

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Country Stores

Grocery chains, like the Lion (Food Lion), the Pig (Piggly Wiggly), and IGA, have long histories of operation. Established in 1916 in Memphis, TN, the Pig is the oldest, and celebrated its centennial anniversary last year. IGA was organized a decade later in 1926 in Chicago, IL.

The Lion is the youngest of the three. Formerly called Food Town and founded in 1957, the Lion finds its roots in Salisbury, NC. La Grange and surrounding areas have been well served by all three stores, albeit at different time periods.

Prior to the supermarket era, country stores or commissaries were common in agricultural communities. Many emerged after the Civil War, but some originated in the early-1800s. Although farmers grew their own vegetables and meats, basic food staples were available at country stores.

More importantly, country stores offered a variety of house wares, supplies and tools needed by rural families. These ranged from “straight razors to plows, timepieces to guns, eggs to overalls, fiddle strings to fishing tackle, seed to sorghum, and calico to coffee pots,” as characterized by Virginia Fick (NCpedia).

Country stores were abundant in greater Bucklesberry. Many continued to operate through the mid-1900s, but all are closed today. Most of the buildings were demolished or gradually collapsed over the years. The structures of several are still visible. One building remains in-use but operating as another business. These country stores are acknowledged below by name, the last known owner-operator, and original location:

BEAMAN GROCERY & SERVICE STATION: Owned and operated by the late James C. and Mary Sugg Beaman; junction of Barwick Station Road and US Highway 70; building standing.

CASH CORNER STORE: Owned and operated by the late Charlie Ivey Smith; junction of Hardy Bridge and Kennedy Home Roads; building gone.

CHESTER ISLER STORE: East end of Mays Store Road; building standing.

COMMISSARY: Frank Barwick Road, directly across from Gene and April Parrish’s house, the site of the former Dawson and Eubanks (D&E) Milling Company; building gone.

ROLAND & ESTELLE DAWSON STORE: West end of Kennedy Home Road, Pot Neck area; building gone.

HAZEL GRADY STORE: Southeast corner of US Highways 55 and 903; building gone.

TOMMY HERRING STORE: North corner of Jenny Lind and Kennedy Home Roads; building gone.

JOE HILL STORE: Corner of Sutton Shortcut and Pine Bush Roads; building gone.

WILBUR HUSSEY STORE: Southeast corner of US Highways 55 and 903; building gone.

JENNY LIND STORE: South corner of Jenny Lind and Kennedy Home Roads; building standing and under restoration.

MAYS STORE: Corner of Jenny Lind and Mays Store Roads; building gone.

NEWMAN BROTHERS GROCERY STORE: Owned and operated by the late Braxton and Herndon 'Rock' Newman; corner of Hardy Bridge Road and US Highway 55, Strabane area; building gone.

CHARLIE ANDREW SUTTON STORE: Corner of Albert Suggs Road and US Highway 70; building standing and functional; site of the current Chubby Nubby Thrift and Gift Store.

HENRY SUTTON STORE: Corner of Bear Creek Road and US Highway 903; building standing.

JOHN CHARLES SUTTON STORE: Kennedy Home Road, across from Jack R. and Sue Sutton's house; building gone.

JUNIUS ELI SUTTON STORE: Pine Bush Road, within proximity of Jack and Nina Herring's and James Herring's houses; building gone.

JACK & HELEN WHITE STORE: Last owned and operated by Carl Wilson (C. W.) and Sally D. Alphin; corner of Willie Measley Road and US Highway 70; Little Baltimore area; building gone.

Photographs and captions:



Chester Isler Store, Mays Store Road,
La Grange.



Henry Sutton Store, corner of Bear Creek
Road and US Highway 903, La Grange.