

# WASHBURN'S

*General Store & Community*

Open 9am-4:30pm Monday-Saturday, except Wed  
828.245.4129 or [www.WashburnStore.com](http://www.WashburnStore.com)

2426 Bostic Sunshine Hwy  
Bostic, North Carolina 28018

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## *Life's Good at Alumni Country Stores: Ed Washburn's Country Store*

In 1831, Benjamin Washburn opened a tavern on the stagecoach road between Rutherford and Lincoln Counties in North Carolina. Today, eight generations later, Washburn's store stands on almost the exact spot, which is now labeled 2426 Bostic-Sunshine Highway. It belongs to Ed Washburn '52 (graduated in 1952 from Wofford College) and his wife, Catherine. The present brick building dates from 1925.

Across the street from the store is the family home place, a mansion by standards of any time and locality. Erected by Ed's grandfather for a Texas bride, it was completed in 1914 at a cost of \$8,055.49, according to the original charge book in the store office. A two-story verandah with a view of horses grazing in a rolling pasture, bricks that were carefully hauled over the mountains from Tennessee, dark woodwork that lines a stately entrance hall, and wonderful family antiques and photographs make the home a truly memorable visit.

When we arrived in Washburn one morning in August, Ed shared some of his memories of student life on the Wofford Campus. As a freshman, he struggled to adjust to college academics. Eventually, he decided to join the Air Force and begin married life with Catherine, his childhood sweetheart. When he was discharged, he asked the late Frank Logan '41 for another chance to earn a Wofford degree and made the most of it. "We enjoyed our time together at the college," he remembers. "We lived in apartments moved in from Camp Croft and set up on the north side of Main Building for use by married students and young faculty families. They were

convenient, but they could be uncomfortable on a hot day — no air conditioning in those days."

Returning to North Carolina, Ed became involved in the managing of the family businesses. Until very recently, he was a licensed funeral director, operating a multi-generation professional establishment that was a natural byproduct of selling coffins to families giving up the old tradition of burying their dead in home-made pine boxes.

The Washburns also held a block of stock in the First State Bank of Bostic, which remarkably survived the Great Depression. "My grandfather, Nollie, picked up on the fact that people were about to start a run on his bank," Ed recalls. "He took the train from Bostic to the Federal Reserve in Charlotte and brought back two satchels filled with cash. He called the mail carriers and had them count it. On their routes the next day, they told everyone the bank had cash in the vault and was sound. Meanwhile, we had family in Forest City who lost everything they had in a bank failure."

The Bostic State Bank eventually became part of Wachovia, but today the old safe (compared by a recent writer to an armored washing machine) has a place of honor in the Washburn store.

Before we left, Ed offered us one of Bessie Smith's famous bologna, hoop cheese, and fresh lettuce-and-tomato sandwiches. Having read about this delicacy in an article in the January 2003 issue of *Our State* magazine, we eagerly accepted, along with a Coke in the classic, returnable bottle. Life was good.