

# Along the Line<sup>6</sup>

## I. Introduction

The following appraisal of the towns and stations on the Kansas Pacific (now the Union Pacific) railway between Salina and Pond City (near the west line of the state), early in 1870, is taken from *A Business Directory . . . Entitled St. Louis to Denver, for 1870 . . .*, published by N. W. Josselyn & Company of St. Louis (presumably in 1870), pp. 376-388. The agent of the *Directory's* publisher who traveled over the Kansas Pacific's "Great Smoky Hill Route" and recorded his candid impressions, remains anonymous.

## II. Excerpts From The Directory

*Salina*. . . is one of the most flourishing and prosperous towns in Western Kansas. The town site . . . was selected and the first settlement made here in 1858 . . . by a small party under the leadership of Col. Wm. A. Phillips. . . .

During the war emigration westward was almost entirely suspended, and Salina did not grow much until after its close. In September, 1866, when the first saw mill successfully operated in the country began to turn out lumber for building purposes, there were scarcely more than a dozen buildings in the town, and those were mostly small. The town as it now stands has nearly all been built within the last three years.

Until within the last few years Salina was little more than a way station on the Santa Fe and Overland freight and stage route, and its business consisted in supplying a few farmers in the valley, the ranchemen on the Plains, and in trading with the Indians, Mexicans and freighters. Now she has a large and rapidly increasing trade in the various branches of business, with industrious thrifty farmers in large numbers. . . .

The market west is caused by the demand for the government posts along the line of the railroad, and for Sheridan, Hays City and Ellsworth, as after you get 30 miles west of Salina it is almost an impossibility to find an acre of tilled land. In fact, Salina may very properly be considered as being on the boundary line of civilization, and one is surprised on coming there from the east to find so much quiet and order in a town so far west. . . .

The K. P. R. W. runs through the town, and a movement is on to build a road from Salina south into Texas, and thus open an all rail outlet for the cattle trade. Another road is prospected which will run diagonally across the lower portion of the state and through Salina. . . .

Salina contains four hotels, a large number of business houses in the various branches of trade, a Presbyterian church, a Methodist church, and an elegant Baptist church, just completed. It is one of the best churches in Western Kansas, and is a perfect gem. Salina also contains a good public

school building, which cost between \$7,000 and \$8,000, two grist mills, one saw mill, a newspaper, &c. . . .

*Bavaria*, a flag station, 195 miles from (Kansas-Missouri) State line. . . . One stock ranche and a store are all the improvements to be seen as yet.

*Brookfield*. This will be a place of considerable importance, as the Kansas Pacific Railway Co. are building a fine roundhouse here, and contemplate building the principal machine shops of the road at this point. No other improvement at present. . . .

*Rock Springs*. A flag station on the K. P. R. W., containing only a water tank and a section house. . . .

*Fort Harker*. This is a military post for the protection of the frontier against Indians. . . .

*Ellsworth* . . . is a promising young town located at the most Southern point of the K. P. R. W. four miles west of Fort Harker on the Smoky Hill river. . . .

This place and Fort Harker are the points of reshipment of supplies for Fort Sill, Camp Supply, and the other points in the Indian territory and Forts Larned and Dodge, in the South-west.

Ellsworth now commands a fine trade from an extensive range of country. . . . Extensive sales of land are being made to actual settlers of a class that will make their mark with permanent improvements. This is also a point of reshipment for Texas cattle and large numbers will be driven here this coming season as good grass and water are to be had in abundance.

The town was laid out in lots in July 1867, and in August following the Railroad company commenced building their depot. Since that time notwithstanding the cholera scare and the Indian difficulties it has been steadily improving, and now has a population of over 500 souls.

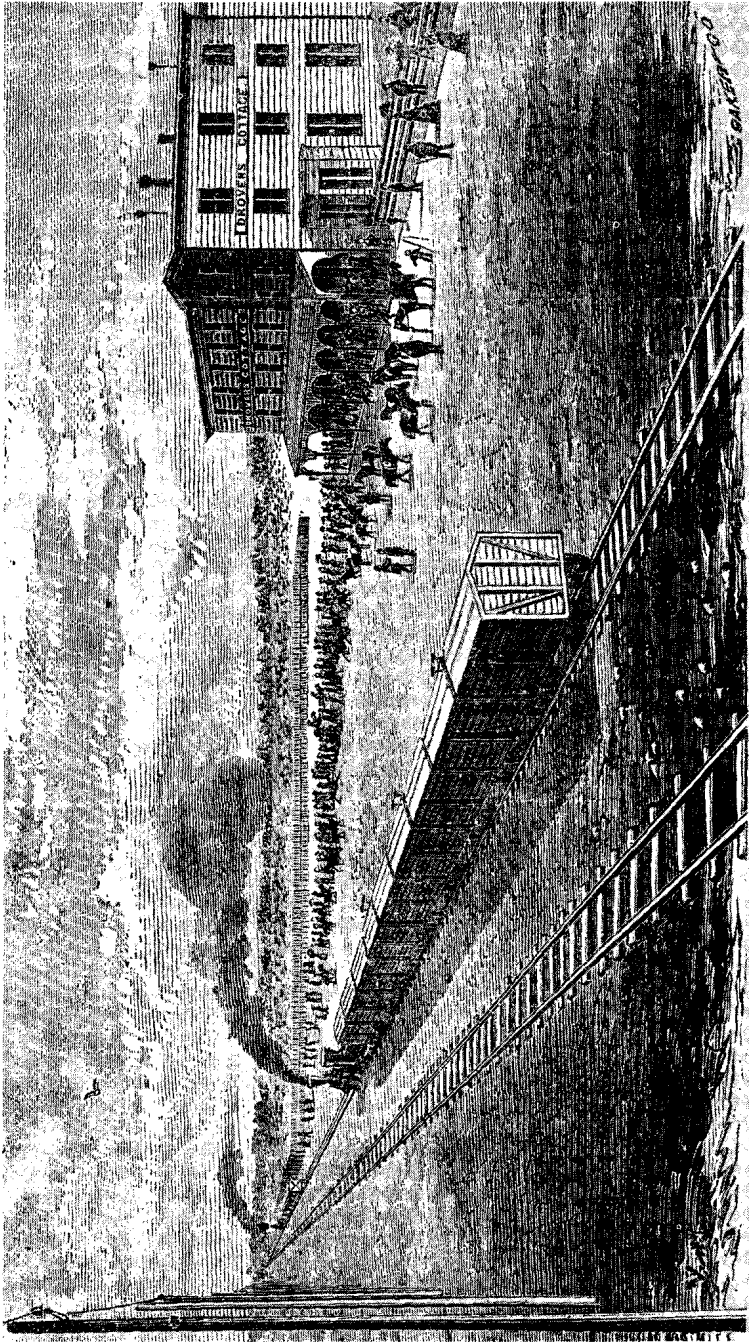
The climate is excellent and the atmosphere is pure, dry and exhilarating, with no malarious diseases, incident to most new countries. Physicians find little employment. . . . Buffalo, Antelope and other game are found within a few miles of town.

A vein of anthracite coal is being worked near the western boundary line of the county, and is delivered at the railroad for \$8 per ton. . . .

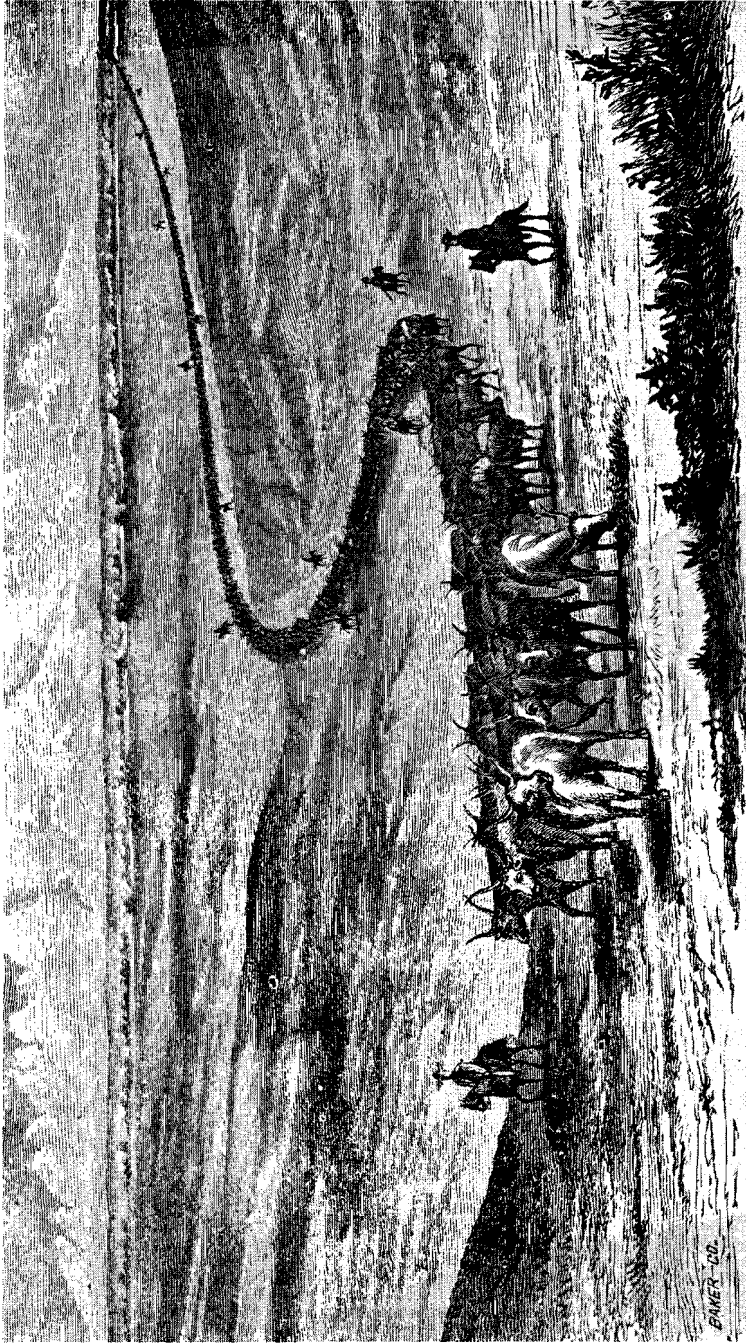
The National Land company. . . have an agency here designated as the "Ellsworth district" including all the Railroad lands in Ellsworth, Lincoln, Rice and Barton, under the charge of that indefatigable Western Kansas man Judge James Miller. . . .

The only public buildings yet in course of construction are a church and school house which are evidences of an advancing civilization and a more healthy public sentiment.

What the future of this town is to be can only be a matter of speculation, but judging from what has already been accomplished in so short



ELLSWORTH, KANSAS.—Trains of Cattle Leaving for Kansas City.—Kansas Pacific Railway.



HERD OF TEXAS CATTLE EN ROUTE FOR ELLSWORTH — Kansas Pacific Railway.

BANKER CO.

a time we are inclined to the opinion that there will one day be a large and flourishing town, at this point, which was once known as a portion of the "Great American Desert." . . .

*Cow Creek Station.* This is simply a wooding station and like all the stations from here to Sheridan except Hays City, the largest portion of it is its name. . . . From here to Sheridan, there is not a foot of ground under cultivation. . . .

*Wilson's Station.* A "wood and water" station, 239 miles from State Line. . . . Coal is found about 5 miles south of here and is being worked but it is not of a very good quality. . . .

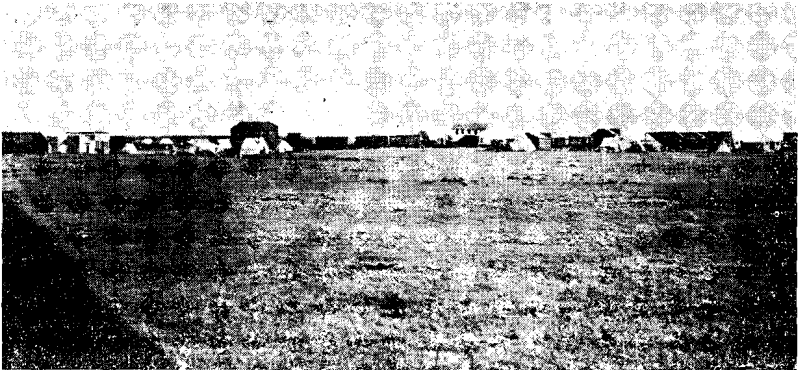
*Bunker Hill.* "Wood and water" are all the train stops here for. Nothing to be seen for miles, except boundless prairies and coarse buffalo grass. . . .

*Fossill Creek.* Another "wood and water" station, with a corporals guard of soldiers on duty as at the other Stations along here to prevent any Indian troubles. . . .

*Walkers Station.* This is the first station east of Fort Hays and "wood and water" or water and wood for a change, is all that is wanted here. . . .

*Hays City* . . . is the county seat of Ellis County Kansas and is situated on Big Creek about half a mile from Fort Hays from which it derives its name. From here, or rather from the Fort a very large amount of Government supplies are sent south, as it is from Fort Hays, that Fort Dodge and Camp Supply receive there supplies as well as a large quantity of Indian goods. Fort Hays is probably one of the most important Government posts on or near the Kansas Pacific Railway and is at present, Jan. 1, 1870 under command of Col. Gibson.

Hays City is in the heart of the buffalo and Indian country and but for its close proximity to the Fort would be completely isolated as it is the



**Across the Continent on the Kansas Pacific Railroad. (Route of the 35th Parallel.) Hays City, Kansas, Aged Four Weeks, 289 Miles West of Missouri River.**

only town within a radius of nearly 75 miles. It was near here that the principal outrages were committed during the Indian troubles of 1858 and it was as much a man's life was worth to venture half a mile from town.

In former times it had a very bad reputation, as being the resort and abode of a large number of roughs and outlaws, but the law abiding citizens having taken matters into their own hands and hung a few of them, have so completely changed the order of things as to now make Hays City quiet and orderly in comparison to what it used to be. . . .

*Ellis* is 302 miles west of State line. . . . It is another "wood and water" station, with a few bluecoated fellows on guard. . . .

*Ogallah* . . . is in the very center of the buffalo country, and besides the everlasting "wood and water," the train stops for dinner, and you are regaled with buffalo in all imaginable styles. Nevertheless it contains no houses, and is like all the stations along here. Distance from State Line 318. . . .

*Park's Fort*. There is nothing here but "wood and water," and very little of that. 329 miles from State Line, 619 miles from St. Louis, and you know all about Park's Fort any one can tell you. . . .

*Coyote* . . . is another "city of the plains," and boasts of one house and a limited supply of "wood and water," with a few blue-coats to watch it.

*Buffalo*. A "wood and water" station, 351 miles from State Line. . . .

*Grinnell*. More mud forts, presided over, built and commanded by the "boys in blue," here meet the traveler's gaze, as another stop is made for "wood and water," at a point 364 miles from State line. . . .

*Carlyle*. A mere stopping point for trains, with a side track and water tanks, 375 miles from State Line. . . .

*Monument* . . . is 386 miles from State Line . . . and is another stopping point to replenish the fuel and fill the water tank. . . .

*Gopher* . . . is 7 miles east of Sheridan, and the last station on the road before you reach there. "Wood and water" again, and we are off. Distance from State Line 398 miles. . . .

*Sheridan* . . . was settled during the summer of 1868, and until within the last few weeks of 1869 was the western terminus of the Kansas Pacific Railway. Now, however, the road is in operation to Eagle Tail, Colorado, 25 miles west of Sheridan, and will soon be opened to Carson City, 83 miles west. For a long time doubts were entertained as to whether the road would be completed any further, as the Government subsidy expired here; but the company have determined to push it forward to Denver, any how, and a large force of men are now at work on what is called the Denver Extension, and the road bed is graded about half-way, with a good prospect of the iron horse bounding into Denver before the close of the summer.

Sheridan is the farthest west of any town in Kansas except a small place near Fort Wallace called Pond City, and is only 20 miles from the

Colorado line. While it was the terminus of the road a large business was done, as it was from here that most of the teams started with freight for Denver and Santa Fe, and also the Overland Mail coaches for the same places; but as the road is moving on, the Mexican and Colorado trade will go with it, and it is thought by many that Carson City will be the next place to which the principal business houses of Sheridan will remove, and to which place this trade will go.

The country around Sheridan is barren and totally unfit for cultivation. What life and activity there has been here has resulted entirely from the railroad and the Mexican trade, and not from any demand for goods, or even prospect of any from the surrounding country, over which the buffalo range and the Indians hold almost undisputed sway. Sheridan is 405 miles from State Line. . . .

*Fort Wallace.* A military post of considerable importance, 419 miles from State Line. . . . It is situated about 2 miles from the K.P.R.W., and near the western boundary line of Kansas.

*Pond City.* This is a small place of perhaps 100 inhabitants, and is dependent entirely upon the soldiers of Fort Wallace for support; it is about two miles from the Fort.

There are no business-houses here, and the town is composed almost entirely of saloons. It is the farthest west of any town in Kansas. Distance from State Line 421 miles. . . .

Editor's note: In cases where it is unfeasible to compare a reprinted text with the original version of a selection used in the *Heritage of Kansas*, such emendations and alterations as seem appropriate are made by the editor. This is necessary only infrequently, and every effort is made to reproduce accurately the author's original text.

## NOTES

1. The facts cited appear in a Kansas Industrial Development Commission publication entitled "Kansas Industrial Resources," p. 5. It covers a wide range of facts about the state and was apparently published in October, 1956, as a Commission project.

2. This condensed sketch was provided by the Department of Public Relations, Union Pacific Railroad, 1416 Dodge Street, Omaha 2, Nebraska.

3. Mr. Cruise, of Kansas City, Kansas, originally prepared an article bearing this title for the Kansas State Historical Society. What appears here is an excerpt provided by the U.P. Public Relations Department. Mr. Cruise was born in Albany, N.Y., in 1844. After living in St. Louis and a few other Missouri cities, he joined the United States military telegraph corps and was ordered to Wyandotte, Kansas, where he arrived October 22, 1863, and was operator for Gen. Samuel R. Curtis during the Price raid in 1864.

He was the first telegrapher, and the first superintendent of telegraphy, for the Union Pacific railroad, Kansas Division. He afterward became joint agent at Wyandotte for various railroad and steamboat lines. From 1875 to 1878 he was general agent for the Union Pacific at Topeka. He then returned to Kansas City and occupied various railroad positions.

4. This summary of the besetting trials faced by the early builders comes from the Public Relations Department of the Union Pacific.

5. *Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society*, 1903-1904, VIII (Topeka: George A. Clark, State Printer, 1904) 384-389. Mr. Roenigk was born in Thuringia, Prussia, in 1847. He eventually settled at Lincoln, Kansas. Further biographical details appear in the source cited.

6. *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XIX, No. 2 (Topeka: The Kansas Historical Society, 1951) 207-211.



Vol. 1, No. 1, *Men Against The Frontier*, February, 1957:

Vol. 1, No. 2, *The Red Man Lives*, May, 1957:

Vol. 1, No. 3, *Buffalo: Lord of the Plains*, August, 1957:

Vol. 1, No. 4, *To Live in Symbols*, November, 1957:

Vol. 2, No. 1, *Trails of Steel*, February, 1958:

Neil Byer, "Trails of Steel."

U.P. Public Relations, "Condensed Sketch of Corporate History of Union Pacific."

John D. Cruise, "Early Days on the Union Pacific."

U. P. Public Relations, "Railroad Trials."

Adolph Roenigk, "Railroad Grading Among Indians."

*Kansas Historical Quarterly* (no author), "Along the Line of the Kansas Pacific Railway in Western Kansas in 1870."