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SECTION TWO

## Rural Store Kept By McGills Long A Tradition At Bethany

### Family Has Owned Same Store For Past 65 Years

By ELIZABETH REED

Five generations of the McGill family have kept a country store in the Bethany Community of York county. And three of those generations have kept the 65 year old rural store that stands today at the cross roads leading in one direction from Clover to Blacksburg and in the other from York to King's Mountain.

The first McGill storekeeper was William McGill. He was a young man with a family at the time of the War of 1812. As early as 1796 he bought cattle and drove them to Philadelphia. That same year a brush arbor was built at Bethany for public worship.

In April, 1804, when he was 28 years old, William McGill married Martha Shaw Henry, then 15 and one-half years of age. In the 63 years of their married life they reared 10 children.

One of these 10 children carried on the storekeeping tradition. He was James L. McGill who built the present store building. James' children were W. Bonner McGill, J. Lesslie McGill, A. Moffatt McGill, E. Ruth McGill Adams and Thomas Franklin McGill.

James Lesslie McGill is the "Mr. Les" who today with a slow and pleasant smile presides over the store at McGill crossroads. Until his death, W. Bonner McGill operated the store with his brother and the business went by the name of McGill Brothers. Today "Mr. Les" operates the store with his two sons, John L. III, and Charles, who are the fifth generation of McGill storekeepers.

One of W. Bonner McGill's sons is George McGill, vocational rehabilitation supervisor for York, Ches-

(The history of McGill family and one of the early McGill houses will be featured next week.)

McGill's Store



"Cap'n Les" McGill, right, shows Captain James B. Felton, a pair of sturdy shoes, typical of the goods carried in McGill and Sons store at Bethany. Captain Felton is superintendent of the King's Mountain National Park. (Herald Staff Photo).

ter and Lancaster counties.

#### The Store

With the exception of a new silk dress, an Easter bonnet or perhaps an automobile, almost every conceivable commodity can be bought in the store.

The store defies all the rules of advertising. As it stands on the busy cross road, there are no huge signs to call the attention of the passer-by to the fact that here stands McGill's Store and that here almost any item may be bought. The simple white store is without any sign, but generations of Bethany folk have made their way to its doors.

Inside are the same hand hewn counters and ceiling planks that were put down 65 years ago. As long as the memory of man runneth, the store has carried a more or less complete line of groceries, dry goods, farming tools, fertilizers, hardware, automobile supplies and notions. Gasoline is sold and McGill and Sons also operate a cotton gin and saw mill.

"Mr. Les" pays little attention to regulation store hours. He smiles as he acknowledges that from "sun-up to sun-down" constitutes his store hours.

The store has had its share of robberies. Mr. Les will show the visitor the heavy and wide boards that have been nailed over the openings in the floor made in attempts to rob the store. At one time burglars removed a heavy window bar by making holes around it with an augur.

W. Bonner McGill, who died a few years ago left a number of children, George, Mrs. Agnes McGill Thomasson of York and J. H. of Charlotte. Besides the two sons who assist him in the operation of the store, "Mr. Les" has one daughter, Miss Janet McGill, a student at Limestone College in Gaffney.