *Munsey's Magazine*, 'Women Gamblers', in which she stated:

> If it be urged against certain sets in the fashionable society of the day that their feminine contingent spends a scandalous amount of time — and money — at bridge whist, it may be pleaded in their defense that they are doing precisely what women high in social rank have done in almost any historical period. The modern craze for 'bridge' is but the latest expression of that itch for play which seems to have attacked the women of every royal court and of all fashionable society.

Throughout the article Stanford makes the point that women have been big gamblers since the late 1600s but have survived just fine. Men should not believe that women are so delicate. At one point, she quotes the satirist/cartoonist James Gillray, 'Oh woman, woman! Your power is truly everlasting. In youth you charm our hearts, and in after years you charm away our purses.' She quotes a 1713 comment by the writer Steele about the devastating road that female gamesters follow: 'Hollow eyes, haggard looks, and pale complexions are the natural indications of the female gamester. In short, I never knew a thorough-paced female gamester hold her beauty two winters together.'

In *The Bridge-Fiend*, Bruce provides some estimates of the number of women bridge teachers. He indicates that there are at least four in Boston, ten in New York and five in Philadelphia. He believes bridge teaching was very lucrative for women since male teachers were well paid, $10 to $20 per hour (remember this was more than one hundred years ago).

In a world without internet, television or even radio, magazines and journals carried the main burden of disseminating information about changes in society. Several were specifically directed toward women's issues. By this they did not mean women's rights, but rather the effect of societal changes on women in a very practical sense. For example, how do you host a party in which most of the guests want to play bridge? The obvious answer of, 'Let them play bridge' is flawed. What about the non-bridge-playing leftovers? Do they just sit around? They will truly feel like outsiders. One article pointed out that they could not discreetly leave since they probably came in the same coach as bridge players. The obvious answer to this, invite only multiples of four who all play bridge, is also flawed. A good host cannot tactfully say, 'If you play bridge you are invited, if not, don't show up.'

The Lady's Realm, a journal concerned with women's issues, was the *Cosmopolitan* of its time. The November 1904 issue featured an article titled, 'Is Bridge Immoral?' Three authors gave their opinion,

and the vote was two to one that it was immoral. The sole defender was listed as Mrs. Robert Tennant, who was actually the bridge author, Eleanor Tennant, mentioned earlier. She wrote:

> Just think of the change it brought into the lives of certain middle-aged women, perhaps not very attractive in appearance, or amusing in conversation. Formerly their only diversion took the form of dreary teas enlivened by 'a little music' (generally amateur) where they sat around the wall in a dismal circle, nobody taking much notice of them; but now, if they are fair bridge players, how different is their lot! They are eagerly welcomed when they appear with a joyous, 'How good of you to be so punctual.'

In the anti-bridge days nobody cared whether they came or not.

Mrs. Eric Pritchard, however, wrote the strongest article against bridge, reflecting a very different attitude to women:

> Many girls have obviously spoilt their chances of matrimony through bridge playing. This extreme foolishness is more likely to occur in the case of the club girl, who spends her afternoons as well as her evenings in the card-room. Unfortunately, girls are such excitable creatures that they cannot take to gambling, even in a mild form, without sacrificing most of their other duties.

The author points out that the excitement of the game deprives women of their better judgment. Few women are scrupulous enough to gamble without being tempted to cheat. If all of that is not enough to cause a reader to run from bridge, the author points out that playing for long hours has most disastrous consequences for their complexion. The article ends with the following statement:

> Women should always make a point of being seen at their best in the presence of the opposite sex, and the gambling woman, to my mind, is seldom seen to advantage. The immorality of bridge lies in the fact that it has deprived women of some of their most precious and subtle qualities — possessions which, ever since the world began, have been their best weapons of offence and defence.

'The Social Tyranny of Bridge' by Lady Mary Jeune, a widely-read article as it appeared in five journals between 1901 and 1903, states:

> The man, too old to dance and yet too young to admit that his best days are over, now finds himself sought after by the most exclusive sets because he plays Bridge; the old maid who had contentedly settled into the only life she conceived remained for her, is hurried from one place to another, and has an engagement list weeks ahead, because she has mastered the mysteries of the great game. In fact there is no man or woman too poor, too friendless, too unknown, who cannot at one bound achieve all that the wildest dreams of the mind of man can conjure up if they can only play bridge with decent success.

Bridge was changing the social dynamics. Non-players felt forced to learn and play the game. Often at dinner parties it was standard to play bridge after completing the meal. A common argument in favor of bridge was that after dinner, the boring conversation was replaced by the exciting game of bridge. Of course one argument against bridge uses the same scenario but with a very different spin. The anti-bridgers argued that the intelligent conversation had been replaced by bridge.

The Lady's Realm contains a wonderful six-page play — 'The Bridge Fiend' — about bridge. In it, Player A is continually blaming and teaching Player B. This leaves Player B apologizing for numerous errors. Player A has her turn at being the declarer/dealer. This results in a large score and leaves Player A explaining to the table her brilliant play. Everyone must appreciate it! To her dismay, the opponents realize that her brilliant play required a revoke. The revoke penalties are very stiff. When her great score becomes a terrible score, she is finally speechless. The previously abused Player B states 'Oh, pray don't apologize! It may happen to anyone. It was— I'm sure if you were going to revoke, you revoked in the best possible manner.'

The game was so popular among women that newspapers would, at times, devote columns to their bridge playing. For example, on January 28, 1906, *The Sunday Pioneer Press* of Saint Paul, Minnesota published a long article taking up more than half of the front page with the title 'Do Bridge Whist and Love of Dress Safeguard Woman's Sanity?' In this article, the mental health of women bridge players was debated. The journalist discussed the theory advanced by doctors that modern devices for the home gave women too much free time. Bridge was the game that could save them from the insanity created by idleness. The opponents of bridge claimed that, on the contrary, it was bridge itself that promoted insanity in women due to its addictive properties. As one society woman, a 'slave to bridge', had supposedly confided: 'One

would almost sigh to be a Martian, for on Mars the days are forty-eight hours long, and you would have so much more time for bridge.'

Women often made a career in the gaming world. They not only taught both whist and bridge but would often run gambling houses or at least host card games. It was not uncommon for widows to have inherited lavish homes but at the same time be cash poor. Rather than sell their home they could put their asset to work. The most common solution was to rent out rooms. But rather than cooking breakfast for strangers, some would turn their home into a house of ill repute: gambling, prostitution, or both. When paying off authorities for any vice, one can get an excellent bargain for a second vice.

Why We Do the Things We Do

Several aspects of present-day bridge seem illogical, and in some cases crude and ungentlemanly. The history of the game indicates how they came about.

Let's consider the dealer. He is clearly the host for the hand. As a gentleman, he makes sure to deal a card first to the other three players before dealing a card to himself. Very proper indeed. He would appear vulgar to deal himself the first card. But what about taking the first action in the bidding? The dealer leaps in and passes or bids before anyone else can. This reflects a lack of manners, demonstrating a poor upbringing. This is an outgrowth of whist. After the distribution of cards, the act of turning over a card by the dealer to select trumps was still considered part of the dealing process. The player to the left of the dealer took the first action by choosing what to lead. The eldest hand rather than the dealer made the first decision and started the ball rolling. Early duplicate trays, designed for whist, did not indicate the seat of the dealer but rather the seat of the opening leader. In bridge whist, as in whist, the opening leader was always sitting to the left of the dealer. It was easy to maintain that relationship by making the dealer play every hand as the declarer. Therefore the dealer played every hand whether he or dummy determined the trump suit, and dealer was the first to act on each hand. In present-day bridge, we still give the dealer the right to take the first action. The trick-taking games Boston, preference, and solo whist gave the eldest hand the first shot at determining the trump suit.

Scoring undertricks above the line first occurred in cut-throat bridge. You probably remember that the name came about because there were situations where one might want to hurt one's partner, even if it meant a bad score for oneself. This peculiar situation occurs since

one is really playing as an individual, but at times would form a temporary partnership with a player (two defenders against declarer). Suppose your partner in that temporary partnership has almost all the points needed for game. You don't want to help him in that pursuit, so it may be in your interest to let the dealer make seven tricks. A change in the laws to prevent this situation was implemented. Points for undertricks would be treated like honor points and slam points and would no longer be counted toward game. This was the first form of bridge where undertricks were treated like honor points, but the change was not carried over to the four-person game till many years later.

Bridge Toys and Apparatus

In Chapter 7, we saw that playing cards went through many changes during the nineteenth century. By 1895 the cards were virtually identical in appearance to modern cards, but cards today are more durable and can better withstand an attack from coffee or other liquids. Nowadays, their long potential lives enable many decks to live long enough to take on a soiled appearance and show their age. There is even a famous card durability bridge tale. An angry partner rips up his thirteen cards and tosses them on the floor. When the club manager arrives at the table, the player explains that he dropped them and they broke.

The duplicate trays began to indicate the dealer rather than the opening leader. This made them appropriate for bridge while still being fine for whist. Some provided both the dealer and the leader even though it was obviously redundant. The board numbers were still on the back to enable memory duplicate for both whist and bridge. Even though the sight of dummy in bridge somewhat spoiled that version of duplicate, it was still occasionally played even in the early contract days.

Trump indicators were modified to include the words No Trumps, a two word expression in the plural form. Most were manufactured in England. Often they advertised some known bridge-related product. Sometimes they advertised resorts, towns or cruises, so they may have been handed out as presents to guests or vacationers.

A useful device was the bridge scoring table similar to one on the cover of this book. All elementary instructional bridge books had an equivalent table. The complicated system of honors forced even experienced players to consult such a table often. Of course, just like the Boston payoff table, one needed only to memorize the spade column and do the appropriate multiplication for the other suits. Since all the

information could be placed on a slip the size of a playing card, scoring tables were often included with a deck of playing cards.

In addition there was a need for a scoring pad in which to enter the scores for both sides. Usually a scoring table appeared inside the cover with a pad of twenty to fifty sheets. The most common had an upper portion called Honors and a lower portion called Tricks. These names were more descriptive than the present terms 'above the line' and 'below the line'. Unfortunately, the word Honors was not really accurate since bonuses for slams and the rubber were also placed above the line in that section. Points for undertricks were recorded as trick points for the non-dealer side. Both the scoring tables and scoring pads were often designed in an aesthetic and humorous fashion.

The popular whist markers and counters were useless for the scoring system of bridge. There were attempts at mechanical devices for scoring. None worked as well as simply entering scores on a blank sheet of paper or a scoring pad. Thos. De La Rue & Co. was the major company in London printing playing cards, manufacturing whist markers, and publishing whist and early bridge books. They produced a contraption called the 'Klik' Bridge Marker, shown in Fig. 14. Each partnership would need a device, which had a top part for Honors and a lower part for Tricks. Each marker has twenty-two tabs that would shoot out when a corresponding button was pressed. The user could later push the spring operated tabs into the device. They were extremely well manufactured. I have three of these markers and all sixty-six tabs and springs work perfectly. That is incredible durability considering that they are more than 100 years old. Their major drawback is that they are useless, since they don't do any arithmetic. Possibly their uselessness is the reason they have stood up so well. Players never bothered to use them.

The bridge world also had a device called the 'Simplex' Bridge Marker. The name involves a word that vaguely resembles the word 'simple'. The device actually performed in a similar fashion to the useless 'Klik' Bridge Marker. It did no arithmetic but the values represented a running total. It was made of an attractive celluloid material. There were three parts: the standard bridge scoring table, a two-page scorekeeping system with one page for each pair, and markers for both long and short whist. The two-page scoring system had a line separating the honors and trick scores. The great advantage of buying the 'Simplex' Bridge Marker was that, if you gave up bridge, your investment was not wasted since you at least had a whist marker.

The Good and the Bad

When playing bridge for stakes, the most exciting moment is when one picks up one's cards; but when playing duplicate that emotion is limited. A great hand does not translate into an anticipation of a reward. It is as easy to get a bottom with a 24-point hand as with a 4-point hand. Certainly for duplicate declarers, the most exciting five-second period occurs while dummy is being exposed on the table. That is when one's blood pressure peaks. Declarer was involved in selecting a contract based on being only certain of half of his resources. The other half was more or less vaguely revealed by partner. How well will the two halves form a whole? Suddenly, after those five seconds, declarer's total resources are known. All twenty-six cards are on view.

The same excitement is true to a slightly lesser extent for the defenders. The opening leader often feels like a genius or a fool at the end of that five-second exposure. The other defender will learn how well placed his kings and queens actually are. Even dummy himself may cast a fleeting glance at declarer in order to ascertain whether it is necessary to look for the emergency exit doors.

In bridge whist, the minimal communication made the decision on trumps based heavily on guesswork. When dummy appeared, the dealer would learn the quality of his guess or dummy's. Had either been brilliant? The emotional impact of the exposed dummy was something whist could not offer.

Bridge critics mistakenly thought of bridge as a form of dummy whist (three-handed whist). The French truly loved their game *mort* but the American and English only played dummy whist out of necessity. In dummy whist, the dummy was dealt face up. No mystery. Too much information was revealed. In bridge, both sides have to make crucial decisions before dummy is known. Great excitement!

The other big plus of an exposed dummy was that it enabled the average or below player to play with some minimal competence. Signals were not essential.

Whist players believed strongly in their tradition of silence. Cavendish witnessed it when he toured America in 1893. He wrote a letter to the Editor concerning the competence, atmosphere and health of whist in America. He was full of compliments. He begins the article with the expression '…hear a pin drop'. Is total silence so important? Noise is associated with fun — think of crowds at sports events, in bars, at carnivals. I can imagine whist clubs, where bridge players in one room bid and communicated verbally while whist players remained silent in the other room. It was an unfair fight.

The strongest attack against bridge on moral grounds appeared in the June-July 1902 issue of the *Whist* journal:

> Under a thin resemblance to a game hallowed by traditions of sobriety and respectability, it insidiously introduced a chartered form of gambling (with its attendant debauchery) into the most rigid haunts of virtue.

One can assume the 'attendant debauchery' meant cheating. It is true that bridge was a great game for gambling but that element could easily be controlled. Simple scoring modifications could correct that feature. Bridge clubs could easily change the scoring by limiting the doubling and redoubling. The extreme solution was to disallow doubling, thereby preventing trick values from growing, but obviously the majority did not wish for that. A further way to make the game less desirable for gamblers would be to make it more of a game of skill and less of a game of luck. Reducing or removing the awards for honors would have that effect. Of course, any scoring change that made the game more a game of skill and less a game of chance would also make it harder for poor players to taste victory.

However, limiting doubling and reducing payouts for honors would not only make the game less desirable for gamblers but would also simplify the scoring arithmetic. Clearly, the gambling problem could be solved and would soon be. Another solvable problem was the enormous spread in trick values. The trick value for notrump was six times the trick value for spades. It violates human decency to have a scoring system in which making a grand slam in spades or clubs does not produce enough trick points for game. Earlier we encountered the Spade Convention, which enabled the play of spade contracts to be skipped under certain conditions. The values for trick points called for change and that was about to start happening.

Modern players tend to react negatively to the idea of a game where there was no competitive bidding and where the dealer would always play the dummy, but those arguments did not seem to surface during the transition from whist to bridge. Converted whist players realized that there was a great advantage when playing with dummy as your partner, but in terms of fairness they did not see a problem. What is fairer than to have a rotating system where everyone gets to play the dummy every fourth hand? The standard method of rotating the dealer on every hand would equalize the advantage, provided that an even number of hands were played. Each side would have the advantage of being declarer on half of the hands. Once one allows bidding

to determine who plays with dummy, this concept of fairness is out the window. A modern duplicate player can play a session of twenty-six boards and only be declarer two or three times; a partnership nine or ten. In addition, whist players were not spoiled by free choice. At the whist table, they had all experienced the painful helpless feeling of holding a seven-card suit when the turned-up card is in a different suit.

Competitive bidding appeared in 1885 in Swedish whist and in the early 1900s in auction bridge, but did not start winning over the bridge population until almost 1910. With the growing popularity of bridge whist during the first decade of the twentieth century, more and more players who had never played whist took up the game. These players had a different sense of fairness.

Even though bridge whist was very healthy, it still had much room for improvement. Whist was no longer a threat to bridge. Bridge had captured England, France and non-duplicate-playing clubs in America. One would have expected bridge whist to have a long life, but that was not to be: its own children were preparing to take over the family business.

Whist players in the late 1890s wrote many articles calling bridge whist a fad and predicting its imminent demise. They felt whist would rise again. They were partially correct. Bridge whist did die after barely a dozen years, but it was not whist that marched back into control.

Part IV

AUCTION BRIDGE

Card games, like anything else… mirror the conditions of society and the state of business morals.

Foster's Auction Bridge (1910)

CHAPTER 13
Rules (Laws) and Strategy of Auction

Method of Play

Prior to 1915, auction bridge went through a period of trial and error, with many rule changes. Here I'm going to describe the 1926 American Laws that were generated by The Whist Club of New York. They can be labeled the final form of auction, not because the laws were so perfect, but because the emergence of contract bridge meant any further modifications of auction bridge became pointless.

Auction rules allowed both pairs to partake in the fun of bidding. The non-dealing side was no longer limited to only double or pass. The method for determining the declarer and dummy was identical to present day where the side bidding higher gets that privilege. This meant no guaranteed bathroom break every fourth hand as in bridge whist days. The bridge whist methods for choosing trumps and scoring had long been forgotten. The early days of auction bridge, pre-1915, were a period of unsuccessful experimentation. Several versions died a quick death, but their short lives still contributed to the development of bridge.

In 1926, if a side won the auction with a two heart bid and won ten tricks they received credit for game. There was no need to bid game. If they made twelve tricks, they received full credit for a small slam. These rewards seem undeserved from our presen-day viewpoint, but perfectly natural to the converted bridge whist player. During bridge whist days, players had only been allowed to select the trump suit so all bids were equivalent to one-level bids. Seven tricks was the most immediate objective. Bridge whist players were automatically granted bonuses for game and slam if they won a sufficient number of tricks. In auction, even though one was allowed to bid higher, the goal was simply to outbid the opponents. Sometimes this would involve unforced high bids to interfere with the opponent's bidding (preemptive bids).

Bridge whist players did not have to adapt to any changes in cardplay in order to switch to auction. They actually found it a slightly easier game since the opponents' bidding often provided some information about who was holding what.

Scoring

The scoring method in the 1926 auction laws was very different from bridge whist. The only important carryover was that 30 points below the line were still needed for game. The suits not only changed their trick value but even their relative rank; notrump was 10, spades 9, hearts 8, diamonds 7, and clubs 6. In order to achieve 30 points for game, declarer was required to win nine tricks in a notrump contract (10 x 3=30), ten tricks in spades (9 x 4=36), ten tricks in hearts (8 x 4=32), eleven tricks in diamonds (7 x 5=35), or eleven tricks in clubs (6 x 5 =30). Sound familiar?

A major problem with bridge whist was the large scoring spread, where the value of a notrump trick was six times the value of a spade trick. It was possible to score a grand slam bonus in clubs or diamonds without winning enough trick points to satisfy the requirements for game. Now that was nicely corrected: spades took a giant leap all the way from 2 to 9, clubs and diamonds each went slightly up, hearts remained at eight and notrump fell from 12 to 10. One could argue that the notrump change was an overdue correction. We saw that the 1886 biritch document used 10 and it was probably an error in transmission that had caused all books and scoring tables to use 12.

The penalties for undertricks in auction bridge were 50 per trick undoubled, 100 points per trick doubled, and 200 points doubled and redoubled. These penalties seem quite stiff in light of the small trick values. Part of the reason was that in bridge whist undertricks had been treated as tricks won by the defenders, and the score appeared in the trick portion of a scoresheet and therefore counted toward game. In auction, undertrick scores were placed above the line and did not help the defenders reach game: these new larger values were somewhat of a consolation prize. One goal of assigning higher values to undertricks was to prevent extreme overbidding.

With undertrick penalties the same for every suit, scoring was simpler. This suit equality approach carried over to bonuses for honors, which also became identical for all four suits. Unfortunately the size of the bonus was still determined by how the honors were split between the partners. In suit contracts, holding three of the five honors was worth 30 points independent of whether they were split 2-1 or 3-0, four of the five honors was 40 points (80 points when split 4-0), and holding all five honors scored 50, 90 or 100, according to whether the split was 3-2, 4-1 or 5-0. In notrump, holding three of the four aces was 30 points, all four aces was 40 points (100 points when split 4-0). This was a great improvement over bridge whist if one must award points for honors. It still meant that honors were awarded on every hand in a suit

contract since one partnership will always satisfy the minimum requirement of being dealt three of the five honors. One advantage of that was that the players would not forget to note and record honor bonuses.

Winning two games and the rubber resulted in a 250-point bonus. A small slam carried a 50-point bonus and a grand slam was 100 points. Pretty miserly amounts! A small slam scored above the line the same amount as one undoubled undertrick. A grand slam was equivalent to two undoubled undertricks. This very small value was more palatable since one did not have to take the risk of bidding slam. It still was an upgrade from both whist, which did not give any bonus for a slam, and bridge whist, which gave merely 20 and 40 for small and grand.

Law 41 in the 1926 laws indicated the size of slam bonuses and included this jaw-dropping sentence. 'When Declarer's contract is seven and he wins six-odd, he counts fifty for Small Slam although his contract fails.' Next time I go down a trick in a grand slam, I plan to quote Rule 41 to a director and demand credit for a small slam.

The scoring rules and the mechanics of bidding just described correspond to 1926 Laws. In the next chapter we will see the very indirect path taken from bridge whist to this final form of auction in America. The 'in America' phrase is important because the 1928 Portland rules used in England had several major differences, as we will see shortly. What about the French? They had already moved on to a primitive form of contract bridge.

Basic Strategy

During the bidding process, modern bridge players are asking themselves three questions: 'Do we have enough good stuff to outbid the opponents?', 'Do we have enough good stuff to bid game?', and 'Do we have enough good stuff to bid slam?' At auction bridge only the first question was relevant. Whist players and bridge whist players were well versed in cardplay communication through signals. The only bidding communication known to bridge whist players was that a pass by dealer ruled out holding certain hands and a double of notrump was lead-directing. Now auction players were hungry for books on the communication techniques required by this new game.

Auction players quickly realized that rarely does one wish to double a low-level contract for penalty. Auction books would describe doubles as serving two purposes: one was called a 'business double' while the other was an 'informatory double'. An informatory double was a tool for describing a hand and not for the primary purpose of hitting de-

clarer with an undertrick penalty. The problem was telling them apart. Sound familiar? Over the past one hundred years, the issue has certainly been responsible for breaking up many partnerships and probably some marriages. Perhaps the informatory double should have been called an inflammatory double.

Florence Irwin, the most respected female writer on auction bridge, felt the informatory double was unethical and illegitimate since it gave false information. The expression 'negative double' first surfaced in the mid-twenties as a new name for the informatory double. In Work's *Auction Bridge Complete* the author expresses his displeasure with the new term and the writers using it:

> They have not, however, as would have *been logical*, attempted to change the popular term Business Double to Positive Double. The word negative does not as accurately describe a double which is eminently a conveyer of information and which when followed by a Business Pass is anything but negative.

Decision-making in auction bridge bidding required new techniques for evaluating a bridge hand. Robertson's method used for bridge whist represented the first point count system but did not get much of a following as it required too much arithmetic. A simpler method had to be found. Bryant McCampbell's *Auction Tactics* (1916) recommended a point count system where ace = 4, king = 3, queen = 2, and jack = 1. McCampbell called it the Pitch Scale; auction pitch was a popular game at that time and this scale was used for scoring points in that game. Actually auction pitch is a descendant of a very old game called 'all fours'. Cotton's 1674 book *The Compleat Gamester* describes all fours and included this famous scale. McCampbell's book contains three pages of examples where this method is used to evaluate the worthiness of hands for notrump bids. Later, Milton Work and Charles Goren would popularize this method and use it as a cornerstone of their techniques for hand evaluation. With the help of a Canadian actuary, William Anderson, Goren extended it by incorporating distribution points for judging hand strength for suit contracts.

Terminology

Much of the terminology we use in bridge today surfaced back in the days of whist and bridge whist, but several bidding terms were unique to auction bridge. 'Flag-flying' was a very colorful term used during that period. It meant overbidding in the hope that the penalty would

be less costly than allowing their opponents to play in their contract — what today we could call 'sacrificing'. It was a very common term and conveys the image of a military encounter where neither side is willing to back down. The high undertrick penalty was an attempt to reduce flag-flying.

'Grand slam' had several, less French, equivalent terms, including 'large slam' or 'big slam'. However, grand slam was never dethroned as the most popular term.

Auction players used the term 'business pass' to refer to a pass of partner's informatory double. The player was out for blood. Today we would call this a penalty pass of partner's takeout double.

One cute term was 'pianola hand'. From the word for a self-playing piano, it referred to a hand that was so straightforward that it played itself. As the self-playing pianos became extinct, this term followed suit.

The two terms 'senior' and 'junior' were often used. Senior referred to the opponent on declarer's left. It was sort of a takeoff on the whist term, eldest hand. While the location of the eldest hand, when playing whist, was known at the time the cards were dealt, the location of the senior was determined when the declarer was determined. The junior was the player on declarer's right.

Auction bridge necessitated the following revised definition of 'convention': 'A practice in declaration or play which has some generally-understood special significance.' This early definition of a bidding convention opened up a Pandora's box by using the phrase 'generally-understood'.

And by now the term 'declarer' was finally being used in the modern sense. It was no longer redundant since the dealer was not the automatic declarer.

The word 'contract' was also heavily used in the late auction days. It was a desirable one word alternative to 'final bid' or 'final declaration'. It did not mean that auction bridge players were playing the game of contract bridge. However, I'm sure that many auction players mistakenly believed that they were already playing contract when they first heard of the new game.

Duplicate, Progressive Pair Duplicate, and Progressive

Even though whist had been dethroned by bridge, duplicate whist remained strong during the bridge whist period. This was because the duplicate form of bridge whist introduced such a large chance factor in trump selection that it was not a great test of skill.

Auction bridge was much more appropriate for duplicate play, and duplicate auction bridge events began to attract players. The old American Whist League even offered some duplicate auction bridge at their duplicate whist tournaments. By 1926 a set of laws for duplicate auction bridge, which had been adopted by the Knickerbocker Whist Club of New York, were widely published. The membership of the Knickerbocker Whist Club included most of the top experts and it stood out as the capital of duplicate auction bridge. The laws were basically consistent with the laws of auction bridge but were modified in order to cover the various duplicate forms. It is easy to confuse the two powerful New York whist clubs that were both creating sets of laws for bridge. It was at a different club, The Whist Club of New York, that committees would regularly meet and revise the standard laws for auction bridge.

'Duplicate' at that time was the common term for team play. 'Progressive pair duplicate' was the name used for what we would call a pairs event. The mechanics of the movement were practically identical to today but the scoring was very different. Playing progressive pair duplicate, honors scores were included, and if declarer made game a bonus of 125 was awarded. The raw scores were used to obtain the winners rather than matchpoints. The failure of duplicate bridge whist limited the early popularity of duplicate auction. Duplicate whist players often stuck to their old game and still saw bridge players as unrefined loud gamblers. By the early twenties, duplicate auction pairs was quickly becoming popular. Mitchell and Howell died in 1914 and 1907 respectively, so they both lived to see their names popularized by duplicate whist, but neither could have seriously imagined their names would be linked to duplicate bridge. That form of the game was so unpopular they probably never played duplicate bridge — for that matter, they may not have even played bridge.

Progressive auction bridge followed along the lines of progressive whist (drive whist). Players would shuffle every deal at every table, thereby removing the duplicate element but making the movement very simple. This style of play was excellent for large social gatherings. When playing with fixed partnerships the pairs would shift every round. When partnerships were not fixed throughout the event, new partnerships were formed every round. This movement provided a great opportunity to meet a possible future spouse, as well as a future regular bridge partner. In some forms, each round was recorded as a win or a loss; the margin of victory was of no importance. This made scoring easy and limited cheating. Players could not purposely produce big victories for their friends. That very unethical act can unfortunately be too easily rationalized as being generous.

CHAPTER 14
Evolution During the Auction Bridge Period

One King and Two Jacks: Work, Whitehead, and Lenz

Work was a clear choice for the king of auction bridge but I could not decide between Whitehead and Lenz for a second king. So I am naming each a jack and I'm going to talk about them both.

Milton C. Work (1864-1934) wrote under his own name, but it actually would have been a very appropriate pseudonym for him. During the period of auction bridge he turned out sixteen books on that form of the game. They were all high quality, several over 500 pages, and many became classics. In most cases, they were not reworked versions of earlier books. His production was somewhat aided by the quick changes that auction bridge was experiencing in its early days. His titles often reflected this dynamic situation. He used such titles as *Auction of To-Day* in 1913 and *Auction Methods Up-to-Date* in 1920. Both titles sound current and modern but imply to the reader that they probably would be out of date soon. Sometimes he chose titles that indicated the new books were current and would definitely remain current for a full year: two such were *Auction Under the Laws of 1915* and *Auction Bridge of 1924*. His greatest success probably was his 1926 classic *Auction Bridge Complete*. This book incorporated the 1926 laws and became his final major work on auction. Work did write a few specialized auction bridge books in the late 1920s, and in 1927 came out with one of the first books on contract bridge.

I have mentioned that Foster greatly contributed to all four periods from whist through to contract. The time span of Work's life enabled him to do the same but he skipped the bridge whist period. Unfortunately, he allowed his work as a lawyer to interfere with his hobby during that time. In the days of whist, Work was a highly respected player in Philadelphia, his native city, and he played an important role in the early days of the American Whist League. In the debate on private conventions, we have seen that he was the most prominent authority to feel that they should not be prohibited. In 1895, he wrote the very successful book, *Whist of Today*.

Work's legal background aided him while he served as the chair of the laws committee for auction bridge. His committee meetings made him a regular visitor to The Whist Club of New York. He left the law

in 1917 at the age of 53 to devote himself full-time to bridge. We will encounter his different accomplishments and the famous bridge players he influenced throughout the rest of this book.

Although Wilbur Whitehead (1866-1931) lived during both the whist and bridge whist periods, he contributed nothing to these games. He pretty much wasted his life until 1910. (If one wants to nitpick, he was the president of an automobile company and got rich enough to retire at the age of forty-four and then devote his life to auction bridge.) He wrote ten books on auction bridge; the two that became classics were *Auction Bridge Standards* in 1921 and Whitehead's *Complete Auction Bridge* in 1926. This latter book was published the same year as Work's similarly titled *Auction Bridge Complete*. The word 'complete' was very popular with bridge authors. Both Culbertson and Goren wrote famous books with 'complete' in their titles. 'Complete' is always a lie by an author but it has a much better ring in a title than 'very, very large'. Whitehead's ten books are only part of his contribution to bridge, however. He held several administrative and editorial positions and took part in many promotional events.

Sidney Lenz (1873-1960) wrote an excellent book on cardplay, *Lenz on Bridge*, in 1926. It was the first great book on declarer play. Since that aspect of the game has changed very little over time, modern players can still read it in order to improve their technique. He was a very talented individual with outstanding ability at several sports, as well as chess and conjuring. He never played bridge for money even though he did not object to gambling for moral reasons — he feared that his fine skills at 'magic' with cards would make him vulnerable to accusations of cheating. Like Whitehead, his talents carried over to business where he retired as a wealthy man in his early thirties.

Lenz held many administrative positions in bridge and did much to promote the game. However, somewhat sadly, his greatest success in bridge promotion was his own greatest personal failure — the Culbertson-Lenz match, which will be discussed in Part V.

Books, Newspapers, Magazines, and Radio

The Roaring Twenties was an affluent period in American history. Both Work and Whitehead were very well-paid speakers at special events. At that time, bridge could make one a celebrity even at non-bridge events.

The Whist Club laws committee was generating a new set of laws every two or three years. Since these were changing very quickly it was necessary for authors to include the latest laws in their books. A scor-

ing table card was included with practically all fifty-two-card decks. The many versions the game went through before 1915 gave books a very short shelf life but also created a need for new texts — in the end, several hundred books were written on auction bridge. Some were out of date before they even appeared. Most were of an instructional nature but several were aimed at amusement: cartoons, rhymes, humorous stories, and tales.

Women were well represented, both as teachers and writers, at this form of the game. The most successful female auction writer was Florence Irwin of Hastings, New York, who wrote eight well-respected books. We have already encountered her opinion that informatory doubles were unethical and should be made illegal. Irwin used the word 'complete' in one of her titles, *The Complete Auction Player*. When contract burst into popularity in 1927, Culbertson used one of her books to transform himself from a top auction bridge player into a contract player. He believed she wrote the first book on the game.

Foster and Elwell, the great giants of bridge whist, were actually also the dominant auction writers between 1908 and 1912. Foster wrote *Auction Bridge* in 1908 (renamed *Foster's Auction Bridge* in 1910) and *Royal Auction Bridge* in 1912. Elwell wrote *The Principles, Rules and Laws of Auction Bridge* in 1910. These three books were very popular and provide an excellent record of the early auction days. Foster would go on to write a dozen books on auction, but once Work's books started coming out in 1913, the kingdom of bridge belonged to him.

The popularity of auction bridge led to newspapers publishing daily instructional columns and cartoons about the game. Radio had become an important medium for reaching the general public, and both Work and Whitehead had regular shows on bridge. That duo also teamed up to create the *Auction Bridge Bulletin* which first appeared in December 1924. They functioned as the editors and their names were sufficiently prominent on the front cover that one could easily conclude that the full journal name was the *Work-Whitehead Auction Bridge Bulletin*. The header on every page includes that lengthy five-word name. The first volume contains references to a defunct magazine, *Auction Bridge and Mah Jong*. It is surprising that the earlier magazine disappeared since both games were enjoying their peak popularity during the twenties, but the *Auction Bridge Bulletin* had several years of success. The *Bulletin*'s goal was to promote auction bridge, so not surprisingly it became a hotbed of anti-contract rhetoric.

This was also an era where crossword puzzles were beginning to become popular in newspapers and magazines. Simon & Schuster entered the publishing world just in time for the Depression, but they

printed the first full book of crossword puzzles. Its success kept them in business and enabled them to go on to publish many of the best bridge books. Bridge had evolved to the point where its vocabulary was rich enough for the *Bulletin* to offer regular crossword puzzles on the game. The title of these full page puzzles, 'Cross Words for Bridgers', reflects that this bridge whist term for a player that had evolved from whister was still alive and healthy in the late twenties. However, the term barely crawled into the contract bridge period and then died a quick death.

It was common in the *Bulletin* to include a listing of the addresses and phone numbers of available teachers in the area. Almost all of the more than a dozen teachers in Manhattan were women. For the record, Josephine Culbertson's listing was 15 W 55th St, phone # Circle 10213. I hope she won't mind my giving it out. The only king on the list was R. F. Foster.

In the next chapter we will look at the *Bulletin*'s view of a new game called 'contract auction bridge'. I'm sure that you can already imagine that it wasn't very favorable. The *Work-Whitehead Auction Bridge Bulletin* went through a name change early in 1927. It changed from *Bulletin* to *Magazine* and no longer did the names of Work or Whitehead figure prominently even though they were officially still listed as editors. It kept the name *Auction* but must have realized a revolution was approaching. The new name was a potential source for confusion since, back in 1926, a separate journal had been started in England under the name *Auction Bridge Magazine* with A. E. Manning-Foster as the editor. Any confusion was short-lived since the Work-Whitehead magazine closed up shop in September 1929; the English version still exists (as *BRIDGE Magazine*) and is the oldest (almost) continuously running bridge magazine. It took a hiatus during World War II and did not resume publication until January 1949. Hervey claimed in The *Bridge Player's Bedside Book* that one dummy copy was produced every month in order to maintain continuity, but since the January 1949 editorial did not mention dummy issues and none have ever surfaced, they probably never existed. I hope English readers will check their attics.

Businesses were eager to advertise in any media mode that would attract bridge players. Bridge players were a large, quickly growing rather affluent group of people, and the advertisements reflected the type of products that the world felt bridge players would need to buy. The two most common non-game-related items were cigarettes and liquor. Possibly as a result, many advertisements also appeared for health and life insurance.

Total Chaos

On page 164 we encountered a very early game that had the name 'auction bridge'. It contained competitive bidding where both pairs would try to make the highest bid but it restricted all bidding to the one-level. Players would determine the trump suit but the trick requirement was always seven. The lack of levels made it a close relative of bridge whist. Actually, the closest relative of that early version of auction was the 1885 game Swedish whist (preference).

Several years after that first version of auction, books appeared that allowed players to include a level from 1 to 7 with their bids. This would indicate how many tricks were required in order to satisfy the bid. This was a major step toward present-day bridge bidding. Even that was not totally innovative; we have seen that the game Boston, already more than a century old, and its many relatives involved bids that required winning more than seven tricks.

The evidence is very strong that the game of bridge with bidding levels was first played by three members of the Indian Civil Service. They started playing a three-handed game where each player would bid for the right to play with dummy. It was immediately called 'auction bridge' but was only thought of as a three-person game. According to Dalton's *Auction Bridge Up-To-Date*, Oswald Crawford, who had recently returned to England from India, described the new game in *The Times* on Jan. 16th, 1903. There was only one round of bidding that both began and ended with the dealer. One very interesting aspect of this game was the feature of 'halving'. It was the natural opposite of doubling. If you felt your opponents were certain to make their contract you could cut their profits in half.

In the evolution of bridge this was the third major contribution made by a three-handed game. We have already seen that dummy whist prepared the world for playing with a dummy, and cut-throat bridge gave birth to the idea that undertrick rewards should be placed above the line (as honor values) and therefore would not count toward game.

The notion of a 'higher bid', however, was not as straightforward as it first seems. Let me start with a present-day analogy. A 3♣ bid is made on your right. You are proud of your hand with two club stoppers and jump in with a 2NT bid. The director is summoned and a finger from each opponent is pointing in your face. The director has the nerve to say that you made an insufficient bid and starts the list of options. Not being a quitter you respond 'Why is my bid insufficient? I made a higher bid than my opponents. 2NT is 40 + 30 = 70 points.

Three clubs is only 60 points. Isn't 70 higher than 60? Isn't the value of my bid higher?' Your argument is logical. Logical, but wrong.

The first American auction bridge laws were generated by the Whist Club of New York on October 1, 1908. They were basically identical to the Portland and Bath Clubs laws developed a month earlier. These laws actually used this method to determine which of two bids was higher. Auction originally used the bridge whist trick point values: spades 2, clubs 4, diamonds 6, hearts 8, and notrump 12. Thus:

3♥ (3x8=24) was a higher bid than 5♣ (5x4=20)
2NT (2x12=24) was a higher bid than 7♠ (7x2=14)

Often the values of two different bids were the same. For example, 3♥ and 6♣ were both 24. The tiebreaker was the level. Therefore 6♣ was legal after a bid of 3♥ but 3♥ was insufficient after 6♣.

Remember that teaser back in the Foreword? Now I am assuming it is clear why 2♥ (16) would be a legal bid after 6♠ (12). Hope you didn't lose any sleep over it. This unusual ranking of bids was called 'value calling' and 'value bidding' while the system used in modern contract bridge became known as 'majority calling' and 'majority bidding'. Even though the 1915 laws ended value calling in America, it was still the primary method described in the 1928 Portland Club Auction Laws. The 1928 Portland Club had a tough time on this point since they wanted to switch but many clubs objected. Those laws also retained the complicated bridge whist system of suit-dependent honor bonuses.

This system of ranking bids by their value, rather than the tricks required, was explained surprisingly briefly in auction bridge books around 1910. I think our present-day bridge minds have been so indoctrinated by what we have been doing for decades that we have more trouble understanding this ranking than bridge whist players had when shifting to the new game of auction. It was basically the standard technique from 1907 to 1915.

Foster's *Auction Bridge* includes a section on an alternative version of bidding that is even more peculiar to modern day players. In this variation auction players actually bid without naming the trump suit until the bidding ended and play was to start. For example, they might make a bid of 16. If no player bid higher, the person who bid 16 would then have to indicate whether he wanted the contract to be 4♣ or 2♥ since both bids were worth 16. A bid of 24 could be 6♣, 4♦, 3♥, or 2NT. Players certainly got to know the multiplication table. It was possible to add honor points to trick points in order to satisfy the numerical bid.

The version of auction that appeared in Foster's 1908 book and *Elwell on Auction Bridge* in 1910 was a mix of the bridge whist laws and the future 1926 laws covered in the last chapter. The trick points were the same as bridge whist when the required tricks were won but the undertrick penalties were already 50 a trick. The game bonus was already 250 but the slam bonuses of 20 and 40 were the same as bridge whist. The bonuses for honors were unchanged from bridge whist.

In the early years of auction, the dealer was not allowed to pass at the start of the bidding! There was no fear of a passed out hand and having to reshuffle. This was not a surprise to former bridge whist players since, in that version, when the dealer passed the dummy was forced to choose trumps. Till 1915, no bridge hand had ever been passed out. This is sort of the bridge equivalent of the blind or ante that is required of a poker player. With the new 50-point penalty for undertricks, there was enormous discomfort when a player dealt himself a truly rotten hand. In bridge whist there was the safe harbor of a spade bid, but now the spade undertrick value had risen from 2 undoubled to 50 undoubled. The safe harbor now was littered with mines. To rectify the penalty inflation they placed a 100 point maximum for undertricks when 1♠ was opened by the dealer, so the spade suit still offered a bit of a safety net when going down.

It had long been clear that the disparity in the trick values was too great. Actually, the method of competitive bidding even added to the problem. Auction's capitalistic philosophy of encouraging open competition was undermined by the extreme trick values. One might hold a great spade suit, bid 7♠ and be outbid at the two-level in hearts and notrump, the three-level in diamonds and the four-level in clubs. Is this fair? Yes, but it would not feel fair to the spade holder. A simple solution would be to increase the value for spades and clubs while decreasing the notrump value. One problem was the opinion that since a 1♠ bid did not risk an enormous undertrick penalty, that bid should not be rewarded very well when declarer is successful. A solution was to create two different ways of making spades trumps. If trumps was chosen by a one spade bid each successful trick was worth only 2 points. If trumps were chosen by a 'royal spade' bid or a 'lilies' bid, each trick was worth 9 points. This form of the game, where two different values could be used for a spade bid, was called 'royal auction bridge'. The other suits were given the following modified values: clubs 6, diamonds 7, hearts 8, and notrump 10.

Foster's 1912 book was one of the most popular books on royal auction bridge. A few dozen auction books had the word 'royal' appearing in their titles. In 1913, Work's first book on auction bridge,

Auction of To-Day, hit the bookshops. Its clarity helped make it an instant classic. He referred to these new trick values, with two spade values, as the 'new count'. He felt royal auction should just be called auction since the new count was here to stay, and even took credit for devising it.

The laws for auction bridge in 1912 and 1913 led to Work's enthusiasm. The scoring method he developed in Philadelphia had become the standard. But by 1915 the auction laws generated by the Whist Club of New York had changed. The spade suit only had the trick value of nine — no longer was there an option of a spade value of two. The laws also dropped the requirement that the dealer had to bid. These two changes were not as independent as they at first seem. The purpose of the spade trick value of 2 was to limit the danger when the dealer was forced to bid with a terrible hand. That danger no longer existed once the dealer was given the option of passing. I wonder whether all these manipulations and alternative names for spades (royal spades and lilies) led to the expression, 'Call a spade a spade'.

Experimentation had pretty much ended by 1915, and the future of auction looked very secure. There were sets of laws in 1917 and 1920, but there were no great surprises in those versions. Even the 1926 laws we covered in the last chapter were not very different from the 1915 laws, except that those laws were the first where honor bonuses were not dependent on the suit. The introduction of Work's *Auction Bridge Complete* starts with:

> The Auction Bridge world is entering upon a new era — the era of stability. During the formative period, deficiencies have been supplied, undesirable features eliminated, and every innovation has received the test of experiment and experience. The outward and visible sign of the beginning of the new era is the 1926 code of Auction Bridge Laws. Experienced observers predict that this code will remain the standard for years, and expert opinion is united as never before on the important conventions of bidding and play.

A year later his book on contract bridge was published.

Bridge Whist Players' Reaction to Auction

The transition from bridge whist to auction was relatively smooth in America. King Foster and King Elwell had taught bridge whist to the world. When both kings said, in effect, 'Stop playing bridge whist, auc-

tion is a much better game', who could disagree? Foster's 1908 book was really the unofficial start of auction in America. In his introduction, he writes the following:

> Those who have watched the trend of events in the world of cards must have been impressed by the constantly increasing popularity of games in which there is a bidding element; games in which there is no favored player who inherits the right of making the trump, or turning it up from among his own cards, but in which everyone must compete in the open market for the advantage. In some games these special privileges must be paid for in some way, and if you want them you must be willing to risk as much or more as any other player at the table in order to secure them.
>
> …Boston, Solo Whist, Cinch, Auction Pitch, Five Hundred, Nap, Auction Pinochle, and Skat, will readily occur to the reader. Several of these games are changes from older forms in which trump was turned up, and where such a change has been introduced it has been found almost impossible to get players to return to the old style.
>
> That Bridge would not escape the general tendency was inevitable. When certain colors become the fashion, they impress themselves upon everything, and you suddenly find yourself tired of a dress which is not up to the latest styles.
>
> Bridge, probably because it lacks the bidding element, shows some signs of going out of style, and it certainly has not the rage it had a few years ago.

I included this very long quote since it is impossible to underestimate its significance. Foster was respected not only as a great bridge whist authority but more importantly as the greatest authority on card games since Hoyle. *Foster's Complete Hoyle* (1897) included several games whose name started with the word 'auction': auction euchre, auction hearts, and auction pitch.

The introduction to the 1910 edition of Elwell's book on auction includes several interesting remarks about the fledgling game. He had less need to sell the game to society since Foster had already accomplished that two years earlier, and instead he comments on auction's origins and its great success:

> The fact, however, remains that its popularity started in England, and has increased by leaps and bounds until to-day, in the London clubs, it is played almost to the exclusion of Bridge. In this coun-

> try it is having a similar success. Wherever Auction is introduced, it kills the older game much in the fashion that Bridge killed Whist.

He also makes the somewhat surprising statement, 'It must be acknowledged that the bid at Auction does, in some sense, simplify the play.' This is based on the questionable belief that greater information on where cards are located makes cardplay easier. This had been the basis for whist players believing that exposing the dummy made bridge whist a much simpler game than whist. However, Elwell also correctly pointed out that the judgment required for bidding and doubling would make auction overall a more challenging game. Indeed, he stated, 'The essential equipment for Auction is the ability to estimate the value of a hand with approximate exactitude. Without this facility the player is more or less gambling on the good looks of his cards.' It is a cute way of stating the importance of hand evaluation.

The transition to auction actually crept up on players gradually in several rather small steps, which we examined earlier in this chapter. The trick values and scoring did not originally change. All that was introduced in 1908 was the ability to compete in selecting trumps.

Bridge whist players had all experienced holding a fine hand, with a great suit, without any opportunity of making that suit trumps. This was fair since the right of naming trumps alternated between the two partnerships. However, a large luck factor was generated by whether or not a player held the right hand at the right time, so this method of naming trumps would often feel unfair. All serious bridge whist players must have felt frustrated at times. Now auction bridge had arrived and would save players from these petty emotions.

The name of any game always outlives the popularity of the game itself. In 1925, long after bridge whist had been buried, the Bridge Whist Club surfaced in New York City. This lavish club was actually an undercover sting operation where the card tables were equipped with recording devices. The goal was neither to catch illegal gamblers nor cheaters but rather to enable a roundup of evil alcohol suppliers. It was during Prohibition, and the authorities used the pretense of it being a bridge club/speakeasy. I'm sure this was the only bridge club ever opened by the Federal Government at taxpayer's expense.

Conflicting Philosophies of Foster and Work

The kings, R. F. Foster and Milton Work, were the two great game changers in the bridge world; their approaches and goals, however, could not have been more different. Milton Work's two major prin-

ciples were that nothing was more important than having a stable form of the game, one that was simple enough to be attractive to new players. Foster believed in experimentation and change. He believed that if you don't create new and improved products, the competition will pass you by. Work was the insider while Foster was the outsider.

Work was a long-time member of the law committee at the Whist Club of New York. He was often the chairman, and even during the periods when he was not the official chairman, he had the power of the chairman. He was understandably proud of the revolutionary 1915 Laws. We saw that these laws eliminated value bidding by requiring majority bidding and eliminated the spade trick value of 2. Several proposals for change had been considered and rejected by the committee. He believed that transparency would aid acceptance and wrote the book, *Auction under the Laws of 1915*. In this book he justifies the committee's (greatly his) thinking and conclusions. Here is an excerpt:

> It is the element of luck that causes the Auction enthusiasm now felt by a large percentage of the players of today. Eliminate or materially decrease that element, and a large proportion of the 'fans' will forsake Auction and take up some other pastime.
>
> Auction is not Chess, and to introduce any feature either too scientific or too exacting must prove a fatal error.

The end of dual spade values was justified by the fact that:

> The change materially simplifies the game. It makes it much easier for the beginner and the weak player. They need help more than the expert and the continued popularity of Auction may depend upon their support.

When a committee on game laws has trouble reaching an agreement, they tend to compromise by creating laws for optional features and alternative forms. Some felt that alternative forms of Auction could coexist. Work obviously was not a fan and in this book states:

> The Committee is thoroughly convinced that the good of the game demands that but one standard be unfurled for players to follow and that the doctrine of simplicity be stamped indelibly thereon. A double code would increase, not diminish, the existing confusion and instead of standardizing the game in this country, would tend to produce the opposite result.

The laws, which went into effect in June 1915, were called 'The Laws of Auction'. I don't believe the word 'bridge' ever appears in Work's book. Between 1915 and 1926 the game was officially called 'auction' rather than 'auction bridge'. Most writers and players did not seem to realize that. Another oddity was that prior to 1915 it was unclear which partnership were the winners! From 1908 to 1915, the first law had the curious statement, 'The partners first winning two games win the rubber.' I can envision the statement at the end of a rubber, 'Congratulations you outplayed us and won the rubber. I did the arithmetic; you each owe us $43.' The 1915 laws made it clear that it was the total points that determined who won the rubber.

The mechanics of the game was virtually identical to our game ninety-nine years later, however, with an entirely different scoring system. In the Foreword, I mentioned that 2015 readers of *Bumblepuppy Days* can honor the publication of these laws as the centennial event commemorated by the book.

Foster's 1913 book *Royal Auction Bridge with Nullos* was a fine alternative to firewood by 1915. 'Nullos' was a declaration where one attempted to lose tricks. That was a feature in several of the games we have covered: Boston, solo whist, Cayenne, and Swedish whist. But Foster, definitely the greatest expert in history on the general subject of games, appreciated desirable features in other games that could be incorporated into bridge. He saw certain weaknesses in bridge that made its popularity vulnerable to other games. One was that any version with fewer or more than four persons was unlikely to have success. Several books on card games claim that from 1905 to 1920 the game five hundred, a trick-taking distant relative of bridge, was as popular or even more popular than auction bridge in America. It was a descendant of euchre but carried a 1904 copyright by The United States Playing Card Company. It had different versions for any number of players, from two to six. Foster's books often included two three-person games: stop-gap auction and dummy-up.

Foster's Pirate Bridge: The Latest Development of Auction Bridge hit the bookstores in 1917. It had the potential to revolutionize bridge by converting bridge into an alliance game similar to the old games Boston and solo whist. In alliance games there are no fixed partnerships but only temporary partnerships formed for a particular deal. One player would bid and the other players would have the option of passing or accepting the bid and becoming dummy. If no one accepted, the bid was voided. Only after a bid was accepted could either of the opponents overcall. Of course that bid also had to be accepted or it was voided. The dummy might not be seated opposite the declarer so each

partnership might play two cards one after the other. This feature certainly feels odd to bridge players but, as we saw, was common in alliance games that had descended from Boston. Despite Foster's enthusiasm this game was a quick failure, which obviously disappointed Foster but must have thrilled Work.

Foster never claimed to have invented these new versions of bridge but publicized them through his books using his reputation as the great fashion designer of games. We will see that around 1920, Foster started pushing a new version of bridge called 'contract bridge'. Work had an easy time resisting that by touting the long list of Foster's failures. Foster may still get the last laugh when it comes to pirate bridge. As mentioned, a copy of *Foster's Complete Hoyle* was placed in a time capsule at the 1939 New York World's Fair. If it was an edition that included pirate bridge some future alien civilization may find it and take up the game.

The tug of war produced by Work and Foster's conflicting goals was essential for the creation of contract bridge as it exists today. We will see this play out in Part V. Fig. 3 shows a famous 1928 photo of the great bridge authorities of that time. Judging by Foster's body angle, he might not have felt very comfortable standing next to Work.

The Good and the Bad

The 1926 laws of auction described a game far superior to bridge whist. Players no longer felt frustrated by their inability to compete when dealt an excellent suit. The scoring was simpler since honor bonuses and undertrick penalties were the same for all suits.

None of the changes from bridge whist to auction bridge were driven by gambling. Neither the gamblers nor anti-gamblers reacted. To the gambler, some of the changes were desirable and others not. A very desirable aspect for the gambler was the potentially large undertrick payments, but this was balanced out by the increased importance of skill rather than luck in selecting trumps. The earlier two great changes, to short whist from long whist and to bridge whist from short whist, brought a big negative reaction from the anti-gambling constituency. This was a refreshing change.

In 1926, the game of auction was flourishing, and many books were available for complete beginners. With Work promoting the game on the radio, it would seem the sky was the limit in terms of its popularity. Actually, that was literally the great problem with auction: it is better to have a ceiling than for the sky to be the limit. Bear with me while I justify that odd statement.

A wonderful feature of present-day bridge is that on most deals the bidding is interesting. The incentive to bid games or slams requires players to become experts in cost/benefit analysis. For example, should one try for a slam and risk a certain game? It is the television game show problem. Should you try for a larger prize and risk losing all the small prizes that have already been won?

Auction bridge players could not expect excitement during the bidding on the majority of hands. Certainly, if points were evenly divided between the partnerships, exciting contested auctions would develop. However, if one partnership held much better cards, usually the bidding would end very quickly. No excitement. No fireworks. There was no need to bid game or slam. If declarer made ten tricks in hearts, he got credit for game; for twelve tricks, he got credit for a small slam. Thirty years ago an elderly gentleman asked me to sit behind him and comment on his play. His partner bid 1♠. He held 16 points with four spades and passed. When I expressed some surprise at his pass, he explained that he liked spades as trumps, so why bid? What he did would have been reasonable at auction bridge. Unfortunately, the other three players were playing contract.

Auction players recognized this weakness in their game. In Part V, we will look at some early attempts to change it. No longer would players be able to bid only 1♠ and receive credit for a grand slam, or for that matter be pushed by the opponents to the seven-level, go down one trick, and receive the bonus for a small slam. A very popular French alternative to auction was a game called *plafond* (the name is the French word for 'ceiling'). As we shall see later, in this game, the points awarded were no longer unlimited but were limited by the contract or ceiling.

An additional problem was the lack of any organization governing auction bridge. An explanation is given in Work's classic, *Auction Bridge Complete*, for the changes incorporated in the Laws of 1926:

> The American Whist League appointed a Committee that met on various occasions during a period of two years; and finally, after the most thorough consideration, recommended to the Whist Club that it make about thirty changes. The Knickerbocker Whist Club of New York, acting through its special Committee, submitted its recommendations to the Whist Club Committee in the form of a complete new code.

In these two sentences the word 'whist' appears four times and 'bridge' does not appear once. The divorce between whist and bridge had clearly not been finalized.

Part V

EARLY CONTRACT BRIDGE

As far back as 1917, and again in 1920, when the revision of the laws of auction bridge was under consideration, an effort was made to have contract bridge recognized.

Foster's Contract Bridge (1927)

CHAPTER 15
Finally, Contract Surfaces

We have almost reached the end of our journey, and we are arriving at a game that is recognizable as very close to the one we play today. Auction bridge players had quickly fallen in love with the excitement generated by competitive bidding. The Roaring Twenties was a period where the competitive element of capitalism was making people rich and the competitive element of bidding was making people bridge players. Outbidding one's opponents was becoming more exciting than the actual cardplay. Auction bridge bidding was a far cry from the days of whist, where the dealer would merely turn over a card in order to determine trumps.

In the last section of Part IV we saw that even though bidding could be very exciting when the values were closely divided between the two partnerships, it became boring when the riches of one partnership were considerably greater than those of the other. In that case the stronger partnership would end the bidding quickly at a low level. The very high undertrick penalties would keep their opponents as silent as old whist players. No excitement at all during the auction.

The new philosophy of contract was that a partnership should only get rewarded for what they truly earned. In the real world, a person could become wealthy by working hard or taking large well-thought-out risks. At the contract bridge table, only points for tricks bid would be placed below the line, and therefore count towards game or slam. Therefore a bidding side, rich in cards, would be forced to do some risk analysis. The contract player suddenly had to decide between taking the sure small profit and making an all-or-nothing attempt at a large profit.

It required only a scoring change in order to implement this philosophy; that sounds easy enough, but it took more than a dozen years to work out the details. A delicate balance had to be found to maximize the excitement of the game. Decisions had to be made about the right size for game and slam bonuses. The trick value for each suit had to be established, and the point value for undertricks and overtricks decided upon.

There was a desire to make as few changes as possible from auction bridge. On the other hand, since games, rubbers, and slams were now harder to achieve, they deserved a greater reward than was pro-

vided by the auction bridge scoring table. Many experiments were done before some stability was reached. Various different early scoring tables were produced: they were not incorrect in any way but simply fell by the wayside in the unofficial popularity poll. The choice of scoring table, of course, affected player strategy. For example, if slams are poorly rewarded, why take the risk? In auction bridge they were poorly rewarded, but that seemed appropriate since there was zero risk. With the new spirit of rewarding risk-takers, the slam bonuses increased more than tenfold. This was not unreasonable. In the early days of contract, without even the most basic conventions like Blackwood, it was almost impossible to bid even a small slam with any sense of certainty. With such primitive communication, any slam bidder would have to be an extreme risk taker. An early scoring table for contract had three different awards for a grand slam. If declarer bid at the seven-level and made thirteen tricks, he received a 500 point bonus; if he bid at the six-level and made thirteen tricks the award was 300; if declarer made a lower bid but won all thirteen tricks, the bonus was 100 points (this last case pandered to old auction players).

In bridge whist, the terms undertricks and overtricks did not exist: both partnerships simply received trick values. A form of three-handed bridge whist introduced undertrick values of 50, which became the standard for auction. At the start of contract, overtricks were treated the same way. A bid of 2♥ making three would give the score of 16 below the line and 50 above the line. This resulted in players wanting to investigate bidding game but at the same time wanting to stop as low as possible in order to enjoy the large overtrick value. Present-day bridge players do not have that dilemma since overtrick values are equal to trick values, so duplicate players receive the same score for 2♥ or 3♥ making nine tricks. At times, remnants of the old system still surface today: overtricks in a doubled contracts still pay very well. For example, 4♥ doubled making five is better rewarded than 5♥ doubled making five. When this occurs on a board, many players are surprised as it goes against their intuition. They feel that succeeding in a higher contract doubled should pay better than in a lower contract doubled. Not an unreasonable argument.

Of course one would like the scoring to be simple, but that was never achieved. At the very start of contract bridge, vulnerability did not exist. Early on, it became an option and a foursome had to decide whether or not to use it before starting play. The idea was a great success and quickly became compulsory. It adds variety but certainly complicates the scoring.

In one regard, present-day duplicate is much simpler than rubber bridge and whist. In rubber bridge the scores below the line would influence decision-making. For example, your bidding would and should be altered by your side having a partial of 40 and your opponents having a partial of 80. Whist authors used a lot of space in their books on how the score altered cardplay decision making. The most common quote of whist writers from Hoyle's days till 1900 was 'Remember the score.'

SACC, Plafond, and Contract without Vanderbilt's Influence

As the most powerful member of The Whist Club rules committee, Milton Work was well aware of all proposed changes to the laws of auction bridge. The contract philosophy is described in his 1916 book *Auction Declarations*:

> It is, in brief, the proposition that a player be permitted to score in his trick column only the amount of his bid, the excess, if any, to be scored in his honor column. In other words, a bid of one Heart which resulted in the taking of ten tricks would count eight points in the trick column, twenty-four points in the honor column.

Do not, however, be misled into thinking that Work supported the idea. The following two pages are devoted to explaining why he feels that this change would be a terrible mistake for auction bridge. He did not use the name 'contract bridge' or 'contract auction bridge' since he did not see this scoring change as creating a new game but simply as a radical change for auction bridge. Since Work liked the fact that auction bridge had stabilized after a half dozen very volatile years, he did not want this disruption. I include the quote in order to demonstrate that the contract bridge philosophy had clearly been articulated by the king of auction bridge himself, in a popular book, as early as 1916. He did not name any particular person behind this bad idea, but blamed foreigners. He wrote that this mode of play was reported 'to have found favor abroad', but gave no specifics about the rules of the game that was proposed or where abroad it had gained favor. We know, however, that the philosophy of contract had already definitely appeared in India and probably also in France.

The game played in India would have been lost to history, had it not been for Sir Hugh Clayton, an Englishman who lived in India where he functioned as an administrator in colonial government. He started playing bridge with the contract philosophy around 1912. He first de-

scribed the game in the July 15, 1914 issue of *The Times of India*. This article, called 'A New Variety of Bridge', clearly stated that no score toward game is awarded for tricks won in excess of the number declared and it specified large bonuses for bidding slam; the two key ingredients of the contract philosophy. The author of the article was listed as "S.A.C.C." so this version of bridge has been called either S.A.C.C. or SACC in publications. (The letters are the initials of the four players who originated the game.) Clayton went on to publish a description in several papers before 1920. In 1940, Clayton read an article, 'The Origin of Bridge' by George Hervey, in *The Field* that stated that the first form of contract bridge was played in France in 1918. Clayton's subsequent letter to the editor finally placed SACC in its proper place in the history of bridge. Clayton said he did not know the names of the four players who originated the game. There were two players with the initial 'C'. If Clayton were one of them, he must have known his own name, so presumably he no longer remembered the names of the other three or did not want to mention them.

The tale is quite similar to how John Collinson's 1886 document, *Biritch, or Russian Whist,* was almost forgotten. Part of the reason the 1914 *Times of India* column went unnoticed was that it appeared two weeks after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Crown Prince of Austria. The world was watching to see who was declaring war in late July and early August. The anticipation of WWI breaking out probably seemed more important.

SACC awarded 1000 points if a grand slam were bid and made. If a small slam were bid and made, 500 points. If a five-level contract were bid and made, 250 points. No points were awarded for overtricks. This meant that if the contract was 2♦, winning thirteen tricks scored exactly like winning eight tricks. A deal such as this resulted in immediate claim of eight tricks, so cardplay had very little importance much of the time. The remaining scoring was similar to auction bridge.

Plafond ('ceiling'), a very popular French game in the 1920s, is often called either *plafond* bridge or bridge-*plafond*. It was described in numerous French books and even in a few English books in the thirties. The name is an appropriate name for a game with the contract philosophy, since declarer's bid placed a limit on the number of points toward game that could be received. *Plafond*, which was probably first played between 1914 and 1916, clearly strongly influenced the development of modern contract bridge. In their 1958 book, *Le Nouveau Bridge pour tous*, three prominent French bridge writers, Pierre Albarran, Robert de Nexon and José Le Dentu, claim an earlier date: 'around 1905, the French introduced a very clever innovation which would contribute to

the progress of bridge. They created bridge-*plafond* and decided that one could only receive points below the line in their column for tricks corresponding to the risk taken.' I believe this claim involves a full decade's worth of puffing but the credentials of the three authors are so outstanding that no statement from them can be dismissed out of hand. If an American gloats to a Frenchman that we had Culbertson, the Frenchman will most justifiably respond, '*Nous avions Albarran*' ('We had Albarran').

In *plafond*, the bonus for game was 100 and for winning a rubber 400 more. The bonus for a grand slam was 200 and for a small slam was 100 (early versions used 100 and 50 respectively). These are really low values: twice the values for auction, to be sure, but still very small. They had not made a complete commitment to the contract philosophy since *plafond* required bidding games but not bidding slams. In *plafond*, winning thirteen tricks resulted in a credit for a grand slam even if the bid was only 1♦. Of course their grand slam bonus was earned without a game bonus. Other than the requirement of bidding game, little was new. The trick value for each suit was the same as auction and the requirement of 30 points for game was retained. Each undertrick was 100, each overtrick was 50, and both were entered above the line: this led to the situation where it was advantageous to stop bidding at a low level. Thankfully, even the earliest versions of *plafond* used a simple bonus system for honors that was suit-independent. Auction players in the United States and England were still running for scoring tables after each hand. Making any contract received a 50-point bonus, just like a partial in modern duplicate. There was no form of vulnerability, except that winning a second game in a rubber resulted in a rubber bonus rather than a game bonus.

Authors often hedged their bets at this time by writing popular books that covered both bridge whist and auction bridge. Other books aimed at both auction and contract, and since *plafond* was a French 'halfway house' it could be included in books on either game. One such work was K. C. Liddell's *Contract and Plafond Bridge: Self-Taught*, which covers elements of bidding common to both games. It has a section that tells bridge players how they can quickly learn *plafond*, and of course it has a similar section on how *plafond* players can quickly pick up contract. It compares the two games and is quite biased in favor of *plafond*. *Plafond* was much more popular than contract in Europe and Liddell expected it to challenge contract in English-speaking countries. He listed ten reasons why he felt *plafond* was the superior game. Here are items 2 and 3 in his list, which relate to the minuscule slam bonuses of *plafond*:

2. The absence of THE NEED TO BID SLAMS is considered an advantage by some players as it reduces the number of DIFFICULT or DISPUTABLE DECISIONS often involved in bidding slams and avoids the creation of many situations which in Contract do cause MANY REGRETS FOR OVERBIDS or for SLAM CALLS NOT BID.

3. Ninety per cent of the POST-MORTEMS which arise from SLAMS are avoided and give the *Plafond* Table a peaceful atmosphere not always experienced by Contract Bridge players.

Liddell obviously did not have proper respect for contract players: they could find plenty of reasons to argue even while playing *plafond*. In general most of his pro-*plafond* arguments were centered on its bidding being simpler, since learning slam bidding conventions was unnecessary and the scoring system produced fewer extreme scores. He did not like the vulnerability feature used in contract, because it also produced large scores.

Between 1917 and 1927, the king of bridge whist, Foster, and the king of auction, Work, were publicly dueling over the kingdom. Foster and Work had very different views on whether the contract philosophy would be the future of bridge. We have seen that Foster was an innovator and always eager for change, while Work did not want to disturb the stability of auction bridge.

The following preface to the laws generated by the Whist Club of New York appeared in Work's *Auction Bridge* of 1924:

> 'Contract Auction,' which provides that a player be permitted to score in his trick-score only the amount of his bid, the excess, if any, to be entered in his honor-score, was considered and rejected in 1917 and in 1920. Auction, as it stands, gives the expert sufficient advantage; 'Contract Auction' would almost legislate the poor bidder out of the game.

In *Foster's Contract Bridge*, the author attacks Work for resisting contract bridge. He never mentions Work directly in this 1927 book but at that time Work chaired the rules committee. The first paragraph of the introduction of Foster's book shows his feelings about Work's opinion of contract bridge:

> As far back as 1917, and again in 1920, when the revision of the laws of auction bridge was under consideration, an effort was made to have contract bridge recognized and legislated for in

> connection with the parent game. The rather illogical reason for its rejection, as stated by the then chairman of the committee, was, 'that contract would almost legislate the poor bidder out of the game'.

This book contained Foster's set of laws for contract bridge. Those forty pages of laws were neither created nor endorsed by The Whist Club or any other club. Foster had lost his patience waiting for a set of laws, so he created his own. They were dated January 1927 and resembled the auction laws of 1926, but modified for contract. Foster had already published three books in 1922 that included a description of his version of contract bridge. In *Foster on Auction* (ninth edition), Foster had already included a chapter on contract bridge. Both his *Encyclopedia of Games* and *The Official Rules of Card Games* had a page describing contract bridge. These three 1922 publications used similar rules as his 1927 book but slightly differed in undertrick and overtrick values.

The version of contract described in Foster's book made bidding and making game worth 100 points. Winning a rubber in two games added a bonus of 300 more, while winning the rubber in three games added only 200 more. A small slam bid and made garnered 250 points, while if twelve tricks were taken, there was a bonus of 50 even when not bid. Similarly, a grand slam bid and made was worth 500 points, and a bonus of 100 was scored up for taking thirteen tricks even when not bid. These awards for unbid slams were to help wean players off auction. The trick value for each suit was the same as auction and the scoring retained auction's requirement of 30 points for game. The first undertrick was 50, second was 100, and 200 for all additional. The first overtrick was 50, second 30, third 20, and all additional 10. Undertricks and overtricks were entered above the line. Foster mentioned that in Canada each overtrick was only worth 10, which he complained reduced the importance of overtricks and therefore cardplay. Making a contract received a 50-point bonus when the contract was doubled. There was no notion of vulnerability but winning a second game of a rubber resulted in a rubber bonus rather than a game bonus.

Vanderbilt's Cruise

At the bridge table, I often hear, 'What is the topic of your next book?', 'I hope you are working on a new book', and 'I hope you are not working on a new book.' The third comment is not as bad as it sounds provided it means they want me to play bridge with them. When I explain that I am working on a book describing early bridge history, I usually get the

response, 'So you are writing a book on the Vanderbilt cruise?' When I tell them that I devote only one section of one chapter to Vanderbilt, they protest with, 'Didn't he create the game during a cruise in the 20s?' That myth is quite common. It provides bridge with one big birthday rather than a dozen fuzzy small steps. It is nice to envision a person playing cards with a group of friends and giving birth to the game of bridge. Actually, it seems that during the trip they played *plafond* much more than bridge.

The famous Harold S. Vanderbilt cruise was on the ship S. S. Finland in late October and early November of 1925. It departed from California and was heading to Cuba, so the new form of contract was probably first played in the Panama Canal. One of the original players was Francis Bacon III. In 1975, he related that they had been playing *plafond* and that a woman joined in their game on October 31. She suggested rule changes and it was she, not Vanderbilt, who was the first to use the word 'vulnerable'. The following day Vanderbilt created a new scoring table incorporating the vulnerability feature. On November 1st they played the new game. In the 1960s Vanderbilt gave his own account of the cruise, in which he gave himself slightly more credit than Bacon would a few years later. He said he had worked on the game the previous fall, planning to test it out on the cruise. He stated that his name for this improved form of *plafond* was 'contract bridge'. He did acknowledge that an unidentified woman player was first to use the word 'vulnerable'.

Vanderbilt certainly did not come up with the name contract bridge, as the name appears in several books years before Vanderbilt's cruise left its dock. Since Vanderbilt was an experienced *plafond* player, he could not even argue that he independently came up with the philosophy of contract. Indeed, this is reflected in his 1929 *Contract Bridge: Bidding and the Club Convention* where the dedication reads:

> TO MY FRIENDS
> FREDERIC S. ALLEN
> FRANCIS M. BACON, 3rd
> DUDLEY L. PICKMAN, JR.
> TO WHOSE COOPERATION IS DUE THE EVOLUTION OF CONTRACT BRIDGE SCORING

This statement is really very humble. He thanks the three players who accompanied him on the cruise, uses the word 'evolution', and restricts their accomplishment by acknowledging that it was just a scoring change. In later years, however, there were signs that as he

aged, Vanderbilt started believing his admirers. On both the cover and title page of Vanderbilt's 1964 book, immediately following the name of the author is the statement: 'THE INVENTOR OF CONTRACT BRIDGE.' While this was probably the work of the publisher, Vanderbilt could certainly have resisted.

Vanderbilt does deserve, however, enormous credit for creating a scoring table incorporating the vulnerability feature. He chose appropriate values for tricks, game requirements, game and slam bonuses. These values are virtually the same as present-day values. The two major differences from present-day bridge were that overtricks were always 50 points a trick (independent of suit) and notrump tricks were worth 35 points. Some writers actually say that the excellence of Vanderbilt's values is evident in the fact that only minor changes have occurred in almost a hundred years.

If any one man could have invented bridge, Harold Stirling Vanderbilt was such a man. His middle name may reflect that he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He was part of a very strong partnership with Joseph Elwell — according to *The Official Encyclopedia* they were the strongest partnership in the U.S. from 1910 to 1920. I don't know if they had a pro/client relationship but I am sure between sessions at the end of dinner, Elwell never heard, 'Your share is $2.35, oh wait, sorry, you had dessert, $2.75.' (I am using very upscale 1915 prices.) Vanderbilt was a Harvard Law school graduate, a successful railroad tycoon (family business), and a champion yachtsman. And most importantly, he was never a suspect in the 1920 Elwell murder. One could well imagine the unidentified woman on the cruise saying to the worldly forty-one year old Vanderbilt, 'With your charm (and wealth), I feel very vulnerable.' Maybe that was how the term came about.

Vanderbilt's impressive resume helped contract bridge take off. If Vanderbilt liked this new scoring table, how could normal people disagree? Rather like in *Fiddler on Roof* when Tevye sings 'If I were a Rich Man', and he envisions everyone asking for and respecting his opinion. During the summer of 1926, the high society crowd in Newport and Southampton had fallen in love with the game. By fall it had spread like a virus to New York City, thanks to Vanderbilt handing out a few sheets to his friends in these communities.

In fact, Vanderbilt's greatest contribution to bridge may have been devising the first strong club system, the Vanderbilt Club. He wrote several books on the system, and it was popular in the early days of bridge. Vanderbilt received too much credit for his cruise but not enough for his convention. Of course, it is a mistake to create a con-

vention involving the club suit since the word 'club' could refer to a social hangout to play cards. I have played bridge at a Vanderbilt Club on Long Island, and I'm sure there are several others.

Implementations Influenced by Vanderbilt

Even though *Foster's Contract Bridge* appeared more than a year after the Vanderbilt cruise, we have seen that this book was not in any way influenced by Vanderbilt's scoring ideas. It did not have the vulnerability feature and it used auction trick values.

Surprisingly, Work's distaste for contract bridge did not prevent him from writing a book on it in 1927. This seems like quite a reversal for him. He felt a need to justify the book and in the introduction gave the following explanation.

> Some Americans took kindly to the Contract idea, but they did not constitute an impressive percentage of the whole body of Bridge players; and about 1915, when The Whist Club (New York) was importuned to embody Contract provisions in its code as an alternative method of play, the Club, believing the introduction of the proposed game to be inadvisable, declined to do so.
>
> Nothing more was heard of Contract until the summer of 1926…

In effect, he was saying that only now was the time right. I'm sure this annoyed Foster. Not to mention that Work's last sentence is not true, since in other books Work regularly stated that the rules committee considered contract in 1917 and 1920.

Actually, Work's book presents two alternative scoring systems. One was produced by the Knickerbocker Whist Club (KWC) and the other by the Racquet Club, both New York clubs. Both systems included vulnerability. Clearly Vanderbilt's cruise brought about that change. However, it was still acceptable for players to decide at the start of play to ignore the vulnerability principle completely. The main differences between the two systems were the score for tricks and requirements for game. The KWC rules used the auction, *plafond*, and Foster values: 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 with a requirement of 30 for game. The Racquet Club used the new values devised by Vanderbilt: clubs 20, diamonds 20, hearts 30, spades 30 and notrump 35 with a requirement of 100 points for game. Both systems were identical in terms of how many tricks were required for game: eleven in a minor, ten in a major, and nine in notrump.

All other significant scoring features were basically identical. The honor bonuses used by both systems in 1927 were identical to modern day rubber bridge. If four trump honors are in one hand, 100 points. If five trump honors or four aces (notrump) are in one hand, 150 points. Remember that bridge whist bonuses were dependent on the trick value of the trump suit, while 1926 auction bridge bonuses were suit-independent, but had several more alternatives for honors. Finally the bridge world found a simple way to provide honor bonuses. Since the new system for honors was similar to the ten year old *plafond* system, *merci* France.

Both clubs could argue that they had produced the better scoring table. Those who preferred the low trick values and 30-point game requirement could argue that both auction and *plafond* players would have an easy time adapting since they were using the same trick values as those that had been around for a dozen years. The high trick value fans could argue that the higher scores were consistent with the high reward for rubbers, games, and particularly slams. I'm sure you can guess the winner.

The two scoring systems are explained in *Contract Bridge* (1927) by Farrelly and Coleman. In this book the Knickerbocker Whist Club System was called 'The American Count' and The Racquet Club System, 'The New York Count'. This seems backwards since the word 'knickerbocker' was created by Washington Irving to refer to NYC residents with their large Dutch population, culture, and dress. If not for our basketball team, the word might have disappeared into history. Using the low trick score values, the game was viewed as a form of auction, and writers tended to call it 'contract auction bridge'. The game generated by the higher score values was usually seen as a new game and was called 'contract bridge'.

Later, but still in 1927, Work produced a new version of his book, as the first version was out of date within a few months. No longer did Work's book have to explain the two competing scoring tables. The Whist Club issued its first Laws of Contract Bridge. The scoring table used was merely a clearer description of The Racquet Club scoring table. The differences were insignificant. The important thing is that the most powerful bridge organization had spoken and all other organizations followed. The front page of the book listed all the clubs and organizations that had adopted these laws, including The Knickerbocker Whist Club, The American Whist League, and The American Auction Bridge League.

It is curious that Work does not mention Vanderbilt in these books, considering that the new scoring table and the vulnerability feature

were incorporated in the new official laws. Work seemed to be in the middle of all bridge action, and Vanderbilt's important role may not have been fully appreciated at that time. Some 1927 books give some credit to Vanderbilt. Some books refer to the 20 for minors, 30 for majors, and 35 for notrump as the 'so-called Vanderbilt count', but they don't mention where it got this name. Very early contract laws used the word 'invulnerable' to describe the state of a partnership who were not vulnerable. It has the desirable feature that it is one word. Besides, who wouldn't want to be invulnerable? Occasionally an early contract book used the term 'unvulnerable'. Quickly these two words lost out to 'not vulnerable' and 'non-vulnerable'. Actually, some books would use the term 'danger zone' as an alternative to vulnerable.

Vulnerability was certainly not universally embraced and early rules treated it as an optional feature; there was no intention to impose it on unwilling bridge players. Its purpose was to put the leading side in jeopardy in order to increase the chance of a comeback. Even the word itself shows why the feature was introduced. Present-day duplicate players might think that this jeopardy is balanced by greater rewards for games and slams.

Plafond players attacked the bridge world over the vulnerability feature. If I were to select a king of *plafond* it would be the Frenchman, Pierre Bellanger. He wrote a lengthy introduction to A. E. Manning-Foster's book *Bridge-Plafond: The Original Game of Contract Bridge*. In his work, Manning-Foster expresses Bellanger's sentiments in a colorful fashion:

> Monsieur Bellanger, the guardian angel of *Plafond*, is opposed entirely to the vulnerable feature, and has written about it with inexorable logic.
>
> He considers the idea is 'anti-chivalrous, anti-logical, contrary to the spirit of any good fight, anti-sporting…
>
> 'In what kind of brain,' he writes, 'can such an idea have germinated? Can you imagine a tennis championship in which one gives one or two games to the side that loses first?'

The English attacked the higher trick values used by the Vanderbilt scoring table. They commented that it was typically American to think that bigger is better. One writer conjectured that 'in 1940 (or will it be next year?) clubs will be 200 a trick and notrump 350'.

By 1927 the bridge world had almost arrived at the scoring of today. The main two steps left were to change the value of notrump tricks and to reduce the overtrick score from 50 to the value of a trick

in the same strain. Selecting the best notrump trick value was still a source of contention.

Auction Players' Reaction to Contract

This section should probably be titled 'Milton Work's reaction to contract'. The *Work-Whitehead Auction Bridge Bulletin* ignored contract from its first issue in December 1924 until February 1927. In that February issue it ran an editorial, "Has Contract Auction Bridge a Future in America?" The short answer summarizing the opinion provided in that column is, NO, NO, and NO: 'Viewed from the club standpoint, much can be said against Contract and nothing in its favor.'

The magazine dismissed contract bridge as a fad, comparing it to other silly experiments during the early days of auction. As usual, gambling was an issue, partly because of the higher point values, and a reference was made to poker. The new scoring would 'make Bridge a lottery; an appeal to the gambling rather than intellectual instinct. It unquestionably possesses an appeal for the stake player, who, satiated with the routine of ordinary life, is looking for new thrills.'

Work and Whitehead were the editors of the *Bulletin* but these statements do not reflect the sentiments of either. I am quite confident that someone else wrote this editorial. They both had misgivings about contract but it was not their style to use the simplistic gambling argument. Besides, both of them were busy at that time writing contract bridge books! The May-June 1927 issue was the first to be titled *Magazine* rather than *Bulletin* and reflected a smaller role for Work and Whitehead, possibly as a result of fallout over this February column. The May-June issue also contained a long, odd statement which basically said that in the future all non-signed articles would be by the editors. Additional evidence is that the May-June issue carried advertisements for recently completed books on contract bridge from both Work and Whitehead. Why would either write such an anti-contract article, knowing that their contract book would appear in a few months?

Primarily, Milton Work's opposition to contract was based on a genuine and indeed understandable fear that contract bridge was just too complicated for the average player. Even though his 1927 book on contract bridge was a success, he still was not a happy camper: he merely accepted contract as an inevitable unfortunate development. In the 1880s and 1890s, Work had been a leading whist player and writer. He had a front row seat to watch the dramatic transition from whist to bridge, providing him with an excellent historical perspective. He had seen whist improve as a game for the expert but for the aver-

age player those improvements only generated bumblepuppy play. He expressed his feelings very clearly on December 2, 1927 at the first congress of the American Auction Bridge League.

> May I say to the American Auction Bridge League: Do not repeat the error of the American Whist League. You may think today there is no game but auction bridge; you may believe that contract is another Mah-Jongg, flaring up for a brief existence, destined soon to be forgotten; but I implore you to keep your ears to the ground and your eyes wide open. I am not here to plead the cause of contract; far from it. Could I, with a wave of my arm, wipe contract from the map, I would do so gladly; not because I do not believe it to be a great game, but because I deprecate the introduction of a more difficult form of bridge (Quoted in Emery, *No Passing Fancy*).

In the following part of his talk, he made it clear that he was not encouraging auction players in the audience to switch from auction to contract but rather saying that the American Auction Bridge League had better start offering contract bridge events in order to survive. Since this organization was only a few months old, I'm sure they did not enjoy hearing that they were playing the 'wrong game'.

Given that Work was the most powerful auction writer and authority, this is reminiscent of Cavendish's whist surrender 29 years earlier. In the introductions to Work's great auction books of 1924 and 1926, he was still strongly fighting contract. As we have seen, he mainly thought the game was too complex for the average player. However, he also felt a rubber would take much longer than auction players were used to. One reason is that when playing contract, fewer points were generated below the line. In addition, more declarers would be defeated since contract scoring encouraged a player to take risks and make higher bids.

Of course, R. F. Foster was not thrilled either. He had fought hard for contract but this was not the version of contract that was his baby. In the late twenties, *Foster's Complete Hoyle* refers to his trick value system as 'Standard Contract' and the version with Vanderbilt's trick values as 'Jazz Contract'. He indicates that he sees no advantage to the increased values. At some level, Foster must have hoped his contract bridge would enable him to reacquire his old throne. Earlier kings did not face that challenge. Hoyle and Elwell never lost their thrones and Cavendish only surrendered his throne two months before his death.

For the standard auction player in America, the transition to contract was very smooth and unbelievably quick. The game was not at all known by Americans until 1927. Many Frenchmen were enjoying *plafond* and a few Englishman in India were playing SACC, but not Americans. If they read the introductions to Work's auction books, they would have heard of the game but did not receive enough information to be teased into wanting to take it up. Quite the opposite: they would have appreciated that Work was saving them from contract. In the early and mid-twenties, Foster spoke well of contract in his popular book, *Foster on Auction*. When the game truly surfaced for the upper-class elite in 1926 and the riff raff in 1927, the takeover was immediate. Work was writing books on contract and made his surrender at the December gathering of the American Auction Bridge League. There was no time for the common man to form an opinion and take sides.

Ely Culbertson, who will be discussed in the next chapter, came to the fore shortly after the transition to contract. In his autobiography, *The Strange Lives of One Man* (1940), he made it clear that his enthusiasm for contract was not shared by the leading auction authorities.

> Everything about contract was remarkable, even its origin. Right after the war, an attempt had been made to introduce *plafond* in America, through the Knickerbocker Whist Club. It had failed because of the opposition of expert auction players and authorities. The winners in any game want to keep on winning and are fearful of anything new — which makes them conservative. The losers would like to change, but they have little power — which makes them liberal.

Culbertson states that he converted many of these experts who thought contract was a fad and would soon disappear.

With *plafond* hopping around Europe and across the channel since the end of WWI, England had experience with the contract philosophy and an easier time converting to contract bridge. Actually, A. E. Manning-Foster, the editor of the *English Auction Bridge Magazine*, wrote a 1920 book under the title *Contract Bridge*. This book lists petty attacks on contract and counters them. He points out the key reason he feels auction experts have been turned off to contract:

> Consciously or unconsciously a man who 'gets it in the neck' on his first introduction to a game is apt to be prejudiced against it.

CHAPTER 16
Contract Bridge Reaches Maturity

Strange Experiments, Strange Words, and the Wandering Notrump

During the first few years of any new game, players find themselves adjusting to rapidly changing methods of play. We saw that auction went through a period of chaos prior to 1915. Contract was more settled, but players did experiment with several odd alternatives.

At one point a new bid was introduced called the 'challenge bid' or simply 'challenge'. Its purpose was to avoid the confusion generated by a double having two different meanings: takeout (informative) and penalty. Challenge replaced the takeout double, so if a player said 'challenge' after an opponent's bid, it requested partner to bid. The challenge bidder's partner could decide to double for penalty by choosing to pass; the challenge bid automatically turned into a penalty double. This allowed the word 'double' to have only the one meaning: let's make the opponents regret their bid. It was probably hoped that this modification would help prevent partnerships from breaking up.

The idea originated with Sidney Lenz in 1927, and the prestigious Knickerbocker Whist Club of New York incorporated it into their laws in October 1929. The pros and cons of replacing a takeout double with a challenge is well described in Chapter 12 of Work's *Contract Bridge for All*. Suggesting such a revolutionary bid opened Lenz up to ridicule. Theodore A. Lightner sarcastically suggested allowing 'half-bids'. For example, if your partner bid 1♠ and you raised to 2½♠ (stronger than a bid of two but weaker than a bid of three), your partner could either return to the two-level in spades or make any higher bid.

Players experimented with some very peculiar ways of dealing cards. The term 'goulash' refers to several of these schemes. This colorful term implies that the cards were not shuffled normally with a proper mixing. It was often used after a deal that was passed out in order to produce distributional hands, thereby reducing the chance of two consecutive passed out hands. It was actually included in the laws in a way, since it was listed as an optional feature after a section on Ethics and Etiquette. This was not an uncommon solution (i.e. a cop-out) for bridge laws committees. Some of the goulash schemes are described in Work's *Contract Bridge for All*.

Many early bridge words have become extinct. A favorite way to refer to a bridge player was with the one word 'bridger' (analogous to the term 'golfer' for a golf player). Ely Culbertson's *Encyclopedia* (1935) provides the definition: 'a Bridge player; a Bridge fan' but even the first edition of the *ACBL Encyclopedia* (1964) does not include it. The problem was actually the three known forms of bridge around 1930. Even though bridge whist was dead, it was still remembered by most contract players. When the three games were all being compared, there was a tendency to use the one-word names: bridge, auction, and contract. This made the term 'bridger' too vague. In the auction period one would at times encounter 'auction bridger' but the one-word element was lost. In the twenty-first century, we could finally bring this word back.

Several other terms have a cute visual element but fell out of use. For example, 'ace-framing' refers to ducking aces — the player appears to want to take them home and have them framed for display. Culbertson's *Encyclopedia* also contained the word 'bridgeitis', defined as taking bridge too seriously. There apparently was a divorce case in 1933 on the grounds of dementia bridgeitis.

We saw that the term 'odd trick' had a different meaning for the bridge whist player than it had for the whist player. It gradually fell out of use during the early contract days. Some terms had very misleading meanings and perhaps for that reason they disappeared. For example, holding the 'king card' did not mean holding the king, but meant holding the highest remaining card in a suit.

The expression 'psychic bids' captured the interest of the bridge world in the early thirties. The whist world and early bridge world had long been familiar with the strategy of misleading opponents by falsecarding and with psychic bids that was being carried over to bidding. Dorothy Sims is considered the inventor of psychic bidding, but she acknowledges that it was discovered by accident. She described a session of terrible bidding on her part where she reaped unjustified rewards by confusing the opponents. Starting in 1931, she began writing articles and eventually a book on using psychic bids that generated a great deal of interest and arguments over their usefulness and fairness. In the early days of contract, a psychic bid was at times referred to as 'a Jacoby' since Oswald Jacoby overused the tactic in the Culbertson-Lenz match.

The most colorful and still popular term from very early contract is 'kibitzer'. It is a German word for a particularly inquisitive bird, the green plover. The name became immediately popular in 1929 when Edward G. Robinson performed in a Broadway show titled *The Kibitzer*.

The notrump option has had an exciting history with its value and even its name going through many changes; one constant, however, was that nine tricks in notrump scored game. Swedish whist used 8 points per trick (20 points were required for game). The biritch document used 10 points per trick (30-point game requirement). Bridge whist used 12 points per trick (30-point game requirement), probably after a communication error, and most writers felt that the change was undesirable for the game. They wanted to go back, and with auction bridge notrump returned to 10 (30-point game requirement). When the contract bridge laws appeared in 1927, Vanderbilt's values were used, and his scoring table indicated 35 points per trick (100-point game requirement).

Some lawmakers were very displeased by that value of 35. It stood out like a sore thumb in the scoring table, as every other value was a multiple of 10. They felt it made the arithmetic harder by forcing players to do multiplications by 35. The 1932 Laws of The Whist Club reflect a crazy attempt at a solution: the odd number tricks won above book (1, 3, 5, 7) were each worth 30 while the even number tricks (2, 4, 6) won were each worth 40. In effect, they made the average of any two tricks 35. But was this really easier? I doubt it. It reminds me of a well-known statement in the academic world: if a horse were designed by a committee, it would end up looking like a camel.

In the early and mid-1930s, contract bridge was no longer competing with auction bridge but was in competition with *plafond*. Pierre Bellanger, a leading writer on *plafond* and an expert on everything wrong with bridge, pointed out that scoring this way is not only confusing but illogical. Three notrump bid and made is game (30 + 40 + 30 = 100). Two notrump bid and made followed by one notrump bid and made would also be 100 points. Fine. But what about one notrump bid and made on three hands? That only adds up to 90. Shouldn't this also be game? It had been in every other form of scoring since 1886.

Not surprisingly, when new laws were issued by The Whist Club Laws Committee in 1935, the scoring table was revised for notrump. Our present-day solution of 40 for the first trick and 30 thereafter went into effect.

Britain, France, and America Unite with 1932, 1935, and 1948 Laws

Even though the laws of bridge today are almost identical to the 1935 laws, the law story did not end in 1935. Laws are only as good as the

organization behind them. Bridge organizers would still need more than a dozen years to reach 'perfection'.

In the last section I mentioned that The Whist Club Laws Committee was still passing laws that governed bridge. On a few levels that seems distasteful. We saw that the laws of short whist were created in 1864 by a committee representing several clubs, not just one main club. Better still would be to have one governing organization hammer out the laws. The Whist Club of New York published the first bridge laws in America back in 1897, and for the next forty years it was the greatest American bridge power.

The 1932 Laws were the first international bridge laws. The cover of the Law book states that they were agreed on and promulgated by The Whist Club (New York), Portland Club (London) and Commission Française du Bridge (Paris). Apparently creating the scheme of varying the notrump values for odd and even tricks required an international effort. The American preface implied that The Whist Club had the most influence. Work and Vanderbilt were both members of the Committee on Laws. The Laws were followed by a Supplement to the Laws called the 'Proprieties of the Game'. It lists what players should avoid: undue delay in making a call when there is no need to consider any other call, exceptional haste or reluctance in passing or in doubling, allowing his partner's hesitation, remark, or manner to influence a call or play, and lastly undue delay in playing to a trick when the play does not need consideration.

As we have seen, the 1935 Laws created our present trick value for notrump. Vanderbilt was now the chair of the Whist Club Committee on Laws. This set of International Laws provides the scoring table and some value changes from the outdated 1932 Laws. Both grand slam bonuses and certain undertrick penalties were reduced and simplified. The laws have separate sections covering shuffling, auction, play, and scoring. Each section has its own set of priorities, which leads to considerable repetition. It is indicated that the next revision of the international laws would not appear before 1940.

In 1948, the first set of International Laws since 1935 was created. It was generated by the National Laws Commission of the ACBL, the Card Committee of the Portland Club and the Executive Committee of the European Bridge League. The Whist Club was still mentioned, but only in order to point out that it was no longer involved. Barely a goodbye and thanks for services rendered. Three members of the old Clubs Committee on Laws became members of the National Laws Commission, the most notable being Vanderbilt, who became the chairman.

These Laws went into effect on October 1, 1948. The separate but very similar duplicate laws did not take effect until January 1, 1949.

Two Kings: Culbertson and Goren

The names of my two kings for this period will not surprise anyone. They were great writers, players, showmen, and promoters of the game, but their personalities could not have been more different. Culbertson liked the risk factor in making and losing fortunes. Goren chose to live his life on a more even keel.

Culbertson's life (1891 -1955) cannot possibly be described in two or three pages. His own autobiography, *The Strange Lives of One Man*, written at the age of 49, ran to 693 pages, and provides his version of his youth, travels, education, and accomplishments. If I had to sum up Culbertson's greatest talent it would be as a showman and promoter, using an approach that has since proved successful for both professional wrestling and 'reality TV'. His technique was to create 'enemies' and then challenge them to duel him over the bridge table. He would first make sure that the general public, not just bridge players, was aware of the animosity between the parties. Part of the greatness of a bridge duel is that it could be dragged out over weeks or months, providing the world with a wonderful opportunity to watch him in action. Many bridge writers and teachers could make bridge players want to improve their game. Culbertson, however, was capable of making non-bridge players feel they had to learn the game, and that if they did not, that they were missing out on something wonderful.

Culbertson arrived in New York in 1921, a year after Elwell's murder, and he became a regular at the Knickerbocker Whist Club. That was one of the two major clubs where much of the bridge establishment was located, and where Whitehead and Lenz were key players. Culbertson quickly managed to aggravate this crowd, not so much by winning their money as by stealing the heart of Josephine Dillon. She was brilliant and she was beautiful, but most importantly she was an outstanding bridge talent. A mere twenty-two when Ely arrived, she had already been married. The old guard was high middle age or older, so they were not appropriate suitors for her, though John Clay's books indicate that she had been involved with Whitehead. They probably felt their sons were not good enough for Jo, since they were as protective of her as fathers would have been of their daughters. They hated the idea that this thirty-year-old stranger, the grandson of a Cossack general, who claimed to have lived all over the world, and to have attended the best universities in Paris and Geneva, had won her heart.

They did not trust him. Who would? The truth is that he was quite remarkable. He could back up most of those claims as well as any human being possibly could.

Culbertson's two greatest promotional events were famous grudge matches, one against Colonel Walter Buller's team and the other against the Sidney Lenz team. There was enough animosity behind both contests to generate enormous international public interest. In both matches the teams were playing for much more than a trophy.

Colonel Buller was an English bridge writer who was fond of both saying and writing that the standard of bridge in England was far higher than that in America, due to the superiority of the English bidding system ('British Bridge') over Culbertson's. In Mackey's *The Walk of the Oysters*, Buller is quoted as saying:

> Its followers are bumblepuppies, quacks. The Cumbersome System consists of artificial stunts which must be eschewed, the product of sub-human system-mongers. The sooner we cut out this nonsense the better. Even the village idiot would accept this, but not the bridge world.

Mackey does not provide a source for this quote so it may be his creation rather than Buller's, even though it certainly is consistent with other writings of Buller. The word 'Cumbersome' is not a typing mistake but reflects the humor of either Buller or Mackey. Culbertson obviously disagreed and was, of course, equally outspoken.

The international nature of this match certainly was very appealing. Whist had never got its act together to stage international matches. Neither team officially represented their nation, but the public couldn't care less. The match took place in England in September 1930. Simultaneously, Culbertson's classic, *Contract Bridge Blue Book*, was released. This match was all or nothing for Culbertson, but it ended very well for his team, which consisted of Josephine Culbertson, Ted Lightner, and Waldemar von Zedtwitz. They won the match and the *Blue Book* sold like hotcakes. This book and Culbertson's *Contract Bridge Summary* were the two bestselling books of 1931. Notice that there was no need to say 'bridge books' or even 'non-fiction books' in that last sentence; they outsold all books of any kind. Not bad for a game only a few years old.

The Sidney Lenz match had a very different but equally wonderful backdrop. Many authors were creating their own bidding systems and publishing them around 1930, but it seemed that Culbertson's dominance doomed both the authors and their systems. The solution

his opponents tried was to join up, combine their systems into one, give themselves the name Bridge Headquarters, name their system the Official System and name their book *The Official System of Contract Bridge*. It all sounds very… official. The front cover had the subtitle, *The Official Book on the Official System*, in case any reader missed all the other appearances of 'official'. The Advisor Council had sixteen members, and their pictures and impressive credentials appear in the first few pages. Among them were Work, Whitehead and Lenz.

This did not trouble Culbertson. It meant all sixteen authorities could be destroyed with one big blow. Sixteen against one was not a fair fight when the one was Ely. Culbertson challenged Lenz to a match — or it would probably be more appropriate to say, baited him into a match. The match was to be all or nothing for both Culbertson and the Bridge Headquarters. This was a test of the two dominant systems. If that were not enough to generate interest, Culbertson offered insulting odds. He would put up $10,000 to Lenz's $1000, with the winnings going to a charity.

The match started on December 7, 1931 and lasted for over a month. For Lenz, that date would certainly live in infamy, as President Roosevelt would say of a day exactly ten years later. The world watched this very long pair event, 150 rubbers. Ely played mostly with Josephine and Lenz played with Oswald Jacoby. Culbertson was excellent at annoying Lenz. After 103 rubbers the Lenz-Jacoby partnership had a bitter breakup, and Cmdr. Winfield S. Liggett was Lenz's partner for the remainder of the match. The Culbertsons won very comfortably and Bridge Headquarters had a bleak future. Ely did not dismantle that organization immediately; he found it more desirable to occupy it. A new edition of the book with the title *The New Standard Official System of Contract Bridge* was published in 1932. The photos of the new sixteen authorities now included a large photo of Ely, and Lenz no longer appeared. The foreword included an acknowledgment that the Official System was largely based on the Culbertson System.

Culbertson's autobiography provides statistics about the famous match. In those 150 rubbers (879 hands), a small slam was bid and made 17 times and only one grand slam was bid, but it failed to make. This shows how rare slam bidding was for even the top experts. For the common player it must have been like winning the lottery. Therefore the added bonus for vulnerable slams over non-vulnerable slams was not an important factor for the typical player.

One of the greatest twists in Culbertson's life was revealed by his non-bridge writings. He took pride in his insight into world politics and instinct for human psychology, and his non-bridge writings were

an earnest attempt to solve the world's problems. His most popular non-bridge work, written during World War II, had the promising title *Total Peace*. Considering his greatest personal successes were based on confrontation, it was odd that he considered himself an authority on peace. He listed as his qualifications his studies and insightfulness in the areas of power politics, social psychology, and mass propaganda. Culbertson claimed that his skills were demonstrated by his ability to organize the chaotic world of early contract bridge. He left out the fact that he achieved that by being a conqueror rather than a mediator. Culbertson equated cards to human dynamics:

> I had always been fascinated by the bizarre world of cards. It was a world of pure power politics where rewards and punishments were meted out immediately. A deck of cards was built like the purest of hierarchies, with every card a master to those below it and a lackey to those above it. And there were 'masses' — long suits — which always asserted themselves in the end, triumphing over the kings and aces.

One of his themes was the importance of after-war politics for preventing future wars, foreshadowing the popular twenty-first century expression that it is necessary to win the peace. His main idea was to form a 'World Federation' in order to maintain peace: it was in fact a blueprint for the United Nations.

Culbertson's personal success created industries during the depression. The Culbertson National Studios held conventions, and trained and certified approximately 6000 bridge teachers. There were also international branches, of course all teaching his system. Many books appeared taking positions for and against the system. Warren J. Lynch's 1931 book had the rather unusual title *Culbertson for Morons*. The title was not chosen to attack the Culbertson System, but rather to imply that the book presented the Culbertson System in an easily understandable fashion. This book was published by *The Bridge World* and included an introduction by Culbertson. The lessons in this book were presented using rhyming verses with numerous illustrations. I would imagine that most readers, when holding the book in public, would carefully place it so that only the back cover was visible.

Culbertson produced a set of instructional playing cards where each card had a lesson on the Culbertson bidding system. If a player had to respond to a 1NT opening bid, the appropriate lesson could be found on any four-spot in the deck. I wonder whether the rules al-

lowed a player to borrow a card from an opponent during the bidding, in order to read a needed lesson.

As the bridge king, with a fine appreciation of capitalism, Ely marketed everything: bridge tables, playing cards, devices to shuffle cards, bridge scoring devices, autobridge, shaving cream, and liquor. He was once asked to create and market toilet paper inscribed with lessons on the Culbertson bidding system. In his autobiography he tells this tale and said his response was: '…millions of people have done the most unimaginable things with the Culbertson System, but I'll be damned if I'm going to give them a chance to do *that* with it!'

His greatest legacy is probably *The Bridge World* journal. Later in this chapter more will be said about its contribution to the early development of bridge and its continued importance even today for very serious bridge players.

Charles Goren (1901 - 1991) was the antithesis of Culbertson. Goren's wonderful warm smile conveyed the impression of a kind gentleman. I am basing this merely on how he comes across on the popular television show he hosted in the late 1950s, *Championship Bridge with Charles Goren*. This show occasionally featured celebrities like Chico Marx playing bridge with the experts. If Culbertson had the vision of a promoter of professional wrestling, Goren had the vision of *Dancing with the Stars*. Goren's demeanor of a kind uncle apparently did not imply a kind uncle who would bring expensive gifts. According to Sue Emery's *No Passing Fancy*, 'When he donated a bridge trophy in his name (National Men's Teams Championship), he went out and bought an ancient horseracing cup and had the old inscription chiseled off to make way for the new.' This trophy has found a resting place at the ACBL Bridge Museum. It is the only horseracing trophy in the museum. In defense of Goren, he also once made a gift of $1500 to the Damon Runyon Cancer Fund after a charity event in Las Vegas. The year isn't mentioned, but in Goren's day that was truly a very large donation.

Rather than attempting to list Goren's endless accomplishments, I will concentrate on his relationship with the two kings who preceded him, Work and Culbertson. Work was Goren's mentor; they were both Philadelphia lawyers who quickly abandoned their profession for bridge. Once Goren demonstrated his excellent natural bridge ability, they became bridge partners and co-writers. Well, not really co-writers. Goren was a ghostwriter for Work's newspaper columns. Goren never took full credit for the 4-3-2-1 point count system. He passed credit back to Work, who passed it to McCampbell, who passed it back to the game called auction pitch. Actually, they all deserve credit for appre-

ciating its value and running with it. Before Goren it was only seen as a tool for evaluating notrump hands. Goren's version enhanced it by adding points on distributional hands, thereby increasing the popularity of bridge through simplification. Others tried to improve on Goren's system, both before and after, but found that creating a more accurate system sacrificed that simplicity.

Culbertson wrote a one-page introduction to Goren's first very successful book, *The Standard Book of Play; Better Bridge for Better Players*. This 1942 publication was almost exclusively on cardplay. The one chapter on bidding used Culbertson's Honor Trick evaluation system. I'm glad I promised to stop at 1948 and therefore I can limit Goren to approximately one page. All one need say about Goren is that it is claimed his books sold in total more than ten million copies.

The Duplicate Game

Duplicate contract bridge grew quite naturally out of duplicate auction bridge, so the vulnerability feature of contract rubber bridge did not directly carry over to duplicate contract bridge. During the earliest duplicate contract events, all boards were played with neither side vulnerable. It was Culbertson, a great lover of the vulnerability feature, who first suggested to the Rules Committee of the Knickerbocker Whist Club that the vulnerability status could be designated for each board. He also recommended the present-day game bonuses of 300 and 500. In the early days of duplicate contract bridge, bonuses were still being given for honors, so a player would score better in a 5♣ contract making five than a 3NT contract making four if the declarer's side was entitled to club honors. This was indeed an added complication when deciding on a contract. How could a player encourage their partner to play in clubs rather than notrump because of a bonus for club honors? Matchpoint scoring already existed, so this was an important issue.

Duplicate boards were produced specifying which pairs were vulnerable on the board. Olympic Duplicate Bridge Boards, manufactured by *The Bridge World*, were a popular folding board of a leather-like material. However, thirty-year-old whist trays were still in excellent working condition since they contained no breakable moving parts. Most clubs owners just used a label and some Scotch Tape to convert an old whist tray into a new contract bridge board.

Duplicate boards from the early 1930s were still not numbered on the top surface. Replay bridge, the third generation of memory whist, was still being played, so the board number only appeared on the bottom. Two pairs would simply change directions and play the same

boards a second time. Of course, bridge was less suited for this form of play. The exposed dummy and the auction itself made it easier to remember what happened the first time it was played. Vulnerability was the final nail in the coffin of any form of play with a replay of boards. Each pairing of the vulnerability status and the dealer's location only occurs once in any set of sixteen consecutively numbered boards, so hiding the board number became pointless. A 1933 book on very early contract bridge was Gruenther's classic *Duplicate Contract Complete*. One chapter describes the dying 'replay' form of duplicate.

Alphabet Soup: AWL, WWL, AABL, ABL, USBA, NBA, and ABA

Surprisingly, the AWL (American Whist League) and the WWL (Woman's Whist League) were still functioning in the 1930s. They held their yearly Congresses and modified the whist laws and slightly influenced the bridge laws. They drifted progressively into non-existence in the late thirties and forties. As the AWL had been devoted to the 'wrong' game since 1900, it is incredible that they survived to mid-century, but part of the reason was that the league was an outstanding model of organization. At their tournaments in the 1920s a few auction bridge events were offered. By the thirties they were experimenting with and promoting the game 'contract whist', in which the bidding was identical to contract bridge but during play no dummy was placed on the table. Not a great success. Duplicate whist did have its appeal, and as the trump suit was the same at every table, it was an excellent test of cardplay. I can imagine an experimental duplicate bridge event where a board is played in the same contract at all tables, no bidding. Maybe all four players could be supplied with the required bidding as well as the final contract.

The AABL (American Auction Bridge League) was an organization with similar goals as the AWL. It wanted to organize and promote its game by holding congresses and tournaments in different cities throughout the nation. It had as its model the organizational skills of the AWL, and its goal was to apply similar leadership to the very popular game of auction bridge. What could go wrong? The AABL came into existence in 1927. Its first convention, in Hanover, New Hampshire in June of that year, was held jointly with the 37th Congress of the AWL and the 28th Congress of the WWL. It quickly realized that it had followed the AWL too closely. It also had the wrong game. By 1929 it changed its name to ABL (American Bridge League). It did not commit to the name 'contract' as it feared again being out of date if contract turned out to be only a fad. The administrators had changed

the name, but were their hearts behind the change? Had these auction players suddenly fallen in love with contract? Had they even played contract?

The ABL charged very high annual dues of $10. These were individual dues, unlike the AWL membership dues which were charged to clubs. If $10 was high in the Roaring Twenties, it was ridiculously high after the stock market went belly up. At least the League did dish out expensive trophies to tournament winners. The Headquarters of the ABL was in New York at the Park Central Hotel, where in 2011, the Edgar Kaplan Regional took place. I resisted asking the directors whether the event was sanctioned by the ABL or the ACBL — too much of an inside joke.

Into this disorganized mess of organizations came Ely Culbertson, with all the instincts of a predator spotting wounded prey. Culbertson's strategy was to draw everyone in to his association by offering a cheap price: if you initially lose money, so be it, you will eventually get it back in spades once you have cornered the market. (Side note: this idiom only works when the spade suit is the highest ranking, so it did not exist before auction bridge.) Culbertson started both the NBA (National Bridge Association) and the USBA (United States Bridge Association) in 1932. The name NBA not only did not commit to a specific form of bridge — it did not even commit to a specific nation. The organization's primary purpose was to create a tournament mechanism to choose a National Championship team. This involved regional winners competing for the national title; the eventual winner could truly be called a national champion and could justifiably represent the nation in international events. Possibly, Culbertson dreamed of his model being used by other nations to select a champion. The USBA was a grass roots organization for the common man, and it aimed to have large and small bridge clubs in every city, town and hamlet. All NBA members had free membership in the USBA; others had to face $2 annual dues. Ely Culbertson did not initially appoint himself USBA president — perhaps he did not want to look power hungry. It was a little late for that. Milton Work had the title from 1932 to 1934, and Culbertson became president in 1935.

The ABL and the USBA were in direct competition. The ABL fought back by lowering the cost of dues and starting to award titles for master players through a point system. Culbertson immediately saw the beauty of awarding the title 'master' and started his own point system. A player could be a master in one system but a nobody in the other.

The ABA (American Bridge Association) is an organization composed of African-American bridge players. It was formed in 1932 by

members of a tennis league for African-American players and is the oldest living bridge organization in America. In the early thirties at the ABA championships, tournaments were held for both auction and contract players. In 2005 the ABA published a book called *Defining Moments: A 70 Year Chronicle of the American Bridge Association* which describes its groundbreaking masterpoint system. In the late thirties the ABA started issuing different types of points for National, Regional, and City events rather than merely issuing more points for important events. These National, Regional, and City points could be combined into one value using 1 National point = 10 Regional points and 1 Regional point = 10 City points. In 1939 or 1940 they introduced Sectional points to enable players to earn National points without traveling to National events. These names are more descriptive indicators of the event level where points were earned than the systems of colors now used by organizations such as the ACBL and the EBU.

ACBL and Masterpoints (No-dust Trophies)

The ACBL itself came into existence in 1937, and it was created through a merger of two and a half organizations. One organization was the ten-year-old ABL. The second organization was Ely Culbertson's five-year-old USBA/NBA. The half organization was the forty-six-year-old AWL. The two battling organizations both disappeared after the merger. In the November 1937 *Bulletin*, William McKenney, representing the ABL, explained why they were agreeing to the merger. He was not the ABL President but he was by far the most powerful individual in that organization: his title was Secretary. On the same page Ely Culbertson explained why he was agreeing to the merger. It was assumed that the old decrepit AWL would merge and disappear as well, but they never received the memo. The AWL would drag itself around for several years until it had such a vague disappearance, nobody in the bridge world noticed.

The USBA and the ABL were bitter rivals, and it took many years to work out the merger. McKenney and Culbertson had each made financial investments in their respective organizations. The bridge community needed an individual with the intelligence and negotiating skills of a great peacemaker, and Nate Spingold became the hero. He worked on the one point on which they both agreed: the American bridge world had one organization too many. Even choosing the name of the new organization presented a problem. They wanted to combine the two old names equally. A clear choice for the first word was 'American': it was not only used by the ABL but had name recognition from the old,

well-established but dwindling AWL. The second letter had to be B for bridge. The third letter had to reflect the USBA, for if they used L for League one ended up with just the ABL. A simple solution was to use A for Association. Great, the new name would be ABA, and this merged name began to appear in print. Charles Coffin even referred to the new merged organization as the American Bridge Association. Whoops, that name was already being used! African-American players had had their own association by this name for the last five years. Back to the drawing board. Quickly, our present name was chosen. I have no doubt they feared that the name was too specific, and that contract would be replaced in a few years through the power of evolution.

It is surprising that they were so unaware of the American Bridge Association. When the ABA was formed in 1932, Culbertson wrote to the ABA president Dr. M. E. DuBissette:

> Permit me to express my sincere wish that the American Bridge Association will meet with long and continued success. Contract Bridge is the one universal language transcending barriers of language and creed in its uninterrupted progress. You are embarked on a worthy cause and I trust the American Bridge Association will attain the degree of prestige and influence which it deserves (quoted in *Defining Moments*).

The American Contract Bridge League had the best features of the two merged organizations. In 1937, many still remembered the glory days of the AWL. It represented a wonderful model of what the ACBL should aspire to emulate for bridge. And it is not entirely true that the only point of agreement was that the other organization should disappear: both were in love with a numerical system for rewarding tournament accomplishments.

Earlier in this book, I wrote that I believe tournament players gamble for a sort of 'short-term self esteem'. It is nice to have a mechanism where the successes can be savored indefinitely and the failures forgotten quickly. In the 1890s the AWL and the WWL issued prizes, gifts and trophies. Masterpoints function like improved trophies. I like to refer to them as 'no-dust trophies'. They don't need dusting and don't take up space. They are not a nuisance for one's heirs to discard. They not only represent success but they quantify it. I have mentioned my mother's weekly card game. The token gambling enabled a numerical result. Winning 23 cents was better than winning 11 cents which was better than losing 5 cents. The resulting transfer of pennies was their trophy presentation ceremony.

The world of mathematics uses the term 'zero-sum game' to identify games where the sum of the payoffs to the players is zero. For example, suppose after an evening of poker at the dining room table there are two winners and three losers, the total winnings of the winners must be equal to the total loses of the losers. The Masterpoint system, by contrast, keeps everyone happy. After a session, the losers have only lost an opportunity to win, but no points have been taken away. The bridge organization can easily manufacture an unlimited supply.

It is nice that a numerical system can be divided up. Fractions are great, and they allow partial rewards for the non-winners who finish second or third. Often with prizes and trophies, first place received a prize but second place received nothing. In the progressive whist days, it was common for a 'booby prize' to be given to the last place finisher.

The ABL was first to award masterpoints as prizes. When the Depression and USBA competition forced them to cut their annual dues from $10 to $5 for men and $3 for women, they had to do some belt-tightening, so prizes and trophies were replaced by the inexpensive masterpoint. Becoming a 'master' required winning ten points. More clubs and individuals joined the league in order to be eligible for the rewards. By 1936 the inflation of masterpoints became a problem, so they created the rank of Life Master with a requirement of 250 masterpoints. The USBA developed its own masterpoint system. Players would choose which tournaments to play in by which type of points could be won. Not a good situation and probably the major motive for the merger. One could even argue that masterpoints created the ACBL.

Even though the ACBL did not invent the masterpoint system, it had the harder job of unifying the two systems. A conversion scheme was needed to transfer from the two currencies into one, not unlike developing the EURO in Europe. Success came in spite of several USBA players losing all their points, which apparently were either lost or misplaced by McKenney. Since masterpoints are not physical objects, it is strange that they could be lost. The ACBL had a problem deciding on whether it wanted a trophy system or a rating system. Prior to 1944, players would have a certain percent of their total masterpoints deducted every year, making the system more meaningful as a current ranking. If one views the system as a trophy system, this practice is a crime. If it is viewed as a rating system, it makes sense. Any true measure of ability should be weighted toward recent performance rather than lifetime performance. The trophy system flatters the older players but may discourage younger players. I know that when I joined

the league as a teenager I felt there was no quick way to get a rating that would correctly reflect my ability. When I turn 100 in 2048, I'm sure my rating will still not correctly reflect my ability, but in the opposite direction. Somewhere in the middle it must have been the proper number. Interestingly, some European countries today use an annual deduction system, and players do watch their titles disappear.

The Bridge World, ABL *Bulletin*, and ACBL *Bulletin*

Of the many great contributions Culbertson made to bridge, it would be hard to argue that any were greater than founding *The Bridge World*. He invested considerable money and effort starting this publication in 1929, betting on the success of a game that was only two years old. This journal predated his successful books. At the time he was relatively unknown, and he understood that without communication and advertising you cannot build an empire. *The Bridge World* allowed Culbertson to promote his bridge matches, advertise and even sell his books many months before they were written, and publish his books his way.

Hoping his journal would attract new players, he tried to sell individual copies at the newsstand. The grudge match columns and gossip had the potential to draw inexperienced and new players. For example, the September, 1934 issue had an article titled, 'Assault, Battery, Shouts and Murmurs' on a verbal name-calling battle that actually turned physical when P. Hal Sims struck Oswald Jacoby. They were both top experts and the battle was at the ABL summer championships in front of a ballroom full of players. Jacoby said he did not punch back out of a sense of fairness since he was only 32 while Sims was 48. He apparently was not influenced by the fact that Sims was six foot four and well over 300 pounds. The ruling committee merely issued reprimands but no suspensions; the zero-tolerance policy did not exist in 1934. Culbertson's editorial on the incident objected to the ABL's ruling as being too lax, and suggested that the ruling created the impression that brawling at bridge tournaments would go unpunished. No one can question Culbertson's argument on laxness but I'm sure he did not mind pointing out mismanagement in the ABL.

Even with all the juicy material bridge players generated, selling at the newsstands was a failure. Between 1932 and 1937, the magazine functioned as a communication arm of the USBA/NBA. It would announce upcoming events, tournaments, and results. It was not alone in that role since a monthly journal, *United States Bridge Association*

Bulletin, was started in 1932. Culbertson felt you could never have too much publicity or too many publications.

After the ACBL was formed and the ACBL *Bulletin* emerged, that role disappeared for *The Bridge World*, and it became the top journal for advanced players. The articles were written by the finest bridge players and authorities. It was and still is on the cutting edge of bidding system and convention evolution. The best players in the world write articles and take part in its bidding contests.

The ABL *Bulletin* was published prior to the formation of the ACBL. It only consisted of a few pages containing articles, information about upcoming events, and most importantly masterpoint listings. The August 1936 issue gave the listings of the top few hundred players. The top five were: David Burnstine 607, Howard Schenken 506, Oswald Jacoby 472, Waldemar von Zedtwitz 379, and P. Hal Sims 326. The two combatants, Jacoby and Sims, made this short list. Our two kings did not fare very well; Ely had 96 and Goren, 32. The very early ACBL *Bulletin*s looked identical to the ABL *Bulletin*s that they had replaced, and were published at the same address in Cleveland.

One bridge story captured the attention of the country and even the world. Auction bridge had the famous 1920 Elwell murder but contract trumped it with the even more famous 1929 Bennett murder. Even though the Bennett murder did not involve a major bridge personality, it supposedly resulted from an argument at the bridge table. The murder involved a wealthy, attractive married couple, Myrtle and John Bennett. The Elwell murder story had become infamous due to the inability of the police to make an arrest. That certainly was not the case here, as the couple they had been playing against witnessed Myrtle shooting her husband. The trial dragged on for several years with famous lawyers and judges. The tawdry side of the marriage made it a great story and generated human interest. Surprisingly, in spite of the evidence, Myrtle was acquitted. She later sued to obtain the proceeds of her husband's $30,000 life insurance policy, and was successful. Myrtle went on to live a very long normal life, dying in Florida at age 97. No other murders or murder charges. She played bridge throughout her life, and seems to have outlived her notoriety even though she never changed her name.

Bridge Popularity and the Survival of Whist

The popularity and success of bridge can be measured by the enormous sales of bridge books, bridge related instructional material, apparatus, and scoring devices. By contrast, the publication of sophis-

ticated, scientific books on whist had totally collapsed back around 1900. However, even though the serious competitive side of whist had disappeared, the whist world never suffered a complete collapse. There were several short-lived attempts at trying to remake a serious competitive whist game. It is hard to accept a parent stealing from their own child, but the world of whist was desperate. Two of these attempts were descriptively named 'auction whist' and 'contract whist'. These games would have been relatively easy for the American Whist League to stomach but neither met with any success. Fighting for survival, they began offering the distasteful games of auction bridge and contract bridge.

Two less competitive unscientific forms of whist flourished in the twentieth century. Bid whist appeared rather early in the twentieth century. Players would first announce how many tricks they would win and the highest bidder had the right to name trumps. This was similar to early auction bridge where the highest bidder was determined before the trump suit was named. Bid whist had several forms, but was in general more a fun social event than a serious competition. Bid whist is still popular both in colleges and in the African-American community. On March 9, 1997 *The New York Times* published an article, 'A New Bid for Bid Whist', on the version of bid whist popular with African-Americans. It was described as a very loud event with a great deal of gamesmanship and very few rules. If Cavendish had read that column, he would be turning in his grave.

Progressive whist (drive whist) was a large, very social type of event. In the twentieth century, it was common for whist drives to be charity events for churches, hospitals, and nursing homes. During WWI they were used to raise money to support the war. Most participants probably played only a few times a year. It was a less competitive version of the progressive whist that had been played in the nineteenth century. Since these events had a low quality of play, no one felt the pain of being a bumblepuppy. If any did, they at least had the comfort of being invisible in a large pack of bumblepuppies. The whimsical nature of these events was reflected by a scorecard (tally card) that included instructions about the play on each round of the event. One of the over one hundred versions was called 'court whist' — the instructions read rather like a dance card at a gala ball. Speaking of dancing how about 'dance whist', which involved alternating rounds of whist with ballroom dancing? To prevent embarrassment, inept participants did not read whist books but instead studied and practiced the foxtrot, one step, and waltz. There was some purpose to the dancing component. The method of shifting pairs or individuals when playing progressive

whist was at the discretion of the host. There was no higher authority to dictate the rules. Dance whist seems to have had a component of musical chairs; when the music stopped a pair would sit down at the closest unoccupied table. When one uses the term 'movement', this movement really involved movement.

The enormous success of bridge in the twenties and thirties generated a major market for the one tool bridge players could not live without, playing cards. Jack Olsen, in *The Mad World of Bridge*, claims that by the 1930s more than fifty million decks of playing cards were being sold each year in America. This is an incredible level of sales. Many manufacturers tried to devise and market 'improved' playing cards, including cards in bizarre shapes and sizes. None of these innovations were successful, and most of these cards, though fine novelty items, were useless.

There were, however, some suggested variations on bridge that required unusual cards. Several small books were written on a five-suit version of bridge. In America the fifth suit of this sixty-five card deck was green and named 'eagles' while the fifth suit in England was called 'royals'. In general it tried to mimic standard contract bridge as much as possible. The 1938 rules used the modified trick values: clubs and diamonds 20, hearts and spades 25, eagles 30, and notrump 40.

Devices were invented to simplify the scoring process. Fig. 15 shows chips that were marketed under Culbertson's name. This had no advantage but it was another novelty item. Feeding off the popularity of bridge, even useless bridge novelty items were a success. A very popular item was a card shuffler, which was also manufactured under Culbertson's name. Several scoring devices remind one of a slide rule. One nice example appears in Fig. 16.

It is always possible to form hybrids of two or more games. Several combinations of golf and bridge were tried, since many people were interested in both. A game called 'golf bridge' involved a matchpoint system for the golf results on each hole, which were then combined with the bridge results. Culbertson's *Encyclopedia of Bridge* describes a game called 'contract golf'. Each pair or player bids the number of strokes they think they would need on a hole. If they provide the lower number and succeed they are well rewarded. If they fail to satisfy their 'contract', they are punished.

Most bridge players today are quite content with the variety generated by playing a pair event one day and a team event the next.

AFTERWORD
Bridge Evolution and Durability

I have arrived at my stopping point: 1948. The ACBL had been healthy for over a decade and was now in total control of the American laws. No organizations with the word 'whist' in their names had any power over bridge: the evolution from whist to bridge was complete. The majority of present-day ACBL members were already born by 1948, and therefore the years since then can be viewed as current events rather than as history.

In 1948, the United Nations had recently been formed and the united nations of bridge, with its new international rules, had also come into being. Culbertson was taking partial credit for both; he certainly deserved credit for bridge. From 1948 to today we have been in a period of bridge stability. All post-1948 rule changes have been minor. Bidding systems and conventions are always changing, so bridge cannot get stagnant. Technology has made some significant improvements by offering new options and conveniences. One can play and watch top-class players online. Computer-generated hands and hand records have increased the enjoyment of club and tournament play. Computer scoring has also been a wonderful improvement; not so long ago, club players would not get their results until late in the evening, or sometimes even the following day or week.

Developing bridge as we know it today was an international effort. No one country can take credit for 'creating' the game but dozens can take some credit for their role. England was a major player by virtue of whist. France made a great contribution with Boston, *mort*, and *plafond*. Two major United States contributions were the development of duplicate and the formation of powerful official organizations to help the game prosper. Even though the first documented duplicate play was in England, it was in the USA that it thrived. The first form of bridge clearly was influenced by Eastern European games played in Germany, Russia, and other Slavic nations. Where was bridge whist played first? Maybe in Turkey, but several other countries are possibilities. Very likely both auction bridge and contract bridge were played first in India. We cannot be sure. But in many ways, isn't this for the best? With bridge being presently played in over 100 nations, doesn't it add to the mystique that its history is an international mystery?

Whist/bridge is certainly resilient, and it has prospered through hardships. Rixi Markus has written about how she developed her bridge expertise during WWII, often in an English bomb shelter. When soldiers and sailors are not very busy they have a lot of free time, and use games for much-needed entertainment and distraction. There are many tales of prisoners of war using paper products to make crude decks of cards. The Great Depression created a perfect environment for the fledgling game of contract bridge — a cheap activity that required only a deck of cards, at a time when travel or even going to a movie was an impossible expense. The game provided a great distraction and time-filler for the unemployed workers and their families. An interesting example was Charles Darrow, an unemployed salesman and fix-it man. His hobbies were games and unsuccessful inventions. He invented an improved scorepad for bridge — at least 'improved' in his eyes — but nobody wanted it. His hobbies remained hobbies, not moneymakers. He had one child and his wife was expecting a second. Don't worry, this story has a happy ending. He used his free time to invent the game of Monopoly, and his royalties quickly made him a Depression era millionaire. I wonder what his bridge scorepad was like.

The association of bridge with gambling almost derailed the game in its early days, but that image was greater than the reality. Most players just played for small stakes in order to add some meaning to the game. Money just added a tangible reward for an achievement. Duplicate bridge with its no-dust trophies achieves that very successfully, offering great excitement without the need to play for money.

Recently I visited the former Alcatraz prison, in San Francisco. It seems bridge was quite popular with its renowned inmates, so I guess there was a finer class of criminal in the old days. Among the personal belongings I saw were green boxes from the Charles Goren version of Autobridge, his face prominently displayed on the top of the box. The inmates would play using four color dominoes rather than playing cards. This probably was done because they played in an outdoor courtyard, and the island has hurricane-strength winds even on the most beautiful of days. I saw an unofficial list of approved card games; bridge did not make the list. The administration may have feared that bridge meant gambling, thereby potentially generating fights. Possibly playing with dominoes was a way of getting round the rules. If any of my readers were incarcerated in Alcatraz and can answer the domino question, please let me know.

Part of the resilience of bridge is the simplicity of the equipment requirement. One only needs a deck of cards or a makeshift substitute. While writing this book, I considered using the title, *No*

Batteries Required. I liked that it emphasized that whist and bridge only need cards. Even at night, candlelight and gaslight worked fine for whist and early bridge. Actually, electricity and the technology it facilitates are the biggest threat to the status of bridge. All those darn newfangled devices, television, computers, etc., offer a large variety of entertainment. In my particular case, in a world without computers, I would be playing much more bridge. Without computers with their excellent word processing, I certainly would not have attempted writing a bridge book. The time I've spent writing my four books would have been spent at the bridge table. I hope readers are not thinking that it would have been better spent.

Improved methods of transportation have not been conducive to bridge. Taking a train across America or a ship to Europe was wonderful, since passengers had the time and the facilities for playing cards. Jules Verne included an obsessed whist player in *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Airplane travel is awful for bridge — for that matter it is awful for eating or any human comforts. Bridge itself is a wonderful traveling companion, though. When I find myself in a strange foreign city, a visit to a local club creates a familiar surrounding. Hospitality is always great. Even when once or twice I found myself the only English speaker in a club, someone would run to the phone and an English-speaking player without a partner would materialize.

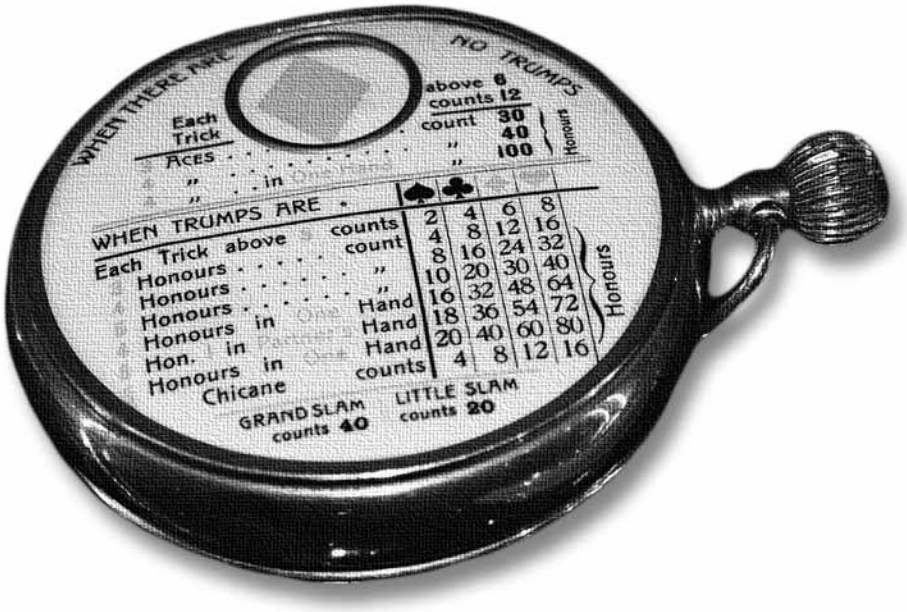
I have never liked or understood the meaning of the expression 'social bridge'. Definitions vary but one thing is clear: the term does not include duplicate play. I disagree: duplicate is the most social form of all. If two couples get together to play every week, they just socialize with each other. At duplicate your opponents change every 15 or 20 minutes. You meet new people. Some you may wish you had never met, but some will have the potential to be future friends. Recently a new method for dating has surfaced, called speed dating. Each participant spends about ten minutes talking to a prospective date and then moves on. How different is this from duplicate bridge? The goals are different but speed dating tends to use a Mitchell Movement. If very few participants show up, and they are open-minded to same-sex dating, they could use a Howell Movement.

We live in a period of social networking. Facebook has become a great success because Mark Zuckerberg appreciated the importance of introducing total strangers to one another. As a preteen, his first career move was to be a bridge caddy at local tournaments. He wasn't paid much as a caddy, but his education was literally worth billions. He witnessed the result of 300 years of social networking.

Bridge friendships and partnerships are age independent. When I was young, I had some partners almost two generations older than me. At my present age that is no longer possible, but I have played with teammates who were two generations younger. What other activity would allow a grandparent and a grandchild to compete together as equals?

When players enter a bridge event, they all start as equals. Their power, wealth, and accomplishments or lack of the above are left at the door. Whist players appreciated this equality, and writers often cited a famous story with that theme. In 1807, Napoleon created the kingdom of Westphalia in northern Germany from a region composed in part of captured former Prussian lands. The new kingdom had a total population of less than three million, so it was not one of his greatest accomplishments. While playing whist against the newly appointed king of Westphalia, Napoleon gathered in a trick that he had not won. The king shot back, '*Sire, on ne joue pas ici en conquérant*,' ('Sire, it is not the custom here to play as a conqueror'). The laws of King Hoyle were more powerful than those of any emperor.

APPENDICES


WHEN THERE ARE NO TRUMPS
above 6 counts 12
Each Trick
Aces . . . . . count 30
" . . . " 40
" . . . in " 100
Honours
WHEN TRUMPS ARE
Each Trick above counts count
Honours . . . . . "
Honours . . . . . "
Honours . . . . . Hand
Honours in Hand
Hon. in Hand
Honours in counts
Chicane
GRAND SLAM counts 40
LITTLE SLAM counts 20
2 4 6 8
4 8 12 16
8 16 24 32
10 20 30 40
16 32 48 64
18 36 54 72
20 40 60 80
4 8 12 16
Honours

APPENDIX 1
The Mathematics of Whist

It was mentioned on page 48 that the mathematical tools of probability were more applicable to the game of whist than the game of bridge. I will start with an example to justify this statement.

Suppose you are on opening lead defending against a spade contract. You hold two small trump cards and ♥Kx. Envisioning your partner holding ♥Axx your adrenalin starts flowing at the thought of leading the king, continuing with the small heart and ruffing the third round. You can already anticipate the look of admiration on your partner's face and the word 'brilliant' flying through his lips. But what if partner holds three small hearts? Now words may still be flying through your partner's lips but 'brilliant' will not be one of them — unless he's giving you the advice, 'Don't try to be so brilliant!'

The gambler lurking in any cardplayer's head will be tempted to try. The whist player can base the question of whether partner has the ace solely on mathematics. Let's first assume that trumps were set as spades without revealing a turn-up card. Each of the other three players is equally likely to hold the ♥A so the probability that your partner was dealt that ace is 1/3. Let us now suppose that trumps have been selected by turning over dealer's last card. Clearly that card was not the ♥A, as hearts would have been trumps rather than spades. In this case dealer has only 12 cards that are not known to the opening leader. Therefore the ace is either one of the 12 other cards dealt to dealer or 13 cards dealt to dealer's partner or 13 cards dealt to your partner. Since there are 38 (12+13+13) equally likely places where the ace can be located, the probability that partner was dealt the ace is now 13/38. Slightly more than the value obtained in the prior case.

If we replace the whist table with the bridge table, this calculation is no longer appropriate. Suppose your hand consists of 7 high card points and the opponents think enough of their cards to bid a small slam. Clearly there is an extremely small chance that your partner has any ace, let alone the ♥A. You would have to be an incredible optimist to lead the king. Suppose the opponents stopped at the two-level and you again have 7 points. Now your partner rates to have some nice cards and leading the king is not ridiculous but still a big gamble. If your partner has bid hearts, the opening lead is totally justified.

This example demonstrates that since the bidding in bridge provides so much information to the opening leader, any mathematics based on equally likely possibilities loses its value. At whist, the lack of information for the first few tricks results in probability being of great importance for decision-making. As the whist hand progresses with cards revealed and signals thrown about, information trumps probability.

In the prior example, the location of the ♥Q becomes very important if partner lacks the ace. Partner's queen may save you from looking foolish and may result in your lead of the king still being brilliant. Therefore, whist players were often concerned with the probability that partner has at least one of two possible cards. The obvious intuitive answer of just adding the probability of partner having the ace to the probability that partner has the queen is wrong, wrong, wrong! It is not that simple.

Hoyle's mathematics was accurate although there is no record of him having any personal training in the subject. He profited from the excellent parasitic relationship that existed between gamblers and mathematicians. Gamblers would bring interesting problems and undisclosed financial support to mathematicians. Mathematicians would help gamblers design games and tell them which side was favored in existing games. Many of the greatest mathematicians were involved. The French were great gamblers, something which helped them dominate the early study of probability. A famous correspondence between Blaise Pascal and Pierre de Fermat took place in 1654. It was prompted by the gambler Chevalier de Mere approaching Pascal with questions about probability when rolling dice. One important question gamblers were concerned with was the unfinished game. Suppose A is ahead of B by some score and is likely to win. B suddenly falls ill or remembers it is his wedding anniversary. He has to terminate the game and head home. What should B pay A? The answer is obviously dependent on the score and the likelihood of each player winning from that point forward. The early days of probability treated the subject as a science. The mathematicians would test their theories through extensive experimentation. The gamblers would notice unexpected results and bring it to the attention of mathematicians.

The natural question for whist mathematics is, 'Who or what helped Hoyle in his 1743 work?' The great mathematician, Abraham de Moivre (1667-1754), is probably the answer. Was he another Frenchman? Yes and no. De Moivre was very French but not quite French enough; he was a French Protestant (Huguenot). After the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685, he must have felt like an un-

wanted guest to say the least. Historians believe he was imprisoned for a few years but ended up in London at the age of twenty or twenty-one. France's loss was England's gain. This is an early example of a country rich with experts losing its advantage via a 'brain drain'. In England de Moivre became a mathematics teacher and tutor. His office appeared to have been the London coffee houses. I picture him sitting behind a sign 'MATHEMATICIAN FOR HIRE. CHEAP WORK.' I'm sure when business was slow he would kibitz a few hands of whist. He was at least in the perfect setting.

De Moivre's famous work, *The Doctrine of Chances* (1718), on games and gambling was a true classic, and Hoyle was probably familiar with the second edition which appeared in 1738. This edition not only dealt with games of cards and dice but included several sections on annuities and insurance. One could justify calling this book the start of actuarial science. De Moivre investigated the question of the probability of holding a specific number of honors for the dealing side and the eldest hand side. He refers to the dealer's side as 'The two dealers'. A few pages are devoted to computing the five cases. The dealer's side can hold 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 honors. The dealer's side is very likely to hold the majority, since the turn-up card will dictate trumps, and the probability is 4/13 that the turn-up card will be an honor.

Hoyle's 1743 book dealt with two important types of probability issues. One type considered the following family of questions: what is the probability that partner holds exactly one out of two specific cards, what is the probability that partner holds one or two out of three specific cards? The other type dealt with the general problem of prematurely terminated games. For example, suppose the score is 8 to 3, what is the probability that each side will win? This type of question is not just useful for prematurely terminating games but for allowing additional betting to take place between hands when one side is already ahead of the other. Wonderful for late-arriving kibitzers.

I have stated earlier that I was less impressed by William Payne's book than Hoyle's. Payne covers the same two issues but in his effort to simplify he introduces some ambiguity. For example, his first statement is: 'It is about 5 to 4, that your partner holds one card out of any two' (*Maxims for Playing the Game of Whist*). Does this mean exactly one card or at least one of the two cards? Hoyle wrote, 'That he has One of them only, is 31 to 26' (*A Short Treatise*). The word 'only' indicates exactly one. Consider our example at the beginning of this Appendix. You will not look foolish if your partner holds either the ♥A or the ♥Q, and of course you will not look foolish if partner has both.

My favorite book explaining whist probabilities was written by William Pole in 1883. The book title is rather pompous: *The Philosophy of Whist: An essay on the Scientific and Intellectual Aspects of the Modern Game*. Part II (125 pages), 'The Philosophy of Whist Probabilities', clearly explains the subject.

Both probability and odds represent the likelihood of an event. Unfortunately they are often stated incorrectly. Mathematicians prefer to work with probabilities. Gamblers prefer odds, as working with odds enables a convenient way to express payoffs. Suppose the probability of an outcome is 3/5. Then the odds that it will occur are 3 to 2. In a fair game, someone who bets on the outcome occurring should risk $3 for a payoff of $2 (or any multiple, such as risk $18 for a payoff of $12).

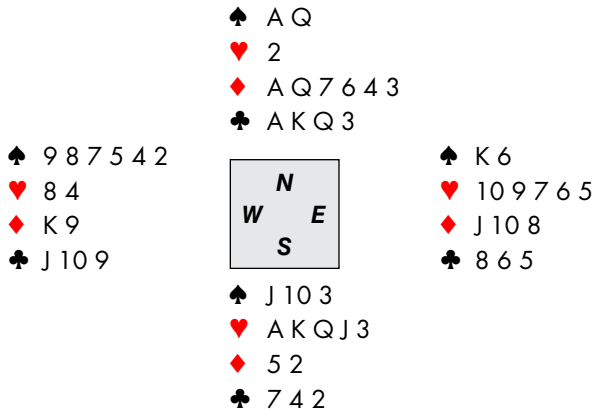
If you want an introduction to bridge-related probabilities, I would of course recommend my book *A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play*. The two Appendices contain over thirty pages on the topic. Appendix 1 is Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Probability. Appendix 2 is Much More Than You Ever Wanted to Know About Probability.

APPENDIX 2
Clay's Famous 1864 Vienna Coup

The expression 'double dummy' originally referred to a two-player form of whist where two dummies were exposed on the table. A player would in effect know the location of all fifty-two cards since thirty-nine were either in a player's hand or exposed on the table, so the remaining thirteen had to be in the one hand that was not visible. Eventually the term took on the meaning of solving either whist or (later) bridge problems with the knowledge of where every card is located.

Double dummy analysis allowed whist players to study rather sophisticated squeezes. They did not call them squeeze plays since that term was not coined till the 1920s by Sidney Lenz. In the days of whist, a squeeze was usually called 'a coup'. On page 83 I provided an example from James Clay's 1864 book of a squeeze/coup that had been solved double dummy by a top Viennese player. It involves two simple squeezes, one followed by the other, against the same defender, the second squeeze requiring a Vienna Coup. This hand is the origin of the name Vienna Coup even though it is clear that the term was meant to refer to the whole deal rather than merely the unblocking play.

This extremely famous and impressive squeeze is mentioned in several Hoyle books from the late 1860s and 1870s. The title of the section in *The American Hoyle* that contains the deal is, 'Great Vienna Coup at Double Dumby'. This book shows the honors but does not indicate the spot cards. Below is a version with specific spot cards from George Coffin's book *Endplays in Bridge*. We saw that in the 1864 version the spot cards were not specified.



Clubs are trumps and the opening lead is from the North hand. North-South must win all thirteen tricks. Remember that we are doing double-dummy analysis, so South knows that clubs split 3-3, the diamond finesse will succeed, etc.

North-South have eleven winners (one spade, four hearts, two diamonds, four clubs). Cash the four club winners, thereby squeezing East on the fourth trick. If East discards a spade, the ace drops the king, and North-South have two more spade winners for all thirteen tricks. If East discards a diamond, North-South can finesse the ♦Q and win several additional diamond tricks, so East must discard a heart. This will allow North-South to cash the ♠A and run five heart tricks. The fifth heart winner will squeeze East on the tenth trick.

North-South executed two squeezes. When the first squeeze card is played, North-South can discard without consideration of the card played by a defender. For the second squeeze a Vienna Coup was required, and North-South's new winner from the first squeeze functions as the squeeze card for the second squeeze. Very irritating for East! This occurs since that defender is guarding threat cards in three suits. Sometimes this type of squeeze is called a triple squeeze, a progressive squeeze or a repeating squeeze.

Doubly-dummy analysis is actually on the rise. Most bridge events provide readers with hand records, even at the club level. Players are provided with information about what contracts can be made by a computer playing double dummy. Very often, I am asked how one can make some contract. Often I respond that the computer cheats. With total knowledge of the defenders' cards, the computer will forgo the percentage play for the winning play. It never loses a finesse to a singleton king. Two-way finesses for the queen are a snap.

APPENDIX 3
The Biritch or Russian Whist Publication

This famous document was first discussed on page 144. Here are the full contents of its four pages:

BIRITCH, OR RUSSIAN WHIST

VALUE OF THE CARDS

- The value of the cards is the same as at short whist.
- Tricks are taken in the same manner, and the odd tricks, over and above six, are counted as at short whist.

METHOD OF PLAYING

- There are four players as at short whist, the cutting for partners, shuffling and dealing is the same, *except that no card is turned up for trumps*.
- The dealer, after the cards have been looked at, has the option of declaring the suit he elects for trumps, or of saying "pass," in which latter case his partner *must* declare a suit for trumps.
- In either case of the dealer or his partner declaring, the one declaring may, instead of declaring trumps, say "biritch," which means that the hands shall be played *without trumps*.
- After the declaration of trumps, or "biritch," either of the adversaries may say "contre," in which case the value of all tricks taken is *doubled*, the dealer or his partner may however thereupon say "sur contre," in which latter case the value of all the tricks taken is *quadrupled*, and so on *ad infinitum* the doubling of the last established value may go on until one side ceases to call a "sur" to the previous "sur contreing."
- When the declaration has been made, and the "contreing" and "sur contreing" (if any) have ceased, the person to the left of the dealer leads a card.
- Then the partner of the dealer exposes all his cards, on the table, which are played by the dealer as at *Dummy* Whist.
- No *suggestions* as to play may be made by the one standing out (Dummy) to the dealer.

- A *revoke* counts the same as at Short Whist, but the exposed hand cannot revoke.
- A *misdeal* does not change the deal, but in such cases the cards must be re-shuffled, re-cut, and re-dealt.
- After each rubber there is a fresh cut for partners.

GAMES AND RUBBERS

- A *game* is won by the first side which scores *in play* 30 points. The honours do not score towards the game.
- The *Rubber* consists, as at Short Whist, of two games out of three.

SCORING

- The *odd tricks* count as follows —

If "Biritch" is declared	. . . each 10 points.
If "Hearts" are made trumps	. . . each 8 points.
If "Diamonds" are made trumps	. . . each 6 points.
If "Clubs" are made trumps	. . . each 4 points.
If "Spades" are made trumps	. . . each 2 points.

- If *all* the tricks are taken by one side they add 40 extra points. This is called "Grand Slamm."
- If *all* the tricks *but one* are taken by one side they add 20 extra points. This is called "Petit Slamm."
- The *winners* of each rubber add 40 points to their score. This is called "Consolation."
- There are *four honours* if "Biritch" is declared, which are the *four aces.*
- Equality in aces counts nothing.

3 aces	= 3 tricks.
4 aces	= 4 tricks.
4 aces in one hand . . .	= 8 tricks.

- There are *five honours*, viz:—Ace, King, Queen, Knave and Ten, if *trumps* are declared.

Simple honours (3) . .	= 2 tricks.
4 honours . . .	= 4 tricks.
4 honours (in one hand)	= 8 tricks.
5 honours	= 1 trick. (Additional to the score for four honours.)

- The honour points are of equal value to the other points, except that they do not affect the games or rubbers, and are not doubled by a "contre."
- If one hand has *no trumps* (trumps having been declared) his side, in the case of it scoring honours, adds the value of simple honours to its honour score, or, in the case of the other side scoring honours, the value of simple honours is deducted from the latter's score. This is called "Chicane."

APPENDIX 4
Suggested Readings on the History of Bridge

A complete bibliography of over 200 publications is available online at www.masterpointpress.com. It contains the source documents with specific page references of quotes.

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Anyone interested in collecting old whist or bridge whist books will find the 1905 bibliography created by Frederic Jessel essential.

Index of Names and Games

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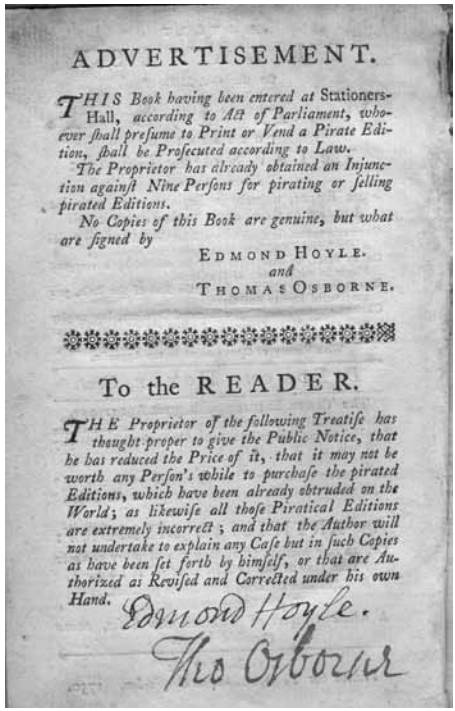

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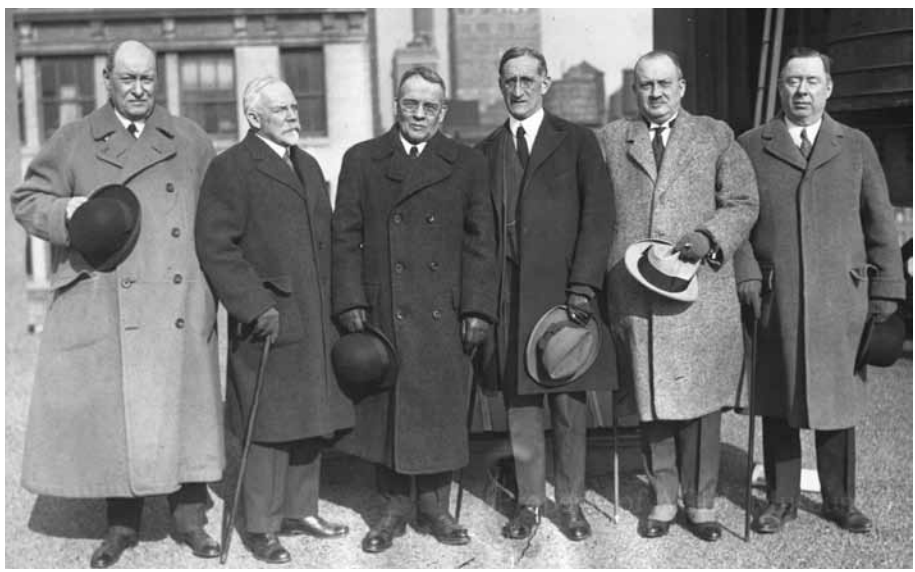
1. 1750 book with both Hoyle's and his publisher's signatures.

2a. Ely Culbertson.

2b. Cavendish.



3. (l-r) Milton Work, Robert Foster, E.V. Shepard, Sidney Lenz, Wilbur Whitehead, Gratz M. Scott.

4. The Duke of Norfolk playing living whist.

5. Pointer-type trump indicator.

6. Wheel-type trump indicator.

7. Flag-type trump indicator.

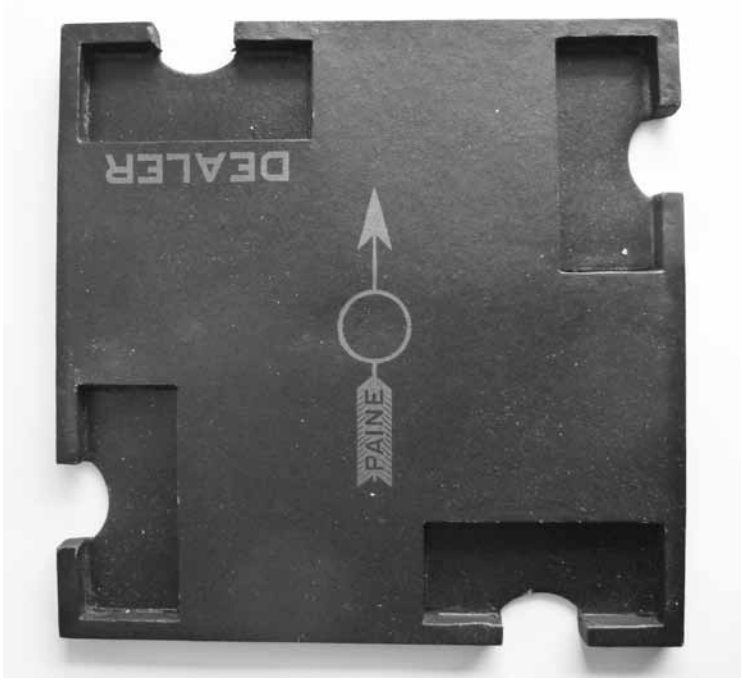
8. Further examples of trump indicators.

9. Turning counter.

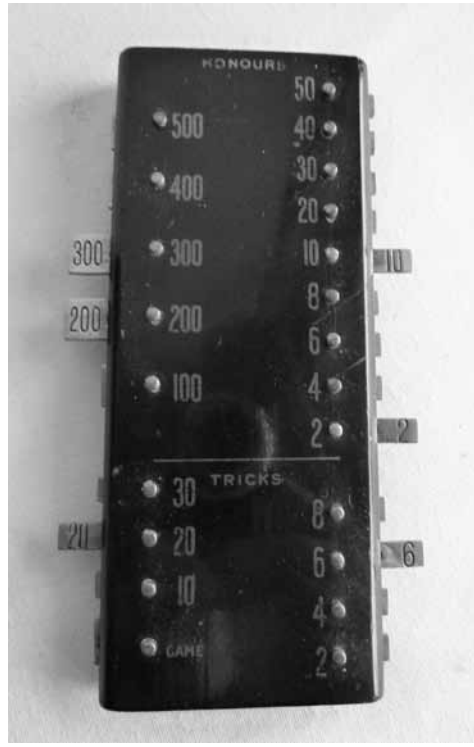
10. Two examples of dial counters.

11. Pall-Mall whist marker indicating a score of 7.

12. The beautiful Japanese Shibayama whist marker.

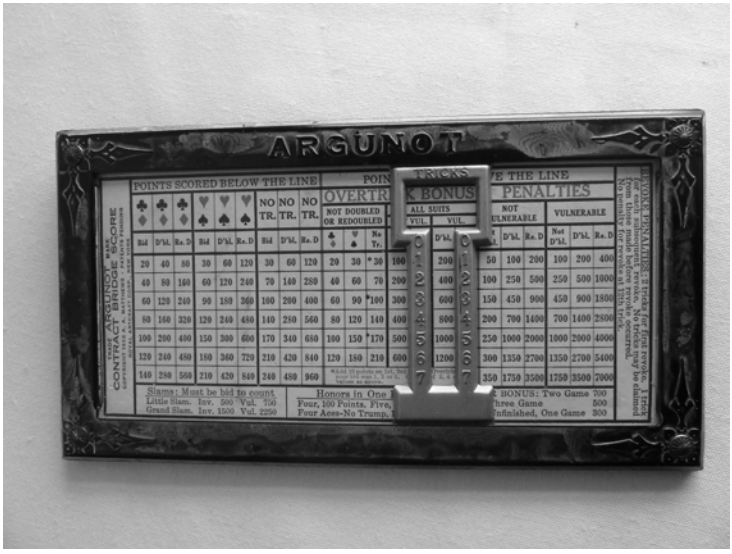


13. Front and back of the Paine Duplicate Whist Tray.



14. The spring-loaded 'Klik' Bridge Marker.

15. Culbertson bridge chips.



16. A slide rule-type scoring device.

17. Bumblepuppies desperately searching for alternative forms of amusement.

GENERAL INTEREST

It is to be regretted that bridge has found its way also to America, and that many of our whist-players have yielded to its temptations.

William Mill Butler, 1899

It is to be hoped that a satisfactory method of playing bridge in duplicate will be found, and when it is… we shall have a perfect game of cards.

R. F. Foster, 1900

The nineteenth century belonged to whist, the twentieth century to bridge — but where did bridge come from, and why did it take over? Follow the trail as, with many detours, it winds through duplicate whist, Boston, Swedish whist, Russian whist or 'biritch', bridge whist, auction bridge and *plafond* to contract bridge, and finally (thanks to Harold Vanderbilt) becomes essentially the game we play today.

Along the way, you'll meet the fascinating and colorful characters who popularized each game, played it, taught it, and wrote about it — Hoyle, Cavendish, Elwell, Foster, Work, Culbertson, Goren, and many, many others — and see how these writers facilitated each transition from one game to the next. You'll discover, too, how society was impacted, as attitudes changed towards gambling, leisure time and the role of women, and how traces of these early games can still be found in our everyday language.

JULIAN LADERMAN, Ph.D., is a retired applied mathematics professor (Lehman College, City University of New York). His books include two American Bridge Teachers' Association Book of the Year Award winners: **A Bridge to Simple Squeezes**, which won in 2006 and **A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play**, which won in 2009.

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