



Criders Corner

"I AM THE rarest of people," says Joyce Bessor — "one actually born in Criders Corners and more than that, still alive!" The photo shows her dad, Jay Miller, in front of his garage about 1924. "The empty area around the station is now part of the packed-in Cranberry Township boom in southern Butler County, and what was the service station for many years is now Instant Print King — still there, but not quite the same."

She says it was probably the oil fields (notice the oil derrick in the background) that brought Jay's father to Criders Corners, but "when I knew him, he didn't work anywhere but on his few acres of land at the northeast corner of Perry Highway (Dutilh Drive now) and the (old) Mars Road. That intersection was the true Criders Corners."

Bessor's grandparents, Bill and Eva Miller, "grew corn, had a large garden, kept chickens, and a cow, Daisy, from whom we received all our milk. Eva churned butter, made soap, canned her garden produce, baked bread, and

did all the things a good farm wife would do. We butchered a pig sometimes in the fall and Grandma made the usual disgusting things from all parts of the pig, including 'head cheese.' I was never a real farm kid, but I certainly was a country kid.

"Jay's garage was a general repair facility, and he also sold Erskines and Studebakers. Those were the days when one took orders for cars, then went to the factory and drove them home. Everyone got a used car, or perhaps they looked at it as a road-tested car. One can only imagine the condition the cars were in when they got here, about 450 miles later."

In the photo, Jay is 27, "unmarried, played baseball with the local leagues which were, I hear, pretty good teams; he sold the station (and my birthplace next door!) in the early 1930s and was a machinist at a Zelienople plant, so we moved to Zelienople." Joyce Bessor still lives there, serving as director of the Zelienople Historical Society. — *By Brian Butko, photo courtesy Joyce Bessor.*



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