

Gove County, in the western part of the state, is the third from the west line of the state, the third south from the Nebraska line and the fifth north from Oklahoma. It is bounded on the north by Thomas and

Sheridan counties, on the east by Trego, on the south by Lane and Scott, and on the west by Logan county. The first settlements were made in the latter '70s. The Union Pacific railroad was built through this section of the state about that time and the first towns were established along the railroad. Buffalo Park was the first town. It was established about 1878. One of the most important early settlements was the Bristol colony, which came from Bristol, Bucks county, Pa., in 1879. Its officers were: President, M. E. West; secretary, R. Robinson; treasurer, R. Shaw. Eleven families constituted the party. They came first to Buffalo Park and after prospecting through the surrounding territory located southwest of the town. The people found native building stone to construct buildings, plenty of good grass for cattle, and water at an average depth of 50 feet. There was no timber and the government granted timber claims, whereby the claim holder was required to plant ten acres of timber. Hundreds of these timber claims were taken, resulting in the planting of thousands of acres of trees.

In 1879, the legislature erected Gove county and bounded it as follows: "Commencing at the northeast corner of township 10 range 26 west; thence west on said township line to the east line of range 30 west; thence south on said range line to the north line of township 15; thence east on said line to the west line of range 25 west; thence north on said range line to the place of beginning." The present boundaries extend to the east line of range 32, and to the south line of township 15. Gove township, as it was called at that time, was attached to Ellis county for judicial purposes. In 1881 the legislature removed it from Ellis and attached it to Trego.

The drought of 1880 was rather severe in Gove county and reduced many families to destitute circumstances. Outside aid was sent in and much suffering relieved in this way. There were several little towns in the county by this time, and two newspapers were established in this year, the Grainfield Republican and the Buffalo Park Express.

In 1886 the governor appointed L. F. Jones census taker. He made his returns in August, showing that the population was 3,032, of whom 851 were householders, and that there were \$549,909 worth of taxable property. Two petitions were sent in on the county seat matter, one asking that Grainfield be made the temporary county seat and the other asking the same thing for Gove. Delegations from each town went to Topeka to interview the governor, help count the names on the petitions, and to prefer charges of fraud against each other. Originally the petition for Gove had 612 names and that from Grainfield 336. Some of the names on the Gove petition were not on the census taker's list, which cut the Gove majority down to 71. Then it was found that some of the names on the Grainfield petition were open to the same objection, and after a thorough investigation the governor proclaimed Gove the temporary county seat. The following officers were appointed: Commissioners, Jerome B. McClanahan, William T. Stokes and Lyan Raymond; clerk, Dell A. Borah. The election was held at the time of the general

election on Nov. 2, 1886, and Gove was made the permanent county seat, in spite of the offer of Grainfield to furnish the site, put up a \$6,000 courthouse and buy \$1,200 worth of books. The officers chosen were as follows: Clerk, Dell A. Borah; sheriff, J. W. Hopkins; probate judge, C. E. Hebard; treasurer, George S. Dyer; register of deeds, L. F. Jones; clerk of the district court, U. W. Ohlinger; superintendent of public instruction, G. G. Lehmer; attorney, R. C. Jones; surveyor, F. B. Cope; coroner, David Blackwell; commissioners, Lyman Raymond, J. W. Campbell and Gustavus Peterson.

By this time there were 8 towns in the county, and 41,590 acres of cultivated soil. The settlers had recovered from the hardships of the early beginnings and most of them were raising fair crops.

Gove county is divided into nine townships, viz: Baker, Gaeland, Gove, Grainfield, Grinnell, Larrabee, Lewis and Payne. The postoffices in the county are, Gove, Alanthus, Ball, Campus, Catalpa, Coin, Grainfield, Grinnell, Hackberry, Jericho, Jerome, Orion, Park, Quinter, Tweed and Valhalla. The surface is undulating with bluffs and rough lands along the streams. Bottom lands average one-half mile in width. The largest stream is the Smoky Hill river which flows from west to east through the southern part. Two branches of Hackberry creek enter in the northwest and join two other creeks near the center of the county, forming the larger Hackberry creek which continues in a southeasterly direction, joining the Smoky Hill in Trego county. Gypsum, limestone and mineral paint are found in considerable quantities.

Winter wheat, corn, barley and sorghum are the principal field crops. Live-stock raising is profitable. The value of the farm products in 1910 was \$1,194,476, of which field crops amounted to over \$1,000,000, live stock, poultry, eggs and dairy products making up the balance. The population of the county in 1910 was 6,044, which was nearly three times that of 1900. The assessed valuation of property was \$10,373,486. The school population is 1,437, and there are 46 organized school districts.