

Inventory of the

H. H. Wagner Dry Good Store
DeKalb, Illinois

Records

In the
Regional History Center

RC 23

INTRODUCTION

Waite W. Embree, a local DeKalb historian, collected the H.H. Wagner Dry Goods Store records. Mrs. Hattie Welch Embree donated the Embree Collection, including the Dry Goods Store materials, to the University Archives in 1967. J. Joseph Bauxar, University Archivist, transferred the Embree Collection to the Northern Illinois Regional History Center in June 1978.

Property rights in the collection belong to the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: 3
Number of containers: 3 boxes + 2 volumes
Northern Illinois Regional History Center
Collection 23

SCOPE AND CONTENT

These records document the history of the H. H. Wagner Dry Goods Store from 1866-1922. Since Mr. Wagner did not establish his business until 1875, it is presumed that the earliest records (1866-1875) are from the R. K. Chandler Dry Goods Store of which Mr. Wagner was an employee. Extensive inventories comprise a major series in the collection detailing the store's merchandise and its monetary value. A second series including an employee daily wage ledger (1873-1875), account ledgers (1866-1914), and sales and cash ledgers (1868-1892), contains information on the financial aspect of the business. Although there is no correspondence in the collection, legal documents (1873-1922), estate statements (1914-1915), and advertising materials provide background information on the business' history.

Researchers should note the other business collections held by the Regional History Center which might provide comparative economic data: Groenewold Business Collection (RC 36), Rockford Small Business Collection (RC57), Wirtz and Wirtz Collection (RC 60), and the Piper Business Collection (RC 78).

HISTORICAL SKETCH

H. H. Wagner was born in LaSalle County, Illinois in 1847. He came to DeKalb in 1863 and began working as a clerk for the W. & F. Winship mercantile business. In 1864 Wagner joined the United States Army enlisting in Company K, 132nd Regiment of the Illinois Volunteers. After serving 100 days, Wagner returned to DeKalb and entered the employ of R. K. Chandler, one of the early dry goods merchants of DeKalb. When Mr. Chandler died in 1875, H. H. Wagner established his own dry goods business.

The H. H. Wagner Dry Goods Store became one of the best known mercantile businesses in DeKalb County. Mr. Wagner's previous experience qualified him to conduct a business offering a quality and varied line of merchandise to his customers. When the building in which the store was housed burned down in 1897, Wagner built a new brick building at the same location and continued to provide retail services to his clientele until his death in 1914. Wagner's son, Harry Hough, chief assistant in the business, purchased the entire store from its stockholders in 1915, but because of financial difficulties, was forced to close the business in 1919. In April of that same year, Michael Malone reopened the store and the business still is in operation under the Malone name today.

SUBJECT TRACINGS

Clothing Trade
 DeKalb
 H.H. Wagner Dry Goods Store
 Retail Trade
 Wagner, H.H.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	
1	1	Legal Documents, (1873-1922)	
	2	H. H. Wagner Estate Statements, 1914-1915	
	3	Advertising Materials, (1910's)	
	4	Employees' Daily Wage Ledger, 1873-1875	
	5	Day Book, 1872-1875	
	6-7	Daily Sales Ledgers, 1868-1882	
	8-10	Cash Books, (1874-1892)	
	11	Monthly Account Ledger, 1876-1878	
	12-14	Account Ledgers, (1866-1900)	
	15	Account Journal, 1909-1910	
	16	Account Ledger, 1914	
	17-18	Inventory Ledgers, 1876-1884	
	2	1	Inventory Ledger, 1882-1884
		2-16	Inventory Ledgers, (1896-1913)
17		Inventory Ledger, n.d.	
3	1-4	Inventory Ledgers, n.d.	
Oversize	2 volumes	Cash Books, 1898-1909	