

**Clark County.**—On Feb. 26, 1867, Gov. Crawford approved an act of the legislature defining the boundaries of a number of new counties in the western part of the state. Section 39 of that act reads: "The county of Clarke shall be bounded as follows: Commencing where the east line of range 21 west intersects the sixth standard parallel, thence south to the thirty-seventh degree of north latitude, thence west to the east line of range 26 west, thence north to the sixth standard parallel, thence east to the place of beginning."

By the act of March 6, 1875, the northern boundary was moved northward 6 miles, to the north line of township 30 south, and the western boundary was fixed at the "east line of range 27 west." The county was named for Charles F. Clarke, who entered the volunteer service in the Civil war as a captain in the Sixth Kansas cavalry, was commissioned assistant adjutant-general on June 12, 1862, and died at Memphis, Tenn., on the 10th of the following December. In the original creative act the name is spelled with the final "e," but in the act of 1873 and all subsequent legislation affecting the county the last letter was dropped from the name.

As an unorganized county, Clark was attached to Ford county for judicial purposes only until Feb. 21, 1883, when Gov. Glick approved an act including Clark in Ford county, in order that the latter might benefit by the taxation of the large cattle interests. This did not please the few settlers in Clark county, and by the act of March 7, 1885, Clark was reestablished with its present boundaries, extending from the east

line of range 21 to the east line of range 26 west, and from the north line of township 30 south to the southern boundary of the state. By the same act the county was attached to Comanche for judicial purposes.

Clark county has an altitude of nearly 2,000 feet, Ashland, the county seat, being situated 1,950 feet above sea level. The surface is generally level prairie, sloping gently southward toward the Cimarron river, which crosses the southern boundary near the center and flows in an easterly direction until it enters Comanche county about 5 miles north of the state line. All the streams of the county are directly or indirectly tributary to the Cimarron. The principal creeks are Bluff, Beaver, Bear, and Big and Little Sand creeks. Near the center of the county is an elevation, to which H. C. Inman, quartermaster of the Custer expedition in 1868 gave the name of "Mount Jesus." In the winter of 1868-69 a trail was made from Fort Dodge to Camp Supply in the Indian Territory, over which government supplies were taken to the latter post. It passed near the elevation mentioned, and became known as the "Mount Jesus trail." In 1870 a new trail was opened, over which the cattle drovers passed to Dodge City and the northern ranges. It was known as the "Texas Cattle Drive," and during the ten years from 1876 to 1885 some 2,000,000 cattle passed over this trail. There is not much native timber in the county. Along the streams are narrow belts of hackberry, walnut, mulberry and cottonwood, the last named being the most common.

The settlement of the county was slow for several years after it was established. In the spring of 1871 the county was surveyed, and in 1874 John Glenn built a road ranch where Ashland now stands. Two graves were found there, supposed to be the graves of men killed by the Indians in 1871, and the place was at first known as "Soldiers' Graves." A weekly stage route from Dodge City to Camp Supply was established in 1875 and four years later it became a daily stage line. In 1876 a large cattleman named Driscoll located a ranch in Clark county, being the first heavy cattleman in that part of the country. The following winter three Benedictine priests came to a mound about 3 miles northeast of Ashland, which they named Mount Casino, with a view of founding a college for invalids and establishing a colony. The movement was discouraged by the cattlemen, the priests lost their horses through an Indian raid, and after a few months abandoned the attempt. Spencer brothers later located their ranch near Mount Casino. Two men came to the Sand creek valley in the spring of 1878 and made a crop there that season, but did not become permanent settlers.

In the Cheyenne raid of 1878 (q. v.) some of the Indians entered the state near the southwest corner of Comanche county and passed through Clark, stealing some horses from Driscoll's ranch. One Indian was killed in the county. In the spring of 1879 a man named Dudley came from Sumner county and settled on Bear creek. Up to this time there had been nothing but cattle ranches in the county, the

principal ones being Driscoll's and Evans' ranches on Kiger creek; Lustrum's and Carlson's below Bluff creek; Dorsey's at the mouth of the Red Earth, and Collar's on Bluff creek. It was the value of these ranches that influenced the legislature to include Clark county in Ford, as above mentioned.

Clark City was laid out in June, 1884, about a mile and a half north of the present city of Ashland. The first number of the Clark County Clipper, the first newspaper in the county, was issued at Clark City on Sept. 18, 1884, by Marquis & Church. Late in October of that year Ashland was laid out by a company of Winfield men, of which W. R. McDonald was president and Francis B. Hall secretary. The new town company offered for a certain length of time to give each of the householders of Clark City a lot and remove his house to the new town site free. Quite a number accepted the offer, and as Ashland went up Clark City went down, until it finally disappeared entirely.

About the time that Ashland was founded, the Clipper said in an editorial: "The immigration into this county from the east does not seem to abate because of the approach of winter. The wagons still pour into the valleys south, southeast and southwest of here at a rate never before equaled, and we expect to see them continue to come all winter. . . . If you have not used your right of preëmption, wait no longer, as in all probability it will soon be forever too late."

At the presidential election in Nov., 1884, Blaine received 85 votes in the county; Cleveland, 70; and Butler, 14, a total of 169 votes. At the same time J. Q. Shoup was elected to represent the county in the state legislature. When the news reached Ashland in March, 1885, that Clark county was again made an independent political organization by the legislature, it was received with demonstrations of joy. On the 10th a meeting was held at the office of Ayers & Theis to take steps to organize the county. J. W. Ayers presided and Robert C. Marquis acted as secretary. A committee, consisting of Messrs. Likes, McCartney and Berry, was appointed to attend to the work of printing and circulating petitions to the governor asking for the organization of the county.

Another meeting was held on April 17, when Robert C. Marquis offered the following resolution: "That this convention temporarily divide the county into three districts of ten miles each, running north and south, to be known as the Eastern, Western and Central districts, and that the representatives present from each district select a committee of three to represent their district, and these committees from each district shall meet immediately and select a day, place and manner whereby the several districts shall select a man to be recommended to the governor for appointment as county commissioner in their respective districts, and also a person for county clerk."

The resolution was adopted and the following committees appointed: Eastern district—C. B. Nunemacher, D. C. Pitcher, C. G. Graham; Central district—F. M. Sanderlin, J. M. Bly, J. M. Lockhead; Western

district—H. W. Henry, A. F. Harmer, Joseph Hall. This committee of nine decided on April 25 as the date of an election, and met at Ashland on the 27th to canvass the vote. A. F. Harmer, Daniel Burket and G. W. Epperly were chosen for county commissioners and John S. Myers for county clerk, and these men were recommended to the governor for appointment. In the meantime Thomas E. Berry had been appointed on March 20 to take a census of the county. His enumeration showed a population of 2,042, of whom 877 were householders. Upon his report Gov. John A. Martin issued his proclamation on May 5, 1885, declaring the county organized, appointing the commissioners and clerk recommended by the people of the county and designating Ashland as the temporary county seat.

The first meeting of the board of commissioners was held on May 11, 1885, when the three districts authorized by the resolution of April 17 were declared civil townships. The Eastern district was named Liberty township, with voting places at Weeks' ranch, Kepler's and Mendenhall's; the Central district was named Center township, with voting places at Letitia, Ashland and Edwards; and the Western district was named Vesta township, with voting places at Appleton, Vesta and Englewood. An election was ordered for June 16, for the election of county officers and the selection of a permanent county seat. The officers elected were: C. D. Perry, representative; John S. Myers, clerk; S. H. Hughes, treasurer; J. J. Kennedy, probate judge; J. L. Snodgrass, register of deeds; Michael Sughrue, sheriff; W. A. McCartney, county attorney; A. F. Harmer, clerk of the district court; C. C. Mansfield, superintendent of education; J. W. Henderson, surveyor; Dr. S. H. Parks, coroner; G. W. Epperly, Daniel Burket and B. B. Bush, commissioners. For county seat Ashland received 577 votes; Englewood, 257; Fair West, 98, and 34 were recorded as "scattering."

The first school in the county, of which any record is obtainable, was a three months' term taught at Clark City by W. H. Myers, closing on Nov. 29, 1884. The first banking institution was the Clark County bank, which opened its doors for business on June 24, 1885, at Ashland.

Since the organization of the county, its history differs but little from that of the other counties of the state. Constructive work has gone forward steadily, highways have been opened, public buildings erected, school districts organized, etc. Two lines of railroads operate in the county. The Wichita & Englewood division of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe system enters the county near the center of the eastern boundary, runs west to Ashland and thence southwest to Englewood, and a line of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific system crosses the northwest corner through Minneola.

According to the U. S. census, the population of Clark county in 1910 was 4,093, a gain of 3,022 during the preceding ten years, or more than 200 per cent. The county is bounded on the north by Ford county; on the east by the counties of Kiowa and Comanche; on the south by the State of Oklahoma, and on the west by Meade county. It is divided into ten townships, viz.: Appleton, Brown, Center, Cimarron, Edwards, Englewood, Lexington, Liberty, Sitka and Vesta. The value of all farm products in 1910, including live stock, was \$2,111,518. The five leading crops in the order of value were: wheat, \$936,387; corn, \$181,084; Kaffir corn, \$87,715; oats, \$44,677; sorghum, \$42,160. Hay, barley, milo maize and broom-corn were also important crops.