

**Morris County**, one of the oldest and most historic in the state, is located in the northeastern section, the 5th west from the Missouri line and the 4th south from Nebraska. It is bounded on the north by Geary and Wabaunsee counties; on the east by Wabaunsee and Lyon; on the south by Chase and Marion, and on the west by Marion and Dickinson. Prior to 1858 this county was a municipal township of the district composed of Wise, Breckenridge and Madison counties. In that year it was organized as Wise county and the following officers were elected: Probate judge, H. J. Espy; surveyor, N. S. Brazleton; supervisors, T. S. Huffaker, Harvey Munkers and Lewis Baum.

The first full ticket of county officials was elected in Nov., 1861. In 1859 the sentiment of the state having changed from what it was in 1855 when the county was named Wise in honor of a southern celebrity, the name was changed to Morris in honor of Thomas Morris, United States senator from Ohio. The county seat contest did not come up until 1871, as prior to that time Council Grove had no rival. When Parkerville became an incorporated town it entered the lists for county seat, and an election was called to settle the matter. All sorts of trickery was resorted to by both sides. Men were brought into the county for voting purposes by the hundreds. The population of the county at that time was 2,225. The number of votes cast was 1,312, of which 899 were for Council Grove and 413 for Parkerville. The question was not brought up again.

The Santa Fe trail crossed Morris county and Council Grove was for many years one of the most important points on that famous route. The Kaw trail, one of the hunting routes in use by the Indians, also passed through the county. The land belonged to various tribes of Indians until a reservation was set apart, which included the site of Council Grove. Later the reservation was limited to a small area in the southeastern part of the county known as the "diminished reserve." (See Indians.) The government tried various methods of civilizing the Kaws who occupied these lands. It maintained schools, which no one attended but orphans. It built a number of three-room houses on the reserve, but the Indians quartered their horses in them, and continued to live in wigwams. As long as the Kaws occupied these lands, the settlers, especially at Council Grove, were in more or less apprehension. Perhaps the most serious trouble was in 1859, when the town was visited by 400 armed Kaws. Two white men were wounded and a bloody war was averted only by the Indians giving up the two of their number who did the shooting. They were hanged by the whites. Considerable alarm was caused among the settlers in 1868 by the Cheyennes who came to fight with the Kaws. They were mounted and well armed, but after a skirmish of several hours were forced to retire.

The first white men in the county were missionaries and traders. S. M. Hays, the first trader, located at Council Grove in 1847; Chouteau Bros. in 1848; T. S. Huffaker, a missionary, in 1850; and Columbia Bros. in 1852; J. C. Munkers came in 1854; C. P. Eden, Henry Thornby, Joseph Dunlap and John Warnecke in 1857; June Baxter, William Atkinson, Charles Guenter, J. M. Douglas and John O'Byrne in 1858, and in 1859 the population of the county was about 600 people.

In 1860 the settlers suffered greatly from the drought. Not a single bushel of corn was raised. About 62,000 pounds of food out of the relief supply at Atchison were issued to Morris county people in the winter of 1860. Before there was opportunity to plant another crop the Civil war broke out. The total population did not exceed 800, only 158 of whom were of voting age. They were divided in their

sympathies between the North and the South. However, before the close of the war Morris county had furnished 125 Union soldiers. A number of Kaw Indians were enlisted, which raised the total to 180. The following is a list of the military organizations of Morris county which took part in the war either as home guards against the border ruffians or in the regular service: Morris County Rangers, cavalry, Capt. S. N. Wood; Neosho Guards, cavalry, Capt. W. T. Lard; Clark's Creek Rangers, cavalry, Capt. Charles Guenter; Neosho Rangers, cavalry, Capt. S. D. Price; Council Grove Guards, infantry, Capt. R. B. Lockwood. During the war and for a number of years afterward the community was molested by guerrillas and horse thieves and a number of lynchings and murders, justifiable and otherwise, occurred.

Shortly after the close of the war a new influx of settlers came into the county. A little set-back was experienced the same year by the failure to secure the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad, which was built about 25 miles to the south. Settlers continued to pour into the county and great herds of cattle were driven in for pasturage. By 1871 large colonies, some of them numbering 150 people, were coming in. A negro colony came in 1874. A disastrous prairie fire swept over the western part of the county in 1873, destroying the grass and growing crops. By 1875 the population had grown to 4,597. In 1880 it was 8,422. The next year there were 200 farm dwellings built at a total cost of \$160,000; the value of farm implements in use was over \$53,000; the value of live stock, \$685,673; there were 75,000 bearing fruit trees and 100,000 young trees not bearing. About one-third of the land had been brought under cultivation. In 1890 the population had increased to 11,381. In the next ten years, when many of the counties in Kansas were losing in population on account of the money panic, hard times, and the boom in the southwestern states, Morris showed a small gain, the number of inhabitants in 1900 being 11,967. The flood of 1903 raised the Neosho river several feet above all recorded high water marks and destroyed considerable property. That of 1908 was serious but not as disastrous as the flood of 1903.

Morris county is divided into 14 townships: Clark Creek, Council Grove, Diamond Valley, Elm Creek, Four Mile, Garfield, Grandview, Highland, Neosho, Ohio, Parker, Rolling Prairie, Valley and Warren. The postoffices are: Burdick, Council Grove, Delavan, Diamond Springs, Dunlap, Dwight, Kelso, Latimer, Parkerville, Skiddy, White City and Wilsey. A line of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas railroad enters in the northwest and crosses southeast through Council Grove. The Missouri Pacific crosses east and west in the south, and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific enters in the northeast and crosses southwest into Dickinson county. There are 107 miles of main track.

The general surface is an undulating prairie, practically all of which is tillable. The bottom lands along the streams average one mile in width and comprise 15 per cent. of the total area. The area of native timber is above the average for the state. All the varieties of wood

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common to Kansas soil grow along the streams in belts a quarter of a mile in width, and a number of artificial plantings have been made. The Neosho river rises in the western part of the county and flows southeast into Lyon county. It has several tributaries. Clark's creek flows north through the western portion. Limestone underlies the entire county and is extensively quarried and shipped at Council Grove and Parkerville.

The value of farm products is more than \$3,000,000 annually, the leading crop being corn, which in 1910 brought \$879,127. Oats the same season was worth \$87,482; wild grass, \$180,000; tame grass, \$151,344; millet, \$81,390; Jerusalem corn, \$75,834; the value of animals sold for slaughter was \$1,511,625. The value of all farm products that year was \$3,251,523. The total value of all live stock on hand was \$2,620,962. The assessed valuation of property was \$22,119,714, and the population was 12,397.