

DID YOU KNOW?

by VAN BEYDLER

Here is a collection of facts, tidbits, and trivia about Pulaski County and the surrounding area. Did you know . . .

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A Schlict (mill) mechanic applied for a patent for a flying machine in Pulaski County in the year 1902.

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In 1869, a proposal was made to make Rolla the southern capital of Missouri. Macon was proposed to be the northern capital.

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In 1902, a new town to be named PURDEN was to be located at the foot of the little Hancock hill between Crocker and Hancock. Crockerites said this place was to be the new railroad division. A train wreck occurred at Purden on January 3rd, 1903 dumping three cars of whiskey.

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Forest Lodge was once a resort near the Schlict Milling Company that drew visitors from all over. The Forest Lodge was renowned for its healthful magnesia water.

Dixon once had a charcoal and chemical plant.

In 1903, the Missouri Fish Commission stocked 5,000 jack salmon at the Schlict Milling Company spring to give them time to acclimate to the water before entering the river.

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The Pulaski county courthouse built in 1903 cost \$10,240.

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After the Pulaski County Courthouse burned in 1902, it was suggested that Schlict valley would be the perfect place to build a replacement. Newspaper accounts said it could be the site of the new county seat since the magnesia springs would furnish water enough to put out the fires in Hades.

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An early real estate agent in Dixon named George Peck advertised the country as "The Land of the Big Red Apple." The apples were from the large apple orchard south of Dixon near Piquet Cave. The apples were shipped in barrels on the Frisco to nearby cities.

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A man was killed in Dixon by an elephant.

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George Cain was born in Pulaski County in 1823 and lived his entire life in the county. By 1852, Cain homesteaded land

along the Gasconade and was known as one of the area's wealthiest farmers owning 2400 acres. Legend has it that a young man stayed three weeks with Mr. Cain training a horse to race. Mr. Cain said he was a nice, well-behaved, young man by the name of Jesse James.

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As a child in Pulaski County, Minnie O. Johnson stated she had taken care of the guns of Jesse and Frank James when the notorious robbers were lodged overnight at her farm home in Dixon, Missouri.

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The Dixon News, a weekly newspaper published around 1880 later moved to Waynesville and the name was changed to the Pulaski County Democrat.

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When a prohibition law was passed in Pulaski County, certain pranksters made a mock grave in the Dixon City Square and "buried" a certain doctor who had been one of the main contenders.

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During the Civil War, James McMillian and his family were living five miles north of where Crocker would be built on a tract

of land adjoining Miller County. Bushwackers forced him to give them \$400 after he had received that amount from the sale of oxen. Later, in an attempt to force him to reveal the hiding place of \$16,000 in gold, the bushwackers left him hanging to a tree limb in front of his house. His seven year old son, James B. McMillian, cut the rope and released him in time to save his life. The elder McMillian was so impaired by the ordeal that he couldn't find the money afterwards.

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Crocker was named for Eurilis J. Crocker who was a stockholder of the railroad.

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In 1924, the Federal Water Power Commission authorized a preliminary permit for a project to build a 95-ft. high dam on the Gasconade River to impede water to form a lake one-half to a mile wide and over 50 miles long. The Central Missouri Power and Water Company planned for the main powerhouse to have six or seven huge water turbines and the project would cost \$10,000,000.

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In the 1860s and '70s, Black Jim Wall operated a trading post, mill and post office called Faith. He owned farmland,

bought, fed and sold livestock, and had a long dining table in his home which was set to feed, not only seven sons and five daughters but anyone else who was present at mealtime. Faith was located nine miles west of the Madden Church or six miles northwest of the Crocker area. Black Jim Wall's wife was the cousin of Jesse and Frank James. Mr. and Mrs. Brownie Miller lived on a farm surrounding the Madden Church. They lived on the trail leading to the Wall's home and were considered neighbors. On one occasion after they had complied with a request for water to drink, they had a very friendly conversation with the mild mannered Frank James. Having previously met him at the Wall home there was no mistaken identity concerning him, his beautiful horse or his brilliant diamond. An individual who had a moonlight ride with one of the James' boys was Jim McMillian, the same Jim who during the Civil War cut the noose from his father's neck. Jim was returning home on horseback from a courting date with Ollie Porter (Michelle) when he heard hoof sounds approaching from behind. A man riding a horse of recognizable worth came up quickly by his

side and for awhile talked small talk in a very friendly manner. Quite abruptly he asked, "Are the James' boys anywhere around?" Young Jim's reply was, "If I thought so, I'd be home." The rider said, "You're riding with one right now." The two separated at the next crossroads.

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Pulaski County isn't the home of The Batman but does have it's own batcave. The Batcave, as it was known, was on Camp Gasconade near Crocker.

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Sources: Dixon Pilot, Pulaski County Democrat, Rolla Herald, Dixon 1869-1969 Centennial Book, and 100 Years of Crocker by Nellie Stites Wells used by permission.



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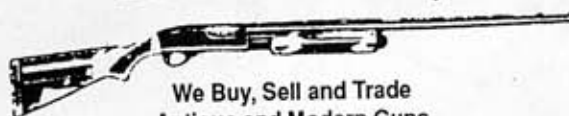
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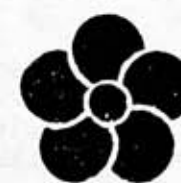
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