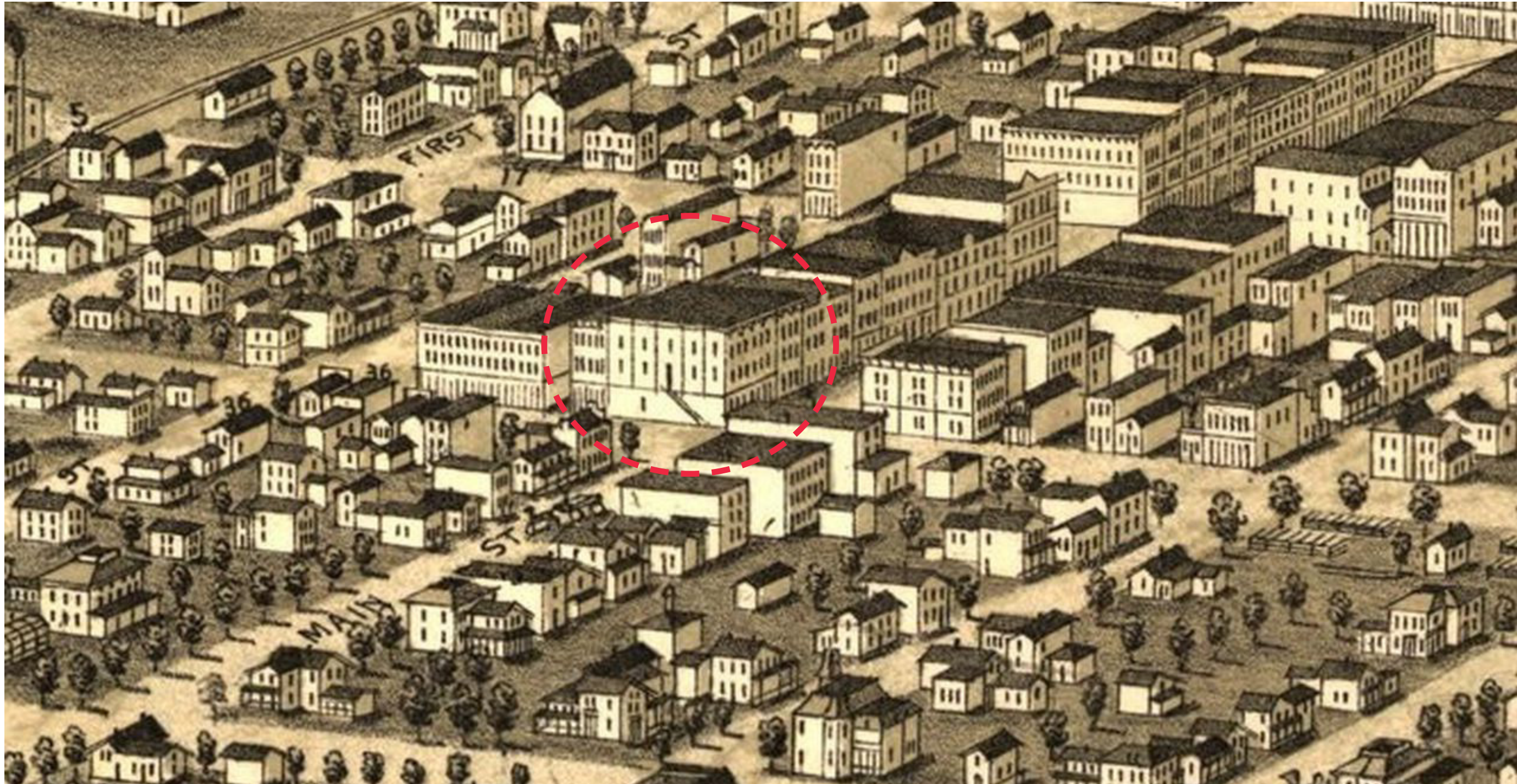


ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION
1857

Mack-Schmidt Company and
Martin Haller



HISTORIC DRAWING
image circa 1880



HISTORIC IMAGE 1
photo circa 1906



HISTORIC IMAGE 2
photo circa 1920



HISTORIC IMAGE 3
photo circa 1930's

APRIL 1ST 1939
MAC & CO CLOSES
AFTER 82 YEARS

New Firm

SAT APR 1 1939

Oldest Main St. Business Passes After 82 Years

Management, Headed By Flint Man, Plans Opening In 30 Days With Complete Stock

Mack & Co. department store, founded and continuously owned by the pioneer Mack family, has been leased to a newly-formed firm of which Chauncey T. Ray of Flint is president.

Thus Main street's oldest business will become its youngest and the transition will effect as important a change as has been made in an Ann Arbor firm of its size and history. The new management is taking immediate possession of the extensive buildings at Main and Liberty Sts. for the establishment of a complete department store which will be opened there within 30 days.

Leasing of the business is accompanied by the announcement also of the retirement of Walter C. Mack, owner of Mack & Co., ending a business tradition started 82 years ago when his father, Christian Mack, founded the store.

The new owner, Mr. Ray, has a complete experience in store management and merchandising and has been employed in many capacities varying from his first job as a cash boy to his latest position as manager of Sears, Roebuck & Co. store in Flint.

Attesting to his capabilities is the Sears, Roebuck & Co. award which he received last year for outstanding store management. He relinquished his duties Feb. 1 after reaching the company's compulsory retirement age of 59 years.

"Mr. Ray has the experience and wisdom of a good merchant and is ideally qualified to head the department store of the type he plans," Mr. Mack commented. "I feel well repaid for taking so long in reaching a decision as to the successor to Mack & Co., keeping in mind along with the business factors, the good of the city and the surrounding trading community."

"After 55 years in the business I am ready to retire and conserve my health," he continued. "It gives me a deep personal satisfaction to know the store will be in good hands and I commend the new management to the community."

The new management's lease from Mr. Mack includes the space now occupied by the Red Robin Shop at 218 S. Main St. In all the new firm will have a frontage of 88 feet on Main St., and the building extends back 124 feet to an alley.

During the 30-day interval preceding the opening of the new firm, the interior of the buildings will be remodeled, departments arranged and the stock assembled. An entirely new stock will be offered, Mr. Ray announced. Employees of Mack & Co. who fit in with the new organization will be retained and every effort will be made to give preference to residents of Ann Arbor and vicinity, he said.

Began Work When 12

Studying nights and working as a cash boy during the day was an ambitious beginning for Mr. Ray when he started at the age of 12 years to help with the support of his mother and four sisters. He was first employed by Charles Gossage, a drygoods firm in Chicago, and later with Carson Pirie Scott & Co., which absorbed the Gossage business.

He advanced to the position of buyer when he entered the employ of B. Nugent & Brother, drygoods firm in St. Louis, leaving there to accept a similar position with the A. M. Rothschild drygoods firm in Chicago. This was acquired by Marshall Field and continued as the Davis Co., with which Mr. Ray remained for six years as a merchandiser.

Taking a new position as manager of a Sears, Roebuck & Co. store in Chicago, he was selected some time later to open the Chicago State St. store and in 1933 was given the new assignment of manager of the store in Flint.



UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT: Mack & Co. department store of which a general view is shown here has been leased to a new firm and the new management will open a complete department store there within a month. At the right is Chauncey T. Ray of Flint, president and manager of the new business.

Mack & Co. Household Word For Six Generations

Walter C. Mack, retiring from the department store business which was founded by his father 82 years ago, looked back upon the history of Mack & Co. today and, in retrospect, found it good.

It is not without regret that he is stepping aside because of his health and yet, in the transfer of the business to a new concern he visualizes it as continuing the progress made by Mack & Co. under the leadership of his father and himself.

Mack & Co. became a household word to the six generations of families in southern Michigan which the firm served during its 82 years, and the company pioneered in many merchandising ventures.

Had Drug Division

In a reminiscent mood, Mr. Mack recalled that the store had pioneered in establishing a "bargain basement", and in introducing style shows with living models, and that it was one of the two department stores in the state permitted to have a drug division.

Mack & Co. developed from a general store of the type familiar to the residents of four decades ago to its present proportions utilizing approximately 100,000 square feet of floor space. Throughout the successive stages of its development the firm endeavored to keep pace with the expansion of the city and from the time of its establishment it has been a leading mercantile interest.

Few if any Washtenaw residents today can remember the store of 82 years ago, but many will recall events in its history. The black horses which drew the delivery wagons were famous for their beauty and because of the uniformity of color (black always being specified) attracted attention.

Only Two Heads

The firm has had only two heads during its 82 years of existence, Christian Mack, who founded the store, and Walter C. Mack, who succeeded his father and has been the firm's active head for 50 years. The elder Mr. Mack came to Ann Arbor in 1851 from Ohio, and established the store in March, 1857, having spent the intervening six years in the employ of a local merchant. He died in August, 1901.

The store building of Mack & Co., at the northwest corner of Main and Liberty Sts. was constructed during the first year, and while it then had the frontage of an average store on Main St., subsequent expansions increased the store to its present size. At the beginning the store consisted of first floor and basement amounting to 3,700 square feet.

From an original staff of four employees, the personnel of the store increased steadily until it reached a point where 200 persons were employed.

Chinaware, groceries and drygoods, mostly yard goods, formed the principal stock of the store during the early years, but as it developed the drygoods and household goods divisions expanded remarkably and the other divisions became minor and in some instances, such as groceries, have ceased to exist.

One of the older divisions is the postoffice, a substation of the main postoffice, which has been located in the store for 25 years. The Christian Mack insurance agency, which Mr. Mack will continue, is the oldest agency in Washtenaw county and was started by the late Christian Mack during the first few years of his firm.

Began In 1884

Walter C. Mack, who now is retiring from the business, began work for his father in April, 1884, being assigned to varied duties similar to other employees beginning with the firm. He became a member of the firm and was given the entire responsibility of management in 1889. The business was incorporated as Mack & Co. in 1895.

"After all 55 years with one



business is a long period of service and it is time that I should think of retiring and conserving my health," Mr. Mack said. "I feel that the business is being turned over to capable hands and I am satisfied."

"Mack & Co. has had the loyal patronage of generations of residents in Washtenaw county and adjacent communities and we have had a sincere appreciation of this loyalty which we hope now will be transferred to our successors."

"Naturally I expect to remain in Ann Arbor. I was born here and have lived here all my life. I like the city and enjoy living here. I shall never lose interest in seeing Ann Arbor progress," he concluded.

HISTORIC ARTICLE
circa 1939

Shuttered Cunningham's
1971-1975



HISTORIC IMAGE 4
photo circa 1939



HISTORIC IMAGE 5
photo circa 1990



CURRENT IMAGE



CURRENT IMAGE



VIEW 1



VIEW 2



VIEW 3