

EDWARDS STORE GROWTH DUE TO COURAGEOUS POLICY



DANIEL MURRAY EDWARDS

A merchandising genius as well as a philanthropist and civic leader, Daniel Murray Edwards, late head of the E. W. Edwards & Sons stores in Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo, was one of the outstanding figures in development of the present-day Syracuse.



This mighty store with frontages on S. Salina, Washington and S. Clinton sts., stands as a monument to the ability of D. M. Edwards. Starting with a small store in this block, employing but four clerks, D. M. Edwards and his father built up an organization which expanded until it occupied nearly the entire block and had a staff of more than 800 in the Syracuse store alone. The store today is still controlled by the Edwards estate, and P. J. Sullivan, who was general manager under Mr. Edwards, is chairman of the board of directors. Picture by Journal staff photographer.

before long he drew away from merchandising to establish the O. M. Edwards Company to manufacture steel furniture and many other devices perfected by Mr. Edwards.

E. W. Edwards remained nominal head of the store until his death, Nov. 25, 1911, but "D. M.," as he came to be known to his clerks and associates, was the one who engineered the program of expansion which developed the store.

When Edwards store was first opened in 1889 it was sandwiched by other small stores, and the largest building in the block was the Globe hotel, which was one of the show places of the time.

The Globe hotel had been established in 1846 by John Wilkinson and passed through many hands until 1869, when it was remodeled and stores were constructed on the ground floor. D. M. Edwards was looking for room to expand his store and finally succeeded in buying an interest in the hotel property.

The deal was closed in 1906 and soon after title had passed the hotel property was remodeled to provide added store space. This was only the beginning of the growth of Edwards store, which later took over Rosenbloom's store and other concerns until it covered the entire city block, with the exception of the old Kirk block and the O'Donnell property. After the purchase of the Globe hotel the store established a branch in Troy, but this was abandoned in 1912. The original store at Johnstown was sold and then "D. M." purchased a store in Rochester in 1906. The Buffalo store was added in 1922.

Expansion of the business continued with purchase of the building occupied by the Syracuse Dry Goods Company at the southwest corner of Washington and Clinton sts.

Daniel Murray Edwards died May 26, 1929, mourned by

Syracusans in every walk of life. A true philanthropist, many of his benefactions never became known. He contributed generously to every movement of a charitable or civic nature and annually played Santa Claus to thousands of families.

His name was always well up on the list of donors to the Community Chest and on drives for orphanages, hospitals and schools. He served as a trustee of Syracuse University and contributed largely to that institution.

D. M. Edwards' only hobby was business and his stores. Although handicapped by illness, which left him a cripple in his later years, he never relinquished active control of his stores and daily made his regular inspection from his wheelchair.

His keen eye noticed every detail on these inspections and he saw to it that the "stock was moved" regardless of price.

Two years before his death Mr. Edwards instituted a joint outing for the employees of all three stores, paying transportation and all expenses for the staffs and their families for a day's picnic at Crystal Beach, near Rochester. More than 2,500 people attended and paid homage to the man whose business genius had built up the organization of which they were proud to be members.

During the years when Mr. Edwards was expanding his merchandising concern he had as most able assistant, Patrick J. Sullivan, general manager of the Edwards stores.

Mr. Sullivan was Mr. Edwards' most trusted executive and during the years when the infirmities of the merchant confined his activities, Mr. Sullivan shouldered most of the burden of carrying through his plans.

After Mr. Edwards' death Mr. Sullivan took over management of the stores for the estate, and is now chairman of

the board of directors of the company. Mrs. Daniel Murray Edwards retains her husband's interest in the stores, and their son, Walker Edwards, is now connected actively with the Syracuse store. He is the fourth generation of the Edwards family to be engaged in merchandising.

Having been in most complete confidence of Mr. Edwards, Mr. Sullivan was able to carry on his plans for the stores and has aided in maintaining them at the high standards in which Mr. Edwards left them.

D. M. Edwards was a most courageous merchant, always on the alert for a bargain and willing to pass the saving on to the patrons of his store. He never hesitated to buy in carload lots, or in earlier days, in canal boat lots, if the price was right. He would buy a canal boat load of socks and sell them when others would hesitate, because he felt the price would sell the goods. And it always did.

Edwards store became famous in mercantile circles when at one time one of its buyers, a silk buyer by the way, had the audacity to purchase a carload of needles, enough needles to supply the entire United States.

But it was just such courage of his convictions that led to the growth of Edwards stores. Daniel Murray Edwards had but four clerks under him when he first put up his sign in Syracuse, but the Syracuse store employed more than 800 at the time of his death.

Perhaps no better example of D. M. Edwards' generosity and courage could be found than that which came to light after his death, when it became known how he had saved stockholders of the Hotel Syracuse from loss of their entire holdings.

Joseph A. Griffin, president of the Citizens' Hotel Corporation, told the story.

He said:

"I was chairman of the stockholders' committee at the time. It looked like financial disaster for the hotel and everyone was doing all they could to save it. We needed someone with money who had the right spirit.

"There were many widows and old people who had nearly all their savings in the hotel corporation and they were in great danger. I didn't want them to lose their money, so I went to Dan Edwards.

"I told him the situation, and as soon as I mentioned that there were people, widows and students and old folks facing sure ruin unless something could be done, he became interested.

"What is there we can do for to help them, Joe?" he asked me. 'I think there is a real future for that hotel.'

"He was silent for a few minutes and then looked at me and said, 'Joe, I'll take \$150,000 worth of the second mortgage bonds.'

"And in that way Dan Edwards practically saved the Hotel Syracuse.

"I knew Dan Edwards for 25 years and every time I went to him for money to help somebody who needed it he never failed in doing more than I expected from him."

The Edwards store is now being thoroughly remodeled to expand its service and to permit rearrangement of many of its departments to give patrons greater convenience in shopping. A portion of the store has been leased to the G. C. Murphy Company, which is now installing a modern 5c and 10c store department. This department will open directly from the main Edwards store.

In announcing the leasing of a portion of the Edwards store to the Murphy Company, Mr. Sullivan said the action followed the policy of his organization to maintain the flow of business in the 200 block of S. Salina st. and to give patrons of the store the advantage of easy access to the facilities of the new organization.

The Murphy organization has an organization of 183 stores and the new unit, which will open on or about Oct. 1, will provide employment and increase the city's payroll materially.

Despite the fact that the new store will occupy the entire first floor of the former Ballway building, Edwards store will still have a main floor more than twice the size of any other store in the city.

With its huge floor space and trained staff of executives and clerks, the Edwards store is equipped admirably to carry on the fine traditions laid down by Daniel Murray Edwards. As have other mercantile houses, the store has undergone many changes and alterations to meet the shifting needs of business but as closely as possible the program of development as laid down by D. M. Edwards has been followed out.

HUGE RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT'S STAFF TOTALS MORE THAN 800

(This is the fourteenth and last of a series of articles 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

If ever the title "merchant prince" could be bestowed on anyone in a democracy, it belonged rightfully to the late Daniel Murray Edwards, whose natural ability and power of action, coupled with his philanthropy and civic-mindedness, made him the outstanding citizen of his time.

Third in a line of merchants whose family tree goes back to the colonial days in America, Mr. Edwards during his life became the leading merchandiser between New York City and Chicago through the E. W. Edwards & Sons stores in Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo. These stores still stand as a monument to him and are under direct control of his estate.

Talmadge Edwards, great-great-grandfather of Daniel Murray, came to America from England before the Revolution and first settled in Connecticut. Later he moved to New York State, settling in Johnstown and opening a factory for the manufacture of gloves. It was from this beginning that Johnstown and Fulton County became the center of the glove industry in the Nation, today boasting more than 250 concerns.

John Edwards, son of Talmadge, was active in political and civic affairs in Fulton County, serving as representative in Congress in 1836.

John Edwards' son, Daniel Edwards, was the first to enter the merchandising field. He established a drygoods store in Johnstown and married Sally Maria Wells, daughter of Eleazer Wells, who at one time was owner of the famous "Johnston Hall," home of Sir William Johnson of colonial fame.

Daniel Edwards' store, which opened in 1832, prospered, and when his son, Eleazer Wells Edwards, became of age, he entered the store. Daniel Edwards died in 1863 and "E. W." then took over complete management.

Eleazer Wells Edwards had two sons, Daniel Murray and Oliver Murray Edwards, both of whom were to make their presence felt later in the development of Syracuse.

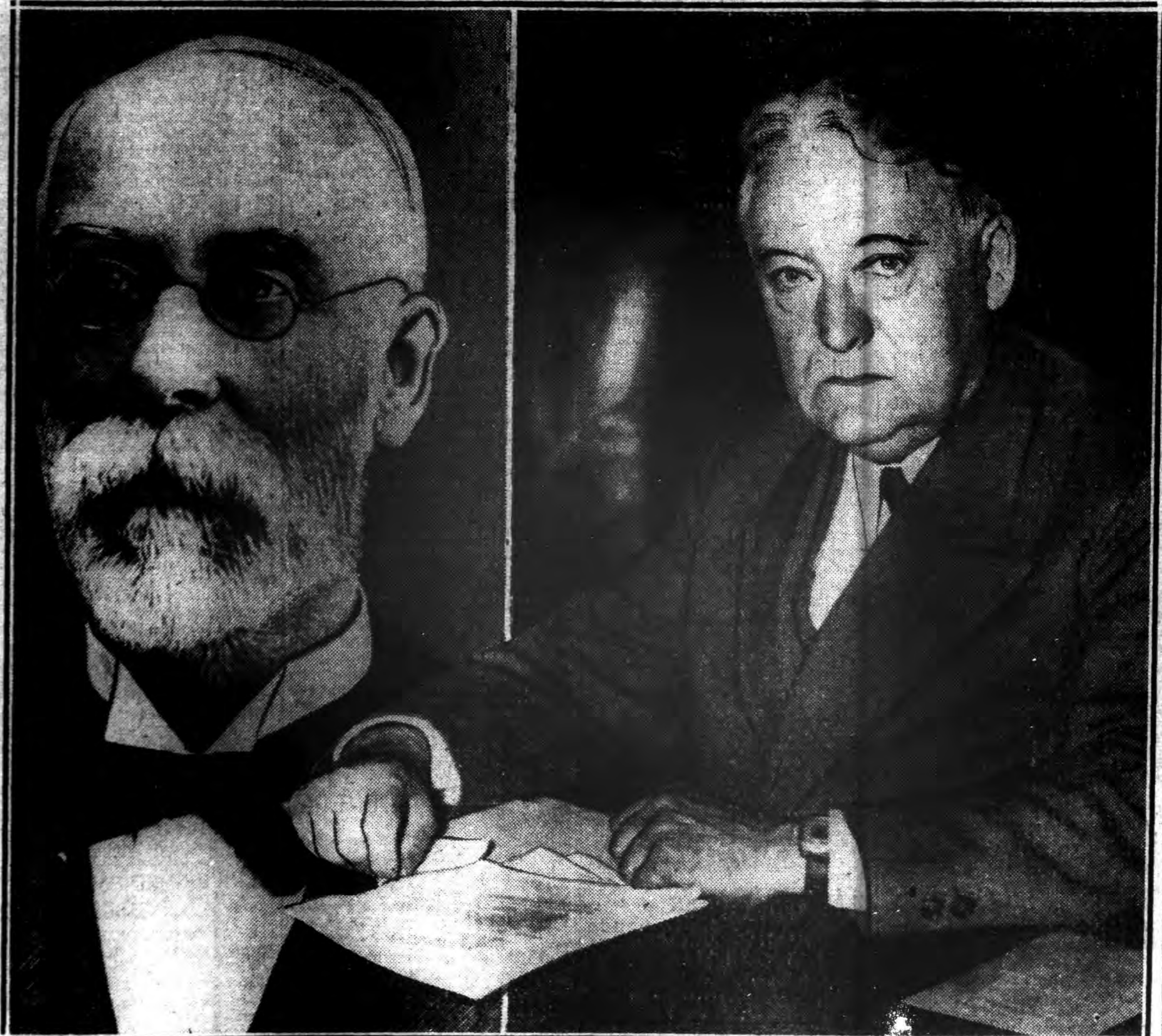
Daniel Murray Edwards was born March 25, 1861, at Johnstown. He was educated in the public schools of the town and in 1881 was taken into his father's store. Four years later the firm branched out to establish a branch at Gloversville and Daniel Murray Edwards was placed in charge.

The Gloversville store was a success almost from the start and encouraged by his record, the family started looking for new fields to develop. They turned naturally to the up-state area and selected Syracuse as most promising.

At that time Salina st. business was confined to the two blocks north and south of the canal, and the stores were mostly small shops. One of these shops, established in 1832, was run by Milton S. Price, who was a pioneer merchant of the district.

E. W. Edwards and his son decided the Price store most suitable for their needs, and after negotiations purchased the establishment. The firm name was changed to E. W. Edwards & Sons when it opened in Syracuse, but Daniel Murray soon came to be recognized as the directing head. Oliver Murray Edwards was more interested in his inventions and

THEIR ABLE DIRECTING BUILT UP GREAT MERCANTILE HOUSE



ELEAZER WELLS EDWARDS

Father of Daniel Murray Edwards and himself a son of a pioneer merchant, Eleazer Edwards was head of the Syracuse store which bears his name until his death in 1911.

P. J. SULLIVAN

Chief assistant to Daniel Murray Edwards during the days when he was expanding his holdings in the merchandising field, P. J. Sullivan carries on as chairman of the board of directors.