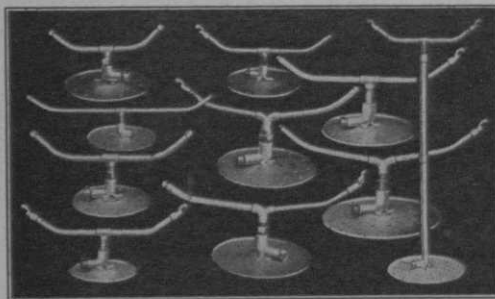


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Spalding to Celebrate 60th Anniversary This Year

ON MARCH first a huge business founded by a pro celebrates its sixtieth birthday.

The pro who made good was Al Spalding, a husky kid from the middle west who pitched for the Boston baseball team. He was good enough to be the leading pitcher of the National Association of Professional Baseball Players for four consecutive years. He was farsighted and forceful enough to sponsor the idea of the National league as the ground work of baseball growth, and take a prime part in the league's organization and firm establishment. He was bold and brainy enough to get his brother, J. Walter Spalding, out of a bank job to become his associate in the formation of A. G. Spalding & Bro., with an athletic goods store in Chicago.

And, if you've read any of the old books and learned what the public thought of pro athletes in the seventies and how highly the responsibility and promise of bank jobs were held in those departed days, you will realize that Al Spalding must have been a confident high-powered promoter to get his brother to take a chance.

The first year's business was only \$11,000. Al and Walter sweated to keep battling the sheriff's curves for Texas leaguers at crucial moments. With the score plenty to nothing against them in the second inning the Spaldings enlisted a brother-in-law, William T. Brown of Rockford, Ill., in 1878.

Three Are All-Star Team

The trio formed an ideal and harmonious combination, each in his respective sphere of organization—promotion, merchandising and finance—which was to last for a long and uninterrupted period, a period which saw the awakening of the recreation consciousness of the American people, in which the Spalding firm had an intimate, important part.

Shortly before the firm was organized, tennis was introduced to this country from England. Spaldings were soon selling tennis "sets" and J. W. Spalding did his promotion bit by playing as a member of one of the early lawn tennis clubs.

Until 1885, Chicago was Spalding headquarters, with a bat factory in Hastings, Mich. In that year, the firm moved to New York, where Julian W. Curtiss joined the newcomers as sales manager. Curtiss, still active in the organization as chairman

of the board and director, is today Spalding's oldest employee.

In the '90s golf was introduced in the United States by a few gentlemen at Yonkers, on the outskirts of New York, but elicited no general attention. Curtiss, while on a visit to Britain, was attracted by some peculiar looking implements in the window of a sports store and enquired their use, whereupon he purchased the set and brought them, along with a few balls, to New York. While the other members of the firm were too polite to express their opinion of his shopping, their approval of his enthusiasm as to the future of the game was not very apparent. It was not long, however, before Curtiss' predictions were substantiated and Spalding began to import British clubs and balls. The demand continued to the extent that the firm decided to enter the manufacturing field themselves, with the result that a golf department was established at the Spalding factory at Chicopee Falls.

Interest in the game lagged. A golfer seen with a set of clubs often met with comment similar to the "get a horse" days of the motor car. At this juncture J. W. Spalding signed the British open champion, Harry Vardon, to make a tour of the U. S., with the idea of stimulating interest in the Scottish game. The innovation was a brilliant thought. Vardon's skill was a visible demonstration of what the game really contained, and golf in America was successfully launched.

An Instinct for Promotion

Promotion was an outstanding feature in the life of A. G. Spalding. He had the instinct of the showman and the capacity to gauge the interest of the public in exploits of attraction. Even as a young man, while still a player, as early as 1874, he took two teams of ball players to England, where the American game—although the British claimed it was of their own origin—was the subject of much comment. In 1889 he made a round the world tour with his own Chicago National League team and a picked All-America selection. Hawaii, Australia, Egypt, Italy, France and Britain were visited.

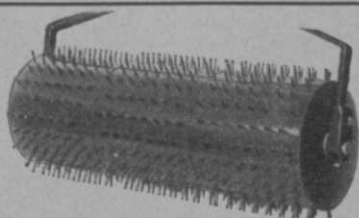
Widening sphere of influence of the Spalding firm was evident in the erection of factories for the exclusive manufacture of their own trade mark equipment. With a reputation founded on quality, it was essential that the strictest supervision should be employed, and consequently factories were established at the most convenient centers for manufacture and materials. Large factories at Chicopee, Mass.; Brooklyn, N. Y.; Philadelphia, Pa.; Chicago; and smaller ones in other locations, cater to a demand that embraces every type of athletic paraphernalia. In addi-

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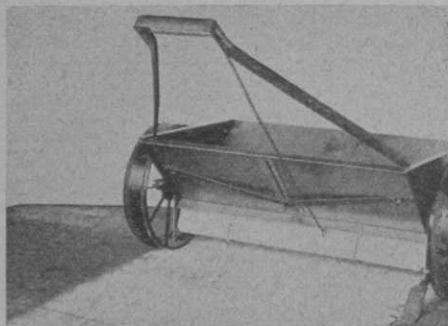
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SEE PAGE 62

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tion, the firm's operations extend to Great Britain, where a large factory at Putney-on-Thames takes care of the "made in Britain" demand, which is supplied through eleven stores in the British Isles. Canada's requirements are manufactured at Brantford, Ontario, and those of Australia through a factory at Melbourne, with stores in the larger cities of the Commonwealth.

Manufacturing athletic goods evidently is a guarantee of a reasonably long life, if not a bed of roses. J. W. Spalding, who was actively identified with the business from its founding up to the time of his death, in 1931, put in considerably more than half a century. A. G. Spalding's connection embraced more than forty years, as did that of William T. Brown, while Curtiss' fifty-one years bids fair to be extended indefinitely. Numerous employees also have served long periods, twenty years being considered by many of them only as an apprenticeship.

A significant feature of the history of Spalding in the last sixty years and one of which it is particularly proud is the development of its sales and distribution structure. Few companies have succeeded in welding together a more enthusiastic and loyal group. The managers and employees of the various departments have played a part of major importance, while golf professionals throughout the country have formed a vital link between the company and golfers throughout the United States.

GOLF'S MARKET PLACE

Harold Sampson, well known pro of the Burlingame (Calif.) CC, has designed a new putter that is being made and sold extensively by WILSON SPORTING GOODS CO.

Sampson's putter is generally of the blade type but, with its back tapered down into a broad flat sole, the putter not only is made easy to line up but the back surface becomes a good left-handed trouble club. The grip is built to put the control in the fingers of the right hand.

Harold's putter already has been warmly endorsed by a number of prominent pros and quite a few of the boys have begun to pick up some extra dough by selling these putters to members who ordinarily are tough to jar loose.

McCLAIN BROTHERS CO., Canton, O., are displaying their entire line at the Cleveland NAGA, convention, Feb. 4 to 7.

Line consists of Fungol, the two-in-one product for handling the brown-patch and soil vermin problem; Veg-E-Tonic, a