

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

R. H. Macy and Company Store

AND/OR COMMON

R. H. Macy and Company Store

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

151 West 34th Street

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION 18

CITY, TOWN

New York

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

New York

__ VICINITY OF

CODE

36

COUNTY

New York

CODE

061

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

R. H. Macy and Company

Contact: Herbert L. Seegal, President
Alex Conroy, Adm. of Planning
and Development

STREET & NUMBER

151 West 34th Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

__ VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

New York County Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER

31 Chambers Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

253

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

R. H. Macy and Company's Herald Square store is, according to historian John William Ferry, "the world's largest department store under one roof."¹⁷ It occupies, except for a tiny lot on the southeast corner and another on the northwest corner, the entire block bounded by Broadway on the east, Seventh Avenue on the west, 34th Street on the south, and 35th Street on the north. Erected in three sections, the store consists of a 9-story, steel-frame, masonry section built on the Broadway side in 1901-2; a similarly constructed 1-story addition to this section in 1910; and a similarly constructed, 20-story section added on the Seventh Avenue side in 1922-24.

From 1858 to 1902 Macy's occupied a frequently expanded facility at 204-206 Sixth Avenue near 14th Street. By the end of the 19th century this group of old buildings was showing signs of delapidation, and each new addition to the conglomeration presented more maintenance and managerial problems. Moreover other major retailers were leaving 14th Street and following the city's commercial center as it moved further uptown. Macy's principal leases were to expire in 1903, and so the Strauses decided to erect a new store on a new site. They examined possible locations as far north as 45th Street before choosing Herald Square.

Acquisition of land for the new store proved a formidable task, and the Strauses failed to get the entire tract they sought. It measured about 400 feet along 34th and 35th Streets and from 180 to 200 feet between them. A 31.1-by-45.7-by-16-by-50.6-foot lot on the southeast corner of the block belonged to a clergyman named Alfred Duane Pell, who was abroad when Leopold Weil, a realtor engaged by the Strauses, began buying lots in the block. Apparently Pell agreed to sell his lot for \$250,000, but at the time he was unaware of Macy's connection with the transaction. When this became public knowledge, R. Smith and Company persuaded Pell to sell the lot to them for \$375,000. There is no agreement about why R. Smith and Company took this step, but according to Hower, the Strauses believed that Henry Siegel, president of Siegel-Cooper Company, engineered the transaction either to halt Macy's relocation near his own store or to force Macy's to transfer their 14th Street leases to him so that he could erect a new store on the old Macy's site and capitalize on the shopping habits of former Macy's customers. Whatever the case, when offered the corner lot for the same price R. Smith and Company paid for it, the Strauses refused it. They retained control of much of the 14th

(continued)

¹⁷John William Ferry, A History of the Department Store, (New York, 1960), 55.

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8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Subject: 1858-present BUILDER/ARCHITECT George A. Fuller Co.
Site: 1901-present DeLemos & Cordes

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although there is no consensus about who contributed most to the development of the department store, R. H. Macy's name nearly always appears high on lists of those whose influence has been particularly significant. Macy helped pioneer American use of the one-price system in the 1850's, led other early department store entrepreneurs in introducing new kinds of merchandise in the 1860's and 1870's, made widespread and innovative use of newspaper and magazine advertising throughout his career, and always refused to be undersold. Since 1924 R. H. Macy and Company's New York store has been the world's largest department store under one roof, and during much of this time it has led in volume of sales as well. According to retailing historians Tom Mahoney and Leonard Sloane, Macy's size and operating methods have made it "the epitome of the traditional department store." Its "shoppers have become convinced that no matter what they want, they can usually find it at Macy's;" and "'Macy's window' is well understood as the ultimate in public exposure."¹

Macy's impact on American retailing extends beyond the evolution of the department store, however. According to distinguished scholar Daniel J. Boorstin, R. H. Macy himself, through various promotions, significantly hurried the Christmas holiday season along its way to becoming "a spectacular nationwide Festival of Consumption."² Furthermore after Macy's death, the store's management, says business historian Ralph M. Hower, through "its spring advertising pioneered . . . in the now traditional emphasis of retailers upon the Easter season." Thus, Hower concludes correctly that "the story of Macy's is, to a large extent, [both] the story of the American department store and one of the main chapters in the history of American retailing."³

(continued)

¹Tom Mahoney and Leonard Sloane, The Great Merchants: America's Foremost Retail Institutions and the People Who Made Them Great (New York, 1974), 156, 357.

²Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The Democratic Experience (New York, 1973), 158.

³Ralph M. Hower, History of Macy's of New York: Chapters in the Evolution of the Department Store (Chambridge, 1943), 4, 170.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(see continuation sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY circa 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>18</u>	<u>518,670.0</u>	<u>4,511,215.8</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

As indicated in red on the accompanying AASLH sketch map and in black on the accompanying U.S.G.S., 7.5' Series, 1966, N.Y., Central Park Quadrant, a line passing around the outer plane of the exterior walls of the R. H. Macy and Company Store in its present configuration.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

George R. Adams, Director, Historic Landmarks Project

ORGANIZATION

DATE

American Association for State and Local History February 1977

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1400 Eighth Avenue South

615-242-5583

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Nashville,

Tennessee 37203

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET R.H. Macy Store ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

Street complex to thwart Siegel and went ahead with plans for a new store, which they erected around the Smith-Siegel lot. Macy's never acquired this tiny tract, and today it holds a small multistory brick building, the upper portion of which is leased to Macy's as a base for a huge sign bearing the firm's famous red star trademark.

Designed by the firm of DeLomos and Cordes and constructed by George A. Fuller Company, the new store was completed in 1902 at a cost of about \$4.8 million, which included the site but not the fixtures. Within the massive structure were 13,000 tons of structural steel, 1,000 tons of ornamental iron and bronze, 33 hydraulic elevators, 18 miles of brass tubing for a pneumatic tube system, 1,400 Jandus enclosed arc lamps, 15,000 incandescent lamps, 42 miles of wiring, 6 massive iron and marble stairways leading to the upper selling floors, 4 Otis mahogany and steel escalators, 6 160-inch ventilating fans, 6 large power generators driven by 6 Corliss-type steam engines totaling 3,040 horsepower, and a built-in vacuum cleaning system, known then as a "suction duster."

Although Macy's added another story to the building in 1910, by the early 1920, continued rapid business growth demanded a major expansion of store facilities. Accordingly Macy's acquired the remainder of the west side of the block, except for a tiny lot at the northwest corner, and workmen completed a 20-story addition to the store in 1924. The new section included a number of truck elevators for lifting delivery vehicles from basement loading docks to the street. These remain operable today.

Although the 1902 section and the adjoining 1924 section of the store have somewhat different designs, they are compatible in appearance. Except for show windows and polished red marble ashlar on the lower portion of the 1902 section's first story, concrete and stone create a grayish colored, three-and-four-story base of uniform height for the pair on all sides except the north, where the entire facade is brick. On the older or Broadway section, red brick faces stories four through seven, stone covers stories eight and nine, and brick faces the top story. On the newer or Seventh Avenue building, red brick covers the facade from the 5th through the 13th stories, while the walls above display gray-painted brick. Stone cornices mark transitions of wall materials. The walls of the Broadway section rise uniformly,

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CONTINUATION SHEET R.H. Macy Store TEM NUMBER 7 PAGE two

while those of the Seventh Avenue section rise uniformly for 13 floors and are recessed irregularly through the next 7 floors. Recently Macy's had the store's Broadway facade cleaned, and company officials hope eventually to have the remaining facades cleaned too.

Fenestration is generally regular throughout the building, with most windows being one-over-one sashes grouped in threes. Each of the middle three floors on the east side of the Broadway section, however, is graced with a row of seven projecting hexagonal bays, while the eighth and ninth floors exhibit on each exposed side a row of round-arched palladian windows. Both the east and west ends of the building have two major entrances. On the south side the 1902 section has three major entrances, and the 1924 section has four. All these hold glass-and-bronze revolving doors, and most have traditional hinged doors as well. The north side, which faces narrow 35th Street, is given over completely to freight and service entrances.

Most of the principal customer entrances are sheltered by large rectangular or rounded metal awnings supported by steel rods fastened to the building facade. Published early sketches of the building suggest that the awnings were added quite some time after completion of the building, but they appear to date from early in the century. All primary customer entrances to the 1902 building are framed by a continuation of the main story's marble facade.

The most elaborate entrance is situated in the center of the Broadway section's south side. Two large red marble pillars rise the full height of the main story, flank a semicircularly arched opening, and support a dentiled entablature that in turn supports a bronze clock and two pairs of statues of Greek maidens. Each marble pillar bears a huge bronze plaque with "Macy's" in raised letters, a decorative five-globe lamp, and other ornamentation, which features a floral design. Immediately above the arch, bronze letters spell out "R. H. Macy & Co." Two revolving and two single, hinged doors are set under a five-light, fixed transom.

Inside, the huge store has undergone the usual modernization suggested or necessitated by changing technology and merchandising methods, but there have been few structural changes. Many of the

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CONTINUATION SHEET R.H. Macy Store ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE three

original moldings, cornices, and other architectural ornaments remain, although some features, such as column capitals, are enclosed by temporary ceiling and wall components. The selling floors and most clerical, storage, and service floors continue to serve their original purpose, and on the 13th floor of the Seventh Avenue section, company officials occupy the 1924 executive offices. The least-altered area is the main selling floor. It lacks the grandeur of John Wanamaker's store in Philadelphia or Marshall Field's in Chicago, but it retains almost as much of its historical integrity. Remaining are the crystal chandeliers and the marble columns, stairs, mezzanine balustrades, and soon-to-be-carpeted floors. The original Otis steel-and-mahogany escalators still serve the Broadway section.

According to company officials, Macy's plans to remodel the entire interior but retain basic decorative features such as moldings and cornices and such important equipment as the steel-and-mahogany escalators. The AASLH representative was granted only a brief tour of the building, however, and historical background and descriptive materials promised from the company archives were not provided for this inventory.

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CONTINUATION SHEET R.H. Macy Store ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE one

R. H. Macy and Company's Herald Square store is the largest department store in the world. It occupies, except for a tiny lot on the southeast corner and another on the northwest corner, the entire block bounded by Broadway on the east, Seventh Avenue on the west, 34th Street on the south, and 35th Street on the north. Erected in three parts the store consists of a 9-story, steel-frame, masonry section built on the Broadway side in 1901-2; a similarly constructed, 1-story addition to this section in 1910; and a similarly constructed, 20-story section added on the Seventh Avenue side in 1922-24. For a structure of this size and age, the store is suprisingly little altered.

History

Rowland Hussey Macy was born of Quaker stock on Nantucket Island, Mass., August 30, 1822. The fourth of six children, he received only a rudimentary education, and although his father ran a bookshop, young Macy seems to have looked forward to a life as a sailor rather than a retailer. At age 15 he left home to join the crew of a whaling ship bound for the Pacific. Apparently 4 years of this work gave him his fill of seafaring, however, for in 1841 he gave it up and returned to Massachusetts.

Sometime during the next 3 years, Macy met Boston dry goods retailer George W. Houghton and in 1844 married his sister Louisa. Macy's chief biographer, historian Ralph M. Hower, speculates that Houghton may have set Macy up in a small needle and thread store in Boston. If so, it lasted only a little while and marked the first of a succession of business disappointments for Macy. Before 1849 he opened and was forced to close at least two dry goods stores in the city. When news of California gold reached Massachusetts, Macy left behind his wife and 2-year-old son and journeyed west with his brother Charles B. Macy to the boomtown of Marysville, where they opened a small dry goods establishment called Macy and Company. Evidently, skyrocketing freight costs forced the brothers to sell out the following summer, but they realized a small profit on the transaction.

By 1851 R. H. Macy had returned home and opened a new dry goods store, under his brother Robert's name, in Haverhill, Mass. Rowland offered a full line of dry goods, including "fancy" items, and according to Hower, this, plus newspaper advertising, use of the one-price system, selling for cash, offering low prices, and

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CONTINUATION SHEET R.H. Macy Store ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE two

rapidly turning over the stock, formed a "preliminary sketch of the Macy success formula."⁴ The Haverhill venture went well enough at first to allow Macy to move the business into larger quarters, but eventually competition from bigger stores in Boston and other neighboring towns cut into his already limited market and doomed Macy to failure once again. He sold the business in 1855 and paid off his creditors at a heavy discount. Nevertheless, "it is significant," Hower points out, "that the kind of advertising which he used [here] and the scale on which he used it"--frequent full-column advertisements for close-out and other sales and discount offerings--"were not to be common even in New York until the 1860's and 1870's."⁵

After a brief stint as a Boston stockbroker and a depression-doomed effort to become a successful real estate broker in Superior City, Wis., Macy decided to try retailing again, this time in New York City. In 1858 he opened a small, narrow-frontage, dry goods store on Sixth Avenue near 14th Street, and in contrast to his Haverhill policy, he offered a restricted line of merchandise best described as "fancy goods." It included ribbons, laces, embroideries, artificial flowers, feathers, handkerchiefs, cambric flouncings, hosiery, and gloves.

From the start, Macy instituted the one-price system and cash-only sales. He also became, according to business authors Tom Mahoney and Leonard Sloane, "one of the first to use typographic devices to gain attention and spent a healthy 3 percent of sales on advertising at a time when well-established competitors were spending only 1 percent."⁶ Gradually Macy diversified his merchandise and earned substantial profits by acquiring "goods from auction" and offering them at bargain sales. By 1861 his business had achieved considerable success, and it weathered the Civil War years well.

"At some point between 1858 and 1877 the year of Rowland Macy's death, the fancy little dry goods store on Sixth Avenue became," says Hower, "a department store," offering a variety of goods that "was practically without precedent."⁷ Although Lord and Taylor

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⁴Ibid., 18.

⁵Ibid., 31.

⁶Mahoney and Sloane, The Great Merchants, 163.

⁷Hower, History of Macy's, 98.

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preceded Macy in opening a furniture department (1874), Macy introduced toy, silver, and house furnishing departments in 1869; books, stationary, and a soda fountain in 1870; fancy groceries in 1873; china in 1874; and women's and children's shoes in 1875.⁸ He moved also to eliminate middlemen by importing goods directly from Europe, buying direct from factories rather than from wholesalers, and by carrying on some manufacturing himself. To house all this additional merchandise, Macy bought and expanded into 10 adjoining properties, and to keep his stock moving he continued to advertise vigorously, sell at fixed prices, sell for less than his competitors, and offer a variety of free customer services. Macy "did not invent any of these policies," Mahoney and Sloane point out, "although all of them were radical when they were adopted." What he did, however, "was to stick with them," the result being "not only a fabulously profitable business but also development of a new way of retailing . . . which was soon to have many followers."⁹ Significantly, Macy also delegated managerial responsibility along merchandise lines as early as 1862, and by 1869 his entire operation centered upon a modern departmental structure with superintendents handling both sales and purchases and floorwalkers (service managers) supervising clerks within individual departments.

The impact of R. H. Macy and his store on American retailing transcends the evolution of the department store, however. According to distinguished scholar Daniel J. Boorstin, Macy, through various promotions, significantly hurried the Christmas holiday season along its way to becoming "a spectacular nationwide Festival of Consumption."¹⁰ On Christmas Eve, 1867, Macy kept his store open until midnight and set a new single-day store sales record of \$6,000. This encouraged other merchants to keep their stores open late every night for up to 2 weeks before Christmas and thereby started a custom that is today an almost essential practice for all kinds of retail establishments throughout the country. As early as 1870, thanks in large part to Macy's initiative, December

(continued)

⁸Ralph M. Hower, "Urban Retailing 100 Years Ago," Bulletin of the Business Historical Society, XII (December 1938), 96.

⁹Mahoney and Sloane, The Great Merchants, 160.

¹⁰Boorstin, The Americans: The Democratic Experience, 158.

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had become retailers' biggest sales month, bringing proceeds double those of May, the second best month. In 1874 Macy's put together the first promotional window display--a portion of the store's doll collection--ever with a purely Christmas theme and thus created another annual tradition. Fifty years later Macy's inaugurated its first annual Thanksgiving Day parade, and today it is a widely emulated signal for the beginning of the Christmas shopping season. In addition to influencing Christmastime buying and selling, judging from Hower's examination of advertising by New York stores, Macy's "spring advertising pioneered (1878) in the now traditional emphasis of retailers upon the Easter season" as well.¹¹

Macy owed much of his success to Margaret Getchell, "possibly the first of her sex," says Hower, "to attain an executive position in American business."¹² Hired as a cashier in the early 1860's, she rose quickly to general superintendent of the store. In this capacity she initiated several new lines of merchandise and exerted an important influence upon store policy. Getchell's managerial role following Macy's death in 1877 remains unclear, but apparently it diminished. In any case, she died only 3 years after her boss.

The ensuing decade marked a conservative period in Macy's history and witnessed several changes in the store's ownership. Earlier, in 1872 and 1875, R. H. Macy had taken Abiel La Forge and nephew Robert Macy Valentine as partners. After La Forge died in 1878, Valentine took another relative, Charles B. Webster, as his new partner but lived only a year longer himself. Webster then married Valentine's widow and took his brother-in-law, Jerome B. Wheeler, into a somewhat longer partnership that lasted 8 years. When this arrangement folded, Webster made Isidor and Nathan Straus partners. They and their father, Lazarus Straus, had held a successful concession for the Macy's china and glass department since 1874. In 1896 the Straus brothers bought Webster out, and although R. H. Macy and Company went public in 1922, the Straus family retains a substantial stock interest in the firm today.

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¹¹Hower, History of Macy's, 170.

¹²Ibid., 65.

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Under the Strauses, Macy's expanded rapidly once more. The store added new departments, manufactured more of its own brands, approached an annual sales mark of \$10 million by 1900, and in 1902 moved 20 blocks uptown to Herald Square and into the original, nine-story section of its present store building. After the move annual sales soared again, reaching almost \$17 million by 1907. From then until the end of World War I, however, the firm experienced little growth. But the year 1919 marked another turnabout, and in the words of Hower, during the twenties "the Macy organization blossomed forth with a brilliant display of growth and achievement which made the store truly world-famous." Due in part to a new 20-story addition that enabled Macy's to fill almost an entire block, the store became "the largest in the world in terms of physical size" and in "amount of business."¹³ Perhaps even more significant for present-day consumer-advocates, in 1927 Macy's established a Bureau of Standards that according to Mahoney and Sloane, was "unique in all retailing."¹⁴ It tested thousands of products annually, and those that failed never appeared on store shelves.

Since the 1930's Macy's has undergone further expansion both by acquiring competing firms in New York and other cities and by erecting branches in the suburbs. In fact "Macy's Parchester store in the Bronx was one of the first department store experiments," say Mahoney and Sloane, "in decentralizing to follow its customers" away from the city center.¹⁵ Certainly Hower is correct in asserting that "most, if not all, of the forces leading to the emergence of the modern department store can be discerned in . . . [Macy's] history."¹⁶

¹³Ibid., 398-99.

¹⁴Mahoney and Sloane, The Great Merchants, 159.

¹⁵Ibid., 172.

¹⁶Hower, History of Macy's, 4.

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