

Bing, Bob and Golf

How the two comics helped a young sailor score points with his girl's disapproving dad.

By Edward Withrow

Tony Fignori did not like me at all. I was a Coast Guard sailor stationed aboard a ship with its home port as Boston, Mass., in 1942. While the ship was in port for some engine repairs, I met a girl named Maria Fignori. We dated several times, and, when I went to her home to meet her parents, Mr. Fignori was decidedly “cool” toward me.

“Don’t worry about him,” Maria laughed. “He doesn’t like me seeing *anyone* who isn’t Italian *and* from Boston.”

But that changed abruptly.

One Saturday afternoon, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope played a round of golf at the Putterham Country Club as part of a war bond drive. I was there, and I followed the famous pair as they clowned their way around the fairways, all the while urging everyone in the audience to “buy war bonds.”

That evening, when I went to Maria’s home to pick her up for dinner and a movie, Mr. Fignori was a changed man. He greeted me like a favorite son.

Maria explained it all to me after we left the house.

“I told Daddy that you were with Crosby and Hope at the golf match today. Those two are his absolute, bar-none favorite

entertainers, and when I told him that you were with them today, he got so excited that he missed the point! He thought I was saying that you *played* golf with them, and he immediately decided you are the greatest guy in town. He is going to be

bragging to everyone he knows that his little Maria is dating a swell guy who is a golf buddy of Bing and Bob!”

Evidently, the old saying “It pays to know the rich and famous” has some truth to it! ❖



Bing Crosby (left) clowns around with Bob Hope while “golfing” in this old publicity photograph.