

MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Sinclair Weeks, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
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SALES AND INVENTORIES

Sales

January 1958 sales of merchant wholesalers were estimated at \$9.0 billion, a decrease of 4 percent from December 1957, and a 10 percent decline from January sales a year ago. Durable goods trades reflected sharper declines than the nondurable goods trades. Durable goods trades, with sales of \$3.5 billion in January 1958, showed a decrease of 4 percent from previous month sales and 18 percent from sales a year ago. The nondurable goods trades, with January sales of \$5.5 billion, were down 3 percent from December and 3 percent from last January.

Substantial seasonal declines were reported by wholesalers of jewelry (4%), wine, distilled spirits (4.3%), and amusement, sporting goods (3.2%). Farm supplies wholesalers, with a seasonal gain of 22 percent, noted the principal increase over December sales. Iron, steel scrap dealers, as in the past three months, showed the largest decline (6.3%) from a year ago. Dealers of nonferrous metals (4.2%), iron, steel products (3.7%), waste material (3.1%) and industrial machinery, equipment (2.5%) also reported large decreases. Meat products wholesalers (1.6%) and poultry products distributors (1.7%) led in increased sales over January of last year. One of the few durable goods trades to show a gain was automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers (9%).

All but one geographic division reported January sales below December, the largest decline occurring in the West South Central Division (8%). Sales in most geographic divisions were also 5 to 11 percent below a year ago.

Inventories

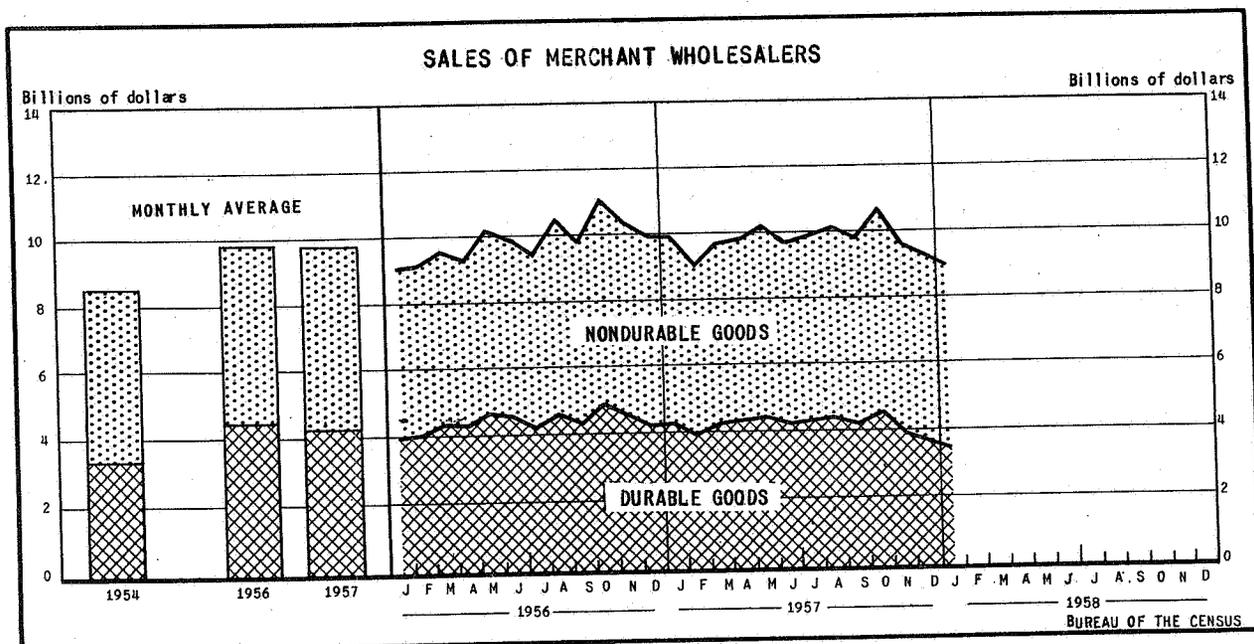
Inventories of wholesalers at the end of January were down slightly (1%) from a month earlier but showed no change compared with January of last year. The January 1958 stock-sales ratio of 144 percent was 8 points above the December ratio and 12 points above the ratio for January 1957. The January stock-sales ratio for durable goods was 201 compared to the nondurable goods ratio of 104.

While January 31 inventories for most kinds of business showed little or no change from a month earlier, stocks of coal wholesalers were off 17 percent. Compared with a year ago, inventory changes of 10 percent or more were noted in 9 trades. Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers reported the largest increase (16%), while piece goods converters, with stocks down 14 percent, showed the largest decline.

Changes from previous month inventory levels were limited to 2 percent or less in all geographic divisions except the East South Central, which reported stocks up 4 percent. Compared with a year ago, somewhat larger changes were noted.

General

This report includes monthly dollar volume estimates of sales of merchant wholesalers by kind of business from January 1957 through January 1958. These data are based on a probability sample representative of all merchant wholesalers in the country. A description of this sample and approximate measures of the reliability of the data are included on pages 2 and 5. Also included in this report are sales and inventory trends and stock-sales ratios by kind of business, for the United States as a whole and by geographic division.



For sale by the Bureau of the Census: single copy--10¢, annual subscription--\$1.00

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE, ESTIMATING PROCEDURE, AND RELIABILITY OF THE DATA

1. Scope of Survey

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers, which constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes other types of wholesale trade such as manufacturers sales branches and sales offices; petroleum bulk stations; agents and brokers and assemblers of farm products. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Merchant wholesalers are defined in the Standard Industrial Classification Manual issued by the Bureau of the Budget, Executive Office of the President, as "Establishments usually known as wholesalers, merchant wholesalers or jobbers, primarily engaged in buying, taking title to, and where customary, physically storing and handling goods and selling the goods at wholesale principally to retailers and industrial and commercial users. This group also includes industrial and distributors, exporters, and importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers; drop shippers, wagon distributors, etc. The establishments included in this group may perform operations on the goods incidental to the wholesale trading and delivery, such as installing equipment, and fixtures; and collecting and baling waste materials." Firms which, in addition to merchant wholesale establishments, operate other types of establishments, e.g., retail, manufacturing, etc., report in this survey only for their merchant wholesale establishments. A description of each kind-of-business classification shown in this report is included on pages 11 and 12.

2. Sample Design

Firms reporting in the survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. The sample, which includes over 17,000 firms (about 26,000 establishments) is drawn from two sources: (1) 1954 Census of Business lists representing all wholesalers (with paid employees) in business in 1954 and (2) Bureau of Old Age and Survivors Insurance (BOASI) lists of wholesalers (with paid employees) entering business (or requesting new Employer Identification Numbers) since 1954. The sample is supplemented twice a year for new firms on the BOASI lists.

The reporting panel includes a fixed panel of about 1,400 very large firms reporting monthly and four rotating panels each containing about 3,900 smaller firms which report every fourth month. In any given month, the total reporting panel includes about 5,300 firms.

The number of firms selected in the sample for each kind of business varies from 150 to 650 firms, depending upon (a) the total number of firms in the trade, (b) the distribution of firms within the trade by sales size, and (c) whether geographic division trends are to be shown for the trade. In those kinds of business for which percentage changes are shown by geographic division, the sample chosen for the national estimates was increased by about 50 percent to provide wider representation by geographic division. In some of these trades, however, data are not shown separately for some geographic divisions because even this increase in the sample size will not provide reliable results in all geographic divisions.

3. Published Data

Sales.--This report includes monthly dollar volume estimates of sales by kind of business for the United States as a whole (Table 1) and sales trends (percent changes) derived from these estimates (Table 2). Sales trends are shown in Table 2 for some detailed kind of businesses for which estimates are not shown separately in Table 1. For these kinds of business (identified by * in Table 2) the trends are based only on the weighted sales of identical firms (i.e., firms reporting data for each of the months for which comparisons are made). Sales trends by geographic division are also shown for selected kinds of business (Table 3). In Table 3 the trends for geographic division are based on weighted sales of identical firms; however, sales trends at the United States level are derived from the dollar volume estimates shown in Table 1.

Sales include sales of merchandise and receipts from repairs or other services to customers after deducting returns and allowances, and discounts. Sales of merchandise for others on a commission basis are also included. Local and State sales taxes, and Federal excise taxes are included.

Inventories.--This report presents inventory trends by kind of business for the United States as a whole (Table 2) and by geographic division (Table 3). These inventory trends are based on the weighted inventories of identical firms (i.e., firm reporting data for each of the months compared).

Inventories represent stocks, at cost, of merchandise on hand for sale at the end of the month.

Stock-sales ratios.--These are presented by kind of business for the United States as a whole (Table 2) and by geographic division (Table 3). The stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing weighted stocks, at cost, by weighted sales for only those firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales in all three periods compared. Excluded from these ratios were all firms which report "zero" inventories (e.g., drop shippers). No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade. Stock-sales ratios for previous months shown in the current report may differ from those published in previous reports since the reporting panel varies.

4. Estimating Procedure

Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection in the sample. Large firms are selected with certainty, this having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon size, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

For most firms reporting, data are available for each of three months (current, previous, and year ago). New firms reporting provide data for at least two months (current and previous). Sales and inventory figures reported for each firm are multiplied by its weight (the reciprocal of its probability of selection) and the results summarized to obtain the dollar volume estimates, percentage changes and stock-sales ratios shown in this report.

Volume estimates.--The summation of the weighted reports of sales for each monthly panel provides unbiased dollar volume estimates, by kind of business, for two months--the current month and the preceding month. However, the published estimate is a "composite" of two estimates (a) the unbiased estimate for the current month obtained from the summation of the current month reports and (b) a ratio estimate obtained by multiplying the "composite" estimate for the previous month by the ratio of the current month unbiased to previous month unbiased estimates obtained from the summation of the current reports. The unbiased estimate (a) receives a weight of .3 while the ratio estimate (b) receives a weight of .7. The resulting weighted average provides a "composite" estimate of the dollar volume of sales considerably more reliable than either of the two estimates taken alone. The estimates shown for January-June 1956 were not obtained in this manner. Since unbiased estimates were not available for this period from the new sample which was introduced in July 1956, monthly estimates prior to that date were calculated by dividing the "composite" estimates for January-June 1957 by the year-to-year ratio for each of these months obtained from weighted reports of identical firms.

Percentage changes.--Two types of percentage change figures are presented in this report, viz., (1) percentage changes derived from dollar volume estimates (2) percent changes based on the weighted data from identical firms (i.e., those reporting data for each of the months for which comparisons are made). The percentage changes based on identicals however, should not be regarded as an unbiased measure of percentage change. Since only those establishments reporting in both periods compared are included, the net change due to births and deaths is not reflected in the ratios shown.

5. Reliability of the Data

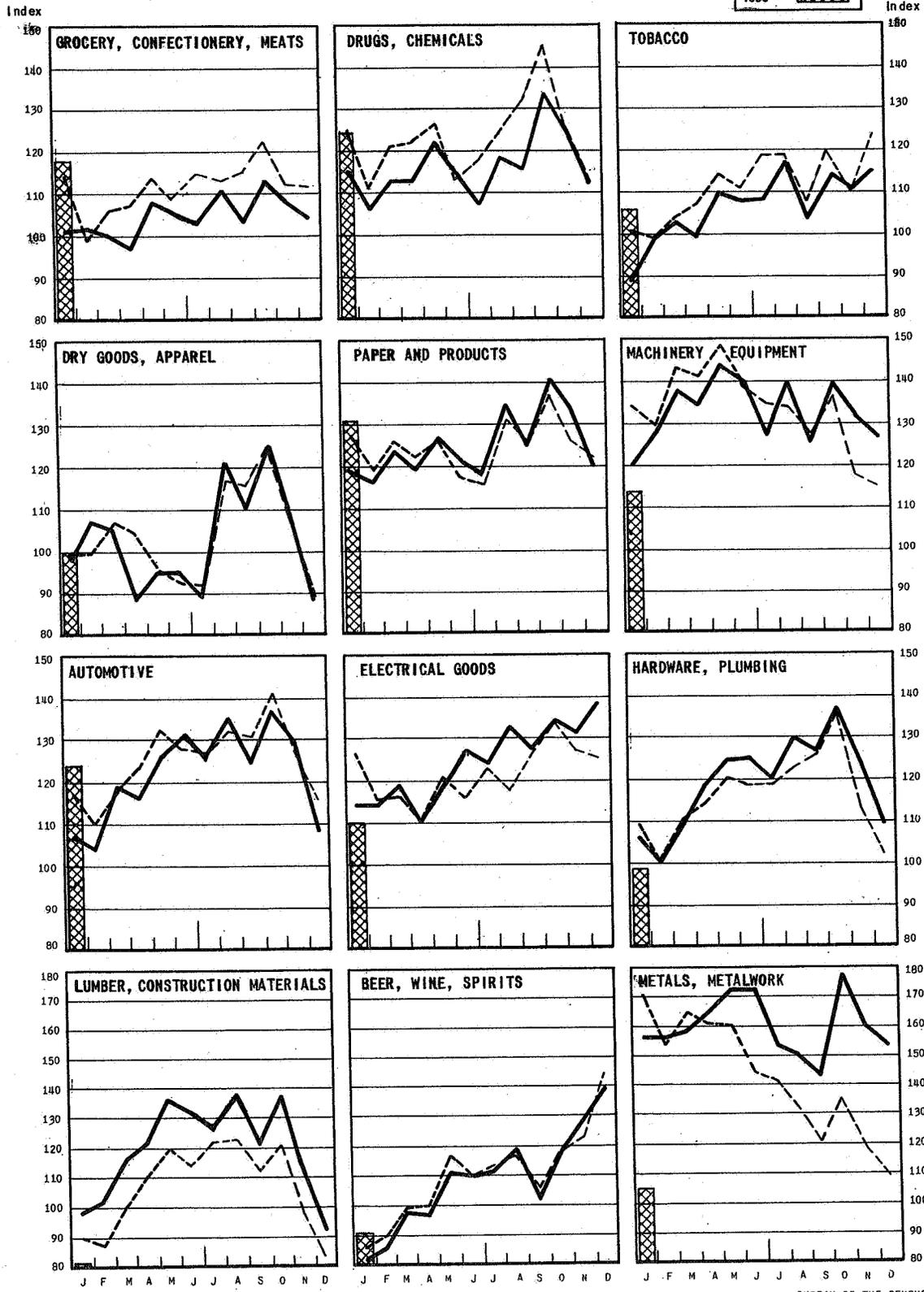
Estimates based on a sample are subject to sampling variability and thus are not expected to be in exact agreement with a complete census taken with the same enumeration procedures. For all trades combined, the sampling variability of the "composite" sales estimates for any individual month, is less than one percent at the one sigma level. That is to say, the chances are about two out of three that the estimated sales shown would differ by less than one percent from the results of a complete enumeration. The variability of estimates for kind-of-business groups and individual kinds of business is generally higher than for total merchant wholesale trade but for most trades the sampling variability is less than 5 percent at the one sigma level. Table 1A presents these sampling variabilities of the estimates for February, March, April and May 1957. Since these measures are also subject to sampling variability they should be regarded as giving a general rather than exact idea of the variability due to sampling. The sampling variability of the ratios based on weighted identicals has not been evaluated. However, where these ratios are based on a small number of reports (viz., trends by geographic division) the sampling variability is usually quite high.

These measures do not include biases that may arise from other nonsampling errors, such as failure of respondent to submit correct figures or to submit a report in time for tabulation. In preparing the dollar volume estimates, an estimate is included for those firms that fail to respond. To the extent that the estimates for these firms may differ from the actual figures, nonresponse affects the reliability of the dollar volume estimate. As a result, dollar volume estimates are not published separately in a few trades where the nonresponse rate was considered too high to provide reliable level estimates. Approximately 11 percent of the total sales in May 1957 were imputed for nonresponse.

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS—KINDS OF BUSINESS 1956, 1957 AND 1958

1954 MONTHLY AVERAGE = 100

1956 = ———
1957 = - - - -
1958 = [X] [X] [X]



BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

FIGURES IN THIS REPORT ARE NOT ADJUSTED FOR NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE MONTH NOR FOR SEASONAL OR PRICE FLUCTUATIONS

Table 1.--ESTIMATED MONTHLY SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS¹--UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

1957 AND 1958

(Sales of millions of dollars)

Kind of business	1957												
	Jan.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	8,972	9,945	9,097	9,744	9,834	10,168	9,610	9,916	10,197	9,814	10,713	9,590	9,325
DURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	3,493	4,278	3,981	4,292	4,314	4,450	4,243	4,267	4,329	4,222	4,511	3,907	3,656
Automotive wholesalers.....	412	389	366	392	408	428	424	421	439	434	467	418	386
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers...	350	321	298	319	334	352	359	363	377	373	406	359	329
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.	580	665	609	613	588	623	614	650	624	673	709	667	660
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors...	260	301	291	293	297	308	315	325	307	332	341	311	312
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	319	364	318	320	291	315	299	325	317	341	368	356	349
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	168	189	189	205	212	200	193	185	210	216	245	223	208
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.	110	127	128	140	144	135	131	120	135	142	167	152	139
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers....	362	398	365	405	420	443	435	436	452	463	499	415	372
Hardware wholesalers.....	165	184	173	191	196	205	196	192	197	201	215	177	164
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distrib- utors.....	197	214	192	214	224	238	239	244	255	262	284	238	208
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	444	496	476	551	609	659	628	667	675	613	666	538	448
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	242	295	259	307	330	343	329	343	342	307	331	269	232
Construction materials distributors.....	202	201	217	244	279	316	299	324	333	305	335	269	216
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	954	1,121	1,081	1,194	1,182	1,234	1,166	1,131	1,121	1,071	1,141	985	963
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	442	590	547	593	540	560	512	509	512	490	548	455	457
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.	87	78	77	83	85	84	89	89	96	99	99	91	92
Service establishments supply houses.....	113	113	110	113	112	122	116	106	115	113	120	106	106
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors...	295	478	430	459	452	448	404	396	368	339	378	331	305
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	200	317	287	312	317	311	275	272	252	230	257	217	184
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	94	161	143	147	135	137	129	124	116	108	121	114	122
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	223	476	393	393	369	328	308	320	361	319	303	229	r 212
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	119	325	266	263	236	199	193	208	232	212	192	132	122
Waste materials dealers.....	104	150	127	130	133	129	115	112	129	107	111	97	90
NONDURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	5,479	5,667	5,116	5,454	5,520	5,718	5,367	5,649	5,868	5,591	6,202	5,683	5,66
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	1,705	1,642	1,433	1,530	1,544	1,630	r 1,565	1,660	1,630	r 1,623	r 1,755	r 1,622	r 1,615
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	729	707	627	655	676	698	r 676	703	692	r 701	r 758	r 679	650
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	606	611	521	566	557	591	r 577	610	593	r 589	r 634	r 607	616
Confectionery wholesalers.....	56	52	49	53	50	52	49	50	51	55	61	58	57
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	315	272	236	256	261	289	264	297	294	278	302	278	r 292
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	377	357	341	352	394	429	418	442	413	375	419	402	415
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	142	121	106	109	124	127	116	129	142	138	163	166	165
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	235	236	235	243	270	302	302	313	271	237	256	236	251
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	432	408	425	468	472	551	520	543	556	501	561	583	683
Beer, ale distributors.....	161	158	158	172	193	227	234	269	254	205	198	185	209
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	271	250	267	296	279	324	286	274	302	297	363	398	474
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers...	349	350	312	340	344	354	317	331	350	373	406	350	315
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines)	228	224	199	213	208	214	196	211	222	241	271	234	209
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers..	100	103	92	102	108	110	93	90	99	103	107	92	85
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	21	23	21	25	28	30	28	30	29	28	28	24	20
Tobacco distributors.....	284	271	266	280	285	307	297	319	319	288	320	295	332
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	475	468	472	507	491	457	440	434	567	549	593	506	424
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers...	161	145	160	184	182	156	136	151	236	212	221	208	149
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	192	192	183	194	190	187	193	186	220	223	240	190	172
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	324	313	294	310	302	312	291	287	323	310	339	312	301
Paper wholesalers.....	287	268	252	265	258	271	250	250	279	267	290	265	258
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	84	74	83	96	99	101	104	111	119	125	129	126	124
Coal wholesalers.....	103	124	105	109	108	105	110	101	108	103	108	99	100

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¹ Merchant Wholesalers total and Group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately. Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.

Table 1A.—SAMPLING VARIABILITY—MONTHLY ESTIMATES OF SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

Kind of business	Sampling error of monthly dollar value of sales				Sampling error of the ratio of sales in two consecutive months	Kind of business	Sampling error of monthly dollar value of sales				Sampling error of the ratio of sales in two consecutive months
	Feb. 1957	Mar. 1957	Apr. 1957	May 1957			Feb. 1957	Mar. 1957	Apr. 1957	May 1957	
	(percent)				March 1957 from February 1957 (percent)		(percent)				March 1957 from February 1957 (percent)
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.5	NONDURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.7
DURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	1.1	1.4	1.0	0.9	0.7	Grocery, confectionery, meat.....	2	.2	1	2	2
Automotive.....	3	3	3	3	2	General-line grocery.....	2	2	2	2	2
Automotive equipment, tire-tube....	3	3	4	3	2	Specialty-line grocery.....	4	4	4	4	3
Electrical, electronics, appliances..	2	2	2	2	1	Confectionery.....	4	3	3	3	2
Electrical apparatus, supplies.....	2	2	2	3	2	Meat, meat products.....	4	5	4	4	3
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts.....	2	4	4	3	2	Farm products (edible).....	3	3	3	3	2
Furniture, home furnishings.....	3	3	4	4	2	Poultry, poultry products.....	5	3	4	5	2
Home furnishings, floor coverings..	4	4	4	4	2	Fresh fruit, vegetables.....	5	4	4	3	2
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods....	2	3	3	3	2	Beer, wine, distilled spirits.....	2	2	2	2	2
Hardware.....	2	3	3	3	2	Beer, ale.....	4	3	4	3	2
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies.....	3	4	4	4	2	Wine, distilled spirits.....	3	3	3	2	2
Lumber, construction materials.....	3	3	3	2	2	Drugs, chemicals, allied products...	2	2	2	2	1
Lumber, millwork.....	5	6	6	5	3	Drugs (general and specialty lines)	2	2	2	2	2
Construction materials.....	3	3	3	4	2	Industrial chemicals, explosives..	5	4	5	4	2
Machinery, equipment, supplies.....	2	3	2	2	2	Paint, varnish.....	4	4	3	3	3
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies.....	3	5	4	4	3	Tobacco.....	2	3	2	2	1
Professional equipment, supplies....	3	3	4	3	2	Dry goods, apparel.....	3	3	3	3	2
Service establishment supply houses	5	3	4	4	3	Clothing, furnishings, footwear...	5	5	5	5	3
Metals, metalwork (except scrap)....	2	3	3	3	3	Dry goods (general and specialty-lines).....	6	6	6	5	3
Iron, steel and products.....	3	5	4	4	4	Paper, allied products.....	3	2	2	2	1
Nonferrous metals.....	3	3	2	4	1	Paper.....	3	2	2	2	1
Scrap, waste materials.....	2	2	3	3	2	Amusement, sporting goods.....	6	4	4	4	4
Iron, steel scrap.....	3	3	4	4	3	Coal wholesalers.....	5	6	6	6	2
Waste materials.....	4	4	6	6	3						

Note: The above table provides approximate measures of the sampling variability of the dollar volume estimates of sales and of the ratio between sales for the two consecutive months specified. The ratio between sales for two consecutive months generally has a smaller sampling error than the level estimates in those months. These sampling errors are themselves subject to sampling variability and thus should be regarded as giving a general rather than exact idea of the variability due to sampling. Differences from month to month may be due to this error in the estimates of sampling error. Differences may also result from seasonal or cyclical fluctuation in the sales of individual firms (see page 2, for statement on nonsampling errors).

The sampling errors shown above can be converted to a range by the following computation: Multiply the sampling error by the estimate (whether it is a dollar volume estimate or a ratio). Add and subtract the resulting product from the published estimate. The resulting range is expected to include the "expected value" (that is, the value which could be obtained from a complete enumeration) about two out of three times. Doubling the sampling error and repeating the above process will give a range which will include the "expected value" about 19 out of 20 times.

To illustrate the computation of these ranges for monthly dollar volume estimates, consider the estimate made for all durable goods in March 1957. The published estimate is \$4,292 million while the sampling error shown for this month is 1.4 percent (or .014). Multiplying \$4,292 million by .014, we obtain \$60 million. Thus, the chances are two out of three that the "expected value" of the estimate is between \$4,232 and \$4,352 million. Doubling the given sampling error gives us the limits, \$4,172 to \$4,412 million, which will contain the "expected value" 19 out of 20 times.

As an example of the use of these sampling error data with ratios, consider the ratio of change from February 1957 to March 1957 for all durable goods. This ratio of change, obtained by dividing \$4,292 million by \$3,981 million, is 1.08 (it can also be expressed as an 8% increase). The sampling error of this statistic is 0.7 percent (.007). Multiplying 1.08 by .007, we obtain .008 as the standard error of the ratio. There is a probability of two out of three that the "expected ratio" is contained in the range 1.07 to 1.09 while there is a probability of 19 out of 20 that the "expected ratio" is contained in the range 1.06 to 1.10.

Table 2.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

Kind of business	Sales*		Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change, Jan. 1958 from--		Percent change, Jan. 1958 from--		January 1958	January 1957	December 1957
	January 1957	December 1957	January 1957	December 1957			
	January 1957	December 1957	January 1957	December 1957	January 1958	January 1957	December 1957
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	-10	-4	0	-1	144	132	136
DURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	-18	-4	+1	0	201	167	193
Automotive wholesalers.....	+6	+7	-1	-1	209	205	240
Motor-vehicle distributors*.....	-5	+17	+4	0	152	136	164
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+9	+6	-1	-2	219	218	255
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	-13	-12	-2	-1	180	165	156
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	-14	-17	0	-2	184	160	146
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	-12	-9	-4	-1	175	169	167
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	^r -11	-19	+3	+4	223	201	174
Furniture wholesalers.....	-10	-15	+2	+5	244	207	174
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	-13	-21	+3	+3	215	198	173
Hardware, Plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	-9	-3	-3	+3	247	237	230
Hardware wholesalers.....	-10	+1	-6	+5	256	255	247
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	-8	-5	+1	0	238	219	215
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	-10	-1	0	-1	136	127	139
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	-18	+4	-3	-1	147	132	157
Construction materials distributors.....	0	-6	+3	-1	124	122	122
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	-15	-1	+1	0	212	176	210
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment, distributors*.....	0	+3	+10	0	195	180	205
Commercial machines, equipment distributors*.....	+1	-6	+5	-3	214	197	212
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	-25	-3	+5	-1	197	141	195
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	+12	-5	+7	+2	212	217	205
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses*.....	+9	-9	+6	0	231	219	231
Service establishment supply houses.....	0	+7	+5	0	131	123	132
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	-38	-3	+11	-1	286	173	282
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	-37	+9	+13	-1	319	195	338
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	-42	-23	+1	-1	156	99	125
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	-53	+5	-3	-4	72	34	76
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	-63	-2	+4	-2	91	28	83
Waste materials dealers.....	-31	+16	-12	-8	58	43	69
Jewelry wholesalers*.....	-24	-46	-9	-2	276	287	149
NONDURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	-3	-3	0	-1	104	104	97
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+4	+6	^r +2	+1	71	75	74
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+3	+12	+3	0	91	95	97
Voluntary groups*.....	+5	+5	-3	-1	82	88	86
Retailer-cooperative*.....	+6	+12	+10	-2	70	73	76
Nonaffiliated*.....	+7	+9	+4	+1	111	116	122
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	-1	-2	-2	+3	63	68	61
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+8	-2	+15	-3	69	59	65
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	+16	+8	+11	+5	21	19	22
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	+6	-9	-2	+2	23	25	21
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	+17	-14	+2	-8	23	24	21
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	0	-6	-4	+7	24	26	20
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+6	-37	0	-4	131	132	85
Beer, ale distributors.....	+2	-23	-7	+4	65	71	48
Wine distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+8	-43	+3	-6	172	172	103
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	^r 0	^r +11	+5	0	144	138	156
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+2	+9	+6	0	158	156	172
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+3	+18	+7	+1	96	84	101
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	-9	+5	-2	+1	219	205	251
Tobacco distributors.....	+5	-14	+1	+1	65	67	55
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+1	+12	-7	+4	219	233	220
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	+11	+8	-2	+9	238	252	220
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	0	+12	-10	+3	215	228	218
Piece goods converters.....	-5	+18	-14	-6	188	208	223
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+4	+8	-1	+2	109	113	118
Paper wholesalers.....	+7	+11	0	+2	106	113	117
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers*.....	-16	-12	-5	-1	134	120	124
Farm products (raw materials) merchants*.....	-14	-8	-6	-6	122	117	105
Other nondurable goods wholesalers.....	-8	-2	+6	-4	128	110	131
Amusement, sporting goods distributors.....	+14	-32	+8	-1	202	216	155
Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers*.....	+13	+6	+16	-2	110	110	118
Coal wholesalers.....	-17	+3	-1	-17	70	57	93
Farm supplies wholesalers*.....	-11	+22	0	-1	161	133	185

* See text, page 2.

^r Revised since Advance Release dated March 5, 1958.¹ Percent change shown in Tables 2 and 3, December 1957 report, for General-line grocery wholesalers should be changed from 0 to +6 in column "Inventory, December 1957 from November 1957."

UNITED STATES, BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS
JANUARY 1958 COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1957



UNITED STATES (-10)

Table 3.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

JANUARY 1958

Kind of business and geographic division (see map page 7)	Sales ¹		Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change, Jan. 1958 from—		Percent change, Jan. 1958 from—		Jan. 1958	Jan. 1957	Dec. 1957
	Jan. 1957	Dec. 1957	Jan. 1957	Dec. 1957			
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	-10	-4	0	-1	144	132	136
New England.....	-6	-7	-1	-1	145	130	138
Middle Atlantic.....	-8	-3	-2	-2	124	119	119
East North Central.....	-11	-6	+3	-2	140	119	131
West North Central.....	0	-6	-5	-1	149	149	139
South Atlantic.....	-8	-5	+4	+1	165	151	148
East South Central.....	-11	0	-2	+4	152	150	150
West South Central.....	-7	-8	+4	+1	177	161	171
Mountain.....	+3	-4	+7	0	152	147	147
Pacific.....	-5	-1	0	-2	138	134	139
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+9	+6	-1	-2	219	218	255
New England.....	(X)	+11	+1	+1	237	174	238
Middle Atlantic.....	+7	(X)	-1	+1	164	201	219
East North Central.....	-2	+3	+7	-4	174	159	193
West North Central.....	-3	+4	+12	+1	283	305	297
South Atlantic.....	-7	+9	+3	+5	251	201	276
East South Central.....	+3	+18	+2	+2	214	231	265
West South Central.....	+3	+18	-1	+2	229	236	270
Mountain.....	(X)	+9	(X)	+3	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	-9	+8	+4	-2	252	253	309
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	-14	-17	0	-2	184	160	146
New England.....	-29	-48	+17	+5	308	183	136
Middle Atlantic.....	-8	-11	0	0	163	145	137
East North Central.....	-10	-16	0	-5	166	146	133
West North Central.....	-16	-25	-14	-11	224	215	181
South Atlantic.....	-20	-23	-3	-2	185	153	142
East South Central.....	-23	-3	-4	-5	234	200	241
West South Central.....	-13	-14	-6	+2	257	215	180
Mountain.....	-19	-26	+8	-4	175	138	139
Pacific.....	-13	-17	+1	+2	163	143	129
Elect. appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts distributors...	-12	-9	-4	-1	175	169	167
New England.....	-15	-27	(X)	+1	(X)	(X)	(X)
Middle Atlantic.....	-4	-14	-10	-1	156	177	156
East North Central.....	-11	-7	-9	-1	154	154	144
West North Central.....	-16	-11	+2	-4	163	148	174
South Atlantic.....	-21	-14	-2	+4	204	176	188
West South Central.....	-3	(X)	+4	+3	207	213	197
Mountain.....	+4	-3	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	-6	-9	(X)	-7	213	196	209
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	-11	-19	+3	+4	223	201	174
Middle Atlantic.....	-16	-16	-3	+2	235	200	(X)
East North Central.....	-3	-19	+8	+5	197	175	153
West North Central.....	-2	-5	0	+6	210	196	174
South Atlantic.....	-7	-17	0	+3	256	252	175
West South Central.....	-7	-8	(X)	+2	(X)	(X)	(X)
Mountain.....	-13	+6	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	-2	-7	+19	0	228	204	177
Hardware wholesalers.....	-10	+1	-6	+5	256	255	247
New England.....	-6	-4	(X)	+14	171	168	138
Middle Atlantic.....	-15	-1	+8	+1	239	185	220
East North Central.....	-15	-5	-7	+9	297	250	236
West North Central.....	+2	+12	-9	+10	265	296	274
South Atlantic.....	-8	+3	+3	-1	261	243	260
East South Central.....	+9	+2	-7	+11	236	231	231
West South Central.....	-2	+1	-5	+6	325	331	313
Mountain.....	-13	-29	-2	+3	383	340	263
Pacific.....	+2	+11	-9	+5	246	286	264
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	-8	-5	+1	0	238	219	215
New England.....	(X)	+2	-3	-1	265	253	265
Middle Atlantic.....	-8	+1	-2	-8	191	187	173
East North Central.....	-8	-11	+6	+1	275	239	237
West North Central.....	+1	+2	-11	+1	263	257	253
South Atlantic.....	-8	0	0	+8	187	157	158
East South Central.....	(X)	-4	(X)	+1	(X)	(X)	(X)
West South Central.....	-4	-9	+1	0	349	325	321
Mountain.....	-9	-3	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	0	-2	-3	+3	217	221	193
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	-10	-1	0	-1	136	127	139
New England.....	+1	-9	+12	0	121	103	108
Middle Atlantic.....	-8	-3	-10	-4	169	170	172
East North Central.....	-10	-2	-2	0	151	134	153
West North Central.....	-2	+6	-4	-1	180	144	201
South Atlantic.....	-7	+1	-3	+2	182	176	187
West South Central.....	(X)	-2	-6	-6	114	120	116
Pacific.....	-15	+2	-4	0	82	78	85

See Page 10 for footnotes.

Table 3.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS—Continued

JANUARY 1958

Kind of business and geographic division (see map page 7)	Sales ¹		Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change, Jan. 1958 from--		Percent change, Jan. 1958 from--		Jan. 1958	Jan. 1957	Dec. 1957
	Jan. 1957	Dec. 1957	Jan. 1957	Dec. 1957			
Industrial machinery, equipment supplies distributors.....	-25	-3	+5	-1	197	141	195
New England.....	-17	(X)	+2	+8	(X)	(X)	(X)
Middle Atlantic.....	(X)	+12	(X)	-4	124	101	182
East North Central.....	-36	-4	-5	-2	139	90	149
West North Central.....	-14	-9	(X)	-1	202	200	193
West South Central.....	-32	-15	+9	-1	244	157	212
Mountain.....	-3	-26	+29	-2	263	173	196
Pacific.....	-14	+14	-8	0	181	171	204
General-line grocery wholesalers ²	+3	+12	+3	0	91	95	97
New England.....	0	+7	+4	0	107	103	120
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	+7	+2	+3	97	98	99
East North Central.....	+10	+5	0	-4	77	82	79
West North Central.....	+7	+7	0	-3	86	91	92
South Atlantic.....	+8	+7	+9	+7	113	116	117
East South Central.....	+9	+7	+8	-3	90	108	101
West South Central.....	+10	+5	+1	-1	101	113	114
Mountain.....	+7	+24	-8	-1	102	120	129
Pacific.....	-2	+14	+25	-2	73	65	84
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	-1	-2	-2	+3	63	68	61
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	-2	-6	-7	54	63	54
East North Central.....	+1	-2	-4	-4	66	79	69
West North Central.....	(X)	-14	+7	(X)	67	75	52
South Atlantic.....	(X)	+3	(X)	(X)	118	122	89
West South Central.....	(X)	-5	(X)	-5	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	-10	-2	-5	+8	49	48	45
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	0	-6	-4	+7	24	26	20
New England.....	+4	-2	+1	+11	22	23	19
Middle Atlantic.....	0	-15	(X)	+10	14	16	13
East North Central.....	-7	-1	-1	+6	18	18	16
West North Central.....	(X)	-7	(X)	+6	(X)	(X)	(X)
South Atlantic.....	+2	-10	+21	(X)	28	22	17
West South Central.....	+18	-4	-12	+26	19	27	15
Mountain.....	+25	-2	(X)	+15	34	58	32
Pacific.....	-3	+1	-11	-14	26	29	25
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+2	+9	+6	0	158	156	172
New England.....	+2	+3	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Middle Atlantic.....	+3	-5	+2	+1	153	145	169
East North Central.....	+2	+11	+7	0	148	137	165
West North Central.....	+7	+14	+2	-4	148	156	181
South Atlantic.....	+4	+11	+7	0	155	151	171
East South Central.....	+13	+6	(X)	+2	(X)	(X)	(X)
West South Central.....	+13	+8	+1	+5	165	183	160
Mountain.....	+7	+19	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	+2	+12	+3	-4	148	146	168
Tobacco distributors.....	+5	-14	+1	+1	65	67	55
New England.....	+8	-14	+6	-1	70	67	59
Middle Atlantic.....	+8	-19	-8	-2	68	75	57
East North Central.....	+8	-13	+3	+2	59	62	52
West North Central.....	-2	-18	-4	-8	65	66	63
South Atlantic.....	+5	-9	+10	+11	65	68	48
West South Central.....	+10	-3	0	+7	57	52	44
Mountain.....	0	-11	(X)	+5	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	(X)	-4	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+1	+12	-7	+4	219	233	220
New England.....	+7	(X)	-15	+3	119	158	243
Middle Atlantic.....	-3	+11	-9	+1	210	225	222
East North Central.....	(X)	-29	+11	+2	248	226	174
South Atlantic.....	-1	-1	(X)	+12	271	279	286
West South Central.....	+7	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	+11	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)

X Withheld due to extreme variation of reported data.

¹ See text, page 2.² Percent change shown in Tables 2 and 3, December 1957 report, for General-line grocery wholesalers should be changed from 0 to +6 in column "Inventory, December 1957 from November 1957."

DESCRIPTION OF KINDS OF BUSINESS

All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey. The kinds of business shown in this report parallel broad classifications used in the 1954 Census of Business covering wholesale trade. Each establishment in this survey has been assigned a kind-of-business classification based upon its trade designation and an analysis of its sales by commodity lines as reported to the Bureau of the Census. A description of each kind-of-business classification in this report is given below.

DURABLE GOODS

Automotive wholesalers

Motor-vehicle distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling new and used passenger automobiles and similar motor vehicles, road-type trucks, truck-tractors, buses, trailers, and semitrailers to dealers or to fleet operators, industrial accounts, and to commercial users. Dealers in road-type trucks, truck-tractors, and truck-trailers are included here on the basis of kind-of-goods sold.

Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments--frequently referred to as jobbers in this trade--primarily engaged in selling automotive equipment, accessories, parts, tires, tubes and garage equipment and tools.

Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors

Electrical apparatus, supplies wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments selling a general line of electrical goods such as electrical equipment and apparatus; wiring supplies and construction materials; lighting fixtures and lamps; radio and television sets and accessories; electric refrigerators and other electrical appliances and specialties; and electronic parts and equipment; and those primarily engaged in selling such electrical equipment and apparatus; wiring supplies and construction materials, and lighting fixtures and lamps, as conduits and fittings, interior wires and cables, wiring devices, safety switches, poles, crossarms, pole-line hardware, outside wires and cables, residential, commercial, and industrial lighting fixtures, and incandescent and fluorescent lamps. Establishments specializing in the sale of electrical prime movers and other electrical power equipment for the generation, transmission, or utilization of electric energy are also included.

Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling such electrical appliances and specialties as radio and television sets, dish washers, electric refrigerators, electric ranges, washing machines, ironers, radio and television parts and accessories, home freezers, sewing machines, hot water heaters, electric irons, percolators, clocks, hotplates, vacuum cleaners, etc., and electronic tubes, electronic replacement parts and accessories, and transmission and sound equipment.

Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers

Furniture wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling home or office furniture--wooden, metal or other.

Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling household china, glassware, and earthenware; floor coverings (carpets, rugs, linoleums, etc.); antique home furnishings; and miscellaneous home furnishings such as brooms, brushes, curtains, draperies, pictures and picture frames, window shades, kitchen utensils, phonograph records, and musical instruments.

Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers

Hardware wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments selling a general line of merchandise sufficiently broad to service retail hardware stores and the hardware departments of other outlets--general-line hardware wholesalers; and establishments primarily engaged in selling builders hardware, heavy hardware, shelf or light hardware, and hardware specialties such as tools, cutlery, bolts, nuts, rivets, screws, padlocks, keys, and the like--specialty-line hardware wholesalers.

Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling plumbing and heating equipment and supplies such as plumbing fixtures, including sanitary ware; steam and hot water heating boilers, radiators, parts, and fittings; stoves, ranges, furnaces, and other types of heating apparatus (except electric); oil burners; gas appliances and supplies; plumbing pipe, valves, and fittings; and plumbers brass goods.

Lumber, construction materials distributors

Lumber, millwork wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling lumber and millwork such as rough, dressed, and finished lumber; sheathing, siding, flooring, shingles, plywood, veneers, doors, sashes, frames, interior woodwork and trim.

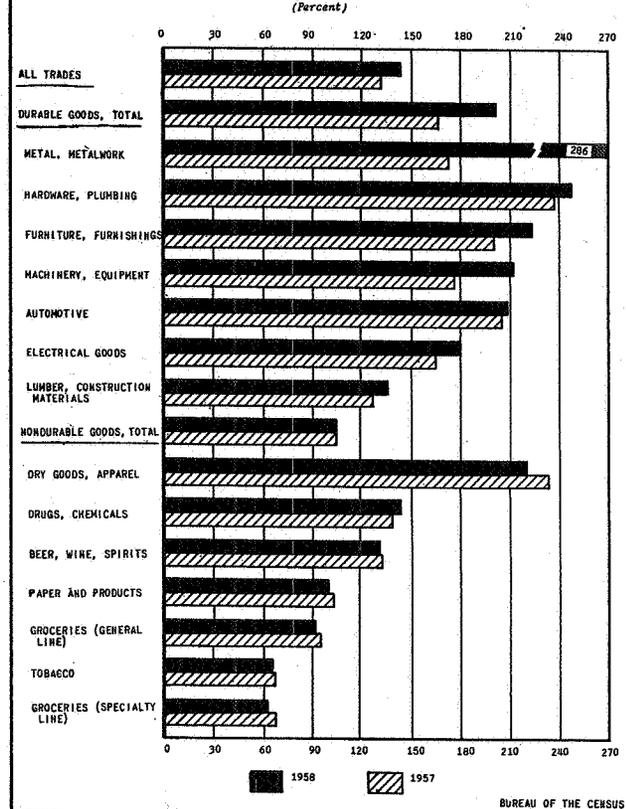
Construction materials distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling such construction materials as brick, tile, and terra cotta; cement, lime, and plaster; building glass; sand, gravel, and crushed stone, ready-mixed concrete; roofing, siding and insulation; and stone, slate, concrete products, and building board.

Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors

Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling commercial refrigeration equipment (including electric) such as refrigerators, display cases, freezers, dispensers, water coolers, food locker equipment; and those selling air conditioning and ventilating equipment and supplies, including fans, blowers, and accessories. Establishments specializing in the sale of commercial refrigeration components and accessories are also included in this classification.

Commercial machines, equipment distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling office machines and equipment (except furniture) such as adding machines, typewriters, addressing, duplicating, sealing, computing, stapling, accounting, and statistical machines; restaurant and hotel equipment such as coffee urns, steam tables, china, glassware, silverware, linens, and related items; store machines and fixtures such as display fixtures, show racks, pricing equipment, cash registers, scales, meat slicers and grinders, coffee grinders, etc.; and such related equipment as florists' supplies, theater supplies and equipment, and parking meters. Establishments primarily engaged in selling to users are included, as well as those selling to dealers.

STOCKS--SALES RATIOS OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS IN SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS: JANUARY 1958 COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1957



Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors--continued

Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling machinery, equipment, and supplies to manufacturing and mining concerns. Included here are establishments selling industrial machinery; industrial belting, hose, and packing; machine tools, mine and mill supplies; oil well and oil refining supplies; printing machinery and supplies; industrial rope, cordage, and twine; industrial materials, handling equipment; power transmission equipment; and machinery and equipment for such industries as food products, woodworking, shoe manufacturing, tanning, textile, and paper and pulp.

Professional equipment, supplies distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling dental supplies (chairs, sterilizers, cabinets, instruments, dental gold and alloys, waxes, teeth, and the like); religious supplies (church goods and religious articles such as statuary, vestments, fonts, candles, religious pictures, calendars, literature, etc.); school equipment and supplies (desks, blackboards, chalk, rulers, wall and globe maps, etc.); optical goods; surgical, medical, hospital supplies, and equipment; artists supplies; engineering instruments and supplies; and supplies for other professions.

Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling surgical and medical instruments; doctors apparatus and equipment; orthopedic appliances; artificial limbs; operating room and other hospital equipment; X-ray machines and accessories and other scientific instruments used by physicians and in hospitals.

Service establishment, supply houses.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling barber and beauty supplies; laundry, dry cleaning equipment, supplies (washing, drying, ironing, and pressing machines; laundry soaps and chemicals; dry cleaning fluids, marking equipment, etc.); shoe service supplies and equipment; undertakers supplies (caskets, burial vaults, burial garments, embalming chemicals and preparations, and other morticians and funeral equipment); upholsterers supplies (fabrics, leather and fillings, and other types of supplies used in the upholstery trade); and miscellaneous service equipment, such as janitors' supplies, furriers' supplies, bootblack's supplies, and hat cleaners' supplies.

Other machinery, equipment supplies distributors (not shown separately in accompanying table).--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling (a) transportation equipment such as aircraft and aeronautical equipment, supplies; railroad equipment, supplies; marine equipment, supplies; and other transportation equipment and supplies; (b) construction machinery, equipment such as road building machinery, excavating and dredging machinery, derricks, cranes, hoists, and winches; and related construction equipment as pneumatic hammers, concrete construction clamps and forms, scaffolding, chutes, and wheelbarrows--but not construction materials, and (c) farm-garden machinery, equipment (including tractors) used in the preparation of crops, and maintenance of the soil, the planting and harvesting of crops, and other operations and processes pertaining to agriculture; dairy machinery and equipment, such as milking machines and cream separators; poultry equipment, such as incubators, brooders, and feeders and irrigation equipment.

Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors

Iron, steel, and products distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments usually referred to as steel warehouses--primarily engaged in selling iron and steel products such as semifinished forms and shapes, plates, sheets, strips, bars, structural shapes, piling, nails, tubular products, wire products, forgings and castings. Steel warehouses of firms operating steelworks and rolling mills are also included here.

Nonferrous metals distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling nonferrous metals and metalwork such as aluminum, copper, tin, brass, lead, and zinc.

Scrap, waste materials dealers

Iron, steel scrap dealers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in assembling, breaking up, sorting, and selling all forms of iron and steel scrap.

Waste materials dealers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in assembling, sorting, and selling such waste materials as nonferrous scrap metals, waste paper, rags, wiping cloths, textile wastes, scrap rubber, and other waste and salvage materials. Scrap iron and steel may be handled as secondary lines.

Jewelry wholesalers

Jewelry wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling a general-or specialty-line of jewelry such as clocks and watches; precious stones and metals; watch materials, jewelers supplies; costume jewelry; and miscellaneous items such as silverware, plated ware, medals, trophies, semi-precious stones, and insignia.

NONDURABLE GOODS

Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers

General-line grocery wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments handling a general line of dry groceries and processed foods usually sold in retail grocery stores, such as canned foods, flour, sugar, coffee, tea and spices, as well as such nonfood items as household chemicals, soaps and detergents, paper products, brooms, brushes, etc. Voluntary group wholesalers, retailer-cooperative warehouses, and cash-and-carry depots are included, as well as nonaffiliated general-line grocery wholesalers.

Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.--This classification includes two general types of merchant wholesale establishments: Those handling a combination of grocery items, no one item predominating, but not a sufficiently broad line of commodities to be classified as "general line"; and those primarily engaged in selling specialized lines of groceries and related products, such as canned foods; coffee, tea, and spices; dairy products; dried fruits and nuts; frosted and frozen foods; fish and seafood; bakery products; packaged breakfast cereals; flour; cooking oils and shortening; and soft drinks.

Confectionery wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling candy, chewing gum, popcorn, potato chips, salted nuts, fountain fruits and syrups, and related items. Cigars, cigarettes, and other products are also frequently handled as secondary lines.

Meat, meat products wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling fresh, frozen, cured or processed (but not canned) meats, lard, and other edible meat products. Secondary lines such as butter, cheese, eggs, dressed poultry, vegetable shortening, and canned meats are frequently handled.

Farm products (edible) distributors

Poultry, poultry products distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling live or dressed poultry, eggs, and related products. Establishments primarily engaged in dressing poultry are considered manufacturers.

Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling fresh fruits, vegetables, berries, melons, and related items.

Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers

Beer, ale distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling beer, ale, porter, stout and other fermented malt liquors. Soft drinks, confectionery, tobacco, wines, and spirits are frequently handled as secondary lines.

Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling wines, whiskey, gin, rum, brandy, and other spirits, including neutral spirits and ethyl alcohol used in blending. Merchants who bottle and sell wines and distilled spirits manufactured in bulk by others, liquor departments of drug wholesalers, and State-operated wholesale outlets are included. State depots primarily engaged in supplying State liquor stores, however, are not included in wholesale trade.

Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalersDrug wholesalers (general and specialty lines)

General-line drug wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments engaged in selling a full line of drugs, pharmaceuticals, proprietary medicines, druggists rubber goods, cosmetics, toiletries, drug sundries, and related merchandise. Cooperatives and voluntary group wholesalers handling a full line of drugs are also included in this classification. Liquor departments of drug wholesalers, however, are included with "wines and distilled spirits wholesalers."

Specialty-line drug wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling proprietary medicines, toilet preparations, and articles such as drugs, perfumes, cosmetics, powders, shaving preparations, toilet soap, dentifrices, combs, brushes, mirrors, medical glass, bandages, rubber goods, and antiseptics.

Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers--Continued

Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling such industrial and heavy chemicals as coal-tar chemicals, plastics, compressed and liquefied gases (except LP gas), acids, ammonia, soda, industrial alcohols, explosives, dyestuffs, naval stores, etc. Concerns primarily engaged in selling pyrotechnics and ammunition for small arms are included in "Amusement and sporting goods wholesalers."

Paint, varnish wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling paints, varnishes, lacquers, enamels, calcimines, shellac, and stains. Glass, wallpaper, painters supplies, oils, chemicals, and related products are frequently handled as secondary lines.

Tobacco distributors

Tobacco distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling manufactured tobacco products such as cigars, cigarettes, chewing and smoking tobacco, and snuff. Confectionery, smokers articles, razor blades, playing cards, etc., are frequently handled as secondary lines.

Dry goods, apparel wholesalers

Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling men's, boys' clothing, and furnishings (including suits, coats, overcoats, work clothing, hats and caps, shirts, ties, and underwear); women's, children's clothing, furnishings, and accessories (including suits, dresses, and skirts); furs and fur clothing; millinery, millinery supplies; shoes and other footwear; work clothing; and related lines.

Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines)

General-line dry goods wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments engaged in selling a diversified combination of lines usually sold in retail dry goods and general merchandise stores, including piece goods, home furnishings, work clothing, dresses, infants' wear, notions, and hosiery. Men's and women's clothing, furnishings, and millinery frequently constitute secondary lines.

Specialty-line dry goods wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling hosiery, underwear, piece goods, knit and lace goods, fancy linen and needlework and notions (thread, tapes, needles, pins, buttons, hair accessories, zippers, and shoe laces).

Piece goods converters.--Merchant wholesale establishments which purchase textiles in the gray or unfinished form, have them dyed and/or finished by others, usually on a contract basis, and sell to the cutting-up trade, garment makers, wholesalers, or retailers. Converters operating bleaching, dyeing, and finishing plants are not considered as merchant wholesalers.

Paper, allied products wholesalers

Paper wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling wrapping paper and other coarse paper; fine paper (writing papers, reproduction paper stock, cover, text, thin, and other fine papers); newsprint and book paper; paperboard; and converted paper products such as bags, boxes, cups, dishes, towels, napkins, tissues, and bottle caps.

Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling commercial and social stationery, including envelopes, typewriter and mimeograph paper in cut sizes, file cards and folders; and office supplies such as pens, pencils, writing inks, carbon paper, paper clips, typewriter ribbons, greeting cards, and erasers; and embossed and printed wallpaper for use in covering or decorating interior walls and ceilings.

Farm products (raw materials) merchants

Farm products (raw materials) merchants.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling cotton, grain, hides, skins, raw furs, livestock, leaf tobacco, wool, mohair, horses and mules, and other inedible products such as broomcorn, moss, hair, feathers, bristles, and fibers. This classification includes merchants (including terminal elevators) primarily engaged in selling raw farm products in marketing centers. Dealers buying such products direct from farmers and assembling them at local production points are classified as "assemblers" and not included here.

Other nondurable goods wholesalers

Amusement, sporting goods distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling cameras and photographic goods (cameras, parts, and accessories, projection apparatus, enlargers, developing and printing room apparatus and accessories, sensitized unexposed photographic supplies and equipment); sporting goods (toys, games, novelties, fireworks, bicycles, sporting goods, and athletic goods); and other recreation goods such as playground equipment, billiard and bowling equipment and supplies; and hobby goods.

Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling books, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, and related items.

Coal wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling bituminous coal, anthracite coal, and coke. This includes firms with coal yards as well as those selling goods shipped directly from mine to customer.

Farm supplies wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling mixed and other feeds; fertilizers, fertilizer materials, and agricultural chemicals; seeds (farm, garden, and flower); and miscellaneous farm supplies such as hay, straw, and alfalfa.

Merchant wholesalers, n.e.c.--(Not shown separately in the accompanying table.) Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling petroleum products, cut flowers and potted plants; forest products except lumber; inedible oils and fats; textiles and materials other than dry goods; industrial yarns; crude rubber; ores; sponges; artificial leather; wood pulp; artificial flowers; and products not elsewhere classified; and establishments handling a line of merchandise too broad to be included in any of the classifications outlined above.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Lewis L. Strauss, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Robert W. Burgess, Director

DECEMBER 1958

FOR RELEASE
FEBRUARY 6, 1959

SALES AND INVENTORIES

Annual Sales

Annual 1958 sales of merchant wholesalers totaled \$115.6 billion, about 2 percent below 1957 sales of \$118.0 billion. Durable goods trades, with 1958 sales estimated at \$47.3 billion, indicated a 6 percent decline from the \$50.5 billion in the previous year. In contrast, nondurable goods trades, with sales of \$68.2 billion in 1958, noted a slight increase (1%) over 1957 sales of \$67.5 billion.

Iron, steel scrap dealers, with 1958 sales down 40 percent from 1957, reported the largest decline. Other large decreases (about 20 percent) were experienced by distributors of nonferrous metals, coal, and industrial machinery. Among the nondurable goods trades, the principal increases were reported by meat wholesalers (15%) and poultry distributors (1%), Professional equipment distributors (9%) and automotive equipment wholesalers (7%) registered the largest gains among the durable goods trades.

Total 1958 sales were below a year ago in five geographic divisions; showed no change in one, and showed small gains in the remaining three. The largest decline (5%) was reported in the West South Central Division, the biggest gain (4%) in the Mountain Division.

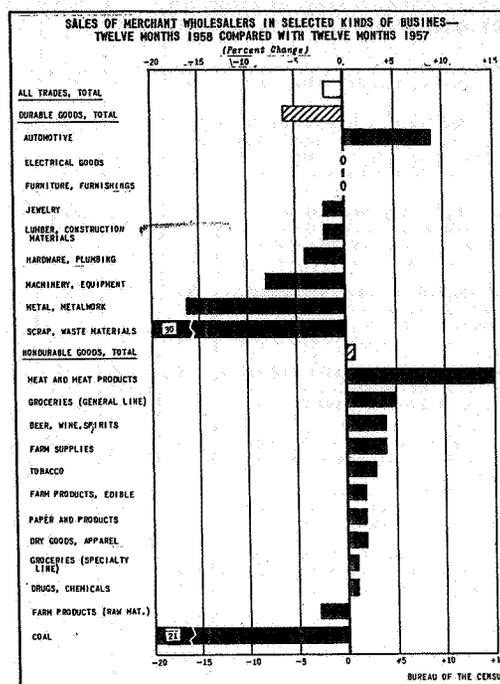
December Sales

December 1958 sales of merchant wholesalers totaled \$10.4 billion, an increase of 4 percent over November 1958 and 12 percent above December sales a year ago. The durable goods trades reflected a somewhat smaller gain over November sales than the nondurable goods trades but reported a substantially larger increase over December 1957 sales. December 1958 sales in the durable goods trades were up 2 percent over their November level and 16 percent above sales a year ago. Sales in the nondurable goods trades were 6 percent above November sales and 9 percent above December 1957.

The principal increase over November sales was reported by wine, distilled spirits wholesalers (30%), while the largest decline was indicated by construction materials distributors (14%). Compared with a year ago, two trades--furniture wholesalers and coal wholesalers--showed slight (1%) declines while all other trades noted increases. Iron and steel products distributors, up 36 percent, registered the sharpest gain over year ago sales.

Inventories

Wholesalers inventories at the end of December were off 4 percent from a month earlier and were also 2 percent below stocks on hand a year ago. Durable goods stocks declined 2 percent from the November level and were slightly (1%) below a year ago. Stocks of nondurable goods trades showed somewhat larger declines, dropping 6 percent below the previous month and 2 percent below the year-ago level.



Most trades reported small declines from their November inventories. However, stocks of wine and distilled spirits wholesalers dropped substantially (18%) during the month. Compared with a year ago, inventories of meat wholesalers indicated the sharpest increase (23%), and stocks of coal wholesalers the biggest drop (16%).

The December 1958 stock sales ratio for all merchant wholesalers reporting inventories in conjunction with their sales was 121 percent, down 11 points from November and 16 points from the December 1957 ratio. The December stock-sales ratio of durable goods wholesalers was 168 percent compared with the nondurable goods ratio of 89.

General

This report includes monthly dollar volume estimates of sales of merchant wholesalers by kind of business from December 1957 through December 1958. These data are based on a probability sample representative of all merchant wholesalers in the country. A description of this sample and approximate measures of the reliability of the data are included on pages 8 and 9. Also included in this report are sales and inventory trends and stock-sales ratios by kind of business, for the United States as a whole and by geographic division.

Table 1.--ESTIMATED MONTHLY SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS¹--UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

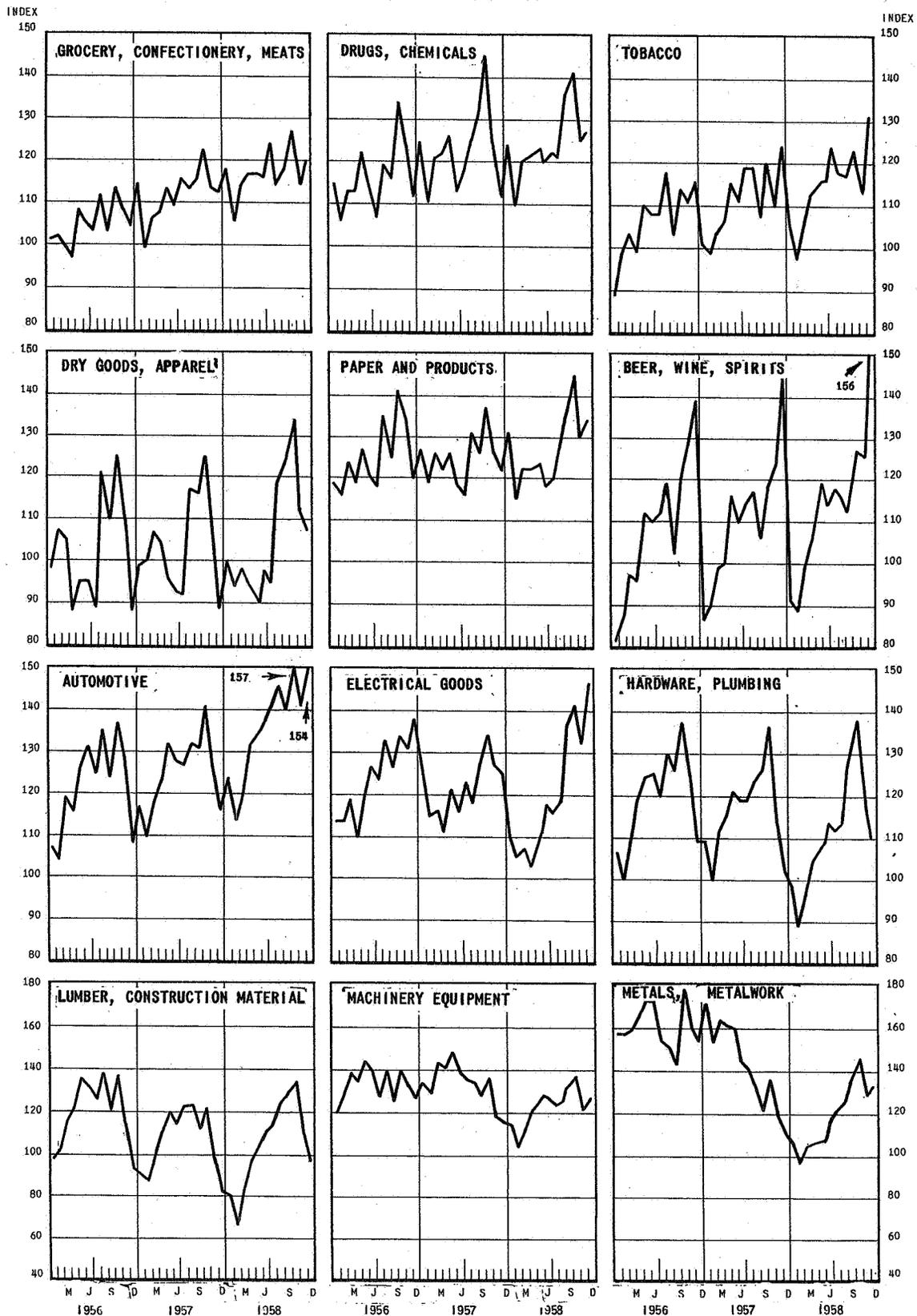
1957 AND 1958

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Kind of business	1958												1957	Total 12 mos.	
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Dec.	1958	1957
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	8,972	8,179	8,863	9,213	9,435	9,480	9,663	9,825	10,336	11,163	10,009	10,423	9,325	115,561	117,953
DURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	3,493	3,181	3,501	3,727	3,868	3,972	3,958	4,134	4,395	4,700	4,162	4,241	3,656	47,332	50,450
Automotive wholesalers.....	410	378	394	438	449	453	468	484	463	521	467	510	386	5,435	4,972
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	350	324	337	368	371	376	387	379	389	426	379	391	329	4,477	4,190
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	584	558	584	558	590	626	611	631	724	746	695	772	660	7,684	7,625
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	260	263	277	269	292	312	299	298	339	340	322	351	312	3,622	3,733
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	323	295	307	289	298	314	318	332	385	406	372	421	349	4,060	3,963
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	168	170	191	197	192	198	194	218	229	256	226	229	208	2,468	2,475
Furniture wholesalers.....	58	55	59	57	57	62	64	73	75	76	63	68	69	767	816
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	110	114	132	140	135	136	130	144	154	180	163	161	139	1,699	1,660
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	362	327	356	386	400	416	412	417	465	506	428	404	372	4,879	5,103
Hardware wholesalers.....	165	151	170	184	186	183	181	183	203	216	183	187	164	2,192	2,291
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	197	176	186	202	214	233	231	235	263	290	245	217	208	2,689	2,812
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	444	364	458	536	585	610	644	684	698	733	611	530	448	6,897	7,026
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	242	208	248	277	301	307	328	350	369	378	322	296	232	3,626	3,687
Construction materials distributors.....	202	156	210	258	284	303	317	334	330	355	289	234	216	3,272	3,338
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	954	867	937	1,023	1,074	1,066	1,022	1,053	1,097	1,148	1,014	1,052	963	12,307	13,390
Industrial machinery, equipment supplies distributors.....	442	381	391	419	442	408	395	413	438	458	417	470	457	5,074	6,313
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	87	84	91	91	90	95	98	107	111	111	96	94	92	1,155	1,058
Service establishment supply houses.....	113	106	112	117	121	125	116	115	128	135	117	121	106	1,426	1,352
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	295	272	291	300	304	327	338	354	382	407	359	374	305	4,003	4,788
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	200	184	197	209	208	226	238	256	271	289	243	250	184	2,771	3,231
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	94	88	94	91	97	100	99	98	111	118	116	123	122	1,229	1,557
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	223	194	237	232	217	215	214	233	249	277	268	261	212	2,820	4,011
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	119	108	133	128	111	114	111	130	140	151	155	153	122	1,553	2,580
Waste materials dealers.....	104	86	104	104	106	101	103	103	109	125	113	108	90	1,266	1,430
NONDURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	5,479	4,998	5,362	5,486	5,567	5,508	5,705	5,691	5,941	6,463	5,847	6,182	5,669	68,229	67,504
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	1,705	1,512	1,646	1,684	1,688	1,675	1,786	1,645	1,706	1,830	1,643	1,729	1,615	20,249	19,249
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	729	672	688	715	727	706	753	713	750	785	701	726	630	8,665	8,222
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	606	528	612	596	595	620	637	561	574	629	565	597	616	7,120	7,072
Confectionery wholesalers.....	56	51	54	53	54	53	54	53	55	62	58	61	57	664	637
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	315	262	292	319	312	297	341	319	327	353	320	345	292	3,802	3,319
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	377	353	403	450	446	416	432	380	371	404	387	436	415	4,855	4,757
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	142	120	136	156	143	134	146	153	156	167	164	170	165	1,787	1,606
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	235	233	267	294	303	282	285	227	215	237	224	266	251	3,068	3,152
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	429	426	470	501	564	539	560	552	533	603	597	738	683	6,512	6,271
Beer, ale distributors.....	161	151	172	198	226	227	253	245	210	211	191	211	209	2,456	2,462
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	268	275	298	303	339	312	307	308	323	392	405	526	474	4,056	3,810
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	349	309	336	341	345	338	342	339	381	397	350	358	315	4,185	4,142
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	228	202	219	214	215	211	218	215	248	259	227	233	209	2,689	2,642
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	100	88	95	100	102	98	94	96	103	109	97	102	85	1,184	1,184
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	21	19	22	26	28	29	30	29	29	29	26	23	20	311	314
Tobacco distributors.....	284	262	282	302	311	310	332	315	312	330	301	349	332	3,690	3,579
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	475	445	463	446	429	465	451	564	586	635	531	507	424	5,997	5,908
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	161	157	180	163	150	143	160	227	228	247	210	194	149	2,220	2,140
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	192	174	168	167	164	190	182	207	219	230	189	185	172	2,267	2,370
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	324	285	300	301	303	291	295	315	336	357	321	330	301	3,758	3,694
Paper wholesalers.....	287	251	264	263	266	255	259	276	295	306	274	281	258	3,277	3,173
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	85	86	90	99	100	99	100	103	120	127	120	130	124	1,259	1,291
Coal wholesalers.....	103	98	86	71	81	80	67	75	83	90	84	99	100	1,017	1,280
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	123	124	146	160	138	116	109	116	125	122	104	109	96	1,492	1,441

¹ Merchant wholesalers total and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately. Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS—KINDS OF BUSINESS
1956, 1957 AND 1958
1954 MONTHLY AVERAGE = 100



DATA IN THIS REPORT ARE NOT ADJUSTED FOR NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE MONTH NOR FOR SEASONAL OR PRICE FLUCTUATIONS

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

DECEMBER 1958

Kind of business	Sales*			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios		
	Percent change			Percent change, Dec. 1958 from--		(percent)		
	Dec. 1958 from--		12 mos. 1958 12 mos. 1957	Dec. 1958 from--		Dec. 1958	Dec. 1957	Nov. 1958
	Dec. 1957	Nov. 1958		Dec. 1957	Nov. 1958			
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	+12	+4	-2	-2	-4	121	137	132
DURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	+16	+2	-6	-1	-2	168	194	175
Automotive wholesalers.....	+32	+9	+9	+4	-3	184	200	186
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+19	+3	+7	+3	-3	198	212	199
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	+17	+11	0	-6	-8	129	150	156
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	+13	+9	-3	-9	-5	121	143	145
Electrical appl., TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	+21	+13	+2	-2	-10	137	158	168
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+10	+1	0	0	-6	151	177	166
Furniture wholesalers.....	-1	+8	-6	-4	-8	151	189	189
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+16	-1	+2	+3	-6	151	169	156
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	+9	-6	-4	+1	-4	208	231	205
Hardware wholesalers.....	+14	+2	-4	-3	-4	216	244	226
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	+4	-11	-4	+5	-3	199	216	184
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+18	-13	-2	+2	+1	130	147	111
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	+28	-8	-2	+7	+4	164	183	149
Construction materials distributors.....	+8	-14	-2	-2	-1	109	124	90
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+9	+4	-8	-2	-1	192	205	204
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment, distributors*.....	+33	+4	+2	+4	-4	219	281	230
Commercial machines, equipment distributors*.....	+6	+8	-3	0	0	177	198	190
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+3	+13	-20	-1	-1	179	173	202
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	+2	-2	+9	+5	-1	184	181	185
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses*.....	+8	+11	+5	-1	-1	132	146	159
Service establishment supply houses.....	+14	+3	+5	0	-1	128	145	135
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+23	+4	-16	-3	+2	222	284	229
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+36	+3	-14	-4	+2	259	335	265
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+1	+6	-21	0	+1	94	112	99
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+23	-3	-30	+8	-1	91	109	89
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	+25	-1	-40	+15	0	98	114	94
Waste materials dealers.....	+20	-4	-11	0	-2	81	104	80
Jewelry wholesalers*.....	+23	+16	-2	+10	r -1	113	116	127
NONDURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	+9	+6	+1	-2	-6	89	100	101
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+7	+5	+5	+2	-4	69	72	74
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+12	+4	+5	+2	-5	91	98	99
Voluntary groups*.....	+12	+3	+8	0	-6	79	84	86
Retailer-cooperative*.....	+13	+1	+8	+6	-5	78	84	86
Nonaffiliated*.....	+9	+3	+4	+2	-5	108	116	116
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	-3	+6	+1	-4	-3	68	69	70
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+7	+5	+4	+1	-1	52	56	60
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	+18	+8	+15	+23	0	21	20	23
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	+5	+13	+2	+1	-5	24	25	28
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	+3	+4	+11	+7	-1	20	21	21
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+6	+19	-3	-2	-8	26	27	33
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+8	+24	+4	+3	-16	76	80	114
Beer, ale distributors.....	+1	+10	0	+14	-12	47	43	60
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+11	+30	+6	0	-18	91	101	147
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+14	+2	+1	+1	-5	138	152	145
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+11	+3	+2	0	-5	146	160	164
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+20	+5	0	+4	-4	103	118	101
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+15	-12	-1	+2	-1	244	246	203
Tobacco distributors.....	+5	+16	+3	+7	-11	48	48	63
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+20	-5	+2	-4	-2	150	190	148
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	+30	-8	+4	-11	-5	137	201	135
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+8	-2	-4	+1	0	164	197	161
Piece goods converters*.....	+11	-1	-4	-6	-1	140	160	144
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+10	+3	+2	+1	-2	115	123	125
Paper wholesalers.....	+9	+3	+3	+2	-1	117	123	126
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers*.....	+14	+4	-1	-2	-8	101	124	112
Farm products (raw materials) merchants*.....	+2	-6	-3	-10	+1	141	188	142
Other nondurable goods wholesalers*.....	+4	+7	-4	-6	-7	108	119	126
Amusement, sporting goods distributors.....	+5	+8	-2	+2	-11	104	113	127
Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers*.....	+3	0	+5	-11	-6	129	138	127
Coal wholesalers.....	-1	+19	-21	-16	-9	62	89	87
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	+14	+5	+4	+5	+4	215	230	220

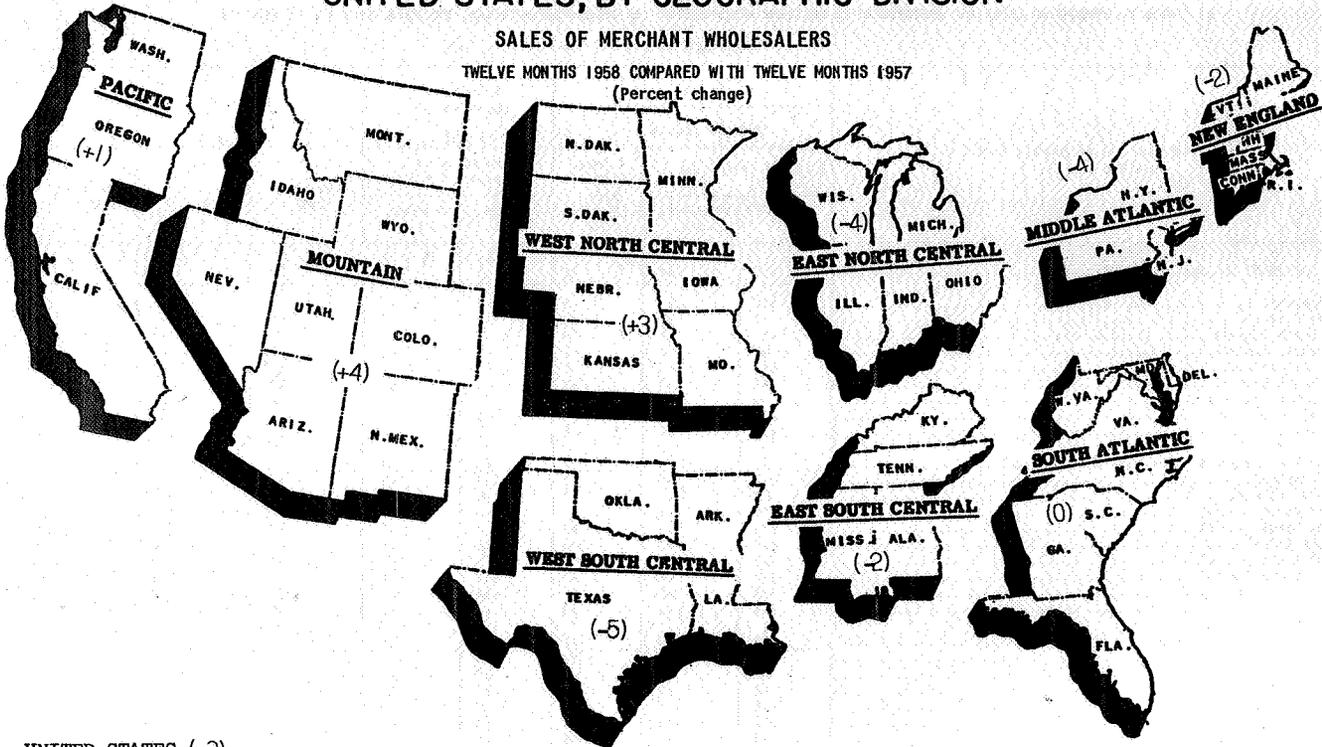
* See text, page 8.

r Revised since Advance Release January 29, 1959.

UNITED STATES, BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS

TWELVE MONTHS 1958 COMPARED WITH TWELVE MONTHS 1957
(Percent change)



STOCKS—SALES RATIOS OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS IN SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

DECEMBER 1958 COMPARED WITH DECEMBER 1957

(Percent)

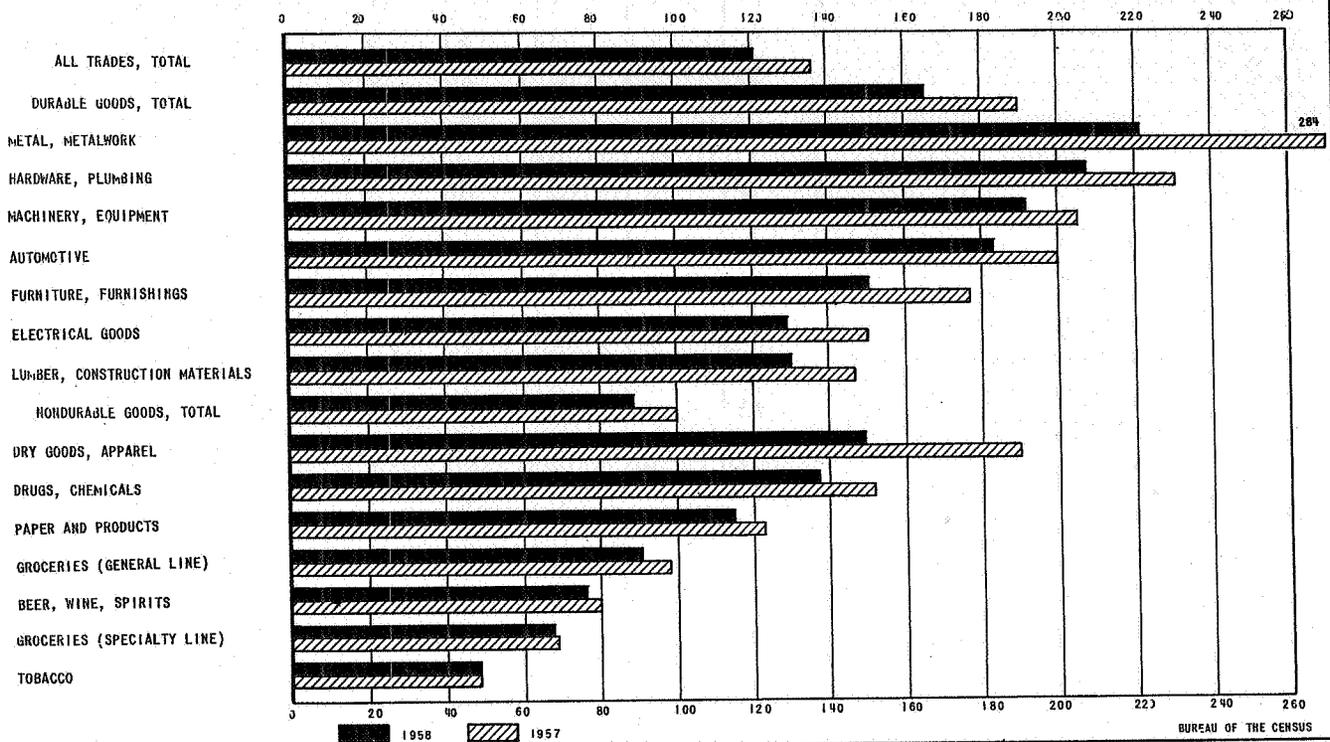


Table 3.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

Kind of business and geographic division (see map page 5)	Sales*			Inventory, end-of-month		Stock-sales ratios		
	Percent change			(at cost)		(percent)		
	December 1958 from--		12 mos. 1958 from 12 mos. 1957	Percent change, December 1958 from--		December 1958	December 1957	November 1958
	December 1957	November 1958		December 1957	November 1958			
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	+12	+4	-2	-2	-4	121	137	132
New England.....	+14	+10	-2	-8	-6	99	121	115
Middle Atlantic.....	+7	+3	-4	-1	-3	98	111	108
East North Central.....	+12	+5	-4	-1	-4	123	143	134
West North Central.....	+9	-1	+3	-1	-3	128	148	141
South Atlantic.....	+11	+1	0	-2	-4	143	162	150
East South Central.....	+4	+5	-2	-2	-2	174	178	180
West South Central.....	+6	+4	-5	-2	-8	127	147	148
Mountain.....	+18	+7	+4	+1	-3	121	139	133
Pacific.....	+16	+4	+1	-1	-2	127	145	136
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+19	+3	+7	+3	-3	198	212	199
New England.....	+10	-8	+2	(X)	+7	119	129	129
Middle Atlantic.....	+30	+13	+7	-6	+4	153	154	150
East North Central.....	+22	+6	-1	-3	-3	201	259	211
West North Central.....	+33	+5	+8	-2	-3	182	240	233
South Atlantic.....	+16	-7	+4	+12	+1	206	186	178
East South Central.....	+13	-5	+7	+13	+1	237	238	224
West South Central.....	+11	-4	+5	+11	-1	232	183	238
Mountain.....	+19	+3	+5	+14	+1	242	248	222
Pacific.....	+24	-1	+4	+4	+1	208	244	204
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	+13	+9	-3	-9	-5	121	143	145
New England.....	+2	+17	-10	-19	-14	88	111	118
Middle Atlantic.....	+3	-1	-7	-12	-1	111	129	122
East North Central.....	-6	+8	-11	-13	-12	123	136	151
West North Central.....	+6	+15	-8	-12	-5	132	159	162
South Atlantic.....	+15	+15	-7	-3	-6	130	153	156
East South Central.....	-3	+6	-6	-5	+3	173	153	183
West South Central.....	+15	+16	-4	-8	-7	141	175	173
Mountain.....	+29	+21	+8	-1	+4	117	152	148
Pacific.....	+20	+9	+1	-2	-4	109	132	128
Elec. appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts distributors....	+21	+13	+2	-2	-10	137	158	168
New England.....	(X)	+9	(X)	-17	+2	128	162	163
Middle Atlantic.....	+10	+9	-7	-1	0	124	145	138
East North Central.....	+17	+14	-7	-8	-8	142	175	173
West North Central.....	+10	+22	-1	-4	+2	127	137	180
South Atlantic.....	+22	+9	-3	0	-10	150	180	183
East South Central.....	+8	+21	-2	-13	-12	163	180	241
West South Central.....	+12	+1	0	0	-11	176	200	206
Pacific.....	+13	+3	0	+1	-10	121	123	144
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+10	+1	0	0	-6	151	177	166
Middle Atlantic.....	+6	-9	-3	-2	-7	139	151	129
East North Central.....	(X)	+12	(X)	+5	-5	142	175	182
West North Central.....	+12	+9	-1	+4	-10	193	220	217
South Atlantic.....	+7	+9	+4	(X)	-6	159	171	192
West South Central.....	-8	+10	-6	-12	-10	176	185	225
Mountain.....	+14	(X)	-4	(X)	(X)	(X)	185	(X)
Pacific.....	+26	+4	0	-1	-1	139	169	144
Hardware wholesalers.....	+14	+2	-4	-3	-4	216	244	226
Middle Atlantic.....	-2	+9	-8	-9	+2	204	212	219
East North Central.....	+8	+6	-6	-4	+2	203	238	224
West North Central.....	+20	-3	+4	-5	+3	229	262	212
South Atlantic.....	+5	-4	-3	-2	-7	235	242	252
East South Central.....	+10	+1	-3	-3	-9	203	222	222
West South Central.....	+21	+4	-5	-4	-7	260	311	284
Pacific.....	+15	+4	+1	+1	-3	206	239	220
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	+4	-11	-4	+5	-3	192	216	184
New England.....	(X)	-11	(X)	0	-6	218	208	200
Middle Atlantic.....	-1	-9	-5	-5	-2	196	208	189
East North Central.....	+5	-16	-9	-1	-8	222	239	189
West North Central.....	+20	-12	+9	+6	-5	236	267	203
South Atlantic.....	+10	-6	0	+5	-3	206	217	190
East South Central.....	(X)	0	(X)	(X)	-1	(X)	(X)	(X)
West South Central.....	+21	-11	+1	+8	-1	178	204	170
Mountain.....	(X)	+9	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	+19	-4	+2	+14	0	171	183	167
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+18	-13	-2	+2	+1	130	147	111
New England.....	-6	+8	-4	+9	+8	100	99	92
Middle Atlantic.....	+21	-21	-4	-2	-1	111	133	91
East North Central.....	+14	-22	-5	+1	162	175	122	
West North Central.....	+4	-14	-1	(X)	-1	149	194	129
South Atlantic.....	-1	-14	-1	+13	+4	105	107	90
East South Central.....	(X)	-10	(X)	(X)	+3	113	118	92
West South Central.....	+16	-7	+5	0	+5	161	191	147
Pacific.....	+35	0	+4	(X)	-3	140	180	135

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

DECEMBER 1958

Kind of business and geographic division (see map page 5)	Sales*			Inventory, end-of-month		Stock-sales ratios		
	Percent change			(at cost)		(percent)		
	December 1958 from--		12 mos. 1958 from 12 mos. 1957	Percent change, December 1958 from--		December 1958	December 1957	November 1958
	December 1957	November 1958		December 1957	November 1958			
Industrial machinery, equipment supplies distributors.....	+3	+13	-20	-1	-1	179	173	202
New England.....	(X)	-3	(X)	-21	-13	79	161	130
Middle Atlantic.....	+5	+9	-12	+4	-1	200	199	208
East North Central.....	+5	+11	-19	-6	-1	151	182	171
West North Central.....	(X)	-3	(X)	+17	-2	152	214	149
South Atlantic.....	(X)	+12	(X)	-2	-6	178	221	183
East South Central.....	+36	+4	-7	+6	0	193	235	193
West South Central.....	-2	+17	-31	-2	+2	191	186	219
Mountain.....	+1	+16	-16	-7	0	209	296	244
Pacific.....	+5	+10	-13	-8	0	234	255	271
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+12	+7	+5	+2	-5	91	98	99
New England.....	+6	+4	+5	0	(X)	65	75	66
Middle Atlantic.....	+16	+9	+6	0	-3	115	139	128
East North Central.....	+14	+1	+8	+8	-4	86	91	91
West North Central.....	+9	+3	+7	+2	-4	80	84	86
South Atlantic.....	+8	-2	+6	+3	-9	104	117	111
East South Central.....	+1	+8	+8	+16	-6	105	101	117
West South Central.....	+7	+2	+5	+1	-11	94	99	106
Mountain.....	+14	-4	+6	+9	-7	98	96	101
Pacific.....	+12	+2	+5	+5	-3	75	78	84
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	-3	+6	+1	-4	-3	68	69	70
Middle Atlantic.....	-6	+7	-1	-11	+3	59	56	55
East North Central.....	+14	+9	+4	+13	-4	66	68	76
West North Central.....	(X)	+8	(X)	(X)	0	(X)	(X)	(X)
South Atlantic.....	-4	(X)	+2	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
East South Central.....	(X)	0	(X)	(X)	-12	(X)	(X)	(X)
West South Central.....	-14	-2	+1	-18	-9	76	79	75
Pacific.....	+2	+6	+3	(X)	+1	63	61	72
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+6	+19	-3	-2	-8	26	27	33
New England.....	+13	+8	+3	+36	+26	11	9	10
Middle Atlantic.....	+8	+14	-3	+5	-11	15	17	19
East North Central.....	+3	+21	-6	(X)	+2	21	19	26
West North Central.....	+1	+18	+11	-1	-7	40	40	52
South Atlantic.....	+8	+10	0	+1	-5	25	26	29
East South Central.....	+8	+34	-2	+3	(X)	11	11	20
West South Central.....	+3	+9	0	(X)	-18	19	18	23
Mountain.....	+23	+25	+11	+10	(X)	24	25	27
Pacific.....	+5	+9	+1	-21	-15	29	25	36
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+11	+3	+2	0	-5	146	160	164
New England.....	+6	+8	0	+14	-8	165	148	204
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	-4	-3	+3	-5	120	116	122
East North Central.....	+6	+7	-1	+1	-6	149	162	178
West North Central.....	+13	+7	+4	-9	-8	139	167	161
South Atlantic.....	+9	+12	+2	+4	-7	184	193	204
East South Central.....	+11	+8	+3	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
West South Central.....	+10	+13	+3	+2	-5	183	193	238
Mountain.....	(X)	+2	(X)	-8	-1	192	257	200
Pacific.....	+11	+2	+4	-3	0	111	152	110
Tobacco distributors.....	+5	+16	+3	+7	-11	48	48	63
New England.....	+4	+26	+3	+4	-17	49	47	74
Middle Atlantic.....	+7	+17	+6	+3	-13	48	50	66
East North Central.....	+5	+18	+4	+4	-6	41	41	52
West North Central.....	+7	+15	+8	+13	-9	77	65	93
South Atlantic.....	+6	+12	+5	+7	-15	46	46	65
East South Central.....	+10	+12	+10	+22	-5	47	47	54
West South Central.....	+6	+8	+5	(X)	-13	46	34	55
Mountain.....	+15	+17	+6	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	+21	+18	+12	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+20	-5	+2	-4	-2	150	190	148
New England.....	+8	+11	-2	-19	-6	101	138	135
Middle Atlantic.....	+17	-7	-3	-4	-1	131	172	132
East North Central.....	+8	-10	-6	+1	0	179	195	157
West North Central.....	(X)	-12	(X)	+7	-5	208	258	183
South Atlantic.....	+10	(X)	0	-2	-9	161	193	151
East South Central.....	+19	+2	0	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	+25	-5	0	(X)	-4	176	203	170

* See text, page 8.

X Withheld due to extreme variability of reported data.

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE, ESTIMATING PROCEDURE, AND RELIABILITY OF THE DATA

1. Scope of Survey

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers, which constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes other types of wholesale trade such as manufacturers sales branches and sales offices; petroleum bulk stations; agents and brokers and assemblers of farm products. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Merchant wholesalers are defined in the Standard Industrial Classification Manual issued by the Bureau of the Budget, Executive Office of the President, as "Establishments usually known as wholesalers, merchant wholesalers or jobbers, primarily engaged in buying, taking title to, and where customary, physically storing and handling goods and selling the goods at wholesale principally to retailers and industrial and commercial users. This group also includes industrial and distributors, exporters, and importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers; drop shippers, wagon distributors, etc. The establishments included in this group may perform operations on the goods incidental to the wholesale trading and delivery, such as installing equipment, and fixtures; and collecting and baling waste materials." Firms which, in addition to merchant wholesale establishments, operate other types of establishments, e.g., retail, manufacturing, etc., report in this survey only for their merchant wholesale establishments. A description of each kind-of-business classification shown in this report is included on pages 10 through 12.

2. Sample Design

Firms reporting in the survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. The sample, which includes over 17,000 firms (about 26,000 establishments) is drawn from two sources: (1) 1954 Census of Business lists representing all wholesalers (with paid employees) in business in 1954 and (2) Bureau of Old Age and Survivors Insurance (BOASI) lists of wholesalers (with paid employees) entering business (or requesting new Employer Identification Numbers) since 1954. The sample is supplemented twice a year for new firms on the BOASI lists.

The reporting panel includes a fixed panel of about 1,400 very large firms reporting monthly and four rotating panels each containing about 3,900 smaller firms which report every fourth month. In any given month, the total reporting panel includes about 5,300 firms.

The number of firms selected in the sample for each kind of business varies from 150 to 650 firms, depending upon (a) the total number of firms in the trade, (b) and distribution of firms within the trade by sales size, and (c) whether geographic division trends are to be shown for the trade. In those kinds of business for which percentage changes are shown by geographic division, the sample chosen for the national estimates was increased by about 50 percent to provide wider representation by geographic division. In some of these trades, however, data are not shown separately for some geographic divisions because even this increase in the sample size will not provide reliable results in all geographic divisions.

3. Published Data

Sales.---This report includes monthly dollar volume estimates of sales by kind of business for the United States as a whole (Table 1) and sales trends (percent changes) derived from these estimates (Table 2). Sales trends are shown in Table 2 for some detailed kind of businesses for which estimates are not shown separately in Table 1. For these kinds of business (identified by * in Table 2) the trends are based only on the weighted sales of identical firms (i.e., firms reporting data for each of the months for which comparisons are made). Sales trends by geographic division are also shown for selected kinds of business (Table 3). In Table 3, the trends for geographic division are based on

weighted sales of identical firms; however, sales trends at the United States level are derived from the dollar volume estimates shown in Table 1.

Sales include sales of merchandise and receipts from repairs or other services to customers, after deducting returns and allowances, and discounts. Sales of merchandise for others on a commission basis are also included. Local and State sales taxes, and Federal excise taxes are included.

Inventories.---This report presents inventory trends by kind of business for the United States as a whole (Table 2) and by geographic division (Table 3). These inventory trends are based on the weighted inventories of identical firms (i.e., firm reporting data for each of the months compared).

Inventories represent stocks, at cost, of merchandise on hand for sale at the end of the month.

Stock-sales ratios.---These are presented by kind of business for the United States as a whole (Table 2) and by geographic division (Table 3). The stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing weighted stocks, at cost, by weighted sales for only those firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales in all three periods compared. Excluded from these ratios were all firms which report "zero" inventories (e.g., drop shippers). No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade. Stock-sales ratios for previous months shown in the current report may differ from those published in previous reports since the reporting panel varies.

4. Estimating Procedure

Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection in the sample. Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon size, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

For most firms reporting, data are available for each of three months (current, previous, and year ago). New firms reporting provide data for at least two months (current and previous). Sales and inventory figures reported for each firm are multiplied by its weight (the reciprocal of its probability of selection) and the results summarized to obtain the dollar volume estimates, percentage changes and stock-sales ratios shown in this report.

Volume estimates.---The summation of the weighted reports of sales for each monthly panel provides unbiased dollar volume estimates, by kind of business, for two months--the current month and the preceding month. However, the published estimate is a "composite" of two estimates (a) the unbiased estimate for the current month obtained from the summation of the current month reports and (b) a ratio estimate obtained by multiplying the "composite" estimate for the previous month by the ratio of the current month unbiased to previous month unbiased estimates obtained from the summation of the current reports. The unbiased estimate (a) receives a weight of .3 while the ratio estimate (b) receives a weight of .7. The resulting weighted average provides a "composite" estimate of the dollar volume of sales considerably more reliable than either of the two estimates taken alone.

Percentage changes.---Two types of percentage change figures are presented in this report, viz., (1) percentage changes derived from dollar volume estimates (2) percent changes based on the weighted data from identical firms (i.e., those reporting data for each of the months for which comparisons are made). The percentage changes based on identicals however, should not be regarded as an unbiased measure of percentage change. Since only those establishments reporting in both periods compared are included, the net change due to births and deaths is not reflected in the ratios shown.

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE, ESTIMATING PROCEDURES, AND RELIABILITY OF THE DATA--Continued

5. Reliability of the Data

Estimates based on a sample are subject to sampling variability and thus are not expected to be in exact agreement with a complete census taken with the same enumeration procedures. For all trades combined, the sampling variability of the "composite" sales estimates for any individual month, is about one percent at the one sigma level. That is to say, the chances are about two out of three that the estimated sales shown would be within about one percent of the results of a complete enumeration.

Sampling errors have been computed by kind of business for each of the monthly estimates of sales in 1958 and, for the ratios of current month to previous month sales and current month to year-ago sales, for four months--December 1957, May 1958, September 1958, and October 1958. Sampling errors are themselves subject to sampling variability and thus should be regarded as giving a general rather than exact idea of the variability due to sampling. They may also vary as a result of seasonal or cyclical fluctuations.

Table 4 presents the range of the sampling errors during 1958 and their medians. The sampling errors for individual months, however, are available upon request.

Evaluation of the sampling variability of the ratio based on weighted identicals has not been completed. However, where these ratios are based on a small number of reports (viz., trends by geographic division) the sampling variability is usually quite high.

These measures do not include biases that may arise from other nonsampling errors, such as failure of respondent to submit correct figures or to submit a report in time for tabulation. In preparing the dollar volume estimates, an estimate is included for those firms that fail to respond. To the extent that the estimates for these firms may differ from the actual figures, nonresponse affects the reliability of the dollar volume estimate. As a result, dollar volume estimates are not published separately in a few trades where the nonresponse rate was considered too high to provide reliable level estimates. Approximately 10 percent of the total sales are imputed for nonresponse.

Table 4.--SAMPLING VARIABILITY--MONTHLY ESTIMATES OF SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

Kind of business	Sampling error of monthly dollar value of sales--1958		Sampling error of the ratio of current month sales compared to--				Kind of business	Sampling error of monthly dollar value of sales--1958		Sampling error of the ratio of current month sales compared to--			
	Range	Median	Previous month sales		Year-ago sales			Range	Median	Previous month sales		Year-ago sales	
			Range	Median	Range	Median				Range	Median	Range	Median
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	0.8-1.2	1.0	0.6-0.6	0.6	0.6-0.9	0.8	NONDURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	1.2-1.7	1.3	0.9-1.1	1.0	1.0-1.4	1.2
DURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	1.2-1.8	1.4	0.6-0.8	0.8	1.2-1.6	1.4	Grocery, confectionery, meat.....	2-3	2	1-2	1	2-3	2
Automotive.....	4-9	4	2-4	3	3-7	4	General-line grocery.....	2-3	2	1-2	1	2-2	2
Automotive, equipment, tire-tube..	2-4	4	2-3	2	3-3	3	Specialty-line grocery.....	4-10	7	2-3	3	5-7	6
Electrical, electronics, appliances	3-5	4	1-2	2	2-4	3	Confectionery.....	4-7	5	3-4	3	3-5	4
Electrical apparatus, supplies...	2-4	3	2-3	2	2-4	3	Meat, meat products.....	5-6	6	2-4	4	2-4	4
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts.....	4-8	7	2-3	2	4-6	5	Farm products (edible).....	3-4	3	2-2	2	2-3	3
Furniture, home furnishings.....	3-5	3	2-3	2	3-3	3	Poultry, poultry products.....	5-7	6	3-4	3	5-6	5
Furniture.....	4-7	6	2-4	3	5-7	6	Fresh fruit, vegetables.....	3-5	4	2-4	3	3-3	3
Home furnishings, floor coverings	3-5	4	2-4	3	3-5	4	Beer, wine, distilled spirits....	2-4	3	1-2	2	2-3	2
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods...	1-2	2	1-2	1	1-2	2	Beer, ale.....	3-6	4	2-3	3	2-4	2
Hardware.....	2-3	2	1-2	1	2-3	2	Wine, distilled spirits.....	3-4	4	2-3	3	2-4	3
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies.....	3-4	3	2-2	2	2-4	3	Drugs, chemicals, allied products.	2-3	2	1-2	2	2-2	2
Lumber, construction materials.....	2-3	2	2-2	2	2-4	3	Drugs (general, specialty lines)	2-5	3	2-2	2	2-3	3
Lumber, millwork.....	3-6	5	2-4	3	3-6	4	Industrial chemicals, explosives	3-6	5	2-4	3	3-5	4
Construction materials.....	3-6	4	2-3	2	3-5	4	Paint, varnish.....	4-6	4	2-3	3	3-4	4
Machinery, equipment, supplies....	2-5	3	2-2	2	2-3	2	Tobacco.....	2-3	2	2-2	2	2-3	2
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies.....	3-6	5	2-4	3	4-6	4	Dry goods, apparel.....	2-5	3	2-2	2	2-5	3
Professional equipment, supplies.	4-6	5	2-5	3	5-6	5	Clothing, furnishings, footwear.	4-9	6	3-6	5	5-7	6
Service establishment supplies...	3-7	5	2-3	3	4-7	4	Dry goods (general, specialty lines).....	4-7	5	2-5	4	4-6	5
Metals, metalwork (except scrap)...	2-4	3	2-3	2	3-4	4	Paper, allied products.....	2-3	3	1-2	2	2-3	2
Iron, steel and products.....	3-6	4	3-6	3	4-7	5	Paper.....	2-3	3	2-2	2	2-3	2
Nonferrous metals.....	3-5	4	1-2	2	3-6	5	Amusement, sporting goods.....	4-6	5	3-4	3	3-6	4
Scrap, waste materials.....	4-5	5	2-3	2	4-5	4	Coal.....	3-7	4	1-2	2	2-4	2
Iron, steel scrap.....	4-8	7	3-4	4	6-6	6	Farm supplies.....	5-8	7	2-4	3	5-8	6
Waste materials.....	6-10	8	2-4	3	6-9	8							

Note: The use of sampling errors shown above is illustrated by the following computation: Multiply the median sampling error by the estimate (whether it is a dollar volume estimate or a ratio). Add and subtract the resulting product from the published estimate. The resulting range of the estimate is expected to include the "expected value" (that is, the value which could be obtained from a complete enumeration) about two out of three times. Doubling the median sampling error and repeating the above process will give a range which will include the "expected value" about 19 out of 20 times.

To illustrate the computation of these ranges for monthly dollar volume estimates, consider the estimate made for all durable goods in May 1958. The published estimate is \$3,868 million while the median sampling error shown for this month is 1.4 percent (or .014). Multiplying \$3,868 million by .014, we obtain \$54 million. Thus,

the chances are two out of three that the "expected value" of the estimate is between \$3,814 and \$3,922 million. Doubling the given median sampling error gives us the limits, \$3,760 to \$3,976 million, which will contain the "expected value" 19 out of 20 times.

As an example of the use of these median sampling error data with ratios, consider the ratio of change from April 1958 to May 1958 for all durable goods. This ratio of change, obtained by dividing \$3,868 million by \$3,727 million, is 1.04 (it can also be expressed as a 4% increase). The median sampling error of this statistic is 0.8 percent (.008). Multiplying 1.04 by .008, we obtain .008 as the standard error of the ratio. There is a probability of two out of three that the "expected ratio" is contained in the range 1.03 to 1.05 (that is, that the April to May change was between a 3% and 5% increase), while there is a probability of 19 out of 20 that the "expected ratio" is contained in the range 1.02 to 1.06.

DESCRIPTION OF KINDS OF BUSINESS

All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey. The kinds of business shown in this report parallel broad classifications used in the 1954 Census of Business covering wholesale trade. Each establishment in this survey has been assigned a kind-of-business classification based upon its trade designation and an analysis of its sales by commodity lines as reported to the Bureau of the Census. A description of each kind-of-business classification in this report is given below.

DURABLE GOODS

Automotive wholesalers

Motor-vehicle distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling new and used passenger automobiles and similar motor vehicles, road-type trucks, truck tractors, busses, trailers, and semitrailers to dealers or to fleet operators, industrial accounts, and to commercial users. Dealers in road-type trucks, truck tractors, and truck trailers are included here on the basis of kind-of-goods sold. (Not shown separately in the accompanying table.)

Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments--frequently referred to as jobbers in this trade--primarily engaged in selling automotive equipment, accessories, parts, tires, tubes and garage equipment and tools.

Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors

Electrical apparatus, supplies wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments selling a general line of electrical equipment and apparatus; wiring supplies and construction materials; lighting fixtures and lamps; radio and television sets and accessories; electric refrigerators and other electrical appliances and specialties; and electronic parts and equipment; and those primarily engaged in selling such electrical equipment and apparatus; wiring supplies and construction materials, and lighting fixtures and lamps, as conduits and fittings, interior wires and cables, wiring devices, safety switches, poles, crossarms, pole-line hardware, outside wires and cables, residential, commercial, and industrial lighting fixtures, and incandescent and fluorescent lamps. Establishments specializing in the sale of electrical prime movers and other electrical power equipment for the generation, transmission, or utilization of electric energy are also included.

Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling such electrical appliances and specialties as radio and television sets, dish washers, electric refrigerators, electric ranges, washing machines, ironers, radio and television parts and accessories, home freezers, sewing machines, hot water heaters, electric irons, percolators, clocks, hotplates, vacuum cleaners, etc., and electronic tubes, electronic replacement parts and accessories, and transmission and sound equipment.

Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers

Furniture wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling home or office furniture--wooden, metal or other.

Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling household china, glassware, and earthenware; floor coverings (carpets, rugs, linoleums, etc.); antique home furnishings; and miscellaneous home furnishings such as brooms, brushes, curtains, draperies, pictures and picture frames, window shades, kitchen utensils, phonograph records, and musical instruments.

Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers

Hardware wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments selling a general line of merchandise sufficiently broad to service retail hardware stores and the hardware departments of other outlets--general-line hardware wholesalers; and establishments primarily engaged in selling builders hardware, heavy hardware, shelf or light hardware, and hardware

specialties such as tools, cutlery, bolts, nuts, rivets, screws, padlocks, keys, and the like--specialty-line hardware wholesalers.

Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling plumbing and heating equipment and supplies such as plumbing fixtures, including sanitary ware; steam and hot water heating boilers, radiators, parts, and fittings; stoves, ranges, furnaces, and other types of heating apparatus (except electric); oil burners; gas appliances and supplies; plumbing pipe, valves, and fittings; and plumbers brass goods.

Lumber, construction materials distributors

Lumber, millwork wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling lumber and millwork such as rough, dressed, and finished lumber; sheathing, siding, flooring, shingles; plywood, veneers, doors, sashes, frames, interior woodwork and trim.

Construction materials distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling such construction materials as brick, tile, and terra cotta; cement, lime, and plaster; building glass; sand, gravel, and crushed stone, ready-mixed concrete; roofing, siding and insulation; and stone, slate, concrete products, and building board.

Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors

Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling commercial refrigeration equipment (including electric) such as refrigerators, display cases, freezers, dispensers, water coolers, food locker equipment; and those selling air conditioning and ventilating equipment and supplies, including fans, blowers, and accessories. Establishments specializing in the sale of commercial refrigeration components and accessories are also included in this classification.

Commercial machines, equipment distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling office machines and equipment (except furniture) such as adding machines, typewriters, addressing, duplicating, sealing, computing, stapling, accounting, and statistical machines; restaurant and hotel equipment such as coffee urns, steam tables, china, glassware, silverware, linens, and related items; store machines and fixtures such as display fixtures, show racks, pricing equipment, cash registers, scales, meat slicers and grinders, coffee grinders, etc.; and such related equipment as florists' supplies, theater supplies and equipment, and parking meters. Establishments primarily engaged in selling to users are included, as well as those selling to dealers.

Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling machinery, equipment, and supplies to manufacturing and mining concerns. Included here are establishments selling industrial machinery; industrial belting, hose, and packing; machine tools, mine and mill supplies; oil well and oil refining supplies; printing machinery and supplies; industrial rope, cordage, and twine; industrial materials, handling equipment; power transmission equipment; and machinery and equipment for such industries as food products, woodworking, shoe manufacturing, tanning, textile, and paper and pulp.

Professional equipment, supplies distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling dental supplies (chairs, sterilizers, cabinets, instruments, dental gold and alloys, waxes, teeth, and the like); religious supplies (church goods and religious articles such as statuary, vestments, fonts, candles, religious pictures, calendars, literature, etc.); school equipment and supplies (desks, blackboards, chalk, rulers, wall and globe maps, etc.); optical goods; surgical, medical, hospital supplies, and equipment; artists supplies; engineering instruments and supplies; and supplies for other professions.

Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling surgical and medical instruments; doctors apparatus and equipment; orthopedic appliances; artificial limbs; operating room and other hospital equipment; X-ray machines and accessories and other scientific instruments used by physicians and in hospitals.

Service establishments, supply houses.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling barber and beauty supplies; laundry, dry cleaning equipment, supplies (washing, drying, ironing, and pressing machines; laundry soaps and chemicals; dry cleaning fluids, marking equipment, etc.); shoe service supplies and equipment, undertakers supplies (caskets, burial vaults, burial garments, embalming chemicals and preparations, and other morticians and funeral equipment); upholsterers supplies (fabrics, leather and fillings, and other types of supplies used in the upholstery trade); and miscellaneous service equipment, such as janitors' supplies, furriers' supplies, bootblack's supplies, and hat cleaners' supplies.

Other machinery, equipment supplies distributors (not shown separately in accompanying table).--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling (a) transportation equipment such as aircraft and aeronautical equipment, supplies; railroad equipment, supplies; marine equipment, supplies; and other transportation equipment and supplies; (b) construction machinery, equipment such as road building machinery, excavating and dredging machinery, derricks, cranes, hoists, and winches; and related construction equipment as pneumatic hammers, concrete construction clamps and forms, scaffolding, chutes, and wheelbarrows--but not construction materials, and (c) farm-garden machinery, equipment (including tractors) used in the preparation and maintenance of the soil, the planting and harvesting of crops, and other operations and processes pertaining to agriculture; dairy machinery and equipment, such as milking machines and cream separators; poultry equipment, such as incubators, brooders, and feeders and irrigation equipment.

Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors

Iron, steel, and products distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments usually referred to as steel warehouses--primarily engaged in selling iron and steel products such as semifinished forms and shapes, plates, sheets, strips, bars, structural shapes, piling, nails, tubular products, wire products, forgings and castings. Steel warehouses of firms operating steelworks and rolling mills are also included here.

Nonferrous metals distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling nonferrous metals and metalwork such as aluminum, copper, tin, brass, lead and zinc.

Scrap, waste materials dealers

Iron, steel scrap dealers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in assembling, breaking up, sorting, and selling all forms of iron and steel scrap.

Waste materials dealers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in assembling, sorting, and selling such waste materials as nonferrous scrap metals, waste paper, rags, wiping cloths, textile wastes, scrap rubber, and other waste and salvage materials. Scrap iron and steel may be handled as secondary lines.

Jewelry wholesalers

Jewelry wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling a general- or specialty-line of jewelry such as clocks and watches; precious stones and metals; watch materials, jewelers supplies; costume jewelry; and miscellaneous items such as silverware, plated ware, medals, trophies, semiprecious stones, and insignia.

NONDURABLE GOODS

Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers

General-line grocery wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments handling a general line of dry groceries and

processed foods usually sold in retail grocery stores, such as canned foods, flour, sugar, coffee, tea and spices, as well as such nonfood items as household chemicals, soaps and detergents, paper products, brooms, brushes, etc. Voluntary group wholesalers, retailer-cooperative warehouses, and cash-and-carry depots are included, as well as nonaffiliated general-line grocery wholesalers.

Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.--This classification includes two general types of merchant wholesale establishments: Those handling a combination of grocery items, no one item predominating, but not a sufficiently broad line of commodities to be classified as "general line"; and those primarily engaged in selling specialized lines of groceries and related products, such as canned foods; coffee, tea, and spices; dairy products; dried fruits and nuts; frosted and frozen foods; fish and seafood; bakery products; packaged breakfast cereals; flour; cooking oils and shortening; and soft drinks.

Confectionery wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling candy, chewing gum, popcorn, potato chips, salted nuts, fountain fruits and syrups, and related items. Cigars, cigarettes, and other products are also frequently handled as secondary lines.

Meat, meat products wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling fresh, frozen, cured or processed (but not canned) meats, lard, and other edible meat products. Secondary lines such as butter, cheese, eggs, dressed poultry, vegetable shortening, and canned meats are frequently handled.

Farm products (edible) distributors

Poultry, poultry products distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling live or dressed poultry, eggs, and related products. Establishments primarily engaged in dressing poultry are considered manufactures.

Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling fresh fruits, vegetables, berries, melons, and related items.

Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers

Beer, ale distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling beer, ale, porter, stout and other fermented malt liquors, soft drinks, confectionery, tobacco, wines, and spirits are frequently handled as secondary lines.

Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling wines, whiskey, gin, rum, brandy, and other spirits, including neutral spirits and ethyl alcohol used in blending. Merchants who bottle and sell wines and distilled spirits manufactured in bulk by others, liquor departments of drug wholesalers, and State-operated wholesale outlets are included. State depots primarily engaged in supplying State liquor stores, however, are not included in wholesale trade.

Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers

Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines)

General-line drug wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments engaged in selling a full line of drugs, pharmaceuticals, proprietary medicines, druggists rubber good, cosmetics, toiletries, drug sundries, and related merchandise. Cooperatives and voluntary group wholesalers handling a full line of drugs are also included in this classification. Liquor departments of drug wholesalers, however, are included with "Wines and distilled spirits wholesalers."

Specialty-line drug wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling proprietary medicines, toilet preparations, and articles such as drugs, perfumes, cosmetics, powders, shaving preparations, toilet soap, dentifrices, combs, brushes, mirrors, medical glass, bandages, rubber goods, and antiseptics.

Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling such

industrial and heavy chemicals as coal-tar chemicals, plastics, compressed and liquefied gases (except LP gas), acids, ammonia, soda, industrial alcohols, explosives, dye-stuffs, naval stores, etc. Concerns primarily engaged in selling pyrotechnics and ammunition for small arms are included in "Amusement and sporting goods wholesalers."

Paint, varnish wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling paints, varnishes, lacquers, enamels, calcimines, shellac, and stains. Glass, wallpaper, painters supplies, oils, chemicals, and related products are frequently handled as secondary lines.

Tobacco distributors

Tobacco distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling manufactured tobacco products such as cigars, cigarettes, chewing and smoking tobacco, and snuff. Confectionery, smokers articles, razor blades, playing cards, etc., are frequently handled as secondary lines.

Dry goods, apparel wholesalers

Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling men's, boys' clothing, and furnishings (including suits, coats, overcoats, work clothing, hats and caps, shirts, ties, and underwear); women's, children's clothing, furnishings, and accessories (including suits, dresses, and skirts); furs and fur clothing; millinery, millinery supplies; shoes and other footwear; work clothing; and related lines.

Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines)

General-line dry goods wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments engaged in selling a diversified combination of lines usually sold in retail dry goods and general merchandise stores, including piece goods, home furnishings, work clothing, dresses, infants' wear, notions, and hosiery. Men's and women's clothing, furnishings, and millinery frequently constitute secondary lines.

Specialty-line dry goods wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling hosiery, underwear, piece goods, knit and lace goods, fancy linen and needlework and notions (thread, tapes, needles, pins, buttons, hair accessories, zippers, and shoe laces).

Piece goods converters.--Merchant wholesale establishments which purchase textiles in the gray or unfinished form, have them dyed and/or finished by others, usually on a contract basis, and sell to the cutting-up trade, garment makers, wholesalers, or retailers. Converters operating bleaching, dyeing, and finishing plants are not considered as merchant wholesalers.

Paper, allied products wholesalers

Paper wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling wrapping paper and other coarse paper; fine paper (writing papers, reproduction paper stock,

cover, text, thin, and other fine papers); newsprint and book paper; paperboard; and converted paper products such as bags, boxes, cups, dishes, towels, napkins, tissues, and bottle caps.

Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling commercial and social stationery, including envelopes, typewriter and mimeograph paper in cut sizes, file cards and folders; and office supplies such as pens, pencils, writing inks, carbon paper, paper clips, typewriter ribbons, greeting cards, and erasers; and embossed and printed wallpaper for use in covering or decorating interior walls and ceilings.

Farm products (raw materials) merchants

Farm products (raw materials) merchants.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling cotton, grain, hides, skins, raw furs, livestock, leaf tobacco, wool, mohair, horses and mules, and other inedible products such as broomcorn, moss, hair, feathers, bristles, and fibers. This classification includes merchants (including terminal elevators) primarily engaged in selling raw farm products in marketing centers. Dealers buying such products direct from farmers and assembling them at local production points are classified as "assemblers" and not included here.

Other nondurable goods wholesalers

Amusement, sporting goods distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling cameras and photographic goods (cameras, parts, and accessories, projection apparatus, enlargers, developing and printing room apparatus and accessories, sensitized unexposed photographic supplies and equipment); sporting goods (toys, games, novelties, fireworks, bicycles, sporting goods, and athletic goods); and other recreation goods such as playground equipment, billiard and bowling equipment and supplies; and hobby goods.

Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling books, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, and related items.

Coal wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling bituminous coal, anthracite coal, and coke. This includes firms with coal yards as well as those selling goods shipped directly from mine to customer.

Farm supplies wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling mixed and other feeds; fertilizers, fertilizer materials, and agricultural chemicals; seeds (farm, garden, and flower); and miscellaneous farm supplies such as hay, straw, and alfalfa.

Merchant wholesalers, n.e.c.--(Not shown separately in the accompanying table.) Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling petroleum products, cut flowers and potted plants; forest products except lumber; inedible oils and fats; textiles and materials other than dry goods; industrial yarns; crude rubber; ores; sponges; artificial leather; wood pulp; artificial flowers; and products not elsewhere classified; and establishments handling a line of merchandise too broad to be included in any of the classifications outlined above.