



The Museum's General Store Display

General stores have existed since colonial times, but were especially popular from 1870 to 1930. Most general stores were two story buildings, with the second floor used as storage and a home for the merchant. The walls of the general store were lined with shelves full of merchandise. In front of the shelves, there were long counters that also displayed merchandise.

A trip to the general store was exciting. You could buy clothing and accessories, cloth, needles and thread, cooking utensils, irons, nails and tools, coffee, sugar, produce, seeds, medicine, and more. If you did not have enough money to buy what you needed, you could barter (or trade). Eggs or butter were often traded for merchandise. Sometimes farmers would buy items on credit and then settle their bill in the fall when they were paid for their crops.

The general store served as a community information center. Because the general store clerk knew everyone, he knew the latest local news. In the early days, mail was delivered to the general store and not to individual homes. Men would gather around the potbelly stove, play checkers, and have lively discussions.

