

# THE DESERET NEWS: WEEKLY.

## THE PIONEERS OF THE PACIFIC RAILROAD.

THE alleged opposition of the "Mormons" to the national inter-oceanic railroad, the telegraph, and every means of bringing us into closer contact with the outside world, was a favorite theme with a certain class who delight in evincing their enmity to us, until the alacrity manifested by our people in aiding to further these great works, gave a practical and incontrovertible contradiction to such statements. Yet now, there are numbers, who would continue to insult our past record by declaring that we accept the approach of the railroad, because we are powerless to prevent it.

It would be a waste of labor to use argument against such persons; but for the benefit of many who are honestly desirous of becoming acquainted with our early views and opinions on these subjects, we produce to-day a few historical facts, which place the matter in its true light. When the Pioneers, led by President Brigham Young, started from the Missouri river, to seek a home amid the wilds of the west, during the whole of their long and tedious journey the idea of a national railroad was ever present with them, and they sought out a line of road on which it might be built. When our people located in this valley, one of the first things to which through their representatives they directed the attention of Congress was the same subject. In the first annual session of the Legislature of the Territory of Utah, "a memorial to Congress for the construction of a great national central railroad to the Pacific coast," was adopted, and was approved by his Excellency, Governor Brigham Young, March 3d, 1852. The following is that memorial:

*To the Honorable, the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:*

Your memorialists, the Governor and Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah, respectfully pray your honorable body to provide for the establishment of a national central railroad from some eligible point on the Mississippi or Missouri rivers, to San Diego, San Francisco, Sacramento or Astoria, or such other point on or near the Pacific coast, as the wisdom of your honorable body may dictate.

Your memorialists respectfully state, that the immense emigration to and from the Pacific, requires the immediate attention, guardian care, and fostering assistance of the greatest and most liberal government on the earth. Your memorialists are of opinion that not less than five thousand American citizens have perished on the different routes within the last three years, for the want of proper means of transportation; that an eligible route can be obtained your memorialists have no doubt, being extensively acquainted with the country. We know that no obstruction exists between this point and San Diego; and that iron, coal, timber, stone and other materials exist in various places on the route; and that the settlements of this Territory are so situated, as to amply supply the builders of said road with materials and provisions for a considerable portion of the route, and to carry on an extensive trade after the road is completed.

Your memorialists are of opinion that the mineral resources of California, and these mountains, can never be fully developed to the benefit of the people of the U. S., without the construction of such a road; and upon its completion, the entire trade of China and the East Indies will pass through the heart of the Union; thereby giving our citizens the almost entire control of the Asiatic and Pacific trade; pouring into the lap of the American States, the millions that are now diverted through other commercial channels; and last, though not least, the road herein proposed, would be a perpetual chain, or iron band which would effectually hold together our glorious Union with an imperishable identity of mutual interest; thereby consolidating our relations with foreign powers in times of peace and our defence from foreign invasion by the speedy transmission of troops and supplies, in times of war.

The earnest attention of Congress to this important subject is solicited by your memorialists, who, in duty bound, will ever pray.

Approved, March 3, 1852.

The same Legislative assembly also

adopted the following "Memorial to Congress for an electric telegraph from the Mississippi to California," which was also approved March 3rd, 1852, by Governor Young.

*To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:*

Your memorialists the Governor and Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah, respectfully beg leave to suggest, that,

Whereas the inhabitants of this Territory are situated in the Great Basin of North America, occupying an intermediate position between California and the States on the Mississippi; and being shut out by their isolated position from a ready intercourse with their mother States; the roads passing over arid plains, rough and desert mountains taking a term of thirty days in the best seasons of the year for the mails to pass through from the confines of civilization to this Territory; and considering the obstructions arising from storms, floods, and the depredations of hostile Indians, all combining to render our means of intercourse extremely limited and precarious, therefore your memorialists respectfully pray your honorable body to provide for the construction of a Telegraph from some convenient point on the Mississippi or Missouri, via Great Salt Lake City, to San Diego, San Francisco, Astoria, or such other eligible port on the Pacific coast as your wisdom may direct. And your memorialists respectfully beg leave to state their sincere conviction, that no movement of Congress could be better calculated to preserve inviolable our glorious Union, than to bind the east and west by an electric stream, whereby intelligence and instantaneous intercourse, from the eastern to the western limits of our wide spread country annihilate the distance, and make the freemen of Maine and Oregon, Florida and California immediate neighbors.

The favorable consideration of this important subject at an early period by Congress, is respectfully solicited; and your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Approved, March 3, 1852.

The prospect that the desired road would be completed, again called forth a Memorial from the Legislature of Utah Territory, in which they expressed their views of the best route for the location of the line. A perusal of this memorial shows how carefully the country had been examined by the Latter-day Saints for these express purposes, for the best engineering skill of the country in actually locating the line, has followed the route indicated in the memorial from the Missouri river to Bear river, although the road down Weber Cañon was selected in preference to that down Provo Cañon. This memorial was approved by Governor Young, Jan. 14th, 1854, and reads as follows:

*To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress Assembled:*

GENTLEMEN,—Your memorialists, the Governor and Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah, beg leave respectfully to represent to your honorable body, that it is with no ordinary feelings of interest that we witness the progress of events, which appear probable to result in the construction of a railway across the continent. It is not deemed necessary at this late day to urge the importance and necessity of this great work, nor even its practicability, for these are questions which the intelligence of the people and their representatives have freely and fully discussed, and happily disposed of by the action of Congress, in authorizing reconnaissances to ascertain the most practicable route. Hence our main object in this memorial is to give our candid views on what we deem the best route for the location of the first line of railroad from the Missouri river to the Pacific ocean; this we shall do from reliable information in our possession, and in the briefest manner that our judgment will admit, without entering into the detail of distances, elevations, and depressions, which can only be satisfactorily determined by the careful survey necessary to finally locate the route.

Without further preface, and with all due deference, in our judgment, the route in question should commence at Council Bluff city, keep up the main Platte to its south fork, and up the south fork to the proper point for diverging to the summit of the Black Hills, in the neighborhood of what is known as the Box Elder pass; or commencing near the mouth of the Kansas, and keeping up that stream to the Republican fork, and up that to where you leave it to reach the same pass. A glance at the

map will show the difference of distance between the Missouri river and said pass by the two named routes to be very trifling, and the grade would be equally low, and the amount of timber, grass, quality of soil, climate, and facilities for settlement are almost or entirely identical.

The Box Elder pass is a wide, low depression in the Black Hills, with very gentle ascent and descent; from this point the route is across the southern portion of the level, well watered, and grassy Laramie's plains, to the Medicine Bow Butte; thence by gentle grade across the north fork of the Platte to a low, beautiful pass on the summit of the Rocky Mountains called Bridger's pass. Here the route reaches the eastern outcrop of the rich and thick bituminous coal beds of the extensive region drained by the waters of Muddy and Bitter creeks, whose strong indications of rich iron ore beds were also noticed, and pursues its easy grade across Green river near the mouth of Henry's fork, an affluent from the west, whose outlet is just above Brown's Hole; thence up Henry's fork, and across Bear river and Weber river by its lower canyon into Kamas prairie, and down the Timpanogos or Provo river into Utah valley. From the mouth of the canyon of Provo river by the north end of Utah lake to Walker's river pass in the Sierra Nevada, the face of the country is nearly a dead level, with the exception of short isolated ranges of mountains, which could easily be turned, if any were found on the line. From all we can learn, Walker's river pass is the most eligible in the Sierra Nevada, anywhere north of Walker's pass, which is near latitude 35°, and of course much too far south. Between Walker's river pass and San Francisco, on a direct line, there is no unusual obstacle.

The most casual inspection of any late map will demonstrate the route above indicated to be the shortest, most direct, and most central that can be located between the Missouri river and San Francisco, by way of any practicable mountain passes now known. From the Box Elder pass to the rich valleys skirting the west base of the Wasatch mountains, independent of the inexhaustible coal beds, and strongly indicated iron ores of Bitter creek, there are more favorable localities for settlements on and near the line indicated, than on any other between the same parallels of longitude, unless a route is made extremely crooked, and solely with a view to accommodate such locations.

The mouth of the Timpanogos or Provo canyon opens immediately upon the eastern edge of Utah valley, and near Provo city, which will, ere long, be rich and powerful, through skill and labor well applied to its abundant resources. This is the most eligible point for branching through a rich chain of fortunately located valleys to Oregon on the one hand, and San Diego on the other. From longitude 113° 30' to the Sierra Nevada, there is but little chance for settlements, of much importance on any route.

Having thus briefly expressed our views upon this all-absorbing subject, we beg leave, with all deference, to express our firm conviction that the desired action on this subject by your honorable body, to render this a national work, is almost unanimously demanded by the whole country, and is entirely constitutional; all of which is respectfully submitted.

Approved Jan. 14, 1854.

These memorials fully vindicate the early anxiety of our people for the completion of the great works to which they refer, and should silence the tongue of calumny on this point—could such a thing be done. They also prove that it was no mere verbal expression of an opinion or wish, but the result of a settled purpose and desire, proved by careful research and painful explorations, to put the nation in possession of valuable information which would facilitate the construction of the great railroad, then merely contemplated as a future probability.

## OUR CITY AND ITS STREETS.

Every intelligent visitor who comes to our city is struck with the width of our streets and side-walks and the expansive manner in which the city is laid out. We have heard many eulogiums from Eastern gentlemen on the foresight of the founder of the city and his companion pioneers in allowing so much space to start with for the site of the city. This feature is looked upon with surprise by many, because they cannot understand how men, coming here as the pioneers did, into the midst of a howling wilderness, could have

thought that this would ever be a place of any importance or that we would want streets of such width. In a country town streets five rods wide are thought ample for all purposes, and they are too; but with the prescience which characterizes all the movements of President Young, he knew that we would have a great city here, and never losing sight for a moment of our future destiny, nor forgetting that time would surely bring us and our chief city and country into prominence, he had the streets laid out eight rods wide. Now, that the city is being settled up, and trees are growing on all our side-walks, this width for our streets is one of the most beautiful features in our city. We appreciate it, visitors admire it, and every year adds to the credit of the pioneers for the wisdom, foresight and liberality they evinced in thus laying out the city.

The San Francisco papers are complaining of the condition of that city. The dreadful epidemic which has been raging for some months there has awakened public attention to the condition of the city, and one paper, the *Times*, in speaking about it says:

"In laying out this city, but little attention has been paid at any time to the future needs of its inhabitants, and the theories of most of those who have had a hand in the work seem to have been based upon the supposition that the place would never be much larger than it is now."

San Francisco it is claimed wants lungs. The streets are not wide enough. There are not enough public squares. Every acre of ground demanded for public squares has been bestowed grudgingly, and there have never been wanting people who have asserted that such reservations were mere waste of valuable land. It is thought that the time is fast approaching when regret will be felt for the want of foresight in laying out the city and not providing it with a greater number of open spaces. The maintenance of open spaces at intervals is now advocated in that city as being as important, in a sanitary point of view, as the placing of windows in the side of a house. The planting of these squares is also deemed necessary. The *Times* thinks that many of its readers will be surprised to learn that plants are absolutely necessary to the purification of the atmosphere. Man exhales carbonic acid in large quantities and vitiates the air; plants, in the day time, absorb the carbon, and give back oxygen, to purify the air. It is the excess of carbonic acid in the air that predisposes those who breathe it to disease. The planting of trees without delay is being urged to purify the atmosphere and to improve the sanitary condition of the city.

The Latter-day Saints have taught and are still teaching the world many important lessons; they will yet set them an example in building beautiful and healthy cities. Time will show what we shall do in this respect.

## WAHNO; THE NORTHERN POLAR CONTINENT.

*Dreams of the Arctic Explorers realized.*

[Communicated exclusively to the *Republican*.]

## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

In presenting to the world an account of a northern arctic continent, I cannot better explain the manner in which I became acquainted with the discovery than by introducing the following copy of a letter, which I have dispatched to Professor Gerok, of the University of Bonn, in the scientific service of which institution I am occupied. I claim no credit for the discovery, but consider myself fortunate in being allowed to make it public. I think I have rightly considered the acquisition personally mine, because it does not come within the scope of the scientific mission to Alaska with which I am charged; and I have chosen to publish it first in this country since I have felt that it would thence be most widely and most rapidly diffused. The translation has been made as literal as is consistent with rendering it intelligible, and the only additions made to it are the head lines to distinguish the different topics. I am certain that the importance of the disclosure made will be readily appreciated by intelligent readers, and more especially by all men of science, and I therefore submit the document without comment upon the interest and value it has in my own mind.

A. B.  
New York, December, 1868.

LETTER TO PROFESSOR GEROK.

NEW YORK, N. Y., Dec. 20, 1868.

Prof. Isidor Gerok, University of Bonn, Germany: Dear Sir,—My pre-