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Change, Continuity, and Golf's Battle of the Century

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One field of sports history that has yet to be cultivated is that of American golf. Remarkably, historians have even neglected golf in America's so-called Golden Age of Sports, the decade of the 1920s. These years witnessed the transformation of golf from an esoteric, aristocratic pastime to a popular participatory and spectator sport. In fact, the country's golfing population was approximately 250,000 in 1916, but by 1925 it had climbed to 4.5 million as private and municipal courses increasingly dotted the landscape. With the emergence of the sport came two of the most colorful, popular, even adored athletes of the decade, Walter C. Hagen and Robert "Bobby" Tyre Jones, Jr.

Hagen and Jones competed against each other in a number of medal tournaments (mostly U.S. Opens), but met only once in head-to-head match play. That exhibition occurred in March 1926 and, for several reasons, may be regarded as the sport's Battle of the Century. The match is important to the history of American golf because it helps mark the transition of golf dominance from one player to another, and it provides clear examples of the styles of the era's two leading players. In addition, the competition throws light on the professional-amateur dichotomy, a particularly important aspect of the sports history of 1920s America.

The event also offers insight for the broader scope of American history, because off the course each participant created a presence and public image which illustrate major trends in the

popular culture of the period. Hagen developed an image as the game's irreverent "bad boy," a modern professional whose primary concern was making money and enjoying life. Jones, on the other hand, offered sports fans a model of decorum and convention; his image was that of a "simon-pure" amateur, who supposedly played the game for its own sake, eschewing the almighty dollar. Hagen and Jones were as different in reality, particularly in their socio-economic backgrounds, as in their public images. Thus, the Battle of the Century brought together not only golf's brightest stars, but two of the sports world's finest symbols of change and continuity. This piece will provide the first documented narrative of the event as well as a discussion of its significance.

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Walter Hagen remembered it as "my greatest thrill in golf." To Bobby Jones it was a "glorious licking . . . far and away the most complete" defeat he ever experienced in match play. The Southern Golfer simply called it "The Battle of the Century." In the winter of 1926 most fans knew it as the unofficial World's Championship of Golf. The seventy-two-hole exhibition pitted the Professional Golf Association's champion, Walter Hagen, against the U.S. Amateur champion, Bobby Jones. An ongoing debate had developed among golf fans around the globe as to which player was better, and this match would supposedly settle the issue.¹

Many other matches had been held since the Great War, some including either Hagen or Jones, but this one surpassed them all because it finally brought together the two best players in the world. By early 1926 Walter Hagen had collected seven major championship victories: two U.S. Opens, two British Opens, and three match-play PGA crowns, most recently in 1924 and

1925. Moreover, he had won an assortment of other significant tournaments, including two Western Opens, and was considered the nation's top professional and most dangerous match-play opponent. Bobby Jones, in a shorter period, had also put together an impressive record in major championships. He had captured the U.S. Open title in 1923 and was runner-up in that event in 1922, 1924, and 1925. He also had won the match-play U.S. Amateur title in 1924 and 1925. Many observers regarded him as the finest medal player in the world.

The fact that it was also a test of amateurism against professionalism added excitement to the classic match. Between 1888 and 1920, some of the finest golf had been played in America by amateurs, who won three out of the four U.S. Opens between 1913 and 1916 (Hagen won the fourth in 1914). In 1894 the United States Golf Association (USGA) had been formed in large part to define and protect amateur golf. For years upper-class amateurs, usually of old Anglo-Saxon stock, were the only ones to have access to the nation's finest golf courses, laid out on the most exclusive country clubs. Born into wealth, amateurs had the time to practice and play golf; they were an elite group, and the USGA recognized them as such, always announcing the amateurs at the open events as "Mr. Robert T. Jones" or "Mr. Francis Ouimet." Professionals, on the other hand, were simply referred to by their initials and last name, as in "W. C. Hagen." Indeed, for the pre-World War I generation, golf was a highly exclusive and essentially private sport, organized for and usually played by elites.

The rise of the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) in 1916, however, marked the arrival of highly-skilled and competitive club professionals, who in most cases were either British immigrants or young Americans who had been introduced to the sport through caddying. American "homebred" professionals (those who were born and who learned their game in the

U.S.) were usually of recent immigrant stock--German or Italian--and from the working classes. Long before the game was transplanted to the U.S. from Scotland, professionals were expected to humbly serve club members by offering lessons and selling equipment at the pro shop. Professional golfers were generally viewed as a rough, subordinate lot; before 1920, most country clubs on both sides of the Atlantic prohibited their professionals from mingling with club members or even entering the clubhouse. In America, though, a few foreign-born and homebred professionals had cast off Old World expectations in order to play full-time in tournaments and exhibitions. By 1925 some of them, like Hagen, had gained remarkable fame and fortune and were competing against amateurs on relatively equal terms.

Jones, from a prominent and moderately wealthy Atlanta family, was the latest in a long line of prestigious American amateur golfers, including Jerry Travers, Robert Gardner, and Charles "Chick" Evans. Hagen, reared in an obscure, working-class, German-immigrant family from Rochester, New York, was the finest example of the new homebred golf professional. Others, such as Gene Sarazen and Al Espinosa, had followed the trail blazed by Hagen. So "Sir Walter" had led the way for professional golfers, and when he competed against Jones in the winter of 1926, he was playing for the pride of professional athletes, especially golfers, throughout the country. In sum, a Jones victory would be one for amateurism, tradition, and continuity. A win by Hagen would be further evidence of the professionalization of golf and all of sports, yet another manifestation of change in modern America.

"Everybody was claiming Jones was the greatest golfer in the world and saying I was second best," Hagen recalled. "It rankled me a bit, so I got a friend [and manager] Bob Harlow to arrange the match [with Jones]." Hagen admitted later, however, that he was somewhat

reluctant to meet Jones because he was concerned about what a loss would do to his reputation, the basis for exhibition profits. Nevertheless, in the fall of 1925 the two agreed to compete in a home-and-home, seventy-two-hole match-play competition that would be held in St. Petersburg and Sarasota, Florida. Gate receipts (Tickets sold for \$3.30.) would be collected and divided between the players, and a businessman friend of Hagen's, Benjamin Namm, put up an additional \$5,000 prize, which would be given to charity if won by Jones. As Hagen put it, "Winning that challenge match was equally important to both Bobby Jones and to me." Jones confirmed this. "Although this match involved no championship, it did carry a sizable load of prestige, and I wanted badly to win it."ⁱⁱⁱ

There was unusual pre-match ballyhoo; the New York World even reported that in St. Petersburg the golf match "eclipsed" the arrival of the Yankees for spring training. Betting odds in New York had Jones a 3-2 favorite, based on his medal scoring average and on sentimentality. (Jones's medal average was lower than Hagen's, if one calculated selectively.) As Gould B. Martin of the Metropolitan Golfer noted, "The American sporting public is so constituted that its sympathies are always with the amateur--and Bobby Jones is no mere amateur, he is one of America's best beloved athletes." Hagen took it a bit more personally, feeling that "the public somehow had come to consider the amateurs as the Galahads of golf. While I . . . was a professional--the natural villain of the game."ⁱⁱⁱ

Both Martin and Hagen were correct. Although Jones was hardly typical in socio-economic background, he was boyishly shy, humble, and an amateur. By 1926 Jones had acquired degrees from Georgia Tech and Harvard, and he was making plans to enroll at Emory Law School. In the meantime (and in between golf events), he worked as an agent for Adair

Realty and Trust in Atlanta. By then sportswriters, such as Grantland Rice and O. B. Keeler, were regularly perpetuating the myth that Jones played only occasionally, a little more often than the typical weekend hacker. Jones, according to the image, was a regular guy, with a job and a family and plenty of interests other than sports. For many fans, especially traditionalists, Hagen and his professional cronies were the villains, or at least they were sports mercenaries, men who had sold out the integrity of golf for so many pieces of silver.

Jones had won when a piece of silver had been tossed several weeks earlier and had elected to play the first thirty-six holes over his home course, Whitfield Estates in Sarasota. In so doing, he was following conventional match play wisdom; it was important to get out to a big lead, competitors usually surmised, and the best place to do that was on familiar territory. Hagen later wrote, however, that had he won the coin flip, he too would have elected to play at Whitfield Estates. Although the choice of course was unconventional and risky, Hagen believed he could gain a small lead or at least play even with Jones at Sarasota, and then he would have an insurmountable advantage over the last thirty-six holes held on his Pasadena course in St. Petersburg. Moreover, Hagen thought that this would put all the pressure on Jones, who would be expected to perform well at home in the early rounds, during which both players naturally would be tense.^{iv}

So it was with much anticipation that approximately 1,200 spectators, mostly Jones fans, gathered on Sunday morning, February 28, 1926, at Whitfield Estates Country Club to witness the first rounds of golf's Battle of the Century. Conditions were balmy and pleasant, typical for the Gulf Coast in late winter. The players arrived at the first tee similarly clad in knickers, long ties, and pullover sweaters; Hagen, as he always did to show off his perfectly combed, sleek

black hair, was hatless, while Jones opted for a stylish Fedora. At thirty-three years of age, Hagen was much older than his opponent, who was a youthful twenty-three. And at 5'11" and 180 pounds, Hagen was also considerably bigger than the 5'8", 165 pound Jones. After an eye-to-eye handshake, Jones lit a cigarette. Then Hagen won the honor, and the match got underway.

Hagen hooked his tee shot to the 421-yard, par four hole into the rough, and Jones responded by splitting the fairway with his drive. Neither man hit the green with his approach; Jones was long to one side, while Hagen was a bit short. Jones chipped his ball some twelve feet past the pin, missed his putt, and settled for a bogey five. Hagen chipped to within six feet, holed his putt, went 1 up on Jones with a par, and never looked back. In many ways, the first hole was a microcosm of the match: Jones drove accurately and Hagen was, as usual, wild off the tee; Jones had problems with his approach irons, while Hagen recovered remarkably well; and Hagen completely dominated Jones on the putting surface, especially on the first day of the match. Nervous (as Hagen had predicted), both players began "rather unsteady," but Hagen seemed to settle down sooner than Jones and went on to take a two-hole lead through the first nine and finish the morning round 3 up. The New York Times noticed that Jones, after losing the thirteenth to fall 2 down, was "visibly affected" and that his "spirit was broken."

Hagen's first round strategy obviously unsettled Jones and probably caught him by surprise; at least it did commentators. After all, Hagen's reputed method was to play aggressively from the first tee, fire at the flags in an attempt to score birdies, and get on top of his opponent early so as to demoralize him. In this match, though, Sir Walter cautiously played short of the pins and repeatedly settled for pars. Surprising or not, the strategy worked. Jones

later admitted that it was "smart" because greens at Whitfield Estate tended to be "sloped up from front to back," which made Hagen's putts uphill and much easier. After lunch, Hagen continued his cautious strategy through the next nine holes.^{vi}

Nearly all accounts of the match point to the sixth hole of the afternoon as being the turning point, and, like the first hole, it was illustrative of what happened throughout the day. Having won the twenty-third (or fifth) hole to reduce Hagen's lead to three, Jones teed his ball on the sixth, hoping to develop some momentum heading into the last nine of the day. The sixth at Whitfield Estates was a 345-yard par four. Both men hit solid drives, but while Jones's neatly divided the fairway, Hagen's stopped on the edge of the rough, leaving him a second shot that was partially obstructed by a pine tree. Jones hit his approach to within twelve feet of the flag; at that point, with Hagen behind a tree, it looked like a sure win for him. Hagen studied his lie and determined to reach the green by slicing a midiron shot around the tree. He completely miss-hit the shot, though, topping it so that the ball took off under the tree branches. To everyone's amazement, the ball carried down the fairway, through a bunker, up a bank that guarded the front of the green, and finally rested about ten feet from the flag! Suddenly, Jones was under pressure to make his twelve-footer; his putt rimmed the cup but stayed out. Hagen then delicately rolled his ball into the hole for a birdie three, and, instead of trailing by two, Jones was again 4 down.^{vii}

Jones later told O. B. Keeler, "I watched that shot, and I said to myself, I'm four down to a man who can miss one like that! . . . when a man misses his drive, and then misses his second shot, and then wins the hole with a birdie--it gets my goat!" The amateur's frustration was understandable; after all, Jones had characteristically played the hole to near perfection, missing a

birdie on the rim. Hagen, on the other hand, had hit two poor shots and ended up with a three. It was the kind of play which caused Leo Diegel to remark, after losing to Hagen in a 1925 PGA match, "I never want to play him again; he's killing me!" Obviously frustrated, Jones momentarily lost his concentration. Hagen recognized the opportunity. He captured the seventh hole to go 5 up, lost the eighth and ninth, but remained a comfortable 3 up heading into the last nine.^{viii}

At that point, the typical Hagen emerged, and he decided to take the offensive. It was a safe gamble, because if the breaks went against him, the best Jones could do was even the match, not such an accomplishment on one's home course. If the momentum continued in Hagen's favor, he could gain several more shots and have an even bigger lead heading home. The strategy worked, and Hagen started a run that all but finished Jones. He won the tenth and eleventh, halved the twelfth, won the thirteenth and fourteenth, halved the fifteenth through seventeenth, and won the eighteenth, despite slicing his drive into the rough, to go 8 up after the first thirty-six holes. While Jones played the last nine in a respectable par 36, Hagen played it in 32 (-4), finishing the back nine with a card that was marked with only threes and fours. First day medal totals: Hagen, 71-70-141; Jones, 77-74-151. Most telling, though, was the number of putts required: Hagen used twenty-seven in the morning round and twenty-six in the afternoon to Jones's thirty-one and thirty.^{ix}

The flurry on the final nine holes was vintage Sir Walter--wildness off the tee followed by amazing recoveries with short irons and the putter. His lead was not the result of perfect, orthodox technique, but scrambling ability and "headwork." Through these methods, he overcame the odds and his opponent's flawless swing, and badly defeated Jones on his home

course.^x

Although they were only at the halfway mark, during the intervening week dopesters began writing concluding analyses. Martin believed that the first half of the match had taught so-called golf experts an important lesson: "Professional golfers are far better than amateurs, and especially is Hagen the best of the pros, better than Jones, the best of the amateurs." Most commentators were more restrained, arguing that Hagen had simply been on his game, Jones off his. But no one suggested, at least in print, that Jones had a chance to come back on Hagen the following Sunday at the Pasadena Golf Club. As if conceding defeat, Monday's Atlanta Constitution appended to its coverage a short story which reminded southerners that Jones still had the edge on Hagen in stroke totals for U.S. Opens since 1920.^{xi}

Apparently many golf fans refused to give up on Jones; a gallery nearly twice the size of the previous Sunday's gathered at Pasadena to witness the final rounds. Certainly Jones had a chance to come back on Hagen, but on this day Hagen would have to be off his game and Jones on his. After halving the first hole, Jones must have felt that fate was still against him, because he lost the second in a most demoralizing fashion. Both men reached the par four hole in regulation but were far from the flag; Jones was some sixty feet away and Hagen a few feet less. Moreover, both men would have to negotiate a "knob" located just in front of the cup. Jones putted first, and his ball died very close to the hole, guaranteeing at least a halve and possibly a win if Hagen three-putted. But Hagen neither three-putted nor two-putted. Rather, he sank the long putt for a birdie three to go 9 up.^{xii}

Hagen went on to win the sixth and lose the eighth, and came to the turn still 9 up on Jones. Despite his lead, "Sir Walter" had his "fighting mask" on all day, playing as though he

was behind rather than ahead. Hagen only gained momentum heading into the back nine of the morning round. He finished 12 up, with a medal score of 34-35-69 (-3). Jones had played well also, posting a 35-38-73, yet Hagen was simply too much for him. Hagen's total provided the basis for a famous joke that "Walter had gone around in 69 strokes and Bobby in 69 cigarettes." As the competitors broke for lunch, there was no reason to believe that Jones would pull off any miracles that afternoon.^{xiii}

In fact, when they started the fourth and final eighteen, the only uncertainty was how soon the end would come. Jones gave Hagen a match to the very end. He lost the second hole again, allowing Hagen to stretch the lead to its extreme of thirteen holes, but won the fifth to bring it back to twelve. They came to the sixty-first (seventh) hole of the match with Hagen dormie 12. (In other words, Hagen could not lose in regulation, and in order to win, Jones would now have to take the final twelve holes of the contest; he could not afford to halve even one of them.) Both men were on the fringe of the green in two on the par four. The crowd roared when Jones sank his chip shot for a birdie three and, seemingly, won the hole and extended the match. But Hagen dashed any remaining hopes when he also chipped his third shot into the cup for a halve and the victory. The "Battle of the Century" was over, although the two played out the last eleven holes to please the spectators. It had not been the tension-filled, wire-to-wire match that many had predicted. Rather, Hagen had overwhelmed Jones, 12 and 11.

By that point in his career, Jones's behavior in defeat was always as endearing as in victory, and in this "severe drubbing" he was at his best. Someone suggested that all of the gate receipts should be given to a charity, but Jones offered that Hagen should keep all of the earnings. Hagen did take all of the Sarasota receipts, about \$1,800, as well as the \$5,000 put up

by Namm, but he gave away the Pasadena receipts, over \$5,000, to the St. Petersburg Hospital. The champion still cleared \$6,800, the largest purse in the world's history of golf up to that time. Hagen also gave Jones a pair of cuff links to thank him for the match. He said in the closing ceremony, "Jones realizes that a professional makes his living out of the game I want the world to know that I appreciate his attitude and that I consider his action the most generous in the history of American sport."¹⁴

The USGA agreed concerning Jones's generosity; in fact, its leaders thought he was too generous and soon after the match prohibited any such future exhibitions, unless all of the money was given to charity. That upset Jones's fans, who wanted a quick rematch. Such an event never materialized, and there would be only one Hagen-Jones Battle of the Century.¹⁵

3

Golf writers, historians, and fans ever since have debated the meaning of the Hagen-Jones duel. Most of the discussion has centered on the lopsided outcome of the match. Jones's supporters have refused to believe that it was anything other than an anomaly and that their man was still the best of his day, if not the best ever. They have pointed out that his strength had always been in medal, not match play, that he had been off his long irons, and that, generally, Hagen had overachieved and Jones underachieved. To a degree all that was true, yet it omits the fact that Jones had been playing more competitive golf that winter than usual and had done very well in numerous four-ball exhibitions with Tommy Armour as his partner. One could argue that Jones was better prepared for this competition than for any other in his career. Still, he was not in top form.¹⁶

To Hagen's supporters these arguments have amounted to little more than excuses; Hagen was the best golfer in the country, and he had proved it once again. "The Haig" (as his fellow professionals nicknamed him) apparently solidified his claim as the nation's top golfer two weeks after the Jones match, when he won Florida's West Coast Open by firing an impressive 283. Jones also played in that event but finished in second place, two strokes behind. Indeed, going into the 1926 season, a majority of commentators viewed Hagen as the world's top golfer, holding high expectations for him. Hagen did have a very good season in 1926, adding to the West Coast title the Eastern, Western, and PGA crowns; nevertheless, it was much easier to argue his supremacy in the spring than it would be in the fall.¹⁷

Perhaps the most ironic thing about the unofficial 1926 World's Championship of Golf is that Hagen won and Jones lost, which implied that Hagen's career was still on the rise, while Jones's had reached a plateau. In fact, despite his accomplishments, the 1926 season dealt Hagen some surprising and symbolic disappointments; he finished behind Jones in both the U.S. and British Opens. Actually, it was Jones who was on the rise in 1926, becoming the first man in history to win both national opens in one season. He would go into 1930 with nine major championships and cap off his career with four more that year, solidifying his dominance of the period 1926-30. So 1926 was the year that Hagen passed the crown of "Emperor of Golf" to Bobby Jones. A few weeks earlier, on February 16 in Cannes, France, a parallel event occurred in women's tennis, when Suzanne Lenglen and Helen Wills fought that sport's "Battle of the Century." Lenglen was the seasoned, veteran French amateur (soon to turn professional) and was still considered the strongest female tennis player in the world. Wills was the upstart young American amateur, whom most recognized as the heir to Lenglen's throne. Lenglen defeated

Wills 6-3, 8-6 in their monumental (and only) match, but Wills proved stronger than many expected and soon took the top position in women's tennis, despite her defeat by Lenglen. Likewise, Jones ironically moved forward from his loss in the Hagen match to become the world's best golfer.¹⁸

But the Hagen-Jones Battle of the Century contains rich significance that goes beyond the unresolvable, if enjoyable, debate over each player's competitive greatness and niche in history. For example, the match was illustrative because each man exhibited styles and strategies of play that he used throughout his career. Just as the first hole was a microcosm of the match, the match was in many ways a microcosm of the competitive careers of Hagen and Jones. Throughout the competition, Sir Walter was at his scrambling best. Erratic off the tees, Hagen won the event because of accurate approach shots, deft pitching, and superb putting. Hagen mostly compiled his impressive tournament record from one-hundred yards inward to the hole, and has always been recognized for possessing one of the best short games ever.

Moreover, throughout his career he was the game's foremost psychologist. It seemed he always knew what strategies to employ and what mind games to play with his opponent. Thus, even his seemingly uncharacteristic passive play for pars at the beginning of the 1926 match became Hagenesque in hindsight. In a piece entitled "What Makes Hagen A Great Player?" golf writer William Richardson argued that Hagen's two greatest assets were his "head" and "confidence." "Others, his mechanical equals, maybe superiors, have to give way to him when it comes to headwork on the links," concluded Richardson, and O. B. Keeler dubbed Hagen the game's "Match-Play Master." Hagen's reputed prowess at match play was based first on his winning four consecutive PGA titles from 1924-1927, but second on his performance in the

Battle of the Century.¹⁹

On the surface, Jones's performance seemed less characteristic than Hagen's. Jones, for example, was noted for exceptionally accurate middle to long iron approach shots, but he struggled with those strokes in the Battle of the Century. However, throughout much of his career, Jones displayed an inconsistent short game from the lengthy pitch to the putter. Jones admitted as much in 1927, when he described his game as lacking a "good reliable pitch shot of from 100 to 120 yards. There, to my mind, is the real strength of Walter Hagen's game." In 1929 British golf historian Bernard Darwin wrote, "When it comes to the shorter pitching shots, Bobby is good, but he is human." Jones had significant problems with both the pitch and putt in his match with Hagen. On the other hand, Jones's most widely regarded area of expertise was the driver; indeed, some consider him the greatest driver of the golf ball ever, and in the Battle of the Century, Jones drove the ball well.²⁰

Finally, whereas Hagen was the game's "Match-Play Master," observers considered Jones the world's leading medalist. Earlier in Jones's career, Hagen had predicted that Jones would win the U.S. Open before the U.S. Amateur; Jones proved Hagen correct when he finally "broke through" by capturing the U.S. Open crown in 1923. Jones had his greatest success when he focused on beating "Old Man Par" rather than his opponent. Such an attitude is perfectly suited for medal play, but violates the fundamentals of match play. Although Jones did collect six major match-play events, he was more comfortable in the less personal environment of medal play, and it should not have surprised so many when Jones fell to the world's "match-play master" in their Battle of the Century.

Still, as important as it is to the history of golf, the Hagen-Jones match has an even

broader significance. For just as it was not simply another golf competition, neither was it merely one of many famous sporting events of the "Golden Age"; this contest brought together the sport's greatest figures, and also, coincidentally, two of the most revealing athletes of the era.²¹

Although many Americans have heard of Bobby Jones through the Masters tournament he founded, few more than recognize the name of Walter Hagen. That is puzzling in light of his competitive record. During the period from 1914 to 1932, Hagen won eleven of the currently designated major championships: two U.S. Opens, four British Opens, and five match-play PGA titles (four in a row between 1924 and 1927). In 1922 he became the first American-born professional to win the British Open. Hagen also won five Western Opens in that period, giving him a total of sixteen contemporary major titles. His record in the major tournaments has been exceeded only by Bobby Jones (unless one counts his Western titles), and, more recently, by Jack Nicklaus (even if one counts his Western titles). In addition to his major championships, Hagen recorded some thirty other tournament victories in his career, including three Metropolitan Opens and three North and South Opens. Because he was so tough in match play, Hagen was the captain of the first United States Ryder Cup teams. Sportswriter Al Laney concluded "that all of us who wrote golf in Hagen's day made too much of his flamboyant showmanship [and] not nearly enough of his golf."²²

Nonetheless, as Laney's analysis suggests, Hagen's significance goes beyond his statistical golf record. Hagen, in many ways fulfilling the stereotype of the 1920s, was an incredibly colorful figure and did much to popularize the game. According to Herbert W. Wind, Sir Walter was "a born showman," who "loved the big gesture" and attracted thousands of spectators to

tournaments with his knack for the spectacular in behavior and dress. In the spring of 1925, Keeler described him as "the leading showman of sport today," characterizing Hagen's showmanship as an "instinctive . . . natural ebullition," unseen since the days of the great prizefighter John L. Sullivan. Laney remembered that Hagen's "mere arrival on the scene did something, caused something to happen. His every appearance seemed to be accompanied by the figurative blaring of trumpets and a metaphorical waving of banners, and Walter was perfectly conscious at all times of his role as a performer."²³

Hagen's biggest "gesture" was probably during the 1926 British Open when he came to the seventy-second hole of the event needing to sink a 150-yard iron shot for a tie with Jones, who was in the clubhouse with the lead. Before attempting the improbable shot, Hagen paced off the distance to the hole and then amazed everyone by asking his caddie to pull the flag! Sir Walter did not make the eagle two, but he did run the ball remarkably close to the hole, offering everyone a great show.²⁴

Moreover, analysts often noted that even Hagen's swing was extraordinary and unorthodox. He was merely a "scrambler," never an acknowledged "stylist of the game." It was obvious to golf experts that Hagen had played a lot of baseball in his youth; his stance was wide, his swing plane was relatively flat, and he exaggerated his weight shift, creating a "lurching" motion at the point of impact. Others, most notably Jones, possessed a more artistic, technically sound swing than Hagen. Highlighting The Haig's ability to scramble for wins, British golf writer Arthur Croome wrote that Hagen "makes more bad shots in a single season than Harry Vardon [a British golfer who helped pioneer the game in America] did during the whole period 1890-1914. But he beats more immaculate golfers because three of 'those' and one of 'them'

count four, and he knows it." Hagen was "superbly unorthodox . . . self-taught and not in the slightest measure a copyist or a patternist," thought H. B. Martin. On the course, Hagen was a pure utilitarian; he cared far less about what his swing looked like than about whether he won or lost, and he always played to win. Robert Harlow, Hagen's close friend and manager, believed that "if Walter got into a game of tiddledywinks with a couple of kids on the nursery floor, he would try as hard to beat them as he did to win the British Open championship."²⁵

Hagen was unconventional off the course as well. Anecdotes about his "roaring" lifestyle are legion. In many ways he was golf's answer to Babe Ruth. Wind wrote that Hagen drank "what would have been for other people excessive quantities of liquor. . . . [He] broke eleven of the Ten Commandments and kept on going." Hagen could, apparently, party all night, show up to the locker room the following morning to prepare for a tournament, and ask his competitors: "Well, who is going to be second?" Much of this is legend. Actually, Hagen took good care of himself during his playing days and drank far less than was commonly believed. At a party, Hagen would often ask the bartender for a ginger ale, which he would nurse as if it were a cocktail, or he might merely walk around with a drink, sipping and then discarding it as inconspicuously as possible. "I could make one highball last longer in my own glass than any Scotchman ever born," Hagen wrote. On one occasion, someone told H. B. Martin that Hagen had consumed a dozen cocktails and was drunk in his hotel room. Martin entered the room, however, and found Hagen "sober as a judge." When Martin told Hagen what he had heard, Hagen replied, "Well, did you believe it?" As for staying up all night, Hagen later admitted that he usually had little choice; that is, sometimes he could not sleep before big competitions. So Hagen was not quite as indulgent or cool as everyone assumed.²⁶

But if Hagen's drinking has been exaggerated, the stories concerning his womanizing are probably all true. He was certainly popular and undisciplined with female fans, who usually comprised a large segment of the galleries that followed him over the golf course. Hagen enjoyed looking at women almost as much as being seen with them, and he often found his evening's companionship within his gallery. Early in his career he was introduced to Ernestine Schumann-Heink, famous contralto of the Metropolitan Opera. He had never heard of her and, after noticing her "ample bosom," reputedly said, "my dear, did you ever stop to think what a lovely bunker you would make?" Such behavior, combined with his travels, did not make for a good family environment. Hagen was married and divorced twice in the period from 1917 to 1929, and in this way, among others, he represented changing American attitudes about the family. Insofar as golf "roared" in the Twenties, it did so through Walter Hagen.²⁷

Hagen's career also signaled a deep change in the development of his sport. He is regarded as the country's first professional touring golfer; he was indeed the first golf professional to abandon the traditional role of giving lessons and selling equipment for a single country club. Indeed, in this way Hagen most epitomized change. He was also the first to make a comfortable living playing in tournaments and (more often in the Twenties) exhibition matches. More than any other person, Hagen paved the road for professional tour golf and did so with pride. In an age of fading amateurism, when "professionals" in sports were still often frowned upon as common and crass, Sir Walter offered class (his comments to Ms. Schumann-Heink notwithstanding) and commanded respect. He was suave, debonair, and, of course, always impeccably dressed. In 1924 the Detroit News carried an article entitled "Walter Hagen---Golf's Fashion Plate," which informed fans of Hagen's extensive wardrobe, including

two dozen pair of custom designed golf shoes. Grantland Rice wrote that "Hagen, by his tact, deportment, style, and over-all color, did for the professional golfer what Babe Ruth did for the professional ball player."²⁸

In later years, Hagen happily carried the distinction of being the first golfer to earn a million dollars. During the 1920s, his annual income ranged from \$45,000 to \$75,000, depending on his standing and the number of exhibition matches he played; H. B. Martin once estimated that Hagen made \$1.4 million throughout his career. Exhibitions were usually arranged by Robert Harlow. Smooth and well-groomed, Bob Harlow was the perfect conductor of Sir Walter's show, serving all at once as a publicity, endorsement, and tour manager. (Harlow later became the PGA Tournament Bureau Manager and was vital to the development of a regular, organized tour.)²⁹

In addition, Hagen made a lot of money from endorsements. He liberally lent his name and picture to the advertisement of many products, including cigarettes, sweaters, golf instructional albums, and golf equipment, among others. In 1922 he left the Spalding Company's golf department and established Walter Hagen Golf Products. Although the company struggled early, Wilson Sporting Goods eventually purchased it, kept Hagen as a well-paid expert consultant, and continued to produce clubs bearing his signature. In sum, more than any other golfer of the period, Hagen represented and profited from the consumer culture.

Like much else that Hagen did, his business ventures alarmed many of the sport's purists. At the height of his career, Hagen was asked why he got into the sport, and he replied, "I got into golf for the money." He was jokingly referring to his boyhood days when he worked for dimes as a caddie, but to traditionalists Hagen's financial motivation seemed unhealthy, not funny.

Some suggested that Hagen's emphasis on golf as business was unseemly, even dishonorable. For example, in 1922 he created a small brouhaha by not defending his PGA and Western Open crowns, instead opting to play in exhibitions and capitalize on his recent win in the British Open. Many felt that Hagen was "duty-bound" to defend his titles, that his failure to do so was "unethical," and that he was "unduly interested in the commercial side of the game."³⁰

Hagen developed an image as a cold professional, a "money-player," who ignored his critics and did whatever was necessary to turn a profit. "The Haig isn't much when playing for haircut money," wrote Walter McMullen of the Hamilton Spectator in 1931, "but dangle a few thousand dollars or its equivalent in marks, lire, pesos, francs, or pounds before his pin-point eyes and he becomes the calmest, most unruffled and most calculating golf machine in the world." One anonymous critic feared that Hagen was advancing a "creeping commercialization" of the game. The great British professional J. H. Taylor was also uncomfortable with Hagen's flamboyant, globe-trotting style. Taylor castigated Hagen for remaining "unattached" to a country club and touring the country for profit. The Britisher argued that "real pros" worked for the "honor, prestige, and dignity of the clubs" and the game they served. To traditionalists, in other words, the true golf professional accepted his subordinate, lower-class position, deriving a limited social stature through his service to wealthy elites at a particular country club. For years, that had been the most to which any professional golfer could aspire.

Early in his career, from 1912-1919, Hagen had been satisfied with such expectations, being "attached" first to the Country Club of Rochester and then to the Oakland Hills Country Club, outside Detroit, Michigan. After all, Hagen's father was a blacksmith in the railroad car shops of East Rochester, and his grandfather had been a German immigrant who had probably

also worked for the railroad. Hagen's mother was also a German immigrant. If the Country Club of Rochester had not been constructed in 1895 (when Hagen was three years old) within comfortable walking distance of his home, Walter Hagen would have likely never played golf. He grew up playing baseball, like most other American children of working-class, immigrant backgrounds. In 1900 Hagen took a job caddying at the Country Club, where he impressed the professional, Andrew Christy, who subsequently took Hagen under his wing. Hagen learned the game and, more importantly, the golf professional's vocation, including club repair and swing instruction, and eventually took Christy's position. He did all of that before competing in his first U.S. Open in 1913. In sum, Hagen took the only avenue into golf that was available to a youth of his socio-economic and ethnic heritage, moving up from caddie to club professional.

By 1920, though, Hagen recognized an opportunity to further elevate his social and financial standing; he could make much more money and acquire greater fame by traveling the country as the first "unattached" professional. Tournament summaries in newspapers always listed the final standings of players, including their name and the name of the club they represented. Hagen was the first to have the designation "unattached" printed after his name. The word suggested economic independence or free-agency. Few Americans with Hagen's lineage and education (he claimed to have dropped out of school in the seventh grade) could claim such financial and social freedom. Of course, as Taylor's comments illustrated, not everyone welcomed or accepted Sir Walter. Yet by 1926, Hagen had become an example of how a working-class youth could rise in professional sports, even golf, one of the most exclusive sports in the country.³¹

Hagen carried his challenge further by leading several so-called "rebellions" at the finest

golf courses around the world, helping to gain equal treatment and accommodations at clubhouses for both amateurs and professionals. In 1920 Hagen attempted to break down social barriers at clubhouses for professionals in Great Britain, where upper-class amateur prejudices toward professionals remained strongest. Upon arriving in England to play in his first British Open, he learned that professionals were prohibited from entering the clubhouse at Deal. So Hagen ordered his chauffeur to park his long, luxurious Austin-Daimler automobile in front of the clubhouse and proceeded to use it throughout the tournament as a locker room. The club secretary asked Hagen to park the car in the rear of the building, but Hagen said no. At the 1923 British Open, Hagen refused to attend the award ceremonies (he finished runner-up) because Troon officials had prohibited professionals from using the clubhouse the previous week. He repeated these antics at other prestigious British clubs and, although the barriers to professionals did not collapse immediately, they did eventually, and Hagen is justly credited with assisting the process. Hagen summed it up well in 1956, "I made a few dents in those [British] traditions . . . but not enough." Still, in resisting the second-class treatment often dealt to professional athletes, Sir Walter embodied and promoted change.³²

Hagen possessed other interesting qualities. It seems clear that early in his career he was a modest, even unassuming individual, but once established, he was rarely humble and often cocky to the point of arrogance. J. H. Taylor believed, however, that Hagen's showmanship was "but a pose designed to impress and to conceal real anxieties." Given his education and background, Hagen must have occasionally felt out of place, even insecure, in the world of golf. Whatever the motive, Hagen did exude confidence. Recalling his first experience with Hagen, Croome wrote: "It was at once borne in on me that here was a man who would not fail through

excess of modesty." But if he seemed arrogant and materialistic, Hagen also impressed people with his generosity, playing many matches for charity and giving money large sums of money to caddies, friends, and hospitals, as in the Battle of the Century. And, according to H. B. Martin, Hagen's two outstanding characteristics were his refusal to court sympathy or self-pity and his utter disregard for making an alibi--whatever the breaks might be. These qualities endeared him to competitors, who generally admired and respected Hagen, despite his showmanship, gamesmanship, and cockiness. "I love to play with Walter," Jones declared. "He goes along chin up, smiling away; never grouching about his luck, playing the ball as he finds it. He can come nearer beating the luck itself than anybody I know."³³

Hagen, therefore, represented a curious blend in character. Golf's leading showman and one of its greatest athletes, Hagen was most notably a confident and feared competitor, who was flamboyant, controversial, and original. But he was also gregarious, respected, generous, and, within his sport, egalitarian. In so many ways, especially in his professional endeavors, Hagen represented change. He was golf's leading representative of the Roaring Twenties, cultivating a rebellious, irreverent image that more often than not was consistent with reality. "In Hagen you have the irresponsible playboy of golf, and at the same time a keen and determined competitor," wrote Grantland Rice in 1930. Chick Evans, an outstanding American amateur, said of Hagen, "he is in golf to live, not to make a living." Actually, Hagen was in the game to do both. Jones may have put it best when he reflected on Hagen, "He wasn't called Sir Walter for nothing."³⁴

As for Bobby Jones, on and, to a lesser degree, off the course, he represented much of what Hagen did not--continuity and tradition. "Mr. Jones" was unlike Sir Walter except in his achievements on the course. Jones's record is equally impressive, particularly in light of the fact

that he was an amateur and concentrated only on the major events. He won his first competitive tournament at the age of nine when he took the 1911 East Lake Jr. Championship in Atlanta. "A pink-cheeked, round-faced, blue-eyed boy," Little Bob splashed onto the national scene in 1916 with his performance in the U.S. Amateur Championship at the Merion Cricket Club in Philadelphia. Although he did not win the tournament, he became an instant star, the game's child prodigy.³⁵

Observers admired Jones's fluid, orthodox swing and the studiousness with which he approached the game. He was often described as a methodical "student of good form." "Golf's Great Stylist," he made the game look easy, "with scarcely a blemish in a swing that appeared to onlookers as absolutely perfect." Whereas Hagen "swayed" or lunged at the ball during his swing, Jones had a "classic" and "flawless" swing, marked by "perfect balance," an "orthodox" narrow stance, and a "rhythm" that finished with a "statuesque" follow through. As one golf writer put it, Jones moved "up and down, instead of to and fro." British amateur E. W. E. Holderness noted that Jones's swing "just flows sweetly and smoothly from start to finish" and concluded that Jones was the natural heir to golf's classicist, Harry Vardon. George Duncan, a prominent British professional, referred to him as an "artist who is never satisfied with anything less than perfection." Yet Jones was not a "fanatic" of the game who hit practice balls for hours on end; rather, to him golf was "a game of character" in which "preparing himself was much more important than preparing his shots." Jones's style and approach to the game were typically described in such traditional terms. The Atlantan even looked old-fashioned on the course; instead of Hagen's dazzling, pin-stripped wardrobe, Jones wore drab or navy blue knickers.³⁶

Despite his natural ability, Jones took longer than some expected to win a major title, and,

during the early years of his career, he developed a reputation as a club-throwing, spoiled hothead. The most infamous manifestation of his temper occurred in Scotland during the 1921 British Open at St. Andrews when Jones, frustrated by his poor play in the third round, "tore up his card" (figuratively speaking) and withdrew from competition. "The one fault that [Jones] had to conquer was the overeagerness and the fiery impatience of youth," concluded Grantland Rice. Eventually, however, he "curbed his temper" and, like a model Victorian, learned from his infirmities. Yet it was never quite as simple as his admirers made it seem; in the spring of 1930 Jones admitted, "I've never gotten rid of my temper. I still get as mad as blazes, but I don't show it; I suppress it."³⁷

As age and experience had their influence, Jones broke through in 1923 by winning the U.S. Open and starting an incredible run in the majors that included thirteen titles before his retirement in 1930 at the age of twenty-eight. In 1927 Jones won forever the heart of Scotland as he returned to St. Andrews, apologized for his earlier behavior, took the British Open, and then left the trophy at the club. In all, Jones won three British Opens, one British Amateur, four U.S. Opens, and five U.S. Amateur titles, including the Grand Slam (all four of those titles) in 1930. Like Hagen, he also promoted international competition by playing for the Walker Cup (the forerunner and amateur counterpart to the Ryder Cup).

But beyond their competitive records and star-level popularity, Jones and Hagen had little in common. Jones was blessed with most, if not all, of the advantages a young man could hope for in 1920s America. He was of Welsh heritage, born into an established southern family that first migrated to Georgia in the colonial period. Jones was the son of a prominent Atlanta lawyer and the grandson of a wealthy businessman from Canton, Georgia. He could afford to

play the game as an amateur, a luxury denied Hagen, who began his career as a caddie; Jones, in other words, took the traditional path into the sport, as the son of a country club member.

Family friend George Adair once told a reporter for the Philadelphia Inquirer that Jones, as a youth, "virtually 'lived on the links.'" Jones also had the time and resources to acquire a formal education. Whereas Hagen had dropped out of school at the age of twelve, the Atlantan provided an admirable example of how one could blend education and athletics. Commentators highlighted his formal education and interest in literature and classical music. Rice informed fans, "In starting for a championship [Jones] might be found with a Latin book or a calculus treatise, completely engrossed, with all thought of golf eliminated until he reached the scene of battle."³⁸

Of course, it was not all classical literature for Jones; like Hagen, he loved billiards, hunting, and, especially, fishing. For the most part, though, Jones developed a personal life that was very different from Hagen's. He stated that his priorities were family first, vocation (law) second, and golf third, with the game never being a life unto itself. The record of his life suggests that Jones was capable of occasionally mixing up those priorities, especially golf and vocation, but he certainly prized and protected his family, an old-fashioned value transmitted to him through both his father and grandfather. Jones remained married to one woman throughout his life, and together they raised three children in Atlanta. In addition, although he enjoyed a good joke and a few drinks with friends or competitors, he was never accused of being raucous.³⁹

Interestingly, while many Americans found Sir Walter an alluring, heroic figure, they simply adored Bobby Jones. After winning the 1926 and 1930 British Opens, Jones received two of the largest New York ticker-tape parades bestowed on any person, much less an athlete;

he is the only person to receive two such honors. Upon his retirement, Golfers Magazine declared Jones "the greatest sports idol the world has ever known; more loved and admired than a Cobb, Dempsey, Ruth, or Tilden."⁴⁰

Most admired Jones because he was, supposedly, a "simon-pure" amateur, increasingly a novelty in American sports. "He is the most popular champion in any sport because he is an amateur to the marrow, a sportsman at all times, a lover of the game for itself and not the profit to be made from it," wrote one commentator. H. B. Martin said of Jones, "never was there an athlete who imbued a truer sense of amateurism . . . who steadfastly refused to listen to tempting offers to join the professional ranks."⁴¹

So in 1927, when Jones signed a contract to write a series of articles for a newspaper syndicate, his fans were "surprised," even though the USGA had been allowing other amateur golfers to do the same for years. To the public, however, Jones was not simply another amateur athlete, he was "simon-pure." Jones carefully guarded his amateur standing and could apparently use quite virtuous rhetoric in the process. The New York Times reminded its readers that Jones had turned down a similar offer a few years earlier, reputedly saying, "I am not a writer and I refuse to sell my name for \$25,000. If I were not fairly well known as a golfer, anything I might write would not be worth \$10 and I do not intend to trade on my reputation, regardless of whether my standing as an amateur is affected." In another instance, Jones returned a gift of \$50,000 given to him by friends in Atlanta for the purpose of buying a house because he thought (and was advised by the USGA) that it might threaten his standing and tarnish the game's amateur character.⁴²

Of course, Jones could not be "simon-pure," and, inevitably, throughout his life he

profited from the game of golf. Indeed, in the long run Jones probably made much more money from golf as an amateur than he would have made if he had competed as a professional. Yet during the 1920s he played in few professional tournaments and never accepted prize money; rather, as one fan put it, he "ignored the golden glow of professionalism" and the "temptation" to play for profit. For this, many Americans gave Jones their loyalty and respect. Even when Jones retired in 1930 and "cashed-in" by signing a contract worth \$250,000 with Warner Brothers to do a series of golf instructional films, observers thought him "wise." He "chose the proper moment for quitting," having "won everything there is to win" and having a "growing family" to look after. The fact that the films were "educational" in nature brought an amateur flavor to his first major act of commercialism. Stacy Bender, president of the Metropolitan Golf Association, concluded that Jones's "entire approach to the game is just another laurel wreath on the head of Old Man Tradition, which holds golf in such high esteem."⁴³

In fairness to Jones, by 1930 he was usually less than pious--even ambivalent--about professional sports. "Amateurism, in my opinion, is entirely a matter of convenience, depending upon the financial condition of the individual. In other words, it is fine to be an amateur if one can afford it," he believed. Yet in the same article he also advised Americans: "One does not and should not choose his sport with the same care he would use in deciding to what business or profession he will devote his life." For Jones personally, a career in professional sports was nearly inconceivable; when he retired in 1930, Jones made it crystal clear that he would not play golf for money. To have done so would have invited stigma, and that would have meant a significant loss of social standing; Jones would never have been satisfied with changing his shoes in the parking lot or losing access to all British and a few American clubhouses.⁴⁴

In sum, to his legions of admirers, Jones was the embodiment of amateurism; in reality, he, like everyone else, wrestled with the definition and role of the amateur athlete in the midst of emerging professionalism in sports. Still, all of this was in stark contrast to Hagen's frankly commercial exploits.

Moreover, Jones was adored because he seemed to possess the finest Victorian personal characteristics. While Hagen was described as a "cocky showman," Jones was most often characterized as "modest" and "sportsmanlike." William Richardson simply remarked, "Bobby is modesty personified." In his diatribe on modern sports, Paul Gallico admitted that Jones was the "One Hero" who "would stand up in every way as a gentleman as well as a celebrity . . . and who never once . . . has let me down in my estimate of him." When he won the 1926 British Open, the Times of London declared that "no more modest or generous golfer" had ever won the event. The same newspaper compared Jones's retirement to that of George Washington, saying both left the stage "with the blessings" of their "fellow citizens." In the summer of 1930, the Catholic periodical Commonweal noted that "Bobby is widely loved because he is genuinely modest, because he mingles a boyish intentness with the artist's grim obsession with perfection, [and] because he is a model of sportsmanship." A prominent British golf journal concluded that "the significance of Mr. Jones" was his "character," which "captured the hearts of the golfers of two hemispheres" through "modesty and the sincerity of a nature as honest as the sunlight."⁴⁵

Though a feared competitor, Jones was considerate and kind to his opponents. No one accused him of gamesmanship as he attacked "Old Man Par" instead of his competition. Gallico believed that "Jones could not even work up a grudge against an opponent. His sole enemies were himself and the landscape." Moreover, he did not pursue victory at any price; Jones

became famous for calling rules violations and penalties on himself, even while it cost him a major tournament, such as the 1925 U.S. Open. And Jones was a model of decorum off the course. Besides being strongly committed to his family, he lived a seemingly disciplined, humble, and orderly life.⁴⁶

But while Jones's public life was nearly a perfect reflection of the finest traditional values, his private life and views were not always so admirable and were certainly more complex. For example, he was rarely as calm and collected on the course as he appeared to be. On one occasion he said, "People may get the impression that I find it easy to go on playing golf day after day without breaking down. But actually it is really hard work and . . . I [often] feel a bundle of nerves."⁴⁷

Moreover, although he never identified with the dark, intolerant defense of tradition in the Twenties such as was represented in the Ku Klux Klan, Jones was characteristically moderate to conservative on social and political questions. On the individual level he was warm and considerate with everyone, regardless of skin color; indeed, from East Lake caddies to his chauffeur, Jones was popular among black people he knew personally. Unlike the other great Georgian athlete of the early twentieth century, Ty Cobb, there were no incidents of violence toward blacks in Jones's life. Charles Elliott, a friend who spent long, casual hours fishing with Jones, recalled never hearing Jones talk about race, much less uttering any offensive slur.⁴⁸

Yet Jones was a traditionalist reared in a racially backward culture; he likely harbored the typical, paternalistic views of upper-class southern whites. So if warm and considerate on the personal level, on the public level he never supported progressive civil rights policies and always seemed comfortable in the New South's segregated society. In the 1950s Jones was a friend and

fund-raiser to President Dwight D. Eisenhower; the Atlantan apparently shared Eisenhower's moderately conservative policy views, including those on racial integration. In the 1960s and following his death in 1971, Jones's golf club and tournament, Augusta National and the Masters, would receive much criticism for their insensitivity to African-Americans, specifically their replication of the Old South's plantation culture and inflexibility in allowing a black golfer to enter the Masters. While it is true that by 1960 co-founder and friend Clifford Roberts was primarily responsible for the conduct of the club and tournament, it is also a fact that Jones tolerated Roberts' decisions, however much black spokesmen protested.⁴⁹

In other ways, Jones simply broke from the Victorian mold and manifested traits that were more modern than traditional; for instance, Jones lacked a strong sense of Protestant religious piety. He married a devout Roman Catholic, permitted his children to be reared Catholic, and was generally not concerned with religious conduct or issues. Moreover, he cursed and smoked excessively. The "69 cigarettes" quip was but a slight exaggeration; "I have no recipe for discipline," Jones confessed in a 1927 interview. "I only know that you can break any habit if you try hard enough. Except smoking." And he regularly enjoyed a glass of corn whiskey, even if it meant breaking the law in the era of Prohibition, which, despite popular history, not everyone did. Finally, Jones lived in Atlanta, the city that most embodied the New South and that also symbolized his familiarity with change and progress. Nevertheless, sportswriters portrayed Jones as the classic southern Victorian gentleman, and, in general, this popular perception had deep roots in reality.⁵⁰

Many historians have suggested that American culture experienced its own battle of the century during the 1920s between progressive, urban, liberal, modern values on the one hand and

traditional, rural, conservative, Victorian values on the other. Paula Fass has found that American youth in the Twenties was marked by a "tension" between the forces of "change and stability." In The Nervous Generation: American Thought, 1917-1930, Roderick Nash argues that American thought and culture in the Twenties were neither "roaring" nor "lost," as often stereotyped. Rather, he claims that Americans in these years were "nervous" about what John W. Chambers has called the "tyranny of change" and its effect on traditional Victorian values. Americans, Nash contends, were cautiously moving forward, attempting to assimilate the advantages of change with the best of tradition. He concludes his study by declaring Henry Ford, a complex mixture of modern change and Victorian tradition, the best symbol for the age. Even while significantly adding to this framework, Lynn Dumenil has more recently written that "Americans were of two minds" about the consolidation of modernity in the 1920s, having a sense of anxiety over change but for the most part maintaining an optimism for the future.⁵¹

It is obviously possible to detect that broad theme in the images and lives of Walter Hagen and Bobby Jones. Admittedly, one must be careful not to burden these athletes with more interpretive weight than they can bear; obviously, neither man was a complete representative of anything, except a great golfer, and so I am not naively suggesting that either be considered a "symbol for his age." That said, these golfers do generally illustrate the tension between change and continuity that is omnipresent and that was especially sharp in 1920s America. Hagen, a professional with a northern working class, immigrant background, was popular because he essentially represented change, while also testifying to the old-fashioned virtues of hard work, self-confidence, and pluck; Jones, an amateur from an old-stock, moderately wealthy southern family, was adored because he essentially embodied tradition, while

comfortably accommodating a limited amount of modern change. It says something significant about American society in the Twenties that both Jones and Hagen were exceptionally popular, despite their varying socio-economic backgrounds, public images, and personal lives. Indeed, Hagen and Jones are revealing enough as individuals, but taken together they provide rich comparisons and contrasts which illuminate a pivotal period in the history of golf and American society. Beyond that, their stories are some of the most exciting and enjoyable in all of sports, and are simply worth remembering.

Notes

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- i. Will Grimsley, Golf: Its History, People, and Events (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), 58; Robert T. Jones, Jr., Down the Fairway (N.Y.: Blue Ribbon Books, 1927), 148; Southern Golfer, March 15, 1926, 11.
- ii. Grimsley, Golf, 57-8; Walter Hagen and Margaret Seaton Heck, The Walter Hagen Story (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 148-51; "Hagen Overwhelms Bobby Jones," Professional Golfer, 7 (March 1926), 24; Robert Tyre Jones, Jr., Golf is My Game (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1960), 96.
- iii. New York World, February 28, 1926; H. B. Martin, "Golf Records Make Interesting Comparison," Metropolitan Golfer, 4 (May 1926), 20-1; Gould B. Martin, "Jones No Match for Hagen," Metropolitan Golfer, 4 (March 1926), 8; Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 148.
- iv. See Hagen, Walter Hagen Story, 148-9.
- v. Sarasota Herald, Atlanta Constitution, New Orleans Times-Picayne, March 1, 1926; New York Times, March 1, 1926.
- vi. Ibid., Jones, Golf Is My Game, 98.
- vii. Sarasota Herald, March 1, 1926; see also, Hagen, Walter Hagen Story, 153-4; Grantland Rice, The Bobby Jones Story (Atlanta: Tupper and Love, 1953), 140; and Jones, Golf Is My Game, 98. In the last account, Jones recalls that Hagen's ball was not really obstructed by a tree, but was in the middle of the fairway. Sarasota Herald report mentions the tree, however.
- viii. O. B. Keeler, "Hagen--Match-Play Master," American Golfer, 29 (May 1926), 1;

reprinted in Charles Price, American Golfer (New York: Random House, 1964), 77-82.

This article gives excellent coverage and analysis of the match.

ix. Hagen, Walter Hagen Story, 154; Sarasota Herald, March 1, 1926.

x. New York Times, March 1, 1926.

xi. Gould, "Jones No Match For Hagen," 8; Atlanta Constitution, March 1, 1926.

xii. Tampa-St. Petersburg Tribune, March 8, 1926; Sarasota Herald, March 8, 1926; New York Times, March 8, 1926, 13; and Hagen, The Walter Hagen Story, 155. Accounts of the length of Hagen's birdie putt vary from the Times's record of forty feet, to Hagen's fifty feet, to the Herald's report of 70 feet. In any case it was long, and no one, including Hagen himself, expected the putt to fall.

xiii. New York Times, March 8, 1926, 13; Herbert Warren Wind, The Story of American Golf (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), 151.

14. Rice, Bobby Jones Story, 137; New York Times, March 8, 1926, 13; Richard Miller, Triumphant Journey: The Saga of Bobby Jones and the Grand Slam of Golf (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1980), 161; New Orleans Times-Picayune, March 8, 1926.

15. H. B. Martin, Fifty Years of American Golf (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1936), 330; Allison Danzig and Peter Brandwein, Sports Golden Age: A Closeup of the Fabulous Twenties (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1948), 193.

16. Jones, Down the Fairway, 149.

17. Atlanta Constitution, March 25, 1926.

18. Larry Englemann, The Goddess and the American Girl: The Story of Suzanne Lenglen and Helen Wills (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1988).

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19. New York Times, November 13, 1927, XI, 9.
 20. Jones, Down the Fairway, 180-1; Bernard Darwin, "Why Bobby Jones is the World's Best Golfer," New York Times, September 1, 1929, V, 4.
 21. I found the seed for this project in Benjamin Rader, American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Televised Sports (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1996), 194-9.
 22. On Hagen and Jones, see Paul Gallico, The Golden People (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1965); Grantland Rice, The Tumult and the Shouting, (N.Y.: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1954); Hagen, Walter Hagen Story; Ross Goodner, Golf's Greatest (N.Y.: Golf Digest, 1978), 70-9; Wind, Story of American Golf, 118-32; George Peper, ed. Golf in America: The First Hundred Years (N.Y.: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1988), 52-61; Bernard Darwin, Golf Between Two Wars (London: Chatto and Windus, 1944); Gene Sarazen, Thirty Years of Championship Golf (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Press, 1950), passim; Al Barkow, The History of the PGA Tour (NY: Doubleday, 1989), 17-24, 269; Al Laney, Following the Leaders (Reprint, Classics of Golf), 46.
 23. Wind, Story of American Golf, 119-120; Laney, Following the Leaders, 46.
 24. Bernard Darwin, "How Jones Won the British Open," American Golfer, 29 (August 1926), 12.
 25. For a discussion of Hagen's swing, see Tom Scott and Geoffrey Cousins, The Golf Immortals (N.Y.: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1969), 43-55; H. B. Martin, Fifty Years of American Golf, 325; O. B. Keeler, "Studying the Styles of Champions: Walter Hagen," American Golfer, 26 (19 May 1923), 24.
 26. Wind, Story of American Golf, 127; interview with Ken Janke (friend of Walter Hagen

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- and executor of Hagen estate), May 14, 1997, Birmingham, Michigan; Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 262; Al Barkow, History of the PGA Tour, 19; H. B Martin, "A Champion in the Making," Golf Illustrated, 40 (December 1933), 41.
27. Charles Price, The World of Golf (N.Y.: Random House, 1962), 132.
28. See Peper, Golf in America, 52-60; Herb Graffis, The PGA: The Official History of the Professional Golfers' Association of America (N.Y. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1975), 167-74; and Al Barkow, Golf's Golden Grind: The History of the Tour (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, 1974), 66-75; Detroit News, May 25, 1924; Rice, Tumult and the Shouting, 65.
29. "How Hagen and Harlow Hit It Off," Professional Golfer, 9 (January 1929), 21; Barkow, History of the PGA Tour, 39-67; Herb Graffis, "The Haig," Sport, 27 (June 1959), 88.
30. Ross, "Walter Hagen," 148; New York Times, August 20, 1922, 25; Detroit News, August 18, 1922.
31. Ibid.; New York Times, December 21, 1924, IX, 5; Hamilton Spectator (Ontario), July 14, 1931.
32. Charles Bartlett, "Walter in Wonderland," Professional Golfer, 33 (June 1951), 18; Barkow, History of the PGA, 23-4.
33. J. H. Taylor, Golf: My Life's Work (London: Jonathan Cape, LTD, 1943), 212; A. C. M. Croome, "The Other Side of Hagen," American Golfer, 29 (September 1926), 26; Martin, Fifty Years of American Golf, 324-5; O. B. Keeler, "Studying the Styles of Champions," 24.

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34. Rice, "Golf's Bad Boy," 18; Grimsley, Golf, 59; Jones, Golf is My Game, 97.
35. Grantland Rice, "There's Only One Bobby Jones," Collier's, 75 (4 April 1925), 20.
36. E. W. E. Holderness, "Golf's Great Stylist," American Golfer, 31 (July 1928); Thomas Uzzell, "A Study of Bobby Jones's Swing," American Golfer, 27 (18 October 1924), 8; Martin, Fifty Years of American Golf, 361; Scott and Cousins, The Golf Immortals, 81-96; Rice, "There's Only One Bobby Jones," 20; Price, World of Golf, 174; "In the Locker-Room with Bobby Jones," Literary Digest, 105 (5 July 1930), 42.
37. Rice, "There's Only One Bobby Jones," 20. See Jim Barnes's quotation in Martin, Fifty Years of American Golf, 357; also, Jerome Travers and James Crowell, The Fifth Estate: Thirty Years of Golf (N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), 67; W. E. Woodward, "What Makes Him Click," American Magazine, 109 (April 1930), 170.
38. Philadelphia Inquirer, September 8, 1916; Rice, "There's Only One Bobby Jones," 20.
39. "In the Locker-Room with Bobby Jones," 42.
40. Francis J. Powers, "Bobby Jones Retires From Competitive Golf," Golfers Magazine, 58 (December 1930), 7.
41. Angus Perkerson, "Atlanta, Home of Golf Champions," Golfers Magazine, 50 (October 1926), 29; Martin, Fifty Years of American Golf, 362.
42. New York Times, April 23, 1927, 12; January 8, 1928, XI, 1.
43. Bobby Jones, "Not My Business," Collier's, 85 (26 April 1930), 13; Powers, "Bobby Jones Retires From Competitive Golf," 7; New York Times, November 19, 1930, 26.
44. Bobby Jones, "Not My Business," 14.
45. New York Times, July 18, 1926, VIII, 8; Gallico, Farewell to Sport, 70; Atlanta

Constitution, July 11, 1926, November 18, 1930; "The Impredicable Bobby Jones,"

Commonweal, 12 (23 July 1930), 314; "The Significance of Mr. Jones," Golf Monthly, 18 (August 1927), 18.

46. Gallico, The Golden People, 280.

47. "Bobby Jones on His Victory," Golf Monthly, 20 (June 1930), 314.

48. Charles C. Alexander, Ty Cobb (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1984); interview with Charles Elliott, (friend of Jones), Covington, Georgia, July 30, 1997. Jones left no record—public or private—of his views on race or minorities in golf; his silence on the issue has left him vulnerable to an increasing number of criticisms.

49. For varying treatments of Augusta National, the Masters, and Clifford Roberts, see David Owen, The Making of the Masters: Clifford Roberts, Augusta National, and Golf's Most Prestigious Tournament (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1999); Steve Eubanks, Augusta: Home of the Masters Tournament (Nashville, TN: Rutledge Hill Press, 1997); Curt Sampson, The Masters: Golf, Money, and Power in Augusta, Georgia (N.Y.: Villard Press, 1998).

Although they agree on little, all three works affirm that by about 1948, when Jones was afflicted with a rare spinal disease, Clifford Roberts was primarily responsible for the policies of the club and tournament.

50. New York Times, July 31, 1927, VIII, 2; Elliott interview.

51. See Stanley Coben, Rebellion Against Victorianism: The Impetus for Cultural Change in 1920s America (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1991); Roderick Nash, The Nervous Generation: American Thought, 1917-1930 (reprint, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1990); Lynn Dumenil, The Modern Temper (N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1995), 6; Joan Hoff Wilson, ed., The

Twenties: The Critical Issues (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1972); Paula S. Fass, The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the Twenties (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1977); Paul A. Carter, Another Part of the Twenties (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1977); T. J. Jackson Lears, No Place of Grace (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1981); and William Leuchtenberg, The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-32 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).