

Leeser Electrical Supply

Hal (Helmut) Leeser



Location(s)

411 Landis Ave &
733 Chestnut Ave
Vineland, NJ
Cumberland
County

Years Active

1964 - 1987

Leeser "Lamp Land" AD
1974

Leeser Electrical Supply
Building

About Hal Leeser

Hal Leeser was born Helmut Leeser in Wanne-Eickel, a town in the Ruhr industrial region of Germany, in 1923. He was one of two boys born to Julius and Else Leeser. His father, a physician, was having difficulty getting approval for the family's immigration to the United States. Julius Leeser was also frustrated at the impossibility of getting certified to practice medicine as an immigrant. Ultimately, Hal's parents made



the difficult decision to send Hal to the United States when the opportunity arose in 1937; Hal was only 13 years old. When he arrived, a family in Washington D.C took him in and allowed Hal to live in their basement. At this time he only knew German and a bit of French. His foster family, who had a bakery, enrolled him in public school, where he quickly learned English, and Hal worked in the bakery when he wasn't in school. With the help of the Jewish Agricultural Society (JAS), Hal's parents and his brother Ralph were able to immigrate to the



United States in 1940, and, after JAS training, to become chicken farmers. They settled on a poultry farm in Woodbine, New Jersey. Hal was reunited with the family in Woodbine. While working on the farm, Hal discovered that he had a knack for doing electrical work, and he got paid to do this work for other farmers. He married Hilde Moses in 1949. Hilde was also a Jewish refugee who had arrived in the United States with her family in 1940.

Hal Leeser riding a tractor in 1946

The family first lived in New York, and then bought a poultry farm in Norma, New Jersey. Hal was a founding member of the VineCo Egg Co-Op in 1952. This was a group of regional poultry farmers who joined together to compete with lower-priced egg wholesalers. Hal and Hilde moved to Vineland in the early 1960s. In Vineland, they founded Leeser Electrical Supply. They had two daughters, born in 1951 and 1953, who grew up there and in Vineland. Hal and Hilde lived in Vineland for the rest of their lives. Hilde Leeser passed away in 2014, and Hal Leeser in 2019.



Hal Leeser looking at family photos in 2001

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Based on his experience in Woodbine, and the knowledge he gained from his work with VineCo Co-op, Hal identified a need to provide electrical supplies and services to the region's farmers. At first, he operated this business from his farm in Woodbine in 1949. In 1959 he moved the business to 4th Street and Landis ave in Vineland. By 1961 the business was profitable enough for Hal to sell his poultry farm and move to Vineland after commuting between Woodbine and Vineland for the previous two years.

Leeser Electrical Supply served both consumers and businesses. They provided alarm services, lighting, electrical connections, and other

electrical services, and specialized in the needs of the poultry farmers in and around Vineland. Leeser Electrical Supply patented the "Power Off Alarm" in the late 1970s. This system alerted farmers if the power failed in their chicken coops. The system facilitated power restoration and feed monitoring even when the poultry farmers were away from their chicken coops. In 1987 Hal sold the business and retired.

For more information see

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

Daily Journal, Vineland, 11/22/1999, 5/7/2001

**Profiles of South Jersey Holocaust Survivors by George D. Quinn (Project Lead),
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