

NORTHERN KENTUCKY VIEWS PRESENTS

Report from Owen County Kentucky

By

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OWEN COUNTY.

(Revised, 1907, by Hon. J. W. Cammack.)

Owen was the sixty-seventh county organized, and was formed in 1819 out of parts of Franklin, Scott and Gallatin. It was named in honor of Colonel Abraham Owen, who was a distinguished citizen and soldier and as aid-de-camp to General William Harrison fell bravely fighting for his country at the battle of Tippecanoe.

The general character of the soil of Owen county is limestone upon a clay foundation. Its soil produces corn, wheat, and all kinds of grasses that are raised in this section of Kentucky. It produces large amount of peaches and apples and small fruits. The county raises the best Burley tobacco, which brings the top of the market in all tobacco markets. There are a great many horses, hogs, sheep and cattle raised in the county.

Owenton, the county seat, is situated in the center of the county, and has 1,100 inhabitants. It possesses a graded school building, which cost \$12,000 and is run by eight teachers. There are enrolled three hundred pupils, eighty of which are from different sections of the county.

There are seventy-three common school districts for white pupils and eight school districts for colored pupils in the county. They are in flourishing condition. There are not enough teachers for the schools. The reason of the scarcity of teachers is that under the present school system the pay is not sufficient to attract young men and women to that profession. Owen county has not a foot of railroad, and by reason of that fact the county suffers very largely because its farm products can not be gotten to market easily.

The Kentucky river forms the western boundary of the county, and affords the people near the river access to the Louisville and Cincinnati markets for their farm products.

Quite a number of mineral springs are found in the county, the waters of which are of approved valuable medicinal properties.

The turnpikes have suffered a great deal by toll gates being taken off of them.

The indebtedness of the county amounts to \$200,000 and the constitutional limit for its indebtedness has been reached, so that only

fifteen cents to the \$100 of taxable property is now appropriated to maintain the roads and turnpikes, so that the roads and turnpikes are kept in repair by the old "warning in" system principally, which has proven a failure in the way of keeping the roads and turnpikes in good repair. There are three hundred miles of turnpikes in Owen county.

The largest streams in Owen county are Cedar, Big Twin, Big Indian, Severn, Elk, Eagle and Stevens' creek. They furnish a great deal of water power for propelling machinery. Most of the timber has been cut away. There remains but small quantities of the poplar, beech and oak varieties. There are many many patches of black locust growing throughout the county. The farmers are transplanting a great many black locust. The farmers are beginning to realize how necessary it is to have timber, and by little encouragement they would begin to cultivate and transplant great quantities of young trees.

Tobacco has been the principal product in the past, and the people have neglected their lands and in many instances have worked them too hard, but they are beginning to realize the great necessity of caring for their lands and are taking greater care of their lands than before. The land in Owen county has increased in fertility and desirableness at least ten per cent. within the last five years. The county abounds in mineral resources. Large deposits of lead and zinc ore are found in various localities. What is known as the "Kentucky River Fault" passes through the county near Gratz and Balls Landing and from this fault there are various fissures extending north and south through the county. There have been exposed in several localities in the county, and show large deposits of lead and zinc ore. The Ohio Lead Mining Co. is doing extensive mining about one mile from Gratz on the Kentucky river. The mineral is found in fissure veins. The mineral district comprises about one-half of the county. The principal work has been done on Twin creek by the Twin Creek Mining & Smelting Co., and near Gratz by the Ohio Lead Mining Company. What mining has been done in this county has been by inexperienced men, and the result of their work has not been very satisfactory to them. What seems to be needed in this county to make the mining business a paying proposition, is to have men experienced in mining with improved and up-to-date machinery and plenty of capital. Mining rights can be had at very low figures.

There are large quantities of limestone shale and clay that will make a very fine grade of Portland cement.

The county is situated in the Seventh Congressional, Fifth Appellate, Fifteenth Judicial, Twenty-third Senatorial and Sixteenth Legislative Districts.