



Murlin Sparger.

lot across the street to the Methodists to build a new church on. Uncle Frank Sparger (Marvin's grandfather) built a house next to ours.

In his young manhood, my father raised and manufactured tobacco in a small way. Later, he and his brother, Frank, built large brick factories on Willow St. (now occupied by Spencer's and Renfro Mills). They manufactured plug tobacco until the Tobacco Trust put the small manufacturers out of business. These buildings have recently been declared historic sites because of their age and unusual architecture. My father also had a general store in which he carried groceries and merchandise.

My father rode horseback through the deep south, selling his tobacco. He loved a good joke and he told one on himself. He stayed at a small hotel in Georgia one night. He had always suffered from asthma and thought he had to have fresh air in his room. He went to bed and couldn't get his breath. The room was dark but he groped his way around until he felt glass. He tugged and tugged, but the window wouldn't come up. He decided to take his shoe and break it, and pay the proprietor next morning. He went to bed and slept all night. Next morning, he found that he had broken the glass in a book case.

When the factories closed, my father had to make a new start in life. He moved to Elkin and bought a wholesale grocery store. We only stayed one year as the dampness from the Yadkin River didn't agree with his asthma.

We moved to Greensboro, where he also ran a wholesale grocery business. Later, he sold the store and bought tobacco for R.J. Reynolds Co. until he retired.

Sources: Moravian Archives — Winston-Salem, N.C.; facts remembered by Alma M. Sparger; Surry Co. Courthouse — Dobson, N.C.

— Miss Alma M. Sparger

THE WALTER SPARGER FAMILY

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The country store continues to play an important part in rural community life and this is

true of Beulah, a community ten miles west of Mount Airy, N.C., on highway 89.

Walter Creasy Sparger, a name that has been familiar to hundreds of Surry County citizens, operated a country store at Beulah for forty years until his retirement in the late 1960's. His son J.B. Sparger has continued the business. Through the years Walter furnished his customers anything they cared to buy, from a pair of shoes or some broad cloth to groceries, oil cloth, hardware or men's clothing. From the opening until now it has been an Exxon Service Station. From his storage warehouse he sold feed and fertilizer and later built a ham house to cure country hams.

Walter was born in a log cabin September 28, 1898, in the Beulah Community, the son of John (b. 1831 — d. 1912) and Verginita Brent Bobbitt Sparger (b. 1859 — d. 1934).



Walter and Sarah Snow Sparger picture made on their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

He grew up on a farm and at the age of 18 worked for 85¢ a day as a pruner and fruit grader for the Sparger Orchard near Mt. Airy. The orchard was owned by his cousins J.B. and Jim Sparger.

At the age of 21 he was a detective for the Marshall Field Co. in Leaksville. Through the years he kept in contact with many of the people he knew there. One of his friends at Marshall Field was Luther Hodges who later became Governor of N.C.

Walter clerked in stores in West Virginia and N.C., and on July 14, 1927, he opened his own country store at Beulah. People walked, rode horseback and came by buggy or wagon for miles around to trade.

They used the "barter system" in early days. Families brought eggs, chickens, butter, dried fruit, blackberries, shelled corn and tanned animal hides to exchange for their household needs. Kerosene oil was one of the main items sold since everyone used oil lamps.

The ladies bought a lot of cloth to make dresses, aprons, bonnets, etc. The men found their needs such as plow points, etc. Children picked berries and brought bantam eggs to buy tablets and pencils for school.

In 1932 a post office was established in the store building and Walter was postmaster for



Birthday party. front row, left to right — Gail Martin Shelton, Carol Sparger, Grandmother Alice Snow, Walter R. Sparger. back row, left to right — Ned Martin, Joy Martin, Ivylyn Sparger Martin, Walter C. Sparger, Sara Snow Sparger, Goldie Sluder Sparger and Cheryl Sparger.



Left to Right — Cheryl Sparger, J.B. Sparger, Goldie Sluder Sparger, Walter R. Sparger and Carol Sparger.

the Bottom Post office for a number of years.

March 17, 1928, Walter married Sara Jane Snow, a neighbor girl. Sara was born April 30, 1905, the daughter of Sara Alice Goings and Preston Hall Snow. When they married, Sara was teaching primary grades at Zion Hill School, a two-teacher school. When J.B. was in the second grade she decided to go back to teaching at Beulah School. She taught a total of thirty-one years and retired in 1970. Sara and Walter had two children, Ivylyn Arlene Sparger (b. 1930) and Joseph Bryson Sparger (b. 1935). Ivylyn graduated from Appalachian State University and married Ned Herman Martin (b. 1928). They have two daughters, Aleta Gail Martin (b. 1956) married Johnny Ray Shelton (b. 1958) and Joy Lynn Martin (b. 1965). Ivylyn taught high school home economics in Forsyth County, at Beulah, and North Surry. She has been Surry County School Food Service Director since 1966. Ned owns and operates a dairy farm and they live in the Beulah community.

J.B., a graduate of Steed College, married Goldie Jaunita Sluder (b. 1930). Their children are: Carol Dawn Sparger (b. 1963), Walter Russell Sparger (b. 1965). Cheryl Ann (b.

1967). Goldie graduated from Steed College and received an MA degree from ASU. She has taught at Lees McRae College, Beulah and North Surry High and Surry Community College.

Walter's father, John Sparger, grew up near Mt. Airy and as a young man plowed and cultivated the land where the town of Mt. Airy now stands. His father's sister sold the land where the Granite Quarry now is for \$100 per acre. No one knew that it was of any value.

Walter said his family raised almost everything on their farm. They grew wheat for bread, rye for chop corn, cane for molasses and all kinds of roots and herbs were used for medicine. The pastures were mild grass and broom sage, which they burned off in early spring so tender sage would come up.

Walter's family included Nancy (Nannie) Jane Sparger (b. 1883 — d. 1964) married Newton Boyles (b. 1874 — d. 1956). Calvin Sparger (b. 1886 — d. 1945) married Lillie Palmer (b. 1883). Lou Sparger (b. 1888 — d. 1953) married Grover Cleveland Atkins (b. 1884 — d. 1950). John Frank Sparger (b. 1890 — d. 1956). Lee R. Sparger (b. 1892 — d. 1945) married Sallie Collins (b. 1896 — d. 1944) and Dewitt Sparger (b. 1894 — d. 1972) married Lura Jean Wagoner (b. 1896 — d. 1981).

Walter was known far and near for his good "country cured hams." His hams were bought by Southern Railway, Rays Restaurant and many individuals. He was quite surprised to have Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken Restaurants to visit him and ask him to furnish hams for his restaurants. Walter said at his age he would not be interested in any new business adventures.