The game and industry have come a long way since GOLFDOM made its bow.

By HERB GRAFFIS

In this, GOLFDOM'S 40th year, we are going to look again at the accomplishments of brilliant pioneers and their significant achievements that built U. S. golf into a business with an investment exceeding $1 billion.

This review, in GOLFDOM articles throughout 1966, is not going to merely cover the entertaining recollections of men who made American golf business great. The members of this group, happily, are of such mental and physical vigor that they look at the past mainly for lessons they can apply and share with others in continuing solid and rapid progress in every phase of the game and business.

Golf has had more effect than any other sport on the social, economic and political life of Americans. Its influence on suburban development in the U. S. became strong in the '90s. Today's numerous subdivision promotions built around golf courses are a replay of the boom of the '90s and later and bigger booms between the end of World War I and the market crash of 1929.

The influence of golf on American fashions over the years has been revolutionary. Politically, golf has figured in another revolution. During Franklin D. Roosevelt's first Presidential campaign the "country club set" was a sneering term used with vote-getting effect. Lately, government endorsement of loans for golf club construction has—more than any other one factor—figured in the building of new clubs.

Yet the history of golf as an American business has been told only by the spoken reminiscences of colorful men who made and lived this history.

Although more than half the Class A membership of the PGA is comprised of men older than 50 and the superintendents and managers are amazingly durable, the roster of golf business pioneers is rapidly thinning.

In recent years professionals whose testimony is essential to recording the story of American golf business have gone to the Green Pastures. Bertie Way, Jack Jolly, Isaac Mackie, Carroll MacMaster, Willie Whalen, John Watson, George Sargent, Chuck Congdon and other kindly, modest souls in pro golf have gone out of bounds from this planet in the past few years.

Golf course superintendents, formerly known as course foremen or greenkeepers, in GOLFDOM's time have paved the way to the modern era of golf scoring. They haven't had many lines of sports section space for the history they made in golf. Far more than any other men in sports business they have contributed to the beautification of the nation's real estate. GOLFDOM worked closely with them in organizing their national association, in setting up their educational program and in suggesting and getting their occupational identification changed to golf course superintendents as better identification from public relations and economic viewpoints.

The late Fred Burkhardt, when greenkeeper at the Westwood C. C., Cleveland and an official in the association, and GOLFDOM's Joe Graffis and this writer worked out the basis for the greenkeepers' annual show as the foundation of the association's financing.
Burkhardt, John Morley, Howard Farrant, John MacGregor, Joe Roseman, Fred Krueger, John Anderson, Frank Maples, Joe Mayo and such versatile pro-greenkeepers as "Dutch" Loeffler, Joe Mayo, Jack Pirie and George Knox have taken their stories with them.

Departed or in musing retirement are the old managers who came young to country clubs when the clubhouses were not much more than new, and often garish, roadhouses and who developed standards of cuisine and service that contented members of prestige country clubs with house deficits that were gigantic then—and too often merely normal now.

Gone, too, and with their chronicles dimming into mists of legend, are the pioneer manufacturers whose faith, hope and the charity of their cash investments brought American golf business into being.

Long gone is the charming Julian Curtiss of Spalding whose conviviality in Scotland was recalled when an immense shipment (for those days) of golf clubs arrived in New York. As a magnificent gentleman who never could imagine going back on his word (even while in the gloom of an historic hangover) the late and always great Uncle Julian sold the clubs and gave golf business one of its earliest and biggest boosts.

The tale of the Worthington Ball Company goes back to the revolutionary Haskell ball. The MacGregor and Burke golf club businesses had their beginnings in the manufacture of wooden forms on which shoes were made by machinery that could be adapted to the manufacture of wood clubheads.

The "Big Name" merchandising in golf and in other sports began as a flash in the brilliant mind of L. B. Icely of Wilson. Sarazen and Snead were two of his early proteges. The star system in selling golf goods wasn't doing much good in replacing the selling power of the home club's name on clubs until Icely figured out how both classes of pros could make money. Every pro who gets royalties for his name on golf merchandise today should bless Icely's memory as a royalty check is cashed. L. B. Icely has been dead for years and the story of how he put fortunes into pro pockets never will be told except in bits and secondhand from veterans.

The golf course maintenance equipment and supply business has had effects on American outdoor beauty, on home and park lawns, on highway and airport construction and maintenance, far beyond the imagination and knowledge of even most veterans in golf course management.

The channels through which the contributions of mechanics, science and merchandising first were made to golf are almost forgotten now. How Toro, for instance, got into golf from the farm tractor business; how a maker of beehives got into making golf ball washers; how fertilizer and agricultural chemicals got into golf as a show window for general turf business, are case histories that are growing into legends now.

GOLFDOM, as the magazine of golf business that has healthily spanned the transition of golf business from an essential sideline of fun to a huge success, believes that there is inspiration and a great deal of practical value in the tales of the pioneers.

So, from time to time, GOLFDOM will run recollections of the men who made golf business great.

We invite your suggestions and contributions. You don't have to worry about fancy literary touches. The facts and pictures concerning golf history in which you have figured will be adequate. And we will see that your pictures are returned.

To begin a series that we are confident will be intensely interesting and stimulating, we present on page 28 some notes from the late Edmond Rossiter (Ross) Sawtelle, of Sawtelle Brothers Inc., Danvers, Mass., golf course equipment and supply dealers. Mr. Sawtelle was a founder of the Turf Equipment Distributors Association. He was born at Bromley, Kent, England, Oct. 5, 1905. He died suddenly during that association's banquet at Las Vegas in October, 1964. His brother, Chester, who had established a turf equipment and supply business in Boston, and who was joined by Ross in 1948, continues the business.