

The Grocery Stores of Manheim **(They may be gone, but not forgotten)**

Manheim had approximately 20 small grocery store locations that were in operation from 1900-1950. Although, various advertisements account for about 35 such stores, my research indicates that ten of those had two or more different owners at the same location. The town's grocery stores did business the old-fashioned way. Bulk items were sold from barrels, cheese was sliced from the big "Cheese Wheel," and meat was cut and wrapped up in paper from the big roll at the end of the counter and tied up with string. Canned goods were kept on shelves behind the counter where the grocer would get them for you, sometimes using a long handled clamp to get the higher cans.

The fact that Manheim was and still is only about a square mile, shoppers could easily pick up items from different stores. However, due to a lack of efficient refrigeration coupled with loyalty, many residents supported their neighborhood stores. Most of the stores were on the major locations and streets around town- on Market Square, on North and South Prussian St, on North and South Charlotte St, and out West High and West Colebrook Street.

I used various references for this piece, including- books, articles and ads from a 1939 Manheim Sentinel newspaper, and interviews with former patrons of those wonderful establishments. Writing this article was challenging and a little confusing at times, especially when it came to those stores in the same location. I tried my best to make my list as accurate and complete as possible, but I am sure a few stores may have been overlooked and for that I apologize. Due to the large scope of this project, I have limited my research article to those grocery stores that were in operation between 1900- 1950.

Since the town was centered on Market Square, I think this is an excellent place to start my list. **(1)** One of the earliest grocery stores was George Danner & Co., at 26-28 Market Square. At this location Danner sold clothing, dry goods, notions, and groceries. **(2)** Another early store was that of J.F. Becker at the old Stiegel mansion where he operated from 1900-1911. Then H.D. Leman set up shop there from 1911-1919, before selling to the Rettew family who ran the grocery store up until 1950 when the grocery line was discontinued. **(3)** Located a couple doors west of Main St. at 11 Market Square was Mosemann's Grocery, which opened in 1930 and moved four or five doors westward in 1941. **(4)** Mosemann's new location was at 37 Market Square, where the Devine Cosign Shop is now located. At the new location they expanded their grocery line and included a popular pickle barrel.

(5) Traveling down South Prussian Street within a stone's throw of Market Square at 16 S. Prussian St., or where Tanner Chiropractic is currently located, was the store of John K. Gantz. The store opened in 1906 and continued until 1918, when American Stores Co. took over and became Manheim's first complete self- serve food store with meats, produce, and dairy kept fresh by electrical refrigeration in the mid 1930's. Some people referred to it as the A&P store and they operated there until 1940.

(6) Almost directly across the street, at 25 S. Main St., that same year(1940), Acme Markets opened with a large line of self-serve groceries and they occupied that location for 25 years. This larger supermarket was a sign of the times- with advances in refrigeration and automobiles, shoppers could now stock up and go grocery shopping about once a week. Shoppers now favored one stop shopping with a large selection of goods that the small stores could not offer in terms of volume or price. (7) Next door at 27 S. Main St., was the National Consumer's Store from 1924-1934. H.F. McCloud who worked for Henry Arndt at his clothing store on Market Square prior to the turn of the century gaining the necessary experience to open a grocery store and did so in 1910. McCloud's store according to an Old Home Week ad was "The Oldest and Only Strictly Grocery Store", even though the facts do not support this claim. However, McCloud operated at 23 S. Prussian St. until 1935- when the Summy House was remodeled and then set up shop there. (8) Located at 124 S. Main St. was K. Marvin Lebo's grocery store from 1937-1944, when Sam Knight took over, before he sold to Carl Dissinger in 1953. (9) Moving south on Prussian St. was another early and successful grocery store, I'm referring to the store at 143 S. Prussian St., owned and operated by Ira Brosey. Ira Brosey's Green Front Store handled dry goods, groceries and quality fruit. The Greenfront Store sold Gunzenhauser bread, which was popular bread that was baked in Lancaster, the price was 8 cents a loaf. In 1920, Brosey sold to Clayton Sharbone who operated it for 28 years. "I remember Hershey bars for 5 cents, Tastycakes for 10 cents, and they ground Robert Fulton Coffee and Eight O'clock Coffee at the counter for you", recalls Janet Atkinson Strauss. "They had five dollar Mickey Mouse watches behind the counter on a big white card", said Ron Wolfe. Sometime in 1948 Sharbone sold to H.P. Ruhl & Son.

(10) Down the street a couple of blocks at 300 S. Main St., James D. Hillard opened a grocery store in 1927. The store was located across the street from the present day Twin Kiss restaurant. "My dad sold lots of things from bulk- cookies in 10-12 lb. cubes that had to be weighed out for the customers-we also had large 25 lb. brine buckets of salted mackerel of which Doc Guy bought a lot of", said, James Hillard Jr. Some of the other prices included cans of Campbell's Pork & Beans for 5 cents and their soups for 8 cents a can. Hillard moved his store in 1942 to the corner of S. Charlotte St and Railroad Ave, which is now Uhlrich's Fuel Company's office. (11) Up the hill near Kauffman's Park was according to a 1939 Sentinel ad the Park Hill Grocery- H. Graybeal proprietor RD#1. They had fine groceries, meats, and produce. Hours were 8AM-9PM. Daily, some prices- 2lbs lard for 25 cents and homemade sausage 25 cents a lb. (12) Staying at the southern end of town, at the corner of Charlotte and Railroad Avenue was the store of H.C. Miller from 1914 -1941, when Hillard relocated there. I learned a little about World WarII rationing- in which coupon books were issued once a month to citizens to restrict the use of valuable goods for the war effort. The coupons restricted how much cooking oil, meat, lard, rubber goods, and gasoline you could buy. The store did not sell gasoline, but did sell kerosene.

(13) The next stop on this tour of grocery stores will take us northward to the corner of S. Charlotte St., and West Ferdinand Street. This location probably had more owners than any other location in Manheim. Elmer Bomberger set up shop from 1900-1910, when he sold to George F. Seabold who was also a Maytag repairman according to a 1939 Sentinel ad. Seabold's was a popular store and operated for 36 years before changing hands to Herbert George in 1946. The location had three different owners after 1950.

(14) Heading up to N. Charlotte St. at the corner of North Charlotte St. and W. Gramby was a store called Witmyer's. Having one of the shortest stints of operation at only two years from 1919-1921, Witmyer sold to Seabold's brother Robert- three dwellings plus the store for \$3,500.

(15) Going north on Main St. after Market Square is one of the most famous and long lasting grocery stores in Manheim's history. Located at 60 N. Prussian St., Elias E. Kready took over in 1904 from J.P. Swarr and ran the grocery store for over 50 years. When Kready took over for Swarr, he expanded his line to include butter, eggs, and vegetables. Then in the mid- fifties his son Elias Kready Jr., operated it from 1957-1970. (16) Half a block away at 101 N. Main St. once known as the Prussian House Tavern and hotel, Mrs. Ella Fralich operated a small grocery store from 1928-1932. Then in 1933, J.E. Alexander who was one of the earliest stores to have refrigeration operated it from 1933- 1952. Around 1952, Alexander leased it to Krupp's Food Market. Then in 1961, Allen Shaw bought the building from Alexander and called it Shaw's Market which remains the only active grocery store location from the first half of the 1900's. High quality meats, good advertising, cost cutting whenever possible and personalized old time service has enabled Shaw's Market to survive the competition from larger supermarkets. (17) Hollinger's Grocery (1939) on N. Main St., "The Better Home Town Grocery", as quoted by an advertisement in the 1939 Sentinel newspaper. It does not give the street number and I do not know the years of operation.

(18) Going north to Colebrook Street and then west to 129 W. Colebrook Street was Fetter's Store who like many others offered a delivery service. (19) Staying on the west side of town, we head out West High Street to 140 W. High St. and Flinchbaugh's Grocery Store 1940-? Then it was known as Malcom Shaeffer's Grocery. (20) Just a little farther west at 220 W. High St. was Elsie McCanna's Grocery Store-(1929-1944), then in 1944; Harry K. Mellinger took over and ran it till the mid 1970's.

Each and every one of these locations served a deeper purpose than just to supply the town's citizens with groceries. The owners and clerks knew their regular customers and many offered credit to carry their faithful patrons to the end of the week or month. A few stores even managed to extend credit through the depression years. Customers could telephone ahead and the grocer would have their order ready for them to pick up, or it would be delivered to their home. This kind of customer service has fallen by the wayside in today's retail environment. They were places to socialize, because everybody knew everybody, you could get your fresh cut meat and produce as well as some town news and an occasional bit of gossip. Ah yes, these wonderful old grocery stores may be gone from sight, but not from our memories!

Article was compiled by Gary Frederick with the help of many people, printed books and papers.

The following map indicates approximately where each of the stores were located:

