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## IN INTRODUCTION.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Port of New York Authority, is conducting an inquiry into the terminal handling and distribution of fruits and vegetables in the Port of New York district. This project has been extended to include a survey of the various types of demand for fruits and vegetables in order to furnish both producers and consumers more accurate estimates of the amount of principal varieties, grades and sizes required on given days by the consumers of the New York market. This report attempts to present such demand information as it relates to the pushcart trade. Many of the facts compiled and tabulated in this report were gathered through the courtesy of the Department of Markets of the city of New York. The analysis and conclusions, however, are original with the author.

The writer wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of Edwin J. O'Malley, City Commissioner of Public Markets for aid in gathering much of the raw material which forms the basis of this report, of Mr. Ole Salthe, former Director of the Food and Drug Division of the Department of Public Health, for statistical contributions of food inspections, and of Mr. Walter P. Heden, Research Agent in Marketing, United States Department of Agriculture, for assistance in securing the tabulation of the greater part of the statistical material and for helpful suggestions and criticisms proffered throughout the pursuit of the work.

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## PUSH CART MARKETS IN NEW YORK CITY.

By Earl R. French, Research Agent in Marketing,  
United States Department of Agriculture.

### PURPOSE.

This study was made for the purpose of ascertaining the economies in the principles and practices of push cart retailing in New York City, especially as pertains to agricultural products. At the beginning of the survey it was the author's intention to study only the importance of the push carts as a marketing channel. When proceeding in the work, it was seen that there were numerous pertinent factors having a direct bearing on the economies of street marketing, which if made public would be of aid to the producers and distributors, and to the consuming public. Thus the scope of the report was widened to include such information as, the early history and trend of the push cart business, area supplied at present, number and race of people dependent, sanitary conditions, and administrative control.

### SOURCE OF INFORMATION.

A large part of the information incorporated herein was obtained through a questionnaire containing fourteen items which was submitted to the peddlers in each of five selected markets. Each market was carefully chosen with a view to including only those believed to be geographically representative, representative as to race, and as to high and low class of patronage. The total number of peddlers included in the sample is 744, or what practically constitutes ten percent of the total number of push cart peddlers in greater New York. It was through the Department of Public Markets that this questionnaire was distributed to the push cart peddlers, and the data requested therein obtained. That Department, in addition, made a special survey of the peddlers stocks, and supplied from its records other miscellaneous data concerning the vendors.

The statistics of inspections showing a comparison of sanitary conditions between the push carts and other retailers was supplied by the Bureau of Foods and Drugs of the City Department of Public Health.

For analysis of the population surrounding and patronizing the push carts, the data and conclusions incorporated were drawn from "Statistical Sources for Demographic Study," New York City population Statistics for 1920 compiled by sanitary districts.

Other important information was obtained through interviews with wholesale and jobbing dealers, push cart patrons and the peddlers themselves. Many pertinent facts regarding marketing practices were gathered through visits to the market zones, where observational studies were made of market operations.

FINDINGS

Through this study it has been found:

- (1) That there are approximately 7860 push cart peddlers plying their trade on the streets of the City of New York.
- (2) That of this number approximately 5500 operate continuously in the 53 public marketing centers, 1500 to 2000 have stand permits, but on certain days sell outside the market areas and 300 to 800 are wholly itinerant vendors, and consist in large part of floaters, or illegitimate peddlers.
- (3) That 71 percent of the vendors are located in Manhattan, 25 percent in Brooklyn, and 4 percent in the Bronx.
- (4) That the marketing zones are located in the districts of the greatest density of population.
- (5) That the push cart markets are situated in the most impoverished sections of the city.
- (6) That approximately one million five hundred thousand people are supplied wholly or in part by the push carts.
- (7) That 89 percent of this population are foreign born whites or of foreign parentage; 6 percent are native born whites of native parentage, and 5 percent are negroes and mulattos.
- (8) That at least two thirds of the people purchasing from the peddlers are by race either Jewish or Italian.
- (9) That 68 percent of the vendors deal in fruits and vegetables, 4 percent in other foods, and 28 percent in merchandise.
- (10) That fruits and vegetables having an approximate value of \$35,000,000; merchandise having a value of \$9,000,000; fish \$1,000,000 and miscellaneous foods \$500,000, are retailed annually through the push carts.
- (11) That 11.0 percent of all the fruits and vegetables supplying New York City are retailed through the push carts.
- (12) That the fruits and vegetables purchased by the peddlers are, as a class, the smaller sizes, and lower grades, and the deteriorated.
- (13) That a considerable saving is effected by the peddlers through salvaging of poor conditioned produce.
- (14) That the average volume of weekly sales in monetary units for vendors handling fruits and vegetables is \$126; for those handling other foods \$95; for those handling non foods, \$75.

- (15) That the days of largest purchase for the peddlers in order of importance are, Monday, Friday and Wednesday.
- (16) That the days of largest sale in the markets patronized by Jewish trade are Thursday and Friday; those having a Christian patronage, Saturday.
- (17) That the commodities most largely handled are, boxed apples, oranges, grapes, onions, pears, potatoes, tomatoes, barreled apples, cabbage and bananas.
- (18) That Washington Street Market is the principal source of purchases of produce for the peddlers.
- (19) That the average size of sale for fruits and vegetables is approximately 15 cents, and that the size of sale most frequently made is 10 cents.
- (20) That the size of sale for commodities sold by weight is, most frequently, three pounds.
- (21) That 90 percent of all the vendors are foreign born - that approximately 72 percent are Jewish, 22 percent Italian, and the remaining 6 percent, German, Irish, Russian, Spanish, and American.
- (22) That 72 percent of the vendors are in the prime of life, being under 48 years of age.
- (23) That 8.5 years is the average length of time peddlers remain in the push cart business.
- (24) That 2 percent have some physical disability.
- (25) That 63 percent are citizens.
- (26) That approximately 10 percent are engaged in other occupations.
- (27) That 62 percent hire their push carts.
- (28) That 86 percent have dependents.
- (29) That approximately 31,000 people rely upon the push carts wholly or in part for a livelihood.
- (30) That 45 percent of the vendors handling fruits and vegetables use family help and 6. percent hire help.
- (31) That the method of delivery for fruits and vegetables from the central market to the peddlers' stands is chiefly that of hired truck or express.

- (32) That the cost of operating a push cart is practically one third that of a unit store, and for the typical vendor averages \$9.22 per week.
- (33) That the vendors' prices, on practically all commodities, are the lowest in the city.
- (34) That the fruits and vegetables sold on the push carts are, with few exceptions, wholesome and suitable for human consumption.
- (35) That unwashable articles of food, such as bread stuffs, candy, dried fruits, etc. are, while displayed on the carts, being exposed to the dirt and dust of the streets, and the insects of the air, in violation of existing city ordinances.
- (36) That the sale of fish in the streets, as it is being carried on, is a menace to health.
- (37) That a certain few peddlers use their homes and apartments for the storage of surplus produce over night.
- (38) That peddling at night was found to exist in certain neighborhoods.
- (39) That on certain thoroughfares the presence of the push carts, together with the large crowds of shoppers are a menace to public safety, as well as an impediment to the regular use of the streets.
- (40) That itinerant peddlers or floaters are a constant menace in the market zones, causing street congestion and traffic delays.
- (41) That the revenue derived by the City from the push cart peddlers for the year ending Dec. 31, 1923 totaled \$320,115.00.
- (42) That the City's supervisory and administrative expense of the open air (push cart) markets amounted to \$235,047.42 for the same year.

#### OPEN AIR MARKETS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Open air markets have been in existence from time immemorial, and are still today an important system of retailing food stuffs in numerous large cities of the world. Not all so-called open markets, however, are technically push cart markets, but they are identical in their functions. Among the large population centers which may be mentioned as having these open markets are: Budapest, Vienna, Tokio and Yokohama, where before the earthquake the push carts were upon the streets in large numbers; Berlin, Hamburg, Paris, and London. In the latter city the number of street vendors reputed to be in operation on special market days is 15,000. These market street stalls in London often extend for miles in length, and are located in the poorer sections. Information relative to street markets almost invariably emphasizes the points of low prices, and cheap foods, which, it is stated, are chiefly retailed through these agencies.

For instance, concerning the London markets reference is made to the rejected fruits and vegetables from Covent Garden and Pudding Lane, which figure in an important way in street vending.

As is well known, this system of marketing is not peculiar to the old world. It is found here in the United States, where it thrives in the larger cities, notably in Chicago, Boston and New York.

#### OPEN AIR MARKETS IN NEW YORK CITY

To state definitely the date of the advent of the push cart peddler in New York City would in a large part be conjectural. Earliest accounts of the prevalence of the peddler in the metropolis date back some three quarters of a century, or between the years of 1840 to 1850. Before this period seemingly no record is available descriptive of such activities or even to show that such vocation did exist.

At this early period selling from a push cart was not an established system of retail, rather it was a supplementary agency. Dependency upon it narrowed to a small and widely scattered group, passers-by, who purchased only in a small way. The necessity for such an institution or the conditions conducive to its existence had evolved to only a small degree. Crowded districts, tenement houses, congestion, in a large sense, all were practically unknown. Poverty characterized the residents of certain specific districts in a far less degree than at present. Furthermore, the alien races which draw heaviest upon the push cart trade today constituted relatively a much smaller element in the population. Obviously then, the need and practice of parsimonious spending was not a market feature of the time, and naturally enough relatively few vendors pursued this occupation.

Other important items affecting adversely the growth of the push cart business were the manner in which fresh produce was supplied to New York City, the agencies engaged in transporting it, distance of haul, and the methods employed in its distribution upon arrival. There was hardly a need for the push cart when the city relied primarily upon the surrounding districts for its supply of fresh fruits and vegetables. Marketing then was chiefly the farmers' and small dealers' problem. The producer and consumer met, or were removed by not more than one, or two, middle men. City distribution was highly decentralized; there were many channels with small supplies flowing through each.

Under this scheme of distribution, such irregularities as gluts, congestion, delays, deterioration and broken crates in a large way were more infrequent and less significant than at later times and under modern conditions. Consequently, the need for special agencies to recondition and salvage the damaged and deteriorated food stuffs, and to absorb the surpluses, both of which are important functions of the push cart man, was less pronounced. Due to the short distance of haul, together with the intervention of few or no middle men, it required only a short time to transport a commodity from the source of production to

the city's consuming centers, a factor which operated to keep deterioration reduced to a minimum. Lack of concentration in supplies prevented congestion and delays from becoming important factors.

During the period from 1840 to 1870, the growth of the push cart business was extremely slow and intermittent. These were years of rising prices and attendant prosperity, except for the period during and immediately following the Civil War. Work on the whole was plentiful, due to the rapid industrial and commercial expansion, and because of the higher remuneration labor was attracted into other occupations.

It was following the years of 1870 that the push cart market began to take a noticeable position among the various systems of retail. Conditions under which such a business thrives and includes large numbers among its customers were developing. Contributing toward this end was the great influx of poor immigrants from European countries, a type of immigrant who was more or less accustomed to trading in open markets. Many were virtually destitute. They sought the poorer sections and cheapest living quarters, and in so doing they added to the number in penury, augmented congestion, and marked off more distinctly the poorer districts. This growing differentiation in the constituency of the population warranted a strict and rigid discriminatory division, as between cheap and non-cheap foods for different classes; and thus the peddler, with his cheaper wares gained in favor among the poorer classes.

The 2,000,000 population of 1880 as compared to the 391,000 of 1840, obviously required an increased supply of foodstuffs. No longer was the farmer close to the city able to supply even the seasonal food requirements, therefore greater volumes were arriving daily from more distant points by both water and rail. The inflow now highly concentrated, necessitated an enlargement of the distributing channels, hence, large receivers sprang up to take care of the tremendous increase. This inevitable change in the manner of receiving and distributing, as well as the extension in the sources of production, and the transportation time requirements, had worked to produce irregularities. Little or no control was exercised over the quantities that might arrive at any particular day or week. Growers and shippers of perishable commodities forwarded their products to the New York market in a haphazard manner (and is still being done by many today), giving little heed to demand or price, and gluts became common. In time of such irregularities the push cart peddler became an important adjunct in the new marketing system in disposing of the surpluses. It may be mentioned also that there is always a goodly amount of perishables, fruits of smaller sizes and produce of lower grades arriving on the market, and that these go to that group of the populace where low priced foods are in strongest demand. No doubt a large portion of the vendors' fruits and vegetables was made up of this class of commodities in the earlier history of the trade as well as at the present time.

Cheap merchandise, such as clothing, house furnishings, etc., as well as cheap food were in demand in the poorer sections, and they began to find an outlet through the medium of the push carts. Falling in this

class, were slightly damaged goods, remnants, seconds, culls, and the like. This line of push cart trading, however, has never assumed the importance of foods trading; in fact, not more than 28 percent of the peddlers have ever dealt in this class of merchandise.

Working to the advantage of the push cart peddler from the first is his small original investment and low cost of operation. He pays only a nominal fee for his necessary equipment, while his daily expense, barring his time, is practically negligible, as compared to that of the store dealer who must pay a high overhead.

Ever since the inauguration of the push cart business, it has been influenced to some degree by the fluctuations in general business conditions. Periods of depression have lent an impetus to the trade, in that men who have been thrown out of employment have turned to push cart selling as a means of livelihood, while others, who have had their source of income reduced or cut off, have turned to the cheapest market for their purchases - the push carts. On the other hand, in the periods of prosperity when work is easily secured in other fields, there is a tendency on the part of the peddlers to turn to other lines of business, and at the same time fewer new ones enter the push cart trade.

Before 1886 the New York peddlers had always vended their wares throughout their ambulations, without taking a definite stand at any point or location and making it a permanent marketing center. But by 1886 conditions were favorable for this adventure. Poor districts were clearly defined, and then population which was comprised chiefly of foreigners, had grown in density until groups of peddlers could be supported in a single location.

During this year four vendors took up a position on Hester Street, placed their carts along the curbing adjacent to each other and remained there through the whole of each day. Soon the surrounding residents, through force of habit, came to rely upon this small market for their supply of fresh fruits and vegetables. Business increased, and more vendors took up a position in the line. The following year, 9th Ave. (Paddy's Market) became a zone center for push cart retailing for Saturday only. Following the establishment of these two marketing areas, came Grand Street in 1893, Orchard Street in 1895, Rivington Street, 1898, East Monroe 1901, and so the process continued until the year 1920, when there were approximately thirty markets in greater New York. Since 1920, all records were broken for the establishment of push cart areas, in all 23 were formed. This sudden growth can be attributed to the aggressive step taken by the City Department of Public Markets, which Department took over the supervision of the push cart markets and used its influence in procuring the legal establishment of marketing areas for congregations of peddlers.

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PUSH CART MARKETS.

#### Number of Markets.

At present 53 market zones are to be found in Greater New York, but this is by no means a constant number. A period of five to ten years may record an addition of a half dozen push cart areas, judging from the rapid growth and concentration in the population, and by the large number established in the last few years.

Geographical Location. With rare exception, the name applied to the push cart zones is that of the street upon which they are located, and when two markets appear on the same street, they are designated by upper or lower, east or west or north or south. An exception to this general rule is that of the 9th Avenue Market which has come to be called "Paddy's Market."

Distribution of the push cart markets is unequal with respect to the city's five boroughs. The whole fifty-three markets are contained in the boroughs of Manhattan, Bronx, and Brooklyn. Of the total 53 markets, 34 are located in Manhattan, 17 in Brooklyn, and 2 in The Bronx.

The fixing of the geographical location and defining of the boundaries of market zones is by official act, through city ordinances. Certain sections of particular streets are set aside where the privilege of taking up a stand and selling from a push cart is extended to the peddlers. When a street has been thus allocated, it becomes a permanent marketing center, and is so recognized throughout the neighborhood and by the city at large.

#### Sociological Location.

Among the numerous and varied phases bearing upon this subject, three appear to be of dominant significance, pertaining directly to the inhabitants residing in the vicinity of the market zones, density of population, nativity, and the degree of poverty prevailing.

Open markets (push carts) follow closely upon the manner in which the population is distributed. Large aggregations of residents indicate a more fertile field for a thrifty push cart trade. Location of the push cart areas studied in connection with the density of population strikingly reveals that in the districts where an extreme concentration prevails there also prevails a cluster of market zones. Furthermore it is noted that these markets are, on the whole, much larger than the average, as attested by the number of carts contained in each.

Push cart zones do not appear within a district in Manhattan with a range less than two to three hundred inhabitants to the acre, with the exception of a small market which contains less than 50 carts. The

distribution of the markets in this borough in respect to the number of inhabitants per acre in the sanitary districts surrounding them is as follows: Twelve are located where the population is 500 or more, ten where it ranges from four to five hundred, nine from three to four hundred, and two from two to three hundred. Similarly in the Bronx, the lowest range is two to three hundred. It is only in the borough of Brooklyn that the average number of inhabitants per acre does not exceed at least two hundred in the districts close by or surrounding these open markets, and under this category only four of a total of seventeen fall. A closer inspection of these peculiarly catalogued markets reveals that the number of vendors in each is comparatively small, proving that there is little demand for them. As a matter of fact the question of the advisability of attempting the continuance of one or more of these is under discussion at the present time.

The relation between the density of population and the location of the open markets is clearly brought out by a comparison of the average number of inhabitants per acre residing in a radius of four blocks of the market zone with the average per acre for the total area for each of the three separate boroughs. This can be best shown in the form of a table.

Table I: Relation between density of population and location of market.

	Population per acre for entire borough	Population per acre in four blocks radius of the push cart markets
Manhattan	163	371
Brooklyn	43	161
Bronx	27	233
Combined Average	58	275

The density of population in the districts immediate to the push carts is almost five times as great as the density in the combined territory of the three boroughs as a whole.

Again, bearing out this striking fact and showing a direct relationship between density of population and number of vendors, is a comparison of the different boroughs with respect to the number of inhabitants (1920 census) within a four block radius of the market zones for each cart in operation. The comparison is here shown:

Number of inhabitants in four  
block radius of market zones for  
each cart in operation in each  
borough respectively

Manhattan	217
Brooklyn	226
Bronx	243

From these figures it is evident that there is a definite dependency upon the number of residents in certain sections as to how far retailing through push carts can be extended in these sections.

That there is a high degree of concentration in the push cart territories is again vividly confirmed by a percentage comparison for the three boroughs, as between the number of inhabitants within a four block radius of the market zones, and the area encompassed within that radius. Of the total population in Manhattan, 37.3 per cent reside in close proximity to the push cart zones, and yet the area occupied comprises only 21.2 per cent of the whole. In other words, about two fifths of the total population of this borough are crowded onto about one fifth of its area, and that is where the push carts abound. In Brooklyn, concentration of the residents adjacent to the push carts is even more emphasized when considering the dispersion of the population for the borough as a whole; approximately one fifth of all its people live on one seventeenth of its area. The Bronx shows the largest relative congestion around the market zones, for eight per cent of the inhabitants are grouped on one one-hundredth of its territory. Taking the three boroughs together, the territory encompassing the push cart zones comprising in area only 6.8 per cent of the total, holds 30.6 per cent of all the peoples. And for Greater New York 19 per cent of the total population are crowded in a four block radius of the push cart zones.

According to figures taken from the 1920 census, the inhabitants dwelling within a four block radius of the market zones are predominantly of foreign birth, especially is this true where concentration is highly pronounced. On the lower east side and upper east side of Manhattan where the number of people range over 500 to the square acre, there are ten more persons of foreign birth per hundred than elsewhere. The foreign-born group represent 49.5 per cent of what is virtually half of the total number. Second in importance is the group of foreign-born whites of foreign parentage (one or both parents), which comprises 40.1 per cent. Considering these two groups together, of the total residence eighty-nine and six tenths per cent are either foreign born or are of immediate foreign extraction. A third group represented is the negroes and mulattoes which make up 4.5 per cent, leaving 5.9 per cent of native born whites of native parentage.

Analysis of the data a step further, relative to the nativity of the foreign born, gives a comprehensive picture of the races which in the main are responsible for the large business carried on through

the medium of the push carts. Of the total of those of foreign birth, 37 per cent claim Russia as their country of nativity, 22 per cent claim for their native land Italy, 12 per cent Austria, 3 per cent Ireland, and the remainder, 26 per cent, claim other countries. In this latter group the largest contributors, in the order of their importance, are the countries of Poland, Germany, and Hungary. About 10 per cent were originally natives of these three nations. The manner in which the foreign born are distributed with respect to their country of nativity is shown in the following table:

Table 2: Foreign-born white population in four blocks  
radius of the market zones, distributed ac-  
cording to countries of nativity.

Borough	Nativity : Total											
	Native	Native	Native	Native	All Other	Foreign	Russia	Italy	Austria	Ireland	Countries	Born
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)
Manhattan	188	34	126	23	74	13	22	4	145	26	555	100
Brooklyn	82	48	28	16	12	7	4	2	47	27	173	100
The Bronx	6	27	9	41	1	4	3	14	3	14	22	100
Three Boroughs	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Combined	276	37	163	22	87	12	29	3	195	26	750	100

Russia, Italy, and Austria are the native countries for 71 per cent of the foreign-born whites, and since those from Russia and Austria are largely of Semitic stock, it may be stated with considerable surety that among the races of foreign birth, Hebrews and Italians contribute approximately three quarters of the total number. Figures were not available giving the nativity of the parents of those of native birth of foreign parentage, but knowing that these two races are prone to congregate in colonies, and knowing that it is in these colonies that the greatest congestion prevails, it is probably safe to allot these proportionately to those of foreign birth. Granting the validity of this assumption, the conclusion to be drawn is that at least two thirds of all the peoples residing in close proximity of the push carts are of Italian and Semitic stocks. Giving further credence to this hypothesis, is the additional data which shows that there are many Hebrew immigrants in New York City from countries other than Russia and Austria. Such countries as Roumania, Hungary, and Poland, as well as part of Asia, have sent many of this immigrant race.

Further analysis of the nativity of the residents in each of the marketing zone neighborhoods shows that in twenty-nine market areas, the predominating class supporting the push carts is Jewish, (nativity--Austria, Russia), in fifteen zone neighborhoods the predominating class is Italian, in four, negroes and mulattoes, in two Irish, in one German,

in one Scandinavian, and in one a general mixture. This market in the latter zone neighborhood is very small and may be discontinued at any time. Almost invariably wherever a cluster of markets appears, the predominating class of residents are Hebrews, Italians, or negroes, and it is only about the isolated markets that the Irish, German and Scandinavian out-number the former groups. Even about these isolated markets, Italians and Jewish people comprise a part of the population.

The third phase of the subject is the degree of poverty prevailing in the districts which are the supporters of the push cart trade. There seems to be little doubt in the minds of those familiar with the conditions in New York that the deepest poverty of the city is to be found in the neighborhoods surrounding the open markets. Students of sociological conditions generally accept without question this conclusion.

It is well understood that charitable cases prevail here in largest numbers and more extensive free health service is extended the people. Free clinics are more numerous throughout these districts and the number administered to exceeds those of other localities.

More concrete data bearing upon the subject are statistics of the expenditures of this group with respect to other groups, which have been prepared by the Bureau of Business Research, New York University. This study for the borough of Manhattan, shows that the people residing about the open markets expend a smaller amount annually per family than any of the other groups of the city and in a direct ratio to the extensiveness of the push cart business, as measured by the number of carts in operation. Taking the lower east and south side of the borough, a section of the city where the markets are more numerous, the expenditures per family average only one half that of the locality having the smallest expenditure lying outside the marketing zone neighborhoods and one eighth that of the group reported as having the largest expenditure.

Further substantiating proof can be obtained by reference to "Statistical sources for Demographic Study," New York City Population statistics for 1920, which give the number of families owning their own homes for each sanitary district. The smallest percentage of those owning homes are shown to be included in those sanitary districts embodying the push cart markets.

No attempt has been made to measure accurately by mathematical expression the significance of each of the forces determining the location of the push cart markets. As an aid to administrative function, the need of such a measure is clearly apparent. A knowledge of the functional relationship of each of the factors directly influencing the institution of push cart vending, would serve as a guide in determining the location of new markets, the number of vendors to be allotted each, and would prove a valuable key in directing administrative policy toward already established markets, showing the advisability of continuing, extending or diminishing them. Such an understanding, supplied through a deeper analysis, might well supplant the system now in practice, that of experimentation. (See recommendations)

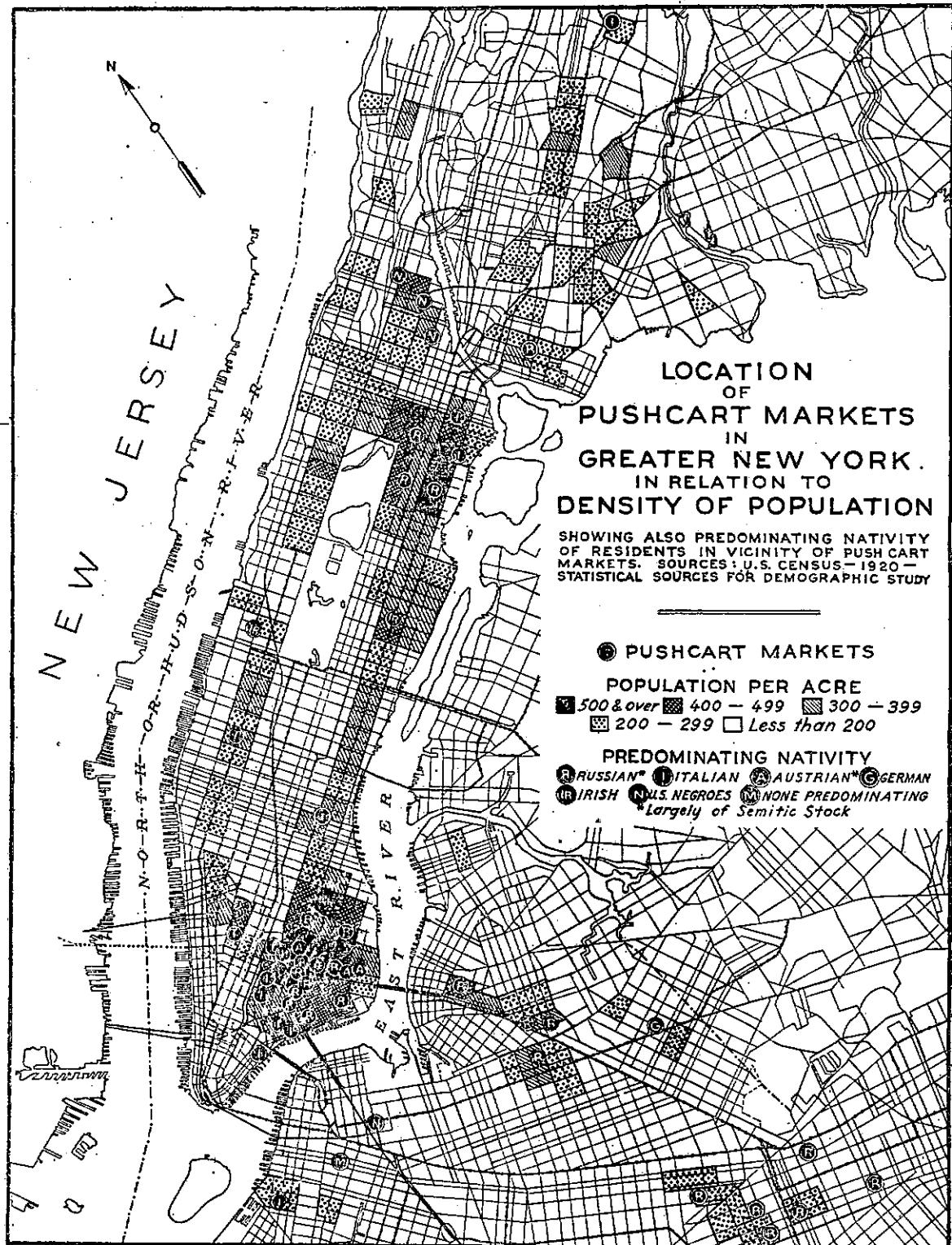


Fig. 1. Push cart markets are most numerous in lower East Sids Manhattan whers thsre is the heavisst concsntation of poor people of foreign parntage. Population is also congested in part of the Bronx. Brooklyn has a number of push cart marksts mors widely ssparated.

Area Supplied.

The problem of estimating the area supplied by the push carts is complicated because of the two different types of peddlers, stationary and itinerant, and because of the peculiar buying habits of the public. In the stationary zone, observation shows that the larger bulk of the inhabitants turn to the peddlers for the whole or part of their commodity supplies. Besides the permanent marketing centers serve a small transient trade which emanates from all parts of the city, business people passing through the markets to and from business and shoppers coming long distances for week-end supplies.

Aside from the vendors who operate only in the zone centers, there are approximately fifteen hundred who purvey their wares by wandering from street to street. These peddlers cover more or less all the principal highways which are not prohibited to them by the city ordinances, and sell to a wide-spread populace. In addition, many vendors have stationary stands in market zones, but who turn itinerant on certain days of the week when their own markets are inactive. From this group some fifteen hundred more can be classed with the perambulating type for from one to three days out of each week. Through this class a further large element of the outside public is reached, and naturally a greater territory supplied.

From this brief review it is clearly seen how impossible would be the task of prescribing a definite area which would include accurately the territory supplied by the push cart peddlers. Suffice to say that the greatest bulk of the push cart trade is confined to the locations immediately surrounding the permanent marketing centers, yet despite this fact the whole of Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx is pretty thoroughly canvassed by the vendor, barring the streets restricted by city ordinances on account of traffic congestion.

Population Dependent.

Difficulties encountered in any attempt to reach a reliable approximation of the population dependent upon the push carts for supplies are now obvious. Due to the lack of time, funds, and working force, no attempt was made to survey the field and make actual count for any particular day. Because of the irregular manner of shopping for different days, such an undertaking held out little promise of giving the true results. After considering different possible lines of investigation, it was decided to limit the survey to a census of the populace living adjacent to the permanent marketing centers, since these comprised by far the greatest percentage of the patrons, and incidentally the largest buyers. Question arose as to what would be the proper area, embodying the marketing zones, from which to take census figures, that would be representative. Finding, from a short study of the distance traveled by pedestrian shoppers, that a radius of four blocks from the push cart markets, encompassed, much the greater part of the trade, it was decided to use this distance as a basis of measuring the area. Therefore, around each of the 53 New York push

cart zones, a territory was laid out having an average radius of four blocks from market limits and the number of families and total population determined for each of the three boroughs. The results are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Number of families and population within a four-block radius of the push cart market for the boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx.

Borough	Total Population	Population 4 blocks radius of push carts	Per cent	Number Families
Manhattan	2,284,106	1,059,000	37.3	228,000
Brooklyn	2,018,356	392,000	19.5	86,000
Bronx	732,016	61,000	8.4	13,000
Total	5,034,475	1,513,000	30.6	327,000

These figures are mere estimates. Many people living outside of these areas trade with the peddler, and many residing within these areas purchase exclusively from store dealers. Between the two, however, there is a counterbalancing effect, just how equal is not known. Nevertheless, it is felt that these figures are fairly representative of the population dependent upon the push carts for the whole or a part of such commodities as are sold through this medium.

Accepting, in general, these figures as a working basis, approximately 228,000 families in Manhattan, 86,000 in Brooklyn and 13,000 in the Bronx or an approximate total number of 327,000 families, are supplied through the retail agency of the push carts. The total population thus supplied is approximately 1,513,000. Manhattan is strikingly the largest borough in respect to the push cart patronage for here 1,059,000 people, or virtually two-fifths of the total population, are estimated to be push cart purchasers to a greater or less extent.

Size.

Variation is a characteristic feature of the New York push cart markets in the matter of size. They show a divergency from one to fourteen blocks in length, and from a fraction of a block to two blocks in width. The majority of markets are from four to six blocks in length, and their width is kept within the bounds of one street, with perhaps occasional stands encroaching on cross streets. Protracted markets are usually the result of inadequate street space coupled with a large trade demand. Considered in terms of number of carts in operation, the markets show a range from 10 to 470.

Days of Operation.

Because of religious restrictions and buying habits of the people who live in the neighborhoods, not all of the markets are open for business every day in the week. On certain days when there is little or no promise of a trade, vendors do not bring their carts into the market street.

Thus of the 53 market zones, 23 only operate six days per week, 21 operate five days, one, three days, (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday), and eight are essentially Saturday markets only. In these latter zones, a few dealers always remain in the area or immediate thereto to take care of any scattering trade, but on days prescribed by customs, religious or otherwise, these markets are but from five to twenty per cent efficient.

Effects on Stores (Local Tradesmen).

In general the presence of a push cart market increases the trade of the stores adjacent to them, especially those carrying non-competitive lines, and for this reason a large number of store dealers are located along the streets where the push cart markets are situated. For the same reason, rents along these blocks are higher and store vacancies uncommon. The opposite conditions prevail in streets near to, but not actually in, the market zone. Drawing a still closer line, the effects of the carts upon the trade, even upon the same street, is highly evident for they stimulate a thriving business on the side where they congregate, while business on the opposite side, at the same hour, often remains dull.

THE PUSH CARTS AS A MARKETING CHANNEL.

In the main the push cart markets are retailers of foodstuffs. Of the total 7,860 vendors, 72 per cent, or 5,659, handle foods of which 68 per cent or 5,344 carry exclusively fruits and vegetable. The kinds of fruits and vegetables finding greater favor in the open markets, we were able to determine through the medium of the questionnaire. The sample included 450 peddlers, a sufficient number, it is believed, to be representative. The principal fruits and vegetables dealt in and the percentage of vendors handling each are here listed.

Boxed apples	26 per cent	Grapefruit	7 per cent
Oranges	21 "	Greens	6 "
Grapes	18 "	Lettuce	6 "
Onions	15 "	Celery	6 "
Pears	15 "	Cauliflower	6 "
Potatoes	13 "	Peppers	5 "
Tomatoes	10 "	Horse radish	2 "
Barreled apples	9 "	Artichokes	2 "
Cabbage	7 "	Egg plant	2 "
Bananas	7 "	Lemons	2 "

This survey was undertaken in November and therefore out-of-season fruits and vegetables such as cherries, peaches, etc. do not appear in the list.

The commodities included in other foods (besides fruits and vegetables) handled by 4 per cent of the vendors, are principally as follows: Cheese, nuts, raisins, assortments of dried fruits, honey, and fish. Fish is sold by about 228 vendors and includes shell fish, and fish both fresh and dried.

In the non-food group of commodities, which are sold by 28 per cent of the peddlers, clothing and dry goods bulk largest. Such commodities as underwear, hosiery, dresses, hats, shoes, etc. fall in this group. Hardware and house furnishings are second in importance. In this group are enamel ware, pots and pans, curtains, linens, bed clothing, etc. Notions, novelties and toys are also sold and innumerable other articles, such as handbags, pins, buttons, beads, thread, and elastic. A more complete list of stock sold by the push cart vendors is given in the appendix.

An intensive study was made of fruits and vegetables and this discussion is narrowed to include only these commodities. Such points as are believed to be of special interest to growers, shippers, and tradesmen, are given special treatment.

Variety and Sizes Preferred. To ascertain the varieties and sizes of the different produce most favored in the push cart markets, an inventory was taken of the stock (before being re-assorted), of approximately 350 vendors, in five different markets. The commodities considered were potatoes, onions, lettuce, cabbage, oranges, boxed apples and barreled apples. The ratio of one variety to another such as new and old potatoes, Domestic and Spanish onions as found in the push cart stocks are compared with the ratio of varieties for the city's total trade as established by the norm of the carlot receipts for the particular week in which the inventory was made. The comparisons follow, showing percentages of varieties sold in the push cart markets as against the percentage of the city's total supply.

City's SupplySold in the  
Push cart markets

## Potatoes

Old	93%	97%
New	7%	3%

## Onions

Domestic	68%	100%
Spanish	32%	

## Lettuce

Western	72%	56%
Eastern	28%	44%

## Oranges

Florida's	74%	51%
California	26%	49%

## Apples

In barrels	60%	48%
In boxes	40%	52%

The ratio between barreled and boxed apples, as here set down, is even greater in favor of boxed apples, for in two of the markets comprised in the inventory, every dealer selling barreled apples was included, yet there was not a sufficient number to meet the quota requested, that of ten peddlers.

In attempting to show the size of produce, only three fruits have been included: Oranges, boxed apples and barreled apples. In the case of oranges and boxed apples, size is determined by count for a uniform container, while with barreled apples it is based on diameter size of the fruit. Arraying the markets sampled on the basis of size in terms of percentage for these three fruits, we obtain the following:

<u>Market</u>	<u>Large</u>	<u>Medium and Small</u>
North Park Avenue	26%	74%
Ninth Avenue	47	53
Lower First Avenue	32	68
Belmont Avenue	14	86
Havemeyer Street	27	73
Average	35	65

The fact that the fruit inventoried in the Ninth Avenue market was of exceptionally large size brought the average for the large sized fruit considerably higher than it would have been if all of the fifty-three markets had been included. The Ninth Avenue market is exceptional in the kind of fruit handled.

General Condition of Commodities when Purchased: Referring to the inventory taken of the seven varieties of fruits and vegetables, which were judged to ascertain their condition when purchased by the vendors, an array of the markets on the basis of produce purchased in poor condition in terms of percentage was found to be as follows:

North Park Avenue	4%
Lower First Avenue	18%
Belmont Avenue	22%
Havemeyer Street	32%
Ninth Avenue	69%
Average	40%

These figures reveal that a good percentage of the produce retailed by the push carts is purchased in poor condition; by the average it is shown to be 40 per cent. They show that there is a wide variation between markets regarding the amount of produce purchased in poor condition, substantiating the impression that some markets more or less specialize in poor condition foodstuff while others buy largely first-class stuff. All poor quality food must be reconditioned and just to the extent that markets deal in this type of produce they must recondition their products before sale. Further information may be gained regarding the importance of reconditioning as between markets by arraying them on the basis of produce packed as fancy or extra fancy, using boxed apples and oranges, and comparing these percentage figures with the above. Arraying the markets on basis of apples and oranges packed as fancy or extra fancy we secure the following:

Ninth Avenue	100%
North Park Avenue	95%
Lower First Avenue	85%
Belmont Avenue	66%
Havemeyer Street	62%
Average	88%

The average 88 per cent here shown, being the state of fancy or extra fancy fruit at the time of packing, compared to the average 40 per cent, the amount of produce purchased in poor condition shows a large per cent of poor-conditioned produce which was packed as fancy and in good condition, but which deteriorated from time of shipment until purchased by the peddlers.

The tabulations show some of the markets to be stocked with small varieties which are in fair condition, as North Park, while others are stocked with larger varieties which are in poor condition, and must go through the process of re-assortment. The Ninth Avenue market shows 47 per cent purchases of varieties of large size, and 100 per cent of oranges and boxed apples packed as fancy, while 69 per cent of the stock is in poor condition when bought, hence this is a market where salvaging is carried on in a large way. The reason is found in the fact that the Ninth Avenue market is in close liaison with the central wholesale market, and is used by the latter for produce which must be turned over quickly.

Factors Determining Preference: The choice of the peddler when stocking his cart is determined by many considerations. It is dependent in part on the customer, or on social tastes, thus there will be found different stocks according to racial prejudices. The Italian vendor whose compatriots make up the majority of his customers provides himself with foods preferred by them: Greens, peppers, cheese, garlic, nuts, olives, grapes, pickles, and dried fruit, such as figs, dates, raisins, and prunes. In a Jewish trade, stands selling fish, both dried and fresh, horseradish, matzoths, etc. are prevalent.

Particular foods are certain to appear on religious holidays, and special permits are given for the most popular of these to be sold on such occasions. This applies to both the Jewish and Italian races. The holiday has a marked effect in the field of merchandise.

The size of container is a factor in determining preferences; notably is this true between boxed and barreled apples. Other things being equal the vendor who has to do his own handling naturally chooses a box of apples which he can move readily in preference to a barrel. Also boxes can be used in building a display. The size of the package is important because of the different quantities contained. Often purchases of small amounts will be bought when a chance will not be taken on a larger quantity.

Color also figures in the push cart tradesmen's preferences, this being essential to an attractive display, upon which the business is vitally dependent. The peddler is likely to select those commodities that are bright in color in preference to the pale, colorless varieties. Here, in part, we may find an explanation of why certain varieties of barreled apples are retailed in a small way from the push carts as compared to boxed apples. In certain communities the custom is to buy apples by the count rather than by the pound, a fact militating against the sale of those varieties packed in barrels.

Giving these points due consideration, it still remains true that the chief factor determining the preference of the peddler, is price. Even though a commodity stands in great favor with the patrons of the push cart, it is seldom seen in the open market when a high price is demanded for it. With the wholesalers and jobbers, it is

plainly understood that there is a distinct line of price beyond which the peddler refuses to go. For this reason it is rare to find in the push carts fancy fruits and vegetables unless the goods find their way there through a glutted market, or, because of some irregularity, are sold at a nominal figure. The vendors purchase the cheapest in price - the smaller sizes, the lower grades, the left overs, the odd lots, the deteriorated. 1/

Further abundant testimony is seen in the market zones where, beneath or beside the cart are containers holding decayed fruit, and trimmings from vegetables, the rejections in the process of salvaging; or if the reconditioning has been done in the cellars, it is there that one finds the culled-out portions.

Size of Purchases of Fruits and Vegetables:

Several of the principal specialties have been tabulated in a frequency distribution on the basis of size of purchases, with a class interval of two packages. (See Fig. 2). The modal class (the sizes of purchases most frequently made), for boxed apples is shown to be nine to ten packages, oranges, one to two packages, although in the latter, another modal class is found, - nine to ten packages. Bananas show two modes; first, twenty stalks; second, forty stalks. With potatoes two classes are distinct, - first, one to two bags; second, three to four bags. Pears are purchased most frequently in sizes of nine to ten crates; barreled apples nine to ten barrels; onions, three to four bags; cabbage one to two bags; tomatoes nine to ten packages; lettuce, one to two crates, and greens, one to two packages.

The reasons which would explain these significant variations between the sizes of purchases for the same commodity and for different commodities are size of business, that is, volume of trade and perishability of commodity. The larger dealers who operate two or more carts, or who sell in package unit sizes to restaurants, or to other peddlers, obviously trade in larger volumes than the smaller dealer who operates a single cart, and they therefore purchase in larger volumes.

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1/ Practically all of the produce, rejected on either price or condition, is, it is believed, purchased by the push cart or wagon peddler. This is the opinion of the men who sell this type of commodity. Sometimes jobbers purchase it, but they, in turn, usually sell to the peddlers. In observing a sale of a carload of rejected lettuce containing 400 crates the writer noticed that 175 were bought by one push cart man, and that the remainder was sold to the hucksters.

## NUMBER AND SIZE OF PUSHCART SALES

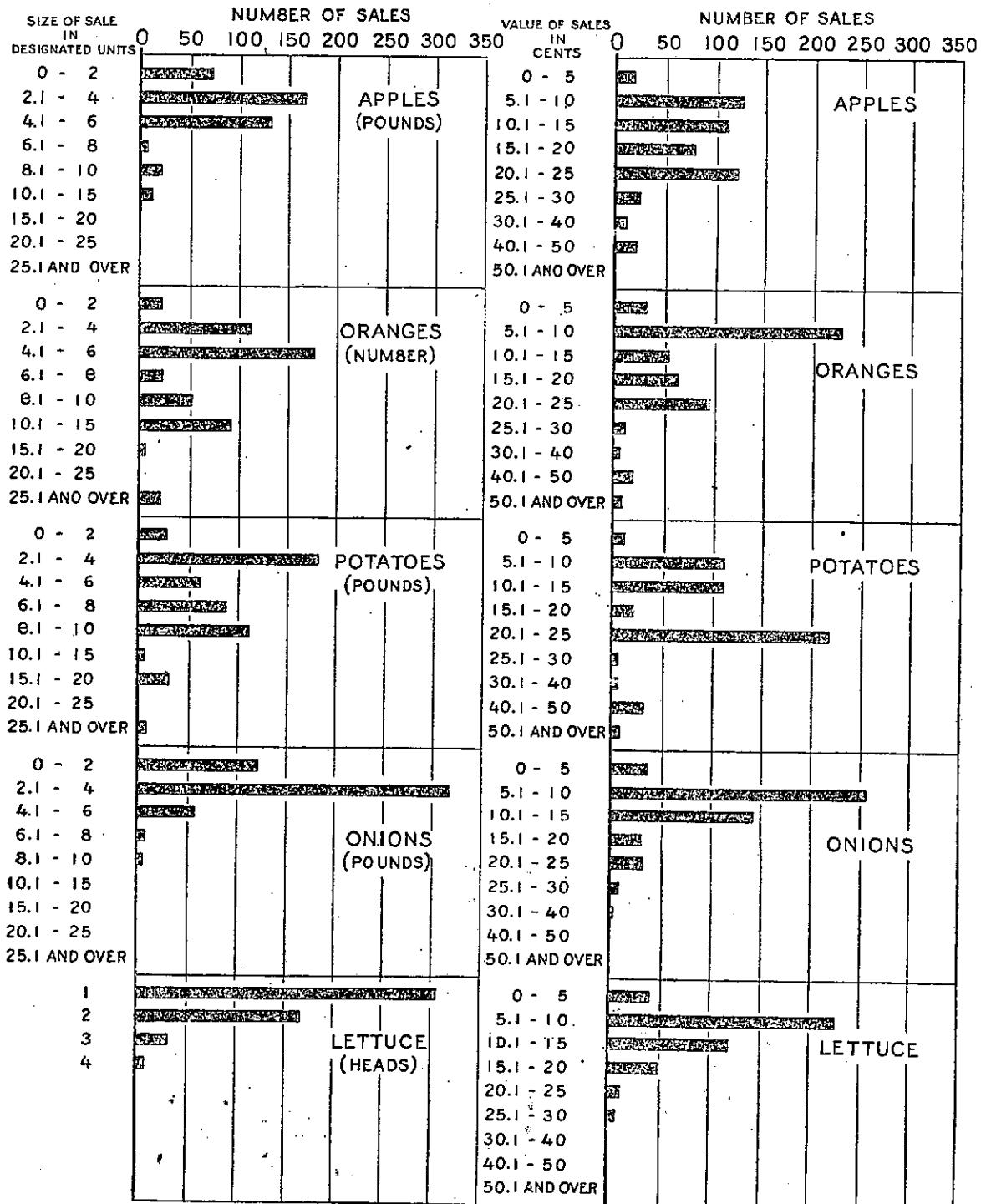


Fig. 2. Puehcart men buy frequently in small quantities as few have facilities for carrying more goods than they can sell before Sunday. The less perishable fruits and vegetables may be bought in larger lots.

It is well understood that some fruits and vegetables deteriorate less quickly than others. Falling in this class are such commodities as potatoes, apples, onions and old cabbage. Peddlers when handling this type of produce can and do purchase in larger volume without danger of spoilage. In the case of highly perishable commodities like lettuce and greens, purchases must be made more frequently which means purchasing a smaller volume at a time. Thus the listing shows that the size of purchases for these commodities are the smallest of the group.

Of the different classes of individual retailers, the push cart vendor purchases in largest quantities. This is possible only because he specializes more than any of the others - his line narrows to only a few commodities, in some instances to only one.

Principal Days of Purchase  
of  
Fruits and Vegetables

Certain days of the week are preferred by the vendors for making their purchases, their choice being determined by numerous considerations, such as size of business, perishability of commodity, type of clientele and season of year. The principal days in order of the largest number of purchases, as revealed by the questionnaire, are as follows:

Monday	25 per cent
Friday	23 "
Wednesday	19 "
Thursday	14 "
Tuesday	10 "
Saturday	8 "
Sunday, less than	1 "

The Monday buyers comprise not only the largest number but make larger purchases. Tuesday and Saturday buyers purchase in rather large quantities, Saturday buyers include the vendors who are in the market for any left-over produce, and who often have to take large lots in order to get a favorable price. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are days when the volume of purchases is smaller in proportion to the number of vendors who are recorded as marketing on these days.

Monday is a big buying day for two reasons; first, the dealer is likely to find that Saturday sales, the largest of the week, have depleted his stock, and second, he has the week before him in which to dispose of his purchased products. The latter reason applies with some force to those purchasing on Tuesday. Large buying on Friday is to stock up for the week-end, while on Wednesday heavy purchases are made to replenish supplies, and if selling in Jewish neighborhoods, chiefly

to prepare for a good sized trade on Thursday and Friday morning. The purchases made on Saturday fall in volume for three reasons: The dealer does not want to carry goods over Sunday, on this the biggest market day he cannot afford to spend time away from an active trade, and lastly the vendors who are Orthodox Jews keep Saturday as a Holy Day and do no business. The 8 percent who purchase on Saturday do so in search of bargains, for the same reluctance to carry goods over the week-end prevails in the wholesaler's mind.

The less perishable foods are bought on the days of marketing in quantities bearing a direct ratio with the percentage of vendors given, as trading on those days, while the perishable foods, like greens and lettuce, are practically equally distributed through the week, showing that vendors carrying these commodities purchase daily.

Principal Days of Sale of Fruits and Vegetables:

Vendors do more or less business every day in the week, and in certain localities on Sunday, but there are special days when their sales are greatly augmented. This is effected through custom and buying habits which are influenced largely through racial and religious prejudices. In all cases, the latter days of the week are the principal ones noted for extensive trading. In the market centers where Hebrews are the chief patrons, Thursday and Friday are days of largest receipts, Thursday especially; while in the Italian, Irish, German, and Negro markets, Saturday is, almost without exception, the day of largest business. With both the Jews and Christians the days of greatest buying precede the weekly holy day, when practically all trading is suspended.

As it was necessary to keep the questionnaire simple, the relative importance of the days of the week, with respect to sale, could not be ascertained. The vendors were asked, "What were your biggest days in the week?" In response to this question, the great majority of the peddlers gave only one day, and that of course their largest.

The vendors were also asked, "About how much money did you take in on your biggest day?" The information supplied by this question made it possible to determine the importance of the different days thus reported, both as regards daily sales measured in dollars, and as a percentage of the total weekly sales.

The 463 vendors who responded to the questionnaire have been classified according to the day of principal sales.

The value of the sales on the day of largest business was averaged for each group and this value computed as a percentage of the average weekly business of the group as reported in another section of the questionnaire. A table summarizing this information follows:

Table 4. Principal Days of Sales for 463  
Vendors Handling Fruits and Vegetables.

Days of Week	Number of Vendors	Per Cent	Average daily sales	Average Daily Sales as a percentage of average Weekly Sales.
Sunday	-	-	\$	-
Monday	12	2.6	25.18	26%
Tuesday	7	1.5	20.38	28
Wednesday	1	.2	25.00	25
Thursday	151	32.6	34.96	30
Friday	59	12.8	41.92	32
Saturday	233	50.3	55.46	40.4
TOTAL	463	100		

The latter days of the week are the principal ones for the sale of fruits and vegetables. Notably is this true of Saturday, as over 50 percent of the vendors reported this day as one of largest business. Thirty-two percent reported Thursday, and about 13 percent reported Friday. The Friday group is small compared to Thursday, largely because the vendors in the Jewish market, which includes a large number in the survey, do not sell through the whole day Friday, but leave the market in the early afternoon in preparation for the Sabbath. Trade is large on Friday mornings, but is not sufficiently large in the afternoons to warrant the peddlers remaining on the streets should they be inclined so to do.

When daily sales are measured as a percentage of weekly sales the Saturday group are reported to have taken in 40 percent of their total weekly receipts on this particular day, the Friday group 32 percent and the Thursday group 30 percent.

Size of Sales: A record was taken of 2500 sales, comprising 500 sales each of five commodities; apples, oranges, potatoes, onions and lettuce, and these 500 sales were made up of a hundred sales of each commodity in each of the five markets considered. The specifications of size are in terms of pounds and "count", (the latter for lettuce, oranges and one sample of apples), and also of monetary units.

A variation in the size of sale for any of these commodities is to be noticed in the various markets, the largest sales by far being shown in the 9th Avenue Market where vendors weekly receipts are found to be largest, while the smallest sales are shown to be in Lower First Avenue. Also in the matter of coin units as determining the size of sale, there is a wide divergency. In the case of 9th Avenue, almost all of the purchases are some multiple of five, as 5 cents, 10 cents,

fifteen cents, while in lower First Avenue the odd cent sales, 3, 7 and 11 cents are frequent, showing a difference in free handedness in the two populations.

Combining the five markets for each of the five commodities, the modal class of sales in monetary units was found to be, for oranges, 10 cents, onions 10 cents, potatoes 25 cents, apples 25 cents, and lettuce 8 cents. This last commodity retails by the head, and at times, sells for odd cents by all dealers in all markets and being in these markets a luxury is sold in smaller quantities. Taking the five markets and grouping the five commodities, the average for the 2500 sales amounts to 15.8 cents. The modal class for the 2500 sales grouped is observed to be 10 cents, at which figures 28 percent of the sales were made. The second highest class is 25 cents, and includes 17 percent of all the sales, and third class is 15 cents and comprises 10 percent.

For the size of sales in pounds the modal classes are: Potatoes, three pounds; onions, three pounds; apples, three pounds. This three-pound size makes up 36 percent of the total sales in pounds. For the sales in counts, the following results were obtained: Oranges, five; apples, 4; heads of lettuce, 1.

#### OPERATION OF THE MARKET

General Facilities: The cart is among the first of the facilities for operating the market. It is made in a standard size of eight feet in length and four feet in width, has two wheels, and is supported at one end by a stick of timber when standing. This is the perambulating cart, and is propelled by the peddler when moved from place to place. The wheels, axles and springs are built by factories outside of New York, while the bed and trestles are constructed by blacksmiths and carpenters in the city. But as markets become standardized, giving a permanent stand for the cart throughout the whole of the day, the vendors have begun the practice of building accessories to the regular form described, which enables them to heap on to the cart a high mound of fruits and vegetables.

The standard cart, when new, costs from \$30 to \$35, and the sandwich cart, (for frankfurters, ice cream, etc.) costs \$125. After a cart has been in use some years its average price is around \$15. Over 60 per cent of the peddlers hire their carts. Numerous push cart stablemen are located in Brooklyn, Manhattan and The Bronx, who make a business of renting out push carts for which they charge from \$1 to \$1.50 per week. At present, 48 stablemen are doing business, each keeping a supply of carts for rent, ranging in number from 2 to 150.

Cellar: Nearly all the vendors who rent their carts are in the habit of storing them, together with the unsold stock of produce, in a cellar which is usually in the vicinity of the stand, or perhaps in a by-street. A family or a group of relatives selling from two or more

NUMBER AND SIZE OF PUSHCART PURCHASES

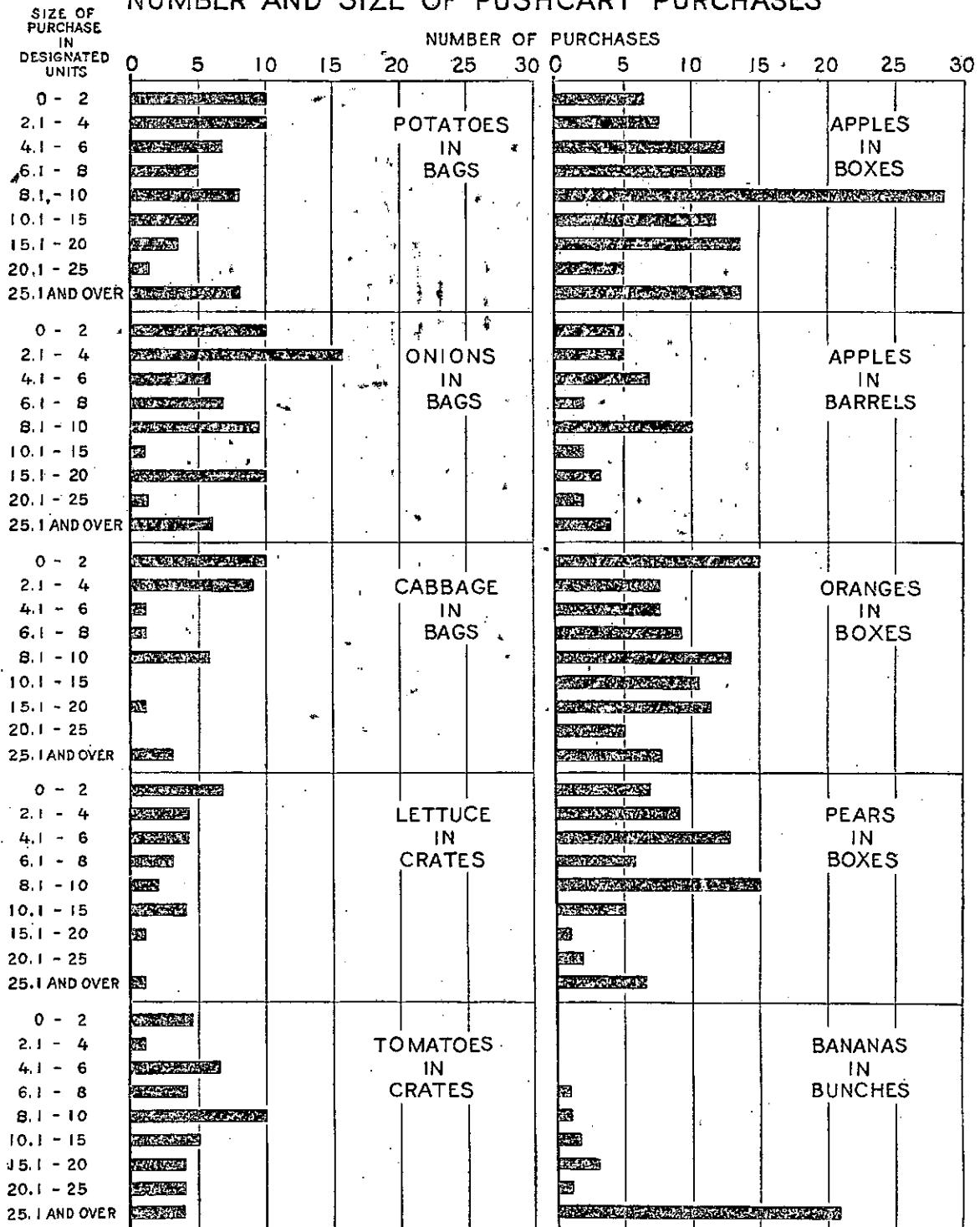


Fig. 3. Individual sales of the five leading products do not often exceed 25 cents in value. The most frequent size of sale is 10 cents.

carts operate from a common cellar almost without exception.

There are certain peddlers doing considerable business who own their own carts, but have no suitable place to store such produce as may be left at the close of the day's business. A common practice is to take the cart to their home, unload the stuff, store it in the rooms where they live, while the cart is chained somewhere about the premises. This is an unsanitary practice, requiring correction.

It has been estimated that in sections where there are stablemen who rent out carts and provide storage, less than one percent of the vendors carry food to their homes, while in the isolated markets where there are few or no stablemen, where cellars are scarce and rents are rather high, a larger number are guilty of this practice.

It may be added here that the cellar, besides being a place of storage, and for salvaging is useful for the preservation of food-stuffs in freezing weather, and it is not uncommon for push cart men, during inclement weather, to leave their goods in the cellar and sell from there as from a stand.

Streets and Sidewalks: It is on streets and sidewalks that the market zones are established and the push cart man given his opportunity. Carts are lined up end to end, (gaps being left only at water hydrants, and police signal stations) in long rows next to the curbing, each bearing its own peculiar assortment of commodities. When in full display, together with the attendant crowds, they present a scene which to say the least is picturesque.

In the early morning when the carts are brought into the street, the market becomes a scene of much activity. The vendors are kept busy for an hour or two receiving, unpacking, and arranging their earlier purchases in preparation for the day's trade. On the sidewalks by the carts, several packages of produce wait to be unpacked and displayed for sale. On busy days, like Saturday, when a large trade is anticipated, dealers provide a reserve stock which they keep under their carts or stacked behind them, or in trucks in adjacent streets from which to replenish the stock depleted by numerous small purchases. A dealer in 9th Avenue market, has a record of selling from fifty to one hundred cases of oranges, and a similar number of boxes of apples on these great market days.

Congestion: As the open markets occupy the streets the question arises as to whether they block these avenues, and cause traffic delays. This has been a controversial question among different factions from the time of the establishment of the push cart areas and much has been said and written about it. The opposition has made further criticism against granting the use of the streets to the peddlers, saying that a preference is shown to push cart men over drivers of vehicles and pedestrians. In some respects these objections are legitimate, but they are often carried further than the true conditions warrant. A large number of the

markets are confined to side streets where the traffic is not large and even when they appear on thoroughfares the evil, in a great many cases, is not great because the streets are sufficiently wide to support both carts and traffic. Even on streets having heavy traffic where markets are located, the carts, in some instances, have been confined to one side only, which arrangement presents few traffic difficulties. Moreover, since supervision has been undertaken and a personal supervisor is on duty in the market areas to guard traffic congestion a further betterment has been apparent.

But in busy hours, such as the afternoon and holidays, there is more or less impediment to the natural use of the streets, the very crowds coming to buy contributing to it, and the floaters or itinerant peddlers, who push their carts into any possible space left vacant, and behind the carts of licensed peddlers, are a certain nuisance. When wagons or trucks are driven up to the back of the carts for the purpose of unloading goods, the congestion reaches the point of irritation. The work of the street cleaning department is hampered, and in the case of fire the difficulty of the fire trucks getting through to the threatened building is immensely increased.

Displays: A universal practice among street vendors is to endeavor to display their wares attractively. Now and then a fruit and vegetable hodge podge is seen on a push cart, but in the main, the vendors seek to show their wares separately and to the greatest advantage, one compartment being given to apples or similar fruit which are highly polished, and which displays an attractive color combination, another to oranges, etc. Vegetables, to some degree, are arranged on the cart attractively. They too are segregated and pyramided in different sections with a view to color scheme, as well as to display of quality.

As a rule, produce is not left in the boxes or other containers, but is removed to the carts where it can be better presented to attract the attention of the passing customers. Large operators with surpluses of stock, after filling the cart to capacity, sometimes display fruits and vegetables in original containers by placing them on the sidewalk in front of the stand, or by building accessories on the bed of the cart, and stacking them high on this foundation.

The vendor has learned that his volume of sales is greatly affected through the outward show of his wares, and so in assorting, he puts the best, largest, and most luscious on the outer edge, a custom not wholly peculiar to this class of dealer.

No doubt one of the strongest factors, (perhaps only second to price), operating in favor of the open air push cart market, as contrasted with the unit store, is the opportunity offered for display, which is readily used by the shrewdest of these merchants.

Over each pile of fruits and vegetables is placed a placard,

showing in figures large enough to be read across the width of the sidewalk the price of each unit. This practice, now universal, aids the vendors who may not speak fluently the language of their customers, as through this means sales are often consummated. Regular customers, upon entering a street market, make a round of it, studying and comparing prices, and fixing in mind the cheapest, before they come to the final act of purchasing, when it is necessary only to specify the quantity desired.

Inspection by Customers: Brands and trade marks play very little part in the push cart marketing scheme. They are not given much attention by the vendors themselves in selecting merchandise for their carts, as they are chiefly concerned with price plus outward attractiveness and facility of sale, consequently the commodities are of such varying quality and condition when purchased in the wholesale or jobbing market that a trade mark or brand may or may not be a criterion of the true quality. It follows that the customers show a similar lack of concern in trade marks. Despite this, produce is handled much less than might be expected. The customers rely upon the eye as a guide in making their choice. The women of the Jewish race, particularly, are rarely deceived when trading with the vendor. It often happens on an active day that a line of customers 10 to 12 deep will surround a single cart with an attractive display selling at a low figure, who merely call out the quantity they wish, having judged it solely through the eye.

When it comes to foods that are not to be judged by the eye alone, like fish in piles or under water, pickles in kegs, tomatoes and other vegetables that belie their real quality, something more is demanded of both vendor and purchaser. In the case of fish, the vendor will be asked to tell the weight and the customer may insist on handling the more deceptive foods, but this is rather an exception to the rule.

Merchandise, like clothing, house furnishing and hardware is freely handled by purchasers.

#### Hours of Trading.

The push cart markets open, as a rule at 8 A.M. and close at dusk, with the exception of Saturday night when those particularly known as Saturday markets remain open until eleven. A small number of vendors, maybe five to fifteen per cent depending upon the time of year and locality, continue to purvey their wares at night, Sundays included. These peddlers are not under supervision, and as they sell by the street light greater opportunity is offered for the deception of customers. "Let the buyer beware" is a phrase which may well be applied to the business transactions of many of these after-hour vendors. Furthermore, these late operators are a menace in that they litter the street with refuse, and so leave it when departing. The pavement beneath their carts literally becomes a catch trap for dirt, as passers-by use it as a depository for trash.

In distinctly Jewish markets, a general egress of peddlers is noticed on Friday afternoon, and little or no selling is done on Saturday. The less orthodox, however, do not recognize these religious restrictions, and continue to trade like other races. Owing to the same cause - religious observance - there is a limited switching of vendors on Saturday from markets in Jewish neighborhoods to others like the 9th Ave. market.

Selling on Sunday in Jewish localities is rather common, especially by the itinerant peddler.

VENDORS.

Number: Because of the fluctuations in the number of push cart peddlers from season to season, and for different religious and national holidays, no single figure can be presented which will represent the actual number for any period of long duration. In the summer months when the fruit and vegetable season is at its height, the largest number of peddlers are recorded. Figures taken from the records of the Department of Public Markets, show that, within the market areas under its control, during July approximately 7,200 peddlers were plying their trade, while in January the number had declined to as low an average as 6,650. The holidays for the different racial groups, Hebrews and Italians, effects wide variation in the number of vendors, more especially during the time preceding the holy days for both of these groups, as well as during the Christmas season, when the number is usually greatly augmented.

Taking these changes and modifications into account, we can with a fair degree of confidence estimate the average total number of vendors which are continuously in operation at present to be 7,860.

Growth: The establishment in 1896 of the City Bureau of Licenses made it possible to form some idea of the tremendous growth of the push cart business. In 1870, an itinerant system of merchandising had obtained a strong foothold; in 1886 market zones were beginning to be formed. The first figures indicative of the number of vendors operating in the city are those of 1897, when the records show 2,017, and for the three following years with one exception, 1898, this figure is practically duplicated. Beginning with 1902 the number of peddlers increased tremendously. To find the cause we need only to look at the influx of foreigners. In 1901 began the flood of immigration from southern Europe, the characteristics of which are well known and have been described. From this immigration of a million annually was recruited the push cart army. The numbers in it were multiplied by two and by three. Even these figures do not comprehend the whole number, which must include the floaters or illegitimate operators, a type that no doubt aggregates hundreds. According to actual count made by the City Police Department, the total number of peddlers in 1906 numbered 4740. This number had increased to 6000 in 1912, the next date

for which a record is available. Between 1912 and 1923 growth was not so rapid, no doubt due to the War's demand on man power. The total increase for this period was 1860.

Influencing the establishment and growth of the pushcart business are these six significant factors. Enumerated in the order of their importance:

(1) Poverty of the people who buy from push carts. These people expend what small funds they have for bare necessities and they naturally seek such markets as will supply food and clothing at the lowest figure.

(2) Immigration. The immigrants from Southern Europe and parts of Asia are accustomed to trade in the open markets and look for them in a strange country. This need, real or fancied, coupled with their lack of money, would create a push cart system or something similar, if it did not already exist. Many immigrants having neither a trade nor an inclination to engage in manual labor, drift into the trade, as the only resource for a livelihood, and are prone to use it as a stop gap until something better engages them. From a survey of over 7,000 peddlers, 90 per cent were shown to be foreign born.

The importance of immigration, as an influence upon the number of vendors entering the push cart business, was measured mathematically covering the period from 1898 to 1913. From the computation it was found that the degree of relationship between these two variables (lagging entrants figures one year) as expressed by the coefficient of correlation, is .50. While this figure does not show a particularly high relationship, yet it is sufficiently large to be significant. From the computed equation of regression it may be said in general, that for every one thousand immigrants entering the United States about three enter the push cart trade in New York City the following year. However, the scatter about the line of regression shows a wide dispersion, consequently any predicted value is subject to an appreciable error. (See Fig. 4 for graphical presentation).

(3) Cyclical changes in business. With every period of depression immigrants in some lines of business find it falling away from them. In order to subsist, many drift into the push cart trade to tide their families over a period of distress and finding it both simple and profitable they continue in it. In periods of prosperity the opposite is true, though less in degree. Because of the opportunities and higher wages offered in other trades, at these times many vendors are induced to leave the peddling business thus depleting the ranks of the army of these small street merchants.

(4) Relative availability of deteriorated and surplus produce. Overflows and deteriorated food stuff make up a considerable portion of the supplies arriving in the city market. Such foods are sold at a low price and if deteriorated must be salvaged before being brought

## INFLUENCE OF IMMIGRATION ON NUMBER OF VENDORS ENTERING THE PUSHCART BUSINESS

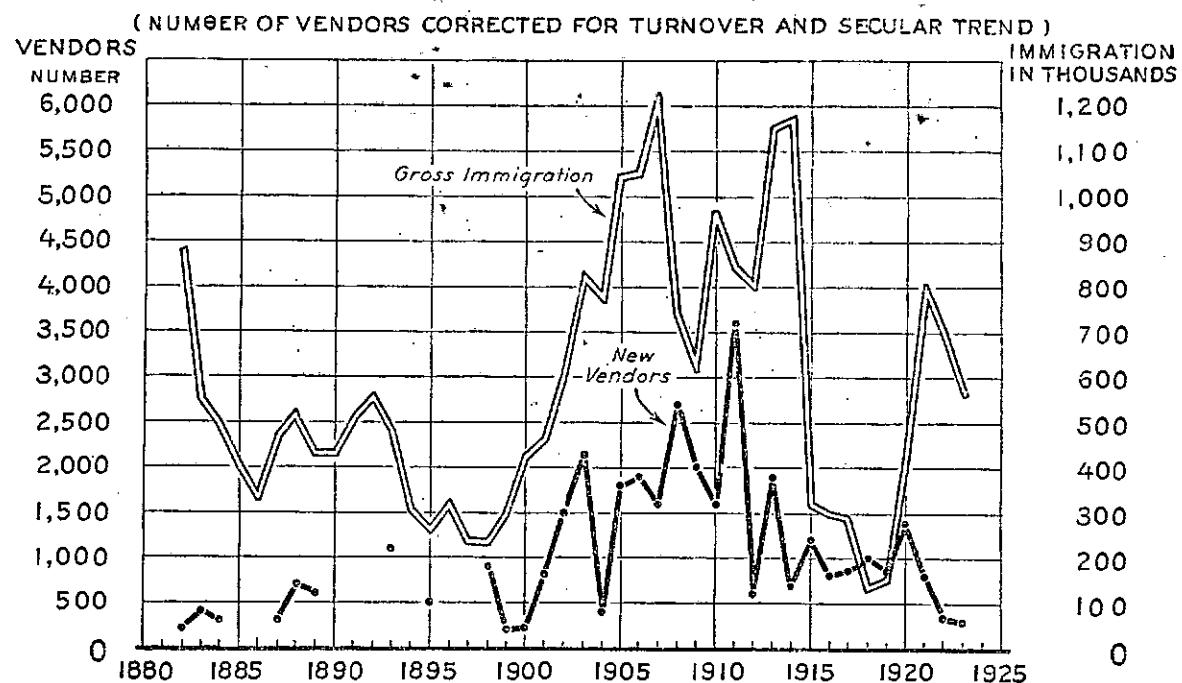


Fig. 4. The number of vendors that enter the push cart business has followed the general trend of immigration. Little capital is required; and cost of doing business is about one-third that of a store. When immigration has been heavy the number of men resorting to this form has been large as has been the number forced to buy in the cheapest markets.

within reach of the customers who in the case of the push cart patrons have a minimum of purchasing power. In the disposition of all such food, the push cart man forms an essential link between wholesaler and consumer. There is always with the wholesaler and jobber the necessity of gaining some return, however small, rather than submit to a total loss on goods which must turn quickly. Thus between these dealers and the consuming public the street vendor is a needed link.

(5) Display. Having the vantage point for display as well as the opportunity for open presentation the peddler is decidedly favored in comparison to a store dealer. His cart is ideally positioned. Customers passing along the street can see the product at close range and free from cover and are thereby induced to make a larger number of purchases from the cart.

(6) Low cost of operation: This subject is referred to in detail under the section of "Vendors". Without rent charge and frequently with no labor required, except what their families may supply, these wards of the streets, as compared to the merchants in a higher grade, may be, in this respect considered fortunate.

#### Classification of Vendors.

According to age: Through the investigation it was disclosed that the men and women engaged in the operation of push carts, are, on the whole, in the prime of life, of the age of greatest efficiency, a fact contrary to the prevalent common belief that elderly people principally take up this occupation. From a total of 392 handling fruits and vegetables who gave answers to the questionnaire, relative to their ages, it was revealed that 64 per cent are between 29 and 48 years of age, inclusive, or practically two-thirds of the whole number, 19 per cent, between 49 and 58 years, 8 per cent above 59 years of age, 8 per cent under 28.

Data gathered concerning the ages of those handling merchandise shows a slightly different result. In this group a larger number are past the middle age of life, and there are more young peddlers, indicating that the less able bodied, and the less experienced, are least qualified as vendors of the perishable bulky commodity lines. Between the ages of 49 and 68, 39 per cent of the vendors in the latter group are included, while 12 per cent are under 28 years of age. Verifying the statement that principally the middle aged turn to the push cart business is additional data relating to the ages of vendors at the time of entering the trade. By far the largest number, exactly 81 per cent are between the ages of 21 and 50.

According to Sex: Unfortunately this inquiry had neared completion before the question of the sex of the vendors was raised for consideration. Deeming it not of great consequence sociologically or economically to ascertain accurately the number of men or women engaged,

it was concluded to make only a general statement on this item. Briefly it is this: Out of the number of push cart operators, women having permits in their own name, comprise less than ten per cent of the total. Large numbers of wives and daughters assist their husbands and fathers, but these are considered only helpers and are discussed elsewhere in the report.

According to Race: Of the vendors surveyed (744), engaged in the sale of fruits and vegetables, of merchandise and other goods, the highest percentage was of the Jewish race, with the Italians second. Of the field of cheap merchandise, the Jews may be said to be in control. Formerly many Greeks were engaged in street vending, and many Americans, (the Americans in 1906 composed 20 per cent of the Brooklyn peddlers), but these two groups have dropped away giving over the field to new immigrants. Vendors of other foods besides fruits and vegetables rank Jewish first, Italian second. The actual percentages of the vendors of fruits and vegetables as questioned were: Jewish 63 per cent, Italian 32 per cent, the remainder, 5 per cent, divided between Russian, German, Irish, Spanish, American, Austrian, Rôumanian and Polish. In the field of merchandise the Jews are shown to hold sway, 95.7 per cent of those questioned being of this race. Russians and Italians make up practically the remaining 4 per cent.

Length of time in business: It is a common assumption that the push cart man uses his trade as a stop gap to tide over until better employment turns up, but the actual facts prove a different conclusion. The average time the peddler remains in the push cart business is 8.5 years. This figure is an average for 744 vendors. It can hardly be said that it requires eight years in which to locate in a different occupation, if the vendor is disposed so to do, notwithstanding his lack of knowledge of the American language and customs. Most of the men are in the occupation because of what it pays them, together with the ease of the work and the desire to remain in the merchandising field.

As between different groups of commodities, the average length of time in business shows a wide variation. Those handling fruits and vegetables continue in the trade for an average of ten years. More certainty is connected with the sale of these commodities, which are necessities always in strong demand. Furthermore, they yield a larger weekly gross sale, and obviously a larger net profit. Among vendors of clothing, beads and other notions, the so called mortality rate is greater: 5.9 years is the average length of time these men continue to sell, for their trade is subject to fluctuations which do not affect fruits and vegetables. Also many of these vendors of clothing and novelties find it possible soon to graduate into a little store.

It was found that among the different races the Jews remain in the push cart business a little more than half as long as the Americans, German and Irish. This is notably true of those in the merchandising game. One reason for this is the ambition of the average Jew to get ahead, and his success in so doing by his practices of close economy.

To amass a small but sufficient capital to take him higher requires comparatively a short time. The few Americans, Irish and Germans who still continue to follow the push cart business are men who have been operating for many years and who deal almost exclusively in fruits and vegetables. The weekly gross receipts reported for these individuals are comparatively large, indicating that they have continued because the trade has, to them, proved lucrative.

According to Other Occupations: The majority of vendors, it is well understood, operate continuously, but there are, as has been estimated, 8-10 per cent who multiply their occupations, being in the push cart business only one, two, or three days of the week, depending upon the activity of their respective markets. Among the numerous occupations engaging the vendors on days when not selling from a cart, are tailoring and pressing, manual labor, carpentry, and like trades.

Again, there are several who own a horse and wagon and who become hawkers, going to the outskirts of the city and to Long Island where they sell from the wagon. A few of this group are engaged, at times, in delivering to store dealers and to other vendors. A certain number of vendors visit the factories in outlying towns like White Plains and North Amboy and sell to the employees such goods as candy, notions, and novelties.

The most important of these peddlers who multiply their occupations are those who run a store, and who, holding permits, operate from one to two carts in front of their premises. Strictly speaking, those men are essentially store dealers but who find it profitable, as well as an effective means of meeting competition, to operate in conjunction with their regular business one or more push carts. It is estimated that half of the vendors who have other occupations fall in this particular class.

Then there are the wholesaler and jobber who operate in the central wholesale and jobbing markets but who, like the store dealer, find the push cart a fluent means of disposing of certain produce, that which is in the process of deteriorating, or the smaller sizes or the lower grades. They send from 1 to 3 carts or take them themselves on the day of the week when the principal market is held.

According to Methods of Delivery: In the early history of the push cart trade, when practically all goods were carted by hand from the central jobbing and wholesaling markets to the points of distribution, the peddler was his own deliveryman. The push cart was taken into the market and supplies loaded upon it as purchases, and the vendor propelled the cart to the location of his selling. With the growth of the city, and concurrently the extension of the territory of demand, this practice was no longer feasible. Peddlers were required to change to more practicable methods of transporting their goods. Thus today we see an entirely different system. Express companies have sprung up, as special carting agencies. Many of the vendors have acquired their own wagons,

and a lesser number their own trucks, and it is through these that the bulkier goods, especially fruits and vegetables, are delivered to the peddler's stands and cellars. In the case of merchandise, because of the close proximity to the depot of supplies to many of the market zones, the small bulk, and the frequency of purchases, hand delivery is the principal method employed.

From the survey of the five selected markets, pertaining to the manner of delivery, answers were obtained from 457 vendors handling fruits and vegetables, which showed a distribution in terms of percentage as follows:

<u>Methods of Delivery</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Own wagon	21.9
Own truck	3.5
Hired truck or express	71.1
Wholesaler or jobber	2.6
By hand	.7

Those handling other foods, numbering 47, were distributed in a similar way with the exception that none delivered by own truck or by hand. In the case of non-foods, hand delivery is the method most commonly used as 70 per cent of the 229 surveyed stated that they employed this method; 14 per cent delivered by hired truck or express, and 14 per cent employed wholesaler or jobber. None delivered by own truck.

Different methods of delivery are employed by vendors handling fruits and vegetables for three reasons (1) the relatively long distance between the push cart stands and the wholesale and jobbing markets, (2) the general tendency of jobbers and wholesalers to pursue a policy of little or no delivery, and (3), the volume of business done by the different groups of vendors. The peddler who does a business on what may be called a large scale buys a horse and wagon or a truck and transports foodstuff to his own stand while those operating in a smaller way rely upon special agencies for their deliveries. When the volume of business in monetary units was tabulated on the basis of method of delivery for the group dealing in fruit and vegetable lines, the results here given were obtained:

<u>Methods of Delivery</u>	<u>Average weekly Sales (\$)</u>
Own wagon	\$122.50
Own truck	260.30
Hired truck or express	120.60
Wholesaler or jobber	118.50
By hand	61.70

According to Citizenship: It is demanded by the Department of Public Markets that a petitioner for a permit to operate a push cart

shall have taken out his first papers entitling him to citizenship or shall have declared his intentions to become one through having made application for papers. The majority of the peddlers are citizens, having completed the necessary papers and having resided in the United States the required time - exactly 63 per cent are citizens, the other 37 per cent are still waiting to be admitted to full citizenship.

Dependents: Information taken from the applications made by the vendors under the Department of Market control, relative to number of dependents, shows that of the 7,270 there recorded, 6,261 or 86 per cent had dependents. The aggregate number of persons depending for a livelihood on this group of 6,261, according to data from the same sources here mentioned, is 22,253, making a total number (including the peddlers themselves) of 29,523. This figure is slightly larger than the actual results would portray, for the reason that there was more or less duplication in the tabulation. In the cases where husband and wife both held permits, each gave the same children as dependents. To correct this, allowance should be made for at least a thousand, reducing the total to 28,500.

No records were at hand to show the number of dependents for the floaters and licensed vendors, but we are justified in allotting these peddlers proportionately to those under departmental control. Having done this and added the results to the above figure, a grand total is obtained of 30,000, an army living wholly or in part off of the push-cart business.

#### Investment and Operating Expenses.

The initial investment of the typical vendor is extremely small. Having the street for a stand he pays no store rental, and being able to rent a cart by the day or the week, he is not obliged to purchase any equipment. Virtually the only two items in which he has to invest are scales, costing from 2 to 4 dollars, and a blue-and-white enamel metal tag, which he must place conspicuously on his cart for the purpose of identification. The Department of Public Markets charges a fee of \$1 for this tag.

Under the heading of operating expense a first outlay for every vendor is the payment of \$1 per week for a permit from the Department of Public Markets. The typical or average vendor has an expense of \$1 or \$1.50 that he pays for the rental of his cart for the week, depending upon its size, and this charge usually includes storage of the cart at night. This expense is averaged at \$1.30. There are also cartage expenses for bringing his produce to his cart, and the cost of paper bags, although in certain zones, especially on the lower east side of Manhattan, these bags are often dispensed with, for many vendors use newspapers instead. The item of help also should be considered, although it is not a direct cost to the average vendor measured in so many dollars, as the help usually comes from members of the family. Just to

what extent the vendors are assisted by their families and to the degree to which hired help figures in their expenses may be gathered from the following table:

TABLE 5. - Vendors classified according to Kind of Help Employed for General Commodity Groups.

Class of Help	General Commodity Groups					
	Fruits & Vegetables		Other Foods		Non-Foods	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No help.	227	49.1	30	63.8	190	80.5
Family help	205	44.4	17	36.2	43	18.3
Wife	106	23.9	10	21.3	28	11.9
Son	43	9.3	4	8.5	5	2.1
Wife and son	17	3.7	-	--	-	--
Brother	11	2.4	1	2.1	3	1.2
Daughter	9	1.9	-	--	2	.9
Other family help	19	4.0	2	4.3	5	2.1
Hired Help	30	6.5	-	-	2	.9
TOTAL	462	100	47	100	225	100

This is true of the typical vendor. There are exceptions, additional expenses being entailed for the man who owns his cart, as he usually rents a cellar for the storage of the cart, together with surplus produce. The vendor who substitutes for a push cart a horse and wagon or truck adds certain expenses, but of course relieves himself of others, such as rent and cartage. Hired help is an exceptional item of expense, and is confined to a few of the larger operators.

To determine the advantage of the push carts over the unit store with respect to investment and operating expense, two fruit and vegetable stores in the vicinity of the push carts were surveyed and the items embodied in each table of expenditure evaluated. To make comparable the items of operating expense, monetary values have been reduced to abstract terms and are expressed as percentages of weekly gross sales. Comparison of unit stores, - Number One, and unit store Number Two with the typical push cart follows:

TABLE 6.- Initial Investment.

	Typical Push Cart	Unit Store Number 1	Unit Store Number 2
Identification tag,	\$1.00	\$ -	\$ -
Scales	2.00	4.00	7.00
Horse and wagon	-	-	175.00
Fixtures	-	\$125.00	150.00
Total	\$3.00	\$129.00	\$332.00

Weekly Operating Expense

	Typical Push Cart	Unit Store Number 1	Unit Store Number 2
Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ .84
Permit fee	1.00	-	-
Rent on cart and storage	1.30	-	-
Rent on store	-	29.28	29.28
Cartage	5.24	7.24	-
Upkeep on horse and wagon	-	-	11.00
Paper bags and wrapping paper	1.68	2.50	2.00
Stoop line license	-	.19	.19
Electricity	-	.82	1.40
G a s	-	.58	-
Coal	-	.54	-
Depreciation on property	-	.25	.64
Interest on investment	-	.12	.32
Total	\$9.22	\$41.52	\$45.67
Gross weekly receipts	\$126.18	\$145.00	\$180.00
Weekly operating expense as a percentage of weekly receipts	7.3%	28.6%	25.3%

From the tabulation it will be seen that for every dollar the push cart man receives in sales, he pays out in expenses 7 cents, while with unit store Number 1 the expense is shown to be 28 cents for each dollar in receipts, and with unit store Number 2 it is 25 cents, which makes the unit store expenses 3 1/2 and 4 times above that of the average vendor. Furthermore, the initial expense of the unit store is many times greater than that for the typical push cart operator.

In the comparison in this tabulation, no mention was made of the item of help, for they were all considered equal in this respect, two adults being engaged in each instance.

The expenses of the unit stores naturally vary in different localities, principally because of the item of rent, and therefore the two here surveyed can not be taken as entirely typical, but the contrast between any of the stores and the push carts in the same neighborhoods will in all instances show a somewhat similar proportionate difference.

#### PURCHASES.

Vendors may be divided according to purchases into two classes, individual and cooperative. The latter class, large operators, comprising 12 to 15 per cent of the whole, is further subdivided into three divisions: Centralized purchasing by means of agents, by delegated authority and by reciprocal buyers.

Under the plan of having a single agent do the buying for several, the latter club together and select one of their number who is made the single purchasing agent for the group. These vendors are old acquaintances or more usually, are members of a family. While they are operating their carts, which vary from three to seven in number, their agent is in the market most of the time studying it under daily changing conditions and watching for the opportunity to purchase such commodities as are desired, at rock bottom prices. This system is found to work well, permitting each of the group to specialize and permitting the carrying on of business continuously through the day. From an economical viewpoint this system is decidedly the most favored.

Under the plan of delegated authority, one that long custom has made familiar, a man trusted by his neighbors is commissioned by three or four of them to purchase, while in the central market, such produce as they might prescribe, and have it delivered to them by express. The necessary funds to cover these purchases are placed in the hands of the buyer as he leaves for the market. As in the preceding case, this method saves time.

The reciprocal system is, as a rule, confined to the men who operate in a large way, measured by what is called "large" in the push cart world, and is generally confined to the dealers of longer experience. Its operation is nothing more than a mutual understanding that if any one of the four or five, so allied, has the opportunity of purchasing a large lot at a bargain, he shall do so, and the others will be responsible for their proportionate share. As a matter of fact this system is made to work because of the moral obligation which each one is willing to assume. These men, particularly those who have been long known as buyers of this kind, are frequently informed by the wholesaler of the presence in the market of some large lot, which he is willing to sell at a low

figure, who invites them to come and inspect it with a view to purchase.

Push cart men are among the earliest buyers to reach the market in the morning. Many of them are in the group of first purchasers at the opening of the central market, which in summer is 1 A. M. and in winter 4 A. M.

Perhaps no other class of buyers, barring horse and wagon peddlers, comb the market as do the push cart vendors in search of bargains. They may be seen at various hours during the day scrutinizing the commodities open for inspection in the wholesale and jobbing markets. Nothing in the way of produce capable of a quick turnover, at prices reasonable to insure a profit, escapes their observation. This meticulous search is carried on even more assiduously during the last days of the week, when none know better than they that dealers will sell at bottom prices, or even at a sacrifice rather than hold goods over Sunday. Thus, in furtherance of the general desire to "clean up" by Saturday, the push cart men or their representatives become a potent factor in the markets.

Bargaining: Upon reaching the market, the peddler customarily traverses it, inspecting many shops and making mental notes of prices. When he has completed the tour, he comes back to the dealer who made the lowest figures, and it is with him that he bargains. Even with this merchant he haggles, offering at first maybe only half of what he demands. This practice brings the vendor into disrepute with the wholesaler and jobber in times of a brisk trade, when he is denominated by them a "Nuisance" or even "Scavenger". When business is dull, however, their regard for him is reflected in a different light. At these times when it appears as though their merchandise were going to be left on their hands, they speak of him as a legitimate customer. And in the instances when the push cart men relieve them of the fear of a glutted market, taking produce which might otherwise be a dead loss, the dealers term them "Life Savers". "We depend on the push cart men to save us from a hole", is the final and most candid expression of opinion.

Source of Purchases: Records showing where vendors buy their produce have been taken from five selected markets, which were chosen because of their equal distribution with respect to the whole 53 zone centres and therefore can be accepted as typical. The results from this survey are informative. In the cases of the Upper Park Avenue, Manhattan, and Belmont Street, Brooklyn, two markets which are far distant from the centralized distributing center, i. e., lower West Side Manhattan, the majority of foodstuffs are purchased at jobbing markets near by. Nevertheless, many vendors in these same two markets go to Washington Street, auctions and piers for certain of their purchases. The other three markets, 9th Avenue and Lower 1st Avenue, Manhattan, and Havemeyer Street, Brooklyn, are comparatively close to the center of distribution, and it is here that they come for the larger part of their commodities. Classifying the markets of supply into wholesale, semi-wholesale, primary and secondary jobbing, vendors are distributed for the

five market zones with respect to purchases as follows:

<u>Source of Purchases</u>	<u>Percentage of Vendors</u>
Wholesale,	8
Semi-wholesale	55
Primary jobbing	16
Secondary jobbing	20
Traveling market wagon, farmer, etc.,	1

Wholesale markets in the classification include the docks, piers, auctions, railroad yards, and all other exchanges which receive and sell in large units. Washington Street includes both jobbers and wholesalers, and is denominated as the one semi-wholesale market. Primary jobbing markets, as the term implies, are intermediaries between wholesale and retail, and comprise the three markets of Harlem, Gansevoort, Wallabout, while the secondary jobbing are markets of similar kind, only they operate on a smaller scale, having fewer dealers, and it is thought, a cheaper grade of produce. Under the latter heading fall the Osborn Street and Attorney Street - Ludlow Street markets. Purchases from farmers are revealed to be extremely small because of the season, (November), when these records were taken. A larger number, however not highly significant, trade with the farmers for seasonal commodities in the summer.

Another factor determining the source of the vendors' purchases is his volume of business. Those who are able to dispose of large quantities of produce regularly, through combining or selling to restaurants or other dealers, go to the wholesale sources for supplies. Staples like potatoes, onions and cabbage, are bought at the railroad yards, some times in units as high as a hundred bags. Apples and oranges are purchased in large volumes from the auctions; a unit of purchase ranging from 50 to 100 boxes of apples, and from 25 to 75 boxes of oranges is not uncommon. Actually, 7.3 per cent of the peddlers buy their apples at auction, and 11.9 per cent their oranges. The smaller dealer usually goes to the semi-wholesale, primary or secondary, jobbing markets, where he bargains to secure the best prices for the smaller units which he purchases.

The third determinant of the source of purchases is the perishability of the commodities dealt in. Commodities which deteriorate quickly of necessity must move readily into the hands of the consumer, hence they are purchased in smaller units and very seldom at wholesale. Because of the perishable qualities of certain foodstuffs, jobbers at outlying markets refuse to take a chance on estimating the demand of the trade, and therefore do not lay in large stocks, for they know by bitter experiences that they may be forced to sell at a sacrifice or to cart the produce back to the centralized distributing center, at a great loss, there to be sold a second time. The inevitable result is that

Washington Street has remained the marketing center for the push cart peddler, for when going to this point for certain commodities, he, while there, procures other produce, making one trip suffice. Notwithstanding the considerable distance from some of the push cart zones, Washington Market stands out preeminently as the peddlers' principal source of purchases of the five push cart markets surveyed. Fifty-five per cent of the peddlers rely upon this market, and it is from the Washington Market that 76 per cent of the perishable commodity, lettuce, is purchased, 65.1 per cent of the tomatoes, and 100 per cent of the mushrooms. It is highly likely that should a survey be made when perishable commodities, such as cherries, strawberries and other berries, are in season it would reveal such commodities to be purchased in almost 100 per cent quantities from the Washington Street Market.

VOLUME OF BUSINESS.

Individually considered: As there has been a great deal of speculation concerning the push carts as an economic factor in the distribution of food stuffs and merchandise in New York City, and in regard to the weekly receipts of vendors, the questionnaire was framed with a view to ascertaining the importance of this system of retailing, as well as determining the economic status of the individual peddler. Therefore a question was included inquiring of vendors how much money they took in from their sales during the week.

Answers were obtained from over 700 peddlers but in a few cases where the weekly sales in monetary units were unduly low, compared to the quantity of produce stated as purchased during the week, the results were not considered in the tabulation. Approximately 700 items are contained in the data relative to the weekly receipts, and are divided between commodity groups as follows: Fruits and vegetables, 415, other foods 45, and non-foods 235. The market supervisors interviewed the peddlers and filled in the answers to the questionnaire themselves, and since these men are considered by the vendors as exercising more or less mandatory power, it is felt that a great deal of reliance can be placed on the results.

When considered by commodity groups, the vendor's average weekly receipts differ rather widely. Shown in tabular form, they are as follows:

<u>Commodity Group</u>	<u>Average Gross Weekly Receipts</u>
Fruits and Vegetables	\$126.18
Other foods	95.16
Non-foods	74.94
Combined average	107.26

Contrasting the vendors' average weekly receipts on the basis of the commodity groups dealt in, as is set forth in the above tabulation, it will be readily noticed that they are widely at variance. Those handling fruits and vegetables are decidedly the highest, those handling other foods are second in the scale, with the non-food group coming last. The reason is easily understood. In the first place the peddlers, as a whole, who are engaged in selling fruits and vegetables are young and middle-aged men, yet of relatively long experience. They are the most capable and the most enterprising. Furthermore, food-stuffs are always a necessity, and are not affected appreciably by outside influences. Vendors carrying this line may expect a more or less uniform continuous turnover, thus men of fair sales ability are enticed to remain as push cart peddlers, retailing fresh foods.

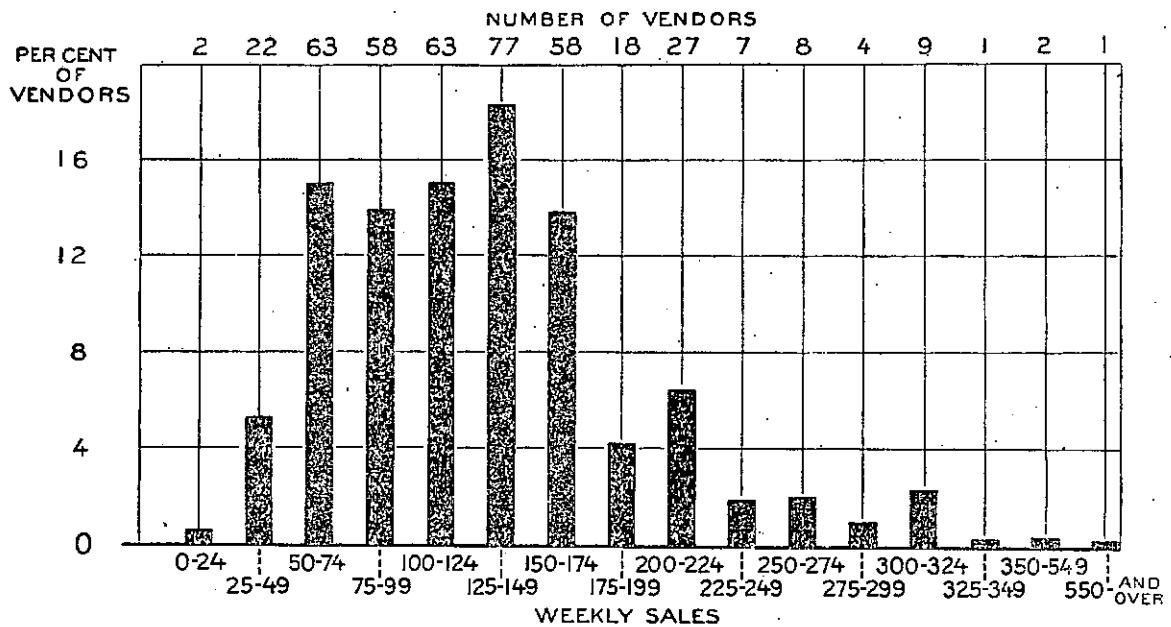
A wide range in weekly sales was observed to exist among vendors handling various commodity groups, the greatest range, however, occurring in the fruit and vegetable line. Here some vendors take in less than \$20, while the largest dealer takes in as much as \$600. This latter class sells to restaurants and other dealers. The largest per cent or modal class has a weekly gross sale of between \$125 and \$150. (See frequency distribution and accumulative fig. No. 5.)

The reason for this variation in peddlers' weekly receipts may be explained on various grounds. Obviously some are more enterprising, operating in a large way, using hired help or family help. The relation of help to weekly receipts was measured for fruits and vegetables and it was found that those who used hired help had an average weekly gross sale of \$189.00, those using family help \$137 and those employing no help at all showed a weekly return of only \$110.

Experience is another important factor, together with the age of the vendor, both of which were measured in terms of weekly receipts. Those vendors who have been engaged in the business for a period averaging 11 years and who are between the ages of 29 and 33 years have an average weekly gross sale of \$176.00, those engaged five years and who are under 28 years of age average less than \$115.00, while those who are over 60 years and who have been engaged in this trade averaging from 13 to 15 years have a weekly return averaging less than \$90.00. Taking these figures as indicative of what vendors at different ages accomplish, depending in good measure upon their experience, it may be stated that, as a rule, a man who has passed sixty, however long his active experience may have been, is no longer fitted to take best advantage of the opportunities offered by the trade. In the field of merchandise where more older men are engaged, weekly sales, in many cases, do not amount to more than \$12, \$15 or \$20, an amount inadequate to support more than one individual. Of all the vendors handling notions, novelties, and toys, the average weekly gross sale amounted to only \$43.80.

Collectively considered: Using as a base the average weekly receipts obtained from the sample, the total weekly receipts for each commodity group were determined for all vendors in all markets, includ-

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FRUIT AND  
VEGETABLE VENDORS ACCORDING TO  
GROSS WEEKLY SALES



PERCENTAGE OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLE  
VENDORS AVERAGING A GIVEN WEEKLY  
GROSS SALE OR LESS

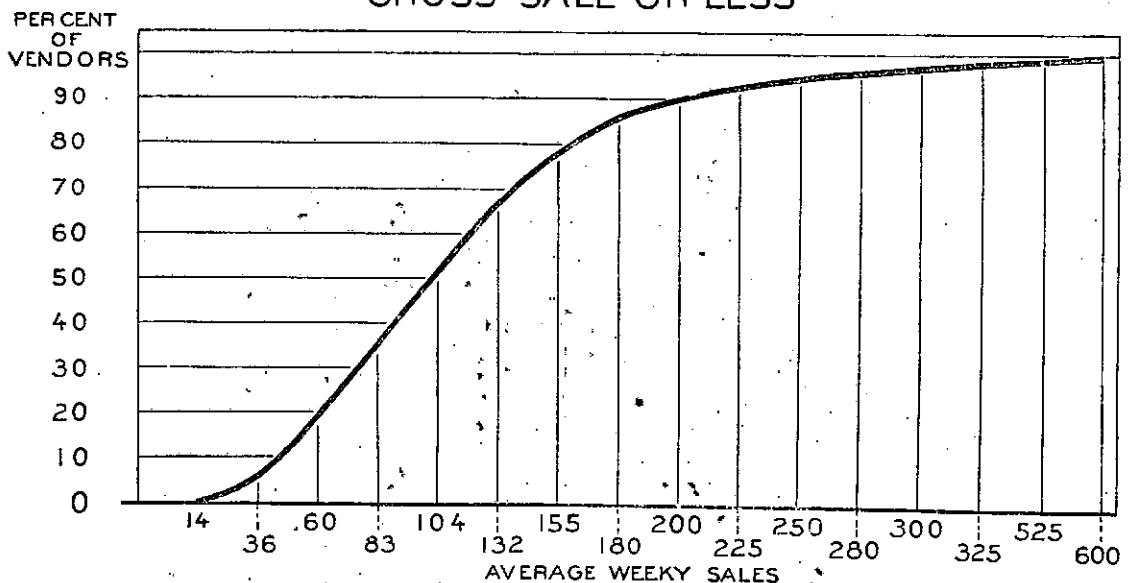


Fig. 5. Gross weekly sales of Fruits and Vegetables averaged \$126 in 1923, of other food \$95, and of goods other than foods \$75. Two thirds of the number fell between \$60 and \$160. A few vendors have more than one cart and so are able to increase their volume of business.

ing not only the permit holders, but the floaters. The latter group have been divided in precisely the same ratio as were the vendors under the Department's control. The figure given of the total number, 7860, is an average. The vendors in summer exceed this figure, while a less number are engaged in the winter. Since this survey was made in late fall, this figure can be accepted as typical of the actual number of vendors operating during the year. Moreover, sales of food stuffs at this time of the year are representative of the yearly sales, which, like the number of peddlers, fluctuate from season to season. Therefore, in view of these facts, we are justified in multiplying the weekly receipts by 52 to show the approximate grand total of yearly sales.

Table 7. Weekly and Yearly Volume of Sales of Peddlers in New York City.

Commodity Groups	Number of Peddlers	Weekly gross sales	Yearly gross sales
Fruits and Vegetables	5,309	\$669,890	\$34,834,257
Fish	228	19,335	1,005,409
Other Foods	110	12,650	657,800
Non-Foods	2,213	165,842	8,623,779
GRAND TOTAL	7,860	867,717	45,121,245

By a reference to table number 3 the approximate number of people trading more or less with the peddler is seen to be 1,500,000. Applying this figure to the \$35,000,000, the calculated annual value of fruits and vegetables retailed through the push carts, as shown in table number 7 above, the average per capita expenditure in the open markets is shown to be \$23. It must be understood, however, that not all of this million and a half population depend entirely upon the push carts for their supply of fruits and vegetables, and therefore the figure \$35,000,000 is not representative of the whole expenditures of this group. Similarly the figure \$23 is hardly representative of the total per capita expenditure.

Considered as a percentage of the total volume of fruits and vegetables consumed in Greater New York.

For the week in which push cart receipts were obtained, the total physical quantity of all fruits and vegetables arriving in New York, by whatever route delivered, were ascertained and converted into car lot equivalents, giving a total number of 2945 cars. 1/

1/ Records of unloads furnished by the Fruit and Vegetable Division of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and Daily Fruit Recorder.

These commodities transposed into monetary units, employing wholesale prices obtaining during that particular week, presents a total sum of 3,338,381 dollars.

To make comparable the total bulk of commodities and the total sales of the vendors for the week, it is necessary to add to the former sum a margin, the spread in difference between wholesale and retail prices, and for this percentage we have as a guide the figures established by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, which is 48 per cent, the margin found for all types of retailers in New York, (excluding peddlers) on a basis of 15 commodities. It will be understood that this marginal percentage is excessive in the case of the push cart dealers, therefore, a somewhat lower and arbitrary figure was used, 45 per cent. Forty per cent might have been employed, yet the results would not have been altered materially - not more than one per cent. Employing then this rate of percentage, 45 per cent, we add to the wholesale value given above, the retail figure, as determined by this margin and we have a total of \$6,069,780 the approximate retail value (push cart prices) of all deliveries into the city for the particular week under consideration.

During the same week the receipts of the push cart vendors amounted to 669,890 dollars, (see table above) or, 11.04 per cent of the total amount.

It will be surprising to a great many people, who have made no personal study of the push cart situation, to learn that these small dealers, often thought of as being an unimportant element in New York's system of retail, handle in their markets one-ninth of the total quantity of fruits and vegetables coming daily into the largest city of the American continent.

And it may be asked by some if it is from a true base that these calculations were made, that is, if this figure is representative of the volume of fruits and vegetables arriving weekly throughout the year. The receipts of commodities vary according to time of year, greater when seasonal, and less during the winter. At the period under consideration, November, receipts had fallen off, but were not at the low mark; probably close to the average for the year.

If we take the total receipts for the year 1923 as reported by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, plus the estimate of bananas reported by the New York Fruit Exchange, we find the total to be 163,000 cars, a figure almost precisely 52 times as large as the receipts for the week in question, which, it will be recalled, amounted to 2,945 cars. Therefore, it may be said with assurance that the figure here set down is fairly representative.

#### PRICES

Weekly prices from push cart peddlers were collected through the

City Department of Public Markets for a period of four months, August to November, 1923, on three staples, namely, Long Island Potatoes, New York State Cabbage, and Boston Head Lettuce. These prices were collected from five selected markets and from three or more dealers in each market, an average being taken. Prices for the same commodities and for the same period were gathered through the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from unit stores, high class, low class and medium, and from low class reconditioning stores, chain stores and from jobbers and wholesalers.

Prices from the high class stores represent an average for two to eight stores; medium class stores are represented by from four to twelve and the chain stores by from two to five. One store only furnished the data of the low class reconditioning store and this one is, in the knowledge of the writer, the only important one in the city which makes a practice of buying deteriorated food stuff and reconditioning it, as do the push cart men.

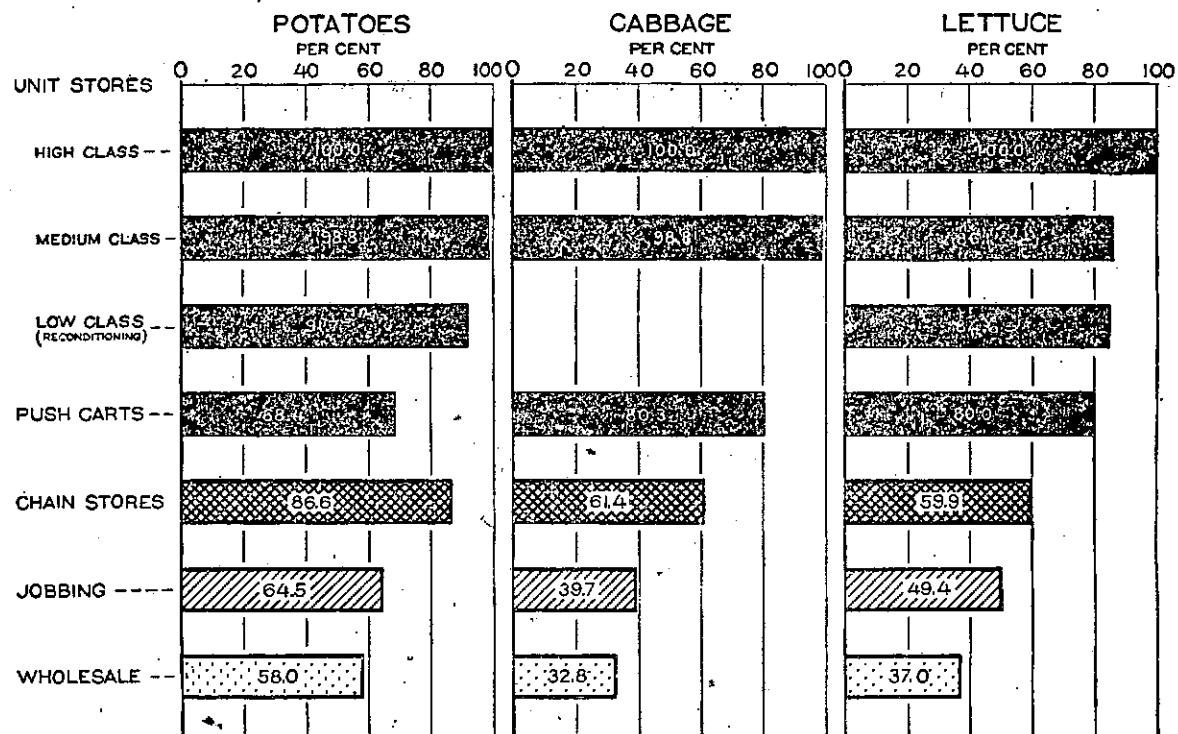
A high class store as here adjudged, is one which extends a service (delivers goods), gives credit and deals in a fine selection of produce. Its trade is composed of well-to-do patrons.

The medium class stores which figure in this comparison cater to the middle-class persons of average income. Some of these stores give credit and practice a limited delivery system. The low class store does a strictly cash and carry business and sells primarily to a class of patrons having a small income. (Where unit stores do not appear in the price comparisons with reference to any particular commodity it is because no prices were quoted.)

Reference is necessary to Fig. 6, showing an average for each separate commodity for the different marketing agencies. In this chart prices are expressed as relatives with a base of 100 (or \$1.00) for prices obtaining in the high class unit stores. It will be seen that for lettuce and cabbage push carts were decidedly the lowest in price. Cabbage was sold by the push carts for 38 cents less, for each dollar expended, than the high class stores, 37 cents less than the medium stores and 18 cents less than chain stores. Lettuce shows a slightly greater variation as between the carts and other retailers.

In the case of potatoes another situation is revealed. The chain stores sold this staple for less than the push carts. During most of the period through which prices were collected a violent competition was existing between different chain systems and unit store dealers and the chain stores were using this basic commodity as a "leader" and disposed of it at prices yielding them, at best, little profit. Figure 7 which gives actual prices for potatoes for the particular period, strongly indicates that, in the case of this commodity, chain store prices could hardly have been determined through the normal functioning of the law of supply and demand, rather that they were controlled according to a definite marketing policy. They fluctuate neither in

RELATIVE PRICES — NEW YORK CITY  
BASE: 100% FOR UNIT STORES — HIGH CLASS TRADE  
PERIOD AUG. 10 TO NOV. 30, 1923.



Note: Pushcart prices collected weekly thru the Department of Public Markets, New York City  
Other prices collected weekly thru the U.S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

Fig. 6. Push cart prices are generally lower than prices obtained by other types of retailer; with the exception of potatoes sold by chain stores, which often use low prices for potatoes as "leaders."

WEEKLY POTATO PRICES OF VARIOUS RETAIL GROUPS  
COMPARED WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH  
WHOLESALE PRICES

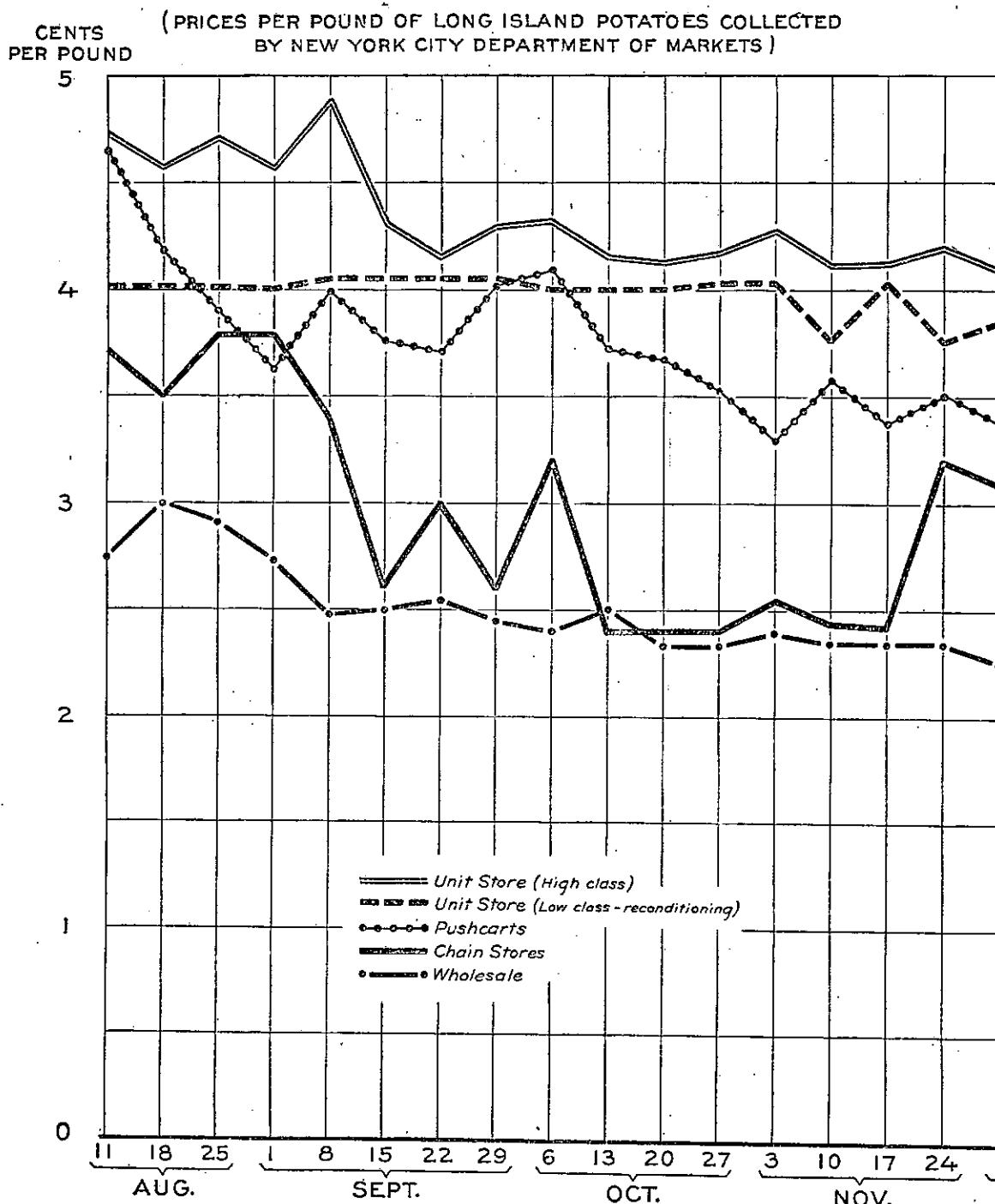


Fig. 7. Wholesale prices of potatoes in the fall of 1923 varied little after the first week in September. Chain stores prices varied most and were sold at the smallest margin over wholesale prices. Push cart prices were usually below those of the unit stores.

accordance with wholesale, jobbing nor other retail prices, but move in a manner peculiar to themselves, being high one week and unduly low the following and vice versa. Interviews with chain store merchants confirmed these deductions as being true. Later when competition had returned to the expected degree, and control was no longer exercised, potato prices moved to a somewhat higher level and continued more stable.

The question may very well be asked if the quality and condition was sufficiently considered in these price comparisons, and if it be not true that high prices obtaining with certain retailers, are due to a superior grade of products. In the assembling of prices, only those were used which were believed to be for a uniform grade, quality and condition. Originally five commodities were selected for a price study, but owing to the diversity of sizes and grades the prices for two of these, oranges and apples, were thought scarcely comparable. Therefore lettuce, cabbage and potatoes only were used.

The variation in condition for the specified grades of these varieties upon which price quotations were gathered are not so pronounced so that the comparison has some validity although different agents assembled the quotations. Elsewhere in this report figures are quoted, from the Department of Food and Drugs in the City's Bureau of Public Health, of foods examined on push carts in Brooklyn and Manhattan, showing what was passed, what condemned and the number of sanitary violations. According to this report the food stuffs ordered by the push cart men compare favorably with other retail systems, in fact, the push cart man is established as a purveyor of wholesome foods.

Factors contributing to price variation: Five points seem to merit special consideration in attempting to explain the underlying causes of price variation, and these in a large way also show why push cart dealers are able to undersell other retailers. A discussion of each follows:

- (1) Investment: It has been shown elsewhere that the initial investment of a peddler is negligible, while for the store, no matter how small it may be, this is a considerable item, and for middle and high class stores, it is large in proportion to their volume of sale.
- (2) Cost of operation: In terms of percentage, it has been brought out that the cost of operating the average push cart is less than one third of that of a unit store dealing in fruits and vegetables. It should be pointed out that the vendor performs no service for the customer in the sense of delivering goods or granting credit.
- (3) Grade and quality of produce handled: The type of produce handled by push cart vendors is already clear to the reader,

who will remember that these men buy the unconditioned lower grades and smaller sizes. The former of these they must recondition with a resultant waste, but not sufficient, considering the purchase price, to prevent their selling at a low figure, and at the same time returning the vendor a margin of profit. The latter type of produce he can buy at a low price, and therefore can retail it at a corresponding low price.

(4) Size of purchases: The push cart vendor buys in larger quantities than his competitor, the unit store, purchasing at times two and four times as many packages of certain commodities as do the unit store dealers. It is because the push cart men specialize that they are able to buy in these quantities. Some carry but one line like celery, and only a few carry as many as six or eight lines. These larger sized purchases permit the peddlers to secure more favorable prices.

In contrast to the large chain stores the push cart men are handicapped in the manner of purchase. Most of the former group purchase through a central agent and do a business often greater than the wholesaler. This is especially true of certain staples, thus for these particular commodities the chain store is favored by lower purchasing price, and can therefore retail at an accordingly lower price.

(5) Jobbers Margin of Profit: Peddlers or their agents (as the latter have heretofore been defined) who go to the wholesale or semi-wholesale markets, and purchase direct from the wholesaler, and this constitutes about 10 to 12 percent of the vendors, are able to buy on the basis of the jobbers, and therefore save the jobbers margin. This cheaper buying naturally enables them to sell at a lower price, as the jobbers percentage for handling goods has been found to be practically 9 per cent.

Saving: In a general sense the push cart dealers may be said to save the consumer considerable money, and it will probably suffice to call attention to but three ways in which this is effected.

(1) Saving is effected through rejected food stuffs (surpluses and the deteriorated) which are purchased by the push cart peddlers and hawkers at the piers. The saving to the public is manifest in this instance through reduced prices at large. Lower prices are inevitably brought about through competition when these cheaper commodities are thrown on the market, that is, if the economic law is allowed to function normally. The push cart and horse and wagon peddlers are the only retail agencies of note which are known to buy these types of foods, and the cart peddlers comprise about three quarters of the total number.

(2) The lower prices at which the vendors are able to sell, makes keen competition in the neighborhoods of the push carts, with the effect that prices with other retailers are kept down. Grocery stores

and fruit and vegetable stores in the vicinity must mark their goods, in a measure, commensurable with the push cart prices, or suffer the alternative, that of having goods left on their hands.

(3) Because jobbers and wholesalers are, by the activities of the peddlers, able to dispose of a large quantity of produce, which would otherwise be a total loss, a considerable sum is saved. Without this saving these dealers would find it necessary, in making their normal profit, to widen their margins on all other produce handled, thus increasing the price of food stuff to the consumer.

As an economic factor in the distributing system of agricultural produce in New York City, the push carts, it would appear, are of a compelling significance. It is probable that their influence is felt, in reduced prices, in all parts of the city. In localities foreign to them their influence is naturally of less consequence, but wherever they appear among the poor, food stuffs are made available which under store competition would in all probability be prohibitive.

#### SANITARY CONDITIONS

Perhaps the greatest of all the contentions adverse to the existence of the push carts is the one attacking the sanitary conditions, claiming that the life and health of the people who patronize them are jeopardized. These attacks have been made by both individuals and organizations, whose objections in some cases are justly founded, although in the majority of instances they are unfounded and do not merit a great deal of consideration. In studying the push cart situation, attention has been given to this particular phase, and for nine months the writer, as well as other individuals, made frequent excursions into the market zone with a view to ascertaining to what degree sanitary and hygienic principles were violated. Giving the results in a broad general way, it may be stated that the food stuff retailed through the open markets are, with few exceptions (which are treated later) wholesome and suitable for human consumption.

Through the courtesy of the Food and Drug Division of the Department of Public Health, it is possible to add to our findings something even more concrete and comprehensive, that is, the report of inspections for the calendar year 1923, which permits comparisons of the push carts with other retailing systems. The figures showing the comparison, appearing in the following table, have been reduced to a percentage basis, except pounds of food condemned which are shown as an average per dealer.

Table 8. Comparison of Push Carts and Wagons, Grocery Stores, and Fruit and Vegetable Stores with Respect to Condition of Foods Handled. \*

Retailer	No. of Inspections	Sanitary Violations	Instances of bad food	No. of Summons	Foods condemned, lbs. per dealer, average
Carts & Wagons	13,902	4.1%	.31%	4.8	.14
Grocery Stores	33,675	11.9%	2.71%	8.0	6.92
Fruit & Vegetable Stores	3,668	8.2%	.93%	4.9	5.68

The inspections for carts and wagons aggregate a total of 13,902, and, although not so stated, over ten thousand of this number are for carts alone, a sufficient majority to make comparisons significant.

Contrasting the push carts with the two types of stores for sanitary violations, the two latter are shown to be the greatest offenders. In the same way for "Instances of bad food," the stores were outstandingly higher, likewise for "Number of summons." For the average number of pounds of food condemned per dealer, the best record goes to the push carts by a ratio of about 50 to 1 in the case of the grocery stores, and 40 to 1 in the case of the fruit and vegetable stores.

A comparison between push carts and grocery stores cannot be fairly made because the stores carry a great variety of canned and packaged food stuffs in which the push cart man does not deal; and of which condemnations are rather frequent, as deterioration is an important item in this type of food. Likewise some allowances should be made for fruit and vegetable stores on the same ground, as several of these stores carry a smaller or larger line of canned stuffs. Further allowances for the large number of pounds condemned should be made for the stores, because they carry a much greater volume of produce than is customarily the practice of the peddler.

In attempting to explain further the lower average of the push carts from the sanitary point of view, it must be borne in mind that many of these dealers are able to dispose of their stock daily, arriving at the market in the morning with a fresh supply. Those who do not have a daily turnover, and of course this includes the majority, especially in winter, reassort their produce each morning, keeping and making an attractive display of the good and rejecting the bad. Their daily reassortment is essential, for the vendors' success or failure

\* Report by Bureau of Food and Drugs, City Public Health Department, for calendar year 1923.

in a day's trading, surrounded as he is by rivals, depends upon the thoroughness with which he attends to this reassortment. In this point the keeper of a store often fails; he may leave stock practically untouched or assort it only after decayed fruit threatens to destroy his stock. Of course there are some store dealers who are very strict in keeping an attractive display and hence give special attention to the matter of assortment.

It has been held and by the above table verified, that the foods in the push cart markets cannot, as a rule, be attacked for sanitary reasons, but this statement does not apply to the handling of fish by the vendors and its exclusion from the market can be recommended on various grounds. During the time of this study even the casual observer could see that the necessary precautions to insure sanitation were not taken by the dealers. Often little ice was used, scarcely no refrigeration, and as there is no connection with a water supply, the debris taken from the cleansing of this food was dumped directly into the street and the odors arising therefrom are unpleasant, and may have bad consequences. Flies were attracted in swarms to the neighborhoods and carry to human beings the species of germs which attack the flesh of fish. These germs, as every bacteriologist knows, are more harmful than those which are found ordinarily in fruits and vegetables.

It is a cunning practice of some fish vendors to have live carp, or other varieties of fish, swimming in the water, where lie the dead fish, among which may be the dog fish, a variety apt to bloat if kept an hour or two under water. When a customer asks for one of these live fish, the dealer sometimes grabs a dead one, and giving it a shake or two, weighs it, wraps it in a common newspaper, which in itself is an unsanitary practice, because of the cheap dyes, and hands it to the customer who goes away thinking she has bought a fresh fish.

Since this study was made, various changes had been introduced. Following suggestions regarding the unsanitary manner in which fish were being distributed from the carts, the Department of Public Markets has taken steps to correct these evils; and has required that new practices be put into operation. The rules of the department now provide that the fish be kept under cover and in a sufficient bed of ice, that there shall be no cleansing or scaling at the cart, and that only clean paper (not newspaper or paper that has been used before) shall be used for wrapping.

While these regulations have improved in some measure the conditions surrounding the retailing of fish, yet many unsanitary practices still exist. Peddlers are delinquent in observing these rules, but even should they comply with them in the strictest sense bad features would still remain, for whenever fish is sold without proper water and sewerage connections there is bound to be refuse, and the swarming of flies to the vicinity of the fish cannot be avoided, so long as they are sold on the streets.

A city ordinance states that other foods as well as fish when sold on the streets are to be kept under glass, mosquito netting, etc.. When this ordinance was new some attempt was made to enforce it, but now enforcement is more or less theoretical, and is honored rather in the breach. This may be due to the fact that infractions in a great many instances are not of great consequence. At any rate, push carts and stoop line stand dealers exhibit little or no effort to adhere to the law. With fruits and vegetables which can be washed, or whose rind or other outer covering is removed before eating, disobedience is not very serious, but in the case of candies, bread stuffs, pretzels, dried figs and other dried fruit, push cart men, stoop line stand dealers and basket peddlers should be compelled, in the interest of public health, to obey the law. If it were for no other reason than to keep safe from dust which blows up from the streets, not to mention the flies and other winged insects that find easy access to them, these foods should be kept under cover of some kind.

#### SUPERVISION AND CONTROL

##### Department of Public Markets:

From the time of the establishment of the City Bureau of Licenses in 1896 until 1918, the push cart vendors were supervised by this Bureau, in conjunction with the City Police whose duty it was to enforce the prescribed rules and regulations. Permits were issued to the peddlers in the form of licenses for a fee of \$4, to cover the period of one year. But during the year of 1918, because of street congestion, hindrances to the activity of the Fire Department, etc., an order was issued by the mayor to grant no more new licenses, but merely renew the old ones, with the result that the number of vendors legally authorized to sell was reduced in the two following years from 5288 to 2383. Nevertheless, many thousand peddlers continued to purvey their wares on the streets. New ones coming into the business, not being able to procure a license, proceeded to sell without this legal right. It is highly likely that more unlicensed vendors were operating than licensed ones, and thus the push cart situation was not improved.

At this time, 1920, the Department of Public Markets took over supervision and established public market areas in many sections of the city, assembling the peddlers in these districts, and locating them at definite stands under permits. Not all the peddlers came under the jurisdiction of the Department of Markets at this time; the licensees who peddled outside the marketing areas still remained under the control of the license bureau. This overlapping of authority continued between the two departments until recently, 1924, when an ordinance was passed discontinuing the issuance of permits by the license bureau, and vesting this power with the Department of Public Markets. This final enactment gives the latter department control over all legitimate push cart vendors.

Personnel: Having extended its activities to include the supervision of the push cart peddlers, numbering about 7000, the Department of Public Markets has accordingly enlarged its working staff. The personnel of the department as it exists today, pertaining to the open air markets, consists of a Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, three chief supervisors, 38 supervisors, and 64 assistant supervisors.

The Deputy Commissioner has charge of the push cart markets proper; and the rules and regulations applying to same are prescribed and administered by this official under the direction of the Commissioner. With reference to the three chief supervisors, each has charge of one-third of the territory embodying the markets, which is divided as follows:

Brooklyn	17 markets
South of Houston St., Manhattan	20 markets
North of Houston St., Manhattan & Bronx	16 markets

A supervisor is in charge in each of the 53 marketing zones, and with him are one to four assistants, depending upon the number of peddlers in the market.

Personal Supervision: The supervisor and his assistants are stationed in the markets where they remain during the regular trading hours, from the opening to the closing of the market. It is their duty to cooperate with the traffic department by keeping the streets open, and by making the vendors draw their carts close to the curb. It is likewise their duty to prevent a blocking of the sidewalks at the cross streets, and to disallow the floaters, whenever possible, from utilizing street space behind the regular stands. They cooperate with the fire department in keeping carts from standing at hydrants, in moving away obstructions in case of fire, and in preventing the burning of trash in the marketing zone, or the starting of fires in the vicinity. It is further the duty of the supervisor to report any vacancies occurring in his market, and in case of irregularities or emergencies, he is to notify the Department without delay. He also makes a record of violations, including them in his weekly report.

Fees: The supervisor collects a fee of \$1. from the vendor each week, issuing a receipt for it. Sometimes, when the dealer is absent from the market because of illness or for other reasons, fees are deferred, the supervisor making back collections when the peddler has returned to the market.

Permits: Each vendor must hold a permit in order to operate in the open-air markets. Applicants wishing to take up the business of peddling are obliged to file an application with the Department of

Markets, giving specific information concerning themselves, and must furnish a photograph. If all conditions are approved by the Department as being satisfactory, a permit is issued, permitting the holder to sell from a push cart.

Revenue and Expenditures:

The following is a statement of the revenue and expenditures of the open-air push cart markets for the year ending Dec. 31, 1923, as reported by the Department of Public Markets.

REVENUE

Manhattan	\$226,313.00
Brooklyn	82,949.00
The Bronx	<u>10,853.00</u>
Total	\$320,115.00

EXPENDITURES

Supervisory Expense

Personal Service	\$223,056.17
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Administrative Expense

Personal Service	11,691.25
Stationery, Printing, Postage, etc.	<u>300.00</u>

TOTAL ..... \$235,047.42

Net Revenue \$ 85,067.58

Cooperating City Departments: The Department of Weights and Measures and the Department of Public Health cooperate with the Department of Public Markets in the supervision of the peddlers. Through the Department of Weights and Measures, the scales used by the vendors are sealed, and measures are tested as to their accuracy. Inspectors frequently visit the market zones, as they do other retailers, with a view to ascertaining any violations. A vendor found using false weights is turned over to the Department of Public Markets, there to be dealt with according to the gravity of the offense.

The Health Department not only looks after the sanitary condition of the foods sold from the push carts, inspecting it at frequent intervals, but concerns itself with the health of the vendor, requiring that he submit himself periodically for examinations. A great many of the examinations are made by the Department's staff of doctors, but owing to the vast number of food handlers in New York City, vendors as well as other dealers are permitted to be examined at outside clinics or by private physicians, both of whom furnish the department

on a regular form, the results of the examination. Those vendors who pass satisfactorily this health test are issued a food handlers' certificate. This health certificate is a prerequisite for a permit from the Department of Public Markets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Growing out of this protracted study are several suggestions for improvement in the methods employed in the operation of the Push Cart Markets. Of the several changes for the bettering of conditions which have suggested themselves, seven seem to be particularly important, warranting special consideration.

It is recommended:

- (1) That before a permit be issued to operate a push cart, it be ascertained that the petitioner has a fitting and proper place for the storage of his produce.
- (2) That night peddling be prohibited.
- (3) That all foods, like dried figs and dates, bread stuffs, candies, etc., be kept under proper covering, as prescribed by the existing city ordinance.
- (4) That the sale of fish on the streets of the city be prohibited.
- (5) That markets on certain streets and thoroughfares which impede traffic and increase the fire hazard be removed to side streets, or confined to one side of the street.
- (6) That stricter rules be applied to the itinerant vendor, or floater so-called, who frequently adds to the congestion of traffic, and obstructs the routine of the market.
- (7) That further studies be carried forward and a more accurate measurement be made of the fundamental economic forces underlying the push cart business, such as density of population, immigration, race, poverty, business cycle, etc. (See page 23).

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APPENDIX I.

QUESTIONNAIRE SUBMITTED TO PUSH CART VENDORS.

PUSHCART MARKET INFORMATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Market \_\_\_\_\_

1. What general line do you sell? (Example-oranges, onions, fish, drygoods)
2. What specialities? (Example -celery, honey, flowers, etc.)
3. About how many boxes or packages of each do you buy at a time? (Example- 3 boxes oranges, 2 bags onions, etc.)
4. How often in a week do you generally buy? (Example- daily, 3 times a week, Mondays & Fridays)
5. From what market do you buy mostly? (Example-Washington Street, Attorney St., auctions, piers, etc.)
6. How are goods delivered to your stand? (By yourself or by hired truck)
7. About how much money did you take in from your sales last week?
8. What were your biggest days in the week? (Example-Saturday, Tuesday).
9. About how much money did you take in on the biggest day?
10. How many members of your family help you? (Example, - wife, boy, daughter)
11. Do you hire help? \_\_\_\_\_ How many? \_\_\_\_\_
12. What is your race? \_\_\_\_\_ Your age? \_\_\_\_\_ (Example-Italian, Jewish, Polish).
13. How long have you been in the pushcart business? (Example- 6 months, one year, 5 years).
14. Date \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX II.

LIST OF COMMODITIES SOLD IN PUSH CART MARKETS

Fruits and Vegetables

Apples (boxes)	Potatoes	Tomatoes
Oranges	Onions	Cabbage
Grapes	Celery	Lettuce
Grapefruit	Cauliflower	Sweet Potatoes
Bananas	Carrots	Beets
Pears	Spinach	Roumain
Plums	Scullions	Dandelion
Pineapple	Rhubarb	Watercress
Lemons	Peppers	Radishes
Cherries	Squash	Turnips
Peaches	Egg Plant	Artichoke
Cranberries	Mushrooms	Beans
Apples (barrels)	Corn	Anise
Watermelons	Cucumbers	Peas
Honey Dew Melon	Garlic	Horseradish
Pomegranates	Pumpkins	Asparagus
Tangerines	Parsley	

Other Foods

Cheese	Eggs	Assorted nuts
Dried figs	Dried dates	Raisins
Prunes	" apricots	Fresh fish
Dried fish	Snails	Shell fish
Olives	Pickles	Matzoths
Honey	Frankfurters	
Candy	(cooked)	

Non-Foods

Cotton goods	Underwear	Flannels
Capes	Dresses	Trousers
Hats and Caps	Hosiery	Handkerchiefs
Laces	Linens	Shoes
Slippers	Sweaters	Remnents
Silks	Bed clothing	Curtains
Crockery	Enamel ware	Glass ware
Mechanics tools	Oil cloth	Junk
Pots and pans	Shirts	Collars
Collar Buttons	Ribbon	Hand bags
Beads	Buttons	Agate ware
Combs	Dolls	Elastic and tape
Pins	Pocket books	Stationery
Thread	Toys	Belts
Hair tonic	Cosmetic	Perfume
Rugs	Phonograph records	Statues
Umbrellas	Optical supplies	

This list is not by any means exhaustive, but is sufficient to give a conception of the vast and varied number of commodities which are retailed through the push carts.

APPENDIX III.

General Summary - Miscellaneous Data  
Concerning Peddlers

	Number of Peddlers	Percentage Ratio
Marital State		
Married	6440	88.7
Single	321	11.3
Dependents		
Total dependents reported	22253	
With dependents	6261	86.3
Without dependents	1991	13.7
Citizenship		
Citizen	4568	63.0
Non-citizens	2675	37.0
Birth		
Native born	529	7.3
Foreign born	6732	92.7
Physical condition		
Able-bodied	7068	97.4
Incapacitated for manual labor	193	2.6
Type of Trade		
Perishable foods, chiefly fruits and vegetables	4999	68.8
Merchandise	2043	28.2
Fish	210	3.0
Family Permits		
Permits held by members of family	693	9.6
No other permits in family	6568	90.4
Push Carts		
Owned	2778	38.2
Hired	4485	61.8
Members of Family owning stores		
Yes	23	.3
No	7238	99.7
Owner of real estate		
Yes	24	.3
No	7237	99.7
Total -----	7270	100.0

APPENDIX IV.

NEW VENDORS ENTERING THE PUSH CART TRADE

Year	Number of Entrants as Sampled	Total Number of Entrants in ratio to sample	Total Entrants	
			Corrected for Turnover	Corrected for Secular Trend
1883	1	20	100	420
1887 *	1	20	92	364
1888	2	40	180	668
1893 *	4	80	320	1116
1895 *	2	40	152	498
1898 *	4	80	280	864
1899	1	20	68	198
1900	1	20	66	180
1901	5	100	320	818
1903 *	15	300	900	2166
1904	3	60	174	394
1905	15	300	840	1786
1906	18	360	972	1944
1907	15	300	780	1510
1908	29	580	1450	2718
1909	23	460	1104	2002
1910	19	380	874	1534
1911	49	980	2156	3666
1912	8	160	336	552
1913	31	620	1240	1976
1914	11	220	418	644
1915	23	460	828	1236
1916	16	320	544	786
1917	19	380	608	850
1918	26	620	780	1056
1919	23	460	644	844
1920	42	820	1092	1386
1921	30	600	720	884
1922	13	260	286	340
1923	13	260	260	300

\*No items were included in the sample for the intervening years.

APPENDIX V - PRICES

(Aug. 10 to Nov. 30, 1923)

Whole- sale (D.A.E.**)	Job- bing (B.A.E.)	Push carts (Dept. P. Mkts.)	Chain stores (B.A.E.)	Low class trade re- condition- ing, (B.A.E.)	Medium class trade (B.A.E.)	High class trade (B.A.E.)
1.82	2.28	3.53	4.61			

CABBAGE - NORTHERN WHITE: Unit (cents per pound.)

Week Ending	Average Price for period
4.81	6.42
	7.79

LETTUCE - BOSTON HEAD: Unit (cents per head.)

Week Ending	Average Price for period
4.81	16.4
	11.0

WEEKLY PRICES  
POTATOES - LONG ISLAND: Unit (cents per pound.)

Aug. 10	2.72	2.71	3.70	4.00	4.15	4.72
" 17	3.00	3.16	3.50	4.00	5.00	4.58
" 24	2.95	3.10	3.80	4.00	4.15	4.45
" 31	2.75	3.00	3.80	4.00	4.20	4.72
Sept. 7	2.50	2.95	3.97	4.05	5.00	4.58
" 14	2.50	2.94	3.76	4.05	5.00	4.89
" 21	2.55	2.90	3.70	4.05	5.00	4.29
" 28	2.45	2.81	4.03	2.60	4.05	4.39
Oct. 5	2.40	2.80	4.09	3.20	4.00	4.15
" 12	2.50	2.53	3.70	2.40	5.00	4.39
" 19	2.35	2.68	3.66	2.40	5.00	4.56
" 26	2.35	2.81	3.54	2.40	4.05	4.29
Nov. 2	2.40	2.65	3.30	2.55	4.06	4.20
" 9	2.36	2.74	3.59	2.44	3.78	4.32
" 16	2.36	2.59	3.38	2.43	4.06	4.15
" 23	2.36	2.64	3.51	3.20	3.78	4.28
" 30	2.28	2.67	3.39	3.10	3.80	4.19
Average	2.52	2.80	3.76	2.97	3.98	4.10
					4.63	4.34

\*B.A.E. - Bureau of Agricultural Economics      \*Dept. P. Mkts. - City Dept. of Public Markets.

APPENDIX VI.

Table 11

Frequency distribution of Push  
Cart Peddlers' gross weekly re-  
ceipts.

Fruits and Vegetables

Class Interval (\$)	Frequency Peddlers	Percent	Average Gross weekly Receipts
Less than 25	2	.5	\$13.50
25 to 50	22	5.2	36.18
50 " 75	63	15.0	58.77
75 " 100	58	13.8	82.50
100 " 125	63	15.0	103.57
125 " 150	77	18.3	131.75
150 " 175	58	13.8	154.83
175 " 200	18	4.3	179.16
200 " 225	27	6.4	200.74
225 " 250	7	1.7	226.43
250 " 275	8	1.9	251.25
275 " 300	4	1.0	280.00
300 " 325	9	2.1	300.00
Over 300	4	1.0	493.75
Total	420	100.	Avg. 126.18