San Francisco Retail Co-Operator
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SCRIPPS-HOWARD No. 6.

Rainbow Grocers Move To Swell New Location

Over on Front and Pacific sts., right smack on the corner sits a low, solidly-built newly-painted building. On one side there are three immense doorways like gigantic doors to a giant's den. The other side runs back to a double story at the end. Overhead, bright with new paint, a rambling sign runs the length of the building.

"V. Traverso Co.," it reads. And a little further down, "Rainbow Stores Headquarters." A duplicate of this appears on the other side. Over the double story in the rear a sign labels the two-story affair also as "Rainbow Stores Headquarters."

Perhaps if one were passing there Aug. 9th there would have been a lively burst of action, hilarity and humanity about. If one didn't exactly pass there, but, say, two blocks further away in any direction, they very likely would have been aware of it also.

For Aug. 9 was Housewarming Day. And the house being warmed was the new warehouse and headquarters of Victor and Jack Traverso and Rainbow Stores with its glistening paint and new trappings.

The two names are synonymous. One started the other and the other goes on to the credit of the former. Let's look back some years ago. Back to 1918, when two brothers were engaged in a small grocery business.

The store was on Greenwich st., 291 Greenwich, to be exact. The business was small and things were just starting. The first brother, Victor, decided that Jack, who at that time was attending Lowell High with visions of being a lawyer, might come over during the summer vacation and straighten out the books.

That was Jack's meat. He not only straightened up the books, but found he couldn't confine his talents to books only. When school started in the fall he was so busy with the Traverso future in the grocery business that he forgot all about Mr. Croft's little red schoolhouse and his other brother, William F. Traverso, in the law business.

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TRAVERSOS MOVE INTO NEW STORE

Steady Growth Culminated With Climax

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Victor was glad to have Jack with him and in 1920 they decided to go into the wholesale business where the money lay. In the meantime, of course, they had built up their retail contacts to a nice and profitable association.

Sales Amount to $30

These they had to renounce entirely when they decided to take the step that proved to be the embryo of the Rainbow Stores. It was just like starting all over again. Their sales were made to an entirely different set of customers and the first day's receipts came to exactly $30.

What a beginning! Compare that to the $10,000 a month business they conduct now. But that's ahead of our story.

There were lots of trials and troubles in those first days. Clerks were hard to get—that is, honest clerks. It was right after the war and people were independent. Jobs were plentiful. Other problems came up in numerous rotation, but Jack Traverso met them adequately.

Found Slogan

Those first days were the foundation of the slogan that spread the good name of Traverso throughout San Francisco: "Honesty and Service."

A slogan that presented here looks nothing more nor less than the usual succession of words, but which meant as much as the business itself to the Traverso boys in those days and still does, for that matter.

It was a slogan that didn't stop at being just a nice catch phrase, but it went farther than that. It was put into actual practice.

Get Bigger Place

So much so that two years later, 1922, they moved into larger quarters. The new place was at 506 Washington, and they moved in quietly and businesslike. When those Traverso lads were going to shout they intended first to have something to shout about.

Two years went by during which business kept building slowly, steadily. In '24 they moved again up the street. This time the new address was 441 Washington, and in 1927 they annexed the location at 445 Washington and still no fanfare, nor floodlights, nor bouquets; they had seen too many businesses start out with the bloom of a sunflower only to curl up in the heat of competition.

They would wait, and build for the future.

In 1928, Victor and Jack took their first big step and announced the formation of the Rainbow Stores. That was on July 22, and the membership came to 78. It was a buying organization for the purpose of allowing its members to derive the same buying power and discounts afforded large quantity accounts.

Grows Fast

There were no dues, and with Victor and Jack Traverso behind it the list grew steadily to 196.

In 1929 Fred Beck was added to the organization as advertising manager and started the Advertising Club, which now has a total of 83 participating stores.

Well, there is no doubt that the founding of the Rainbow Stores was the turning point for the Traversos and now they really have something to shout about, those two boys, Jack and Victor, San Francisco's youngest wholesale grocers. And that is the modern and up-to-date plant at Front and Pacific sts., the pride of wholesale San Francisco.

And after the shouting they'll be right back on the job again and