

Kansas City at that time was almost on the frontier ; there was but one small foundry and machine shop in the town, while not a barge suitable to carry stone could be found on the river. Special tools had also to be designed and erected, which, however simple and obvious they may seem now, caused the engineer no little thought and anxiety. A steamboat was also found necessary to tow the barges, and for this purpose the steamer "Gipsey" was purchased in Wheeling, and brought to the bridge site ; eight flat-boats were built, and two small ones purchased ; pile drivers, derricks, and dredges built, and a dismantled building, situated near the bank of the river, half a mile above the bridge, was bought and converted into a machine shop.

The contract for the masonry was let on the 23d of February, 1867, to Messrs. Vipond & Walker, of Kansas City, and the quarrying of stone was begun forthwith. The corner-stone of the south abutment was laid on the 21st of August, 1867, with appropriate festivities, and the last stone was laid on the 5th of May, 1869, when the completion of Pier No. 4 finished the masonry of the bridge.

A contract for the superstructure was closed with the Keystone Bridge Company, of Pittsburg, on the 22d of November, 1867, and under the direction of that company this portion of the work was carried to completion.

The timber used in the false works, and in the trestle for the northern approach, was mostly native oak lumber, and obtained in small contracts from time to time, whenever needed. Contracts for the grading of the southern approach, and for several unimportant parts of the work, were let during its progress ; but, with the exception of the masonry and superstructure, the bulk of the work was all done by the Company.

The draw was swung on the 15th day of June, 1869, the first engine crossing the bridge ten days thereafter, and the bridge was publicly opened on Saturday, July 3d, 1869.

The period of two years and a half, thus consumed in the location and construction of this bridge, had brought about great changes in its immediate vicinity. The population of Kansas City had increased from 13,000 to 30,000, and from being little more than a way-station on the Missouri Pacific Railroad, it had become an important railway centre, from which no less than seven lines