

Chase County, organized in 1859 and named for Salmon P. Chase, chief justice of the United States supreme court, is located 50 miles south of the Kansas river and 100 miles west of Missouri. It is bounded on the north by Morris county; on the east by Lyon and Greenwood; on the south by Greenwood and Butler, and on the west by Marion. The earliest settlement was made in 1854, when Seth Hayes, an Indian trader at Council Grove located a cattle ranch on the Cottonwood river, near the mouth of Diamond Spring creek. Two years later Nathan Corey, Daniel Holsinger and Gabriel Jacobs located in the eastern part of the county. Among those who came in 1857 were: Dr. M. R. Leonard, B. McCabe, J. Lane, M. Coyne, A. Howell, C. T. Hegwer, William Osmer, William Dixon, Walter Watson, A. B. Wentworth, Milton Ford, James Fisher, and several families from Illinois. The first marriage was in 1857, between a Mr. Pine and Jane Wentworth. The first school house was erected in Bazaar township

in 1860, the schools previous to that time having been taught in private houses. The first birth was that of George Holsinger in 1857. The first postoffice was located in Bazaar township in 1860, with George Leonard as postmaster. The first death was that of Mrs. M. R. Leonard in 1859. The Fratchet grocery store, established in 1859 in Cottonwood township, was the first business enterprise in the county.

There were 549 people in the county when it was organized by act of the legislature in 1859. It was formed out of territory taken from Butler and Wise (Morris) counties. Three townships—Falls, Bazaar and Cottonwood—were formed, and voting places fixed. The first election was held on March 26 and resulted as follows: M. R. Leonard, probate judge; A. W. Smith, sheriff; Sidney A. Breese, register of deeds; R. C. Farnsworth, superintendent of public instruction; J. F. R. Leonard, surveyor; J. W. Hawkins, coroner; C. S. Hill, clerk of the board of supervisors; Samuel N. Wood, Augustus Howell and Barnard McCabe, supervisors. There were 72 votes polled. Chase county was located in the Fifth judicial district and for some time court was held in the Congregational church at Cottonwood Falls. Unlike many of the counties, Chase lived within her means and did not vote bonds in extravagant amounts or build expensive public buildings which she could not afford. The first court-house was a log building, which was bought in 1863 from George W. Williams for \$175. In 1871 \$40,000 were voted for public buildings, and two years later the present court-house was completed at a cost of \$42,600. The square in which it stands was donated by the city. The first county officers served without pay. The first assessment was made in 1859 and the total valuation of property was \$71,536. Lodges, churches and societies of different kinds were organized early in the history of the county.

When the war began in 1861, out of the 262 voters of Chase county, 72 enlisted at once. Samuel N. Wood was made captain of Company I, Second Kansas infantry. He was made brigadier-general of the state militia in 1864, and a number of other Chase county men achieved distinction in the war for the preservation of the Union.

The first railroad was the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, built some time in the early '70s. It enters the county from the east, about 8 miles below the north line, runs west to Strong City and Cottonwood Falls, thence southwest through Elmdale and Clements and on into Marion county. There is a branch of the same line operating between Strong City and Abilene which runs northwest from Strong City and leaves the county near the northwest corner. A branch line connects Cottonwood Falls with Bazaar, a few miles to the south.

The county is divided into 8 townships: Bazaar, Cedar, Cottonwood, Diamond Creek, Falls, Matfield, Strong and Toledo. There are 11 post-offices as follows: Cottonwood Falls, the county seat; Bazaar, Cedar Point, Clements, Elk, Elmdale, Homestead, Hymer, Matfield Green, Saffordville, and Strong City.

In surface the county is somewhat broken and hilly, especially in the

southern portion, while in the north are gently rolling slopes. In some places along the streams the slopes terminate in abrupt bluffs. The Cottonwood river is the principal stream and with its numerous tributaries forms the water system of the county. It enters the county from the west about 12 miles from the southern line, flows northeast to Cottonwood Falls and thence east into Lyon county. Some of the important creeks are Diamond, Fox and Middle creeks on the north, and Fork and Cedar on the south. The river bottoms average over 2 miles in width, those on the creeks three-fourths of a mile and together comprise about one-eighth of the total area. The timber belts along the streams average less than half a mile in width and contain the following varieties of wood: walnut, cottonwood, burr-oak, sycamore, ash, hickory, hackberry, box-elder, redbud and buckeye. Limestone of an excellent quality and material for building-brick is found in abundance.

Chase is strictly an agricultural and stock raising county. Grazing lands are plentiful. The total value of farm products in 1910 was nearly \$3,000,000, of which live stock sold for slaughter amounted to \$1,500,000, and corn, the largest field crop, brought \$500,000. Tame grasses amounted to \$250,000. There are 100,000 fruit trees of bearing age.

The population of the county according to the census of 1910 was 7,527. The assessed valuation of property that year was over \$18,000,000, which makes the wealth per capita nearly \$2,500.