

**Hodgeman County.**—The territory now included in Hodgeman county was first embraced in Hageman county (q. v.), which was erected by the act of Feb. 26, 1867. By the act of March 6, 1873, Hodgeman county was called into existence with the following boundaries: "Commencing at a point where the 4th standard parallel inter-

sects the east line of range 21 west; thence south along range line to its intersection with the north line of township 25 south; thence west along township line to where it intersects the east line of range 27 west; thence north along range line to its intersection with the 4th standard parallel; thence east along the line of the 4th standard parallel to the place of beginning."

The county was named for Amos Hodgman, captain of Company H, Seventh Kansas cavalry, who was wounded at Wyatt, Miss., Oct. 10, 1863, and died on the 16th. The original act gave the name as "Hodgman," but a subsequent legislature placed the letter "e" at the end of the first syllable, and that form has remained. In 1883 the county was enlarged, but in 1887 the original boundaries as established in 1873 were restored.

The first settlement in the county was made at Duncan's ranch on the Pawnee river, in the northeast corner, in 1871. Soon afterward a party came from New York on a buffalo hunt and built a hunting house and stockade not far from Duncan's, but made no permanent settlement. Bowman, Adair and other cattle men established ranches along the Pawnee river and Buckner creek in 1873, and the following year T. W. Pelman located at the junction of Buckner and Saw Log creeks, being at that time the most western settler in the county. From that time until 1878 there was a steady influx of settlers, among whom were James Gilland, J. W. Harlan, S. J. Eakin, L. E. Carter, J. R. Wilson, S. A. Sheldon, Samuel Townsend, J. R. Baird and Clawson Parker. Early in 1879 a census was taken by S. A. Sheldon. It showed that the county had the number of inhabitants required by law for an independent county organization. The people selected John W. Hunter, Samuel Townsend and D. McCarty for county commissioners, E. M. Trimble for county clerk, and petitioned the governor to issue a proclamation declaring the county organized.

Accordingly, Gov. St. John issued a proclamation to that effect on March 29, 1879, but, with the exception of John W. Hunter, he did not appoint any of the officers recommended by the people. The commissioners named by the governor were Jonathan R. Wilson, John W. Hunter and S. A. Sheldon, and the clerk was W. W. Wheeland. Hodgeman Center, 2½ miles east of the present town of Jetmore, was designated as the temporary seat of justice. The first meeting of the commissioners was called for April 14, 1879, but one of the commissioners and the clerk were absent and nothing was done at that meeting.

In the meantime two newspapers had been started in the county. The Hodgeman Center Agitator began its career in March, and the first number of the Fordham Republican was issued on April 9, 1879, by Guy F. Carleton. The former lived until Jan., 1880, and the latter suspended in Oct., 1879. The governor's appointments evidently failed to give satisfaction. When the first meeting of the commissioners resulted in failure the Fordham Republican said: "We presume that Mr. Wheeland, the governor's county clerk, will be on hand at the



next meeting, providing by that time he establishes a residence in the county. It looks as though the governor was straining a point somewhat when he ignored the fact that we had competent material for county officers and went to Edwards county for a clerk."

On July 7, 1879, the commissioners appointed the other county officers, who served until the general election the following November, when the following were elected: Samuel Townsend, representative; George Curtis, sheriff; E. M. Prindle, county clerk; A. O. Dickinson, clerk of the district court; James Whiteside, Jr., register of deeds; W. A. Frush, treasurer; E. R. Fuller, county attorney; G. A. Curtis, superintendent of schools; C. E. Boughton, Philip Best and Lewis Stroud, commissioners. At the same time the people voted on the question of a permanent location for the county seat. Buckner (now Jetmore) received 199 votes; Marena, 107; Hodgeman Center, 40, and Fordham, 5. The county offices were established at Buckner soon after the election.

Hodgeman county is bounded on the north by Ness county; on the east by Pawnee and Edwards; on the south by Ford, and on the west by Gray and Finney. It has an area of 864 square miles and an elevation of about 2,500 feet above the sea level. The general surface is undulating prairie. Along the streams are belts of timber, the principal varieties being ash, oak, cottonwood, box-elder and hackberry, the total area of natural timber being about 5,000 acres. The Pawnee river flows through the northern part; Buckner creek rises near the southwest corner and flows in a northeasterly direction through the county, and the southeastern part is watered by the Saw Log creek. These streams with their tributaries form an abundant natural water supply. The climate is healthful and invigorating, there being neither swamps nor marshes to breed malaria. The bottom lands average nearly a mile in width and constitute about one-tenth of the entire area. Limestone and a soft sandstone are found in the bluffs along the streams, native lime is plentiful, and there is some gypsum near the center of the county.

The county is divided into the following townships: Benton, Center, Hallet, Marena, North Roscoe, Saw Log, South Roscoe, Sterling and valley. It has only about 20 miles of railroad, the western part of the Larned & Jetmore division of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe system. In 1910 the U. S. census reported a population of 2,930. The assessed valuation of property was a little over \$6,500,000, and the value of agricultural products for the year was \$1,158,560. Wheat, corn, sorghum, Kafir corn and hay are the leading crops.