

Local Treasure

Written by Dale Potruski

Monday, 04 May 2009 00:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 14 January 2010 19:29

Over the years, I have been fortunate to call many fascinating places home. In all these places, I have encountered knowledgeable and intelligent people, the finest of which I call friends.

Before we became residents of Saluda by taking over **The Oaks Bed and Breakfast**, my wife and I would stroll Main Street and visit its shops and restaurants.

It was here we heard the stories and developed an appreciation for the people who told them. We learned where the train depot was originally situated before it was moved to where it sits today and how the locomotives chugged through town on their way down the Saluda Grade.

Walk past the cafés and the shops and you find yourself at the “heart” of Main Street, the veritable “*Center of the Universe*” here in Saluda. A large diagonal crack runs through the thick pane of glass, yet does not disturb the hand lettering on the window, which proclaims this particular business as “

Merchandise

M. A. Pace General

”. Push

open the door and enter a world of curiosities, history and camaraderie.

Ceiling to floor shelves heaving with memorabilia and collectables all belonging to the man behind the counter, Robert Pace – a robust man for his years, bright, alert and talkative.

This place is what a General Store is supposed to be, before others calling themselves “General Stores” began selling hemp fabric garments and Life is Good T-shirts. This is where local folk find all of life’s daily needs; a barrel bolt and hasp; cake mix or tub caulk; Vienna Sausages or a garden rake; fishing tackle to a Moon Pie; locally made jams and jelly or PVC pipe -- Robert has it all!

Robert grew up in this unique place, a place where every picture and magazine has a special place and story. He remembers when Main Street was home to a bowling alley, a tearoom and a movie theatre and celebrities like Perry Como shopped his store.

He is a living-breathing history lesson and a treasure, as is his store. No visit to Saluda is complete without a trip to our Main Street.

And no trip to Main Street is complete without a visit with Robert at

M.A. Pace General Store.

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