



Catasauqua and North Catasauqua (Images of America)

Martha Capwell Fox



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Once among the wealthiest communities in the country, Catasauqua was the birthplace of the modern American iron and steel industry. The energy and inventiveness of industrialists such as David Thomas, J.W. Fuller, and Leonard Peckitt spurred the growth and spread the fame of the Iron Borough far beyond the Lehigh Valley. Entrepreneurs and workers flocked to Catasauqua and North Catasauqua. They filled its mansions and row houses, churches and schools, silk mills, saloons, and playing fields with families who were proud to call the "Million Dollar Town" home.

Their pride is evident in the images in Catasauqua and North Catasauqua. Bustling businesses, spacious schools, cherished churches, opulent houses, big parades and public celebrations, and strong, confident faces abound in these photographs. The culmination of that pride and prosperity came in 1914, when Catasauqua welcomed the world to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Crane Iron Works with Old Home Week. Less than ten years later, the iron business was gone, its last years recorded in extraordinary photographs. Life in Catasauqua, though harder, went on and today, the heritage of the Iron Borough days is visible everywhere in both towns—the streets, houses, and churches still loved and lived in as they were a century or more ago.



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