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## How Green Is The Valley

By

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# Hayes Valley By The Licking

## HOW GREEN IS THE VALLEY

BY JAMES RULE KLABER  
FALMOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

It is hard to imagine as I ride back to Hayes Station on my father's feed route that once there was a thriving distillery on this site.

Folks in Pendleton County believe the Garden of Eden could have been in Hayes Valley. This fertile valley is in the midst of an area where much of the soil is stony, where most farmers till their ridges and leave the hill land for pasture.

Hayes Valley is eight hundred lush acres, watered by powerful limestone springs and securely cuddled between the hills and the South Licking River. Each acre is as level as a table top. It would have been an ideal location for many enterprises; but it is divided into farms of one hundred acres or less. The land owners are justly proud of their holdings and it would be hard to purchase land in the valley.

As early as 1792, men were trying for possession of this valley. When Dr. Monroe and a surveyor named Frazer came here from Virginia, the Indians watched their activities jealously. The last white person to fall by an Indian hand in Pendleton County was a girl who was scalped in this valley.

The first homes were built by Frazer and Dr. Monroe. Frazer built his home in a curve of the South Licking River. It was built of brick made on the spot of clay dug out of the river bank. Monroe built a log house in the center of the valley. Beside each house was a spring of cold sparkling water.

On May 21, 1828, the worst of storms ripped through the valley. Every building was demolished except Monroe's log house. Monroe saved his home by thrusting iron wedges under the door so it could not blow open. The house was torn down a hundred years later.

Frazer built a new home of timbers. His heirs kept possession of the home and surrounding land for 156 years.

The Monroes remained in their log house. They continued drinking the sweet limestone water from the spring. Suddenly the entire family got sick. The mother and father died. A tenant's wife admitted that she put poison in the spring. The surviving Monroes sold their land and moved away.

The valley had only one disadvantage. One had to cross the river twice to get there. The first road was a trail dug by slaves. The road was widened until it became passable for wagons and buggies.

During the Civil War, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad ran a single track through the valley, reaching Cynthiana in 1865. In 1864, Confederate soldiers wrecked a train on the track.

The railroad arranged to take residents of the valley to Falmouth daily. Perhaps it was on such a train ride as this that Timothy Hayes saw the valley. Hayes' heirs say that he felt that this valley was a bit of Ireland. He came from Ireland as a boy and became a distiller in Cincinnati. Actually

it was the fertile soil and limestone water that attracted Hayes.

The Pendleton County Courthouse records show that Timothy Hayes bought 560 acres in 1885 for five thousand dollars.

Corn and wheat raised in the fertile valley were ground in the Hayes distillery. The mash, mixed with limestone water from the spring, was dumped into huge concrete vats. One can still see the concrete frames of the vats, but a farmer filled them so his cattle would not fall into them.

After the whisky was "run-off," it was poured into charred oak barrels. The average output of the Hayes Distillery was twenty barrels a day. Before the aged whisky was bottled, testers often found it to be 120 proof. It was watered down to ninety. The liquor was sold all over the country as Hayes Valley Whisky." Hayes had perfected and patented a superior whisky yeast. He sold it and made a fortune.

Hayes built a fine three story summer home. There were ten rooms with high ceilings, huge halls and an elaborate staircase. He also built four barns, one of which is still standing. The barns cost four hundred dollars each and were put together with wooden pegs.

The first distillery burned in 1906. Valuable Shorthorn cattle kept near the distillery to fatten on waste mash perished in the blaze. Hayes put up a much larger distillery. The L&N built a spur to its door. This spur was a great boon to the valley.

Hayes built a post office. Today, the post office still stands and serves as a private home. When people came there to mail letters, they also started boarding the train.

It has been estimated that Timothy Hayes was worth half a million dollars at the time of his death. His heirs tried to keep the distillery going but the venture lost money.

As time went by, the need increased for a bridge across the Licking to make possible a turnpike to Falmouth. The bridge was completed in 1913 at a cost of seven thousand dollars.

Falmouth businessmen bought a strip of land along the South Licking River and constructed the Pendleton County airport. For several months, the roar of planes echoed from surrounding hills.

But the planes have moved on and corn grows tall on the runways. And the trains neither whistle nor slow down anymore as they pass through Hayes Station.

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