

# Cave Lodge

## on the Gasconade

by Terry Primas

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Pulaski County was already well known as a destination for sportsmen and recreationists. In the July 10, 1913 Pulaski County Democrat, editor George Lane exulted, "The Baker hotel has been crowded to the limit with St. Louis parties for the last several weeks. Waynesville's reputation as a summer resort is still growing." This growth was not sudden but had been building for several decades. As early as 1895, the "Rod and Gun" column in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat extolled the bounty of bass and walleye found in the Big Piney and Gasconade rivers. Ten day float trips yielded hundreds of pounds of fish.

Perry Andres, the renowned outfitter and guide at Arlington, had as many as ten guides working for him with twelve fishing camps in 1907 located on the Big Piney from Slabtown to the Piney's confluence with the Gasconade. Andres corresponded with the "Rod and Gun" editor, describing in superlatives the opportunities for the sportsman. Andres, revered in St. Louis as the consummate backwoodsman, also made frequent trips to the city, stirring up interest for forays on the Piney and Gasconade and into the forest. Perry Andres' enterprise stretched over 85 miles of river, from Slabtown on the Big Piney downstream to Indian Ford on the Gasconade. The Frisco, also a partner in advertising the Ozark experience, brought many clients right to Andres' doorstep in Arlington.

The Big Piney River crossing on the Old Wire Road, familiar to locals as Wagon Ford, was known to sportsmen as Hooker Ford. John Hooker, local guide, lived on the west bank at the ford and his letters at the turn of the century to "Rod and Gun" promoted fishing, local history, and the Ozarkers' dancing skills. Hooker had to work a little harder in those pre-automobile days. The nearest Frisco rail stop was in Dixon, a rough ten-mile wagon ride away.

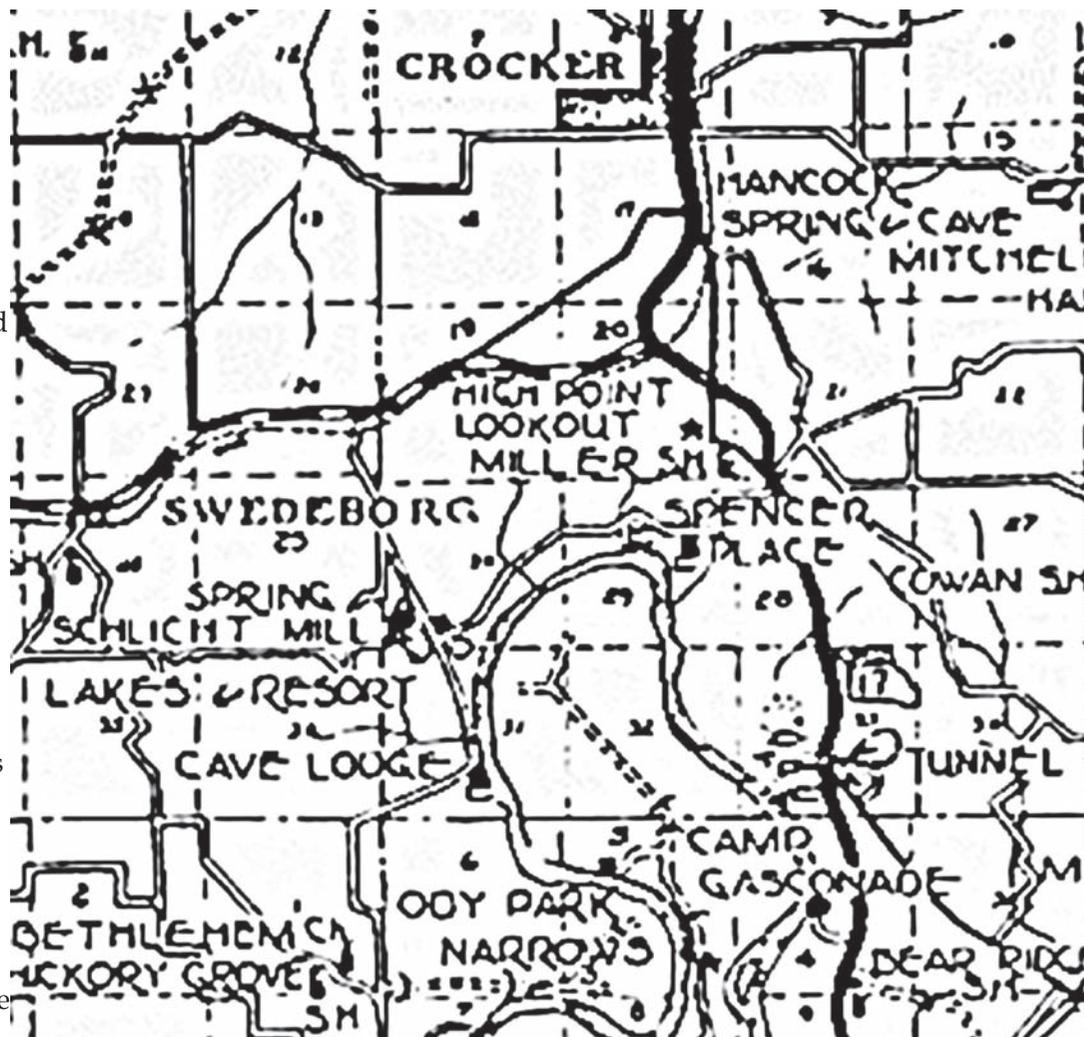
The lure of clean air, clear water, and plentiful game also led private hunting and fishing clubs to erect

clubhouses on the banks of the major streams. Sites were established at Sand Spring and Stone Mill Spring on present Fort Leonard Wood. Farther downstream on the Big Piney was a cluster of three lodges two miles above Devil's Elbow, including Shanghai Spring on the west bank, Meadowbrook on the east bank, and Piney Lodge just downstream from Shanghai Spring.

The Gasconade, reputed to be one of the crookedest rivers in the world, offers nearly 70 miles of meandering streambed in Pulaski County. It provided many prime sights and sites for the urban sportsmen. Early notable hunting and fishing clubs on the Gasconade were: Kickapoo Lodge near Richland (members were St. Louis federal postal workers); the Griesedick (brewing brothers from St. Louis) Lodge, high on a bluff south of Richland; and the Dixon Club, founded in 1902 and located at Fish Dam Bridge, near where Highway 28 crosses the Gasconade today.

Certainly the most well known and busiest public resort in Pulaski County in the first decade of the twentieth century was Schlicht Mill (see Lynn Morrow's article, "The Dixon Club and Schlicht's Spring," in the 2002 Old Settlers Gazette for a lively account of these two early locales.) John Schlicht (1848-1918) bought Gasconade Mill and some acreage in 1876. Schlicht made major improvements to the mill and farm and with his son, Charles (1875-1945), developed the resort.

Schlicht Mill had three major attractions. It was but a mile from the railroad, a stop dubbed Schlicht Station. The springs were impounded into three small lakes, affording women and children water to develop rod and reel skills for fishing on the river. The water issuing from the springs, dubbed "Magnesia Water," was thought to have curative attributes,



The Gasconade River forms a loop called Moccasin Bend. At its narrowest part, appropriately called The Narrows, it is only .2 of a mile across the land but 7 miles by river. Moccasin Bend sported five of the thirty-plus resorts in Pulaski County in 1935. Four of the five resorts were on the outer bank of the bend.

and was ingested by urban guests and country folk alike. The Valley, as it was often called, was a favorite day-trip destination for locals, too. The Schlicht correspondent to the Pulaski County Democrat reported that on July 4, 1913, more than 500 people were enjoying the holiday.

A casual observer would have noticed the stream of tourists disembarking from the train at Schlicht Station (renamed Templar Park in

1913) and also the line of local buggies, all heading for the Valley. The resort was on a boom in 1912 and would not have gone unnoticed by neighbors. Its success provided an excellent business model. This item appeared in the April 11, 1912 issue of the Democrat:

Joel Lane moved in his new home, the Cave Hotel. He will keep some boarders. It is a fine place with twelve rooms.



Schlicht Springs Lodge, "the longest family house in Pulaski County and its all on the ground." Charles Schlicht also wrote on the back of the card that the reason it is so large is that three generations of the family reside within, making it the size of a large barn. Courtesy of John Bradbury.

Oddly, the Schlicht newspaper correspondent had not previously mentioned the construction of the new hotel, less than a mile upstream. The 1906 Lumpkin and Williams map of Pulaski County, which shows all of the residences (plus schools and churches) in the countryside outside of the cities, shows no building where the Cave Hotel was erected. We must assume that Lane constructed the building as a hotel from the ground up as a hotel and that the "new" in the above news item means just that.

The 1913 Frisco "Vacations in the Ozarks" guidebook shows several homes in or near Crocker that were primarily residences but rented rooms to recreationists (viz. homes of W. H. Seaton, A. E. Lofting, and G. E. Barcalow). They also provided saddle horses, buggies, and float trips.

However, it seems unlikely that the Cave Hotel was primarily the residence of Joel Lane. In 1913, Joel was 32 years old and his wife, Sebina, was 39 years. They had no children and certainly would not have needed a ten-room house. The 1910 census discloses that Joel and Sebina were renting a house in the vicinity of Schlicht's Mill.

The question arises as to how the Lanes acquired the wherewithal to build a new ten-room hotel. Joel Lane's occupation, listed in the 1910 census, was "guide". The seasonal work of a hunting and/or fishing guide was not particularly lucrative. An experienced fishing guide at Schlicht's charged \$1.25 per day. Joel had a brother, also renting a house nearby, who was eight years younger and hired out as a laborer. He certainly may have provided help in the

**M**ANY St. Louis young people have organized "Week End Clubs" for the purpose of spending every Saturday afternoon and Sunday at one of the many delightful places shown in this booklet. "The Fisherman"—a Frisco Lines special train leaving St. Louis every Saturday afternoon and returning every Sunday night, affords ideal service for this purpose.

The St. Louis-San Francisco Railway (Frisco) actively promoted destinations in Pulaski County and elsewhere in the Ozarks through special fares, trains, and its "Vacations in the Ozarks" booklet from which the item above appeared (1913). These specials were a boon for resorts on or near the railroad and helped fill Schlicht Mill's boats and beds on the weekends.

construction but probably not financially. The question remains.

Joel had the hotel mostly finished by the end of May. The Schlicht correspondent reports on the Cave Hotel again in August. By this time, the correspondent had nicknamed the Cave Hotel the "Hotel-de-Cave". It was reported that "The Valley is full of St. Louis visitors. Hotel deCave is well filled with guests, some of them from Chicago."

The summer season seems to have gone reasonably well but Joel Lane may have found he did not like being a resort proprietor, was overextended, or both. It was announced in the January 30 Democrat that a Mr. Laws of Swedeborg bought Hotel-de-Cave and would be open for guests on March 1, 1913.

Marion J. Laws was in the grocery business. He was 66 years old and his wife, Nancy, was ten years younger. They had two daughters, Edith and Marsha, ages 20 and 14 respectively. It is curious why the Laws at their age would embark on running a riverside resort, a much more demanding occupation than selling groceries.

Meanwhile, Joel Lane was busy transacting more real estate deals. He

sold his property in Swedeborg, possibly acquired in trade from Laws, to W. B. Colwell for \$800.00. He then closed a deal with J. M. Sloan on his grocery business and property in Swedeborg. The Schlicht correspondent dubbed him the "merchant prince of Swedeborg."

Laws was making improvements to the resort. He purchased tables and chairs to scatter around the dancing platform constructed in the cave in the bluff below the hotel. By the middle of May, a waterworks was operating, providing the hotel and each room with running clear spring water.

Edith, the young Miss Laws, seems to have captivated some of the locals with her social skills. She hosted a social and play attended by "all of the Crocker sports." The youngsters had a fine time until way into the early hours. She also attended the moving picture show in Crocker on several occasions.

Then, in early June and without

any rumor or warning, Laws sold Cave Lodge, reportedly to a St. Louis Club, for the sum of \$2300. The face of the "club" was George Ebersole. George was 32 years old and single.

Ebersole set about immediately making improvements. He hired two men, Israel Groves and his son Elmer, to do some "elegant" painting at the resort with an eye to putting it in first class style. He hired carpenter Jim Carr to build john boats.

In June, G. E. Ebersole's younger brother, Benjamin S. Ebersole of Page Avenue in St. Louis, came to visit. He was listed as a contact person in the brochure shown on the next page and may have had some investment in the recreational enterprise.

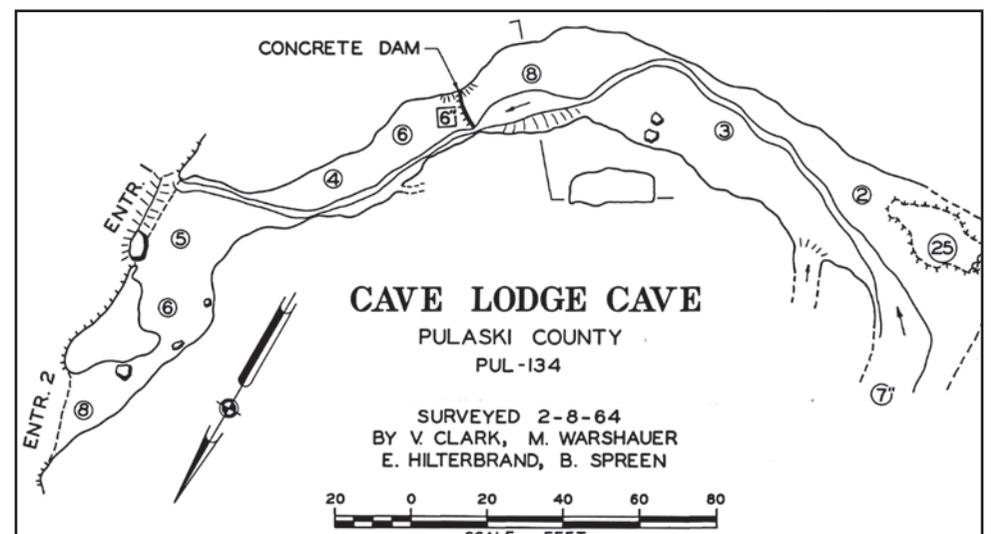
The July 4th weekend was a busy one at Schlicht's Mill and the Cave Hotel. More than 500 visitors were in the Valley and Ebersole was doing a "banking business." It was also remarked in the news that his "best lady love" arrived from St. Louis to spend some time with the "Col.", a title awarded to Ebersole by the correspondent.

Cave Lodge, under its new management, was chosen as the site for the meeting of the Pulaski County Medical Society in July of 1913.

The saw bones, M. Ds. and doctors held their conclave at Hotel-de-Cave about 20 using the dancing floor for speech making but soon moved farther in the ice cold cave where they found medicine good enough for any Indian. Dr. Newcomb of St. Louis, and our Murphy M. D. making

**T**HE residence of Mr. Joel Lane. A ten-room residence near Templar Park at Forest Lodge, on the Gasconade River. A large cave on the grounds. One mile from Templar Park station on the Frisco and five miles from Crocker. One of the nicest places on the river. Can accommodate fifteen persons. Has riding horses. Very convenient for fishing parties. Fine spring on the grounds. Mr. Lane is also a famous guide. Rates: \$1.00 per day, \$6.00 per week, \$25.00 per month. Joel Lane, Expert Guide, Schlicht P. O., Mo.

Most hotels and resorts had an accompanying picture of the facility with the text describing the accommodations in the Frisco's "Vacations in the Ozarks" guidebook. Joel Lane did not get a picture of his Cave Hotel in the 1913 vacation guide. The Democrat noted on November 13, 1913, that "G. B. Nace, connected with the Vacation Bureau of the Passenger Traffic Dept. of the Frisco, was here Tuesday taking views and getting information in regard to this part of the country as a summer resort. He expects to send quite a number of people here next summer (1914)." Apparently, Lane did not have the hotel sufficiently constructed for a picture in November of 1912 for the 1913 edition of the Frisco guide.



The cave at Cave Lodge was a big attraction. It is not a large cave nor is it resplendent with large or unusual speleothems. It has two openings, the right entrance about eight feet high and twenty feet wide. The entrances lead to a chamber about 400 feet long. The main passage is traversed by a stream, which was dammed and tapped for the water supply. As with other caves in Missouri, the temperature is about 58 degrees. The cave interior would feel cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

# CAVE LODGE



ON THE GASCONADE RIVER IN THE HEART OF THE OZARKS, REACHED VIA



The cover art for the brochure produced by G. E. Ebersole. The hotel is visible on the top of the bluff. The long descending wooden stairway to the mouth of the cave was not yet present. Brochure courtesy of the State Historical Society of Missouri.

the principal addresses. The gents departed in good health and well satisfied with Col. Ebersole's treatment. —Pulaski County Democrat, July 24, 1913.

The summer of 1913 was very dry and the drought was having an effect upon the river levels in Pulaski County. Nonetheless, George Ebersole's Hotel-de-Cave enjoyed a bustling August. It was filled to capacity the third week and entertained a large party of city gents and ladies the last week of August. The Cave Hotel was even drawing guests from Chicago.

Ebersole announced that he had a shipment of high-priced pigeon stock ordered from a range in California. The pigeons, along with some turkeys, arrived in mid-September. Another hundred arrived for the roost in October. The resort brochure announced to guests that one of the culinary offerings was squab, an entre' familiar to the well-to-do. It might be that George was going to breed the small bird for the table.

The seemingly ever-restless Joel Lane (or maybe just poor businessman) sold his Swedeborg restaurant and general merchandise store and

other property. He announced a move back to the Schlicht neighborhood to pursue his preferred occupation of hunting and fishing. He bought 50 acres with river frontage on Ben Franklin Eddy, the next eddy upstream from Cave Eddy, for \$1000. He contracted with Jim Carr, the boat builder, to buy ten canoe-style boats. When Joel finished his house on the river bank, he planned to serve fried fish and gravy to customers.

Business was excellent at Cave Lodge into the fall. George Ebersole did take some time off in October to visit St. Louis and attend the Veiled Prophet Ball. George left the resort in the hands of Elizabeth Grunise, chief cook and manager when he was absent, and Herbert Uhlander, the handyman.

In December, construction of a rustic log cabin was completed. That log cabin, christened the "Grande Visita," is pictured in the brochure below. George averred that he built it for a stay by his St. Louis lady.

After not quite a year as a resort owner on the Gasconade, George Ebersole developed some sensibilities about the use of its wildlife resources. It seems that Ebersole was

a member of at least one of the St. Louis clubs before becoming a lodge host and outfitter in the Ozarks. He wrote several letters to the "Rod and Gun" column of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, which chronicled the city's true sportsmen's adventures. Most of George's letters were promotional in content. However, the following letter was published in the column on September 14, 1913.

Col. G. E. Ebersole writes from Cave Lodge on the Gasconade River, at Schlicht, MO.

*"Dear Sir-I read with much interest Dad Hunt's article in the Rod and Gun column of August 24th, regarding the preserving of fish and game throughout the famous Ozarks and wish to verify his statement of the lawless way fish are being exterminated in the Gasconade River, as well as the Black River. I have*

(continued on page 34)

The Cave Lodge tri-fold brochure of 1914 is reproduced below and on the next two pages. It describes the resort in detail. Ebersole was not selling a wilderness experience but an Ozark vacation of relative comfort for the whole family with comfortable accommodations, excellent table fare, and a variety of recreational pursuits.

# CAVE LODGE

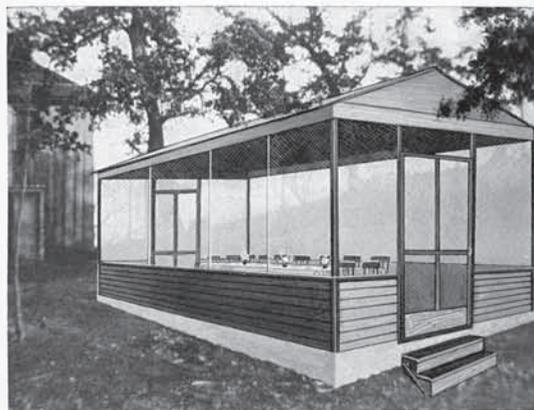
**C**AVE LODGE has the most attractive location of all Ozark Mountain recreation resorts, being situated on the bank of the Gasconade River. It is only a mile and a half from Templar Park station on the Frisco, and but 150 miles from St. Louis.

The Lodge, situated on a bluff as it is, occupies a commanding position overlooking the river, and from its two hundred feet of screened-in veranda a magnificent view of the Gasconade is obtained. From this veranda one can see a considerable distance upstream and down, and enjoy absolute immunity from the annoying fly and mosquito.

The Lodge contains eight large rooms, a bath and a sleeping porch, providing comfortable sleeping accommodations for twenty-five people. It is supplied with running water, which is taken from a nearby spring and forced into the Lodge by a hydraulic ram.



CAVE LODGE, SCHLICHT, MO.—TEMPLAR PARK R. R. STATION



OPEN AIR DINING ROOM AND KITCHEN

A large open air dining room, screened-in on all sides, permits one to enjoy the excellent country meals served, without the distasteful sight of insects, and in an atmosphere of good mountain air that serves to whet one's appetite.

Fresh milk, butter, eggs, fish, chicken, vegetables and fruit contribute toward making an attractive bill-of-fare for the vacationist.

Squabs and spring chickens are served regularly, but can be prepared to order on short notice.

You're not going to the "Woolly Wilds," but if you want to have a good time, bring along your old "togs" and enjoy yourself roughing it. Our fall season is ideal as well as beautiful.

Grande Vista.—The Rustic Log Cabin on the hill is ideally located, being two hundred and fifty feet above the river, and affording a beautiful panoramic view of the surrounding country.

The Cabin consists of two separate rooms with comfortable sleeping accommodations for five or six persons in *each* room, and a screened porch where outdoor rest may be enjoyed in comfort.

Grande Vista is especially well suited for private parties desiring a comfortable place where a congenial crowd can get together.

It can be rented by one party of ten or twelve at \$10.00 a week, or two parties of five or six, or less, at \$6.00 per week, for each party. Meals will be served in the open air dining room, a short distance from the Cabin on the grounds, at 35c per meal.

*This is a resort for brother and sister—father and mother.*



LOG CABIN—GRANDE VISITA



CAVE AND SPRING

The spring, which furnishes water of unusual purity and coolness, has its source in the above cave on the grounds, from which the name of the resort—Cave Lodge.

The cave is a cool retreat on hot days, having a regular temperature of 48°, and is a picturesque attraction of nature's great work, which can be explored as far back as the Giant Drip Rock or stalactite. It is supplied with tables and benches for picnic or basket parties.

First and foremost among the many attractions held forth to the visitor at Cave Lodge are fishing and hunting (in season), boating and bathing.

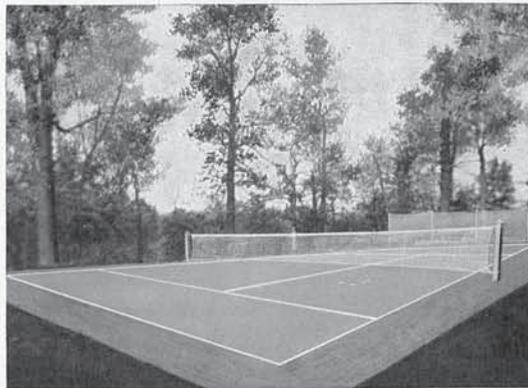
Fishing poles and lines are furnished guests without additional charge, while boats, canoes, minnows and worms are furnished at very reasonable prices.

Saddle horses, buggies and driving rigs and the services of expert guides may also be secured at moderate expense.

There is a double tennis court on the grounds; so bring along your racket and tennis balls. No charge is made for the use of the court.

The most popular among the recreations of the resort is a fifteen-mile float, which can be made comfortably in a day. The starting point is one end of a large loop or horseshoe formed by the Gasconade, and the end can be easily reached by supertime. Commissary supplies for this float, and for other outings, can be obtained at the Lodge.

Those desiring to bring tents and camp out on the grounds of Cave Lodge, surrounded by this beautiful scenery and pure ozone, may obtain table board at the "Lodge" at reasonable rates. As above stated, the nearest railway station is Templar Park (formerly Schlicht Station), a mile and a half distant. The towns of Swedeborg and Crocker are also within good driving distance, three and one-half and five miles distant, respectively.



TENNIS COURT



GASCONADE RIVER AT CAVE LODGE

Schlicht Post Office is but a quarter of a mile distant and there is a Long Distance telephone in the Lodge. Parties sending advance notice will be met at Templar Park Station and driven to the Lodge *without charge*.

Come and see the wonders of the scenery right here at home instead of making that long, tiresome, hot Western, Eastern or Northern trip.

## Wilderness Ridge Resort

On the Big Piney River

Canoeing-Rafting-Camping-Cabins

### Tim and Nancy Warrick

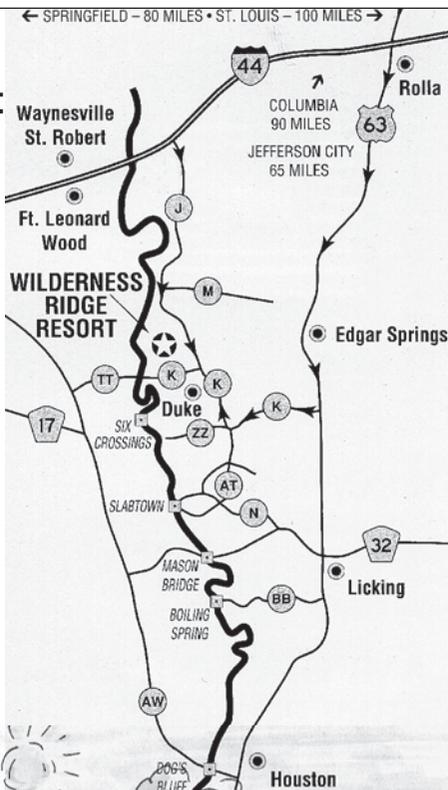
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*Ozark natural beauty and charm  
on the middle Big Piney*



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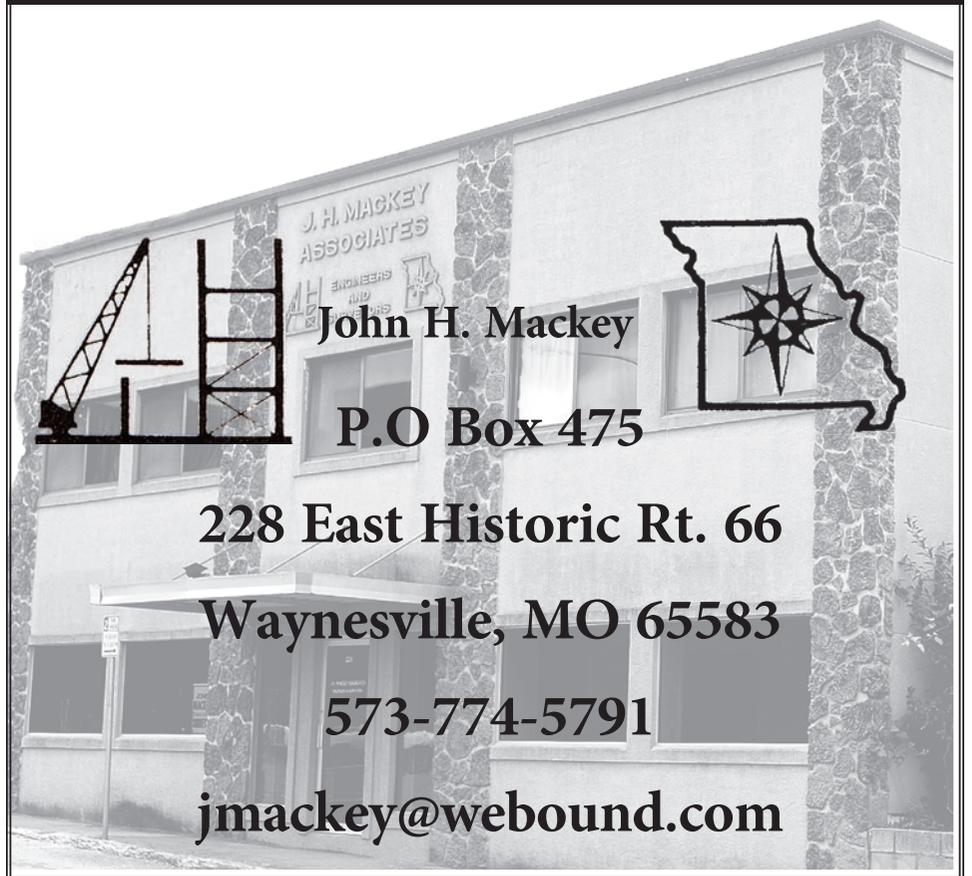


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Waynesville, MO 65583

573-774-5791

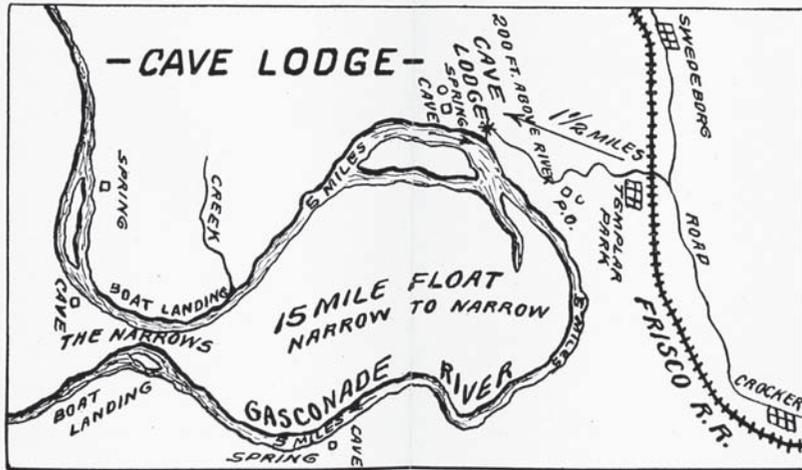
[jmackey@webound.com](mailto:jmackey@webound.com)



# 15 MILE FLOAT

## NARROW TO NARROW

### 12 HOURS OF BEAUTIFUL SCENERY



## MANY CAVES EN ROUTE

### TABLE OF RATES

Room and Board.....	\$ 2.00 a day.
Room and Board.....	12.50 a week.
Room and Board parties of four or more—each.....	10.00 a week.
Log Cabin for party of 5 or 6..	6.00 a week.
Log Cabin for party of 10 or 12..	10.00 a week.
Meals.....	\$0.35 per person.
Boats.....	.50 a day.
Boats.....	2.50 a week.
Canoe.....	.75 a day.
Canoe.....	4.00 a week.
Bathing Suits, Ladies' or Gents'..	\$0.25 a day.
Bathing Suits, Ladies' or Gents'..	1.25 a week.
Trunks, Caps, Slippers and Stock- ings.....	Reasonable.
Floats, Narrow to Narrow .....	\$2.50 per trip.
Expert Guide.....	\$1.50 per day.
Minnows.....	\$1.00 per 100.
Worms.....	1.00 per 100.
Hack Hire from or to Swedeborg.	\$1.25 per trip.
Hack Hire from or to Crocker....	1.50 per trip.
Hack Hire from or to Templar Park.....	Free.
Drayage Charge on Canoes, Camp Outfits, Float Parties, etc., from Templar Park.....	\$1.00 per trip.

If parties desiring accommodations at Cave Lodge will send advance notice to the undersigned, reservation will be made for them, and arrangements made to meet them at the train. Care should be taken to advise the exact date and train on which such parties will reach Templar Park. For further information, write or phone

B. S. EBERSOLE, 5550 PAGE AVENUE, BELL: CABANY 4610.  
G. E. EBERSOLE, SCHLICHT, MO.

(continued from page 32)  
seen dead fish float past Cave Lodge with gig scars and others look as though they had been dynamited and some illegal fish baskets are still being used. These things should be stopped at once and the laws enforced, as it is not done by the real sportsman, who journeys a long way to enjoy his vacation in a lawful way. Mr. Roach, fish and game warden, did some very effective work here a short time ago, and I sincerely hope this will be continued, for I wish to assure all 'Rod and Gun' readers that I will do all in my power to protect the fish and game. I have even gone so far as to discourage motor boats being used on the Gasconade River, so we will have one quiet place for fishermen in Missouri. I would like to have others join this crusade against the motor boat. Let it remain once and forever the canoeists' ideal float through its beautiful winding channel, as the 'Happy Hunting and Fishing Grounds' of the sportsman. We are watching closely all game and can assure the hunter a plentiful supply of quail by December, squirrel and rabbits in abundance, a good supply of doves, ducks, 'possum and fox for the early hunter. Therefore, let's all put our shoulder to the wheel for a good old-fashioned hunting season, but in a lawful way. Now is the time to begin."

George Ebersole operated Cave Lodge for six years. In November of 1918, Ebersole and his wife Minnie sold the resort to Harry V. and Lona English for \$3,750. The English fam-

**Upper Left** The most popular float and fishing trip was the loop around Moccasin Bend. The map orientation in the brochure is a little confusing, as it is off about 90 degrees. The "tip" of the loop actually points north, rather than east as the map shows.

Another irregularity is the stated distance of the float trip around the bend, from boat

landing to boat landing on either side of "The Narrows," as 15 miles. According to a current river mileage book, it is only a seven-mile float. Taking 12 hours to cover the distance might have been close to the truth

if exploring one of the "many caves en route" was undertaken. There is ample evidence that such spelunking trips were done by patrons of Cave

ily had a long tenure, 1918-1948 (see interview beginning on page 37.)

Ownership of the Cave Lodge property passed through the hands of seven owners over the next three decades. Its glory days as a bustling and fine river resort gone, it was primarily used as a vacation retreat by St. Louis County families.

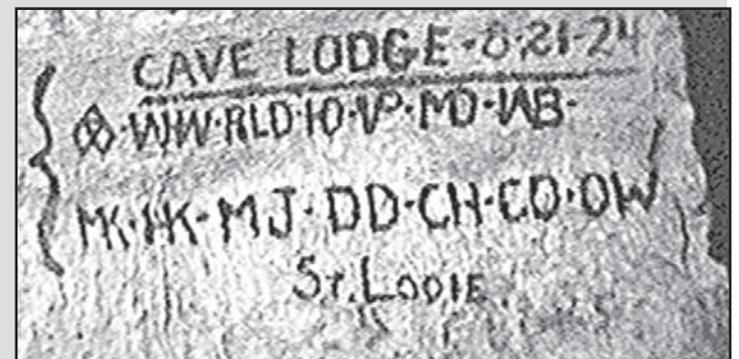
In 1979, Bill Lowry, a retired Rock Island railroader, bought the old resort. The hotel was in poor condition and Bill made his residence in one of the cabins, planning to demolish the main building. Upon beginning the demolition, Bill found that the hotel, despite its appearance, was better constructed than the cabin he was living in. The plan then changed from demolition to rehabilitation.

Mr. Lowry enclosed porches, removed doors, and sealed up the openings. Kitchen cabinets were made from the cabin lumber. Laboring for most of a decade, Bill transformed the aging and neglected structure, poised above the river on cedar piers, into a comfortable residence.

Bill Lowry sold the building and grounds to Charles and Shannon Westrup in 1987. It is in their caring hands that Hotel de Cave enters its second century overlooking the Gasconade River.

Thanks to Chuck and Shannon Westrup for their gracious assistance in determining the ownership timeline.

Lodge. The cave graffiti below was photographed by the author on a wall in Bat Cave near Tie Landing. There were other "signatures" that were older. The St. Looie (Louis) vandals did not carry paint in 1924 but left the message by building up layers of smoke emanating from their carbide lamps into letters.



**Lower Left** Cave Lodge's Table of Rates lists Benjamin S. Ebersole, George's younger brother, as the person to contact in St. Louis.

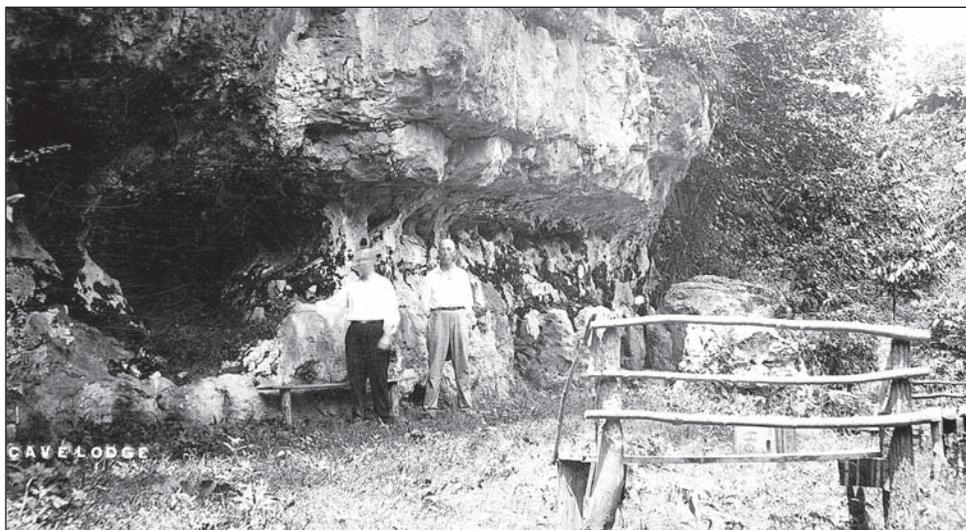


Cave Lodge on the Gasconade River, Schlicht, Mo.

One of the earliest views available of Cave Lodge, postmarked 1914. The people relaxing on the lawn may have been picked up at the railroad station at Templar Park but they might be locals who drove out from the nearby towns of Swedeborg or Crocker. Courtesy of John Bradbury.



This long view of the resort shows its location on the Gasconade, on a high bank very near the river at the end of a long eddy. The wooden walkway down the hill to the river beach and the cave on the left were attractions. Courtesy of John Bradbury.



The long wooden walk down the hill terminated at the mouth of a cave, which was an advertised feature of the resort. The cave was used for dances and picnics in the early days but those uses had waned by the late 1930s. Its small stream was dammed and provided water for the resort. Courtesy of John Bradbury.



In the first decade of the resort's existence, guests traveled to Cave Lodge primarily by way of the Frisco Railway. With the paving of Route 66 through Pulaski County in 1930, automobilists found it much easier to drive to the vacation spot. Courtesy of Jan and Terry Primas.



There were three cabins stair-stepped up the hill behind the main lodge. Each had three rooms and a screened porch. George Ebersole built a log cabin for guests on the grounds in 1913 as the first accommodation in addition to the lodge. Courtesy of John Bradbury.



This view of the north side of the cabins was taken by Gerald Massie, state photographer for almost 30 years for Missouri's Division of Commerce and Industrial Development. His photographs did much over the years to promote tourism in the state. Courtesy of the Missouri State Archives.



One of the major attractions at most of the thirty-plus resorts in Pulaski County doing business in the 1930s was river recreation. The county's two rivers, the Big Piney and the Gasconade, were renowned among sportsmen for their smallmouth bass and jack salmon (walleye) fishing. Floating and bathing (swimming) in the clear Ozark streams appealed to all of the recreationists. Above left and right—At first look, these seem like two different postcards, especially since the card on the left has a postmark date of 1921 and the card on the right a date of 1926. However, they both feature the same floaters and horsemen in a different configuration. Notice the ladies in the john boat at right. They are in dresses, not uncommon among city folks in that era. Some even fished in a coat and tie. Lower Left—This is a very early scenic postcard, postmarked in 1914. It is a view from the lower end of Ben Franklin Eddy, looking upstream on the Gasconade. Courtesy of John Bradbury and Jan and Terry Primas.

ROTARIANS OBSERVE A MORAL CODE FOR PERSONAL AND BUSINESS

# ROTARY

Club of Pulaski County

The Rotary Club of Pulaski County is a non-profit service organization that:

- funds scholarships for graduating seniors
- helps provide free dictionaries to 3rd graders throughout the county
- serves free soup after the Christmas parade
- provides free photos with the "Cat in the Hat" and the "Grinch" during Christmas on the Square
- teaches the Choices Program, which encourages students to make good decisions, to Pulaski County middle school students
- judges middle school science fairs throughout the county
- sponsors the Interact Clubs at Waynesville Middle and High Schools
- recognizes the WMDS Student of the Month
- helped build the skate park in St. Robert
- sponsors and sends high school students in Pulaski County to leadership training
- volunteers monthly at the USO on Fort Leonard Wood

For more information, please contact Club President Keith Pritchard at 573-774-6417.

Rotary Motto:  
SERVICE  
Above  
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# Lona Zeigenbein

## Remembering Cave Lodge Resort

**Old Settlers Gazette:** How did you know the old resort of Cave Lodge?

**Lona:** My grandfather, Harry V. English, came out of St. Louis and bought Cave Lodge and also the theater in town in Crocker. My dad was Ted Harry English.

**OSG:** When did your grandfather come from St. Louis and buy Cave Lodge?

**Lona:** Well, my dad was less than five years old and he was born in 1913. So it was pretty early. Well, you know, they advertised and I forget how many hundreds of feet of screened porch and the summer dining room. They had the cave and the spring. They ran the jet pump and pumped water from the cave up into the reservoir up on top of the hill.

**OSG:** When did you start going there?

**Lona:** I was born there. Well, I was

born in Crocker because you had to be in town for the doctor. I was born in 1937 so they had been there quite a while by that time.

**OSG:** How long did he have the lodge?

**Lona:** Well, my dad joined the National Guard about maybe 1946 and we lived at the fort for a while when he was in the National Guard and when we came back from the fort to Crocker, we didn't go down to the lodge anymore, so I'm assuming it was sold in that time period but they still had the theater for a while. The theater was located where the post office now is. My grandma [Ilona] had a little brown house just below that. My grandfather, Virgil, died shortly after I was born. Mom told about him sitting by my cradle and just watching me sleep [laughs] 'cause I was the first grandchild for him.

**OSG:** So he died in about 1939 or so?

**Lona:** Yes, I was born in 37, so maybe in 1937 or 38.

**OSG:** Then your grandmother kept the lodge going for a while?

**Lona:** Yes, with my parents, and the theater. 'Cause we lived at the lodge

in the summer but in the winter it was very cold. There was no insulation or central heating and things like that so we would live in town then in the winter. He [father] was projectionist at the theater. The bus came to get us to go to school. We went to Swedeborg. In the dead of winter, we went to town so then we would go to Crocker School.

People would come from St. Louis and they took long vacations then. They would stay two or three weeks. It was very low key. There was no television. We did have radio and they would play badminton, shuffleboard, horse shoes, and fish. And sit on the porch and play cards in the evening, you know, the screen porch. It was beautiful. Big gravel bar down where the boats were pulled up and we'd swim.

**OSG:** What use did they make of the cave?

**Lona:** Well, I had heard that at times they used to have picnics and dances in there but that was before my time. Everybody had to look at it, of course. And that was where the water came from. That little elec-

tric jet pump was on the pathway as you walked to the cave and it would pump it up over the hill to the reservoir. There was enough water in it then for the winter because they turned the electric off when the paying guests went home. So what water was there would gravity feed down. It came down the hill from the reservoir. It had a shingle roof and it was round. I don't know what it was constructed from. But it had a window, I guess you could look in to see what your water level was to see if you were going to run the pump that day. I was afraid to look into that reservoir window. You knew it was deep and it was dark and I was afraid to look in there.

**OSG:** Were most of the guests from St. Louis?

**Lona:** Yes, that is what I remember. People that they had known there, I'm sure.

**OSG:** What did your grandfather do in St. Louis before he moved here?

**Lona:** Well, I have a picture. He was a Representative to Jefferson City at one point [Republican, elected in 1910, from St. Louis City, 3rd District.] Other



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This long view of the resort gives a good look at the wooden stairway down the hill. It branches left to the cave and the right stairs lead down to the gravel bar, boats, and swimming hole. Courtesy of John Bradbury.

than that, I don't know.

**OSG:** When did your grandmother die?

**Lona:** She was alive until I was six, or seven or eight when she died. Surely she passed away before 1947. [Ilona English died in May 21, 1944.]

**OSG:** Did the theater pass to someone else?

**Lona:** We had it for a while. I can remember, you know how the projection window was bigger then than it is now? I had a little bed under there and I was supposed to lay down and go to sleep but I would raise up my head and look at the movie and the light was behind me so my head [was in the picture] so everybody in the theater said, "Lona May, lay down and go to sleep."

**OSG:** Were there only three cabins?

**Lona:** There were three cabins that stepped up the hill and then there were several big rooms in the house. Lots of people came as families. You know, I can remember there would be maybe three full size beds in each bedroom. And the cabins had three rooms each, I believe, and a screened porch. We used to have pictures of monumental fish that they caught. The men would be holding them on a pole at shoulder level and the fish would be touching the ground. My dad would guide for a dollar and half a day.

**OSG:** Was it generally pretty well booked?

**Lona:** I seem to recall so. I remember that my Mom always said that it was the hardest work

she ever did. We had a cook but then you had to help a lot and there was a lot of laundry. There were the iron bedsteads and the marble topped dresser and wash stand and wash bowl and pitcher. You know, how much people give for those things now. When she left there, she said "I'm not taking a thing. I don't want any of this old stuff. I want something new." But you're influenced by how much hard work you had to do. We'd like to have them now. And, you know, it always seemed so big to me and it was quite large but when you go back and look at the building now, it doesn't appear so big.

But you got three square meals a day and it's hard to feature all that cleaning, and cooking, and laundry.

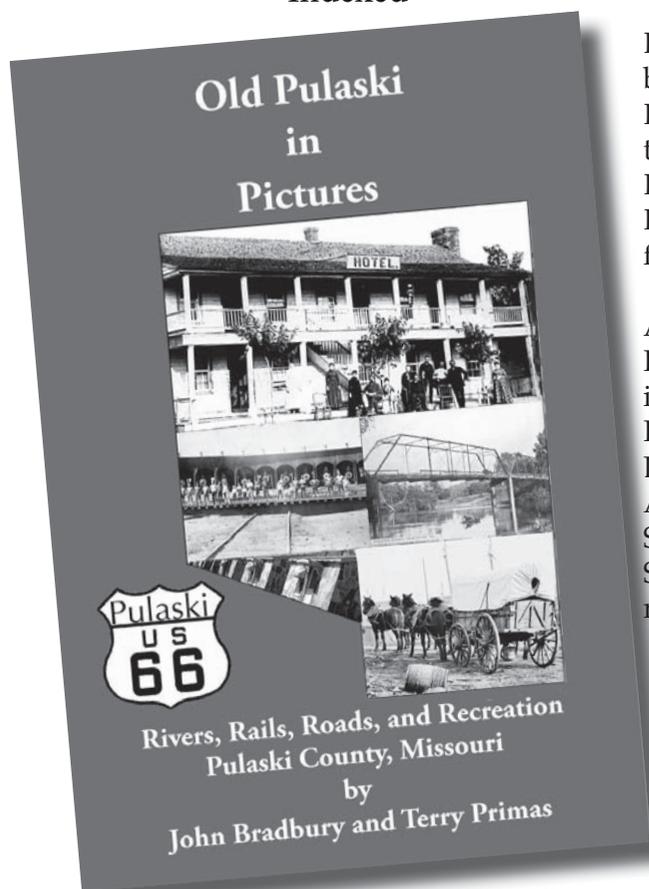
**OSG:** Did you raise any of the vegetables?

**Lona:** I don't know about the vegetables. I think the cook brought in a lot of the vegetables from her garden but we had a cow and we had chickens. During the war, the people from St. Louis would bring their ration stamps for sugar and coffee and rubber tires because they weren't home for three weeks so then they would give them to the folks and that would help buy groceries. During the war, things were short sometimes.

I remember a lot of fried chicken. They were outside until you needed them. You didn't go to the store and get the chickens. And there was a Jersey cow and my mom couldn't milk her

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because the muscles in her arm were not up. So even if dad came home late from projecting the movie, he had to milk the cow.

**OSG:** Was the movie in the same building as the post office now?

**Lona:** No, it's been replaced because the theater had a lot of concrete steps in the front, eight or ten wide ones, kind of a semicircle steps. Mom said when they got married, they told her if she would do the popcorn, she could have the proceeds from popcorn sales.

**OSG:** Did you go up the road much to Schlicht Mill?

**Lona:** I had been there. The house on the hill sure was pretty in its day. They had peacocks that walked around on the lawn. We would gather peacock feathers if they'd let us.

**OSG:** What are your fondest memories of Cave Lodge?

**Lona:** I remember playing a lot. We could play badminton and stuff if none of the adults wanted to do it. Then the kids could play. Of course, I think I was too young to have many chores connected with the business but we knew that there was no sitting

on the couch watching TV. We didn't have it. So you had to get out of the house or they would find you a job. I had brothers two years younger than

me and four years younger than me so we were outside. My one brother was greatly attracted by the river and Mom was afraid for him to go

down there so he got in trouble a lot for going down to the river. We had extensive grounds and things to do and there were people around. It was good. It was a good raising.

**OSG:** Lona, thank you very much for sharing your memories.



This previously unpublished image is the Frisco's small depot near Schlicht Mill, known as Schlicht Station, ca 1904. Fare paying passengers bound for and leaving the resorts at Schlicht and Cave Lodge used the depot. When the proposal by the Missouri Knights Templar (Masons) to build a state encampment was made in 1913 (News, page 20), the depot was renamed Templar Park. Courtesy of The State Historical Society of Missouri-Rolla Research Center.



Lona Zeigenbein spent her early childhood at idyllic Cave Lodge. Lona retired after 30 years with Civil Service at Fort Leonard Wood. She currently is working part time at the Devil's Elbow Post Office.

The article was written and interview conducted by Terry Primas.

**Terri Mitchell**  
Pulaski  
County Collector

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