

# FARNHAM'S GENERAL STORE!

by Peggy Smith Hake



Another of Iberia's historic landmarks has vanished from the face of the earth forever, but not from the memory of those who will always remember the old building that stood for almost a century facing north on Main Street on the old Tusculum-Big Piney Road. She has a history, as do all aged buildings in any town, and I am happy to preserve hers in this article.

The year was 1892 and two brothers, Charles and William L. Farnham, who lived north of Iberia on farms out near the old Rabbithead School, decided to move to Iberia and start a general store and mercantile business. The father and mother of the Farnham brothers were David Farnham, born

in 1826 in Canaan, Maine and Henrietta Goebel Farnham, born in 1831 in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. David and Henrietta came into Miller County after the Civil War from Williamsport, Lycoming County, Pennsylvania. Other Pennsylvanians came to Missouri during this same time including the Hedges, Newharts, Clarks, Hess', Heltzells, Johnstons, Irwins, Tallmans, Bennages, Groffs, Moores, and Browns. All remained except the John Hess family who returned to their eastern home.

When the Farnham brothers moved to Iberia, they acquired the land where the store was erected. On this land, in 1882, stood a small house

where Will Farnham and his bride, Sarah Heltzell Farnham, lived for a few years. In 1900, he built the family home on Lombar Avenue at the corner of Normal Street. George Farnham, another brother to Will and Charles, built his family home next door to Will and Sarah. These two homes still exist today. One is occupied by William (Bill) Farnham and the other is owned by Mrs. Millie Duncan. Bill resides in his ancestral home where he was born 81 years ago. These two homes sat directly south of the old Lombar mansion which was replaced a few years ago by the Bank of Iberia building.

In 1892, when the Farnham Store was ready to be opened to the public,

William and Charles went to St. Louis on St. Patrick's Day and bought all the opening stock to outfit their new general store. The stock arrived from St. Louis, freighted by wagon, a few weeks later and their doors were opened for business in the Spring of 1892. Bill Farnham told me that his father and his Uncle Charley could remember being in St. Louis on St. Patrick's Day in 1892 because they observed the large parade by the Irish community of the city and were so impressed by the grandeur of the parade. They were, after all, small town country folk who were not accustomed to seeing such grand sights in Iberia.

The store continued on for many decades and

passed on into a new generation. When I was a young girl growing up in Iberia, the store was operated by the grandson of David and Henrietta, the Pennsylvanians. He also owned and operated a lumber yard to the Southwest of the store for many years.

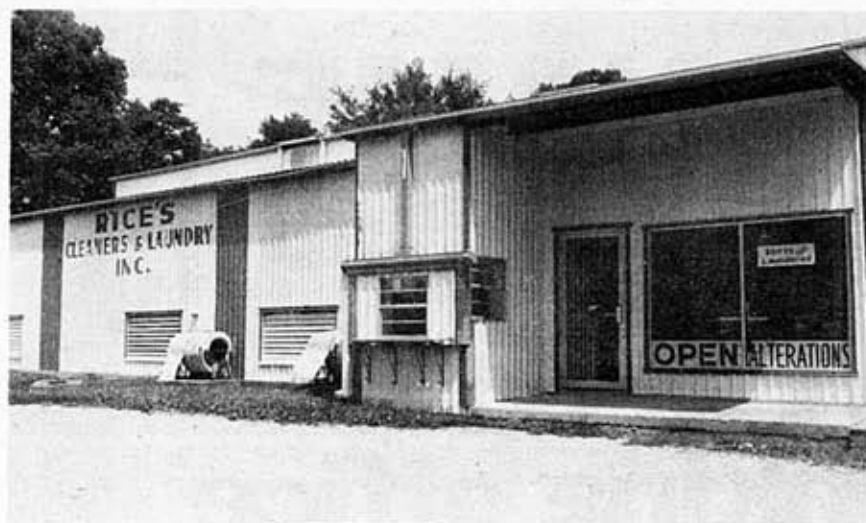
The site of the old Farnham Store and Lumberyard is an historic spot which reaches back further in Miller County's history. During the Civil War, a fort was built on this piece of land by the citizenry of Iberia for protection from the renegade forces that ran rampant through the Big Piney Richwoods. It was used as a command post for the militia organized under the leadership of Captain

William Long. Other buildings surrounding the Fort in the war years included a blacksmith shop, a freighting company, a general store, and a saloon.

So you see, every building and the land it sits upon, has some form of history which can be told after the years have melted away. Farnham Store is one of those that has a marvelous story to be told...it touches upon the history of the land; its people; the generations of our past. There are just a few old buildings left standing in Iberia and I am sure each of them could tell a wonderful story if only their walls could talk.



## RICE'S LAUNDRY & CLEANERS, INC.



**HWY 17N**

**QUALITY LAUNDRY AND  
DRY CLEANING**

**774-2416**



# Bank of Iberia



**LIMITED TIME**  
**SOON AVAILABLE - SPECIAL EDITION**  
**MINT U.S. CONSTITUTION PROOF SETS**

**Longer Banking Hours  
To Serve You Better**

**DRIVE-UP WINDOW OPEN**  
**8:30 AM - 5:30 PM MONDAY - THURSDAY**

**8:30 AM - 6:00 PM FRIDAY**  
**793-2224**

