

Franklin County, located in the eastern part of the state, was one of the original 33 counties created by the first territorial legislature in 1855. It was named Franklin in honor to Benjamin Franklin. At the present time the county is bounded on the north by Douglas county, on the east by Miami, on the south by Anderson, and on the west by Osage and Coffey counties. It has an area of 576 square miles, and had a population of 20,884 in 1910. The county is divided into sixteen townships, as follows: Appanoose, Centropolis, Cutler, Franklin, Greenwood, Harrison, Hayes, Homewood, Lincoln, Ohio, Ottawa, Peoria, Pomona, Pottawatomie, Richmond and Williamsburg. The surface of Franklin county

is mostly undulating prairie. The "bottom" lands along the creeks and Marais des Cygnes river average from one to two miles in width and comprise nearly one-fifth of the area. Timber belts confined to the streams average from one-half to one mile in width and contain trees of the following varieties: walnut, oak, cottonwood, elm, hickory, willow, locust, ash, soft maple, mulberry and hackberry. Winter wheat, Irish potatoes, and flax are important crops but corn is the leading cereal. Much effort is given to the production of live-stock and also to the growing of fruit trees, there being 150,000 bearing fruit trees in 1907. Limestone and sandstone are abundant, marble and potter's clay are found near Ottawa, coal is mined in several localities, and oil and gas have been found in the southern portion of the county.

The principal stream is the Marais des Cygnes (Marsh of Swans) which enters the county from the west and flows through it into Miami county. Pottawatomie creek is second in size. It enters near the southeast corner and flows northeastward into Miami county.

Franklin county was included in the tract of land ceded to the Great and Little Osage Indians on Nov. 10, 1808, and receded by them to the government in 1825. (See Indians and Indian Treaties.) The settlement of the county by white people was not so early as that of the adjoining counties, due to the fact that most of the land was occupied by Indians until late in the '60s. However, along the northern line, was a strip of land belonging to the Shawnee reservation, the title to which was extinguished in 1854, and a number of settlements were made there in that year. Appanoose township was settled by Missourians in 1856. Some time later J. H. Whetstone conceived the idea of establishing a colony in its western part. To this end in 1869 he purchased 15,000 acres north of the Marais des Cygnes, and in 1870 S. T. Kelsey became associated with him. They platted the land into small farms and laid out the village of Pomona. Harrison township was opened for settlement in 1865. In 1868 there was a large influx of settlers to this district.

One of the first settlers in Centropolis township was J. M. Bernard, who was made postmaster, the postoffice being named St. Bernard. Mr. Bernard being a pro-slavery man, the Missouri legislature of Kansas in 1855, located the county seat at St. Bernard. The town never grew and was finally extinguished by a raid of free-state men. Ohio township was opened to settlement in 1857 and a large immigration set in from Ohio. A postoffice was established at Minneola in 1858.

In 1856 the settlers of Pottawatomie valley organized the Pottawatomie Rifle Company. It was composed exclusively of about 100 free-state men with John Brown, Jr., as captain. The object in organizing the company was to protect free-state men against the border ruffians.

After the first session of the territorial legislature, the company went to Judge Cato's court, in session at Henry Sherman's house, to inquire if the court intended to enforce the so-called "bogus" laws. Finding that it did, Capt. Brown, leader of the company, cried in a loud voice, "The Pottawatomie company will assemble on the parade ground!"

This order was quite sufficient, for Judge Cato and the jury hastened to Lecompton. On the night of May 24, 1856, occurred what is termed the Pottawatomie massacre (q. v.), the object of which was to protect the free-state settlers by terrorizing in the most effective manner the pro-slavery element.

Franklin county did not contribute many men to the army in the Civil war. In 1861 there were about 2,500 inhabitants in the county scattered along the northern, eastern and southern borders. There was very little town life, no rallying points, so the enthusiastic ones had to go to Lawrence or other points to enlist. There were some recruits, however. Company D of the Twelfth infantry was composed entirely of residents of the county. It was mustered in on Sept. 25, 1862, and was officered by George Ashley, captain; Henry Shively, first lieutenant; Alfred Johnson, second lieutenant. In addition to this company, men were enlisted in nearly every regiment of the state.

Two railroad companies operate in the county. A line of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe crosses from north to south in the center, passing through Ottawa, with a branch southwest from Burlington Junction into Coffey county. Another line of the same road enters in the northeast corner, crosses in a southwesterly direction through Ottawa, and enters Osage county. A line of the Missouri Pacific railroad crosses the southeast corner, and a branch northwest from Osawatomie, Miami county, following the valley of the Marais des Cygnes river passes through Ottawa, thence west into Osage county. The first bond election for any railroad was held Nov. 6, 1866, on the question of voting \$125,000 to the L. L. & G. railroad, and the second was held Sept. 23, 1867, on the question of raising \$200,000. Both were carried, the second on the condition that cars were running to Ottawa by Jan. 1, 1868. The road was completed to Ottawa Dec. 30, 1867. Bonds for the Santa Fe road to the amount of \$100,000 were voted on April 6, 1869, on condition that \$50,000 should be issued if the cars were running to Ottawa by July 1, 1870, and \$50,000 when they were running to the southern line of the county.

Franklin county was organized in 1855 with a partial set of officers. In 1857 an election was held and officers chosen, part of whom failed to qualify and in the spring of 1858 the vacancies were filled. The first county officers were as follows: Commissioners, J. A. Marcell, William Thornbrough and John F. Javens, Marcell being also probate judge; clerk, Robert Cowden; treasurer, T. J. Mewhinney; sheriff, C. L. Robbins; prosecuting attorney, P. P. Elder; register of deeds, William Austin; coroner, John Bingham.

The contests over the location of the county seat were numerous and exciting. The legislature of 1855 placed it at St. Bernard. When St. Bernard became extinct Minneola was made the county seat. An election was held March 26, 1860, to determine a location. Ohio City, Peoria and Minneola were the contesting villages, but no one of them received a majority of the votes cast. Another election was held on April 16,

1860, at which Peoria received 342 and Ohio City 320. Then followed a contest between Peoria and Minneola. Minneola enjoined the removal of the records. A law suit followed, which was carried to the supreme court, but while the case was pending the territorial legislature passed an act resubmitting the matter to the people. Another controversy followed but the supreme court decided the act was legal so the question was resubmitted and Minneola won the election. The next election on the question was held March 25, 1861, when the contesting towns were Ohio City, Peoria, Centropolis, Mount Vernon and Minneola. Again no decision was made. Another election was held on April 15 when Ohio City became the county seat and so remained until another election on Aug. 1, 1864, decided the question in favor of Ottawa.

The schools of Franklin county are among the best in the state. There are 94 organized school districts and a school population of 6,624. Aside from the district and high schools is Ottawa University at Ottawa (q. v.), which has been maintained by endowment since it was organized in 1860.

While Franklin county is preëminently an agricultural county, a few industries of other kinds are in successful operation. Among these are flour mills, furniture factories, brick and tile factories, machine shops and a soap factory. In earlier days an effort was made to establish a silk industry. (See Silk Culture.)

Among the earliest newspapers published in the county was the Western Home Journal, a sheet that did much toward attracting settlers to that section. A cabin of an early settler, Judge James Hanway, located near Lane, and occupied by the Hanway family from 1857-59 has frequently been called John Brown's cabin. While he visited there a great deal, he never owned the place.

In 1910 the assessed valuation of Franklin county property was \$32,342,026. The total value of field crops was \$1,630,506, the five leading crops being corn, \$822,603; hay, \$387,269; oats, \$171,931; wheat, \$74,631; Kafir corn, \$57,264. The value of animals slaughtered or sold for slaughter was \$940,605, and the value of dairy products was \$250,824.