

FROM: The Parsons, Kansas, Sun, "Holiday Edition, 1876," published December 24, 1875, written by its Editor, Milton W. Reynolds.¹

THE HANNIBAL & St. JOSEPH RAILROAD.

THE OLD RELIABLE OF THE WEST.

Kansas people will always have a warm side for the Hannibal & St. Joseph R.R. The pioneers of this State are indebted to the road in a way and to an extent that years of patronage and the most loyal services in good will cannot repay. We should be derelict in duty and fail to meet the wishes and the requirements of the early settlers of Kansas if in this our great Holiday Edition we did not make honorable mention and show our kindly appreciation of this great pioneer trunk line of the west.

We shall never forget with what joy the day was welcomed when the Old Reliable was completed to St. Joseph, and the fiery horse with his ribs of steel and breath of flame slaked his thirst in the waters of the Missouri. It was a great day for western and northern Missouri. It was a great day for Kansas and Nebraska and the upper Missouri Valley. We all know with what haste it was built and how poorly it was constructed. The amount of profanity that the road caused in those early days it is frightful to contemplate. But even then it was a great institution for the new west. No other one agency did so much to people the wilds of Kansas and Nebraska, give freedom to a State, and prepare the way for the overland coach, the overland express, and finally the Pacific Railroad.

But these days and years of doubt and danger over what was facetiously termed the Horrible and Slow Jogging Railroad, those years of imperative and frightful necessity for life insurance to all travellers, did not long continue. The road bed was improved, culverts repaired, substantial bridges constructed, and all the equipment of a first-class road rapidly and substantially furnished. Of the present condition of the road under the efficient general management of that well-known old time Kansan, Hon. R. S. Stevens, our old college classmate D. C. Brooks, Esq., says in a recent number of his Chicago Railway Review:

¹See Letter from Reynolds to Stevens, No. 751224-D.

The eastern half to Brookfield - taking it over the great embankments and deep cuts of the hilly portion - is completely ballasted with rock and gravel; and the western half, running through a less difficult country, is practically in nearly as good condition of track. The alignment is as accurately maintained as our Chicago Roads. The road has 36 miles of steel rail, 28 miles of which form a continuous track west from Macon, over the broken country of the coal formation. The iron is mainly in good condition, and the road is exceedingly well tied. Depot, side track and elevator facilities are adequate along the line. The motive power is superior, consisting of 79 locomotives, all the first class ones being of the same dimensions and uniform construction and parts; and the car equipment amounts to about five cars per mile for the whole 300 miles of the company's lines. From 125 to 150 loaded cars now pass daily over the entire length of the main line; and, as these are about equally divided among grain, lumber, coal, merchandise and livestock, the empty cars are run in either direction. The road gets the large proportion of the cattle from Kansas City; the magnitude of the lumber business may be illustrated by the fact that the orders for lumber out of Hannibal not infrequently aggregate from 50 to 70 cars in one day; there will be shipped this month about 800 cars of coal, which will be increased to some 1,500 during the ensuing months.

The tonnage of the road approximates 30 per cent. more than last year; and though rates are lower, this will be compensated for in the superior economy with which the road is now administered in all its working departments. - A visit to the yards and shops of the road give one a realizing sense of the change of late going on and now about consummated in the status and spirit of the road. The fine grounds and buildings, till recently a chaos of debris and an *omnium gatherum* of odds-and-ends of machinery and materials, now present an appearance of cleanliness and order; the low portions are being filled up, new tracks laid, and the buildings repaired and painted; a spacious car shed has been erected ample to shelter the entire passenger equipment which (*sic*) was hitherto left exposed to the elements.

The Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad, it should be borne in mind, is a trunk line. It always has been and will be the favorite route for parties

coming to Kansas, to Texas, and the New West. Under the present management it cannot fail to meet the expectations of its best friends. It will do the business of this western country. It will be the favorite route for all Kansas and the new west to the Centennial.