



**R**HODE ISLAND DOESN'T CLAIM to be the birthplace of golf in the United States, but the nation's smallest state has a number of firsts to its credit in connection with the game that was imported from Europe.

Newport Country Club, incorporated in 1894, "just two or three hours" after the St. Andrew's Golf Club in Yonkers, New York, was one of the five charter members of the United States Golf Association, and played host to the first U.S.G.A. amateur and open championships in 1895.

A visitor to the Newport club today can examine the original charter hanging on the wall of the men's bar and note the signatures of the presidents of the

five organizing clubs. Henry O. Havemeyer signed for Newport. His father, Theodore A. Havemeyer, had first introduced the game to the area in the fields adjacent to the present course on Ocean Drive.

The elder Havemeyer hired John Yale from historic St. Andrew's in Scotland as the first greenskeeper, and W. E. Davis, whose title then was "golf club and ball maker," was the club's first pro. The original members wanted a course similar to the familiar seaside links of England and Scotland "with plenty of bunkers," and that's exactly what they got.

Furthermore, the design of the Newport course became the model for the many fine golf courses that were to be constructed in the state during the next

two decades, notably Wannamoisett in Rumford, R. I. Country Club in Barrington, Metacomet in East Providence, and Misquamicut in Watch Hill. Thus, the game that was regarded originally as a healthful pastime for wealthy gentlemen has grown in popularity to such an extent that it now is within reach of almost the entire population.

In this respect, Rhode Island has been second to none in keeping abreast of the demand, for it boasts no less than 37 courses—more per square mile than any other state. This year, the Louisquisset Golf Club, an 18-hole public course in North Providence, was among the first in the country to install lights for



the benefit of those whose occupations prevent their playing during the day.

Having inaugurated the two most important championships in men's golf—the amateur and open, Rhode Island has since been host to two women's national tournaments and to the Professional Golfers' Association championship. The former two were held at the R. I. Country Club in 1924 and 1953 and the latter was contested at Wannamoisett in 1931. Triggs Memorial, Providence's public course, was host to the touring professional in 1941, when such greats as Ben Hogan and Sam Snead were rising young stars on the circuit. It was the occasion of the first and only Providence City Open and the top prize went to an unknown youngster named Lou Barbarro.

From within its own ranks, Rhode Island has produced a number of golfers of national stature in both men's and women's competition. The most famous of them all is Glenna Collett Vare, whose feat of win-

ning six U. S. women's championships remains unmatched to this day. In addition, she was runnerup twice and medalist or co-medalist six times. She enjoyed singular success in numerous other tournaments, reaching the finals of the British women's amateur twice, and was a fixture on the U. S. Curtis Cup team for many years. She also achieved the rare distinction of winning the R. I. women's title twice, 36 years apart—in 1921 and 1957.

Other home-grown products who have made their mark outside the state included such as the late Johnny Burke of Newport, four-time state champion in the 30's who went on to win the National Collegiate championship while a student at Georgetown University; Bobby Allen of East Providence, five-time state titlist, and Ronnie Quinn of West Warwick, two-time

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state champ, each of whom won the New England amateur crown; Angie Santilli of West Warwick, who gained the quarter-finals of the U. S. Amateur in 1953 and played in the exclusive Masters Tournament at Augusta, Georgia, the following year; and Brad Oxnard, the patriarch of R. I. fairways who won his first state title in 1928 and is still going strong in both state and national seniors' tournaments. Rhode Island will miss the late Ralph D. Rooks, known to all as the Dean of Golf in these Plantations.

But perhaps the most significant characteristic of golf in Rhode Island is the atmosphere of friendly competition that has been engendered by the state's men's and women's golf associations. Their respective championship tournaments annually generate high spectator interest among sports-minded Rhode Islanders, and galleries of three and four thousand people are commonplace.

The R. I. Golf Association, chartered in 1902, annually conducts competition for male golfers in the following categories: amateur, open, junior, senior, caddy and four-ball. During the last ten years under the direction of Secretary Edward Perry, its championship events have been models of organization and efficiency, containing all the accoutrements of the best run national tournaments. But not one to rest on his laurels, Mr. Perry, with the assistance and cooperation of the association's officers and member clubs, is ever seeking to improve its operation, keeping uppermost in mind the interests of the player and spectator alike.



Aside from its role in the field of competitive golf, the RIGA is making another vital contribution to the welfare of Rhode Islanders through the John P. Burke Memorial Scholarship Fund. Established in 1946 as the Rhode Island golfers' tribute to the state's World War II dead and named in memory of one of their number who lost his life in the conflict, the fund provides financial aid for advanced education to deserving caddies in Rhode Island. At the present time, 41 boys are being helped through college by the fund, and since its inception, a total of 62 caddies have received scholarships. All of the grants are made possible by the voluntary contributions of the state's golfers, duffer and champion alike.

The history of the R. I. Women's Golf Association, which this year is celebrating its 50th anniversary, is replete with stirring individual achievements and noteworthy contributions to the sport. There have been two six-time champions, Elizabeth Gordon (1916-17-18-19-20-24), sister of the former long-time pro at Wannamoisett, the late George Gordon, and Mrs. John L. Hulteng (1948-49-50-52-53-55), a West Coast native who resided in this state for eight years and never lost a match. Mrs. Frederick Davis (1931-34-35-36-47) and Betty June Bobel (1954-56-58-60-62)—each has won the title five times.

In addition to its annual championship, the RIWGA has fostered the growth of women's golf by organizing a junior girls' program, by conducting weekly team matches and tournaments for its members, and by participating in annual tri-state team matches with its sister golfers in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Beginning in 1962 a new tournament was added to the state's golfing calendar—the Northeast Amateur Invitational. Sponsored jointly by the R. I. Golf Association, the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce and the Providence Journal-Bulletin, this tourney is designed to bring together the leading amateur golfers of the Northeast in a 54-hole, stroke-play competition as well as to focus attention on Rhode Island's excellent golfing program and facilities.

The knowing golf enthusiast therefore recognizes that our small state has a golfing heritage second to none in the United States. We are blessed with some of the finest courses in the country, both from the standpoint of location and construction. Those who would disagree would surely get a stiff rebuttal from former President Eisenhower, America's most celebrated golfer of all time, who while in office became Newport's No. 1 tourist after discovering the delights and challenges of Rhode Island's oldest course.

Following is a directory of private, semi-private and public golf courses in Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts:

#### Private

Agawam Hunt, East Providence (18), Alpine, Cranston (18), Bayside, Warwick (9), Crestwood, Rehoboth (18), Glocester, Glocester (9), Highland, Attleboro (9), Kirkbrae, Lincoln (18), Ledgemont, Seekonk (18), Ledgemont Valley, West Warwick (18), Lincoln, Limerock (9), Metacomet, East Providence (18), Misquamicut, Watch Hill (18), Newport, Newport (18), Pawtucket, Pawtucket (18), Potowomut, East Greenwich (18), Point Judith, Narragansett (18), Quidnessett, North Kingstown (18), R. I. Country Club, Nayatt (18), Sakonnet, Sakonnet (18), Segregansett, Dighton (9), Wannamoisett, Rumford (18), Wanumetonomy, Middletown (18), West Warwick, West Warwick (9), Winnesuket, Woonsocket (18).

#### Semi-Private

Conanicut, Jamestown (9), Montaup, Portsmouth (9), Winnapaug Hills, Westerly (18).

#### Public

Bristol County, Taunton (9), Castle Hill, Woonsocket (9), Chemawa, Attleboro (9), Coventry Pines, Coventry (9), Foster, Foster (9), Goddard Park, East Greenwich (9), Green Valley, Portsmouth (9), Hidden Hollow, Rehoboth (9), Heather Hill, Plainville (9), Laurel Lanes, West Kingstown (9), Locust Valley, Attleboro (9), Louisquisset, North Providence (18); Meadowbrook, Narragansett (9), Middlebrook, Rehoboth (9), Municipal (Triggs), Providence (18), Pine Valley, Rehoboth (9), Pocasset, Portsmouth (9), Rolling Greens, North Kingstown (9), Silver Spring, East Providence (6), Stillwater, Smithfield (6), Stone-E-Lea, Attleboro (18), Sun Valley, Rehoboth (18), Swansea, Swansea (18), Wampanoag, North Swansea (9).

