

# *History of Gove County, Kansas.*

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*Gove City, KS  
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## FOREWORD

This little History was started to while away some idle moments on a farm. Being the first History of Gove County ever written it is not obliged to conform to any established rules and is neither complete or exhaustive. Some time some one will write a bigger and better History and will use this little sketch as one of his sources.

Part One was written in 1920, and brings the history of the county down to the time of its organization. Part Two is written in 1930, and Part One is republished with it.

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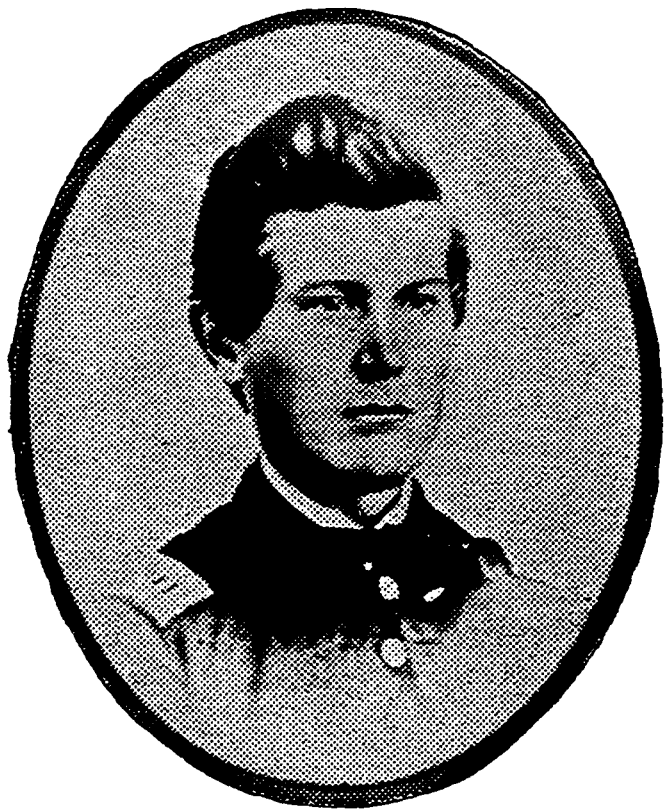
## FOREWORD TO PART ONE, 1920

Though Gove county has had a place on the map for fifty-one years, and has been an organized and self governing body for thirty-three, its history has never been written. The writer several years ago began the collection of materials for such a history; owing to the War and other causes the task is still incomplete, but I have concluded to publish a part of the work and finish the book, perhaps, at some future time. The present part will deal with the history of the county from the earliest times till its settlement and organization in 1886. I realize that there must be many inaccuracies, misstatements and omissions in this narrative, and will welcome any helpful criticisms or corrections.

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For the benefit of those who do not already know, let it be said that Gove county is a part of the "Louisiana Purchase" bought by President Jefferson from France in 1803. It lies far out on the plains of Kansas, just west of the 100th Meridian, and is crossed by the 39th Parallel. Its altitude is about 3000 feet above sea level; its surface is a great plain somewhat broken in places by the Smoky Hill River and its tributaries which cross it.





CAPTAIN GRENVILLE L. GOVE

Gove County was Named for Him



## CHAPTER I

### THE FIRST INHABITANTS

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The buffalo and the Indian were the first inhabitants. Gove county was a great buffalo range. Its natural vegetation is the short, curly mesquite grass known as "buffalo grass." The country is full of the spots known as "buffalo wallows." These are shallow depressions, averaging perhaps a rod in diameter, where the buffalo was accustomed to roll and wallow in the dust if the ground were dry or in the mud if the depression happened to contain water. Why he did this is the buffalo's own secret, but it was probably for the same reason that the domestic hen takes a dust bath or our domestic cattle rub against fence posts. With the passing of the buffalo these wallows became again covered with grass, but not with the original buffalo grass. In them the prairie blue stem found lodgment, and the difference in vegetation marks out the spot and makes the buffalo wallow noticeable from a considerable distance. When the sod is still unbroken these spots are found everywhere. Probably there was not a quarter section in the county without its buffalo wallow, and some had scores of them.\*

In places on these prairies are found circles of maybe fifty or a hundred yards in diameter where the vegetation is of different species from the buffalo grass within and without the circle; this vegetation "greens up" earlier in the spring than the buffalo grass and then the circle is very conspicuous. Old buffalo hunters say that these rings were made by the buffaloes when a small herd was menaced by an attack from wolves. The cows and calves would bunch up and the bulls would pace round outside them ready to beat off the attack if it should be made; this trampling cut through the sod and killed the buffalo grass, and grass of other species came in.

The buffalo had ceased to exist here before the settlers came. Few persons now living in the county ever saw a buffalo. This is because of the wholesale slaughter of the species which commenced as soon as

the white man began to appear upon the plains. The buffalo was stupid and inoffensive and fell an easy victim. As the Pacific railroad advanced across the plains its first passengers were the buffalo hunters and its first business was the shipping of buffalo meat. The railroad advertised excursions to the west "to Hunt the Buffalo." The roundtrip from Leavenworth was ten dollars; the railroad reached Gove county in 1868.

The first mention I have found of Gove county towns is as buffalo hunting stations: "Coyote, 336 miles from K. C. Many buffalo are slaughtered here and their hides and meat shipped east." "Buffalo, 352 miles from K. C. This being the present center of the buffalo range they are found here in larger quantities than at any other point on the road." "Grinnell, 364 miles from K. C.—two large turf houses built for the purpose of drying buffalo meat."

These items are taken from "Weston's Guide to the Kansas Pacific Railway" for 1872, four years after the railroad reached Gove county.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the buffalo soon disappeared. The number of buffalo hides thrown on the market was enormous. Leather was cheap. It was the fashion in those days to wear high topped boots; now economy compels us to wear low cut shoes. Some of the buffalo meat was saved—more of it was wasted. A decade or so later the impecunious homesteader gathered up the bones and bought flour with the proceeds. Now nothing remains to testify to the existence of the buffalo except the buffalo wallows and the buffalo horns, which latter have outlasted the bones and are common enough to this day.

Much sorrow has been expressed for the wanton destruction of the buffalo. Perhaps this sympathy has been misplaced. There is a story that the legislature of Texas once had up for consideration a bill for the protection of the buffalo. General Phil Sheridan, then commanding the army on the frontier, appeared before the legislature and

\*Note 1.

made a speech against the bill. He said in substance "We have got to get rid of the buffalo before we can get rid of the Indian. As long as the buffalo exists the Indian can live and we can't conquer him. When the buffalo is gone we can starve the Indian out." Those who understand the diabolical savagery of the wild Indian on the war path will appreciate the point which the general made. The buffalo had to go before the plains could be made habitable for the white race.

## CHAPTER II

### THE INDIAN OCCUPANCY

This portion of the Great Plains seems to have been claimed by the Pawnees at the time it first became known to the white men. This tribe was then powerful. One of their principal villages was in Republic county; the Pawnee Trail ran from there south, crossing the Smoky Hill in Ellsworth county; Pawnee Rock, noted as a battle ground, is in Barton county. From these points on their eastern frontier the Pawnees ranged far out on the plains and seemed to have claimed as their own all the territory drained by the Platte and Kansas rivers.

They had a village at the junction of the north and south branches of the Platte river, where the city of North Platte, Neb., now stands. In the year 1720 a Spanish expedition under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Don Pedro de Villazur set out from Santa Fe (now the capital of the state of New Mexico) to visit this village. This expedition marched to the Indian village of El Cuartilejo—which modern research has located on Beaver Creek in the northern part of Scott county, Kansas,—thence directly north to the Pawnee village on the Platte. Here the Spaniards were ambushed by the Indians and all massacred or put to flight (Aug. 16, 1720).\*

This expedition has nothing to do with the history of Gove county except that its line of march was very near our county and may even have crossed it. It may be, then, that Col. Villazur and his companions, in 1720, were the first white men to see Gove county. The story has been

written up by John B. Dunbar in the publications of the Kansas Historical Society; his map shows that the line of march ran very close to the west line of our county.

The Pawnees finally lost their power through the ravages of smallpox and war with other tribes, and in 1838 ceded all their lands south of the Platte to the United States.

The Kaw Indians also claimed a portion of this country. In 1825 they sold certain of their lands to the United States. The treaty described the northern boundary of the ceded lands in part as follows: "From the source of the Nemaha river thence to the source of the Kansas river, leaving the old village of the Pania (Pawnee) Republic to the west." By the Kansas river was meant the Smoky Hill branch, and this identifies our county as part of the Kaw claim.

At this time the government was engaged in moving some of the eastern tribes to new homes in the west, and these treaties with the Kaws and Pawnees were for the purpose of procuring lands for the new comers.

The real occupiers of the plains after the supremacy of the Pawnees was broken were the Cheyennes and Arapahoes and their allies the Sioux. The first treaty made by the United States with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes, in 1825, was a simple treaty of peace. In 1851 another treaty of peace was made with these tribes. A large emigration from California was then crossing the plains. A council of Indian tribes was called by the government at Fort Laramie, Sept. 17, 1851. Each tribe was assigned boundaries in accordance with its claims. The treaty with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes fixed as their boundaries the Platte river on the north, the Rocky Mountains on the west, the Arkansas river on the south and for the eastern boundary a line "from the crossing of the Santa Fe road" on the Arkansas in a north-westerly direction to the forks of the Platte. This would include Gove county.

The Indians granted the government the right to establish roads and military or trading posts in their territory; in return the government was to pay them \$50,000 per annum for fifty years, distributing this sum among the tribes according to their respective numbers.

\*Note 2.



Before many years this treaty was broken and the Indians were ravaging all the frontier settlements of Kansas. But these depredations will be treated of in a subsequent chapter.

The Indians have left few traces. One of our streams is called Indian Creek, probably for cause. Cheyenne Creek, which empties into the Smoky from the south, is said to have derived its name from a skirmish which a troop of U. S. Cavalry once had with a band of hostiles near the mouth of the creek. Arrow heads have been found, made of the primitive flint, also some of the iron ones which the savages learned to make after they were able to procure iron from the whites, but these are about all the relics of the aborigines that have ever been found. The Indian population was sparse and perhaps never consisted of anything but scattered hunting parties. If there ever was an Indian village in Gove county it seems to have left no trace of its existence.

But the time has now come to tell of the first visit of American white men to our county. How many know that John C. Fremont, "The pathfinder of the Rockies," was in Gove county seventy-five years ago?

### CHAPTER III

#### FREMONT IN GOVE COUNTY

John C. Fremont, soldier, explorer and statesman, first candidate of the Republican party for president and familiarly known as the "Pathfinder of the Rockies," made three expeditions to the unexplored regions of western North America between the years 1842-48. At this time the frontier settlements reached only to the Missouri river but the territory of the United States extended westward to the Rocky Mountains and, in the northwest, to the Pacific Ocean. The expeditions of Lewis and Clark in 1804 and Pike in 1805 had given only a vague and imperfect idea of this vast region; so in 1842 Fremont, then a lieutenant in the regular army, was sent out with an exploring party to find out more about the country and the Mexican possessions south and west of it which a strong party in the United

States had already determined should be annexed to the States.

Fremont's first trip was up the Republican river to the mountains and back by way of the Platte. This expedition, while very interesting, has nothing to do with our history. In the following year he set out again, his instructions being to explore the mountain passes, cross the mountains and go on to California, and to return by some different route. This was one of the greatest exploring expeditions ever made in the history of the world.

He started from Kansas City May 29, 1843, and, thirteen months later, having in the meantime crossed the mountains and the desert, penetrated to the Pacific, laid out roughly the route which the first great transcontinental railway followed a quarter of a century later, explored the grandest mountain region in North America and the sources of several great rivers—we find him on July 1, 1844, on his return, at Bent's Fort of the present city of Las Animas, Colorado. We will now let Fremont tell the story in his own words. His report is accompanied by an excellent map and is addressed to his commanding officer, the chief of the Corps of Topographical Engineers:

"On the 5th we resumed our journey down the Arkansas and encamped about 20 miles below the fort. Agreeable to your instructions which required me to complete as far as practicable our examination of the Kansas, I left at this encampment the Arkansas river, taking a northeasterly direction across the elevated dividing grounds which separate that river from the waters of the Platte. On the 7th we crossed a large stream about forty yards wide and one or two feet deep, flowing with a lively current on a sandy bed. The discolored and muddy appearance of the water indicated that it proceeded from recent rains, and we are inclined to consider this a branch of the Smoky Hill river, though possibly it may be the Pawnee fork of the Arkansas."

The map shows that this stream was the Big Sandy which falls into the Arkansas about twenty-five miles west of the Kansas line. Fremont's route here was through the counties of Bent, Kiowa and Cheyenne in Colorado, and it was in the latter county that he struck both the Big Sandy

and the Smoky. Kit Carson, the celebrated scout, was a member of Fremont's little party of sixteen horsemen, and he passed very close to or maybe crossed the site of the town of Kit Carson named in his honor. But let us listen to Fremont:

"Beyond this stream we traveled over high and level prairies, halting at small ponds and holes of water, and using for our fires the bois de vache,\* the country being destitute of timber. On the evening of the 8th we encamped in a cottonwood grove on the banks of a sandy stream where there was water in holes sufficient for the camp. Here several hollows or dry creeks with sandy beds met together, forming the head of a stream which afterward proved to be the Smoky Hill fork of the Kansas river."

Fremont's map shows that this camp was made in Colorado about twenty miles west of the Kansas line—July 8, 1844.

"As we traveled down the valley water gathered rapidly in the sandy bed from many small tributaries; and at evening it had become a handsome stream fifty to eighty feet in width, with a lively current in small channels, the water being principally dispersed among quicksands. Gradually enlarging, in a few days march it became a river eighty yards in breadth, wooded with occasional growths of cottonwood. Our road was generally over level uplands bordering the river, which were closely covered with a sward of buffalo grass."

Fremont's map shows his camp on the 9th to have been in Wallace county, Kansas, about eight miles east of the Colorado line. On the 10th he camped somewhere in the neighborhood of the present town of Wallace, and here they stopped over for a day to hunt buffalo. The camp on the 12th was somewhere east of Russell Springs. On the 13th of July he entered Gove county and camped that night somewhere east of Jerome near the mouth of Plum Creek. On the 14th he camped between the Smoky and the mouth of Indian Creek in Larrabee township, not far from Alanthus. But let us let Fremont tell it:

"On the 10th we entered again the buffalo range where we had found those animals so abundant on our

outward journey, and halted for a day among numerous bands in order to make a provision of meat sufficient to carry us to the frontier.

"A few days afterward we were encamped in a pleasant evening on a high river prairie, the stream being less than a hundred yards broad. During the night we had a succession of thunder storms with heavy and continuous rain, and toward morning the water suddenly burst over the banks, flooding the bottom and becoming a large river five or six hundred yards in breadth. The darkness of the night and incessant rain had concealed from the guard the rise of the water; and the river broke into the camp so suddenly that the baggage was instantly covered and all our perishable collections almost utterly ruined and the hard labor of many months destroyed in a moment."

Now the question arises, did this disaster happen to Fremont within the limits of Gove county? Fremont says it was "a few days afterwards" from the hunt of the 11th. His last camp in Gove county was on the 14th. What did Fremont mean by "a few days?" The term is delightfully indefinite. But till some evidence is brought forward to disprove it I shall claim that it was in Gove county that Fremont encountered the storm that broke up his camp. The conformation of the river bottom in the neighborhood of Alanthus is such that it might easily have happened there. The banks of the river are low and it takes no great rise to put the water over them and cause it to spread out over the bottom the "five or six hundred yards in breadth" mentioned by Fremont. Such a thing has happened frequently within historic times.

The Fremont expedition proceeded down the river and on the last day of July reached "the little town of Kansas on the banks of the Missouri river"—now Kansas City. From there it went by boat to St. Louis where the party was disbanded.

The next year this indefatigable explorer was off again on a third expedition more famous than the others, in which he was to again penetrate to the Pacific coast, and, war having broken out, drive the Mexicans from California and eventually return to Washington as the first senator from the new state of Cal-

\*Note 3.

ifornia and a candidate for the presidency. But as he went out this time by the Santa Fe Trail and never appeared again along the Smoky his last expedition has no place in our history.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE OVERLAND TRAIL

After Fremont 14 years passed away ere white men began again to go through Gove county. Kansas was organized as a territory and the strife between the free soil and pro-slavery factions began to rage, but the settlements were confined to the eastern part of the territory and did not extend as yet very far out on the plains. Gold was discovered in California in 1848 and a big rush set in for that state but it followed the old established routes, by the Platte and Republican rivers on the north and the Santa Fe Trail on the south.

It was not till gold was discovered in the region of Pike's Peak in 1858 that an effort was made to lay out a trail along the Smoky Hill. These trails necessarily must keep close to water, but here was a route which had all the advantages of the older ones and was shorter to the Colorado gold field by several days than either of the old routes.

The first mention I can find of the Smoky Hill Trail is in Alexander Majors' book "Seventy Years on the Frontier." Mr. Majors was a member of the celebrated firm of Majors, Russell & Waddell, the pioneer company in the overland freight business. He says that in the winter of 1858 W. H. Russell and John S. Jones conceived the idea of putting on a line of daily coaches between the Missouri river and Denver, which city was then but a few months old. Majors was offered a share in the enterprise but declined as he felt that it would not pay.

The company bought a fine outfit and the line was put in operation. "They bought their mules and coaches on credit; giving their notes payable in ninety days; sent men out to establish a station every ten or fifteen miles from Leavenworth due west, going up the Smoky Hill fork of the Kansas river, through the territory of Kansas direct to Denver. The line was organized, stations built and put in running order in

remarkably quick time." They made their daily trips in six days, traveling about one hundred miles in twenty four hours. The first stage ran into Denver May 17, 1859.

It was looked upon as a great success, so far as putting the enterprise in good shape was concerned, but it did not pay; when the ninety days expired and the notes fell due the company was unable to meet them. It became necessary for Majors, Russell and Waddell to take the property; "we continued to run it daily."

The new owners consolidated this line with their other lines and Majors says: "From the summer of 1859 to 1862 the line was run from Atchison to Fort Kearney to Fort Laramie, up the Sweet Water route and South Pass and on to Salt Lake City."

Thus it appears that this first stage line on the Smoky Hill Trail had but a short existence. It is to be supposed, however, that the route continued to be used by the hardy pioneers who started out in their covered wagons inscribed "Pike's Peak or Bust" and wanted to reach their destination by the shortest and quickest route.

In 1860 the citizens of Leavenworth conceived the idea that their city ought to have a larger share of the overland business which was at that time handled from Atchison over the Republican river route and from Kansas City over the Santa Fe trail. So the city council sent out an expedition to open up the Smoky Hill route, "to point out to the public the shortest and easiest route to the gold fields of Western Kansas." (The Pike's Peak region and all of Colorado east of the mountains was at this time part of Kansas Territory.)

This party was commanded by Henry T. Green and was accompanied by an army engineer, Lieutenant Tennison, who prepared a map of the route. The party left Leavenworth June 19, 1860. They were at Topeka June 23, Junction City June 28. Salina July 4; they left Salina July 5th and plunged into the unknown. No further dates are given, but the report says "Arrived at Colorado City 18th of August, having been on the road 61 days."

By comparing Tennison's map with modern maps the route of the party through Gove county can easily be

traced. I give some extracts from Mr. Green's report of the trip:

"At a distance of fifty miles from Big Creek we came to the White Bluffs or Chalk Regions.....From the White Bluffs to the forks of the Smoky Hill a low narrow bottom will be found, hemmed in by chalk bluffs. ....We followed the bottom as far north as North Creek from which point we followed the highlands till we struck the old Pike's Peak road, beyond Cottonwood Creek, which we followed to the river, crossing numerous small tributaries to the Smoky Hill, well supplied with water and their banks lined with good grass. At this point we left the old Pike's Peak road, crossed the river and traveled about seven miles on the south side, but finding it impossible to make a good road on that side of the river we recrossed to the north side and took the old road."

Three camping places are marked on the map within the present limits of Gove county. There are some discrepancies between the table of distances as given in the report and the distances as marked on the map, which has been the cause of much worry to the historian. Perhaps the average reader is but little interested in the account of this expedition, but individually I have a lively interest in it, for the party is traveling through the neighborhood in which I live, before settlement was thought of and years before I was born. As near as I can make it out the story of their trip through Gove county would be about as follows, written out in modern language:

"North Creek" is evidently the Hackberry, which has most of its course in Gove county but empties into the Smoky in Trego county. Here they found "wood, water and grass" as at all their camping places. Here, leaving the rough ground along the Smoky, they came out on the great flats between the Smoky and the Hackberry—that splendid stretch of country through which, I have always believed, will some day be built another line of railroad parallel to the U. P. and the Missouri Pacific. They followed this route till they came to "Cottonwood Creek", which the map shows to be our own Plum Creek, crossing on the way, as the notes of expedition say, "numerous small tributaries well supplied with water." They must have passed very

near the neighborhood of my own home, and for all we know may have filled their canteens at the Indian Springs on my own farm. Their map shows that the party camped on the west bank of Plum creek at a point which can not be far from where I cross it when I go to Jerome to vote. There is a cottonwood grove at that place now, on "Tommy" Garner's old homestead. Perhaps the Leavenworth party found trees there and called the stream Cottonwood Creek for that reason. Concerning this part of the route the notes say, "Water and grass abundant. Road crosses several small water courses before reaching" (the camp on Plum creek.)

After crossing Plum creek the party struck the old trail and followed it till it touched the Smoky just east of Jerome, then crossed the river and tried to go up the south side. But here they were in the roughest part of Gove county, where many streams and canyons cut their way down to the Smoky, so they soon decided they had better stick to the old trail and recrossed to the north side. They camped that night on the north bank of the river close to the west line of the county. The map shows, off to the north of their camp, an elevation of some kind which may have been that famed bit of scenery, the Monument Rocks. The note on this part of the journey is, "Smoky Hill valley; water and grass; driftwood. Camping places, with wood, water and grass on the banks of the Smoky Hill at convenient distances." The expedition returned by the same route. Here are their notes as far as they refer to Gove county:

Sept. 17th—Left Babcock's valley this morning, traveling over the old road four miles to Cottonwood Creek where we put up a signboard. At this point we left the old road and traveled due east over a level bottom, crossing several ravines, and camped for dinner at the head springs of a stream emptying into the Smoky Hill. Good water and grass. After dinner we traveled over the same character of country, erecting mounds at suitable distances and camped at night in a ravine. Abundance of water and grass. No wood. Distance sixteen miles." (This camping place was probably in the neighborhood of Alanthus post office. The distance agrees.)

Sept. 18—Left camp at seven o'-

clock, bearing north of east over a broken country. At a distance of five miles we came to a high chalk bluff which can be seen at a great distance in all directions. This bluff is the divide between the Smoky Hill river and North Creek. Four miles from the bluff we came to North Creek."

This may have been the high bluff just south of Castle Rock. The description fits fairly well.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BUTTERFIELD TRAIL

The Leavenworth expedition does not seem to have succeeded in popularizing the Smoky Hill route, and the overland business continued to go over the Republican and Santa Fe trails. The life of the Smoky Hill route really began when David A. Butterfield took hold of it in 1865. He was a man of much experience in freighting and seems to have had no difficulty in getting capital interested in the Butterfield Overland Dispatch, as the enterprise was called, or in getting business for the company. Atchison was the eastern terminus of the line and Denver the western. The surveying party which fixed the route left Atchison June 13, 1865. In the party was Lieutenant Julian R. Fitch of the United States Army. Here is an item from his report which will interest Gove county people: "Nine and one fourth miles west (from Downer station) we crossed Rock Castle Creek. Camped two days to rest. The scenery here is really grand. One mile south is a lofty calcareous limestone bluff having the appearance of an old English castle with pillars and avenues traversing it in every direction. We named it Castle Rock." This may be the first time the name was ever applied to the place.

The first wagon train followed June 24. This caravan—known as "Train A"—was a small one loaded with 150,000 pounds of freight for Denver and other Colorado points, and the freight rate was 22½ cents per pound. A passenger and express service was put on in September; Butterfield himself was a passenger on the first stage, which reached Denver Sept. 23. The trip was widely advertised and Butterfield was given a great ovation at Denver. Root's "Overland Stage to Califor-

nia" gives a list of the stations on the Butterfield Trail and the distances between them. It entered Gove county at the point where Hackberry creek crosses the county line. Here somewhere, probably on the Trego county side of the line, was a station known as Castle Rock Creek. Leaving the Hackberry here the trail angles southwest to the Smoky. Eleven miles from Castle Rock Creek station was Grannall Spring. After reaching the Smoky the trail continues up the river till it leaves the county; there were two stations on the river in this county, Chalk Bluff, 12 miles from Grannall Spring, and Monument, 13 miles from Chalk Bluff; Monument was an eating station on the stage route and here the government established an army post for the protection of the trail.

The Butterfield Overland Dispatch did a large business from the start. In one day during the month of July, 1865, nineteen car loads of freight was received by the company at Atchison to be forwarded. In August a train was loaded with 600,000 pounds of merchandise for Salt Lake City. Butterfield had a large and expensive outfit. "Some idea of the cost of operating an overland transportation line may be had when it is known that work oxen in the summer of 1865 cost in Atchison \$160 to \$170 a yoke. The company bought for the line 1200 mules, the most of them being purchased in St. Louis."

But the Butterfield company had no monopoly of the route. The government used it for its supply trains, other companies and individuals engaged in the overland business sent trains over it and much of the emigration to Pike's Peak and California went over the new trail. No statistics are obtainable but a rushing business must have been done for a time.

Trouble soon came to the Butterfield Trail in the shape of assaults from the Indians. In November, 1865, a train was attacked by Indians "between Chalk Bluff station and Denver", and from that time on the line was never free from danger. It became necessary to send out a guard with every coach. In March, 1866, Butterfield sold out to his rival, the Holiday Overland & Express Co., which had been operating on the northern route, and after a few months Holiday in turn sold out to



Wells, Fargo & Co. This company suffered heavily from the Indians but kept up the business till the railroad was completed; then the freight, passenger, mail and express business went to the railroad, and the Smoky Hill trail ceased to be a factor in overland transportation.

The old trail can still be traced across the county. Leaving the Hackberry bottoms it sweeps past the base of Castle Rock and strikes out boldly across the high and dry prairie. On such trails watering places at frequent distances are a necessity and one such is found at the old Grannall Spring on section 29-14-27 where the trail crosses Indian creek. This section, still untouched by the plow, is now enclosed in a cattle ranch; and the spring is walled up with concrete and furnishes water for a considerable number of cattle. The trail first strikes the Smoky just north of the bridge on the Grainfield-Gove City-Shields county road. It crosses Plum creek just above its mouth and continues up the river as straight as the lay of the land will permit. The river in its long sweeping curves is sometimes close at hand, sometimes a mile away. Where the trail strikes the river about a mile east of Jerome was the Chalk Bluff station. The trail goes right across the townsite of Jerome; it runs close to the old Swede Church, and Monument station is on the river bank within sight of Monument Rocks from which it took its name. Occasionally the settler's plow has obliterated the trail but most of that part of the county where the trail runs is still pasture land and the old track is soon found again. In crossing the flats sometimes the trail becomes dim and hard to follow, but in broken ground and the crossings of ravines its ruts and gullies stand out prominently. Sometimes the trail seems to narrow to a single pair of ruts but sometimes there are a score of them. The elements have dealt lightly with the old trail; though laid out sixty years ago it can still be followed with an automobile with very little difficulty; and indeed for some miles along the river it is the main traveled road to this day.

Of the stations few traces are to be found. At Grannall Spring no remains of buildings are to be seen, though there may once have been some dug-

outs in the creek bank. At Chalk Bluff and Monument are some pits and mounds on the river bank to mark the location of the old dugouts and sod houses; and there were some stone buildings at Monument which were afterward despoiled by the settlers to get materials for their dwellings.

One of the old time freighters, John A. Himebaugh, has written of his experiences in the publications of the Kansas Historical Society. He says: "Our outfit was loaded with shelled corn in sacks for the stage line, our route was what was called the 'Smoky Hill route'; this was the overland line of the 'Holiday Stage Co.' of Denver. They ran a daily six horse stage each way, heavy Concord coaches, if water was obtainable change stations for fresh horses was had about every 12 or 15 miles. This season (1867) the plains Indians were very bad and troublesome, so the United States soldiers were distributed all along the line to protect the lives of stage passengers, freighters and emigrants going to and from the mountains. A squad of soldiers were stationed at every stage station and at certain of such places quite a post or garrison was maintained; from two to six soldiers rode with every stage coach. The army officers would not allow a stage coach to leave a station without the proper number of soldiers and when a freight outfit came to one of these stations we were required to wait till not less than eighty men were ready to move. But bull whackers did not like to be bunched up too closely, so soon after leaving we scattered out, as bull whackers were always well armed and were never afraid of Indians."

Those wishing to know more about the old stage coach days will find something interesting in such books as Root's, referred to above, Mark Twain's "Roughing It" and Albert Richardson's "Beyond the Mississippi."

It may be of interest to know what became of Butterfield. After selling out the Overland Dispatch he went to Hot Springs, Ark., and built a street car line and was killed in a fight there, by a blow from a neck yoke. He seems to have tried to talk to the Arkansas man as he would to one of his own mules on the Butterfield Overland Dispatch, and the Arkansas man would not stand for it.

## CHAPTER VI

### INDIAN DEPREDACTIONS

As the Pacific railroad and the buffalo hunters advanced across the plains the plains Indians, always more or less unfriendly, seemed roused to frenzy and in the sixties hostilities broke out along the border from Texas to Dakota. Settlements were attacked and settlers killed within a hundred miles of the Missouri river. Tracklayers on the railroad were harassed continually and could work only when under an armed guard. Traveling parties on the overland trails went heavily armed and fortified their camps at night with a rampart of wagons.

The little regular army was divided up into squads to cover as much country as possible, protect the construction gangs on the railroad and keep the trails open. Numerous small forts were established. Along the Smoky Hill trail were Fort Hays, Downer (in Trego county), Monument (Gove county), and Wallace. The state of Kansas raised a regiment of troops and Governor Crawford resigned his office to take command of it. Not till 1869 were the Indians finally put down.

The Smoky Hill trail was attacked frequently. Fort Downer was taken in 1866 and the garrison massacred. (This fort was in Trego county, nine miles east of the Gove county line.) In 1867 several of the stations were destroyed, including Castle Rock and Chalk Bluff. The late Harvey Groves of Jerome township was a regular army cavalryman in those days and used to tell of a fight which his company had with a band of Indians on the Smoky near the mouth of Cheyenne creek.

Root's "Overland Stage" describes at some length a fight at Monument station Aug. 22, 1867. A freight train of forty wagons belonging to Powers & Newman of Leavenworth was attacked at 5 o'clock in the morning by a force of Cheyenne and Sioux numbering several hundreds. Sheltered with their stock behind their wagons the freighters beat off the attack and withstood a siege of thirty two hours. The next day a government freight train of twenty five wagons came along, under guard of a small detachment of soldiers, and the

combined forces compelled the Indians to retire.

Chalk Bluff seems to have been raided more than once. D. Street, general agent of the Holliday company at Omaha, wrote the adjutant general of the United States as follows, Oct. 23, 1866:

"Your telegram of the 18th asking what Indians burned Chalk Bluff station on the Smoky Hill route is received. Have not received particulars. Am satisfied, however, that it was done by the dissatisfied band of Cheyennes known as 'Dog Soldiers.' This band consists of 250 to 300 young bucks and as it was they that killed our two employes at that station about three weeks ago it is reasonable to presume that they are the ones that burned the station. The only particulars I have of the affair is that they told our men to take the horses out of the station and go....that they did not want their horses or to shed their blood."

General Hancock, who was in charge of the operations against the Indians, said in his report "The Cheyennes are charged with the murder at Chalk Bluffs Sept. 29, 1866, and with other outrages on the Smoky Hill during last summer and fall. The trader, Mr. Butterfield, has, I presume, traded arms and ammunition to these tribes." (Rather a serious charge. Perhaps Butterfield had reason to leave the country).

The Chalk Bluffs affair is referred to repeatedly in Gen. Hancock's report. James Wadsworth, a driver of the Overland Express, makes an affidavit in regard to it which is too long to reproduce here. He said in part: "I am perfectly satisfied that the Indians who attacked me at Monument station were Cheyennes, also that the Indians who massacred the stock tenders at Chalk Bluffs were of the same party." It is worthy of passing notice that this affidavit was sworn to before Lieutenant Fred H. Beecher of the Third Infantry. This is the same officer who was killed in the famous fight at Beecher's Island on the Arickaree in September, 1868, and from whom the island was named.

The Indian outbreak was put down, the railroad was completed and the overland trail abandoned. Peace reigned on the plains for several

years. Then came another outbreak in 1878.

In September of that year a band of Cheyennes who had been removed to the Indian Territory broke away and made a dash for their old homes in the north. This band consisted of about 200 or 250 bucks with their families and effects. They entered the state of Kansas on the 14th of the month and marching in a north-westerly direction crossed the state in eighteen days. Their route took them across the counties of Barber, Comanche, Clark, Foote, Meade, Ford, Hodgeman, Ness, Gove, Sheridan, Decatur and Rawlins. They crossed the Union Pacific near Buffalo Park.

Wherever they went they committed depredations but their march was so rapid, the territory covered so narrow and the settlers so well warned that the loss of life and property were not great. The greatest loss of life was in the northern part of the state after the hostiles had crossed the railroad and perhaps felt more safe from pursuit and had more leisure for killing.

A monument to the victims of the raid was unveiled at Oberlin Sept. 30, 1911. This monument is 22 feet high and was erected by the state at a cost of \$1500. Upon it are inscribed the names of nineteen victims of the raid, all of whom were killed in the northern part of the state. Among these is the name of one Gove county young man, Edward Miskelly of Buffalo Park, who was the only one from our county to lose his life in the last Indian war in Kansas.

The property destroyed in this raid was paid for by the state. The legislature of 1879 provided for a commission to investigate the damage. This commission held sessions at Dodge City, Hays and Norton. To it were presented 116 claims aggregating \$182,646.13. Of these the commission allowed claims to the amount of \$101,766.83. Two Gove county claims were presented, for live stock stolen or killed. Smith & Savage claimed \$17,153 and were allowed \$14,019. Dowling Bros. presented a claim for \$1,650 and were allowed \$1,350.

In addition to the loss of property the commission found that thirty two lives were sacrificed in this raid of the Cheyennes.

## CHAPTER VII

### FIRST SETTLEMENTS

The construction of the Kansas division of the Union Pacific railroad was begun at Kansas City in September 1863. It had a government grant of \$16,000 per mile and every alternate section of land for twenty miles on either side of the track. Construction was slow and the road seems not to have reached Gove county till 1868. A report issued by the company July 3, 1868, stated that the road was then completed to Fort Wallace near the Colorado line. It was finished to Denver August 15, 1870.

The legislature of 1868 created two new counties, Gove and Wallace. Evidently an influx of settlers was expected, though the railroad was not yet finished; but the settlement was not to come for ten years yet. The original boundaries of Gove county were the same that it has today.

The county, like a score of others in the state, was named after a Union soldier. Here is all the information I have been able to collect about him:

Blackmar's History of Kansas says: "Gove, Grenville L., soldier, was a son of Moses Gove, who was one time mayor of Manhattan. At the breaking out of the Civil War he enlisted in Company F, Sixth Kansas Cavalry, as a private, but was soon made corporal. In the summer of 1862 he was assigned to duty as a recruiting officer and raised Company G, Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, of which he was commissioned first lieutenant. In May, 1864, he was promoted to Captain and remained in command of the company until his death at Olathe, Kan., Nov. 7, 1864. Gove county and a Grand Army Post at Manhattan have been named in his honor."

My friend George A. Root of the State Historical Society writes me: "Mr. William W. Denison, assistant adjutant general of Kansas G. A. R., was a member of the 11th Kansas. He says that 'Lew' Gove (doesn't remember whether it was Louis or Lewis) was a man of medium size, and as an officer made a very fine personal appearance. His company was said to have been the best drilled company in the 11th Kansas.



and when the other companies saw it getting ready to drill, they all stood around to watch them. He was in the Price raid campaign from start to finish, and died soon after of brain fever at Olathe. When Major General Samuel R. Curtis took command of the Western Department he looked about for a cavalry company as a body guard, and was not long in requisitioning the services of the company commanded by Gove. Gove was promoted captain May 19, 1864.\*

The government began the survey of Gove county in August, 1868. The county was laid off into townships six miles square at this time but for some reason, perhaps on account of Indian troubles, the subdivision into sections and parts of sections was not made till 1869. By the way, this survey was a very slovenly piece of work; the courses of the streams are not indicated correctly, they being marked down in some cases a mile away from where they should be; some of the section lines are crooked and the corner stones several rods out of line. Evidently the surveyors were more interested in finishing the job and drawing their pay than they were in doing their work well.

Gove county was too far west at this time to attract settlers. No one lived in the new county except the buffalo hunters and the railroad employes. Weston's Railway Guide says of Buffalo Park in 1872: "There is a telegraph office, soldier's quarters, turf house and tank here." At Grinnell were "section house, railway tank, six dug outs and two large turf houses."

The first bona fide settler in Gove county was George Von Dehsen, who came to the county from Colorado with a party of buffalo hunters in 1871. Instead of following the buffalo after they were driven from the county he settled down at Grinnell and lived there till killed by a stroke of lightning in 1913. The next settler was Charles Johnson of Grainfield township, who came to the county as a section hand in 1874.

The new county must have been a very lonesome place indeed in those days. The Indian, the buffalo and the buffalo hunter had vanished, and grass grew in the ruts of the abandoned Butterfield Trail. The only

signs of animation were along the railroad where the trains hurried through without stopping except for coal and water and the section crew went forth on its daily round to keep the track in order.

Charles A. Sternberg, the noted fossil hunter, who has Gove county for one of his regular hunting grounds, made his first trip here when a very young man, in 1876. He tells about it as follows in his book, "The Life of a Fossil Hunter": "As soon as the frost was out of the ground, having secured a team of ponies and a boy to drive them, I left Manhattan and drove out to Buffalo Park, where one of my brothers was the agent. The only house, besides the small station building, was that occupied by the section men. Great piles of buffalo bones along the railroad at every station testified to the countless numbers of the animals slain by the white man in his craze for pleasure and money. A buffalo hide was worth at that time about a dollar and a quarter.

Here at Buffalo I made my headquarters for many years. A great windmill and a well of pure water, a hundred and twenty feet deep, made it a Mecca for us fossil hunters after two weeks of strong alkali water. At this well Professor Mudge's party and my own used to meet in peace after our fierce rivalry in the field as collectors for our respective paleontologists, Marsh and Cope.

What vivid memories I have of that first expedition!—memories of countless hardships and splendid results. I explored all the exposures of chalk from the mouth of Hackberry Creek, in the eastern part of Gove county, to Fort Wallace, on the south fork of the Smoky Hill, a distance of a hundred miles, as well as the region along the north and south forks of the Solomon River.

When we left Buffalo station we left civilization behind us. We made our own wagon trails, two of which especially were afterwards used by the settlers until the section lines were constructed. One of them was directly south, crossing Hackberry Creek about fifteen miles from the railroad, at a point where there was a spring of pure water—a rare and valuable find in that region. We camped here many times and made such a good trail that it was used for many years. Our second trail ex-

\*Note 4.

tended across the country, striking Hackberry Creek where Gove City now stands, and led over Plum Creek divide, whose high ledges of yellow chalk served as a landmark for twenty miles. From this point we could see Monument Rocks; and near them the remains of a one-company post on the Smoky Hill Trail. Our trail then led up the Smoky Hill to the mouth of Beaver Creek, on the eastern edge of Logan County, and followed the old road as far west as Wallace.

Prairie dog villages extended west along all the water courses, and open prairies to the state line, and we were rarely out of sight of herds of antelope and wild horses. Near the present site of Gove City, on the south side of Hackberry Creek, there is a long ravine with perpendicular banks ten feet or more in height. This ravine at that time was used as a natural corral by some men who made a business of capturing these wild ponies by following them night and day, keeping them away from their watering places, and giving them no chance to graze, until they were exhausted. They were then easily driven into the ravine and roped; after which they were picketed on the prairie and soon became tame. These wild horses were swift travelers, and the most graceful of all the wild animals of the west; being distinguished for the beauty of their flowing manes and tails.

There was constant danger from Indians, and in order that we might escape as much as possible the eagle eye of some scout who might be passing through the country, our tent and wagon sheet were of brown duck. This blended with the dry, brown buffalo grass, as we traveled from canyon to canyon, and could not be distinguished very far even by the trained eye of an Indian."

But in 1878 the wave of immigration struck Kansas and flowed far out on the plains before it spent its force. Of course the vacant lands in central Kansas were taken first, but by 1879 Trego county had attained a population of 3500 and settlers were pouring on west into Gove county.

The first homesteads taken in Gove county were the southwest quarter of section 8-11-27 and the northeast quarter of section 18-11-27. These tracts adjoin the townsite of Buffalo

Park. They were both taken the same day, December 10, 1877, the former by W. A. Lewis and the latter by J. C. Burnett.

Settlers came in at a lively rate in 1878 and 1879. Among those who came in the spring of 1878 was a party of "Pennsylvania Dutch," from Westmoreland county, Pa., who settled south of Buffalo Park. The party consisted of Christian Schaefer with his wife, five sons and one daughter, Wm. Walthour and family, Wm. Rowe and family and the Skelly brothers, twenty two persons in all. At the time of their arrival the only habitation in that region was the house of Jim Thompson, the section boss at Buffalo Park. Today only two of this party are still living in Gove County, Mrs. Schaefer and her daughter Emma, (Mrs. Chas. Crippen). Christian Schaefer died in 1913. Mary, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Schaefer (now Mrs. John Sutcliffe), was born Sept. 17, 1879, and is said to have been the first white child born in Gove county. Only once have I ever known Mary Schaefer's right to this title to be disputed. In some early county paper I once found an item about the "Hamilton twins" of Grinnell, with the claim that they were the first white children born in the county.

Tom Hamilton was section boss at Grinnell in the seventies and the family left the county, as near as I can find out, in the spring of 1878, going to Ellis, Kansas. Does any one know anything about the twins?\*

It is impossible after a lapse of forty years to give much account of the earliest settlers. The majority of them were gone again within a couple years, leaving no trace on the history of the county. Only a few of the men and women of 1878 and 1879 survive to this day and none of them, so far as I know, have ever written their experiences. It will probably take an Old Settlers' organization to draw out the recollections of the pioneers, if the history of the first settlement of Gove county is ever to be written in detail or with any degree of accuracy.

One group which left a record of the date of its arrival was the "Bristol colony," from Bristol, Bucks Co., Pa., which arrived March 4, 1879, at Buffalo Park. This consisted of

\*Note 5.

Richard E. Shaw, Joseph Moulding, W. and R. Scott, and Messrs. Smith, Wood, Robinson, Peterson, Longworth, Bennett and West. These families all settled in town 11, range 28, a few miles southwest of Buffalo Park. A write up of the colony appears in the Grainfield paper the following year. The "colony" is not heard of afterward and probably most of its members soon left the county. Joseph Moulding seems to have been the only stayer.

What was known as the Locket colony settled on the Hackberry about twelve miles south and three west of Grainfield in 1879. The first arrival was Thomas Locket, March 8, 1879. Later came the Maxwell, Danaker, Tenan and Swaer families, and a postoffice known as Locket was established with Thomas Locket as postmaster. All these families soon left the county.

A colony of Holland Dutch came to make their homes in Gove county at this time. At the time of the Indian raid in 1878 when trains were being held up for fear of the savages a telegram from Salina dated Oct. 3 said "Last night there were 44 Hollanders from Iowa on the train, bound for Gove county." N. J. Gesmon was the agent of the colony and bore a letter of introduction from Governor Geer of Iowa to Governor Anthony of Kansas. This colony settled principally in township 11-29, southwest of Grainfield, and the census roll of 1880 contains the names of some fifty families of undoubted Hollander blood.

Of these Kryn Van Zee and members of the Verhoeff, De Boer and Van Marter families are the only ones who still live or have lived in the county in recent times. It would be interesting to know what has become of the following families: Platz, Rheitz, Van Stenwyk, Van Gorkon, Brinker, Pas, Schimmel, Booi, Van de Verre, Ruiter, De Yong, Van Kooy, Rhyneburger, Kamp, Brenklander, Vanderlinden, Walraven, Boombower, Van Loon, Faasen, De Wild, Kraag, Rap, Vanderwilt, Notenboom, Glanzevoort, Muillenburg, Vanderhorst, Vanderpool, Benink, Koffers, Vanderkreek, Den Burger, De Bondt, Ten Hagen, Veenstra, Vanderwerf and others.

Kryn Van Zee tells me that it was the intention of the Hollanders to start a town on section 2-11-29, but

the move got started too late and the establishment of Grainfield two miles east of the site they had selected put an end to the project. Most of the colony seem to have returned to Iowa in 1880, where perhaps some of them are living to this day.

In the list of "first happenings" in Gove county history it may be well to include here the following:

The first wedding of which we have any record is noticed thus in the Buffalo Park paper:

"William Watcher and Corneila Den Burger, both of Buffalo Park, were united in the bonds of holy matrimony July 10, 1880, by Rev. J. A. Hahn. The happy couple will go to WaKeeney where Mr. Watcher is employed by the railroad company." It is contrary to nature that the county had been settled two years before there was a wedding, but if there were any before that date they never got into the papers.

The following record of the first sermon is taken from successive issues of the Grainfield paper in 1880:

Feb. 13—A little over a year ago the first sermon ever preached in Gove county was delivered at Buffalo Park by a Presbyterian clergyman, Rev. Mr. Schermerhorn. It was preached in a railroad car to a respectable audience. Feb. 20—Our correspondent whose record of the first sermon preached in Gove county appeared last week was mistaken. The Rev. Mr. Schermerhorn is a German Reformed minister and till recently was pastor of the church at Pella, Iowa. Mr. S. was passing over the Kansas Pacific railroad when the Indians made their raid through this country a year ago last fall. As the passengers feared to proceed the train remained at Buffalo station over the Sabbath which gave the zealous minister an opportunity to preach and he improved it.

But the most important result of the immigration of 1878-79 was the founding of Grainfield and the growth of the older towns, Buffalo Park and Grinnell.

The townsite of Grainfield was laid out by the U. P. Railway Co. in June, 1879. The station was first opened for business August 23. John B. Beal and George S. Dryer were among the first arrivals; they put up the Occidental Hotel and engaged in the real estate business. The first newspaper published in Gove county

was the Grainfield Republican, A. J. R. Smith editor, which made its first appearance Jan. 28, 1880. It was newsy and well patronized but we look in vain in its columns for names which are familiar to us today. John A. Lewis was postmaster, A. J. Ayres seems to have been the leading merchant, Miskelly & Sons—probably relatives of the young man killed in the Indian raid—were dealers in live stock, but Beal & Dryer were the only firm whose name is known to the present generation. The population of Grainfield is not given.

The Kansas Gazeteer for 1880 mentions Grinnell as having a population of 75. It says of Grinnell, "it ships cattle and banks at WaKeeney." Joseph Corette was postmaster. Buffalo Park had 250. L. J. Bliss was postmaster and J. H. Miskelly was listed as "hotel and live stock dealer."

Grainfield and Buffalo Park were good trading points at this time, as not only did they handle the freight for Gove county but goods were hauled from them as far as Oberlin on the north and Dighton on the south. These towns as yet had no railroad, and the official record books for Decatur county and a 4000 pound safe in which to keep the records were unloaded at Grainfield and hauled to Oberlin, a distance of fifty miles. The first frame houses in both Oberlin and Dighton were built of lumber hauled from Grainfield.

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## CHAPTER VIII

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### THE EFFORT TO ORGANIZE

The legislature of 1879 changed the boundaries of Gove and a number of other unorganized western counties. Just why this was done is not clear—perhaps the interests of local politicians and ambitious would-be county seat towns had something to do with it. This act dropped two rows of townships from Gove county on the west and one row on the south, and added one row of townships on the north. It reduced the county in size to twenty four miles east and west and thirty miles north and south, with an area of 720 square miles instead of 1080 as before. The Saline river was included within the new boundaries and the Smoky was given to Lane county.

The county was attached to Ellis county for judicial purposes.

As long as the county was sparsely settled it got along very well without organization and without taxes; but now with the increasing population naturally came a demand for a county organization. There was considerable lawlessness, which is hard to deal with in a county without government, but the school question was the big problem now confronting the settlers. An unorganized county could not levy taxes, and the new settlers had to get along without schools or contribute the money direct from their own pockets to establish them.

The first meetings among the settlers were school meetings. Buffalo Park was first—theirs is still known as School District No. 1. The second was in the Hollander settlement. Grainfield established a school the winter after the town was started, but we find that six years later the town had no school building. The schools of that day must have been very primitive affairs—without equipments, having very short terms and taught in sod houses or any old makeshift of a building. It would be interesting to hear about it from some of the pupils who attended them, a number of whom doubtless still live in the county.

March 11, 1880, the board of commissioners of Ellis county made Gove county a township of Ellis county under the name of Gove township, and ordered an election March 26 to choose township officers. The order commanded the township records to be kept at Grainfield. At a caucus held at Grainfield on the 13th B. H. Ten Hagen was nominated for trustee, J. A. Lewis for clerk and A. J. Ayres for treasurer. Presumably these officers were elected, though I have failed to find an account of the election. There seems to have been some doubt of this, for in the following fall the commissioners called another election at Buffalo Park October 23, at which the following were elected: Trustee, Marion Brinker; clerk, J. H. Fosdick; treasurer, Thos. Locket. Just why a special election should be called, so close to the state and national election, is not clear. But Kansas loved elections in those days and had not yet reached the point where they could be satisfied with only one election every two years. Under the law as it stood then

a population of 1500 was sufficient to organize a county. Trego county was organized in 1879 with about twice that number. By the summer of 1880 there was some reason to believe that Gove had the necessary population, and Buffalo Park started the movement for organization. Grainfield seems to have been distinctly unfriendly and to have done all it could to hinder the movement. The rivalry between Grainfield and Buffalo Park appears all through this time; Buffalo Park had a paper now, the Express, which first appeared June 3, 1880, with J. C. Burnett as editor, and the rivalry between the towns finds expression in a constant quarrel between the Express and the Republican.

A memorial praying for organization was circulated and received 254 signatures; it was presented to the governor June 29, 1880. The Buffalo Park faction circulated a petition asking for the appointment of Edmund H. Hibbard as census taker; Grainfield got into the game and circulated one for the appointment of A. J. R. Smith, editor of the Republican. Hibbard's list was the longest and he got the appointment.

To complicate matters the attorney general of the state handed down an opinion that the act of 1879 changing the boundaries of Gove county had not been properly passed, and that the true boundaries of the county were those fixed by the law of 1868. In order to be on the safe side Hibbard proceeded to enumerate the population of all the territory in dispute—taking the census of the county as fixed by the law of 1868 and also by that of 1879.

This brought a protest from Sheridan county, whose officials wrote the governor claiming the row of townships along the Saline as a part of Sheridan county and threatening trouble because Hibbard was taking the census there. Many settlers were leaving the county because of the drouth, and Hibbard's opponents wrote the governor that he was enumerating nonresidents and those who had left the county; the matter even reached the affidavit stage.

One of the most active citizens of the county at this time was the Rev. J. Q. A. Weller, the Congregational minister at Buffalo Park, who had a voluminous correspondence with Governor St. John. He wrote the

governor warning him against the Grainfield crowd. "The trouble with Grainfield," wrote Mr. Weller, "is that it is a Democratic outfit and wants to put off organization in hopes of making this a Democratic county, which God forbid!"

With so much opposition it would have been difficult to organize the county even if the census had shown the required number of inhabitants; but when Hibbard made his report showing several hundred short of the necessary fifteen hundred the whole scheme of organization fell to the ground. There was now no danger of a county seat fight and Grainfield and Buffalo Park could make up and be friends once more.

The United States census of 1880 had shown a population of 1197 in Gove county. Hibbard's census was as follows: In the county as defined by the act of 1868, 1184; by the act of 1879, 1227. The four townships along the Saline had a population of 241; the six along the railroad, 670. The four townships now included in Larrabee township had a population of 23; the four in Jerome had 9; and not a single inhabitant was found in Lewis.

It may be interesting to know who were in Gove county in 1880. Upon the census roll appear the names of the following who still are, or within recent years have been, citizens of the county:

J. B. Beal, Geo. S. Dryer, E. H. Borah, Christian Schaefer, Andrew Christensen, Joseph Moulding, F. W. Martin, George Krieh, J. K. Moore, George Van Dehsen, Joseph Lengel, M. O. Wrighter, Wm. Hamilton, C. J. Ellithorpe, F. B. Strong, Charles Johnson, P. J. Gubbins, Frank Sharp, John Verhoeff, George Rhodes, John De Santos, Hiram Crippen, Jacob Hansen, A. B. Brandenburg, J. C. Houser, Alex Haney, Gus Peterson, Kryn Van Zee.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE STATE AID

The year 1878 was one of good crops in western Kansas. Yields of thirty bushels of wheat and seventy five of corn per acre were reported, and these stories had much to do with the flood of immigration which set in for the west in the following year. But the fat year of 1878 was



followed by a series of lean ones; and the successive crop failures fell very hard on the new settlers in the western counties. The pioneers were industrious, energetic and full of hope for the future. Every man felt himself an independent land owner when he had put his homestead papers on a quarter section of land on the boundless plains of Sunny Kansas. But few of them had any money or anything else to fall back on and were from the start dependent on their labor and their crops for the support of themselves and their families; so when the crop failed in 1879 the settlers were confronted with the problem of what to do to keep themselves and their families through the winter. All sorts of makeshifts were resorted to. A few found work on the railroad; some went west and some east to work at anything they could find to do. This disruption of families fell hardest, of course, on the women and children who had to stay in the lonely sod house or dug-out home on the claim while the father was away at work. Those who stayed gathered up the bleached and scattered bones of the buffalo and hauled them to the railroad where they found sale at four to six dollars a ton. Loads of bones were hauled to the U. P. station from as far away as Rawlins county, a distance of sixty miles. By these and other makeshifts many of the pioneers weathered the storm. But as winter came on it became evident that many would be unable to get along without outside help; and so the call for aid went forth.

The call met a ready answer. Americans are generous people and never fail to respond to a call for aid, whether it be from flood sufferers in the Ohio valley, earthquake sufferers in California or the victims of drouth on the plains—or victims of famine in India, Russia or Belgium. Gove was not the only county afflicted by the drouth—the blight had struck all the western counties.

The first mention I can find of aid in Gove county is this from the Grainfield Republican, Jan. 29, 1880: "It is reported that Rev. J. Q. A. Weller who was chosen to see about aid for Gove and Sheridan counties wrote Gov. St. John that \$1600 was needed, of which Sheridan needed three times as much as Gove."

The largest single contributor to

the aid fund for western Kansas was Jay Gould, then in control of the Union Pacific. In response to an appeal from the governor he contributed \$5000, specifying that it should be expended "in the counties of Trego, Gove, Wallace, Sheridan, Graham and the northern part of Ness," along the line of his railroad; the railroad also offered to haul all donations free of charge. The governor appointed R. S. Coldren of Topeka to handle the Gould contribution; Mr. Coldren made several trips to Gove and other counties with provisions.

Gov. St. John made a personal visit to the western counties in May, 1880, to investigate conditions. On his return to Topeka he invited a number of prominent citizens to a meeting in his office; at this meeting, May 25, a State Aid association was formed for the relief of settlers in western Kansas. Most of the aid received during the year 1880 was handled through this committee. The secretary of the committee reported that 1600 people in western Kansas were destitute. His list was prepared by counties and showed 400 destitute in Gove, 1000 in Sheridan, 1000 in Graham, 1600 in Ness, etc. Gove's number was smaller than any other county except Wallace, which reported 200.

On July 3, 1880, at a meeting in Buffalo Park Rev. J. Q. A. Weller was appointed to visit the east and solicit aid. Rev. Weller was very active in the aid matter. The Grainfield paper was very spiteful at Mr. Weller, charging him with sensationalism and with grossly exaggerating the amount of destitution existing, and even insinuated that he was a grafter. A meeting at Grainfield in January, 1880, adopted a resolution that there were only twenty eight destitute families in the county at that time and that there were enough provisions on hand for these at Buffalo Park. Grainfield gave but little encouragement to the aid proposition and continually threw cold water on it. It must be remembered that the organization movement was under way at this time and a county seat fight was brewing, and perhaps it was natural that Grainfield should be suspicious of any movement coming from Buffalo Park, and vice versa.

The legislature of 1881 appropriated \$25,000 for the relief of western Kansas and I. N. Holloway was

appointed commissioner to administer the fund. He made his report June 30, 1881. He said the destitution was not so great as reported but that he found many persons greatly in need of help. He estimated that ninety five per cent of the suffering was due to the drouth of 1879-80 and the other five per cent to various causes such as sickness, loss of teams and the destruction of growing crops by roving droves of unherded cattle. He bought 750,000 pounds of supplies, which were transported free by the railroads. The total cost of supplies was \$14,817.05, leaving a balance of over ten thousand dollars of the appropriation to turn back into the treasury.

A vast amount of distress was caused by the drouth of 1879-80 in the way of personal suffering, loss of crops and the abandonment of homes. What was the total amount of aid rendered can never be known but it was small compared to the total loss; and it has long since been made good by contributions from western Kansas to the unfortunates of other localities. It is probably no exaggeration to say that western Kansas contributed more to the flood sufferers of the Kaw valley at the time of the flood of 1903 than all eastern Kansas contributed to the west in the time of the Great Drouth.

## CHAPTER X

### THE TEXAS CATTLE TRAIL

The population of Gove county fell away half in the big drouth, and the fields began to go back to the primitive sod. The legislature of 1881 took the county away from Ellis county and attached it to Trego. The year 1881 saw the death of all the county papers; the Grainfield Republican breathed its last in January; the Buffalo Park Express went under in August. In June J. G. Coutant & Sons started the Golden Belt Advance at Grainfield but it gave up the struggle in October, and with its death the newspaper history of Gove county closes for four years.

At the first national election held in Gove county, in 1880, a total of 158 votes were cast. For president the vote was Garfield, Republican, 101; Hancock, Democrat, 40; Weaver, Greenbacker, 17. The vote for governor was St. John, Republican,

102; Ross, Democrat, 40; Vrooman, Greenbacker, 15. The vote on the prohibition amendment to the constitution was 88 for and 45 against.

The county administered its own affairs as a township of Trego county, and every election resolved itself into a contest between Grainfield and Buffalo Park. Buffalo Park was the voting precinct and its faction was generally the stronger. At the election of 1881 Buffalo Park won by a vote of about 100 to 56 all round. E. C. Baker was elected trustee without opposition; Frank Sharp beat his Grainfield opponent for road overseer by 103 to 55. In 1882 L. H. Lassel beat George Platz for trustee 50 to 48; Frank Sharp and F. S. Adams were elected justices of the peace. F. W. ("Fred") Martin started a contest against Adams on the ground that he had a homestead in Sheridan county and was only residing in Gove county to escape taxation on his cattle, but Adams beat the contest by giving up his homestead and announcing himself a citizen of Gove county for keeps. So little was the value placed on land in the west in those days! George Platz was elected trustee in 1883. In 1884 Platz and D. L. Greenfield were rival candidates for trustee; Platz was elected on the face of the returns but the election was contested and the matter carried before the Trego county commissioners at Wakeeney who decided in favor of Greenfield. Some one claimed to have made the discovery at this time that by a decision of the supreme court Gove county had not been properly attached to Trego and was consequently a sort of No Man's Land and all its official acts were illegal. However, no great issues hinged on the matter and no great harm was done.

The hostility between the Buffalo Park and Grainfield factions caused a split in the Republican party in 1880, each faction holding a convention and sending a different set of delegates to the state and district conventions.

The rivalry of the two towns shows up in the correspondence in the Wakeeney paper after Gove county's papers ceased to exist. Nov. 5, 1881, the Buffalo Park correspondent boasts thus of his town: "Four good stores in the town—only hardware store in the county—the only money order office and the only railroad

well—the first sermon ever preached in the county was here—first church, Congregational, was here—the first school taught and first school house in the county worthy of the name was built at Buffalo Park—the U. P. railroad has here the only stock yards in the county.” Next week the Grainfield correspondent comes back with the following: “The professions are represented here by two ministers, Presbyterian and Methodist, one physician and one lawyer. The Presbyterians have a church building paid for and we have two terms of school a year. The county is unorganized as yet and we have no taxes to pay; but when it is organized Grainfield will be the county seat.”

Decoration Day was celebrated at Grainfield in 1882. There was but one soldier's grave to decorate, that of Chas. A. Nichols who had died at Grainfield while on a visit to relatives there. About five hundred were present, of whom seventy five were ex-soldiers. Fred Martin was chairman and C. M. Burr acted as Officer of the Day.

Buffalo Park celebrated the Fourth of July in 1883. J. J. Dixon of Bunker Hill delivered the oration of the day and David Ritchie (now a prominent lawyer of Salina) read the Declaration of Independence. The baseball game between Buffalo Park and Bunker Hill resulted 40 to 22 in favor of Buffalo Park. Even in those days Gove county had a champion baseball team.

In its issue of April 30, 1880, the Republican notes that the Kenneth baseball team of Sheridan county came down to Grainfield and played a team made up of the Grainfield and Buffalo boys, the Gove county boys getting the victory by the score of 39 to 33. The names of the players are not given but the paper states that this was the first game ever played in Grainfield. On the following 4th of July the same teams met again at Kenneth, the Gove county boys again winning, 23 to 18. In spite of their rivalry it is evident that the two Gove county towns would get together if necessary to beat another county for the baseball championship. The large scores look rather strange to us now; but baseball was a different sport then, played without gloves, and the games were remarkable for heavy hitting

instead of fast fielding and scientific pitching.

But the biggest thing in the history of Gove county at that time was the Texas cattle drive. Tens of thousands of the long horns were being driven through the county every season. The history of the cattle drive dates back to the years immediately following the Civil War. Texas at that time was full of cattle but they were scarce at the north. Cattle were wanted for the feed lots of the corn belt and, after the buffalo had been exterminated and the Indian subdued, cattle were needed to stock the ranges of the west and northwest. Joseph G. McCoy of Abilene was the originator of the drive; and the cattle at first were driven to Abilene, which was for a time the western terminus of the U. P. railroad. Later the drive was made to Hays, to Wichita and to Dodge City. These changes were made because the railroad was being extended farther west to those points, and because as the settlers filled up the plains of central Kansas they refused to allow the cattle to be driven through their settlements and sought and obtained legislation pushing the traffic farther west.

The “dead line” as established by the legislature of 1879, beginning at the boundary of the Indian Territory, ran up along the east side of Clark and Ford counties to the Arkansas river, thence west along the river to Dodge City, and thence along the east side of Finney, Lane, Gove, Sheridan and Rawlins counties to the Nebraska line; no driving was allowed east of this line. The effect of this regulation was to direct the stream of cattle to Dodge. Here some of them were shipped to eastern markets over the Santa Fe road, and those destined for more northern points continued on their way up the trail. The Santa Fe and Union Pacific were then the only railroads in the country and after leaving Dodge no settlements were met with till the neighborhood of Buffalo Park was reached.

The trail entered Gove Co. 6 miles west of the southeast corner of the county and struck across country in a direction slightly west of north, to Buffalo Park. The old trail can still be traced for a part of its course across the county, wherever it has not been obliterated by the plow; it



is particularly plain just south of the Hackberry where it sweeps by the base of Round Top.

The cattle were driven in herds numbering hundreds or sometimes several thousands. At the camping places along the streams they were allowed to scatter out and graze, but on the march they were strung out by the drovers in a long thin line. Land marks were set up where necessary to mark the trail. The Buffalo Park Express, June 3, 1880, had the following mention of the trail: "The right of way has been obtained from the settlers over their claims, and a new cattle trail marked out with two furrows about two hundred feet apart all the way through the settlements in Gove county. The new trail is very near the old one, has better crossings on the creeks, and is shorter than the old trail. Soon after crossing the Hackberry coming northward you strike the new trail which crosses the old one three times before arriving at Big Creek and thence you have a perfectly straight route between the furrows for five miles over smooth level ground to the stock yards in Buffalo." The number of cattle that traveled the trail can only be conjectured. We have the figures for one season only. The editor of the Express kept a partial record for 1880. In one day of that year 11,600 head arrived at Buffalo Park. Thirty thousand came in one week. By July 8 the arrivals numbered 89,220; by August 5 there were 165,220. After this date no more figures were given, but as the run of range cattle usually continues till fall it is evident the record is far from complete. The cattle did not all come to Buffalo Park; some herds crossed the railroad near Grainfield and Grinnell, and it is probably conservative enough to estimate that a quarter of a million head of Texas cattle passed through Gove county during the one season of 1880. Some of the cattle were shipped from the stock yards at Buffalo Park to the east or to the west, but most of the herds were driven on, to find their final stopping point in Nebraska or the territories of the northwest. The cattle moved leisurely, sometimes taking weeks for the trip, and often making long stops when the grass was good and water abundant. Some of the herds were known as "time herds," because they

had been bought by the government to furnish rations for the Indians on the reservations and were under contract to be delivered at their destination by a certain time.

The cattle drive soon became unpopular in Gove county for the same reasons that had caused it to be outlawed in the older counties. The cattle destroyed the crops of the settlers, who could collect no damages. It was charged that the cattle brought disease into the country. The cowboys went on sprees at Buffalo Park and Grainfield and once "shot up" the town of Grinnell; the cowboys got the worst of this affray (June, 1880) the net result being one cowboy killed and one citizen wounded.

Petitions were circulated asking the legislature to remove the "dead line" farther west. The bill was introduced in the legislature of 1881 and passed the House but was killed in the Senate. Being unable to get relief from the legislature the settlers tried another tack and secured an order from the commissioners of Trego county that after the first day of August, 1881, no stock should be allowed to run at large in the night time in Gove county. This night herd law may have helped some but the Texas cattle drive continued till 1883; the legislature of that year changed the law and removed the dead line to the westward of Gove, Sheridan and Rawlins counties, and the Texas cattle drive ceased to be any longer a disturbing factor in the history of Gove county.

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## CHAPTER XI

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### THE SMOKY HILL CATTLE POOL.

At different times between 1878 and 1886 the following post offices were established in Gove county: Willow, Lulie, Locket, Tiffany, Hackberry, Sarah, St. Sophia, Mahan, Sloey, Hackberry. (The latter was not the present office of that name, but another one in the western part of the county.) These posts were generally short lived and unimportant and a history of them would be hard to obtain.

The State Board of Agriculture first recognized Gove county in its reports in 1881. That year it was reported as having a population of 650, with 3,243 acres under cultivation,

546 of which was wheat and 1,610 was corn. Horses and mules numbered 200, milk cows 311, other cattle 2,594, sheep 4,760. In the report of 1884 the population is put at 700 and the principal industry as stock raising, but no figures are given. In 1885 the population was 595, number of horses 444, milk cows 194, other cattle 7,855, sheep 5,167.

But now for a few years the development of the country and its resources was to be in the hands of the cattle men. Such farming as was done was carried on in the northern part of the county near the railroad. The Shoen brothers ran a sheep ranch on the North Hackberry, but the whole southern part of the county was a void till the cattle men began to take possession. These cattle men met in the fall of 1882 and organized the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool.

The Pool was similar to other cattlemen's organizations then existing everywhere in the range country. Each member had his own cattle and his own brand, but the cattle all ran together on a common range and were "rounded up" once a year. The organization had its officers and constitution, it hired range riders and other employes and incurred other necessary expenses which were met by assessments on the members according to the number of cattle each one had in the pool. The territory claimed by the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool was thirty miles along the Smoky and about twelve miles each way from it north and south, though this territory varied in extent at different times. The principal watering places for the cattle were on the river, but drinking places were also maintained at the old Grannal Spring and Indian Spring on Indian creek and at various other places within the territory claimed by the Pool.

The Pool was organized in August 1882 at Farnsworth postoffice in Lane county. The first officers were S. S. Evans president, W. A. Sternberg secretary and treasurer, Noah Chenoweth and J. W. Felch directors. The Pool headquarters were at Farnsworth at first, but as its membership grew and its territory extended its headquarters were changed to Grainfield and E. A. McMath of that place was made secretary and treasurer. The membership of the Pool was never very large; it seems to have been its policy to keep the

membership small and not overstock the range.

At the time of the organization of the Pool there were the following cow camps along the Smoky in Gove county from east to west: Felch, Evans, McCafferty & Swartz, Bowman Brothers and Sternberg. Bowman Bros. held their cattle on the site of old Fort Monument on the Butterfield Trail. Each member of the Pool advertised his brand in the Kansas Cowboy at Dodge City, and these ads filled a whole column of that publication. Here are the names of the advertisers, which probably constitutes nearly a full list of the membership of the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool at the time of its greatest prosperity: S. S. Evans, John W. Felch, Frank McCafferty, Sylvester Swartz, E. M. Prindle, Samuel Bowman, George Bowman, Rochester Land & Cattle Co. (W. A. Sternberg, Sup't), Wm. Lenihan, Robert Hickman, James Rider, Frank Davis, John Mueller, N. Chenoweth, Curtis & Campbell, J. J. Baker, E. A. McMath.

When organized the pool represented about five thousand head of cattle. This number increased till it was estimated at fifteen thousand head in 1884.

The Pool was prosperous. At the end of its first year, in the fall of 1883, it gave out a report showing that the expense for keeping the cattle had been but twelve and one half cents a head per month. Fifteen hundred calves were branded that year and the number of cattle in the Pool had increased to more than eight thousand. A contract was let to build a drift fence forty eight miles long on the south and east sides of the range. This fence was a substantial affair with galvanized wire and oak posts. Joshua Wheatcroft of Lane county was given the contract to build the fence.

The fence proved its worth. In the spring of '84 it was announced that the cattle were badly scattered by storms but that the fence had held them on the range and kept them from drifting away. Losses had not been heavy, though the cattle had been subsisting entirely on grass. There was fear that the range would be overstocked. Members were complaining that a "carpet bag" outfit was preparing to move in on the range to take advantage, without paying, of the accommodations af-

forded by the Pool. The Pool this spring bought 140 high grade Short-horn animals for breeding purposes and allotted them among the members.

Fifteen hundred Pool calves were branded in 1884. The calf crop was smaller than expected. (Wonder if the fact that the cows had been "scattered by storms" and "subsisted entirely on grass" had anything to do with this?) It was stated that some of the cattlemen were putting up windmills on fresh ranges. A new pool was formed this fall in the southeast corner of Gove county, known as the Forrester Pool.

The headquarters of the Forrester Pool were at the Forrester ranch at the big spring north of the Smoky now owned by Dave Bollinger. An irrigation expert from the state agricultural college once inspected this spring and estimated that it has a flow sufficient to irrigate ten acres of ground. The pool had twenty miles of fence and four thousand head of cattle; its members were Forrester Bros., Kellerman Bros., I. P. Olive, Joseph Gotier, E. R. Moffit and Joseph Middleby.

This man Olive was an old time cattleman with a history. A native of Texas, a Confederate soldier, wounded at Shiloh, captured at Vicksburg, he had been obliged to leave Texas for cause, after the war. Settling next in Custer county, Nebraska, he took part in a war between cattleman and settlers and was leader of a party which lynched a couple settlers in 1878. For this crime he served a term in the Nebraska penitentiary. The details of this affair are given at considerable length in S. D. Butcher's "History of Custer County." Olive's conduct in Gove county seems not to have been such as to get him into trouble, but a couple years after finally leaving Kansas he died with his boots on in Colorado, being shot by a man who it was said had followed him clear from Texas to get him.

Prosperity continued in 1885. At the first calf round up two thousand head were branded; the calf crop was estimated at three thousand for the season. "Jack" Thomas makes his first appearance in Gove county history; he is hired to "ride the line" and keep the cattle from bothering the settlers on the Hackberry. During the season seventy four car loads

of cattle were shipped from Buffalo Park, forty seven of them going in the month of October.

The winter of 1885-86 put the finishing touches on the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool. It was the hardest winter that western Kansas had ever known. The cold was long continued and intense, with frequent blizzards and the ground covered with snow; and without either feed or shelter only the strongest of the cattle could survive. Human lives were lost likewise in the storms of this winter. August Johnson, one of the Pool cowboys, was frozen to death on Salt Creek in January. After this storm in January newspaper reports estimated that there were ten thousand dead cattle in western Kansas between Garden City and the White Woman. Many cattle which survived the winter storms were so weakened that they died in the spring.

The cattlemen held their last meeting at Grainfield in the spring of 1886. Grainfield had another paper then, the Cap Sheaf, and from it we take the following account of the meeting:

"The regular semi-annual meeting of the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool was held at Grainfield on Monday, April 5. Besides the regular routine of business important action was taken toward the winding up of the association. The directors were instructed to take immediate steps to remove and dispose of the wire fence erected by the Pool three years ago. They were also authorized to prosecute any person found stealing posts or wire.

"The following action was taken relating to the general round up:

"Whereas, the cattle owned and controlled by the members of this Pool are, on account of the unusually severe winter and late spring, in a much weaker condition than usual at this season, therefore be it

"Resolved, that the general round up shall commence upon our Pool range June 1st, 1886, and as a matter of self protection no rounding up of the cattle on the range prior to that date will, under any circumstances, be permitted.

"Resolved, that the secretary be instructed to notify secretaries of interested stock associations of the date fixed for said round up and that a copy of this resolution be published in the Grainfield Cap Sheaf for the

information and guidance of local stock men.

"On comparing notes and opinions among the stock men assembled here this week it seems to be the unanimous conclusion that the range cattle business in this country is played out, we are getting too much rain in summer and too much snow in winter."

"To be sure, the hide business has been extremely good this spring, but it does not pay to raise cattle just for the hides. Stockmen also recognize the fact that the farmer has come to stay, and there is no disposition to contest the territory. They have been slow to admit but now fully recognize the climatic change which this region is undergoing. They "cuss" the country because it is too wet for the successful raising of stock on the open range system. They will move on west or else hold in smaller bunches, close herd and feed. There will be no issue between the stock men and the granger."

"Newcomers who are inquiring about the rainfall need no stronger evidence than this of the climatic changes that are taking place in this region."

The fence belonging to the Pool was bought by T. L. Smith for his ranch at Goodwater. The number of cattle found at this round up is not given, but the Cap Sheaf said "The loss on the range for the three years last past has been from sixty to eighty per cent. of the book count. The storm the first of April killed more cattle than all the other storms during the three years previous."

The raising of cattle on the open range system of "making them rustle" had proved a costly failure. The cattle men could not change their ways and stay in the county under new conditions. Of those prominent in the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool only McMath, Baker and Prindle ever cut any figure in the subsequent history of Gove county.

One more incident in the history of the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool remains to be written. In July, 1886, the members of that organization and the Forrester Pool were arrested by the U. S. marshal on the charge of fencing government land. They were defended by Lee Monroe and E. A. McMath. In the days of their prosperity the members of the Pool had felt and expressed some indignation

against the outsiders who had brought cattle into their range; but circumstances alter cases, and now they were glad to point to these outsiders as evidence of the fact that the Pool had not monopolized the land or kept anybody out. As for the Pool fence, they contended that it was not an enclosure at all, merely a drift fence on one side of the range to keep the cattle from straying. The court took this view of the case and when it met at Leavenworth in October the action against the cattlemen was dismissed.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE BOOM OF 1886

The cattlemen were merely making a virtue of necessity in giving way to the settlers. The country was public land, open to settlement by anybody, and railroad land. The cattlemen owned none of it; they were merely squatters. A wave of eastern immigration was once more flooding Kansas, and the cattlemen could not have held their ground for another season.

Kansas grew up, so to speak, in the eighties. During that decade her vacant lands were taken up, her railroads built, her cities established, and the state settled down to permanent conditions generally. Gove county had lain dormant for several years but was now to receive its share of the new life which was flooding the plains. During 1885 and 1886 three new towns and five newspapers were established, and Gove county changed from a cattle range to an organized county of more than three thousand souls.

The boom began to develop in the spring of 1885. Among the first boomers was E. A. Benson of Davenport, Iowa, who bought 250 sections of the railroad lands in Gove and Sheridan counties. Later he sold 110,000 acres of these lands to C. E. Perkins, president of the C. B. & Q. railroad "and associates in Boston." Mr. Benson long since disposed of his holdings, but the Gove County Atlas, published in 1907, shows that as late as that date Mr. Perkins still held 8,800 acres of land in the county. Benson and Perkins put their lands on the market and began a systematic advertising campaign to attract purchasers. Of course in a county

where more than half the land was still public land it was natural that the homesteads would be taken up much faster than the railroad lands. Besides the land open to entry there were many homesteads that had been taken in 1878 or later and afterward abandoned, and these could be obtained by contest proceedings.

Gove county had been without a newspaper for four years when A. W. Burnett began the publication of the Pioneer at Buffalo Park, April 16, 1885. The Pioneer had considerable advertising patronage and five columns of land contest notices. The law requires that every contest or final proof notice must be published, and it was chiefly upon this patronage that the frontier newspaper lived in the homestead days.

Two more newspapers made their appearance in 1885—the Golden Belt at Grinnell, first published July 18, and the Cap Sheaf at Grainfield, first published October 8. Each is well filled with land contest notices. The towns are doing a brisk business. Each of the county papers teems with items of new settlers arriving or new homeseekers making purchases. The first issue of the Cap Sheaf says "J. B. Beal is credited with saying four years ago that 'anyone that would lariat the town and brand it could have it.' John is now putting up houses to rent and we don't believe he ever said it." Somebody started a petition to have the government take down the Pool fence.

Buffalo Park had a two day celebration July 3 and 4, 1885, the chief event of the celebration being that the Buffalo Blues beat the Russell nine one day and WaKeeney the next. It is evident that the Blues were a good team. They took a couple trips down the road and beat WaKeeney, Hays and Russell on their own grounds. They published a challenge to any team west of Topeka to play them a game on the Buffalo Park grounds for \$100 a side—and no takers. The membership of this championship team of thirty four years ago included T. B. Sloey catcher, Jack Thomas pitcher, Lew Thomas short stop,—Fredenburg first base, E. S. Wilson second base, Jim Sloey third base and captain Bill Sloey left field, F. B. Strong center field and manager, Chas. Campbell right field. Of this band three—F. B. Strong and

the Thomas brothers—still live in Gove county.\*

The business done by the railroad company is one indication of the way Gove county was now growing. The receipts at Buffalo Park for August '85, were \$1239.78; for September, \$1990.12; October, \$1837.50. Grainfield did a still larger business. The receipts there were in October '84, \$767.66, in October '85, \$4282.37; in November '84, \$1511.03, in November '85, \$4059.06.

In November, 1885, two new towns were established in the county. The railroad company had for several years had a switch seven miles southeast of Buffalo Park at a place it called Melota, but no station had been established. Here in November the town of Familton was platted by the Familton Town Co. The company built a two story frame hotel, the Familton Hotel, in the fall of 1885, but no other buildings were erected till the following spring. The government refused to establish a postoffice under the name selected for the town, because the name was too much like some other offices in the state in sound or spelling, so the name Familton had to be given up and another name selected. The town was finally called Quinter, after Rev. James Quinter of Huntingdon, Pa., an elder of the Dunkard or Baptist Brethren church. A strong settlement of the Brethren was forming around the town, which caused the name to be chosen.

The Gove City Improvement Co. was organized at Davenport, Iowa, by E. A. Benson, H. H. Benson, C. E. Perkins and others. It acquired land on the Hackberry twelve miles south of Grainfield and here in November, 1885, laid out the town of Gove City. The town was off the line of the railroad but was near the center of the county (three miles due north of the exact center), and the promoters made no secret of the fact that Gove City would be a candidate for the county seat. The first building erected was a two story hotel of stone, the Benson House, begun in November and completed the following spring.

The town of Jerome was founded on the Smoky in 1886 and in July of that year could boast of two general stores, blacksmith shop, restaurant and livery stable and had taken

\*Note 6.



steps toward building a school house.

The winter—the hardest ever known for years, the winter which broke up the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool and strewn the prairie with the carcasses of dead cattle—put a stop to the boom but the rush was resumed stronger than ever in the spring of '86. Two new papers appeared, the Gazette at Gove City in April and the Settlers Guide at Quinter in July. A strong Swedish settlement was being built up in the southwest part of the county. On one day in March the receipts of the Grainfield station were \$1100, the remittances \$700. Twenty five car loads of freight were received at Buffalo Park in one day in April, while at Grainfield fifty eight car loads of merchandise and emigrant goods arrived in one April day; the track would not hold so many, and some of the cars had to be carried on that day to Grinnell. The "prairies were dotted with schooners", "emigrants coming in by hundreds". In April the Gazette estimated that new settlers were arriving at the rate of fifty a day. Men stood in line for days at the land office at WaKeeney awaiting their turn to file on their claims. A new slang term was coined—any concern which had all it could do, or more, was said to be "doing a land office business."

In spite of the rush the country found time for recreation. The first circus visited the county, showing at Buffalo Park and at Grinnell; the newspaper accounts said it was a fraud, and the outfit got away without paying its hotel and printing bills. Decoration Day was observed at Grainfield, the G. A. R. posts of Grainfield and Buffalo Park participating. H. H. Benson delivered the oration of the day. Buffalo Park and Grainfield both wanted to celebrate the fourth of July. The day fell on Sunday, so Buffalo Park held its celebration on the 3rd and Grainfield on the 5th. H. H. Benson was orator of the day at Buffalo Park. The Ellsworth band furnished the music and there were horse races and a ball game. The Blues met with a set back, being defeated by Ellis 18 to 15. Grainfield had a pigeon shoot and fire works and an oration by Rev. Aller. A prize of \$50 was hung up for the ball game between Buffalo Park and WaKeeney. The Blues took the game, 13 to 8, and it was said about \$800 changed hands on the

result. The papers estimated that there were fifteen hundred people in Grainfield that day.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ORGANIZING THE COUNTY

During the boom times of the seventies a number of western Kansas counties were organized which, when the boom bursted, had difficulty in keeping up their organization. Some went completely broke and had to be disorganized, and others were left to struggle along with a depleted population, shattered finances and a burden of debt; Gove county had escaped some such fate by being a little short of population in 1880. The law had now been changed, making it much more difficult to organize a new county. Instead of the fifteen hundred population required in 1880 a new county must now have twenty five hundred inhabitants, of whom four hundred must be householders, and a certain specified amount of taxable property (\$150,000 above exemptions, of which \$75,000 must be real estate).

As soon as it was felt that Gove county had enough in the way of population and property to fill the requirements a movement began for organization. In 1880 it was a Buffalo Park move, with Grainfield opposing. There was no opposition now; all pulled together for organization; here is the argument advanced by the county papers. Says the Grainfield Cap Sheaf, May 14, 1886:

"During the past year our population has increased four fold. As for taxable property we are in better condition than any unorganized county in the state and better than many counties organized years ago. We undoubtedly have \$1,000,000 of taxable property in the county, if valued on the same basis as other counties around us. The question with us is, shall we pay our taxes longer to Trego county and still be without the benefits of organization.

"The laws of the state controlling unorganized counties are most unjust. They are infamous. We are compelled to pay taxes the same as if we were a part of the county to which we are attached. We can have no voice in the election of county officers, but are subject in all matters to their dictation. We cannot

vote on representative to the state legislature who is supposed to represent us, and it is not strange that in the legislature the unorganized counties have been "sat down on" in every possible way. Trego county has paid off its debt with the taxes of Gove, Logan and Wallace counties, and grown rich. Organization will benefit us in many ways. It will give us schools and school houses. It will save the expense and inconvenience of having to go to WaKeeney to do our county business. It means a saving of ten to fifteen dollars to every settler who proves up on his claim; as by making proof before county officers he can save the large expense necessary to take witnesses to WaKeeney. Above all it will give us self government.

"If we organize at all this year it should be done very soon. In this connection is a point we must not lose sight of. If our organization is not completed before August 1st, the commissioners of Trego county will have levied their tax for us this year, and this county, if organized after that date, will be without money in its treasury for more than a year."

The Buffalo Park Pioneer puts the case thus: "Those who oppose organization are disposed to refer to Sheridan county with a bonded debt of some \$12,000. The comparison is far fetched. Gove has forty miles of rail road bed in the county, excluding switches, side tracks, etc. Sheridan hasn't a mile. When Sheridan county was organized there was not to exceed a thousand acres of taxable real estate in the county, while Gove has at this time nearly a million dollars of taxable real estate, something that will not run away when the hot weather comes, if it should. When Sheridan was organized no property qualifications were required, only so much population. The legislature in its wisdom saw the evil of this and required a property qualification, and this not to consist of chattels but substantial real estate. Gove county has nearly double the property qualification to become a full-fledged county."

When it was finally decided to start the ball the following notice was published simultaneously in all the county papers:

#### Organization.

A meeting has been called to be

held at Grainfield on Monday, May 31, 1886, after Decoration Day exercises, for consultation in regard to the organization of Gove county. It is desired that every section of this county be represented.

Here are the minutes of this meeting, which tell in concise form what was done:

#### Organization Meeting.

S. S. Reynolds chosen chairman, E. A. McMath secretary. Following resolution offered, discussed and adopted:

Resolved, as the sense of this meeting that the time has arrived when the best interests of Gove county require that it be organized.

H. H. Benson moved that a committee of five be appointed, consisting of the chairman of the meeting, J. B. McClanahan, Thomas H. Moore, George Platz and Bruce Sanders to divide the county into not less than ten canvassing districts and to report to this meeting the name of one resident of each district to circulate a petition with a view to the organization of the county. Carried.

Committee so appointed reported, following names: J. H. Baker, D. A. Drake, Thomas H. Moore, Bruce Sanders, Van Smith, F. W. Martin, Willis Walkey, —. Delyea, Richman Hart, S. S. Howe and Frank Wright.

Committee of three also appointed to prepare the proper memorials to the governor, to be circulated by the (10) appointed as canvassers. E. A. McMath. J. Q. A. Weller and H. H. Benson were appointed that committee.

Committee of 11 were instructed to ascertain whether a majority of the legal voters of Gove county want organization or not, and to report to an adjourned meeting. Adjourned, subject to call.

The next meeting was held at Gove City June 14. S. S. Reynolds presided and in the absence of Mr. McMath L. F. Jones was elected secretary. Rev. J. Q. A. Weller of the committee of three reported that he had heard from nine of the committee of eleven, their reports showing that 344 had signed the memorial, with two districts to hear from. The meeting voted that the committee of three be increased to seven by the chairman appointing representative men from different parts of the county, and that this committee take

charge of the memorial and complete the organization. The chairman appointed A. P. Duryea for the southeast part of the county, Richman Hart for the south center and Bruce Sanders for the northwest. The fourth place was left vacant for the time being with the understanding that some "representative Swede" should be selected. Before adjournment the meeting took a vote on the question of organization, showing seventy two for organization and eighteen opposed.

The organization committee met at Grainfield June 25. The total number of names reported was 353, one district yet to be heard from. L. F. Jones was recommended to the governor for appointment as census taker, and the following assistant census takers were agreed on: G. F. Roberts for Buffalo Park, A. P. Duryea for the southeast part of the county, George Platz for Gove City, F. W. Wright for the southwest part of the county; N. H. Allison, south center; Sam Smith, Grainfield; and Bruce Sanders, Grinnell. The following resolution, offered by Mr. Weller, was adopted unanimously: "Resolved, that this committee does not consider itself authorized, either by law or otherwise, to take any action whatever in the matter of recommending the temporary county seat."

July 7 the governor appointed L. F. Jones census taker. August 13 the organization committee met again at Grainfield to make recommendations to the governor for temporary officers for the county. They recommended for county commissioners J. B. McClanahan of Buffalo Park, T. M. Stokes of Grinnell and Lyman Raymond of Jerome, and for county clerk D. A. Borah of Grinnell. Next week the Gove City Gazette said, "F. G. Bliss of Buffalo Park was suggested for county clerk. E. A. McMath, chairman of the committee, immediately objected to Mr. Bliss because he is a Democrat. McMath said that if the committee recommended Mr. Bliss he would go before the governor and make a personal fight against his appointment on the ground that he is a Democrat. In order to avoid such work Mr. B's name was withdrawn." We give this item from the Gazette for what it is worth. This is the first discordant note sounded in the organization campaign. The editor of the Gazette

was a young man new to the country and did not know the people very well, for he refers to the new county clerk as "Al Borough."

Thus far everything has been lovely, but now the county seat fight breaks out. Gove City is first in the field. Those old time rivals, Buffalo Park and Grainfield, make an effort to get together. The Buffalo Park Pioneer of September 2 has an account of it. Buffalo Park sent a committee to Grainfield, consisting of J. W. Ellithorpe, John Morgan and D. L. Greenfield. This committee offered to deposit \$10,000 in the bank at Grainfield as a guarantee, to move the town of Grainfield to Buffalo Park and to give Grainfield property holders two lots in Buffalo Park for every one they had in Grainfield. Grainfield made a counter proposition to put up \$3,000 to move Buffalo Park to Grainfield and give lot for lot. Nothing comes of it all and "the fight for the county seat is triangular" says the Pioneer.

Buffalo Park does not enter the fight for temporary county seat. That fight is between Gove City and Grainfield. Each of these ambitious towns circulates petitions, remonstrances, etcetera, and each one sends a delegation to Topeka to see the governor. At last, Sept. 2, 1886, Gov. Martin issues his proclamation organizing Gove county. He appointed the officers recommended by the organization committee and designated Gove City as the temporary county seat. The part of his proclamation referring to the county seat dispute we will quote entire:

"The following facts are shown touching the organization of Gove Co.:

"First—The official returns of the census taker enroll the names of 3,032 bona fide inhabitants, 851 householders, and 757 legal voters.

"Second—Memorials are presented, numerously signed, one asking that Gove City be declared the temporary county seat, and another asking that Grainfield be designated the temporary county seat.

"The memorial in favor of Gove City is signed by 636 persons, who represent themselves as legal voters of the unorganized county of Gove. This is supplemented by a memorial signed by nineteen persons, who say that they had signed the memorial asking that Grainfield be designated



as the temporary county seat, but now withdraw their names from such memorial and ask that Gove City be designated as the temporary county seat.

"The memorial in favor of Grainfield is signed by 282 persons, who represent themselves as legal voters of the unorganized county of Gove. This is supplemented by memorials, signed by 43 persons, who say that they had signed the memorial asking that Gove City be designated as the temporary county seat, but now withdraw their names from such memorial and ask that Grainfield be designated as the temporary county seat. A supplemental memorial, favoring Grainfield, is filed, signed by 30 names, purporting to be those of legal voters.

"Making the changes required by these supplemental memorials, and the memorialists of the unorganized county of Gove express preferences as follows: For Gove City, 612; for Grainfield, 336; majority for Gove City, 276.

"Representatives of Grainfield, appearing before me, allege that the names of 118 signers of the Gove City petition do not appear on the census taker's rolls; that 74 names on the same petition are not the names of legal voters; that three names are those of persons living in Sheridan county; and that 10 names are repeated making a total of 205 names that are challenged.

"In so far as the census taker's returns are concerned, it may fairly be assumed that he has failed to enroll the names of all legal voters. The object of the census taken by him was to ascertain whether the county has 2,500 bona fide inhabitants, and 400 householders, as required for organization. Hence, the enrollment is not necessarily a complete enrollment of either the bona fide inhabitants or of the legal voters.

"But if the 205 names thus challenged should be stricken from the memorial favoring Gove City, the preferences of the legal voters would then be: for Gove City, 407; for Grainfield, 336; majority for Gove City, 71.

"The representatives of Gove City appearing before me allege that the names of 137 signers of the Grainfield petition are not legal voters of the county of Gove, and that eight names appear twice on said Grain-

field memorial, and these allegations are supported by affidavits of citizens of the county of Gove.

"If the 145 names thus challenged should be stricken from the memorial favoring Grainfield, the preferences of the legal voters would then be: For Gove City, 407; for Grainfield, 191; majority for Gove City, 216.

"It will thus be seen that, in any view of the case that may be presented, a fair majority of the legal voters of Gove county who have expressed a preference on the question of locating the temporary county seat, are for Gove City.

"The case may also be stated in another form. The census taker's enrollment includes the names of 757 legal voters. A majority of the number would be 379. There are 612 names on the Gove City memorial (after deducting and adding those who petition to be changed) and of these 205 are challenged. Without passing upon the question whether these challenges are or are not valid, but deducting all the names challenged from the Gove City memorial, the remainder, 407, constitute a majority of the total number returned as legal voters by the census taker.

"Again, there are 336 names on the Grainfield memorial (after deducting those who petition to be changed) and of these 145 are challenged. Without considering the question whether these challenges are or are not valid, but counting them as valid, the total of the signatures to the Grainfield memorial, 336, lack 43 of being a majority of the legal voters as returned by census taker.

"In view of these facts, it seems to me that there can be no doubt concerning the preferences of the legal voters of Gove county on the question of locating the temporary county seat. Hence, I designated Gove City as the temporary county seat of said county of Gove.

John A. Martin,  
Governor of Kansas."

The county commissioners met at Gove City Sept. 9th and 10th. This first session was a very busy one. The board bought books and supplies for the county to the amount of \$1,440.20, subject to a cash discount of twenty five per cent if paid before Jan. 1, 1887. The county was divided into townships and commissioner dis-

tricts, an election called for October 19th to choose county officers and a permanent county seat, and election boards were appointed.

Eight townships were provided for—Baker, Larrabee and Jerome in the first commissioner district, Grainfield, Gove and Payne in the second and Grinnell and Lewis in the third. Grainfield, Grinnell, Gove and Jerome townships were named after the towns of the same name within their boundaries. Payne was named after Captain David L. Payne, the Oklahoma boomer, who was very much in the public eye just at that time through his efforts to get the Oklahoma territory opened to settlement. Larrabee was named for Governor Larrabee of Iowa; a good number of Gove county citizens were natives of Iowa, and besides, the governor himself had financial interests in the county and was a stockholder in the bank at Grainfield. Baker township was so called as a compliment to J. H. Baker, a prominent citizen of Quinter and editor of the Settlers Guide. Every ambitious town in the county had to have a township carved out for it and this resulted in some curiously shaped townships and a great difference in size, running all the way from Grainfield township with seventy two square miles to Grinnell township with a hundred and eighty. The commissioner districts were so shaped also as to put Buffalo Park, Grinnell and Jerome in different districts and give each commissioner a territory of his own. Nevertheless, the lines as drawn in 1886 by this first board of commissioners have stood unchanged to this day except that in 1903 Gaeland township was formed out of parts of Grinnell and Gove townships and in 1916 Payne township was placed in the first commissioners district and Jerome in the second.

There was no lack of candidates for the offices. Three tickets were in the field. Besides the Republican and Democratic tickets another one was nominated at a convention at Gove City, Oct. 7, which went on the ballot as the People's Ticket but which was called by various other names. The county papers abused it, and the Cap Sheaf said "The mugwumps and Gove Cityites held their wondrous convention." The Pioneer called it the "Gove City ticket," "Benson-Davenport Land Syndicate ticket," etc.

I have also heard it spoken of as the "Homesteader's ticket."

But the real fight was for the county seat. It can readily be imagined that candidates for office had to be very careful what they said about that matter, and that the voter's choice of candidates was often governed by his preference for the county seat. The Bank of Grainfield announced, "The citizens of Grainfield have deposited in this bank Seventy Two Hundred Dollars, payable to the order of the county commissioners of Gove county, thirty days after Grainfield is duly designated or declared the permanent county seat of Gove county, in current funds, on the return of this certificate properly indorsed, Six Thousand Dollars of said money to be used in the erection of a court house and Twelve Hundred dollars to pay for the county books." This offer was supplemented by the offer of a block of land for a court house site.

Gove City's offer was, a block of land for a court house site, the use of the Benson House for a court house for "the term of ten years or as long as it may be used for court house purposes." Also, the Gove City Improvement Co. would deed the county fifty business lots in Gove City. The Gazette figures it out that this offer is worth "\$25,000 to \$50,000." I have not been able to find the particulars of Buffalo Park's offer, if she made any.

The happy family that had worked together so nicely for organization was all broke up over the county seat fight. Crimination and recrimination, charge and countercharge flew back and forth. But why recall the unkind things that were said of this or that citizen who was prominent in the advocacy of the claims of his favorite city—why mention that it was said that Buffalo Park was the kind of a town that had "joints" but no church buildings, that Grainfield was "Bealsburg" and the candidate for county seat of that hated corporation, the Union Pacific railroad, that Gove City had no railroad and never would have any and was a land speculation engineered by a "carpet bag" outfit of non-residents and that their title to the townsite was fraudulent and defective—why speak of these things here, for are they not written in the files of the county papers of that day?

Election day came at last and Gove City was chosen as permanent county seat. Here are the returns of this election, by precincts:

	Gove City	Buffalo Park	Grainfield	Jerome
Baker	25	48	27	
Payne	33	91	1	
Grainfield	10		97	
Grinnell	60	51	27	
Gove	106	1	6	
Larrabee	73	16		
Jerome	132	10	6	1
Lewis	36	1	10	
Total	480	218	174	1

In the election for county officers the Democrats elected one commissioner, Hamilton, in the third district and the People's ticket elected L. R.

Jones register of deeds and Campbell commissioner in the second district. The rest went Republican. All three of the temporary commissioners were candidates at the election but Commissioner Raymond was the only one to be successful. And after all this fuss the newly elected officials could only serve a brief time, the regular November election was coming on in three weeks and it would all have to be done over again. And thus Gove county entered upon its career as a fully organized and self governing body.

Here for the present our history must come to a close. As was said in the beginning, the writer hopes some time to be able to take up the work again and bring the History of Gove County down to the present time.

## NOTES TO PART ONE

Note 1—My friend J. J. Griebel of Rooks county (since deceased) took exception to this statement and wrote me as follows: "My theory is that these are hard pan spots, such as are found in many places on these plains. This 'hard pan' is a compact clay which in most cases does not come to the surface at all. We often strike it in digging wells, etc. When it comes to the surface it holds the rain water and makes a pool in wet seasons. I do not think the buffalo had anything to do with making these so-called buffalo wallows." More than likely this old plainsman is right. As a matter of fact we know very little about the habits of the wild buffalo.

Note 2—The site of this Indian settlement is now marked by a granite monument erected by the Kansas Historical Society and the Daughters of the American Revolution, and is included within the limits of the Scott County State Park.

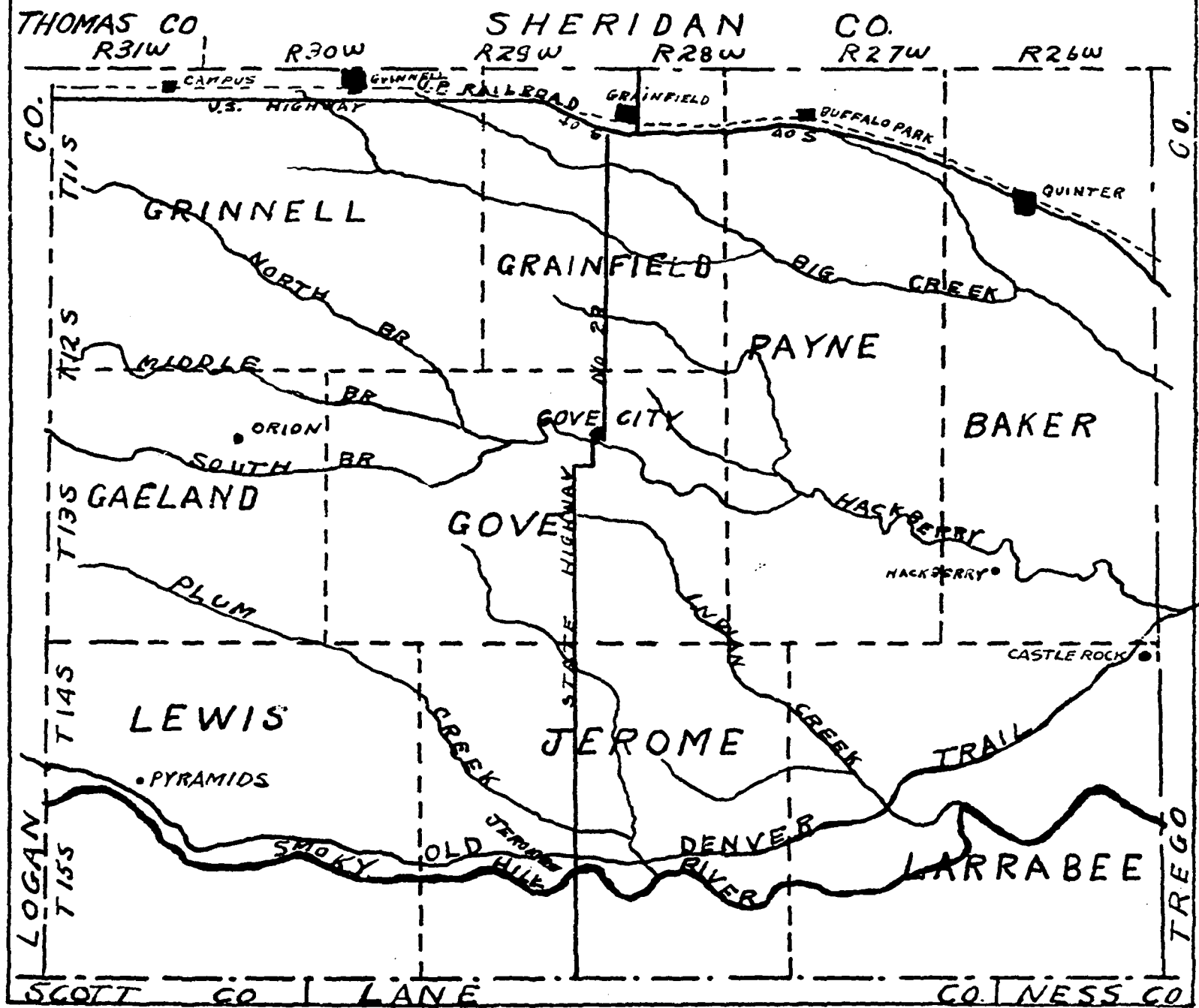
Note 3—This is the polite French term for the prairie fuel which was in general use on the plains before the railroads were built and coal could be obtained. Not much used now, but the plains could never have been settled in those days without the bois de vache.

Note 4—A framed photograph of young Captain Gove in his uniform is the property of Gove county and hangs in the court house in the office of the county clerk. It is a copy of one in Memorial Hall, Topeka. These are supposed to be the only photographs in existence of Capt. Gove.

Note 5—After the lapse of ten years I still have no satisfactory answer to this question. I have heard that one of these twins served in the American army in the Philippines at the time of the War with Spain.

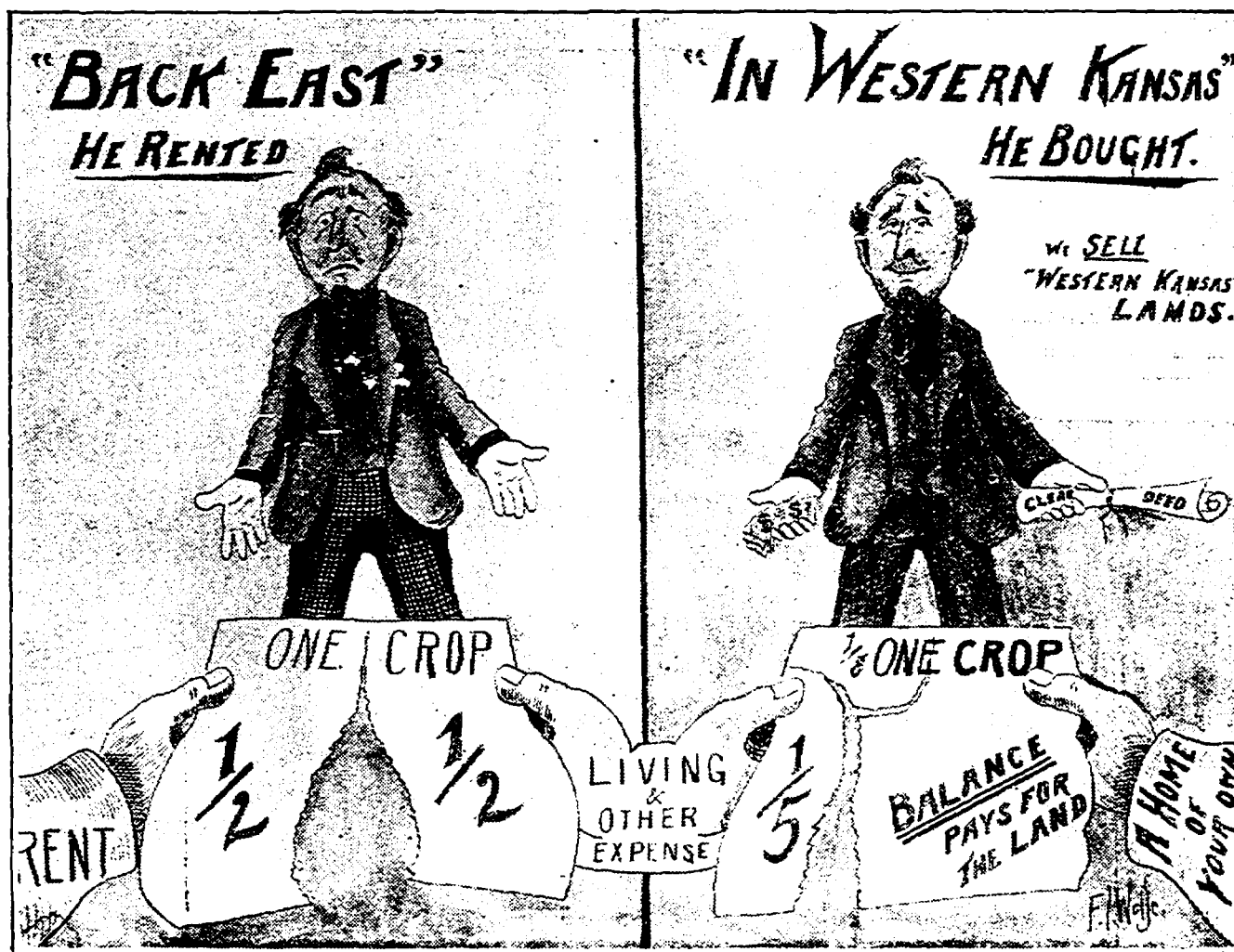
Note 6—The original edition of this history, published in 1920, went on to say "Each is an ardent 'fan' and, though the old boys no longer play the game there is Frank Strong Jr., (lately captain of artillery in the American Expeditionary Forces) who before the war was pitcher for the Gove City nine, and one of Jack's boys is short stop on the team and the other is a promising 'kid' pitcher. But alas for Lew—he has lived a life of selfish celibacy and neglected his patriotic duty of raising a boy to take his place on the nine." Time has made some changes in ten years and this bit of fine writing no longer applies; Frank Strong and Jack and Lew Thomas have all passed away since it was written.

# GOVE CO.



Drawn by FRANK T. TYSON



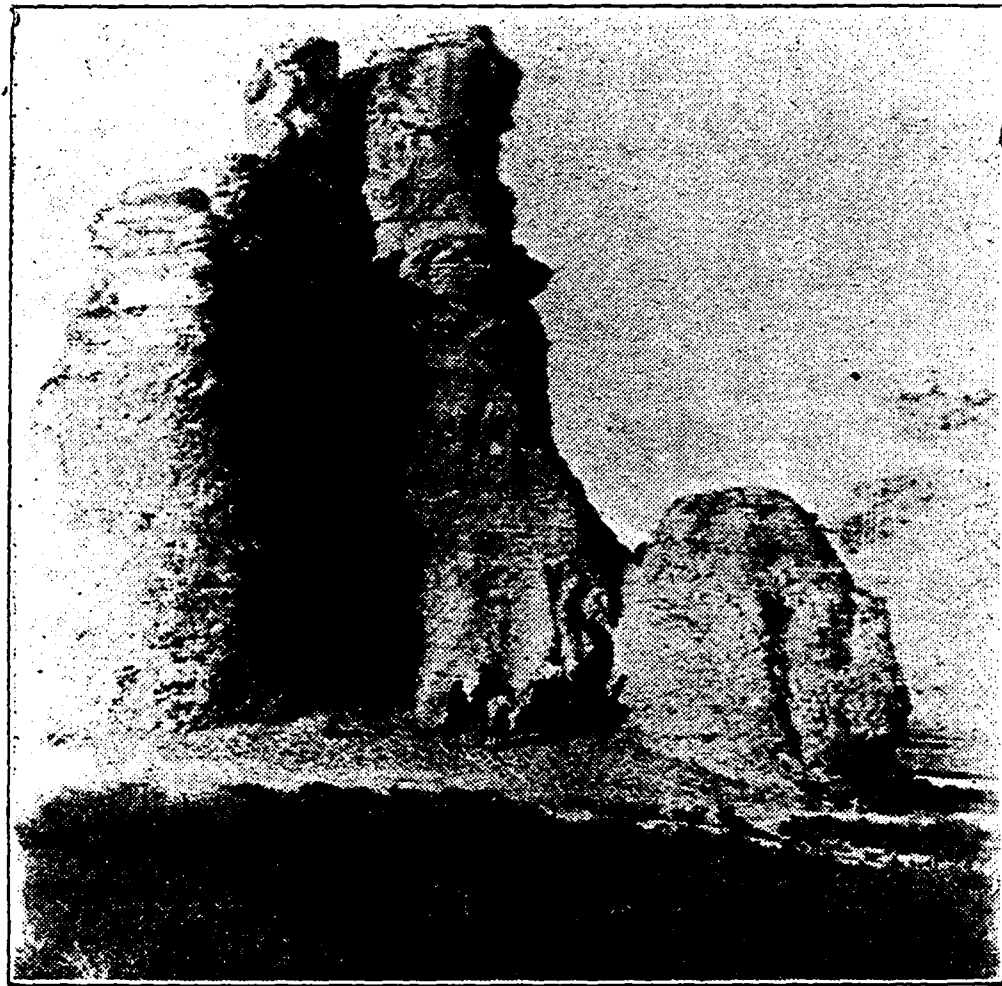


CARTOON BY FRED I. WOLFE  
Published in the Grainfield Cap Sheaf



# HISTORY OF GOVE COUNTY

## Part Two



CASTLE ROCK

On Section 1-14-26, Gove County, Kansas





## CHAPTER I

### THE UPS AND DOWNS OF A FRONTIER COUNTY

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If the historian were asked to tell in a single sentence the history of Gove county, he would say that it is a tale of ups and downs. It is a record of progress and improvement, but this progress instead of being regularly and orderly has been subject to some rather violent fluctuations. In a previous chapter of this history, the story was related of the first settlement of the county in 1878-80 and the subsequent desolation and ruin of that settlement by drouth. Since that time our history has been an irregular alteration of good times and bad, of gains and losses in population, production and wealth, and these changes have tallied roughly with the annual fluctuations in rainfall.

Let me invite the reader's attention to the table given below. These figures, which are taken from the reports of the State Board of Agriculture and the United States Weather Bureau, are perhaps not as dry as they seem; they date back to about the time of the organization of the county, and a study of them will tell, better than words, the nature of the progress or retrogression our county has made since that date. From the table a very fair chronicle can be made.

Using the table as a guide, a history of the county, year by year, could be constructed, about as follows:

1886—The newly organized county started off with a population of 3,032; most of the settlers were poor, living on homesteads and having little property to assess; the cattle in the county were worth far more than the crops produced. The Union Pacific railroad was by far the largest taxpayer.

1887—Population increased more than a third; production tripled; value of live stock doubled; the country was booming.

1888—Population still on the increase, live stock increasing, the assessed valuation of the county has nearly tripled in two years, but the farms produced less than last year; not so good.

1889—This year the rainfall record begins. There is a six-fold in-

crease in wheat production, but the value of farm products is only doubled. Corn crop is poor. Probably also a year of poor prices. Fourteen inches of rain is not enough to make a farming country. The settlers sell some of their cattle, and the population falls off seven hundred.

1890—Only ten inches of rain. Crop production smallest ever known. Six hundred leave the county. Valuation decreased fifteen per cent in two years.

1891—Population still fast decreasing, but those who remained have a pretty good crop. Twice as much rain this year as last.

1892—Another year of good rains and a good crop. The exodus from the county has slowed down.

1893—The county begins to gain in population once more, but it is another dry year and crops are poor.

1894—Driest year since 1890. All the discourageable ones leave; only the stayers remain; population reaches the irreducible minimum. The rainfall was heavy in June, too late to save the wheat, nearly half the year's supply of rain coming in that month, but October had no rain at all, and six other months had less than an inch of rain each.

1895 and 1896—Twenty three inches of rain each year. The survivors are producing something from their farms, but cattle have decreased in number and are worth less than half what they were worth eight years before. These are years of low prices, following the financial panic of 1893.

1897—Look who's here. Gove county had the biggest rainfall in its history, and its first big wheat crop. Now for the first time the produce of the fields was worth more than the live stock.

1898—The country shows signs of recovery. Cattle nearly double in numbers and value since last year. It is becoming a cattleman's country.

1899 and following—On the upgrade, in population, crop production, live stock and everything. These are years of good rainfall.

In 1900 the combined value of farm products and live stock ap-

Year	Popula- tion	Wheat bu.	Value of farm products	Value of live stock	Assessed valuation	Rainfall in inches
1886	3,032	312	\$ 51,206	\$ 175,432	\$ 585,148	
1887	4,113	640	147,696	342,915		
1888	4,363	4,764	106,857	439,478	1,335,199	
1889	3,637	24,615	199,133	354,365		14.30
1890	3,068	7,467	48,910	361,266	1,130,173	10.91
1891	2,370	112,518	232,380	316,599		20.56
1892	2,215	234,724	301,084	317,606	1,071,785	25.05
1893	2,409	3,822	76,722	280,659		15.38
1894	2,388	4,528	76,228	338,859	1,129,886	12.50
1895	2,032	72,216	120,338	210,158		23.34
1896	2,043	89,556	114,864	205,549	1,192,925	23.53
1897	2,145	254,016	293,352	270,989		28.83
1898	2,093	154,119	193,714	468,392	1,248,239	24.53
1899	2,224	255,108	151,063	540,774		19.51
1900	2,563	244,416	302,828	667,347	1,267,581	17.20
1901	2,587	192,066	312,634	715,849		19.06
1902	2,816	178,650	335,423	800,627	1,377,214	26.62
1903	2,870	752,518	782,757	798,566		17.25
1904	3,207	132,548	348,996	738,833	1,388,839	18.10
1905	3,353	518,574	807,199	830,597		27.59
1906	4,081	452,410	654,404	898,596	1,602,551	21.22
1907	4,699	470,215	846,377	962,168		19.80
1908	4,887	687,942	1,149,888	972,219	8,484,475	21.91
1909	5,169	775,760	1,806,860	1,107,638		28.11
1910	5,599	428,344	1,194,476	1,120,029	10,373,486	7.97
1911	5,640		655,519	1,329,165		11.77
1912	4,516	72,528	1,266,335	1,010,128	8,974,191	
1913	4,291	3,772	176,442	1,069,705		
1914	3,771	1,142,100	1,541,160	1,064,696	8,275,830	
1915	4,010	1,218,736	1,998,252	1,479,696		
1916	4,537	1,544,496	2,842,993	1,867,052	9,395,397	
1917	4,872	47,061	960,853	2,002,607		10.90
1918	4,645	11,670	1,874,758	2,063,088	10,277,865	20.90
1919	4,973	878,877	4,101,810	2,195,703		19.95
1920	5,009	2,763,516	6,877,238	2,200,720	11,566,144	17.88
1921	5,109	978,736	1,688,872	1,445,305		20.84
1922	5,209	982,685	2,079,551	1,402,772	11,040,570	14.61
1923	5,037	106,764	2,623,803	1,267,144		28.72
1924	5,333	1,904,714	3,510,021	1,144,505	11,477,253	16.85
1925	5,464	630,165	1,846,171	1,269,713		14.07
1926	5,203	899,994	1,576,578	1,044,442	12,685,724	12.21
1927	5,464	103,370	1,488,257	1,263,656		21.11
1928	5,481	1,353,888	3,261,770	1,688,031	12,755,667	27.39

proaches the million dollar mark. In the value of live stock increased four 1901 they go over it, to stay there and one-half times. permanently.

In 1908 the value of farm products 1903 was a phenomenal wheat passed the million mark. It has been year. This year's crop deserves above that mark every year since, ex- special mention, which will be given cept three. The live stock valuation it later in another chapter. crossed the mark in 1909.

The population of the county dou- In 1910 the U. S. Census takers bled between 1896 and 1906, and enumerated 6,044 people in Gove

county, while the local assessors reported only 5,599. This is our high water mark for population.

It will be noted that the assessed valuation was more than five times as great in 1908 as in 1906. This is due to a change in methods of assessment. Property was formerly assessed at about one-fifth of its value all over the state; since the adoption of the present system in 1908 all property is supposed to be assessed at its actual value.

Gove county had now been prospering for so many years that it seemed to have become a habit. The calamitous days and the busted boom of the early Nineties were forgotten; indeed about two thirds of the population had come into the county since those disastrous days and knew nothing of them. Land had acquired a value, the homestead lands and school lands were taken up, and the Union Pacific disposed of the last remnants of the land grant it had received in the Sixties and had been holding all these years till it could find purchasers. Settlers were acquiring more cattle and better horses and moving out of the old sod houses into substantial frame dwellings, and furnishing the same with pianos and steel ranges and telephones and that popular new invention, the automobile. Perhaps ours was the pride which goeth before destruction, and perhaps we needed some punishment to teach us humility.

And the punishment was now at hand. Note, on the table given above, the rainfall of 1910 and 1911. For the first time in its history Gove county had a total failure of its wheat crop, and nearly everything else. In 1912 there was a small yield of wheat, and other crops were good, but this was the year of the "horse disease" which swept away the farmers' work animals. The next year, 1913, was another total failure. In these years nearly two thousand people left the county and the taxable valuation of the county fell off more than two million dollars. This, in a few words, is the history of three disastrous years.

But, once more, it was demonstrated that the man who can hold on is the winner. The rains came again, and the Desert of 1913 pro-

duced more than a million bushels of wheat in 1914; more than that, we had another wheat crop in 1915, and again in 1916. For three successive years Gove county was in the million bushel class. We gain back some of our lost population. We have no record of the rainfall in these years—the local weather man had quit the job.

Then came the World War. Farmers did not profit greatly by wartime prices, for the yield was light (note that ten inch rainfall in 1917), but the stockman made money; live stock values went over the two million mark, to stay there for four years. 1919 was a good year.

Nineteen Twenty was the most glorious year in the history of the county. The wheat crop was worth five million dollars. The yield was the largest ever known, and most of it was marketed before the break in prices. This was the year when the great United States government put into operation its policy of deflating the farmer. This was a year of land speculation, and land sold at unheard-of prices. Late in the year prices broke sharply, and those who had held their wheat or speculated suffered severely.

Recent years have been only moderately prosperous. The live stock industry was hard hit by the post-war deflation and is just beginning to recover. Those who are in debt have been having something of a struggle to keep going. Farmers have not made money as they did in 1914-16 and in 1920, but they have not suffered such losses as in 1911-13. Population has grown a little each year for fifteen years and is now almost up to the figure attained in 1910. The taxable wealth is the highest in history, nearly thirty per cent greater than in 1910. Those who have been through hard times in Gove county realize that our present situation is not nearly as bad as it might be. And in this year of 1929 a new element has entered the calculation, the value of which cannot yet be determined. The present activity of Oil men, leasers, geologists and core-drillers, points to the possibility that we may have an oil field which may soon be adding its product to the wealth now turned out by our pastures and our farms.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SHIFTING POPULATION

Since its first settlement Gove county has had several waves of population, increasing and diminishing, and there has been a considerable shifting about of the settlement within the boundary. And this forms an interesting study. Here is one way of writing history—without mentioning any individuals we can construct from the census returns the story of how our population has shifted, and why.

The northern part of Gove county is, in general, a beautiful plain, well fitted for agriculture, with no outcrop of rock, and through it runs our only railroad, following the divide between the Saline river and the Smoky Hill. The central part is rougher, for through it flows the Hackberry and its branches and there are outcrops of rock in places. (Also, the best alfalfa lands are on the Hackberry bottoms.) South of the Hackberry is another beautiful plain which soon shades off into the valley of the Smoky Hill and its tributary Plum Creek. The roughest land in the county is along the Smoky, and this part of the county is also farthest from the railroad and market.

The first permanent settlements were along the railroad; the first homesteads taken were adjoining the townsite of Buffalo Park; but before the day of the settlements the cattlemen with their organization, the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool, had squatted with their herds along the Smoky where they could get water without digging for it.

The county when organized was laid off into eight townships in what looks like a very arbitrary fashion. Probably because each and every ambitious little town in the county had to have a township carved out to fit it. Baker and Payne townships each got seven miles of the railroad, but ran south eighteen miles into the Hackberry country. Gove township was carved out of the central part of the county. Grinnell township got the northwest part of the county and a panhandle down along the west side. Grainfield, smallest of all townships, got what was left in the north part of the county. The south was divided into Larrabee, Jerome and

Lewis, each twelve miles square. And such the arrangement has remained, except that in 1903 Gaeland township was formed out of the west part of Gove and the south part of Grinnell.

I have not been able to find the roll of the census of 1886, taken at the time the county was organized. The oldest we have is the census of 1887, taken the year after organization. On this roll I find the names of about forty adult male citizens who were residents of the county at that time, forty two years ago, and who are still with us. The list may not be complete but here it is:

Gust Anderson, J. B. Beal, L. E. Bigbee, D. A. Borah, A. B. Brandenburg, W. T. S. Cope, C. D. Eastlack, John Fahey, W. C. Fullmer, Jacob Hansen, W. J. Heiney, A. W. Hendrickson, J. M. Hockersmith, J. W. Hopkins, D. H. Ikenberry, George S. Ikenberry, Lee Jones, W. G. Jones, R. S. Kim, Karl Kuhl, George Luckcuck, Henry McCloney, R. B. McNay, J. F. Mendenhall, B. A. Meyers, A. J. Mitchell, John Norton, J. W. Purdum, Geo. W. Rhine, Geo Rhodes, J. C. Roesch, T. L. Smith, C. S. Stansbury, Nels Steanson, R. J. Stevenson, John Suter, A. K. Trimmer, I. S. Wigington, H. C. Williams, Simon Wright.

The first settlers were homesteaders. For twenty miles north and south of the railroad the even-numbered sections, except the school lands, were government land, open for settlement to the first comer. The odd-numbered sections were part of the U. P. land grant. But south of the "railroad limit" the whole country, except the school lands, was homestead land. The first wave of settlement passed by the railroad and school lands to take up homesteads in the remote parts of the county; and the first census after the organization shows the population spread fairly evenly over the county, with Grinnell township leading in population and Jerome second. It seems strange that Jerome should have more population than Baker, or Larrabee more than Payne, but such was for a time the case. For several years Jerome township had two voting precincts, Jerome and Goodwater.

But now the population began to decrease. It might be noted here that this was a phenomenon not confined to Gove county alone. All over

the Great Plains the wave of immigration slowed down, stopped and ebbed away. Most of the western counties were hit much harder than our own. The country was inhospitable, the rains uncertain and the settlers "starved out." Many stayed just long enough to prove up on the claim, perhaps get a mortgage on it, and leave the country. All parts of the county suffered equally, but ten years after the organization of the county the population had fallen away approximately one half, the country along the Smoky was almost depopulated and nearly half the settlers remaining were in Gove and Grinnell townships. Those were the days of which the Old Settlers love to tell, when they "knew everybody in the county;" there's a reason—the country was dead, no new settlers coming in, we had little to do except get acquainted with our neighbors.

Again, recovery begins and the population starts on the upgrade once more. But this is no boomers' rush like that of the eighties when three thousand people came into the county in a single year, most of them to go out again as soon as they had lost a crop and proved up on their claims. Land was of more value now than in the former decade, and this new wave of settlers was determined to stay. This movement included many of the original settlers, who had been unable to stay but had held onto their land and were now coming back to try it again. Now the remaining homestead lands were taken up, and for a time Lewis and Larrabee trebled their population; but the railroad lands and school lands were purchased also, and the settlers located in greatest numbers in the townships along the railroad, close to market. Such has become our permanent condition, and today it might be said that half the people of Gove county live within sight of the railroad; and there are now more people in our five little towns than live in the whole south half of the county.

The people of Gove county have come from nearly every state in the Union and from the older parts of our own state. Knud Knudsen, a native of Norway, was the first foreign born citizen to take out naturalization papers in the district court of Gove county. The foreign born el-

ement is not large. The census of 1925, our latest authority, gives the number of foreign born as 341; of these 197 were born in Russia, 30 in Germany, 30 in Canada, 27 in Sweden, 25 in England, the balance scattering. The number of colored people was 37. Most settlers have come without any special inducement or influence. There have been few attempts savoring of colonization or organized effort; but this chapter would not be complete without reference to some such "settlements" which were made.

In a previous chapter dealing with the settlement in 1880, before the organization of the county, reference was made to the Holland Dutch settlement south and west of the town of Grainfield. These families would no doubt have had an important influence upon the county if they had stayed, but they left in a body as they came; the Verhoeff and Van Marter families were the only ones which remained.

The Boom of '86 brought to the county many Swedish families, most of which settled in Lewis and Jerome townships, in such numbers that that part of the county was popularly known as "Sweden" for many years. These settlers brought to the county such names as Johnson, Nelson, Hanson, Larson, Danielson, Swanson, Peterson, Pierson, Anderson, Bredson, Olson, Velen, Thoren, Soderstrom, Youngdahl, Lofgren, Moller, Norell, Nordell, Lillia, Lundgren and others. The "Old Swede Church" still stands in Lewis township with the date "1887" carved in stone on its front, but the congregation is long since dissolved and most of the Swedish families are gone. The church is now a dwelling house, occupied by an up to date citizen who has equipped his home with that latest great invention and can sit in the old church and listen to a sermon every Sunday—by radio.

A congregation of the Brethren or Dunkard denomination was established at Quinter in 1886 and has increased in numbers and strength ever since. Prominent in this community are the following families: Jamison, Ikenberry, Flora, Crist, Wertz, Wolfe, Blickenstaff, Bowman, Long, Roesch, Lahman, Eisenbise, Mohler, Eller and Jarboe. Of this "settlement" it is sufficient to say that it is beyond praise. Here are found the

best farmers in the county and the best improved farms. This community is the backbone of prosperity for Quinter and Baker township; and it is due to them first of all that Baker has taken the lead over all the other townships in population, production and wealth, a leadership which it is likely to hold for a long time to come.

Beginning with about 1900 a "Russian" settlement has grown up around the town of Park in Payne and Grainfield townships. These people are not Russians, except that they came from Russia—they are Catholics in religion and Germans in race and language, who having good cause for dissatisfaction with life in Russia under the Czars left that country to seek new homes in America. A few of them are still so new in this country that they have not yet learned the language, but most of them are of the second or third generation, born in America. They take to American ways so readily that there seems to be nothing foreign about them but their names, which are as yet a trifle hard to get used to. Here are a few of the family names they brought with them: Deperschmidt, Walschmidt, Linneberger, Schwarzenberger, Kinderknecht, Waldman, Wildeman, Leiker, Heier, Ochs, Goetz, Selensky, Rueschhoff, Kaiser and Zerr. Their settlement contains some of the best wheat land

in Gove county, as they have abundantly demonstrated. Before the coming of the Russians Buffalo Park was a deserted village and its vicinity an empty waste, but these settlers have brought Payne township to the front and made it second only to Baker in population and productiveness.

(The writer is reluctant to close this chapter with such a brief and utterly inadequate account of these two excellent communities, at Quinter and Park. They deserve much fuller treatment, but I will leave this duty to some future historian. After all, this chapter was not written to tell of individual or community achievement but of The Shifting Population.)

Figures may be dull reading, but the reader's attention is invited to the following table which shows the shift in our county's population by five year periods, beginning with the first year after the organization of the county. Note how the population of the river townships fell and rose and fell again, and how in recent years the population has gravitated to the railroad townships. Note how the total fell away one half in the first five year period. The figures for 1911 are placed alongside those of 1912 to show how the county lost twenty per cent of its settlers in one calamitous year, and where the loss fell.

	1887	1892	1897	1902	1907	1911	1912	1917	1922	1927
Baker Township	497	328	299	427	701	1290	995	1114	1250	1299
Payne "	552	245	263	363	699	856	772	840	845	937
Grainfield "	330	375	197	286	458	581	489	597	690	728
Grinnell "	743	473	454	565	728	665	587	628	704	764
Gaeland "					284	305	230	229	251	267
Gove "	501	375	469	503	477	607	539	538	563	623
Larrabee "	480	267	168	330	449	453	313	360	364	313
Jerome "	687	222	193	227	370	354	301	278	300	320
Lewis "	304	110	102	125	533	529	290	288	242	216

## CHAPTER III

### THE SCHOOLS

It would be the merest commonplace to brag about our schools. Of course Gove county has schools, and they are our joy and pride. Gove

county has always been a leader in maintaining schools and in enforcing compulsory attendance. The first report we have was for 1889 when there were 1108 pupils enrolled in the common schools, forty seven teachers employed and school property valued at \$33,025. The per-



centage of enrollment was probably as large then as now, (and who shall say that the schools did not do as good work then as now?), but the value of school property was not great. The country was too poor in those pioneer days to afford fine school houses and expensive equipment; these had to wait till more prosperous times. There are some still living in Gove county who can remember going to school in a sod house or a dugout. The report of the county superintendent for 1928 shows an enrollment in the common schools of Gove county of 1277, with eighty nine teachers employed and school property valued at \$355,010. There are seven "Standard" schools and one "Superior" school—the latter being at Quinter.

As might be expected, this ten-fold increase in the value of school property has been accompanied by a rising debt. The old school houses were paid for; but Gove county school districts now carry a bonded debt of \$83,300 (most of which is on the grade schools, in the towns). Even so, this is not bad, compared with some of our neighboring counties.

Sixty one school districts have been organized in the county. Of these about a dozen were laid out before the county itself was organized in 1886, and while we were still a part of Ellis or Trego county. The others have been formed since, as the need arose. Eleven of these districts have been disorganized or joined to others. One district was included in the Oakley consolidation, and several in the Quinter Consolidated School. The Quinter people are very proud of their school, but for some reason the other parts of the county have not taken to the idea of consolidation,—probably because they fear the expense.

Graduation records for the common schools run back as far as 1894. For some years the number of graduates was not large, but it is now sometimes more than a hundred in a single year. It is worth while to print the names of those who carried off the class honors for each year. It will be noted that the list includes some now prominent in Gove county affairs. There is one college professor and three now teaching in high schools. Two of the valedictorians were killed in the World War. In

several instances children of honor students have themselves carried off the honors in their time. In this list the valedictorian is named first, salutatorian second:

1894—C. L. Cook, W. S. Kriegh.  
 1895—Mabel Munns, Evelyn Bentley.  
 1896—E. L. Wickizer, W. S. Harper.  
 1897—Etta McKinney, B. B. Bacon.  
 1898—Annie Harrington, V e r n a Cook.  
 1899—Sybil Wilson, Lucy Wilson.  
 1900—L. G. Peirce, J. L. Mendenhall.  
 1901—E. D. Samson, Ruby Darnall.  
 1902—Moyne Jones, Annie Williams.  
 1903—John Borah, Annie Ritchie.  
 1904—Blanche Mendenhall, G a y e Iden.  
 1905—Edna Rundberg, Olive Steck.  
 1906—Newton E. Terrill, S t e l l a Houser.  
 1907—Ella Holaday, Chas. L. Caldwell.  
 1908—Pauline Pritchard, J o s e p h Bowman.  
 1909—Eric Cummings, Lela Songer.  
 1910—Emma Haldeman, Martha McKnight.  
 1911—Clara J a m i s o n, Minnie Smith.  
 1912—Charles Harvey, Orpha Hinchsliff.  
 1913—Pansy Turman, Faye Smith.  
 1914—Elva Bowers, Lennie Nelson.  
 1915—Geo. D. Royer, Jr., Floyd Cooper.  
 1916—Myrtle Crist, Velma Anderson.  
 1917—Cecil Walt first; Marie Hall and Rosa Suter tie for second.  
 1918—F r a n k Phelps, Robert E. James.  
 1919—Bryonia Pearce, C y n t h i a Cooper.  
 1920—Elsie Albin, Nancy Beesley.  
 1921—Ella May Cooper, Iver Tokoi.  
 1922—Mary Marshall, Bertha Marshall.  
 1923—J. Wayne Lansdowne, Ivan Walt.  
 1924—Lloyd Sheard, Merlyn Grecian.  
 1925—Dorothy Pittinger, Grace Beesley.  
 1926—Edna Mann, Lucille Thompson.  
 1927—Fred Benson, Jr., Jennie Sterrett.  
 1928—Nadine Calvert, Clyde Coulter.  
 1929—Joseph Mohler, Jr., Pearl Doxon.

The agitation for high schools be-

gan in 1895. In the election of that year a proposition was submitted to the voters to establish a county high school. The proposition was not very strongly supported, and received only 97 votes as against 231 in opposition. It carried only a single township, Gove township, where the school would have been located if established. At length the idea gained enough favor that in the legislature of 1903 the representative from Gove county (Jones) got a special bill passed providing for a county high school in Gove county. The act created much dissatisfaction, it did not submit the matter to a vote of the people but provided that the school could be established upon a petition signed by a majority of the voters of the county. The petition was secured, and the Gove County High School was opened at Gove City in the fall of 1903.

The Gove County High School had a short and troubled existence. It started out with nine students, and the student body never grew to be a very large one. Certain parts of the county never were enthusiastic about it and were always fighting it. It might be said, too, that its supporters were not always wise, and the institution lost support on account of their actions. As the opposition grew Representative Dennis introduced in the legislature of 1907 a bill to submit the fate of the school to a vote of the people of the county. If this election had been held the school would probably have been sustained, but the supporters of the G. C. H. S. were unwilling to allow the matter to come to a vote. The principal of the school and a delegation of its friends went to Topeka and "lobbied" against the Dennis bill and secured its defeat. This was hailed as a great victory for the G. C. H. S., but it was the beginning of its downfall. The fight was taken to the courts; a taxpayer was found who protested against the tax levied to support the school and brought suit to test the legality of its establishment. It was a matter of a technicality, the law creating the school had not been properly complied with, the petitions had not been published the required number of times; and so the district court and the supreme court put an end to the Gove County High School, the final decision being rendered in May, 1909.

One of the graduates of the Gove County High School (Lieutenant George Strong) penned the following tribute to it after the school had gone out of existence:

"Though its existence was brief and its end oblivion, yet it was the instrument of perhaps more good than one would think of at a casual notice. Of the graduates and students of this high school two continued their education at Kansas University, one at Washburn College, four at Kansas Wesleyan University, eight at the Western Branch of the State Normal at Hays, three at the State Normal at Emporia, three at the State Agricultural College, two at Kansas Wesleyan Business College at Salina and one at Spalding's Commercial College at Kansas City.

"About forty teachers received full or partial training at this high school. Most of them taught or are teaching in Gove county. Four of this number have become teachers in other high schools.

"Among this high school's former students and graduates may be numbered one lawyer, one law student, two holding clerical positions, one graduate nurse, one evangelistic worker, one merchant, and two young men who have been of inestimable value to their father in assisting him in the editorship of a newspaper. Not a bad record for a small high school in existence only six years and whose average enrollment was about thirty."

The Gove County High School was never a very heavy financial burden. It carried on in the grade school building at Gove City (since torn down) and never had a building of its own; and the taxpayers of Gove county at this date would be tickled pink if they could bring their present high school tax down to the figure which sufficed to maintain the old county high school. But those days are gone, probably forever.

The property of the G. C. H. S. was sold at auction and bought in for \$500 by School District No. 8, the district in which Gove City is located, and this district bravely proceeded to carry on a high school,—a heavy load for so small a unit. But at last came a time when the country was ripe to take advantage of the rural high school law passed by the legislature. Then a rural high school district was carved out for each town

in the county. Gove and Grinnell districts organized in 1915, Quinter, Grainfield and Park in 1916. The Quinter, Grainfield and Gove districts have erected handsome buildings for their high schools. Park high school is still using the grade school building.

It took three bond elections in one year before the Grinnell district could start on its high school building. Since its organization the school has been conducted in the grade school building. In January, 1929, an election was called to vote \$60,000 in bonds to construct a high school building. The opposition contended that the amount was too large, as the Quinter and Gove districts had issued but \$30,000 each and the Grainfield district \$20,000. The bond issue was beaten at the January election by a majority of five votes. The friends of the \$60,000 proposition alleged that illegal votes had been cast, and caused another election to be called in March, at which time the proposition carried by about the same majority by which it had been beaten at the first election. The opposition now brought suit and had the second election set aside for irregularities of procedure. Then the two factions got together on a proposition to vote \$40,000 and called a third election. And so the Grinnell Rural High School will have a \$40,000 building—which is in course of construction at this writing.

The enrollment in our five rural high schools at last report was Gove 59, Grainfield 32, Grinnell 57, Park 13, Quinter 128, a total of 289. These five institutions are a trifle expensive; but when you come to think of it, it is a very nice arrangement—each ambitious town in the county can have its own high school, and the way is made easy for every bright boy and girl in the county to get an education. And one out of every twenty of the entire population of Gove county, big or little, is enrolled in high school. Think of it a moment. The writer claims that no other county in the state can equal this record.

Having treated of our grade schools and our high schools, let us now consider our college. How many know that Gove county once had a college? In 1889 the G. A. R. Memorial College of Buffalo Park was

chartered by the state, its object being, as stated in the charter, "to build and maintain a college for the free education of the children of the union soldiers of the late rebellion in the United States." The incorporators of the college are Mrs. Mary J. Whiting of Oakley, Miss L. A. Mints of Buffalo Park, and Mrs. Carrie Chase Davis, Mrs. Agnes Frick and Mrs. Sarah J. Johnston of Wakeeney. I find but one newspaper reference to this Gove county college. The Gove County Republican under date of Sept. 20, 1889, says: "The G. A. R. Memorial College at Buffalo Park opened Sept. 11 with an enrollment of 21. The College occupies elegant and commodious rooms in the new school building. Miss Clara Davis, president of the College, has charge of Preparatory and Normal courses; Mr. Griffith has charge of the Commercial course, Mrs. D. A. Woodford the Musical department and Mrs. N. Saum the Art department. A library of about 300 volumes has been established and additions will be made as rapidly as possible. The students are doing thorough good work and all are ambitious and enthusiastic. On the evening of the 10th a concert was given in honor of the opening of the school by the Woodford orchestra which was a complete success. It was the first concert given in Gove county and won the appreciation of all present."

And that seems to be all. Buffalo Park had no newspaper, the Pioneer having suspended two years before, and no other mention of the G. A. R. Memorial College appears. And who the incorporators and the teachers are whose names are given, I have never been able to find out—except one. Evidently the sponsors of this Gove county college soon found out that running a higher institution of learning is a financial proposition and the country was not able to sustain it—so it died an early death. In the year 1922 Miss Lucille A. Mints, who is the same person mentioned as one of the incorporators of the college, came to Quinter for a short time to conduct a class in painting and drawing. This old lady, whose home was then at Seattle, Wash., told the writer of this history that the G. A. R. Memorial College was soon removed from Buffalo Park to Oberlin. That city

wanted it and promised to maintain it. Inquiry at Oberlin brought the information that a tract of 640 acres (I think) was set aside on which to erect the college buildings, which same were never erected. And what became of the G. A. R. Memorial College at Oberlin or how long it lasted there is no part of the history of Gove county.

Our neighboring city of Oberlin is said to be getting ambitious again, and to be dreaming dreams of expanding her fine community high school into a college. It is to be hoped those good people will have better luck with it than they had with the G. A. R. Memorial College which they took away from Gove county.

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## CHAPTER IV

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### POLITICS IN GOVE COUNTY

One election night the crowd was gathered at the county seat to hear the election returns. Every precinct had reported except Jerome, far out in the country, the roads were bad and there was no telephone connection. The election had been very close in spots, and the result hinged on the vote of this one country precinct. At last the expected messenger arrived, and the crowd quieted down and gathered around to hear his report. He started at the top, with the vote for president,—“Roosevelt 48, Parker 12, Debs 6.” Nobody said anything, no one appeared particularly interested, and the messenger inquired, “What do you fellows want first?” And some one spoke up, “How is the vote for sheriff?”

This little incident well illustrates the character of Gove county politics. Everybody wanted to know the vote for county officials, but the vote for president and for state officers could wait. When the campaign grows warm and voters get excited, the battle rages not about who shall be elected to the highest offices in the land but who shall fill the places in the court house. The voters dearly love to argue about, and vote upon, some “local issue”; and when veteran politicians get reminiscent about past political battles, it is not to tell of what we did for our candidate for president or governor, but of how we brought about the downfall of some local politician or helped to put some

friend into an office in the court house.

Perhaps we have overdone it. It is a noteworthy fact that never in all our history has a Gove county man been a party nominee for any state or district office. This may be because we have exhausted our energies in local political contests. (There is one exception—the Socialist party nominated a Gove county man as their candidate for state senator in 1904.)

Gove county has always been Republican on state and national issues; but even this rule has its exceptions. Woodrow Wilson carried the county for president in 1912 and in 1916, and the county has on more than one occasion given a majority for the Democratic candidate for Congress or for judge of the district court.

It is worth noting that this county gave a majority for the prohibition amendment to the state constitution in 1880—when the county was as yet unorganized—and for the woman suffrage amendment in 1912.

In the early Nineties the Farmers Alliance and Populist party swept most of our neighboring counties and kept political control of them for several years, but it was never strong enough in Gove county to command a majority. In its first campaign, in 1890, the party selected its nominees for county office in the regulation Farmers Alliance style, by secret ballot in the sub-alliances, and the result of the ballot was not known till later when the county alliance met to canvass the vote and announce the result. None of the Populist nominees of that year were successful; but in later elections a number of Populists were elected, by fusion with the Democrats. The Populist party made no more nominations after 1900.

After the Populist party was gone the Socialist party effected a county organization and for several successive elections nominated candidates for county offices. The party never became strong, its highest vote for president being fifty-five. Its highest vote for any county office was 65, and it elected a justice of the peace in Jerome township. The Socialist nominee for state senator in 1904 still remembers that he received 49 votes in Gove county, nineteen of them in his own precinct.

The events of the World War ruined the Socialist party in Gove county and destroyed its organization, though it still has a scattering vote at each election.

Since 1908 the law has required all party nominations to be made at a "primary" held in August preceding the election. But for a dozen years previous to the passage of the state primary law the Republican party in Gove county had been in the habit of having a county primary, with an occasional delegate convention instead. The Populists and Democrats made their nominations usually in mass convention, though sometimes a delegate convention was called instead.

County officials are sometimes elected to a second term, but not to a third. During war time this rule was broken, and some of the officials were given a third term. At that time there was but little politics, everybody was thinking about the war or trying to raise some of that \$2.40 wheat; but no candidate for a third term has gotten anywhere since the war came to an end and the country returned to normalcy.

The first representatives of Gove county in the legislature were in the same position as the representative of a territory in the congress of the United States—they had a seat on the floor and the privilege of debate, but no vote. The older counties of the state were very reluctant to give the voting privilege to the newly settled western counties. It was the Farmers Alliance legislature of 1891 which redistricted the state and put Gove and eighteen other western counties on an equal footing with the older counties in every respect.

The rest of this chapter is a catalog of names. Herewith we give the names of those who have held the offices since the county was organized. Those marked with a star (\*) were elected as Populists or Democrats; the others are Republican.

Representative—J. K. Wickizer, C. H. Towsley, John W. Campbell\*, J. B. McClanahan, I. T. Purcell, R. D. Anderson, John L. Cook, A. J. Sprague\*, John Heckman, James M. Sutcliffe, E. C. Prather\*, John F. Jones, George D. Royer, D. M. Dennis, W. J. Davenport\*, George P. Crippen, E. D. Samson, W. P. Harrington\*, A. Yale, Cecil Calvert\*.

County Clerk—D. A. Borah, W. H.

Wigington\*, W. J. Heiney, C. P. Munns, I. N. Carver\*, T. L. Sturman, C. R. Summers, George H. Thomas\*, S. A. Mitchell, E. E. Baker, Christian L. Ikenberry, W. P. Harrington\*, J. L. Mendenhall.

County Treasurer—F. F. Wright, George S. Dryer\*, C. J. Ellithorpe, George S. Dryer\*, A. J. Mitchell, J. F. Mendenhall, J. E. Smith, T. P. McQueen, C. C. Spiher\*, Alex Haney, A. M. Weir, Lloyd J. Tustin\*, F. A. Lewis.

Register of Deeds—L. F. Jones, C. E. Peirce, F. B. Strong, H. A. Spiher\*, W. G. Jones, Martin Sutcliffe, J. M. Denning\*, A. E. Osborn\*, L. O. Maxwell, J. L. Mendenhall, E. H. Brown.

County Superintendent—G. G. Lehmer, D. J. Coy, C. H. Cole, Isaac Smith, W. S. Kriegh, Ruth Benson, E. L. Wickizer, C. H. Cole, Stella Mather\*, J. R. Mohler, Mrs. Emma C. Sites, Charles D. Wilson\*, B. B. Bacon, John F. Lindquist, Ralph C. Eller, Fred M. Crippen.

Probate Judge—J. H. Jones, C. E. Hebbard\*, A. C. Hennesey\*, J. W. Benson, Jesse Royer, J. M. Tyler, T. U. Moller, John L. Cook, I. B. Peck\*, J. N. Turman, Gus Peterson\*, W. T. Snowden, J. H. Orten, L. F. Thomas, Charles Swenson, George F. Turner\*.

Clerk of the Court—Wm. Murphy, U. W. Oblinger, O. B. Jones, M. A. Lohr, John L. Cook, James P. Knight, J. A. Wilson\*, Jennie E. Benson, E. E. Baker, A. J. Wiles\*, Floyd B. Hazelwood, T. A. Evans, George F. Turner\*, C. F. Cook, R. B. McNay.

Sheriff—John W. Hopkins, R. C. Bohn, N. E. Terrill, D. C. Blackwill, Gust Anderson, I. L. Longwell, W. T. McDonald, E. T. Lewis, H. A. Cook, W. T. McDonald, F. E. Batman\*.

County Attorney—P. J. Cavanaugh, R. C. Jones, J. F. Todd, I. T. Purcell, O. B. Jones, L. O. Maxwell\*, John R. Parsons, E. L. Tustin\*, R. H. Thompson, E. F. Beckner\*, R. H. Thompson, J. H. Jensen, R. H. Thompson.

Coroner—W. H. Crater, D. C. Blackwill, N. F. Davis, John W. Hopkins, J. H. Fosdick, James M. Sutcliffe, M. B. Smith, J. E. Vanderpool, E. N. Wert, George Birrer\*, N. E. Terrill, O. J. Benson, C. S. Wall, A. M. Weir, George Birrer\*, J. H. Rinehart, C. O. Hoover\*, W. H. Reckling, Benj. H. Morris, C. O. Hoover\*.

County Surveyor—F. B. Cope, A. P. Duryea, F. B. Coy, R. H. Samson,

L. O. Maxwell, J. W. Whitmer, J. J. Wolfe, J. H. Sprenger, N. C. Lewis\*, A. R. Livingston, M. A. Lohr, C. W. Brown, W. W. Roberts.

County Commissioners—J. B. McClanahan, Lyman Raymond, T. M. Stokes, John W. Campbell\*, James Hamilton\*, Gus Peterson\*, W. J. Heiney, J. H. Redifer, James Mather, J. S. Muchmore, Alex Haney, J. B. Wertz\*, J. W. Wolfe, W. H. Leach, Ben Jones, M. E. Wilkinson\*, George T. Brown, J. W. Purdum\*, L. M. Baker, John Soderstrom, R. H. Holmes, C. G. Crippen, John Rundberg, L. H. Livingston, Alex Haney, J. F. Harper\*, H. W. Gee\*, E. L. Tustin\*, Hiram Richardson, N. C. Lewis\*, J. W. Butler\*, I. N. Carver\*, C. C. Morgan\*, T. F. Poole, George F. Wilson, T. H. Simmons, W. F. Bowman, J. H. Flora, W. E. Roesch, J. H. Mather\*, J. H. Flora, R. S. Ikenberry\*, T. F. Poole, Carl Knudsen.

County High School Trustees, 1903 to 1909—George D. Royer, J. M. Sturman, M. E. Wilkinson\*, Hiram Richardson, A. A. Madden, E. C. Prather\*, W. E. Bentley, B. B. Bacon, George F. Wilson, Nels Nordell, Mack White, H. A. Spiher\*, H. W. Gee\*.

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## CHAPTER V

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### THE PRESS

As previously related in this history, there were newspapers at Grainfield and Buffalo Park before the county was organized, but these were forced to suspend when the county was depopulated by the Drouth of 1880. Some six hundred people still lingered on, but for four years Gove county was without a newspaper.

The printing presses came again with the first wave of returning settlement in 1885. In April of that year A. W. Burnett started the Buffalo Park Pioneer. Three more papers sprang into existence in July, the Settlers Guide at Quinter, the Cap Sheaf at Grainfield and the Golden Belt at Grinnell. At the end of 1885 Gove county had four papers.

1886—The county was organized this year. Immigration is big, and here come two more papers. The Gove City Gazette made its first appearance in April, and the People's

Press was started at Grinnell in September. Then there were six.

1887—The Golden Belt absorbs the People's Press, in February. The man Criswell, who had started the Gazette and had disposed of it, now returns and starts the Graphic at Gove City in July. The Smoky Globe began publication at Jerome in March. Now for a time the county had seven papers, but the number was reduced one when the Buffalo Park Pioneer quit in December.

1888—The Smoky Globe suspends in April; Criswell sells again; his Graphic was a democratic paper, and immediately following Grover Cleveland's defeat for the presidency Criswell disposes of his paper to Loyd & Hart who change its name and politics to the Gove County Republican. Five papers are left.

The number remains the same in 1889. The Settler's Guide suspends in January, but Trimmer and Spalding start the Quinter Republican in April to take its place.

In the next few years the county loses half of its population and three-fifths of its newspapers, but the papers hang on longer and give way more slowly than the population. In April, 1890, the Golden Belt suspends and the Gazette absorbs the Gove Co. Republican. In March, 1891, John L. Cook & Sons start the Echo at Gove City. There are no more changes till 1894. In August of that year Cook buys the Gazette and consolidates his Echo with it, and in November the Cap Sheaf is moved from Grainfield to Gove City and changes its name to the Gove County Leader. No change in 1895. In 1896 the Quinter Republican is moved to Gove City, in April, absorbs the Gazette in October and becomes the Gove County Republican-Gazette. There were now but two papers in the county, one Republican and one Populist, and both of them published at the county seat. This is a very natural and desirable state of affairs; and Gove City, twelve miles off the railroad, had proved itself the only town in the county capable of supporting a newspaper at that time. Of late years the citizens of Quinter, Grainfield and Grinnell sometimes turn up their noses at poor old Gove City which has no railroad, no heavy bonded debt and no high taxes, and it may be hard for them to realize that there was a time when they lost



their citizens, their business and their newspapers to Gove City. One who now sees our thriving little towns along the railroad could hardly believe how dead those same towns were at that time. And no doubt Gove City without the county seat would have been as dead as any of them.

The year 1897 brings another change. In December the Leader becomes a Republican paper, and on the last day of the year the Gove County Advocate, a Populist paper, begins publication at Gove City. This Advocate will be given special attention in a later chapter. The three-cornered rivalry at Gove City continues till 1901; in January of that year the Republican-Gazette absorbs the Leader; the Advocate suspended in December. And now at last Gove county has but one newspaper.

With the return of better and more hopeful times came more newspapers. In June, 1904, W. H. Tuttle buys the Gove County Advocate press and type and starts publication of the Short Grass Advocate, at Gove City. The next year it moves to the railroad and becomes the Grainfield Advocate; and in 1905 E. E. Bevan (who had learned his trade on the old Gove County Advocate) started the Record at Grinnell.

In 1908 Wm. Field Jr. bought out Tuttle and moved his paper to Quinter where it became the Gove County Advocate—second of the name. Grainfield would not be without a paper, and in 1910 the editor of the WaKeeney World starts at Grainfield the Cap Sheaf—second of that name. In 1913 the Record, after many ups and downs and changes of ownership (and a fire) gives up the ghost; but in 1916 Rawleigh Young, the Oakley editor, starts the Grinnell Record—again, the second of the name. Since that date the situation has remained unchanged with four newspapers in the county—the Republican-Gazette at Gove City, the Advocate at Quinter, the Cap Sheaf at Grainfield and the Record at Grinnell.

During almost a half century of newspaper history there naturally have been many changes in the ownership of these papers. Also changes in politics and policy. The earliest editors, they of the Grainfield Republican, the Golden Belt Advance and the Buffalo Park Express were steadfast men who founded their papers

and stayed with them till the depopulation and ruin of the country in 1880 compelled them to shut down. But the editors who came with the second settlement were a more restless and changeable lot and few of them could or would stay with the job long at a time.

At Grinnell, one early editor is said to have left town in fear for his personal safety as a result of the town row. At least one other always carried a "gun"; another one quit the job for a better one farther east and told the world through his new publication that Gove county was desolate and her people destitute. Maybe it looked that way to him, for that particular year was a season of drouth and high winds, when the country suffered severely and it was no place for the faint hearted. The founder of the first Quinter paper seems to have become involved in unfortunate land speculations which forced the paper to suspend. Another editor at Quinter violated the law of the land and left the country after dark.

The early newspapers depended largely for their living upon the land office patronage, the publication notices required in land contests and in proving up on homesteads, and these notices were political patronage and went by favor—so when the national administration changed from Republican to Democratic or vice versa it made a corresponding change in Gove county newspapers. Then, the board of county commissioners had sometimes a Republican or Democratic or Populist majority and awarded the county printing accordingly, and more than one Gove county paper changed its politics to get or to retain the county printing. The Gove City Gazette and the Graphic were started as Democratic and became Republican. The first Cap Sheaf was in both political parties by turns. The Gove County Leader ran the first part of its course as Populist and finished as Republican. The first Grinnell Record began as Republican, changed to Democratic and was finally sold out to and consolidated with a Republican paper. Some Gove county papers have been independent and nonpartisan, but of those which frankly were political organs only two have a clear record—the original Gove County Advocate at Gove City was always Popu-



list, and the Quinter (now Gove City) Republican has always been Republican.

The founder of the Buffalo Park Express in 1880 had been a member of the Wyandotte Convention in 1859 which framed the constitution under which Kansas became a state; the founder of the Buffalo Park Pioneer five years later was his son. Two Grinnell editors, Rickman and Carroll, went from Gove county to a larger field, to do newspaper work in Topeka. Of Grainfield editors McIvor has been state senator and Purcell has been district judge; both of them were to leave Gove county and take up their abode elsewhere before their ability was appreciated and these honors came to them.

To mention briefly the "passing show" of those who were our editors: First, the Buffalo Park Pioneer. A. W. Burnett founded it and ran it a year and a half, then sold out to G. F. Roberts and A. F. Potter. Most western editors in those days were real estate agents and used much space in their own papers to advertise their land business. Finally Roberts assumed sole control and closed the paper down, the last issue saying, "While we dislike to pull up stakes and leave our property and many friends, we do not propose to spend our time and printer's ink to eke out a mere existence."

W. P. Evans started the Smoky Globe at Jerome, and had for a time as partner J. L. Papes. Mr. Evans also ran a paper for a time at Farnsworth in Lane county. His son, who is now an editor in Coffey county, makes occasional visits to Gove county and tells of how his father brought the family and the print shop with him to Kansas in a covered wagon, halting occasionally along the way to do a little job printing. At the time he set up his shop in Jerome railroad surveyors were laying out a route along the Smoky and Jerome felt certain of getting a railroad.

J. H. Baker was owner of the Settler's Guide, and J. M. Cober editor. J. W. Baker succeeded Cober as editor of the Guide, and Cober later became prominent as a Democratic editor in Nemaha county.

The first Cap Sheaf changed hands frequently. Those who served more or less briefly as editors or proprietors were E. P. Worcester, A. F.

Enos, E. M. Prindle (who was interested in the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool), Grainfield Publishing Co., Ira D. Chamberlain, W. J. Evans (the Cap Sheaf was at its best during the year he ran it), C. M. & E. L. Chamberlain (husband and wife), I. T. Purcell, Frank A. McIvor, Beal & Dryer, Cap Sheaf Publishing Co., M. M. Martin and again Purcell.

Of the early Gove City papers: Ralph L. Criswell starts the Gazette and after running it for a year sells out to R. W. McAdam. Then a few months later Criswell returns to Gove and starts a rival, the Graphic. McAdam sells out to E. J. Killean who takes for a partner W. H. Maxwell and, later, D. V. Smith. Criswell sells the Graphic to Loyd & Hart who later change the name to the Republican. (By the way, Criswell afterward became a prominent citizen in Los Angeles, California.) Killean & Smith of the Gazette absorb the Republican, and later sell out to O. B. & J. F. Jones. John L. Cook & Sons start the Echo, and for three years the Cooks and the Jones brothers are rival Republican editors in the same little town. Finally Cook terminates the rivalry by buying the Gazette and merging the two papers. Then Tom Kirtley moves to town with the new Populist paper, the Leader, (which had formerly been the Grainfield Cap Sheaf). Those were the days of personal journalism; Kirtley, Cook, Evans, the Joneses and Trimmer, any or all of them, usually have a wordy war going on about the county printing or some thing else. No blood is shed and apparently no friendships disrupted, and evidently these newspaper rows are not to be taken very seriously—news was scarce and the editor had to print something to fill up his paper. Trimmer moves the Quinter Republican to Gove City and absorbs, and hyphenates, the Gazette.

At this stage of the game there are but two papers in the county, of opposite political faiths, but the balance is soon disturbed. L. O. Maxwell buys the Leader and changes its politics. The Advocate is started by the writer of this history. Maxwell sells out to Bevan & Munns, they to Munns & Smith, they in turn to Trimmer of the Republican-Gazette. The Advocate suspends, and the Republican-Gazette emerges as

the last survivor of fifteen years of fierce competition.

Rivalry, after a lapse of years, began again with "Short Grass Bill" Tuttle, who gave place after a time to Wm. Field Jr. Field was a moral delinquent, but a great rustler with a wonderful handshake. I remember hearing one who knew him say of him, "He shook hands as hard as he grafted." Field published his Advocate for a time at Quinter as a semi-weekly, and even talked of making it a daily—in a town of about three hundred population. Field was followed at Quinter by Lisle McIlhenry (now running a paper in Douglas county) who gave way about ten years ago to A. A. Keiser. Most famous of editors at Grainfield in recent years is F. I. Wolfe, genius and cartoonist, who advertised to the world that the Cap Sheaf was "the only newspaper in the world printed in a barn." A year ago the Cap Sheaf was acquired by young Harvey Keiser who learned his trade in his father's shop at Quinter. The Record is owned and printed at Oakley but edited at Grinnell by Earl Davis, a crippled veteran of the World War.

Lastly, let it be mentioned as a part of Gove county journalistic history that the character of Gove county editors and newspapers has changed greatly in these later times. The old time editor was usually a violent partisan, with but little invested and no business sense. He usually had a row going on all the time with some one about the county printing. Of late years it has become the settled policy of our boards of county commissioners to give the county printing to all four of the county papers instead of bestowing it as a favor upon some one of them, so that now each paper gets a part of the pay and they can stop quarreling. The present day editor is a business man with a typesetting machine and a power press, who cares little about politics but is running a paper to serve the community and to make a living. He lacks some of the old time fighting spirit and the ability to write those red hot editorials, but he is getting out a neater sheet with more news in it than the old time editors, and he is making dollars where the old timers never made cents.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE GOVE COUNTY ADVOCATE

Perhaps the reader will bear with me if I give a personal experience. This chapter is about the Gove County Advocate which the writer founded and ran for four years and discontinued, at Gove City. Those who are not interested are at liberty to skip this chapter—I will take up the general thread of the history in the later chapters.

Old Tom Kirtley, running a Populist paper in Gove City, was tired of the game and wanted to quit. The county board was Republican and he could not get the county printing; the Republicans had just come into control of the national administration and his patronage from the U. S. Land Office was cut off. It was a gloomy outlook for a Populist paper.

I was a newcomer in the county and had not come with any thought of running a newspaper. But, given a Populist who takes his politics seriously, just out of a print shop and fond of the work, some leisure time on his hands and an editor who is about to quit and leave the county without a Populist paper,—and perhaps it is not strange that a fellow soon gets back into the game. In my state of mind at that time life was not worth living in a county without a Populist paper, where we had to bear the slings and arrows of an outrageous opposition and had no way of returning them. It began to look as if there might be some fun in being a Pop editor in Gove county, and possibly some profit.

But before bargaining with Kirtley to buy his paper I wanted to know something about the newspaper business in the short grass country, so I took a few days off to visit the Populist editors at WaKeeney, Hill City and Hoxie in quest of information and advice. Results were not altogether encouraging. I learned much about the hard struggles for existence of short grass editors (particularly those of the Populist faith), and the advice ran all the way from "you can't make it, you will go broke," to "go it, we admire your spunk,"—but after a week's absence and a horseback journey of nearly two hundred miles I returned to Gove City with the intention of buying the Leader. But too late; dur-

ing my absence Kirtley had sold the paper to L. O. Maxwell, who changed its politics, and now Gove county had two Republican papers and no Populist paper at all.

Well, perhaps two Republican papers would be no harder to fight than one. Having determined to go ahead, and being unable to buy a paper already established, it was now necessary for me to buy a new outfit and begin at the bottom. Inserting a paid notice of my intention in the Leader, I boarded the train for K. C. to purchase the necessary equipment. It took no very large sum of money to start a paper on the frontier in those days; a hand press and a few pounds of type was enough. Not all of my outfit was new. The Republican-Gazette, as a result of absorbing many other papers (Guide, Echo, Graphic, Gove Co. Republican, Gazette, and Quinter Republican) had more material than it could use, and Mr. Trimmer was glad to sell me a few fonts of display and advertising type at a reasonable figure.

As I look back now upon that adventure it seems to me to have been a very rash undertaking. I had been in the county less than a year and my acquaintance was very limited. I had no assurance of support not a dollar of advertising patronage promised, nor—I had almost said not a subscriber, but my friend Col. S. S. Reynolds of Grainfield asked for the privilege of being my first paid-up subscriber and paid over his dollar before I had even purchased my outfit. There was not even a decent place in town for a shop—during those years of depression the empty buildings in Gove City had been bought up by ranchers and moved out of town—and I was forced to build an office for my paper, meanwhile taking temporary quarters in an old “lean to” with a very leaky roof and no room at all. The population of the county had been practically stationary for several years. Newcomers were few and were looked upon with something like suspicion, and there was a growing feeling that the only people worth considering were those who had come to the country in Eighty Six and had stayed with it, and that the later comers were an inferior lot. This feeling of superiority was hardening into something like a caste system, and the Men of Eighty Six were be-

ing made into a sort of local aristocracy. Of course, this state of affairs was shattered later by another influx of new settlers, but it was quite noticeable at this time, in the year 1897, and it had its depressing effect even upon the egotism and self assurance of the new Populist editor. There was but one other Populist in Gove City, and he not very trustworthy; and many a time when I felt myself slipping and in need of encouragement I have jumped into the saddle and ridden far out into the country and sought out some old Pop (the more radical the better) and put up with him for the night and bade him talk to me and stiffen my backbone, lest I should lose the faith.

As for the Advocate itself, Gove county never had another paper like it, and never will. An old newspaper friend who knew the country had given me this advice, “Gove is a county where it does not pay a Pop to be good;” and this was the policy upon which the Advocate was run. It might be all right in some places for a Populist paper to roar gently and be mild and conciliatory, but the Advocate would have none of it. It had come to fight, and it kept up the fight as long as there was a party left to fight for; and when the Populist party ceased to be, the Advocate’s excuse for existence was gone and it suspended publication.

Times have changed so much in thirty years that it is difficult to imagine our way of life in those days. We had no radio, no automobiles and no telephones. The country was in a state of stagnation, we had few visitors and little communication with the outside world. Business was dead, land of no value, there were no roads or bridges, everybody lived in sod houses, and there was no dividing line between the rich and the poor. Per consequence, our local affairs took on a magnitude such as they do not have in these later days; they were the only thing we had to talk about, and for the time being the editor of the local paper had an influence as a molder of public opinion such as few of them possess at this day. Elections were held every year, instead of biennially as now, and politics, local politics, was the one live subject all the year round.

Right here let me say that during its existence the Advocate was some-

thing more than a mere political organ. It chronicled the news, such as were; it ran a series of write-ups of the townships and their productions, and of individual citizens. And it wrote up some local happenings in a semi humorous strain which attracted the attention of, and caused them to be copied in, the press of Kansas and other states—such things, for instance, as the prize fight at Grainfield, the Advocate's prairie dog banquet, the "pigeon toed schoolma'am" story and the tale of the plucky Gove county girl who smoked a wildcat out of his den and beat him to death with a rock. It was the aim to have something attractive of a newsy nature in every issue. But the main purpose of the sheet was political.

And Politics at that time was a matter of personalities. Gove county was fiercely Republican. While neighboring counties had gone Farmers Alliance and Populist, Gove county had steadily refused to change. In a total vote of about five hundred the county gave about 125 majority Republican. Republicans might fight among themselves like cats and dogs, but they lined up for the straight ticket on election day. Those were the days when men boasted loudly of voting their ticket straight. Probably this was why my friend had said that it did not pay a Populist to be good. Up to this time the Populists had never been able to place a man in a single office in the court house. They had elected representative in 1894 and a county commissioner in 1896; these had been elected in a campaign full of personalities, which showed that this was at that time the only way to success.

Not to make the story too long, let it be said that the Advocate never gave the enemy a rest. The political "ring" was bombarded constantly. Every Republican candidate had to run the gauntlet of criticism. Public records were dug up and published if they could be made to reflect upon some candidate. Something had to be done to make these voters mad, and to shock them out of the habit of voting the straight Republican ticket. As is likely to happen in a campaign of this sort, the editor often got encouragement and assistance from unexpected sources. (I had a good laugh one day when glancing out of the window of my shop I saw a candidate shaking hands with one of his

friends. This candidate was at that time under my heaviest fire, and his "friend" was the very fellow who had secretly furnished me the ammunition to make the attack,—but the poor candidate never suspected. I had to establish a reputation for keeping secrets, and for keeping my mouth shut, before any one would trust me like that.)

Under this style of attack the enemy's forces gave way. There are some voters still living in Gove county who learned then for the first time to vote a mixed ticket. The Populists put up only part of a ticket in 1898, and elected all their nominees. They elected most of their ticket in 1899; it was a nice war. But now Luck deserted. Perhaps the voters tired of the Advocate's style of journalism, after two campaigns. More surely, the Populist party itself had entered upon its decline, due to causes far beyond my control. The party was never to win any more victories, local, state or national, and soon was to disappear from the political field entirely. The Advocate did its part well enough, but it was involved in the ruin of the party.

The Advocate never was anything but a "side line" to me, and an expensive one at that. After having run it a year and put it on its feet I tried to dispose of it, but never had a chance; failing to find a buyer I leased the paper to Earl Hoffer and took the family back to the ranch. Hoffer was a better printer than I and a good writer and newsgetter. He needed no help from me except during the few weeks of each year's campaign. The paper paid its own way during the one year when it had the county printing. Hoffer ran the paper during 1899 and 1900, then went to run a paper of his own at Utica, and I came back into the shop again. The political party I was serving had lost its spirit. There was nothing left, to run a paper for. At the end of the year 1901 the paper stopped publication, and the first Gove County Advocate had passed into history.

The life of a pioneer editor was usually not a happy one. They might get quite a kick out of it, but they made no money and few of them broke even. During my brief career I was assaulted more than once, and I know how it feels to have a gun drawn on you. Also, to be arrested.

A libel suit was hung over me, finally to be withdrawn after it had cost me several hundred dollars for attorneys' fees and court expenses. But my greatest grief is found in the realization that I accomplished so little—could have employed my time so much better at something else. I got quite a shock at the very time the Advocate was going the best. We were having a party committee meeting (at Colby, I think,) and each county was being called on in turn for its report. My report for Gove county seemed quite satisfactory to me—our party was united and feeling fine, we had elected certain county officials and expected to elect more. Then a wise old Pop mildly inquired, "Your campaign in your county seems to be of a personal nature, does it not?" Quite true. Then inquired my friend, "Do you think the kind of a fight you are making has helped to advance the Populist principles?" It had never occurred to me before, but I was forced to admit that while we had raised considerable hordes we had not made a single convert to the party. And so all my efforts had gone for nothing. There is a lesson in life which we all have to learn, to not take ourselves too seriously.

The Advocate press and type were moved out to the ranch and stored away, in a sod house. Then after a time the sign was right again to start another paper, and Bill Tuttle bought the outfit from me and started his paper, which, to my surprise, he called the Advocate. It was the "Short Grass Advocate," to be sure, but the prefix went through several successive changes until the name became again the Gove County Advocate, as it is today at Quinter. It is a good old name. But—sometimes I find myself wishing that I had copyrighted the name thirty years ago, so that no one but myself could ever run a newspaper under the name, Gove County Advocate.

## CHAPTER VII

### REMINISCENCES OF EARLY DAYS

This chapter was written by A. B. Brandenburg of Quinter, who was one of the earliest settlers, and one of the very few of those settlers of

half a century ago who are still with us. Mr. Brandenburg can tell this story much better than any writer who came upon the scene in these later days; and in telling it he could say, like the hero of ancient times, "all of which I saw, and a part of which I was."—W. P. H.

In the first settling of this part of Kansas, the Kansas Division of the Union Pacific Railroad was one of the Pioneers. This was built thru here about 1866 and 1867 and was finished thru to Denver, Colorado, ready for trains to make the thru trips from Kansas City to Denver, September first, 1870. Wells were put down and section houses were built for the five men and crews about 14 miles apart. The writer came to Russell in January 1878 and went to work for a man that was one of the town company of Park, Kansas. He wanted another man and myself to come out to Gove County and locate and he let us have a horse and buggy to drive thru. We made the trip the last of April 1878. By driving thru we could see the country better, so will say that Fort Hays was the first sight we saw. The town was then not very large.

The next place was Ellis, where there was not a building, only a small shed on the south side of the track, and nothing north of the creek. Next town was Ogallah and they had just finished a sod house and was digging a well and then on to WaKeeney. The town was plotted and two or three houses were built. The old town was known as Trego, in the draw west of WaKeeney about a mile. Then we drove on to Collyer where they were laying out that town and one house was already built. The old town was about a mile west of Collyer. A section house and water tank had been built and was called Coyote. On we drove to Buffalo, now called Park.

When the town was called Buffalo the postoffice was Hill Grove and then the town was named Buffalo Park, and later Park. H. J. Bliss, one of the town company, had built a store and lived over the store. There was one dwelling house, and a shed blacksmith shop.

The first settlers were a number



of families from Pennsylvania, 16 families in all. These settled in and around Park in the spring of 1878. Another colony came west and located at Collyer, settling as far west as Quinter, but there was no town where it now stands. In the spring of 1879 the railroad laid a spur track where Quinter is now located and called the place Melota. The town of Grainfield was started in the spring of 1879. A colony of Holland Dutch from Iowa, settled around Grainfield. The town of Grinnell had then a section house and another small house where mostly tobacco and drinks were sold, also a few groceries.

The town of Oakley was first named Carlisle. It like most of the other towns along the Union Pacific have different names now than was given them when the road was first built. In the fall of 1878 a band of Indians left the reservation in Indian Territory and went north going thru the west part of Gove County, and northward. Some where over the Solomon river a man was killed. This man's body was brought back to Park for burial, as his parents lived at Park at the time. This however seems to be one of those mysteries, because many at that time did not think that the Indians were to blame for it.

As this band traveled north into the northern part of Sheridan and the southern part of Decatur county, between the Solomon and Prairie Dog property. A man by the name of Peck had a store on the Prairie Dog right in their path, also the post office in connection. The post office was called Shibolet. I stopped with them several times after the raid and they told me the story of the raid on their house and store. From the house they took clothing and bedding and from the store dry goods. The feather beds that were in the house were taken outside and emptied of feathers which were scattered to the four winds. Mr. Peck said that he had just received a barrel of syrup, that was all taken away, but what they used to carry it in had always puzzled him. The Indians also killed the fat cattle, then cut them in strips and left them lay.

After doing all the mischief they could here the band left for Nebraska, where their real trouble began. The settlers and cowboys were aroused

over the depredations the Indians were doing and gathered together and went after them, finally driving the whole band into a canyon, where every member of the band was killed.

The soldiers had been following the Indians but apparently did not want to catch them. The Indians said they were not afraid of the soldiers, but were afraid of the cattle men and settlers. They knew that the soldiers were allowed to go only so far, but the settlers and cattle men knew no such rules and meant business.

What really made Buffalo Park a live town those days was the fact that the old cattle trail passed just west of Park, near the edge of town. There were from 100,000 to 200,000 head of cattle driven northward into the north western states. These were mostly cattle contracted for by the government. These cattle herds would start from Texas in March and get this far in June. The largest herd I ever saw at any one time was 10,000 head. It looked to me like they covered an area of ground 10 miles long by one quarter of a mile wide.

While driving these cattle the men scattered along on each side to keep them in line, and each man as a rule had five saddle ponies and would use a fresh horse each day by turns. Those days they would let the cattle go all winter and then round them up in the spring, and each man pick out his own cattle. I heard one man say that when he left Texas he had 400 head of cattle in his bunch that did not belong to him, and when they arrived here had about 50 head that did not belong to him, most of them belonged in Nebraska.

The cattle men had men stationed along the route with a list of brands whose business it was to take such branded cattle out of the herds as the cattle passed by. This cattle business is what made Buffalo Park a good town then. Many of the boys would drop out and go back home and others were here waiting for a job on the trail.

By the end of 1879 Buffalo Park was a town with twelve stores and three Hotels, three livery stables, three restaurants, three saloons, one barber shop, two blacksmith shops, one harness maker and one bakery, and a paper printed here, was the first one to be printed in the county.

The first school was started in the fall of 1878, the people built the house as there was nothing to tax, as this then was a township attached to Ellis county, and later when Trego county was organized it was a township of Trego county.

The first Church organized in Gove county was at Buffalo Park by a Congregationalist missionary sent out by that church. He was an able man by the name of J. Q. A. Weller.

In 1880 the people began to leave the town and also the settlers began to go away as there were no crops and hence nothing to sell. In some instances the man of the family would leave the family where they could take care of the things then find work elsewhere, so they could earn some money to keep their families and in some cases the wife would go and they received the sum of \$1.50 per week. That sum would seem almost nothing now. I have surely felt very sorry many, many times for these families with their children, and no one knows what some noble women have endured to bring up their families and keep their homes together, and it was those people that have sacrificed to make it possible for the present generation to have the advantages they have today.

The first money the writer earned in Gove county was by picking bones over the prairies.

One of the first wheat crops raised in Gove county was in 1881. There was about 20 acres of it on land about a mile east of Park. The writer and ex-sheriff Robert Bohn cradled, bound and shocked the wheat for a man by the name of Peach, who operated a blacksmith shop in Park.

Grandma Christensen had a bakery in Park at the time, and we bought bread from her often.

In February 1881 was the worst we ever saw on these plains. I was batching on my claim at the time and was caught there during the storm. I did not see any one for 11 days. Folks south of me ran out of provisions and had to go to town, they came by with a yoke of oxen and sled and we put my oxen and theirs to the wagon and broke the road to Park. We were the first team to get to town from south and east of Park.

The most wicked blizzard we ever saw while it lasted was in February, 1883, but it lasted only six hours.

During the blizzard of 1881 some

burned up most of their furniture. It was not very costly stuff, however. It was mostly homemade furniture. At this early day folks had to be men of all trades. Cabinet makers and sod masons, most of the houses were built of sod or were dug-outs.

The blizzard of January 1886 was the longest of any of them. There were 19 days during that storm that no train went through from Kansas City to Denver.

Late in the spring of 1870 a caravan of 60 covered wagons traveling together, past through Park. They were headed for the State of Washington. Their route followed the cattle trail northwest. These folks were from eastern Kansas and Missouri. The prairie did not appeal to them.

Our social times naturally were limited compared to what they are now, but we had real good times together. The social dance and playing of games were the chief activities of the social life.

In the fall of 1885 the town of FAMILTON, now Quinter, was staked out by a town company from Nebraska and in the spring of 1886 a colony of the Brethren Church located here and began to improve this part of the country. There is not much use for me to say much about this country since the spring of 1886, as there are so many here who are familiar with its history from then on.

When I first located here and was on my homestead, I would imagine I could see in the future. Perhaps only a few years, and see a nicely improved country—like it is at present—but after a few years, when there were seasons when we failed to raise anything, and what is more, it looked like it never would be of any account, brought the discouraging periods to the country. But thanks to the faithful few that stayed with it, it was these stalwart souls that saved the day for this country. After a time new settlers came and stayed, they too saw in the future that this would be a country of homes and determined to stick it out. It is to this class of people that we owe a big debt for the homes we now have in this section of Kansas. In what way could we be better rewarded for the sacrifice so many have made when we see the grand churches of the community, and the schools and all conveniences we now have, and best of



all the God fearing people with whom we have associated.

As I look around and think of the early settlers here and the good, kind friends of those times and wonder where they are all now. The older ones are gone on and the younger ones are scattered to the four winds. At the present time I can count only two people living in this country now who were living in this country when I located in this county. They are Mrs. Emma Crippen of Gove and Charley Johnson living west of Grainfield.

There were many interesting events happened in those days, which I have passed over.

In concluding this brief sketch of those earlier days will give the names of those who were members of the town company of Buffalo Park: J. W. Ellithorpe, S. J. Bliss, John Morgan, Jim Goudy, Ed Hibard, these were from Russell and there are a few more names I do not now recall.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FIGHT FOR THE SCHOOL LANDS

Every new state when admitted to the Union was endowed by the national government with a portion of the public land, for the support of education. The size of this gift varied somewhat with different states, but in the case of Kansas two square miles in each government township were thus set aside as school lands. These lands were not to be homesteaded but were to be sold for cash and the proceeds turned into the permanent school funds of the state.

Some states administered their school land inheritance much more wisely than others. The states which held their school lands—several of which could be named if their names had anything to do with this story—now have a valuable property which brings a large revenue into their school funds. But the Kansas school lands were sold long ago at very low prices and never brought enough to do the cause of education much good.

The school lands were offered for sale at \$3 per acre, the purchaser paid one tenth down and had twenty years time to pay the balance, with interest at six per cent. But few people cared to purchase the state

lands, even on such generous terms, so long as the national government was offering homestead land free to every actual settler. After the homestead lands were gone the school lands were soon snapped up; and thereby hangs a tale, as Shakespeare says.

The first tract of school land to be filed on in Gove county was Section 36-13-26, which was taken in 1884 before the county was organized. The purchaser made his initial payment of thirty cents an acre, kept up his interest payments till 1894 and then abandoned the land. A few tracts were taken in 1885 and 1886 but most of these were abandoned after a few years. The first tract to be purchased and paid for was Section 36-12-29, the section on which (a part of) Gove City is located. This land was filed on in 1885 and patented in 1887 to the Gove City Townsite Association. Willard Teller paid out on the north east quarter of Section 16-15-27 and got a patent to it in 1887; a town had been laid out on this tract and named Teller, which was expected to become a real city when a railroad should be built up the Smoky.

Soon the demand for school lands came to an end, and for twelve years following 1886 not a single tract was taken up; and most of those which had been taken up previous to that time were abandoned and reverted to the state.

A few tracts of school land were taken up in 1898 and the two years following. It will be noted that at this time western Kansas was recovering from the calamitous Nineties, population was beginning to increase and land was again acquiring a value. In the natural course of events as things were going at that time all the school lands would have been taken within a few years, even at the extravagant price of three dollars an acre, thirty cents down and twenty years time on the balance at half the prevailing commercial rate of interest.

But the Kansas legislature of 1901 started something. It occurred to that bunch of statesmen that the best thing they could do was to help the state get rid of its lands. The few remaining school lands were all in the western counties which were supposed to be a desert arid or semiarid country fitted only for pasture, and

it was argued that the state should sell its holdings as quickly as possible and get out of the land business. Accordingly, the legislature amended the old law and cut down the minimum price of school lands from \$3 per acre to \$1.25. The bill went through the legislature very smoothly and was supposed to be a very nice law. After it was seen how the law worked the charge was made that it was a scheme of the western cattlemen to steal the state's school lands. And perhaps it was.

Immediately following the passage of the new law active trading in school lands began. Under date of April 15, 1901, the State Auditor, Mr. George E. Cole, wrote from Topeka to the county clerk of Gove county (and presumably to all the county clerks:)

Dear Sir:—The state land office is receiving letters every day wanting to know the amount and quality of school lands for sale in the state.

Please give me the detailed information concerning the school land subject to sale in your county. Also the detailed information concerning the land that has been sold on which payments are in arrears and on which the county clerk has not issued legal notice of forfeiture.

Please list all land subject to sale or forfeiture, and whether leased. Under "Remarks" give some general information about what the land is good for whether wheat, corn, general farming, grazing or grass land.

In order to be of value these reports should be returned to this office immediately.

This information will be widely advertised and will result in getting a considerable amount of this land on the tax rolls, increase the population of the state, and in addition will materially increase the permanent school fund. I shall take particular pains to let it be known that you are instrumental in bringing this about and I hope it will receive your prompt and hearty support.

The Gove County Advocate found little to approve in the plans to dispose of the school lands, and its comment on the Auditor's letter was as follows (April 19:)

Mr. Cole may be perfectly honest in his action but his anxiety to "get this land on the tax rolls and add to the population of the state" by sac-

rificing the lands set apart for the benefit of the school children of Kansas is rather suspicious, coming as it does so soon after the passage of the law reducing the minimum price for school land to \$1.25 per acre. We are not aware that Mr. Cole ever made any special effort to sell school lands when the minimum price was \$3.00 per acre.

Under the public land laws sections 16 and 36 in each township are set apart as school land. There are sixty sections of school land in Gove county. Of these about one-fourth have been sold; about seven sections are now held by settlers who are preparing to bring them into market, and seventeen sections are leased for a term of five years. Thus about two-thirds of the school lands are now used or yielding a revenue to the school fund in some way.

For the year ending last October the sales of school land in this county amounted to \$1470.39, and \$483.87 was collected for leases. All lands were sold for \$3.00 per acre and upwards, one section near Quinter having been bought by Samuel Long for \$4.65 per acre. Gove county school land is worth something and there is no excuse for rushing it on the market for \$1.25 per acre. The county is out of debt and has a surplus of \$17,000 in the treasury; the school lands are yielding a good revenue now and should be held till they bring a good price.

These lands when sold should go to actual residents and those who will use them, and not to speculators. Those who want school land should settle upon or lease it now to head off the speculators. A lease will hold the land for five years in spite of a sale, and a purchaser can oust a settler from the land only by buying his improvements; so that a lease or a settlement will virtually act as a bar to the designs of speculators. If you want a farm, get it right away, on some school section.

The county commissioners were importuned to have the school lands appraised and sold and a meeting of the board was called to consider the matter (April 25); at the meeting (says the Advocate) "a plea was made to have appraisers appointed but none of the members of the board viewed the proposition with favor, as they had found that the people gen-

erally are opposed to taking such action at this time." The same week the Advocate says: "Gove county citizens seem to have suddenly awakened to the advantages of school land as a real estate investment, as evidenced by the rush of the past week to make settlement on all that was not already tied up. In several cases there was a race for possession a la Oklahoma. When the time for selling it arrives there will be little of Gove county's school land unoccupied."

The school lands did not last long after attention had been called to them in such a fashion. The record shows that on one certain day eleven filings were made on school lands and on another day nine. From the time when the new law went into effect till the end of 1903 eighty entries were made, in 1904 there were thirty, in 1905 twenty seven, in 1906 eighteen. This cleaned up the school lands—and ordinarily this would be the end of the story; but it is only the beginning.

The school lands had been sold and the incident was in a fair way to be forgotten when in 1906 Capt. George K. Spencer, who had once been a resident of Gove county but was now living in Kansas City tendered to the treasurer of Gove county a payment on a tract of school land which he had purchased twenty years previously. The land was the west half of section 36-13-31, and the record showed that Mr. Spencer had purchased it in 1886 for \$3 per acre, made his initial payment, kept up his interest for about ten years and then stopped paying. His contract had then been forfeited, following the proceeding provided by law; and later on the land had been sold again to Arthur Stansbury, at \$1.25 per acre.

The county treasurer refused to accept a payment on a forfeited contract. Mr. Spencer contended that the forfeiture had not been made according to law, and brought a mandamus suit in the supreme court of the state to revive his title to the land and compel the treasurer to accept his money.

The decision of the court is found in Volume 74. Supreme Court Reports, case of Spencer vs. Smith, and was handed down June 9, 1906. The law provides that in cases of this kind the sheriff shall serve notice of forfeiture upon the party holding the contract to the land, or if the

party cannot be found he shall post the notice of forfeiture in a conspicuous place in the office of the county clerk. The sheriff had done this and put his endorsement on the notice in the following words: "Received this notice this 8th day of January, 1898, and served the same by posting a certified copy in the county clerk's office, January 13, 1898, as the within named George K. Spencer cannot be found in the county." The Court declared that there had been no forfeiture, because the notice had not been properly served. Said the Court:

"The returns show fatal defects. No personal service was made, and the essentials of a constructive service do not legally appear. Notice can only be given by posting where the purchaser cannot be found and no one is in possession of the land. The returns of the sheriff show that Spencer could not be found in the county, but they do not show that no one was in possession of the land. The returns further fail to show that the notices put up in the county clerk's office were posted in a conspicuous place. The failure to observe these requirements defeats the attempted forfeiture."

Therefore, because of these defects which the court had been so acute in discovering, the state could not regain this land after Mr. Spencer had violated all the terms of his contract. This decision of the Kansas Supreme Court is one of the finest examples of judicial thick headedness and hair splitting to be found in all our history. County officials are not one hundred per cent efficient, and probably never will be. If they make some trifling mistake, if the court really wanted to get at the facts, it would have been easy to prove by competent witnesses that Spencer had abandoned the land, had ceased to make the payments required in the contract, that no taxes had been paid on the land for several years, that no one was claiming the land or making any use of it and, finally, that the bulletin board on which the notice was posted was the most conspicuous place in the county clerk's office. But the court would have none of this sort of evidence; the sheriff had not stated in so many words that the notice was posted in a "conspicuous" place, and the court slammed the door in his face in the following

language: "Oral proof offered to show that the notice was sufficient in fact, or to amend the service, is not admissable."

Of course, the effect of this decision was to upset the title to practically every piece of school land in Kansas. And, as if by prearrangement, as soon as the decision was handed down, the old contracts which had been forfeited for years made their appearance and their possessors descended in a swarm upon the present holders of school land. In nearly every case these old contracts seem to have found their way into the hands of lawyers or other smart people from the cities who did not care for the lands but held the contracts as a club over the head of the new claimants, to get as much money as they could out of them. The new claimants were actual settlers—the law required actual settlement and at least \$100 in improvements—and in their unorganized condition they were ill fitted to deal with this sudden peril which threatened to deprive them of their homes. Some of them capitulated and came to terms with the old contract holders. Others were defiant; one of the latter kind tells of his experience about as follows:

"I had bought a tract of school land, and afterward sold the contract to Mr. R—— who had moved on the land with his family. I had never heard that the land had been sold and forfeited before my time, and supposed that I was the first purchaser. I heard that the supreme court had made a decision of some kind affecting school lands but did not suppose it had anything to do with my case. Then one day when I went to town a stranger came to me and told me that he was the owner of my school land. He had the contracts and a certified copy of the court decision to prove it, too. You could have knocked me over with a feather. As I had disposed of my interest, probably I could have stood from under and let Mr. R—— do the fighting, but I felt under at least a moral obligation to protect my purchaser.

I read the documents over slowly, to gain time to think, and then I talked it over with him about like this: "I see, Mr. J—— that you have the contracts, and that the court says they are good. I see, also,

that you defaulted on them ten years ago and that you owe ten years interest and ten years taxes. You will have to pay all these up before you can establish your claim to the land; also penalties for non payment of taxes, and these penalties are assessed by our local officials; and you will find that they are good chargers when it comes to dealing with a speculator who is trying to take something away from one of our own people. And when you have made all these payments you have only bought yourself a lawsuit, for we are on that land in good faith and are not going to get off till we are put off." By this time I was doing all the talking. He left me and drove out into the country to see Mr. R——, who, of course, told him he would talk to me about it. When I got home I found Mr. R—— very much excited and more than half convinced that I had swindled him. I offered to trade back, but that did not suit him, he wanted only to keep the land. All right then, we will stick together and fight that fellow to a stand still. Well, that was the last of Mr. J. He gave us up as a bad job and never bothered us again."

A meeting was called at Gove City, August 25, and the school land holders formed an organization with J. W. Suiter president, C. H. Cole secretary and J. F. Mendenhall treasurer. The members empowered those officers to act for the organization and pledged them their moral and financial support. In all the neighboring counties similar action was being taken. It was agreed to appeal to the state legislature, which was to be chosen in the fall. Every candidate for the legislature was sounded out, to be sure that he was right on the school land question.

When the newly elected legislature met the following January it showed itself overwhelmingly in sympathy with the settlers on the school lands, and eager to do everything which lay in its power to reverse the supreme court. The school land act which it passed was Senate Bill No. 1, which numeral means that it was the first bill introduced at the session and the first one to become a law. The act fairly bristles with provisions intended to deny and undo everything the court had put into its decision. The law is too long to reprint here in full, so a few extracts must suffice:

"Where entries which appear upon the records—in the office of the county clerk—indicate that the interest of the purchaser in the tract of land—had been forfeited for default in the payment of money due the state—such entries shall be prima facie evidence, in any action or proceeding in any court in the state, that proper notice of the purchaser's default had been issued and legal service thereon made, and that all things necessary to be done—had been duly done and performed." "Any entry upon said records of the county clerk as 'canceled', 'forfeited', 'reverted to state', and the like, with or without date, shall be held to be an entry indicating that the interest of the purchaser had been forfeited." "The return of the sheriff on any notice issued by the county clerk to the purchaser of school lands of his default shall not be held to show an insufficient or invalid service because of the omission of any recitals required by law to show legal service; but if, notwithstanding such omissions, such return shows that service of such notice was made by posting a copy thereof in the office of the county clerk, such return shall be prima facie evidence, in any action or proceeding in any court in this state, that the persons upon whom such notice was to be served could not be found in the county, that no person was in possession of the land described in the notice, and that a copy of such notice was posted in a conspicuous place in the office of the county clerk." "In any case where the sheriff's return fails to show legal service, parol and other evidence may be introduced to prove that in fact legal service of the notice was made." The act then went on to provide that any holder of a forfeited contract who wished to try his case in court must do so within six months after the forfeiture or within six months after the passage of the act. A reading of this law makes it look as if the supreme court was pretty well spanked, as far as the legislature could do it.

The passage of this act relieved the fears of the school land settlers, and the situation was soon straightened out. In a few cases the holders of the old contracts got the land, but most of them were put to flight and made little profit out of the affair.

But there is still another chapter to this story. Mr. Spencer had brought a lawsuit, upset the titles to perhaps a million acres of land in western Kansas, secured a decision from the supreme court and caused that tribunal to be spanked by the legislature; and now it was to be supposed that Mr. Spencer would pay up on his land, take his deed to it and quietly drop out of the picture.

He did nothing of the sort. He made no move to avail himself of the decision in his favor, and now it was discovered that instead of paying out on the land according to his contract he, or his attorney, was negotiating with his late opponent, Arthur Stansbury, to buy the title which Stansbury had acquired to the land at the new minimum of \$1.25 per acre. There is some difference between a land deal at \$3 per acre and one at \$1.25. It appeared to the angry state and county officials that Spencer's suit had not been brought in good faith but that his purpose was merely to blackjack Stansbury and use the state and the supreme court to pull his chestnuts out of the fire.

Accordingly, suit was begun in the district court of Gove county to compel Spencer to pay out on his contract or to forfeit the bond which he had put up when he entered into the contract. The case is known on the records of the district court as Case No. 734, and the assistant attorney general, John S. Dawson, (now a member of the supreme court) came out from Topeka to prosecute Spencer.

Now Spencer is on the defensive and pleads, We cannot carry out our contract because the land has already been sold and patented to Stansbury, and that lets us out. The state says, You've got to do it.

The state wins the suit, gets judgment against Spencer, the sheriff starts out to collect the judgment, reports that he cannot collect, Spencer is out of the county and there is no property to seize except the land, and the land had already been patented to Stansbury but Stansbury's title to it is not good because of that decision of the supreme court. It is a fine mess. The sheriff is looking for Spencer's property, to seize it on execution. Spencer is holding a contract which he is anxious to get rid of. Stansbury has paid out his money and holds a patent which the



court has decided is no good. Spencer has grounds for a damage suit, and so has Stansbury. It looks as if the supreme court, or somebody, will have to make some more decisions.

But now at the psychological moment comes an offer of compromise. Mr. Spencer's lawyer is Mr. L. C. True of Kansas City. He buys Stansbury's interest. He figures out that the state had only asked \$3 per acre for the land in the first place and ought to be satisfied with that amount. Very well; Spencer, the party of the first part, had paid down thirty cents per acre to begin with; Stansbury, the party of the second part, had paid \$1.25 per acre to get his patent; that makes \$1.55 per acre which the state had already received for the land. Now Mr. True, the party of the third part, offers the state the lump sum of \$464, which is \$1.45 per acre for the half section in litigation and brings the price which the state receives up to the \$3 per acre which Spencer, the party of the first part, had agreed to pay for it and which the state had been trying to collect from him. Mr. True makes this offer, provided the state will drop the case and make out a patent to the land to him (Mr. True.)

The offer is accepted and patent issued to True. How much True paid Stansbury for his interest does not appear. What Spencer got out of it, if anything, also does not appear. He probably got nothing, and was out that thirty cents per acre and all the interest payments he had made the state. The purchasers of school lands all over western Kansas were put to a vast deal of trouble. The supreme court of Kansas made itself ridiculous and was reversed by the legislature. And nobody made anything out of it except a sharp lawyer who started the suit and got a half section of land.

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## CHAPTER IX

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### THE "NEW COURT HOUSE" FIGHT

This may be a tale of a tempest in a tea pot,—but it is a story of a feud which raged at the firesides and the cross roads, and before the Supreme Court of the state and at the polling places; and it will explain why our county has never had a new

court house and why the county business has always been transacted in the same building which was set aside for that purpose when the county was organized forty four years ago.

One thing we have always prided ourselves on, that Gove county has never had any bonded debt. Some Kansas counties as soon as organized proceeded to go into debt and issue bonds, to build a new court house or for other purposes, or to pay current expenses. In some cases the county debt had its accompaniment of fraud and scandal. At any rate, a county debt was a handicap, and we prided ourselves on the fact that we could hold up our heads and tell the world that our county had no debt and that our taxes were low. (Speaking personally, I recall that it was this distinction which first attracted my attention to Gove county and caused me to select it as a home instead of some other western county.) As one of the inducements to get the county seat located at their town the Gove City Town Company had offered the county the free use of their building for a term of ten years, with the option of buying it at the end of that time for a thousand dollars. The offer was accepted, and for twenty years the court house problem was solved and settled.

The building was a substantial two story structure, about 32 by 32 feet, and had been used at first as a hotel. The name and date, "Benson House," and "1885" were carved in stone on the front. Years afterward, when a new roof was put on and some other alterations made, the name was taken down, but the date remains. In its time the old court house was considered quite good enough. The county officials occupied the ground floor and a part of the up-stairs; and the balance of the second floor was occupied by the court room, which was large enough for the semi-annual sessions of the district court and for political conventions and other public meetings (and for the Gove City literary society.)

Then without warning, out of a clear sky as it were, came the news that we were to have a new court house at Gove City. I will let those who sponsored the scheme tell the story, if they wish, of how the plan

was hatched and put over—I know nothing about it. There had been no public discussion of or agitation for a new court house. The bill providing for the new court house was passed by the legislature of 1905, sometime in its session from January to March, but was published for the first time in the Statute Book, which did not make its appearance till July.

The law is too long to be given here in full. It conferred authority upon the board of county commissioners of Gove County to build a new court house at Gove City "on the tract of land now owned by the said county and known as the public square in Gove City." (This is the square on the hillside three blocks north of the court house). The cost of the court house was not to exceed sixteen thousand dollars. The commissioners could levy an annual tax of not to exceed three mills on the dollar to build the court house. (At that time a three mill tax would have brought in about \$5,000 a year.) The board of commissioners was further authorized to draw on the general fund of the county for "such sums as they may deem necessary" to complete the building, and were permitted to start construction at any time after the first day of July, 1905.

As has been said, the news burst upon us as out of a clear sky. The Act was published in July. But the Statute Book has a very limited circulation, only a few copies of it found their way to Gove county, communication was much slower in those days before automobiles and good roads and telephones, and most of the people of the county knew nothing of the law and the new court house and the new tax burden till the Board of Commissioners met at the regular time on the first Monday in August and levied a tax of three mills to build the new court house.

Then as the poet wrote about a famous battle, there was a call To Arms! and a hurrying to and fro. I think that the first one who told me about it was John Hopkins. "Hop" was mad. Next I ran across Squire Sutcliffe who was spreading the news and asking everybody what they thought about it. My opinion agreed with his exactly. Then came Col. Reynolds, like Paul Revere riding the country and broadcasting the news. I think it was my own

suggestion to have the meeting at Grainfield. It takes a little time to spread the alarm and work up sentiment. There was danger that the attendance at the meeting might be small and thus bring ridicule upon the movement. But Grainfield was to hold a "Street Fair," which was an institution popular in those days, and if we would wait till that time there would be a crowd in town anyway. So the call was issued for a Tax Payers meeting at the opera house in Grainfield on September 23.

Now for a moment, before we plunge into the thick of the fight, let's laugh. Funny, isn't it, how some people's minds react to a situation. The hardest boiled old scrap-pers in the county were out in force at our meeting; and before the fight was over we had all the kickers in Gove county working together—something which will not happen more than once in a lifetime. One of our foremost agitators was in town that day but would not attend the meeting—he had political ambitions and feared the effect if he were caught in such a crowd. Another one of our agitators got cold feet, and would not enter the hall till he glanced through the door and counted about sixty there, all mad,—then he became bold as a lion. Col. Reynolds called the meeting to order and asked for nominations for chairman. Jacob Tustin was elected chairman and the writer and John Norton secretaries. I had feared that the enemy would try to prejudice the movement by calling it a Grainfield scheme to take the county seat away from Gove City to Grainfield; it would not do to have a Grainfield man for chairman; I looked the crowd over swiftly and nominated Mr. Tustin. He was an old timer, a leading citizen whom everybody knew and respected, and he lived in Gove township. Nobody could say now that it was a Grainfield move. But you cannot watch all the corners at once—it so happened that Tustin, Norton and myself had all been Populists when that party was in existence some years before. (John will put in a denial here, for he was a Democrat; but he was a good Democrat, who worked in harmony with the Populists, and we were quite willing to accept him). So now the enemy turned on us and called it a "Populist move." The Populist party was dead, but evident-



ly its memory still lingered. Thus, in getting out of one difficulty we had gotten into another.

Speeches were made. But if the meeting were to end in talk it would be "mere sound and fury, signifying nothing"; something definite must be accomplished. The writer of this history had prepared a statement for publication, and this was now read to the meeting. It didn't quite suit, so a committee was appointed, consisting of S. S. Reynolds, R. H. Samson and the writer, to take the statement out and work it over again; some minor changes were made, and the address was then adopted in the following form:

"To the Tax Payers of Gove County:

By secret and underhand methods a special tax has been imposed upon us for the erection of a new court house at Gove City. The law was put through the legislature by the representative of this county without the knowledge or consent of the people of the county and without any discussion of the matter, and the levy has been made by a majority of the board of county commissioners. The Tax Payers meeting held this day at the city of Grainfield wishes to record its emphatic opposition to this scheme, for the following reasons:

In the first place, there is no pressing need for a new court house, and we can get along with the old one for the present.

Secondly, Gove City is not the proper place for a permanent county seat. The permanent seat should be located in a railroad town somewhere near the center of the county. There is no railroad now in the center of the county, but it is almost a certainty that one will be built through there in a few years. Our two lines of railroad are forty miles apart, the Union Pacific at the north line and the Missouri Pacific near the south line of the county, and a new road must be built through the center of the county, to develop a territory which neither of the other roads can reach. When this road is built it will be time to locate a permanent county seat and build a new court house. If the road comes to Gove City, well and good, it will be time to build the new court house there then. But the Gove City crowd evidently believes the road will not come to their town, hence their haste to get a new court

house and try to keep the county seat anyhow. We hold that no new court house should be built till the situation clears up and we know where we want to build it.

Thirdly, when the new court house is built we want it built properly and legally. The General Statutes of Kansas, chapter 27, paragraph 50, says: "No Board of County Commissioners shall proceed to build any permanent county buildings and assess any tax for that purpose without first submitting the question to a vote of the electors of the county." We see no reason for departing from this principle, and we believe that this attempt to build a court house without taking a vote of the people is not only against good public policy, but that the tax is illegal and will be so declared by the courts.

Pending a decision of this matter by the courts, we advise every one to pay this tax, at the same time filing a written protest against it with the county treasurer, to insure that the money thus illegally collected shall be returned to them when the tax has been declared void; and we call on the voters of Gove county to so use their ballots at the next election that no one shall be elected Representative or Commissioner who is not known to be opposed to building a new court house, unless the same is first approved by a vote of the people, special acts of the legislature notwithstanding."

The hat was passed and a few dollars in small change collected for printer's bills and other expenses. Then came the question, When shall we meet again? And then John Hopkins made the motion that our next meeting be two weeks hence, in Gove City! This was carrying the war into the enemy's country, with a vengeance. I will admit that the audacity of the proposition fairly took my breath away; but it suited the humor of the crowd, and the motion carried with a whoop.

The meeting at Gove City, Oct. 7, had its thrills. The court room was more than filled. The court house crowd was out in force and tried to argue the case and convince our crowd of the error of its way. The three who were brave enough to argue were O. B. Jones, John L. Cook, and J. F. Mendenhall, but they had little luck, opposition only made our crowd more determined. Peti-

tions had been circulated, asking the commissioners to reconsider their action in levying the court house tax. Commissioner Rundberg had voted against the levy; the other two commissioners would not come to our meeting. Some of the petitions had not been turned in yet, so we stand adjourned till two weeks later, October 21st, at Gove City again.

The court house crowd did not attend the meeting of the 21st. One of the unfriendly commissioners was present, having been waited upon by a special committee with a polite invitation. Petitions were laid before him showing that, with some townships missing or incomplete, five hundred voters had asked to have the levy reconsidered—of whom 238 were from his own commissioner district. This showing had no effect. Evidently the time for petitioning was past. So the meeting proceeded to adopt a resolution, "That we bring an injunction suit to restrain the county from collecting the special court house tax; that an executive committee of five be elected to bring the suit, and a committee of one from each township be appointed to solicit funds to defray the costs; that the executive committee have full charge of conducting the suit and three members of the committee constitute a quorum." The committee selected was S. S. Reynolds, R. H. Samson, J. M. Sturman, M. E. Wilkinson and W. P. Harrington. Reynolds was made chairman of the committee, Harrington secretary and Samson treasurer. This was the last of the mass meetings; the scene now shifts to the courts.

The county attorney was on our side, so the Board of Commissioners (Rundberg dissenting) retained O. B. Jones of Gove City to represent the county and instructed him "to employ such counsel as he thinks best in the matter." He selected as his assistant J. S. West of Topeka. The county had the bill to pay. Our committee employed Lee Monroe of Topeka (former district judge) and Chambers & Chambers of Hoxie. To put an end to the charge that this was a "Populist move" the injunction suit was brought in the name of Alex Haney and several other good Republicans. (Mr. Haney was at this time the Republican county chairman.)

The case was tried before Judge

Reeder at Hays, Dec. 19. (The writer was shucking corn that day and did not go to Hays. Have always regretted it. Those who were there told me I missed something.) The papers said that about twenty five were down from Gove county to hear the trial.

Now here is another laugh. The court house crowd felt sure of Judge Reeder. It came out later that Judge Reeder had himself suggested that Gove county needed a new court house and had himself drawn the bill. But when the case came before him for trial Judge Reeder found that the laws and the precedents were all on the side of our Tax Payers organization, so he decided in our favor. No wonder the court house crowd was sore. They took it out on Judge Reeder in the next campaign, and defeated him for reelection.

The case was appealed to the Supreme Court, which in April 1906 handed down a decision sustaining Judge Reeder. This was the end of the trial, so far as the legal aspect was concerned. The courts had probably never read the manifesto which we had delivered at Grainfield; but they found objections to the law which we had never thought of, and declared it unconstitutional because it directly violated a provision of the state constitution. The opinion of the court of last resort may be found in full in Volume 73, Supreme Court Reports. Boiled down, the decision is:

"This law is to be interpreted as authorizing the commissioners of Gove county to use a part of the general revenue fund for the building of a new court house.

Such provision violates section 4 of article 14 of the state constitution, forbidding the diversion of a tax from the object for which it is levied, and is therefore void.

Such provision is so related to the other provisions of the act that the entire act must be held void."

The fight on the court house was financed by voluntary contributions, which were small in amount but large in number. There was no single contribution larger than \$10. After the case was finished the Tax Payers committee published a statement:

"In prosecuting the suit against the court house tax the sum of \$337 was collected and \$311.75 was ex-

pending, leaving \$25.25 balance on hand.

If this is pro-rated back to the contributors as was at first proposed, each contributor will receive about 7 per cent of what he paid in.

As a promise was made in the beginning to pro rate we feel under obligations to make this promise good to all parties who wish to avail themselves of it.

For the next thirty days R. H. Samson, treasurer, will repay to all who ask for it seven per cent of their contribution. After thirty days whatever balance is left will be donated to some public or charitable purpose."

In the end, the balance was turned into the fund which was being raised to fight the Gove County High School. The high school fight and the court house fight were two separate and distinct affairs, but three members of our committee of five were also interested in the fight on the high school; they wanted to use our balance in the other case, and they had their way.

The suit having been decided, the Board of Commissioners ordered the tax refunded which had already been collected toward the construction of the new court house, and most of it was so returned to those who had paid it. But between eight and nine hundred dollars of it was never claimed. Most of this, perhaps all of it, was paid in by non-resident land owners who probably never heard of the court house tax and the conflict which raged around it, or knew that they had a rebate coming. After lying unclaimed in the treasury for several years this balance in the "County Building Fund" was turned into the general fund of the county. And so the treasury of Gove county profited several hundred dollars by this tax levy, even though the levy had been declared invalid by the courts.

Of course, the fight had to be carried into politics before it could finally be settled. (The writer of this sketch had small hand in this part of the war, and could view it as an interested outsider.) The Democrats nominated an anti-court house county ticket, and hoped that the court house crowd would be able to control the Republican organization—but it wasn't. That Republican convention at Gove City would make a good

story in itself, if we had time and space to tell it. The court house crowd had the delegates from Gove and Grinnell townships, and the antis had the rest of them, though some of the delegates were a trifle shaky. The antis held a caucus of their delegates the night before the convention at a farm house a few miles out of town, put a guard over the place to keep visitors away, made up a slate of candidates and marched the delegates to the convention next day in a body. A lot of swapping had to be done, some candidates who had announced themselves for one place were switched to another, some officials who were asking for a second term were ruthlessly turned down. In the convention the court house crowd filibustered and laughed and enjoyed themselves but could accomplish nothing, and the slate went through without a break. At the election the results were mixed, some Republicans and some Democrats were elected, but they were all antis. Not a single county official or candidate who had favored the new court house was successful. The rout of the courthouse crowd was complete.

Years later, after the court house fight had been fought out and had become but a memory, the writer met a man in the East who told this story: "I went to your county once to make a land trade. My purchaser was with me, all ready to sign the papers and complete the deal. We got off the train at Grainfield, and while waiting for the hack to take us down to Gove City we picked up on the street a paper which proved to be a remonstrance against building a new court house. We hunted up the man who had lost the paper and turned it over to him, but my land deal was off. My man declared he would never buy land in a county which had a county seat fight; so there was nothing left for us to do but wait for the next train and come home." That man had heard about county seat fights long ago in western Kansas or somewhere, and imagined that civil war was raging in Gove county and murder about to be committed. Imagine it! I have called it a "fight," but it never reached the stage of hostilities—we never even quit speaking to each other.

The amount of business necessarily transacted by the county officials

has increased greatly in recent years, and so has the revenue of the county; and the law relating to the building of court houses has been changed. Some six years ago the Board of County Commissioners enlarged and remodeled the old court house till it doesn't seem like the same place, at a cost of about \$20,000, and paid cash for it—and there was no grumbling. A new generation has grown up in Gove county, which looks at things differently, and which will probably read with astonishment this story of how a quarter of a century ago our county was all worked up over an attempt to build a new court house.

## CHAPTER X

### WAR RECORD

Gove county sent no soldiers to the Civil War, for the sufficient reason that the county was not laid out or named till several years after that conflict was over, and there was not during that time a single white man in our county. When settlers came, fifteen or twenty years after the Civil War, a large proportion of them were veterans of that conflict. Their number varied with the years, for the veterans came and went as the population rose or fell. A census of the Union veterans taken in the years 1900 to 1904 shows about seventy of them in the county at that time. Charles A. Nichols Post of the Grand Army of the Republic at Gove City was a flourishing organization for forty years. But the Grim Reaper has taken the veterans one by one. Seventeen of them are buried at Gove City, thirteen at Grainfield, eleven at Grinnell, nine at Quinter and nine at other cemeteries in the county. Charles A. Nichols Post has lost its charter as the members were mustered out by death. Only three of its members survive. John R. Cooper lives in Colorado, Robert S. Kim is in the National Soldiers Home, and A. J. Mitchell is the only one now living in Gove county.

Our county owes much to the industry, the good sense and the sturdy Americanism of these old soldiers. They were the leaders in the difficult and discouraging work of pioneering, and it is largely due to them that this is now a tamed, civilized

and prosperous community instead of a desert waste "haunted by beasts and forsaken by men" as it was a half century ago. Below is given the names of the Union veterans who helped to settle Gove county and make it what it is today. Here are men who will be remembered as having been prominent in farming, in business and in civic affairs and as the founders of families well known in the county to this day.

#### Civil War Veterans

Oliver W. Abbott, M. A. Ackley, Charles W. Adams, Eli Alberts, Henry Alberts, A. H. Anderson, Conrad Appel, James Archbold.

T. H. Bacon, B. F. Bartlett, H. H. Benson, J. W. Benson, A. W. Berry, J. J. Bigbee, George Bingaman, George Blackwill, J. W. Blackwill, M. E. Boles, W. A. Bolster, L. Bornt, T. N. Bray, John H. Brown, C. M. Burr, Stephen Burris.

Richard C. Cahill, Chauncy Callo-way, David Carlton, G. M. Chambers, H. P. Colgrove, Wm. B. Colwell, John Comstock, Jackson Cook, Jephtha D. Cook, John L. Cook, John R. Cook, John R. Cooper, John Crippen, J. E. Criswell, Joseph Crow.

Marion Dargitz, Isaac Derr, John DeSantos, W. S. Dotson.

Andrew Easton, Harrison Eaton, A. S. Eldred, T. R. Epps.

Perry Fellers, John J. Fisher, Wm. Fleener, John H. Fosdick, Wm. Fowler, W. E. Frint, Carlos Fuller.

Jacob Gabler, Thomas Gallion, Wm. Grooms, H. J. Groves, Patrick J. Gubbins, August Guschewsky, Robert Guy.

A. W. Harper, W. A. Harper, T. C. Hartwell, H. H. Henderson, G. W. Henry, John Hogan, Emanuel Holsinger, William Hubbell, Henry A. Hurlbert, J. F. Hyskell.

J. W. Jameson, John H. Jones.

R. S. Kim, Thomas Kirtley, James T. Knight, George Kreigh.

John Lafferty, William Latham, Joseph Lengel, Frank Lewis, Joseph Lines, B. B. Loomis, A. J. Lyon.

D. J. Mallory, F. W. Martin, A. F. Massy, James Mather, C. D. Mathews, D. S. Maxwell, Isaac Miller, John H. Miller, A. J. Mitchell, M. V. Mitchell, John Morgan, W. B. Munns.

D. McAnderson, Wm. McBride, J. B. McClanahan, John McCollister, T. M. McDonald, John W. McGinnis, J. J. McMains, E. McRitchie.

Charles A. Nichols, Benjamin Nick-

erson, Charles Noble, Samuel B. North.

U. W. Oblinger, Stewart Orr.

E. H. Parsons, I. B. Peck, Jeremiah Peck, C. E. Peirce, Andrew Peirsee, J. N. Perry, Gus Peterson, Levi Phillips, E. R. Pilcher, George Platt.

Lyman Raymond, J. H. Redifer, Asa Rice, W. Richards, M. P. Roberts, A. M. Robertson, C. Rupson, R. S. Russell.

H. Schafer, Samuel G. Schafer, Michael Schartraw, J. Shelly, Preston Shipp, William Simpson, P. Sloey, J. J. Smith, Nathan Smith, Van Smith, William Smith, H. C. Spalding, E. H. Spencer, George K. Spencer, W. H. Spicer, T. B. Spielman, J. E. Springer, W. W. Stocking, Daniel Stout, A. K. Straley, O. P. Summers.

N. E. Terrill, Louis F. Thomas, Jordan Tinsley, William Tipton, C. H. Towsley, I. N. Trollinger, Daniel Turner, J. M. Tyler.

W. D. Ure.

George W. VanMarter, John H. Vanover, Leonard Verhoeff.

John Wahl, S. O. Wanzer, J. Q. A. Weller, O. C. Wells, Uriah Welton, E. N. Wert, A. West, R. L. West, E. Whismore, Milo W. Whitcomb, Joseph Whitehair, O. A. Widney, W. W. Wiggins, Jacob W. Williams, Guy Wing, Jacob Woodcock, Calvin Workman, William Wright, M. O. Wrighter.

C. S. Yetman.

In addition to the Union veterans, Gove county has had three sturdy pioneer citizens who wore the Confederate gray—S. S. Reynolds, D. F. Bowman and Major Armstrong—all of whom are now deceased.

When the call went forth in 1898 for volunteers for the war with Spain James A. Stoner, Llewelyn Pearde and Joseph Crow of Gove county enlisted in Company I, Twenty First Kansas, and Harry Burr and Pleasant Harper, temporarily out of the county, enlisted in other states. If a thorough search of the war records were made it may be that we could find other boys from our county, but we are sure of the names given above. We feel no need for apology, there were some counties in Kansas which failed to furnish any recruits at all, but the circumstances under which that army was enlisted were such as to keep our number

down to a minimum. Very short notice was given; it was announced that on a certain day in May recruits from a number of counties, including Gove, would be received at Hays almost a hundred miles away. It turned out to be a week of almost continuous rain and bottomless mud. Even under such handicaps the lads from Gove county appeared at Hays in numbers large enough to have formed a small platoon—only to go down under the veto of an army surgeon. Men were turned down for the most trifling physical defects imaginable. One who was rejected that day passed the army examination nineteen years later and served in the World War. Another passed the examination for the regular army several years after being rejected at Hays. The truth seems to be, that the government was embarrassed by the rush of martial young men all over the land to join the colors. The President of the United States had called for one hundred thousand volunteers and six hundred thousand offered themselves, so the large majority of them had to be rejected. Never before was a body of men subjected to so rigid an examination, and the army which marched away in 1898 to whip Spain was as near physical perfection as an army can hope to be.

Of the boys who were accepted for service, Harry Burr was sent to the Philippines. Pearde, after his period of enlistment expired, reenlisted in the regulars and was also sent overseas. And Jimmy Stoner was stricken with typhoid in the fever-ridden army camp at Chickamauga, Georgia, and came home to die at his home at Quinter, Sept. 24, 1898,—first of our boys to give his life in the service of his country.

Gove county may well point with pride to the record made in the World War. The civilian population upheld and aided the government to the limit in every way—Liberty Loans, Red Cross and everything else. And the figures show that we exceeded our quota by ten per cent in the number of men we sent To the Colors. Besides the number taken in the draft there were a number of volunteer enlistments and more than a dozen who were in the regular army at the opening of the war or who joined the regulars before the draft



began to work. The boys from Gove county saw service in largest numbers in the Eighty Ninth, Eighty Eighth, Tenth and Thirty Fifth Divisions, but they were found in many other units and while in the training camps they were scattered all the way from the Presidio in California to Camp Johnston in Florida. By far the largest part of them served in the Army branch of the service, but there were five in the Navy and eight in the Marines.

Below is given the list of those who entered the service from Gove county—with some misgivings, for I fear the roll is not complete. It has been no easy task to compile this list; the records of the County Draft Board are available, but are not complete; neither are the records of the Adjutant General's office at Topeka, as they frankly admit. I fear that some one has been left off the list.

It will be noted that in several instances two brothers, or three brothers, from the same family were in the service at the same time. We have the names of a considerable number of lads born and raised in Gove county who served in the World War but whose names cannot be put on our list because they had at that time ceased to be residents of our county and are accredited to other counties in Kansas or to other states (for instance, the two sons of S. S. Reynolds and the two sons of F. B. Strong.)

Of the World War dead, Gove county contributed ten—Cummings, Fink, Harvey, Hoeb, Johnson, Scott, Seiple, Stittsworth, Verhoeff, Ure. Of these Grant Ure is claimed by Sheridan county and his name is inscribed upon the World War monument which the citizens of that county have erected at Hoxie; but he is put on our roll because he is credited to Gove county on the Adjutant General's records and his body is buried at Grainfield. The names of Eric Cummings and Charlie Harvey are inscribed on the monument which the State Teachers' College at Hays has raised to its students who made the Supreme Sacrifice. No attempt is made here to list those who received wounds in France, but they are not a few.

Most of our men served in the ranks, but we must not omit to mention that five of them received commissions as officers—W. D. Clark,

Eric Cummings, W. B. Davidson, J. H. Rinehart and Guy H. Winslow.

### The World War

Floyd D. Adams, Frank E. Anderson.

Jacob W. Barr, Ross Beamer, Arthur E. Beaver, Eurie F. Beckner, Will H. Behrns, Charles G. Beicher, Bennie G. Beougher, Emery B. Beougher, Glen D. Beougher, Clifford J. Bland, Forrest O. Bland, Jean H. Bland, Earl A. Bingaman, Ernest J. Boesch, Eugene W. Borah, John E. Borah, Orrin B. Boyer, Samuel L. Boyer, Niley S. Bray, Wallace Brooks, Leslie L. Brown, Edmund M. Burnett, Gilbert Burns, Harold D. Burns, William H. Burris, Verne W. Butler.

Allan W. Cheney, Orval M. Chenoweth, Silas E. Clark, William D. Clark, Harold P. Cole, Artie Cook, Pierce R. Cookson, Charles W. Cooper, Floyd L. Cooper, John R. Cooper, David E. Copeland, Matheny J. Copeland, Frank B. Cox, Raymond G. Crippen, William M. Crownover, \*Eric Cummings.

Harry H. Dahna, William B. Davidson, John E. Davis, Earl W. Davis, Floyd E. Dazey, Seraphine Depperschmidt, Louis A. Deves, Patrick J. Donahue, William E. Donahue, Frank R. Dufford.

Martin W. Eastlack, Edward J. Easton, Forrest J. Eaton, Ralph Eaton, Samuel S. Ebbert, Ralph C. Eller, George A. Ely, Chester Embree.

\*Charles A. Fink, George W. Ford, Elwood C. Forney, William E. Friend, Chester A. Fritts, Darwin L. Fullmer.

Winfield Gallion, LaFayette Goodman, Nolan Goodman, Harold P. Greene, Leroy L. Gregg.

William J. Haines, Christian S. Haldeman, Charles C. Hall, Don C. Hall, Roy R. Hamilton, Samuel E. Hamilton, Hobart Haney, Walter Haney, Andrew Hansen, Cecil D. Harper, W. P. Harrington, Frank Harsh, \*Charles Harvey, George Heier, \*Charles R. Hoeb, Leo J. Hoff, Fred B. Holloway, George J. Homm, Clifford P. Houser, William M. Howard, C. E. Hullet, Leo Hullet.

Benjamin F. Jamison, John E. Jamison, Noah D. Jamison, George W. Jennings, \*Charles D. Johnson, Clifford W. Jones, Hiram W. Joy.

Theodore A. Katt, Verne E. Kinzie, Sam M. Kirkland, Charlie L. Kline, Jesse L. Kline, Carl R. Knott, Charles H. Knudsen.

Urless R. Lanham, Arthur M. Layton, Pius Leiker, Roy E. Lewis, John F. Lindquist, Samuel W. Long, Isaac W. Love.

William F. Maginness, Leigh H. Main, George Malsam, Frank Mark, Henry Martin, Tolbert S. Martin, Hilary E. Mather, Earl Maxwell, Hugh E. Melroy, George L. Mendenhall, Adam Meyer, George A. Meyer, Mike W. Meyer, Jack V. Miller, Raymond H. Milroy, Lloyd Mitchell, Howard E. Moore, Lewis Muhlenkamp.

Ralph McCalmant, Ray McDonald, Cash C. McNay.

Walter E. Nation, Edd Naylor, Claude E. Nemeyer, Charles W. Norton.

Kasper Ochs, Lester H. Ohls, Charles A. Orten.

Robert J. Parish, William L. Peace, Ray B. Phelps, Donald L. Porter, Jay D. Porter, August E. Priefert, Glen I. Purdum.

Earl Rachau, Samuel N. Rainer, Dan Rebarchek, Benjamin Richardson, Clarence S. Richardson, Robert W. Richardson, Alex W. Riley, John H. Rinehart, Valie L. Robertson, George C. Roemer, Lem Roemer, William F. Roemer, Don A. Romesburg, Francis E. Ruch, Abner Rush, Merle Ruttan.

David Schaible, Joseph B. Schamber, Carl Schikowsky, Ernest Schikowsky, Arthur Schultz, \*George M. Scott, \*Ivan Seiple, Carl R. Sensenbaugh, Merle E. Shirkey, Ned L. Shirley, Stanley S. Simpson, Ruhl Sites, Asa M. Smith, Fred J. Snart, Harvey E. Snyder, Lewis O. Snyder, William H. Snyder, W. H. Spena, Elza M. Staples, Hobart A. Staples, Cecil W. Starr, Earl A. Stranaud, William A. Stevenson, \*George H. Stittsworth, Erasmus F. Strickler, Fred G. Stubbs, Joseph W. Suiter, Joseph L. Surmeier, George A. Sutcliffe, Harley Swain.

Charles H. Terrell, Earl L. Terrell, Harry T. Tholen, Lorin W. Timmons, Frank F. Tomanek, George H. Tribble, Ernest R. Trimmer, Loyd J. Tustin, Ralph M. Tuttle.

\*Grant Ure, Fred B. Ury.

Guy Van Marter, Roy Van Marter, \*Leonard Verhoeff.

Luther E. Wade, Clarence H. Wakefield, James H. Walkinshaw, Andrew Weber, Wilsie B. Wells, Warren T. Welton, Jewell West, Robert A. White, Arthur C. Williams, Clarence H. Williams, Neal Winningham, Guy H. Winslow, Benjamin M.

Wooters, Loran Wright, Floyd S. Wrighter.

Nicholas Zerr, Theodore Zimmermann.

The folks at home planned a reception for the boys when they returned from the War. They came straggling back one at a time as they got their discharges, and it was not till almost a year after the Armistice that it was concluded that they were all back, and the party was given—an outdoor picnic in a grove near Gove City, Sept. 1, 1919. It was a very enjoyable affair with speech-making, a dinner and a brass band. The citizens committee did itself proud. But there was a certain feeling of disappointment, because the Boys in Khaki did not come out in greater numbers to the reception given in their honor. The lads who whipped the Kaiser are a modest lot, and many of them preferred to stay at home that day instead of turning out to be lionized.

Two posts of the American Legion were organized in the county, in 1920. The Fink-Harvey-Seiple Post at Quinter surrendered its charter after a few seasons, but the George M. Scott Post at Gove City is in a thriving condition, with a present membership of sixty. The Legion has fallen heir to the traditions of the G. A. R. and taken over the special work of that organization in the celebration of Decoration Day on the 30th of May in each year. And then, the Legion has its Armistice Day, our latest national holiday, November 11, the day when the World War ended in victory for the American arms.

The record may well be taken as a guarantee that the citizens of Gove county will do their part at any time, if the country should ever become involved in another war and need defenders.

NOTE—The following names of Civil War veterans are to be added to those given above: Nathan H. Burkhead, L. D. Bulla, Hudson Chapman, T. S. Coppock, D. C. Farnsworth, George M. Grubb, John Heckman, Thos. Hindman, Peter McFarland, G. W. Poorman, Uriah Probasco. There were posts of the G. A. R. at Grainfield in 1887 and 1888, at Buffalo Park from 1885 to 1892 and at Alanthus from 1889 to 1892.



## CHAPTER XI

### FARMING IN GOVE COUNTY

The next historian of Gove county will probably write of some things which are interesting enough but which have been left out of this work because I do not feel competent to do them justice. The next writer will tell of our cities and fraternal organizations and churches. At the present time six denominations have organizations and church buildings in our county. The Dunkards have three churches in Quinter and Baker township, the Methodists have churches in Gove City, Quinter, Grainfield and Grinnell, the Presbyterians in Quinter, the Christians in Grinnell, the Nazarenes in Gaeland township and the Catholics in Park, Grainfield and Grinnell.

At last report the population of our cities was Gove City 226, Grainfield 338, Grinnell 274, Quinter 485. But let some city man write the story of our cities, with their ups and downs; their occasional losses, by fire or some business catastrophe; their big days, when they put on some celebration that drew a crowd to town; their public improvements, electric lights and graveled streets. The first dwellings in our towns were sod houses or tents. There is still one sod house remaining in Quinter, where a fine old pioneer lady is spending her declining years, in a home well furnished within and fortified against the rain by a metal roof, rather than move out of the "soddy" into something more modern and less homelike. With this exception, sod is no longer in use as a building material in our towns; all these towns have some very nice and tasty homes; and it is probably correct to say that more brick and cement is used in them today than lumber.

Buffalo Park was the first town in the county and in its time had an ambition to be the county seat, as told in a previous chapter of this history. The town was platted as Buffalo, the railroad company calls the station Buffalo Park, but the postoffice is known as Park. After getting a good start in the early days the town faded away till there was little left except the depot, stock yards, water tank and school house; then the "Russians" settled around

Park and built their big church and Park became a town again. The town was never incorporated, and has got along very well so far without a city government, but it has a sufficient population to incorporate as a city at any time the inhabitants desire.

Our cities have plenty of civic pride, and nothing gives a citizen such a thrill as to have his town beat some other town, in any competition whatsoever. A few years since, Quinter had a baseball team which beat everything in the country. The Gove City sports got tired of being beaten by Quinter and hired a noted professional pitcher, giving him a hundred dollars to beat Quinter a couple games. He delivered the goods and Quinter was beaten. Quinter had several paid players on the team, and after these two games these players were "fired." Quinter wouldn't have them if they couldn't beat Gove City. And the Gove City sports were a hundred dollars poorer but did not regret it, because they had beaten Quinter.

On another occasion a county-wide Sunday school rally was held at Grainfield and a banner was to be given to the town which had the largest attendance. Our town wanted that banner. The writer's attendance had not been regular and he was not in very good standing at Sunday school, but this was forgiven and he was kidnapped and taken along, for something desperate had to be done to beat Quinter. When the noses were counted our crowd had beaten Quinter,—by just one. I shall always think they never would have won that banner without me.

Our cities perhaps will never grow much larger under present conditions. They are country towns, without industries of their own, and their prosperity depends upon that of the country surrounding them. The big industry of Gove county is farming.

And farming in Gove county has a history—romantic, sometimes comic, sometimes tragic. Perhaps the subject calls for a poet rather than a historian. Elihu Bowles, former resident of our county, wrote a small volume of very readable verse which he called "In a Sod House." The Creator never made a fairer land but this sun which shines nearly every day in the year is sometimes destructive as well as creative; the wind may be chillingly cold or blisteringly

hot; the temperature may range from a hundred degrees above zero to thirty below, according to the season; the rainfall may be anywhere from seven inches to twenty eight inches per annum, as the record shows, and the evaporation is from two to five times as great as the rainfall. This was the natural home of the buffalo grass, scanty of growth but rich of quality, which survives both heat and cold and in times of drouth cures up on its stalk and goes to sleep till rain comes again. The soil is rich, the sod easily broken, but farming in Gove county has been a fifty years struggle of man against the climate, to make the country a home for domestic plants and fruits and animals and civilized people.

The first battle of the settlers with the wilderness was lost by the settlers. Seeds the farmers brought with them from their eastern homes would not do well in a new country and their farming ended in failure; the country could not be carried by assault and half the settlers gave up the battle and left the county as quickly as they came. The early settlers had little capital, and perhaps it was just as well that they did not, for in their ignorance of the country those who had the most money were the biggest losers. Those who built nice houses and planted trees and made other improvements lost their money; the successful ones were those who built a sod house and settled down to live within their means and work out a system of agriculture fitted to the country.

When the battle was resumed it was along different lines. The country would grow buffalo grass if it would not grow corn and wheat, and every settler tried to get hold of a few cows. Half the country was railroad land untouched by the plow; of the remainder much had not been plowed or had been deserted and was rapidly going back to grass. Grass was free and a cattleman had a snap. New crops were being discovered; it was found out that the sorghums would thrive on the plains and that they were good winter feed for cattle, and that some kinds of them produced good grain. Alfalfa was introduced on the bottom lands. Settlers from Russia brought a variety of wheat which thrived on the plains of Kansas, and new strains of corn were being developed which were

suited to our climate. But during the time that these new crops were being tried out everybody was cattle-minded. The country was covered with the melancholy ruins of the settlers sod shanties, and we wished it to remain that way, for if let alone the buffalo grass would soon reclaim the country and repair the damage which the plow had done. If an occasional home seeker visited the country he was asked to declare his intentions; if he would bring cattle he was welcomed as a good citizen; if he intended to farm, every one he met discouraged him and told him the country is no good, you can't raise anything, you can't get water. I have no doubt that in those days we scared away many a good farmer whom we would be glad to welcome now.

Now for a few years the cattlemen made money. Then, when the value of cattle in Gove county was approaching the million mark, ruin struck the cattlemen. I shall always think it was a put up job. The Kansas City banks, dominated by the packing interests of that city, had been eager to make loans to cattlemen. Any one who had a few cattle and an abundance of free range was urged and solicited to borrow money and buy more cattle. With money to be had so easily everybody went in debt, then—the packers sprung the trap, knocked the bottom out of the cattle market and called in their loans. The packers got the cattle, and most of the cattlemen were broke.

But in the same year that the cattlemen were being put out of business Gove county got its first big wheat crop. Those of the stockmen who were raising wheat also had a chance to make back in wheat what they lost in cattle. The year 1903 was a perfect wheat year. A perfect wheat year is not necessarily a year of heavy rainfall. In fact, the rainfall in 1903 was only 17.25 inches—but it came when needed and none of it was wasted. There were heavy rains in the fall of 1902; 16.8 inches of rain fell during the months from July till October. This spoiled the winter pasture and made a miserable season for cattle, but put the ground into perfect condition for wheat and gave it a good early growth; gentle rains came in the spring and till harvest time, with no hail or high winds,

then followed a dry spell during harvest—and Gove led all the counties in the state in average yield of wheat per acre, in a year when the rainfall was two inches less than the average of the forty years in which the record has been kept.

The wheat crop of 1903 was 752,518 bushels, the average per acre 25 bushels. With our acreage in this year 1930 such an average would mean a wheat crop of five million bushels. There were, of course, many fields which yielded far above the average. Yields of forty bushels per acre were common. But the highest yield of all was reported by J. C. Ort of Grinnell township who on a measured area of three acres harvested and threshed 222 bushels, an average of seventy four bushels to the acre. Lest this story be doubted Mr. Ort and his neighbors made an affidavit to the facts as stated. And Mr. Ort is still alive to testify to that big wheat crop.

Since 1903 mixed farming has been the type of agriculture most followed in this county. The settlers who came in about that time and later were better equipped for the battle than were the first comers. They grew corn and wheat of a kind suited to the country; they grew the sorghums, which in some years yield better than corn and wheat; they raise live stock as well as the field crops, and much butter and eggs. The new agriculture is on a secure foundation; the sod houses are gone; our county has many well improved farm homes and some of our farmers are not to be excelled anywhere. Three years ago the State Agricultural College and the farm papers of Kansas instituted the custom of selecting each year a small number of outstanding men to be designated as Master Farmers. The first selection contained the name of one Gove county man, A. Yale of Grinnell township; and we expect to see the names of some other Gove county farmers when future lists are announced.

The climatic difficulties which confront our farmers are perhaps as great as ever, but have been overcome to some extent by improved methods of farming, Drouth has been rendered less deadly by conservation of moisture and the raising of the crops best suited to the country. As more of the buffalo grass is broken up the hot winds have lost some of

their power and prairie fires have ceased to be a menace. The wind we have always with us but we are learning to tame it. The writer of this sketch well remembers being put on the program of the county Farmers Institute twenty years ago for a talk on How to Keep our Soil from Blowing. It was a big subject, and in trying to solve the problem in a few words he laid down the following principles: "Keep a cover on the ground—stubble, trash or a good soil mulch (not a dust mulch); throw the harrow away, or use it with judgment; stir the ground in the spring." These recommendations seem rather inadequate now, but I maintain that they are good, as far as they go.

Certain animal pests have had to be eliminated. Time was when the prairie dogs numbered millions, and when the sod was broken up they held their ground and cut down the crops the farmer planted; the Agricultural College took up the problem and compounded a poison which was effective, and for years the townships levied a tax each year for the destruction of prairie dogs. It would be hard now to find a prairie dog in the county. Thousands of dollars have been paid out in bounties on coyotes and jack rabbits, and in some years that little animal, the grasshopper, is still very destructive.

In 1912 came the "horse disease", a malady which the veterinarians have never been able to explain, which carried off 1470 horses in Gove county. All the counties in the wheat belt were stricken, in the neighboring states as well as in Kansas. Farming operations were paralyzed for several weeks, then the scourge passed away as mysteriously as it came.

The development of the southern half of the county has been retarded by the lack of railroad facilities. The early settlers firmly believed that a railroad would be built along the valley of the Smoky, and the towns of Jerome, Alanthus, Teller and Pyramid were laid out in readiness for it. One or more railroad surveys were actually projected, but nothing came of them. The railroad excitement broke out at recurrent intervals and even so recent as six years ago a railroad meeting was held at Gove City. It is now evident that no more railroads will be built, and the south half has settled down to make

the best of it; the Smoky is now bridged in eight places, our graded roads are pretty good, most of our farmers have trucks and it is not much of a hardship now to haul grain twenty miles to market; most of the county now has R. F. D. or star route delivery, so the railroad is now but little missed. Lands are cheaper in the south half, the largest ranches are there and a larger percentage of the land is owned by non-residents than in the northern part of the county.

A new style of agriculture has made its appearance within recent years. The tractor and the combine enable the farmer to farm a larger acreage, but sometimes he has to go a long distance from home to get the land he needs. Some who live in the extreme north of the county are now farming south of the Hackberry. If this tendency continues our towns along the railroads may become farm villages like those in the Old World and much of the farmer's work will be at a distance of twenty miles or more from his home. Some future historian may have a word to say about this subject.

At last report our county had 327 farm tractors, 329 trucks and 1571 automobiles. These gas-propelled vehicles are of such recent invention that it is not hard to remember back to the time before they made their appearance here. If we are not mistaken, J. E. Smith owned the first automobile in Gove county; the purchase was announced in the Republican-Gazette Dec. 14, 1905, in the following words:

"County Treasurer Smith has purchased an Olds Mobile with which to pass to and from his respective positions of county treasurer and cashier of the Citizens State Bank of Grainfield. The two towns being about 14 miles apart he can now cover the distance in about one hours time."

Tradition says that this pioneer auto frequently failed to make the distance within the hour, and that it sometimes had to be hauled in.

I wonder who will get the first airplane?

Our farmers have not been backward in forming organizations necessary to their business. Farmers institutes were formed at different times, but the County Institute or-

ganized at Gove City in 1907 had the longest life. For thirteen years this body maintained a two day annual fair each fall at Gove City. It had no buildings or grounds and offered no amusement attractions to draw a crowd, but it got a \$50 grant from the county each year and raised an equal amount on the side and put on a free fair and a program of stock judging and other matters that was worth while. Then the Gove County Fair Association at Gove City and the Quinter Fair Association at Quinter were organized and took over the work which the farmers institute had started. For the last seven years the county has had two very creditable fairs. Too bad this is the last chapter in this history—I would like to give a chapter to these fairs and the work they have done.

The Farmers Union organized the county about fifteen years ago, and has an elevator or business association at every shipping point in the county. When Congress passed the Rural Credits Act, two local farm loan associations were formed in the county to take advantage of the provisions of the law and get cheap money for the farmers; these associations are the Prairie View Farm Loan Association, whose territory is the south half of the county, and the Baker-Collyer Farm Loan Association which does business in the Quinter territory.

Some final statistics are in order, to show the basis upon which Gove county agriculture rests. Eighty per cent of the county is in farms. The acreage in wheat is reported as 153,233; corn is 30,189 acres, barley 27,422, cane 12,986. But these figures are subject to change; if the outlook for wheat is not good in the spring the farmers will put out a larger acreage of corn, barley and the sorghums; and in some seasons the yield of these crops is worth more than the wheat crop. For some reason not yet explained the acreage in alfalfa is much smaller than it used to be. Cattle number 21,548. The product of the fields varies greatly from year to year according to the season, but the egg crop last year was worth \$88,258 and the milk crop \$108,920, and these are crops which can always be depended on.



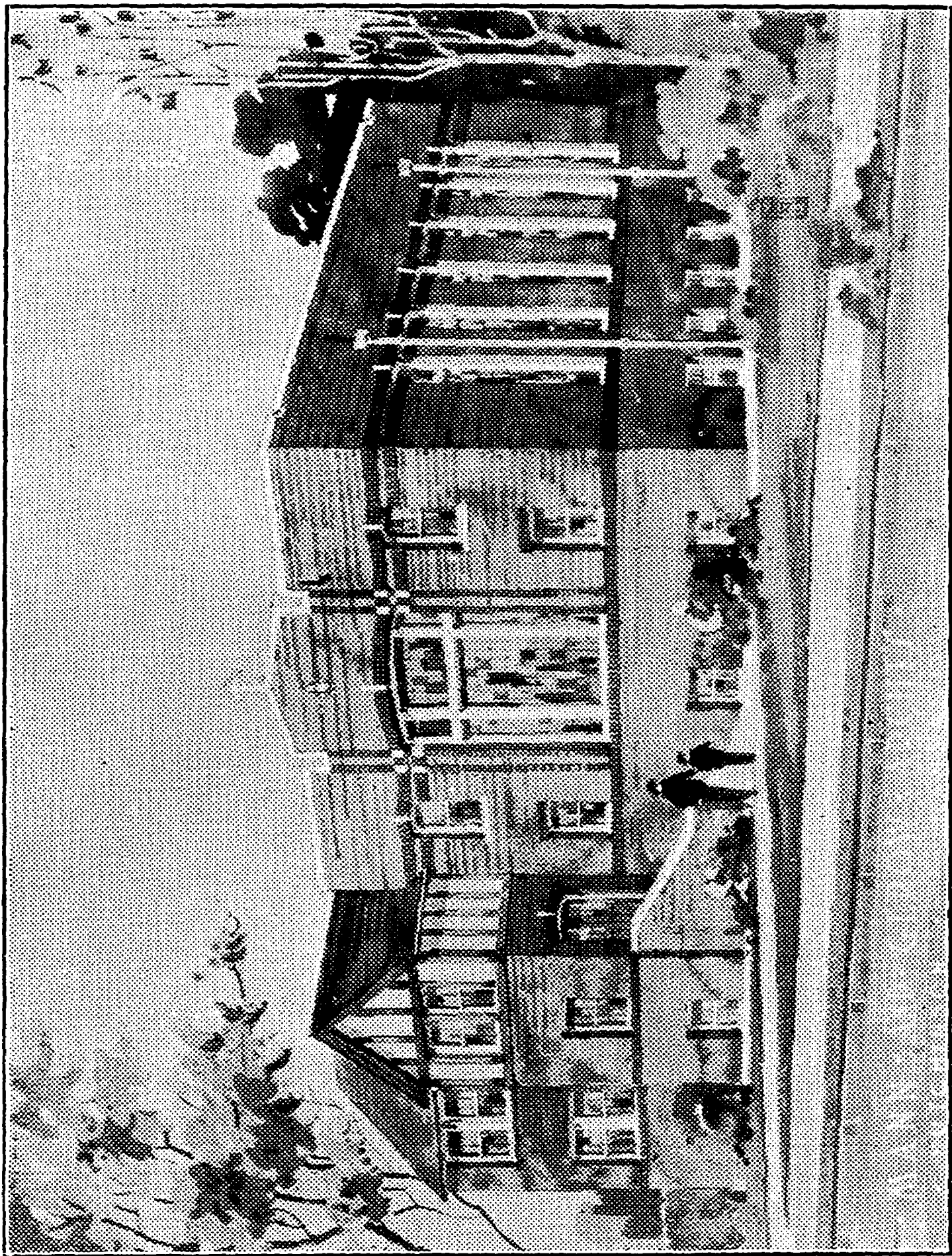




CATHOLIC CHURCH AT PARK







M. E. CHURCH AT GRINNELL

