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FINDLAY, OHIO

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Findlay's Most Modern Department Store

Lovely Merchandise
Charming Surroundings
A Profitable and Pleasant
Place to Shop

Pattersons
SINCE 1849

Now In Our Second Century

*American
Lady*
CORSETS



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AMERICAN LADY CORSET CO.
"THE AMERICAN LADY"
TRADE MARK

Post Card

Place Stamp
Here

United States
and Canada
one cent
Foreign, two
cents

Ask to see the new models of the
American Lady Corsets.
They produce the long clinging
lines of the present fashion.
Insist upon just this make.
Prices range from

\$1 to \$5

Let Us Fit You

J. S. PATTERSON & SON
Findlay, Ohio

Grand Fall Opening

From October 4th to October
9th. Double Purple Trad-
ing Stamps with All Cash
Purchases this week.

J. S. Patterson & Sons
Always ask for Purple Trading Stamps





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414 S. MAIN 1902-'08 FINDLAY HARNESS & LEATHER

412 S. MAIN 1906-'08 WHITNEY & CURRIER
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1904-'06 E. B. CAMPBELL - PHOTOG.
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1858 LANGWORTHY DRUGS
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FOR GOOD SHOES

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Poor Man: "19."

Stanley Hake: "Well I thought so. I'm older and I'll be seeing him before you so I'll just hand it to Him myself."

Vesta Lindenman: "This is the plot of my new story. A midnight scene, two bandits creep stealthily toward the house. They scale a wall and force open a window. As they slip in the clock strikes one."

Mary Weitz: "Which one?"

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require dresses and
accessories that help
to make the occasion
memorable. May we
suggest that you
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PATTERSONS

Distinctive Gifts for Commencement



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since 1849 when Pattersons opened its store on Main Street in Findlay, but the policy of carrying apparel only of unquestionable quality and correct style has never changed!

*The gals who have the smartest
wardrobes buy at Pattersons!*



Pattersons
SINCE 1849





Advertising Has Changed And, We Hope, Improved

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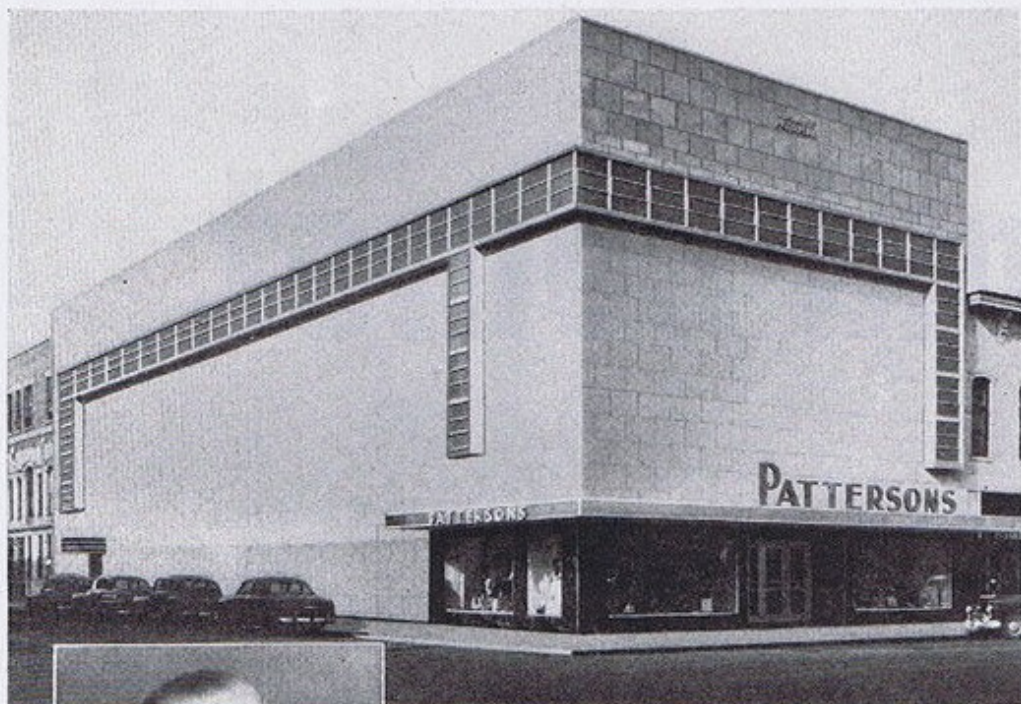


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SINCE 1849



This Grand Old Ohio Store

has insured with The Central
for more than half a century



"We like The Central's enviable record of quick, fair claim settlements"

—says Col. A. D. Patterson, owner and manager, Patterson's Department Store, Findlay, Ohio

"Our opinions about The Central are based on more than 50 years' experience," declares the head of Patterson's Department Store, Findlay, Ohio, which recently celebrated its 100th Anniversary.

"When we had a fire several years ago, we were much impressed by the friendly, considerate manner in which the claim was settled. We have always felt that our Central agent has had our interests at heart. In short, we know we can depend on The Central."

Thousands of property owners from coast to coast feel the same way Mr. Patterson does about The Central. Whether you wish to insure your home or business property, it will pay you to call in your local Central agent and learn how The Central's policy of insuring only "preferred risks" can reduce your insurance costs.



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Majoring in School Clothes

See us for the best in
Party and Banquet Facilities

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Findlay, Ohio

MERLE E. SHRIDER, MANAGER

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PATTERSONS

418 South Main Street

Findlay, Ohio

We Welcome
Findlay High School Students
As we did your Grandparents,
and your Great Grandparents.

Findlay's Quality Store
Since 1845

COMPLIMENTS OF

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500 Lima Avenue

Phone GA 2-1515

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Ruth and Robert J. Davenport

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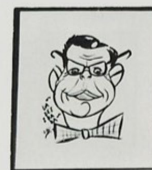
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CONGRATULATIONS TO
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THE PHOTO CENTER



PLANK'S MUSIC STORE

234 South Main
Findlay

136 Sandusky
Upper Sandusky

139

138



GORDON'S

Majoring in School Clothes

See us for the best in
Party and Banquet Facilities

Amber Room for Cocktails and Dinners

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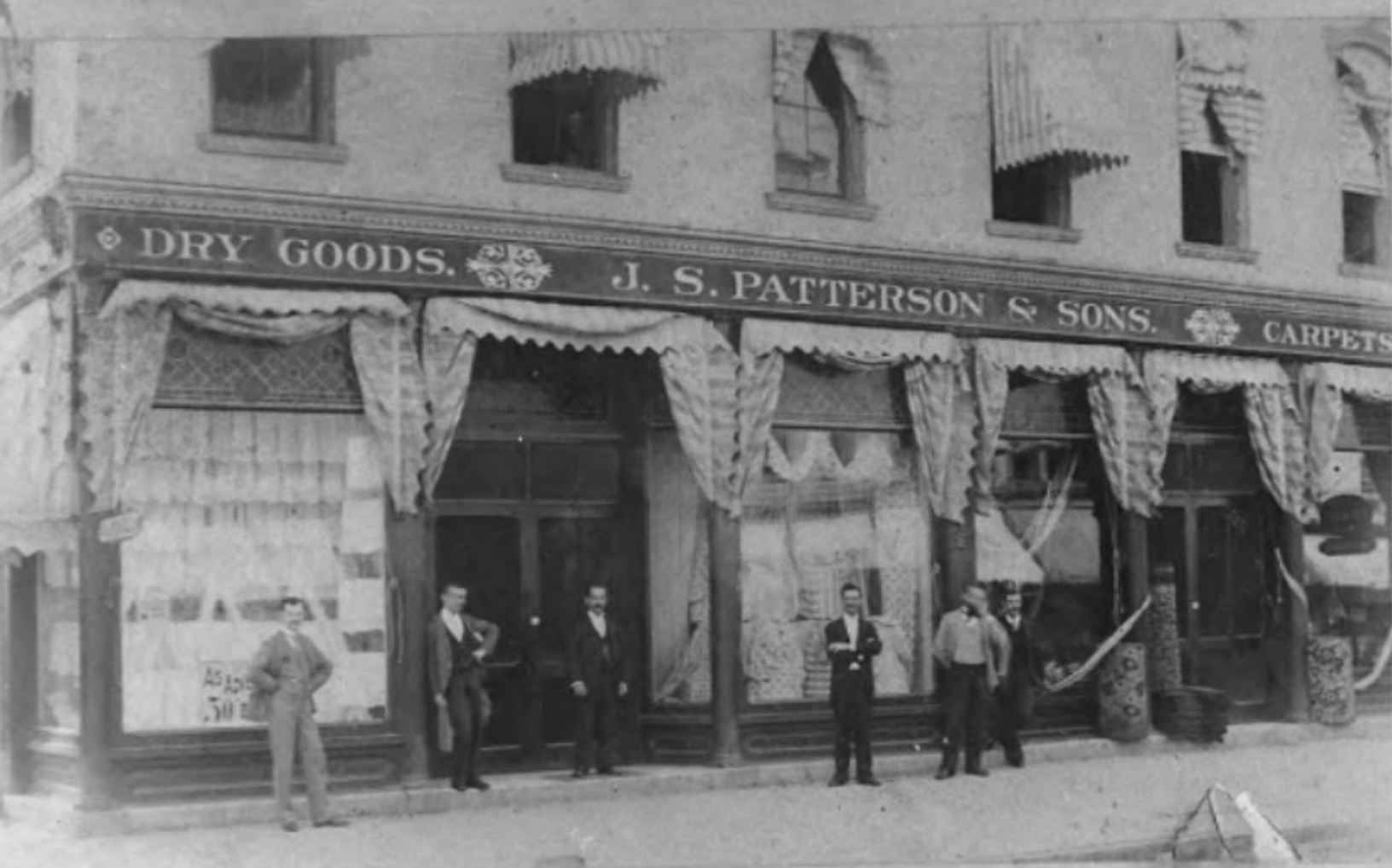
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PATTERSONS

The busiest doorway in town is always pleased to welcome Findlay High School students as we did your parents, your grandparents and your great grandparents.

Findlay's Quality Store Since 1849



45 YEARS OF
 Dependable Insurance of ALL Kinds
 EOFF INSURANCE AGENCY

PHONE 116

FINDLAY, OHIO

Don C.: "What kind of cars has an engine?"

Benny: "I don't know."

Don C.: "Why, engineers, of course."

—o—

Ted S.: "Dad, what is influence?"

Mr. Spidler: "Influence, my son, is a thing you think you have until you try to use it."

—o—

Banker: "Do you know anything about checks and drafts?"

Applicant: "Yes, sir; I've run our furnace for years."

CLINTON MUSIC
 STORE

"Everything in Music"

Expert Repairing of All Instruments

Formerly C. KOBE & SON

THOMAS & CO.
 JEWELERS

Giftware China
 Lamps Glassware

235 South Main Street

Even the grave and dignified British civil service commissioners could not resist being amused at an answer given at a recent examination. The question was:

"Give for any one year the number of bales of cotton exported from the United States."

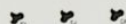
The applicant wrote: "1491. None."

—o—

"Jones is always hankering for posts of danger."

"Yes, he just volunteered to judge a baby show."

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 Dry Goods and Ready-To-Wear
 Accessories



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*Building Supplies
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Davis Block 320 S Main
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Findlay Medical Bldg 225 W Sandusky
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Frey Building 419 S Main
Hancock Savings & Loan Building 101½ W Sandusky
Hartman Building 131 W Sandusky
Hyatt Block 315½ S Main
Jones Block 109 W Crawford
Jones Block 400½ S Main
Kuebler Block 418 W Main Cross
Marvin Block 309½ S Main
Moran Block 630½ S Main
NILES BUILDING CO, 101 E Sandusky, Tel GArden 2-3262
Odd Fellows Building 411 S Main
Ohio Bank Building 110 W Main Cross
Ohio Oil Co Building 200 E Harden
Patterson Block 234 E Main
Patterson Building 234½ S Main
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Complete Insurance Service — Court Bonds
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Bus Terminal 110 E Sandusky

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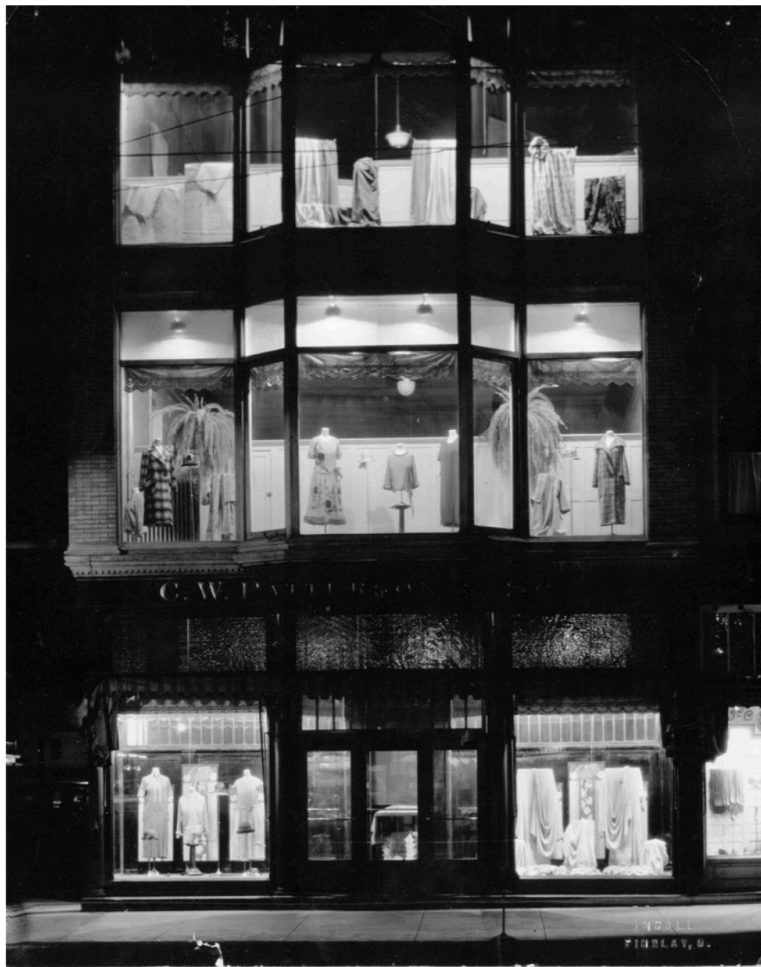
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PATTERSONS': A HISTORY OF RETAILING

IN

FINDLAY, OHIO, 1911-1949 (PART II)

Charlotte Eardley

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

BOWLING GREEN, OHIO

June, 1951

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CHAPTER I

THE MANAGEMENT 1911-1929

INTRODUCTION

The tremendous growth of big business was an outstanding feature of American history in the latter part of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries. America's big companies grew ever larger, and with this growth in size, their significance in the American economic scene became increasingly important. As a result, beginning about 1920 historians began to focus their attention upon this phase of economic activity, and a new academic field was developed--business history. Norman S. B. Gras, who was given the Isidor Strauss Chair of Business History at Harvard University in 1927,¹ has undoubtedly been the outstanding business historian in this country. Two years previous to this time, the Business Historical Society was founded at Boston and was served by the excellent Baker Library. One of the best known business histories is Ralph M. Hower's History of the Macey's of New York, 1858-1919.² Another well known business historian is Arthur H.

¹Directory of American Scholars, p. 319.

²Ralph M. Hower, History of Macey's of New York, 1858-1919 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1943).

Cole, former associate editor of The Journal of Economic History, whose best known contribution to the field is American Wool Manufacture, which was published in 1926.³

Nearly all of the studies in business history thus far have been concerned with big business. Small business which has played a significant role in American economic history has been singularly neglected, and a demand has arisen among all historians interested in the field for more studies of small businesses. This history of Pattersons' store will represent such a study.

THE STORE IN 1911

Pattersons' department store is a pioneer retail establishment in the Mid-western town of Findlay, Ohio and has served the community for a full one hundred years. The store celebrated its one-hundredth anniversary in October, 1949. The year chosen for the commencement of this history, 1911, marks the entrance into the firm of Arthur D. Patterson, the present general manager and grandson of the original founder. During his managership, this establishment has changed from a small-town dry goods store to a modern small

³Arthur H. Cole, American Wool Manufacture (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1926). A more recent work by Cole, in joint authorship with Harold F. Williamson, is The American Carpet Manufacture, A History and an Analysis (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1941).

city department store.

Findlay was in 1911 a rather staid and settled community situated in the midst of rich agricultural and once-rich oil and gas fields.⁴ It was (and still is) the county seat of Hancock County,⁵ and to it farm folks in large numbers made their weekly shopping trips, especially on Saturday nights. Thus, even though census records show a slight decline in the city population between 1900 and 1930 (thereafter the population increased gradually through 1950), Pattersons' could count on farm trade from the surrounding area to maintain a consistently large market for its goods.⁶

The store in 1911 occupied the same site in Findlay that it had for the past forty-five years, a busy northwest corner at the intersection of Main and Sandusky Streets.⁷ This location, two blocks south of the Hancock County Court House, is on the main street of the town, which is also a

⁴Facts About Findlay (Findlay, Ohio: Chamber of Commerce, 1935), p. 1.

⁵Ibid.

⁶U. S. Census records show a decline in Findlay for population from 1900-1920. Since 1920, there has been a gradual increase in each succeeding decade. (U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Population, Volume I: Number of Inhabitants (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1940), p. 829.

⁷C. W. Patterson, "Early Merchandising," (unpublished paper, n. d.), p. 3.

well travelled national highway, route 25, more familiarly known as the Dixie Highway.⁸ As a business location, Pattersons' was and still is well within the hub of the business activity of the town.

Located thus, the store became a familiar sight to the residents of the community. The front of the store faced east on Main Street, and the south side ran along Sandusky Street to an alley at the rear.⁹ There were two wide display windows on the twenty-seven foot store front, with a single door exactly in the middle. There was also an additional narrow display window on the south side of the building at the front corner. The store occupied all three floors in the building, but the third floor was not quite as large as the other two beneath it.¹⁰ The exterior finish was of light brick unembossed in the front except for the name "Pattersons'" in approximately two feet gold letters over the entrance.¹¹

⁸Facts About Findlay, p. 1 .

⁹Photograph of the store in 1911, in the possession of Arthur D. Patterson, Findlay, Ohio.

¹⁰Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio. Blue prints for the expansion of the third floor in September, 1941 showed the width of all three floors to be approximately twenty-seven feet. The first and second floors were approximately two hundred feet long, but the third floor was only one hundred and fifty feet long.

¹¹Photograph of the store in 1911, in the possession of Arthur D. Patterson, Findlay, Ohio.

Inside, Pattersons' appeared as a typical small town dry goods store with merchandise distributed over the three floors in eleven separate departments.¹² Walking up and down the aisles of the first floor, one might notice handkerchiefs, dress goods, table and bed linens of various kinds, and even jewelry. Visitors were encouraged to ascend to the other floors in an elevator, a convenience of many years standing at Pattersons'.¹³ Women's and children's ready-to-wear, corsets, and lingerie were to be found on the second floor, and carpets were featured on the third floor.¹⁴ A typical purchase in these times might have been dress goods,

¹²Departmental records of Pattersons' for 1911 prepared by A. D. Patterson include the following list of departments:

- Department A. . . . Domestic, bedding, wash goods, linens, and patterns
- Department B. . . . Woolen piece goods
- Department C. . . . Silks and rayon piece goods
- Department D. . . . Neckwear, scarfs, laces, ribbons, and handkerchiefs
- Department E. . . . Notions
- Department F. . . . Women's and children's hosiery and knit underwear
- Department G. . . . Handbags, jewelry, gloves, umbrellas, toilet and sanitary goods
- Department H. . . . All women's and children's ready to wear goods
- Department I. . . . Millinery
- Department K. . . . Corsets, lingerie, and infant's wear
- Department L. . . . Floor coverings, curtains, and drapery fabrics

¹³Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. There are no records of the date of the installation of the elevator, but Mr. Patterson estimated it as being in the 1880's.

¹⁴Departmental records of Pattersons' in 1911.

sewing supplies, or even a ready-made dress to wear on Sunday.

In view of the nature of the merchandise, it is not too difficult to understand why the preponderance of customers was feminine. Men were occasionally seen at the counters, but mainly in the capacity of escorts or account settlers.¹⁵ It is not surprising then, that the largest sales volume in 1911 was in the women's accessories, followed closely by woolen piece goods.¹⁶ Actual store records for this year were destroyed; but according to the best available estimates, the total sales volume for the entire store was approximately \$150,000.¹⁷

THE MANAGEMENT

At the helm of the firm at this time were three partners, all of the founding family. Pattersons' were proud of the fact that the store had been continually under the management of their family for the entire sixty-two years of its history. The three partners were Joseph

¹⁵Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

¹⁶Profit and loss records of Pattersons' taken by departments for 1912-13. The records of 1911 were destroyed.

¹⁷Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

S. Patterson, the original founder of the store, and his two sons, Charles W. and Frank T. Patterson.¹⁸ Red-bearded Joseph Patterson was a well known figure in the community. He had actively engaged in merchandising since approximately 1846 and had participated in community life in such ways as serving on a military committee during the Civil War.¹⁹ His oldest son, Charles, had first entered the store after his father took him out of college during the adverse conditions of the panic in 1873.²⁰ He was made a member of the firm in 1880. The younger son, Frank, began working in the store immediately after he was graduated from high school and was made a member of the firm in 1886.²¹ At that time each man held a one-third interest.²²

¹⁸Pattersons' Seventy Fifth Anniversary Pamphlet (Findlay, Ohio, 1924), p. 6. Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, March 31, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Personal interview with T. V. Patterson, March 31, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

¹⁹C. W. Patterson, "Other Days in Findlay," (unpublished paper read before the "Up to Date Club," Findlay, Ohio, March 30, 1922) p. 30. J. S. Patterson served on a local (Findlay) military committee, and he also aided the families of soldiers who were away in the war. Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, May 19, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²⁰Article in The Republican Courier (Findlay, Ohio), October 13, 1949.

²¹Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, March 31, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Personal interview with J. V. Patterson, March 31, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²²Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

In 1911, the grandsons, young Arthur D. Patterson and his younger cousin, Joseph V. Patterson, entered the store as clerks.²³ Arthur had been graduated recently from Amherst College in Massachusetts and had thought of a legal career, but he complied with his father's wishes instead and entered the store.²⁴ "Joe and I began as clerks," he recalled. "I worked in the dress goods material department, while he Joseph was in the bedding department. Our salary was ten dollars a week."²⁵

Frank and Charles Patterson were in actual control of the management of the store at this time, because their father had been suffering from the effects of a serious illness for several years.²⁶ This illness had left his mind unclear, and he never resumed full responsibility after its inception. "He might call at the store in the morning," Arthur Patterson remarked, "and request the office secretary to add up the accounts payable and then return in the afternoon to repeat the request."

In April, 1913, Joseph Patterson died. His death

²³Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

²⁴Ibid. (College diploma of A. D. Patterson from Amherst College, Massachusetts, June, 1911).

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

revealed a will drawn up six years previous at a time when he was suffering acutely from his illness.²⁷ The provisions of the will ran as follows:

To Arthur D. Patterson, May M. Patterson (Jackson), and Joseph V. Patterson is given in the original plat of Findlay, Lot 16, being the store building of J. S. Pattersons & Sons. All the rest of the property of the decedent, both real and personal, is devised and bequeathed to Charles W. and Frank T. Patterson, share and share alike.²⁸

As the provisions of this will placed the ownership of the business property in the hands of the three grandchildren of J. S. Patterson, Charles Patterson became concerned, because he feared that the grandchildren might sell all or a part of the property to an outside interest. On close examination of the will it was evident that there was not even a provision whereby Charles might lease the business property. Thus, because the entire power of the property was in the hands of these youthful and inexperienced grandchildren, Charles felt the business to be in a precarious state.²⁹ In addition, one of the grandchildren, May Patterson Jackson, had married into the family of one of Pattersons' leading competitors, The Jackson Company,

²⁷The will of J. S. Patterson was drawn up in 1907. Probate Court Records of Hancock County, 1907. The will was filed on December 11, 1913.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, March 31, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

a department store situated directly across Sandusky Street from Pattersons'. On these grounds, Charles, duly cognizant of his father's mental condition at the time the will was filed, brought suit against the beneficiaries of the provisions of the will to obtain ownership of the business property.³⁰ While the suit over the will was in progress, a compromise was sought among the partners. Charles felt, however, that May Patterson Jackson was being influenced by her husband, the Patterson competitor, and no satisfaction was achieved.³¹ The first court decision was in favor of Charles, but this was appealed by the beneficiaries, and the settlement was left indefinite.³²

At the entrance of the United States into the First World War, Arthur had been called into the army as a reserve officer,³³ and his cousin, Joseph, enlisted as a private.³⁴ Both were called home from the army in the

³⁰Charles W. Patterson v. Arthur D. Patterson et. al., 18571, Court of Common Pleas, Hancock County, Ohio, Docket 66 (August, 1914).

³¹Joseph V. Patterson et. al. v. Charles W. Patterson, 18571, Court of Common Pleas, Hancock County, Ohio, Docket 66 (August, 1917).

³²Ibid.

³³Service records of A. D. Patterson, World War I.

³⁴Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

summer of 1918 to participate in the will controversy which still raged between their fathers.³⁵

An extra-legal settlement was finally arrived at whereby the grandsons, Arthur and Joseph, each deeded their one-third share of the business property to their respective fathers. May Patterson Jackson sold her one-third share of the property to her father, Frank, and to her uncle, Charles, so that each received an equal part.³⁶ The result of this compromise gave a fifty per cent share of ownership of the business property each to Frank and Charles. The sons returned to their posts and were subsequently sent overseas. The firm continued on a more amicable basis thereafter.

The 1911-18 period, thus, seemed to be one of turmoil. It marked the absorption into the firm of the younger generation in the family, and, as has been seen, it also witnessed the death of the original founder of the store, Joseph Patterson. The next era in the store's history began in 1919 when a definite division of the firm took place. This date also signified the final chapter of the will controversy.

³⁵Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

³⁶Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, March 31, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

On November 1 of that year, a completely new partnership was formed, but it still retained the family management principle. The compromise partnership between Charles and Frank was dissolved, and all interests were sold to Charles.³⁷ Charles thereby won immediate possession of the business, all stocks of goods purchased in addition to those already in the store, and all other assets of the firm.

Since Charles Patterson wanted to stay in the retail business and Frank intended to sell out, a new lease was arranged between the two to give Charles the complete and immediate control of the business property.³⁸ The

³⁷Dissolution of the partnership of J. S. Patterson and Sons, November 1, 1919. A summary of the provisions of this dissolution is as follows;

The partnership of F. T. Patterson and C. W. Patterson operating under the name of J. S. Patterson & Sons is dissolved. F. T., the second party to the agreement, sells and disposes all interests to C. W. Patterson, the first party, on the following terms;

(1) C. W. Patterson is to have immediate possession of the business for cash payment, note, and deed of conveyance as settlement.

(2) He shall have all stock of goods, including goods purchased, whether in transit or not, furniture and fixtures--except the elevator and heating plant, all accounts and bills receivable, and other assets of the firm, except United States Bonds and war savings stamps--to be equally divided.

(3) No amounts due and payable for taxes and assessments or any other obligation of said J. S. Patterson & Sons are included in the sale.

(4) The lease belonging to J. S. Patterson & Sons, once owners of the building shall be cancelled.

³⁸Lease of C. W. Patterson and Son by Frank T. and

lease also gave the right of renewal at expiration.

In July, 1920, a partnership agreement was drawn up between Charles and his son Arthur.³⁹ In this agreement, the two men acknowledged the new partnership as existing since November of the previous year, and they agreed further to operate under the name of C. W. Patterson and Son. As a result of this new agreement, Charles Patterson held a two-thirds interest, and his son received a one-third interest. The profit sharing was to be in the same two-thirds-to-one-third ratio in addition to an annual

Charles W. Patterson, November 1, 1919. Lease in possession of A. D. Patterson, Findlay, Ohio. A summary of the lease is as follows:

C. W. Patterson and F. T. Patterson lease to C. W. Patterson and Son--the premises of Lot #16 in the original plat of Findlay, Ohio, now occupied by the business room used by J. S. Patterson & Sons, and the room occupied by Turner and Crosby, and the rooms over them. The said property was not to be used for unlawful or a more hazardous purpose than then being used.

This lease gave the right to make any improvements, alterations or repairs desired, as long as it didn't impair the safety of the building. The leasees were to bear all expense so occurring.

The lease was to continue for five years with a fixed annual rent payable to C. W. Patterson and F. T. Patterson equally.

The firm of C. W. Patterson & Son was to have the privilege of renewing the lease at its expiration, which done November 1, 1923, was purchased at that time.

³⁹Partnership agreement of C. W. and A. D. Patterson, July 2, 1920, in the possession of A. D. Patterson, Findlay, Ohio.

salary of three thousand dollars for each.

The new firm had a number of obstacles to overcome. One of these was that Frank Patterson had marked the retail prices of all the items in his first floor departments in code letters. One of the first tasks undertaken by the new firm was to mark clearly all prices of merchandise in figures so that the customers would know the exact cost without having to ask.⁴⁰ Another handicap encountered by the new partners was that Arthur had never done any buying for his dress materials department on the first floor. Frank Patterson previously had managed the entire first floor and had insisted upon doing all the buying for it.⁴¹ Arthur, who relied on his own judgment as well as his father's greater experience, was soon able to overcome this handicap.

The above mentioned difficulties were easily surmounted, and the new partners became concerned with launching their business efficiently. As a measure of the success of their efforts, both men received recognition from state and national organizations representative of the dry goods business. Arthur Patterson was selected as a

⁴⁰Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

⁴¹Ibid.

delegate to the National Retail Dry Goods Association Trade Mission to England in 1921.⁴² "The mission had as its chief aim the investigation of lower costs of production in the British Isles," commented Arthur Patterson.⁴³ In representing Pattersons', he was selected as a delegate from the smallest store in the entire mission composed of approximately seventy-five persons.⁴⁴ Charles Patterson was elected president of the Ohio Retail Dry Goods Association in the eighth year of its organization.⁴⁵ In addition, he was elected a director of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce in 1922 and for two successive years thereafter.⁴⁶

Thus through the efforts of the new management, composed of Charles Patterson and his son, Arthur, the store began to be moulded into the modern form which it attained by 1949 at the time of its one hundredth anniversary.

⁴²Article in The Daily Courier (Findlay, Ohio), March 30, 1921.

⁴³Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Article in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), April 13, 1923.

⁴⁶Article in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), October 13, 1949.

CHAPTER II

THE STORE GROWS UP--1911-1929

Pattersons' new customers as well as innumerable older ones have no doubt wondered many times about the procedures that have kept the old store at the corner of Main and Sandusky Streets successfully in business year after year. These same customers have probably also wondered about new methods and vogues introduced from time to time into the business and to what extent they have or have not influenced the operations of the store.

GENERAL BUSINESS POLICIES

Through its public relations, Pattersons' has attempted to establish much good will in the community. As a result, charitable and patriotic causes were consistently supported throughout the 1911-29 period. The store endorsed campaigns that kept the town "dry" and closed its doors during state Sunday school conventions to encourage participation in the parade.¹ Furthermore, during the First World War, store advertisements advocated the purchase of Liberty Bonds, the cultivation of Victory Gardens, and the

¹Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), May 29, 1914. Ibid., December 4, 1914. Ibid., June 21, 1916.

conservation of both food and fuel.²

To increase its good will in the community, Pattersons' attempted to formulate a fair and honest merchandising policy. The store made a point of selling commodities which were of high quality but in the moderate price range.³ This was probably done because Findlay, as a Mid-western farm community, provided a market which required good quality but not necessarily luxury items.

This policy of providing quality goods for Findlay was as consistently maintained as the opening of the front doors every morning at 8:30 A. M.⁴ In fact, Pattersons' liked to refer to itself as the "home of quality" and frequently reiterated this theme in its advertising.⁵ In the early twenties before the heyday of advertising contests in America, the store paid one dollar for the best

²Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), March 23, 1917. Ibid., October 5, 1917. Ibid., April 15, 1918. Ibid., January 19, 1918.

³Ibid., September 20, 1911. Ibid., July 16, 1912. Ibid., November 11, 1914. Ibid., May 4, 1915. Ibid., December 2, 1916. Ibid., October 1, 1918. Ibid., November 28, 1923. Ibid., October 15, 1925. Ibid., March 18, 1926.

⁴Personal interview with Miss Gladys Ames, March 17, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Miss Ames has been employed at Pattersons' since 1924.

⁵Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), July 13, 1917. Ibid., September 20, 1911. Ibid., December 17, 1918. Ibid., July 27, 1925.

essay on why their establishment had been known as the "quality store" since 1849. This was the winning answer:

The reason why this store has been known as the Quality Store since 1849 is because at that time they brought into business the spirit of the "Golden Rule" to deal with as would be dealt by. On that basis, they have built a business that will last.⁶

This little essay was published in the local paper.⁷

In consistency with its policy of fairness and honesty in merchandising, the store attempted to promote a similar policy in regard to customer relations. Quality merchandising and fair dealing were stressed in the following advertisement which appeared in 1913:

We are "finicky" about our merchandise, and everything that crosses our counters bears an unwritten pledge that it is right. But it is human to err, and things will go wrong, in which case bring your purchase back, and we will gladly adjust the matter. Sales here do not end with the passing of cash.⁸

In commenting upon this phase of the store's operation, Arthur Patterson remarked, "We do not go along with Marshall Fields wholeheartedly in saying the customer is always right. We say that the customer is right until she starts to impose too far."⁹ Mr. Patterson illustrated his remark by

⁶Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), July 27, 1925.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., October 3, 1913.

⁹Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

indicating the reluctance of the store to accept returned lace tablecloths, for example, if they showed evidence of food stains or ready-to-wear apparel if it appeared to have been worn outside the store.

CUSTOMER CONVENIENCES

Pattersons' customer conveniences appeared to be inextricably linked with sales promotion. There were some, however, which seemed to be classified more definitely as special aids or services for the patrons. One service employed by the store to increase sales as well as to provide opportunities for customer benefits and economy was the use of trading stamps which were given by most of the merchants of Findlay in return for cash purchases by the public.¹⁰ When the customer collected enough stamps to fill a book, he could redeem his book for gifts or premiums given by the stamp company. The practice of premium redemption was abandoned in 1911, however, since Pattersons', as one of the leading stores in the town, hoped to gain a greater volume of business by redeeming the stamps in merchandise. Pursuant to this end, Pattersons' gave patrons \$3.50 worth of merchandise while other stores gave only \$3.00 worth

¹⁰Personal interview with H. P. Coombs, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Mr. Coombs was a former sales manager with the United States Trading Stamp Company in Findlay.

of merchandise for the books. The merchants in the town eventually banned the use of the stamps, because the local company, the United States Trading Stamp Company, had sold out to a larger concern. The new company, Sperry and Hutcheson, had disregarded the prevailing practice of redeeming the stamps for merchandise in the local stores and returned to the former practice of redeeming the stamps on a premium basis from the stamp company offices.

Pattersons' was no exception to the local sentiment against the premium redemption plan, and the store joined in the agreement among the merchants to end the use of the stamps on January 1, 1930. Pattersons' expressed its disapproval on small printed cards which for about six weeks prior to the date set for the abandonment of the plan were distributed to customers as they entered the store.¹¹ The store explained its action solely in terms of dislike of this premium redemption scheme in place of the former merchandise redemption plan.

There were other methods used by the store to stimulate trade and attempt to link special service features with its name. Most of these methods were adopted during the twenties. Among the practices subsequently adopted

¹¹Printed statement in regard to the abandonment of the trading stamps by Pattersons' on a two inch by four inch card.

were cosmetic demonstrations for the customers in addition to free consultations with various cosmetic representatives.¹² The customers were also invited to seek advice on fashions from special agents of dress making pattern companies; to ask for suggestions on the latest millinery from specially trained millinerists, and to avail themselves of a corset fitting service aided by specially trained corsetiers.¹³ There were other diversified activities for the convenience of the patrons, among the more unusual being a luggage demonstration and a lecture on Oriental rugs delivered by a connoisseur.¹⁴

One of the most significant customer aids which was designed to increase sales was added in the twenties--a personalized shopping service.¹⁵ "Jane Orth" was the name given to this mythical shopper, and for over a year she freely urged the Patterson customers to avail themselves of her aid by phone or mail.¹⁶ No other Findlay store

¹²Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), March 23, 1922. Ibid., October 31, 1923.

¹³Ibid., April 13, 1922. Ibid., August 25, 1922. Ibid., February 13, 1922. Ibid., April 4, 1923.

¹⁴Ibid., February 26, 1915. Ibid., October 2, 1917.

¹⁵Ibid., October 26, 1923. Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

¹⁶Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), October 26, 1923. Ibid., December 3, 1923. Ibid., February 10, 1924.

used this customer convenience at this time.¹⁷ Pattersons' continued the idea of a mythical shopper but in 1925 changed the name of the shopper to Betty for no apparent reason.¹⁸ Unlike "Jane Orth," "Betty" wrote letters to the customers through the advertisements, and advised them what to buy. The use of the phone and mails for shopping was continued, however, whether advocated by "Jane" or "Betty."

The facilities for extending credit to the customers were fairly limited during this period. The general use of long term credit had lessened, and the trading stamp practice had diminished the number of charge accounts to approximately half of the former number.¹⁹ This probably occurred because customers who charged their purchases did not receive stamps. The use of installment buying was not too widespread, and lay-away purchases were never encouraged.²⁰ In general, Pattersons' was gradually becoming a cash store, although they never emphasized this fact. There were many customers from the surrounding rural areas

¹⁷Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), November 2, 1923. Ibid., November 28, 1923. Ibid., May 16, 1924.

¹⁸Ibid., October 6, 1925. Ibid., October 15, 1925.

¹⁹Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. (No charge account or credit records available for this period.)

²⁰Ibid.

who were unable to pay their accounts as promptly as the urban customers, however, and this contributed to the continued use of fairly long term credit buying throughout this period of 1911-29.

Another customer convenience was the delivery service, which without additional charge made free deliveries twice daily to each end of town.²¹ The use of horse and wagon was abandoned shortly before the first World War for that of a truck.²² During the war, Pattersons' cut the service to a half time basis in consistency with the austerity program adopted by most concerns.²³ After the war, the store resumed its deliveries twice a day to each end of town.

In general, the 1911-29 period was one of gradual improvement in retailing methods. The growth of the store in regard to increased sales and to the addition of new departments was more noticeable after 1919, when the new partners had sole control of the establishment. Some progressiveness in merchandising became apparent, even though

²¹Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), October 4, 1917.

²²Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²³Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), December 12, 1919.

the old conservative policy was not necessarily abandoned. This progressiveness seemed to be evidenced in the introduction of the various promotional schemes and customer aids, and in the employment of trained personnel. The conservatism was still apparent in the plain and direct wording of the advertisements that called attention to these services.

ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY

"Readers spend more time with type than with any other element of the average advertisement," according to the authors Edwards and Howard in Retail Advertising and Sales Promotion.²⁴ With this in mind, a store such as Pattersons' did well to prepare carefully its newspaper advertising.

For the greater part of this period, the advertising was under the direction and supervision of Arthur Patterson.²⁵ In the twenties, he delegated some of the responsibilities of this work to store assistants trained at the Prince School of Boston, but he continued to handle most

²⁴C. M. Edwards and W. H. Howard, Retail Advertising and Sales Promotion (New York: Prentice Hall, 1943), p. 302.

²⁵Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, March 17, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Personal interview with Doris Lytle, March 17, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

of the task himself.

A typical Findlay shopper would always know where to find the advertisement of Pattersons' in the local paper, for it was planned to coincide with the fashion or society page in each edition.²⁶ How better could it attract the attention of the woman shopper in Findlay? Occasionally when Pattersons' did not advertise in the paper, rural dry goods stores would happily occupy the exact space usually taken by the advertisement of the older store.²⁷

Pattersons' did not always have the most highly illustrated advertisements, but the improvement in format was great enough by the end of the period to have surpassed that of most of its rivals.²⁸ In attempting to add readability to the advertisements, the store did not always include price offerings. At times, the advertisements publicized general store policies, described store services, or announced demonstrations.²⁹ Generally, the

²⁶Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²⁷Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), September 16, 1922. Ibid., August 13, 1923. Ibid., January 28, 1922. Ibid., May 4, 1921.

²⁸Ibid., February 22, 1911. Ibid., February 25, 1911. Ibid., December 6, 1921. Ibid., September 30, 1924.

²⁹Ibid., February 16, 1915. Ibid., February 25, 1915. Ibid., December 6, 1921. Ibid., September 30, 1924.

advertisements were varied enough to appeal to the readers, and the illustrations were more attractive than those used by the other dry goods stores in Findlay. Unintentionally in 1911, Pattersons' enthusiasm injected a humorous note into the regular advertisement. The caption accompanying an illustration of some imitation alligator luggage described it as being so nearly genuine that it would pass for the same "at only fifteen feet's distance."³⁰

In the earlier part of this period, Pattersons' presented rather terse and laconic advertisements which were lacking in illustrations. The following quotation is an example:

Pattersons'

Pattersons'

Special Clean Up Sale
 WOOL AND COTTON
 BLANKETS
 TODAY-----SATURDAY
 See the Bargains³¹

This type of advertisement was typical in 1911. It would always appear in the lower left hand corner of the page, and it was usually approximately six inches high and two columns wide.

By way of contrast to this sort of thing, Jackson's, one of Pattersons' leading competitors, generally featured

³⁰Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), July 28, 1913.

³¹Ibid., February 17, 1911.

advertisements from three to five columns wide which extended over half a page or more. The Jackson Store would scatter illustrations much more freely through its advertisements, and they also contained itemized price listings consistently.³² One method used by Jackson's to stimulate sales through its advertising was to feature one or two items such as fountain pens or a special cut of meat (for they also carried groceries) at a lower price for a limited time of thirty minutes or an hour in the morning. Before or after the special sale hour or half hour, the price of the said article would be raised to the normal level.³³

As early as 1913, however, the advertisements of Pattersons' began to show a transition from the succinct phraseology of 1911 to a style which showed more careful preparation and greater length. This transition revealed a change, which seemed to de-emphasize actual price listings in the format, and place a new significance on quality merchandise and on styles or fashions. The following advertisement, although still somewhat terse, is an example:

The House of Quality
A New Fashion Season Brings Exclusive Displays of Fall Attire
A Wonderful Exhibit

³²Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), January 11, 1913. Ibid., June 6, 1913. Ibid., February 3, 1914.

³³Ibid., August 8, 1911.

of Foremost Designers
 Creations Awaits You
 Here.³⁴

Regardless of changes in format, a conservative policy was ever present in the advertising. In 1913, for example, a Pattersons' advertisement encouraging its patrons to participate in a January clearance sale read as follows:

We are going to crowd the store with satisfied buyers as never before, and we earnestly invite you to be one of them. You can make no mistake in buying at this sale.³⁵

This was in marked contrast to an advertisement of a rival store on the same day:

You ought to be bumped good and plenty if you do not attend our January clearance sale, that is if you want to save money.³⁶

Though retaining conservatism, the advertisements became more elaborate and wordy by the twenties. The following example, which was presented in 1921, illustrates this change:

DO YOU REALIZE HOW MUCH
 RETAIL PRICES HAVE COME DOWN
 SINCE LAST OCTOBER?

³⁴Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), September 18, 1915.

³⁵Ibid., January 25, 1913.

³⁶Ibid.,

It took two years of war and a year and a half more to run prices up to their highest point. No one expected price deflation to be so rapid. In this store prices are lower. We have met every drop in wholesale prices with a corresponding one in our retail price. Come and see for yourself. Compare our prices.³⁷

This statement was coupled with long lists of prices for every department of the store.

In addition to newspaper advertising, one of the most important means at the disposal of a department store to attract attention and to arouse customer interest is the intelligent use of its display windows. Located as it was on a busy corner, the store found its two windows on either side of the front door a constant source of attention. Pattersons' was often more conscious of its windows than the other stores, and it was probably the only store in town which called attention to its window displays in newspaper advertisements as frequently as it did.³⁸

In the 1911-29 period, a regular member of the store staff devoted his full time to the window displays and to the interior decorations as well.³⁹ The interior decorations were changed seasonally, but the window displays were changed

³⁷Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), October 21, 1921.

³⁸Ibid., February 17, 1915. Ibid., September 30, 1915. Ibid., November 9, 1915. Ibid., October 20, 1915.

³⁹Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, February 10, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

more frequently. The central feature in the window displays was undoubtedly ready-to-wear items that were accompanied by appropriate accessories. "During the twenties, Pattersons' was a leader in window decorations in Findlay," said Mr. H. C. Walker, local decorator, who later trimmed those very windows himself.⁴⁰ Mr. Walker also implied that Pattersons' windows were more carefully planned and arranged than those of the other stores. This undoubtedly attracted more appreciative interest from the shoppers.

SALES PROMOTION PLANS

No small part of the publicity was directed toward the development of sales promotional campaigns that were designed to stimulate customer interest in the store. With few exceptions, most of the promotional activities were conducted in the twenties after the firm reorganization.

One campaign, which was conducted by the store prior to 1920, was a co-operative venture with the Findlay businessmen and the local newspaper, The Morning Republican. This campaign was known as "Trade Week," and it had as its purpose the increase of business from out-of-town customers.⁴¹ Persons from the area surrounding Findlay were

⁴⁰Personal interview with W. J. Walker, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

⁴¹Editorial in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), October 16, 1911.

encouraged to visit the town during this week to do their shopping, and as a special concession, they were asked to present receipts for their purchases at the newspaper office.⁴² The newspaper would refund the railroad or inter-urban car fares to the customer by a fixed schedule according to the amount of purchases shown by the receipts. To insure that no long or unusual distance would be covered, the maximum round trip fare to be refunded was \$1.20. To receive a refund for this ticket, the customer had to show a receipt for at least \$20.00 worth of merchandise. The smallest round trip fare on the "Trade Week" itinerary amounted to twenty cents. To obtain this amount, a customer had to purchase \$2.00 worth of merchandise. During this week, Pattersons', along with the other merchants, further tried to stimulate sales among local shoppers as well by offering sales in nearly all lines of merchandise.⁴³

In 1919 one promotional campaign in the nature of a demonstration was conducted right outside the store. For a week passers-by were encouraged to walk over a length of floor covering placed on the sidewalk. At the end of this time, all were invited to inspect the piece, and to judge

⁴²Article in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), October 17, 1911.

⁴³Special Advertising Edition in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), October 13, 1911.

for themselves as to how it had withstood this harsh treatment.⁴⁴ The test was repeated the following year with the same procedure used.⁴⁵ Such a procedure undoubtedly stimulated considerable interest.

During the twenties, fashion shows were a new feature of promotional advertising. In 1924 when the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment was celebrated, Pattersons' collaborated with other stores and presented a style playlet at the local movie theater. This playlet was divided into three parts displaying morning, afternoon, and evening clothes.⁴⁶ The next day all dresses worn in the playlet were offered for sale at a twenty per cent reduction with millinery at a ten per cent reduction.⁴⁷ This playlet helped to establish the reputation of Pattersons' as a "style center" for women's clothing.

From time to time, Pattersons' invited women to attend fashion shows held in the store. Models were selected from the regular employees or were representatives of various

⁴⁴Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), November 4, 1919.

⁴⁵Ibid., March 11, 1920.

⁴⁶Program for the "Style Playlet," March 17, 18, 1924, Findlay, Ohio.

⁴⁷Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), March 18, 1922.

nationally advertised clothing lines.⁴⁸ For these fashion pre-views, carpet runways were placed in the aisles of the ready-to-wear department on the second floor. "This type of style show was never very important here because of the crowded conditions," remarked Arthur Patterson.⁴⁹

The sewing school was another type of promotional policy also adopted by the store during the twenties. Pattersons' claimed that this was the first time such a service had been offered in a community the size of Findlay.⁵⁰ Any woman could avail herself of this service by registering for the course for a small fee. This sewing school course lasted for approximately a six week period, and the store probably hoped to stimulate sales in the dress goods department simultaneously. An instructor was provided for the course, trained by a national service, and the classes were held in the store. As a result of this project, Pattersons' became noted as a center of dress materials.

Pattersons' did attempt to aid charitable causes with their publicity and promotional schemes at times.

⁴⁸Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), March 24, 1926. Ibid., June 2, 1924.

⁴⁹Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, February 10, 1924, Findlay, Ohio.

⁵⁰Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), May 19, 1922. Ibid., May 31, 1922. Ibid., May 26, 1926.

In the mid-twenties, its advertising in the newspapers and displays in the store invited Findlay patrons to bring in their old coats and receive a ten dollar credit towards the purchase of a new coat from the store as a gift.⁵¹ The customers were assured that their old coats would be given to the Associated Charities of Findlay. There was no cash given for the old coats, but merely credit towards the purchase of a new coat. Again, Pattersons' was a leader in promotional advertising, for no other store in town made the offer.⁵²

SALES VOLUME

One might wonder to what extent all these methods of retailing were influencing the over-all success and prosperity of the store. The basic end of all of the advertising, store services, and various other promotional methods was to increase the sales and business volume. It can be seen that the bulk of the schemes and ideas to promote sales were introduced following 1920, but these plans showed no pronounced increase in the total sales volume in a year to year analysis. Probably, more people were at-

⁵¹Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), December 19, 1924. Ibid., December 21, 1924.

⁵²Successive issues of The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), December 19-24, 1924.

tracted into the store by these methods, but this was not sufficient to show marked gains in either sales volume or profit. The real growth and increase in sales, therefore, came as the result of the wartime prosperity. The sales after the first World War remained above the pre-war level due probably to general business conditions and the prevailing high prices rather than to the promotional policies of the firm.

The sales volume of the store remained especially high in 1929. Perhaps the general economic conditions would have warranted a decline in sales during November and December, but this did not affect the sales at Pattersons'. Arthur Patterson endeavored to answer this with the following explanation:

Strangely enough, 1929 was a peak year for us in sales volume. The merchants of Findlay chose January 1, 1930 as the final date for the validity of the trading stamps previously in use. Since Pattersons' gave \$3.50 in redeeming the stamp books and the other stores gave only \$3.00, we did an almost unprecedented amount of business in cashing these books. In fact, we cashed over \$8,000 worth of stamp books contributing appreciably to our sales volume.⁵³

PROFIT AND LOSS

Although records for the years preceding 1922 are not available, records for the years of 1922-29 reveal a

⁵³Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio

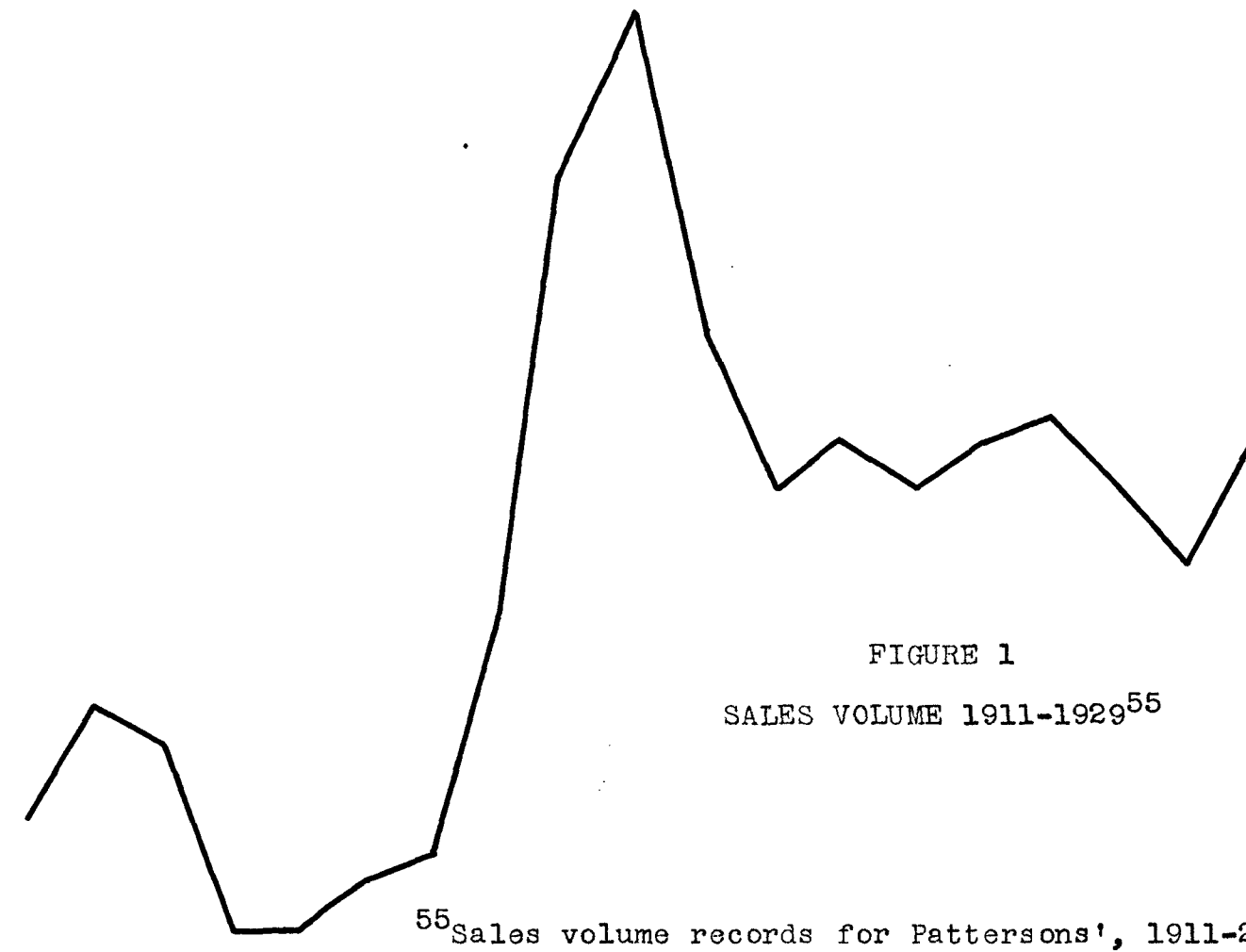
return from the capital investment averaging approximately three per cent of profit.⁵⁴

The following graph charts the sales volume for the store in the 1911-29 period:

⁵⁴Profit and loss records for Pattersons', 1922-29.

**SALES VOLUME
IN HUNDREDS
OF THOUSAN
OF DOLLARS**

**270,000
260,000
250,000
240,000
230,000
220,000
210,000
200,000
190,000
180,000
170,000
160,000
150,000
140,000
130,000**



**FIGURE 1
SALES VOLUME 1911-1929⁵⁵**

⁵⁵Sales volume records for Pattersons', 1911-29.

**YEARS OF
OPERATION**

1911 1912 1913 1914 1915 1916 1917 1918 1919 1920 1921 1922 1923 1924 1925 1926 1927 1928 1929

From the preceding graph, the answer to the general question of whether the store was growing or not can readily be seen. It certainly was growing and more than keeping pace with the times. Yet, was the store attempting to undersell competitors; and how was it faring with the chain store? A typical chain store had opened up in Findlay in 1914 challenging the small home-managed stores.⁵⁶ The chain store was advertised as an underselling store from the first, and a new note appeared in Pattersons' advertising in answer to this challenge. It read as follows:

Inexpensive, but not cheap. Cheap means low in price; inexpensive means low in price, but high in quality. In other words, purchases at Pattersons' mean unusual values for the money. Such is our merchandise.⁵⁷

The low point in sales volume for 1914 undoubtedly reflected some of the new competition offered from this store, but the general business recession of that year and the strife in the Patterson management over the will of J. S. Patterson probably contributed more to this drop.

Thus, Pattersons' seem to have successfully met the challenge of the chain store with its underselling and mass marketing merchandising techniques. Though this chain

⁵⁶Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), May 13, 1914.

⁵⁷Ibid., September 24, 1914

store remained in business for quite a few years and was joined subsequently by another, which also prospered, so did Pattersons' remain in business and they too prospered.

CHAPTER III

THE EFFECTS OF THE DEPRESSION AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The Great Depression and the Second World War affected almost every phase of the store's operation. Generally speaking, Pattersons' was in a moderately prosperous state at the end of 1929. Losses had not been unknown during the twenties; but the gains for the period had been sufficient to show the partners an equitable return on their investment. It would be highly erroneous, however, to depict the store as a citadel of financial strength.

CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT

Managerially, Pattersons' remained basically unchanged throughout the twenty year period from 1929 until the death of Charles Patterson in 1946.¹ Through the years, Arthur had assumed more and more of the full responsibility of the store until his father had reached a status of semi-retirement.² But Charles had retained his two-thirds interest in the firm, and his son's share had been left

¹Charles W. Patterson died on March 14, 1946.

²Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

unchanged.³ When the war called Arthur back into active army service, his father came out of semi-retirement and into active store service again,⁴ at the age of eighty-seven.⁵

During an army leave, Arthur jovially reminded his father that he had never been made an equal partner since they had been in business.⁶ Later, after he had returned to duty, Arthur learned that his father had immediately adjusted the matter. Henceforth, the partnership was comprised of two equal members.⁷

Prior to the War, Arthur had requested that his return to army service be delayed as long as possible; but to meet any emergency, he had drawn up a blueprint of operation to aid his aged father in managing the store.⁸

³Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

⁴Mr. Patterson was called into the service in May, 1941 to serve as a lieutenant-colonel in the army. He was an executive officer in the Civilian Defense Program and had command of the fifth, sixth and seventh regional areas which included sixteen states. Mr. Patterson was in 1949 retired with the rank of colonel. (Service records of A. D. Patterson.)

⁵Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

⁶Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, March 17, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

⁷Partnership agreement between A. D. and C. W. Patterson, February 1, 1945, Findlay, Ohio.

⁸Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

He had worked out the plan in great detail and had consulted other store employees to aid in the scheme. The plan did not serve its intended purpose, however. "After I had been gone only one week," related Arthur, "Father scrapped my entire plan and proceeded to run the store the way he wanted to."⁹

During the interim that Charles Patterson assumed full responsibility for the store, despite his age he undertook a remodeling and expansion program on the third floor which added fifty feet to the rear of this floor.¹⁰ Nevertheless, he more than welcomed the return of his son to relieve him of his duties in management and again retired with great expectation and anticipation of the store's one hundredth anniversary to be celebrated in 1949. His nintieth birthday was celebrated by nearly all of the businessmen of Findlay with a testimonial dinner given by the local Chamber of Commerce in October, 1944.¹¹ He was a familiar figure around the town and especially attracted attention

⁹Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

¹⁰Blue prints of the third floor expansion program, September, 1941. W. J. Warbentien, Chicago, Illinois, architect.

¹¹Program from the Testamonial Dinner given by the Findlay Chamber of Commerce for Charles W. Patterson on his nintieth birthday, October 8, 1944.

driving his electric cars to and from the store.¹² It was with great regret that the firm of C. W. Patterson and Son announced the death of its senior partner in March, 1946. His death brought to an end a long successful career in retailing in Findlay.¹³

Arthur now became sole owner-manager of the firm. The rapid growth of the store since the war had placed additional and heavier demands upon him, and he realized the need of assistance in sharing the responsibilities of management. In view of this need, a further change was effected in the firm. On February 1, 1949, a new limited partnership was drawn.¹⁴ Into the firm for the first time in its history came interests outside of the family. Mr. A. L. Whistler and Mr. F. C. Remley were each allowed to purchase a ten per cent interest.¹⁵ It is notable that Pattersons' did not become incorporated at this time. Arthur Patterson explained, "One of the principal causes

¹²Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio. Charles Patterson had purchased his first electric car in 1911 and always owned one up to the time of his death in 1946.

¹³Announcement of the death of Charles W. Patterson by the store, March 14, 1946.

¹⁴Limited partnership agreement among Arthur D. Patterson, A. L. Whistler, and F. C. Remley, February 1, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

¹⁵Ibid.

for not incorporating thus far has been to avoid the double taxation of that form of organization and to present a more favorable investment opportunity to the two new partners."¹⁶ Both of the new partners were already employed in the store and had an active interest in its future. They were termed special partners of the firm and were liable only for their ten per cent investment in the event of severe loss. The only additional change at the time of this new partnership was the adoption of the firm name of "Pattersons" instead of the former name, "C. W. Patterson and Son." Arthur Patterson still retained the principal responsibility and control, and in the agreement he was termed the general partner.

Mr. A. L. Whistler, merchandise manager since 1946, was now a limited partner in the firm. He was well educated and previous to coming to Pattersons', he had worked at Taylors in Cleveland, LaSalle and Koch in Toledo and the J. B. Sperry Store in Michigan.¹⁷ Mr. F. C. Remley, the house furnishing manager, had been affiliated with Pattersons' for fourteen years prior to the formation of the new

¹⁶Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

¹⁷Personal interview with A. L. Whistler, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Mr. Whistler obtained a master's degree in history from Ohio State University in 1929.

partnership.¹⁸

Thus, the firm moved on with three executives at the helm of its management. The greater part of the firm ownership has remained in the family, and its name still appeared on the store front as an obvious reminder.

The following chart diagrams the store organization at the time of the most recent partnership agreement:

¹⁸Personal interview with F. C. Remley, January 15, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

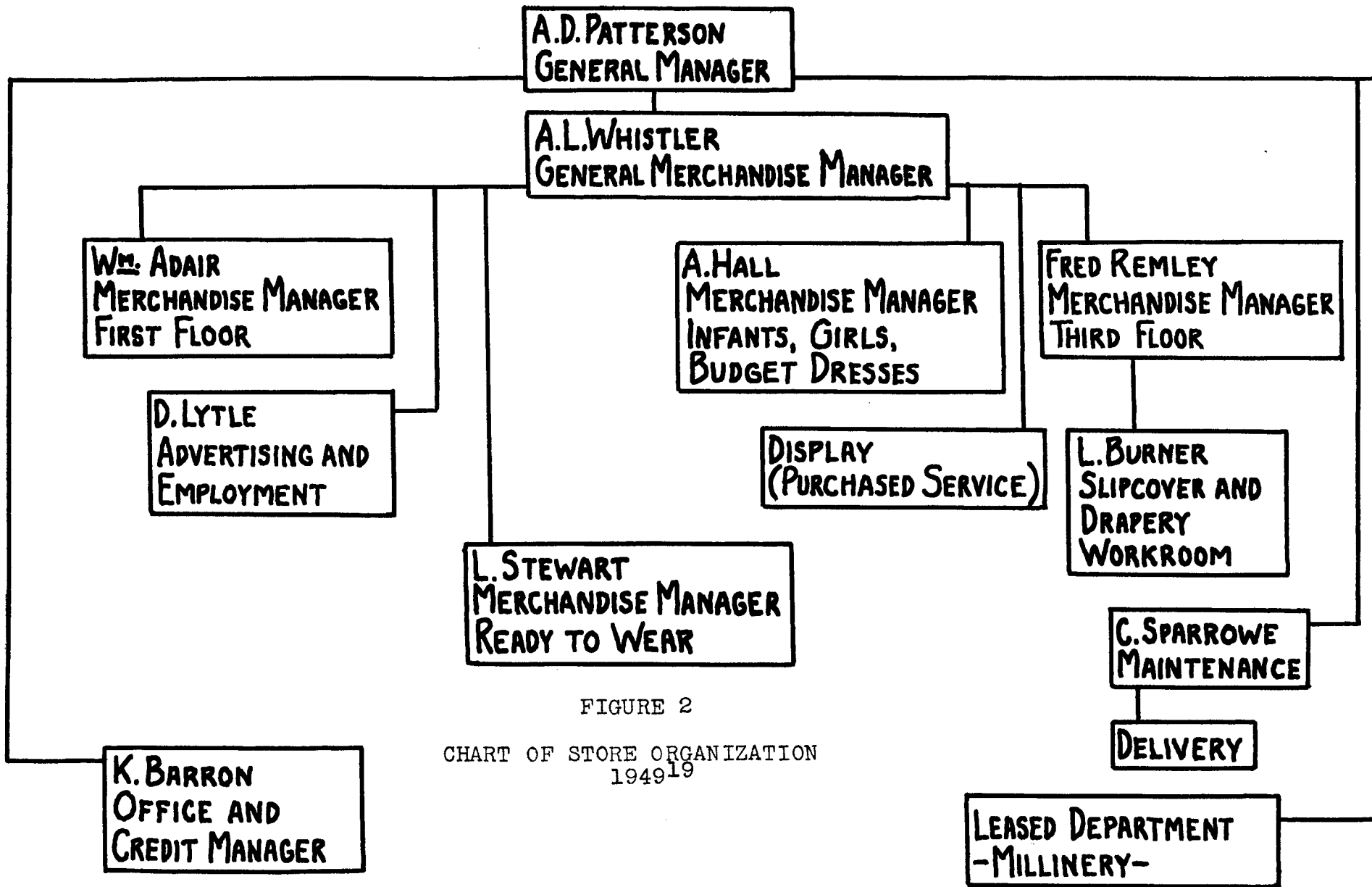


FIGURE 2
 CHART OF STORE ORGANIZATION
 1949¹⁹

¹⁹Chart of store organization of Pattersons', February 1, 1949, prepared by A. D. Patterson.

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PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING

Changes during this twenty year period in the publicity and advertising methods of Pattersons' were not nearly as great as in the previous 1911-29 era; but certain important revisions of interest did occur. Pattersons' customers had been accustomed to rather attractive store displays both within and without the store. Their attention had been frequently called to both types of displays. In the past, a full time store employee had taken charge of arranging these displays.²⁰ During the Second World War, however, all such personnel had been drafted into the service, and the store made a new arrangement. It contracted for the Walker Display Service, a local firm, to trim its windows and handle all the decorations and displays inside the store.²¹

Since that time, the merchandise manager, Mr. A. L. Whistler, was in general charge of the store and window displays, and he worked in cooperation with Mr. W. I. Walker, using ideas furnished by the management and employees.²²

²⁰Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, March 31, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Personal interview with W. J. Walker, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²¹Ibid.

²²Personal interview with A. L. Whistler, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

Displays were arranged on a seasonal basis and took into account the buying and shopping cycle as well.²³ "Pattersons' windows have been designed to provide a continuous focal point of interest all the year round for Findlay shoppers," commented Mr. Walker.²⁴ Arthur Patterson expressed his preference for this new service over the old system since it eliminated unnecessary confusion in the store while the changes were made. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that the windows were trimmed usually in a day by the Walker service while previously the changes took much longer.²⁵

The only other outside advertising service utilized by the store has been its subscription to the Welcome Wagon plan in Findlay.²⁶ This service employed trained personnel who visited newcomers, congratulated brides and new mothers, etc., with gift and service certificates from the various business establishments in the town. The results of such a plan are difficult to determine, but Pattersons' were

²³Personal interview with A. L. Whistler, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²⁴Personal interview, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²⁵Personal interview, March 31, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²⁶Personal interview with Mrs. Doris Lytle, March 17, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Mrs. Lytle was the advertising manager for the store in 1949, and she also handled all personnel work.

wholeheartedly in favor of it.²⁷ The goodwill thus established no doubt contributed much towards the prosperity of the store.

Arthur Patterson continued to handle the mechanics of the newspaper advertising during the earlier part of this period.²⁸ As the task became more burdensome, he delegated the work to a greater extent to office assistants or to his personal secretary. He still maintained, however, a watchful eye on policy and procedures up until the time he was called back into army service. During his wartime absence, a separate advertising office was established with a full time advertising manager employed. This practice has been maintained, but the advertiser doubles at hiring new employees as well.

Pattersons', contracting approximately ten thousand column inches of space per year for their advertising, has been one of the oldest and largest customers of the daily local paper.²⁹ The almost complete circulation coverage of the newspaper in Findlay has enabled the store to abandon

²⁷Personal interview with Mrs. Doris Lytle, March 17, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²⁸Ibid. Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, March 17, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²⁹Advertising contract with The Republican-Courier (Findlay, Ohio), 1949. Personal interview with Mr. Lowell Heminger, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

practically all forms of printed advertising other than the practice of inserting "fillers" or "stuffers" in the monthly statements sent out to the customers.³⁰ These "fillers" include nationally advertised product circulars as well as notices of special sales and offerings prepared by the store. Oftentimes the "fillers" make provision for ordering by mail, thus introducing the mail order store character to the old dry goods store of Findlay but only to a small extent. There is no specially designated person to handle these mail orders when they occur. They are turned over to respective departmental heads.³¹

Pattersons' maintained a conservative tradition in newspaper advertising as a general policy and trend. That did not mean that there were never timely nor attractive advertisements for the store, as can be seen by the following example which appeared in 1930:

"HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN" starring Mr. Sixty Per

³⁰Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, March 17, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. The following products were advertised in the fillers;

Alexander Smith Floor Plan Rugs
 Certified Fur Storage Company
 Dana Colognes
 Dorothy Perkins Deoderants
 Goray Belts
 Trapie Nitey Nite Sleeper Pajamas

³¹Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

Cent in the role of "Old Man Dollar"

WE'RE SHIFTING SCENES FOR YOU, and the curtain rises tomorrow on this thrilling show. The last prop is in place!

ACT I: We have the closing of the local Bank in the month of May. Price levels are high. There is much sadness in the community. People begin to economize.

ACT II: We find the price levels slowly but steadily declining while the bank remains closed.

ACT III: A thrilling climax is reached. The market has reached a low level. The bank is opened and pays off sixty cents on the dollar. There is much rejoicing for people find their sixty per cent will now buy nearly as much as their dollar formerly did.

GRAND FINALE: Everyone sings "HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN."³²

Pattersons' were a bit premature in their rejoicing, for the joyous advertisement belied the store's own critical financial plight caused by the depression.

The actual techniques of advertising changed little and progressed with the advertising methods of the time. The advertisements of Pattersons' compare favorably with the advertisements of the largest stores of any city during this period. Stress upon the traditional community service of the store became a major theme in the advertising, as the following example shows:

Pattersons' Store, established in 1849 on a policy of fair dealing, has proven its right to enjoy your patronage as it enjoyed that of many of your grandparents and great-grandparents. Through these 92 years, it has lived UP To a reputation, not ON IT--otherwise it would have ceased to exist.

³² Advertisement in The Republican-Courier (Findlay, Ohio), September 29, 1930.

Such a period of service to one community must be deserved. Only a careful adherence to the policy of fair dealing of J. S. Patterson, its founder in 1849, has made it possible.³³

In the early thirties, Pattersons' devoted considerable attention to the introduction of a store Santa Claus who arrived at the local airport with free candy to distribute among all the children who came to meet him.³⁴ In addition, he was greeted by the mayor of Findlay and other civic leaders. Later, he officially opened the toy department at the store in November, 1931.

Noticeable throughout the remainder of the thirties and on into the war period was the lack of promotional schemes in the newspaper advertising comparable to the number introduced in the twenties. Pattersons' was becoming a mature establishment and appeared also to be a trifle more dignified. The advertising for the entire decade of the thirties seemed highly conventional.

With the advent of the Second World War, Pattersons' advertisements reflected wartime trends. The following example illustrates a military type slogan:

WE STAND BY AS YOUR QUARTERMASTER FOR CIVILIAN

³³Advertisement in The Republican-Courier (Findlay, Ohio), April 30, 1951.

³⁴Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), November 13, 1931.

NEEDS!³⁵

The War also affected the anniversary sales; but Pattersons' still claimed to be the center of new styles, good values, and fair prices.³⁶ They celebrated their anniversary as a special week, however, not as a sale week. The mandate of the War Production Board had limited sales to clearances, and this, of course, eliminated the anniversary sale. Following the close of the War, the store resumed its anniversary sales.

SALES VOLUME

The sales volume for the twenty year period following 1929 is a revealing story. In the first three years of the thirties, the store suffered an average loss in profit of approximately \$15,000 annually.³⁷ This fact speaks for itself in regard to the actual effect of the Depression. Naturally, such losses were inhibitive for expansion on any scale. Merely to have stayed in business was a good sized task for the store at that time. Arthur Patterson remarked:

³⁵Advertisement in The Republican-Courier (Findlay, Ohio), May 19, 1944.

³⁶Ibid., May 16, 1944.

³⁷Profit and Loss records for Pattersons', 1930-1932.

Actually, we had no more money borrowed at the end of the depression than when we had started in 1919. Our stock merchandise was eaten up and had gone down and down to very little in 1933. So if things had not been better at the end of that year, we would have rented the business, sold out the rest of our stock, and waited until business conditions improved before venturing again.

However, the bank holiday, supports on prices, and the N. R. A. all came at the right time for us. There was a definite price advance at the end of 1933, and we were encouraged. There is an old saying that applied to our business at that time. If we would have bought black ink to balance our books, we would have gone in the red.³⁸

From the above statement, it can be seen that Pattersons' operation during the depression appeared to be typical. The store had a heavy inventory at the end of 1929 and little buying had been done during the following two years. Thus, by the end of 1933, either a new inventory would have had to be obtained, which would have involved the stimulation of business on a small scale at least, or the firm would have gone out of business.

During the remaining years of the thirties, Pattersons' recovered gradually. The sales volume slowed considerably, however, during 1936-38 but showed some growth even then. The greatest growth in sales volume came in the ten year period following 1940.³⁹ This growth was accen-

³⁸Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

³⁹Profit and Loss Records of Pattersons', 1929-1949.

tuated by the war prices undoubtedly; but the higher sales level was maintained and increased because Pattersons' were doing more business in all departments.⁴⁰ The increased purchasing power of the Findlay patrons throughout the war probably accounted for this greater business volume. Also, the greater business volume was undoubtedly a more important factor in sales volume growth in the Second War period in contrast to that in the First War, because in the Second War, prices were somewhat stabilized along with wages, which curbed inflation to a larger extent.

As the sales volume grew, the profits also increased. During the thirties, the partners made an average net gain of approximately five per cent on their capital investment.⁴¹ This return changed from a loss for the three initial years of the thirties to a profit of approximately twelve per cent by 1939. Through the war years that followed, the store made highly favorable gains from the prosperity conditions.⁴² As a result, the store was in the most prosperous position of its one hundred year history in 1949.

The following graph shows the rise in sales volume for the 1929-49 period:

⁴⁰Departmental Records of Pattersons', 1922-1949.

⁴¹Profit and Loss Records of Pattersons', 1930-1939.

⁴²Profit and Loss Records of Pattersons', 1940-1949.

SALES VOLUME
IN THOUSANDS
OF DOLLARS

550
540
530
520
510
500
490
480
470
460
450
440
430
420
410
400
390
380
370
360
350
340
330
320
310
300
290
280
270
260
250
240
230
220
210
200
190
180
170
160
150
140
130
120
110
100
90

1929 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49
YEAR OF APPROXIMATE

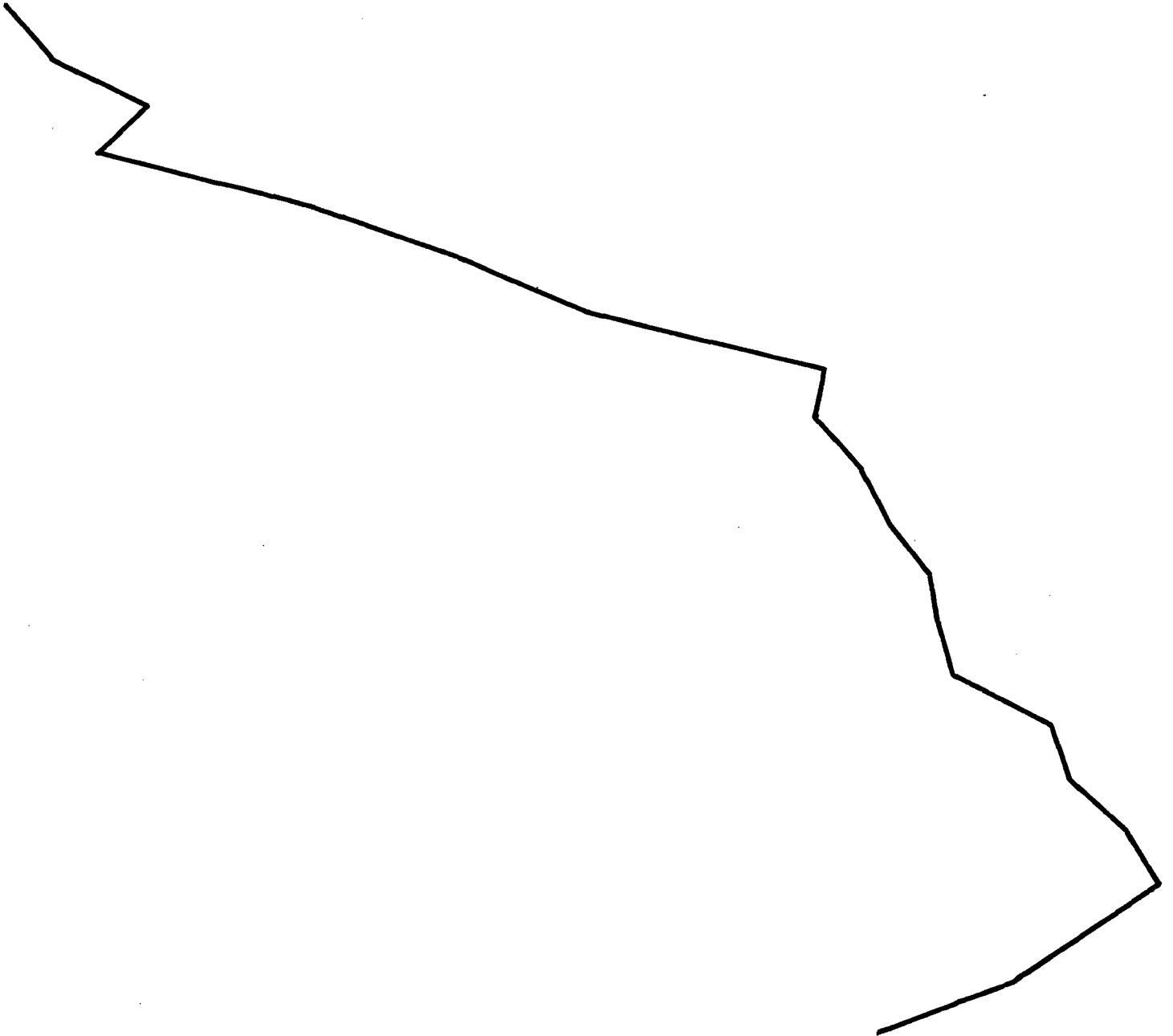


FIGURE 3

SALES VOLUME 1929-49⁴³

⁴³Sales volume records of Pattersons', 1929-1949.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the phenomenal gains in sales, however, Pattersons' basic business policies seemed to remain virtually unaltered. It still claimed to be the "home of quality" for Findlay.⁴⁴ A bargain basement had not been added, nor did such a move appear imminent. Consistent with the policy of offering only first class merchandise, Pattersons' refrained from advertising or featuring damaged or inferior quality items. The firm continued to offer exclusive sale of such products as St. Mary's blankets and Charles of the Ritz toiletries, etc., to their patrons.⁴⁵

Though the store appeared conservative and refined in decorative taste, there seemed to be no evidence of a retarded development in its merchandising policies.

⁴⁴Advertisement in The Republican-Courier (Findlay, Ohio), October 13, 1949.

⁴⁵Personal interview with A. D. Patterson, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

CHAPTER IV

DEPARTMENTAL GROWTH AND PHYSICAL STORE CHANGES

DEPARTMENTAL GROWTH

During the period from 1911 to 1949, Pattersons' underwent many physical changes not only in appearance but also in departmental organization. The changes were made in order to meet the growing demands of the patrons.

The addition of completely new departments was slight. There were eleven departments in the store in 1911, and by 1929 the number had grown to twenty.¹ This growth did not mark, however, the addition of nine new departments. Actually, only two entirely new departments were introduced—luggage and a gift shop featuring low-priced items.² The other seven departments were subdivisions of the original eleven of 1911.

An interesting note concerning the ready-to-wear department was discernible in the departmental organization. This essential and all-important department of the store showed a consistent loss from 1911 to 1929 with the exception of the four years following 1916, even though

¹Departmental records of Pattersons' for 1911 and 1929.

²Ibid. Luggage was added in 1916, and the gift shop was added in 1925.

Pattersons' tended to feature this department in its advertising more than any other separate department.³ This loss was explained partly by a merchandising inefficiency which was discovered in the ready-to-wear department during the early twenties. The two ready-to-wear merchandisers had over stocked their department, and they had also refused to take the advice of the owners in regard to the proper mark-downs for this merchandise. Due to the losses thus encountered, the two buyers were subsequently released. Even if this department wasn't always profitable, however, it was generally the greatest contributor to sales volume of all the departments, and thereby was undoubtedly the department which attracted the most trade. This probably was more true around 1929 when ready made clothing was much more popular than in 1911.

A customer of Pattersons' could have found his way through the store in 1949 nearly as easily as he had twenty years before. A store directory listed departments on practically the same floors in the early thirties as they occupied in 1949 before the one hundredth anniversary remodeling began.⁴ This basic plan placed accessories and

³Departmental records of Pattersons' for Department H, 1911-29.

⁴Advertisement in The Republican-Courier (Findlay, Ohio), June 3, 1933.

dress goods on the first floor, all ready-to-wear on the second, and house furnishings and the gift shop on the third floor.⁵

There were internal changes in the departments during the twenty years following 1929. Again, most of the changes were reorganizations rather than additions of new departments. An example of this type of reorganization was the domestic and bedding department and the ready-to-wear department which were broken into several separate divisions according to the growth in sales volume for each division. Thus, by 1949, there were five separate departments each handling ready-to-wear items which were previously sold from one single department.⁶ This change was made in the early thirties and has been maintained to the present.⁷ The only real addition to the departments was that of a Hoover sweeper division.⁸ This department was added in the early thirties also but was dropped in the late forties.⁹

⁵Advertisement in The Republican-Courier (Findlay, Ohio), June 3, 1933.

⁶Departmental records for Pattersons' 1929-49.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Hoover sweepers were added in 1930 but dropped in 1947.

During the 1930 decade, an important development in store services was added. This addition comprised the installation of a special work room to fashion draperies and slip covers.¹⁰ Although the labor in the departments was an added expense, Pattersons' has felt that it (the store) was amply compensated by the increase in sales volume for the drapery fabrics department.¹¹ The demand for the services of the work room has increased, and, by 1949 the work required eight full-time employees to fill the orders.¹²

Also during the 1930 decade the first instance of a leased department occurred in the store. This department--millinery--merely changed hands in management.¹³ This first leasing, which happened approximately in 1934, was to an individual, Miss Lilyan Stuart, who later became manager of the ready-to-wear department for the store.¹⁴

¹⁰Departmental records of Pattersons'. The work room was added in 1939.

¹¹Sales volume records for the drapery department from 1929-49.

¹²Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

¹³Departmental records for 1934. The department was first leased in 1934.

¹⁴Personal interview with Miss Lilyan Stuart, March 31, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

About ten years later, in the early forties, the department was leased to a national chain, The Consolidated Millinery Corporation.¹⁵ This change was probably made because of the increased specialization in the millinery field. In addition, the services of a national company would seem to be more adaptable to the nationally advertised clothing lines handled by the store.

The period 1940-49, besides witnessing the greatest growth in the store's history in nearly every respect, saw additional departments come and go in the organization. Special sections for books and for teen-age dresses were added, but both were dropped after a few years because they were not profitable.¹⁶ Toys and a budget shop were added also as separate departments during this period and were retained.¹⁷

An innovation in the budget shop, in which inexpensive dresses were carried, was a method for the syste-

¹⁵Personal interview with Arthur Patterson, May 7, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

¹⁶Departmental records for Pattersons', 1929-49. Teen age dresses were in a separate department from 1946-48. Books were a separate department from 1945-47. Books were profitable in 1945, but showed a loss along with teen age dresses for 1946 and 1947.

¹⁷Toys as a separate department was added in 1940, although the store had handled them as early as 1931. The budget shop which handles inexpensive dresses and handbags was added in 1949. Departmental records from 1929-49.

matic replacement of these items. "This is a two tag set-up," explained Mr. A. L. Whistler, merchandise manager for the store.¹⁸ "When an item is sold, one half of the tag is kept by the clerk to give us an almost automatic system for re-ordering," he continued. Mr. Whistler elaborated further on the advantages and disadvantages of extending the system to other departments as follows:

The handicap in unit control for us is that it involves too much clerical expense. We do the next best thing. The advantage is that we are small, and our clerks are under the direct supervision of the buyers on the selling floor. We are closer to operating and the sales girls. Another advantage of our informal system is that it is more flexible in indications of demand.

The disadvantages of our informal system is that besides relying on our experience of buying in the community we have to use a certain percentage of guesstimating sic . In addition, our information from personal contact of clerk and customer is not always reliable. A sales girl may be highly more impressed with one sort of customer demand and not too impressed with a necessary stable customer demand. We watch the reaction to early deliveries closely to give us trends of buying. We also add our own judgement to the advertisements of Vogue, etc. We use customer testing in a small percentage of buying, but for the most part, we use the bulk of our money for "safe" buying and reordering.¹⁹

According to departmental records, the departments

¹⁸Personal interview with A. L. Whistler, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

¹⁹Ibid.

which have contributed the most heavily to sales volume have remained fairly consistent. In 1929, the ready-to-wear department was the largest selling single department in the store.²⁰ By 1949, Pattersons' found the curtain and drapery department the highest contributor to sales volume.²¹ This is not, however, a unit sales appraisal. If the various sections of the ready-to-wear department were taken as a whole, it would vastly outsell all other departments.²² The facilities of the drapery and slip-cover work shop had undoubtedly increased the sales in the drapery and curtain department considerably.

Other departments contributing substantially to the total sales volume during the entire thirty-eight year period following 1911 have been the gift shop, corsets, and hosiery.²³

As a summary of the departmental growth from 1911 to 1949, the total number of departments had increased from eleven to twenty-seven. Only the leased millinery

²⁰Departmental records for Pattersons', 1911-49.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid. In 1949, the ready-to-wear department had five separate divisions, namely: H. C., Cloth and fur coats; H. D., Women's and Misses' dresses; H. B., Budget dresses; H. G., Girls' wear; H. M., Knitwear and blouses.

²³Departmental records, 1911-49.

department had entered the list, and it was still leased at the end of the period. The number of new departments added was few; the greatest change resulted from the increased growth and development in the existing departments.

PHYSICAL STORE CHANGES

The physical transformation of the Findlay store was great during the 1911-49 period. In 1919 and for a few years afterwards, the new partners were changing primarily the internal organization of their establishment; and they had little time for altering the appearance of the old fashioned structure at the corner of Main and Sandusky. The first alteration was made in the mid-twenties.²⁴ This change indented the front entrance from the sidewalk to give additional display surfaces to the front windows.²⁵ Arthur Patterson described this change with the following remark, "The new front did not give us so much of a change in appearance as it gave us more space for displaying merchandise."²⁶ The completion of the alteration was celebrated by an evening's entertainment of music at the store and

²⁴Letter from Arthur Patterson, April 14, 1950. Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), October 19, 1925.

²⁵Photograph of the store before and after the alteration in 1925.

²⁶Letter from Arthur Patterson, April 14, 1950.

also by distributing roses to the ladies.²⁷

In the late thirties, new show cases and counters were added in the ready-to-wear department. This was the only change in the store until Arthur was called back into army service in 1941.²⁸ In September, 1941, on the third floor, Charles Patterson began a remodeling program which added fifty feet to the original one hundred and fifty feet.²⁹ Thus the third floor had the same sales area as the two beneath it.

The most extensive physical changes in the history of the store came in the summer of 1949 at the time of the one hundredth anniversary. As usual, Pattersons' disregarded the correct anniversary month of March to celebrate; and the official opening for the remodeled and expanded store was in October. Arthur Patterson explained this as follows:

Even though we reckon our store anniversary events in the spring normally, we took into account the buying cycle for our opening. The extent of the alterations would handicap the operation of the store during the slack summer months, but we would be open in time

²⁷Advertisement in The Morning Republican (Findlay, Ohio), October 19, 1925.

²⁸Service records of Arthur Patterson, U. S. Army.

²⁹Blue prints for the third floor of Pattersons'. Prepared by R. P. Alge, registered architect, Findlay, Ohio, on September 12, 1941.

for the beginning of the Christmas shopping season.³⁰

Basically, the outside appearance of the store remained as it was in 1911. In contemplating a departure from this old fashioned style, Arthur Patterson engaged an architect from Findlay and one from Chicago. Mr. Walter J. Warkentien, the Chicago architect, was to consider extensive changes for the interiors in his plans which included an expansion of the first floor roughly equal to the width of another store front. His instructions from Mr. Patterson were indicative of these changes. Mr. Patterson said, "You are planning and designing this store for the people in and for miles around Findlay, and they--not Pattersons'--are to be pleased."³¹ In addition, Mr. Warkentien took into account the role of Pattersons' in the shopping center when he planned the new alterations. "If located in New York, Chicago, or even Toledo," he said, "Pattersons' would be considered a small store. But Pattersons' is in Findlay, and to Findlay and its shopping radius, Pattersons' is a large store."³² Architect Warkentien continued:

³⁰Personal interview with Arthur Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

³¹Letter from Walter J. Warkentien of Chicago, Illinois, February 3, 1950.

³²Ibid.

In department store planning, the size should not be considered; the small store in a big city can be the giant store in a small town. . . but the customers' wants must be considered of equal importance in any size town. Pattersons' then, was designed, in all modesty, with the same scientific techniques that are used in planning the large store in a larger city.³³

The Findlay architect was Mr. Robert J. Alge, who planned the modernistic exterior. Mr. Alge hoped to give an illusion of added width by his design. The results of Mr. Alge's skillful planning may be observed in the illustrations on the following pages. Although the expansion of floor space was on the first floor only, the false front above this expansion gave the appearance that the entire store had been widened. The expansion of the upper two floors has a definite part in the future plans for the store according to Arthur Patterson.³⁴

³³Letter from Walter J. Warkentien of Chicago, Illinois, February 3, 1950.

³⁴Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.



FIGURE 4

Photograph of the Store as it
Appeared after 1925

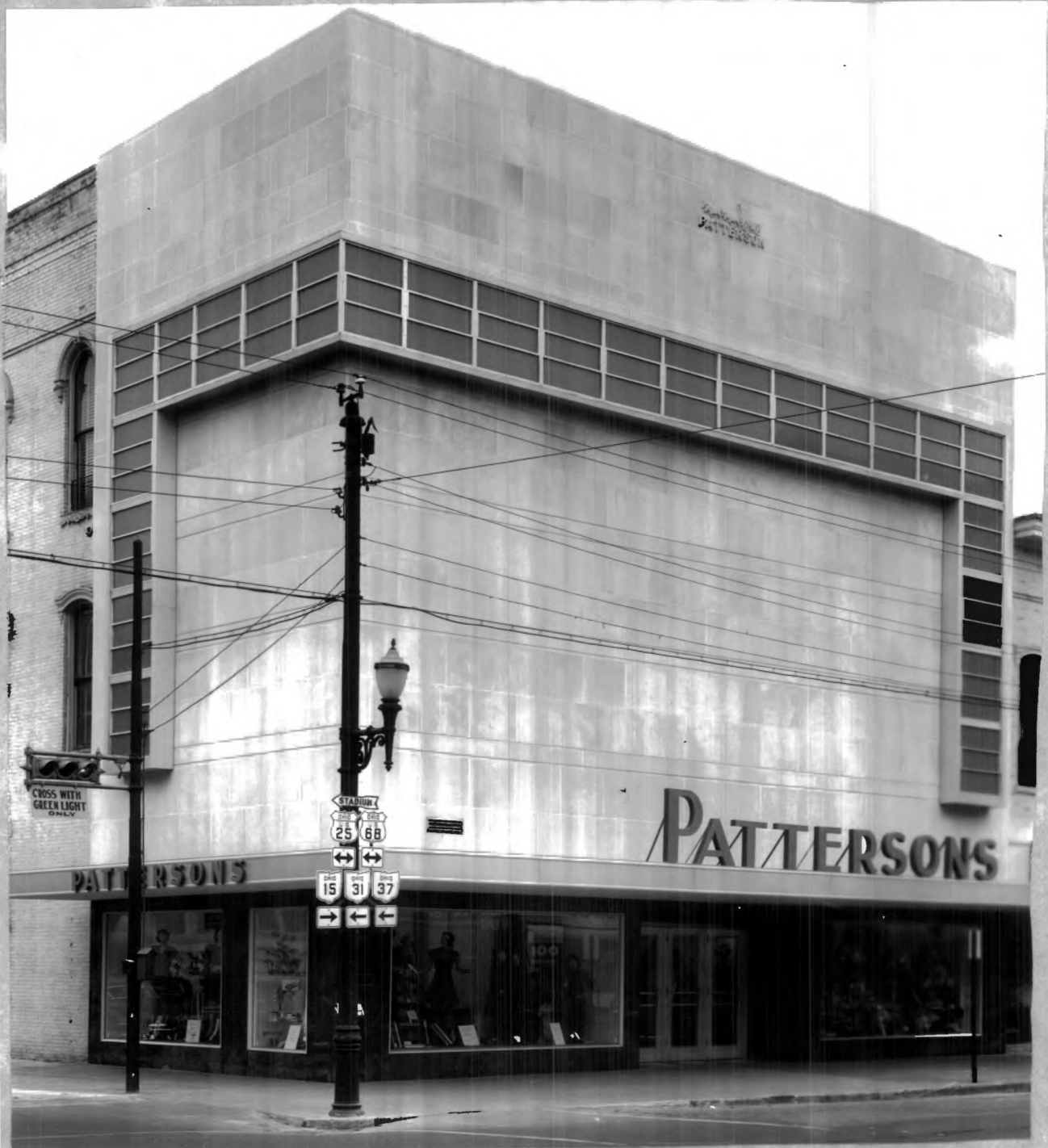


FIGURE 5

Photograph of the Store as it
Appeared after November, 1949

After the remodeling was completed, much attention was given to the emblem high above the street on the new limestone front. This emblem was a hand-carved oxen and covered wagon that symbolized the early establishment of the store. Also contributing to a great change in the store's external appearance was the addition of a marquee which extended across the entire front of the store. Surmounted on the marquee was the new firm name--"Pattersons'"-- in large cut letters which were floodlighted at night. The aluminum-trimmed marquee served a twofold purpose. It was to serve as a decoration and to provide protection to the window shoppers from the glare of the sun.

Inside the remodeled store, one might observe that the entire first floor was refurnished with new custom-made limed oak show cases and counters.³⁶ The new fluorescent lighting installations seemed to highlight the other improvements. Actually, only 2400 square feet of additional retailing floor space was added to the store.³⁷ A pneumatic coin carrier, which had been installed in the late thirties, and the elevator, which had also been improved

³⁶Personal interview with Arthur Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

³⁷Blue prints for Pattersons' remodeling and expansion program in 1949, prepared by Walter J. Warkentien, February, 1949.

at this time, were left unchanged by this remodeling.³⁸

This expansion did not result, however, in the addition of new departments, but it did shift around several existing ones. In the previous arrangement, there had been a noticeable crowding in the ready-to-wear departments on the second floor. As a result, the lingerie, corsets, and housecoat divisions were moved to the first floor.³⁹

When the remodeling was completed, the entire community was invited to participate in Pattersons' one hundredth birthday celebration. A huge cake with one hundred candles was divided among those who attended the opening; and favors which included a small booklet on the history of the store, were distributed among the guests.⁴⁰ This pamphlet was edited and compiled by Arthur Patterson who had professed considerable interest in the background of his business. Included among the favors given to the guests were roses for the ladies. Over 4500 persons signed the guest book during the first few days of the anniversary celebration. At the same time as these above mentioned activities, Pattersons' sponsored a style or fashion show

³⁸Personal interview with Arthur Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

³⁹Letter from W. J. Warkentien, February 3, 1950.

⁴⁰Article in The Republican-Courier (Findlay, Ohio), October 13, 1949.

at the high school auditorium which was coupled with numerous and factual notes on the historical background of the store.⁴¹

A congratulatory telegram from the governor was received in which he commended the store and its management for their long service to the community. Governor Lausche added, "The long life of your store is forceful testimony of the enduring life and great opportunity of the humble American to operate a business under our freedoms."⁴²

⁴¹Article in The Republican-Courier (Findlay, Ohio), October 13, 1949.

⁴²Letter from Governor Frank J. Lausche to Arthur Patterson, October 3, 1949.

CHAPTER V

PERSONNEL

The general trend of personnel policies and practices at Pattersons' is not difficult to follow. The moderate size of the store, which allows a close personal relationship between the manager and clerks, undoubtedly has been a contributing factor to the comparative simplicity of personnel problems.

In 1911, Pattersons' employed approximately twenty-seven persons.¹ Among that number were two full time office workers, three executives, and a custodian. The other employees were clerks on the selling floor and were distributed so that the greatest number clerked on the first floor, and the smallest number clerked on the third floor. The smaller sales area of the third floor was one factor responsible for this distribution of the clerks.

The growth in the number of employees corresponded with the over-all growth of the store. By 1929, there were approximately thirty-five employees.² All of the new workers were clerks. During the depression, the store

¹Personal interview with Miss Gladys Ames, March 17, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²Ibid.

avoided releasing employees whenever possible. This was accomplished largely through the reduction of executive salaries by as much as sixty per cent.³ "We did let one young man go," said Arthur Patterson, "We assumed he wouldn't starve, though, because his father ran a meat market."⁴ In order to retain more employees, the clerks worked only three weeks out of the month. It was sardonically referred to by one of the senior clerks as a sort of "vacation without pay."⁵ This policy achieved successful results. Pattersons', with one exception, did not release any other sales person because of the depressed economic conditions. This was undoubtedly a severe strain on the financial conditions of the store in view of the losses sustained in 1930 and the two years thereafter. Arthur Patterson commented, "We nearly went out of business with such a policy."⁶ Pattersons' seemed to have retained this policy, anyway, solely out of humanitarianism for the economic welfare of their employees.

³Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Personal interview with Miss Gladys Ames, March 17, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

⁶Personal interview with Arthur Patterson, November 11, 1949, Findlay, Ohio.

By 1940, there were slightly more than forty persons employed by the firm, and this number had grown to fifty-two in 1949 at the time of the one hundredth anniversary.⁷

Noticeable among the personnel records at the store was the comparative absence of long time employees. The clerk with the longest record of service, Miss Gladys Ames, had by 1949 worked for twenty-five years at the store.⁸ The person with the next longest service record was Mrs. Katie Pifer, who had clerked for Pattersons' for fifteen years.⁹ The typical term of employment, however, seemed to lie between three and five years.¹⁰ Arthur Patterson's explanation of this fact was that, "Most of our employees are women who leave the store to be married or to enter other forms of employment after only a few years experience with us."¹¹

A clerk at Pattersons' in 1911 received a salary of ten dollars per week.¹² There were at this time no

⁷Personnel records of Pattersons', 1940, 1950.

⁸Personnel records of Pattersons' for Miss Ames.

⁹Personnel records of Pattersons' for Mrs. Pifer.

¹⁰Personnel records of Pattersons', 1940-50.

¹¹Personal interview with Arthur Patterson, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

¹²Personal interview with Arthur Patterson, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

bonuses or commissions to add incentive to selling.

In these days 1911 [sic] the majority of our employees--yes, nearly every one of them--was thankful for a job, and they worked to earn their money in spite of the fact that the amount received was relatively small.¹³

Mr. Patterson spoke with appreciable experience on the attitude of the employees in 1911. His first duties in the store were those of a regular sales clerk through which he collected the ten dollars along with the other employees. The clerks found opportunity for advancement in pay as their experience increased.¹⁴

After 1920, the opportunities for salary increases tended to become linked with sales. At this time, the store adopted a commission plan whereby each clerk received a cash return based upon a small percentage, probably two or three per cent, of the total value of merchandise sold each week.¹⁵ This commission plan reckoned upon individual sales was modified by 1940 to a group sales basis. At this time, the commissions were determined by sales volume per department per week.¹⁶ The sales were divided equally among

¹³Letter from Arthur D. Patterson, March 28, 1950.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Personal interview with Miss Gladys Ames, March 17, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. The employees of the store were paid on a weekly basis during the twenties, and this practice has been retained through 1949.

¹⁶Personal interview with Miss Kathleen Barron, February 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Payroll forms of Pattersons', 1949.

the number of persons who worked in a department, and the commissions were apportioned on a percentile basis to each clerk. Mr. Patterson estimated that the departmental commission varied according to the sales, but the average commission would amount to approximately two per cent for each sales person.¹⁷ This practice undoubtedly eliminated an element of personal competition among the employees, but it probably also served to add incentive for each individual to increase the total sales for the entire department. Besides this group commission, each employee received a base salary plus a cost of living bonus which was figured as a percentage of the base salary.¹⁸

A further incentive to each clerk was the possibility of becoming a buyer for her department. This type of advancement was encouraged by making trade magazines and papers available to all employees and by allowing the workers to take them home in the evenings.¹⁹ A. L. Whistler noted that nearly every one of the buyers for the store had risen from

¹⁷Personal interview with Arthur Patterson, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

¹⁸Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, February 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Personal interview with A. L. Whistler, February 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. During World War II, the bonus was higher than in 1949.

¹⁹"Pattersons' Store Manual," (unpublished pamphlet mimeographed by the store, Findlay, Ohio, 1949), p. 6.

the ranks of the clerks.²⁰

In addition to the above mentioned personnel benefits, clerks were usually given a twenty per cent discount on the retail price of any item they wished to purchase at the store. Occasionally, they were permitted to purchase merchandise for the cost price plus an additional ten per cent.²¹ This procedure remained unaltered up to 1949. At Christmas time a small gift, probably a blouse or a pair of silk hose, was given to the feminine employees during the earlier part of the 1911-49 period. About 1919 or the year following, this practice was varied when the store gave each worker a five dollar bill.²² "We were looked upon as quite ahead of the times," recalled the present general manager.²³ By the thirties, the Christmas gift was increased to ten dollars, and in 1940 the employees received a week's pay.²⁴

²⁰Personal interview with A. L. Whistler, February 10, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²¹Letter from Arthur D. Patterson, March 28, 1950.

²²Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, February 10, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²³Letter from Arthur D. Patterson, March 28, 1950.

²⁴Ibid. This gift amounted to approximately \$20.00 in 1940, while in 1949 the average weekly base salary for a clerk was approximately \$32.00 per week. Letter from Arthur D. Patterson, June 23, 1950, quoting from company records.

Retirement policies and plans were almost unknown in the years immediately following 1911. Length of service rewards were confined to increases in salary. Through the years, however, Pattersons' encouraged a policy calculated to render an adequate and a fair insurance to the employee in regard to illness and hospitalization. The Blue Cross Hospitalization plan was instituted in approximately 1940, and Arthur Patterson was one of the first to subscribe to it as an example to his employees. He is a firm advocate of the plan.²⁵ In addition to this plan, Pattersons' allowed each employee a sick leave of six days per year.²⁶ If an employee had not used his leave at the end of the year, he was paid for it. In this way, the leave was not cumulative but was canceled at the end of a year's time. Both the management and the employees seemed to be in favor of this program.²⁷

As an ultimate reward for long and efficient service at the store, four employees have been permitted to share

²⁵Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²⁶"Pattersons' Store Manual," (unpublished pamphlet, mimeographed by the store, Findlay, Ohio, 1949), p. 3.

²⁷Personal interview with Arthur Patterson, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Personal interview with Miss Anna Bowser, May 1, 1950. Personal interview with Mrs. Katie Pifer, May 1, 1950. Personal interview with Mrs. Agnes Martin, May 1, 1950. Personal interview with Miss Gladys Ames, May 1, 1950.

in the firm's profits.²⁸ These employees had no official voice in the management, however, but they received a small percentage of net profits. This type of remuneration ended with the worker's retirement from the firm.

Pattersons' have had no organized personnel service to conduct hiring, placing, and other phases of employee relationships. During the twenties, trained personnel workers were employed by the store, but these persons handled advertising as well as personnel work.²⁹ Following the advent of the depression, the store had no separate and distinct personnel office as the advertising manager proceeded to handle both functions.³⁰

The activities sponsored by the store for the employees have been varied. During the twenties, Pattersons' personnel workers sponsored Halloween parties, Christmas gift exchanges, and summer picnics.³¹ These activities were discontinued during the thirties probably because the management's attention was diverted to more pressing economic conditions. After 1940, however, store sponsored

²⁸Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Personal interview with Mrs. Doris Lytle, March 17, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

³¹Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, January 25, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

activities for the workers have received more consideration from the management. During the war while Arthur Patterson was away in the service, his father, Charles, sponsored a sales contest which divided the clerks into two teams entitled appropriately enough, "C. W.'s Air Corps" and "A. D.'s Marine Corps." The losers of the contest, "A. D.'s Marine Corps," had to eat a meal of beans while the winners enjoyed a full chicken dinner at the same function.³² In the celebration of the store's anniversaries, especially since 1940, the employees were generally feted by the management at a dinner or party to commemorate the occasion. Such activities undoubtedly contribute to a higher level of morale for the entire personnel.

From 1911-49 the opening and closing hours of the store have remained approximately the same. In 1911, the store was opened at 8:30 A. M. and closed at 5:30 P. M.³³ In the middle thirties, the opening hour was advanced to 9:00 A. M. and in 1947 moved even further to 9:30.³⁴ The closing hour remained the same throughout the period. Mr. Patterson suggested the reason for the changes in the

³²Article in The Republican-Courier (Findlay, Ohio), March 15, 1942.

³³Advertisement in The Republican-Courier (Findlay, Ohio), July 26, 1911.

³⁴Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, Findlay, Ohio, May 1, 1950.

opening hour was to shorten the work week for the women employees. During the working day, each employee was allowed one full hour for lunch, but there was no other provision for a rest period.³⁵ If a clerk wished to retire from the selling floor, she had to have permission from her department head. Although this regulation seemed strict, the permission was undoubtedly readily given and even waived in cases of emergency. The small size of the store would have tended to develop a rapport among the employees, and this would have also seemed to mitigate the effect of the regulation.

The employees seemed to favor the benefits derived from the size of the store which permitted a direct contact with the management.³⁶ This close relationship probably contributed much to successful employee-employer relationships and undoubtedly kept inefficiency to a minimum. In addition, the small size of the store with its closer personal contacts seemed to compensate for the lack of a separate and distinct personnel office or department.

³⁵"Pattersons' Store Manual," (unpublished pamphlet mimeographed by the store, Findlay, Ohio, 1949), p. 2.

³⁶Personal interview with Miss Gladys Ames, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio. Personal interview with Mrs. Anna Bowser, May 1, 1950. Personal interview with Mrs. Agnes Martin, May 1, 1950. Personal interview with Mrs. Katie Pifer, May 1, 1950. Personal interview with Mrs. Lilyan Stewart, March 3, 1950. Personal interview with Mr. A. L. Whistler, February 10, 1950.

A certain amount of freedom and discretion was allowed the clerks in the matter of dress. The store manual, which was given to each new employee, advised against "extremes in either style or color."³⁷ Other than reflecting a note of Pattersons' conservative taste, this advice placed no real restriction on the clerks and was probably appreciated by most of the women employees. The Patterson sales personnel appeared neatly groomed and well within the prescribed limits of the sales manual at the time of the one hundredth anniversary.³⁸

Cognizant of the fact that a male customer might feel ill at ease in a store where the preponderance of shoppers were women, the Patterson "Sales Manual" urged clerks to go out of their way to give "our male shoppers" the best information and service available.³⁹ Men who shopped at Pattersons', however, were undoubtedly few.

Employees and employer seemed to be in complete agreement with plans for future developments at the store. Pattersons' have had no special lounges or rest rooms for

³⁷"Pattersons' Store Manual," (unpublished pamphlet mimeographed by the store, Findlay, Ohio, 1949), p. 5.

³⁸This personal observation was made after several visits to each department of Pattersons', 1949.

³⁹"Pattersons' Store Manual," (unpublished pamphlet mimeographed by the store, Findlay, Ohio, 1949), p. 5.

their personnel. There were rest rooms on both the first and second floors, but these were for use of the customers as well as the employees. Arthur Patterson expressed approval for a plan which would provide one or two special lounges or rest rooms for employees.⁴⁰ The hope that this plan would be realized was seconded by several employees.

Other future changes in personnel policies will undoubtedly reflect Pattersons' traditional conservatism. The kind of service the store wished the employees to render to the patrons seemed no exception to this tradition. The following excerpt from the first page of the store manual typifies the quality of service Pattersons' hoped to offer:

Since 1849 Pattersons' has served the residents of Findlay and the surrounding area.

.....

During all these years, Pattersons' has stood for quality merchandise, truthful advertising and fair prices. Our chief aim has been to render service to our customers and to the community.

We know you will enjoy working with us, and hope that you will do your part in maintaining that tradition of dependability and service which is an integral part of Pattersons'.⁴¹

⁴⁰Personal interview with Arthur D. Patterson, May 1, 1950, Findlay, Ohio.

⁴¹"Pattersons' Store Manual," (unpublished store pamphlet mimeographed by the store, Findlay, Ohio, 1949) p. 1.

This pledge seemed to signify the awareness of the management of the important clerk-customer relationship in establishing good or ill will for the establishment. Pattersons' were attempting to establish as much good will as possible.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Pattersons' was in 1949 basically the same type of store that it had been in 1911, a women's department store. Through the years, there was a marked growth in sales volume, and, as a result, the whole store grew. In spite of this growth, which was accentuated by the prosperity of two world wars, it remained a conservative, home-owned store throughout this thirty-eight year period.

This predominant characteristic of conservatism was retained through years of competition with the chain stores of Findlay as well as with other home-owned stores. Pattersons' survived the chain-store competition successfully by developing progressive merchandising techniques which met the challenges of the underselling mass-marketing procedures of the other type store. Pattersons' sound business reputation undoubtedly contributed to the success of the store in meeting the challenges of the home-owned stores. The customers in Findlay knew they would receive fair dealing from their oldest retail dry-goods establishment which had become an established community institution by 1949.

Pattersons' was also known for its financial independence. Although the great Depression had placed the

severest strain of its 100-year history on the store, the firm never closed its doors because of financial stress. And from that low point in its history, the store quickly grew by 1949 to its most prosperous state.

Perhaps one reason for the continued prosperity of this establishment has been its advantageous location. Since it is within walking distance from the other important stores and the banks, the site appears to be one of the most favorable in the whole business district. The only future difficulty that may be encountered is the lack of available automobile parking space near the store. There seems to be no immediate solution to this problem, however.

The firm's policies toward the employees have changed and progressed very gradually. There appeared no evidence of real liberalism at any time. Increased salaries, bonuses, paid vacations and hospitalization plans have been innovations adopted largely since 1940. It seems reasonable to assume that future changes and benefits will continue to reflect the traditional conservatism of the past.

The management itself clung down to 1949 to an organization form from the past, the partnership. In February, 1949, when the most recent firm reorganization took place, Arthur Patterson explained that the partnership offered a more attractive form of investment opportunity

to the new partners than the corporate organization. It would appear, however, that the entire structure of the firm would be much more stable under corporate organization.

The future management of the store will undoubtedly adhere to the conservatism of the past and yet continue to apply the progressive merchandising methods of the present in so far as they are applicable. High-pressure salesmanship and cut-throat competition if introduced would never seem appropriate with Pattersons' tradition. Mr. Whistler and Mr. Remley, the new partners in the firm in 1949, seem to favor extending progressive techniques without disregarding the advantages of the business reputation built up by the one-hundred year old store. Arthur Patterson's son, William, who was sixteen years old in 1949, will probably not enter the firm for five or six years.

Thus, Pattersons' began its second century of enterprise in 1949. If it is to continue to be as successful in the second hundred years as it was in the first, the fashionable high-quality items usually found on its shelves must continue to be found there. In addition, its reputation for fair and honest merchandising must never be sacrificed in presenting such merchandise. If this is done, the store will probably continue to grow and with-

stand successfully all forms of competition, no matter how pressing.

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