

A GEOGRAPHIC STUDY OF SEBASTIAN COUNTY, ARKANSAS

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PREFACE

The writer moved to Sebastian County, Arkansas, with his parents when only one year old. He also lived in an adjacent county in Oklahoma for several years and had occasion to visit the county, especially the City of Fort Smith, fairly often. His parents moved back to Sebastian County three years ago which conditions gave an opportunity to study the county.

The study of the county considers the geographic setting, history, communities, communication, manufacturing, mining, and agricultural activities. Recreational facilities are near here. The county is ideally situated for production of manufacturing, mining, and agricultural products, and is a suitable habitat for a large population.

The writer wishes to express his gratitude to the Department of Geography of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, and especially to Dr. David C. Winslow for directing the study, to Dr. Edward E. Keso for suggesting the subject, and to Professor George S. Corfield for valuable suggestions in its preparation. The writer also wishes to thank the Library Staff of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, the University of Arkansas Extension Service, the Sebastian County Agricultural Agent, Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce, and others who helped the writer in any way to make this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to give a geographic interpretation of the rise of Sebastian County, Arkansas. The writer will show how the political division has continued to increase in population, in production of manufactured products, in development of natural resources, and in output of agricultural products. Information concerning the area is to be found in several sources but mainly from government documents, bulletins and statistics furnished by the United States Extension Department, the University of Arkansas, and other reliable sources. It was necessary for the writer to make a personal tour of the county and to contact county offices to become more familiar with the local and its problems, which are interpreted here.

Sebastian County, Arkansas, is situated on the western border of the state where it adjoins Oklahoma along its western boundary. The county, located within the Ozark region, is bordered on the north by the Arkansas River, which separates it from Crawford County; on the east by Franklin, Scott and Logan Counties; and on the south by Scott County. (See Figure 1.) The County of Sebastian has an area of 529 square miles with an estimated population of 66,500 and with a population density of 125 per square mile in 1947. These high, smooth prairies and level valleys, within the surrounding Ozark Mountains, are scenes of great agricultural activity, the area being a very desirable habitat for man.¹

The economy of the county is based upon manufacturing, mining, and agriculture-triple sources of wealth which have provided the bases for steady growth with little in the nature of boom conditions and under few destructive depressions.

Fort Smith, the largest city in the county, is the most industrialized city in the state. It has over 108 manufacturers that employ more than 5,800

¹ Arkansas, American Guide Series, (1941) p. 146-152.

persons. Manufactured products include: furniture, furniture accessories, glass, scissors, spelter, brick, mirrors, automobile bodies, trailers, woodworking products, canned vegetables, frozen foods, poultry and meat products, stoves,² mining machinery, paper products, and bottled drinks.

Center of the Arkansas-Oklahoma coal fields, Sebastian County produces a smokeless domestic fuel without an equal in quality closer than the fields of West Virginia. Approximately three-fourths of a million tons are produced annually. The county is also a producer of natural gas in two areas.

Land in the county varies in type from the rich Arkansas River bottoms to the timbered mountains. Elevations range from slightly over 400 feet in the bottom to about 2,200 feet on Sugarloaf Mountains. The county averages about 500 feet above sea level. Highly productive land, along with long growing season and abundant rainfall, makes for heavy agricultural production, especially in the Arkansas River bottoms.³

The fitness of Sebastian County as a home for man can be measured by the number of people it can ultimately sustain, and by the standard of living of these people it can support. There are many factors to take into consideration in determination of the future possibilities of the county as a home for a greater population. Only time and the variable factors of the natural and cultural environment concerned can determine the favorability of the county for larger settlement.

The human factors, along with the natural environment, must be added to the time element in determining the favorability of the political division for larger settlement. The chief environmental factors consist of:

² Post War Planning Survey, Fort Smith, Arkansas, (1944).

³ Arkansas on the March, Arkansas Resources and Development Commission, (1949) p. 169.

(a) The healthfulness of the region as a home for man. If people find a region unhealthy, they will either move to a more favorable location or will decrease in numbers. Fortunately, Sebastian County is a healthy place.

(b) The degree of productivity of the soil is another important factor of the natural environment. The productivity of the soil is largely based on the topography of the land, climate and man himself. If the topography is satisfactory for production and the climate is favorable; then man must have the ability to cultivate the soil for the greatest possible production. Soils of the county are arable and productive.

(c) The length of the growing season, the amount and seasonal distribution of precipitation and the amount of insolation are other factors. If the area has a long growing season with a more or less even distribution of rainfall and a great amount of sunshine; it will produce more crops and yield greater yields⁴ than other areas lacking in these natural environmental factors. In these climatic qualities, Sebastian County is likewise favored.

The reader will see how the white race settled the Indian's land and adapted himself to the environmental factors and how he made improvements in the use of the land as a place in which to live. The soil was misused at first⁵ but due to recent farming practices it is fairly productive.

The farmers of Sebastian County are now taking advantage of the advice of the United States Extension Service, United States Soil Conservation Service, United States Forest Service, and other agencies, in helping to make the land

⁴ George Miller and Almon E. Parkins, Geography of North America, p. 3.

⁵ C. Landon White and Edwin J. Foscue, Regional Geography of Anglo-America, p. v.

more productive and to prevent unnecessary soil deterioration. Much of the land has been allowed to return to native vegetation. Development of grazing lands for livestock has been encouraged, permitting misused crop land to return to grasses.

The reader will see how Sebastian County has grown from an Indian hunting area to a thriving manufacturing, mining, and agricultural region that today supports over 66,000 people with a good standard of living. The county is situated in the productive Arkansas River Valley farming region and produces a variety of crops including: corn, cotton, potatoes, berries, vegetables, and others. It is an area of great economic development and has all the favorable environmental factors which will allow future growth and progress.

MAP OF ARKANSAS

SHOWING-LOCATION OF SEBASTIAN COUNTY

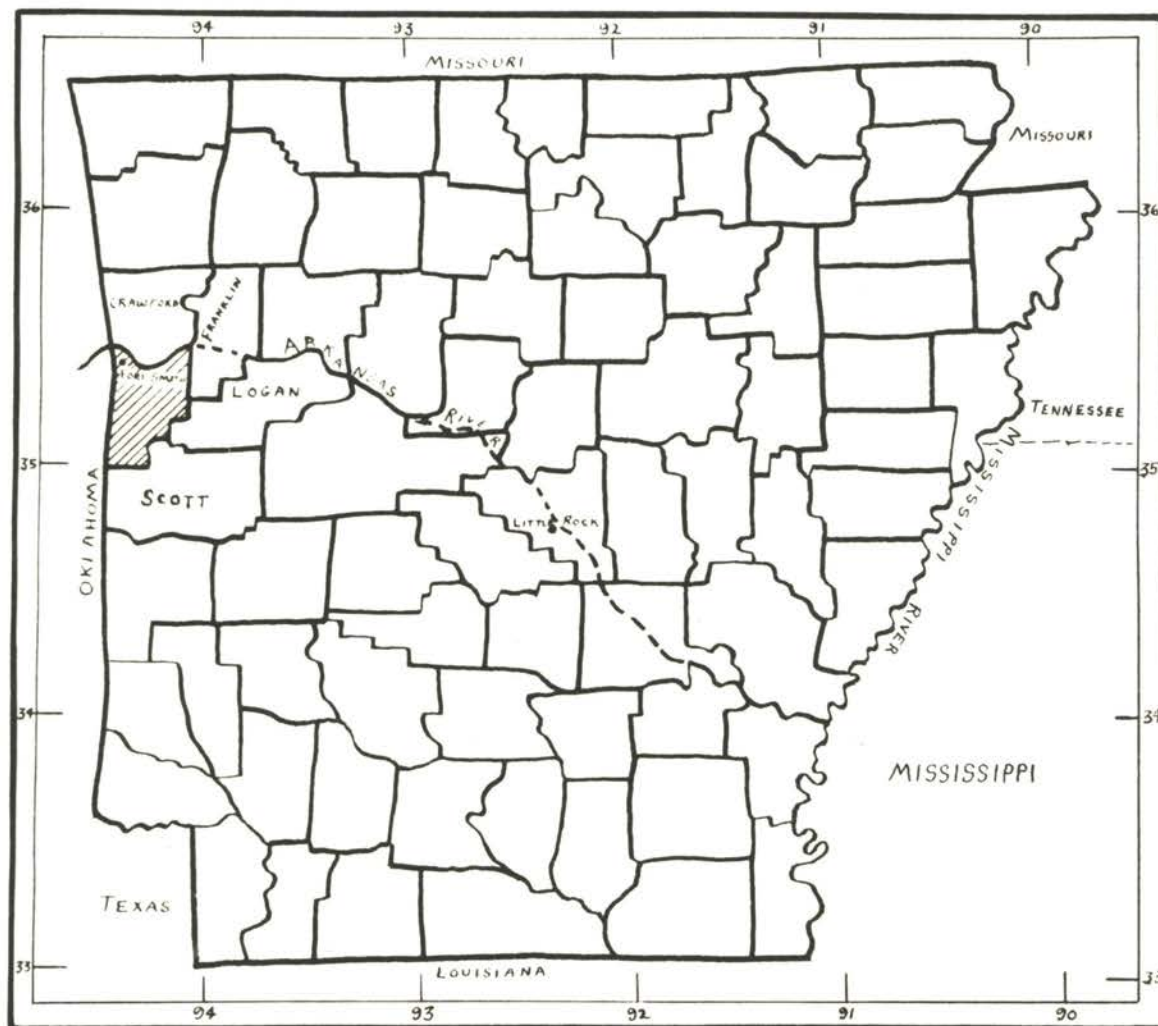


FIGURE 1

CHAPTER II

GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

Passive Elements of the Natural Environment

The northern boundary of Sebastian County, Arkansas, is formed by the Arkansas River, the county lying in the Arkansas River Valley of the Ozark region. The land varies in elevation from 400 feet in the river bottoms to over 2,200 feet in the Sugarloaf Mountains to the south, averaging about 500 feet above sea level. The northern part of the county is near the foothills of the Ozarks in the Arkansas Valley while the southern part is near the foothills of the Ouachitas and includes parts of Sugarloaf and Poteau Mountain¹ sections.

Sebastian County physiographically is situated in the Arkansas Valley of the Ozark region. The Arkansas River flows eastward from the Osage Plains, which are part of the Central Lowlands, and through this lowland belt of the county bordered on the south by the Ouachitas and on the north by the Boston² Mountains, which are a part of the Ozark system.

Beneath the Arkansas Valley the structure consists of a series of folds, which taken together, form a synclinorium, and the Ouachita Mountains, taken as a whole, to the south consist of a series of folds that together form an anticlinorium. Where the lowland is located, the structure is that of a geosyncline, the highlands resulting from dissection of a geanticlinal structure. South of the Arkansas River, the underlying layers of the synclinal trough appear as somewhat prominent features; they are known locally as mountains. Most of them are parts of dissected synclines, but they appear today as tablelands; at other

¹ Arkansas on the March, Arkansas Resources and Development Commission, (1949) p. 169.

² A. K. Lobeck, Physiographic Diagram of the United States.

places, where these strata are upturned, erosion has produced distinct ridges. These mountains are not nearly so large as the Ouachita Mountains to the south.³

The formations in this area belong to the Pennsylvanian series of the Carboniferous system, the geologic history which has been proved by study of both fossil shells and plants.⁴ The upper layers of rock are comprised of parent material, which breaks down into fertile soil and the lower layers of rock contain rich coal beds and natural gas wells. (See Figure 2) That part of the section lying above the top of the Hartshorne sandstone contains a number of coal seams that vary from one to seven feet in thickness. No coal of economic importance, as yet, has been found below the Hartshorne.

Composition, character, and economic significance are described as follows:

Hartshorne sandstone- the Hartshorne sandstone varies in thickness from one-hundred to two-hundred feet and is made of massive beds at the top and thinner beds below, with layers of shale between, gradually giving place to shale of the Atoka formation at the base. The Hartshorne as a rule makes a low ridge and is one of the most easily recognizable and economically important formations in the area. It is important because of its value as an index to the position of two extensive coal beds, one of which lies just above the sandstone and the other from fifty to one-hundred feet higher.

Atoka formation- The Atoka formation has a thickness of 6,000 to 7,000 feet, and its base is not exposed. So far as shown, the whole thickness is made up of shale and sandstone. The sandstone constitutes but a small part of the formation and lies in zones about one-hundred feet thick, separated by beds of shale 1,000 to 2,000 feet thick. However sandstone in more or less abundance interbedded with the shale; likewise beds of shale occur in the zones primarily sandstone.

Study of the Atoka formation for many miles along its outcrop indicates that the inclosed sandstone beds are somewhat variable in thickness and lateral extent. There are areas in which the formation consists almost entirely of shale, whereas in other areas the beds of sandstone are abnormally massive and thick. (This formation forms the base for coal and gas deposits)

³ Wallace W. Atwood, Physiographic Provinces of North America. p. 242-243.

⁴ Carl D. Smith, Contributions to Economic Geology, Part II, 1912, United States Geological Survey Bulletin 541, U.S. Department of Interior, p. 23.

McAlester shale- In areal extent the McAlester shale surpasses any of the other formations in the area. Because of the relative softness of its constituent materials, the McAlester forms the surface rock of most of the lowlands and prairies, which are interrupted here and there by local developments of ridgemaking sandstone beds occurring in the shale. The thickness of this type of formation has been estimated at 2,000 to 2,500 feet.

Savanna formation- Three prominent zones of sandstone, each ranging in thickness between one-hundred and two-hundred feet, separated by masses of shale, constitute the savanna formation. Its total thickness is estimated at 1,200 to 1,500 feet.⁵ (Its surface decomposes into a poor soil on which grasslands predominate.)

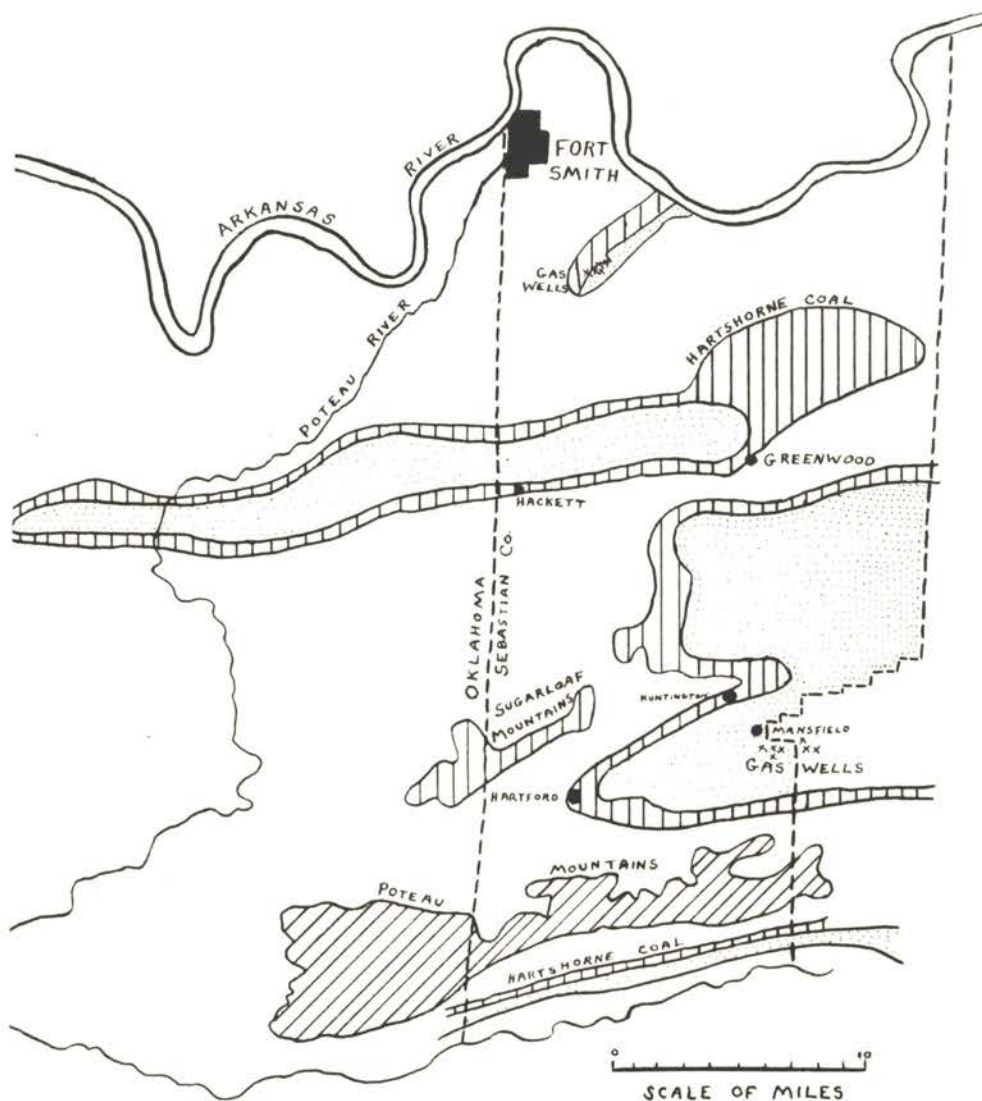
Therefore Hartshorne sandstone is of particular economic importance because it is in this type of rock that two extensive coal beds of Sebastian County are found. It is from these beds that the large coal production of the county is taken. The irregularity of the sandstone, too, has an economic bearing on the county because in it is formed the reservoirs in which natural gas is found. Extraction from these horizons is particularly of importance in the Massard Prairie near Fort Smith and in the Mansfield area in the southeastern part of the county. As mentioned previously, the Atoka formation forms a base for the sandstone formations.

The McAlester shale is of particular economic significance because it has weathered and developed to form the main soil type of the area. Such soils found in the lowlands are very fertile and produce abundant crops when properly cultivated. These fertile prairie soils also are food for agricultural crops or as rich grazing lands for livestock.

The Savanna formation is important in the area because it is on this type of formation that much of the grazing land of the county occurs. The county is increasing in livestock production, this enlargement is partly due to the grasslands on this type of formation.

⁵ Ibid., p. 24-27.

The county has plains in the north near the Arkansas River while it is more rolling and uneven toward the south. The Poteau Mountains are in the southern end of the county and extend across the southern boundary. The Sugar-loaf Mountain area is smaller, but it is in this mountain region, situated northeast of Hartford, that the highest altitude in the county is found. It reaches an altitude of over 2,200 feet above sea level. The Arkansas River, which flows along the northern boundary and the Poteau River which passes along the southern part of the county and enters from the west near Fort Smith, are the only rivers of importance. (See Figure 2). Several small streams and creeks are scattered over the county.



CARBONIFEROUS SYSTEM

□ M ^c ALESTER SHALE	▨ ATOKA FORMATION
▤ HARTSHORNE SANDSTONE	▩ SAVANNA FORMATION

SEBASTIAN COUNTY, ARKANSAS

SOURCE: U. S. G. S. BUL. 541

Figure II

Climate

Although the climate of Sebastian County is of the continental type with pronounced seasonal range in both temperature and precipitation, it is satisfactory for man, animals, and plants. Blair locates the county near the southern margin of the Humid Continental "warm sub-type" (ICW).⁶ In a climatic transition zone, the area is influenced by the Humid Subtropical Climate (STH) to the south as well as by the Humid Continental "warm sub-type", to the north. Winters are mild and short, except for occasional severe "northers" of short duration.⁷

Temperatures are mild, averaging 61.3 degrees Fahrenheit for the year. Winters are relatively mild, as the temperature seldom falls below 20 degrees. The summers are long, with occasional periods of high temperature. The mean summer temperature, (June, July, August) is 81.5 degrees. The summer high seldom exceeds 100 degrees Fahrenheit.⁸

The average growing season for the past twelve years was 237 days, lasting from April 12 to November 14. This long frost-free season is favorable for the production of a variety of crops including cotton, which takes a long time to mature.

The average annual rainfall of 39.5 inches falls on about 99 days. This precipitation in the form of rainfall along with the two or four inches of snowfall is conducive to good agricultural production. Skies are clear about 135 days, cloudy 109 days, and partly cloudy 121 days of the year.⁹

⁶ Thomas A. Blair, Climatology, (1943) p. 149.

⁷ R. J. Martin and J. B. Kincer, "Climatic Characteristics", Climatic Summary of the United States, Section 43, p. 2.

⁸ Monthly Weather Review, Vol. 75, (1947) United States Department of Commerce.

⁹ Arkansas on the March, Arkansas Resources and Development Commission, (1949) p. 169.

TABLE I

CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA FOR THE WEATHER BUREAU¹⁰
AT FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS, Elevation 463 ft.

Month	Mean Temp.	Max. Temp.	Mean Max. Temp.	Min. Temp.	Mean Min. Temp.
Dec.	45.6	74	55	22	32
Jan.	41.6	78	52	7	32
Feb.	36.6	72	48	12	25
Winter					
Mar.	45.1	77	57	17	33
Apr.	61.2	85	73	35	50
May	67.4	91	78	45	57
Spring					
June	78	97	89	53	67
July	80.2	107	94	54	67
Aug.	86.4	108	100	69	73
Summer					
Sept.	77.1	106	91	48	64
Oct.	69.2	90	82	46	56
Nov.	47.6	72	57	28	38
Fall					

Month	Mean Relative Humidity	Precipitation No. of inches	Wind Ave. Hr. Velocity & prevailing Wind Direction	No. of days with thunderstorms
Dec.	76	5.11	7.3 N.E.	2
Jan.	78	.46	7.3 N.E.	1
Feb.	63	.14	8.5 N.W.	0
Winter				
Mar.	64	1.99	9.1 N.W.	1
Apr.	70	5.88	9.3 E.	14
May	68	6.19	7.7 N.E.	12
Spring				
June	71	2.73	7.2 S.W.	7
July	62	.11	6.0 N.E.	4
Aug.	62	1.38	6.3 N.E.	8
Summer				
Sept.	66	4.89	7.8 N.E.	6
Oct.	72	4.00	6.1 N.E.	5
Nov.	78	2.28	7.8 E.	2
Fall				

¹⁰ Monthly Weather Review, Vol. 75, (1947) United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, p. 85, 105.

TABLE II

Climate of Fort Smith Based on 1947¹¹
and 1948 Summaries

	<u>1947</u>	<u>1948</u>
Normal Temperature - - - - -	61.3 degrees F.	61.3
Total Precipitation - - - - -	35.16 inches	38.85 inches
Highest Temperature- - - - -	108 degrees F. on August 9th.	99 degrees F. on July 25th.
Lowest Temperature- - - - -	7 degrees F. on January 4th.	7 degrees F. on March 11th.
Growing Season - - - - -	225 days	225 days
Total Sunshine - - - - -	2,671 hours	Not given

The climate in this area is agreeable most of the year. Temperatures average 61.3 degrees F. for the year, sunshine 2,671 hours out of a possible 4,458. The winters are short and relatively mild with the lowest temperatures above zero. The growing season is over 240 days allowing cultivation of many crops in the area. The summers are long with the highest temperatures a little over 100 degrees F. on a few days, usually with low humidity. Outdoor sports and labor are engaged in virtually every week in the year. (See Figure 3)

¹¹ United States Weather Bureau data, (1947-1948) Fort Smith, Arkansas.

FORT SMITH

AVERAGE MONTHLY TEMPERATURE

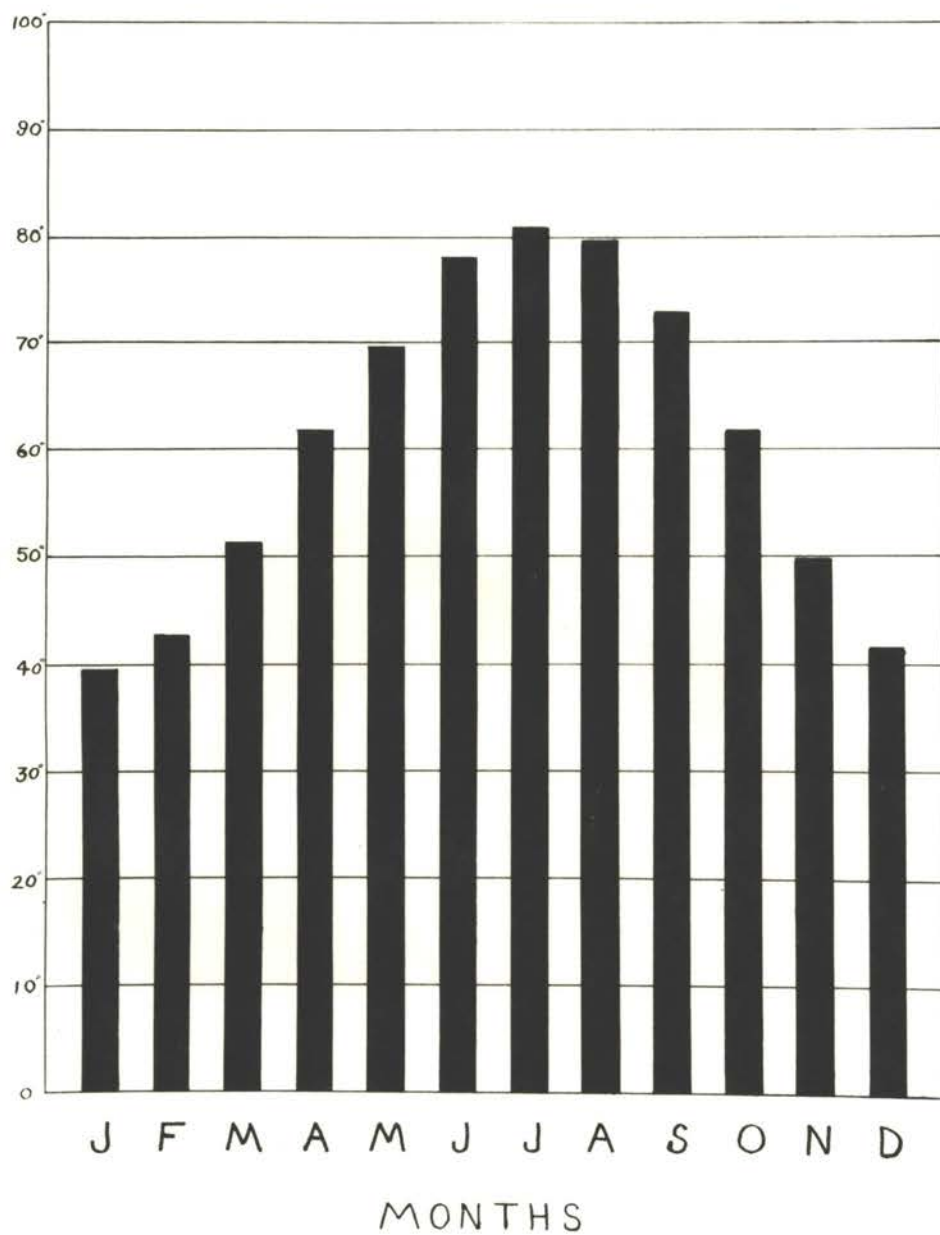


Figure III

Active Elements of the Natural Environment

Animals: The first settlers in the county found wild animals so plentiful that they had little difficulty in killing enough game to supply them in food until they could clear some land and grow a crop. Even though agricultural and industrial development has diminished the amount of wild animals, many farmers still consider squirrel, rabbit and fish as supplies for the family food supply rather than as an object of sports.

There are few pastures that one can cross without seeing a cottontail rabbit running for cover. Rabbits, red and gray squirrel and opossum are very common in the area. Some racoon, opossum, skunk and mink are trapped for the fur trade.

Hunting has eliminated some species of wild animals altogether, and reduced others so drastically that their killing is now legally forbidden. Some red and gray fox remain in the area and the fox chase is a favorite sport for many hunters, but except during a brief open season, the fox, if caught, must be released. Wolves commanded a bounty until 1929 but are now seldom seen in the area. The buffalo that roamed the area in large numbers when the white man first settled the area are now extinct, except for a few in captivity. The panther has practically disappeared but the bobcat or wildcat, is still common enough to be hunted by the farmers when it destroys turkey and quail.

The quail, rabbit, squirrel and wild turkey are all hunted by farmers and other sportsmen for their food value. Some racoon, opossum, skunk and mink are trapped and sold for their furs. Many of the farmers supplement the farm income by trapping during the winter months.

Other smaller animals of less or no economic value include the gopher, chipmunk, and several varieties of mice and rats. The mole annoys the gardener

by tunneling vegetable gardens. The woodchuck, weasel and muskrat are common
¹²
 in the mountain areas of the county.

Birds are very common in this county. Quail are found in brush patches all over the county. Some wild turkey is still found in the uplands and mountain areas. These are the only birds of any relative economic value. The sparrow, robin, whippoorwill, goldfinch, and brown thrasher are all very common in the
¹³
 area.

There are several varieties of snakes, such as the king snake, blue racer, water moccasin, and others found in the county. Frogs and toads are very common in the area.

Fish are still plentiful in some areas. Several varieties of fish are caught in the rivers and streams of the county. They include perch, bass, catfish, buffalo, drum, minnows and some trout and others. Fish are found in the Arkansas River, the northern border of the county, the Poteau River, in the southern part of the county, and in the small streams and creeks of the county. Fishing is a favorite past-time for young and old of the area. Many farm families supplement their diet with fish caught in the streams of the county, while many people fish for sport.

Native Vegetation: Mixed pines and southern hardwoods are found in the hilly and mountainous regions of the area. This mixed pine and hardwood forest is found at elevations of from 1,000 to 2,000 feet above sea level. Short leaf pines, oaks and hickories, particularly yellow oak and bitternut and pignut hickories, are found on the dry ridges. White and red oaks, mockernut hickory
¹⁴
 and red gum are found in the fresher soils.

¹² Arkansas, American Guide Series, p.14-17.

¹³ W. J. Boerg, Birds of Arkansas, University of Arkansas, Experiment Station Bulletin 258, (1931)

¹⁴ Raphael Zon, Natural Vegetation Section, Atlas of American Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture (1928), p. 14.

Plants grow luxuriantly in Sebastian County. Nurtured by abundant rainfall and a benign climate, they come up from the soil early in the spring, mature rapidly, resist the late summer dry weather, and yield only to the frost in October and November. Many plants flourish even through the winter. A walk through the woods in the winter will reveal, besides the conifers, many mosses, ferns, grasses, hollies, red berries and mistletoe. The mistletoe clings high in the oaks. The apple blossom, the state flower, also grows abundantly in this area.

Blackberries, blueberries, muscadines, wild grapes, persimmons, mulberries, red haws, are all gathered in season from native vines and trees in the county. Nuts are collected from pecan, hickory, and walnut trees. All are native and common trees in the area. The pecan tree is of great economic value.¹⁵

The people of the county gather the wild berries and preserve them in various ways to be used during the winter to help supply the family food. Many of the berries and nuts are eaten while fresh in several different forms. The county, as a whole, is blessed with a rich native vegetation of trees, vines, herbs, ferns, grasses and other plants, many of economic value.

Fish and wildlife of the region are fished, hunted, or caught for sport and to supplement the food supply. The county has few varieties of destructive animals left today and these remaining are being killed when found by a hunter. The county as a whole contains a wealth of fish and wildlife which yields food or other economic products.

¹⁵ John T. Buchholz and Wilbur R. Matton, Common Forest and Trees of Arkansas, University of Arkansas Agricultural Extension Service, Extension Circular 180.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY AND PEOPLE OF SEBASTIAN COUNTY

The lands included within Sebastian County have, from time to time, been under the jurisdiction of several nations. As a result of La Salle's exploration in 1682, the French had title to what was then the southwestern part of the United States, and claimed for the Bourbons all the territory drained by the Mississippi River, which included the portion of land that was to become Sebastian County. Then sovereignty over the area was vested in Spain in 1763, when France ceded it to her during the French and Indian War, but the white flag of the French again was restored when Spain ceded the region back to her in 1800. It remained under French control until 1803 when Napoleon, then First Consul, sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States. When Missouri was made a territory of the United States, nine years later, her jurisdiction extended over¹ the Sebastian County area, a fort being established there in 1817.

The United States Congress passed a law on March 2, 1819, which was to become effective July 4, 1819, creating the Arkansas Territory that included all the present states of Arkansas and Oklahoma. The Governor of the Territory was to supervise Indians within the Territory. Arkansas was admitted into the² Union as a state in 1836.

Sebastian County was created by an act of January 6, 1851, the county being formed from territory taken from the older Crawford, Scott and Polk Counties. It was named for William K. Sebastian, who was Judge of the First Circuit Court for several years following the admission of Arkansas into the Union as a state. He presided as President of the State Senate in the session 1846, and served

¹ Archer Butler Hulbert, United States History, p. 101-114.

² Charles A. Beard & Mary R. Beard, History of the United States, p. 301.

as United States Senator from Arkansas, from 1847-1865.

What is now western Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma furnished the Indians their choicest hunting grounds. The bank of the Arkansas River, where Fort Smith now stands, served as the camping site for the Osages, Quapaws, and other Indian tribes. It afforded, moreover, a convenient location for them to prepare for long river trips either to the northwest or for the eastern route to the south.

The Osages were a proud, insolent, and war-like tribe of Indians, who ranged, for their marauding expeditions, over the country from eastern Missouri to the Red River on the south, and to the Rocky Mountains on the west. They drove out most of the native tribes of this region and committed many robberies. Their depredations on white hunters and trappers caused the more timorous whites to become afraid to venture into the forest to secure furs.³ The area, now comprising Sebastian County, was part of the domain over which the Osage Indians' raided. They were referred to by other Indian tribes, as well, as barbarous, uncivilized, and as a lawless gang of robbers making war on everyone else. For illustration, certain Osage warriors defied their own chiefs, and robbed the Cherokees of their traps, ammunition, and horses.

Because of the war-like Osages and the thoughtless whites, life was hard for the Cherokee Indians. They appealed for relief to the Governor of the Missouri Territory. Major Lovely, agent of the Cherokees, in November, 1813, urged the National Government to send troops to preserve order in Arkansas Territory. Nothing was done at the time, so finally the Cherokees sought revenge. This serious dispute caused the National Government to act on the recommendations of Major Lovely. General Andrew Jackson, head of the Southern Division of the

³ J. Fred Patton, The History of Fort Smith, Arkansas, (1946) p. 1.

United States Army, was directed to establish a post to be garrisoned by one company on the Arkansas River where it bordered on the Osage line, now the boundary line between the Sebastian County, Arkansas and the State of Oklahoma.

General Jackson received his orders from the War Department on August 19, 1817, and communicated these to General Thomas A. Smith, who was in command near St. Louis. On September 15, 1817, General Smith ordered Major William Bradford, in company with Major Stephen H. Long, who was a member of the Topographical Corps, to descent the Mississippi River from St. Louis to a point where it intersected the Osage line as determined by the Osage Treaty of 1808. The two officers were to select the most suitable site near that line, and forth-with to erect, as expeditiously as circumstances would permit, a stockade adequate for the accommodation of one company.

The French called the site chosen Belle Point, for, in the days of John Law, an early fur trader, it was well-known as a haven on the river for the young men who lived at the Post of Arkansas. Belle Point was located in the forest at the junction of the Poteau and Arkansas Rivers, in what is now Sebastian County.

Since it was customary in military circles to name forts after noted military men, Belle Point was named Cantonment Smith in honor of General Thomas A. Smith, who had made the order to establish the fort, but by December, 1818, it was known as Fort Smith. Major William Bradford and his troops first reached the new station on December 25, 1817.

Life at the garrison at Fort Smith ran along smoothly in its earliest days but continued peace was not to last long because the Osages and Cherokees started their long struggle for control of the territory west of the fort. Major Bradford prevented a war in September, 1819, by calling the first council of

the two tribes together at Fort Smith. The two groups sat in the council and smoked the pipe of peace, but it wasn't long until hostilities broke out between them. Since the Indians continued their fighting, in 1821, the government issued orders that the 7th Infantry be moved from St. Louis to Fort Smith. The companies under the command of Colonel Matthew Arbuckle, arrived at the post on February 26, 1822.

Even with the re-enforcements at the garrison, the Osages and Cherokees continued to war on each other. Because of these hostilities, and as a protection to the white settlers farther up the Arkansas River to the west, Colonel Arbuckle received orders to remove his troops from Fort Smith to Fort Gibson in what is now the State of Oklahoma. These troops departed on April 9, 1824, leaving only eight men, under the Assistant Commissary, Lt. Bonneville, temporarily in charge of the buildings. Thus ended the first establishment of Fort Smith.

When the troops were withdrawn, the little frontier town of Fort Smith lost much of its activity, but evidently Captain John Rogers saw in this small fortification site the germ that would, in the not very distant future, develop into a prosperous city. Instead of following his troops, he remained upon the land where he first pitched camp, continued to trade with the white and Indian settlers, cleared away the forest and raised corn. He was thus one of the first known permanent white settlers in what is now Sebastian County.

Many settlers had moved into the region during the time of the first post at Fort Smith. This made it necessary to establish a protected base for supplies, and since Fort Smith was at the head waters of navigation of the southwest, it was chosen as the logical place. On July 19, 1838, the fort was reopened, becoming known as the second Fort of Fort Smith. In the meantime, what is now Arkansas was admitted into the Union as a state in 1836.

In July, 1838, Major Charles Thomas, who had been selected to superintend the building of the new fortification, arrived at the post. The plan of the new establishment embraced a quadrangle of 450 to 600 feet, walled with stone, inside of which were the barracks, officers' quarters, and magazines. Stone for the fort was quarried from the bluff at Belle Point. Ground work of the walls was in the shape of an irregular quadrangle, with a cannon bastion at each angle of the wall.

When Major Thomas first came, he took possession of the land at the head of what is now Garrison Avenue, the main street of Fort Smith, and built a temporary encampment for the troops, which was named "Cantonment Balknap". A one-story log residence was built for the commanding officer on the north side of the Avenue, just behind the present Catholic Church. It was occupied by General Zachary Taylor, later President of the United States, from 1841-1845, when he left for the Mexican War. His vegetable garden was on the site of the present Catholic Academy, and his horse, "Old Whitney", pastured where Saint Edwards Hospital is now located.

In 1839, Captain John Rogers engaged a surveyor to lay out the original town of Fort Smith. The first buildings were erected on Front Street, which was on the river bank, and for several years, all the business houses were concentrated on Commercial Row, as it was called.⁴ Commercial Row is now called Garrison Avenue and runs from the bridge at the Arkansas River for over a mile where it intersects state highway number 22 leading east across the county.

Today, Fort Smith, the largest city in Sebastian County, is second largest in the state, surpassed only by Little Rock. It was incorporated as a town on December 24, 1842, and the city made rapid growth. The Assembly gave the town

⁴ Ibid., p. 2-4.

a new charter on January 11, 1851. From 1838 to 1851, the foundation was laid for a city which was to attract the attention of the entire southwest within a few years and to make Sebastian County one of the leading political subdivisions of the state.⁵

When Sebastian County was first created on January 6, 1851, Eaton Tatum's house was designated as the temporary seat of justice, where the village of Jinny Lind is now located.

The first election for county officers was held on January 27, 1851. At the same time five men were elected commissioners to locate a permanent county seat. They decided in favor of a site in Section 12, Township 6 North, Range 31 West, where Rueben, one of the commissioners, offered to donate forty acres of land for that purpose. They gave the name Greenwood to the new county seat.

The location of the county seat was not satisfactory to many of the citizens of the county. The following year (1852), the question was submitted to a vote of the people and Fort Smith received a majority of the votes. In 1854 it was voted to take the county seat back to Greenwood. A compromise was reached in 1861, by which Greenwood and Fort Smith were each to have two terms of the circuit court annually, and since then Sebastian County has had two county seats, one at Fort Smith and the other at Greenwood.

The county is divided into the following townships: Bass Little, Bates, Beverly, Big Creek, Bill Johnson, Bloomer, Center, Cole, Dayton, Diamond, Eagle, Hartford, Island, Jim Fork, Marian, Mississippi, Mont Sandels, Nat Osborn,⁶ Prairie, Rogers, Sugarloaf, Sulphur, Upper, Washburn and White Oak.

⁵ Joseph H. Shinn, School History of Arkansas, (1900) p. 3-335.

⁶ Dallas T. Herndon, Annals of Arkansas, (1947), Vol. II, p. 525-535.

Captain John Rogers settled on the site of Fort Smith soon after the close of the War of 1812. There may have been a few settlers there before that time but they left no historic record. Among the pioneers who came soon after Captain Rogers were: J. Kannady, H. A. Queensbury, Matthew Moore, James McDavid, Charles A. and George S. Birnie, Matthew Moss, Robert Sinclair, Alfred Ray, William Duval, James Griggs and others who settled in different parts of the county.⁷

Sebastian County was formed in 1851 during the administration of Governor John Selden Roane. It was the second of two counties formed during his administration as Governor. The county was named after William K. Sebastian, a United States Senator, from Arkansas at the time. Fort Smith was incorporated on January 11, 1851, just five days after the county was formed. It was re-incorporated May 11, 1879. Greenwood was incorporated on November 22, 1850, and Mansfield on August 29, 1888. By 1880 the population of the county had grown to 19,560 and reached a population of 33,200 by 1890.⁸ The population of the county was 54,426 in 1930; 62,809 in 1940; and has an estimated population in 1949 of over 66,000 people.

⁷ Patton, Op. Cit., p. 5.

⁸ Shimm, Op. Cit., p. 150-160.

The People of Sebastian County

This county is the home of over 60,000 people who are over ninety per cent white and over ninety-seven per cent native born. It mostly consists of people classified as urban since over half the population of the county lives in the City of Fort Smith. The total population of the county in 1940 was 62,809 as compared with a population of 54,426 in 1930.⁹ It ranks number ten in the United States rank of counties (in percentiles) in 1940. The county had a population density of 118.7 per square mile in 1940.¹⁰

The total white population in 1940 was 58,091 people, a total of 92.5 per cent of the total population. The negro constituted only 7.4 per cent of the total population in 1940 as compared with 7.3 in 1930.¹¹

TABLE III

Characteristics of the Population		Census of 1940	Census of 1930
1	Total population of Sebastian County -----	62,809	54,426
2	Number of Males-----	30,679	- - -
3	Number of Females-----	32,130	- - -
4	Native born (all races)-----	62,040	- - -
5	Native born males -----	30,268	- - -
6	Native born females -----	31,772	- - -
7	Foreign born (all races) -----	769	1,018
8	Foreign born males -----	411	- - -
9	Foreign born females -----	358	- - -
10	Total white population -----	58,091	- - -
11	Native white -----	57,324	49,376
12	Foreign born white -----	767	1,018
13	Negro -----	4,647	3,990
14	Other races -----	71	42
15	Per cent native white -----	91.3	90.7
16	Per cent foreign born white -----	1.2	1.9
17	Per cent negro -----	7.4	7.3
18	Urban population -----	36,584	- - -
19	Rural non-farm population -----	14,223	- - -
20	Rural farm -----	12,002	- - -

⁹ County Data Book, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, (1947), p. 72

¹⁰ Population, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population, Part I, U. S. Summary (1940), U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, p. 421.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 436.

Over 50 per cent of the people are classed as urban; that is, living in cities of over 2,500 population. Fort Smith, being the only city in the county with a population over 2,500, is the home of more than half the people in the county. The rural non-farm population has the next largest per cent of the population with less than 25 per cent; this includes the people living in the other towns of the county but classified as rural non-farm. The rural farm population comprises over 20 per cent of the total population with about 2,000 less people than the non-farm.

The negro constituted only 7.4 per cent of the total population of the county in 1940. There were 4,647 negroes in the county in 1940, nearly all of which live in the City of Fort Smith. Less than one per cent of the negro population of the county are farmers. They prefer to work in factories, shops, and in odd jobs in the City of Fort Smith.

The foreign-born people in the county are less than two per cent of the total population, there being only 767 in 1940. Most of the foreign born are shop keepers in the City of Fort Smith.

Sebastian County has had a very colorful history from the establishment of the first fort at Fort Smith in 1817 down to the present day. The people of the county have progressed from a small fort and little agricultural activity to a progressive group of manufacturers, miners and farmers. Over ninety per cent of the population of the county today is native white.

CHAPTER IV

COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Fort Smith

Fort Smith is a thriving commercial and industrial center located in the northwestern corner of Sebastian County, Arkansas, at an altitude averaging 450 feet above sea level. Its situation is adjacent to the boundary line of Arkansas and Oklahoma and on the south bank of the Arkansas River where it enters the state. The community is surrounded by the Ozark and Ouachita National Forests, the Kiamichi Mountains and the Cookson Hills.

The territory about Fort Smith is fertile and especially adaptable to the growth of a large variety of agricultural products. Livestock breeders have found conditions ideal for profitable production, and stock raising has become a major activity of the region. The temperate winters, long growing season, and regular rainfall¹ are conducive to the farming and livestock industries.

Fort Smith is the second largest and most industrialized city in the state. It has for its economic horizon, factories that will make a variety of products, including: furniture, glass, brick, scissors, spelter and others. The city has farms which surround it that raise corn, livestock and truck crops; and mines that produce coal. The urban area had a population of 36,584 according to the 1940 census.²

The retail trade territory comprises ten counties in Arkansas and four in Oklahoma with a total population of over 370,000 people. The effective buying power for Fort Smith is over \$58,250,000, as reported to the sales management in the city. The retail sales for Sebastian County, July 1, 1946 to June 30,

¹ Facts and Figures About Fort Smith, Post-War Planning Committee, (1947), p.1

² Arkansas, American Guide Series, (1941) p.143-144.

1947, was over \$43,600,000 and did not include cigarettes, gasoline, or liquor.³

The principal traffic artery of Fort Smith is Garrison Avenue which runs southeast from the Arkansas River through the center of the business district. Exceptional width of the Avenue, originally laid out for a parade ground for soldiers, gives downtown Fort Smith an air of western spaciousness and even makes the larger buildings that line the sidewalk seem small. The bulky brick buildings nearest the river show structural lines favored in the early Twentieth Century. Farther southeast, large steel and brick hotels, department stores, and restaurant fronts display architectural form of recent time. The structures press together in an urban concentration surprising in view of the city's comparatively small population.

At a right angle to Garrison Avenue is Tenth Street, which after a few blocks becomes Midland Boulevard and several miles farther out crosses a loop of the Arkansas River into Crawford County. The older streets of Fort Smith, narrow and often heavily shaded, lie parallel with Tenth Street, north of Garrison Avenue. The entire district is laid out at a 45 degree angle to the cardinal points of the compass.⁴

Fort Smith is the leading manufacturing center in Arkansas. There are over 108 manufacturers in the city employing over 5,800 persons and having annual sales of more than \$33,000,000. Principal manufactured products are: glass, furniture, furniture accessories, scissors, spelter, brick, mirrors, automobile bodies, trailers, woodworking products, canned vegetables, frozen foods, poultry and meat products, stoves, cans, paper products and mining machinery.

³ Facts and Figures, Op. Cit., p. 2.

⁴ American Guide Series, Op. Cit., p.146-148.

The wholesale center for 67 counties of Arkansas and Oklahoma in which live over two million people, Fort Smith is a thriving merchandising town. There are more than 130 old established, successful wholesalers who distribute a great variety of merchandise totalling more than \$70,000,000 per year, and employ more than 1,200 people. The effective buying power of the wholesale territory is in excess of \$625,000,000.⁵

There are sixty-six churches in the City of Fort Smith. The following denominations are represented: Baptist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic, Lutheran, Christian, Church of Christ, Jewish, Apostolic, Adventist, Nazarine, Salvation Army and others.

Two excellent clinics and four well-equipped hospitals with 257-bed capacity serves Fort Smith. They are: Cooper Clinic, Holt-Krock Clinic, Colonial Hospital, St. Edwards Hospital, Sparks Memorial Hospital, and Twin City Colored Hospital. These facilities accommodate Sebastian County and surrounding territory as well.

Fort Smith's two daily newspapers, the Southwest American and the Fort Smith Times Record, have a combined circulation of over 33,000. The Southwest American is a morning daily and the Fort Smith Times Record comes out daily in the afternoon.

There are four radio broadcasting stations in the City of Fort Smith.

They are:	KFPW-	- - - - -	1400 kilocycles	- - - -	250 watts
	KRKN-	- - - - -	1230 kolocycles	- - - -	250 watts
	KWHN-	- - - - -	1320 kilocycles	- - - -	5000 watts
	KFSA-	- - - - -	950 kilocycles	- - - -	1000 watts (day)
					500 watts (night)

These stations meet the needs for advertising of the city and other towns while performing valuable services for the people within their reach.

⁵ Facts and Figures, Op. Cit., p. 2.

Fort Smith is the principal transportation center for Sebastian County and all western Arkansas. It is served by four railroads and a network of paved highways. Bus transportation service is provided by four bus lines radiating in all directions. Overnight freight movements to all principal markets in the Middle West is provided by forty truck lines, many of which have their headquarters in Fort Smith. One airline passes from north and south and another from east and west.

The City of Fort Smith has provided itself with many fine schools. It has public (white) schools through junior college with a total enrollment of more than 6,500 students. There are also four public (colored) schools with a total enrollment of over 600 students. Five Parochial schools have a yearly enrollment of over 1,100 students. A business college boasts 100 day students and 40 night students. The total school enrollment is, therefore, more than 8,500 within the city.⁶

The urban community of Fort Smith has enjoyed a rather rapid growth from a small town of 400 to 500 people in 1840 to an estimated population of 47,500 in 1947. It has increased in population numbers more than four times in the last fifty years. These growth features are shown in Table IV below.

TABLE IV

7
History of Fort Smith's Population

1840	- - - - -	From 400 to 500 people
1850	- - - - -	From 400 to 500 people
1860	- - - - -	1,529 (slaves not included)
1870	- - - - -	2,227
1880	- - - - -	3,099

⁶ Facts and Figures, Loc. Cit., p. 5.

⁷ United States Census Reports (1890-1940).

TABLE IV (Continued)

1890	- - - - -	11,311
1900	- - - - -	11,587
1910	- - - - -	23,975
1920	- - - - -	28,870
1930	- - - - -	31,420
1940	- - - - -	36,584
1944	- - - - -	43,000 Estimate based on Post War Survey
1947	- - - - -	47,500 May 10, 1947 by Post War Survey

Approximately 3,500 negroes live in Fort Smith, not in one separate district, but grouped in various parts of the city. Work in the factories enables them to enjoy a standard of living somewhat higher than that of other members of their race living in nearby towns depending solely on cotton. Substantial brick houses appear occasionally among the more common two and three room frame houses. There are a number of negro churches, several amusement and recreational centers and a swimming pool. In 1923 the Roman Catholic Church added a Parochial school for negroes to the already existing accredited schools.

Since 1913, municipal affairs have been handled by three commissioners. A \$409,000 bond issue for civic improvement, which was voted in 1927, paid for new streets, sewers, parks, and playgrounds. These improvements were for the benefit of all the city and for anyone passing through or visiting the city. The parks and playgrounds are places of recreation for young and old. Since 1936, clear mountain water from Lake Fort Smith, twenty-eight miles to the northeast, has flowed through the city water mains. This is much better water than the so-called "Poteau Punch" taken from the Poteau River before 1936. This mountain lake, under the supervision of Fort Smith, is situated in the Ozark Mountains. It is a place of recreation for the people of Fort Smith and for tourists, besides furnishing the city its water supply.

For three decades the one-time frontier fort has had no challenge for its

position as second largest city in the state and today it stands as a modern city. The past, however, is still too near and too large a part of Fort Smith to be forgotten. In May each year the city dons wide-brimmed sombreros, decorates Garrison Avenue with the Wild West motif, stages the Arkansas-Oklahoma Rodeo,⁸ and plays the role of a frontier town once more.

Lesser Trade Centers

Greenwood

The town of Greenwood, in the central part of the county, is the second county seat of Sebastian County serving the southern half of the county. It was incorporated on November 22, 1850. Now Greenwood serves as the chief shipping point of coal from the area, which ranks first in Arkansas coal. The population was 1,219 in 1940, most of the working people being coal miners.

Coal mines close down about the first of April and re-open in July, in time to supply early winter demands. Miners spend their summers working their vegetable gardens with perhaps two weeks of cotton chopping on the plantations farther down the Arkansas Valley.

There are several stores to meet the needs of customers from about and within Greenwood. It is the leading shopping center of the southern part of the county, and all legal transactions for that part of the area are carried on at the court house there. The town is served by paved highways and by rail transportation.

Hackett

Hackett is a small town of 436 population situated in the west central part of the county on the Oklahoma border. It is also a coal mining town made up chiefly of coal miners and their families. The main street of Hackett once boasted

⁸ American Guide Series, Op. Cit., p. 149-152.

a dozen saloons and rang with the sound of quarrels, for it was one of the string of border towns that sprang up along the edge of Indian territory in the 1870s to sell supplies and liquor to the Indians. Today the saloons have given way to one-story brick store buildings. The only memento of the town's youthful enterprise is the ponderous three-story limestone block old schoolhouse, now abandoned, a block north of the business district.

Mansfield

Situated on the county line in the southeastern part of the county, Mansfield lies 594 feet above sea level. It was incorporated in 1888, and in 1940 had a population of 1,002 people. Royalties from natural gas wells nearby supplement the farmers' income earned from cotton, fruit and truck crops. A brick plant early supplied the material for homes and stores in western Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma from 1901 until the collapse of markets and the depression⁹ caused its closing in 1929. Most of the people of the area today are farmers or workers in the town's business places.

Hartford

Hartford is the southernmost town in the county, situated in a valley surrounded by the Sugar Loaf and Poteau Mountain sections. Founded as a coal mining town, it produces much of the fuel of the county until the present day. It had a population of 1,189 people in 1940, but appears to have declined somewhat since that time. The Hartford Music Company was established in this town soon after the turn of the century and has published song books for singers over the entire south until the present day.

Huntington

The town of Huntington is located in the southeast part of the county just

⁹ American Guide Series, Loc. Cit., p. 317.

three miles northwest of Mansfield. It had a population of 990 people in 1940. Coal mining is the chief industry of the town, along with the business concerns that supply the miners and farmers of the area. The houses, as a rule, are old looking. It was a thriving mining center in the early twenties but has much less activity since. There are some negroes living within the limits of the community but the population is over ninety per cent white.

Lavaca

A thriving little farm village, Lavaca is located 17 miles east of Fort Smith on Highway 96 just three miles from Highway 22. Located near the Arkansas River, it is in the fertile river bottom area and is very productive for intensified agriculture. This is the chief berry growing section of the county. The population of the town is approximately 350 people.

Bonanza

Another border town, Bonanza was built up on the Arkansas-Oklahoma border during Indian Territory days. It is situated five miles north of Hackett in the west central part of the county. A small mining community, today it has a population of 400 to 500 people, chiefly coal miners and their families.

Midland

Midland is situated in the south central part of the county just six miles north of Hartford on Highway 45. It was built near the Midland Valley Railroad and took its name from this railroad. Formed as a coal mining town, it still caters chiefly to miners. There is considerable farming and cattle raising in the area today. It had a population of 560 in 1940.

Other Communities

Other communities of the county with populations between 100 and 300 include the villages of Barling, Central, Excelsior, Hillcrest, Jinny Lind and Washburn.

Camp Chaffee Army Camp

Camp Chaffee covers an area of 75,000 acres, lying southeast of Fort Smith bordering on Highway 22. The main gate of the camp is about eight miles southeast of Fort Smith. The camp comprises almost twenty per cent of the area of the county. Construction of this large Army Camp was started in September, 1941. Since that time, thousands of troops have been trained for overseas combat service, and since late in 1944, many, including the writer, have returned there to be processed through the War Department Separation Center for their discharge from service.

The first combat organization trained at this camp was the 6th Armored Division, and then the 14th and 16th Armored Divisions. All were in the European Theater of Operations when victory came there in 1945. There were also many smaller units trained at Camp Chaffee including: an Infantry Regiment, Engineer Combat Group, Field Artillery Groups, Ordnance, Medical, Military Police Battalions, Signal Repair and Quartermaster Gas Supply Companies. The camp has also had three WAC Detachments.

Late in the summer of 1945 the 44th Infantry Division was sent to Camp Chaffee for deactivation. Then the 5th Armored Division, which had a brilliant record in Europe during World War II, was reactivated and assigned here as a training division to handle men arriving under Selective Service Law No. 2. This Division, since July 6, 1948, has the mission of receiving, equipping and furnishing an eight-week course of basic military instruction to new enlistees and inductees in the Army.

Army personnel of 10,000 and nearly 800 civilian employees at Camp Chaffee have a combined payroll of well over one million dollars monthly. The greater part of this money is spent in Sebastian County, mainly in the City of Fort Smith.

Before the end of 1949, Camp authorities expect to have 20,000 troops, making it one of the largest Army Training Centers in the United States.

Camp Chaffee has 2,643 structures of all types including barracks and mess halls, a field house, laundry, bakery, cold storage plant, incinerator, ice plant, six non-denominational chapels, recreational halls, and office buildings. All of these buildings are of wood structure, called temporary frame buildings by the Department of the Army. The barracks are two-story frame buildings, each built for the accommodation of sixty-four soldiers.

Ten miles of railroad lines (branching off from the Missouri Pacific Railroad) are laid through various sections of the camp. There are 277,438 square yards of concrete roads, 653,150 square yards of bituminous roads and 1,665,857 square yards of miscellaneous roads throughout the camp. Sixty miles of water mains, seventeen miles of steel pipe for gas, and 80 miles of overhead and service distribution line for electricity supply the camp.⁹

It is hoped by the civic leaders of the county and especially the City of Fort Smith that the Camp will remain as one of the permanent installations of the United States Army. This will continue to give added prosperity to many private businessmen of the area, as well as giving employment to several hundred civilian workers.

Communication

Sebastian County is in a good location in regard to communications. It is served by several railroad lines including: the Missouri Pacific running from Fort Smith eastward across the county, and also southeast to Greenwood; the Midland Valley Railroad from Fort Smith south through Hartford, the southernmost town in the county; the St. Louis-San Francisco runs from Fort Smith through a

⁹ Facts and Figures, Loc. Cit., p. 7.

large part of the county; and the Kansas City Southern comes through Fort Smith
 10
 and a small part of the county.

The county is served by a good highway system for personal automobile, truck and bus transportation. U. S. Highway 71 crosses the county from Fort Smith in the northwest corner through Greenwood and on through Mansfield in the southeast corner of the county. State Highway 22 stretches across the northern part from west to east passing through Fort Smith, Barling and on eastward. State Highway 96 reaches from the county line on the north to the line on the south serving Lavaca, Greenwood, and Hartford. State Highway 10 stretches across the central part of the county from west to east through Hackett, Greenwood, and on eastward across the county. State Highway 45 reaches from north to south on the western border of the county serving Fort Smith, Bonanza, Hackett, Midland and Hartford.

Main transportation centers are Fort Smith in the northwest corner of the county and Greenwood in the central part. Highways lead in all directions from
 11
 the two cities. Fort Smith is the focal point of great industrial development, having freight service from four main railroads and several large trucking companies. It is also served by the airlines whose planes haul freight and passengers. All the main towns have either good bus or train accommodations for passengers.

Towns of the county are connected by telephone service and the larger communities have telegraph facilities. Fort Smith has four radio stations that serve the people of the area with advertisements and programs for recreation. Postal service, likewise, is effective since trains or buses reach the various

¹⁰ Hammond's Standard World Atlas, p. 61.

¹¹ Official Highway Map of Arkansas, (1947).

communities at regular intervals. Camp Chaffee is to have a new radio station that will be in a world-wide Army radio net, as described in an announcement:

New Station to Tie Chaffee to World-Wide Radio Net

Before next fall Camp Chaffee will be in direct contact with the entire world, according to an announcement by division headquarters today (June 5, 1949). Plans are well underway for the installation of a MARS-military amateur radio system-station at Camp Chaffee. The station at Chaffee will be the Arkansas net control station, which will tie in with the Fourth Army system.

Mars systems are already in operation in New Mexico and Oklahoma and systems are in the process of organization in Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana. When organization is complete, there will be more than 100 stations in the Fourth Army area net which is controlled by the Fort Sam Houston, Texas, station.

Any amateur radio operator with an Army or Federal Communications Commission license and who is affiliated with some branch of the Military Establishment-ORC, ROTC, ER, National Guard or Naval Reserve- may use the facilities of MARS.

Free communication, both by voice and continuous wave, with any short wave in the world will be possible. Messages destined for receipt out of the state will be cleared through command channels via local, district, state, Army area, and Army net control stations. Messages of a purely commercial nature will not be authorized.

Civilian operators with military affiliation may use the Chaffee facilities, except at specified times when the Army will have exclusive use.¹²

This new radio net will be helpful to former servicemen who are interested in the radio amateur field as well as give training to the soldiers of the local camp.

¹² Southwest American Daily Newspaper, Fort Smith, Arkansas, (June 5, 1949).



AN AERIAL VIEW SHOWING PART OF
THE CITY OF FORT SMITH, THE LARGEST
CITY IN SEBASTIAN COUNTY, AND THE
SECOND LARGEST CITY IN ARKANSAS

Figure IV

CHAPTER V

MANUFACTURING AND MINING

Manufacturing is one of the chief industries of Sebastian County for the economy of the area is based on the three activities of manufacturing, mining and agriculture. Fort Smith, the second largest city in the state and the largest in Sebastian County, has the highest industrial development of any urban center in the state. There are over 108 manufacturers in Fort Smith employing over 5,800 persons and having average annual sales of more than \$33,000,000.¹

Manufactured items produced in the county, nearly all of which are made in the Fort Smith region include: glass, furniture, furniture accessories, scissors, spelter, brick, automobile bodies, trailers, wood-working products, canned vegetables, frozen foods, poultry and meat products, stoves, mining machinery, paper products and bottled drinks.

Over two million people in sixty-seven counties of Arkansas and Oklahoma look to Fort Smith for the merchandise they want, including the manufactured articles listed above. There are over one hundred established, successful wholesalers who distribute a great variety of merchandise which totals more than \$54,000,000 a year and employ more than a thousand people. The effective buying power of the wholesale trading area is well over \$625,000,000.² This makes Fort Smith and Sebastian County the principal trade area in the entire state with the exception of Little Rock.

The retail sales for Sebastian County were over \$34,000,000 in 1944 with the breakdown as follows: food products, \$7,570,000; general merchandise, \$5,120,000; lumber, building and hardware, \$1,650,000; and drug products, \$1,632,000.

¹ Post War Planning Survey, Fort Smith, Arkansas, (1944), p. 1.

² Arkansas on the March, Arkansas Resources and Development Commission, (1949), p. 169.

Effective buying power of the county is over \$70,500,000, as reported by the
 Sales Management Bulletin.³

Marketing Information

The principal trading center of Sebastian County is the City of Fort Smith where over half the population of the county resides. It's center is latitude 35 degrees 23' North, Longitude 94 degrees 24' West. There has been a steady growth of the city due to it's industrialization. The population has increased as follows: 1910 it had 23,975; by 1920 it had increased to 28,870; 1930 to 31,429; 1940 to 36,584 people;⁴ and it is expected to be well above the 45,000 mark by the 1950 census.

It can be seen from the table below that the City of Fort Smith is doing a thriving business and, in so doing, is helping the entire county. There were 762 stores of all kinds in Sebastian County, with net sales of \$17,089,000 and a per capita sales of \$284 in 1939. The total sales for 1945 were \$34,541,000.⁵

TABLE V

Retail Sales and Kind of Stores

1. Food stores --- 251 -----	with sales of -----	\$3,289,000
2. General stores (with food) --- 24 ---	with sales of --	549,000
3. General Merchandise Stores --- 16 ---	with sales of --	2,863,000
4. Apparel Stores --- 37 -----	with sales of -----	1,043,000
5. Furniture, Household, and Radio --- 24 --	with sales of	640,000
6. Automotive --- 26 -----	with sales of --	3,291,000
7. Filling Stations --- 124 -----	with sales of --	1,473,000
8. Lumber, Building, and Hardware --- 22-	with sales of --	1,155,000
9. Eating and Drinking Places --- 127 ---	with sales of---	887,000
10. Drug Stores --- 28 -----	with sales of---	815,000
11. Other Stores --- 83 -----	with sales of---	1,084,000

³ Ibid., p. 169.

⁴ Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide, Rand-McNally, Seventy-Ninth Edition, (1948) p. 62.

⁵ Ibid., p. 63.

Food processing is the fastest growing industry in the county's industrial center of Fort Smith and it is enlarging more rapidly than any other industry in the state. Five of the largest canning plants in Arkansas are within a fifteen mile radius of Fort Smith. Arkansas' canning jumped 300 per cent during the recent war while the nation as a whole gained 49 per cent. This shows that the canning of food is increasing so as to become an important industry in this area.

The Fort Smith Industrial Building Foundation offers financial aid to sound new enterprises. The Foundation is a non-profit civic corporation that was created to promote sound industrial growth. It is always ready to try to bring more industry into the area. The plan followed by the organization has been widely copied. One of the most successful projects was the Dixie Cup Company's new \$750,000 plant built by the Foundation on a ten-year purchase contract, which was paid off eleven months after the building started. The Company began operation late in 1947.

The furniture industry has a large place in the industrial development of the area. Forests, in Sebastian County, provide basic materials for the wood-working enterprises, the chief industrial activity of Fort Smith. Now it is one of the six largest furniture centers in the United States. All types of furniture for the household and other uses are made in six large furniture factories in the Fort Smith vicinity. Furniture from the area is shipped to many points in the United States.

The future industrial growth of this county looks bright because it is well established as a manufacturing region, has progressive communities, and has good transportation facilities. Civic groups are active in bringing more and more industries into the area.⁶

⁶ Post War Planning Survey, Op. Cit., p. 2.

Mining

Sebastian County, situated in the center of the Arkansas-Oklahoma coal fields, ranks first in the production of bituminous coal in the state. The yield for the county during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1948, was 832,267 tons. There were over 1,000 men employed in the mines in the county on an average of 137 days during the year. There were 43 producing mines within the area owned by railroads and a number of independently operated small mines. It is estimated by Mr. William B. Mather, of the Midwest Research Institute of Kansas City, that there remains in the state approximately one billion tons of coal. The quality of the Arkansas coal produced in this one and other counties is not surpassed by coal of any other field. Sebastian County and Arkansas has the noted smokeless coal which is being used in a number of larger cities of the country today because of its cleanliness features.

The smokeless coal produced in this area is without a rival closer than the coal fields of West Virginia. The county production of over three-fourths million tons annually comes from mines in the areas of Hackett, Bonanza, Jimmy Lind, Midland, Hartford, Greenwood, Huntington and Mansfield. Most of these towns sprang up as mining towns. The coal fields are widely distributed over the county.⁷

Greenwood is the chief coal-shipping point of Sebastian County. The town is served by good rail and highway transportation in all directions. The principal markets for the coal are the railroad companies which consume a large part of it. Manufacturing and domestic consumers are St. Louis, Omaha, Kansas City. Fort Smith, with its industries, is the chief market of the county.

Most of the coal found in the area is in thin veins from 28 to 32 inches

⁷ Op. Cit., p. 2.

thick, lying at an angle of 20 degrees. Miners work about seven hours a day in less room than an automobile mechanic, digging coal loose from the rock above and slicing out a space below the vein to insert dynamite charges. Nervous stress is added to physical strain by the possibility that a blast may open a gas fissure leading to an accidental explosion.

The coal mines close down about the first of April and reopen in July, in time to supply winter demands for fuel. The miners work in their vegetable gardens or are employed as part-time farm laborers while the mines are not in operation.⁸

Natural gas is found in main areas of Sebastian County. The Massard Prairie district five miles southeast of Fort Smith and the Mansfield district in the southeastern part of the county are the chief producers. The 1944 production of natural gas for the county was 328,347 cubic feet coming from 56 producing wells. These wells produce a natural gas product that is used in most homes of the county as well as for industrial use. The producing areas are not large but supply enough for domestic use by the communities of the county. The wells in the Mansfield district are near the county line and extend over into Scott County.⁹

Manufacturing and mining have long been important in the economy of this county. The county has prospered and kept a higher standard of living for its population than many of the less fortunate counties of the state, which have to depend solely upon agriculture.

⁸ Arkansas, American Guide Series, p. 317.

⁹ Post War Planning Survey, Loc. Cit., p. 7.

CHAPTER VI

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is one of the three leading industries of Sebastian County. There were 2,867 farms in the county in 1935; 2,407 in 1940 and 2,257 in 1945 with a total of 179,589 acres in cultivation in that year. The approximate land area of the county is 338,560 acres with over fifty-three per cent of it¹ in farms.

The County Farm Bureau has a membership of more than 400 members. It has done a good job of keeping farm people of this county informed of the state and national farm picture. The organization is growing because of the fine service² it has been doing.

The County Agricultural Agent is very active in working with the farmers, Marketing, cooperative purchasing, and 4-H Club work are three of the most important activities of the United States Extension Service Office. Fifteen active clubs had an enrollment of 240 boys in 1947. There were 211 farm articles published in the two county newspapers and 104 farm radio broadcasts over two radio stations during the year 1947. The County Agent helped to organize two new cooperatives for farmers during the same year. It is estimated these cooperatives will do approximately \$200,000 worth of farm business in a year's³ time.

The County Agriculture Planning Committee is very active in the Extension program of Sebastian County. It is composed of officers and more than

¹ United States Census of Agriculture, (Arkansas) Vol. 1, Part 23, (1945) Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, p. 45.

² S. D. Bateman, 1947 Annual Report, County Agricultural Agent, Sebastian County, Arkansas, p. 1-2.

³ Ibid., p. 4.

thirty members from fifteen communities in the county. Neighborhood and community leaders are also helpful in carrying out the farm program. Problems considered by the Planning Committee were the improvement of farm buildings, machinery repairs, rural electrification and soil and water conservation.

The Farm Bureau, an active organization of more than 400 members, is the only farmers' organization of its kind in the county. All communities are represented. The Bureau has a definite place in the rural economy of the county and has done its share in sponsoring and stimulating programs and meetings that are of vital importance and interest.

Sebastian County is a feed deficit area because the City of Fort Smith and surrounding area offers a market for the sale of livestock and their products. This stimulates the raising of dairy and beef cattle in the county. It naturally follows, too, that the farmers are interested in producing the greater part of their feeds in order that they might have a greater net profit. Lack of enough livestock feed is a problem, but with the aid of the Planning Committee a program was recently worked out that will help the situation. Silage and pastures was the logical approach, as well as a testing and culling program for dairy herds.

Pastures

Provision of adequate pasturage is another major problem of the livestock raisers of the county. The rapid transition from cotton to cattle that many of the farmers have made has been faster, in some cases, than it has been possible for additional pasturage to be established. Since the greater part of this change-over has come about within the past seven years, and since the greater part of this time materials and labor have been very scarce, the

⁴ Agriculture Planning Committee Information, Sebastian County, Arkansas.

⁵ Farm Bureau Information, Sebastian County, Arkansas.

progress made in development of permanent pastures has been very slow.

There was not over 200 acres of pastures improved during the year 1947, however the dry weather as well as the shortage of competent labor at a reasonable cost has been considered responsible. There was a total of 1700 acres in pasture lands in the county at the close of 1947.

The period of July, August, and September is usually a dry season. This makes a hardship on the livestock raisers unless they have some temporary pasture such as sweet sudan grass or lespedeza. At mid-summer, they will usually find their cattle occupying the pasturage simply as a corral because little grass usually is available at this season.

During the year 1947, over 4,000 acres of pastures were over-seeded with rye grass at a time when it was badly needed. The rye grass was planted largely on bermuda grassland although some of it was sown between corn rows. Rye grass is highly recommended to livestock raisers of the area as a means of increasing total pasture production.

Use of winter oats as a fall and early spring grazing crop is becoming more widespread in this county. Livestock raisers are now beginning to plan their fall pasturage and grazing areas in order to insure an adequate supply of cheap, nutritious feed at a period when it is sorely needed. No other small grain has offered the livestock raiser so much grazing with the prospect of a grain crop in the spring than has winter oats.⁶

The farmers of this county planted approximately 1,200 acres in lespedeza during the year 1947. Every livestock raiser looks to lespedeza as an indispensable part of his pasture program and this legume has played an important part in the farm program of this area. Dairymen over-seed their bermuda grass

⁶ Planning Committee, Op. Cit.

pastures with lespedeza in the spring and in some cases it is planted for hay, but regardless of the use, the legume still serves as one of the greatest contributions made to the upland farms in this county.

Horticulture

The average yield of the boysenberry, which is the dominant variety in this county, was 51 crates per acre in 1947. This berry has excellent keeping qualities and is the one demanded by most of the processing plants in the county. Boysenberries constitute one of the major cash crops in the Lavaca area. This is one of the largest areas in the state for the production of this type of berry, locally known as the Lavacaberry. It was introduced by Mr. I. H. Fielder, Vocational Agriculture teacher, and now president of the Lavaca Berry Growers Association.

The Lavaca Berry Growers Cooperative Association is a new cooperative organized in 1947. It was organized to help market the berry crop for the members of the association so as to get a fair price for their product. There are over 115 members in the association, all of which live within a 15 mile radius of the Lavaca community, with 90 per cent living within seven miles. They have a total of more than three-hundred acres planted in berries, with the average farm being only two or three acres in size.

The Lavaca Berry Growers Association that handles the marketing of the boysenberry crop is also handling the strawberry harvest. Eighty-two farms reported planting 1,065 acres in strawberries during 1944. The highest yield was reported by a farmer from the Lavaca community who harvested 100 crates per acre.

Local freezing plants in Fort Smith and nearby Van Buren purchase most of the berries that average eighteen cents per quart. They bought approximately 4,500 crates of them in 1947. The berries were picked and the crates capped

by workers who received an average of eighteen cents per quart. Some of the berries are sold directly to the consumer at an average of from twenty to thirty-five cents per quart.⁷

There is a need for more research work on this particular type of berry. The true variety of the berry has not as yet been definitely determined. Some people call it a youngberry, and others the boysenberry, but more and more of the growers in this area are calling it the Lavacaberry. This will have its definite advantages, once the berry is established on the market.

There is not too much known about the cultivation of the berry in other sections. Mr. I. H. Fielder, who introduced it in this section, is the best authority and has passed his information and experience on to the other growers in the area. After the berries are harvested about July first, the vines are cut even with the ground. Fertilizer is applied at the rate of 45 to 60 pounds of nitrogen per acre. These steps are necessary in order to get as much growth as possible before frost.

Cover crops, grown to protect the soil from erosion, are something new to boysenberry growers. Most of the old plantings are in seven foot rows and the plants six feet apart in the row. This distance is narrow for tractor cultivation. It has been felt for some time that the middle portions should be kept free from any type of vegetation and this has been the general practice.⁸

Tree Fruits:

Sebastian County is not a large producer of tree fruits but grows enough

⁷ Bateman, Op. Cit., p. 5-6.

⁸ I. H. Fielder, (Pamphlet), Boysenberries, p. 1-3.

of some varieties for home consumption and for market demand as well. In January, 1945, the Census of Agriculture of the Department of Commerce reported 262 farms in the county as growing apples with a total of 8,448 trees producing a total of 2,088 bushels in the year 1944. This is little more than enough for home consumption but supplements the farm income of approximately 260 farmers in the county. Cherries were listed on only 111 farms in 1944 with 497 trees producing 2,217 pounds. Peaches were reported on 336 farms with a total of 32,492 trees with a harvest in 1944 of 10,423 bushels. Over twelve per cent of the farms in the county produced peaches during 1944 supplementing the income of the farmers. Pears were grown on 194 farms with 5,539 trees producing 7,341 bushels in 1944. Plums and prunes were reported on 135 farms with 1,655 trees producing 842 bushels in 1944.

Grapes and Nuts:

Grape production for the county is small. In 1944 only 104 farms reported harvesting grapes from 5,630 vines producing 12, 258 pounds. The total acreage in Sebastian County planted in fruit orchards, vineyards, and nut trees, chiefly pecans, in January, 1945, was 8,825 acres. These products are grown chiefly to
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supplement the main farm income and for domestic use.

Other Crops:

Most of the farms in this county are diversified in nature, growing a variety of crops rather than planting the entire farm in one crop. The farmers of the county have shifted from a cotton economy to the livestock or intensified type of farming or a combination of the two, in the last ten or more years. Its nearness to Fort Smith, where there is a large population and excellent marketing

⁹ Form A-45-74, U. S. Census of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, (1945), p. 1.

facilities, has prompted the change.

The county grows some corn, Irish potatoes, wheat, peanuts, oats, alfalfa, lespedeza, spinach and several varieties of vegetables, and cotton. The three leading crops are cotton, corn and Irish potatoes.

A large percentage of the cultivable land is still planted in cotton. During the year 1944, cotton was produced on 259 farms in the county with a total acreage of 17,327 acres and a production of 8,528 running square bales.¹⁰ Sebastian County, located at the northern fringe of the Cotton Belt, has been a cotton growing area, but it is growing less than in past years.

Corn is a very important crop grown in the county because it is fed to the livestock and also used for human consumption in many forms. The crop is produced on over forty per cent of the farms of the county. It was grown on 970 farms in the county on 9,000 acres in 1944. Corn was grown on 932 farms on 8,739 acres, and with a production of 130,230 bushels of shelled corn.¹¹

Irish potatoes thrive on over fifty per cent of the farms of the county. Production for 1944 was high because of the exceptional demand and high price paid for them under the farm support program of the Government. Grown on 1,183 farms with a total acreage of 8,909 acres planted; 65,443 bushels were produced and harvested for sale or home consumption that year.¹² The county is noted for its potatoes which have been planted for many years. The farmers consider it one of the main cash crops. Now, since the potato production has been cut because other areas nearby are producing them, causing the price to be lower, many of the farmers have changed to more profitable crops. There was not over

¹⁰ Form A-45-74, Ibid., p. 1.

¹¹ Form A-45-72, U. S. Census of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, (1945) p. 1.

¹² Form A-45-74, Op. Cit., p. 1.

150 acres in potatoes in 1947 as compared with 8,909 acres in 1944. These few potatoes were sold largely to truckers and vegetable dealers in Fort Smith and Van Buren. Most of the potatoes grown today are in the vicinity of Hackett.¹³

Other Vegetables:

The farmers of the county have always grown vegetables for their own consumption but in recent years some of them are producing them for the market. Beans, cabbage, tomatoes and spinach are the main vegetables being raised for the market by farmers of the county. The market for these crops is always fair but beans are not considered as profitable as the other crops. Most of the tomatoes are produced in the Massard community near Fort Smith, as is most of the cabbage. Spinach is grown in the bottom land near Fort Smith. Beans are grown in all parts of the county.

Marketing of Farm Products:

The marketing of fruits and vegetables, as well as other agricultural products, is one of the most important tasks of the County Agricultural Agent and other farm leaders of the county. For years the farmers have been capable of producing far more than they could possibly market. This has been one of the main problems in stabilizing agriculture and prices.

The Extension Service of the Government has been instrumental in assisting the farmers by aiding them with their marketing problems through cooperative endeavor. There were four cooperatives operating in the county by 1947. The County Agent, in cooperation with the Extension Service, and local farm leaders have given a cooperative study to the different groups in order to coordinate the thinking of all the groups and tie the cooperative program together.

¹³ Bateman, Loc. Cit., p. 5-7.

The Farm Bureau Mill and Supply Cooperative is flexible enough to permit the vegetable growers to use its facilities for marketing. During the marketing season for cabbage the Cooperative sold over sixty tons of cabbage after grading and sacking. This Cooperative was started in 1942 and is affiliated with the Arkansas Farm Bureau. It now has over 300 members and new ones are being added. Having built its volume of business through quality feeds and seeds, it now handles other farm supplies. Among these are refrigerators, lawn mowers, nails, fencing, roofing, and many other supplies that go into the cost of production on the farm. The group has a capitol stock of \$35,970 and undistributed savings of more than \$16,000.

The previously discussed Lavaca Berry Growers Association, with over 118 members, is another farm cooperative that is doing a good service for the berry growers of the county. It grades and markets the berries for the growers, helping to get a fair price for their products.

The farmers of the county have made efforts to improve the farm land by conservation methods. They are becoming more conscious of the need for land use adjustments and through farm visits by the County Agent, newspapers, and radio, the farmers are being encouraged to ask for assistance in making long range plans for their farms.

The farm labor problem has been handled through the United States Employment Office in Fort Smith. Up to November 1, 1947, one hundred forty-one farmers had placed orders for over 25,000 workers for the year. Most of the employees only help out in the harvest for a very short time. There is always a ready supply of short time workers, many of whom are women and children who only work

¹⁴ Bateman, Loc. Cit., p. 9.

¹⁵ U. S. Employment Office figures, Fort Smith, Arkansas, (1948).

during harvest time.

Location of Sebastian County as to types of Farming

The northern fringe of the county bordering on the Arkansas River is in an area known as the Arkansas River bottom land that extends along the Arkansas River the entire width of the county. The soils of this region are highly productive where drainage is adequate and where there has not been excessive flood damage. Most of the land in the area is protected by levees. Corn, cotton and hay are the principal crops. There are also considerable acreages of berries, potatoes and green beans.

The rest of the county is located in part of the area comprising the upper Arkansas River Valley. The upland soils found on the rolling hills and the plateau-like, higher lying elevations, are for the most part sandloams and are not very productive. The soils in the valleys, if well drained, have a moderate degree of productivity.

The agriculture of this area is characterized by a wide variety of local specialization on the better land types. This includes cotton in the river and creek bottoms, dairying in the vicinity of the cities, and peaches, strawberries, and other small fruits and melons in several localities. The intervening, less fertile lands used are in general self-sufficing farms. Much of the land in the
16
mountain area is left in woodland.

TABLE VI

SHOWING VALUE OF FARM PROPERTY, NUMBER OF FARM DWELLINGS AND THE
FARM POPULATION OF SEBASTIAN COUNTY, ARKANSAS

17

Value of Farm Property		Census of 1945	Census of 1940
1	Value of farms (land and buildings) -- dollars	\$5,954,315	\$4,381,612

¹⁶ Ross Mauney, Miscellaneous Publication No. 10, Extension Service, University of Arkansas College of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Commerce Cooperating, p. 2.

¹⁷ U. S. Census of Agriculture for 1945, Op. Cit., p. 142.

TABLE VI (Continued)

Value of Farm Property		Census of 1945	Census of 1940
2	Average per farm (all farms) - - - - dollars	\$ 2,638	\$ 1,820
3	Farms of 30 acres and over - - - - dollars	3,028	1,920
4	Average per acre (all farms) - - - - dollars	33.16	20.47
5	Value of implements and machinery- - farm reporting dollars	1,874 558,142	1,848 343,137

Farms reporting by value of Implements and Machinery

1	\$1 to \$99 - - - - - No. of farms	1,139	Not given
2	\$100 to \$249- - - - - No. of farms	276	" "
3	\$250 to \$499- - - - - No. of farms	111	" "
4	\$500 to \$749- - - - - No. of farms	129	" "
5	\$750 to \$999- - - - - No. of farms	50	" "
6	\$1,000 to \$2,499- - - - - No. of farms	134	" "
7	\$2,500 and over - - - - - No. of farms	35	" "
8	Value of livestock on farms - - - - - dollars	\$1,301,046	\$ 896,915

Farm Dwellings and populations

1	Dwellings on farms - - - - - Farms reporting Number of dwellings	2,246 2,677	Not given " "
2	Occupied- - - - - Farms reporting Number occupied	2,229 2,414	" " " "
3	Unoccupied- - - - - Farms reporting Number unoccupied	216 263	" " " "
4	Farm population (persons living in occupied dwellings) on farms- - - Persons	8,673	" "
5	Average per occupied dwelling - - - - - Persons	3.58	" "
6	Under 14 years old - - - - - Persons Boys Girls	2,901 1,506 1,395	" " " " " "
7	Men and boys on farms - - - - - Persons	2,747	" "
8	Women and girls on farms- - - - - Persons	3,025	" "

It can be noted that there was an increase in the value of farm property during the five-year period between 1940 and 1945. This can be accounted for due to the rise in property values and also to the increased prosperity of the farmers during the war years when their produce demanded a high price.



BOYSENBERRIES GROWING ON
A FARM IN THE LAVACA COMMUNITY

Figure V a



BOYSENBERRY VINES AFTER THEY WERE CUT.
NOTICE HOW NEAR THE HOUSE THE BERRIES ARE GROWN

Figure V b

Livestock

Dairying is a very important enterprise in this county since there is a great demand for such products due to the fact that well over one half of the people live by other means than farming. The dairymen have three chief outlets for milk and milk products: (1) Three milk plants in Fort Smith, (2) one cheese plant at Greenwood, and (3) Five creameries. Then, too, the Avoset plant at nearby Paris in Logan County has routes which extend throughout the county and are helping to maintain prices through competition.

Most of the dairy herds are a mixture of Jersey and Guernsey breeds. There are several breeders in pure bred cattle in the county, among them are O. K. Mills Farm with a herd of 37 registered Guernsey cattle; Kilcrest Guernsey Farm with 55 registered cattle; I. C. Robison with 23 registered Guernseys; Diamond Grove Farm with 30 head of registered Jerseys; and Z. D. Richison Farm with 20 head of registered Brown Swiss cattle. All of these men have good herd sires and are following definite breeding programs. Some of the best sires in the nation are in this county, and as more and more livestock raisers become interested in the pure-bred livestock program, it is believed that the program will enlarge.¹⁸

The Farm Bureau Milk Producers are now testing all of the milk for the members of the cooperative. A record is mailed to the members after each testing. Milk quality is getting better but there is still need for more educational work in this field. Dairymen are trying to get their barns and milk rooms in better condition to meet inspections. The 4-H Club quality team is helping assist dairymen in this connection.¹⁹

¹⁸ Bateman, Loc. Cit., p. 11-12.

¹⁹ Farm Bureau Milk Producers Cooperative Association Data.

More than sixty farmers were assisted during 1947 in getting plans for the construction of farm buildings, including dairy barns and milk houses. The dairy-men realize that they will need to have better building equipment if they are to meet the sanitary requirements for selling milk and milk products on the market. Then too, they are asking and learning more about how to judge dairy cattle. Many farmers in the Hackett area are getting interested in the dairy business.²⁰

The county has an average of ten head of cattle per farm. In January, 1945, over 2,000 farms reported 22,389 cattle and calves. Cows and heifers, two years and over, numbered 12,891 and the number milked in 1944 was 8,697.²¹ Nearly all the farmers have their own milk cow or cows to supply their family needs. Most of the large dairies are in the area near Fort Smith where over half of the population of the county resides.

The farmers of the county are becoming enthusiastic about raising purebred swine. A great deal of interest has been stimulated by the O. I. C registered herd on the O. K. Mills Farm near Fort Smith on Highway 22 east of the city. The swine program appears to be gaining in recent years. Most all the farmers in the county raise a few pigs for home consumption. In 1945, 978 farms reported having 4,797 hogs and pigs.

Nearly all of the farmers of the county own a mule or a horse, and many of them have several of them. On January, 1945, 759 farms reported having 1,543 mules and mule colts, and 1,183 farms reported having 2,479 horses and colts, including ponies. It is obvious from the above figures that there is an average of one horse on each farm and a mule on an average of over one-half of the farms.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Form A-45-54, "Livestock and Livestock Products." U. S. Consus of Agriculture, (1945), p. 1.

Chickens are raised on practically all the farms in the county and many other people living in small towns have a flock of chickens. Fort Smith furnishes a ready market for fryers, hens and eggs. Poultry production furnishes many of the farmers of the county a cash income during a greater part of the year. In January, 1945, 2,018 farms reported having 101,404 chickens on hand over four months old. This does not account for the many thousands of chickens raised in small areas by people who do not farm for a livelihood.

There are very few turkeys raised in this county. In 1944 turkeys were raised on 20 farms out of a total of 2,257 farms. These farms raised only 412²² turkeys during that year. Many of the farmers raise ducks, guinea hens and geese but very little of it is done on a commercial basis.

Agricultural production is the basis of any society and Sebastian County produces its share of agricultural and livestock products. The farm operators are raising more livestock and less cotton. Dairying is becoming an important industry in the area as is livestock raising. Chief agricultural crops are corn, cotton, potatoes, hay, berries, and vegetables. The production of crops and livestock will remain important in the economy of the county.

²² Ibid., p. 1.



A TYPICAL SEBASTIAN COUNTY FARM HOME

Figure VI a



A DAIRY HERD NEAR FORT SMITH
IN SEBASTIAN COUNTY

Figure VI b

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

Sebastian County, Arkansas, which is situated in the western part of Arkansas, lies within the Arkansas Valley of the Ozark Mountain region. It was established by an act of the state legislature on January 6, 1851, and comprises a total area of 529 square miles. The county was formed from Scott, Polk and Crawford Counties, with two county seats, one at Fort Smith for the northern part and one at Greenwood for the southern part. Court houses are maintained at both places. It is the only county in Arkansas which is divided into two separate judicial districts.

The economy of the county is based primarily upon manufacturing, mining, and agriculture - a triple source of wealth which has provided steady growth with little in the way of booms and depressions. The county has grown from a population of a few thousand in 1851 to more than 65,000 people today.

There are more than 100 manufacturers in the City of Fort Smith employing about 6,000 persons. Principal manufactured products include: furniture, furniture accessories, glass, spelter, brick, scissors, automobile bodies, trailers, canned vegetables, poultry and meat products, frozen foods, paper products, wood-working products, stoves, mining machinery and bottled drinks.

This county is located in the center of the Arkansas-Oklahoma coal fields, which produces some of the best coal in the country. Sebastian County ranks first in coal production in Arkansas with an annual production of about three-fourths million tons. The coal produced in the area is a smokeless domestic fuel without equal closer than the coal fields of West Virginia. Sebastian County is also a producer of natural gas. Gas wells are found in two principal areas, one in the Massard prairie five miles southeast of Fort Smith and in the Mansfield district in the southeastern part of the county. The yearly production

for 1944 was over 325 million cubic feet coming from fifty-six producing wells.

The agricultural land of the county varies in type from the rich Arkansas River bottom land to the timbered mountains to the south. Elevation ranges from somewhat over four hundred feet in the river bottoms to 2,200 feet on Sugarloaf Mountain. The average for the county is five hundred feet above sea level. Those soils produce a variety of crops including: corn, cotton, potatoes, berries, hay, and truck crops. Livestock are raised on the grasslands and planted pastures of the area.

The climate is favorable for man and for the production of a variety of products. The average growing season for the past twelve years was 237 days from April 12 to November 14. The annual rainfall is normally thirty-nine inches and the average snowfall about four inches. The twelve year mean temperature for the county was 62.7 degrees F., with a high of 104 and a low of nine degrees F.

The chief city of Sebastian County is Fort Smith, a thriving commercial and industrial center located in the northwestern corner of the county. It is the second largest community in Arkansas, having an estimated population of 47,500 in 1947. The city has over 108 manufacturers and more than 100 wholesalers, supplying 67 counties in Arkansas and Oklahoma with the merchandise they want. This wholesale trade territory, with over 2,000,000 people, has an effective buying power in excess of \$625,000,000. The city appears destined to a continued growth for many years to come.

The future of the county looks bright since it is well established as an industrial area, wholesale center, good agricultural and livestock production, and produces its own coal and natural gas for domestic consumption as well as for other markets. It is well served by railroads, highways, and air service.

The largest Army establishment in the state is located in the county. The climate is favorable as a habitat for man and for good agricultural production. The gradual increase in population is an indication that the county is progressing and it is the opinion of the writer that it will increase to a greater population in the future.

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