

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

COLUMBUS CHARLES ANDERSON
November 2, 1873-December 27, 1958

Number 567

1981

The founder of a chain of Golden Rule Department Stores, C. C. Anderson exemplified the American dream of success through hard work and honesty. He was born November 2, 1873, near Osceola, Missouri. He grew up in Missouri and attended a commercial school in Valparaiso, Indiana. From 1893 to 1895, he got practical experience in the general merchandise business by working for the Colorado Golden Rule chain and by starting his own store in Central City, Colorado. Anderson came to Boise in 1896, opened a Golden Rule Store on Main Street, and married Henrietta Walter on June 15, 1898. The department store was located for several years in the Sonna block, until in 1929 Anderson built an impressive store at 10th and Idaho streets. While the Boise store was growing, the C. C. Anderson chain was spreading throughout southern Idaho and into Colorado, Utah, Oregon, and Washington. By 1937, when they were sold to the national chain of Allied Stores, there were a total of twenty-one stores. A 1913 article in the Idaho Daily Statesman attributed Anderson's merchandising success to several factors, but primarily to his policy of selling only for cash, thereby eliminating the expense of a credit system and enabling him to buy in quantity and pay suppliers promptly. He also had a staff of well-trained buyers who were knowledgeable about Eastern markets; he introduced a "revolutionary" idea of refunds to dissatisfied customers; and he operated on a small profit-margin with frequent turnover in stock.

C. C. Anderson's success and sense of responsibility carried over into his service to the community. He was president of the Children's Home Finding and Aid Society, president of the Y.M.C.A., chairman of the board that raised \$450,000 to bring the Union Pacific Railroad to Boise, and founder of the C. C. And Henrietta Anderson Charitable, Cultural and Religious Fund. He was also appointed a director of the Idaho First National Bank in 1907, served as State Fuel Director during World War I, and was director of the Idaho Office of Price Administration during World War II. Anderson died in Boise.

Publications--450 N. 4th Street, Boise, ID 83702--208-334-3428