

Louis Levine Family



In 1909, Louis Levine, age 14, left Lithuania and arrived in Scotland where he remained for two years. After finding his way to the United States, he settled in Paterson, NJ where, as a peddler, he sold clothing from door to door. In 1916, he opened his first store and sold shoes and men's clothes to the people of Bloomingdale. Soon after, he left a thriving business in the hands of his parents and nine brothers and sisters and went to war to help protect his adopted country.

When he returned from World War I, he moved his business to Butler. By 1927, he had outgrown his original store and moved to 154 Main Street, where it would become one of the cornerstones of the Butler business community for the next 69 years. When the A&P grocery chain took over the ground floor of the building, the clothing store moved to the second floor. A&P moved out in 1938 and Levine's moved back downstairs.

Louis and his wife Lillian raised their two sons, Jack and Sam, and their two daughters, Evelyn and Barbara, in the apartment above the store. They all attended Butler High School and, as teenagers, everyone helped out in the store. After serving in the military, Jack and Sam joined their father and the business became *Louis Levine and Sons*.

LEVINE'S
The Store With A Quick
TURN OVER

It's a Fact—Prices are lower
and it's up to you to compare
before you buy.

My quick turn over and small
overhead expense enables me
to keep up with the declining
market.

COMPARE—and get better Shoes,
Underwear, Hosiery, Furnish-
ing and Sweaters, for less at

LOUIS LEVINE
BUTLER HABERDASHER
BUTLER, NEW JERSEY

Louis Levine & Sons of Butler
COMPLETE LINE OF
SPRING & SUMMER
SUITS

Botany 500 Daro-Glo
suit for Summer

Featuring
BOTANY 500
\$59.95 to \$85

MICHAEL'S STERN
\$59.95 to \$85

P. B. M.
\$55

NORTHWEAVE
by SAGNER
\$49.95

MIDDISHADE
\$59.95 to \$85

"BOTANY 500"
Tailored by BAROFF

"SPECIAL BONUS" with every suit purchased
during introductory week of "THIRDS" April 30th to May 6th
WE WILL GIVE YOU
1 Manhattan Shirt (Short or Long Sleeve)
1 Bone Brummell Necktie

LOUIS LEVINE & SONS
"NORTH JERSEY'S FINEST MEN'S & BOYS' STORE"
154 MAIN ST. (528-0399) BUTLER, N. J.
STORE HOURS—MON. THURS. WED. SAT. 9 A.M. to 6 P.M.
THURS. & FRI. 9 A.M. to 9 P.M.

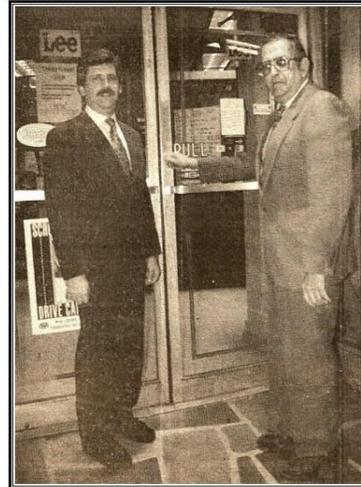
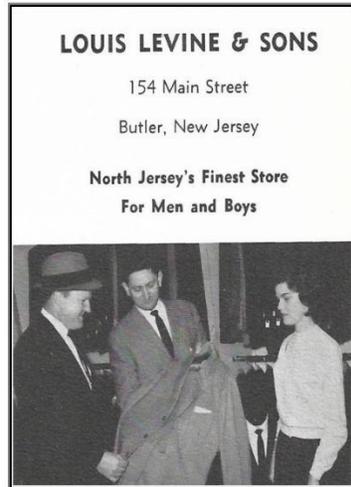
In 1951, business prospered to the point where it was necessary to build an addition to the back of the store. Two upper stories were removed and a new storefront was added, modernizing the building. Additional renovations took place in 1961 and 1976.

Louis and Lillian lived in the Lake Edenwold section of Butler for years, but when Louis's health began to decline, they started spending more and more time in Florida. On April 30, 1963, with Lillian by his side, Louis Levine passed away at the Sands Hotel in Miami Beach, Florida.

Mr. Levine was a member of the John A. Dean American Legion Post and a founder of the Pompton Lakes Jewish Center. He was also a member of the Silentia Lodge of FreeMasons, the Boonton Elks, and several other local organizations. Former Mayor William Dean noted that during one of the strikes at the Rubber Mill, Louis co-signed a number of loans to "help workers to get back on their feet."

In the 1930's and 1940's, Levine's sold mostly workingmen's clothing geared toward mill and factory workers. Keeping up with changes in the local economy, by the 1970's and 1980's, they had switched to a businessman's line of clothing. Jack and Sam carried on the finest traditions of their father, offering fine name brand merchandise and personalized service.

In 1986 Jack Levine retired and his brother, Sam, bought out his share of the business. Sam's wife, Lenore, became more active in the store and, in 1988, their son Bruce joined the business.



In 1996, Sam and Lenore decided to retire, but ending an 80-year tradition was a difficult decision. Selling the Levine building meant selling the first home he ever knew. He was born in the apartment above the store and began working as a stockboy when he was 12 years old. Sam never worked anywhere else. After working in the family business for 20 years, as the third generation, it was also tough for Bruce to move on to a men's shop in Morristown.

Jack Levine passed away in 1996 and Sam followed in 1998. A number of businesses have occupied 154 Main Street since Levine's closed - a dance studio, a martial arts school, a theater company, and an optometrist just to name a few. In recent years, it has remained empty.

Louis's brother, Fred, was also an early Butler merchant. His business was originally named the Globe Store and later became Levine's Furniture. The Globe Store sold a complete department store line of merchandise and was one of the first of its kind in the area. In 1926 Fred changed his business over to a line of brand-name furniture and appliances. It remained a fixture at 118 Main Street Butler for over half a century.

Sources: *Butler Gazette* 1976, *Butler in Story and Pictures* 2001, *Paterson News* Feb. 2, 1960, 1959 & 1962 *Butler High School Yearbooks*, *Suburban Trends* Nov. 12, 1996, *Herald News* April 30, 1964, *Daily Record* April 3, 1989