

Looking back through 150 years of history, we find that Will County was established in January of 1836. Frankfort Township, which has the highest elevation above sea level on the Rock Island Railroad between Chicago and the Mississippi River, was formed some time prior to 1851. The township received its name from a Mr. Cappel, whose native city was Frankfort-on-the Main in Germany.



As early as 1831, settlers arriving from the east via the old Sauk Trail, which passed through the area, had given the name of Chelsea to a location in the western part of the township. Charles Clayes and M. C. Farwell envisioned a village there but it never became a reality. A post office was established on the L. M. Clayes' homestead. Later, it was moved to the Matthew Van Horne place, which is now a forest preserve site on Route 30. The Chelsea post office continued in use until 1868. Very early settlers to the area included families named Owens, Carpenter, Doty, Bowen, Letts, Rice, Stephen, and Clayes, whose names are found on markers in nearby cemeteries.

In 1854 the Joliet & Northern Indiana Railroad built a line through Frankfort Township connecting it with Joliet to the west and Lake Station, Indiana to the east. The Michigan Central Railroad leased the line in September of that same year. In 1855 Nelson D. Elwood and Sherman W. Bowen of Joliet platted a town here, dedicated land for a railroad station and facilities and thus Frankfort Station was born. Regular train service started in July of 1855. Because the railroad line bypassed Chicago, it became famous as the "Joliet cut-off Railroad." A local passenger train called the "Dinky" ran twice daily in each direction until 1914. Freight service continued on the line until finally stopped by Conrail around 1978.

Incorporation as a village took place in August of 1879 and the first election was held in September of that year. John McDonald was the first village President and L. M. Clayes was the first Clerk. Other founding village board members were Fred Hasenjaeger, Thomas Herschbach, Charles F. Baumann, Owen Donahue and Henry Nettles.

## Frankfort Area Historical Society

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### Mission Statement

"The society's major function will be to discover and collect any material which may help to establish or illustrate the history of the area. It will collect and preserve printed material, manuscript material and other museum material. The society will disseminate