

Jewell County, one of the northern tier, is the second county west of the 6th principal meridian. It contains 900 square miles and is divided into 25 civil townships, each of which is a Congressional township. It is bounded on the north by the State of Nebraska; on the east by Republic and Cloud counties; on the south by Mitchell, and on the west by Smith. Jewell was one of the counties on the line of the historic Pawnee road, and also one of the counties crossed by

Lieut. Pike in 1806. The surface is rolling prairie gradually rising to table lands in the central portion. The branches of the Republican and Solomon form its water system.

This county was named in honor of Lewis R. Jewell, lieutenant-colonel of the Sixth Kansas cavalry, who died of wounds received in the battle of Cane Hill, Ark. The earliest known settlement was made by William Harshberger and wife on White Rock creek in 1862. They were driven out by the Indians and no other attempt to settle the county was made until 1866, when a number of families, including those of William Knapp, John Rice and Nicholas Ward, settled on White Rock creek. Two raids by the Cheyennes, one in Aug., 1866, and the other in April, 1867, broke up the settlement. Many were killed, including the Ward family, and the others were driven away. In the spring of 1868 another attempt at settlement was broken up by Indians and again in October of the same year the extension of the Scandinavian colony up White Rock creek from Republic county was driven back. In May, 1869, the Excelsior colony (q. v.) from New York, numbering about 100 people, took claims along White Rock creek and built a blockhouse at a point 8 miles north of the present town of Mankato. By June, 1869, they were all driven out, and the county was in the hands of the Indians. In the fall of 1869 a number of land entries were made and the next year the flood of immigration coming into Kansas extended into Jewell county in spite of the dangers. In the early part of May, 1870, great excitement prevailed over the news that the Cheyennes were on the war-path. On the 13th the settlers met at "Hoffer's Shanty" to devise means of protection. A company of 28 men, known as the "Buffalo Militia," was organized with William D. Street as captain; Charles Lew, first lieutenant; Louis A. Dapron, second lieutenant; James A. Scarborough, orderly sergeant. The personnel of the company was as follows: L. J. Calvin, F. A. May, W. M. Jones, Samuel Krape, Louis A. Dapron, C. L. Seeley, J. A. Scarborough, Cyrus Richart, Chris. Bender, J. H. Worick, David J. Rockey, James W. Hall, Richard D. Fardy, Charles J. Lewis, C. A. Belknap, A. J. Wise, John Hoffer, William Cox, S. R. Worick, Allen Lightner, James F. Queen, J. F. Fogel, J. A. Sorick, R. F. Hudson-piller, I. A. Swain, Henry Sorick, William D. Street and John R. Wilson.

A fort was built where Jewell City now stands, and was held by the "Buffalo Militia" for about a month, when the Third U. S. mounted artillery took possession and relieved the settlers. (See Fort Jewell.) No more attacks were made, and from that time Jewell county has been free from hostile Indians.

Some time during this year the ruins of what is supposed to have been an old Spanish fort were discovered, which seemed to be a landmark of some former occupation of the country by white men. It was located on the claim of Oliver Smith 2 miles east of Fort Jewell, and is described as an "irregular inclosure containing some 2 or 3 acres

of ground." At that time it was overgrown with sod and was 2 feet high and 4 feet thick. Its origin is not known.

A number of settlements were made in 1870. William Friend, C. J. Jones, O. F. Johnson, M. Hofveimer, Lewis Spiegle and Silas Mann settled the Marsh creek district, and at Burr Oak the settlers were A. W. Mann, Zack Norman, Lee M. Tingley, Richard Comstock, Frank Gilbert, A. J. Godfrey, D. H. Godfrey, Allen Ives, John E. Faidley and E. E. Blake. A claim was preëmpted by Jack Mango at Jewell Center (Mankato); A. N. Cole homesteaded near the present town of Ionia in 1869; and in 1871 H. M. George and H. L. Browning started a steam sawmill on the freight road between Cawker City and Hastings, Neb., where Salem now stands.

In July, 1870, Col. E. Barker and Orville McClurg petitioned Gov. Harvey for county organization and on July 14 the governor appointed C. L. Seeley, E. T. Gandy and A. I. Davis county commissioners, and James A. Scarborough, county clerk. The first meeting of the commissioners was held at Jewell City on Aug. 22. On Sept. 27 an election was held, at which Jewell City was chosen the county seat, and the following county officers were elected: Dennis Taylor, Thomas Coverdale and Samuel C. Bowles, commissioners; James A. Scarborough, clerk; Henry Sorick, treasurer; N. H. Billings, surveyor; S. O. Carman, register of deeds; Charles L. Sully, probate judge; A. J. Davis, sheriff; R. S. Worick, county superintendent. At the November election Felix T. Candy was elected the first representative in the legislature. The population of the county at that time was 207.

The first marriage was that of a couple from Cloud county, the ceremony being performed by O. F. Johnson, justice of the peace, Jan. 2, 1871. The first marriage of residents was between Lawton McCord and Evaline Davis of Highland township, Feb. 22, 1872. The first birth occurred in Aug., 1870, on the Buffalo creek, the child being Jewell Rittenhouse. He was presented with a lot by the town company of Jewell City. The first regular mail was established in July, 1870, weekly from Sibley, John Hoffer, carrier. The first postoffices were Amity, Highland township, 1872, James Mitchell postmaster; Burr Oak, Burr Oak township, James McCormack, postmaster; Jewell Center, Center township, 1872, J. D. Vance, postmaster; Johnsonville, Vicksburg township, 1872, P. F. Johnson postmaster.

Before 1873 the following towns had been established: Jewell City, Jewell Center, Burr Oak, Salem, Ionia and Holmwood, and the county had six newspapers. By 1886 Randall, Omia, Gregory and Rubens had been added to the list of towns. Some of these towns have ceased to exist and the present list is as follows: Athens, Burr Oak, Dentonia, Esbon, Formosa, Gregory, Harrison, Ionia, Jewell, Lovewell, Mankato, Mayview, Montrose, North Branch, Otego, Randall, Rubens, Salem, Steuben and Webber.

The townships of Jewell county are: Allen, Athens, Brown Creek, Burr Oak, Buffalo, Calvin, Center, Erving, Ebson, Grant, Harrison, Highland, Sinclair, Vicksburg, Walnut, Washington, White Mound, Holmwood, Ionia, Jackson, Limestone, Montana, Odessa, Prairie and Richland.

Schools were established in several of the townships in 1872. Five years later the number of organized districts was 133; the total number of school houses, 60; value of school property, \$21,412; and the school population, 4,561. In 1910 the population was 18,148, and the assessed valuation of property was \$38,625,285.