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## Beirne considered best shipping point

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# Beirne considered best shipping point

By Wendy Richter  
For the Siftings

The town of Beirne in southern Clark County was founded in 1880 by James Lewis Beirne from Grafton, Illinois. Beirne established a sawmill as well as a Methodist church, at which he served as the first minister. Postal service began in the community in that year as well, with the town's founder as postmaster. By the end of that year, a railroad depot had been completed, and Beirne's sawmill and grist mill became fully operational. People of the surrounding area considered Beirne to be among the best shipping points for the new railroad passing through the state. The small village grew.

James L. Beirne's daughter and son-in-law came to the tiny village in 1881, and built a planing mill and store on 800 acres of land. In that same year, a correspondent to the Southern Standard news-

paper, writing under the name of "Zebedee Beelzebub," proclaimed that Beirne enjoyed daily mail service and had two sawmills. Meetings were held to establish some sort of lumber commission, and rumors surfaced about a plank or tram road to nearby Okolona.

Arkadelphia's Southern Standard described Beirne in 1897: "The town is situated in a rich farming country, about 20 miles southwest from this place on the Iron Mountain Railroad. It is being settled up with a good class of emigrants from Indiana. The Yeager Brothers have just put in an operation and have in good running order an extensive mill, and saw lumber exclusively for manufacturing all kinds of furniture, which is quite an addition to the place. F.M. White also owns a mill which is doing a good business. Our old friend A.W. Cagle has charge of the mill. Mr. White also

has a neat little drug store. J.G. Clark is one of the successful and enterprising men of the place. He is not only one of the largest merchants, but a successful farmer also, and has furnished quite a number of farmers with supplies this year. This year he planted over a hundred acres of oats which will yield from 15 to 20 bushels to the acre. G.W. Cobbs & Company do a general grocery business. The post office is located in his building and our friend Capt. J.L. Beirne, the founder of the town, has been postmaster for twenty years and is still in charge. Beirne has a good hotel, kept by Mrs. J.D. Robertson. There are two churches, Methodist and Baptist, with good memberships. The public school is in charge of Miss Daisy Johnson of this city. She has about forty pupils, and her patrons are highly pleased with her."

Cutting trees and sawing the logs into lumber was

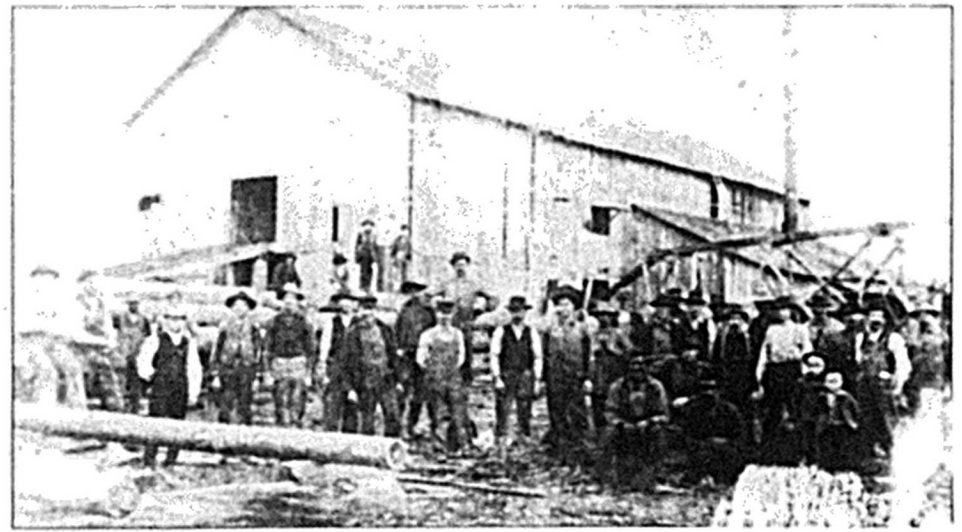


IMAGE COURTESY OF CLARK COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Image is of a mill at Beirne in the early 1900s.

an important local enterprise almost from the beginning of the settlement of Arkansas, and through the years, timber products continued to be the foundation of the Beirne community's economy. The Yeager and Hartley Mill was built in 1882, burned in 1899, and rebuilt. It was then sold to the Pennsylvania Lumber Company.

The Acme Handle Mill operated at Beirne for about twelve years. The Beirne Lumber Company was formed by James G. Clark's interests and their large mill began operations in 1932, managed by Dallas H. Dalton. The mill employed hundreds of men, and as a result, many families moved to the area during the Depression in

search of jobs there.

For additional information about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum ([www.clarkcountyhitory.org](http://www.clarkcountyhitory.org) or 230.1360) or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library ([www.obu.edu/archives](http://www.obu.edu/archives) or 245.5332).