

Chautauqua County, formerly the southern half of Howard county, is located in the southern tier of counties and is the fourth west from the Missouri line. It is bounded on the north by Elk county, on the east by Montgomery county, on the south by the State of Oklahoma, and on the west by Cowley county.

Chautauqua county was not settled until after the war, the first white man to occupy land being Richard Slater, who took a claim in Salt creek valley, Salt Creek township, in 1868. Although the land still belonged to the Osage Indians and was not open to settlement until 1870, a number of people made homes in the vicinity before that time. Among these pioneers were William Bowcher, in Lafayette township; O. Hanson, Harrison township; H. S. Halliday, Sedan township; Alexander Shaver, Caneyville township; George M. Ross, Summit township; John W. Morris and John Sutton, in Belleville township, all of whom came in 1869. By the time the county was organized in 1875, the population was over 7,000. The first marriage was between Ebenezer Horton and Martha Starks of Salt Creek township in 1869, the first birth was that of Abigail Slater in the same year, in the same township. Elgin in Hendricks township was the first town.

The incorporation of Chautauqua county was provided for by act of the legislature, to take effect June 1, 1875, and Sedan was designated as the county seat. When the day arrived M. B. Light, clerk of Chautauqua county, moved to the place appointed, while the other officers were retained at Elk Falls until the constitutionality of the division could be tested in the courts. The court upheld the division and the necessary changes were made, thus bringing to a close a bitter and expensive county seat war, which was hindering development. The debt of Howard county, most of which was incurred in useless county seat elections, was divided equally between the two new counties. The debt of Chautauqua county at the beginning was therefore \$30,000. In order to avoid new county seat troubles Sedan offered to build a court-house and donate it to the county in consideration that the county seat remain there. The building was put up by private donations and its construction was fraught with the greatest difficulties on account of the unsettled condition of the location of the county seat. The construction was under the management of H. B. Kelly, who was the proprietor of the paper. The walls and roof were built at a cost of \$4,000 and turned over to the county. This proved satisfactory and Sedan became the permanent county seat. A jail was built in 1877.

The first school building was erected in 1870 at Elgin. A number of others were erected in 1872 in different parts of the county. In 1880 the school population was over 2,000, and in 1881 the money raised by taxation for school purposes was over \$71,000. The school population in 1882 was double that of 1880, and the valuation of school property had increased from \$4,500 to \$52,200. There were three graded schools in the county at that time. At present all the schools are graded. The school population is 4,000, the number of districts 93, all of which are supplied with good substantial buildings, in most cases brick or stone.

The county is divided into 12 civil townships, viz: Belleville, Caney-

ville, Center, Harrison, Hendricks, Jefferson, Lafayette, Little Caney, Salt Creek, Sedan, Summit and Washington. The towns and villages number more than a score, the principal ones being Sedan, the county seat, Brownsville, Cedar Vale, Center, Chautauqua, Cloverdale, Colfax, Elgin, Farmersburg, Grafton, Hale, Hewins, Jonesburg, Leeds, Lowe, Monett, Niotaze, Peru, Rogers, Sedan, Spring Creek and Wauneta.

There are two lines of railroads in the county, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, and the Missouri Pacific. The former, a branch diverging from the main line at Cherryvale in Montgomery county, enters the county on the east and traverses the southern portion, the line terminating at Cedar Vale on the western border. The Missouri Pacific crosses from east to west a few miles south of the center. This company operates a line which enters the county in the northeast corner and connects with the first at Peru Junction. The total railroad mileage is 94.

The surface of the county is level in the northern part and hilly toward the south. Bottom lands along the creek beds average a mile in width on the larger streams and one-fourth of a mile on the small streams, and comprise one-fourth of the total area. The streams are numerous with the watersheds bearing toward the south. The three important branches of Caney creek—Big Caney, Middle Caney and North Caney—are the larger streams. Salt and Bee creeks in the northeastern portion are next in importance. These streams are belted with thin strips of timber native to Kansas soil.

Among the natural products of the county are sandstone of excellent quality for paving and building, limestone from which an excellent quality of lime is produced, and marble which takes a high polish is found in the hills about Sedan. There are a number of gas wells from which all the important towns are lighted and heated. Coal has been found along the streams. This is one of the leading oil producing counties of the state, thousands of barrels of oil being carried out daily by the pipe lines.

There are over 416,000 acres of land in the county, of which 250,000 are under cultivation. The value of farm products in 1910 was nearly \$1,500,000, of which Indian corn amounted to \$167,000 and Kafir corn to a similar figure. The field crops furnished about half the total income and barnyard products about half.

The assessed valuation of all property was \$13,930,000 in 1910. The population in the same year was 11,429.