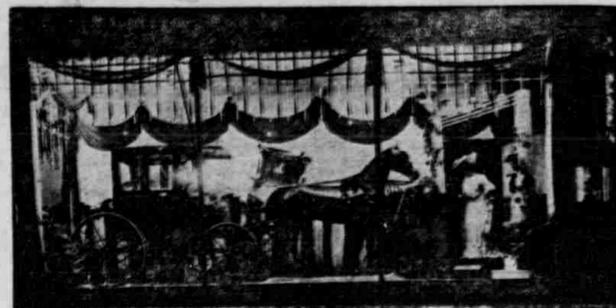
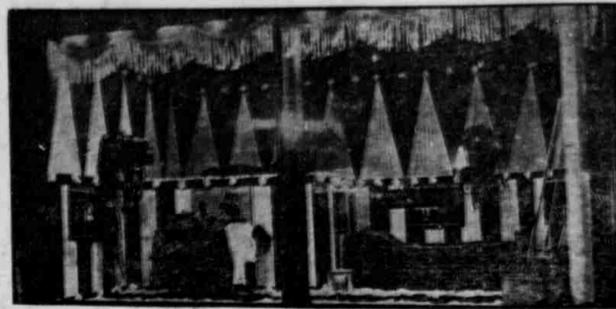


Omaha's Artistic Window Trimming and Expert Window Trimmers

These Pictures Are from Photographs of Omaha Show Windows Decorated Last Fall for the Horse Show Week. The photographs were all made at night, by the light of the windows themselves. The time of exposure varied from five to fifteen minutes, according to the brilliance of the light. They were selected at random from a large number made at the time by the Bee's Staff Photographer.



Retail merchants were a long time in realizing the possibilities that exist in ground floor windows. For centuries, as long as men sold wares from a cart or open stand, he thought it proper to display all the goods he had to the best advantage, but as soon as he became more prosperous and retired within four walls he enveloped himself in an atmosphere of reserve. He was so important in his own eyes that he considered it a privilege extended when he allowed inspection of what he had to sell. As for placing merchandise and material in easy and convenient view, inside the shop or in the windows, that was a departure involving a ridiculous consideration to the public and altogether too much trouble. Therefore, mercantile windows went ugly and uncared for and oftentimes unclean, and any old stock was good enough to dump into them. The longer a window could go without being renovated and the exhibit changed the better it was. The merchant did not expect to sell anything of his own in the windows, nor did he deem the displays a criterion for judgment on his stock.

Show Windows of Today.
Today the show window is regarded by its owner as one of his most important mediums for advertising. He estimates upon the window with all the sense of certainty that he does upon his advertising space in the daily newspaper. He has found that the window and printer's ink go hand-in-hand and that one supplements the other. Stuff is placed in the window to sell it, not merely to fill the window and to indicate the character of the business, like the familiar mortar and pestle of the apothecary or the wooden Indian of the tobacconist.

There is far more to window trimming than the casual observer imagines. The art has its theories, its divisions, its well defined aims, its schools for instruction, associations and publication. It has been specialized from execution by "anybody in the store" to highly trained men who do nothing else and whose wages, in Omaha, range from \$25 to \$50 a week. The highest-paid window trimmer in the city is in charge of the head man of Marshall Field & Co. of Chicago, who draws \$80 weekly.

Growth of the Idea.
It was along in the '80s that the reformation in window dressing set in. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent since then in remodeling windows and inserting plate glass. The old-fashioned heavy-jawed front has disappeared from modern designs. Heavy pillars, deep recesses, high ceilings, indifferent lighting, all have disappeared from the modern store front and show windows. Now the effect is for lightness, cleanliness, neatness, and an important distinction is building the windows and their displays no higher than the ordinary visual level of people walking or standing on the walk. In place of columns of iron and stone and ponderous masonry the lightest, most ingenious devices that will hold the plate glass together are used. Sometimes there is no sash at all, the plate glass being joined by screws and cement. The windows are cut off entirely from the remainder of the store and are dust proof to prevent damage to stock. Most of them have cold air vents to keep the temperature behind the glass the same as that in front in order to prevent frosting. The lighting is done by what might be termed inverted footlights, or rows of incandescents with reflectors, usually invisible and fixed at the top of the window inside. No store that makes any pretensions to window dressing will permit a window to go longer than two weeks without changing it completely, usually even to the background. In some places there are new displays every day.

Degrees of Window Dressing.
Window trimming has developed into two distinct classifications. The one most used is described as the "sales," "trade" or "mechanical" window, the other as the "spectacular or artistic window." The purpose of the first is to sell goods; that is, to interest the pedestrian directly in the wares in the window and their price, conspicuously displayed. The theory of the other window is to attract attention by its novelty of design, scheme of color or harmonious arrangement and to impress with the implied superiority of the establishment that is willing to go to such lengths gratuitously to entertain the public. Into the sales window goes little other than stock actually handled in the store, but for the spectacular window almost anything under the blue canopy that can be got within the space has been thought appropriate at diverse times. The trade window is the one for the practical, immediate value and convenience for merchant and patron, while the other is a diversion to please the fancy of the consumer and to assist a mood for letting go or dollars within. One appeals to the shopper's needs concretely; the other to his imagination and the human penchant for applying things out of the groove. Trade journals have piled up enough argument on the subject to make any of it unnecessary here. It has been the theme of endless debates, for the smallest detail of every business is now discussed to the last shred.

Omaha and the Art.
No strictly spectacular window has not much vogue in Omaha, except at Bennett's

other than during special seasons or in recognition of certain public events. At Bennett's several windows are used exclusively for artistic and unique effects and for this reason they are the most distinct and marked things of their kind in the city. The window trimmer here has a free hand in originating designs and carrying them out. Quantities of material are purchased for use in the windows only. The results have been frequent prize winners in competition.

Up to within a few years Omaha has been known as a backward town among window dressers. Now it is on a footing with other cities of its class. New mercantile buildings and expensive improvements to old ones, together with expansion in the business of existing houses, have worked this desirable change. The city has about fifteen men who devote themselves exclusively to window decorating, not including their assistants. Up to the first horse show in 1901 no outside stimulus had ever been given the art here. At that time liberal prizes were offered for the best windows, dressed according to rules, in horse show colors, red and white. Nearly every big store in town was entered and the experiment was so successful that the practice was repeated with equally good results in 1902. So, a exceptionally good window were produced.

Most of the Omaha window trimmers received their training in other cities and a number in the large Chicago stores. A few got their knowledge by actual work here, helped by trips to Chicago and other places. At present a group of young men, acting as assistants, are preparing themselves to follow the occupation. There is a lot to the life of the window

trimmer that the public knows nothing about, nor is likely to learn unless told. Vicissitudes frequently are delivered in large packages. In winter the temperature in the windows is cold days makes a refrigerator, fully refrigerated, a refuge infamously to be wished for. The nature of the work generally precludes the wearing of gloves, and you will surmise that the window trimmer at times gets very sick of his job. Neither in summer is his lot much improved, for nowhere in the city on a sweltering day can a hotter place be found than a show-window. Every trimmer has pathetic tales to tell how he has had to place carbide before him to keep half blins of perspiration from his furrowed brow from ruining delicate fabrics.

A great variety exists in windows. Some are wide and some narrow; some have convenient entrances and some not; many are too small and a few too big, and there are those specified as special curves of the window trimmer's life. All of the modern windows are dust-proof and most of them protected from the sun by awnings, so the loss is small to rare silks and laces and the like from these two sources. But the heel of the trimmer has been known to work much havoc. Sometimes he has to climb through a small aperture and traverse the entire length of the store to get to a certain window.

What Might Happen.
Presuming he desires to fill the far win-



M. J. LOFTUS, Orchard & Wilhelm.



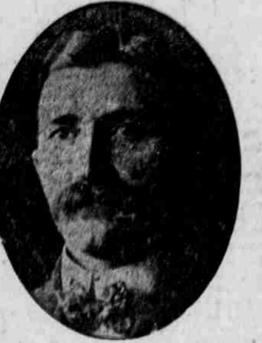
J. L. SULLIVAN, Drexel Shoe Company.



A. J. NURSE, Kilpatrick & Co.



JOSEPH LUBIN, People's Store.



M. J. CHOLOPKY, J. L. Brandels & Sons.



R. SCHANKE, Thompson, Beiden & Co.



EDWARD J. SIMPSON, Berg-Swanson.



W. G. COLLING, Bennett's.



JOHN A. HAMER, Miller, Stewart & Beaton.



N. B. NORTON, Browning, King & Co.



L. HAWKINS, Hayden Bros.



C. T. WALKER, Nebraska Clothing Company.

usually yields the largest revenues. In other stores the trimmer works partly on his own responsibility and partly under direction from superiors. A third class of stores retain general supervision of the windows in the management and the trimmer simply follows orders except in details. The third class usually includes the stores that go after business the hardest and

make specialties of sales and concentrated effort. Generally speaking dry goods is considered the easiest line to "trim." The colors and variety of the goods tend themselves to endless arrays. Furniture, carpets and draperies are ranked more difficult, shoes by no means easy, jewelry fairly easy, furnishing goods not so hard and men's clothing about the limit in getting the best possible effects. "Any man," said a successful clothing merchant of Cleveland years ago, "can put a \$10 suit in the window and make it look like it is worth \$5, but I have found only a few men who can put a \$10 suit in a window and make it look like it is worth \$15." It is not necessary to go into detail further to be understood that certain lines lack the possibilities for good window displays that are found in others. The trimmer whose inclinations are artistic longs for plenty of color material about everything else.

Thompson, Beiden & Co. have fine opportunities for attractive window displays in their new quarters in the recently completed Hoagland block at Sixteenth and Howard streets. For a number of years the dressing has been done by R. E. Schanke, who also has charge of the men's furnishing department. Mr. Schanke has achieved considerable success in window trimming and his brother, Albert Schanke of Pueblo, is ranked as one of the best trimmers in the west. At the Boston store Mike Chelupsky has had the window dressing in charge for ten years. His chief assistant is Harry Flumbeck. The Boston store windows are admirably adapted to the purposes which they are called upon to serve. The Bennett store, as has been mentioned, is the leader in spectacular and fine window displays. To carry out this idea the highest salary paid to any Omaha window trimmer is given to W. G. Colling, formerly with Marshall Field & Co. in Chicago. His chief assistant is T. P. Haller, who is learning the art as a permanent occupation. Mr. Colling is at liberty to go as far as he likes in originating designs and executing them. At both horse show competitions his windows carried off the first prize. Considerable money is spent in odd backgrounds and various appointments. M. J. Loftus, who has charge of the windows at the Orchard & Wilhelm establishment, has had sixteen years' experience in the drapery goods department and window trimming. The windows of the Hayden Brothers' department store are dressed by Leroy Hawkins, who came here several months ago from Quincy, Ill., after a long experience in window trimming in New York and Chicago. At the Drexel Shoe company's store J. L. Sullivan for nearly half a dozen years has made an attractive change every two weeks. The windows of his store are small but tasteful, and are peculiar in that they are air tight. According to Mr. Sullivan, this arrangement always keeps the glass free from frost, something that the cold air vents do not invariably accomplish. At the Fry Shoe company's Douglas street store F. F. Sturgess and George Burkman both employ part of their time in keeping the windows pleasing to the public. At the dry goods store of Thomas Kilpatrick & Co. six large and very deep windows are afforded for display and are trimmed by A. J. Nurse, an Englishman who obtained his early training in several great London stores. Mr. Nurse has been with the firm since it succeeded N. B. Falconer & Co. and had been with the latter house for a number of years. In point of service Nate Horton of Browning, King & Co. is probably the senior window trimmer of the city, having had not less than twenty-five years' experience in the line. Mr. Horton has been with Browning, King & Co. in Omaha for twelve years and has charge of the advertising department as well as the windows. A. J. Simpson, who has had charge of the window trimming and advertising at the Berg-Swanson clothing store for about three years, came here from Chicago, where he had six years' experience with the Marshall Field store. At the Nebraska Clothing company's store both backgrounds and window displays are changed frequently. Charles T. Walker, the trimmer at this store is known as one of the closest students of the art in the city, as well as one of the most successful. His experience goes back through fifteen years; began at Leadville, Colo., and includes work for prominent firms in such cities as Cincinnati, Chicago, Cleveland, Indianapolis and Des Moines. He has been with the Nebraska people about a year and a half. Three immense windows, 21 feet wide and 11 feet deep, enable Miller, Stewart & Beaton to make some striking displays of furniture, carpets, rugs and draperies. The window trimmer is in charge of John Hamer, a draper of many years' experience and H. L. Stussell, who arranges the furniture displays. At the People's store one window is given over to clothing for both sexes and several others to furniture, stoves and carpets. The trimming is in charge of Joseph Lubin, who is experienced and capable. Among other establishments that give special attention to window dressing are the Sorosa and Regent shoe stores, Mahwinney & Ryan, Shelley, Albert Cahn, who has windows of the most modern type, with oak backgrounds; & Frederick Berger and Albert Edholm.

Family Group at the Golden Wedding Celebration of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Weber of Florence, Neb.

