

Toronto Public Library
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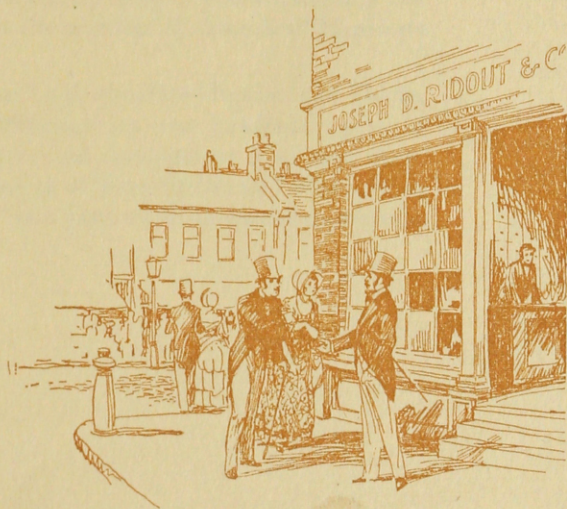
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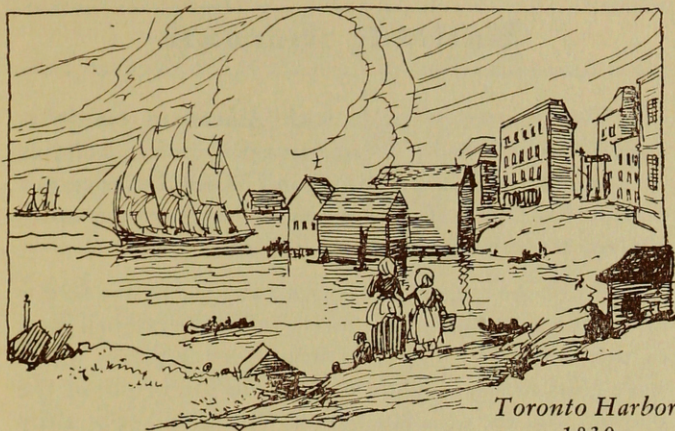


Gift 57
Aikenhead Hardware Co

Building Toronto

A story of the growth
of a great city and the
development of a great
enterprise. Published by
Aikenhead Hardware
Limited, commemorat-
ing their 100th year in
business





Toronto Harbor
1830

Building Toronto

FEW business organizations in this young and growing country can turn back the pages of their history and point to business transacted through the currency of pounds, shillings and pence. Yet this is the privilege of Aikenhead Hardware Limited.

In the year of our Lord, Nineteen Hundred and Thirty, this Company celebrates its one hundredth year in business. Its history and development is an epic story, paralleling the growth of Toronto from a "Village, Fort and Trading Post" to a vast, world-renowned metropolis.

*The
Aikenhead
Centenary*

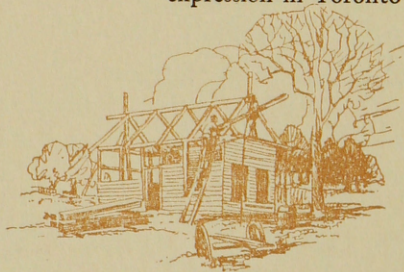
Building Toronto

It is a matter of pride with Aikenhead Hardware Limited to have had a conspicuous place in the building of Toronto. The hearts, hands and TOOLS of energetic artisans have built of Toronto an enduring monument to the vision and enterprise of its citizens.

*The
Original
Store an
"Iron-
mongery"*

Many of the tools which hewed away the native forests of the town of York were purchased in the original store of this Company. The saws, hammers and planes which were plied in the building of the rude log houses of the pioneers and the occasional frame "mansion" of wealthy business man or magistrate, most probably were supplied by the founders of this Company, whose Hardware Store was situated on the property now occupied by the twenty-story Royal Bank Building at the north-east corner of King and Yonge Streets. It was called an Ironmongery. Shelf hardware, cutlery, building materials, tools and sheet iron were imported from England, Europe and United States. No such articles were then manufactured in Canada. The store stood for business integrity and quality merchandise. Patrons recognized and appreciated the service rendered. The business continued to flourish.

So bound up in historic incident with the growth of Toronto is this enterprising hardware company, that reference to its evolution and expansion finds its best expression in Toronto's own chronological development.



Erecting a Pioneer Home

Building Toronto

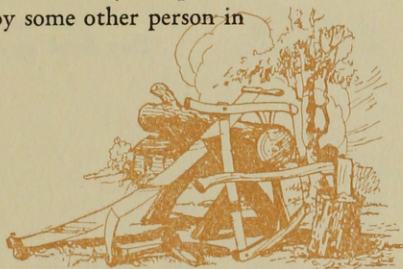
'Way back in 1830 when the business of Joseph D. Ridout & Co. (the parent organization) was founded, York (now Toronto) had but a few years before been laid out in streets to the westward of the old town. This old town comprised the area bounded by George Street, Duchess Street, Ontario Street and the bay front.

The old Day Book of this Company, used during the period from November 5th, 1833, to July 9th, 1835, is still in the possession of this Company. Each transaction of business is recorded in copper-plate handwriting. The currency is pounds, shillings and pence. Up to March 5th, 1834, each page is headed "York, Upper Canada", and on March 7th the heading "Toronto" indicated the transition of the town into a city.

The names of purchasers recorded in this Day Book sound like a "Who's Who" in early Toronto. It contains such names as Chief Justice Robinson, Jesse Ketchum, Judge Macaulay, Captain Dennison, Dr. Powell, Dr. Strachan, Judge Sherwood, Sir John Coleburn, and many others whose history has faded into the dim past but whose legacy of noble influence has been left to succeeding generations.

On the margin after each purchase appear such words as "Per Bright", "Per book" or "per self". Thus it was indicated whether the goods were received by the person to whom they were charged, or by some other person in

*Original
Aikenhead
records
preserved*



The Pioneer's Tools

Original
transactions
recorded in
pounds,
shillings
and pence

*Actual reproduction from the
Day Book of this Company, 1833-1835*

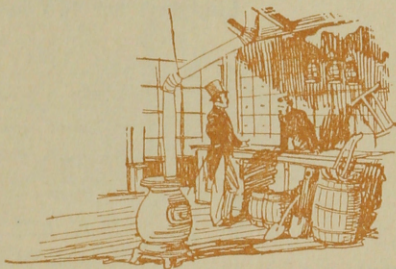
Building Toronto

behalf of the purchaser. "Per book" meant that the record of the transaction would be entered in the customer's "pass book". Such a book was provided for customers by the Company. At the end of each year, when accounts were rendered, the customers would have an itemized account of their own to verify each transaction.

It is interesting at this time to read the reminiscences of business men who had taken an active part in Toronto's business expansion. Each decade imparted a new thrill of civic pride in the bosoms of public-spirited citizens. Each generation was enthusiastic over the rapid development of the town.

The first Toronto directory, published in 1833, contained the following historic preface: "*In whatever direction the eye of scrutiny be turned, our city luxuriates in the solid evidence of a well-directed industry.*" "*When it is considered,*" continues the eloquent preface, "*that forty years ago the site of York and the whole country to the north and west of it was a mere wilderness, the haunt of the savage and of beasts scarcely less savage, that sustained him, the splendid marks of growing opulence which everywhere surrounded him must strike the spectator with wonder and admiration and certify to his mind that he beholds the nucleus of a great and powerful empire.*"

*Description
of early
Toronto*



Interior of Hardware Store—1833

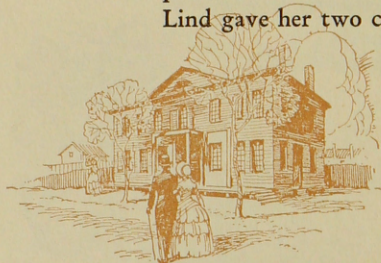
Building Toronto

Twenty years later we find another description of the fast-growing community: *"Thronged at the point where it descends to the water's edge with steamers and other craft, great and small, lined at the left and right up to the far-vanishing point with handsome buildings, its pavements and central roadway astir with life, its appearance is agreeably exciting and even impressive"*.

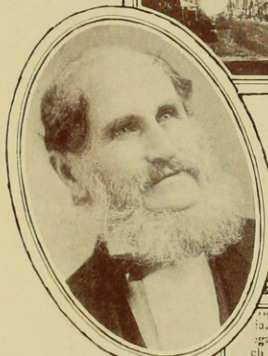
The accommodations of the early residents were primitive, and while the electric light problem did not vex the settlers, the lighting question was evidently not entirely satisfactory, for in a newspaper issue of 1830 we find: *"To the dissatisfied users of lamp oil, the undersigned offer a very superior bleached elephant oil, equal to sperm"*.

*Toronto's
population
2860 when
Aikenhead
business
started*

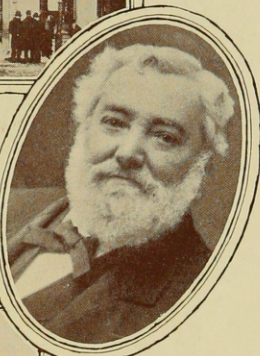
Although York in 1830 was but a small place boasting a population of but 2860, 500 of whom formed the garrison, it was the hub of Ontario's industry, its government and its social activities. The lads and lassies of those days had great fun with their skating parties on the bay, their maypole dances and frolics in the open spaces from which had been cleared the native forest. The social affairs were held at Jordan's "York Hotel" or at the Powell House. Later, in 1850, the St. Lawrence Market was a public hall, at that time the finest and most aristocratic place of amusement in Toronto. It was here that Jenny Lind gave her two concerts before Toronto audiences.



*"The Palace", home of Dr. John Strachan
(Hardware by Aikenheads)*



JOSEPH D. RIDOUT



JAMES AIKENHEAD

The First Store
northeast corner of
Yonge and King Streets

...at a clock, passing through the beautiful Townships of Pickering, Whitby, Darlington, and Clarks, and the pleasantly situated Villages of Port Hope, Cobourg, & Colborne, and arriving at the Carrying Place the same evening.

Will leave the Carrying Place every TUESDAY and FRIDAY morning at 4 o'clock and arrive at YORK the same evening.



The above arrangements are in connexion with the Steam-Boat SIR JAMES KEMPT, so that passengers travelling this route will find a pleasant and speedy conveyance between York and Prescott, the road being very much repaired and the line fitted up with good Horses, new Carriages, and careful drivers. Fare through from York to Prescott, £2 10 0, the same as in the Lake Boats. Intermediate distances, fare as usual.

All baggage at the risk of the owner. N. B. Fares furnished at York, Cobourg, or the Carrying Place, on reasonable terms.

WILLIAM WELLER.

York, June 9th, 1830.

NEW IRONMONGERY.

THE Subscribers have just received at their Store in King street of Yonge Street, direct from the Manufacturers in England, a general and choice assortment of IRON, MONGERY AND HARDWARE GOODS, which they offer for sale on low and advantageous terms, and to which they beg leave to call the attention of their friends and the public whose patronage they respectfully solicit.

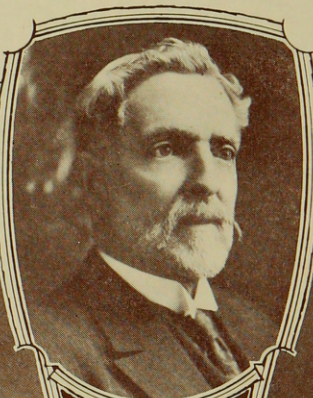
JOSEPH D. RIDOUT & Co.

York, 25th September, 1830. 45 1/2.

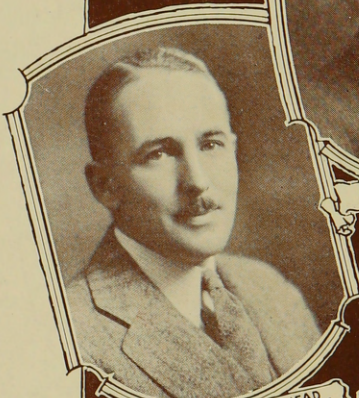
BUILDING LOTS for sale on the corner of Park Lane No. 19 and 20, on Lot Street, and in the Field adjoining Mr. Dunn's, on Lot and Peter Streets. Enquire of Mr. Crookshank or Mr. Mercer. York, 23rd February, 1830.

The First Advertisement-1830

APPEARING IN THE CHRISTIAN GUARDIAN, TORONTO



T. AIKENHEAD
President



JAMES T. AIKENHEAD
Vice Pres. & General Mgr.



J. WILFRED AIKENHEAD
Secretary & Retail Mgr.



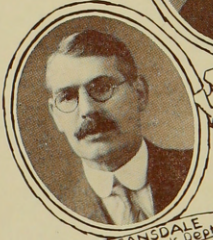
J. H. THORNHILL
Mgr. Builders Contract Dept.



S. SHEPPARD
Treasurer



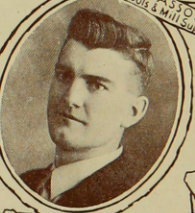
M. M. NASSON
Mgr. Tools & Mill Supplies



H. CANDALE
Mgr. Metals Dept.



F. O. HARRISON
Mgr. Paint Dept.



I. FINDLAY
Mgr. Mail Order & Phone Dept.



J. M. BINGHAM
Mgr. Radio Dept.

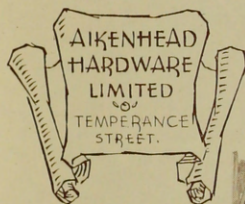
AIKENHEAD HARDWARE ADVERTISING

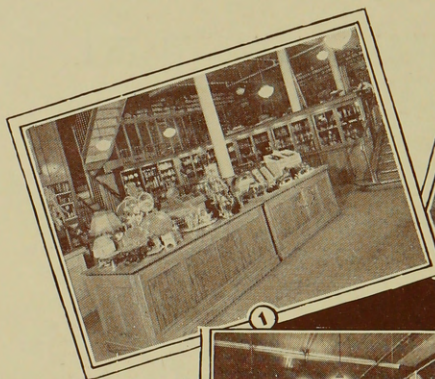


1840



1930





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2

1. Electrical Dept.

2. Cutlery Dept.

3. Tool Dept.

4. Builders' Hardware Sample Room.



3

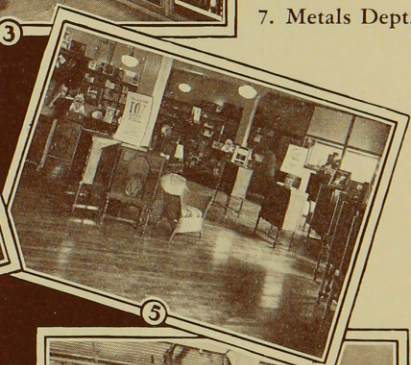
5. Radio Dept.

6. Cabinet and Builders' Hardware Sales Dept.

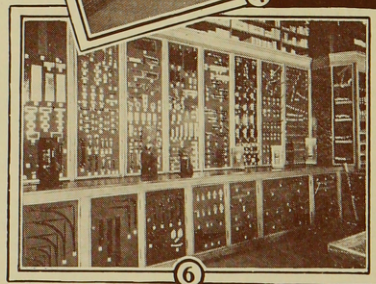
7. Metals Dept.



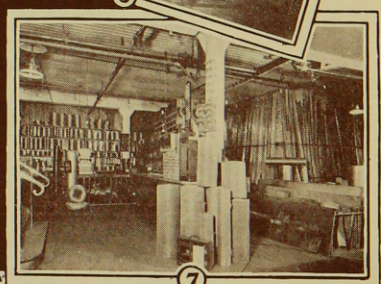
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Building Toronto

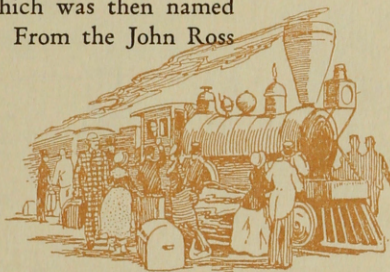
The first building on the north-east corner of King and Yonge Streets was John Dennis' frame cottage, white, with rows of beautiful elms shading it, both on the King Street and Yonge Street sides. Behind his home in the 1820's he had a fine garden and plum orchard, extending upwards to Newgate Street (now Adelaide). In 1830 a red brick building was erected and was Ridout's Hardware Store—a copy of the advertisement appearing in the *Christian Guardian*, September 25th, 1830, is reproduced, announcing the opening of this new Hardware Store then known as an IRONMONGERY.

*First store
at King and
Yonge
Streets*

Toronto was fast becoming conscious of its strategic position on Lake Ontario, its wonderful harbor, and its location as the hub of commerce throughout the surrounding settlements. Business men began to organize for co-ordinated effort in city planning and business building. In 1845 the Board of Trade was formed and Mr. George P. Ridout was chosen as its first president.

In 1847 Mr. James Aikenhead joined the firm of Ridout Bros. & Co. Mr. Aikenhead was a man of keen discernment and sound business judgment. His sterling qualities and outstanding business ability were the molding influence that was to form the inspiration for a great business enterprise in Toronto. In 1868 Mr. James Aikenhead became a member of the firm which was then named Ridout, Aikenhead and Crombie. From the John Ross

*Mr. James
Aikenhead
joins the
firm*



"The Toronto"

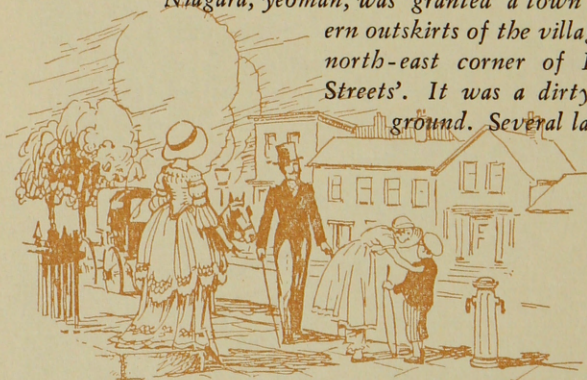
First train out of Toronto—1853

Building Toronto

*Mr. Thomas
Aikenhead
commences
his career*

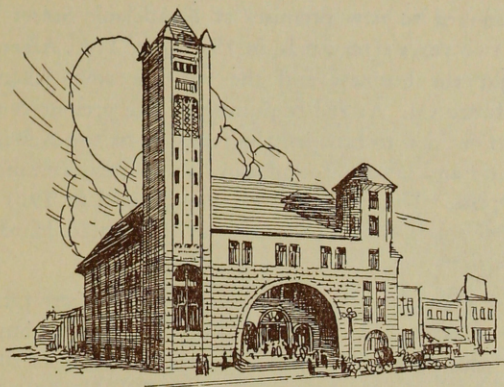
Robertson collection, an interesting photograph is reproduced here, showing the building which this young hardware company occupied. On September 1st, 1873, Mr. Thomas E. Aikenhead, son of Mr. James Aikenhead, started in to serve a five year apprenticeship with Messrs. Ridout, Aikenhead and Crombie.

Toronto was by that time blossoming forth into a veritable city. King's College had become the University of Toronto. Queen's Park had become city property. The city itself was greatly enlarged in area and in population. Yonge Street, which in 1830 was but a long clearing and wagon trail with mud so thick as to make it impassable (and at either side of which the residents used to shoot quail and partridge in the dense woods) was now fast taking the semblance of a city street. It had been named after Sir George Yonge, Secretary of War in England in 1791. Yonge Street, like a magnet, continued to draw the business activity from the populated area of the East, known as the "Town of York". The early citizens of York thought this property to the west of little value. In fact, the records read that "*In 1801 Charles Field of Niagara, yeoman, was 'granted' a town lot on the 'Western outskirts of the village of York, at the north-east corner of King and Yonge Streets'. It was a dirty, scrubby bit of ground. Several large elms stood on*



Fashions of the Period—1850-1875

Building Toronto



The Union Station—1873-1928

it, among much alder and other rocky underbrush; and on the opposite, north-west corner Mr. William Bowkett, master of a small schooner on Lake Ontario, had also been granted a town lot, after it had lain vacant seven years from the founding of York, and had built a nice cottage on it, away from the hustle and bustle of the village of York, as suited the taste of a mariner ashore”.

Meanwhile as Toronto in the 1870's was developing apace, the hardware business of Ridout, Aikenhead and Crombie made parallel progress with it. In 1891 they sold their lease on the corner of King and Yonge Streets

*Aikenhead
Hardware
moves to
Adelaide
Street*

Building Toronto

and moved to new premises at 6 Adelaide Street East. Just two years afterwards, in 1893, Mr. T. E. Aikenhead bought the business and the style became Aikenhead Hardware Co. At the beginning of the present century it was decided to broaden the facilities of the Aikenhead business and lay the foundations for a great commercial enterprise. The business was re-organized in 1901 as a limited stock company known as Aikenhead Hardware Limited.

*The
Company
locates on
Temperance
Street*

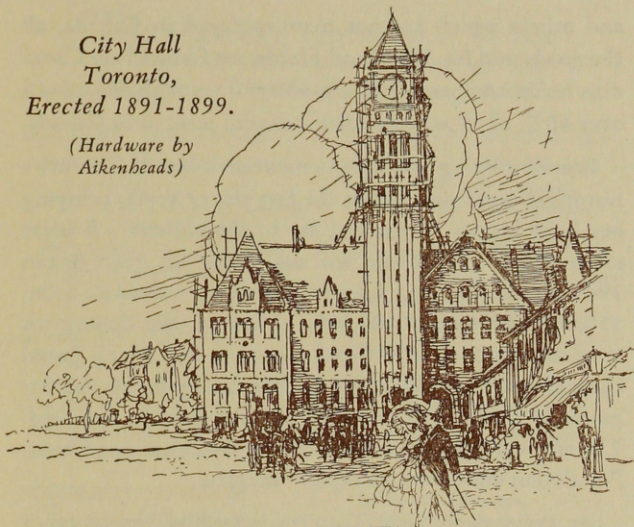
The present location of Aikenhead Hardware Limited at 17-21 Temperance Street has been its place of business since the year 1905 and is within two blocks of the original location of Joseph Ridout & Co. Here the business has continued to flourish. Many departments have been added, so that everything from tacks to tractors is included in the 36,000 items stocked under one roof. Six floors are literally filled with hardware. In addition, a warehouse building is used as a stock room and repair department.

About sixty years ago great advances were being made in the manufacture of fine hardware. This development was particularly noticeable in the United States. No manufacture of this kind was being done in Canada. The Yale pin-tumbler lock had just been invented by Linus Yale as a result of his study of some recently

Building Toronto

City Hall
Toronto,
Erected 1891-1899.

(Hardware by
Aikenheads)



discovered ancient Egyptian wall locks. The Yale lock soon became popular in use and the Aikenhead Hardware Company took up the sale of it and were later appointed agents in this territory. Aikenhead's have acted as exclusive representatives for Yale locks and builders' hardware in Toronto for upwards of forty years.

With the exception of a comparatively small number of products, which have won a world-wide reputation

*Aikenhead
agents for
Yale
hardware*

Building Toronto

*Canadian
merchandise
chiefly sold*

and others which are not manufactured in Canada, all the goods sold by Aikenhead Hardware Limited are Canadian made. At present, in the entire lines of their business over 80% of all merchandise is manufactured in Canada.

It is interesting just here to mention a few of Toronto's historical incidents during the last thirty years, bringing our brief history of the city up to the present. A great many people of Toronto will remember the great fire in 1904 which involved a loss of property valued at from \$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000. Most of the downtown wholesale district was wiped out in a fire which lasted throughout two full days before being finally extinguished. But new business structures quickly appeared. The city extended its boundaries to east, north and west. Population continued to rapidly increase.

*Larger
stocks
to meet
increasing
demand*

At the present time Toronto is leading nearly every other city in the world in her amazing volume of building construction. In this construction activity Aikenhead Hardware Limited has rendered a complete service to contractors, builders and workmen. Stocks of equipment and materials, unmatched in Canada for their completeness of range and variety, have provided convenience and facilities which have been greatly appreciated in the building trades.



The Skyline of Toronto—1930

Building Toronto

THE following is a partial list of the lines of hardware and other equipment now available at Aikenhead Hardware Limited:

BUILDERS' HARDWARE:

Contracts for Homes and Buildings,
Yale Locks, Yale Door Closers,
Garage Door Hardware,
Warehouse Door Hardware,
Whitco Casement Hardware,
Panic Locks, Locksmith Shop.

BUILDERS' SUPPLIES:

Wheelbarrows,
Building Papers,
Roofings, Coal Chutes,
Sash Weights,
Nails (all kinds).

FIREPLACE FITTINGS:

Fire Baskets, Coal Boxes,
Andirons, Fireside Sets,
Cape Cod Lighters.

REFRIGERATION:

Kelvinator Electric.

OIL BURNERS:

"Quiet May."

RADIO:

Sets (various makes),
Parts and Accessories, Service.

TOOLS:

Carpenters', Machinists',
Household, Molders'.

MILL SUPPLIES:

Bolts and Screws (all kinds),
Blow Torches, Files,
Abrasive Paper and Cloth,
Glue, Electric Lamps.

INDUSTRIAL SPECIALTIES:

Parker-Kalon Metal Screws,
Binks Spray Equipment,
Pyrene Fire Extinguishers.

ELECTRICAL SPECIALTIES:

Electric Drills, Electric Saws,
Electric Grinders,
Electric Woodworking
Machines.

GOLF CLUB, PARK and FARM EQUIPMENT:

Ideal Power Lawn Mowers,
Centaur Tractors,
Gravelly Tractors,
Barker Cultivators,
Golf Course Supplies.

PAINTS:

"A" Brand House Paints,
Kyanize Enamels,
Kyanize Varnish,
Brushes, Lead and Oils.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS:

Cutlery, Electric Appliances,
Indian and Chinese Brassware,
Lawn Mowers, Garden Tools,
Electric Bulbs.

METALS:

Brass—Rods, Tubes, Sheets,
Aluminum, Iron and Steel,
Wire (all kinds).

PLUMBING SUPPLIES:

Pipe and Fittings,
Taps, Valves.

