The Old Country Store

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As life moves at a convenience pace, the general stores in little towns throughout Acadiana are just becoming things of the past.

"Chaotic d's Rooster for 50 cents" proclamations edge above the morning — long-faded flyers from the coffee shop's sign under the soothing Louisiana air. It was here that Grandad and Olga Branch sold ice drinks and a warm pot of coffee going at 5 a.m. and plate lunches around noon for the store figures. And it’s here that Henry LeDain's grandfather bought his first convenience store in the 1970s and his own daughter bought candies and soda in the 1990s.

Now the doors and windows are boarded up — from the raised water lines and language barriers met to the door, the only thing sold here these days are memories from the stand's front.

The shop in the little town of downtown Louisiana is quietly closed in doors for probably the first time in a few weeks ago, a post-teenage consequence of progress. "It was a place where we could hang out, a place to go to get away," says LeDain, who has lived near Chauvin & Breaux for nearly all of his life.

Indeed, little country towns like this one don't have the Acadiana countryside from Lake Charles to Breaux Bridge telling a certain shape of some that includes fresh produce, local products, chocolate bars and other items. This is the heart of the Acadiana community — and just about everything in between. And don't forget the bread and fruit.
... these mom and pop operations aren’t even struggling anymore for their survival. They’ve resigned themselves to their ultimate demise.

in Southern California...
Seventy-year-old Jack Doucet runs the counter, telling the occasional off-color joke and dispensing advice about small motor repair...

"Would you like to introduce me to your family?" he asks the group of children. "You're already here, aren't you?"

"We're always here," a child replies. "But we come here to learn something new."