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GEORGE BUSH

July 18, 1995

1918

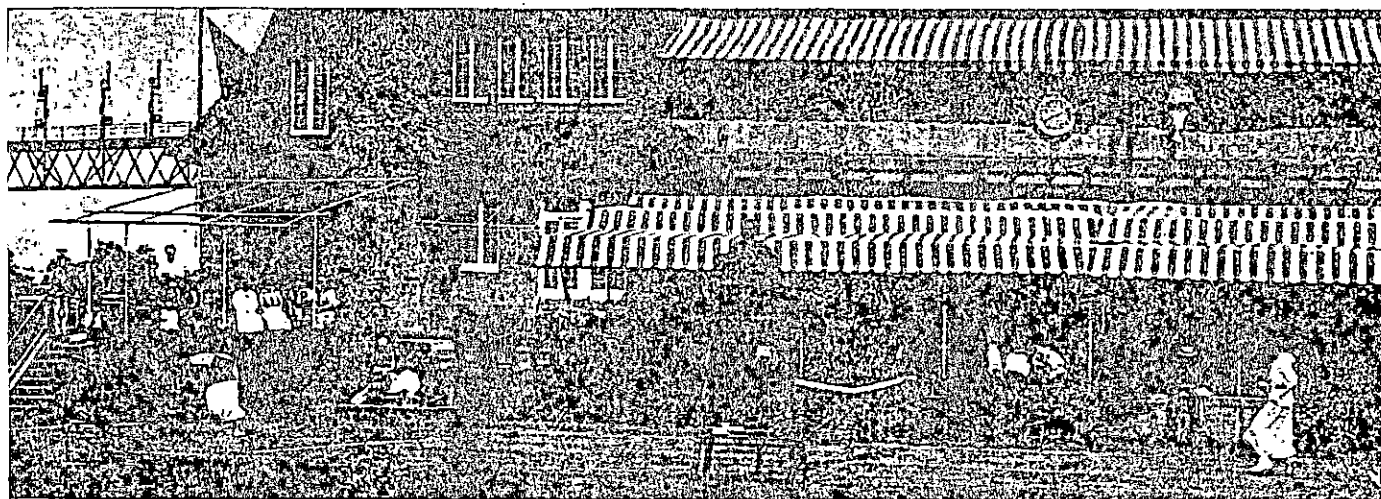
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Not the date on this article. Mother (Dorothy Walker) was runned up in first National Girls tennis championship. see p.105.

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WOMEN'S METROPOLITAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Final round on the exhibition court of the West Side T. C., Forest Hills, N. Y.—Miss Molla Bjurstedt at left versus Miss Eleanor Goss.

31st Annual Women's Championship

Four Titles Are Won, Including One for Girls—
Miss Molla Bjurstedt Wins the Challenge Bowl

MISS Molla Bjurstedt, of Norway and New York, won the women's singles championship by successfully defending her title against Miss Eleanor Goss of New York in the challenge round of the singles event. Her win was in straight sets. It was her third successive win of the championship (the 1917 patriotic meeting not counting), and she thus bracketed her name with those of Miss Juliette P. Atkinson, Miss Elisabeth H. Moore, Miss Hazel Hotchkiss and Miss Mary K. Browne, all of whom had won the title three times. The doubles championship was won by Miss Goss and Miss Marion Zinderstein, the latter of New York, Miss Bjurstedt and Mrs. Johan Rogge of Norway being the runners-up. In the mixed Mrs. George W. Wightman (formerly Miss Hazel Hotchkiss) and Irving C. Wright of Boston won from Miss Bjurstedt and Fred B. Alexander.

A fourth championship was added this year—that for Girls. It was won by Miss Catherine Porter of Philadelphia, who beat Miss Dorothy Walker of the same city. The Eastern Doubles was the fifth event, and it was won by Percy S. Osborne and Wallace Rhoades, both of Philadelphia. They beat Irving C. Wright and W. Herbert Abbott of Boston in five sets in the final round.

The meeting (which was the thirty-first women's championship, was held as usual on the turf courts of the Philadelphia Cricket Club, St. Martins, Chestnut Hill, Pa., during the

week of June 17. All five events were disposed of by Saturday night, and everything went through without a hitch. Considering that we are at war, and that nothing is normal, the tournament was a success. The entry list was a fairly good one, the conduct



Miss Molla Bjurstedt at left and Miss Eleanor Goss

of the meeting was beyond criticism, and there was plenty of good play. The influx of young blood was especially noticeable and gratifying.

Miss Katherine Porter gave an inkling of her capabilities by beating Mrs. A. D. Smoker in the first round, 7-5, 6-0; while in the second round Miss Dorothy Walker won from Miss Rudderow, 6-1,

6-2. Miss Clare Cassel had a close match with Mrs. Rogge and by being a little more aggressive won at 6-4, 9-7. Miss Helen Ledoux of Swarthmore revealed promise, winning from Miss Annie Townsend at 7-9, 6-4, 6-1. Mrs. H. B. Huff took the first set from Mrs. J. F. Betz, 3rd, but the latter's sharply angled shots enabled her to take the next two.

Miss Walker advanced another round by putting out Mrs. J. F. Bailey in straight sets. Miss Pollak met stout opposition from Miss Mary Trayer for one set, but then romped home; and Miss Cassel won from Mrs. Candee in the same manner. The Miss Ledoux-Mrs. Herold, Miss Hooker-Mrs. Betz and Mrs. Weaver-Mrs. Payne matches were all close, the last mentioned requiring three sets.

But the sensational match of this, the third round, had Miss Eleanor Sears and Miss Zinderstein as opponents. It began Tuesday morning and was stopped at 4-all by rain. Upon play being resumed Wednesday, Miss Sears led at 6-5, but Miss Zinderstein was equal to the emergency and by taking three games in succession, won the set. She was at her best, and it seemed to be her match. But Miss Sears is not easily beaten, and she won the next set with something to spare, taking full advantage of Miss Zinderstein's unsteadiness. In the third set Miss Zinderstein rallied and was brilliant at times; but she was also erratic and Miss Sears' steadiness told in the end, taking the set at 6-4. It was a notable and an earned victory.

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Miss Sears.

Only one set in the fourth round was very close. In it Miss Cassel won from Miss Sears, quite unexpectedly to most people, at 6-8, 6-2, 6-4. Straight-set wins fell to Miss Goss and Miss Cassel in the semi-final rounds. Miss Ledoux did very well against Miss Goss, being beaten only at 6-3, 6-4. Miss Pollak surpassed herself against Miss Cassel, winning at 6-3, 6-0. In the second set she played almost without an error, and her drives were going finely. Miss Cassel was below her form of the day before.

It was a little past 4 o'clock when Miss Goss and Miss Pollak appeared on the court for the final round match. Neither wore spiked shoes. Miss Pollak started the service and quickly lost the game, erring badly and being baffled by the hard drives sent over by Miss Goss. At 2-all Miss Pollak slipped and fell, and again she lost her service. From this point Miss Goss went right on, taking the set at 6-2. She was pressing Miss Pollak with forceful shots, and occasionally sending over a chop, which bothered her opponent considerably. Miss Pollak was unable to bring off her drives with any consistency.

The tennis improved slightly in the second set, but there were still plenty of errors by both players. At 2-all first Miss Pollak and then Miss Goss were broken through; Miss Pollak then won her own delivery, playing very much better. Miss Pollak got to 5-3 by taking her opponent's service and playing perhaps her best tennis in the match. She now had her opportunity, and playing very determinedly she got to set point. Twice she served a ball that Miss Goss failed to get back, but both serves were called faults. In one case Miss Pollak felt certain that the service was good, and the consensus of opinion supports her; in the other the call of "fault" was indistinct, and confusion resulted. The two occurrences threw Miss Pollak quite off her game and Miss Goss quickly ran out the set. Miss Goss was clearly superior except in the period just referred to, and she fully deserved the win.

It was not championship tennis by any means, both players erring frequently and losing many chances. Miss Goss excelled in her service, her drives and most of her volleys and in the versatility of her play; but she was streaky overhead and at the net and her court covering left something to be desired. Miss Pollak's service was mediocre and her net work, on the few occasions when she was drawn in, was distinctly bad. She depended almost entirely on her driving and her speed of foot; but many of her drives went away out of court, and much of her scoring was done on Miss Goss' errors. Yet there were good moments, well placed shots and spirited rallies eliciting applause from the gallery.

The weather was cool and the sky overcast and indicative of rain. There was a strong breeze, which bothered the players considerably.

It was 2.50 when Miss Bjurstedt and Miss Goss came on the court. The champion began serving and Miss Goss drove the first delivery to the sideline in fine fashion. Her driving was too exuberant, however, for she drove out twice, and Miss Bjurstedt took the game. The second game was hers also, for she had control almost from the start, while Miss Goss was missing narrowly. The service counted for little, as both players were losing it with some frequency; Miss Bjurstedt, when she led at 5-1, erred badly, losing her service instead of taking the set. Miss Goss was improving and the gallery was quick to recognize the fact and encourage her. Four balls put into the net lost Miss Bjurstedt the eighth game, and she traveled the same route in the ninth, again dropping her service. Score 5-4, Miss Bjurstedt leads. At 0.30 Miss Goss slipped and fell on the court just as she was preparing to ace an easy return; and before she could recover her composure Miss Bjurstedt had taken the two points necessary and the set was hers at 6-4.

The tennis was good only in spots, and Miss Bjurstedt was so completely master of the situation that it was difficult to be enthusiastic. Both girls made many and bad errors, although each was brilliant at times.

Miss Bjurstedt jumped into a 3-0 lead in the second set, taking Miss Goss' service in the second game. Miss Bjurstedt then had another erring streak and dropped two games. In the sixth game Miss Bjurstedt again broke through, although both were making mistake after mistake. Miss Goss won one more game and then Miss Bjurstedt ran it out at 6-3 rather easily.

The second set was even more disappointing than the first. It was not that the play was dull and monotonous, for it was quite the contrary; each player made fine shots, and Miss Bjurstedt's in particular came just when she seemed to be in difficulties. At such times she was her real self, master of court strategy as it applies to her game, eager and fairly sure of making the shot she attempted. But such periods were the rule rather than the exception, and she was in constant need of being wakened up. Miss Goss, on the other hand, was always wide awake and trying hard, but she did not have control of the ball and many of her mistakes were prodigious ones. She always looked as if she might become dangerous, but she never did.

Mrs. Wightman and Miss Sears overwhelmed Miss Cassel and Miss Pollak in the first set, but the latter pair improved materially in the second, forcing

their opponents to an 8-6 score. In the third round Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Weaver suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Miss Bjurstedt and Mr. Rogge; Mrs. Weaver was quite unable to bring off her shots. Mrs. Kerbaugh and Mrs. Herold played on even terms against Miss Ballin and Mrs. Candee for two sets, but weakened in the third. But the surprise of the round was the defeat of Mrs. Wightman and Miss Sears by Miss Goss and Miss Zinderstein. The former pair took the first set as was expected, the score being 6-4; but then they stopped completely—or, rather, Miss Goss and Miss Zinderstein went on. They played excellent tennis, working well together and being very aggressive. There was a surprise in store for those who expected to Miss Goss and Miss Zinderstein to go right through Miss Ballin and Miss Candee. The latter pair won the first set at 7-5 and lost the second by the same score. It was a good and very even contest to the point. But in the third set Miss Goss and Miss Zinderstein put on steam and won at 6-1.

It was not until 5.30 that the four players came on the court for the final round of the women's doubles championship, Miss Goss having played her final round singles with Miss Pollak. The weather was so bad that there was some doubt whether it was advisable to start. A little rain had fallen and it was dark and windy; and as Mrs. Rogge wore glasses she would be seriously handicapped if much rain fell. But play began, and fortunately the rain held off until the match was finished.

A battle was confidently expected, and for once expectations were realized—and a little more. Miss Bjurstedt and Mrs. Rogge played tennis that would ordinarily have landed them winners, for they have the experience and the skill to achieve victory against most players. But the younger pair, Miss Goss and Miss Zinderstein, were on their mettle, and they treated the gallery to a display of tennis that was exhilarating, full of life and sparkle and marked by striking originality. This was especially true of Miss Zinderstein's game. Her tactics were entirely her own, and she made continual use of a backhand stroke that was a delight to watch. She was full of pep and very eager to win. Miss Goss made an ideal partner for her and was equally keen.

Things started badly for the youngsters. Miss Goss lost her service in the first game, and her example was catching for Miss Zinderstein dropped hers, ending with two double faults and looking completely disgusted with herself. Miss Bjurstedt and Mrs. Rogge went on to 4-0, paused and then got to 5-2, where they stopped completely. Miss Goss had trouble winning her service in the fifth game,

Mrs. Rogge lobbing beautifully to the backhand corner. But at 4-1 Mrs. Rogge was broken through, Miss Goss varying her drive with a chop that bothered Mrs. Rogge greatly. In the seventh game Miss Zinderstein made three double faults in succession, and then a few more at intervals, but the game was finally tucked away in spite of them. Then Miss Bjurstedt's delivery was taken from her, this result being due chiefly to a sudden erratic streak she developed. Miss Goss again had trouble winning her service, but finally did so, and then Mrs. Rogge fell by the wayside through repeated errors, and the score was 5-all. The remainder of the set was easy, Miss Zinderstein getting her serves in for a change; and Miss Bjurstedt was again broken through this time at love. The younger players scented victory, while Miss Bjurstedt and Mrs. Rogge were half demoralized.

It was a splendid pull-up and an earned victory in a set that seemed lost. Miss Goss' play was sound and result-producing; but it was Miss Zinderstein who "pulled" the fireworks. She played left court and took everything possible on her backhand, getting pace and sharp angles on her returns, which she followed in and volleyed like—well, like a Hazel Hotchkiss.

Again Miss Bjurstedt and Mrs. Rogge jumped into a lead in the second set. They took Miss Goss' service again, and treated Miss Zinderstein in the same disrespectful manner. A lead of 3-2 was established, but the loss of Mrs. Rogge's service evened matters, and thereafter they were never in front. The seventh game was bitterly fought for, but Mrs. Rogge's errors more than matched Miss Zinderstein's faults. Miss Zinderstein played even more aggressively in the next game and Miss Bjurstedt dropped her service. Leading at 5-3 and with Miss Goss serving it seemed to be over, but she was broken through in a game that abounded in rallies of the most exciting kind, all four players taking part in them. Mrs. Rogge won her own delivery and the score was 5-all. To 6-all the fighting was bitter and even, and then Miss Zinderstein stepped into the breach again. She found that there was just room enough between Mrs. Rogge at the net and Miss Bjurstedt back, and she crossed the ball at a sharp angle right into that spot again and again. At 7-6 Miss Goss ran it out, Mrs. Rogge losing the last point by failing to return a ball that dropped right on the baseline.

The victory was a deserved one, and the credit for it is pretty nearly evenly divided between Miss Goss and Miss Zinderstein. The latter was the more spectacular and she got most of the

applause—except when she double-faulted, when the gallery suffered with her; but Miss Goss worked hard, was very reliable, and frequently came across with the punch when it was most needed. Mrs. Rogge was the weakest of the four players, but it should be recorded that her many errors were very apparent, while the excellence of her play escaped many of the gallery.

In the first round of the mixed Miss Thomson and W. S. Thomson had a tidy little argument with Miss Barbara Hooker and E. H. Hooker—father and daughter against father and daughter. The Philadelphians won in three sets.



Miss Bjurstedt receiving the Wissahickon Challenge trophy from Joseph M. Jennings

The Thomsons continued their progress by taking Miss Carpenter and J. R. Carpenter, Jr. (another daughter and father combination) into camp after losing the second set. The other matches in this round were one-sided; as were the semi-final matches.

The mixed got under way at a little past 4 o'clock. Wright began the service and won it comfortably. To the general surprise Alexander lost his, showing a weakness overhead that is very unusual. His smashes went out by many yards, and for a long time he could not get them down. But Mrs. Wightman was broken through after deuce, so matters were evened. Mrs. Wightman and Wright were working together very smoothly and forcing matters at every opportunity. The rallies became more frequent, and sometimes the four players would be at the net with the ball going back and forth like lightning. The Bostonians got to 5-3 by capturing Miss Bjurstedt's service, and won the set on Wright's delivery.

While it was good tennis, it was

streaky and not quite up to expectations. Alexander was much less accurate than usual, and as the match progressed this had an influence on Miss Bjurstedt and she fell off somewhat. But the real trouble was on the other side of the net. Mrs. Wightman and Wright were going great guns, the former playing as she had done in the Hazel Hotchkiss days and the latter revealing a mixed doubles game that was better than anything he has done.

The second set opened better for Miss Bjurstedt and Alexander, they taking the first game. Mrs. Wightman's splendid overhead work did much to even matters in the second game, and then Miss Bjurstedt's service was wrested from her. Alexander got going well in the fifth game, which he served out at love by almost perfect shots. It looked as if they would draw level, for Wright was 0-40, only to open his box of tricks and fool Miss Bjurstedt with cut serves and other heavily rotated shots. The ninth game was a crucial one. Errors were plentiful, but Alexander's smashing of lofts finally won the game for his side. Wright served it out, Miss Bjurstedt netting for the last point.

Had not so much been expected of it, the match would have been regarded as a good one from every point of view. But it was apparent from start to finish that Miss Bjurstedt and Alexander were beaten unless something very unexpected happened. Mrs. Wightman was the star, and the way she covered court and kept boring in to the net, there volleying and smashing with all the dash and skill of the born mixed doubles player, was a sight worth going far to see. Wright backed her up to the minute, his only fault being an over-eagerness to do things. Alexander was far from being in his best mood. It was not that he did not try or work hard enough; but he could not make the ball behave as he is usually able to do, and that was a fatal fault when facing such a pair. Miss Bjurstedt was not at either her best or her worst, but she was in a following rather than a leading mood, and on the day Alexander was not like the great Macedonian whose name-sake he is.

An historical event of no little importance was the first Girls' National Championship. In this year the entry list was naturally rather meagre, and most of the competitors came from Philadelphia, where the meeting was held.

As was fitting, the playing of the final round, which was to produce the first Girl Champion, was made a feature of the meeting. It was staged on the Championship court in front of the main clubhouse, immediately preceding the final

round in singles, early Friday afternoon. Vice President Julian S. Myrick had just come over from New York, and in recognition of his efforts to inaugurate the Girls' event he was asked to score the match. There was a full corps of linesmen, just as in the challenge round of the singles, and a considerable part of the gallery was made up of friends and adherents of the players, who were liberal in their applause and keenly attentive to the play. In fact, everybody seemed to realize the significance of the match, and it was followed with the closest attention.

For the first few games both Miss Porter and Miss Walker were nervous, and the fact was apparent in their play. But they gradually concentrated on the game and the play improved very materially. It was uneven right to the end, and the youth and tournament inexperience of the players was very evident. They made many mistakes, some of them very glaring; but it should be borne in mind that in this review of the match it is criticised as a Championship final, and not as a contest between two girls still well in their teens.

Miss Porter won the first set by clearly superior play. She was so much better than Miss Walker that the second set seemed to be a foregone conclusion. But Miss Walker improved markedly in the second set, and for 14 games she fought determinedly for the mastery. She led at 4-3, 5-4 and 6-5, but Miss Porter came back strong and ultimately ran it out at 8-6, amid great excitement and hearty applause for a well fought and close match. Miss Porter deserved her victory, and was clearly the better player; but her advantage was a slight one, and the slightest faltering on her part in the second set would have invited disaster.

Inquiry by the editor made it plain that George Kerr, the Philadelphia Cricket Clubs professional, is responsible for no small part of the skill of these two young girls. They have had the benefit of his coaching and play, and unreserved praise is due him for what he has accomplished. Both Miss Porter and Miss Walker are fighters. It made no difference how the tide of battle ebbed and flowed, how many mistakes they made, how dubious seemed the result of a game or set; they never faltered, never showed the slightest tendency to become rattled. Nerves did not trouble them. They even seemed, after the first few minutes' play, to be oblivious to their surroundings—the enclosed court with a critical gallery almost surrounding it; their thought was on the match itself. We have seen much more nervousness and the state of being "fussed" in evidence on that same court.

The tactics of both girls were almost beyond criticism. They played to win points, and most of the time they used exactly the right methods to win them. If an opening was left the ball was aimed for it, and it frequently hit the mark, winning by a wide margin. Not a single opportunity to lob to advantage was over-

looked; and while some of the lobs went out most of them scored. Nor was there any undue eagerness to win the point; the girls were content to maneuver for position or the right moment to make the kill. Good shots by the opponent were nearly always recognized, and there was very little chasing after unretrievable balls.

Frequently the production of the various shots was highly praiseworthy. Miss Porter has the better strokes, hitting with a free swing, both forehand and backhand, and getting a lot of pace on her best shots. Miss Walker was not so good in these respects, but she had a better balance and was a little more reliable, especially in the rallies. The service was noteworthy chiefly because there were very few faults, it having seemingly been impressed upon both girls that the game is to deliver the ball to the proper court. The net and overhead play of both the contestants needs to be developed, they having evidently specialized on ground strokes. But there was plenty of indication that such development is a comparatively easy matter to bring about.

Some of the shots brought off were quite remarkable. This was especially the case with shots from the back court, and Miss Porter in particular sent over some whizzers that went close to the net yet had splendid length. The free swing with which she made her drives was fine to watch, as was her foot work.

To sum up, it may be said that both Miss Porter and Miss Walker (and especially the former) have unusual promise. If they continue to be as keen as they are now, and follow the path upon which they have set their feet, they are likely to go far.

The Eastern Doubles, in this war year shrunk to a shadow of its former self, drew a small entry. In the semi-final round Irving Wright and W. H. Abbott of Boston beat a Philadelphia team, J. R. Carpenter, Jr., and C. B. Jennings in two close sets, 6-4, 9-7. Percy S. Osborne and Wallace Rhodes came through to the final by an easy victory over Paul W. Gibbons and G. R. Powell.

The final was played late Saturday afternoon, and the Philadelphians won in five curiously one-sided sets. It was Hammer and tongs all the way through. Rhoades was nervous at first, but under Osborne's steadying influence he came down and played good tennis. At the end of the fourth set it seemed anyone's match; but the pendulum swung to the home players in the fifth and they ran it out at 6-1.

Most unusual weather prevailed throughout the week. There was some rain on Tuesday, although it only slightly interfered with the play. It was very threatening on Friday, but save for a drizzle once or twice it held off until play was finished for the day. There was a heavy rain Friday night, but the sun came out Saturday morning and

the court dried out pretty well. But was cloudy, windy and cold Saturday afternoon, and throughout the week the temperature was low. None of the heat which usually characterises championship week at Philadelphia was in evidence.

In the mixed doubles final there was a great array of champions. Mrs. George W. Wightman takes precedence in this respect, no less than 11 having been her credit prior to this match. Miss Wightman, then Miss Hazel Hotchkiss of San Francisco, made her first appearance at the Philadelphia Cricket Club the 1909 Championship; and when the meeting came to an end she was the holder of the singles, doubles and mixed doubles title.

The twin umpires' chairs were in evidence on Friday and Saturday, and the later day they were occupied by L. Hoskins, who scored, and Mar Fielding, who had just got back from Washington. The court was good, despite the hard winter and the heavy rain of Friday night, and every detail looked after in the manner we have come accustomed to associate with these events. Tournament Chairman J. Jennings had the situation in hand all times, wisely keeping himself free for that purpose. His favorite position, inside the barrier, in a corner, when seated in a chair, he could survey the entire court. George Wooley looked after the court and its equipment in a usual capable manner. Everything was exactly right, although the net did wobble loose from one of the sticks and made it necessary for Fielding to climb down and fix it; while on Friday the youthful ball boy at the post by the umpire's chairs managed to release the spring which loosened the net.

The effect of the war was seen in the comparative slimness of the gallery. Friday it was very slim, but the next day not only the clubhouse porch and stand in front of it but the stand on the opposite side of the court was comfortably filled.

Following the usual practice at Martin's, the three years' trophies (in number) in competition in the singles tournament were exhibited on a table standing at the side of the court, close to the net post. The massive Wissahickon challenge bowl, which had replaced the cup won by Miss Mary K. Browne in 1914, attracted the most attention, of course. It bore Miss Bjurstedt's name, she having won it in 1915 and 1916, was not in competition last year, the tournament being held as a patriotic meeting, which was won by Miss Bjurstedt. This year she accomplished her third win, and the cup became her property. After the match, when she and Miss Goss had shaken hands, Joe J