



**Monday – Friday 8:00am to 6:00pm Sat. 8:00am to 5:00pm
Closed Sunday (Family Day) 873-3364**

The History of Joseph's Market

Joseph's Market was started in 1925 by my grandfather; John R. Joseph Sr. He migrated to America from Lebanon in 1900 landing at Ellis Island. Upon his arrival, the customs officer had a hard time, as it was with most immigrants, pronouncing his Arabic name, Razouk, so they just called him Joseph, after his father's first name. (John son of Joseph). He moved to Waterville shortly after he arrived to the states as did a lot of the immigrants. You see Waterville and the surrounding towns had a lot of mills operating. Most of the immigrants could not read or write English so in order to make a living they had to work with their hands. Working in the mills they were taught more by hands on than verbal. He married Lena Ferris in 1905. Together they had 6 children; Elias, Sadie, Dianne, Johnny, Roy and Peter. He worked in the mill all his life but in 1925 he opened Joseph's Market a little ways further up Front Street from where it is now located. He didn't starting selling meat at that time. It started out being a one isle store with just a few groceries, candy, cigarettes and beer. In the early 1930's he moved the store to its present location after taking some of the living room from the house that he lived in. Little by little he expanded the store by taking more and more of the living room until around the late 1930's when we started to get into the meat business. It was at this time that it got to the size that it is today. In the early days while my grandfather went to work in the mill it was run by my Uncle Johnny with help from my Aunt Sadie. When we started to get into the meat business my Uncle Johnny took over. In the meantime Roy and Peter went into the service. Upon returning from the service it was my father's dream to go into the car business with his brother Elias. Unfortunately my uncle Johnny took sick and died. At that point Roy and Peter took over the family business. Over the years business started to grow and we began to be known for our great meats. This was what set us apart from the other 20-30 grocery stores in Waterville. Remember, back then there were not a lot of cars and even fewer two car families so there were grocery stores on just about every corner. Over the years these stores closed one after another while we just kept on growing. Today we are the only original store that is still in operation.

Throughout the years as my brothers and sister and also my cousins got older we all worked in the store. There were eleven of us all together. These were trying times for the store having to support two families, 15 people in all. This was about the time that you started to see the big grocery chains move in. Needless to say times were tough. But it was the meat side of the business that kept us going. Our reputation for carrying only the finest quality meats at the lowest possible prices along with our great personal service is what helped us build a foundation for us to stand on. While our grocery sales started to decline little by little our meat sales kept growing by double digit numbers. This was fine with us because while it was hard to explain to a customer while we were 15-20 cents higher on the same exact can of Hunts tomato sauce, our staff in our full service meat department was able to explain the difference in the quality of the meats we carried. We were also able to sell our meats cheaper than the big stores; sometimes 20, 30 and even up to \$1.00 a pound less. Plus they got to pick out their own meat and talk to an experienced meat cutter. It's all about the personal service.

In 1985 I bought out my Uncle Peter. We made some big changes to the store at that time also. We cut down on our grocery space and brought in another 16 feet of deli and chicken cases. This gave us a total of 40 feet of selling space for all our fresh meats. Sales continued to grow every year. In 2005 my dad fully retired. I began to change our operation little by little focusing on meats more and more. In 2010 we went through another renovation. We replaced all of our coolers and freezers and most of the compressors with new ones. We even added two new spot freezers and a fish case. The biggest improvement we made was to put in a new 24 ft. double deck meat case. The upper part is for our full service meats while on the lower part we are able to display all out packaged meats. This gives us a total of 48 ft of selling space for our red meats and packaged meats,

6 ft of service deli, 6 ft of self-service deli, 8 ft. of chicken, 4 ft of precooked ready to eat product and 10 ft of open freezer case. This totals over 80 ft of selling space on products that carry a good margin.

One of the things that I feel has made Joseph's Market successful over the years is our involvement in the community. Starting with my grandfather and my uncles and continuing with my wife and me. Our family has been involved with helping build churches, additions on to hospitals, a new Homeless Shelter, belong to many service clubs and sit on many boards just to name a few our involvements. We have always felt that if you expect the community to support you, you have to support them.