

Brigantine Pharmacy / Surf Sundries

Don & Nan Berkman



Brigantine Pharmacy in the 1950s



Storefront of Surf Sundries in 2021

Location

Brigantine Pharmacy

1018 W. Brigantine Ave.
Brigantine, NJ
Atlantic County

Surf Sundries

1306 W. Brigantine Ave.
Brigantine, NJ
Atlantic County

The Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy

New Rd.
Linwood, NJ
Atlantic County

Wernerbrooks

Route 9 & New Jersey Ave.
Absecon, NJ
Atlantic County

Years of Operation

Brigantine Pharmacy (1966 - 1980)
Surf Sundries (1970 - Present)
The Medicine Shoppe (1973-1976)
Wernerbrooks (1982-1998)

About Don Berkman - Chipkin

Don (Chipkin) Berkman, born January 25, 1941 in a shtetl in Druysk, Poland (now Belarus), near Vilna (now Vilnius), was an infant when the Berkman family was initially forced into a small ghetto and later into a larger one. Awaiting deportation to the Vilna Ghetto, Don's mother, Sarah, begged her husband, Joseph Berkman, and other family members to go into hiding, but they refused, fearing they would be shot if they were caught. The rest of the family were told they were going to the Vilna Ghetto, but instead they were taken to the notorious killing site at Ponar (now Ponary), on the outskirts of Vilna, where they were murdered by *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing squads). Sarah hid with Don in a closet while Nazis cleared their ghetto, and then slipped out of the empty ghetto with Don to seek refuge. Sarah and Don were hidden in a convent but fled Nazis approached. Sarah, being resourceful, hid with Don in the forest and hid in an old woman's root cellar for two and a half years, teaching her toddler survival skills to keep him occupied and quiet. Even the harsh winters did not weaken her.

Don Berkman in 2008, *Portraits of Resilience*



photograph by Ann Erik

After the Soviet Red Army liberated the area in 1945, Sarah returned to Druysk. There she discovered that her neighbor, Michael Chipkin

(Michel Cypuk) and his two young daughters were still alive. The rest of the family was also murdered during the Holocaust. Michael's two daughters needed a mother, and Sarah's son needed a father. They married in Druysk in 1945. The family fled to Berlin, where they lived in DP camps in Germany for four years: Schlachtensee (West Berlin), Ziegenhain, and Eschwege. In 1949, the family immigrated to St. Paul, Minnesota, where their daughter,

Riva was born. In 1954, the Chipkin family purchased a poultry farm in Oceanville, New Jersey. When they settled in New Jersey, Don was in 8th grade; he graduated Pleasantville High School in 1958. He attended Long Island University's Brooklyn College of Pharmacy, earning a bachelor's degree in 1962. He returned to south Jersey and interned at Brigantine Pharmacy, where he then worked as an employee.

Brigantine Pharmacy & Surfside Sundries



Don Berkman bought Brigantine Pharmacy in 1966. In 1968, he also bought Harris Pharmacy in Brigantine. It became Surf Sundries, a store for locals and vacationers, providing beach gear, and an assortment of souvenirs, casual wear, and gifts. Surf Sundries is still owned and operated by the Berkman family.

Brigantine Pharmacy Car in front of the store during the 1960s

In 1974, Don established The Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy in Linwood, New Jersey. In 1980, he bought Wernerbrooks in Absecon, New Jersey. The State of New Jersey bought the Wernerbrooks property under eminent domain to expand the road to Atlantic City.

A pharmacist and business owner, Don lives in Margate, New Jersey with his wife, Nan. They have three children and five grandchildren.

Pharmacies & Gift Shops owned by Holocaust Survivors

Donald Berkman owned and operated Brigantine Pharmacy and several other businesses on Brigantine and Absecon Island. Later as the Berkman family moved into selling gifts and sundries, they purchased gift shops in nearby Margate. Bayless Pharmacy in Atlantic City was owned and operated by other Holocaust Survivors, Sol & Alice Gingold from 1959 to the 1970s.

For more information see

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

City of Brigantine Tax Records.

Berkman, Donald, with Maryann McLoughlin. *Two Voices: A Mother and Son, Holocaust Survivors*. Margate, NJ: Comteq Publishing, 2010.

Donald Berkman Testimony, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.

"Donald Berkman." McLoughlin-O'Donnell, Maryann (2008). In *Portraits of Resilience: Holocaust Survivors of South Jersey*, 46-47. Margate, NJ: ComteQ Pub.

Schoffer, L. B. (2009). *A Dream, A Journey, A Community: A Nostalgic Look at Jewish Businesses In and Around Atlantic City*. Comteq Publishing.

Photos provided by the Berkman Family.

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