

UNION SOLDIERS COMMENTED UPON ASHLAND AND ITS HOTEL/HOSPITAL
Kentucky Yesterdays
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MEDICO wrote in the Louisville Journal that Ashland's "advantages as a manufacturing mart in the future appear to me very great. Coal and iron, the bulwarks of manufacturing industry, abound in inexhaustible quantities in the hills just at her back door." Though wrong about the inexhaustibility of Ashland's natural resources, the soldier was fundamentally correct in his assessment. Another veteran wrote home that he had been stationed at Ashland "just long enough to find this the budding of a beautiful city."

Many of the men who came through Ashland during the war years were associated with the hospital, originally built as a landmark hotel to impress investors with the permanence and future greatness of the upstart city. One veteran, handy with a pen, drew this view of the building, which eventually made its way to the National Archives.

The sick and the wounded from the West Virginia and Big Sandy campaigns were sent here. The magnificence of the edifice was in sharp contrast to the suffering within. B.F. Stevenson⁴ was shocked on his arrival to see "Ten, twelve, and fifteen men crowded into small ill-ventilated rooms, with nothing under them but a single blanket" in the dead of winter. "Each room was heated by a large stove, and in all I found the temperature above 100° . . . I could not breathe the fetid atmosphere without a feeling of disgust and nausea." Upon his arrival in early January 1862, Stevenson accepted the resignation of Dr. Jones, the contract surgeon, who was much relieved to be replaced. The sick were dispersed and sent to vacant homes which at the time abounded.

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Though Stevenson and the 22nd Kentucky soon left, the hospital continued to be run in a business-like fashion under Post Surgeon B. Elder, Surgeon J.W. Cook, and Assistant Surgeon Ezra Weis who was from Ashland. The most common illnesses were typhoid pneumonia, erysipelas, dysentery and intermittent fever.

One jaundiced observer declared that "everything is reduced to system and whatever is done must be in accordance with the army regulations, even to the taking of a dose of 'epsom salts'--The wants of the sick are attended to principally by men regularly detailed for that purpose, who act not from sympathetic motives and feelings for the sick, but simply because they have been detailed . . . hence the inattention to the wants of the sick.

Others were favorably impressed by the handling of the roughly 375 patients declaring that the ward masters were doing a splendid job receiving the sick, seeing that they are clean, keeping the rooms in order, taking charge of the dead.

CAPTION: "The building is a large four story brick block having in all ninety rooms, formerly occupied for a store, hotel and post-office. It is owned by a company, and its original cost was about \$35,000. It is rented by our government at \$50 per month. The building has a large hall through it on every floor, with porches on either end which affords a fine promenade. . . . The lower floor is occupied for a kitchen, dining room for the nurses, and the convalescent, ware-room, Baggage-room and dispenstory [?]. Also in the backyard, the government have been at the expense of building a small wash-room and bakery. The dispensatory is... where all the medicines are kept and dealt out by the steward according to the prescription of the surgeons sent in by the nurses."---L.S. April, 1862 published in the Summit County Beacon May 1, 1862.

CATLETTSBURG A STAGING AREA FOR EXPEDITIONS INTO EASTERN KENTUCKY
DURING THE CIVIL WAR

Kentucky Yesterdays

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The Forty Second Ohio, Colonel Garfield's regiment steamed into Catlettsburg from Cincinnati on the Izetta and Lady Jackson. They ~~troops~~ were surprised to find themselves up the Ohio river ~~inasmuch~~^{when} ~~as~~ the war was raging in western Kentucky. From that moment ~~until~~^{onward}, ~~the war's end~~, Catlettsburg had a military value. A soldier sketched the rude barracks near Catlettsburg and the stables at South Point, quite possibly the earliest representations of these localities.

The Forty Second Ohio were cheered by the Fourteenth Kentucky which had retreated from Louisa. Union refugees poured in daily from the mountains, some walking or riding a hundred miles for protection.

Garfield and his men moved up Sandy, meeting the Confederates at Middle Creek and ~~defeating them, was able to temporarily clear~~^{ed} ~~the~~ ^{Eastern} ~~section~~^{Kentucky} of Humphrey Marshall's confederates.

As the war wore on, Catlettsburg was transformed into a supply depot and a place to which sick and wounded were sent. A Boyd county resident in the 1930s remembered that "horses and mules were kept in a corral here and large stocks of clothing and arms were stored, without a soldier to guard them." Such a situation attracted the attention of the Confederates and if tradition is to be believed, in mid-1862 a large body of Rebels appeared on the West Virginia shore, but failed to attack inasmuch as the commander was from Guyandotte and ~~refused~~^{would} ~~not~~^{the} to attack ~~the~~ town in which he had so many friends.

Catlettsburg's use as an infirmary led to one amusing incident. Though Front Street had not gained the noto^rriety it would later achieve, liquor flowed freely. A doctor attached to the Eighty Fourth Indiana reported that

"when we came here the two houses on each side of the hotel we occupy were selling the meanest kind of dead shot whiskey . . . and the one we have our hospital in had but recently been engaged in the same unholy traffic. . . . The hotel on our right is the Brownlow House, where the proprietors sell Parson Brownlow whiskey. The one on our left is Boyd House, where they sell Linn Boyd whiskey, of course." Since the hospital had so recently been a public house, individuals often walked in asking for "Mr. Lane or something to drink." At times it was difficult to persuade ^{such people} ~~potential customers for liquor~~, particularly those who were already tanked up, that the premises had been converted to non-alcoholic use.

Catlettsburg's position at the mouth of the Big Sandy made it the principal port for supplying ~~sedentary~~ troops stationed "Up Sandy" at Louisa and elsewhere. Steamers such as the S.B. Swain, Rover, Tacon, Mason and Victress regularly plied the Big Sandy. Though most of the vessels were in the 50-200 ton class, the three hundred and fifty ton packet, the Boston, made one trip to Louisa. Small steamers operated eight months of the year; pushboats could operate ten and could carry anywhere between twenty and thirty tons of freight.

As the war drew to an end, Catlettsburg took on still another function, for it and Maysville became centers at which soldiers were processed and discharged.