

LeLoup

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The town of LeLoup was first known as Ferguson in honor of Robert Ferguson, one of the town's first settlers. The name was changed to LeLoup for reasons unknown. LeLoup is French for "the wolf" and the name was probably taken from Wolf Creek that is located nearby. [*The river—the Marais des Cygnes or Marsh of the Swans, was first recorded on maps by French explorers. These survivals of French words for local geography are all that remain of them.*] The townsite in the northeast part of the county was located adjacent to the railroad tracks of the Kansas City and Santa Fe (later the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe) where a small station and post office were built in 1870. J.A. Stonebraker was the first postmaster. That same year the town was established. Early businesses included three stores, a bank, a drug store and doctor's office.

An early LeLoup resident, Lou Young, born in 1876 in Pennsylvania, moved with his family to LeLoup in 1888. In an interview with Young in 1964 that appeared in The Ottawa Herald, Young recalled that when his family moved to LeLoup there were few houses within the town. One was a log house later used as a barn. There was a section house and a school house where prayer meetings were held. Young also recalled a store built by Aaron Greg in later years and a large depot that had big walks around it at the west edge of town. A hay press (steam bailer) was also available. Young returned to Pennsylvania to marry Clara May Harrington, also a native of Pennsylvania, September 4, 1907. The couple returned to LeLoup to make their home.

The Modern Woodmen Association Picnic that began in 1897 was one of LeLoup's most popular and well-known events. The picnic was held in late summer or early fall each year and attracted as many as 10,000 people, according to one early report. The Santa Fe would often set a coach off at the switch in LeLoup in the morning and pick it up again at midnight for out-of-town visitors. Young was a member of the Woodman Lodge. Other members included Charlie Averill, George Kyle, Damon Higbie, Charlie Peterson, and George Fisher.

A 1929 handbill advertised the 32nd annual LeLoup M.W.A. Picnic at LeLoup Camp No. 5730 M.W.A., Seylers Grove, LeLoup. Baseball games were a big attraction and teams listed were LeLoup and Wellsville both first and second teams, the Monarchs [*the famous Negro Leagues team from Kansas City*] and a Liberty team. County Attorney R.E. Page was scheduled to give

an address Tuesday afternoon and the State M.W.A. officers were to explain the lodge's assessment raise. Additional events included a concert by the Wellsville Band with songs and readings each evening. Games and contests included footraces and sack races for all ages, fat man's race, lean man's race, race for girls and twins, and for the ladies a ball and tin cup race and nail driving contest. The Baby Show named the prettiest baby-boy, girl, twins, and red-headed baby. A contest also named the prettiest old maid and handsomest old bachelor. No prizes were over \$2. Platform dancing with the Hartford Nighthawks closed out the evenings.

Only several dozen homes—some new—and trailers, all occupied, remain. The depot is gone as are the business buildings. The old school is now a residence.

Population in 1910 was 100 and there is no listing in the 1990 census as residents were included in the township count.

Catherine Jane Richards, 1992, and Deborah Barker, 2011