



In 1979, a barrack was added to the back of the general store fronting Bandera Road.

7 Helotes General Store

1881

In the 19th century and into the early 20th century, a community's general store was a common feature of rural Texas. Patrons, predominantly farmers, came to the store, which often also housed the post office, as this one did, to buy their staples, and to socialize. Business transactions often involved trade and barter. Since farmers did not have ready cash until they sold their crops or livestock, purchases were frequently made on credit, with transactions recorded in ledger books.

Arnold Gugger (1855-1928) built the Helotes General Store in 1881. He and his wife Amalia "Mollie" Benke (1860-1921) founded downtown Helotes with the purchase of 110 acres at the intersection of Helotes Creek and Bandera Road that year. Using rock from a local quarry owned by Arnold's family, the couple built their homestead (see the Gugger Homestead next door) and this general store, which

they operated as a family business for more than twenty years.

The Helotes General Store operated under different proprietors for several decades. Phillip (1897-1949) and Ruth Maltzberger (1903-1993) purchased and ran the general store for almost twenty years starting in 1936. During their tenure, the general store became known as Maltzberger's. Ruth became the Helotes postmaster and ran the post office from the general store until 1944, when that position was taken over by her sister-in-law Blanche Maltzberger who lived next door in the Gugger Homestead. She moved the post office there.

After Philip's death, Ruth and her 25-year-old son, Frank, continued to run Maltzberger's. Despite the competition from the Red & White Grocery Store and Floore's Country Store, Maltzberger's was widely known as having the "best meat market" in town.

The general store was leased to Jack Nottingham (1919- 2010) from 1960 to 1965. Nottingham was a Grey Forest Community leader serving as Fire Chief, project manager for the Grey Forest Utilities, and alderman and mayor of the city of Grey Forest. He quipped, "People don't remember me, but they remember the Lowenbrau keg beer in the frozen mug I served [in the bar area]." The general store in Nottingham's era also included a grocery

Helotes General Store (cont.)

store and a meat market. In a remembrance, he wrote of Maltzberger's, "I did not make any money, but I got a lot of education and met a world of wonderful people."

In 1979, the Hickory Hut BBQ Restaurant opened, with a recently added military barrack attached to the back of the rock building. The popular BBQ eatery, with seating within the old General Store building and in the barrack, was in business for more than twenty-five years. Today, the General Store building is home to the popular women's boutique, [Cheetahlish](#), and the back barrack houses [B-Daddy's BBQ](#) restaurant.

