

## Iowa Central Air Line Railroad Report and Maps

*First Annual Report of the President and Directors to the Stockholders of the Iowa Central Air Line Railroad Company.* Chicago: Daily Press & Tribune Printing Establishment, 1858. pp. 1-8, with “Map of Iowa Showing the Line of the Iowa Central Air Line Rail Road and the Boundaries of Its Landgrant” and “Map of the Iowa Central Air Line Showing Its Eastern and Projected Western Connections.” Chicago: Ed. Mendel, [1858]. Newberry Library call number: Graff 2151

### Report of the President and Directors of the of the Iowa Central Air Line Rail Road Company.

This Company was organized under the general laws of Iowa, on the second day of May, A.D. 1853.

Time Co. was organized.  
See Exhibits A B C.  
Where road commences.

The road commences at two points on the Mississippi River, fifteen miles apart; viz.: at Lyons City, opposite Fulton, the Western terminus of the Dixon Air Line of the Galena & Chicago U.R.R., (136 miles west of Chicago,) and at Sabula, opposite Savanna, the western terminus of the Racine & Mississippi R.R., about the same distance from Milwaukee and Racine, on Lake Michigan. The line of the road runs from Lyons City up on the bank of the Mississippi River, and down from Sabula to a point of junction about seven and a half miles from each of those towns, and from said junction west across the State of Iowa, following as near as practicable the 42d parallel, that being the entire center or middle line, which divides the state.

Distance from Chicago and Milwaukee.

Route of road.

It will be seen by glancing at the accompanying map that the two great lines of railroad with which this road connects at the Mississippi River, are the main links west of lake Michigan in the great East and West chains of railroad extending through the Northern and Middle States and the Canadas to the Atlantic seaboard; which great lines starting at Portland, Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, and running westerly, finally converge to a single point at the Mississippi River, in Iowa, and then extend due west by this road 335 miles to the Missouri River, at a point midway between the north and the south boundaries of Iowa, which is on the direct line with the “South Pass” of the Rocky Mountains, as a careful reference to the maps of the country will demonstrate.

Connections.

On a line with South Pass.

Important link in Pacific R. R.

Thus, it will be seen that this road is destined to be the most important link in the great chain which is to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Is an East and West R. R.

Aside from the importance of its location as a link in that great chain of railroad, it has the advantage of being an East and West line of the road, dividing the State between the north and South, passing through the richest lands of Iowa, abounding with coal and fine groves of timber, –well watered with pure springs, rapid rivers and smaller streams, affording good water power.

Coal, timber and water.

The eastern half of the State through which this road passes is well settled, and under a good state of cultivation.

Settlements.

A large surplus of produce is raised, and now seeks an eastern market by wagons to the Mississippi River, at a very serious expense to the producer.

Large surplus of produce.

The annexed exhibit (D) will show the present population of nine of the

Exhibit D.

eastern counties through which this road passes, and the amount of assessed property in the respectively, and also the assessed value of the counties along the line of the Galena & Chicago Union R.R., at the time that road was built, by which it will be seen that the assessed value of property along this line of road, is greater than it was along the Galena & Chicago Union R.R. at the time that road was built.

Population.  
Settlements of this line compared with that of G. & C. U. R. R. at time that road was built.

It will be seen by a reference to the report of the Chief Engineer, herewith published, that the cheapness with which this road can be constructed, on account of the uniformity of the surface and other natural advantages, it is not surpassed by any similar work on the West.

Cheap road.

It should be borne in mind that this line of road has this important advantage, –no other road can ever be built to compete with it on account of getting a shorter line to Chicago or Milwaukee from the interior of Iowa or Nebraska. This line is on the most direct, and is the shortest route from the Missouri river to its great eastern connections, with great natural facilities from bridging the Mississippi at the “Narrows” between Lyons and Fulton, not found at any other point below St. Anthony’s Falls. Arrangements for building a bridge at this point are now being perfected. The proper explorations have been made, and necessary grounds purchased by the Bridge Company for that purpose.

Shorter route.  
Bridging Mississippi.

LANDS BELONGING TO THIS COMPANY.

By acts of Congress and the General Assembly of the state of Iowa, this Company is vested with a munificent grant of lands.

Land of Co.

This grant authorizes to go a distance of fifteen miles on each side of the track, to make up what would be equivalent to six miles on each side, where the lands have already been entered, or otherwise previously disposed of by Government, thus giving the company a strip of land 30 miles wide clear across the State, to make their selections from.

Quantity of lands

This grant is equal to 3,840 acres for each mile of road constructed. The company is entitled to 76,800 acres at once and 76,800 acres additional for each 20 miles of railroad constructed, or, in other words, the act of Congress provides for the title being perfected to 76,800 in advance—and as much more when the Governor of the State shall certify that any continuous twenty miles is completed, and so on in like quantities for each twenty miles, till the whole quantity is vested in the company, which is a like quantity of land per mile with that which the Illinois Central R.R. Co. received, and on much better terms.

Equal to Illinois Central R. R. land grant per mile.

This company is now selecting their lands under the Land Grant. It is already certain that the company will get 906,480 acres of land, and it is confidently expected the amount will be increased by lands where there is a conflict of title with the Des Moines Navigation Company, to over one million of acres. These selections will soon be completed, and duly certified by Government. These lands being generally of superior quality, will, when the railroad is completed to the Missouri River, it is confidently believed, sell at an average sum of at least ten dollars per acre, exclusive of town sites, which the company will lay out on the line of the road, where stations are required. These lands, lying in a free State, and on the line of an East and West R.R., due west of Chicago, must be of an equal, if not greater value, than those belonging to the Illinois Central Railroad Company, and their sales have averaged over \$11.33 per acre. (See exhibit H, showing the sales of land by the

Valued at \$10 per acre, exclusive of town lots.

Exhibit H.

Illinois Central R.R. Co.)

Exhibits (E and F), will show said acts granting said land, and exhibit (G) is the opinion of the Attorney General of the United States in a similar case, showing that the title to said lands passed absolutely from Government by virtue of the act of Congress referred to.

Opinion of  
Att'y General

These lands are all situated along the line of this road, none of them being more than fifteen miles from it. There is scarcely a forty acre lot of poor land embraced in the grant. more beautiful and productive undulating or rolling prairie, and fine groves of timber, underlaid with inexhaustible coal beds (at may points out-cropping at the surface of the ground) is not to be found in the North-West. And in fine it is a limestone formation of as rich land as can be found on the face of the globe.

All the Co's  
lands within 15  
miles of R. R.

No poor lands.

Coal.

All kinds of vegetable productions that are common to the Prairies of the West are produced upon these lands, with the greatest facility, and of a most luxuriant growth.

Limestone  
formation.

Best quality of  
lands.

The richness of the soil and other natural advantages have developed this new State with a rapidity heretofore unknown even in the North-Western States, as will be seen in the following statement of facts, viz.: The area of Iowa is 51,000 square miles. In 1836 its population was 10,351; in 1840, 43,116; in 1844, 71,644; in 1850, 192,204; in 1856, 503,625. The Presidential vote of 1856 was 92,644. The taxable property in 1851 was \$28,464,550; in 1857, \$210,944,583. The present population of the State is estimated at 800,000.

Rapid  
development of  
the state.

Area.

Assesses value  
of property.

*The few farmers of Iowa raise more corn than the many of New York and New England combined.*

Corn raised.

By the census of 1856 it appears that Iowa raised 31,136,362 bushels of corn, while, by the census of, 1850 it appears that New York and all of the New England States put together, raised only 28, 034, 256 bushels, as per the following table:—

Maine.....	1,750,056	Rhode Island.....	539,201
Massachusetts.....	2,345,490	Vermont.....	2,032,396
New Hampshire.....	1,573,670	Connecticut.....	<u>1,935,043</u>
New York.....	<u>17,858,400</u>		4,506,640
	23,527,616		<u>23,527,616</u>
Total.....			28,031,256

The corn crop is more valuable than any three crops raised in the United States. By the census of 1850 it appears that the corn crop was worth \$296,035,552, while the—

Relative value  
of corn crop.

Wheat crop was worth	\$100,485,944	Sweet Potatoes—worth	\$19,134,074
Cotton	“ 98,603,720	Buckwheat	“ 6,969,848
Oats	“ 43,975,253	Rice	“ 4,000,000
Potatoes	“ <u>25,319,158</u>	Barley	“ <u>3,616,910</u>
	268,383,075		33,720,832
			<u>268,384,075</u>
Total, (corn excepted).....			\$302,104,907

It is confidently expected that the local business along the line of the first division of eighty-six miles' viz.: from the Mississippi to Cedar River, will be quite

Local business.

equal to that furnished to the Galena & Chicago U. R. R., for the same distance at the time that road was constructed. The country is quite as well settled as the same extent was in Illinois, west of Chicago, at the time referred to.	Settlement of country.
Soon after passing the Cedar River, the line of road enters the great coal basin of Iowa, and traverses it for a distance of over one hundred miles. The amount of business that the coal trade will furnish this road must be very large. The coal is of easy access, and of excellent quality.	Coal beds.
For through business, when the road is completed to the Missouri River, this route will furnish the shortest line to the interior of Nebraska. Already a railroad company has been chartered, (the Decatur & South Pass Air Line R. R. Co.,) in Nebraska, extending from the western terminus of this road across that Territory. Immigration during the last year to that portion of Nebraska has been large. The soil and natural advantages of the country are very similar to those of Iowa for a long distance into the interior. It is but reasonable to suppose that a portion of the Decatur & South Pass A. L. R. R. will be in operation from the Missouri River west by the time this road is completed, especially if that Company should succeed in obtaining a grant of land to aid in the construction of their road, as they expect to, and as it is but reasonable to suppose they may. In the United States Senate Report of Explorations for a Pacific Railroad from the Mississippi River on the route near the 41 <sup>st</sup> and 42 <sup>nd</sup> parallels, it is said, "Its advantages are—comparatively cheap construction, due to the favorable features of the Rocky Mountain System in this latitude, and those of the Great Basin, both of which result in a low sum of ascents and descents, which would be a favorable element, should the full working power of the road be developed; in the mountains being passed without tunnels, the probability of its possessing extensive coal fields in the middle of the route; and in the aid which its construction would receive from the population of Utah."	Through business.  Decatur & South Pass R. R.  Immigration to Nebraska.  Prospect of R. R. in Nebraska.
	Extract from U. S. Senate Report.
The great Central Pacific Railroad will no doubt pass the Rocky Mountain either by the "South Pass" or Bridger's Pass," both of which are near the 42 <sup>nd</sup> parallel, the former being a little north and the latter a little south of that parallel, as will be seen by reference to the maps of that section of the country, and nearly on a line west of Chicago.	Middle route of Pacific R. R.
In either case the Iowa Central Air Line R. R. will form the main link in that great chain across the state of Iowa.	Iowa Central A. L. R. R. a link in Pacific R. R.
The local business of this road will be equal to that of first class East and West roads in the Western States, and will increase rapidly as the country becomes settled, and the coal mines are opened and worked, and the many other resources of this new and promising State become developed.	Local business.
But its location fits it for all time to come as the great leading thoroughfare for through business to the extreme West, and will place it beyond successful competition, and consequently will be one of the very best paying roads in the West.	Through business.

TOWN SITES.

By a reference to the financial plan of this company, hereunto annexed, it will be seen that it is the policy of the company to layout towns at each point on the line of the road where stations are required and towns are not already started. The large amount of means the stockholders will realize from the sale of lots from such towns cannot be appreciated except by those who have been in the states of Illinois

and Wisconsin, and witnessed the rapid growth of towns and cities which have sprung up along the many lines of road within the last ten years. The growth of many of the towns is almost incredible.

Large revenue from towns.

It is no uncommon thing for towns to be laid out at the points where stations are required along these railroads, and in two years' time have a population from one to two thousand, and increase with a like ratio from year to year, in many instances down to the present time. It is but reasonable to suppose that the growth of towns along the line of the Iowa Central A.L. R. R. will be quite equal to that along the line of any other railroad in the West—equal to that of those towns along the line of the Galena & Chicago Union R. R., either the old line, or that of the Air Line with which this road connects.

Growth of towns in the West.

Growth of towns on the Iowa Central will be quite equal to those along the G. & C. U. R. R.

Assuming that Central Iowa will afford towns equal in importance to those along the line of the G. & C. U. R. R., stations will be required at intervals of about seven miles. The company will lay out one section of their own lands at each of these points.

Stations required once in seven miles.

At points that promise fair to become large towns, a larger amount of land will be secured, if deemed necessary, to be laid out into town lots. The company propose to adopt a scheme for the promoting of the general interest of these towns, which will make them the most desirable locations for those seeking a permanent home in the West. The railroad company being the proprietors of the town, can well afford to render the best facilities in the power to encourage the settler, by accommodations which no other proprietors could afford.

These towns will be desirable homes.

It will be the policy of the company to set aside a sufficient number of lots to accommodate all institutions of learning, religious and benevolent societies, without distinct of sect or party, as shall desire to erect suitable buildings within a limited but reasonable time, free of charge.

Free lots.

Such parties as desire to purchase lots and erect good and permanent buildings on them, during the first or early settlement of the towns, (thereby enhancing the value of other lots, and encouraging settlement,) will be accommodated with satisfactory prices and time of payment.

Accommodations will be rendered.

Those who desire to take stock in the railroad company will receive not only a certificate of full paid stock of one hundred for every one hundred dollars they pay the company, but a land scrip of one hundred dollars, which they can enter on farming lands at an average of eight dollars an acre, or on town lots at their appraised value; and it will be the policy of the company to see that such appraised value is *low enough* to encourage immigration and settlement on these lands and town lots.

Bonus land scrip will pay for lots and land.

It is believed that this liberal policy will encourage settlement and build up these towns, and develop the resources of these most fertile prairies, and cause them to be converted into valuable farms in a briefer period than has ever been witnessed before through a similar extent of the country, even in the North-West. This course will not only produce a large amount of means for the construction of the road, but will add largely to the business of the road when completed.

Encouragement to settlers.

Business and revenue.

To make a brief calculation in reference to the revenue to be derived finally from that sale of town lots, it will be seen that the estimate made in the "Financial Plan" is very low, even for what will probably be realized during the construction of the road, but the permanent or continued income, for along series of years, which the company will receive from the sale of town lots, will at the lowest calculation which

Computation of value of town lots.

Town lots will eventually more

would be made by the most cautious, amount to a sum more than equal to the first cost of the road. than pay cost of R. R.

Stations will be required at intervals of an average of seven miles. This will give the company at least thirty points for town sites, without interfering with the towns already started on the lines of the road. These towns will be laid out principally on the company's own lands—consequently no expense out to start with. Suppose one section or 640 acres of land is laid out at all ordinary points, and at points that promise well for large towns or cities (say seven in number, at a distance of about fifty miles apart) lay out tow sections, or 1280 acres each. For safe calculation as to number of lots, and have them of good size, make them average, streets included, for to the acre. Thirty towns. Laid out on Co's. lands.

That will give to the small towns 2,560 lots each, or to 23 small towns, 58,880 lots. To the large towns, 5,120 each, or to the 7 large towns, 35,840 lots, equal in all to 94,720 lots. Set aside for educational and religious purposes, to be given away to parties who will erect public edifices thereon, an average of 75 lots at each town, amounting, in all, to be donated to 2,250, leaving, in all, belonging to the Railroad Company to be sold, 92,470. Number of lots. Donate 75 at each town.

Sell these average lots at an average of \$100 each, and they afford the large sum of \$9,247,000. This is very low average price for so large averaged sized lots, and without much doubt lower than they would net the company. Average price.

The estimated number of lots or price is not beyond what will be required or what they will bring, taking as a fair criterion the towns on Western roads. Indeed, if we look at towns on any of the great trunk lines in the Western or Eastern States, we are abundantly justified in this calculation. It may be said that it will take a series of years to sell all these lots. Admit that to be true, still the calculation made will warrant that amount nett to the Railroad Company. And the receipts will be ample, beyond question, to meet all contingent expenses and liabilities of the Company, that may by possibility not be otherwise provided for in their "Financial Plan," and leave a large surplus to be divided among stockholders. Estimated number & price low. Comparative towns. Time taken to sell lots. Revenue from lots will meet all contingencies.

However large this calculation may appear to the casual observer, it will bear the test of the closest calculations, and has been arrived at after the most careful consideration of the facts involved. The \$1,700,000 estimated in the financial plan to be raised from town lots, is the amount it is expected to raise during the construction of the road, while the amount that will be received from time to time after the road is opened, will exceed the whole of the first cost of building and equipping the road. This part of the scheme of the Company is believed to be far superior to that which was adopted by the Illinois Central Railroad Company—they having been prohibited by the state from laying out any towns till most of their stations were pre-occupied by other parties. Estimate carefully made. Estimate in financial plan. Scheme better than that of the Illinois Central R.R.

## WILL RAILROADS PAY, AND WILL THEY CONTINUE TO BE BUILT.

While Railroads running North and South in the United States, are far less productive than East and West roads, such is especially the case in the West. North and South R.R. not good.

North and South Railroads, as a general thing, do not pay well.

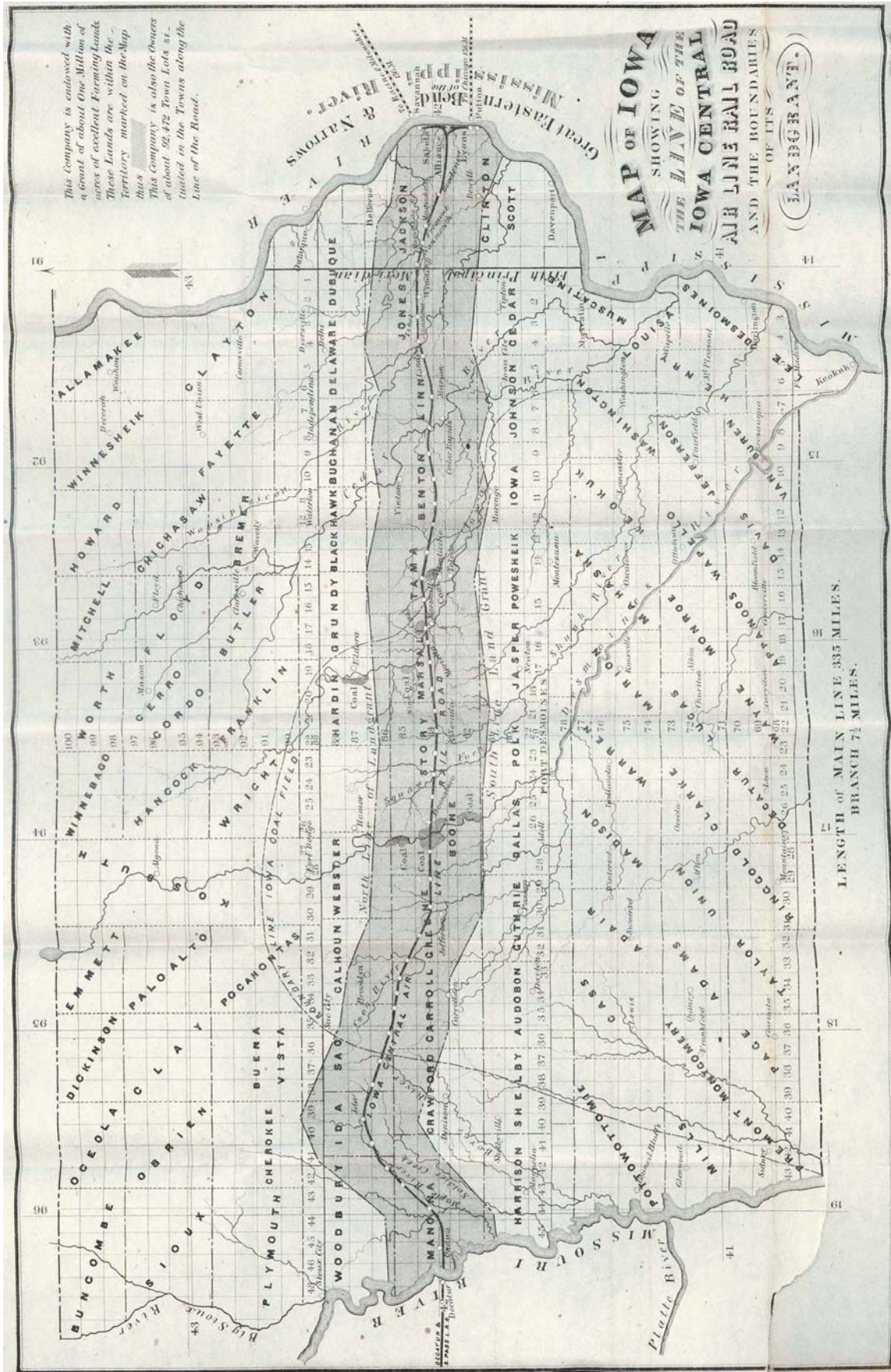


This Company is endowed with a grant of about One Million of acres of excellent Farming Lands. These lands are within the Territory marked on the Map thus.

This Company is also the Owner of about 99,472 Town Lots situated in the Towns along the Line of the Road.

# MAP OF IOWA

SHOWING  
THE LINE OF THE  
IOWA CENTRAL  
AIR LINE RAIL ROAD  
AND THE BOUNDARIES  
OF ITS  
LAND GRANT.



LENGTH OF MAIN LINE 335 MILES.  
BRANCH 74 MILES.

