

# The Building, Growth and Economic Importance of the Santa Fe to the Southwest

**M**R. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The people of Atchison and its neighbor cities, with characteristic energy, courage and hospitality have done themselves proud today. We of the Santa Fe are very well aware that to plan this great celebration and to carry it into effect was no small undertaking, and we are grateful. It demonstrates the capacity for imagination, enthusiasm and work, and especially the spirit of co-operation, which you and the whole citizenry of Kansas have inherited from the men who established this State, conspicuous among whom were those who organized the Atchison & Topeka Railroad.

Perhaps there is no transaction in human affairs which under ordinary circumstances has less of the dramatic or more of the formalistic and dull than a meeting for the organization of a corporation. Usually the papers are drawn in advance and everybody concerned knows in advance what they contain. Nothing happens which is not pre-ordained; and any departure from the pre-arranged program would be corrected speedily as an incongruous act of unexpected independence on the part of the participating dummies. I do not know whether a form of minutes was prepared in advance for the meeting at which the Atchison & Topeka Railroad Company was organized September 17, 1860, but I do know that there were no dummies present.

Thirteen men participated. Each had already committed himself by a subscription to \$4,000 of stock at par, and as an earnest of his good faith each had paid in not less than \$400 cash—no small amount in those days.

M. C. Dickey was present; he became the first treasurer of the railroad. R. H. Weightman, ex-Attorney General of the State of Missouri, was there, as was Jacob Safford, who had just been elected District Judge, and G. H. Fairchild, at one time Mayor of the City of Atchison and a member of the Territorial Legislature.

Of course some real estate men were there. One of them was P. T. Able, who was president of the Atchison Town Company and who became the first secretary of

the railroad; another was J. H. Stringfellow, who, in addition to being secretary of the Town Company and a member of the Territorial Legislature, shared with two others present the distinction of having been instrumental in bringing to Atchison its first railroad, the Hannibal & St. Joseph.

One of the companions of Stringfellow in that enterprise was L. C. Challiss, a member of the Territorial Council, who subsequently moved to New York and became a conspicuous figure in financial affairs of national significance, only to return to Atchison and again take part in the development of railroads in Kansas. The other of the three who had been associated in the establishment of the Hannibal & St. Joseph was S. C. Pomeroy. He was to become one of the first senators of the new State of Kansas on its admission to the Union two years later; and he was to become the second president of the Santa Fe.

Edmund G. Ross was there. A newspaperman who had been connected with the Milwaukee *Sentinel*, the Topeka *Tribune* and the Topeka *Record*, he had just returned from the Wyandotte Convention, where he had signed the document which was to be the Constitution of the State of Kansas. He was to become United States Senator from Kansas by election in 1867, and he was to display his courage by casting the deciding vote against conviction of a president of the United States in proceedings of impeachment.

And C. K. Holliday, the first president, was there. He was only thirty-three years old, but he knew what Americans had already done in America. Transportation by railroad had come into existence during his lifetime, and with his own eyes he had seen its results. He had seen the iron horse suddenly free from their restraints the people along the Atlantic seaboard, shut in by the mountain wall to their west, and the frontiersmen of the Valley of the Ohio, imprisoned by impassable forests and impossible distances. He had seen the mighty tide of immigration which flowed into and occupied and conquered and civilized the great region east of the Mississippi River. As he looked to the west he saw an undeveloped empire;

*I think that  
the charter, or  
preliminary plans,  
were drawn in  
Lawrence.*