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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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16TH CENSUS
OF THE UNITED STATES
1940



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Census of Business : 1939

WHOLESALE
TRADE

Business-Size Groups
and
An Analysis of
Operating Expenses

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF

JESSE H. JONES, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

J. C. CAPT, Director (Appointed May 22, 1941)

WILLIAM LANE AUSTIN, Director (Retired January 31, 1941)

VERGIL D. REED, Assistant Director

HOWARD H. McCLURE, Assistant Director



SIXTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES : 1940
CENSUS OF BUSINESS : 1939

WHOLESALE TRADE

BUSINESS-SIZE GROUPS
AND
AN ANALYSIS OF OPERATING EXPENSES
(Wholesale Merchants and Industrial Distributors)

Prepared under the supervision of

FRED A. GOSNELL

Chief Statistician for Business

UNITED STATES
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WASHINGTON : 1941

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Special Reports.

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE,
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS.

Washington, D. C., October 20, 1941.

SIR: I transmit herewith a subject report on wholesale trade, issued in connection with the 1939 Census of Business. This report, which is limited to wholesale merchants and industrial distributors, is in two general parts: The first presents the number of establishments, sales, total operating expenses, personnel, and pay roll by business-size groups, or size brackets based upon 1939 sales; the second analyzes total operating expenses into administrative, selling, warehouse, delivery, occupancy, and "other." Data in both parts are by trades or kinds of business.

The Census of Business, taken in 1940 in conformity with the Act providing for the Sixteenth Decennial Census, approved June 18, 1929, covers operations during the calendar year 1939. The facts were collected in 1940 by a complete field canvass of all business establishments in continental United States.

The statistics were compiled under the supervision of Fred A. Gosnell, Chief Statistician for Business, and William A. Ruff, Assistant Chief Statistician. The report was prepared by John Albright, Chief of Wholesale Trade, assisted by William P. McNerny.

Respectfully,

J. C. CAPT,
Director of the Census.

Hon. JESSE H. JONES,
Secretary of Commerce.

CONTENTS

CHARTS

	Page
CHART 1.—Number of establishments, sales, and personnel, by business-size groups.....	VI
CHART 2.—Number of establishments and sales, by business-size groups: 1939, 1935, and 1929.....	2
CHART 3.—Ratio of operating expenses to net sales, by business-size groups.....	3
CHART 4.—An analysis of expenses of 1,090 tobacco wholesalers, by business-size groups.....	4

TEXT

	Page		Page
Introduction.....	1	Description of terms—Continued.....	
Business-size groups.....	1	Operating expenses—Continued.....	
Establishments and sales: 1939, 1935, 1929.....	1	Selling expenses.....	5
Expense ratio decreases as size increases.....	2	Delivery expenses.....	6
Employment and pay roll by size.....	3	Warehouse expenses.....	6
Analysis of operating expenses.....	3	Occupancy expenses.....	6
Tobacco trade analyzed.....	4	Other expenses.....	6
Industrial distributors.....	5	Business-size groups.....	6
Operating expenses analyzed.....	5	Types of operation.....	6
Description of terms.....	5	Wholesale merchants.....	6
Number of establishments.....	5	Industrial distributors.....	6
Sales.....	5	Kinds of business.....	6
Active proprietors of unincorporated businesses.....	5	Explanation of tables.....	6
Number of employees.....	5	Table 1.....	6
Pay roll.....	5	Table 4.....	6
Operating expenses.....	5	Table 5.....	6
Administrative expenses.....	5		

TEXT TABLES

TABLE A.—Number of establishments, sales, and total operating expenses, by business-size groups: 1939.....	2
TABLE B.—Employment and pay roll by size brackets: 1939.....	3
TABLE C.—Establishments, sales, expenses, employment and pay roll, by business-size groups: 1939 (industrial distributors).....	5
TABLE D.—Analysis of operating expenses, by business-size groups: 1939 (industrial distributors).....	5

TABLES

TABLE 1.—United States summary—number of establishments, sales, expenses, personnel, pay roll, and stocks—types of operation and kinds of business for wholesale merchants.....	8
TABLE 4.—Business-size—wholesale merchants—establishments, sales, expenses, personnel, and pay roll—kinds of business by net-sales size groups—United States summary and by geographic divisions.....	11
TABLE 5.—Analysis of operating expenses for trades or kinds of business—United States summary and by geographic divisions and cities.....	58

APPENDIXES

TABLE 4.—Sales and expenses by business-size groups, 1935.....	100
TABLE 5.—Analysis of operating expenses, 1935.....	108
SCHEDULE FORM 31.—Wholesale schedule.....	113

INDEX TO DATA BY TRADES OR KINDS OF BUSINESS

KIND OF BUSINESS	TABLE 4		TABLE 5		KIND OF BUSINESS	TABLE 4		TABLE 5	
	United States total	Geo-graphic divisions	United States total	Geo-graphic divisions and cities		United States total	Geo-graphic divisions	United States total	Geo-graphic divisions and cities
	Page	Page	Page	Page		Page	Page	Page	Page
Amusement and sporting goods.....	11	22	58	69	Chemicals and paints.....	12	25	58	71
Bicycles and supplies.....	11	22	58	69	Dyestuffs.....	12	25	58	71
Cameras and photographic supplies.....	11	22	58	69	Explosives.....	12	25	58	71
Motion-picture equipment and supplies (except films).....	11	22	58	69	Industrial chemicals.....	12	25	58	71
Motion-picture film exchanges.....	11	22	58	69	Naval stores.....	12	25	58	71
Sporting goods.....	11	22	58	69	Paints and varnishes.....	12	25	58	72
Toys, novelties, and fireworks.....	11	22	58	69	Paints with glass and/or wallpaper.....	12	25	59	72
All other.....	11	22	58	69	All other.....	12	25	59	72
Automotive.....	11	22	58	69	Clothing and furnishings.....	12	26	59	72
Automobiles (new and used).....	11	22	58	69	Clothing and furnishings (general line).....	12	26	59	72
Trucks and tractors.....	11	22	58	70	Men's and boys'.....	12	26	59	72
Automotive accessories and equipment.....	11	23	58	70	Women's and children's.....	12	26	59	73
Automotive parts.....	11	23	58	70	Furs, dressed, and fur clothing.....	12	27	59	73
Tires and tubes.....	11	23	58	70	Millinery and millinery supplies.....	12	27	59	73
Beer, wines, and liquors.....	11	24	58	71	Shoes and other footwear.....	12	27	59	73
Beer and ale.....	11	24	58	71	Coal and coke.....	12	27	59	73
Wines and liquors.....	11	24	58	71	Drugs (general line).....	12	28	59	74
					Service wholesalers (without liquor).....	12	28	59	74

CONTENTS

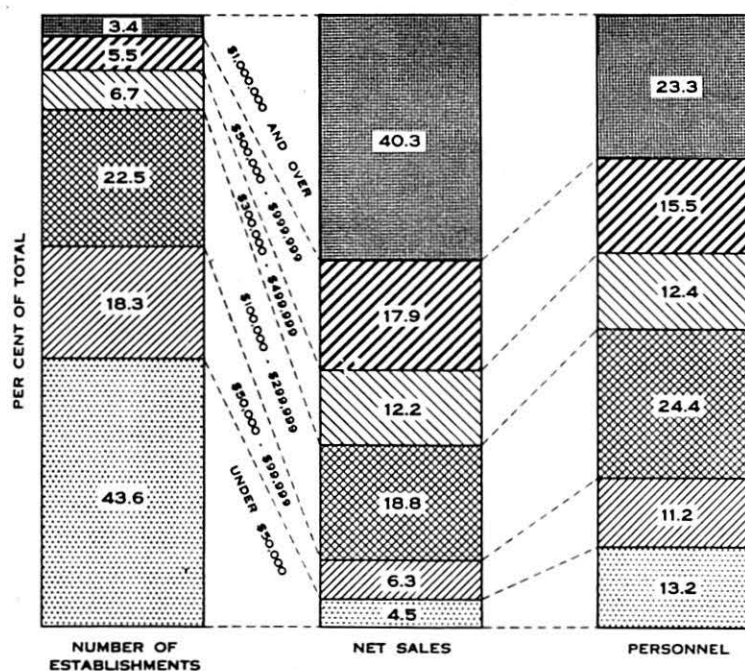
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KIND OF BUSINESS	TABLE 4		TABLE 5		KIND OF BUSINESS	TABLE 4		TABLE 5	
	United States total	Geo-graphic divisions	United States total	Geo-graphic divisions and cities		United States total	Geo-graphic divisions	United States total	Geo-graphic divisions and cities
	Page	Page	Page	Page		Page	Page	Page	Page
Drugs (general line)—Continued.					Machinery—equipment—supplies—Con.				
Service wholesalers (with liquor).....	12	28	59	74	Commercial equipment—Continued.				
Drugs and drug sundries (specialty lines).....	13	28	59	74	Soda fountain equipment and				
Proprietary medicines.....	13	28	59	74	supplies.....	17	44	64	87
Toiletries.....	13	28	60	74	Store machines.....	17	44	64	87
Drug specialties and sundries.....	13	28	60	74	Store fixtures and equipment.....	17	45	64	87
Dry goods (general line).....	13	29	60	75	All other.....	17	45	64	87
Dry goods (specialty lines).....	13	29	60	75	Farm and dairy.....	17	45	64	87
Hosiery and lingerie.....	13	29	60	75	Dairy equipment.....	17	45	64	87
Notions.....	13	29	60	75	Farm implements.....	17	45	64	87
Piece goods.....	13	29	60	75	Farm machinery and equipment.....	17	45	64	87
General line.....	13	29	60	75	Industrial machinery, equipment,				
Cotton.....	13	29	60	75	and supplies.....	17	45	64	87
Silk, linen, rayon, and velvet.....	13	30	60	75	Industrial (general line).....	17	45	64	87
Woolen and worsted.....	13	30	60	75	Belting, hose, and packing.....	18	45	64	87
Other.....	13	30	60	75	Construction (except road build-				
Other dry goods specialties.....	13	30	60	75	ing).....	18	45	64	88
Electrical goods.....	13	31	60	76	Road building.....	18	45	64	88
Electrical merchandise (general line).....	13	31	60	76	Machine tools.....	18	46	64	88
Apparatus and equipment.....	13	31	60	76	Mine and mill supplies.....	18	46	64	88
Wiring supplies and construction ma-					Oil well supply houses.....	18	46	65	88
terials.....	13	31	60	76	Power plant and power trans-				
Radio and equipment.....	13	31	60	77	mission.....	18	46	65	88
Refrigerators and equipment (house-					Printing and lithographing (ex-				
hold).....	14	32	61	77	cept paper).....	18	46	65	88
All other.....	14	32	61	77	Rope, cordage, and twine.....	18	46	65	89
Farm products—raw materials.....	14	32	61	77	Textile.....	18	46	65	89
Cotton.....	14	32	61	77	Used machinery and equipment.....	18	46	65	89
Grains.....	14	32	61	77	All other.....	18	47	65	89
Hides, skins, and raw furs.....	14	33	61	78	Professional equipment and supplies.....	18	47	65	89
Horses and mules.....	14	33	61	78	Dental supply houses.....	18	47	65	89
Livestock.....	14	33	61	78	Religious supply houses.....	18	47	65	89
Tobacco (leaf).....	14	33	61	78	School equipment and supplies.....	18	47	65	89
Wool and mohair.....	14	33	61	78	Surgical, medical, and hospital.....	18	47	65	90
All other.....	14	33	61	78	All other.....	18	48	65	90
Farm products—consumer goods.....	14	33	61	78	Service equipment and supplies.....	18	48	65	90
Dairy products.....	14	33	61	78	Barber and beauty supply houses.....	18	48	65	90
Dairy and poultry products.....	14	34	61	78	Laundry and dry cleaning.....	19	48	65	90
Poultry and poultry products.....	14	34	61	79	Tailors' supplies.....	19	48	65	90
Fruits and vegetables (fresh).....	14	35	61	79	Undertakers' supplies.....	19	48	65	90
Fresh fruits only.....	14	35	61	79	Upholsterers' supplies.....	19	48	65	90
All other.....	15	36	61	79	All other.....	19	48	65	91
Farm supplies.....	15	36	62	80	Transportation equipment and sup-				
Feed.....	15	36	62	80	plies.....	19	49	65	91
Fertilizer.....	15	36	62	80	Aircraft and aeronautical.....	19	49	65	91
Seeds.....	15	36	62	80	Railroad.....	19	49	65	91
All other.....	15	36	62	80	Marine.....	19	49	65	91
Furniture and house furnishings.....	15	36	62	80	Other.....	19	49	65	91
China, glassware, and crockery.....	15	37	62	80	Metals and metal work (except scrap).....				
Floor coverings.....	15	37	62	80	Building metal work.....	19	49	65	91
Furniture (general line).....	15	37	62	81	Iron and steel products (general line).....	19	49	65	91
Furniture (household).....	15	37	62	81	Iron and steel products (semi-fin-				
Furniture (office).....	15	37	62	81	ished).....	19	49	66	91
House furnishings (except as specified).....	15	37	62	81	Iron and steel products (flat).....	19	49	66	91
Musical instruments and sheet music.....	15	37	62	81	Wire and wire products.....	19	49	66	92
Groceries (general line).....	15	37	62	81	Iron and steel finished products (not				
Not sponsoring cooperative or volun-					elsewhere classified).....	19	49	66	92
tary groups.....	15	37	62	81	Copper.....	19	49	66	92
Groceries and foods (specialty lines).....	15	38	62	81	All other.....	19	49	66	92
Breakfast cereals.....	15	38	62	82	Paper and its products.....				
Canned foods.....	15	38	62	82	Wrapping or coarse paper and prod-				
Coffee, tea, and spices.....	15	38	62	82	ucts.....	19	49	66	92
Coffee roasting and spice grinding.....	16	38	62	82	Printing and writing papers.....	20	50	66	92
Confectionery.....	16	39	63	82	Stationery and stationery supplies.....	20	50	66	93
Fish and sea foods.....	16	39	63	82	Wallpaper.....	20	50	66	93
Flour.....	16	40	63	83	Petroleum and its products.....	20	51	66	93
Fruits and vegetables (frozen).....	16	40	63	83	Plumbing and heating equipment, and				
Meats and provisions.....	16	40	63	83	supplies.....	20	51	66	93
Other food and grocery specialties.....	16	40	63	83	Plumbing and heating (general line).....	20	51	66	93
Hardware.....	16	41	63	84	Heating (including stoves and ranges).....	20	51	66	93
General line (with industrial depart-					Plumbing fixtures, equipment, and				
ment).....	16	41	63	84	supplies.....	20	52	66	94
General line (without industrial de-					All other.....	20	52	66	94
partment).....	16	41	63	84	Tobacco and products (except leaf).....	20	52	67	94
Specialty lines.....	16	42	63	84	Waste materials.....	20	53	67	94
Jewelry.....	16	42	63	84	Iron and steel scrap.....	20	53	67	95
Jewelry (general line).....	16	42	63	84	Junk and scrap (general line).....	20	54	67	95
Clocks and watches.....	16	42	63	84	Waste paper, rags, and rubber.....	20	54	67	95
Diamonds and other precious stones.....	16	42	63	84	Non-ferrous metals.....	20	54	67	95
All other.....	16	42	63	85	All other.....	20	54	67	95
Lumber and construction materials.....	16	42	63	85	All other products.....	21	54	67	95
Builders' supplies (general line).....	17	43	63	85	Books, periodicals, and newspapers.....	21	55	67	96
Lumber.....	17	43	64	85	Flowers and nursery stock.....	21	55	67	96
Lumber and millwork.....	17	43	64	85	Forest products (except lumber).....	21	55	67	96
Millwork.....	17	43	64	85	General merchandise.....	21	55	67	96
Brick, tile, and terra cotta.....	17	43	64	85	Leather and shoe findings.....	21	55	67	96
Cement, lime, and plaster.....	17	43	64	86	Leather goods.....	21	56	67	96
Glass.....	17	43	64	86	Oils and greases (animal and vege-				
All other.....	17	44	64	86	table).....	21	56	67	96
Machinery—equipment—supplies.....	17	44	64	86	Optical goods.....	21	56	67	97
Commercial equipment and supplies.....	17	44	64	86	Textiles and materials (other than				
Office machines and equipment.....	17	44	64	86	dry goods).....	21	56	68	97
Restaurant and hotel supply					Yarns.....	21	56	68	97
houses.....	17	44	64	86	Miscellaneous kinds of business.....	21	56	68	97
Garage and filling station equip-									
ment.....	17	44	64	86					

CENSUS OF BUSINESS

WHOLESALE MERCHANTS AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRIBUTORS: 1939

CHART 1. NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS, SALES, AND PERSONNEL, BY BUSINESS-SIZE GROUPS



BUSINESS-SIZE GROUPS (BASED UPON NET SALES)	ESTABLISHMENTS		NET SALES		PERSONNEL	
	Number	Percent of total	Amount (add 000)	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total
Total	92,794	100.0	\$19,418,547	100.0	912,548	100.0
\$1,000,000 and over	3,154	3.4	7,817,324	40.3	212,700	23.3
\$500,000-\$999,999	5,047	5.5	3,482,371	17.9	141,736	15.5
\$300,000-\$499,999	6,195	6.7	2,376,989	12.2	113,208	12.4
\$100,000-\$299,999	20,943	22.5	3,658,798	18.8	222,907	24.4
\$50,000-\$99,999	16,971	18.3	1,213,777	6.3	101,752	11.2
Under \$50,000	40,484	43.6	869,288	4.5	120,245	13.2