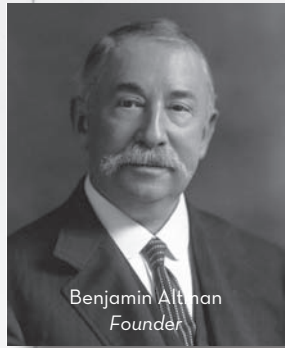
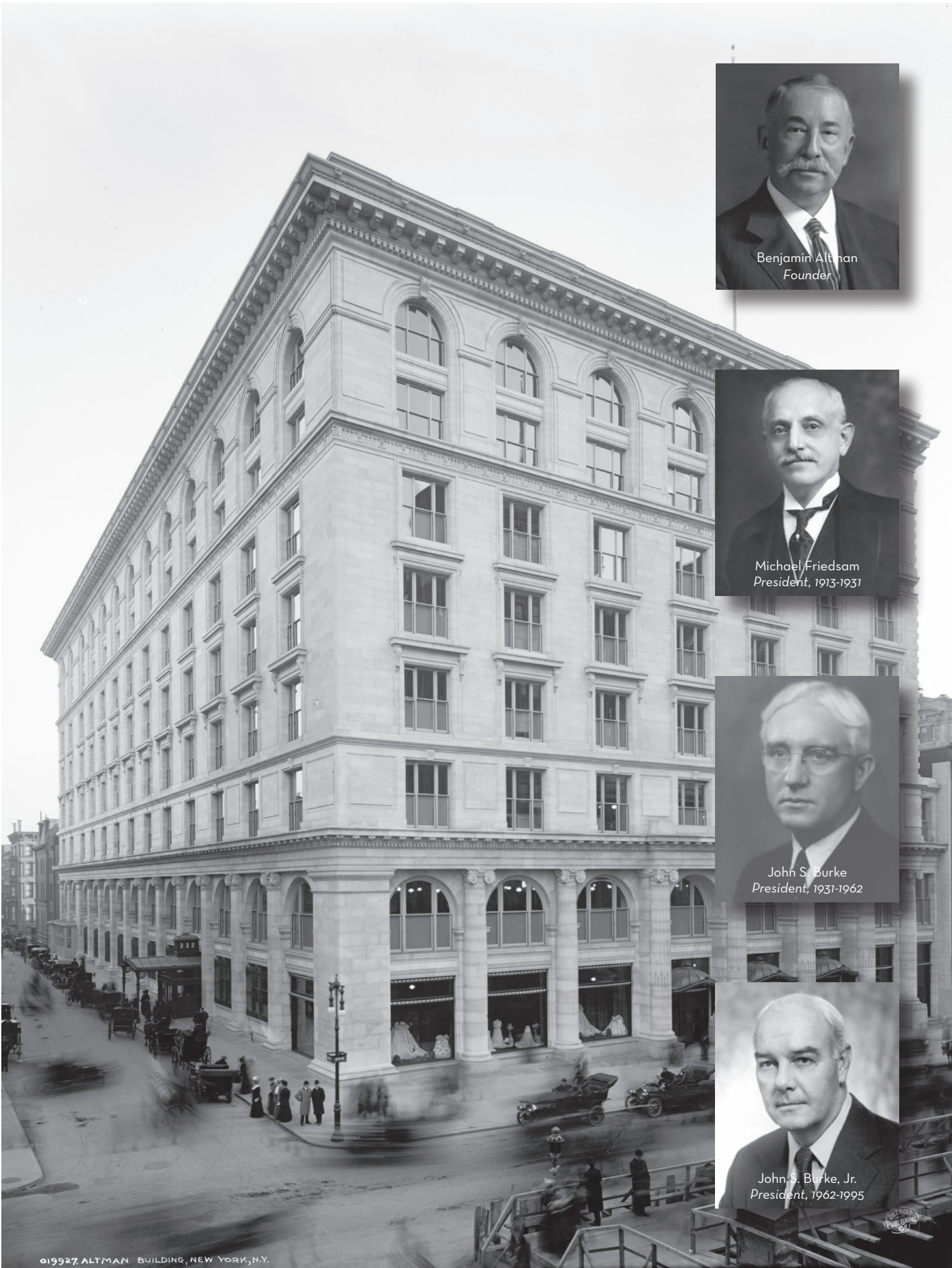


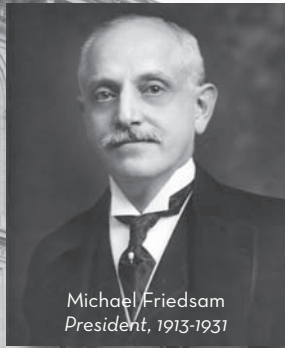
THE B. ALTMAN "FAMILY" REMEMBERS



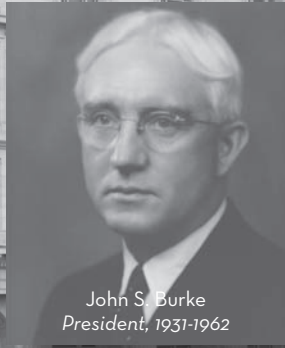
MEMORIES & MILESTONES



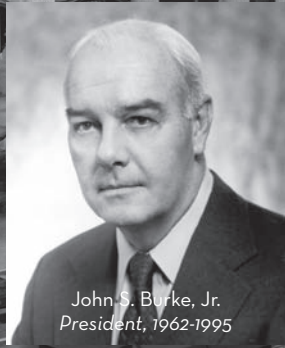
Benjamin Altman
Founder



Michael Friedsam
President, 1913-1931



John S. Burke
President, 1931-1962



John S. Burke, Jr.
President, 1962-1995



A TRIBUTE TO THE B. ALTMAN & CO. FAMILY

Some people of a certain age can grow misty-eyed when they remember B. Altman & Co. For them, Altman's wasn't just a department store; it was where they were cared for as if each were a friend or relative not only a customer. And for employees, Altman's wasn't just a place where they worked; it was truly a family.

In a history of the store written in 1968, John S. Burke, Jr. noted: "No story, a history as much as any other, has real meaning or interest unless it deals with the people who helped shape the events of that story." This informal book is the story of the company in the words of the Altman family—the employees who contributed so much to its impeccable reputation over the store's 120 years.

The qualities of excellence and service that characterized B. Altman & Co. were very much due to the vision of its founder, Benjamin Altman, and the leadership of the three thoughtful men who followed him, Michael Friedsam and the two John S. Burkes, Senior and Junior.

The project was inspired by Doris Robsky and Wes Lang, who began to collect stories and mementoes of the store from their friends. We received letters, photographs, catalogs, shopping bags and many delightful odds and ends—many more than we could publish here. But we hope that what we *have* included conveys who and what made B. Altman & Co. unique, from its beginnings in 1865, when Benjamin Altman opened his first store at 39 Third Avenue, through the years on 34th Street, which spanned most of the 20th century.

The Altman Foundation is Benjamin Altman's legacy. His standards of excellence and service and his deep respect for the individual infuse the foundation's approach to grantmaking today. His will celebrated his employees and, by creating a foundation for the benefit of "charitable and educational institutions in the City of New York," he also exhibited his deep affection for the city where he made his fortune.

As the Foundation approaches its centennial in 2013, we are proud to share this bit of anecdotal history. The memories and tributes will continue to inspire the Foundation's trustees and staff to continue the tradition of warmth and caring so evident in this little book. We thank all who contributed their memories and their personal histories.

Sincerely,



Jane B. O'Connell
President
The Altman Foundation
September, 2011

“Not only did my father work at B. Altman but my fiancé/husband. How wonderful it was as a newly-wed to go to lunch in the employee cafeteria on the 12th floor and be able to join my Dad for lunch. We would have a wonderful meal for about \$1.50! How wonderful to work with my two favorite men and for such a wonderful company.”

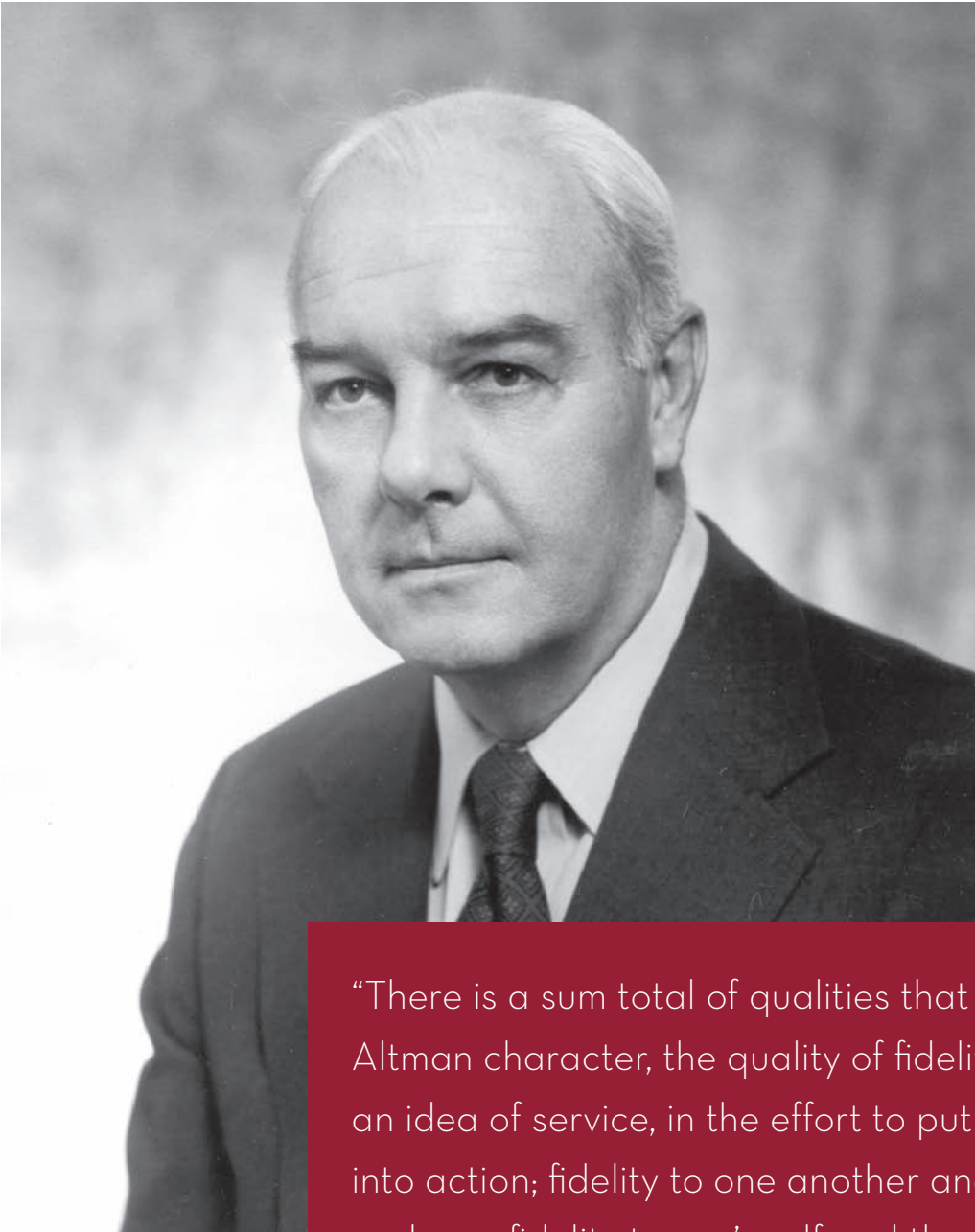


—Barbara Bishop Doster

“I worked for B. Altman for 10 years in the Charleston Garden as a waitress. We served cold salads, assorted tea sandwiches, desserts and beverages from 9:00 a.m. til noon and from 3:00 p.m. til 5:00 p.m. When my boss and our dietician decided to open a bakery outside of the Charleston Garden I was put in charge. I remember that after my maternity leave ended, I couldn't stay away and returned to my second home 'B. Altman & Co.' I still miss it.”



—Jenny D'Antuono Lorusso

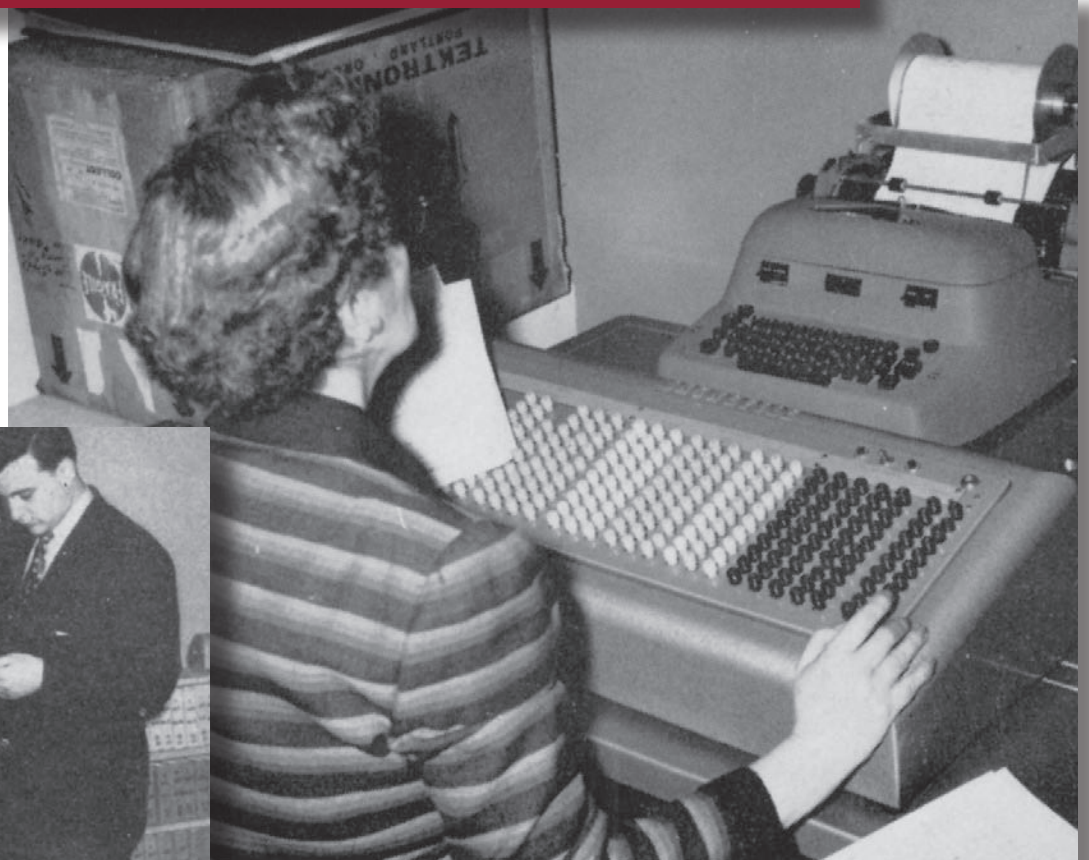


“There is a sum total of qualities that make the Altman character, the quality of fidelity: fidelity to an idea of service, in the effort to put that idea into action; fidelity to one another and, above all perhaps, fidelity to one’s self and thus to individual responsibility. There is an amalgam produced by that quality, rare enough in these days, that unites all of the other Altman qualities into a distinct personality evident within and without our walls.”

—John S. Burke, Jr.

“For four years, I worked at Altman’s on Saturdays as a clerical in various buyers’ offices. When I handed my job application to the woman in Personnel, she asked me why I wanted to work at Altman’s and I said, ‘Because my mother has a charge account here.’ After I got the job, I had to attend a new employee orientation during which I was shown a video of an employee who was caught stealing. Although I knew I would never steal, I was still very afraid that if I wasn’t the perfect employee, they might call my mother to complain and threaten to revoke her charge account!”

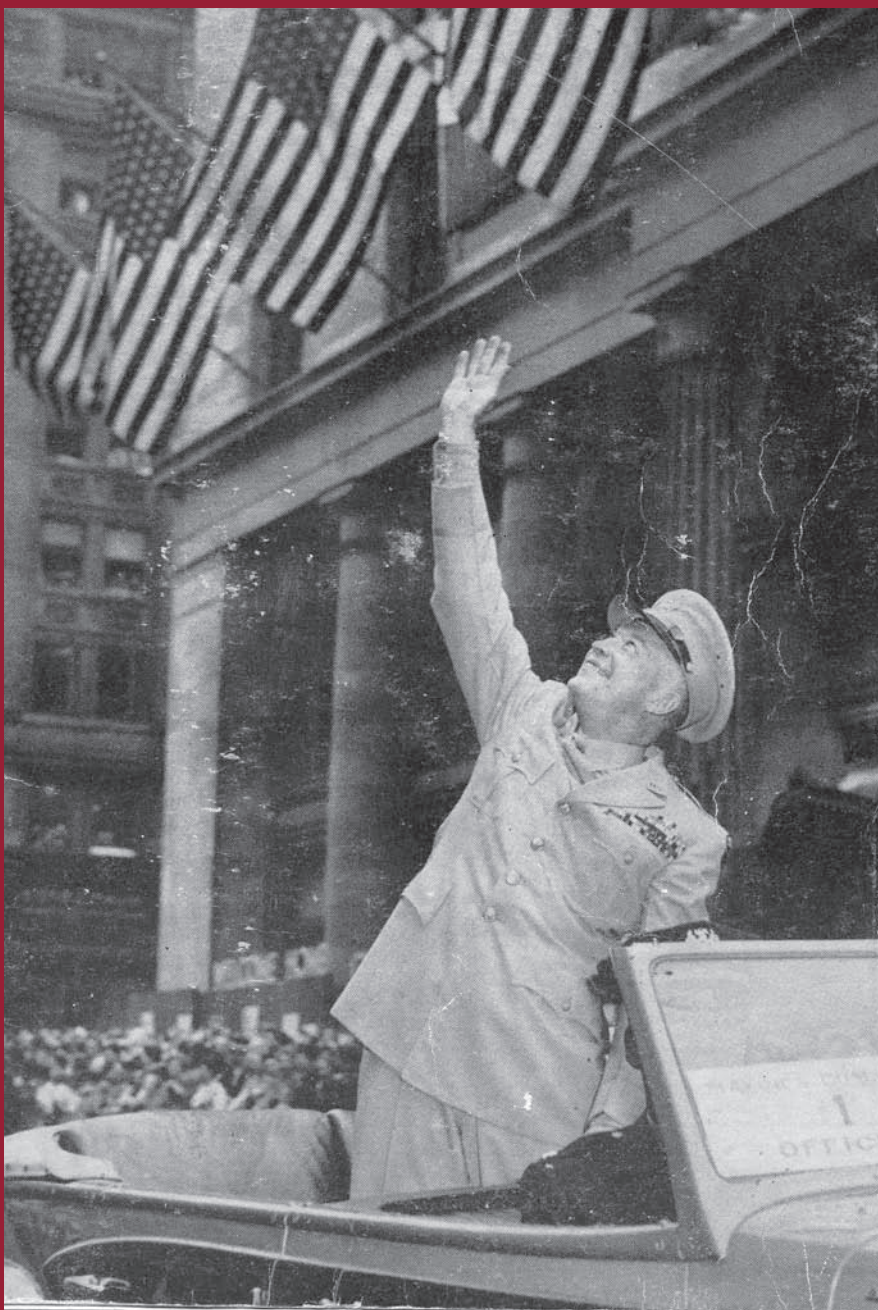
—Tina Xenos





“I started in Altman’s management training program in 1974 as my first full-time job. One of my assignments was to assist the communications manager in updating the telephone system. As late as 1976, the New York store was still utilizing an old-fashioned switchboard, with operators juggling ‘spaghetti cords.’ Before evaluating new systems, I had to conquer the old one. After several days on the switchboard and numerous rescues, I developed great respect for those women who could untangle my knots. I suppose it’s safe to admit now that I have no idea how many customers I lost that week!”

—Heather Litton

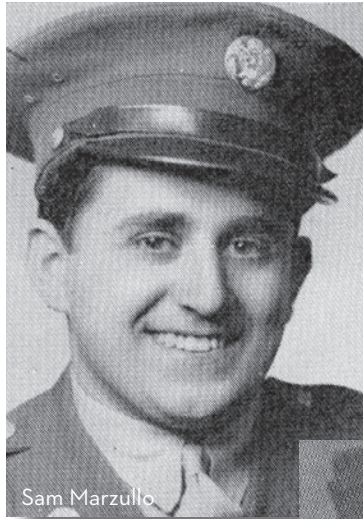


“When General Eisenhower was officially honored in New York on June 19th, 1945, he was met with no more gala welcome than that which B. Altman & Company extended him. Practically the whole Fifth Avenue front of our block-wide

store was covered with one huge American flag.

At a nudge from the Mayor, who rode beside him, the General turned abruptly and saw our colossal flag that measured 79' x 129' and spontaneously his lips outlined a whistle and both arms formed a big V-for Victory sign as the crowd broke into a fresh crescendo of cheering.”

—E. Jane Dintruff



Sam Marzullo



Anthony LaGuardia



Ronald Barton



John Enman



Dick Heaney

B. Altman's Fighting Men Return

"Though they deserve it a thousand fold, the joyous welcome our soldiers and sailors receive in the store when they return must give them a thrill of happiness and pride. Here they are again in their old departments, gay, debonair, deeply sun-browned, wearing their honors modestly and delighted to see their old friends at B. Altman & Co. once more."

—*B. Altman Bulletin*
Midsummer, 1945



“One day Mr. Burke was coming down the escalator when a lady customer asked me where the elevator was. I pointed to the wall and said, ‘Right behind there.’ Mr. Burke came over and said, ‘It would be nice if you could bring the lady to the elevator, don’t you think?’ When I had Mr. Burke thanked me and I thought, ‘What a wonderful store—really attentive to customers for anything.’ It was an honor and a pleasure to work there.”

—Richard Jones

“From experience, it is my belief that you train your personnel to reflect the courteous helpfulness, which is the guiding principle of your store. If this is so, then Mrs. Mahoney is a remarkable example of that principle. Thank you for the high quality of your service. In a world of dwindling values, I voice my appreciation of your high standards.”

—From a letter to the President



Mrs. K. Mahoney



“Once you were hired, you knew you could be there for the rest of your life. Altman’s was like your mother; it never disowned you.”

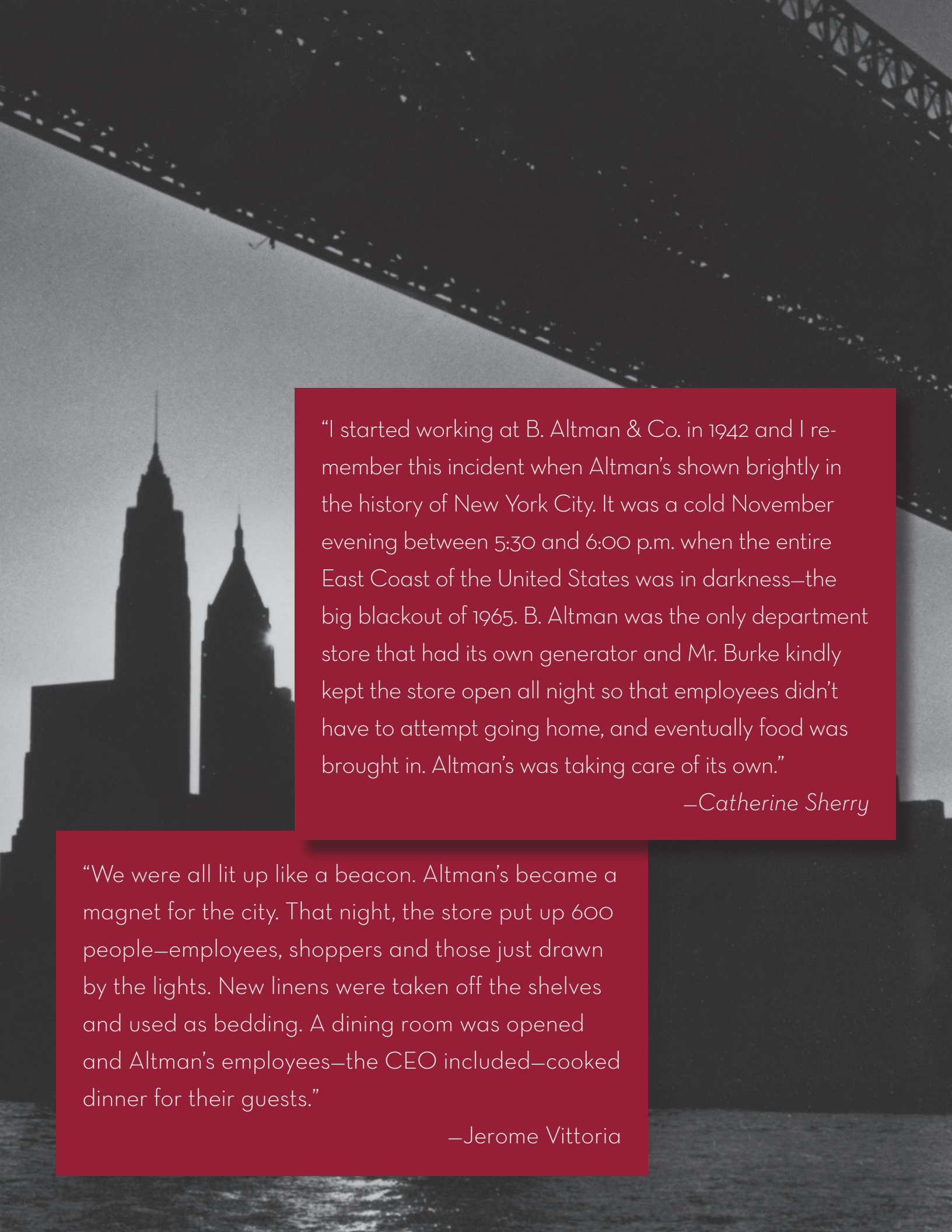
—Pat O’Connell



“I was about 17 years old when I started working at B. Altman & Co. as temporary part-time Christmas help in the Delivery Department. Eventually, I became a full-time employee. In my last position I was Executive Secretary to the Merchandise Manager of Soft Goods. I have always appreciated that my career path stemmed from the ‘hands-on’ training with the most wonderful people I have always considered my family.”

—*Sonia Sanchez-Buonpane*



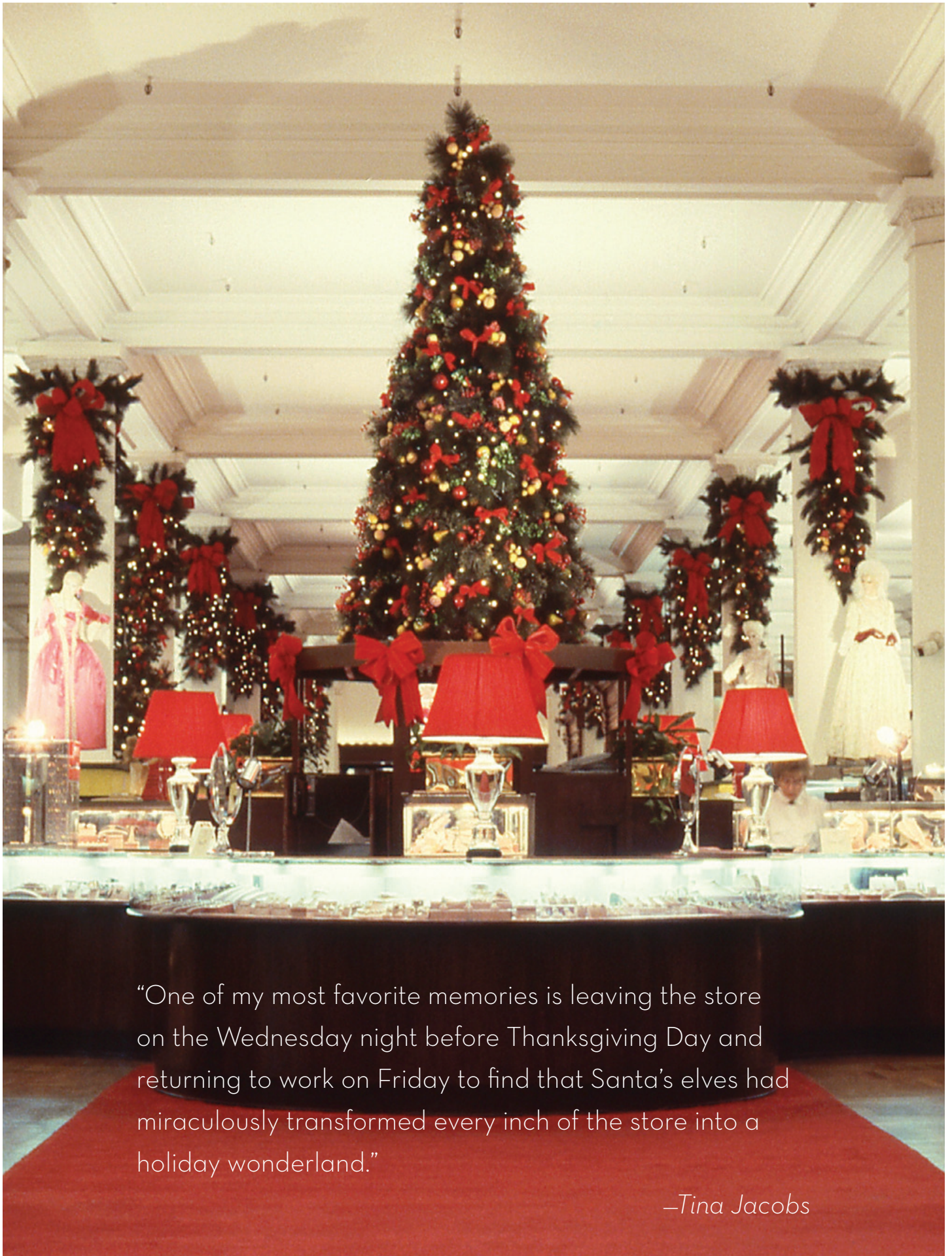


“I started working at B. Altman & Co. in 1942 and I remember this incident when Altman’s shown brightly in the history of New York City. It was a cold November evening between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. when the entire East Coast of the United States was in darkness—the big blackout of 1965. B. Altman was the only department store that had its own generator and Mr. Burke kindly kept the store open all night so that employees didn’t have to attempt going home, and eventually food was brought in. Altman’s was taking care of its own.”

—Catherine Sherry

“We were all lit up like a beacon. Altman’s became a magnet for the city. That night, the store put up 600 people—employees, shoppers and those just drawn by the lights. New linens were taken off the shelves and used as bedding. A dining room was opened and Altman’s employees—the CEO included—cooked dinner for their guests.”

—Jerome Vittoria



“One of my most favorite memories is leaving the store on the Wednesday night before Thanksgiving Day and returning to work on Friday to find that Santa’s elves had miraculously transformed every inch of the store into a holiday wonderland.”

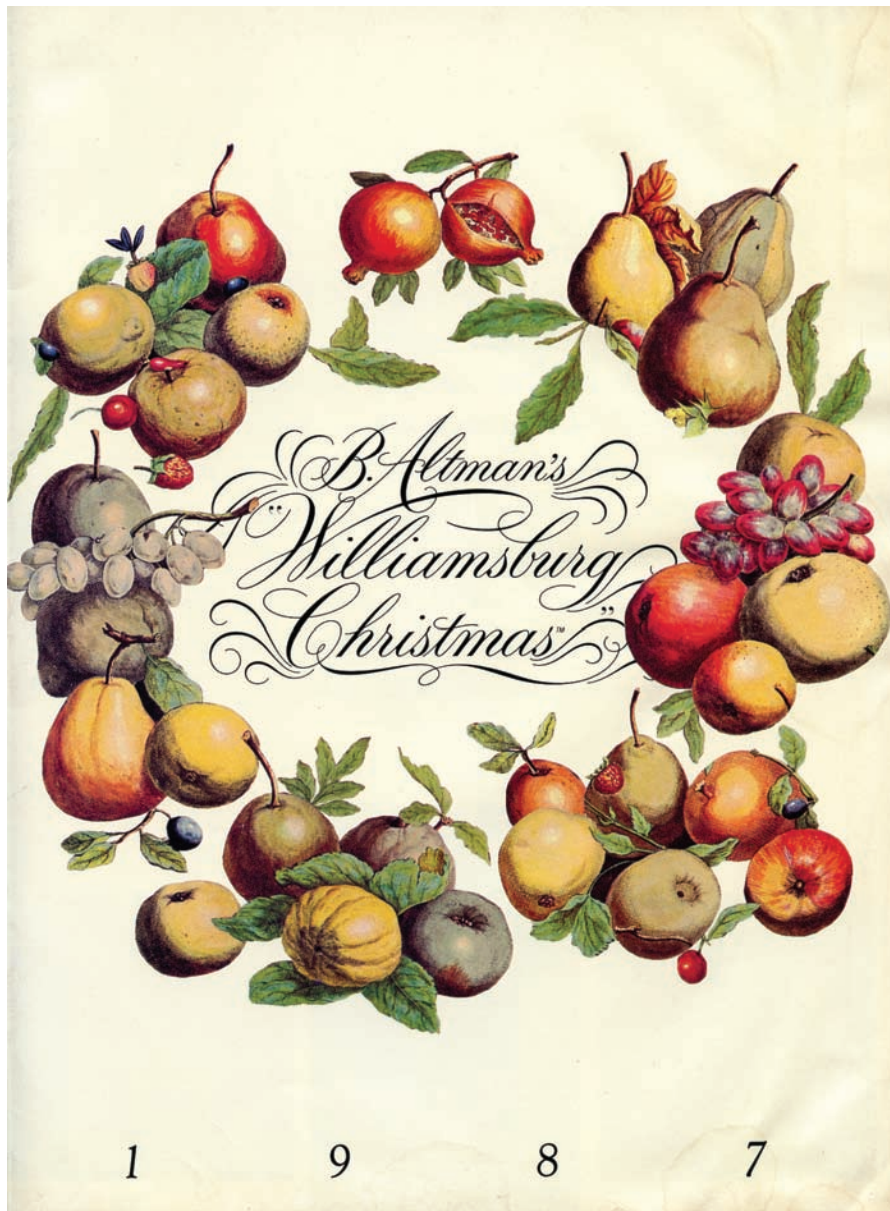
–Tina Jacobs

“Some of my best memories of B. Altman are of the holiday season. As soon as the store closed on the Saturday evening before Thanksgiving, we worked well past midnight hanging the Christmas chandeliers down the center aisle of the main floor. The following day, Sunday, the red carpet was laid down the center aisle, and the Christmas greenery was hung from the columns. We then installed the large lanterns over the Fifth Avenue entrance, and worked on the animated Christmas windows.

On Monday morning when the store opened, you could not only hear the ‘oohs’ and ‘aahs’ of employees and customers alike, but could actually feel the holiday spirit throughout this most beautiful and elegant store.”

—George W. Bishop





"The B. Altman Christmas windows were an annual tradition, and had been one of the city's attractions for the holiday crowds for decades. The store was famous for them. Their success depended on the combined talents and efforts of us all as a group in the Visual Merchandising Department, and gave us joy to work on. Our 'Williamsburg Windows' remain one of my favorite memories of my favorite store...

B. Altman & Company, Fifth Avenue, New York!"

—Virginia Hurley



Baltman's Williamsburg Christmas



Baltman's Williamsburg Christmas



“What a creative and colorful cast of characters in the Display Department at B. Altman & Co. Our mandate was to make Altman’s windows beautiful, a job we took seriously, especially the annual Christmas windows. It was a year-long labor of love from designers, carpenters, craftsmen, painters and display artists in our sub-basement studio/workshop. Our Fifth Avenue windows remain very dear to me and to many New Yorkers.”

—David Milutin



"I came to Altman's straight out of college in 1977 not knowing I was beginning an eight-year career with a new family. I remember some things as if they were yesterday like how great it was to walk through the main floor after it was adorned with all the Christmas decorations, the chandeliers dressed in red, and the red carpet rolled out...and then Christmas Eve when we all sang carols and listened to Mr. Moraski's annual rendition of 'O Holy Night.'"

—Carol Reed-Liszewski

“I recently visited your beautiful store and had occasion to order a quantity of personal stationery. The young lady who served me, Mrs. Ellen Allerup, was unusual. I shall never forget her courteous and gracious manner. I suppose you have hundreds of outstanding men and women in your organization—you would not have the reputation you have if you did not choose carefully—but this young lady was really exceptional.”

—From a letter to the President



Mrs. Ellen Allerup



Mrs. Juliet New

“When we came to furnishing and decorating our new home, we con-

tacted Altman’s because we were sure that you would do an outstanding job for us.

Your Interior Decorating Department assigned your Mrs. Juliet New to us and with great taste and good judgment she helped us select our carpet, wallpaper, draperies, furniture and miscellaneous items (all purchased from Altman’s, of course).

Our many friends who come to see the house marvel at its beauty, and they all say ‘who on earth did you ever get to do such a wonderful interior decorating job?’ It is always a pleasure to say ‘Altman’s did it for us.’”

—From a letter to the President



“I spoke to a woman from abroad who was shopping in our Hosiery Department. She said, ‘What a wonderful store and what friendly people working here! I didn’t know there was such a store left in the world.’”

—John S. Burke, Jr.



