

# STATION NAMES

## Originate in Humor, Drama, Pathos

Tragedy, humor, hope, frustration – all have had a part when names were being chosen for towns along the Missouri Pacific Lines' thousands of miles of territory and none of the emotions was overlooked by founding fathers who performed their roles in the comparatively small area embraced by the Missouri and Memphis divisions and the Missouri-Illinois, west. Physical characteristics in the surrounding countryside were taken into consideration in many instances and backwoods economists made their influence felt in others. In at least one case money reared its crinkly head, although it was unable to achieve its sordid ends.

Romance, too, played its part as witness **DES ARC**, a Missouri division town which draws its name from the combination of the descent of Gads Hill (if the train is moving northward) and the arc the tracks form in the process. But Des Arc had its hour in the sun because the southward climb to the summit of the hill, second highest on the division at the present time, made it possible for Jesse James and his band to rob the chugging Iron Mountain train one day. The tree to which Jesse tied his horse while committing the robbery still stands at Des Arc and, even after the passage of many years, the owner, Mrs. E. W. Fitz, whose husband conducts a general store, will not permit it to be cut down.

The presence of iron ore in the Iron Mountain adjacent to the towns of **IRONTON**, **IRON MOUNTAIN**, and **PILOT KNOB** was responsible for those towns being name and was one of

the reasons for building the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern RR., southward from St. Louis. Even today, almost 100 years since the completion of the railroad which is a most important link in the Missouri Pacific Lines, iron mining is carried on in a modest manner in the vicinity.

Slightly north of the iron belt **DE SOTO**, named according to legend, in honor of the widely-traveled Spaniard, should have been named for another Spanish grandee, de Leon, for the town is known as the "Fountain City" and during the World's Fair at St. Louis in 1904, water from De Soto's artesian wells was transported to the fairgrounds in tank cars for drinking purposes.

Joe Booshie sank a shaft in the ground some 65 miles southwest of St. Louis in 1887 and tapped a lead vein. Soon a settlement grew up around the shaft and became known as "Miner Joe's Diggin's." Then, as more people moved in, the name of "Slab Town" was bestowed upon the community. The following year the Desloge Consolidated Lead Co., bought Booshie's mine and the town became known as **DESLOGE**, in honor of Firmin Desloge, founder and president of the company. The St. Joseph Lead Co., is successor to the Desloge company but the name remains.

The Hunt brothers owned the land upon which the St. Joseph Lead Co. sank its first shaft in the town now known as **LEADWOOD** and for more than a year after the vein had been reached the settlement was known as Huntington. Then the name was changed to Owl Creek because a post office was being established and there was another

Huntington in Missouri. But, as the town prospered the residents felt the need for a more dignified name and combined the mineral treasure with the surface forests to get the present name.

Known as the “Lead Capital of the World” because here are located what are said to be the largest working lead mines in the United States, **FLAT RIVER** derives its name from the river of the same name and the river, in turn, is so called because its bed is almost on a level plane. Nearby is **RIVERMINES**, so named because its lead mines abut on Flat River.

Realizing the value of having trains stop at the town he was about to establish, a German settler named Kimm made a deal with the young Iron Mountain road to exchange land for a right-of-way in return for an agreement to stop at least two trains in each direction at his town. As the settlement grew the preponderantly German populace called the place **KIMMSWICK**, or Kimm’s village. Today Kimmswick, about 21 miles south of St. Louis, is a flag stop for two southbound and two northbound trains each day, thereby keeping alive the agreement the founder made with the railroad.

Whimsy enters into the titling of the Arkansas town of **MELLWOOD** for, says a local sage, the name grew out of an informal conference among a group of residents. Suggestions were being offered by the conferees but no progress was being made until one of the group produced a bottle and passed it among the members. Each in turn savored the potent contents and one came up with the suggestion that, inasmuch as the whisky was pretty good stuff, why not call the town Mellwood to honor the brand of bonded bourbon.

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*Article found in scrapbook belonging to Charlie Ottman and donated to the Iron County Historical Society; submitted by Wilma Cofer.*