

HISTORY OF BUTLER COUNTY KANSAS

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THE HISTORY OF BUTLER COUNTY KANSAS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

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WICHITA, KANSAS

MAY, 1932

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PREFACE

Butler County Kansas has received little notice in Kansas History textbooks, and is chiefly known to the average Kansas newspaper reader as "one of those oil counties", or, as being "one of those counties over in the Flint Hills where few people live." Among builders and contractors it is known as a source of high grade lime-stone.

Those extensively interested in live stock are better acquainted with the part it has played in the development of Kansas by it's association with the Texas cattle industry. But even they are inclined to regard it wholly as a cattle county, and forget the great number of farms producing large yields of grain with which those Texas cattle are "fed out."

Vol. P. Mooney's book on Butler County Kansas praises the virtues of the county and gives a great number of contributions written by the early settlers, all of which are excellent source material and a stimulus for additional research. His large volume of material is excellent but uncritical.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. John Rydjord for his kind criticisms and helpful suggestions; to the county officers at El Dorado for allowing access to their records, and

making room for a troublesome student; to the librarians of the University of Wichita, the Wichita City Library, and the El Dorado City Library; and to the El Dorado Times for the suggestions by members of their staff and for so graciously allowing access to their files.

I am very grateful to those people of El Dorado whom I have interviewed, allowing me many hours of their valuable time, for without them this work could not have been prepared.

Wichita, Kansas

E. P.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From the first settlement of the Atlantic seaboard "The West" has played an imposing part in the development of the American nationality. At first the unexplored regions were feared by many, while others despised them as worthless, but when the "old" settlements became crowded, or the regulations imposed by the group became too strict for the more adventurous, the dis-satisfied citizens looked about them and found that the new territory had redeeming features. Perhaps the earliest westward expansion was the migration of a portion of the inhabitants of Newtown to the Connecticut valley. A few of the adventurous spirits had previously discovered the valley, and had brought back glowing reports which had fallen upon the ready ears of the dis-contented, who in turn bravely marched seventy miles westward across the Worcester Hills and established the first "West". Those who dared to set forth looked back upon those who would not make the venture as effete and somewhat cowardly. The smug "Easterners" in turn looked askance at the raw and uncouth new land of the "West", and denounced as vehemently as the previous explorers had extolled. "Territorially speaking," the story of the American Republic has been the continuous establishment of one new "West" after another, until there was no more tillable land.

The settlers of the Connecticut Valley did not find that the new land was as glorious as they had hoped, neither were the reports circulated in Newtown true, that all of the cattle of the new colony had died the first winter. Both the old and the new communities gradually learned to modify their opinion of the other, and the political history of America has been the story of the reactions of these "Wests" upon the "Easts", and "Easts" upon the "Wests" in almost all of the great national problems.¹

There were many reports in the east of the hardships, Indians, and "bad men" of the west, but there always seemed to be those that were willing and glad to move westward regardless of the reported dangers. And their ardor did not seem to be dampened with the increasing distance from the Atlantic, for "the call of the Columbia or Sacramento was no less clear, insinuating and captivating than had been the call of the Susquehanna, Genesee or Shenandoah".²

In the gradual westward migration there were two streams of advance. The southerner because of the increasing demands of the Industrial Revolution was moving westward with great strides in order to supply cotton to the rapidly growing tex-

1. A. B. Hulbert, *Frontiers, The Genius of American Nationality*, pp. 128-31.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

tile industry. This rapid expansion depended largely upon the institution of slavery for furnishing a vast amount of cheap labor. The northern stream of migration was based upon an entirely different economic system. The New Englanders, later supplemented by the Germans and Scandinavians were small farmers, and as there was no great industrial need that held forth promises of a quickly made fortune by the production of a large surplus, continued to farm small units of land and required little extra labor. Thus the two economic systems laid the way for the practically un-reconcilable political and social systems which culminated in the Civil War.

Climate was another factor in keeping the two streams from clashing in the early period of westward migration, and for many years it appeared that there was a limitless amount of land that was best suitable for both groups. But when the Mississippi River was crossed and opened for settlement the two groups met, and as ~~the~~ their interests and institutions were very different, there was occasion for conflict.¹

Perhaps the greatest cause for conflict between the two groups was the institution of slavery. The Southern statesmen had had clashes with the Northern statesmen, over the slavery issue, in Congress. And they had found it necessary

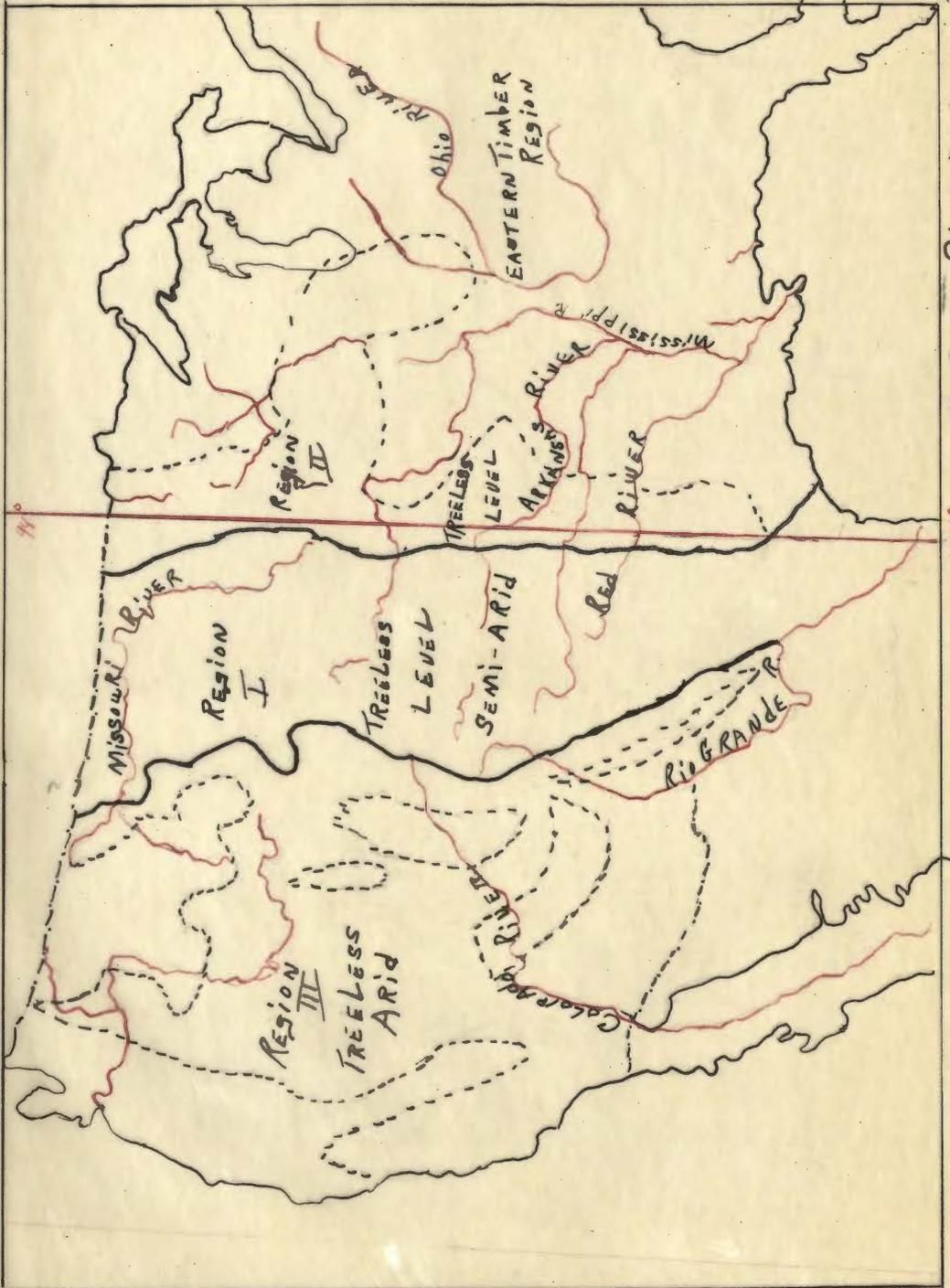
1. W. P. Webb, The Great Plains, pp. 184-202; F. J. Turner, The Frontier in American History, pp. 139-41.

to make political demands that assured them of an equal amount of power in legislation, and to do this they found it necessary to demand lands that were not suitable for the raising of cotton or the maintaining of slaves. One of the results of this statesmanship was the Missouri Compromise, which seemed fairly satisfactory to both sides at the time, or at least to the Westerners of both sides, for it appealed to their love of national union. It appeared to be a peaceable means of allowing the new areas to decide upon their own institutions, for many of the pioneers loved independence as much if not more than national unity.¹

The pioneers however had a new and apparently impossible problem to meet, for first the Southerners and then the Northerners came to a great "desert", the eastern boundary of which is approximately located at the ninety-eighth meridian.² The Southerners had the legal right to go into the plains territory by the terms of the Missouri Compromise, and by the force of their own conquering spirit. They had arrived at the edge of the plains by 1840 and had full possession of all un-admitted territory by 1860, but because of the lack of wood and water their rights were of little value. Their plan was

1. F. J. Turner, The Frontier in American History, pp. 140-1.

2. See map, p. 4A



THE GREAT PLAINS ENVIRONMENT

to cross over the great plains region and take new and very desirable cotton lands on the Pacific slope, but the great problem was, how to cross? This was where the Northern Congressmen held the whip hand for any such huge transportation scheme needed the aid of the national government, and all plans for aid to a railroad crossing the southern plains were blocked by Anti-slavery men in Congress, thus the further expansion of the "cotton kingdom" was checked by 1850.¹

As a last resort the slave states then attempted getting political control so they could get economic aid. When there arose a greater demand for expansion on the part of the land seeking pioneer, two new territories were created by the Kansas-Nebraska bill, which was a great victory for the Southerners. For territory was open to slave colonization that had been considered Free-state preserves since the Missouri Compromise.²

At the time of the compromise in 1820 the plains territory seemed so remote, and of such little value, that it's actual possession was of little consequence. For when the edge of the plains were reached the pioneer ceased advancing. Much as he desired land he could not go forward, because he

1. W. P. Webb, The Great Plains, p. 201.

2. Jesse **Macy**, The Anti-Slavery Crusade, Chronicles of America Series, p. 142, and pp. 150-1; F. J. Turner, The Frontier in American History, p. 139.

could see no means of subsistence, therefore the westward movement stopped for approximately thirty years with the first tier of states west of the Mississippi, and the last outpost of civilization long remained Westport Missouri, later known as Kansas City. The land west of this point was Indian Reservation, and the chief excursions into this territory were made for the purpose of trading with the Indians, or with the Spanish settlements of the Old South West. But the pioneer became restless and making an almost superhuman effort he pushed on across the plains to Oregon and California where the land was more like the lands from whence he came. In California gold was discovered and there was a great migration for a time. With the establishment of the new colonies on the Pacific slope it became increasingly necessary for both traders and colonists to go through the Indian lands, for the shortest distance between Westport and Santa Fe was a diagonal route southwest, through the "worthless waste lands" which later became the State of Kansas. The territory for the first time assumed importance, although the traders and colonists would probably have been glad to have seen it suddenly effaced, but as it had to be traversed the ever increasing business made more people acquainted with it, and what had been considered a worthless land was recognized as desirable in part, for a number of wooded streams had been discovered, which was practically all that was necessary to tempt the land hungry pioneer.

As the two new territories of Kansas and Nebraska were open to both slave and free-state settlers it was assumed by many that Nebraska would become a **Free-state**, and Kansas, because of being on the western border of the slave state of Missouri, would join the ranks of the South if the old plan of an equal balance was to be continued.¹

Many of the people of the Middle West were at first indifferent to the slavery question, but with the approaching crisis the Puritan and German population was no longer willing to compromise, and took a definite stand with the North. Calhoun and Taney had defined the issue so definitely that the Middle Westerners saw clearly that the contest was not only over the preservation of the Union, but a struggle for the unoccupied West as well.

The economic life of the Middle West was more closely bound to the North than to the South, because of the railroad connections with the North Atlantic States. The settlers of the Middle West had become much more nationalistic than their southern neighbors, for they had requested national aid from Congress in the form of internal improvements, protective tariffs, and land grants, all of which met with disapproval from the southerner.²

1. Webb, pp. 152-160; Turner, pp. 142-4

2. Turner, pp. 142-4

The anti-slavery group with almost religious zeal decided to offset the obnoxious Kansas-Nebraska bill by creating a majority of Free-staters so that Kansas would enter the Union as a Free-State. This plan was sponsored by Eli Thayer and the New England Emigrant Aid Society who were untiring in their efforts to get free-state sympathizers to come to Kansas. The first party sent out by them arrived in August, 1854, and established Lawrence, soon to be followed by four more parties, all of which arrived within the same year; thus, through advertising, Kansas received a great many new settlers.¹

The Southerners becoming alarmed, retaliated by sending a large number of Missourians into Kansas to establish residence, thus giving them a majority. While they were in the "majority" they decided to organize the State and in July, 1855, they drew up and selected "unanimously" the Pawnee constitution. In October of the same year the anti-slavery group met at Topeka and unanimously selected the Topeka constitution. Kansas then had two "unanimously approved" and very different constitutions, which practically plunged the territory into a state of civil war for several years, with the Free-Soil group as the final victors.

Thus it appeared that there were no means whereby the South could win the territory in the West, and with the elec-

1. Jesse Macy, The Anti-Slavery Crusade, Chronicles of America Series, pp. 150-1.

tion of 1860 their last hope for political gain vanished. The Northern economic system appeared to be accomplishing what the Southern system could not, namely the conquest of the southern plains region west of the ninety-eighth meridian. The Southern leaders saw that their whole economic system was being undermined, and deciding to withdraw from a contest that was to them wholly onesided, seceded from the Union.¹

During the Civil War few settlers came to the new territory and many that had arrived before the War returned to their old homes. But with the close of the War the arrested migration was resumed with many new problems to be met by the newcomers. In 1862 Congress had passed the Homestead Law which was very encourageing to settlers, and as a result many discharged soldiers and sailors came west seeking homes, but there were many less desirable discharged soldiers that also came west. This latter element often caused the pioneer much trouble, for in many cases they made up the robber bands that preyed upon the unprotected and poorly organized communities, and the property stolen by these thieves worked an especial hardship on the pioneer, because of his extreme poverty and isolation. The food supply was also more difficult

1. W. P. Webb, The Great Plains, pp. 200-2; Anne E. Arnold, History of Kansas, p. 76; Vol. P. Mooney, Butler County Kansas, p. 33; Jesse Macy, The Anti-Slavery Crusade, pp. 150-164.

to procure for the number of immigrants was increasing and the native products, such as buffalo, fish, wild berries, and acorns, had noticeably decreased. The early pioneer and the frontier soldiers during the War had seen such an abundant supply of wild game that they had not bothered to conserve the supply, but many times killed more game than they could possibly use for meat. Both before and after the war traders and pioneers slaughtered buffalo and other animals for their hides, leaving the carcasses on the prairie. This wholesale slaughter put an end to the previously great supply of free meat, but it did have one good effect for the pioneers, for it destroyed the economic foundation of the Indians. When their natural source of food was destroyed the Indians became more manageable, for they were then dependent upon the whites for their food supply.¹

The first people to really surmount the difficulties of the plains were the Texans. After they had adopted the six-shooter and learned to fight while riding they conquered the lands of the Mexicans and the numerous Indian tribes and practically drove them from the plains. The Texan also discovered the great number of wild native cattle which he developed into an industry that drew great numbers of ranchers to the plains region to make a quick fortune by feeding in-

1. F. J. Turner, The Frontier in American History, pp. 143-4.

expensive cattle on free grass. The result of this quick growth was a flood of the Eastern markets which not only made the price fall rapidly but enabled the consumers to choose only the best grades of meat, thus creating a demand for better fed animals. To produce a better grade of beef it became necessary to feed the cattle on food other than could be found in the short grass country.

The cattlemen of the plains had previously solved the problem of getting their cattle to market by driving them north and east to Kansas and Missouri, which economically "made" several shipping centers at once. These centers formed the nucleus for the rapid growth of the cattle industry in Kansas, for it finally developed that the Texas rancher grazed his cattle until they had reached the desired state of growth and then drove them north to Kansas and neighboring states to be fattened on the long grass, for "good old blue-stem shore put the taller on the ribs" according to the cowman. One of the best sections for this second phase of the industry was, and continues to be, the Eastern half of the State of Kansas.¹

There was another force at work on the plains that was working a change in the cattle kingdom, namely the homesteader. The cattlemen of the fifties and sixties did not have to

1. Laura M. French, History of Emporia and Lyon County, pp. 31-2; W. P. Webb, The Great Plains, pp. 216-31.

meet this problem, for then the settlers generally followed the trails to the various streams. Wood and water were still the pre-requisites of settlement and as there was not a great abundance of them, a great amount of open range remained that could only be used for grazing purposes. Encouraged by the Homestead Law of 1862 the pioneer was becoming able to devise means whereby he could select his homesite away from the stream and the woods. Sod houses were built and wells were dug, soon to be followed by wind-mills, but perhaps the most stimulating cause for plains settlement was the solving of the land transportation problem in the form of railroads. The railroad companies had been granted extensive privileges in the form of land grants, and while they were building their trans-continental and branch lines, they were also busy spreading extensive propoganda to encourage settlers to come to the new lands. They had a two-fold purpose in their encouragement of newcomers, for first they wished to sell their lands and then they wanted people who would use the roads after they were built. Fencing was also a problem on the prairie, but with the invention of barbed wire inexpensive fences were built inclosing the crops and excluding the cattle.¹

The people who came to Kansas before and immediately following the War had come by their own choice or the encouragement of the New England Emigrant Aid Society, but with the

1. Webb, pp. 333-44, 270-312; Turner, pp. 145-6.

the railroad boom the West was advertised as it had never been. Railroad agents went everywhere booming the "Golden West", appealing to the people by presenting the great possibilities for economic gains and political prestige, and as a result the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas, grew by leaps and bounds. In Kansas the population in 1860 was one-hundred and seven thousand, and by 1870 it was more than three and one-half times as large. Within the next decade the population had trebled and by 1890 it had again doubled. Many of the settlers to the new states came from foreign countries, but the State of Kansas received only about twenty-five per-cent of her increased population from foreign sources. Illinois and Ohio together furnished about one-third of the settlers in Kansas, and Iowa, Indiana, and Wisconsin, were well represented, as well as several southern states, particularly Missouri.¹

At the outbreak of the Civil War the northeastern part of the original thirty-three counties of Kansas were quite well settled, but with the exceptions of the trails and streams the remaining counties were inhabited only by cattle men. The trails had been made by wagon trains crossing the prairie from Kansas City to various forts and trading posts, but the trail routes selected had nearly always been chosen

1. Webb, pp. 333-44, 270-312; Turner pp. 138-40, 147.

with the necessary watering places, camp grounds, and river crossings in mind. The requirements for camp-grounds were similar to those for permanent settlements, therefore people going into a new territory did well to follow a well traveled trail. In the settlement of Kansas the trails acted as wedges for new lines of settlement, and the settlements made at the river crossings were outposts, many of them later becoming large towns.¹

Two of the earlier communities to be established in this way were Chelsea and Old El Dorado, Chelsea being in what was then Butler County, and the Old El Dorado townsite being in what was then Hunter County, both of which are in the present county of Butler.² Evidence has been found that the streams in Butler County had been used by cattlemen as early as 1854, and possibly even before. Certainly the Fort Smith Branch of the Old California trail, which crossed the county and joined the Westport branch just west of Newton, had been frequented by many travelers by 1854.³ It is quite possible that the Walnut River crossing was known, among traders, to be a good camp ground and ford before the gold rush to California 1849. For on July 3, 1847, Captain J. J. Clark in charge of a company of Missouri Mounted Volunteers, "bound for the Mexican War, came along the Old California trail" and crossed

1. A. T. Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1432.

2. See map, p. 17A.

3. B. R. Leydig, Historical Reminiscences, p. 2.

the Walnut "about a mile below the site of the present city of El Dorado, and camped over night". This river crossing became the site for El Dorado in 1858. There were other trails, one of the most important being the Osage trail, crossing the county in different directions, but they crossed the Walnut River at the above mentioned ford.¹

Another such desirable ford and campground in the County was ^{the} ford across the Whitewater River, almost ten miles straight west of the Walnut crossing. James R. Mead early discovered the valuable location of the Whitewater crossing, and for many years after 1863 the ford was known as Meads Ranch, until the settlement became a third class city and was named Towanda.²

As for the honor of being the first actual settler of Butler County there are many claimants. Many old settlers insist that Jacob Carey and family settled southeast of El Dorado in the early part of 1857. Others claim than honor for William Hildebrandt who settled east of El Dorado in 1857, while still others say that Charles Jefferson and wife and Doctor Lewellen and wife settled in the county in 1856.³

The first colony to arrive in the county was organized

1. A. T. Andreas, *The State of Kansas*, p. 1432; interviews with Vol. P. Mooney, October 21, 30, 1931, and Judge A. L. L. Hamilton, October 30, 1931, at El Dorado, Kansas.

2. *Ibid.*

3. B. R. Leydig, Historical Reminiscences, p. 2.

by Samuel Stewart in June, 1857, in the Free-State town of Lawrence, Kansas. This intrepid group of fifteen families followed the Old California trail some one-hundred and fifty miles to the southwest of Lawrence, arriving at the Walnut June 15.

There were several groups that quickly followed the first comers to the new location, and by 1859 there were about fifty families in the two communities of El Dorado and Chelsea. Although the two new settlements were far away from other settlements and forts it is not surprising that so many people had arrived at this early date, for the valleys of the Walnut and Whitewater rivers with their many tributary streams, were among the best remaining locations for settlement in the Kansas territory.¹

The settlements of El Dorado and Chelsea were frontier outposts for several years, for the territory between Emporia and El Dorado was not so desirable and there were few settlers between the two communities. This was also the case to the north and most certainly to the south and west, therefore the members of the two settlements came to depend upon each other as in many like frontier outposts.

1. Cyclopedia of Kansas History, Frank W. Blackmar, ed., p. 261.

CHAPTER II.

ORGANIZATION

In 1855 a group of slave sympathizers from the State of Missouri met at Pawnee, Kansas Territory, to organize the territory and prepare it become a slave state. The territory, they divided into thirty-three counties, and they named many of them for southern notables with very pronounced pro-slavery sentiments. The names of many of these counties were changed upon later organization, but Butler County, which was named for Senator Andrew P. Butler of South Carolina, retains it's original name.

By the act of the legislature of 1855 Butler County was attached to Madison County for civil and military purposes.¹ The same legislative act of 1855 designated the region immediately south of the original Butler County as Hunter County.² In 1857 the boundaries of Butler County were extended eight miles southward by act of the legislature.³

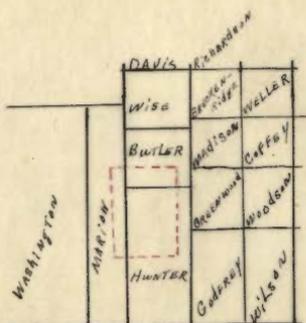
By 1857 settlers had commenced to look upon the Walnut Valley territory, which then included the southern part of Butler County and the northern part of Hunter County as de-

1. See map, p. 17A.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.; Vol. P. Mooney, Butler County Kansas, p. 35;

Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1431



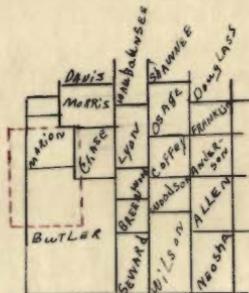
BUTLER COUNTY IN 1855



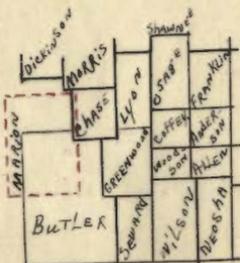
BUTLER COUNTY IN 1857-1859



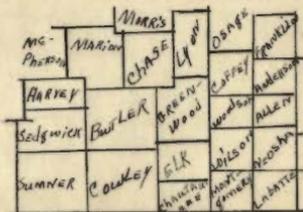
BUTLER COUNTY IN 1860



BUTLER COUNTY IN 1861-64



BUTLER COUNTY IN 1865-66



BUTLER COUNTY AT PRESENT DATE, 1916

MAPS SHOWING BOUNDARY CHANGES SINCE 1855.
 Red Dotted Lines Show PRESENT COUNTY.

sirable homestead land. According to the report of several of the early settlers a small number of families had arrived by the summer of that year.¹ As actual settlers arrived in the County and neighboring counties more definite legislation was required. One of the earliest acts of legislation concerning the county was the apportionment of the territory into judicial districts by the territorial legislature of 1857. Butler, Hunter, Greenwood, Madison, Weller, Coffee, Anderson, and Allen, counties constituted the Thirteenth district.²

In 1858 the settlers of El Dorado and Chelsea platted their towns, and there is evidence of a regular town company having been formed in El Dorado in 1858 but there were only a limited number of lots sold. By 1858 Chelsea received an official post office with George T. Donaldson as the first postmaster, and by 1860 El Dorado received a postoffice with D. L. McCabe as postmaster. For a number of years these two postoffices were the only ones within a radius of many miles.³

By 1859 there were approximately fifty families in the two communities of El Dorado and Chelsea.⁴ In this group were

1. See above, Chapter I. pp. 15-16.

2. Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1432

3. Ibid.

4. Both El Dorado and Chelsea have been included in Butler County since 1867.

many of the citizens that later became prominent in the political, economic, and social, life of the county.¹

The settlers of Butler County that were present when it was organized in 1859 were largely from the mid-western states of Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa. The people of these states had practically common interests in so far as political and economic affairs are concerned, and as a result the citizens of those states that came to Butler County were quite homogeneous. As evidence of this we find in Cutlers History of Kansas that in the election returns for October, 1857, Madison and Butler Counties together polled sixty-nine Free-state and seven Democratic votes. From the same authority we find that in August, 1858, an election was held at the Old El Dorado townsite, on the LeCompton Constitution, and "the entire vote of twenty-three was cast against the infamous platform", and on November 8, 1859, the county cast one vote for the Democratic candidate for Congress and forty-seven for the Republican candidate.²

1. This group includes Judge J. C. Lambdin, Archibald Ellis, Judge Harrison, P. P. Johnson, George Donaldson, Martin Vaught, Henry Martin, J. D. Conner and James Gordy. J.C. Lambdin was elected to the upper house of the Territorial Councils of 1859 and 1860. J. D. Conner was a member of the legislature in 1867.

2. Cyclopedia of Kansas History, p. 212; Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1432.

Homogeneity did not mean satisfaction with political affairs in so far as the citizens of the new southwest settlements were concerned, for the homesteaders at this early date were not protected by a homestead law. They held their land by their own strength, and they were not sure that they would have a legal title to their land if they did manage to keep it by force. The Lecompton, ^{Leavenworth} ~~Topeka~~, and Wyandotte, constitutions were not satisfactory and were rejected in quick succession by the voters of Butler County.¹

When the Topeka or Free-State constitution was voted upon in May, 1858 the sentiments were much different and it appeared that the political situation was becoming much better, and the county came out with more than their full force. If judged by our present standards this election was illegal, but in that early day there were few election laws. The election was held north of Chelsea under some spreading oaks, and a large coffee mill was used for a ballot box, for boxes were so rare that not one could be found. The coffee mill was the kind that possessed a drawer as a receptacle for the ground coffee, and the voter after writing his choice upon a slip of paper, pulled out the drawer, dropped in his ballot, and then closed the drawer. But there was quite possibly an irregularity in this election, for the report shows that

1. R. H. Fisher, Biographical Sketches of El Dorado Citizens, p. 18

about one-hundred votes were cast, and the county at that time could hardly boast that many inhabitants, including women and minors. Almost a year later when voting upon the Wyandotte constitution, the county polled a vote of seventeen, two for the constitution and fifteen against it.¹

February 11, 1859, the legislature passed an act re-organizing the counties of Wise, Butler, and Chase, and the boundaries of Butler County were again changed. The fifth standard parallel which is now the north boundary of the city of El Dorado, was at that time the south boundary of the county, which was a thirty-mile square consisting of nine-hundred square miles, with the county-seat at Chelsea.² At this time Old El Dorado was the county-seat of Hunter County, and February 27, 1860 the legislature made it the temporary county-seat of Irving County.³

On April 30, 1859, a little more than two months after the county was re-organized by the territorial legislature, Butler County was officially organized by it's citizens. On that date the Board of County Commissioners were elected by the community, and they held their first meeting on the same day at the home of G. T. Donaldson, in Chelsea township.

1. Fisher, Biographical Sketches, p. 18; Andreas, The State of Kansas, pp. 1430-31.

2. See map, p. 17A.

3. Ibid.

This meeting was held for the "purpose of establishing officers for the county offices; P. G. Barrett, chairman, G. T. Donaldson and J. S. White commissioners. The commissioners were ordered to meet at Chelsea hall; the county officers were ordered to keep their offices at their own dwellings, except the clerk of probate, who shall keep his at the residence of J. D. Lambdin." June 13, of the same year the commissioners appointed P. G. D. Morton county auditor and the assessor of Chelsea township.

The next meeting of the supervisors did not take place until March 21, 1860,¹ and with a broad flourish and much underlining the clerk writes "The State of Kansas", in his record of that meeting. The most important business transacted at this meeting was the dividing of the county into three districts for the election of county commissioners. The new state laws enacted in February, 1860, made it necessary for the county commissioners to change the personell of their officers to some extent, and we find in their minutes for May 12 that the assessor and a township trustee did not qualify according to law, and that new officers were appointed to take the place of the dis-qualified ones.²

1. The official record kept by the Clerk of the County Commissioners shows no record of a meeting held between June 13, 1859, and March 21, 1860.

2. Official record of County Commissioners Meetings, I, pp. 1-10.

As is usual in most governmental organizations the questions of assessment and taxation are quite generally in the public mind, and the first tax protest was made in 1863 by several of the citizens of Butler County. In response to these protests the County Board met July 3, 1863, for the express purpose of equalizing and correcting errors in the assessment rolls. Another protest presented at this meeting was made by William Harrison, who was not satisfied with the the election of county officers in October, 1862.¹

February 24, 1864, the legislature greatly extended the boundaries of the county. It was made to include several counties and included that part of the state that is now occupied by Newton, Wichita, Belle Plaine, Oxford, Winfield, Arkansas City, Cedarvale, Grenola, Reece, Burns, and Peabody, with Chelsea as the county-seat.² February 26, 1867, the legislature repealed the act of 1864, and gave the county it's present boundaries. The county is now forty-two miles in length from north to south, and thirty-four miles wide from east to west, with an area of one-thousand, four-hundred and twenty-eight square miles, containing approximately one-million acres, which is larger than the state of Rhode Island, and is the largest county in Kansas.³

1. Record of County Com. Meetings, I. p. 13.

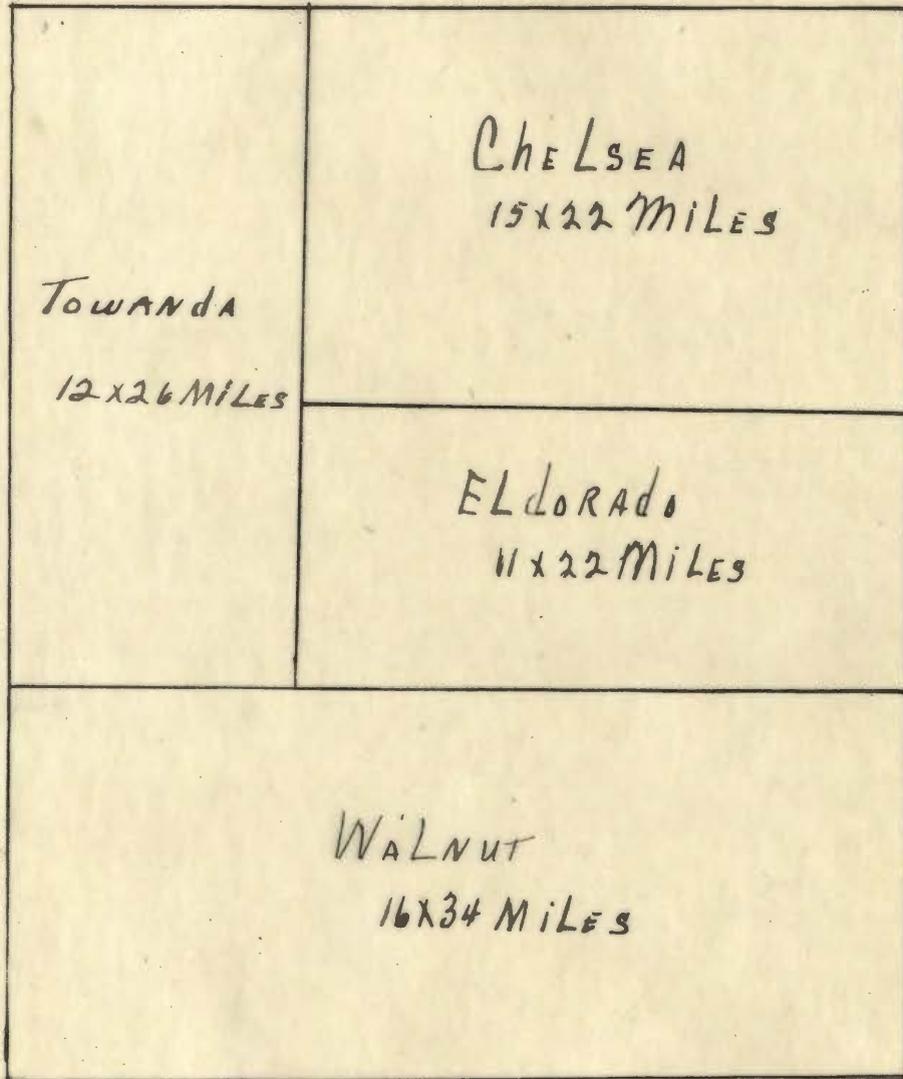
2. See map, p. 17A.

3. Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1432.

With the change in boundaries, made by the legislature in 1867, the state also set up additional requirements for internal county organization, including requirements for officers, the holding of elections, the keeping of records, division of counties into townships, reservation of school lands, and other similar requirements. To comply with the state law the County Commissioners on August, 23, 1867, divided the county into the townships of Chelsea, El Dorado, Walnut, and Towanda, these four being the "mother townships" from which the twenty-three new townships were formed.¹ These townships were ordered, by the county board, to elect their officers, and an election was held for this purpose and for the purpose of voting upon two proposed amendments to the state constitution, on November 5, 1867.²

1. See map, p. 24A

2. The first of these amendments was for, "striking out the word "male" from section 1, article 5, of the constitution," * * * and for striking out the word "white". Both measures of this amendment were defeated by a large vote in county and state elections. "For the amendment of article 2, section 5, of the constitution, restoring election franchises to loyal citizens, there were 39 votes in favor and 64 against the proposal", in Butler County. This amendment was likewise defeated in the state by about the same proportions. According to several of the citizens that have been residents of Butler County for many years, the County generally "goes" as the state and nation "go" in elections. From R. H. Fisher, Biographical Sketches, p. 16; and interviews with Vol. P. Mooney, October 21, and 30, 1931 and A. L. L. Hamilton, November 29, 1931, and B. R. Leydig, February 27, 1932, at El Dorado, Kansas.



Map Showing First Division OF BUTLER COUNTY, 1867

CHAPTER III.

THE COUNTY-SEAT AND COUNTY POLITICS.

The county organization to be wholly successful, demanded the co-operation of the citizens, but as there were several interest groups in Butler County the organization was not always able to meet the problems that arose. With new settlement after the War the people were often divided into two or more groups, unless there was an outside danger, in which case they became quickly united.

One problem that had to be met by all frontier groups was the establishment of order, for many of the lawless characters that could not prey upon society without punishment in the older states, came to the frontier where every man was more or less for himself, and the outlaw had an even chance if not an advantage. There were few banks to rob, but many of the pioneers brought gold money west with them, and nearly all of the newcomers had livestock which was their most valuable possession. There were organized bands of horse-thieves that stole not only the horses of the pioneer but his other animals as well. From the day of the first arrival of settlers in Butler County there were horse-thieves, and with the arrival of great numbers of horses, cattle, and oxen, came more thieves. This county particularly suffered because of being bounded on the south by Indian

Territory from which many of the thieves operated, making sudden raids into the white man's territory, and quickly crossing the line before pursuit parties could catch them.

The only means of combatting the thieves was by the organization of the settlers into, what was commonly known as, vigilance committees. As the need had arisen, several such organizations had been formed in Butler County before 1870, but their punishment had generally been to drive the offenders from the territory. By 1870, however, the thieves had become so active that drastic action became necessary. The business had become so profitable that many of the citizens of the communities, and even a few government officials, had become involved. Much of the stealing was performed at night, but with better organization on the part of the thieves, and the establishment of agents within a community, strategy was used. One of the most profitable methods of wholesale thievery was to incite an Indian scare, and after the settlers were in flight to Emporia or Cottonwood Falls, the thieves would drive the remaining stock across the line into Indian land. But several of the people became suspicious of these Indian raids, and the men after sending their families on to the north or east would hide at home. After some private detective work on the part of the pioneers during two of these faked raids, the settlers decided to act, and forming themselves into the largest vigi-

lance committee that had ever been formed in the County, they acted.¹ On the morning of November 10, 1870, the citizens "awakened to experience one of the most sensational events in their history", for:

Four dead bodies were found near the home of one George Booth (near Douglas), with the warning notice: "Shot for Horse Thieves". It is not believed the citizens were much surprised, nor were they much distressed because of the quadruple tragedy. Mrs. Booth was a witness to the killings and she explained that while James Smith, Lewis and George Booth and Jack Corbin, the latter a government scout, were seated in a room, a party of men, with leveled pistols stepped in and covered them. George Booth attempted to escape by dashing from the house. But he was promptly shot down and died in the yard. Lewis Booth and James Smith were taken into custody, led from the house and shot to death. Corbin, the government scout, was haltered, taken to a nearby tree and hanged.

But this was evidently not enough to quiet the thieves, for there was much talk of retaliation on their part and they even threatened several "prominent Douglas citizens" which resulted in the arrest of "James Quimby, his clerk, Michael Dray, Dr. Morris the druggist, and his son" * * * for complicity in horse stealing." These men were placed under heavy guard and many reports were spread that "horse-thief bands were coming to liberate the prisoners, burn the town and murder the citizens. * * * The town quickly

1. A. T. Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1432; interviews with Mrs. Addie Cowley Bradlie, October 21, and 30, 1931; and Vol. P. Mooney, February 27, 1932; and T. P. Manion; November, 21, 1931, and February 27, 1932; all at El Dorado Kansas. 2. Andreas, p. 1432.

filled with men from surrounding country, all heavily armed, to guard prisoners and citizenry. Every man wore a brace of pistols, a knife, and carried a shotgun."¹ By December 2, three-hundred men had assembled in Douglass and that night the men "marched in order behing the four doomed prisoners, escorting them to the timber near Olmstead's mill, on the Big Walnut, a mile south of Douglass, where they were hanged to a piece of scantling that reached from one tree to another. The night was cold and the next morning settlers of southern Butler viewed with horror the suspended bodies-- with beards and hair stiffly frozen ^{and} white with frost."²

It is possible that several of the eight men were unjustly punished, and many people say that James Quimby was innocent and later signed a published statement to that effect.³ But "this positive treatment effectually discouraged the horse thieving business!"⁴

1. Mrs. Alvah Shelden in telling of this trouble, says that she was then a girl of fourteen and waited upon the table in her brothers hotel which served two-hundred of these men three times each day for four days.

2. Thrills of Fifty-seven Years Ago in Butler County, from an interview with Mrs. Alvah Shelden, The Wichita Eagle, May 30, 1926, p. 6A.

3. Ibid.

4. A. T. Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1432.

At the same time the county was struggling with the above problem, the location of the county-seat, and the settlement of the difficulty between the farmer and the cattle-men, proved to be additional problems that demanded the attention of the people; upon which there was sharp disagreement.

The county-seat of Butler County had been Chelsea from it's first organization in 1859, and at that time the town was in the approximate center of the county, but in 1864 the northern part of Butler County, became part of Marion County, and Butler County included what had previously been Hunter County to the southern line of the state.¹ The county-seat instead of being centrally located, was then in the extreme northern part of the county. Before that time many of the settlers had left the county because of the drouth of 1860, and the War, but there were enough left to be interested in the machinery of government, and in 1864 there were twenty-eight petitioners demanding the permanent location of the county-seat. An election was called for May 21 to decide the question, and the majority voted to remove the county-seat to El Dorado. But on July 4th the board met and selected the county-seat according to their own judgment and contrary to the popular vote. From the original record of the clerk of the board we find the following statement:

1. See map, p. 17A.

Resolved that whereas the county-seat has been removed to El Dorado and there is not any building which can be procured for the county offices the board resolved not to remove the said offices until such buildings can be procured.¹

In 1868 the El Dorado Town Company was formed on the site of the present city of El Dorado which is about one and one-half miles north of the first, or Old El Dorado. There had been several cabins built on the new town-site in the early part of 1867, but with the platting of the site, the selling of lots, and the arrival of new settlers, there were a number of new cabins built by 1868. A cabin was procured for the court house in 1867, and the first term of court, with S. N. Wood as Judge, was held in this cabin, but the the records, or at least a part of them, were not moved until the early part of 1868.²

The one-room log cabin soon became inadequate for county needs and it was not an edifice that could be pointed out to newcomers with pride. By the account of Martin Vaught,

A. Ellis was county treasurer; M. A. Palmer, S. C. Fulton and myself were county commissioners, and John Blevins was county clerk. How we schemed and planned to get a court house and finally when the treasury had between \$4,000.00 and \$5,000.00 in cash we decided to put up the first building, Henry Martin donating the lots. Then didn't some people howl! One Augusta man came to see me, and forbid any further action, accompanied by terrible

1. Record of County Commissioners Meetings, I, pp. 13-14, July 4, 1864.

2. Ibid., p. 31; Martin Vaught, Early Recollections, in Fisher, Biographical Sketches, p. 27.

threats if we attempted to use public money for that purpose. But we did it, erecting a two-story building, now the east one-third of the old court house, and El Dorado business men contributed liberally.¹

The liberal contributions made by the business men was an excellent investment, for the city from that time prospered rapidly, and a number of new stores and other shops were established. But the ambitious citizens of the other towns, particularly Augusta, were not willing to see fortune flying from their grasp and did not give up the struggle for several years. There were several elections and

everybody voted who could be induced to go to the polls and no questions were asked regarding citizenship. In some cases horses and dogs were voted. I know this was the case at El Dorado, Chelsea, and Augusta. I recall one election held at El Dorado where the first two hundred names were taken from the city directory in alphabetical order just as they appeared in the directory. One of the clerks, Ottentot, I think, was sent to the penitentiary for six months as all names on both roll books were written by him.

But the great fight came off in 1871, when at a meeting of the county commissioners, the Augusta people presented a petition praying for an election for the removal of the county seat from El Dorado to Augusta, and Douglas had joined forces with Augusta. During the consideration of the petition, a legal question was raised as to who were legal petitioners. Augusta's contention was that a signer did not have to be a legal voter, at the time of signing the petition. El Dorado's attorney demanded that only legal electors be permitted to sign. * * * The board decided to defer action until it could consult A. L. Redden, the county attorney. Augusta kicked and demanded that the question be referred to the attorney-general, which we agreed to do. Right there was

1. El Dorado Times, May 19, 1895, Article by Martin Vaught, also quoted in R. H. Fisher, Biographical Sketches, p. 27.

where Augusta blundered; they should have withdrawn their petition until the attorney-general's decision had been made, for the election must be held within fifty days from the time of the presentation, also requiring thirty days notice. I think it was about six weeks before his decision was returned¹.

The county commissioners, not knowing of this irregularity at the time, called the election, and there was much illegal voting in all of the places, but Augusta won by a small majority. Before the votes were canvassed the board was served with an injunction at the instance of El Dorado. This stopped proceedings until the case came up for hearing at which time Senator Preston B. Plumb represented El Dorado, but the injunction was dissolved and Augusta demanded the immediate removal of the county seat, as the canvass gave Augusta a slight majority of the votes.

A group of Augustans came with ox wagons to remove the safes and records to Augusta. However they were expected, for the courthouse had been barricaded, with armed guards stationed on the roof, and other guards stationed at different vantage points in the town. There were no people in the streets, and both sides were watching and waiting to see what the other would do, and finally the Augustans went home without the records.²

1. Ibid.; supported by interview with Judge A. L. L. Hamilton, November 29, 1931, El Dorado, Kansas.

2. Ibid.

"The supreme court handed down a decision upholding El Dorado's contentions that the election was illegally held, and as El Dorado was the county seat before the election it legally remained the county seat. This was the last of the county seat elections, although Augusta schemed for several years to get it away from El Dorado. But in the early eighties, Representative J. H. Fullinwider, introduced a law which was passed by the legislature, providing that county seat elections should not be held oftener than once in five years, and then only on petition of two-fifths of the legal electors. "This practically put an end to the contests, though ill feeling has continued in some degree."¹

The political situation in the County was not made any more harmonious by the the controversy between the cattlemen and the farmers, which problem arose at about the same time as the location of the county seat. The cattlemen, as in other counties and states, depended upon the open range to feed their cattle. But when the homesteaders arrived and selected their farms upon the range the ranchers lost their free feeding grounds, but not until the farmers protested against the destroyal of their crops. The cattlemen were quite convinced that their "range rights" had been infringed upon, and the farmers felt equally justified in defending

1. Ibid.

their homestead rights, even going so far as to shoot the cattle that destroyed their crops.¹ This situation very nearly brought the two interests into open conflict, which was the incentive for the passing of the optional herd law, by the state legislature in 1870. The law provided that the separate counties could adopt this law, but the citizens hesitated in many cases for a year more before adopting. In Butler County there was much controversy over its adoption, and it was not until April, 1871, that it was brought to a vote. By the election results, the county was very nearly equally divided upon the question, for it was adopted by a vote of 569 over 504. The adoption of the law did not make the two groups feel any more friendly toward each other, but it did require the rancher to either herd his cattle or fence his pastures, and pay damage if his cattle destroyed the property of another. With the invention and introduction of barbed wire, it became possible, and even desirable, for both farmers and ranchers to inclose their land, which did much to unite the two factions politically.¹

While the above questions were the cause of several strong opposing factions, disasters and common enemies were doing much to off-set the widening breach between the separ-

1. Webb, The Great Plains, p. 230; Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1431; interviews with T. P. Manion, Vol. P. Mooney, and A. L. L. Hamilton, February 27, 1932, El Dorado Kansas.

ate groups. Fear of Indian and new outlaw attacks, was common with cattlemen, farmers, El Doradoans, and Augustans, and the common need for protection demanded unification. The tornado of June 1871, and the locust (grasshopper) "plague" of 1874, destroyed the property of all factions, and the need for co-operation in re-construction and seeking aid was obvious to the worst enemies. According to witnesses, after the destruction by the locusts, several families spoke to each other that had not done so for two or three years.¹

The above differences and adjustments had little effect upon the political party affiliations of the various members of the different factions. The party membership was based largely upon the party division following the Civil War, or, they voted "as they shot", and as the citizens of Butler County fought on the Union side, they were quite generally Republicans.²

Perhaps the first public expression of dis-satisfaction with political affairs was in 1873, when there was a mass meeting called at the Sutton Branch school house. The reason given for the meeting being called was that the "farm-

1. Interviews with Mrs. Bradlie, and Vol. P. Mooney, November 21, 1931, and T. P. Manion, February 27, 1932, El Dorado, Kansas.

2. Ibid.; see above, p. 19.

er of the County was being overlooked in the distribution of official patronage." At this meeting county officers and a representative to the legislature were nominated and later elected. The nominations following this one were usually made by the regular county conventions of the two political parties until 1882, when the nominations were made by a primary system which was known as the "Crawford County System." But the farmers did not like this system, for they contended that all of the nominations were given to the people living in the cities, because of their larger acquaintanceship with both farmers and townsmen. In 1888 the convention system was again adopted and nominations were made by this means until the state adopted the primary system.

Third parties have played an important part in the political affairs of Butler County from the early eighties. The Greenback party of the county put a "ticket in the field" in 1881, and was voted for by about twelve per cent of the "citizens of Butler County." The Union Labor and Prohibition parties also made nominations in the county in 1888, but the third party that took the county by storm was the Populist party. Populism was introduced into the county in 1890 and grew rapidly. According to witnesses and participants a big Populist rally was held just before the election of 1892, and in ^{the} parade of the party, so many people were in the parade that there was scarcely anyone left to watch, with the exception of a "few sickly looking Democrats and Republicans

who soon took refuge in the back rooms of their stores and houses" when they saw how much they were in the minority. In the election of that year every Populist county and state officer nominated was elected with a very large majority. The party carried a good part of the elections until 1900, and had a ticket in the field until 1906. Since 1900 the members of the party had ~~been~~ gradually been fusing with the two major parties. With the exception of 1912 when several Progressive candidates were elected, county politics has been largely dominated by the Republican party since 1900.¹

1. Mooney, Butler County Kansas, pp. 237-41, and interviews with Mooney, and T. P. Manion, February 27, 1932.

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY ECONOMIC PROGRESS IN BUTLER COUNTY

The exploration and development of the United States has been motivated by many forces, but perhaps the most powerful force was the desire for economic gain. The man with money found the new land and the undeveloped resources a means of increasing his wealth, and the poor man by conquering the "savages" and overcoming the elements, was able to lay the way for his own economic independence, and perhaps even become wealthy. The settlers that came to Kansas and to Butler County were a part of the great westward movement, and it is quite likely that a majority of them came for economic reasons. Butler County was settled first by the man with very little money, and was soon followed by the man with money to invest and loan. However much of the land of the county was purchased by land investors before the first settlement, by eastern financiers who were able in many cases to purchase land for as little as twelve and one-half cents per acre.¹

Many of the purchasers however, were people from states farther east. Families were large and there were many new

1. R. H. Fisher, Biographical Sketches, p. 30, quoting Martin Vaught.

farm homes to be established with each generation, but as many young farmers found that they only possessed as much as forty or eighty acres, they decided to come west where there was more land at a much lower price. They were nearly always able to find buyers who were quite willing to pay from fifty to sixty dollars per acre, thus giving them enough money to come west and purchase larger farms^{at} from one-dollar and a quarter to two dollars per acre, with the obligations of "proving up". Or, it was even possible at times to take claims for which the only obligation was "proving up", but the greater portion of the land in what is now Butler County was originally purchased at the above very low prices.¹

To mee the requirements of "proving up",

the claimant must have at least ten acres of sod broken and living water, a well, or spring (many wet weather springs at certain seasons served the purpose), and a house (a shanty, a dugout, a sod house, or even a hay house passed muster in those days). An actual occupation of at least six months was required * * *. When desiring to make his final proof, the claimant appeared at the United States land office * * * where he received a declaratory statement of his intention to make his final proof. This statement gave the date and the names of tow witnesses, neighbors, who could testify to the facts of his having complied with required conditions of settlement. This declaratory statement was published in a newspaper, as near the land as practicable, for

1. Interviews with Vol. P. Mooney, and Mrs. Addie Bradlie, November 30, 1931, and T. P. Manion February 27, 1932, El Dorado, Kansas.

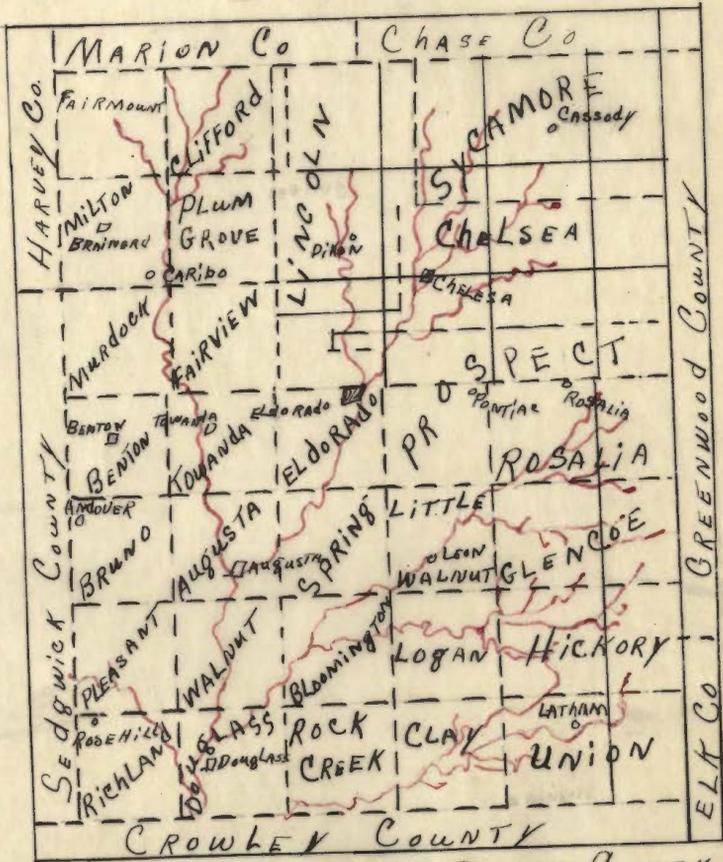
five consecutive weeks, at the settlers expense. ¹

By 1857 settlers had begun to look upon the Walnut Valley, comprising what was then the southern part of Butler County and the northern part of Hunter County, as desirable for homesteads.² The Valley had many natural advantages that were inducive to early settlement. The first advantage to attract settlers was the great number of generously wooded streams. The Walnut and Whitewater Rivers cross the County from north to south and join south of the present town of Augusta, and branching from each of these rivers are numerous creeks, at from four to ten mile intervals.³ These streams not only furnished a plentiful water supply for the first comers, but a good supply of building material and fuel, for five per cent of the total area of the county was at that time heavily wooded. With the woods and streams there was a generous supply of fish and game which furnished a good part of the food supply, and along the streams were found many acorns and walnuts, the former often being used for stock feed, and upon many occasions the people baked them and used them for food when the "bread-stuff" ran low. Every family usually gathered a good supply of walnuts each fall to last them through the winter.⁴

1. Chas. R. Noe, Little Walnut Township, in Mooney, Butler County Kansas, p. 164

2. See above, Chapter I. p. 16.

3. See map, p. 40 A. 4. Interview with Mrs. Bradlie November 21, 1931, El Dorado, Kansas.



A MAP OF BUTLER COUNTY

The plentiful supply of wood was the incentive for the first industry to be established, other than farming. The people coming to the County in 1857, 1858, and 1859, built their houses of logs, and took their corn to Emporia to be ground,¹ but in the spring of 1859 C. S. Lambdin, with the aid of several of his neighbors, went to Le Roy Kansas and hauled back the machinery for a saw and grist mill which was built on the Walnut River at Chelsea.²

The numerous streams also furnished Butler County with much fine farm land, for fifteen per cent of the land of the present county is bottom land. The remaining eighty-five per cent is upland, only about half of which is tillable, but the untillable land is very fine grass land, covered with long bluestem. There is also much lime-stone and sand-stone, but the first comers made but little use of it.³

When the first colony under the leadership of Samuel Stewart arrived in June of 1857 it's most immediate need was to plant corn, for it was already late for planting, and every day was precious. Drawing their wagons into a circle for protection from Indians, they immediately plowed ground, and within two days the corn was planted. When the grain was planted their next move was to select the location for their

1. Laura M. French, Hist. of Emporia and Lyon County, pp. 17-20; interview with Mrs. Bradlie, November 21, 1931.

2. Martin Vaught, Early Recollections, in El Dorado Times, May 19, 1895. 3. Andreas, The State of Kansas, p.1431.

cabins, which they built near the streams, for the two-fold reason of being near their water supply, and the location of the trees from which they constructed their cabins. The newcomers were very busy people that summer, for in addition to cutting down and trimming the logs, and building the houses, the corn had to be weeded--they had no cultivators-- and the daily food supply in the form of meat had to be hunted. Then some kind of shelter had to be supplied for the stock, one of the earliest forms being a "barn" made by hay being piled upon and around crossed poles. In order to get ready to go through the winter every daylight hour had to be used, and the women did the chinking and daubing of the new houses--filling the cracks with clay. In their struggle to overcome nature their lot was made more difficult by the ever-present fear of an Indian raid, and soon after their arrival they were constantly in danger of losing their necessary live-stock to horse-thieves.¹

Many of the settlers placated the Indians by giving them chickens or trinkets and sometimes medicines, but the thieves could only be satisfied with driving off all of a man's live-stock. Until 1870 when the citizens dealt with the thieves

1. A. T. Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1431; and interviews with Mrs. Addie Bradlie, November 30, 1931, and T. P. Manion, February 27, 1932.

in their own way,¹ many families awoke some morning to find themselves almost poverty-stricken, for all of their horses, cows, and oxen, had been driven away in the night, and they were seldom found. Their claims were of little value to them without their stock, without which they could not even leave the country. Many of the farmers had all they possessed invested in their land and stock, and until they could afford to re-stock their farms many were forced to exchange labor for the use of a neighbors horses or oxen in order to plant their crops.²

To add to the early difficulties there were storms, drouths, floods, and locusts. One of the worst years for the first settlers was 1860. As described by Martin Vaught, one of the few settlers to arrive in 1857 and remain through all of the difficult period of early settlement,

The year 1860 passed beyond expression any I ever saw in Kansas. It was a year of unprecedented drouth. May, June, and July without a drop of rain. Every green thing withered; even the leaves of the trees turned yellow and then brown. The streams dried up, fish innumerable died and as the deep water holes dried away, they were pitched into wagons and hauled to the hogs. Great seams cracked in the earth. It was really dangerous to ride a pony at speed through the prairie. To add to our woes along in August came myriads of grasshoppers that literally hid the sun. Many settlers, under these distressing circumstances, coupled with the doubt as to

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1. See above, Chapter III. pp. 26-29.
 2. Interview with T. P. Manion, November 21, 1931,

El Dorado, Kansas.

what democracy (Buchanan's administration) meant to do regarding their homesteads, left the state never to return, This awful year gave Kansas a name that was a detriment to her for years afterwards.¹

However there were many of the settlers that did not want to leave if there was any possible way of staying, and there were others who were too poor to leave. Agents were sent east to the states to seek aid and it was quite generously granted. Quoting Mr. Vaught again we find that:

S. C. Pomeroy, afterwards United States Senator, was relief agent at Atchison and all supplies were shipped through him. Human hogs came to the front as usual on such occasions but generally relief was fairly distributed. Grain, flour and beans were shipped in heavy grain bags, which were afterwards utilized for clothing on which the lettering would show. Some times it would be "S. C. Pomeroy" on one leg, "Kansas Relief" on the other, and "Atchison" somewhere else. A pair of pants worn by a Mr. Bixler took the cake. He was both broad and tall, and on the broadest part of his pants in black letters was "Kansas Relief, S. C. Pomeroy, Atchison, Kansas."²

In 1861 young grasshoppers hatched out, but as it was so early in the spring and there was little for them to feed upon, they departed to the north, greatly to the relief of the farmers. But their relief was not for long, for the outbreak of the Civil War followed closely. This news caused more settlers to return to their home states, and many of the

1. Martin Vaught, Early recollections, in El Dorado Times, May 19, 1895. Also in Fisher, p. 30.

2. Ibid., Also in Fisher, p. 32.

men to enlist, thus leaving the small four year old settlement partially deserted.¹ According to Martin Vaught El Dorado had become such an unimportant place that the postoffice was kept at the farm of the post-master until after the war, and the new settlers began to arrive. When the new townsite was platted the post-office was moved to El Dorado. Mr. Vaught describes the towns of El Dorado and Chelsea as being two groups of deserted cabins, but the county records of commissioners meetings show that Jordon Mabe was voted a sum of twenty dollars for twelve days services in assessing the county. This was done on January 19, 1864, at which time the army needed all of the men that could be mustered.² Therefore it is possible that all of the houses of the townsites were not deserted.

Preston B. Plumb had issued many calls for volunteers from Kansas, but he discouraged the enlistment of men on the far frontiers because he said they were much more valuable to repel Indian attacks incited by "rebel" forces.³

All Indians were not unloyal to the Union however for in February, 1862, the citizens of the county went out to meet a large group of Cherokee Indians that had been driven

1. Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1432.

2. M. Vaught, Early Recollections, in El Dorado Times, May 19, 1895; Record of County Comm. Meetings, I. January 19, 1864.

3. M. Vaught, Early Recollections, in El Dorado Times May 19, 1895.

from their reservation by the "rebels", because of their loyalty to the Union. They were on the way to Lawrence to get food from their Indian agent and as they were without food and shelter, and the snow was a foot deep on the ground, they were suffering greatly. The settlers gave them six-hundred bushels of corn and several oxen for beef.¹

After the war many of the families returned to their first claims to rebuild their homes and re-stock their farms. But if anything life was more difficult than before the war, for in addition to the danger of having their property stolen by Indians and thieves, the pioneer found that much of the game had been needlessly killed, and the streams had not become re-stocked with such an abundant supply of fish since the drouth of 1860.²

The pioneer was often able to buy and hold his land, but it was very difficult to find a source of actual money income for even if a surplus of grain was raised it was hardly worth while to haul it seventy-five or more miles to a market, but a small amount of money was needed by practically everyone. One of the best sources of money to the early pioneer was trapping.

1. Ibid.

2. Interview with Mrs. Addie Bradlie, November 30, 1931, El Dorado, Kansas.

In those days buffalo and wolf hunting were sources of revenue; wolf pelts being worth from \$1.25 to \$2.00 each, and buffalo skins rating from \$3.00 to \$6.00. These furs had to be taken in winter and danger from storms and Indians made hunting no pleasant work.¹

Sometimes trinkets could be traded to the Indians for these skins, and the skins could then be sold for a profit. Vol. P. Mooney tells of such a trade made by himself and another young man in 1869. For one tin backed mirror the size of a dollar, a package of needles and a spool of heavy thread, he received one good buffalo robe, and his companion made a similar trade. But one could not always count upon making such a profit by trading, therefore the farmer to be sure of a small amount of money, did well to do some hunting and trapping for himself, even after the game became less plentiful.²

While the first comer had need for only a small amount of money, the settlers after 1867, found that more money was a necessity. Perhaps his greatest additional expense was tax. In 1859 the only tax was a poll tax of \$1.00 to be paid by every male citizen between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five, levied by the County Commissioners in August of that year. Although many of the citizens were away in 1864 there was need for a county fund and the commissioners in

1. M. Vaught, Early Recollections, in El Dorado Times, April 21, 1909.

2. Interviews with Vol. P. Mooney, November 30, 1931, and Mrs. Addie Bradlie, December 29, 1931.

their meeting of July 4 levied a tax of five mills on the dollar on all taxable property of the county, for a county tax. August 14, 1865, the county board levied a tax of ten mills for the county expenses, and by October 1, 1866 a still larger fund was necessary, and the board levied a fifteen mill tax. In 1867 there was a state, county and school tax levied with the total levy amounting to thirty-mills on the dollar on all taxable property.¹

The real estate valuation and the tax collected therefrom came principally from non-residents, who had located land warrants, or script, on certain lands, receiving patents therefore from the government and thus subjecting such lands to taxation. There were 29,700 acres of land assessed in Butler County for the year 1867. The heaviest taxpayer on real estate was a party by the name of A. M. Lawrence who owned at that time 21,100 acres of the 29,700 assessed. This land presumably cost him from twelve and one-half to twenty-five cents per acre. The party paying the largest amount of tax on personal property was G. T. Donaldson, who paid on a valuation of \$5,290. The total value of the real estate for the year was \$50,987 and the personal property \$60,728.90. The total tax levied for the year was \$2,997.88 of which \$45 was collected as a tax on dogs. The taxes were divided as follows: State tax, \$566; county tax \$1,724.60; school tax (teachers) \$416.81; buildings \$290.47 (Seven school districts received the benefit).²

By 1867 eastern people again became interested in Kansas and Nebraska. Many men came to Butler County at that time seeking a location for their future homes. The

1. Fisher, Biographical Sketches, p. 16; all facts checked with records of County Commissioners Meetings, the County Treasurer, and the County Superintendent of Schools.

2. Ibid., Also checked with the above records.

usual procedure was for the families to stay in some eastern Kansas town such as Lawrence or Emporia, while the men came on west and chose the "best" location. In 1867 a group of men originally from Macon Missouri and southern Iowa came to the Walnut, Whitewater, and Arkansas, river vallies, but they all decided that the banks of the Arkansas River were too low and too sandy, and came back to the Walnut and located. To them the numerous wood banked streams were much to be preferred.¹

This new interest in land was retarded for a short time however by the renewed hostility of Indians. The United States troops in their endeavor to drive back the Indians so that the frontiers would be more safe for the newly arriving settlers, burned several of their villages and made the situation worse instead of better.² Trade and travel all along the trails became more dangerous,² and it was almost impossible to get to the eastern Kansas towns to get such necessities as medicines, thread, needles and hardware.³ On the whole the year of 1867 was a period of watchful waiting, with many visible possibilities of new settlers and increasing business as soon as the Indian difficulties could be settled.

1. Interview with T. P. Manion, November 30, 1931, El Dorado, Kansas. Mr. Manions father was one of these men.

2. Anne E. Arnold, History of Kansas, p. 117.

3. Interviews with Mrs. Addie Bradlie, November 21, 1931, T. P. Manion, November 30, 1931, El Dorado, Kansas.

In February, 1867, the state legislature set aside two sections in each township for school purposes. The law provided that none of the land was to be sold for less than \$3.00 per acre, and as there was at that time, much land that could be purchased for less, the school lands were not in great demand, but on July 17, 1867, James R. Mead filed the first application in Butler County to purchase school lands, for which the appraisers asked \$3.00.¹ The forty acres that he wished to purchase adjoined his farm, and was good bottom land, which accounts for his willingness to pay the "high" price.²

An idea of the "housing situation" in this year can be gathered from the minutes of the County Commissioners Meetings for October. The court house was a new cabin and one of the best and largest, but as it was not always needed for county business it was decided to rent it to A. H. Marshall for \$8 per month: "He is to give possession when the same is needed for court or public business."³

In the same year several cabins were built on the old Hilderbrandt claim which soon became that part of the town-site north of Central Avenue. Henry Martin had opened a

1. Vol. P. Mooney, Butler County Kansas, p. 48.

2. Records of the County register of deeds.

3. Record of County Commissioners Meetings for October 12, 1867; R. H. Fisher, Biographical Sketches, p. 15.

store and Elias Main had built a saw mill. Soon after Ben King opened a small store, and Dr. Allen White¹ purchased a stock of goods and opened a drug store.² In quick succession other businesses were established, the Moorehead Brothers opening a store, and Sam Langdon opened what was referred to as a store, but it's principal stock was Log Cabin Bitters. The other asset of the latter establishment was a quarter of a mile race track on which there were almost daily horse races, and often the betting was more important than the racing.³

This small nucleus of buildings and business drew new business when more people commenced arriving in 1868. The prospects were so good that B. Frank Gordy platted one-hundred and forty acres, that now forms the part of El Dorado south of Central Avenue, and with three associates formed the El Dorado Town Company, selling the lots for \$10 each. D. M. Bronson opened a land office in which he was assisted by Dr. Kellogg, who divided his time between his profession and the new business. Soon a wagon shop, a blacksmith shop, harness shop, shoe shop, and a millinery and dressmaking shop which sold "ribbons, laces, flowers, feathers, silks, satins, velvets, etc." were opened for business. By 1869

1. The father of William Allen White, Emporia, Kansas.

2. M. Vaught, Recollections, El Dorado Times, April 21, 1909; R. H. Fisher, Biographical Sketches, p. 202; A. T. Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1433.

3. M. Vaught, Ibid.

El Dorado possessed a large one-room stone schoolhouse, and a two-story stone hotel, The El Dorado House, which was "furnished throughout" and meals were fifty cents.¹ The latter two buildings were the pride of the town and were pointed out to all prospective residents.²

At just the time when prospects had commenced to look so hopeful for the new county-seat, there was a severe cloudburst and flood, in June, 1869, and the rivers and smaller streams overflowed to the extent of doing much damage to the homes that had been so carefully built near the water. The Walnut River, because of the many branches draining into it, quickly became swollen and overflowed during the night, and the Johnson family, who was among the first arrivals in the county, was drowned. The flood was evidently quite severe at this point for their buildings were washed away.³

By this time accustomed to adversity, the settlers soon repaired the damage, and in many cases began anew. In spite of the many difficulties the county had gained a population of 3035 by the time the census was taken in 1870, and the town of El Dorado was inhabited by approximately 500 people.⁴

1. Andreas, p. 1431; El Dorado Times, March 4, 1870.

2. Interviews with Mrs. Bradlie and Mr. Manion, November 21, 1931. 3. Ibid.

4. Andreas, p. 1433.

All of the business and trade however, was not carried on in El Dorado, for there were as many as five country stores, and Chelsea, Augusta, and Douglass, as well as Meads Ranch, each possessed a number of shops and stores. Not a small part of the business of the county was that of milling. There were several saw mills and molasses mills, and numerous grist mills located on the various streams. All of the people in the county had their grain ground at these mills, and several of the mills, particularly the Turkey Creek Mill, drew customers from Newton, Wichita, and many other places.¹ One of the most unique of the early mills was a wind power grist mill owned by H. H. Wilcox of Clifford township in northern Butler County. It was much like a Dutch windmill and the thirty-six foot wheel was a great curiosity for many years, but it was destroyed by a strong wind in the early eighties and was never rebuilt.²

It was a regular occurrence for the pioneer to bring enough grain to a mill to furnish him with meal for several months, and sometimes a years supply was ground at one time. As a farmer ~~often~~ had to wait several days to have his grain ground he often brought his family along and they camped near the mill until the meal was ready to be taken

1. Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1433; and interview with T. P. Manion, November 30, 1931.

2. B. R. Leydig, Historical Reminiscences, pp. 13-14.

home. The charges for grinding were paid by a portion of the grain, ranging from thirty to fifty per cent. Later the millers traded ready ground meal for grain, thus enabling the customer to return the same day.¹

Perhaps one of the most unusual of the early "shops" or "industries" in the county was the first restaurant. The proprietor or chef was Bige Bemis whom could be found at almost any place where there were people that were likely to need food, roasting chickens over an open fire in the shade of a tree. It was sometimes wondered where he got his plentiful supply of chickens, but he seldom ran short and his customers could have all the chicken they could eat and a drink from his whiskey jug for fifty cents.²

Another of the first shops was that of John Houser, who established a blacksmith shop in Chelsea in 1869. He established his business by merely unpacking his limited number of tools in the shade of a tree and commenced work.³

Although many of the industries of the time were operated by the owners, there were a limited number of

1. Interview with T. P. Manion, November 30, 1931.

2. Martin Vaught, Recollections, El Dorado Times, April 21, 1909 .

3. Martin Vaught, Chelsea Township, Mooney, Butler County Kansas, p. 110.

wage earning and apprentice-ship positions. The first apprentice-ship papers were filed in probate court March 28, 1870, by Elisha Main indenturing his twelve-year old daughter to Edwin Cowles until her eighteenth birthday. Mr. Cowles was to care for, clothe her respectably, give her board in his family, and give her a good common school education.¹

Clothing was generally made at home but sometimes the women made garments for the numerous bachelors that were proving up claims, thus bringing in another small bit of money. One example of such sewing is buckskin gloves, for which the seamstress furnished the material and nearly one days work, all for twenty-five cents.²

For those adventurous men craving both wages and excitement there was stage-coach driving. The average wage for a freighter was seventy-five cents a day, and some stage-coachmen received as much as a dollar a day. After the towns had become established business centers, there were many such drivers needed, for

everything and everybody came in wagons. Wagons drawn cattle, oxen, or later by horses. The supplies for the by stores, the household goods of the settler who came from 'back east' "

and all of the finer finishing lumber and hardware, and the few luxuries such as organs, books, and factory made cloth, had to be hauled over the long, winding, unmarked

1. Records in probate court, and Fisher, p. 14.

2. Interview, Mrs. Bradlie, November 21, 1931.

and un-graded roads.¹

Although many of the towns of the early seventies did not have a railroad, few were without a newspaper. The first organ of this type in Butler County was the "Emigrants Guide", first published in El Dorado by Bronson and Salee in 1869 and printed in Emporia. Mr. Bronson published the paper as an advertisement for his real estate business, and it "crowed" for Butler County and El Dorado "in a very lusty fashion."² This paper soon failed, but T. Benton Murdock arrived in El Dorado and on March 4, 1870 he printed and published the first issue of the Walnut Valley Times.³

By 1872 a bank was established by Betts and Frazier, and a hardware store was added to the already long list of firms, and many lawyers and doctors arrived as well as additional merchants and tradesmen. However the growth of the county did not depend upon the new business establishments alone, for few if any of these enterprises and professions could have prospered if it had not been for the rapidly increasing number of settlers. One of the old settlers speaks of the great number of people arriving in 1870, '71, '72, and '73 as the "great Hegira."⁴

1. Vol. P. Mooney, Butler County Kansas, p. 86.

2. Andreas, History of Kansas, p. 1432, supported by Vol. P. Mooney, and Mrs. Bradlie

3. Now in the files of the El Dorado Times.

4. B. R. Leydig, Historical Reminiscences, p. 2.

By 1871 the people of the county began to feel more safe. The danger of Indian raids had greatly decreased and the law enforcement officials had become much more efficient, for it was no longer safe nor profitable to aid the horse-thieves, due to the great activity of the several vigilance committees. Wagon, stage-coach, and mail routes had become well established, and due to legal settlement of the county-seat location, owners of the various enterprises were more willing to invest their capital in the new town. In Butler County it appears that doctors were more willing to come to a new community than were lawyers, but upon the establishment of business organizations and the purchase and settlement of much new land a great number of lawyers soon came. Some of them came with the intention of rapidly making their fortunes and leaving, while others came to stay and grow up with the country. Many young lawyers came to El Dorado just out of law school, two of the most prominent being Judge A. L. L. Hamilton, and Judge W. P. Campbell, who later moved to Wichita. Judge Campbell proved to be an ideal frontier judge and was nicknamed "Tiger Bill", probably because he was not afraid to reprimand a jury and on several occasions when such reprimands were resented, he proved to be ready to back up his

statements with his fists.¹

The early law suits were quite simple compared with those of today and the fees were small. Most of the lawyers were more able to collect their bills than were the doctors, but many of the fees were collected in the form of produce. It was not unusual for a farmer to trade a pig or a few chickens for the successful defense of a claim right, or the drawing up of a simple contract or other legal paper.²

All of the new business growth and the increase of capital, however, did not prevent a severe tornado, destroying in a few minutes what had taken years to build, on the afternoon of June 22, 1871. The property not directly destroyed by the severe wind was "finished off" by the accompanying hail and rain. The total loss was estimated at not less than \$150,000.00, but every-one immediately commenced rebuilding and traces of the destruction were practically gone by the next June.³

1. T. A. Kramer, Tiger Bill, An Intelligent Jury, A Defendant Who Lied, Vol. P. Mooney,^{ed.} Butler County Kansas, pp.361-2.

2. Interviews with Judge Hamilton, December 29, 1931, Judge Mooney, November 30, 1931, Mrs. Alvah Sheldon, March 19, 1932, and B. R. Leydig, Attorney, March 19, 1932, El Dorado Kansas. 3. Wilder, Annals of Kansas, p. 549.

News of the tornado soon reached the eastern states and many people that had been contemplating coming to Kansas paused to re-consider, but only for a short time. The possibility of gaining one-hundred and sixty acres of land was a great temptation that overcame practically all fears and the spring of 1872 brought a new group of settlers. However, their new cabins had scarcely been built in time to be destroyed by the great prairie fire that came October 20, 1872.¹ The wind was so strong that the fire was not even stopped by the rivers and creeks. The grass and timber was very dry and the fire traveled so quickly that little could be done to stop it. Mrs. Alvah Sheldon, then a girl of sixteen, in telling of her experiences in this greatest of prairie fires says, that her father sent her with her sister to keep the horses on the small patch of plowed ground. While he, with her brother and cousin took old clothes and soaked them in the household water barrels and managed to fight the fire in the short grass around the house. The men were almost suffocated, but they were able to save the shack and wagon. The girls, by lying face down on the ground as much as possible, managed to keep from breathing too much smoke. Their simple barn, which was made

1. Interview with B. R. Leydig, March 19, 1932, El Dorado, Kansas. Mr. Leydig, then a boy of ten, came in this group with his parents.

of hay, was destroyed, but they were much more fortunate than many of the claim holders, for there were many cabins and wagons, and much live stock that were not saved.¹

This was perhaps the most destructive of the prairie fires, but there were many others, and for several years they were almost a yearly occurrence. Between the floods, tornadoes, and fires many families had to rebuild their cabins as often as four times in a period of five or six years.² The fires were very serious, for the people were only able to live by the results of their labor, and when a whole years work was completely destroyed they could not remain through the winter. As their neighbors were often in the same plight they could not help each other, and the only thing for them to do was to go east and try to find work to keep them until the spring planting.³

In spite of the many mis-fortunes from the time of the first arrivals in 1857, the county was practically all settled by 1873, with the exception of the grazing district bordering the Flint Hills. Much land had been brought under cultivation and the settlers had become practically self-

1. Mrs. Alvah Sheldon, Letters to My Grandchildren, in El Dorado Times, May 9, 1926; interview with Mrs. Sheldon March 19, 1932, El Dorado, Kansas.

2. Interview with T. P. Manion, November 29, 1931,
El Dorado, Kansas.

3. French, Hist. of Emporia and Lyon County, p. 198.

supporting, for they were becoming fairly well supplied with cows, hogs, and chickens.¹

It would almost appear that each time the citizens gained a larger advantage over nature, the worse was the following disaster, for a disaster always seemed to come after each gain in the early period of settlement. The year of 1873 was on the whole, considered as a good year, and the prospects for 1874 appeared to be much better, but prospective prosperity was not to be, for the grasshoppers, more properly known as locusts, descended upon Kansas, and Butler County received it's full share. They arrived in full force August 7, 1874, and all of the settlers readily agree that everything that was not under cover was completely destroyed, even harness leather.²

The crop prospects for both wheat and corn were excellent, but the high hopes of the settlers were blasted in but a few minutes by the great mass of locusts from the northwest. There had been other locust plagues, but none had ever been so bad as in the summer of 1874. Tons of them were killed but there was no visible decrease in the number; in fact their numbers were so great that the

1. Interview with B. R. Leydig, March 19, 1932, El Dorado, Kansas.

2. W. H. Douglass, Pioneer Days, Butler County Kansas ed. Vol. P. Mooney, p. 375; interviews with V. P. Mooney, T. F. Manion, B. R. Leydig, Judge Hamilton, Mrs. Sheldon.

superstitious believed the great insect plagues predicted in the Bible had arrived.

Roads became so slippery that horses could scarcely walk, and the railroad tracks became so slick that the trains had to stop running. There are numerous stories that are told about the grasshoppers, but some of them have become legends that have changed and developed with each telling. But there is little doubt that they were very destructive, and that many families had to receive outside help.

The state relief committee reported that one-ninth of the population of Butler County had to have food to get through the winter, and clothing was given to one-hundred and ninety. Grain for planting was issued to many more, and in 1875 a comparatively good crop was produced.¹

To many of the citizens of the County, Grasshopper Year is the focal date from which all events are located. The people that have the most legitimate claim to the title of "old settler" are those that went through the trials of that year, for those that arrived before 1874 and remained were properly "initiated" into pioneer life.²

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

CHAPTER V.

LIVE STOCK AND AGRICULTURE

Several of the the new arrivals that came to Butler County immediately following the war, came for the express purpose of going into the cattle business on a large scale, and with the intention of owning a small amount of land, but letting the cattle graze upon the open range. Those that settled in the river and creek vallies were soon disappointed, for with the arrival of the homesteaders, their free pasturage was gone. The difficulty was legally settled by the adoption of the herd law, but the two fact~~i~~ions remained hostile for some time. However it finally developed that the two interests were to unite and enrich each other.¹

Butler County primarily is an agricultural county, raising many of the common crops and the more hardy fruit trees, but the most profitable pursuit has proved to be the raising of live stock, largely because of the vast amount of fine grass land. The raising of crops and stock have aided many^{of} the citizens in making very large sums of

1. A. T. Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1432; interview with T. P. Manion, November 30, 1931, and Februrary 27, 1932, El Dorado, Kansas.

money, several of them becoming millionaires, but there were few that were not helped at least in a small way.¹

The other industries that arose were the result of necessity, with but the one exception of stone quarries.² The grist and flour mills located along the different streams drew much business to the county in the early period, but with the coming of the railroads their business very noticeably decreased. In 1875 El Dorado could boast a tannery, cheese factory, furniture factory, and a woolen mill, which were quite easily operated because of the abundant supply of timber,³ but they were only temporary industries. As soon as the towns became linked with the commercial centers by railroads, the local industries had to give way to more cheaply manufactured goods, and the people became more occupied with the occupations of farming and the raising of live stock.⁴

At a very early date the Butler County Citizens became interested in improving their homes and farms, and

1. Ibid.; Cyclopedia of Kansas History, Blackmar, ed. p. 261.

2. Butler County Stone was and still is shipped to many nearby towns. There are several quarries.

3. Chas. R. Tuttle, History of Kansas, p. 219.

4. Interviews with Vol. P. Mooney, and T. P. Manion, February 27, 1932.

the quality of their crops and live stock. Several of the farmers came from Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and had possessed fine stock farms in their home states. They were accustomed to pure bred stock and desired to continue the raising of it in their new homes.¹ These farmers furnished inspiration to their neighbors, and as a result many people became interested in thoroughbred stock, or at least in better grades.²

The first evidence of a desire for betterment was the organization of county fairs, the first one being held at Towanda in 1871. This one was a fair in name only, for the only attraction was the horse races. Mrs. Sheldon says that her father drove the winning horse whose name was "Champion", but he was not really a fast horse for his gait was only about 2:40, but it was the best in the county. He must have been considered a very valuable horse by someone for she says her father afterward traded the horse for a quarter section of land, just two miles from Douglas-"even up!"³

1. Mrs. Sheldon says that her father had a fine stock farm in Ohio, and was very much interested in following the same pursuit in the new state. Interview March 19, 1932.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.; Mrs. Alvah Sheldon, Letters to My Grandchildren, in El Dorado Times, May 2, 1926.

The second county fair was held a year later in Douglass and there were many more races, one of which was a ladies riding contest, Mrs. Shelden winning the second prize of ten dollars. But they also had stables in which the horses were kept and a small building for exhibits of agricultural products and fine arts, which largely consisted of a few personal treasures and a small number of pieces of needle work. This fair was the forerunner of the long series of fairs that followed, each one larger and more varied in interests than the preceding one.²

The fairs and organizations really did much to promote a desire for improvement and provided an agency for learning the best methods of production, as well as to furnish social activities. But many of the first comers came from a country in which corn had been the principal crop for many years, and they continued to raise corn in Butler County for many years. As there was a large amount of bottom land in the county, the settlers thought the fertility of the soil would probably last forever, and they were little interested in unfamiliar crops, therefore they

1. Ibid. Note: The county fairs have been called Kaffir Korn Karnivals since 1911, and it is truly a carnival in which everyone takes part for three days. See Fisher, Biographical Sketches, pp. 229-30 for detailed account.

2. Ibid.

continued to raise corn until their yields began to very noticeably decrease.

The solving of the above problem was largely brought about by ^{the} Butler County Horticultural and Agricultural Society which had been organized in March 1872. This society held all day meetings once each month at which the people gathered for a big picnic dinner. Games were played and many papers were read on subjects of interest to the farmers, and they were sometimes fortunate in having speakers from afar. One of the first problems the society took up was the introduction of proper fruit trees into the county. Many of the people had come from homes "back East" and were accustomed to fruit, vegetables, dairy products, trees, shrubs, and flowers, and they knew what they wanted, but much experimenting had to be done to find fruit trees and bushes that would grow in their soil. Much money was spent and many orchards were planted, but few of them really paid, for many varieties were only acclimated to the localities from whence they came. Many of these trees and shrubs did not live, and others grew but would not bear fruit.¹

By experience, and the spending of much money in purchasing trees and shrubs that "grew back home" the pioneers

1. Cyclopedia of Kansas History, Blackmar, ed. p. 262; interviews with Mrs. Bradlie, Mrs. Sheldon, Vol. P. Mooney, T. P. Manion, and A. L. L. Hamilton.

of the County found that there were many hardy varieties that would both grow and bear fruit, and it was commonly agreed upon by the members of the society and others that each farm, to be independent and have fruit the year around should have the following in the home orchard and garden:

Two Red June, two Early Harvest, two Maiden Blush, two Grimes Golden, five Jonathan and five Winesay apple trees; eight Early Richmond, two English Morella and two Montmorency cherry trees; five Champion and five Elberta peach trees; six Kiefer, three Duchess and three Seckle pear trees; 200 Kittiteny blackberry plants; 200 Kansas raspberry plants; 200 Dunlap and 200 Progressive strawberry plants; twenty-five Houten gooseberry plants; twelve Concord and six Worden grape vines; 100 asparagus plants; twenty-five rhubarb plants and a bed of horse-radish.

Such a garden and orchard produced both early and late varieties, and the above plants were found suitable for both upland and bottom land farms, and were the most resistant to disease. Few of the large orchards planted for commercial purposes, proved to be financial successes, and many of the home orchards, although successful for many years, were later practically destroyed because of the entrance of new diseases into that locality.¹

Soon after fruit trees were introduced the people became interested in beautifying their homes and forming windbreaks, by and they planted hedges, shade trees, shrubs and flowers. There were many nursery salesmen traveling through

1. Vol. P. Mooney, Butler County Kansas, p. 278, supported by T. P. Manion, Mrs. Sheldon and Mrs. Bradlie.

the country in the early eighties selling trees, shrubs, and hedge, and many of the people of the county purchased them. But these purchases often times proved to be a failure, for as with the fruit trees, it was found that only acclimated varieties would grow, but the homes eventually became more beautiful.¹

Farm crops were also taken up by the society as the corn continued to prove less successful than in the regular corn states. Alfalfa had been introduced into the county by early improvers in a very small way at an early date, but it did not become popular until the need of a new crop was pretty generally felt. Winter wheat was also introduced after it had been found successful in Kansas. But it did not prove to be the most profitable crop for the county. Kaffir Corn was introduced into the United States from Africa in 1885, and became popular in the west very soon after. This was the crop that gave Butler County her place in the agricultural sun, for it was more of a dry weather crop than corn, and more adaptable to the soil than wheat.²

As the live stock industry became very large in the county the feed crops became more valuable. The prices for crops varied greatly in the seventies. Corn might be worth from ten to fifteen cents per bushel when it was shelled

1. Ibid.; Cyclopedia of Kansas History, p. 262-3.

2. Ibid.

and by spring it was often worth as much as fifty cents per bushel, depending largely upon outside markets. In the eighties this same price fluctuation continued in the large markets, but the rapid growth of the cattle industry changed this unstable state for the Butler County farmer. For the Texas cattlemen had discovered the Flint Hills grazing region, and Butler County was included in that section.¹

The Texas cattlemen had driven their cattle north and east to be shipped for fifteen or twenty years, and one of the best shipping localities discovered was the eastern half of Kansas, beginning with the late sixties. In this section of the country were their nearest railroads, and there was a good supply of grass on which to feed the cattle while awaiting purchase and shipment. But in 1871 more cattle were driven north than ever before which resulted in a glutted market. Only about one-half of the cattle were purchased, and the remainder were wintered at a great loss on the Kansas plains. In 1873 matters were made much worse by the banking firm of Jay Cooke and Company closing its doors--for this company had made many loans to cattlemen--which started the first panic known to the range cattle industry.²

1. Mooney, Butler County Kansas, pp. 266-7; Webb, The Great Plains, p. 230.

2. Webb, p. 230-1

In the fall of 1872 many cattle were driven up from Texas and sold to many of the settlers in Kansas, and a number of them were purchased by the farmers of Butler County. But the winter of 1872-73 was very severe, "practically all of these cattle died and left the owners with some experience and many hides." ¹ Thus the first attempt to make the cattle industry a success in the county was a failure.

But there were many changes taking place on the range that were to prove beneficial to the future development of the industry. Grain was being produced in large enough quantities to supply food for the fattening of cattle, and as the number of cattle increased the demand for grain also became greater. In 1876 the cattle industry showed signs of recovery. The cattlemen had adjusted themselves to the changing conditions, and looking about them, they discovered places to fatten their cattle, and were thus able to meet the demand for fat beef. ²

One of the best of these feeding grounds discovered was the Flint Hills region. According to several of the Butler County cattlemen, the grass has much better fattening qualities than the Texas grass. ³ The Texans drove their cattle north to be fattened, and the ranchers of Butler County re-

1. Mooney, Butler County Kansas, p. 273.

2. Webb, The Great Plains, pp. 230-2.

3. T. F. Manion, B. R. Leydig, and Mrs. Bradlie.

ceived from \$6.00 to \$10.00 per head for the season. Many of the ranchers also supplemented the grass feeding with grain and cotton-seed cake feeding. Soon there were many cattlemen in the county that bought cattle of their own and fed them, and this new demand required more feed than could be produced in the county. Farmers had previously had to sell their grain for market price less the freight rates, but since the feeders needed more than was produced in the County, feed was shipped in, and as a result the farmers got the market price plus the cost of shipping in, which allowed many farmers to clear up their debts and buy a few cattle of their own.¹

When several of the cattlemen became prosperous they could afford to deal in thoroughbred stock. There were farms that specialized in Ayershire, Brown Swiss, Red Polled, Jersey, and Holstein breeds, but the largest and by far the best known of all of these farms is the Hereford farm, known as "HazeFord Place," and owned by Robert H. Hazlett. His farm is so well known that buyers have come from South America, the Hawaiian Islands, and many other distant places as well as from near-by states, for the purpose of getting thoroughbred Herefords.²

1. Ibid.; Mooney, Butler County Kansas p. 274.

2. Ibid.

The cattle industry in all of its phases was the most profitable in raising the general wealth of the county, until the discovery of oil in 1915, but where the oil enriched only a limited number, cattle helped practically everyone.

The second most important live stock in the county was developed in the eighties and nineties when several men took up the raising of fine horses. There were several farms for the purpose of breeding and training race horses, but the horse farm that was the most noted was the one started by J. C. Robinson on the Whitewater Falls Ranch, four miles north of Towanda. Mr. Robinson specialized in the raising of draft horses, the most famous breed of which are Percherons, and he brought his original stock from France, the home of the Percherons. The most famous of his imported horses was "Casino" who won the grand prize at the National livestock show in France. After being brought to America by Mr. Robinson, "Casino" won one-hundred and fifteen first and sweepstake prizes. Mr. Robinsons farm was well known nationally and internationally among stockmen, as the Hereford farm of R. H. Hazelett.¹

As the farmers and stockmen of the County prospered

1. Ibid.

the people in the towns prospered. A number of new stores, newspapers, and banks, were established in both the large and small towns, thus enabling those citizens to better their surroundings, not only by building better homes, but by building public buildings such as churches and schools. In El Dorado a library, city building, and a new county court-house were erected. The latter is of particular interest because the county commissioners did not have to issue bonds to build it.¹

Thus we find that the people of the County have been able to surmount the greatest difficulties of nature and finance and emerge prosperously.

1. Ibid.; Mooney, pp.59-61.

CHAPTER VI

PIONEER LIFE

The social background of the Butler County pioneer is much the same as that of other communities of the Middle West. The inhabitants were often from the farming communities of the states farther east, and a great many of them were quite young, often newlyweds! These young people could seldom find cheap land in their home communities, therefore they came west where a small sum of money would buy a fair sized farm, stock it, and set the young people up in housekeeping.

Their usual method of arrival was to come as far west as Kansas City or Lawrence or later to the very new town of Emporia, by themselves or in small groups. At these places they waited until they found where they were to continue, and found others going in the same direction. People of all types, nationalities, religious faiths, political parties, states of the union, and social classes, gathered at the various central points and banded together for protection in going into the new and unknown territory, wherever it might be.

1. William Allen White, The "Quilting Bee" Crowd, Vol. P. Mooney, ed., Butler County Kansas, p. 330

Social barriers that would have been carefully observed in an older community were as easily forgotten in the new. But in spite of the general homogeneity of the group, there were those few that were regarded as unusual and amusing by all, and well there might be for there were some very unusual people from all parts of the world, that came to the new country in search of adventure and wealth.

In August 1857 there was a colony gathering at Emporia preparing to go into the unknown regions farther west, without being quite sure just where they were going. While preparing to go on west two very unusual and amusing characters arrived in the camp, at least they were unusual in the light of their standards. Martin Vaught, one of the colonists, gives a very colorful description of the two men. One of the two was largely responsible for getting the camp at Emporia to go the Walnut Valley. He was one I. N. Barton, a college professor and civil engineer from Maine who came into camp with a

long swinging stride, a rifle on his shoulder, a large pack on his back, carrying his boots while his feet were unshod, his hat rimless, and clothing in tatters, a man who had been on an extended tramp. His hair was light, his eyes blue and bright and contrasting strikingly with his sun-tanned skin

He had come to Kansas for his health and he had certainly found found it by exploring every stream south of the Neosho River and as far west as Cow Creek which is west of the present city of Wichita.

His description of the Walnut and Whitewater Valleys and his prediction that in and near them was the garden spot of Kansas won us and we unanimously agreed to go with him and see them.

Professor Bartons advice was followed, and the people upon arrival found that he had not exaggerated, but this did not alter the fact that he was "different", for he was regarded, by both old and young, as a "curious" person. Professor Barton was evidently an adventurous and restless spirit, for he moved on to explore the country west of the Cow Creek, after he had guided the small colony to Chelsea.¹

The other "unusual character" that joined the colony at Emporia, however, did remain, and perhaps it was well that he did, for he was one of the chief causes for amusement in and near Butler County for many years. He was none less than Prince Gorum Davis Morton, who came into camp at Emporia possessing one long-tailed coat, a fine cane, a small pack of clothing and one wooden-leg, and was from that time on called "Peg-Leg". Mr. Vaught says that "Peg-Leg" Morton was from Boston, "which to him was the hub of the solar and all other systems;" for he talked continually of Boston, so much that his associates used

1. Martin Vaught, Early Recollections, in El Dorado Times, May 19, 1895; interview with Mrs. Addie Bradlie November 21, 1931.

"Boston" as a byword. But in spite of his idiosyncracys, or possibly because of them, he was accepted, for his unusual characteristics were effaced by his singing ability. He had a beautiful voice and an apparently limitless supply of songs, and he cheered and enlivened the group both on the way from Emporia and after it's arrival at Chelsea, with his singing, that is

whenever not engaged in relating his adventures, the like of which never were on land or sea. He had sung to the elite of the earth, even to the crowned heads of Europe as far back as Mary Queen of the Scots. We kept tab on him and figured up by his romancing that he was not under four hundred years old; he only claimed to be thirty five.

But he was an excellent story teller and generally had a good crowd of listeners, even though they knew he was romancing. It was pretty generally believed that he had told the stories so many times that he believed them.

"Peg-Leg" seldom missed a public gathering and was in the midst of all controversies. In fact it was Morton that named Chelsea. At first he insisted upon naming the town Boston, or New Boston, but he compromised with the others upon Chelsea which was a town near Boston.¹

If anyone could get a joke on Peg-Leg it was worth any amount of effort, and if any near tragedy could be turned into such a joke the danger was speedily forgotten.

1. Ibid.

One such occasion as this was at the time of one of the worst Indian scares, when everyone in Chelsea and the surrounding country had corraled their stock in their circle of wagons, barricaded the cabins, organized their defense, and quieted down for the night, with "Peg-Leg" Morton as one of the pickets on duty. Near dawn when Indians usually attacked, he heard the whiz of arrows coming from the river, and breaking from one of the houses on a run, he excitedly fired his gun and began yelling "Indians" at the top of his voice. After a near riot on the part of the fear stricken women and children and the fighting men it was finally discovered that the "arrows" were goshawks gathering their food as they flew, often hitting the walls of the houses. The Indians did not come and "Peg-Leg" never heard the last of this scare, although they had many occasions to be really frightened.¹

No social gathering was considered quite complete without "Peg-Leg", for singing was one of the chief diversions and there was, at this early date, no one like him for a leader and teacher. He even composed his own

1. Ibid.

songs, which by many were considered the best ones for the "sings".¹ During the war he was one of the commanders of the county defense unit, and after the war, when people again took interest in social life, Mr. Morton went around to the different school houses and cabins of the settlers and conducted singing schools.²

Having a common interest seemed to be a great unifying force for the people that first came to El Dorado, Chelsea, and their surrounding settlements, for by the account of several of the remaining people of that early day, there was no person so poor, foreign, or far away, that almost any-one would not make a brave attempt to reach him in a time of serious illness or trouble. And people were quite willing to lend their few possessions and their time. Feuds between the opposing factions seldom prevented them from helping each other if the difficulty was really serious.³

According to a rumor that seems to be quite common, there was one pioneer that possessed the luxury of a bacon rind during the "grasshopper year", and upon several occasions loaned it to several of his neighbors for the

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.; Andreas, The State of Kansas, p. 1432.

3. Interviews with Vol. P. Mooney, and Mrs. Addie Bradlie, November 21, 1931, El Dorado, Kansas.

purpose of greasing the pan-cake griddle.¹

To the modern Butler County citizen such a trivial possession as a bacon rind , would probably not be considered as of any value, but to his father or grandfather it was a luxury. Food, shelter, clothing, and protection from hostile people, were his first problems. The first comers in 1857 brought a small supply of the first necessities with them, but the first thing they did was to plant corn which was to supply them with their "bread-stuff" for the coming winter. They had drawn their wagons up in a circle so as to be ready to protect themselves in case the Indians should attack, and in this position the wagons remained, during the night, until their cabins were built. The problem of clothing did not generally prove to be so large to pioneers during their first year of residence, but it became a difficult problem when their supply began to wear out.

Anything that had to be purchased was a problem, for outside of the wolf pelts and buffalo hides and tallow, that could only be captured with much danger and effort, there was little that the pioneer could trade for necessities, for lack of transportation facilities kept him from marketing his products in any great amount. To make up

1. Ibid.

for the lack of "necessities", to which he was accustomed in his eastern home, he often became an "inventor".

Many examples of the inventive genius of the pioneer are found among the early settlers of Butler County

When he arrived he found a few articles of food in abundance, but if he had lived only upon what he found with what corn he could raise, he would have had a very tiresome diet. There was plenty of meat in the form of buffalo, antelope, small animals of the woods, birds, and fish. And later there was beef if he was so extravagant as to eat something he could drive to market and sell. But there was practically no milk, butter, and cream, for the early cattle were wild Texas cattle and could not be milked with safety, even if they could be captured. The settler also found acorns and Walnuts in abundance along the streams, but although wild berries were plentiful in the neighboring county of Greenwood¹ there were few such desirable fruits along the streams in Butler County.²

Corn was produced by the pioneer, and from cornmeal practically all of the bread was made. Many families lived for years without even seeing white flour. Sugar

1. See map, p. 17A.

2. Vol. P. Mooney, Butler County Kansas, p. 275.

was a luxury that was possessed only by the more prosperous, for since it had to be hauled in by wagon, it was very expensive. This lack was in part offset, for soon each farmer raised a small patch of cane from which molasses was made at the various molasses mills along the Walnut. From these simple ingredients many combinations were made, but in the "bad years" just plain molasses, corn-bread, and dried buffalo meat almost assumed the position of being a luxury.

Butter and other spreads were probably the most missed of all the foodstuffs, and there were many attempts to make up for this lack, one of the most successful being pumpkin butter. The pumpkin was cooked and mashed and mixed with molasses, and was then spread on corn-bread. This combination eaten with buffalo meat and burnt cereal of crust coffee, completed the average meal of the pioneer until he was able to better his conditions by possessing gardens and fruit trees.¹

The buffalo meat was brought in only by going on hunts that lasted several days, therefore a large supply had to be preserved to last between hunts. There was at that time no means of canning the meat, therefore it had to be preserved by drying. It was prepared by cutting in

1. See above, Chapter V. pp. 68-9

long strips, dipped in a strong solution of boiling salt-water for a few minutes, and hung up to dry.

Coffee and tea were also greatly missed and the most realistic substitute found was cereal "coffee", which was prepared by parching or burning the grain and the bread crusts that remained from the meals. It at least looked like coffee, and many claimed that it slightly resembled coffee in taste. However, when the wagon trains became better established in the early seventies, the store keepers were able to procure green coffee, ~~for~~ which they were able to sell for thirty-cents per pound.

Material from which pies could be made was scarce, and a dried apple pie was the luxury of luxuries. Mince meat was often made from rabbit or squirrel meat, and green tomatoes. Vinegar pies took the place of lemon pies, and "mock-apple" pies were made by flaking ordinary soda crackers, adding molasses and water well flavored with lemon extract or tartaric acid. When gardens became common, and before the fruit trees were bearing, pies were often made from green or ripe tomatoes.¹

The first cabins consisted of one room, and were often built with one side open to the weather, but after

1. See above, Chap. V. pp. 68-9; interviews with Mrs. Sheldon, Mrs. Bradlie, Vol. P. Mooney, A. L. L. Hamilton, B. R. Leydig, and T. P. Manion, El Dorado, Kansas.

the first winter or two, it was found that it was necessary to have all four sides inclosed, dirt floors however, were common for several years. Bed covers were often buffalo hides, and many families did not possess sheets or blankets for a number of years. The beds were either bunks fastened to the sides of the walls and arranged in tiers, or in the attic on the floor. The first furniture was very simple and made from rough boards, or if possible from the more desirable boxes.¹ But a furniture factory was established in El Dorado in the seventies, and those that could afford such a luxury, had chairs, tables, and beds made to order.²

Clothing was a very difficult problem, and the smallest piece of cloth, or the plainest garment was carefully conserved, particularly in the fifties and sixties. Mrs. Bradlie says that each person was lucky if he had two garments and that included his Sunday clothes. In her description of the famous Fourth-of-July celebration of 1868, she says that at that time she was ten years old and spoke a "piece", but was attired in her "other" linsey-woolsey dress, and was bare-footed. Clothing for the men was also made at home, and was generally made from grain sacks or heavy

1. See above, Chapter II, p. 20.

2. Interviews with Mrs. Sheldon, Mrs. Bradlie, Vol. P. Mooney, B. R. Leydig, and T. P. Manion, El Dorado, Kansas.

drill. In the seventies it became easier to get manufactured cloth such as calico and jean, and in the late seventies a limited number of silks could be purchased in several of the El Dorado shops and stores, but only a limited number of people were financially able to buy them. Mrs. Bradlie says that the finest luxury a woman could wish for in the early days was a black silk dress; and there were only a limited number of women who could possess one until the more prosperous period of the eighties.¹

It is little wonder that the early pioneer did not prosper, for in addition to all of his adversity, he did not have fair prices. His purchases were so far out of line with his receipts, and the prices fluctuated greatly from year to year, thus making it necessary to deny himself everything but the most simple food and shelter until he could become more sure of his position. In 1860 the purchaser had to pay thirty-five cents per pound for bacon, but in 1872 that purchaser could only procure one-dollar and seventy-five cents per hundred for dressed hog in El Dorado. It is also easy to understand why the pioneer and his children went barefooted, for he received approximately one-dollar for his hides and had to pay from eight to ten dollars

1. Interview with Mrs. Bradlie, November 30, 1931, and approved by Mrs. Sheldon. March 19, 1932.

a pair, for each pair of shoes he had made.¹

If there was a chance to make money by buying cattle or introducing a new crop, the farmer of the sixties could seldom do so because of the high rate of interest on borrowed money. The first recorded mortgage in the county was given by Dr. Lewellyn in 1860, for which he received a loan of one-hundred and ninety dollars, giving as security a quarter-section of land. Five years later he paid the loan back with three-hundred and forty dollars. In the seventies the customary rate of interest was five per cent a month.²

Although food, shelter, clothing, protection from enemies, and money, were difficult problems that each pioneer had to meet, illness was perhaps the time when early pioneers were the most helpless. There were no doctors in Butler County until 1868,³ thus making a period of eleven years when nature and home remedies held sway. To most all newcomers the climate was very different than what they were accustomed, and scarcely anyone escaped an attack of the ague sometime in the first year of his residence. For many people, several years were re-

1. Vol. P. Mooney, Butler County Kansas, p. 127.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

3. The Doctor Lewellen referred to at various times in this work was not a doctor.

quired to become acclimated. The ague was a combination of chills and a high fever, and came upon people without warning at irregular intervals. The nearest doctor was Dr. Thomas Armor, at Emporia, and ague sufferers all along the Walnut Valley purchased his ague pills, for which he became quite famous.¹

In Butler County there was a man by the name of Thompson who seemed to possess a "talent" for concocting remedies. His most popular and lucrative discovery was that of a weed, which became known as "Thompsons Ague Weed", from which he brewed ague "medicine", and according to several of the early pioneers there was scarcely a pioneer shelf in Butler County that was not at sometime, graced by a bottle of "Thompsons Ague Medicine."²

One of the most feared epidemics in the county was a Cholera epidemic in that part of the sixties immediately following the Civil War. Many Indians and about a dozen settlers in Butler County died, including one of the clerks in James R. Meads household at Meads Ranch. It is thought that this epidemic was brought by a group of soldiers stationed at the Wichita Village.³

Laura M. French,

1. History of Emporia, and Lyon County, p. 16.

2. Interviews with Mrs. Addie Bradlie, and T. P. Manion, November, 30, 1931, and Judge A. L. L. Hamilton, December 29, 1931.

3. James R. Mead, Address before Kansas State Historical Society, Dec. 6, 1907, Kansas Hist. Collection, X. p.

In the period of growth following the war several doctors came west and bought lands or proved up claims in Butler County and lived upon them much the same as the other farmers, doing their "doctoring" on the side. When making calls these early doctors rode ponys as there were no buggies at this time in the community. Almost any doctor was glad to ride ten or twelve miles at night for a fee of three dollars, and less distant calls were much less.¹

But as the population of the county increased and the organization of the county and it's institutions improved life became less difficult. Interest in improvement was aroused and the more people that arrived the greater was the possibility of attracting railroad interests. The Flint Hills in the eastern part of the county and beyond are very steep, and the railroad companies hesitated in building their roads through the hills when branch lines could be made to enter the county from the north, south, or west, but Butler County citizens refused to accept a "bob-tail road", and as a result they received no road of any kind until 1877 and it was only the El Dorado and Walnut Valley branch of the Santa Fe entering the county from the north. Another road was built through the

1. Interview with T. P. Manion, December 29, 1931, Vol. P. Mooney, November 30, 1931, El Dorado, Kansas.

county from east to west in 1879 that was later to be included in the Missouri Pacific System, soon to be followed by the Frisco Railway running east and west, and another branch line of the Santa Fe running from north to south.¹

The growth in population stimulated not only business interests and railroads but the social life of the county. Religious and educational interests were obvious with the first settlers, but because of the necessary struggle for the prime requisites of life, and the great shortage of money, they could do little about establishing the institutions with which they were familiar, and greatly desired.

1. Mooney, Butler County Kansas, p. 93.

CHAPTER VII.

RELIGION

With almost any new community one of the first signs of development is the interest taken in religious services, there seemed to be a number of ministers with different degrees of ability following closely after the first arrivals.

It is pretty generally conceded that the Reverend Mr. Morse, a Congregational minister held the first religious services in Butler County, in the spring of 1858 at Chelsea. He came to town and visited the homes of the settlers announcing a meeting to be held in Lewellyn's grove. Mr. Morse continued his visits for about two years, holding his meetings in the cabins of the settlers or in the open.

In the same year a colony of Swedes located on the upper Walnut river, and with them came their Lutheran minister, Reverend Winberg. He did not stop with his own people however, but interested the other people of the community for miles around, and held weekly meetings in the homes of the settlers. Mr. Winberg was largely responsible for the organization of the first Sunday School for he encouraged two young women, Miss Maggie Vaught, and Miss Minnie Post, to form the first organization. These two young women went to the saw mill and begged rough lumber, and with

their own hands they seated a deserted cabin, which served as a meeting house for the community for several years, and upon the completion of their task they organized the Sunday School and were among the first teachers.¹

In 1860, James S. Saxby, a Baptist minister, came to Chelsea and located on a farm. He also preached in the above mentioned meeting house, but his methods were a bit different than those of Mr. Morse and Mr. Winberg, for he was a subscriber of a New York weekly paper which contained Henry Ward Beechers sermons. His sermons were so brilliant that members of his congregation counted the days until the following Sunday, but his duplicity was discovered by some people that had received a bundle of the same papers from eastern friends, and he was no longer able to use the Beecher sermons as his own. However the people kept coming for there was no one else in the community that regularly received the paper, and they were glad to hear the fine sermons that the Reverend Mr. Saxby memorized in the field behind his plow.

Mr. Saxby was a bachelor and was often envited to the homes of the settlers for his meals, and he became as well known for the huge amount of food he was able to consume as

1. George F. Fullinwider, The Pioneer Church, Vol. P. Mooney, ed, Butler County Kansas, pp. 301-2, supported by Mrs. Addie Bradlie, November 30, 1931.

for the brilliance of "his" sermons.¹

In 1862 the first sermon was preached at Towanda by Rev. Wilson Harer, and several other preachers and church workers came in that same year, one of whom was J. D. Chamberlain, a missionary among the Choctaw Indians who occasionally held services for groups of the white people. But perhaps the most outstanding of the early pioneers of religion in Southcentral Kansas was Father Stansberry of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was quite an old man when he commenced visiting the settlers of Butler County, and he traveled on a weatherbeaten old which many observers said was the exact color of his reddish-gray beard. He also came at irregular and un-announced intervals calling his "congregation" together for "preaching" in the home of one of the settlers, whether it be Sunday or Wednesday. Father Stansberry was greatly admired by the children and young men and women, who seldom missed his meetings. People came to his meetings, ^{on} horses and in ox-drawn carts, and if they possessed neither they came on foot.²

As in other pursuits, the religious growth of the County was greatly retarded during the War, but was resumed

1. MartingVaught, Early Recollections, in El Dorado Times, May 19, 1895, supported by Mrs. Bradlie, Nov.30,1931.

2. Ibid.; George F. Fullinwider, The Pioneer Church, ed. in V. P. Mooney, Butler County Kansas, p. 302.

with added vigor after new settlers arrived. Methodist, Presbyterian, and Friends congregations were organized by 1869 although they had no separate buildings in which to hold services, but the county commissioners in April, 1871, aided this situation in part, by allowing religious meetings to be held in the court house.¹

In 1869 Reverend Isaac Mooney came to the county and remained there for many years. Mr. Mooney has the distinction of preaching for many years, often with a sermon every day and always on Sunday, and never accepting a cent of pay for his services. He operated James R. Mead's trading post at Towanda for a livelihood, but he was chiefly known as a preacher, and there is scarcely a person in the County that has been a resident previous to 1900, that has not heard "Father" Mooney, for he preached for a good forty years after his arrival.²

There have been other pioneers of religion in the County all of whom have played an important part in the lives of the people. They are largely responsible for the organization of more than a hundred Sunday Schools and nearly as many churches, for nearly all orthodox denominations are represented.³

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. Including Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Christian, M. E. Church South, Evangelical, Lutheran, Mennonite, congregational, Catholic and Adventist.

CHAPTER VIII

EDUCATION

Closely linked with the development of the county in all of its phases is the growth of the public school system. The honor of possessing the first school building and operating the first school goes to Chelsea with Miss Sarah Satchell as teacher. On the county records this district is listed as district number one. According to Andreas El Dorado township also built a schoolhouse by public subscription in 1860 for the term of 1860-61,¹ but Professor C. F. Smith, in a special article appearing in the El Dorado Times, October 10, 1929, states that the first school ever held in El Dorado was opened July 30, 1868, with the late Dr. E. Cowles as teacher. However, Mrs. Addie Cowley Bradlie says that she first went to school in Old El Dorado when she was seven years old, and as she was born in 1858, there was quite likely a school sometime in the winter of 1865-66 if not before.²

1. Andreas received his information from three pioneers that arrived in 1857, namely Martin Vaught, J. D. Conner, and Judge Lambdin, p. 1433.

2. C. F. Smith, El Dorado Schools, in El Dorado Times October 10, 1929; interview with Mrs. Bradlie November 30, 1931.

Mrs. Bradlie describes her first school as being a log house and a very small one, with a doorway cut in the east and a small hole for a window in the south. There were no charts, maps, or blackboards, and the earth formed the floor. The furniture consisted of big blocks of wood in each corner with boards placed from block to block, making seats for the "scholars." There was one rude desk, which was used by the more advanced students using quill pens.

In this first school there were about twenty-two pupils with possibly three-fourths of them in regular attendance. Miss Lizzie Atwood was her first teacher, but Mrs. Bradlie particularly remembers Miss Jane Wentworth, one of her later teachers. "Miss Jane" appears to have made quite an impression on her, for she describes her as being a very large woman who "licked" three of the largest boys in one day, and was regarded by the people of the district as being a successful teacher.¹

Except on the very coldest days the children and teacher alike went barefooted, but as there seldom was any school in the winter months there were only a few such days. There was so little money with which to pay

1. Interview with Mrs. Bradlie, October 20, 1931, El Dorado, Kansas, supported by T. P. Manion, November 30, 1931.

for
the teachers that many years they were only able to have school for three months. Later they would have two, three months terms, one in the fall and one in the spring.

The teachers in the late sixties or early seventies generally received thirty-five dollars for teaching the three months term, or in some cases twelve dollars per months. However she "boarded around" with the different members of the district for a period of two weeks with each family.

There there was much difficulty in the county about the division of the districts. Often times the pioneer found himself closer to a school-house in an outside district than in his own. The division of the districts was left to the county superintendent, which made him a very unpopular person for everything that was not satisfactory was laid on to him. Samuel L. Shotwell, the superintendent in 1871, in his first annual report says

The organization of school districts and the alteration of district lines should be in the hands of the county commissioners. The superintendents usefulness is much impaired by his duty, as it is hardly possible to make the lines of districts suit all. Some one must be in a corner, and those who feel especially aggrieved charge the superintendent with the whole blame and are ready to oppose any measures he may suggest for the betterment of the schools.¹

In 1880 the school districts of the county took their present form, making a total of one-hundred and sixty-eight districts.

1. Interview with Mrs. Sheldon, and H. I. French, Butler County Schools, in Vol. P. Mooney, Butler County Ks. p. 295-6.

By 1870 schools were much better in the County. Many of the buildings were improved by installing shutters on the windows, and building backs for the benches, and in El Dorado a large one room stone school house with glass window panes was constructed. The wages of the teachers had been slightly raised until by 1880 they were receiving thirty-five dollars per month which however did not include board and room.

Teaching ideals also had improved and in compliance with the state law which required teachers to attend the county institute, the first county institute was held at Augusta. The teachers were very welcome in Augusta and the people of the town boarded them in their homes free of charge for one week. At this time certificates were issued based upon the examinations held for that purpose. Mrs. Alvah Shelden received a third grade certificate and taught the fall term in a school near her home in Douglas. The following year she again took the examinations and received a second grade certificate.

There were several excellent teachers in the county that had come west from their homes in the eastern states. Douglass and Clifford township possessed two such teachers. They were such good teachers that many of their students were able to pass the teachers examinations and thus become teachers.

CHAPTER IX

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.

Special holidays and their celebration played no small part in the lives of the Butler County pioneer. Perhaps the most important holiday was Independence Day. This day was not only an important day for the Butler County farmer but was an important day in the lives of all farmers of the Middle West. It was the day that farmers got together and really enjoyed themselves. However in 1873 the Fourth of July was of a more serious nature, for the farmers had become very much discontented with their economic conditions. There was so much denunciation of corporations and railroads, and the actions of Congress, expressed, that it was called the "Farmers' Fourth of July".¹ This was the case in Butler County as in other communities on that particular holiday. Among the young people of the county at that time the Fourth of July of 1873 was known as the least pleasant of the holidays for there were not so many games or dances, but far too many speeches.²

The first Fourth of July celebration held by the people of the county was just fifteen days after the arrival of the

1. Solon J. Buck, The Agrarian Crusade, Chronicles of America Series, pp.32-4

2. Mrs. Alvah Shelden in interview March 19, 1932.

first colony in June, 1857. A feast was prepared from wild turkeys and a large buffalo fish, with corn bread and other simple foods of the pioneer. Even with the small number present there were speeches made, for that was a requirement for all proper Fourth celebrations.

The most memorable of the early Independence Day celebrations was that celebrated in 1868. It has been described by Mrs. D. M. Bronson, who was "a very literary woman" according to Mrs. Bradlie, as never having been surpassed as a demonstration of

unadulterated patriotism and practically illustrated freedom. The grove near Dr. Gordons was selected and elaborate preparations were made, seats were improvised a speakers stand was erected, an old army flag was resurrected out of some dark corner and suspended in graceful folds from the limb of a tree just over the head of the speaker, which was both inspiring and effective.

A public dinner was the order of the day and "The men reconnoitered around to secure the financial requisite." The women were occupied in preparing the "grub". The happy day arrived and "all went merry as a marriage bell", It was a beautiful day and Mr. Elisha Main the saw mill operator and owner, was the 'Marshall' of the Day.

The exercises opened by singing the "Star Spangled Banner", "which was executed with spirit, and what was lacking in time was supplied in sound." Father Stansberry offered a prayer, and the Declaration of Independence was read by W. T. Gallagher, both of which were

eloquent and patriotic, and so vivid in portrayal that we could almost see the noble bird in his aerial gyrations, and hear the footfall of the Pilgrim Fathers on the barren Plymouth Rock.

After the program there was a fine big dinner but as there were a great number of bachelors who did not furnish food there was practically none left for the women. The happy day closed with a grand "dress ball" over Henry Martins store, the first of it's kind ever held in the county.¹

One of the most popular forms of amusement among the people of the county in the sixties, seventies and eighties was the dance. All special occasions were the inspiration for a big dance, particularly on the part of the young people. In the summer time they were usually held on platforms and in the winter in the homes of the settlers, but by 1871 and 1872 several of the towns such as Douglas, Augusta, El Dorado and Chelsea possessed a Town Hall. The music for the dances was furnished by two fiddlers, ~~one~~ one of them playing the first half of a tune and the other the last half. Also many dances were "called", the caller calling the figures in rhyme and with the music of the fiddler.

1. A. T. Andreas, The State of Kansas; interview with Mrs. Bradlie November 21, 1931.

The refreshments at such occasions, especially in the winter, were generally made from cove oysters, or oyster stew. For as Mrs. Sheldon says fresh oysters were un-heard of, and there was nothing else in the county that was fresh "unless it was some of the young men." But many of the young men were "fine upstanding young men, for they were from good families back East."

The longest dance in the county lasted three days, not by intention, but by accident. A group of young men started out in an ox-drawn wagon and picked up so many girls that the boys had to get off and walk, and after crossing Satchell Creek arrived at the home of one of the settlers. While the dance was in progress a heavy rain came up, the creek became flooded, and the young people had to remain for three days, for the stream was so swift that the boat was capsized that attempted to cross, nearly causing the death of two of the young men. The young people that lived on the side of the creek where the dance was held, did not get to stay in the day time, but were back for the night sessions. The young people living on the opposite side of the creek considered themselves lucky, although the dancing of the third day was less lively.¹

1. Interview with Mrs. Sheldon March 19, 1932, and Vol. P. Mooney, November 21, Note: Judge Mooney was present at this long dance, but lived on the same side of the creek and did not participate during the day.

Other forms of amusement were many and varied. The older people often becoming lonesome would load the family into the wagon and go eight or ten miles to stay all day with another family. The men often organized hunts, both for amusement and to procure g food, leaving the women and children at the home of one of the settlers. On Sunday afternoons the young people would get together and go for long horse-back rides.

After the communities became well settled home talent plays were given, and in the eighties several traveling companies of musicians, jugglers, and players, made regular trips to the towns of the county.

Social organizations were started in the County at an early date, the first of which was the Beethoven Club, organized in 1870. This club was organized for the purpose of "musical betterment" and remained an important organization for several years.

The fraternal orders were early represented in the county as were the womens organizations which have played an important part in the development of the county social life.

1. Mrs. Frank H. Cron, Womens Clubs, Vol. P. Mooney, ed. Butler County Kansas, pp 314-16, and interviews with Mrs. Shelden and ^{Mr.}rs. Bradlie.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Most of the material concerning Butler County was gathered from interviews, the county records, and the files of the El Dorado Times. There are only a limited number of books published which deal with the history of the county. Vol. P. Mooney's book, Butler County Kansas, is a compilation of contributions from a great number of early settlers interspersed with comments and much additional material by the author. R. H. Fisher's Biographical Sketches of El Dorado Citizens contains many unrelated details concerning Butler County history in a long introduction and several closing chapters. Much of his introduction is taken from Mr. Mooney's book to whom he does not give credit. It is a beautifully bound and printed book containing a short biography of praise for each of the contributing citizens, made for the purpose of selling at a large price. In both of these works, however, there is much material that is of great value to the critical research student.

A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, and the Cyclopedia of Kansas History edited by Blackmar were very valuable as a basis for further research, as were The Agrarian Crusade by Solon J. Buck, and The History of Emporia and Lyon County by Laura M. French.

The Frontier in American History by F. J. Turner, The Anti-Slavery Crusade by Jesse Macy, and Frontiers, The Genius of American Nationality by A. B. Hulbert are excellent sources for historical background, and with The Great Plains by W. P. Webb, have made the forces in national and state history easy to associate with the political, economic, and social, difficulties and adjustments of the Butler County citizens.

The Early Recollections by Martin Vaught is an excellent source of information, the material of which has been quite thoroughly approved by the personal recollections of remaining early settlers.

The interviews were approximately of equal value, although each one was of particular value on a certain phase of the county events and conditions. Vol. P. Mooney, Judge A. A. L. Hamilton, T. P. Manion, and B. R. Leydig, gave much excellent material concerning the political and economic life of the county, while Mrs. Addie Bradlie, and Mrs. Alvah Shelden were excellent for the social life of the county and the early difficulties of pioneer life.

Original sources have been used wherever possible and much material was discovered that would be of value for additional research.

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