

Displacement of the Hill Folks

Fort Leonard Wood - in the beginning

by Terry Primas

Pearl Harbor was more than a year away. The United States was doing its best to support Britain with munitions, supplies, and ships (dubbed the Lend Lease Plan). The idea was to support England's war effort against the Axis Powers, particularly Germany, and that would keep America from direct involvement. The United States was woefully unprepared for war, whether it be a defensive one on the home front or an offensive action in Europe or Africa. Troop strength in the fall of 1939 was only 190,000 men.

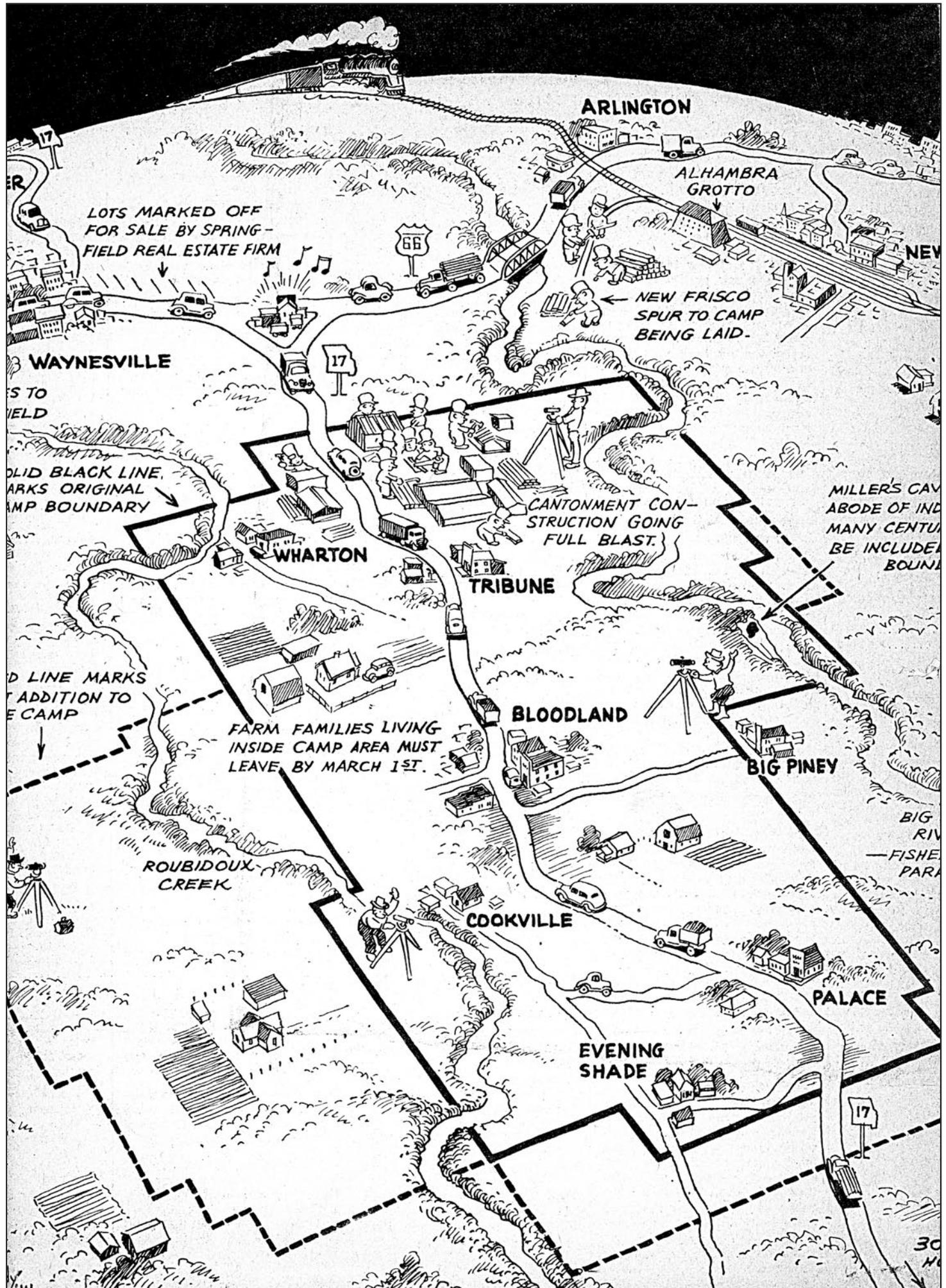
The newly sworn in Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, was determined to transform the poorly organized and antiquated army into a modern fighting force. His plans included new field manuals, a new training model, a one million man army by October 1941, and two million men by January of 1942.

Marshall requested additional funds and men from President Roosevelt but the President refused. Even though German armies had rolled over Poland and a half dozen other countries in short order, the isolationists and a Congress bent on keeping out of the war were not likely to go along, the President reasoned.

However, when France fell in June of 1940, the Roosevelt Administration and Congress acquiesced and even surpassed Marshall's request with an emergency appropriation of \$657 million. The country began preparing for the inevitable.

The Draft

Building a million man army by volunteers was less than likely and conscription during what was still peacetime was even more remote. Given that 1940 was an election year, getting Congress to institute a draft seemed hopeless. Additionally, the Secretary of War was Harry Woodring, an isolationist. President Roosevelt was convinced that he must replace Woodring (Roosevelt was always reluctant to fire anyone) and Henry L. Stimson was confirmed as his replacement. Stimson was an admirer of General Marshall. On the day that Stimson was confirmed, the Burke-Wadsworth bill was introduced in Congress. It would establish a draft during peacetime. Stimson was confirmed with little opposition and the draft legislation, named the Selective Service Act of 1940, passed with a comfortable margin. It obligated draftees for a term of



The dark black line marks the Fort Leonard Boundary as envisioned in December of 1940. The dotted line denotes the 1941 proposed addition to the fort. The boundary line changed several times but what didn't change was the disappearance of four small communities: Wharton, Tribune, Cookville, and Bloodland. Evening Shade and Palace continued outside of the fort boundary. The map will give the reader an idea of the population concentrations, although it is not to scale. This graphic first appeared in the *Springfield News Leader* on January 19, 1941. Roberta M. Routh, Pulaski County Director of the Social Security, Division of Public Assistance, later used it in her report, "The Army Comes to the Ozarks," in June of 1941.

twelve months, which turned out to be shortsighted.

While the draft produced one million inductees, there was not an accompanying surge in equipment or training camps. Draftees trained with stovepipe rifles and cardboard tanks. Many soldiers were just waiting for OHIO, meaning "over the hill in October," when most terms of service would be up and a massive desertion would occur. It was apparent that the large army Marshall had envisioned would dissolve if the War Department did not provide better training and more places to do it.

Legislation was introduced that would extend the term of service another eighteen months (and, later, for the duration of the war). This was seen by many as the country going back on its word to the draftees. There was a bitter debate in Congress, with the isolationist Midwest violently opposed to the extension. The vote on August 12 was a squeaker: 203 for and 202 against with charges that Speaker Sam Rayburn had called an end to voting too quickly. Good planning would have had camps built before the men arrived for training. Good planning was not the order of the day yet.

Training Camps

The men needed were now in place but there needed to be more places for the men. Fort Bragg in North Carolina had already started a major enlargement, with a labor force of 28,500 working around the clock. The fort was tripled in size, with a reception center capable of processing 1,000 men upon arrival. Twenty 63-man barracks were erected, as well as a new hospital for 1,680 soldiers with 99 interconnected buildings.

It was determined that 69 new army camps would have to be built to train the 1.4 million men that conscription would provide. Landscapes were about to change with surging new roads, hurried infrastructure, and the required services buildings popping up overnight. It would require 400,000 construction workers, 908,000 gallons of paint, 3,500 carloads of nails, and 10 million square feet of wallboard to construct the new training facilities.

Most of the new camps were established on the east and west coasts and in the Old South. The camps needed plenty of land for training, rifle ranges, etc. They also needed an adequate water supply and transportation access

Originally, the new training camp was to be built in Iowa.

in the form of good highways or railroads, preferably both. In the midwest, one camp would be located just out of the Ozark region, near Little Rock, Arkansas and named Camp Robinson. The camp was named for Joseph T. Robinson, former Arkansas Representative, Governor, and U. S. Senate Majority Leader and a New Deal

supporter for President Roosevelt.

Another training camp was planned for Iowa, but the site proved to have inadequate water resources. It would cost a

million dollars to construct a reservoir to supply water for the size of the planned camp. It was relocated to the central Ozarks, in Missouri, in Pulaski County.

South central Pulaski County was a good location for a large training camp. The location between the Roubidoux Creek and Big Piney watersheds promised a more than adequate water supply. Additionally, there were several large springs in the vicinity. Before a treatment plant could be built, water was hauled from Blue (Shanghai) Spring, whose flow is 12 million gallons per day, located just outside the northeast boundary of the fort. The

camp would also be located within a few miles of Route 66, although the narrow and winding Main Street of America proved inadequate at first to handle the traffic jams caused by construction workers and the delivery of materials. This would be remedied by the construction of a four lane highway east of Hooker to just east of Waynesville's city limits, although not in time for the initial construction phase. What was missing was rail service. A railroad spur was constructed during the initial construction from January-April of 1941. Its creation was as daunting and noteworthy as the building of the fort itself.

There was one other obstacle to be overcome before the fort could be completed and operational: there were 304 families living inside the proposed boundary.

The Land

The War Department announced in late October of 1940 that it planned to build an army training base in the Gasconade Unit of the Mark Twain National Forest. Surveyors were on the land in November. The base would be almost entirely in the southeastern part of Pulaski County. Land acquisition would start immediately for a training center that would house 40,000 soldiers

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and officers with construction to be completed by April 1, 1941, a scant six months away. If any citizens were paying attention to the national news, they were under the impression that a mid-west camp would be built in Iowa. The announcement that Pulaski County had been chosen instead took the local population by surprise. There was little time for rumor of the coming fort or for land speculation in the interim. The government already owned about 12,000 acres in the proposed area but it was determined by War Department planners that 65,000 acres were needed, the additional 53,000 acres coming from private landowners.

The Forest Service was put in charge of land acquisition. The area within the cantonment or where the buildings would be constructed was condemned and the people living therein were given only a few weeks to vacate — by December 3rd. Those living outside the construction site could stay temporarily but all residents would have to be gone by the April 1 completion date.

The relocation affected 304 families, ranging from those living on a hard-scrabble ridge top homestead in a one-room log home on a half acre to a ten-room, two-story house on an 800-plus acre productive farm. The average, of course, was in between, closer to the first than the second situation.

Not all of the 304 families owned the land they lived on. Some were tenant farmers or renters. There was a total of 570 landowners, including the owners of tenant farms and those who owned acreage but did not live on the land.

Some parcels were owned and maintained for recreation. Dr. James Titterington, the dentist who owned the Old Stagecoach Stop at the time of acquisition, had 33.5 acres on the east bound-

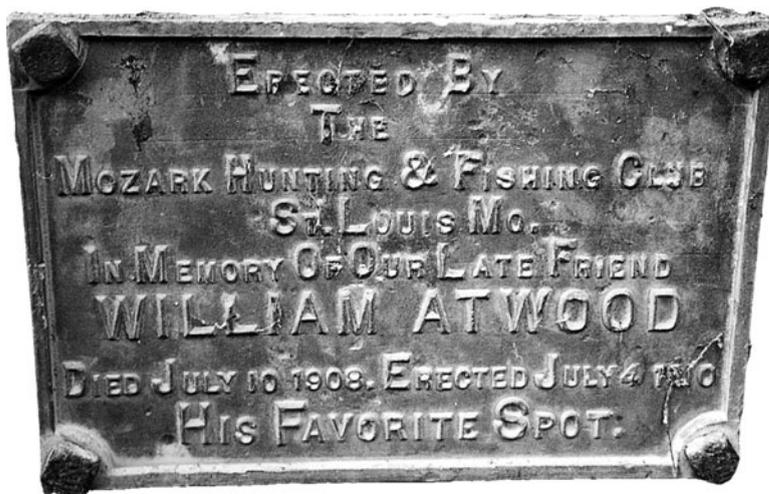
ary. It was taken for construction of the railroad spur from Newburg.

The Sand Springs Hunting and Fishing Club had 83 acres and was located at the tip of a big bend in the Big Piney River, across from the Ramsey farm mentioned below. The club was joined on the upstream (south) side by 20 acres belonging to Mozarco Investment Company. Mozarco also owned 98 acres on the downstream side of the club. We are curious as to the relationship between Mozarco and the Sand Springs Hunting and Fishing Club. Another curiosity is a plaque found on a boulder four miles upstream from the Mozarco property (see picture above).

The size of the land parcels acquired varied greatly in size, from one acre to 1098 acres. The largest parcel belonged to Monroe Ramsey, whose farm was on the east side of the Big Piney in a long elbow of the river. The Ramseys had been farming that land since the 19th century and today part of it is Piney Hills, the Fort Leonard Wood golf course, and Happy Hollow recreation area.

The second largest farm, 886 acres, belonged to Roy and Jaretta Laughlin, also an established family, whose farm was in the Cedar Hill neighborhood on Roubidoux Creek, west of the fort's current horse stable (see sidebar on page 37).

The Christeson family, long time active members in county affairs, had ten family members lose their farms that



This plaque was bolted to a large dolomite rock below Miller Spring on the Big Piney River in 1910. It seems the Mozark Hunting and Fishing Club of St. Louis had property across the river from the Ramsey farm on the camp site. Photo by Terry Primas.

ranged in size from 80 acres to 600 acres. Family cemeteries, holding the remains of some of the county's earliest settlers, changed hands with all three of these farms.

The Page family had farmed land north of the village of Big Piney for three generations (see article "Big Piney" on page 48.) Three Page agriculturalists had farms optioned, totaling 1054 acres, with 910 of those acres belonging to Robert Page.

Some of the land surely were investments for the owners. George Lane, Pulaski County Tax Collector, had 850 acres among three farms. Claude H. Morgan, lawyer and proprietor of an abstract company, owned nine scattered parcels, mostly 40 acre tracts, totaling 449 acres.

Farms and homes were not the only things that ceased to exist. Four school districts went out of business. No longer would the school bells ring at Bloodland C-1 (the largest), Dundas, Palace #64, Dry Creek #53, Lone Star #51, Low Gap #56, St. Anne #66, Union

(Tribune) #52, and Rolling Heath #55.

Along with the schools closing, area churches closed their doors. Hymns and prayers fell silent at Friendship Baptist, Bloodland Methodist Episcopal, Christian, and two locations of Fire Baptised Holiness churches.

Foresters visited each of the affected families and "took an option." Apparently, the head of the household was asked to value his holdings and the government would take into consideration the conditions of the land and buildings and set the price.

The People

Several agencies were involved in assessing a family's situation and providing assistance, including the Missouri Social Security Commission, Farm Credit Administration, Farm Security Administration, Missouri Agricultural Extension Service, Missouri College of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

These agencies were concerned about the welfare of the displaced families. Assistance was provided in several ways. Meetings were held to discuss the displacement, demonstrations of new farming methods, and loans and grants for the relocations.

Albert E. Mussman, Assistant Agricultural Economist, Division of State and Local Planning, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, finalized a report in July of 1941 that assessed the existing situation. Mussman focused on land use and farming practices, as well as the living conditions. Much of what we know about the area's agriculture



A forester is taking an option on this ten acre farm. The house is a two-room log structure built within the last ten years. It provides shelter for the father (age 53) and mother (48) and their six children, ranging in ages from 6 to 27, all living in the home plus the maternal grandmother, who is 85 years old. "Housing facilities are inadequate for families of this size," according to the Mussman Report. Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection.



The southern part of Pulaski County had long been a favorite hunting and fishing destination for St. Louis sportsmen. The original picture caption reads, "Favorite hunting grounds disturbed. This is Carter and Mize, St. Louis Cardinals baseball aces." Johnny Mize (right) was a first baseman with the 1936-1941 Cardinals, highly paid with a salary of \$7,500. No "Carter" could be found on the Cardinals' rosters of the era. Mussman Report.



The military spirit comes to the cantonment area in the antics of these lads of the Union school at Tribune dressed up to play soldier. They're delighted that soon they will have a chance to observe the brisk activity of military life and maneuvers. This school, one of several in the area, probably will be moved from its present site [It was not moved, just closed and dozed.] *Springfield News and Leader*.

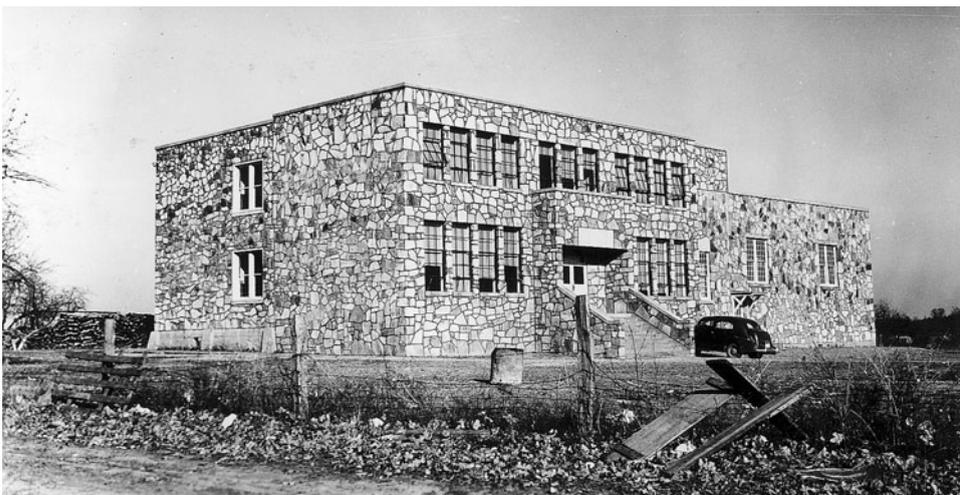
before the fort construction radically changed the landscape is from Mussman, including some excellent snapshots (2 1/2" by 4 1/2" prints, Kodak 616 film size) taken by Fowler A. Young of the Agricultural Extension Service.

Mussman observed that the generally rolling topography featured timber land that had been cut over and burned and that only a small amount of good timber remained, outside of that managed by the Forest Service. The soil was gravelly except for the good bottom land farms along the Big Piney and Roubidoux watercourses, where the principle crop was corn. Mussman noted that a large percent of the corn was white rather than yellow. Lespedeza was the most widely grown crop on the ridge land. The livestock of sheep, hogs, and cows were of poor to fair quality.

As for the farmsteads, Mussman describes them as follows:

The buildings on the farmsteads are in very poor state of repair and give the ap-

pearance of being owned by families who have suffered for many years with a low income. There are also many cases where lack of pride and interest in the home prevails. There are, of course, a few exceptions to this. There are very few houses on farms in the area that would be considered in good condition. The houses are mostly log and native plank structures. They are furnished with a meager amount of poor quality furniture. The conveniences for the housewife and family in most the homes is very limited. It was seldom found that the family enjoyed the comfort of running water, electricity, or telephone. However, it is surprising to know that a large per cent of the families have a radio. The houses, for the most part, are small, many having only two or three rooms. There are, of course, occasional houses with six or eight rooms but these large houses are usually very old and sadly in need of repair. The out-buildings generally consist of one or two log sheds and native plank poultry houses. Occasionally one finds a sizable barn. However, there are many farms in the area that have



Bloodland School was originally built in 1917-18 and a gym was added in 1937 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Bloodland School was one of the last buildings to be razed on Fort Leonard Wood. It was still standing when cattle grazed on the closed fort lands between World War II and the Korean War (see "Roundup on Fort Leonard Wood," page 44). Mussman Report. Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection.



Typical upland farm of 120 acres, showing all of the buildings on this farm. The owner valued his farm at \$5,000. The family farmed this land for ten years and were doing fairly well with an automobile and livestock consisting of a horse, 16 cattle, 11 hogs, and 300 chickens. Sixty acres had been in crops in 1940, along with 31 acres in pasture. Mussman Report.

no barn of sufficient size for the livestock and forage storage. Only a very few buildings on farms have been painted. This is especially true of the buildings that have been constructed during the past 10 years. Most of the families in the area raise a garden and many of them can large amounts of fruits and vegetables. However, it is doubtful if there are very many families that can sufficient food per persons in the home to provide an adequate diet during the winter months.

Mussman characterized the hill folk families in this way:

The people living on farms in the area present the appearance of having lived for a long time with only a meager income. The families are comparatively large and although there seem to be sufficient schools, it is noted that only a small percentage of the children are graduated from the eighth grade, however, occasionally it is found that one or two members of the family spent a few years in high school. In many cases there are two or three children in the family that have attended school only three years or less. There are many families that have members who have the appearance of being mentally incapacitated, and it has been found too often that marriages have been permitted between relatives.

As one can see from these two quotes from Mussman's report, titled "Implications of Land Use Adjustments in Connection with the Defense Program: Report on Activities Concerned with Assisting in the Relocation of Families Disturbed by the Construction of Fort Leonard Wood," he did not seem to hold the hill folks' farming practices or lifeways in high esteem. He was condescending in tone and word choice. It may be true that his assessments were correct compared to established farms and practices of the upper midwest or New England states. However, the farms on Fort Leonard Wood were typical for the Ozarks.

The relocation of the 304 families was not a sudden exodus from the optioned property. Removal happened as the camp boundaries took shape and construction started. Those living in the immediate area of the cantonment were given only a couple of weeks to vacate while others were able to take a longer time for readjustment. A third segment had a period of four months or so before they relocated. These families had an opportunity to substantially profit from the construction and the shortage of housing for workers.

Roy and Jaretta Laughlin were among the last to leave (see sidebar on page 37). Their large farm was on Roubidoux Creek on the western boundary of the camp. They had a nice two-story house with three bedrooms upstairs which they rented to workmen. The workmen, all from Poplar Bluff, Missouri, built bunks in the three rooms, as many as six men to a room. Jaretta did the cooking and cleaning and Roy had a job at the camp. The men slept in shifts. One group would come in at 8:00 a.m. and another group would go to work.

Fifty years later, Jaretta recalled those hectic boardinghouse days and leaving the home place.

[We kept boarders for] oh, eight months. Eight months. I thought it was heaven when I got out of there. I had an old baking powder can. I loved that old baking powder can. It was a big one, you know. Every time my boarders would pay me, I'd stick it down in there. Every time Roy would get paid, I'd stick it down in there. So we weren't getting any money for our land and we knew we had to do something to move. When we found out about this place around the hill here [at the end of Dwyer Street in Waynesville], the Crismon place, when we found out we could buy it, a section of land, 640 acres for twelve thousand five, we jumped at it. Roy

said, "Mom, how much have we got in the can?" And I said, "Well, we'll just wait until everybody goes to bed and get in here in the corner and count it." They didn't know but that we took it right to the bank. And we counted it and we counted him out a thousand. A man that he knew real well, he was a county clerk and recorder, J. J. Dake, and he'd moved to Springfield. Roy called him and said, "Joe, I hear your farm is for sale and I'm up agin it. I gotta have it." He said, "Well, it's for sale." There was an old street car in Lebanon, right along the road, an old streetcar. It was a restaurant. He [Joe] said, "I'll meet you at the streetcar at eight in the morning." Roy took his thousand, paid him a thousand, and he sold it waiting [for the balance] until the Army paid us. And that was the way we started out here. The Crismon place. You know where the Big Spring is? Right straight across from there I've got a fine spring. Right across from the Big Spring is my spring and it was 600 feet from the house and Roy piped it in for me. Now that was a great day when I saw that water coming out.

The Laughlin farm house stood through the building of the camp and World War II. It continued to stand during the period when the fort was closed (1946-1950) and provided quarters for cowboys. It was finally razed

when the fort was reopened for the Korean War.

To determine what kind of assistance the displaced families might require, the agencies involved developed a survey. The survey or schedule was a questionnaire with 21 items on it. It was a comprehensive and effective tool for the purpose. The survey groups contacted all of the families and of the 304 families, only 11 refused to provide information.

Based on the information provided by the survey and sometimes additional interviews, the families were classified and assigned to an agency that could best provide assistance during relocation. These classifications and the number of families placed in the group were: Social Security Commission (45 families); Farm Security Administration (127 families); Production Credit Association (17); Agricultural Extension Service (47); and the Non-aid group (57).

The families in the Social Security Commission group included those who were receiving Old Age Assistance, such as the case on the right. Thus, the average age of the head-of-the-household was older than the average for all of the families. This group also had a lower education level. Only two per-



"Home since 1914 and they are unhappy to leave it." This couple moved to the Ozarks from Minnesota in May of 1914. They raised eight children in this log house on their 76 acre farm. The man was 77 years of age and his wife 67 years old. None of their children (all of whom had left home) were financially able to take care of the parents in their retirement years. They were receiving Old Age Assistance. They valued their farm at \$1,000. They owned no farm machinery, automobile, or radio. Their livestock consisted of a mule and 25 chickens. Two granddaughters, ages 13 and 15, lived with the aged couple and depended on them for support. They received \$1,600 for their property. In an interview, they were quoted as saying, "We don't like the idea of getting kicked out. We have spent most of our lives clearing and preparing this farm for our home—now we have to give it up. Guess it's all right to get ready for war, though. Pa was born in Germany and God knows we never want to be bossed by Hitler. It's bad here but it could be worse, I suppose. Our only breakfast this morning was bread, lard, and coffee. One of our granddaughters who lives with us couldn't eat a bit of that." Also in the interview, the couple expressed a hope to buy a small non-farm residence and would have to depend on public assistance. Of the total population being displaced, 5.2% were receiving Old Age Assistance. Case study from the Mussman Report. Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection.



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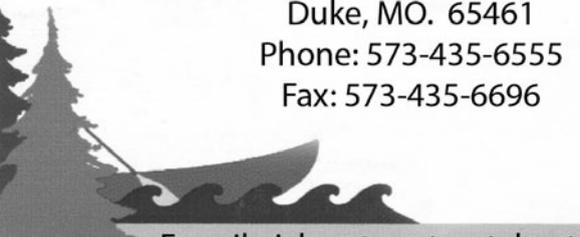
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cent in this group had attended school beyond the eighth grade, compared to nine percent in the whole area. The financial status of this group was below the average, too. Only four percent of these families had gross incomes exceeding \$500, while 19 percent of all the families had a gross income of \$500 per year. Longevity was not an indicator of net worth, either. Four percent of this group had a net worth of \$5,000, whereas 16 percent of all the families indicated a net worth of more than \$5,000. The net worth figure for both groups was probably a little high, as it included an estimate of the value of real estate, which was somewhat inflated.

In addition to those receiving Old Age Assistance, the Social Security Commission also provided assistance to those families receiving Aid for Dependent Children. Those families were 9.5 percent of the total group.

The largest assistance group were those families assigned to the Farm Security Administration (FSA), which comprised 40.5 percent of the total. This group had four subgroups: families who were already clients at the time of the survey; potential client families who had shown initiative, a willingness to use their resources responsibly, and would probably qualify for a standard rehabilitation loan; families that showed little indication of being able to manage a farm successfully and had no material claim for compensation; and those with substantial claims for their real estate equity but could not secure loans from private sources to relocate.

The group as a whole was a little below area average in net worth and income but these financial benchmarks varied considerably within the group.

The FSA provided a wide range of services and assistance (see sidebar on page 39 for a personal account). Workshops about good farming practices, advice about tenant rights, demonstrations of the canning and storage process, small grants to improve gardening activities, and short term loans for relocation were among the offerings.

The third group classified by the survey were those families assigned to the Production Credit Administration. They were previous borrowers from the PCA and, generally, were in a better financial condition than the previous two groups. The families lived on better farms, had fair or better farm machinery valued at \$250 or more, often no money in the bank but owned their farms with no indebtedness. One typical farm had livestock consisting of two horses valued at \$75, nine cattle at

Jaretta Laughlin

We interviewed Jaretta Laughlin at her home in Waynesville in 1991 when she was 83 years old. She grew up near Big Piney in McCourtney Hollow. She married Roy Laughlin and they had a large farm on Roubidoux Creek near Cedar Hill. In this excerpt from the interview, she tells about the coming of Fort Wood.



Oh, words can't tell you [how much Fort Leonard Wood changed the area]. It just scattered people. They were closely knit neighbors, you know. They were on 40 acres, 60 acres, 80 acres. Nice farms that's in Fort Leonard Wood now. It just came in. One Sunday morning we went to our little church that myself and my neighbor had started, so's our children would have a church to go to. It was called Cedar Hill. There was a school house, Cedar Hill, and we would have church there. We went to church one Sunday morning and one of the farmers, Andrew Christeson, said "Say, you know what I heard? I heard that the fort isn't going to be built in Iowa. It's coming here to Missouri." Well, you know, we just let that go in one ear and out the other. We didn't dream they could come in here and tear up the country like they did.

We had a nice saddle mare, Old Nell, and I would carry a big bucket of eggs on my saddle on my leg and in my arms and I would go to the store at Wildwood and get my groceries. Oh, yeah, you could get a great big sack of candy for a quarter. I mean a big one that you could bring home and divide up with the kids, about what a dollar would buy now, I guess. But anyway, I got on my mare on a Friday to take the eggs up and I said, "Well, Roy," my husband's name was Roy, "there's something strange going on. They're widening the highways, they're clearing and getting the highways widened for some reason." And he said, "Well, Mom, there's just more cars." No, the last of that week, after we had heard it, we stepped out on our back porch, we had a lovely old home. We lived six miles out [from Waynesville] and a mile from Cedar Hill School. And we stepped out on our porch and those hammers went to ringing out there and it sounded like a bunch of horses on wood, running. That's what it sounded like, just as fast as they could. They averaged a barracks every three minutes. Can you believe that? They brought them in here from everywhere. They brought them from the south, west, everywhere. I kept seventeen men, boarded them. Seventeen men. 'Course, I had help. My husband got me a helper. But that fort just came in here

and tore the people up. They told my husband that we would have to vacate in six weeks. Oh, we had two big farms and crops on 'em. My husband said "No, no, we can't do that that quick. I have a family, I have my mother to get located, I have my wife

and children, and we just can't do it that quick." "Yes, you will. We're going to be building through here. We're not going to have anyone down in here." Like I say, he could get on his horse, Roy could, on Old Nell, of an evening and go up on Smith Hollow. It was so closely settled, big families, people making a living with the double shovel and their fruit trees and things. They were making a living for their children. So he would go up in there and buy his calves and sometimes I'd go with him. We'd get in the wagon with the mules and get those calves, put little halters on 'em and tie 'em and bring 'em in, you know. So the fort, I just can't tell you how quick it went up. It was a city built overnight. Oh, it was a city built overnight.

You could just see the biggest difference week by week by week. We'd go up there on Sunday just to see what they were doing. My husband worked at the fort. When it came in here, we were just out of the worst depression that Missouri had ever seen. We were out of a depression. If you had twenty dollars, it wasn't worth nothing hardly then, you know. The stock market was down. We were farmers and everything we had to sell was down but that fort came in here and we wanted to grab some of that money. So he went to work. I boarded the people and my children milked cows and sold milk. Why, people were squatted everywhere. They would beg for your hen house so they could reline it with sheetrock and live in it until they could build something. The wages were powerful, you know. So one day, I said I'm going to have to run up to the store and I got on my horse and went. Oh, I met dozens of trucks. Old Nell tried to turn around. She didn't like it a bit. Then I'd have to turn her around with her rear end to the trucks to get her to go. There was just one after the other and, folks, they sunk in that road to the hubs. And they said "We're going to stay this way until the bulldozers get this way and pull us out." Lumber trucks, plumbing stuff, and everything. You just can't visualize what a mess it was.

So I remember one nice old man. Oh, he was just a perfect man, Ed Kerr. He

was the sweetest thing to help people and he lived at the end of his mother's farm on the Kerr Place. I could take you right to it. His mother lived up there in a lovely home and on her farm and down from her, he had bought a farm, and they was all settled in for life. They didn't want to sell. Well, they told them they would have to get out in six weeks. They would be shooting and there would be dangerous things and your family would be in danger. So he went to Sedalia and bought a nice hay farm up there. He and his boy and his wife. They went up there to Sedalia and he didn't live ten years. Took him from his home and he didn't live ten years.

The worst part about my husband and me was they took our land, which was producing real good with a corn crop on it. They took our home and we had just built a new barn. They took everything and they didn't pay us. So we had to hustle out and look for a home.

Jan Primas: They didn't pay you?
Jaretta: No, they didn't pay us a dime. My husband would go to the fort and he'd say, "Folks, how do you expect me to leave and no money? I've got to have some money." They said, "Well, you're going to get about fifty-five thousand for your land [which amounted to \$62.00 an acre] and you'll get about fifteen thousand for your crop but I don't know when you'll get it." Well, my husband had a breakdown, he had a nervous breakdown. He had the children and I and his mother and everything and no money. Well, it went on and on and they'd say, "Mr. Laughlin, we can't tell you a thing. That's got to come from Fifth Army." Well, Fifth Army was like Chicago is to me. He didn't know how to get to Fifth Army or what to do when he got there. So, five of 'em took it to court to get their money. I guess it was nine months later we got our money. That's just what they done. And Roy said, "We're not moving 'til we get some money. We're not moving." There was five hundred boys laid on their stomachs and shot into the hill. Here was a row and here was a row and here was row and they was shooting into it just tearin' the hill up. Well, Roy said, "We can't just be contrary. We got to get out of here or we'll get a boy killed. Our boys were going across the creek to tend the corn so we had to get us a place and move without a dime of money. But we were making money. Roy was working at the fort. We had lots of stock to sell and hogs and we had enough hogs and enough cattle to pay [down] on the farm that we'd bought, the Wheeler place.

\$450, five hogs at \$65, 39 sheep at \$150, and 350 chickens valued at \$125. They had a garden and canned 400 quarts of food in 1940. As was true for most of the families in all groups, they owned a radio but did not own an automobile. Like the majority of the hill farms, they did not have electricity or running water.

The final designated group contained those families that required no financial assistance. They were 18.6 percent of the total. These self-sustaining families had been on their present land on average longer than those in the previous groups. The household heads were between 35 and 55 years. Only one out of ten had a net worth of less than \$1,000, compared to 34 percent for the area as a whole. These farmers were characterized as thrifty, industrious, and good managers.

Albert Mussman's report was completed July 1, 1941. By that time, 229 of the 304 families had moved from the defense area. Sixteen families remained outside of the camp area due to adjustments in the boundary lines. At that time, 59 families had not yet moved.

Of those 229 families who moved by July 1, 1941, 91 or 40 percent relocated in Pulaski County. Another 86 (38%) found new homes in other Ozark counties. Twenty-six families (11%) settled



This was "an average residence," a three room plank frame house about 75 years old. The 140 acre farm was located on the Monroe Ramsey property, operated by a son and his wife as part of the 1100 acre unit. They were considered thrifty and industrious with an above average farm. Photos on this page from the Mussman Report. Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection.



"This family lives under very unfavorable conditions." Eight children and their parents rented this five room frame house, along with 217 acres of land. Only eleven acres were cultivated.



The cellar was part of the farm at left and was "better than average." The family's main income was from the sale of hogs and cattle. They raised a good garden and canned more than 500 quarts of fruits, vegetables, and meats. The husband trapped fur bearing animals in the winter months, making enough from the sale of pelts to make the payments on their Farm Security Administration loan.



The kitchen of the family at left. They canned 75 quarts of food and have some livestock. Illness in the family resulted in a low net worth of \$136. They hope to rent another place upon relocation.

Terri Mitchell
Pulaski
County Collector

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Roger Harrison

elsewhere in Missouri. It certainly was not the case that, given the chance, the rural people would flee the Ozarks. They generally looked for something similar to what they left. It was also the case that the construction and subsequent growth offered much more opportunity to find work. Only seven families (3%) left the state and 19 (8%) were not accounted for.

The Families

The survey results provide a good profile of the Ozark families within the boundary of the camp. In his report, Mussman includes 19 pages of tables compiled from the surveys and interviews. Extrapolating some of these statistics gives us an idea of the demographics of those living within the camp boundary, including educational levels and standard of living.

Data was generally reported on 270 families, reflecting the number of surveys completed on the 304 families. A few categories reported on 281, with that data filled in during interviews.

A number of categories only tabulated the information for the head of the household. Such was the case for place of birth. The majority of the household heads were born in Pulaski County (144 or 54.4 %) and another 10% were born in adjacent counties. The ages of the household heads showed the largest group to be between 35-44 years of age (25.2%), which included some of the most productive farmers. Those residents aged 65 and over totaled 14.1 % of the group, for whom we surmise the relocation was the hardest. The data did show that there was some movement in that only about a third (35.2%) had lived at their present location more than ten years.

Family size was characterized as being rather large. Families with three to six members numbered 50.8% and those with seven or eight members another 14.6%. This is not surprising, either, as large families in an agrarian society in the early decades of the 20th century was typical.

The educational level of the heads of household were as follows: 7.8% completed less than grade 4; 13.9% completed grades 4-5; grades 6-7, 10%; grade 8, 31.3%. Only 9.3% had completed grade 9 or more. This is not surprising. Bloodland, the only high school in the area, was not a four year high school until 1927, which was after the school years for most of the heads of households. Many, if not most, of the teachers in the small one room schools had only completed the eighth grade.

Standard of Living

For the most part, we measure the

Wilda Miller Pippin — Farm Security Administration Supervisor

Wilda Miller Pippin actively aided some of the displaced families in 1940-1941. Encouraged by her husband Dru, who was tape recording his memories of the Ozarks in 1975 (see page 50), Wilda recalled her efforts with the Farm Security Administration. Wilda had been a schoolteacher in Howell County before coming to Waynesville. With notes in hand, she recorded some memories of those days. Her account gives us a personal glimpse of an individual's effort to help the hill folks forge a better life. Tape transcription by William Eckert.

Thirty-five years ago today, September 8, 1940, I drove Highway 17 onto Highway 66 and I saw a sign "Waynesville-3 Miles, Population 392." I drove those three miles and decided that I hadn't come to the town yet so I drove across the Roubidoux Bridge and still thought I hadn't come to the city. I kept going and left the village entirely. The only thing to do was to turn back and see if I had missed the town. Well, I had. I started searching around for an apartment. I came to the conclusion that people didn't want to be bothered with roomers. I rented a place at the Bell Hotel so I parked there on Sunday, September the eighth and was happy to get settled, as it looked as if I might not have a place to sleep on a park bench. I couldn't sleep because there was no park in town. At the time I came here, there were two liquor stores in town, from Waynesville to the "Y", a distance of three miles. There now exists [in 1975] 17 liquor stores.

In December 1940, we picked out nine families who were so-called problem families because they had not had an adequate diet and had not raised their standard of living as they should. These nine families were given grants ranging from \$37.00 to 261.00 for a total of \$1300. The families ranged in size from four to seven members. Even though these families were granted during the hard months of the years, it does not necessarily mean that they had an adequate diet of meat, milk, eggs, potatoes, tomatoes, and other fruits and vegetables when they were needed most. In each case, the family was granted with funds in February to buy seed, fertilizers, seed potatoes, and, in some cases, enough was furnished to buy hoes, rakes, and garden plows if they did not have these tools. --- these families did not have good gardens and without it they were not able to live during the winter months and come through with enough cash to buy seed and fertilizer and so forth. The money was not given gratis to these people for we asked them to do certain things on the farm that would

pay for the grant they were receiving. Some of these things were: prepare and plan the garden under the supervision of the home agent and the man agent; repair the cellar or build one if there was none on the farm; and repair the garden fences. In every case, we set up the minimum and maximum canning and storage budgets that must be filled if at all possible. The actual budget for canning was 85 quarts per person, approximately. I do not have the exact figures on the storage budget but I do know that not one of the above families had to come to the office or write for a grant during December or January. They had had milk, butter, eggs, meat, potatoes, enough canned vegetables and fruit so that they could have a good diet. For the first time in years, these families have had a good diet and they are proud of the fact that they haven't had to ask for help. Poor management and not planning ahead has always been a detriment to these families. And if we, as supervisors, can help them and teach them along these lines, our time has been very profitable. One family I visited every two weeks and during the canning season every week to get her started in canning and to see that the vegetables were canned at the proper stage. These women have attended canning, school lunch, and meal planning demonstrations and I'm sure they benefitted from them. A rural teacher of one family made this remark to me at a book meeting he had, "You have just done wonders with this family." She [does much better planning] for her day in the way of clothing, cleanliness, and better school lunches that I do not have a chance to observe. Now let me tell you how the Medical Coop has helped.

"Your spinach has gone to seed and you haven't canned any at all. I believe you agreed to can all available vegetables on the pledge of cooperation, did you not?", I said to a family.

"Yes, I did but my back just hurt so bad that I can't stoop over to gather the spinach or do any thing. At night I just can't sleep after having worked all day."

"What's the matter with your back," I asked.

"The doctor says I have I have a fatty tumor and in the last year it has grown to four times its original size. He says it should be removed soon. I know it should but I'm afraid to be operated on."

"You are members of the Medical Coop and you could have it operated on without any charge at all except for hospitalization. That would cost you around twenty dollars, I imagine."

"I'm afraid to go. I hate to leave the three children and I'm just afraid I'll die and leave them."

"This operation would not be a serious one," I said, "If I were to make all the arrangements for your going, would you be willing to go and have this tumor removed? There would be no cost or worry whatever and you would have excellent care."

"I'm afraid of strange doctors and nurses," she said.

"Last winter I was in the same hospital that you would be in," I told her, "and I had excellent care. They were nice and kind to me as I was having trouble breathing. They will treat you the same way, too, I am sure."

"If you think it's best for me, I'll try to get someone to stay with the children and go."

After a month's deliberation, I finally got her to the hospital and the tumor removed. On my last visit to this family, she said, "I feel so much better and I'm so glad that I went in. I thought you and the other woman, the district supervisor, were just telling me in order to get me operated on. The doctors and nurses were just as nice to me as they were to the other patients. The doctor said I had an umbilical rupture that was a lot more dangerous than the tumor on my back. I plan to go back and have this taken care of just as soon as I can. It bothers me so when I wash and do heavy work."

"How long have you had this hernia?"

"Ever since my oldest child was born and she's ten years old."

At present, they are planning to get this taken care of by a medical grant. The first operation was taken care of by a medical grant of \$20.00. In trying to estimate the value of this to the family, one could not value it in dollars and cents. This family has been one of our least friendly and one in which we have given rather close supervision in the last year. They have progressed a great deal and we are proud of them.

Last night at our group meeting held in their community, the rural teacher said to me, "You have just done wonders with the children and these families. The children attend school every day, they are much cleaner, and better dressed. There is a remarkable change for the better in all their lunches."

I was happy to hear this as their teacher could see results but I could not and she knows the family and sees them every day. The family has a very good canning and storage budget, something they had never had before. I believe [when the mother] has been taken care of, we can do more and better rehabilitation with this family.

standard of living by tangible goods and the money we have. There is data in the report by which we can infer such a measure. What we can't measure is the quality of life that the hill folks felt they had. Much of that is about traditions and expectations.

Seems today we look first at a family's vehicles, house, and electronics to assess how well they are doing. We have shown representative housing in these pages. Households possessing an automobile numbered 121 (44.8%). An almost equal number owned radios, 123 households (45.6%). It is interesting to note that those classified as living in a village had the lowest percentage of autos (18%) and radios (12%), although this was a small group in the largely rural area.

Agricultural Activity

Farming was the principal activity. Those farming the bottoms of the Roubidoux and Big Piney had much more productive operations. There were some upland farms, too, mostly pasture.

One table shows the number of acres in crops and gives us an idea of the agricultural activity. The farm operators were subclassified as full owners (97), part owners (7), and tenant farmers (39). The group as a whole numbered 143 farm operators. Twenty-six of the tenant farmers (67%) had between 10 and 70 acres in crops. Seventy-two percent of the part owners planted the same acreage. Sixty-one (70%) of the full owners planted between 10 and 79 acres. Only two full owners had more than 200 acres planted in crops. Ten to forty acres seemed to be the average size of cultivated land.

Livestock raising was not on a grand scale. Nineteen households (7%) in the area had no livestock. About half (50.7%) of the farms had one to six animals. Only 24 farms had more than 24 animal units.

Monetary Indices

Before we talk about money as an indicator of the standard of living, we need to know the relative value of the dollar. One dollar in 1940 translates to \$15.13 today. Put another way, if you bought a product in 2009 for \$1.00, it would have cost \$.07 in 1940.

In 1940, 103 or 38.1 percent of the families had a gross cash income of less than \$250. Seventy-one (26.3%) of the families had an income between \$250 and \$499. In other words, two-thirds of the families had gross incomes of less than \$500. For some perspective, that \$500 would be \$7,650 in 2009 dollars. The Federal Poverty Guideline for a



"Source of farm power and transportation for this family." The husband and wife in this family were both 63 years old. She is blind. They owned a 30 acre tract of land, raised a garden, but cultivated no crops. A daughter and her two children lived with the parents. The main income was from the blind pension, supplemented by timber cutting, road work, and WPA. Photos on this page from the Mussman Report. Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection



"With tears in their eyes this family says, 'We hate to leave this little home.'" This hardscrabble farm had no barn but the family had a few chickens and raised a garden. Nonetheless, it was home. Most hill folks were reluctant to leave their homesteads but almost to a family, there were expressions of patriotism. One family stated, "We fully realize it is necessary to prepare to defend the country and we are certainly willing to do our part."



"Store buildings and towns have to go. These are business houses in Bloodland."

family of four in 2009 was \$22,050.

Poverty was not quantified until 1963. How many times have you heard an older person say, "I guess we were dirt poor but didn't know it." By today's standards, the majority of the camp residents were poor. Forty-nine families had incomes between \$500 and \$1499, accounting for 27 percent of the households. Only five households (1.8%) had gross cash incomes over \$1500. One must remember that many items needed for subsistence were grown, raised, and obtained by barter.

Bartering was very common at the local stores and hard cash was scarce. The one time you had to have cash was when the tax collector visited the nearest community. (Yes, the county tax collector came to you in those days.) At the time of the survey in 1940, 191 (70.7%) of the families had less than \$10 cash on hand. At the other end of the money spectrum, four families (1.5%) had \$250 or more in ready cash.

The final bit of information gathered regarding financial status was an estimate of each family's net worth. A caveat was stated that the net worth figures also included a valuation by the owner of his/her property which, in some cases, might be overstated.

Of the 304 families, 87 did not respond to this item, for whatever rea-



"Thrifty, industrious people have enjoyed a comfortable living where others have failed."

son, for a total of 217 household respondents. The results were reported in ranges of net worth. Ten families (3.7%) showed a negative net worth; ten families worth less than \$100; 39 families in the range \$100 to 499; 31 in the range \$500-999; 23 ranged from \$1,000-1,999; 34 at \$2,000-4,999; 12 in the range of \$5,000-\$9,999; and ten families in the highest range of over \$10,000. This particular table showed a more even spread than any of the other considered indicators of standard of living.

In the concluding narrative section of the report, Albert Mussman comments about a concomitant use of the study. Fort Leonard Wood's location was chosen because of its varied topographical attributes which would be beneficial in the training of soldiers. Those 65,000 acres, nearly 100 square miles, were also typical of similar substantial regions in the 26 counties that, in whole or part, make up what we call the Ozarks in Missouri. Mussman states, "It furnishes detailed information on all families living in a substantial area of the Ozark Region and offers an opportunity, heretofore unavailable, to present a detailed account of the social and economic conditions prevailing in the Ozarks...It is believed that similar conditions exist elsewhere throughout the Ozarks and that the area is fairly

typical of the region as a whole." It is a glimpse of the social and economic conditions in the Ozarks prior to World War II.

It's hard to know the efficacy of the assistance of the federal and state agencies involved in the relocation of the families. Construction work was offered through the Missouri Employment Service. It was given the names of all males in the area between the ages of 16 and 65. At one time or another, 74 percent of the men on the list were given jobs. How much this benefitted the families was not known. Some did not work the full construction period.

The Social Security Commission worked with 66 families, trying to ease the strain of a "mass exodus." They particularly aided the Old Age Assistance Group.

The Farm Security Administration made two loans of \$50 and \$200 to families who had to move before compensation. They provided grants for moving and subsistence to an additional 37 families, ranging in sums from \$35 to \$100.

The Rural Rehabilitation Supervisors and the Agricultural Extension Service spent many man hours securing and distributing listings of farms and homes for sale or rent.

Other Perspectives

Local newspaper coverage, particularly the *Pulaski County Democrat*, barely made mention of the plight of the dispossessed families or the disappearance of communities long featured in its local correspondents columns. However, the *Springfield Leader and Press* dispatched two reporters, Jim Billings and George McCue, to cover the upheaval.

The two reporters interviewed Mary F. Page, 81, about the impending removal. Her farm sat on a ridge above the Big Piney River. Of her situation, she said, "We had just got so we could kind of live. Byron—that's my son—said, 'Ma, we'll just live here and die here.' We've got good neighbors. If ever I need anything and Byron's away, I just go out and ring the bell good and loud and they come right over. Course, it takes them some time to get here because the river is between us."

The Pages were resigned to the move. "We've already sold almost 60 hogs. Byron's been looking for a new place. He found one place that was real nice with good fixtures and conveniences, but he said, "Ma, there is too much house for the land. I've got to look some more."

They had already struck a deal for the farm, felt the price was good, but would not disclose how much. "It ain't the money so much anyway," Mrs. Page said. "Long as you've got plenty of bread and meat and gravy and plenty of water and wood a body can live. Lots of people down in here have been getting way over what their place is worth. You take these log cabins worth \$20, they're doubling that three and four and five times."

The journalists also visited with Mr. and Mrs. Richard Miller, a couple of miles away. Richard was Mrs. Page's grandson and the couple lived in one of her houses with their two small sons. The Millers owned two tracts of land within the camp boundaries. Mrs. Miller taught at the school in the village of Big Piney and was afraid the school would be a casualty, too, as the families moved away. This proved not to be the case. The school's enrollment gradually diminished but it lasted until the early 1980s.

Mrs. Miller was more forthcoming about the optioned land prices. She said the average price for land was \$2000 to \$2500 for 80 acres, improved. They received \$2500 for one eighty acre parcel and \$1700 for a 120 acre tract, improvements made the difference.

Billings and McCue finished their interviews with Ben Wood, manager of the Harry Vaughan & Son general store. During this third week of Janu-



"One of the oldest homes in the area." Most of the houses, at least the ones pictured in the two reports, were either board and batten or log cabins, some with frame additions (right). The typical Ozark log cabin measured about 16 x 16 feet.



The home place above was formerly occupied by an Old Age Assistance recipient and family. It became part of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp 3757, organized May 10, 1941, on Fort Leonard Wood. For a history of the CCC in Pulaski, Phelps, and Texas counties, see the 2005 *Old Settlers Gazette*.

ary, the store was doing a brisk business, all cash, in groceries for the men who were boarding with those homeowners who had not yet left. Ben said the store had been valued at \$5,000 but would soon be vacated, as would the rest of Bloodland. "I understand there's to be an artillery range right around here close. So we're not arguing."

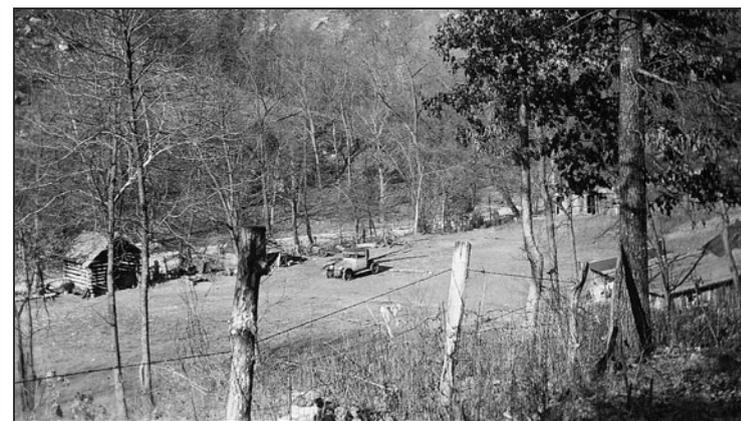
Another Report

Albert Mussman, the agricultural economist cited earlier, prepared an extensive report, replete with socio-economic statistics. It was a penetrating look at the conditions of the farms and the people. Mussman cast a cold, detached eye toward the local culture and sometimes his comments were rather condescending.

Another report was completed a month prior to Mussman's. This report was written by Roberta M. Routh, County Director, Pulaski County Social Security, Division of Public Assistance. Her report is titled "The Army Comes to the Ozarks," herein referred to as the Routh Report. Ms. Routh had a wider and more empathic view of the situation. Her observations and comments were informed by working closely with



"This 100 year old cabin was formerly occupied by a relief family who rented it to a stranger that 'cashed in' by putting beds that accommodated twenty men in the three small bedrooms." Pictures on this page from the Routh Report. Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection.



"Joe's 'down the road.'" A neighbor said, "Poor Joe down the road had been on relief so long... We'd got to thinking Joe had lost his ambition and was just alivin' off the Relief but he sure has showed us all that he is made of better stuff, all he needed was the chance." Joe kept on working as a camp laborer while battling the bad weather and a bad case of the flu.

some of the families for several years and living in the area. Her report also followed the relocation of several of the families, as well as giving some insight into the overall impact on the area of the camp construction. Fortunately, Roberta also illustrated the report with images from her Kodak.

Ms. Routh characterized Pulaski County as entirely rural, having only four towns of more than 100 population in 1940 (Crocker, Dixon, Richland, and Waynesville). The land was not productive, except those farms with bottomland along the three rivers. The citizens made a living primarily by farming, timber cutting, and, of worthy mention, selling native baskets and woodwork to tourists. The timber was about gone but tie hacking persisted as a source of income. Because of the marginally productive hill farms and the dwindling timber resource, many citizens availed themselves of Public Assistance.

Routh fixes the number of families in the camp area as 278. (There are several figures quoted in the Mussman and Routh reports as representing the number of displaced families. Mussman asserts 304 total, but complete survey

data was obtained only on 270. His data tables bases vary from among 270, 281, and 304. Routh's number 278 is another total number, the number of families that dealt with her agency.

At the time of the survey, 64 were receiving Old Age Assistance and Aid to Dependent Children. Thirty-four employable men were receiving surplus commodities as a service of the Social Security Public Assistance office. Since 1935, 201 of the total 278 had received aid of some kind from Social Security. These were her clients.

Ms. Routh's report mostly described smooth relocations, a chronicle of successes. It didn't begin that way. November of 1940 was a month of anxiety, families knowing they had to move. Many had no idea of where they could make a new home and when they would get paid for the old one. The prices offered seem liberal to most of the hill folks but the "gub'ment men" were up front in admitting they didn't know when the owners would get their money. The *Leader and Press* pointed out that the "government has millions in emergency money to buy camp materials, but money to pay people dispossessed of their home has to go

through "regular channels," which means red tape."

The citizens just knew that things would be radically different in a few short months. Routh recalled one client who said, "Mrs G. told us that, 'A bunch of us neighbors were down at Brown's. I just said, 'This may be the last time we will all be together we are all going different directions, like seeds in the wind. We don't mind moving, though we like it here best of any place we've ever been. We like the people, and we're going south if we can't find a place in this county. We wouldn't know how to live with folks up north, no we've been away a while. Guess some of the folks around here are moving into Texas County and we might go along.'"

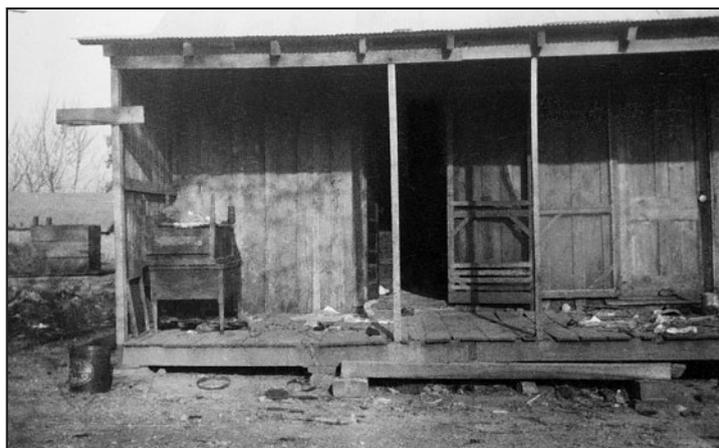
That anxious November passed and three families who lived in the cantonment area were told to move with only a few days notice. The Social Security Office helped two of the families, who were clients, find homes.

One of those families numbered eleven persons, living in a three room house. The parents had serious health problems. Besides the seven children, two other adults resided in the house, one the maternal grandmother and the other a homeless old man. Both of these were on Old Age Assistance and the parents received Aid to Dependent Children.

As ramshackle and crowded as the house was, the family hated to leave. The father would miss the hilltop where he and his brothers played marbles as boys. They had nurtured an orchard, planting a few new trees each year and built a fruit cellar to hold the orchard's bounty. The mother's dead sister had planted a rose bush in the yard.

After living in a rented house for two months, the family received the \$1,000 for their property. They bought a couple of acres and built a new house. Ms. Routh assessed this as a successful transition and the new house "a very great improvement over the former living quarters."

The opportunity for work at the camp took some men off the Old Age Assistance roll. Such was the case for Mr. E., who could still do some carpentry. Mrs. E., while grateful for the her husband's chance for employment, lamented being wrenched from the land and the loss of community. "We are having our last revival, that Church has been there over 100 years. I can remember when I was little that my father use to take my sister and myself; we had little aprons that tied over our dress, and wore no shoes in summer. We walked across the field to the church - then we had serv-



The three room home of a family of eleven. This picture was taken on December 3, 1940, the day after the family moved. Routh Report. Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection.

ices at 11:00 on Saturday. You don't think that they will make us move our dead do you? My sister laid there 52 years - I just can't move her. They won't bother the dead will they? We will never all meet together again like we do now - and we won't be able to get inside the wall to decorate our graves, come Decoration Day - and what will they do to our Church House - will they blow it up or just wreck it?" The sense of place and community are still strong characteristics of the Ozarker.

Another characteristic of the rural folks was, and is, attachment to the land. In some cases (the Ramseys, Yorks, and Pages come quickly to mind), the same land had been tilled for several generations. For some, separation from the home place and land was as traumatic as Mrs. E.'s turmoil over leaving the family burial ground. However, another group of the older folks, on Old Age Assistance and not, saw the buyout as a chance to downsize, their vigorous farming days behind them. They could do with smaller acreage, a few head of livestock, and a good garden plot. The Army was a ready buyer paying a decent price. Local buyers in the private sector were not plentiful in 1940 after years of a depressed economy.

Ms. Routh told the story of one family, typical of others waiting to see what was in the immediate future.

"Mrs. L., an Aid to Dependent Children Recipient, was out near the barn, carrying in pieces of dry wood, explaining on the way to the house that the mule had wandered away and that they had to carry their wood up by hand the last few days. She asked the visitor to follow her around to the back door as she had put a bed against the front door. There was mud and remains from the table about the doorway and inside the door one was struck by the unclean odor as well as coming face to face with an untidy table and dirt on all sides. In the front



The new family home 23 miles away. This house had four rooms down and two upstairs and was "well and economically built." The children were excited as this was their first move.



The vintage log home of Mr. and Mrs. L. The living circumstances of this Ozarks family changed for the better when they purchased better land and house elsewhere in the county in March of 1941. Some of the log cabins were nearing the century mark in age and logs were used in construction as late as the 1930s. Frame houses were sided with rough-cut board and batten.



Mrs. R. and her son borrowed \$100 from the Bank of Waynesville to pay down on a 40 acre farm east of Dixon. Some of the owners were not able to get bank loans or didn't think they would qualify. When it was learned they didn't have to move until April, they returned to their house in the camp. They took in boarders. Accommodations for the thousands of camp workers were scarce. Construction was going on 24 hours a day. A worker could always get at least a couple of hours of overtime, making a ten hour day. Beds could be rented out twice during a 24 hour period, once to each shift. When April came, it was hard for Mrs. R. and son to give up the extra income and made it even harder to leave. When they received \$1500 for their farm, they paid off the debt to the bank and made some improvements to their new place. Photos above from the Routh Report. Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection.

room Mr. L. and the three younger children sat on a cot near the stove. Almost immediately both Mr. and Mrs. L. started telling why the little boy was not in school, explaining that he had been sick since the night before and had vomited almost continuously. Later in the interview, Mrs. L. told about this youngster being in a school program the night before and a neighbor buying a pie for each of the children. This boy ate the whole pie and had been sick since.

The family has stopped making any repairs on the house or getting up extra wood for the coldest months of the year [*remember, this is December*]. They are waiting for the man to come that will tell them how much they will receive for their land. They wish to stay in the county going either west or north, but would go over into Phelps County if there was no other alternative. Mr. L. wants to put the money he receives from the place back into another home with less acreage and a better house. They want to stay near their relatives and since most of them have to move they are waiting to see what the others are going to do. Three months later the family did buy a farm in this county. The land is much better as is the house and barn."

Such is the story, bittersweet at best, of the relocation of hundreds of people from the north central Ozarks, a 100 square mile landscape of hills and hollows in southern Pulaski County between the Big Piney River on the east and the Roubidoux Creek on the west. The story has been pieced together from government statistics, personal recollection, and case study anecdotes. Today, seventy years later, the story is largely unknown to those thousands who train, work, reside, and recreate on the old farmsteads. National needs and international forces combined to change the lives of these particular hill folks.

Overall, the change may have been for the good. The selection of case studies showcased by Mussman and Routh indicated many families improved their living conditions. However, most of those had marginal farms or were living in impoverished situations, particularly Routh's cases, whose clients were receiving public assistance of some type. The successful operations, such as the Ramsey family farmsteads and Roy and Jaretta Laughlin, were disrupted and planting and/or harvesting prevented. Even if a suitable farm could be found quickly, it was too late to plant. For those who owned small acreage and lived elsewhere with

no attachment to the land, such as Dr. Titterington, the buyout may have been a windfall. There can be no doubt that the fort's creation was and is a boon for the economy of Pulaski County and beyond.

For some residents, the suddenness of change and the unknown future was the predicament. For those who were second or third generation farmers, a life's work and attachment to the land made removal particularly distressing. Money could not compensate for the terminated lifestyle. The isolated nature of the area, declining resources, and hardscrabble existence suited most of the hill folks. An Army officer told Ms. Routh, "I have never seen people so well satisfied with themselves." It was a life of hard work, little in the way of material culture but the fishing was good and time was your own. It

was best expressed by another Army officer, who said to Ms. Routh, "The Ozark people are so connected with living that they don't care to bother with earning money while the rest of us are too busy earning money to live."

Some resentment still remains, although it is fading away as the participants fade. Partly, the ill will was a result of being separated from ancestral burying grounds. Decoration days are allowed but new burials are restricted on Fort Leonard Wood.

In the rush to prepare a defense and to mount an offense, the Army did little to document the cultural enclave within the boundary. Seventy years later we are left to excavate the debris, read a couple of reports, and prod a few fading memories to learn about and appreciate a way of living that allowed people to be "so well satisfied."

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