

# Dru Pippin - a reminiscence

## Part Eight

### Pippin Place

When Pippin Place was built an old mill was still in operation. My father, who built Pippin Place, decided to use this water power to generate electricity for the building that he was building. So he bought a five kilowatt generator and by turning the water wheel on to a series of belts, the generator generated sufficient electricity to light Pippin Place.

We had working for us at that time a very fine gentleman by the name Roberson. He could make anything with a pocket knife, a foot adze, an ax, and a hammer and a nail, and it's too bad that he had not had the education or the equipment because he certainly would have made a wonderful cabinet maker, had he been so trained. Anyway, he had never seen an electric light, as had very very few people in the county at that time [1914], and they came from miles around to see the electric lights burn.

Well, the first night that we turned the direct current on, because it was a direct current system, the light lit up in the house. At that time, no switches had been created so that individual lights could be turned off. It was simply wired as a test to see if the water flow from the spring would be sufficient to generate power for the entire day. Therefore, the lights that were on continued to burn all night. The next morning, I said to Billy, "Billy, how did you sleep last night?" He said, "I didn't sleep, very little. Those electric lights, they bother me," I said, "Then why didn't you put it out?" "Well," he said, "I couldn't find no way to put it out. I blew on it and it wouldn't blow out. I shook it and it wouldn't go out, so I finally just took my shoe and laced it up over that thing. It kind of scorched the shoe a little bit but by jing, I got to sleep."

You take the first road to the right

as you go west from Waynesville. Follow that road under the bluff down the Roubidoux and up the Gasconade River for five miles, you will come to an old rock building standing to your left on the top of the hill overlooking the river valley of the Gasconade River. At the foot of this big building is a spring known as Bartlett Spring. This spring furnished the power for a grist mill that was in operation before the Civil War and it was a meeting place for people miles around who brought their grain of wheat or corn to be ground for consumption during the winter. Pippin Place was operated as a summer resort and was the first summer resort in the Ozark area that had modern equipment, hot and cold running water, electric lights, and so forth. I am holding in my hand the last brochure that was put out when I operated Pippin Place and I think it might be interesting that it be recorded because there are very few of these brochures left. It reads as follows: *[Dru reads the back panel of the 1955 brochure reproduced on the next page.]*

It was recommended by the Scenic Inns of America. It was highly recommended by Duncan Hines, the outstanding food connoisseur of that day. Today, Pippin Place stands as a monument of foresight for Dr. Pippin. It stands as a challenge for future generations to preserve this historical building.

I sold it in 1969. It has deteriorated a lot during that time because it was not in operation. But today [1976], thanks to the present ownership, I can see that it is being improved and I hope that as time and years go on it will be preserved for future generations as a landmark where people met, played, worshipped, and lived — for the country met city where individuals were accepted for what they were, not for what they had.

# 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 Claburn 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 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.



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.



Guests arriving at Pippin Place. Courtesy of William Eckert.

## GASCONADING

The Gasconade, Roubidoux, Piney river area is rich in legend and historical events because growth and development have depended entirely on natural resources. Once it was a paradise for the wild creatures of the forest and streams and the happy hunting grounds for the Indians who lived by the skill of the hunt. Then came the white trappers, followed by the covered wagon with those who would build a home. By 1831 the present U. S. Highway 66 was well established as the "Old Kickapoo Trace", only to be known later as the "Wire Road" because it was paralleled by the only telegraphic communication between St. Louis and Springfield.

Settlements grew around the springs which are so numerous in the area. Water mills were built with turbines or overshot wheels to harness the power with which to grind the grains for food. Timber was cut and rafted as logs or railroad ties down the rivers, and farms were carved out of the alluvial valleys and uplands. Then came the Civil War and a fort was built at Waynesville to protect the region from bushwhackers, and to preserve a military communication line on the "Old Wire Road". The late Dr. Bland N. Pippin, founder of PIPPIN PLACE, as a boy rode horseback on top of a sack of shelled corn to Bartlett's Mill from his home, some eight miles distant. He dreamed, as boys will do, of the time when this spot would be his.

And so it was, for in 1911 he bought the spring and mill and forty acres of land and his dream came true, as in 1914 the first section of PIPPIN PLACE came into being. Guests rode the Frisco trains to Crocker, Missouri, and completed the trip by horse and buggy.

Then came the Model T and in 1918 another section of PIPPIN PLACE was completed.

As the years went by, PIPPIN PLACE kept time with progress, continued to improve and today, still under PIPPIN management practices the principle of service, hospitality, and courtesy that have so well established it for over 40 years.

The dictionary defines a Gasconader as a braggart, one given to boastful talking, so if we seem to be boasting in this booklet, please excuse us, it is a part of our heritage. All we ask is a chance to show you PIPPIN PLACE, then, you too might become a Gasconader.

Dru and Eva Pippin, Managers.

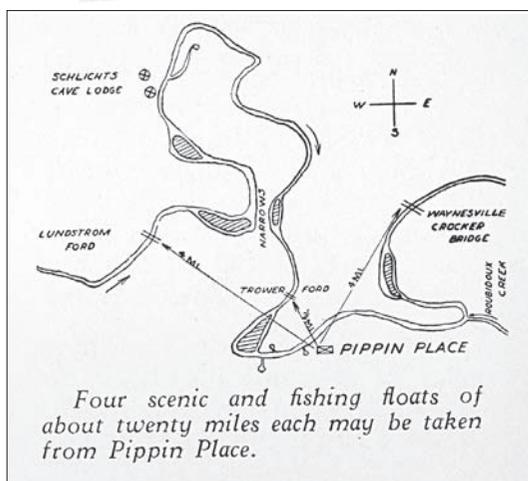
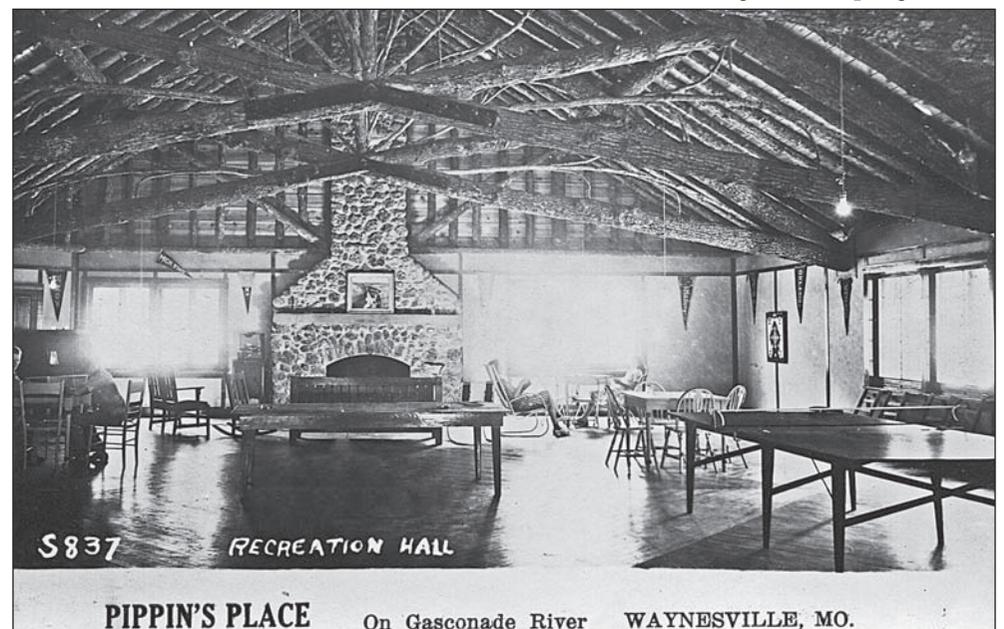


Dru was justly proud of the table fare at Pippin Place and the recommendation by Duncan Hines. Dru was a graduate of the University of Missouri College of Agriculture. In the 1930s he operated the 500-acre model farm at Pippin Place. A herd of registered Jersey cattle provided dairy products. Sheep, chickens, and hogs were raised and found their way to the kitchen, along with a wide variety of vegetables and fruits produced on the grounds. Probably the biggest factor affecting the success of the menu was the gentleman pictured at left, John Brahnham, often referred to as the "Dean of Chefs." This picture of John appeared in the resort's 1955 brochure, which mentioned that John's service at Pippin Place started in 1918.

*For an in-depth history of Pippin Place, see "Pippin Place—Serving Pulaski County as a Long-time Resort" by Lynn Morrow and Gary Kremer in the 2001 Old Settlers Gazette.*

*For more Pippin Place views and the complete 1929 and 1955 brochures, visit our web site and click on "Vintage Image Gallery" in the green navigation pane at:*

[www.oldstagecoachstop.org](http://www.oldstagecoachstop.org)



Four scenic and fishing floats of about twenty miles each may be taken from Pippin Place.

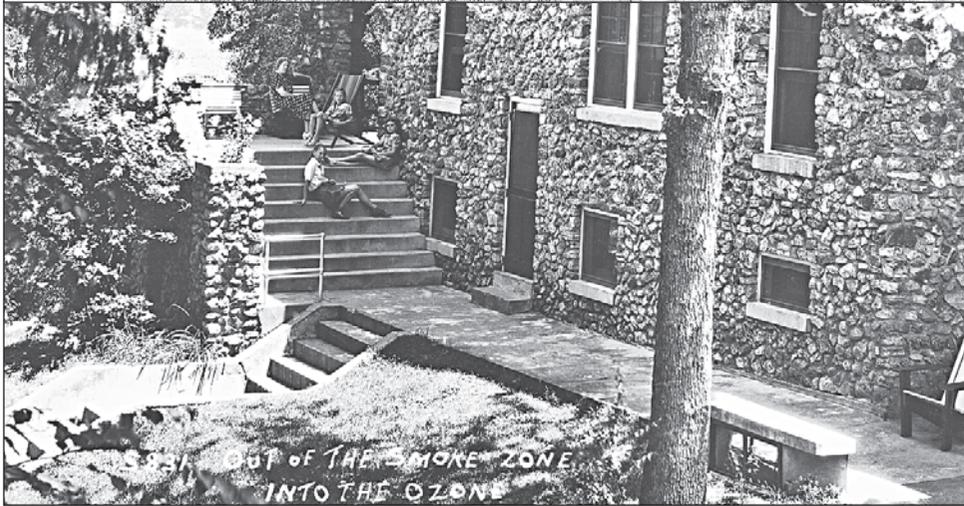
Left The map is from Pippin Place's 1929 brochure which promotes the area rivers where "the flyfisherman may drop his favorite lure in a likely spot, and, if a small-mouth black bass chooses to take it, a battle royal will ensue."

Right The "Nancy" is Dru and Eva Pippin's daughter. Courtesy of William Eckert.





1916 PLAYING TENNIS AT PIPPIN PLACE



1916 OUT OF THE SMOKE ZONE INTO THE OZONE

**Variety of Sports**

Games and pastimes are never lacking at Pippin Place.

Many a snappy match is played on the clay tennis court. Guests of both sexes vie with each other at horseshoe pitching.

Hiking is always popular. Parties of two or more strike out confidently to reach a distant hill-top, cave or spring, and flower lovers are rewarded by countless blooms of wild plum, cherry, hawthorn, dogwood, crabapple, redbud, verbenas, sweet William, violets, bluebells, foxglove, columbine, scarlet sage, tulips, daisies and others, each in its season.

**Horseback Riding**

Good saddle mounts from Pippin stables are ready to take guests over winding Ozark trails which unfold a seemingly endless series of beautiful spectacles of Nature's handiwork in form and color. A gentle pony is a favorite mount for small children.

Then, too, are the cool, spacious living rooms, recreation hall and shady porches and lawns for quiet games of cards, or plain loafing.

—from the 1929 brochure



Above Dru at the age of 17.

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*.

A collection of the eight parts is available in our online *Old Settlers Gazette* Archive ([www.oldstagecoach-stop.org](http://www.oldstagecoach-stop.org)).

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