

Richard W. Sears

The biggest retail business in the world-
catalog sales The Wish Book, The Dream Book
6 pounds 1500 pages
100,000 products
20 million Americans as customers
Dreamed of being a railroad man
worked in a station
1886 case of gold watches not claimed
made a deal with the company to sell the watches
Moved to Minneapolis and opened a watch company
Started order by mail also.

The General Store was the only source of goods for rural
America.

Social center, post office, Mixed goods but poor selection
and high prices

→ Mail Order was a threat to the general store.

March, 1887 Sears moved to Chicago to start his business.

Montgomery Ward was the largest at the time.

Chicago was a modern city- new buildings
all the latest technology
steel
railroad builders
meat packers

1888 Sears sold watches to farmers in the Midwest.
Hired Roebuck, his watchmaker

1893 formed Sears, Roebuck and Co.

Understood mass marketing--COD

Dramatic promotions

Devotion to customers

Free merchandise to those in Iowa for handing
out the catalog to others

→ ****Sears catalog smaller than Montgomery Ward's
so Sears' catalog would be on top on the parlor table.

Catalog items

Patent medicines- popular because of isolation and few
doctors

Soothing Syrup- contained opium

Electric belt

10,000 books- poems, tales, history, how to write love
letters

Sewing Machines- the Family Friend

average price was \$50

Sears sold his for \$10.45

1902 sold 1 per min.

100,000 per year

Sewing machines replaced the work of traveling
seamstresses who would visit for a week to 10 days

Sears 2

Farmers wanted stylish goods like the city folk.

Sears did much to homogenize America

Previously country women made most of the family's underwear.

1893- Women now wore corsets.

1895 Roebuck feared failure. Sold out to Sears for \$25,000

Sears took a new partner- Julius Rosenwald

He was a good manager, organized affairs, opened warehouses

Hired women to fill orders

Started profit sharing plan- stock in the company

Sales tripled- Storekeepers were angry

★ (They bribed kids with free movie tickets to bring in a catalog which they would then burn

1896 Rural Free Delivery- US Mail direct to the farm.

Mailman got notes like-

water chickens and cows

put the bees in a new hive

sell this 1/2 dozen eggs and bring the change in postcards and stamps

People liked to talk to the mailman.

1900 RFD- catalog all over the US.

Largest retail business in the world.

9000 employees

90,000 letters per day

examples- asked for a husband or wife

put feet on the women to be used as dolls

advice on pronunciation

a loan to buy land

105,000 orders per day- used conveyor belts and pneumatic tubes

Printed their own catalog 30,000 per day

Sears sold cars, shoes, organs, plows

75000 buggies

10000 gallons of paint per day

houses

Sears retired age 44 Died age 50

Company opened retail stores.

1933 Roebuck returned and asked for a job.

Worked for wages. Opened new retail stores.

Retired 1940.