

Celebrate...from Page 1A

and flannel shirts. They sold items likely to suit most farmers. They also sold household items, food, and milk.

When families fell on hard times, Hoyt and Ruby made sure they didn't do without, oftentimes making mid-night deliveries of groceries to those that they knew were in need.

Hoyt and Ruby became extended family for many families in the Union County community.

Their children, Bonnie, Jim, and Eddy grew up in the store, helping with the family business.

Ruby died in 1995; Hoyt died in 2002.

A tradition of family was born at Alexander's, and it continues today.

On Saturday, Sept. 14th, that store, which started with meager beginnings, celebrates its 60th anniversary.

It's also a day to remember the legacy of Hoyt and Ruby Alexander.

The Alexander family will celebrate the day with door prizes, and refreshments from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. And, the day also features a whale of a sale - 75 percent off many in-store items during store hours.

Hoyt and Ruby's youngest son, Eddy, and his wife Sandy say to come on by and share your favorite memories of Alexander's Store.

The store has gone through a transformation from the days when Hoyt and Ruby first opened its doors.

Over the years, the store has shifted its focus from satisfying farmers in the early years, to today's store featuring clothing, sporting goods, furniture and appliances.

They also carry one of the finest displays of weaponry and outdoor adventure gear as you can find in the country.

As the sign above the door reads, *Everything under the Sun*.

Hoyt, Eddy says, was slow in handing the store's keys over to him.

"It took 25-30 years to wrestle those keys out of his hands," Eddy said. "Dad was hands on, he believed he could take care of everything. He started to back off when he got in his early 80s, and let me start taking care of everything then."

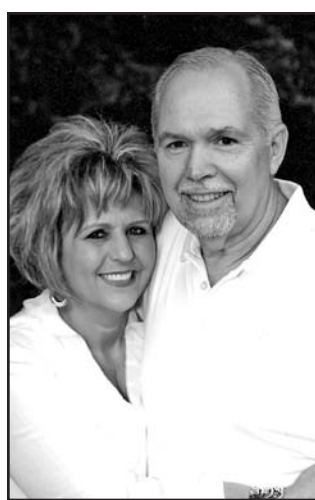
Eddy was well prepared



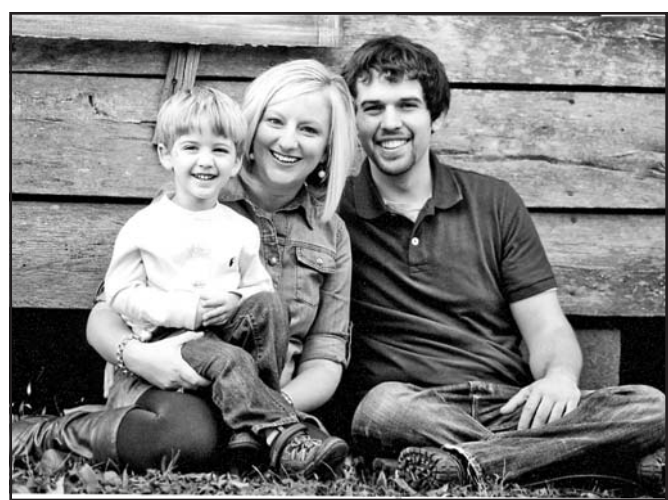
Hoyt Alexander



Ruby Alexander



Sandy and Eddy Alexander



Sawyer, Kennetha and Mark Alexander.



The Alexander Clan in recent times. Kennetha, Mark, Sawyer, Sandy, Eddy and Paul.

to take the reins, having earned a degree in accounting and business administration from North Georgia College in Dahlonega.

The store is in transition today, from Eddy and Sandy Alexander, to a third generation Alexander, Hoyt's grandson and Eddy and Sandy's youngest son Mark.

Together with his wife Kennetha, Mark spends much of his time focused on the store's operation.

Today, Eddy has cut back to working 40 hours a week.

Mark says if he's not at the store, he's thinking about the store.

"I work in the store six days a week," Mark said. "Even when I'm not there, I'm thinking about the store."

"It's not something that you can forget when you go home," he said. "It weighs on your mind."

"My grandfather planted seeds that came to fruition when my father started running the store," Mark said. "My father has planted seeds that have come to pass."

"My goal is to plant seeds that will come to pass as well. I want to follow in grandfather's footsteps and my father's footsteps and be a businessman that they can both be proud of at the end of the day."

Kennetha said being a member of the Alexander family has been a natural for her.

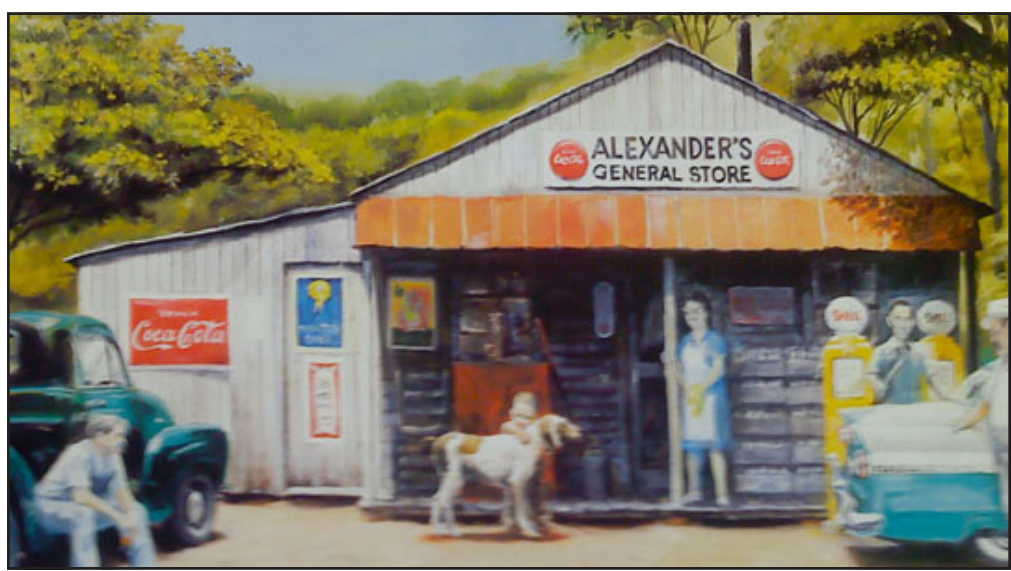
"It's like I've always been a member of the family," she said. "Working at the store is an experience. I never dreamed that there was so much to working retail."

"I never knew there was so much involved in owning your own business," she said. "A lot of people think that owning your own business is a real charmed life. Well, there's a lot of work. It's constantly on your mind; even when you're not at work, you're thinking about work. It's a lot of work to stay on top of everything."

Mark's mother, Sandy, says the sky is the limit for the store's future.

"I don't see us backing off," Sandy said. "God has blessed us."

Eddy says Hoyt's vision of a store on the outskirts of



A depiction of the early years of Alexander's General Store. Photos/courtesy the Alexander Family.

town looks like a winner.

Eddy tried to get him to move to town years ago, but Hoyt resisted.

Today, the appeal of rolling hills and green grass is the

magic that brings people back to Alexander's, Eddy said.

Does the future include another store?

"Well, we've got Hoyt's (furniture and appliances) in

town," Eddy said. "The next logical step is to build Ruby's (a mirror store to Hoyt's). Where will we build Ruby's? I think Hiawassee is the logical choice. We'll see."



Eddy Alexander says to come on out on Saturday and share your fondest memory of Alexander's Store.