

Northern Kentucky
Views Presents:

Catawaba

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from
The Pendleton County Historical
and Genealogical Society
Quarterly Newsletter

www.nkyviews.com

CATAWABA

From The Falmouth Outlook,
Given by Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Ruber
Source: Record Book of Iliff, Garrard, and Combs,
given to my great-grandfather; History of Pendleton
put together by Lawrence Colvin and written by a

committee of five men in Falmouth in 1876; Dr. H. C. Clark and Ed Barton, a Falmouth Lawyer.

History of the Town of Catawaba:

Some towns are founded and grow into large cities. Some are founded and later become "ghost towns". Catawaba is an example of a town that for a while grew and flourished, but later faded away.

Catawaba is located between the Main Licking River and the L & N Railroad about four miles north of Falmouth. The town it's self was more on the rail road than on the river.

In 1854, a one-track railroad called the Kentucky Central Railroad, was built from Lexington to Covington. The railroad passed through Catawaba. Later it became the L & N Railroad. When it was the Kentucky Central Railroad, R. B. Bowler was the President of it.

On September 22, 1858, R. B. Bowler, President of the Kentucky Central Railroad, Honorable Leslie Combs of Lexington, Kentucky, Charles R. Iliff, Pendleton County surveyor, and Thomas Lewis Garrard of Pendleton County organized and established the town of Catawaba. Fifty acres were laid out for a town site with streets, a city park, a public square, and grounds for a college. They had in mind a college and even a bridge across the Licking River. This would give them a shorter route to Foster's Landing on the Ohio River, which at the time was a landing place for steamboats. From Foster's Landing ox teams or horse teams hauled supplies overland to Falmouth and other points. Richard Pettit in 1858 became the towns first postmaster.

On August 14, 1858 the first lots were sold. Some histories of Pendleton County state that a lot sale was held in 1859.

My father has a book at home, which is over 100 years old. This book was given to him by his great-grandfather. It was given to him by a former Pendleton County Judge. In this book it lists the numbers of the lots, the buyer's name and the amounts paid. On August 14, 1858, lots 9, 10, 11, and 12 were sold to James H. Casey for fifty dollars, payable in three, twenty and thirty-two months in equal installments with interest from the date. Lots 13, 14, 15, and 16 were sold to J. W. Stevens for the same amount and the same terms. There must have been some lots better or bigger than others, because lots 57, 58, 70, and 71 were sold to Hiram Thornton for only \$30 on August 21, 1858.

According to the book a total of 112 lots were sold to the following people: James H. Casey, J. W. Stevens, Loyd Bradford, Hiram Thornton, Jasper Stevens, James Larkin, Rawlings, and Pettit William Gillaspay, James Perkins, John P. Miller, Lemuel

Oliver, John Jacobs, James Wells, Jarrard Woodworth, David Bradshaw, Richard Landrum, H. D. Willett, John Hanks, Lafayette Gaskin, Leslie Combs, James T. Anderson, George W. Ritter, John Quigley, L. V. Looker, A. D. Moore, E. D. Paul, J. H. Hallam, A. Haynes, Charles Riddle, D. T. McFford, and Bafsell Bailey.

Leslie Combs bought eleven lots for one hundred and seventy-three dollars, payable one fourth in hand and the balance in one, two and three years with interest from the date of November 10, 1858. He bought these for Bertie Bush. Some bought twice and bought four lots at a time. Many only bought four on August 16, 1858, got Forty-five dollars, but paid eighty dollars for four more on October 2, 1858. Lot number 15 was later sold for one hundred dollars to James Smith and was listed as one acre of land.

Also recorded in the book are sales of farms near Catawaba in 1858 and 1859. They sold from \$20 per acre to \$90 per acre.

Catawaba soon began to be a thriving town. It had homes, a railroad passenger and freight depot, a school, a church, a railroad Section with section houses, many businesses, a saw mill, a large cooper shop, and numerous stores.

Some of the main businesses leaders in Catawaba were the firms of Peoples and Hobbs. Another was Issac Newton Walker. Mr. Walker's bookkeeping said in one season Mr. Walker's bookkeeper said in one season, Mr. Walker purchased and shipped out of Catawaba three and one-half million pounds of tobacco. My great-grandfather, Charles Ruber, bought cattle in the Kentucky Mountains and shipped them to Catawaba sometimes. There he unloaded them and drove them to his farm three miles away. He, also, loaded cattle he raised there.

By the early years of the 1900's the town of Catawaba was fading away. The town still had some homes, a railroad depot, a school, a store, and a church. When my father was a small boy he rode to Catawaba in a horse and buggy and boarded the train to go to Cincinnati. In the late 1920's, according to my father, the school was closed and the children were hauled to his school, Oak Grove. Mr. Albert Powell hauled them in a school bus, which was really a small bread or milk delivery truck. The last store closed about the same time. The cattle pens fell down; the depot disappeared and the church had only occasional services. Town lots were bought and added to the farms.

Now, the town is only a memory, written by Angela Rae Ruber, an eight-grade history class student.
