

01 - 03 Railroad Place, Hopewell - Rose & Chubby's (c 1890s)

Rev. 5/2/2021 x - D. Dixon

The Hopewell institution known as Rose and Chubby's has a long history, with the building existing by 1890, with early use as a candy store and confectionery. During the heyday of the railroad, the proprietors worked long hours to serve the traffic from its location opposite the train station and at the Greenwood Avenue railroad bridge, selling products including groceries, tobacco products, and stationary. Later, successive owners added ice cream, fountain service, and luncheonette sandwiches.

Meanwhile, the structure of the building has remained relatively intact. A third floor was added sometime before the mid 1900s, and then the front porch on the left side of the building (facing Railroad Place) was enclosed. Around the early 1970s, the back of the store (facing Cook Place) was expanded to add a second-floor addition as a separate apartment from the front of the building (on Railroad Place). The enclosed front left corner has been used for a variety of small independent businesses, including ice cream and piano training.

Chronology

~1895 - 1911 - Cook Family

~1902 - ~1908 - Mrs. John Gould's Store

1913 - 1925 - M. L. Von Steeg's Store [Pierson]
Mary Louetta Campbell / Pierson / Von Steeg

1925 - c 1946? - Ewing's Corner Store
D. Walter & Eva Ewing

1950? - 1952 - Gwen Wostoupal

1953 - 1971 - Jimmy's Corner Store
Jim & Marie ("Red") Hall

1971 - c1975 - Kip's Corner Store
Clifford (Kip) & Barbara Slobiski

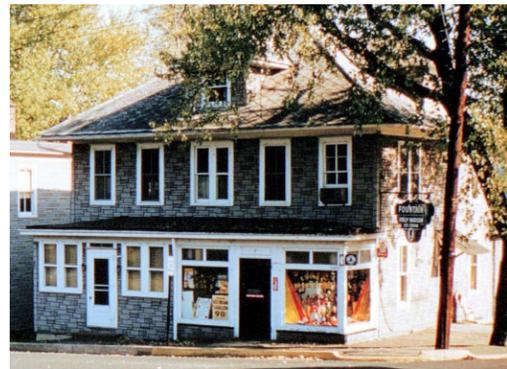
c1975 - 1979 - Cliff's Corner Store
Clifford & Lillian Skubas

1979 - ~2012 - Rose and Chubby's
Carol ("Chubby") Montello & Rose Sponholtz
1991 - Chubby's

2019 - Aunt Chubby's Luncheonette
Lyn Farrugia, Michelle Hamilton



M. L. Von Steeg's Store (1913 - 1925)



Ewing's Corner Store (1955)



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1 Railroad Place - Then to Now



M. L. Von Steeg's Store (1913 - 1925)
- Flat roof, no third floor
- Open porch on left [Klett]



Corner Store
- Third floor dormers, Open porch on left
- Dolly Madison ice cream sign [WF]



Ewing's Corner Store (1925 - 1940s)
- Open porch on left [Chubby's]



Ewing's Corner Store (1955)
- Left porch enclosed
- Dolly Madison ice cream sign [Labaw]



Kip's Corner Store (c 1970)
Facing N. Greenwood Ave. [Mochel]
- Apartment addition on back (Cook Place)



Kip's Corner Store (c 1970)
Facing Cook Place [Mochel]
- Apartment addition on back (Cook Place)



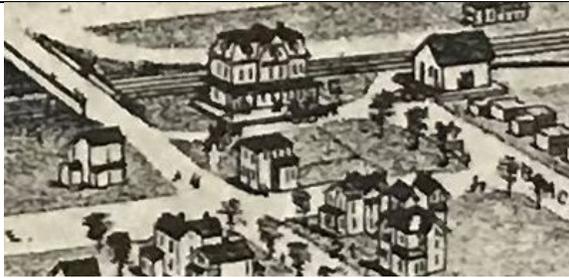
Aunt Chubby's [2020]
Facing Railroad Place



Aunt Chubby's [2020]
Facing N. Greenwood Ave. and Cook Place

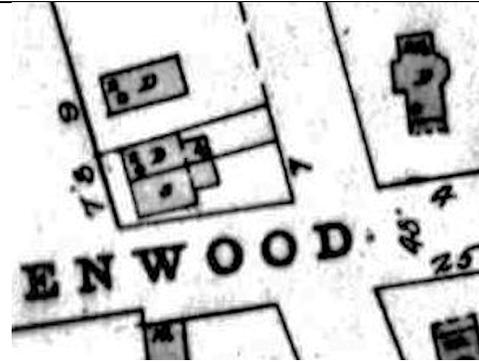
1890 - 1910 - Early Maps

Development along Railroad Place began with the construction of the train station in 1876. The 1887 Fowler panoramic map shows buildings in the area of Greenwood and Railroad. The Scarlett and Sanborn Fire Maps then show the same structure from 1890 to 1912 - A double house, with a Candy store on the west side (facing Greenwood) and a dwelling on the east side. Both sides are two-story, with a small one-story extension on the back. Aerial photos from 1932 and 1972 suggest the same general shape.

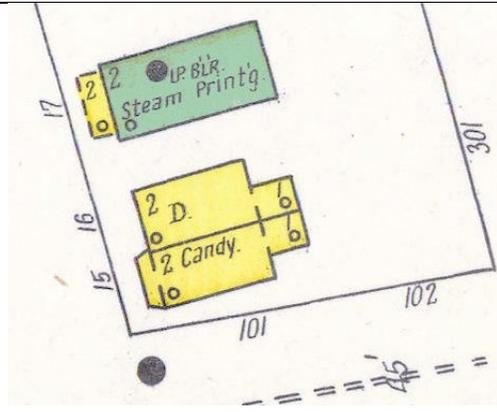


[Fowler 1887]

Greenwood Ave. crossing the bridge, with "Rail Road Ave." on left (now Model)



[Scarlett 1890]



[Sanborn 1902 - 1912 same, 1927 "Store"]



[1932 Aerial] - Bridge to top right



[1972 Aerial - Sudlow] - Bridge to left



[2021 Google] - Back addition

~1895 - 1913 - Cook Family

Cook family deeds and mortgages from Joseph Klett record the ownership of the corner of Greenwood Avenue across from the railroad station from at least 1895 (Alfred S. Cook) to 1899 (Albert D. Cook), and then to the sale to Mrs. M. L. Von Steeg (Mary Louetta Pierson) in 1913. Not coincidentally, the small street behind the building (parallel to Railroad Place) is called Cook Place.

Catherine Gould ("Mrs. John Gould") then rented the property by 1902 and operated the store through at least 1908.

~1902 - ~1908 - Mrs. John Gould's Store - Confectionery

Mrs. John Gould's confectionery store operated from at least 1902 through 1908 (as mentioned in the Hopewell Herald), selling bread, cake, candy, cigars, and fireworks.

The 1910 census shows John and Catherine Gould renting on Railroad Place (e.g., from the Cook family). Catherine's business was described as a "Retail confectionery."

There is no further report of the business after 1908, although the Herald continues to mention the Gould family. Catherine Gould was reported to be ill in 1910, and died in 1911.

<p>—Mrs John Gould has a fresh line of bread and cake every day. Also new lot of Easter candy. The best brands o' cigars. A trial will convince.</p>	<p>BURGLARS GET FIFTY CENTS. Special to the Times. HOPEWELL, Dec. 12.—Burglars broke a window in the store of Mrs. John Gould, last night and looted the cash drawer, which they were able to reach from the outside. About 50 cents in change was stolen.</p>
<p>[HH 3/19/1902]</p>	<p>[TET 12/12/1907]</p>
<p>—FIREWORKS!—Mrs. John Gould has an usually large supply of fireworks. Everything to make a noise and please old and young. Also a fine line of candles, tobacco and cigars.</p>	
<p>[HH 7/2/1902]</p>	

1913 - 1925 - M. L. Von Steeg's Store [Pierson]

In 1913, Mrs. M. L. Von Steeg (Mary Louetta Campbell Pierson) purchased the property from the heirs of Albert D. Cook. Mary Louetta Campbell had married James E. Pierson in 1893. James died in 1909, leaving Mary Louetta with five surviving Pierson children. She then married Otto Von Steeg in 1912. They were separated a few years later, but were never divorced.

The business was known primarily as "M. L. Von Steeg's store" in the Herald. It was described as a grocery store, also selling candy, tobacco and cigars, stationary, ice cream, as well as toys and Christmas tree ornaments. In 1920, the store opened an ice cream parlor serving Hildebrecht's ice cream. Mrs. M. L. Von Steeg sold the store in 1925 "because of poor health."

At the time, the property consisted of a double house and a small store. William Corcoran and his family lived in one side of the house until Mrs. Pierson decided to make the house into one for her five children and herself. They had a kitchen, living room and parlor on the first floor while upstairs there were bedrooms and, after a few years, an indoor bathroom was installed. "The store was a little one then, just a 15 by 15-foot room that had a tobacco case, a candy case, a bread case, and shelves on one side that held popular groceries like baked beans. "Supplees (dairy) had a man come up and put in a wooden cabinet that he filled with steel cans of ice cream."

[Joe Pierson, son of Mary Louetta, from the Hopewell Valley News, March 25, 1999]



M. L. Von Steeg's Store (1913 - 1925)

- Flat roof, no third floor
- Open porch on left [Klett]

MRS. M. L. VON STEEG

FRESH CANDIES
always on hand Good
assortment of

TOBACCO AND CIGARS

Nice Line of Stationery,
GROCERIES and FRUIT
Heinz's pure cider vinegar and
Dill pickles.

FRESH FRUIT AND NUTS

Bell Phone 26 R 3

GREENWOOD AVE AND RAILROAD PLACE

[HH 5/31/1916]

BUSINESS LOCATION for sale—Will sell my confectionery, tobacco and ice cream business, including all fixtures, as a modern soda fountain, show cases, etc, in their present condition at a reasonable figure. Selling out because of poor health. For terms inquire of **MRS. M. L. VON STEEG**, corner Greenwood avenue and Railroad Place, Hopewell 7-23-2t

[HH 7/23/1924]

TOYS! TOYS! TOYS!

A Fine Assortment of

Xmas Tree Ornaments
Confectionery, Stationery,
Tobacco and Cigars.

Fruit and Fine Class of
Groceries at

M. L. Von Steeg's

Greenwood Ave. & Railroad Place
HOPEWELL, N. J.

[HH 12/8/1920]

1925 - 1946? - Ewing's Corner Store - D. Walter Ewing

In 1925, D. Walter ("Walt") and Eva Ewing bought the property from Mary Louetta Von Steeg, described as the "ice cream parlor and confectionery store." Ewing was previously with Belle Mead Sweets in Trenton. The business was called Ewing's Corner Store, or simply The Corner Store. Variations of the Corner Store name then continued through several successive owners.

The store was described as a "candy store" or a "confectionery store." Ads in the Hopewell Herald promoted candy, ice cream, soda, and cigars. In 1948, the store advertised Dolly Madison ice cream, and promoted itself as a luncheonette, serving "sandwiches and other specialties from our grill."

According to Claire Hall, when the Ewings ran the business it was simply a soda fountain. They didn't sell groceries but Dick Hall remembers there being a room downstairs for the young men to play cards and shoot pool.

[Hopewell Valley News, March 25, 1999]

Walter Ewing Buys Greenwood Avenue Store

Purchase of the ice cream parlor and confectionery store, at the corner of Greenwood Avenue and Railroad Place, owned by Mrs. Louetta Von Steeg, was negotiated during the past week, the new owner being D. Walter Ewing, of this place. Mrs. Von Steeg will retire from active business and the new owner, after making some alterations to the store, will formally open the establishment on Monday.

Mr. Ewing is not a newcomer in the candy field, as he has had considerable experience in the manufacturing of all kinds of sweets. A room will be equipped for a ladies ice cream parlor in addition to the one already used for the purpose of serving sodas, ice cream and soft drinks. A high grade of confectionery will be carried in connection with the other lines of the business formerly included before its transfer.

The entire building will be renovated and greatly improved. The downstairs is being painted and other minor repairs are to be made.

[HH 3/18/1925]

The Ewings passed on the business to Gwen Wostoupal sometime before 1953, when Jim Hall acquired it. Meanwhile ads with the Ewing's Corner Store name continued in the Herald through 1952. However, Walter Ewing died in 1954, and was described as having "operated a confectionery store here until 8 years ago," which suggests that he exited the business around 1946.

<p>Have a Chocolate Sundae!</p>  <p>You haven't had a real chocolate sundae until you taste one made at Ewing's Corner Store. Smooth chocolate syrup with the full chocolate flavor. Talk about appetizing! This certainly hits the spot. We ask you to come only once—you'll come yourself after you've tasted our fountain delicacies.</p> <p>CRANE'S ICE CREAM Tobacco and Cigars STATIONERY and NOTIONS</p> <p>THE CORNER STORE D. WALTER EWING, Prop. Cor. GREENWOOD AVE. and RAILROAD PLACE Phone 2683 HOPEWELL</p>	<p>Sodas Are a Delicious Drink Try Ours</p>  <p>Full Line of TOBACCO & CIGARS</p> <p>Open Weekday Mornings at 8 o'clock. Sundays at 9.</p> <p>THE CORNER STORE D. WALTER EWING, Prop. Cor. GREENWOOD AVE. and RAILROAD PLACE Phone 184 HOPEWELL</p>	<p>EWING'S CORNER STORE LUNCHEONETTE</p> <p>is now equipped to serve you an appetizing assortment of sandwiches and other specialties from our grill. This service daily, including Sundays.</p> <p>DOLLY MADISON ICE CREAM</p> <p>GREENWOOD AVE. and RAILROAD PLACE PHONE 184</p>
<p>[HH 8/27/1930] - Sundae [HH 4/19/1944] - Soda</p>		
		<p>Corner Store - Third floor dormers, Open porch on left - Dolly Madison ice cream sign [WF]</p>

Notes from Betty Gantz

Notes on "The corner store" from Hopewell's Past by Betty Gantz.

M. L. Von Steeg's Store (1913 - 1925)

After bridge improvements by the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad in 1919, the curbing in front of the property was two feet above the level of the sidewalk. A Borough Council committee estimated the cost required to raise the house and sidewalk to the new grade as \$2500. The railroad offered to pay \$300, or buy the property for \$3000. A month later, the railroad appealed an award for damages by the Committee of Assessment of \$1600, and apparently the repairs were made.

About 1919 the present N. Greenwood Ave. at 'this' location was raised 3-4 ft.! --- to enable the early cars to go up over the railroad bridge! With sidewalks then several feet 'below' the road --- what a mess when it rained hard!

Ewing's Corner Store (1925 - c 1946)

Betty Gantz reports a story that that the cellar floor of the building was built directly on the old Mercer & Somerset railroad bed.

When this store was owned by D. Walter Ewing and wife Eva, there was a famous blue room in the basement where the men of the town socialized and played cards. The floor was so deep --- or the height of the room was unusual -- because it had been built ON the old roadbed.

1950? - 1952 - Gwen Wostoupal

Gwen Wostoupal then acquired the business sometime before 1953, when he sold it to Jim Hall. Meanwhile ads in the Herald continued to use the Ewing's Corner Store name.

Gwen Del Wostoupal was born and raised on a farm in Nebraska. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II, and then somehow came to the Hopewell area. In 1947 he married Norma Maple of New Hope, Pa. in Lambertville, and they reportedly then resided in Iowa.

By 1951, "Mr. & Mrs. Given Wostoupal" were in Hopewell with their young daughter. However, the local papers have no further reports of their involvement in the store. Gwen Wostoupal's obituary from 2000 reports that he was the owner of a Ben Franklin Store in Gloucester [N. J.] from 1952 to 1982.

Claire (Righter) Hall, worked behind the counter as a teenager. ... She worked Saturdays and Sundays, a total of 10 hours, and took home a paycheck of \$6.25. That was during the 1950s. ... According to Claire Hall, one of the former owners, Gwen Wastapoul [sp], made his own hot fudge, chocolate syrup and simple syrup (the base for all syrups.) He also sold Candy Cupboard candies.

[Hopewell Valley News, March 25, 1999]

**NEW BRIDGE GRADE
DAMAGES PROPERTY****Railroad Company Offers Sum
Far Below That Estimated
by Appraisers**

HOPEWELL, Sept. 1.—In the course of the improvements which the Philadelphia and Reading Railway has had under process during the past two years, the bridge on North Greenwood Avenue was made considerably higher than the old one and that necessitated carrying the approaches some distance further along the Avenue.

Mrs. Otto von Steeg owns a house on the southeast corner of Railroad Place and Greenwood Avenue which she occupies as a dwelling and store. The approach in front of her house brings the completed curbing two feet above the level of the sidewalk which causes the

[TET 9/1/1919]

1953 - 1971 - Jimmy's Corner Store - Jim & Marie Hall

Jim and Marie ("Red") Hall owned and operated the business from 1953 to 1971. Jim Hall was the grandson of Mrs. Louetta [Pierson] Van Steeg, who had owned the store in the early 1900s.

The store was eventually known as Jimmy's Corner Store, although ads in the Herald still called the business Ewing's Corner Store and The Corner Store through 1954.

The store offered fountain service with Dolly Madison ice cream and "light lunch," and sold candy, tobacco, school supplies and stationary, magazines and papers, and gifts and toys.

By the time Jim Hall owned [the store] there was a pin ball machine, a phone booth, tables in a back room, a wall of magazines and newspapers, and luncheon meats in cases in addition to the soda fountain and candy and tobacco cases.

[Hopewell Valley News, March 25, 1999]

James Hall New Owner Of Ewing's Store

James Hall, of Hopewell, has purchased the Ewing's Corner Store business formerly owned by Gwen D. Wostoupal. Hall is making some improvements and renovations but is conducting the business on full scale during the operations.

Mr. Hall's grandmother, the late Mrs. Louetta Von Steeg, owned this store years ago. So "Jimmy" returns as owner to the place where he purchased penny candy as a little boy.

[HH 4/8/1953]



Corner Store (1955)
- Left Porch Enclosed
- Dolly Madison Ice Cream Sign [Labaw]

Ewing's Corner Store



JAMES H. HALL, Proprietor

[HH 4/15/1953]

Fountain Service
Light Lunch
Quality Candy
Whitman's
Schraff's
Candy Cupboard
Full Tobacco Line
Medico, Yellow Bowl
Demuth, Falcon and
Porex Pipes
School Supplies and
Stationery
Magazines and Papers
Gifts and Toys

HALLOWE'EN

Masks - Candy - Party Novelties

LARGE SELECTION

Get Yours Early To Be Sure

THE CORNER STORE

Jimmy Hall, Prop.

[HH 10/21/1954]

1971 - c1975 - Kip's Corner Store - Clifford & Barbara Slobiski

Clifford (Kip) and Barbara Slobiski acquired the store from the Halls in 1971, and ran it as Kip's Corner Store until sometime in the mid 1970s.

Early in the period, the back of the store (facing Cook Place) was expanded to add a second-floor addition as a separate apartment from the front of the building (on Railroad Place), where the Slobiski family lived.



Kip's Corner Store (c 1970)
Facing N. Greenwood Ave. [Mochel]
- Apartment addition on back (Cook Place)



Kip's Corner Store (c 1970)
Facing Cook Place [Mochel]
- Apartment addition on back (Cook Place)



Clifford (Kip) Slobiski
Kip's Corner Store (c 1970) [Mochel]

c1975 - 1979 - Cliff's Corner Store - Clifford & Lillian Skubas

Sometime in the mid 1970s Clifford and Lillian Skubas acquired the business, and ran it as Cliff's Corner Store, along with an adjacent Craft shop (on the corner closest to the train station).

They retained the right to use the upstairs apartment after the business was sold to Chubby's in 1979.

1979 - ~2012 - Rose and Chubby's - Montello & Sponholtz

In 1979, Carol ("Chubby") Montello and Rose Sponholtz partnered to acquire the business. Montello had worked at the restaurant before they bought it. The business then was called Rose and Chubby's.

The business became simply Chubby's in 1991, when Sponholtz left the business. Chubby hired Buzz Voorhees as a waitress who helped her with operations.

Around 2012, Chubby's went out of business.

Carol ("Chubby") Montello died in 2015 - "allowed to die peacefully inside luncheonette she ran for 36 years." She left the business to her nieces, Lyn Farrugia, Michelle Hamilton, and Joanne Farrugia.

Often in the morning, the customers arrive before Chubby, the owner, does and when that happens they let themselves in and get the coffee going. Then one by one the other regulars begin to arrive. ...

Chubby does all the breakfast and lunch cooking and on Wednesdays and Saturdays she makes a full-course fixed-price dinner for \$12. Word of what she will be cooking that night travels by word of mouth and she said, "people just show up."

[Hopewell Valley News, March 25, 1999]

2019 - Aunt Chubby's Luncheonette - Farrugia & Hamilton

On January 31, 2019, Lyn Farrugi and Michelle Hamilton opened the new Aunt Chubby's Luncheonette after extensive renovations. Improvements included rebuilding the basement for baking, and combining the first floor to incorporate all the space facing Railroad Place (including changing the windows to match the old design).

The Luncheonette is structured as a non-profit. Since the onset of COVID, the company has hosted a outdoor, free food pantry, and in the first year the Chubby's Project has delivered over 5000 meals to local folks in need, along with weekly grocery bags.



Aunt
CHUBBY'S
Luncheonette
HOPEWELL, NJ



References

Information extracted and summarized from sources including books, reports, maps, newspapers, and photos. Many of the original materials (books, reports, maps, photos) are shared on the Hopewell Valley History Project site (HopewellHistoryProject.org).

Thanks to families who provided information:

- Marie Hall and Jean (Hall) Gianacaci - Jimmy's Corner Store
- Judie (Slobiski) Mochel - Kip's Corner Store
- Aunt Chubby's Luncheonette - <https://chubbysluncheonette.com/>

Books

- [HHH 1897] - *Healthful Historic Hopewell* (1897), Normer Gray
- [Gantz] - *Hopewell's Past*, Betty Gantz (1987)
- [HAHG] - *Hopewell: A Historical Geography*, Richard Hunter and Richard Porter (1990)

Reports

- [[HVHS Calendar 1987] - Hopewell Valley Historical Society Calendar
- [SS / Site Survey 1985] - 1985 Cultural Resource Survey, Hopewell Borough

Maps

- [Everts & Stewart 1875] - Map of Hopewell Borough, Everts & Stewart (1875)
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- [Scarlett 1890] - Scarlett & Scarlett Fire Map of Hopewell Borough (1890)
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Newspapers

- [HH] - Hopewell Herald newspaper (ends 1955, has multiple gaps)
- [TET] - Trenton Evening Times newspaper
- [HVN 1999] - 'The store' where Hopewell's old gang still gathers, Janet Purcell Piggott, Hopewell Valley News, March 25, 1999

Online

- Articles on Aunt Chubby's
<https://chubbysluncheonette.com/about-us>
- Find A Grave on Mary Louetta Campbell Pierson (Joseph Klett)
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/45141163>