

## Information Sheet

**R Richeson, Paul R.**  
**376 "The Perrys of Potosi," 1977.**  
**One folder, photocopies.**

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This is a speech concerning a prominent early family in Washington County, Missouri, delivered at a reunion of the Perry family at Brazoria, Texas. The Perrys were associated through business and by marriage with the family of Moses Austin.

Samuel Perry, the first of the family to come to America, was a native of Ireland. His son, John Perry (1747-1825), served in the colonial army during the American Revolution, and by the late 1700s was living in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. He came to Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, about 1800, bringing with him his sons, Samuel Perry (1783-1830), William Moor Perry (1784-1825), and John Perry, Jr. (1787-1850). In 1804 the elder Perry was appointed assessor of the mining areas, Belleview, and Murphy's settlement, and in 1805 he was appointed a judge of the Ste. Genevieve Court of Quarter Sessions.

Perry bought a Spanish land claim in 1806 at Mine à Breton, later Potosi, center of the early mining operations in southeastern Missouri. Perry went into the general mercantile business with his eldest son, Samuel. Later the youngest sons, William Moor Perry and John Perry, Jr., also opened a store at Potosi. Still later, a younger cousin, James Franklin Perry (1790-1851), opened another store at Potosi, financed by his kinsman, Samuel Perry. The Perrys obtained stock from St. Louis and other cities, sold it or bartered for minerals at their stores, and reinvested the profits in additional mining lands. The Perrys were well-respected and influential citizens, associating at Potosi with Moses and Stephen Austin, Daniel Dunklin, William Henry, and John Rice Jones. Samuel Perry was the most politically active, serving as a commissioner to locate the seat of Washington County and as a member of the first territorial assembly. He was a member of the first Missouri Senate, and in 1827 was appointed a director of the St. Louis branch of the Bank of the United States. John Perry, Jr., continued in business at Potosi, ultimately expanding his interests into Jefferson County as a partner in the Valle mines. He held several county appointments and was a member of the county court, 1821-1825.

The Austin-Perry relationship, already in effect through business connections, was strengthened in 1824 by the marriage of James F. Perry to Emily Austin Bryan, the widowed daughter of Moses Austin. Stephen Austin, then in Texas, urged his sister and brother-in-law to join him in the American settlement. James F. and Emily Austin Perry left Potosi in 1831 to settle at Peach Point, near the Austin settlement in Brazoria, Texas.

Paul Richeson, a native of Potosi and a Perry descendant through Isabella Perry McGuire, delivered this address to the Perry family reunion at Brazoria, Texas, on June 18, 1977. His speech emphasized the Missouri period of the family's history, and their activities at Potosi.

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23 October 1984

George W. Showalter

Gift

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