



# The History of the Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Company

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From the Archives of  
The Winchester \* Keen Kutter\* Diamond Edge Chronicles  
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Pictures of Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Charles Conover from HSB 1913 Catalog

## HSB Time Line

- 1853-54 Brown, Tuttle Co. Hdwe, Michigan Ave \* Wm. Hibbard, salesman

- **1855 Tuttle, Hibbard Co. Hdwe, Michigan Ave.\* Hibbard joined Tuttle**
- **1857 First Fire destroyed hardware building**
- **1860 Tuttle, Hibbard Co., 62 Lake St.**
- **1864 Adolphus Bartlett started employment as a janitor**
- **1865 Hibbard, Spencer & Co., 92-94 Michigan Ave.**
- **1871 Chicago Fire, second HSB building destroyed. William Hibbard resumed temporary business at his home at 1701 Prairie Avenue. Hibbard's home was open not only to his firm, but for all friends whose families needed shelter.**



The building where Hibbard and Spencer resumed business after the 1871 fire until the next building was built.

- **1872 Hibbard, Spencer Co. 16-32 Lake Street**
- **1882 Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Co. \* A.C. Bartlett joined the firm William Hibbard - President; Franklin Spencer - Vice President; A.C. Bartlett - Secretary**



Plaque of William Gold Hibbard 1826-1903, Franklin Fayette Spencer 1817-1890, and Adolphus Clay Bartlett 1845-1922

- **1902 Cruso Brand introduced by Frank Hibbard \* Revenoc & Hibbard Brands also**

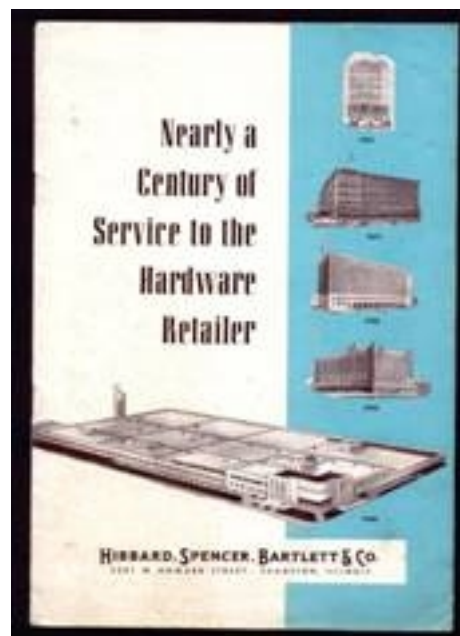
**introduced in the early 1900's**

- **1903 Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Co, State St. Bridge \* Built a fire proof 10 story building, condemned in 1924**



**OVB salesman with his car.**

- **1925 Hibbard, Spencer Bartlett & Co, 211 East Water St**
- **1930 Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Co \*Celebrated their 75th Anniversary.**
- **1932 True Value Brand was introduced**
- **1943 The US Army Air Force took over the building briefly**
- **1948 Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Co., Evanston Ill.\* New Modern Building**



**Brochure of Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Co celebration of nearly 100 years in business showing 1855, 1872, 1903, 1924,**

and 1948 building.

- **1962 Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Co. was sold to John Cotter & Co. for the True Value Brand Name**
- **Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Co. had a large selection of hardware, tools, cutlery, paints, sporting goods and many more items with different brand names to choose from. They also offered many advertised give-away items for their many merchants to distribute.**
- **Some Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Co. Trade Marks include:**  
**O.V.B. (Our Very Best), Hibbard, Cruso, Revonoc,**  
**U.S.A., (Universal Satisfaction Guaranteed), AJAX,**  
**IL-A-NOY, True Value, Stand-By, Lady Hibbard, and Chrysolite (enameled ware).**
- **During the 1883-1920's, Sandusky Plane Co. manufactured molding and plow planes for H.S. B. & Co. The planes were marked A.C. Bartlett, Ohio. In the 1920's, Stanley Tool manufactured the Gage Plane for H.S.B. & Co. and marked them with the OVB logo.**
- **In the later years, HSB & Co. also sold Keen Kutter razor blades and pocket knives, Marbles hunting knives, and Winchester flashlights as found in their catalogs.**

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**From the front page of the Hardware Merchandiser, Vo. 13, No. 12, December 1962,**

**Cotter Buys Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett's Hardware Business**

**Chicago--Hibbard Spencer, Bartlett and Co. is leaving the hardware business--the rapidly growing Cotter & Co. organization is purchasing its wholesale hardware division. Cotter is acquiring the True Value trade-marks, all of the inventories, certain of the accounts receivable and other assets of Hibbard's hardware operations. According to a joint announcement issued by O.W. Ahl, president of Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett and Co. and John M. Cotter, president of Cotter & Co., the purchase price is approximately \$2 million.**

**The sale is subject to the approval of the shareholders of Hibbard. A special meeting has been called for December 5, 1962 and the transaction is scheduled to be completed on January 2, 1963. Cotter & Co. has formed a wholly-owned subsidiary, Cotter T-V Hardware Co. to serve a selected group of Hibbard's retail hardware dealers after the sale. As part of the agreement, Cotter will lease approximately 280,000 sq. feet of space in Hibbard's warehouse in Evanston, ILL, and will acquire a leasehold interest in Hibbard's present St. Louis warehouse.**

Commenting on Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett and Co.'s future plans, Mr. Ahlsaid, "We will be completely out of the hardware business. We will devote ourselves to real estate and other interests.



A 9 foot x 7 foot poster that is currently in the Fillmore County History Center in Fountain MN was originally in a Preston MN hardware store.

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**THCKK is a not-for-profit organization formed in March of 1996. It serves to distribute information and provide an interactive forum about vintage hardware companies such as E. C. Simmons, (Keen Kutter), A.F. Shapleigh (Diamond Edge) and The Winchester Store (and the popular collectibles bearing their logos and associated house brands) as well as other historically interesting hardware companies such as "Our Very Best" (Hibbard, Spencer & Bartlett), Blue Grass (Belknap Hardware), Stanley, etc. are included as interest dictates (Witte, Wyeth, Lee, Sargent, etc)**

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