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This little tour guide is to help you enjoy your trip.

ABILENE - Named from Luke 3:1. First Texas cattle town in Kansas. Over 3 million Texas longhorns arrived 1867-72 to be shipped east over the KANSAS PACIFIC railroad that opened for service on April 29, 1867. The second railroad to Abilene was the SANTA FE in 1887. You are riding on the original alignment of the CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND, AND PACIFIC that also arrived in 1887. All three have depots standing in Abilene!

Why did Abilene become the first cattle town in Kansas? Previous herds had been driven to and shipped by rail from Sedalia, Missouri and other cities. Such outlets were not satisfactory because the area was becoming settled by farmers and ranchers who did not want herds of cattle crossing their property.

Joseph G. McCoy, an Illinois livestock shipper, studied his maps and decided some Kansas railhead would be a good site. He visited Salina and Solomon City but no one was interested. Finally he selected Abilene, an unsettled region, well watered, with excellent grass. The first shipment from his stockyards left on the railroad September 5, 1867.

Of course settlers were pouring into Dickinson County, and by 1872 a herd law was passed and enforced so farmers and ranchers no longer had a problem with Texas longhorns. Cowtown days ended for Abilene as herds found shipping points at Ellsworth, Newton, Wichita, and finally Dodge City! Barbed wire fences were rapidly shrinking the open range in the state where HOME ON THE RANGE was written.

The HUTCHINSON NORTHERN diesel pulling you is a gift from that railroad at Hutchinson Kansas, formally the Carey Salt Company. It is an Alco S-1 built in 1945 with a six cylinder 660 HP MacIntosh-Seymore engine and power trucks with wording AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE CO. CANADA PATENTED 1925.

The beautiful wooden passenger car is a gift from the tourist railroad at Belton, Missouri. It was so rotten they gave up on restoration and would scrap it if no one wanted it. People from ASVR looked it over and about decided against attempted restoration but finally brought it to Abilene as if it were a semi-truck with tandem dual rubber tires where the steel wheels are. At 60 MPH many people were quite surprised when they saw this old wooden passenger railroad car sailing down Route 56 as if on rails!

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Restoration of this 100 year old MISSOURI-KANSAS-TEXAS Rail Road (KATY) car was headed by Sonya Anders and Art Kidwell of Enterprise. It was named in honor of all the workers from that city. First MKT track was Junction City to Council Grove opened October 27, 1869. The old gondola was found in Council Grove, lost by the Missouri Pacific and given to ASVR by new owners Union Pacific. The steel sides, ends, and floor were badly beaten by heavy load through the years, but a poured concrete floor makes walking and standing easier and greatly improves the ride.

The caboose is a gift from Geary County.

ALL ABOARD!

Time to leave the boxcar station on the south side of the Greyhound Hall of Fame parking lot and head east to Enterprise. Long time locomotive engineer Fred Schmidt, co-founder and Vice President of ASVR, and others do not blow the whistle just for fun, but as on all railroads, the long and shorts are signals.

ORIGINAL ROCK ISLAND STATION IN ABILENE. Purchased by Old Abilene Town and moved a bit south, this depot was built in 1887 when the rails arrived in Abilene. Enjoy a tour of it.

MUSEUM OF INDEPENDENT TELEPHONY and Dickinson County Historical Society's HERITAGE CENTER. The original patents granted to Alexander Graham Bell in 1876 included exclusive rights to make and distribute telephone instruments and components for a period of 17 years. By the time patents had expired, people in small towns and rural areas wanted telephones too. As a result, nearly 6,000 non-Bell telephone companies, known as INDEPENDENTS, came into being. One of these was the United Telephone Company of Abilene. Spend some time here.

C. W. PARKER CAROUSEL is north-east of museum complex. Look quickly, don't miss this origin built by the Amusement King Of Abilene. Ride!

VOLKMANN CABIN was built around 1858 by German who settled in the Lyona area of eastern Dickinson County. The cabin continued to be used for many years, with additions that completely enclosed it. In 1985 these additions were removed, revealing the original cabin. It was moved to this present location under the guidance of Joe Minick, President and co-founder of ASVR. It was given to the Historical Society by Larry Latzke.

RIDE THE RAILS OF HISTORY

ABILENE, KANSAS



P.O. Box 744
Abilene, Kansas 67410

(913) 263-1077