



Railroads



OVERLAND THE PIONEER ROUTE

General Dodge Tells of the Start of the Great Transcontinental Route.

TO CONNECT THE TWO COASTS

President Lincoln Favored the Road as a War Measure.

MILLIONS FOR BETTERMENT

During Last Seven Years Harriman Has Been Lavish.

ROAD MEANS MUCH TO OMAHA

Growth Has Been Coincident with the Growth of This City—Has Meant a Great Deal to Omaha in Many Ways.

From the standpoint of railroad accommodations Omaha is one of the country's most favored cities. Every day ten great trunk lines operate a multitude of trains in and out of the city and each of these great railroad lines holds a warm place in the hearts of Omaha's citizens. But for several reasons the Union Pacific has always been just a bit closer to the hearts of Omaha people than have the other roads and has always seemed to Omahans a bit more their road than has any of the others. This feeling is largely accounted for by two facts, one the prominent place which Omaha occupied in the events immediately preceding and connected with the building of this first great transcontinental railway to make this city a center for administering the immense business of the road and for building, equipping and repairing much of the vast accumulation of rolling stock which is the road's property. The history of the Union Pacific railroad is interwoven with that of the country itself and for each step in the development of the United States is found a corresponding development in the Union Pacific. The idea of building a railroad to connect the two coasts of the United States was not a late development, the project having early been proposed by Dr. Samuel Bancroft Barlow of Granville, Mass., who in 1834 first advocat-

ed the construction of a road from New York City to the mouth of the Columbia river. Robert Mills, however, in a speech in congress in 1840, in which he advocated the construction of the road, called attention to his design for connecting the Atlantic and Pacific with steam carriages which has been published, with other suggestions, in a work which he had compiled in 1819. In all probability the honor of having first suggested the road belongs to him, chimerical as it may seem, coming at a time when not a mile of railroad had been laid in the United States. Transcontinental Line Proposed. For many years this idea of building a great line of railroad from Atlantic to Pacific was talked about and alternately advocated and opposed. Daniel Webster, who never believed that any good could come from the Pacific coast, was one of its strongest opponents, while Senator Thomas H. Benton of Missouri never lost an opportunity to say a good word for the plan. It is probable, however, that a majority of the men in the public eye at that time were opposed to the scheme. General Grenville M. Dodge it was who surveyed the line upon which the Union Pacific was built. He commenced his explorations in 1843 and continued to make them until 1861. Mr. Dodge had been connected in earlier days with the Rock Island railroad as it was built westward from Chicago and had assisted in establishing the terminals of the road in Council Bluffs. When these terminals were established General Dodge purchased eight acres upon which they are located and subdivided the tract, a portion being taken by the Rock Island interests and a portion by the citizens of the town. A part of the Rock Island's share of this tract fell into the hands of N. B. Judd, the general attorney for the road, a prominent Illinois republican and a personal friend of Lincoln, who purchased from him a portion of this interest. In 1859 Mr. Lincoln visited Council Bluffs, then a frontier town of some 1,000 inhabitants, to inspect his holdings there, and it was while on this trip that he met General Dodge, just then returned from one of his surveying trips into the country west of the Missouri, and after a dinner at the old Pacific hotel sought out the clever surveyor and engaged him in earnest conversation about the western country, in which the Illinois statesman showed a marked interest. The next time the two gentlemen met was in 1862. Meantime Lincoln had become chief executive and two years of the bloody civil war had been fought. Mr. Dodge at his country's call had given up the transit for the sword, and at this time was a brigadier general of volunteers and in com-

mand at Corinth. While there he received an order from General Grant to report to the president in Washington. When he reached there he found that the president had not forgotten the conversation on the porch of the Pacific hotel in Council Bluffs and had called General Dodge to Washington to consult him as to the proper location for the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific railway, which under the act of congress of 1862 he was empowered to select. Competition for Road. "There was great competition from all the towns along the Missouri for fifty miles above and below Council Bluffs," says General Dodge in his own narrative of the building of the road, "for the distinction of being selected as this initial point. I found Mr. Lincoln well posted in all the controlling reasons covering such a selection, and we went into the matter at length and discussed the arguments presented by the different competing localities. "It is a singular fact that while the United States had spent a great deal of money in exploration for a feasible line for the Pacific railroad, the government never had examined the natural route along the forty-second parallel of latitude. All the surveys had been made and all the data obtained by private citizens connected with the Rock Island railroad, at the head of which was Henry Farnam of Connecticut. President Lincoln, after going over all the facts that could be presented to him, and from his own knowledge, finally fixed the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific railroad where our surveys determined the proper locality—at Council Bluffs, Ia. Lincoln Interested. "After this discussion of the location he took up with me the question of building the road. The law of 1862 had failed to bring any capital or men to undertake the work, and I said to him that in my opinion private enterprise could not build the road. Mr. Lincoln said that the government had its hands full and could not undertake the work, but was ready to support any company to the fullest legal extent, and amend the law so as to enable such company to issue securities that would furnish the necessary funds. "From Washington I went to New York, where I met the parties then connected with the Union Pacific railway, John A. Dix, Henry Farnam, T. C. Durant, George Francis Train and others, and informed them of the result of my visit and what President Lincoln had said. They were greatly encouraged, and immediately went to work on the preparation of the measure which was afterwards presented to congress and passed as the Union Pacific bill of 1864. Under this the road was built in some four years, although congress had

allowed ten years for its construction, and I feel that it was Lincoln's faith, energy and comprehensive grasp of what the building of the road meant to the United States that induced congress to pass liberal laws and made it possible to raise the funds to accomplish the work. Military Necessity. "President Lincoln regarded the building of the road as a military necessity for the purpose of protecting and holding California in the union. The task of its construction proved too much for private individuals and the government gave help; it was too much of a task for one company and so the work was divided, the Central Pacific railroad to build eastward from Sacramento, Cal., and the Union Pacific westward from Omaha. Ground was first broken at Omaha on December 2, 1863, and the golden spike joining the two roads at Promontory Summit, Utah, was driven on May 10, 1869. Of the entire road, the Union Pacific had laid 1,138 miles of track and the Central Pacific 638 miles. In later years the western terminus of the Union Pacific was fixed at Ogden, Utah, 1,608 miles from Omaha, but the entire line from Omaha to San Francisco is now one route, controlled by 'the Harriman System.'" The story of the trials and triumphs connected with the building of this first transcontinental road are filled with interest and dramatic quality, the weary, tedious work through a hostile country, the exceeding difficulty of obtaining supplies, the marvelous engineering skill which was exhibited and the multitudes of discouragements and disappointments until victory finally crowned the efforts of these pioneer road builders at Promontory are incidents from real life which exceed the most brilliant efforts of the most skilled novelist. The line of the Union Pacific proper, that old line which was first built from Omaha to Ogden, measures 1,038 miles and traverses that territory which, before the modern days of irrigation and dry farming was oftentimes known as "The Great American Desert." This was the desert, the home of wild beasts, of sage brush and of cactus. Some idea of what irrigation has done for this land may be gathered from the fact that millions of acres of land, apparently worthless, have advanced to \$1,000, and in some cases, as high as \$4,000 an acre. This increase is, of course, due to the astonishing yield of crops. And it is a curious fact that where there is sufficient water for irrigating purposes, better results are attained than where there is the most bountiful natural rainfall. The reason for this is not deep or hidden, however. It is simply a case of having the water at all times where and when it is wanted. A great deal of

the development of this region may be accredited directly and indirectly to the Union Pacific, the first road to invade this region. Hardships for Pioneers. The pioneers who first settled these states were obliged to journey weary distances, and an ox team or a pair of mules or horses and canvas-covered wagons, were the only means of conveyance. It used to take the mail coach thirty days to make the run from Salt Lake to Omaha, and the country swarmed with Indians in many places along the route. In any of the western states traversed, there were no railroads; the river towns on the Missouri river were better off by reason of steamboat service, but this was somewhat irregular and not always satisfactory. The coming of the railroad brought thousands of immigrants, who reached their destination cheaply, and these brought under cultivation millions upon millions of acres of land. It also attracted men who developed the vast mineral resources of gold, silver and copper, coal, iron, etc. All the machinery needed for mining had to be hauled by wagon at great expense, and the quick, cheap and sure service of the railroad placed producers next door to the whole world. And the people who raised all kinds of crops could now sell their produce 2,000 miles distant; even to European countries. Nearly all the higher grade apples raised in Oregon are now sold in London, where they command very high prices. Towns Spring Up. As soon as the railroad came towns sprang up almost overnight; people came from far distances to settle; great acres of land were cultivated; the farmer became sure of a market; a new and vital energy developed along many lines because the settlers were put in close touch with the outside world; distance was no longer thought of, for the railroad brought their former neighbors to visit them, carried their freight, and took them on journeys which, were it not for this strong friend, would have been as impossible as if they were held fast in a wilderness. The line of the Union Pacific passes through a country full of interest unparalleled for him who enjoys the beauties of nature. Leaving Omaha one has first an opportunity to admire the thriving towns and cities of the great Cornhusker state and meanwhile to marvel at the fertility of its fields and valleys. Marvellous Sights. Crossing the border line into Wyoming he is whisked through a wonderfully scenic country, gaining an excellent view of Granite Canyon, the continental divide and the thousand and one other sights of this

interesting western state. Utah furnishes its share of thrills for the sight-seer. Here one's admiration is attracted by Castle Rock, Hanging Rock and the multitude of other natural wonders with which the country is replete. At the same time, for he who is historically inclined, every foot of the great route is pregnant with interest, having been the scene of many interesting incidents in the life of the country. One can also reach Ogden by another line of the Union Pacific, which runs from Kansas City through Kansas and Colorado and is as full of interest as is the more northerly route. Ogden is the farthest west point of the Union Pacific proper, but the Harriman system extends to the coast from Ogden and one may travel to San Francisco over the Southern Pacific or to Los Angeles over the same route. If he is bound for Portland or Seattle he will have left the Union Pacific proper at Granger, Wyo., and started his trip thither over the lines of the Oregon Railroad and Navigation company, and other Harriman lines. All of these lines run through country that is full of interest and each year the trips are taken by thousands of people interested only in knowing more of this great western country, which is fast becoming so important a part of the United States. Many are the engineering feats which were accomplished to make possible the Union Pacific route of today, but above all others four stand out as prominently noteworthy. These are the Lane cutoff, Sherman Hill tunnel, Aspen tunnel and the Great Salt Lake cutoff. Big Undertakings. The construction of the Lane cutoff a few miles west of Omaha did not penetrate any granite mountains or involve any deep and lengthy tunnels, but it did involve some tremendous fills and cuts and accomplish a purpose of immense importance. But the most remarkable feature or it is that it cuts off in distance nearly as much as its actual length and though but 11.64 miles long it cost \$3,000,000. To be exact, it saved 8.94 miles in a distance of 20.58 miles between connecting points on the old line. The excavation for this cut-off was entirely in earth. It involved the removal of nearly 3,000,000 cubic yards of dirt. Every particle of this dirt was utilized in the formation of embankments and about 4,000,000 cubic yards of these embankments were built. They were necessary to form crossings over the deep, wide valleys. The roadway proper in excavation has one and one-half to one side slopes and a maximum width of thirty feet; the embankments have a minimum width of thirty-five feet and one and one-half to one side slopes. To give some idea of the herculean task confronting the builders of this cut-off it is well to note that at one place there

is a cut with a depth of 85.5 feet, a width of 437 feet, and a total length of 5,200 feet. Tunnel in Granite. Sherman Hill tunnel runs for 18,000 feet through solid granite and the Sherman Hill line is 158 miles long. These two improvements cost approximately \$5,000,000. Aspen tunnel is 5,996 feet long and Aspen cut-off is twenty-two miles long. These two with other western cut-offs saved thirty miles in distance and cost almost \$12,000,000. The Great Salt Lake cut-off, a distance of 302.5 miles across Great Salt Lake, which cut off forty-three miles of the distance between Ogden and San Francisco, cost \$6,000,000. The Union Pacific has 5,316 miles of track, main line and branches, and it costs about \$1,692 for each mile to keep the track, ties, bridges and roadbed in repair. There are about 1,100 locomotives which weigh over eighty tons each and it costs about \$3,000 a year to keep them in good running order. There are 25,000 freight cars, every one of which will carry about thirty-five tons of freight and which cost every year \$131 each for repairs. Then the handsome passenger coaches, of which there are 425, cost \$3,000 each every year for repairs. On the payroll of the company, comprising men of all classes and grades, are over 25,000 names and their salaries amount every year to nearly \$2,000,000. Some idea of what it costs to operate a great railroad can be formed when we find that in ten years—from 1888 to 1907—there was expended on the Union Pacific for changes in the line, reductions in grade and improvements and additions to the roadway, \$41,000,000; for locomotives, cars, etc., over \$22,000,000; for new lines and terminals over \$30,000,000—a total of over \$113,000,000. Tendency to Steel. Although the change is not yet completed, the tendency of the Union Pacific is toward the installation of all steel cars for all purposes, and in a very few years the road will be one of the few in the United States so equipped. At the present time the Union Pacific is operating a large number of steel cars, including mail cars, diners, Pullman and freight cars and contracts are already let for enough steel cars to completely equip the entire Harriman system. The road is also advancing in the sort of locomotives used. Engines such as number 792, which was built in the local shops twenty years ago and has made remarkable time between Omaha and Grand Island, are fast giving way to larger and more powerful engines which the modern demand for speed and efficiency as well as improved ideas in engine construction make necessary. The latest locomotive to be purchased for use on the Harriman line is known as the Mallet compound, which is really two engines built into one. The combination of weight and pulling power is enormous.

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