

2000

Sir Walter and Mr. Jones: Walter Hagen, Bobby Jones, and the Rise of American Golf. Chapter 8: The "Atlanta Golf Machine" and the "Lion-Tamer," 1928-1929.

Stephen Lowe

Olivet Nazarene University, slowe@olivet.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/hist_facp



Part of the [American Popular Culture Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lowe, Stephen. "The 'Atlanta Golf Machine' and the 'Lion-Tamer,' 1928-1929." *Sir Walter and Mr. Jones: Walter Hagen, Bobby Jones, and the Rise of American Golf*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Sleeping Bear Press, 2000.

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by the History at Digital Commons @ Olivet. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Scholarship – History by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Olivet. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@olivet.edu.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The "Atlanta Golf Machine" and the "Lion-Tamer," 1928-1929

1

The primary reason that Walter Hagen traveled around the U.S. in the winter of 1927 and to Rochester instead of Florida in the winter of 1928 was that he had lost his position, or at least his salary, at Pasadena. Hagen's lucrative arrangement with Jack Taylor became a casualty of the Florida real estate market. The market had peaked in 1925, and by the summer of 1926 it was in serious trouble. A deadly hurricane ripped through southern Florida in September 1926, killing 400 people and finishing off much of the state's speculative enthusiasm. Hagen summarized his and many other Americans' experience: "The Florida boom paid me off well for three straight years, then the bubble burst." Actually, because Hagen had not invested in land himself, he lost only a regular income and a comfortable winter base.ⁱ

Hagen returned to Rochester in the winter of 1928 to prepare the baseball Tribe for the upcoming season. It was even reported that its soon-to-be president would work out with the club in spring training. But Hagen's stint as a "baseball magnate" did not last long enough for that. On January 5 the Rochester Times-Union revealed that the Hagen-Ganzel offer was dead and that the St. Louis Cardinals were interested in buying the Tribe.ⁱⁱ

Without the Tribe to hold his attention, Hagen fled the snow in Rochester and headed for the sunshine in southern California. For the next several years, Hollywood would be Sir Walter's winter retreat. Hagen loved spending time with movie stars and producers, being seen with them, and, occasionally, working with them. He had already "starred" alongside Marge Beebe in

a silent golfing comedy entitled Green Grass Widow. The sum of Hagen's memory about the experience was that "Marge Beebe's form was as good on the course as off." Hagen recalled that while in Hollywood, he leased a large house on King's Road above Sunset Boulevard. The four-bedroom "villa" was staffed by two "Philippine houseboys" and served Hagen's "big-scale entertaining" quite well. He also remembered that many "film beauties," including Bette Davis, Bebe Daniels, Norma and Constance Talmadge, and the "curvaceous blonde" Thelma Todd, would "often drop in for tea." Hagen went to Hollywood early in 1928 to do another picture, but although several sequences were made, the project went over budget and was never completed.ⁱⁱⁱ

In mid-March he announced that he would journey abroad to enter the British Open and to meet Archie Compston in another international grudge match. Compston, like Abe Mitchell two years earlier, had issued a challenge the previous November from across the Atlantic; this one, though, was specifically for Hagen. The "Welsh Giant" (Compston stood around 6' 5") was considered the best match player in Great Britain. In his brief challenge, Compston declared: "I am willing to play Hagen over seventy-two holes for the world's championship, with a substantial side bet and a percentage of the gate receipts." Hagen hesitated but finally announced that he would face Compston for "a stake of \$2,500 a side." The match was scheduled for April 27-28, 1928, about a week before the British Open. Bob Jones had already said that he would not defend his title, so the British were especially happy to have Hagen's commitment. He was scheduled to leave for Britain on April 18 aboard the Aquitania.^{iv}

Hagen played little golf between his acceptance of the Compston challenge and his boarding the Aquitania. Indeed, he had played only occasionally since winning the PGA the previous autumn. Two days before the Aquitania departed, Hagen arrived in New York. An

already tight schedule became tighter when Hagen realized en route to New York that he had left his passport in California, so he had to spend the next two days acquiring a new one. Before boarding, he gave an impromptu press conference, telling reporters that he would ask Compston for a postponement of their match. Because of his film-making, he had been unable to practice and would "need a little time to get back into shape." He added, "No one who is not in good shape should play Archie." Someone brought up Bobby Jones's decision not to defend his British Open crown and asked Hagen what he thought of the Atlantan's impressive play as of late. Hagen said that he was sorry Jones could not make the trip, and as for Jones's good form: "Tell me something new, that boy always plays good golf."^v

Compston received Hagen's request with little sympathy. Having practiced for weeks, he was in top form and saw no reason to postpone the match. If the American professional had frittered away time in Hollywood, failing to prepare himself for the biggest international match of the season, then he would have to suffer the consequences. "I am as good as any golfer in the world today. And I am going to prove it," Compston declared. The battle would be held on time, two days after Hagen's arrival in London. When Hagen learned of Compston's rebuff, he simply smiled and commented: "Well, I suppose I must do my best." Hagen also admitted that he wanted "to put himself right" with the British public for his tardiness in the 1926 Mitchell match. To ensure Hagen's timely arrival at Moor Park, Harlow hired a private detective, formerly of Scotland Yard. Harlow told the British press that if Sir Walter wanted "another forty winks" in his bedroom at the Savoy, the detective was to "haul him out from under the bed-clothes." The British loved it. So, having rarely touched his clubs for a month and with bodyguard in tow, Hagen practiced for a day at Moor Park, site of the impending battle.^{vi}

The next morning, as Hagen remembered it, Compston's caddie appeared holding the Welsh Giant's mascot and good-luck charm, a black cat. Informed about Hagen's match-play magic, Compston was determined to cast his own spell, and it worked. He demolished Hagen; after the first day the American was 14 down. The press noted that at least Sir Walter showed up on time. He was punctual the next day, too, when Compston closed him out by the count of 18 and 17. To make matters worse, the humiliating performance was constantly before the gallery in unusual fashion; Moor Park officials had struck upon the idea of having a boy carry a scoreboard. Britain's Golf Illustrated later sold copies of a photograph showing a dejected Hagen being followed by the roving scoreboard, which read "Compston 16." By the second day, the gallery was giving Hagen "sympathy applause" in response to his executing the simplest of shots.^{vii}

Naturally, British fans reveled in Hagen's loss, probably more than in Compston's victory. British golfers were not "lazy" after all, at least not Archie Compston; on this occasion it was Hagen who had been unprepared. The American remembered some of the local headlines: "Hagen Submerged!", "American Gets His Own Medicine!", "Hagen's Ghost Is Laid", and "The Eclipse of Hagen!" British cartoonist Tommy Webster had been drawing a series for the Hagen-Compston match. His last sketch showed Hagen in bed, struggling to get past his bodyguard, with the caption: "Harlow Should Have Paid Scotland Yard to Keep Hagen in Bed . . . 18 and 17!" The Morning Post noted that the victory deserved "more than passing celebration to a British golfer's heart, which for a long time has been uncheered by any challenge to American ascendancy." The London Observer mocked the American professional, stating that he had been "badly mauled [and] ignominiously crushed" in his quest for more money and he "now knows

better." The Observer also quoted an anonymous "compatriot" of Hagen: It was a lesson that "has been coming to [Hagen] for a long time, and one that he will never forget."

But while they savored the victory, Britishers also respected Hagen's attitude in defeat. "I got what I deserved," Sir Walter admitted. "I am supposed to have said that British professionals did not work at the game, and I have discovered one of them has been working very hard indeed, while I, who am getting on for 40, have allowed other interests to interfere with golf." Did Hagen's lack of practice explain the outcome? "[I] do not want to make any excuses, because I know that if I had played par golf I would have been down, for Archie played super golf." Hagen concluded that he was going to work hard for the British Open. Once in his limousine, however, he assured Harlow, "Archie was good, but I can beat him any time."

The hyper-critical Observer was not much impressed by Hagen's public statements, commenting that practicing for the Open could not "wipe out this debacle." Most British analysts, though, admired Hagen's pluck and serenity. The Times of London noted that during the lunch break on the second day, when he was down 18 with 18 to play, Hagen courteously "signed autographs for young and old alike." That, the Times declared, was the mark of "a great golfer and sportsman."

Moreover, British writers acknowledged that Hagen was indeed tired from the trip and in no shape to face Compston. Generally, the lopsided margin was interpreted less as a manifestation of British superiority and more as a case of one golfer playing extremely well and another playing unusually bad. Still, Golf Monthly believed that Hagen's loss "inspired hope amongst British golfers that in the forthcoming Open Championship, the cycle of American successes will be brought to an end." Maybe Compston could keep the Claret Jug in Britain; it

certainly seemed that Hagen was no threat. The Observer thought it a pity that Jones had not tried for the "hat trick," adding that, given Hagen's "annihilation," an American victory was remote. Bernard Darwin of the Times cautioned restraint, however, suggesting that Hagen would "likely prove every whit as dangerous" in the Open, and would play as if the Compston match had never taken place. Hagen was, after all, the master psychologist of the game.^{viii}

Aside from Hagen, Darwin may have been the only man in Britain who gave Hagen a chance. Yet Sir Walter had two things in his favor: The tournament would be held over the Royal St. George's links at Sandwich, where he had won his first British Open in 1922; and Hagen had more than a week to practice--and practice he did. He remembered being "serious about winning the British Open. That defeat by Compston had been a terrific blow to my pride." The following week he "refused the tempting phone calls." Harlow confirmed that Hagen "became serious" after the Compston match: "He went to work. He followed a strict routine of practice, diet, and sessions with a masseur. And he even locked his address book in a valise."

On May 6, Hagen took a 73 over the par 72 layout, driving and putting accurately. He had putted dismally in the Compston match; now he seemed to have his favorite part of the game in tune. Indeed, by the preliminary rounds, even Compston considered Hagen a favorite. On May 7-8, Hagen qualified with 76-77. One reporter noted that Hagen wore the same blue sweater and stockings that he had worn in the Compston match, apparently unaffected by superstition.

The tournament proper began the next day, amid a "strong and bitter northerly wind." The weather was so cold that some forecast snow for the tournament. Hagen shot 75 to end the day in fourth place. Darwin recorded that his round contained "some characteristic mistakes and

characteristic recoveries." Conditions improved for the second round, and so did Hagen's play; he moved into second place after a slow start, adding a 73. That evening he nonchalantly reflected, "I played quite well. I might have done better, but then I might have done worse."

Hagen saved his best performance for the final day. He came from behind, posted a pair 72s, and won his third British Open title. Darwin thought that the unexpected victory "showed what amazing courage, vitality, and recuperative power Hagen possesses." Any other golfer, "would have been at least temporarily crushed by that fearful beating from Compston only a short while ago. To Hagen it only acted as a spur. There are other golfers as good as he is, and perhaps one better; but as a fighter he is in a little class all by himself." That probably summed up the views of most golf fans around the world. The Daily Express thought that "Except for Bobby Jones, Hagen must be reckoned the world's best tournament golfer." Sporting Life believed that "no finer display of determination to overcome difficulties was ever witnessed," and that Hagen's performance represented "the most dramatic comeback in the history of the game."^{ix}

Hagen enjoyed a special treat at the closing ceremonies when he received the Claret Jug from Edward, Prince of Wales. Hagen modestly told the crowd that he had been "lucky" to win. Prince Edward had been an interested spectator all week and was seen several times chatting with Hagen and Gene Sarazen. In one episode that has become part of Sir Walter's legend, Edward invited Hagen into the clubhouse for a drink. They chatted at the grill for a while before the club's secretary politely reminded Edward that professionals were not allowed in the building. The Prince supposedly brushed off the comment, saying that he would drink with whoever he wanted, wherever he wanted. The clubhouse-storming incident became another basis for Sir Walter's reputation as golf's "Great Emancipator." For the most part, though, Hagen comported

himself dutifully, and, when he left Britain for France a few days later, he garnered new-found admiration, even affection, from the British golfing public.^x

Before returning to the U.S., Hagen and Harlow toured Continental Europe. Through the rest of May, Hagen played exhibitions in Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Zurich. On his way back through France, he played a few rounds along the Riviera. By the end of the month, he was in the British Isles for more matches in Ireland and England. Hagen had announced that he would compete in the Irish Open, but he changed his mind at the last moment, saying that he was too tired from his Continental tour. That angered the Irish event's sponsors, particularly because it came after the pairings had been arranged. Declared Alan Kidd, secretary of the Golfing Union of Ireland: "Hagen not only has injured his name as a sportsman here but indirectly has hurt the good name of all Americans." Despite his best efforts, Hagen could not escape Europe without alienating some segment of the British populace. Nonetheless, the trip did his competitive and personal image good with most foreign fans and added to his 1928 income; Hagen-Harlow reportedly made \$15,000 for their troubles.^{xi}

On June 8, Hagen arrived in New York Harbor to a hero's welcome. William Richardson of the New York Times considered it "second only to that received by Bobby Jones" two years earlier. Golf writers ludicrously had resorted to comparing every aspect of Hagen's and Jones's careers. "It lacked the scope of the Jones reception," but, Richardson reminded, "allowance must be made for the fact that Hagen's ship docked early in the morning, whereas Bobby's came up the bay in the afternoon." Although Hagen arrived at 9:00, he had to wait until 2:30 for his formal welcome at City Hall by Mayor Jimmy Walker, because according to the Times, "that was the only time that Mayor Walker had open on his calendar." Still, immediately after landing, Hagen

was paraded up Fifth Avenue, while a band played "Yankee Doodle Dandy." When Mayor Walker finally greeted Hagen, he handed him the keys to the city.^{xii}

If Hagen's reception was not quite up to Jones standards, then neither was the rest of his season. The British Open proved to be its highlight. He finished a solid fourth place in the U.S. Open later that month and runner-up at the Canadian Open in July. In the fall, Leo Diegel knocked him out of the PGA in the third round by a count of 2 and 1, ending Hagen's consecutive match-play winning streak at twenty-two. (Diegel went on to win the tournament.) In between those major events, Hagen finished third in the New York Open; he skipped the Western Open, playing in fewer tournaments than he once did.^{xiii}

Instead, Hagen capitalized on his British crown through exhibitions. In July he beat Compston 6 and 5 in a rematch of their Moor Park duel. Canadian Golfer reported that Hagen received \$5,000 for his victory over the Welsh Giant. Hagen also defeated Johnny Farrell in the Unofficial Championship of the World; the best-of-five marathon called for 180 holes, spread out over five days and five cities. The series went the distance and brought in more than \$9,000 in gate receipts, of which Hagen took the lion's share. Some skeptics suggested that Hagen had let up on Farrell in the fourth match to guarantee the additional receipts of a fifth match.^{xiv}

Hagen amused even skeptical fans, though, late in August when he drove "300 miles out of bounds," showing up in Menominee, Michigan, for an exhibition that was to be played in Menominee, Wisconsin. Hagen could only telephone his apologies. He then covered the Walker Cup matches for Golf Illustrated and the U.S. Amateur for the Boston Globe. In Boston he was regularly besieged by autograph-hunters.^{xv}

By early November, Hagen was again playing his way to southern California, a region

that now challenged hurricane-battered Florida as the sport's winter haven, boasting opens with lucrative purses in Long Beach, Catalina Island, and Los Angeles. He and Harlow traveled with Johnny Farrell, who had joined Hagen in exhibitions throughout the northwest. As they often did, Hagen and Harlow took a break with some duck hunting on Tulie Lake in Oregon. The deliberate Hagen, Harlow recalled, was always the first one to spot the mallards and say "Mark," but the last one to fire his shotgun. Still, he was exceptionally accurate and adept at hitting birds just as they seemed to fly out of range.^{xvi}

From Oregon the Hagen party went south to San Francisco for another exhibition, finally arriving in the Los Angeles area early in December. On the 11th, the PGA announced that Hagen would captain the third U.S. Ryder Cup team, which meant that in 1929 he would travel abroad and defend his British title. A few days later, Hagen relaxed with some more hunting, this time shooting seven wild goats on Catalina Island. He then finished 1928 on a high note, capturing the Long Beach Open. Nonetheless, the Metropolitan Golfer ranked Hagen third among professionals for the season. Minus the British Open, the year would have been mediocre at best. Only that victory sustained his reputation, facilitated the Farrell matches, and generally kept Hagen near the top of his profession for another season.^{xvii}

2

As the comments following the British Open illustrated, Bob Jones continued to wear the emperor's crown through 1928. He began the year by revealing that he would not finish school but rather would join his father's law practice. He took the same opportunity to inform his fans

that he would not be traveling abroad that summer.^{xviii}

On January 4 Jones was in New York City for a sportsmanship banquet at the Hotel Commodore. There he joined some of the decade's most illustrious sports figures, including Gene Tunney, Babe Ruth, Bill Tilden, and Johnny Weissmuller. Mayor Jimmy Walker emceed the "Champions' Dinner," during which Jones spoke briefly. In his characteristic style, Mayor Walker introduced Jones as the "greatest golfer ever known." The Atlantan responded with a few sentences about the "greatness" of the occasion, thanking the committee for his invitation.^{xix}

Three days later, Jones announced that he would return the generous \$50,000 housing allowance given to him in Atlanta, because it might cast aspersions on his amateurism and sport. While most of the public thought the gift acceptable, "another still respectable part entails some doubts." Criticism had "come to his notice, [and] to avoid any chance of misunderstanding," he "decided that the best thing to do was to return the home." Jones thanked his Atlanta friends again and reminded them that their gift was significant only because of the affection it represented. As he likely expected, the \$50,000 had raised many eyebrows at the USGA. Supposedly, cheers went up at the USGA convention in the Hotel Astor when news arrived of Jones's decision. President Melvin Traylor called the choice "magnificent," because Jones was neither a rich man nor the son of a rich man. The press association in London declared that Jones's action "will be much admired in this country, where he is held in equal admiration with any of our own amateurs."

William Fownes also lauded Jones, characterizing his decision as a "voluntary act." That is not so clear. In truth, some concerns were voiced in the weeks before Jones's trip to New York. While there, he met with USGA officials, who advised him that, although there was

nothing technically wrong with accepting the money, it clearly would not be in the "best interests of the game." Jones concurred, and a few weeks later he was named to several USGA advisory committees, including those on course selection and membership and reinstatement, and was made captain of the 1928 Walker Cup squad.^{xx}

Of course, Jones could have resisted the USGA; after all, its advice had been muddled and inconsistent. Other star athletes, particularly tennis players, had led rebellions against the constraints of amateurism. Jones might have asked, "What's the difference between a luxury sedan and a house?" The USGA might have responded, "about \$45,000." Ultimately, Jones's amateur standing could have been rescinded, as had Francis Ouimet's a decade earlier.

Given Jones's status, it is interesting to contemplate what might have happened if he had challenged golf's authority. The fact that he did not, however, says a lot about him. By nature, he was a conservative person, who easily deferred to the game's authority and traditions, even if it meant significant short-term economic loss. His dutiful sacrifice for the sport underscored his image as a traditional amateur. But his decision also illustrates that Jones understood the unique basis of his fame and influence: his amateur status. He wanted and needed to protect his image as a simon-pure athlete. If Jones could do that and continue to compile an unprecedented competitive record in the process, he eventually would be in a position to make far more than \$50,000 from golf and still retire with stellar, impeccable standing in his sport. Jones's judgement proved wise; much more cash did come his way, and all the while he maintained the public's deep admiration and respect.

In the meantime, Jones and his family needed a house of their own. Mary Jones was especially anxious to relocate. The couple purchased a home on Northside Avenue in northeast

Atlanta and moved in the spring of 1928.

Richard Miller has written that Jones borrowed something like \$50,000 from granddad R. T. to finance the house. If Jones did obtain the money that way, he changed his mind. Lewis Jones, Jr. of Canton, Georgia, has an interesting letter dated January 11, 1928, in which "Rob" thanked R. T. for his offer to help him buy a house. Jones also thanked R. T. for approving his "action in turning back the home" that his friends had given him. "I felt I was right," Jones wrote, "but I feel more certain of it now." As for R. T.'s offer to finance a new house, Jones was "awfully grateful" but declined, because "Mary and I should make some effort now to shoulder responsibilities . . . [and] scratch for ourselves for a while." He assured R. T., "If I need any help and feel that I am justified in asking it, I may call on you later."^{xxi}

With a new house and his amateur status above reproach, Jones looked forward to the 1928 golf season. He skipped the Southern Open that spring because he wanted to practice a month to get himself in "tiptop shape." In March he played an exhibition at East Lake with Frank White, U.S. Treasurer. After the match Jones autographed White's scorecard and White reciprocated by signing a brand new dollar bill. Ten days later in Atlanta, Jones received a portrait of himself, done by Margaret Fitzhugh Browne. At the unveiling ceremony, Jones was credited with the "sportsmanship of medieval knighthood" because he had returned the \$50,000 and played golf solely for "the love of the game." The next month he played a handful of exhibitions with Watts Gunn for the American Olympic Fund. Those exhibitions, plus a "month's hard practice" prepared Jones for the U.S. Open.^{xxii}

The 1928 U.S. Open was held at Chicago's Olympia Fields. As usual, both Jones and Hagen were favorites. The USGA had ruled that the top thirty finishers at Oakmont were exempt

from regional qualifying, so neither Hagen nor Jones dealt with that inconvenience. Hagen liked the course--he had won the PGA Championship and Western Open there--and wanted to duplicate Jones's feat of winning both national opens in the same season. But whereas Jones showed up the weekend before the event for some final practice, Hagen waited until one day before the tournament began. Still, dopesters agreed that if he could stay close to Jones and turn the medal event into a man-to-man struggle, he would gain the advantage.

Once again, Hagen's fans were disappointed. Until the seventy-first hole, it looked as though Roland Hancock, a young, unknown professional, would capture the event of his career. The crowds had been most enthusiastic that week, prompting William Richardson to note: "A prize ring has nothing on the modern roped green of the golf course." "One more tournament like that," wrote John Kiernan, "and the spectators will rush from the last green to the nearest insane asylum and give themselves up." Hancock was forced to wait for thirty minutes on the seventeenth tee, while officials cleared the fairway. With more time to think than he wanted or needed, the inexperienced Hancock double-bogeyed seventeen and bogeyed eighteen to fall one shot behind Jones and Johnny Farrell, who had both already finished at 294. Hagen's 296 put him in a fourth-place tie.

For the third time, Jones would be involved in a playoff for the U.S. Open championship. He and Farrell met for thirty-six holes the next day, Sunday, June 24. Most of the 8,000 spectators rooted for Jones and were frustrated when he came up short. Only one stroke separated the competitors through 108 holes; Jones bogeyed the 106th, and that proved to be the difference.^{xxiii}

Although he lost, Jones had fought hard, recovering the U.S. Open form that had eluded

him at Oakmont in 1927. A New York Times editorial commented that Jones's designation as the world's greatest golfer was still unchallenged. Golf was a sport of "upsets and miracles," and after all, for Jones "there would have been nothing in it [a U.S. Open victory] but glory, of which he has already had enough to turn his head, if it were not so firmly set on his sturdy shoulders." Still, the editorial concluded, no one could "begrudge Farrell" the opportunity to "add greatly to his income."^{xxiv}

Throughout July, Jones practiced regularly, but he engaged in no serious competition until late August, when he returned to Chicago for the Walker Cup matches. Robert Gardner, the former captain, stepped aside, and Jones was his natural heir. The Atlantan badly wanted a victory in his first captaincy and prepared with a sense of mission. The week before coming north, Jones shot six practice rounds, all between 69 and 71. In Chicago, he compiled an average of 69 for ten more preliminary rounds. Observers suggested that he resembled a "golfing automaton" or a "machine" more than a mortal man, and compared his cool determination to that of Helen Wills, the icy "Miss Poker-Face" of women's tennis.^{xxv}

The rest of the American squad--Chick Evans, Jess Sweetser, George Von Elm, Harrison Johnston, Francis Ouimet, Watts Gunn, and Roland Mackenzie--also looked strong. By the end of the week, Jones was confident. "We ought to win, but this is golf, and you know the old saying about golf being a humbling game." As it turned out, the British were the ones humbled or, actually, "humiliated." Britain's Golf Monthly likened the defeat to Waterloo, concluding that its team had been "beaten, crushed, [and] annihilated." On the first day, the U.S. swept the foursomes. Evans was the only American to lose in the singles the next day, and the U.S. retained the cup, 11 points to 1. In his singles match, Jones thrashed the reigning British

Amateur champion, Thomas Philip Perkins, 13 and 12.^{xxvi}

Two days later, Jones, Keeler, and nearly everyone involved in the Walker Cup competition departed from Chicago's LaSalle Street Station on the Twentieth Century Limited for Boston and the U.S. Amateur championship. The tournament was scheduled for the Brae Burn Golf Club, site of Hagen's 1919 U.S. Open victory. On the way, Jones and Keeler spent some time in New York as the guests of USGA Vice President H. H. Ramsey. By September 4, Jones was practicing Brae Burn, and it was obvious that he had not lost his Chicago form. The following day he teamed up with Farrell against Hagen and Sarazen for a thirty-six-hole exhibition to raise money for the Ryder Cup team's 1929 travel expenses. Five thousand turned out to watch Hagen-Sarazen win by the narrowest margin, 1 up. More than \$10,000 was raised, and Jones shined in the loss, shooting a 67.^{xxvii}

The following week, Jones advanced through the field at Brae Burn. After finishing fifth in the qualifying rounds, he survived the first day's eighteen hole matches, edging his afternoon opponent, Ray Gorton, 1 up. Jones breathed easier in the thirty-six-hole affairs, crushing his next two adversaries. That set up a rematch of the Walker Cup duel between Jones and Perkins. The British star again fell to Jones; the score was 10 and 9, one of the widest final round margins in U.S. Amateur history.

For Jones, it was his eighth national title, surpassing the mark of seven held by Britishers Harold Hilton and Harry Vardon. Moreover, he had collected at least one national crown in each season since 1923. It was also his fourth U.S. Amateur title in five years and the second time he had repeated as champion. Essentially, the event belonged to the "Atlanta golf machine." It seemed that the rest of the world's amateurs had succumbed to the "Jones complex." Some

feared that his dominance would lead to a lack of interest in future amateur events. Grantland Rice likened Jones to a "cyclone" and proclaimed: "The amateur golf championship of the United States might as well be handed to Bobby Jones at the start of each fiscal year to save any number of people a lot of time and money and bother." Jones's victory had become so common that much of the post-tournament analysis ignored his achievement, focusing instead on the format of the event, specifically whether or not the eighteen-hole matches should be retained.^{xxviii}

By October, Jones was at home in Atlanta practicing law. He played infrequently the rest of the year, although late in November he joined Democratic politician Alfred Smith for a publicized round at East Lake. (Smith had lost lopsidedly to Republican Herbert Hoover in the presidential election a few weeks earlier.) Jones then spent the holidays in southern Florida, where, between fishing trips, he played one more charity exhibition. With that, Jones concluded another sparkling season.^{xxix}

3

Jones thoroughly enjoyed his Miami vacation. On January 6, the Atlanta Constitution reported that he lost four sail fish but landed a seven-foot, thirty-four-pound barracuda after an hour-long struggle. He returned to Atlanta the following week for a match involving Glenna Collett. Collett had played a number of exhibitions with Jones and Hagen, but this was her first in Atlanta. By early 1929 she had taken Alexa Stirling's place as the best female golfer in the country, winning the U.S. Women's Amateur championship in 1922, 1925, and 1928. (She would go on to make it three in a row, winning the title again in 1929 and 1930.) Golf writers

would eventually refer to her as the "Bobby Jones of women's golf" because of her record and gracious manner in victory or defeat. Her fame, together with that of Alexa Stirling, Maureen Orcutt, Edith Cummings, Mary K. Browne, and others, proved that the rise of American golf was not a purely male story. Collett was teamed with Chick Ridley, former Georgia state champion, against Jones and Mrs. Dalton Raymond, a former southern champion. Collett-Ridley won, with Collett firing an 80 from the men's tees.^{xxx}

Aside from occasional exhibitions and practice rounds, Jones continued to play little golf that winter. During a business trip to New York City early in April, he reaffirmed that he would not travel abroad in 1929 but would journey to the Pacific Coast for the U.S. Amateur in the fall. On May 8 Jones was admitted to the bar of the U.S. District Court in Macon, Georgia, to try his first federal case, which he won on May 17. Jones appeared before Judge Bascom S. Deaver representing an Atlanta company to whom Herbert Pearson, a "receiver of a Macon bank," owed \$4,000. Pearson claimed the right to delay payment on the loan, and Jones argued that it should be given immediate priority. In spite of his victory, the case was just the sort that counselor Jones found unpleasant.

In fact, Jones soon fulfilled his 1926 prediction and decided that trial practice was not for him. He was simply much more comfortable attacking "Old Man Par" than an old man or young woman or anyone else on the witness stand. Just as real estate necessitated intrusiveness, trial lawyering required personal confrontation and aggression. Although Jones possessed more than enough intellect for either career, neither suited his personality. Late in his life, Jones remarked that he believed litigation to be "distasteful." By the summer of 1929, he concluded that he most enjoyed the behind-the-scenes work of giving legal advice, especially to the family businesses in

Canton.^{xxx}

So, having discovered another career path that did not agree with him, Jones resumed competitive golf. In mid-June, he received a unique offer when the Japanese Foreign Ministry invited him to play in Tokyo. The invitation declared that "all Japanese golfers are anxious to welcome [you.]" Although Jones said that he would "love to go to Japan," he did not "see at present how he could be away from the office that long." Indeed, he never made the trip, and Asian golfers had to settle for Sir Walter a few years later.^{xxxii}

On June 17, three days after he courteously refused the Japanese invitation, Jones made his way north on the Birmingham Special to the Winged Foot Golf Club in Maramoneck, New York, site of the U.S. Open. Grantland Rice informed fans that Jones had "played only six or seven rounds between September and April"; Keeler put the number around ten but also reported that Jones had been practicing regularly throughout April, May, and early June. Nonetheless, Jones felt that his game was rusty, and so he showed up at Winged Foot about ten days before the tournament to get in some more "hard practice." On the 21st he shot a round with Sarazen, Farrell, and Kirkwood. At one point, the foursome passed another that included baseball superstar Babe Ruth and Ruth's teammate Waite Hoyt. In his irreverent, brash way, Ruth shouted to Jones's group, "I'll take on the four of you!" Despite his considerable golf skill, the Babe was a bit out of his element at Winged Foot, and his challenge, according to William Richardson, was simply "ignored."

Given the way that Jones had been playing, he probably would have beaten the best ball of the entire New York Yankees team. He shot two 69s in practice. Winged Foot seemed tailor-made for Jones, requiring both extraordinary length and accuracy off the tee. The character of

the "man-sized" course, plus Jones's practice scores, made the Atlantan a heavy favorite, while commentators predicted that Hagen would struggle over the long, narrow, heavily-bunkered layout. Jones was so satisfied with his game on Wednesday, June 26, that he passed on a final opportunity to go around the course, opting only for some time on the putting green.

The tournament began the next day in nearly perfect weather. The sun was so hot, though, that Hagen wore a Panama hat. Maybe the hat threw off his balance; at any rate, he played poorly, while Jones jumped into the lead with another 69. Al Espinosa was next, just one stroke behind. A "torrential downpour" hit Winged Foot on the afternoon of the second day. Some of the players, such as Espinosa, were fortunate to finish before the storm struck. Espinosa took advantage and grabbed the lead. Jones, meanwhile, battled the water-logged course and finished two strokes behind. The rain killed Hagen's chances; his embarrassing 81 put him fifteen shots to the rear.

Jones started fast on the final day, amassing a three-stroke lead by the lunch break. But he floundered on the last nine, and when he reached the seventy-second hole, Jones was in a precarious position. He had given away four strokes to par on the previous five holes and was in danger of firing his first 80 in U.S. Open competition. The tournament came down to a slippery, downhill, breaking twelve-foot putt for a 79 to tie Espinosa. O. B. Keeler was too nervous to watch, so he turned away, listening for the crowd's response. "The breathing ceased," he recalled. "A thin click, and the beginning of a kind of sigh--the ball was on its way. The sigh grew louder . . . it changed to a gasp. . . . Missed! No! The gasp changed to a roar." Jones had struck the ball so delicately that it rolled to the edge of the hole and seemingly suspended itself before falling in. Al Watrous later called the putt the "finest" he ever saw; Keeler thought it the

"most important shot of Jones's career," because, had he missed, he might never have recovered the confidence lost on his final nine.

The putt put Jones in still another U.S. Open playoff. Coincidentally, Jones and Espinosa had tied at 294, just as Jones and Farrell had the previous year. That was where the similarities between the two opens ended, however, because the next day Jones regained his composure and beat Espinosa all over the course. At Jones's suggestion, the playoff had been postponed a couple of hours so that both competitors could accompany their wives to mass. Although he smiled at his wife moments before the playoff began, saying that he "felt fine going after Bobby Jones," Espinosa was actually an emotional wreck, and whatever prayers he uttered that morning went unanswered. En route to his ninth national crown, Jones mercilessly pummeled his professional friend, shooting 72-69 to Espinosa's 84-80. If he lost in humiliating style, Espinosa received some compensation when he collected the top prize, recently increased to \$1,000 by the USGA. With tickets at \$3 and total gate receipts a reported \$36,000, the organization could afford to be a bit more generous with the players.^{xxxiii}

As for Jones, he traveled back home to more superlatives and accolades. At the trophy presentation, USGA president Findlay Douglas had called the Georgian "the greatest golfer that ever lived," adding that "there never was a more ideal sportsman than Mr. Jones." For a change, no band or parade awaited the Jones party at the Brookwood Station in Atlanta, possibly because the city figured that once a year was enough and he would win the Amateur in the fall when it might be cooler. The modest reception was nonetheless "magnificent in its sincerity," and plenty of friends, fans, and family, including little Clara Malone and Bobby III, showed up to greet their hero. If the city did less than usual, the Georgia House of Representatives adopted a resolution

congratulating Jones. Upon arrival, he announced that "Calamity Jane, Jr." would be given a rest; he planned to refocus on his law practice until the U.S. Amateur in the fall.^{xxxiv}

In spite of his announcement, Jones continued to play as much as possible during the six weeks between his triumphant return from Winged Foot and his departure for Pebble Beach, site of the Amateur. Just two days after forecasting a break, Jones played in an exhibition at East Lake. He played three more exhibitions that week, and at least two more by the end of July. Early in August, he competed in another at a new course in Highland, North Carolina. Amid all of that, Grantland Rice wrote in Collier's that Jones entered national championships "in spite of a still greater devotion to the practice of law."^{xxxv}

On August 17 the Joneses--Big Bob, Clara, Bob, Jr., and Mary--left in a "special car" from Brookwood Station for the west. California golfers eagerly awaited the Emperor's arrival but were again warned by local papers that Jones had "played little golf this year because of his growing law practice." It was the first time that the Amateur championship was played in the far west, as well as Jones's first trip to the region, so the party spent a day sightseeing at the Grand Canyon before arriving in Los Angeles. There Jones played in a charity exhibition and was a guest at Will Rogers's ranch. His train pulled into San Francisco the morning of the 26th, and that afternoon he tied the Pebble Beach course record of 73, while praising the beautiful and challenging layout. The San Francisco Chronicle reported that Jones immediately won the hearts of Californians with his "slow, boyish smile and marvelous golf shots." "Mr. Bobby Jones conquered," the Examiner noted, and "made a million more friends."^{xxxvi}

Jones was the number-one seed for the impending event, and he had about a week to practice. As in 1926, he was in a position to set a record of winning three consecutive amateur

titles. Although Hagen's string of four in the PGA took some luster away from Jones's potential achievement, most analysts then still considered three U.S. Amateurs more impressive. A year earlier, California native George Von Elm had predicted that there would be some surprises at Pebble Beach, a "real he-man's course."

Jones looked unstoppable in practice; once again it was "the field against Bobby." On Tuesday he tied Gene Homans for the qualifying medal and then looked to his first-round match with Johnny Goodman, an unknown twenty-year-old from Omaha, Nebraska. As usual, the first two match-play rounds were at eighteen holes. In 1921 Jones had despised the eighteen-hole format used in the British Amateur. At Brae Burn in 1928, he had barely survived an eighteen-hole affair with Ray Gorton. Unfortunately for Jones and his "10,000 worshippers," who flocked to the Monterey peninsula on trains, automobiles, and yachts, Von Elm had been correct about potential surprises, and Johnny Goodman proved better than good. He stunned Jones by a count of 1 up, pulling arguably the upset of the century in U.S. Amateur match play.^{xxxvii}

"If an earthquake had suddenly rocked the peninsula," wrote Alan Gould in the San Francisco Chronicle, "the shock could hardly have been any greater . . . ,[and] there was as much gloom around the home green at the finish as there was enthusiastic appreciation for the astonishing feat of Goodman." The defeat of Jones, remarked the New York Times, was "nothing short of a calamity"; O. B. Keeler recalled that the gallery appeared "heart-broken." To make matters worse for Californians, Jones was not the only big name to fall on the first day; Jess Sweetser and George Von Elm also lost. The USGA did not like Jones's early exit either. Gate receipts at Pebble Beach turned out to be lower than anticipated, and the blame was affixed to Jones's elimination. Later that week, William Richardson characterized the semifinals as "the

most uninteresting that ever were played in the championship," while E. M. Adams commented in Golfers Magazine that "the champion's early defeat took most of the spice and enthusiasm out of the tournament." Concluded the acerbic Ring Lardner, "The ancient Scottish pastime in this age is a one-man sport, and the one man is public property, like Lindbergh, or Charlie Chaplin, or Babe Ruth. If you're giving a show, don't kill the star in the prologue." A year earlier, analysts had feared that Jones's domination would lead to apathy for the event, but in 1929 they discovered that his absence made the tournament even more boring.^{xxxviii}

In one of his finest moments, Jones congratulated Goodman and told reporters: "We can't win all the time. I didn't do so well today. The clubs weren't working. We had a great match, though, and Goodman is a fine golfer and a game boy." Jones did not blame the course, the gallery, the breaks, or even the format. When queried a few days later about the eighteen-hole matches, Jones replied, "A real champion should be able to play two to seventy-two holes." The response reflected his maturation. Moreover, rather than immediately getting back on board the train for Atlanta, Jones remained at Pebble Beach to watch the rest of the tournament, even serving as a referee for one of the semifinal matches.^{xxxix}

Jones's behavior in defeat endeared him to northern Californians; in fact, the Golden Gate city decided that a first-round loss to Goodman was no reason to rob its citizens of a Bobby Jones celebration. So, less than a week after his defeat, Jones, puffing a cigar and wearing a panama hat, blue blazer, and white knickers, was received in San Francisco with a parade and motorcycle police escort. He told reporters that he was "tickled to death to be here" and that he just wanted to relish the city. One evening Jones and his wife tried to slip unnoticed into the Geary Theater to take in a "burlesque melodrama" entitled "After Dark." Although they were discovered and

created a distraction, the Joneses seemed to enjoy the show.^{xl}

On September 12 the Jones family began its journey back east. Because they had cut through the southwest on the way to California and wanted to see as much of the country as possible, they traveled home through the northwest. The party spent time in Wyoming and at the Yellowstone National Park, as well as in Colorado Springs, before arriving in Atlanta at the end of the month.

Jones closed out the 1920s in relatively quiet fashion. In mid-November, while in New York for a meeting of the USGA executive committee, he announced that he had become part-owner of the Atlanta Crackers minor league baseball club. Baseball was still the national pastime, and Jones, like Hagen, found it a pleasant distraction from the links. Some observers speculated that Jones was looking for a permanent diversion. Following his return from California, a few stories suggested that "Bobby Jones [is] losing interest in golf" and even contemplating retirement. Jones assured fans that he was not ready to quit, saying that he would continue to compete as long as he could "walk and earn a living as a lawyer." When someone asked how much longer Jones would play, O. B. Keeler answered: "Of course, Bobby is not going to come out and say he will continue competitive play for five or ten years. He doesn't know what may happen, but if he is chosen on the American Walker Cup team in 1930, he will go to Britain and compete not only in the international match but also in the British open and amateur."^{xli}

At twenty-seven, Jones was young enough to at least double his major championship crowns. Yet, despite public statements to the contrary, he was indeed tired of competitive golf. It was time-consuming as well as expensive, and he had never been happy in the limelight, which

by late 1929 was brighter than ever. Mary Jones had grown weary of it, too. She was jealous of her husband's time and, like him, did not enjoy having her family on national display. Jones said that his priorities were family first, vocation second, and golf third, with the game never being a life unto itself. Like his father and grandfather, Jones absolutely believed in the Victorian ideal that men should be available for their family. The record of his life, however, suggests that he was capable of rearranging his priorities, because competitive golf had always required extended absences from home. If it continued, he would become miserable. In sum, in terms of his physical condition, he could easily compete another ten years; in about every other way he had had enough.

So if things had unfolded differently at Pebble Beach, maybe he would have seriously entertained retirement; after all, a win there would have given him three consecutive U.S. Amateur championships, a nice note on which to exit the stage. But Jones could not retire on a loss; too much of his life had been given to building the greatest amateur golf career ever. Besides, after his tremendous 1926 season, the thought of winning all four national titles had crossed his mind. Jones understood that time was running out, and that he had one last opportunity. The 1930 Walker Cup matches would be played abroad, providing him an excuse to enter all four national championships. Jones determined to win as many of them as possible and then reevaluate his future in competitive golf. It proved to be a very good plan.

4

While Jones reflected on his first-round loss to Goodman, the nation was coming to grips

with Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929, the day the stock market crashed, and, as Frederick Lewis Allen put it, "an old order [gave] place to new." Historians and economists now generally agree that Black Tuesday did not cause the Great Depression, as was once so widely believed; nonetheless, it was a frightening and painful signal that the country was headed into a long period of "hard times." The survival of sports businesses in the 1930s, however, illustrates that the Depression did not hit everyone so hard; in fact, many middle to upper-income families, who survived the initial dislocation, actually experienced a rise in their standard of living as prices for consumer goods nosedived. There is no evidence that the Depression hurt the Joneses much. Rather, R. T.'s textile mills continued to crank out denim, much of which was simply stored and then sold at a huge profit during World War II.^{xlii}

If the Joneses were well-equipped to handle "hard times," Walter Hagen had proved that he was capable of taking the kind of financial risks that led some people to jump out of windows. Fortunately for him, golf had always been a sport sustained by rich people; Hagen could line up a string of exhibitions at posh country clubs, and the well-to-do would continue to purchase the equipment he endorsed. For those reasons, Hagen, too, came through the "hard times" with minimal discomfort.

Yet 1929 was another rocky year for Hagen. It opened with his filing for divorce from Edna Straus on January 31. Hagen, the Los Angeles Times commented, had once again been "stymied by matrimony." Estranged from his wife since the spring of 1927, Hagen wanted to make the separation official. In his divorce suit, Hagen charged that his wife had deserted him, despite his "indulgence, kindness, and generosity." Undoubtedly, Sir Walter was concerned about potential alimony. According to his wife, Hagen had agreed to pay her \$500 per month

when they had separated. If he had made such a promise, he broke it, and his suit was only the first step in a long divorce process. In September 1929, a Los Angeles judge awarded Edna Straus \$9,300, essentially the monthly allowance that Hagen had failed to pay. Hagen did not appear in court to contest the decision, but his wife soon discovered that winning a legal judgement and collecting alimony were two very different things. As far as Hagen was concerned, paying one ex-wife at a time was enough.^{xliii}

Hagen also stepped into more professional controversy that winter. This time the issue was the composition of the Ryder Cup team. He spoke out against the requirement that members be American-born. Hagen argued that it was unfair and discriminatory to some professionals, such as Tommy Armour, MacDondald Smith, Jim Barnes, Jock Hutchison, and Joe Kirkwood, all of whom were naturalized American citizens. Although he was willing to abide by the restriction one more year in order to "demonstrate sufficiently the strength of our native-born professional golfers," he wanted foreign-born players to have an opportunity to make the 1931 team.^{xliv}

Hagen seemed to be in the minority, though. U.S. Open champion and homebred professional Johnny Farrell, for example, thought his captain "mistaken," because the foreign-born professionals "really developed the fundamentals of their games before coming to the states." The British, who were little less than mortified by Hagen's suggestion, agreed, arguing that "financial allurements" had brought their best players to the U.S., and that if Hagen's suggestion were implemented, the U.S. would be buying the Ryder Cup. Thus, the British found another way to blame Yankee materialism for their decline in world golf competition. Still, British fans made a convincing point, because most of the players Hagen was concerned about

had learned their game in Great Britain, had come to the U.S. to make money, and would otherwise have uplifted the depleted British professional ranks. On the other hand, the British argument was flawed in that several of the foreign-born professionals had been a part of the 1926 U.S. team that was humiliated abroad.^{xlv}

The PGA decided that protecting the integrity of international match play was its supreme interest. Thus, Hagen's wishes were never realized and the Ryder Cup teams would thereafter remain exclusively homebred. The 1929 team included Captain Hagen, Leo Diegel, Ed Dudley, Al Espinosa, Johnny Farrell, Johnny Golden, Gene Sarazen, Horton Smith, Joe Turnesa, and Al Watrous. The selection process assumed another controversy when William Mehlhorn became angry over his being dropped from the team, despite his solid performance in recent winter tournaments. Mehlhorn did not blame Hagen, who was "one of his best friends in the profession" but was upset with the PGA, which had made the final selections.^{xlvi}

Unfortunately, Hagen's competitive season was rough as well. In California, he finished ninth in the San Diego Open, tied for sixteenth in the Los Angeles Open, and ended eighth in the Pasadena Open. He skipped February's Texas events and by early March arrived in Florida. There Hagen finished fourteenth in both the West Coast Open and the Florida State Open, although he and Leo Diegel captured Miami's International Fourball tournament. By Hagen's standards, it was a not a good winter.^{xlvii}

There was certainly no reason to expect great things from him when he took the Ryder Cup team abroad in April 1929. The team sailed aboard the Mauretania on the 10th, wearing splendid navy-blue, double-breasted jackets and grey trousers (picked out by Captain Hagen) and carrying team golf bags (also Hagen's idea). The U.S. Army gave Hagen permission to put a

patch consisting of the official government eagle ensign crossed with golf clubs on the breast pockets of the blazers. Just before leaving New York Harbor, Hagen told reporters, I am "confident that we will win." To stay in form, the professionals drove golf balls into canvas nets which had recently been added to the Mauretania's deck. Despite the Cunard line's sophisticated practice facilities and Hagen's efforts to build team spirit, the 1929 U.S. Ryder Cup team was doomed.

The team arrived in Leeds, England on the 16th with more than a week to practice over the Moortown course. The weather was so cold that snow fell during one of the practice rounds. Still, the Americans liked the layout and maintained their hopes for a victory. On the 25th, the day before the matches got underway, an enterprising film maker with a new sound camera caught rival captains Hagen and George Duncan in a casual discussion. They were reportedly "overwhelmed" by the "talkie." Hagen "stammered," commenting, "The only thing I have to say is here's to a great match." The forty-five-year-old Duncan seemed even more frightened by the new-fangled machine but shook Hagen's hand and replied, "I wish you luck, Walter. May the better team win." At the end of the day, a more relaxed Hagen predicted, "I shall win. I usually do and I have a fighting team."

Two days later, the British proved Hagen wrong. The matches were the closest and most exciting in the event's short history. On the first day, the sides split the foursome competition, 2 points each. Playing with Golden, Hagen won his match. The next day, however, he was pummeled 10 and 8 in his duel with Captain Duncan. That delighted the London Observer, because during the match Hagen had "assumed a jaunty air and on one or two occasions laughed aloud when he failed to hole a putt." Duncan had been confident that day, too. E. M. Cockell of

Britain's Golf Illustrated reported that before his match with Hagen, Duncan said, "This guy has never beaten me in a serious match and he never will." In all, the Americans lost five of the eight singles, and Britain reclaimed the Ryder Cup by a final count of 7 points to 5. The captain's battle proved pivotal; had Hagen won, the Americans would have tied the score.

Afterward, Hagen said that the galleries had "witnessed some of the greatest golf ever played," except for his match. "The best team won," and "it's all for the good of the game." Indeed, he was not "down-hearted" and looked forward to winning the trophy back two years hence. Hagen's good sportsmanship and die-hard self-confidence concealed his deep disappointment. His caddie in Britain that year was a youngster named Ernest Hargreaves. He remembered that Hagen was "complimentary about his opponent's play and humorously deprecating about his own; but he could not disguise from himself or anyone else that he [had taken] a thrashing."

Some observers criticized Hagen's judgement in not using Horton Smith in the foursomes. The twenty-one-year-old Smith was America's newest golf star and one of the three Americans to win his singles match. George Greenwood surmised in Golf Illustrated that Hagen had played Dudley (who teamed with Sarazen for a loss) instead of Smith on the first day, because, as Hagen put it, Dudley had made the long trip, and each team member deserved a "chance to deliver a blow for his country." Cockell concluded, "In the matter of captaincy, I think Britain was better served." Others second-guessed the PGA's decision to leave Mehlhorn off the team. To all of that, Hagen simply responded, "I think I have disposed of the men at my command to the best advantage" possible.^{xlviii}

When Bob Jones heard of the demise of the U.S. Ryder Cup team, he remarked that

"probably in the long run it was a good thing [for international competition] and in the open tournament to follow, the American team will be on edge, trying hard to recoup their lost prestige." That was exactly what Hagen's men hoped to do as they set out northward for Scotland in the first week of May. The British Open was to be held at Muirfield. A few observers took note of the fact that Hagen had again suffered a humiliating match-play loss, similar to the one Compston had dealt him in 1928. They wondered if Hagen might repeat history a step further and pull an encore in the British Open. Young Hargreaves recalled that Hagen sensed destiny. Immediately following his loss to Duncan, Hagen told his sixteen-year-old caddie, "I have a feeling that I am going to be lucky at Muirfield."^{xlix}

Hagen's team had lost in the Ryder Cup, he had been disgraced by Duncan, and critics had surfaced on both sides of the Atlantic to question his judgement and leadership. Beyond that, Hagen probably did not like the fact that his Ryder Cup team had to qualify for the British Open, inasmuch as the USGA had exempted the British team from the preliminary rounds for the 1927 U.S. Open. The Royal and Ancient Golf Association simply could not bring itself to "shatter" tradition and exempt the Americans. So, if he smiled on the outside, Hagen's inner spirit was probably as "vile" as the weather when the Open qualifying commenced. Actually, the weather was a big story that week. As Bernard Darwin described it, "Both sea and sky were grey, and there came a melancholy booming from the foghorn on the Bass Rock [as] a cold rain was coming down quite relentlessly--nothing much more unpleasant could be imagined." Hagen quietly qualified in eighteenth spot, ten strokes behind the leader, Leo Diegel.

Sir Walter continued to pose little threat after the first round of the tournament proper, finishing six strokes off the pace. But he surprised everyone the second day when he fired a

record-smashing 33-34-67 and climbed into second place, two behind Diegel. As the crowd gathered around him on the last green, Hagen coolly inquired, "What's all the fuss about? The championship has just started." Darwin noted that Hagen's round was not the usual wildness followed by amazing recoveries but rather a round of "sheer perfection. It was not Hagen golf, but Bobby Jones golf."

By that point in his career, Hagen had learned how to play in all kinds of British conditions. It had been nine years since he had "cracked wide open," finishing in fifty-second place at Deal, and during the interim he discovered how to keep the ball low into the wind, recover from trouble, and win. So, when the Firth of Forth was stirred and the wind began to blow hard, Hagen was ready as few others could be. The weather was simply morbid for the last two rounds; big blackened clouds--the kind that appear to be within arm's length--hung ominously low over the fairways. Providing a nice contrast, Sir Walter appeared at the first tee wearing a "symphony in blue and brown" that included a light brown sweater vest and bright blue shirt, with plus fours and stockings to match. Unintimidated by the forbidding conditions, Hagen asked sportswriter Al Laney: "You coming with the winner? I figure about 150 will do it today. What do you think?"

Indeed, on the final day Hagen kept his balance in a gale to shoot a pair of 75s and win his fourth British Open crown. As Jones had suspected, the Americans again took their revenge, dominating the event. Farrell was runner-up, and Diegel came in third. Abe Mitchell and Percy Alliss took fourth and fifth place, but the next five spots were filled by Americans. In fact, eight of the top ten and eleven of the top fifteen finishers were Yankees. One Scottish professional remarked, "The Americans have licked us. Tom Morris would have wept bitterly to see this." "It

was a glorious win for Americans," noted E. M. Adams in Golfers Magazine, "but a greater accomplishment for Hagen."¹

Hagen could not resist the opportunity to gloat a little over his spectacular title defense. "One of the things I like to do is to disappoint people [and] make them eat their words," he admitted with a smile. "In this championship I may have disappointed some folk, but you have no idea how full of joy I am at winning after the Ryder Cup match, when people put me out of the reckoning." At the trophy ceremony, Hagen pointed out that the Americans had "brought two cups to England and lost one of them, so we've got to cling to this one." He remembered that Harry Vardon had six titles and James Braid five; thus, "I am down, and I must come back again." Then, regaining a touch of diplomacy, he told the British throng that he had been "lucky" to win and that they "had been very good to me." Recalling his numerous hubbubs in Britain, Hagen concluded, "I hope I have done nothing to offend you. If so, believe me, I never intended it." After those comments, he accepted the winner's check and promptly handed it to his young caddie.^{li}

The British did not like Hagen's suggestion that he might match Vardon's or Braid's records, but golf fans everywhere again admired Sir Walter's fighting heart. They agreed with Adams, who wrote: "There isn't another golfer in the world who could have gone out in the gale that blew across Muirfield and reel off two miracle rounds of 75 each." Hagen looked "more majestic and massive than ever," observed the London Evening News. The Times of London was convinced that "no reverse, however severe, can shake [his] nerve or ruffle his equanimity." P. C. Pulver called the thirty-six-year-old Hagen "the man who never is through," while Grantland Rice simply dubbed him "the Lion Tamer." Golf Illustrated's George Girard revealed

that "some feel that suffering under the sting of defeat, [Hagen] becomes invincible." Britain's Golf Illustrated offered Hagen its "heartiest congratulations," and advised fellow countrymen: "Let us in the future lull him into a comatose state. We must see to it that Hagen plays no public matches over here previous to the Championship. Or, if he does he is allowed to win."^{lii}

On May 12 Hagen relaxed with a day of trout fishing on Loch Leven. Then, on the 18th, he teamed up with the Prince of Wales--who had given up hunting and polo for golf--to defeat Sir Philip Sassoon and Aubrey Boomer in a private match near Sunningdale. Hagen told reporters that "the Prince telephoned me at my hotel and it certainly was a great and pleasant surprise." Afterward, Hagen "irreverently" noted that the Prince was a quick-study, who played the game with his "bean." The next day news arrived that both he and Duncan had been made honorary members of the Moortown Golf Club. Hagen expressed "deep appreciation" for the honor; as he pointed out, he belonged to five American clubs, but Moortown was his first British membership.^{liii}

Hagen spent the following week on the Continent, flying for exhibitions from France to Germany to Austria to Hungary to Switzerland and back to France. He enjoyed himself to the fullest, specifically recalling a "beautiful little number" in Berlin. "Since I had been a free man the past several years," he wrote, "all these extracurricular activities were legal passes."^{liv}

He returned to Britain by June 1 for the first of two thirty-six-hole matches with Archie Compston. Hagen lost the first match 8 and 7 at Moor Park, where Compston had humiliated him the previous year, but won the second exhibition at the Blackwell Golf Club near Birmingham. If Hagen had had his way, he would not have faced Compston either day; he was exhausted from his Continental tour. The matches had been scheduled, however, and when

Hagen publicly suggested that they might be canceled, the British press instantly reacted, reminding Hagen of his offense in snubbing the 1928 Irish Open and the "tremendous responsibilities [he] bears because of his unique position in his profession." Britain's Golf Illustrated called Hagen's effort to avoid the matches an "unfortunate incident" and "gross discourtesy" that "put a slight on the British golf public." Hagen eventually acquiesced, although he took his time, showing up at Moor Park twenty minutes late.^{lv}

On June 8 the Leviathan brought a tired Hagen and his Claret Jug into New York Harbor. He told reporters all about his match with the Prince of Wales and, specifically, how he had helped the Prince correct his slice. "I'll bet he is hitting a great ball by now," Hagen guessed. He also announced plans to make an exhibition tour of the Pacific rim early in 1930 that would preclude defending his British Open a third consecutive year. He finished by confessing that he was "immensely pleased" with his fourth British victory. In all, Hagen seemed poised to extend his success in American events.^{lvi}

As in 1928, though, the British Open would be the highlight of Hagen's season. He conducted an exhibition tour through Michigan and Ohio with Horton Smith prior to the U.S. Open, in which he tied for sixteenth place. He again skipped the Metropolitan and Western Opens but finished thirteenth in the Canadian Open. Late in August Hagen captured the inaugural Great Lakes Open in Charlevoix, Michigan. That tournament came at the end of a two-week fishing trip on the Georgian Bay in Ontario. For most of the summer, Hagen spent his golf energies on an extended tour with Smith. In September the pair played their way to the west coast via Canada, Idaho, and Oregon. By October 1, Hagen-Smith had compiled a record of 45-5 in exhibition play. Hagen later recalled playing eighty-two matches and personally collecting

\$17,000.^{lvii}

Their tour ended early in November, when Hagen-Smith began gearing up for the PGA Championship. The PGA had followed the USGA's lead in going to the Golden State, holding its event at the Hillcrest Country Club in Los Angeles. In between practice rounds, Hagen indulged in some acting, making several golf instructional-comedy film shorts and pocketing another \$3,600. Despite the diversion, Hagen performed respectably in the PGA after barely qualifying; he advanced into the semifinals, where he was knocked out for the second straight year by defending champion Leo Diegel. The event was a hit in southern California, attended by a galaxy of movie stars and other Hollywood personalities. Actress Fay Wray was even given the task of introducing the players for the semifinals. She did well, at least until she became "tongue-tied," referring to Hagen as the reigning "British Opium champion."^{lviii}

Following the PGA, Hagen finished twenty-second in the Catalina Open and nineteenth in the Pasadena Open. On those flat notes, he closed his golf season. Yet given his age and the year's rocky beginning, Hagen could not have been too disappointed. He had proved that he could still compete with the world's best and win major championships. The "entertainer of princes [still] has the knack of coming through when least expected" and "galleries continue to follow him," observed the Professional Golfer of America. "Hagen is like Ruth in that he is as interesting in defeat as in victory." Moreover, Hagen was excited about his upcoming tour to Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. As Harry Vardon had done in the U.S. almost thirty years earlier, Hagen, in the twilight of his career, planned to take the good news of golf abroad and make a tidy profit in the process.^{lix}

Notes--Chapter Eight

-
- i. Lynn Dumenil, The Modern Temper (N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1995), 303-4; Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday (N.Y.: Harper and Brothers, 1931), 270-89; Walter Hagen and Margaret Seaton Heck, The Walter Hagen Story (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 125.
- ii. Rochester Times-Union, January 5, 1928.
- iii. Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 88, 187, 242; Robert Harlow, "The Return of Hagen's Ghost," Esquire, 28 (May 1945), 42.

iv. William Richardson, however, wrote in the New York Times that Hagen was guaranteed \$2,500 for showing up and that neither man was in danger of losing money. That is corroborated somewhat by Hagen's memory that the winner's take amounted to \$3,750, as well as what Bob Harlow wrote in "The Return of Hagen's Ghost," 42. See also New York Times, November 19, 1927, 12; March 17, 1928, 13; May 6, 1928, X, 6; Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 188.

v. New York Times, April 20, 1928, 21.

vi. Ibid., April 21, 1928, 15; April 26, 1928, 24; April 27, 1928, 21; Harlow, "The Return of Hagen's Ghost," 42.

vii. London Times, April 25-30, 1928; Golf Illustrated (British), 93 (4 May 1928), 117.

viii. London Observer, April 29, 1928; London Times, April 30, 1928; Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 188-94; Harlow, "The Return of Hagen's Ghost," 42; William Campbell, "Compston vs. Hagen," Golf Illustrated, 29 (June 1928), 26; "Britain's Rising Hope," Golf Monthly, 19 (May 1928), 17; Francis Ouimet, "Compston's Victory and Hagen's Sportsmanship," Golfers Magazine, 53 (June 1928), 28; Robert Harlow, "Compston Slaughters Hagen," Metropolitan Golfer, 6 (May 1928), 12.

ix. London Times, May 8-12, 1928; New York Times, May 11, 1928, 19; May 12, 1928, 11; May 13, 1928, Xi, 4; R. J. Tolleson, "Hagen Wins the British Open," Golfers Magazine, 53 (June 1928), 22; Innis Brown, "Same Old Hagen," American Golfer, 31 (June 1928), 9; William Clarkson, "The British Open," Golf Illustrated, 29 (June 1928), 27; "Hagen's Victory Abroad," *ibid.*, 19; Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 196; Harlow, "The Return of Hagen's Ghost," 42.

x. Charles Bartlett, "Walter in Wonderland," Professional Golfer, 33 (June 1951), 18; New York Times, May 12, 1928, 11.

xi. London Times, May 14-28, 1928; New York Times, May 29, 1928, 19; "How Hagen and Harlow Hit It Off," Professional Golfer of America, 9 (January 1929), 21.

xii. New York Times, June 9, 1928, 13; Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 199.

xiii. Baltimore Sun, October 1-6, 1928; E. M. Adams, "Leo Diegel Dethrones King Hagen," Golfers Magazine, 54 (November 1928), 18. When the P.G.A. asked Hagen for the Rodman Wanamaker Cup, he could not find it. Supposedly, he had had it for too long and had lost it; another was made for Diegel. See John Lardner, "Rowdy Rebel of the Fairways," True, 40 (February, 1959), 91.

xiv. "How Hagen and Harlow Hit It Off," 21; New York Times, October 28, 1928, II, 1.

xv. Boston Globe, September 11, 1928; Herbert Reed, "Hagen, Hardy Annual," Outlook, 149 (23 May 1928), 582; "Canadian Open Championship," Canadian Golfer, 14 (August 1928), 320; New York Times, August 28, 1928, 21.

xvi. Robert Harlow, "Walter Hagen, the Artist of Golf," American Golfer, 33 (November 1929), 29.

xvii. Los Angeles Times, December 16-31, 1928; New York Times, December 23, 1928, X, 6; Hal Sharkey, "Highlights on Western Tournaments," Golfers Magazine, 54 (November 1928), 26; Gould B. Martin, "How the Country's Stars Rate This Year," Metropolitan Golfer, 6 (December 1928), 26.

xviii. See Fulton County certificate dated January 3, 1928, admitting Jones to the Georgia bar, roll 1, Robert T. Jones, Jr. Collection, Golf House Library, United States Golf Association, Far Hills, New Jersey (hereafter, "RTJ").

xix. New York Times, January 5, 1928, 34.

xx. For coverage of the \$50,000 controversy, see; January 8, 1928, XI, 1; "Rob Jones Explains," Professional Golfer of America, 8 (February 1928), 20.

xxi. Richard Miller, Triumphant Journey: The Saga of Bobby Jones and the Grand Slam of Golf (N.Y.: Holt Rinehart, and Winston, 1980), 191; interview with Lewis Jones, Jr., Canton, Georgia, July 31, 1997.

xxii. Washington Post, April 28-29, 1928; New York Times, January 24, 1928, 33; March 7, 1928, 23; March 17, 1928, 10; April 18, 1928, 20; April 29, 1928, XI, 4; April 30, 1928, 16; June 4, 1928, 16.

xxiii. Chicago Tribune, June 15-25, 1928; New York Times, June 23, 1928; Grantland Rice, "Another Jones or Vardon?" American Golfer, 31 (August 1928), 5; George Girard, "Farrell Wins the Open," Golf Illustrated, 29 (July 1928), 33. Telephone interview with Thomas Hancock (son of Roland Hancock), October 9, 1997; Darsie L. Darsie, My Greatest Day in Golf (N.Y.: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1950), 56.

xxiv. New York Times, June 26, 1928, 24.

xxv. Ibid., August 28, 1928; Grantland Rice, "Making of the Mighty," Collier's, 82 (3 November 1928), 17.

xxvi. Chicago Tribune, August 30-September 1, 1928; "British Golfing Waterloo," Golf Monthly, 19 (October 1928), 17; Walter Hagen, "The Walker Cup Matches," Golf Illustrated, 30 (October 1928) 26; E. M. Adams, "America Scores Fifth Victory in Walker Cup Matches," Golfers Magazine, 54 (October 1928), 21.

xxvii. New York Times, September 6, 1928, 17.

xxviii. Boston Globe, September 10-15, 1928; Sol Metzger, "Great Golf Shots," Country Life, 60 (September 1931), 49-50; Grantland Rice, "The Cyclonic Bobby Jones," American Golfer, 32 (October 1928), 3; Arthur B. Sweet, "Bobby Jones Wins Fourth National Amateur," Golfers Magazine, 54 (October 1928), 9; "The Jones Complex on the Golf Links," Literary Digest, 99 (6 October 1928), 43-8; New York Times, September 17, 1928, 18; September 18, 1928, 27.

xxix. Atlanta Constitution, November 27, 1928.

xxx. Atlanta Constitution, January 6, 1929; O. B. Keeler, "Two Champions Measure Strides," American Golfer, 32 (February 1929), 7; Herbert Warren Wind, The Story of American Golf, third edition (N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), 176.

xxxi. Atlanta Constitution, May 9, 1929; O. B. Keeler, "The Challenge of Horton Smith," American Golfer, 32 (August 1929), 15; interview with Eugene Branch (Jones's former law partner), July 30, 1997, Atlanta, Georgia; New York Times, April 3, 1929, 33; May 9, 1929, 22.

xxxii. New York Times, June 13, 1929, 23.

xxxiii. New York World, July 1, 1929; New York Herald, June 27-July 1, 1929; New York Times, July 1, 1929, 1; June 21, 1929, 38; Atlanta Constitution, June 16, 1929; Grantland Rice, "They Can't Stop Jones--Yet," American Golfer, 32 (August 1929), 11; Wm. Henry Beers, "The National Open," Golf Illustrated, 31 (August 1929), 12; Keeler, "Challenge of Horton Smith," 58; A. W. Tillinghast, "The Open at Winged Foot," Golf Illustrated, 31 (June 1929), 42; O. B. Keeler, The Boys' Life of Bobby Jones (N.Y.: Harper and Brothers, 1931), 262-7.

xxxiv. Atlanta Constitution, July 3, 1929.

xxxv. Ibid., July 5-August 15, 1929; Grantland Rice, "The Trial of Lawyer Jones," Collier's, 84 (17 August 1929), 10.

xxxvi. San Francisco Chronicle, August 18-September 1, 1929; "Golf Gossip," American Golfer, 33 (October 1929), 53.

xxxvii. Jones played solidly, if not brilliantly, in his match with Goodman. Jones began slowly--a cardinal sin in eighteen-hole match play--and, although he squared the contest, he could never take the lead. San Francisco Chronicle, September 2, 1929; New York Times, September 1, 1929, X, 1; August 31, 1928, 12; O. B. Keeler, "It Was A Great Championship," American Golfer, 33 (October 1929), 19; Harold P. Farrington, "The National Amateur Golf Championship," Golf Illustrated, 32 (October 1929), 10.

xxxviii. Ibid; New York Times, September 5-6, 1929; September 9, 1929, 22; E. M. Adams, "Harrison Johnston Replaces Bobby Jones," Golfers Magazine, 56 (October 1929), 7; Ring Lardner, "Bobby or Bust," Collier's, 84 (21 December 1929), 19; Keeler, Boys' Life of Bobby Jones, 270.

xxxix. In a pair of ironies, Jones shot a medal round of 75 to Goodman's 76, and Goodman was eliminated in the second round. Harrison Johnston went on to become the unlikely winner of the 1929 U.S. Amateur. Also, Augusta National fans will recall that Jones's first-round elimination offered him an opportunity to discuss golf course architecture with Dr. Alister Mackenzie, whom he had met well before 1929. See endnote #24 of chapter 10.

xl. San Francisco Chronicle, September 9, 1929; September 12, 1919.

xli. "Is Bobby Jones Losing Interest in Golf?" Literary Digest, 102 (21 September 1929), 66-9; New York Times, November 7, 1929, 32; November 15, 1929, 24; Miller, Triumphant Journey, 151.

xl. Allen, Only Yesterday, 356.

xl. Los Angeles Times, February 1, 1929; Walter C. Hagen vs. Edna C. Hagen, January 31, 1929, Superior Court, Los Angeles County, California, County Records Center, Los Angeles, California; New York Times, September 9, 1929, 15.

xliv. New York Times, January 17, 1929, 3; in 1927 a team of American homebreds had won convincingly on U.S. soil. Interestingly, golf writers have refused to refer to the 1926 matches, in which the American side used some foreign-born players, as the first Ryder Cup contest, despite the New York Times's 1926 reports of Samuel Ryder's involvement. Instead, the 1927 matches have become regarded as the inaugural competition. See Bob Bubka and Tom Clavin, The Ryder Cup: Golf's Greatest Event (N.Y.: Crown Publishers, 1999).

xl. Ibid., January 20, 1929, X, 8. The British also cried "foul" regarding American professionalism of the Olympics in this period. See Mark Dyreson, Making the American Team: Sport, Culture, and the Olympic Experience (Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 163-9.

xlvi. New York Times, February 3, 1929, X, 2.

xlvi. Los Angeles Times, January 10-15, 1929; Miami Herald, March 11-24, 1929.

xl. For 1929 Ryder Cup, see Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 211; London Times, April 17-29, 1929; New York Times, April 10, 1929, 27; April 25, 1929, 25; April 26, 1929, 19; April 27, 1929, 11; April 28, 1929, XI, 1; London Observer, April 28, 1929; E. M. Cockell, "At Moortown: A Tale of the Iron," Golf Illustrated (British), 47 (3 May

1929), 122; Brownlow Wilson, "Horton Smith--Golf's New Star," Golf Illustrated, 32 (November 1929), 16; George Greenwood, "The Ryder Cup Matches," Golf Illustrated, 31 (June 1929), 28; Ernest Hargreaves and Jim Gregson, Caddie in the Golden Age (London: Partridge Press, 1993), 24.

xlix. Hargreaves and Gregson, Caddie in the Golden Age, 27; New York Times, April 29, 1929, 19.

l. Hagen's total for the 1929 British Open was 292. London Times, May 7-11, 1929; New York Times, May 5, 1929, XI; May 9, 1929, 22; Grantland Rice, "The Battle for the British Open," American Golfer, 32 (May 1929), 15; George Girard, "Walter Hagen Again Wins the British Open," Golf Illustrated, 31 (June 1929), 30; William Campbell, "The British Open Championship at Muirfield," Golf Illustrated (British), 47 (17 May 1929), 180; E. M. Adams, "Hagen Wins Again," Golfers Magazine, 55 (June 1929), 60; Al Laney, Following the Leaders (Reprint for Classics of Golf, Ailsa, Inc., 1991), 53; Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 163.

li. London Observer, May 12, 1929; New York Times, May 11, 1929, 15; Adams, "Hagen Wins Again," 20; "Hagen Again Crowned Golfing King," Canadian Golfer, 15 (May 1929), 57; Hargreaves and Gregson, Caddie in the Golden Age, 49.

lii. Adams, "Hagen Wins Again," 60; Girard, "Walter Hagen Again Wins the British Open," 30; "Bravo! Hagen," Golf Illustrated (British), 47 (17 May 1929), 170; P. C. Pulver, "The Man Who Never Is Through," Professional Golfer of America, 10 (June 1929), 5; Grantland Rice, "Hagen, the Lion Tamer," 32 American Golfer, (June 1929), 15; New York Times, May 11, 1929, 15.

liii. "Hagen and His Game with the Prince of Wales," Canadian Golfer, 15 (June 1929), 178; New York Times, May 13, 1929, 19; May 16, 1929, 35; May 17, 1929, 30; May 19, 1929, XI, 1; May 18, 1929, 10.

liv. Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 250.

lv. "Walter Hagen," Golf Illustrated, (British) 47 (31 May 1929), 240; Harold Hilton, "Hagen versus Compston at Moor Park," *ibid.*, (7 June 1929), 276.

lvi. New York Times, June 9, 1929, X, 8.

lvii. "Diegel Again Crowned Canadian Golfing King," Canadian Golfer, 15 (August 1929), 303; Margaret Bell, "Short Putts," Golfers Magazine, 56 (November 1929), 31; Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 239.

lviii. Los Angeles Times, December 1-8, 1929; Bell, "Short Putts," 31; "The P.G.A. Championship," Golf Illustrated, 32 (January 1930), 13; Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 239; Herbert W. Wind includes a slightly different version of the Fay Wray fumble

in The Story of American Golf, 171; my description comes from contemporary Los Angeles Times coverage.

lix. "Hagen, from Fishing to Golf," Professional Golfer of America, 10 (October 1929), 14.