

Saline County, one of the central counties of the state, is the fourth county south from Nebraska, and the eighth from the Missouri river, the 6th principal meridian forming its eastern boundary line. It is bounded on the north by Ottawa county; on the east by Dickinson; on the south by McPherson, and on the west by Ellsworth and Lincoln. The name Saline was given to the river, and later to the county on account of the salt marshes in this section.

The earliest settlements were not permanent. The first one of which there is any authentic account was made by Preston B. Plumb, afterwards United States senator. He came into the county in 1856 with a Mr. Hunter and Maj. Pierce and the three projected a town at the mouth of the Saline river which they called Mariposa. The place was soon afterward abandoned, a cabin and a well being the extent of the improvements. In the same year the territorial legislature chartered what was known as the "Buchanan Town company," of which Richard Mobley, a pro-slavery man and later a member of the Lecompton constitutional convention, was president. This company was to have several thousand acres of land. A site was selected near the mouth of the Solomon river in Saline county, and a town was laid off in 1857. Eight log cabins were built, but only two were ever occupied. On the death of his child, Mr. Mobley abandoned the town project and Saline county was without a settler. However, a permanent settlement was made the next year by Col. W. A. Phillips, who in 1857, with a companion by the name of Smith, had made a tour into the valleys of the Saline and Solomon rivers on foot. In Feb., 1858, he returned with A. M. Campbell and James Muir. Passing the sites of the two former settlements, they made their way up the Smoky Hill river to where the stream turns due south, and there founded the town of Salina. The next month two brothers named Schipple, who had erected a cabin on the Saline that winter, came and settled on their claim. The first merchant in the county was George Pickard, who built a store and brought a small stock of goods to Salina. The latter was an arduous task. On arriving at the Solomon river with his goods he found the government bridge had been washed out by the floods, as were the bridges over the Saline and Smoky Hill. He constructed a raft of skins and timbers, with which he succeeded in getting his goods over, but not without considerable damage. A number of new settlers arrived during the year, most of them settling in or near Salina. Among them was a Dr. Graw, a German from Illinois, who in the absence of any other method of surveying, measured off with a string a piece of land, which he supposed to be a mile square, on the Saline, and proposed to build a town by the name of Grawville, but abandoned the idea.

At this time all the territory west of the 6th principal meridian was called the "Arapaho district." Saline county was included in this unorganized territory until Feb., 1859, when the legislature passed an act organizing and defining the boundary lines of five counties, of which Saline was one. The same act designated as a board of commissioners A. C. Spillman, Israel Markley and Charles Holtzman. These men met in April, 1860, elected Charles Holtzman, chairman; A. C. Spillman, clerk; and the officers were sworn in by Hugh M. Morrison, the first justice of the peace. Salina was named by the act as the temporary county seat. In May, the commissioners met again and divided the county into two townships—Elm Creek and Spring Creek—and ordered an election to be held in July, 1860. At this election the following officers were chosen: D. L. Phillips, Israel Markley and Charles Holtzman, commissioners; Jacob Cass, treasurer, and L. F. Parsons, sheriff.

In the year 1859 many improvements were made in Salina, Israel Markley being the prime mover in building enterprises. That spring a perfect stream of emigrants for Pike's Peak passed through the county. The stage line for New Mexico also came this way, and Salina being the farthest town west became quite a supply station for travelers. A hotel was built by Col. Phillips, with lumber which he hauled from Kansas City. The settlers being very much in need of a grist mill and a sawmill, Col. Phillips set up a combination grist and sawmill at a great financial loss to himself.

When the Civil war broke out, nearly all the able-bodied men in Salina enlisted on the Union side. Among those who entered the army W. A. Phillips rose to the rank of colonel; L. F. Parsons went in as second lieutenant and came out as captain; and D. L. Phillips was mustered in as a private and mustered out as first lieutenant. During the war two raids were made into Saline county. The first was by the Indians in the early part of 1862. The settlers heard of their coming in time to gather at Salina, where a stockade had been built. The red men had determined upon killing every settler in the Smoky Hill valley. A number of ranches west of Salina were attacked and the ranchmen killed, but when the Indians reached Salina and found the settlers ready for them they changed their course without molesting the stockade. The second raid was by a band of white desperadoes in the fall of that year. They rode into Salina, taking the citizens by surprise, and not meeting with any resistance, limited their outrages to pillage. They destroyed everything in the way of fire-arms that they could not take with them; appropriated everything of value they found in residences and business places; and took 20 horses and 6 mules, the property of the Kansas Stage company. One horse was accidentally overlooked and this one was used by R. H. Bishop to carry the news of the raid to Fort Riley. A detachment of soldiers was sent out but the bushwhackers had escaped "to parts unknown."

The first election at which a full county ticket was chosen was held under the state law in Nov., 1861, and resulted as follows: Commissioners, Henry Whitley, G. Schippel and R. H. Bishop; probate judge, A. A. Morrison; sheriff, John McReynolds; treasurer, Ransom Calkin; county clerk, H. H. Morrison; register of deeds, H. H. Flagg; assessor, Robert McReynolds; surveyor, James R. Mead; coroner, Robert Crawford; justices of the peace, Daniel Alverson and Peter Giersch.

During the war Saline county, in common with other parts of the state, made no progress. As soon as the soldiers returned, however, new life came into the western settlements. Up to that time the settlement of Saline county was limited to the vicinity of Salina. In 1865 Ernst Hohnock located about 9 miles west of Salina and established a ranch store where Bavaria now stands. In April, 1869, a large colony from the Western Reserve in Ohio settled at this point. They were under the leadership of John Thorp, and the township was named after their state. By 1868 there were settlers in every part of the county, and that

year saw a large increase in the population. In August word reached Salina of the Indian raids in the Republican, upper Saline and Solomon valleys, where they were murdering and outraging settlers on every hand. Gov. Crawford was telegraphed and arrived on the next train. A company of 60 men was raised as fast as they could be armed. Gov. Crawford took command and proceeded to the seat of trouble. He went north into Ottawa county, visited Minneapolis and Delphos, where he sent out a scouting party of 2 men—M. J. Mills and M. D. Simpson—the main body retiring to Asherville. The scouts went as far as Fort Sibley in Republic county, and then, seeing no Indians, joined the main body at Asherville. After burying several men who had been scalped, and several children whose bodies had been fastened to the ground by arrows, the company returned to Salina and disbanded.

Two large colonies—one of Swedes numbering 75, who bought 20,000 acres in the southern part of the county, and another of Illinois people numbering 60, who located in Smoky View and Smolan townships—were added to the strength of the frontier, and enabled Saline county to make rapid strides in improvements. The next year the Ohio colony came, and in 1870 a colony of 75 under the leadership of Eric Forse, located in Falun township. Three new postoffices were established in that year: Brookville, in Spring Creek township, J. W. Hogan, postmaster; Falun, Eric Forse, postmaster; and Salemburg, in Smoky View township, J. P. Clarkson, postmaster. Hohneck, in Ohio township, had been established in 1867, with Ernst Hohneck as postmaster, and Salina in 1861, with A. M. Campbell, postmaster. Before the postoffice was established at Salina, there was no office west of Fort Riley. The Saline county people had their mail forwarded from Lawrence, and it never reached them oftener than once in two weeks.

The first Saline county people to be married were A. M. Campbell and Christina A. Phillips, in 1858. There being no minister or justice of the peace in the vicinity, they were obliged to travel 60 miles to Riley county to be married. The first white child born in the county was their daughter, Christina Campbell, born in Oct., 1859.

Saline county is divided into 19 civil townships, the dates of organization being as follows: Elm Creek, 1860; Spring Creek, 1860, disorganized in 1862 and reorganized in 1869; Cambria, 1878; Dayton, 1877; Eureka, 1860; Falun, 1873; Glendale, 1880; Greeley, 1879; Gypsum, 1871; Liberty, 1872; Ohio, 1871; Pleasant Valley, 1875; Smoky Hill, 1871; Smoky View, 1874; Smolan, 1874; Solomon, 1867; Summit, 1880; Walnut, 1869; Washington, 1874. Some of the early towns which have disappeared from the map were Crown Point, Dry Creek, Gypsum Creek, Pliny, Poheta and Torry. The towns and postoffices in 1910 were Salina, Assaria, Bavaria, Bridgeport, Brookville, Falun, Gypsum, Kipp, Mentor, New Cambria, Salemsburg, Smolan, Strickler and Wonderly.

The surface of the county is level bottom lands, rolling prairie and highlands, having about an equal area of each. The Saline and Smoky Hill rivers meet near the eastern line and the bottom lands along their

banks form a basin through the central part of the county, the sides of which are much higher on the north than on the south. There is a range of high hills near the southern boundary called "Smoky Hill Buttes"; an elevation on the north called "North Pole Mound,"; one 8 miles east of Salina known as "Iron Mound," and in the west rises "Soldier Cap." Limestone, sandstone, gypsum and salt are found in considerable quantities. The Solomon river flows across the northeastern part of the county; the Saline enters on the northern boundary and flows southeast; the Smoky Hill enters from the south, flows north to Salina and from there east about 8 miles, where it is joined by the Saline. The smaller streams are the Gypsum, Hobbs, Dry, Spring, Mulberry and Buckeye creeks.

The area is 720 square miles, or 460,000 acres, about two-thirds of which are under cultivation. The total value of farm products for 1910 was more than \$4,000,000. The corn crop was worth \$1,250,000; wheat over \$500,000; animals marketed amounted to over \$1,000,000; the assessed valuation of property was about \$42,000,000. The population in 1910 was 20,338, which makes the wealth per capita about \$2,000.

Saline county is well supplied with railroads. The first one built was the Union Pacific, which reached Salina in 1867. The main line enters in the northeast and crosses the county into Ellsworth, passing through Salina, where two branches diverge, one going south, and the other northwest. A branch of the same road passes through the northeastern corner. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific enter from Solomon and terminate at Salina. The Missouri Pacific enters in the southeastern part of the county and diverges at Gypsum, one branch running to Salina and the other southwest into McPherson county. Another branch of the Missouri Pacific enters in the southwest and crosses northeast to Salina.

Saline River, the principal tributary of the Smoky Hill river, has its source in the southwestern part of Thomas county. For the first 60 miles its general course is almost due east across the southern part of Thomas and Sheridan counties. It then turns slightly to the south, continuing a general eastward course, however, across the northern part of Graham and Ellis counties; thence across Russell county a little north of the center; eastward through Lincoln county; across the southwest corner of Ottawa, where it turns sharply to the southeast and empties into the Smoky Hill a few miles below the city of Salina, in Saline county. Schoolcraft mentions a legendary tin mine on the south side of the Saline "about 40 miles west of the Pottawatomie country." The total length of the stream is about 250 miles. It is not navigable and has no large tributaries.