

When the Union and Kansas Pacific Built Through Kansas—*Concluded*

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THE OFFICERS of Shoemaker, Miller & Co., contractors for the construction of the Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division, did not want for comfortable accommodations as they pushed their field headquarters westward. The *Junction City Weekly Union*, December 8, 1866, quoting from the *Lawrence Tribune*, described the company's portable hotel:

R. H. Shoemaker, Esq., passed over the Union Pacific Railroad, E. D., on Wednesday, in charge of a fine new car, made by the Harrisburg Car Manufacturing Company, expressly for Messrs. Shoemaker, Miller & Co., who have the contract to build the road from Fort Riley to Fort Wallace, on Pond Creek, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles. The car is emphatically a moving hotel, divided into four apartments—sitting room, dining-room, bed-room and kitchen. It is furnished in fine style, and is intended to supersede or rather fill the place of a hotel in the construction of the roads. The bed chamber is very comfortable—furnished with fine hair mattresses. In fact every department has the air of neatness. Mr. Shoemaker has probably more practical experience in building railroads than any man in the West, and under his efficient management we feel confident that the work will progress rapidly. Mr. Shoemaker acted in the capacity of civil engineer in the building of the following roads now in operation, viz: Little Miami, Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton, Kentucky Central, Sandusky, Dayton & Cincinnati, and Michigan Southern. Through his indomitable perseverance and skill the Union Pacific Railroad has been put in successful operation beyond Junction City. But few men in the country possess greater ability in the construction of railroads than Mr. Shoemaker. In a social point of view he is affable and pleasant, and is the right man in the right place.

The railroad reached Dickinson county on November 24 and the *Union* reported on December 1, 1866:

To-day (Saturday, November 24,) the track of the Union Pacific Railroad, reached the western boundary of Davis [now Geary] county, about eight miles above town. It will be at Chapman's creek [near present Chapman] on Tuesday evening, the 27th inst.

Cold weather forced surveying parties to cease operations early in January, 1867. The *Union*, January 5, stated:

Mr. Greenwood, one of Wick's surveying party, called on us this morning, and gratified our curiosity greatly by exhibiting a map of the line of the Union Pacific Railroad west of Fort Harker. The party have ceased operations for the

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winter. The line stops at the west end of the seventh mile of the eighth forty [mile section] from the State line, being 318 miles in all; or 179 miles west of Junction City. The end is ten miles west of Fort Hayes, one mile west of the west line of range seventeen west, and is located in township fourteen south. The party will resume operations early in the Spring, as they have something over 100 miles yet to lay out.

Railroad construction was halted too. A correspondent of the *Leavenworth Daily Conservative*, traveling along the line of the road and beyond, reported great stockpiles of material at end-of-track while adding interesting comments about one of Kansas' more famous and successful towns. His letter appeared in the issue of January 24, 1867:

THE COUNTRY WEST OF US!

LETTER FROM FORT ELLSWORTH. . . .

FORT ELLSWORTH, KAN. Jan. 14.

ED. CONSERVATIVE: Having been much pleased with the country west of Fort Riley, and not doubting that your numerous readers would like to know what sort of country the "Great American Desert" is, I have made a few wayside jottings which may or may not be worth publication. . . .

Crossing Indian Hill [just west of Chapman], a ride of six miles brings you to Lamb's Point [named for Green Lamb, now known as Detroit] . . . where the poorest kind of whiskey is dispensed and outrageous rates charged for everything furnished or sold. . . . [Here] you come to the end of the track of the Union Pacific railway, E. D., but find huge piles of iron, rails and ties being accumulated for the spring campaign, which will open vigorously as soon as the frost will permit. Geo. Wallace, Superintendent of Construction, informed me just previous to his departure for Ohio, that he expected to have track laid to Ellsworth in May. This railway is doing wonders in the way of opening up and improving this new country, it will advance it more than one can imagine—its benefits are incalculable.

Another six miles from Lamb's Point and we reach Abilene, the county seat of Dickinson county. This is the town which the well informed Bayard Taylor supposed was named after "Old Abe," thus showing a most lamentable ignorance of the scriptures. Had he studied the third chapter of Luke diligently he would have found that "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Lysanius was tetrarch of Abilene." I fear poor Bayard is more familiar with matters profane than sacred.

Abilene has won a cheap immortality, from the fact that here our distinguished traveler (Bayard) got his first "square meal" [in July, 1866]. It is to be a station on the Union Pacific Railway, and boasts of two hotels, a blacksmith shop, three or four saloons and two or three small stores. Yet I cannot say that I think its future, as a town, is very promising, as much of the land in its immediate vicinity is held by non-residents, as is nearly the whole area of Dickinson county; hence, population is sparse. . . .

Although winter halted construction activities, the Junction City *Weekly Union* kept reader interest in the railroad alive with such information as "the train up this morning [January 26], was the

largest ever passed over the road, consisting of 39 freight cars loaded with railroad iron; besides a large number of passengers and several of cars of general freight," and, on February 2,

the passenger train due at this point Friday evening [February 1], left Topeka [at] 1:25 P. M., and had not arrived at Wamego at 9:15 A. M. this morning. An engine was sent east to look for it, and no word has been had of either. Freight due here yesterday morning is in snow bank two miles west of Ogden, and another train in snow bank $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of Manhattan. It is said that there is a snow bank near Manhattan, two hundred yards through and forty-five feet high.

The snow storm had fallen on January 31. The *Union*, February 2, stated:

Thursday afternoon some eight or ten inches of snow fell, which a terrific north wind all night, and continuing through to day, (Friday) has drifted about in huge piles, which have caused a total suspension of travel. The passenger train which started from this place east this morning, was compelled to return. The freight train which went out Thursday evening, and also the one due from the East this morning, are lodged in snow somewhere near Manhattan. To add to this perplexity, the telegraph wire gave way, somewhere east of Manhattan. The Santa Fe coach from the West, due at ten o'clock, Thursday evening, has not arrived up to this evening, while the Wells, Fargo coach did not start out.

More blizzards and high water, which washed out the bridge across the Republican, could not stop the railroad. Construction resumed in late winter and on March 23, 1867, the *Union* reported that track had reached Mud creek in Abilene on March 14. A temporary bridge was thrown across the Republican and on March 25 trains were again running into Junction City. Continued flooding plagued construction but enough materials were on hand to enable the track to be laid to the Saline river. "The Railroad Bridge over the Republican is not yet considered perfectly safe," reported the *Union* April 13. "No locomotives cross it, but freight and passenger cars are pushed over."

A week later, on April 20, the *Union* said that the bridge over the Saline had been completed and track laid across on April 16. Eastern portions of the road were still having difficulties and the *Union* added:

Freight, mails and passengers have had a terrific time in attempting to go west by train, during the past two or three days.—Some days the trains don't come or go. When they do, there is no knowing at what time of the day or night the occurrence will take place. One of the consequences is a great deal of heavy waiting at the depot. The old reliable Kansas Stage Company is the only sure means of transit to the west at present.

According to the *Leavenworth Daily Times*, April 23, 1867, the

Union Pacific, Eastern Division, was completed to Salina on Saturday night, April 20, and track was being laid at the rate of about a mile and a half a day. Passenger service west of Junction City began on Tuesday evening, May 6. By November 30, 1867, the *Junction City Weekly Union* could report on another important improvement:

The most complete, perfectly arranged and handsomest hotel on the line of the road is being built at Salina, by a widow lady named Mrs. M. Bickerdyke. We were through it a few days ago, and was rejoiced to witness such comfortable and elegant quarters. In the *Lawrence Journal* we find the following notice in it, and the lady building it, written by Mr. Burnell: "At Salina, 146 miles west from Lawrence, I had two evenings, a children's and a mother's meeting. They promised to hold the last two every week. The first evening's exercise was full of interest of itself, and beyond that it was a dedication service of a new railway hotel or eating house [see picture section]. The new building has large dining rooms, with kitchen, pantry, and thirty-two sleeping rooms. The trains are to take supper and breakfast there. The person building it, and the one to keep it, is a most admirable christian lady, Mrs. M. Bickerdyke, familiarly known in the army as 'Mother Bickerdyke.' She is a widow lady about fifty, formerly from Galesburg, Ill., and a member of Dr. Edward Beecher's church. I first met her a few days after that terrible battle of Shiloh, and for many days worked with her among those poor wounded men. She would work from 5 o'clock in the morning, till 10, 11, and 12 o'clock at night, and how she endured it so long is very wonderful, for she was in the army work over four years. Thousands of soldiers will remember her as long as they have a memory. Coming home from the army, she went to Chicago, and was two years engaged in the home of the Friendless and City Missions. Last winter she passed over the New Pacific railroad lines, in Kansas and Nebraska, to their terminus, and then took the stage and went beyond, and finally determined to make her home in Salina. Her hotel will cost \$20,000, and is dedicated to temperance and Christ, so far as a hotel can be. The railroad managers assist her in building it, and show her every possible favor."

Meanwhile good weather allowed railroad construction to progress rapidly. Another 25 miles had been completed when the *Junction City Union* related on May 25, 1867:

Wednesday evening [May 22] the railroad was completed to the two hundred and tenth mile post [Alum creek at present Carneiro]. This is within twelve miles of Ellsworth, and is a few miles over covering half the state. . . .

By this time laying rails had been reduced to a science. The *Union*, June 15, 1867, told how it was done:

A small car having been loaded in the same manner and with the same precision as the large ones had been, was run forward to the end of the track by horse-power. A couple of feet from the end of the rails already laid down checks were placed under the wheels, stopping the car at once. Before it was well stopped, a dozen men grasped a rail on each side, ran it beyond the car, laid it down in its chairs, gauged it, and ere its clank in falling ceased to

reverberate, the car was run over it and another pair of rails drawn out. This process was continued as rapidly as a man would walk. Behind the car followed a man dropping spikes, another setting the ties well under the heads of the rails, and thirty or forty others driving in the spikes and stamping the earth under the ties. The moment that one car was emptied of its iron, a number of men seized it and threw it off the track into the ditch and the second followed on with its load.

As summer approached Indians began to harass the construction crews and survey parties. An expedition under Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock had been sent out in April to intimidate the Indians but it apparently only provoked them into wild depredations. Even the presence of Lt. Col. George A. Custer and the Seventh cavalry along the Smoky Hill route failed to deter the savages from destroying both stage and railroad property. On May 18 they attacked a surveying party in present Logan county. Robert Shoemaker reported the fight in a telegram to Gov. Samuel J. Crawford:

END OF TRACK, May 23, 1867.

GOV. CRAWFORD,

Our locating party under Col. W. H. Greenwood was attacked by Indians near Monument Station [at] 9:30 A. M. Saturday. The Indians fought four & a half hours for possession of the camp, but were driven off without doing any damage excepting to capture thirteen mules. Two of their ponies went off riderless. The engineer party has fallen back to await the escort promised them by Gen. Hancock.

R. M. SHOEMAKER.¹

Lt. Gen. William T. Sherman, commander of the Division of the Missouri and consequently responsible for military actions against Indians in Kansas, apparently did not believe an Indian war was impending. Editor George W. Martin, in the *Junction City Union* of May 25, failed to see how Sherman could have arrived at that impression:

A St. Louis dispatch announcing the return of Lieut. Gen. Sherman from Fort Harker, says he is reported to have said that we can have an Indian war or not, as we choose. He says certain parties in Kansas desire war, but don't think they will be gratified. Such an expression sounds very good, considering that since the 15th of last month the Indians on the Smoky Hill Route have stolen sixty four head of stock, burned two stations entire, burned two stables, and a large amount of hay, besides killing two men.

As if Indian depredations weren't enough, Mother Nature continued to assault the railroad at every turn. The *Junction City Union*, June 15, 1867, reported water damage:

The tremendous rains of Saturday and Sunday [June 8 and 9], have affected

1. "Governor Crawford Telegrams, Telegrams Received," page 42, item number 191, Archives division, Kansas State Historical Society.

the streams more than all others of the season. The Smoky Hill and Republican are both bank full, the former still rising, and the latter falling. Sunday afternoon the Republican reached to within eighteen inches of the track of the Union Pacific Railroad bridge. The bridge was saved only by the vigorous efforts of the Railroad employees. The water began washing around the abutments. The stone sawing company were called on for stone with which to stop the wash, and in exactly one hour they had seven teams hauling from their quarry to the track, where it was loaded upon cars and run to the bridge. . . . About two hundred yards of the grading this side of Chapman's [creek] has been washed out, and the track and ties are floating on the top of water. . . . Some time Sunday forenoon a locomotive and five or six cars were capsized by a wash, and the engineer slightly injured. No western train has come through, and we understand that orders were given that none should start from the east end of the road. About six o'clock Saturday night the prairies presented the appearance of a great sheet of water. The oldest inhabitants were astonished. All the streams and low lands are impassable.

A week later the paper could report no improvement:

Saturday [June 15], three trains attempted to come through from the west. One of them succeeded in getting to town, another is piled up in the water and mud about four miles above town, a locomotive and passenger car almost laying on their sides, and off the track, in four feet of water. Three miles further on a freight train lies in the same condition.

Indians struck again on June 22. This time the president of the railroad wired the governor:

LAWRENCE, KANSAS.

June 24, 1867

HIS EXCELLENCY, S. J. CRAWFORD,
GOVERNOR OF KANSAS,

I have just returned from Fort Wallace, over the line of the Union Pacific Railway, E. D. The Indians along the whole line are engaged in their savage warfare. On Saturday [June 22] three of our men were killed and scalped within twenty miles of Fort Harker. Our laborers—one thousand or more [scattered over] 75 miles of the line—have been driven in this side of Wilsons Creek [present Wilson, Ellsworth county]— Unarmed men cannot be expected to expose themselves to these savages. Genl. Hancock is away west of Fort Wallace, so that I cannot apply to him and I do not know where a dispatch will reach Genl. Sherman. In this emergency I do not know to whom else to apply. What can be done to put an end to these atrocities,

Yours Respectfully,
JOHN D. PERRY,
Pres.²

Governor Crawford, in transmitting Perry's message to Edwin M. Stanton, secretary of war, declared that the "Road west of Fort Harker, the route of travel across the plains, together with our

2. *Ibid.*, "Telegrams Sent," page 134, item number 46.

Frontier settlements will all have to be abandoned if prompt and decisive measures are not adopted."

"The Indians killed two of our men near Bunker Hill and drove the workmen all off of twenty miles of lines," reported Shoemaker to Crawford on June 24. "Please send us five hundred stand of best arms you have with plenty of ammunition. . . . Unless you send us protection our work must be abandoned."³

June 27 saw still another Indian raid on the railroad. Robert Shoemaker again wired the governor:

LEAVENWORTH, KANS.
June 28, 1867.

GOV. CRAWFORD,

The following dispatch has just been received from Wilson's Creek, 18 miles west of Harker.

FORT HARKER, KANS.
June 28, 1867.

R. M. SHOEMAKER, LEAVENWORTH, KANS.

My camp was attacked yesterday at 7 A. M. by Indians— we lost one killed—John Kessler, from Springfield, Ohio & George Waite badly wounded— five or six Indians were killed. I leave here tonight with more soldiers for our protection— Kessler's body is here.

J. B. RILEY, Res. Eng.

Unless our men are promptly protected, all the men will be driven off of the road & the citizens out of the country.

R. M. SHOEMAKER.⁴

Arms and ammunition were soon forthcoming from the military; four wagon loads of guns and bullets passed through Junction City on June 25, bound for the employees of Shoemaker, Miller and Company, said the *Union*, June 29. Shoemaker was not appeased, however, and on July 5 wired the governor from end-of-track that he wanted a company of infantry to guard his construction train and another of cavalry to patrol the country. "How soon can you get them here," he asked.⁵

Fearing the regular military establishment in Kansas was too small to cope with the increasing Indian activity, Governor Crawford offered to raise a volunteer military unit to supplement the local garrisons. Approval was received from General Sherman and the governor issued this proclamation:

STATE OF KANSAS, EXECUTIVE OFFICE.
TOPEKA, July 1st, 1867.

Central and Western Kansas has been, and is still, overrun and invaded by bands of hostile Indians, who are indiscriminately murdering, scalping and mutilating our frontier settlers—travelers on the great western thoroughfares,

3. *Ibid.*, "Telegrams Received," page 43, item number 192.

4. *Ibid.*, page 37, item number 169.

5. *Ibid.*, page 46, item number 203.

and the employees on the U. P. R. W., E. D. They have almost entirely cut off communications between Kansas and the States and Territories west. The U. S. forces, now on the plains, are unable to protect life and property. And, having received authority from Lieut. Gen. Sherman to raise a volunteer cavalry force of eight companies, to be mustered into the U. S. service for four months, unless sooner discharged, I, therefore, appeal to all good citizens of the State to favor, facilitate, and aid this effort to protect the frontier settlers—the traveler—and the workmen engaged in the construction of the great national thoroughfare—the U. P. R. W., E. D.

S. J. CRAWFORD,
Governor.⁶

The unit thus organized became the Eighteenth Kansas cavalry battalion, one of the state's two military units in history organized for the sole purpose of combating the Indian menace.

General Sherman apparently was still not convinced that the situation was as bad as it appeared even though he had authorized the muster of the Eighteenth Kansas. He sent the following telegram from the frontier:

FORT HARKER, KANS.
July 8, 1867.

GOV. CRAWFORD,

I believe there are other causes than Indians why the Smoky Hill stage has not run. The Railroad was delayed by high water and not by Indians and the stages have stopped for want of connection and because it is not profitable—I want both Railroad & Stage Companies to prosper but cannot excuse them from doing their share of service unless they make efforts equal to the occasion— All our Posts and intermediate stations to Denver are safe— Trains of wagons go with light escort & even single carriers run from Post to Post— Gen. [Andrew J.] Smith [commander of the District of the Upper Arkansas] has offered the Stage Co. any amount of guard but they wont go. Keep this to yourself, only help me to quiet down unnecessary alarm, which, as you can see, often does as much harm as real danger, and of course all parties having close contracts avail themselves of the alarm to avoid service and claim compensation and damage.

W. T. SEERMAN.⁷

In another telegram to Crawford sent two days later, Sherman reported that one company of infantry and another of cavalry had been assigned to protect Shoemaker's construction crews in spite of the general's opinion "that Indians have not delayed the progress of this road one hour."⁸

Though many skirmishes occurred between the military and the redman, no more attacks on railroad crews were reported for several weeks and the Union Pacific continued to move west. The first passenger train ran to Fort Harker on Monday, July 1, 1867.

6. Junction City Weekly Union, July 6, 1867.

7. "Governor Crawford Telegrams, Telegrams Received," page 47, item number 207, Archives division, K. S. H. S.

8. *Ibid.*, page 48, item number 210.

In addition, Colonel Greenwood's party of engineers, now back on the job, were locating nearly seven miles of the line each day. Possibly this activity continued because of the 1,500 rifles and 50,000 rounds of ammunition which the Fort Leavenworth arsenal had issued to the workers on the railroad.⁹

By August 3 the *Union* was able to report that the track had been laid to the 235th mile post, just four miles short of present Wilson. More laborers were being hired, five thousand of them, and they were being paid \$2.50 a day with only five dollars a week charged for board.

From time to time official inspection parties would venture out upon the Kansas prairies to look over the condition of newly completed sections of the road and report their acceptability to the President. Naturally, anything the railroad could do to make such an inspection trip more enjoyable would speed the transfer of bonds and lands to the company treasury. The Junction City *Union*, August 17, 1867, repeated one newspaper's report of such proceedings:

THE VERY PLEASANT STYLE IN WHICH RAILROADS
ARE INSPECTED.

A correspondent of the *Missouri Republican* thus details the *modus operandi* of inspecting a railroad:

"In concluding my notes upon this trip with the [inspecting] Commissioners, I ought not to omit to sketch the scene of the inspecting party taking a view of the twenty four miles of railroad just completed. At Junction City the Engineer's and Contractor's car was attached to ours, in the rear. It is a very comfortable and conveniently arranged car, provided with a spacious platform at one end, where half a dozen or more persons can be comfortably seated. On reaching the beginning of the division or section to be examined, the Commissioners, together with Mr. Shoemaker, the contractor, and myself, rested ourselves comfortably in arm chairs on the rear platform, having a full review of the track. The train started, taking a speed of twenty-five miles per hour, and mile after mile passed under the review of our gazing eyes, rails, ties, spikes, grade receded from us, or we speeding away from them, as fast as a bird flies through the air. Fragrant Havanas were distributed, and through the clouds of smoke we inspected the track. Next we looked at it through a bottle of Concord wine, and all looked rosy and good.

The medium examination was greatly improved by a bottle of the best of Bourbon from Nickleson's, and through its amber or golden hues the prospect was charming, and all of the kinds and crooks of the track straightened out—the line was straight and smooth. The finishing touch was put on, when glasses of claret punch, excellently compounded were placed in our hands by a colored gentleman, and through the rosy shades of this conciliating and charming medium, the three commissioners and myself took our final view

9. Junction City *Weekly Union*, July 6, 1867.

of the well-built track, and the inspection was over, for by this time we had traversed the twenty-four miles—spending an hour in the arduous work, and viewed the road through media which clarified the vision, sharpened the judgment, inspired good nature and prepared us to make a most satisfactory report.

In early Autumn the Indians again were recorded a threat to the construction crews. Governor Crawford wired General Sherman:

TOPEKA, KANSAS
September 23, 1867.

LIEUT. GENL. W. T. SHERMAN,
OMAHA.

Just returned from Hayes— Indians along the Smoky Hill, west of Harker, are worse than ever— while I was there last week, they fired into construction train, on the Railroad. Attacked and captured parts of three Government trains— Attacked most of working parties along the road— killed one contractor and eight employees, and wounded many more besides committing various other depredations. . . .

S. J. CRAWFORD,
Gov.¹⁰

No reply from General Sherman is recorded in the governor's papers and apparently the new war cry ended as suddenly as it began.

"The railroad is progressing at the rate of two miles per day," reported the Junction City *Union*, October 5, 1867, "and it is expected to be at Hays City this (Saturday) evening [October 5]. Wednesday it was within six miles of that place."

Editor George W. Martin made a personal inspection of the railroad which he reported in the *Union* of October 12:

Last week, in company with Mr. Joseph Kemp, of Hollidaysburg, Penn., we made a trip as far west as Big Creek. . . . The railroad from Ellsworth, west, is exceedingly rough, the grades being very heavy. It is said by some—we did not examine for ourselves—that if one will take a position on the track and look after a train, that the locomotive will sink out of sight about twice in two or three miles. We know that with a train of but ten or twelve cars of iron, a frightful speed down hill was necessary to enable the engine to ascend the other side of the gully. No locomotive can start an ordinary train at the foot of one of the hills. On the way out, buffalo were seen stretching along the road for a distance of probably ten miles. We arrived at the end of the track which was then some seven or eight miles this side of Big Creek, at two o'clock, and rode in a coach by four, to the prospective metropolis of Hays City. This place consists of ten or fifteen frame houses, and a like number of tents, and is situated about one mile north of Fort Hays, and, not to be too precise, just about three quarters of a mile from the Eternal City, known among geographers as Rome [a now extinct town founded by William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody]. Big Creek flows from the north between the two places. Rome, we understand, is not so far advanced as is Hays City, but if the people of the latter place are not actuated by local

10. *Ibid.*, "Telegrams Sent," page 137, item number 64.

envy, Rome must then be the Mecca to which rushes all the males and females of loose virtue and bad morals. Indeed, the question as to which is the town had been determined, and the excitement had centered on the stupendous one as to which side of the track the depot would be built. We found a tolerable fair hotel, but the next morning, before starting homeward, we endeavored to find some crackers for lunch, but whiskey was the only commodity to be found. . . .

Passenger trains began running between Ellsworth and Hays on October 15, about the time the newly completed section of road was inspected by the commissioners. The *Union*, October 26, 1867, reported:

A correspondent reports from Omaha, Oct. 21, that the United States Commissioners of the Pacific R. R. have just examined and received twenty six miles of the U. P. R. R., E. D., up to Ft. Hays and pronounce it the best section of road yet examined by them. The train with the Commissioners ran into a herd of thirty buffaloes and one was shot down by Col. R. M. Shoemaker while the train was in motion. The train was stopped and the buffalo taken on board and is now en route for St. Louis, Chicago and Cincinnati in pieces; U. S. Commissioner Dr. William White getting the tail and rump; U. S. Commissioner J. B. Drake getting the head and Col. Shoemaker claims the meat.

Bison were sometimes a problem. The Junction City *Union*, November 2, 1867, stated:

We learn that about ten days ago, while the passenger train was coursing the plains, on the track of the Union Pacific railway, west of Ellsworth, a buffalo was discovered ahead, and failing to get beyond rifle range was handsomely shot by a marksman on the locomotive. A few days afterwards, in about the same locality, the train was intercepted by a whole herd of buffaloes and compelled to halt until they had crossed the track! This is the statement as made to us. The Kansas City Journal of Commerce says that for three miles the buffaloes pushed along parallel with the train, heedless of many shots fired among them, and finally swept across the track, ahead of the locomotive, fairly worsening the iron horse by bringing him to a halt.

The same day the *Union* reported the road's October 30 arrival at the 300th mile post, just two miles east of present Ellis.

"The track is now laid to the 330 mile post [five miles east of present Collyer] from the State Line, and work is progressing rapidly," stated the Hays City *Railway Advance*, December 12.¹¹

The Lawrence *Tribune*, January 3, 1868, picking its news from the *Advance* of an unknown date, mentioned some of the violence which followed the rails:

A man named McMahon shot and killed Thos. Sullivan, a fellow laborer, at the end of the track on Christmas day. The difficulty grew out of a drunken row. McMahon was arrested by the sheriff of this [Ellis] county, and is now in custody here.

11. Quoted in *Atchison Weekly Free Press*, December 21, 1867.

McMahon, charged with the murder of Sullivan, at the end of the track, on Christmas day, is to be discharged for want of evidence, no person, as yet, having appeared against him.

Advance says a sober and industrious railroad laborer named Barber, was shot and killed by some person unknown, on the railroad track near that town [Hays] on Tuesday night.

The advent of winter failed to halt construction for the Denver *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, January 6, 1868, said:

The Hays City Advance says a number of carpenters came down from the end of the track on the twenty-seventh ultimo. Trestle and bridge building is suspended for the winter. Grading will be continued during the next two months. Most of the men discharged have formed into small squads and taken contracts to grade from one to three miles.

"The Union Pacific Railway, E. D., has now three hundred and seventy-five miles of road completed, the track being laid eighty-five miles beyond Hays [to present Oakley] and rapidly advancing," reported the *Advance* through the Lawrence *Kansas Weekly Tribune*, May 14.

As spring drew on Indians once again became a concern to the railroad. Unfortunately not all the incidents were as humorous as this one recounted by the *Junction City Union*, May 16, 1868:

A few days after the recent attack by Indians on the construction train west of Coyote [near the site of present Collyer], our Railroad friends tell us that the Indians attempted to capture the locomotive alive. They took a large quantity of telegraph wire, and doubling it several times, stretched it across the track, an Indian or two holding each end. They didn't want to shoot the thing lest they might injure it, and hence this strategy. Of course the locomotive, under full head of steam, was captured in this way. The noble red men is an imitative cuss—if he wasn't he wouldn't be as mean as he is. They can now enjoy their special train about the country, meeting peace commissioners, and sling on as much style as a one-horse lieutenant of militia. About two days after they burned the cars, we understand an officer at Hays telegraphed the Superintendent to send him a locomotive and a special car, that he might go out and see what the Indians had done. Considering the number of horses and ambulances Uncle Sam furnishes, this may be considered a superb specimen of cheek.

"The Hays City *Advance* says that Company A, 38th infantry, are to be stationed at and beyond Coyote for the better protection of the railroad employees," stated the *Atchison Weekly Free Press*, April 18, 1868.

Track was open to Monument on June 1. The *Junction City Union*, May 30, 1868, stated:

RAILWAY NEWS.

On Monday next [June 1] passenger trains on the Union Pacific, Eastern Division will run to the 385th mile post, fifty miles beyond Coyote. The staging

to Denver will then only take forty-two hours. The Government subsidy for the road ends at the 411th mile—about two hundred and forty miles from Denver, and six miles this side of Fort Wallace. It will take till about the first of September to complete the road to that point, there being heavy cuts to go through. . . .

Monument was a new town, born with the arrival of the railroad. The *Union*, June 13, 1868, gave this early description:

"Monument," the new town started last week at the 380th mile post on the U. P. Railway, already contains a population of five hundred souls, and up to 12 o'clock last night not a man had been shot or hung in that city, which speaks volumes for the moral worth of its citizens. . . .

A correspondent of the Lawrence *Kansas Weekly Tribune*, June 18, 1868, wrote of the remnants of railroad "towns" along the construction line and of Hays, then the leading city of the west:

HAYS CITY, June 12.

After stopping about two hours in Monument, and partaking of a most excellent dinner at the dining hall of Spencer & Fowler, where we found a table spread with a large variety of meats, vegetables and delicacies, such as we had not looked for in this desert region, we returned to Hays City, ninety-five miles eastward. . . .

For the entire distance of ninety-five miles, not a tree or shrub relieved the monotonous landscape of level, parched prairie. At long intervals a tent, and an underground hovel, bulletproof, marked the abode of a few colored soldiers, stationed there, we suppose, as bait for the Indians, for certainly the idea of defense could never have been associated with such an arrangement. Prairie dog towns excited not a little interest [among the passengers], and were the innocent cause of considerable waste of ammunition. The little squirrel-like creatures seemed to delight in sitting on their mounds in front of their houses, and watch until you are just going to shoot, when they pop into their holes and the ball passes harmlessly over them. The remains of sod houses, which have sheltered railroad hands, speculators, and their goods, and the various hangers-on which are always found wherever money is distributed in large quantities, are scattered along the route, and at Hays some have been fitted up for dwelling and business houses.

This city is the western frontier town of Kansas. It is the capital of Ellis county, has a regular municipal organization, numbers about a hundred and fifty houses, nearly all of which are business houses, and had between three and four hundred inhabitants, a very large majority of whom both men and women are single. One of the old citizens, however, counted for us thirty men who are here with their families. From the few observations we have made while here, we judge Hays is probably not quite as moral or virtuous as Beecher's town of Norwood. Of its hundred or more places of business, there are very few places where liquor is not sold, and a drunken man does not excite any surprise. It is certainly a paradise for local editors, and a poor place for lawyers, the men generally preferring to do their own lawing, and in their own way. . . .

By the end of July the railroad was approaching Sheridan, a now

extinct town [in present northwest Logan county, the N½ of the SE¼ of Sec. 7, T 12 S, R 36 W] named in honor of the famous Civil War general. The Lawrence *Kansas Weekly Tribune*, July 30, reprinted from the *Advance*:

Mr. Caplice arrived home from Sheridan last night, and informs us that the track is within two or three miles of that point, and that two weeks will finish up Shoemaker's contract. Preparations being made indicate a cessation of work, as the graders, as soon as their contracts are finished and business settled, leave for Denver and the upper road, or move downward to America.

The Junction City *Union*, July 25, described Sheridan in the following manner:

Sheridan is twenty miles above Monument, and thirteen [41] from the State line, is two weeks old, and has sixty-five business houses, and a population numbering two hundred people. Winter wheat flour is worth \$14 per hundred, corn \$2.50 per bushel, butter 75 cents per pound, eggs 60 cents per dozen. Whiskey 24 cents per drink, and ordinary labor \$2.50 per day, so that the place has its attractions.

An Ellsworth correspondent of the Leavenworth *Daily Conservative*, August 4, 1868, wrote August 1 that

The Union Pacific road, E. D., will be finished to Sheridan by the middle of the month, when I understand the intention is to stop the work until additional subsidy is obtained, and as this cannot be done until the next meeting of Congress, it will probably be some time ere work will be resumed. The trains west of this place are running very light, and all have been abandoned but a daily mixed train, which it is presumed will be sufficient to do the business,

"All of Shoemaker, Miller & Co.'s men, at the end of the track, have been paid off and discharged," stated the Junction City *Union*, September 5, 1868.

For over a year rails of the Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division (Kansas Pacific after March 3, 1869) waited at Sheridan and during that time the little frontier village was one of the toughest towns in the west. Six years after its heyday an eyewitness, W. E. Webb, described its scenery and inhabitants in an article titled "Air Towns and Their Inhabitants" which was published in the November, 1875, issue of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, New York:

Coyote soon disappeared. The temporary terminus moved forward to Sheridan. If the noise of house-building, the blow of the hammer and tear of the saw, are sweet music to the workman's ear, however jarring to that of the neighborhood, no such plea can be put forth for the sounds which proclaim a prairie building's removal in situations where each man is his own carpenter. A liberal application of nail has done the duty elsewhere assigned to tenons, and the consequent breaking of boards and voice of the axe are discord most wonderful. Happy then the neighbor who may be deaf! The tempers of the workmen change for the worse, and there seems to be a general disjuncting of dispositions as well as beams.

In one short week not a house but that of the railroad section men remained [at Coyote]. Thousands of oyster and fruit cans alone marked the spot where vice had lately rioted.

Sheridan was Coyote enlarged. We christened it after the gallant Phil, then stationed at Hays. When the general was introduced to his namesake, he remarked that, as a seat of war, it strongly resembled the Shenandoah Valley. The yelling and firing of our Irish mob on pay-day reminded him of Stonewall Jackson's battalions.

Sheridan was situated on the side of a desolate ravine. The ever-lasting plain embraced it. Two solitary buttes, named "Hurlbut" and "Lawrence," had been placed on guard over the region by nature, and looked as wretched and dismal as sentinels in a penal settlement. A month's hammering and the new town was built. Before one street had been surveyed, however, the engineer was called upon to locate a graveyard. This he did upon a ridge overlooking the town. "I'll give you a high lot" was a threat in Sheridan, and meant six feet of soil on the hill-side. During the first week three of the inhabitants moved into that quarter, all going, as the phrase has it in that country, "with their boots on." During the winter the number increased to twenty-six.

Judge Lynch was Justice's favorite official, and the railroad trestle the gallows tree, which bore monthly and sometimes daily fruit. Passengers standing on the platforms of the cars have occasionally drawn back in affright as they beheld gazing up at them the distorted, grinning face of some Texas Jack or California Joe, swinging back and forth like a pendulum before the prairie gale. . . .

With notification that the railroad had changed its name, the Junction City *Union*, March 13, 1869, felt construction would be speedily resumed:

The "Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division," no longer exists. The joint resolution introduced by Mr. [Sidney] Clarke [Kansas' sole member of the house of representatives] and adopted in the House, was adopted by the Senate on the 2nd inst. The name is now Kansas Pacific Railway Company—a great improvement.

Since the Union Pacific Railroad, Eastern Division, has changed its name by act of Congress, to that of the "Kansas Pacific Railway," we understand fresh efforts are being made to push forward the extension of the road. Mr. Perry, the President, it is understood, has about completed his financial arrangements for the rapid completion of the road from the present terminus at Sheridan, to the city of Denver—the distance between those two points being in the neighborhood of two hundred miles. Under the new arrangement, work will be immediately resumed.

Construction actually was started the following fall. The Junction City *Union*, October 16, 1869, reported an interview with William Jackson Palmer who was in charge of building the road to Denver:

[I] called on General Palmer, who superintends the construction of the Denver Extension of the Kansas Pacific. We found the General ready and willing to impart all information concerning the progress of the Extension, and in a clear and pointed manner, demonstrated the decided advantages which

this country will ultimately derive from the completion of this line. The project is to tap the northern line at Cheyenne, and naturally enough, divert the eastern traffic and travel over this route. A route which even the most prejudiced cannot fail to consider the most feasible for all seasons of the year. Besides the distance from ocean to ocean by the Kansas Pacific and Denver Extension is shorter by several hundred miles. General Palmer is finishing the work as rapidly as possible, though he is somewhat retarded at present, waiting for the completion of some bridges and culverts west of Sheridan, to facilitate transportation of iron and ties along the track. The grading, however, is progressing rapidly. We left General Palmer with our best wishes for the success of the enterprise he is so ably managing. . . .¹²

By November 20 the *Union* could report that track was laid to within 12 miles of the Colorado border. A week later Editor Martin wondered if the railroad had changed the weather:

The *Scientific American* publishes a letter from some one at the terminus of the Kansas Pacific railroad, who says that for two seasons past a belt of fifty miles wide, through which the road passes, and which was formerly dry, has had an abundance of rain, while hunters and men who follow the plains agree that north and south of the railroad little or no rain has fallen. He asks whether this is owing to the breaking of the land or the laying of the rails. Articles have appeared in these columns on the fact that rain has increased in this country as civilization and improvement advanced. There is no question but that the arid plains will ultimately be as fruitful as any part of the American Continent. The soil is there—the Railroad and the plow will bring the rain. Old settlers, who have noticed the change from the Missouri river westward find some excuse for the "Great American Desert" representations of this neighborhood which in olden days embellished the maps. We cannot believe that it is in the economy of God that so much magnificent country should remain forever worthless.

"Trains on the Kansas Pacific now run to Eagle Tail, [present Sharon Springs], twenty miles west of Sheridan, connecting there with a line of splendid Concord coaches to Denver," reported the *Union*, January 15, 1870. The next week, January 22, it predicted completion by July:

Work on the Kansas Pacific railroad, west of Sheridan, still progresses finely. The track has been laid on the Denver extension, fifty miles west of Sheridan. Early in March the road will be completed to Kit Carson, thirty-four miles further west of the present terminus, when cars will make regular trips to Kit Carson, 134 miles from Denver. We believe the design of the Company is to have the road built to Denver by July.

Indian troubles bobbed up again in the spring and the Junction City *Union*, May 21, 1870, commented sarcastically on the government's Indian policy:

The annual May festivities of the poor Indian have commenced again. We

12. For a detailed treatment of Palmer and the Kansas Pacific see George L. Anderson, *Kansas West: An Epic of Western Railroad Building* (San Marino, Calif., 1963).

publish elsewhere accounts of the murder of three men on Limestone, and ten on the grade beyond Carson. Thursday morning's train coming east, somewhere between Hays and Wallace, was fired into, and one or two passengers slightly wounded. The Quakers policy is a success among the Kaws and Pottawat-tomies.

"Tracklaying is progressing vigorously on the Kansas Pacific," reported the Denver *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, July 30, "and last evening the gap was only 54 miles. . . ." ¹³

The Kansas Pacific was finished on August 15. The *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, August 16, 1870, and probably all of Denver rejoiced with the announcement:

THE KANSAS PACIFIC
THE COMPLETION OF THE GREAT ENTERPRISE
TEN AND ONE-FOURTH MILES OF TRACK LAID IN TEN HOURS
THE STRIFE FOR THE FLAG—WEED VS. EICHOLTZ
THE FIRST TRAIN INTO DENVER
SCENES—INCIDENTS—AND ITEMS

The last rail has been laid, the last spikes driven, and the Kansas Pacific is at last an accomplished fact. The iron road connecting us with Kansas City and St. Louis, opening a new highway of trade and travel, and ensuring to our commerce the benefit of a fair and equal competition, is completed. A second continental railway spans the continent from the great river to the great mountains, and brings with it the promise of an increased growth and prosperity to Colorado and to the entire West. In the name of Denver and of Colorado we bid a welcome. Welcome, thrice welcome, to the Kansas Pacific Railway! Honor, all honor to the men, whose labor, energy, brains, and money have brought it. The Kansas Pacific is completed and Denver rejoices. . . . A special train on yesterday morning carried, from Denver, leaving the Union depot at 7 o'clock, Gen. Palmer, Capt. Schuyler, Major Garner, Dr. Hod, Mr. Filey, and other railway gentlemen. Invitations had been extended to Col. Fisher, of the Denver Pacific [the Denver-Cheyenne railroad which had been finished in June, 1870], and C. W. Mead, of the Union Pacific, but business engagements forbade their acceptance. . . . It may not be understood by our readers, that on this day, August 15, it had been determined to complete the road. On Friday night, August 12, there remained ten and one-fourth miles to be completed, and Col. Weed, the Superintendent of Construction on the east end, was out of iron. On Saturday, iron was supplied him by hauling it from the west end. Every arrangement was completed, and the two forces under Eicholtz and Weed proceeded to make the word of the company good and join the rails of the Kansas Pacific, making it continuous from the mountains to the father of waters. A strong but generous rivalry has sprung up between the forces. . . . As it was, the gap was filled up, the last rail laid and the last spike driven at three o'clock, making ten and one-fourth miles in ten hours. This surpasses anything in the history of railway laying ever known in the country. The fastest time made was by Col. Weed, who laid the first mile in 55 minutes.

13. Items from the *Rocky Mountain News* were graciously provided by the State Historical Society of Colorado through Dr. Harry Kelsey, state historian.

After the completion of the road, a cheer was given by the men, congratulations were exchanged among all, and the boarding and supply trains were moved back to the switch at Kiowa in order to allow a special passenger train which had come up from Kit Carson to pass. In the meantime, it may be noted that arrangements had been made by the Company for the treating of the men to an excellent supper. Preparation had been going on during the whole day and late in the afternoon, the employees and workmen sat down to an excellent dinner consisting of all the substantials, together with California fruits, ice cream, champagne, cigars, etc., making altogether a most worthy treat for the strong armed, brow heated men whose continuous labor have completed the great work.

Passing the boarding train, the special passenger train made a rapid run into Denver. The conductor was Frank Hodges, the engineer, Jack Vaughan, the engine No. 46. It consisted of two passenger coaches and a baggage car, all of which were tiled. It arrived in Denver at 6:45, where a large number of citizens had assembled to witness its arrival. . . . There was no show, no parade, no display. Everything was conducted in the most plain and simple style, and was eminently worthy of the company, which without any bragadocio, any fine writing, or any grand display, has completed a railway from the Missouri river to the Rocky Mountains and secured to our people a second highway to the East. The quiet manner in which the day passed was eminently characteristic of the quiet and modest manner in which the company have urged forward their great enterprise.

Noting an item or two in relation to the history of the road, it may be said that 231 miles of road have been constructed during the last year, only a portion of the time being employed. Since the middle of May, one hundred and fifty miles of road have been graded, the ties placed upon the track, and the iron laid, making a fine showing for four months work.

On the return of the gentlemen who went out in the morning, together with all the attachers of the company in the city, they were most handsomely entertained by General Palmer at Chapiot's, and at nine o'clock the party dispersed with thanks to their host, and congratulations on his highly successful management as director of construction.

The road will not be turned over by the contractors until the first of the coming month. There is considerable work in preparing for the through business and for the grand opening which will take place about that time. Until the road is open for through business, trains will leave Denver at 8 o'clock for the east and arrive at 6 o'clock.

Back in Junction City, the editor of the *Union* could not restrain himself from comparing the old with the new, the progress of the last five years. On September 3, 1870, he wrote:

TO DENVER AND THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

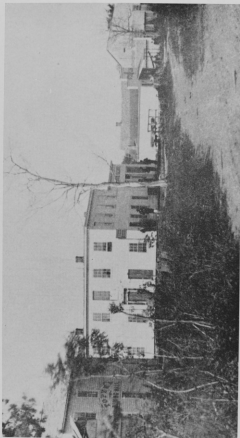
Five years ago, trains that went through this country to Denver and the Pacific, consisted of mules, prairie schooners, rugged pioneer settlers, and split-bottom chairs. The curious who hung around to see the train pass, were Indians in war paint. Five years, however, in the nineteenth century, bring about a wonderful change. A four o'clock p.m. on Thursday [September 1], the excursion of the period passed our City on its way to Denver. It was a

gorgeous affair, a train of elegant palaces, glittering with gilded mouldings and burnished lettering. How rapidly these wonderful improvements of the hour take the place of the old canvas-covered wagons of "ye olden time." Now these retired servants of the emigrant stand on the shores of the Pacific with dry spindles and rusty tires—mementoes of the past. Pullman's palaces usurp their place on the great paths of travel. . . .

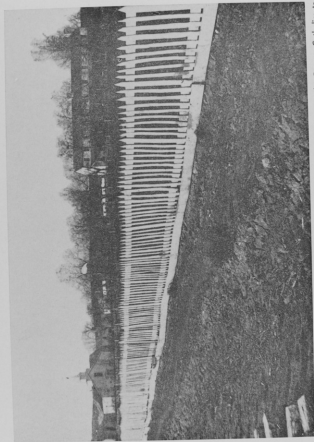
ALEXANDER GARDNER'S PHOTOGRAPHIC TOUR OF THE UNION PACIFIC, EASTERN DIVISION,
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1867.

This noted Civil War photographer was in Kansas for approximately a month during September and October, 1867, as he journeyed toward the Pacific coast.

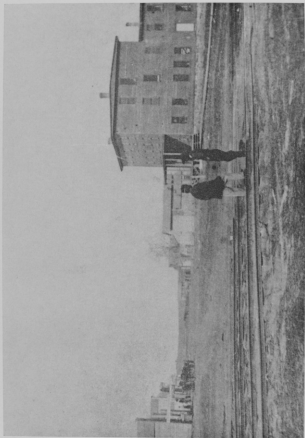
Reproduced in this section are some of the best of Gardner's pictures, as he captioned them and recorded the mileage. Arranged in geographical order they show scenes west from Topeka to the end of track.



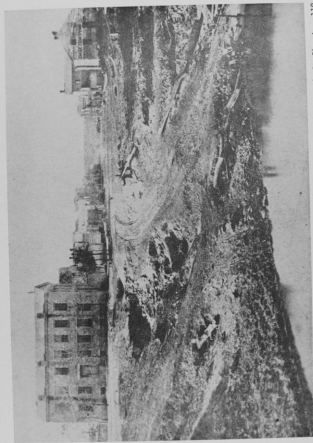
[1] "View at Depot, Topeka, Kansas," Jackson street south of the railroad tracks, 67 miles west of the Missouri-Kansas line.



[2] "St. Mary's Mission, Kansas," 91 miles west of the state line. It was founded by the Roman Catholics to serve the Pottawatomie Indians.



[3] "Lincoln Avenue, Wamego, Kansas," looking north past what was known as the Merritt House on the right, 104 miles west of the state line.



[4] "Poyntz Avenue, Manhattan, Kansas," looking west from the Union Pacific bridge over the Big Blue river, 118 miles west of the state line.



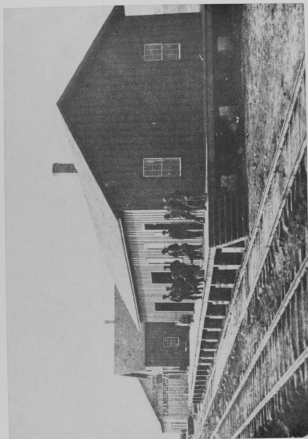
[5] "A Rare Specimen Found on Hill Above Fort Riley, Kansas," 136 miles west of the state line. The wagon contained Gardner's photo equipment and portable darkroom.



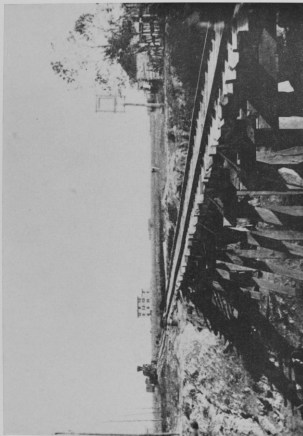
[6] "View on Kansas River at Fort Riley, Kansas," 136 miles west of the state line.



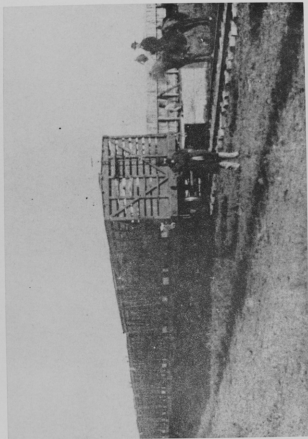
[7] "Railroad Bridge Across the Republican, Kansas," 137 miles west of the state line.



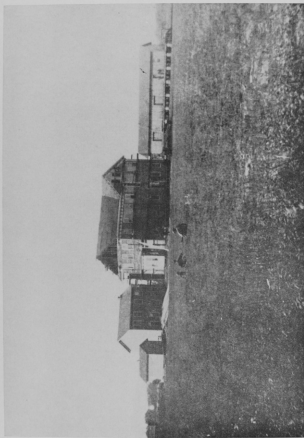
[8] "Depot at Junction City, Kansas," 139 miles west of the state line. The railroad had been in Junction City nearly a year when this picture was taken.



[9] "Trestle Bridge Near Abilene, Kansas," 163 miles west of the state line. From Mud creek on the west edge of town, Gardner shot this picture of the Union Pacific's undulating track and Abilene's famed Drovers Cottage.



[10] "Loading Cattle at MacCoy's [McCoy's] Stock Yard, Abilene, Kansas," 163 miles west of the state line. The first carload of longhorns driven up the extended Chisholm trail had been shipped east only weeks before.



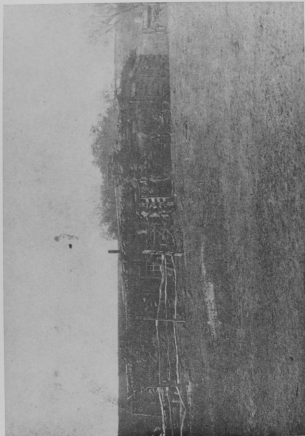
[11] "Hotel and Depot, Salina, Kansas," 186 miles west of the state line. The hotel is that of Mary A. "Mother" Bickerdyke, famed Civil War nurse (see p. 337).



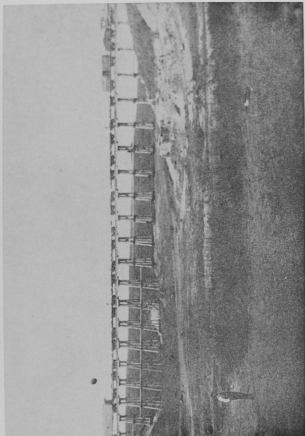
[12] "Section Men at Salina, Kansas." Gardner wrote that the extreme distance in the picture was five miles.



[13] "Workmens Ranch on Alum Creek, Kansas," 212 miles west of the state line. Construction laborers often lived in such hovels as the railroad pushed west.



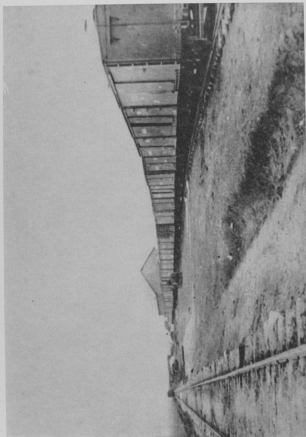
[14] "Rancho at Clear Creek, Kansas," between present Carneiro and Kanopolis, 214 miles west of the state line. The building had been a station on the Butterfield Overland Despatch.



[15] "Trestle Bridge Near Fort Harker, Kansas," 216 miles west of the state line.



[16] "Fort Harker, Kansas," 219 miles west of the state line, with troops on review.



[17] "View at Fort Harker, Kansas."



[18] "North Side of Main Street, Ellsworth, Kansas," 22.4 miles west of the state line. Less than a year old when this picture was taken, Ellsworth had already begun to earn its wild and woolly reputation.



[19] "Hays City, Kansas," 289 miles west of the state line. The town was so young that it was still primarily a tent city.



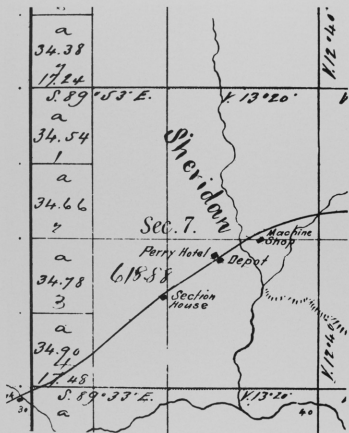
[20] "Fort Hays, Kansas." Tents in the background probably housed soldiers of the 5th U. S. infantry. Some of its contingents were being assigned track guard duty in the autumn of 1867.



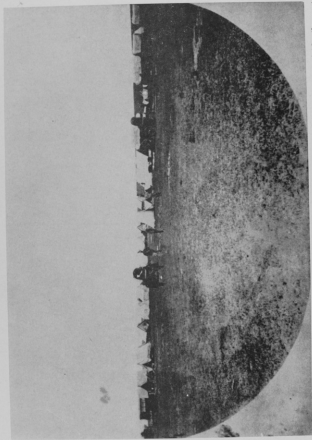
[21] "Construction Train West of Fort Hayes [Hays], Kansas." End of track at this time was a few miles east of present Ellis.



[22] "Westward, the course of Empire takes its way," Laying Track." Gardner indicated the picture was taken 316 miles west of the state line or four miles west of Ogallah.



- [23] Sheridan, a now extinct town in present northwest Logan county, was the railroad's terminal from August, 1868, to the summer of 1869. This map was reproduced from the official state survey in the office of the state auditor.



[24] "Engineer Camp on Great Plains of Kansas," 417 miles west of the Missouri-Kansas line and 12 miles west of Sheridan.