

CHAPTER SEVEN - DANGER: DUST AHEAD - STEVENS COUNTY, 1930-1950

On April 19, 1935, the Hugoton Hermes reported that a dust storm had engulfed the southwest Kansas area on the previous Sunday. The journal said that: "Showing up in the northwest horizon, and extending for miles east and west, a great wave of dust, at least 2,000 feet high or more rolled over Stevens County Sunday, striking Hugoton at four p.m. and for twenty minutes visibility was at zero. It was total darkness. The dense cloud continued until a little after midnight." The report continued to describe the dust cloud as a foaming, boiling mass of fine, light colored dust followed by a larger, darker whirling wave of black dirt and silt; it made a dramatic contrast with the bright, blue sky and the level plains. The article concluded by commenting on the reactions of the people to the dust cloud, saying that "In spite of dire experiences of the storm, when it was approaching it was stated by many who saw it as being a pretty sight, watching it come toward us."

This dust storm characterizes the storms which continually besieged Stevens County during the "Dirty Thirties" and twenty years later in the mid-1950's. The first time these storms wrecked havoc on the High Plains the area was given the label of "Dust Bowl." <sup>174</sup> At this time Stevens County experienced a drouth which caused widespread wind erosion and a drastic reduction of its agricultural production. The extended period of drouth forced the county's farmers to adjust their farming methods to suit the fluctuating plains climate. In the 1940's the return of wet weather and good grain prices caused many people to overlook the new conservation farming techniques as they again began extensive cultivation of the land. However, the return of drouth and dust in the 1950's finally convinced people that they must employ conservation methods for farming to have any kind of stable future. By 1960, the county's residents had modified their lifestyles to a new agricultural system.

The dust bowl of the 1930's developed from the extended period of drouth and the great plow up of the 1920's. Both drouth and dust storms were not new to the area but this was the first time they reached a destructive level. James Malin, in a series of three articles, pointed out that dust storms were a common element of the weather pattern in Kansas..Malin, from various weather records and newspaper reports, showed that before 1900 settlers in western Kansas often put up with blowing dust each spring, when the strong wind would carry off soil unprotected by crops or native grasses. <sup>175</sup> In the 1930's, with much more land cultivated and the topsoil dry from the lack of rain, the spring winds were much more devastating.

The year 1931 marked the turning point of farming conditions in Stevens County. This was the peak year of acreage in crops, as well as the high year for wheat acres and production results. In 1931, the county's population also reached a high of 5,351 after a steady climb since 1900. The only low figures recorded during 1931 were the price of wheat and the inches of rainfall. <sup>176</sup> Overproduction and a high yield per acre flooded the wheat market in 1931. The high wheat prices of the mid-1920's, averaging one dollar and ten cents per bushel, fell to thirty-one cents per bushel in 1931. Farmers were stunned and unsure of what to do with the almost worthless bumper crop of wheat. Most farmers put the grain into storage, few realizing it would later help them weather the dusty depression years ahead.

The next year rainfall remained low and farmers harvested almost one hundred thousand acres less than the previous year. They cut wheat production one-third and planted more sorghums. By 1933, rainfall returned to normal, but the acreage continued declining, with only 9,490 acres of wheat harvested. In 1934, with the wetter season of the year before, farmers again increased their acreage of wheat and harvested about seventy-seven thousand acres. Just as the acres went up, the rainfall again declined and the long drouth started. Not only did Stevens County get just under nine inches of rain that year, but also the spring and summer months had more sunshine and

higher temperatures. Dust storms were more frequent now and of a higher severity: By June, 1934, insufficient moisture throughout southwest Kansas caused pastures to be burnt by the sun and crops failed to materialize. The number of cattle in Stevens County started declining and continued on a downward trend until 1939 brought better weather. Farmers kept planting crops, but now they replaced most of the wheat with the hardier sorghums. Crop failure continued into the next year.

The year 1935 was the worst of the dust bowl era for Stevens County.<sup>177</sup> Agriculture was not the only thing adversely affected by the drouth and dust; in 1935, the health of county residents also suffered from the dusty conditions. In the first days of May, the Hugoton Hermes reported on the effects a series of storms had on the people.

The health of Stevens County residents has become more critical this week than last. Monday was a balmy day, but we awoke Tuesday morning with dust blowing into our fresh-air-windows which covered up the designs on linoleum covered floors. Nostrils were drifted full and our hair was heavy with silt. Under such existing conditions, people are becoming weakened and their bodies are breaking down with illness. 178

People complained of sore throats, chest pains, headaches because of sinus irritation, and bronchial coughs. Anyone with an illness found their condition worsened by the dust, which made breathing more difficult. Babies, children and old people were very susceptible to illness and several of them were sent out of the county.

People tried various ways to prevent the dust from entering homes, but it proved an impossible task. The Hugoton Hermes reported that people pasted strips of paper and cloth over cracks around windows. They also hung wet sheets over the doors and windows to stop the dust. Both methods helped somewhat, but dust still sifted into the houses.<sup>179</sup> People found no escape from breathing and living with the dust until the winds calmed and the dirt settled.

The people in Stevens County coped the best they could with the dust. Dust storms greatly restricted their lifestyles;

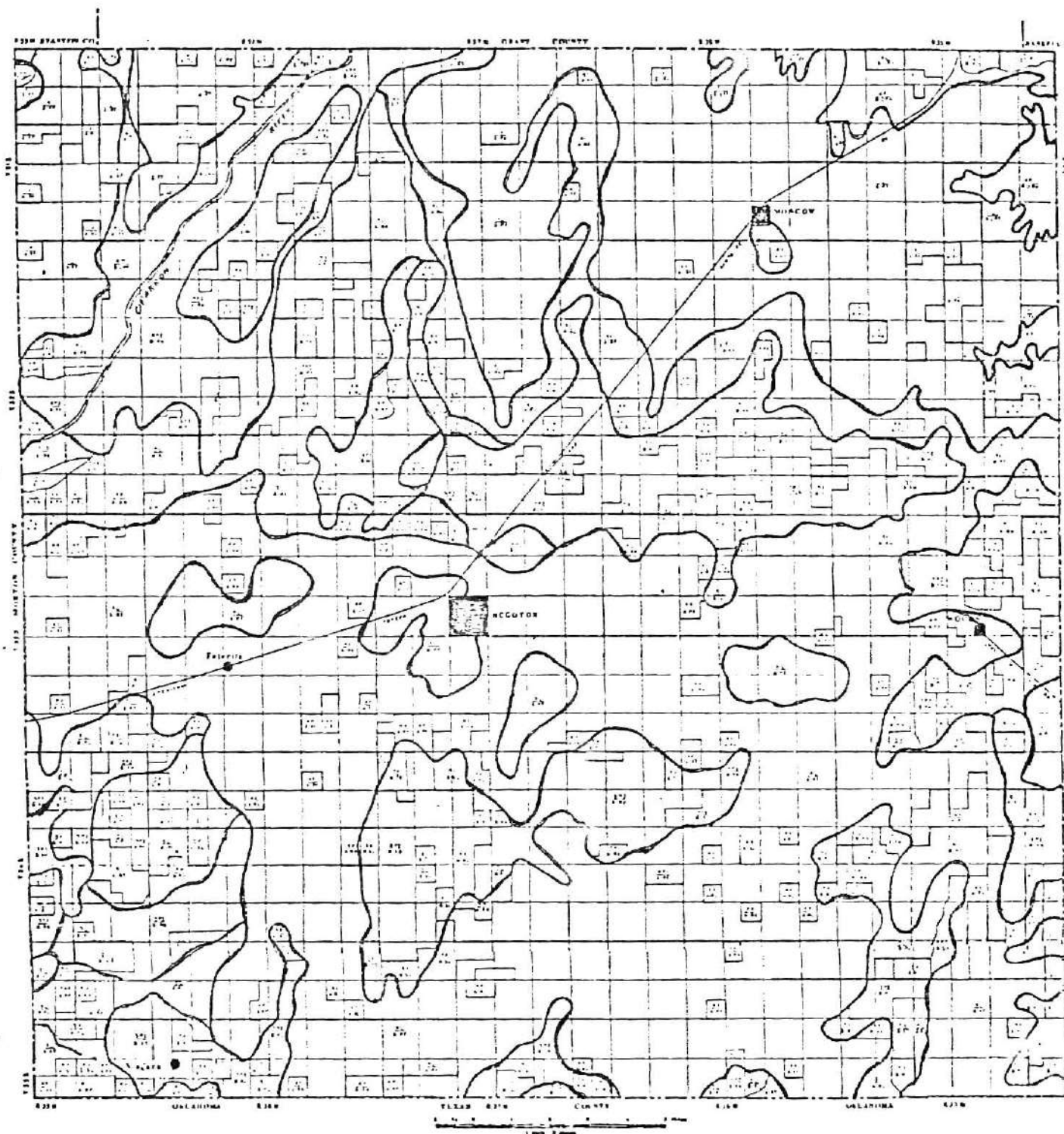
businesses closed down, people were confined to home, and schools were dismissed until the storms dissipated. People waited out the storms and took advantage of the rare dust free days to do shopping, clean house or visit friends. The Red Cross issued dust masks to people so they could travel about more easily when the dust was bad. Some people could not stand the daily repetition of storms and they left the county; an outward migration started which did not stop until the population hit 3,051 in 1943.

Storms affected the people both physically and mentally. Yet many county inhabitants constantly expressed optimism about the future, whether it was tomorrow or the next year. A perfect example of the confidence people had in "tomorrow" was the Hugoton Hermes. The newspaper continually reported dust bowl conditions in a positive light. It was not until the dust severely threatened the people that the newspaper reported more about the problems in the county. Even then the paper over-emphasized any good weather or rain. When a rain storm in May brought enough moisture to stop the dust from blowing the newspaper reported with big headlines that "what was once apparently a vast desert of sifting sand will soon be green pastures and fields of grain."<sup>180</sup> One week later, after dust storms had ravaged the county again, the Hugoton Hermes mentioned little about the return of dusty conditions. Other newspapers, such as the Garden City Daily Telegram, were just as optimistic and constantly berated eastern papers for painting such a poor image of the dust bowl and its inhabitants.<sup>181</sup> This confidence in the future of the land, based on previous experiences, kept many people in the area.

The optimism of the people did not allow them to overlook the damage done to the land during 1935. Statistics for that year help show the situation in the county and how it occurred. There were 612 farms in the county averaging 585.6 acres per homestead. From a soil survey done in the county in 1936, certain facts show what happened in the county.<sup>182</sup> The survey emphasized the direct correlation between the number of



# SOIL CONSERVATION MAP OF STEVENS COUNTY \*



- Areas outlined experienced the worst wind erosion in 1936.

\* Arthur H. Joel, Soil Conservation Survey. Jan. 1937.

tenant farmers and the high amount of soil erosion. In Stevens County farms operated by full owners amounted to 107, by part owners 194 and operated by tenants, 310 (presumably many of these tenants were agents for suitcase farmers). There were 358,365 acres of land in farms, 63.3 per cent cultivated, 14.8 per cent idle or in summer fallow and 21.9 per cent in pasture. The high number of acres in use, as well as the large amount of tenants who neglected the land, meant a large amount of Stevens County acreage was affected by erosion. Out of the total 466,560 acres in the county, approximately 358,970 acres, or 76.9 per cent, had serious erosion problems. The remaining 107,591 acres, or 23.1 per cent experienced slight erosion. This wind erosion caused about a fifty per cent crop failure rate in the county for 1935, as well as providing physical harm to the people.

The decline of agricultural production and the affects of the dust storms continued until 1940, when rainfall returned to over eighteen inches. During the Thirties farmers repeatedly planted crops, but results were poor. The southeastern part of the county, as well as around Moscow, fared the dusty conditions the best. The northwest corner of the county suffered the most. During 1938, more rain fell in the spring and helped crops for awhile. In an article "Stevens County 'Dust Proof' for 1939," the Hugoton Hermes reported conditions appeared greatly improved, except for the bare northwest corner. This year farmers finally had sufficient rain to start crops correctly, and both weeds and grasses showed up throughout the county.<sup>183</sup> By this time farmers employed new methods to stop blowing dust and to conserve moisture. Still, it was not until 1940 that agriculture recovered completely and returned to pre-dust bowl production levels.

During the 1930's the federal government started the first comprehensive relief program to deal with the High Plains drouth. Previous government involvement in the plains area consisted of limited seed relief and studies of the drouth cycles.<sup>184</sup> With a national depression, compounded by the dry weather, the

government established agencies to help the farmers in the plains region. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration, founded in 1933, gave financial aid to needy farmers.<sup>185</sup> The Hugoton Hermes, on September 22, 1933, ran a list of farmers who applied for money from this program based on the average acreage of their land from 1930 to 1933. Stevens County set up a wheat production control association and a county agricultural adjustment administration office to coordinate the federal program and help farmers get their share of the 866,128 bushels of wheat allotted in 1933.

By 1935, the conditions in the plains received national attention when the dust storms spread to the east coast. The severity of the drouth stirred the government into additional action. It authorized soil surveys, such as the one provided in 1936, to be done of the dust bowl area. The government used the results of the surveys and other reports on the area to deal with the drouth stricken area. These reports analyzed the situation in the plains, why it occurred, and offered solutions to the problems. Stevens County was a direct beneficiary of such reports.

In 1937, President Franklin Roosevelt referred to Congress a report by the Great Plains Committee entitled "The Future of the Great Plains."<sup>186</sup> In the letter of transmittal by the President, he stated the problems of the area and what must be done. President Roosevelt indicated that the plains had a more basic problem than just dealing with drouth and depression. As he said, "The problem is one of arresting the decline of an agricultural economy not adapted to the climatic conditions because of lack of information and understanding at the time of settlement and of readjusting the economy in the light of later experiences and of scientific information now available." He explained how settlers used agricultural methods from a humid climate to farm the semi-arid plains. The extended drouth proved that such methods were ill-adapted to the plains. Roosevelt concluded that "A new economy must be developed which is based on the conservation and effective

utilization of all water available, especially that which falls as rain and snow; an economy which represents generally a more rational adjustment of the organization of agriculture and cropping plans and methods to natural conditions." He finished the letter by recommending a long range program to deal with the plains climate and coordinating efforts of the federal, state and local governments.

A program based on these recommendations was devised, with the federal, state, and county governments working together. The Federal Soil Conservation Service, established in 1935, helped farmers use their land better. In 1936, the Social Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act provided payments to farmers who employed conservation practices.<sup>187</sup> Stevens County's farmers received \$254,791 in 1937 and \$292,604 in 1938 for plowing, listing or chiseling the land to decrease blowing.

Kansas also passed two laws which worked with the federal legislation to help farmers. In 1937 the Soil Conservation District Law permitted counties to establish soil conservation districts. Stevens County did not utilize this legislation until after 1948. However, the other state law passed the same year benefited county inhabitants more. The law authorized county commissioners to inspect blowing lands. If the erosion of the land affected neighboring fields, the commissioners could force the owner to use conservation methods to control the blowing. This law proved effective in forcing unwilling or neglectful farmers into caring for their land.<sup>188</sup>

The county provided help for farmers who needed additional funds or could not get aid from state and federal agencies. In 1936, the county issued emergency funds to destitute farmers.<sup>189</sup> Similar programs of aid continued until the return of better weather. The county and the town of Hugoton provided other types of help. The city park was plowed and plots given to people to grow food.<sup>190</sup> The county also worked with federal programs, such as the Works Projects Administration, to provide jobs for people. This coordination of programs got the



county swimming pool built, roads resurfaced and civic improvements made in the towns.<sup>191</sup> Finally, the county had the tax revenue and the additional business of the natural gas companies to supplement the local economy. This meant more money was available in the county treasury for relief programs and agricultural needs.

The federal programs introduced newer farming methods to prevent soil erosion. These conservation practices included contour farming, terracing, summer fallowing, and planting cover crops and native grasses to hold the land. At first farmers hesitated to follow many of these practices because they meant spending additional time and money. The farmers used the practices more after 1935 and when the government paid for fuel.<sup>192</sup> By the 1940's, many of these practices were forgotten with the return of wetter weather.

Federal studies also recommended a better system of land use for the southern Great Plains. Federal reports suggested an increase in farm size to better facilitate agricultural operations.<sup>193</sup> Stevens County underwent a drastic change in the average acreage of farms, as well as the number of farms in the county. The farmers who remained in the county during the dust bowl days consolidated their land holdings with acreage abandoned by others. With land at low prices, it was a perfect opportunity for farmers to expand their operations. In 1935 there were 612 farms in the county with the average size of 585.6 acres. By 1940 there were 433 farms averaging 739.1 acres. This trend continued in the ensuing years, going from 426 farms of 893.9 acres in 1950 to 400 farms of 1,171.1 acres in 1969. This change allowed farmers to develop a more efficient system of agriculture better adapted to the flat open plains; a larger land unit permitted more variation in crops and greater production per farm to cope with farming costs.

Along with these suggestions and practices, studies re-introduced irrigation as a means to alleviate problems in the area. Irrigation had always been a solution suggested for the area during dry periods. In his study of irrigation in south-

western Kansas, Richard Pfister shows that the farming practice was big along the Arkansas River during the 1880's.<sup>194</sup> Stevens County never had an irrigation program in its early settlement and until the dust bowl days no attempt was made to begin one. The greatest hinderance to irrigation in the county was lack of surface water for irrigation canals. Other early day irrigation projects depended upon a group of wind mills to pump water to the fields, which proved to be an expensive operation. By the time of resettlement better weather alleviated the need for irrigation and no big investment was made in developing the practice.

With the dust bowl conditions farmers reconsidered the use of irrigation. Farmers had natural gas available for powering pumps and making ground water more accessible. The county's first irrigation well was drilled in 1934; but wide spread irrigation never caught on before the return of rain in 1940.<sup>195</sup> In 1942, only two farms had a total of 472 acres irrigated, using four wells powered by natural gas.<sup>196</sup> Up until 1950 irrigation increased in use slowly and by that time eleven farms irrigated a total of 1,615 acres.<sup>197</sup> All during the 1940's irrigation was never seen as important because rainfall reached record breaking amounts and acreage again climbed to new highs.

The 1950's heralded a more permanent change in attitude toward irrigation and other conservation methods suggested during the "Dirty Thirties." What happened to bring about wide scale use of irrigation? It was the return of the dust bowl conditions. With 1940, Stevens County's agriculture recovered from the affects of the dust bowl. World War II stimulated the growth of the agricultural economy as the demand for livestock and grain grew. Both the amount of acreage cultivated and the number of cattle in the county increased rapidly. In 1939 only 131,817 acres were harvested but by 1943, 223,365 acres were cultivated. Similarly, in 1939 only 4,320 head of cattle were in the county; by 1943 there were 14,590 head of cattle. Both wheat and sorghums were produced in greater quantities, and yields were higher because of the exceptionally wet weather.

After the war the livestock totals dropped, while cultivated acreage continued to expand. In 1948, total acreage was 267,800, while wheat crops reached a high of 148,000 acres.

This rapid growth of agricultural production worried some people about the future of the plains. In 1947, Secretary of Agriculture Clinton P. Anderson wrote an article entitled "Soil Murder on the Plains" for the Country Gentleman.<sup>198</sup> Anderson warned that overproduction could create another dust bowl if farmers did not continue using conservation methods. He felt the rapid growth in agriculture must be blamed on World War II and the return of the suitcase and sidewalk farmers pursuing profits from high grain prices. Anderson stressed the lessons of the "Dirty Thirties" and hoped farmers would work to prevent a reoccurrence of the dust bowl. Unfortunately, farmers left Anderson's message unheeded.

A dry cycle hit Stevens County in 1952, when it had about seven inches of rain. In 1954, only thirteen inches came and in 1956, 7.49 inches of rain were recorded. The dry weather, coupled with overcultivation, brought about dust storms equaling or more severe than the 1930's. Fortunately, the inhabitants were better off this time with the increased production of natural gas and the revenue from it. This time they had money to see them through the dry years. With these resources and the right to use gas without charge for irrigation, the number of irrigation wells increased rapidly between 1954 and 1956 in the county. By 1956, there were one hundred irrigation wells in the county, with twenty thousand acres irrigated.<sup>199</sup> This number steadily increased, despite the return of better weather conditions, until 142 farms in 1969 irrigated 65,724 acres in the county. Farmers finally learned the lesson of the dust bowl and turned to irrigation as a partial solution to dry conditions.

Stevens County shook off affects of the second dust bowl by 1957. Rains increased and agricultural production followed. Farmers now incorporated conservation methods and irrigation into their system of agriculture. Through the use

Topeka Capital, Feb. 27, 1954

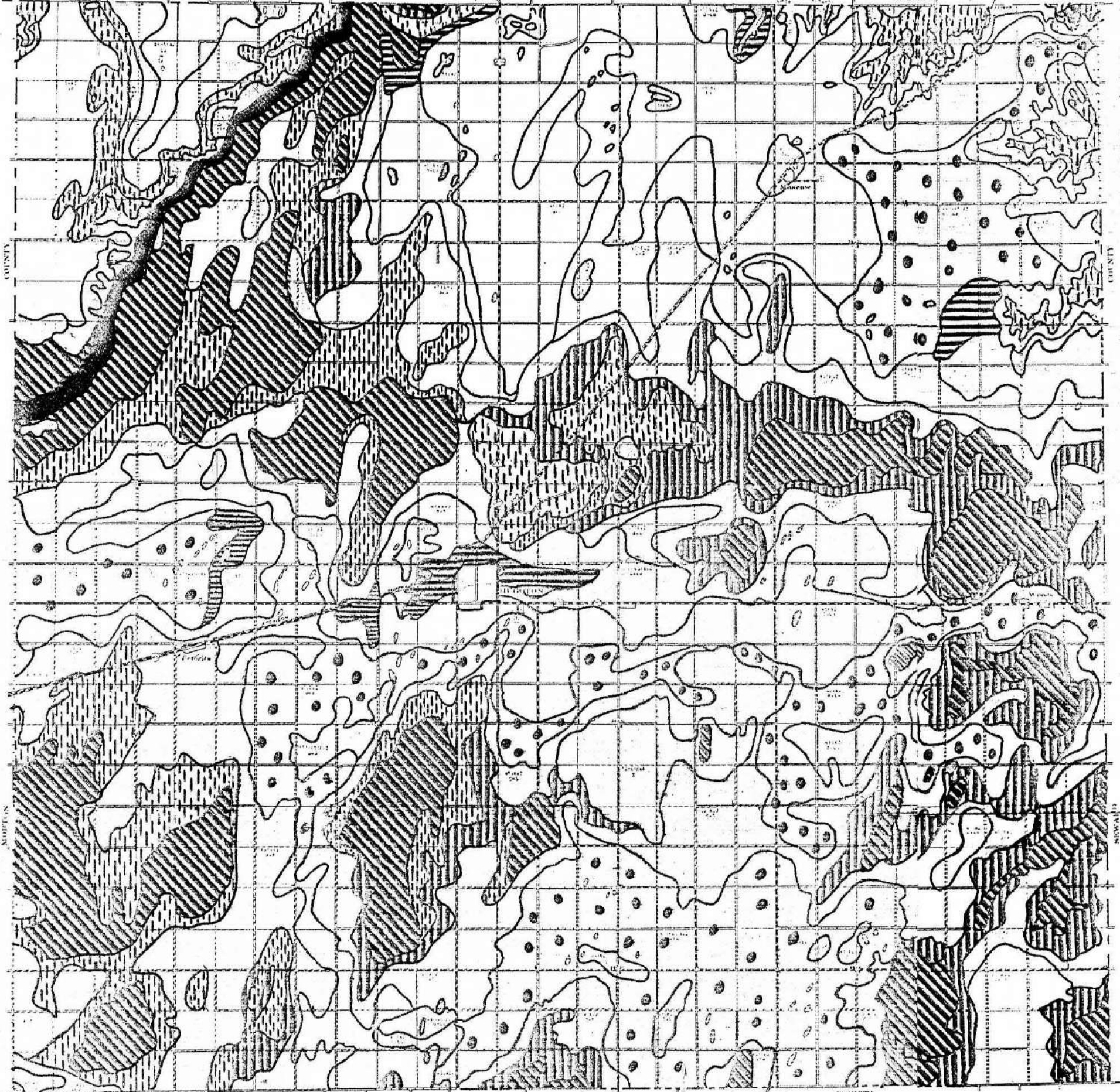
CHEYENNE	RAWLINS	DECATUR	MORTON	PHILLIPS	
135	147				
SHERMAN	THOMAS	SHERIDAN	GRAHAM	ROCKS	
181	221				
WALLACE	LOGAN	GOVE	TREGG	ELLIS	
100	134				
GREELEY	WICHITA	SCOTT	LANE	NESS	RUSH
165	130	128	135		
HAMILTON	KEARNY	FINNEY	HODGEMAN	PAWNEE	
153	117	213	171		
STANTON	GRANT	MASKELL	GRAY	FORD	EDWARDS
140	104	162	231	301	
MORTON	STEVENS	ESQUIRO	MEADE	CLARK	KOVA
91	113	120			COMANCHE

COLORADO

**KANSAS DUST AREA**—This map prepared by E. H. Teagarden, Kansas State College, shows the area where dust storms the past seven days have destroyed an estimated one-third of the 1954 wheat crop in 15 counties, and endangered another third. Numbers in each county represent thousands of acres of wheat allotted for seeding last fall. The shaded area along the Colorado-Kansas border is where most damage has occurred and represents a total of about 2 million allotted wheat acres.

of soil surveys, farmers now understood what methods to use on their land. Farmers, with the aid of agricultural extension services, and other agencies, also worked out long range programs for agricultural production of their land. In 1950, Stevens County established a soil conservation district which worked hard in the following seven years to combat soil erosion.<sup>200</sup> Included in the program was reseeding lands to native grasses; 465 acres planted in 1956 brought the total to





## SOIL MAP

- Suitable for cultivation:

With Intensive practices



Limited use with  
Intensive practices



- Not suitable for  
cultivation:

Suitable for grazing



- Not suitable for  
cultivation or  
grazing:



16,683 acres. Finally, farmers joined the newly formed South-west Kansas Irrigation Association and similar organizations which offered help and information on improved agricultural methods. 201

Stevens County survived two dust bowls and emerged in better shape to face the future. The people finally realized their eternal optimism must be supported by practical farming techniques. Farmers failed to recognize the restrictions on full scale cultivation of the county until the dusty 1950's. Reinforced by a second experience with severe wind erosion, county residents willingly adjusted their farming methods to ones better suited for the plains climate. This change in farming practices stabilized the agriculture of Stevens County. Total acreage, crop acreage, and the land in use are now relatively constant. Over cultivation and crop speculation are no longer a threat. However, it remains a question whether an extended period of drouth can bring back a third dust bowl to Stevens County.

## CHAPTER EIGHT - STEVENS COUNTY: TODAY AND TOMORROW

The small road sign planted beside the two lane highway marks the start of Stevens County's boundaries. For the next twenty miles a traveler drives through level, cultivated fields intermingled with rough prairie. One or two broken down buildings and an occasional farmstead stand out against the expanse of blue sky. At one point a cattle feed lot interrupts the near emptiness of the land. The horizon is finally broken by a grain elevator off in the distance. The town of Moscow comes into view, nestled at the foot of the elevator. Three or four dirt streets, lined with small houses and large trees make up the whole of the town, and Moscow is soon left behind for more miles of open land. A small group of sandhills flank the road, with the white blossoms of the yucca plants and little yellow wildflowers scattered among the short grasses. Emerging from the hills, a visitor again sees grain elevators standing in the foreground. This time a green oasis spreads out around the base of the elevators. The road leads into a small, sprawling town, full of nice brick homes, neatly trimmed green lawns, numerous big, shady trees and a busy modern main street. A sign welcomes the traveler to Hugoton, the "natural gas capital of the world" and the county seat of Stevens County.<sup>202</sup>

Today Hugoton dominates the scenery in Stevens County. In the last thirty years the town has grown, with the majority of the county's population concentrated there. Most of the county's farmers live in Hugoton, along with the large number of people who work in non-agricultural jobs. The town serves as a shopping center for three counties. Hugoton boasts its own water, gas and sewer systems; wide, clean, curbed, paved street; a well-lit municipal park with a swimming pool; one of Kansas' finest schools systems; and exceptionally friendly people.<sup>203</sup>

Hugoton reached its present status through a series of changes which took place in Stevens County after World War II.





GAS CAPITAL OF THE WORLD  
CITY OF HUGOTON, KANSAS  
A PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITY



114 EAST FIFTH STREET  
HUGOTON, KANSAS 67951

- 1 City Hall & Power Plant No. 1
- 2 Power Plant No. 2
- 3 Stevens County Library
- 4 Stevens County Court House and Memorial Hall
- 5 Stevens County Jail-Dispatch
- 6 Chamber of Commerce Office
- 7 Elementary School (Kindergarten through sixth grade)
- 8 Secondary School (Junior High and High School Grades seven through twelve)
- 9 Stevens County Hospital
- 10 Project Vancor-Nursing Home
- 11 Stevens County Gas and Historical Museum
- 12 City Parks
- 13 First Church of God In Christ
- 14 Faith Lutheran Church
- 15 St. Helen's Catholic Church
- 16 First Christian Church
- 17 Hugoton First Church of God
- 18 Church of Christ
- 19 Church of The Nazarene
- 20 Hugoton United Methodist Church
- 21 Assembly of God Church
- 22 Trinity Baptist Church
- 23 Hugoton Baptist Church
- 24 Pentecostal Holiness Church
- 25 El Bethel Church
- 26 Pentecostal Holiness Church
- 27 Post Office
- 28 County Fair Grounds

This map provided for your convenience with the compliments of the City of Hugoton Utility Department providing you with Electric, Water and Sanitation Services.

The town's population increased from 1,349 in 1940 to 2,781 in 1950, then more than half the county's inhabitants. This trend of people settling in Hugoton, still in process today, came about for several reasons. The gas companies, with their offices in town, attracted a few people with jobs and related business. Farmers abandoned their isolated homesteads for the benefits the town offered their families. While the automobile made it easier for a farmer to live in town and drive to his land, the towns provided better schools and a more enjoyable community lifestyle.

The biggest force pushing people into Hugoton came from the agricultural situation in the county. When farmers expanded their land holdings to larger, more efficient units it meant fewer people owned more land. The number of farms in the county stabilized around four hundred; this allowed fewer opportunities for the excess population to work the land. In addition, increased mechanization of farming eliminated jobs for farm laborers. These people who could find no place in the agricultural system went to Hugoton for work.

By 1950, most people in Stevens County worked in non-agricultural jobs. The federal census for that year lists 573 people in farm jobs, while 836 people had other employment.<sup>204</sup> This trend became the normal pattern of employment and remains today. The increase in non-agricultural jobs meant more people lived in Hugoton, where the work was located.

The change from an agricultural to a non-agricultural work force did not mean farming diminished in importance. On the contrary, agriculture remains the mainstay of Stevens County's economy. The increase in non-farming jobs simply reflected the growth of industries dependent on agricultural production. Especially important are the retail and wholesale trades, professional and service industries and transportation facilities.<sup>205</sup>

The natural gas industry provides fewer jobs; but similar to agriculture, gas business creates related jobs dependent on the industry. A large number of lawyers, abstractors, cement contractors and other professionals exist in the county because

of the gas industry. The natural gas revenue also stabilizes the agricultural industry and provides additional income for county inhabitants when crop production is down. Finally, the gas income gives the county a lower, more favorable tax rate and an ample energy source which attracts more small businesses than other counties in southwestern Kansas.

Hugoton has undergone several face lifts in the last thirty years. Many civic improvements came about because of the increased gas developments and the return of agricultural prosperity. Other changes marked steps in the modernization process going on in towns throughout Kansas. The volunteer fire department had its equipment upgraded. A country club golf course was built west of Hugoton. Near the course the county-city owned airport was established. A bowling alley was added to the town. The county built a home for the elderly residents of the area and situated it near downtown Hugoton. In 1950, the county constructed a twenty bed hospital. This eliminated the long drive of inhabitants to Liberal or Garden City when they needed intensive medical which the county's two doctors could not provide. Stevens County adopted the "county unit system" in 1948 to service and finance roads in the area and then paved more of its highways.<sup>206</sup> Today all but a few county roads are black-topped.

The schools of Stevens County have retained their important function as centers of educational and community activities. Through a series of reorganization laws passed by the state of Kansas after 1945, the number of school districts in the county decreased from over thirty to two.<sup>207</sup> The consolidation of the districts into larger units resulted from better transportation facilities, the decrease of rural population, and improved schools in the towns of the county. All of Hugoton and three-fourths of the county are in school district 210; Moscow and northeast corner, along with part of Grant Seward counties make up district 209. In addition to the district changes, the county now has two high schools, one in Hugoton and one in Moscow. The schools of the county are con-

stantly being upgraded; for example, in 1967 Hugoton completed a new carpeted and air conditioned annex to its primary school.<sup>208</sup>

The numerous civic improvements made in Hugoton during the post World War II period are symbolized by the new county courthouse erected in 1952 to replace the 1887 building. The push for a new building began in 1930, but the dust bowl years diverted attention from the issue. Finally, the county built the modern, two-story courthouse and memorial auditorium. Governor E.F. Arm dedicated the building on September 6, 1952, during the festivities of the county fair and Gascapeade.<sup>209</sup> The county razed the beautiful, old courthouse the following year, ending seventy-five years of service as a school, church, community center and courthouse. The Hugoton Hermes reported that older residents hated to see the building demolished, but that "persons of more recent years did not have the personal feeling for the old building and they felt it should be replaced by modern construction."<sup>210</sup> The 1887 structure was one of the oldest and last original buildings in the county; like its contemporaries, the courthouse finally succumbed to the pressures of modern America. Today, only the cupola and bell are left as a reminder of the past.

The changes in the agricultural system and the development of a sounder economy in Stevens County produced a more stable society. The county experienced a decrease in the migration of people to and from the county, which makes the community much more homogeneous. The county still has its problems as does any other small American community. A higher divorce rate, infrequent cases of juvenile delinquency, and assorted crimes plague the county.<sup>211</sup> Welfare and community assistance for the needy also increased with a revision of the Kansas constitution in 1937, which set up a board of welfare in the county. The number of people on welfare in the county averages about fifteen per thousand and most of these are elderly people.<sup>212</sup>

Today, Stevens County is a modern, prosperous, agricultural community dominated by the pleasant town of Hugoton. For almost one hundred years the county and town have had years of plenty



tempered by depression, indebtedness, isolation and dust bowls. The success of the community is a testimony to the tenacity and faith of the people who settled and remained in the county. The ability of these people to deal with hard times and survive makes a person wonder about the future. How will the inhabitants deal with over-population, energy problems, water shortages, inflation and the perpetual drouth cycles?

The natural increase of Stevens County's population has only two possible outlets; migration or more industry to create jobs. The excess population gives the county a good, relatively young work force, but there are few employment opportunities in the community. Emigration has been the traditional solution for this group of people. New industries in the county would offer the alternate solution.

Large manufacturing concerns and industries have never developed in Stevens County. Manufacturing outfits never numbered more than three, and that amount existed in 1919.<sup>213</sup> Most of these businesses were small and employed less than ten people. The gas business is the only large scale industry in the county; again employment has been on a small scale with a constant number of jobs. Both manufacturers and industries are not attracted to the county because of the low population density, the distance from major marketing areas, and the limited resources of raw materials in the area.<sup>214</sup> Though gas supplies and a low tax structure make the county appealing, the low water supply, high shipping costs and the small number of consumers outweigh the positive aspects. For this reason, chain stores and other large concerns avoid the area. A small business, based on agricultural products could take advantage of the area's benefits and successfully service the small population.

The major drawing power of the county is its gas reserves. Not only do they attract business, they also boost the economy and allow irrigation. The question still unanswered for county inhabitants is how long will the gas continue to flow. Gas companies offer no estimation of the supply. Based on previous

appraisals of the geological surveys, the gas will be depleted in twenty or thirty years. When the gas stops flowing the county will lose an important source of energy and income. The plains are ideally suited for solar and wind energy facilities, but these sources could not quickly replace the gas power and additional revenue on which the county functions today.

If gas supplies are depleted, Stevens County will again rely solely on its agriculture. This could put the county back into a pre-1930's situation. Today, farmers produce sorghums, wheat and irrigated corn. The sorghums and corn feed the increased number of livestock in the county, creating a complementary and profitable system of agriculture. Wheat remains an important crop for export from the county. With natural gas available for irrigation systems, truck or garden farming is a possibility for the future, as California and other areas become more populated.<sup>215</sup> Without gas, however, irrigation would cease and crops using the system would become almost non-existent. Other crops would again be subjected to dry cycles and low yields. Even this year, with irrigation, blowing dust and low rainfall have hurt the crops in the county.<sup>216</sup> Without gas and its revenue, crop losses would be greater and more destructive to the economy. Coupled with a falling ground water level, inflation, and high credit rates, the loss of gas would be very harmful.

Hope for Stevens County lies in the development of additional gas reserves. Wells have been drilled below 5,000 feet, with some striking gas. If larger reserves can be discovered and developed, the county will escape a return to the past. Otherwise, with limited water resources and the fluctuating climate, the agricultural community will have to readjust once more. Extensive conservation practices along with a reduction of crop acreage will likely occur. More pasture land and expanded livestock production will replace the crops. Hopefully a balance will be found to prevent dust bowl conditions and allow the people to survive the dry cycles of the High Plains. The population will decrease to a number capable of existing on the new

system of agriculture. The people that do remain in the county will be the ones who believe, as their predecessors did, in the land and its future.

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## FEDERAL CENSUS, 1880, STEVENS COUNTY, KANSAS

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>PLACE OF BIRTH</u>
John C. Kelley	45	Freighting	Ohio
Henry Kelley	40	Mule Driver	Ohio
Harry Burch	26	Mule Driver	Indiana
Henry P. Buck	28	Mule Driver	Kentucky
Patrick Quinn	34	Mule Driver	Ireland
Michael Quinn	30	Mule Driver	Ireland
Ivan Obraah	25	Cook	New Mexico
Jesus Obraah	21	Herder	New Mexico
S. Obraah	17	Mule Driver	New Mexico
John O. Dowd	40	Mule Driver	New Hampshire
Peter Kelly	33	Mule Driver	Indiana
Jack Cummings	24	Mule Driver	New York

Refer to information in Chapter Five - The People, for a complete explanation of the county's population composition.

## POPULATION STATISTICS

	TOTAL POPULATION	NATIVE WHITE	FOREIGN BORN	BLACK	SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
1880	12	10	2	0	0
1890	1,418	1,399	0	19	451
1900	620	532	21	5	181
1910	2,453	2,313	59	81	615
1920	3,943	3,699	73	169	802
1930	4,655	4,479	33	142	1,209
1940	3,193	3,082	-	111	1,055
1950	4,516	4,414	20	79	995
1960	4,400	4,326	8*	66	1,255
1970	4,198	4,141	7**	50	1,046

\* Includes six Indians, two Japanese.

\*\* Includes seven Indians.

TOWNS OF STEVENS COUNTY <sup>1</sup>

1. Cave - A present day unincorporated town on the southeast corner of section 8, T31S, R35W, and along the tracks of the Santa Fe railroad.
2. Dermot - Located on section 15, T31S, R39W. Established by the Dermot Town, Land and Investment Company which was incorporated June 1, 1887. The company had eight trustees: N.P. Allen, W.E. Allen, W.E. Davis R.C. Crandon, C.E. Blewett, R.H. Chrism, H.M. Gilbert, all of Dermot; I.B. Nall, Louisville, Kent. Dermot was platted July 1886 and the first buildings started by N.P. Allen and W.E. Allen. At one time there were two general stores, a blacksmith shop, livery barn, school and post office. The town was vacated in 1893 and most of the buildings, except the school, moved to other parts of the county. About 1908 a readjustment of county lines moved Dermot into Morton County.
3. Ematon - A small community located fifteen miles from Hugoton. The Hugoton Hermes, July 10, 1908, called it a quaker settlement. Polk's Kansas State Gazetter, 1912, lists a daily mail route and a general store run by Fred J. Bowman. The town is shown on the map of Kansas mail routes in Baughman's Kansas in Maps, p. 94.
4. Feterita - An unincorporated town, still in existence, located southwest of Hugoton on the Santa Fe railroad, section 29, T33S, R38W. Established in 1918 as a grain collection point, the town is named for a type of sorghum grown in the area. A post office was established in 1919 and discontinued in 1937.
5. Hugoton - Located on section 16, T33S, R37W. It was established in 1885 by a group of McPherson, Kansas men and was originally named Hugo, after the

- french writer Victor Hugo. It is the county seat and the largest community in the county.
6. Indianapolis - Unidentified town located near the center of the county on land districts maps for 1885-86. Baughman's Kansas in Maps, p. 87, has it located near present day Hugoton.
  7. Lafayette - Located on section 10, T35N, R36W. The town was established by a Quaker group in 1886. An article in the Topeka Daily Capital, December 6, 1916, reporting the closing of the post office in worth quoting. "This will write "finis" on the history of the town started thirty years ago by Doctor Furness as leader of a colony of Quakers in that section. Mayor E.R. Kimzey, of Hugoton, and his father A.A. Kimzey, hauled the lumber from Hartland on the Santa Fe nearly eight [?] miles to build the two story building and livery barn that marked the beginning of Lafayette. For the last few years the post office has been kept at country dwellings until now there are only four families getting mail at Lafayette, the others being supplied by the star route that passes thru from Hugoton to Liberal." The town had a population of fifty in 1888 and 1891 and it had three weekly stages to Hugoton, Oak City and another town. In 1912, the majority of people left in the town were involved in livestock production.
  8. Macon - Located on section 16, T35S, R37W, near the southern line of the county. It was established by the Macon Town Corporation in June, 1886. There were eight directors of the company: Eli P Williams, W.H. Cottingham, L.H. Roberts of McPherson; M.F. Fletcher, W.O. Gray of Canton, Kansas; W.M. Donald, E.M. Cook, C.Friese of Hugoton.
  9. Moonlight - Located on section 11, T32S, R39W. (Mrs. Thomson records it as section 17, 16, 20, 21.) The town



was established by the Moonlight Town company, incorporated in March, 1887. The five directors were S.N. Wood, C.S. Toby, A.A. Dunmire of Woodsdale; J.F. Appleby of Moonlight; A.R. Beatty of Laken, Kansas. The town was named for Thomas Moonlight, a politician from Leavenworth.

10. Moscow - Presently located on section 26, T31S, R36W. This town was established in 1913 when the Santa Fe railroad built through the county. The original location of the town was section 16, T32S, R35W, and it was established in June 1887 by the Moscow Town Company. The company had nine directors: J.T. Hopkins, W.J. Wines, J.R. Boswell of Woodsdale; S.I. Drysdale, J. Adkins of Valparaiso; J.W. Gallaway, A.P. Ridenour, J.E. Hunt of Fargo Springs (Seward County); J.F. Van of Voorhees. The town was named after Mosco, a member of Coronado's exploration party. The town remained small during the boom period, though it did support a newspaper. In 1891 Moscow had a population of 15, mail service tri-weekly, and a justice of peace, music teacher, shoemaker and real estate man.
11. Niagara - Located on section 1, T35S, R38W, and established in the fall of 1887. Polk's Kansas State Gazetteer for 1888 and 1891 list it only as a post office. The town is recorded on the soil survey map prepared in 1936, though there is no record of how large the community was at the time.
12. Valparaiso - Located on section 8, T32S, R35W. The town was established in late 1886 by the Valparaiso Town Company, whose purpose was to build a town near the post office built in July 1886. There were five directors of the company, all of Valparaiso: E. Dudley, G.R. Porter, W.S. Nomby, J.K. Bosmed, S.S. Wilbur. (Note: a witness to the signing of the town charter was S.N. Wood, implying the town had his blessing.) In 1888 the town had a pop-

ulation of 15, a church, school, grocery store, general store, hotel and restaurant.

13. Voorhees - Located on section 36, T34S, R37W. It was established by the Voorhees Town and Land Company in April, 1887. There were thirteen directors of the company: J.K. Holmes, D.C. Bridges, H.P. Ulyton, A.H. Burtis, W.I. Harwood, G.L. Holmes, all of Garden City; J.W. Reich, W.C. Edwards of Larned; Colonel A.S. Johnson, George R. Peck of Topeka; Alex Davezac, John Gordon of Covington, Kentucky; W.J. Buchan of Wyandotte; J.R. Hallowell of Wichita. The town was named after Senator Voorhees of Indiana. The town was an ally of Woodsdale during the county-seat fight and it supported a newspaper for three years.
14. Waterford - Located on section 5, T31S, R35W. A small community, with a post office established in 1888. In 1888 it had a population of 15. The Dead Town File of the Kansas State Historical Society Archives suggests that the town could have been a farm post office located in Grant county for a short period and then in Stevens County.
15. Woodsdale - Located on parts of section 12, 13, 14, T32S, R37W. The town was established in June, 1886, by the Woodsdale Town Company. The five directors were S.N. Wood, W.W. McLane, W.H. Kerr, H.C. Gibson, and Q. Rolstin. The town was the rival of Hugoton for the county seat. The town had several newspapers and was a thriving community for a few years. The population for 1888-89 was 500, and in 1891 was 150. Of interest is the listing in Polk's Kansas State Gazetteer of 1888-89 of a meat market run by Ed Short and Sam Robinson, rivals in the county-seat fight.
16. Zella or Pearl City - Located on section 3, T32S, R36W. The town was established by the Zella Town Company in July, 1886. The company had five directors:

Joseph Neer, L.H. Lyon, J.S. Hoare, all of Zella; C.E. Cook, A.W. Donald of Hugoton. The population in 1888 and 1891 was 50. The town had a weekly paper and numerous businesses. The town was vacated in 1893 and resettled in the first decade of 1900. In 1908 there were two teachers, a carpenter, a grocer, dentist, dressmaker, veterinary, and blacksmith. Also, the town has a telephone exchange out of Hugoton. There is no explanation of the town's double name.

17. Znojmo - Located on section 26, T33S, R36W. It was established in the late 1880's by a Bohemian group. ( Mrs. Thomson dates the town from 1905.) In 1916, the town lots were sold for delinquent taxes. Most of the lots were in the name of Anton B. Chapek. The town was probably named after a village in Czechoslovakia where the settlers had come from.

- 
1. Information for this section on the towns of Stevens County was taken from the following sources unless otherwise cited. Material on specific towns found in the Dead Town File of the Kansas State Historical Society Archives; yearly information from R.L. Polk and Co., Kansas State Gazetteer and Business Directory (Chicago) for years cited; general information from Edith Campbell Thomson's History of Stevens County.

POST OFFICES OF STEVENS COUNTY, KANSAS <sup>1</sup>

POST OFFICE	ESTABLISHED	DISCONTINUED	FIRST POSTMASTER
Bruce	Feb. 26, 1889	Jan. 28, 1890	Daniel L. Betts
Clarence	Mar. 29, 1890	Aug. 15, 1895	C.A. Youngren
Dermot	Jy. 20, 1886	Aug. 31, 1929	Nathan P. Allen
Ematon	Mar. 14, 1905	Je. 30, 1919	Elihu M. Anderson
Feterita	Oct. 25, 1919	Mar. 31, 1920	Warren C. Trapp
	Dec. 8, 1922	Apr. 30, 1937	
Hugoton	Apr. 1, 1886	-	George C. Kroh
Lafayette	Jan. 8, 1887	Dec. 15, 1916	John Moore
Moonlight	Je. 7, 1887	Apr. 30, 1891	John F. Appleby
Moscow	Apr. 28, 1888	May 31, 1909	Edward Dudley
	May 3, 1913	-	
Niagara	Aug. 6, 1887	Dec. 31, 1894	Sylvester Maher
	May 19, 1905	Oct. 30, 1926	
Sibon	Dec. 23, 1911	Jy. 18, 1912	William A. Sibon
Star	Oct. 19, 1912	Dec. 26, 1912	James Hoskensin
Stevens	Apr. 1, 1908	May 15, 1913	Bertie McStevens
Traver	Feb. 27, 1904	Dec. 30, 1911	Josephine Traver
Valparaiso	Jy. 22, 1886	Apr. 28, 1888	Edward Dudley
	(Valparaiso office moved to Moscow)		
Voorhees	Feb. 5, 1887	Apr. 30, 1891	Franklin P. McGinnis
Waterford	Je. 22, 1887	Apr. 14, 1894	Timonthy Nihill
Woodsdale	Nov. 18, 1886	Mar. 31, 1915	Mrs. Lizzie Rice
Zella	Jy. 22, 1886	Mar. 15, 1909	John H. Ellis

1. Robert W. Baughman, Kansas Post offices. Kansas Postal History Society Publication, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, 1961.



NEWSPAPERS OF STEVENS COUNTY <sup>1</sup>

1. Dermot Enterprise - Established June 2, 1887 and discontinued in 1888.
2. Hugoton Hermes - Weekly newspaper, established on August 4, 1887 by Charles M. Davis. It is the only paper to survive from the 1880's to the present. (It was not published from February, 1890 to December, 1893. ) It is a Republican newspaper.
3. Hugo Herald - Established February 13, 1886 and discontinued in 1889. The paper was printed in Hugoton and played an important role in keeping the county-seat fight going with Woodsdale. C.E. Cook was one of the first editors.
4. Hugoton Ad-Viser - Established in June, 1934 and discontinued in October, 1934.
5. Morning Star - The Hugoton Ad-Viser was changed to the Morning Star in October, 1934. The newspaper was discontinued in May, 1935.
6. Moscow Review - Established in April, 1888 and lasted until December of the same year. The Moscow Review was a supporter of Woodsdale during the county-seat fight.
7. Southwest Kansan - Established in January, 1896 and discontinued in 1897. The paper was published in Hugoton.
8. Stevens County Sentinel - Established January, 1893 and discontinued in 1894. The paper was published in Woodsdale and then moved to Hugoton in early 1894.
9. Stevens County Tribune - Established January, 1890 and discontinued in 1892. The paper was published in Woodsdale.
10. Woodsdale Democrat - Established in March, 1887 and discontinued in 1889. The paper was started by Sam Wood.
11. Woodsdale Sentinel - Established in March, 1889 and discontinued in 1892. The paper took over the Woodsdale Democrat and was run by Sam Wood.

12. Woodsdale Tribune Sentinel - Established in July, 1892 and discontinued in 1893. The paper was changed to the Stevens County Sentinel in 1893.
13. Voorhees Vindicator - Established in October, 1887 and discontinued in 1890. The paper supported Woodsdale during the county-seat fight.
14. Zella Gazette - No dates available.

Short-Lived Newspapers:

15. Stevens County Eagle - Established in March 1889 and discontinued in May of the same year in Woodsdale.
  16. Woodsdale Times - Established in October, 1886 and discontinued in November of the same year.
- 

1. Information on the newspapers of Stevens County from:  
William E. Connelley, History of Kansas Newspapers.  
Kansas State Historical Society and Department of Archives, Topeka, 1916; Hugoton Hermes, Centennial Edition, August, 1961. ( Information for Hermes article compiled by Edith C. Thomson.)

## STEVENS COUNTY MEN SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES, WORLD WAR I

## ARMY:

## Hugoton:

Arnold, George	Joslin, William R.
Baggerly, Earl W.	Kascak, Joseph P.
Baker, Marvin S.	Kemp, Frank H.
Bane, John E.	Lancaster, William A.
Barber, George P.	Lautaret, Edward E.
Barton, James L.	McClure, Roy D.
Block, George E.	Martin, Ernest R.
Brown, Glenn D.	Mills, William J.
Bruce, Clifford	Morgan, Jay A.
Bruce, Everett	Neal, John H.
Bruce, Henry	Parker, Clyde T.
Bruce, James E.	Parsons, James R.
Burrows, Kenneth M.	Ray, Manning C.
Cooper, Raymond D.	Reeve, Jesse W.
Coulter, Harry A.	Richardson, Rueben E.
Cox, William J.	Richardson, Lemuel I.
Day, Ben H.	Roehr, Elmer G.
Downey, Earl J.	Roehr, Wallace W.
Elliott, David W.	Rowden, Charley G.
Faucett, William E.	Schmitt, Waldo D.
Floyd, Harry J.	Schweitzer, George F.
Forward, Glenn L.	Stitt, Logan D.
Frazee, Whitney B.	Thorpe, Gomer S.
Fulkerson, John F.	Tolbert, William
Gerrond, James R.	Van Dyke, Shannon W.
Gillespie, Griggs T.	Vogt, Jacob D.
Grubbs, Ralph	Webber, Leonard, A.
Gustafson, Edward W.	Wilcox, Clement C.
Hall, Earnest A.	Williams, Delbert D.
Hampton, Earl D.	Williams, John W.
Harmsen, Arthur M.	Willis, Howard L.
Hargrove, Malcolm F.	Wilson, Everett L.
Headrick, Leslie A.	Wilson, Oba
Humphreys, Floyd G.	Wilson, Vernon R.
James, Alvin	Wolfe, Harold W.
Jennings, Milton	Woodcock, Randall W.
Joslin, Donald	Young, Robert E.

## Moscow:

Bailey, John	Knisely, William H.
Clark, William L.	Lewis, Dee S.
Crosley, David V.	Lowery, Lige
Crosley, Deroy J.	Miller, Marvin
Dudley, Tolman L.	ONeal, Lester L.
Eberhart, Rueben J.	Ragan, Levi O.
Franzmeier, Bernard S.	Rosel, Franklin D.
Gilbert, Harry J.	Scranton, Ira E.

## Moscow:(continued)

Gray, James H.  
Hall, William H.  
Harmsen, Ralph H.  
Hubble, Everett E.  
Jones, Charles E.

Sloan, Wilbur H.  
Summers, Ivan F.  
Thomason, Fred  
Tilford, Albert O.

## Ematon:

Chaffin, Charles H.  
Kile, Lloyd M.  
Nix, Earl C.

Rawlins, James A.  
Sessler, Ralph E.

## Niagara:

Hicks, Herman L.

Horner, Omar

## Lafayette:

Bechtle, Fred L.

## MARINE CORPS:

## Hugoton:

Phillips, Ernest C.

Farmer, Earl A.

## Moscow:

Olney, Lloyd P.

## NAVY:

## Hugoton:

Moreneau, Louis

Williams, Harlan O.

## Moscow:

Grimes, John N.

Stitt, John A.



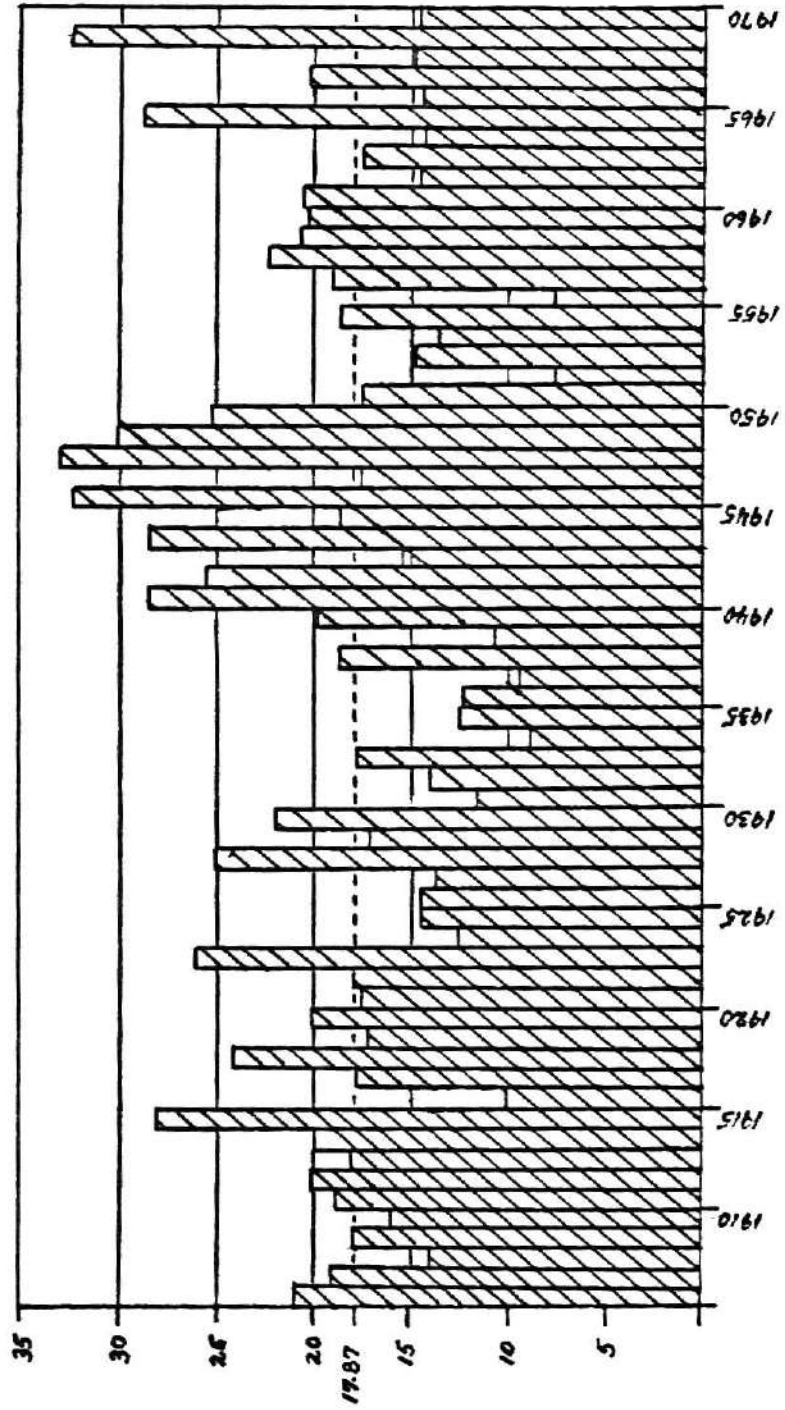
STATE REPRESENTATIVES OF STEVENS COUNTY <sup>1</sup>

- 1887 - John L. Pancoast; Republican; Hugoton.
- 1889 - A.S. Beeler; Republican; reelected in 1891.
- 1893 - A.H. Drew; People's Party.
- 1895 - Frank Murphy; Republican; Hugoton.
- 1897 - James T. Dalton; People's Party; Hugoton.
- 1899 - Charles H. Wright; Republican.
- 1901 - George H. Storms; Republican; Lafayette.
- 1903 - William Willis Martin; Republican; Richfield, Morton Ct.
- 1905 - John S. Stout; Democrat; Hugoton; also served in 1909, 1915 and 1917.
- 1907 - G. Porter Craddock; Republican; Richfield.
- 1911 - James W. Phillips; Democrat; Hugoton; reelected in 1913.
- 1919 - Edward White Joslin; Republican; died after elected.
- 1919 - Charles E. Dudley; Republican; Moscow.
- 1921 - John A. Kelley; Democrat.
- 1923 - Robert Morrison Crawford; Republican; also served in 1925, 1927, 1929, 1931, and 1933.
- 1935 - James Roy Parsons; Democrat; reelected in 1937 and 1939.
- 1941 - William F. Hubbard; Republican; Hugoton; he served until 1955.
- 1955 - Paul A. Wolf; Democrat; Hugoton; reelected in 1957 and 1959.
- 1961 - Paul Sundgren; Republican; Hugoton; also served in 1963 and 1965.
- 1965 - Howard Drew; Democrat; Hugoton.
- 1967 - Water Ford; Ulysses.

1. Information from the Hugoton Hermes, Centennial Edition, August, 1961; also from

Stevens County was designated as the 124th District with Morton County; in 1911 it was changed to the 125th District; in 1941 to the 124th District; in 1967 to the 122nd District.

ANNUAL PRECIPITATION IN STEVENS COUNTY, KANSAS



## AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Agriculture has always been the principal industry in Stevens County and will probably remain so. The following information was compiled from biennial reports of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture to help show the amount of crop and livestock production in the county.

The types of crops grown in the county have varied throughout its history. Everything from cotton to soybeans have been tried, some with success. The acreage chart outlines the principal crops and their relation to the total amount of acres harvested each year. In addition to the different plants on the chart, other crops grown in the county include the following:

Spring Wheat - This crop has never been planted extensively because winter wheat proved more adaptable and profitable in the county. The highest acreage of spring wheat, 2,887 acres, was harvested in 1908.

Rye, Oats, and Barley - These three crops have been planted periodically in the county. Usually a small acreage of one, two or three of them was planted each year. The largest acreage was in barley, when 18,400 acres were harvested in 1922. Generally, barley averaged around 4,000 acres a year, while the other two were less.

Soybeans - This crop entered the statistics in 1969, when less than 200 acres were harvested. In 1970 the amount was 270, and by 1972 it was below 200 acres again.

Cotton - This crop was grown in Stevens County in 1891, 1906-07, and 1911. The largest acreage was in 1907, when 158 acres were harvested.

Sweet Potatoes (1919 - 21), Irish Potatoes(1917 -69),

Cowpeas (1917 - 7), Castor Beans(1889 - 1,371), Buckwheat (1913 - 21), Alfalfa (1953 - 900), Sugar Beets (1909 - 2), and Popcorn (1937 - 12) - All of these crops were tried in the first fifty years of the county's history. Only castor beans were harvested on more than 1,000 acres in a year. The numbers in parenthesis are the year and largest acreage harvested for each crop.

Watermelon and other melons - Melon crops were grown in the earliest years of settlement to provide seed for eastern seed companies.

Truck farming - Production of vegetables has never been extensive in the county, though irrigation would now allow more of this type of farming. Farmers only produce enough vegetables for themselves or a small local market.

Orchards - Fruit trees were first tried in the 1880's and 1890's. The semi-arid climate has never allowed orchards to be successful in the county. However, a few trees were kept up into the 1940's. Also grape vines have been tried periodically. The harvests from both the fruit trees (apple, pear, peach, plum, and cherry) and the vines have never been more than twenty to forty bushels per year for each group. Again, this provided enough fruit for the local market.

In addition to crop production, livestock has played an important role in the agricultural system in Stevens County. The livestock chart shows the amount of animals in the county on an annual basis. The fluctuation in the number of cattle in the county should be noted. Horses and mules no longer figured in the statistics after 1961. Chickens entered the livestock tables in 1937, with 35,777 listed. The number of chickens (over three months old) for every five years is as follows:

1940 - 40,610; 1945 - 44,500; 1950 - 26,600; 1955 - 12,000;  
1960 - 7,000; 1965 - 4,000; 1970 - 500. Today, cattle and hogs  
are the most important livestock in Stevens County.

To give an accurate picture of the farming situation in Stevens County a chart containing farm statistics follows the previously mentioned charts. The information on farms was compiled from the United States Agricultural Censuses.



## CROP ACREAGE IN STEVENS COUNTY

YEAR	WHEAT	CORN	*SORGHUMS	BROOMCORN	TOTAL ACRES HARVESTED
1888	53	9,936	4,769	425	19,654
1889	585	14,225	3,438	2,396	26,792
1890	1,514	142	3,026	3,317	18,162
1891	5,660	4,043	2,576	3,366	23,463
1892	5,212	2,766	1,962	5,187	24,549
1893	7,310	2,138	4,179	7,702	27,110
1894	2,620	819	4,170	4,607	15,161
1895	290	797	3,787	4,590	11,548
1896	456	783	3,949	1,846	11,879
1897	132	648	3,998	1,418	9,657
1898	325	370	5,100	1,395	8,635
1899	71	407	4,778	1,560	7,897
1900	8	672	5,906	2,168	10,956
1901	66	424	6,061	1,425	39,225
1902	153	240	9,534	2,078	57,606
1903	173	579	10,807	1,960	37,776
1904	114	35	50,537	3,085	86,761
1905	484	405	11,254	3,285	117,832
1906	2,466	624	10,198	3,914	45,280
1907	3,477	2,259	9,993	4,278	65,046
1908	7,641	8,596	19,667	8,366	82,726
1909	4,792	11,730	28,128	13,654	115,938
1910	8,327	4,510	29,338	15,045	104,366
1911	2,826	6,281	33,591	11,074	137,818
1912	6,606	3,149	30,982	14,811	131,579
1913	6,563	5,339	38,361	7,318	-
1914	9,370	2,527	28,918	7,089	-
1915	12,626	3,494	37,947	4,123	** 62,536
1916	21,454	9,339	34,342	5,664	77,216
1917	3,617	7,183	67,963	11,893	99,065
1918	7,850	3,501	75,209	11,299	100,645
1919	23,654	4,870	76,184	4,318	118,897
1920	29,043	5,575	81,437	5,917	130,076
1921	56,091	15,476	45,073	2,335	132,726
1922	39,616	18,957	62,564	4,159	149,464
1923	-	15,695	118,886	15,395	171,363
1924	55,544	10,910	74,287	12,350	171,760
1925	61,032	11,436	80,538	6,745	168,353
1926	101,333	7,947	73,377	8,990	196,605
1927	5,937	19,888	109,921	7,662	151,674
1928	66,893	16,864	88,601	10,850	193,867
1929	131,050	14,549	55,828	12,895	231,507
1930	131,204	17,901	43,239	19,365	227,845
1931	166,989	15,262	59,491	6,935	270,309
1932	51,302	26,017	55,269	8,585	187,982

\* Sorghums include sorghum, milo maize, kafir corn, jerusalem corn, and feterita for grain, forage and silage.

\*\* Fenced prairie is no longer include in total acres.

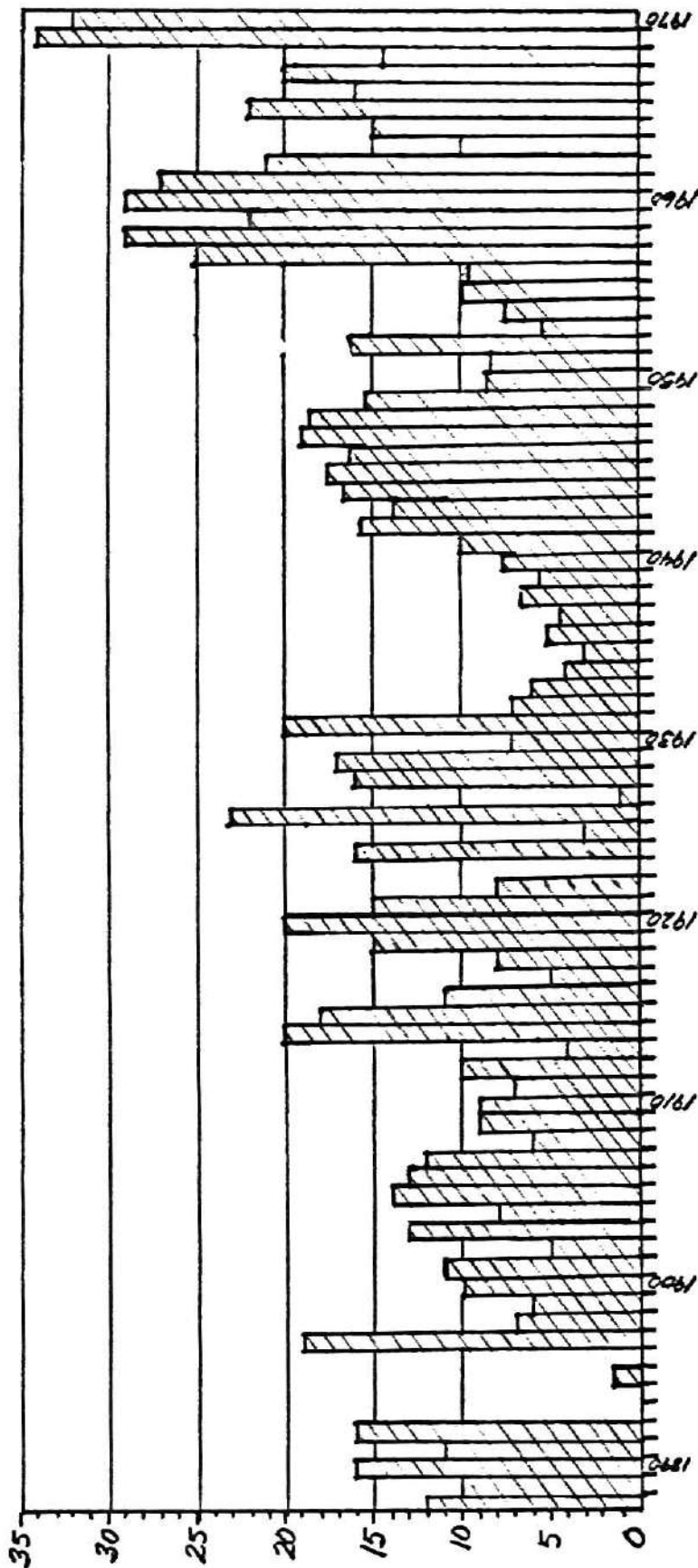
## CROP ACREAGE IN STEVENS COUNTY (CONTINUED)

YEAR	WHEAT	CORN	SORGHUMS	BROOMCORN	TOTAL ACRES HARVESTED
1933	9,490	19,311	78,084	13,785	152,280
1934	77,289	6,381	62,851	16,990	180,869
1935	16,271	8,633	117,845	19,716	174,979
1936	30,181	4,591	129,671	12,520	181,586
1937	24,500	-	76,870	10,060	115,212
1938	45,600	-	96,290	11,270	159,380
1939	59,000	-	61,000	5,555	131,817
1940	51,000	-	113,040	10,730	196,490
1941	63,100	590	87,130	5,230	170,240
1942	97,000	2,590	93,800	2,910	206,160
1943	106,000	2,040	103,850	4,560	223,365
1944	76,000	700	137,030	4,310	240,150
1945	122,000	100	109,500	1,960	241,360
1946	125,000	120	106,610	2,610	236,770
1947	145,000	210	96,630	1,990	246,070
1948	144,000	60	106,920	1,640	254,740
1949	148,000	160	118,190	1,080	267,800
1950	108,000	60	142,460	400	252,520
1951	51,000	710	193,060	450	248,280
1952	108,000	580	129,500	1,030	242,510
1953	79,000	1,400	129,900	- *	214,590
1954	97,000	70	173,900	-	277,910
1955	55,000	260	221,900	-	280,410
1956	71,000	240	146,200	-	219,800
1957	10,000	300	257,000	-	271,610
1958	97,000	590	170,000	-	272,340
1959	96,000	1,300	179,000	-	280,060
1960	102,000	4,400	143,000	-	254,930
1961	102,000	2,750	116,000	330	- **
1962	94,000	2,080	124,800	580	-
1963	72,000	2,100	157,600	360	238,940
1964	84,000	1,900	131,100	270	222,460
1965	94,000	2,900	135,800	240	241,220
1966	94,000	3,000	139,600	200	240,720
1967	106,000	3,400	136,300	-	250,860
1968	81,000	6,000	146,500	-	237,510
1969	73,000	14,400	133,600	-	224,630
1970	79,000	18,500	133,400	-	236,690

\* Broomcorn not included in statistics in reports.

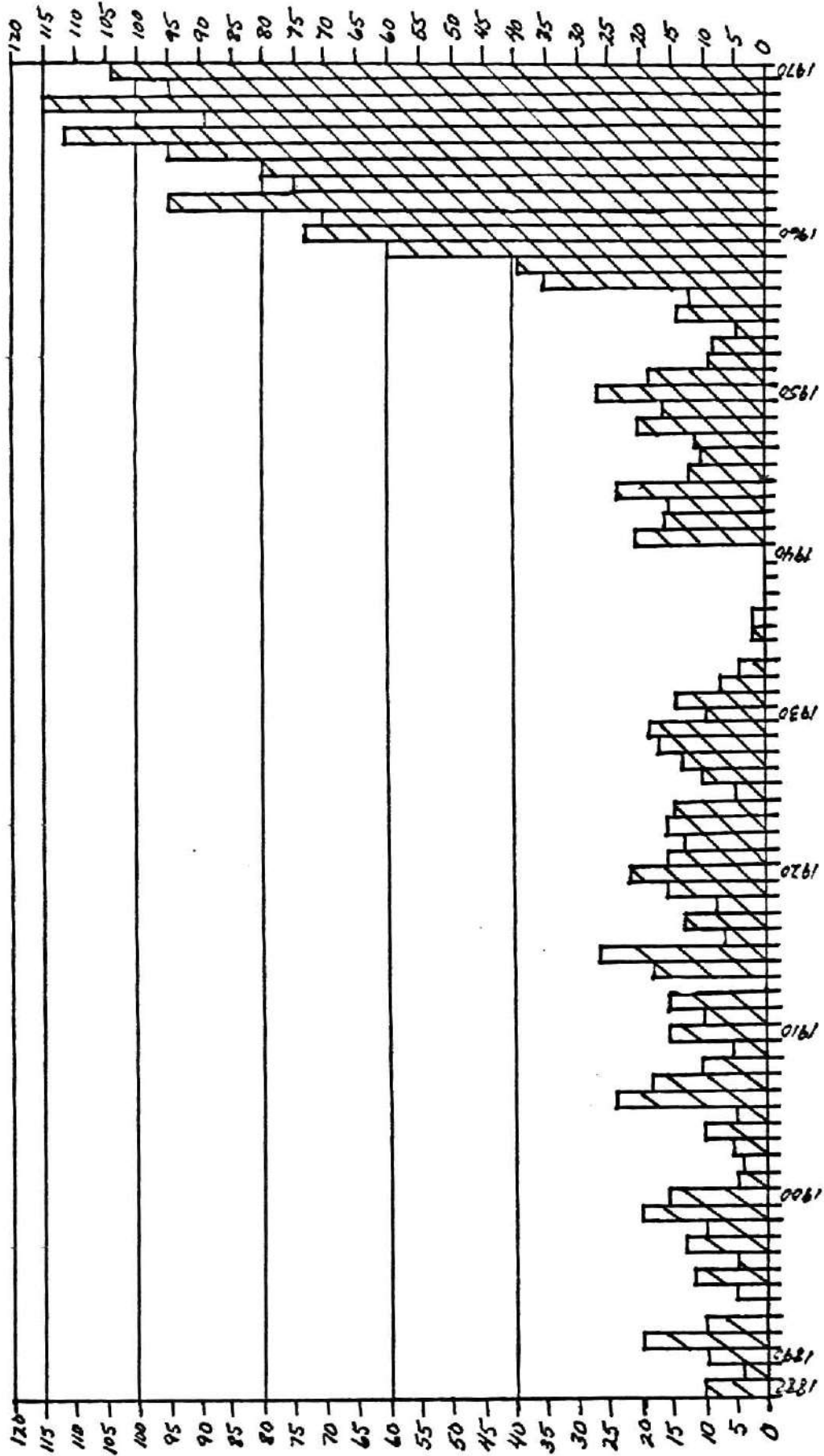
\*\* Figures unavailable.

ANNUAL WINTER WHEAT YIELDS - BUSHELS PER ACRES <sup>1</sup>



1. Information from biennial reports of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture.

ANNUAL CORN YIELDS - BUSHELS PER ACRES



## LIVESTOCK IN STEVENS COUNTY

YEAR	MULES- HORSES	MILK COWS	CATTLE	SHEEP	HOGS
1888	935	813	779	3	261
1889	923	935	1,388	1	436
1890	765	744	1,150	1	920
1891	714	758	1,607	13	836
1892	808	741	1,589	20	499
1893	1,017	803	1,914	20	563
1894	719	650	1,015	386	246
1895	782	714	1,474	53	158
1896	886	805	1,855	64	310
1897	758	760	2,211	70	321
1898	761	409	4,108	81	257
1899	839	571	6,623	60	213
1900	789	460	5,306	75	228
1901	762	159	8,175	116	210
1902	906	264	10,314	76	210
1903	1,463	532	13,321	113	177
1904	1,555	481	12,462	143	211
1905	1,466	337	14,046	123	283
1906	1,529	422	9,103	-	352
1907	1,436	490	7,436	6	807
1908	2,592	802	7,929	3	2,092
1909	2,895	1,035	10,679	25	2,114
1910	3,253	1,524	5,629	-	1,306
1911	4,000	2,679	5,800	1,200	1,035
1912	4,195	3,385	5,273	1,200	1,389
1913	4,219	3,328	5,536	1,215	1,332
1914	4,264	2,935	4,166	1,320	861
1915	4,358	3,660	7,008	157	2,491
1916	4,855	4,498	7,843	64	2,992
1917	4,953	919	8,777	21	2,243
1918	5,321	1,972	10,290	105	2,244
1919	7,045	2,893	11,269	76	2,283
1920	7,520	1,734	11,450	84	2,296
1921	7,953	2,324	7,531	108	3,464
1922	8,017	2,557	7,111	72	4,798
1923	8,392	2,529	6,060	15	5,700
1924	8,120	1,956	6,111	2	4,559
1925	7,995	2,596	4,940	3	2,419
1926	7,155	3,190	2,865	-	1,109
1927	6,683	2,498	3,392	-	1,963
1928	6,084	2,354	2,515	21	2,058
1929	5,678	2,539	3,084	8	2,304
1930	4,251	2,366	3,354	290	1,552
1931	3,429	1,682	6,288	297	1,570
1932	3,163	1,899	5,510	243	2,129
1933	2,993	1,963	6,736	216	2,569
1934	2,773	2,569	5,778	240	2,069
1935	2,411	2,842	4,176	100	896



## LIVESTOCK IN STEVENS COUNTY (CONTINUED)

YEAR	MULES- HORSES	MILK COWS	CATTLE	SHEEP	HOGS
1936	1,554	1,854	3,166	111	602
1937	1,222	2,580	2,220	587	891
1938	763	2,230	1,930	74	790
1939	610	2,210	4,320	450	1,430
1940	600	2,240	2,340	280	3,140
1941	590	1,620	4,800	2,630	2,880
1942	590	1,630	10,530	3,980	4,740
1943	610	1,830	14,590	20,190	8,810
1944	710	1,710	9,610	12,530	9,730
1945	650	1,500	7,700	25,800	2,450
1946	600	1,430	6,070	26,000	2,700
1947	520	1,300	8,400	60,000	1,840
1948	500	830	5,770	7,200	1,700
1949	490	770	7,230	16,810	2,260
1950	490	830	5,970	19,810	2,050
1951	480	650	6,150	5,620	1,370
1952	450	620	9,280	3,880	1,610
1953	290	600	6,800	4,150	1,560
1954	330	600	15,900	19,720	800
1955	290	450	9,150	4,660	600
1956	320	400	8,600	1,110	750
1957	280	350	5,150	110	800
1958	280	300	6,700	110	800
1959	380	200	7,800	110	2,000
1960	490	200	11,800	3,210	1,400
1961	-	200	11,800	7,300	2,000
1962	-	200	14,800	5,200	1,700
1963	-	200	15,800	1,200	1,400
1964	-	200	17,800	300	1,300
1965	-	150	13,850	200	1,200
1966	-	100	17,900	200	700
1967	-	100	18,900	100	800
1968	-	150	16,850	200	700
1969	-	100	14,900	200	800
1970	-	150	17,850	100	1,400

## FARM STATISTICS

	NUMBER OF FARMS	AVERAGE SIZE FARM	LAND IN FARMS	LAND IRRIGATED
1900	123	-	54,761	-
1910	628	-	224,770	-
1920	666	471.0	313,703	-
1930	634	573.3	363,498	-
1940	433	739.1	320,013	Below 200 acres
1950	426	893.9	-	1,615
1959	390	1,059.8	413,309	36,291
1969	400*	1,171.1	468,446	65,724

\* Number of farms by type (sales over \$2,500): 313 - cash grain; 2 - dairy;  
47 - livestock; 5 - ranches; 3 - general.

## WILD FLOWERS OF STEVENS COUNTY \*

Sunflower  
 Dandelion  
 Frost Flower  
 Common Thistle  
 Prickly Pear  
 Long Flowered Gilia  
 Bindweed  
 Plains Ground Cherry  
 Black Nightshade  
 Rocky Mountain Bee Plant  
 Curly Dock  
 Curly Top Lady's Thumb  
 Plains Milkweed  
 Western Wall Flower  
 Pepper Grass  
 Portulaca  
 Pale Echinacea  
 Low Pea Vine  
 Wild Alfalfa  
 Low Broom Snake Weed  
 Catalpa Tree Blossoms  
 Catclaw Briar  
 Meadow Salsify  
 Burr Ragweed  
 Common Yarrow  
 Broom Snakeweed  
 Black-eyed Susan  
 Rush Skeleton Plant  
 Resin Weed  
 Lance Leaf Salvia  
 Blazing Star  
 River Dock  
 Round Head Lespedeza  
 Canada Milk Vetch  
 Loco Weed  
 Common Dwarf Mallow  
 Tansy Aster  
 Golden Wand  
 Wild Lettuce  
 Yellow Clover  
 Henbit  
 Gaillarda  
 Summer Poinsetta  
 Wild Onion  
 Guara  
 Broad leaf Aster  
 Plains Chinese Lantern

Yucca  
 Snow-on-the-mountain  
 White Thistle Poppy  
 Devil's Claw or Unicorn  
 Blace Medic  
 Bush Morning Glory  
 Virginia Ground Cherry  
 Buffalo Burr  
 Wild Begonia  
 Golden Weed  
 Pennsylvannia Smart Weed  
 Snowball Sand Verbena  
 Long Leaf Erigonum  
 Spreading Yellow Cross  
 Purslane  
 Plains Larkspur  
 Plantain Leaf Pussy Toes  
 Oxalis  
 Sandhill Sage  
 Camomile May Weed  
 Trumpet Creeper  
 Upright Mentzelia  
 Yellow Goat's Beard  
 Lead Plant  
 Partridge Pea  
 Plains Coreopsis  
 Rayless Thelesperma  
 Common Golden Rod  
 Pitcher Sage  
 Gay Feather  
 Spiderwort  
 Tansy Mustard  
 Illinois Bundle Blower  
 Wild Honeysuckle  
 Scarlet Globe Mallow  
 Finger Poppy Mallow  
 Goat Head Burr  
 Mouse Ear  
 Thread Leaf Groundsel  
 Low Poppy Mallow  
 Aromatic Aster  
 Caper or Spider Flower  
 Prairie Onion  
 Canada Garlic  
 Common Evening Primrose  
 Kansas or Western Ragweed  
 Silver Leaf Nightshade

\* Compiled by Oleta Wilson

## PHOTOGRAPHS OF STEVENS COUNTY, KANSAS

- A. Stevens County - Late 1890's.....
- B. Railroad Celebration.....
- C. Farming in Stevens County.....
- D. Dust Cloud Over Hugoton.....
- E. Drifts of Dust Around a County Farm .....
- F. Gas Well - Stevens County.....

\* Photographs furnished by the Kansas State Historical Society. Copies made by Sheena L. Sheldon, Houston, Texas.

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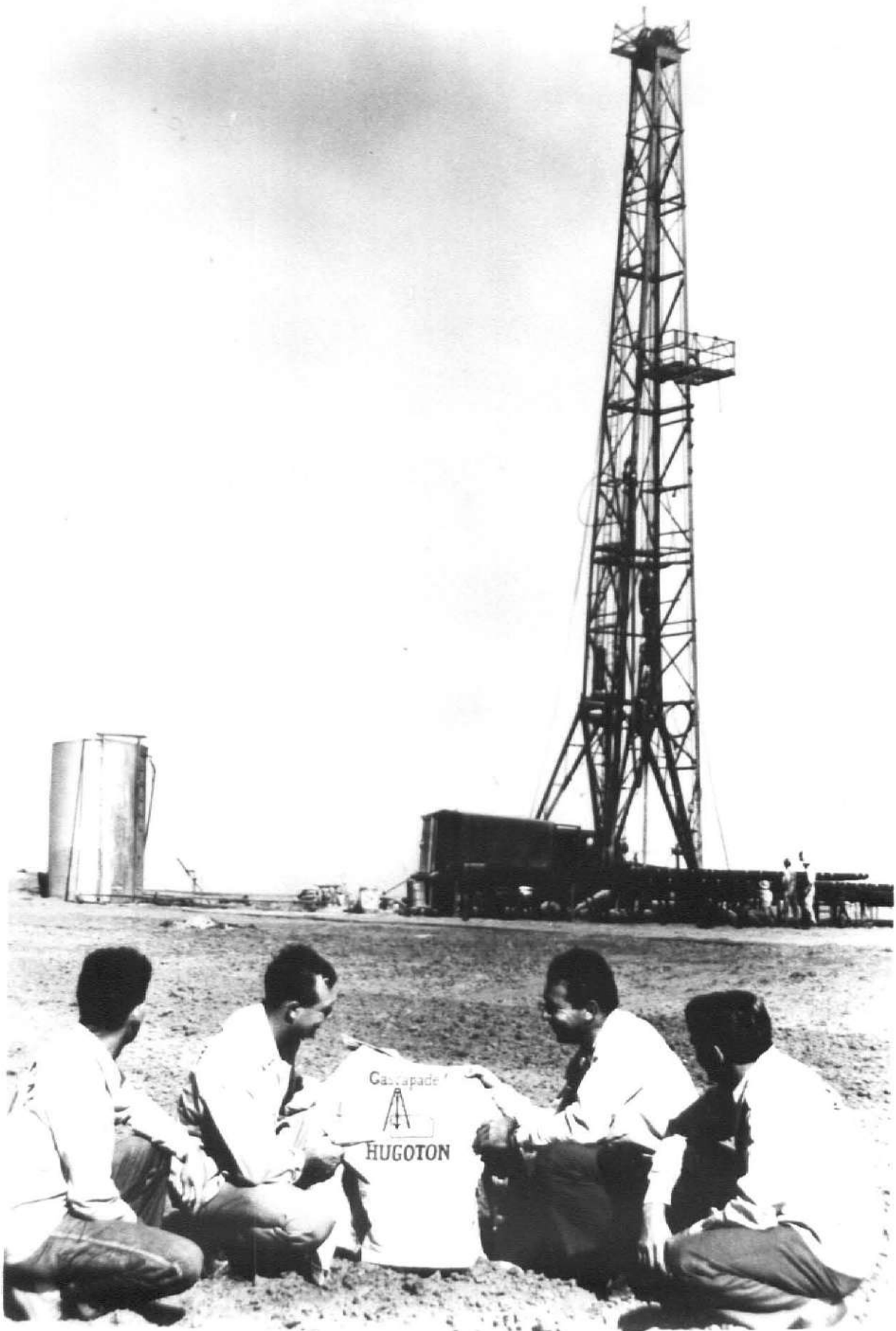




*Subway Mapping Machine, L.L. & L.L. Co.  
Dust Clouds Rolling Over The Prairies  
Snorrell Studio Dodge City, Kansas 43*



*Drifts of Dust Around a Western Kansas Farm  
Dodge City, Kansas. #19*





ENDNOTES

1. Thad G. McLaughlin, Geology and Ground Water Resources Grant, Haskell and Stevens Counties, Kansas. Bulletin 61, State Geological Survey of Kansas, Univ. of Kansas, 1946, p. 9, 21.
2. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Soil Survey of Stevens County, Kansas. Series 1958, No. 13, Washington, D.C., issued Oct. 1961, p.27.
3. Ibid, p.25; McLaughlin, Geology and Ground Water Resources, p. 31.
4. Grace Muilenburg, Floyd W. Smith and Lowell Brandner, From Desert to Breadbasket. Agricultural Experiment Station, Kansas State Univ., Manhattan, 1975, p.3; A listing of the types of wildflowers can be found in the appendices.
5. Ibid; Soil Survey of Stevens County, Kansas, p.25; Hugoton Hermes, Jan. 5, 1956.
6. Homer E. Socolofsky and Huber Self, Historical Atlas of Kansas. Univ. of Oklahoma, Norman, 1972, Map 35.
7. Francis Haines, The Plains Indians. Thomas Y. Crowell Co., N.Y., 1976, p.103-4.
8. Ibid, p. 120-22.
9. Ralph K. Andrist, The Long Death. Macmillan Co., N.Y., 1964, p. 145-46.
10. Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains. Ginn and Co., Boston, 1931, p. 47, Chapter III.
11. Ibid, p. 106-8; Dr. Socolofsky suggested that Coronado returned to the Rio Grande on a route close to the Santa Fe Trail.
12. Socolofsky and Self, Historical Atlas, Map 7.
13. Robert W. Baughman, Kansas in Maps. Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, 1961, p. 32-33.
14. Webb, The Great Plains, p. 155-57.
15. Leo E. Oliva, Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail. Univ. of Oklahoms, Norman, 1967, p. 5-7.
16. Ibid, p.9

17. Ibid, p. 17. .
18. Stevens County has a marker on the southwest quarter of section 10, T 31 S, R 38 W, overlooking the Cimarron River. The marking of the trail was undertaken by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1905. County Commissioner R.T. Beatty, at his own expense, picked up the marker at the Santa Fe Railroad depot at Lakin, hauled it to the county and placed it in the chosen spot. "Report on the Marking of the Santa Fe Trail," Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Board of Directors of the Kansas State Historical Society. Topeka, July 1906 - June 1908, p. 14, 26.
19. Socolofsky and Self, Historical Atlas, Map 21.
20. Helen G. Gill, "Establishment of Counties in Kansas," Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society. Vol. 8, Topeka, 1904, p. 449.
21. Ibid.
22. Similar to many other Kansas counties, Stevens County was named after an important Civil War personality. Thaddeus Stevens (1792-1868) helped formulate and institute Radical Reconstruction policies; he also proposed in Congress the Fourteenth Amendment. Stevens had a sincere desire to help black people and he requested that when he died he would be buried in a black cemetery rather than just a place close to a black burial ground. Refer to Socolofsky and Self for more information on names of Kansas counties.
23. United States Bureau of Census, Federal Census of 1880, Stevens County, Kansas. Refer to appendices for listing of people and vital statistics.
24. Harry Chrisman, Lost Trails of the Cimarron. Sage Books, Denver, 1961, p. 27.
25. Harry Chrisman, Personal Letter, February 10, 1977.
26. J.S. Painter, "Southwest Kansas," Kansas Historical Collections. Vol. 4, 1886-88, p. 282.
27. Paul W. Zickefoose, "Population and the Labor Force," Economic Development in Southwestern Kansas. Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, 1953, Part 2, p. 7-13, 19-20.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Panhandle Stage Company Corporation Charter. Corporation Books, Vol. 19, p. 520-21. The Kansas State Historical Society Archives.
31. R.L. Polk and Co., Kansas State Gazetteer and Business Directory. Chicago, Vol. 6, 1888-89, information by town; Edith Campbell Thomson, History of Stevens County,

p. 21, 113.

32. Fred L. Parrish, "Kansas Agriculture." Reprinted from John D. Bright, ed., Kansas: The First Century. Lewis Hist. Publishing Co., Inc., N.Y., 1956, p. 410-11.
33. Edith Campbell Thomson, History of Stevens County, p. 8; Hugoton Hermes, Centennial Edition, August, 1961.
34. Louise Barry, ed., "Circuit-Riding in Southwest Kansas in 1885 and 1886," Kansas Historical Quarterly. Vol. 12, 1943, p. 385-86.
35. Victor Hugo was a popular writer who died in May, 1885. It is not known why the McPherson men picked the name.
36. James W. Dappert, "My First Trip to Stevens County, Kansas," Hugoton Hermes, February 16, 1940. General information, unless otherwise cited, comes from the Hugoton Hermes.
37. Dept. of Public Instruction, Biennial Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Kansas Superintendent of Public Instruction, Topeka, Sixth and Ninth Reports. Mrs. Thomson lists districts in her history.
38. Ibid.
39. Report of the Superintendent of Schools, Stevens County. 1888 Report, County Courthouse, Hugoton, Kansas.
40. Biennial Reports, Superintendent of Public Instruction.
41. Seventieth Anniversary Celebration Publication of the Hugoton Methodist Church. The Kansas State Historical Society Library, June 1957.
42. Information on present day Stevens County compiled while visiting the county.
43. Robert W. Baughman, Kansas Post Offices. Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, 1961, p. 232. Refer to appendices for complete list of post offices.
44. William E. Connelley, History of Kansas Newspapers. Kansas State Historical Archives, 1916, p. 304; Edith Campbell Thomson, A History of Stevens County, p. 132-34. Refer to appendices for complete list of newspapers.
45. Biennial Reports of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture. Fifth Report, p. 546; Sixth Report, p. 488.
46. Jay Baugh, "Southwestern Kansas, 1900-1925," Contemporary History. The Cultural Heritage and Arts Center, Dodge City, June 4, 1970, p. 5-9.
47. J.S. Painter, "Southwest Kansas," p. 285.
48. Fred Parrish, "Kansas Agriculture," p. 410-11.
49. Biennial Reports of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture. Refer to appendice for a list of crops and production figures.

50. Ibid; Agricultural information, unless otherwise cited, comes from the Biennial Reports for the years discussed.
51. Ibid; Livestock information is listed in the appendices.
52. John Rydjord, Kansas Place - Names. Univ. of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1972, p. 127.
53. Dead Town File, Kansas State Historical Society Archives. Listed by name of town.
54. John Rydjord, Kansas Place - Names, p. 261, 99.
55. Edith Campbell Thomson, A History of Stevens County, p. 16, 12.
56. Joseph Snell, "The Stevens County Seat Controversy." Master's Thesis, Univ. of Kansas, 1961, p. 2. Information on the county seat fight, unless otherwise cited, comes from Snell.
57. D.W. Walker, Stevens County, Kansas. Fairfield, Penn., February 27, 1935, p. 2.
58. Ibid, p. 4; The Supreme Court commission investigating the census found approximately 1,200 people.
59. No Man's Land today is part of Oklahoma. Henry Bascom Kelly, in "Tragedy and Trial of No Man's Land," (The Green Bag, Boston Book Co., Boston, ND), p. 3, describes the area as being 33 miles wide north to south and 210 miles long east to west. It was bounded on the east by the Cherokee Outlet, on the south by Texas, on the west by the Territory of New Mexico, on the north by Kansas and Colorado. In 1890 much of the area was made into Beaver County, Oklahoma. During the Stevens County fight no state claimed legal jurisdiction over the area and it was some time before Sam Wood determined that the district court of Paris, Texas could handle the murder trial. Elmer T. Peterson, in "The Battle of Phantom Cities," (Saturday Evening Post, May 14, 1927), reported that the U.S. Congress attached No Man's Land to Oklahoma Territory after the murders at Wild Horse Lake.
60. Joseph Snell, "The Stevens County Seat Controversy," p. 34.
61. The word "drouth" will be used in this paper instead of "drought." "Drouth" is a more personal form used when the settlers talk about dry cycles.
62. Sixth Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, p. 488.
63. Joseph Snell, "The Stevens County Seat Controversy," p. 40.
64. Paul I. Wellman, "The Bubble Beneath the Plains," Saturday Evening Post. Vol. 215, December 12, 1942, p. 21.
65. Biennial Reports of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture. Population statistics, unless otherwise cited, come from these reports.

66. Paul W. Zickefoose, "Population and the Labor Force," p. 20-23.
67. Stevens County Commissioner Records, Vol. A, November 6, 1897; O.P. Byers, "Early History of the El Paso Line of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad," Kansas Historical Collections. Vol. 15, 1919-22, p. 575.
68. O.P. Byers, "Early History," p. 575.
69. Hugoton Hermes, 1893-1896.
70. Ibid, April 6, 1895.
71. Ibid, June 8, 1895.
72. April 6, 1895.
73. Ibid, December 22, 1894; Personal Letter, Harry Chrisman.
74. Hugoton Hermes, January 25, 1896. The Centennial Edition of the Hermes lists the brands of cattle in the county.
75. Ibid, August 10, 1895.
76. Biennial Reports, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1890-1900.
77. Hugoton Hermes, May 27, 1908.
78. Paul W. Zickefoose, "Population and the Labor Force," p. 22-23.
79. Hugoton Hermes, May 27, 1908.
80. K.L. Bryant, History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway. Macmillan Co., N.Y., 1974, p. 265-66.
81. Refer to appendice for livestock statistics which show the increase in cattle in the county.
82. Hugoton Hermes, May 20, 1908. Covers election and the results.
83. Ibid, May 22, 1908.
84. Ibid, December 18, 1908.
85. Bryant, History of the A.T. and S.F. Railway, p. 265-66.
86. Hugoton Hermes, April 18, 1913.
87. Ibid, April 4, 1913.
88. Ibid, May 2, 1913.
89. Ibid, January 17, 1913.
90. "When the Santa Fe Came To Hugoton," The Earth. June 1913, p. 11.
91. Ibid.
92. Hugoton Hermes, Centennial Edition, August 1961.
93. Ibid, January 17, 1913; May 2, 1913.
94. "When the Santa Fe Came to Hugoton," p.11; Hugoton Hermes, May 2, 1913.
95. "When the Santa Fe Came to Hugoton," p.1 .



96. The northwest corner of the county, because of its terrain and the presence of the Cimarron River, did not produce as much grain and did not need the railroad closer.
97. Hugoton Hermes, January 27, 1922. Information on the K and O Railroad comes from the 1922 issues of the Hermes.
98. Dead Town File. An alternate explanation might be that the town was named after a Liberal man who was a major investor in the town.
99. Hugoton Hermes, November 24, 1922.
100. Paul W. Zickefoose, "Population and the Labor Force," p. 75-76.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid, p.28.
103. United States Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910; Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920.
104. Kansas Statistical Abstract. Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, 1974, p.9.
105. Hugoton Hermes, January 26, 1961.
106. Lewis Killian and Charles Grigg, Racial Crisis in America. Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1964, p.5.
107. Topeka Daily Capital, April 19, 1910.
108. Letter to the Attorney General, February 22, 1909. Record of the U.S. Attorneys and Marshals, District of Kansas, Federal Record Center, Kansas City, Missouri. Information on the Stokes case, unless otherwise cited, comes from these letters.
109. Ibid, Letter to Carr W. Taylor, February 15, 1909.
110. Hugoton Hermes, February 28, 1908.
111. It is not known why L.J. Pettijohn decided to support the black farmers, nor why District Attorney Bone did.
112. Court Case No. 466, United States District Court, Federal Records Center, Kansas City, Missouri.
113. Topeka Journal, August 19, 1918.
114. Information on Sam B. Amidon in Kansas - A Cyclopedia of State History. Standard Publishing Co., Chicago, 1912, Vol. 3, Part II, p. 1206-08; on Judge David M. Dale from Biographical Record - Sedgewick County. Biographical Publishing Co., Chicago, 1901.
115. Court Case No. 466, Instructions to Jurors, No. 14, 18, 19.
116. Journal B, Second District, United States District Court.
117. Kansas Statistical Abstract, p. 9.

118. Interview of Russell Smith.
119. "Suitcase Farmers" were people who lived outside the county yet farmed land in the county. The cousin of the suitcase farmer was a "sidewalk farmer" or a person who lived in town and farmed land.
120. Though the population increased, there was also an out migration. In-out migration occurred during prosperous and bad years in the county. Refer to Paul W. Zickefoose, "Population and the Labor Force," p. 76-77; A.D. Edwards, Influence of Drought and Depression on a Rural Community- A Case Study in Haskell County, Kansas. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Farm Security Admin. and Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Social Research Report No. 7, Washington, D.C., January 1939, p.19.
121. Kansas Bank Commission, Biennial Reports of the Bank Commission. Topeka, The Twelfth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Twenty-Fourth reports. The Hugoton Bank was chartered on May 11, 1907 and voluntarily nationalized between 1918 and 1920. The Citizens State Bank was chartered April 12, 1913 and remains today. The Moscow State Bank was chartered June 18, 1915 and liquidated December 21, 1937.
122. Hugoton Hermes, Centennial Edition, August 1961.
123. Ibid, January 5, 1956.
124. Ibid, January 12, 1956.
125. Ibid, January 20, 1920; October 29, 1920; December 24, 1920.
126. Refer to appendices on towns and post offices.
127. Hugoton Hermes. Information from 1910 and 1920 issues.
128. Hugoton's Woman's Club Yearbook, 1955-56. Kansas State Historical Society Library.
129. Kansas Traveling Libraries Commission, Stevens County - A County Library Study. Topeka, 1959. The library became a tax supported institution in 1924. An adobe building was erected in 1934 with National Youth Administration funds. It was remodeled in 1953. A more modern building, located near the courthouse now houses the small, but well used library.
130. The First Methodist Church Anniversary Publication.
131. Hugoton Hermes, Centennial Edition, August 1961.
132. Ibid.
133. Biennial Reports of the Secretary of Kansas, State of Kansas. For decimal years 1890-1950; State of Kansas Election Statistics, Primary and General Elections. For 1960, 1970. Also Hugoton Hermes, 1910, 1920
134. Hugoton Hermes, August 13, 1920

135. Kansas Adjutant General, European War Roster. Vol. 2-4, Kansas State Historical Society Library.
136. Willard Johnson, "The High Plains and Their Utilization," Twenty-First Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey. Dept. of Interior, 1901, Part 4, p. 611.
137. George N. Coffey and Thomas D. Rice, Reconnaissance Soil Survey of Western Kansas. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Bureau of Soils, Washington, D.C., 1912, p. 91, 97.
138. Refer to appendices for comparison of production figures.
139. Coffey and Rice, Reconnaissance Soil Survey, p. 94-95.
140. Hugoton Hermes, April 10, 1936.
141. "When the Santa Fe Came to Hugoton," p. 11-12.
142. A.D. Edwards, Influence of Drought and Depression on a Rural Community, p. 45.
143. Ibid.
144. Paul W. Zickefoose, "Population and the Labor Force," p. 68-70.
145. Stevens County never had more than 280,060 acres in production, about sixty per cent of the county's land. The remaining area is in summer fallow, pasture, sandhills, municipal property and the Cimarron River.
146. Robert S. Eckley and W. James Foreman, "Agriculture," Economic Development in Southwestern Kansas. Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, 1951, Part 5, p. 11-12.
147. Topeka Daily Capital, July 5, 1918.
148. A.D. Edwards, Influence of Drought and Depression on a Rural Community p. 50-51.
149. Leslie Hewes, The Suitcase Farming Frontier. Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1973, p. 51-52.
150. Soil surveys referred to are: Arthur H. Joel, Soil Conservation Reconnaissance Survey of the Southern Great Plains Wind Erosion Area. Technical Bulletin No. 556, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Jan. 1937; U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and Kansas Agriculture Experiment Station, Physical Land Conditions Affecting Use, Conservation, and Management of Land Resources - Stevens County. November, 1954; U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Soil Survey - Stevens County.
151. Paul I. Wellman, "The Bubble Beneath the Plains." Title of article used for chapter heading
152. Hugoton Hermes, Centennial Edition, August 1961.
153. Robert S. Eckley, "Mineral Resources and Industries," Economic Development in Southwestern Kansas. Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, 1955, Part 3, p.2.

154. Margaret O. Oros and Douglas L. Beene, Oil and Gas Development in Kansas During 1966. Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, Bulletin 190, 1968, p. 9; Walter A. Ver Wiebe, Oil and Gas Resources of Western Kansas. Mineral Resources Circular 10, Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, Vol. 39, 1938. On December 28, 1937, the Kansas Nomenclature Committee named the field.
155. Paul I Wellman, "The Bubble Beneath the Plains," p. 96. The first clue to the structure was the way the Cimarron River curved around the field.
156. Garvin Taylor, "The Hugoton Gas Area of Southwestern Kansas," Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Field Conference of the Kansas Geological Society. Topeka, September 1934, p. 57; L.W. Kesler, Oil and Gas Resources of Kansas in 1927. Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, Mineral Resources Circular 1, Vol. 29, June 1, 1928, p. 52.
157. Hugoton Hermes, Centennial Edition, August 1961. Unless otherwise cited, information on the gas comes from the Hermes, August 1961 edition.
158. Robert S. Eckley, "Mineral Resources and Industries," p. 3, 26. In 1954, 460,000 out of the 466,560 acres in the county were under lease to gas and oil companies.
159. Margaret O. Oros and Douglas L. Beene, Oil and Gas, p. 136-37, 172.
160. Information on the development of pipelines from: Anthony Folger and Roy Hall, Development of Oil and Gas Resources in Kansas. Mineral Resources Circular 2, Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, Vol. 34, February 15, 1933. They reported that in 1929 a pipeline was laid to Dodge City and other communities in southwest Kansas; Kenneth K. Landes, Mineral Resources of Kansas Counties. Mineral Resources Circular 6, Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, Vol. 38, June 1, 1937. He reported that pipelines carried gas from Stevens County to cities in Colorado and east of the county; Kansas Chamber of Commerce, Progress in Kansas. In reports of January, March, April and August are details of different pipelines being built.
161. Paul I. Wellman, "The Bubble Beneath the Plains," p. 96.
162. "Owners of Gasser Which Opened World's Largest Field Disappointed in It," Garden City Daily Telegram. Southwest Kansas Resource Edition, June 8, 1937.
163. Robert S. Eckley, "Mineral Resources and Industries," p.6; Buddy R. Guest, Resource Use and Associated Problems in the Upper Cimarron Area. Research Paper No. 19, Univ. of Chicago, Chicago, June 1951, p. 43.
164. Robert S. Eckley, "Mineral Resources and Industries," p.12-13.
165. Ibid, p. 6, 9-12.



166. Hugoton Hermes, Centennial Edition, August 1961; Interview with Mr. Clay Horner.
167. Estimates of the field's resources were made by several sources. Included are: Progress in Kansas, January 1936, p. 23, 200 years; Kansas City Times, April 11, 1935, 175 years; Robert S. Eckley, "Mineral Resources and Industries," p. 4, 30-40 years; Paul I. Wellman, "The Bubble Beneath the Plains," 200 years.
168. Hugoton Hermes, November 2, 1945; Paul I. Wellman, "The Bubble Beneath the Plains," p. 96.
169. Kansas Senate - House Journal, Twenty-fifth day, February 13, 1945, p. 108. The bill reads as follows: "H.B. 175, by Mr. Hubbard: An act authorizing cities of the third class situated in a recognized and established natural gas field to drill a gas well and to produce and sell natural gas therefrom, acquire a drilling site, and make necessary contracts for such purposes and to devote the proceeds to government uses and purposes of the city."
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171. Richard Pfister, "Manufacturing," Economic Development in Southwestern Kansas. Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, Part 6 1953, p. 54-55.
172. Ibid, p. 59; Buddy Guest, Resource Use, p. 81.
173. Art McIntire, "Oil and Gas Industry Gives Boost to Old Dust Bowl Area," Topeka Daily Capital, June 11, 1954; Don Pinkston, "Stevens County Farmers Add Irrigation Facilities to Remedy Lack of Rain," Wichita Eagle Magazine, June 10, 1956.
174. Fred Floyd, "A History of the Dust Bowl." Doctoral Dissertation, Univ. of Oklahoma, Norman, 1950, p. 17. Floyd explains the origins of the term "dust bowl."
175. James C. Malin, "Dust Storms, 1850-1900," Kansas Historical Quarterly. May, August, and November, 1946, Vol.14.
176. Thad G. McLaughlin, Geology and Ground Water Resources, p. 24; U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Monthly Weather Reports. Kansas Section, Topeka, 1933-39. All rainfall and weather statistics come from these two sources.
177. This is the author's opinion, based on the study of statistics and general information from newspapers and reports. It is after 1935 that both the people and the government take action to improve the situation.
178. Hugoton Hermes, May 3, 1935.
179. Ibid; General information gathered from the newspaper on the dust conditions.

180. Ibid, May 24, 1935.
181. Garden City Daily Telegram. Southwest Kansas Resource Edition, June 8, 1937. A special edition of the paper was prepared and sent out to 400 cities to show conditions in the area were not as bad as reported.
182. Arthur H, Joel, Soil Conservation Reconnaissance Survey, p. 20, 66.
183. Hugoton Hermes, September 23, 1938.
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185. A.D. Edwards, Influence of Drought and Depression on a Rural Community, p. 85.
186. The Future of the Great Plains. Report of the Great Plains Committee. House Document No. 144, Seventy-fifth Congress, First Session, February 10, 1937.
187. Robert S. Eckley and W. James Foreman, "Agriculture," p. 118, 115.
188. Ibid, p. 188-21.
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190. Ibid, March 31, 1933.
191. Ibid, January 31, 1936; June 19, 1936.
192. Ibid, April 3, 1936.
193. The Future of the Great Plains, p. 74.
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196. Thad G. McLaughlin, Geology and Ground Water Resources, p. 73.
197. U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Census, United States Census of Agriculture - 1964. Vol. 1, Part 21, Kansas.
198. Clinton P. Anderson, "Soil Murder on the Plains." Reprinted from the Country Gentleman by the Curtis Publishing Co., 1947.
199. Hugoton Chamber of Commerce, Information Sheet for 1956.
200. Hugoton Hermes, January 19, 1956.
201. Ibid, January 26, 1956.
202. Personal Observations.
203. Hugoton Chamber of Commerce, Information Sheet for 1976.



204. Figures of farm, non-farm working force for:  
 1940 - 518 farm; 488 non-farm  
 1960 - 503 farm; 1,199 non-farm  
 1970 - 458 farm; 1,165 non-farm
205. These industries include farm machinery outlets, clothing, grocery and drug stores, lawyers, clerical workers, truckers, and government employees.
206. Paul E. Malone, "Government in the Economy of Southwestern Kansas," Economic Development in Southwestern Kansas. Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, Part 9, 1951, p. 93.
207. William E. Mays, Sublette Revisited: Stability and Change in a Rural Kansas Community After a Quarter Century. Florham Park Press, Inc., N.Y., 1968, p. 93.
208. Hutchinson News, November 27, 1967.
209. The Gascapade was organized by the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Hugoton, to promote the town and gas industry.
210. Hugoton Hermes, Centennial Edition, August 1961.
211. William E. Mays, Sublette Revisited, p. 124. Crimes, in order of highest frequency, that occur throughout southwest are: 1. Bad checks - most people, especially in an agricultural community used to an extensive credit system, do not feel it is a big crime to write a check that will bounce; 2. Breaking and entering, and larceny - the sparse population and the trusting nature of the people create many opportunities for this type of crime; 3. Driving while intoxicated; 4. Violent crimes.
212. Paul E. Malone, "Government in the Economy of Southwestern Kansas," p. 67.
213. Richard Pfister, "Manufacturing," p. 7, 9, 20.
214. Ibid, p. 61-65.
215. William E. Mays, Sublette Revisited, p. 131.
216. Manhattan Mercury, February 24, 1977.

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Interview. Mrs. Oleta Wilson, Hugoton, Kansas.

A HISTORY OF STEVENS COUNTY, KANSAS

by

SEONAIID L. EATON

B.A., University of Houston, 1973

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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Stevens County, Kansas, is a prosperous agricultural community located in the heart of the world's largest natural gas field. The history of the county, unlike most American farming communities, is not one of steady, constant evolution. On the contrary, Stevens County's past is filled with extremes. A period of land speculation and rapid settlement in the 1880's was followed by drought and depression in the 1890's. In the first two decades of the 1900's, resettlement and a wheat boom returned prosperity to the county; by 1933, depression and dust engulfed the area. A bloody county seat fight, the struggle for a railroad, and the discovery of natural gas further complicated the historical development of the county.

Much of Stevens County's erratic history is explained by its geographical location. The county is located in southwestern Kansas, on the southern Great Plains. The land and the climate of the plains dictated the way the area developed. The flat, treeless prairies and the climatic cycles have been tempered somewhat by human resourcefulness. However, limited water supplies, reoccurring droughts, constant winds and the semi-arid climate remain uncontrollable. The physical characteristics of the land made the county's history a story of human efforts to adapt to the environment. Stevens County's story also parallels the general development of the southern plains region and reflects the history of the entire area.

This history of Stevens County is a general account of the community from pre-settlement to 1970. Set in a chronological framework, the eight chapters deal with the major events in the county's history. The narrative begins with a description of the land and its first inhabitants, the Plains Indians. The other topics covered are the settlement of the county, the county seat fight, and the affects of the drought and depression on the rural community. These are followed by the coming of the railroad, resettlement of the county in the first decades of the 1900's, and the development of natural gas resources in the county. The history also includes a

study of the dust bowl years of the 1930's and the 1950's, and the changes made in the agricultural system. The final chapter describes the modernization of the county and suggests what will be the future course of the community. The text of the history is followed by a series of appendices with additional information on the county.

In writing this history of Stevens County, the author relied heavily on general accounts of the Great Plains, special studies done on the southern area, newspapers, and some interviews with county inhabitants. The Kansas State Historical Society provided most of the specific material and all of the pictures used in the text. Government studies, soil surveys, and state agricultural records were also a valuable source of information. There is a scarcity of material on the southwest region of Kansas which limited the depth of the history.

From this study of Stevens County several conclusions can be made about the community and the surrounding region. First, the land and its climate dictated the lifestyles of the people. The settlers had to adjust from the forested, humid lands of the east to the treeless, semi-arid plains. Secondly, the cycles of drought and wet weather created a speculative attitude toward the land; most people took advantage of the good years and left the county during the bad years. Thirdly, it was not until the dusty 1930's that a search for a more suitable system of agriculture began. Since that time, with the development of natural gas and irrigation facilities, southwestern Kansas has attained more stability and is an important agricultural area. Finally, this study of Stevens County highlights the need for a more detailed history of southwestern Kansas and the southern Great Plains. The area and its agriculture, the history of irrigation, and the story of the natural gas are neglected subjects. More extensive studies of these topics would provide a better understanding of the region and perhaps help people make future adjustments to the land and its climate.