

# MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Lewis L. Strauss, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Robert W. Burgess, Director

JANUARY 1959

FOR RELEASE  
MARCH 10, 1959

## SALES AND INVENTORIES

### Sales

Sales of merchant wholesalers, for the fifth successive month, showed an increase over the year ago level. January 1959 sales, estimated at \$9.5 billion, were 6 percent above last January. However, January sales were 9 percent below the December 1958 level.

Sales in the durable goods trades, in total, amounting to \$3.8 billion in January, declined 10 percent from December but were 10 percent higher than sales a year ago. Sales in the nondurable goods trades, at \$5.7 billion, reflected a smaller decline (8%) from previous month sales and a smaller increase (4%) over sales a year ago than the durable goods trades.

Nine trades, led by farm supplies (25%), reported January sales above their December level. However, most trades experienced seasonal declines, the most substantial of these being noted by jewelry wholesalers (50%), wine, distilled spirits wholesalers (45%), and amusement, sporting goods distributors (30%). In contrast, most trades reported increases over their sales a year ago. The largest gains were registered by iron, steel products distributors (34%), iron, steel scrap dealers (24%), and lumber, millwork wholesalers (20%). Declines from year ago sales were indicated by three trades--coal wholesalers (13%), specialty-line grocery wholesalers (6%), and commercial machinery, equipment distributors (3%).

All geographic divisions reported sales below December levels, the West North Central Division indicating the sharpest drop (13%). Compared with a year ago, one division, the West South Central,

reported a small (2%) decline, while the remaining divisions indicated increases up to 15 percent in the South Atlantic Division.

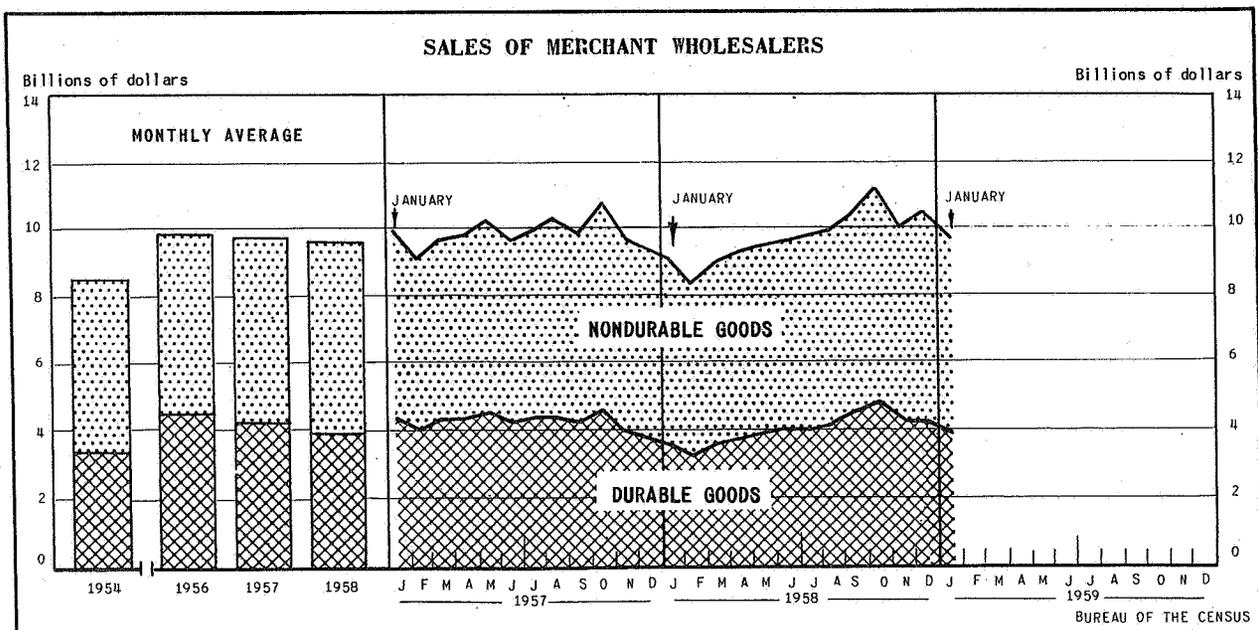
### Inventories

Inventories of wholesalers at the end of January showed no change from the December level and were slightly (1%) above stocks on hand last January. Durable goods stocks were up 2 percent over December but were unchanged from a year ago. In contrast, inventories of nondurable goods fell 2 percent since last month and were 1 percent above January a year ago.

The January 1959 stock-sales ratio for all merchant wholesalers reporting inventories in conjunction with their sales was 136 percent, up 13 points from December but 6 points lower than the January 1958 ratio. The January stock-sales ratio for durable goods trades was 188 compared to the nondurable goods trades ratio of 96.

### General

This report includes monthly dollar volume estimates of sales of merchant wholesalers by kind of business from January 1958 through January 1959. 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.



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

An advance release of January 1959 data was issued on March 2, 1959.

Table 1.--ESTIMATED MONTHLY SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS<sup>1</sup>--UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

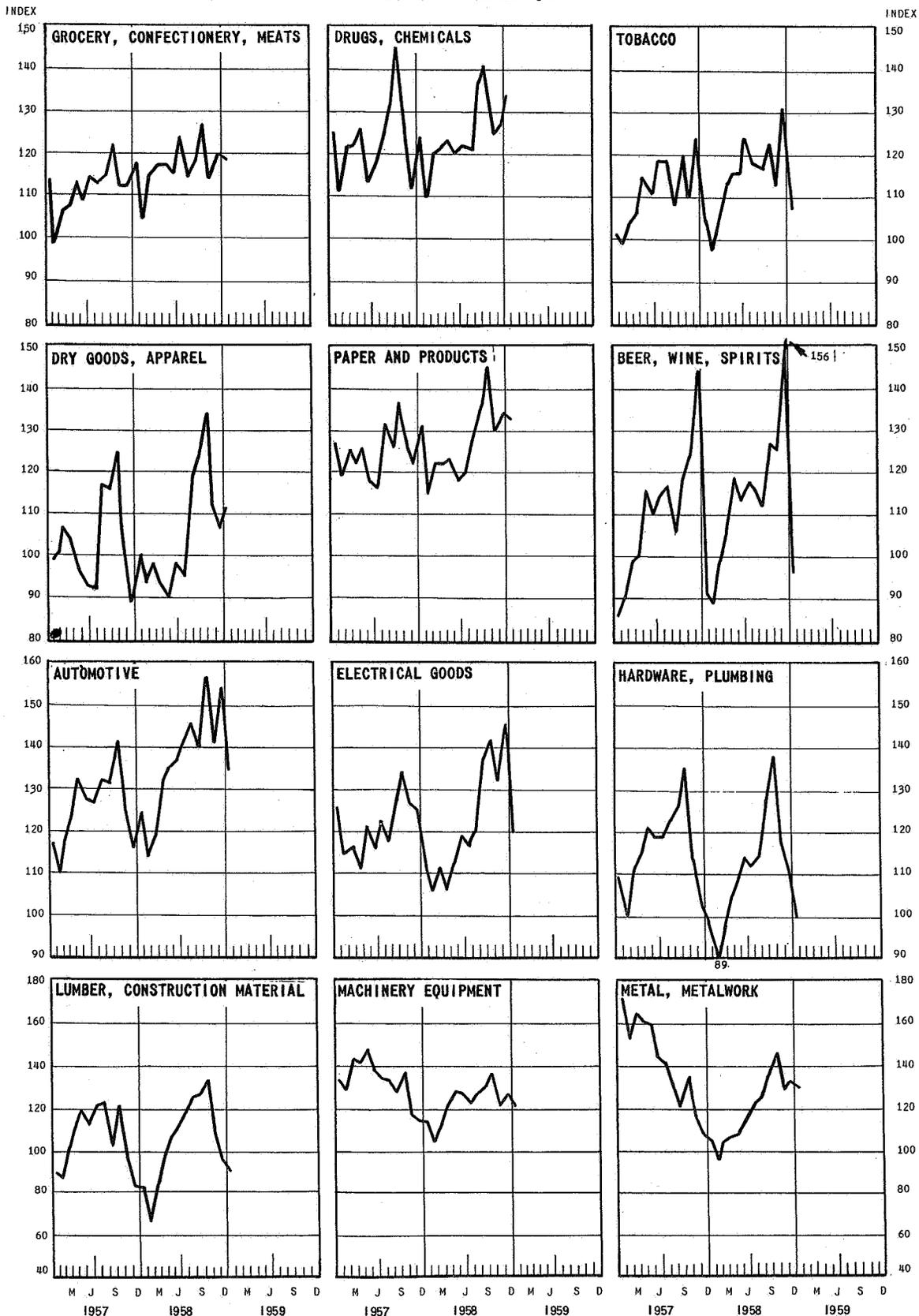
1958 AND 1959

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Kind of business	1959		1958										
	Jan.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL <sup>2</sup> .....	9,534	8,972	8,179	8,863	9,213	9,435	9,480	9,663	9,825	10,336	11,163	10,009	10,423
DURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	3,829	3,493	3,181	3,501	3,727	3,868	3,972	3,958	4,134	4,395	4,700	4,162	4,241
Automotive wholesalers.....	444	410	378	394	438	449	453	468	484	463	521	467	510
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	352	350	324	337	368	371	376	387	379	389	426	379	391
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	634	584	558	584	558	590	626	611	631	724	746	695	772
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	281	260	263	277	269	292	312	299	298	339	340	322	351
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	353	323	295	307	289	298	314	318	332	385	406	372	421
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	185	168	170	191	197	192	198	194	218	229	256	226	229
Furniture wholesalers.....	58	58	55	59	57	57	62	64	73	75	76	63	68
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	127	110	114	132	140	135	136	130	144	154	180	163	161
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	365	362	327	356	386	400	416	412	417	465	506	428	404
Hardware wholesalers.....	168	165	151	170	184	186	183	181	183	203	216	183	187
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	197	197	176	186	202	214	233	231	235	263	290	245	217
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	503	444	364	458	536	585	610	644	684	698	733	611	530
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	291	242	208	248	277	301	307	328	350	369	378	322	296
Construction materials distributors.....	212	202	156	210	258	284	303	317	334	330	355	289	234
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	1,013	954	867	937	1,023	1,074	1,066	1,022	1,053	1,097	1,148	1,014	1,052
Industrial machinery, equipment supplies distributors.....	477	442	381	391	419	442	408	395	413	438	458	417	470
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	93	87	84	91	91	90	95	98	107	111	111	96	94
Service establishment supply houses.....	120	113	106	112	117	121	125	116	115	128	135	117	121
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	365	295	272	291	300	304	327	338	354	382	407	359	374
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	267	200	184	197	209	208	226	238	256	271	289	243	250
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	98	94	88	94	91	97	100	99	98	111	118	116	123
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	259	223	194	237	232	217	215	214	233	249	277	268	26
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	148	119	108	133	128	111	114	111	130	140	151	155	153
Waste materials dealers.....	111	104	86	104	104	106	101	103	103	109	125	113	108
NONDURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	5,705	5,479	4,998	5,362	5,486	5,567	5,508	5,705	5,691	5,941	6,463	5,847	6,182
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	1,715	1,705	1,512	1,646	1,684	1,688	1,675	1,786	1,645	1,706	1,830	1,643	1,729
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	752	729	672	688	715	727	706	753	713	750	785	701	726
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	572	606	528	612	596	595	620	637	561	574	629	565	597
Confectionery wholesalers.....	57	56	51	54	53	54	53	54	53	55	62	58	61
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	333	315	262	292	319	312	297	341	319	327	353	320	345
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	382	377	353	403	450	446	416	432	380	371	404	387	436
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	145	142	120	136	156	143	134	146	153	156	167	164	170
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	237	235	233	267	294	303	282	285	227	215	237	224	266
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	453	429	426	470	501	564	539	560	552	533	603	597	738
Beer, ale distributors.....	163	161	151	172	198	226	227	253	245	210	211	191	211
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	290	268	275	298	303	339	312	307	308	323	392	405	526
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	375	349	309	336	341	345	338	342	339	381	397	350	358
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	234	228	202	219	214	215	211	218	215	248	259	227	233
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	118	100	88	95	100	102	98	94	96	103	109	97	102
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	23	21	19	22	26	28	29	30	29	29	29	26	23
Tobacco distributors.....	287	284	262	282	302	311	310	332	315	312	330	301	349
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	524	475	445	463	446	429	465	451	564	586	635	531	507
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	180	161	157	180	163	150	143	160	227	228	247	210	194
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	206	192	174	168	167	164	190	182	207	219	230	189	185
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	327	324	285	300	301	303	291	295	315	336	357	321	330
Paper wholesalers.....	288	287	251	264	263	266	255	259	276	295	306	274	281
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	91	85	86	90	99	100	99	100	103	120	127	120	130
Coal wholesalers.....	90	103	98	86	71	81	80	67	75	83	90	84	99
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	136	123	124	146	160	138	116	109	116	125	122	104	109

<sup>1</sup> 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.  
<sup>2</sup> Excludes Alaska which in 1954, according to the Census of Business, had wholesale sales equivalent to about .04 percent of the U. S. total.  
r Revised since Advance Release dated March 2, 1959.

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS—KIND OF BUSINESS  
1957, 1958 AND 1959  
1954 MONTHLY AVERAGE = 100



BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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

JANUARY 1959

Kind of business	Sales*		Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios		
	Percent change				(Percent)		
	January 1959 from--		Percent change, January 1959 from--		January 1959	January 1958	December 1958
	January 1958	December 1958	January 1958	December 1958			
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	r+6	r-9	+1	0	136	142	123
DURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	+10	-10	0	+2	188	201	168
Automotive wholesalers.....	+8	-13	+6	+4	220	218	198
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+1	-10	+8	+4	234	230	211
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	+9	-18	-7	0	164	178	130
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	+8	-20	-9	-1	173	183	130
Electrical appl., TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors	+9	-16	-5	+1	156	171	130
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+10	-19	+1	+1	206	222	153
Furniture wholesalers.....	0	-15	-3	+1	212	238	166
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+15	-21	+3	+1	203	216	148
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	+1	-10	0	+4	242	244	207
Hardware wholesalers.....	+2	-10	-1	+6	249	258	212
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	0	-9	+1	+2	235	232	203
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+13	-5	r+2	-2	130	143	127
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	+20	-2	+1	-4	141	167	141
Construction materials distributors.....	+5	-9	+4	0	121	124	116
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+6	-4	0	+3	196	213	184
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment, distributors*.....	+2	-16	+7	+1	203	215	171
Commercial machinery, equipment distributors*.....	-3	-6	+4	+3	203	192	180
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+8	+1	+1	+4	192	202	190
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	+7	-1	-4	+1	204	209	198
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses*.....	0	-5	-6	-1	215	234	217
Service establishment supply houses.....	+6	-1	+5	+2	121	123	117
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+24	-2	+2	0	230	261	236
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+34	+7	+2	0	255	294	276
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+4	-20	+1	0	136	145	116
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+16	-1	r+24	-2	94	88	
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	+24	-3	+31	-2	108	108	
Waste materials dealers.....	+7	+3	+11	-3	76	67	79
Jewelry wholesalers*.....	+17	-50	-6	+4	275	278	118
NONDURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	r+4	r-8	+1	-2	96	101	90
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+1	-1	+5	-1	65	66	66
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+3	+4	+6	0	84	85	87
Voluntary groups*.....	+7	-2	+9	-3	76	75	77
Retailer-cooperative*.....	+13	+9	+7	-1	69	70	79
Nonaffiliated*.....	+4	0	+5	+4	101	102	100
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	-6	-4	-2	-4	60	61	61
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+2	-7	+2	-1	68	71	64
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	+6	-3	+16	-3	23	22	24
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	+1	-12	+2	-1	27	26	23
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	+2	-15	+12	+1	27	24	22
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+1	-11	-3	-3	24	24	20
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+6	-39	+6	-2	133	130	85
Beer, ale distributors.....	+1	-23	+13	0	71	62	55
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+8	-45	+4	-3	169	173	96
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+7	+5	+2	+1	138	140	141
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+3	0	+3	+2	154	154	152
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+18	+16	+1	-1	83	86	93
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+10	0	0	+3	210	220	206
Tobacco distributors.....	+1	-18	+4	0	60	60	52
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+10	+3	-4	+3	166	173	158
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	+12	-7	-8	+7	171	189	145
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+7	+11	+1	-1	157	154	178
Piece goods converters*.....	+7	+6	+1	+1	172	173	158
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+1	-1	+1	+3	113	113	107
Paper wholesalers.....	0	+2	-1	+2	108	110	107
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers*.....	+3	-20	+13	+5	158	136	106
Farm products (raw materials) merchants <sup>1</sup> .....	+5	-4	r-14	-14	130	161	138
Other nondurable goods wholesalers*.....	+3	-9	+8	-1	120	116	108
Amusement, sporting goods distributors.....	+7	-30	+12	+5	206	210	126
Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers*.....	+1	-3	-7	-4	135	145	135
Coal wholesalers.....	-13	-9	-14	-13	62	72	64
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	+11	+25	+8	-5	127	132	171

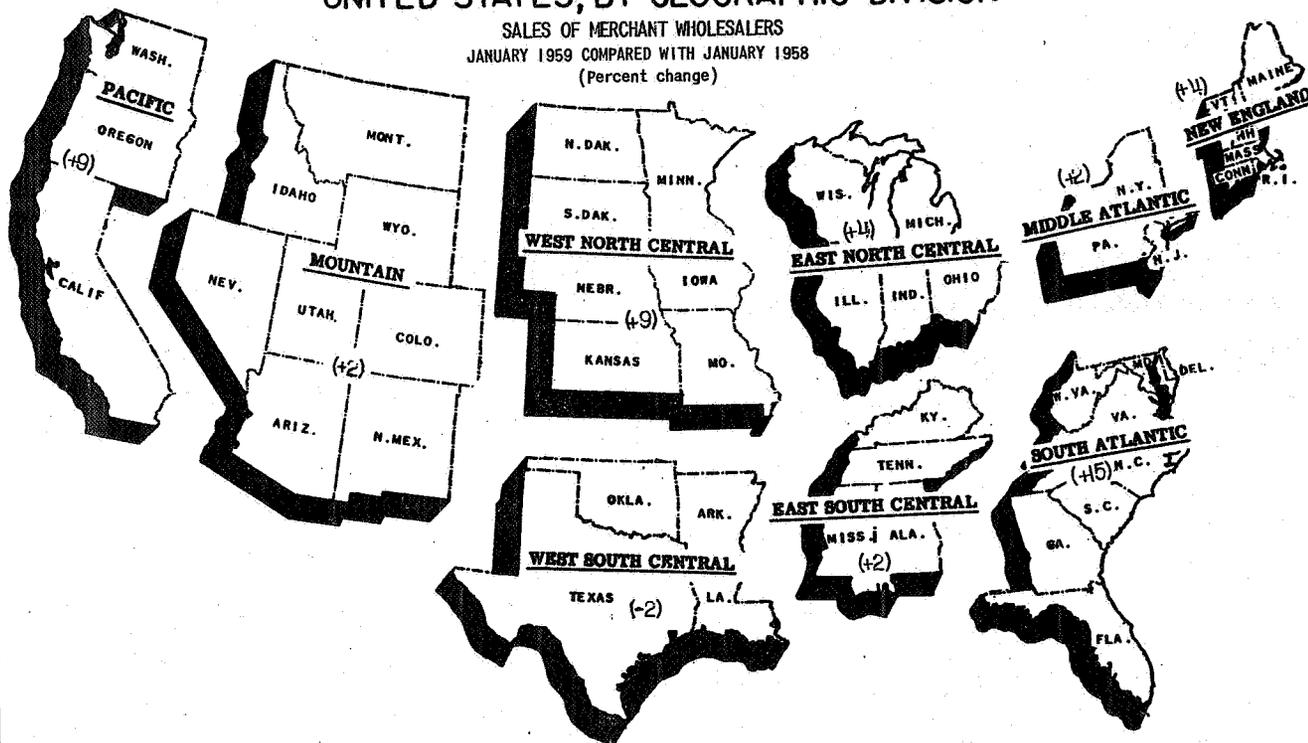
\* See text, page 8.

r Revised since Advance Release dated March 2, 1959.

<sup>1</sup> Percent changes in sales shown for Farm Products (raw materials) Merchants; in Columns 1 and 2 of Table 2, December 1958 report should be changed from +2 to +7 and from -6 to -2.

### UNITED STATES, BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS  
 JANUARY 1959 COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1958  
 (Percent change)



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

JANUARY 1959 COMPARED WITH JANUARY 1958

(Percent)

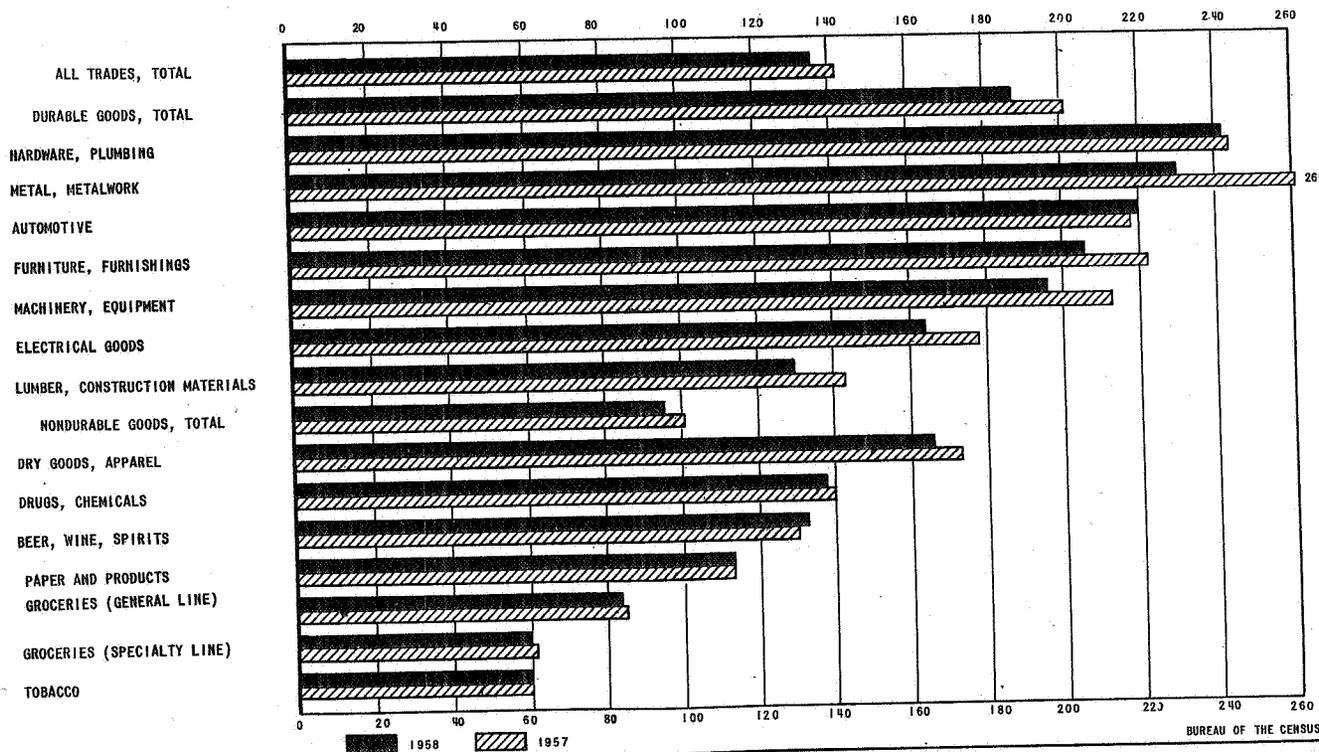


Table 3.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

JANUARY 1959

Kind of business and geographic division (see map page 5)	Sales*		Inventory, end-of-month		Stock-sales ratios		
	Percent change		(at cost)		(percent)		
	January 1959 from--		Percent change, January 1959 from--		January 1959	January 1958	December 1958
	January 1958	December 1958	January 1958	December 1958			
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL <sup>1</sup> .....	+6	-9	+1	0	136	142	123
New England.....	+4	-12	-7	-1	131	147	121
Middle Atlantic.....	+2	-10	+3	0	122	120	108
East North Central.....	+4	-12	+2	0	131	132	114
West North Central.....	+9	-13	+3	0	135	141	115
South Atlantic.....	+15	-3	-2	-2	141	166	144
East South Central.....	+2	-1	0	0	181	180	175
West South Central.....	-2	-10	-4	+4	156	171	137
Mountain.....	+2	-9	+2	-1	152	153	141
Pacific.....	+9	-6	+1	-1	129	140	122
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+1	-10	+8	+4	234	230	211
New England.....	(X)	+2	-11	+2	191	199	144
Middle Atlantic.....	-1	-16	+20	+6	249	194	188
East North Central.....	-3	-26	0	+1	182	174	136
West North Central.....	+18	-7	+11	+4	270	283	224
South Atlantic.....	+11	-2	+10	0	226	225	241
East South Central.....	+18	+5	+12	0	214	238	239
West South Central.....	+10	+10	+12	+5	220	224	241
Mountain.....	+7	+7	+9	+12	226	252	247
Pacific.....	+25	0	+5	0	237	276	233
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	+8	-20	-9	-1	173	183	130
New England.....	-3	-41	-40	-3	198	271	123
Middle Atlantic.....	-1	-13	-13	-1	152	156	125
East North Central.....	+2	-24	-8	-1	172	177	125
West North Central.....	-8	-35	-5	-3	232	221	150
South Atlantic.....	-8	-24	-10	-1	181	185	130
East South Central.....	+5	-29	+7	+6	256	236	185
West South Central.....	-10	-29	-19	-2	238	256	149
Mountain.....	+14	(X)	+8	+7	177	173	133
Pacific.....	+17	-14	-15	-1	123	162	104
Elec. appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts distributors..	+9	-16	-5	+1	156	171	130
New England.....	+21	-17	+4	-3	153	148	100
Middle Atlantic.....	-5	-22	-11	+1	138	149	108
East North Central.....	0	-17	-4	+1	145	157	122
West North Central.....	-2	-16	-2	+1	162	160	132
South Atlantic.....	+15	-12	-14	+4	140	200	133
East South Central.....	(X)	-31	-24	+6	176	187	111
West South Central.....	+15	-15	-1	+4	177	189	154
Mountain.....	+3	-8	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	+10	-16	+3	-1	172	189	150
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+10	-19	+1	+1	206	222	153
New England.....	0	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Middle Atlantic.....	+11	-9	-4	+3	183	220	142
East North Central.....	-4	(X)	+13	-1	224	192	151
West North Central.....	+3	(X)	+8	+5	173	178	146
South Atlantic.....	+5	-24	-10	+7	269	282	155
East South Central.....	+32	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
West South Central.....	(X)	+1	-16	+10	126	176	110
Mountain.....	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	+7	-13	+7	-2	183	185	142
Hardware wholesalers.....	+2	-10	-1	+6	249	258	212
New England.....	-5	-17	(X)	+9	254	233	201
Middle Atlantic.....	+6	-8	-8	+6	187	221	158
East North Central.....	+1	-17	-2	+14	253	267	199
West North Central.....	+5	-8	+10	+8	256	243	219
South Atlantic.....	+1	-7	0	0	305	304	256
East South Central.....	+7	-7	+3	+6	223	222	195
West South Central.....	-1	-5	-10	+5	215	341	266
Mountain.....	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	+7	-5	-1	+2	241	240	221
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	0	-9	+1	+2	235	232	203
New England.....	+5	-8	(X)	+1	281	277	232
Middle Atlantic.....	-1	0	0	-1	191	183	179
East North Central.....	-3	-17	0	+2	198	258	213
West North Central.....	+8	-4	+6	+4	261	279	258
South Atlantic.....	-6	-6	-2	+3	275	215	172
East South Central.....	+12	-14	(X)	+9	187	149	142
West South Central.....	(X)	-4	+1	-1	256	361	260
Mountain.....	+14	-9	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	+9	-4	+7	+4	224	225	207
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+13	-5	+2	-2	130	143	127
New England.....	-4	+6	(X)	-1	95	120	100
Middle Atlantic.....	+5	-3	+3	+2	162	178	149
East North Central.....	+1	-10	+1	-4	155	155	149
West North Central.....	+9	-14	+5	-3	177	232	192
South Atlantic.....	+13	-5	+19	+3	171	163	160
East South Central.....	(X)	-3	(X)	0	122	100	129
West South Central.....	+10	+6	+11	-6	96	98	107
Mountain.....	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	+24	-6	+4	-3	79	102	75

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Alaska (see footnote 2, Table 1).  
See footnotes at end of table.

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

JANUARY 1959

Kind of business and geographic division (see map page 5)	Sales*		Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change				January 1959	January 1958	December 1958
	January 1959 from--		Percent change, January 1959 from--				
	January 1958	December 1958	January 1958	December 1958			
Industrial machinery, equipment supplies distributors.....	+8	+1	+1	+4	192	202	190
New England.....	+5	(X)	+6	+11	188	187	196
Middle Atlantic.....	-12	+3	+6	-5	177	138	189
East North Central.....	+16	+5	-5	-1	112	143	125
West North Central.....	(X)	-18	+13	+3	226	179	188
South Atlantic.....	(X)	-2	(X)	-1	140	213	189
East South Central.....	(X)	+4	+12	(X)	134	318	248
West South Central.....	+12	-12	0	+13	226	258	174
Mountain.....	(X)	-1	-11	-2	267	266	300
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+3	+4	+6	0	84	85	87
New England.....	+3	-1	+4	-2	112	108	119
Middle Atlantic.....	+9	-2	+1	0	74	79	74
East North Central.....	+1	+1	+8	-2	75	69	73
West North Central.....	+6	0	+11	-2	83	82	86
South Atlantic.....	+6	-1	+4	+5	107	106	106
East South Central.....	+7	-3	+14	-1	97	93	99
West South Central.....	-2	+2	+4	+2	94	95	87
Mountain.....	+1	+9	+7	+2	107	102	114
Pacific.....	+16	+28	+5	-2	62	73	77
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	-6	-4	-2	-4	60	61	61
Middle Atlantic.....	-3	-2	-7	-6	57	58	64
East North Central.....	+1	-8	+2	-9	62	63	61
West North Central.....	(X)	-3	(X)	-2	64	64	74
South Atlantic.....	+10	-14	-10	-5	90	101	84
West South Central.....	(X)	+1	-13	-3	51	50	47
Pacific.....	+4	+1	+16	+7	51	52	49
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+1	-11	-3	-3	24	24	20
New England.....	-8	-4	-1	+10	22	21	19
Middle Atlantic.....	-4	-18	(X)	+7	16	16	13
East North Central.....	+1	0	-5	+1	20	20	20
West North Central.....	-6	-16	+5	-3	(X)	(X)	(X)
South Atlantic.....	+10	-19	-16	-2	24	29	15
West South Central.....	-3	-13	+16	+35	21	19	13
Mountain.....	+9	+2	+9	+12	34	33	34
Pacific.....	+8	+2	(X)	0	43	50	50
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+3	0	+3	+2	154	154	152
New England.....	(X)	-6	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Middle Atlantic.....	+5	-8	+4	+3	133	132	135
East North Central.....	0	+2	+3	-1	164	164	172
West North Central.....	-5	-5	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
South Atlantic.....	-3	-2	+3	+4	164	158	155
East South Central.....	-8	-9	0	+3	198	181	185
West South Central.....	-4	+4	+1	+5	164	153	136
Mountain.....	-3	+11	(X)	+5	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	-2	+5	+7	-1	120	139	134
Tobacco distributors.....	+1	-18	+4	0	60	60	52
New England.....	+7	-14	-3	-5	61	69	58
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	-24	+4	0	56	57	48
East North Central.....	+1	-16	+1	0	63	63	53
West North Central.....	-1	-18	+8	-3	66	61	60
South Atlantic.....	+5	-12	+4	+6	55	55	44
West South Central.....	+4	-6	+6	+11	46	47	39
Pacific.....	+11	-27	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+10	+3	-4	+3	166	173	158
New England.....	+7	+14	-23	-12	105	125	223
Middle Atlantic.....	-1	+3	0	+1	154	147	153
West North Central.....	+9	(X)	0	+9	231	261	189
South Atlantic.....	+15	-3	+1	+15	235	279	202
West South Central.....	+1	(X)	(X)	+23	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	-6	(X)	+6	+6	159	171	130

\* 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 GOODSAutomotive 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.

# MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Frederick H. Mueller, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Robert W. Burgess, Director

DECEMBER 1959

## SALES AND INVENTORIES

FOR RELEASE  
February 8, 1960

### Annual Sales

Annual 1959 sales of merchant wholesalers totaled \$128.5 billion, 11 percent above total 1958 sales of \$115.6 billion. Durable goods trades, with 1959 sales estimated at \$55.4 billion, showed a more substantial increase (17%) while sales in the nondurable goods trades, totaling \$73.2 billion, rose 7 percent during the same period. The principal gains were reported by iron, steel and products distributors (41%), lumber, millwork wholesalers (29%), iron and steel scrap dealers (28%), and industrial machinery distributors (25%). Coal wholesalers (down 11 percent) and poultry distributors (9%) experienced the only declines from 1958 sales.

All geographic divisions indicated 12-month 1959 sales above the previous year. The increases ranged from 7 percent in the East South Central Division to 12 percent in the East North Central, Mountain and Pacific Divisions.

### December Sales

December 1959 sales, estimated at \$11.3 billion, were 4 percent higher than November sales and 9 percent above a year ago. The durable goods trades, with sales totaling \$4.6 billion in December, showed a slight (1%) increase over previous month sales and were 9 percent higher than sales a year ago. The nondurable goods trades, with sales of \$6.7 billion, indicated a larger increase over previous month sales (6%) than the durable goods trades; however, the increase over year-ago sales (8%) was about the same as in the durable goods trades.

Most trades reported increases over previous month and year-ago sales. The principal gains over November sales were shown by iron, steel scrap dealers (23%)

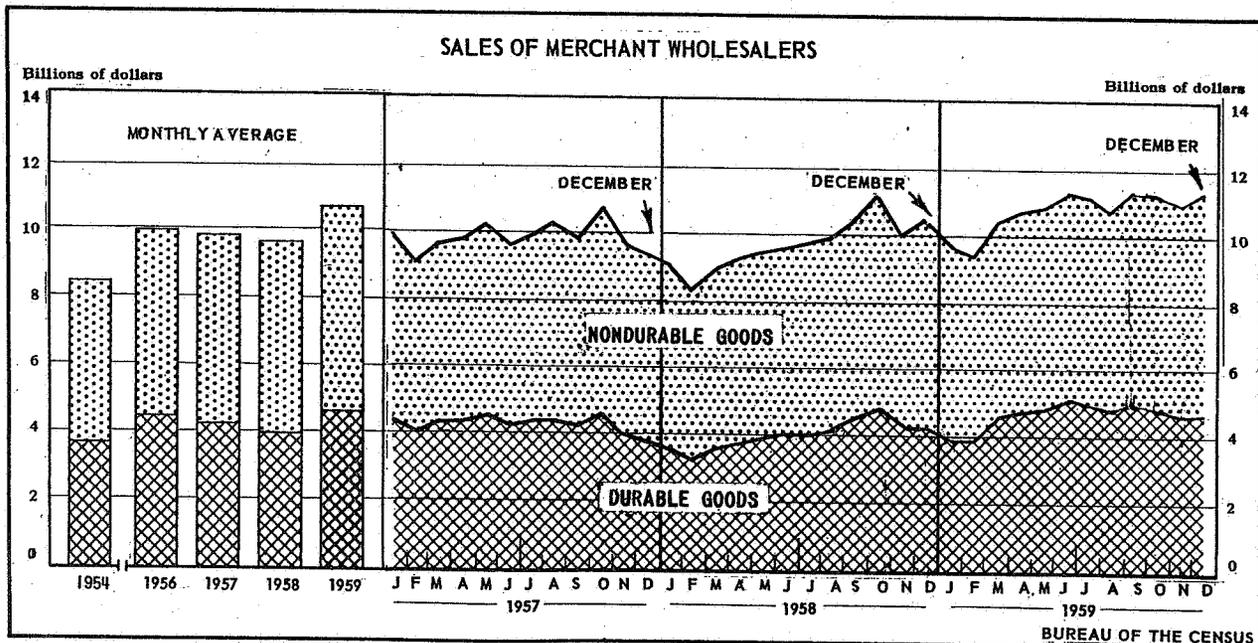
and by wine, distilled spirits wholesalers (28%). Iron, steel and products distributors, with sales up 3 percent over a month earlier, indicated a substantial increase (21%) over last December. Larger gains over year-ago sales were registered by iron, steel scrap dealers (44%), and nonferrous metals distributors (24%). Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers reported the sharpest declines from previous month (21%) as well as year-ago (14%) sales.

### Inventories

Inventories of wholesalers at the end of December were down 2 percent below their November level but were 8 percent higher than a year ago. Durable goods trades reported inventories 2 percent below November but 7 percent above December 1958 stocks. Nondurable goods inventories were reduced 3 percent since November but were 9 percent above their year-ago level.

Most trades reported small to moderate declines from previous month inventories. Reflecting primarily seasonal influences, sharp declines were noted by wine, distilled spirits wholesalers (21%) and beer, ale distributors (20%), while large increases were reported by farm products (raw materials) merchants (16%) and farm supplies wholesalers (8%). Iron, steel and products distributors also indicated an increase (6%) over previous month inventories but registered the sharpest drop (12%) from year-ago inventories.

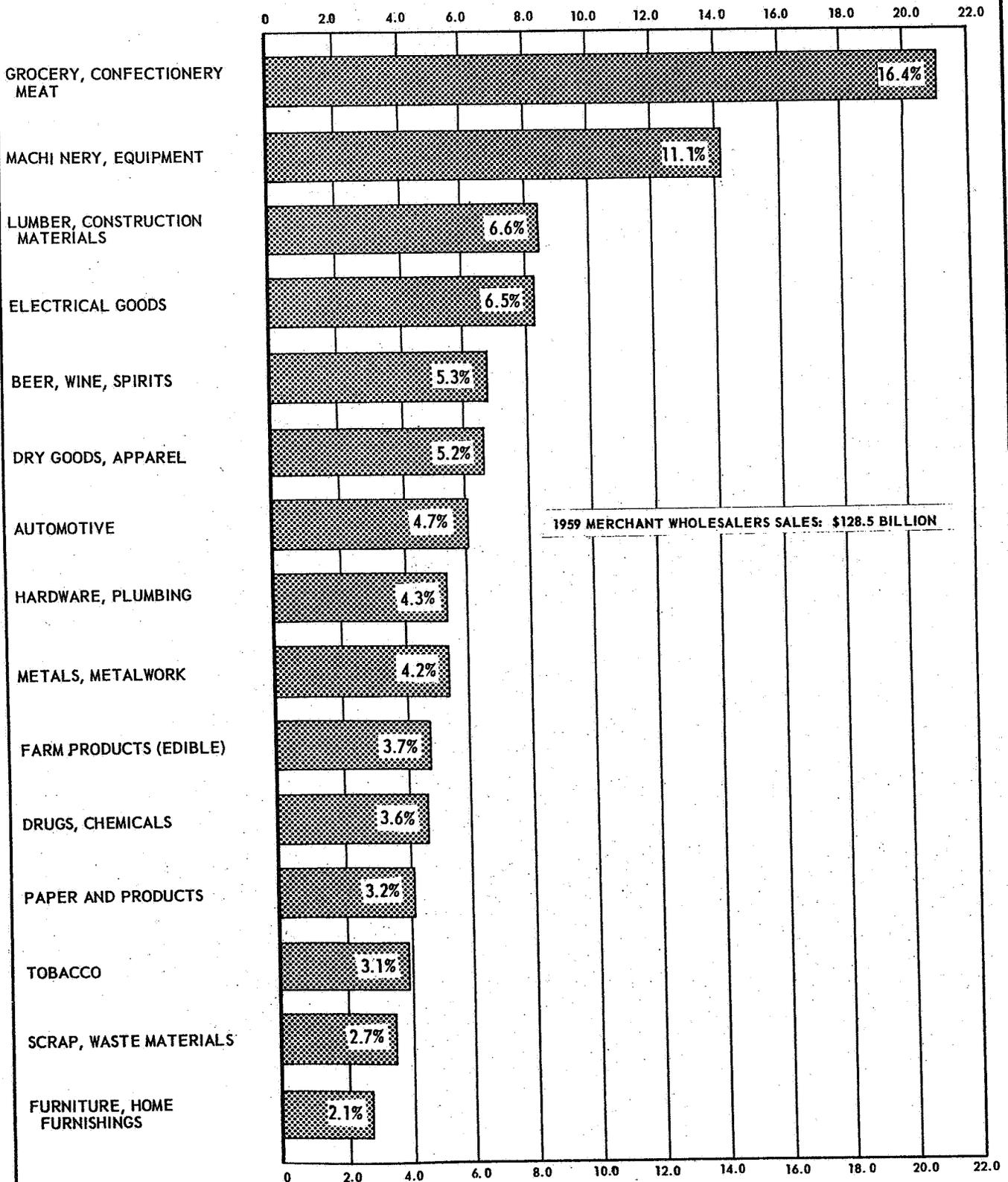
The December 1959 stock-sales ratio for all merchant wholesalers reporting inventories in conjunction with their sales level was 119 percent, down 11 points from November and 1 point below the December 1958 ratio. The December 1959 stock-sales ratio for the durable goods trades was 165 percent, compared with a ratio of 89 percent for the nondurable goods trades.



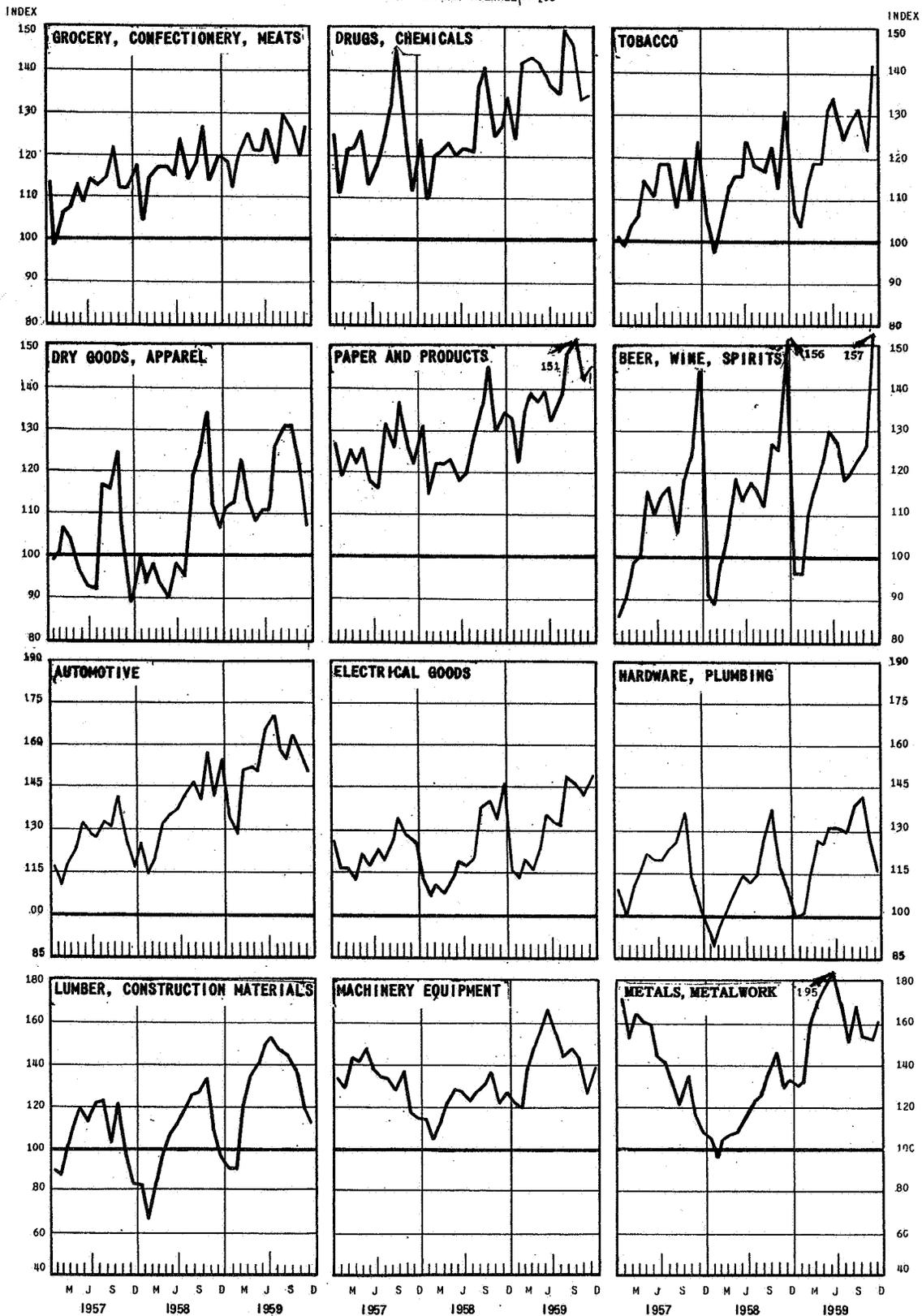
For sale by the Bureau of the Census: single copy--10¢, annual subscription--\$1.00

An advance release of December 1959 data was issued on February 1, 1960

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS IN SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS  
 1959 SALES AND PERCENT OF TOTAL  
 (Billions of dollars)



SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS—KIND OF BUSINESS  
1957, 1958 AND 1959  
1954 MONTHLY AVERAGE = 100



BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

DATA 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 WHOLESALERS<sup>1</sup>—UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

1958 AND 1959

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Kind of business	1958												Total 1958
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
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	115,561
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	47,332
Automotive wholesalers.....	410	378	394	438	449	453	468	484	463	521	467	510	5,435
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	350	324	337	368	371	376	387	379	389	426	379	391	4,477
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	579	550	575	547	578	612	603	615	708	725	676	751	7,519
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	260	263	277	269	292	312	299	298	339	340	322	351	3,622
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	318	287	298	278	287	300	304	316	369	385	354	400	3,896
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	168	170	191	197	192	198	194	218	229	256	226	229	2,468
Furniture wholesalers.....	58	55	59	57	57	62	64	73	75	76	63	68	767
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	110	114	132	140	135	136	130	144	154	180	163	161	1,699
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	362	327	356	386	400	416	412	417	465	506	428	404	4,879
Hardware wholesalers.....	165	151	170	184	186	183	181	183	203	216	183	187	2,192
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors	197	176	186	202	214	233	231	235	263	290	245	217	2,689
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	444	364	458	536	585	610	644	684	698	733	611	530	6,897
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	242	208	248	277	301	307	328	350	369	378	322	296	3,626
Construction materials distributors.....	202	156	210	258	284	303	317	334	330	355	289	234	3,272
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	12,307
Industrial machinery, equipment supplies distrib- utors.....	442	381	391	419	442	408	395	413	438	458	417	470	5,074
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	87	84	91	91	90	95	98	107	111	111	96	94	1,155
Service establishment supply houses.....	113	106	112	117	121	125	116	115	128	135	117	121	1,426
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	295	272	291	300	304	327	338	354	382	407	359	374	4,003
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	200	184	197	209	208	226	238	256	271	289	243	250	2,771
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	94	88	94	91	97	100	99	98	111	118	116	123	1,229
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	223	194	237	232	217	215	214	233	249	277	268	261	2,820
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	119	108	133	128	111	114	111	130	140	151	155	153	1,553
Waste materials dealers.....	104	86	104	104	106	101	103	103	109	125	113	108	1,266
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	68,229
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	20,249
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	729	672	688	715	727	706	753	713	750	785	701	726	8,665
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	606	528	612	596	595	620	637	561	574	629	565	597	7,120
Confectionery wholesalers.....	56	51	54	53	54	53	54	53	55	62	58	61	664
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	315	262	292	319	312	297	341	319	327	353	320	345	3,802
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	377	353	403	450	446	416	432	380	371	404	387	436	4,855
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	142	120	136	156	143	134	146	153	156	167	164	170	1,787
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	235	233	267	294	303	282	285	227	215	237	224	266	3,068
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	429	426	470	501	564	539	560	552	533	603	597	738	6,512
Beer, ale distributors.....	161	151	172	198	226	227	253	245	210	211	191	211	2,456
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	268	275	298	303	339	312	307	308	323	392	405	526	4,056
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	349	309	336	341	345	338	342	339	381	397	350	358	4,185
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	228	202	219	214	215	211	218	215	248	259	227	233	2,689
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	100	88	95	100	102	98	94	96	103	109	97	102	1,184
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	21	19	22	26	28	29	30	29	29	29	26	23	311
Tobacco distributors.....	284	262	282	302	311	310	332	315	312	330	301	349	3,690
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	475	445	463	446	429	465	451	564	586	635	531	507	5,997
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	161	157	180	163	150	143	160	227	228	247	210	194	2,220
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines)	192	174	168	167	164	190	182	207	219	230	189	185	2,267
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	324	285	300	301	303	291	295	315	336	357	321	330	3,758
Paper wholesalers.....	287	251	264	263	266	255	259	276	295	306	274	281	3,277
Coal wholesalers.....	103	98	86	71	81	80	67	75	83	90	84	99	1,017
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	123	124	146	160	138	116	109	116	125	122	104	109	1,492

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. ESTIMATED MONTHLY SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS<sup>1</sup>--UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS--Continued

1958 AND 1959

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Kind of business	1959												Total 12 mos.	
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1959	1958
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	9,534	9,262	10,410	10,709	10,757	11,203	11,095	10,653	11,366	11,326	10,890	11,312	128,517	115,561
DURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	3,829	3,837	4,471	4,697	4,794	5,118	4,917	4,707	4,919	4,844	4,594	4,632	55,359	47,332
Automotive wholesalers.....	444	424	501	499	497	547	562	520	517	536	515	498	6,060	5,435
Automotive equipment, tire, tube wholesalers.....	352	333	375	392	389	429	419	405	428	439	429	379	4,769	4,477
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	612	595	631	619	657	713	702	695	779	769	750	787	8,309	7,519
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	281	278	303	300	322	347	331	336	375	367	353	365	3,958	3,622
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	331	317	328	319	335	366	371	359	404	403	397	421	4,351	3,896
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	185	199	231	231	222	223	211	225	237	248	234	239	2,685	2,468
Furniture wholesalers.....	58	60	67	67	67	70	69	72	74	76	71	72	823	767
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	127	139	164	164	155	153	143	153	163	172	163	167	1,863	1,699
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	365	371	422	461	459	484	482	475	511	517	460	424	5,431	4,879
Hardware wholesalers.....	168	169	196	212	208	210	202	201	219	216	195	190	2,386	2,192
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors	197	202	226	250	251	274	279	274	292	301	265	234	3,045	2,689
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	503	502	664	746	773	823	838	801	797	754	655	612	8,468	6,897
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	291	294	389	403	426	452	466	444	434	399	351	333	4,682	3,626
Construction materials distributors.....	212	209	275	343	347	371	373	357	363	355	304	279	3,786	3,272
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	1,013	1,004	1,153	1,244	1,297	1,386	1,287	1,200	1,240	1,201	1,138	1,165	14,328	12,307
Industrial machinery, equipment supplies distributors	477	468	528	553	572	608	535	517	533	520	501	545	6,365	5,074
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	93	89	103	101	100	117	115	127	129	118	113	114	1,319	1,155
Service establishment supply houses.....	120	124	138	143	150	149	143	127	144	153	132	140	1,663	1,426
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	361	368	448	476	490	539	464	419	474	430	426	455	5,350	4,003
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	267	271	334	357	364	403	350	312	340	305	292	302	3,897	2,771
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	94	96	114	119	126	136	114	107	134	125	134	152	1,451	1,229
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	259	281	323	322	292	301	272	260	271	289	309	341	3,520	2,820
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	148	169	192	187	159	163	144	129	139	159	179	220	1,988	1,553
Waste materials dealers.....	111	112	131	135	134	139	129	131	132	130	129	121	1,534	1,266
NONDURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	5,705	5,425	5,939	6,012	5,963	6,084	6,178	5,946	6,447	6,482	6,296	6,680	73,157	68,229
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	1,715	1,619	1,725	1,775	1,734	1,729	1,822	1,709	1,871	1,811	1,737	1,828	21,076	20,249
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	752	713	737	758	753	750	793	739	803	791	740	768	9,097	8,665
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	572	560	609	616	589	572	612	589	640	609	612	646	7,226	7,120
Confectionery wholesalers.....	57	56	57	56	56	57	59	55	59	63	64	71	710	664
Meats, meat products wholesalers.....	333	291	322	346	336	350	357	325	370	348	322	344	4,044	3,802
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	382	347	375	407	400	442	424	362	393	383	391	432	4,738	4,855
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	145	121	125	132	128	133	129	121	143	136	155	160	1,628	1,787
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	237	226	250	274	272	309	295	241	249	247	235	272	3,107	3,068
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	453	454	521	551	578	614	603	559	569	584	595	743	6,824	6,512
Beer, ale distributors.....	163	165	189	213	240	272	282	261	236	210	188	223	2,642	2,456
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	290	289	332	337	338	342	321	298	333	373	407	520	4,180	4,056
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	375	348	398	402	393	391	383	380	419	410	374	376	4,649	4,185
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines)...	234	218	249	243	235	238	238	235	265	263	243	239	2,900	2,689
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	118	106	121	126	124	118	111	111	120	114	105	113	1,387	1,184
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	23	24	28	33	34	35	33	34	35	32	27	25	363	311
Tobacco distributors.....	287	277	301	317	318	349	358	332	343	351	326	380	3,939	3,690
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	524	530	583	538	511	526	528	597	627	624	568	509	6,665	5,997
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	180	197	214	197	192	174	190	240	240	231	211	167	2,433	2,220
Dry goods wholesalers (general & specialty lines)...	206	196	224	213	196	226	235	242	254	256	293	222	2,703	2,267
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	327	301	333	343	339	344	326	343	366	373	350	358	4,103	3,758
Paper wholesalers.....	288	261	292	301	299	303	288	300	323	322	299	305	3,581	3,277
Coal wholesalers.....	90	81	79	73	73	71	61	65	73	76	78	86	906	1,017
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	136	145	172	174	145	119	112	115	125	107	107	116	1,573	1,492

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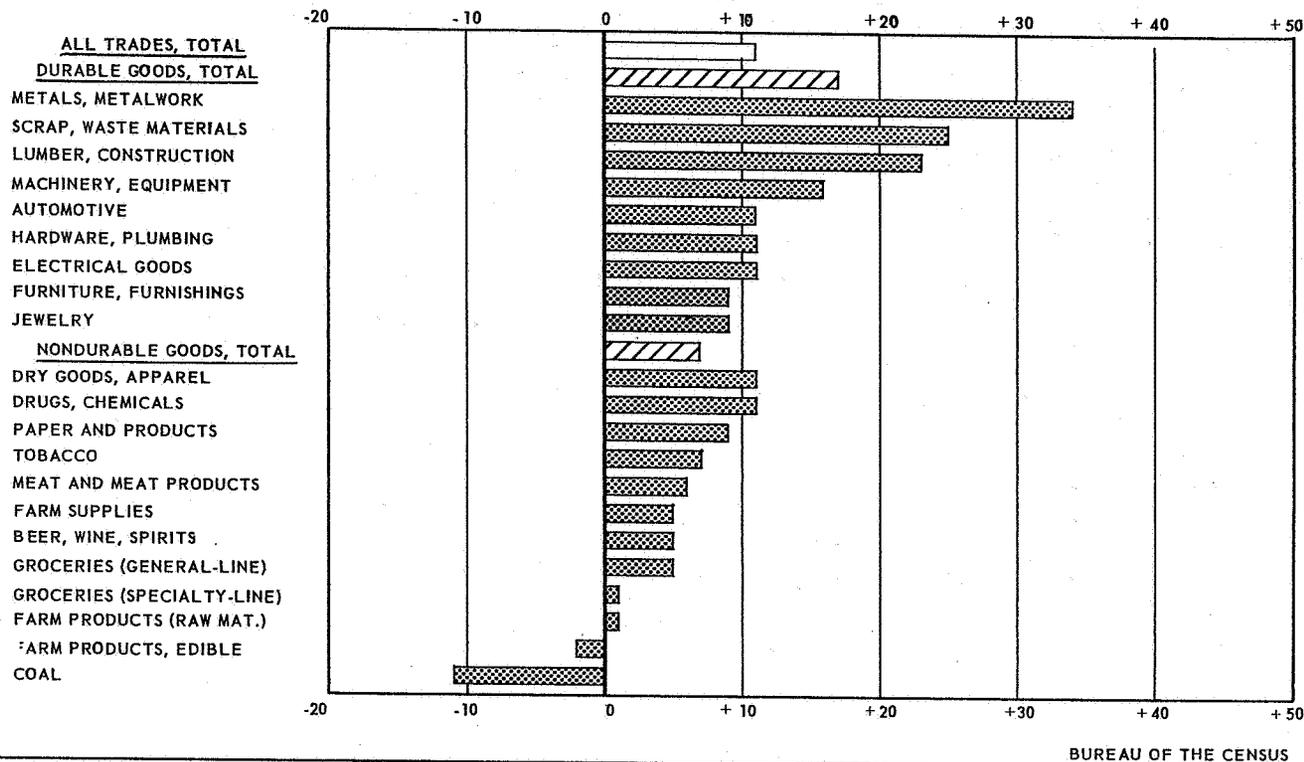
<sup>1</sup> Merchant wholesalers total and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately. Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.<sup>2</sup> Excludes Hawaii and Alaska which in 1954, according to the Census of Business, had wholesale sales equivalent to about 0.3 percent and 0.04 percent respectively, of the United States total.

Table 2. TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS  
DECEMBER 1959

Kind of business	Sales*			Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios		
	December 1959 from--		12 mos. 1959 from 12 mos. 1958	December 1959 from--		December 1959	December 1958	November 1959
	December 1958	November 1959		December 1958	November 1959			
	(percent change)			(percent change)		(percent)		
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	+9	+4	+11	+8	-2	119	120	130
DURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	+9	+1	+17	+7	-2	165	164	169
Automotive wholesalers.....	-2	-3	+11	+9	+1	211	192	194
Automotive equipment, tire, tube wholesalers.....	-3	-12	+7	+7	-1	223	206	203
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	+5	+5	+11	+6	-6	132	130	146
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	+4	+3	+9	+3	-6	122	126	136
Electrical appl., TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	+5	+6	+12	+9	-6	142	135	155
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+4	+2	+9	+8	-4	142	143	151
Furniture wholesalers.....	+6	+1	+7	+9	-4	154	151	163
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+4	+2	+10	+8	-4	136	139	146
Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+5	-8	+11	+9	-2	216	204	204
Hardware wholesalers.....	+2	-2	+9	+8	-1	230	211	227
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	+8	-12	+13	+9	-2	203	196	184
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+15	-7	+23	+10	-1	123	120	117
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	+13	-5	+29	+13	-1	139	135	131
Construction materials distributors.....	+19	-8	+16	+7	-1	112	110	107
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+11	+2	+16	+12	-1	210	202	219
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment, distributors*.....	+20	+5	+12	+8	-2	171	159	182
Commercial machines, equipment distributors*.....	+7	+5	+9	+10	0	148	158	153
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+16	+7	+25	+4	0	172	187	193
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	+21	+1	+14	+3	+1	175	191	191
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses*.....	+25	+9	+11	+8	+5	123	140	140
Service establishment supply houses.....	+16	+6	+17	+8	-1	133	135	135
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+22	+7	+34	-9	+5	162	212	158
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+21	+3	+41	-12	+6	181	247	172
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+24	+13	+18	+19	0	95	93	105
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+31	+10	+25	-3	-5	72	91	82
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	+44	+23	+28	-10	-10	66	97	88
Waste materials dealers.....	+12	-6	+21	+9	+3	85	82	73
Jewelry wholesalers*.....	-3	+8	+9	+5	-13	139	111	190
NONDURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	+8	+6	+7	+9	-3	89	87	100
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+6	+5	+4	+6	-4	68	67	75
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+6	+4	+5	+2	-5	85	88	91
Voluntary groups*.....	+5	+4	+7	+1	-6	75	78	83
Retailer-cooperatives*.....	+16	+3	+9	+3	-1	68	72	71
Nonaffiliated*.....	+3	+1	+3	+2	-5	103	104	109
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+8	+6	+1	+17	-3	76	69	85
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+16	+11	+7	+6	-6	53	57	68
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	0	+7	+6	-4	-4	21	22	23
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	-1	+10	-2	+5	-8	22	22	26
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	-6	+3	-9	+7	0	20	19	22
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+2	+16	+1	+4	-13	23	24	30
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+1	+25	+5	+6	-20	77	76	118
Beer, ale distributors.....	+6	+19	+8	-5	-20	42	47	60
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	-1	+28	+3	+9	-21	92	89	146
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+5	+1	+11	+8	-3	136	138	140
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+3	-2	+8	+7	-4	149	153	155
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+11	+8	+17	+14	+1	96	92	98
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+9	-7	+17	+3	+1	238	250	214
Tobacco distributors.....	+9	+17	+7	+8	-12	48	49	65
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	0	-10	+11	+10	-3	163	151	158
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	-14	-21	+10	+17	-6	183	151	168
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+20	-5	+19	0	-3	149	153	152
Piece goods converters*.....	+12	-4	+13	+23	+1	160	149	154
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+8	+2	+9	+4	-2	110	116	115
Paper wholesalers.....	+9	+2	+9	+4	-1	111	116	116
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers*.....	+16	+3	+9	+3	-6	103	113	110
Farm products (raw materials) merchants*.....	+15	+9	+1	+20	+16	136	125	125
Other nondurable goods wholesalers*.....	+3	+6	+6	+5	-8	101	101	111
Amusement, sporting goods distributors.....	+8	-1	+10	+16	-14	106	105	105
Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers*.....	+6	-1	+6	+16	-4	126	121	121
Coal wholesalers.....	-13	+10	-11	0	-4	85	68	68
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	+6	+8	+5	+5	+8	223	210	215

\* See text, page 11.

**SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS ON SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--  
TWELVE MONTHS OF 1959 COMPARED WITH TWELVE MONTHS OF 1958**  
(Percent Change)



**STOCK-SALES RATIOS OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS IN SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS  
DECEMBER 1959 COMPARED WITH DECEMBER 1958**  
(Percent)

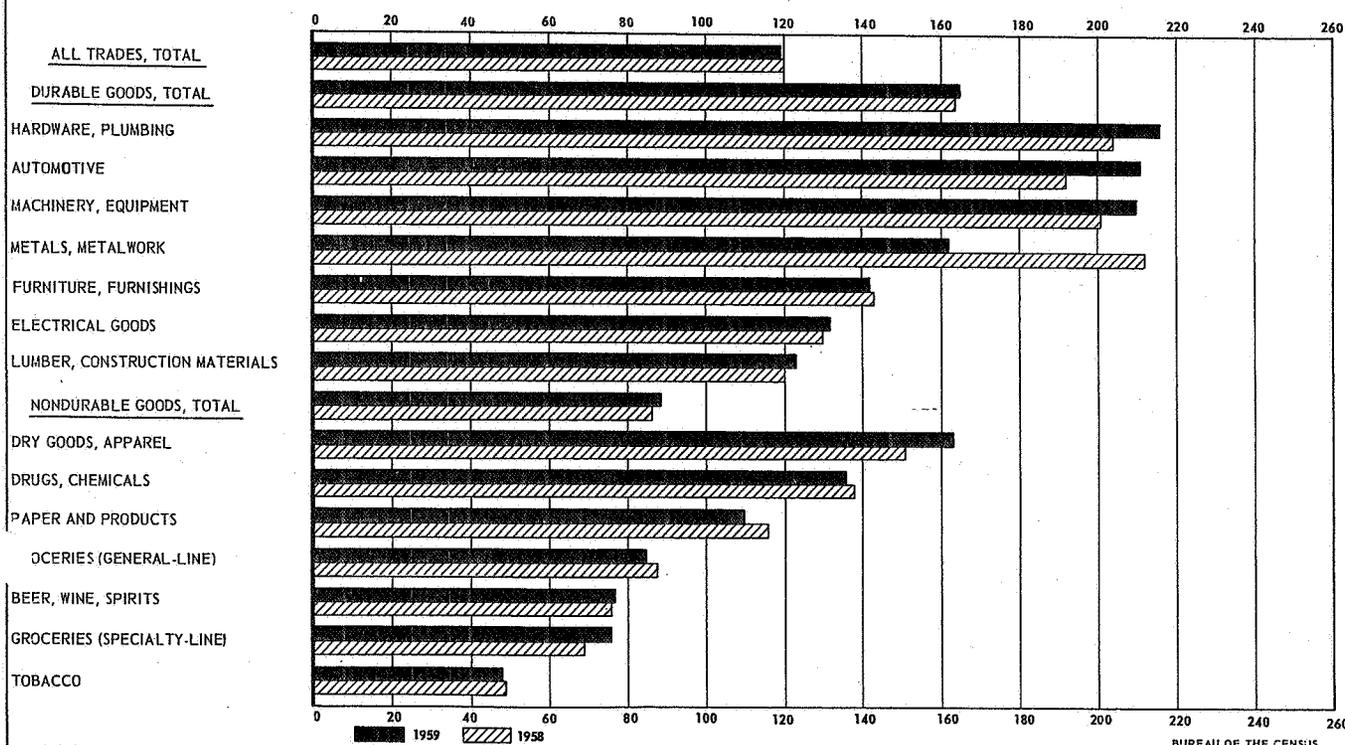


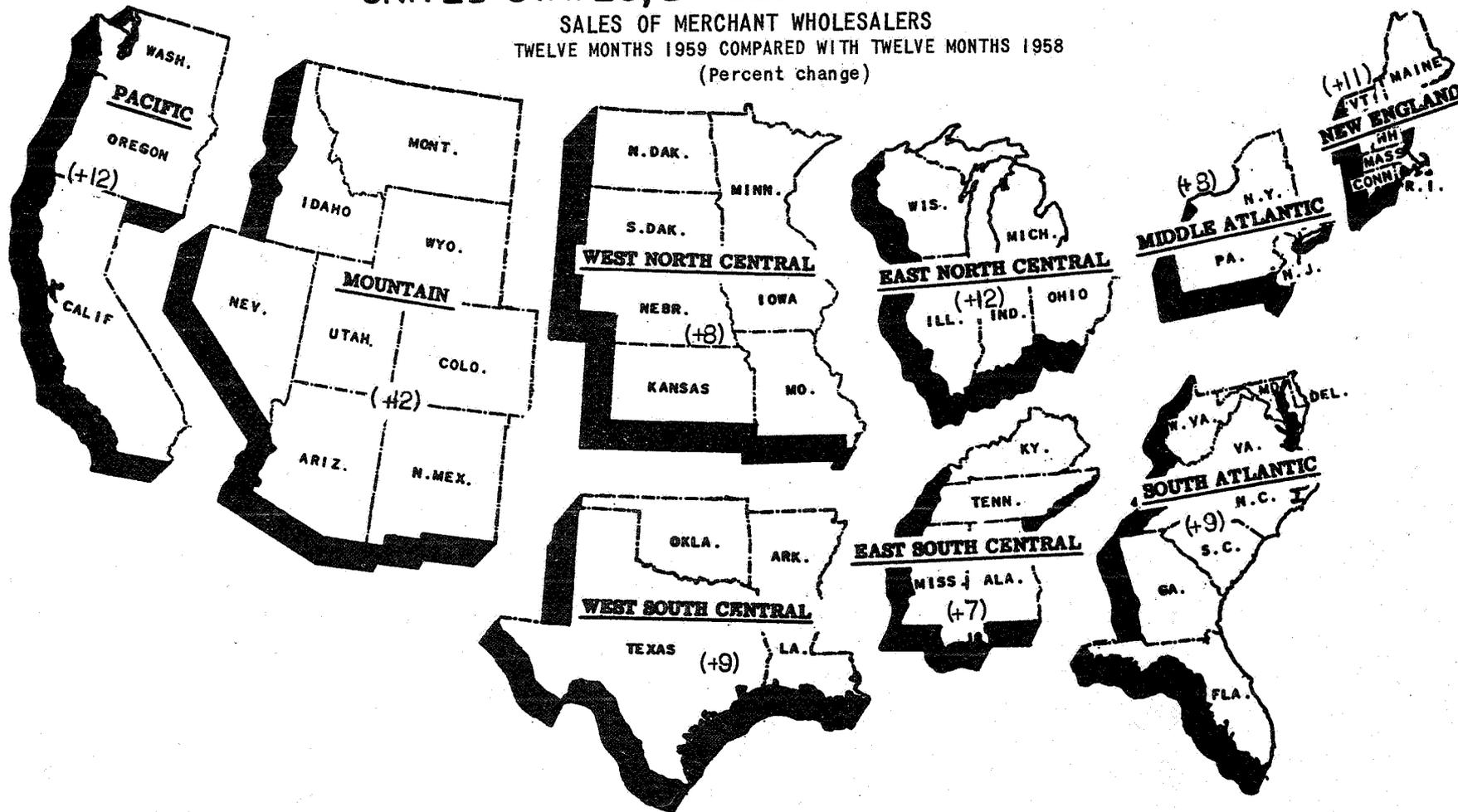
Table 3. TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS  
DECEMBER 1959

Kind of business and geographic division (see map page 9)	Sales*			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios		
	December 1959 from--		12 mos. 1959 from 12 mos. 1958	December 1959 from--		December 1959	December 1958	November 1959
	December 1958	November 1959		December 1958	November 1959			
	(percent change)			(percent change)		(percent)		
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	+9	+4	+11	+8	-2	119	120	130
New England.....	+7	+5	+11	+5	-5	105	106	116
Middle Atlantic.....	+6	+4	+8	+4	-3	100	99	106
East North Central.....	+10	+6	+12	+4	-3	112	121	125
West North Central.....	+4	+7	+8	+9	-1	133	136	145
South Atlantic.....	+8	+2	+9	+6	-5	141	140	155
East South Central.....	+12	+4	+7	+13	+6	179	161	174
West South Central.....	+8	+5	+9	+16	-1	133	121	140
Mountain.....	+13	+8	+12	+8	-4	116	123	132
Pacific.....	+9	+1	+12	+11	-4	122	118	131
Automotive equipment, tire, tube wholesalers.....	-3	-12	+7	+7	-1	223	206	203
New England.....	(X)	-8	(X)	-5	+1	105	134	103
Middle Atlantic.....	-8	-5	+7	-1	-2	147	162	149
East North Central.....	-13	-12	+11	+19	-5	243	173	223
West North Central.....	-18	-21	+6	+6	-4	242	192	209
South Atlantic.....	0	-15	+10	+7	0	221	216	194
East South Central.....	-5	-17	+10	+9	+2	338	312	305
West South Central.....	-4	-10	+12	+13	+8	311	252	251
Mountain.....	0	-2	+14	+11	0	313	288	297
Pacific.....	+8	-5	+13	+6	-2	179	190	178
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	+4	+3	+9	+3	-6	122	126	136
New England.....	(X)	+13	(X)	+5	-6	(X)	(X)	(X)
Middle Atlantic.....	+12	-5	+6	-8	-5	114	134	113
East North Central.....	+10	+16	+11	+3	-9	114	122	149
West North Central.....	+2	+20	+7	+4	0	136	133	163
South Atlantic.....	+6	+12	+6	+3	-2	126	132	150
East South Central.....	+22	-14	+14	+3	+1	150	170	130
West South Central.....	-4	+2	+6	+11	-4	168	147	17
Mountain.....	-5	+3	+15	+22	-4	128	102	11
Pacific.....	+2	+1	+15	+10	-10	111	109	125
Elec. appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts distributors.....	+5	+6	+12	+9	-6	142	135	155
New England.....	+22	+14	+20	-7	+4	100	113	110
Middle Atlantic.....	+8	+5	+10	+3	0	118	123	125
East North Central.....	+2	-3	+14	+9	-9	146	138	153
West North Central.....	-10	+2	+9	+9	-4	151	126	186
South Atlantic.....	+13	+2	+15	+21	-2	139	146	142
East South Central.....	+3	+13	+5	+13	-10	191	182	258
West South Central.....	0	0	+10	+13	-1	221	192	222
Pacific.....	+2	+1	+20	+25	-7	138	112	150
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+4	+2	+9	+8	-4	142	143	151
New England.....	-7	+26	+6	(X)	-3	(X)	(X)	(X)
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	-10	+9	0	0	126	124	112
East North Central.....	+22	+13	+9	+18	-10	136	146	176
West North Central.....	+7	+4	+10	+5	-8	202	179	217
South Atlantic.....	+14	+14	+15	+13	-9	146	160	185
East South Central.....	+7	(X)	+4	+8	-8	173	185	205
West South Central.....	+13	+3	+18	+12	-6	136	139	144
Hardware wholesalers.....	+2	-2	+9	+8	-1	230	211	227
New England.....	+11	-13	+8	+7	-1	249	259	213
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	0	+9	+7	+2	225	201	212
East North Central.....	+1	+1	+13	+12	+4	225	202	217
West North Central.....	-12	-16	+4	+3	0	266	240	216
South Atlantic.....	+5	-3	+10	-2	-1	221	201	236
East South Central.....	-5	-4	+5	+8	-5	223	198	225
West South Central.....	+5	-2	+12	+11	-7	264	232	283
Mountain.....	(X)	+2	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Pacific.....	+6	0	+14	+4	-4	206	210	216
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	+8	-12	+13	+9	-2	203	196	184
New England.....	(X)	-7	(X)	-4	+2	146	220	148
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	-12	+6	+9	-1	176	167	164
East North Central.....	+1	-15	+15	+5	-1	230	236	193
West North Central.....	+11	-6	+15	+6	0	200	210	188
South Atlantic.....	+6	-9	+10	+7	-3	195	186	185
West South Central.....	-8	-25	+11	(X)	-6	281	194	222
Pacific.....	+8	-6	+22	+4	-1	188	202	174
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+15	-7	+23	+10	-1	123	120	117
New England.....	+26	-4	+10	+9	-9	99	113	104
Middle Atlantic.....	+15	-11	+14	+4	-1	112	116	111
East North Central.....	+12	-5	+12	+12	+2	156	159	146
West North Central.....	+4	+1	+14	+7	0	98	98	115
South Atlantic.....	+9	-11	+12	+4	0	141	133	127
West South Central.....	-2	-9	+10	+2	+5	153	140	1
Pacific.....	+23	0	+22	(X)	-2	99	85	1

See footnotes at end of table.

# UNITED STATES, BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS  
 TWELVE MONTHS 1959 COMPARED WITH TWELVE MONTHS 1958  
 (Percent change)



UNITED STATES (+1)

Table 3. TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued  
DECEMBER 1959

Kind of business and geographic division (see map page 9)	Sales*			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios		
	December 1959 from--		12 mos. 1959 from 12 mos. 1958	December 1959 from--		December 1959	December 1958	November 1959
	December 1958	November 1959		December 1958	November 1959			
	(percent change)			(percent change)		(percent)		
Industrial machinery, equipment supplies distributors.....	+16	+7	+25	+4	0	172	187	193
Middle Atlantic.....	+10	+9	+11	-4	0	141	165	164
East North Central.....	+18	+7	+25	+4	-2	152	178	174
West North Central.....	(X)	+14	(X)	(X)	-1	159	153	164
South Atlantic.....	(X)	-12	(X)	+11	0	230	214	229
East South Central.....	(X)	-10	(X)	(X)	-5	249	211	237
West South Central.....	+14	+23	+32	+2	+3	174	194	206
Mountain.....	+9	+19	+26	-15	-7	229	249	300
Pacific.....	+6	-8	+16	+7	0	231	232	220
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+6	+4	+5	+2	-5	85	88	91
New England.....	+1	+7	+1	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Middle Atlantic.....	-1	+5	+8	-7	+2	101	108	103
East North Central.....	+10	+1	+7	+3	-7	81	86	88
West North Central.....	+5	0	+6	+2	0	79	81	78
South Atlantic.....	+4	+1	+3	+7	-6	118	107	132
East South Central.....	-1	+3	+3	-8	-9	98	112	108
West South Central.....	+2	+2	-1	+2	-10	84	83	95
Mountain.....	+13	+2	+5	-7	-14	73	74	81
Pacific.....	+20	+4	+9	+4	-1	69	74	74
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+8	+6	+1	+17	-3	76	69	85
Middle Atlantic.....	+9	+14	+2	+23	-7	63	58	76
East North Central.....	+6	+4	+2	+7	+1	90	88	94
South Atlantic.....	+24	-7	0	(X)	+4	109	120	97
West South Central.....	+11	+2	0	+26	+7	78	76	75
Pacific.....	+3	+9	+8	(X)	-2	54	48	60
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+2	+16	+1	+4	-13	23	24	30
New England.....	(X)	0	(X)	(X)	(X)	10	11	12
Middle Atlantic.....	+13	+18	+6	+1	-7	16	18	19
East North Central.....	+5	+11	+2	-13	-5	16	19	21
West North Central.....	(X)	+25	(X)	+10	-9	24	24	31
South Atlantic.....	+8	+21	+7	+9	-16	17	19	23
West South Central.....	-2	+14	-1	+14	-19	21	21	32
Pacific.....	-3	+1	+1	+7	-12	38	36	38
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+3	-2	+8	+7	-4	149	153	155
New England.....	+5	+10	+7	(X)	-7	152	163	184
Middle Atlantic.....	+12	-7	+11	+11	-4	124	136	119
East North Central.....	+6	+5	+8	+1	-3	132	145	146
West North Central.....	+2	+2	+6	+5	-4	147	134	121
South Atlantic.....	+5	+2	+6	+3	-7	178	183	200
East South Central.....	+2	+7	+5	+7	-4	140	140	160
West South Central.....	+2	+8	+5	+8	-6	187	182	214
Mountain.....	+2	+3	+7	+10	-4	180	175	210
Pacific.....	-3	0	+6	+5	-2	149	141	159
Tobacco distributors.....	+9	+17	+7	+8	-12	48	49	65
New England.....	+7	+25	+6	0	-7	43	48	73
Middle Atlantic.....	+10	+13	+10	+18	-8	57	51	68
East North Central.....	+4	+22	+7	+5	-6	41	42	54
West North Central.....	-5	+4	+4	-4	-9	66	75	67
South Atlantic.....	+15	+20	+7	+5	-16	44	48	63
East South Central.....	+4	+19	+9	+5	-13	47	48	65
West South Central.....	+10	+16	+8	+12	(X)	36	38	51
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	0	-10	+11	+10	-3	163	151	158
New England.....	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	-8	+13	+11	0	139	135	138
East North Central.....	-3	-15	+6	+15	-6	218	172	209
West North Central.....	-9	-25	+12	+5	-3	278	244	238
South Atlantic.....	+9	-12	+11	+3	-15	139	152	145
Pacific.....	+7	-13	+9	+3	-14	101	129	117

\* See text, page 11.

X Withheld due to extreme variability of reported data.

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## 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), based on weighted

sales of identical firms. United States trend estimates, based on the "composite" dollar volume estimates shown in table 1, may, in some instances, be outside the range indicated by the percentage changes based on identical firms due to differences in treatment of "births" and "deaths" in the two methods of estimating as well as the sampling errors associated with these estimates. (See "estimating procedure" and "reliability of the data" below.)

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 how-

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

ever, 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 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 July 1958--June 1959, for the ratios of current month to previous month sales and current month to year-ago sales, for four months--September 1958, October 1958, December 1958, and March 1959. 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 and their medians for the period July 1958 through June 1959. 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-- July 1958 to June 1959		Sampling error of the ratio of current month sales compared to--				Kind of business	Sampling error of monthly dollar value of sales-- July 1958 to June 1959		Sampling error of the ratio of current month sales compared to--			
			Previous month sales		Year-ago sales					Previous month sales		Year-ago sales	
	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	0.8-1.5	1.0	0.6-0.6	0.6	0.6-1.1	0.8	NONDURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	1.2-1.8	1.6	0.7-1.1	0.8	1.0-1.3	1.2
DURABLE GOODS, TOTAL.....	1.3-2.0	1.6	0.6-1.1	0.9	1.2-2.0	1.5	Grocery, confectionery, meat.....	2-2	2	1-1	1	1-2	2
Automotive.....	4-11	7	2-6	3	4-11	8	General-line grocery.....	2-3	2	1-2	1	1-2	2
Automotive, equipment, tire, tube...	2-6	3	2-3	2	3-3	3	Specialty-line grocery.....	5-8	7	3-3	3	4-6	5
Electrical, electronics, appliances...	2-4	3	1-2	1	2-3	2	Confectionery.....	4-8	5	2-4	3	3-5	4
Electrical apparatus, supplies.....	2-4	3	2-3	2	3-4	3	Meat, meat products.....	4-6	5	2-4	3	3-4	4
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts.....	3-5	4	2-3	2	2-5	3	Farm products (edible).....	3-5	4	1-2	2	2-4	3
Furniture, home furnishings.....	2-5	3	2-5	3	3-5	3	Poultry, poultry products.....	5-7	6	2-4	3	5-5	5
Furniture.....	4-7	6	3-5	4	4-8	6	Fresh fruit, vegetables.....	3-7	5	2-3	2	3-4	4
Home furnishings, floor coverings...	3-6	4	3-5	4	3-5	4	Beer, wine, distilled spirits.....	2-4	3	1-3	2	2-3	2
Hardware, plumbing, heating goods.....	2-3	2	1-2	1	2-2	2	Beer, ale.....	3-6	5	2-3	3	2-4	3
Hardware.....	2-4	3	1-2	2	2-3	2	Wine, distilled spirits.....	3-4	4	2-3	2	3-4	3
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies.....	3-5	4	2-3	2	3-3	3	Drugs, chemicals, allied products...	2-3	3	1-2	2	2-2	2
Lumber, construction materials.....	2-4	2	2-4	2	2-3	2	Drugs (general, specialty lines)...	3-5	4	2-2	2	2-3	3
Lumber, millwork.....	3-6	4	2-6	2	3-6	4	Industrial chemicals, explosives...	3-6	5	3-3	3	3-4	3
Construction materials.....	3-6	5	2-4	3	3-5	4	Paint, varnish.....	4-6	5	2-4	3	3-5	4
Machinery, equipment, supplies.....	2-3	3	2-2	2	2-3	3	Tobacco.....	2-4	3	2-2	2	2-2	2
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies.....	3-6	4	2-3	2	4-5	4	Dry goods, apparel.....	2-4	3	2-3	2	3-3	3
Professional equipment, supplies...	4-6	5	2-3	3	4-6	5	Clothing, furnishings, footwear...	4-8	6	3-6	5	5-5	5
Service establishment supplies.....	5-7	5	2-4	3	4-7	5	Dry goods (general, specialty lines).....	4-6	5	2-4	4	4-6	5
Metals, metalwork (except scrap).....	3-5	4	2-3	2	3-4	3	Paper, allied products.....	2-3	3	1-2	2	2-2	2
Iron, steel and products.....	4-6	6	2-4	3	4-7	5	Paper.....	2-4	3	2-2	2	2-3	2
Nonferrous metals.....	3-4	4	1-2	2	3-6	4	Coal.....	3-5	4	1-2	2	2-4	2
Scrap, waste materials.....	3-5	4	2-3	2	4-4	4	Farm supplies.....	6-8	7	2-5	4	5-8	6
Iron, steel scrap.....	4-7	5	4-4	4	5-6	6							
Waste materials.....	6-10	7	3-4	3	4-9	6							

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 June 1959. The published estimate is \$5,118 million while the median sampling error shown in this report is 1.6 percent (or .016). Multiplying \$5,118 million by .016, we obtain \$82 million.

Thus, the chances are two out of three that the "expected value" of the estimate is between \$5,036 and \$5,200 million. Doubling the given median sampling error gives us the limits, \$4,954 to \$5,282 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 May 1959 to June 1959 for all durable goods. This ratio of change, obtained by dividing \$5,118 million by \$4,794 million, is 1.07 (it can also be expressed as a 7% increase). The median sampling error of this statistic is 0.9 percent (.009). Multiplying 1.07 by .009, we obtain .010 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 1.06 to 1.08 (that is, that the May to June change was between a 6% and 8% increase), while there is a probability of 19 out of 20 that the "expected ratio" is contained in the range 1.05 to 1.09.

## 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 GOODSAutomotive 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, and kitchen utensils.

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; phonograph records, and musical instruments; and products not elsewhere classified; and establishments handling a line of merchandise too broad to be included in any of the classifications outlined above.

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