

# Sam's Market

## Sam & Clara Wasserstrum

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### Location

Main Road &  
Sherman Ave  
Vineland, NJ  
Cumberland  
County

### Years

### Active

1960s - 1983

## About Sam & Clara Wasserstrum

Sam and Clara were both born in Poland, Sam in 1915 and Clara in 1914. Clara survived the Holocaust with the help of her sister, Esther Distenfeld, a fellow Vineland local. Clara and her sister volunteered to work at a labor camp to cook for the Germans. They were treated relatively well due to their cooking skills. They spent time at two camps, one in Pluhviv and Kashurufka. They worked in the camps until June 1943, when one of the guards advised them not to come to the camp the next day because it was to be liquidated. For the rest of the war, Clara and her sister hid with Polish families or in the surrounding woods. Sam's war experience is unknown. It seems that Clara and Sam met at a displaced person camp in Germany, where they married and had a son. The family of three arrived in the United States in September 1949. They stayed in

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New York until they settled on a poultry farm in Vineland in 1953. They struggled to make a significant living from egg farming, as egg prices were declining, while chicken feed costs were rising in the late 1950s.

## Sam's Market

By the early 1960s, the Wasserstrum family contemplated returning to New York when a corner store at Main and Sherman in Vineland went up for sale. Sam and Clara, with the help of their son Seymour Wasserstrum (who went on to become a lawyer), worked every day for 20 years except on Jewish holidays. The family saw success over the 20 years they ran Sam's Market.

Sam and Clara retired and sold their store in 1983 after 20 years of ownership. As Sam stated for an article in the *Vineland Daily Journal*, everyone he spoke with had advised him against him purchasing the store.

"They said nobody ever made it out there. It was a store for 50 or 60 Years, and it was always changing hands. But I figured I'd lost everything anyhow. I figured I would try this store before I made another move to New York. And I figured the people [of Vineland] were honest people, and if you treat honest people right ... if you try to make them come back and give them good service - then they'll be good to you. We started



**Sam specialized in "everything," lunchmeat included.**

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with nothing. It was hard but it was worth it. I did what I wanted to and gave no regrets about how it turned out.”

Sam Wasserstrum passed away in 1990, and Clara in 2012.

## **For more information see**

South Jersey Holocaust Survivor Digital Archive, Sara and Sam Schoffer Holocaust Resource Center at Stockton University.

*Daily Journal*, Vineland, 1/5/1983.

**Profiles of South Jersey Holocaust Survivors by George D. Quinn (Project Lead), with contributions by Dr. Michael Hayse (Curator & Editor).**