

This is a brief sketch of energy, creativity, and entrepreneurial zeal. It is the story of Frank Jones. It is Frank A. Jones' vision of pastoral industry on the banks of the Gasconade and the roadside of Route 66.

Frank Allison Jones was born on September 8, 1889 between Greeley and Garnett in rural Anderson County, east central Kansas. Little is known about Frank's early years in Kansas or his education. He did receive a high school diploma and married Ila Marie Palmer in 1912. Ila was from the same Garnett/Greeley area in Kansas.

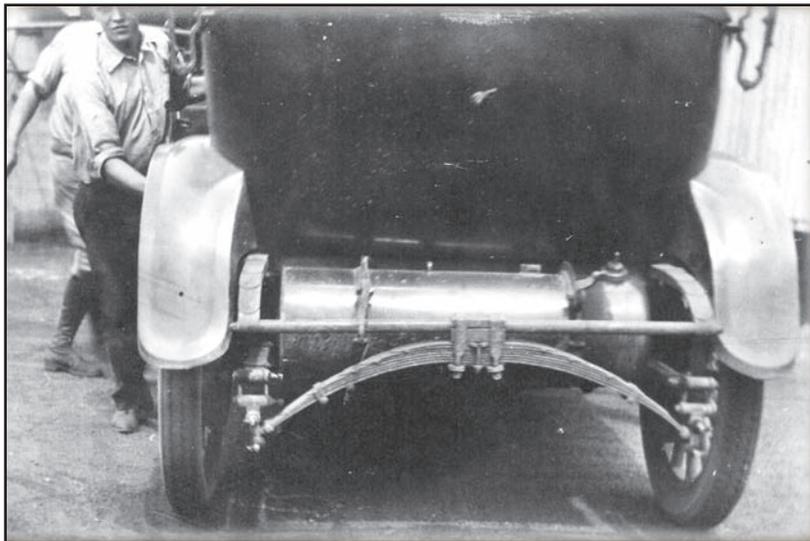
Frank served as a Sergeant in the army during World War I and was mustered out in 1918.

It seems likely that Frank went to work on the plains in the oil fields. He was involved with pipeline construction. These duties kept him on the move as he worked in Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico. His abilities must have been readily apparent. By



Casual portrait of Frank Allison Jones as a young man.

the early 1920s, he held a management position with Shell Oil Company at its offices in St. Louis. By 1924, Frank was a member of the Freemasonry Lodge on Lindell Boulevard in St. Louis and left a will on file with the secretary of that fraternal organization. Frank Jones was a deliberate man, a planner, and making a will in his mid-thirties is an example of his deliberateness. The will also expressed his trust in Ila. It stated, "Having the utmost confidence in my wife's ability and judgment, no provision is made herewith to settle a part or portion of my estate on my son, Frank Allison, Jr., this matter being left



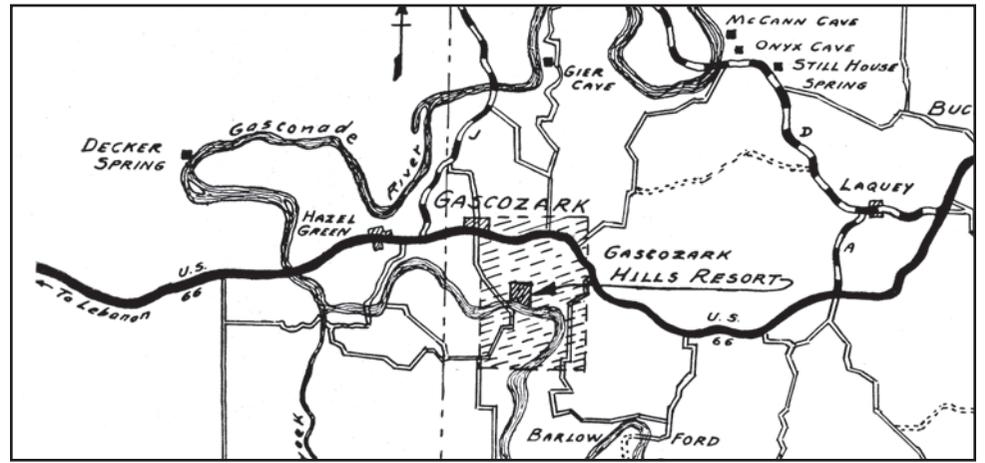
Leaf spring invented by Frank and given to the Dodge brothers in the 1920s. Courtesy of Jason Jones.

entirely to her." Frank, Jr. would have been an early adolescent at the time and later a partner in Frank Sr.'s retirement ventures.

One example of Frank's mechanical ability was his invention of a rear leaf spring. He did not patent his idea but merely gave it to the Dodge brothers to use on their vehicles. For his contribution, he received an autographed photo from fellow inventor Thomas A. Edison.

In 1927, Frank and Ila purchased a few hundred acres along the Gasconade River in western Pulaski County from M. D. Jones. It may be that Frank spotted this idyllic location from the air on one of his flights for Shell Oil. It was probably not coincidental that the location for his retirement was also just off the newly commissioned national highway, Route 66.

With his retirement from Shell Oil Company as Vice President of the Automotive Division, Frank set about to transform his portion of the Gas-



Left: One of the original cabins at Gascozark Hills Resort. Above: Location of Gascozark store and the Gascozark Hills Resort. Route 66 today at Gascozark is Route AB and Gasconade Hills Resort is on Spring Road where it crosses the Gasconade River.

conade valley into a working farm. For a name, Frank invented one. He combined Gasconade and Ozark to coin the name Gascozark. He also set about building a hereford herd. The farm became the Gascozark Hereford Ranch. Frank was proud of his breeding efforts and traveled the midwest to show his cattle at expositions. Over the next decade and a half, the Joneses added acreage to the ranch and it com-

prised 760 acres by 1945.

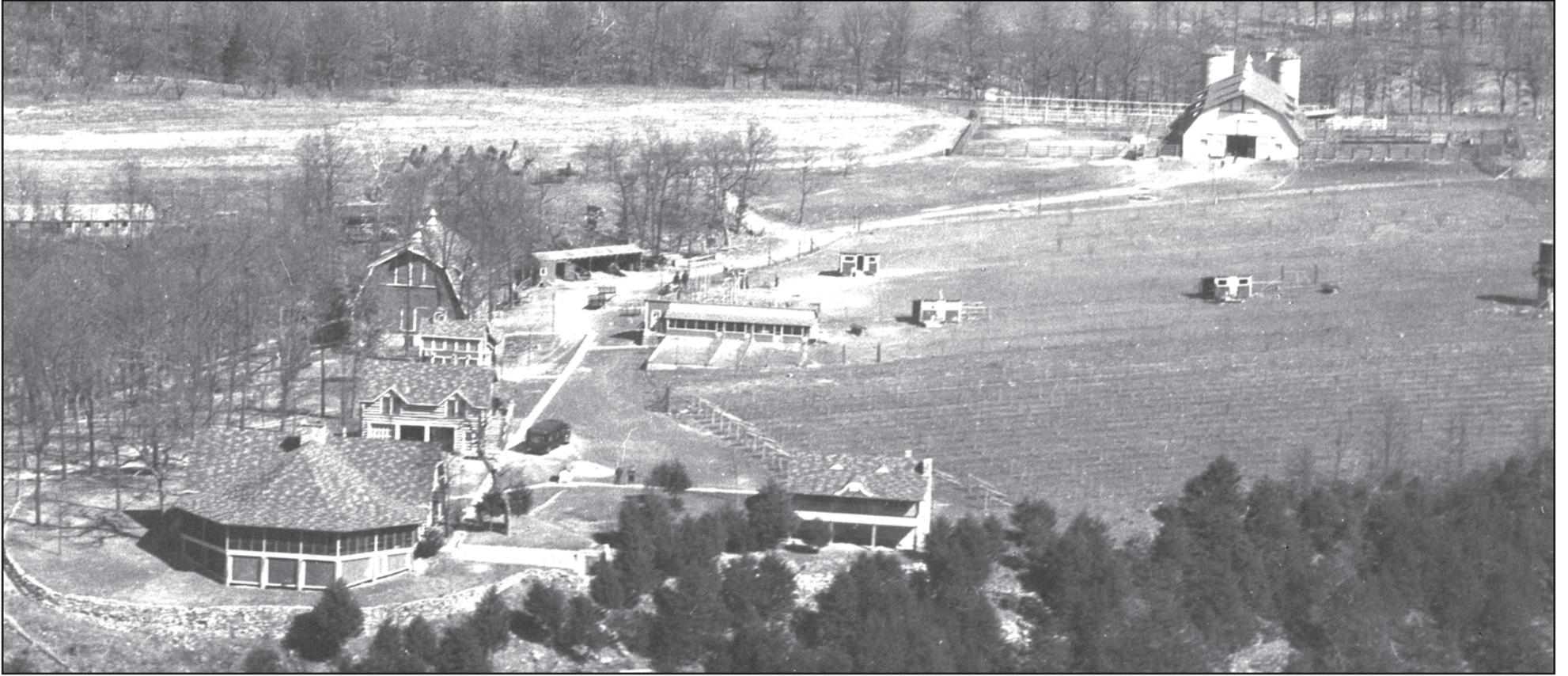
Frank built a large log house, dubbed "The Mansion," for Ila, Frank Jr., and himself. The large barn was flanked by two silos. One innovation was a water tank for irrigation and other water needs. The water was piped from the Gasconade.

Several associated ventures evolved from the farm operation driven by Frank's ambition and energy. Pulaski Dairy was created with pasteurization equipment installed on the farm. The dairy supplied milk to Fort Leonard during World War II. Frank built the Gascozark Cafe and Station. It was located a mile and a half from the farm on Route 66 at its junction with State Route 133 near Hazelgreen. That small area on the Mother Road, a few houses and Caldwell's four single room cabins plus store/cafe/station, became known as Gascozark. It seems any place along Route 66 in those days was a good place to offer services and souvenirs.

Concurrently, Frank Jones was bringing to life his most ambitious vision—"to build and operate a resort of the type he had so often wished for but never found." Gascozark Hills Resort became the reality of that dream.



Frank sitting in a Shell Oil Company biplane. During his official duties with Shell Oil, Frank was required to fly to various parts of the country on the corporation's Ford Tri-Motor passenger aircraft. On many of his flights, his aircraft was flown by a fellow Shell Oil executive and pilot Jimmy Doolittle. Doolittle became nationally famous after leading the first aerial attack on Tokyo in World War II. While with Shell, Doolittle flew over the Gascozark Hereford Ranch so that an aerial photo could be snapped for Frank.



Partial aerial view of Gascozark Hills Ranch. Left foreground is the log "mansion" built by Frank A. Jones, with a three vehicle two-story log garage just behind it.

The Gasconade River and Pulaski County had long been known to the sportsmen and resort clientele of St. Louis. In the early 1900s, the brewers and the politicians boarded rail cars and filled Forest Lodge at Schlicht Springs. When not drinking the magnesia water, anglers cast for the jack salmon and smallmouth bass. The lure of the pure Ozark ozone was well established by the mid late 1930s. Pippin Place, a first class resort 43 miles downstream, had been trumpeting the clean air and pastoral bliss of the area since 1915. [See Morrow and Kremer's excellent article on Pippin Place in the 2001 Gazette.]

Access to the resorts on the Gas-



Frank and Ila Jones about 1939.



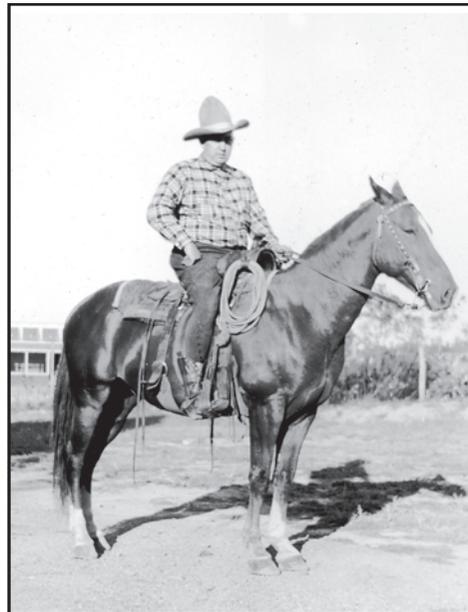
conade and Big Piney had certainly improved. The previous generation flocked to the rivers and woods after a ride from St. Louis on the Frisco railway and then endured a bumpy wagon ride from depots at Dixon, Crocker, or Richland. By the time Gascozark Hills Resort was established, the increasingly popular Route 66 provided a paved highway through the heart of Phelps and Pulaski counties. The resort was only a mile and a quarter south of the highway. However, GHR offered livery services to train traveling guests from the depots at Lebanon or Richland for \$1.00 per person.

The resort boasted of "three or more miles of river front encompassed by the Ranch boundaries." According to the brochure, the famously winding Gasconade offered float trips of over one hundred miles of good water but the drive to a take-out would not exceed fifteen miles over good roads.

Other amenities included modern cabins, a large dining hall, main lodge, tennis court, croquet, ping pong, pool tables, and horse riding. Hay rides were offered every Tuesday evening, which featured hill billy music and tall tales of the hills around a camp fire.

But maybe the most unusual attraction for that time and place was a 30 x 60 feet concrete swimming pool ranging in depth from three to eight feet with diving tower, bath house, and sand beach. The water in the pool was changed every week by draining and then pumping water about 300 yards uphill from the Gasconade.

[text continued on page 51]



Frank poses with a work crew from his days with Shell Oil Company (upper left). He was probably the boss, as he is the only one dressed in a suit and a smile. However, manual labor was the order of the day in constructing the resort (upper right), which had a Main Lodge and Dining Hall and numerous one to three room cottages. For "roughing it", guided float trips on the Gasconade with a cook were available (lower left). Frank poses on one of the horses stabled for use by guests (lower right).

Paul's Furniture

St. John's Clinic



75c

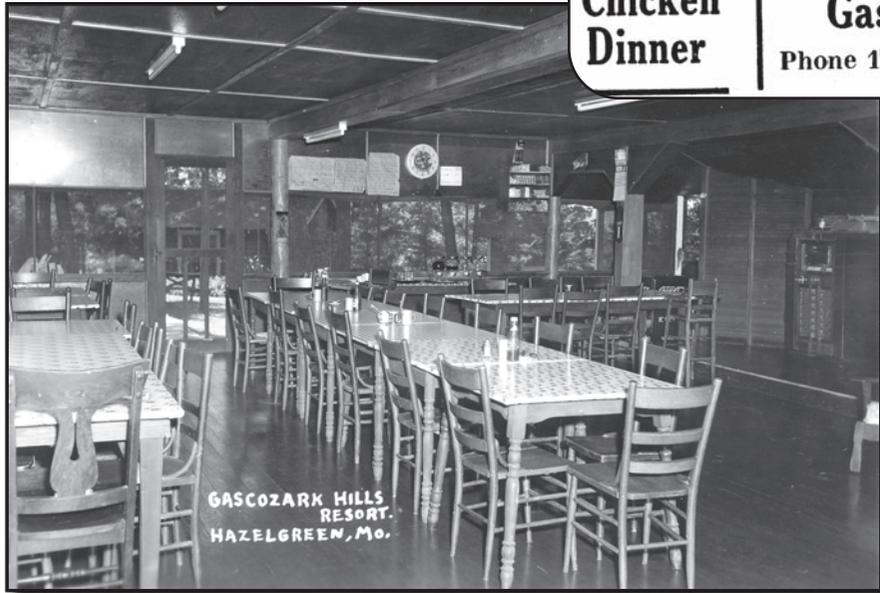
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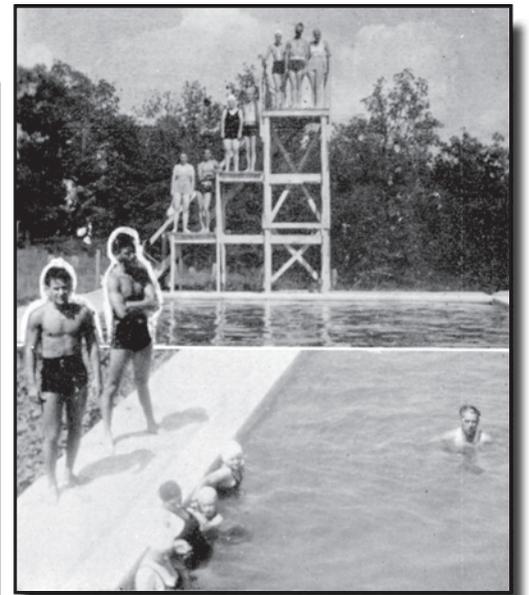
Gascozark Hills Resort

Phone 171 R-5

Hazlegreen, Mo.

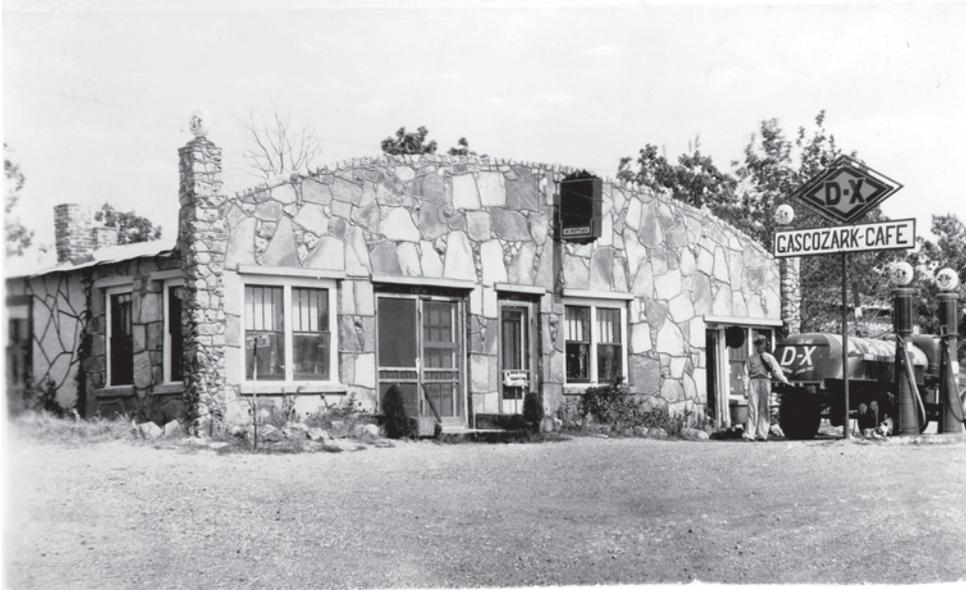


Cabins were grouped around "The Circle" (top left), which included the Dining Hall (lower left), whose opening was announced in the Lebanon *Free Press* in May of 1938 (inset). "Vegetables, berries, fruit and milk from a tested dairy herd... young chickens, home cured hams, bacon, eggs—all produced here on the Ranch" was a claim not many resorts could make. The Dining Hall was spacious enough for fireside conversation (upper right) and the swimming pool was unique for the area (lower right.)



Tourism Bureau

Bank of Iberia



A group arrives (upper left) outside the log lodge for the last family reunion in 1943. There would be plenty of comfortable accommodations for them at the resort (upper right). There were "one, two and three room cottages—regular little homes, fireplaces, hot and cold running water, shower and tub baths, inside toilets, electric lights, screened porches, plenty of large windows, all furnished with comfortable furniture and the best beds obtainable. Concrete walks lead from each cottage to the Main Lodge and Dining Hall wherein the best of meals are served." One assumes there was fresh fish, too, as anglers brought in their catch from the Gasconade River (inset).

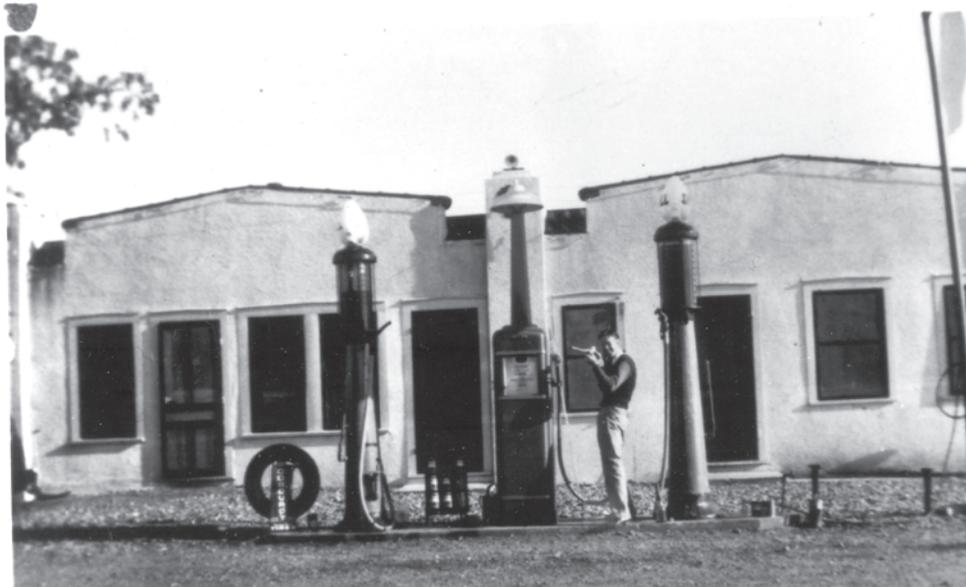
[continued from Page 47]

Jones' efforts in Pulaski County started with his farm and he built a successful stock and dairy operation. He was keenly aware of the benefits that electricity would bring to the rural farm and home. He was instrumental in the founding of Laclede Electric Cooperative in 1938 and served on the Board of Directors from 1940 until 1945.

By the time Frank A. Jones, Sr. died in November of 1945 at the age of 56, he had also actualized his dream resort. Shortly after his death, Ila sold the resort and all equipage at a private auction. The family retained most of the ranch.

Except for a short period in the 1960s, the resort has been in continuous operation. The name of the resort was changed to Gasconade Hills Resort in 1977 because "Gascozark Hills Resort" was hard to understand over the telephone.

The current proprietors are Bob and Pat Sutcliffe, who are in their twentieth year of ownership. Under their management, the resort has grown from 10 canoes and seven cabins to 130 canoes and 15 cabins. GHR still has a swimming pool, although a newer one has replaced Frank's original. The grounds and buildings are meticulously maintained. There is no doubt that Frank Jones would be very pleased that his creation is still a first class resort.



Frank Allison Jones 1889-1945

Information and family pictures supplied by Frank A. Jones III, grandson, and Jason Jones, great-grandson, of Frank A. Jones Sr. The original brochure and additional information supplied by Bob and Pat Sutcliffe. Caldwell's pictures courtesy of John Bradbury.



Frank Jones' goal was "to build and operate a resort of the type he had so often wished for but never found" in the Ozarks. He was not without competition on his stretch of the upper Gasconade River at about mile 71 (the whole length is nearly 300 miles.) Upstream Herbert Barlow offered Barlow Lodge. Just four miles downstream, clustered between Hazelgreen and the Route 66 bridge over the Gasconade, were several other resorts. Lee and John Walker operated a resort, begun in 1916, which offered guided float trips, dining, croquet grounds for the land bound, and riverside cabins (top left.) Parson's lodge was located across the road from the Walker Bros. Resort (lower left.) Eden Resort sprawled over a hillside on the west bank of the Gasconade near the bridge(top right.) It gained a local reputation for fine food. White City was not much farther downstream. The decades of the thirties into the early 60s was the heyday for resorts on this section of the river, easily reached by Route 66. Of these competing resorts, only Frank Jones' enterprise survived the interstate highway bypass and the change in tourists' pursuits.

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