

LEN RAY'S STORE

4/19/1955

Fifty three years ago last Friday-April 15, 1902-Bessie Ray's father, John M. Williams and her husband Leonard "Len" Ray, opened their store for business in Prospect Harbor. Jimmie Good's home had stood on that corner and after it burned, John Hutching's mother who lived on the opposite corner persuaded him to buy the lot. Later the Hutchings sold the land to Mrs. Ray's father and husband.

The lumber was sawed by Frank P. Noyes of West Gouldsboro. A store, half its present size was built with an apartment above for Bessie and Len Ray.

The store carried general merchandise from the beginning with their line of furniture kept across the road in the tool house. The firm had two teams in a stable where the garage is, one delivered to Birch and Bunker's Harbors and the other to Corea.

The partnership dissolved in 1904. In 1910 Mr. Ray added another section the same size including a big back room 30 x 50 ft. for the furniture. This stock included mattresses, bed springs, chamber sets, chairs-rocking, arm, a captain type, an "1875". and porch-tables, wallpaper, window shades, crockery, hammocks, croquet sets, floor coverings-rugs, carpets, and the then popular dust sifters, straw matting.

Until good roads were built about 1920 Mr. Ray used trucks summers and his horse drawn teams winters. But in 1920 he gave up horses. In all he had two Model T's and two panel trucks in service.

In 1918 John Workman started working there and has been employed there ever since.

For nineteen of these busy years Mr. Ray found time to be the town's collector and treasurer.

Around 1935 the Ray's bought the house where Mrs. Ray now lives and they moved back and forth soending winters up the road in their home and the busy summer in the apartment above the store.

Even after Mr. Ray's death in 1940 Mrs. Ray continued the practice for a few years more of dividing the year between the two homes. Then she remained in her home up the road. Now her sister-in-law Ada Ray, stays in the store apartment summers and goes to Florida winters.

In 1945 Mrs. Ray discontinued the line of furniture and the back room is now a most orderly looking storeroom.

Although the store does not carry furniture it carries everything from the Farmer's Almanac to a large size garbage can with a varied sprinkling of stock in between of stationery, supplies for ladies who do handwork, drugs, added 10 to 15 years ago, gift wrappings, and of course food. It's the kind of store where one can always find numerous things to buy. There is one place behind a desk with room for two chairs where Mrs. Ray has created a cozy

corner for herself. There she can read, write, do business, or visit with a friend as she begins her 54th year at the same place of business her father and husband started in 1902.

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