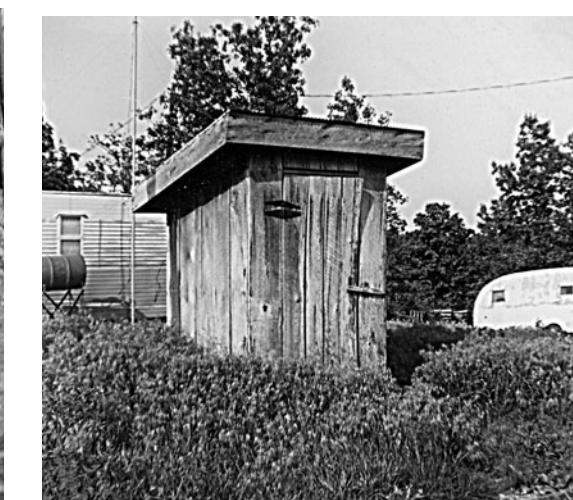


Roadside Entrepreneur — P. R. Lynch



The construction of Fort Leonard Wood and Route 66 provided miles of traffic congestion and ample business opportunities in 1941. The thousands of workers and incoming military personnel created an economic oasis in the Depression desert of south-central Missouri.

Philip Remi Lynch, known to most as "P. R.," came to Pulaski County from northern Missouri when construction began in January of 1941. He brought his family south in March to the two-lane stretch of Route 66 between the emerging camp and Waynesville. The family consisted of wife Leota and children Tom, Vic, Al, and Annora. Their first home was in a tent (above



left with Al (l) and Vic) alongside the Mother Road. The WPA constructed the family's first Pulaski County "bathroom" (above, center).

When the 32,000 construction workers converged on southern Pulaski, they overwhelmed the available accommodations. Any structure with a roof was sought for shelter and sleeping space. P. R. hauled a load of doors to the roadside, cobbled together some rafters, and spread a canvas roof. He had fashioned the "Bunk House" (upper right). It was located next to what is now the First State Bank in St.



Robert.

It was a cold winter and a muddy spring. P. R. burned a rank of wood each night and hauled water from Roubidoux Spring.

When the major construction of Fort Leonard Wood was completed and the construction force trimmed, P. R. sold the Bunk House furniture. There was a demand for beds, dressers, and other furnishings and the sale was the beginning of Lynch's Furniture and Appliance, located on Route 66 (below).

P. R. was also instrumental in

the founding of St. Robert, serving on the organizing committee, as an alderman, and as mayor for ten years.

The boys had P. R.'s interest and talent for business, too. Al went into the propane gas business and later bus transportation. Tom and Vic expanded the furniture business and grandson Steve entered the home furnishing business. The original complex was razed for the Waynesville I-44 overpass in 1960.

Almost seven decades later, there is still a Lynch Furniture and Appliance store doing business on Historic Route 66 in St. Robert.



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