

The Kingston Railroad Rally, 1899

The text of this article was published in the Burlington Hawk-Eye newspaper in 1899; it was found originally online at a site that no longer exists.

MN&S: A Great Success! Muscatine North & South Railroad Company A Great Success

The Kingston Railroad Rally Exceeded all Anticipations

- The Attendance Was Large and the Farmers Were Inclined to Co-Operate With the Townspeople
- Right of Way Donated
- Cash Subscriptions

(The following story appeared in the Burlington Hawkeye on August 26, 1899:)

The Kingston Railroad Rally held yesterday afternoon was a great success and a pleasant social feature in addition. A bond of union between townspeople and country people was established and the necessity of co-operation on the part of the country people in the railroad enterprise was made clearly manifest and the fact was accepted by the country people, who after the matter had been plainly put before them contributed quite liberally in right-of-way and stock subscriptions to the advancement of the cause.

The meeting was held in the grove of Jacob Hinson, just a bit of road beyond the Kingston Post Office. It was a pretty shady spot, the ground covered with long soft grass. There was assembled there a crowd of 200 or 300 men.

Quite punctually at 4 o'clock the Italian orchestra of harp and violin struck up and coincidentally the commissary stores were opened. Ham and cheese sandwiches, peaches, pears, beer and soda water were freely dispensed and frankly and eagerly disposed of by the assembled company.

After the refreshments and music had been allowed to engender sociability and the crowd had become pretty well permeated with it business was suggested. Frank B. Churchill mounted one of

the nearby wagons and from it's deck as a rostrum he briefly detailed the objects of the meeting. He called to his aid ex-Senator W.W. Dodge, who enlarged in a general way upon the mutual interests of the farmers and the townspeople, treating his subject happily and convincingly and eliciting many tokens of approbation.

He was followed by C.H. Mohland who explained in detail the origin and progress of the project; the conditions imposed upon the Burlington people in order to get the road and stated the townspeople had done the best they could and still found themselves short of the goal. It had therefore been decided to appeal to the farmers, who would be benefited by the road and ask them to put their shoulders to the wheel and push the work along. "You farmers," he said, "can sit down and figure out how this road will help each one of you to the extent of from one to twenty dollars per acre. All you need is better shipping facilities, quicker hauls to market and the competition that different markets afford." He quoted the remark of one farmer to the effect that if the government levee does what is claimed for, all of the teams in Des Moines County could not haul the corn crop raised in the bottoms to market," hence the necessity of the railroad with several stations as shipping points. He closed with an urgent appeal to the farmers, whose lands would be crossed to grant free right-of-way and to those whose lands would not be so used to contribute cash in the form of subscriptions and stock to compensate those who would suffer any material damage by the grant of the right-of-way. He called attention to the fact that the last previous chance to get a railroad through that part of the county had been offered eighteen years ago and warned them that failure to improve the present opportunity would leave them stranded for as long or longer period again. In every man's life there comes an opportunity for success, and neglect of it means failure. This is the opportunity of a lifetime for the bottom land farmers; if they help Burlington the road will be built, - if they do not the road will not be built for the simple reason that Burlington cannot raise it's required cash subscription and terminal facilities if, besides, it must buy the right-of-way from the farmers.

La Monte Cowles went extensively into the financial problems entering into the building of the road; he told how the men of Burlington had at last seen an opportunity that they had been looking for to obtain an independent competitive railway into the city. The Muscatine North and South Railway had showed them how much a road could be built; they corresponded with the people who built it and learned upon what terms the proposed road could be built. Finally, definite propositions were made and agreed to; Burlington undertook to raise \$50,000 and to furnish terminal facilities besides securing the right-of-way. The town has almost raised the money and obtained the depot grounds; now it asks country people to give the right-of-way. We've done all we can do in Burlington, and if you people who's land will be increased in value from 10 to 20 dollars per acre, will see that the right-of-way is obtained without cost to the railroad company, the road will be built.

Adrian Schultz was called upon for an expression of his views upon the railroad project, and he said he was heartily in favor of it; so much that he would give the right-of-way over his land and make a

cash subscription besides, if the road ran to Oakville. This statement was heartily applauded.

Then J.L. Pugh of Galesburg, who owns land in Huron township, was moved to speak, and he related to the farmers instances where people had stood in their own light by refusing to help a railroad project, thinking it would be obliged to come their way whether they helped or not. He also sited case where land had increased ten, twenty, and thirty dollars per acre because of the building of a line of railway. He made a rattling good talk and visibly impressed the farmers. He told them that Oquawka might have been what Burlington is if it had not assumed that the C.B. & Q. would be compelled to cross the river at that point. He asked them which example they would follow. Kingston might grow to be a place of consequence or it would remain in the state it had been in for fifty years. Along a railroad a man can always sell a farm for cash. The minute the cars run through this bottom land, at the east calculation it will go up from twenty to thirty dollars and acre.

Luke Palmer also dwelt upon the advantages offered by the proposed road and confirmed what Mr. Pugh had said relative to the increase of land values as shown by the experience of farmers about Galesburg when the C.B. & Q. built through that part of Illinois.

Then H. Weinrich laid emphasis on the fact that the townspeople had got to the end of their string, and if the road is to be built the counrty people must come forward at once; they must not think the road will come anyhow, whether you help us of not; such will not be the case. Unless you help us over the obstacle, the project will be dropped. I promise to erect a receiving warehouse at your nearest station, and you can raise pickles enough on an acre of ground to pay for all it costs you.

The committee then got out among the crowd with subscription blanks, and after a short time the following results were announced, there being much applause and enthusiasm during the reading:

Right-of-Way Donated

Name:	Acres Donated:
Dave Sheridan	over 900
T.J. Mills, Est.	over 300
A. Butler	over 300
J.L. Swank	over 280
J. Hedges	over 80
J.J. Carnegy	over 240
J.C. Bailey	over 160
H. Williams	over 240

Theo. Butler	over 80
Adrian Schultz	over 600
H. Weinrich	over 717
John Malchow	over 340
E. Niehaus	over 320
Mrs. Haight	over 1,100
Fred Schultz	along his east line
W.L. Potter	over 119-1/2
J. Upton	over 113
Wm. Bazel	over 80
Wm. H. Hengst	over 89
Walter Steingreaber	over 160
O.E. Avery	over 165
H. Haight, Est.	over 1,070
H.J. Reipe	over 360
Chas. Hebner	over 140 rods
Wm. Brumm	over 160
Wm. Prindle	over 60
V. Hedges	over 80

Cash Subscriptions

Name:	\$ Amount
L. Seibert	10.00
C.G. Griesel	25.00
F. Volkmer	25.00
Chas. Obermann	100.00
W.M. Young	10.00
L. Koch	10.00
Herman Walker	10.00

Chas. Hebner 50.00

At the conclusion of this highly satisfactory missionary work, another attack on the commissary stores was invited, and the response was equally gratifying. Before the meeting dispersed the following committee was appointed to continue the work so well begun: Messrs. Seibert, Volkmer, **Brumm**, Pugh, Schultz, Steingreaber and Obermann.

The committee arranged to meet at 8 o'clock to-night at Volmer's store in Kingston to lay out a line of work.

Among the people from town were the following: Messrs. Penrose, Pauly, Sutter, Jones, Strodel, Rhein, McCosh, Moehn, Barker, Prenzler, Palmer, Hyskell, Henry, Stivers, Mohland, Klippach, Mathes, Funck, Holiday, Weinrich, Blaul, McConnell, Topping, Robinson, Cowles, Muenzenmeyer, Dodge, Churchill, Parsons, Wilkin, Hosford, Boeck, Niehaus, Grupe, Frawley, and G.R. Hall of Oakville.

NOTES OF THE MEETING

Perfect order prevailed, An era of good feeling was established. Some of the farmers are real enthusiasts for the new road. This is a great year for the bottonland's farmers. The crop outlook is immense and a frost now would hardly injure the corn. Copeland & Martin contributed a big case of choice pears and another of peaches. The country small boys lit onto them like devouring wolves. All the town people praised the graveled portion of the bottom road, and contrasted it with it's condition in the recent past. Chairman Mathes' name was blessed more than once for this improvement.

It would be more than a decade before the M.N.& S. would steam through Kingston. The residents of that place would endure a roller-coaster of emotion before the rail was finally laid.