

GRIGGS COUNTY

Occupied first by Hudson Bay Company traders and trappers, it was not until General Sibley crossed the country in 1862 in pursuit of the Sioux Indians that anything definite was known concerning this region. The first permanent settler did not arrive until 1879, but he was so closely followed by others and in such numbers that the county was organized on its present boundaries in November 1882, seven years before the admission of the state to the union. The first settlers were nearly all homesteaders on government land, they and others later buying from the railroads the government land allotted to them by Congress and at a still later period buying from the state the two sections in each township reserved for the public school fund. As the government land became scarcer up to the present time when there is none, the price has advanced from 50 cents to from \$30 to \$55 per acre.

In 1883 what is known as the Cooperstown branch of the Northern Pacific was built as far as Cooperstown, and in 1898 this was extended northwestward across the county. This road with the Great Northern which crosses the western part of the county to the east and the southern part of the county north, and the Soo which runs near the southern boundary, and the Great Northern Cut-off which crosses the county in a northwesterly direction entering at the southeast corner, have up to the present time afforded the markets for Griggs county products. In addition to this the Midland, a Winnipeg to Gulf project now supposed to be backed by the Great Northern, has a survey across the county which runs from the southwest to the northeast corner. This survey has been completed as far as the Missouri in South Dakota, and work on the grade finished on one stretch in North Dakota.

Griggs County is situated on the western slope of the Red River Valley. It is composed of 20 townships with a land surface of 455,127 acres and 2,403 of water. The surface ranges from level to gently rolling dotted through the northern part with little lakes surrounded in most cases by native timber. It slopes toward the east, the whole county being well drained by the Sheyenne River which flows through the eastern tier of townships and empties into the Red River near Fargo.

The State Agricultural and Geological Survey describes the soil as follows; "Silt loam predominating, accompanied by loam, sandy loam clay loam; dark brown in color, rich in organic matter; retains moisture well; one of the most valuable soils in the northwest; adapted to all cereals, flax, vegetables, small fruits and forage crops; clay subsoil." Well water is found in abundance.

Dakota winters seem to be ranked by Eastern people as in the Alaska class, while as a matter of fact they do not approach that season of the year in Chicago or New York in disagreeable features. The climate is healthful and invigorating both winter and summer. The days of the summer being much longer than those in more southern latitudes lengthens the growing season that much. Seeding is generally done in April, some farmers seeding as early as March and from then to the last of May, depending on the the season

and crop sown.

Wheat has been and still is, to a large extent, the staple crop, but flax, barley, rye, oats, and of late years speltz and durum wheat, have been increasingly grown. Wheat has ranged from 10 to 40 bushels to the acre; flax has ranged from 10 to 25 bushels per acre; barley has ranged from 20 to 45 bushels per acre; durum wheat has ranged from 12 to 40 bushels per acre; oats has ranged from 30 to 75 bushels per acre.

The native prairie grass has always been largely used, but brome grass, millet, timothy and more recently clover and alfalfa are being grown successfully.

Fruit trees, where protected by wind breaks, have yielded well, but wheat has long loomed so large in the farmer's eye that only enough people have given any attention to fruit to show what can be done. Among the small fruits raspberries, currants, gooseberries, and strawberries have done well; strawberries two and a half inches in diameter and 2,000 quarts in one season from less than a quarter acre of ground. Vegetables of all kinds are grown successfully.

The people of this county are cosmopolitan in their origin though the Scandinavian, Yankee, German, and Irish form the largest per cent of the population. Nearly all the states to the south and east are represented, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa probably ranking first in numbers.

Educational conditions are of the best, the twenty townships having in all seventy schools in three-fourths of which school was taught over seven months during the past year. There are three graded schools, one of which is ranked by the state as first grade and all stand high in the state classification. In addition the state offers the best of advantages for advanced study in all lines, these various institutions being easy of access to Griggs county students, all lying within a radius of 100 miles.

The number of churches in the county is 20. The total value of church property amounts to \$76,600. The county itself is well supplied, as there is hardly a township in which there is not at least one country church besides the congregations that use the school houses. Nearly all the denominations of the Christian churches are represented.

Farmers are giving more attention to live stock of late years and the grade throughout the county has been raised to a high standard. The range horse used here ten years ago has almost entirely been supplanted by the well bred draught horse, and instead of buying Griggs county is now shipping horses. The dairy cow is not as much in evidence as the beef and dual purpose ones, for grain growing has been so lucrative and appealed to the farmer so much more that few have cared to give any time to what they consider the drudgery of the dairy. But many have taken advantage of the ideal conditions of climate, water and native grown grass and are raising herds of short horn cattle. Hogs and sheep thrive as well on this grass.

There are 32 elevators in the county of which 6 are Farmer's Elevators. One of these being located in each of the towns—prices and grades have been influenced to the benefit of the farmer.