

Dear Members,

This year will be the 60th Anniversary of the Havemeyer Invitational Tournament and so I thought it would be appropriate for us to pass on the following article as a brief history of just how important Horace Havemeyer was to the community of Southward Ho.

I have also included a short article from the Honorable Robert Oliver who will be honored at this year's event. The Judge has been a long time Member of Southward Ho and his given countless hours to the success of the Havemeyer Invitational. The recognition of thanks on behalf of the many participants and Members is richly deserved.

With this in mind and on behalf of the Havemeyer Committee, I would like to ask that you make every effort to come out and watch the tournament on May 20, 21, 22 and see some of the best amateur golf talent in the Tri State area. It should be another exciting tournament.

Enjoy the articles and I look forward to seeing you out there!

Paul O'Donoghue
General Manager
Southward Ho Country Club

Southward Ho Country Club

Our club was organized about 1923. According to an article in the Brooklyn Eagle dated September 15, 1924, the Southward Ho Land Corporation purchased 140 acres of land and buildings for \$125,000 from the Bossert estate. It had formerly been owned by James Hazen Hyde (not to be confused with James R. Hyde who owned the South Shore Field Club on the south side of Montauk Highway). The Hyde family had spent in excess of a million dollars to make the estate "one of the show places of Long Island." After the land was acquired, more than \$50,000 was expended to improve the property. The golf course was designed by A.W. Tillinghast, designer of five courses in Golf Digest's Top 50 (Winged Foot, Baltusrol, Quaker Ridge, San Francisco G.C. And Five Farms in Baltimore). In addition to golf, the club had a swimming pool, lawn tennis, squash, and bridle paths, The first meeting of members was held in September 1924.

The Depression which began in 1929 with the stock market crash caused the club to fail and in 1934 a bankruptcy proceeding was instituted. At the time the Emigrant Savings Bank held an \$80,000 mortgage on the property. The bank foreclosed and forced Southward Ho out of existence.

A sheriff's sale was held and ten to fifteen members grouped together to purchase the physical assets (mowers, etc.) The club was then reorganized under the name South Bay Golf club in 1934. The bank held title to the property and buildings, permitting the members to use the facilities on the condition that the club would pay the real estate taxes and \$4000 per year to the bank.

Throughout the war years, Emigrant pressed for payment of the loan, but the club was unable to do so. With the boom in land values after the war, it became apparent to everyone that if a speculator purchased the property, the South Bay Golf Club would be closed. The membership at that time was small and did not have the resources to buy the property. However, one of the members, Horace Havemeyer, realized the precarious position the club was in and in 1945 purchased the mortgage for \$82500 cash plus the payment of all closing expenses.

Mr. Havemeyer then gave the club a ten year option to purchase the mortgage at his cost plus fees. He paid the real estate taxes during this period. The club did not have to pay any interest or any other fees. He made two conditions for his loan – the club had to be maintained as a golf club and the members had to put away money each year so that a fund would be carried to eventually purchase the mortgage. A sum of \$4000 was put away annually for nine years raising in excess of \$40,000.

In April 1954 the club exercised its option and purchased the mortgage for \$87,084.31. There is no doubt that without the generous gift from Horace Havemeyer, Southward Ho would not exist today. On November 20, 1953 the name was changed back to Southward Ho Country Club.

From the above article it is clear that had there not been, many years ago, a Horace Havemeyer, there would not be, today, a Southward Ho.

With that understanding, and out of respect and appreciation, Bob Baxter and his brother Jerry among others with the help of then president of the Club, Bill Mattimore, and our Club's long time Golf Professional, Alex Ferguson, conceived the Havemeyer Invitational Golf Tournament as a lasting tribute to our benefactor. In fact, it was Jerry, Bill and Alex who went to Mr. Havemeyer's home to request, and obtain, his permission to hold the tournament.

Therefore, on September 14, 1951 The South Bay Golf Club staged the first Havemeyer Tournament. If you wonder what was the “South Bay Golf Club”, read Jerry's article. In these fat years, we sometimes forget the lean ones.

From its very inception, the criteria for invitation to compete were only two: 1) one must be a gentleman and 2) he must possess an excellent golf game.

That first tournament, and for many years thereafter, consisted of three flights of 16 players competing at scratch. There was no senior flight. On the night of qualifying all competitors were our guests at a dinner and there was a Calcutta Pool. Two rounds of match play were contested on Saturday and two rounds on Sunday. A buffet dinner was held Sunday evening after the Championship match was completed.

The first final was a splendid match between two of our members, both of whom were to become Club Champions, Mike Ryan and Emil Roy. The match was all even on the 18th tee and it turned on a bit of bad luck for Mike. His tee shot came to rest in the center of the fairway in a deep, unreplaced divot. Mike's second shot was thus spoiled and Emil won the tournament with a par. Oddly, though both competitors continued to play excellent golf at the Club, and many other courses, for many years thereafter, neither ever came close to winning the title again. In 1955, Jack Sabine of Rockville Links, one of the Metropolitan area's leading amateurs, won the trophy and repeated the following year. He is the only winner in the history of the tournament to successfully defend his title.

Although Bobby and Jerry were each, in their own right, superb golfers, and each a Club Champion, neither ever won the tournament they originated. In fact, it was not until 1961 that a Southward Ho member was able to bring the Championship trophy back home. Modesty forbids naming that winner, but, if you care, you can find my name on the Championship Board in the Trophy Room.

Many Champions of yesteryear are now, unfortunately, mostly forgotten. Names such as Mattwell, Silverstone, Tuthill, and Edwards grace the Championship Board. Through the years, many other golfers, though equally gifted, competed but were unable to win the tournament. Each year, the field comprised the class of the local amateur scene.

The names of Champions of more recent vintage are more familiar, such as: Jonny Doppelt, Malcom Smith, P.J. Cowan, George Zahringer, Jeff Thomas, Joe Sommers, and Ken MacDonald.

One name deserves special mention: Chris Estelle. A Club member and Club Champion, he is the only four time Havemeyer Champion. In fact, Chris won the qualifying medal so often, we named the medalist trophy in his honor.

In the last fifty years, the cast of players has continually changed. Many of our old friends have ceased to play competitive golf. New golfers, younger and stronger, have taken their places. Moreover, in these past fifty years, the Havemeyer has become one of the oldest and most esteemed tournaments in the Metropolitan area.

We hope that Mr. Havemeyer looks down upon us from his celestial palace and is pleased that this tournament exists to commemorate, if only in a small way, his wonderful gift to us.

Robert Oliver