

112-Year-Old Business A Family Affair

Last week marked another milestone for Michaels' Market in Cooperstown and for the Michaels family, who have been operating the store for the past 112 years, when Howard Potter Michaels bought out the interest of his father, Howard N. Michaels and is now sole owner of the market.

The store was founded by Nehemiah Michaels, who started in business in Claverack, Columbia County in 1850. He then moved the market from Claverack out in the country from Dunnsville in Albany County. From there, the market was moved to Middlefield, then to Buel and Fort Plain and back again to Middlefield, where he conducted a meat market in the stone store now located at the Farmers' Museum.

Shortly before the Civil War, Nehemiah moved his family including, Mrs. Michaels, the former Eliza Cullins and his sons, William and Charles back to Adams, Mass., where they continued to live until after the war. Then for the third time Middlefield offered an attractive location for the meat business and they returned there, shipping their household furnishings by rail to Cherry Valley and making the journey themselves by horse and wagon in 1873.

While still residing in Bowers-town, Nehemiah opened a meat market in the cellar of the Hyde block, where Sherry's Restaurant is now located at the corner of Main and Chestnut Streets in Cooperstown. The business operated and continued in that location until they decided to operate horse-drawn deliveries throughout the rural area.

In 1880, William Michaels, who had purchased his father's interest in the concern, purchased for \$150 from the late Morgan R. Stocker, a small frame structure, which had been used as the Otsego County Sheriff's office and which was being replaced by the present structure on the Court House grounds. The building was moved to a plot on Main Street, the site of the First National Bank, where they leased the land from the bank for a yearly rental of \$25. In this location, William Michaels did business for six years until he built the Michaels' block at 93 Main Street in 1886 at its present location.

The eldest son, Howard N. Michaels, who had assisted his father for some time in the market, in 1905, joined the firm known as W. H. Michaels and Son and this partnership continued until 1916 when the senior partner retired to enjoy the fruits of a long and rugged business career.

In January 1938, Howard Potter Michaels, son of H. N. Michaels became a partner in the firm, thus completing the fourth generation of the family during the 112 years of business. He is now sole owner of the concern. H. N. Michaels retired about one and one-half years ago as an active member of the firm. He is now 84 years of age.