

1. Record Nr.	UNICAMPANIASUN0107375
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Titolo	Cornering the market : independent grocers and innovation in American small business / Susan V. Spellman
Pubbl/distr/stampa	XII, 226 p. : ill. ; 25 cm
ISBN	978-01-993842-7-3 978-01-993842-8-0
Edizione	[Oxford]
Descrizione fisica	Pubblicazione in formato elettronico. – Accesso al full text attraverso riconoscimento indirizzo IP di Ateneo.
Disciplina	381.450020945
Soggetti	Grocery trade - United States - History Small business - United States - History
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Sommario/riassunto	In popular stereotypes, local grocers were avuncular men who spent their days in pickle-barrel conversations and checkers games; they were backward small-town merchants resistant to modernizing impulses. Cornering the Market challenges these conventions to demonstrate that nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century grocers were important but unsung innovators of business models and retail technologies that fostered the rise of contemporary retailing. Small grocery owners revolutionized business practices from the bottom by becoming the first retailers to own and operate cash registers, develop new distribution paths, and engage in transforming the grocery trade from local enterprises to a nationwide industry. Drawing on storekeepers'diaries, business ledgers and documents, and the letters of merchants, wholesalers, traveling men, and consumers, Susan V. Spellman details the remarkable achievements of American small businessmen, and their major contributions to the making of'modern'enterprise in the United States. The development of mass production, distribution, and marketing, the growth of regional and national markets, and the introduction of new organizational and business methods fundamentally changed the structures of American capitalism. Within the walls of their stores, proprietors confronted

these changes by crafting solutions centered on notions of efficiency, scale, and price control. Without abandoning local ties, they turned social concepts of community into commercial profitability. It was a powerful combination that businesses from chain stores to Walmart continue to exploit today.

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