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OLD BERRIEN

Newsletter of the
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Volume 5 Number 3

Fall Quarter 2023

SHEBOGGY & SHEBARGIE



The little country store—they were sprinkled throughout the rural county for several decades, providing basic food, drink, and merchandise suited to the needs of the farmer and the farm family. Many sold oil and gasoline. And most all of them provided a candy case to satisfy a youngsters sweet-tooth. They were the forerunners of today's convenience store.

They were a social gathering place, often to listen to the neighborhood's only radio. Some offered dancing and entertainment.

They went by several names, usually the name of the owners, Giddens Store, Harris Grocery, Hand's Store, or Fronie's Store. But others had monikers such as "Ruffle Jacket", Whispering Pines", or "Sheboggy" or "Shebargie" as others would say.

This country store above once sat at the corner of the Old Valdosta Road and the Pleasant Cemetery Road in the New Lois Community. It was know by the locals as "Shebargie" Built in the late 1920s, it served the community for almost three decades until GA Highway 37 opened in the 1950s. It sat vacant for a number of years, finally moved in the late 1990s to the property of Gene Sellars in the Lakeland area.

Most were usually made from nothing more than the remnants of a wooden framed outbuilding, some even covered with tarpaper or stamped tin to prevent the loss of their contents by fire or thieves in the night. Cinder block was the choice of material in later years.

Shebargie-New Lois

My earliest awareness of one of these stores was listening to my father telling of his early childhood in 1930, when his family was sharecropping for John Strickland on his farm on the Old Valdosta Road 10 miles south of Nashville. He told me how he and young Johnny Strickland would walk a mile north on the dirt road to a tin store that folks called “Shebargie”. It was there they would sit on the porch steps and wait for farmers to toss aside their cigarette butts. Whereupon the boys would remove the tobacco and “roll” their own in tobacco papers, starting to smoke at the age of 10.

Shebargie was the name given the store where the wife could take farm products to see what “she could bargain” for in exchange, thus she-bargied.

Whispering Pines, as it was officially called, was built in the late 1920s by Otto E. Summerlin. He and his family operated the store and a grist mill on the adjacent property. He had the first radio in the community, and on Saturday and Sunday nights, folks would gather and visit in the store while listening to the Grand Ole Opry.

There was an ice house built adjacent to the store, and Johnny Pat Webb and Elwood Webb would run the store some. In July, 1930, Elwood was sent to Nashville to get a load of ice in the truck. On his return trip to Shebargie, about two miles south of Nashville the truck ran off the edge of the road and rolled over. Webb was crushed by the weight of the automobile and died of his injuries soon after in a Valdosta hospital.

Mr. Summerlin died in December of 1933, and the store was purchased by 26-year-old Bernys Peters. Peters rented the Summerlin home and farm from the Summerlin heirs. He and his dad, Billy Peters, ran the store and operated the grist mill.



Bernys and Edna Davis Peters about the time he purchased the Shebargie Store at New Lois in 1933.

About 1936-37, Johnny Pat Webb and his brother Garth Webb operated both the store and the mill for Peters. Emory Webb once peddled fish at Whispering Pines at three fish for 25 cents.

The Harris Grocery is pictured above from a primitive painting based on the old Shebargie store at Whispering Pines in New Lois. Milton Harris owned the store from 1946 until it closed for good in the mid 1950s.

In 1939, Bernys Peters father was in failing health so Bernys sold the store and stock to K.M. Miller, who hired Hamer Webb and Mrs. Charlie Daniels to operate it. After a year or two Miller sold the store and stock to Edwin Smith. Mrs. Daniels continued on working for Smith running the store until December of 1946, when Edwin Smith sold it to Milton Harris.

Whispering Pines became a community gathering place called Harris Grocery. Harris ran it along with the help of his wife, Maudell, and his mother-in-law, Bessie Cooper. Business continued there for eight or ten years until better transportation and the new Georgia Highway 37, reduced the traffic, and brought fewer customers.

The store closed its doors in the middle 1950s. The store sat vacant, being used only as a storage building until the late 1990s, when it was finally move to the property of Gene Sellers between Ray City and Lakeland.



Sheboggy-Alapaha

Sheboggy of Alapaha has a much more colorful history. It was a landmark, and everyone has a Sheboggy story, though often enlarged upon the more each story is told.

The first Sheboggy was built by Sherman “Bo” Smith, a former postmaster of Alapaha, in the late 1920s on Georgia Highway 50, now U.S. 82 just east of the Alapaha River.

There are different stories on how Sheboggy was named. One tells that Sherman and another fellow were digging a hole for a cement culvert during a heavy rain spell, Sherman found himself sinking down in the mud up to his knees. He exclaimed, “Boy, she sure is boggy”, repeating the phrase until the job was finished. The she-boggy name stuck.

Another version went something like this. Again during a heavy rain spell, a car drove up to the store and a finely dressed lady stepped out of the car in her high-heeled shoes, and immediately sunk into the mud, sinking further with each step. After making her purchase she found the conditions worse going back to her car. The male

customers found the event especially humorous, recalling how “she bogged deeper with each step” Thus Sheboggy.

The 1930 Census records show Smith operating the store and service station while his wife Janie Mae was the cook in the cafe, serving sandwiches, hamburgers and hot dogs..

Sherman was also known to have bootlegged illegal liquor or “moonshine”. The “shine” was kept in the river to keep it cool, with a rope attached to it so it could be retrieved whenever a paying customer was ready to make a purchase. A person buying the illegal hooch would bring his own empty bottle, and Paulk Smith, one of Sherman’s son, would take the bottle down to the river and fill it up.

In 1936, Sherman Smith decided to move his family back into Alapaha, and sold his building to Lewis and Sarah Jernigan. Lewis loaded the Sheboggy building on the back of an old one-and-a-half ton truck and moved it up to their property near Alapaha.

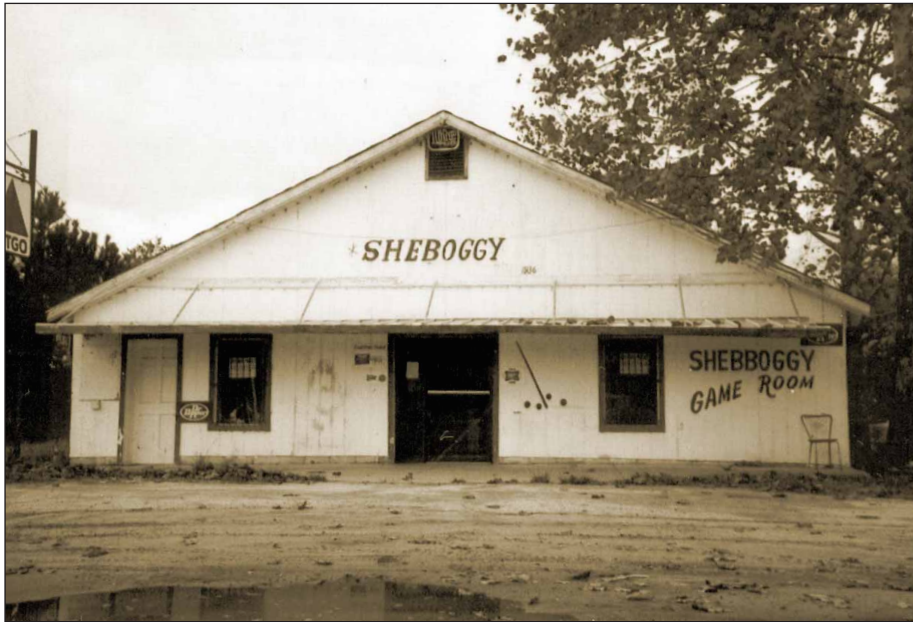
The Jernigans had sold the family milk cow and with five silver dollars they had saved, purchased the Sheboggy building and stocked their store with a few cartons of cigarettes and a couple of cases of drinks.

The photo above on the left depict the service station and store side of the second Sheboggy building, about 1938. The photo on the right is of the dining and dancing portion attached to the store. This wood frame structure was replaced sometime after WWII with the concrete block building.

After the first Sheboggy building was moved off of the property, the new owners, the Moore brothers—Ocie, Bertie, and Clayton—went about building new wood frame buildings. They expanded the business to include gas, groceries, beer, wine, candy and ice cream. Plus they added dining and dancing, pool tables, slot machines, and game machines. Sheboggy would never be the same again.

In the 1940 Census, 34 year-old Ocie Moore was shown to be the owner and operator of the service station and liquor store., working 60 hours a week. Bertie and Clayton were shown engaged in farming.

While Ocie was operating Sheboggy, it became the infamous “must stop” place on Georgia 50, where you



The cement block building above replaced the wood-frame structures and displayed its famous “Sheboggy” moniker for the first time. The infamous roadside attraction lasted almost 50 years, before finally being demolished about 1989.

could find wide open gambling and liquor. The gathering place developed a rough reputation, with all forms of mischief, from fist fights and brawls, to shootings and even a murder.

Ocie was known to have dealt moonshine liquor, and when revenue agents began putting pressure on the es-

tablishment, Ocie left town, turning the operation of Sheboggy over to Bertie, who went about cleaning up the place.

Sometime thereafter, the wood framed buildings were torn down and the more familiar cinder-block structure, was built in its place..

The new Sheboggy still offered some of the same services, but in a more friendly, family environment, at least during the daytime hours. But one could still find a card game to ante up.

In the 1950 Census, Julius Brogdon, Bertie’s brother-in-law, was operating Sheboggy, and Bertie was operating a creosote plant nearby. Shortly there after, Julius and his wife Bessie built and operated the Ruffle Jacket Store, about two miles northeast of Sheboggy.

For almost three decades, Sheboggy was a great place for families to go for parties, dining, and dancing. Sometime prior to 1984, Bertie sold Sheboggy to E. B. “Beuren Jr.” Jacobs. Jacobs operated it as a mere shell of its colorful history, until about 1989 when it was torn down to make way for the four-lane US Highway 82.

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