Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

Willett Bros. Store Orangeburg, Ky. 1889-1892

By Eva E. Willett

1979

www.nkyviews.com

WILLETT BROS. STORE

ORANGEBURG, KY.

I889 - I892

The old Willett Bros. Store Ledger is now in the possession of Harold M. Willett, Maysville, Kentucky.

From dates in the Ledger it would seem as though the Willett Bros. Store in Orangeburg might have started in business during the latter part of I889 and, gaining in momentum, was in full operation by I890.

In charge of operating the store was Ira Dean Willett, then twenty years of age. Born on a farm in Fleming County, Kentucky, he was the eldest of the five children of Mary Elizabeth Harn and John Mason Willett. His father died when he was a lad of fifteen. For the next five years he struggled along on the farm, together with two of his younger brothers, James and Benjamin, each trying to get along and to do the best they could with the farm work. Clarence, the youngest son of all, was litt. more than four years of age when his father died.

The Willett boys must often have been discouraged - they were ambitious - they longed to succeed and they no doubt spent many thoughtful hours pondering their future.

And so it was that in I889 (or thereabout) that Ira Dean decided to open a general store in Orangeburg and to call it the Willett Bros. Store. It must have taken more courage than we will ever know to take that step. He was very young; he had had no experience along that line, and he was not used to dealing with various types of people.

Soon his brother, James, came to a decision about his life's work. About the same time Ira Dean was starting his store James enrolled in the Business and Phonographic College in Portsmouth, Ohio, with a view to becoming a lawyer. His dream was short lived because in the early spring of I890 he contracted measles at the college. Upon starting home to recuperate he was able to get as far as Orangeburg before developing pneumonia. He died there on March 7, I890. To the young storekeeper, struggling under the strain of making a go of his store business, the death of James must have been a cruel blow.

As days passes more customers came. Most of them asked for credit. At certain periods some of them would come in and pay their bills in cash, some would bring in produce to settle their bills, and some never settled at all. The country storekeeper could not have survived without extending credit, and often extending credit was why he could not survive.

As the days passed Ira Dean was pushed to lay up much of a profit. Somewhere along the line robbers came in and robbed his store one night. A fried later remarked that upon discovering the robbery all the color drained from my father's face but the next morning the store was open, as usual, for business.

The year 1892 came into focus. On March 24 of that year the last entry was made in the Ledger.

During the operation of his store Ira Dean had met an Orangeburg girl, Mary (Mollie) Farrar. They were married at her home in Orangeburg October 12, 1892.

For a short time Ira Dean and Mollie lived with the widow of his uncle, James Madison Willett, but soon on December 1,1893 they bought the farm in Fleming County that Benjamin Harn had once owned.

Ira Dean and Abe Lincoln had something in common - they both struggled with the operation of a country store - but briefly - they both met with about the same measure of success. Nevertheless as I thumbed through the old Ledger history came creeping out of every yellowed page. In my mind's eye I could see my father's customers coming and going. Some of the names were very familar - I had even met a few. I decided to record some of the people thinking it might be of interest to you. You may even find some of your ancestors among his customers.

Bullock,	Rice	Brierly ,	Basel
Harrison,	Charles	Parker ,	Clift
O'Cull ,	Thomas	Alexander,	Dudly
Anno ,	Mrs. Martha	Dickson ,	Clarence
Halfhill,	Dave	Humphrey ,	Lillie
Phillips,	Mrs. Eva	Sexton ,	Mrs. Ida
Sims ,	Jacob T.	Farrar ,	George
Miller ,	Cambel	Turner ,	Mrs. Susan
Davenport	Henry	Alexander,	Martin
Oridge ,	W.M.	Jones ,	Charles
Roe ,	Chas. W.	Browning ,	John
Davis ,	Mrs. Jas.	Crosby ,	Muten C.
Collis ,	Lewis	Binnegar , ?	John
Bullock ,	Robert	Kennan ,	Wm.
Ruark ,	Allen	Ruark ,	Silvester
Calvert ,	George	Deatley ,	S.P.
Dickson ,	Doc.	Mc.Alister	Jackson
Wright ,	Wm.	Polls ,	Beverly
Dickson ,	Dave	Coryell ,	Cornelious
True ,	Alex	Calvert ,	Charles G.
Morgan ,	Frank Joe	Hord ,	Dr. W.H.
Mason ,	Lee	Roe ,	John W.
Campbel ,	John P.	Bierley ,	George
Shipley ,	Quince R.	Kennan ,	Charles
Kennan ,	Frank	Dickson ,	A.D.
Alexander	Edman	Parker ,	Wesley
Wells ,	Z.P.	Taylor ,	Wm.
Bramel ,	S.A.	Fetters ,	Charles

Customers - continued.

Parker ,	Enos
Mason ,	Charles
Heflin ,	Martin
Taylor ,	Hordsen
Perkins ,	John
Coryell ,	Hawk
Perkens ,	Sanders
Cooper ,	Thomas
Cooper ,	Dave
Cooper ,	Theodore
Cooper ,	Allie
Willett ,	Mrs. Mary A.
Harn ,	Lee
Dickson ,	Mrs. Mary B.

Bullock	, Ben
Calvert	, Wm.
Johnson	, Travis
Davis	, Joseph
Parker	, Susan
Browning	, Wm.
Bullock	, John
Brierley	, Bell T.
Bramel,	, Wm.
Luman	, Henry
Bullock	, W.W.
Trisler	, James
Bullock	, Rice
Harrison	, Charles
Turner	, Sarah
Coryell	, W.H.
Alexander	, Martin
Kackley-Doyle,	
Hord -Harberson	

I am indebted to Gerald Carson, author of "The Old Country Store" for quite a bit that is used in this discussion. I usually get the author's permission before making use of any of his material but, someway, I have a feeling Mr. Carson will not object. He dedicates his book to his wife who at the age of eight, used to ride Old Dick down to Bill Green's general store at Summer Hill, Illinois, where she replenished her supply of cinnamon redhots - so many thanks to you, Mr. Carson.

The contributions made to American life by the country doctor, the village lawyer and the editor of the local newspaper have been frequently and generously recognized. Yet a four-corners might turn out to be nothing but a cross-roads without a general store.

In the days when men lived separate and solitary lives it was the country store that tied the scattered farms into a community. The storekeeper and his store was the necessary core of cross-roads life, the best hope that the spot might someday grow into a town.

The general store was an American organization; something new under the sun - improvised to meet the raw conditions of a new continent.

The 19th. Century ways of country life now seem as remote as life in a medieval barony, yet there are still millions of men and women living today who remember well - if not the golden age of the country store - at least its afterglow.

Thousands of stores exist today, of course, with a sign above the door which says, 'General Store.' They are, however, with few exceptions 'convenience' or 'fill in' stores for the purchase of the forgotten items - a box of cereal or a loaf of bread.

My father's store was located in what was once Mr. Lum Cooper's yard. The store faced the old Dr. Hord place. I can dimly remember the building being there when I was a very small child. I do not know the date it was torn down. It was truly a cross-roads store. As well as I remember it had a porch in front and sat on a bank which made it convenient for backing up to the porch and loading heavy goods directly into a farmer's wagon. Somewhere handy to the front door were the hitching posts.

Inside the store could be seen, I am sure, the accustomed furnishings. The stove, of course, was a must. In the days when almost every adult male raised in the country chewed tobacco, the store-owner was forced in self-defense to provide a facility known as the "spit box." Sometimes it was a bucket or a coal hod filled with sawdust. Some chewers preferred to open the door of the stove and drench the fire. There is a legend that some general store stoves had doors on all sides so the marksmen could shoot from all quarters without moving.

Then could no doubt be seen the counter with its scales. Many times there were bins lining the opposite wall since many things were bought in bulk and had to be measured or weighed and wrapped in brown paper.

Somewhere, in a sacred place, was the store Ledger.

Then of course there was the cracker barrel, the flour barrel, the sugar barrel, etc. My father sold an awful lot of molasses so there had to be a molasses barrel.

The first country stores are said to have swarmed with flies, and I expect the Willett Bros. Store did, also. I can remember when I was about four or five we had strips of newspaper tacked along a window stick. This was kept by the table. Then when the flies descended they were startled half out of their wits by someone swooshing the stick with the paper fringes. Yes, I'm sure the flies gorged themselves on spilled molasses and scatterings of sugar and smears of lard. The people no doubt shrugged and lived with what they had to endure since there was no means of effectively shutting the flies out or cutting down on their numbers. One could not be finicky and manage to eat at all.

Screen windows did not appear to have exhisted in 1864. A patent was issued, however, in 1868 for a wire-screen making machine. But it took time to set up machines and get screening on the market. In looking back over my father's Ledger I see that he did have fly-paper for sale. He probably had some pieces hanging up in his store , battling as bravely as he could, "the fly."

Then there were the kegs of nails. These were often put to good use by the loafers - they could sit on the kegs and clean their fingernails with a Barlow knife , or discuss the happenings of the day with their buddies, or play checkers, or whittle, or chew and spit or just sit in a comfortable silence.

There was usually a bench, also. Sometimes this was referred to as the "lair bench," since the sitters thereon were known to tell 'very tall tales' on occasion.

Of course in the showcase was kept the candy and the cheese, and on the walls of the store various items were displayed.

The store Ledger has already been mentioned. My father seemed to take great pains in recording purchases and the price per purchase. The items sold were jotted down, and in the correct column the price of each was recorded. Another column was reserved for produce brought in and credited to the customer. Of course farmer's wives brought in lots of eggs, hunters in season brought in rabbits (Mr. Lewis Collis must have been a good shot because he brought in a good many.) Other customers brought in meat, butter, etc. The accounts were continuous and settlements infrequent.

The spelling found in the old Ledgers of the general store shows fewer departures from established usage than spelling in wills, personal letters, or diaries, but from time to time the merchants displayed origionality. My father's spelling, in the main, was pretty good but there were times when he displayed his origionality. He charged 'crakers' 'molases' 'chees' to many a customer and then turned around and redeemed himself by spelling difficult words correctly.

Some people have saved the old Ledgers - we feel fortunate that ours has been handed down in fair condition. Sometimes discarded Ledgers had a further history of unexpected service. When Chauncey Brewer, a general merchant in the little village of Battle Creek, Michigan, a hundred years ago had filled up his Ledger, he cut a rectangular hole or well through the center pages; not all the pages, and not the covers. The result was a secret cache for his surplus cash.

Someone else's old Ledger had been filled with poems clipped from the Boston Transcript and pasted in, showing a love for poetry.

Another old Ledger who fell into the hands of an avid fisherman had turned the book around broadside so he could draw on its maximum width great trout just as they looked when he caught them. Each is lovingly drawn in the artist's firm line right over the old accounts.

There was one thing about the Willett Bros. Store that amazed me no end, and that was the variety of items the store carried. Someone described a country store as a -

grocery store
hardware store
shoe store
confectionary store
drug store
trimming store (needles, pins, thread, buttons, ribbons)
crockery store
book store
stationary store
(and sometimes - postoffice.)

As you read over the stock in the Willett Bros. Store you will find that it qualified for all but the last -post-office.

And now to read what I copied from my father's Ledger and to marvel at the prices. Sometimes the prices would vary at different times - but slightly.

Canned corn	I0¢ can	
Canned tomatoes	I0¢ can	
Canned peaches	I0¢ can	
Dried peaches	I0¢ lb.	
Canned apricots	25¢ can	
Butter	I2½¢ lb.	
Molasses N. O.	60¢ gal.	Molasses - sorghum ½gal.2(
Sugar	8¼¢ lb.	
Barrel of sugar	$I4.00	
Granulated sugar	------	
Brown sugar	------	
Meal	80¢ bu.	
Side of meat $I.I8 ave. 8¢ lb.		
Barrel flour-Morning Glory $5.00		
Sack of flour	75¢	
Sack graham flour	40¢	
Coffee, lb.	25¢	
Salt by the sack	I5¢	
Salt by the bu.	45¢	
Lemons	I0¢	
Bananas, doz.	20¢	
Muskmelon	8¢	
Pickles (bottle)	I0¢ or 20¢	
Crackers lb.	I0¢	
Eggs ½ doz.	5¢	
Oysters can	I0¢	
Oysters can (if served)	20¢	
Cream of tartar	5¢	
Candy kisses	5¢	
Whiskey killers	5¢	
Candy lb.	I5¢	
Rice lb.	8¢	
Ginger	5¢	
Potash can	I0¢	
Tea	I0¢	

I paper(Ariosa ??)coffee		30¢	
Cloves		5¢	
Nut megs		5¢	
Cinnamon (ground)		10¢	
Cayenne pepper		5¢	
Pepper		10¢	
All-spice		5¢	
Matches		5¢	
Wooden bucket		15¢	
Vinegar - gal. -		20¢	
Beans - gal. -		35¢	
Vanilla		15¢	
Chewing gum		5¢	
Lard		25¢	
Peppermint (bottle)		15¢	
Cheese		10¢	
Blackberries (bucket)		25¢	
Sweet potatoes		10¢	
Arbuckle Coffee lb.		27½¢	
Mince meat (box)		10¢	
Sardines (box)		7½¢	
Rolled oats (box)		15¢	
Raisins lb.		15¢	
Oranges doz.		30¢	
Peanuts		10¢	
Sage lb.		30¢	
Rabbit (sold Nov. 25		10¢	
Rabbits -2 (sold Dec. 4		15¢	
Rabbit (sold Dec. 5		7¢	(He paid 5¢ per rabbit.
Figs lb.		20¢	
Herrings - dried -		10¢	
Goose eggs (8) to Dr. Hord		20¢	
Meat sacks each		3½¢	
Lard can		67¢	

MEDICINES -

Castor oil (Dr. Hord Bought a lot)		15¢ pt.	
Castoria		35¢	
Liver medicine pkg.		50¢	
Camphor gum		10¢	
Worm candy		25¢	
Native herbs pkg.	$1.00		
Gooch's Mexican syrup		50¢	
Liver & kidney cure bottle	$1.00		
Gooch's pills box		25¢	
Setter's pills box		25¢	
Epsom salts ½ lb.		10¢	
K.C. cure bottle		35¢	
Quinine		25¢	Capsules 5¢
Pearce's Favorite Perscription	$1.00 bottle		
Golden Discovery	$1.00 bottle		
Hoad's Sarsaparilla bottle	$1.00		
Sulphur		5¢	

Medicines for Livestock

Horse powders		--
Haas hog medicine		--
Vermifuge ????		--

Women's Department -

Coffee boiler		25¢	
Coffee pot		I0¢	
Veiling	yd.	5¢	
Jelly glasses	I doz.	50¢	
Fire shovel		I0¢	
Plush box		85¢	
Dish rag		I0¢	
Bell		I0¢	
Bees wax		I0¢	
Baby shoes		50¢	
comb		I0¢	
Strainer		I0¢	
Skirt patterns (2)		$2.00	
Bed ticking	yd.	I0¢	
Hat rack		I0¢	
Chamber		50¢	
Coal oil	gal.	I0¢	Coal oil was bought for Church by Henry Luman.
Cashmere	yd.	25¢	
Embroidery silk		4¢	
Scissors		50¢	
Whalebone	bunch	I0¢	(for corsets-high collars,etc.)
Cottonade ???	yd.		
Thread O.N.T.		5¢	
Thread silk		I0¢	
Drilling	yd.	I0¢	Aheavy linen or cotton fabric with a diagonal weave.
Flannel	yd.	30¢	
Muslin	yd.	8⅓¢	
Hose	pr.	I0¢ to 25¢	
Challie	yd.	6¢	Light-weight usually printed fabric, as of wool or cotton and wool.
Cotton	yd.	5¢	
Black calico	yd.	7⅔¢	
Indigo calico	yd.	7⅔¢	
Sateen	yd.	I5¢	A cotton fabric finished with a glossy surface to resemble satin.
Bleached cotton	yd.	8½¢	
Lawn	yd.	5¢	
Cheese-cloth	yd.	5¢	
Cambric	yd.	5¢	A fine white linen cloth or a similar closely woven cotton fabric.
Gingham	yd.	7½ or I0¢	
Shoes	pr.	$I.00	
Sandals	pr.	35¢	
Overshoes		--	
Button hole twist		5¢	
Smoked pearl buttons		I5¢	
Agate buttons		I0¢	
Brass buttons		I0¢	
Bottle perfumery		I0¢	
Paper pins		Io¢ and 20¢	
Fine comb		5¢	

Velvet ribbon		$I.25	
White ribbon		I0¢	
Batting	(roll)	I0¢	
Broom		$I.75	
Worsted	yd.	20¢	A fabric woven from
Yarn	(per cut)	7¢	pure wool yarn.
Knitting needles		5¢	
Powder		I0¢	
Whitening	box	I5¢	The Farrar's bough-
Blueing		I0¢	a lot of this.
Corset		85¢	
Oil cloth	yd.	I3¢	
Baking powder		I5¢	
Valentines	each	I¢	
Lamp burner		I0¢	
Lamp chimney		5¢	
Handkerchief		5¢	
Ladies ties	pr.	90¢	
Ammonia		5¢	
Diamond dye		I0¢	
Bed ticking	yd.	20¢	
Hair pins		I5¢	
Needles		5¢	
Child's shoes		$I.25	
Fan		I0¢	
Sealing wax		I0¢	
Carpet(70 cuts $4.50)per cut		6¼¢	
Wigging ???	yd.	I0¢	
Dress pattern		$I.32	
Pointed lace	yd.	I0¢	
Starch		25¢	
Wash board		30¢	
Safety pins		5¢	
Cedar churn		$I.25	
Shoe strings		2¢	
Carpet tacks		5¢	
Wall paper	(bolt)	20¢	
Carpet chain	(per cut)	6½¢	
Spectacles		50¢	
Colored specks		50¢	
Fly paper		I0¢	
Kid gloves		$I.00	
Window blind		75¢	
Nursing bottles		8⅓¢	
Nipples		4 ¢	
Basket		65¢	
Goblets	(each)	7½¢	
Plates	(Iset)	40¢	
Glass pitcher		25¢	

Cups and saucers	(I set)	25¢	
Glasses	(I set)	35¢	
Spoons		20¢	
Braid	(roll)	I0¢	
Clothes line		35¢	
Wash tub		70¢	
Stand plus drawers	-order-	$I.00	Purchased by S.A. Bramel
Elastic starch	pkg.	I0¢	
Stove polish	bar	5¢	
Darning needle		5¢	
Sifter		I0¢	
Gallon jar		I0¢	
Table linen	yd.	45¢	
Stove pipes		40¢	
Toys		20¢	
Toy pistol		5¢	
Linsey cotton	yd.	I5¢	Often called Linsey-woolsey. A coarse cloth made of linen and wool or cotton and wool.
Hooks and eyes		5¢	
Dish pan		45¢	
Tea pot		I0¢	
Thimbles		5¢	
Gum camphor		I0¢	
Flower pot		5¢	
Ladies undershirt	(knit)	40¢	
Towel		20¢	
Milk crook		I0¢	
Knives and forks	(set)	$I.00	
Drilling	yd.	5¢	A heavy linen or cotton fabric with a diagonal weave.
Hat pin		75¢	
Parasol		75¢	
Silk mitts		25¢	A glove without fingers
Glycerine	(bottle)	I0¢	
Mason jars	each	I0¢	
Wash pan		I5¢	
Bird seed		I0¢	
Cucumber seed		5¢	
Cabbage seed		5¢	
Turnip seed		5¢	
Lettuce seed		5¢	
Onion sets	(½ gal.)	50¢	
Beet seed		5¢	
Onion seed		5¢	
Peas	(peck)	I5¢	
Beans	(peck)	I5¢	
Mouse trap		I0¢	

Men's World -

Pipe	5¢	
Brogans (2 pr.)	$2.50	A heavy , coarse shoe, often with a hobnailed sole.
Heel braces pr.	I0¢	
Undershirt	40¢	
Sleeve holders pr.	I0¢	Dr. Hord bought these often.
Fine shirt	85¢	
Twine (ball)	5¢	
Nails lb.	4¼	
Spikes lb.	4¢	
I Knob lock	25¢	
Lime bu.	40¢	
Shoe polish	I5¢	
Hoe and handle	40¢	
Goggles	--	
Monkey wrench	25¢	
Pitch fork	35¢	
Boots pr.	$3.75	
Hip boots	$2.45	
Hinges pr.	I5¢	
Paint brush	25¢	
Axle grease (box)	I6¢	
Rake	6¢	
Blacking and brush	20¢	
Cross-cut saw file	I5¢	
Rat-tail files	I0¢	
Alum lb.	7½	
Necktie	50¢	
Shaving mug	25¢	
Shaving soap	5¢	
Men's hose	I5¢	
White-wash brush	20¢	
Buck-skin gloves	$I.66	
Fiddle strings	25¢	These sold to Dr. Hord and
Lantern	75¢	Thomas Cooper.
Pronged fork	75¢	to Geo. Farrar.
Fencing nails	5¢	Geo. F. was always buying thes
Yarn socks	25¢	
Linseed oil (½ gal.)	40¢	
Paint (pt.)	25¢	
Fish hooks	5¢	
Canvas cotton (50 yd.)	$I.25	Sold to Sam A. Bramel -I89I.
Whet rock -or Whet stone	I0¢	
Gimlet	5¢	A small tool for boring with a screw-like point.
Hog rings each	I¢	
Steel trap	I0¢	
Hatchet	35¢	
Work shirts	40¢	
Flannel shirts	35¢	
Socks	8½	
Shoes	$3.00	
Celluloid collar buttons	5¢	
Overalls	45¢	
Turpentine	--	

Currycomb and brush	65¢
Fishing line	I0¢
Flue (top and bottom)	$I.80
Hat	$I.50
Straw hat	I5¢
Tin cup	5¢
Plug tobacco	I0¢
Leaffie ??	
Tobacco - Navy	I0¢
Tobacco - Gravely	I0¢
Twist NipRella	5¢To
Tobacco - Millian lb.	50¢
Carpenter pencil	5¢
Suspenders	35¢
Ax handle	I5¢
Barlow knife	I5¢
Pant buttons (I doz.)	5¢
Seal skin gloves	$I.00
Work gloves	I5¢
Powder	30¢
Shot	I0¢
Box G.D. caps	5¢
Cartridges	30¢
Wads (box)	20¢
Men's drawers	50¢
Necktie	25¢
Mule-skin pants	~~$2.00~~
Pants	$2.00
Saddle girth	25¢
Cuff buttons pr.	25¢
Water-proof cuffs pr.	40¢
Tooth brush	20¢
Plow lines -2-	25¢
Bridle	$I.00
Bridle bit	I0¢
Check-lines pr.	$2.25
Shingle nails	5¢
Bridle reins	50¢
Horse collar	75¢
Throat latch	I5¢
Hame strings pr.	20¢
Halter	I2½
Blind-bridle	$I.25
Set buggy harness	$I0.00
Pads	40¢
Window sash	$I.60
Window glass	55¢
Screws	5¢
Oil can and oil	50¢
Boot soles pr.	20¢
Ball shoe thread	5¢
Joint of stove pipe	20¢
Harvest gloves	50¢

Lee Harn was always buying suspenders.

Sorry - make the mule-skin pants 90¢, please.

Educational -

History	$I.25	
Second Reader	40¢	
Geography -three part	$I.50	
Geography -one part	75¢	
Grammar- Hollbrook's	80¢	
Physiology-Steel's	$I.20	
Copy Book	I0¢	
Spelling Book	25¢	Travis Johnson bought a
Fifth Reader	$I.00	good many books.
Grammar	50¢	
Third Reader	50¢	
Mc.Guffeys Action Reader	$2.00	Bought by Sam A. Bramel.

Lead pencils	5¢	
Letter paper	5¢	
Tablets	5¢	
Ink powder	I5¢	
Pen point	I¢	
Note paper	I0¢	
Ledger paper	75¢	by Dr. Hord.
Day book	5¢	
Slate	I0¢	
Chalk crayons	I5¢	
Pencil sharpner	5¢	
Pen and holder	5¢	
Ink - bottle	5¢	(bottle of ink)
Fountain pen	I6¢	
Mucilage - bottle	I0¢	
Slate pencil	I¢	
Fools-cap paper	5¢	

Roman candles	50¢	Sold on Dec. 25.

NOTE: My father was evidently sick in May or June of I89I because he paid Thomas Cooper $I0.50 for services while he was ill. Page II7 of Ledger.

In the very earliest days of the country store the merchant had to go to a town or city and buy stock for his general store. But when the Drummers started in business in the rural districts, about I870-'80, the store keeper purchased smaller lots and stocked a wider variety.

The Drummer brought with him the very taste of the city when he came driving in with his heavy sample case in his hired livery rig. The store keeper was glad enough to stay at home and keep informed by his genial friend, the drummer.

There have been many Drummers who later became well-known. Among these could be listed Marshall Field, Aaron Montgomery Ward, John Gates, and King C. Gillette.

Gillette tried to think of some article the buyer would use once, throw away, and come back for more. He got his idea while shaving - the Gillette Safety Razor.

My very first experience with a drummer was in Orangeburg, Kentucky, when I was around five or six. My Aunt Eva and I had gone down to Mr. and Mrs. Holiday's to sit till bed-time. The drummers always boarded with the Holidays when they came through because Mrs. Holiday was noted as the best cook in town. We had not been at the Holidays long before a card game started - probably Flinch, with the drummer, of course, participating. I don't know whether I was making a nuisance of myself or what - but the drummer, in a very solemn voice, said he was going to have me arrested and put in jail. I can tell you I slept only snatches that night; expecting, momentarily, to be toted off and put be-hind bars.

It is said some of the drummers were great hands for practical jokes and, I for onefor one can believe it. In Montpelier, Vermont, the Daughters of the American Revolut-ion decided to put a plaque on the Pavilion Hotel in the town; the plaque bearing some deathless prose about how Lafayette had been entertained there. The celebration was set for a June afternoon. The spandy-new historical tablet was carefully veiled by a flag until the great moment came. A whiskey salesman staying at the hotel looked the situation over and got an idea which he quietly put into effect. That afternoon the people assembled, the band played, the orator of the day pointed to the flag and rising to the climax, exclaimed, "When the American flag is lifted you will see words to be read by generations yet unborn!" The flag was whisked upward. A large card appeared, and on it the words WILSON'S WHISKEY - THAT'S ALL.

But for all their jokes the drummers were a pretty good lot. Maybe their sense of humor helped them endure a life that must have been rugged. Rev. T. DeWitt Talmadge, the Norman Vincent Peale of the I870's, recommended to the traveling drummers that they take along with them on their tours a serious secular book and a Bible printed in large type. It is interesting to note that two traveling sales-men met, by accident, in a crowded hotel in Boscobel,

Wisconsin. They read together chapters 6 and 7 of Judges and were inspired to organize "The Gideons" - a Bible in every hotel room. Special texts relevant to the life of a traveling man were prominently emphasized in the front of the Gideon Bible. More on next 2 pages about Gideon Bible.

My last contact with drummers was also in Orangeburg, Ky. I was grown up now and teaching in the Orangeburg School. Strange as it may seem I was boarding with Mr. and Mrs. John Holiday. Mrs. Holiday was still giving drummers their board and lodgings. Her cooking was still the best and on "drummer days" we were always in for a banquet. When Mrs. Holiday would bring the dessert in I can still hear Mr. Holiday saying, "Becky, why didn't you tell me you were going to serve this?"

As you read over the stock carried by the Willett Bros., I'm sure you noticed the medicines. Nearly every country store had a patent medicine shelf beside the cattle powder and the poultry remedies. A dose from a patent bottle was reasonably certain to give the sufferer a boost since the formula included either a narcotic or a good slug of whiskey. Hostetter's Celebrated Stomach Bitters contained varying amounts of alcohol at varying times - pleasantly flavored with oil of anise, coriander and gentian. At one time the alcoholic content was 25% and the recommended daily dose was 6 tablespoons. Many a good church member accumulated an impressive collection of bitters bottles out in the barn without dreaming that the blessed gift of the Vegetable Kingdom, straight from Natures Own Laboratory, made him feel frisky because it was spiked - if he did he never mentioned it.

Strychnine was used in tonics, to give a good belt to the appetite, morphine was also a base for some pain killers. Dr. J.C. Ayer's Sarsaparilla was recommended for ~~the~~ & harrowing list of disorders - but the 'spirits' it contained was what did the business. For years the Ladie's Home Journal published pictures of Lydia E. ~~Perkins~~ Pinkham and her product. This compound was 18% alcohol.

Sometimes, if the storekeeper's business was brisk enough, he would hire a clerk. I don't believe the Willett Bros. ever felt this to be necessary.

The clerk was not always a blessing, some preferring to listening to the tales of the neighborhood, as told by the loafers, rather than wait on the customers.

For instance up in Michigan they told about Miz' Lou Esty, a seamstress who went from house to house to sew and mend. One evening at a neighbor's supper table it was mentioned that someone had broken a mirror. "I've broke mirrors", said Miz' Esty. "And you didn't have any bad luck?" enquired Mrs. Thompson her employer at the moment. "Nothin' I can remember, of course," she added negligently, "Esty died that fall, but I wouldn't count that." "Neither would I", agreed Mr. Thompson.

Of course, sometimes the storekeeper himself might catch it. One tall tale in a certain locality said one of the merchants had a habit of "stove-piping the potatoes." A section of stove-pipe was inserted in a bag of potatoes. The big ones were dropped in outside the stove pipe. Then the pipe was filled with culls and little fellows, the pipe gently withdrawn.

Then when Rev. Ayers said a particular grace it was soon all over the community thanks to the loafer's party line. It seems that Rev. Ayers was passing his brother's home when he sniffed the fragrance of his sister-in-laws own special version of johnnycake. It ~~awe~~ was just at noontime, too. So he got off his horse and turned into the yard, to the dismay of his sister-in-law who knew his capacity. Quickly she pushed the fragrant yellow cake out of sight and put ordinary bread on the table, reminding the minister, somewhat breathlessly, that it was time to say grace.

"Oh Lord," said the Reverand, "bless this food prepared for our use, and bless the johnnycake - under the stove.
A-h-men!"

Then there were sometimes pranks by the loafers which were often crude and earthy by polite standards. It was great fun, they thought, to turpentine a dog just to see him jump and tear off howling down the road.

Years ago one store had an enormous tomcat who had the full use of the premises and took his ease with a full sense of hereditary rights. One day a clerk was painting an address on some shipping cases with a brush dipped in a mixture of lampblack and turpentine. Just at that moment the cat strolled by, his tail arched over his back, with an air of owning the establishment. The clerk reached down and daubed the cat from the rear with the brush. For a second the cat wore an expressio of acute disbelief. Then the turpentine really took hold. He dug his claws in the floor and took off with a screech - chargin right thru the women customers, knocking down displays and creating, it was agreed, a memorable scene.

The next tale happened in Orangeburg, and instead of a cat meeting with disaster it was a two-thirds grown puppy. The

setting was not a country store but a country barber shop run by Pete Weaver and George Warren.

My brother, Harold, had gone to visit some of our relatives in Ohio and had brought home a fat butter-ball of a puppy in a baby shoe box. The puppy was so adorable our mother fell in love with it at first glance. She named the puppy "Josiah" and under her care it thrived and grew.

Someone had cut most of it's tail off when it was born but that didn't seem to detract from the puppy's looks. It grew the longest whiskers I have ever seen on such a small dog.

Often Josiah would trot down the road to the main part of town to see what was going on, then he would come trotting back again seemingly pleased with his outing.

One day he returned minus his whiskers - there was plain evidence that he had visited the barber shop. My mother was beside herself - it was all we could do to restrain her from going right down and giving Pete and George a piece of her mind. After a lapse of time Josiah's whiskers grew back again and this time he kept them. I'm sure George and Pete heard by way of the grape vine about the explosion in the Willett household and decided it would be better to cut only men's whiskers thereafter.

After reading the vast number of things offered for sale in the Willett Bros. Store one wonders how anything was ever located. It has been said that through all the years of its long life there was little system or order in a country store. A great deal of time was wasted in looking for articles that were not in place, or had no place. Often the customer could find what he wanted with more success than the merchant himself - an early version of self service.

In going over my father's Ledger I would come across such notations as a "paper of coffee" or a "paper of corn starch,et. I was completely mystified with the expression until I read Mr. Carson's book, "Old Country Store." In the book he explains that in the early days many things were sold from 'bulk' supplies. That meant the storekeeper measured out maybe a pound of coffee; this he would pour out on a piece of wrapping paper and fold it into a paper package - hence the expression a "paper of Coffee." The "paper" was the ancestor of the paper bag and the modern package or carton.

No one knows today who invented the paper bag, but after the Civil War they gradually came into use. The first name in 'bag history' is that of Francis Wolle of Bethlehem,Pa. He was granted a patent application in 1852 for a machine that would cut, roll paper, fold, and paste it with flour paste (lumps and all) to make a bag. Wolle put his bag on the market but found it tough going the first ten years or so. Sometimes the flour paste ran out over the surface of the paper - and in the winter some bags (sacks) would be frozen solid - but as time passed the necessary improvements were made.

Gradually changes began taking place in the old country store. Many different items began to appear in cartons. The change from the barrel to the carton must have been a big surprise to a customer when he ran across it the first time in the general store. Imagine his surprise when he came into the store to get oatmeal to find that the old barrel had clean disappeared. Instead there were rows of paperboard cartons. At the same time the people who produced the products saw the need for naming their goods - thus appeared cartons with names and pictures on them - advertising was beginning in earnest.

Henry D. Seymour turned in desperation to the encyclopedia to help him name his oatmeal produced at the oatmeal mill at Ravenna, Ohio. His eyes stopped at the entry on QUAKERS - and so it was "QUAKER OATS." If not the first, Quaker Oats was certainly one of the first cereals in the world to move out of the bulk goods class and into the package. National advertising came along at about the same time.

Some of the most successful names were sheer inventions -easy to pronounce, remember, and protect. George Eastman, pushing the letters of the alphabet around - hit upon a winner, KODAK.

The National Biscuit Company on putting a new cracker before the public needed a new name. UNEEDA - UNEEDA BISCUIT! exclaimed someone, and so it was. The next 3 pages tel how IVORY SOAP got its name.

Yes, change was in the air - change was everywhere. The Model T. Ford appeared in 1909. After Henry Ford's invention some merchants put a red gas pump out in front. There was a gradual improvement in roads.

Of course the change came gradually. The country merchant kept right on dusting his cases and sweeping out and wondering, sometimes, where all the drummers were. He did not know that he was a casualty of a transportation revolution.

Then there were the mail-order catalogs - they didn't help. The country stores were at an acute disadvantage here. They couldn't provide the country homestead with 100,000 articles of merchandise but Sears-Roebuck Catalog House.could! As more change came the Catalog Houses saved themselves by a fast transformation in the early 1920's into Retail Chain Store Systems - the Country Store could not make this final adaptation.

But the car! Some people think that was the real culprit. As country folk pushed the clutch down to the floorboard and disappeared with a roar and a rattle, there was a loss of ruralism and picturesqueness. Distinctions of speech and clothing disappeared. Country people were no longer "Countrified."

But in progress you usually lose something, too - can the modern woman enjoy the relaxed talk-fest that her grandmother knew along the country store counters while pushing a little wire cart in a super-market? Will the check-out girl deliver a telegram or a baby? Where can the stove-side congress of males hold their deliberations,now that the country store has slipped into the shadows of the past?

It has been said that every year between I89I and I92I was a critical year for the general store. If that is true Willett Bros. Store got in on the very beginning of the end.

Never-the-less I'm sure even my father, in after years, looked back on the old country store with bits of nostalgia.

And as for me? Well, the country store was a place where a little girl could take an egg and exchange it for a stick of candy with a ring on the stick. No matter that if later it left a dark circle around her finger; that ring with its bit of colored glass for a stone, would, for the time being, trans-port her directly into the 'land of make-believe.'

Eva E. Willett
June, I979

ORANGEBURG STORES

As I came to the end of my discussion about the Willett Bros. Store I began to wonder about all the other storekeepers who had set up shop in Orangeburg.

Somewhere I read that Joe Varian ran the very first store in the village. Elizabeth Bullock Willett says Ann W. Bullock married Joseph Varian, Sept. 26, I854. Was this the Joe Varian who ran the first store or did he have a father, or grandfather who really ran the "first" store?

Research says Orangeburg was formerly laid out in town lots in the year I796 by Harry Parker and John Williams. It was called Williamsburg at first, and continued under that name for some years till the U.S. Postal Department sought, and had the name changed because of confusion arising in the distribution of mail between it and Williamsburg, in the county of Whitley.

I do not know in exactly what year the change was made but Orangeburg was chosen for the new name because Providence Orange (Pickering or Pickerell) was a well-known and respected resident of the village; being a tailor by trade.

In the Atlas of Mason County, Ky. I876 it says there was a H.V. Riggen who ran a store at that time - but was this at Orangeburg? (his postoffice was Rectorville.)

Also - Charles E. Varian, Dealer in Dry Goods, Notions, Groceries, Hats, Caps, Boots, etc.

Also - Yates and Stephens. They had quite an add, but after the add it says- Springdale.

On Page 5 of the Atlas there is an outline of Mason County showing the I2 Precincts. Orangeburg is Precinct No. 9, and it shows that the Springdale and Rectorville postoffices, and regions there-about are included in the Orangeburg Precinct.

I have an old tin-type showing a store in Orangeburg run by W.H. Cole. This store must have been in operation around I880 - '85 (or before my father started his store.)

The old tin-type of W.H. Cole's store shows several people sitting on the porch, Evaline and George Farrar (my grandparents) are there, also my mother, Mary (Mollie) Farrar. There are others in the picture including Mrs. W.H. Hord, holding Winn - destined to become a doctor later on.

The Farrars didn't buy property in Orangeburg until Sept. I6, I880 so that pretty well dates the "Cole" store somewhere between I875 and I885.

The first postoffice was in the Red Men's Hall. It was run by John Howard. I wonder if Howard ran a store, also? It was the custom in the early days for the post-office to be located in a store.

The list I will endeavor to make of Orangeburg stores is subject to change, correction, and addition. Harold has been a valuable assistant in listing many of the more recent stores for me.

ORANGEBURG STORES

Varian	, Joseph (Joe)	
Varian	, Chas. E.	I876
Riggen ?	, H. V.	I876
Yates & Stephens ?	,	I876
Tolle	,	I889 and before.
Cole	, W. H.	I876 and beyond I880. (estimated)
Willett Bros.		I889 - I892
Wilson	, Grant	
Holiday	, John	
Campbell	, Dave	
Cooper & Turnipseed	, Lum , Charlie	
Cooper	, Lum	
Kalb	, Wm.	
Young	, Scott	
Wallingford	, George	I9I4
Markwell	, Bruce	
Grayson	, Arnett & Mae	
Campbell	, Albert	
Halfhill	, L. C.	
Newspme	,	

Gillespie , Arthur

Wilson , Dick

Landreth , Virgil

Wallingford , Harry & Tollie

Willett & , Richard W.
Mayhugh , Rodney

Bane , Elmo

Shoemaker ,

Cowan , Gordon & Gladys

Wallingford