ARCHER COUNTY THROUGH NINETY-EIGHT YEARS

THESIS

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PREFACE

Archer County, Texas, as one of the major areas inhabited by Indian tribes and as the gateway to "the Big Ranch Country," has had a colorful, interesting history. The purpose of this study was to catch and record some of the early-day happenings, county history, and recent changes for the boys and girls of the area. It is hoped that it will help to preserve for future generations some of the colorful events that have gone into the making of Archer County history.

L. B. G.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Before the organization of the Republic of Texas, there was no such political subdivision as the county, the state's area at that time being subdivided into departments and municipalities. At the time the revolution began, there were three departments and eighteen municipalities. North Central Texas had no organization, but in 1835 five additional municipalities were created, one of which was Red River. This municipality embraced what is now thirty-nine Texas counties and extended from Cass County on the eastern boundary of the state to what is now Cottle County in West Texas. After the establishment of the Republic of Texas, two counties, Fannin and Bowie, were organized from the Red River municipality. Seven counties—Red River, Bowie, Titus, Franklin, Morris, Cass, and Marion—were eventually organized from Bowie County; Fannin, which was much larger, has been organized into thirty-two Texas counties, one of which is Archer County.¹

Texas has 254 counties. Each of these has its own history, its own resources, its own way of living. Each has developed in its own

¹Z. T. Fuimore, The History and Geography of Texas as Told in County Names (Austin, Texas, 1935), p. 278.
particular way. If individual county characteristics are to be preserved, they must be chronicled on an individual basis by those who know them best and have access to available records. Within recent years The Texas Historical Commission has urged the writing of individual county histories. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to collect and chronicle the history of Archer County, Texas, in order that its own particular flavor as the "Happy Hunting Ground" of the Indians and as the gateway to the "Big Ranch" country be preserved for its boys and girls who will be its citizens tomorrow.

In point of development, Archer County can be classified as a comparatively young county, but in point of age as a county it is approaching the century mark. Texas, in the 1850's, had a wide expanse of fertile prairies in the northwestern part of the state, which was unsettled and yielding no return whatever. In order to encourage settlement, a number of counties were created by the State Legislature out of what was originally Fannin County. Archer County, which was created in 1858, and named for a famous Texan, Branch T. Archer, was one of these. Archer died in Brazoria in 1856, two years preceding the creation of the county. Although there were no settlements of any kind in the area, the land comprising it had long been favorably known and occupied

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2 The Handbook of Texas (Austin, Texas, 1952), p. 63.
by Indian tribes. A brief survey of these tribes and their activities is an interesting background for the study of county development and growth.

The location of Archer County in the fertile watershed of the Red River has had much to do with its history. While not bordering the river itself, the county lies in its tributary valley just south of Wichita County. The Wichita River crosses the northwestern corner of the county, and the Little Wichita River with its tributaries, Middle Fork and South Fork, drains the central portion. Holliday Creek, Onion Creek, and Lake Creek are other small streams near the central portion of the county. In the southeastern part of the county the West Fork of the Trinity crosses the terrain. In these river and creek valleys the soil is very fertile. Bluffs along the banks furnish protection from the cold of the winter and the heat of the summer.

In the early days of Texas this area was carpeted with the luscious life-giving native grasses, sage grass, blue stem, or blue sage. On the open prairies the grasses grew to a height of three or four feet, and in the fertile valleys they might be much taller. A variety of timber, mostly oak, elm, ash, hackberry, cottonwood, willows, and pecans, grew along the creeks and rivers. Of these trees that grew along the creeks, the rivers, and in their adjacent lowlands there were the plum, pecan, and some black walnuts that produced edible fruit and

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3 Little Wichita Soil Conservation District, United States Soil Conservation Bulletin (Wichita Falls, Texas, 1955), p. 4.
nuts. The bush plum, commonly called the Chickasha plum by the early settlers, grew on bushes some five feet tall and covered several thousand acres of the district. 4

Texas before the advent of the white man was occupied by Indian tribes. The 1955 edition of The Texas Almanac shows a map of Indian tribes of Texas at about the time of the coming of the white man on the scene. 5 According to this map, the Comanches occupied what is now the Texas Panhandle and parts of the north-central portion of the state; the Lipan Apaches roamed over the Big Bend area and into central Texas; the Coahuilitican tribes occupied the southern tip of the state; and the Karankawas, Tonkawas, and the Caddo Group held eastern and northeastern areas.

The Indians, as numerous researchers have established, were a roaming people. Since their principal source of food was the wild game life of a region and the fruits and nuts from trees, they did not live in any certain place, but followed the game from one portion of the state to the other. Their villages of wigwams were staked in fertile, protected valleys where there was water, game, and wild fruits and nuts. The abundant grasses of the prairies of what is now Archer County were a magnet for the buffalo and deer which fed on them. These alone would

4Ibid.

5The Texas Almanac, 1955 (Dallas, Texas, 1955), p. 45.
have attracted the Indians, but the numerous springs, the fertile soil, and the wild fruits made the area indeed the "Happy Hunting Ground" for the Indians.

According to the Little Wichita Soil Conservation District bulletin, Archer County has within its boundaries certain Indian campsites of outstanding scientific importance. These sites contain materials and data that apparently do not exist elsewhere in the United States. Scientists studying the sites have not agreed as to the approximate date man first appeared in this area, but traces of ancient man have been found in the valleys of local rivers. 6 There is this description:

At these sites, certain strata up to 18 feet beneath the present level of the Broad valleys contain stone tools, flint chips, ashes and camp rubbish. If we are to accept these geological evidences, these men were here in the Little Wichita Soil Conservation District before the last glacial age, possibly some eight to ten thousand years back. In sharp contrast to campsites of the modern Indian, these deeply buried horizons contain only a sparse number of huge animal bones. Fish, clams, and edible nuts were eaten principally. 7

These findings substantiate the claim that the story of Indians in Texas falls into three parts: (1) those who passed from the scene before the coming of the white man; (2) those living within the boundaries of Texas at the coming of the white man; and (3) those who later migrated into the state from other areas. Just when and where these ancient

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6 Little Wichita Soil Conservation District, p. 4.

7 Ibid.
Indians went is a matter for the archeologists to study, but researchers have concluded that "these early semi-civilized people vanished at least 500 years ago."  

The desirability of the area comprising what is now Archer County led to numerous wars and battles between the different Indian tribes. North of the Red River there were still more Indian tribes, some of which were the Kiowas, and the Wichitas. A French writer, telling of his trip up the Red River in the eighteenth century, described an Indian village at the forks of two rivers, and from the Indians he learned of a Seven Days' Battle in the vicinity of Wichita County, where the Wichitas, Kiowas, and Comanches defeated the savage Apaches and drove them into New Mexico. The description corresponds to the "Three Forks" area of Archer County, and Indian relics in this area indicate that it had once been invaded by the dread Apaches from their strongholds in the western portion of the state. Indian tribes known to have been in striking distance of Archer County at the time of its organization were the Wichitas, the Comanches, the Kiowas, and some friendly tribesmen.

The first major settlements of the white man in Texas were in the southern and eastern portions. Most of the settlers came in by the eastern routes from Louisiana or down the Preston Road leading from

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8 Ibid.
the Red River down across the high prairies north of what is now the city of Dallas. As the settlers located their homes and began to cultivate the land, the Indians who roved over the area were gradually pushed back. The Indian was smart enough to realize that his wild free range was endangered, and he began to strike back at the encroaching settlers with the only weapons that he knew: attack, murder, and burning of the settlers' homes.

Directly after the establishment of Texas as a republic, the Texas Congress authorized the President to organize Ranger companies for the protection of the settlers. In 1839, 1840, and 1841 there were three companies of about sixty men each for the protection of Fannin County. These rangers traveled up and down the state from Red River on the north to a point south covering about one third of the state's frontier. The westernmost line of the rangers' patrol extended to the Brazos River. The Indians in the eastern and central portions of the state, therefore, were gradually pushed backwards until their main strongholds lay along the Red River area of northwestern Texas, a part of which is Archer County today.

The principal threat to the settlers in the area now comprising Wise, Clay, Montague, Young, Jack, and Archer counties was the Comanche tribe of Indians. This Indian tribe was an offshoot of the

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Shoshonean stock, the only one of that group living entirely on the plains.

During the early Mission period in Texas these Indians occupied only the upper Panhandle, but in their wars with the Apaches on the west and south and the Wichitas on the east, they advanced southward rapidly. By 1750 they had established themselves as far east as the Blackland prairies and as far south as San Antonio, thus occupying the most fertile areas of Texas and the one which was most desired for white settlement. 11

The Comanche Indian tribe was not a large group but was considered so because of its nomadic habits. Its members were expert horsemen and possessed great skill and courage. They hated the Texas settlers because they dispossessed them of their homes. They never yielded to civilizing influences. The isolated settler who woke in the dead of night to find the yelling Comanches surrounding his home could expect no mercy.

After Texas became a part of the United States in 1845, a line of camps and forts was established across the state and manned by United States troops. One of these was Fort Belknap in what is now Young County, just across the border from Archer County. These forts, in addition to the State Rangers, gave a measure of protection to the incoming settlers.

The government, however, felt that pushing the Indian backwards and continuing to protect the white settlers with soldiers was not the ultimate answer to the Indian problem. The policy of the government in dealing with the Indians east of the Mississippi was to remove them to reservations in the Indian Territory, where lands were assigned to the different tribes. Texas, however, retained all of her public lands when she became a member of the United States, and the Federal Government therefore owned no lands in Texas. In 1852 the Texas Legislature authorized the setting aside of land for two Indian reservations in the Young Territory of North Texas. One of these consisted of 37,000 acres and was near Fort Belknap on the main fork of the Brazos River near present Graham, Texas. Another reservation somewhat smaller was established on the Clear Fork of the Brazos, about forty miles above. The Comanche tribe was placed on this smaller reservation, while the larger reservation was allotted to the more friendly tribes, the Tonkawas, Delawares, and Caddoes. The proximity of the fierce Comanches to the area no doubt served as a deterrent to keep the white man from moving in. At least, in 1858, when Archer County was created, there was not a single white settler in the area.

Prior to the organization of the county in 1880, however, the Indians had finally been moved across Red River into the reservations in Oklahoma. The roving tribes, though, were not content to stay on the

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12 Ibid., p. 67.
reservations long at a time, and they continually broke away to raid across the river, especially to replenish their store of buffalo meat. The Civil War erupted in 1861, just three years after the creation of Archer County, and this called most of the soldiers away from Fort Sill in Oklahoma. The Indians, left mostly to their own devices, resumed their old ways of living and made frequent raids into Texas. In March of 1862 a Ranger station was established on the Gainesville-Fort Belknap road at the Trinity crossing in southwestern Archer County. A company of Rangers under the command of Captain J. J. Jack Cureton, for whom the post was named, was stationed there until March, 1864, when the Ranger force was consolidated with the troops at Fort Belknap. 13

The years 1865 and 1866 were especially bad in the Archer County area from the standpoint of Indian depredations. The Civil War was over, but chaotic conditions prevailed in Texas due to the Reconstruction form of government. The Indians continued their raids and even attacked the agency at Fort Sill, killing and wounding several men. After stampeding the cattle and mules, the Indians challenged the soldiers to come out and fight.

Old Fort Richardson, in Jack County adjacent to Archer County, was established in 1867 as one of a string of outposts designed to protect

settlers from the marauding Indians. At that time, Jacksboro, the county seat of Jack County, was the western outpost of civilization in the area. A half-million dollars was appropriated for the construction of the fort, and it is estimated that a million dollars a year was spent between 1867 and 1868 to build and maintain the post. In 1868 General William T. Sherman, who had succeeded in concentrating many of the Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches at Fort Sill, made an inspection trip to Fort Richardson. 14

In 1871 a wagon train under command of Captain Warren was ambushed at Lost Valley, Young County, about twenty miles from Fort Richardson. Seven of the crew of eleven men were murdered. The raiding Indians escaped safely back to their reservation in Oklahoma. General William Tecumseh Sherman was ordered to the area and marched with a small detachment of troops from San Antonio along the line of western forts to Fort Belknap. He ordered an investigation of the massacre, and Satank, Santanta, and Big Tree, Kiowa Indian chieftains, were arrested and two of them transported to Fort Richardson for trial—the first instance for Indians to be tried in the civil courts of the United States. 15

The Indian chiefs had been arrested because they had boasted of the raid. It was brought out at the trial that General Sherman had gone

14"Two Kiowa Chiefs Tried at Jacksboro 84 Years Ago," Wichita Daily Times, July 10, 1955, p. 2D.

15Ibid.
to Fort Sill and arrested all the leaders that he could "lay hands on but because of their bragging, Satanta and Big Tree, and a third, Satank, were singled out as the ring leaders."\textsuperscript{16} All of these were outstanding Indian chiefs. Satank, especially, had cause to hate the white men. In 1870 his son had been killed by the whites while raiding in Texas. The father went down into Texas, gathered the bones of his son into a bundle and brought them back, thereafter carrying them about with him on a special horse. He was the leader of the band which had raided Captain Warren's wagon train and when arrested for the deed, resisted arrest. The following description is given:

On May 17, 1871, in company with Satanta, he led the attack on a wagon train in Texas; seven white men lost their lives. On making public boast of the deed to the agent at Fort Sill, in the present state of Oklahoma, he and two others were arrested by military authority, to be sent to Texas for trial. Satank, however, refused to be a prisoner, and inviting death, sang his own death song, wrenched the fetters from his wrists, and drawing a concealed knife, sprang upon the guard, only to be shot to death by the troops surrounding him. He was buried in the military cemetery at Fort Sill.\textsuperscript{17}

Satanta and Big Tree were moved under heavy guard to Fort Richardson. The trial was held in district court with Judge Charles Seward presiding. Additional troops were brought in because it was feared there would be more trouble. District Attorney S. W. T. Lanham, later

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{17}Ruthe M. Edwards, \textit{American Indians of Yesterday} (San Antonio, Texas, 1948), p. 85.
governor of Texas, was the prosecuting attorney. A jury selected from resident ranchers heard the evidence.

The Quakers, who were running the Indian agencies north of the Texas frontiers, sent a Fort Sill agent, Lawrence Tatum, to testify and try to persuade the cowboy jury not to bring in the death penalty for the two chiefs. Much sentiment had been aroused in eastern states for the Indian chiefs, and Lanham in his address to the jury referred to these Indian admirers as those "who live in secure and favored lands where the dread war whoop is not known."\(^\text{18}\) He described Satanta as an arch-fiend of murder, a coward, and a hypocrite. Big Tree was "tagged a tiger demon who has tasted blood and loves it as his food."\(^\text{19}\) Thomas Bell and J. A. Woodfork, who had been appointed by the judge for defense of the chiefs, described the act of raiding the wagon train as one of savage warfare, not murder.

Big Tree refused to say anything except that this was the day for white man's talk. Satanta, who was known as the orator of the plains, denied the charges, saying that he had never been near the Tehannas (Texans). He told the jury:

> If I ever get back to my people I will never make war upon you. I did not kill the Tehannas. I came down the Pease River to make medicine for wounded braves. I am suffering for the crimes of bad Indians, Satank, Kicking Bird, and Fast

\(^\text{18}\)Wichita Daily Times, July 10, 1955, p. 15D.  
\(^\text{19}\)Ibid.
Bear. If you will let me go I will kill them with my bare hands. There shall be peace.

But if you kill me it will be like a bolt of lightning making a spark in dry prairie hay... make big fire... burn heap. ²⁰

The jury was not impressed with the oratory of Satanta. The two Indian chiefs were sentenced to be hanged at the state penitentiary at Huntsville, but two months later their sentences were commuted to life imprisonment.

Capture and trial of these chiefs, however, did not break the Indian spirit. Other leaders took up where Satanta and Satank left off. Grove, in an article in regard to the Kiowa Chief Kicking Bird, makes these statements:

Those were names to shudder over during the dangerous years of the great slaughter on the Southern plains, when hunters shot buffalo like penned beeves and hide buyers hauled the curly brown robes stacked on their high wagons like so much hay. A man never rode alone if he could avoid it. It was worse when the moon rose full over the mesquite flats and the broken buttes. Ranchers and settlers in lonely cabins felt a dread upon seeing the green-turning grass, for adequate war pony graze signaled the start of another raiding season. It was the time for warriors to leave their reservations in the Indian Territory, strike across the Red River and plunder and kill the Hated Tehannas. ²¹

Kicking Bird succeeded to leadership in the Kiowa tribe. Three years before the capture of Satanta and Satank, however, he had signed the Medicine Lodge treaty, which fixed the Comanche-Kiowa-Apache

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Fred Grove, "Prairie Peacemaker," The Cattleman, XLII (December, 1955), 32.
reservation between the Washita and Red Rivers in what is now western Oklahoma. Because of this, the Indian warriors said that Kicking Bird was not a warrior and, therefore, not capable of leading the tribe. In order to gain the support of the tribe, it was necessary for him to lead them once more against the whites. More raids resulted. In the negotiations that followed between the Indians and the agents at Fort Sill, Kicking Bird and Lone Wolf declared that they would neither make peace nor return white captives until Satanta and Big Tree were freed. In 1873 the two chiefs were freed. Big Tree studiously avoided warfare with the whites after this, but Satanta was soon on the warpath again. He was returned to Texas and sent to the penitentiary, where he committed suicide by throwing himself from an upper story of the prison, October, 1878. 22

The backbone of Indian raids in Texas, however, was broken before the death of Satanta. In 1876 General R. S. Mackenzie was commissioned to round up the Indians of Northwest Texas and return them to the Indian Territory reservations. The chiefs of the Kiowas and Comanches were imprisoned at Fort Sill. The main body of the Comanches and Kiowas was trapped at the junction of the Tule and Palo Duro Canyons at the foot of the Panhandle after their horses had been stampeded by a night attack. The Indians were decisively defeated,

22 Edwards, op. cit., p. 85.
and they retired across Red River to the reservations allotted them. There were no more Indian raids across the river in Texas. 

Although the Indians were banished from the hunting ground which they loved so well, there remained much to remind the white settlers of the first people who had made the area their home. There were the Washita and Wichita Rivers, Kickapoo Creek, Indian Mound, Spy Mound, and Benge Mound. The tops of the mounds show today that they were at one time frequented by the Indians, as many arrow heads have been found there. Unfinished arrow heads and broken flint rock can also be found which indicate that the Indians used these mounds to spy out game, to make arrow heads, and probably to look out for their white enemy. In many crevices on the rocky sides of those mounds are graves of Indians where time has exposed the bones, heads, and trinkets that were buried with them. As previously reported, the Wichita Soil Conservation District, in its explorations, has found traces of ancient Indian villages, indicating that the red man was in the area hundreds of years before the coming of the white settlers.

Sharing the range with the Indian previous to the settlement of Archer County was the buffalo hunters. W. C. Lobenstein, hide and fur dealer of Leavenworth, Kansas, exhausted the buffalo supply which he at first found on the plains of Kansas, and with his crew of hunters

23 The Texas Almanac, 1955, p. 67.
advanced on the Texas and Oklahoma or Indian Territory plains, the last hunting ground for the buffaloes. Although the entry into this area violated the provisions of the Medicine Lodge treaty negotiated with the Indians, the United States Government made no effort to stop the slaughter of the buffalo. "Destroy the Indians' commissary," it was said, "and you'll see the end of raiding." The hunters could accomplish what the soldiers had not been able to do.

Lobenstein furnished the capital for the buffalo hunts and contracts were sub-let. Merchants were furnished supplies, equipment, and such like; and they, in turn, furnished smaller men, who kept up with hunters ready to supply them. The hunter was hired by the piece; if robe hides were worth $3, he was paid twenty-five cents for each buffalo that he killed and was brought in by the skinners. If the hides were worth $2.50, he got twenty cents; if $2, he got fifteen cents; if $1.50, he got ten cents; and if the hide was worth only $1, the hunter got only five cents for it. Hides, like all other commodities, rose and fell in price according to demand. In some instances, the hides were reported to have been shipped to New York, then to Liverpool, England, and back again in order to manipulate prices.

24 Naomi Kincaid, "Rath City," West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, XXIV (October, 1948), 42.
25 Grove, op. cit., p. 38.
A good hunter would kill seventy-five to one hundred buffalo per day, but the average was far less than this. The humps of the buffalo were the parts most prized for eating; in many instances the carcasses were discarded once the hides had been secured without any of the meat being used.

In the early days of Archer County, great herds of buffalo were reported grazing on the lush prairie grass. The buffalo hunter, ever widening his search for the buffalo herd, followed the game into this territory, and once the danger of Indian raids was removed, intensified his efforts to exterminate the animal wherever it was found. No supply depots were available, but supplies were brought in from the nearest settlements or outposts. The hunters worked from a camp much like those used by ranchers in herding cattle on the plains.

The background history of Archer County, it is thus seen, extended far back beyond the coming of the first settler. In the study of it is found much of the explanation of the developments that have come. To the wily red man, living off the wild game, fruits, and berries of the fertile river valleys, it was indeed a "Happy Hunting Ground"; to the white man who has pastured his stock on the grassy plains, cultivated the prairies, and brought "Black Gold" from far beneath the soil, it is equally a grand and wonderful place in which to live and work. One could expect to find much of what is worth-while to chronicle in the story of its development.
Related Studies

An incentive for the present study is a number of county histories which have been written around the developments of neighboring counties. The earliest of these was written by Thomas F. Horton in 1934 and is a history of Jack County, which joins Archer County at its southeastern border. 27

The History of Jack County covers the period from its date of organization, July, 1857, down to and including December 1, 1932. In the introduction, Horton stated that the "book might not gleam with beautiful metaphors or exquisitely rounded periods," but that he did hope "to portray to the minds of the readers the events related as vividly as they exist in my own."

Excerpts from county court records were used to show the organization of the county and the returns from various elections held from 1857 through 1872. In this way, much valuable historical material was brought together for preservation. The most interesting phases of the book, however, are the biographical sketches which show a very vivid portrayal of the hardships and difficulties of pioneer life, especially in regard to the Indian raids. One of the most interesting of these includes a description of the trial of Satanta and Big Tree, the Indian chiefs who were tried and convicted at Jacksboro in 1871.

27 Thomas F. Horton, History of Jack County (Jacksboro, Texas, 1935).
Clay County, which joins Archer County on the eastern boundary, has had its memoirs compiled and published under the title *Romance and Dim Trails*. The book, written by Katherine Christian Douthitt, was dedicated to the pioneers of the county. The statement was made in the dedication that Clay County has been the "scene of plots and counterplots, hardships and pleasures, heroism and cowardly terror, treachery, brutality and tragedy, romance and wild conflicts, matchless horror and lusty humor." These, in one way or another, are all woven into the story of what is Clay County.

*Romance and Dim Trails*, like many of the other early-day county histories, is composed mainly of biographical stories relating the pleasures and vicissitudes of pioneer days. Cowboys and ranch life vie in the stories with the descriptions of Indian raids. There are also stories of the fence-building era and of the early ranches. A more modern note than the history of Jack County is sounded throughout the book.

Still another related study, while not a county history, is that of Morgan's *The History of Wichita Falls*. Wichita Falls is located in Wichita County, just north of Archer County, and is the largest city in the immediate area.

28Katherine Christian (Mrs. J. W.) Douthitt, *Romance and Dim Trails* (Dallas, Texas, 1938).

The book is divided into two parts: "A Historical Summary" and "The City That Faith Built." In the first part attention is directed to the history of Wichita County, the incorporation of the city, two decades of growth, the war period and boom days, and the woman's movement. In the second part, attention is directed in more detail to the city and its problems. The historical chapter is especially valuable in the study of Archer County history.

Most recent and ambitious of the county histories is that of The First 100 Years in Cooke County by A. Morton Smith, publisher of The Daily Register in Gainesville, Cooke County. 30

Smith's history departs from the biographical type of county history and makes an effort to present a comprehensive chronicle of the county's growth and development in all of its phases. The book is divided into four areas: early history of the county, the cattle industry, agricultural growth, and development of oil resources in the county.

The book is arranged in chronological order. Although differing areas are set up, the history of the county is told in sequence. For example, the chapter on "The Gay Nineties" covers the period extending from 1889 to early 1900. Included in this chapter is the story of the organization of Muenster, a description of the first baseball game ever seen in Gainesville, organization of a number of churches, a medical...

30 A. Morton Smith, The First 100 Years in Cooke County (San Antonio, Texas, 1955).
society, a Board of Trade, activities of the local band, population
growth, and various types of entertainment prevalent in Gainesville
during that period. Since the author of the book is also editor of the
main newspaper in Gainesville, it is apparent that he was able to supple-
ment county records with a great deal of information from his news-
paper back through the years. In no other way could he have presented
the length and variety of the material that he assembled together.

Events chronicled include the coming of the Butterfield Stage
Line, which passed through the county en route from St. Louis to San
Francisco; the "Great Hanging" of the Civil War days; the last Indian
raids in the county; the arrival of the first Iron Horse; cattle boom
days; the Gay Nineties; the period of Cooke County's standing as the
banner agricultural county of Texas before World War I; the discovery
of oil; the Depression Years and World War II; the impact of Camp
Howze on the life of the area; and finally, the celebration of the county's
centennial. Altogether, the chronicle presents and preserves a vast
amount of historical material which will be more valuable as the older
generations pass.

The study most closely related to the present one was made by
Winnie D. Nance in 1927, "A History of Archer County, Texas, "31 as a
part of graduate study at the University of Texas. The present study,

however, in no way duplicates that made by Nance. In her study, which only brought the history of Archer County up to 1927, she emphasized the history of the region more than that of the county itself. Much attention was given to Indian tribes, the Peters Colony project, and the cattle industry as a whole, but these were not linked specifically to their impact on the history of Archer County. In the history of the county itself, the discussion was limited mainly to the statistical details of county organization and to the resources of the county. The present study centers in the county history itself with many added details of the social and economic phases of county growth.
CHAPTER II

ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF
ARCHER COUNTY FROM 1870 TO 1900

Archer County, created in 1858, did not secure full county autonomy until 1880. Few settlements were made prior to 1881, but before this time the cattle industry, which was to dominate in county affairs, had already become established. In the twenty-year period from 1880 to 1900, the ranching industry saw its heyday in the county and the title of "Gateway to the Big Ranch Country" became a part of county nomenclature. Many factors operated to bring this about.

The first and foremost factor in the establishment of the ranching industry in Archer County was the favorable climate, the fertile soil, the many streams providing water, and above all, the luxuriant crop of grass which covered the terrain. The same conditions which had covered the plains with the buffalo were favorable to the growing of cattle. It is true that occasional droughts occur in the area in which Archer County is located, but in the over-all picture, the county had all the requisites for the establishment of a great cattle industry.

Another factor operating to aid in the development of the county was the cessation of the Indian raids. As long as there was danger of
sporadic raids across the border, men feared to move their families into the area in close proximity to the Indian reservations and into territory which the Indians specifically desired and which they felt was their rightful home. The dreaded war whoop of the Comanches and Kiowas in the dead of the night was not a thing to be taken lightly.

Another important factor in county development was the growth and development of the cattle industry in other portions of Texas. Cattle raising, the oldest industry in Texas, had had its inception in the southern portions of the state. Its beginning is placed at the San Antonio missions from 1718 to 1725 in the terrain commonly known as the Brush Country, where wild cattle roamed at will. These cattle attracted settlers who found the cattle theirs for the taking. Between the Texas War for Independence against Mexico and the Civil War, cattle raising extended northward to what is now Denton and Tarrant Counties and westward to the Cross Timbers.

Texas, prior to 1850, however, had no railroad nor were there any railroads west of the Mississippi. The market for cattle, therefore, was limited. In 1835 Almonte's "Statistical Notice" of conditions in Texas reported about 25,000 head of cattle which "are usually driven for sale to Nachitoches." In 1833 Stephen F. Austin also

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prepared a report on Texas products and prices. Cattle, he reported, were worth from $8 to $10 per head. When it is considered that the prairie grasses of Texas would raise a beef without any additional feeding, the price was sufficient to encourage the raising of cattle. Just prior to the Civil War, however, the main outside market for cattle was for their hides and the tallow from their fat. Great numbers of cattle were slaughtered for these products and their meat left to waste, much like the buffaloes which were killed for their hides.

Two factors operated to increase the demand for cattle and to increase their worth in terms of the prices paid for them. With the decline of cattle raising in the North and East during the Civil War, Texas remained the only economic source of beef in the country. War restrictions had also caused decline in the marketing activities of Texas cattle and at the end of the war it is estimated that there were more than three and one-half million cattle in the state. The cattle were in Texas, but it was impossible to trail them as far north as necessary to tap northern markets.

The first transcontinental railroad, however, solved the marketing problem for the cattle. Dodge City, Kansas, the terminus of the first railroad west of the Mississippi, was within trail-driving range of the Texas cattle. Millions of cattle were rounded up and started north over a period of years extending from the 1860's down to 1880.

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3The Texas Almanac, 1955 (Dallas, Texas, 1955), p. 303.
The cattle would be rounded up and driven leisurely northward over a number of trails. These trails were chosen because of available grass along the way, water holes, and favorable fords for crossing Red River. One of these trails extended from San Antonio up to Doan's Store at the foot of the Panhandle. Another one, a branch of the Chisholm trail, angled northward from Fort Worth and crossed the river at Red River Station. These trails, in one way or another, crossed the broad grassy lands of what is now Archer County and the herders became familiar with the area.

Up in Illinois lived the Harrold family, who raised cattle and either shipped or trailed them to the Chicago market. The family was of Quaker stock, and the children were given Biblical names, the boys being Ephraim, Elam, Mahlin, Eli, and John, and the girls, Phoebe and Annie. The latter was married to Jim Scott, another cattle raiser in the community.

The Harrold brothers on their trips to the Chicago market saw the cattle coming in from the Texas ranges. The cattle owners, in many instances, came with their herds from Dodge City, and from them the Harrolds learned about the wide grassy prairies of Texas. The boys were a bit dissatisfied with farming conditions in Illinois, and in 1875 "Doc" Harrold came to Texas to look over its possibilities for raising cattle. He saw the vast expanse of level land, the lush grasses without

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4Ibid., p. 304.
any mesquite trees, the animal life, and the beauty of the country. He liked what he saw. He was especially pleased with the lands between the Wichita and the Little Wichita Rivers in Archer County.

Harrold returned to Illinois and persuaded two of his brothers, his brother-in-law, Jim Scott, and two neighbor boys, Ed and Henry East, to return to Archer County with him and establish a ranch. The Harrold brothers and Scott were co-partners, and the East boys were foremen. The Bar X was their original brand, but they later bought out the OX holdings and maintained both brands.

The Harrold Ranch consisted of territory from the Big Wichita River north of Wichita Falls to the Brazos River in Young and Throckmorton counties and from the east line of Archer County to the Hash Knife Ranch in Baylor. Headquarters of the ranch were in what now is the center of Archer City. Altogether, the ranch comprised roughly 1,000,000 acres. The foundation land for the ranch had been purchased, but the greater portion of it was what is known as "free grass range." The beginnings of the "Big Ranch Country" had been made.

Williams in his book, The Big Ranch Country, describes the area embracing the East holdings in these words:

It was that country thirty miles ahead and for some two hundred miles beyond that breathed so deeply of the Old West as any part of North America. It was that spread of rolling and broken prairies that had beckoned
to the plodding farm boy as a great dream country filled with adventure. It was limitless acres filled with grass...\textsuperscript{5}

The Harrold brothers lived in Archer County six years before it was considered safe to bring their families. A ranch house was built on the site of what is now known as the Powers lot in Archer City. It was built partly of logs, partly of rock, and partly of some hard-to-get lumber which was brought in from Fort Worth by freight wagons drawn by oxen. Inside the house was a fort well-stocked with ammunition which had holes in one wall for the placement of guns. A large bunkhouse with quarters for the cowboys was built near the ranch house and around it was built a stockade of rock. A good well of water was also within the stockade. This well was dug by Newt Jones, who later became a rancher with his own spread.

In 1879 Jim Scott brought his wife and family to live on the ranch property—Annie Harrold Scott, Jeanette, and little Bob. For a long time Jeanette was the only little girl on the immense ranch. Little Bob did not live long, succumbing to a sudden illness before his father could reach the place with a doctor. This happened in spite of the fact that a race horse was kept at all times in the stable to serve in just such an emergency. The nearest doctor, until Dr. Prideaux came to the area to practice, was from fifteen to forty miles away, at either Henrietta or Wichita Falls.

\textsuperscript{5}J. W. Williams, \textit{The Big Ranch Country} (Wichita Falls, Texas, 1952), p. 15.
Just north of the Harrold Ranch was another one equally famous. In the 1870's Dan Waggoner established headquarters near what is now Wichita Falls with his western boundary line near Bare Butte. Two or three years later the W. S. Ikard family moved farther west up the river and began ranching to the west of Waggoner. The Ikard cattle, wearing the famous Bar V brand, roamed over thousands of acres, with the dividing line between the Harrold holdings being Holliday Creek, a tributary of the Wichita River. When small cattlemen moved into the area, the Ikards and the Harrolds moved their herds out to Greer County fifty miles to the northwest, where there was little or no competition. Part of the range left vacant by the Ikards and the Harrolds was taken over by the T Fork Ranch.

Some smaller herds had preceded the Ikards and the Harrolds into the area. The first ranch in Archer County was one staked out by Mose Dameron, who, with his sons, Joe and Jack, and his nephew, John Dameron, built a small log ranch house and located a small herd of a few hundred Longhorn cattle near where the Terrapin school house later stood. Another ranch that was established at about the same time was on the West Fork, and was run by Hillary Bedford and Bob Milton. The ranch later was moved to Onion Creek. The 2B brand was used for awhile, but was changed to the OX brand, one of the famous Texas brands. Later, the ranch was moved west of Archer City,

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and one-half interest sold to E. H. East. Later, the ranch was purchased by Harrold Brothers, the owners of the Bar X.\(^7\)

Other ranches in the area were the TIP, which was started by W. W. Mann, the JJ Ranch by Perry Harmonson, the Muleshoe Ranch by Jasper Herron, the CLA Bar Ranch by L. C. Garvey, the Lazy H Ranch by Luther Clark, and many other small ranches in different sections.\(^8\)

The Ikard Ranch on the east side of Archer County owned by Captain Will and E. F. Ikard, was the largest ranch and extended from Archer City to a point ten miles east of the Archer County line in Clay County. Another large ranch was known as the 99 Ranch and was owned by John S. Stone and associates, and extended from the east line of Archer County to a point five miles past the center of Archer County on the west. This ranch later was divided into three parts, one of which (the west half) became the famous 66 Ranch owned by Luke F. Wilson. The central portion of the 99 Ranch became the T. L. Ranch owned by Dickey Brothers, while the east end of the 99 pasture was allotted to C. W. Word and was run for many years as the Word Pasture. Stone, after selling his interests in the 99 Pasture, formed the Stone Land and Cattle Company and started the T Fork

\(^7\)"The First Ranches of Archer County," \textit{The Archer County News}, November 11, 1929, p. 2.

\(^8\)Ibid.
Ranch that extended from the 99 Ranch on the east to the west line of Archer County west of the present town of Dundee.  

There were no fences in the early days of Archer County to mark the lines of demarcation between the different ranches. Imaginary lines were drawn and established by agreement between the owners of the various herds that were designated by brands. These lines were ridden daily by cowboys to beat back the animals and confine them to a territory that had been agreed upon. Several times a year round-ups were made, and the animals that escaped the watchful eyes of the line riders would be cut out and restored to their proper herd.

The cattle industry in the early 1800's was almost a bonanza. Range was free and the cattle were fattened altogether on grass. Grass-fed steers sold for more than $6 per hundred weight on the Chicago markets in 1883, and the rangy Longhorn cattle weighed several hundred pounds each. Barbed wire was first introduced in the fall of 1880, and there was a rush to fence in the vast territories held. Archer County was seemingly divided into three sections: north, central, and south. The T Fork and 99 Pastures controlled the north section, the OX and Circle Pastures the central portion, and the LM, TIP, JJ, CLA BAR, Mule Shoe, GAR, Figure 3, Lazy H, and other small ranches the southern part. Archer County, indeed, was one of cattle ranches.

\[ ^9 \text{Ibid.} \]

\[ ^{10} \text{Ibid.} \]
In the meantime there had been other developments. In the days of the Republic of Texas, colonization contracts had been made in order to bring in settlers for the new land. The Fifth Congress on January 4, 1841, passed an act granting to married settlers 640 acres of land, to single settlers 320 acres, under certain conditions of settlement. Section four of this act authorized the President to make a contract with W. S. Peters and eighteen others (collectively) to colonize lands covering much of North Texas. Later the act was amended to reduce the amount of land to 320 and 160 acres, respectively, to married and single settlers. A dispute arose over the boundaries of the colony, and a compromise was reached permitting the company to locate their lands outside of the colony in a body, or about two counties. This land was located in the areas adjacent to Archer County.\footnote{Ed F. Bates, History and Reminiscences of Denton County (Denton, Texas, 1918), p. 7.}

Agents for the colony were stationed in Kentucky and nearby states. Glowing tales were told of the fertility of the new land, of its ease of cultivation, and its promise of free land to those who would live on it and improve it. The result was a steady influx of emigrants into North Texas from the "old states." Not a few of these filtered in through the large ranches of Archer County and began to homestead on available land or to purchase small acreages. These settlers did not receive a very warm welcome from the ranchers, who would have liked to keep the "free range" indefinitely.
Dr. and Mrs. R. O. Prideaux were the first settlers to come into Archer County in 1878, but it was not long until other families moved in. The spring of 1879 found at least twenty families besides the cow camps and the camps of the buffalo hunters. Dr. C. B. Hutto located about three miles east of the center of the county, erected a log cabin, and laid off a town that he named Archer City.  

Because of the fact that there were no settlers in 1858, when the county was originally created, it was attached to Clay County for judicial purposes. A petition had been signed in 1879 asking the commissioners' court of Clay County to grant Archer County an election on organization. The large ranch owners, wanting to keep the land for themselves, opposed the organization procedures. An adverse vote was at first given the petition by the Clay County commissioners' court, but in 1880 Matt Wicker, one of the commissioners, changed his vote on the question and granted Archer County the right to hold an election. The combined votes of the settlers, small ranch owners, and nestors carried the election and the county was organized as an independent unit of the state on July 27, 1880.  

After Archer County was independently organized, Archer City was designated as the county site. Dr. Hutto then donated to the county a one-story box house with four small rooms and one large room to be

\[\text{\textsuperscript{12}}\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{13}}\text{Ibid.}\]
used as a court house. The smaller rooms were used for the county clerk, sheriff, and tax collector, county surveyor, and county treasurer. The larger room was used as a court room and the county attorney had a desk in the room that he used. The tax assessor also used this room when it was not occupied by the court. This house was destroyed by fire in 1890. In 1891, under the administration of Judge Alfred Llewellyn, a modern three-story stone structure was erected, with spacious court rooms and offices for all county officials and vaults for the county records. This basic building is still in use today, but was substantially remodeled in 1921.

At the time of its organization as an independent county unit, Archer County, according to the United States Census for 1880, contained a population of 596 people. There were only fifty-three farms reported in the county by the census; forty-three of these were evidently homestead claims because their acreage ranged from 100 to 500 acres. Six of the farms had less than fifty acres, while four had between 500 and 1,000 acres. The total acreage in farms at that time was only 14,979 acres, and much of this must have been in pasture because only 404 acres in corn, 104 acres in cotton, fifty-nine acres in wheat, and thirty-three acres in oats were reported in the census figures. The following description is an apt one of the area at that time:

\[14\text{United States Census Report (Washington, D. C., 1880).}\]
Archer County in 1880 was occupied by stockmen owning vast herds of longhorn cattle, a few herds of horses and sheep, and scattering settlers over the various sections of the county had "squatted" with their families and a few stock, opened up small farms and built their houses, consisting of anything from a dugout, log cabin, or boards to stone houses where they had located vacant lands and pre-empted for themselves small homesteads in various sections of the country. 15

Archer City was laid off as a townsite in 1879 and was voted the county seat of Archer County. Unlike many of the small towns of an earlier date, Archer City was surveyed with wide streets. The two main streets are 100 feet wide and the other streets vary in width from forty to fifty feet. Of the two principal streets, the one running east and west was called Main Street and the other running north and south was called Center Street. C. B. Hutto, the founder of the town, named other streets after some tree or vine.

As previously mentioned, Dr. C. B. Hutto donated a building to the county to be used as a courthouse. He also had a small supply store, but later sold it out to W. B. Hutcheson, who ran the only general supply store for many years. The post office was also located in this store. M. J. Baughman, who, as well as Dr. Hutto, had emigrated to Texas from South Carolina, was appointed postmaster. To Mr. and Mrs. Baughman in the spring of 1879 was born a baby boy, the first white child born in Archer County. 16

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16 Ibid.
Since much of the transportation available was by horse, a blacksmith shop of necessity was among one of the first business establishments. The first blacksmith shop in Archer City was located on the northeast corner of the square and was run by a man by the name of Shepherd, who soon died and was the first body buried in the cemetery at Archer City. This shop was continued by John Brown, who bought the lot, shop, and tools. The lot was later occupied by the W. C. Young Land Company.

The first livery stable was run by F. Lewis on the west side of the square. As in almost all frontier towns, a saloon was a part of the business establishments, and Archer City was no exception. The first saloon was opened up by Jim Smith and run in a house and on a lot where later was located the John V. Longam Grocery and Market. Later, a building was constructed for a saloon, but a local option election was held and the saloons voted out. Funds were then raised by public subscription for the purchase of the building and it was given to the town for a school house. The first school in Archer County, under the direction of Miss Kitty Ingalls, was opened in this building in 1880.  
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The small school building was also the home of the first church organization in the county. In 1880 the First Baptist Church, with the Reverend Joe S. Benson as pastor, was organized in this building with

17Ibid.
a membership of eight, as follows: Mr. and Mrs. Sam S. Moorehead, Mr. and Mrs. John S. Moore, Mrs. G. Moran, Mrs. Lizzie Llewellyn, Mrs. J. B. Taylor, and Grandma Berry. Later four others were added to the membership by letter: Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Powell, and Mr. and Mrs. F. Lewis. Ten years after the organization, this church erected a building, but it later was wrecked by a storm. Immediately, another was erected on the same site. These two buildings were frame buildings, and the last one was used by the church until the spring of 1929, when a large brick structure was erected.\textsuperscript{18}

The First Methodist Episcopal Church of Archer City was organized in the early 80's by the Reverend I. N. Crutchfield, who was then an itinerant Methodist preacher, with headquarters at Jacksboro, Texas. Among the first members were L. W. Hart, Mrs. E. A. Hart, and Mrs. Bill Mann. The first building erected on the site was dedicated in 1889. It was torn down in 1914 and the present church edifice erected.\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 6.  \textsuperscript{19}Ibid.

In the next few years many more families came to live in the town. These included W. M. Powell, F. E. Dycus, C. M. Mays, R. M. Taylor, R. M. Graham, G. C. Dickey, T. A. Mathews, John Robertson, A. P. Neal, P. U. Neely, Harve Allman, Jeff D. Lyles, and J. B. Hestand. According to one source, the town of Archer City contained less than 100 inhabitants and the county less than 300 in 1880, although the census figures show 569. The enumerator, according to the local report, counted a large body of cowboys who were passing through the area on a cattle drive to the north.

The first county officials for Archer County were A. Ingalls, Judge; J. S. Scott, District and County Clerk; L. W. Hart, County Attorney; W. W. Mann, Sheriff; William Gound, County Treasurer; James P. Hart, County Surveyor; William Hutton, County Tax Assessor; and John Baxter, Commissioner, Precinct No. 1. The first

20 Ibid.
Mayor of Archer City was S. S. Moorehead and the first City Marshal was Richard Taylor. 21

The school population of the county at the time of its organization was twenty-three, and ten years later it was 159, with eleven school houses, eleven teachers with salaries averaging $35.00 per month. The average attendance was forty, and the school term was 130 days. The total estimated value of school property outside of the school buildings was $250.00. 22

The slowness of the early growth of Archer City is indicated in the numbers of professional men and business establishments. There were in Archer City in 1889 six lawyers, three mercantile establishments, one saloon, and two physicians. Meanwhile, the economy of the county was slowly beginning to turn from ranching to farming. In the 1880 census, a harvest of 4,905 bushels of corn, 510 bushels of oats, 371 bushels of wheat, and forty-three bales of cotton was reported, whereas the 1890 census reported 45,000 bushels of corn, 30,000 bushels of wheat, 75,000 bushels of oats, sixty-six bales of cotton, and 4,000 tons of sorghum. 23

The population of early Archer County was very homogeneous, even though the sources from which it had come were widely scattered. The majority of the settlers had migrated from the "old states" in search

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 United States Census Reports, 1890.
of free land. This land was fertile and much more easily cultivated because it was prairie instead of hilly in terrain. Many nationalities were represented, Pole Benoist, an old Frenchman, being one of the most picturesque. In 1890 the United States Census listed 223 foreign-born residents of Archer County, and sixteen Negroes. **24** This was the largest number of Negroes listed by the Census in Archer County at any time; the Census of 1910 enumerated three Negroes, and that of 1920, two Negroes. **25** The presence of a larger number in the early days was due, no doubt, to the large number of ranches in the county which required cooks for the chuck wagons on the range. In his reminiscences of the county, a sheriff of the early days recalled Heck Bazy, who was working on the JJ Ranch owned by Harmonson; Old Pleas, who worked for the same ranch as cowhand and race rider; Felix Zollicoffer, headquarters cook on the OX ranch; Charlie Coons, cook for the 66 Ranch; and Oliver and Lee Zollicoffer, cowhands on the OX Ranch. Lee was drowned while trying to cross the North Fork of the Little Wichita River, and was held by such esteem by the white people that he was buried in the cemetery at Archer City.

The first settlers of Archer County went through many hardships in holding their homes and herds. The county has an average rainfall

**24**United States Census, 1880, p. 44.

**25**Fourteenth Census of the United States, State Compendium: Texas, 1890, 1900, 1910, and 1920.
of 24.63 inches, which is sufficient for growing crops, but this rainfall is not evenly distributed. In some years drouth conditions prevail, and one of the severest drouths ever to occur in Archer County was during the years 1886 and 1887. The numerous creeks and rivers and springs in Archer County came very near going dry, and the people seemed to "shrink up" from the oppressive heat. There was great suffering among both man and beast. The cattle on the ranges, seeking for water, drifted down the dry beds of streams. Those that followed the West Fork of the Trinity, where the worst drift of cattle occurred, were found as far southeast as Fort Worth the following year. Many of the cattle were never returned to the county. The "great drift," as it is known in Archer County, was described as one of "thirsty, maddened, lowing brutes that were drifting by the scent of water and were followed by their owners in an effort to keep them located." Ahead of this mass of "thirsty, dying brutes were great bunches of armed men who threatened to shoot them down if they intruded on their possessions."

The situation became so critical that it was thought at one time that the Texas Rangers would have to be called in. This was not done, however, and there was no bloodshed over the great drift, but wire fences were cut and the cattle were allowed to look out for themselves.

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It was ten years after the county became a functioning unit before a railroad was built through the area. In the meantime, transportation was mainly by horseback and stage. Mail at Archer City was brought in by what the United States Postal Department termed Star Routes until the arrival of the railroad. For many years the mail was brought from Henrietta in adjoining Clay County, and it was conveyed first by horseback and later by buck-board and buggy. After the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad built into Wichita Falls in the 1880's, the Star Route to Henrietta was abandoned and a line established to Wichita Falls, and real stage coaches and hacks were used to convey the mail, passengers, and express. The drivers of the stages are described as "very accommodating men" and would take an order for anything from a spool of silk thread to a gallon of whiskey, and rarely ever failed to get what was ordered and deliver it the same day.

Many lively tales of the old frontier cluster around these stage coach journeys. The following description typifies the many adventures that befell the travelers:

Charlie Sheckells was an old time stage coach man who had worked for Uncle Sam for years and knew the game and made it a point never to fail to get his coach through on schedule time, rain or shine. Our streams were not bridged in those days and he thought nothing of tying his mail securely and plunge his coach and team in swimming water and there is only a few times of record when he was late at the end of his route.

Charlie Sheckells would not take a drink of intoxicants of any kind, but would get the best he could buy for those who placed orders with him, and when he would bring his express
in at night, if the person was not there to receive it, he would lock it up in his oat bin and the customer would usually be there the next night to get it. Some of the boys found out that this was his custom so they would pull the staple on the bin and pour out one-half of the whiskey and fill it up with water. This kept up until there was a general complaint that the whiskey was weak. So Mr. Sheckells, not understanding the cause, would get vexed and tell them he had bought the best and they claimed they gave him the best, so if he could do better to do so. One day some of the cowboys came in and were making a sneak on his bin and the staple was lost and they could not find an old one anywhere, so they had one made at the blacksmith shop and drove it in with the lock and when Mr. Sheckells came in that night and tried to unlock he could not and found out there was a new staple. By degrees he found out what had been going on for a long time, so his express was kept in a different place and his customers received the unadulterated article and the old boys were cut off from their foraging.28

Another stage driver, C. B. Decausey, received similar treatment, except that the cowboys slipped out his jug while he was delivering the mail and diluted its contents. He is reported to have surprised the boys with a jug of buttermilk instead of the hard liquor which they were accustomed to find. Still another anecdote centered around the stage line driven by "Uncle" Ben Hodges:

When we were near the Bluff Creek Crossing a big opossum crossed the road and some of the passengers jumped out and got him and were holding him by the tail in the hack when he stuck his head into one of the mail paper sacks that had not been drawn taut by the post master at Holliday, so we let him go in and we drawed the fasteners taut on the sack and the mail was delivered by Uncle Ben to the postmaster at Archer City, who at that time was Pole Benoist, a great friend of the writer. So when the mail was carried behind the screens, the writer went to the back window

28"Mail Route to Archer City Prior to the Coming of the Railway," The Archer County News, Section II, November 11, 1929, p. 1.
and looked in to see what would happen. . . . The paper sack was opened and the mail and opossum poured out and there was some jumping around. . . . Uncle Pole was a very mad man, and jumped upon Uncle Ben about it, and Mr. Hodges was innocent. He was not satisfied until he got T. H. Marberry to tell him the truth about the way the opossum got in the sack, and then he tried to make all the passengers think he was going to report it to the postal authorities but he was too good a friend to the one who played the joke on him to have ever done so. 29

Archer County in its early days was known as a hunter's paradise. In 1858 surveyors and explorers reported it filled with vast herds of buffalo, deer, antelope, and wild turkey. No doubt this, along with the favorable terrain and climate, accounted for the large Indian settlements in the area. The buffalo is reported to have been almost extinguished by the year 1880, or driven farther west and north by the continual hunting by the buffalo hunters who killed mostly for the robes made from the shaggy hides. At the legal organization of Archer County, only a few buffalo were to be found on the plains, but vast droves of antelope, deer, and wild turkey could be seen in almost any direction and from almost any hilltop.

The first settlers used the wild game as a plentiful source of meat for the family table. One early settler reported that practically every home was supplied with fresh venison, antelope, and wild turkey. Ducks, geese, and wild pigeons swarmed to the southern portion of the county when the post oak acorns were ready to fall, and they were so

29 Ibid.
numerous that the sky would be darkened by their numbers and as many could be killed as were wanted. 30

In the fall of the year great droves of prairie chickens came in to feed upon the red berries that grew along the creek and river banks and to eat a winter weed that thrived in the river valleys. A kill of twelve dozen birds per day was not uncommon. At that time there were no protective game laws, and the prairie chickens were slaughtered and sold for $4.00 per dozen, then shipped to northern markets where they sold for $6.00 gross. 31

The intensive hunting, though, soon depleted the plentiful wild game. Deer and antelope were very plentiful up to 1888, and after that a few could be found up until 1900. The prairie chicken also quit coming to the area about this time. Cultivation of the soil and loss of cover and food, of course, were other factors besides hunting which helped deplete the wild game life of the region.

The first railroad to come to Archer County was that of the Wichita Valley Railroad in 1890. This road traverses the northwestern corner of the county and serves the fertile Wichita valley. Three towns in the county were laid off on this railroad in 1891: Mankins, Holliday, and Dundee. 32

30 "Archer County Formerly a Hunter's Paradise," The Archer County News, Section III, November 11, 1929, p. 4.

31 Ibid.

The title to the ranch property on which the town of Mankins now stands was first held by Sam Lazarus. This place was a little northwest of the geographic center of Archer County. At the time the Wichita Valley Railroad was built through Archer County, a spur line was extended from the main line of the railroad to a point on the Sam Lazarus ranch where a station for the loading of grain was erected. This station was called Lazarus. Here the ranch owner built his home and also erected a small community church.

In 1908, Charles Mangold of Dallas purchased the Lazarus ranch holdings, laid off the town in lots, and erected a small store building and a small hotel. With the coming of the post office at this time, the name "Lazarus" was changed to "Mankins," since the first name was already used by a post office in another part of the state. The people then living in the community were Tom Mankins, the Harris brothers, H. C. Riggs, T. B. Wilson, J. E. Rayburn, Rev. J. J. Hynes, a Mr. Patterson, and J. R. and Whit Parkey. 33

The Dundee township site was formerly occupied by the big T Fork Ranch, "over which wild cattle roamed, coyotes howled, deer and antelope came at will." Prior to the coming of the railroad, about fifteen families lived within a radius of fifteen miles of the place. On Black Flat were the Capps, Prescott, Burk, Hestand, and Barnes families. Eastward down Holliday Creek were the Spears, Johnson, Steele,

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33 "Mankins," The Archer County News, Section III, November 11, 1929, p. 3.
Wicker, Hines, House, Finch, Miller, and Simpson families. Almost all of these families were newcomers to the area, lured into the region by the state's action opening up public school lands for settlement.

The townsite itself was named for Dundee, Scotland, the home of the builder of the railroad, Colonel Morgan Jones. The first settlers of the town, as recalled by a pioneer resident, were Forney Smyth, Alex Allbright, Sam Walker, J. W. Giddens, John Daggitt, Andy Manton, Sam Bellah, Carson Capps, John Axman, Job Barnett, and the Smith family. Alex Allbright was the first to put in a general supply store, Ben Musser the first lumber yard, and a Mr. Barnes the first hotel and livery stable. 34

Holliday was named for the creek that runs just south of the town. It is located in the fertile valley land of the county and ranching and farming were its first interests. The first settlers of the town, as recalled by an old settler, were the Taylor, Edwards, Hawley, Rose, Perkins, Thomas, Williams, and Lowery families. Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Taylor ran the first hotel, and John Hawley and J. C. Thomas were the first storekeepers. John Hawley was the first postmaster. 35

As the end of the century approached, Archer County is thus seen to have been gradually gathering its forces for the progress that was to come. The county seat had been established, the county government

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34 "Dundee," The Archer County News, Section III, November 11, 1929, p. 3.
35 "Holliday," The Archer County News, Section IV, November 11, 1929, p. 4.
organized and functioning, stage lines operating, and a railroad built across one corner of the county. The United States Census for 1900 lists a population of 2,508 for the county and 506 for Archer City.

Three hundred and fifty-six farms were listed, as against fifty-three farms listed in 1880.36

No history of the period would be complete without some attention being given to the manners and customs of the era because, in their own peculiar fashion, they initiated a way of life that has been and is typical of Western culture.

Many factors operated to give the social life of the Archer County pioneers a happy-go-lucky, yet sturdy air. In the first place, the large ranches precluded the close relationships that develop among a thickly settled population. At the same time, distance operated to enhance friendly feelings toward those encountered. The chance visitor at the ranch or at the chuck wagon on the range was not only invited to share in the hospitality of mealtime but was expected to do so. Single men, too, predominated in the population; every ranch maintained a "string" of cowboys, most of whom were men unattached to family ties. The days on the range were long and lonely, the work hard, and there was little opportunity for recreation. During round-up time, the ranch hands or cowboys worked almost night and day without time off for week-ends or for riding into town. Once the job was completed, it was

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36 United States Census of 1900, Texas Compendium, p. 34.
time for a celebration. The presence of wild game, too, in plentiful numbers provided opportunities for hunting expeditions, for shooting matches, and for general "get-togethers" to enjoy the fruits of hunting.

One writer describes life at this time as follows:

The boys of thirty, forty, and fifty years ago, when not at work, passed the idle hours in amusements and jokes and seemingly enjoyed life better than the young men of today. They had pony races, gun shoots, or shooting matches, foot races and card games that were enjoyed and indulged in by all. They had occasional dances and parties that drew both boys and girls together and were the occasions looked forward to and universally acclaimed as the high points of life. 37

The pony races were held among the boys at the ranches who liked to determine the fastest horses in the remuda, the string of cowponies kept by each ranch. Once this was decided, meets would be held at which the fastest horses from the different ranches would be matched against each other. This invariably produced a great deal of rivalry and enthusiasm.

Shooting matches were often held as a part of the round-up activities or of the festivities at the horse races. Very often expert marksmanship was revealed. A typical meeting of this kind at the Bar X Ranch is described by one of the participants. The Bar X was owned by the Harrold brothers, E. B., E. W., and Dock, with headquarters at the old Bar X Springs on the edge of Black Flat. The ranch, as used

37 "Old Time Amusements," The Archer County News, November 11, 1929, p. 3.
then, contained some fifty thousand head of longhorn cattle and some
horses. The foreman was George Crammer, and the cowboys under him
were: Frank Milwee, George Mobley, Charlie Hart, Aut Blackburn,
Tom York, Ben H. Hawkins, Ed Hawkins, Louis Snider, Tom Elmo,
Charlie Meredith, John Chatham, Jim Floyd, Milt Goode, Dave Yoakum,
Bob Yoakum, Pole Benoist, Dock Grigsby, Bill Blackmon, Warren
Harrold, with Frank Hart, W. W. Duren, and Big Alex Morris as
cooks. 38 These men were described as follows:

These men were all known as good riders, ropers, and shooters, and readily held their own in the building of the West, or it might be said the taming of the West, for they demanded their own of range and cattle, commanded respect by the handy use of firearms. Most of these men were crack shots. Some of them were what was termed as two-gun men. All of them had done away with the triggers on their six-shooters and could use either hand in firing. Tom York and George Crammer were acclaimed to be the best shots and I have seen them shoot at the well-bucket on the curb of the well at Archer City running at full speed and hit with every shot. I have seen them stand still and shoot from each hand in opposite directions at card board targets and never miss and I believe their reputation as crack shots was justly due them. 39

The foot races were enjoyed by large crowds at general round-
ups and at neighborhood picnics. On these occasions the fastest run-
ners would compete with each other, and good time was usually made in
the dashes. Card games were indulged in and usually seven-up and
poker were the games. Small sums were usually bet at these games, but

39Ibid.
no large gambling was permitted; in many instances the ranch fore-
man would give instructions that no gambling would be allowed, and
what he meant in most cases is said to have been that large stakes
would be interpreted as gambling. 40

Square dances were the most common type of entertainment for
the young people, and the older people as well. They were the gala
occasions of the early days, and cowboys came from a radius of fifty
miles or more to attend them. A description of these dances ends
with these statements:

There is no old cowboy living today but what has en-
joyed the gatherings of those early pioneers in their good
old square dances, when the prettiest girls and the healthi-
est girls on earth, met those old-time cowboys, dressed in
their best, and danced to the music supplied by some old-
time fiddler, playing old-time tunes. Those were the happy
days and as we look back, no wonder we long for the good
old times we have had in the years of the long ago. 41

Many hunting expeditions were part of the recreational activities
participated in by the early settlers. Three Forks, so called on ac-
count of the meeting at this point of the south, middle, and north forks
of the Little Wichita River, was located four miles north of Archer
City on the L. F. Wilson Ranch, and was one of the favorite hunting
spots utilized by the pioneers. In early days it was described as being
a huntsman's paradise and was the feeding grounds for deer, turkey,
and prairie chickens. In season, great droves of ducks and geese
would make the lakes a roosting point. One observer wrote:

40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
"I have seen multiplied thousands of ducks and geese come to this roost from every direction and the hunter who was located before sunset could kill, in a few minutes, more than enough for a dozen families." 42

There were other types of hunting, too, that were utilized as recreation as well as performance of some type of service. The jack rabbit, according to reports, was one of the earliest pioneers of Archer County and was mentioned by explorers who traversed this section over a century ago. In later years after the land began to be cultivated, the jack rabbits became so destructive to growing crops that farmers were forced to take some active means to destroy them. In order to cope with the pest, rabbit drives were organized in which the entire neighborhood would participate. Here is a description of such a drive:

A rabbit drive and the pen to catch them were made and executed in the following manner: The whole community would be called together to make the drive and they would make a wire pen some twenty feet square, out of net wire about five feet high and run wings for half a mile in two directions, of net wire two or three feet high. This would be located at favorable places where they would have barbed wire fences to hold the net wire in position and generally where the rabbits would run to when molested by man, dog, or coyote. The congregated neighborhood under leaders, would then go straight from these pens for a mile or two, leaving some of their number scattered to make the march when the signal was given. The interval between the hunters would be some fifty or more feet according to the number of people in the drive. These people had instructions to move slowly near the wings of the pen and the out lines to move more swiftly in making the circle and closing it with the drive. The signal would be given by a gun shot

fired by the leader and the drive would commence and the fun begin. Most of the rabbits would run until they would encounter the wire, go down the wings until they would enter the pen. But many times, they would turn back and try to dodge through the line of people and this is when they would get into trouble, and this is when the fun would commence with the rabbit drives, for there would be many attempts to kill them as they passed, by striking them with clubs carried by the hunters, as ordinarily no guns would be allowed... In one drive, I think, there were eight hundred. Over five hundred of these were caught alive in the pen. 43

Another type of hunting indulged in by some of the more venturesome was that of rattlesnakes. Prairie fires in the early days are said to have caused them to den in the cliffs along the Wichita and Little Wichita Rivers, and that they afterwards made these cliffs their winter homes. Regardless of the verity of the belief, the rattlesnakes did have a habit of denning along the cliffs and among the rocks during the winter months and of crawling out in the early spring to bask on the rocks at the mouths of their dens. The more intrepid of the pioneers found sport in hunting out these reptiles at this season of the year. The following description indicates the large number of the snakes existent in the region in early days:

The first den I ever saw in Archer County was located near the line of the place now owned by T. A. Mathews at a cliff between the south and middle forks of the Little Wichita River. I found them while recovering a prairie chicken that I shot on the wing and fell in the rocky cliff. When I went

after the chicken I found a rattlesnake near it and shot it and the sound of the gun seemed to awaken others that were taking a sun bath near and I used up all the ammunition I had with me killing snakes and saw more go back into their den unharmed. When I was through shooting I had over twenty rattlesnakes and am sure that as many more were seen to enter their cliff home. 44

Another report describes the killing of 300 rattlesnakes near the line of fence that separated the Matt Andrews Ranch and the ranch of W. P. Harmonson. Another report told of the killing of more than 100 snakes on the R. Taylor Ranch near the Windthorst Road.

In spite of the "gun-toting" cowboys, the rough-and-ready life, and the always possible element of danger, the prevalence of crime was limited mainly to that of horse-thievery. In the reminiscences of an early-day sheriff of Archer County, a number of instances of trailing horse thieves are recounted. According to the sheriff, it was much easier to trace a horse thief on horseback than it is to trace a thief in an automobile. In the accounts of the old sheriff, activities correspond very closely to the so-called Western pictures so prevalent on television today: trailing the thief through rough country, cutting the gang off from their horses and then hiding in the mesquite thickets, the abandoned house, the finding of the thieves concealed in the attic.

Only one murder was mentioned in the historical account of Archer County as given in The Archer County News. Strange to say, in the

44 "Rattlesnakes of Archer County," The Archer County News, November 11, 1929, p. 8.
light of the rough-and-ready atmosphere that prevailed, the shooting was neither due to liquor nor to a "trigger-happy" cowboy, but was evidently a grudge killing. The murder was committed in the south-east part of the county about fourteen miles from Archer City. M. A. Brookhout, who lived with his family near Flag Springs, was called out in the middle of the night and shot as he walked from his door. The killers escaped into the Indian Territory, then a no-man's land where they were safe from capture.45

Even the "shoot-'em-ups" or "painting the town red" were not necessarily marked by violence. The following description preserves for generations to come the outline of "painting the town red":

At the close of the general round-up, when the representatives of the different ranches had been drawn together in hard work for weeks over a vast territory, the men would be sitting around talking after the morning meal and the boss would say, "Boys, this is the last day we will be together this trip, and after the last round-up this evening, I guess we had better go to town and 'paint her red' tonight." This would apply to any town that was closest to the end of the work, and I have seen them come into Archer City and after having a jolly good time, would leave the town, emptying their revolvers in rapid fire, making the red flashes that gave the term of "painting the town red" to history.

The performance did not greatly excite the inhabitants, for it was expected whenever a crowd of cowboys would remain in town at night. The shooting never caused much damage, as the guns were generally elevated and rarely ever fired in the direction of any house that was inhabited.46

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45"The First Murder in Archer County," The Archer County News, Section IV, November 11, 1929, p. 3.

46"Painting the Town Red," The Archer County News, Section III, November 11, 1929, p. 4.
Further corroboration of the harmlessness of the cowboys' pranks is found in the letter of a woman who was a pioneer settler of the Dundee area:

Early life in Dundee had a great many thrills, and among them were the Saturday nights the cowboys came to paint the town red. Big hearted and generous as they usually were, when they were under the influence of liquor, they simply went wild. One night my mother had just put her head out of the bedroom window to call into our house a widow, who lived in a small house about three feet away, when a bullet went whistling by her head, which you will admit, is enough thrills for one night.

On the other hand, when I had typhoid fever, when a little girl, these same cowboys could not do enough for us, as they kept us supplied with the most delicious meats, bringing a quarter of a beef at a time. They were typical Dr. Jekylls and Mr. Hyde, with their goodness predominating. 47

Statistics bear out the claim that the "goodness of the cowboys" predominated over their tendency to "shoot up the town" or "paint it red." Saloons were voted out of Archer City at an early date, but there was one at Holliday, one at Dundee, one at Geraldine, and two at Windthorst. Not a single murder, however, was committed in Archer County that in the remotest way could be charged to saloons.

One of the best-known of the cowboy ballads, "The Dying Cowboy," is believed to have had its origin in the early days of Archer County or before its organization. For years there has been a grave on the banks of the South Fork of the Little Wichita River. The grave was first discovered in 1879 about the time of the organization of the

47 "Maid of Dundee," The Archer County News, Section III, November 11, 1929, p. 3.
county. At first it was thought that the grave was that of a buffalo hunter, but in 1889 a group of young people found the grave and a sandstone with something carved on it. The carving was indistinct, but the words "cow boy" and "last words" could be deciphered. These words so nearly correspond with those found in the ballad, "The Dying Cowboy," that it is now thought that this grave or the cowboy buried therein might have been the inspiration for the writer who composed the well-known cowboy song.

In "Personal Glimpses of Archer City" one of the pioneer daughters of the town recalls many interesting events of the early days. She was the daughter of L. W. Hart, a lawyer and official of the town, and had gone to school in Iowa. Her father came to meet her at Fort Worth and they went from there to Henrietta by train. There they were met by a member of the family with a "spanking team of gray horses and a high cow man's buggy." Henrietta was thirty-five miles from Archer City, and on the trip from one to the other, only one house was seen. The young lady and her father, however, passed through a town on the way which is best described in her own words:

I was told that Archer City was thirty-five miles away and soon after we started I asked if we passed through any towns on the way. My father assured me that about halfway to Archer City, we should go through a very pretty town situated in a beautiful grove of mesquite and I watched and waited to see the spires of the churches and the settlement around the town. Finally I was told that the settlement

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48 The Archer County News, Section I, November 11, 1929, p. 3.
was just over the next hill. It really was a lovely location and a well-populated town, but imagine my astonishment to find it was a "dog town" and all the prairie dogs were outstanding as straight as possible and barking with excitement to see us. This was my first sight of the well-known prairie dogs who lived with the owls and rattlesnakes and ate up grass and grain and finally became such an nuisance that the government helped the local authorities to exterminate them. I liked the little fellers; they were cunning and friendly when you could get them young enough to train them. 49

The young lady was agreeably surprised in the people of Texas. She had been told that it was a country of outlaws and that all the men on the streets wore pistols or Bowie knives and unless one was very careful, they would "shoot" or "knife" the newcomer. Much to her surprise, she found "the people of Texas, even in the early days, were much like they were elsewhere."

Many intimate personal glimpses of the life of Archer City are found in Mrs. Kerr's reminiscences. There was Mrs. East, the "great lady" of the town, who was the wife of Ed East, rich cattleman and head of the OX Ranch. They lived in a log house. Miss Lula Barwise was described as "an elegant young woman in a beautiful pink and blue gingham, very tight fitting with high collar and large bustle." "Net" Scott, one of the belles of the town, was "dashing, witty, and talented." Grandma Adams was a "woman of culture" who entertained many distinguished people and served tea in a blue china cup and saucer which she had inherited. Tradition held that George Washington had drunk

49 Lillian Hart Kerr, "Personal Glimpses of Early Archer City," The Archer County News, Section IV, November 11, 1929, p. 3.
from this cup when he had visited at the home of an ancestor while on
one of his campaigns.

Archer County, it is indicated, in its early days was a cross sec-
tion of the culture of the "old states"—a new land which took from the
migrant settler his manners and customs and welded them into a way
of life that was peculiarly his own—a life that was not only marked by
boldness and bravery but by integrity and chivalry of the highest order.

One of the old-time settlers summed it up in this way:

People had more religion, more freedom, more
Americanism apparently than they have today; they had
less crime, less poverty, less suffering according to the
population, than we do today. We had more respect for
womanhood, more respect for mankind in those good old
days, when modesty, virtue, and true Christianity were
looked upon as the true attributes of a lady or gentleman. 50

50 The Archer County News, Section I, November 11, 1929,
p. 3.
Archer County, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was, to a large extent, still undeveloped and could be classified as a part of Texas' "cow country" rather than as a farming section. In the thirty-year period from 1900 to 1930, however, the economic as well as agricultural picture of the county underwent many changes.

A number of factors operated to bring about these changes. Many of the larger ranches were subdivided into smaller acreages or divided up and sold outright to stock farmers. Two more railways were built through the county, providing transportation facilities to all portions of it. The invention of the automobile greatly added to transportation facilities, and indirectly led to the building of a system of paved highways across the county. The discovery of oil in the county brought enormous wealth to many of the landowners and a large new source of income for the county. Migration to the county of large numbers of German people with intensive farming practices changed the agricultural program prevalent in the county in many ways. The breakup of the large cattle ranches, the influx of foreigners, and the prosperity
brought about by the discovery of oil all had repercussions on the life
and manners of the people. The period was one of many changes.

Favorable prices and a strong demand for cattle had had a large
influence in helping hold the large ranches intact. In 1882, some
"grass fed" steers sold in Chicago for $6.80 a hundred, and upwards
of $6.00 was offered for the corresponding month of the next year.¹

Prices for market stock remained high throughout 1883 and the early
months of 1884, but in the fall of that year the decline began and by the
middle of 1885, range cattle sold high at $10.00 per head, and thousands
went for less. The value of "range rights" and "free grass" were
found to be delusive and no longer to be regarded as assets. The un-
fortunate stockmen found the returns from their vast herds to be a
mere pittance compared with their original investments. One case is
reported in which a Texas cattleman, who in 1883 had refused
$1,500,000 for his cattle, ranch outfit, and range rights, sold them
all in 1886 for $245,000.² The extreme dry weather in Archer County
in 1887 added to the cattleman's woes in this region of the country.

With the collapse of the great boom of the eighties, a complete
rearrangement of the great cattle pastures began to take shape. The
fiction of "range rights" gave place to the outright purchase or the
leasing of tracts of range land. The improvement of the grades of

¹"Fort Worth and the Texas Northwest Edition," History of
²Ibid.
cattle and the gradual elimination of the longhorn led to a different type of farming wherein more emphasis was placed on the raising of feed crops, which in turn were fed to both beef and dairy cattle. The changes which have occurred in Archer County as a whole are typified by the changes which have occurred on the 66 Ranch, one of the early large ranches of the county.

The 66 Ranch has had a colorful history. It is a part of the original 99 Ranch owned by John Stone and extended from Archer County into Clay County. Luke Wilson, who was born at Palestine, Illinois, in 1842, bought all of the 99 spread in the early 1880's. Associated with him in this undertaking were M. B. Wilson, W. E. McCrory, W. D. Dickey, Vol Dickey, and C. B. Ward. These people, together with Wilson, formed the Wichita Land and Cattle Company. Allen Palmer, one-time member of Quantrell's raiders, was foreman of the ranch. 3

The property did not prosper, and returns from the investment were small. After several years the owners agreed to dissolve their organization and divide their holdings. "Uncle Luke," as Mr. Wilson was familiarly called, sold some bank stock he owned in Kansas City in order to buy the holdings of some of his associates. The land that he now held became known as the Wilson Ranch, with the 66 brand instead

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of the 99 heretofore used. The story goes that the 66 brand was adopted, not from the fact that the ranch contained sixty-six thousand acres, because it was much larger than that, but because "Uncle Luke" turned his branding irons upside down in using them. When he came into possession of the old 99 irons, he did not want to use them because of possible confusion, so he decided upon the simple and economical device of using the same irons, upside down, making a "66" instead of a "99."

From 1886 until 1900, the Wilson Ranch was much like any other piece of ranch property in North or West Texas. Some years the grass would be plentiful and the prices good. A profit was made during such times, but in other years this profit would be wiped out when the grass was short or prices low. It gradually became evident that the ranch owner, if he was to make an over-all profit, could not depend on grass alone for raising his cattle.

In 1900 Uncle Luke sold a considerable portion of the ranch lands to P. H. Fitzgerald of Indianapolis, Indiana, who, in turn, placed it on the market in quarter sections under the name of the American Tribune Colony Lands. A number of the buyers, most of whom were from the northern states, moved onto the land and started farming. The town of Geraldine was established in the heart of the small colony of farmers.  

4 Ibid.
The northern colonists, however, were not familiar with the farming methods of Northwest Texas or with the vagaries of a Texas climate. Such knowledge probably would not have helped them very much because the early 1900's were years of extreme drought. Practically all of the crops failed, and the colonists turned their land back to its original owners and quit in disgust. Fitzgerald, in his turn, passed most of the land back to Uncle Luke. Geraldine disappeared from the map of Archer County, and the 66 reverted to its former ways as a cattle ranch.

The next important step in the history of the 66 was the building of the Wichita Falls and Southern Railway directly across its pastures. The road, built by Frank Kell, J. A. Kemp, and associates, traversed the ranch between Wichita Falls and Archer City and made Newcastle, Young County, its southern terminus. For many years the cattle shipments from the 66 provided a big share of the railroad's freight traffic.

In 1912 Archer County began attracting the attention of the oil men on account of the discovery of oil in adjacent counties. In 1916, the Panther Oil Company composed of Wichita Falls citizens drilled in a small producer on Panther Creek, on the 66 Ranch, and followed it with several others. In 1922 a good producer, the Peterson well, was drilled in on the ranch, and exploration was rapid after this time. Soon a large part of the ranch was punctuated with derricks and crisscrossed
with pipe lines. At one time, 25,000 barrels of oil were being produced daily from the wells on the ranch. The same thing was happening to most of the other ranches, and a great new source of income thus came into the ranchers' hands. New homes and many new improvements sprang up almost overnight. The following description is apt:

The open ranges have been replaced with large pastures under fence. The scrub cattle have been replaced gradually, but steadily, with animals more suited for the feed lot, beeves with the breeding and conformation that would respond to scientific feeding programs before being shipped to the market. More cattle, better cattle, better tended cattle—that sums up the change in the beef production and of the ranch.5

The foregoing, however, does not sum up all of the changes which have taken place in the ranching industry. As early as March, 1920, Uncle Luke made a start in dairying. He remembered the fertile fields of his northern home and he thought that the future of Archer County lay in a varied farming program instead of depending mostly on the raising of cattle. He looked ahead to the time when the ranch lands would be fertilized by both improved beef cattle and dairy cattle and thus enriched, become fertile farm lands such as he had known in his youth in Illinois.

Range cowmen, though, knew little about the dairy business, and they were indifferent to its possibilities. Milking is a twice-a-day job, and in the old-time cow countries was regarded as a woman's task. One of the most severe handicaps Uncle Luke encountered in establishing a dairy business was the difficulty in getting suitable dairy help.

5Ibid.
Considerable financial loss was suffered at first, but Uncle Luke was committed to the idea that the dairy cow was eventually going to be the salvation of Archer County, and he kept on. When he turned the ranch over, in 1924, to Luke McCrory as trustee of a trust to administer the estate, the transfer included a somewhat improved dairy herd that was beginning to give promise of greater things to come.\(^6\) It was also made plain that Uncle Luke wanted the dairy herd improved and kept up, and his wishes have been carried out. The most modern ideas in buildings and equipment have been put into use, and careful and complete records of production and feeding are kept.

In the meantime a new type of settler had been moving into the county. The Circle Ranch, ten miles east of Archer City, had begun to break up after the decline of cattle prices in the late 1880's, and in 1891, 75,000 acres of this ranch were reserved for German colonists. J. H. Meurer, one of the pioneer settlers of Archer County, was instrumental in the colonization project.\(^7\)

On July 26, 1891, a cross was erected on a hill on the wide expanse of ranch land, and the colony officially recognized as that of Windthorst in memory of the well-known German statesman, Ludwig Windthorst. In September, the first colonists arrived, composed of the Reverend Father Joseph Reisdorff, Ernest Hoff, Frank Humpert, 

\(^{6}\)Ibid.

\(^{7}\)"Windthorst," The Archer County News, November 11, 1929, p. 6.
Henry Weinzapfel, John Andres, and Nicholas Swenk. Advertisements
in several German newspapers proved successful, and twice each week
the stage from Henrietta brought new families seeking the "garden spot
of Texas," as Archer County had been advertised. By 1894 there were
120 families living in the area, and by 1900 their ways of living were
firmly established. This way of living was a wide variation from that
of the ranch areas of the county.

In the first place, the German colonists were accustomed to an
intensive type of farming. This was necessary because of the lack
of space, for Germany was very densely populated. Many types of
crops, therefore, were utilized because the people raised their liv-
ing. Cows and chickens had played a major part in their agricultural
economy, and vegetables and fruits were also widely utilized. The
abundance of land and its fertility were almost unbelievable and the
colonists were quick to take advantage of the opportunities provided.

The word went back to the "old countries," and more and more
colonists moved in. The new land, however, had many hardships as
well as opportunities. Prolonged summer droughts and the bleak blue
northerns that swept down in the winter brought havoc to the best-laid
plans. Many of the settlers drifted farther south, where the rainfall
was more abundant and the winters less severe. Father Reisdorff
stayed three years at Windthorst, then old age and poor health forced
him to retire. The Reverend Father Ludwig Stutzer, his successor,
worked for eight years in the community. On January 3, 1904, the church and school were destroyed by fire. The Reverend Father John then succeeded Father Stutzer, and he was aided by Father Frowin and Father Leo. Under their leadership, the colony progressed and by 1930 many of the farmers owned attractive modern homes with comforts of which their parents dared not dream. Diversified farming, the raising of poultry and cattle, and especially dairying are the sources of a solid income.

With the beginning of the breakup of the great ranches, there were thousands of acres of land to be sold. A. L. Scott of Canada, who at one time owned thousands of acres of land in the vicinity of Windthorst, put his lands on the market. J. H. Meurer, who had been instrumental in colonizing Windthorst, was the agent for Scott. He saw the necessity of another village in order to sell the many thousands of acres of land, and accordingly founded the town of Scotland, and colonized the Scotland community. The name given was in honor of the owner.

Meurer, with his family, located in the community. He began advertising the land in leading newspapers throughout the eastern states. In these advertisements he praised the new virgin soil of Archer County and offered it at a fair price. In a short time the land was sold to people from different states, a little village took on substance and growth, and what was once a ranch of some fifty thousand acres was soon

\[8\text{Ibid.}\]
transformed into a striving community of small farms and comfortable homes.

Another community heavily colonized by German immigrants in Archer County is that of Bowman. It was established in the early nineties, and the names of the settlers indicate their origin: R. G. Decker, Ervin Fair, James Brown, Thomas Aten, George Koenig, Jake Schmitt, John Lankhuff, John Krebs, Chris Krebs, Charlie Knight, A. Priebe, William Vogtsberger, Martin Finkler, Gustave Clair, Henry Ford, W. H. Bachman, Johnnie Jones, Charlie Wright, Bob Dowlin, John Gronnel, William Sturn, A. Ludolphus, and A. Ingalls, who became the first county judge in Archer County. A rural school was established and a German Evangelical Church built in 1900. At that time this church was the largest of its denomination in the state, as well as the strongest, financially.

In addition to poultry raising and dairying, the settlers of this area developed two unique projects. The community is located in the largest peach orchard in Texas, and it also has the largest commercial daisy garden in the South, if not in America. The peaches are grown for shipping purposes and are harvested and shipped to northern markets. The daisies are grown for cut flowers and are shipped to all of the flower markets in America.

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9 Ralph Crowell, "Bowman," The Archer County News, November 11, 1929, p. 3.
The breakup of the large ranches plus the colonization of a large number of people accustomed to a diversified type of farming thus created a new agricultural economy for the county. On the large ranches yet remaining, stock farming rather than range grazing of cattle began to be the preponderant phase of the cattle industry, while on the smaller farms a diversified type of farming, of which dairying was the keystone, began to be firmly established. As one writer expresses it: "The old time cowboy with his boots and his ten gallon hat might be shocked at the change, but just a little study and observation on his part would convince him of the everlasting wisdom of it."\(^{10}\)

The discovery of oil in Archer County also changed the economic picture to a large extent. Prior to the year 1922, Archer County was looked upon by oil men as the "oil man's graveyard" because of repeated failures to find oil in paying quantities, despite the fact that large oil fields had been developed in adjoining Wichita County. Petroleum was known to exist in Archer County because oil had been found on the Wilson 66 Ranch in 1917 and 1918, but owing to the improper testing of the sands, these resulted in dry holes. A couple of years passed without further drilling in the county. Later, Charles Bean and associates of Wichita Falls formed a company known as the Panther Oil Corporation, and put down a successful test on the Wilson Ranch. Other

\(^{10}\)Gould, op. cit., p. 4.
wells were drilled and the Panther pool was uncovered. Drilling on ad-
joining tracts, however, was unsuccessful, and the producing areas
were ringed by a string of non-producers.

In the latter part of 1918 the Burkburnett pool was discovered in
Wichita County, and activity of the oil drillers was centered in this
area for the next two years. By 1921 the producing oil sands had been
tapped to include the great KMA pool just over the line from Archer
County. Renewed interest was now taken in drilling in the county, and
in a short time many derricks were up along the northern boundary.
Freeman-Hampton brought in a 150-barrel well at 1,765 feet, on the
W. P. Ferguson Ranch north of Mankins, and this completion ushered
in an intensive drilling campaign in all parts of the county. This
campaign resulted in the opening of scores of pools that yielded thou-
sands of barrels of high-grade oil that in a period of seven years totalled
the enormous output of 59,537,446 barrels.¹¹

Oil production, at first, centered mainly in the northern part of
Archer County, but later much activity centered in the southern portion
of the county, the development of the Swastika pool being a notable ex-
ample. The initial well in the Swastika pool was a rank wildcat
which opened up a great deal of new territory to oil production. With
this completion, a demand for acreage was made in the sector, and in

¹¹ Jimmie Maxwell, "Oil Production in Archer County," The
Archer County News, November 11, 1929, p. 4.
a short time the Harmel pool, the Carey pool, and the Ragle pool were discovered and developed.

An intense drilling campaign was then begun in the county with all parts of it being tested. Major producing areas, however, were found to be in the northern and southern sections of the county. Prior to any discovery of oil the government had made an oil survey through Archer County and the surveyors drew a map showing an oil stream running through the county down from Indian Territory and extending down through Young, Jack, and other counties by the way of Navarro and Jefferson counties to the Gulf Coast on the Louisiana line. Although the survey was discounted at the time, subsequent drilling activities have shown that oil has been found in most places this map indicated. Oil, according to this map, flowed in a stream much like that of water and traversed Archer County from the north to the south.12

One of the remarkable things about the oil sands in Archer County is that they represent twelve different oil-producing sands, all at different depths. This may be due to the proximity of the fields to the rock areas just across the line in Oklahoma, where geologists claim that every stratum of rock is represented in the different layers. Be that as it may, the twelve sands tapped are found at approximately 300, 600, 900, 1,000, 1,100, 1,200, 1,300, 1,400, 1,500, 1,600, 1,700,

12Ibid.
and 1,800 feet. Since many oil wells have to be drilled to 5,000 feet or more, the shallow depth at which oil was found in Archer County facilitated the drilling program and made it much less expensive. One of the deepest wells ever located in Archer County was that drilled in the early 1950's by the Phillips Petroleum Company in north Archer County near Lake Wichita to an approximate depth of 5,550 feet. It was not a producer, however. The county's greatest production is from the old L. F. Wilson estate, the 66 Ranch, which has been sold to the Petrex Corporation. The largest production owned by a single individual is that of Mrs. R. O. Prideaux of Graham. 13

Many interesting stories have been unfolded in the process of leasing lands for oil production. For instance, a plot of 428 oil-rich acres owned by Mrs. George Abercrombie, Sr., was purchased by her father, the late Sanford Wilson, in 1904 from Mark Twain, the one and same Samuel L. Clemens of Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer fame. Sanford Wilson, in 1904, had visited the World's Fair held at St. Louis and, while there, purchased land script from Twain which had been bought when the country was being flooded with land script for land in Texas. During his lifetime, Wilson used the land he purchased for ranch purposes. It is now one of the richest oil-producing areas in the county. 14

13 "Archer County Has Colorful, Interesting Oil History," Wichita Daily Times, March 20, 1955, p. 2E.

14 Ibid.
Some idea of the vast amount of oil yielded by oil sands in Archer County may be gained from the following figures:

During the year 1922, the first year of the county's real development, the figures showed 849,680 barrels passed through the various pipe lines. The year following found an increase of over 3,000,000 barrels over the previous years output, a total of 5,210,000 barrels being run. In 1924, due to the uncovering of a number of new pools, a grand total of 11,280,833 barrels was produced, an increase of approximately 6,000,000 barrels, as compared with that of 1923. The year of 1925 the county's production reached 13,000,000 barrels, the peak of its yearly output. During 1927 and 1928, on account of the depressed condition of the market, the activity fell off to a great extent and a gradual decline in the output was noted. Slightly under 10,000,000 barrels were produced in 1927 and in 1928 production fell off until there were slightly over 7,000,000 barrels marketed. 15

When it is considered that oil at the present time brings $2.90 per barrel for high-grade (40 gravity) oil and that its cheapest price was eighty cents per barrel in 1912, some idea may be gained of the vast amount of money collected by the people of Archer County who owned the lands on which oil was found. In 1954, under stringent proration, 8,447,226 barrels of oil poured into the county a wealth of $23,652,232. 16 Such an amount of money as has been received from the sale of oil could not have failed to have had an enormous effect on the economic conditions of the county.

15 Maxwell, op. cit., p. 4.

16 Wichita Daily Times, March 20, 1955, p. 2E.
Another causative factor in the change-over from ranch economy to that of diversified agriculture was the construction of railroads through and across the county. Such construction opened up new areas to settlement and provided avenues for shipping out farm products.

As previously mentioned, the Wichita Valley Railway, which traverses the north side of the county, has existed since before 1900. In 1890 Colonel Morgan Jones of Wichita Falls, who had been one of the builders of the Fort Worth and Denver City Railroad, chartered a railway known as the Wichita Valley Railway Company and constructed a line from Wichita Falls to Seymour, a part of which crossed the northwestern boundary of Archer County. In 1907 J. A. Kemp and Frank Kell of Wichita Falls organized a railway known as the Wichita Falls and Southern Railway Company and constructed a line of railway from Wichita Falls to Newcastle, Young County, Texas. This line passed near the center of Archer County and directly through the Wilson 66 Ranch. In 1909 the Gulf, Texas, and Western Railroad crossed the county near the southern line. Thus a network of railway lines very early was laid through and across Archer County, providing easy access to transportation.

The coming of these railways also brought new towns to the county. Huff, and Luke Wilson were located north of Archer City, and Anarene and Bell Camp south on the Wichita Falls and Southern Railway through Archer County.
Huff, on Lake Creek, was named in honor of Charles C. Huff, general attorney for the railway, while Luke Wilson was named in honor of the late owner of the 66 Pasture, on whose lands the station was located. Anarene was named in honor of Mrs. Anna Graham, wife of Charles E. Graham, on whose lands the town was located. A store, school house, post office, blacksmith shop, filling station, and a hotel were built. Bell Camp was named after Mrs. W. T. Campbell, on whose land the railroad station was located.

Megargel, the second largest town in Archer County, is located on the headwaters of Kickapoo Creek in the southwest part of the county. It was laid out when the Gulf, Texas, and Western railroad was built in 1910, and was named for Roy C. Megargel, of New York, who at that time was connected with the new road. In 1929 Megargel had a population of 1,200, nine grocery stores, two dry goods stores, three cafes, three meat markets, two lumber yards, two hotels, a flour mill, a cotton gin, two blacksmith shops, four churches, two fine brick school houses, and various other necessary industries. One of the youngest towns in the county, it has grown the fastest of any of them.

Major oil companies also laid pipelines into the county for the more economical transportation of the crude oil. By 1930 the county was crisscrossed with such lines. Natural gas, a by-product of the oil drilling industry, is available for use by residents of the county from two gas lines which cross it. One from the Panhandle fields and
the other from the Winkler County field provide service for every city, town, and hamlet in the county. High-power electric lines also were built across the county and provide electrical service.

Still another factor influencing the development of the county, especially in rural areas, was the building of paved highways. The inadequate roads of the ranch era in the county provided very poor transportation. The large ranchers, jealous of the encroachment of settlers, had no desire to see roads cross their wide acres or to put hindrances in the path of cattle on the trails. The invention of the automobile and the discovery of oil in the county were the great motivating forces that finally ended with the construction of a system of paved roads.

In fact, lack of transportation or all-weather roads was one of the factors which delayed the development of the oil fields. Oil drilling sites were often in the middle of a field or in inaccessible places. The heavy equipment required for oil drilling could not be carried in to the location in many instances, especially during the winter when rains made the clay soil sticky.

The first automobile registered or run in Archer County was bought by W. C. Young and J. D. Powell, who composed the land firm of the W. C. Young Land Company, in 1904, and was an International Harvester chain drive model. This firm bought the car to use in showing the lands they had for sale and employed James Q. Clark

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17 The Archer County News, November 11, 1929, p. 2.
as chauffeur. The car had solid rubber tires, a chain drive similar to the chain used on the corn harvester, and cost $780.

The need for an automobile in the business is indicated by the fact that the car paid for itself in the first day of operation. The firm had a customer who was interested in buying some land, but time did not permit him to look at it. He had to catch a midnight train in Wichita Falls and he told the firm that he would have to defer to a later date looking at the land seven miles northwest of Archer City. The land firm then told him that they had a new automobile, a careful driver, and they agreed to put him in Wichita Falls in plenty of time for his train. The customer agreed, and Young went with him to inspect the land. The customer liked the land, came back to Archer City, and signed a contract for its purchase. The customer was delivered safely to Wichita Falls in time for his train, although some difficulty was encountered on the way when the car chain was broken. A corn harvester provided a replacement and the car took up its journey once more. The commission on the land sale was $780, the purchase price of the car. 18

Archer County was among the first of northwest Texas to vote bonds for a system of paved highways. Opposition, however, was manifested against the bonds and the commissioners' court was enjoined from issuing and selling them. The court battle that followed extended

18"Archer County's First Automobile," The Archer County News, November 11, 1929, p. 7.
to the Supreme Court of the United States, involved seventy million dollars of construction in Texas and approximately a billion dollars in both the state of Texas and the United States. The Supreme Court of the United States decided in the Archer County case that the road district law of the state of Texas was involved and that the "due process" clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States was contravened. The State Legislature had to meet then to clear up the situation. A bill was passed in November, 1926, to cover the road bonds issued and to make the legislation retroactive.

The Archer County road question was again brought before the people and an agreed system of roads designated as follows:

Highway No. 79 from the north line of Archer County to the south line of Archer County, by the way of Archer City.
Highway No. 30 from the north line of the county, where the highway enters from Wichita County to the west line of the county, through the towns of Holliday, Mankins, and Dundee.
Highway No. 24 from the west line of the county through Megargel to a point on the south line, where said highway enters Archer County from the east.
Highway No. 25 from the east line of Archer County through Windthorst, Archer City, and Mankins and a lateral road starting twelve miles due west of Archer City on Highway 25 to Megargel. Also one hundred thousand dollars to be used on a road from Highway No. 25 at Windthorst, through Scotland to the north line of Archer County and seventy thousand dollars to be used on a road from Archer City, running southeast to the east corner of the county.19

As evident from the above description, this planned system of highways very effectively reaches all portions of the county. These

roads were not all completed by 1930, the end of the period covered in this chapter, but they were subsequently finished and additional farm-to-market roads built. From the standpoint of transportation, Archer County is adequately serviced.

The search of Wichita Falls for an adequate water supply has resulted in the impounding of the water of the streams in Archer County to form lakes. Lake Wichita, which is partly in Archer County on its northeastern boundary, was built in 1900 by constructing a dam across Holliday Creek. The watershed comprises approximately 150 square miles, all of which is in Archer County. Later, in 1921, Lake Diversion in the northwestern portion of the county was created by damming the waters of the Wichita River. This watershed extends into Baylor County. These lakes added much to the recreational facilities of the county, which had always been noted for its hunting and fishing. More than 3,000 acres, also, of Archer County land are irrigated by using the waters from Lake Diversion.

World War I had a great impact on the county, it being the first one to occur since the county had considerable population. At the time of the Spanish-American War there were not many people in the county; and then, too, World War I was the first to draft soldiers and not rely solely on volunteers. There is no accurate record available of the number of young men from Archer County who were called into the service.

The Archer County News listed 162 names of boys known to have entered the service from Archer County. Eight men from the county lost their lives in the conflict: Ira Jones, Ed Hurst, Dick Miller, Doss Pendergast, Jeff Mays, Lee Miller, Edgar Burroughs, and Lyle Sowell. 21

Economically speaking, the impact of the war was tremendous. All farm products were in great demand, especially wheat and cotton. The latter brought over forty cents per pound. Much land in the county which had hitherto been used for grazing was plowed under and wheat or cotton planted. Since much of this land might well have been better utilized as grass lands, an erosion problem was generated for which soil conservation was later needed.

A recapitulation of the 1900 statistics and a comparison of them with those of 1929 provide some measure of the changes which occurred during this thirty-year period. In 1900 the majority of the land in Archer County was divided up into large ranches. There was only one railroad across the northwestern portion of the county. There were no surfaced highways, no automobiles in the county. The cattle industry was paramount, but with no emphasis placed on dairying to any extent. The population of the county in 1900 was only 2,508 people; in 1910 it had increased to 6,525, and in 1929 it was approximately

21 The Archer County News, November 11, 1929.
11,000 people. The population of Archer City in 1900 was 506, while it had increased to 2,000 people by 1930. In 1900 the total stock population of the county was 1,447,733 head, and by 1920 this figure had increased to 3,025,180. In addition to the large income from oil products in 1930, the crop products were estimated to be worth $52,000,000. There were large corn and grain crops, and between three and four thousand bales of cotton. Forage grains had become a part of the agricultural economy and there was a large crop of these. More than $200,000 income was reported from the dairy industry of the county.

Great strides had been made in transportation. Two more railroads had been built through the county, an adequate system of highways was under construction, pipelines provided transportation for oil, and electric and gas lines had brought new conveniences as well as time- and work-saving facilities. In the short space of thirty years, the county which was almost wholly a part of the great ranching industry had been transformed into one with a diversified agricultural economy. Great wealth had also been channeled into the county from the discovery and exploitation of the great Archer County oil fields. The foundations had been laid for the march of modern progress.

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Such important changes could not have failed to have repercussions on the local culture of the area. One of the most important of these was the establishment of a county-wide system of schools. The first school in the county had been established at Archer City, and by 1900 there were small schools at Mankins, Dundee, Bowman, and in other small settlements in the county. At Bowman there were eighty pupils attending the school in 1900.

In 1929 there were twenty-five common school districts in Archer County and three independent school districts. They are described as follows:

The Independent Schools are Archer City, Holliday, and Megargel, all first-class high schools, each doing eleven years or grades of work, all affiliated with the State University and each under the management and supervision of a local superintendent. The common schools, under the supervision of the County Judge as Supt. Ex-Officio, are located in the various parts of the county so that each neighborhood or community has a school. These range in size from one teacher schools to affiliated high schools with faculty of nine teachers. Most of the schools in the county have terms of nine months each year, are well-equipped, and the teachers are well paid. The shortest term of any school in the county is six months.

The old type of school building is being replaced by modern school buildings erected on plans approved by the State Department of Education as regards heating, lighting, ventilation, etc.24

Seven of the common schools, namely, Windthorst, Eagle Bend, Cottonwood, Scotland, Geraldine, Mankins, and Lone Oak, were

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24"The Public Schools of Archer County," The Archer County News, November 11, 1929, p. 6.
recognized at that time by the State Department of Education as being standard schools. All independent schools and four of the larger common schools operated buses in the transportation of children to and from school.

The tax rate in the various districts ranged from ten cents to one dollar on the $100 valuation, with an average of 51 3/5 cents for all common school districts. The estimated value of the school properties in the county was approximately $200,000.

In 1929 there was comparatively little bonded indebtedness of the common schools in Archer County. Presence of oil in paying quantities in most of the districts had provided funds through taxation for improvements, for better salaries, and for a nine-month school term.

The impact of oil revenue had also made itself felt in many other ways in the county. In many instances it brought great wealth to many families of the area. On some of the larger ranches, such as the Wilson Ranch, hundreds of oil wells were brought in. This new wealth reflected itself in the building of beautiful, comfortable homes and in modern conveniences such as telephones, gas, and electricity.

These homes were built both on the ranches and in the cities and towns. One of the most imposing ranch homes is that of the J. R. Parkey family, located two miles from Mankins in the northwest part of Archer County. It has all of the city conveniences of electrical lighting, heating, and cooling. With his parents, Parkey came as a
pioneer to Archer County in 1888. In 1929 he owned more than 20,000 acres of Archer County land with not a mortgage or debt of any kind on it. He had about 2,000 head of the finest cattle in this section of the state.

One of the beauty spots of Archer County is the ranch home of the Griffin family. It is located one mile north of the small village of Dundee and specialized in stock farming. In 1929 the ranch had a fine herd of registered Hereford cattle, 250 head of cows of Anxiety strain, which produced calves in great demand from cattlemen who wished to build up their herds. About 2,000 acres of land were operated under irrigation, planted to cotton and feedstuffs. The ranch home might well serve as a pattern for the ranch styles so prevalent in modern building at the present time.

The Cowan family, with extensive ranching interests in Archer and Baylor counties, maintained the family home in Archer City. Another fine ranch home in 1929 was that of the W. M. Coleman family, located about ten miles northeast of Archer City. Coleman was one of the pioneer settlers of the area and served as foreman of the old TL Ranch. He owned 15,000 acres of land, and kept a herd of from 1,000 to 1,500 Hereford cattle, depending on grass conditions.

Not all of the imposing homes in the county were built with oil or registered Hereford cattle money. In the Windthorst and Scotland areas are many comfortable homes of the people who have gained
sustenance by dairying and diversified farming. The homes of descendants of the Meurer pioneer family are examples of this.

In and near Archer City are many palatial homes. The beautiful three-story home of the T. B. Wilson family stands in the south part of Archer City. The W. H. Taylor home, located just outside Archer City on the south, is one of the most magnificent homes in this section of the country. Land, cattle, and oil have all contributed to the income of this family. Many more instances of beautiful homes could be mentioned.

Archer County pioneers, like those in other portions of Texas, represented, for the greater part, families of culture and breeding. They withstood the hardships of the early days and when the black gold flowed up from underneath their lands, they used it to build a still higher standard of living. There was money for conveniences, money to use in improving the local schools, money to send the boys and girls to colleges. The paved highways brought the large cities to their doors. In the short space of thirty years, progress changed the county from an almost isolated state to that of one whose people were in close contact with all that went on in the outside world and who, though living some distance from the large cities, enjoyed their comforts and conveniences.

The discovery of oil also had impacts of other kinds on the county. In the first place, it brought in many more people. Excitement ran
high in the early days of oil exploration. Hundreds of people flocked to the area when they heard the stories of the great oil fields being developed. Many of those who came made big money. In turn, they offered big money for a few necessities. Due to the poor transportation in an area which had no hard-surfaced roads in the beginning of the oil development, boom towns mushroomed at production sites. These boom towns, some numbering up to as many as 3,000 people, attracted not only earnest oil explorers but also hordes of thugs, murderers, gamblers, and plunderers. Texas Rangers at one time served as bodyguards for judges during district court terms at Archer City. The areas which had once resounded to the wild whoops of the cowboys now rang with the noises from the boom towns.

By 1929 the drilling frenzy had reached its peak. The oil development was not a thing of the past, but settled down to a steady business growth and development much like any other industry in the area. The story of how this was done, as well as other developments, comprises the contents of the next chapter.
CHAPTER IV

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHER COUNTY

FROM 1930 THROUGH 1955

In 1930 the population of Archer County totaled 9,684; in 1940 it was 7,599; and in the 1950 census a total of 6,816 people were enumerated. In the period from 1930 to 1940 there was a 21.5 per cent loss in population and in the one from 1940 to 1950, the percentage of population decrease was 10.3. ¹ This steady decrease in population, on the surface, might be considered as an indication that the county as a whole was going backward and failing to make progress. Statistics, however, show that this is not true. The purpose of the present chapter is to bring the county history up to date and to show that a number of factors have contributed to population decrease without hindering the progress of the county as a whole.

In the first place, the year 1930 found Archer County near the peak of the oil boom that had come to the county. Oil, first found in 1912 in small quantities, had, by 1922, become a dreamer's reality of a great oil field. At that time there were no hard-surfaced highways for workers to come in from distant points and work for the day and

¹The Texas Almanac, 1955 (Dallas, Texas, 1955), p. 130.
then return there at night. On the contrary, small towns mushroomed at production sites. Some of these, now non-existent, were Gose City, Dad's Corner, Ferguson City, Four Corners, Green Flowers, and Turbeville. Some of these boom towns, in the heyday of the oil exploration, had as many as 3,000 people. This inrush of workers, prospectors, and drilling operators rapidly increased the county population and largely accounted for the large increase in 1930 to 9,684 people over the 1920 population figure of 5,254—an increase of almost 100 per cent.

Peak oil production in the county was reached in 1925, when 13,000,000 barrels was produced. The following three years saw a recession in output to about 7,000,000 barrels in 1928. The boom days had passed, and the business settled down to a steady production basis. As this became more stabilized, the itinerant workers who follow boom production drifted on and out to other regions, thus causing a decrease in the 1930 population figures.

A decrease in production, however, does not mean that the drilling for oil or the discovery of new fields has ceased. On the contrary, statistics of the Texas Railroad Commission, which regulates oil production, for 1953 indicate that the majority of the early oil wells are no longer producing and that more recent drilling provides the major sources

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2"Archer County Has Colorful, Interesting Oil History," Wichita Daily Times, March 20, 1955, p. 2E.
of oil in the county at the present time. ³ Data on production from different fields in the county and the year in which the fields were discovered are shown in Table I. ⁴

TABLE I

OIL PRODUCTION IN ARCHER COUNTY FIELDS IN 1953 AND DATE OF DISCOVERY OF THE FIELDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Discovery</th>
<th>Number of Fields</th>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table, only three fields were producing in 1953 which had been discovered prior to 1940, one in 1911, and two in 1939. Forty-nine of the fields were discovered between 1940 and 1950, and sixty-three fields between 1950 and through 1953. Scarcity of materials and shortage of laborers curtailed oil exploration during the years


of World War II, but since 1949 the tempo of drilling and consequent discovery of new fields have been on the increase. Recent newspaper stories in The Archer County News show that drilling activity is still continuing. In October, it was reported that W. B. Hamilton had completed his third producer in the Shekells Mississippi pool five miles southwest of Archer City at a depth of 5,299 feet. The earlier oil drilling found production at shallow depths, and much of the later production has been and is being found at much greater depths.

Some idea of the impact which the discovery of oil has had on the economic history of Archer County may be gained from the statistics of production. As compiled by the Texas Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association, 8,486,572 barrels of oil were produced in Archer County in 1954, and 251,192,175 barrels of oil were taken from wells in the county from the initial production in 1911 until January 1, 1955. Since 1931, too, production has been limited in the county, as well as in all other oil-producing areas in Texas, by the State Railroad Commission through a system of proration.

Oil, it is thus seen, is, and has been, one of the major economic resources of Archer County. No major refining systems have been built in the county to refine it, but extensive pipelines channel it into


6The Texas Almanac, 1955, p. 318.
other more highly industrialized areas. This network of pipelines, plus mechanization of drilling and pumping, has materially reduced the number of workers needed for oil production; and, except for drilling crews, most of the labor required is stable. This situation has contributed to the population decrease in the county over a period of years.

Another factor affecting the population statistics of the county has been the trend toward mechanization of farming and the consequent decrease in the number of small farms. In 1940 there were 501 farms in Archer County; in 1950 there were 443; and in 1954 the number had decreased to 417. The average size of farms in the county in 1950 was 1,299.2 acres, and in 1954 it was 1,508.9 acres. These figures show a steady decrease in the number of farms and at the same time an increase in the size of the average farm. This tendency to increase acreage has acted to eliminate the small farmer and renter. This situation, however, according to Texas Almanac statistics, prevails throughout all the rural areas of Texas.

The value of the land and of buildings per acre, though, has materially increased. The estimated value of land and buildings per acre in Archer County in 1950 was $36.86, but only four years later this value had increased to $45.84, a considerable gain in such a short period. According to the Agricultural Census of 1954, there were

\[\text{Ibid., p. 280.}\]  
\[\text{Ibid.}\]
only 102 full-tenant farmers in Archer County. Instead of declining prosperity, as might have been indicated by decreasing population, it is evident that the county has made long strides in material gains within recent years.

World War II, also, had a great impact on all phases of county life. In the first place, the universal draft took many of the county's young men from businesses and farms. Secondly, the prices of farm products and of oil, as well, increased because of the great demands for these products. The location of many large army installations and of plane manufacturing concerns in areas not far removed from Archer County increased the demands for labor and many people left both rural and urban areas to work in the industrial centers. According to information reported by the Texas Employment Commission in 1955, there were only fifty-eight business establishments in Archer County as of March, 1955, with a total of 981 employees. The major industries of the county, therefore, are its oil and farming operations.

Stock farming and diversified farming in Archer County have progressed hand in hand with the changing times. The improvement of the cattle breeds and improved methods of feeding started in earlier days has continued. There are still a number of large ranches in the

\[9\text{Ibid., p. 283.}\]

\[10\text{Ibid., p. 378.}\]
county, and, as before mentioned, the average sized farm in the county is over 1,500 acres. A description of a cattle shipment from one of these ranches during July, 1955, shows that much of the spirit of the Old West still remains. Six hundred steers, a part of about 900 steers purchased in Old Mexico and shipped to the ranch for pasture in January, 1955, were loaded into trucks and hauled to Jolly, where they were transferred to railroad cars for shipment to Portsmouth and Panora, Iowa. There they were to be fed for about four months before being sold to packers. The steers, while in Archer County, were pastured on the Abercrombie ranch and the remaining 300 on neighboring grass lands. The big-time maneuver of shipping this many cattle furnished occupation for ranchers, buyers, truckers, cowpunchers, and the services of Mrs. James Tarr, wife of the manager of the ranch, who fed from seven to fifteen cowboys each day for several days. 11

The center of interest of the diversified farming practices has continued to be in the eastern and southeastern portions of Archer County, where people of Germanic descent predominate. An example of what is being accomplished in this area was recently described in The Archer County News. Henry Wolf, a prominent farmer of the Windthorst area, was named first-place winner in the Conservation on

the Whole Farm division of the Bridwell Soil Builder's Awards Program.

He first started a conservation program on his farm in 1947, when he became a co-operator with the Little Wichita Soil Conservation District, a government service which is working with the farmers in conservation of their soil resources. Since he began the work, the farmer has constructed three miles of field terraces and 2,800 feet of diversion terraces on his farm. He has practiced contour farming on all the cultivated land that is terraced. He uses legumes to improve the soil and plants a portion of his croplands in legumes each year for cover crops. He practices stubble mulch by leaving crop residues on or near the surface of the soil.

On his pasture, Mr. Wolf has been carrying out brush control to rid the area of mesquite brush. He has seeded seven acres of cropland back to grass and has constructed two farm ponds for livestock water. At present on a hard-land site in his pasture, Mr. Wolf is chiseling his pasture on the contour at various intervals to allow it to take in more water to grow more grass. Mr. Wolf believes in the conservation way of farming and states that he has found that it is the most profitable way as well as the way to protect the soil from erosion and depletion. Mr. Wolf is also interested in wildlife conservation and maintains a wildlife area on his farm as well as stocking his ponds with fish. 12

Farmers like this are not only making a living and a profit from diversified farming, but they also are restoring soil fertility and improving water conservation at the same time—factors which are

especially important in an area which is subject to occasional drought periods. The extent to which diversified farming has succeeded ranching is indicated in figures taken from the Agricultural Census of 1954. There was a total of 42,780 cattle and calves in the county, with 2,078 of these being milch cows. Whole milk sold by the gallon totaled 1,168,216 gallons, and there were 444 pounds of cream marketed. Livestock sold alive totaled 32,310 in number, and the value of these was $3,921,364, which was surpassed by only seven other counties in the state.

The sheep industry has also become established in Archer County. The Agricultural Census listed 821 sheep and lambs and a yield of 3,636 pounds of wool. Hogs and pigs numbered 1,356 in 1954 in the county. Chickens on hand, four months old and over, totaled 28,227, and the number sold during 1954, mostly broilers, was 168,340. A total of 171,441 dozen eggs were sold in 1954. The number of turkeys raised in the county during this year was 2,311.13

Farm products, for the most part, outside of the livestock, dairying, and poultry industries, consisted of grain and sorghums which are used extensively for stock feed. In 1954 there were 29,916 acres planted to wheat and the yield was 312,134 bushels. There were 10,858 acres planted in oats with a yield of 219,479 bushels. Corn and sorghum were the other main crops. The raising of cotton has greatly decreased.14

In 1916, 4,276 bales were ginned; in 1927, there were 8,207 bales ginned; and in 1929 the ginnings dropped to 1,481 bales. In 1935 production had come back to 3,691 bales, but the next year, due to crop failure, it dropped to 907 bales. The uncertainty of the crop plus the large amount of labor required for its production and harvesting has caused this staple crop to be replaced with others more economically produced.

One of the characteristics of farming in Archer County within recent years has been the increasing emphasis on scientific farming practices. The Wichita Soil Conservation District, created and set up by the farmers and ranchers in Archer and Clay counties, has taken the leadership in "the conservation and preservation of all agricultural resources of this area in the interest of public health, safety, and general welfare of the people."  

Extension Work from the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas is also carried on extensively in the county. During the year 1955 there was a membership of 155 4-H Club girls and 121 4-H boys, according to figures released by their leaders, Home Demonstration Agent Pearla Coffman and County Agent C. W. Wilhoit, respectively. In addition to this work with the young people, adult work is carried on,

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15 Ibid., p. 259.

and there is an active Home Demonstration Club in every community in the county. 17

An example of the work done in the 4-H Clubs is that of two of the Windthorst Club members, Gerald Barend and James Zotz. James won an expense-paid trip to Chicago as the winner of an annual 4-H Club contest sponsored by the City National Bank of Wichita Falls in November, 1954. Gerald was an honor guest at a meeting of the Lions Club in Archer City in February of 1955, where he gave a resumé of his club work, which began in 1952. Part of this work had included helping his father raise and market 3,000 broilers and the other was in netting a profit of $247 from a sow and a litter of nine pigs. The accomplishments of these boys show the possibilities of what may be achieved from scientific farming practices. 18

Archer County, it is indicated from this review of oil production and farming and stock raising, has made steady progress in its chosen way of living since the 1930's in spite of droughts, depressions, wars, and labor shortages. Thousands of acres of the original grass lands have been plowed up, but the cattle population, instead of decreasing greatly, is almost as large as it was in the peak of free range. With fewer acres in grass, the Archer County stock raiser has been able to

17 Ibid.

build a diversified economy and a great livestock industry as well.

Williams explains how he has done it in these words:

A new type of beef producer has begun to elbow his way into the limelight. This newcomer is none other than the stock-farmer. The nester who turned the sod on many of the large ranches and planted wheat, oats, and row crops at last added a few beef cattle to his little farm. He has found a way to produce a cow on fewer acres of ground, and hence when the market demands, possibly he can rise to meet the increased payments for beef. Even though the number of cattle on the farms and ranches of West Texas areas has slumped since 1945, that fact does not in any way erase this demonstration of productive capacity.

Other phases of county development have kept pace with the progress in farming practices. Steady improvement has been made in building hard-surfaced roads to make all portions of the county accessible to transportation. Figure 1 shows the present network of transportation for the county. As shown, State Highway 79 traverses the county from south to north. United States Highway 281 also crosses the county from north to south in the eastern part of the county. State Highway 25 begins at Windthorst on U. S. Highway 281, runs through Archer City, and branches west of this town to cross the northwestern portion of the county and runs through the town of Mankins. United States Highway 82 and also No. 277 parallel the Wichita Valley Railroad, traversing the northwestern corner of the county. State Highway 374 branches from Highway 25 west of Archer City and angles across

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Fig. 1.—Archer County, 1956.

- - - Rivers, creeks.
--- Highways.
(281) National highways.
  25 State highways.
  368 Farm-to-market roads.
++++++ Railroads.
...... Abandoned railroads.
○ Towns.
© County seat.
the southwestern portion of the town of Megargel, where it meets State
Highway 199, which crosses the southwestern corner of the county.

Other shorter stretches of paved highways are shown. More farm-to-
market roads linking the state highways and the federal system of high-
ways are needed to give all-weather roads to all portions of the county.
As it is, the network of paved roads reaches all county towns.

The use of large trucks in hauling cattle and farm products has
reduced the need for railroad transportation to the point where two of
the railroads crossing the county have been discontinued. The main
markets of the area are Wichita Falls and Fort Worth, both of which
are within easy driving distance from Archer County. Farmers and
ranchers drive their own cattle to market unless shipping to long dis-
tances. As previously described, a movement of 600 steers from the
Abercrombie Ranch was carried out by trucking the cattle to Jolly,
where they were loaded on cattle cars on the railroad. The network
of pipelines that cross the county transport the oil taken from the
wells, and this removes a still further need for railroad transportation.
The only railroad now operating in the county is the first one, built in
1890, the old Wichita Valley Railroad.

Marked progress has been made in consolidation of the schools of
the county. In 1936, according to a survey made by the Works Progress
Administration, there were twenty-four common school districts in
Archer County, and three independent districts, Archer City, Holliday,
and Megargel. Of the common school districts, there were seven one-
teacher schools, thirteen two-teacher schools, one school with three
teachers, one with four teachers, and two schools with seven teachers.
One of the seven-teacher schools was at Geraldine, the town of the
northern colonists, and the other was at Mankins, in the northwestern
part of the county. One of the schools had a five-and-one-half-month
school term in 1934-35, one had a seven-month term, two schools had
a term of eight and one-half months, four had terms of eight months,
and only fourteen of the common school districts held nine-month
terms. One school district, Eureka, with only two teachers, had a tax
valuation of $2,244,370, or $52,195 assessed valuation per scholastic.
The Luke Wilson School District, with only one teacher, had an as-
sessed valuation per scholastic of $58,852, and held school for only
an eight-month term. 20 School opportunities of the children of Archer
County, it is thus seen, were very unequal.

A movement to consolidate the large number of small schools into
larger districts did not begin until after the close of World War II.
Onion, Ikard, Anarene, West Fork, Oak Grove, Cottonwood, Lake
Creek, McCormick, Baxter, and Luke Wilson were all consolidated with
the Archer City School District in 1946 and 1947. In 1949, North Star,
Huff, and Lake Creek also voted to join the Archer City Independent

20A Report of the Adequacy of Texas Schools (Austin, Texas,
District. In 1952 Scotland School District was annexed to Archer City, making a total of fourteen districts annexed to this district.

Dundee, Black Flat, and Mankins school districts voted in 1947 to be annexed to the Holliday Independent School District. In 1949, the Bowman School District also voted to become a part of the Holliday Independent District.

Eureka, Newport, and Lone Oak all voted in 1946 to join Megargel Independent School District. Westover was also annexed to the Megargel district in 1950.

One of the small one-teacher schools, Terrapin, voted to consolidate with the Olney District in Young County just across the Archer County line. Eagle Bend, located in the northwestern part of the county, is the only common school district left in the county.

The one common school district in the county which voted to retain its independence is that of Windthorst. This school is in one of the closely-knit areas where people of Germanic descent predominate in the population. The people of the area elected to keep their own school and then moved to support it 100 per cent. In a recent report on the school, the statement was made that "Windthorst is small, but what it lacks in size is made up in enterprise and accomplishment." Through the vote of the patrons it has become an independent district, has a staff of eight teachers, and a school population of 187 students. As the community is predominantly Catholic, Catholic sisters teach in the school,
but there is no religious education during school hours. One huge building houses the high school, with the old buildings accommodating the intermediate grades. The new and modernistic high school of six classrooms, combination gymnasium, auditorium, cafeteria, library, and home economics department, was finished in 1954 at a cost of some $200,000 voted by the taxpayers of the district. Windthorst is perhaps the most unique school of its type in the state, and is the center of interest for the community as a whole.

The Archer City Independent School District, by the addition of fourteen other school districts, became the largest school district in the county, as well as the oldest. A modern building houses the school, and a new gymnasium and cafeteria have been added. There are twenty-nine well-trained teachers and approximately 600 students.

This modern school is far different from the little one-room original school established in 1880. According to Mrs. Nettie Scott Taylor, pioneer and early-day teacher in Archer County schools, the first school building in Archer County was a frame structure about twelve by fourteen feet in size, with a dirt floor. It was located on the south side of the square in Archer City. The school had no furniture, and the children sat on boxes, though a few of the more fortunate had their own chairs. After a considerable period of time had elapsed, a floor was

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built in the school house, and wooden benches without backs were installed. 22

In 1910 a site was purchased upon which a two-story native stone building was erected. A large auditorium and two rooms were on the first floor, and two large rooms on the second floor. In 1913 the first high school commencement exercises were held. An effort was begun in 1919 to secure affiliation of the school, but this was not won until 1924. By that time the school comprised eleven grades.

The native stone building was condemned as faulty in construction in 1924, and classes had to be conducted in churches and in a temporary building until the present structure could be constructed.

As the situation exists today, there are only five school districts in the county, whereas in 1937 there were three independent and twenty-four common school districts. Modern buildings have been erected in each of the districts, and buses operate to bring children in from outlying districts. The census enumeration for the schools in 1955 showed the following numbers of scholastics 23 in the different districts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archer City</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holliday</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windthorst</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The school systems in Archer County, it is evident, have progressed along with other phases of the county growth.

The religious side of life has not been neglected by the Archer County residents. Early-day churches in Archer City were organized by the Baptists, the Methodists, and the Church of Christ. As each small community developed, one of the first structures to be built for the use of the settlers was one designed for some type of worship, and often the community itself grew up around a small country church. In the areas where foreign-born residents have settled, Catholic churches predominate. Megargel and Windthorst both have especially beautiful Catholic churches. One of the beautiful stories of the area centers around St. Mary's Church in Windthorst.

In 1942, as the story goes, two young men of the community who were soon to enter military service, went to Father Francis Zimmerer, then the pastor of St. Mary's Church, with the idea of building a shrine. They proposed that all the youths of the parish entering armed service commit themselves to the keeping of Our Lady of Perpetual Help for safe return from the wars. They offered no prayers to be spared from participating in battles, but just that they might be returned safely home after the battles had been won.
The idea was well received by Father Zimmerer. It was agreed that each young man would regularly send part of his earnings to be used upon his return for the erection of the proposed memorial shrine.

Sixty-four young men went to war from the community, and sixty-four came back. Only four were wounded, but these only slightly. Among those going to service was Father Zimmerer himself. He entered the service in 1943.

Sufficient funds were realized to build the shrine. A grotto was constructed just north of the steps leading to the high ground upon which the church stands. Its frontal arch rises approximately twenty feet above the ground and is surmounted by a cross of white stone. The frontal surface of this cross is set with prism glass which causes it to gleam crimson at night in the rays of light from automobiles coming up the hill. The shrine is known as "Our Lady of Highway 281," and many travelers stop along this heavily traveled route to view the work of art.

The grotto is built of native stone and of granite taken from the Wichita Mountains in Oklahoma. The statue of Our Lady of Perpetual Help is of Ravaciene white marble imported from Italy. The figure weighs 1,600 pounds and is five feet tall. The altar is of solid polished granite.

The grotto was built by the Reverend Patrick O'Neill, O.S.B. (Order of Saint Benedict), of St. Bernard Abbey, Alabama. He began
work on the project early in 1949, and it was finished for formal dedication on August 22, 1950. All of the sixty-four servicemen who went to war, including Father Zimmerer, were present for the dedication. The shrine includes a plaque bearing the names of the servicemen. 24

The story of the shrine at Windthorst possesses added significance when considered in the light of the loss of young men in World War II from Archer County. Thirty-eight young men—a high percentage in view of the comparatively small county population—made the supreme sacrifice. The names of these young men are as follows:

Atkins, Don F.               McKinney, James R.
Busby, Roland H., Jr.        Neimeyer, Edwin A.
Byrd, J. R.                  Nicholson, Willie L.
Calvert, Wilbert Adair      Patterson, Roy Edgar, Jr.
Cooper, Jack W.             Prescher, Jacob
Evans, Leslie A., Jr.       Ray, John Dillard
Fichte, Arthur E.          Reed, Clifton T.
Hargis, Carl E.            Robertson, Edward H.
Howard, Leroy              Rogers, Elmo Leon
Hubbard, Norman K.         Simons, John R.
Huffman, Howard N.         Smith, James E.
Johns, Robert Curtis       Sorrels, Odis Tillman

Archer City, at the present time, has a population of 1,901 people. Other small towns—Holliday, 1,007; Megargel, 347; Dundee, 300; and Mankins, 180—have remained small trading centers for the different communities. Predominantly, the area can be classified as rural in nature.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the population has been the stability of residence of the early settlers of the county. The large ranch-owning interests and families are still to be found represented to a large extent in the present-day citizens of the community. Dr. Prидеaux, the first settler of the county, has three sons—George, Ed, and Jesse—who are prominent business men in Archer City. Mrs. Mary Garvey, wife of one of the early ranchers, celebrated her one hundredth birthday on February 8, 1956. Her son and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Ben

Garvey, are pioneer residents of the county and have both oil and ranching interests. The Abercrombie family also belongs to one of the pioneer settler families. The Ikard ranch interests have numerous descendants, among whom are W. S. and Scotty Ikard of Archer City.

W. H. Taylor, one of the original settlers, has only recently died. His family have extensive ranching and oil interests. Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Parkey and Whit Parkey of Mankins have also grown with the county. Likewise, Cecil and Bill Mankins of this small town are carrying on the traditions of their father, for whom the town was named.

The lack of so-called "suitcase farming" no doubt has contributed greatly to the steady progress that has been made in the county. Through good years and lean years there has been a steady forward growth. In the process, most of the inhabitants have bought their homes and there are very few rental properties available today.

The standard of living of the people is high. According to the 1950 Census report, the number of families in Archer County was 1,750 in that year, and the median family income was $3,006, a much higher amount than that recorded for the majority of Texas families by counties. 26

Many of the business institutions in Archer City are continuations of those established by the early settlers. Notably, The Archer County
News has grown with the county for many years. It was founded in 1908 by Charlie Martin, a native son, and is published today by a son, Charlie Martin, Jr., and his wife. The present editor, according to a story in The Wichita Times, has been working in the News office since he was "old enough to reach the bank." Martin, senior, died in 1937, and the son has carried on. It was under the supervision of the elder Martin that the 1929 pioneer edition of The Archer County News was written and published, and it preserves for future generations much of the color and spirit that permeated the early history of Archer County. The News has taken a leading part in promoting soil conservation in the county, and was the first winner of the Bridwell Soil Conservation Award in 1950. Another weekly paper, The Leader, has recently been established in Archer City by Mr. and Mrs. Keith Blalock.

Editor Martin of The Archer County News, in the 1929 Golden Jubilee Edition of his paper, very adequately summed up his feeling for Archer County when he wrote:

The News editor, as you know, loves Archer County, Archer City, and every town and community in the county—and most all the people he knows, and he knows most all of them.

In fact, the News editor was born in Archer County and has lived here nearly ever since.

In this spirit, Editor Martin looked at the land he had known since a

27 "Conservation Awards," The Wichita Daily Times, February 27, 1955, p. 9D.

28 The Archer County News, November 11, 1929.
child. To him it was indeed the "promised land," Likewise, the County Chamber of Commerce, organized in 1926, welcomed the pioneer celebration with a glowing recapitulation of the progress that had been made in fifty years. The greeting, however, did not forget nor minimize the heritage of the past:

To those who still have a penchant for the "wide open spaces," out where "Men are Men," we recommend the more than four hundred and fifty thousand acres of unbroken ranges "where the coyotes howl and the bob cats yowl and the rattlesnake dens in the branding pens and the cowboy sings in his soothing song as the trail herd wends its way along."29

In other words, the old familiar land of "cattle, cane, and cactus" was still there. That has been almost thirty years ago, but the same is still true today. On Saturday nights the electric lights shine on the paved streets, cars prowl where once the horses cantered, but a quick ear will hear the ring of boots on the streets, the familiar creak of saddle leather as a rider edges his way in between the cars. Archer County has come a long way, has made wonderful progress, but fundamentally it is still the gateway to the "big ranch country," still the home of those who have lived through the droughts, the sandstorms, the blue northers, and the pioneer days that tried and proved the mettle of which people are made. It is still a part of the great West, still very much the same land that the pioneer woman described after arriving there from her home in the East:

29 Ibid.
The sun is riz, the sun is set,
And here we is in Texas yet. 30

It was, indeed, a big country. It still is.

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30 Mrs. R. C. Abercrombie, in interview with the writer, Archer City, Texas.
### APPENDIX

**OFFICIALS OF ARCHER COUNTY, TEXAS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>County Judge and School Superintendent</th>
<th>County Attorney</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>A. Ingalls</td>
<td>L. W. Hart</td>
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<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>A. Ingalls</td>
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<td>S. A. Denny</td>
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<td>W. E. Forgy</td>
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<td>1902</td>
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<td>G. H. Henley</td>
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<td>S. G. Walker</td>
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<td>1908</td>
<td>C. H. Henley</td>
<td>W. R. Humphrey</td>
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1 Names of officials of Archer County, Texas, were obtained from a careful search of the records of the County Commissioners' Court, county clerk's office, Archer City, Texas.
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<td>O. M. Wylie</td>
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<td>D. M. Harris</td>
<td>Paul Wylie</td>
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*At this time, the office of tax assessor was combined with that of sheriff and tax collector.*
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*Resigned September 21, 1881. Unexpired term completed by G. B. Hutto.
County Commissioners, Precinct 2 (Windthorst)

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*(Mankins and Dundee)*

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