

# 57 Years Grocery History Draws to a Close

By Rick Myers

Since March of 1920 the Flohr family has been providing friendly and efficient grocery service to the people of the community but as the first of July nears that bit of local history draws to a close as the shelves of their store are emptied.

Jacob Flohr started the business in the Gering Merchantile in 1920 and was joined by his son Emanuel in 1921 who helped his dad before and after school.

"I had to stand on a box to see over the counter when I waited on customers," Emanuel said.

On Oct. 15, 1938 the store moved to its present location and opened business with an original order of \$900. Today an average weekly order from Associated Grocers tops \$1,500.

Henry Klein was the first customer in the new store when he bought two pounds of coffee at 35 cents per pound. On Saturday the price of coffee was \$9.24 for a two-pound can and has soared as high as \$14.54 for three pounds.

Mrs. Emanuel Flohr, in recounting the years and changes, said initially a great deal of time was spent talking to various suppliers who would come to the store to sell their products directly to the owners.

Today very few salesmen call because nearly all of their products now come from AG.

A few of the original wholesalers who serviced the store were Raymond Bros., Nash-Finch, Pacific Fruit, Swift, and Wilson-Cudahey Packing Co. The first milk the store received was from Brown's Dairy then the market changed to Fairmont.

Mrs. Flohr said the most memorable event that took place in the store was on an exceptionally busy day when Jacob, "Jake", carried out the store's adding machine for a lady rather than her box of groceries.

Emanuel said the biggest changes he has seen over the years has been in packaging of food stuffs and the introduction of frozen foods.

"We used to have to package all of our own loose items such as beans and other vegetables and price them all ourselves but with the plastic wrap and pre-pricing those days are over," he added.

The store was the second one in town to handle frozen items with the first products being frozen strawberries and peas then ice cream.

One of the more frustrating times for Emanuel was before the introduction of shopping



Hannah Kuxhausen, left, and Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Flohr strike a familiar pose

behind the counter of Flohr's Market, the friendly downtown grocery store that

so many of the people of the community have grown up with.

## The "Three Musketeers"

baskets and carts when they used to "put up" orders for the lady customers.

"A lot of the time they wouldn't write their list down and thought they had it all in their head. We'd have to follow them around and wait while they did their shopping."

Looking back at the 39 years of business Mrs. Flohr said "we appreciate the loyalty of our friends who have made it all possible."

"We're going to start our second career although we don't know what it will be yet," she added.

While Flohrs Market will become history there will still be some family ties as the Flohrs have sold the building to Charlie and Barb Muhr, their son-in-law and daughter, who in turn have leased the market to John Paris who will open an expanded Paris Meats at the location.

The new meat market is expected to open for business between July 1 and 15.



"These are the 'Three Musketeers' of our business," Mrs. Flohr said of the above picture, the only one taken of Emanuel, left, David

Kuxhausen, center, and "Jake." Emanuel is the only surviving member of the trio who have served customers well over the years.