



## Paul Hill: Railroad Builder

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Article Summary: This account of Hill's work for the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad in Nebraska includes letters and diary entries with estimates of construction costs.

See also the related article about Hill's earlier life, "[Paul Hill](#): Removal of the Potawatomi."

### Cataloging Information:

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Photographs / Images: Lincoln Burlington station in 1870s, Plattsmouth in 1870, inset time table for trains to Harvard, section of pier of proposed Platte River bridge at Kearney

## PAUL HILL: RAILROAD BUILDER

By MABEL HILL

Colonel Thomas Doane of Charlestown, Massachusetts, founder of Doane College of Crete, and Paul Hill of Lowell, Massachusetts were associated together from 1863 to 1866 building the Hoosac Tunnell in western Massachusetts. It was an appointment by the Massachusetts Legislature, where Paul Hill had been a representative. When their appointment terminated Mr. Doane, as chief engineer, and Paul Hill as construction engineer, went to Nebraska to build the extension of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad which was to be constructed from Plattsmouth to Fort Kearny.

It may be of interest to open the diary of September 1, 1869, and read, "Started at 12 noon today for Plattsmouth, Nebraska." and to note that between Boston and Plattsmouth his expenses ran to \$35.80. This covered Pullman car service, hotel bills at Suspension Bridge, Chicago, and St. Joseph, and included a carriage from Pacific [Pacific Junction, Iowa] to Plattsmouth.

### *Work Begins at Plattsmouth*

In a letter written in October, 1869, Paul Hill tells of his activity, "I have been very busy the past week and shall be until the river freezes up so that we cannot transport longer with the steamer. We are making two trips a day now from St. Mary's, [Iowa] which is 15 miles above here. We brought over our first locomotive yesterday, so that we can begin laying tracks pretty fast in a few days. You ask me what sort of boarding place I have. The best the country affords! I have been boarding at the Platte River House, which by the way, is a poor concern, though the best here. I still have a bed in my office on the steamer, and I shall live altogether aboard there for the present. 'A life on the ocean wave, a home on the rolling deep.' Oh, we have so much to do before winter, when unless we get very mild weather here, we may have to transport for a while on the ice.."

### *Storm at Plattsmouth*

In a later letter, written from the office of the Steamer *President*, Hill described a Nebraska thunder storm. "Last night when the clouds began to lower, they somehow looked very frightful; very dark all afternoon. Suddenly in the evening the lightning and thunder and large drops of rain began to give warning of what was to come and perhaps the 'oldest inhabitants' never witnessed the like before. From nine

o'clock until three the following morning never did I see anything to match it. The sky was darkness itself, but with the almost constant flashing of lightning and the dreadful roar of thunder now and then, you could catch glimpses of the grand scene. Rain came down in torrents, and as though this were not enough, hail as large as hen's eggs came with such fury as to break glass in many quarters. Some of the cellars in town were completely filled with water, and the dining room of the Brooks House where Mr. Doane boards at present, was filled to the ceiling, there being 8 feet of water in it at one time. We were completely drowned out on the boat, but all's well that ends well."

*Pioneer Plattsmouth Church Honors Hill*

During this first year of engineering in Nebraska, Mr. Doane and Paul Hill spent the greater part of their time at Plattsmouth. Plattsmouth was evidently a very advanced town, a town of distinction in the west. One of the fine influences of the place was St. Luke's Church (which still carries on the work of the Episcopal diocese). Here Plattsmouth citizens found a spiritual home where they might worship God and bind themselves together in the fellowship of Jesus Christ. Just what aid Hill gave to this pioneer Church is unknown, but evidently he was of some service in the parish of St. Luke, for on his return home he brought with him a beautiful New Testament, a gift from St. Luke. Upon the title page of this embossed leather book these words in a large flowing hand were written:

"The Church's  
Glad Welcome  
to  
Her Earnest Son  
Who  
Flies to her relief  
In  
The 'Far West'  
St Luke's Parish  
Plattsmouth,  
Nebraska  
Xmas 1869."

In 1929 a bronze tablet was placed in St. Luke's Church in memory of Paul Hill as a reminder that once upon a time he was there in the "Far West" and that his aid was sufficient to warrant remembrance by the Plattsmouth parish.

*Platte River Bridges*

In 1872, Paul Hill, together with John Fitzgerald, built bridges across the Platte River, one at Kearney and another

at La Platte. These bridges withstood the floods of the great river until long into the new century, according to reports of engineers who have come from the west and spoken of the enduring strength of these bridges.\*

### *Poetry to Sell Land*

Even before Doane and Hill arrived in Nebraska to build the Burlington extension to Kearney the railroad was advertising the new country and the new lands which were to be opened. Among Paul Hill's papers is a pamphlet published in 1867 giving full particulars of the Iowa and Nebraska lands. These books were issued by the land department of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad Company and used poetry to mingle emotional quality with the hard business of selling railroad land. On the first page there was a quotation from the poet Whittier. On the same page there is also a statement, "It will be found worthy of careful examination," meaning the booklet, not the poem.

Here are the two verses:

"I hear the tread of pioneers of Nations yet to be;  
The first low wash of waves where soon shall roll a  
human sea.

The rudiments of empire here are plastic yet and  
warm;

The chaos of a mighty world is rounding into form."

During the two or three years that Doane and Hill were in Nebraska, both men naturally purchased tracts of lands which were offered by the company. Mr. Doane bought much of the acreage in the town of Crete, Beatrice and other townships.

### *Alphabetical Towns*

Some of the towns on this Burlington line were named by Mr. Doane himself. They ran alphabetically: Crete, Dorchester, Exeter, Fairmont, Grafton, Harvard, Inland, Juniata, Kenesaw, Lowell. Doubtless Lowell was named for Paul Hill's city in Massachusetts, to which, when he was a boy of ten his family had moved, from his birth place in the old town of Billerica, Massachusetts.

### *Nebraska Memories*

With the return of Paul Hill to Lowell, his relationship with Nebraska ended with the exception of tax bills for land in Ashland, Nebraska. Unfortunately his investments in land were not as financially successful as Mr. Doane's. After a

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\*Editor's note:—Burlington records indicate that these bridges were first repaired, and later rebuilt, within the next two decades.

quarter century of taxation, the last of his Nebraska interests was sold for \$200.00. But somehow Nebraska was the land of romance to his family. They loved to think that their father had pioneered in 1837 and that he had helped to open up the country by his work there from 1869 to 1872. So it was with real regret that there passed out of their lives the annual tax bill for the Ashland farm!

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## EXTRACTS FROM PAUL HILL LETTERS AND DIARIES

*Compiled by MABEL HILL*

September 3, 1869. "Chicago does not look very much as it did in 1837. I should never know it was the same place."

October 10, 1869. "We are looking for Mr. Holbrook's [Assistant Engineer of the Burlington and Missouri in Nebraska] return. "This is a great country for railroading. There are any quantity of roads building and projected to be built. However, things move slowly here—everything has to be done at arms' length, an ugly river to cross, a long distance to any place of account, nothing to work with, so it takes a long time to get our things together here. The bridging of rivers is troublesome, yet it is an easy place to build railroads and this country will be a wonderful farming country in 50 years. Being full of railroads, the products of the farms can be readily brought to market. The richness of the lands must make it the most desirable farming country in the world."

October 31, 1869. "We are very busy now getting material over the river. We are hoping that the road from Pacific will be finished in the course of 10 days. Then we shall only have to ferry across the river instead of going to St. Mary's. It is very pleasant going up there in pleasant weather. You would enjoy it. Seeing the flocks of ducks and wild geese which fill the bars of sand in the river. Our sportsmen in the East would have a fine time if they were here. We have a great many large steamboats from St. Louis coming here in the course of a week. You will see by the papers of a large steamboat burnt on the Mississippi last week with the loss of a great many persons."

November 17, 1869. "Office of the Steamer President.<sup>1</sup> I shall have to go without my turkey dinner tomorrow (Thanksgiving Day), I fancy, as I have not seen one since I came into this country. People here do not live by eating so much as by drinking, and as I do not indulge, I expect a poor show of a dinner tomorrow."

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<sup>1</sup>Editor's note:—Miss Hill writes that her father's diary of 1869-70 refers to William Martin as cook on the **President**. He was paid September 18, 1869, \$40.00 a month. In March, 1870, John Shelter was cook.

June, 1870, St. Louis, Mo. "The country through which I passed in coming here, was beautiful. I think Missouri as a state is far ahead of Iowa or Nebraska."

January 15, 1871. "The ride down the Ohio River from Cincinnati to Lawrenceburg was perfectly splendid. The Ohio bottom is narrow, from one half to one mile wide before coming to the Bluffs, which are covered with grape vines, fine houses, large fields of corn. In summer it must be grand."

March 7, 1871. "It is warm and pleasant here as I sit writing here in my office on the boat, which lies on the east side of the river. The doors are all open and men sitting out on deck with their coats off. One would think summer had come indeed. We are lying just at the mouth of the Platte River, and having a fine display of fireworks along the bottoms of the river where there is a (wiry?) last growth of heavy grass which stands through the winter, but the weather has been so fine it has become quite dry and makes a fine display now on fire."

June 8, 1871. "As I write, we are having a frightful thunder and lightning storm, rain and hail pouring down in great fury. And to add to our anxiety, we are having a great flood in the river. The water in the river has risen five feet in the last 36 hours. In all making the river at least 10 feet higher than in the winter. We have been working very hard all day trying to save our landings."

September 10, 1871. "Captain Butt is sick at Burlington which makes it harder for Mr. Brown and myself. By the way, Henry D. Brown, my clerk, is a very fine man and one whom I like very much."

November 12, 1871. "I have been to church where I stood sponsor or God Father for two children, a Mrs. Simpson's little baby girl and a Mrs. Wheeler's baby boy. Captain Butt is better. I am in hopes to be relieved somewhat of so much duty. We are pushing our road along quite fast, and I shall probably get the most of it done by the first of December."

Plattsmouth, Neb. "On board the Steamer President with my friend H. D. Brown, Jan. 11, 1872." "We, Mr. Fitzgerald and myself, have just closed the contract for building the bridge at Ft. Kearny. James Sully did not meet me in Boston as I hoped he would. Henry and I want him back on the boat as soon as he can come."

Undated, 1872. "I am sorry that we are not in condition to be at work on our bridge, for the weather is most beautiful here. It will take 15 or 20 days yet before we can get to work driving piles. We have just let the job to some carpenters in this place, (Plattsmouth) to go out to Kearney and build us first and foremost a boarding house to be 30 x 14 feet with an ell 42 x 14. The ell will be a story and a half high. The main house of 30 x 14 will be used as a dining room and the room 14 x 14 will serve as the kitchen.

The middle room will be for the cook and the end room I shall use as a sleeping room and an office."

Mar. 8, 1872. On my return I found that the men had been idle all the time I was away on account of the water and the ice. The weather today is awful. No man can work on account of the cold wind blowing like a gale."

Aug. 4, 1872. "If you were with me dear George I think we would go for a little time on a buffalo hunt, as there are a great many of them now within 20 miles of us. A good many parties go out from this neighborhood every week. A large party of Indians passed here 5 weeks ago and some few scattering Indians have been killed within a few miles of us. Only think of seeing a herd of wild buffaloes numbering 80,000 to 100,000! Would not that be a sight worth seeing!"

Sept. 8, 1872. "I wish you and the children could have been here today. There have been about a thousand Pawnee Indians here all day. I have been with them most of the time. They look so dirty and miserable I pity them. They have been on a buffalo hunt which proved very successful. They have great amounts of dried buffalo meat packed on their ponies. They have a great many ponies and some of them are very good. The squaws are horrible looking and they are ugly and they do most all of the work, and they are dreadfully dirty. Still I have enjoyed the sight as something new and to be remembered. They look so picturesque on the march. As far as the eye can reach you see them, some leading ponies others riding, others walking. Their ponies are loaded with all they can bear up under. And on top of everything else from one to 3 little papposes are sitting, looking so funny."

Dec. 11, 1872. "The cars are running regularly now over our bridge today.<sup>2</sup> It is all right! Yours in love, Paul Hill."

<sup>2</sup>Editor's note:—This would appear to be the La Platte bridge.

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## CONSTRUCTION LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS

(Exact reproduction from Paul Hill Papers)

### Railroad Ties From Missouri

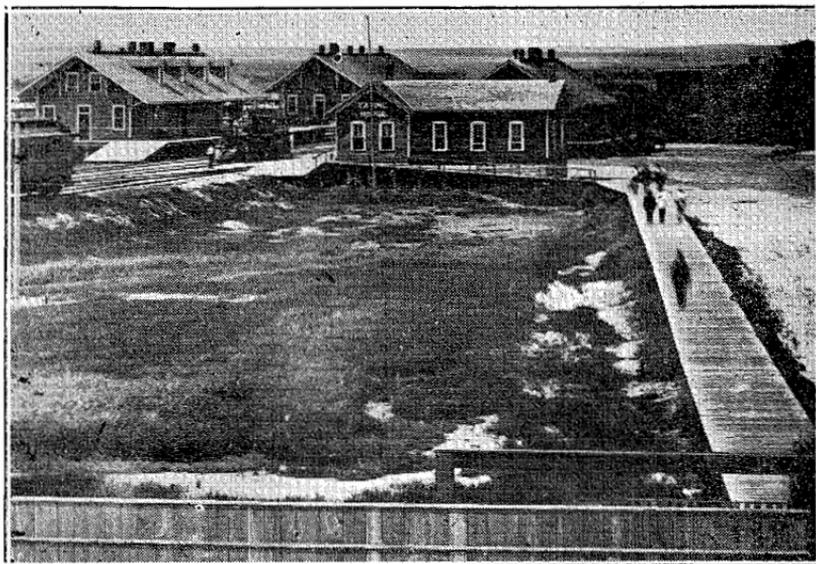
PATEE HOUSE

J. H. BAGWILL, *Proprietor*,

St. Joseph, Mo., Dec. 20, 1869.

My dear Belinda

As I have a few moments before bed-time, I will just write a few lines letting you know how I am today. I came to this place last night, arriving at 1 h 15 m a.m. took breakfast at 6 a. m.



Lincoln Burlington Station in Seventies

Started up the river 16 miles in a freight train, and then walked about 10 miles in the woods on the bank and in the bottom lands of the Nodaway river. One of the rivers which I crossed thirty two years ago. I think you will remember of hearing me speak of the Nodaway—My business to day was looking after timber for ties. St. Joe where I am stoping tonight is quite a city some thirty thousand inhabitants. I have met here a Mr. Hopkins Supt. of the St. Joe & Council Bluffs R. R. He is a very gentlemanly man. Son of President Hopkins of Williamstown. I shall start for Plattsmouth at 2 h a. m. You see that we travel by night in this fast country. I expect to get back tomorrow morning at 9 h a. m. Oh how soon Christmas will be here, and find me a long way from you and the dear ones. Love and kisses to them all. Yours (?)

Paul Hill

#### Contract for Ties

**AN AGREEMENT**, made at Saint Joseph, in the State of Missouri, this 29th day of January A.D. 1870, by and between, **Henry Baker**, of Osborn, in the State of Missouri and the **Burlington and Missouri River Railroad Company in Nebraska** witnesseth, The said Henry Baker agrees to furnish and deliver in or on cars in St. Joseph, in the state of Missouri **FIFTY THOUSAND RAILROAD TIES**, which ties are to be in accordance with the following specifications:

All of the ties to be of white or burr Oak, each one of the ties to be eight (8) feet long, and six (6) inches thick: all of the ties to be hewed to a uniform thickness, hewed smoothly and out of wind: the flattened surface no where to be less than six (6) inches wide and to average at least eight (8) inches wide. The ties are all to be of sound timber and not split at the ends:—to be in every respect first class ties. And are to be delivered in the following three months from this date. Say. Fifteen Thousand (15000.) in the month of February, Fifteen Thousand (15000.) in the month of March, and the balance Twenty Thousand (20000) in the month of April. The said Henry Baker agrees to deliver the said ties as above specified, and the said Railroad Company agree to pay the said Henry Baker Seventy (70) cents a piece for said ties; the said payments to be made in the following manner: For each and all of the ties received in the month of February, to be paid for on or before the fourth (4th) day of March, and for each and all the ties received in the month of March, on or before the fourth day of April and for the ties received in April on or before the fourth day of May.

IN WITNESS whereof the respective parties hereto have set their hands the year and day first above written

Henry Baker,  
Paul Hill for  
B.&M.R.RR in Neb

#### Lincoln Celebrates Arrival of Rails

Plattsmouth Neb  
August 10, 1870

Dear Child

Yours of the 2d was duly rec'd. In answer I have to thank you for it, as it is so comforting always to get letters from home, it shortens the weeks so much too when I can know, what you all are doing at home. I think I told you a few weeks ago that we had got our road into Lincoln. Yesterday was set apart for a free blow on the road. The Lincoln people got up a dinner and ball for the occasion. We ran two trains each way, free to all who wished to go, and the result was that we carried about one thousand persons into Lincoln yesterday. I went out on the morning train, arriving at 3 P M We were met at the depot grounds and the officers of the road were taken in carriages and taken to a new hotel, which was just opened the day before, which we found very comfortable. We dined at 10 P.M. after which the ball was to commence. Holbrook & myself not wishing to join the dance, took an engine and car, and at 12 midnight, started for Plattsmouth where we arrived this morning at 3 A M. Fred, what should you think of seeing a city of two thousand inhabitants out on a great

(level?) prairie where you could not see any thing but earth & sky, that had been built within three years. Lincoln is not quite three years old yet. Still she is a fine looking city with a good many fine private buildings as also the state buildings which add much to the place—Since I began writing this, I have had the pleasure of reading yours of the 5, which I will answer in a day or two. Fred, dont for mercy sake give up going out of doors if you once more get Measels I shall be sorry enough. Do keep out in the air and sun. You can ride some every day—at any rate in the car—and some in the country with a horse. But dont for pity sake say that you are going to stay in the house.

I met our friend Dr. Smith in Lincoln yesterday. He was very anxious about you. He is very sanguine about your getting help, if you will only try his medicine (fairly?)—

Why don't Annie' write me?—

Now be sure Fred and keep out of doors in the air and sun. Not stay in the house any more than you possible can help.

Your father in love

Paul Hill

### Rock Ballast

Account of Rock del'd Aug 20th 1870

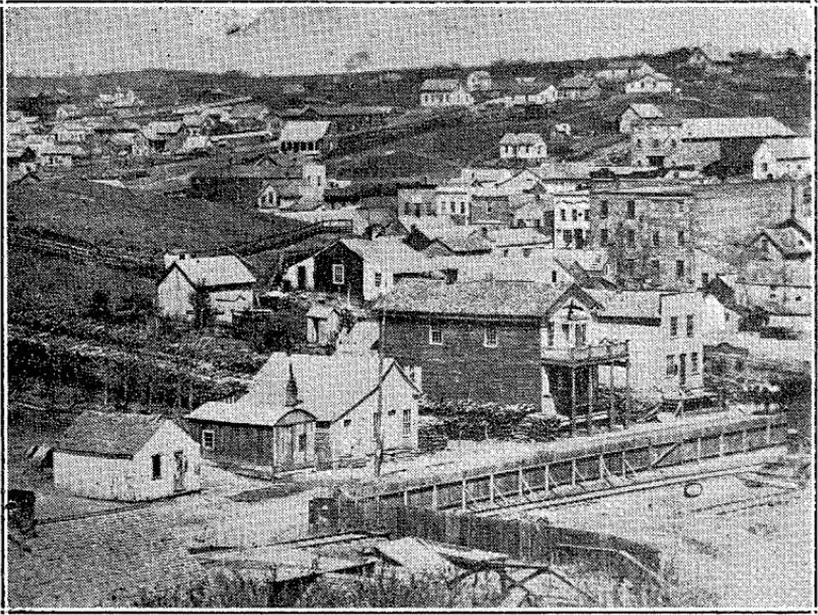
				by Steamer Gallatin	21 Loads	
				" "	President	18 "
				Total	39 "	or 1560 C. yds
Between Nos	13 & 14	8 Loads	320 yds			
" "	14 & 15	1 "	40 "			
" "	15 & 16	4 "	160 "			
" "	17 & 18	1 "	40 "			
" "	19 & 20	1 "	40 "			
" "	21 & 22	4 "	160 "			
" "	23 & 24	8 "	320 "			
" "	25 & 26	9 "	360 "			
" "	27 & 28	1 "	40 "			
" "	29 & 30	2 "	80 "			
			<u>39</u>		<u>1560</u>	

Work of Men a \$2.00 pr day	-----	\$1403.00
" " Horses a 3.00 pr pair	-----	114.00
Cost of Powder a \$6.00 pr keg.	-----	114.00
Wear of Tools (say)	-----	25.00

Cost of 1560 Cubic yds ----- \$1656.00

about \$1.06 pr yard

Clark



Plattsmouth in 1870

o marks the Burlington yards. x marks the Eaton home on Second Street, where Paul Hill attended a wedding celebration. The line across the top of the small white frame store building indicates the main street.

### Bridges to Span Nebraska Streams

#### BURLINGTON AND MISSOURI RIVER RAILROAD IN NEBRASKA

Office of Chief Engineer

Plattsmouth, June 29 1871

Paul Hill Esq

Dear Sir,

Cars a/a/5, 891, 351, 80E marked No. 1 is 80 Ft Span Bridge for Sta 3193 + 25. —

Cars / 125, 3/17, 1a/27 Marked No 3 is 80 ft. span Bridge for Sta 3310 + 10 —

Cars 5/3, 955 are for Bridge at 3287 marked No. E —

Please let me know when these are transferred

Yours

F.W.D.Holbrook

Trains Run to Harvard

BURLINGTON & MO. RIVER R. R. CO. IN NEBRASKA.									
NO 13. TIME TABLE. NO. 13.									
FOR PASSENGER AND MIXED TRAINS.									
To Take Effect Wednesday December 20, 1871.									
WESTWARD.			STATIONS.	EASTWARD.					
Train No. 3.	Train No. 1	NO. OF MILES FROM PLATTSMOUTH.		Train No. 2.	Train No. 4.	NO. OF MILES FROM HARVARD.			
MIXED.	PASSENGER.		PASSENGER.	MIXED.					
4.45 p. m. leave.	10.00 a. m. leave.	0	PLATTSMOUTH.....	136	3.45 p. m. arrive.	9.00 a. m. arrive.			
5.55 .....	10.25 .....	0	OMAHA JUNCTION.....	127	3.20 .....	8.20 .....			
6.25 .....	10.50 .....	18	LOUISVILLE.....	118	3.00 .....	7.45 .....			
6.55 .....	11.05 .....	24	SOUTH BEND.....	114	2.48 .....	7.20 .....			
7.45 .....	11.30 .....	31	ASHLAND.....	105	2.25 .....	6.10 .....			
8.15 .....	11.47 .....	37	GREENWOOD.....	99	2.10 .....	6.10 .....			
8.40 .....	12.00 .....	43	WAVERLY.....	93	1.55 .....	5.50 .....			
9.00 .....	12.12 .....	48	NEWTON.....	88	1.45 .....	5.20 .....			
9.30 p. m. arrive.	12.30 p. m. arrive.	54	LINCOLN.....	81	1.20 p. m. leave.	5.00 a. m. leave.			
MIXED.					MIXED.				
8.00 a. m. leave.	2.00 p. m. leave.	55	LINCOLN.....	81	10.45 a. m. arrive.	6.45 p. m. arrive.			
8.45 .....	2.35 .....	63	DENTON.....	71	10.15 .....	6.15 .....			
9.05 .....	3.05 .....	72	HIGHLAND.....	64	9.45 .....	5.45 .....			
9.20 arrive. } 9.30 leave. }	3.20 arrive. } 3.30 leave. }	75	CRETE.....	61	9.30 leave. } 9.20 arrive. }	5.30 leave. } 5.20 arrive. }			
10.00 .....	.....	83	DORCHESTER.....	53	.....	2.50 .....			
10.20 .....	.....	88	WATER STATION.....	48	.....	2.30 .....			
11.25 .....	.....	103	WATER STATION.....	31	.....	1.25 .....			
11.40 .....	.....	108	FAIRMONT.....	28	.....	1.10 .....			
12.20 .....	.....	110	GRAFTON.....	17	.....	12.20 .....			
1.15 .....	.....	133	WATER STATION.....	3	.....	11.35 .....			
1.30 p. m. arrive.	.....	136	HARVARD.....	0	.....	11.20 a. m. leave.			
O. & W. R. R.					O. & W. R. R.				
.....	3.20 p. m. } 3.30 p. m. }	0	CRETE.....	31	9.30 leave. } 9.20 arrive. }	.....			
.....	4.40 .....	18	DE WITT.....	15	8.10 .....	.....			
.....	5.30 p. m. arrive.	31	BEATRICE.....	0	7.10 a. m. leave.	.....			

Full faced figures indicate passing places.  
 \*Only Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.  
 †Only Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.  
 The time given above is that of Omaha being 25 minutes slower than that of Chicago.

**F. W. D. HOLBROOK,**  
 Asst. Engr. & Asst. Supt.

**THOMAS DOANE,**  
 Chief Engineer & Superintendent.

Kearney Bridge Estimates

(The following letter from the Plattsmouth office was unsigned.)

Paul Hill

If you intend to bid on Platte River Bridge as Mr. Doane requested the following notes may assist you—The piles go twenty (20) ft into the sand take 100 blows and go a little over two (2) inches at a clip on an average—

Allowing three (3) blows per minute for the driver and that you drive three (3) hours a day steady (a good deal of time is wasted in setting up etc) you have with a single engine about five (5) piles driven per day—Allow \$10 per day for use of engine and driver, \$4 for team and \$2.00 for 6 men say \$15—\$5 for Foreman you have \$34 for 5 piles driven—being nearly \$7 a pile—On this basis I think \$10 a pile would give a fair profit being 50 cts per foot absolutely driven into the ground and I think would be considered reasonable by Mr. Doane.

The pine work such as caps and stringers will be easy and nice work and can be done cheaply—I think Mr. Doane would consider any where from \$56 to \$65 per M Ft reasonable or if the Co. furnished the timber \$26 to \$30 per M—This supposing this pine timber be sent out over our Road—The timber costing say \$20 in Burlington and frt to Platts \$10 making \$30 net—If timber has gone up lately perhaps you could get \$65 per M in the work—Iron work should be about 8 cts for cast and 11 cts for wrought iron per lb.

If trimming piles is paid for separately \$1.50 per pile would pay well—\$1 being general price East in Iowa—

For putting in braces and Girders of oak Co (fwding?) the material I presume it is worth about \$10 or \$12 a (truss?)

There is supposed to be about 700 piles

250,000 M Ft	Stringers
32,000 M "	(Fenders?)
40,000 M "	Spread Blocks and plank

---

say 320,000 M " Timber

Whole cost of bridge probably will be about \$60 000

I dont want this to go out of your possession should prefer to have you copy anything you want in it and then destroy—

Your best way of getting this I think would be to have yourself or partner if you have one talk the matter over with Mr. Doane and settle upon what is fair—You have my best wishes for your success—

---

Doane's estimate of cost of Kearney bridge,

Cost of piles at Ft. Kearney [Kearny] supposing 10 will go upon a car, each 30 feet long:

The cost at Missouri river of white oak piles pr foot	"40
Transfer over Missouri river at Omaha	\$10.
Freight over Union Pacific RR	55.
Teaming from Kearney Sta. to the River	\$1.50
(\$2.00)* each	15.

10 piles 30 feet long 300 ) 80 ( "27

Cost per running foot at Bridge	"67¢
Four piles 30 feet long a' 67 cts	\$ 80.40
One pile 25 " " a' 67 "	16.75
Driving 5 piles each 20 ft into ground = 100 a' 50¢ (60)*	50.00
Oak cutwater 10 feet long a' say 50¢	5.00
Girders & braces 16½ x 2 + 10½ x 2 = 54 feet & 25¢	13.50
Labor (estimated) each counted 18 of them at 75	13.50
Capping piles, 4 of them & fitting two ends of cut water = 6 a \$1.50	9.00
Pine Cap = 300 feet a' 50	15.00
Iron & putting in (Iron at cost)*	20.00

Total for pier main channel \$223.15

Cost of other piles:

Four piles 30 feet long a' 67 cts	80.40
Driving 4 piles each 20 feet into ground = 80 ft a' 50¢	40.00
Braces 33 feet long a' 25¢	8.25
Labor on each counted 75¢ 8 of them	6.00
Capping piles 4 of them a' 1.50	6.00
Pine cap 300 feet a' 50	15.00
Iron & putting in say	10.00

Total for pier in inferior channel \$165.65

Number of piers in main channel, 900 feet wide being 20 feet apart centre to centre equal 45 a' 223.15 (231.65)*	\$10,041.75
Number of piers in inferior channels 4000-900 = 3100, piers being 20 feet apart equal 155 a' \$165.65	25,675.75
	\$35,717.50

Nothing of this would be required before January 1st next & can be spread I should say over 3 months of time.

The top work can go on then when you choose & will cost something as follows:

256 M pine stringers a' \$60. put together	15 360.
10 " " spread blocks a' 60.	600.
30 " " plank a' 60.	1 800.

\*Editor's note:— Pencil notations.

32 " " fenders 6 x 8 a' 60.	1 920.
Iron work say	3 000.
	<hr/>
Cost of top work ready for ties	\$22,680.
Cost of bottom work including cap	35,717.
	<hr/>
	\$58,397.

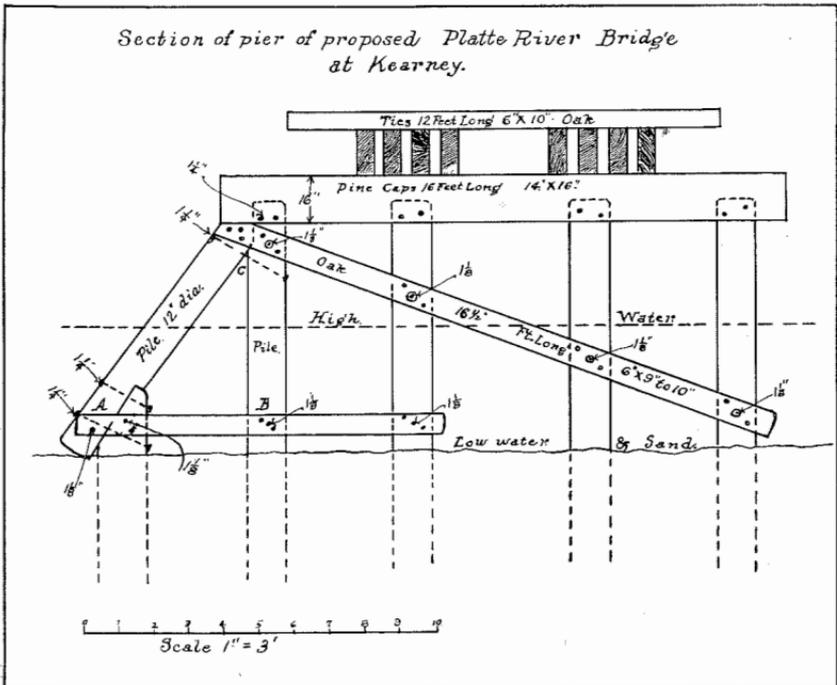
I think the above will give a very near approximate to the cost of bridge from the data now in my possession.

Truly yours

Thomas Doane  
Chf Engr &c.

(make model 2 feet long—)\*

Section of pier of proposed Platte River Bridge at Kearney.  
Scale 3 feet to a<sup>n</sup> inch



The oak girders & braces should be put on to both sides of the piles, & the triangle A B C should also be planked up on both sides with 3 inch oak plank—

\*Editor's note:—Pencil notations.

**Construction of Bridge Begins—Board Bill**

Kearney Stations Jan 31st/1872

Fitzgerald and Hill

To Chas. Walker Dr

To Board Wm Butterfield. Jan 25th—Feb 11th	12	37½
" " Sam. Cole " "	12	37½
" " Herb. Wake " "	12	37½
" " John Ryan " "	12	37½
" " John Patrick " 24th— "	12	95
" " Richard Weldon " 25th	8	57
" " Wm Remington	6	19
" " Frank Clawson	2	38
" " Geo. Clawson	2	38
" " Peter Ellisen	2	38
" " P. B. Murphy & Men	54	32
" " Wm Adams	1	60
" " Isaac Gochnor	1	20

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Rec d Amt. One Hundred Forty One &amp; 47/100 Dollars

Mary A. Walker

**Construction of Bridge Begins—Murphy Bill for Boarding House**

Bridge House Sec. 185 B. and M. in Neb.

Feb. 15th 1872

Fitzgerald and Hill To

P. B. Murphy Dr.

Building Boarding House as per contract	270.00
Building Engine House	10.50
Work on sleeping Bunks, up Stairs	6.00
Extra partitions and doors	0.00
Three dining Tables, and Six seats	9.00
Two tables, Stand, and bunks for Office	6.00
Cup-board for Kitchen	2.00
Two bunks in Bed-room	1.50
Fourteen feet tin Valley	2.25
	<hr/>
	\$307.25

Jan 22nd Credit by four car fares from Omaha to Kearney

57.40

Jan. 24th Hotel Bill at Omaha

3.20

Jan. 31st Credit by Cash

20.00

Feb. 9th " " "

11.70

Feb. 11th " " "

10.00

Charles Walker's Board Bill

54.32

Mrs. O Keefe's " for self

3.36

Feb. 15th Credit by cash	47.27
	\$207.25
Balance Due	\$100.00
(Duplicate)	

**Extract from Freight Charges for Bridge Material**

Fitzgerald & Hill 275

To BURLINGTON & MISSOURI RIVER RAILROAD COMPANY  
IN NEBRASKA, Dr.

Oct 25, 1872

For your proportion of freight on piles etc for K Bridge—as per statement herewith—				7380. 47
Cr K Bridge—				

Received Seven thousand three hundred eighty 47/100 Dollars,

in full for the above Account.

Date Dec 30 1872

William C. Brown

A. Tr.

(The original intention to present extracts from the itemized statement which totaled the \$7,380.47, given in bill No. 275 above, was not carried out because of composition difficulties. The itemized statement of five pages was in longhand, and gave date of shipment, freight car number, item shipped—piling, coal, lumber, engine, bolts, and machinery—freight charged, over the Union Pacific, and divided each item between Fitzgerald and Hill, and a J. H. Burkholder. The freight bill totaled \$12,389.27 of which \$5,008.80 was charged to Burkholder and \$7,380.47 to Fitzgerald and Hill.)

**Burlington Presents Bill For Supplies and Advances**

(Note that someone has indicated which charges are for the La Platte bridge, and that these were deducted to make the computation for the Kearney bridge only.)

Fitzgerald & Hill Dr To

THE BURLINGTON & MISSOURI RIVER RAILROAD  
COMPANY IN NEBRASKA

1872

Feb	19	For bill rendered No	257	61 10	
	29		46	153 77	
Mch	30		258	315 47	
Apr	30		95	10 52	
"	"		96	177 00	
"	"		97	110 50	
"	"		259	145 57	
"	"		260	132 00	
May	31		261	36 25	
"	"		262	134 20	
"	"		263	4 05	
Jun	19	For advance Cash		4000.	
	30	" bill rendered No	264	225 53	
July	23	" advance Cash		10000 00	
	31	" bill rendered No	265	97 79	
Aug	31	"	266	924 79	} La Platte
	24	"	267	133 50	
Sep	30	"	268	335 71	
"	"	"	269	166 79	
"	"	"	270	161 20	
"	"	"	271	56 25	
Oct	16	"	242	81 70	
	11	" Advance cash		1000	
	25	" bill rendered	275	7380 47	
	31	" " "	299	586.98	
Dec.	28	" " "	381	14457.50	
				40888 64	
Mar	1	" advance (Baum & Long?)		18265 92	
Dec	18	" " " "		1371.17	
				60525 73	
		Deduct as per back		2859 94	
				57665.79	

Oct 25/72

Deduct La Platte Bills as follows—[From back of statement]

266	924.79
267	133.50
268	335.71
269	166.79
270	161.20
271	56.25
242	81.70
Advance	1000.
	<u>2859.94</u>

**Union Pacific Switching Fee**

(Charge is for cars of material destined for the La Platte bridge which were switched to Omaha and Southwestern tracks at Omaha)

E# 323

Fitzgerald &amp; Hill

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 TO BURLINGTON & MISSOURI RIVER RAILROAD COMPANY  
 IN NEBRASKA, Dr.

For paid U. P. RR for transferring cars from their  
 track to our as per statement—viz—30 cars

@ 2 00

60.00

Cr C F E O &amp; S W

Received

Sixty

Dollars,

in full for the above Account.

Date Jan 1, 1873

William C Brown

**Chicago Fire**

The following letter, in the Hill Collection, was dated at Chicago, October 14, 1871.

Dear Fred.

What shall I say to you from this dreadfully doomed city. Chicago only a few days ago. One of the proudest cities in the world. Today in ashes. Yesterday I saw the saddest sight of my life. Twenty five hundred acres of land covered with the debris of what was only a few days since beautiful buildings. You have no idea. You cannot have an idea of the terrible destruction of the place. I rode some six hours among the ruins yesterday. Today shall attend to business, if I can get round on account of the rain which by the way is a blessing, as water is so much needed. I saw Huntie [Hunter?] for a moment yesterday. His place of business was burned together with every body else's. He has not opened his safe as yet. So does not know what his loss is. Mr. B—(?) his partner, is feeling pretty gloomy. I shall see Huntie [Hunter?] again today. I shall spend Sunday here and will write again tomorrow.

Much Love to all I remain

Your father in love

Paul Hill