

WASHBURN'S

General Store & Community

OPEN Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri 9am-4:30pm and Sat 9am-3pm
CLOSED Wed & Sun

828.245.4129 or WashburnStore.com

2426 Bostic Sunshine Hwy
Bostic, North Carolina 28018

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A visit to Washburn's Store is a trip back in time; Cider from the Press

By Mary Ann Claud

There are place you must see if you are to understand the old ways of life in the rural South, and there are roads you should travel because they will not stay the same forever. The Bostic Golden Valley Road in Rutherford County is one of those roads, and the stop you don't want to miss is Washburn.

Although the nearest post office is in Bostic, never mind; Washburn is a place in it's own right whether the U.S. Government knows it or not. There are two local points in Washburn. The first is a stately brick house, bigger and finer than anything else on Bostic-Golden Valley Road. Surrounded on three sides by two-story porches, it is a landmark which has sheltered the Washburn's since it was built in 1915. The Washburn House has 12 rooms and nine fireplaces, all made of tile and oak, and all different.

Just across the road, Washburn's Store stands in humble contrast. Don't be deceived by its modesty, for inside you will find a treasure house. You will also find the fourth generation of Washburns, Edward and his wife Catherine, in the fourth building to house Washburn's Store.

Washburn's contains everything you might expect to find in a country store. There are dozens of gadgets whose shape and function are lost on the Cuisinart generation – things like corn shellers, cherry pitters, and churn dashers. Perhaps Washburn's greatest treasure is the daily sales diary of Rueben Washburn dated 1887. Rueben was Washburn's second proprietor. The first, Benjamin, opened the store shortly after arriving from Cleveland County in 1831.

At Washburn's Store, seed is kept, as it always has been, in a 10-gallon ceramic pot. It is weighed on hand scales with individual weights.

Older men from the community gather daily for conversation and coffee. The kerosene pump, back at the end of the lefthand aisle, is on of only three left in North Carolina. Donna King, who works in the store and covers for the Washburns when they are busy at the mortuary next door, says it got a fine workout during the snowstorms of the past winter.

"Mostly we sell hardware, the groceries are just for convenience," says Edward Washburn. Canned goods line the shelves on one of the five aisles that run the length of the store, and near the chiller, a brook rack hangs like a giant witch's cap from the tin ceiling.

To eyes grown weary of glossy catalogues and color-coordinated displays, every aisle yields a surprise. There are wooden rockers, oil lamps, a hand plow leaning against a partially crated Zenith color TV set and a lady's corset of 19th Century vintage sits high on a shelf. There are harnesses, wooden biscuit cutters and a thousand things to handle and remark about.

But most of all, in Washburn's Store there is conviviality, and time, and a place for the past to coexist with the present. "We're open six days a week from 8 til 6. Come back and see us," says Donna King.

Try a taste of the Wisconsin Cheddar while you're there, it's on the house. Just remember to put the knife back in the water glass.

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