

Tornado-ravaged community remembers Tippy and bologna at landmark store

By Rebekah Davis
Limestone County Archivist

I spent a lot of my younger days in that store,” Johnny Smith said. “I can remember walking miles from my house to the store and back for a candy bar and drink. It’s no wonder we stayed skinny. We burned more calories going after the sweets in those days than we gained consuming them.”

Smith was one of many people from the Coxey and Clements area of southwest Limestone County who responded with stories and memories of the U.S. 72 landmark Log Cabin Grocery after it – along with many houses along its namesake Log Cabin Road – were hit by the April 28, 2014, EF-3 tornado that killed two people and destroyed or damaged hundreds of homes, churches, businesses and more in the area.

Many people shared fond memories of Tippy Smith, one of the last owners of the store.

“I have great memories of Daddy and I stopping in to see Tip, love that old store!” Jennifer Hamilton said. “It’s the one that had the little plastic gorilla hanging from the ceiling above the cash register.”

“I remember the creaking sounds as people walked across the floor and cold Coca Cola and of course Tippy behind the counter,” [Clara Virginia Crawford](#) said. “And who can forget good Bologna and crackers?”

“So sad. Loved stopping in there many years ago to get cokes and a pound of bologna,” [Alice Sparkman Ownby](#) said. “Tip would whip out that big knife and slice each piece neater than any meat cutter could do. Does anybody remember the big Texas fly swatter he had hanging on the wall? A landmark that will be greatly missed.”

“Tip always had hot sauce and crackers,” [Manda Nash Wisniewski](#) said. “We would sit and eat bologna, cheese and crackers and listen to the ‘old men’ talk.”

[Carrie Smith Naumann](#) remembered Bryan bologna, hoop cheese, Vienna sausages and beanie weenies with hot sauce and Cokes with peanuts.

“That’s where I’d get all my candy and sundrops before going to the river!” Alissa Rose-Clark said.

“I have bought a lot of cokes out of that store after riding there on my bicycle,” said Nolan Todd.

“I’m 57 and Tippy Smith was the proprietor of this store for most of my years growing up just west of Clements,” Neal Rose said. “This was one of many little stores between Clements and Athens back during the day. Within walking distance of our house, there was Nick Bridges, Son Goodes, and Log Cabin. Each store sold gas and did a thriving business for many years in the Coxey community. In my childhood years, soft drinks were a dime and a candy bar sold for a nickel. I sometimes could walk to one of these stores and pick up enough drink bottles to get enough on the deposit to buy a drink and candy bar.”

Other owners included Mr. Sims, Mr. Goode, Leonard Cox – who is likely the man in these pictures – and Gordon Easter. Susan Smith Tucker remembered her mother running the store for a while; Amber Moore Garth said her grandmother, Sue Hargrove, ran the store for 15 years; and [Sirena Chittam Pugh](#) remembered going in the store when James Perry was running it.

“That was always my favorite store as a child and of course my family ran it for many years,” said [Crystal Sain](#).

“They got tired of it and closed it down. Sad to see a childhood memory gone.”

“If walls could talk. What some stories to be heard,” [Tammy Gatlin Smith](#) said.

“Every time we would go visit my grandmother when she lived in the old house that used to be the store, we would always go to the store to get a coke and candy,” said [Katina Pack Stewart](#). “So many memories. Coxey will always be home.”

About the Archives:

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