



## A YEAR OF GREAT PROSPERITY.

Review of Richmond's Wonderful Progress the Past Twelve Months.

## MANY NEW AND GREAT ENTERPRISES.

Marked Development Along Railroad, Manufacturing, Financial, and Other Lines.

## MANUFACTURES SHOW A LARGE INCREASE.

Over 100 New Plants and Increase of \$6,500,000 in Sales—Our Jobbers Do Well—Tobacco Market Healthy—Grain and Produce—Immense Increase in Bank Clearances—Activity in All Directions.

The heads of the old year have been faithfully fulfilled. The rich legacy of promise made manifest at its birth has been realized, and the records of the going months establish the beginning of a new era of industrial enterprise in this city.

It has been a period of great growth and development. Looking broadly out over the past there is nothing to compare with it in the history of Richmond, and looking forward to the future, the commercial eminence of the city does not seem to be remote.

The year 1899 brought wider opportunities to all classes of society; to the rich man as well as the poor, to the professional man as well as the artisan, to the semi-professional workers as well as the common laborers. The story of the year 1899, as set forth in today's Dispatch, tells how the people of this city have availed themselves of those opportunities. New manufactures have sprung up, the volume of business in every line has increased most wonderfully, great enterprises have been founded, and the waste places of the city are rapidly being built up to meet the demand for new factories, more dwellings, and greater facilities.

There is a firmer and more confident tone in financial circles, and capital is seeking investment instead of being sought. Capital invested in manufactures has increased over half a million dollars, and in the jobbing trade over a quarter of a million, and there has been a remarkable growth in the volume of business. Two new banks have been organized, and the capital of other institutions has been vastly increased.

Among the most prominent industrial features of the year have been the development of the ship-yards, and of the great work that is being done by the Virginia Electrical Railway and Development Company, the building of the Union Stock-Yards, and the Pace and Kingan abattoirs, the construction of underground conduits, the enlargement of the Richmond-Locomotive-Works, and the great railroad enterprises now being matured by the Chesapeake and Ohio, the Richmond, Petersburg and Carolina, the Seaboard Air-Line, and the Southern Railway companies. The building trade is far better than it has been for many years, and the revenue and post-office collections show a very significant increase. Bank clearances have exceeded all previous records by no less a sum than thirty-two million dollars, and a corresponding increase is manifest in almost every department of trade.

The Richmond tobacco market has had a large measure of prosperity. Larger quantities have been sold than for some years past. Prices have been good, better, indeed, for lower grades of tobacco than in previous years. A feature of the year has been the establishment of a warehouse for the sale of bright loose tobacco.

The city government has kept step with the march of progress in other directions; streets and sidewalks have been improved, great sewers have been built, a road above the high-water mark now connects Fulton with Chincoboro Park, and other steps have been taken which will give to the city a vastly improved street-car service.

## THE TRADE OF THE YEAR.

Progress Manifest in All Directions—The Railroad Development.

Plans have been developed within the past twelve months by which an immense concentration of railroads is to be brought about in Richmond. It is the logical result of the unique situation of the city as the gate of the South, and its growing commercial importance.

The reconstruction of the Richmond and Tidewater railroad, which will open up a large and attractive new home at the Richmond terminus. Work on the latter is well under way.

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## The New Glass-Works.

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The real estate and personal taxes paid amount to \$2,350,000, a decrease of \$17,957.38. The State taxes exhibit shows that the value of real estate, personal property, and income assessed by the State is \$22,785,532.

The health of the city has been excellent, and the death rate—3.38 per thousand—falls its own story. There were 1,436 deaths, compared with 1,005 the previous year. The rate of mortality amounting to 11.11 per cent. The Registrar of Births and Deaths reported that the Registrar investigated the causes of 375 deaths during the year, and there were 46 infants in Potter's field.

The meteorological report shows that the climate of Richmond is even and healthy. The mean temperature was highest in July, being 77.7, and lowest in February, 32.9. The rainfall was highest in September, but less during the past twelve months than any year since 1890.

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Lines of Virginia and the South Never Had a Year of Such Prosperity.

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## NEW EQUIPMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS.

They Were Made Necessary in Order to Have Better Facilities for Handling the Increased Business—the Great Features of the Year With the Lines of the State and the South.

The year just closing has been epochal in the history of the railway lines of Virginia and the South.

Its close finds every line in Virginia at least enjoying a prosperity wholly unprecedented, and with every prospect for the continuance of conditions which have gladdened the hearts of the operators of railway lines and the stockholders in the companies.

The year has not been remarkable for the amount of new line built. Indeed, the total mileage of new track laid in Virginia and the Southern States during the past year has been much less than in many a preceding year.

But never before has traffic been so heavy. Never have gross earnings been so great. Never have net profits been so large. Never has the improvement of the road-bed of old lines been so general. Never has so much new equipment been added. Never in a twelvemonth have there been deals of such magnitude consummated. Never before did a new year find the South the centre of railroad development and the cynosure of all eyes in the railway world that she is at the beginning of 1900.

Brief reviews of the year as it has affected a number of the Virginia lines are presented below. The details which they contain fully bear out the general statements above regarding the prosperity of the Virginia railways. They show in a most conclusive manner that Richmond, as a centre of railway communication, is more influential than almost any city of the same size in the United States, and that her advantages in this respect are far greater than those of any other city in the Southern States.

The gigantic railway improvements now in progress in Richmond, involving the expenditure of several millions of dollars, the approach to completion of the Richmond, Petersburg and Carolina road, which is to be the northern division of the Seaboard Air-Line, and the nearness to completion of the consolidation of the Seaboard lines, the Virginia Central and Potomac, and the Georgia and Alabama into one great system, are not only the features of railway development during the year, but are earnest of the future of Richmond as a railroad centre.

The year 1899 will inaugurate a new era in the transportation facilities of Richmond by the completion of the Richmond, Petersburg and Carolina road, the northern division of the Seaboard Air-Line system.

This road is nearly completed from the Raleigh and Gaston Railway (forty miles west of Weldon) through Petersburg to Richmond, and through Richmond a distance of about four miles to a connection with the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac road near the Hermitage road.

The new line via Ridgeway shortens the distance between Richmond and Norfolk by 20 miles, and will give Richmond and Petersburg better access to a large territory in the Carolinas with which they already have business relations.

The 34 miles of the Richmond, Petersburg and Carolina road will be a part of the Seaboard Air-Line, making Richmond the northern terminus of that system, and connecting it not only with the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac, and the Norfolk and Western and Chesapeake and Ohio railways, which are important western connections.

From Hamlet, 133 miles south of Richmond, the Seaboard has a branch to Palmetto railroad, and this branch is now being extended a distance of eighty-four miles to Columbia, the capital of the State of South Carolina, where it will connect with the Florida, Central and Georgia railroads. The latter road extends southward from Columbia, through Savannah, Ga., where it connects with the Georgia and Alabama, to Fernandina, Jacksonville, Cedar Keys, and Tallahassee, Fla., the central point of the system being Baldwin, where its northern, eastern, western, and southern lines meet.

The Georgia and Alabama extends westward from Savannah to Montgomery, Ala., with sundry branches. Recently it has used part of the track and the terminal facilities of the Central railroad of Georgia, at Savannah, but extensive wharves are being built with convenient warehouses and yards, which will make the terminals of the Seaboard System at that port equal, if not superior, to any in the South.

THE GREATER SEABOARD AIR-LINE The consolidation of these roads will make a new southern system, extending from Richmond, Portsmouth, Savannah, Fernandina, and Jacksonville on the Atlantic Seaboard, to Tampa and Cedar Keys on the Gulf of Mexico, with extensions westward to Atlanta, Ga.; Montgomery, Ala.; and Tallahassee, the capital of Florida, thus connecting the Atlantic

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Line	1900 (est.)	1899
Seaboard Air-Line System	1,150,000	1,150,000
Virginia Central and Potomac System	360,000	360,000
Georgia and Alabama System	463,000	463,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,973,000</b>	<b>1,973,000</b>

  

Class	1899	1898
Article of Kind	1,250,000	1,250,000
Grocers and liquors	1,250,000	1,250,000
Fruit goods and notions	1,100,000	1,100,000
Buts and shoes	750,000	750,000
Coal and wood-ware	3,225,000	3,225,000
Provisions	2,500,000	2,500,000
Carpets and tobaccos	46,000	46,000
Drugs and hardware	48,000	48,000
Hardware and agricultural implements	210,000	210,000
Railway and plumbers' supplies	275,000	275,000
Coal and wood-ware	230,000	230,000
Stoves, tin, china, and earthenware	200,000	200,000
Oils, paints, varnish, and glass	120,000	120,000
Hats, caps, and nursery	145,000	145,000
Books, stationery, and paper	175,000	175,000
Sewing machines and typewriters	160,000	160,000
Sporting, bicycle, and rubber goods	70,000	70,000
Pianos and organs and musical instruments	65,000	65,000
Wood and upholstery	65,000	65,000
Millinery and straw goods	50,000	50,000
<b>Totals for 1899</b>	<b>\$3,170,000</b>	<b>\$3,170,000</b>

  

Line	1899	1898
Increases over 1898	236,000	4,401,532

  

Year	Failures
1899	16
1898	135
1897	135
1896	135
1895	135

  

Year	Clearances
1899	\$22,827,719.43
1898	\$13,315,000.00
1897	\$13,315,000.00
18	