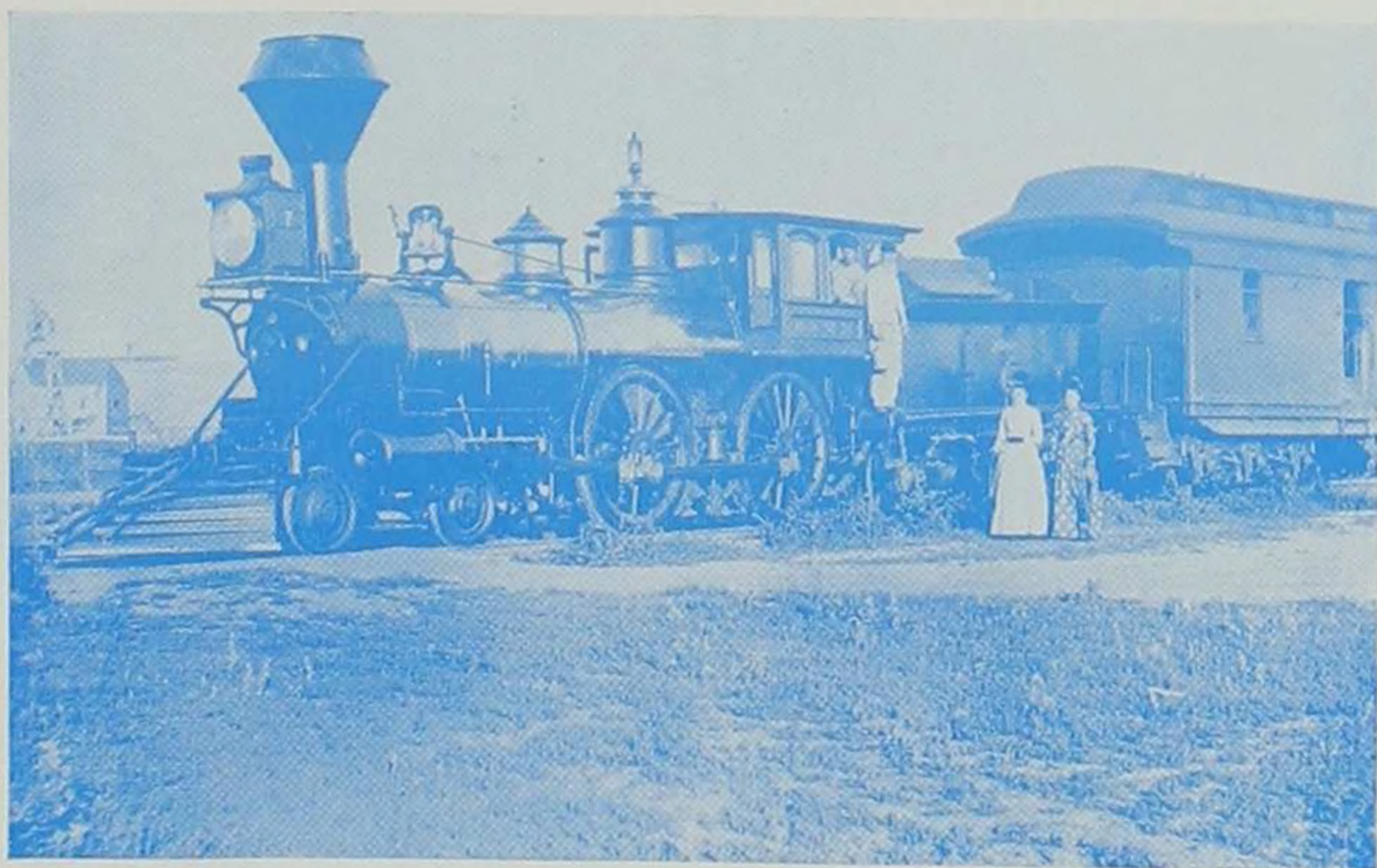


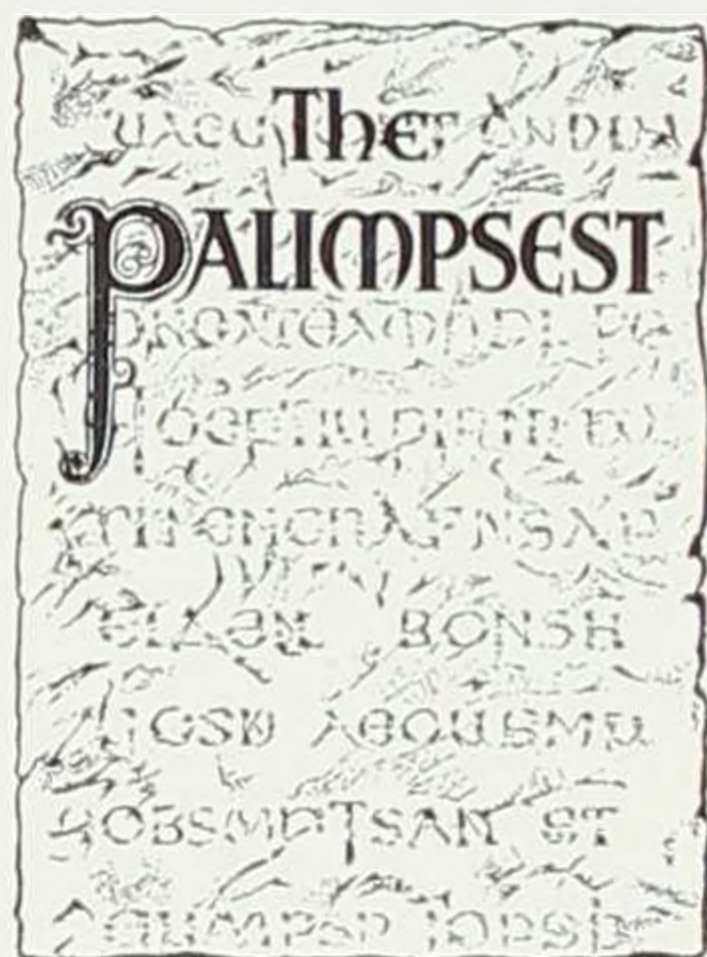
The PALIMPSEST



THE BURLINGTON & MISSOURI RIVER RAILROAD

Published Monthly by
The State Historical Society of Iowa
Iowa City Iowa

JANUARY 1952



The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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Cover

Front — B&M Locomotive "Wahoo" in 1870.

Back — Inside: Map of the lines of the B&M and the CB&Q in Iowa.

Outside: Advertising poster for B&M lands, 1873.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Officials of the Burlington Lines have furnished pictures and suggestions. Portions of the unpublished manuscript of Dr. Richard C. Overton's forthcoming book, *Burlington Route*, were read by special permission of the author.

ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER JULY 28 1920 AT THE POST OFFICE AT
IOWA CITY IOWA UNDER THE ACT OF AUGUST 24 1912

PRICE — 15 cents per copy; \$1.50 per year; free to Members

MEMBERSHIP — By application. Annual Dues \$3.00

ADDRESS — The State Historical Society, Iowa City, Iowa

THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

VOL. XXXIII

ISSUED IN JANUARY 1952

No. 1

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Burlington Plans a Railroad

On December 18, 1851, the people of Burlington and Mount Pleasant were celebrating. They had just completed a three-year project — the Burlington and Mount Pleasant Plank Road. The completion of anything on the frontier of the 1850's called for a celebration, with feasting and speaking the order of the day, and with some orator sure to submit a list of "resolutions" for enthusiastic approval. Among the resolutions adopted on that December day in Burlington was one declaring that with the completion of what was "emphatically the farmer's highway to market and prosperity," they now "ardently looked for the time when the Mississippi shall be connected with the Missouri by railway. . . ."

The word "railway" had magic in the 1850's. No other decade of the nineteenth century saw so much enthusiasm for railroads. Steam trains, which had been pushing their way westward ever since 1830, were mostly sponsored originally by individuals and groups with more optimism than

money. People did not wait for someone else to grade the right-of-way, lay the track, and supply the locomotives and cars, in those days. "Paper" railroads were planned everywhere. A group of men would gather in a Midwestern town, draw up articles of incorporation, give their railroad a name, and then set about finding the money to realize their dream.

As 1852 dawned, such a group in Burlington set out to implement the resolution passed at the plank road celebration. Fourteen months before that date — in October of 1850 — another group had met at Iowa City to organize the "Davenport and Iowa City Rail Road." So far, this plan had remained on paper; not until December of 1852 would it approach reality with the incorporation at Davenport of the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad, forerunner of the Rock Island in Iowa and perennial rival of the Burlington Route to the south. Rivalry was the spur to the men in Burlington in January, 1852.

On January 7, James W. Grimes of Burlington, soon to be Governor of Iowa, had addressed the citizens in the council chamber, telling them that he had received a letter from Washington with encouraging news of land grants for railroads. Ever since the fiery little Senator from Illinois, Stephen A. Douglas, had succeeded in procuring the land grant for the Illinois Central Railroad in 1850, communities all over the Middle West had in-

creased their pleas for additional grants of the seemingly limitless public domain. Now word had come that an Indiana Representative in Congress, Daniel Mace, would soon introduce a bill for a grant for the building of a railroad which would connect the Wabash and the Missouri rivers. Such a road would naturally pass through Burlington. There was now no time to waste. On January 15, 1852, forty-six men met in Burlington to draw up articles of incorporation for "The Burlington and Missouri River Rail Road Company."

The forty-six were not impractical dreamers. They were lawyers, businessmen, and public officials of Burlington and vicinity. William F. Coolbaugh, soon to be elected president of the road, was a merchant and one of the active builders of the plank road. David Rorer, attorney of Burlington, would for many years serve as attorney for the new railroad and, later, for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy. Joseph T. Fales was Iowa's first State Auditor, serving from 1846 to 1850. Charles Mason, Thomas W. Newman, and Jonathan C. Hall were judges; J. F. Abrahams, A. W. Carpenter, Lyman Cook, A. D. Green, Thomas Hedge, J. G. Lauman, F. J. C. Peasley, J. S. Schramm, William Sunderland, John G. Foote, Denise Denise, and J. F. Tallant were merchants. There were plenty of lawyers in Burlington, and several of them were among the incorporators of the new railroad: George Frazee, J. H. Rauch,

Henry W. Starr, and James W. Woods. In addition to these, there were R. S. Adams, Francis Barsch, J. J. Child, Joshua Copp, T. D. Crocker, William Endsley, J. C. Fletcher, J. A. Funk, Jarret Garner, William S. Graff, Levi Hagar, E. H. Ives, John Johnson, G. P. Krieschbaum, J. G. Law, O. McClelland, Alphonsus Martin, T. L. Parsons, John Pierson, C. H. Snelson, Thomas Sperry, J. P. Sunderland, J. M. Swan, and P. C. Tiffany. The name of James W. Grimes, a man so important to Iowa railroad history and to the Burlington in particular, is missing from the list, but his partner, Henry W. Starr, is there. These were the men who laid the plans for a "paper" railroad which would one day become a part of the famous Burlington system across mid-America.

Two days later, on January 17, the forty-six met again and elected nine of their number as directors. These nine, in turn, elected William F. Coolbaugh president and appointed a committee to instruct James W. Grimes to go to Washington and work for a land grant for the road. This was the first consideration. The company's pocketbook was, however, quite empty. The city of Burlington came to the rescue with \$500 in city scrip, worth about eighty cents on the dollar, to pay Grimes's expenses. The next step was to open subscription books and to go about the countryside seeking men to risk their capital in the new venture.

In the eleven counties through which the B&M would undoubtedly run there were less than 50,000 persons in 1852 — 47,739 to be exact. But to Des Moines, Henry, Jefferson, Wapello, Monroe, Lucas, Clarke, Union, Adams, Montgomery, and Mills counties the incorporators looked for financial aid, either from individuals or from the counties and towns. Since over 85 per cent of the people in this region were in the four easternmost counties of Des Moines, Henry, Jefferson, and Wapello, it was there that the salesmen of railroad shares concentrated their attention for the time being. During 1853 these four counties came through handsomely — on paper. Des Moines County citizens voted a bond issue of \$150,000; Henry County, \$100,000; Jefferson County, \$100,000; and Wapello County, \$100,000. But even the promise of \$450,000 would not build much of a railroad. A mile of railroad cost at the very least \$25,000 to build and equip. The seventy-five miles between the Mississippi and the Des Moines rivers — between Burlington and Ottumwa — would thus cost at least \$1,800,000. Even a land grant would not bring immediate cash into the till of the B&M. Thus the founders turned to the East, to New York and Boston, where they hoped to find the money they needed.

The "Boston Group" and the B&M

Western ingenuity and optimism could plan railroads in the mid-nineteenth century, but it took eastern capital to build them. In Boston, in New York, in Detroit, there were men with money, men eager to build railroads. John Murray Forbes in Boston, Erastus Corning in New York, James F. Joy and John R. Brooks in Detroit were the men who would be important to the future of the B&M.

While the forty-six Iowans were meeting in Burlington, these easterners were pushing their Michigan Central Railroad toward Chicago. Even before they reached that rising city on Lake Michigan — on May 21, 1852 — they had begun to investigate the Illinois railroad picture. As in Iowa, so in Illinois, local groups were planning railroads. The Michigan Central people, who came to be known as the "Boston Group" because of the leadership of John Murray Forbes, a thirty-nine-year-old financier, soon gathered together these scattered Illinois roads into the nucleus of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy. But railroad builders of the 1850's knew no horizons; they constantly looked beyond the "end of track" for new projects. The Boston Group sought to tap the wheat and corn lands of the Midwest. When

less than a month after the meeting in Burlington, Erastus Corning received a letter telling him of this Iowa project, he was interested.

Richard P. Morgan, chief engineer of the Peoria and Oquawka Railroad in Illinois — a road, incidentally, of which James W. Grimes was a director — was in Burlington in early 1852. On February 21 Morgan wrote to Erastus Corning, sending him a copy of the land grant memorial to Congress which the B&M incorporators had prepared, and suggesting that possibly the Michigan and New York financiers would like to add their endorsement. Morgan was well aware of the strategy of the Boston Group, a strategy which included railroad expansion westward in rivalry with the Michigan Southern and Rock Island roads.

Meanwhile, Grimes had gone to Washington on his mission. Back in Burlington, a letter came "from Detroit" for Charles Mason, who was out of town. Mrs. Mason wrote her husband on March 7: "You have a letter come from Detroit on Rail Road business, and I gave it to Coolbaugh." Possibly this might have been a letter from James F. Joy, already a magic name in railroading. Sometime during that spring of 1852 a most important meeting — for the future of the CB&Q and the B&M — took place in Boston, whether by accident or design is not known. In the lobby of the American House three men met:

James W. Grimes, director of the Peoria and Oquawka; Elisha Wadsworth, president of the Aurora Branch; and Chauncey S. Colton, of the newly incorporated Central Military Tract. These three decided that if their three Illinois roads combined and built to the Mississippi at Burlington they would form an important western outlet for the Michigan Central. The Michigan Central people in New York and Detroit agreed.

The incorporators of the B&M were well aware of the importance of these events to their railroad. Interest now began to turn from the proposals for an Indiana-to-Iowa road to a Chicago-to-Burlington road, since it was obvious that any road reaching Burlington would want to build farther west. During the late spring and summer of 1852 railroad meetings were held all along the projected line from Burlington to Ottumwa. The latter city had already been host to a meeting in favor of the Indiana-to-Iowa road in January; by February opinions had changed, and a new meeting gave its entire support to the Burlington and Missouri River project as the one more likely to succeed. In December Grimes managed to push a resolution to Congress through the Iowa General Assembly, asking for land for four east-west lines, over the opposition of a few die-hards who favored north-south lines along the Mississippi. "I have succeeded in the principal object for which I came here, viz., upon the subject of railroads," Grimes

wrote his wife on December 18. "We had a fierce struggle for four days, but won . . . triumphantly."

Sometime early in 1853 word came from Joy and Brooks in Detroit that the B&M might expect financial aid from the Michigan Central interests, provided the directors of the Iowa road could show evidence of progress. In reply, the directors of the B&M resolved to "proceed with all energy, means, and resources in our power" and to open subscription books "in all the counties along the line of road." Albert Hebard was immediately sent on a preliminary exploring and surveying expedition along this "line of road" from Ottumwa to Council Bluffs. Today the main line of the Burlington follows almost exactly this original and hasty survey, except for a slight deviation at Vilisca.

The eastern Iowa counties, meanwhile, were voting bonds for aid to the railroad, and a Michigan Central civil engineer, Henry Thielsen, had been sent by Forbes to survey the route from Burlington to Ottumwa. In June Forbes's brother, R. B. Forbes, made an inspection trip from Burlington to Mount Pleasant, and shortly thereafter Coolbaugh and Tallant of the B&M met with Joy and Brooks in Galesburg. From this time on the B&M began rapidly to lose its local character; on July 2 the directors elected John W. Brooks to the presidency, and the B&M moved closer to the CB&Q interests.

Building the B&M

Iowa's first settlers had helped build and repair the rough country roads which served as highways. With the coming of the railroads, the farmers along the line turned out to help prepare the ground for the iron rails. Eighteen farmers between Burlington and Ottumwa received contracts from the B&M in May of 1854 to grade the seventy-five miles between those two cities. At the same time, Alfred Hebard, who had made the preliminary survey to the Missouri River, received the contract for bridging the road from Burlington to Ottumwa, while Charles H. Snelson and Sandon Mullen agreed to furnish the ties.

This was, in any day, an expensive project; in 1854, for a railroad company with practically an empty till, it seemed almost foolhardy. Yet, after many setbacks and the intervention of depression and civil war, the B&M, still under its original name, reached Council Bluffs by January 1, 1870 — eighteen years from the time the forty-six met in Burlington. It was, to quote Dr. Richard C. Overton, historian of the Burlington Railroad, "only by this magic combination of western determination and eastern dollars that the early Burlington was built."

Once started, the dirt began to fly, and hopes were high. But money trickled in slowly from subscriptions for shares, and county bonds were not released to the company until the track reached the county granting the bonds. An attempt was made in June to sell \$1,200,000 in shares in the East, but the effort failed. J. M. Forbes came to the rescue with \$25,000 and the promise of as much more. However, in spite of these heroic efforts, work on the road was almost suspended by the end of summer. Through the winter months many became discouraged.

With the spring of 1855 hopes again rose. On March 17 the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad reached East Burlington, and the usual celebration was in order. On May 31 Burlington turned out to welcome Lewis Cass, Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, the mayor of Chicago, and "other luminaries" who had come to the little Iowa city to rejoice in another link completed in the growing chain of American railroads. They were welcomed by Governor Grimes, who did the honors of the occasion until time for the supper. This festivity he refused to attend, because he felt that as Governor he should not take part in a "supper where it was known that champagne was to be drunk." That, and a strong distaste for after-dinner speaking and speeches, were, he felt, sufficient reasons for staying at home.

By this time Jonathan C. Hall, one of the orig-

inal forty-six incorporators, was president of the B&M. Encouraged by the arrival of the CB&Q just across the river from his partly-graded line of road, Hall asked for bids on completing the line from Burlington to the Skunk River in Henry County. After much dickering, Clarke and Hendrie of Burlington received a contract to build to the Skunk River at a price of \$22,500 per mile for the thirty-five miles — a total of \$787,500. They set to work at once; grading out of Burlington was completed, the iron arrived, and tracks were laid. On January 1, 1856, four years after the incorporation of the B&M, a brass-trimmed, wood-burning engine, with the characteristic funnel stack of the nineteenth century locomotives, "chuffed out of Burlington a few miles and returned." At last the work of four years was beginning to bear fruit, and Burlingtonians would soon "take an affectionate farewell of that time-honored institution, the stage coach."

The year 1856 was a memorable one for Iowa railroads. In May, after some ten years of petitions, memorials, and political pressure, Congress at last passed an act granting lands to four east-west lines in Iowa. Governor Grimes immediately called the General Assembly into special session, and on July 14 the Iowa legislature enacted the necessary legislation accepting the grant, which totaled about three and one-half million acres of Iowa land. According to the act of Congress, the

railroads were to receive the alternate odd-numbered sections "for six sections in width on each side of each of said roads," provided that these sections were unoccupied at the time. If some of the lands were already sold, then indemnity lands for fifteen miles back from the road could be substituted. The Iowa legislature added further stipulations: first, the entire road must be located and a map filed with the Governor before April 1, 1857; second, to qualify for the lands, each road must have "completed and equipped" seventy-five miles within three years, thirty miles each year thereafter for five years, and the entire line must be completed by December 1, 1865. The lands were to be turned over to the railroads in 120-section lots upon the completion of each twenty miles of road. The Burlington and Missouri's share of this first grant amounted to about 300,000 acres; on September 3, 1856, the directors voted to accept the grant and its conditions.

Just five days before Congress had passed the land grant act — on May 10, 1856 — the B&M had mortgaged the first thirty-five miles of their road for \$350,000. Thus, with money in hand, and the promise of more to come from sales of the land grant, the prospect was bright by the end of 1856. Progress had been made since New Year's Day when the first locomotive had made its appearance. By the end of April the first passenger train began running on the partially completed

line; in May the track was finished to Danville, Des Moines County; on June 17 the rails reached New London in Henry County; and in the following month they were completed to Mount Pleasant.

News of the land grant increased activity all along the projected line. Henry Thielsen was instructed to start the final survey west of Ottumwa, and in the sparsely settled counties of southwestern Iowa enthusiasm ran high. Thielsen's arrival at Glenwood in Mills County on the Missouri River was followed shortly by a "Railroad Meeting" which resolved to open subscription books for the B&M at once. Glenwood was "all life and motion."

It had taken two years to build the thirty miles from Burlington to Mount Pleasant. It took another year to complete the five miles to the Skunk River at Rome. Not until September 1, 1857, did the B&M freight trains begin service to that small Henry County community. A second mortgage of \$275,000 had been negotiated in January, 1857, but even that effort, plus the work of John Murray Forbes in raising \$1,500,000 during the year did not help to speed the rails westward. The severe financial depression of 1857 had slowed progress almost to a standstill. In May of 1857 Edward L. Baker of New Bedford, Massachusetts, had been elected president of the B&M, signaling the growing eastern control of what had started out to be merely a local Iowa road.

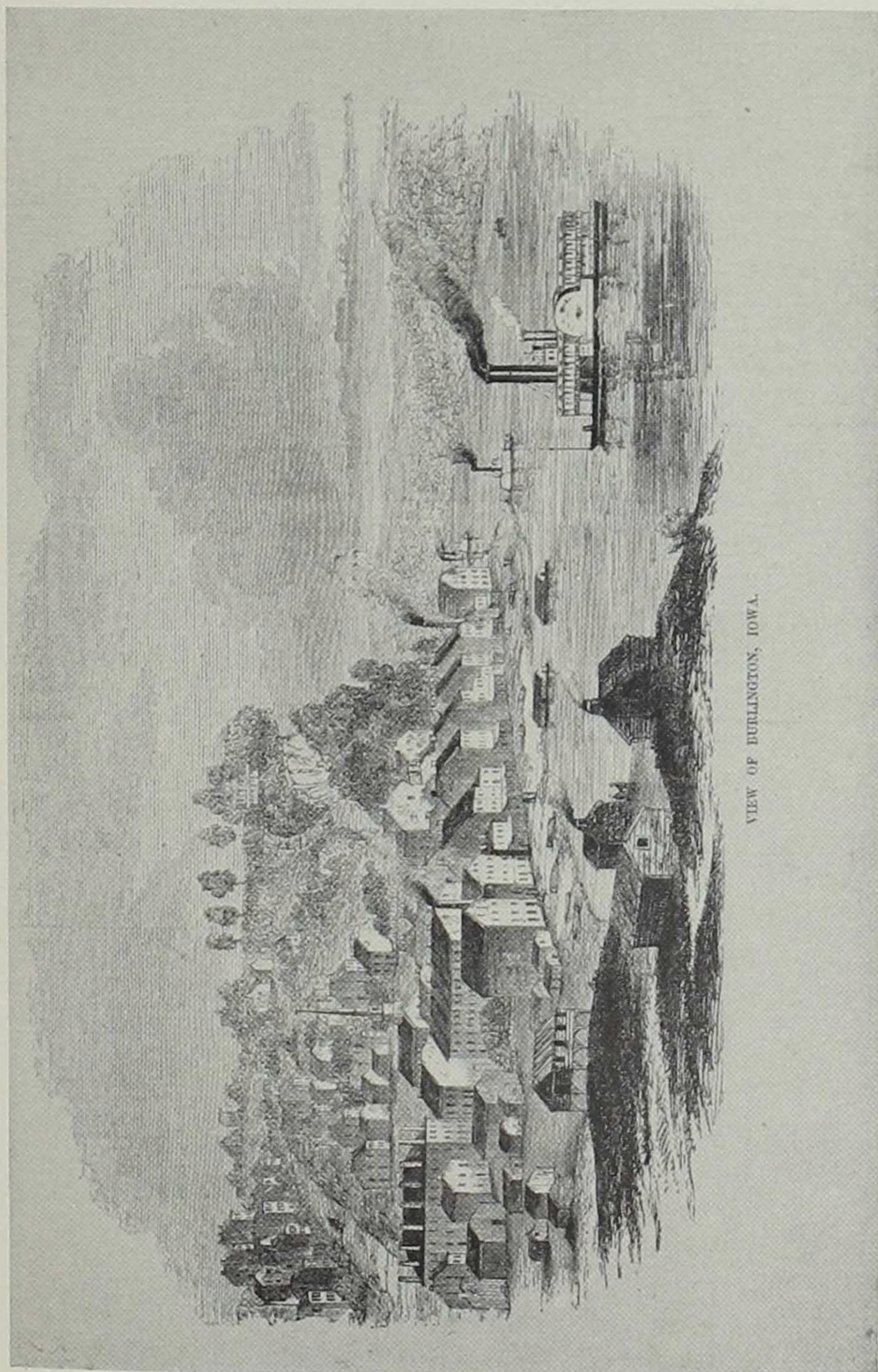
Meanwhile, John Murray Forbes in Boston watched the struggles of the B&M carefully; he now had a large stake in the Iowa road and he wanted his own man on the spot to watch things. Characteristically, for Forbes believed in young men, his choice fell on twenty-three-year-old Charles Russell Lowell, a nephew of the poet James Russell Lowell. In August, 1858, young Lowell arrived in Burlington, a town, so he wrote his mother, with "a half-fledged look, the pinfeathers being very apparent," but still a town "not to be sneezed at." With the title of assistant treasurer, Lowell set to work to learn the business of railroading. Iowans, oppressed by falling prices and lagging railroad construction, were growing restive and beginning to grumble, while newspapers alternately scolded and lectured. One suggestion of a Burlington paper, that "*people* along their line will be of vastly greater value to them than land," may well have been listened to thoughtfully by Lowell and the B&M interests. When, in 1870, they began the huge task of converting their land grant into cash, they sold, as far as possible, to actual settlers who would develop the country and produce surpluses to be shipped via railroad to the markets of the world.

John G. Read, vice-president of the B&M and superintendent in charge of construction, was also in Burlington by 1858. Under his patient direction the line slowly pushed the sixteen miles to Fairfield

by August 1, but this was all the B&M could show in the way of progress that year. The city of Burlington, following a visit from James F. Joy, had added its municipal help during the year, granting the road \$75,000 of its bonds, plus the river accretions along the Mississippi for depot grounds. In October a third mortgage of \$1,000,000 brought the bonded indebtedness of the small road to over a million and a half. This money, plus the stock which had been sold in Iowa and in the East, enabled the road to reach the Des Moines River at Ottumwa by late August, 1859, in time to meet the requirements of the land grant act.

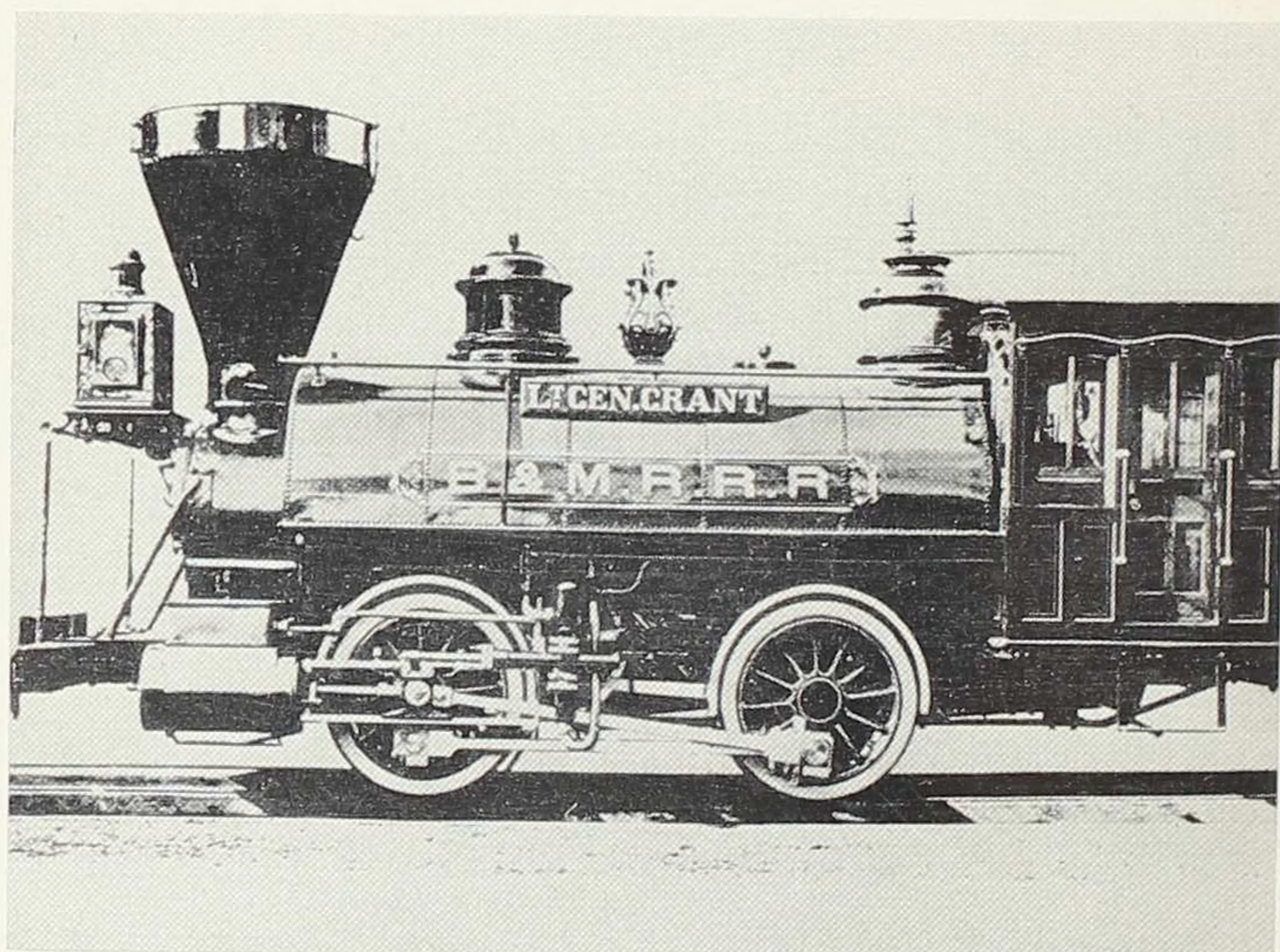
A "Grand Railroad Celebration" was planned at Ottumwa for September 1. The citizens resolved that all previous celebrations must be surpassed. The committee sent out a call for donations of money, produce, "cakes, pies, fowls, butter, honey, &c." Expressing the general excitement over the approach of rail connections with the east, they closed their plea with a resounding call:

Farmers of Wapello! you who have been in the habit of selling your produce for a mere song, and taking store pay — you who have waded through snow and storms with your stock to the Mississippi — you who have travelled after mud wagons to get your yearly supplies — you, all of you! come forward and let us rejoice together over the arrival of the "Iron Horse!" Let us glory over this most important event — have a good dinner and a unanimous and harmonious action, and go home satisfied with

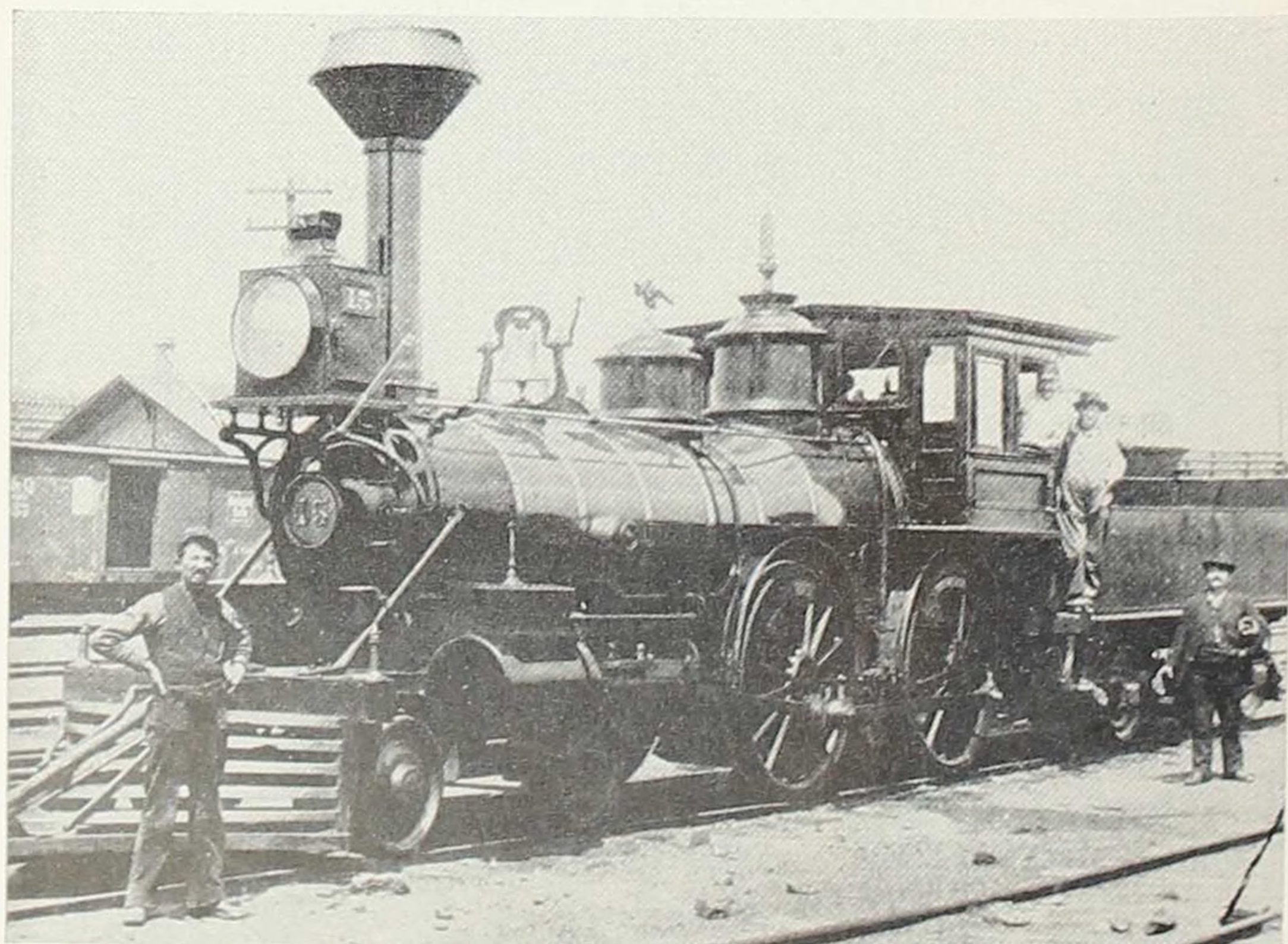


VIEW OF BURLINGTON, IOWA.

View of Burlington in 1850



Credit Burlington Lines
B&M Locomotive built in 1866

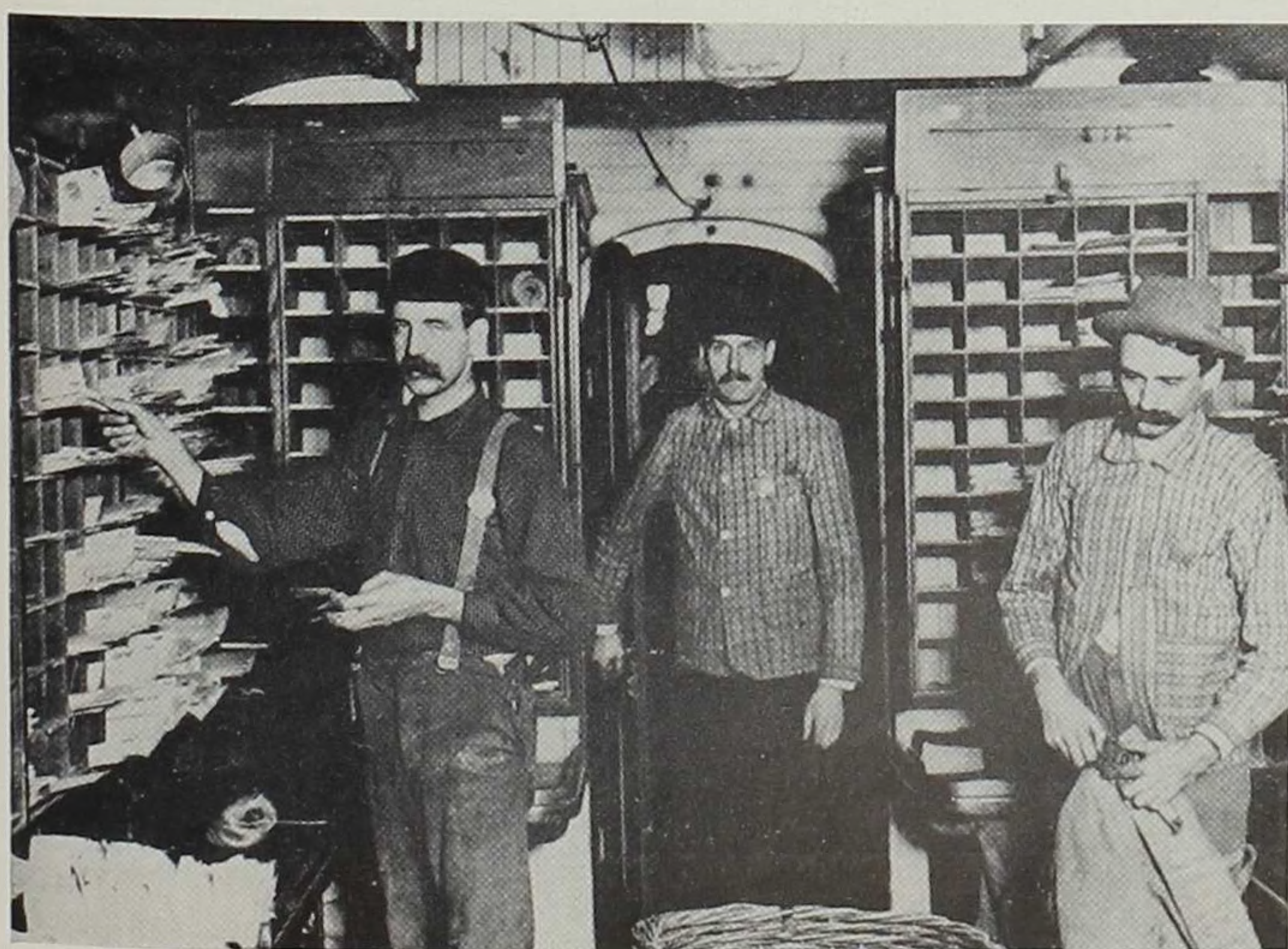


Credit Burlington Lines
B&M Locomotive No. 15



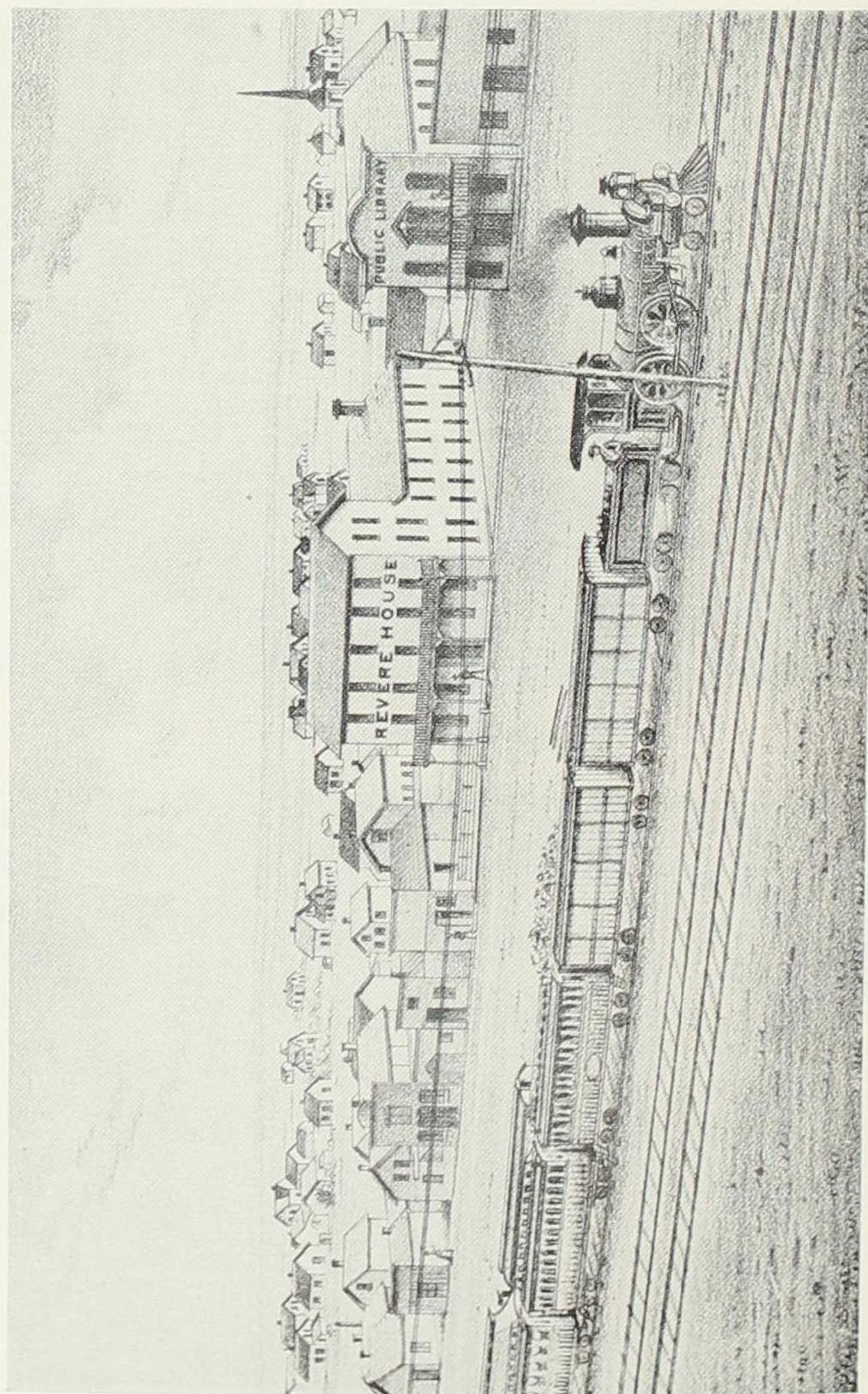
Credit Burlington Lines

Traveling on the B&M



Credit Burlington Lines

Sorting Mail on the B&M



View of Creston in the 1870's

ourselves, and proud of our county! Now, altogether — let no one stand back.

At "7½ o'clock" on the morning of September 1, a half-mile-long excursion train left Burlington, "drawn by two magnificent first class locomotives" — the "J. C. Hall" and the "Mount Pleasant." A second section, also with two locomotives — the "Burlington" and the "Autograph" — followed, picking up passengers at every stop. A private coach brought many eastern stockholders and the officers of the road from Burlington, and when the supply of passenger coaches was filled to capacity, flatcars "trimmed with trees and branches" furnished benches for the militia companies, bands, fire companies, and "an immense number of citizens and their ladies." In all, some thirty-five assorted cars brought about 3,000 people to Ottumwa for the great day; many more came by wagon from the surrounding countryside. Ottumwa claimed 12,000 visitors that day.

Eight tables, each 460 feet long (in order to outdo Fairfield's 986-foot table at her celebration), were laden with food for the rank and file, while the officials were served a banquet prepared by Peter Ballingall in the new B&M freight house. The centerpiece at the table (which was covered with muslin costing seven cents a yard) was a two-foot-high pyramid of cake, topped by a Goddess of Liberty. Two balls closed the festivities, which continued "until broad daylight."

Ottumwa soon began to show the effects of the B&M on its economy. New businesses sprang up, and the Western Stage Company — retreating before the oncoming rails — set up its offices there. One corner of the stage company's office was set aside as a railroad ticket office, with J. W. Edgerly in charge. Two trains daily reached Ottumwa from Burlington, one an "express," the other an "accommodation." The latter made the trip in six hours; the "express," living up to its name, in five. Three lines of four-horse coaches carried passengers and goods westward from the railhead at Ottumwa.

Back in Burlington another young man had arrived to help Lowell in his expanding activities. He was but nineteen years old and his name was Charles Elliott Perkins. Twenty-two years later, in 1881, this youngster would become president of the CB&Q. But in 1859, at a salary of \$30 a month, he set about learning the railroad business. Within a year he was made assistant treasurer and land agent — with the job of organizing the exploration, surveying, classifying, and selling of between 200,000 and 300,000 acres of land in southern Iowa. Ralph Waldo Emerson visited Burlington in 1867 and remembered Perkins as "a noble youth who inspired interest and respect at once."

With seventy-five miles of the road completed, business on the B&M boomed, as the "cars" drained off the produce of the rich Des Moines

Valley. The balance sheet of April 30, 1860, showed that the road had spent \$2,750,000 to reach Ottumwa; even without counting equipment and surveys, the cost had been \$34,000 per mile. About 40 per cent of this sum had been realized from stock subscriptions; the balance was in bonds, bearing 8 per cent interest. As business increased in 1860, the B&M looked forward to expanding westward. But civil war intervened, and for seven years — from 1859 to 1866 — “end of track” for the B&M remained at Ottumwa.

The equipment of the B&M during the war years consisted of 8 wood-burning locomotives and 230 freight cars. What passenger cars they had were borrowed, probably from the CB&Q, until 1864 when two of their own were purchased. In that same year the road also began converting her wood-burning locomotives to coal. The average train consisted of only eight freight and two passenger cars; while the average freight load, per train, was only about 42 tons. Freight tonnage increased 50 per cent from 1860 to 1865, while passenger traffic doubled. But, in spite of seeming prosperity, the war years were hard ones for railroads. In order to meet interest payments due on bonds, President Baker proposed a refinancing program in 1863 which saved the road. The competition of the Des Moines Valley Railroad, which crossed the B&M at Ottumwa in 1863 and began taking some of the freight business from the Des

Moines Valley, made it more than ever necessary that the B&M resume its westward march.

The Iowa legislature had come to the rescue of her railroads, mired by the war, and had extended the time limit on building, so that the land grants would not be forfeited. Congress, in turn, lent a hand to the B&M in 1864, when an act was passed granting indemnity lands as far back from the line as twenty miles, in order to make up for much of the land in the original grant which had been taken up by previous settlement, swamp land claimants, or speculators. When the original grant of 1856 had been made, all land offices within the land grant area were ordered closed; but for some reason — the B&M suspected fraud — the Council Bluffs district office did not receive closing orders until several days after the other offices had been shut down. Knowledge of the land grant act was general; the land office at Council Bluffs was swamped with speculators who bought up great blocks of lands which were within the B&M grant area. Thus, although the B&M claimed some 300,000 acres by the 1856 act, only 230,000 were finally certified. It was to alleviate this condition that Congress passed, and President Lincoln signed, an act allowing about 100,000 additional acres to the B&M in Iowa.

A further grant of land from Congress in 1864 broadened the horizon of the B&M. Under the instigation of Representative James F. Wilson of

Fairfield, Congress granted the B&M about 2,368,000 acres in Nebraska, on condition that the road build its line through that territory to a junction with the Union Pacific Railroad at the 100th meridian. The B&M was now no longer merely an Iowa road but was raising its sights toward the proposed transcontinental railroad.

As the war drew to a close James F. Joy decided to make a personal reconnaissance of the area west of Ottumwa. He made two trips during the spring and summer of 1865, trips which promised well for a western Iowa railroad. At this time he was president of the CB&Q and a director of the B&M. Accompanied by Perkins and Thielsen, Joy left Burlington on May 18 by train to Ottumwa. A stagecoach took them on west, and they reached Albia at seven in the evening. Their presence "made a sensation," Perkins reported, and plans were made for a public meeting on the following Saturday.

The next day they continued on to Chariton in Lucas County by wagon, but because of a broken axletree finished the last mile into town on foot. The visit from the president of the Burlington, even if he had to walk to get there, was also a matter of excitement in Chariton. After dinner Joy met with the citizens at the courthouse and told them bluntly that if they wanted a railroad they would have to raise \$50,000. Chariton replied that she thought she could do it. Albia's reception and

reaction to a similar demand, made on the return journey, was not quite so enthusiastic as that of Chariton, but both Perkins and Joy were nevertheless encouraged.

They made a second trip in June and returned with promises from Albia and Chariton of \$100,000. In Chariton, Joy had to compete for attention with Yankee Robinson's circus parade, and at Albia they were served — but refused to eat — a supper of oysters. To easterners, oysters 1,300 miles from the seaboard — and in June, at that — were not only uneatable but unthinkable. The Albians, Perkins reported, ate them "as if they would never get another chance," a contingency he thought quite probable.

In September, 1865, Perkins was made superintendent of the B&M in Iowa, and John S. Wolf and S. C. Carpenter received a contract to build the B&M from Ottumwa to Albia. Construction began in July. At last the B&M was again moving westward. In May of 1866 Joy was elected president of the B&M, thus further strengthening the close ties with the Illinois road. A third trip, this time to the Missouri, came in August, when Peter Ballingall of Ottumwa drove Perkins and Joy across Iowa in a buggy. As a result of this trip Joy recommended another 50 miles of road, through Chariton and Osceola to Afton in Union County.

Up to this time goods had been ferried from the

B&M at Burlington to the CB&Q at East Burlington, an expensive and time consuming process. During the winter months, of course, Nature provided a quicker method, when the mighty Mississippi froze over and goods and passengers could be transferred on the ice. But a bridge was needed. The Rock Island had completed its bridge at Davenport in 1856; a bridge at Burlington was long overdue. Thus, when the directors of the CB&Q, on September 11, 1866, voted to bridge the Mississippi at Burlington, the B&M people took heart. With contracts let for the road westward, with a bridge to speed them eastward to Chicago, and with the princely grant of land in Nebraska, every obstacle seemed removed.

When the B&M construction train reached Albia in November, 1866, the editor of the *Albia Union* congratulated "the cities of Boston and New York, on their good fortune in having communication with the growing city of Albia." This "growing city" had not been reached without trouble. The Des Moines River had been bridged above Ottumwa in 1865; in January, 1866, part of the bridge was "carried away by the high water and floating ice," but by May repairs had been completed and only the iron for tracks was needed. In February the railroad hands at Ottumwa struck for higher wages — they demanded \$2.00 per day. The railroad answered this request by sending to Chicago for other workers; "work will

be suspended only a very short time," the newspaper commented.

From 1867 to 1869 the B&M moved steadily forward. On April 19, 1867, the road reached Russell, 23 miles west of Albia; by July 1, trains ran to Chariton; by December 23 to Woodburn, half-way across the state. Osceola was reached January 29, 1868; Afton on September 10; Cromwell on June 1, 1869; Corning on August 23; Villisca on September 28; and Red Oak on November 12, 1869.

Meanwhile, tracks were being laid from East Plattsmouth eastward, and on November 26, 1869, S. C. Carpenter reported laconically from Glenwood: "The last spike on the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad has been driven to-day at 12 o'clock, by J. S. Wolf and S. H. Mallory." The actual joining occurred at Hastings, nine miles west of Red Oak Junction.

Thus, after fifteen years of construction, preceded by two years of planning, the Burlington and Missouri River Rail Road Company had fulfilled its objective: "to construct and use a railroad extending from Burlington to the most eligible point on the Missouri River." The "construction" was now completed; on January 1, 1870, the "use" began, with the institution of regular through service. By using the tracks of the St. Joseph and Council Bluffs Railroad at Pacific Junction, the B&M could run its trains into Coun-

cil Bluffs, the focal point for Iowa's east-west lines. The B&M was the third road to reach Council Bluffs; the North Western and the Rock Island had reached that city in 1867 and 1869 respectively. Back on the Mississippi, the CB&Q bridge had been completed in 1868. On May 10, 1869, the driving of the Golden Spike at Promontory Point in Utah had joined the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific. Thus, when the B&M reached Council Bluffs on New Year's Day, it became another link in America's transcontinental system.

From B&M to CB&Q

As early as 1859, B&M treasurer Charles Russell Lowell had come to the conclusion that "he who buildeth a railroad west of the Mississippi must also find a population and build up business." Thus, in 1870, with the road completed across the state, the next big task was to "find a population." The advertising and selling of the B&M's 300,000 acres began, officially, on April 1, 1870, although some 10,000 acres had been sold during 1866-1869 by Colonel John W. Ames, land agent for the company. Ames did yeoman work in laying the foundation for the land department, but the real development of the Burlington land grant came when George S. Harris, formerly of the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad, took over the job of selling Iowa lands to farmers.

The land grant railroads either disposed of their holdings in great blocks to land companies or to individuals — often men directly or indirectly connected with the roads — or, as in the case of the Illinois Central and the Hannibal and St. Jo, they endeavored to sell only to *bona fide* settlers who would develop the region. The B&M subscribed to the latter policy. Rather than turn over their grants to speculators, who might hold the

land out of the market for years waiting for a rise in prices, southern Iowa's railroad preferred to bring actual farmers and businessmen to their area. By following this policy, the B&M could boast of doing its share in building up the state. They stated their position in April, 1869:

There is certainly no individual, or corporation of individuals, more directly and deeply interested in the welfare, and advancement of Southern Iowa, than is the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad Company. They are aware that that which conduces to the benefit of the State, will necessarily redound to their own especial advantage. They believe that the great advantages of Southern Iowa, have only to be fairly and fully understood to be eagerly grasped by thousands desirous of finding homes in the west.

The farmers and townsmen of Iowa were ready to welcome the type of settler that the B&M brought in. They did not share in the modern romantic admiration for "pioneers." To them, the pathbreaking pioneers were bad farmers. They "flee from *rats* and Railroads," wrote one Wapello County farmer. What Iowa wanted was a "better class of farmers" who would "build fine houses, and erect substantial improvements, designing to pass a lifetime here." And since the B&M's ten-year-payment contracts stipulated that a certain amount of improvements must be made each year, the men who bought railroad land did prove to be a "better class of farmers." As a result, southern

Iowa began to "blossom as the rose," in the words of one enthusiastic observer.

The wisdom of the B&M's land policy was soon evident. Population increased, the products of the farm increased, and freight tonnage increased — all to the profit of Iowa and the railroad. New towns sprang up along the line of the B&M, many of them sponsored by townsite companies founded by the directors of the railroad, particularly in the counties west of Ottumwa. Creston, for example, was founded in 1869 by a group of B&M officials as a division point for the railroad. These townsite companies usually donated lots to churches, schools, courthouses, mills, or stores. Anyone who could guarantee to develop the business or cultural activities of the embryo town would receive aid from the founders. Perkins contributed 1,000 volumes to help found the Creston public library, while Forbes and Nathaniel Thayer took liberal shares of stock and also made donations of books for the enterprise. Other towns which owed their existence to the railroad promoters were Russell, Lucas, Woodburn, Murray, and Elliott.

Meanwhile, farmers from the East and from Europe were coming to Iowa in response to the advertising and promotional work of the B&M land department. Having established a purchase plan, Harris set out to "find a population." Every inducement was offered to make it easy for pros-

pective buyers to travel throughout the area. A circular issued in about 1872 advised the immigrant on procedure:

After the cars have crossed the Mississippi Bridge, into Burlington, look out of the left side windows. You will see the north side of the brick building nearest the track inscribed, "*B. & M. R. Land Office*," and its front covered with the following words:

IOWA AND NEBRASKA LANDS. B. & M. R. R.

English	Deutsche	Scandinavsk
Emigrants'	Auswanderer	Emigrants'

Go thither as soon as you leave the cars.

In this "Emigrant" home officials would advise on sites; the traveler could stop overnight or as long as necessary; here, also, he could buy "land exploring" tickets, the purchase price of which would be deducted from his first payment. He could then travel from one point on the railroad to another, until he found the land which suited him. The cost of travel was moderate. From Chicago, the purchaser could buy a ticket to Burlington for \$7.25. From Burlington, a ticket over the 279 miles to the Missouri River would cost him only \$12.25. The railroad advised their prospective customers not to hurry in selecting a site: "This is a great country, and it takes some time to see it thoroughly."

Under Harris' direction, the business of the land office boomed. In the decade 1870-1880, practically all of the grant in Iowa went into the

hands of individual purchasers: a total of 5,604 sales of 320,678.67 acres brought \$3,881,712.10 into the railroad's pockets. The average price paid per acre was just over \$12.00. Most of the Burlington grant was in middle and western Iowa, since the eastern counties were practically all settled by 1856 when the first grant was made. Only scattering sections or quarter-sections were sold by the B&M in the counties east of the Des Moines River. In 1874 when Harris resigned because of ill health, his job was taken over by A. E. Touzalin, a former ticket agent at Burlington who had done much in the earlier days to further the company's advertising.

Just as the railroad had found an unoccupied prairie and peopled it with farmers and dotted it with little market towns, so it changed the type of agriculture of the area. Grains, heretofore a drug on the market, now found a ready sale in the East. Cattle, formerly driven to market over long distances, with an inevitable loss of weight on the way, could now be shipped on cattle cars to slaughter houses in Ottumwa, Burlington, or Chicago. "Prior to the time of the railroads," reported "Uncle Henry" Wallace, "the hog that could not walk to market was of no use. . . . The railroad has shortened the nose, shortened the legs, done away with the bristles, and put a more lovely kink in the tail."

With rising prices and more available markets

for his surplus, the Iowa farmer became a businessman. Commercial farming came with the railroad. Many of these advantages were lost sight of in the seventies, during the agitation for decreased freight rates and railroad regulation; but even while he fought the railroads, the Iowa farmer knew he could never get along without them. One reason for the strong anti-railroad sentiment of this decade might have been that by that time Iowa's biggest roads had lost their local character. They were no longer "our" roads; men in Chicago, in Boston, and in New York decided the destinies of the railroads for which Iowans had laid the groundwork.

Such was certainly the case with the B&M. All of the original forty-six founders had disappeared from the directory of the road. In 1872, of the nine directors, six were also on the eleven-man CB&Q board: Nathaniel Thayer, J. M. Forbes, J. M. Brooks, R. S. Watson, Erastus Corning, and James F. Joy. Only one resident of Burlington was a board member — E. D. Rand, lumberman and banker. Ever since its founding in 1852 the B&M had drawn closer to the CB&Q. By 1872 the latter road held large blocks of stock in the Iowa line; the Burlington's president, Joy, was a member of the B&M board, while the B&M president, Brooks, was a member of the CB&Q board. Therefore, on December 31, 1872, the two roads took the step which was inevitable: the Iowa road

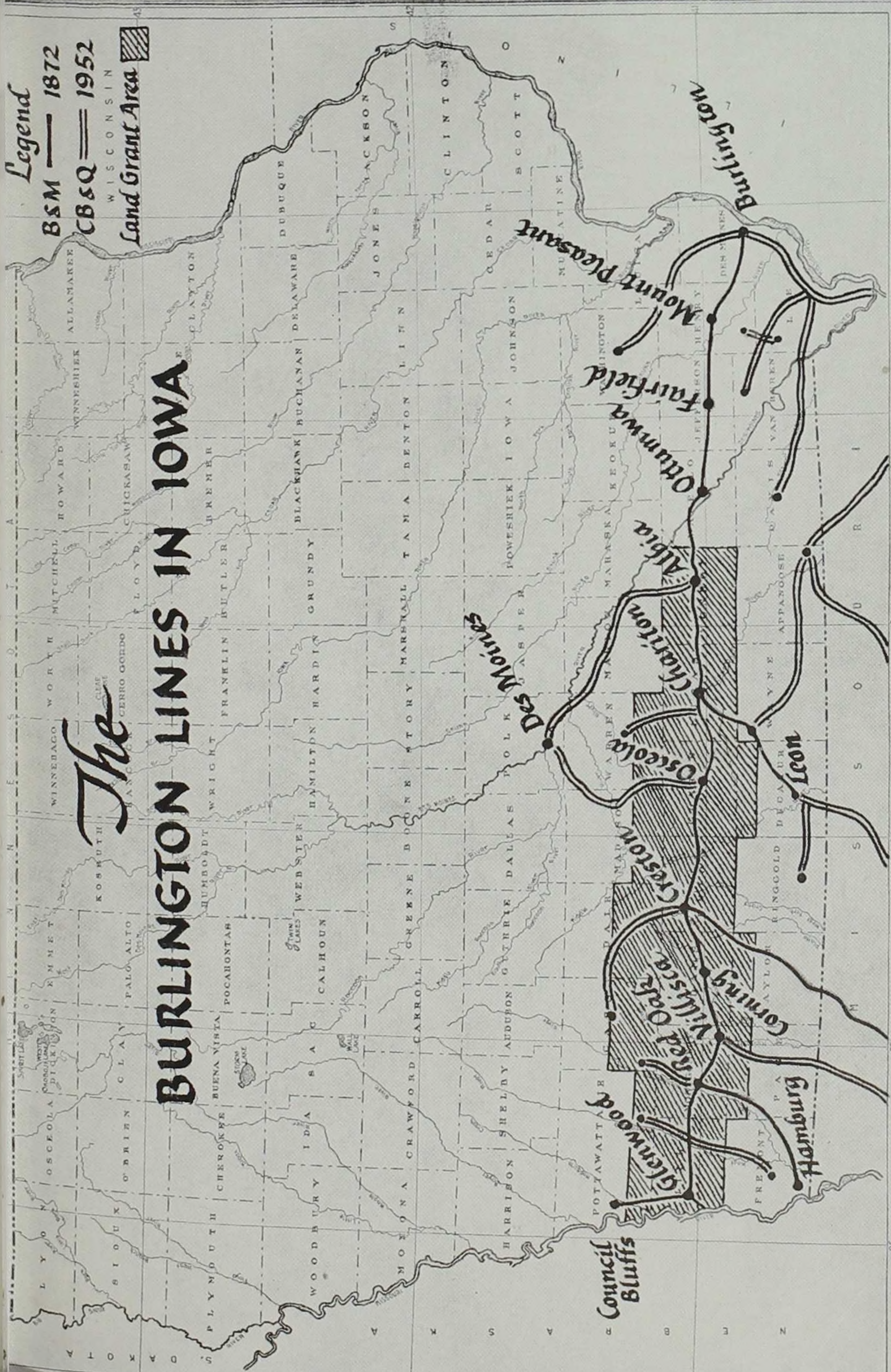
was leased "in perpetuity" to the Illinois road. Although a final deed was not negotiated until July 31, 1875, after January 1, 1873, the B&M no longer existed as a separate entity.

The Burlington and Missouri River Railroad had been an independent corporation for just over twenty years. In that time it had built a railroad from the Mississippi to the Missouri, and had built or leased three branch lines: from Red Oak to Hamburg, opened on August 1, 1870; from Creston to Hopkins, Missouri, opened January 21, 1872; and from Chariton to Leon, completed August 21, 1872. Its total mileage in 1872 was 332.75 miles, and the total cost of its property, \$12,992,931.91. Fifty-three locomotives and 1,100 cars made up its rolling stock. It had received, and was in the process of selling, a total of 359,185.92 acres of land in Iowa. As such, it was a valuable addition to the Burlington System.

Today the Burlington Route through Iowa covers 1,011.66 miles of road; counting second tracks and yard and siding tracks, the total comes to 1,550.29 miles. For one hundred years the Burlington has dominated the transportation system of southern Iowa. The forty-six who met in Burlington on January 15, 1852, "builded better than they knew." Their centennial, on January 15, 1952, is a landmark in Iowa railroad history.

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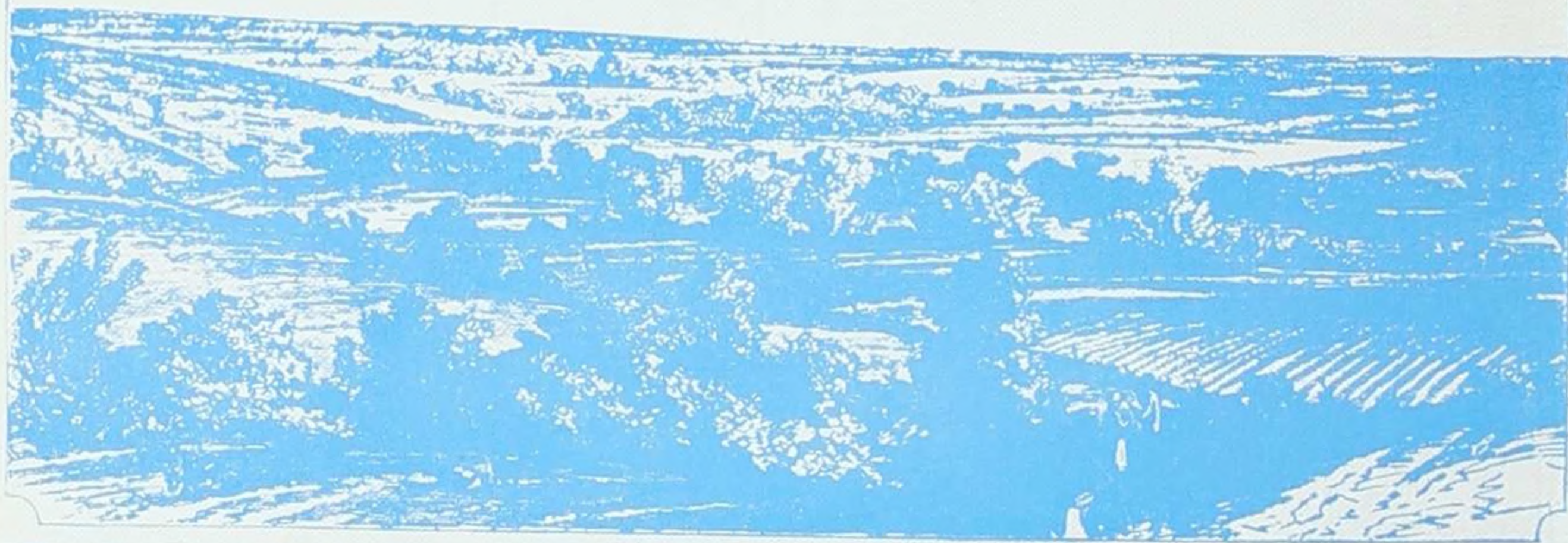
Legend
BSM — 1872
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