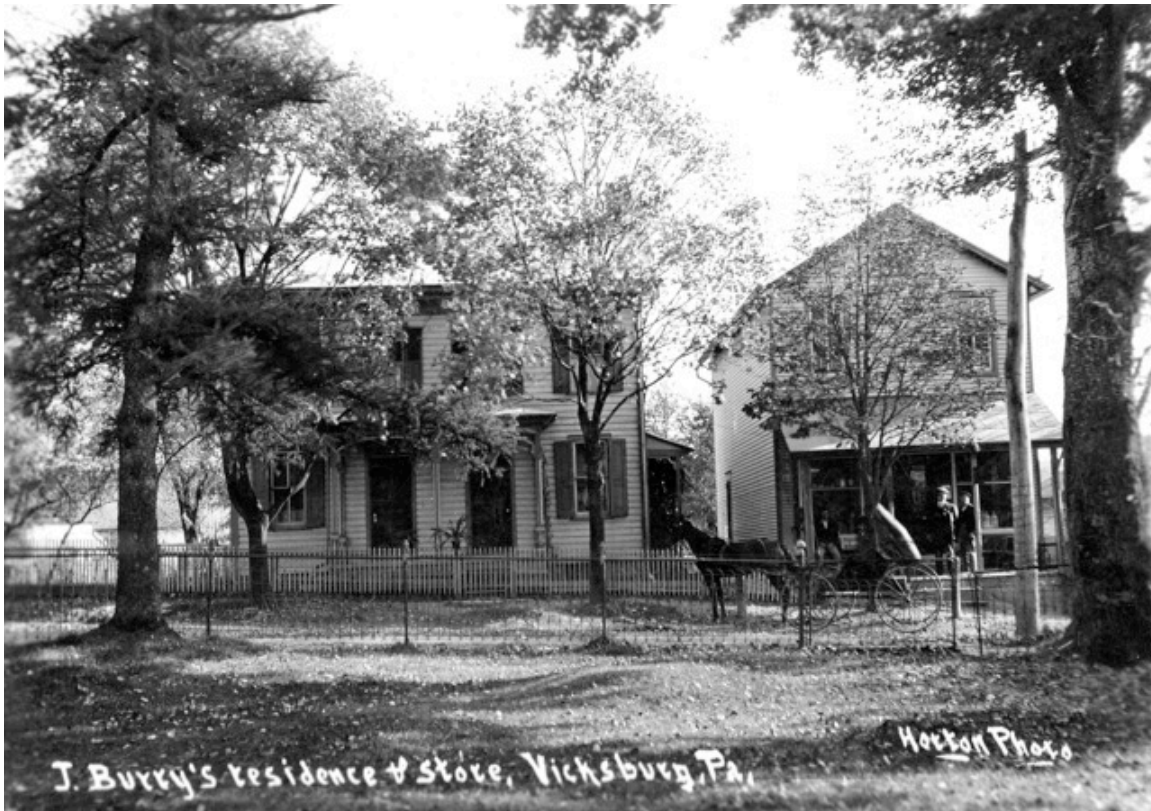


Burrey's Store in Vicksburg

by

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I remember my great-grandfather's store with fond memories. Jeremiah "Jerry" Burrey, a native of Limestone Township, and David Smucker entered into a partnership in 1894, operating a general store in Vicksburg on the north side of Route 45. After Smucker moved to Mifflin County, great-grandfather built a store on the south side of Route 45 (now at 6321 Old Turnpike Road). My parents, Luther and Hazel Burrey, joined him in business in 1928. As can be seen in the photograph below, the house and store were separate buildings. They were connected in the 1930s.



UCHS Archive Photo

Being born in 1932, the youngest of three girls, great-grandfather may have spoiled me a little bit. By this time my mother was kept busy caring for the store and father had promoted grandpa's coal and fertilizer business. Although father delivered coal, people could come to the store and buy coal in bags or directly from the bin in the back.

As you entered the store there was usually a bunch of bananas hanging from the ceiling. People could choose which bananas were to be cut according to their liking. There was a long glassed-in cooler on the left for meats and cheeses. Sodas were stored in the bottom along with extras like celery and lettuce. In front of the case stood three large wooden barrels which contained dried lima, Great Northern, and pea beans, respectively.

Behind the case there was walk space for the store attendant and shelves lined with all kinds of groceries. On the wall there was a glass case for tobacco items, both chewing and smoking.

As you went toward the back of the store there was a candy counter filled with 1-cent and 5-cent candy and an ice cream freezer with both boxed and hand-dipped ice cream. The favorites of many children were the teaberries or pink and white mints which were kept in large apothecary jars.

There was a pot-belly stove in the center of the store where men gathered for discussing the news or telling stories. As children my sisters Louise and Loretta and I were not allowed to listen but I can remember that my great-grandfather and Sammy Starook used to talk about their belief that seasons would eventually change and people would then come from Florida to Pennsylvania for the winter.

In the rear of the store there were many hardware items such as nails, screws, bolts, washers, paint and all kinds of repair items. Shotgun and .22 shells were a popular item and rifle shells were sold in the fall of the year.

As you came from the back of the store great grandpa was often found sitting at his desk cracking walnuts for me. He would say, "Chew them right fine." In the case by his desk there were overalls, shirts and coveralls for men. Behind on the wall were boots, shoes, laces, and then some sewing items.

The soaps and toilet tissue were on shelves away from the food. In those days people used hand towels instead of toilet paper so I don't remember toilet paper being sold until later. There were also toiletry items and many medicinal concoctions.

There were cookies sold by the pound from glass-topped boxes. There was also a large rack for flour, cornmeal, oatmeal, etc. in the center of the store and a bread rack in front of that.



Vicksburg. Burrey's store is near the bottom on the left (south) side of the highway. It's the building with the flat roof in the rear. It's opposite the space between the two tall trees on the north side of the road. UCHS Archive

I'm sure I missed some items that were sold in the store but will always have good memories of the excitement of being reared in a country store.

The advent of supermarkets in Mifflinburg and Lewisburg made it difficult for little country stores to compete and my parents closed the store in 1958. Everything was sold at auction. Father continued to operate the coal and

fertilizer business out of Lewisburg until 1973. Toward the end he had also expanded into heating oil. Everything connected with that business was auctioned off over a four-day period.



Former Burrey Store (right) and residence, Vicksburg, 2015

Greaves photo

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