

## Newest Century Farm in Pulaski County

The Missouri Century Farm program is administered by the Missouri University Extension service. It was initiated in 1975 as part of the celebration of the American Revolution Bicentennial in 1976. The governor at the time, Christopher Bond, felt that Missouri agriculture should play a role in Missouri's celebration since agriculture was the state's number one industry. Thus, the Century Farm program was established. Today, the program is jointly sponsored by MU Extension, MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, and the Missouri Farm Bureau.

Certificates are awarded to persons owning farms that have been in the same family for 100 years or more. (An item on page 12 of our "1921 Pulaski News" feature noted that Missouri had 263,004 farms that year.)

The qualifying guidelines for a Century Farm are:

1. The same family must have owned the farm for 100 consecutive years or more.
2. The line of ownership from the original settler or buyer may be through children, grandchildren, siblings and nephews and nieces, including through marriage or adoption.
3. The present farm shall consist of no less than 40 acres of the original land and shall make a financial contribution to the overall farm income.

As of the end of 2020, Pulaski County had 25 Century Farms. The newest Century Farm recognized is located in Piney Township, along the east side of the Big Piney River, midway between Ross Bridge and Miller Spring. It is the farm of Benjamin F. McDonald. The farm is of particular interest to the Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation, as Ben McDonald was the youngest son of

W. W. McDonald, who built the Old Stagecoach Stop. After W. W. sold the Old Stagecoach Stop, then called the Waynesville House, in 1870, he spent a short time in the railroad boom town of Crocker and then headed for the bottom lands along the Big Piney to become a farmer.

The application for Century Farm status prepared by Pamela Tynes, granddaughter-in-law of Benjamin McDonald, reads, in part

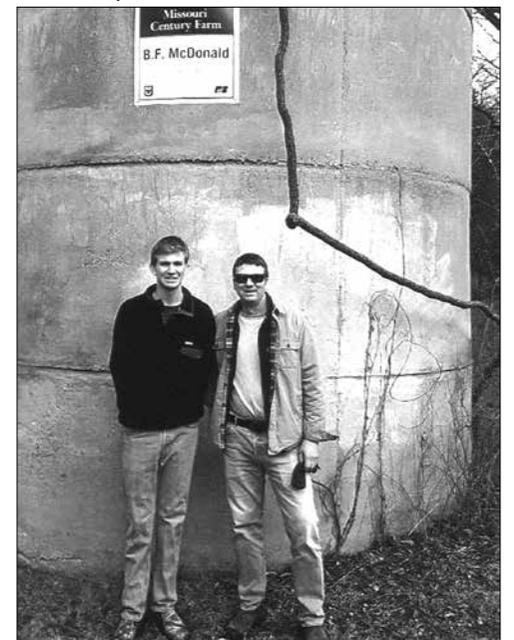
"Benjamin Franklin McDonald was born January 17, 1892, in Pulaski County, Missouri. He was the youngest son of William Walton McDonald and Lydia Jane Page McDonald. Upon reaching the age of four, his father passed away, leaving Lydia with a farm to run and several children still at home. The 1900 Census lists Lydia McDonald as involved in farming, as well as others in the family. By 1909 Ben McDonald obtained a teaching certificate upon graduating from high school. He rode his horse to Springfield. He attended Springfield Business College and by 1910 was employed as a clerk at Springfield



Benjamin F. McDonald, 1918

Grocer Co., while staying in touch with his mother and siblings in Duke, Mo. In October of 1912, it was written in the *Pulaski County Democrat* newspaper that he returned to Duke to visit his mother and relatives. In August of 1914 Ben, Lydia, and siblings acquired land for back taxes. His mother and siblings continued to work the land and he returned to Springfield. Ben registered for the draft for WWI and served stateside as, being a buyer by now with Springfield Grocer Company, his job there was deemed essential during war time. During the 1930s, many families migrated to California. Severe drought was widespread in the plains and most of the McDonalds felt the need to move west. Like thousands of other families, they drove to Modesto, California, on Route 66 to find their new fortunes as farm workers. Ben McDonald, however, stayed in Missouri and, as bits of land became available adjacent to his family land, he bought many acres by just paying back taxes. He began leasing out various parcels for crops and cattle grazing. His relatives never returned from California, making it their new home. Ben enlisted in the army during WWII but being 50 years old did not serve except stateside. By the 1950s he planned to build a cabin on this property. It is located near his mother's home and barn. Sadly, he never lived to see this dream cabin built. He passed away Sept 4,

1954. His family did build this cabin that he dreamed of high on the ridge and continue to enjoy spending time in this special part of Pulaski County, Missouri. All descendants of Ben McDonald are proud to now be listed as a "Century Farm" in Pulaski Co, Missouri. I feel he would be very proud to have this honor being attributed to his family homesteading, farming, and ranching the land. Land continues to be leased for farming and ranching by area residents. It remains in the family and all are proud of Ben McDonald and the mark he made on Pulaski County, Missouri."



Walker Tynes (l), great-great-grandson and Jeff Tynes, great-grandson, of Benjamin F. McDonald. They are standing in front of one of several early 20<sup>th</sup> century concrete silos on the farm.

