

# Dru Pippin - a reminiscence

## Part Six

### Unsung Hero

One of the original members of the "Make Fort Leonard Wood Permanent Committee" went to his eternal rest, Rudy (Rudolph) Weber. He came to this county originally from St. Louis. In about 1953, he was a most prominent member of the "Make Fort Leonard Wood Permanent Committee." He typed, folded, and addressed the first two thousand initial mailings that went out notifying the world that Fort Leonard Wood was in danger of being closed.

Also, he is known in this county by many of us who were closely associated with the Missouri Conservation Commission at that time as one who cooperated one hundred percent. He owned a tract of land in the Shady Grove neighborhood which is just off Highway T and on this tract of land the first white-tailed deer that were trapped and brought to this county by the Conservation Commission were stocked. He protected them, encouraged his neighbors to watch after them. And by his full cooperation the deer herd of Pulaski County has spread to its present population.

Then, too, there came a time when we thought it was possible to open a wild turkey season in the county and he, too, volunteered himself and his land, peculiarly located as it was in the narrows of the Gasconade River. These turkey, very few in numbers to begin with, thrived and multiplied and spread until we had a turkey season that we have today. Thanks to Rudolph Weber for his untiring effort in the cause of conservation.

I especially appreciate this because having served fifteen years on this commission [1946-1959; 1961-1964] and four times as its

chairman, I can appreciate what he went through. I want everyone to know his accomplishments that will live as a memorial to his life as giving of himself that those who follow could benefit. I think he might well be called an unsung hero.

### Artful Dodger

The first modern highway through Waynesville was numbered 14 and the first bus carrying passengers from St. Louis to Springfield was the old Pickwick bus.

One day as the Pickwick stopped at the Waynesville restaurant for a rest stop, an eastern artist, who was a passenger, got off the bus and noticed in front of one of the stores a native seated on a good box and whittling. It was obvious by his dress and his appearance, as the easterner thought, a typical hillbilly. He approached the native and tapped him on the shoulder and said "Mister, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you five dollars if you let me paint you." He didn't say anything in return so the easterner tapped him on the shoulder again and said, "Did you hear me? I'll give you five dollars if you let me paint you." Whereupon the native said, "Ima thinkin' about it but I heard its worth a lot more than five dollars to be able to get all that cleaned off."

### High Water

As most of you know, Fort Leonard Wood was supposed to be built in Iowa. And overnight the building place was changed from someplace close to Des Moines, Iowa to Pulaski County, Missouri. Unbeknownst to the citizenry of this area, cars started coming in from all directions planning the site of this great fort. So, after it

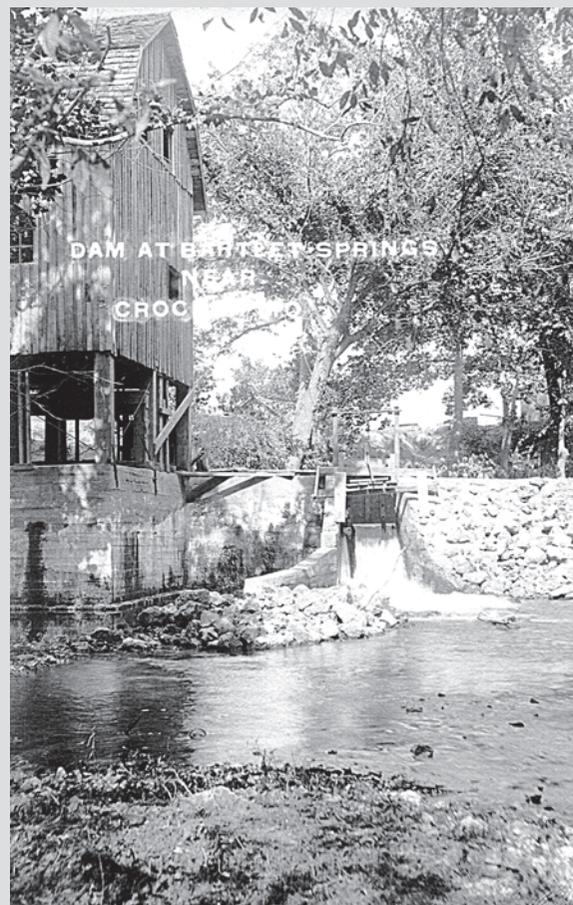
# Dru Pippin - a profile

by William Eckert

**D**ru L. Pippin was born April 13, 1899 in Pulaski County, Missouri, son of Bland Nixon Pippin and Nancy May Vaughn. The Pippin family had settled in the Pulaski County area in the late 1840s, having come from Tennessee and Alabama. Dru was named after area doctors Drura Clai-burn and Lavega Tice. His father was a professor of Dentistry at Washington University in St. Louis and Dru grew up in large part in St. Louis. Dru caught the so-called Spanish Flu and moved to Waynesville to recover. He attended the University of Missouri at Columbia and met and married Eva Luther. Dr. Pippin, who had a great love of the Ozarks and the outdoors, purchased property near Bartlett Spring and built a resort there named "Pippin Place". Dru and Eva took over management of Pippin Place and ran it until Dru closed it in the late Sixties. While Eva stayed at Pippin Place, Dru also had an insurance agency in Waynesville. In 1947 Dru was appointed to the Missouri Conservation Commission and served until 1959. He served another term from 1961 to 1964. Dru was very



Dru was committed to good conservation practices. This photo appeared in the August, 1947 *Conservationist* magazine when his first term on the Missouri Conservation Commission began.



The mill and dam converted to electric generation for Pippin Place. Jan and Terry Primas.

active in the effort to make Fort Leonard Wood a permanent installation. Dru had two children, Dan and Nancy. Dan was captain of the United States Olympic Basketball team in 1952 and won a gold medal. Eva died in 1962 and Dru later married Wilda Miller. After Dru closed Pippin Place, he and Wilda moved to a small house in Waynesville where he died in 1981 and Wilda in 1980. Dru's father was always fascinated with the unique aspects of Ozark culture, such as the stories and the dialect, and Dru followed in his footsteps. In the 1970s he was asked to record some oral history memorializing his own observations of Ozark culture, customs, stories, and dialect and he recorded some 10 hours, most of which are available at Ft. Leonard Wood.

had been built and in operation, [a man] started to build what is now known as the picture show which stands on the Roubidoux bank at the bridge in west Waynesville. I got there one day and I saw a man with surveying instruments waving his arms at a man across the creek who was giving him signals in return. Standing beside the man with the surveying instruments was a stick with a red flag on top. Being curious, I said, "What is that red flag for?" and he said, "That's the floor level of the picture show we're going to build here." And I said, "Why don't you put it above high water?" He said, "This is above high water." I said, "No it isn't. It lacks a couple of feet being above the high water mark." "Well," he said, "water has never been here since the highway was built." I said, "That's right but on August 10,



The Fort Wood Theater was located two blocks west of the square on Route 66 in Waynesville on the site of the present Waynesville Gun and Pawn. Courtesy of Benny Doolin.

1914, it was way over where you have that red flag. If you don't believe it, turn that transit over to that old bridge pier that you see to your right and add 14 inches and add four more and then add 12 inches on top of that for a railing and you got the high water of the Roubidoux as I remember it and I've seen it almost that high since that time."

He turned the surveying instrument over, marked the spot, turned it back, and measured the distance between what he had recently surveyed and the top of the red stake and said, "You're crazy." I said, "Yes, I guess I am but I think I remember what I saw."

When the Fort Leonard Wood Theater opened with a lot of advertisement and

fanfare and publicity and a large crowd of people, water stood in the eighth row of seats.

### Doctorin'

Talking about doctors, one of my other names is for another doctor in Waynesville, a beloved character, Dr. Tice. [LaVega Tice, 1857-1925. Dru's middle name was LaVega. His first name, Drura, was honor of Dr. Drura Claiborn, another early 20th century Waynesville physician.]

When I was farming, I had a man and his son working for me. The boy was barefoot all the time and he was plowing with a double shovel plow and a copperhead bit him on the ankle. The kid yelled and I happened to be close by, went over and saw what had happened, and tied a rag around his leg, and got him in the car and took him to Dr. Tice to see what could be done.

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He gave him an emergency treatment and the leg was quite swollen. The doctor said, "I wouldn't be surprised if the snake doesn't get sicker than the boy. I never saw such a dirty leg in my life."

Well, we had a little fun on that, the copperhead being sick, on the way home. We went out in the field where the boy was bitten. Within ten feet of where he had been bitten we found the snake all stretched out and we killed it. Which goes to show, I suppose, that dirty feet are poisonous to copperheads as their bites are poisonous to dirty feet.

Dr. Tice and I were talking one day and the remark was made, "I wonder how our forefathers derived so many different ways of treating so many diseases." Oh, a fellow would have a boil and they'd chop up jimson weed and make a jimson weed poultice or an old

remedy was that if you got a bee sting take a chew of tobacco and tie the tobacco around and it would take the sting and the swelling out. Another was when you had the measles if you simply make some tea out of dry sheep manure. It would break the measles out. There are many remedies of that kind and I told him of my grandmother having been vaccinated when she was a girl by her mother by taking a needle and scratching her arm and taking the scab from one of her brothers who had smallpox and tying it on the scratch which made a scar and immunized her. It was a simple way of vaccination.

He said yes, it made him remember when he first went into practice as a doctor and was hard up for any kind of a case he could get to bring him in a dollar. He wasn't too well accepted because the main practitioners were the women who

took care of the baby cases, the midwives, and he said he heard of a child being badly burned by having fallen into the mouth of a big fireplace. He got on his horse and rode as fast as he could to where this child lived only to find the women had beaten him to the case and wouldn't let him in to view the child, saying that they had the child already taken care of and he would be alright and didn't need a doctor. He asked them what they had done and they said they had taken some clean sheets and tied the burns up in fresh cow manure.

"Of course, I was astounded to hear of such a procedure for treating burns and I could just visualize that child dying of infection. For almost a week, I managed to make a trip by this house inquiring as to how this child might be and each day he was reported better. Finally, the child recovered and, to my

surprise, the scars were very very nominal, well healed. I wondered about it for a long while and now I know why. It was the tannic acid that came from the manure that came from the plants that the cows ate that effected the cure. Today, in the treatment of burns, one of the main ingredients in a lot of these salves that are used is tannic acid. Which goes to show that of all of the treatments that our ancestors used, somewhere, whether they knew it or not, is an ingredient in that particular plant product they used that is being used today in some form or other."

Audio tapes transcribed by:  
**William Eckert**, son of Lauramae Pippin Eckert and Dru's nephew, is an attorney in private practice in Arcadia, California;  
**Terry Primas** is the editor of the *Old Settlers Gazette*.

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**Committed to Country:** Judge Cortesini served her country in the United States Army, Texas Army National Guard, and Army Reserves.

**Committed to Community:** During her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family and enjoying community activities. She serves on the board of Habitat for Humanity and is a past president of the Waynesville-St. Robert Chamber.

**Experienced:** As a trial lawyer with 20 years of experience, Judge Cortesini focused her practice on family law. That's why she was elected by the other judges in the 25th Circuit to be the Family Court Administrative Judge.

**Efficient:** She is the first associate judge in Pulaski County to implement scheduling orders to expedite cases involving families. This requires attorneys to move cases more quickly to trial reducing delays.

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