

Theodore Havemeyer

He was one of the game's founding fathers, not just in Rhode Island but in the nation, as attested by the fact that he was the first president of the United States Golf Association, which he helped organize. A resident of Newport and New York, he was the president of the American Sugar Refining Company. He was introduced to golf at age 50 on a visit to France in the winter of 1888-89. When he returned to Newport he organized a group which was named "The Four Hundred," a gathering that included John Jacob Astor, Cornelius Vanderbilt and Oliver Belmont. They purchased land on Ocean Drive for what was then the staggering price of \$150,000 and built a nine-hole golf course. When it was opened May 25, 1893, the second course incorporated in the country, after the St. Andrews Club of Yonkers, N.Y., it was called the Newport Golf Club. One year later, members voted to host a National Amateur Championship, which it did on its own. Later that year, representatives from five clubs, Newport, St. Andrews, Shinnecock Hills, The Country Club and The Chicago Golf Club met and formed the USGA. The 22 assembled delegates voted Havemeyer their first president. The next year, Havemeyer's Newport course hosted the first official U.S. Amateur on Oct. 3, 1895, and the following day, the first U.S. Open. One of the state's premier club-sponsored events, the Havemeyer Invitational, is still held each fall at Newport, and the Havemeyer Trophy is presented each year to the USGA Amateur champion.