

Blair Historic Preservation Alliance

Presents

History of the Railroads

in Blair, Nebraska

Part of the Blair Reminisce! Series

7:00 p.m. Thursday, August 9, 2007 Blair City Council Chambers

Presented by Railroad Historian

Lou Schmitz

assisted by Barbara Schmitz

Railroad Timeline

- 1855** -- Carter brothers settled in the valley that would one day become the city of Blair
- 1862** -- Union Pacific Railroad was incorporated in the wake of the Pacific Railroad Act signed by President Abraham Lincoln
- 1869** -- Trains first crossed the Missouri River by ferry and travel west through "Carter Valley" to Fremont.
- 1869** -- John I. Blair sells off city plots
- 1869** -- The Blair House Hotel was built and served as the first depot
- 1870** -- First regular service through Blair on the S.C. & P.
- 1871** -- First regular service between Blair and Omaha on O. & N. W.
- 1880** -- Depot built at the rail crossing of the C.St.P.M. & O. and the S.C. & P.
- 1883** -- Whipple Truss (flat top) Railroad Bridge completed
- 1910** -- Brick Depot built, replacing the 1880 wooden depot
- 1924** -- First railroad bridge replaced with a (round top) Pratt Truss Bridge
- 1950** -- Last regular passenger service in Blair
- 1980** -- Tracks between Omaha & Blair abandoned
- 1987** -- The Brick 1910 Depot demolished

Primary Railroad

Nebraska Air Line Railroad

Organized in 1864 and re-organized 1867. Proposed a line from DeSoto to Fremont via Blair but never accomplished. Company later acquired by John I. Blair.

S.C. & P. east-west line

Sioux City & Pacific Railroad

Organized in 1864 in Iowa and then acquired the Northern Nebraska Air Line by consolidation. John I. Blair was first President. S. C. & P. built the line from the Missouri river to Fremont and then in 1883, built the bridge at Blair.

C.R. & M.R.

Cedar Rapids & Missouri River Railroad

was under lease to the C & N.W. Completed a line through Missouri Valley to Council Bluffs in 1867. Also in 1867 completed a line from Missouri Valley Junction to Yazoo – today known as California Junction.

O. & N.W. north-south line

Omaha & North Western

Reached Blair in late 1870. Extended line to Herman the next year. Later became the Omaha & Northern Nebraska in 1878. Purchased by the St. Paul & Sioux City in March 1880. Then joined the C. St. P. M. & O. in 1881.

C.St.P.M. & O. north-south line

Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha

Known as the "Omaha Railway." Chicago & North Western gained stock control in 1882 but continued to operate as the C.St.P.M. & O.

C. & N.W. east-west line

Chicago & North Western

Later purchased the S.C. & P. and the Blair Railway Bridge in 1901. Later took over the C.St.P.M. & O. by lease in 1986.

U.P.

Union Pacific Railroad

First laid rails in Omaha in 1865 then built the bridge across the Missouri River in 1872. The S.C. & P. line west from Blair connected with the U.P. at Fremont in 1869. In 1995 the U.P. & C. & N.W. merged and today the U.P. operates the main line through Blair.

For more history of Blair, log-on to www.BlairHistory.com