

Lane County, in the western part of the state, is the fourth east from Colorado, and the fourth north from Oklahoma. It is bounded on the north by Gove county; on the east by Ness; on the south by Finney, and on the west by Scott. It was created by the legislature in 1873 and named for Senator James H. Lane. The boundaries fixed at that time were as follows: "Commencing where the 3d standard parallel intersects the east line of range 27 west; thence south along

range line to its intersection with the north line of township 20 south; thence west along township line to where it intersects the east line of range 31 west; thence north along range line to its intersection with the 3d standard parallel; thence east to the place of beginning."

The first change in the boundaries was made in 1879, when the county was enlarged by township 15 in ranges 26 to 30. In 1881 it was diminished on the north by one tier of townships and increased on the south by a strip taken from Buffalo county. In 1883 townships 21 of ranges 27 to 30 were detached, the first two being given to Hodge-man and the last two attached to Finney.

In Feb., 1886, in response to a petition from the residents of Lane county for organization Gov. Martin appointed G. T. Sutton census taker. His report, made on June 3, showed that there were 2,726 inhabitants, of whom 924 were householders, and \$739,843 worth of taxable property, exclusive of railroad property, of which \$462,955 was real estate. Dighton was the choice of the majority of the voters for temporary county seat. The governor's proclamation, made the same day that this report was returned, declared Dighton the temporary county seat and appointed the following officers: County clerk, T. J. Smith; county commissioners, Joshua Wheatcraft, J. J. Shaffer and G. H. Steeley.

The first settlements were made in 1878 and were in or about Alamota, where the first postoffice was established in that year, a pioneer character known as "Wild Horse" Johnson being the first postmaster. Dighton must have been founded in 1879, as a newspaper, the Dighton Progress, was established in Feb., 1880, by Robert Mitchell. The first school was taught at Dighton in 1879. The first birth was that of Grace Lane Dow in 1879. The Dighton Republican in 1887 gave a list of 129 people who came into the county in 1879. The first United States census was taken in 1880 and showed a population of 619. At that time Lane was attached to Ness county for political purposes. A number of towns were founded about this time, among which were Waterloo, by R. W. Hey; Gould City, or California, at the geographical center of the county, at which place the first newspaper was established one month prior to the Dighton Progress, and Watson. In 1881 Lane was organized as a municipal township and held its first election. The first marriage occurred in March, 1881, between William D. Larkin and Margaret A. Sprague, the ceremony being performed by Rev. N. R. Van Derran. In 1882 there were but three sections of land deeded, 1,198 head of cattle, and 2,304 sheep. The real estate and personal property was worth \$45,000. Five years later there were 180 sections of land deeded, the live stock numbered 6,326, of which one-half was cattle. The railroad had been built and Dighton had attained a population, according to the newspapers, of 2,000. The hard times of 1892-93, which caused a great deal of suffering in western Kansas, was especially disastrous to Lane county people. In the winter of 1893 many of the farmers, finding themselves unable to buy coal for

fuel, sent a request to Gov. Lewelling that they be supplied from the state mines at Leavenworth. This could not be done under the law, but they were helped by private contributions. Ten years later the whole section had practically recovered from these hardships, land prices in Lane county had gone up, and permanent prosperity had been established.

The general surface of Lane county is rolling prairie. Bottom lands average one-half mile in width and comprise about 8 per cent. of the area. A few small streams, flowing north and east, have their sources within the county. There is a little native timber, and some artificial plantings. White limestone is found in the bluffs, and gypsum is plentiful.

The county is divided into nine townships: Alamota, Blaine, Cheyenne, Cleveland, Dighton, Spring Creek, Sutton, White Rock and Wilson. The postoffices are Alamota, Amy, Dighton, Division, Farnsworth, Healy, Lobdell, Pendennis and Shields. A branch of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad crosses near the center, almost directly west through Dighton. The Missouri Pacific railroad enters in the northeast and crosses southwest into Scott county. There are 45 organized school districts and one county high school.

The total value of farm products in 1910 was \$691,847, of which \$593,327 accrued from the field crops. The most valuable crop is wheat, which in 1910 amounted to more than \$200,000. Sorghum for forage and grain brought \$110,000. Corn, oats, barley and hay are other important crops. There were 13,520 head of live stock. The assessed valuation of property was \$6,546,431. The population was 2,603, an increase of nearly 900 over that of 1900.