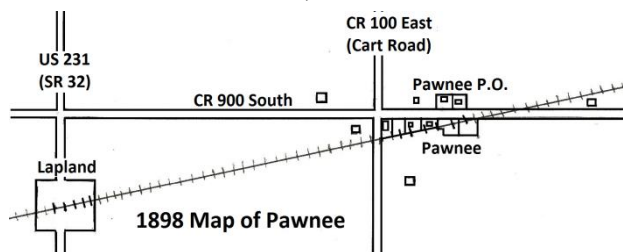


Pawnee: A Forgotten Village

The Midland Railroad was constructed in the late 1880's across the southern half of Montgomery County stretching from Waveland to Ladoga and New Ross. Between these two established towns several railroad towns were built. Railroad towns were communities whose whole existence depended upon the railroads. They were created when the tracks were laid and vanished when the railroads quit operating. There were three such towns between Waveland and Ladoga on the Midland Railroad; Penobscot, Lapland and Pawnee. In this issue we will highlight the small history of Pawnee.

The name Pawnee seems out of place in Montgomery County but the old tales tell about a tribe of Pawnees which camped where the village was located. We do know that Chief Cornstalk's village was located to the southeast but they were from the Miami tribe and there were natural springs in the area. One of Indian Creeks sources is just to the west so there is a possibility other tribes may have camped here when following the Indian trail nearby.

By now you are probably wondering, "Just exactly where was Pawnee?" The town was located on the northwestern corner of section 23 and the southwestern corner of section 16 in Scott Township. The exact location is one mile east of US 231, where CR100 east intersects



CR900 South about 2 1/2 miles north of Parkersburg. The town site has totally vanished and today only farm fields and the roads can be seen.

County Road 100 East was known in the 1800's as Cart Road. In the mid to late 1800's this road was built to accommodate the cart racers. Horse racing was a major pastime during the mid to late 1800's in Montgomery County with a world class race track built in the county fairgrounds in Crawfordsville. Men raced their horses on a whim in the streets and roads across the county causing untold accidents and creating a general nuisance. Ordinances were passed outlawing racing on the public streets.

Because the Crawfordsville Greencastle Road was straight and flat, trainers brought their horses and carts there to race and train. This was major road with wagons of supplies and settlers passing through every day. The racing horses made many of them pull off the road to avoid causing an accident. To solve this problem a new road was built a mile to the east, flat and straight, to accommodate the trainers and racers. This road became Cart Road and eventually CR 100 East.

Pawnee was platted sometime between 1878 and 1883 with six to eight lots. Two of the lots were on William Johnson's property north of CR900S and four or six lots on Margaret Johnson's land on the southern side of the road. (See map 2) William Johnson was Margaret youngest son

and had served two terms as county assessor.ⁱ He was mostly involved in stock speculation. The railroad right of way was laid out in 1853 and it appears the Johnsons platted the town with the intention of getting a rail stop there so they could ship their stock easier.

In 1883 William opened the Pawnee Post Office and he became the Postmaster. In addition he also served as the superintendent of the Sabbath School (#3) to the west of Pawnee. The post office was located on the north side of the road in Johnson's house. There is conflicting information on the dates and the where the mail was diverted when the Pawnee Post Office was discontinued. One source has the mail going to Lapland in 1895 while another source has the mail diverted to Ladoga in 1899. ⁱⁱA postal map after 1900 shows this area as Ladoga Rural Route one. On this map there are six buildings in Pawnee, three on the north side and three on the south side.

Once the railroad was established the town became a regular stop for the daily train. A telegraph office was installed two years after the line came through and a derailed box or flat car alongside the rails was probably used as a depot. Shortly after the railroad was built a wood frame grain elevator was built so area farmers could sell their crops. It is possible the depot and telegraph was located in elevator office. In 1904 the elevator was owned by R.L. Ashby and the grain business on the Midland Railroad was not good. During the summer of 1904 Ashby had the elevator demolished. The materials were used by the Huntington and Sons Company to build a new elevator in Lapland a mile west for the Crabbs and Reynolds Grain Company in Crawfordsville.



1878 Atlas

Sometime after 1910 the rail depot was discontinued. The small town had lost its lifeline; the elevator, the post office and the depot and faded into history. In 1938 the Midland Railroad folded up and the trains stopped running. In 1943 the rails were removed and melted down to support the war effort. The few houses left fell into disuse, were torn down and the land turned into farmland. If you travel down the road today nothing remains of Pawnee except the flat land on which it was built.

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ⁱ <http://genealogytrails.com/ind/montgomery/scott-twp-bios.htm>

ⁱⁱ Montgomery Magazine October 1982, page 11,