

The Cilley Shop

Mary Robertson Ives

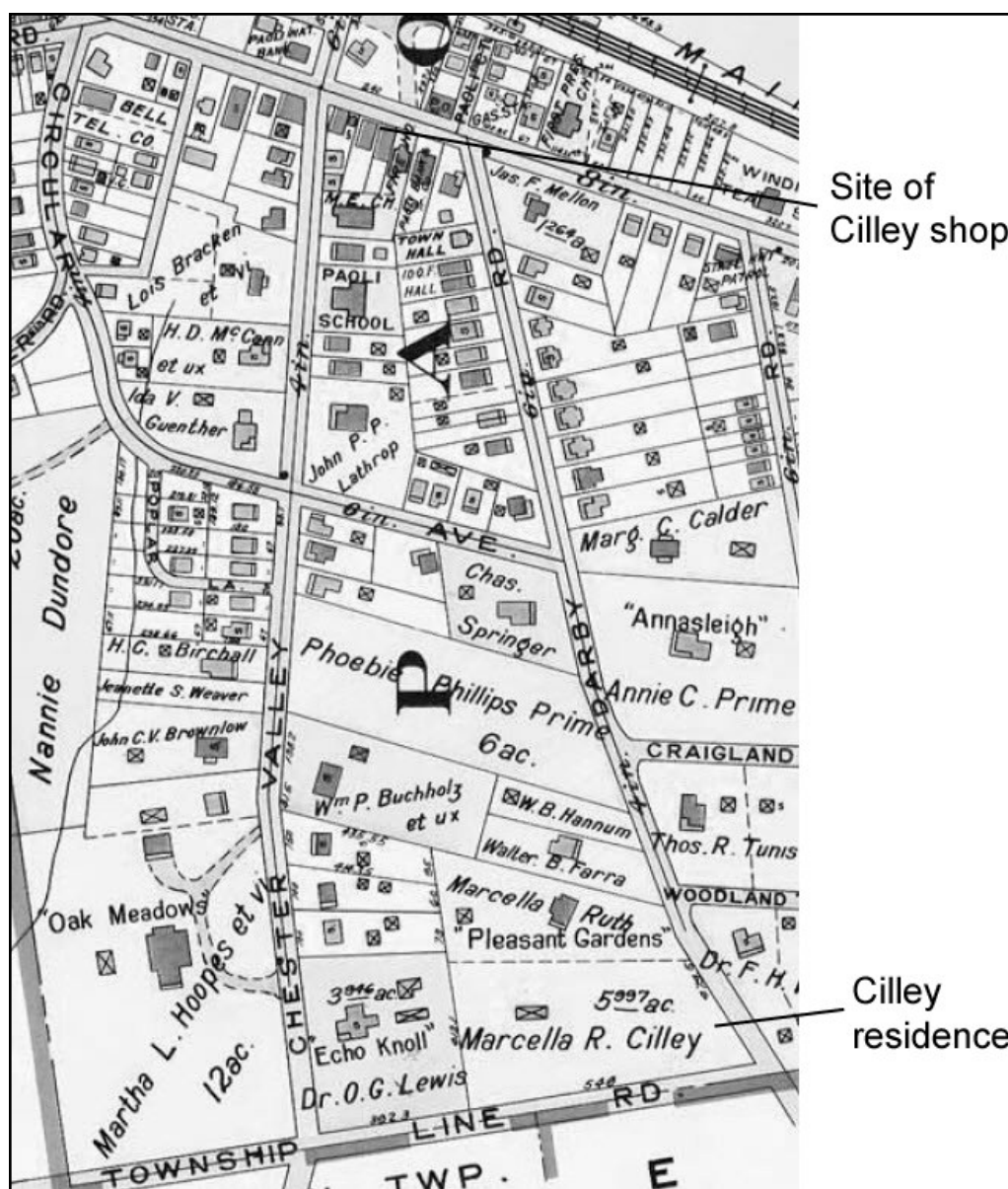
Several people have asked me if I remember the Cilley Shop in Paoli, and I do. Here is what I remember: Gordon and Marcella Cilley lived in a house on Darby Road in Paoli, about three blocks south of Lancaster Pike. They had three daughters – Virginia, Adelaide, and Mary Jo.

I cannot remember when Virginia and her husband, Mr. Chrisman, opened the shop but it was located on Lancaster Pike in the block between South Valley and Darby Roads, facing north. It was quite small, but airy and well lighted. Virginia, whose nickname was “Ginger,” sold greeting cards and had an eye for gifts that were pretty and useful. Periodically, she would disappear for several days, and her customers knew she had gone to

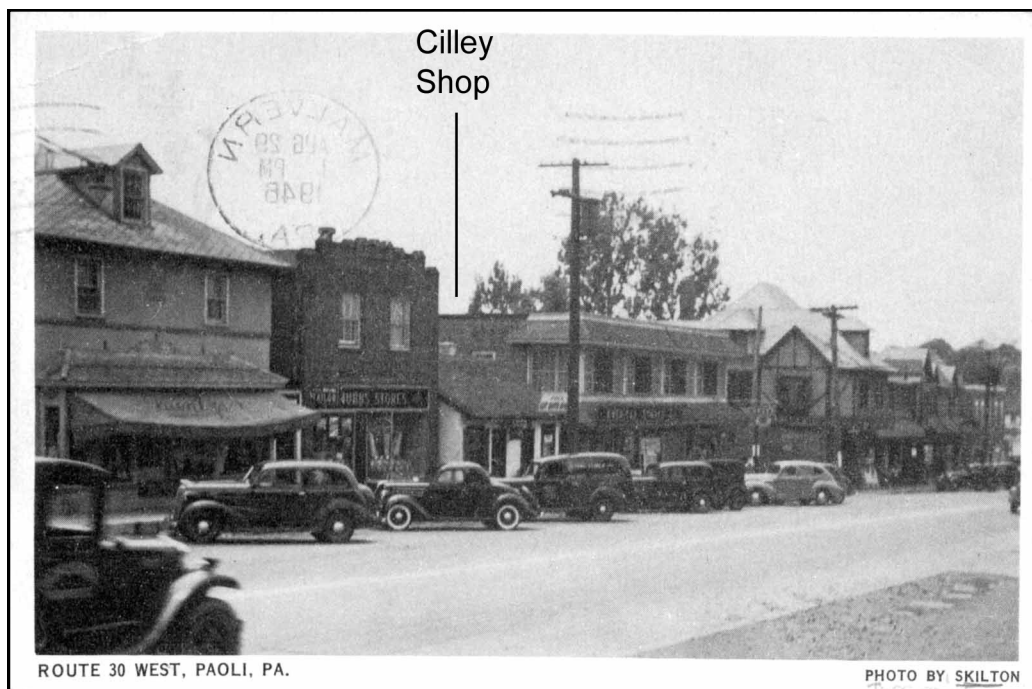


Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society

The Cilley Shop, Paoli.



The Cilley Shop was located on Rt. 30 in Paoli. The Cilley residence was at the corner of Darby Rd. and Township line Rd. (today's Devon Rd.). Map from the 1933 Franklin Survey atlas, in the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society Archives. Annotations by Mike Bertram, 2009.



Postcard from the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society Archives.

New York City to buy things to sell in her shop.

I still have some items which my mother purchased there. Three of them are small oil paintings of historic places in the area – the covered bridge at Valley Forge, the Diamond Rock School, and Old St. David's Church, Radnor. These were painted by Adelaide Cilley Ward, whose nickname was "Jackie." The paintings them-



Interior of the Cilley Shop.

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selves measure 6¼ by 4½ inches and are surrounded by wooden frames painted a soft shade of gray making the total size 7 x 9 inches. They are all snow scenes. When someone bought one of her paintings, Jackie would paint another and frame it. I don't know whether or not she painted other historic spots but these three are the ones I have.

During the time I knew the family, Mary Jo was still in school and I think she aspired to be a fashion model. The girls were not the only talented women in the area. Marcella also had a little business going. She made and baked delicious small chicken pies and sold them to her friends.



Adelaide Cilley Ward's painting of the Diamond Rock Schoolhouse. *Image courtesy of the author.*

I don't remember when or why the Cilley Shop closed, but it probably was due to the loss of convenient accessibility to the shop. In those days Route 202 went through Paoli and Route 30 and Route 202 were the same road. Route 202 came up from the valley on Bear Hill, went under the Pennsylvania Railroad bridge and turned right onto Route 30. After several blocks, 202 bore left onto Paoli Pike at the traffic light in front of Matthew's Ford and followed Paoli Pike all the way to West Chester.

Traffic in Paoli became unmovable and there was no way to widen the street. So the powers that be in Tredyffrin Township and PennDOT removed the parking spaces in front of the stores in that block and made it a through lane.

To get into the Cilley Shop one had to enter the parking lot behind it from South Valley Road then walk through a narrow alley between the buildings to get to the front entrance. A lot of Ginger's customers were very unhappy at the loss of the lovely shop. It was one of the many changes that have taken place in the village of Paoli.



The former Cilley Shop building as it looks today. *Photo courtesy of Mike Bertram, 2009.*