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February 14, 1962

To: The Honorable  
Robert Dole  
From: History and Government Division  
Subject: History of Tescott, Kansas

Post Office

The first post office established on the present site of Tescott, Kansas was called "Churchill," and was dedicated on April 8, 1869. The name was changed to "Tescot" on August 4, 1886, and to Tescott on June 22, 1893. The first postmaster was Thomas B. Sears, and the first postmaster under the present name was Samuel L. Apple. Sears served until April 28, 1874 and Apple until July 12, 1897.

Ottawa County

Ottawa County was formally organized in 1866, in response to a petition from its citizens, and was named for the Ottawa Indians. This is appropriate, because the Indians provide most of the County's history. Until 1866, Indian raids had resulted in the death of only one Ottawa County man, but in that year two disastrous raids occurred. In August, although no one was killed, much property was destroyed--"though a number saved themselves only by great coolness and good judgment." In October, another raid resulted in the deaths of four men, two more were wounded, and the wife of one wounded man was carried away to a captivity from which she was not released until the following spring. This ravaged couple was Mr. and Mrs. Morgan.

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Mr. Morgan had gone to gather corn on another farm, and was in the field when attacked. He left his horses partly unhitched and ran for the river, pursued by one of the Indians, who wounded him just as he reached the bank. Morgan fell, rolled over the bank, and was left for dead. In the meantime one of the horses freed himself and started for home, followed by the Indians with the other horse and what they needed of the harness. Mrs. Morgan saw the first horse alone and supposed that her husband had been killed in a runaway. She was taking the horse to the field when the Indians arrived and she was captured. "It was a grand reunion when she returned, for she found her husband alive whom she had believed to be dead, and he found the noble wife he had begun to believe was not among the living." Generals Sheridan and Custer led the rescue expedition.

The last of the Indian raids occurred in June, 1869, but the Indian trouble was succeeded by an onslaught of natural disasters. The first was the grasshopper raid in 1874, which brought marauders worse than the Indians. The grasshoppers devastated the whole State, killed all the vegetation in the County, and sent the residents for aid. Since then, cyclones, hurricanes, and the like have swept through the County with unpredictable frequency, causing loss of life and destruction of property.

The first settlers in Ottawa County were William Still, George Darling, and a Frenchman named La Pere. They built cabins near the mouth of Coal Creek and cultivated a garden in the year 1855. Other settlers located

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with similar humility in similar parts of the County, but the Sioux war induced them to leave before the year was out. Several large colonies prospected the County but turned away because of fear of going beyond the frontier. The first permanent homes were established near the present site of Minneapolis in 1859.

Since that time the settlement of Ottawa County has required perseverance against the rigors of the wild but fertile plain. With the help of the railroad--first extended into the County in 1877--it has become a small but prosperous agricultural community.

Sources: Blackmar, Frank W. Cyclopedia of Kansas History.  
Cutler, William G. History of the State of Kansas.

Warren Olney IV