

**Douglas County**, located in the second tier of counties west of Missouri and in the fourth tier south of Nebraska, is bounded on the north by Jefferson and Leavenworth counties, from which it is separated by the Kansas river; on the east by Johnson county; on the south by Franklin county, and on the west by Osage and Shawnee counties. It is one of the original 33 counties created by the first territorial legislature with the following boundaries: "Beginning at the main channel of the Kansas river, at the northwest corner of Johnson county; thence south to the southwest corner of Johnson county; thence west 24 miles to a point equidistant between the limits (embraced in the original plots) of the towns of Lecompton and Tecumseh."

It was named in honor of Stephen A. Douglas, United States senator from Douglas at the time of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill.

It has an area of 469 square miles and is divided into the following townships: Clinton, Eudora, Grant, Kanwaka, Lecompton, Marion, Palmyra, Wakarusa and Willow Springs. The general surface of the country is undulating, breaking into high bluffs along the Kansas and Wakarusa rivers. The bottom lands or valleys, which comprise about a quarter of the area, are from 2 to 4 miles in width. Timber belts are generally found along the streams, and average about a mile in width. The principal varieties of native timber are ash, elm, cottonwood, oak, walnut and hackberry. The main water course is the Kansas river, which flows in a general southeasterly direction and forms the northern boundary. The Wakarusa river, also an important stream, flows nearly across the county from the west and empties into the Kansas river. The main tributaries of the Wakarusa are Deer, Rock, Washington and Coal creeks, while Plumb creek flows across the extreme northeast corner. In the south are Eight Mile and Ottawa creeks, and along the eastern boundary Captain's creek. Springs are abundant and good well water is usually found at a depth of 25 feet. The soil is extremely fertile, and all grains grow well. The principal crops are winter wheat, Kafir-corn and hay, but the county ranks high in the production of Irish potatoes. Limestone is extensively quarried in Wakarusa and Lecompton townships. Potter's clay is found along the Kansas river, and coal has been mined in limited quantities south of Lawrence. The county also ranks high in live stock and there are over 200,000 bearing fruit trees in the county, more than half of which are apple.

The first white men to visit the present Douglas county, so far as is known, were French traders, who passed up the Kansas river in the first quarter of the eighteenth century and carried on an extensive trade

with the native Indian tribes. Following them, but nearly a century later, were the white explorers who generally followed the waterways toward the west. Thomas Say's route lay along the south bank of the Kansas river through what is now Douglas county, when he passed up the stream in 1819. Fremont followed this route in 1842 and again in 1843, when he went west to explore the Rocky mountains. In 1842, the expedition camped within the limits of Douglas county near the present site of Lawrence, and in his journal of the expedition, Fremont wrote, "We encamped in a remarkably beautiful situation on the Kansas bluffs, which commanded a fine view of the river." The Santa Fe Trail (q. v.), traversed the southern part of the country from east to west, and the route to the gold fields, which began at Westport, Mo., crossed the Wakarusa near what was once the town of Franklin, a little southwest of the present town of Eudora, passed near Lawrence, and left the county beyond the present town of Big Springs. Thousands passed westward over these famous highways after gold was discovered in California, but there were none who stopped to settle as it was Indian territory and the only habitations were the stations kept by whites for the accommodation of the travelers.

The first permanent white settlement in what is now Douglas county was made by Frederick Chouteau in 1827, when he established a trading post, on the south bank of the Kansas river, a little above the present hamlet of Lake View. It remained but a short time, as he removed to Shawnee county in 1830. In 1848 the Methodist Episcopal church established a mission among the Shawnees on the south bank of the Kansas river, near the mouth of the Wakarusa, but in 1857 it was abandoned.

Prior to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, much of the best land in the valley of the Kansas river had been marked for preëmption by Missourians. The undue haste of the pseudo settlers, made against the protests of the Indians, and the great influx into the territory was probably stimulated by the knowledge that organizations were being formed in the north to send emigrants to Kansas with the avowed purpose of working to make it a free-state. Hence, by staking out claims, the Missourians hoped to hold the land against these undesirable settlers.

Some of the first men who came to Kansas in the summer of 1854 and settled along the California road were F. W. Lunkins, A. R. Hopper, Clark Stearns, H. R. Lykins, the Wade brothers, J. A. Wakefield, S. N. Wood, William Lyon, Josiah Hutchinson, and a number of others. South of the California road were Joel K. Goodin and William Breyman. A. W. and A. G. Glenn, William Shirley, and M. S. Winter settled at Lecompton; Jacob Branson, Charles Dow and Franklin Coleman located near the present site of Vinland in 1854. A little farther south, near the present city of Baldwin, claims were taken by Robert and Richard Pierson, Jacob Cantrell and L. F. Green. Douglas, a pro-slavery town, was laid out 2 miles southeast of Lecompton on the claim

of Paris Ellison, and later in the year William Harper and John Chamberlain settled in the extreme northwestern part of the county where Big Springs was afterward laid out. In May, 1855, Napoleon Blanton settled on the Wakarusa 4 miles south of Lawrence, where a bridge was soon built, known as Blanton's.

Most of the claims taken by the Missourians were merely staked out, or a few logs cut and piled up crosswise to show occupation, sometimes only a notice was posted. These non-resident squatters nearly all returned to Missouri, but they had organized and agreed to have no interference with the "paper" claims, threatening to shoot any man who attempted to take possession. But the most systematic movement toward colonization was made by the New England Emigrant Aid company (q. v.) which directed a party of men from Massachusetts and Vermont to start for Kansas with a view of establishing permanent settlements and working to make Kansas a free-state. Other companies followed and together they founded the city of Lawrence.

When claims were taken by squatters, it was assumed that they had secured the land for a permanent home and intended to improve them, but as many did not do this the early settlers formed associations to protect themselves against such encroachment upon the land. Before the New England emigrants came to the territory two such organizations had been formed in what afterward became Douglas county. A call was issued for a meeting to be held on July 8, 1854, at Blue Jacket's store on the Wakarusa. The free-state men who had already located in the vicinity believed that the meeting was to be of men friendly to making Kansas a free-state and attended in considerable numbers, but upon their arrival discovered that it was a meeting of squatters to make rules and regulations with regard to claims. A number of those present were pro-slavery in sentiment and wished to introduce resolutions barring emigrants opposed to that institution of slavery. There were too many free-state men present to carry out that plan, and a compromise was effected by which any person had a right to bring property into the state and the question of slavery was to be settled when the territory had a sufficient population to be admitted to statehood. Some of the more bitter pro-slavery men were not satisfied with the turn affairs had taken and openly declared that they intended to fight the settling of the territory by free-state men, especially the New England company. This first organization was known as the Wakarusa Association.

A meeting of the settlers was called for Aug. 12 at the house of Brice W. Miller, at Miller's Spring, or Millersburg, the object of which was the adoption of some regulations that would afford protection to the actual settlers, not unlike those adopted by the pro-slavery men farther east. By that time northern men had come into the Wakarusa valley in considerable numbers, and the meeting was of great importance. It was generally understood that only actual settlers were expected to attend, but the members of the Wakarusa Association and many pro-

slavery men were present. Settlers and claimants came from a radius of 40 miles, but the question was of burning interest and not confined to any locality. John A. Wakefield called the meeting to order and stated the object to be a conference of actual settlers in the territory. A Mr. Dunham from Missouri caused some disturbance, as the spokesman of the Missourians present, who were practically in the majority. This led to a quarrel and the meeting came near breaking up, but a compromise was effected. John A. Wakefield was chosen president of the Actual Settlers' Association and S. N. Wood register. After considerable argument and deliberation a committee was chosen from each of the associations to agree upon some plan by which they could work together, for the benefit of both. This joint committee submitted a report, which was adopted and proved effective in settling many of the claim difficulties and disputes that arose thereafter, until title could be gained from the government. As new settlers came into the territory they joined either association as they preferred.

The first election in what is now Douglas county was held on Nov. 26, 1854, for a delegate to Congress. The free-state men did not take much interest in it, but from the great number of Missourians who voted at that time the residents should have had some hint of what would follow at the local elections. Douglas county, with only 50 legal voters, cast 283 votes. (See Reeder's Administration.)

The election for members of the first territorial legislature was set for March 30, 1855. The district in which Lawrence was located had 369 voters. For weeks before the election the residents in the border counties of Missouri were active and the Blue Lodges perfected a plan of campaign by which their members were to march into Kansas on election day, take possession of the polls and by a heavy vote gain control of the legislature. Companies were sent into every council district in the territory, and into every representative district but one, in such numbers that they could control the election. They came openly, with the avowed purpose of voting, heavily armed and provided with provisions. About 1,000 of these men came into what is now Douglas county on the evening preceding the election, and the morning of election day. Richard Cordley in his history of Lawrence says, "On the morning of the election the Missourians came over to the place of voting from their camp, in companies, or bodies, of 100 at a time. Mr. Blanton, one of the judges, not appearing, Col. Young claimed that as the people of the territory had two judges, it was nothing more than right that the Missourians should have the other one to look after their interests. Robert Cummins was elected in Blanton's stead because he considered that every man had a right to vote if he had not been in the territory an hour. The Missourians brought their tickets with them. Not having enough they had 300 more printed in Lawrence the evening before and the day of the election."

The polls were crowded all day and the Missourians forced the free-state men to pass through two lines before reaching the polls. During

the day some free-state voters were driven away and prevented from voting. Although the district had but 369 voters, according to the census, 1,034 votes were cast and a careful examination showed that only 232 were legal. (See Border War.)

Samuel J. Jones was appointed sheriff of Douglas county by the first territorial legislature, and the county was organized on Sept. 24, 1855, when the county commissioners assembled at Lecompton in response to a proclamation of the sheriff. The first commissioners were Dr. John Wood, chairman and ex-officio probate judge; John M. Banks and George W. Johnston. James Christian was appointed clerk; Hugh Cameron, treasurer; Peter Crockett, coroner; A. C. W. Stafford, attorney; and O. H. Browne, assessor. The commissioners divided the county into the municipal townships of Lecompton, Lawrence, Franklin, Washington and Louisiana. The county seat, by the first act organizing the county, was designated as Lecompton, which by the same legislature was made the capital of the territory, and it remained the county seat and territorial capital as long as the pro-slavery party was in power. In 1858 an act was passed by the legislature removing the county seat to Lawrence, where it has since remained. For a number of years the county offices were located in different business blocks but when the city hall was built in 1869, offices for the use of the county were rented there. In 1903 a fine new court-house was erected on the corner of Massachusetts and Quincy streets at a cost of \$85,000. The county jail and sheriff's house are located just back of the court-house on Hancock street. This building was erected at the same time as the court-house at a cost of \$22,000. The money for the county buildings was raised by direct tax levy.

That the people of the county were interested in agriculture is demonstrated by the fact that a fair association was started in Douglas county as early as 1868. The race track was laid out where Woodland Park is now located, and the present track is the old one repaired. After a few years this pioneer organization died out and was succeeded by the Western National Fair Association, which had grounds a mile and a half northeast of Lawrence laid out in 1879. It ran for several years and was followed by several organizations which tried to form a Douglas County Fair Association but no great success was achieved until the present fair association was formed in 1905. The race track at Woodland is used and it is expected that within a few years permanent buildings will be erected.

The first railroad in Douglas county was the Union Pacific, constructed in 1864. In 1869 the Leavenworth, Lawrence & Galveston was built south from Lawrence into Franklin county, and subsequently the road along the south bank of the Kansas river was constructed. Both of these roads now belong to the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe system. The Union Pacific runs along the northern border of the county on the north bank of the Kansas river; the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe traverses the entire county east and west along the south bank of the river;

a branch of the same system runs south from Lawrence, so that the eastern and northern portion of the county have excellent transportation facilities. The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific operates its trains over the Union Pacific tracks from Kansas City to Topeka. There are over 55 miles of main track railroad in the county.

Lawrence, the seat of justice, is located on the south bank of the Kansas river, in the north central portion, 40 miles west of Kansas City. The state university is located there and has property valued at over \$1,500,000. Haskell Institute, an industrial school maintained by the government of the United States for the Indians, is situated just south of Lawrence. Baldwin, Eudora and Lecompton are incorporated towns of more or less importance.

According to the U. S. census for 1910 the population of Douglas county was 24,724. The assessed value of the property for taxation in the same year was \$33,800,845, and the value of all farm products was \$3,039,086—of field crops alone, \$2,032,119. The five leading crops were as follows: Corn, \$1,218,068; hay, \$295,228; wheat, \$182,355; oats, \$142,236; Irish potatoes, \$120,232.