



CALLAWAY GROCERY IN DECATUR—For more than 45 years, this structure on Sycamore Street in Decatur has housed a grocery store, a business occupied by several families. It is now operated by Mrs. Louise Callaway, who has been there for three years. (NEWSphoto by Ed LaBorwit).

10/24/79

Anachronism

Tiny Decatur Grocery Stands As Relic Of Past

By ED LABORWIT

The Callaway Grocery in Decatur is a small business that makes a lot of young friends for an enterprising woman.

It is also one of DeKalb County's anachronisms, a place out of its proper time, a tiny food market that was there 45 years ago and remains part of a residential area.

It is as out of place as the old corner drugstore that had a soda fountain, and the "billiard parlor" that attracted a neighborhood's adults so many years ago.

By all historical rights, places like the Callaway Grocery should be gone with an old-fashioned wind.

Then, again, there are the rights of Louise Callaway, a former Scottdale child-sitter, who says, "I have a lot of kids come through here and I love them all. They call me Louise; they call my mother Granny; they call my husband Dave. And, they come from all over, from Glennwood Elementary, Renfro Middle School and Decatur High."

HOW DID Louise Callaway get where she is today, in that one-room store, with one counter and an extension telephone to the family's living quarters?

Louise Callaway has owned the store for three years, since she left her job as a sitter in Scottdale. Her husband, Dave, has retired due to a respiratory illness.

Before the Callaways came to the store in Decatur, the place was called "Carlisle Grocery," and, before that, Louise believes, the place was called "Mitchell Grocery."

"This place has been a grocery store for 45 years," says Louise Callaway, "and folks around here say it'll never be anything but a grocery store."

She adds, "We plan to stay here. Business is not too good, but I have a lot of friends here. A lot of these kids I've been knowin' ever since I've been here. I've seen them grow up, and some of them tell me their problems."

"I just enjoy being here...if I moved anywhere else, I'd have to start over."

That is Louise Callaway's realistic outlook about her life at the store, a place which carries a twist of irony.

Forty years ago, Louise Callaway's uncle, Marvin Fortner, met a girl named Marie Rice at the store.

Marvin and Marie were married, and they now live in Scottdale.

"We're real happy here," says Louise. "We've been here three years and we're satisfied."