

Racket Stores ^[1]

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Racket Stores

by William S. Powell, 2006



Advertisement for 'The Big Racket Store,' Raleigh, 1889. Image from the North Carolina Digital Collections. ^[2]

Racket stores were individually owned and operated retail businesses carrying a large assortment of merchandise not unlike that of a [country store](#) ^[3] or, later, a five-and-dime store. Racket stores offered shoes, dry goods, groceries, hardware, tableware, pots and pans, washtubs, ladies' and men's ready-to-wear clothing, and other merchandise at low prices. The earliest known use of the term was in [Asheville](#) ^[4], where an establishment called the Racket Store opened in 1887. In May 1888 [William Henry Belk](#) ^[5] opened a store in Monroe called the New York Racket. "New York" was included in the name apparently to suggest class. There were also racket stores in [Charlotte](#) ^[6] and Statesville; these stores apparently closed before 1929, but the one in Asheville was in operation as late as 1937. Racket stores appeared elsewhere in the South, but there seem to have been none in the North.

Additional Resources:

Emerson, Charles. *Chas. Emerson's North Carolina tobacco belt directory*. Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards and Broughton. 1886. p. [575](#) ^[7] and [645](#) ^[8].

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North Carolina Agricultural Society. *Premium list of the Twenty-Ninth annual fair of the North Carolina State Agricultural Society*. 1889. p. 49. <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/u/?p249901coll22.221902> ^[2] (accessed September 24, 2012).

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[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[15]

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