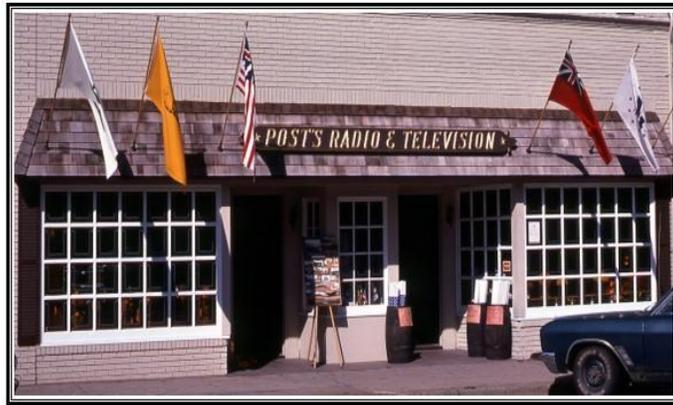
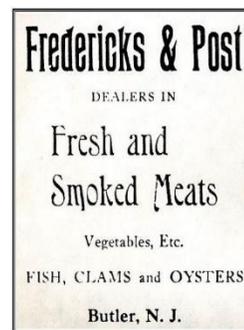


The Post Family

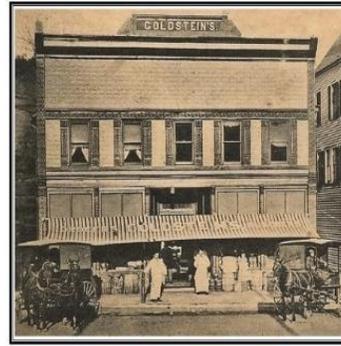


George R. Post was born in the Newfoundland section of West Milford in 1862 and, as a young man, came to Butler to work in the American Hard Rubber Mill. Later, he helped found the Pequannock Coal and Lumber Company and then went into the butcher business as *Fredericks & Post*. Their wagons were a common sight around town, peddling steaks, fish, oysters, and clams. In 1905, their store was located on the lower end of High Street next to the bridge, near the intersection of Boonton and Keil Avenues.



When George's son, Claude, returned from World War I in 1919, he joined his father's business, which became *George R. Post & Son*. Claude served in the 114th Regiment of the New Jersey National Guard. The 114th was mustered into federal service on July 25, 1917 and served in France until the end of the war. Post received a Purple Heart accommodation for being wounded in the Battle of Meuse-Argonne. The Meuse-Argonne offensive was the largest in U.S. military history, involving 1.2 million American soldiers. It was also the bloodiest battle in American history, resulting in over 350,000 casualties, including 28,000 German lives, 26,277 American lives, and an unknown number of French lives. It was the largest and deadliest operation of World War I for the American Expeditionary Force. The German defeat helped bring the war to an end.

Claude may have acquired his interest in radios while serving in the army because soon after his return from the war, he opened a radio and electrical appliance shop next to his father's market. In the 1920's, radio was on the cutting edge of technology. Far from just a new source of entertainment and news, it helped bridge the gap between people and cultures from coast to coast.



Their business grew and, in 1935, the family bought the old Lyric Movie Theatre on Main Street. Originally the Goldstein Building, in 1904 it had been moved from the Borough Park next to the railroad tracks to its present location at 180 Main Street.

On August 16, 1926, George died of a stroke at his home on Kiel Avenue at the age of seventy-five. He was a former member of the Butler Borough Council and a member of the Junior Order of American Mechanics Lodge. Mr. Post was buried at Mount Rest Cemetery next to his wife, Emma.

On Christmas Eve 1936, Post's store suffered a disastrous fire. The building was completely gutted and its entire inventory destroyed. Serious water damage was also done to adjoining stores. The Butler Fire Department called for outside help and the Bloomingdale, Riverdale, Pompton Lakes, and Wanaque fire companies responded.

The cause of the fire was never determined; it was believed that an oil stove in the rear of the building started it. Six firemen were hurt fighting the fire, two from smoke inhalation, one with a cut over his eye, another injured his wrist, Paul Marion fractured his arm, Roy Shippee fell off the roof of the Butler House next door and crashed through a glass window, he was seriously injured.

Royden Smith, an employee of the store, was badly burned about the head, body, and legs. He was rushed to Saint Joseph's Hospital in Paterson in critical condition and later died from his burns. Claude Post, the owner, was badly burned about the hands and arms trying to save Smith. He was listed in serious, but stable condition.

Mr. Smith was 57 years old and a veteran of the Spanish-American War. He worked as a steward on the railroad for 13 years, ran a grocery store with his father in Smith Mills for 25 years, and had been employed by Post for about six months.

As you can imagine, the fire that completely destroyed their business was a devastating blow to the Post family. They vowed to rebuild, however, and within a year, the store was up and running again.

More changes came to the business in 1939. Claude, who was also serving as state Civil Service Commissioner, decided to give up the market and concentrate on the radio and electrical appliance side of the business. The main street building was divided into two stores. One was retained as Post's Radio and the other was rented to the National Grocery Company, which moved down the street from the Benson Building.

With the coming of World War II in 1941 and with limited electrical products available, the store was leased to the Safeway grocery chain. A smaller store was created for the radio business by closing in the alley next to the building. Claude Post Sr. married Mary Brautigan and they had two sons, Donald and Claude, Jr.

Claude, Jr. was working at the DuPont plant in Pompton Lakes when he registered for military service in 1942 at the age of 18. Six months later, he enlisted in the Army Air Corp and was sent to Newport, Arkansas for basic training. He then went on for further training with single and twin engine aircraft.

Claude, Sr. chaired the welcome home celebration for Butler's veterans. On September 8, 1946, more than 400 vets marched in a huge parade that included floats, local bands and drum corps. More than 5000 spectators lined the parade route to pay tribute to their friends, relatives, and neighbors. Almost every building on Main Street was decorated for the occasion.

Gold Stars were presented to Butler's nine Gold Star Mothers by Mayor Thomas Mace. (mothers who lost a son or daughter in military service).

The festivities included a barbecue dinner served under a large circus tent at the High School athletic field, drum corp. performances, a rodeo demonstration by Diamond B Ranch, and concluded with a block dance. Claude Post, Jr. was one of the returning veterans.



1953
POSTS' RADIO
Television and Electrical Appliances
Large Selection of Records
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Claude, Jr. joined the family business and the trade name was changed to *Post's Radio and Television*. Not only was Post's one of the first stores in North Jersey to sell televisions, they were also one of the first to sell color TV's. In 1947 Mr. Post was awarded a plaque by RCA acknowledging him as a pioneer in the color television business.

Claude, Sr. was seriously injured in Ormond Beach Florida in 1959. He suffered a broken vertebrae in his neck when a truck rolled out of a driveway and struck his car. Mrs. Post, who was also in the car at the time, escaped injury. Claude recovered from the accident and lived to be 72 years old. He passed away on November 26, 1967 at the Idylease Convalescent Home in West Milford after a lengthy illness.

In 1960, the business moved back to the original store from the alley store and Claude, Jr.'s wife, Eleanor, opened a gift shop featuring Early American gifts called the *Hitching Post*. Post's was one of the first Main Street stores to remodel to match the town's new motif. They were also recognized at this time as the oldest radio dealer in the state operated by the same family.

In a newspaper interview, Claude stated that, "the hallmark of our success is the fact that we service everything we sell. From radios and televisions, to videotape recorders to stereos, to household appliances like refrigerators to washing machines, all are serviced by our own technicians."

As a member of the George P. Siek VFW Post 8092, he served as Post Commander, District 10 Commander, State Commander, and in other state and local offices. He was also a member of Butler's Silentia Lodge No. 168 of the Freemasons.

Claude, Jr. was very active in community affairs. He was a founder and president of the Downtown Butler Business Association which was formed in 1974. Mr. Post also served on the board of adjustment, the borough council, and as mayor from 1982 to 1987. When he stepped down as mayor in July 1987 for health reasons, he was presented with the key to the city for his many civic contributions.

As mayor, Claude fought for the acquisition of the former Amerace complex on Ace Road. He felt the borough had outgrown the old municipal building next to the park, and that an additional facility was needed. In spite of some opposition, the Amerace property was purchased for \$500,000 in 1983 and today houses the municipal offices and the town library.



On June 31, 1986, after 66 years of operation by himself, his father, and his grandfather, Claude closed the doors of Post's Radio and Television for the last time and announced he was retiring. He stepped down as mayor, and he and his wife Eleanor moved to Florida to enjoy the sunshine.

They later returned to West Milford to be closer to their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

When he passed on March 8, 2007, it was hard to find anyone who had ever heard an ill word spoken about Claude C. Post, Jr. Most people considered him a true gentleman who treated everyone with respect. He was survived by his wife of 61 years, Eleanor; his son Keith; two daughters, Marsha and Valerie. six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren, his brother, Donald; and many nieces and nephews. It's said that the Post family legacy is, "they tried to make Butler a better place."

Sources: *Butler Gazette* Sept. 7, 1980, *Suburban Trends* May 14, 2007, *Butler In Story and Pictures* 2001, *Paterson News* Nov. 28, 1967, *Herald News* Jan 31, 1959, *Record* June 30, 1986, *Paterson Morning Call* Sept. 9, 1946