

## 15 East Broad Street, Hopewell - Hopewell Inn (c1878)

Rev. 9/25/2021 x (Prev. 10/10/20) - D. Dixon

The Hopewell Valley Bistro & Inn, at 15 East Broad Street on the southwest corner of Seminary Avenue, has a nearly 150 year history as a residential home and store, bar and restaurant, and lodging and apartments. The building has been known as the Central Hotel, Cray's Hotel, Gebhart's Hotel, and the Hopewell Inn. It has seen multiple renovations with additions and porches. It even was briefly a national landmark with the Lindbergh kidnaping press frenzy, while to the town it has been a local gathering place.

This brief provides a history of the "Hopewell Inn" building, including the people who owned and managed it and the renovations made to the structure.

### **By 1878 - Drug Store, Susan A. and Sarah Sexton**

### **1883 - Millinery and Fancy Goods, Mrs. M. A. Carter**

By 1890 - Store on Seminary front

### **1893 - Cray's Hotel / Central Hotel, Andrew Cray**

1893 - Conversion to hotel - bar, city water, livery

### **1899 - Central Hotel, John Corcoran**

1901 - Rear addition west, dining room and kitchen, electric lights, steam heat, "sanitary plumbing"

1905 - Rear addition east (Seminary),

office front, bar back; side entrance on Seminary

By 1913: Porch renovation, side porch, diagonal railing

### **[1914 (U.S. 1917) - 1918 - World War I]**

### **1915 - Central Hotel, Frederick A. Jackson**

1920 - Conversion to stores and apartments

Store Seminary front, west and upstairs apartments

### **1926 - Gebhart's Luncheonette, Paul T. & Bertha Gebhart**

1932 - Gebhart's Hotel / Lindbergh

1933 - Death of Gebhart, aka Theodore Bankert

### **[1929 - 1939 - Great Depression]**

### **[1939 (U.S. 1941) - 1945 - World War II]**

### **1949 - Hopewell Valley Inn, Anton & Rose Mar**

### **1970 - Hopewell Valley Inn, Albert & Rose Mar Rathousky**

Bar on right, residence on left

### **1977 - New Hopewell Inn - Erno & Rose Nemeth**

1977 - Bar on left, restaurant on right, Tudor exterior,

front porch enclosed with center front steps,

balcony railing vertical

1985 - Octagonal banquet room addition

### **2000 - Hopewell Valley Bistro and Inn, Susan & Paul Molnar**



Central Hotel, Cray (1897)



Gebhart's Hotel (1932) - Lindbergh



Hopewell Bistro and Inn (2020s)

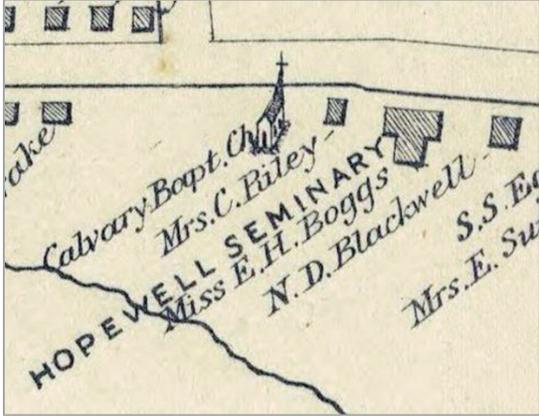
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## By 1878 - Drug Store, Susan A. and Sarah Sexton

The Hopewell Inn was apparently built by two sisters, Sarah and Susan Ann Sexton, who acquired the property in 1875 after selling their family's homestead farm. The building does not appear on the 1875 Everts & Stewart map, but by 1878 the building had been constructed and the Sextons were operating a "drug and notion" store there.

Sarah Sexton left the business after she married in 1879, and Susan Sexton then sold the property in 1882, and later married and lived in Los Angeles.

	<p>The 1875 Everts &amp; Stewart Mercer Atlas map of Hopewell does not show the Hopewell Inn building.</p> <p>Only the Mrs. C. Riley structure is shown on East Broad Street between the Calvary Baptist Church (now near the east corner of South Greenwood) and Hopewell Seminary (now near the east corner of Seminary Avenue).</p> <p>(Neither Seminary Avenue or Blackwell Avenue existed at the time of this map.)</p>
<p>The inside of the paper has a few local items and advertisements that are truly rare. Pins, needles, spool cotton, handkerchiefs, collars, cuffs, rushings, all to be found at the drug store. "Prescriptions carefully compounded at all hours, day and night," by S. A. &amp; S. Sexton.</p>	<p>The drug store was described in the Hopewell Herald in 1878:</p> <p>Pins, needles, spool cotton, handkerchiefs, collars, cuffs, rushings, all to be found at the drug store.</p> <p>"Prescriptions carefully compounded day and night, by S. A. and S. Sexton"</p> <p>[HH 1/31/1878, quoted HH 4/12/1944]</p>

After selling their family farm, Sarah and Susan Ann Sexton acquired the Hopewell Inn property in 1875 from Charles and Hannah M. Drake for \$1056. [DB 110-31, 12/14/1875]

Sarah Sexton (c1843-1917) later married Alexander Cody in 1879 and then had a child and sold her share of the business to her sister in 1881. [DB 127-471, 2/16/1881] Susan Ann Sexton (c1841-) sold the property in 1882 and later married Mr. Alburtus and lived in Los Angeles. [Ege 1908, p. 247]

The 1917 obituary of Sarah Sexton Cody describes her as "a direct descendant of one of the pioneer families of Hopewell" (Jared Sexton) and reports that the sisters grew up on a farm west of Hopewell, on the Hopewell-Woodsville road. [HH, 3/7/1917] Gantz describes the location of the Farm: "the land is east of Stony Brook, north of Wm. Kirkendall's on Stony Brook, and west of Van Dyke Rd. north and south of 518." [Gantz 1987]

The Sarah Sexton Cody obituary also quotes Ralph Ege, from *Pioneers of Old Hopewell*:

Misses Susan and Sarah Sexton operated the old Sexton homestead farm very successfully for some years after their father's death when they sold it to their brother-in-law, Mr. Z. S. Drake. They removed to Hopewell and started the first drug store here, which they managed for some years before they were married. Very many of our readers will remember them not only as women of business ability, but as ladies of culture and refinement, and very accomplished singers, who are in demand at all the social events in the village, and were indispensable at the entertainments where vocal music was one of the features. [Ege 1908, p. 247]

There are a few mentions of the Sexton drug store in the Trenton newspapers through 1881. The "drug and notion store of Misses Sexton" is referenced in the Trenton State Gazette in 1878 and 1880 because of several burglaries. And starting in March 1881, dentist Dr. Merrill ran advertisements in the Herald giving the location "above Sexton's Drug Store."

The 1880 U.S. Census shows Susan A. Sexton as a boarder in Hopewell working in a drug store, near the dwelling of Catherine Riley (streets and addresses were not recorded).

The location of the Sexton drug store is confirmed in 1883, when Mrs. M. A. Carter took over the store "formerly occupied by Miss. S. A. Sexton, Main St. / Corner Seminary Ave." (as also shown in the 1887 Fowler map). [HH 3/28/1883]

In 1882, Susan Sexton sold the property to Joseph Ott and John Hart Brewer. The next year, the Herald reported that "Miss Susan A. Sexton left on Monday of last week for an extensive western trip, intending to be absent for some time, and thus pass away pleasantly the period of the warm weather. We wish her a very pleasant journey." [HH 6/13/1883] She later married and settled out west. [Ege 1908, p. 247]

## 1882 - Joseph Ott and John Hart Brewer

In 1882, Susan Sexton sold the Hopewell Inn property for \$8000 to Joseph Ott and John Hart Brewer of the Ott & Brewer Pottery Company in Trenton, as part of a swap for another property in Trenton. [DB 131-443, 3/21/1882] [Trenton State Gazette 2/25/1882]

John Hart Brewer (1844-1900) was president of Ott & Brewer, a member of congress, and a descendant of John Hart, signer of the Declaration of Independence.

**Miss S. A. Sexton, of Hopewell, has traded her fine property on Main street, to Hon. J. Hart Brewer, for property in this city.**

[Trenton State Gazette 2/25/1882]

Note the building is not described as an inn or hotel; it was apparently regarded as a house that includes a store (see 1900 map below).

("Main" street is our Broad Street.)

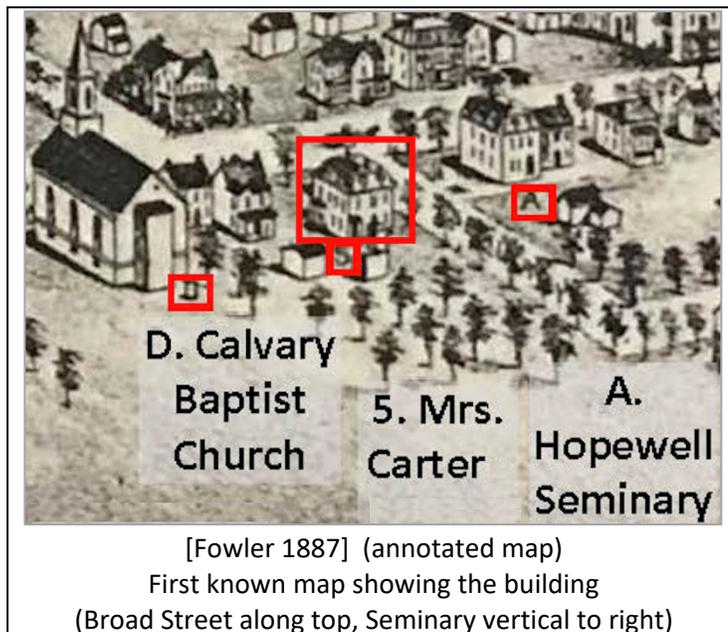
The property then passed through a series of short-term owners until it was acquired by Andrew Cray in 1893. One known occupant during this time was Mrs. Carter's Fancy Goods store, which opened in 1883.

## 1883 - Millinery and Fancy Goods, Mrs. M. A. Carter

The second known occupant of the Hopewell Inn building was Mrs. M. A. Carter, who opened a Millinery and Fancy Goods store there in 1883.

The 1887 Fowler map was the first to show the Hopewell Inn building, with its distinctive square mansard roof, a hint of the front porch, and the bay window on the west side of the building.

The building is identified as "Mrs. Carter - Library & Fancy Goods." (The "Library" reference may refer to franchised subscription libraries operating from kiosks in local stores. See the History Project brief on the Hopewell Public Library.)



On March 31, 1883, Mrs. M. A. Carter held the grand opening of her Millinery and Fancy Goods store in the Hopewell Inn building. [HH 3/28/1883]

The advertisement in the Herald names the managers of the Millinery and Dressmaking departments, and lists the variety of Ladies' Garments and accessories available. Mrs. Josephine Baker then added her Fine Stationary to the store. [7/25/1883]

There was apparently some pushback on the prices of the goods, and Mrs. Carter responded with a small note in the Herald:

It seems to be the impression with a few of the ladies, that our prices are exorbitant, thus preventing some from calling. As seeing is believing, we invite all to come and examine for themselves, whether they wish to buy or not. - Mrs. M. A. Carter [HH 5/2/1883]

The 1885 N.J. Census does list a Mary Carter living in Hopewell with Edward P. Carter, child Louise Carter, and Josephine Baker - near the house of Catherine Riley.

**GRAND**

**OPENING**

—OF—

**MILLINERY**

—AND—

**FANCY GOODS!**

**MARCH 31, 1883.**

The Ladies of Hopewell, Stoutsburg, Blawenburg, Mount Rose and vicinity, are respectfully invited to the opening of  
MILLINERY & FANCY GOODS  
at  
the store, formerly occupied by Miss S. A. Sexton, Main St. Corner Seminary Ave., Hopewell.

**MILLINERY  
DEPARTMENT**

In Charge Of  
**MRS. MESSMORE,**  
Formerly of New York.

**DRESSMAKING**

(In all its Branches)  
IN CHARGE OF  
**MISS CARHIE STOUT.**

**All the Latest Styles**

—OF—

BONNETS, HATS, DRESS  
PATTERNS, &c.,  
Received Daily From New York.

**DRESS GOODS**

Ordered by Sample  
From New York.

**LADIES' GARMENTS!**

Ready Made, All Kinds  
And Sizes.

GLOVES, COLLARS, HDKFS.,  
STOCKINGS, LACES, COR-  
SETS, RIBBONS, TRIMMINGS,  
BUTTONS, CREWELS,  
EMBROIDERY SILKS,  
MACRAME CORD,  
IN ALL COLORS.  
&c. &c. &c.

—STAMPING IN ALL DESIGNS.—

**MRS. M. A. CARTER.**

## 1893 - Cray's Hotel / Central Hotel, Andrew Cray

In 1893, Andrew Cray purchased the Hopewell Inn property from the Goldenes (the last in a line of short-term owners). Cray previously ran the Hopewell House at Broad and Mercer Streets, and had an Oyster Saloon on Princeton Avenue. He converted the property into a hotel, added a bar on the left (Seminary) side, and added the adjacent barns / livery complex. He sold the property to John Corcoran in 1899.



CENTRAL HOTEL.  
ANDREW CRAY, Proprietor.

Central Hotel, Andrew Cray [HHH 1897]  
(First known photo of the building)

**OYSTER SALOON,**  
UNION STREET,  
HOPEWELL, N. J.  
Oysters Served in Every Style.  
MEALS AT ALL HOURS.  
Cigars & Tobacco.  
Cider, Tonic, Ginger Ale and  
Lager Beer.  
ANDREW CRAY,  
Proprietor.

'11 3m°

[HH 1/25/1882]

In 1893, Andrew Cray purchased the Hopewell Inn property from Anna S. and Ebenezer W. Golden for \$4500 and a \$2500 mortgage. [DB 187-259, 4/1/1893] It was referred to as the Central Hotel that year, and also as Cray's Hotel. [HH 6/1/1893, 8/3/1893]

Andrew Cray (1834-1902) grew up with his parents on a farm in Hopewell Township. [U.S. Census 1850, 1860, 1870] By the 1860 U.S. Census he was married to Lucretia [Cook] Cray (1834-1878), living with the first of their three children. In the 1880 census he was a widower living with his children in Hopewell and working as a butcher. In 1880, Cray married Sarah F. [Stevenson] Cray (1836-1914). In the 1890 U.S. Census his occupation on the census was "Capitalist."

From at least 1882, Cray operated the Andrew Cray Oyster Saloon on Union Street (now Princeton Avenue), and reportedly sold 7,000 oysters in four weeks. [HH 1/18/1882] This was later moved to the new Central Hotel.

Before buying the Hopewell Inn property, Cray had operated what is now the Hopewell House, 48 West Broad at Mercer Street, renting it year by year from at least 1889. Before the Central Hotel was created, the Hopewell House was referred to in the newspapers as "the hotel," Hopewell Inn, Cray's Hotel, and Cray's Hall (for the public meeting space). [e.g., HH 1/10/1889, 2/2/1893] Peter Van Fleet took over the Hopewell House property after Cray, which was then called the Hopewell Hotel or Van Fleet's Hotel.

A 1897 business listing highlights the Central Hotel:

Andrew Cray is the proprietor of the Central Hotel, his courtesy and obligingness has made him popular among his townsmen and built up for him a large business. [HHH 1897]

Andrew Cray sold the Central Hotel to John Corcoran in 1899. Cray died in 1902, and the 1910 Census shows Sarah Cray, widow, was living on Seminary Avenue.

Cray's 1902 obituary spoke well of him:

[He] was for many years engaged in the hotel business in the borough, which he carried on according to his own ideas, and which was a credit to the place. He was a good landlord and citizen and was respected by all. [HH 6/11/1902]

### 1893 Renovations - Hotel Additions and Livery - Cray

After he purchased the property in 1893, Andrew Cray immediately began making additions and changes to convert it to a hotel:

- Fitted up the property preparatory to opening a hotel [HH 3/30/1893]
- Introduced city water on his premises, particularly for use at his new barn [HH 4/13/1893]
- Put in a handsome new bar [HH 6/1/1893]
- Erected a new veranda on the south side [HH 10/19/1893]
- Moved his old saloon from Union St. to the Central Hotel, to be converted into an office for the liverymen [6/1/1893]
- Built a large and well-planned barn [HH 3/30/1893]

The barn is presumably part of the "A. Cray's Livery" complex added between the 1890 and 1902 maps (see below).

—Andrew Cray is building a large and well planned barn on his recently purchased property at the corner of Main street and Seminary avenue. He is fitting the property up preparatory to opening a hotel, for which he will apply for a license at the May term of Court.

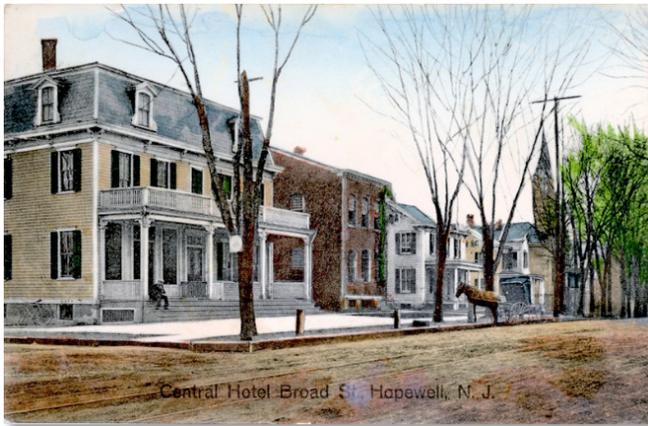
[HH 3/30/1893]

—For the time being this is a "dry" town. Landlord Van Fleet lately of Woodsville, now occupies Cray's old stand, and Mr. Cray has moved into the new building lately purchased by him at the corner of Main street and Seminary avenue. Their removal, we understand, invalidates both their licenses, hence the lack of "moisture" for the throats of the thirsty.

[HH 3/30/1893]

## 1899 - Central Hotel, John Corcoran

John Corcoran acquired the Central Hotel from Andrew Cray in 1899. Corcoran had immigrated from Ireland as a child with his family to a farm in Hunterdon County, where he then served as sheriff before entering the hotel business. Corcoran made major changes to the building, adding the two-story addition on the rear (south) side, the Seminary side entrance, and remodeling the interior with modern utilities and old European styling. He also renovated the porch around the west side, with the diagonal railing. When completed, the left (Seminary) front of the building had the office and reading room, with the bar and sitting room moved behind. Corcoran sold the property to Frederick Jackson in 1915, after purchasing the Old School Baptist Church farm property.



Central Hotel c. 1900 [hand colored postcard, WF, n/d]  
 (Bell Telephone sign by tree)



[TET 7/26/1914]

John Corcoran acquired the Central Hotel from Andrew Cray in 1899 for \$12,500. [DB 231-464, 7/8/1899] [HH 9/19/1900] During his tenure, the building was known as the Central Hotel, and occasionally the Central House (in the Trenton papers).

John Corcoran (1851-1921) immigrated from Ireland as a child in 1853, and lived with his parents in Raritan, Hunterdon County. [1860/70 U.S. Census] He married Catherine [Cunningham] Corcoran (1853-1932), and by the 1880 U.S. Census was living with his parents and the first four of their six children.

Corcoran was deputy sheriff of Hunterdon County from 1881 to 1884, and sheriff from 1884 to 1887. [TET 7/26/1914] By the 1900 U.S. Census, Corcoran was listed as a hotel keeper living with his family.

The Central Hotel was featured in the 1900 promotional Souvenir Edition of the Hopewell Herald:

Central Hotel / John Corcoran, Proprietor - This is Hopewell's leading hotel and has for several years been identified with the best public houses in central New Jersey.

Mr. Corcoran, its present proprietor, after conducting a hotel at Milford for four years, purchased this property about a year ago, since which time he has not only made many improvements but has also transacted a very successful business. The house is splendidly furnished throughout, possesses all conveniences, and has become famous among wheelmen and travelers for its excellent meals. In connection is a first-class bar and large stable and sheding accommodations. The Central Hotel is essentially the hotel of Hopewell and is in every respect conducted in a strictly first-class manner. Special rates are made to summer boarders, who will find here every inducement to make their stay pleasant and one that will be repeated. [HH 9/19/1900]

In 1915, John Corcoran sold the Central House to Frederick Jackson. Corcoran had bought the Old School Baptist Church farm property on Hopewell-Pennington road from the church, where he intended to retire and convert a section into building lots. [TET 7/26/1914] Corcoran then died in December 1921. [HH 12/21/1921]

### 1901 / 1905 Renovations - Rear Additions - Corcoran

John Corcoran built the major extension of the Central Hotel - a two-story addition to the south of the building (the back, down Seminary Avenue) that almost doubled its footprint. The extension was done in two steps: the west side in 1901, and the east side in 1905. (See fire maps below.)

The first addition in 1901 extended the west side (dining room and kitchen), and also upgraded the building with electric lights, steam heat, and "sanitary plumbing":

The improvements which were begun on the Central Hotel last spring have just been completed. The extension built on the south side, has increased the capacity of the dining room and kitchen threefold and added a corresponding amount of bedroom. The old heating apparatus has been supplanted by modern and improved system of steam heat. Electric lights had been added; and sanitary plumbing installed. In every respect the appointments of the hotel are up to date, thus affording all the comforts and conveniences to be found in city hostelryes. [HH 12/25/1901]

The second addition in 1905 completed the rear extension with the east (Seminary) side addition, including a small porch on the street to provide a side entrance. The building's interior also was significantly enhanced, with an office and reading room, bar and sitting room:

The improvements which ex-Sherriff Corcoran began to make on his hotel last spring are completed. The proprietor can now boast of having a hotel which is modern in all its appointments and unsurpassed in beauty and convenience by any other hotel in the country. The entire east side has been remodeled and enlarged by a two story addition in the rear.

The office and reading room is located in the front of the building facing Broad street. The bar and the sitting room are immediately back and the toilets adjoin in the rear.

The capacious side porch which has been built on Seminary avenue adds materially to the architectural effect and renders both rooms accessible from the side street. The large plate glass windows in the front room, running from the ceiling nearly to the floor, make the office exceedingly light and cheerful.

The last article of furniture was installed a few days ago by Mr. Burton. It is a beautiful office desk, eight feet by five[?] feet. It is supported by seven columns and is trimmed with egg and dart molding resembling that on the cove[?] and side walls.

No expense has been spared to make the interior of the building artistic. The floors are of hardwood and the walls above the wainscoting, as well as the ceilings, are steel in bas relief. The designs are extremely beautiful both as to form and color. The side walls of the office are styled after the 14th century Gothic surmounted by an Empire freeze. The ceiling resembles the Italian renaissance. The field contains twelve circular plates, between which are interspersed by symmetrical figures and aluminum stars.

The bar in the sitting room are patterned after the French renaissance and surpass in beauty even the office and reading room. [HH 6/26/1905]

By 1913 Renovations - Side Porch Addition

Sometime by 1913 the front porch was renovated with the addition of the west side porch and stone bases under the columns. The front steps up to the porch were split into three separate segments, matching the porch columns, and the balcony railings were changed from vertical to diagonal. This change is not mentioned in the newspaper reports of Corcoran's 1902 and 1905 renovations, or elsewhere (some of the papers are not available, including 1900 and 1911 to 1915). Unfortunately, the side porch also is not shown in the 1912 or 1927 Sanborn maps, or even the 1935 Sanborn revision of the 1927 map (which is clearly wrong).

However, this change can be dated from several family photographs from the time.

Two photos from the Labaw family of the March 1913 snowstorm along West Broad Street clearly show the new wrap-around porch with stone bases under the columns and diagonal railings above.



A Gantz family photo dated before 1925 (based on the age of a child in the scene) then shows the full front, with the five porch pillars with stone bases and the west side porch.



## 1915 - Central Hotel, Frederick Jackson

In 1915, at the beginning of World War I, Frederick Jackson acquired the Central Hotel from John Corcoran. In 1920, he converted the building into apartments, with the front left (Seminary) corner as a store, one apartment on the first and third floor, and two on the second floor. Jackson sold the property to Paul T. Gebhart in 1926.

### JACKSON TO TAKE HOPEWELL HOTEL

Bound Brook Owner To Make  
Few Changes—At Cen-  
tral House.

HOPEWELL, Nov. 14.—Frederick A. Jackson, of Bound Brook, the new owner of the Central House, Broad and Seminary Avenues, is to take possession of the hotel this coming week. Former Sheriff John Corcoran, who sold the hotel, plans to move his family to the Lewis property on Greenwood Avenue.

[TET 11/15/1914]



CENTRAL HOTEL, Hopewell, N. J.

Central Hotel - by 1914 [postcard, MZ, n/d]

In 1915, Frederick A. Jackson of Bound Brook acquired the Central Hotel from John Corcoran for \$30,000. [DB 373-455, 11/19/1914] [TET 11/10/1914]

Improvements to the local roads also had improved the prospects for the hotel:

With the completion of the Mt. Rose-Hopewell road and the macadam road in Somerset County leading to this town, it is expected that hundreds of automobilists will make use of these improved roads and increase the Hopewell patronage. [TET 11/15/1914]

In the 1915 N.J. Census and 1920 U.S. Census, Frederick A. Jackson (1881-1974) was living in the hotel with his wife, Bertha N. [Ryan] Jackson (1894-1985) and two young daughters.

In 1920, Jackson announced plans to convert the hotel into a store and apartments (see below).

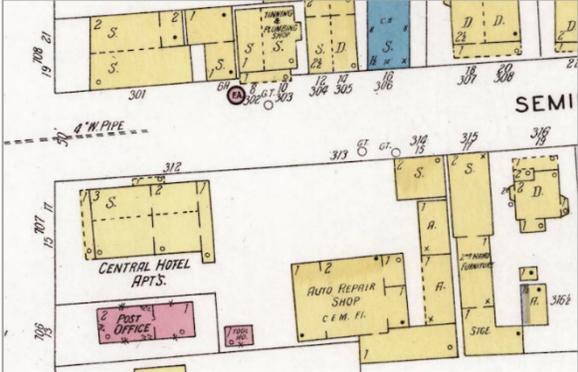
In 1926, Jackson then sold the property to Paul T. Gebhart, although Jackson held a mortgage and the liquor license. [HH 3/14/1934]

After the sale, in the 1930 U.S. Census, the Jackson family is shown at "15" (now 17) Blackwell Avenue. Jackson later served on the board of education and the borough zoning board of adjustment. [TET 12/17/1933, HH 1/4/1950]

## 1920 Renovations - Conversion to Apartments - Jackson

In 1920, Frederick Jackson announced plans to convert the Central Hotel into a store and apartments:

On the first floor, what was formerly the barroom will be converted into a room for store purposes. The west side will be made into an apartment, as will also the second and third floors. The house when completed will contain four cozy apartments, one on the first floor, two on the second and one on the third. The improvements will consist of electric lights and bath for each apartment, and possibly steam heat ... [HH 12/1/1920]

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CENTRAL HOTEL TO PASS INTO APARTMENTS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">HAS BEEN A NOTED HOSTELRY FOR MANY YEARS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OCCUPANCY ABOUT FEBRUARY 1st</p> <p>Fred. A. Jackson, owner of the building at the corner of Broad street and Seminary avenue which has for so many years been known as the Central Hotel, is having plans made to turn it into a store and apartments,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[HH 12/1/1920]</p>	 <p>The 1927 Sanborn fire map shows the building after Jackson's conversion, marked as "Central Hotel / Apartments."</p> <p>The front corner at Broad and Seminary is marked as a store.</p>
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In 1917, Jackson rented the livery stables behind the hotel to F. K. Forsythe, Funeral Director, who advertised that the garage was available for "storage of automobiles and furniture." [HH 10/10/1917 and 11/28/1917] In 1921, the new store was rented by F. K. Forsythe for use as an undertaker's parlor. The Central Hotel sign was replaced by an undertaker's sign. [HH 5/18/1921]

In 1923, Jackson then converted the west side of the first floor into an apartment, which was rented to Mrs. John Corcoran. His family occupied the apartment on the second floor, and he "contemplates improving the third also." [HH 9/19/1923]

## 1926 - Gebhart's Hotel, Paul T. & Bertha Gebhart

In 1926, Paul T. and Bertha Gebhart acquired the Central Hotel property from Frederick Jackson. They moved their Lunch Room restaurant to the left (Seminary) side of the building, and converted it back to a rooming house. In March 1932, Gebhart's Hotel became famous as the press descended on Hopewell after the Lindbergh kidnaping and made Gebhart's the press headquarters. After Gebhart's death in 1933, it was discovered that he had another wife and family in his hometown under his original birth name, Theodore Bankert. The exact resolution of this situation is unknown, but Bertha Gebhart continued to run the business until she sold it in 1949 to Anton and Rose Mar.

 <p><b>Gebhart's Lunch Room</b> WILL MOVE THURSDAY TO ITS NEW STORE <b>18 East Broad Street.</b> In addition to the regular restaurant a new 100% electro-cold soda fountain, and a 12-hole ice cream cabinet have been installed. Patrons may now be served with any flavor of cream or soda desired.</p>	<p>The restaurant, "Gebhart's Lunch Room," moved from Greenwood avenue to "its new Store, 15 East Broad Street" at the end of July 1926. [HH 7/28/1926]</p>
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In May 1926, "the Fred. A. Jackson property" was sold to Paul T. Gebhart, "proprietor of a restaurant on Greenwood avenue." [HH 5/19/1926]

Paul T. ("Pop") Gebhart (1884-1933) was married to Bertha S. Gebhart [Bertha M. Senft] (1896-1977). The Gebharts had two sons, Theodore (Ted) and Norman. Ted was a star baseball player and pitcher in the second half of the 1940s, and was acquired by the New York Yankees.

Bertha Senft was born in Littlestown, Pa. She was a teacher of French and Latin at the Hopewell high School from at least 1920 through 1922. [e.g., HH 9/15/1921] The Gebharts were married by 1924, when Mr. and Mrs. Paul T. Gebhart bought a property on Blackwell Avenue. [HH 9/3/1924] After buying the Hopewell Inn property in 1926, the family is shown living there with their first son in the 1930 U.S. Census.

The 1977 obituary of Bertha Senft Gebhart was reported in the Gettysburg Times, the former home of her parents in the 1920s and 1930s:

Bertha Senft Gebhart, 80, widow of Paul T. Gebhart, died Tuesday at the Mercer Medical Center here after a lengthy illness.

Born in Littlestown, she was a retired teacher of foreign languages at Hopewell High School, Hopewell, N.J. She was also the former owner of Gebhart's Hotel and Restaurant in Hopewell. She was a member of the New Jersey Education Association. [Gettysburg Times, 9/15/1977]

The business was referred to by many names in the local newspapers, including Gebhart's Lunch Room [HH 7/28/1926], Gebhart's Hotel [HH 9/15/1926], and still the Central Hotel [HH 10/4/1933], although the business name for the liquor license was Gebhart's Hotel.

Paul Gebhart died in a car accident in August 1933, apparently caused by a heart attack. His body was taken to his hometown, Littlestown, Pa., for services and interment.



[TET 8/22/1983]

## Lindbergh Press Frenzy (1932)

Gebhart's Hotel became famous as the press descended on Hopewell in March 1932 after the Lindbergh kidnapping. Gebhart's was the press headquarters until the child's body was found in May. Photos from the time show crowds of people on the sidewalk – and spilling into the street – including cars with movie cameras set up on the roofs.

The frenzy began the morning after the kidnapping:

The back roads of central New Jersey were already crawling with reporters. Before dawn, one journalist pounded on the door of Paul T. Gebhart's general store and hotel in Hopewell. "Wake up, Pop!" he yelled. "You'll have three hundred here for breakfast."

[Reported in e.g., *Lindbergh*, A. Scott Berg, 2013]

Looking back two months later on the "hysteria that struck this borough with whirlwind force," the Herald reported that "Hopewell Returns to Normalcy," without "the army of news writers, photographers, radio and sound film men which numbered probably 250." [HH 5/4/1932]

Gebhart's Hotel became the press headquarters with the installation of dozens of telephone wires and a branch telegraph station. The railroad station also had one waiting room turned into a newspaper "city room," and had 18 extra telegraph lines installed. Ten out-of-town newspapers had dedicated phone numbers installed in homes and businesses where they had taken up residence along Broad Street, with three papers at Gebhart's, including the New York American and the Daily News. [Falzini 2012]



Gebhart's Hotel / "Times Square" [1932 pc / SC]



Lindbergh press cameras [1932 JCD]

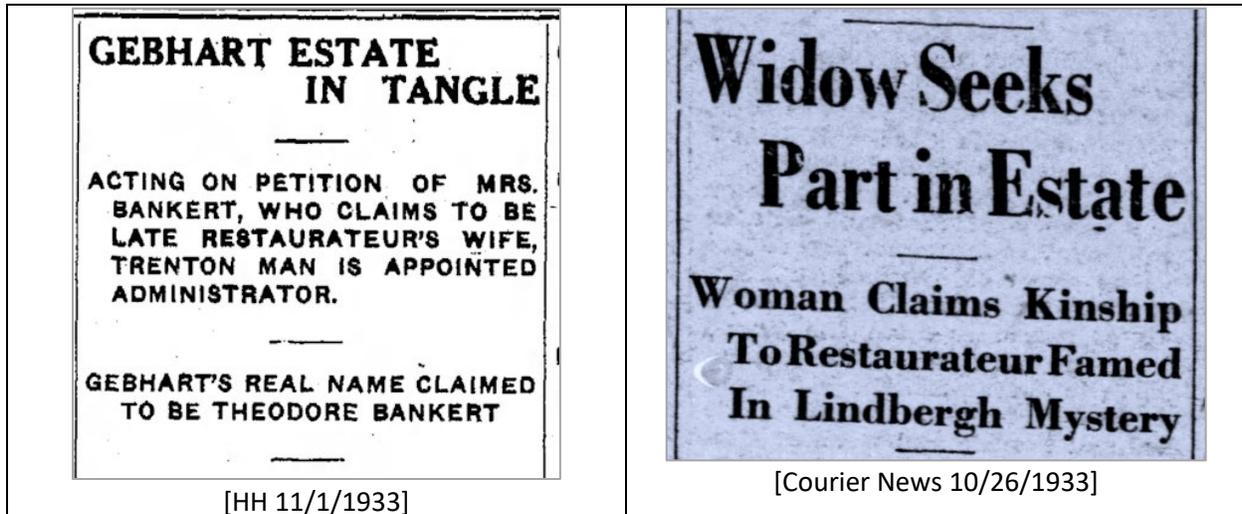


Interior with newsmen (print & radio) [1932 JCD]

"Pop" Gebhart first came into world prominence when his restaurant became the headquarters for newspaper reporters during the sensational Lindbergh kidnapping case. Many famous characters gathered at the restaurant for latest information of the case. A broadcasting station was also improvised in the restaurant. [TET 8/22/1933]

Gebhart Estate "Tangles" (1933)

After the death of Paul T. Gebhart in 1933, the settlement of his estate was challenged by Mrs. Edna M. Bankert of Littlestown. She charged that Gebhart's real name was Theodore Franklin Bankert, she was his widow, and that he had deserted her and two married daughters a number of years previously. This story appeared in numerous papers in New Jersey and was distributed by the Associated Press.



Edna May [Crouse] Bankert (1889-1970) married Theodore Franklin Bankert, then age 21, in 1905 at age 17. [Marriage 12/21/1905] They then are shown in Littlestown in the 1910 and 1920 U.S. Census, with two young daughters. Theodore Bankert was listed as working as a laborer for odd jobs and then as a machinist at a silk mill.

But by the 1930 U.S. Census Edna M. Bankert is listed as a widow, living with her two children (one married).

Meanwhile, Paul T. Gebhart first appears in the 1930 U.S. Census, in Hopewell, living in the Hopewell Inn building with his wife Bertha and two children.

After Paul Gebhart died in August 21, 1933, his body was taken to his hometown, Littlestown, Pa., for services and interment. [HH 8/23/1933] The Mount Carmel Cemetery in Littlestown, Pa. has a tombstone for Theodore Franklin Bankert, with dates 10/11/1884 to 8/21/1993 (the date of Paul T. Gebhart's fatal accident). [FindAGrave] Oddly, the birth date on the Bankert tombstone (Oct. 11) conflicts with the date in his other records (Nov. 11), including his handwritten draft registration. [Draft 9/12/1918] Both Edna M. Bankert and Bertha S. Gebhart are also buried in the same graveyard, albeit all in separate plots. [FindAGrave]

The exact resolution of the conflict over the Paul Gebhart estate is not known. In 1934, "Edna M. Bankert (et als)," was listed as the defendant for a sheriff sale action against the Central Hotel by Frederick A. Jackson, due to an outstanding mortgage of \$14,916.96 - so at the time Edna Bankert had a possible interest in the property. [HH 1/10/1934]

But Bertha S. Gebhart continued to run the business and hold the liquor license, under the Gebhart's Hotel name. She also was the sole owner when it was sold in 1949 to Anton and Rose Mar.

## Gebhart's Hotel and Restaurant, Bertha S. Gebhart

Bertha S. Gebhart continued to run the business after the death of Paul Gebhart, though the Great Depression and World War II, until its sale in 1949 to Anton and Rose Mar.

In October 1933, in the midst of the estate issues, the Herald wrote a piece headlined "Mrs. Gebhart Offers Home-Cooked Meals," saying she "knows how to satisfy the palate of the most ardent epicure." It also reports that she had fifteen "clean and cheerful" rooms available. The article concludes: "On behalf of her many friends we offer congratulations and wish her continued success." [HH 10/11/1933]

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Bertha Gebhart living in the building with her two young children, her two parents (there since at least 1935), two lodgers, and two employees (maid and barman).

The business continued to be variously described as Gebhart's Hotel and Gebhart's Hotel and Restaurant in the 1930s and 1940s, complete with a "beer garden." [HH 3/9/1938] The Central Hotel name seems to have faded out by the end of the 1930s.

After the sale of the business, Bertha Gebhart ran an advertisement for tutoring services. [HH 9/30/1954]



When we're recalling on Christmas day  
Your patrons and friends of our store,  
We shall be sending a thought your way,  
And wishing you joys by the score!

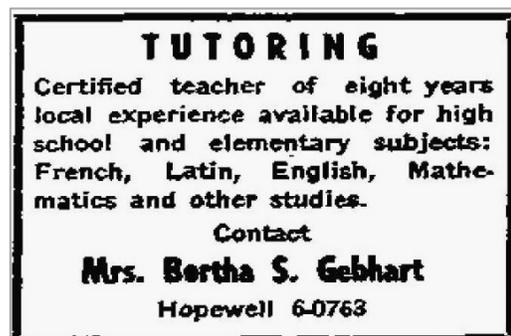
**GEBHART'S**  
**Hotel and Restaurant**  
15 EAST BROAD STREET  
'phone 21  
Meals Daily—Special Dinner Sundays  
Home Cooking—Rates Reasonable  
Choice Wines and Liquors—Beer

[HH 12/19/1934]



**GEBHART'S HOTEL**  
**and RESTAURANT**  
15 E Broad St. Phone 193  
DANCE ORCHESTRA  
**Saturday Nights**  
IN OUR BEER GARDEN  
Fun For All  
MIXED DRINKS OUR SPECIALTY

[HH 3/9/1938]



**TUTORING**  
Certified teacher of eight years  
local experience available for high  
school and elementary subjects:  
French, Latin, English, Mathe-  
matics and other studies.  
Contact  
**Mrs. Bertha S. Gebhart**  
Hopewell 6-0763

[HH 9/30/1954]

### Renovations - Gebhart Building

Due to the massive press activity in Hopewell after the Lindbergh kidnapping, there are a number of images of the town at the time, especially of Gerhart's Hotel, and also aerial photos of the area (see below).

After Gebhart moved in to the building, the left (Seminary) side was Gebhart's Lunch Room, with a sign on the side entrance promoting Arctic Ice Cream. Another sign extending from the porch corner read "Gebhart's Lunch."

The center sign hanging over the front entrance offered "Room for Tourists," and a signboard by the street read "Rooms / Meals." Painted on the center window was "Ice Cream & Candies." And there was a Bell telephone sign on the front corner.



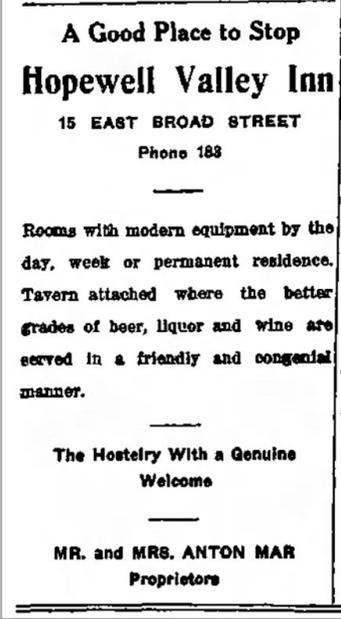
Lindbergh period view [c1932, JCD]



Lindbergh press frenzy [1932 / JCD]

## 1949 - Hopewell Valley Inn, Anton & Rose Mar

Anton and Rose Mar acquired the property from Bertha Gebhart in 1949, and ran it as the Hopewell Valley Inn, with associated tavern. In 1970, Rose Mar passed on the business to their daughter, Rose Mar Rathousky, who ran it with her husband Albert until 1977.

 <p><b>Ziegler's and Gebhart's Hotel Are Sold</b></p> <p>Two old established hostelries and inns, Ziegler's and Gebhart's, changed ownership during the past few days. Ziegler's Overlook Farms restaurant, formerly owned by J. A. Ziegler and George Weston, was purchased by Philip G Prassas, of Trenton. Mr Prassas will take over about October 1 and intends to continue the business along the same lines as before. Anton and Rose Mar, of Zion, new owners of Gebhart's Hotel, formerly owned by Mrs. Bertha Gebhart, will also take possession about October 1. Renovations and changes are expected to be made at Gebhart's.</p> <p>[HH 9/21/1949]</p>	 <p><b>A Good Place to Stop Hopewell Valley Inn</b></p> <p>15 EAST BROAD STREET Phone 183</p> <p>Rooms with modern equipment by the day, week or permanent residence. Tavern attached where the better grades of beer, liquor and wine are served in a friendly and congenial manner.</p> <p>The Hostelry With a Genuine Welcome</p> <p>MR. and MRS. ANTON MAR Proprietors</p> <p>[HH 8/23/1950]</p>
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In 1949, Anton and Rose Mar acquired the Hopewell Inn property from Bertha S. Gebhart, the widow of Paul T. Gebhart, who had died in 1933. [DB 1078-44, 10/19/1949] [HH 9/21/1949]

Anton Mar (1901-1953) had married Rose Lustig Mar (1902-1970) in 1923.

Anton Mar died in 1953, when the family was living at the Hopewell Inn:

Mr. Mar was a resident of Hopewell for the past four years. He was proprietor of the Hopewell Valley Inn, one of the oldest in the area. He retired 12 years ago as a manufacturer of ladies' sweaters. [HH 10/14/1953]

	<p>After Anton Mar died, his wife, Rose Mar, and then his daughter, Rose Marie Mar, ran the business for another 25 years. Women running bars was not unusual in the area - In the 1950s, Hopewell House, the other local Hopewell Hotel / Inn also was run by a woman, Helen Palaschak.</p> <p>Photo: Mrs. Rose Mar and Mrs. Helen Palaschak at a meeting of the Tri-Township Beverage Association. [TET 1/23/1956]</p>
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## 1970 - Hopewell Valley Inn - Albert & Rose Mar Rathousky

After Anton Mar died in 1953, his wife, Rose Mar, and their daughter, Rose Marie ("Rosie") Mar, continued to run the Hopewell Valley Inn. Rosie and husband Albert Rathousky then owned the business from 1970 to 1977. The bar was on the right side of the building, with their residence on the left.

After Rose Mar died in 1970, the Hopewell Inn property passed to her daughter Rose Marie Mar, who had married Norman F. Schumann in 1947, divorced, and then later married Albert C. Rathousky. The property transfer was memorialized in a 1971 deed [DB 1889-516, 8/26/1971]

Albert Charles Rathousky (1929 - 2003) was a Hopewell native, as described in a 2003 obituary:

Mr. Rathousky and his late wife, Rose Mar Rathousky, once owned and operated the Hopewell Valley Inn, located on East Broad Street. A former longtime employee of Rockwell Manufacturing Co., Hopewell, he was an Army Air Force veteran of World War II. Mr. Rathousky was a past commander and member of Hopewell Valley American Legion Post 339, Hopewell, a life member of the VFW, and a former longtime member and past chief of Hopewell Fire Department [1963-64]> [CJ 6/19/2003]

Rose ("Rosie") Mar Rathousky (-1991) was described in a 1991 obituary:

She was born in Long Island, N.Y., and came here from Hopewell, N.J., where she owned and operated the Hopewell Valley Inn for 30 years and was a member of the American Legion Auxiliary. [Tampa Bay Times, 5/7/1991]

Rosie Mar is remembered fondly by members of the local Hopewell Valley American Legion Post 339:

- "She run the place after her father died."
- "She had her own rules and regulations."
- "She was a tough lady - no cursing, no cussing - or you would be flagged for life."
- "The 'Rosie fund' was a charge for cussing - 10 or 25 cents."
- "She helped us out with the cuss jar for people in stress or after a tragedy."

[Legion, paraphrased from local interviews, 2020-21]

<p><b>HOPEWELL VALLEY INN</b> —  <b>Bar. Hopewell borough. Operat-</b>  <b>ing bar with C-2 license. Pack-</b>  <b>age on and off sale. Rented</b>  <b>room and owners apartment.</b>  <b>V.R. zoning permits restaurant</b>  <b>and business activity. By ap-</b>  <b>pointment only. \$220,000.</b>  <b>ROY E. COOK, INC.</b>  <b>896-0266 737-0964</b></p>	<p>In 1975 the Hopewell Valley Inn was listed for sale for \$220,000. When it was sold in 1977, the price listed in the deed was \$90,000. The Inn was not then in use as a restaurant - It featured a bar with liquor license for on- and off-site sales, a rented room, and an owner's apartment. The zoning also permitted restaurant and business activity usage.</p>
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### Renovations - Bar Interior - Rathouskys

When the Rathouskys sold the Inn in 1977 to Erno and Rose Nemeth, the right side of the building was the bar, and the left side was the residence of the Rathouskys. "It was a neighborhood bar, an intimate, warm cozy place to go" [A. Johnson]

The bar side had a long bar along the left side of the room, tables, and a shuffleboard set up along the right wall, along with several dart boards (Albert Rathousky had organized a darts club.) A shelf above the bar displayed an extensive collection of beer mugs from around the world. [Legion]

## 1977 - "New Hopewell Inn," Erno & Rose Nemeth

In 1977, Erno (Ernie) and Rose Nemeth acquired the Hopewell Inn from Albert and Rose Mar Rathousky. As immigrants from Hungary, they brought a Central European cuisine to Central Jersey. Ernie Nemeth made the major changes to the interior and exterior of the building that remain today, including the Tudor look and the octagonal banquet room addition. The bar was on the front left (Seminary) side, with kitchen behind. The restaurant was on the right side, with the banquet room addition to the right.

**THE NEW HOPEWELL INN**  
 "Home of Beef & Beer"

Serving Complete Luncheons All Day  
 Wines • Beers • Cocktails

"All orders individually prepared. To insure quality at its best, it must be this way . . ."

For Your Dining Pleasure American-German & Hungarian Cuisine Served From 5 P.M. to 10 P.M.

ZSA ZSA'S HUNGARIAN CHICKEN PAPIKAS . . . . . 3.95  
 Tender young chicken simmered in a sweet paprika sauce. Served with homemade egg dumplings with our special sour cream sauce.

WIENER SCHNITZL . . . . . 5.85  
 Tender young chicken simmered in a sweet paprika sauce. Served with homemade egg dumplings with our special sour cream sauce.

TRANSLYVANIA GOULASH . . . . . 3.95  
 Special milk-fed young veal with fried potatoes, lettuce, tomato and lemon wedge.

Plus OTHER

Open Daily 8 a.m. to Midnight  
 Closed Sundays

15 E. BROAD ST.,  
 HOPEWELL, N.J.  
 466-9889

Family Entrance to Dining Room

[TET 12/18/1977]

**NEW YEARS EVE CELEBRATION DINNER**  
 Champagne Toast

APPETISER  
 Choice of:  
 • Marinated Herring • Rigatoni Marinara • Chicken Liver Paté

SALAD BAR  
 ENTREE  
 Choice of:

• Roast Suckling Pig • 14 oz. Sirloin Steak  
 • Variety Pork Roast • Stuffed Scallops  
 • Roast Stuffed Duckling • Shrimp Scampi  
 • Veal Paprikas • Stuffed Plover  
 • Wiener Roastbraten

Dessert & Coffee included  
 Children's Menu Available

\$15.95 per adult

Reservations now being taken

**The Hopewell Inn**  
 15 East Broad Street  
 Hopewell, N.J. (609) 466-9889

[TET 12/30/1984]

In September 1977, Erno (Ernie) T. Nemeth (1932-2014) and Rose [Boncfoldi] Nemeth acquired the Hopewell Inn for \$90,000 from Albert and Rose Mar Rathousky. [DB 2053-885, 9/21/1977]

The 2014 obituary of Erno T. Nemeth described his path from Hungary to Hopewell:

Erno was born in Nyul, Győr - megye, Hungary, and immigrated to New Brunswick, NJ, during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution along with his [pregnant] wife, Rose. Erno was a talented carpenter, farmer and restaurateur. He owned and operated the Budapest Cafe in New Brunswick, NJ, (1972 to 1976) where he was an active member of St. Ladislaus Hungarian Church and Hungarian Scouts Home. Later he opened the Hopewell Inn in Hopewell, NJ. (1977 to 2000) where he was a great friend to many. Erno was an avid hunter, antique car collector and member of the Buick Car Club of America. His memory will live on at the Nemeth farm in Ringoes, NJ. [TT 2/21/2014]

A 1978 review then describes Erno Nemeth's discovery of Hopewell:

Farming had always been an obsession as he'd come from a line of farmers. It was summer visits to swim at Hiohela that introduced him the Hopewell area and he fell in love with East Amwell. He finally bought a farm on Cider Mill Road and put the 60 acres into corn and soybean and began raising pigs. ...

He had stopped many times at the men's bar in Hopewell at East Broad and Seminary. It became available and he bought it. The sale was completed last September 19 and he immediately went to work renovating the corner property, shifting the bar to create a good size dining area.

[TET 2/19/1978]

The same 1978 review was enthusiastic about having a new Hungarian dining option in the area ("An ethnic restaurant comes to Hopewell"):

The Nemeths have produced a quiet comfortable informal room with five wooden booths and 16 tables. Nothing is plush and a noisy humidifier being used to clear the air was humming far too loud to permit easy conversation, but the room is a solid first step on the way to a winning facility. ...

Small town Hopewell may seem an odd place for an ethnic restaurant, but the inn was busy the night we stopped by and it can't all be because of the pretty barmaid. Dishes like veal and stuffed cabbage have been the most popular to date, but as people come back, it's a safe guess they'll try other specialties. [TET 2/19/1978]

<p><b>The food is simple, desserts outrageous</b></p> <p>In the mood for some good down-home cooking? Like simple foods and outrageous desserts? Look no farther than the Hopewell Valley Inn (also known as the Hopewell Inn).</p> <p><b>BILL OF FARE</b> Joan Belknap</p> <p>[TET 3/3/1985]</p>	<p><b>HOPEWELL INN</b></p> <p><b>NEW YEAR'S EVE DINNER</b></p> <p>with Champagne Toast Choice of Entree- <b>\$18<sup>95</sup></b> Per Adult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roast Suckling Pig (Hungarian New Year's Eve tradition)</li> <li>• Roast Stuffed Duckling</li> <li>• Veal Paprikas</li> <li>• Wiener Schnitzel</li> <li>• T-Bone Steak</li> <li>• Broiled Scallops</li> <li>• Shrimp Scampi</li> <li>• Broiled Stuffed Flounder</li> </ul> <p>All Entrees include: salad bar, vegetable, potato, coffee &amp; dessert</p> <p>Just a few of our delicious desserts — Kremes, Chocolate Mousse Square &amp; Apple Strudel</p> <p>Children's menu \$8.95 per child (12 &amp; under)</p> <p><b>Call for Reservations</b> <b>609-466-9889</b> 15 E. Broad St., Hopewell, NJ <b>or</b> <b>609-466-1739</b></p> <p>[TET 12/29/1989]</p>
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In 2000, the Nemeths transferred the business to their daughter, Susan ("Susie") Molnar.

A review by the New York Times in 2000 appreciated the Inn ("Dumplings and Paprika Among the Chicken Wings"):

On the menu at the Hopewell Inn - which is decorated with a girl at a well - there are chicken fingers among stuffed cabbage and pirogis. This tells you that in a restaurant with a smattering of standard American fare, the real treats are the Hungarian and German specialties.

The Hopewell Inn, which is the name of both the former hotel and the restaurant in it, is more than 100 years old and was the operations center for reporters covering the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby from the family home nearby. For the past 23 years the inn has been owned and operated by Ernie and Rose Nemeth, with Mrs. Nemeth doing much of the cooking. The restaurant often gets tourists stopping in town to see the renovated train station or the town's famous gazebo, but it also is a favorite stop for locals. ...

Susan Molnar, the Nemeth's daughter, and her husband, Paul, are in the process of taking over the restaurant. They had owned a bistro in Pennington. The same basic menu and generous portions will be retained, and Rose Nemeth will continue to do much of the cooking ... [NYT 8/6/2000]

### 1977 Renovations - Tudor Restaurant - Nemeth

Ernie Nemeth immediately began renovations after buying the Hopewell Inn in 1977. In fact, the Hopewell American Legion Post folks remember him starting to make changes to the building even before the purchase was final, including adding steel beams under the floor.

When the Nemeths bought the building, the right side of the building was the bar, and the left (Seminary) side was the residence of the Rathouskys. Nemeth moved the bar to the left side, with kitchen behind, and set up the restaurant with wooden booths and tables on the right side, as the building stands today. He also removed the tin ceilings over the current bar area.

Nemeth changed the exterior of the building to the current off-white stucco with diagonal Tudor style beams. He also enclosed the front porch so that it had steps only in the center, and changed the balcony railing above the porch. The Borough also required parking spaces, so the current parking lot was built behind the building on Seminary Avenue, which "destroyed Mrs. Gebhart's rose garden." [S. Molnar]



Building before 1985  
banquet room addition  
[TET 10/5/1985]



Hopewell Inn after 1985  
octagonal banquet room  
addition  
[hopewellbistro.com]

### 1985 Renovations - Octagonal Banquet Room Addition

In 1985, the Nemeths proposed adding a 45-foot, three-story tower on the west side of the building, close to the adjacent Hopewell Public Library building. The first floor was planned for dining, and the second and third floor were for offices. The planning board was especially concerned by the proximity to the Library (8 feet) and the risk of damaging its foundations. Erno Nemeth was quoted as saying that the building was in "severe disrepair" when he bought it. [TET 10/5/1985]

In November 1985, the Nemeths were granted approval to build a single-story addition, the current octagonal structure, still with a mansard roof. The new banquet room reportedly added 1,200 square feet, and expanded seating from 80 to 130. [TET 11/9/1985]

## 2000 - Hopewell Valley Bistro and Inn, Susan & Paul Molnar

In 2000, the current owners, Susan ("Susie") and Paul Molnar acquired the Hopewell Inn from Erno & Rose Nemeth. Susan Molnar was the daughter of the Nemeths, so the business was "family owned since 1977." The business was renamed from the Hopewell Inn to the Hopewell Valley Bistro and Inn.



[hopewellbistro.com]

In September 2000, Susan C. Molnar and Paul J. Molnar acquired the Hopewell Inn from Erno & Rose Nemeth. [DB 3913-267, 9/25/2000]

The Molnars had previously operated the Pennington Bistro at 38 South Main Street in Pennington, a small eatery that featured central European cuisine, which continued at the new Bistro and Inn. (Paul Molnar was born in Budapest, and Susie Molnar was the daughter of immigrants from Hungary.)



One early reviewer wrote in 2001:

The Hopewell Valley Bistro and Inn is located on Broad Street in the heart of Hopewell's charming little "downtown" which spans all of about three blocks. ... It offers a mix of American, German and Hungarian food that is, for the most part, hearty with no frills. ...

The Hopewell Valley Bistro and Inn is a neighborhood restaurant. It is the kind of place where you find the dish you like, maybe even crave, and order it every time you go. For me, it would be the beef goulash with a side of spaetzle and the chocolate mousse cake to top it off. [CJ 1/31/2001]

And the New York Times described the ambience in 2003:

If you have labored long and hard in the fields, plowing and weeding the lower 40 with your mule, and if a beautiful plate to you is one heaped high to overflowing with food, you will find the hearty, old-fashioned fare at Hopewell Valley Bistro and Inn exactly to your liking. And there will be enough of it to fill you and fuel you for the next days barn-raising.

Everyone else gets doggie bags.

The restaurant is in a sweet old building along Hopewell's main street, near antique stores and within howling distance of the town's fire alarm, which sounded three times on the two nights that we visited, stopping conversation for its duration. Inside, the room is dark and quiet, with an old-style diner's dessert carousel commanding attention along the left side, near a door to the bar. A wide front porch holds a few tables and dining chairs, affording fresh air, a view of the traffic along East Broad Street and pleasantly muffled sounds of merriment from the bar. [NYT 8/10/2003]

Interior Photos

The interior of the Hopewell Valley Bistro and Inn is shown in photos of various regular music events held there.

In 2006, reviewers reported that the restaurant seated 170, and the banquet room, with parquet dance floor, had a capacity of 90. [CN 6/7/2006]

The Bistro added live jazz in 2005, which evolved into Jazz on Broad, hosted by pianist Phil Orr, a weekly Thursday night series "featuring well-known and worth-knowing performers."



Jazz on Broad, facing the front of the banquet room [jazzonbroad.com]

The Bistro also hosted the Hopewell Irish Music Session starting in the 2010s, for "musicians, singers, dancers of all ages" performing together.



Irish Music Session,  
facing the back of the dining room



Irish Music Session,  
facing the front of the dining room  
[facebook.com/hopewellirishsession]

## Hopewell Inn Visual Chronology

A visual chronology of the development of the Hopewell Inn building and changes in its use, using historic maps and photos (some cropped). Show views from the original rectangular building with mansard roof, through rear additions, to porch renovations, and finally to the current Tudor style structure with the octagonal addition.

### 1887 View - Home & Store, Mrs. M. A. Carter

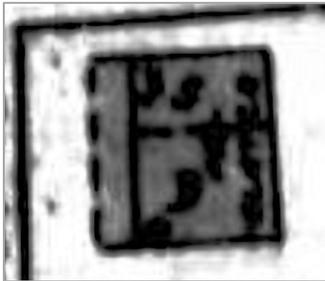
First known image - Fowler 1887 bird-eye view map, facing north  
(Broad St. horizontally across top, Seminary Ave. vertically to right)  
The original rectangular building with mansard roof.



- Rectangular three-story building
- Mansard roof
- Bay window on left side
- Porch in front

### 1890 View - Home & Store

Scarlett & Scarlett 1890 fire map, north to left  
(Seminary Ave. horizontally across top, Broad St. vertically to left)  
Same building, with store on east (Seminary) side



- Rectangular three-story building
- Front porch along entire building
- Store on Seminary side
- Dwelling on west side

1897 View - Same Building with Front Porch - Central Hotel, Andrew Cray

First known photo, first published in [HHH 1897] - matches earlier maps



- Store / hotel in left third, "Central Hotel" sign above
- Residence on right 2/3, door to left
- Front porch along entire front of building, four pillars
- Front stars unbroken across entire front
- Bay window on right side
- Railings with vertical design on balcony above porch

Pre-1913 View - Same Front - Central Hotel, Cray / Corcoran

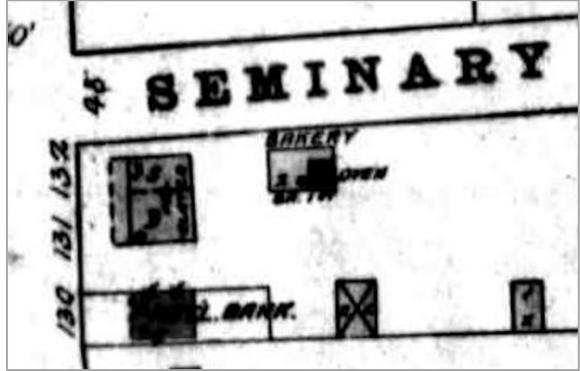
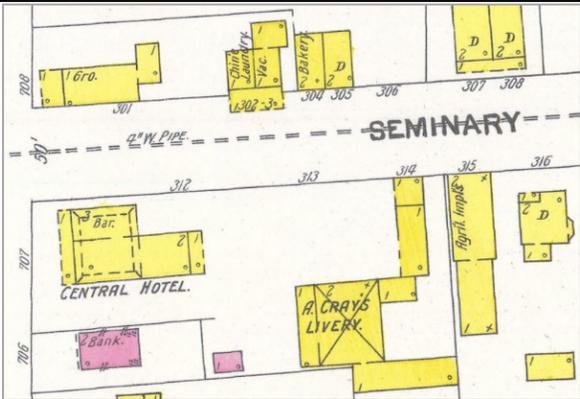
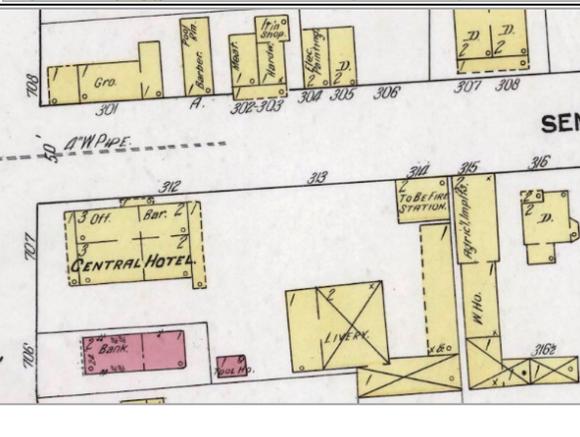
Same building; Photo published with 1914 article [hand colored postcard, WF, n/d]



- Bell Telephone sign by tree (1909 phone number was #3)

1902 -1912 Views - Rear Additions - Central Hotel, John Corcoran

The two rear additions added by John Corcoran are shown in the Scarlett & Scarlett and Sanborn fire maps (1902 on the west side and 1905 on the east). Maps have north to the left (Broad Street).

	<p><b>1890 Scarlett &amp; Scarlett fire map</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive three-story square building</li> <li>• Front porch extending along the entire Broad Street side</li> <li>• Seminary Ave. side is a store (S)</li> <li>• West side is a dwelling (D)</li> <li>• No adjacent livery shown</li> </ul>
	<p><b>1902 Sanborn fire map</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three-story square building, "Central Hotel"</li> <li>• Two-story rear addition on west side</li> <li>• Back porch behind addition</li> <li>• Seminary Ave. side is a "Bar"</li> <li>• "A. Cray's Livery" added adjacent to the Hotel down Seminary Ave. (Later replaced by the auto parts business at 11-13 Seminary, adjacent to the Hopewell Inn parking lot.)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>1912 Sanborn fire map</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-story rear addition on east side (Seminary Ave. )</li> <li>• Back porch along entire south side</li> <li>• Front of Seminary Ave. side is an "Office"</li> <li>• Back of Seminary Ave. is a "Bar"</li> <li>• Small side porch entrance on Seminary Ave. side</li> <li>• Adjacent Livery complex has been adjusted, since the new Hopewell Fire Department building was to be built next door.</li> </ul>

By 1913 View - Side Porch - Central Hotel, John Corcoran

Porch renovation with side porch on west and distinctive diagonal railings [Postcard, MZ, n/d]



- Side entrance addition on Seminary Avenue [Corcoran 1905]
- Five front porch pillars, with stone bases - West side porch addition
- Front stars separated at pillars
- Railings with diagonal design on balcony above porch

1913 View - Side Porch - Central Hotel, John Corcoran

Dated from family photos of March 1914 snowstorm [REL] - Also in 1926 family photo [RDG]



- Five front porch pillars, with stone bases & west side porch
- Railings with diagonal design

1932 View - Gebhart's Hotel, Paul Gebhart

The 1932 Gebhart's Hotel photos show the most recognizable historic building design



- Rear addition, Seminary side entrance, west side porch, diagonal railings [c1932, JCD]

1932 Aerial View - Gebhart's Hotel, Paul Gebhart

Aerial looking northwest - Broad Street from Greenwood (top) to Seminary (bottom).



- Two-story addition on back, porch along full back
- Side entrance on Seminary Avenue
- Livery adjacent on Seminary (to the left)

### 1977 View - Tudor - Hopewell Inn, Ernie & Rose Nemeth

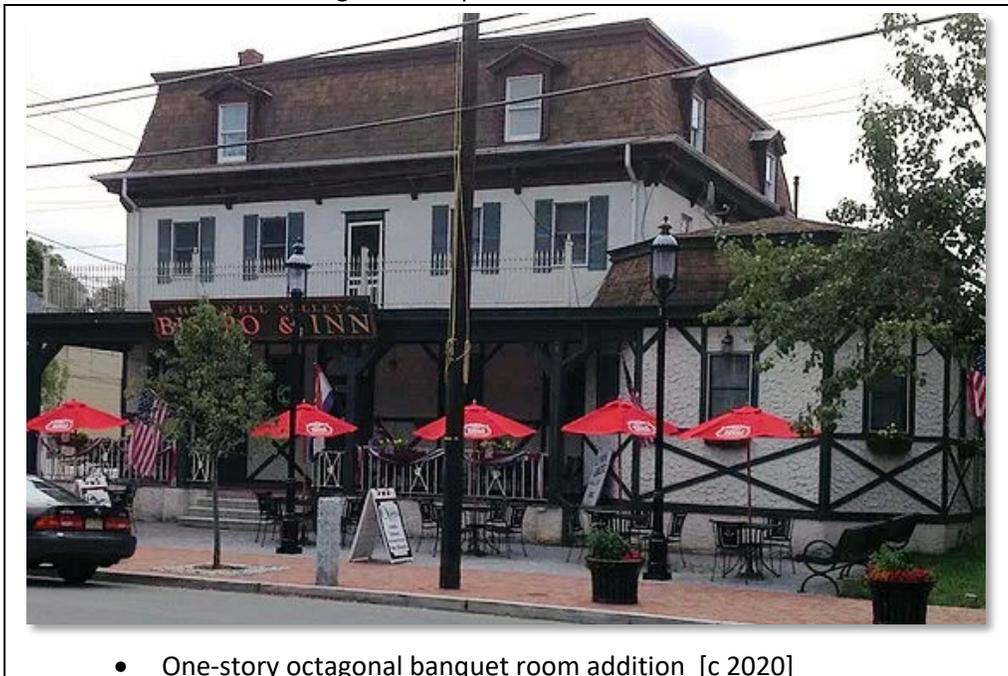
Ernie Nemeth renovated the exterior of the building to the Tudor style in 1977



- Stucco exterior with Tudor style [TET 10/5/1985]
- Enclosed front porch with railing and only center steps
- Upper balcony railing vertical

### 1985 View - Octagon - Hopewell Inn, Ernie & Rose Nemeth

Ernie Nemeth added the octagonal banquet room side addition in 1985



- One-story octagonal banquet room addition [c 2020]

## References

Information extracted and summarized from sources including books, reports, maps, deeds, newspapers, and photos. Genealogical resources include Find A Grave and Ancestry.com; note exact dates may be disputed.

Many of the original materials (documents, maps, aerials, and photos) come from the many contributors to the Hopewell Valley History Project and are shared on the site (HopewellHistoryProject.org) - see the Acknowledgements page.



[Audrey Jones, 2003]

Comments, additions, and corrections are welcome.

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### Books

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[Gantz 1987] - *Hopewell's Past* (1987), Elizabeth (Betty) Gantz

[HHH 1897] - *Healthful Historic Hopewell* (1897), Normer Gray

[HAHG 1992] - *Hopewell: A Historical Geography* (1992), Richard W. Hunter and Richard L. Porter

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[DB] - Mercer County Deed Books - book / page, registration date

- Mercer County records.mercercounty.org and FamilySearch familysearch.org

### Reports

[Site Survey 1985] - 1985 Cultural Resource Survey, Hopewell Borough

[Falzini 2012] - 1932 Hopewell, N. J. & Vicinity Phone Directory (2012), Mark W. Falzini

### Maps

- 1875 Hopewell map from Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County by Everts & Stewart

- 1887 Hopewell panoramic aerial map by T. M. Fowler

- 1900 Scarlett & Scarlett fire map of Hopewell Borough

- 1902, 1912, 1927, 1937 Sanborn fire maps of Hopewell Borough

### Newspapers

[HH] - Hopewell Herald newspaper (through 1955)

[TET] - Trenton Evening Times newspaper

[TT] - Trenton Times newspaper

[CJ] - CentralJersey.com, e.g., Hopewell Valley News

[CN] - Community News, e.g. U.S.1

[NYT] - New York Times