

THE INDIANAPOLIS WHOLESALE DISTRICT: A REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT
BUSINESS CENTER

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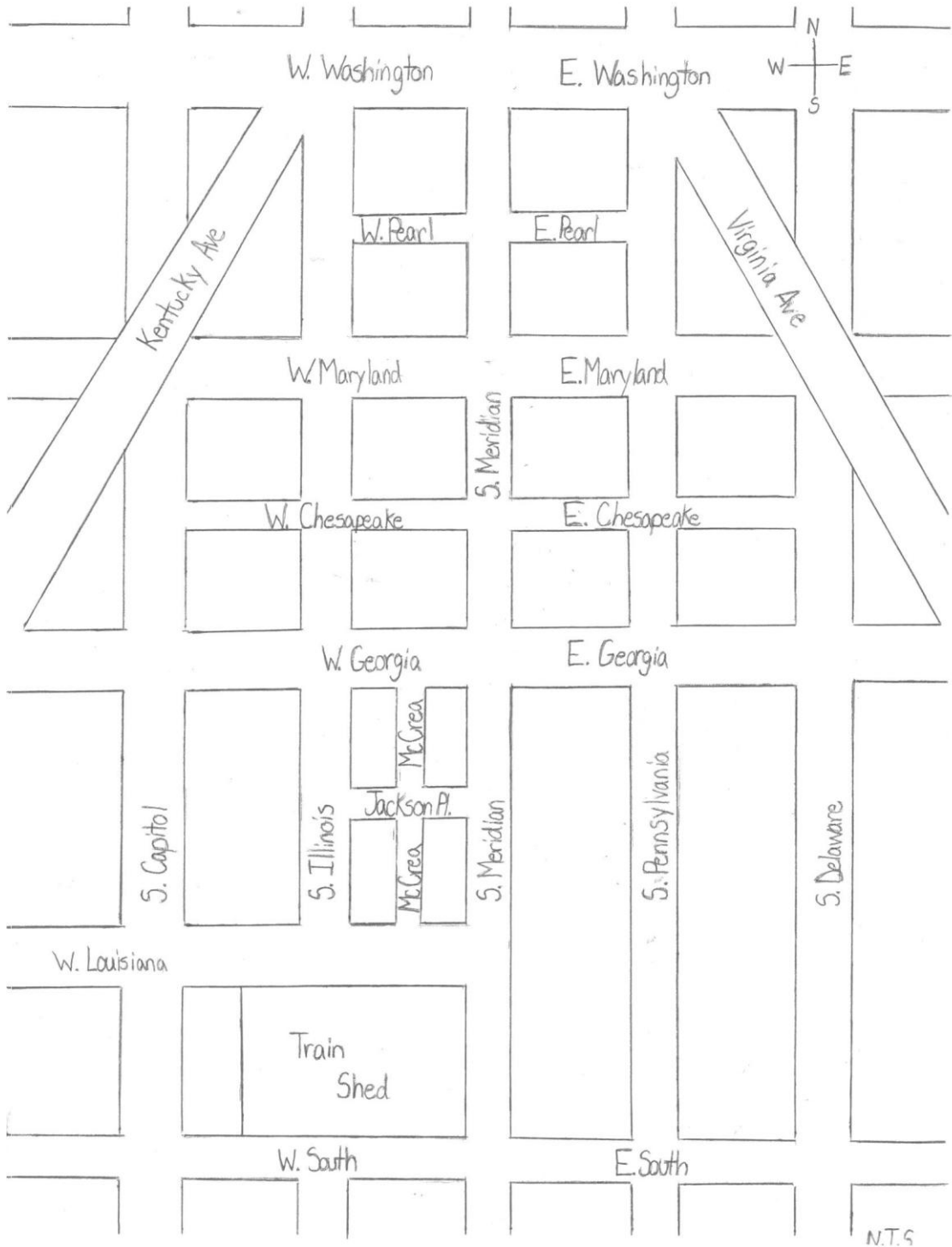
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Figure 1: Map of the Indianapolis Wholesale District



*Not drawn to scale.

Chapter One: Introduction

Research Topic

Few historians have addressed wholesaling in historical study, despite its importance in supplying merchants and retailers across the United States. In the early nineteenth century, wholesalers located their businesses at water sources along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and Mississippi River, with cities in the East as leaders of the wholesale trade. In the Midwest, Cincinnati emerged as a center for wholesaling because of its connections to the Ohio River, a busy waterway integral to the Mississippi Basin. St. Louis and New Orleans also prospered with their connections to the Mississippi River. When historians discuss wholesaling, they typically analyze the eastern and river-based wholesaling centers that appeared to have the potential for uninhibited growth. Until the nineteenth century, river transport dominated American long distance trade and travel. Reliance on roads and canals developed in the first half of the nineteenth century, allowing inland economic centers like Indianapolis to blossom into regional entrepôts.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the development of the midwestern railroad network led to the creation of a regional wholesale center near the Indianapolis Union Depot. In 1847 the first rail line, the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad, reached Indianapolis, and the wholesale precinct began to differentiate itself from the commercial area. The Indianapolis Wholesale District (IWD) represents a regional wholesaling center whose growth reflected its dependence on rail service.¹ For example, the regional focus of the district corresponds with the regional use of 4'8 1/2" and 4'10" railroad track gauges. Restrictions on the extent of railroad travel arose from the difference in gauge

¹ The terms Indianapolis Wholesale District, Wholesale District, and IWD will be used interchangeably in this thesis. Firms in the district primarily catered to merchants in the nearby areas of Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, and Ohio.

sizes between states and the lack of railroad bridges over rivers.² The district's regional significance will be discussed in the following pages in relation to its growth, the specialization of its wholesalers, its railroad connections, and the development of its distinctive built environment.

Significance

This research project analyzes an industry that has been neglected in historical study. Although this research examines one wholesaling center, characteristics uncovered in this study can be tested in other regional centers. This study of the IWD probes the inception, development, specialization, financial underpinnings, and built environment of an inland wholesale center. Unlike wholesale centers in New York or Philadelphia, Indianapolis's typicality and regional scope make it more relevant to the experiences of similar communities in the Midwest.

A select few facades, historical markers, and a generally dense streetscape along South Meridian Street serve as reminders of the nineteenth-century Wholesale District. Renewed attention to downtown Indianapolis since the 1990s led to increased business and cultural interest in the history of its neighborhoods, including the IWD. This research project provides interested parties with an interpretation of the district's local and regional significance and its rich economic history.

² George Rogers Taylor and Irene D. Neu, *The American Railroad Network, 1861-1890* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956). Taylor and Neu provide maps indicating the difference in gauge sizes. In Indiana and Illinois and further west, most of the rail lines used the same size gauge, but differed from many of the tracks in Ohio and eastward. The sparse railroad tracks south of Indiana in Kentucky and Tennessee used differently-sized gauges. These maps also show how the railroads did not cross over rivers.

Methodology

This research project covers one hundred years of Indianapolis's commercial history from 1820 to 1920. It identifies the early transportation systems and economic limitations Indianapolis faced in the 1820s and 1830s, and ends in 1920, when the number of wholesale firms in the Wholesale District decreased.

Crucial to this analysis of the Indianapolis Wholesale District are three main research topics: the railroad network, wholesaling, and the relationship between economics and business history. I first identified the “when, where, and how” of railroad development in Indiana. This examination required understanding the pre-railroad transportation conditions of the state and Indianapolis's isolation in its early decades. Next, I looked at the late nineteenth-century railroads that connected Indianapolis to other midwestern cities. This connectedness set up an argument for Indianapolis's regional economic significance.

An analysis of the IWD also required defining wholesaling. James Vance's definition for merchant wholesaler best characterizes the trade done in the district. Vance defines a merchant wholesaler as a distributor “primarily engaged in buying, taking title to and, where customary, physically storing and handling goods made by others and selling the goods at wholesale principally to retailers or to industrial, institutional, and commercial users.”³ Next, I traced types of wholesaling and changes over time, which necessitated differentiating wholesaling, retailing, and manufacturing functions, as well as indentifying those businesses that performed several functions.

³ James E. Vance, Jr., *The Merchant's World: The Geography of Wholesaling* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), 29.

This thesis also explores the relationship between general economic growth and business history. This study pays homage to the foundational arguments of economic historians like George Rogers Taylor, Irene Neu, Robert Fogel, and Albert Fishlow. However, rather than positing an econometric analysis of the Wholesale District, I examine multiple wholesale businesses that comprised the IWD. A lack of available quantitative data on the district's wholesale firms combined with an interest in the profiles of individual wholesalers created a focus on the correlation between economic growth and business history in the context of the city's commercial development.

The second chapter analyzes the interplay of Indianapolis's economic and transportation history. Local newspaper articles from the 1830s to the 1850s, railroad maps, and booster literature from economic interest groups advertising the benefits of doing business in Indianapolis demonstrate how railroads functioned as a catalyst for the IWD's growth into a regional hub.

The third chapter documents the development and specialization of wholesaling and supplementary businesses in the district. Profiles for specific wholesale businesses demonstrate growth over time and the regionality of Indianapolis's trade. This chapter utilizes city directories (beginning in 1855), booster literature on specific wholesale firms, and Chamber of Commerce minutes and reports to exhibit the local business community's involvement in wholesaling. R.G. Dun and Company credit reports show the financial condition of individual wholesale corporations.

Chapter four covers the built environment, including a discussion of the streetscape, architectural variety, and physical characteristics of warehouses. I include descriptions of the warehouses for three businesses on South Meridian Street to identify

building components necessary for firms operating at a regional level. Sources used for this chapter consist of *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* for analysis of warehouse components and street layouts, booster literature and photographs for building descriptions, and biographies and institutional histories of architects and firms that designed in the area.

Through documentation of the Wholesale District's beginnings, connection with transportation advancements in central Indiana, business development and specialization, and physical presence, this research project uncovers how the IWD contributed to Indianapolis's economic history.

Related Scholarship

In 1951, George Rogers Taylor's *The Transportation Revolution 1815-1860*, analyzed the development of transportation in the antebellum United States.⁴ Taylor sang the praises of railroads' impact, stating that they had triumphed over competing forms of transportation by 1860.⁵ He wrote that railroads "built great cities, hastened settlement of the West, made farming practicable on the prairies, and greatly stimulated the flow of internal commerce."⁶ Taylor also discussed the impact of canals, inland waterway and overseas vessels, and turnpikes. Taylor and Irene Neu subsequently examined the contributions of railroads in *The American Railroad Network, 1861-1890*, which studies the development of the railroad "network" in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Taylor and Neu argued that "fundamental improvements in railroad transportation were

⁴ George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York: Rinehart, 1951).

⁵ Taylor, 102.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

among the major factors making possible the post-Civil War expansion.”⁷ These fundamental improvements included track gauge regulation and the construction of railroad bridges over major inland rivers. In sum, Taylor, writing on his own or with Neu, emphasized that the American railroad network was critical in shaping nineteenth-century American economic growth and creating a national business community. This economic connectivity became very important to Indianapolis’s trade growth.

The next important texts on the effects of railroads were Robert William Fogel’s *Railroads and American Economic Growth: Essays in Econometric History* (1964) and Albert Fishlow’s *American Railroads and the Transformation of the Ante-bellum Economy* (1965).⁸ Both historians used quantitative methods to measure economic growth during the nineteenth century. Fogel and Fishlow explicitly engaged each other’s work, each arriving at a different theory on the effects of railroads on American economic growth.⁹ Fogel broke down what he terms the “axiom of indispensability” that had been attached to railroads since the Gilded Age. Fogel asserted that historians have inaccurately declared railroads to be necessary for economic growth during the nineteenth century. While he did not dispute the importance of railroad development, especially its provision of low-cost inland transportation, he argued that scholars have generally overlooked the continuing importance of other means of transportation, such as

⁷ George Rogers Taylor and Irene D. Neu, *The American Railroad Network, 1861-1890* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 1.

⁸ Robert William Fogel, *Railroads and American Economic Growth: Essays in Econometric History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964); Albert Fishlow, *American Railroads and the Transformation of the Ante-bellum Economy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

⁹ Each completed his dissertation in 1963, Fogel at Johns Hopkins and Fishlow at Harvard; the dissertations formed the basis for their subsequent publication.

road and water transport. Fogel stated that no single innovation was indispensable to nineteenth-century economic growth in the United States.¹⁰

While Robert Fogel questioned the necessity of the railroads for American economic development and presented a counterfactual history for how the United States could have developed without them, Albert Fishlow focused on how and to what extent railroads stimulated the economy.¹¹ Although he acknowledged the validity of Fogel's findings, Fishlow reaffirmed the necessity of the railroads for the transformation of the antebellum economy. Despite his view on the overall importance of railroads, Fishlow conceded that the expansive industrial growth of the 1840s and 1850s owed little to the railroads. In his section on domestic commerce, however, Fishlow stated that while early railroads did not create interregional flows, they left a "major imprint upon their [subsequent] direction and magnitude."¹² Fishlow also attributed the binding together of the East and West to railroad connections, although he argued that railroads did not create a national market before the Civil War.¹³ Fishlow ultimately affirmed the necessity of railroads for the development of the American economy, especially after the Civil War. While Fogel believed that railroads affected the economy, he did not award them the same level of importance as Fishlow.¹⁴

Recent scholarship has continued this debate over the effect of railroads on American economic development. Michael Haines and Robert Margo tested the effect of railroads on agricultural development at the local level using a quantitative approach with

¹⁰ Fogel, 234.

¹¹ Fishlow, ix.

¹² Ibid., 297.

¹³ Ibid., 297.

¹⁴ Irene D. Neu, Book review of *American Railroads and the Transformation of the Ante-bellum Economy*, *Journal of American History* 53 (September 1966): 367.

a pool of sample counties from 1850 to 1860.¹⁵ Haines and Margo found that in Illinois and Indiana, railroad access did not increase agricultural participation; in fact, they claim that railroad access reduced the likelihood of it. Instead, Haines and Margo argued that railroads promoted urbanization.¹⁶ Several decades before Haines and Margo, Indiana scholars such as Emma Lou Thornbrough and Clifton Phillips made similar claims about the railroad network's effect on Indianapolis's urbanization.¹⁷

More recently, Jeremy Atack and associates, including both Haines and Margo, published, "Did Railroads Induce or Follow Economic Growth? Urbanization and Population Growth in the American Midwest, 1850-1860."¹⁸ The article discussed the connection between railroad expansion and urbanization in the Midwest from 1850 to 1860, a topic important for this study on the Indianapolis Wholesale District. The authors responded to Fogel, Fishlow, and Taylor by combining census data and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) technology based on nineteenth-century maps and travel guides to quantitatively track growth patterns (economic and population) at the county level. They found an increase in urbanization due to railroad growth, thereby showing alternative theories to Fogel's argument that economic growth could have occurred through other forms of transportation. They compared claims of the railroads playing a central role in America's economic development with Albert Fishlow's 1965 theory that

¹⁵ Michael R. Haines and Robert A. Margo, *Railroads and Local Economic Development: The United States in the 1850s*, NBER Working Paper Series (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, July 2006).

¹⁶ Haines and Margo, 19.

¹⁷ Emma Lou Thornbrough, *History of Indiana, Volume Three: Indiana in the Civil War Era 1850-1880* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau and Indiana Historical Society, 1965); Clifton Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1968).

¹⁸ Jeremy Atack, Fred Bateman, and Michael Haines, "Did Railroads Induce or Follow Economic Growth? Urbanization and Population Growth in the American Midwest, 1850-1860," *Social Science History* 34 (Summer 2010): 171-197.

railroads did not inherently induce growth. The authors followed up on Fishlow's analysis by examining the effect that railroads had on midwestern economic growth. The authors found the effect of railroads on population density was quite small, but that "somewhat more than half of midwestern industrial urbanization in the 1850s can be attributed to the causal impact of railroad diffusion."¹⁹ Atack and his associates' findings have been insightful for a study of the Indianapolis wholesaling market and Wholesale District.

In this thesis, the discussion of railroad development in Indiana draws heavily on the scholarship of Victor Bogle regarding railroad development, particularly his 1962 article, "Railroad Building in Indiana, 1850-1855."²⁰ Bogle emphasized the enthusiasm for and rapidity of railroad development in the early 1850s, a stark contrast to the slow progression of the 1830s and 1840s. He also noted a decline in railroad proposals by late 1854. Bogle's thorough examination of Indiana's railroad building provided context for Indianapolis's railroad connections.

The work of other economic historians who analyze more broadly the economic growth of the United States also provides background to this study of the IWD. With an initial focus on the nation's foreign trade and later focus on interregional economic cooperation, Douglass North theorized about the development of the American economy in *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860*.²¹ North argued that most of the nation's economic growth occurred initially as a result of exports and later through

¹⁹ Jeremy Atack et al., 174.

²⁰ Victor M. Bogle, "Railroad Building in Indiana, 1850-1855," *Indiana Magazine of History* 58 (September 1962): 211-232.

²¹ Douglass C. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966).

improved technology and transportation.²² While some economic historians attribute industrialization and instrumental growth to the Civil War, North believed the war interrupted growth that was already taking place. North's focus on interregional trade in the second half of the book, particularly his chapter on the economic structure of the West, provided a helpful quantitative approach to understanding American economic history, especially for an inland city like Indianapolis.²³

Literature on Indiana, and specifically Indianapolis, economic history serves as a foundation for this study of the Indianapolis Wholesale District. Particularly important in the discussion of Indiana's economic progress are Emma Lou Thornbrough's *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880* and Clifton Phillips's *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920*. Both historians interpreted wide spans of Indiana history, but with a particular focus on economic development. Thornbrough asserted that the Civil War served as an impetus for growth. She devoted a great deal of space to the development and effect of railroad lines, using such sources as railroad company reports, newspaper articles, and legislative documents. Citing what she deemed a "transportation revolution," Thornbrough connected almost every facet of life to railroad expansion. She stated, "railroads brought new settlers, broke down rural isolation, transformed villages into cities, brought far-reaching changes in agriculture and everyday life, and hastened the beginnings of mining and industry. Railroad companies wielded great political power and successfully sought favors from government."²⁴

²² North, 1, 146.

²³ North's definition of the "West" included Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Missouri.

²⁴ Thornbrough, 318.

Thornbrough emphasized the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad's role in Indianapolis's emergence as the largest city in the state.

In his analysis of Indiana's history from 1880 to 1920, Phillips examined Indiana's urbanization and industrialization. He found that World War I furthered Indiana's industrialization. Phillips emphasized the dominance of railroads in Indiana. He set Indiana up as the literal crossroads of America, stating that "Indiana lay directly in the path of the expansion of American commerce and transportation."²⁵ Phillips included a description of the major railway lines in Indiana, describing their development and routes. I used the works of Thornbrough and Phillips for context when arguing for the IWD's regional importance.

James Madison's Ph.D. dissertation, "Business and the Business Community in Indianapolis, 1820-1860" strongly shaped my ideas on early business patterns in Indianapolis in the initial stages of this study on the Wholesale District. His use of local newspapers in tracking the rise and reception of railroad building in Indianapolis guided some of the primary source use in the second chapter of this study. For scholarship on Indianapolis's social development, this thesis relies on Frederick Kershner's Ph.D. dissertation, "A Social and Cultural History of Indianapolis, 1860-1914," especially his discussion of economic interest groups like the Chamber of Commerce.

The final chapter of this thesis covers the built environment of the IWD and connects with scholarship on the spatial and architectural aspects of commercial trade. Anne Mosher's "Downtown Dynamics" used sources and a methodology I have adapted

²⁵ Phillips, 229.

to this study of the Wholesale District.²⁶ Mosher and her colleagues, Barry D. Keim and Susan Franques, tracked late nineteenth century through mid-twentieth century changes to New Orleans's Canal Street that transformed the area from a business district to an abandoned street indicative of the decentralization of downtown. Leonard Eaton's article "Warehouses and Warehouse Districts in Mid-American Cities" proved especially helpful.²⁷ Drawing on architectural guides from the late nineteenth century, architectural journals, and monographs, Eaton focused on the architectural features of warehouses and their evolution according to the needs of wholesalers. For information on the Indianapolis Wholesale District's history and its built environment, the 1982 National Register of Historic Places nomination form prepared by James Glass and Mary Ellen Gadski suggested many initial themes and a preliminary periodization.²⁸

During the latter half of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth century, the Indianapolis Wholesale District operated as a local and regional hub. Analysis of the IWD's relationship with the railroad network in Indiana points to a widening of trade, yet regional focus due to transportation restrictions. The growth and subsequent specialization of wholesale trading in the district catered to a primarily local and regional audience. Examining the physical presence of the IWD in downtown Indianapolis uncovers the built environment of a typical midwestern business district. This research project argues for the local and regional significance of the Indianapolis Wholesale District in the pages that follow.

²⁶ Anne E. Mosher, Barry D. Keim, and Susan Franques, "Downtown Dynamics," *Geographical Review* 85 (October 1995): 497-517.

²⁷ Leonard K. Eaton, "Warehouses and Warehouse Districts in Mid-American Cities," *Urban History Review* 11, no.1 (June 1982): 17-26.

²⁸ James A. Glass and Mary Ellen Gadski, *Wholesale District National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission, 1982).

Chapter Two: Railroads as a Catalyst for Economic Growth and the Birth of the Indianapolis Wholesale District, 1830-1860s

Early American city founders often positioned cities according to natural landmarks that would aid in populating and establishing commercial ventures. While many cities grew along rivers and coasts, Indianapolis could not boast of access to useful waterways. The city's founders discovered early on that the White River could not support riverine travel. As in other states, in Indiana the legislature appropriated funds towards internal improvements of canals and roads. The introduction of a railroad connection to Indianapolis in 1847 opened another avenue for trade, including wholesaling. In the 1850s, the Wholesale District, a heavily-concentrated commercial district in Indianapolis, sprang up around the rail lines that distributed products.²⁹ By the late nineteenth century, booster literature included South Meridian, South Pennsylvania, South Delaware, Maryland, Georgia, and McCrea street addresses in their definitions of the Wholesale District.³⁰ The Indianapolis Wholesale District built on the increased connections to markets and consumer populations to become a local, as well as a regional, economic hub.

Necessary Terminology Defined

The terms wholesaling and wholesaler require defining. Wholesaling refers to all economic operations of middlemen and producers “in getting processed goods from their point of production to retailers or processors.”³¹ Wholesaling may also be defined as

²⁹ See Figure 1 on page vii for a map of the Indianapolis Wholesale District, which shows the streets included in the IWD.

³⁰ Ernest Bucknell, *Indianapolis Illustrated* (Indianapolis, IN: Baker-Randolph Litho. & Eng. Co., 1893), 133.

³¹ Bill Reid Moeckel, “The Development of the Wholesaler in the United States 1860-1900,” Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1953, 5.

“connecting the producer of commodities with the retailer.”³² Three factors defined wholesaling in the nineteenth century: “1. Status or motive of the purchaser, i.e., the customer and his purpose in making the purchase. 2. The quantity of goods involved in the transaction. 3. Method of operation of concern.”³³ The wholesaler dealt with entrepreneurs, such as retailers, rather than individual consumers. Conversely, retail displayed the following characteristics: “1. It is open to the general consuming public; 2. sales are made over the counter; 3. usually in small quantities; [but] 4. in large numbers [of individual transactions]; 5. to ultimate consumers who buy for direct consumption; [and] 6. at so-called retail prices that are not subject to various types of discounts.”³⁴ Wholesaling and retailing were not mutually exclusive ventures, as some wholesalers also sold goods at retail.

While there are several types of wholesalers, the businessmen in the Indianapolis Wholesale District would have been considered merchant wholesalers. The term merchant wholesaler can be defined as a distributor “primarily engaged in buying, taking title to and, where customary, physically storing and handling goods made by others and selling the goods at wholesale principally to retailers or to industrial, institutional, and commercial users.”³⁵

³² James E. Vance, Jr., *The Merchant's World: The Geography of Wholesaling* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), 23.

³³ Vance, *The Merchant's World*, 24.

³⁴ Vance, 25.

³⁵ U.S. Bureau of Census, *Census of Business: 1954*, vol. 4, *Wholesale Trade-Area Statistics* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1956, 1956), Appendix A, p.3 quoted in Vance, 29.

Indianapolis Wholesaling Prior to the Introduction of the Railroads, 1830s and Early 1840s

Indianapolis business in the early decades of the nineteenth century remained limited to merchants and small manufacturers. By 1821, the city's first business merchant, Nicholas Shaffer, had opened a store on high ground near Pogue's Run. That year also witnessed the establishment of several stores called "Wilmot's Row" near the State House square on the White River bank.³⁶ Washington Street, located a block north of what would become the Wholesale District, claimed many of the town's retail businesses and early wholesaling firms. Designated as "main street" and part of the National Road by 1830, Washington Street represented a thriving part of Indianapolis's economy.³⁷ In his 1884 history of the city, B.R. Sulgrove asserted that until the completion of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad, "no business was done off of Washington Street."³⁸ Newspaper advertisements from the 1830s and 1840s also demonstrated the limited nature and location of early wholesaling. An advertisement in the June 22, 1833, issue of the *Indiana Journal* listed the wholesale grocery firm of Patterson and Beard on Washington Street with goods recently received from New Orleans.³⁹

³⁶ Ignatius Brown, "Historical Sketch of Indianapolis," in *A.C. Howard's Directory, for the City of Indianapolis Containing a Correct List of Citizens' Names, Their Residence and Place of Business; With a Historical Sketch of Indianapolis, from its Earliest History to the Present Day. First Issue* (Indianapolis: A.C. Howard, Publisher, 1857.) Brown's history appeared after the directory's preface, before the address listings.

³⁷ Harriet McIntyre Foster, "Memories of the National Road," *Indiana Magazine of History* 13 (March 1917): 62.

³⁸ B.R. Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1884), 168.

³⁹ *Indiana Journal*, June 22, 1833. James Madison's 1972 dissertation on the Indianapolis business community in the early nineteenth century guided the search for many of the *Indiana Journal* and *Locomotive* newspaper articles used for this thesis. James H. Madison, "Business and the Business Community in Indianapolis, 1820-1860," Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1972.

More businesses sprang up downtown after the introduction of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad in 1847, although businesses primarily remained on Washington Street. According to Sulgrove, “foundries and shops started up in convenient openings, and during the [Civil] war groceries, drug-stores, hotels, saloons, and eating-houses were put wherever they could go.”⁴⁰ Yet, early business listings like *Grooms and Smith’s Indianapolis Directory* in 1855 or *A.C. Howard’s Directory* in 1857 demonstrate that Washington Street housed most of the early wholesaling firms. Overall, wholesaling in the initial decades of Indianapolis’s history was limited, and Indianapolis merchants used other options to stock goods.

Wholesalers in eastern cities dominated the business for the first half of the nineteenth century. Eastern cities such as Philadelphia and New York established themselves as wholesale centers long before the advent of Indianapolis and other midwestern wholesale districts. In his 1939 study of merchants in the Midwest, Lewis Atherton wrote extensively on the strengths of eastern cities as wholesaling centers. According to Atherton, prior to the War of 1812, midwestern merchants received their goods from Canada and New Orleans. After the war, wholesalers switched to eastern seaboard cities, such as Philadelphia and Baltimore.⁴¹

Many midwestern businessmen came to regard eastern firms as the best choice for wholesaling. Newspaper advertisements mentioned the origins of a store’s merchandise and its recent arrival from an eastern city to show off the new wares. For example, in 1830 local retailer Isaac Phipps mentioned his receipt of goods from Philadelphia in the

⁴⁰ Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis*, 168.

⁴¹ Lewis Atherton, “The Pioneer in Mid-America,” *The University of Missouri Studies: A Quarterly of Research* 14 (April 1939), 47; Moeckel, “The Development of the Wholesaler,” 80.

January 14 issue of the *Indiana Journal*.⁴² Indianapolis retailers followed this common pattern of advertisement throughout the 1830s and 1840s.

The prominence of eastern cities in wholesaling can be attributed to several factors. The first factor was the low purchase price of East Coast products. For example, eastern wholesale firms bought many of their products at auctions, which kept prices low.⁴³ Midwestern merchants were convinced that they bought at better prices from eastern wholesalers rather than midwestern wholesalers. Early midwestern wholesalers acted as middlemen by buying products from eastern wholesalers, thus adding another layer of costs on the final purchase price.

Prices aside, eastern wholesale firms claimed many other benefits. The second factor in eastern wholesalers' dominance was the relationships formed between eastern firms and English and continental factories. These direct relationships between manufacturers and wholesale firms created an advantage beyond those of midwestern wholesalers and led to a greater variety of goods.⁴⁴

Third, eastern wholesalers offered liberal credit that inspired many merchants to buy goods in cities like Philadelphia.⁴⁵ Seaboard cities also catered to the needs of merchants who came east to trade. Their newspaper advertisements often listed nearby hotels. An extensive advertisement for New York wholesalers in the January 29, 1845, issue of the *Indiana State Journal* provided names of hotels available to merchants.⁴⁶ For

⁴² *Indiana Journal*, January 14, 1830.

⁴³ Atherton, 60.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

⁴⁶ *Indiana State Journal*, January 29, 1845. The name of this paper changed from the *Indiana Journal* to the *Indiana State Journal* by this point.

many midwestern merchants, the benefits of trading with eastern wholesalers far outweighed the costs in the early half of the nineteenth century.

While merchants could eliminate midwestern middlemen by going to eastern wholesale centers themselves, many found the costs of such trips prohibitive. After the advent of freight railroads, higher prices due to freight rates plagued interior wholesale centers such as Cincinnati and St. Louis.

Eastern cities dominated early wholesaling efforts, but interior centers certainly did their fair share of business. Indianapolis merchants often purchased items from wholesalers in Cincinnati. The city's access to the Ohio River made it a large interior wholesale center. Similar to their eastern counterparts, Cincinnati's wholesalers commanded a strong presence in Indianapolis newspapers, placing advertisements as early as the 1830s. That city's merits as a wholesale center also became the subject of several newspaper articles. The *Indiana State Journal*, a long-standing Indianapolis newspaper, contained many early examples of such advertisements and booster literature. In 1844, twenty-nine Cincinnati wholesalers placed an advertisement on their prominent wholesaling market in the *Indiana State Journal* to convince merchants to shop with them. They reasoned that "all articles of common consumption in the Dry Goods, Grocery, Hardware, and Queensware lines can be purchased here at prices and on terms equally if not more favorable in every respect than any of the eastern markets."⁴⁷ An 1846 advertisement in the *Indiana State Journal* claimed that "goods can be sold lower at that place [Cincinnati] and more money made at it than at New York, because house rent and living can be obtained at much less cost. This being the case, country merchants will

⁴⁷ *Indiana State Journal*, September 14, 1844.

save time and expense by making their purchases in that market.”⁴⁸ Although historian Lewis Atherton described cheaper prices at eastern wholesale centers in his 1939 article on midwestern merchants, Cincinnati businessmen placed advertisements in Indianapolis newspapers that insisted on cheaper prices in their own city. Advertisements in numerous sources ranging from newspapers to city directories pointed towards Cincinnati’s dominance over Indianapolis wholesaling and retail.

The absence of significant wholesaling in Indianapolis derived from its early economic disadvantages. Due to the lack of direct links with manufacturers and large wholesaling firms, merchants and wholesalers traveled great distances for products. The yearly purchasing trips came at a great cost to the merchants. In an 1834 letter to the editor of the *Indiana Journal*, Indianapolis resident John Matthews lamented the expenses accrued by merchants during their yearly trips and the debt they incurred as a result.⁴⁹ In addition to paying for travel and accommodations, merchants lost money while they were kept away from their businesses for several weeks at a time. Merchants placed advertisements in the *Indiana State Journal* in anticipation of their trips to the East in which they pleaded for customers to repay any debts.⁵⁰ Merchants also called for requests from customers about what types of goods to buy.

When supplies ran out, merchants relied on interior wholesale centers like Cincinnati for replacement goods.⁵¹ Dependency on other wholesaling centers and high expenses to acquire products kept business limited in Indianapolis in the 1830s and 1840s, thus stunting the growth of commercial areas such as the Wholesale District.

⁴⁸ Ibid., September 23, 1846.

⁴⁹ *Indiana Journal*, January 8, 1834.

⁵⁰ *Indiana State Journal*, June 22, 1833.

⁵¹ Atherton, 80.

Factors related to the dominance of eastern wholesale centers served as the context within which Indianapolis wholesaling emerged and grew. The town's wholesaling developed at a slower pace than the eastern equivalents due to its economic, geographic, and transportation handicaps.

The economic environment of Indianapolis supported a small number of wholesale firms in the 1830s and 1840s. In those days, businesses carried wide varieties of items rather than specializing. Wholesale grocers led the Indianapolis wholesale marketplace for the first several decades of the town's existence. By the 1850s, members of the Indianapolis business community began to tout the virtues of specialization, a concept that had been embraced by eastern wholesaling firms in Philadelphia and New York. In 1852, the *Locomotive* quoted the *Philadelphia Commercial* as saying, "one of the best evidences of progress we have noticed, is the sub-division of business, by which traders confine their attention to one description of articles. By this judicious limitation, they are enabled to keep a stock which for variety and excellence is unequalled."⁵² Indianapolis businessmen believed this concept of specialization to be the key in making Indianapolis a wholesale point. However, the Indianapolis wholesaling industry did not embrace specialization until the 1860s and 1870s. Specialization occurred due partially to Indianapolis's growing reliance on railroad connections by the 1860s and 1870s. Geographer James E. Vance, Jr. theorized that specialization in wholesaling required businessmen to expand their area of trade.⁵³ Following this logic, Indianapolis wholesalers expanded their sphere of business beyond Indianapolis to garner enough

⁵² The *Locomotive*, December 25, 1852. The *Locomotive* was published in Indianapolis from 1848 to 1860. The newspaper covered a wide range of topics, including railroad development. The newspaper's name indicated the city's fascination with railroads rather than the content of its columns. While the newspaper covered a number of railroad-related stories, it also discussed other Indianapolis news topics.

⁵³ Vance, 52, 55.

customers to support each wholesale specialty. Such an opportunity for expansion came due to the introduction and development of the railroads.

Railroad Development, 1830s-1850s

Like the legislatures of Illinois and Ohio, Indiana's legislature chose a central location for its capital to promote easy access to the seat of government. After preliminary surveys, the committee charged with locating the capital favorably noted the area's location near the junction of the west fork of the White River and Fall Creek and near the east-west geographic center of the state. The committee praised the site's "proximity to the proposed route of the National Road, river banks suitable for boat landings, fertility of the soil, and the supposed navigability of the White River."⁵⁴

Indiana's flatness also proved advantageous. While its geography and location benefitted the growth of Indiana's vast railroad network, Indianapolis initially remained isolated after its founding in 1820. In *Internal Improvements in Early Indiana* (1912), Logan Esarey discussed the difficulty of travel to the centrally-located capital: "there was no railroad, no canal, no pike....Two stage lines led to Indianapolis, one from Madison, the other from Centerville. The service was bad, roads frequently impassable, and stages usually late."⁵⁵ The ultimate ineffectiveness of the White River, National Road, and the Michigan Road for Indianapolis's economic growth negates Robert Fogel's assertion of the importance of other forms of transportation.

Early booster literature touted the value of the White River without much regard for its actual utility. Although the White River connects with the Wabash River, which

⁵⁴ William J. Doherty, "Indianapolis in the 1870s: Hard Times in the Gilded Age," Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1981, 18.

⁵⁵ Logan Esarey, *Internal Improvements in Early Indiana*, Indiana Historical Society Publications 5, no. 2 (Indianapolis: Edward J. Hecker, Printer, 1912), 51.

ultimately connects with the Ohio River, low water and obstructions prevented most vessels, especially steamboats, from reaching Indianapolis.⁵⁶ In an attempt to debunk criticism of the White River's utility, Hanna and Company, National Road contractors, attempted to navigate a steamboat up the White River to Indianapolis. On April 11, 1831, the "Robert Hanna" almost made it to Indianapolis, but stuck on a sandbar at Hog's Island, a few miles south of the capital city.⁵⁷ Hopes of major riverine transport ran aground with the "Robert Hanna."

The National Road added little to Indianapolis's commercial development, despite its wide use for westward migration. Plans to connect East and West with the National Road began in 1802. Planners surveyed the roadway at eighty feet wide, with a "solid stone foundation and gravel dressing."⁵⁸ Congress passed thirty-four appropriations for building the road, totaling \$6,824,919, but it was never completed.⁵⁹ Accounts of the road emphasized the great care taken to make sure that it was useable at all times of the year.⁶⁰ The road reached Indianapolis by 1830 and followed what is now Washington Street. Many families traveling westward used the road, with accounts highlighting the constant train of wagons on the National Road. Despite pioneer traffic, the National Road did not appear to have facilitated the large-scale transport of goods, although many Indianapolis retailers opened businesses on Washington Street. Merchants still primarily traded on at local level. Construction of the road beyond Indianapolis was sluggish; the last section arrived at Vandalia, Illinois, in 1852. By then, enthusiasm for railroads reigned. In

⁵⁶ Madison, "Business and the Business Community in Indianapolis, 1820-1860," 10.

⁵⁷ George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution* (New York: Rinehart, 1951), 17; Esarey, *Internal Improvements*, 73.

⁵⁸ Esarey, 54.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 55; George S. Cottman, "Matter Relating to National Road in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History* 3 (June 1907): 75.

⁶⁰ Esarey, 54; George Cary Eggleston, "The Old National Road," *Indiana Magazine of History* 7 (December 1911): 188.

Indiana, railroad development began before the completion of the National Road and quickly surpassed it as the main venue for commercial transport.

The Michigan Road also added little to Indianapolis's economic growth, mainly due to its poor physical condition. Like the National Road, the Michigan Road failed to bring the increased trade many anticipated.⁶¹ The road started in 1826 as a state-built public highway beginning in Madison along the Ohio River to Lake Michigan.⁶² Many pioneers headed to northwest Indiana used the Michigan Road, but rain and snow made it muddy and nearly useless. Historian Geneal Prather mentions that these poor conditions kept the Michigan Road from being the great link between the Ohio River and Lake Michigan.⁶³ Efficient transportation connections between northern and southern Indiana, with Indianapolis serving as the pivot, materialized only after the introduction of railroad travel in 1847.

Historian Robert Fogel's theory on the utility of other forms of transport beyond railroads did not play out in Indianapolis as it did in other parts of the United States. Isolation prevented business growth, such as the development of the Indianapolis Wholesale District, from emerging earlier. As a result, the population and economic growth of Indianapolis remained fairly static during the 1820s and 1830s. Population in 1822 roughly amounted to five hundred.⁶⁴ By 1830, that number had risen to 1,900.⁶⁵ By 1847, the population had increased to around 6,000 at the time of the Madison and

⁶¹ Robert G. Barrows and Leigh Darbee, "The Urban Frontier in Pioneer Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History* 105 (September 2009): 279.

⁶² Esarey, 55.

⁶³ Geneal Prather, "The Struggle for the Michigan Road," *Indiana Magazine of History* 39 (March 1943): 3.

⁶⁴ Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 17.

⁶⁵ Thomas J. Cooke, "Demographic Profile," in David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 500.

Indianapolis Railroad's introduction, signaling a connection between transportation resources and population growth.⁶⁶

Legislative acts passed in 1831 and 1832 initiated a statewide canal project, with work set to begin before March 2, 1832.⁶⁷ The 1832 Indiana legislature's planning for development of other forms of transportation proved to be instrumental when canal projects, such as the Central Canal, were abandoned in the late 1830s due to rapidly accumulating debt.⁶⁸ Besides appropriating money to canal construction in the 1832 act, the legislature also incorporated twelve joint stock companies to build railroad lines. These roads included Lawrenceburg to Indianapolis; Madison via Indianapolis to Lafayette; Jeffersonville via Salem, Bloomington, Greencastle to Lafayette; Harrison to Indianapolis via Greensburg and Shelbyville; Lafayette to Lake Michigan; Jeffersonville via Columbus, Indianapolis, and north to Wabash.⁶⁹

In 1836, the Indiana legislature passed the Internal Improvement Act, which appropriated \$13,000,000 towards the commencement, construction, and completion of eight projects.⁷⁰ Four of the act's eight projects related to canal work, and four of the projects included the surveying of land for railroad construction. One section of the act appropriated \$1,300,000 for construction of a railroad from Madison, through Columbus and Indianapolis, to Lafayette.⁷¹ This railroad later became the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad, the first line connecting to Indianapolis in 1847. Disagreements between the

⁶⁶ Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 84.

⁶⁷ Esarey, 91.

⁶⁸ Margaret Duden, "Internal Improvements In Indiana, 1818-1846," *Indiana Magazine of History* 5 (December 1909), 165, 168. The Central Canal, meant to run from the Wabash and Erie Canal to Indianapolis to Evansville, was not completed before the disbanding of the Board of Internal Improvements, the fund commissioner and chief engineer of the project. Unanticipated costs caused the demise of the statewide internal improvements system.

⁶⁹ Esarey, 96.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 102.

state and private companies, in addition to financial strains, kept the rail line from reaching its original goal of Lafayette. Instead it terminated in Indianapolis.⁷² Early internal improvement efforts, such as the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad and the Central Canal, expanded the economic future of Indianapolis. No longer would unreliable roads and unnavigable rivers limit access to Indianapolis. Railroads opened up the possibilities for greater trade by offering faster travel time, shorter distances, regular schedules, and reduced shipping costs. Additionally, Indianapolis's flat geographical landscape made a perfect setting for railroad building.

Railroad projects began with the chartering of railroad companies, followed by calls for private investment and purchasing of rights of way. For example, the 1832 incorporation act for the Madison, Indianapolis and Lafayette Rail-Road Company established the corporation and divided it into shares initially valued at fifty dollars each. The act also gave the railroad the power of eminent domain along its right of way.⁷³ Railroad companies surveyed land prior to construction, condemned their rights of way, and bought the land needed.

Between 1832 and 1850 the Indiana legislature granted over one hundred separate railroad charters, most of which expired before construction began. Local interest prompted the requests for charters.⁷⁴ Railroad planners in Indiana originally intended for rail lines to supplement waterway systems, which explains why railroad charters beginning at the Ohio River or the Wabash and Erie Canal outnumbered railroad routes

⁷² George S. Cottman, "Internal Improvements in Indiana: No. IV—Railroads," *Indiana Magazine of History* 3 (December 1907): 157.

⁷³ *An Act to Incorporate The Madison, Indianapolis and Lafayette Rail-Road Company, Passed at the Sixteenth Session of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana, and Approved, February 2, 1832* (Madison: Printed by Arion and Lodge, 1832).

⁷⁴ Victor M. Bogle, "Railroad Building in Indiana, 1850-1855." *Indiana Magazine of History* 58 (September 1962): 213; Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution*, 85.

without water connections.⁷⁵ Companies began making plans to connect with Indianapolis. As Indiana railroad historian Victor Bogle stated, Indianapolis “served as a magnet to draw to a central point what otherwise might have been dangling lines.”⁷⁶ The central location of Indianapolis allowed the growing capital city to take full advantage of the transportation revolution, making it the state’s railroad hub.

The arrival of the Madison and Indianapolis line in 1847 initiated a new chapter in the economic history of Indianapolis. The Madison and Indianapolis line served as an encouraging example of the success possible with railroads and held a special significance for the economy of Indianapolis. Emma Lou Thornbrough claimed that the completion of the first railroad line in 1847 “set Indianapolis on the way to becoming the commercial and industrial center of the state.”⁷⁷ Until the introduction of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad, the capital took a secondary role in the economic environment of Indiana behind such early commercial hubs as Madison and New Albany, along the Ohio River. Railroads shifted business to the center of the state. The state built and operated the eighty-six mile line, although it was leased to a private company which completed it.

The introduction of railroads to Indianapolis almost immediately affected the economic environment of the town. William Holloway mentioned business specialization as an important byproduct of these rail lines in his 1870 *Indianapolis: A Historical and Statistical Sketch of the Railroad City*:

manufactures appeared, and would not disappear. “Stores” that had formerly mixed up dry goods, groceries, grain, hardware, earthenware, and even books, in their stock, began to select and confine themselves to one

⁷⁵ Bogle, 215.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 216.

⁷⁷ Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era 1850-1880*, 415.

or two classes of their former assortment. Dry goods houses which kept neither coffee nor mackerel, appeared. Grocery establishments which sold neither calico nor crockery became visible. Business showed its growth in its divisions.⁷⁸

The specialization adopted by the general business community later became part of the core identity and appeal of the Indianapolis Wholesale District, with its long list of wholesaling trades.

Public reception of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad ranged from frustration with the business processes associated with railroad building to elation at the improved economic prospects for Indianapolis. Most newspaper articles in the latter half of the 1840s positively addressed railroad development and its effect on Indianapolis. For instance, an *Indiana State Journal* article in 1845 predicted that the railroad connection between Madison and Indianapolis would start the capital city on the path towards becoming one of the most important business cities in the West.⁷⁹ An article from July of the same year entitled “Indianapolis—Its Prospects,” declared railroad transportation to be less expensive and risky than other forms of travel. The article’s author, likely one of the *Journal*’s editors, did not doubt that Indianapolis would become one of the most flourishing inland cities of the West.⁸⁰

The public generally embraced the arrival of the railroad in 1847. Not surprisingly, railroads became a dominant topic in local newspapers. The Madison and Indianapolis Railroad Company reduced rates for a week and held a community-wide

⁷⁸ W.R. Holloway, *Indianapolis: A Historical and Statistical Sketch of the Railroad City, A Chronicle of Its Social, Municipal, Commerce and Manufacturing Progress with Full Statistical Tables* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Journal Press, 1870), 83.

⁷⁹ *Indiana State Journal*, April 2, 1845.

⁸⁰ *Indiana State Journal*, July 16, 1845. The newspaper did not attribute the article to a specific author.

celebration on October 1, 1847, to celebrate the rail line's arrival.⁸¹ Many believed Indianapolis to be on track to become a great railroad city. By the early 1850s, railroad topics ranging from public support for railroad companies to rate listings appeared in every issue of the local newspapers like the *Indiana State Journal* and the *Locomotive*.⁸²

A number of other railroad lines developed in Indiana within a few years of the first arrival. While railroad expansion in the 1840s had mainly occurred along the East Coast, the 1850s witnessed an accelerated growth in midwestern railroad development. A 2006 quantitative study by the National Bureau of Economic Research of railroad progress in the 1850s states that only about a third of Indiana's population had rail access by 1850, yet that number more than doubled to nearly seventy percent by 1860.⁸³ A railroad map for stockholders published by the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad Company in March of 1850 shows a large number of prospective lines, most with a projected completion within the next year.⁸⁴ The map depicted fifteen lines, followed by a report that summarized the progress of each line. The Madison and Indianapolis Railroad and the Shelbyville Lateral Branch line were in use by 1850, while the construction of several other lines was near conclusion. The engineer who created the map anticipated that most lines would connect with the Madison and Indianapolis line, with six lines connecting directly with Indianapolis.⁸⁵

⁸¹ *Indiana State Journal*, September 28, 1847.

⁸² The *Locomotive* was a weekly newspaper published each Saturday. The *Indiana State Journal* was published daily, except for Sundays.

⁸³ Michael R. Haines and Robert A. Margo, *Railroads and Local Economic Development: The United States in the 1850s*, NBER Working Paper Series (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2006), 11. The study defined rail access as a rail line passing through county boundaries.

⁸⁴ Refer to Figure 2 on page 42 for an overall sense of railroad placement in Indiana.

⁸⁵ *Railroad Map of the State of Indiana, with a Statement of the Condition of the Roads Now in Process of Construction. Published by the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad Company for the Stockholders. March 1850.* New York: Printed by George E. Leefe, 1850. The roads on the map include the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad, Shelbyville Lateral Branch Railroad, Shelbyville and Rushville

In the 1850s only ten of the companies authorized to build railroads showed actual progress. By the end of 1850, both the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad Company and the New Albany and Salem Railroad Company had begun laying track, with twenty-eight and thirty-five miles laid, respectively.⁸⁶ In 1851, the Terre Haute and Indianapolis Railroad Company completed almost its entire seventy-three-mile route.⁸⁷ Rapid building continued during the 1850s. The New Albany and Salem Railroad, a 288-mile route from New Albany to Michigan City, opened by mid-1854, linking the Ohio River and Lake Michigan.⁸⁸ By the beginning of 1855, railroads operated over fourteen hundred miles within Indiana.⁸⁹ The lines connected to Indianapolis created what some contemporaries called a “wagon wheel” effect, with railroads radiating in every direction from Indianapolis like the spokes of a wagon wheel.

Booster literature heralded Indianapolis as the railroad city, emphasizing the city’s growing economic prospects. Commercial interest groups, such as the Indianapolis Board of Trade, created booster books as a form of exaggerated advertisement about the progress of all facets of life in Indianapolis. Booster literature often linked the concept of Indianapolis’s progress with a growth in wholesaling. Numerous books appeared in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that detailed the projects and potential of Indianapolis. These books always devoted a section to the city’s economic prospects.

Railroad, Shelbyville and Knightsville Railroad, Columbus, Nashville, and Bloomington Railroad, Martinsville Branch Railroad, Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad, Indianapolis and Peru Railroad, Indianapolis and Lafayette Railroad, Lafayette and Crawfordsville Railroad, Terre Haute, Indianapolis and Richmond Railroad, New Albany and Salem Railroad, Jeffersonville and Columbus Railroad, Lawrenceburg and Greensburg Railroad, and Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad.

⁸⁶ Bogle, “Railroad Building in Indiana,” 217.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 217.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 220.

W.R. Holloway's *Indianapolis: A Historical and Statistical Sketch of the Railroad City* (1870), an early example of this booster literature, split Indianapolis history into four stages: 1820-1825—first settlement and isolation, 1825 -1847—location of capitol and arrival of railroad, 1845-1861—period of new life, and 1861—breakout of the Civil War, to present (1870).⁹⁰ Holloway argued that the railroad was a catalyst for growth, particularly in his ninth chapter on the third period of economic growth after the introduction of railroads. For example, he stated that Indianapolis businessmen did not pursue jobbing extensively before 1847. He noted the establishment of the city's first wholesale dry goods store, Joseph Little and Company, in 1847.⁹¹ Later booster literature shared Holloway's view on the importance of railroad development. An 1896 publication, *Indianapolis of To-Day*, noted that "the railroads in fact have made Indianapolis, and she is justly styled the 'Railway City.'"⁹² Holloway and other boosters linked the development of railroads in Indianapolis to the city's economic growth.

As with many booster texts, Holloway rested his assertion of the superiority of Indianapolis on its railroad connections. Holloway boasted that in 1870, eleven railways converged at the Indianapolis Union Depot, located on Louisiana Street between Meridian and Illinois streets.⁹³ Noting the rapid expansion of the city's railway system, Holloway saw a need for a larger Union Depot.⁹⁴ In a section of the book specifically devoted to railroads, Holloway declared Indianapolis to be the only city in the world to have railroads radiating from a union depot.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Holloway, *Indianapolis*.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 89. Jobbing is used synonymously with wholesaling.

⁹² Consolidated Illustrating Co, *Indianapolis of To-Day* (Indianapolis, IN: Consolidated Illustrating Co., 1896), 60.

⁹³ Holloway, 258.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 324.

The Indianapolis Board of Trade produced circulars that boasted of Indianapolis's improved economic situation and railroad connections. The Board of Trade sent the circulars to other publications, such as newspapers and city directories. An Indianapolis Board of Trade circular in the February 11, 1854, issue of the *Locomotive* stressed the importance of railroads to the capital, stating that the city had seen an increase in population and trade since the completion of the Madison and Indianapolis line in the fall of 1847.⁹⁶ In true booster fashion, the circular contended that Indianapolis had been called the "greatest railroad city in the world." The circular also listed all of the complete railroads, as well as the ones in progress. The Board of Trade asserted, "railroads are revolutionizing inland commerce, and are turning trade and travel from their former channels."⁹⁷

A year later, the Board of Trade published a report and circular in A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis directory that focused on railroad development. The Board claimed Indianapolis as "the place where the ways meet,' and is more a centre of transit by Railroads than any other inland town in the world."⁹⁸ The Board viewed railroads as the vehicle for Indianapolis's economic growth. The railroad lines "furnish[ed] the most constant, prompt and reliable mode of internal communication."⁹⁹ The Board also recognized the direct link between railroad development and economic growth, pointing out the utility and efficiency of railroads during the winter when cities dependent on waterways for trade coped with frozen rivers.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ The *Locomotive*, February 11, 1854.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ A.C. Howard, *A.C. Howard's Directory, For the City of Indianapolis: Containing a Correct List of Citizens' Names, Their Residence and Place of Business; with a historical sketch of Indianapolis, from its earliest History to the Present Day. First Issue* (Indianapolis: A.C. Howard, Publisher, 1857), 52.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 60.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 52.

Economic interest groups consisted of many of the city's businessmen, including several Indianapolis wholesalers, emphasized the importance of railroads to the city's commercial development.¹⁰¹ The Indianapolis Board of Trade actively promoted the notion of the railroad as a catalyst for development, as well as Indianapolis's rail line superiority, through their circulars and reports. The Commercial Club, another local economic interest group and the precursor to the current Chamber of Commerce, addressed many railroad-related topics in their meetings.¹⁰² For example, a Commercial Club published a booklet of 1894 addressed the best way to relieve the public from the dangers and inconveniences of trains crossing streets. One solution called for elevated tracks.¹⁰³ The booklet included the perspective of a railroad company officer, J.Q. Van Winkle, who expressed interest in the elevated track solution, but stressed the importance of a positive relationship between the people of Indianapolis and railroad companies. The booklet quoted Van Winkle as saying, "the railroads made this city. This is an indisputable fact. The time is not far back when great inducements were offered to railroad companies to build lines into the city."¹⁰⁴ Evidence of a continued discussion appeared in the Commercial Club's 1901 report with its dialogue on the utility and placement of elevated railroad tracks in downtown Indianapolis.¹⁰⁵ Further examples of

¹⁰¹ Frederick D. Kershner, "A Social and Cultural History of Indianapolis," Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1950. The Chamber of Commerce in existence today combined the previous Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Trade, and the Commercial Club. Community leaders established the Chamber of Commerce in 1864, a move that Kershner listed as an indication of the permanence of the city's commercial progress in his 1950 dissertation on the social and cultural history of Indianapolis.

¹⁰² In 1890, Eli Lilly, Sr., founded and led an ambitious economic interest group, Commercial Club, which established developmental goals for Indianapolis.

¹⁰³ Commercial Club, *The Railroad Street Crossing Problem in Indianapolis and its Solution: A Report of Information on the Subject Gathered by the Secretary of the Commercial Club and the Discussion of It* (Indianapolis: Carlon & Hollenbeck, 1894), 6.

¹⁰⁴ Commercial Club, 20.

¹⁰⁵ Commercial Club, "1901 Commercial Club Report," Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce Records, 1890-1959. Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, 16.

railroad interest among business leaders abound, testifying to the importance of the railroad network to Indianapolis.

Track placement in Indianapolis affected economic development. While some rail lines cut through northern sections of Indianapolis, railroad companies generally built their lines south of downtown.¹⁰⁶ Areas near the tracks became the industrial and retail portions of the city, replacing former housing. The high concentration of economic activity on Washington Street heightened the need for nearby railroad development. Areas north of Monument Circle developed as residential properties.

In the 1860s and 1870s, wholesaling firms crowded around the Union Depot, with the highest concentration of wholesale firms centered on South Meridian Street. Before 1880, owners' names identified their buildings, such as the Schnull Block on South Meridian Street or Wallace's Block on South Delaware Street. The blocks on South Meridian Street and by the Union Depot usually housed several wholesale firms in one building. These blocks were subdivided into multiple units, rented by individual wholesalers, or several business owners collaborated to build a single block and split it among themselves.¹⁰⁷

Rather than placing a number of lines in busy areas of downtown Indianapolis, the Indianapolis Union Railway Company created the Belt Railroad, a line that curved around the south side of downtown and fed into the Union Depot. The Indianapolis Union Depot has been housed in two locations and three buildings over its lifetime, with the earliest location on Louisiana Street between Illinois and Meridian, and the later two buildings located at the present site at the intersection of South Illinois Street and Jackson

¹⁰⁶ Refer to Figure 3 on page 43 for an 1870 map on railroad placement in Indianapolis.

¹⁰⁷ James A. Glass and Mary Ellen Gadski, *Wholesale District National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission, 1982), Item 8, 3.

Place. One of the first of its kind, the Indianapolis Union Depot represented progress and possibility for the city's economic community. With such meaning placed on the building, great debate surrounded the placement of the Union Depot.¹⁰⁸ Early city businessmen realized that more traffic would pass through the depot, making its location crucial when picking a section of downtown that could facilitate such activity.

Expansion of wholesale business and birth of the Wholesale District, 1850s-1860s

The city's railroad connection opened up new avenues for trade and manufacture in Indianapolis. The Wholesale District resulted from this expanded trade. In his book on boosterism and business in the Midwest, Carl Abbott asserted that completion of Indianapolis's railroad network inspired interest in wholesaling. Abbott noted that "newspapers in 1854 and 1855 called for the establishment of wholesale houses and in 1857 backed efforts to publicize Indianapolis's advantages as a jobbing center."¹⁰⁹ An 1854 article in the *Locomotive* mentioned the need for more wholesale dry goods firms to improve the wholesaling market in Indianapolis, stating that such firms would flourish in the capital city.¹¹⁰ Newspaper articles during the 1850s repeated the pleas for the establishment of wholesaling houses to compete with nearby markets.¹¹¹ The city's wholesale development appears to have been steady but slow-moving. The *1855 Grooms and Smith's Indianapolis Directory* listed eight grocers and two dry good merchants as

¹⁰⁸ Madison, 86.

¹⁰⁹ Carl Abbott, *Boosters and Businessmen: Popular Economic Thought and Urban Growth in the Antebellum Middle West* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 175.

¹¹⁰ The *Locomotive*, September 9, 1854.

¹¹¹ The *Locomotive*, April 1, 1854; The *Locomotive*, September 16, 1854.

wholesalers.¹¹² By 1860, Sutherland and McEvoy's city directory recorded sixteen wholesale grocers and four wholesale dry goods firms.¹¹³

Many attribute the beginning of the formal Wholesale District to Henry Schnull.¹¹⁴ In 1855, Henry Schnull formed the wholesale grocery firm of Schnull and Company, originally located at the corner of Washington and Delaware streets.¹¹⁵ Schnull pursued his vision of a wholesale district by buying lots, razing houses, establishing speculative wholesale houses, and persuading other businessmen to join his venture.¹¹⁶ Other businessmen followed Schnull's lead, building many wholesale warehouses on South Meridian Street, near many of the railroad companies' lines.

Local merchants picked up on the formation of a wholesale district shortly after the establishment of wholesaling firms such as Schnull and Company. An article from the July 5, 1856, issue of the *Locomotive* noted South Meridian Street as a location of future extensive wholesaling. The writer mentioned the construction of three warehouses on South Meridian, commenting that the buildings would "at once be an ornament to the street and city, and furnish rooms that the growing wants of our city demand."¹¹⁷ While the Wholesale District did not take off immediately, early discussions of the area's

¹¹² *Grooms and Smith's Indianapolis Directory, City Guide, and Business Mirror, Or Indianapolis as it is in 1855* (Indianapolis: A.C. Grooms and W.T. Smith), 1855.

¹¹³ *Sutherland and McEvoy's Indianapolis City Directory and Business Mirror, For 1860-61* (Indianapolis: Sutherland and McEvoy, 1860), 257, 258.

¹¹⁴ *Indianapolis News*, November 4, 1905. *Indianapolis Star*, June 22, 1936. *Indianapolis Star*, May 15, 1938. John H. B. Nowland, *Sketches of Prominent Citizens of 1876: With a Few of the Pioneers of the City and Country who have Passed Away* (Indianapolis: Tifford and Carlon, 1877), 350. *Indianapolis News*, November 4, 1905. *Indianapolis Star*, November 5, 1905. Both articles appeared after Schnull's death in 1905.

¹¹⁵ Max R. Hyman, *The Journal Handbook of Indianapolis* (Indianapolis, IN: The Indianapolis Journal Newspaper Co., 1902), 347. *Indianapolis Star*, May 15, 1938. This article provided a historical sketch of the firm due to the appointment of a new CEO.

¹¹⁶ Glass and Gadski, *National Register Nomination Form*, Item 8, 3.

¹¹⁷ *The Locomotive*, July 5, 1856.

development indicated the business community's awareness of how a wholesale district could help the city and aid commercial growth.

The Indianapolis business community understood the importance of encouraging the city's wholesale growth. While specialization of wholesalers, and thus a greater variety of goods began to appear in the 1850s, local businessmen promoted the continued increase of wholesale houses. Many saw a connection between more dry goods houses and more city trade. A *Locomotive* article from 1853 asserted that merchants bought their goods in the city where they purchased their dry goods. The article read,

our Grocers, Book men, Shoe men, and in fact nearly every kind of business, feels the want of jobbing houses, established with capital enough to prevent merchants [from] going through your city to purchase their dry goods.—Where they purchase dry goods, they purchase other articles, and if they can be supplied here, every branch of trade will be benefitted. We must have jobbing houses.¹¹⁸

Over a year later, an article on the need for dry goods firms appeared in an 1854 issue of the *Locomotive*, stating that it was the best time for establishing dry goods and jobbing houses in the city. In September 1854, there was only one business that fit the description, but the city needed more for competition, which would lead to increased economic activity. Indianapolis had many good wholesale grocers, but the writer felt that trade could be improved because many people purchased their groceries where they purchased their dry goods. The author then recommended establishing six to ten wholesale dry goods houses, asserting that the dry goods trade would flourish.¹¹⁹

By 1857, Indianapolis merchants began proactively pursuing the establishment of more wholesale dry goods houses. Andrew Wallace, a local businessman who strongly supported the movement to increase the number of wholesale dry goods stores, chaired

¹¹⁸ The *Locomotive*, August 6, 1853.

¹¹⁹ The *Locomotive*, September 9, 1854.

the first meeting held on July 29.¹²⁰ The merchants attending felt recent developments in railroad connections opened up the city's chances for extending commercial dominance beyond the local economy. The group created a circular that described the transportation benefits of the city as well as its potential for economic growth. This circular appeared in several publications, including the *Locomotive* and A.C. Howard's 1857 city directory. Despite holding several additional meetings in August of 1857, the national economic panic of that year kept the group from fully pursuing efforts to encourage the city's overall growth.¹²¹ The establishment and subsequent failure between 1857 and 1859 of the dry goods firm Wright, Blake and Company added to local merchants' uneasiness about wholesale trade in Indianapolis. Yet, returned prosperity by the end of the decade restored hope in the capital city's commercial development, with an overall increase in the number of wholesaling houses, establishment of four dry goods firms by 1860, and renewed boosterism on the part of city businessmen.¹²²

Both business and city directories illuminated the increase in wholesaling through comparisons of the number of existing wholesale firms from year to year. Comparing A.C. Howard's 1857 directory, and later compilations such as *Sutherland's 1861 Indianapolis Directory* showed an increase in the number of wholesalers in Indianapolis.¹²³ Howard's 1857 directory included a business section that categorized all of the businesses in town and listed their addresses. Wholesale grocery concerns emerged as key early operators. The 1857 directory listed seven wholesale grocery firms, most of which were located on Washington Street, although the firm Ross and Harper was housed

¹²⁰ Madison, 179.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 187.

¹²³ Solomon Hathaway, *Hathaway's Indianapolis Business Directory, City Guide, and Gab Book* (Indianapolis: Solomon Hathaway & Co., 1876).

in Robert's Block across from Union Depot. Sutherland's 1861 directory identified eight wholesale grocery firms, with three listed on South Meridian Street and two others found within the emerging Wholesale District.¹²⁴ Sutherland's 1861 directory also displayed a shift in wholesale business away from Washington Street to South Meridian, perhaps signifying a reliance on railroad transport versus wagon transport on the National Road.

A greater diversity of wholesaling businesses came about due to railroad links within Indianapolis. In the 1850s grocery firms led the wholesalers. Many of the booster books written in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as John E. Land's 1881 *The Industries of Indianapolis*, proudly listed the wide range of wholesale firms.¹²⁵ The chapter on wholesale trade in Ernest Bucknell's *Indianapolis Illustrated*, an 1893 booster book endorsed by the Board of Trade and Commercial Club, listed dry goods, millinery, drugs, hardware, queensware, grocery, confectionary, and poultry houses as areas where Indianapolis wholesaling excelled.¹²⁶ Bucknell attributed the variety to the city's "direct communication with many cities from which the wares to be sold at wholesale must be obtained."¹²⁷ The Indianapolis wholesale market focused heavily on wholesale grocery for the duration of the Wholesale District, yet eventually diversified enough to transform Indianapolis into a strong and diverse wholesaling center.

Advertising in newspapers and city directories also reflected a shift in Indianapolis wholesaling through the increased presence of advertisements for local wholesalers over those for firms based in Cincinnati or along the East Coast. Before the

¹²⁴ *Sutherland's Indianapolis Directory and Business Mirror for 1861* (Indianapolis: Bowen, Stewart & Co., 1861). In this case, business mirror is synonymous with business directory.

¹²⁵ John E. Land, *The Industries of Indianapolis: Trade, Commerce & Manufacturers* (Indianapolis: J.E. Land, 1881).

¹²⁶ Bucknell, 135

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

district's development, Cincinnati and other major wholesaling centers advertised in Indianapolis papers. With the blooming of the Indianapolis Wholesale District, particularly from the 1860s on, wholesaling firms placed advertisements in local newspapers to encourage merchants to look no further than Indianapolis for their wholesaling needs. Advertising for wholesaling businesses elsewhere continued, but to a lesser degree.

Additionally, railroad links to other sections of the Midwest, as well as other regions of the United States, allowed Indianapolis wholesalers to sell goods to a wider customer base than the local one of the pre-railroad decades. The *Journal of Indianapolis* (1902), listed the scope of business for many of the wholesaling firms in the district at the onset of the twentieth century. Some wholesale companies remained focused on the Midwest in their distribution. For example, Daggett & Company, a wholesale confectionary firm established in 1856 and at one time located on West Georgia Street, mainly traded throughout Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois.¹²⁸ Other firms also embraced the connections afforded to them by Indianapolis's railroad network. Kipp Brothers Company, a wholesale fancy goods, druggists' and stationers' sundries firm located on South Meridian, traded over a wider geographical area. Its business extended from Indiana to Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Texas, Iowa, Nebraska, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Alabama, and Georgia, with branches in Louisville, Kentucky, and Dallas, Texas.¹²⁹ Such a business territory would have been impossible in the period prior to railroad development in Indianapolis.

¹²⁸ Max R. Hyman, *The Journal Handbook of Indianapolis* (Indianapolis, IN: The Indianapolis Journal Newspaper Co., 1902), 343.

¹²⁹ Hyman, 342-343.

The boundaries of the forming Wholesale District related directly to the relationship between wholesaling and transportation.¹³⁰ South Meridian Street became the center of the Wholesale District, as well as the street in the city with the heaviest concentration of firms. According to *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* from 1887, 1898, and 1914, the number of wholesale businesses dwindled as one moved further from the Union Depot and train shed.¹³¹ Such spatial arrangements displayed the direct connection between the location of wholesale firms and railroad lines. Supplementary businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, and manufacturers, also emerged and coexisted with wholesalers in the district, displaying the interconnectedness between the service industry, wholesaling, manufacturing, and railroads.

Conclusion

The growth of the Indianapolis Wholesale District depended on the development of Indianapolis as a midwestern railroad hub. George Rogers Taylor, Robert Fogel, Albert Fishlow, and Douglass North, among many other historians, have debated the role of railroads in nineteenth-century American economic growth. Railroads efficiently connected the isolated capital city to a wider region of manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers. Prior to the 1847 arrival of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad, city businesses were isolated. Available forms of transport, the White River, Michigan Road, National Road, and the Central Canal, disappointed expectations due to both difficult travel conditions and maintenance costs. The lack of transportation links inhibited the

¹³⁰ The City of Indianapolis and the National Register of Historic Places each has its own ideas of what the district includes. Historically, the district included parts of South Capitol Avenue, South Delaware Street, East Georgia Street, West Georgia Street, South Illinois Street, Jackson Place (location of the Union Depot), West Louisiana Street, East Maryland Street, West Maryland Street, South Meridian Street, South Pennsylvania Street, and West South Street.

¹³¹ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Indianapolis, Indiana* (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1887, 1898, 1914).

growth of Indianapolis's businesses, including wholesaling, in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Eastern wholesaling centers such as Philadelphia and river-based centers such as Cincinnati dominated the wholesale trade of central Indiana.

However, the introduction of the railroad network in 1847 and its subsequent expansion provided Indianapolis businessmen direct and efficient transportation and communication with manufacturers, thereby diminishing the need to rely on distant wholesaling centers. Railroad lines also expanded Indianapolis wholesalers' sales territories beyond their previously local customer base. As a result, the wholesale district grew steadily. Wholesale companies placed their firms near the rail lines in Indianapolis's downtown, with the heaviest concentration of firms located on South Meridian Street. Businesses specialized in a wide array of wholesaling areas from dry goods to furniture. The history of Indianapolis Wholesale District demonstrates the effect of railroad development on economic growth in the nineteenth-century Midwest. These railroad connections enabled the Indianapolis Wholesale District to emerge as a regional hub by connecting the city to far-reaching resources and customer bases.

Figure 2: 1850 Map of Railroads in Indiana, Image Courtesy Indiana Historical Society

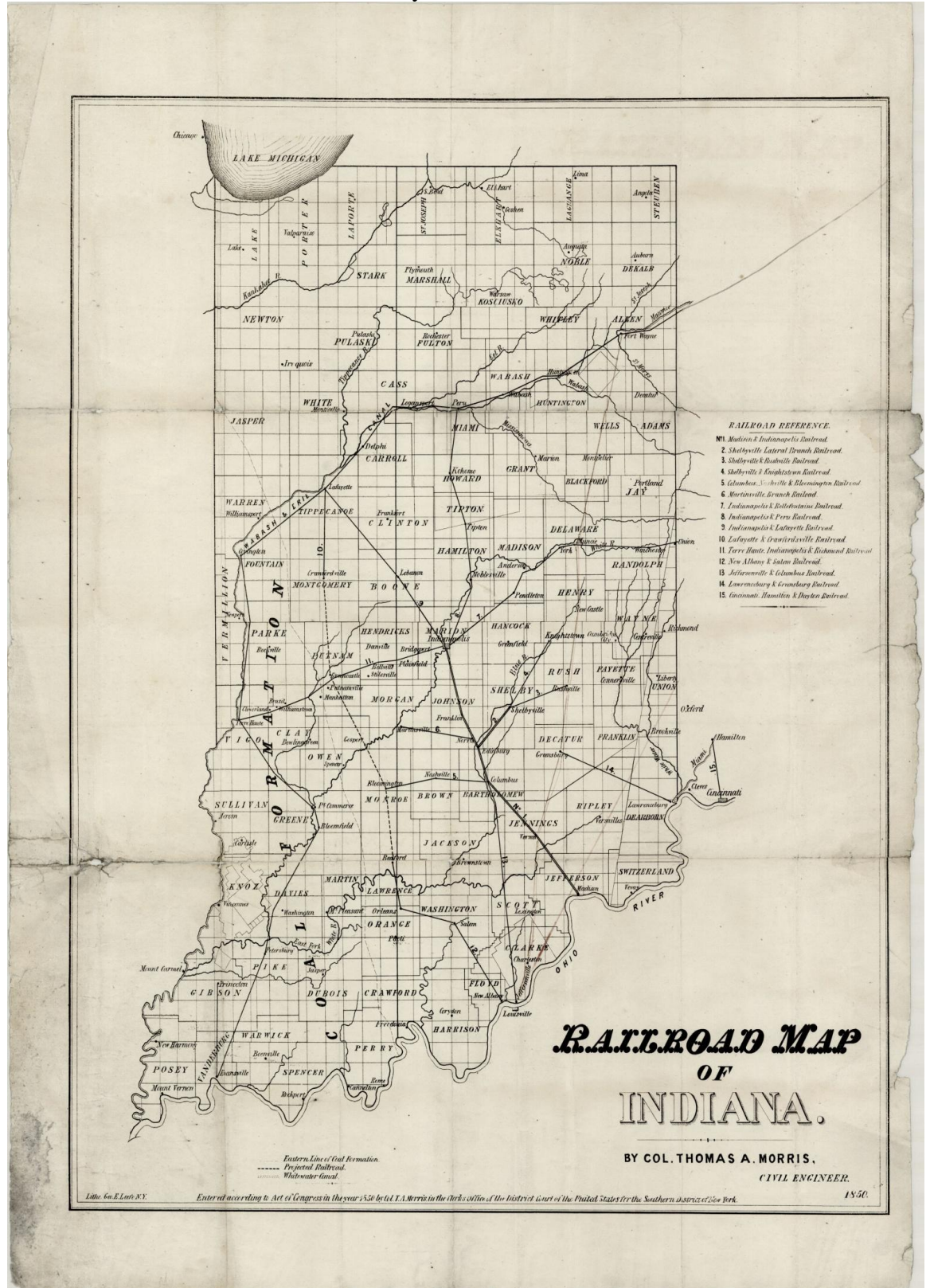
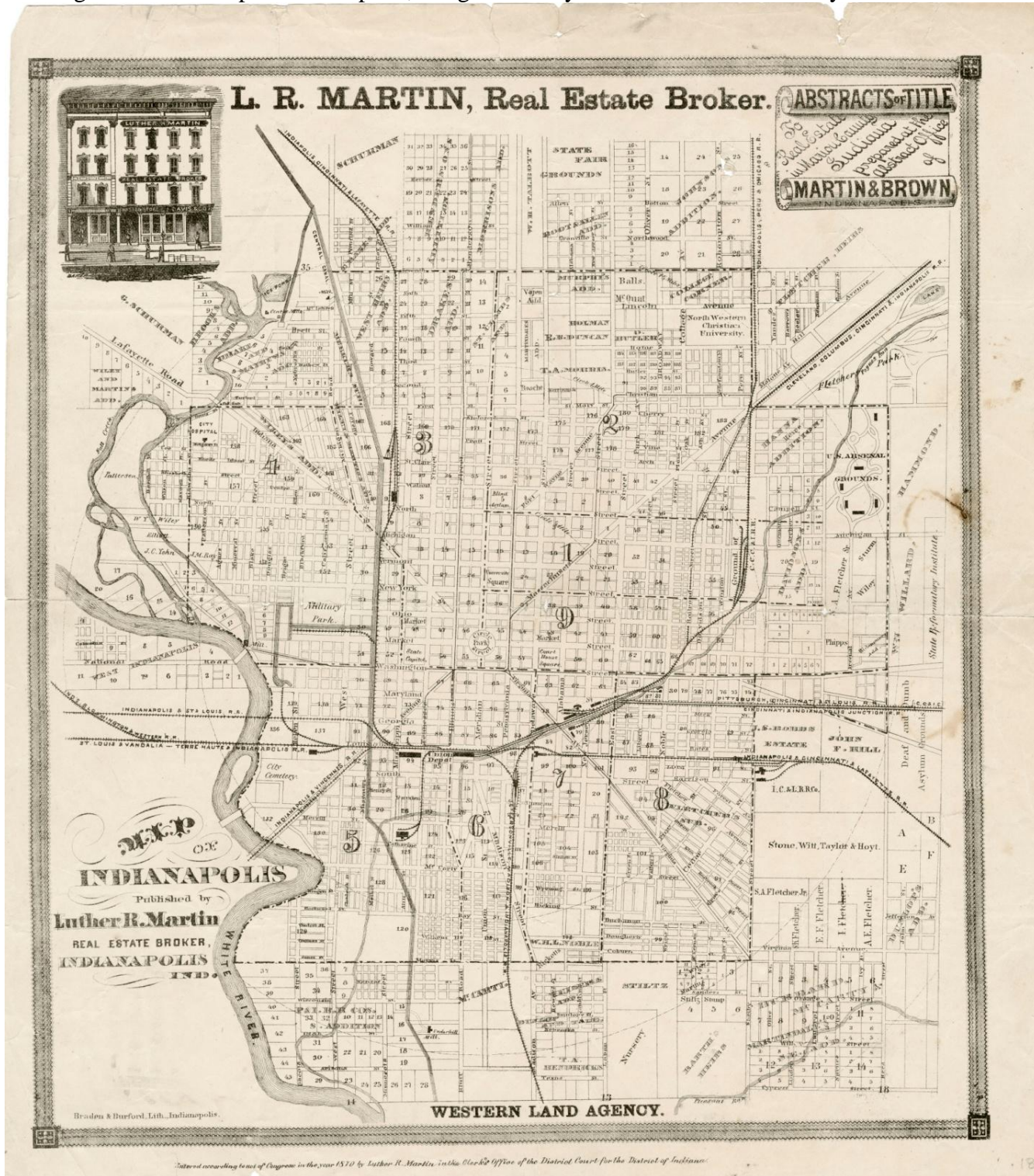


Figure 3: 1870 Map of Indianapolis, Image Courtesy Indiana Historical Society



Chapter Three: Development of the Indianapolis Wholesale District, 1860-1920

Tracking location and growth patterns for each trade found in the Indianapolis Wholesale District (IWD) demonstrates the development of the neighborhood as a local and regional hub for large-scale trade. Descriptions of specific wholesale firms identify materials traded, while also mentioning financial growth and customer bases.¹³² The company profiles also serve as tangible examples of the local and regional trade based in the IWD. Lastly, discussion of hotels, restaurants, retailers, and manufacturers located in or near the district, speaks to supplementary businesses spurred on by the high level of trade within the Wholesale District.

Shift from wholesale district to Wholesale District

Despite the area's growth since the 1860s, contemporaries did not refer to the wholesaling region of downtown Indianapolis as the Wholesale District until the 1890s. To use the title of Wholesale District for the neighborhood in the mid-nineteenth century imposes a unity and awareness that did not exist for several decades. By the turn of the century, however, sources ranging from booster books to newspaper articles referred to the area as the Wholesale District. For example, a 1905 article in the *New York Times* discussing a fire at the Grand Hotel mentions damage done to the wholesale district, with boundaries listed as Meridian Street, Louisiana Street, Jackson Place, and an alley.¹³³ Many late nineteenth-century references gave boundaries to the district, making it a distinct business district. Although one cannot be certain when the area received the

¹³² Financial information for the specific wholesaling companies primarily came from the credit reports of R.G. Dun and Company, with additional information from late-nineteenth century booster books. Searches for pertinent financial information in existing company records, census records, Indiana Secretary of State statistical data, and various records at the Indiana State Archives, including company dissolution files, proved to be unhelpful or no longer in existence.

¹³³ "Grand Hotel Saved," *New York Times*, February 21, 1905.

formal name of the Wholesale District, the density of wholesaling provided an identity for the neighborhood.

Social connections

Business interest groups were instrumental in building support for commercial growth, as well as awareness of wholesaling in the Wholesale District. The Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1864, joined with the Board of Trade in 1870.¹³⁴ In 1890, Eli Lilly founded the Commercial Club, an economic interest group established to achieve developmental goals for Indianapolis. The Commercial Club, which served as a precursor to the current Chamber of Commerce, addressed many trade-related topics in their meetings.

In the initial decade of the twentieth century, the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce Wholesale Trade Division became a valuable source of support and fraternity among wholesalers, as well as a symbol of the importance of wholesaling in the city. A definition of the division's function from a Chamber of Commerce scrapbook stated that it:

originates and directs Trade Extension trip—issues Shippers' Guides showing best shipping routes to surrounding territory—issues Railroad Telephone Directory for Shippers' convenience. Investigates delayed service. Co-operates with shippers and railroads in extending package care service and developing trade in the adjacent territory.¹³⁵

The division owned and published *'Heart O' Trade' The Indianapolis Trade Journal*, devoted to wholesale manufacturing and jobbing interests.¹³⁶ The Chamber of Commerce

¹³⁴ Today's Chamber of Commerce is a product of the combination of the previous Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Trade, and the Commercial Club.

¹³⁵ "Chamber of Commerce Scrapbook" Bound Volume 3014, Chamber of Commerce Papers (M0422), Indiana Historical Society, 22 June 2011.

¹³⁶ The Wholesale Trade Division purchased the *Indianapolis Trade Journal* in 1917 and renamed it 'Heart O' Trade.' Chamber of Commerce Collection (M422), Indiana Historical Society, Box 7, Folder 163, Wholesale Trade Division, 1917.

also held events for wholesale salesmen, such as the “Smoker for the Traveling Salesmen of the Indianapolis Market Given by the Chamber of Commerce. Auspices of the Wholesale Trade Division” complete with refreshments, cigars, and speakers, held on Friday, May 12, 1916.¹³⁷ In an April 1910 meeting of the Indianapolis Trade Association’s Board of Directors, the Trade Extension Division, headed by Harold Hibben, discussed a trip for salesmen of Trade Association members at the end of May and early June in 1910 that included a ride around the Belt Railway, luncheon at German House, and a thirty-town tour of northern Indiana.¹³⁸ Such Chamber of Commerce meeting minutes often contained names of prominent businessmen in the Wholesale District, such as Hollweg, Deschler, Hibben, Schnull, and Van Camp, demonstrating wholesalers’ participation in the Wholesale Trade Division.

Many meetings featured discussions of issues relevant to the district. By 1918, the Wholesale Trade Division had begun discussions about trucking in the downtown area, especially in the Wholesale District. The Return Loads Committee of the Wholesale Trade Division addressed the possibility of a central loading warehouse rather than loading at each wholesale house.¹³⁹ The committee thought this central depot would prevent wholesalers or manufacturers from running around the center of town to deliver small shipments.¹⁴⁰ Committee members debated the issue for the rest of the summer of

¹³⁷ “Chamber of Commerce Scrapbook.” Wholesale Trade Division records for an April 1916 meeting mentioned talks of creating a separate traveling salesmen division, undoubtedly due to the sheer number of traveling salesmen employed by the city’s wholesaling houses.

¹³⁸ July 12, 1910 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, Indianapolis Trade Association, 8.

¹³⁹ Meeting Notes for March 22, 1918, Return Loads Committee of the Wholesale Trade Division, Chamber of Commerce.

¹⁴⁰ Meeting Notes for April 17, 1918, Return Loads Committee of the Wholesale Trade Division, Chamber of Commerce. Meeting notes from this date hinted at the fact that some wholesalers had moved from the downtown area.

1918.¹⁴¹ The central depot issue illustrated the growth of truck delivery in the district and its problems, as well as the Chamber's attention to detail in the Wholesale District.

The Indianapolis Board of Trade similarly connected itself with the business of the Wholesale District. The Board of Trade published several circulars in newspapers and city directories that boasted of the city's facilities for trade, often highlighting the importance of wholesaling and its positive effects on the local and regional economies.¹⁴²

Varieties of Wholesaling Trades in the IWD

With the exception of some wholesalers of smaller items, such as fancy goods or notions, many firms in the district pursued only one product line. Between 1860 and 1920 a variety in wholesale trade options allowed firms to pursue one line of trade, demonstrating that better transport, wider sales areas, and single-line wholesaling went hand in hand.

Despite the expansion of wholesale trade in Indianapolis, many firms closed in ten years or less. Several businesses lasted for longer than a decade, including the grocery firm Schnull and Company, which survived for over thirty years. The district saw multiple wholesaling houses emerge in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that included several categories. Food wholesalers included: bakers; bread, butter, eggs, and cheese; cakes and confectionery; flour and feed; grocers; meats; oysters and fish; teas and coffees; and wines and liquors. Household goods trade included: books and stationery; boots and shoes; carpets; china, glass, and queensware; cigars and tobacco; clothing; rubber for clothing; druggists; dry goods; fancy goods; furniture; hats, caps, and

¹⁴¹ Meeting Notes for the September 19, 1918, Return Loads Committee of the Wholesale Trade Division, Chamber of Commerce. Notes on this issue end with the possibility of building a new loading station at the corner of Missouri and Market streets, located a few blocks from the Wholesale District.

¹⁴² Circulars functioned as persuasive essays on different aspects of Indianapolis's economic life.

furs; millinery; notions; paper; tobacco leaf; toys; trunks; watches, clocks, and jewelry; and wallpaper. Hardware and tools included: hardware; harness and saddle; and tinner's supplies. The length and variety of this list speaks to the specialization and range of wholesale trade in the IWD.

Development of the Major Types of Wholesaling over District's History¹⁴³

Food and Drink-Related Wholesaling

Food and drink-related trade remained the leader in Indianapolis wholesaling during the course of the Wholesale District's history. The wholesale grocery industry emerged early because of the universal need for foodstuffs. Wholesale liquor firms outnumbered many of the other firm types until the state's prohibition law passed the legislature in 1918. The Wholesale District also boasted several longstanding confectionery and bakery firms. Of the major categories of wholesaling, the food and drink-related wholesaling businesses excelled in number of firms in the Wholesale District.

Grocery

Grocery businesses stocked a variety of food-related goods. For example, the firm Kothe, Wells and Bauer carried full lines of staple and fancy groceries, specializing in teas, coffees, and sugars. Here, fancy goods referred to "canned and potted meats, fruits and preserves, sauces, pickles, spices, baking powders, etc., also handling the best brands

¹⁴³ City directories from 1855 to 1920 displayed change in number and location of firms over time. For the purpose of this study, I grouped and tracked firms of major categories of wholesaling. The categories of food-related wholesaling, clothing and home-related wholesaling, and tool-related wholesaling that I tracked for this study do not indicate nineteenth-century categories.

of smoking and chewing tobaccos and cigars, with other articles appertaining generally to the business.”¹⁴⁴

Grocers were among the first wholesalers in Indianapolis. Since the 1850s, wholesale grocers comprised one of the largest categories of firms in the district. Comparison of Indianapolis city directories dating from the late 1850s to 1920 shows that wholesale grocers consistently comprised one of the largest groups of businesses in the city. Financially, the wholesale grocers remained one of the more lucrative branches of trade, with firms bringing in large profits each year. For example, while the aggregate profit for the city’s wholesale grocery firms remained below \$400,000 in 1860, the number grew to \$6,443,150 by 1870.¹⁴⁵

The inception of the Wholesale District ties directly to the expansion of wholesale grocery in the Hoosier capital. The Indianapolis Wholesale District dates back to 1857 when Henry and August Schnull sold groceries in bulk to be resold by their purchasers at retail.¹⁴⁶ The two brothers began to buy up real estate on South Meridian Street, a previously residential area, to make the street the trade center of the city. Prior to its existence as a business corridor, South Meridian Street functioned as a high-end residential neighborhood; but, in 1861, First Baptist Church located at the corner of Maryland and Meridians streets burned down.¹⁴⁷ The Schnull brothers bought the lot and constructed their first building on Meridian, a four-story structure. The brothers next

¹⁴⁴ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 20.

¹⁴⁵ Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 375. Inflation during and after the Civil War alters the reality of this comparison.

¹⁴⁶ Indianapolis Board of Trade, *The Industries of the City of Indianapolis* (Chicago: A. N. Marquis and Company, 1889), 16.

¹⁴⁷ “Death has Come to Henry Schnull,” *Indianapolis News*, November 4, 1905.

bought the residence of Lewis Hasselman, located next to the First Baptist Church's lot, and tore down the home to erect another business block.¹⁴⁸

The Schnulls sold the property with the stipulation that the land must be used for business purposes.¹⁴⁹ While August ultimately returned to their native Germany, Henry stayed and continued to run their wholesale grocery firm for many decades. Other wholesalers called him the father of the Wholesale District.¹⁵⁰ As noted by credit reports from R.G. Dun and Company, Henry Schnull continued to do a large business and make money, with his personal worth valued at approximately \$400,000 in 1879, a considerably higher amount than most wholesalers in the district.¹⁵¹ The company's business extended throughout Indiana, Western Ohio, and Central and Southern Illinois.¹⁵²

Other businessmen also saw potential profit in establishing wholesale grocery firms in the district, especially along South Meridian Street. Many of the city's wholesale grocers had already established storefronts on Washington Street. A.C. Howard's 1857 directory listed seven grocers on Washington Street and one in Robert's Block, opposite Union Depot.¹⁵³ Three years later, the 1860 city directory listed sixteen wholesalers, four

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Indianapolis Board of Trade, *Industries of Indianapolis*, 19.

¹⁵⁰ "Death has Come to Henry Schnull," *Indianapolis News*, November 4, 1905.

¹⁵¹ Indiana, Vol. 72, p. 414, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

¹⁵² Consolidated Illustrating Co., *Indianapolis of To-Day* (Indianapolis: Consolidated Illustrating Co, 1896), 207.

¹⁵³ A.C. Howard, *A.C. Howard's Directory, For the City of Indianapolis: Containing a Correct List of Citizens' Names, Their Residence and Place of Business; with a historical sketch of Indianapolis, from its earliest History to the Present Day. First Issue* (Indianapolis: A.C. Howard, Publisher, 1857) , 229.

of whom were located on South Meridian Street.¹⁵⁴ Washington Street housed the rest of the wholesale grocery businesses.

As with many of the branches of the city's wholesaling, location of firms shifted dramatically by 1870. South Meridian Street transitioned into the city's premiere wholesaling street by 1870. Five of the eight wholesale grocers relocated to South Meridian, while the remaining three located elsewhere within the area that was to become the Wholesale District.¹⁵⁵ Later city directories displayed a continued trend in the predominance of wholesale grocery businesses on South Meridian Street.¹⁵⁶ Variety in firm locations appeared by the 1910 and 1920 Polk Indianapolis city directories, with firms locating to Georgia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware streets.¹⁵⁷ See Table 1 on page 91 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale grocery firms from 1855 to 1920.

Liquor

Wholesale liquor firms specialized in alcohol ranging from whiskey to wine. For example, the firm Mullaney and Hays specialized in "Mullaney and Hays' Old Crow Bourbon," a hand-made sour mash whiskey.¹⁵⁸ The company also carried Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and other kinds of bourbon and rye whiskies, fine imported brandies, gins

¹⁵⁴ *Sutherland and McEvoy's Indianapolis City Directory and Business Mirror, For 1860-1861* (Indianapolis: Bingham and Doughty, 1860), 258.

¹⁵⁵ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 233. By 1870, the firm Severin, Schnull & Co. formed. The firms spread out across South Meridian Street, although they were only within a few blocks of each other.

¹⁵⁶ R.L. Polk & Company, *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory* (Detroit, MI: R.L. Polk & Company, 1880), 569; *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 858; *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1177. Beginning with the 1880 directory, all of the subsequent directories showed that Severin and Schnull split to form separate grocery firms.

¹⁵⁷ *1910 Indianapolis Polk City Directory*, 1627; *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 2009.

¹⁵⁸ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 24.

and liquors, foreign and American wines, and cordials.¹⁵⁹ Indianapolis's wholesale liquor businesses generally traded within the region. For example, the wholesale liquor dealer Christian Koepper, a company located on Maryland Street in the late 1890s, traded throughout Indiana and parts of Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio.¹⁶⁰

The number of liquor wholesale businesses consistently outstripped other wholesale trades for much of the district's history. While wholesale houses like Kirland and Ryan, Ruschaupt, and Elliott and Ryan appeared prior to 1870, that year could be viewed as a watershed for the Indianapolis wholesale liquor trade. In 1860, the aggregate wholesale liquor sales amounted to roughly \$100,000; those sales increased to approximately \$2.8 million by 1870.¹⁶¹ Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis directory listed the impressive number of eighteen wholesale liquor firms, eleven of which had South Meridian addresses, although other locations included South Illinois, West Louisiana, and South Delaware.¹⁶² The *1880 Polk's Indianapolis City Directory* mentioned ten liquor wholesalers in the Wholesale District, in addition to two combined wholesale and retail liquor firms.¹⁶³ Most jobbers were located on South Meridian Street. Thirteen wholesale liquor establishments in the district appear in the *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*; several firms had been in business for over ten years.¹⁶⁴ The 1900 and 1910 directories featured twelve and eleven wholesale liquor businesses, respectively.¹⁶⁵ A comparison of city directory listings demonstrates the lack of continuity over time. While several firms like as George Pfau and Company, George Woodford and Company, and Jacob Metzger

¹⁵⁹ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 24.

¹⁶⁰ Consolidated Illustrating Co., *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 181.

¹⁶¹ Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 378. Holloway theorized that part of the increase could be attributed to the lowered tax on spirits, leading to increased liquor production.

¹⁶² *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 239.

¹⁶³ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 601.

¹⁶⁴ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 906-907.

¹⁶⁵ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1268; *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1733.

and Company lasted for several decades, most firms disappeared after only one. Perhaps this turnaround of businesses appears in the liquor trade due to the number of firms in the district each year. Following statewide prohibition in 1918, all of the wholesale liquor firms promptly vanished. It comes as no surprise that none appeared in the *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*.

Gapen and Catherwood, a wholesale liquor firm, achieved a moderately successful business. Late November 1871 Dun credit reports indicated an estimated worth of \$15,000 to \$18,000, with another increase to \$25,000 to \$30,000 by June of 1872.¹⁶⁶ A decade later, the wholesale liquor partners Pfau and Ward boasted a cash capital of about \$25,000, or \$30,000 with real estate values added to this firm's estimated wealth.¹⁶⁷ See Table 2 on page 92 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale liquor firms from 1855 to 1920.

Confectioners

Wholesale confectionery firms usually specialized in both the manufacture and distribution of goods.¹⁶⁸ The number of wholesale confectionery houses remained small during the course of the IWD's history. A.C. Howard's 1857 directory contained four combined retail and wholesale confectionery firms, with three located outside of the future boundaries of the Wholesale District. Daggett and Company, listed as a manufacturer of confectionery and wholesale dealer in tea and fruit, maintained facilities

¹⁶⁶ Indiana, Vol. 69, p. 612, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

¹⁶⁷ This entry dated to June 15, 1880. Indiana, Vol. 71, p. 234, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

¹⁶⁸ Ian McKay, "Capital and Labour in the Halifax Baking and Confectionery Industry during the Last Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Labour/Le Travail*, Volume 3 (1978): 63-108. This article characterized the confectionery industry as a highly-mechanized field, with business specializing in the manufacture and trade of goods.

for several decades at 30 Meridian Street.¹⁶⁹ Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis directory listed Daggett and Company as the sole wholesale confectioners in the Wholesale District.¹⁷⁰ By 1880, two of the city's three wholesale confectionery firms were located on South Meridian in the district.¹⁷¹ The number of wholesale confectionery houses in Indianapolis jumped to seven by 1890, with four of the firms located in the Wholesale District. Daggett and Company continued to operate on South Meridian Street.¹⁷² The location of the confectioners changed drastically by 1900, with two located on South Pennsylvania Street and Daggett and Company located on West Georgia. Daggett and Company's new address identified its primary office addresses, rather than a relocated warehouse.¹⁷³

By 1910, the Polk Indianapolis city directory recorded fourteen wholesale confectioners in town, with seven located within the Wholesale District. Maryland Street housed four of the companies, a surprising change from the previous decade. South Meridian merely housed two firms.¹⁷⁴ By 1920, the city had twenty-six wholesale confectionery dealers. Only three of them were located in the Wholesale District: the National Candy Company and Nichols Candy Company, both remaining on South Meridian Street, and the J.F. Darmody Company remaining on Maryland Street.¹⁷⁵ The dramatic shift from locations in the Wholesale District reflects a larger trend of wholesale firms moving away from the dense neighborhood located in the heart of downtown, towards areas with more room and better access to automobile-centered transportation.

¹⁶⁹ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis Directory*. The advertisement does not clarify whether the firm was located on North or South Meridian.

¹⁷⁰ *Hutchinson's Indianapolis City Directory, 1870*, 228-229.

¹⁷¹ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 564.

¹⁷² *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 846.

¹⁷³ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1148.

¹⁷⁴ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1595.

¹⁷⁵ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1973.

The manufacturing and wholesaling confectioners Daggett and Company began in 1856, although it was not incorporated until 1892.¹⁷⁶ Daggett and Company experienced success for over half a century, with R.G. Dun and Company credit reports mentioning its large and profitable business.¹⁷⁷ The partnership began modestly, with an estimated worth in 1861 of \$2,100. By December of 1871, that estimated worth increased from \$30,000 to \$40,000.¹⁷⁸ Dun credit reports indicated an estimated worth of \$50,000 in 1879, while an Indianapolis booster book noted the company's profit at \$125,000 in trade per year by the 1880s.¹⁷⁹ By the early twentieth century, Daggett and Company claimed the title of largest wholesale confectioner in the state.¹⁸⁰ By 1902, it employed one hundred workers on site and six traveling salesmen, with trade extending throughout Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio.¹⁸¹ See Table 3 on page 93 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale confectionery firms from 1855 to 1920.

Bakers

Wholesale bakers do not have clear presence in city directories until the 1890 *Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, although A.C. Howard's 1857 directory ran an advertisement for the Cincinnati Bakery and Confectionery, a retail and wholesale business located on East Washington Street.¹⁸² Lack of wholesale bakers in the district probably stemmed from the inherent difficulties of "freshness" associated with the baking

¹⁷⁶ Hyman, *Journal Handbook of Indianapolis*, 343.

¹⁷⁷ Indiana, Vol. 71, p. 206, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School. This note was included in an entry for March 25, 1879.

¹⁷⁸ Indiana, Vol. 67, p. 243, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

¹⁷⁹ Indiana, Vol. 71, p. 206, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School; *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Indianapolis*, 650.

¹⁸⁰ Indiana, Vol. 70, p. 938, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School; Hyman, *Journal of Indianapolis*, 343.

¹⁸¹ Hyman, *Journal of Indianapolis*, 343.

¹⁸² A.C. Howard's 1857 *Indianapolis City Directory*, 76.

industry. Traditional bakers typically manufactured and traded locally, although the cracker branch of baking could trade broadly due to the products' much longer shelf lives.¹⁸³ The latter fact undoubtedly explains the dominance of cracker bakers such as Parrott and Taggart in the IWD. Despite the greater longevity of crackers and possibility for wider trade, Indianapolis wholesalers still predominantly traded regionally. For example, the late-nineteenth century cracker firm Home Cracker Company on South Meridian Street mainly distributed throughout Indiana and Ohio.¹⁸⁴

The 1890 city directory listed two wholesale bakers in the city, both located within the district. Peter F. Bryce, a long-standing wholesale baker, established his company on South Street. Parrott and Taggart, one of the city's most successful wholesale bakery businesses, was located on South Pennsylvania.¹⁸⁵ Two wholesale bakery companies appear in the 1900 directory, the Home Cracker Company at 360 to 364 South Meridian and Parrott-Taggart Bakery at the northeast corner of Pennsylvania and Georgia streets.¹⁸⁶ In 1910, four of the city's seven wholesale bakers resided in the Wholesale District.¹⁸⁷ Taggart Baking Company moved out of the district to a large facility at 18 to 34 North New Jersey. By 1920, the total number of firms in Indianapolis increased from seven to fourteen, with only one located in the Wholesale District. Taggart Baking Company remained on North New Jersey.¹⁸⁸

Horace G. Parrott, a wholesale baker in the IWD, ran a successful business with several partners in the latter part of the nineteenth century. For example, he ran a steam

¹⁸³ Ian McKay, "Capital and Labour in the Halifax Baking and Confectionery Industry during the Last Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Labour/Le Travail* 3 (1978): 67.

¹⁸⁴ Consolidated Illustrating Company, *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 106.

¹⁸⁵ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 829.

¹⁸⁶ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1121.

¹⁸⁷ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1565.

¹⁸⁸ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1946.

cracker bakery under the name of Parrott, Kickum and Company with an estimated worth of about \$30,000, including real estate and personal property, in December of 1881.¹⁸⁹ This firm was succeeded by Horace Parrott and Son in 1884, which was then succeeded by Parrott and Taggart by 1886. According to a November 1, 1886 Dun credit report entry, the estimated worth of the firm amounted to \$8,000 for stock-in-trade, \$14,000 for operations, \$1,000 for cash on hand, \$26,000 for their plant, offset by \$26,000 in liabilities, and \$23,000 for total estimated worth. Two years later, its net worth was valued between \$25,000 and \$30,000.¹⁹⁰ Successor wholesale bakers were active into the 1920s. See Table 4 on page 94 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale baker firms from 1855 to 1920.

Clothing and Home-Related Wholesaling

These large categories of wholesaling encompass at least half of the firms in the Indianapolis Wholesale District. Several of the branches of wholesale trade, such as dry goods and china, glassware, and queensware, became staples of the district.

Dry Goods

The term dry goods referred to a wide range of home goods. For example, Murphy, Hibben and Company supplied customers with domestic and foreign dry goods, notions, hosiery, white goods, linens, woolens, floor oil cloth, hemp carpeting, mounted window shades, overalls, working shirts, jeans and cashmere pants.¹⁹¹ The firm's 1933

¹⁸⁹ Indiana, Vol. 73, p. 30, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

¹⁹⁰ Indiana, Vol. 73, p. 41, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

¹⁹¹ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 17.

Articles of Incorporation provided further detail on its stock, which ranged from textiles to boots to china.¹⁹²

In its early years, Indianapolis lacked an established market in dry goods wholesaling, despite initial efforts to establish one. Dry goods businesses that eventually organized in the IWD boasted healthy profits. The 1883 *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Indianapolis* emphasized the importance of the dry goods trade in its profile of the successful and long-standing firm, Murphy, Hibben & Co. The author postulated that dry goods was considered the most important branch of commerce in the country: “it controls a greater amount of capital, employs directly and indirectly a larger number of persons and distributes a greater value of commodities than any other branch of mercantile pursuit.”¹⁹³

The dry goods section of wholesaling developed slowly in Indianapolis. By 1860, one business directory recorded only four dry goods firms, none located in the area that would be the Wholesale District.¹⁹⁴ Hutchinson’s 1870 directory noted an increase to six businesses, four of which were located on South Meridian Street.¹⁹⁵ The other two wholesalers remained on Washington Street. Principal wholesale dry goods businesses of 1870 included Murphy, Johnson and Company; Byram, Cornelius and Company; Hibben, Kennedy and Company; and Landers, Conduitt and Company.¹⁹⁶ At this point, many names that would be continually associated with dry goods companies in the Wholesale District began to emerge, such as Hibben, Murphy, and Johnston. In addition to the

¹⁹² *Articles of Incorporation of Hibben, Hollweg and Company, Inc.* December 4, 1933.

¹⁹³ *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Indianapolis, Indiana: A Review of Its Manufacturing, Mercantile and General Business Interests, Advantageous Location, and c. To Which is Added a Historical and Statistical Sketch of Its Rise and Progress; Part IV, Resources and Industries of Indiana*, 1883, 443.

¹⁹⁴ *Sutherland and McEvoy’s Indianapolis City Directory, 1860*, 257.

¹⁹⁵ *Hutchinson’s Indianapolis City Directory, 1870*, 230.

¹⁹⁶ *Holloway, Indianapolis*, 373; *Hutchinson’s Indianapolis City Directory, 1870*, 230.

increase in number of firms, the decade between 1860 and 1870 witnessed a drastic increase in transactions from wholesale dry goods. The aggregate value of transactions in 1860 leveled below \$200,000. In 1870, profits amounted to \$4,542,000.¹⁹⁷ Although values for aggregate transactions and profits differ in what they indicate, the overall increase pointed to growth in the city's wholesale dry goods trade, as well as the profitability of dry goods as a wholesaling venture. With only six firms in the city total by 1870, profit of over \$4,000,000 pointed to a validation of the idea that dry goods firms were profitable and worth establishing in a city's economy.¹⁹⁸

Unlike the grocery trade, the dry goods trade spread to streets beyond South Meridian. The number of dry goods wholesalers shrank to four in the 1880 directory; all located on South Meridian Street.¹⁹⁹ Other streets within the district housed dry goods firms by 1890. That year's directory noted five wholesale dry good dealers, four of which originated in the Wholesale District.²⁰⁰ While Erwin D.P. and Company and Murphy, Hibben and Company both rooted on South Meridian, Gallahue P.M. and Brother settled at 23 East Pearl.²⁰¹ Mills and Gibbs inhabited the ideally placed address of 44 Jackson Place, next to the Union Depot. Confirming the short-lived nature of the wholesale business, the *1900 Polk City Directory* listed only three firms in the Wholesale District, with only one firm persisting from the 1890 directory. Murphy, Hibben and Company remained on South Meridian, although at a different location. Havens and Geddes Company emerged as another large and successful dry goods house, with the

¹⁹⁷ Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 372.

¹⁹⁸ Inflation experienced by the Union during the Civil War distorts the comparison of amounts between 1860 and 1870.

¹⁹⁹ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 564.

²⁰⁰ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 852.

²⁰¹ Pearl Street is a relatively small street that could today be best characterized as an alley.

address of 206 to 214 South Meridian. The third firm, Hood, Foulkrod and Company operated from the Majestic Building, a popular address at the northeast corner of Pennsylvania and Maryland streets.²⁰² The year 1910 saw only two dry goods firms located within the Wholesale District, both long-standing houses on South Meridian. Variety appeared again in the 1920 directory with two firms on South Meridian, one on West Georgia, and one on East Maryland.²⁰³

The wholesale dry goods dealers remained small in number throughout the course of the Wholesale District's history, although several of the firms grew into successful businesses. The reason for so few wholesale dry goods firms, both in the district and the city at large, cannot be easily deduced. The prominence of similar companies in surrounding cities such as Cincinnati and Chicago likely deterred local businessmen from competing with businesses in the larger cities. Perhaps a smaller wholesale market like Indianapolis did not necessitate multiple wholesale dry goods firms.

Hibben, Hollweg and Company gained prestige as the oldest and largest wholesale dry goods house in the state. Located at 135 to 141 South Meridian Street and 24 to 30 East Georgia Street, it specialized in dry goods, notions, woolens, and many related items. The firm was founded in the early 1860s as J.S. Hibben and C.B. Pattinson, yet carried the name Hibben, Tarkington and Company by 1866, with a capital amounting to \$80,000.²⁰⁴ By September 1870, under the name Hibben, Kennedy and Company, the estimated worth, including the worth of the partners' personal property and

²⁰² *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1162.

²⁰³ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1610; *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1987.

²⁰⁴ *Indiana*, Vol. 67, p. 373, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

real estate, approximated \$150,000.²⁰⁵ By 1879, under the name Hibben, Pattison and Company, the firm operated a large and profitable business with the total worth, including that of the individual partners, of \$500,000.²⁰⁶ This estimated worth carried over to December 1880 when the firm operated as Murphy, Hibben and Company, with a business value of \$150,000. The remaining \$350,000 included real estate and other investments.²⁰⁷ By 1886, the company had an estimated total worth of \$575,000, including the personal property of John W. Murphy and Harold B. Hibben.²⁰⁸ The firm experienced consistent financial growth over its several decades in operation, supporting the claim that wholesale dry goods houses brought large profits.

The last incarnation of the firm came when H.B. Hibben and T.E. Hibben combined with Louis Hollweg, a renowned glass wholesaler and manufacturer, to create Hibben, Hollweg and Company.²⁰⁹ The new incarnation sat ideally in the middle of the wholesale district, with frontage on both South Meridian and East Georgia streets. With the largest building of its kind in the state, Hibben and Hollweg's block symbolized the dominance of this firm. See Table 5 on page 95 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale dry goods firms from 1855 to 1920.

²⁰⁵ Indiana, Vol. 67, p. 373, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²⁰⁶ Indiana, Vol. 67, p. 373, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²⁰⁷ Indiana, Vol. 72, p. 478, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²⁰⁸ Indiana, Vol. 73, p. 283, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²⁰⁹ Hyman, *Journal Handbook of Indianapolis*, 338.

*China, Glass, and Queensware*²¹⁰

About a decade before the establishment of the long-lasting company, Hollweg and Reese, A.C. Howard's 1857 business directory listed Jacob Linley, located on West Washington Street, as the sole wholesaler of china, glass, and queensware.²¹¹ The number of businesses in this branch of wholesaling remained relatively small for the next few years, with only one firm located on Washington Street listed for china, glass, and queensware in the 1860 directory.²¹² By 1870, the city boasted seven wholesale firms, with four listed on South Meridian Street. These firms included Hollweg and Reese at 92 and 94 South Meridian; Scott, West and Company at 127 South Meridian; West, Morris, and Gorcell at 37 South Meridian; and John Woodbridge at 36 South Meridian.²¹³ Ten years later all three china dealers in the city had South Meridian Street addresses.²¹⁴ The *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory* also listed three china firms on South Meridian, including Hollweg and Reese.²¹⁵ By 1900, only two of Indianapolis's three china wholesalers, including Hollweg and Reese, were located in the Wholesale District.²¹⁶ By 1910, three of the city's four firms remained in the Wholesale District, all on South Meridian.²¹⁷ Only one remained in the district and city-at-large ten years later. The 1920 directory only listed the Mutual China Company at 128 to 132 South Meridian, part of

²¹⁰ Queensware refers to glazed, cream-colored earthenware. The English china company Wedgwood made the most prominent queensware, also written as Queen's ware.

²¹¹ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 86.

²¹² *Sutherland and McEvoy's Indianapolis Directory, 1860*, 46.

²¹³ *Hutchinson's Indianapolis City Directory, 1870*, 227.

²¹⁴ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 558.

²¹⁵ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 842.

²¹⁶ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1142. The directory listed Hollweg and Reese at 128 to 136 South Meridian, indicating that a numbering of the street addresses on South Meridian were altered between 1890 and 1900.

²¹⁷ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1587.

the space previously used by Hollweg and Reese.²¹⁸ Despite the slight variations in the names and number of wholesale china, glass, and queensware firms in the Wholesale District, Hollweg and Reese remained the longest-enduring firm.

In 1868, Louis Hollweg and Charles Reese established Hollweg and Reese, which specialized in wholesale china, glass, and queensware. Hollweg became the sole proprietor after Reese's death in 1888.²¹⁹ The Indianapolis Board of Trade boasted the firm to be the largest, best stocked, and most elegantly equipped china, glass, and queensware jobbing house in the state of Indiana.²²⁰ The firm attained favorable relationships with manufacturers in Europe and the United States, providing stock throughout Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio, and parts of the South.²²¹ Rapid growth of the company's wealth occurred particularly during the 1880s. In early 1881, Hollweg and Reese operated as a large and profitable business with an estimated worth of \$75,000 to \$80,000.²²² In 1882, total worth of the firm, including the partners' personal property and real estate, amounted to roughly \$200,000 to 250,000.²²³ By 1883, the firm worth amounted to \$400,000 per year, making it the city's leading wholesale house in its trade.²²⁴ Contrasting the firm of Hawthorn, an earlier house in the same trade that was worth \$20,000 in March of 1865, Hollweg and Reese's financial history demonstrates the

²¹⁸ 1920 *Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1965.

²¹⁹ Hyman, *Journal Handbook of Indianapolis*, 354.

²²⁰ Indianapolis Board of Trade, *The Industries of Indianapolis* (Indianapolis: A.N. Marquis and Company, 1889), 21.

²²¹ Hyman, *Journal Handbook of Indianapolis*, 354. European products came from such areas as Limoges and Sevres. The firm specialized in fruit jars from a factory located in Greenwood, Indiana.

²²² Indiana, Vol. 72, p. 541, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²²³ Indiana, Vol. 72, p. 541, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²²⁴ *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Indianapolis*, 505.

increase in value and trade during the later portion of the nineteenth century.²²⁵ See Table 6 on page 96 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale china, glassware, and queensware firms from 1855 to 1920.

Boots and Shoes

Indianapolis has a long history of wholesale boot and shoe sales. The city had two wholesale boot and shoe dealers as early as the 1857 business directory: one located on West Washington Street and the other, Mayhew and Company, housed in Robert's Block, opposite Union Depot in the future Wholesale District.²²⁶ The 1860 directory revealed four firms: three had Washington Street addresses and Mayhew and Company remained at 8 Louisiana Street, opposite Union Depot.²²⁷ Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis directory neglected mentioning any wholesale boot and shoe dealers, yet there are eight listed in Polk's 1880 directory.²²⁸

In a pattern similar to other branches of the wholesale trade, the city's seven boot and shoe businesses had moved to South Meridian Street by 1880, a time of expansive growth for the Wholesale District. The 1890 directory displayed a similar concentration of wholesale boots and shoes firms on South Meridian Street, although one of the six firms located near the northwest corner of Delaware and Georgia streets.²²⁹ Businesses remained on South Meridian Street in the 1900 and 1910 directories, although the total number of firms decreased to two. By the 1920 directory, two of the city's three companies remained in the Wholesale District. Crowder-Cooper Shoe Company

²²⁵ Indiana, Vol. 67, p. 305, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²²⁶ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 217.

²²⁷ *Sutherland and McEvoy's Indianapolis Directory, 1860*, 255.

²²⁸ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 554.

²²⁹ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 834.

maintained manufacturing and wholesale headquarters on South Meridian Street, while Jason F. Donavin Shoe Company was located nearby at 34 West Georgia Street.²³⁰ The number of boots and shoes wholesalers remained small, yet centrally located in the Wholesale District. None of the other wholesale trades displayed this level of uniformity or centrality.

Hays Brothers, located at 56 South Meridian by 1889, specialized in wholesale boots and shoes. The brothers created the company in July of 1887, although Joseph Hays had begun business in Indianapolis as a retail boot and shoe dealer in 1871.²³¹ The firm is one example of several firms in the boots and shoes trade, none of which lasted for longer than a decade between 1860 and 1920, with exception of McKee and Company that lasted for over twenty years.²³² See Table 7 on page 97 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale boots and shoes firms from 1855 to 1920.

Clothing

Short life spans of companies also punctuated the history of the clothing trade in the Indianapolis Wholesale District, with many firms lasting less than ten years. The industry began in Indianapolis in 1862 with the Dessar Brothers.²³³ Hutchinson's 1870 city directory listed two of the city's three wholesale clothing firms at addresses in the Wholesale District: Dessar Brothers at 60 South Meridian and Hays, Rosenthal and Company at 64 South Meridian.²³⁴ Despite the trade's relatively small size and young

²³⁰ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1129; *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1574; *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1954.

²³¹ Indianapolis Board of Trade, *Industries of Indianapolis*, 20.

²³² According to the page 554 of the *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, McKee and Company began as Jones, McKee and Company at 93 and 95 South Meridian Street. *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 834; *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1129.

²³³ Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 370.

²³⁴ *Hutchinson's Indianapolis City Directory, 1870*, 228.

age, by 1870, aggregate sales reached over \$1.7 million.²³⁵ The Dessar Brothers appeared again in the *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, this time listed at 120 and 122 South Meridian Street. In addition to the Dessar Brothers, the 1880 directory listed G.H. Day and Company at 135 South Meridian Street.²³⁶ The *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory* named several firms located on South Illinois Street, yet only one on South Meridian, David Newman at 122 South Meridian.²³⁷ The 1900 directory mentioned two wholesale clothing dealers located within the district: Robert G. Harseim operated from 24 West Georgia Street; Harris and Cohen at 342 South Pennsylvania. The directory also listed the Bailey Manufacturing Company as a manufacturing and wholesale clothing firm located at 244 South Meridian Street.²³⁸ By 1910, two of Indianapolis's six clothing wholesale and manufacturing firms called the Wholesale District home, both on South Pennsylvania Street.²³⁹ The *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory* noted nine manufacturing and wholesale clothing firms for the city, yet only one firm, Crown Garment Manufacturing Company, operated from within the district at 251 South Meridian Street.²⁴⁰ The Wholesale District housed no wholesale clothing firms in 1920.

Dessar Brothers initiated the wholesale clothing trade in Indianapolis. Lewis Dessar entered into the business in 1862 at his South Meridian Street location. The firm operated under the name Dessar Brothers and Company by the mid-1870s.²⁴¹ Around this same time, the firm also added a retail department, with total estimated worth equaling

²³⁵ Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 370.

²³⁶ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 560.

²³⁷ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 843. The 1890 directory grouped wholesale and retail together, thus making it appear that the number of firms had dramatically risen between 1880 and 1890. However, most of the city's twenty-nine clothing businesses listed in 1890 were retail firms.

²³⁸ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1144.

²³⁹ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1589.

²⁴⁰ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1968.

²⁴¹ Indiana, Vol. 67, p. 312, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School. The entry that mentioned this name dated to December, 18, 1874.

\$50,000 to \$70,000.²⁴² That estimate dropped to \$25,000 to \$30,000 when Lewis Dessar took over the firm by 1879.²⁴³ By the early 1880s, the firm supported sixty employees. Although, other wholesale clothing firms seemed to work on a smaller scale.²⁴⁴ Daniel Newman ran a small operation with an estimated worth of \$10,000 to \$12,000, with stock-in-trade valued at \$4,000.²⁴⁵ Companies in the district that both manufactured and sold clothing seem to have had a larger scope of business. For example, Gem Garment Company on West Pearl Street traded in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and some southern states.²⁴⁶ See Table 8 on page 98 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale clothing firms from 1855 to 1920.

Millinery

Milliners participated in the hat-making industry. Thus, a wholesale millinery house specialized in supplies for that purpose. For example, Fahnley and McCrea carried millinery/milliner's supplies: hats, ribbons, feathers, plumes, artificial birds and flowers, laces and other novelties of the latest European styles, imported directly from Paris and Berlin, and also obtained from New York and other eastern cities.²⁴⁷

Despite their small numbers during the course of the Wholesale District's history, Indianapolis's millinery wholesaling included two prominent and successful businesses, Fahnley and McCrea and the Griffith Brothers, that gained recognition beyond the borders of central Indiana. In 1870, Indianapolis's two wholesale millinery firms

²⁴² Indiana, Vol. 71, p. 149, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²⁴³ Indiana, Vol. 71, p. 149, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²⁴⁴ *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Indianapolis*, 647.

²⁴⁵ Indiana, Vol. 71, p. 194, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School; Vol. 73, p. 12.

²⁴⁶ Consolidated Illustrating Co., *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 132.

²⁴⁷ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 30.

operated from facilities on South Meridian Street.²⁴⁸ This pair included the continuing firm Fahnley and McCrea. By 1880, the number of firms increased to three, all located on South Meridian Street.²⁴⁹ Fahnley and McCrea continued on South Meridian and was joined by Charles Annan and the Griffith Brothers. The 1890 directory listed both Fahnley and McCrea and the Griffith Brothers at South Meridian Street locations as the only wholesale milliners operating in the city. The 1900 directory listed the two firms, in addition to two others located on McCrea Street, probably named for the firm partner of Fahnley and McCrea. The *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory* displayed a shift in millinery wholesaler locations from South Meridian to Maryland Street.²⁵⁰ While Fahnley and McCrea remained on South Meridian, Griffith Brothers moved to 21 to 23 West Maryland Street. Two other firms also appeared on Maryland Street. Four of the six millinery businesses of 1920 resided in the Wholesale District.²⁵¹ Fahnley and McCrea remained at the same location on South Meridian Street, with an additional address on McCrea Street. The other three firms, including Griffith Brothers, had located to Maryland Street. Although small in number of firms, the Wholesale District's millinery trade produced companies Fahnley and McCrea and Griffith Brothers, that each persisted for over fifty years.

Importers of millinery, straw, and fancy goods, Fahnley and McCrea Millinery Company was founded in 1864, making it one of the oldest millinery houses in Indianapolis.²⁵² The Board of Trade claimed that Fahnley and McCrea was “one of the

²⁴⁸ *Hutchinson's Indianapolis City Directory, 1870*, 241.

²⁴⁹ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 582.

²⁵⁰ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 879; *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1212; *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1665.

²⁵¹ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 2068.

²⁵² Hyman, *Journal of Indianapolis*, 348.

most extensive in its lines between New York and Chicago.”²⁵³ Dun and Company credit reports noted the large and profitable business of the firm, giving an estimated worth of \$100,000 in 1879. By the end of 1883, this number increased to between \$125,000 and \$150,000.²⁵⁴ The firm, located at 140 and 142 South Meridian, traded approximately half a million dollars annually in Indianapolis, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. By 1902, the house supported fifteen traveling salesmen and fifty in-store employees.²⁵⁵ See Table 9 on page 99 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale millinery firms from 1855 to 1920.

Watches, Clockmakers, and Jewelers

This branch of wholesaling could be considered a secondary trade in the district due to its limited presence during the lifespan of neighborhood. The watches, clocks, and jewelry trade started in 1851 with the establishment of E.J. Baldwin and Company. All firms through 1870 remained on Washington Street accruing a fairly minimal profit of less than \$200,000 combined.²⁵⁶ The 1880 Polk City Directory listed two wholesale watches, clocks, and jewelry firms. Gillett and Jenison operated from 16 Hubbard Block, located at the southwest corner of Washington and Meridian streets. The other firm, Louis Manheimer, was located at 84 South Meridian. The Wholesale District housed four of the city’s six firms in 1890, including Kipp Brothers, a wholesale firm that carried a wide range of “fancy goods.”²⁵⁷ All four firms within the Indianapolis Wholesale District listed in the 1890 directory were housed in buildings on South Meridian Street. The 1900

²⁵³ Board of Trade, *Industries of Indianapolis*, 30.

²⁵⁴ Indiana, Vol. 71, p. 333, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²⁵⁵ Hyman, *Journal of Indianapolis*, 349.

²⁵⁶ Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 377.

²⁵⁷ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 905.

Polk City Directory mentioned only two firms located in the Wholesale District, with Louis Haase on South Meridian and W.F. Park and Company in the Majestic Building.²⁵⁸ By 1910, the Indianapolis Wholesale District accommodated only one of the seven wholesale jewelry, watch, and clockmaker dealers in the city. By that year, the State Life Building on Washington Street housed most of these firms.²⁵⁹ By 1920, no wholesale jewelry, watch, or clockmaker firms existed in the Wholesale District.²⁶⁰

E.J. Baldwin and Company, an early wholesale jewelry dealer in Indianapolis, had an estimated worth of \$6,000 by February of 1856.²⁶¹ By 1884, the firm then operating under the name Baldwin, Miller and Company, had an estimated worth of \$50,000, a marked contrast to the worth of the firm roughly three decades prior.²⁶² The company's wholesale trade extended throughout Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri.²⁶³ See Table 10 on page 100 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale watch, clock, and jewelry firms from 1855 to 1920.

Notions

The Kipp Brothers, wholesalers of notions/fancy goods, sold musical instruments, cutlery and fancy hardware, stationers' sundries, druggists' sundries, pipes and smokers' articles, fishing tackle, sporting goods, baseball supplies, jewelry, clocks, optical

²⁵⁸ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1266. The public building listing in the 1900 Polk City Directory gave the Majestic Building the address of 47 South Pennsylvania Street. Wholesale fancy goods dealers the Kipp Brothers still operated in 1900, meaning that they either no longer carried watches, clocks, or jewelry; or that the directory's compiler classified the firm differently than it had been classified in the 1890 directory.

²⁵⁹ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1647. The State Life Building was located at 15 to 23 East Washington Street.

²⁶⁰ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 2036.

²⁶¹ Indiana, Vol. 67, p. 97, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School. An entry reported Baldwin's death in 1858, although the firm continued on afterward.

²⁶² Indiana, Vol. 73, p. 240, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²⁶³ Consolidated Illustrating Co., *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 195.

instruments, Yankee notions, traveling satchels, fancy china and glassware, toys of every description, baby carriages, flags, and fireworks.²⁶⁴ Charles Mayer and Company, a wholesale notions business located just outside of the district on Washington Street carried much of the same stock, in addition to various holiday cards, scrapbooks, brass and bronze goods, and Chinese lanterns.²⁶⁵ Notions wholesalers sold the knic knacs that the dry goods stores did not carry, although there was certainly some overlap in merchandise.

Many wholesale notions businesses pursued other types of wholesaling.²⁶⁶ For example, the 1870 directory listed wholesale milliners Fahnley and McCrea and the wholesale dry goods dealers Murphy, Johnston and Company under wholesale notions as well.²⁶⁷ Like fancy goods wholesalers, the businesses that carried sundries and other home odds and ends specialized in other areas of wholesaling. By 1870, the city had ten wholesaling notions houses, with nine located in the Indianapolis Wholesale District. South Meridian Street housed all nine of the firms, five in the same block.²⁶⁸ By 1880, the number of notions firms had shrunk to three, all still located on South Meridian Street.²⁶⁹ Ten years later, the three reported notions wholesalers still maintained their premises on South Meridian Street.²⁷⁰ Kipp Brothers, which carried many lines of goods, identified itself as wholesale notions dealers. Murphy, Hibben and Company specialized in the complimentary business of dry goods, with part of its merchandise categorized as wholesale notions.

²⁶⁴ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 30.

²⁶⁵ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 35.

²⁶⁶ The term 'notions' refers to small, lightweight household items, such as needles, buttons, and thread. (freedictionary.com)

²⁶⁷ *Hutchinson's Indianapolis City Directory, 1870*, 241.

²⁶⁸ *Hutchinson's Indianapolis City Directory, 1870*, 241.

²⁶⁹ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 584.

²⁷⁰ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 882.

Kipp Brothers continued in the trade of wholesale notions and fancy goods in 1900, while the wholesale dry goods firm Murphy, Hibben and Company also continued its notions trade and the South Meridian Street along with Havens and Geddes Company.²⁷¹ The number of notions dealers increased to six by 1910, with four located in the Wholesale District.²⁷² None of the businesses from the prior decade continued as notions wholesalers, although Hibben, Hollweg and Company, a reconfiguration of the Murphy, Hibben and Company, now added notions. The 1910 directory also showed the movement away from complete centralization of the notions businesses on South Meridian Street, with the short-lived Berkson-Sterne Company established at 110 South Pennsylvania Street. In 1920, the five notions wholesalers listed in Polk's city directory were mostly located on South Meridian.²⁷³ E.C. Dolmetsch Company, a general goods wholesaler, was the sole firm continuing from the previous decade. Most wholesale notions traders were primarily established in complimentary areas of wholesaling, like dry goods and fancy goods.

Kipp Brothers operated as a wholesale fancy goods company, although it also carried many of the same products as wholesale notions firms. Albrecht and Robert Kipp established the company in 1880, although Albrecht had been connected with an earlier business.²⁷⁴ Prior to establishing his wholesale and retail dry and fancy goods business, Albrecht Kipp worked for thirteen years as a head salesman for Charles Mayer and Company, a long-standing retail and wholesale dry and fancy goods firm located on Washington Street. Robert Kipp was a member of a local jewelry business. The two

²⁷¹ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1217.

²⁷² *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1672-1673.

²⁷³ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 2074.

²⁷⁴ Hyman, *Journal Handbook of Indianapolis*, 342.

formed a partnership in early 1880, and had an estimated worth of \$20,000 by the year's end.²⁷⁵ By July of 1886, this worth had increased to \$60,000 to \$75,000.²⁷⁶ By 1893 the Brothers had incorporated and located on South Meridian.²⁷⁷ According to the Indianapolis Board of Trade, the Kipp Brothers once claimed the title of the nation's largest wholesaling business of its kind.²⁷⁸ While the Board of Trade likely exaggerated the size of the firm, Kipp Brothers was undeniably large, with business reaching over half a million dollars annually by 1889.²⁷⁹ R.G. Dun and Company credit reports characterized the firm as "one of our strongest houses. Do a large & money making bus[iness]."²⁸⁰ Kipp Brothers traded with sections of Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Texas, Iowa, Nebraska, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Colorado, Alabama and Georgia.²⁸¹ The company succeeded in what was a secondary wholesaling line in Indianapolis. See Table 11 on page 101 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale notions firms from 1855 to 1920.

Druggists

Wholesale druggists' stock included medicinal drugs and chemicals, proprietary medicines and compounds, druggists' supplies and sundries, medical and surgical instruments, paints, oils, brushes, artists' supplies, perfumeries, and soaps.²⁸² The wholesale drug trade originated in colonial apothecary shops that imported botanical

²⁷⁵ Indiana, Vol. 72, p. 440, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²⁷⁶ Indiana, Vol. 73, p. 63, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

²⁷⁷ Consolidated Illustrating Company, *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 224.

²⁷⁸ Indianapolis Board of Trade, *Industries of Indianapolis*, 30.

²⁷⁹ Indianapolis Board of Trade, *Industries of Indianapolis*, 30.

²⁸⁰ Indiana, Vol. 73, p. 63, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School. This entry dated to April 14, 1883.

²⁸¹ Hyman, *Journal Handbook of Indianapolis*, 343; *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Indianapolis*, 473-474; Consolidated Illustrating Co., *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 225.

²⁸² *Industries of Indianapolis*, 19.

drugs and chemicals in bulk from Europe to compound in-house. Eventually the functions of drug wholesaling and drug manufacturing separated.²⁸³

A.C. Howard's 1857 directory listed two wholesale druggists, both located on Washington Street.²⁸⁴ By 1870, Washington Street still functioned as the main location for wholesale drug firms, with three of the city's five wholesale druggists located there. South Meridian Street housed two firms, Kiefer and Vinton at 68 S. Meridian and Patterson, Moore and Talbott at 128 S. Meridian.²⁸⁵ Ten years later, Kiefer's, now Augustus Kiefer, remained at 68 S. Meridian. This company acted as the city's sole, entirely wholesale drug firm, although there were many businesses identified as wholesale and retail drug stores, including five on South Illinois Street.²⁸⁶ By 1890 A. Kiefer and Company had moved to 70 and 72 South Meridian. Daniel Stewart, located nearby at 48 and 50 South Meridian, was also listed as one of the city's four total wholesale drug firms found in the Wholesale District.²⁸⁷ In 1900, four of the city's six wholesale druggists remained in the Wholesale District, with A. Kiefer Drug Company and Daniel Stewart Company remaining on South Meridian, although at new addresses. Two other firms, Indianapolis Drug Company at 21-25 East Maryland and Ward Brothers Drug Company at 120 South Meridian Street, also had premises in the IWD.²⁸⁸ By 1910, the number of total wholesale druggists in Indianapolis had grown to seven, with four located in the Wholesale District. Augustus Kiefer Drug Company, by then in business over fifty years, had moved to the southeast corner of Georgia Street and Capitol Avenue.

²⁸³ E.L. Newcomb, "The Wholesale Drug Business," *Journal of Marketing* 14 (September 1949), 319.

²⁸⁴ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 96.

²⁸⁵ *Hutchinson's Indianapolis City Directory, 1870*, 229.

²⁸⁶ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 564.

²⁸⁷ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 851.

²⁸⁸ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1161.

Daniel Stewart Company and Ward Brothers Drug Company both remained on South Meridian Street, with the Mooney-Mueller Drug Company added to the number of wholesale druggists on that street.²⁸⁹

By 1920, several wholesale druggists had consolidated. An entry in the *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory* indicated that the Kiefer and Stewart companies had combined at the previous Kiefer location at the corner of Georgia Street and Capitol Avenue. Mooney-Mueller-Ward Company grew out of the previously separate Mooney-Mueller and Ward companies. The third of the city's druggists located in the Wholesale District was the Haag Drug Company on South Illinois Street.²⁹⁰

In 1840, William Hanneman established the Old Gibraltar Drug House, later the Daniel Stewart Company. Stewart took on the proprietorship in 1883, but died in 1892, passing the business on to John N. Carey and William Scott.²⁹¹ The firm successfully traded drugs, cigars, plate and window glass, and manufactured some drugs on site.²⁹² Prior to the consolidation of the Kiefer and Stewart firms, the Daniel Stewart Company maintained its status as a staple in the city's wholesale drug trade, with offices on South Meridian and West Maryland streets and a warehouse on Delaware Street. The company traded throughout Indiana and Illinois.²⁹³ Augustus Kiefer's wholesale drug house also found success prior to consolidation, with the company's estimated worth set at \$125,000 in early 1885.²⁹⁴ Longevity of business characterized the wholesale druggist trade in Indianapolis, with the firms of Kiefer and Daniel Stewart lasting for several decades

²⁸⁹ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1609.

²⁹⁰ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1986.

²⁹¹ Hyman, *Journal Handbook of Indianapolis*, 356.

²⁹² Hyman, *Journal Handbook of Indianapolis*, 356.

²⁹³ Consolidated Illustrating Co., *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 166.

²⁹⁴ *Indiana*, Vol. 72, p. 510, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

before combining by 1920. See Table 12 on page 102 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale druggist firms from 1855 to 1920.

Books

Wholesale book firms ranged in topics of books they carried, as well whether they were stationers. The 1857 city directory lists two wholesale and retail booksellers and stationers, both located on West Washington Street.²⁹⁵ Not every city directory mentioned wholesale book firms. For example, the next mention appeared in the 1880 Polk city directory. Merrill, Hubbard and Company, one of the city's four firms, operated from two addresses, 5 East Washington Street and 13 South Meridian.²⁹⁶ Ten years later, no wholesale books and stationer dealers operated in the Wholesale District. Yet by 1900 the district again had two firms, Levey Brothers and Company at 17, 19, and 21 West Maryland and the Indianapolis Book and Stationery Company at 121 South Meridian Street.²⁹⁷ The latter company remained in operation on South Meridian through 1920.²⁹⁸ The number of wholesale book trade houses remained fairly small for the city as a whole, and certainly for the Wholesale District itself.

Although not located in the Wholesale District, the nearby firm of Stewart, Bowen and Company serves as the best example of estimated worth for wholesale book firms. Credit reports as early as June 1856 estimated its capital at \$12,000, claiming the business to be the "largest book firm in town," and later, "one of the best houses in the city, gaining strength every year." By April 1872, the firm boasted sales of \$200,000,

²⁹⁵ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 84.

²⁹⁶ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 554. This may have been a corner lot, so the firm would have operated out of only one location.

²⁹⁷ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1129.

²⁹⁸ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1574; *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1954. This project only examined business patterns through 1920. It is possible that the Indianapolis Book and Stationery Company continued beyond 1920.

with an estimated worth of \$175,000 to \$200,000.²⁹⁹ By the mid 1880s, the company combined with another wholesale bookseller to create the Bowen-Merrill Book Company, with an estimated full worth of \$75,000 to \$100,000.³⁰⁰ See Table 13 on page 103 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale book firms from 1855 to 1920.

Cigars and Tobacco

In 1860, Indianapolis claimed at least two cigar and tobacco manufacturers and wholesalers, both located on Washington Street.³⁰¹ Ten years later, Washington Street locations predominated, with seven of the city's ten businesses located there. The remaining three planted in the Wholesale District, with J.C. Green and Company at 381 South Meridian Street and both J.W. Lines and Company and W.P. Wallace on Louisiana Street.³⁰² By 1880, Indianapolis only had two cigar and tobacco wholesalers. L.M. Fitzhugh and Company established a warehouse on South Meridian.³⁰³ The total number of firms increased to six by 1890, with three located in the Wholesale District. Two of the three firms, Indiana Cigar Company at number 36 and James R. Ross and Company at number 129, settled on South Meridian Street.³⁰⁴ In 1900 the total number of wholesale cigar and tobacco companies in Indianapolis had jumped to twelve, yet only three remained in the district.³⁰⁵ Indiana Cigar Company continued in business from the previous decade, making it the longest-standing cigar firm in the district before 1900.

²⁹⁹ Indiana, Vol. 67, p. 11, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School; Vol. 67, p. 228; Vol. 69, p. 580.

³⁰⁰ Indiana, Vol. 72, p. 644, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

³⁰¹ *Sutherland and McEvoy's Indianapolis, 1860*, 42, 178.

³⁰² *Hutchinson's Indianapolis City Directory, 1870*, 227.

³⁰³ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 559.

³⁰⁴ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 842.

³⁰⁵ *1900 Indianapolis Polk City Directory*, 1143.

Tobacco wholesalers decreased to seven in 1910 and remained the same in 1920, with long-lasting firms such as Louis Deschler at 135 South Illinois and the House of Crane at 126 South Meridian emerging as new businesses.³⁰⁶ With the exception of a handful of firms, cigar and tobacco wholesaler houses generally had short lives.

One example of a wholesale cigar business was D. K. Butler and James Doherty, located on South Illinois Street. R.G. Dun and Company credit reports estimated its stock worth around \$3,500 in early 1887, and its income as \$1,200 to \$1,500.³⁰⁷ Unlike most other types of wholesalers, wholesale cigar and tobacco firms typically had great flexibility in the types of retailers with whom they conducted business, ranging from drug stores to grocery stores to hotels.³⁰⁸ Such flexibility undoubtedly yielded high earning potential for tobacco firms. Yet IWD houses like Butler and Doherty remained relatively small, perhaps indicating a small, localized clientele. Evidence of this small customer base appears, for example, in the late-nineteenth century wholesale house, the Indiana Cigar Company on South Meridian, which traded in Indiana and eastern Illinois.³⁰⁹ See Table 14 on page 104 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale cigar and tobacco firms from 1855 to 1920.

Hardware and Saddlery Wholesaling

Hardware

Several long-standing wholesale hardware firms called the Wholesale District home, including Van Camp Hardware and Iron Company. Concentration on South

³⁰⁶ 1910 *Indianapolis Polk City Directory*, 1588; 1920 *Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1965. The compilers of both city directories listed Kiefer Drug Company, and later Kiefer-Stewart Drug Company, as wholesale houses for cigars and tobacco. While the firm obviously specialized in wholesale drugs, they also carried stock in cigars, tobacco, and related items.

³⁰⁷ Indiana, Vol. 69, p. G, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

³⁰⁸ H.B. Patrey, "Wholesale Tobacco Trade," *Journal of Marketing* 14, no. 2 (Sept 1949), 331.

³⁰⁹ Consolidated Illustrating Co., *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 172.

Meridian Street began early with the hardware firms. Three businesses were located on South Meridian by 1870. They were Anderson, Bullock and Schofield at 62 South Meridian; Kimbal, Aikman and Company at 110 South Meridian; and E. Over and Company at 82 and 84 South Meridian.³¹⁰ All of the city's solely wholesale houses were located on South Meridian Street, including the highly-successful firm Hanson, Van Camp and Company at 78 and 80 South Meridian.³¹¹ The 1880 directory created another category of companies that specialized in both wholesale and retail hardware trade, with one of these firms, Hildebrand and Fugate, located at 35 South Meridian Street.³¹² By 1890, Indianapolis housed seven wholesale hardware dealers, with five of them located in the Wholesale District. South Meridian hosted four of the five firms in the district, including Hildebrand and Fugate, now listed as a solely wholesale firm. By this point, Van Camp Hardware and Iron Company had moved to their long-standing address on South Illinois.³¹³

The Wholesale District's number of wholesale hardware firms remained at five in 1900, with four of the five businesses still on South Meridian.³¹⁴ W.J. Holliday and Company continued to operate from South Meridian, making it one of the oldest wholesale hardware houses. Van Camp remained on South Illinois, a street that saw fewer wholesale firms yet large numbers of hotels and restaurants.³¹⁵ Several of the hardware wholesalers remained in business in 1910, including Van Camp Hardware and

³¹⁰ Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory

³¹¹ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 572.

³¹² *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 572. This firm also had another location on Indiana Avenue.

³¹³ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 863.

³¹⁴ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1182.

³¹⁵ The specific street numbers of Van Camp's address on South Illinois Street changed between 1890 and 1900, most likely due to renumbering. This change is noticeable amongst many of the long-standing firms that remained at the same address.

Iron Company. The firm locations varied the most in 1910, with only two of the Wholesale District's four firms located on South Meridian Street. W. J. Holliday and Company had moved to 326 to 390 West Georgia Street, while Van Camp had moved from their South Illinois address to West Maryland Street.³¹⁶ The total number of wholesale hardware firms in the city decreased from six to three by 1920, with only one located in the district: Van Camp Hardware and Iron Company remained at 401 to 425 West Maryland Street.³¹⁷ As with many of the branches of wholesaling in the district, wholesale hardware transitioned from a strong presence in the neighborhood to a single company. Examples like this demonstrate the Wholesale District's loss of vitality by 1920.

Van Camp Hardware and Iron Company, formerly Hanson, Van Camp and Company, operated as a wholesale hardware business at 78, 80, and 82 South Illinois Street. The firm began in the 1860s as E. Over and Company, a wholesale iron business, with an estimated value of \$60,000 in 1867. This company sold out to Margo and Burgundthal in 1872.³¹⁸ By 1874, credit reports listed the wholesale iron house Hanson and Burgundthal, with an overall estimated worth of \$30,000. This firm was succeeded by Hanson, Van Camp and Company in August of 1876.³¹⁹ The founders established the house as a partnership in 1876, and reorganized in 1886 as a joint stock company with Cortland Van Camp as president and D. C. Burgundthal as treasurer and secretary.³²⁰ The estimated worth of Hanson, Van Camp and Company increased to \$80,000 in May, 1881,

³¹⁶ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1634.

³¹⁷ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 2017.

³¹⁸ Indiana, Vol. 67, p. 376, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

³¹⁹ Indiana, Vol. 69, p. 675, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School. The dates for these entries include December 7, 1874, June 29, 1875, and August 1876. Hanson was formerly of the firm Hanson and Morrow.

³²⁰ Consolidated Illustrating Co., *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 180.

and to \$150,000 by 1884.³²¹ The Indianapolis Board of Trade and Commercial Club claimed both Hanson and Van Camp as members, illustrating the involvement of wholesalers with the city's business interest organizations. The firm carried an assortment of general hardware, tinner's supplies, guns, bicycles, carriage and heavy hardware.³²² The company formally changed to Van Camp Hardware and Iron Company in 1887.³²³ A large enterprise, the business of Van Camp Hardware and Iron Company extended throughout Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky, and Iowa, with an annual sales aggregate of approximately \$2,000,000.³²⁴ As of the 1890s, the firm employed eighty people in-house and twenty traveling salesmen.³²⁵ See Table 15 on page 105 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale hardware firms from 1855 to 1920.

Saddlery

Wholesale saddlery has a long and prosperous history in the Indianapolis Wholesale District. Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory provided advertisements for several wholesale saddler dealers, all located on Washington Street.³²⁶ Twenty years later, the *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory* listed two firms for wholesale saddlery hardware, both located on South Meridian in the Wholesale District.³²⁷ Holliday and Wyon on South Pennsylvania Street acted as the sole wholesale harness and saddle manufacturers and dealers. Gordon, Kurtz and Company at 141 South Meridian was another wholesale saddle firm in 1880 and 1890, specializing in saddlery

³²¹ Indiana, Vol. 72, p. 412, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School; Vol. 73, p. 52.

³²² Consolidated Illustrating Co., 180.

³²³ Indiana, Vol. 73, p. 281, R.G. Dun & Co. Company, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

³²⁴ Consolidated Illustrating Co., 180.

³²⁵ Consolidated Illustrating Co., 180.

³²⁶ *Sutherland and McEvoy Indianapolis Directory, 1860*, 22, 32, 34.

³²⁷ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 592. These two firms include I.S. Gordon and Company at 118 South Meridian and the George K. Share and Company at 40 South Meridian.

hardware.³²⁸ By 1900, the city had thirty harness and saddle manufacturers and dealers. The Wholesale District boasted five of the thirty total businesses. This list included Holliday and Wyon at 134-138 South Pennsylvania, Indianapolis Saddlery Company at 237-241 South Meridian, Otto P. Irrgang at 653 South Delaware, National Harness Manufacturing Company at 28 South Illinois, and William Vanderpool at 22 South Meridian.³²⁹ Two of the city's purely wholesale harness and saddlery firms remained in the district in 1910, including the Indianapolis Saddlery Company on South Meridian and Martin Rehfuss Jr. at 16 West Maryland.³³⁰ By the end of the period studied, Indianapolis could only claim two wholesale saddlery-related businesses, Van Camp's Hardware and Iron Company on West Maryland for general wholesale harness and saddlery needs and the Indianapolis Saddlery Company on South Meridian.³³¹

In 1860, J. B. Sulgrove operated a modest enterprise as one of the earlier saddlery houses, with an estimated worth of \$4,000.³³² Much larger, and exclusively wholesale, saddlers came later. In 1879 J.D. Holliday and A.F. Wyon established the Holliday and Wyon Company, a top wholesale saddlery firm, with a large, five-story headquarters located at 134-138 South Pennsylvania Street and 36-40 East Georgia Street.³³³ Both founders were well-connected in the community. For instance, Holliday actively participated in the Commercial Club, a precursor the Indianapolis Chamber of

³²⁸ 1890 *Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 863, 894.

³²⁹ 1900 *Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1184. The Indianapolis Saddlery Company also specialized in wholesale saddlery hardware.

³³⁰ 1910 *Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1635.

³³¹ 1920 *Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 2018, 2106.

³³² Indiana, Vol. 67, p. 31, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

³³³ Hyman, *Journal Handbook of Indianapolis*, 352. The company was not incorporated until March 1900.

Commerce.³³⁴ Although it served as a wholesale harness and saddlery dealer, the firm also manufactured saddlery goods extensively, like the “perfection saddle,” which became widely known.³³⁵ Business spanned Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Ohio, and other sections of the country.³³⁶ The company operated from a building with the newest technology, including steam power and freight elevators, and employed seventy-five to ninety hands on site and six traveling salesmen.³³⁷ See Table 16 on page 106 for a breakdown of the number and locations of wholesale saddlery firms from 1855 to 1920.

Supplementary Businesses in the Wholesale District

Supplementary businesses within the Wholesale District also supported the warehousemen. In his 1982 article on American warehouse districts, Leonard Eaton observed that nearby restaurants and bars served the numerous workers of wholesale firms, while hotels provided a place to stay for traveling salesmen who represented the wholesale houses.³³⁸ Wholesale districts did not function in a bubble. According to Eaton, these districts affected the economic development and built environment of cities. The Indianapolis Wholesale District supports Eaton’s theory. The area included hotels, restaurants, limited manufacturing, and retail, making it a very dynamic part of the downtown. Admittedly, the supplementary businesses supported both the district and Indiana’s railroad network. Hotels and restaurants along South Illinois Street provided accommodations to both travelers and visiting retailers. Manufacturing and retail appeared in the district as a result of the area’s proximity to freight depots.

³³⁴ Consolidated Illustrating Co., *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 173.

³³⁵ Indianapolis Board of Trade, *Industries of Indianapolis*, 29.

³³⁶ Hyman, *Journal Handbook of Indianapolis*, 352; Consolidated Illustrating Co., *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 172.

³³⁷ Consolidated Illustrating Co., 172.

³³⁸ Leonard K. Eaton, “Warehouses and Warehouse Districts in Mid-American Cities,” *Urban History Review* 11 (June 1982): 18.

The wholesaling business necessitated the employment of numerous workers: traveling salesmen, factory hands, delivery men, stockmen, store clerks, and managers to name a few. The hotels located on South Illinois Street were ideally placed for the visiting retailers who needed a place to stay when they shopped at wholesaling and manufacturing firms. The Grand Hotel lasted for several decades, while other hotels were short-lived. Due to the high number of visitors in the neighborhood as a result of railroad transport, many hotels popped up, especially on Illinois and Meridian streets. The lengthy list of Wholesale District hotels includes the New Occidental Hotel at the corner of Illinois and Pearl streets, the Swan and New Commercial hotels, side-by-side on Illinois Street near Union Depot, and the Severin Hotel on Georgia Street. Typically these hotels took up one section of the building, or perhaps half of the building. Some hotels occupied almost entire buildings, such as the Grand Hotel once located on Illinois Street.³³⁹ Hotels and wholesale companies often coexisted in the same building, depicting the density and vibrancy of the Wholesale District, particularly in the blocks near Union Depot. Additionally, restaurants flourished on South Illinois Street, ideally placed for visitors and employees. For example, in 1900, thirteen of the eighteen restaurants in the IWD were found on South Illinois Street.³⁴⁰

The Wholesale District's limited number of retail and manufacturing companies often functioned in conjunction with the city's wholesale houses, thus creating another reason for their proximity. Some manufacturing businesses shared buildings with wholesale firms. For instance, iron and machinery manufacturing businesses occupied space throughout the eastern portion of the Wholesale District. South Pennsylvania Street

³³⁹ *1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1, map 3.*

³⁴⁰ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory, 1244-1245.*

housed South Bend Iron Works, The Enterprise Foundry, and Steel Pulley and Machine Works.³⁴¹ Manufacturing companies located in the area to be close to the railroad lines and wholesalers. Similar to the way in which some wholesale firms doubled as retailers, other wholesale firms also functioned as manufacturers. For instance, Daniel Stewart Company on South Meridian sold wholesale drugs and manufactured Old Gibraltar brand medicine.³⁴² Manufacturing and wholesaling complemented one another, and communication and convenience encouraged proximity.

Fire Risks in the IWD

Wholesaling was a high-risk venture, with thousands of dollars invested in stock. The concentration of businesses and stock within a span of a few city blocks made fires a reality for Indianapolis wholesalers. The *Indianapolis Trade Journal* noted several fires in its community news sections.³⁴³ Sometimes the fires were small and caused little damage, but other fires caused great destruction, resulting in thousands of dollars of losses and ruined businesses. For example, a fire on the afternoon of February 11, 1895, completely destroyed the wholesale grocery firm of George W. Stout. Stout carried stock valued at nearly \$100,000, all of which was lost except for some heavy groceries stored in a rear room. Insurance coverage of \$85,000 reduced Stout's losses, although this fire was not his first. A previous fire on January 13, 1888, which had started in D. P. Erwin's wholesale dry goods firm, adjoining Stout, spread to nine other establishments.³⁴⁴

³⁴¹ 1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1, maps 4, 8.

³⁴² Consolidated Illustrating Co., *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 166.

³⁴³ The *Indianapolis Trade Journal* was a weekly paper that discussed local happenings in the business community, sales, and wholesaling trends at the national level. The paper began circulation in 1890.

³⁴⁴ *Indianapolis Trade Journal*, February 16, 1895. A February 3, 1900, issue of the *Indianapolis Trade Journal* noted another fire for Stout on February 1, 1900, with a complete loss for the wholesale grocery firm, and a close to complete loss for the A. Kiefer Drug Company due to water damage. The fire

Another large fire occurred causing over \$500,000 in damages on December 3, 1895, starting on the third floor of the Schnull and Company warehouse. This fire destroyed six adjoining houses by noon, including the wholesale scale business Fairbanks, Morse and Company at 70 South Meridian Street, wholesale drug firm Ward Brothers at 72 South Meridian, wholesale liquor company Eckhouse Brothers at 54 South Meridian, another wholesale liquor firm Woodford and Pohlman at 56 South Meridian, Hildebrand Hardware Company at 52 South Meridian, and the Indiana Coffee Company, located at the rear of the Schnull buildings.³⁴⁵ Insurance became crucial for wholesalers. For instance, a fire coupled with water damage on March 14, 1872, destroyed nearly all of wholesale book dealer Stewart and Bowen's stock, with losses estimated at \$20,000 to \$25,000. Insurance of \$70,000 allowed the house to continue in operation while repairing the building.³⁴⁶

Conclusion

Between 1860 and 1920, the Indianapolis Wholesale District experienced an increase in both the types of wholesaling represented and the number of companies in operation. Some branches of wholesaling, such as grocery and dry goods, brought a great deal of money to the district, as indicated here by the estimated worth recorded by R.G. Dun and Company credit reports and estimated losses due to fires. Other branches, such as cigars and tobacco, yielded smaller profits, yet added to the array of trade options available in the capital city. Trading throughout the state and in neighboring midwestern

did not seem to deter either firm, with the article indicating the business's desire to be back in its building in thirty days.

³⁴⁵ *Indianapolis Trade Journal*, December 7, 1895. The destroyed Schnull building dated back when the firm first moved to the district in 1861.

³⁴⁶ *Indiana*, Vol. 69, p. 580, R.G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

states, most IWD businesses boasted both a local and regional clientele, made possible through Indianapolis's railroad connections. The sphere of businesses clustered around the district spoke to the economic structure that developed in connection with wholesaling. The focus of the business community on wholesale trade also indicated the significance given to that type of economic development for the region. During the latter half of the nineteenth century and the initial decades of the twentieth century, the Wholesale District became essential to the fabric of Indianapolis's economic development through its product output, profits, and its mere physical presence in the downtown.

Table 1: Wholesale Grocery Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ³⁴⁷	1857 ³⁴⁸	1860 ³⁴⁹	1870 ³⁵⁰	1880 ³⁵¹	1890 ³⁵²	1900 ³⁵³	1910 ³⁵⁴	1920 ³⁵⁵
S. Meridian	1	0	4	5	8	9	7	2	2
Elsewhere in IWD	0	1	0	3	1	3	3	8	9
Wash. Street	7	7	12	0	0	0	0	1	0
Other Streets	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	9
<u>Total</u>	8	8	16	8	9	12	11	14	20

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

³⁴⁷ *Grooms and Smith's Indianapolis Directory, City Guide, and Business Mirror, Or Indianapolis as it is in 1855* (Indianapolis: A.C. Grooms and W.T. Smith), 1855, 99.

³⁴⁸ A.C. Howard, *A.C. Howard's Directory, For the City of Indianapolis: Containing a Correct List of Citizens' Names, Their Residence and Place of Business; with a historical sketch of Indianapolis, from its earliest History to the Present Day. First Issue* (Indianapolis: A.C. Howard, Publisher, 1857), 229.

³⁴⁹ *Sutherland and McEvoy's Indianapolis City Directory and Business Mirror, For 1860-1861* (Indianapolis: Bingham and Doughty, 1860), 258.

³⁵⁰ *Hutchinson's Indianapolis City Directory, Embracing an Alphabetical List of Citizens Names, A Business Directory, Street Directory, Church Directory, Shippers' Guide, Post Office List, and An Appendix of Much Useful Information. Published Annually* (Indianapolis: Sentinel Stream Printing, 1870), 283.

³⁵¹ R.L. Polk & Company. *Indianapolis City Directory* (Detroit, MI: R.L. Polk & Company, Publishers, 1880), 569.

³⁵² *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 858.

³⁵³ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1177,

³⁵⁴ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1627.

³⁵⁵ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 2009.

Table 2: Wholesale Liquor Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ³⁵⁶	1857 ³⁵⁷	1860 ³⁵⁸	1870 ³⁵⁹	1880 ³⁶⁰	1890 ³⁶¹	1900 ³⁶²	1910 ³⁶³	1920 ³⁶⁴
S. Meridian	0	1	0	8	7	7	6	5	0
Elsewhere in IWD	0	1	1	5	3	6	6	5	0
Wash. Street	0	1	1	5	4	5	2	1	0
Other Streets	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	5	0
<u>Total</u>	0	3	2	18	14	20	19	16	0

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

³⁵⁶ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*. This directory did not list any wholesale liquor dealers.

³⁵⁷ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 239.

³⁵⁸ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*, 38, 42.

³⁵⁹ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 239.

³⁶⁰ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 601. The directory listed eight firms under wholesale and retail liquor dealers, with one on South Meridian and another on South Illinois.

³⁶¹ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 906-907.

³⁶² *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1268.

³⁶³ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1733.

³⁶⁴ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*. With the enforcement of statewide Prohibition in 1918 and nationwide Prohibition in 1920, the city directory did not list any wholesaler wine and liquor dealers, regardless of whether they truly existed or not.

Table 3: Wholesale Confectioners Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ³⁶⁵	1857 ³⁶⁶	1860 ³⁶⁷	1870 ³⁶⁸	1880 ³⁶⁹	1890 ³⁷⁰	1900 ³⁷¹	1910 ³⁷²	1920 ³⁷³
S. Meridian	0	1	1	1	2	3	0	2	1
Elsewhere in IWD	0	1	0	0	0	2	5	5	2
Wash. Street	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	3	3
Other Streets	0	2	0	1	0	1	7	6	20
<u>Total</u>	0	5	1	3	3	7	14	16	26

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

³⁶⁵ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*. No wholesale confectioners were listed in this directory.

³⁶⁶ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 88, 104, 223.

³⁶⁷ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*, 214.

³⁶⁸ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 228-229.

³⁶⁹ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 561.

³⁷⁰ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 846.

³⁷¹ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1148. Firms were listed as wholesale and manufacturing.

³⁷² *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1595. Firms were listed as wholesale and manufacturing.

³⁷³ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1973. Firms were listed as wholesale and manufacturing.

Table 4: Wholesale Bakers Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ³⁷⁴	1857 ³⁷⁵	1860 ³⁷⁶	1870 ³⁷⁷	1880 ³⁷⁸	1890 ³⁷⁹	1900 ³⁸⁰	1910 ³⁸¹	1920 ³⁸²
<u>Location</u>									
S. Meridian	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Elsewhere in IWD	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	1
Wash. Street	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Streets	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	13
<u>Total</u>	0	1	0	0	0	2	4	7	14

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

³⁷⁴ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*. No wholesale baker firms were listed in this directory.

³⁷⁵ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 76. The directory only listed one firm under Fred Bollman, the Cincinnati Bakery and Confectionery, a wholesale and retail established founded on East Washington Street.

³⁷⁶ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*. This directory did not list any wholesale bakery firms.

³⁷⁷ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 222. This directory did not list any wholesale bakery firms, but it does list seventeen bakeries, including three on South Meridian and three elsewhere in the district.

³⁷⁸ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 551. This directory did not list any wholesale bakery firms, although it did list many bakeries, one of which was in the IWD.

³⁷⁹ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 829.

³⁸⁰ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1121.

³⁸¹ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1565.

³⁸² *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1946.

Table 5: Wholesale Dry Goods Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ³⁸³	1857 ³⁸⁴	1860 ³⁸⁵	1870 ³⁸⁶	1880 ³⁸⁷	1890 ³⁸⁸	1900 ³⁸⁹	1910 ³⁹⁰	1920 ³⁹¹
S. Meridian	0	0	0	4	4	2	2	2	2
Elsewhere in IWD	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2
Wash. Street	2	2	4	1	0	1	1	1	1
Other Streets	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Total</u>	2	2	4	6	4	5	5	3	5

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

³⁸³ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis City Directory*, 187. These are the only firms listed specifically as wholesale dry goods. The directory listed eighteen firms as dry goods dealers, which could refer to retail. All of those establishments were located on Washington Street.

³⁸⁴ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 90, 94. Both firms on Washington Street sold dry goods at wholesale and retail.

³⁸⁵ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*, 257.

³⁸⁶ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 230.

³⁸⁷ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 564.

³⁸⁸ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 852.

³⁸⁹ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1162.

³⁹⁰ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1610.

³⁹¹ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1987.

Table 6: Wholesale China, Glassware, and Queensware Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ³⁹²	1857 ³⁹³	1860 ³⁹⁴	1870 ³⁹⁵	1880 ³⁹⁶	1890 ³⁹⁷	1900 ³⁹⁸	1910 ³⁹⁹	1920 ⁴⁰⁰
<u>Location</u>									
S. Meridian	0	0	0	4	3	3	2	2	1
Elsewhere in IWD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wash. Street	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
Other Streets	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
<u>Total</u>	1	1	1	7	3	3	3	4	1

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

³⁹² *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*, 33.

³⁹³ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 86.

³⁹⁴ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*, 46.

³⁹⁵ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 227. The directory listed these firms as wholesale and retail operations.

³⁹⁶ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 558.

³⁹⁷ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 842.

³⁹⁸ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1142.

³⁹⁹ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1587.

⁴⁰⁰ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1965.

Table 7: Wholesale Boots and Shoes Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ⁴⁰¹	1857 ⁴⁰²	1860 ⁴⁰³	1870 ⁴⁰⁴	1880 ⁴⁰⁵	1890 ⁴⁰⁶	1900 ⁴⁰⁷	1910 ⁴⁰⁸	1920 ⁴⁰⁹
<u>Location</u>									
S. Meridian	0	0	0	4	7	5	5	2	1
Elsewhere in IWD	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	1
Wash. Street	3	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	1
Other Streets	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Total</u>	3	2	4	8	7	6	5	2	3

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

⁴⁰¹ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*, 187.

⁴⁰² *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 217.

⁴⁰³ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*, 255.

⁴⁰⁴ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 225..

⁴⁰⁵ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 554.

⁴⁰⁶ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 834.

⁴⁰⁷ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1129. The directory categorized these firms as wholesaling and manufacturing.

⁴⁰⁸ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1574. The directory categorized these firms as wholesalers and manufacturers.

⁴⁰⁹ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1954. The directory listed these firms as wholesalers and manufacturers.

Table 8: Wholesale Clothing Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ⁴¹⁰	1857 ⁴¹¹	1860 ⁴¹²	1870 ⁴¹³	1880 ⁴¹⁴	1890 ⁴¹⁵	1900 ⁴¹⁶	1910 ⁴¹⁷	1920 ⁴¹⁸
S. Meridian	0	0	0	2	2	3	1	0	1
Elsewhere in IWD	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	2	0
Wash. Street	0	0	0	1	0	13	0	1	1
Other Streets	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	3	7
<u>Total</u>	0	0	0	3	2	29	6	6	9

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

⁴¹⁰ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*. This directory did not list any wholesale clothing firms.

⁴¹¹ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*. The directory did not list any wholesale clothing firms.

⁴¹² *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*. This directory did not list any wholesale clothing firms.

⁴¹³ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 228.

⁴¹⁴ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 560.

⁴¹⁵ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 843. The directory combined the listing of wholesale and retail, thus many of the twenty-nine firms could have been retail.

⁴¹⁶ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1144. The directory categorized these firms as wholesalers and manufacturers.

⁴¹⁷ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1589. The directory categorized these firms as wholesalers and manufacturers.

⁴¹⁸ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1968. The directory categorized these firms as wholesalers and manufacturers.

Table 9: Wholesale Millinery Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ⁴¹⁹	1857 ⁴²⁰	1860 ⁴²¹	1870 ⁴²²	1880 ⁴²³	1890 ⁴²⁴	1900 ⁴²⁵	1910 ⁴²⁶	1920 ⁴²⁷
S. Meridian	0	0	0	2	3	2	2	1	1
Elsewhere in IWD	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3
Wash. Street	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Other Streets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Total</u>	0	0	0	2	3	2	4	4	6

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

⁴¹⁹ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*. This directory did not list any wholesale millinery firms.

⁴²⁰ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*. This directory did not list any wholesale millinery firms.

⁴²¹ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*. This directory did not list any wholesale millinery firms.

⁴²² *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 241.

⁴²³ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 582.

⁴²⁴ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 879.

⁴²⁵ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1212.

⁴²⁶ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1665.

⁴²⁷ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 2068.

Table 10: Wholesale Watches, Clockmakers, Jewelers Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ⁴²⁸	1857 ⁴²⁹	1860 ⁴³⁰	1870 ⁴³¹	1880 ⁴³²	1890 ⁴³³	1900 ⁴³⁴	1910 ⁴³⁵	1920 ⁴³⁶
<u>Location</u>									
S. Meridian	0	0	0	0	2	4	1	0	0
Elsewhere in IWD	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Wash. Street	10	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	6
Other Streets	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	1
<u>Total</u>	10	0	0	0	2	6	6	7	7

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

⁴²⁸ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*, 162. The directory did not label the firms as wholesale or retail. The number of firms and their location on Washington, a primarily retail street, suggests that these operated as retail stores.

⁴²⁹ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*. This directory did not list any wholesale watch, clock, and jewelry firms.

⁴³⁰ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*. This directory did not list any wholesale watch, clock, and jewelry firms, although it did list six jewelry businesses, none of which were located in the IWD.

⁴³¹ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*. This directory did not list any wholesale watch, clock, and jewelry firms.

⁴³² *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 600.

⁴³³ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 905.

⁴³⁴ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1266.

⁴³⁵ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1647. Five of the seven firms operated out of the State Life Building, located at 15 to 23 East Washington Street.

⁴³⁶ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 2036.

Table 11: Wholesale Notions Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ⁴³⁷	1857 ⁴³⁸	1860 ⁴³⁹	1870 ⁴⁴⁰	1880 ⁴⁴¹	1890 ⁴⁴²	1900 ⁴⁴³	1910 ⁴⁴⁴	1920 ⁴⁴⁵
S. Meridian	0	0	0	9	3	3	2	3	4
Elsewhere in IWD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Wash. Street	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
Other Streets	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
<u>Total</u>	0	1	1	10	3	4	3	6	6

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

⁴³⁷ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*. This directory did not list any wholesale notions firms.

⁴³⁸ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 229. The directory labeled the firm Crossland and Gilbert as a wholesale fancy goods and a notions store.

⁴³⁹ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*, 26. The firm listed carried a number of items, including notions.

⁴⁴⁰ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 241.

⁴⁴¹ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 584.

⁴⁴² *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 882.

⁴⁴³ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1217.

⁴⁴⁴ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1672-1673.

⁴⁴⁵ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 2074.

Table 12: Wholesale Drug Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ⁴⁴⁶	1857 ⁴⁴⁷	1860 ⁴⁴⁸	1870 ⁴⁴⁹	1880 ⁴⁵⁰	1890 ⁴⁵¹	1900 ⁴⁵²	1910 ⁴⁵³	1920 ⁴⁵⁴
<u>Location</u>									
S. Meridian	0	0	0	2	1	2	3	3	1
Elsewhere in IWD	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Wash. Street	9	2	1	3	0	2	1	0	0
Other Streets	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2
<u>Total</u>	10	2	1	5	1	4	6	7	5

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

⁴⁴⁶ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*, 116. The directory labeled these ten firms as drug dealers, which might retailers.

⁴⁴⁷ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 96.

⁴⁴⁸ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*, 228.

⁴⁴⁹ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 229.

⁴⁵⁰ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 564. The directory listed the firm of Augustus Kiefer as the lone wholesale druggist, while it listed seventy-nine businesses as wholesale and retail druggists.

⁴⁵¹ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 851.

⁴⁵² *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1161.

⁴⁵³ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1609.

⁴⁵⁴ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1986.

Table 13: Wholesale Book Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ⁴⁵⁵	1857 ⁴⁵⁶	1860 ⁴⁵⁷	1870 ⁴⁵⁸	1880 ⁴⁵⁹	1890 ⁴⁶⁰	1900 ⁴⁶¹	1910 ⁴⁶²	1920 ⁴⁶³
S. Meridian	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1
Elsewhere in IWD	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Wash. Street	2	3	2	0	3	1	1	0	0
Other Streets	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Total</u>	3	3	2	0	4	1	3	3	1

* Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

⁴⁵⁵ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*, 150, 151. These firms operated as wholesalers and retailers. Additionally, one firm printed books.

⁴⁵⁶ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 84, 100. Two of the three firms operated as wholesalers and retailers.

⁴⁵⁷ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*, 46, 76.

⁴⁵⁸ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 224. This directory did not list any wholesale book firms. The directory did list nine book sellers and stationers, with one located in the IWD.

⁴⁵⁹ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 554. The directory listed these firms as wholesale and retail.

⁴⁶⁰ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 834.

⁴⁶¹ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1129.

⁴⁶² *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1574, 1717. The directory listed the Indianapolis Book and Stationery Company on South Meridian Street under both exclusively wholesale books and stationery and wholesale stationers. The other two firms were only listed as wholesale stationers firms.

⁴⁶³ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1954. Not included in the chart, the directory also listed the Kiefer-Stewart Drug Company as wholesale stationers (p. 2116).

Table 14: Wholesale Cigar and Tobacco Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ⁴⁶⁴	1857 ⁴⁶⁵	1860 ⁴⁶⁶	1870 ⁴⁶⁷	1880 ⁴⁶⁸	1890 ⁴⁶⁹	1900 ⁴⁷⁰	1910 ⁴⁷¹	1920 ⁴⁷²
S. Meridian	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	2
Elsewhere in IWD	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	4	4
Wash. Street	5	0	2	6	0	1	2	2	1
Other Streets	0	0	0	1	1	2	7	5	5
<u>Total</u>	6	0	2	10	2	6	12	13	12

* Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

⁴⁶⁴ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*, 152.

⁴⁶⁵ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*. This directory did not list any wholesale cigar and tobacco firms.

⁴⁶⁶ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*, 42, 178.

⁴⁶⁷ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 227.

⁴⁶⁸ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 559.

⁴⁶⁹ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 842.

⁴⁷⁰ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1143.

⁴⁷¹ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1588.

⁴⁷² *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1965.

Table 15: Wholesale Hardware Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ⁴⁷³	1857 ⁴⁷⁴	1860 ⁴⁷⁵	1870 ⁴⁷⁶	1880 ⁴⁷⁷	1890 ⁴⁷⁸	1900 ⁴⁷⁹	1910 ⁴⁸⁰	1920 ⁴⁸¹
<u>Location</u>									
S. Meridian	0	0	0	3	3	4	4	2	0
Elsewhere in IWD	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Wash. Street	6	1	1	0	0	2	1	2	0
Other Streets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
<u>Total</u>	6	1	1	3	3	7	6	6	3

* Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

⁴⁷³ *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*, 86. The directory listed these firms as hardware dealers without specifying if they were wholesale or retail.

⁴⁷⁴ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 180. The sole hardware firm listed in this directory, James Sulgrove, also specialized in saddlery.

⁴⁷⁵ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*, 174.

⁴⁷⁶ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 235.

⁴⁷⁷ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 572. The directory listed four more firms as wholesale and retail, with one firm on South Meridian Street. The remaining three were on Washington Street.

⁴⁷⁸ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 863.

⁴⁷⁹ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1182.

⁴⁸⁰ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1634.

⁴⁸¹ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 2017.

Table 16: Wholesale Saddlery Firm Locations, 1855-1920*

<u>Years</u>	1855 ⁴⁸²	1857 ⁴⁸³	1860 ⁴⁸⁴	1870 ⁴⁸⁵	1880 ⁴⁸⁶	1890 ⁴⁸⁷	1900 ⁴⁸⁸	1910 ⁴⁸⁹	1920 ⁴⁹⁰
S. Meridian	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	1	1
Elsewhere in IWD	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0
Wash. Street	1	1	1	0	0	0	9	0	0
Other Streets	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	3	1
<u>Total</u>	1	1	1	0	2	2	31	5	2

*Unless noted otherwise, only firms specifically designated as wholesale businesses were included in this chart.

⁴⁸² *Grooms and Smith's 1855 Indianapolis Directory*, 46.

⁴⁸³ *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 180.

⁴⁸⁴ *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis City Directory*, 22, 34.

⁴⁸⁵ *Hutchinson's 1870 Indianapolis City Directory*, 285. This directory did not list any wholesale saddlery firms. It did list three harness and saddle hardware businesses, not specified as wholesale, including one on South Meridian Street.

⁴⁸⁶ *1880 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 592.

⁴⁸⁷ *1890 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 863, 894. The firm Holliday and Wyon on South Pennsylvania Street specialized in harness and saddle manufacturing and wholesaling. The other related firm was Gordon, Kurtz and Co., which specialized in saddle hardware.

⁴⁸⁸ *1900 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1184, 1247. The directory listed thirty firms as harness and saddle manufacturers and dealers, which might have included retailers. It also listed one firm, Indianapolis Saddlery Company on South Meridian Street, as a wholesale saddle hardware firm.

⁴⁸⁹ *1910 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 1635, 1706.

⁴⁹⁰ *1920 Polk Indianapolis City Directory*, 2018, 2106.

Chapter Four: Built Environment of the Indianapolis Wholesale District

The Indianapolis Wholesale District (IWD) extended to the neighborhoods directly surrounding Union Depot, a hub for railroad transportation in Indiana. Lack of efficient transportation throughout the city made nearness to the Union Depot a necessity.⁴⁹¹ Wholesaling firms concentrated along Meridian Street, south of Washington Street, with lesser concentration on neighboring South Illinois, South Pennsylvania, South Delaware, and Maryland streets.⁴⁹² Analyzing the physical presence of the IWD in downtown Indianapolis uncovers some of the built environment of a typical midwestern, regional business hub. Additionally, a study of the regional importance of the Wholesale District requires examination of its physical presence in Indianapolis near the Union Depot.

Richard Eaton, a professor emeritus of architecture and urban planning at the University of Michigan, described the history of American wholesale warehouses in a 1982 article for the *Urban History Review*.⁴⁹³ Eaton discussed the history of wholesaling at a general level before launching into a discussion of warehouse plans, building materials, and design elements, many features of which appear in the Indianapolis Wholesale District. Eaton asserted that “honour and social position required that the exterior of the building convey a message of stability and enduring strength, which was very much in keeping with the heavy structural system employed. The buildings had to

⁴⁹¹ Paul Robin Baumann, “The Impact of Transportation upon Land Use within the Mile Square of Indianapolis,” (Master’s thesis, Indiana University, 1963), 52.

⁴⁹² McCrea Street is a small side street located near the Union Depot between South Illinois and South Meridian streets. Mechanic Street is a small road located between South Meridian and South Pennsylvania. The *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, labeled McCrea as 50 feet wide and Mechanic as 30 feet wide, making both streets very narrow. As a point of reference, the 1898 Sanborn map noted South Meridian as 90 feet wide.

⁴⁹³ Leonard K. Eaton, “Warehouses and Warehouse Districts in Mid-American Cities,” *Urban History Review* 11 (June 1982).

signify the owners' status in the community and the financial soundness of the firm.”⁴⁹⁴

Eaton placed great importance on the exterior appearance of the warehouse, connecting appearance with other themes about business, including the role of advertising. While one cannot definitively state that wholesalers in the Indianapolis Wholesale District intentionally put meaning into the facades of their warehouses, firms chose designs that created corporate images. Eaton briefly touched on efforts to “fireproof” warehouses, with many wholesalers turning to mill construction.⁴⁹⁵ Eaton mentioned the prominence of poured concrete slabs for flooring in the early twentieth century, especially after World War One.⁴⁹⁶ Studying the physical characteristics of the warehouses sheds light on the wholesale district.

Anne Mosher and others analyzed the transformation of New Orleans's Canal Street during three periods—1885 to 1887, 1940, and 1994.⁴⁹⁷ While the concept of usage change over time does not apply to this thesis on the IWD between 1830 and 1920, I include changes to the built environment. According to Mosher, a land use chart indicated that the New Orleans wholesaling district on Canal Street was ideally located next to two railroad lines and the banks of the Mississippi River. Mosher's reliance on *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* and city directories mirrors sources used in this study to analyze built environment characteristics found in the IWD. Mosher noted a mixture of wholesale and retail establishments near the Mississippi River waterfront in New Orleans

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁹⁵ Mill construction emphasized the use of timbers rather than cast iron, which deflects under heat. Timbers were recognized as fire-resistant. Varying ceiling heights reduced the spread of fire. Midwestern states had an abundance of wood that could be used, making it a popular building material. American warehouses utilized the timber system of mill construction rather than the load-bearing masonry walls used in European warehouses. Eaton, 22.

⁴⁹⁶ Eaton, “Warehouses and Warehouse Districts in Mid-American Cities,” 25.

⁴⁹⁷ Anne E. Mosher et al., “Downtown Dynamics,” *Geographical Review* 85 (October 1995).

in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁹⁸ Mosher also mentioned varied uses within the same buildings, such as retail on the ground floor and offices and studios of dentists, doctors, lawyers, and photographers on the floor above.⁴⁹⁹ In Indianapolis hotels in the Wholesale District were also housed in mixed-use buildings. Studies like Mosher's demonstrate the patterns found in the built environment of business districts.

A full study of the Indianapolis Wholesale District's built environment warrants examination of topics ranging from block plans to warehouse fire safety features to understand how these businesses operated. This chapter will provide such a study.

Structure of the Blocks⁵⁰⁰

Size of a wholesale firm's frontage differed depending on the location within the IWD. For example, Washington Street buildings, like South Meridian Street buildings, characteristically were narrow but deep, most likely due to the expense of real estate on the city's main retail thoroughfares. These store fronts typically ranged from twenty-four to fifty-five feet, with most being closer to the latter.⁵⁰¹ The depth of the businesses on

⁴⁹⁸Ibid., 500. Most wholesalers purposefully placed themselves near the waterfront in New Orleans. Similarly to Indianapolis's downtown, many retailers located near the wholesalers and the transportation source, the Mississippi River.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 502. Much of the New Orleans wholesaling remained near the Mississippi waterfront, yet the character of the neighborhood began to decline in the early decades of the twentieth century.

⁵⁰⁰ Multiple address notations on *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* indicated that street numbering changed at some point between 1887 and 1898, beginning with all of the addresses south of Maryland Street. The block of Illinois Street between Pearl and Maryland streets also changed. Comparison of 1890s editions of the *Polk Indianapolis City Directory* revealed that street numbers changed in 1898. For example, the boots and shoes dealer McKee and Company was housed at 102 and 104 South Meridian in 1890. This address remains the same until the numbering changed to 202 and 204 South Meridian Street. The street addresses remained the same on the IWD's north/south streets from Market Street and Monument Circle to Maryland Street, starting all of the streets south of Maryland with numbering at 101 and 102. Directories listed the firm as McKee and Branham in 1891. The same switched to R. S. McKee and Son from 1892 to 1896. In 1897 it became the McKee Shoe Company. Additionally, "blocks" in the section title refers to the street arrangement, rather than the proper name of a few warehouses (i.e., Conduitt's Block).

⁵⁰¹ 1887 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, maps 3, 4, 40, 151.

Washington Street reduced street frontage on adjacent streets.⁵⁰² For example, lots facing South Meridian started halfway down the block south of Washington with addresses of 11 and 12 South Meridian Street. Lots on South Meridian Street were also very narrow and deep, often extending the full depth of a block for efficient use of space. Frontage on South Meridian Street varied, but most wholesale firms boasted between forty and fifty feet.⁵⁰³

Many of the buildings on South Meridian Street followed a general street block arrangement. Indianapolis's original platting divided each block into four quadrants, as seen in Figure 4, a map from the 1887 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, on page 126. Density of the IWD, especially on South Meridian Street, required those quadrants to be subdivided further into individual lots, with narrow frontage usually facing the north/south streets. East/west streets in the district included Maryland, Pearl, Chesapeake, Georgia, West Louisiana streets, and Jackson Place. While most of the wholesale houses faced the main north/south streets, the facades of some buildings faced the smaller side streets. For example, the 1898 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* noted the Indianapolis Drug Company's warehouse with an eighteen-foot front on East Pearl Street between South Meridian and South Pennsylvania streets.⁵⁰⁴ Secondary streets in the IWD like Pearl and Chesapeake housed secondary warehouse storage space for wholesale companies whose main premises faced on north/south streets. The structure of the blocks within the Wholesale District added a distinctive character to the area that differentiates it from other areas in Indianapolis.

⁵⁰² See Figure 126, map three in volume one of the 1887 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, for an image of a block structure.

⁵⁰³ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*, 1887, 1898, 1914.

⁵⁰⁴ 1898 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, Volume 3, map 303.

Features of IWD Buildings

Warehouses can be defined as large adaptable structures used mainly for storage with light, ventilation, and circulation for workers and goods by means of stairs, elevators, and walkways. Warehouses in the IWD also housed light manufacturing, or offices and display areas. Important architectural features of buildings in the Wholesale District include form, plans, facades, materials, light and ventilation, fireproof/safety features, roof components, iron walkways, tunnels, technological features, and ancillary structures. Analysis of these features demonstrates the IWD's significance as a collection of late nineteenth-century business district architecture. Examinations of warehouse features provide opportunities for interpretation of the district's built environment. Additionally, studying the district's warehouse architecture continues a spatial awareness that has been important while studying the location and purpose of the IWD.

Most of the buildings in the district had a similar form of flat street façades of three or four stories and a parapet. Therefore, the wholesalers relied on distinctive façades to set their buildings apart from others on the street. Signage on the buildings included the firm's name on the street façades between the first and second or second and third stories.⁵⁰⁵ Businesses on corners also painted signs on the sides of the buildings.⁵⁰⁶ Differentiation of purpose could often be seen on the exterior with large display windows and entrance on the first story and ranks of smaller sash windows for the stories above. Parapets at the roof hid functional penthouses and towers behind decorative cornices.

Some wholesalers used ornamentation to set their warehouses apart. Italianate details of brackets and narrow windows with arched heads were very popular and readily

⁵⁰⁵ See Figure 5 on page 127 for an example of signage on warehouse façades.

⁵⁰⁶ Refer again to Figure 5 for an example of a painted sign for the dry goods firm Hibben, Hollweg, and Reese on South Meridian Street. The image also shows engraved signs.

available from cast iron fabricators. One of the earliest wholesaling blocks located on South Meridian, designed by architect Isaac Hodgson for the grocery firm of Fitzgibbon and Company, featured a façade with a stone cornice.⁵⁰⁷ Conduitt's Block, erected in 1882 at 136 and 138 South Meridian and designed by R. P. Daggett and Company, boasted a heavy ornamental cornice on the front elevation with the name of the firm above, from which rose a six-foot pedestal with a ten-foot six-inch colossal female figure of "commerce," with her left hand grasping a Greek oar, the symbol of progress, and her right hand extended with a wand covered with intertwined serpents, a symbol for trade.⁵⁰⁸

Wholesale buildings in the IWD displayed a fairly uniform use of building materials. Most buildings in the district were brick, although some buildings had stone facades for an elegant appearance. For example, stone trimmed the Murphy, Hibben and Company building at 97 and 99 South Meridian Street.⁵⁰⁹ Fahnley and McCrea's building at 140 and 142 South Meridian also featured a stone front.⁵¹⁰ The *1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* labeled the Conduitt Block at 136 and 138 South Meridian as a brick building with a stone front.⁵¹¹ Others utilized cast iron facades. For example, an 1856 article from the *Locomotive* mentioned a building on South Meridian Street to be built for business partners Kerlin and Fitzgibbon that would feature cast iron with three double doors on the street façade.⁵¹² Cast iron came in a variety of designs that could be chosen

⁵⁰⁷ *The Locomotive*, July 5, 1856; *A.C. Howard's 1857 Indianapolis City Directory*, 121.

⁵⁰⁸ *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Indianapolis*, 466-7.

⁵⁰⁹ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 17.

⁵¹⁰ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 30.

⁵¹¹ *1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 8.

⁵¹² *The Locomotive*, July 5, 1856. The newspaper article did not list an address on South Meridian Street. *Sutherland and McEvoy's 1860 Indianapolis Directory* listed M. Fitzgibbon and Company as a wholesale grocer at 77 South Meridian Street. This might have been the site that the *Locomotive* article described.

from a catalog and shipped to the builder who bolted the panels onto the structural components of the street elevation.

Wholesale buildings typically were three or four stories high. Some firms used double warehouses, meaning that they had two structural bays.⁵¹³ While there was no universal warehouse floor plan, many owners placed offices and showrooms on the first floor, and used upper floors for stock. For example, Johnston and Irwin, a wholesale dry goods, woolens, and notions firm on South Meridian Street, had twelve departments. The first floor housed general offices and showcases of print and gingham fabrics, and ladies' goods. The hosiery and glove, notions, and linen departments were on the second floor, while underwear, manufactured goods, rubber goods, and the packing and shipping department operated on the third floor. The fourth floor claimed storage of duplicate stock.⁵¹⁴ If a warehouse had a basement, that space acted as storage for heavier goods and general storage purposes. Wholesale carpet and wallpaper dealer A.L. Wright and Company, dry goods wholesalers Johnston and Erwin, and hats and caps wholesalers Henley, Hendrickson, and Lefler, all utilized basements.⁵¹⁵ Companies that both manufactured and warehoused goods used the upper floors for manufacturing purposes as well as storage, as was the case for harness makers Holliday and Wyon, located at 77 South Meridian.⁵¹⁶ The wholesale warehouses in the IWD contained versatile spaces used by each wholesaler to meet specific needs. Over the decades, the same spaces were repeatedly repurposed for subsequent occupants.

⁵¹³ The term "bays" refers to structural bays, or the space between support posts. In other contexts, bays can refer to window bays on the facades.

⁵¹⁴ *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Indianapolis*, 453. The text did not clarify what was meant by "manufactured" goods.

⁵¹⁵ *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Indianapolis*, 437, 453, 596.

⁵¹⁶ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 29. Holliday and Wyon specialized in both the wholesale trade and manufacture of harnesses.

Building structure and location within the blocks limited light and ventilation for most wholesale warehouses in the IWD. Facades generally included rows of windows for aesthetic appeal and to provide natural light in the front of the store, especially important for the showroom displays. Exposed side elevations of corner buildings also included windows. In his article on wholesale warehouse architecture, Leonard Eaton noted that the warehouses did not contain many windows because excessive light could damage some stock, such as textiles or drugs.⁵¹⁷ Many IWD buildings were limited to windows facing the street due to their location in the middle of blocks. First floor bays featured larger, fixed sheet glass windows for light and aesthetic purposes, with moveable transom sashes above that could be opened for air.⁵¹⁸

Aerial photographs of South Meridian indicate skylights on many warehouse roofs. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* also indicate that some internal spaces were lit and ventilated by skylights. Stockrooms of the Van Camp Hardware and Iron Company on South Illinois Street included two skylights that each opened to two floors.⁵¹⁹ Kipp Brothers, a wholesale fancy goods and notions firm at 37 and 41 South Meridian Street, boasted four skylights, with two opened to three stories and the other two open to four stories.⁵²⁰ A wholesale leather house at 111 South Pennsylvania Street had a skylight with wired glass, a safety feature, in the metal sash.⁵²¹ Fahnley and McCrea Millinery

⁵¹⁷ Eaton, 19.

⁵¹⁸ Refer to Figure 5 on page 127 for window arrangements on warehouse façades.

⁵¹⁹ *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 301. To bring light and air to the lower levels of buildings required large holes in intervening floors between the skylight and the lowest level to be illuminated.

⁵²⁰ *1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 22.

⁵²¹ *1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 23. Sanborn maps denoted wire glass skylight windows with a “W.G.” inside of a rectangle. Sanborn maps gave many buildings in the wholesale district this notation, though most were not wholesaling houses.

Company's building contained three wire glass skylights.⁵²² The flour warehouse for the Bryce Baking Company, a wholesale and manufacturing bakery located on South Meridian, had three skylights for the top floor.⁵²³

Wholesaling houses contained many features to reduce the threat of fires. Sprinkler systems appeared in the later decades of the IWD, occurring with some frequency in the 1898 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*. The 1914 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* noted that Daniel Stewart's storage building on West Maryland had a dry Hibbard Auto Sprinkler system.⁵²⁴ The wholesale grocery O'Connor and Company at the corner of South Meridian and East Maryland streets stored groceries on all of its four floors. The 1914 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* noted a manufacturers' auto sprinkler system throughout the structure, with the sprinkler heads placed eight feet apart. The system connected to the city's main water line, as well as a 2,000 gallon water tank behind the building.⁵²⁵ Although many of the IWD's buildings lacked sprinkler systems in the early twentieth century, they were becoming more prevalent. A few wholesale businesses utilized fire alarm systems as well. By 1914, wholesale grocery C.A. Schrader Company used a Thompson auto alarm fire system.⁵²⁶

External fire escapes became a typical safety measure in the IWD after the turn of the century. Many of the wholesaling houses had exterior iron fire escapes, as shown by the 1898 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*. Fire escapes appeared on the majority of wholesaling blocks in the 1914 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*. Fire escapes were primarily

⁵²² 1914 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, Volume 1, map 6.

⁵²³ 1914 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, Volume 1, map 7. The Bryce Baking Company's address was 355 to 371 South Meridian, at the corner of Meridian and East South streets.

⁵²⁴ 1914 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, Volume 1, map 21.

⁵²⁵ 1914 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, Volume 1, map 22.

⁵²⁶ 1914 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, Volume 1, map 23.

built on the side or rear elevations of the district's buildings, but a few were placed on the front. For example, Griffith Brothers, a wholesale millinery, utilized a fire escape on the western side of their West Maryland Street frontage.⁵²⁷ Firms in the middle of blocks placed their fire escapes on the rear elevation. Both Tanner and Company and Fahnley and McCrea Company faced South Meridian and placed their fire escapes to the rear of their buildings on McCrea Street.⁵²⁸ Van Camp Iron and Hardware Company had a fire escape for their stock room on West Chesapeake.⁵²⁹ Both wholesale glassware dealers Hollweg and Reese and wholesale confectioners Daggett and Company had fire escapes leading out to West Georgia Street between South Illinois and South Meridian streets.⁵³⁰ The south side of the Murphy, Hibben and Company building also featured an external fire escape facing East Georgia Street.⁵³¹

Wholesale warehouses also utilized water towers (also referred to as water tanks) placed on the roofs. Tanks could be used for manufacturing or fire safety. For example, Schnull and Company used its roof-top water tank for its sprinkler system.⁵³² Hamilton, Harris and Company, a wholesale cigar and tobacco firm at 117 and 119 South Meridian Street, had a thirty-foot high, 15,000-gallon water tank.⁵³³ A 12,000-gallon, seventeen-foot water tank on a wooden tower perched on the building of wholesale dry goods firm

⁵²⁷ 1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1, map 21.

⁵²⁸ 1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1, map 6. Tanner and Company operated as a wholesale tin ware firm, and Fahnley and McCrea was a prominent wholesale millinery.

⁵²⁹ 1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3, map 301.

⁵³⁰ 1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3, map 302. The Sanborn map refers to the company as Daggart and Company, whereas other sources refer to it as Daggett and Company.

⁵³¹ 1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3, map 303.

⁵³² 1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3, map 302. Sanborn maps denoted water tanks with a "W.T."

⁵³³ 1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1, map 20.

Havens and Geddes.⁵³⁴ The Crowder-Cooper Shoe Company at 215 to 217 South Meridian featured a 4,500-gallon pressure tank on the fifth floor of the building.⁵³⁵

The *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* noted pressure tanks on the roofs of some buildings, but water tanks like the one used by Havens and Geddes were labeled as gravity tanks. Pressure tanks relied on pressure to force down water, while the gravity tanks relied on the natural flow of water from a vertically-placed tank. The height of water tanks on roofs created pressure downwards, with the additional benefits of being out of the line of sight and not taking up valuable floor space. Aerial photographs, such as Figure 6 on page 128, show South Meridian Street buildings with water towers littering their roofs.⁵³⁶

According to descriptions in the Board of Trade's 1889 *Industries of Indianapolis*, warehouses included the leading technology of the day. For example, Schnull and Company's building at 62, 64, 66 and 68 South Meridian Street included both elevator and telephone services.⁵³⁷ The *1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* indicated that most wholesale warehouses had open elevators. Architects placed elevators near loading areas of the building, usually at the back of the warehouse off the alley/backstreet entrance. For example, all of the warehouses from 101 to 119 South Pennsylvania Street included an enclosed rear "driveway" for loading on the first floor, with open elevators strategically placed nearby.⁵³⁸ The wholesale hardware firm Gordon, Kurtz and Company, at one time

⁵³⁴ *1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 6. Sanborn notations refer to these water towers as gravity tanks.

⁵³⁵ *1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 7.

⁵³⁶ See Figure 6 on page 128 for an image of water tanks on roofs throughout the IWD.

⁵³⁷ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 19.

⁵³⁸ *1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 23. Included in this block was C.A. Schrader's wholesale grocery, a wholesale leather firm, a wholesale liquor firm, and a wholesale paper firm, Capital Paper Company.

located at 128 and 130 South Meridian Street, boasted a Reedy Elevator.⁵³⁹ The Conduitt Block at 136 and 138 South Meridian utilized one hydraulic elevator and one hand elevator.⁵⁴⁰ Daniel Stewart Company, a wholesale druggist located at the corner of West Maryland and South Meridian streets, utilized an elevator along with storage under the sidewalks on both street elevations.⁵⁴¹ Freight elevators allowed wholesalers to move goods between floors, thus making them a very common technological detail in the IWD's built environment.

Wholesalers utilized iron walkways and tunnels to connect their main buildings with secondary warehouses.⁵⁴² The extra space was vital considering the large volume of goods that most wholesalers kept on hand. An *1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* denoted an iron-clad passageway between the second floors of a wholesale dry goods company at 99 South Meridian Street and its warehouse at 26 East Georgia Street.⁵⁴³ An excellent example of a walkway in the Wholesale District spanned West Chesapeake between Illinois and Capitol. Van Camp Hardware and Iron Company operated from buildings on both the north and south sides of West Chesapeake. The iron walkway connected the warehouse with extra stock rooms in the next block and allowed the Van Camp Company to avoid taking stock from the upper floors to street grade to move it from building to building.⁵⁴⁴

Tunnels also connected buildings in the IWD. For example, a wholesale drug and glass firm at 42 to 46 South Meridian Street connected to 16 to 22 West Maryland

⁵³⁹ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 21. The J.W. Reedy Elevator Manufacturing Company was based out of Chicago, Illinois.

⁵⁴⁰ *Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Indianapolis*, 466-7.

⁵⁴¹ *1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 22.

⁵⁴² Sanborn maps call these structures walkways or passageways.

⁵⁴³ *1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 3.

⁵⁴⁴ *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 301.

Street.⁵⁴⁵ Murphy, Hibben and Company, a large dry goods and notions firm, had both convenient bridges on upper floors and a tunnel in the basement to connect the building on South Meridian Street to a building with an annex on East Georgia Street and a warehouse on East Chesapeake Street.⁵⁴⁶ A 1914 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* indicated a tunnel connecting Daniel Stewart's wholesale drug firm at 42 to 50 South Meridian to a building on West Maryland Street that provided extra storage space.⁵⁴⁷ Schnull and Company used their annex building for roasting and grinding coffee and compounding spices rather than solely for storage.⁵⁴⁸

Other Buildings in the IWD

Support businesses like manufacturers, retailers, restaurants, and hotels also operated throughout the district. The factories of the district resembled the warehouses, largely because their basic requirements for light, ventilation, and circulation were the same. For example, wholesale firms surrounded the trunk factory on the second and third floors of 38 South Meridian, whose lot at forty-five feet wide matched frontages for warehouses in the block.⁵⁴⁹

The IWD's restaurants also blended in with the warehouses of the district. The restaurant at 18 to 20 South Meridian Street operated from the first floor of the building and did not require the usual technological features found in wholesale warehouses, such as an elevator or loading area. The restaurant's bakery operated in the basement due to

⁵⁴⁵ 1898 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 302

⁵⁴⁶ 1898 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 303. This is also described on page 17 of the 1889 book *Industries of Indianapolis*.

⁵⁴⁷ 1914 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 21.

⁵⁴⁸ *Industries of Indianapolis*, 19.

⁵⁴⁹ 1898 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 302.

the large size and weight of its oven.⁵⁵⁰ The 1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showed a large well hole next to the bakery and behind the adjoining crockery store, present in the IWD but gone by the *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*. This restaurant demonstrated how the neighborhood's structures could easily be tailored to the needs of support businesses.⁵⁵¹

Most of the district's hotels clustered on South Illinois Street, near the Union Depot and the Union Passenger Depot. Hotels surrounded the Depot in all directions. In 1887, the four-story Grand Hotel, located on the east side of South Illinois between West Maryland and West Chesapeake streets, had amenities of a billiards room and bar, bakery, toilet and barber, a laundry room on the first floor, and kitchen on the second floor.⁵⁵² In the same year, the four-story Spencer House, across the street from the Union Depot building at 134 to 150 South Illinois Street, contained offices, a laundry room, and a dining room.⁵⁵³ From the 1890s to the 1910s, the hotel district south of Union Depot included the Illinois House, National Hotel, Shepherdson House and California House, all crowded in the block between McNabb and West South streets.⁵⁵⁴ Sherman House was at the corner of McCrea and West Louisiana streets, diagonally across the intersection from the Union Depot. Lastly, Germania House was located at the corner of South Meridian and West South streets, just south of the Passenger Train Shed.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵⁰ *1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 3. The L.S. Ayres Department Store later operated from this address.

⁵⁵¹ *1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 3. Restaurants examined were located at 81 and 87 South Illinois Street. *1914 Sanborn, Volume 1*, map 18. Restaurants and saloons noted on this map were located at 106, 110, 122, 124, 146, 150, and 154 South Illinois Street. Most restaurants in the Wholesale District were located on South Illinois Street.

⁵⁵² *1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 3.

⁵⁵³ *1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 8.

⁵⁵⁴ *1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 8. *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 316. McNabb Street was located directly south of the Union Passenger Depot.

⁵⁵⁵ *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 316.

Some buildings in the district housed multiple businesses. For example, the Grand Hotel on South Illinois between West Maryland and West Chesapeake was located above storefronts on South Illinois. The hotel occupied floors two through four, with some functions like the billiards room in the basement. The kitchen and dining room were both on the second floor, with two floors of guest rooms to the east side of the building at 25 West Maryland Street. Stores and an artificial limb manufacturing company lined South Illinois Street on the first floor.⁵⁵⁶ This mixing of businesses illustrated the adaptable nature of buildings in the district, especially those around the Union Depot.

The Occidental Hotel, located at the corner of West Washington and South Illinois streets, also exhibited mixed use in one building. Due to the hotel's prime location in the heart of the city's retail district on Washington Street, all first floor street frontage was occupied by storefronts. The hotel utilized the second through fourth floors. Like the Grand Hotel, the Occidental's dining room and kitchen were located on the second floor and laundry on the third floor. One distinctive feature of the Occidental Hotel's layout was the hotel entrance from the street level at 17 South Illinois in a part of the building separate from the hotel's other areas.⁵⁵⁷ The *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* displayed the mixing of building use for many of the other area hotels, such as the Virginia European Hotel and the Illinois House on South Illinois, and the Shepherdson House on McNabb Street.⁵⁵⁸ Hotels on South Illinois Street also had street-level entries but upper-level accommodations well into the twentieth century.

⁵⁵⁶ *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Volume 3*, map 302. The artificial limb company was located at 11 South Illinois Street.

⁵⁵⁷ *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 302.

⁵⁵⁸ *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 316.

Examples of Specific Buildings in the IWD

Specific buildings in the Wholesale District illustrate changes over time. The building of wholesale grocer Schnull and Company, located at 110 to 116 South Meridian Street, provides an example of the wide range of features in IWD warehouses and developments in warehouse construction over time.⁵⁵⁹ According to the 1887 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, the firm's warehouse was relatively simple and covered four lots from 62 to 68 South Meridian Street.⁵⁶⁰ The warehouse stood at three stories in the front half and two stories in the back half, primarily composed of brick. The rear of the warehouse included a one- and-a-half story shed built of wood that contained a coffee roaster. A single horizontal steam boiler provided power. Natural lighting was scarce, although the building had one skylight for the second floor in the back half of the warehouse. Schnull used the front half of the warehouse for display and grocery storage, while the back half was for coffee packing and storage. Another three-story, attached structure housed the coffee hopper.⁵⁶¹ Schnull's premises show how distinct warehousing and manufacturing functions all operated from a compact space.

A fire destroyed this Schnull and Company complex in 1895, which led to the construction of a new building on the same site beginning the next year. The 1898 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* indicated a new complex that faced South Meridian with eighty feet of frontage, and extended back to McCrea Street.⁵⁶² The five-story brick

⁵⁵⁹ The same proprietor owned the Schnull and Company warehouse. Although the nature of their grocery business altered slightly over time, the warehouse serves as an example of warehouse evolution. Other warehouses changed occupants and purpose many times, representing a different kind of change.

⁵⁶⁰ Refer to Figure 4 on page 126 for the 1887 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* of the Schnull and Company warehouse.

⁵⁶¹ 1887 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 3.

⁵⁶² 1898 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 302. The company remained in the same location, but the space changed into one storefront rather than three, as seen in the 1887 map. See Figure 7

building had mill construction and an open five-story shed made of wood faced McCrea Street. The warehouse utilized arched brick floors for the manufacturing sections of the warehouse and a concrete floor in the basement. Two open elevators and two interior staircases served the front half of the space. Schnull and Company packaged groceries in addition to selling them. The back half of the warehouse had a fruit canning operation on the second floor and syrup manufacturing on the fourth floor. For canning, distilling, and roasting, the firm had two horizontal steam boilers, a brick chimney, and a roaster on the fourth floor. For natural light, the warehouse had two skylights, one above the steam boiler section of the structure and the other in the middle of the building. The warehouse and factory had one water tower on the roof.⁵⁶³

Schnull and Company made few changes to the firm's warehouse between 1898 and 1914, but the building grew in complexity to match construction advancements. For example, the first floor of the front half of the warehouse utilized three iron posts, whereas the basement and remaining four floors used wood posts.⁵⁶⁴ The front of the building became home to three Siamese steamer columns that connected to pipes inside and outside of the building.⁵⁶⁵ The map also denoted vaults in the basement and on the first floor. The entire warehouse was outfitted with Grinnell Automatic Sprinklers.⁵⁶⁶

on page 129 for the *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*. The previous frontage widths were roughly forty-four feet each.

⁵⁶³ *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 302.

⁵⁶⁴ Undoubtedly these posts were present prior to 1914, but earlier Sanborn maps do not indicate support posts of any material. See Figure 8 on page 130 for the *1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*.

⁵⁶⁵ *1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 19. Siamese pipe connections refer to pipes paired together. They are denoted by two circles placed together on the Sanborn map. These pipes were likely used to connect the steam produced in the boilers to the canning, syrup distilling, and coffee roasting operations above.

⁵⁶⁶ *1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 19.

By 1898, Daggett and Company, a wholesale confectioner located at 18 and 20 West Georgia Street, occupied an eighty-foot frontage on Georgia Street.⁵⁶⁷ The building was equipped for both manufacturing and selling confections. The warehouse contained an open elevator, along with gas and electric lights and a large horizontal steam boiler for heat. The basement housed a roaster and an engine, and a steam dry room was located on the fifth floor. For safety, the firm had a hydrant with a fifty-foot hose on the first floor and a fire escape on West Georgia Street. Manufacturing took place on the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth floors.⁵⁶⁸

Hollweg and Reese, a longstanding wholesale china, glassware, and queensware business, had a strong presence in the Wholesale District. Like Daggett and Company's building, Hollweg and Reese's building was a warehouse, not a multipurpose facility. The firm used three connecting buildings from 128 to 138 South Meridian, with the northern portion with sixty-five foot-frontage at four stories and the southern portion with fifty-five foot-frontage at three and a half stories.⁵⁶⁹ Hollweg and Reese's warehouse stretched back toward Georgia Street, up to a small warehouse belonging to Daggett and Company.⁵⁷⁰ Brick served as the main building material of the Hollweg and Reese warehouse, although the four-story northern portion of the warehouse featured an iron front. The earlier 1887 map depicted two rows of six iron posts in the north section of the

⁵⁶⁷ *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 302. The firm was incorrectly labeled Daggart and Company rather than Daggett and Company. Prior to their Georgia Street address, the firm was located at 100 to 102 South Meridian. The 1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map did not provide details on that warehouse, beyond noting its three stories and forty-four foot width. See Figures 4 and 7 for images of the 1887 and 1898 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*.

⁵⁶⁸ *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 302.

⁵⁶⁹ *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 302.

⁵⁷⁰ *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 302.

warehouse, and throughout the building.⁵⁷¹ By 1898, both warehouse sections included at least one open elevator, fire doors for the second and third floors, and openings at all levels in the rear of the building facing an alley.⁵⁷² One fire escape allowed exiting from the upper floors of the northern section. Although the warehouse for Hollweg and Reese included all components necessary for the firm's wholesale china, glassware, and queensware trade, it contained considerably fewer features than the Schnull and Company warehouse and several other buildings in the district. Buildings in the IWD varied in complexity, especially warehouses for those firms that manufactured or packaged goods; yet all catered to the chief functions of loading, storage, showcase, and sale necessary for wholesale trade.

Architecture Firms Active in the IWD

The collection of nineteenth-century warehouses in the Indianapolis Wholesale District included buildings designed by Indianapolis architectural partners, such as Vonnegut and Bohn, Rubush and Hunter, R.P. Daggett and Company, and D.A. Bohlen and Son.

Bernard Vonnegut and Arthur Bohn formed the architectural partnership Vonnegut and Bohn in 1888. Both men were long-time residents of the capital city and were well-connected in the community. For example, in 1883 Vonnegut married Nannie Schnull, daughter of prominent wholesaler Henry Schnull.⁵⁷³ Although the Vonnegut and Bohn partnership ended with Vonnegut's death in 1908, Bohn and his successors

⁵⁷¹ *1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 3. The *1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1*, map 19, also denoted the two rows of iron posts.

⁵⁷² *1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3*, map 302.

⁵⁷³ *Indianapolis Star*, August 8, 1908.

remained active in Indianapolis into the 1990s.⁵⁷⁴ Their lengthy and impressive list of projects included Das Deutsche Haus (later the Athenaeum), the Herron School of Art building on North Pennsylvania Street, several Indianapolis Public Schools, L.S. Ayres and Company Department Store at 1 West Washington, Lyric Theatre at 125 North Illinois, and the Kahn Tailoring Company building at 800 North Capitol Street. Their projects located within the Wholesale District included the Hotel Severin at 43 West Georgia Street built between 1912 and 1913, the newer Schnull and Company Building at 110 to 116 South Meridian built between 1896 and 1897, and the Hollweg and Reese buildings on South Meridian Street.⁵⁷⁵

Preston C. Rubush and Edgar O. Hunter partnered in 1905 to design the Indianapolis City Hall.⁵⁷⁶ While many of their early commissions were residential, the partners designed churches, apartments, theaters, stores, and factories. In the Wholesale District, the Daniel Stewart Company commissioned Rubush and Hunter for its wholesale drugs warehouse at 42 to 50 South Meridian Street. The six-story building featured dark red brick, a stone belt course that separated the ground floor from the upper stories, and paired brackets at the corners supporting the deep roof overhang.⁵⁷⁷ The architects also planned a warehouse located at 231 to 235 South New Jersey Street for Stewart's drug company.⁵⁷⁸ Rubush and Hunter designed the Darmody Building at 25 to 27 West Maryland Street. This six-story, tan brick building with cream terra cotta trim exhibited

⁵⁷⁴ Connie Zeigler, "Vonnegut and Bohn," in David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, 1389.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1389.

⁵⁷⁶ Patricia Casler, "The Architecture of Rubush and Hunter," M.A. Thesis, Columbia University, 1985, 11.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

Prairie styling with a strong horizontal emphasis and broad cornices.⁵⁷⁹ These examples demonstrate the architects' diverse repertoire.

R.P. Daggett and Company also left a legacy in downtown Indianapolis. Robert Platt Daggett moved to Indianapolis in 1868, soon partnering with fellow architect Matthew Roth. R.P. Daggett and Company formed in 1880 as a partnership between Daggett and James B. Lizius.⁵⁸⁰ Clients included wholesale grocers A.B. Conduitt and Sons and wholesale boots and shoes dealer Robert S. McKee.⁵⁸¹ Daggett also held design commissions for Vajen's Block, the Lemcke Building, Sayles Building, Loraine Building, Marion Building, Wright's Market Street Block, the Indianapolis New Company, Lombard Building, and the H. Lieber Company Building.⁵⁸²

D.A. Bohlen and Son designed several buildings in the Wholesale District. Diedrich August Bohlen emigrated to the United States in the early 1850s and began his own design business in 1853.⁵⁸³ He organized D.A. Bohlen and Son in 1884 when his son Oscar D. Bohlen joined the practice. Commissions included several Indianapolis landmarks, such as the City Market and Tomlinson Hall (1886), the Majestic Building (1896), and the Murat Temple (1910).⁵⁸⁴ In 1901, the Bohlens designed the six-story building at 101 to 105 South Pennsylvania Street for the wholesale grocer C.A. Schrader and Company.

⁵⁷⁹ Casler, 51.

⁵⁸⁰ Andrew R. Seager, "Daggett, Robert Platt" in Bodenhamer and Barrows, eds., *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, 490.

⁵⁸¹ IWD National Register Nomination Form, Section 8, page 5.

⁵⁸² Seager, "Daggett, Robert Platt" in Bodenhamer and Barrows, eds., *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, 490.

⁵⁸³ William Selm, "Bohlen, Diedrich August" in Bodenhamer and Barrows, eds., *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, 333.

⁵⁸⁴ Selm, "Bohlen, Diedrich August" in Bodenhamer and Barrows, eds., *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, 333.

Conclusion

The IWD contained a concentration of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century warehouse architecture. Features ranging from stone façades to elevators characterized buildings in the district. Factories, restaurants, stores, and hotels dotted the warehouse environment. Many buildings served multiple functions, illustrating the versatility of large, unbroken floor areas. Given the sources consulted, including *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*, photographs, and descriptions of building use from booster books, this study analyzed how the buildings were suited for their primary function of facilitating the manufacture, display, storage, and sale of many goods that found their way to and from the Indianapolis Wholesale District. Analysis of the IWD's built environment demonstrates the warehouse features necessary for a regional economic hub.

Figure 4: 1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1, Map 3
Image Courtesy IUPUI University Library Digital Collection

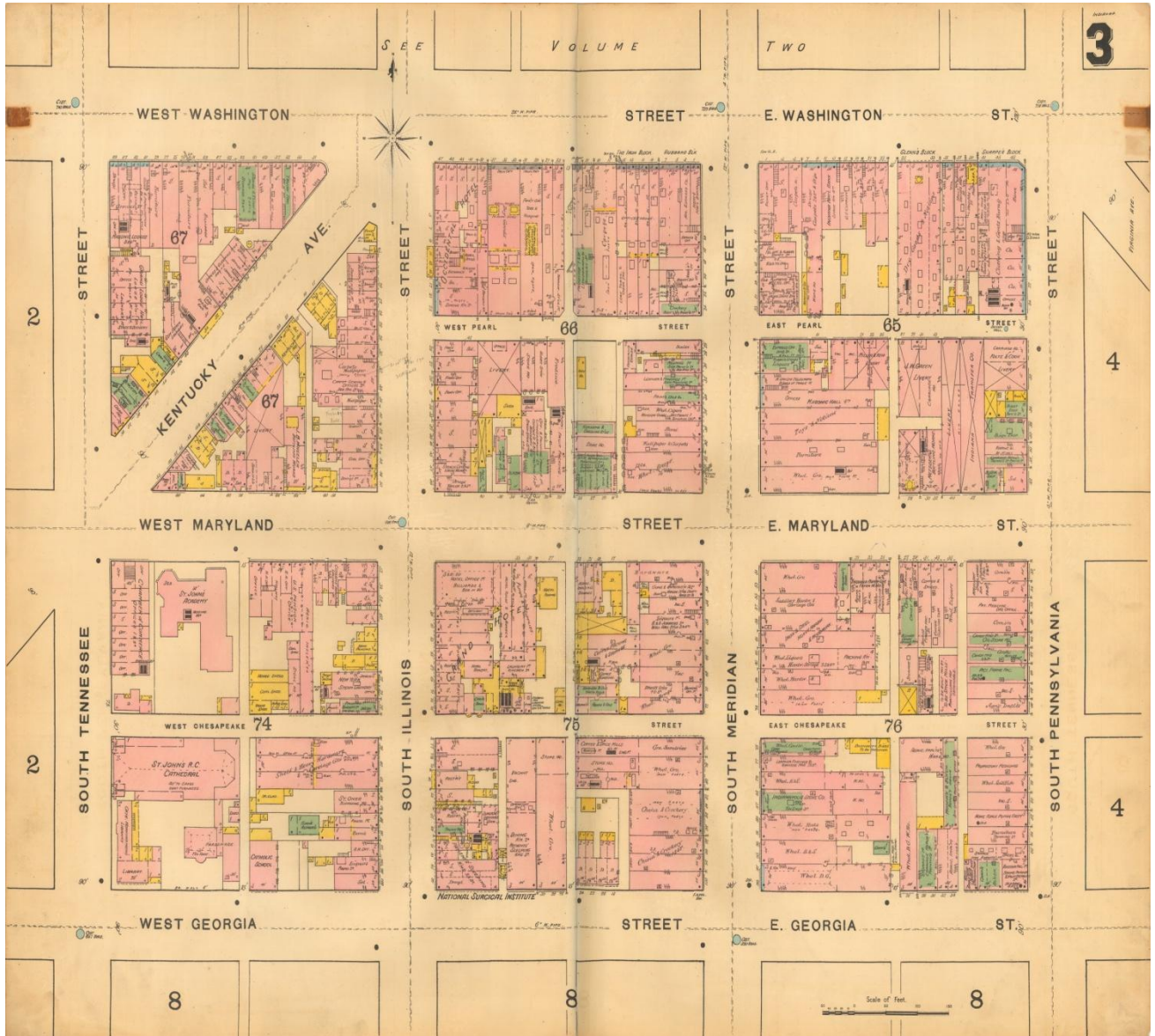


Figure 5: South Meridian Street Looking North, 1910
Image Courtesy Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society



This image depicts signage, façades, and overall streetscape found on South Meridian Street.

Figure 6: Aerial View of South Meridian Looking South, 1907
Image Courtesy Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society



This image displays the penthouses, skylights, and water towers that littered warehouse rooftops in the IWD.

Figure 7: 1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 3, Map 302
 Image Courtesy IUPUI University Library Digital Collection

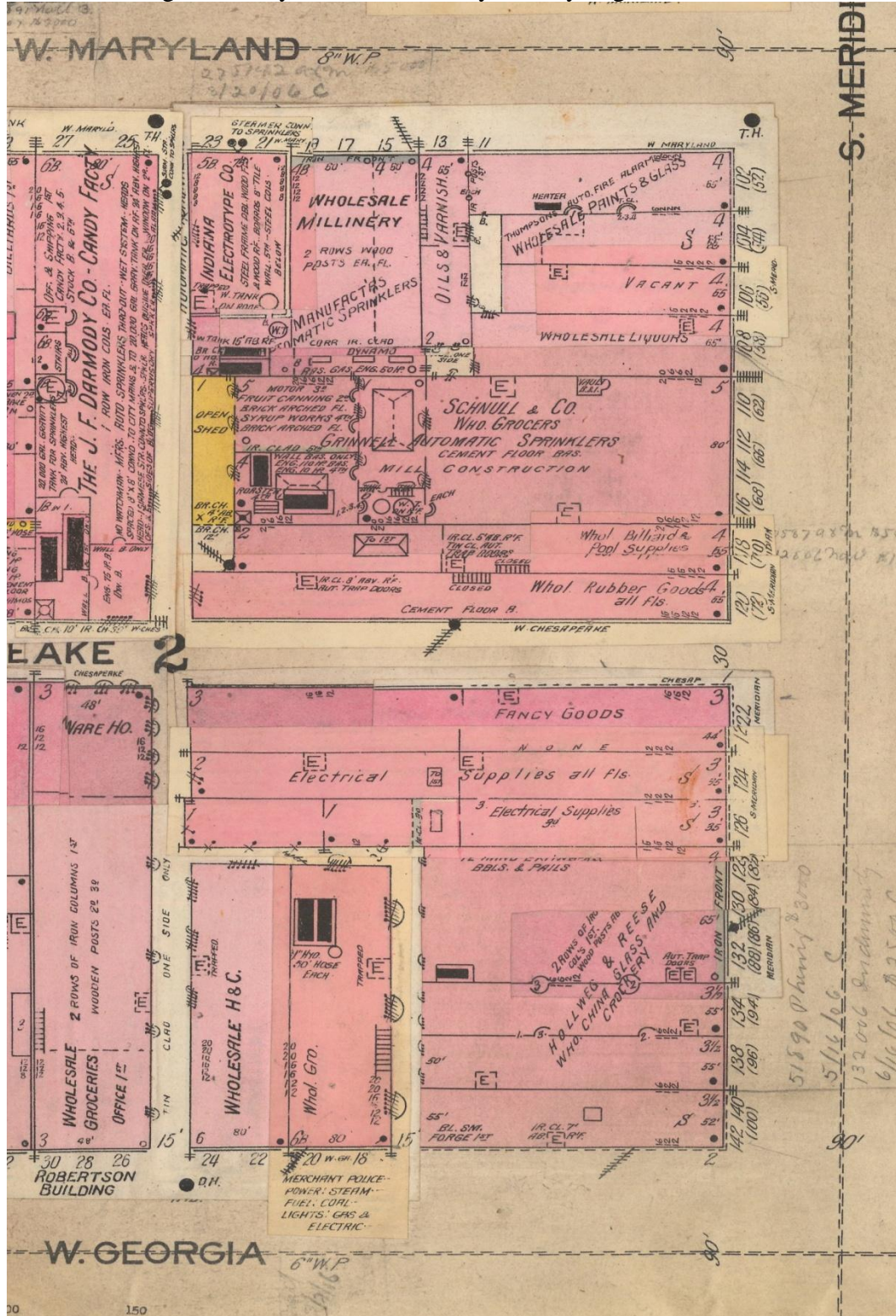
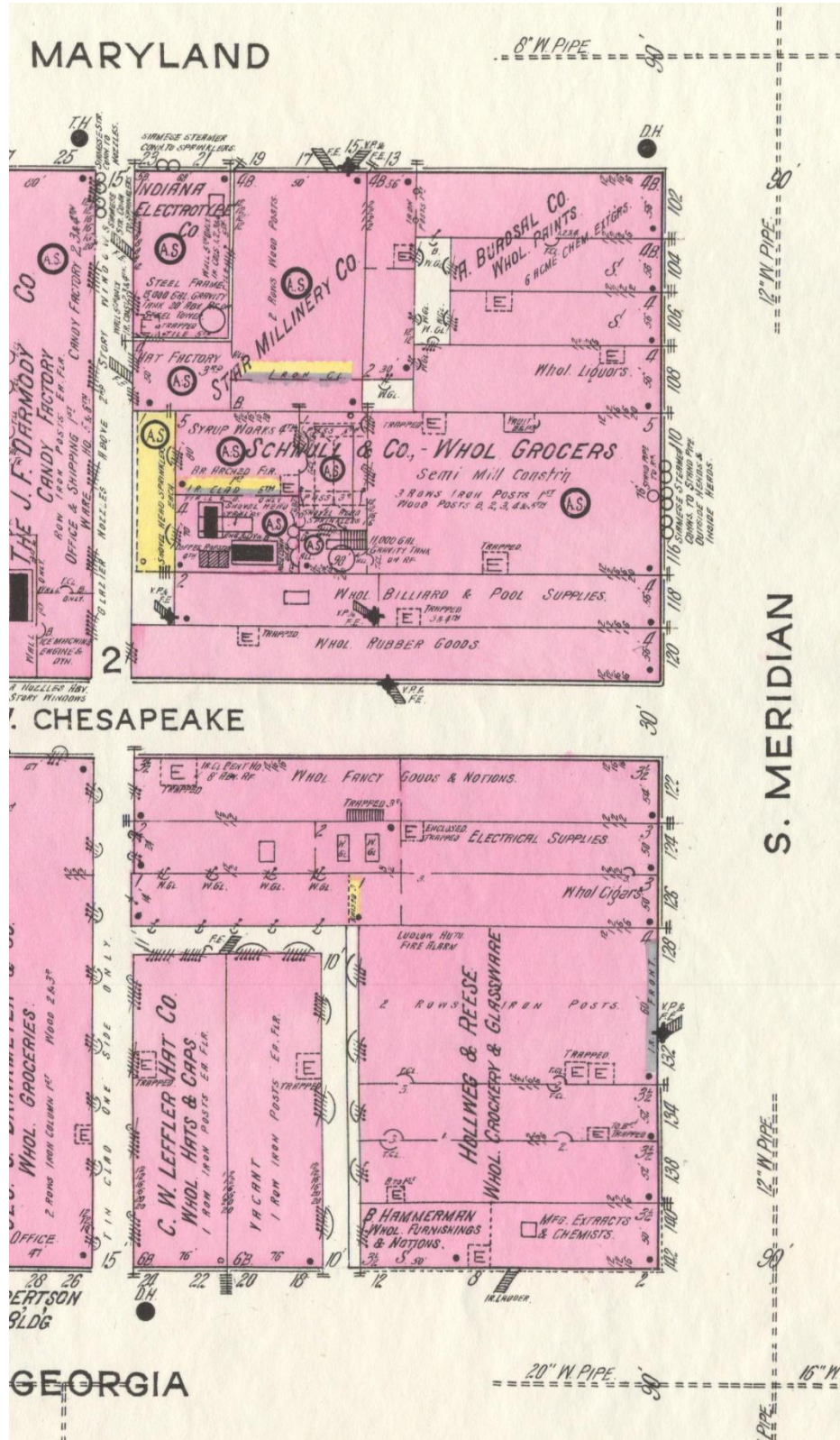


Figure 8: 1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 1, Map 19
Image Courtesy IUPUI University Library Digital Collection



Conclusion

Although early commerce in Indianapolis suffered poor transportation links, railroads expanded both trade and wholesaling. At the same time, most wholesale firms specialized the scope of their trade. Efficient transportation and specialization made Indianapolis a local and regional hub for the central parts of the Ohio River Valley. The densely-developed Indianapolis Wholesale District (IWD) represented the physical side of Indianapolis wholesaling, and like their occupants, the buildings in the district served specialized purposes. The District provides an example of the typicality associated with wholesale trade centers in the Midwest, differing in age, water access, origins, size, and scope from New York, Philadelphia, and New Orleans. An examination of the history and buildings of the IWD shows how railroads affected the late nineteenth-century growth of wholesaling in the Midwest.

The Indiana legislature located the capital in the center of the state where the White River and planned National Road would cross, yet failed to recognize that the river was not navigable by anything larger than flatboats. This transportation failure hindered Indianapolis's development as a trade center. Without easy access to a river network, Indianapolis merchants sought other ways to send and receive goods.

Roads and canals did little to improve Indianapolis's isolation. Routes like the Michigan Road and National Road aided transportation in the Midwest, but were not as efficient as waterways.⁵⁸⁵ Poor weather conditions and the length of time necessary for merchants to travel overland in wagons with goods kept the turnpikes' effect on

⁵⁸⁵ Harriet McIntyre Foster, "Memories of the National Road," *Indiana Magazine of History* 13 (March 1917): 64.

economic growth visible but limited.⁵⁸⁶ Canals in Indiana had the potential to create waterways competitive with those in other states. In 1836, the Internal Improvements Act led to preliminary construction of four canals. However, the cost overruns and the Panic of 1837 slowed construction and eventually led to private financing.

Few transportation options kept the economy localized in the first few decades of Indianapolis's history, yet railroads opened up opportunities for supply and sales. Wholesale trade in the early years was limited to what retailers could get from elsewhere, as well as local "jack-of-all-trade" wholesalers who carried a little bit of everything. Merchants relied on wholesaling centers as close as Cincinnati and as far away as New York and Philadelphia for supplies, which meant long, expensive buying trips. The completion of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad, Indiana's first rail line, in 1847 signified a shift in the state's priority to railroad development, and an opportunity to expand trade beyond the local market.⁵⁸⁷

In this thesis, I discuss the relationship between a regional railroad network to regional trade. In Indiana, the state legislature appropriated money from the Indiana Internal Improvements Fund to help finance rail transportation. The Madison and Indianapolis Railroad increased accessibility to the river system and revolutionized the scope of the latter town's trade. Subsequent railroad building during the 1850s linked Indianapolis to all corners of the state, opening up opportunities to become the state's premier economic center.

Booster maps displayed rail lines radiating from Indianapolis, like the spokes of a wagon wheel. These images gave the impression that Indianapolis connected with cities

⁵⁸⁶ Barrows and Darbee, 274, 279.

⁵⁸⁷ Foster, 63.

in every direction, but the maps failed to differentiate track gauges. Most tracks in Indiana measured 4' 8½" or 4' 10", as compared to other Midwest tracks ranging from 4' 8½" to 6'.⁵⁸⁸ Where railroads of differing gauges met, all freight and passengers had to be transferred from the cars of one railroad to the cars of another railroad—a very inefficient process. Additionally, early railroads lacked bridges over the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Despite these problems, the American railroad “network” created improved transportation for Indianapolis.

As a direct result of railroad connections and a developing regional customer base, a variety of wholesaling businesses developed between 1860 and 1920. Railroads led to “outgoing” opportunities of shipping in this region, creating a regional wholesaling hub. In some cases, the new transportation connections allowed manufacturers in Indianapolis to pursue manufacturing and wholesale trade. Mostly, the railroad network allowed formerly general wholesaling to differentiate effectively by specialty, ranging from wholesale glassware to wholesale saddles.

Examination of specific IWD firms indicates a clientele of merchants from Indiana and nearby states. For example, wholesale grocer C. A. Schrader, who inhabited an imposing six-story warehouse on South Pennsylvania Street, traded extensively throughout Indiana and southern Illinois.⁵⁸⁹ Tanner and Sullivan, a wholesale and manufacturing tinware company based on South Meridian Street, catered to customers throughout Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and northern Kentucky.⁵⁹⁰ Additionally, the narratives of sixteen specific wholesale firms featured in Chapter Three supply tangible examples of

⁵⁸⁸ Taylor and Neu, *American Railroad Network*, Map II.

⁵⁸⁹ Hyman, *Journal Handbook of Indianapolis*, 348.

⁵⁹⁰ Consolidated Illustrating Co., *Indianapolis of To-Day*, 116.

regionally-active businesses. Lists of client locations confirm the IWD's regional influence.

Proximity to the Union Depot spurred on supplementary businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, retailers, and manufacturers that operated within the Wholesale District. These businesses supported the wholesaling operations. In addition to serving travelers passing through the area, hotels and restaurants catered to businessmen visiting the district to gather goods. Wholesaling companies either worked in conjunction with retailing and manufacturing outfits, or took on one or both of those roles. For example, the Layman and Carey Company began in 1869 as a wholesale and retail hardware business.⁵⁹¹ Holliday and Wyon manufactured harnesses, collars, and saddles from their South Pennsylvania facility, while also trading leather and horse equipment.⁵⁹² The supplementary businesses found in the district complemented the town's wholesaling ventures.

Nineteenth-century wholesalers in Indianapolis were spatially aware. This study contains analyzes their choice of location and the probable motivations for those choices. As a result of the increased trade spurred by railroad connections, wholesale firms sprang up around the Union Depot and rail lines in downtown Indianapolis. Owners built densely near the Depot to reduce transportation costs. This thesis addresses how wholesalers maximized their businesses by location. Parallels can be drawn between the clustering of the IWD's wholesalers and those of Columbus, Ohio. Displaying many similarities to the IWD, the largest concentration of wholesalers in Columbus developed

⁵⁹¹ Consolidated Illustrating Co., 128.

⁵⁹² Consolidated Illustrating Co., 173.

next to the central business district and near the railroad system.⁵⁹³ By the twentieth century, needs of the IWD wholesalers began to outgrow the district.

The built environment of the Wholesale District served as a tangible demonstration of the unique characteristics of wholesale businesses. The analysis in Chapter Four of warehouse components for an efficient, regional wholesale district illustrates the physical side of business, complementing the commercial side of the IWD discussed in Chapters Two and Three. Longstanding warehouses, such as those of wholesale grocers Schnull and Company, demonstrate the features necessary to run a business that traded to a regional clientele. Technology varied slightly between warehouses depending on use of the building, yet all facilitated the manufacture, storage, and trade of wholesale goods.

I argue for the regional value of the Indianapolis Wholesale District as a result of railroad development through a business history lens. Further study could enhance our understanding of how such a regional hub functioned. An analysis of the social and work life of warehousemen could be derived from labor history or social history approaches. A study of consumer patterns of communities served by the district's wholesalers would also add weight to the IWD's "hub" status.

This research project analyzes roughly one hundred years (1820-1920) of Indianapolis commercial history. Extending the chronological scope beyond 1920 would require analysis of the relocation of companies from the IWD and the gradual decline of the district from regional trade hub to decaying urban center with less dense business

⁵⁹³ Richard Walter Reseska, "The Locational Structure of Wholesale Establishments in Columbus, Ohio: A Case Study," M.A. thesis, Clark University, 1962, 37.

concentrations. Such a study would reveal the cycle of a midwestern downtown, as well as provide a contrast between nineteenth and twentieth-century industrial patterns.

Regional significance came to the Indianapolis Wholesale District as a result of the advancements in railroad transportation. The IWD made it possible for people throughout the state and region to have better access to supplies and to sell goods to a wider consumer base. Through their physical presence near an expanding transportation entrepôt, Indianapolis's wholesalers enabled the region to participate more fully in American economic exchange during the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This research project demonstrates the need to pursue the overlap in specialization, the morphology of warehouses, and transportation development to understand a business district as part of a larger process of American economic development.

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