

One hundred years ago the major news stories were about community improvement and roads.

Crocker continued to have problems with its electric light plant, remaining in the dark all year. Richland's electric service was more dependable. Bennett Skaggs from Iberia upgraded his already dependable electric service in Dixon. Waynesville, the county seat, still did not have a municipal light plant.

There was intense interest as to the route of the primary road across the Ozarks. The 60 million dollar bond issue okayed by voters in 1921 was aimed at getting (most) of Missouri "out of the mud." A considerable amount of work was done on Highway 14 (St. Louis to Springfield Road) in 1923.

Radio broadcasts continued to attract listeners, particularly in the county's largest and most progressive town of Richland, population 995 in 1920.



News and Views of  
100 Years Ago  
75 Years Ago

The newspapers of Pulaski County had one change of ownership in 1923. W. H. Woodhouse became Owner and Editor of the *Richland Mirror* in 1922, taking over from R. T. Lemons, who bought the paper in 1917. Woodhouse then sold the paper to H. S. Rittenhouse in October of 1923. Charles Iden was Editor and Publisher and Josie M. Iden the Local Editor of the *Crocker News*. The *Dixon Pilot* continued in the capable hands of Arundel Goforth, who billed the *Pilot* as the "Only Republican paper in Pulaski County". V. V. Long, who took over the *Pulaski County Democrat* in 1914, continued at the helm of the county seat publication. However, a 1940 fire incinerated the newspaper issues from 1918 to late 1940, so none survive on microfilm.

# 1923

January 19  
*Dixon Pilot*

## Legion Buys Big Stone

The local organization, Liesman-Roberts Post, of the American Legion, have purchased the large two-story stone building, occupied by A. L. Veasman's hardware store, of C. F. Rinehart of Carthage. The



The stone Dixon VFW building still stands on Second Street.

purchase includes the smaller adjacent stone building occupied by Rugg's restaurant, all for only \$6,000, which the Post paid in cash.

The boys certainly have pulled off a mighty good deal and are to be highly congratulated.

The second floor of the big building will be fitted up for all kinds of public gatherings, the use of which will be free to the community.

Eventually the boys intend to fit the first floor on the opera house order.

There were 389,369 licensed autos in Missouri in 1922. This was an increase of 41,986 automobiles in Missouri during 1922 over 1921. [There were 737 motor vehicles registered in Pulaski County in 1923. Quite a few families were still using buggies.]

January 25  
*Richland Mirror*

## School Bonds Win By Record Vote

By a Vote of 347 to 85 Friends of School Endorse New Building Program

The friends of the new high school building program were out in force last Tuesday, carrying the proposed \$33,000 bond issue by a vote of 347 to 85. It was a miserable day, with a dark, threatening sky and ice-covered streets but in spite of this inconvenience there was a heavy vote polled. Cars for both the friends and opponents of the bonds were driving all day and taken altogether it was a strenuous occasion.

While the friends of the new building expected the proposition to carry they had not in their most enthusiastic moments expected so large a majority and with this almost unanimous vote for the building the undertaking can go forward with every assurance of a unity of community support. The friends

of the new building conducted a perfectly clean campaign, stooping neither to personalities nor abuse and they have every reason to rejoice as a result of the liberal response of the patrons of the district.

The new building will mark an epic in the growth of the Richland schools and in the growth of the town as well and we are quite sure that even the bitterest opponents of the proposition will be among its most enthusiastic supporters before the first fire is built in the new furnace. Richland will not only become the educational center at this section but the graduates of her high school who enter colleges or universities will receive a higher rating and town property and nearby farm values are sure to register a marked increase.

[The enrollment in the Richland School District at this time was about 260 students in all grades.]

February 1

*Richland Mirror***Beck Ford Right-of-Way**

The final step in securing the right-of-way for the state bridge over the Gasconade River at Beck ford was taken last Saturday by the judges of the county court. The court ordered the clerk to draw a warrant in favor of Dr. J. L. Titterington for \$800 for damages to land. The payment of the money was guaranteed to Dr. Titterington by a group of businessmen late in December. At that time, Dr. Titterington turned over the deed and it was forwarded to the state highway commission.

The contract for the bridge has been let and work will be started within a short time.—*Lebanon Republican.*

*[The right-of-way secured from Dr. Titterington was for eight acres on the east side of the bridge site.]*

*Crocker News*

We understand that contracts have been let for the construction of two steel bridges in Pulaski county, one on the Piney river at the Devil's Elbow and one on the Gasconade at Hazelgreen.

*[The contract for the Highway 14 bridge at Devils Elbow was for \$74,414. The contract for the Highway 14 bridge at Hazelgreen, which is in Laclede County, was for \$108,794.00. Both contracts were awarded to the Riley and Bailey Construction Company of St. Louis.]*

**Trouble at Waynesville**

What, from various reports, came near being a free for all fight was staged at Waynesville Sunday afternoon at a meeting which was being conducted by the Pentecostal people, in which we understand that Clyde Hicks was struck in the face by a Mr. Brisch who in turn

had a chair broken across his face by another participant in the affray. It seems that Mr. Hicks' niece, who is staying at his home and attending school, had become interested in the meetings to such an extent that she had been at the meeting house screaming and carrying on for two or three hours, and friends informed Mr. Hicks of the matter. He had gone to the meeting to get his niece when the trouble occurred.

February 22

*Richland Mirror***School Building Plans Accepted**

The plans for the proposed new school building have been agreed upon by the school board and if a suitable site can be secured upon which to locate the brick kilns, it is expected that work on the new building will be started at an early date. The plans provide for a three-story building containing an assembly room and twelve classrooms on the second and third floors and a gymnasium and four additional rooms on the first or basement floor.

The gymnasium will be 58x72 feet, ground measurement, with a fourteen foot ceiling. The entire building will cover a ground space 78x118 feet. The walls will be of

brick, the building will be heated by steam.

The board hopes to have brick burned as near the school grounds as possible and it is expected in this way to handle this part of the building much more economically than could possibly be done if the brick were purchased in the usual way. There is splendid fire clay in the vicinity and an experienced brick man is available to oversee the brick making. Some difficulty is being experienced in securing a suitable site for the kiln but this is expected to be adjusted soon. *[A new site for the school became problematical and a brick kiln was not built. Richland did not sell the \$33,000 in bonds until February of 1924, a year after passing the bond issue. Construction started soon thereafter and a new brick school was ready for students on September 1, 1924.]*

*Crocker News***Crocker-Waynesville Road to be Rerouted**

There are some prospects of quite a change being made in the route of the Waynesville and Crocker road which is to be graded soon by the state as one of the secondary roads to be built out of the Sixty Million dollar state road fund. The bridge

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Even though a \$33,000 school bond issue was approved by the voters of Richland for a new brick school building in January of 1923, delays over a new site selection and materials necessitated that the frame school above continued to be used until September of 1924.



across the Gasconade river on the present route [Skaggs Bridge] does not meet the requirements for such a road as is to be built. The surveyors of the State Highway department have made a survey for the new bridge across the Gasconade at the mouth of the Roubidoux, which would run the road through the August Otto farm to Bear Ridge coming in to the present road at the J. A. Williams place. This new route would do away with quite a distance of bluff road and makes a less grade to get onto the ridge into Crocker. The Highway department will consider both routes and pass on the same at an early date.—*Pulaski County Democrat*.

[Skaggs Bridge and the circuitous bluff road remained until 1932 when it was replaced by the Pikes Peak Bridge at the confluence of Roubidoux Creek and the Gasconade River.]

March 8

*Crocker News*

### Crocker May Have Lights Soon

Charles Wm. Rogers, of St. Louis, district sales supervisor for the Matthews Engineering Co., was in Crocker Tuesday and arranged with Mr. Coop to lease his poles, wires and other equipment for a term of years provided satisfactory terms in regard to street lights can be made with the Board of Aldermen and other matters are adjusted satisfactorily. Mr. Rogers will return the first of next week to meet with the city officials and if the plans are perfected he will install a plant at once and expects to be ready to begin service by April 15 with all-night service. After blundering around in the dark since the old plant burned more than a year ago, it's pleasing to know that there is at least a good prospect of again being "all lit up."

April 5

*Crocker News*

### Bridge Material Here

Two or three car loads of machinery, concrete forms and

other equipment is being unloaded here this week to be used in the construction of a new bridge over the Roubidoux at Waynesville.

April 12

### Bloodland Postoffice Robbed

The Page Bros. store and the postoffice, located in the store, and O'Quinn Garage in Bloodland were burglarized Wednesday night about 11 o'clock by three men who were traveling in a roadster automobile, the make of the car not having been determined. The men were seen at work in the garage where they took a box of new pliers and other tools. After they entered the store and postoffice, citizen were aroused and gave chase, 16 shots being fired but without effect. The car was overtaken at the foot of the Sparks hill below Waynesville, but evaded the pursuers who followed them to Crocker, being but a few minutes behind them when they reached here at 1:25 this morning. Sheriff Mitchell and others were in pursuit and passed the word to Iberia by telephone from here. The bandits took the Brumley road at Iberia, but retired to that place about 4 o'clock and went out on the St. Anthony road as we go to press have not been apprehended. A small amount of change was taken from the postoffice and it is thought their other loot was small. The car was seen here by citizens when it paused near the telephone office apparently uncertain which road to take.

April 19

*Dixon Pilot*

### Brought Home the Bacon

About time the Pilot came off the press Thursday, Marshal Chris Liesman assembled Miskel Carrell, Walter Eads, Walter Rugg and a real rifle in a Ford and burnt the wind for the Hancock section, where the Bloodland postoffice robbers were reported to be.

At Hancock, Chris surmised that out about Crossroads might be a likely place to get "in touch" with the

desperadoes, and his guess proved well-founded. They had scarcely more than spied the malefactors when said burglars began shooting at them with a .22 rifle with which they had succeeded in driving back some fifty to a hundred Bloodland and other men who had been chasing them all day.

Instead of running back when he shot, as others had, Chris proceeded to run after the burglars and shot at them, the more he crowded them and the closer he tried to rivet his eyes to the sites of that old Winchester, shooting so close to the burglars as he gained on them that they surrendered while in an open field on the old Doc Anderson place, about a mile southeast of Crossroads and some seven miles northwest of Dixon.

Chris and the boys brought the three crooks into Dixon on short order, the prisoners giving their names as Alfred Smith, Arthur Ray

and Reuben Walters, their ages as each 19, and claimed to have been together about a year, having worked their robbing stunt from Los Angeles to Pulaski county before running up against the real thing, defending themselves with a shotgun and a .22.

Chris got in touch with Government officials at Springfield and Friday night delivered the "birds" to U. S. Marshal Perry H. Smith and Post Office Inspector C. H. Baker of Springfield, who came here and got them.

The car the robbers left Bloodland in was abandoned somewhere north of Crocker, and had been stolen in Kansas.

The post office at Bloodland is located in a general store, where a few dollars were stolen from the post office and some clothing from the store.

Smith is said to have a wife in Los Angeles.

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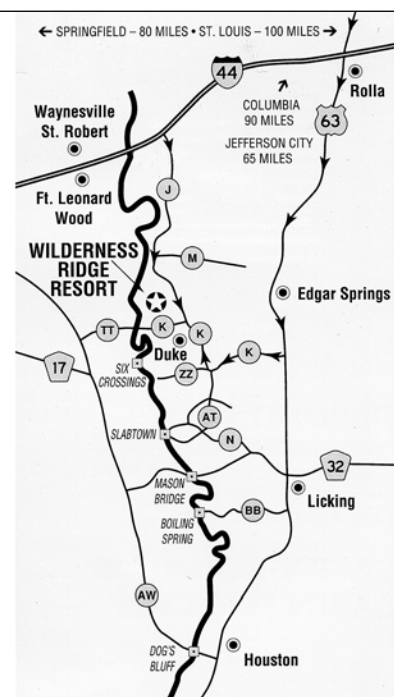
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Nancy Warrick, Owner



April 20

*Laclede County Republican*

William Huff, superintendent, Jos Bade and Bruce Webb, are the advance crew that are now at the river, pitching tents, and building a cook room preparatory to the construction of a bridge over the Gasconade River at the Beckford which the citizens and many others for that matter, have needed for many years. Time was a few years ago as many as twenty-five immigrant wagons crossed at this ford in one day, but now and for many years you never see a covered wagon because there was no way of getting across the river when it could not be forded. There is no way of knowing just how many citizens Laclede county might have gained if they had not sidetracked into some other county. *[This is the beginning of construction of the Highway 14 bridge at Hazelgreen.]*

April 26

**Pulaski Hotel Sold**

Mrs. Sarah Burchard, who has owned and operated the Pulaski Hotel here for the past three or four years, sold the business this week to E. J. Conroy, of west of town,

who will assume management of this popular hostelry June 15th. Mrs. Burchard has successfully maintained a high standard of service during her management of the business and Mr. and Mrs. Conroy will extend to the traveling

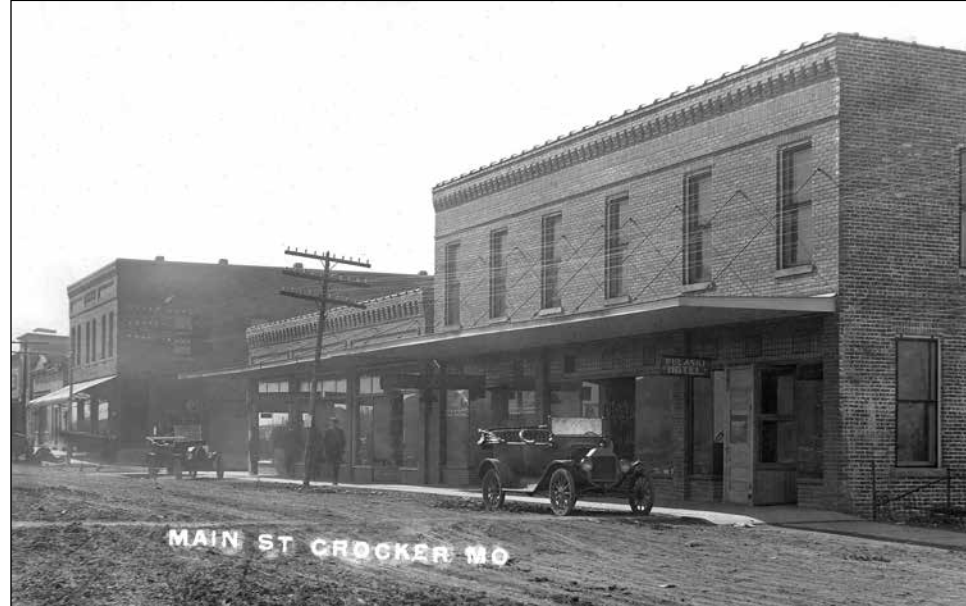
public a genial hospitality and efficient service which will merit and receive a splendid patronage. Mrs. Burchard will continue to reside in Crocker.

May 3

*Dixon Pilot***New Ferry Ready.**

The new ferry boat John Mitchell has been building for Small Bacon, at the White House Ford, also known as Ramsey Ford, on the Gasconade, eight miles east of Dixon, has been completed and is now ready for business.

The new ferry is to be known as White House Ferry, and the boat, which is 14x32 feet in size, is said to be one of the best on the river, and will now open up auto traffic on this road, which is claimed to be a fairly good one, known as the St. Louis to Springfield road, and the most direct route between Dixon and Rolla,



The two-story Pulaski Hotel on Main Street in Crocker changed ownership in 1923 from Sarah Burchard to E. J. Conroy.



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alongside of which the long-distance telephone line runs,

A number of Dixon people are planning to motor down to the new ferry Sunday to spend the day there on the river, and Mr. Bacon invites all. Join the crowd, take your dinner along and have a nice day's outing.

May 10  
*Crocker News*  
**To Have Lights**

C. J. Millar and A. E. Martin of Newburg were here Wednesday and closed a deal with Mr. Copp for the use of his electric light poles, wires, transformers, etc. and will install a plant here in the near future which will probably be ready for business in 60 days. These gentlemen met a number of citizens at the News office Wednesday night and presented their plan which calls for no bonus or other financial aid, merely asking that the city give them a contract for street lights and the citizens give their patronage and moral support. They are operating a plant at Newburg and plan to enlarge it so that "hot lines" may be run to other towns in the vicinity later on but for the present will put in a plant here large enough to handle the town's load. There seems to be no doubt that our town will soon be lighted with all night service to begin with and 24-hour service later on.

May 23  
**Bandit Killed**

Kenneth Smith, one of the three bandits who robbed the Bloodland postoffice five weeks ago, was instantly killed in the county jail at Springfield Monday night when he was shot through the heart by Jailer Henry Gammon while attempting to overpower the officer. Dr. Henry Knabb, who had been called to examine the prisoner's throat, witnessed the killing which followed a desperate struggle between the two men. Smith and his two companions were awaiting trial, they having been captured near here after a battle with posses the day



White House Ferry on the Gasconade, four miles downstream from Jerome.

following the robbery.

Sheriff Jeff Harris of Springfield received a message Tuesday night from R. T. Smith of Alhambra, Calif., who is believed to be the slain bandit's father, asking that the body be held until his arrival in Springfield.

Harold Newcomb delightfully entertained a number of his friends Tuesday night at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Newcomb.

May 31

**Hazelgreen Bank Closed**

The Bank of Hazelgreen, in the edge of Laclede county, closed its doors Saturday morning and its affairs will be liquidated through the Pulaski County Bank of Richland. It is said that the bank has not been paying expenses, but that the depositors and stockholders will be able to recover through the collection of outstanding notes.

**Water Plant Progressing Nicely**

The 2,400 horsepower hydroelectric development of the Missouri Water Power Company at Whitworth Bend on the Niangua River in Camden County near Lebanon is progressing rapidly, according to the Lebanon Rustic. As the capital for this development has to a great extent been supplied by citizens of Lebanon, that city is

much interested in the project.

The installation is being made where the Niangua makes a seven mile loop returning at a certain point to within 900 feet of its channel.

The drop between the channels at this point is 23 feet. A dam is being built across the Niangua and a tunnel has been drilled through the rock to the level of the lower channel. The powerhouse will be at the dam.

When completed the plant will develop about 2,500 horsepower, or in terms of electrical energy, about 34,500 Kilowatt Hours per day.

**Pulaski Farms**

Pulaski County reported 1,454 farms in 1922.

1,317 Pulaski county farms had 16,891 cattle in 1922, 1,235 farms had 19,235 hogs and 1,372 farms had 90,430 chickens.

In 1922 Pulaski county raised 4,964 calves, 19,797 pigs, 82,408 chickens, and produced 437,718 dozen eggs.

June 7

**We've Got a Speed Limit**

The Board of Aldermen met in regular session at the City Hall Monday night and after transacting routine business passed an ordinance establishing a speed limit of 12 miles per hour for automobiles within the city limits. And there

is a penalty for violation of this ordinance which is now in full force.

June 14

Arthur Ray and Clarence DeCreane, alias Reuben Waters, who were arraigned in federal court at Joplin Monday, pled guilty to robbing the Bloodland postoffice in the night of April 12 and were sentenced to five years in the federal prison at Springfield. These men led several posses on a long chase in Pulaski and Miller counties before being captured near Cross Roads on the day following the burglary.

June 21

**To House Light Plant**

F. W. Copp is having a roof erected over a portion of the basement at the old light plant site to provide a place to install the new light plant which is soon to be set up here by C. J. Millar and others, of Newburg, and it will probably not be long until Crocker again enjoys the advantages of electric light.

July 19

**Night Prowlers Shot At**

About 11 o'clock on Thursday night of last week persons living near the north end of the business district were startled by a sound and unusual disturbance which was quickly followed by six or seven pistol shots, and two or three persons were seen running from the vicinity of the Willis store. On investigation, it was found that some miscreants, who had better been at home, had arranged a tick tack with the aid of a brick and some string on the front door at the office of Dr. A. L. Tice. On hearing the noise the doctor, who lives over the office came down the stairway and fired the shots, thinking that someone had broken into his office. Four bullets pierced the screen door and buried themselves in the wood work as the screen was being closed by a string running to the Willis corner. An attempt had been made earlier to commit the same act at the Steward



restaurant but it failed to operate for some reason.

No arrest had been made and it begins to look like citizens must defend themselves and their property against the depredations of an unruly and unruled set of toughs who frequently indulge in similar orgies of vandalism. It is perhaps fortunate that no one was hurt, but the next occasion may result more seriously.

*Dixon Pilot*

#### **Federal Aid for Roads.**

Missouri has been allotted approximately \$17,900,000 in federal aid for the state road system, according to B. H. Peipmeier, chief engineer of the State Highway Department, who has just returned from Washington where he went in the interest of Missouri roads. Contracts for \$11,000,000 of the \$17,900,000 federal aid received by the state have been made:

"Many of the states have lost some of their federal aid on account of not being able to do their work in compliance with the rules and regulations, but Missouri has never lost a dollar of federal aid and is in a position to use the present allotments that may be available. Members of the federal bureau, including the chief spoke very highly of the work being done in this state. They reported that Missouri now has the biggest road program of any state in the union, and an organization that is not excelled by that of any other state," Piepmeier said.

July 26

A national and state hospital was opened at Rolla Tuesday for the free treatment of trachoma (granulated eyelids), which is said to cause one-fifth of the blindness in this state and to be curable if treated in time.

August 2

*Crocker News*

#### **Improved Conditions**

...At Waynesville a substantial concrete bridge is being constructed across the Roubidoux on the east

and west highway.

Another bit of improvement noted, and one that has long been needed to calm the nerves of timid motorists, is a stout oak railing which is being built along the outer edge of the bluff road around Pike's Peak at the mouth of the Roubidoux on the Crocker-Waynesville road. Here is a bit of scenic roadway, at the confluence of the Roubidoux and Gasconade, which has not been fully appreciated because of the "scary" and unprotected heights. But one can go the route in peace and safety soon.

August 30

*Dixon Pilot*

Blind Boone, the renowned musician who hasn't been here for several years, is billed to put on one of his famous musical programs at the Legion Hall Saturday night, Sept 1, under auspices of the Epworth League of Grace M. E. Church. *[John William "Blind" Boone (1864-1937) was a popular blind African-American musician with an interesting career. For a brief and interesting profile, see <https://historicmissourians.shsmo.org/blind-boone/>]*

September 13

*Crocker News*

#### **Telephone System Sold**

Ben Adams, of St. Louis, has sold the Ozark Telephone System, comprising the Crocker, Dixon and

Waynesville switchboard and lines, to a Mr. Bundren of St. Louis who is now in charge. We understand that Mr. Bundren is planning to move to Crocker and that he expects to install cables and improve the lines.

*Richland Mirror*

The enrollment in the Richland high school stands at 110, an increase over last year of 36, or almost 50 per cent. Forty nine students are enrolled in the new departments, twenty-nine in Vocational Agriculture and twenty in Teacher Training. There are fifteen in the senior class. The enrollment in the grades stands at about 180, a slight decrease over last year. *[No new school building yet.]*

#### **Signs to be Removed**

All advertising signs on state roads are to be destroyed November 1 by order of the state highway commission. This order is in conformity with the centennial road law which makes it a misdemeanor for any person to erect or maintain advertising signs within the lines of established roads.

October 4

*Crocker News*

#### **We Need Lights**

Two or three times since the Crocker electric light plant burned, nearly two years ago, prospects for

a new plant have appeared quite encouraging, but each time the plans have "blown up" for some reason. There is a good opening here for a light plant. Folks want lights and are willing to buy juice if someone will deliver it, and we still hope and pray that somewhere there is someone who will come and let their light shine in Crocker. *[Apparently the Newburg people backed out of installing a plant.]*

*Dixon Pilot*

#### **Bridge at Devils Elbow**

Large steel girders, etc., are being unloaded here for use in constructing the Devils Elbow bridge on the State highway south of town. The bridge is to be 20 feet wide and 400 feet in length.

*Richland Mirror*

A man by the name of Bailey fell from a bridge stringer at the new Hazelgreen bridge last Friday, fracturing his right arm both above and below the elbow. He was brought to Dr. Howlett's office for treatment in the afternoon. *[This may have been one of the construction company's owners, or at least a relative, since the bridge was being built by the Riley and Bailey Construction Company of St. Louis.]*

October 18

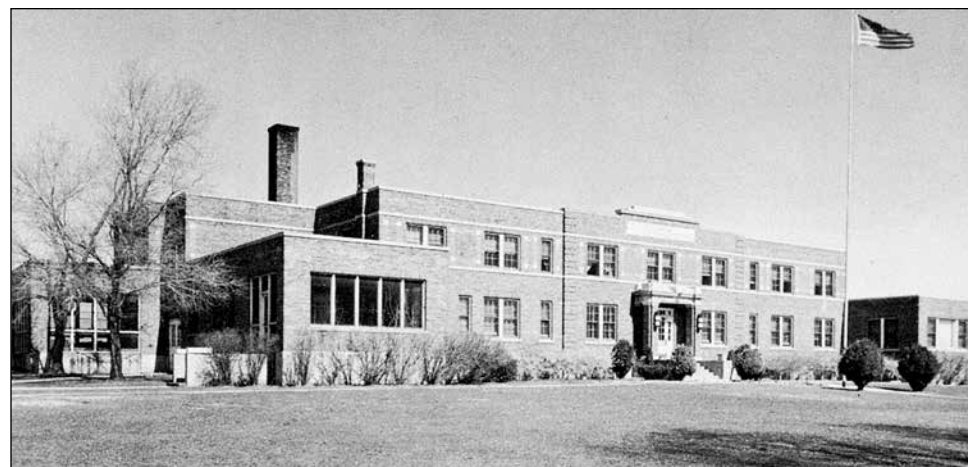
A survey is being made for the improvement of the north and south State Highway through Dixon. We understand the road is to cross under the railroad east of the culvert.

October 25

*Crocker News*

#### **Road Work in Pulaski Co.**

The State Road work now under contract in this county on Route 14 which runs east and west, is progressing satisfactorily. The Riley and Bailey Construction Company who have the contract for the construction of the bridge over the Big Piney river are delivering the steel to the bridge site and this work should be completed by January 1st.



The first Trachoma Hospital, 1923, in Rolla, was in a residence on Elm Street provided by the Chamber of Commerce and operated by the U. S. Public Health Service. In 1939, a new hospital building (above) was constructed at a cost of \$136,000 on Kingshighway (Rt. 66) with state and federal funds. The 65-bed hospital operated until 1957 when it was transferred to the Missouri Highway Patrol and then to the University of Missouri-Rolla in 1971. Courtesy of Richard Elgin.



The steel bridge over the Roubidoux in Waynesville (above) was built in 1911. The steel bridge was dismantled and rebuilt at Lundstrum Ford in 1925 (right) on the Gasconade along Highway T and served that area until it was replaced in 1974.

November 1  
*Dixon Pilot*

The old mass of concrete that was the base of the old band stand is to be removed. The installation of traffic signals and an electric light at the central public well is planned.

Three hundred thousand persons visited the Ozarks this summer, an increase over the preceding one of 20 percent, and last year the visitors doubled the number of



the year before. The “tourist crop” brought more than \$10,000,000 cash business to the state according to John F. Potts, secretary of the Ozark Playground Association, Springfield.

As of October 11, 1923, there are 717 miles of gravel surfaced, 249 miles of concrete and 48.02 miles of macadam or asphalt surfaced roads in the state highway system.

*Richland Mirror*  
**Introducing Our Successor**  
The Richland Mirror and business has been sold to Mr. H. S. Rittenhouse, late of Joplin, Mo., who has been in charge of the office since last Saturday.

The new proprietor is an uncle of Mr. H. T. McClure, formerly of the Mirror, which is sufficient introduction to insure him a warm welcome among Richland people...  
W. H. Woodhouse  
*[Woodhouse moved to Baxter Springs, Kansas, and bought a half-interest in the Citizen, a twice-a-week paper in the town of 5,000 population.]*

November 15  
*Crocker News*

The News editors installed a radio set this week. Others having radios in and near Crocker are W. S. Johnson, J. E. Turpin, Guy and Stanley Mace, C. E. Hobson, D. E. Barcalow and W. K. Royce.

November 22  
*Richland Mirror*

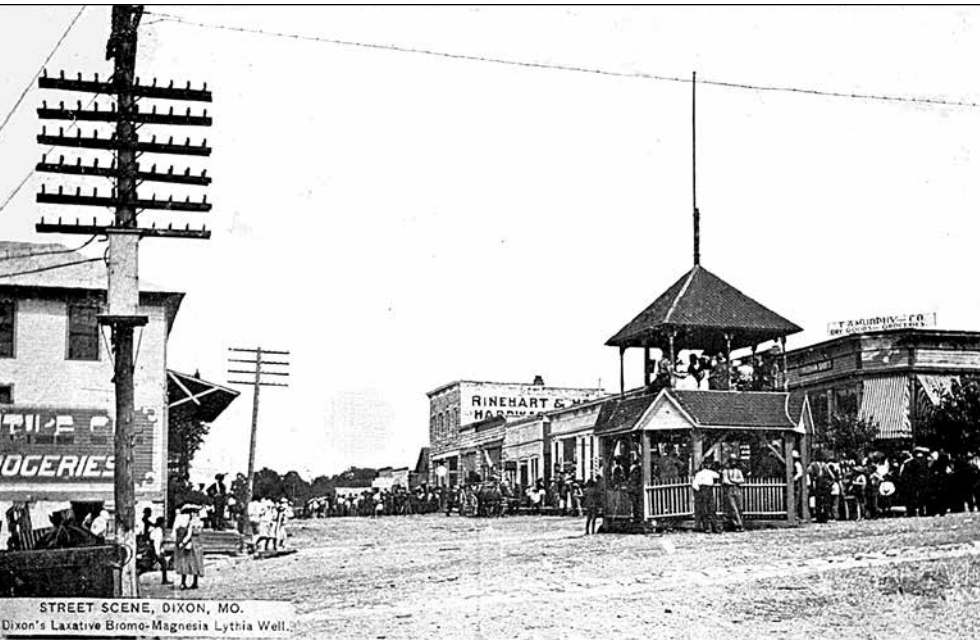
A petition is being circulated in this part petitioning the county court to move the old bridge across the Roubidoux at Waynesville and place it at the Howlett Ford giving Piney and Roubidoux township access to the state road at Laquey. – Bloodland correspondent in *Pulaski County Democrat*.

A number of people were out Sunday afternoon viewing the new bridge at the Beck ford [*Hazelgreen*], which is nearing completion.

December 21  
*Laclede County Republican*

Contractor Bailey at the close of this week will break camp and work on the steel bridge [*at Hazelgreen*] will not be resumed until after the holidays. Only the foreman Mr. William Huff and his family will remain at the camp.  
*[Most of the work on the steel bridges at Hazelgreen and Devils Elbow was done during 1923 and the bridges are dated as completed that year.]*

*News compiled and edited by Terry Primas.*



The town well and second-story bandstand at Second and Elm streets that had served Dixon since its founding was razed. Courtesy of Jan and Terry Primas.



The *Laclede County Republican* of Lebanon declared the two new steel bridges on Highway 14 through Pulaski and Laclede counties complete by April 24, 1924. "Riley and Bailey, of the firm Riley and Bailey Construction Co., of St. Louis, were here [Hazelgreen] Monday taking farewell of the bridge. They left Tuesday via Hooker (Piney bridge) for Dixon, where they will reload two [railroad] cars with machinery to be shipped to the next project, a steel bridge in Mississippi larger than the ones they have just completed." The Hazelgreen bridge served through the Route 66 era (1926-1985). The 525.8-foot long bridge was closed to traffic in 2014. There is a current effort to save the bridge from demolition and to rehabilitate it.



**Above** View of the top of the retaining wall atop Devils Elbow hill in 1924.  
**Below** Part of the cliffside stone retaining wall is visible in this 2017 view.



The steel bridge across the Big Piney at Devils Elbow was the result of Pulaski County's Highway Engineer, George M. Reed. He surveyed a new route for Highway 14 that went around Hooker Hill and, instead of crossing the river at Wagon (Hooker) Ford as had been done since before the Civil War (and which was a poor bridge site), Reed continued south and crossed the Big Piney at Devils Elbow. The new route continued in a southwesterly direction, cutting the road into the side of a hill. The bridge was completed at a cost of \$80,405. The 588-foot bridge still stands, carrying traffic on the original Highway 14/Route 66. A \$1.3 million rehabilitation project by Pulaski County was finished in 2014. Courtesy of Missouri State Archives.



### The Great Wall of Devils Elbow

Of the considerable improvements made to State Highway 14 during 1923-1924, the two bridges mentioned above were the most useful in our area and the wall at left is still the most spectacular. George Reed's 3.16 mile rerouting of the highway from Hooker Ford through Devils Elbow took it up a steep hill southwest of the hamlet. The grading work started May 15, 1923, and cost \$86,334, not including the cost of the steel bridge at Devils Elbow. At the top of the hill, the north side was excavated at depths ranging to 30 feet to make way for the new 34-foot roadway (see picture at left). The top of the stone wall with its concrete cap is most visible while traveling the original Highway 14/Route 66. The length of the wall is 400 feet along and the outer edge of the roadbed has a precipitous drop of 150 feet. To see the spectacular part, one has to peer over the wall. The roadbed is held back by a stone retaining wall from 5 to 20 feet in height that holds the outer edge of the road at its most dangerous points.

Highway 14 traversed the Ozarks from St. Louis to Joplin, a distance of 310 miles. In 1924, the State Highway Department had approximately \$3,000,000 worth of road work under contract on this primary road. "There are 130 miles of earth grading, 45 miles of gravel, and 26 miles of concrete road now under contract on this route, much of which is completed and ready for use" (*Rolla Herald*, August 7, 1924, page 2). Much of the cost of the road work and bridge construction was from the 60 million dollar bond issue. However, additional funds for construction and maintenance was needed. An initiative petition put Proposition No. 5 on the statewide ballot in 1924. It proposed to increase annual motor registration fees by fifty percent and to levy the first tax of two cents per gallon on fuels used in motor vehicles that traveled public roads. The proposition passed by more than two to one.