

Pugh's Store At Midway

By Robert H. Burch - 2019

This short story tells about a small country grocery market that once existed where I lived my boyhood and early adolescent years. The story also relates events, activities and people who, in one way or another, had some connection or association with this 20th century establishment. I suppose one could call this story a collection of memories about a store that was the focal point of the community for so many years. I well recall Pugh's Store (i.e., the store) that was located in a very rural crossroads settlement called Midway. This place is located in extreme western Albemarle County, Virginia and is nothing more than barely a wide area in the road passing through. This was real country; I was a real country boy and was happy for all of those years I lived there. My personal association with Pugh's Store was quite frequent from November 1936 (the date I was born) to the middle of 1954 (the date I graduated from Miller School) and very infrequent after that date. The store ceased to exist about the late 20th century, maybe in the 1960's or 1970's. Let me tell you my story and share memories of that little country market.

The store was at the Midway location from at least the early part of the 1900's until it was eventually demolished sometime in the latter part of the 1900's. Exact dates are unknown to me and unclear to my sister. I am also uncertain about much of the history regarding this place of business. There is no one now in the time of this writing (2019) who can provide much factual information about the store. The one person who has some knowledge about the store and who has contributed somewhat to this writing is Virginia Glen Pugh Grinstead, born in January 1927, and now residing with her son Glen in Manteo, North Carolina. Virginia Glen, daughter of the founders and former proprietors, is the last individual I know connected to the era of the

store. The following narrative reflects what she, my eighty-four-year-old sister Betty Burch Mawyer and I recall about the store.

To the best of my knowledge, the store was founded and may have been constructed by Nell and Molly Pugh. The building may also have existed prior to the Pugh's involvement and ownership. The store was in a structure that served as a small staple grocery market with some processed meats such as bologna along with numerous miscellaneous items (fly swatters, mouse traps, fly strips, etc.). There was always a large "wheel" of cheese sitting atop a barrel or box on the floor. The customer could slice an amount or "hunk", have it weighed and then purchase it. The hours of operation for the store were apparently optional. Since the Pugh's lived in the portion of the building connected to and directly adjacent to the store, Mr. Pugh could open and close at his discretion. Now it seems as if the store hours were often very early in the day to quite late in the evening. Even if a card game was in progress at night Pugh's Store was open for business.

Pugh's Store, in addition to grocery and miscellaneous items, also once sold one grade of gasoline to the motoring public. I think I vaguely remember gasoline sales but clearly recall the old single gasoline pump that stood on the corner of the store's front porch. There was only the one grade of gasoline available during this era; all gasoline powered vehicles used the same grade. During the period about which I am writing the rear of the store building complex served as the two-story living accommodations for the Pugh family, that is Nell, Molly and Virginia Glen. The kitchen, eating and lounging areas were on the main floor and the bedrooms were on the second level. Upon exiting the rear door of the store building, you entered onto a wide covered porch that extended the entire length of the downstairs area. A rock wall or fence, on the south side of the porch, approximately three feet high, enclosed a small grassy side yard. A cistern was positioned in the very rear of the family quarters. The cistern water was mostly used for

washing and cleaning purposes. Drinking water came from a spring fed pond behind Mrs. Carters house. Mrs. Carter was a longtime Midway resident not more than a quarter of a mile from the store. I have this image in my head of her sitting at her front door of her little house, watching traffic, both vehicular and foot, passing along the road. Other building at the store included an outhouse (outdoor toilet), probably for the use of customers and I presume also for any members of the family who needed such accommodations.

The sale of gasoline was discontinued by the very early period of World War II, maybe even sooner. I may recall seeing fuel dispensed from this pump. The one dispensing pump remained standing for some time after gasoline sales were discontinued. Fuel rationing and availability of supply were likely the reasons for discontinuing gasoline sales, although there could have been security or safety reasons as well. The gas pump was unique in its design and functionality but very consistent with gasoline dispensers of the day. I believe all pumps of this era were rather common with the one at the store. A large clear enclosed glass bulb or bowl, probably 15-20 gallons in capacity, rested upon the top of the pump. The purchaser manually filled the glass bowl by means of a hand pump mechanism with the amount of fuel being purchased. Once the glass bowl contained the desired amount being purchased by the customer, gravity allowed the gasoline to flow from the glass bowl to the vehicle tank below.

Gasoline, along with certain automotive products (e.g., tires and rubber), and numerous food items such as sugar, flour, some other staples and certain meats, were rationed because of civilian shortages created by the war (WW II) effort. Rationing coupons, in the form of vehicle rear window decals issued to the consumer by the federal government, allowed the purchase of these rationed items. The window decals were issued to citizens in the alphabetical letters A, B and C, and possibly other letters, permitting the purchaser to obtain

certain quantities of rationed items depending on the letters affixed to the rear window of the vehicle. Even Pugh's Store was not exempt from this government mandated coupon rationing practice. I clearly recall the use of these coupons by mother, Richard and others when they were acquiring rationed products.

From information provided by Virginia Glen Grinstead, about the same time as her father Nell Pugh began operating Pugh's Store in Midway, Mr. Pugh's brother Doss Pugh opened a very similar market in Batesville, Virginia. Batesville is some six plus miles south and west of Midway, also on Virginia State Road 635. This state road is known locally as the Miller School road. According to Virginia Glen, her father decided some years later to resettle the family in Ivy, a small community on US Highway 250, roughly six or so miles west of Charlottesville, Virginia and also in Albemarle County.

During the years the Pugh's lived in Ivy, Mr. Pugh operated a small grocery market similar to the one he established in Midway. While in Ivy, the Midway store location was operated by Mary Alexander, a relative of then Albemarle County sheriff Shirley Cook. Sheriff Cook, his wife Edith and daughters Gwendolyn and Mary Elizabeth were longtime residents of the Midway community. Apparently, changing demographics in Ivy and along the US Highway 250 corridor there caused Mr. Pugh and his family to return to the Midway store location. The move occurred about the year 1939 so that Virginia could begin the sixth grade at Greenwood School. Upon Mr. Pugh's death in 1947, Aunt Molly and Virginia Glen continued operating the store. In about 1950 Gordon and Mildred Burton, longtime Midway residents, became the owners and operators of the Pugh's Store business. I estimate the Burtons continued to operate the store for the next eight to ten years before disassociating themselves from it. Virginia Glen was not certain of these dates and times. Sometime in later years the store and all of the other buildings were completely demolished.

So exactly where, you ask, is Midway, Virginia in relation to other towns and settlements in the vicinity. Certainly, the name implies that it is located midway between two better known places. That is a correct assumption, it is situated on the very narrow and winding Virginia State Road 635, approximately half way between Crozet and Batesville. Crozet, the larger of the two towns is where we grocery shopped for items not available at Pugh's Store. This state road passes through small farms, developed residential areas and tracts of woodlands. Fertile farmlands and bottomlands, rivers and streams are seen as the traveler drives from Crozet to Batesville. This roadway crosses U.S. Highway 250 at Brownsville, another equally small and rural community. The only commercial establishment at Brownsville during the period about which I am writing was a combination grill and truck stop on Highway 250. The grill was known at one time for the fabulous country breakfast it served. Now that you know the exact location of Midway, I still recommend that you take your GPS locator device or smart phone with you if you decide to head out to Midway, Virginia.

At Midway, both the Foster and the Burch farms were near Pugh's store. The road to the Foster farm, where grandparents Robert and Maymie lived, was due west of the store about two miles or less down a sometimes-graded gravel road. During dry months a huge plume of dust trailed behind a moving vehicle. The faster the vehicle was driven, the higher and thicker the column of trailing dust. The road to the Burch farm where my sister and I lived with mother and Richard (stepfather) was due east of the store and about a mile down an ungraded and mostly ungraveled dirt road. In the wet season (any time it rained or snowed) the road was little more than a quagmire in places, with deep ruts, standing mud puddles and other driving hazards. Regardless of driving conditions, both roads led to Pugh's Store.

The common housefly was as much a nuisance at the store in those days as they are today in all other places in the world. The common fly has been around for thousands of years. The house fly may have been one of the seven plagues experienced by the Egyptians during the time of Moses. Pugh's Store and many other businesses and residential dwellings were no exception. To control the common house fly a sticky strip was utilized. We used them regularly in the house at the farm as did Mr. Pugh at the store. Very likely the ones we used at home were purchased at the store. The fly strip contained a very sticky substance attractive to flies. The strip was rolled up inside a small canister about as big around as a fifty-cent piece and approximately two inches long. When unfurled from the canister the strip hung down about two feet. Houseflies were attracted to the sticky strip and once they lighted on it, the end of that fly was near at hand. The cost for this little device was next to nothing. Mr. Pugh always hung several of these devices at strategic locations inside the store; always at the front and back doors and near the meat case. In the summer, the "fly season", the fly strip filled rapidly at the front door. Mr. Pugh did not act too hastily in replacing the strips. He wanted to be sure every possible space on the strip was occupied with a housefly. He did not wait to hang a new strip until every space on the hanging strip had a fly stuck on it. Today, if someone used a fly strip to catch house flies it might seem gross but back then that's just what we did and thought nothing about it. It worked and the fly strip was the number one defense against the common house fly. Yes, even Midway had pestilence in the form of the house fly.

Midway community, at the peak of its existence consisted only of the store, a few scattered residences and a one room, four grade county elementary school. At the time, the school was a unit of the Albemarle County public school system. My sister Betty and I both attended the one room school, completing the four grades before moving on to Greenwood High School for grade five. I will put together

a collection of memories about my Midway school experiences in another story. Some of the children our age I remember who lived in the greater Midway community were Ruth and Marvin Dollins, Jean and Ann Burton, Margie and Marie Grinstead, William and David Shaver, Edward Kirby, the Wheeler sisters, Betty and Bobby (me) Burch and Ruby Lee Parr. There were others but the names escape me at this writing. I certainly apologize for leaving anyone out; it was not intentional.

There was also a number of African-American families and citizens living in or near the Midway community. They all traded at Pugh's Store at one time or another. The black and white families and citizens lived in total harmony and peace. I do not recall a single black-white issue. We all helped each other as the needs arose. Many of the black citizens were laborers and farm workers employed on the neighboring farms in the area. They were all diligent, reliable, honest and hardworking individuals willing to go the extra mile for neighbors on a moment's notice. Some of these black individuals, the ones I remember by name, are Mary and Dabney Carter, Mary Key, Henry and Julia Jones, Chuck Jones, Johnny Green and John Sims and daughter Kit. I am certain there were others but cannot recall their names at this time. Johnny Green was an older black man and he dearly loved Betty and me. He played and joked with us and we enjoyed the attention. He sang a song to us all the time which I remember to this day. Johnny hardly had a tooth in his head and I can hear him singing, "I don't want your green back dollars, I don't want you watch and chain; all I want is you my darling, won't you please come back again". Henry and Julia raised their four grandchildren Hugh, Bobby, Joanna and Roberta. They were all playmates to my sister and me. My stepfather Richard kept a milk cow on our farm for Henry and his family. Henry or one of the older children walked the half mile plus down to our milking pen every evening to milk "their" cow. One elderly black female citizen living in Midway, about 200 yards from the store, was known to everyone as Aunt Millie. I do

not recall her last name if I ever knew it but do remember she was well known by most residents. She was a friend to all. I personally do not recall much about Aunt Millie as she passed away in the early 1940's. I know that my grandmother attended Aunt Millie's funeral service and took my sister Betty with her. Virginia Glen related to me that Millie, who walked with a cane, was a frequent shopper at Pugh's Store. She walked to the store accompanied by her walking cane. Rather than enter the store through the front door to place her order she came to the rear door that opened on the back porch. When she arrived at the back door she rapped her cane on the wooden porch floor and said "Molly, Molly come out here" She then placed her grocery order with Aunt Molly and afterwards returned home carrying her grocery order. As I previously stated, the entire community, black and white, shopped, bartered and/or traded with Pugh's Store at one time or another. We all thought nothing about it. It was just what we all did back then. If it hadn't been for Pugh's Store there are time's we all might have gone without. There is a lot of folklore and pleasant memories associated with the store and I cherish all of them.

The Midway community was also comprised of a number of white residents and citizens. I knew many of them because they had children who congregated at the store to ride the school bus or because they were close neighbors and friends. They too were our playmates and good friends. In addition to our family, there was Tom and Emma Wyant and daughter Althea (son Tommy had already moved out). Mr. Wyant was quite involved with the political elections process and served as a precinct volunteer. At every election, local, state or national he always worked at the precinct in Hillsboro. Mr. Wyant had a favorite name for Midway; he always referred to it as Frog Island. Where that came from, I do not remember, but that was his name for Midway. Other families in the area were the Lang's, and the Cook's (I've already mentioned). Mrs. Carter, a white citizen, and her granddaughter Virginia Tate also lived a stones throw from the store. Virginia Tate was

a tuberculosis patient and we were told not to eat or drink after her. One time Virginia Glen chased my sister when she was about to take a swallow of Virginia Tate's Pepsi Cola. She was eventually transferred to the Blue Ridge Sanitorium where she passed away. Virginia Glen informed that Mrs. Carter was an excellent seamstress and using floral feed sack made many of her school clothes. I believe Mrs. Carter did sewing work for mother from time to time. Adjacent to the store and beyond the school lived the Herbert Grinstead family and a little further away there was the Frank Grinstead family and the Charlie Black family. West of the store lived Gordon and Mildred Burton and family and then "Uncle Dock and "Aunt" Perney Burton. A little beyond these residents lived my Foster grandparents, the Barnett's, the Wheelers and the Kirby families. Dean and Vada Foster and the Dollins families were great neighbors and Vada was my first through fourth grade teacher at Midway School. I will have more to say about Vada in my Midway School memories. We were a very homogenous neighborhood and we all shopped at Pugh's Store during our stay there in Midway. My apologies for anyone I've omitted after all of these years.

Bill Wheeler was a resident of the Midway community and lived with Raymond and Josephine Wheeler and their two daughters. The girls attended Midway School with my sister and me. Bill was a man who had some difficulties with his walking gait and his speech. He worked regularly helping local farmers and merchants in the area. Bill Wheeler was a frequent patron of Pugh's Store. He stopped in several or more times per week. He loved peanuts and Pepsi Cola soft drinks. Bill could be counted on to always buy a Pepsi and a bag of peanuts. He always, without fail, poured the bag of peanuts in the Pepsi and guzzle it down very quickly. That is where I learned to pour a cellophane bag of salted peanuts into an ice cold Pepsi Cola.

Midway was not a utopian community even though I've made it sound that way to this point. We, the residents, had our share of

squabbles, family disputes and disruptions. I do not recall any lasting incidents except maybe the one I will relate here. This incident, I believe, is worthy of mentioning at this juncture of my story. There were two Black (last name) families headed by Charlie and Dan. I think they were related; they possibly could have been brothers. The source of the problem was a mule owned by Dan. The mule kept breaking into Charlie's cornfield. The mule devastated the cornfield. Charlie warned Dan about this, telling him to keep his mule at home and out of his cornfield. Apparently, the warnings went unheeded. One day Charlie saw Dan's mule in his (Charlie's) cornfield. Charlie became very irate about repeated incursions by the mule. Taking matters in his own hands, Charlie took his shotgun to the cornfield and shot the mule. I do not recall that he killed the mule, I rather think he did not. At this time, I cannot remember the fate of the mule or how the whole fiasco was resolved. I do know that it placed a damper on the relationship of the two Black brothers and I don't believe it was ever restored in a favorable manner.

Baseball was a very popular game during the early life of Pugh's Store and the community. Its popularity has not waned in all of the intervening years. Sunday afternoon baseball was a favorite pastime in Midway, Virginia, especially for the black citizens of the community. Mr. Dick Barnett, a resident farmer of the Midway community owned acreage that was large and cleared. This field was ideally suited for a country baseball field. It was really a flat, level cow pasture covered with grass. The black male residents of Midway and their male friends, many, whom I'm sure, were patrons of the store, organized a baseball team. They challenged neighboring teams to a Sunday afternoon game. I recall teams from Greenwood, Hillsboro and Crozet, among others, coming to Midway to play "the hometown team". As a young boy who grew up liking the sport of baseball, it was not infrequent that I went to watch them play since the ball field was adjacent to grandfather

Foster's farm. Such entertainment at such an early age and I am sure I saw many of the players stopping in at Pugh's Store the next week for a cold soda and chips, cigarettes and tobacco, a loaf of bread or a pound of sliced bologna. The store had it all.

Pugh's Store was, according to a year 2019 definition, a very small country grocery market serving the equally small and rural crossroads community of Midway. The store could not have even qualified in the time I write as a "mom and pop" operation. It was in a league all its own. Midway, as I have described was barely a wide spot in the road. Midway never had a US post office. As the residents all had box numbers, we were served by a rural mail carrier out of Crozet. This carrier delivered mail in Midway to a long row of mail boxes diagonally across the road from the store.

Virginia, and I as well, recall other buildings on the store premises. One such building included a small enclosed freestanding wooden frame tin roofed garage. This structure was on the north side adjacent to the store. This is where Mr. Pugh frequently garaged his vehicle during the night. A narrow walkway passed between the garage and store buildings leading to the rear of the main building. Cousin Bobby Palmore, the adopted son of Julian and Catherine Palmore, lived with us on the farm for several years. He attended Greenwood High School and pitched for the baseball team. Another cousin. John Robert Booth, who also lived with us one year was Bobby's catcher on the baseball team. Catherine was the sister of my father John Burch and his brother Richard Burch. John Robert's mother was Mary, also my father's sister. Bobby adapted to farm life really well and seemed to enjoy his time there with us. We owned a very spirited mare, a race horse of sorts, named Molly. Bobby loved Molly and claimed her as his horse during his stay on the farm. Very infrequently Bobby rode Molly from the farm to Pugh's Store where we caught the school bus to Greenwood School. Mr. Pugh apparently allowed Bobby to stable Molly in the garage

during the day until he returned from school in the afternoon. This is the type of person Mr. Pugh was, helpful and accommodating to anyone needing assistance.

Mr. Pugh's wife Molly, everyone called her Aunt Molly or "Cuddin" Molly, I remember also as a kindhearted, generous and personable lady. Although fidgety, high strung and nervous, she dearly loved the school children who hung out at the store waiting to catch the school bus to Greenwood School. On cold winter mornings Mr. and Mrs. Pugh always had a warm fire burning in the store's old pot belly stove. The children always huddled around the stove in cold weather waiting for the bus. We greatly appreciated the Pugh's hospitality while waiting for the school bus, although at the time I am not sure we showed our gratitude. One of the display counters in the store was a glass enclosed case which contained all types of individual pieces of candy. The children ogled the candy display; I'm sure wishing for just one piece. Aunt Molly seemed to always favor my sister Betty and Ruth Dollins. They were the best of friends. When Betty and Ruth were alone together looking in the candy case Aunt Molly would slip each of them a piece of candy. She said to them, "now baby don't tell Mr. Pugh I gave you a piece of candy" and as far as I know they never did. This was just another example of their generosity. I understand Mr. Pugh allowed his customers to "run a tab" meaning charge items until the next pay day and as far as I know there was never a problem or issue from anyone for doing so.

A short distance from the rear of the family residence at Pugh's Store there was a chicken house. Mr. Pugh kept and raised a number of laying hens. He sold the eggs his hens produced in the store. In those days there were no government regulations that prevented one from selling home grown products in the store. Eggs are a good example of this but so were things like butter and other homemade products. As I previously noted, Mr. Pugh bartered and traded home produced items

for staples. He did this on a regular basis. Mr. Pugh regularly traded eggs for staple grocery items from the store shelf. He was a pure barterer and he often traded eggs and other farm produced items for store items. He then sold the traded items to community patrons of the store who had a need for those items. Again, in the 1940's there were few government health regulations on the sale of such products. Although never verified, it was rumored that some devious and unscrupulous customer from the community secretly entered Mr. Pugh's chicken house and took eggs from the nest. They then took the eggs into the store and traded them for some shelf grocery items. If this incident occurred, it was more an act of mischievousness rather than an act of thievery.

Some of the farms in the Midway area that produced milk sold the cream from raw milk to the Monticello Dairy in Charlottesville for processing. The Burch farm, being no exception, always milked five or more cows twice daily. From this raw milk cream was extracted. The way this extraction occurred was by using a cream separator machine. This machine was initially a manually operated device. Later we purchased an electric motor driven machine. I remember this separator was manufactured by DeVilbiss and was faster than the manual model. The raw milk was poured into a large stainless steel or aluminum bowl atop the separator. The whole milk ran through a series of cone shaped disks. The two spouts below the disks channeled the cream into a crock jar container and the skimmed milk drained into the slop bucket and fed to the hogs. The pure cream exited into the crock container and then transferred to a ten-gallon stainless cream canister provided by the dairy. The extracted cream, in the cannister, was kept in the cool basement and after several days taken to Pugh's Store. The cannister was placed on the store's front porch where the Monticello Dairy collected it. Richard sold the cream to the dairy who in turn mailed him a check. As far as I know there were never any incidents involving these transactions. As you see, Pugh's Store was a number of things for

different residents of the community. It was a place to buy groceries, meet people, catch the school bus, socialize and drop off items for pickup, among other things.

Pugh's Store, which no longer exists, was the center of community activity during my life from birth to age 13 years and maybe longer. It existed before and after this time but as of this writing, I have no additional information about that. Pugh's Store also had a social side to its existence. On many Saturday nights, a number of the men in the community gathered there to play cards, checkers and/or dominoes. In addition to cards, the men played dominoes and checkers. My grandfather Foster, Gordon Burton, George Jarman, Mitchell Woodson, Nell Pugh and others I cannot recall at this time, came to play cards at various times. That was the main attraction, although dominoes and checkers were big also. The one card game I most remember was called "setback". This was a popular game of the day and I remember occasionally accompanying my grandfather Foster on some Saturday nights to play cards with the guys. There was a pot belly stove in the store and Mr. Pugh kept a roaring fire in it on cold fall and winter nights. Sometimes the stove became so hot that it glowed red from the coal fired flames in the stove. During fire burning season there was always a scuttle of coal nearby to keep the fire stoked. To my recollection, grandfather Foster never drove a vehicle nor did he ever have a driver's license. Grandmother Foster often transported him the mile and a half plus from their home to the store for Saturday night cards. When the game was over, Gordon Burton transported him to his (Gordon's) house. From there it was a very short walk to grandfather Foster's home. There was a large vacant and mostly open field between the Foster farm and the Burton home. My grandfather often told us about the headless horseman he had encountered on his walk home. This was done to scare my sister and me into believing there really was a headless horseman in the area. We did believe him for quite some

time. Grandfather, we called him "daddy Foster" loved all the grands, sixteen in all, and he liked to joke with us in ways such as this.

Greenwood School was, during the time about which I am writing, one of seven high schools in Albemarle County. All of these schools had grades one through eleven as grade twelve was not required or available at this time. In addition to Greenwood School, there were Albemarle County schools at Red Hill, Crozet, McIntire, Earlysville, Scottsville and Meriwether Lewis. Greenwood served the Midway community for grades five through eleven. Midway school taught grades one through four but I will relate my memories about this school in a separate story. Pugh's Store and Midway School, along with scattered residences, comprised the community of Midway. The school bus route for Greenwood ran from slightly south and west of Batesville to Greenwood, a distance of some twenty plus miles. Mr. Frank Craig was our bus driver and was also a disciplinarian and law and order type of individual. With Mr. Craig as our driver we never had problems on the school bus. I recall getting in a fight with another student at the bus stop and Mr. Craig took the two combatants to the principal's office the next day. The principal, Mr. Ben Hurt took me to the locker room with Mr. Craig and gave me a spanking with a wooden board. The other combatant, a student named Earhart also received a spanking and after that no one ever got in any trouble at the bus stop. When school was in session on cold winter days Mr. Pugh always had a fire in the old pot belly stove and he allowed students to come into the store to stay warm until the bus came. There were some ten or more students who boarded the bus at the store; all of them being of the Caucasian race. All Virginia schools were racially segregated during the 1940's and 1950's. The school bus for Greenwood School did not serve the black Midway community. It was common that the white only students bus passed a group of black students walking to their school at Hillsboro or another location. I didn't think of it then but now I often wonder why those black students couldn't have ridden our bus since we passed right

by their school. My, my how times have changed from then to now and for the most part much better.

Mother worked shift work for a time in Waynesboro, Virginia. She commuted to and from work with a co-worker living in nearby Batesville. She caught a ride with the co-worker to and from work. Most days she met the co-worker at Pugh's Store and was returned there afterwards. She walked the mile from the store to the farm, through the darkened woods. Richard was not always able to meet mother at the store because he had to stay with Betty and me since we had gone to bed. Pugh's Store served as a convenient drop-off and pickup place at times like this. The store was many things to many people.

Nat Sutherland was a friend to the Burch family; maybe even a distant relative. Grandmother Burch was a Sutherland before marrying Grandfather Burch. Nat's name was either Nathan or Nathaniel; I am not sure which. Nat was from Batesville and I believe he knew Mr. Doss Pugh as well as his brother Mr. Nell Pugh. Nat thought a lot of my sister Betty. Each week, for some period of time, Nat went to Pugh's Store in Midway and gave Mr. Pugh twenty-five cents and asked him to buy Betty a soft drink when she came from school on the bus. I do not know of anyone else for whom Nat bought a drink. My sister was a fortunate girl who had a cold drink waiting for her when she stepped off the school bus at Pugh's Store.

I'm sure there were a number of little stores like Pugh's Store across America at this time. I am certain they each held memories for many customers and patrons; they each have stories to be told. Pugh's Store just had the special charm, character and charisma and we remember it as occupying a special niche in our lives. This was a place we will always remember. Family members, friends and acquaintances are intertwined with the memories of Pugh's Store at Midway.

I am certain that I have omitted the names of Midway people and I deeply regret and apologize to the ones not mentioned. I have contacted my former friends and associates, all knowledgeable of Midway School, who were unable for the most part, to nail down specific dates and times of events. I thank Jean Burton, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Margie Houchins, a lifelong resident of Midway, Marie Shiflett of Crozet, Va., Betty Mawyer of Sandston, Va., Virginia Grinstead. Manteo, N.C. and Foster Wray Morse, Lorton, Va. for providing tidbits of information about Midway School. Maybe between that which I remember and what former students added, something about Midway School will be preserved.