THE GOLDEN SPIKE

Quarter Centennial of the Completion of the Pacific Railroads.

WONDER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Atlantic and Pacific Forever Linked by Bands of Steel.

OMAHA AND SAN FRANCISCO SHAKE HANDS

Night of Flickering Hope Contrasted with the Meridian of Realization.

WHAT MIND AND MUSCLE WROUGHT

Inception and Completion of the Stupendous Enterprise and Its Marvelous Fruitage—The Progressive Romance of American History.

Twenty-five years ago next Thursday (May 10) the ticking of the electric telegraph in a thousand offices over the length and breadth of this country noted the strokes of the hammer of silver with which the golden spike was driven into the tie of laurel wood at Promontory, when the junction of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads was effected, and the task of building the first great transcontinental line was formally completed.

Twenty-five years ago, when the projectors of that stupendous work witnessed its successful termination, they beheld a practical transformation in the geography of the country. New York and San Francisco were picked up from their former position of weeks apart and set down within a few days' distance of each other; millions of acres of rolling prairie, the undisputed home of the Indian and the buffalo, were placed invitingly at the very feet of the civilized husbandman; the untold wealth of the nation's ore fields was placed at the mercy of the miner's muscle, and the myriad mysteries of that but little known country between the mad Missouri and the Golden Gate became an open book. The Atlantic and Pacific were joined by bands of steel, and then and there a revolution was accomplished in the commerce of the world.

Thirty years ago on the 2nd of last December the first spadeful of earth was moved on the Missouri bottom within the old city limits of Omaha, formally inaugurating this unprecedented work. On that day the great Union Pacific railway was regarded as very much of a myth even by many of those who enthusiastically participated in the ceremonies attendant on the initial ground breaking, while the men engaged in and controlling the enterprise were largely regarded as a set of stock jobbing, Wall street speculators. Five and a third years later innumerable seemingly insurmountable obstacles had been overcome; thousands of miles of road had been constructed in a country destitute of labor, materials and supplies, with nothing but the dangerous and uncertain navigation of the Missouri river to rely upon during the summer months as a base of operations; trains laden with government stores and private freight sped with the energetic force of steam propulsion toward the western slope of the continent; passengers for the occident had abandoned the stage coach and ox or mule train for the palace car, and a new era in the history of railroad construction had been successfully inaugurated. The Union Pacific had been completed and was known and felt to be a reality.

On this occasion of the quarter-centennial of the completion of that gigantic undertaking The Bee presents a brief history of the enterprise with an account of the exercises that were held in this city at the time of the beginning and completion of the work. It is impossible to present the difficult and disheartening circumstances that confronted the men who invested their money, and, in some instances, risked their lives in this enterprise, yet it cannot be denied that the pushing of the Union Pacific railroad for over 2,000 miles over trackless plains and over the Rocky mountains and Sierra Nevadas seems more like a romance than a reality, and no one can read the history of the first through transcontinental railway without admiring the pluck and indomitable energy of the builders of the great national highway, and the progressive spirit of the nation that made that success possible.

After the loation of the road had been determined in favor of Omaha several attempts were made to secure a change to other points, but President Lincoln invariably replied that the road had been located in conformity with the charter requirements, and that he had neither the right nor disposition to revoke his decision. Omaha naturally experienced something of a boom as a result of it, and grew rapidly under the stimulus of the new enterprise.

Active building operations were begun in the early spring of 1864, contracts being let for work to a point 100 miles west in the Platte valley, from which surveys were continued to the 100th meridian. After $100,000 had been expended on the course due westerly it was abandoned on the ground that it would be impossible to complete 100 miles of road through such a hilly country in time to save the charter, which required that much to be completed between the Missouri river and the 100th meridian within three years from the filing of the company's assent to the organic act, June 27, 1863. Two new routes were at once surveyed; one north and thence west, and the other south nearly to Bellevue, and thence northwest and west. The latter was called the "ox-bow," and was the route chosen by the company, notwithstanding the violent opposition of the people of Omaha, who entertained great fears that the company intended to cross the river at Bellevue and leave Omaha out in the cold. The greatest anxiety existed in Omaha at this time, but everything was finally harmoniously settled, even after an order had actually been promulgated directing the starting of the line from Bellevue, and after that idea was abandoned the Omahans breathed easy once more.

Grading was pushed rapidly forward on the "ox-bow" route, and track laying followed almost as fast. The ties for the road from Omaha to the Platte were obtained from the Missouri bottom lands, and being of cottonwood, were put through the "burnetizing process," which made them impervious to water, as well as to animal or vegetable parasites. The ties for the remainder of the road were of hard wood, and were obtained from Pennsylvania, Michigan and other distant states, and frequently cost as high as $2.50 per tie laid down in Omaha.

Some idea of the difficulty of constructing the road may be obtained from a knowledge of the fact that there was a break of 133 miles in railroad communication between Des Moines and Omaha, and that everything had to be transported by team from that point, or by steamboat up the Missouri. The company employed six large steamers on the river, as well as hundreds of teams between Omaha and the Iowa capital.

The Omaha shops were started soon after the work of building the road was commenced, and they were completed in the fall of 1865. The seventy-five horse power engine for the shops was hauled overland from Des Moines by wagons. The completion of the first fifteen miles of track was celebrated by an excursion from Omaha. Thomas C. Durant, who got up the excursion, took a locomotive and flat car and invited twenty prominent gentlemen to go with him on the first inspection trip to the end of the track at Saling's grove. It was an enthusiastic party, and as the commissary department was well supplied the gentlemen enjoyed themselves. Among the excursionists were Hon. A. J. Poppleton and General Sherman. The latter gentleman, who was called upon for a speech, related an experience in sinking several thousand dollars years before in California in an effort to start the Pacific railroad. He reviewed the dream of other days, and concluded with the expression of a hope that he might live to see the day, though he said it could scarcely be expected at his age, when the two oceans would be united by a complete Pacific railroad. Contrary to his expectations, he did live to see the day, and in less than four years from that day at Saling's grove he went over the complete road, traveling by rail from ocean to ocean.

Every twenty miles of completed road was duly inspected by properly appointed parties and numerous excursions were made to the end of the line as it was moved from time to time. Fifty miles of the road was completed and in running order March 13, 1866, and on April 15 the commissioners of the government, General S. R. Curtis, Colonel J. H. Simpson and W. M. White, came to Omaha, going over the road the next day and accepting the work. In July it was announced that 135 miles were ready for the cars. The grading continued very rapidly and the Casement Brothers, who had the contract for track laying, frequently put down the rails at the rate of five miles a day.

They had completed 260 miles during 1866, 240 miles in 1867, and a total of 555 miles from the 1st of January, 1863, to May 10, 1869, when the road was completed and connection made with the Central Pacific. In the construction of the Union Pacific there were used 300,000 tons of rails, 1,700,000 fishplates, 6,800,000 bolts, 6,126,375 ties and 23,505,500 spikes.

Meantime the Central Pacific had been pushed with equal rapidity, and had crossed the Sierra Nevada mountains, being a marvelous triumph of engineering skill. There was a lively race between the Union Pacific and Central Pacific to see which should build the greater number of miles, and a dangerous rivalry sprang up, which seemed likely to involve both roads in unpleasant and serious difficulties, which, however, were averted April 9, 1869, by the railroad committee of the house of representatives agreeing to ask the passage of a joint resolution declaring that no bonds be issued to either corporation for the eighty-mile section between Ogden and Monument Point, until congress arranged a plan for the junction of the roads. Soon after that the representatives of the two roads met and agreed that the place of junction should be at Promontory Point, and there the roads were united on the 10th of May, 1869.

The celebration at Omaha in honor of the completion of the Union Pacific and its junction with the Central Pacific was a grand and enthusiastic affair. It was a general holiday for everybody, and both public and private buildings were in gala decoration—flags, festoons, banners, mottoes and bunting. A telegraph line was run to a building on Capitol hill, and direct connection was made with Promontory, where the golden spike, at the junction of the roads, was being driven into its laurel wood resting place. When the last blow was struck at Promontory it was instantly known in Omaha, where 100 guns were fired in rapid succession when the announcement was made.

A procession was formed on Farnam street in the afternoon, and with flags and banners flying, the citizens marched to Capitol square, where the meeting was presided over by Governor Saunders. Eloquent speeches were made by General Clinton B. Fisk of Missouri and General Manderson and Judge Wakeley of this city, amid the most unbounded enthusiasm. The illumination in the evening was a brilliant spectacle. The city was one blaze of light, while the display of pyrotechnics was exceedingly beautiful. It was the grandest day ever recorded in the history of Omaha, and the jubilation did not end with the rising of the next morning's sun.

HISTORY OF THE ENTERPRISE.

In 1861 congress chartered the Pacific telegraph, of which Edward Creighton of Omaha was the projector and builder, and who, upon its completion, July 4, 1862, located its terminus in this city. The Pacific telegraph was the forerunner of the Pacific railway, which followed closely upon the heels of the former, as the railroad bill was pending in congress while the telegraph was under construction, and it was only four days before the electric spark flashed across the continent in one continuous circuit that the Pacific railroad act was signed by President Lincoln.

The first Pacific railroad bill was introduced in congress in 1850 by Senator Benton of Missouri. Such a project had, however, been discussed at times for several years prior to the introduction of the initial bill. In 1851 Hon. S. Butler King submitted a plan which was universally approved. It was to the effect that the government should guarantee to any company or persons who would undertake and complete the road a net dividend of 5 per cent for fifty or 100 years; the road to be constructed under the supervision of an engineer appointed by the government, the cost of the road not to exceed a certain sum, and the guaranty not to begin until the road was completed and equipped for operation. In 1853-54 nine routes were surveyed across the continent under the supervision of Jefferson Davis, then secretary of war. Incidentally it may be remarked that had not the war of the rebellion occurred the first transcontinental railway would very likely have been by a southern route.

With each succeeding session of congress the benefits and peculiarities of the various routes were submitted, and the results were summarized in the interests of the extreme southern line. Finally it was demonstrated that the route along the north side of the Platte river was the most practicable, and in June, 1857, a number of distinguished gentlemen from the various portions of the United States visited Omaha and conferred with parties having in view the construction of the Pacific road by way of the Platte valley and South Pass. The visiting party consisted of Colonel Orr of South Carolina, General Robinson, John Covode and Mr. Bradshaw of Pennsylvania, Judge Barber of Wisconsin, Colonel Curtis of Iowa, Mr. Hosmer of Ohio, Mr. Pierce of Indiana and others. They united in a recommendation to congress that such a reasonable grant of land and other aid be contributed as would prove a sufficient inducement to build the road, and they also recommended the Platte valley route. The project of a Pacific railroad was also agitated at every session of the Nebraska territorial legislature, and it became one of the cherished hopes of this then new country.

A Pacific railroad committee was appointed during the session of the Thirty-sixth congress, and on the 20th of January, 1858, that committee, through Senator Gwin of California, reported a bill which proposed to locate the eastern terminus of the road at some point between the Big Sioux and Kansas rivers. The bill provided for the donation of alternate sections on each side of the road, and $12,500 per mile, the same to be advanced on the completion of each twenty-five miles, until $25,000,000 should be reached. The amounts thus advanced were to be returned in mail service and the transportation of men and munitions of war. Five per cent of the stock was to be issued, and the president of the United States was to receive bids and locate the road. This bill was killed in the senate. Another effort was made during the session of 1859-60, when a new bill was introduced by Mr. Curtis of Iowa. It met with more favorable consideration, but with no better results.

A mass meeting of the citizens of Omaha was held at the Pioneer block on the evening of January 29, 1859, at which a memorial was adopted that had been prepared at a previous meeting by a committee consisting of William A. Gwyer, G. C. Monell and A. D. Jones. This memorial was forwarded to Washington and there the matter rested until February 5, 1862, when Mr. Rollins of Missouri, by unanimous consent, introduced a bill to aid in constructing a railroad and telegraph line from the Missouri river to the Pacific ocean. It was substantially the same as that introduced by General Curtis at the previous session and was referred to the Pacific railroad committee.

The bill, with various amendments, passed the house May 6, 1862, by a vote of 79 to 49, and went to the senate for concurrence. In the upper house decisive action was delayed until June 20, when the bill was passed by a vote of 35 to 5. By a vote of 104 to 21 the house adopted the bill as amended by the senate and July 1 it was approved by the president and became a law.

THE COMPANY ORGANIZED

Among other things the bill provided that quite a number of persons, whose names were given, should be created into a body corporate and politic in law and deed, by the name of the Union Pacific Railroad company. These persons were from all sections of the north, the south being then in rebellion. Those from Nebraska were Gilbert C. Monell, Augustus Kountze, T. M. Marquette, W. H. Taylor and Alvin Saunders. Mr. Kountze afterward became one of the government directors of the road. The time of completion was fixed at 1876 and the land grant amounted to 12,000,000 acres, or 19,000 square miles, in alternate sections within a breadth of twenty miles on each side of the road and along its entire length.

An amendatory act directed that a meeting be held in Chicago in September, 1862, to complete the organization and open subscription books. Seventy-three of the commissioners were present and the formal organization of the convention was effected by the election of W. B. Ogden of Illinois as president and H. V. Poor of New York as secretary. The great project was discussed at length and a co-operative committee of thirteen was appointed. The formal organization of this national enterprise was projected at New York, October 29, 1863. Two government directors were appointed and the following board of directors was elected: George Opdyke, John A. Dix, T. C. Durant, E. W. Dunham, P. Clark, E. T. M. Gibson, J. F. D. Lanier, G. T. M. Davis, A. G. Jerome, August Belmont, L. C. Clark, Charles Tuttle, H. V. Poor and George Griswold, New York city; J. V. L. Pruyn, Albany; E. H. Rosekrans, Glen's Falls; A. A. Lowe, San Francisco; W. B. Ogden and J. F. Tracy, Chicago; Nathaniel Thayer and C. A. Lambard, Boston; C. S. Bushnell, New Haven; J. H. Scranton, Scranton; J. Edgar Thompson, Philadelphia; Ebenezer Cook and John E. Henry, Davenport; H. T. McConeb, Wilmington; Augustus Kountze, Omaha; John I. Blair, New Jersey; S. C. Pomeroy, Kansas. General Dix was elected president; T. C. Durant, vice president; J. J. Cisco, treasurer, and H. V. Poor, secretary.

OMAHA THE INITIAL POINT.

Organization being completed the next step was the selection of the eastern terminus of the road. Omaha at that time had no railroad whatever, but three lines were being built across the state of Iowa toward this point. The B. & M. was in operation 100 miles westward from Burlington, the Rock Island had reached Grinnell and the Northwestern was running to Marshalltown. Owing partly to the favorable location of Omaha, which was the objective point of these roads, it was decided to make this city the initial point of the Union Pacific railroad, and, on the morning of December 2, 1863, Chief Engineer Peter A. Dey received a telegram from New York announcing that the president of the United States had fixed the initial point of the road on the "western boundary of the state of Iowa, opposite Omaha," and directing him to formally break ground.

This was a most important piece of news for the people of Omaha and they determined to inaugurate the great work on that very day and appropriately celebrate the event. It had been rumored on the preceding day that President Lincoln had located the road to start at Omaha, opposite Council Bluffs, and that ground would be broken the next day. The report stirred up intense excitement and was the cause of a big rush on the United States land office to secure land near Omaha. It was impossible, however, to obtain land nearer than sixteen miles from the city and property in and around the city took a sudden rise.

It was with the greatest anxiety that the people waited for the confirmation of the rumors and when, on the next day, the telegram ordering Engineer Dey to break ground at Omaha was received the greatest excitement and enthusiasm prevailed throughout the little city, which then numbered less than 5,000 inhabitants. So important an event could not be allowed to pass in any ordinary manner. It was to be the laying of the cornerstone of the grandest enterprise of the age—the great structure that should unite the east and the west, the Atlantic and the Pacific—which would do more to develop the resources of the country than all other agencies combined, and become the great transcontinental highway for the transportation of the people and merchandise of the various nations of the earth. To be sure, not all the people in Omaha had unbounded faith in the enterprise, but there were many who had the utmost confidence in its eventual success, although none believed that it would be completed in such a remarkably short time as it really was. It was not strange, then, that with the intense interest felt in the undertaking, the celebration, although entirely impromptu, should be a most enthusiastic success.

HOW OMAHA CELEBRATED.

Within an hour after the receipt of the telegram, the following committee of arrangements had been appointed: Augustus Kountze, Enos Lowe, John McCormick, A. J. Hanscom, B. F Lushbaugh, A. J. Poppleton, John I. Redick, Ezra Millard, Experience Estabrook, E. B. Taylor, George M. Mills, W. F. Sapp, Jesse Lowe, O. P. Hurford, Edward Creighton, J. J. Brown and George B. Blake. This committee hastily arranged a program of exercises, and fixed the hour for the ceremonies for 2 o'clock that afternoon. It was a pleasant winter afternoon, the sun shining brightly and the thermometer indicating 46 degrees above zero, when a crowd numbering about 1,000 people assembled and marched down to the spot where the ground was to be formally broken as the beginning of actual work on the Union Pacific railroad.

This spot was near the ferry landing and the "old telegraph poles," not far from the location of the old waterworks plant at the foot of Cass street. This initial point of the Union Pacific has long since been washed away by the Missouri river, together with about a mile of the first track laid, which was included in the measurement of the first twenty miles, and for which, as well as for every other mile, the Union Pacific received $16,000 and 12,000 acres of land.

A number of prominent men, among them being Edward Creighton, Governor Alvin Saunders, George Francis Train, Express Superintendent Joseph Shepard and General Stage Agent Atchison, were conveyed to the scene in a stage coach belonging to the Western Stage company.

A. J. Hanscom officiated as master of ceremonies, and the exercises were opened with prayer by the late Rev. T. B. Lemon, who omitted the prayer for the president of the United States, the reason being that Mr. Lemon was a strong democrat. He afterward changed his politics and became a radical republican.

The first earth was removed by Governor Saunders, assisted by Mayors B. E. B. Kennedy and Palmer of Omaha and Council Bluffs, Augustus Kountze, Engineer Dey, George Francis Train, Dr. Atchison and others. Guns were fired, and deafening cheers arose from the assemblage. A brass six-pounder stationed on the Nebraska bank, and another on the opposite shore of the Missouri, were fired at intervals during the exercises.

Governor Saunders first addressed the crowd and read a telegram from Colonel John Hay, private secretary to President Lincoln. Mayor Kennedy spoke next, reading a message from Mayor Opdyke of New York. Speeches were also made by Dr. G. C. Monell and Hon. A. J. Poppleton of Omaha, Judge A. V. Larimer of Council Bluffs, George B. Blake and George Francis Train.

A. J. POPPLETON'S SPEECH.

Mr. Poppleton's speech was as follows:

Fellow Citizens of Omaha and Council Bluffs: On the 13th of October, 1854, about 7 o'clock in the evening, I was set down by the Western Stage company at yonder city of Council Bluffs. At the rising of the sun on the following morning I climbed to the summit of one of the bluffs which overlooked the prosperous and enterprising town, and took one long and lingering look across the Missouri at the beautiful sight on which now sets in the full vigor of business, social and religious life the youthful but thriving and this day jubilant city of Omaha. Early in the day I crossed the river, and along a narrow path cut by some stalwart man through the tall, rank prairie grass, I wended my way in search of a postoffice. At length I found an old pioneer, seated apparently in solitary rumination upon a piece of hewn timber, and I inquired of him for the postoffice. He replied that he was the postmaster, and would examine the office for my letters. Thereupon he removed from his head a hat, to say the least of it somewhat veteran in appearance, and drew from its depths the coveted letters. On that day the wolves and the Omahas were the almost undisputed lords of the soil, and the entire postal system was conducted in the crown of this venerable hat.

Today, at least 40,000 radiant faces gladden our streets, and the postal service, sheltered by a costly edifice, strikes its Briarian arms toward the north, the south, the east and the west, penetrating regions then unexplored and unknown, and bearing the symbols of values then hidden in the mountains and beneath the streams, of which the world in its wildest vagaries had never dreamed. Then it took sixty days for New York and California to communicate with each other. Today, San Francisco and New York, sitting upon the shores of the ocean 3,000 miles asunder, hold familiar converse.

Iron and steam and lightning are daily weaving their destinies more closely with each other and suns with theirs, as the interoceanic city, whose commerce, trade and treasure leave the last great navigable stream in their migration from the Atlantic to the Pacific seaboard.

It is natural, therefore, that you should lift up your hearts and rejoice. And though we have watched for nine long years, during which time our fortunes have been like Antonio's treasures, "mostly in expectancy," we at last press the cup in full fruition to our lips. The lines have indeed "fallen to us in pleasant places," and as I look upon the smiling faces that are before me I seem to read in their happy expression the words of the pious poet:

"This is the day we long have sought
And mourned because we found it not."

All this, however, is but the personal significance of this great national enterprise to us. To us its means prosperity; to the nation and all of its people it bears a significance well expressed in a telegram received from Governor Yates of Illinois, which reads as follows:

Committee of Arrangements, Union Pacific Railroad—Sirs: I have regarded the enterprise of building the Union Pacific railroad as of the utmost national importance. While in congress, when opportunity offered, I urged its necessity, and it is with peculiar pleasure that I learn that the building of the road so long delayed is to become a verity. When completed it will be an enduring monument of the enterprise and patriotism of our common country, firmly uniting the two extremes of the nation and rendering them indissoluble for all time to come. I am, respectfully yours, RICHARD YATES.

I esteem myself fortunate in thus being allowed to give expression to this concourse of the greeting of the state of Illinois through its chief executive officer.

In this hour of sanguinary struggles, when that great and union-loving state, through that most trusted fortunate chieftain, General Ulysses S. Grant, is hurling its victorious sons into the very vitals of the so-called confederacy, she still finds time to turn aside for one brief moment and wish us Godspeed in this wonderful work upon which we now enter.

When those iron bands with which we hope to gird the continent shall stretch from sea to sea, they stand perpetual hostages against the terrible calamities of national estrangement, disruption and dismemberment. The act of congress establishing this great enterprise should have been entitled "An act to promote the preservation of the union, to prevent national dissolution and bind together the Atlantic and Pacific coasts by an indissoluble covenant, to resist and repel foreign aggression." There is not on all the Mississippi and its tributaries a citizen so craven but that were the free navigation of that noble stream, from its source to its mouth, denied him, he would acheive it with the sword. So will this highway of the world be the common boon of every citizen, to be cherished and defended with special devotion.

Standing here, at the initiation of this stupendous enterprise, in this third year of our civil war, let us devoutly pray that the hour that witnesses its completion may behold a rebellion overthrown, a union restored, a constitution unimpaired, civil liberty and the pursuit of happiness the inalienable birthright of the weakest, the poorest and the lowliest citizen in all of our borders. Then with full hearts and bounding pulses we may renew the strain:

"Great God, we thank thee for this goodly home.
This bounteous birthland of the free,
Where wanderers from afar may come
And breathe the air of liberty;
Still may its towers untrampled spring,
Its harvests wave and cities rise—
And long 'til time shall fold its wing
Remain earth's loveliest paradise."

It may be remarked in passing that Mr. Popleton's connection with the Union Pacific as attorney began only a few days before his speech was delivered, and continued until a few years ago, he being general atorney for the road at the time of his retirement, and was the only general officer of the road who at that time had continued in its service from the day that the first spadeful of earth was turned on the Missouri bottom.

At the conclusion of the exercises, the crowd dispersed, highly elated with the occurrences of the afternoon, a full account of which was telegraphed to the eastern press by Mr. Train and Mr. Rosewater. The city was brilliantly illuminated in the evening, and a grand railroad banquet and ball took place at the Herndon house, now a part of the Union Pacific headquarters. About seventy-five couples were in attendance, and supper was served at 1:30. Dispatches of congratulation and encouragement were received and read from Brigham Young, Mayor Steck of Denver, Governor Leland Stanford of California, Governor Yates of Illinois, Hon. William H. Seward, secretary of war, and several other prominent men in various parts of the country. In such a blaze of unprecedented glory ended December 2, 1863, one of the most important and eventful days in the history of Omaha and Nebraska.

SEEKING FINANCIAL AID.

How to obtain the necessary funds to carry the stupendous undertaking to a successful completion was a question that made more than one man lie awake nights before it was satisfactorily solved. The charter granted by congress required that the books should be kept open for subscription until $100,000,000 should be subscribed and paid for. The scheme, however, did not succeed, as capitalists looked with suspicion on the plan as a profitable investment, and the plan was abandoned. Thereupon George Francis Train organized the famous Credit Mobilier, with a view of obtaining funds with which to build the road. Great difficulty was experienced in securing money, and there were times during the period of construction when the company was financially embarrassed in a very critical manner. Financial aid was sought in vain in New York, Philadelphia and elsewhere, but finally considerable money was secured in Boston, and eventually sufficient was obtained for the completion and equipment of the road by the sale of the first mortgage and land grant bonds to Boston capitalists. That was in April, 1868, and as soon as the money was forthcoming the company settle up a large indebtedness that had been contracted in Omaha and at other points, and pushed the work to completion with marvelous rapidity.

THE UNION PACIFIC BRIDGE.

The building of the Union Pacific bridge was not begun until after the road was completed. It was found necessary to cross the river to make connection with the eastern roads that made Council Bluffs their terminus. This connection was first made by means of steamboat transfer across the river in the summer months, and by an ice bridge in the winter. The Northwestern was the first road to come across the river, the first train arriving here on Sunday, January 17, 1867. Then came the Kansas City, St. Joseph & Council Bluffs, the B. & M., and Rock Island in 1868; and then the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy.

Although the initiatory steps were taken in 1866, when an act looking to that end passed congress, the contract for building the bridge was not awarded until 1868. A fight arose over the location of the structure, the choice seeming to lie between a low bridge at the "telegraph poles," or a high bridge at Childs Mills. Council Bluffs objected to the location at the "telegraph poles," and both Omaha and the Bluffs opposed Childs Mills. The location where the structure was finally erected was agreed upon through the efforts of a committee consisting of Alvin Saunders, Francis Smith, Augustus Kountze, Ezra Millard, Enos Lowe and O. P. Hurford, who went to New York for that purpose. Chairman Saunders telegraphed to Omaha March 26, 1868, "The bridge is located at Train Table. Omaha pledges the depot grounds and $250,000; Council Bluffs pledges $200,000; ground and right-of-way will be condemned." Omaha voted $250,000 in bonds as aid to the bridge, in consideration that she should have the main transfer depots, general offices, machine shops, etc. Council Bluffs voted $200,000 in bonds, but the company never received them.

An organization known as the Missouri River Bridge company, which was claimed to be an independent institution, although composed of Union Pacific stockholders, was perfected under authority of a special act of congress to build the bridge, and was authorized to issue bonds to the amount of $2,500,000, which bonds were sold in England.

The contract was awarded to the Bloomer Bridge company of Chicago September 4, 1868, the specified price being $1,089,500, and the time of completion was fixed for November 10, 1869. The work was greatly delayed, and the first cylinder was not ready for sinking until March, 1869. In the following July the Union Pacific took hold of the work, the contract with the Bloomer company having been annulled, and the structure was completed March 25, 1873. The cost was said to be $1,450,000. The structure was 2,750 feet long, consisting of eleven spans, each 250 feet long, constructed entirely of iron. The superstructure was supported by piers, each formed of two iron pneumatic tubes eight and a half feet in diameter, sunk in sections and filled with cement masonry.

This bridge was wrecked in a heavy gale, when two spans were blown into the river, but was repaired, and was replaced in 1887 by the mammoth double track structure that now spans the river at that point.

THE FIRST SURVEY.

Mr. Andrew Rosewater, now city engineer of Omaha, was one of the first surveyors employed on the line of the Union Pacific, and when asked the other day for some of the facts and incidents connected with the early surveys reverted to occurrences of one third of a century ago with a readiness that told how indelibly the scenes of those stirring times had been impressed upon his mind.

"The first survey of the Union Pacific," said Mr. Rosewater, "was a direct line west from Omaha to the Elkhorn river, through the Griffin farm. In the winter of 1864, after a conference with Silas Seymour, consulting engineer, orders were issued for surveys to be made by the way of Mud creek, which line was nine miles longer than the direct route or Dey line to the Elkhorn. J. E. House, now county surveyor, was then assistant engineer and made the first survey over this route. The engineer corps camped out, as the winter was quite open, until the first part of January, when there was a heavy snowfall; but work was steadily prosecuted on the Mud creek route. The adoption of this survey against the protests of Peter A. Dey, then the chief engineer and now one of the railroad commissioners for the state of Iowa, was the cause of that gentleman's resignation the next spring. His place was filled by Mr. House, who was known as the acting chief engineer for some time. Over $100,000 had been expended on the Dey line before it was abandoned in favor of the Mud creek route. One of the amusing incidents of the work on that line was the employment of a lot of Indian squaws as graders, but the experiment soon proved a failure. The first locomotive that arrived here was called the General Sherman. It was brought here by steamer from St. Joe early in 1865 and it was tested on 300 yards of the first track laid on the river bottom. The passengers on the locomotive were John E. Henry of Davenport and his wife. Henry was the first superintendent of the Union Pacific.

"A large crowd of people witnessed this little excursion trip of the first locomotive. The second locomotive was named McPherson and was also transported by steamer from St. Joe. In connection with Assistant Engineer Shotwell I drove the stakes for the first round house and the main shops."

"How about the far west surveys?"

"At this time all the division engineers were out on surveys up the Platte valley and across the Rocky mountains. James Evans, division engineer, started from Omaha April 15, 1864, to make a survey from the foot of the Black Hills, and at the same time F. M. Case was making surveys south toward Denver, while Percy T. Brown was surveying across the plains this side of the Rocky mountains. Over $100,000 was spent that year for engineering, the money being advanced by Thomas C. Durant. It took us one month to reach the foot of the mountains. We had three teams and fourteen men, among them being Wiley Dixon, Andy McAusland and Fred Boegel. When we reached the mountains we were visited by an old Indian chief, who was accompanied by an English talking Mexican as an interpreter. This chief had a medal which he had received from President Franklin Pierce while on a visit to Washington. When informed by the surveyors of the intention of running a railroad through that country he shook his head and said it would be impossible to construct a railroad through a region that had neither grass or water. This was on the bank of Lodge Pole creek. Three years later the railroad reached that point. We laid out the site of Cheyenne in the spring of 1867, having nothing else to do, as we could proceed no further on account of the snow. In July, three months later, the railroad reached Cheyenne. Our stakes were torn up and modified under the direction of General G. M. Dodge. Upon the return of our party to Cheyenne in the fall we found that town, the "Magic City of the Plains," as it was called, a place of 5,000 people.

"It was then the terminus of the road and one of the liveliest border towns I ever saw. It was the greatest gambling center in the west. Its population was made up mostly of gamblers, blacklegs, desperadoes and adventurers, and it was a quiet day indeed when two or three men were not shot and killed.

"I remember during the early surveys of meeting old Bridger at Fort Laramie. Fort Bridger and Bridger Pass were named after him. He had come west when a mere boy and had spent all the years of his life there. When he discovered Salt Lake he thought, on tasting the water, that he had come to the Pacific ocean. He was born in St. Louis, and when speaking of the streets he called them canyons. He did not believe that it was practicable to build a railroad through that country for the same reasons that had been given by the old Indian chief.

"My party went clear through to Green River. From that point westward the surveying was done by a party in charge of S. B. Reed. This was the most difficult part of the whole survey, and great assistance was rendered by Brigham Young. In the spring of 1865, when the road was completed about thirty miles out, a large body of Indians were invited to see a moving train, and they assembled with their families along the track. When the train came along the engineer blew his whistle long and loud, and let off steam, causing a terrible racket, frightening the Indians, who turned and fled in great terror. After becoming accustomed to the engine, however, they frequently amused themselves by racing with the trains on their ponies. Talking about Indians reminds me that they frequently troubled the surveyors as well as the construction parties, and once or twice attacked the trains after the road was completed. Quite a number of surveyors were killed, among them being Percy T. Brown. That happened in the mountains in 1867, and Percy station was named in honor of him. Mr. Hill, a brother-in-law of Byron Reed, was killed the same year, and Hillsdale was named after him.

"A young man named Clark, a relative of Horace F. Clark, afterward president of the road, was also killed. We frequently had some very narrow escapes from the Indians, who, among other capers, once carried off thirty miles of telegraph wire. We frequently suffered hardships. In the spring of 1867 we marched 300 miles through snow two feet deep, and could not cross the mountains on acount of the snow. When we crossed the plains the buffalo and antelope were very plentiful, so that we had plenty of fresh meat, which helped us out considerably. The buffalo were so thick that they frequently had to be driven away to allow the passage of the ox freight trains that were then crossing the plains. They were not wild, and at Fort Kearney they were so tame that they would come up to the troughs to drink. Sometimes we suffered a great deal for lack of water. When we crossed the Red desert we had to carry a water supply for a whole week in barrels. As it was, we ran out before we got through, and were left in a serious predicament. Had it not been for a heavy rain storm one night we would have died before we could have gotten a new supply. We dug holes in the ground, and thus collected enough water to carry us through to Bitter Creek.

"For awhile I was inspector of ties and bridge materials at Omaha. The ties were either floated down the river in rafts or brought up stream on steamers. In the spring of 1866 the river was unusually high, and carried away an immense number of ties and swept away every portion of the first mile of track. John A. Horbach was one of the heavy contractors in those days. The chief engineers of the road in the early days were Peter A. Dey, J. E. House, P. H. Reed, General G. M. Dodge and T. E. Sickles. Mr. Blickensderfer, who afterwards filled the position, was the man selected by the government to determine what constituted the Rocky mountain division."

THE FIRST CHIEF ENGINEER.

The first chief engineer of the Union Pacific, Hon. Peter A. Dey of Iowa City, now and for several years a member of the Iowa railroad commission, gave the following interesting information in response to a request for facts as to the location of the line.

"I think in 1862 I attended the convention in Chicago that formed the preliminary organization of the Union Pacific railroad. I went there at the request of the late Henry W. Farnam (after whom the principal thoroughfare in Omaha is named), in whose employ I had been for a number of years, then the president of the Chicago & Rock Island road. His intention was to interest himself in the project. As I had given close attention to the explorations across the continent made by the government, Mr. Farnam desired to avail himself of any information that I might possess. The policy of the government previous to the war had been to subsidize two railroads, a northern and a southern line, and comparatively little attention had been paid to examining a central route. A study of Mr. Stansbury's survey of Salt Lake and some other disconnected reconnoissances had satisfied me that less difficulties would be encountered on a line following the Platte river as far as practicable and continuing west in about that latitude, than either north or south of it.

"At the convention the company was temporarily organized by the election of William B. Ogden as president; Henry V. Poor, secretary, and Thomas W. Olcott, treasurer. Early in September of the same year, by direction of Mr. Farnam, I went to Denver, looking for a suitable crossing of the mountains west of that place. Failing to find any opening, I went north to the head of Lodge Pole creek, examining the country, and fixed upon a crossing of the Black Hills that I regarded as feasible. I then went west and selected a crossing of the main divide of the continent and also of the rim of the great Salt Lake basin. The nature of the country was such that an engineer had but little difficulty in fixing the route where the road should go. If these three points were determined the entrance to the Salt Lake valley was a simple matter.

"I returned in the fall and made a full report, with a statement of the points where the road would encounter its greatest difficulties and the gradients that would probably be encountered. While my report was more favorable and the project seemed easier of accomplishment than anticipated, Mr. Farnam did not pursue the matter further, and in a short time went to Europe. Nearly a year elapsed and nothing was done to help the project along. In August, 1863, Mr. Thomas C. Durant telegraphed me to meet him in New York with such information as I had with regard to the route. In September, by his direction, I organized engineering parties, made surveys from the mouth of the Platte river, Bellevue, Omaha and Florence over into the Platte valley, near Fremont. I also sent a party to run a line from Lodge Pole creek into the Laramie plains, and also over the main divide, I think through Bridger pass. I also sent a geologist to examine the strata at the mountains and along Bitter creek and Green river to ascertain the extent and value of the coal measures and ascertain whether iron could be found in quantities to warrant working.

"About the 1st of November I went with Mr. Durant, Mr. Carter and Hon. John Kasson to Washington. While we were there President Lincoln fixed the terminus of the road at Omaha. The certificate, which he framed himself, limited the point to any place in the section in which the city of Omaha was located. My own judgment at the time was that either Bellevue or Childs' Mill was the proper point. This was based upon the fact that it seemed easier to bridge the Missouri river there, and the grades to the Platte river would be better than further north.

"I never knew the reason for fixing the point at Omaha, but supposed that it was regarded more practicable to bring the Iowa roads together there than at any point further north or south. During the year 1864 surveys were made from Omaha to Kearney, from Lodge Pole creek consecutively to the opening of Weber river into Salt Lake valley. A survey was also made through the Laramie canyon. During the same year considerable grading was done from Omaha west, and arrangements were made for procuring ties and timber. Considering the difficulty of securing labor and supplies, St. Joseph being the nearest point reached by rail, very much was accomplished. The entire route was practically determined, and a reasonable start was made toward construction. On the 1st of January, 1865, my relations with the road terminated."

TALK WITH SURVEYOR HOUSE.

County Surveyor J. E. House was called upon the other day for a statement of his connection with the building of the Union Pacific, as he had charge of the surveys on the eastern division of the road.

"I came to Omaha," he said," in October, 1863. Our surveys were started on the 14th of that month. We started a line from the river to the eastward, and crossed the Elkhorn river at the present location. We were engaged during the winter of 1863-4 in making surveys between what is now known as the Sioux City & Pacific on the north and the Platte river on the south. We really made two locations from Omaha to Fremont. One was on the Dey line to the Elkhorn river, and the other was up in the valley of the Big Papillion by the way of Elkhorn City and Bell creek. I was in charge of the surveys and locations, and was the engineer of construction for the contractors. Peter A. Dey was the chief engineer of the railway company. N. L. Williams of Syracuse, N. Y., had charge of the first four miles to the summit, and Lewis Carmichael had charge of the work beyond. We worked on the grade during the summer of 1864. I think it was in January, 1865, that the Chicago & Rock Island was completed from Grinnell to Keller, and the entire force of men and teams were transferred from that road to the Union Pacific, and right in the midst of this came orders to change the location of the road to the Mud creek route. We did not make the change until the following February, as I had to survey the new route, but in the meantime I kept the men at work on the Dey line in order to hold them. It was almost impossible to keep men, and at times during the summer of 1864 our force did not average more than twenty-five men, the trouble being that the freighters kept hiring the men