

# Walter Hagen

The house in front of you is the house in which he was born and raised.

1892 - 1969

Walter Hagen was a famous personality from the 1900 - 1930 era. His father, William, had built a house on Glen Road beside Allens Creek to be near his work as a greenskeeper at the Country Club of Rochester. Walter's father had also worked as a blacksmith.



As a caddy at CCR, starting about 1910, Walter had practiced with the pros and knew he was good but few others did.

In 1913 he approached CCR with the request that he go to Brookline, Mass. to compete in the U.S. Open Championship. They practically laughed in his face. A caddy is supposed to clean clubs, not swing them. Nevertheless they granted his request. Although he was regarded in Brookline as a "nobody from Rochester," and treated shabbily by the other players, he amazed them all and placed fourth. Walter then entered the U.S. Open in Chicago in 1914 and won it. He thus began a virtually undisputed 20-year reign over professional golf. He won every major tournament in the US and abroad year after year – a record that has never been broken.

[paraphrased from William Hosley's *Special Places*]

"Walter Hagen was golf's greatest showman, a flamboyant, princely romantic who captivated the public and his peers with sheer panache. He was 'Sir Walter,' and 'The Haig.' Such is his legacy as the most colorful character the game has ever seen that it often overshadows what a supreme player he was."

Quoted from: <http://www.worldgolfhalloffame.org>



"Hagen played semi-professional baseball in Rochester, then tried out in Florida spring training with the Phillies. 'Why not give up that sissy pastime and take up a real 'man's' game,' the Philadelphia manager goaded Hagen. Ernest Willard, publisher of the *Democrat & Chronicle*, got wind of this and countered: 'Don't leave golf. You're a champ.' Willard then sponsored Hagen as a participant in the 1914 U. S. Open in Chicago."



"Hagen attended the U. S. Open at Oak Hill in 1956 and until a few years before his death in 1969 made annual visits to renew old acquaintances."

"But no photographer was he. The Eastman Kodak Co. once provided him with free camera equipment for an overseas tour. Hagen proceeded to consume 4,600 ft. of film without getting one recognizable exposure."

— Elizabeth Brayer "The Fabulous Walter Hagen – Brighton Golfer" Historic Brighton 2001

"The flamboyant master of the most frustrating game ever invented starred on the fairways of five continents with majestic dignity for a quarter of a century. 'The Haig' possessed princely charm, ready wit, and sartorial elegance."

Elizabeth Brayer "The Fabulous Walter Hagen – Brighton Golfer" Historic Brighton News Vol. 2 no.1 winter 2001



Walter Hagen Family Home Foundation  
Rochester New York



## Golf great Walter Hagen's birthplace preserved.

Walter Hagen dominated the game of golf for more than 25 years, demanding -- and receiving -- respect for golf professionals the world over. The record books show Hagen holds a long list of firsts, including being the **first athlete to earn \$1 million playing a sport**, the first American to win the British Open, and the first sportsman named to the list of Best Dressed Americans.

"The Haig" created legends every time he raised his club -- or his glass. **He was the first to grab the check and the last to leave the party**, according to sports writer Vivian M. Baulch.

The son of a blacksmith, Hagen was born December 21, 1892 in the family home, a picturesque farmhouse on the banks of Allens Creek in Rochester, New York. Three-year-old Walter hit his first shots at the family home with a sawed-off five-iron given to him by a Scottish friend. **By age five, he was playing golf in the family's cow pasture.** Walter maintained a putting green by making a hole in the soil and herding the cows close around it, so they would eat the grass short to create a close putting surface.

Hagen's birthplace is just minutes from **Oak Hill Country Club**, site of the 2003 PGA Championship, and **Country Club of Rochester**, where Hagen first caddied and was later golf pro.

Walter Hagen's parents, William and Louise, built the home between 1880 and 1884, raised young Walter and his sisters there, then sold it to the Beers family in 1926. The home is now owned by one of the Beers granddaughters, whose family has worked to preserve the historic charm and unique character of the home. With more exciting improvements underway, the **Walter Hagen Family Home Foundation** (a National Heritage Foundation) **oversees and supports preservation of this important landmark in the history of golf.**

The Foundation also works to support select charitable causes.

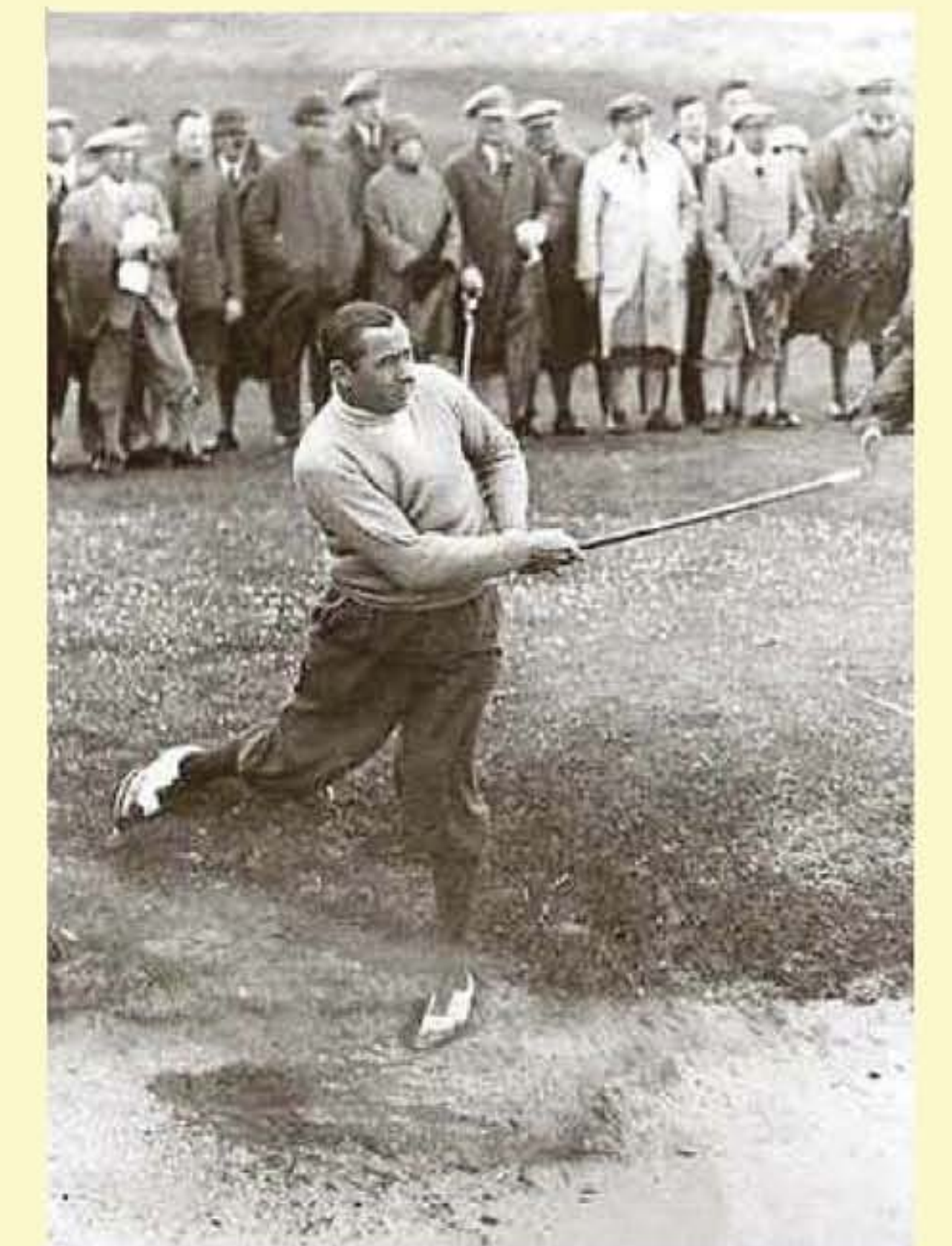
Contributions to the Walter Hagen Family Home Foundation are tax-deductible.

### PGA Championship celebrates the Haig

Golf fans at the 2003 Championship, and around the world, took note of Walter Hagen's Rochester legacy. Tournament attendees saw lifesize banners picturing the Haig adorning Hagen Village, where hospitality chalets were sponsored by world-class organizations like Kodak, Xerox, Bausch & Lomb, and University of Rochester. And television viewers enjoyed lengthy vignettes celebrating the Haig's influence and character with pieces on CBS Sports, The Golf Channel, and WOKR TV-10 (Rochester).



World Golf Champion Tiger Woods holds the Walter Hagen Cup. During the 2003 PGA Championship Woods called Oak Hill the "hardest, fairest" golf course he has ever played.



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