

Valuable Book Group, LLC
Specialists in Rare and Antiquarian Golf Books
Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

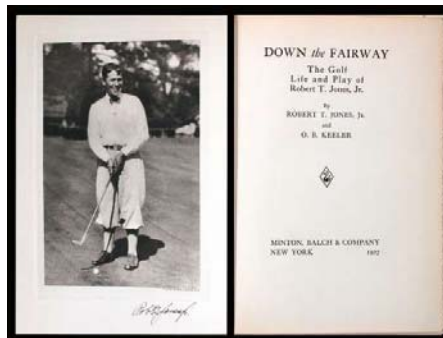
A Review of Bobby Jones Golf Books

Bobby Jones (Robert Tyre Jones, Jr.) was the greatest amateur golfer to ever play the game. Bobby won the Grand Slam of golf in 1930 by winning the British Amateur, British Open, U.S. Open and U.S. Amateur all in the same year, a feat that has never been repeated. The Augusta National Golf Club and The Masters were his creations. Bobby was one of the greatest athletes to ever live. Jones was also a prolific author and his works are sought after by golfers and book collectors.

Below, we will list all the books Jones authored in chronological order:

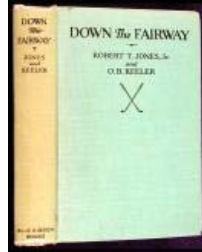
Jones's earliest work is *Golf Clubs as Bird Sanctuaries*, published circa 1920. The softcover book was produced for the National Association of Audubon Societies. Jones was one of seven authors on the committee that produced the book. Grantland Rice was one of the other contributors. A rare bird indeed (pun intended), this book sells for several thousand dollars per copy when it can be found.

Jones was also featured in a series of *Flicker Books* produced circa 1930s. In these books, you flip through them and Jones's swing goes into animation. There are three in the series: *11a Drive and Mashie*, *11b Brassie and Iron* and *11c Out of the Rough and Putt* (see our April 2005 newsletter for a full description and review of these books).



Down the Fairway: The Golf Life and Play of Robert T. Jones Jr. was published in 1927 by Minton Balch & Co. The book is 239 pages and was published in two versions. A limited edition of 300 was issued with a slipcase and was signed by both Bobby Jones and O.B. Keeler who co-authored the book. This version of the book is one the most prized possessions of golf book collecting. If you're thinking of acquiring one, you had better put the kids through college first, and then look at it. Jones's writing style is great, the book is highly recommended! Written before Bobby completed the Grand Slam, it shows an innocence we appreciate today. Consider the following passage in a section where he is

discussing how he prepares for a golf tournament: "I have a good dinner in the evening in my room, prefaced by two good, stiff highballs, the first taken in a tub of hot water; the finest relaxing combination I know; and then a few cigarettes and a bit of conversation, and bed at 9 o'clock." Almost makes you want to draw a bath!



The book was also produced in a non-limited first edition in 1927 with a dust jacket. Subsequent editions were: second printing, July 1928, third printing, August, 1927, fourth printing, November 1930, fifth printing, June 1931 and a sixth printing in June 1931. The first British edition was produced in 1927 by George Allen & Unwin. Lastly, reprint editions were issued in 1983-2001 by various publishers.

How to Play Golf was published in 1929 by The Bell Syndicate, is softcover and is only 32 pages. A second edition was published in 1930. *How I Play Golf*, the first Japanese edition was published in Japan circa 1938.

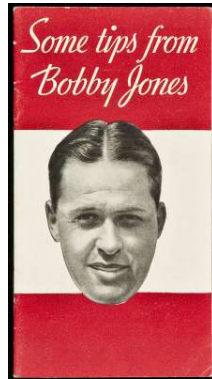
My Twelve Most Difficult Shots was published circa 1929 and is 63 pages. A rare book, it is bound in gilt-lettered flexible green calf and bound with green yarn tied around the spine.

Bobby Jones on Golf was written in 1930, is 112 pages and was published by Metropolitan Fiction, Inc. It was done in wrappers (softcover). We describe it as magazine style since it contains advertisements throughout. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find good copies that still have the cover present due to the fragile nature of the material utilized in the book's publication. There was also a second edition published in 1931. Both books have an introduction by Grantland Rice. Written just before Jones embarked on his Grand Slam year they contain a series of articles, each between one and four pages. They discuss various topics of interest such as *The Difference between English and American Courses* and *Nerves in Golf*. In one particular article, *The Unfairness of Furrowed Bunkers*, Bobby uncharacteristically complains about the bunkers at Oakmont.

In 1935 Jones authored *Rights and Wrongs of Golf* (leatherette) which was published in several different binding covers. The editions with the red covers are the rarest because these were allegedly produced for Bobby's personal use for him to give away. Also published in 1935 was *Some Tips From Bobby Jones*, a softcover book of 24 pages, that is rare. And in 1936, *How to Run a Golf Tournament* which is only 32 pages, and it rarely comes up for auction or sale.

Another sought after Jones title is *The Masters Tournament* which he co-authored with Augusta co-founder Clifford Roberts. Published in 1952, it generally sells for several

thousands of dollars per copy. The book includes a map of the Augusta National golf course.



Golf is My Game, published in 1960 by Doubleday is 255 pages, was issued with a dust jacket and is Jones's autobiography. The British version was published in 1961 by Chatto & Windus and is 270 pages. The book is divided into three parts. Part one is basically an instructional guide to playing. Part two recounts Jones's fourteen years of competitive golf with an obvious emphasis on his Grand Slam year of 1930. Part three covers his life after giving up competitive golf and includes several chapters on Augusta. Our advice is to skip the twenty-five plus books written about Jones after his death and read his autobiography instead. His writing style is very good and he was such a great man, you can still learn a lot from reading him today. Jones did a fair amount of signing of his books, especially later in life and in particular with *Golf is My Game*. Generally, a copy of a book signed by Jones increases its value by at least \$1,000.

Bobby Jones on Golf was published in 1966 by Doubleday, is 246 pages and was issued with a dust jacket. Be careful not to confuse this title with the 1930 softcover with the same title. They are completely different books.

Period Books about Bobby Jones

The Golf Swing of Bobby Jones by Kell Greene was published in 1931, was issued with a rarely found dust jacket and is 77 pages long. The book includes extensive photographs and analysis of Jones's swing.

Why Didn't They Ask Evans? was written by Agatha Christie. Published in the United States under a different title: *The Boomerang Clue* by Dodd, Mead in 1935. The book features a British character named Bobby Jones who uncharacteristically slices off the first tee, off the course and down a cliff. He comes across a dying man whose final words are the British title of the book.

The Boy's Life of Bobby Jones was published in 1931 was written by O.B. Keeler. Keeler was a newspaper reporter from Atlanta that covered Jones throughout his career. They developed into good friends and collaborated on several projects. Bobby states in his autobiography that he and Keeler almost always roomed together when they traveled. Keeler was the only person who saw him win all 13 of his major championships.¹

The Bobby Jones Story, from the writings of O.B. Keeler was written by Grantland Rice and published in 1953. Grantland Rice was a prominent sports writer in the thirties, forties and fifties and was closely associated with Bobby Jones. He was also a charter member of Augusta National.

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ⁱ Murdoch, Joseph. *The Library of Golf*. 1968.