

## Henry and Helene Spincken Grocery

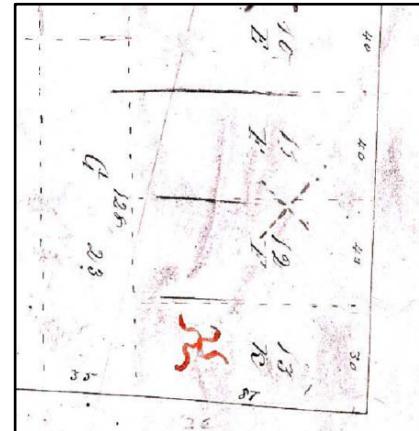
95 Line Street

c. 1867-1869

The corner store at 95 Line Street was built by a German immigrant soon after he returned to Charleston after a period of involuntary service in the Confederate military. Both the building and the lot have slowly grown over about 160 years.

The lot itself was one of the parcels that made up Elliottborough. **Rev. William Percy**<sup>1</sup> owned about eight acres in the area, which he had received from his brother-in-law, **Barnard Elliott**, in 1786. When Rev. Percy died, his land was split into 140 lots to split among his heirs.<sup>2</sup> In 1848, a granddaughter and her husband, **Paul<sup>3</sup> and Catherine<sup>4</sup> Hamilton**, received a 1/21 interest in the Rev. Percy holdings made up of six lots scattered around the larger tract, including K-13, upon which 95 Line Street would be built.<sup>5</sup>

No building had been added by October 1857 when an advertisement ran for “that desirable BUILDING LOT at the southwest corner of Coming and Line-streets.”<sup>6</sup> A similar advertisement appeared in November 1866 for the same “lot of land,” still seemingly unimproved.<sup>7</sup> Eventually, a grocer, **John H. Theile**, paid \$480 for the 35 by 129 foot lot on January 11, 1867.<sup>8</sup> But, later that same day, Mr. Thiele sold the same property to fellow grocer **Henry Spincken** for the same \$480.<sup>9</sup> (The reason for Mr. Thiele’s immediate resale to Mr. Spincken for the same price he had paid is unknown. When Mr. Spincken died years later, Mr. Thiele’s name was listed in the obituary, possibly as a brother-in-law.)



In the 1848 plat of Elliottborough's 140 lots, K-13 was marked with a red X.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Percy was born in 1744 and died in 1819. He married Catherine Elliott (1748-1818) on May 18, 1776.

<sup>2</sup> Plat book A, page 36

<sup>3</sup> Paul Hamilton was born October 17, 1816. He died July 29, 1899 and is buried at St. Helena's Episcopal Churchyard in Beaufort.

<sup>4</sup> Catherine Amarinthia (Campbell) Hamilton was born on March 11, 1790, to William Percy (1744-1819) and Catherine Elliott. She died on October 23, 1877, and is buried at St. Helena's Episcopal Churchyard in Beaufort.

<sup>5</sup> Deed book A12, page 382. The lots going to the Hamilton were K-13, K-55, K-58, K-59, K-144, and K-145.

<sup>6</sup> Charleston Mercury, Oct. 1, 1857, at 3. An earlier advertisement ran in the Charleston Courier on March 25, 1858.

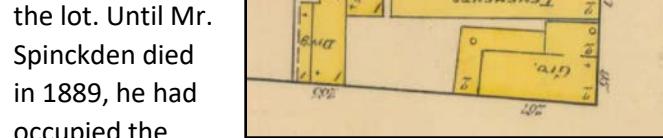
<sup>7</sup> Charleston Daily News, Nov. 12, 1866, at 6

<sup>8</sup> Deed book A15, page 123

<sup>9</sup> Deed book A15, page 128 (In the deed, Mr. Spincken's name was misspelled as Spencken.)

The corner store seems to have been built by Mr. Spincken.<sup>10</sup> Mr. Spincken arrived in the United States in about 1856 from Germany. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he volunteered with a German militia company that took part in the capture of Ft. Sumter. When the Civil War entered full swing, the Confederate military wanted to conscript Mr. Spincken, but he objected that he was not a citizen. He claimed that he had never intended to remain in the country and had never been naturalized. Judge Magrath ruled against him, explaining that when the government declares war, the foreign visitor may choose to stay or go. But, if he opted to remain, the host government could compel the foreigner's service in the military as much as any natural citizen.<sup>11</sup> Mr. Spincken did join the Confederate military, but he deserted in October 1864. Nevertheless, when the war ended, he returned to life in Charleston.

Mr. Spincken was listed in the city directory for 1869 as a resident at the building, and it appeared in the 1872 Bird's Eye View of Charleston (without a dependency). The smaller frame building attached to the rear was likely added at least twenty years after the store had been built, probably after Mr. Spincken died in 1889. When the Sanborn maps were drawn in June 1888, the corner store was shown with the front of its piazzas already enclosed by an addition to the Line Street façade. Behind that addition, the piazzas wrapped around to the back of the building, but no other building was shown on



The 1888 Sanborn maps showed the corner store but not the "kitchen house."

the lot. Until Mr. Spinckden died in 1889, he had occupied the building (probably living above his store) with his wife, Helene Juliana Spincken,<sup>12</sup> but thereafter, Mrs. Spincken was consistently listed as a resident of "267 Coming Street," the dependency was known.

Although the history of 95 Line Street correctly focuses on the corner store that was built on the rectangular Lot K-13, the property today is actually L-shaped. The current property is basically the



The "kitchen" building, also known as 267 Coming Street, was added to the rear of 95 Line Street in about 1889 and served as the residence of the owners for many years.

<sup>10</sup> (b. Apr. 5, 1834; d. Apr. 26, 1889)

<sup>11</sup> "Judge Magrath's Decision as to the Conscription of Foreigners," *Charleston Mercury*, July 6, 1863, at 1

<sup>12</sup> (b. Dec. 17, 1849; remarried to Edward Steenken by Jan. 11, 1893; Oct. 22, 1936)



In the 1872 Bird's Eye View, the building was shown at the corner, but the kitchen house had not been added.

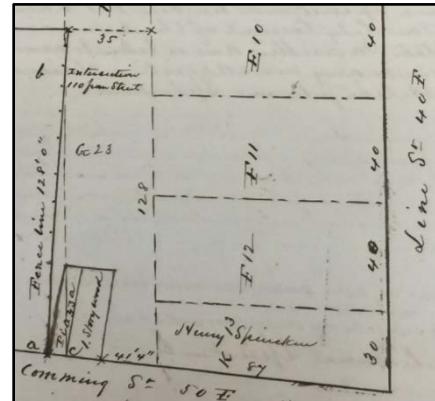
combination of two lots: Lot K-13 (95 Line Street) that runs north-south from Line Street and Lot G-23 (265 Coming Street) that runs east-west from Coming Street. How and why Lot G-23, neighboring the corner parcel to the south, ever came to be part of the current parcel is unclear.

Elliott Turnbull (one of William Percy's heirs) got Lot G-23 when the Percy Tract was divided on August 13, 1848.<sup>13</sup> Several lots apparently were lost due to back taxes although when that occurred is unknown. The South Carolina Sinking Fund (the arm of the State that handled properties lost because of taxes) was transferred to the City of Charleston on October 14, 1886, along with five other lots<sup>14</sup> totaling 210 feet on Coming Street and 119/128 on south/north sides for \$250 in October 1886.<sup>15</sup> Mrs. Spincken asserted that she owned Lot G-23, so to avoid litigation, the City of Charleston conveyed Lot G-23 to her for \$60 on October 25, 1889.<sup>16</sup> A plat was filed along with the deed showing a Charleston cottage at 265 Coming Street that clearly predated the 1889 transfer.

No explanation for her claim to the lot has been located. Even more confounding is that the same property was conveyed to Mrs. Spincken again in 1905. Despite her purchase of the southern parcel from the City in 1889, on October 18, 1905, Mrs. Steenken (Mrs. Spincken had remarried Edward Steenken in the meantime) bought the same lot from the Turnbull family (i.e., heirs of the Percy estate) for \$50.<sup>17</sup> Even at that time, \$50 for a lot with a small house was a nominal price, suggesting that the "sale" was simply to settle possible claims to the property by its earlier owners.

Indeed, on the same day Mrs. Steenken confirmed her ownership, she sold the double property (viz., both the original 95 Line Street/267 Coming Street and also the added southern lot with 265 Coming Street) to another German grocer, **William A. Sander**, on October 18, 1905, for \$4200.<sup>18</sup> Like their predecessors, William A.<sup>19</sup> and A.M. Adelina Busch Sander<sup>20</sup> lived at 267 Coming Street although at times directories also listed their address as 95 Line Street.

Just before Mr. Sander's purchase of the store, the Sanborn maps were updated though 1902. On the new-and-improved maps, the property had the corner store still, and the dependency at 267 Coming Street had been added. The dependency was labeled as the "Kitchen." Whether the secondary



The plat filed at the time of the sale between the City and Mrs. Spincken in 1889 showed that a Charleston cottage already existed at 265 Coming Street.

<sup>13</sup> Deed book A12, page 382

<sup>14</sup> I-47, I-54, H-35, H-41, G-23, and G-29

<sup>15</sup> Deed book M19, page 234

<sup>16</sup> Deed book E21, page 13

<sup>17</sup> Deed book S24, page 96

<sup>18</sup> Deed book T24, page 93

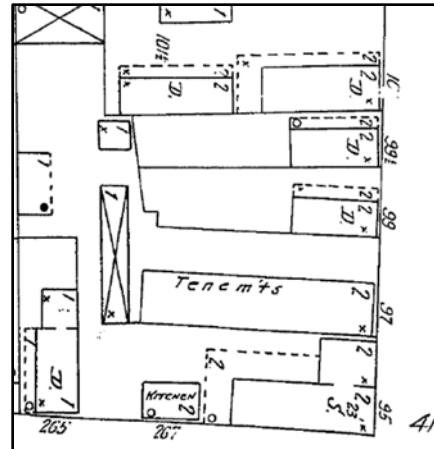
<sup>19</sup> (b. Oct. 12, 1877; d. Dec. 12, 1968)

<sup>20</sup> (b. Nov. 10, 1879; d. May 22, 1921)

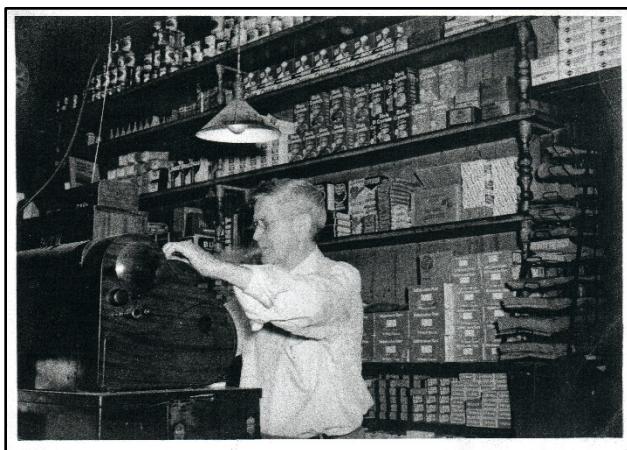
building was truly used as a kitchen house for the corner store or as a second residence, it seems to have been 1/3 smaller than its current size. When the "kitchen" was added to is unknown, but Lot K-13 was only 87 feet deep, a point that would slice off the back 1/3 of the kitchen house; evidence of a gable can still be seen in the roof right on the southern property line for Lot K-13.

The combined L-shaped parcel was expanded again a few years later. Francesca M. Dunnemann sold the rearmost 20 feet of 36 Percy Street with a set of one-story stables for \$250 to Mr. Sander on March 11, 1919.<sup>21</sup> The result was that the Coming Street portion of the L-shaped parcel became a little longer.

In August 1957, Mr. Sander, who had switched careers and was the president of the Atlantic Paint Co., conveyed the L-



The 1902 Sanborn maps showed the "Kitchen" in place.

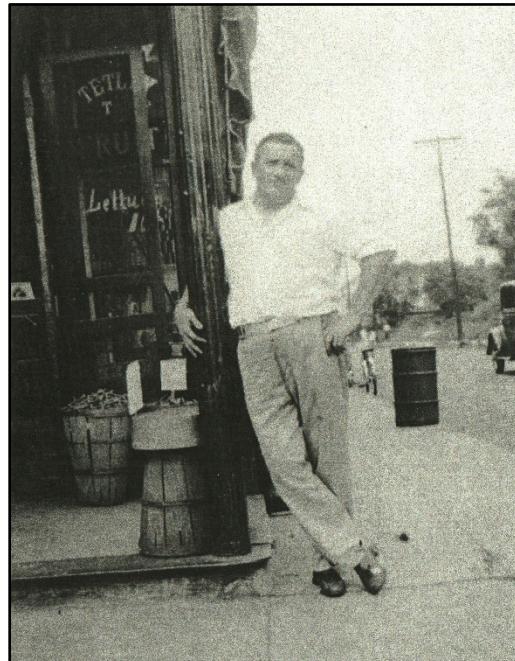


William A. Sander is shown here in an undated photo, tending to his corner store.

shaped parcel to his daughter **Dorothy S. Egonut**.<sup>22</sup> a Southern Bell employee.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, Mr. Sander remained at 267 Coming Street which he shared as a residence with his daughter Mrs. Egonut.

**William and Laura A. Brooks** together with their son, **Nathaniel R. Brooks**, bought the property from Mrs.

Egonut on June 12, 1963 for \$12,000,<sup>24</sup> becoming only the third family to own the store in just under a century. When Mrs. Brooks died on May 21, 1972, the couple's other two children (Walter H. Brooks and Thelma Brooks) joined their father in conveying the property to their brother Nathaniel R. Brooks and his wife, Eliza Mae, on September 3, 1974.<sup>25</sup> On October 17, 2005, the property passed to the third generation of the Brooks family when their son and daughter-in-law, **Ivan C. and Sherry Y. (Brinkley)**



George Busch, the brother of Mrs. Sanders, is seen leaning against the corner column of the store in a photo likely from the 1930s.

<sup>21</sup> Deed book U28, page 317

<sup>22</sup> (b. abt. 1918)

<sup>23</sup> Deed book O64, page 262

<sup>24</sup> Deed book X75, page 125

<sup>25</sup> Deed book E105, page 223

**Brooks**,<sup>26</sup> took ownership. Sherry Brooks died on August 1, 2014, and Ivan Brooks received the L-shaped parcel on May 1, 2017.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Deed book E558, page 58

<sup>27</sup> Deed book 634, page 153