

Business Houses that Lead in Omaha's Rapid Progress

WONDERFUL GAINS IN 1910

Business in Omaha Shows Increase of Over Eighteen Million Dollars.

OLD LINES DO VERY GREAT TRADE

Just How Each Branch of Industry Went Ahead in the Most Prosperous Year of the City's History.

Just one plain statement tells how wonderful has been the growth of Omaha wholesale and jobbing business. What Omaha does is rapid and thorough. During the year 1910 the business of the wholesale and jobbing firms of this city was increased \$18,000,000. This statement is made after a thorough investigation that was conducted by the publicity bureau of the Commercial club. It shows that Omaha's business is on an immense increase. Think of \$18,000,000 being added to the business of the jobbers and wholesalers of this city in one year. It really is marvelous, and shows that the firms of this city are gradually and truly getting business away from other cities; it shows that Omaha is covering more territory and that it is making stronger competition for the firms of other cities.

According to the publicity bureau, the figures are absolutely authentic and there is not a bit of guesswork about them. The heads of the various houses submit in confidence a statement of the business done, and, from the many statements handed in to the publicity bureau, the total amount of business done is compiled. It is very probable that a few houses are not represented, for some are inclined to keep their facts under their own guard.

Total Business Large.

The total business done in the city for 1910 by these various wholesale and jobbing firms was \$133,322,000. Nearly every line of business shows a substantial increase over the business for 1909. Every jobber and wholesaler in the city declares that his business for 1911 will be better than that of 1910. Business for the first six months of this year has been better than it was for the corresponding period of last year.

Omaha's manufacturers for 1910 were greater than those of the previous year by \$3,000,000. The gain was greater than might be inferred from these figures, for the great advances were made by a number of increases and these had to offset them the losses in one or two other lines. The total business done for the year totaled more than \$200,000,000.

Omaha manufactures nearly everything. The list runs from acetylene gas to zithers and from artificial limbs to yeast. The manufacturers' committee of the Commercial club has compiled a list of articles manufactured, under general heads, and there are 459 of these general titles. They could be subdivided until the list would be almost endless.

More than one new industry a week is what Omaha achieved last year. Fifty-six new manufacturing and jobbing concerns came to Omaha during 1910.

The Commercial club, which has brought most of these concerns to Omaha, keeps an accurate record of all new industries and finds that each of recent years show a better result than the year just previous. In 1908 fifty-three new industries came; in 1909, fifty-five companies joined the grand total and in 1910, fifty-six.

Wholesale Lumber Trade.

With approximately \$10,000,000 invested in the lumber business and with an annual distribution of between \$5,000,000 and \$6,000,000 worth of lumber, Omaha holds a leading place among the lumber distributing cities of the world. It is generally conceded that this city has the greatest lumber distributing railroad yards in the country.

The local industry gives its attention exclusively to the distribution of lumber. Into this city is shipped the finished product of the forests in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Wisconsin, Michigan and the northern coast states.

Lumber may be obtained from the mills direct, but the small dealers find it considerably more convenient to buy in small quantities as their needs arise, from the wholesalers. Omaha is the only city on the Missouri river that through its wholesale lumber concerns, maintains an unlimited supply of lumber for all demands. The smaller towns cannot hazard the expense of unloading a wholesale stock of the commodity on their ground and retail to suit the demand that reaches them.

In this respect Omaha transcends even St. Joseph and Kansas City, which metropolises make more of a pretense at lumber greatness than this city does.

Omaha, from all sources of information, ranks easily fourth in respect to the lumber industry of the country. The order of the cities in relation to their importance as lumber concerns are, St. Louis, Kansas City, Chicago and Omaha. The lumber trade in 1910 amounted to \$5,429,000.

Dry Goods Establishments.

With eight large dry goods establishments in the city, Omaha is a colossus of dry goods importance. The city virtually stepped into its greatness in this respect without any remarkable effort. The location in a territory naturally tributary to the town for hundreds of miles, and the natural advantage over other cities located along the Missouri river, was always Omaha's advantage.

Of the enormous establishments dealing in dry goods, most of the local concerns handle the rug, carpet and many other industries, besides the strict dry goods lines. The sales managers say that their business is bound to keep on growing, no matter what efforts they make, or fail to make, because of the rapid settling up of the western country. One big local house received an order for a \$10,000 bill of goods from a small town in Oregon, as a sample of its business in that section. It is declared the Omaha houses not only trade with consumers from the Mississippi river to the coast, but are almost exclusively the distributors for the coast states. The local dry goods authorities say that a vast territory lies close at hand, and that for this reason a large supply is kept permanently on hand by their concerns as it to be had in Chicago. The coast buyers find it much easier to get shipments from Omaha than from the eastern concerns, owing to the less cost of transportation, and get just as prompt service, owing to the practice of Omaha jobbers in keeping a ready supply of goods on hand.

The Dry Goods Business of Last Year.

The dry goods business of last year in Omaha reached a volume of \$3,300,000 in sales.

Ice Machinery Business.

In the manufacture of machinery for ice-making and refrigerating Omaha stands at the head of the cities of the west. Indeed, the Baker Manufacturing company, which is the only concern in the city, engaged in this line of work, is acknowledged to have the largest output of any manufacturing plant in the world which confines its attention solely to the manufacture of the smaller sort of machines for ice-making and refrigerating. This company, which was established but three years ago, has advanced by leaps and bounds until today it has an annual output of approximately \$200,000 per year and its large factory at Twentieth and Izard streets is kept running overtime to supply the demand.

The company is placing its product in all parts of the United States and North America, and there are now only three states in the union where Baker machines are not installed. The mechanics which the company employs are all skilled and highly-paid men, and as a result about 90 per cent of the vast income which this company receives from other states remains in Omaha. Mr. Baker of the company is confident of the future and states that the usefulness of refrigerating machinery is only beginning to be appreciated.

Manufacturing Druggists.

Reaching farther into the west for their trade than almost any other group of wholesalers and manufacturers, the local drug jobbing men and pharmaceutical manufacturers, although both industries are comparatively new to Omaha, are establishing themselves more and more firmly every year and if the present rate of increase continues will soon prove formidable rivals for the Detroit and St. Louis concerns, which are the country's largest.

The territory which belongs almost exclusively to Omaha's drug manufacturers and jobbers comprises Nebraska, South Dakota, Kansas and western Iowa, but these firms, especially the wholesalers, are constantly booking orders from the western coast states and the amount of trade which they secure yearly from what was primarily the territory of the drug men of other cities is enormous.

Candy Manufacturing.

Confectionery manufactured in Omaha in 1910 was valued at \$500,000, and if business for the present year continues in the same ratio it has set during this spring and summer, with the heavy winter and holiday trade when the middle west leans on Omaha to fill the stockings on the Christmas tree, this amount will be materially eclipsed. Omaha has seven thriving candy factories which supply a large amount of the sweetmeats for the people of the middle west.

The D. J. O'Brien Candy company of this city is the largest concern of the kind west of the Missouri river and is growing with rapid strides. Three hundred thousand dollars through this concern, which was established but ten years ago.

The company was first organized by Mr. O'Brien on South Thirteenth street and later moved to 1202-4 Howard street, where the factory has been located until press of room made the erection of the present building at Douglas and Eighth streets necessary. The first year the O'Brien Candy company produced \$150,000 worth of confectionery, which has since practically tripled in volume. At the new factory, which has a floor space of 90,000 square feet, all heat is produced by manufactured gas, and one of the cleanest kitchens in the country is maintained. One hundred and eighty men and women are employed in the factory and fourteen salesmen are kept on the road, covering Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, South Dakota, Wyoming and other states.

Wholesale Clothing Trade.

Probably the first commercial industry of Omaha to enter the western wholesale field was clothing. This city holds its rank as the market town in the wholesale clothing business as well as in the scores of other industries, and by reason of the years in which that particular trade has been worked up is stronger in respect to wholesale clothing selling than in any other line of business.

The trade for Omaha extends from the Mississippi river to the coast, in just the same extent as Omaha's other wholesale enterprises reach that field. All the big clothing houses of the city, which includes concerns which handle dry goods and which manufacture them, are out in open and very stern competition with Chicago, St. Louis and the other great markets further east. The factory output of clothing in Omaha in 1909 amounted to \$2,755,000. In 1910 it amounted to \$2,500,000.

Omaha Shoe Industry.

The shoe industry, both the wholesale and manufacturing phases, is one of Omaha's best developed industries. The financial magnitude of the business is indicated by the report last year that the manufacturing output reached \$300,000 and the wholesale business amounted to \$2,700,000.

It is declared that the advent of wholesale boot and shoe houses in Omaha has had the greatest effect of any city, owing into being countless retail shoe stores throughout the west. It is to the Omaha market that the dealers throughout the west look for their catalogues and advertising matter. To this end the shoe concerns of Omaha have become educated to a high degree in the production of shoe literature of the excellence found nowhere else in the land. The footwear industry is made to cover a large range of products under that general head in Omaha. It includes the production and distribution of shoes, boots, rubbers and a variety of leather goods and incidentals. The scheme of handling a large variety of products without regard to specialization in no other line has become so distinctive of Omaha as in the shoe industry. It seems to be a proof that close specialization is not justified in the west, if, in fact, anywhere, and that a big business built upon trade in related articles will be more apt to succeed and will reach vastly greater volume than does a business confining itself to a single article.

Omaha Cracker Business.

Omaha is rapidly becoming one of the important cracker centers of the west, and approximately six carloads of the product are produced each day. A large percentage of this is consumed in Omaha, while thirty-four salesmen distribute trainloads of it over the entire middle west, including the states of Iowa, northern Missouri, northern Kansas, Wyoming, South Dakota and the Black Hills country. If short the cracker factories of Omaha give employment to 550 people, produce about 1,500 cars of crackers and cakes a year, which bear more than 500 different labels, and is sent to supply the demand of the thousands of families in the west who are in the market for first-class goods.

The Iben Biscuit company of Omaha has made a large growth during the time it has been in business in this city. Its factory is being run at its full capacity at present, which is inadequate to supply the demands of the trade.

The products of the cracker industry



BEEBE & RUNYAN FURNITURE CO.

Omaha's leading furniture manufacturing firm is the Beebe & Runyan Furniture Co., which is located at 1101-1105 Douglas street. This firm manufactures high grade furniture and does a large wholesale business in the west. "The Ideal Lines" are famous throughout the west and are sold extensively wherever traveling salesmen of this firm go.



OMAHA OIL COMPANY

The Omaha Oil company, who handle the B. O. E. brands of oils and greases, is one of the prosperous firms of Omaha and the west. The plant of the company is located at 1317 Grace street. Its oils are rated as among the best, and its business is growing every day. The local management has done wonderful work in advancing the interests of the company during the last year and is getting great results from all its endeavors.



OMAHA CASKET COMPANY.

The Omaha Casket Company, Seventeenth and Izard streets, are manufacturers of coffins, caskets, dry goods and funeral furnishings. Increasing sales every year for the past ten have caused the business of this company to expand and today it is enjoying an extremely prosperous period with the factory working its capacity every week and with every salesman increasing his orders.



ADAMS & KELLY CO.

Adams & Kelly Co., have a large manufacturing plant, office and warehouse at 1202-1224 Nicholas street, where sash, doors, frames, mouldings, building paper, etc., are manufactured in large quantities. All kinds of mill material are turned out by this big firm and the sales in the west are very large. George H. Kelly is president, J. T. Adams vice president, J. C. Collier treasurer and Harry G. Kelly secretary.



PAXTON & GALLAGHER CO.

One of the oldest and best known wholesale grocery houses in the west is the Paxton & Gallagher Co., which is located on Tenth and Jones streets. It occupies one of the first buildings noticed by strangers on the east side of the viaduct and north of the Union station. The firm are importers, coffee roasters and jobbers of groceries and hardware. They have a very large number of traveling salesmen on the road and have established an excellent reputation all over the west.



HAARMANN BROS.

Manufacturers of vinegar, pickles, catsup, mustard, sauces, etc., the Haarmann Bros. company occupies a high position among similar concerns in the west. It has a large factory in Omaha at 1914-16-18 South Twentieth street, where it annually turns out thousands of dollars' worth of its products. Its business has increased by bounds during the last four years, and the outlook is for the greatest record of all during 1911.



AMERICAN DRUGGISTS SYNDICATE

The Omaha branch of the American Druggists Syndicate is located at 809-811 South Sixteenth street. This firm is a wholesale drug house of which E. T. Yates is general manager. All supplies for drug stores are sold by this company in Nebraska and other western states. Business has increased rapidly with this company. It is one of the firms that has progressed with up-to-date ideas and has kept well to the front all the time.



TRACY BROS. COMPANY

The Tracy Bros. Company, wholesale tobacconists, are located at 1415 Douglas street, Omaha. This firm was established in 1892 and incorporated in 1902. Among the famous brands put up by it are Dunora, La Truda, Blenheim, Te Be Ce, Trabroce and Dunora, jr. It is one of the many prosperous firms in this city and it has enjoyed a very substantial increase in its business during the last few years.



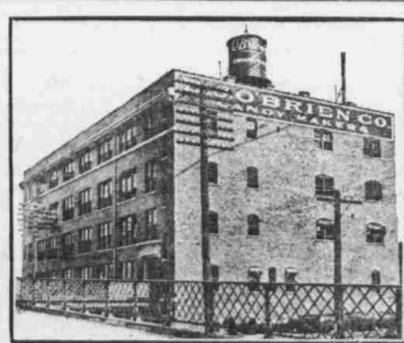
SCOTT TENT & AWNING CO.

At 314-316 South Twelfth street is located the Scott Tent & Awning Co., dealer in all kinds of canvas goods. Window awnings, camping tents, canvas bags, etc., are sold by this firm. Special orders will be made. The firm will fit out any house with awnings and other canvas articles. A. C. Scott is president and manager of the company.



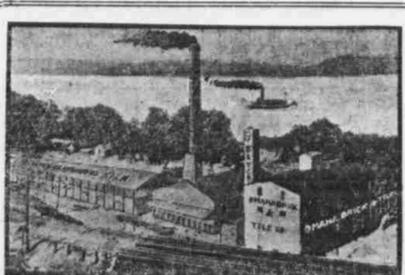
M. E. SMITH & CO.

M. E. Smith & Co., Ninth and Farnam streets, is one of the largest wholesale dry goods houses in the west. M. E. Smith established his business here when Omaha was very young and was just coming to be a jobbing place. The firm of M. E. Smith & Co. is one of the most prosperous in the city and its many traveling salesmen have gradually extended its territory until it covers more than any other Omaha dry goods house. One important feature of this company's policy is its annual trade convention, when all its salesmen and employes gather in Omaha for a get-together business meeting.



D. J. O'BRIEN.

D. J. O'Brien is Omaha's candy man. His large plant is located at 801-11 Douglas street, right at the foot of the Douglas street bridge. Here are manufactured high grade confections. The chocolates put out by this factory are among the best sold in the state and have big sales all over Nebraska and adjoining states. O'Brien candy is good candy and for this reason is the kind people with a sweet tooth like to buy.



OMAHA BRICK & TILE CO.

One of Omaha's very prosperous establishments is the Omaha Brick & Tile Co., which is located at Second and Hickory streets. Here are manufactured hollow building blocks, drain tile, hollow brick and very beautiful earthenware. The company does a large business throughout the west and its trade is growing rapidly every year. P. E. Iler is president of the company. John M. Dougherty is vice president; L. H. Curen, secretary; John L. Pheland, manager of clay products; R. N. W. Nugent, manager of the paint department, and W. E. Iler, assistant manager.



BAKER ICE MACHINE CO.

The Baker Ice Machine Co. furnish and erect refrigerating plants for cold storage boxes, water cooling and ice making. They are manufacturers of ice making and refrigerating machinery. They design, install and guarantee their plants. The company says: "We have, with our corps of efficient refrigerating engineers, expert mechanics, draftsmen and erecting engineers—who are the best it has been possible for us to procure and who have grown up in the business with us—kept overcoming each obstacle at it presented itself, and are now ready to say we have conquered the problem connected with all features of small ice making and refrigerating plants."