

ARKANSAS SESQUICENTENNIAL

1836 – 1986

A HISTORY OF KINGSLAND, ARKANSAS

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EARLY SETTLERS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE KINGSLAND AREA

Soon after 1800 large number of people came to Arkansas from the older states. The population was 52,000 when Arkansas became a state in 1836.

People all across our land are involved in the Sesquicentennial celebrations this year to honor that event. This may have caused many of us to wonder about the people, who were moving into the Kingsland area, about 150 years ago. Some of those early residents are the ancestors of people now living in this vicinity, several generations later.

John Harvie Marks and his father-in-law, Nathaniel Barnett, came into this territory from Alabama in 1834. Other relatives soon followed and settled in an area extending from Kingsland to Moro Bay. In 1840 the land on which the Marks home was located, became a part of the newly formed Bradley County.

Daniel Frazier settled in what is now the Hebron Community, in the early 1830's. He was a large slaveholder and built a large, two-story log plantation home in the area.

Dr. Lewis Leali, a young physician from Italy, came to America in 1850 and settled 7 miles northwest of Kingsland, in what became the Como Community. His medical practice covered a radius of 30 miles, requiring him to be away from home sometimes 3 or 4 days at a time.

By 1890, Dr. Leali owned 1,000 acres of land where he had originally settled. He was the father of Dr. Charles Leali, who later served as a doctor in the Kingsland area.

James Edward Hopson settled on land between Kingsland and the Hebron Community in 1850. It is reported that Baptist Church services were held in the Hopson home and a son, William M. Hopson, was licensed to preach in 1874.

Steve Graves and family settled near the site of the Mt. Elba Baptist Church in 1848, having lived in 17 states before arriving. One of their children died in 1857 and laid to rest in what became the Graves Cemetery at Mt. Elba.

Mr. Graves operated a sawmill in the area and was also a tanner, by trade. The community was once called Gravestown.

Joel Crane settled near Mt. Elba in 1850.

William and Henrietta Morgan were early residents of the Smith Chapel area. Henrietta was born in 1807 and died in 1850. William, who was born in 1803, died in 1890. They were both buried in a family cemetery near the Smith Chapel Community.

John Jones Mitchell was also an early settler. He enlisted in a Confederate Calvary Regiment on February 22, 1862, showing his address as Mt. Elba, Arkansas. He was reported absent without leave in October 1862; a Lauderdale, Mississippi Hospital record shows him as a patient in March and April 1863, which explains his absence.

George Tolson lived in Saline Township as early as 1857.

William B. Selman, a Confederate soldier, was born in 1835 and died July 21, 1864. He was buried in a family cemetery in the Smith Chapel Community, near the birthplace of "Bear" Bryant.

Stephen Johnson, who was born October 25, 1811, at Milan, TN., moved to Arkansas in 1850 and settled in what is now the Como Community. When Dorsey County was formed, he was elected the first Treasurer of the County and served from 1874 through 1884.

Jessie Frank Johnson, a son of Stephen and Nancy Johnson, was 5 years of age when the family moved to Arkansas. He later was a Confederate soldier in the Civil War. He served as County Judge of Cleveland County from 1888 – 1896, and was a Representative from Cleveland County from 1896 – 1898.

Dewitt Johnson, also a son of Stephen and Nancy Johnson, was the father of Dr. S. C. Johnson, who later served many years as a doctor in the Kingsland area.

These are only a few of those who had settled in this territory before the Civil War.

Some other early settlers were H. W. Rogers, William Hall, John Ledbetter, Franklin Sturgis, B. F. Knowles, John Seymore, John H. Breathwit and their families.

The Civil War years from 1861 – 1865 were difficult times, especially the last two years with actual fighting nearby.

In August 1863, with General Steele on his way to claim Little Rock, the state government was moved to Washington in Southwest Arkansas, which remained the Confederate capital until the war was over.

On April 25, 1864, a wagon train of supplies, escorted by 1,000 to 1,500 men, was surprised in an attack by Confederate soldiers, led by General James F. Fagan. The Marks Mill Battle followed, with many killed and a large number taken prisoner.

A historic marker has been placed at the junction of Highways 97 and 8 to commemorate the battle.

After the war was over, Arkansas was readmitted to the Union on June 22, 1868, still enduring many hardships with radicals and carpetbaggers in control.

Cleveland County was formed on April 17, 1873 but was first named Dorsey in honor of Stephen Dorsey, a radical Republican serving in Congress.

On March 5, 1885, by an act of the General Assembly, the name was changed to Cleveland, in honor of the newly elected President, Grover Cleveland.

The County was first divided into 8 townships, with Prairie formed in 1874, from parts of Redland and Saline Townships.

The name Prairie was later changed to Kingsland Township.

Very likely Prairie Township was so named because of the prairie type tract of land located 3 miles east of Kingsland, between Highways 79 and 189. The area covers about 640

acres, is somewhat round and is surrounded by trees; however, there were no trees within this area, except on scattered mounds throughout.

This was called the "prairie" by local residents and was not considered very profitable land. It was once used for baseball games, picnics and other activities.

Paul Shaffner bought a part of the land in 1940 and with some good timber management, is growing some pines fairly successfully.

International Paper Co., bought the remainder of the land in 1954 and planted pine seedlings. These are growing, but only at about half the rate of trees in the surrounding area.

Soil samples have shown a high alkaline content upon testing.

With the growth of pines, the "prairie" is fast disappearing.

The Texas and St. Louis Southwestern Railway first came to Cleveland in 1882. It was soon called the "Cotton Belt", probably because cotton was the largest crop in its territory.

The following information is taken from a 1957 railroad history entitled "80 years of Transportation progress", and is included because the railroad had such an impact on the early growth and development of Kingsland.

Captain Samuel W. Fordyce had grown up in Ohio in an atmosphere of railroads and business. He was living in Hot Springs, Ark., recuperating from an illness caused by wounds received during the Civil War, while serving as a Union Army Captain.

He was a personal friend to James S. Paramore, President of the Railroad Company from 1880 – 1885. He was hired to survey and decide on the location of a narrow gauge railroad to connect the Texas end of a line at Texarkana and the East Coast, at Bird's Point, MO.

Most of the country was very wild and unsettled and Fordyce is said to have ridden over the route 3 times. Legend has it that he rode an old grey mule on the first trip, which took him the greater part of a year.

The accepted custom was for people to give necessary right-of-way land, since land value would be naturally increased; however, in some instances, Fordyce had problems with landowners. His report includes on case where he had spent three days with a man who still refused to sign a deed for the right-of-way. His answer was "General, I done tole you from the fust that I don't want no railroad down heah, we used to be the happiest folks in the world til a lot of infernal longhaired Kentuckians with 6 ft. rifles come over heah and crossed on our people, and their dogs crossed on our dogs, til now thar aint a good bar dog in the whole country."

The final cost of the railroad construction was about \$12,000 per mile. Steel rails were imported from Wales, Great Britain, through New Orleans and up the Mississippi River to Missouri at a cost of \$75.00 per ton.

Construction was begun in several places at once to speed up the work. White Oak from the local areas was used for the crossties.

On June 30, 1882 the works was completed from Pine Bluff to the Saline River, passing through Kingsland soon afterward and reaching Texarkana by December 1882.

Paramore, President of the Company, thought cotton would be the main cargo and that the 3 ft. narrow gauge would be sufficient and much cheaper to build than the regular 4 ft. 8 ½ gauge; however, he soon realized he was wrong. October 18, 1886 became a memorable day in railroad history, when, in just one day (24 hours), the narrow gauge railroad from Texarkana to Bird's Point, MO., was changed to regular gauge. This was a distance of 419 miles, mostly in Arkansas.

The changeover cost \$30 million. Cars and engines were changed and as ties needed replacing, they were exchanged for longer ones. At that time, cost of the ties of \$.29 each with 1 ½ million used; \$3.17 each was the price in 1957.

At a pre-arranged hour, traffic was suspended and the re-enforced section gangs completed the changeover in 24 hours, as planned.

Samuel W. Fordyce, for whom the town of Fordyce, Ark., was named, became President of the Railroad Co., May 1, 1886 and served until his resignation in 1898.

With the completion of the railroad in 1882, there was immediately an increase in population and number of businesses in Kingsland. The rich growth of timber was being cut and sawmills employed many people in the area. Farming was also a chief source of income.

Travel was greatly improved with passenger trains available.

One July 22, 1884, the town of Kingsland was incorporated with a population of 500. The petition asking for the incorporation was signed by 30 men.

By 1890 there was a population of 600; with 3 hotels, a furniture factory, one large lumber mill, 2 livery stables, a post office, and 4 large mercantile stores. There was also a photography studio, telephone exchange office, a number of grocery stores and 3 drug stores, suppliers for 2 prominent doctors.

Several attempts were made at publishing a Kingsland newspaper; however, all were soon discontinued except the Kingsland Leader which was published several years.

Sawmills continued to thrive; some early mill owners were A. P. Guess, Steve Graves, Milton Hargus and H. C. Draughon, who had a large mill at Draughon, 2 miles east of Kingsland. A log tram road extended from Draughon across the prairie and below New Edinburg, connecting with the Warren and Ouachita Valley Railroad into Warren. This provided passenger train service to Warren for a time.

Draughon became a thickly settled community with a post office and a 3-room school, which remained until 1930, long after the mill was discontinued.

In a cotton belt publication in 1890, a railroad representative reported on a tour of the Kingsland area. He was impressed with the rich farmland along the Saline River, also the good fishing was noted. He believed the level land near Draughon to be suitable for rice growing. He

reported \$250,000 of farm produce sold each year in Kingsland, with \$250,000 of merchandise sold in the stores. Also mentioned was the famous red land of the Red Land Township and the fine crops he had observed in the Hebron area.

People of South Arkansas are indebted to the publishers of "Goodspeed History of South Arkansas" which contains location history before 1890; much of which is not recorded elsewhere.

The publishers of the Cleveland County Herald have also helped to preserve the history of this county.

At one time local news items were called "dots".

Some interesting Kingsland "dots" from early issues of the Herald as follows:

June 1886: Mr. Will Dykes, Kingsland Postmaster, was in Rison on Monday.

February 9, 1897: The town is quiet and business fair; a boxcar load of cottonseed arrived in town on Monday.

Quite an interesting meeting of the Masonic Order was held last Saturday evening.

Our efficient and scholarly Representative, Judge J. F. Johnson, spent Sunday with his family and left Tuesday for his post of duty.

February 10, 1897: Mr. E. R. Buster is making decided improvements on his store building and adding to his already large stock of goods.

February 25, 1897: Mrs. Dickerson opened a conscription school on Monday with good prospects.

March 1897: Dr. Charles Leali and B. J. Hopson left for Dewitt, Ark., to shoot snipe.

Miss Louise Barnett is visiting her sister in Fordyce this week.

August 23, 1897: W. W. Mitchell was in New Edinburg on Saturday.

Rev. Jones, Kingsland Methodist Pastor, was in Rison one day this week.

September 23, 1897: Kingsland public School, with Professors Brown and Morgan in charge, will open on the 27th for 8 month term.

October 12, 1897: Kingsland has already handled, to this date, more cotton than ever handled before in a whole season and the half is not yet told. She pays a higher price than any other town in South Arkansas.

October 28, 1897: Public School opened this week with 150 pupils in attendance. There are 75 babies in Kingsland less than 3 months old.

July 4, 1898: The Barbecue given by the Masons and Woodmen of the World was a great success. There was good music and interesting speeches.

Ad: Wanted: I pay \$1.50 a day for men to saw stock in the woods. C. W. Livingston – Draughon, Ark.

September 1902: Cotton is being brought in at the rate of 30 bales a day. Price is 8 ¼ cents a pound.

Buster and Daniel's have returned from Eastern Markets and have shown confidence in business by buying several carloads of goods.

These news items may help us get a glimpse of Kingsland around the turn of the century.

SCHOOL

The earliest public school building was a two-story frame structure built in 1890. It is reported that school had been taught earlier, in the Methodist Church.

A person applying for a teaching position during the early years, was given a teacher's examination by the County Examiner, and was required to make an average grade of 85%, with nothing below 75%.

Licenses were rated as first, second and third grade certificates, with salaries paid according to classification.

In 1916, a tract of land was bought from J. W. Doster for \$165, and a new two-story brick school building was built on the same site of the present building.

R. C. Carmical, Miss Alice Irby and Miss Hattie Griffin were elected teachers, for an 8-month term, with salaries ranging from \$95 to \$40 per month.

W. E. Baker, after an absence of 4 years, was elected principal in 1919, and teacher for grades 9 and 10.

The 11th grade was added in 1920; with grades 12 taught in 1921.

Mr. Baker was employed as superintendent in 1922, with a salary of \$1,500 annually.

Katie Wright was elected to teach in a school for Blacks, held in the Baptist Church in 1922. Edna Walls was elected teacher for Blacks in 1928; however, the Baptist Church was no longer available for school and a new school building was built. There was no school held during the 1928 —1929 term, but was resumed in the fall of 1929 with Edna Walls teaching.

In 1929, the school bought from the T. J. Fortune Estate, the hotel, furnishings and lots, price not to exceed \$1,000. The site was the present location of the city park area where the Johnny Cash Marker now stands. A new gymnasium was built on the lots.

Some of the teachers during the 1920's were: Tate Mitchell, Ruth Ellis, Lola May, Bertha McCoy, Lillian Fortune, Dora Ponder, Eula Fikes, Cadoshia Guyton, Etna Dean Ross, Gladys Doster, Porter Coats, Minerva Whyne, Katherine Sligh, Carnell Malone, A. C. Webb, Archer Lea, Marie McCoy, Lola Thomas and Eileen Griffin.

Enrollment was 310 in 1919 and averaged about 350 each year during the 1920's. Salaries during that time ranged from \$100 for high school to \$60 for elementary teachers.

In June 1930, board members were: T. E. Mosley, R. L. Kight, J. E. McCoy, G. E. Marks, E. R. Buster and J. E. Jones. Plans were finalized and the following schools were consolidated

with the Kingsland School: Cross Roads, Como, Graywood, McCoy, Draughton, Stonewall, Pleasant Ridge and Anderson.

Extra teachers, buses and drivers were required to accommodate the increased enrollment for the 1930 – 1931 term.

With the Depression underway by 1931, all salaries were cut 20%.

In March 1932 funds were not available for the last two months of the term. All teachers and bus drivers worked those last 2 months for 1 month's pay. Salaries averaged about \$60 at that time; however, many were as low as \$50 for the next few years.

Enrollment reached 680 in 1934, with an average of 600 throughout the 1930's. Some of the teachers who taught during these difficult years were W. E. Baker, Superintendent, Eula Fikes, Marie Cash, Trelle Haynie, Erma Rodgers, Margaret Sligh, Alberta McCamey, Fred Harris, A. C. Webb, Archer Lea Williford, Anita Knowles, Marie McCoy, Jane Mitchell, H. C. Kelly, Elmire Knowles, Margaret Childress, Martha Downey, Orella Downey, Mary Wheeler, Mrs. Alva Kight and Mr. and Mrs. Walthaw.

A new school building was erected in 1940, using W. P. A. labor, made available by one of the "New Deal" agencies, active during the Roosevelt Administration. This building is still in use at this time. The gym and lots were sold in 1945 for \$1,250. A new gymnasium was built in 1951, on campus near the other buildings; cafeteria and additional classrooms have been added as needed.

Superintendent W. E. Baker resigned in 1946 to become Cleveland County School Supervisor. He had served in the school from 1909 to 1946, except for an absence of 4 years, making a total of 33 years service.

Other Superintendents since that time include: J. D. Hobbs, E. L. Hopper, A. C. Webb, Willard LaGrone, W. B. Bryant, Travis Hardaway, Ronald Smead and Clyde Dorrrough, who is serving at this time.

Plans are now being made to meet new education standards and to accommodate increased enrollment from recent consolidation with New Edinburg School.

Voters proved their support recently when they turned out in record numbers to approve a tax increase needed. At this point it is hoped standards can be met and the school maintained in its present location.

CHURCH

With the growth and development experienced in the 1880's, there were also 3 churches organized during that decade.

The First Southern Baptist Church was organized in 1885, with the first building erected in 1886; a second one was completed in 1934 and is being used at this time.

On September 15, 1985 the church observed a 100th anniversary, with friends, former pastors and members joining the local members for a special day.

Rev. Cline Ellis has been pastor since 1982.

The Kingsland United Methodist Church was also organized during the 1880's. The land was given by W. H. Barnett and a two-story building was built. The upper story was used by the Masonic Lodge until 1950, when the first church building was razed and a second one was built.

A history published by the Cleveland County Herald in March 1951, names trustees at the time the first building was erected. These were J. W. Doster, G. L. Lockeridge, L. J. Sneed and W. J. Harris. A partial list of early members was also given; Mr. and Mrs. J. E. McCoy were the only living members left from that group in 1951 when the history was prepared.

Rev. Paul Woolley is the present Pastor of the Church.

The Assembly of God Church dates back to 1919 when John and Alice Woods invited Sister Brantley to hold a revival under a brush arbor located on the south side of the railroad. This was repeated in summers until plans were started in 1922 to build a church. Services were held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Woods until the church was completed. Location was in Southwest part of town and on the Southside of the railroad track.

In 1930 the building was moved across the railroad to a new location near the Raymond King home. In 1956 the old church was torn down and a new building erected on the present site.

Rev. Lewis Langley has been Pastor of the church since December 1965 – more than 20 years.

The Kingsland Missionary Baptist Church was organized June 7, 1949 with 18 charter members and A. D. Livingston, Pastor. The first church building was located just west of the present brick building which was built in 1977.

Rev. Tony Atkins is the present Pastor.

The St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church of Kingsland was established in 1897. Some of the earliest officers and members were H. Ransome, Ellen Andrews, Harriet Woods McCall, Ellen Broughton, Susan Hudson and Katie Wright.

The First Baptist Church for Blacks was established in the Sturgis Addition to the town in 1889. It was organized under the leadership of Rev. Elis Sims, with 11 charter members. Some of these were Mr. and Mrs. Sam Avery, Mrs. Martha Smith, Mr. Ike Green and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Stover. The first building was erected in 1891, about ¼ miles southeast of the town. In 1911 a second building was built, on the present location.

The church building was used as a school for Black children through 1927.

The Church of God in Christ for Blacks was established in the home of William Tolefree in the early 1920's.

Later, the services were held under a brush arbor.

Rufus McConel built the first church building and was also Pastor at the time.

The building used at the present time is the third one used by the church. The present Pastor is Eld. B. F. Harris.

There are other churches in the surrounding area; all have had a part in shaping the lives of people.

POST OFFICE INFORMATION

There were 15 Post Offices in the County in 1890. Some of the Post Offices in this area included Kingsland, Como, Graywood, Sneed and Draughon.

After there were automobiles and better roads, the smaller Post Offices were gradually discontinued and people were served by rural routes.

N. R. Tisdale was Postmaster in 1911 he was succeeded by Lee Hamilton, who served until Mrs. Jessie Newton Garners appointment. She retired in 1954 after 35 years of service.

Lois Childs was acting Postmaster 1954 – 1957; Mitchell McCoy was appointed in 1957 and served until his death in 1968. Wardell Langford was acting Postmaster until the appointment of Mary E. Rattledge I 1969. Upon her retirement, Roger Lephiew was Postmaster in charge from February 1981 until the appointment of the present Postmaster, Jimmy Wayne King on June 27, 1981.

Those who have served as Rural Carriers are: H. J. Cook, Marlin Bell, Wardell Langford, George Childs and Kenneth Oliver, who has served since March 3, 1982.

POLITICS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Kingsland people have always been involved in politics and local government.

As early as 1876, E. P. Marks served as County Clerk and J. N. Marks was Surveyor. Other County Clerks from this area include: Woodson Mosley and Pitt Holmes.

Judges include: J. F. Johnson, Woodson Mosley, S. T. Morgan, Rufus Smith, Dave Cash, E. P. Rogers, T. F. Hughes, Ray Curry and Roy M. Curry, the present County Judge.

Sheriffs include: H. W. Rogers, M. M. Smith, S. S. Dykes and Dave Cash.

Treasurers serving: Stephen Johnson, Huey Morgan, Paul Towery and Mack McCallister.

Coroners: William Garlington, W. H. Barnett, Hugh Breathwit and Lee Hamilton.

Tax Assessors: Rufus Smith, Joe Garlington, Huey Morgan and Renea Morgan, who hold the office at this time.

CITY GOVERNMENT AND DEVELOPMENT AFTER 1900

City records show J. D. Shearer was Recorder and Will Hargus Mayor in 1904.

Ordinances passed during that period were different to those needed today and have been abolished or amended. One required all men ages 18 – 45 to work the town streets one-day each quarter, or pay \$1 to the Marshal.

Fast riding on horseback or driving any vehicle over 25 miles per hour would be fined.

Goats and dogs were not to be allowed to run at large on the streets.

All motor vehicles were to be registered and a seal displayed; also, they were to carry lighted lamps from sunset to 1 hour before sunrise.

An important event took place on May 5, 1904, one which changed lifestyles dramatically then, and continues to affect us. The town council granted to the Fordyce Light and Water Company an electric franchise to them and their successors. Besides providing electricity for home use, 2,000 candlepower arc lamps were to be provided for street lighting.

A “History of Arkansas Power and Light”, prepared in 1957 makes the following statement: “The first electric service in Fordyce was 1903, Bearden and Kingsland 1907.” Apparently it was 1907 when Arkansas Power and Light succeeded the first suppliers.

In the beginning lights were only furnished until midnight. Later the service was continued throughout the night and ½ day each week so the housewife might use her electric iron, if she had one.

Kilowatt cost per hour for the first step was \$.17 in 1924. Street lighting was on “moonlight” schedule; when the moon was shining, lights were turned off.

John Mitchell recalls that Ed Offutt was responsible for operating the switch to turn streetlights on and off. The switch was on a pole beside Buster’s Store where Mr. Offutt worked as a clerk, also taking care of this duty each night and morning.

Mrs. Fletcher Wynne was Mayor in 1930 when a new 25-year franchise was granted to A. P. & L to provide electricity.

In October 1905 there was additional space annexed to the town; an area lying west of the original area. The new addition included the brick factory, which was operating at the time.

The first Ford car was in Kingsland in 1904; as the number of cars increased, it came necessary to have better roads.

The first Highway Commission was created in 1913 but was not very effective in the early years.

Some time before 1920, High 3 (now 79) had been built; this had a gravel surface and a bridge was built across the Saline River. In 1930 it became a hard surfaced road.

In 1918 a city ordinance was passed which reflected patriotic support at home for those who were serving in the armed forces in World War I. It read, “Stiff penalties will be set for

writing, speaking or printing anything abusive in character or calculated to bring disrespect to the United States of America.”

The Cleveland County Bank, first bank in Cleveland County, was organized in 1899. Directors were: W. D. Attwood, E. R. Buster, F. L. Daniel's, S. S. Dykes, William Breathwit, W. H. Langford and M. W. Mosley.

The bank grew rapidly and two years later, the first brick building in the county was erected. This was the home of the bank until it was destroyed by fire on February 24, 1923. The building was replaced the brick building still standing, which was originally occupied by the bank and J. E. McCoy's store.

The Cleveland County Bank closed during the Depression and did not re-open.

Kingsland was without a bank until 1979 when William Lyon of Fordyce opened a branch bank in Kingsland. This was affiliated with the Bank of New Edinburg, located in New Edinburg, Arkansas.

On October 24, 1983 the main bank was moved to Kingsland and named the Pine State Bank, with New Edinburg Bank continued as a branch bank.

The original Bank of New Edinburg has been in operation continuously since its organization in 1904; it was not even closed during the Depression.

J. E. McCoy was a leading merchant by the early 1900's; his son, Robert T. McCoy joined him about 1920 and the business became J. E. McCoy & Son. They were active in providing markets for cotton and other produce.

They sold the business to Jimmy Drake in 1944.

Some businesses were discontinued during the 1920's. The timber and sawmill business was no longer flourishing. Cotton continued to be the main crop but prices were low. After an extreme drought in 1929, local people were quickly involved in the Depression, which continued through most of the 1930's.

Prices for produce, professional fees, salaries and wages were very low and jobs scarce. Food and other prices were also low, letting the dollar buy more. These prices were advertised in March 1931; 25 lbs. Corn mean, \$.48; coffee, \$.28 a lb.; Laundry soap, 7 bars for \$.25.

The E. R. Buster store closed in 1935, with his son, Ed Buster, moving the stock to Fordyce.

J. L. Harris, J. A. Bell and Mr. and Mrs. Gus Smiley were store and café owners during the 1930's.

By the mid 1930's, with economic conditions at their lowest point, the Anthony-Williams sawmill located in Kingsland, giving employment to local people and bringing other families into the area.

With this new industry and the “New Deal” programs of the Roosevelt Administration, economic conditions gradually improved.

During the decade of the 1940's, with the armed forces being built up and with World War II, jobs were plentiful for both men and women.

With the War over in 1945, attention was turned to improving areas, which had been neglected during the war years.

Electricity was extended into rural areas in 1946 and 1947, greatly improving lifestyles and bringing new opportunities in many ways.

During the 1950's, there was some development in the poultry industry for a time. Kingsland had been without a sawmill for a time, when, in March 1956, a mill was opened by Woodrow Rogers, E. E. Wilkes and Horace Crain. There were periods of time when Billy Rhodes, E. G. Mosley and Harold Rogers had an interest in the mill. During the later years of operation, Woodrow Rogers, Paul Rogers and Paul Haynie were partners in the Kingsland Lumber Co. The mill burned on two different occasions.

There was some operation by James Rogers for awhile but at present there is no mill operating in Kingsland.

In 1958 the town rating was raised from an incorporated town to a city of the second class.

Soon afterward, with A. R. Crook, Mayor, a natural gas system was approved in a special election, resulting in 104 votes for and 1 against. This was made available through Arkansas Louisiana Gas Co. and gas lines were installed soon afterward.

Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Puterbaugh started a dairy business in 1952, which grew into a family operation over the years, until recently closed out. Mr. and Mrs. James Post began a dairy business in 1954 and operated until 1966.

Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Mitchell also operated a dairy for a number of years during the 1950's.

One of the most valuable additions to the town during the 1960's was the installing of a city water system. This project had been pursued for many years before it became a reality. With A. C. Webb, Mayor, a Federal Grant of \$74,000 and a Federal loan of \$39,800 was approved and the system was installed.

Applications have been made repeatedly for a Federal Grant toward construction of a sewer system, which is one of the greatest needs of the town at present.

The decade of the 1970's was highlighted by two Centennial celebrations. In 1973 there were activities to observe 100 years as a County.

In 1976, there were activities throughout the year to celebrate 200 years as a Nation.

Johnny Cash accepted an invitation to be a part of the Bicentennial celebrations by returning to Kingsland and Rison, along with family members, and those who were a part of the concert in Rison.

Committees arranged a program in Kingsland, worked out traffic details, transportation, ticket sales and citywide clean up.

A special Bicentennial train was arranged for the trip from Kingsland to Rison.

In a cemetery before about 1,500 people, Governor David Pryor proclaimed the day as "Johnny Cash Day." It was a great day, with much effort and planning done beforehand.

Also during the 1970's, Jimmy Drake sold his store, ending his long career as a Kingsland merchant, dedicated to serving the people of this area. He sold to Wayne Keeton, who after a short time sold to Bruce Wilkes, who operated the store for a time, then sold to David Sisson. The store is now closed.

Recent annexation to the town has increased the population to 504. City limits were extended 1 mile north on the Cross Roads road, about 2 miles east of Highway 79, 2 miles northwest on Highway 189, and an area east of town and to the left of Highway 79 are also areas which have been annexed.

It is hoped this move will benefit the town and those who have been included recently.

Tony Atkins was elected Mayor in 1982, but resigned in 1984. Jimmy King was appointed October 1984 to fill his unexpired term.

City Council members are W. E. Updike, Ronnie Lloyd, Leonard Granderson and Dewoody Jacobs.

Throughout 1986, with Arkansas celebrating 150 years of Statehood, there are many activities planned over the State. These should help to remind us of our heritage and give us new direction for the future.

This information has been taken from: Goodspeed History of South Arkansas, the Cleveland County Herald, School Records, City Records and from local residents.