Appendix E: GOODSPEED'S HISTORY OF BENTON COUNTY—VAN WINKLE'S MILL ARTICLE

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1884/2000 *Benton County Section of Goodspeed's Benton, Washington, Carroll, Madison, Crawford, Franklin and Sebastian Counties Arkansas*. Benton County Historical Society, Bentonville.

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This very lively place is situated on Section 22, Township 19 north, Range 28 west, and is worthy of especial mention on account of its being the headquarters of the native lumber industry of Benton and other counties. Peter Vanwinkle erected the first saw-mill at this place in 1858, and ran it until some time during the war, when but was burned, it is said, by Confederate bushwhackers to prevent its being used by the Federal armies. It was rebuilt in 1866 and run until 1882, when it passed into the hands of J.A.C. Blackburn, son-in-law of its original proprietor. Mr. Blackburn has made some improvements, and continues the business on an extensive scale. The mills are inclosed in a building 70x90 feet in size, two stories high, and all covered with an iron roof. The power consists of a 150-horse power engine, with a 22x30 inch cylinder, and a balance wheel twenty feet in diameter and weighing 20,000 pounds. The steam capacity, equal to 200-horsepower, consists of three boilers twenty-four feet in length and forty-two inches in diameter, with four twelve inch flues in each. The smoke stack is five feet in diameter and sixty feet high. The machinery consist of one circular saw, two planers, three cut-off saws, two rip saws, one resawing machine for making bevel siding, one shingle machine, one scroll saw, two moulding machines, one tenanting machine, one mortising machine, one automatic emory wheel for grinding planer bits, one lathe for turning iron and one for turning wood.

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* All misspellings are from the original document.

Mr. Blackburn has also another mill at Rock House, in Madison County; capacity 20,000 feet per day, with all the machinery for preparing the lumber ready for the builder's use. He also has in his employ two portable mills, one in Madison County and one in Benton County, four miles east of the home mill, cutting lumber for him by the thousand feet. The capital invested in this enterprise, including mills, machinery, teams, wagons, lands, etc., is about $60,000. The immense amount of lumber manufactured by Mr. Blackburn is all sold in home markets—in Benton, Madison and Washington Counties. He employs fifty hands, about twenty in Madison and thirty in Benton County, and he owns 17,000 acres of land, principally in these counties, 16,500 of it being timbered and the balance being farm land.

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J.A.C. Blackburn, who is the recognized "lumber king" of Northwestern Arkansas, was born in War Eagle Township, Benton Co., Ark., in 1841, and is a son or Rev. Sylvanus and Catherine Blackburn, both of whom were born in 1809, in Georgia and North Carolina, respectively. They became residents of Arkansas in 1832, and are still living. J.A.C. Blackburn is their sixth child, and his boyhood days were spent in assisting his father in the grist-mill. In 1861 he joined the Confederate army, and was a faithful soldier for four years, and in 1865 returned to Arkansas; here he engaged in the peaceful pursuit of farming, succeeded in accumulating some money, which, in partnership with hi father, he invested in a general mercantile store, and at the end of six months bought his father's interest. Here he remained from 1867 till 1873, and then moved his stock of goods to War Eagle and erected

the mills at that place, and also continued to carry on merchandising. He continued in the saw and grist milling business at War Eagle until 1884, when he succeeded Peter Van Winkle as proprietor of the Van Winkle Saw and Planing Mills. He has been so successful in the management of these mills that he has often been called the "lumber king" of Northwestern Arkansas. His principal mill is situated nine miles east of Rogers. The engine is 150-horse power, the cylinder 22x30 inches and the balance wheel is twenty feet in diameter and weighs 20,000 pounds. He has three large boilers, each twenty-four feet long and forty-two inches in diameter, with four 12-inch flues, and has one circular saw, two rip saws, three cut-off saws, one gang lath machine, one shingle machine, two planers, two mounding machines, one scroll saw, one mortising machine and one automatic emery wheel. He has another mill in Madison County, which is twenty-five horse power, with a capacity of 20,000 feet of lumber per day. Besides this he has two other mills cutting lumber for him by the thousand. He handles 3,000,000 feet of lumber per annum, and owns in connection with his mills 15,000 acres of fine timber lands. There has not been an enterprise started in Benton County in which he has not taken a deep interest, and in the majority of cases become a heavy stockholder, the Stock Bank, Fair Association, Roller Mills and Water Works being some of the enterprises in which he has been interested. He was first married to Miss Ellen Van Winkle, who died November 10, 1884, having borne three children: Carrie, Lucy M. and Laura May. Mrs. Belle Harris, widow of Mack Harris and daughter of C. Petross, became his second wife. Mr. Blackburn is a Democrat and an A.F. & A.M. of the highest order, and belongs to the Knights of Honor.

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John B. Steele, mayor of Rogers, Ark, and secretary of the Rogers Canning & Packing Company, was born in Bedford County, Tenn., in 1838, and is a son of C.D. and Catherine Steele, who were also Tennesseeans by birth. After residing on a farm until thirteen years of age he began serving an apprenticeship at the turner's and machinist's trades, and in connection with this attended school until 1859. From that time until the breaking out of the war he worked at the turner's trade, and at the latter date joined Col. Carroll's Arkansas Cavalry, and served in different companies for four years. He was lieutenant for the First Battalion Arkansas Cavalry, and was finally promoted to brevet-major. He was in a number of hotly contested battles, and was in over fifty skirmishes. He was wounded twice, was in prison six months, and was paroled from Vicksburg, Miss., at the close of the siege. After the close of the war, Mr. Steele went to Texas, but after a short time returned to Arkansas, and engaged in the saw-mill business, which occupation he followed for about five years, and then turned his attention to merchandising at Springdale, Ark. About three years later he moved his stock of goods to Van Winkle Mills, but (illegible) six months later (in 1880) he abandoned this business and opened the Van Winkle Hotel in Fayetteville, which he successfully managed for two years. He then returned to Van Winkle Mills, and spent one year in the wholesale and retain lumber business, when he sold out and followed the same occupation in Rogers for some time. Since 1885 he has held the position of mayor of Rogers, except about nine months, and has also been justice of the peace for several years. Since

November, 1887, he has been connected with the Rogers Canning & Packing Company. In 1868 he was married to Miss Mary Van Winkle, who was born in Illinois in 1841, and by her is the father of three children: (illegible) C., Richard St. Clair and Harry. Mr. Steele is a staunch Democrat, and a member of the A.F. & A.M.