

# The Railroad

Shelbina is here simply because a railroad was built.

The first railroad to be built across Shelby county was the Hannibal & St. Joseph R. R. Organized at Hannibal, Mo., Jan. 8, 1851, construction was to be from Hannibal westerly to St. Joseph, a distance of 206.41 miles, all in Missouri.

Construction commenced at Hannibal in 1851 and on Nov. 5, 1855, twenty-five miles of the grade was completed and ready for the iron.

June 1, 1857 the track was laid to Hunnewell, 37 miles west of Hannibal. In August, 1857 grading was done between Hunnewell and Clarence, passing through what is now Shelbina the latter part of August, 1857. September 9, 1857 the graders reached Clarence, 59 miles west of Hannibal; May 11, 1858—Bevier, 75 miles west of Hannibal; Nov. 29—100 miles west of Hannibal; Dec. 25—107 miles west of Hannibal; Jan. 26, 1859—114 miles west of Hannibal.

Construction east commenced at St. Joseph in 1856. In October of that year several miles of track were laid from St. Joseph. On Aug. 1, 1858 the road was completed 10 miles east of St. Joe; Nov. 7—46 miles; Dec. 5—53 miles; Jan. 2, 1859—63 miles; Jan. 31—73 miles.

The line was completed Feb. 13, 1859 and opened for through traffic Feb. 15, 1859.

Under the terms of a construction contract between the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad Co. and Duff & Seward, Contractors, of date March 1, 1854, it was provided that said contractors were to have the right to operate the road or any part thereof as completed from time to time and the contractors did operate that portion of the road extending from Hannibal to Palmyra and beyond until November, 1858. At this date the railroad company took possession of the road and operated it from that time until March 14, 1867.

A special act of the Missouri Legislature approved March 2, 1867, provided as follows: "The Hannibal and St. Joseph R. R. Co. shall be, and it is, hereby authorized to purchase and own all the capital stock of the Quincy and Palmyra R. R. Co. and when it shall have become the owner of said stock, the Quincy

and Palmyra R. R. Co. shall become a part of the Hannibal and St. Joseph R. R. Co., and subject to all the duties imposed upon, and entitled to all the privileges secured to the Hannibal and St. Joe R. R. Co."

The first meeting of this company was held at Boston, Feb. 14, 1870. The officers and directors of the H. & St. J. R. R. retained their respective offices. Operated from Oct. 29, 1877 until July 1, 1900 by the H. & St. J. R. R. Operated from July 1, 1900 until January 1, 1901 by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy R. R. Co. as lessee. Operated since January 1, 1901 by the Burlington Co. by deed.

When the railroad was being built through Shelby county there was no town of Shelbina. The contractors and laboring men all lived in tents along the right-of-way. The construction gangs which had started from opposite ends met between Cream Ridge and Chillicothe on Feb. 13, 1859. The next day, Feb. 14, 1859, the train made the through run from Hannibal, through Shelbina, to St. Joseph, inaugurating the first rail service to the Missouri River.

That summer Abraham Lincoln traveled over this line on his way to Council Bluffs, Ia., and used it again in the fall on his way to a speaking tour in Kansas. Prior to the building of the H. & St. J. R. R., mail reached the Missouri by steamer and stage. On April 3, 1860 a special train hauled by a wood burning locomotive, carried the mail the length of the line in slightly over four hours. Upon arrival in St. Joseph the letters were handed over to the rider making the first relay on the inaugural westbound run of the famous Pony Express.

Two years later another improvement was introduced. On July 28, 1862 the first railroad car equipped for sorting the U. S. mail in transit operated from West Quincy through Shelbina to the Missouri River. There have been three depots built in Shelbina since the railroad was constructed. The first one was burned by Confederate raiders. The second is now the freight depot on the west side of Center street, and the third is the brick depot on the east side of Center street.



Center Street Looking South. This photograph was made on a hot, lazy day, with a minimum of traffic. The photographer stood in the middle of the street at the intersection of Center and Chestnut streets.