

Rawlins County, one of the northern tier, is the 2d county east from the Colorado line. It is bounded on the north by the State of Nebraska; on the east by Decatur county; on the south by Thomas, and on the west by Cheyenne. This was one of the counties created by the legislature of 1873, and it was named in honor of Gen. John A. Rawlins, the United States secretary of war. The boundaries were defined as follows: "Commencing where the east line of range 31 west crosses the 40th degree of north latitude; thence south with range line to the 1st standard parallel; thence west with said parallel to the east line of range 37 west; thence north with said range line to the 40th degree of north latitude; thence east to the place of beginning."

Two massacres occurred within the limits of the county before it was organized. The first was the massacre of the Indians by the soldiers, which occurred in April, 1875, about the time the first white settlers came to the county. Early in the year a band of Northern Cheyenne Indians, including 75 men, women and children, were on their way from the Indian Territory to their home in the Black Hills of Dakota, and were in orderly march about 40 miles west of the settlements, when on April 18, Lieut. Austin Henley, of the United States cavalry, received orders to intercept the band and turn it back. The cavalry followed the Indians for several days, during which time the Cheyennes tried to escape by dividing up in small groups. The Indians were overtaken while in camp on the Sappa creek in Rawlins county, and the entire camp, including women and children, were murdered. In burning their tepees after the slaughter an Indian baby was accidently thrown into the fire and perished. One young Indian who had no family escaped. The five Germans who made the first settlement in the county, August C. Blume, August Deitleff, Albert E. Lange, Charles Nast and a man named Stermer, saw the Indians before the massacre. In 1878 the Cheyennes exacted vengeance for the death of their tribesmen by visiting the valley of the Sappa and murdering about 40 innocent settlers in Rawlins and Decatur counties. Stermer was killed in his cornfield.

County organization took place in May, 1881. Gov. St. John, in his proclamation, made Atwood the temporary county seat and appointed the following officers: Clerk, William R. Shirley; commissioners, Lorenz Demmer, August C. Blume and Herman Kase. The first election was held in July. Atwood was made the permanent county seat and the following officers chosen: County clerk, William Reilly; commissioners, Albert Hemming, August C. Blume and Herman Kase; treasurer, Greenup Leaper; register of deeds, John F. Hayes; sheriff, Edward H. James; coroner, Leonard Wiltse; superintendent of public instruction, W. W. Dennis; probate judge, R. W. Fowler; attorney, Patrick Fleming; clerk of the district court, A. Birdsall. The number of votes cast was 314. At the November election O. L. Palmer was elected representative.

The first newspaper in the county was the Atwood Pioneer, established in Oct., 1879, by Edwin and A. L. Thorne. In 1882 there were five school houses in the county, with a school population of 510. In 1910 there were 89 organized school districts and 2,069 inhabitants of school age. In 1887 the legislature authorized the county commissioners to levy a tax to build a court-house, such tax not to exceed the sum of \$20,000.

The county is divided into 20 townships, viz: Achilles, Arbor, Atwood, Beaver, Burntwood, Celia, Clinton, Driftwood, Elk, Grant, Hernon, Jefferson, Laing, Logan, Ludell, Mikesell, Mirage, Richland, Rotate

and Union. The postoffices are, Achilles, Atwood, Beardsley, Beaver-view, Blakeman, Chardon, Herndon, Linda, Ludell, McDonald, Minor and Tully. A branch of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy R. R. from Nebraska enters near the northeast corner and crosses southwest a distance of nearly 40 miles, into Cheyenne county, terminating at St. Francis.

The general surface is an undulating prairie, with a few bluffs. Bottom lands average a mile in width. The streams are lined with thin belts of native timber. Two branches of Beaver creek enter the county in the southwest, flow northeast to the center where they join, forming one stream which continues northeast into Decatur county. The north and south forks of Sappa creek flow across the southeastern part; Timber and Burntwood creeks are in the northwest, and Driftwood in the northeast. Limestone, coal and sandstone are found in limited quantities. Springs are frequent in the valleys.

Irrigation is used to a limited extent in farming. The total value of farm products in 1910 was \$1,531,974. Wheat was worth \$662,088; corn, \$140,756; barley, \$158,953; hay, \$133,895; sorghum, \$59,892; animals sold for slaughter, \$153,454; poultry and eggs, \$54,312.

The population of the county in 1880 was 1,623, in 1890 it was 6,756. During the next decade it lost in population as did all the western counties and in 1900 it was 5,214. The population in 1910 was 6,380. The assessed valuation of property in 1882 was \$49,378, in 1910 it was \$8,827,603, and the value of live stock was \$1,435,505.