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GREENVILLE ON THE ST. FRANCIS,
REPORT ON A BRIEF LITERATURE SEARCH
AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING PROGRAM
AT THE TOWN OF OLD GREENVILLE,
WAYNE COUNTY, MISSOURI

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courthouses. The courthouses stood where the earthen mound is presently located in the town of Old Greenville (Cramer 1972:229).

Although Greenville was not located centrally in early Wayne County, it was located near the center of population. In 1820 Greenville served as county seat for 1,443 individuals (Cramer 1972:78-79).

The town was apparently fairly limited in size during the early years of its existence, but this appears to be typical of many of the early town sites on the Missouri frontier (see C. Price and J. Price 1977:93-103). Descriptions of Old Greenville were provided by some of the earlier travelers through the area. In 1820, John Bell forded the St. Francis about 1 mile from the town, and he noted that it was a new town consisting of 5 or 6 houses and a post office (Bell 1957:October 4th entry). In 1834, Featherstonhaugh (1968:80-81) described the town as follows:

...Greenville, a poor wretched collection of four or five wooden cabins, where the miserable inhabitants die by inches of chills and fever: ...Others were roistering about at that indispensable rendezvous of every settlement, a dirty looking store, where all the vagabonds congregate together to discuss politics and whiskey. The settlement, however, is beautifully situated on a rich bottom of land on the east bank of the St. Francis...

Finally, in 1839, Engelmann (Bek 1929:525-526) noted that Greenville was an insignificant looking place. He had been told however, that there was a lot of business transacted there, and that his host, a store keeper, at the settlement of Fourche-a-Thomas 100 miles to the southwest in Arkansas got a part of his goods at Greenville. Engelmann also observed that there was a water-powered sawmill on a creek opposite Greenville (Bek 1929:526).

Greenville grew and became the trading center for a territory reaching a hundred miles to the south and west. The commercial enterprises were served with goods hauled overland from Ste. Genevieve and Cape Girardeau. Elijah Bettis operated the first store on the site. In 1824, Van Horne and

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