

Kingman County, in the south central part of the state, is located in the second tier from the Oklahoma state line, and is bounded on the north by Reno county; on the east by Sedgwick and Sumner; on the south by Harper and Barber, and on the west by Barber and Pratt. It was named for Samuel A. Kingman, who was chief justice of the Kansas supreme court at the time it was organized.

The first settler is said to have been W. H. Childs, who came from Michigan in 1872, though some accounts place the date as 1874, and that of the first settlement as Feb., 1873, when Martin Updegraff located on the Chikaskia river 20 miles south of the present city of Kingman. A few months later half a dozen others settled in the county, among whom were J. K. and F. S. Fical and Charles Barr. Early in 1874 W. H. Childs, H. L. Ball, A. D. Culver, H. S. Bush and W. P. Brown located at Kingman and took claims in the vicinity. W. H. Mosher located at the head of Smoot creek, and a number of families located on the Ninnescah. Late in the summer the settlements were threatened by the Indians. Mr. Fical was commissioned as captain and

W. H. Childs as lieutenant to organize a military company to repel any attack. When the commissions arrived there were no men to organize, all the residents having fled. They returned as soon as the scare was over.

During the years of 1874 and 1876 there were few new people. A large number came in 1877 and every part of the county was settled. The last of the buffalo disappeared in that year. Heavy rains in the spring swelled the streams so that they became impassable and the settlers being shut off from supplies were threatened with famine. For several days parched corn was the only food, and even this gave out before the flood subsided.

The organization of the county took place in Feb., 1874, when there were not more than 20 bona fide settlers. Gov. Thomas A. Osborne designated Kingman as the temporary county seat and appointed the following officers: J. Harmony, county clerk; and J. K. Fical, J. M. Jordan and G. W. Lacey county commissioners. The officers met at Kingman on March 5, and as J. K. Fical withdrew, W. C. Frink was appointed in his place. A special election was called for April 7, to vote on the issuing of bonds to the amount of \$70,000, for court-house, bridges and general expenses. It was ordered also that county and township officers should be elected at this time, and a permanent county seat chosen. The election resulted in the choice of the following officers: H. L. Ball, J. K. Fical and G. W. Lacy, commissioners; J. Harmony, clerk; F. S. Fical, sheriff; J. M. Jordan, treasurer; W. P. Brown, county attorney; George Pitts, probate judge; G. A. Whicher, county superintendent; W. J. Harmony, register of deeds; W. P. Brown, coroner; R. R. Wilson, surveyor; and G. A. Whicher, district clerk. Kingman was made the permanent county seat and the bonds were authorized. These bonds were printed but were canceled and destroyed the next spring. Two efforts were later made to have the county seat removed from Kingman. One was in 1878, when a town called Akron was started in the eastern part of the county. A petition was presented to the commissioners asking for an election to relocate the county seat, and when this petition was denied, the town of Akron was abandoned. The other attempt was in 1881, when the people in the southeastern part of the county succeeded in having an election called. The competing points were Kingman and Dale City, a point about 7 miles to the southwest. Kingman won by a majority of 85 votes.

The first child born in Kingman county was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Fical, whom they named Ninnescah, born in 1873. The first marriage was in Nov., 1875, between Jesse McCarty and Cecilia Capitolia Scribner, the ceremony being performed by W. H. Mosher, a justice of the peace. The first school was opened in 1874 with only 5 pupils, Miss Ada Crane, teacher. The first farming was done by Charles Barr in 1873. Six years later there were 76,000 acres under cultivation. The first water-mill was built by Starling Turner in 1879, at a cost of \$20,000. The Mercury, the first newspaper, was established in 1878 by

J. C. Martin. The census of 1878 gave Kingman county 729 people, but in the next three years the population increased to 3,125, showing that the development of the county did not really begin until about 1880.

Kingman is divided into 23 townships as follows: Allen, Belmont, Bennett, Canton, Chicaskia, Dale, Dresden, Eagle, Eureka, Evan, Galesburg, Hoosier, Kingman, Liberty, Ninnescah, Peters, Richland, Rochester, Rural, Union, Valley, Vinita and White. The postoffices are, Kingman, Adams, Basil, Belmont, Calista, Cleveland, Cunningham, Murdock, Nashville, Norwich, Penalosa, Rago, Spivey, Varner, Waterloo, Willowdale and Zenda.

The surface of the county is rolling prairie somewhat broken in the vicinity of the Ninnescah. The bottom lands comprise 15 per cent. of the total area. Cottonwood is the principal timber and is found along the Chikaskia. An excellent water system is formed by the two branches of the Chikaskia. The south branch of the Chikaskia enters the county near the southwest corner and flows east 15 miles, where it unites with the north branch forming the main stream, which leaves the county near the southeast corner. The south fork of the Ninnescah enters on the west line north of the center, crosses in a southeasterly direction past Kingman, and leaves the county near the central part of the east line. The north fork crosses the northeast corner. There are several small lakes, numerous springs, and well water is found at a depth of 25 feet. Sandstone, rock salt, gypsum and mineral paint are found in large quantities.

There are nearly 150 miles of main track railroad in the county. A branch of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe crosses the northern part from east to west, another crosses from east to west in the southern part, and still another branch of the same system runs through the center from north to south. A branch of the Missouri Pacific enters in the southeast and extends northwest through Kingman into Reno county. The Kansas City, Mexico & Orient crosses the extreme southeast corner.

The area of Kingman county is 864 square miles or 552,960 acres, of which over 400,000 acres are under cultivation. The county ranks high in agriculture and stock raising. Wheat, corn, oats, sorghum, Kafir corn and hay are the principal crops. The value of the farm products in 1910 was \$3,042,500, of which wheat was worth \$853,824; corn, \$656,000; and hay, \$156,904. The population in 1910 was 13,386, a gain of about 30 per cent. over that of 1900. The property valuation of 1910 was over \$30,000,000, which makes the wealth per capita nearly \$2,200.