

ROCKFIELD GROCERY
(Rockfield Country Store)
Albemarle County Country Stores Survey
Off of Route 250
Charlottesville
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1381

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

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ROCKFIELD GROCERY

HABS No. VA-1381

Location:

Off of Route 250, Charlottesville, ^{VICINITY} Albemarle County, Virginia.

Rockfield Grocery is located in Charlottesville, Virginia, off of Route 250 at the Ivy Exit. The building sits against a road lined with farmland. The road is two lanes and not heavily traveled. There are, however, a few houses nearby, including a residence associated with the property to the rear. There is a long gravel driveway, that begins at the street and then runs along the store on the west side, leading to this residence. The residence, built ca. 1950, is unobtrusive as there is a large setback from the street and the store. Immediately adjacent to the store is gently undulating, grass covered land; there are no trees in the vicinity of the store.

Historical Data:

The store building was constructed in 1935 as a grocery. At that time, it was owned by G.F. Ray. The store sold flour and feed in addition to general merchandise.

Architectural Description:

Exterior:

Simple in its massing, the store is rectangular in shape and is covered by a gable roof. Attached to the front of the main rectangular mass of the building is an entrance canopy. The gambrel roof of the entrance canopy is supported by two log columns (fig. 6). The building sits on a concrete foundation. The land around the building slopes to the north and west. The foundation is not visible at the southeast corner of the building, but is visible at the other three building corners. The entire building is clad in clapboard siding and the roofing material is standing seam metal. The building also features double-hung, sash windows. There are two windows on the north elevation, two on the west, and two on the east. There are no windows in the south elevation. The north windows are glazed with four-over-four lights, while the others are glazed with six-over-six lights. The building is heated by an interior, brick chimney located in the middle of the east side of the main gable roof (fig. 9). There is only one entry to the building and it is located on the north facade. It is raised above the level of the entrance canopy and is accessible by a concrete step followed by a step to a wood threshold (fig. 5). Two windows covered with shutters flank the entry door. The shutters feature an awning type mechanism that allows the shutters to swing up (fig. 3).

Interior: Once inside the building, the interior is one large open room. The ceiling is approximately 9' high. The south and west walls feature full-height, built-in shelving of simple construction. There are also two built-in counters in front of the shelving on both walls. The counters have a fine, dark wood finish. There is no ornamental detailing. However, the counter on the west side of the room features a built-in cash register drawer on the underside of the countertop. The drawer slides out to reveal carved wood basins for holding currency. The room has white painted walls, a floor covered with modern carpet, and a finished ceiling. A small section of the finished ceiling on the east side of the room has a place for a stove pipe attachment where a stove once stood.

The entirety of the building is Period One, or dating to the original construction campaign of 1935. There have been no major alterations to the exterior. The interior of the building is intact as well. The original built-in shelving and counters remain in situ. The only modern addition on the interior is the carpeting on the floor, but the only significant alteration consists of the removal of a stove that was once connected to the chimney.

The building is fairly well maintained. There is no apparent structural damage, and all of the exterior building materials appear to be in good shape. There is no indication of rotting in any of the wood fabric, such as the clapboards or windows, and the roofing appears free of rust. The only recommended exterior renovation is cosmetic at this juncture – the clapboards need painting.

The interior of the building is also well maintained. The original wood counters and built-in shelving are intact. The counters have a nice finish and the shelves have been recently painted. Like the exterior, suggested renovations are cosmetic. The modern carpeting could be taken up to expose the (original ?) wood flooring below. More of a concern than aesthetics is the water damage visible in the ceiling around the stove pipe (fig. 10). The source of this water should be identified and steps taken to correct the problem; likely the water is coming in through the chimney, which is no longer in use (fig. 9).

Historian(s): Gabrielle Harlan, May 2003.

Project Information: The documentation of the Rockfield Grocery took place as part of Louis Nelson's (2003) field methods class at the University of Virginia, School of Architecture, Department of Architectural History. Students recorded various structures through measured drawings and written description; the record the

students created was dependent on their ability to read what the structure was telling them about its construction history rather than on traditional documentary research. This structure was also part of the Albemarle County Country Stores Survey.

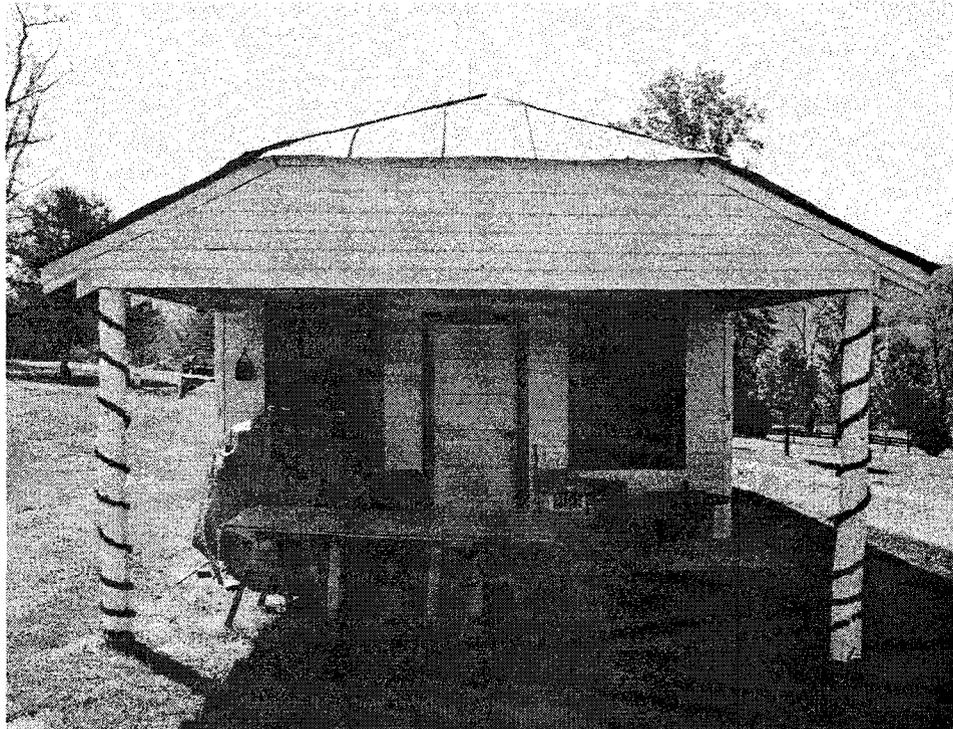


Fig. 1
Rockfield Grocery
North Elevation

The front facade of the building features an entrance canopy supported with log columns. The columns support a gambrel roof which is covered in standing-seam metal. The only entry to the building is located on this facade and is raised off the ground with two steps. The entry is flanked by two windows covered with shutters.

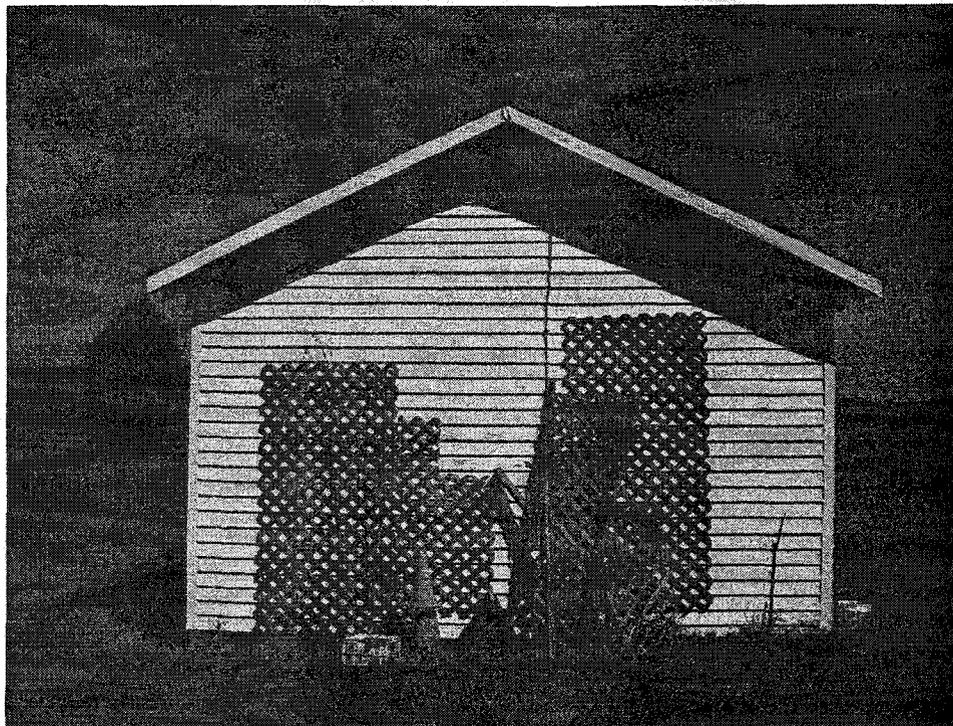


Fig. 2
Rockfield Grocery
South Elevation

The rear facade of the building has no doors or windows. It features the clapboard siding that is used on the entirety of the building.

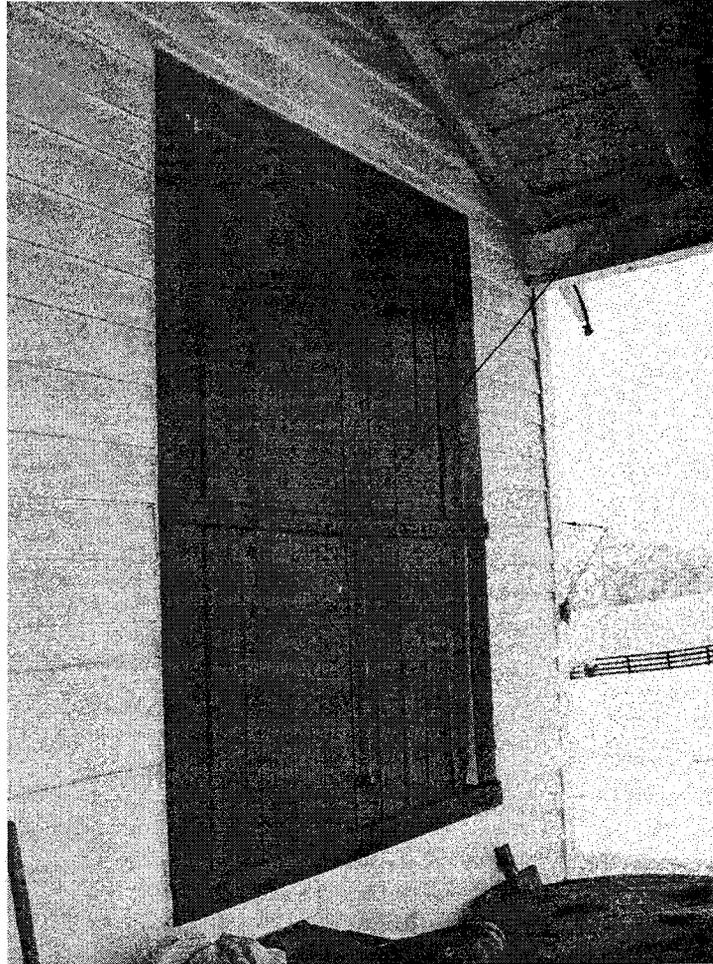


Fig. 3
Rockfield Grocery
Detail of Shutter
The shutters that cover the two windows on the North Elevation have an awning-type operating mechanism.

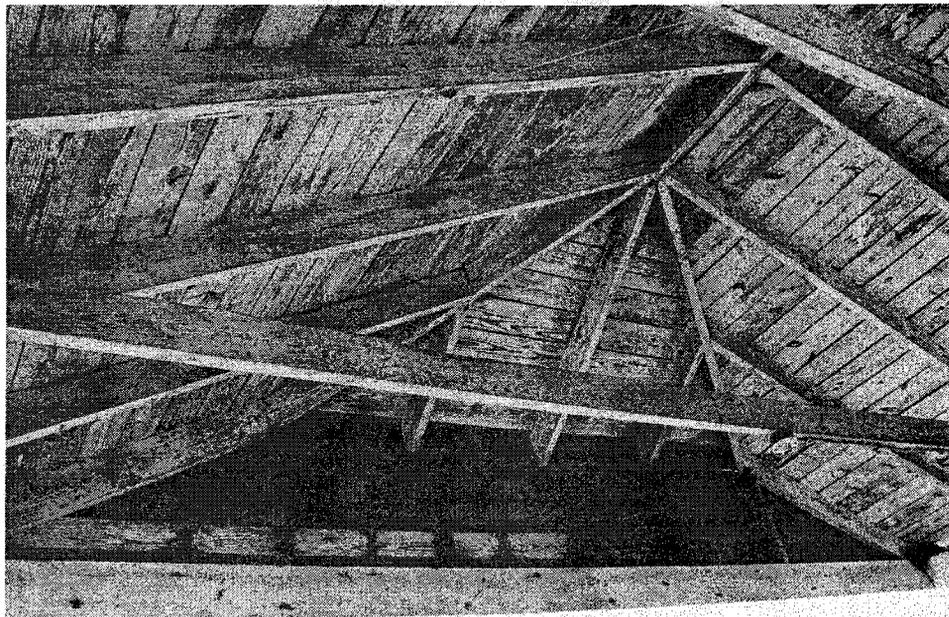


Fig. 4
Rockfield Grocery
Framing of Entrance Canopy
The roof framing of the porte cochere is visible, and is simple wood framing painted white. A portion of the wood appears to be replacement wood, as it is unpainted.

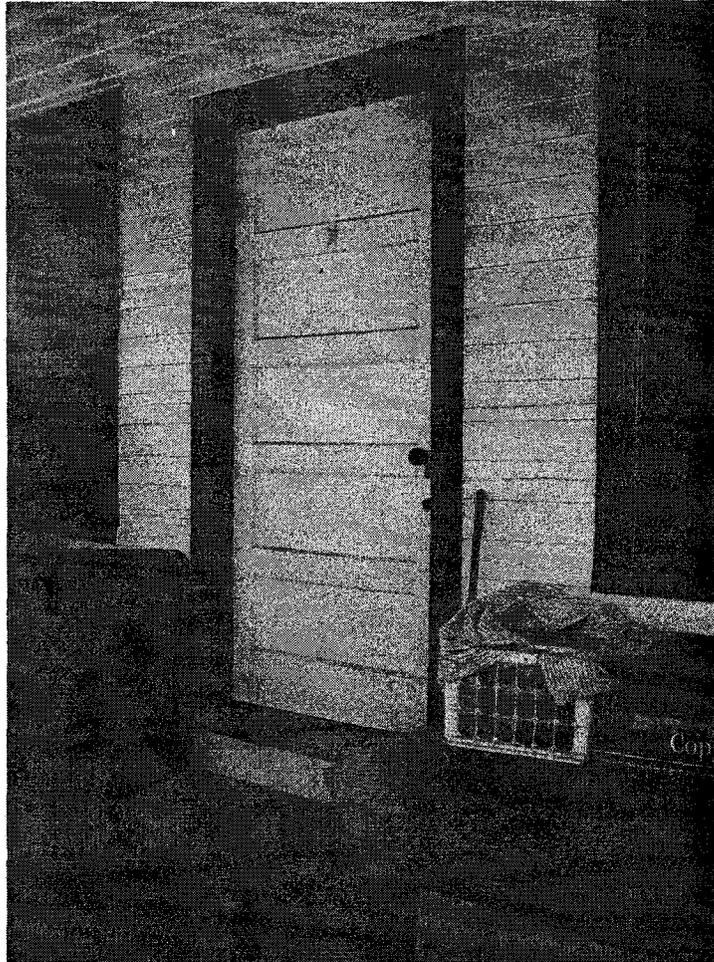


Fig. 5
Rockfield Grocery
Detail of Entry
The entry is raised above the ground level of the porte cochere. There is a concrete step and a wood threshold.



Fig. 6
Rockfield Grocery
Detail of Log Column
The log columns at the porte cochere are notched to receive the roof framing. The columns are painted white.

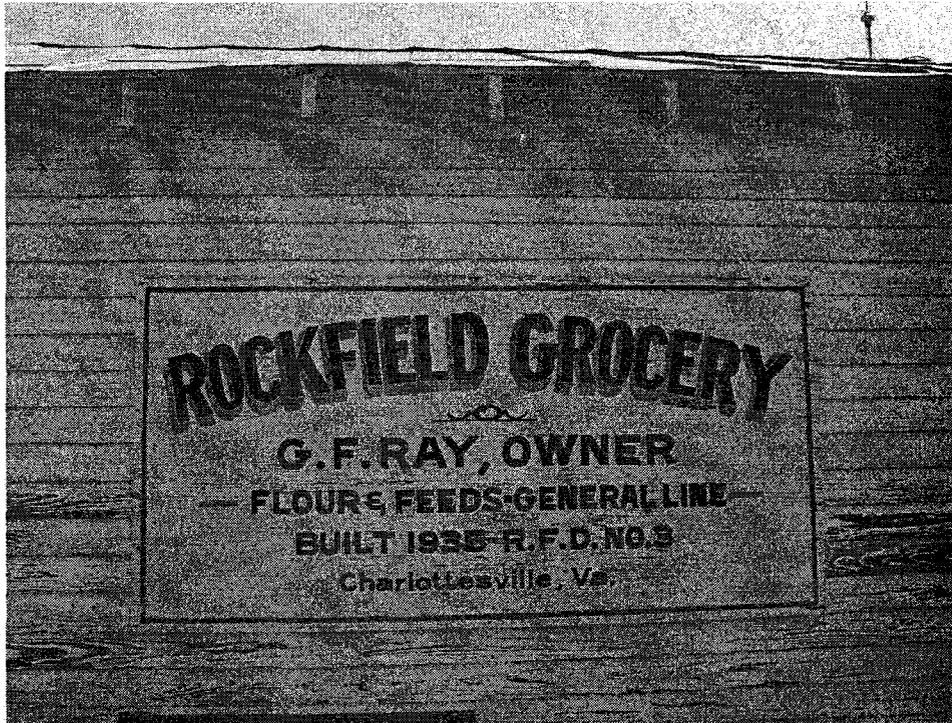


Fig. 7
Rockfield Grocery
Detail of Signage

The signage affixed to the West Elevation is painted wood. The verbiage on the sign indicates that the store was built in 1935.

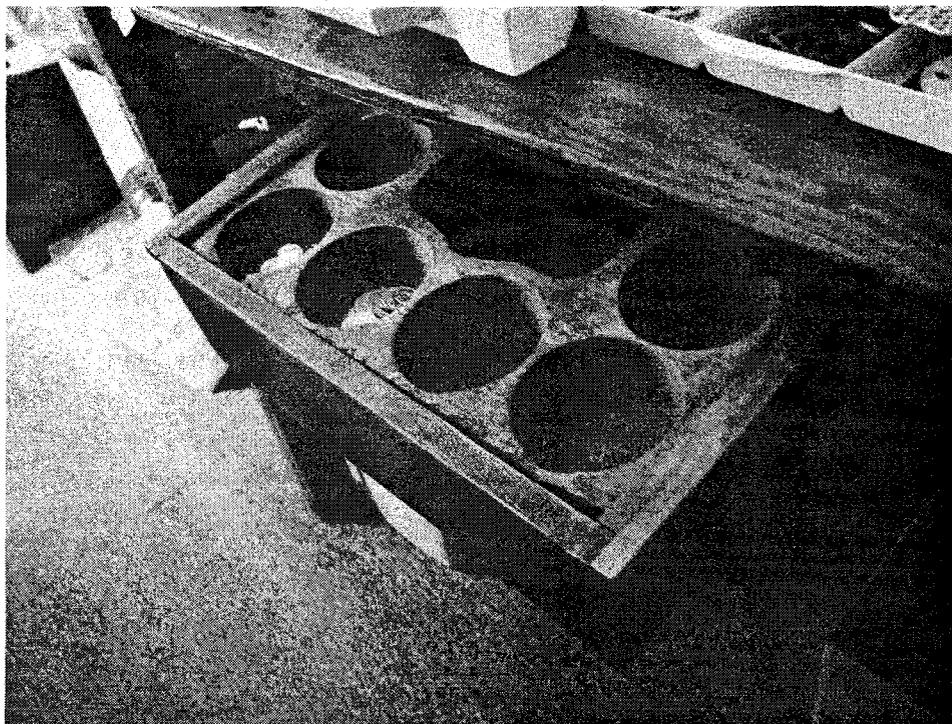


Fig. 8
Rockfield Grocery
Detail of Cash Register

The cash register is an integral component of the built in counter on the interior of the store. It slides out from underneath the countertop and features carved basins for money.



Fig. 9
Rockfield Grocery
Detail of Chimney
The brick chimney is no longer functional, but black charring on the brick suggests it was well-used at one time.

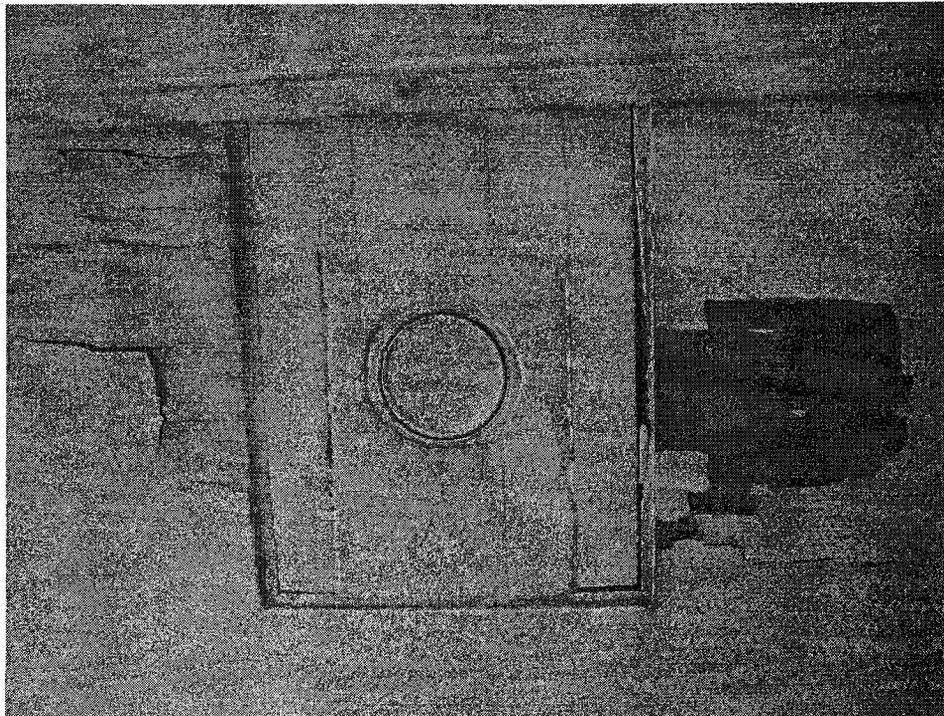


Fig. 10
Rockfield Grocery
Interior Ceiling with Stove Pipe
The store no longer features a stove, but the stove pipe remains visible in the ceiling. The chimney appears to be the source for the water damage surrounding the stove pipe.