

# Railroads – Some Background

## Miles of Railroad

In 1830 – 23 miles of railroad

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oldest\\_railroads\\_in\\_North\\_America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oldest_railroads_in_North_America)

Map of railroads in 1835 [in Why is Kearney Here? Folder]

In 1850 – 9,021 miles of railroad

[http://www.cpr.org/Museum/RR\\_Development.html#1L](http://www.cpr.org/Museum/RR_Development.html#1L)

Map of railroads 1860 – pre Civil War (more in north) [in Why is Kearney Here? Folder]

In 1870 – 53,000 miles of railroad

[http://www.cpr.org/Museum/RR\\_Development.html#1L](http://www.cpr.org/Museum/RR_Development.html#1L)

Map of railroads 1870 [in Why is Kearney Here? Folder]

In 1880 – 93,000 miles of railroad

In 1890 – 163,500 miles of railroad

<http://www.cpr.org/Museum/FAQs.html#Miles>

In 1916 – 254,000 miles of railroad (Peak year)

## Building of Transcontinental railroad

Not “transcontinental”

### Act Establishing the Union Pacific Railroad

<http://www.cpr.org/Museum/FAQs.html#Miles>

#### ● What did the Pacific Railroad Act do for the Transcontinental Railroad?

The first Pacific Railroad Act was signed by former railroad lawyer, President Abraham Lincoln in 1862. The [Pacific Railroad Acts](#) formed the Union Pacific Railroad, authorized the route to be constructed by the Central Pacific Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad, and provided [funding](#) for the transcontinental railroad in the form of [government bonds](#) (which had to be repaid with interest) and [land grants](#) (half the land for the railroads and half for the government in a checkerboard pattern so both would benefit financially when the initially almost worthless land would become valuable [in places where water was available] after the railroad was constructed). [Williams' Pacific Tourist](#), 1877, has advertisements regarding [lands](#) for [sale](#) from \$1 - \$10 per acre according to location (see pages [282](#), [283](#), and [284](#)). Also see the [Land Office Reports of 1861](#) & [1862](#).

**By 1870** - Chicago a railroad hub

CB&Q – West out of Chicago to East Burlington, IL

Burlington & Missouri River RR – Land Grant railroad through Iowa

Burlington (on the Mississippi)

Ottumwa

Red Oak

Glenwood – opposite Plattsmouth (on the Missouri)

## **Transcontinental concept**

Union Pacific not transcontinental

Junction of Burlington and UP would make railroads transcontinental

All transcontinental travelers would pass through that junction

## **Importance of Kearney's location – the Link in the Chain**

**About Feb-March, 1871** – James & George Smith took homesteads in Section 2

Two other men claimed the other two homesteads in the section

A sod house was constructed in the center of the section

D N Smith purchased Section 1 from the Union Pacific

**April 11, 1871** - D N Smith and Asbury Collins, led by Moses Sydenham, crossed the Platte from Ft. Kearny and marked the spot on the UP where the junction connection was to be made - in Section 1

**May 1, 1871** – Asbury Collins, Milton & Finley and Alfred Gay started west with cattle, farm equipment & furniture

Upon arriving here, they made arrangements to stay with the Smith brothers

Asbury telegraphed Louisa to join them

**May 13, 1871** – Louisa and Lou arrived at Kearney Station (Buda)

**Summer 1871** – Town platted ---- People began arriving

**November 30, 1872** – Village of Kearney Junction incorporated – population 100

**December 3, 1873** – City of Kearney incorporated – population 400 (may be little exaggerated)