

Rush County, west of the central part of the state, is the fifth county north from Oklahoma, the fourth south from Nebraska, and the sixth east from the west line of the state. It is bounded on the north by Ellis county; on the east by Barton; on the south by Pawnee, and on the west by Ness. It was named in honor of Capt. Alexander Rush, who was killed at Jenkins' Ferry, Ark. The boundaries were described in the creative act as follows: "Commencing where the east line of range 16 west crosses the 3d standard parallel; thence south to the 4th standard parallel; then west to the east line of range 21 west; thence north to the 3d standard parallel; thence east to the place of beginning." By an act of the legislature in 1873, the southern tier of townships was taken off and the present boundaries established.

The first settlers came in 1870. They were William Basham, Adolph Ashoft and P. C. Dixon. The first family was that of I. S. Templeton, who came in Sept., 1871. His son was the first white child born in the county. Other early settlers were A. A. Stilson, F. E. Garner, A. Harvey, James Corral and Joseph Shaw Brown. The first church services were held in 1873 by Rev. A. Hartman, a Methodist minister. The first marriage was that of Adolph Ashoft and Dora Gein in Dec., 1872. The first postoffice was Economy in Pioneer township, established in 1871 with N. S. Gilbert postmaster. The first newspaper was the Walnut Valley Standard, started at Rush Center by W. P. Tomlinson in 1874. It was taken to La Crosse in the spring of 1877. The Rush County Progress was founded in Rush Center, but was taken to La Crosse when the county seat was moved to that place. The first store was a grocery, established in Center township in 1874 by John Hubbard.

County organization was effected in 1874. William S. Wood was appointed census taker in September. He made his report in December and Gov. Thomas A. Osborn issued a proclamation organizing the county, naming Rush Center as the temporary county seat, and appointing the following officers: County clerk, Frank E. Garner; commissioners, P. C. Dixon, John Shaftsbury and Frederick R. Smith. At the first election the following officers were chosen: Commissioners, Frederick R. Smith, T. S. De La Plaine and Levi Cline; county clerk Allen McCann; treasurer, John Felch; register of deeds, George W. Cooley; surveyor, Eugene N. Gunn; sheriff, P. H. Mosier; coroner, T. S. Clark; superintendent of public instruction, John Hargrave; probate judge, J. E. Mill; county attorney, W. E. Dawson, clerk of the district court, Frank E. Garner.

It is not reported how this election resulted with regard to the county seat, but it evidently left the matter undecided, as the records remained at Rush Center (then called Walnut City), and in 1877 another election was held, when La Crosse was made the county seat and the official county paper was moved from Rush Center to that place along with the county records. Another election was held in 1878. Rush Center had a few more votes and the records were taken back to that place, but La Crosse took the matter to the district court on charges of fraud. The opposition made no answer and judgment was rendered in favor of La Crosse on default. The records were then taken to that place, the removal occurring about the first of the year 1883. Rush Center took the case to the supreme court, where the decision was rendered in favor of that town in 1886. This gave rise to a new county seat election. Under the law a petition of two-thirds of the legal voters was necessary to secure a special election in this case. The petition was secured and the election was held on Aug. 23, 1887, resulting in favor of La Crosse. Rush Center then took the matter to the court, alleging that the petition was not secured according to law. In March, 1888, the court found that the petition was legal and issued a writ of mandamus to have the county records moved to La Crosse. Accordingly a large body of citizens from that place went over in wagons and, aided by about 50 farmers, took forcible possession of the county property and conveyed it to La Crosse where it has since remained.

While all this was going on, the county was steadily building up. In 1877 out of 460,800 acres of land there remained but 150,000 taken. The population of the county was 2,000, a great many of the inhabitants having come in that year. The county indebtedness was \$4,727. There were 16 organized school districts, and the assessed valuation of property was \$176,033. There were 1,000 head of live stock. Five years later the live stock had increased to 13,000 head, the taxable property to \$329,301, the number of organized school districts to 46, and there were teachers' normals being held during vacations.

In 1875 the county was divided into 4 townships; in 1878 there were 8; in 1880 there were 13, and in 1910 there were 15, as follows: Alex-

ander, Banner, Belle Plaine, Big Timber, Brookdale, Center, Fairview, Garfield, Hampton, Illinois, La Crosse, Lone Star, Pioneer, Pleasant Dale and Union. The postoffices are Alexander, Bison, Hampton, Hargrave, La Crosse, Liebenthal, McCracken, Nekoma, Otis, Rushcenter, Shaffer and Timken.

The county is crossed by two railroads, both of which enter on the east line from Barton county. The Missouri Pacific runs west and northwest through La Crosse, the county seat, which is in the central part. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe from Great Bend crosses about 8 miles from the southern line, through Rush Center.

The general surface is tillable prairie. Bottom lands average one mile in width and comprise about 20 per cent. of the area. The streams are fringed by thin belts of timber, the chief varieties being ash, elm, cottonwood, walnut, hackberry and box-elder. Walnut creek, the principal stream, flows from west to east, somewhat south of the center. Sand and Otter creeks are the most important tributaries. Big Timber creek in the northwest flows northeast and empties into the Smoky Hill river. Magnesian limestone is common. Shell-rock limestone, potter's clay and gypsum are found in some localities.

The value of farm products in 1910 was \$3,619,191. The leading field crops are, wheat, which in 1910 was worth \$2,438,765; corn brought \$409,344; oats, \$115,610; Kafir corn, \$95,250; hay, \$142,769; animals sold for slaughter, \$113,440; poultry and eggs, \$86,145; and dairy products, \$94,908. The value of live stock on hand was \$1,786,875. The assessed valuation of property was \$16,351,545. The population in 1875 was 451; in 1878 it was 2,794; in 1890 it was 5,204; in 1900 it had increased to 6,134, and in 1910 it was 7,826. The average wealth per capita was \$2,075.