

Osborne County, in the central part of the state east and west, is located in the second tier from the Nebraska line. It is bounded on the north by Smith and Jewell counties; on the east by Mitchell and Lincoln; on the south by Russell and Ellis, and on the west by Rooks county. It was named in honor of Vincent Osborne, a soldier of the Second Kansas cavalry, who was distinguished for his courage in the Civil war, and who in 1867 settled at Ellsworth, Ellsworth county.

The first permanent settlement was the Bullock ranch, established on the south fork of the Solomon in March, 1870, by Charles and William Bullock. Pennington Ray and James McCormick settled south of the site of Downs a little later. Their stock was driven off by the Indians that summer. Word was sent to the stockade at Waconda and the soldiers came out and drove the Indians away. During the famous raids of 1868 there were no settlers in the county. A party including Lieut. Higgins, John Owens and a third man were attacked while in camp on Oak creek in the northeast corner of the county, and two of them were killed. Owens escaped and reached the stockade at Glasco. Thirty-three people came during 1870, among them being James Weston and family, J. J. Wiltrout, Crosby brothers, Z. T. Walrond, W. T. Kelley and E. McCormick. The next year settlers came in large numbers. The first store was near the center of the county and was kept by Calvin Reasoner. In Nov., 1870, Gen. H. C. Bull founded a town, to which he gave the name of Bull's City (now Alton), and erected a store building. The first white child, Bertha Manning, was born on May 4, 1871. Osborne City was founded in May, 1871, by a colony from Pennsylvania, and the county was organized the same year. On May 27 a mass meeting of citizens at Reasoner's store took the preliminary steps, C. M. Cunningham, W. W. Bullock and A. B. Fleming being appointed as a census committee. On Sept. 12 Gov. J. M. Harvey de-

clared the county organized and appointed the following temporary officers: Clerk, Frank Thompson; commissioners, Samuel Chatfield, C. M. Cunningham and Frank Stafford. An election was held on Nov. 7, when Osborne was chosen as the county seat and the following officers were elected: Sheriff, C. M. Cunningham; treasurer, John Joy; county clerk, C. W. Crampton; attorney, H. H. Napier; clerk of the court, C. J. Watson; register of deeds, A. B. Flemming; surveyor, F. R. Gruger; probate judge, H. C. Bull; superintendent of public instruction, J. T. Saxton; coroner, S. B. Farwell; commissioners, P. W. Kenyon, F. Stafford and J. J. Hayes; representative, W. L. Gear.

In 1880 the population of the county was returned as 12,518, that of 1890 as 12,083, 1900 as 11,844, and 1910 as 12,827. The assessed valuation of property in 1882 was \$1,137,906. The valuation in 1910 was \$24,743,947, which makes the wealth per capita nearly \$2,000.

The first railroad to enter the county was the main line of the Missouri Pacific, which reached Downs in 1879. This road runs through the county and terminates at Stockton, in Rooks county. A branch diverges at Downs and crosses northwest into Smith county. The Union Pacific runs through the southwest corner, passing through Natoma.

The county is divided into twenty-three townships, viz: Bethany, Bloom, Corinth, Covert, Delhi, Grant, Hancock, Hawkeye, Independence, Jackson, Kill Creek, Lawrence, Liberty, Mt. Ayr, Natoma, Penn, Ross, Round Mound, Sumner, Tilden, Valley, Victor and Winfield. The postoffices are, Osborne, Alton, Bloomington, Covert, Downs, Natoma, Portis and Twin Creek.

The area of the county is 900 square miles, with an undulating surface, broken by high ridges which divide the numerous water courses. Medicine Peak, in the eastern part and Round Mound in the southwest, are the most important heights. Bottom lands average a mile in width and comprise 20 per cent. of the total area. Native timber is not abundant, but many acres of artificial forest have been planted. The two branches of the Solomon river and their tributaries form the water system. The north fork enters from Smith county and flows southeast across the northeast corner. The south fork enters in the west from Rooks county and flows east through the second tier of townships from the north. It has numerous tributaries. Limestone, sandstone, potter's clay and gypsum are found in considerable quantities.

The annual product of the farms averages nearly \$4,000,000. In 1910 the total value was \$3,875,000, of which winter wheat brought \$1,213,000; corn, \$819,000; tame grass, \$272,000; animals sold for slaughter, \$893,000. Other important products are, butter, eggs, poultry, milk, fruit, prairie grass, sorghum, Kafir corn, oats and Irish potatoes. There are more than 150,000 bearing fruit trees. The live stock on hand in 1910 was worth \$3,130,593. A great deal of this is thoroughbred. The aggregate number of head of horses, mules, asses, cattle, swine and sheep was 77,681.