

DEY STORE EXPANSION DUE TO PROGRESSIVE POLICY

MORE THAN 500 EMPLOYEES ON SYRACUSE FIRM'S PAYROLL

(This is the tenth of a series of articles which will appear weekly in the Saturday edition of The Syracuse Journal, to permit Syracusans to become familiar with the inside story of the great industrial and commercial enterprises which have played important parts in the development of the city.)

By RICHARD E. WELCH.

Merchandising has gone through complete evolution since the day in 1883 when Robert and Donald Dey, proprietors of a successful drygoods store in Elmira, paid Syracuse a visit, walked along the two business blocks of S. Salina st., and decided they would seek their fortune here.

Through the 51 years methods of selling, type of goods sold and taste of the shoppers have changed but always in the fore, many times forcing the change, have been the Dey brothers, still doing business in their modern department store, now located at the corner of S. Salina and Jefferson sts.

Originally there were five Dey brothers, all of whom were interested in the Syracuse store, but today only two, Donald and Robert Dey, survive. Both retain active interests in the store they founded.

The Dey family can be traced back to the sixteenth century in England when, because of valuable service to the crown, it received grants of land from Queen Elizabeth. Later the family moved to Scotland and Robert Dey was born in Abernathy, Scotland.

He received his education in the schools of Scotland and at 17 years of age secured employment in the drygoods house of Pratt & Keith at Aberdeen. Ambitious to have his own store, Robert came to the United States in 1871 and for a few years was associated with stores in Rochester to learn the American trade methods. Meanwhile his brothers, Donald, Charles and James Dey came to America and when they had become familiar with the situation, branched out for themselves.

They first established a store in Elmira in 1877 and in a few years, by progressive sales promotion and by stocking a high grade of merchandise, became known as the leading store of the city.

The family operated as a unit. It kept but one purse and no outside capital was brought in for its expansion. It was at once both a firm and a corporation.

Robert and Donald Dey at that time had an idea they might establish a chain of drygoods stores in Central New York and when the Elmira store was safely placed in its leadership, they began looking for another location.

As Robert Dey expressed it: "Syracuse struck us as the most enterprising and one of the smartest cities of the country."

Donald Dey told how they came here and looked the situation over. The business district was then confined to a zone about two blocks each side of the Erie Canal. They first signed a lease for a vacant store in the 300 block but before they took possession, learned that it would be possible for them to purchase the store of Edward F. Rice, which had been doing business in the 200 block since 1867.

They closed the deal for the Rice store and were then left with the lease for the first store selected, this lease calling for rental of \$750 a year. Donald Dey laughed in comparing that figure with the rental price for the same store today.

The lease was compromised and the Dey brothers started taking over the Rice store. When it came to the process of taking inventory, Mr. Rice told the Dey brothers to go ahead and take their own inventory and that he would accept their count.

Donald Dey recalled that during this process they found some old garments tucked away in a basement closet. They were out-of-date and the new purchasers were undecided what to do with them.

Donald said: "We asked Mr. Rice about them and he told us that it had been his practice to wait until he had enough of these old garments and then he would pack them in trunks, send them into the northern part of the state, then the 'dark continent' and sell them."

"I wonder where one would find a market for such out-

MODERN RETAIL BUSINESS HOUSE AND BROTHERS WHO DIRECT ITS OPERATION



ROBERT DEY
One of the founders of Dey Brothers & Co., Robert Dey has seen the store grow from a small organization.



In 1894, when the Dey Brothers, having outgrown their original quarters in the 200 block of S. Salina st., decided to expand, they selected a site at the southeast corner of S. Salina and Jefferson sts. The block was then residential and advisors thought them



DONALD DEY
An able assistant to his brother, Robert, in directing the expansion of Dey Brothers & Co. has been Donald Dey.

foolhardy to invade this zone. But history shows they were far-sighted and now the company is housed in this large building, which extends from Salina st. through to S. Warren st., housing departments to serve every want of the Syracuse shopper.—Pictures by Journal staff photographer.

moded goods today, when the radio, automobile, motion pictures and newspapers bring the latest in style news to the farthest corner of the country, almost as soon as it happens."

Dey Brothers & Co. hung up its sign in the 200 block of S. Salina st. in 1883 and then started its road to progress and expansion. The company always advocated short hours, vacations and pleasant working conditions for its employees, which probably accounts for the fact it has always attracted the best of help and that it has so many veterans.

The store started advertising in the newspapers in the days when there wasn't a store in the city which advertised daily. The store grew until its original site was too small and then the company made a move which stamped it as bold, far-sighted and progressive.

At that time the business district stopped short at Jefferson st., and from that point S. Salina st. was purely residential. The mansion of Milton S. Price, himself a pioneer merchant, stood at the southeast corner of Jefferson and Salina sts.

The Dey brothers purchased the Price property against the advice of friends and associates and by building a new store on the site, opened a new area to the business district. They were called foolhardy for the move but history shows they were actually wiser than their advisers.

When the first unit of the new Dey Brothers & Co. was opened April 14, 1894, it was a drygoods store rather than a department store. The company employed 250 dressmakers and its merchandise was principally yard goods. The store employed three modistes who annually went to Paris to learn the latest styles.

But soon the drygoods business shifted, with Dey Brothers

keeping pace. The trend was to the ready-to-wear and today large departments in the store are given over to this phase of merchandising. Then other departments were established until today Dey Brothers & Co. is a modern department store capable of outfitting the family from "the cradle to the altar to the grave."

In 1902 the company was incorporated as Dey Brothers & Co. and in 1912, when the store had outgrown its original quarters, an addition was built to give the store frontage on S. Warren st., and to make possible quarters for additional departments.

Last year the company celebrated its golden anniversary, at which time the store records showed it had expanded from the time it employed about 20 clerks to a full staff of more than 500.

The Dey brothers are proud of the fact that they never discharged an employe in anger and that because of this and pleasant working conditions it is considered a disgrace to have been discharged from the store.

The company and its employes are proud of the store organization known as "Dey's Knights of Honor," composed of employes who have had 21 years or more service. There are now more than 40 members of the order in the store, all of whom proudly wear the gold seal ring awarded them on initiation.

In addition the store employes have formed the Dey Brothers' Relief Association which performs welfare and benefit work among its members.

The store itself is thoroughly modern in every respect and has had constant improvement as science progressed through the years. The company is now completing remodeling of the second floor of the store to provide more comfortable selling space for its patrons.

An unusual feature of the store is that it generates all its

own power, light and heat in a power plant located in the store basement.

Alonzo Highmoor is chief engineer of the power plant in charge of four units of 600 horsepower. It is a unique system whereby steam generated in the boiler is used to run dynamos and is then passed on to be used in heating the building. The current generated lights the store and runs the elevators, while the steam loses none of its heating power.

Among the earliest employes in the Dey Brothers organization is Miss Minnie E. Paddock of 103 Elk st., who is employed in the business office. Miss Paddock said she was a girl in pigtails when she first went to work for Deys, which was then located in its original store in the 200 block of S. Salina st.

She said she was the first woman to work in the store's business office and that it was considered quite an innovation for her to be so employed. She recalled that in those days she knew everyone in the store by their first name, whereas today such a thing is almost impossible.

Miss Paddock recalls many changes in the store. Check boys who ran through the store to bring purchases to wrapping desks and to make change have been replaced by cash registers and men clerks have been replaced almost entirely by women.

Another veteran who was only a boy when he first went on the Dey payroll is Otto Nachant of 252 W. Lafayette av., who for years has been in charge of the information desk and the return credit department on the first floor. Mr. Nachant was first employed as a stock boy, later working in other departments until he was placed in charge of the information desk.

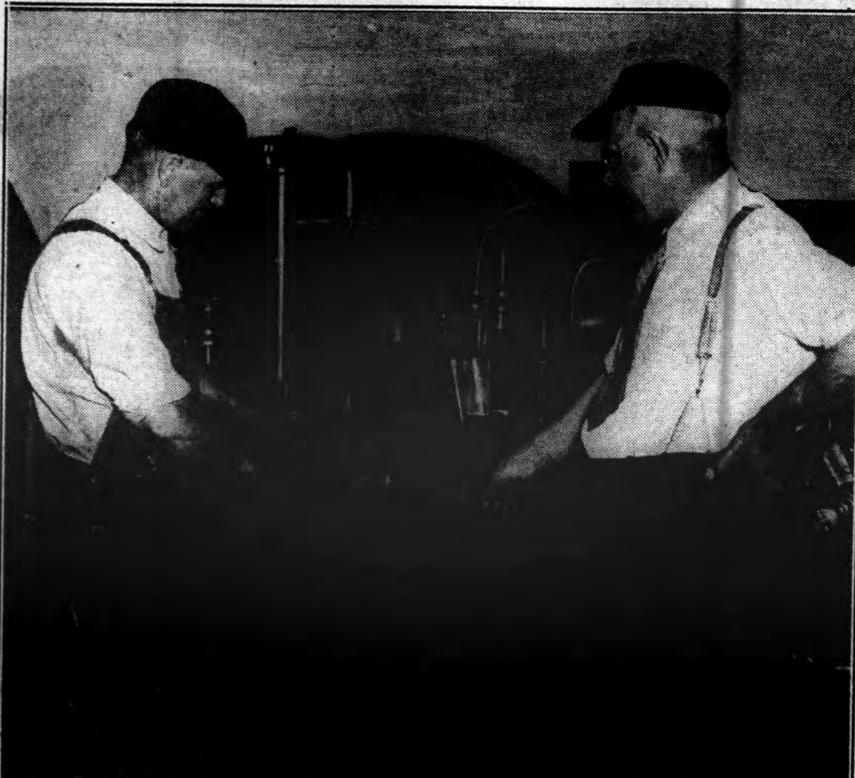
The Dey brothers expect further changes and improvements as civilization progresses but are always on the alert to sense them and be prepared to meet changing conditions.

LONG SERVICE OF STAFF IS PRIDE OF ESTABLISHMENT WHICH POSSESSES ITS OWN LIGHT AND HEAT POWER PLANT



OTTO NACHANT

Next month, Otto Nachant of 252 W. Lafayette av., will celebrate the thirty-fifth anniversary of the day he first went to work for Dey Brothers & Co. Today, Mr. Nachant is in charge of the information desk and the return credit department.



HARRY BAXTER

ALONZO HIGHMOOR

One novel feature of the plant which Dey Brothers & Co. has built in Syracuse is the power units which supply heat, power and light for the entire store. The department is in charge of Alonzo Highmoor of 152 Didema st., chief engineer, with Harry Baxter of 107 Kirkwood av. as his assistant. The four units in the power plant are run by steam, which later is used to heat the building, generating current for elevators and lighting.



MISS MARY SULLIVAN

Probably one of the best-known members of the staff of Dey Brothers store is Miss Mary Sullivan of 123 Highland av., who for years has been in charge of the baby shop. Miss Sullivan, shown here dressing one of the models, has served thousands of Syracusans during her long service with the department store.