

Ottawa, Ohio History

In 1792 Major Alexander Truman, his servant William Lynch and guide/interpreter William Smalley were sent by George Washington on a peace mission. Truman and Lynch were killed; Truman was apparently killed prior to April 20, 1792 at what later became Ottawa, Putnam County Ohio.

The region was originally inhabited by the Wyandot tribe and by the Ottawa tribe. In 1817, a large tract of land in Northwestern Ohio was ceded to the United States, and Blanchard's Fork Reserve was established, until the Reserve was ceded and extinguished in 1831, and Ottawa population on that Reserve removed to Kansas in 1832. Within the Reserve, two Ottawa villages existed, of which the Lower Tawa Town became the Village of Ottawa, Ohio. Ottawa was incorporated as a village in 1861.

Ottawa is the county seat of Putnam County, Ohio. Residents named the town, which was founded in 1833, in honor of the Ottawa people, who once had a village at the site of modern-day Ottawa. Kalida was Putnam County's original seat of government, but a fire destroyed the courthouse in 1866. A county-wide vote by Putnam County residents decided to move the seat of government to Ottawa.

Ottawa became a major meeting place for farmers in the surrounding countryside. The railroad through the community gave farmers access to markets across the United States. Most local businesses either provided services or products for the farmers in the surrounding countryside. In 1886, Ottawa's largest employer, Rice, Brown & Company, employed thirty-nine people. The company produced wagon and carriage wheels. That same year, the town included three newspapers, four churches, and two banks. In 1880, Ottawa's population was 1,293 people, with forty percent of the residents being school-aged children.