

Mitchell County, one of the counties which was settled after the Civil war, is centrally located east and west, and is the second county south from Nebraska. It is bounded on the north by Jewell county; on the east by Cloud and Ottawa; on the south by Lincoln, and on the west by Osborne. The name was given it in honor of Capt. William D. Mitchell, who enlisted in the Union army as a private soldier in the second Kansas cavalry, and after being promoted to the rank of captain was killed at Monroe's cross-roads, N. C., in 1865.

The honor of being the first settler in Mitchell county is divided between Joseph Decker, who located near Glen Elder early in 1866, and Hon. John Rees, who located in Ashbury township at a date not definitely known, except that his son, S. G. Rees, the first white child born in the county, was born in 1866. Mr. Rees opened the first store

in the county and kept the first postoffice, both at Ashbury. The post-office was established in 1869. Mr. Decker brought a large herd of cattle with him, which the Indians drove away before fall. This so discouraged him that he quit the country. In 1867 a number of people settled in the county, and by early spring of 1868 the following had started improvements: Thomas Howie and William Joiner, just below the forks of Asher creek; Mathias Nelson, David Bogardus and B. Bell at the mouth of Plumb creek; Whit McConnell and Tunis Bulis between Asher and Plumb creeks on the river; James Farrow and James Duff just above Plumb creek on the river; H. A. Bell, John Whitehurst and his sons, Vinton and Abraham, on the Solomon river where Beloit now stands; and John Smith at Solomon Rapids. Andrew Peterson settled in Logan township in 1868. Other early settlers were Abram Marshall, Charles Welsh, B. F. Moody and A. A. Bell.

In Aug., 1868, roving bands of Cheyennes and Sioux visited the settlements and lingered about the mouth of Plumb and Asher creeks for several days, hoping to be able to steal something from the settlers. Finally, to intimidate the settlers they called B. Bell and David Bogardus from their cabin and shot them. Mrs. Bell was fatally wounded in attempting to avoid being carried away. They killed Mr. Hewitt of Brown creek and wounded his son, two sons of Abram Marshall and a man by the name of Thompson lost their lives in pursuing the Indians, and two little daughters of A. A. Bell were stolen but were afterward abandoned by the Indians and picked up by the settlers on the Saline. A stockade was established at Howie's ranch, just below the forks of Asher creek a few miles above the present town of Asherville, and nearly all the settlers spent the next winter there. They were joined by George Ealand, William Holton, John Cushing and John Owen. The latter, who led a wild life as a trapper, was unanimously elected commander of the stockade. Finding his protests in vain, he secretly packed his traps and fled to the headwaters of the Cimarron. Shortly after the raid, company G of the Seventh U. S. cavalry made a reconnoissance of the Solomon valley. The Indians managed to escape, although hard pressed on two occasions. That fall the soldiers built a blockhouse on the Solomon 2 miles south of Cawker City, but did not remain long.

Early in 1869 Dr. Rose of Junction City filed on the tract of land occupied by the blockhouse, but was driven out by the Indians and killed near Glen Elder in trying to make his escape. Later in the year the government established a post west of Waconda and north of the river, in which Battery B of the Fourth U. S. artillery, under Capt. H. C. Hasbrouck, was stationed. This company was relieved in April, 1870, by G Troop of the Seventh U. S. cavalry, under Lieut. C. C. de Rudio, with Lieut. McIntosh, a full blooded Chippewa, second in command. The raids of the Indians became less frequent, but on May 9th a party of Cheyennes and Arapahoes came upon four men—Lew J. Best, John Hatcher, R. G. F. Kshinka and John A. Seger—on Oak creek near the

west line of the county. The men made such a determined resistance that the Indians gave it up, passed on down the river, and made an attack at Glen Elder, killing Solomon Meiser, John Greer and a Mr. Kenyon. Most of the settlers then took refuge in a stockade built on the farm of George W. Stinson. The soldiers from the post followed the Indians, who divided themselves into two bands and escaped. They reappeared three weeks later at Cawker City, where John Seger led them into thinking the place well manned. They then went on west and stole 10 horses from the ranch of Best & Hatcher, where a dozen men were concealed, but did not dare attack the savages. The final raid took place July 2, 1870. A settlement was made near the center of the county in the spring of that year by C. J. Brown, G. W. Anderson, R. C. Clark and J. S. Smith. They built a stockade and lived together. Civilization was then pretty well established. The last buffalo seen in the vicinity was one which came down the main street of Cawker City (then a town of 250 people), in July, 1872.

The first school houses in the county outside of Beloit, four in number, were built in 1872, in Lulu, Bloomfield, Center and Solomon Rapids townships. The first church was built in Blue Hills township, by the Baptists in 1873, the second was built at Beloit by the Methodists in 1874. The first marriage was in Asherville township between W. McConnell and Nancy Marshall in 1868.

The county organization was effected in 1870, when the governor appointed as commissioners J. M. Myers, William E. Schooley and Charles Brown, and as clerk Don A. Peaslee. The commissioners held their first meeting in Oct., 1870. At the first election Beloit was selected as county seat and the following officers were chosen; Commissioners, C. L. Brown, William E. Schooley and Lew J. Best; clerk, L. C. Smith; probate judge, James Britt; sheriff, W. B. Smith; county attorney, Don A. Peaslee; treasurer, H. J. Messenger; superintendent of public instruction, J. W. Elliott; coroner, J. W. Clark; representative, E. Harrison. A court-house was built by T. F. Hersey at a cost of \$4,000 and presented to the county.

There were originally 17 townships, Asherville, Beloit, Bloomfield, Blue Hill, Cawker, Cedar Creek, Center, Glen Elder, Hayes, Logan, Lulu, Pittsburg, Plumb Creek, Salt Creek, Solomon Rapids, Turkey Creek, Walnut Creek. Cedar Creek has disappeared and the following have been added, Carr Creek, Custer, Eureka and Round Springs. Some of the early towns which have disappeared from the map are, West Asher, Round Springs, Naomi, Pittsburg, Elmira, Danville, Shockley, Springfield, Brown's Creek, Ulysses and Excelsior. The principal towns and villages of the present are, Beloit, the county seat, Asherville, Blue Hill, Cawker City, Glen Elder, Hunter, Scottville, Simpson, Solomon Rapids, Tipton, Victor and Waconda Springs.

The Central Branch of the Missouri Pacific railroad came through the county in 1879 and was aided by the people to the extent of \$50,000. The Solomon Valley road was extended from Solomon City to Beloit

the same year. The Missouri Pacific enters the county in the northeast corner, runs southwest to Beloit, where it connects with the Union Pacific, thence west through Solomon Rapids, Glen Elder and Cawker City, leaving the county a few miles south of the northwest corner.

The general surface of the county is rolling prairie with bottom lands about 3 miles wide along the Solomon river, and from one-quarter to one-half mile wide along the creeks. The north and south forks of the Solomon join just within the western limits of the county, forming the main river, which flows southeast into Cloud county. It has several small tributary streams within the county, among them being Salt, Oak, Brown's, Limestone, Walnut, Carl, Plumb and Asher creeks. Salt marshes are plentiful in the southern part of the county and Waconda spring, at the place of that name, is heavily laden with salt. Magnesian limestone and sandstone of good quality for building material are extensively quarried along the bluffs. Potter's clay and gypsum are found in several localities.

The area of the county is 720 square miles or 460,800 acres, of which about 300,000 acres are under cultivation. The total farm production in 1910 amounted to over \$4,000,000. The corn and wheat crops were almost even in value, running over \$1,000,000 each. Live stock for the same year was worth \$750,000, and the assessed value of property was \$28,648,000. The population was 14,089, which makes the wealth per capita about \$2,100.