

Haskell County, located in the southwestern part of the state, lies about 30 miles north of Oklahoma and 53 miles east of Colorado. It was created by the act of March 5, 1887, which defined the boundaries as follows: "Commencing at the intersection of the east line of range 31 west with the north line of township 27 south; thence south along range line to where it intersects the 6th standard parallel; thence west along the 6th standard parallel to its intersection with the east line of range 35 west; thence north along range line to where it intersects the north line of township 27 south; thence east to the place of beginning."

The boundaries as thus established are the same as those given to Arapahoe county in 1873. It is bounded on the north by Finney county; on the east by Gray and Meade; on the south by Seward, and on the west by Grant. It is exactly 24 miles square and has an area of 576 square miles, or 368,640 acres, and was named for Dudley C. Haskell, formerly a Congressman from Kansas.

The history of the early settlement of Haskell county is about the same as that of the other western counties of the state. A few cattle men established ranches, and emigrants from the older states added to the population. On March 31, 1887, "in response to a memorial," Gov. Martin appointed Charles A. Stauber to take a census and make an appraisal of the property in the county. Mr. Stauber filed his report with the governor on June 27, showing that there were 2,841 inhabitants, of whom 556 were householders, and that the value of the taxable property was \$850,119. Upon receipt of this information, the governor issued his proclamation on July 1, 1887, declaring the county organized.

He appointed as commissioners James E. Marlow, Joseph Comes and C. H. Huntington; county clerk, Lowry C. Gilmore; sheriff, J. B. Shumaker, and designated Santa Fe as the temporary county seat. The question of the location of the county seat had been decided by popular vote before the governor issued his proclamation, Santa Fe receiving 562 votes, Ivanhoe 396, and Lockport, 1.

At the general election on Nov. 8, 1887, a full quota of county officers were chosen as follows: Representative, M. C. Huston; probate judge, A. P. Heminger; clerk of the district court, W. F. Felton; county clerk, W. E. Banker; county attorney, C. R. Dollarhide; register of deeds, L. A. Crull; treasurer, J. M. Beckett; sheriff, J. P. Hughes; county superintendent of schools, L. McKinley; surveyor, W. M. Haley; coroner, J. C. Newman; commissioners, James E. Marlow, C. H. Huntington and A. T. Collins. Of these first officials, Huston Banker, Beckett, Hughes, Haley and Collins belonged to the People's party and the others were Republicans.

The surface of Haskell county is generally level or gently rolling prairie. The only water-course in the county is the Cimarron river, which flows across the extreme southwest corner, and the absence of streams means a corresponding scarcity of timber, though a few artificial groves have been planted. There are a few natural springs in the county, and good well water is obtained at a depth of from 50 to 100 feet.

The opening of new lands in Oklahoma and a lack of railroad facilities caused many of the early settlers to leave the county. In 1890 the population was but 1,077, less than one-half what it was when the county was organized, and by 1900 it had dwindled to 457. Then came a reaction and in 1910 the population was 993, a gain of 536 in ten years, or more than 120 per cent. The completion of the Garden City, Gulf & Northern railroad through the center of the county north and south gives the county better shipping and transportation facilities. The county is divided into three civil townships—Dudley, Haskell and Lockport. In 1910 the county reported 19 organized school districts, with a school population of 340. Agriculture is the principle occupation. The leading crops are wheat, milo maize, Kafir corn, sorghum and broom-corn. The value of farm products in 1810 was \$214,337, and the assessed valuation of property was \$2,321,605.