

# Piney Sawmillers at Gasconade Mills

By Lynn Morrow

## Introduction

The history of the earliest white settlement of this area has never been very satisfactory. Other than mentioning a few place names on the landscape of the upper Big Piney River (Boone and Paddy creeks in modern Texas County and Bald Ridge Creek in Pulaski—the later two corrutions of Baldridge and Pattie) and a few individuals recalled in the Goodspeed county histories, not much else could be said with certainty. Lumbering seemed to be the key, but the great majority of early nineteenth-century Missourians did not leave personal papers for researchers. For all its importance, the details of the first lumber industry in the pineries, the principal players, and the markets were almost entirely unknown. In effect, we knew of a few trees but not much about the forest.

It turns out that a host of Anglo American entrepreneurs hailing from the American settlements along the lower Missouri River swarmed into the backwoods southwest of St. Louis after the end of the War of 1812. They took advantage of a narrow band of short leaf pine projecting northward from the solid pine forest of southern Missouri. The pine intersected upper headwaters of the Gasconade River, the forks now known as Little Piney Creek and Big Piney River.

Springs and creeks along these watercourses afforded abundant waterpower; mill sites were quickly located on the Big Piney between modern-day Houston and Licking, downstream along the length of Pulaski County, and at the mouth of the Little Piney (at Arlington) in Phelps County. By 1816, sawmillers were cutting and sawing the virgin pine. Plank was the product, but the northward-flowing rivers, the Pineys and the Gasconade, provided the means to get it to markets at St. Louis and the fast-growing settlements along the lower Missouri River. The first sawmillers rafted thousands of board feet of pine lumber hundreds of miles to downstream markets. In the process they established the lumber industry in the Ozark hinterland and made openings in the forest for settlers yet to come.

The first lumbermen were not prone to leaving a trail of personal papers; their names and exploits are barely known. Luckily for those interested in local history, they left other documents behind in the judicial and civil records of the first county governments in Missouri. We are fortunate that, like business people and extended families do yet today, the earliest folks in this area fussed and feuded with each other over debts, inheritances, and personal property. In that period in Missouri, slaves and their ownership were subjects of contention, too. And if the earliest lumbermen weren't prone to drinking and brawling, they were at least susceptible to episodes of

such; records of those peccadilloes still exist. Although biased toward the unhappier activities of the parties involved, court documents generated by judicial actions offer up details available nowhere else. Within the records of long-forgotten personal and commercial disputes, other facets of daily life on the Missouri frontier begin to emerge.

Place names on the Big Piney do remember the first generation sawmillers, but there is much more to the story. The first lumbermen, James and John McDonald, did not leave their names on the landscape at mill sites. It is only now, nearly two hundred years after the fact, that the McDonalds' rightful place can be identified by the historical record. And not just the McDonalds, but also their kin, neighbors, and colleagues—Daniel Morgan Boone, the Baldridges, the Waltons and Waldos, the Burckharts, Cullens, and Sullenses—all of whom were connected by kinship, shared experiences on the Missouri frontier, and mutual business pursuits. Although their presence in the pineries is the focus here, the first lumbermen were much more than mere part-time sawmillers and farmers. Rather, they were American agrarians with interests in long-distance trading and other business ventures of which lumbering was only one. They emerge as multi-dimensional characters with good intentions and bad, family alliances and family feuds, and successes and failures on a number of fronts.

The research behind the tale is a pioneering work in itself, made possible by the work of archivists arranging and indexing early circuit court documents in Missouri. The work below is drawn from two longer, heavily-footnoted articles to be published

by the St. Charles Historical Society. The Gazette is pleased to present this groundbreaking research.

## The Earliest Sawmilling in Missouri

According to the old adage, "the history is in the courthouse." It is only now that records of the proceedings of the earliest courts in St. Louis, St. Charles, Lincoln, Franklin, and Gasconade counties are being made accessible to those interested in Missouri's past. Executive and judicial records, especially in civil and criminal court cases, are illustrating the social histories of many pioneering families. The courts, democratic forums for sorting out disagreements and misunderstandings, recorded the civil and business matters of the first American settlers of Missouri. Long-forgotten litigation is giving up the details of the enterprises of the first lumbermen to float their product down the Piney Fork of the Gasconade, and gives a wider view of life and its vicissitudes on the first Missouri frontier.

Those who appreciate the material culture of building and construction in early Missouri admire the huge hewed and sawn timbers, long sills and floor joists, and wide boards in ceilings and floors that have survived the passage of time. These items, as well as old structures and their design, are increasingly scarce examples of "vernacular" architecture, meaning the common or characteristic types of the time and place. The first sawmills on the Piney were of a "vernacular" pattern common to the lumber industry in that pe-

riod, and the men running them were "vernacular" sawmillers. They were also "plain folk," and, considering the demand for soft, easily worked pine, might be called some of the important "pine folk" emerging in early Missouri. These entrepreneurs created a new specialized industry that complemented hundreds of other sawmills producing lumber from more common hardwoods. The lumber business was yet another extractive economy built upon long distance river trade. The interior Ozarks had the pine, but the financiers and markets were in the lower Missouri River Valley. The business of connecting those resources with markets is a history that will not repeat itself.

Not just anyone could be a sawmiller. In the early nineteenth century they tended to be among the more affluent citizens whose lumbering endeavors were only a part of their overall strategies for making a living. Mills of a scale suitable for the long distance had to be water powered, requiring a mill seat (a suitable topographical site in good timber along a watercourse adaptable to milling), tools, animals, food and shelter for laborers, skilled mechanics, and liquid capital or reliable lines of credit.

Mill construction involved hydraulic engineering, timber framing, and blacksmithing. Mills required specific plans, generally available in published "pattern" books outlining the necessary parts and method of construction. Americans have not seen a landscape dotted with these airy timber frame structures (they had no walls) since the nineteenth century, but they were once a common feature of nearly every spot that aspired to be a settlement in early Missouri. A civil court case at the time of statehood involving Ira and Almond Cottle of St. Charles and Lincoln counties helps to envision these once-common structures. In January 1820 the Cottles hired Nicholas Perrine to "cut and hew" dimensional timber for a saw mill in connection with the new county seat town of Monroe. The contract detailed the parts and their specific dimensions necessary for the mill. Perrine agreed to cut and hew 138 pieces for the Cottle mill, varying in size 65 feet long and 10 x 12 inches square, to 4 feet long and 14 x 18 inches square. Last but not least was the shaft, 20 feet long and 36 inches in diameter, "not to be hewed." The dimensions followed a predetermined pattern for a mill frame and sawing apparatus. Once having parts according to plan, a millwright assembled the parts with appropriate metal hardware, installed the vertical saw blade in its wooden sash, built a flume from the



The sash mill was a low slung structure with open sides. A flume diverted water from a nearby spring or watercourse to turn the wheel that powered the up-and-down saw blade. Pictured is one of the few operational water-powered sash mills in the country at Spring Mill State Park near Mitchell, IN. Photo by John Bradbury.

In 1816, Presbyterian preacher Salmon Giddings, wrote that “The settlement of Bonhomme [ten miles south of St. Charles and twenty miles from St. Louis on Bonhomme Creek] is of people from Kentucky principally ... steady, respectable people ...” Among those steady people were Archibald McDonald and John Walton. The Kentucky McDonalds and their Walton kin, who lived downriver in St. Ferdinand Township, were about to become major players in the founding of the yellow pine river trade and its commerce was directly tied to milling mechanics in St. Charles County.

The McDonalds were among the earliest Anglo immigrants in Missouri to exploit natural resources and market them to St. Louis. They hailed from Angus, Scotland, and had lived in southwest Pennsylvania and around Bardstown, Kentucky, before taking advantage of liberalized requirements for Spanish land grants. James McDonald, the eldest son in his family, brought his siblings and their father, Archibald McDonald, Sr., to their St. Louis District colonial land around 1797. Father Archibald died in 1799; son James McDonald settled his father’s meager estate and took the lead in family commerce. The McDonalds farmed and took considerable interest in regional trade along Missouri’s major rivers and interior tributaries. During the decade of 1805-1815, James, Sr., and his son James A. McDonald became involved in debt litigation, assault, and a dispute over a slave. The litigation often does not indicate when a dispute specifically involves father James or his son James A., but the family history suggests that most, if not all, involves father James as head of the family business. Other sons John and Archibald had their own debt, assault, and court appearances. In the new District of Louisiana, St. Louis District, the McDonald family members were conspicuous litigants and defendants. They epitomized the “rough and ready” backwoodsmen — rough in brawn and ready to go to court — as much as any Missouri pioneer family.

By 1810, the fifty-year-old James McDonald and two of his sons had already ventured into the upper Gasconade to mine saltpetre, a critical ingredient for making gunpowder. English traveler John Bradbury mentioned their adventure in his famous account, saying “James McDonald of Bonhomme and his two sons” traveled to the upper Gasconade near modern Waynesville, extracted minerals from saltpetre caves, and floated 3,000 pounds of it downriver to the St. Louis market for hunters in the fur trade. James McDonald had three older boys — John, James A., and Archibald, all

## The McDonalds of Bonhomme Bottom

born between circa 1782 and 1784 — to employ for his long-distance trade up the Gasconade River, but available records do not indicate which two went. However, over time, John and Archibald appear much more adventurous in court documents than James A., who tended to remain on the home plantation. He was the son with whom his mother lived following the death of James McDonald in 1821.

The McDonalds were minor slaveholders, purchasing and selling slaves. In 1808, James became party to one of the very earliest freedom suits in Missouri when he sold three female slaves. They sued for their freedom in 1810, based on being hired out in “free” Illinois. The slaves lost their suit, appealed to the Supreme Court in St. Louis and lost again, but McDonald wound up owing a significant amount of money for a “broken covenant.” The McDonalds continued as minor slaveholders, hiring slaves in their family economies, but did not appear in future freedom suits.

John McDonald (1781-1859), the eldest son, appears to be the closest sibling to father James. He was surely a member of their 1810 saltpetre enterprise on the upper Gasconade River and his father took him to the pineries to establish the family pine milling business. John already had been a witness for his father in court appearances; subsequent records indicate that John never flinched from any confrontation on the frontier, personal or legal. Over the years, John McDonald’s brawling frequently led him to criminal court (twice in 1807 alone). Louis Lajoie alleged that in February 1807 John assaulted him with “fists, feet, clubs, horsewhip, and stones” and imperiled Lajoie’s ability to make a living. At this very public incident, a bystander had loaned his whip to McDonald “for the purpose of whipping

a French man,” perhaps one of McDonald’s methods for Americanizing Missouri. The case was still undecided when Daniel B. Moore filed assault charges against McDonald for another violent fracas, alleging that McDonald “beat, bruised, and wounded him” on his “head, face and body,” asking for \$500.00 damages from the defendant.

Unfortunately, the available court records do not show what the judge imposed for either case, but the context suggests that it was far below any damages requested. The judge may have imposed his version of modern “community service” or a shaming ritual, such as a minute or two in a pillory for the frontier skirmishes. John McDonald was “lawed” in civil court, too, as in a February 1814 suit for debts involving horses, but his legal troubles did not seem to affect his standing in the community.

Younger brother Archibald also had his days in court. He had envisioned shipping corn to market but had been sued in 1809 for defaulting on the contract, but was the plaintiff seeking money in two other cases through 1815. His legal difficulties did not keep Governor Benjamin Howard from recommending Archibald as an ensign in June 1812 to serve under Capt. Nathan Boone. The following year, Gen. Howard reminded the Secretary of War that McDonald had not received his official appointment or his pay as ensign. Money problems seemed to plague Archibald. It is unknown whether or not Archibald became an investor in the plank business, but, by the summer of 1815, it is clear that Archibald had other debts, perhaps connected to river or agricultural trade. He also faced assault charges, but like his brother John’s brawling, it was the least of his worries.

By 1815, new immigrants brought new money with them into Missouri

Territory. The federal government established a land survey office in St. Louis and sent out dozens of frontiersmen in teams surveying Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas. The McDonalds, already experienced in making salt, mining saltpetre, exporting agricultural products, river trade, and commerce in general, added federal patronage to their mobile economic ventures in 1816. Brothers John and James McDonald received a contract to survey Congressional township lines between the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers to satisfy claims of war veterans. These lands encompassed over forty townships beginning due north of St. Charles and covered much of modern Calhoun County, Illinois. Without question, the federal patronage would have helped the McDonalds to assemble risk capital and to satisfy nagging debts. Some of this scarce cash may have allowed them to invest in the pine lumbering business. The McDonalds hauled the iron parts to the Big Piney River and began setting up the first sawmill in late 1815 or early 1816. James McDonald began sawing plank and presumably sent the first lumber down the Piney toward St. Louis in 1816.

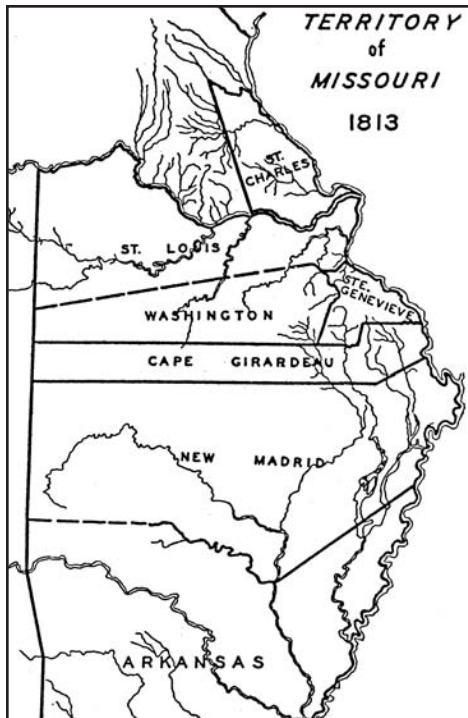
Where the sawyers beached their first rafts, we do not know. Surely, they sent them to Bonhomme Bottom and St. Ferdinand Township where other members of their extended clan arranged the marketing. Their options included docking at the various settlements in the Missouri River bottoms, mooring rafts in St. Charles County, or floating them around St. Louis County to the St. Louis levee. The success of the McDonalds — father James and son John — attracted others to Big Piney. St. Charles County residents soon became the second set of pine millers. Sylvester Pattie and William Harle built near the McDonald’s on Big Piney. Later, around 1818, after the McDonalds and Pattie and Harle successfully floated pine plank downriver, Archibald McDonald and his brother-in-law, Alexander Willard, a blacksmith, installed a third pine mill, this one on Little Piney Creek. Perhaps the need for cash at this time is why Archibald and John McDonald borrowed \$160.00 from associates downriver (the McDonald creditors sued them to gain repayment three years later). By 1817, John and Alexander Baldrige were rafting from “McDonald’s mill” (a reference to James and John’s on Big Piney), but it is reasonable to assume that they hired out to Archibald McDonald, as well. Of the three McDonalds who worked at the pine mills, John remained the longest in the pine trade and lived out his life in the Ozarks.

The McDonalds are archetypes for the reputation that sawmillers and rafters have long had—they were



The early lumbermen came from Bonhomme Township, St. Ferdinand Township, and St. Charles County. The growing city of St. Charles was also a timber market and downstream on the Mississippi was booming St. Louis. Adapted from map of Missouri by Jeremiah Greenleaf, 1840

*continued on Page 33*



During the territorial period, the Gasconade emptied into the Missouri at the western border of St. Charles County. Map by V. D. Neff from Floyd C. Shoemaker.

water source to the mill, connected water and saw with a water wheel, and put the mill into production. The vertical blade or “sash” sawmill was the industry standard at the time and was at the heart of the earliest lumber mills in Missouri. They exist today only at lumbering and forest history interpretive sites such as at the historic village at Spring Hill State Park near Mitchell, Indiana, and the Missouri Department of Conservation’s new Twin Pines Heritage Center near Winona in Shannon County.

We know the details of the Cottle mill because Perrine and the Cottles disagreed on the final financial settlement. In return for making the parts, the Cottles supplied “meat, drink, washing, lodging, and other necessities,” but Perrine believed they owed him \$182.50. He brought suit in August 1820 in Lincoln County court for non-compliance and damages. Ultimately, a jury awarded Perrine a judgment of \$14.72. The seemingly modest sum represented important money to an individual in a cash-poor frontier.

#### Forest Colonizers: A Prologue to Discovering Pine

Sawmillers and lumbering were everywhere in early Missouri. Local histories generally call the forest colonizers “farmers,” but they were agrarians who did more than plant seed and feed livestock – they created an American backwoods culture. Farming was indeed the primary way of life, but ventures such as sawmilling significantly enhanced the economic options for those working in woodlands agriculture. Success in multiple occupations might result in economic prosperity and cultural prominence for a man

and his family. The Mississippi and Missouri River districts attracted thousands of multi-talented adventurers such as the Baldriges, Boones, Cottles, Morrisons, Patties, Scotts, Van Bibbers, and others in St. Charles County. Following the War of 1812, many of them added lumbering to their backwoods pursuits. Like Daniel Boone’s sons, Morgan and Nathan, they experienced successes and failures, either simultaneously or in alternating years.

Beginning during the Spanish colonial regime, Anglo settlers began moving west of the Mississippi River, most notably from the state of Kentucky. They clustered largely along the Mississippi and Missouri River bottoms adjoining the wooded hill country outward from the old colonial city of St. Louis. Backwoods families were sparsely scattered beyond the bottoms, but industrial mill sites existed in both lowland and upland locations. As new immigrants located in sparsely-settled areas and began to form rural communities, they cut logs and split rails for houses and stables, but they also needed planks. Soon every county and all major and most minor waterways supported lumbering operations. The sawmillers established a commercial prologue for a pre-Civil War “timber boom” in Missouri and established an industry that has never left the state. The mill “companies” (not corporations), as they were sometimes described in legal agreements, were composed of private risk takers, often men related by blood or marriage. The first millers opened the way for the secondary, longer-tenured farmers who followed them. Missouri milling ventures, in general, expanded from dozens at statehood to 393 reported on the 1840 federal census. Growth continued until interrupted by the Civil War, but was quickly re-established afterwards and greatly accelerated by railroads and industrial technologies.

The earliest immigrants to Missouri brought the same vertical saw technology prevalent in rural America from the 1750s through the 1850s – it is known in timber history as the sash saw. Water-powered, cast-steel vertical saws were common in New England. Millwrights and mechanics diffused them throughout New York, Pennsylvania, the middle colonies and the South. Immigrants transported them on flat boats to the Western Country. Saw blades were six feet long and seven or eight inches wide; they cut on a three-foot down stroke only. Mills could be powered by human or animal muscle or by the weight of water. Animal-powered sawmilling was considerably slower, although millers could attach several yoke of oxen to one mill. Water-powered mills with their single-blade saw affixed in a moveable frame known as a sash, and connected to a flume-fed water wheel by a series of wooden gears, might produce 2,000 to



The six foot saw blade was rigidly fastened to the sash (much like a window sash) that moved up and down in a greased groove. The blade only cut on the three foot down stroke.

3,000 board feet daily, although water and mechanical conditions could result in greatly reduced production, too.

Probably the first water-powered sash saw in what became Missouri was Francois Valle’s, noted in 1766 near Ste. Genevieve by Capt. Philip Pittman; twenty years later, John Dodge installed another. Americans constructed sash mills from New Madrid north to St. Louis and into the St. Charles District. The technology they employed mirrored that in Oliver Evans’s guidebook of 1795 and its subsequent editions. Millwright Evans described the superstructure of his wooden frame as 12 x 52 feet. In the major river towns of Missouri, and in the Old Lead Belt, sawmill frames were similar in appearance. Although square footage of the mill floor varied, everyone recognized the long vertical blade in its sash. Small circular saws for shingles and clapboards made their appearance slowly, but by the 1830s were relatively common.

Like most craftsmen, sawmillers passed on their own traditions. One study concluded that by 1869 one-half of the sawmills in the United States were still water-powered. One or two millers could operate a sash saw, but it took others to bring the logs to the mill, build lumber rafts, and feed the hands. The mills in early Missouri commonly included a male slave or two as part of the crew, making blacks an integral part of the first “white” settlements. There was usually a mechanic skilled in blacksmithing, an essential craft for the many tasks in the creation, shaping, and repairing of metal parts.

There were few sawmillers in the Trans-Mississippi West prior to the Louisiana Purchase. Those in business

were primarily Americans, who as innovators, came to the western side of the Mississippi River after the Spanish colonial government relaxed immigration policies during the mid-1790s. Americans came in increasing numbers to scout the new lands and carve out settlement immediately, or with an eye to relocating relatives and friends later. According to Maj. Amos Stoddard, the first American governor and military commander of Upper Louisiana, the rapid American advance into Upper Louisiana accounted for a majority “English American” population of “more than three fifths” by 1804. The formerly prevailing French character of the region was already waning. During the following decade, Upper Louisiana’s estimated population of 10,000 in 1804 grew to 25,000 by 1814. As Congress established Missouri Territory in 1812, national movement west accelerated the 60% American ethnicity in Stoddard’s accounting to much higher proportions. The new American lands, especially outside of the old Creole towns, were Anglicized in language, dress, food, culture, commerce, and buildings. Everywhere the American court system was the most powerful Americanizing influence. The French (and the Spanish) had avoided living in the expansive forests. Lacking the “substance” that American backwoods agriculturalists brought, the old colonial legacy “evaporated like the morning mist.”

Early saw and grist mills in the St. Charles District included ones operated by Baldrige, Bryan, Cottle, Coontz, Zumwalt, and other families. In fact, chronicler Kate Gregg described saw and grist mills – some animal, others water-powered – built before and after

*continued from Page 31*

## The McDonalds

tough as hickory knots and a turbulent, volatile crowd. Perhaps the lumber trade itself attracted stubborn and strong men accustomed to hard work, with survival skills on the rivers in all kinds of weather, and able to tolerate months away from family. Contemporary author Timothy Flint wrote that outside of St. Louis and St. Charles "there is a perceptible shade of the roughness of people, who are far removed from the bosom of society." One case at "Gasconade Mills" in 1819 illustrates the kind of society that chagrined Flint.

In November 1819, Samuel Shy sued Archibald McDonald for assault and battery, claiming that Archibald slammed a wooden chair on his head, disfiguring his face and laying up Shy for six months. Plaintiff Shy, a resident of Florissant, was a skilled mechanic who had hired out "to keep the mill on McDonald's place"--that is, for Archibald McDonald on Little Piney Creek in fall 1818. Shy asked for \$2,000 in damages to cover his pain, lost wages, and medical bills. The event took place in the pineries while it was part of St. Louis County and the case involved St. Louis government officials until the territorial legislature cre-

ated Franklin County in 1818, whereupon the case moved to Newport (a county seat from 1818-1826), and later, to St. Charles County on a change of venue. Justices of the peace in all three counties took depositions and heard motions in this case, one that involved many witnesses in the extended McDonald-Walton family. Deponents came from Gasconade Township (successively in Franklin and Gasconade counties), the northern Franklin County area, St. Louis County's Bonhomme and St. Ferdinand Townships, St. Charles County, and up the Missouri River in Howard and Ray counties. Records include depositions from Joshua H. Burckhardt (justice of the peace in Gasconade Township), his wife Nancy Walton Burckhardt (1792-1849), Joseph, James, and Ibbey Walton, and Archibald McDonald, all relatives by blood or marriage. The case must have been a cause celebre among relatives.

Witnesses recounted Shy's threats against McDonald, including the statement in June 1818 that he "could not die contented before he killed the defendant Archibald McDonald and his

mother." Moreover, he had a gun and a dirk "prepared for the purpose." Shy abused McDonald's character and was outspoken in his aim to provoke Archibald into a fight to gain satisfaction, possibly when the open range was burned for fall hunting and when McDonald might be found "drinking spirits." Shy's animosity toward McDonald stemmed from his claim that McDonald had "harbored his Ne-

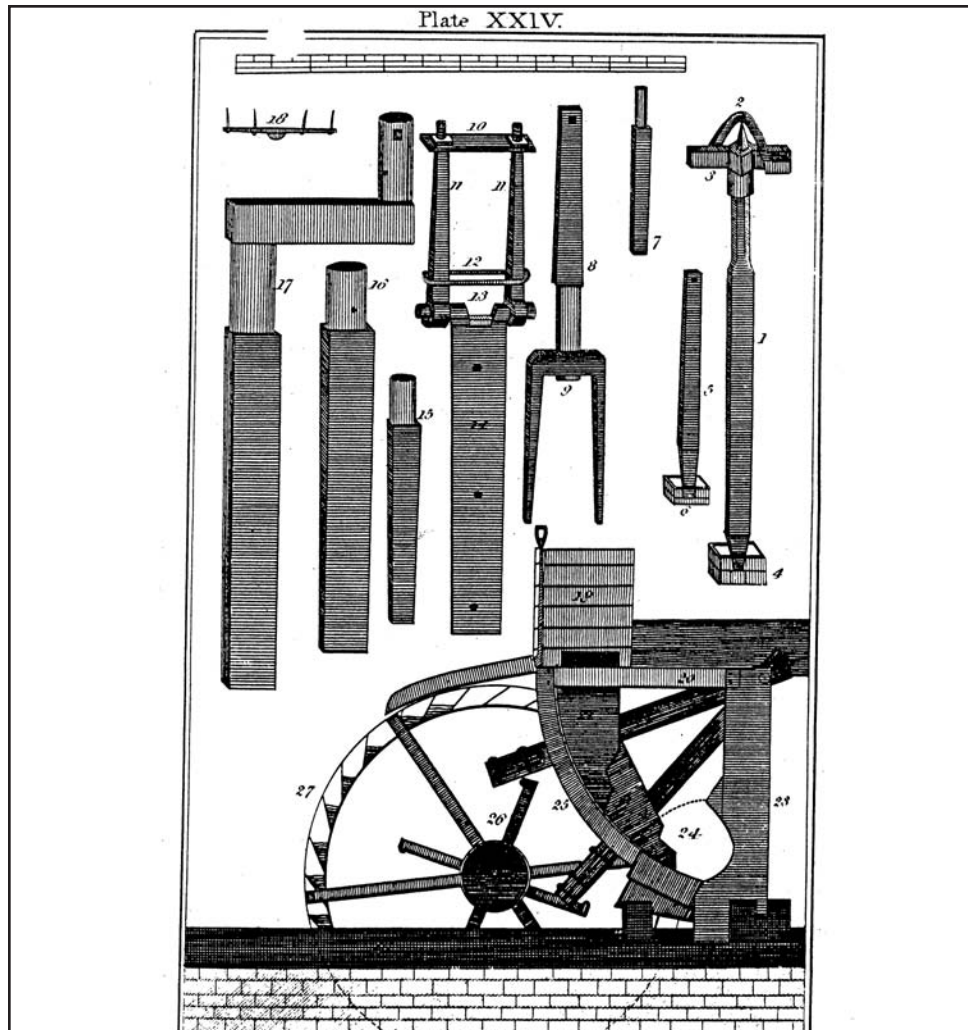
**The McDonalds are archetypes for the reputation that saw-millers and rafters have long had—they were tough as hickory knots and a turbulent, volatile crowd.**

groes," making plots with them in the bushes -- that is, McDonald cheated him in a slave sale by convincing a slave to fake physical im-

pairment to lower Shy's selling price. McDonald denied it, said that he had given Shy a fair price (and a \$400 unpaid mortgage on the slave), but Shy threatened to kill McDonald anyway. Witnesses said Shy was about to draw a weapon from inside his shirt when McDonald dropped him with a chair, leaving an eight-inch gash and the left side of Shy's face "dented in." Nancy Burckhardt reported that McDonald told the disabled Shy that "now you have got the satisfaction you have been wanting all night," although others said McDonald was "upon the

stool of repentance, thinking that Shy's injuries were surely mortal. McDonald said he would give \$200.00 if he could turn back the clock and avoid the incident.

Archibald had sold his saw mill interest in the pineries to Morgan Boone by the time his attorney, Henry Geyer, got the case moved from Franklin to St. Charles County. In May 1821, witnesses crossed the Missouri River by ferry to testify at St. Charles before Henry Walton, justice of the peace in St. Ferdinand Township and St. Louis County state representative at statehood. Geyer turned local gossip to McDonald's advantage by introducing testimony that two jurors told others about a grudge held by one of them in an "old quarrel with McDonald." The jurors allegedly said that Shy would recover damages if they "had anything to do with it [and] would give it against McDonald if he possibly could." A St. Charles jury finally declared for McDonald in the spring of 1822. Adding insult to Shy's injury, the court assessed him over \$300 in court costs in three counties. McDonald paid only \$19.29 in costs. His vindication was completed by acquittal in a separate criminal case brought by the State of Missouri. Frontier bravado combined with business dealings in slavery affected the lives of lumbermen in many ways.



Early sawmillers had “how-to” guides to aid in mill construction. One such early reference was Oliver Evans’ *The Young Mill-Wright and Miller’s Guide*, first published in 1795. The text provided instructions and illustrations provided plans for wooden and metal parts, as well as plans for the flume and overshot wheel shown above.

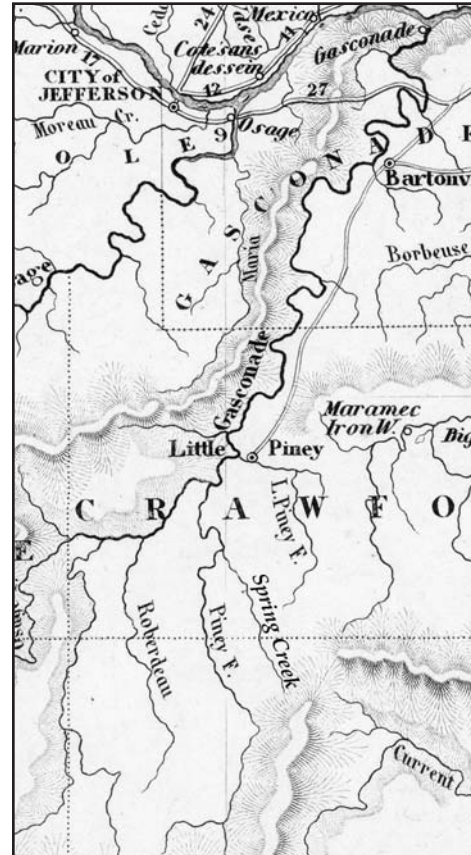
the Louisiana Purchase along the path to interior Missouri that became famous as the Boone’s Lick road. Three mill sites of traditional reputation in St. Charles County were the John Coontz’ saw and grist mills on Dardenne Creek; those of Zumwalt brothers along the Dardenne, Peruque, and Cuivre; and Robert Baldrige’s family’s holdings, also in the Dardenne area, where son Malachi had a mill near the future War of 1812 site of Pond Fort.

Local entrepreneurs recognized that there was a potentially attractive lumber market in the Trans-Mississippi. Gradually, the marketing of imported Ohio Valley goods, including plank and dimensional lumber, gave way to Missouri manufacturers and merchants. Right after statehood, writer Lewis Beck, who settled in Missouri in 1819 to collect data for publishing a gazetteer, wrote that the Gasconade Valley pine sawmills “could supply St. Louis at one-fourth the prior cost of bringing lumber in from the Allegheny and Ohio rivers.” Prospective lumbermen consulting maps of the new market area would have looked at the waterways as the avenues of enterprise in the new state. The pine mills in the Ozarks thus became known collectively and regionally as the “Gasconade Mills.”

### The name Gasconade and the place “Gasconade Mills”

Early nineteenth-century accounts concerning pine lumbering and plank rafted to St. Charles or St. Louis identified sawmill sites as “located on the Gasconade.” In a sense, the attribution is correct in that the primary upper Gasconade River tributary is “Piney Fork of the Gasconade” – a mouthful to say or write and much easier rendered by simply saying, the Gasconade. By statehood, in 1821, lumber traffic was common on Big Piney Fork (in modern Texas, Pulaski, and Phelps counties). The premier sawmill neighborhood encompassed a forty-five mile corridor from Boone’s Creek downstream to Spring Creek. Eight miles down the Gasconade from the mouth of Big Piney the watermen named the next tributary, Little Piney Creek, another source of pine sawmilling. The mill sites with their associated farms and dwellings were small clusters of settlement, much smaller than those in the Missouri River bottoms, but during the first decade of settlement the activities around them altered the environment with clearings in the bottoms and nearby woods, making it easier for subsequent families to begin crops and grazing.

Unlike the Missouri River, the Big Piney’s 105-mile stream channel is still



The Gasconade watershed where the Gasconade Mills were located: Piney Fork (Big Piney River today), Little Piney, Spring Creek, and Roubidoux Creek. Adapted from the map *Missouri* by Joseph Meyer, 1845.

one of the few unaltered prominent waterways in Missouri. From it and Little Piney Creek, the Gasconade then flows through the northern Ozarks for over 100 miles in an “historically navigable” corridor to meet the Missouri River. The original meaning of the term Gasconade is lost to history, but one commentary says that Gasconades were tall stories, and that travelers on the Missouri River were seduced about the character of the Gasconade River, fooled by the tranquil appearance at its mouth.

The Gasconade River was the first major tributary encountered by all watermen going up the Missouri River. Eighty miles upstream from St. Charles, it was a logical landmark used to describe boundaries. Boating upriver, travelers from St. Charles had already named the landmarks that later became familiar to rafters of pine, such as the Femme Osage River, Tavern Rock on the edge of Bonhomme Township in St. Louis County, Point Labadie, Newport, Charette, Loutre River, and by statehood, the Town of Gasconade at the river’s mouth. The pioneers living around these places were among the first consumers of Gasconade pine, but most pine lumber found its way to St. Louis markets.

In 1815, writer D. T. Madox published in Kentucky an account of his tour of Missouri Territory. He emphasized opportunities in the lands south of the Missouri River, but his narrative on timber resources made no mention of pine lumber, for, as yet, there were no lumbermen floating pine plank to

the Missouri River. However, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, who traveled in the Ozarks during 1818-1819, wrote that the “hills of the Gasconade River are covered by pine timber,” and situated there were “several saw mills, where boards and plank are cut for the St. Louis market.” He described a hapless hunter named Roberts who had lost his bearings in November 1818 while gleefully chasing and shooting deer for mere target practice. Luckily, he wandered into the “sawmills on the Gasconade River, the only settlement in that region.” With directions provided at the mills, the hunter got his bearing to return home on Courtois Creek. Had Roberts blundered into the woods only a few years earlier, his chances of acquiring the intelligence needed to find his way out again would have been very slim, indeed.

Shortly thereafter, in 1820, explorer Maj. Stephen Long’s expedition saw the Gasconade River and heard about its sawmills, pine timber, and the projected Town of Gasconade. By then, common recognition of the Gasconade name made it the logical choice for a new county and county seat town. Edwin James, chronicler of Long’s expedition, noted the rareness of pine, but also mentioned sawmills on the Gasconade sending “pine-timber to the settlements on the Missouri.” In Missouri’s commercial center, Paxton’s 1821 St. Louis Directory and Register advised readers that “lumber of various kinds is brought here from the Gasconade and other rivers.” During the 1820s, merchants and investors executing contracts commonly described mills and farms as located on the Gasconade.

Whether it was Morgan Boone writing about supplies in 1820, or descriptions in an 1828 property deed, the reference to the “Gasconade Mills” was well enough known that it did not call for any further explanation to the reader. And, certainly it made sense to talk about “Gasconade pine,” a term that would resonate with all the Missouri River traffic. Preacher Timothy Flint, as author and former St. Charles resident, later championed the Gasconade’s pine-bordered banks and extensive pine forests that supplied St. Charles and St. Louis with plank and timber.

Geographic references made Gasconade a household word, but authors left obscure the specific locations of the sawmills on what we now know as Big Piney River. But then, only a few needed to know exact locations; most were interested in the pine product, not exactly where millers sawed the lumber. So, what remained as common knowledge for lumbermen in St. Charles and St. Louis during the 1820s and 1830s was that the valuable yellow pine forest in the Gasconade/Piney watershed awaited development. That knowledge inspired various partners to pool assets, putting up the \$2,000-3,000 neces-

## The Baldrige Brothers: Rafters, then Millers

Several families in western St. Charles County held clusters of colonial land grants. Included were the Boones and their extended relations, and the Baldriges, Cottles, Howells, Zumwalts, and others. The Baldriges, like the McDonalds, came to Missouri via Pennsylvania, the Carolinas, and Kentucky. Robert Baldrige speculated in colonial land in 1797 near St. Andrews in the Bonhomme settlement, St. Louis County, but like the Howell family and their St. Louis grant, later relocated in St. Charles District. The Baldriges all settled in Callaway Township, where three sons, Daniel, James, and Malachi, had confirmed claims by 1806; together the four Baldriges held 2,260 arpents on the “waters of the Dardenne” and Peruque Creeks. At statehood, the grants were near the Booneslick Road, located today near the west and south shores of Lake St. Louis, and the Baldriges had an early water mill on Peruque Creek. Sons and daughters of “first families” often intermarried and that was the case in St. Charles County. Robert’s son, James Baldrige, married Margaret Zumwalt and Robert’s daughter, Grace Baldrige (1787-1818), married John Howell (1781-1869).

Local historians have mentioned many families who had some connection to the famous Boones, but few writings contain many specifics. The documentary trail of the Baldriges shows those connections. Local tradition holds that one or two of the Baldrige brothers went upriver with the Boone brothers in 1805 to engage in commercial operations at what became known as the Boone’s Lick salt-works, but the lack of records makes it impossible to say just who was there. The Boones sub-leased part of James and Jesse Morrison’s salt lick for production from 1806 to 1810. In 1807, James and Daniel Baldrige went with Morgan and Nathan Boone and frontiersman John Manley from Charette to mark a Booneslick Trace along the Missouri River to the famous lick. All of the Baldrige brothers, save Robert, the youngest, were old enough to go on the overland and river adventures. A decade later, it was James, John, and Alexander Baldrige that Morgan Boone associated with during his years in the pine lumber business. The Baldriges and Boones also had close connections through the Missouri militia. John Baldrige was a mounted dragoon in William Clark’s company in 1808 when Nathan Boone guided Clark to Fort Osage; the same year, Indians killed Malachi Baldrige while he hunted bear on Loutre Prairie. His outraged brother Daniel tracked the Indians to their camp and assassinated their leader under the cover of dark-

ness. At the commencement of the War of 1812, frontiersmen built some two dozen territorial compounds for the protection of militia and settlers from hostile Sauk and Fox Indians. The forts included Pond Fort on the Dardenne prairie within the late Malachi Baldrige’s grant (then owned by father Robert Baldrige). The Baldrige fort was the westernmost settlement in St. Charles District during the hostilities; subsequent travelers going west passed through the Baldrige neighborhood.

As Indian hostilities developed, John and Alexander Baldrige served in Capt. Nathan Boone’s company of mounted rangers in March – June 1812. Richard Baldrige joined his brothers in June 1812 when Capt. James Callaway mustered his company of rangers. The Baldriges served until the following year. In May 1813, John Baldrige was sergeant of Capt. Morgan Boone’s volunteers in western St. Charles County. In June 1814, Capt. James Callaway assumed leadership of the mounted rangers, and “personally recruited most of the men in his company,”

including John and Robert Baldrige. They helped build the short-lived Fort Johnson at the

mouth of the Des Moines River and in March 1815, after the U.S. and England had signed a peace agreement, were along when an Indian attack on the militia unit near Loutre Creek killed several of their comrades, including Capt. James Callaway. Months later, the Baldriges had some reassurances of peace at the conclusion of Gen. Clark’s treaty negotiations with the tribes at Portage des Sioux in September 1815.

The Baldriges were in St. Charles County in October 1815, when Prospect K. Robbins hired John and Alexander Baldrige for the federally-funded survey of the Fifth Principal Meridian in newly-formed Missouri Territory. The survey crew was among the first generation of whites, except for commercial hunters, to see a long transect of Ozarks yellow pine-oak forest. Later the Baldriges joined former comrades in the militia, such as Morgan Boone, to exploit the pine timber resources along the Big Piney River.

In 1821, pine sawmillers and rafters such as John Baldrige, Hiram Scott, Archibald McDonald, and John McDonald sat on the first Gasconade County jury. It wasn’t long in the sparsely settled and vast county before early jurors met each other as litigants

at the Town of Gasconade. Unfortunately for John Baldrige, he became wedged in a conflict of debt and violence between Hiram Scott and John McDonald. Years earlier, in June 1819, James McDonald, Sr., and his eldest son, John, accepted a note for \$576.00 for three months from Hiram Scott and John Baldrige, lumbermen at the new Baldrige saw mill on Big Piney at Baldrige Creek. Scott may have gambled on a pine raft, speculated in land, or suffered dramatic losses in the 1819 depression; the petition does not say. On August 19, 1820, McDonald’s attempts to collect from Hiram Scott led him to assault Scott with his clubbed rifle, “strik[ing] Hiram many and divers violent blows upon his head” and leaving Scott “sick and lame” and unable to work for five weeks. Scott sued McDonald for \$1,000 in damages in May 1821 but, when the court took up the case, Scott was away with William H. Ashley’s fur traders in the Rocky Mountains; McDonald was discharged from prosecution. In the meantime, McDonald sued Scott for the 1819 debt. Sheriff

Daniel Waldo traveled upriver to Boone Township to serve Baldrige and Scott. Scott was not there,

but Waldo took John Baldrige “into custody and released him” upon acquiring Morgan Boone’s security bond. By April 1822, Hiram Scott was with William H. Ashley’s fur traders in the Rocky Mountains.

The Scott and McDonald fracas emerged again five years later in St. Louis circuit court. By then, fur traders Scott and Ashley had returned to St. Louis. McDonald, learning of Scott’s presence back in Missouri, promptly sued him for \$170.00 debt and damages. Lawyer Isaac McGirk submitted McDonald’s further complaint that Scott “designs to leave the state” again and should post a sufficient bond with the court. William H. Ashley co-signed a \$300.00 security bond for his employee, Scott, on September 26, 1826. Scott did in fact leave again for Indian trading on the Great Plains, never to return to St. Louis, but apparently Ashley satisfied the court costs for Scott in July 1831.

Well after John Baldrige extricated himself from the McDonald-Scott argument, the Baldrige brothers became embroiled in domestic and judicial arguments over the partition of their father’s estate (Robert Baldrige, 1744-1822). The depositions hint at bad blood within the family. John Baldrige and Archibald McDonald

assaulted Daniel Baldrige twice in October 1822. Depositions suggest that John Baldrige purposely wanted to cause his older brother Daniel difficulty, as he is quoted telling James Baldrige that he altered the date of documents in a slave sale “to fool the damned old rascal Daniel.” During 1824-1826, they disputed for land and the ownership of various slaves, and in another legal confrontation concerning inheritance, John Baldrige represented his wife — a granddaughter of William Walton — for an additional claim.

At his death, William Walton (1742-1826) had an estate valued over \$8,000, some of which had been invested with several family members engaged in the pine lumber trade on the rivers. They included his son Joseph Walton, grandson Wilson A. Bell (married to Mary “Polly” Walton); Joshua H. Burckhardt (married Nancy McDonald); James A. McDonald (married Lucinda Hawkins); and James’ brother Archibald McDonald (married Nancy Walton). As William Walton’s estate was probated, records show that Walton was creditor to lumberman Archibald McDonald for \$183.40; James A. McDonald \$98.00; John Baldrige, \$30.00; and Joshua H. Burckhardt’s debt was a noteworthy \$506.00. Three Walton granddaughters extended the family’s connection to the Big Piney River pine trade through marriage: Mary married John Baldrige; daughter Narcissa married Archibald McDonald (the nephew of sawmiller Archibald McDonald who married Nancy Walton); and daughter Malinda married Daniel Waldo. The Waltons held a sale of William’s estate in June 1826, at which John Baldrige purchased Walton’s slave Douglas for \$505.00 to take him to Big Piney.

Most Baldriges continued to live in St. Charles County. John Baldrige and brother Alexander continued life in the pine trade and John lived the rest of his life in the Ozarks, where Baldrige Creek memorializes his name (what happened to their Big Piney slaves is unknown). But, the rest of the family remained in St. Charles County, apparently doing well. Robert Baldrige, Jr., for example, was the buyer of the most expensive single item at the 1827 estate of David Darst, a late neighbor of Morgan and Daniel Boone, Sr.’s colonial grants. Robert’s purchase of a \$51.56 wagon and hind gear is a sign that some Baldriges were prospering in St. Charles County. Circumstantially, Alexander McCourtney purchased the next most expensive listing, \$50.00 of bacon. McCourtney had operated a ferry from St. Andrews to Femme Osage Landing and a saw mill in Bonhomme Township. By the 1830s, McCourtney and his family joined the lumbermen’s migration to the Big Piney River.

**“Many of the farmers and settlers made a profitable business of rafting pine lumber from the Upper Gasconade River to St. Louis.”**

*Goodspeed’s History of Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, Crawford, and Gasconade Counties, Missouri (1888)*

sary to open a farm, install machinery, and bring a mill into production. At statehood, anyone possessing liquid capital of \$1,000 would have been considered wealthy (according to one modern estimate, \$100 in 1821 might amount to about \$2,595 today—see [www.eh.net](http://www.eh.net)).

And there were other products, such as those derived from hunting and gathering, that were collected in off seasons and then floated out on lumber rafts. The 1840 census reported the Big Piney region as the primary area in Missouri for export in barrels of tar, pitch, ginseng, and distilled spirits. Yellow pine plank was the principal cash forest product, but the rafts and flatboats of the lumber business provided the vehicles for transporting these other value-added products downriver.

Auxiliary enterprises associated with the lumber business should come as no surprise. Why wouldn't agrarians in Missouri and the Ozarks imitate facets of their previous lifestyles in the Ohio River basin? The interior Ozarks rivers, as well as the Missouri River, offered a waterfront world of travel and trade familiar to these Americans. The St. Louis market for Ozarks skins and furs was profitable for backwoodsmen engaged in multiple enterprises, and it is likely that the Gasconade Mills' fifteen sawmillers in 1840 also invested in the

downriver trade of other forest products such as that of Pulaski County's eleven commercial distilleries (the largest cluster anywhere in southwest Missouri). But when the subject is valuation of lumbering, lumber sawed at mills in the Big Piney region—the core of modern Phelps, Pulaski, and Texas counties — and the hardwood mills of the Booneslick area produced the highest dollar values in Missouri.

#### The Value of Gasconade Mills Pine

Reliable estimates of cost for Gasconade pine to downriver builders are not available, but there are glimpses. By 1808, travelers saw boats from Ste. Genevieve loaded with plank being poled upriver to town markets. Before the War of 1812, the *Missouri Gazette* published advertisements for species of plank available in St. Louis. Lumberman Thomas Kirkpatrick (and most handlers of finished woods) advertised prices per 100 board feet. Oak sold for \$3.00; ash or walnut, \$3.25; and cherry, \$3.50. Prices were high enough that landowners advertised that poachers on their timberlands would be prosecuted. By 1812, timber around St. Louis was already depleted in a ten-mile radius from the city; Pittsburgh dealers made money by sending plank down the Ohio River and up to St. Louis. If millers could saw and transport

planks, they could sell them in St. Louis for good prices anytime.

Species other than pine were more rot resistant for exterior use, but carpenters wanted the soft pine for interior work in floors and ceilings, and for furniture and toys. After the war, Pittsburgh merchants still exported white pine down the Ohio River to Missouri territory, but ever-increasing immigration created larger markets for plank and pricing became volatile. In 1816 and 1817, farmers and lumbermen could sell oak, ash, and pine boards at \$2.00, \$3.00, and \$4.00, respectively, per hundred feet. At the end of 1817, pine plank brought \$4.00 to \$6.00 dollars per hundred feet in St. Louis, and some flooring sold as high as \$10.00 to \$14.00. Demand for plank increased and prices spiraled upward the following year to \$8.00 per hundred for pine boards, enticing millers and rafters to the Big Piney River to cut yellow pine lumber for the St. Louis and the lower Missouri River settlements. The growing Gasconade pine trade became a common topic that writers mentioned when describing attractions in Missouri. By way of confirmation, settlers saw rafters on the waterways every spring and fall.

Today, one of the region's finest examples of the historical use of yellow pine is the Frederick Bates house and barn (circa 1819) in Faust Park, St.

Louis County. Several planks in the barn wall are 18 to 23 inches wide. The house has yellow pine throughout; two original pine doors still exist. Later, about 1832, builders used yellow pine rafters in the Daniel Boone Hays house on Femme Osage Creek, St. Charles County. The lumber in these buildings hailed from the Pineys.

So universal had the practice of lumbering and rafting soft and hardwoods along the major Western waterways become that Sen. Thomas Hart Benton worried that his proposal for graduation in the price of public lands was in peril. He wrote in 1826 that "It is notorious that the public timber is used as common property, and that no blame or censure is attached to the common practice. On the banks of the great rivers, immense numbers make a regular business of cutting large rafts and floating them off to market, even to New Orleans ... Thus the inducement to purchase [government land at reduced cost] is destroyed." This widespread but unauthorized exploitation in the major river valleys allowed adventurous sawyers in the Gasconade and other watersheds to feed expanding markets. Remarkably, by the 1830s, commercial dealers in St. Louis not only supplied Ozarks yellow pine for St. Louis construction, but also exported a surplus on steamboats downriver.



**Food For Life**  
A Natural Health Food Store

**Mary Rush**  
Owner/Certified Nutritionist

Gluten Free Products	Organic Groceries
Ear Candles	Bath and Beauty
Aromatherapy	Netti Pots
Vitamins	Herbs
Supplements	Bio Cleanse Machine

105 Bosa Drive #2, St. Robert, MO 65584  
573-336-1002

[foodforlife01@earthlink.net](mailto:foodforlife01@earthlink.net) [www.food-forlife.net](http://www.food-forlife.net)

Every Bloomin'  
Thing

## J. H. Mackey Associates

### Engineers & Surveyors



**John H. Mackey**



P.O. Box 475  
228 EAST HISTORIC RT. 66  
WAYNESVILLE, MO 65583  
573-774-5791

# Greg Warren

**Associate Circuit Judge**  
**Probate Division**

Wishes You an Enjoyable  
Old Settlers Day Weekend

*I am Honored to continue  
serving as your Judge.*

Your  
**BOOKS**  
are worth  
**CASH**  
*(or trade for store credit)*

That's right - you can trade in your pile of books for a pile of cash or store credit!

Bring your books to:  
**The Reader's Corner**  
819 N. Pine St. • Rolla • 573.426.4434  
[www.readerscorneronline.com](http://www.readerscorneronline.com)

## Pulaski County Abstract and Title Co., Inc.

Issuing Agent for:



- Abstracts of Title
- Title Insurance
- Escrow Services
- Closing Services

50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO PULASKI COUNTY

315 North Street  
Waynesville, MO 65583

573-774-2212  
Fax 573-774-5711

## Sylvester Pattie: Ozarks Lumberman

Sylvester Pattie (1782-1829) and his family came to St. Charles County from Kentucky in March 1811, following the lead of Sylvester's brother-in-law, William Harle, and Harle's father-in-law, Thomas Hubbard. Some of Pattie's business dealings in Kentucky came back to dog him in Missouri when a St. Charles resident, William Hancock, Jr., journeyed to Kentucky to purchase slaves in January 1815. He carried a Nashville Bank note for \$100.00 that was declared counterfeit. Reputedly, "Pattie and his confederates" had passed the note around in St. Charles before transferring it to Hancock in 1814. The note, as a medium of exchange, had originated in 1811 as part of a sale for Tennessee cotton. Back in Missouri, an angered Hancock hired attorneys to confront Pattie with the spurious note in a St. Charles justice of the peace court. Sylvester claimed that "it is a different note" than the one he had in Kentucky, and that he "had marked the original note," a mark that was missing on the note in evidence. The litigants disagreed and the case was moved to St. Charles circuit court. As the case wore on, witnesses such as young Thomas Hart Benton, Mackey Wherry, Nathaniel Simonds, Archibald McDonald, and other regional VIPs were summoned to testify. The court chose Edward Bates, a St. Louis attorney specializing in administrative law, to communicate with the cashier of the Nashville Bank about the genuineness of the note. By August 1817, the Nashville Bank returned its conclusion that the Tennessee signatories were counterfeit. In August 1818, the St. Charles chancery court jury agreed and ordered Pattie to pay Hancock \$100.00 plus 6% interest from November 1, 1814, and court costs. Although it took three years and negotiations in two states for the frontier court to declare that Pattie had to restore the value of the counterfeit note to William Hancock, Jr., local government resolved the dispute.

Hancock had referred to "Pattie and his confederates," implying a premeditated conspiracy. Indeed, Pattie's reputation may have inspired a fraudulent scheme. Lumbermen claimed pine resources on unsurveyed Missouri lands lying beyond the controversial and frequently litigated colonial claims common in the major river valleys. Ironically, malicious prosecution over a pre-emption land claim by an agitated opponent of Pattie did result in a significant financial loss for Pattie and Harle. The damage would have been much worse had their attorneys not been adept in manipulating legal bureaucracy. The court case combines elements of truth and fraud at the Gasconade

Mills. The convoluted tale is worth telling, as it is an early example of how one litigant attempted to use the courts for speculative gain in the pineries and to continue his personal bickering in St. Charles County. Historian Richard Batman's narrative about Sylvester Pattie tells the legendary story of his sawmill and associates it with Morgan Boone, who allegedly introduced Pattie to the area on a hunting trip in 1816. However, William Thompson told a very different tale in St. Louis and St. Charles courts in 1818—a fanciful story woven within domestic and neighborhood feuding.

St. Charles folks knew that Pattie had been a militia lieutenant during the late war. William Thompson claimed that Sylvester Pattie "and his confederates," ex-militiamen from St. Charles County and Portage des Sioux, formed a group that headed into the Ozarks interior. Thompson alleged that in November 1815, Capt. Henry Hight, Louis Tayon, Sylvester

Pattie, William Harle, and several others approached him at his improvements "on the East side of the Piney Fork

of the river Gasconade ... about three miles below [James and John] McDonald's mill" and "with force of arms, and with a strong hand" drove Thompson from his homestead, a pre-emption claim on open range. Harle and Pattie then built a sawmill and began sawing pine. Presumably, Pattie and his workmen, aided by a couple of slaves, sent their first raft downriver in 1816. The workmen may have included John Baldrige and Hiram Scott, as John and Alexander Baldrige were rafting from the nearby McDonald mill by 1817. In March 1817, Sylvester Pattie considered the Baldridges a good risk, as he loaned them \$128.00, which he expected to recoup at the end of the rafting season.

In the spring of 1817, the *Missouri Gazette* reported that 300,000 board feet of pine (a \$21,000 value at the St. Louis levee) waited to come to Charette, Point Labadie, St. Charles, and St. Louis. Allegedly, William Thompson, after being chased off his claim, returned to his home in St. Charles County, and waited for Pattie and Harle to bring their rafts down the Missouri River. In spring 1818, the St. Louis yellow pine market doubled in price from \$4.00 to \$8.00 per 100 board feet. Pattie and Harle stood to make a bundle, but Thompson filed suit against them in April for "forcible entry and detainer." In May 1818, a St.

Louis County special deputy made the long trip to Gasconade Mills to deliver notice of the court's upcoming business to Mrs. Polly Pattie at her residence on Big Piney (Sylvester may have been downriver on the Piney tending to the spring rafts). At the same time, the constable in Portage des Sioux deputized William Thompson "for the special purpose of summoning witnesses" to his case; one of those witnesses was James Burnum, a man who is a common denominator with Thompson in lawsuits that were repeated irritations to Harle and Pattie. On May 21, 1818 at a justice's house in Florissant, William Smith, attorney for Pattie and Harle, hurriedly prepared to represent the defendants. He complained to the court of irregularities in procedure, but was overruled by the two justices hearing the case. A twelve-man jury returned a verdict in favor of Thompson, the action was recorded in St. Louis circuit court, and, in June 1818, St. Louis officials

awarded damages and a writ of restitution for all the mill property and associated improvements to Thompson. The St. Louis sheriff

placed Thompson in possession of the mill in July 1818 and made Pattie and Harle pay him at the Big Piney mill for his travel expenses from St. Louis to Gasconade Mills.

Thompson became the newest owner of a pine sawmill in the interior Ozarks, but his victory was not complete as Pattie and Harle immediately hired two St. Charles territorial dignitaries, Mathias McGirk (future Supreme Court judge, 1821-1841) and John G. Heath (future Franklin County state representative in 1820) to plead their case in St. Louis County and recover their property.

While Thompson remained on Big Piney, Pattie and Harle, shocked by Thompson's successful claim and losing the profits of their mill and farm for a season, took steps in St. Louis and St. Charles to recover their investment. By October 1818, the St. Louis circuit court set aside the justices' ruling and reinstated Pattie and Harle at the mill. In November the Kentuckians filed a counter suit in St. Charles circuit court against Thompson. Another well known St. Charles politician – David Barton – defended Thompson and got his temporary freedom on a \$1,000 recognizance bond. Although Thompson died in late 1819, the court continued the case until February 1820, when the sheriff deputized Archibald McDonald to summon sev-

eral witnesses for Pattie and Harle. The witnesses included Morgan Boone, Jesse Van Bibber, and John Baldrige – all at Gasconade Mills. Pattie and Harle sought \$1,500 in damages for attorney fees, court costs, travel, and their work stoppage at the mill and farm. The brothers-in-law originally invested \$3,000 at the mill and farm, which included "dwelling houses, out houses and barns, forty acres of cleared and enclosed land, including corn and grain fields, forty acres of timber land, and eighty acres of waste wild land."

Although Pattie and Harle recovered and continued to operate their mill and farm, court records do not show any financial recovery against Thompson's estate. Instead, in an interesting twist to the story, Pattie became the legal "best friend" of Eleanor Thompson in her attempts to gain satisfaction against her ex-husband's property. Harle, who discontinued his ownership in the saw mill, either accepted the financial loss, or Pattie agreed upon a settlement with his brother-in-law. The mill site also had a grist operation, but whether it was installed before or after Harle left is unknown.

The rancor of Thompson, aided by his friends, was not without precedent for Pattie and Harle, nor did it cease in 1820. Judicial documents before and after the War of 1812 suggest that Thompson, like many on the frontier, could be vile-tempered, aggressively competitive, and mean-spirited. Thompson's earlier work at a sawmill provides additional insight into how complicated lumbering on Missouri's frontier could be.

Thompson possessed sawmill skills, gained as early as 1809 at Jacob Coontz's mill on Dardenne Creek in St. Charles District. Thompson and Coontz had an evolving agreement for Thompson to saw planks on shares for Coontz. The two had ambitions to saw 70,000 board feet of one-inch plank of white oak, walnut, cherry, ash, yellow poplar, and other plank, or 420,000 board feet by March 1, 1810. It began on April 1, 1809, with Thompson agreeing to "commence the sawing of plank on trial and experiment" and keeping "every sixth plank of any description" for himself through March 1, 1810. However, Thompson and the mill apparently sawed better than first anticipated, as their agreement changed on April 25, 1809, to allow Thompson to saw some plank on one-fourth shares, and others on one-fifth shares. Coontz agreed to board Thompson while the sawing proceeded.

By the time their agreement expired, the two men disagreed on who owed what, as Coontz had kept the account books. In addition to sawing plank,

*continued on Page 39*

...Sylvester Pattie, William Harle, and several others..” with force of arms, and with a strong hand” drove Thompson from his homestead.

### Millers and Rafters Arrive

Investors in Gasconade pine established the mills on the Piney Fork after the War of 1812. The cessation of hostilities opened millions of acres for exploration and occupation, and led generally to boom times in Missouri. Former soldiers were anxious to receive land for their military service. Many of them had traveled over large expanses in the territory, and, as frontiersmen always do, kept on the lookout for money-making opportunities. On Big Piney, tributary creeks still carry the names of former Missouri militiamen turned lumbermen – Morgan Boone, the Baldrige brothers (as “Bald Ridge” Creek in Pulaski County), and Sylvester Pattie (“Paddy” Creek in Texas County. Ironically, the earliest sawmillers, James and John McDonald, are not remembered with their name affixed to the land. However, the foundation of the pine industry during its first decade was primarily an accomplishment of the extended McDonald-Walton family in Bonhomme and St. Ferdinand Townships of St. Louis County. Their menfolk went to the pines and several of their daughters and granddaughters married into milling families prominent in Ozarks history, namely the Baldriges, Burckhartts, and Waldos — all well-traveled in the lower Missouri River Valley.

Their influence in county history was widespread. These backwoods sawmillers were surveyors, road overseers, election judges, and jurymen. It is as jurymen that questions arise, especially in St. Charles County, the home hearth for Sylvester Pattie and his commercial associates in the pineries, Morgan Boone and the Baldriges. On this sparsely populated frontier, juries included men from the same families serving over and over, whether they were from the Baldrige and Boone families, or neighborhood families, such as the Bryan, Callaway, Howell, Zumwalt, and other households. Circuit court cases for debt actions (especially in the exchange of notes receivable by creditors to debtors) commonly involved “seasonal credit” given in the fall for a spring payoff. In regards to long-distance trading (i.e., in rafting lumber), the jurors heard testimony about where the natural resources were located and the details of financing, sawing, transporting, and marketing lumber. From their own neighbors and colleagues, jurymen would have learned firsthand about who and what made money, and a lot in general about entrepreneurial risk-taking on the frontier.

It is worth speculating whether this “commercial wisdom” heard by jurors in frontier debt cases influenced their investments and the choice of partners

in speculative ventures. According to extant jury summons for the decade of January 1815-November 1825, the court called Boone, Bryan, and Callaway men thirty-five times in thirty-five terms of court. The Baldriges, in business with Morgan Boone and the McDonalds, received fifteen summons. In total, the court summoned Boone and Baldrige men fifty times to hear St. Charles County circuit court deliberations (the court clerk recorded only one excused summons, that of Larkin Callaway for October 1816). Court administrators used formulaic language in court documents such as, “You are hereby commanded to come before the Circuit Court on the first Monday of December next at the court house in the county aforesaid ... say twenty good and lawful men ...,” but the clerks used variable phrasing, too. Beginning in April 1815, St. Charles circuit clerk William Christy, Jr. added the phrase, “of the best and most understanding,” suggesting that the courts considered social and business credentials of those called to jury duty. Just which cases each juror of the extended Boone and Baldrige families heard is unknown, but assuming that kith and kin discussed business with each other, circuit court transactions provided insights for decision-making.

Wealthy merchants on the distribution and financing end of rafting surely

took notice of commercial litigation. St. Charles village elders Amos Kibby and Solomon Whitley made an ambitious agreement on March 17, 1821. Whitley first promised to deliver 52,500 board feet of pine plank, one and one-fourth inch thick, by May 1822 to Kibby; he agreed to the same for the following May 1823, promising a total of 105,000 feet of plank. Even during this difficult economic time, at \$4.00 per hundred feet (half the price of 1818), the gross value at St. Charles dockside would have been \$4,200. Whoever Whitley placed his confidence in is unknown, but there were a half-dozen or more mills already in business on Big Piney River. For whatever reason, Whitley defaulted on his obligation and Kibby sued for damages. In a bench trial, the St. Charles circuit court ruled against Whitley for failure to deliver the plank and assessed damages at \$1,841.60. That quantity of plank, even during the contemporary depression, represented a modest fortune at dockside in St. Charles and surely would have piqued the interest of other entrepreneurs.

Historian Richard Batman identified several “movers and shakers” in the interior Ozarks of territorial Missouri. They included experienced woodsmen William H. Ashley, John Baldrige, Hiram Scott, several McDonalds, and Sylvester Pattie. Pattie’s militia experi-

Terri Mitchell

Bales Construction

Rocky Top

Tracy Storie

Charlie’s Cars

Roger Harrison

continued from Page 37

### Sylvester Pattie

Thompson had repaired the saw mill and mill dam, made cart wheels (for hauling timber), made a wheel barrow, and delivered various "goods and merchandise" to Coontz. On the other hand, in addition to boarding Thompson even after the expiration of their agreement, Coontz had a store that provided services to him including clothing, cash allowances, payments to others for purchases by Thompson, boarding and tending Thompson's male slave for seven weeks while the slave healed from Thompson's "severe whipping," and paying Thompson for the hire of his slave. Coontz also found feed for Thompson's horses, paid hunters, and did the accounting for the sale of thousands of board feet of plank to settlers in the area. Coontz claimed that Thompson owed him \$187.20. Thompson toted the balance differently and sued Coontz for \$315.00 debt and \$35.00 damages. The witness list included dozens of families who had done business with Thompson and Coontz.

The litigation lasted eighteen months and was vexed by difficulties in accounting how much plank had been sawed and marketed. A jury in July 1811 claimed that Thompson had been overpaid \$74.84, and Coontz was due \$72.39 in court costs from Thompson, but a new trial began in the fall. When the jury met in private to consider the case, Coontz alleged that Thompson had provided whiskey to the jury, a tale denied by Thompson in November 1811. By the time the court met in February 1812, talk of Indian troubles was common, and a variety of difficulties arose with material witnesses. Andrew Zumwalt was sick, John McConnell and Thomas Brown were on militia duty, and Jacob Zumwalt was moving his family from the settlements on Cuivre River "thro fear of Indian hostilities." None of the above could attend court. When court did convene in July 1812, the jury assessed Jacob Coontz \$60.00 in damages and an expensive \$214.87 in court costs. By fall 1812, sheriff Mackey Wherry had collected obligations due from Coontz, but the court had decided that \$35.40 of the total was due from Thompson, as well.

After the war, Pattie and Harle's sawmilling on the Big Piney was well under way. In March 1818, James Burnum, an acquaintance of William Thompson's from the Portage des Sioux area, was "at the mills on the Gasconade" and found a bay mare on the open range. In April, William Harle declared that the \$60.00 horse was his, but Burnum would not give it up. Harle wound up with the horse, but Thompson sued him for taking it. It was February 1819 before there was

any resolution, when the court concluded that Burnum had used bad judgment in claiming the horse on the open range. The court rendered judgment for Harle and assessed Burnum damages of \$17.77 in March.

While Burnum had Harle's horse in March 1818, he and two associates from Portage des Sioux also "found" 8,000 board feet of pine plank "at the Gasconade Mills in the county of St. Louis" apparently loose in the river, or removed while the raft was banked — the litigation does not specifically say. After rafting season, Pattie and Harle traveled downriver, and in summer, hired William Smith to file suit against Burnum, Armstrong Kennedy, and John Richey for taking their unaccompanied raft of pine, valued at \$320.00 (at \$4.00 per hundred board foot). In August 1818, the court and litigants began to prepare for trial, but it was not until July 1819 that the court awarded Pattie and Harle \$340.00 judgment and costs and St. Charles County sheriff A. C. Parmer began collecting the execution from Burnum and his confederates.

In November 1818, Pattie and Harle had begun their litigation against William Thompson in their malicious prosecution case over his possession of their sawmill, the general scene of Burnum's appropriation of Harle's horse, as well as the "discovery" of their loose pine raft back in March. Thompson had remained at the Big Piney sawmill during summer 1818 after the St. Louis County sheriff had dispossessed Pattie and Harle. When Thompson finally returned home to his wife Eleanor and four children in Portage des Sioux Township in August, he claimed to have discovered his wife in an adulterous affair with neighbor Joseph Beauchamp. Thompson beat his wife and threw his family out of the house. Eleanor Thompson then sued her husband, aided by her "next friend," Sylvester Pattie, filing charges in November 1818. Did Sylvester already know Eleanor Thompson? Or, did Pattie, in St. Charles for his own lawsuit against Thompson for trying to steal his sawmill, decide to take this opportunity to help punish Thompson? Or, did Thompson, realizing that his defense against Pattie and Harle would fail, decide to accuse Beauchamp and become a victim himself? Whatever the case, Sylvester Pattie remained a legal "best friend" of Eleanor Thompson for years to come.

William and Eleanor Thompson had married in 1805 in St. Louis County, but soon moved across the Missouri

River to the Dardenne Creek area. Later, they moved east to Portage des Sioux Township. Eleanor Thompson, in her 1818 suit, claimed that her husband abandoned her and the children "without good cause or provocation" and without any support or maintenance, not allowing her back into the house. She alleged that Thompson had beaten her at other times, as well, "endangered her life" rendering it intolerable, especially for the youngest child, "at the breast about seven months." She claimed that her husband had considerable property and was planning to leave the territory, as he was already selling his personal property to willing buyers. Her petition, signed by Sylvester Pattie, asked that William Thompson be prevented from leaving the county. Thompson counter sued Eleanor for adultery and divorce, and summoned, among others, James Burnum and wife to testify for him.

Thompson's suit against Eleanor claimed that she had early on in their marriage given "evidences of infidelity," leaving him for considerable amounts of time, and behaving in "un-

**Litigation was commonplace and pine plank represented the fortunes of some.**

becoming manners with other men." Although Thompson had forgiven her, she did not reform and continued to relapse, and, on his return from

Gasconade Mills, he had found her with Joseph Beauchamp, thereby necessitating his petition for divorce. The court summoned Eleanor, but the sheriff could not find her, perhaps because she was afraid that Thompson would harm her again, or perhaps Sylvester Pattie was hiding her from him. In July 1819, John Heath won Eleanor's case for a judgment of \$200.00 for the support of herself and the two youngest children, Jackson and Otis. Sheriff Parmer seized Thompson's 200 arpents of land and sold them for \$168.00; the court tacked on \$40.75 in costs for Thompson to pay.

Thompson, while fighting Pattie and Harle over the saw mill and suing his wife Eleanor for divorce, also sued Joseph Beauchamp in November 1819 for trespass against Eleanor, whom he "ill-treated, assaulted and debauched." He asked \$5,000 in damages. Thompson hired David Barton, while Beauchamp retained John G. Heath, both lawyers who by then were well acquainted with all the participants. Thompson accused Beauchamp of "criminal conversation with Eleanor" on a September 13, 1819 night, when he caught Beauchamp, a single man living nearby on an uncle's plantation, "stripped to his shirt, and on the door step" of Thompson's house. Joseph ran and made his escape from Thompson,

and William took the two oldest children to his brother John Thompson's house. Beauchamp posted \$1,000 bond and denied the accusations. After judicial discussion over blame and injury, the court assessed Beauchamp \$60.00 in costs, and \$38.30 against Thompson; Sheriff Parmer collected judgments for the court.

Eleanor Thompson had collected the proceeds from the sale of her ex-husband's land, but he had not completely satisfied her judgment. After the divorce, Eleanor married Joseph Beauchamp, then, in late 1819, William Thompson died, and the Beauchamps became administrators of his estate for the minor children. However, brother John Thompson maintained so much control of his brother's affairs, that the Beauchamps sued John Thompson in their dispute over the estate in November 1820. Allegedly, there were a number of "bills, notes, bonds and accounts" of William Thompson that John withheld. William also had sold at public sale a number of "horses, cattle, sheep, hogs, farming utensils, house and kitchen furniture" on credit for which purchasers gave bonded security. The Beauchamps claimed that John Thompson "had collected considerable sums of money" on those debts, intending to defraud Eleanor and her children. However, John, who lived on William's former land, and as guardian for the two older children and heirs of William Thompson, asserted that he did not have to account to his brother's ex-wife. The Beauchamps' attorney, James Campbell, asked the court for a full accounting of the William Thompson estate.

The court decided that John Thompson legally maintained control of his late brother's estate. But, Eleanor Thompson Beauchamp still did not have complete satisfaction from her late ex-husband in the July 1819 divorce judgment for the two youngest children. In March 1823, Eleanor revived action for that judgment by "her next friend Sylvester Pattie" in St. Charles circuit court. Again, the Beauchamps were not successful and the court allowed Thompson to recover his costs.

After William Thompson's death in 1819, Pattie and Harle never filed suit against his estate in an attempt to recover some of their losses in the pine market season of 1818; instead, it appears that they refrained to allow Eleanor Thompson to petition the court for resources to support her family. Sylvester Pattie and William Harle went back to Gasconade Mills. Whatever arrangement Pattie and Harle made between themselves is unknown, but Harle left the mill business by statehood (1821). Sylvester Pattie continued milling and rafting pine plank downriver for several years.

ence during the 1812 conflict put him in contact with his regimental militia commander, Morgan Boone. A year into the war, militia authorities commissioned Pattie a lieutenant's commission in Capt. David Musick's company of mounted rangers. A year later, in 1814, Sylvester joined Captain Henry High's company as second in command. War veterans, Pattie and his brother-in-law William Harle, brothers John and James Baldrige (and Hiram Scott, the Baldriges' neighbor in St. Charles County), James McDonald and his son John, and later Morgan Boone and his family connections, all became associated with frontier militias and later exploited Ozarks yellow pine. Ashley chose to mine saltpetre, a critical ingredient for the manufacture of gunpowder, just east of the Big Piney woods on the upper Current River. The McDonalds, hailing from their home plantation in the Bonhomme settlements in St. Louis County, had also mined saltpeter, on the Gasconade River.

Early on, most millers were absentee property owners living part time in St. Charles and St. Louis counties, but operating the pine mills and rafting lumber seasonally. Generally, substantial housing associated with mill sites (buildings that became part of mortgages and contracts) do not appear in the property transfers until the mid-1820s and then they were called "farm houses" and not cabins. The term farm house suggests a house with sawn lumber or a timber frame, both rarities in the interior Ozarks of the 1820s. Milling families, the McDonalds, Pattie, Baldriges, Boone, Burckharts, and Waltons all resided in St. Charles and St. Louis counties. North of the river, the pine millers came from western St. Charles County; south of the river they lived in northwest St. Louis County, i.e., St. Ferdinand and Bonhomme Townships—the home of several mechanics and farmers who operated saw and grist mills.

Although rafting was seasonal and available rafting crews changed annually, county sheriffs always knew where to serve the defendants when business disagreements occurred and litigants wanted to do battle in court. Even though they may have been away "on the Gasconade" or at "Gasconade Mills," lawmen knew where their wives and family members lived and delivered court summonses there. The St. Charles and St. Louis post offices advertised in newspapers that they held mail for the mobile lumbermen. Public notification of taxes due also was common in this era of horse and boat travel. After Gasconade County formed in 1821, some found their delinquent tax notices published both in the new county and downriver. The Goodspeed history for Gasconade County remembered the rafting era fondly, reporting that "many of the

farmers and settlers made a profitable business of rafting pine lumber from the Upper Gasconade River to St. Louis."

#### 1820s Transitions: Mobile Lumbermen in the Pine Lands

By the mid-1820s, entrepreneurs in the piney woods began to go elsewhere to seek their fortune. The sources do not indicate whether major floods in the 1820s had any influence, but it is reasonable to think that they did. Floods and erosion reorganized frontier geography along the Missouri River and its tributaries. As the river banks gave way, St. Andrews and Missouri met their slow demise, and by 1826 settlements from Franklin, Chariton, Gasconade, Pinckney, Newport, Labadie, Charette, and others suffered. Moreover, the mills sawed timber taken from a six-to-ten mile wide pine belt that lay in a north-south axis on both sides of the Big Piney. Outside of the pine belt, scatterings of pine and broad savannahs spread over the large prairie regions in modern Texas, Pulaske, and Phelps counties. Thus, the Big Piney woods drainage did not have an

overlapping border with the massive pinelands of the Current River watershed. A decade of sawing and export, 1816-1825, had surely decimated the easiest stumpage to exploit. Sawyers who remained worked with less accessible timber and more difficult logging, but continued to raft lumber downstream, taking advantage of developing regional markets as immigration gradually swelled the local population. Rafter Hiram Scott went to the Rocky Mountain fur trade in 1822, came back after a few years, left again, and was killed in modern Nebraska, where Scott's Bluff and the National Park's Scott's Bluff National Monument memorializes his name. In August 1824, Sylvester Pattie sold his saw and grist mill, carts, blacksmith tools, and "the right of preemption (if any)" to lumbermen Charles and Bazille Drolette on credit arrangements extending over eighteen months. Historian Richard Batman related a tender tale that the death of Pattie's wife caused him to fall into depression and lose interest in the Big Piney lumber business. In reality, Pattie may have been in financial difficulty, as his selling price was only \$375.00, far below his \$2,000

assessment at statehood; or, his legal problems and association with Eleanor Beauchamp that extended from 1818 into 1823, may have had more of a negative impact on him than primary sources indicate. Pattie's agreement with the Drolettes included an option to pay cash or plank in installments totaling 50,000 board feet delivered over one year (at \$4.00 per hundred in St. Louis, the 50,000' of plank would have grossed \$2,000, but the market was probably less, as the state was still recovering from a depression). Perhaps Pattie's saw and grist mill needed considerable maintenance or repair, a legacy of William Harle's exit from the business years earlier. The Drolettes obligated themselves to deliver 10,000 feet by October 15, 1824; 20,000 feet by April 1, 1825; and another 20,000 feet by November 10, 1825. But, for unknown reasons, after the first two payments (60% of the sale price), Pattie left the Ozarks in summer 1825 and headed west with his son, James (c. 1803-1833), for trading adventures in the southern Rocky Mountains. Instead, Sylvester died in a California jail in 1829 and James made his way back to the Ohio River Valley, where he



Slabtown Spring on the Big Piney River near Licking, ca 1950, has an average daily flow of nine million gallons. It is situated in a large floodplain at the midpoint of the Piney's 85 mile course. Sylvester Pattie liked the spring and location well enough to force homesteader William Thompson from the spot at gunpoint. The spring remained a mill site through the 19th century with the Bates family, when timbering changed from pine to hardwood. Although no longer a mill seat, it is still owned by a local sawmiller. Photo by Gerald Massie, courtesy of the Missouri State Archives.

brought tales of their adventures and his father's death. More importantly, James met Timothy Flint, whose chronicles of the Patties in the Far West made Pattie a household name in the fur trade literature.

In March 1824, Morgan Boone became owner of property in his third Missouri River town. Earlier, in 1818, he tried to sell his own lots in Missouri, speculated in three lots in the Town of Gasconade in 1820, and then decided to invest a hefty \$500.00 in a Newport town lot, county seat of Franklin. The lot was adjacent to John Sullens, another colonial land claimant who invested in multiple economies. John and his Sullens' relations had large landholdings along Fee Fee Creek, and in Bonhomme Township in St. Louis County, moved upriver into Franklin County where John donated land for the county seat, had operated a ferry across the Missouri River from his landing at Newport (just upriver from Charette or Marthasville), and also had interests in the pine trade on Big Piney, a commerce that beached rafts at Newport for area saw mills. Did Boone and Sullens have a plan in mind? Whether they did or not, a year later, in June 1825, Morgan Boone and partner James Morrison, sold their Boone's Creek mill on credit, to Samuel Nesbit. Morgan had accepted a post as a federal farmer on Kansas Indian lands, a job with a predictable paycheck, while Morrison continued his family mercantile interests in St. Charles. Boone and Morrison included in the transfer of the mill, only one yoke of oxen, but added the usual carts, log chains, equipment, and "all the improvements on the premises" to Nesbit, and Nesbit signed a number of short-term notes payable in plank to Boone and Morrison. The deal indebted Nesbit to "one hundred and twenty five thousand feet of good merchantable pine plank to be delivered at said sawmill on the Piney Fork of Gasconade River to be delivered as his notes become due." The former \$8.00 per hundred-foot price for pine plank on the St. Louis levee near statehood had surely fallen, as profits had, during the national depression of the early 1820s. But, with the improved economy of 1825, this sale may have supported a \$5.00 per hundred-foot price, which would be a gross \$6,250 (or, at \$4.00, a gross of \$5,000, or at \$3.00, a gross of \$3,750); whichever price, this sale represented one of the more highly valued mills in the pineries. Nesbit apparently delivered his obligation, since in November 1826, Nesbit mortgaged his saw mill to Joseph Laveille and George Morton in St. Louis without notice of any outstanding notes due Boone and Morrison.

Once in Kansas, Morgan Boone still had business with the McDonalds. Boone challenged a settlement in Missouri Fur Company trader Joseph

Mitchell's probate case in St. Louis County, administered by Archibald McDonald (Mitchell's connection to McDonald is unknown, but apparently one existed within the large McDonald-Walton family). Neither Boone nor McDonald required a jury and allowed the probate judge to rule on Boone's petition concerning four notes totaling \$268.61. In November 1826, Boone lost the decision in Daniel M. Boone v. Archibald McDonald and was charged with paying McDonald's court costs, but a circuit court judge reversed the probate judgment conclusion and ruled in favor of Boone, assessing all costs to McDonald.

Archibald McDonald continued to argue the case. In July 1827, Boone demanded a settlement in the escalating dispute over Joseph Mitchell's probate case. This time, Joshua Burckhardt and James McDonald were parties to the fray, although why more of the McDonald clan became involved is unknown. However, the case was another example of debt and the assignment of various notes receivable dating back to January 1818 and involving Boone, John B. Stone, John Collier (a merchant in St. Charles), and others, who paid Mitchell's back wages to the decedent's estate. After Mitchell's death in 1822, Archibald McDonald collected his debts and used the proceeds for his own benefit after January 1824, apparently involving Burckhardt and James McDonald.

Boone's attorney, Charles Hempstead, challenged the September 1823 estate inventory as improper. McDonald's attorneys Matthias McGirk and Spencer Pettis argued that the probate court already made distribution through McDonald's proper administration before Boone received a judgment in the estate (which Boone never recovered), and that Boone did not present proper records as evidence for his claim. The court continued the case to November 1829, then, on January 20, 1830, dismissed the case and assessed all costs to Morgan Boone. There are no entries in the Execution Books that any further action in the Boone and Mitchell case took place. One can conclude that the McDonalds distributed Mitchell's estate and that Boone was unsuccessful.

John McDonald (1781 - 1859), the earliest pine sawmiller (beginning with his father James, c. 1816), decided to take a partner in his lumbering on Big Piney. By 1824, he had sawn, rafted, and sold enough plank to satisfy the inheritance of his two sisters from his father's estate, and purchase his mother's one-half ownership of the mill. So, John made an agreement in Franklin County with John Sullens (owner of a lot in Newport adjacent to Morgan Boone's) by which McDonald transferred one-half interest in his saw and grist mill to Sullens, including nearby land (except a field occupied by neigh-

bor Solomon King), six yoke of oxen, five log chains, five ploughs, one set of blacksmith tools, one set of bench tools for a joiner, 150 bushels of corn, and axes and other tools. Sullens was to take possession of the Spring Creek mill on September 1, 1824, and was to pay McDonald a succession of notes due 1825-1827 for a total of \$1,000. Sullens made partial payments to McDonald, but, by June 1828, McDonald sued for non-compliance. The jury added up payments, assessed damages to McDonald and the mill operation, and gave judgment and execution to McDonald for \$542.36. Sullens, desirous of a foothold in the pineries, postponed his permanent move to Big Piney.

John McDonald's mill, like Morgan Boone's, was a valuable property. Unlike Boone, McDonald didn't abandon lumbering when he withdrew from his Big Piney mill. Instead, he moved west to Roubidoux Creek where he set up another mill with his brother-in-law, Joshua H. Burckhardt. It is unclear what he did with his Spring Creek mill site. Downstream, the Waldo brothers looked westward and moved in that direction. David made a fortune in Jackson County as a trader; other brothers went to St. Clair County and did well as merchants and millers in new settlements in the upper Osage River Valley. But, some sawmillers stayed in the region and more arrived to participate in expanding the piney exports downriver. Bates, Baldrige, Bell, Bradford, Burckhardt, Lynch, McDonald, Ormsby, Sullens, Truesdale, Walton, and more became names interwoven in subsequent decades in Ozarks pine and hardwood sawmilling. These families had histories living for a time in St. Louis or St. Charles Counties. Like John McDonald, John Baldrige (1782-1847) was a veteran who relocated nearby. In April 1827, he sold one-half of a "saw mill situated on Piney Fork of the Gas-

conade" with one-half of "five yoke of oxen, cart, chains, yokes," etc. for \$1,000.00 to brother Alexander, and moved just east to the Licking area, where he and his piney woods friend Barney Lowe assumed a more sedentary life in farming and stock raising, surely easier and more sedentary enterprises than lumbering and rafting.

The Gasconade Mills area continued to change with the times. Laveille and Morton had begun their construction empire in St. Louis building the Old Courthouse, the Old Cathedral, the Episcopal Church, estates for the wealthy, warehouses for commerce, and the first buildings at Jefferson Barracks. They became partners or owners of at least three Big Piney saw mills and began contracting with others for delivery of rafts. More settlers came to open farms, graze stock, and provide seasonal labor to the mills. By 1828, a St. Louis investor co-founded the first company store (at Arthur's Creek in Texas County) associated with William Truesdale's pine mills on Big Piney. The store offered manufactured consumer goods – no longer did lumbermen have to journey to St. Louis to buy their necessities from St. Louis merchants. Nor did Ozarkers take every rafting trip downriver; by 1840, with ten mills sawing plank in Texas County, hired crews came from St. Louis each spring to raft lumber to the urban markets. The reciprocal relationship of lumber from the Big Piney and markets in the lower Missouri River Valley continued until the Civil War. Even before the war, merchants were sending Big Piney plank up the Missouri River on steamboats to the Booneslick counties and beyond, as builders used Ozarks yellow pine in an ever-expanding cultural landscape of Missouri buildings.



Moving the felled timber to the mill seat took an enormous amount of man and animal power. Oxen were the preferred beasts of burden before the mule was introduced into the Ozarks after the Civil War. Courtesy of John Bradbury.

## Sources

Most of the information on the individuals sawing on the Pineys comes from circuit court and judicial records, all available on microfilm through the Missouri State Archives. The lumbermen first appear in the records of St. Louis, St. Louis County, and St. Charles County circuits, then in Lincoln, Franklin, and Gasconade counties after 1821. Litigation concerning the Waltons, McDonalds, and Baldridges appear in St. Louis circuit court record books 3, 4, & 5; St. Louis Common Pleas Books A & B, and St. Louis Execution Book No. 2. The probate cases of James McDonald (1821) and William Walton (1826) in St. Louis County were useful in understanding the complicated finances of these men.

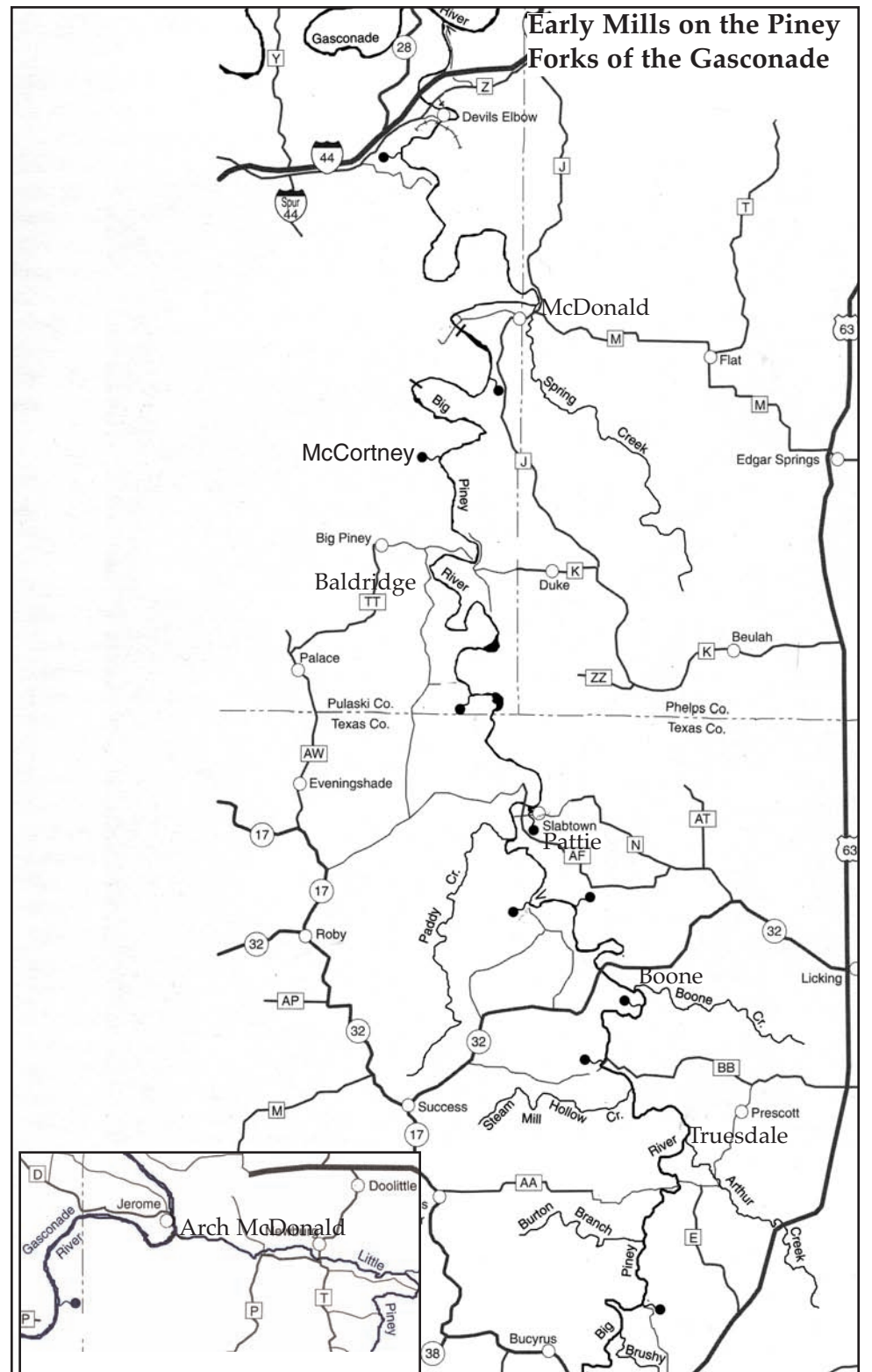
The McDonalds took several cases to the Missouri Supreme Court, including Archibald McDonald slander case against John Caldwell (1806) Betty, Rachel, and Lovina "freedom suit" against James McDonald and Joseph (1810), James McDonald versus James Richardson (1814), and James and Daniel Baldrige versus Henry Walton (1825), all in the Missouri Supreme Court files at the Missouri State Archives.

William Walton probate case, 1826; James McDonald probate case, 1821, St. Louis County MSA;

The Franklin County Tax List, 1819-1820 (Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia) and the Franklin County Circuit Court Record Books A and B, 1819-1842 (Missouri State Archives) show several individuals involved in the pine lumber trade including Archibald and John McDonald and John Baldrige, but also John Ormsby, Alexander McCartney, Samuel Nesbit, Hiram Scott, Jesse Van Bibber, John Sullens, William Truesdale, David Waldo, Washington Walton, Alexander Willard, and others.

Gasconade County Assessments list the mills in the pineries as of 1821. A road petition in 1822 and the Gasconade County minute book, Vol. A, May 1821, places Daniel Morgan Boone's first sawmill in Phelps County, near what is now Arlington. A Gasconade County Voting History shows the prominence of the early entrepreneurs who left their names on townships and voting precincts. Gasconade County Deeds, Vol. A, includes a plat of the town of Gasconade and shows investments by lumbermen. The records are available through the Missouri State Archives.

Several authors described the Missouri frontier during the territorial and early statehood periods, and their accounts are valuable for the wider context in which the first lumbermen lived and worked. Descriptions of the potential and actual value of the lumber trade are: Lewis C. Beck, *A Gazetteer of the States of Illinois and Missouri* (1823, reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1975); John Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior of America in the Years 1809, 1810, and 1811* (1817, reprinted Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1986); Timothy Flint, *Geography and History of the Western States or the Mississippi Valley*, Volume II (1832, reprinted Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1970); D. T. Madox, *Late Account of the Missouri Territory* (1817, reprinted St. Charles County Historical Society, 1989); Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Scenes and Adventures in the Semi-Alpine Region of the Ozark Mountains of Missouri and Arkansas* (1853, reprinted Springfield, Mo.: Greene County Archives); *The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie, of Kentucky*, edited by Richard Batman (1833, Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1988); Richard Batman's *American Ecclesiastes, An Epic Journey through the Early American West* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984) is a



modern study of the stories James Pattie told Timothy Flint. Of particular interest is the section concerning Sylvester Pattie's mill on the Big Piney River, although Pattie's debts as much as the death of his wife probably led to his leaving the Big Piney and ultimately Missouri.

For the geography that made the pine trade possible Carl O. Sauer, *The Geography of the Ozark Highland of Missouri* (1920, reprinted New York: Greenwood Press, 1968); Milton D. Rafferty, *The Ozarks, Land and Life* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2001) are indispensable. For a comprehensive context of backwoods culture, see Terry G. Jordan and Matti Kaups, *The American Backwoods Frontier, An Ethnic and Ecological Interpretation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1989). The importance of lumbering and auxiliary ventures in the Ozark backwoods is shown in Michael Williams, "Products of the Forest: Mapping the Census of 1840," *Journal of Forest History* 24 (1980).

Anyone wanting to build a sash saw still can't go wrong with Oliver Evans, *The Young Mill-Wright and Miller's Guide* (1795, reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1972).