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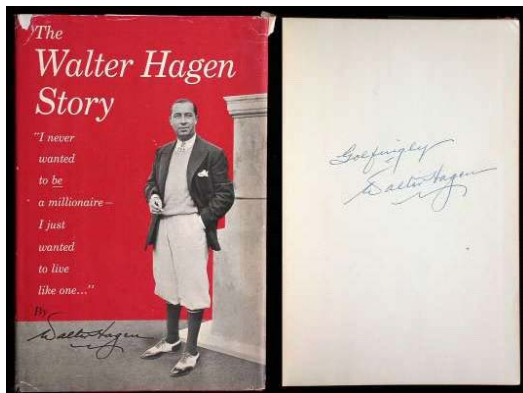
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### Walter Hagen Golf Books

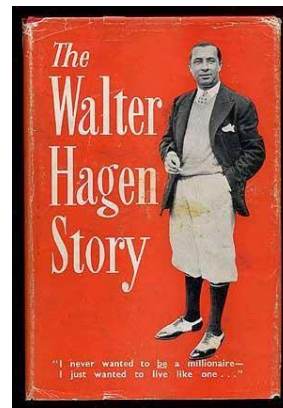
Given a choice of somehow being able to be transported back in time to meet some of golf's historical figures, Walter Hagen would be near the top of our list of those to meet. It's also too bad Hagen didn't live in the modern TV era – he was such a showman he would have been great for ratings and would have been a global media darling.

As a winner of 44 PGA events, including 11 major championships, Hagen currently ranks among the best players ever to have played the game. Hagen also played on five Ryder Cup teams and also served as captain of the American team.

Walter's story is an interesting one; his *curriculum vitae* included serving as a car-repair man, wood-finisher, caddie, stock broker and golf professional including at The Oakland Hills Country Club in Michigan.



With dust jacket and 'Golflingly' signature



Dust Jacket of U.K. edition

*The Walter Hagen Story* was published as a first (and only U.S.) edition in 1956 by Simon & Schuster. The British first edition was published in 1957 by Heinemann. The book was also published in a special edition, which has 342 pages, the same number of pages as the original first edition and is identical in every way to the first edition except for the binding and the copyright page stating "Special Edition" instead of "First Printing." Our research has not concluded why these special editions were printed.

As told to Margaret Seaton Heck, this book is really a collection of stories and anecdotes that Walter recounts. It is his autobiography and is one of the earliest of its genre – that is, the autobiography of a sports star who isn't articulate enough to write the book himself so has it written for him. As Hagen recounts in the book he “jumped out a window in the seventh grade and never went back to school.”

It is important to remember that in the early evolution of the game, golf was dominated by amateurs and not professionals. There was a big distinction between professionals, who were looked down upon, and amateurs, such as Bobby Jones, who were the real stars of the era. He recounts a story at the French Open where, at the time, they made professionals change clothes in the horse stable and they had to hang their clothes on nails. The story on pages 68-71 of how he showed up the hosts of the 1920 British Open, held at the Royal Cinque Ports Club at Deal is one of the most important in the history of professional golfers. It is no exaggeration to credit Walter with gaining equal footing for professionals vs. amateurs.

Walter enjoyed drinking, smoking and women and speaks throughout the book about “tipping the elbows at the grill” which is his shorthand for drinking. He even talks of drinking before matches including one during a U.S. Open he would go on to win. Tied for the lead, he stayed up all night and before teeing off has to “tip the elbows to stop the shaking.” A master of the psychology of the game, his take on staying up is that the rest of the field might have been in bed, but they most assuredly were simply tossing and turning and not sleeping. He felt it more restful to stay up rather than to toss and turn.

It is also interesting to remember that in the Jones-Hagen era you had to cross the ocean on a ship so playing in Europe was a big deal. The book has a definite 1950s feel to it, and the romance associated with traveling on the *Mauretania* and the *Aquitania*. He had a penchant for expensive cars, first class travel and chauffeurs. Walter didn't drive, he motored. He went on “barnstorming” tours. He got “the heebie-jeebies”. He recounts one story at Pinehurst where he talks with an “old negro-mammy”. Sometimes the slang gets on your nerves: everyone is his buddy, pal or one of the guys.

Walter comes across as a combination of Donald Trump the promoter; John Daly the lifestyle and with talent every bit as good as Ben Hogan or Bobby Jones. We recommend the book highly; it is one of the most important, entertaining, enlightening and amusing stories in golf. Thankfully, the book is not a hole-by-hole and shot by shot analysis of each of his wins, which often times dominate the books of previous golf greats.

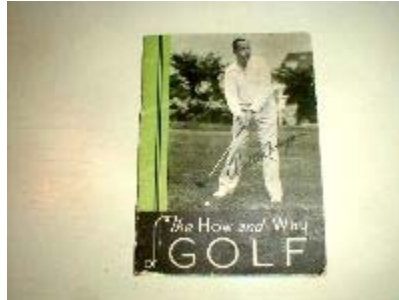
### **Signed Copies**

Copies of the Walter Hagen story are not particularly rare. The book was issued with a red jacket with a picture of Walter on the cover. It is very common for the jacket to be chipped or have pieces missing since the material that was used for the jackets is quite brittle. The British edition has a slightly different dust jacket (pictured above).

Ever the promoter, Walter signed a fair number of copies of the book, usually with the notation “Golfingly, Walter Hagen”. Signed copies of the book generally sell for about 10 times the price of unsigned copies. A reprint edition was also produced in 1977 to coincide with the Memorial Tournament. This reprint was limited to 250 copies and is done in embossed leather.

### **Other Books About or By Hagen**

There were two other soft cover booklets authored by Walter Hagen: *Golf Clubs and How to use Them*, published in Detroit in 1929, it is a 22 page pamphlet and is rare. *The How and Why of Golf* (pictured below) published in 1932 is a 32 page softcover publication and is also rare.



*Sir Walter and Mr. Jones* was written by Stephen R. Lowe and published in 2000 by the Sleeping Bear Press. A scholarly and well researched the book, it contains 41 pages of bibliographic notes in the rear. The book compares the two greats of golf's Golden Era: Bobby Jones and Walter Hagen. The book gives a more balanced view of Walter's life than his autobiography, especially the downside of spending all your time with the rich and famous. Walter the father, husband and business associate aren't nearly as attractive as Walter the golfer. One of Hagen's most proud moments though is when he beats Jones in the "the match of the century" in 1926 by an impressive 12 and 11, highlighted in the book.

*Sir Walter* by Thomas Clavin is the first full biography of Hagen. While writing a biography about Hagen is a tough task because it would be hard to be more colorful than the Haig, Clavin does a good job, especially putting Hagen's achievements from the 1920s in their proper context.

While not exclusively about Hagen, *The World's Championship Golfers: Their Art Disclosed by the Ultra-Rapid Camera, First Series* was published in 1924 by George W. Beldam. This was a series of 11 books each featuring a different golfer. One of the golfers featured was Walter Hagen and he is shown in a photographic analysis.

Joe Kirkwood, Hagen's traveling companion and fellow golf performer authored *Links of Life* in 1973 and the book recounts many a Walter story.

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