

**A NEW RAILWAY OUTLET FROM  
CHICAGO TO THE SEABOARD: PORT  
HURON AND LAKE  
MICHIGAN RAILROAD COMPANY-  
CHICAGO AND MICHIGAN GRAND  
TRUNK RAILWAY COMPANY**

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A New Railway Outlet from Chicago to the Seaboard: Port Huron and Lake Michigan Railroad Company-Chicago and Michigan grand trunk railway company by W. L. Bancroft

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**W. L. BANCROFT**

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A NEW  
RAILWAY OUTLET

FROM

# Chicago to the Seaboard.

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PORT HURON AND LAKE MICHIGAN RAILROAD COMPANY—CHICAGO AND,  
MICHIGAN GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY COMPANY.

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ORGANIZATION--RESOURCES--BUSINESS PROSPECTS.

PREPARED AT THE REQUEST OF THE DIRECTORS,  
By W. L. BANCROFT,  
SECRETARY OF THE PORT HURON AND LAKE MICHIGAN RAILROAD COMPANY.

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PORT HURON, MICHIGAN:  
1866.

## BUSINESS PROSPECTS.

### Object of this Pamphlet:

The object of the following pages is to set forth the existing necessity for opening new outlets by railway to the seaboard, for the vast annual surplus products of the Northwest; and to indicate a line that will blend, in the shortest route, railway interests of unparalleled magnitude, East or West, and which will traverse a rich and growing section of country, nearly destitute of railway facilities, and therefore certain to afford a remunerative and rapidly augmenting local traffic. The subject is a very extensive one; for purposes of brevity, therefore, only its main features will be glanced at in the text. For those who may be induced, from what may be thus stated, to give the matter fuller attention, copious extracts and references will be found appended. These, it will be observed, are drawn principally from official sources, and therefore entitle the facts stated to unquestioned credibility.

### The Northwest.

The development of the Northwest is amazing, both in its extent and rapidity. In 1840, three of the six States, whose resources we shall have occasion to examine, were not in existence, and the territory comprised in the whole of them contained a population of less than 1,500,000. The population, in 1850, had risen to 2,741,152, and in 1860, to 5,134,409. In 1838, seventy-eight bushels of wheat comprised the grain export from Chicago; in 1854, the amount was less than thirteen million bushels; in 1864, it exceeded forty-four million bushels, while the total export from all Lake Michigan ports exceeded seventy million bushels. (1)

The States of Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota comprise the rich granary from which this mighty commerce was created. These States—the creations of yesterday—furnished, in 1860, a grain product of nearly four hundred million bushels. Their horses, neat cattle, sheep and swine are counted by the million. The value of their stock is expressed in hundreds of millions, and of their farms in thousands of millions of dollars. Their population and every product, during the decade ending in 1860, increased from two to ten fold. The Superintendent of the U. S. census of 1860, in chronicling these statistics, exclaims that “such a development is without a parallel in history, ancient or modern.” (2)

#### Commerce of the Northwest.

It was the commercial facilities afforded by the great lakes and the Mississippi that invited the settlement of the Northwestern States. The pioneers found a single season sufficient to prepare the soil for crops, which might be continued in kind for a long series of years. Agricultural pursuits, therefore, engrossed the industry of the Northwest, and it is to-day the heaviest grain and stock producing region of the world. The aggregate industry of such a community being employed in the production of these great agricultural staples, all other articles of consumption required importation; and thus has been created a commerce which, in the rapidity and magnitude of its growth, is as wonderful as the development of the States. The entire tonnage of the lakes, in 1845, was less than seventy thousand tons; in 1851, the amount had increased to over two hundred thousand tons; and, in 1863, to over four hundred thousand tons. In 1851, the entire exports from Lake Michigan were valued at less than ten million dollars; in 1862, they exceeded eighty-one million dollars. The entire eastward movement of grain in the latter year equalled one hundred and thirty-six millions of bushels, and the total value of eastward freights to tide water was over five hundred millions of dollars. (3)

#### The Channels of this Commerce.

As late as 1850, this commerce found its outlets to the seaboard by way of the Mississippi river and the Erie Canal. Boston first stretched forth a hand for a share of the direct trade of the Northwest, by opening a railway to Ogdensburgh, on the St. Lawrence river. In 1851, the New York and Erie road was opened for business. In 1854, the New York Central was finally consolidated in a single organization, and commenced a successful through freight business. The Pennsylvania Central, the Baltimore and Ohio, and the Grand Trunk of Canada were subsequently opened. These lines, together with the Erie Canal, comprise the great arteries through which this marvellous domestic commerce flows. And of the nine millions of tons transported between the East and the West in 1862, it is officially stated that only one-third was carried by water. It was, therefore, very properly suggested by the Superintendent of the last U. S. census, that "such is the rapid increase of western products, and the surplus carried to Atlantic or foreign markets, that the time is near at hand when all that can be carried by water will be but a small proportion of the whole." In other words, the commerce of the West can, even now, be carried on only by the aid of vast lines of railway.

The lines named furnish the only existing facilities for transit over the Apalachian Range, and such is the face of the country, that apparently they must remain the sole avenues between the West and the seaboard. They are fed by the commerce floated upon the Missouri and the upper Mississippi and the great Lakes, and by the vast network of railways which already checkers the valleys of the Northwest. Although the Erie Canal receives about one-third of this commerce, the magnitude of the traffic controlled by the railways will be appreciated, when it is considered that

in 1863, it was nearly double that of the total foreign commerce of the United States. (4)

Nearly one-half of this tonnage is afforded by the grain exports of the States whose resources and products we have investigated, and its transportation is principally absorbed by the three more northerly of the routes named. Thus, of the grain traffic, the New York and Erie receives at Dunkirk only about four per cent., the Pennsylvania Central say five per cent., and the Baltimore and Ohio five per cent. The two roads last named, together with the Ohio and Mississippi, and to a large extent the Atlantic and Great Western also, with their connections, accommodate a belt of country which may be considered commercially distinct from the valleys of the Lakes and the upper Mississippi. The central points of this region, at which are conducted exchanges rising to the dignity of commerce, are Cincinnati, as a point of exchange between the States north of the Ohio and those producing many things essentially distinct south of that river, and St. Louis; and its trade is not embraced in the view presented of the exchanges between the Northwest and the East. (5)

#### Commercial Centre of the Northwest.

The Northwest has also a commercial centre, and one worthy of itself. At an extreme point of over two thousand miles of inland navigation, on a lake over or around whose waters the entire products of the Northwest, whether destined for the seaboard or the St. Lawrence, must pass, and on a parallel of latitude which its whole commerce necessarily seeks, stands CHICAGO. Nowhere, but in the Northwest, could such a city have been created in so brief an interval. A generation has not passed away since it was known only as a military post, on the extreme Indian frontier. In 1840, its population was less than 5000; to-day it is 200,000. Its every appointment is on a scale befitting such unprecedented growth. Its very streets have been reclaimed from the bubbling sloughs of a mucky prairie, raised to a healthy level, and substantially paved. Its business structures and hotels and public buildings, will not suffer by comparison with those of any eastern city. Its grain and packing warehouses are unequalled. Its harbor has been created by dredging. It is tunneling Lake Michigan to afford wholesome water, and inverting the current of its river from the lake to the Mississippi, to secure perfect drainage and a pure atmosphere to its citizens. It is the centre of a railway system unrivalled in the world. There is not a section of the Northwest with which it is not connected by rail. The great Chicago and Northwestern road reaches to Lake Superior, and, with the St. Paul road, bisects Wisconsin and penetrates Minnesota, tapping the entire railway systems of those States, and striking the line of the Northern Pacific Railway. The Galena and Chicago Union road, the Chicago, Fulton and Iowa road, and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy road, respectively, connect with independent lines through Iowa, all of which are partially constructed, and intended ultimately to reach the Missouri river, and at least one of which is to be extended into Nebraska, connecting at Omaha with the Union Pacific Railroad. The Chicago, Burlington and Quincy road connects also with



the Hannibal and St. Joseph road, passing through northern Missouri to St. Joseph, which is already connected by rail with Lawrence, Kansas, where another connection is made with a branch of the same Union line to the Pacific. These various lines, together with the St. Louis and Illinois, the Chicago, Alton and St. Louis, the Illinois Central, and the Chicago and Milwaukee, constitute the main lines of railway converging at Chicago, and, together with their connections, place the entire Northwest under tribute to that city. There are not less than sixteen different points on the Mississippi river connected with Chicago by rail. The aggregate length of the lines of railway radiating from that city is over 8000 miles.

#### Commerce of Chicago.

It were a waste of words to amplify upon the commerce of such a point. Its growth and present proportions will be best illustrated by contrasting the statement of its principal articles of export for 1864 with that for 1852, when the first railway line leading eastward was opened:

ARTICLES.	1852.	1864.
Flour, bbls. ....	61,190	1,158,456
Wheat, bus. ....	941,470	15,312,819
Corn, bus. ....	2,757,011	13,557,925
Oats, bus. ....	2,080,817	14,588,697
Rye, bus. ....	127,028	798,708
Barley, bus. ....	17,315	282,145
Highwines, bbls. ....	7,027	133,145
Hides, lbs., (1855) .....	8,893,322	18,561,965
Number of Beef shipped (1855) .....	5,358	179,530
"    Pork .....	145,590	781,384
"    Beef packed .....	21,508	65,000
"    Pork .....	43,156	357,640
Flour, manufactured, bbls. ....		259,056
Corn Meal, "    tons .....		18,300
Seeds, lbs. ....		10,324,598

It will readily be observed that the extraordinary development of the Northwest has made Chicago the most important central market on the continent. Indeed, in the great agricultural staples, her market is unrivalled in the world. Her grain trade far surpasses that not only of Odessa, the great grain mart of Europe, but of all Russia. Formerly Cincinnati and St. Louis were the chief stock marts, but Chicago has surpassed them both, as a collecting point for the immense herds of bees which annually graze on the great prairies of the Northwest, and for the enormous crop of hogs annually marketed by its farmers and stock breeders. To any one not acquainted with the progress of the West, such a growth of trade and commerce is scarcely conceivable. And when we consider what a small fraction of the country, of which Chicago is the natural commercial centre, has yet been populated and developed, who will venture to predict the proportions which this trade will have assumed ten years hence? (6)

#### Outlets of this Commerce.

The grain trade principally seeks the lake for export. Its increase has been over six-fold, while the tonnage of the lakes scarcely doubled between 1851 and 1864. The increase in all articles which seek the railroad, since 1852, when the first outlet by rail to the eastward was opened, has been from two to twenty-fold. Thus, of flour, the increase was over nineteen-

fold; of pork packed, over seven-fold; of hogs shipped, five-fold; of cattle shipped, twenty-one-fold; of beef packed, over three-fold; highwines, nineteen-fold, etc. (7)

The Michigan Central, the Michigan Southern, and the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago roads, are links in the only direct lines from Chicago to the seaboard; and all of them were completed prior to 1857. The volume of imports tallies with that of exports; and we can, therefore, comprehend why every avenue of Northwestern commerce is pressed to overflowing, until its currents have become so clogged that the inconvenience and damage are severely felt in their every ramification. And we can appreciate the necessity which recently assembled the leading business men of the country, from Halifax to St. Paul, and from New York as far down as St. Louis, in a commercial convention at Detroit, where the principal topic of discussion was the opening of new routes of transit between Chicago and the seaboard. (8)

#### Existing Railway Routes.

The existing lines of railway between the lakes and the seaboard illustrate the limited conceptions of even our most sagacious business men, of the demands likely to be made upon them by the traffic of the Northwest. The various lines, with a single exception, were originally local enterprises. The only really direct GREAT NORTHERN ROUTE remains to be completed. The Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago road, and its connections through Pennsylvania and New Jersey, constitute a great Southern Route, and hence comparisons with it are not necessary to our purpose. The distances by existing central lines are as follows:

#### MICHIGAN CENTRAL AND CONNECTIONS.

	MILES.
M. C. R. from Chicago to Detroit.....	254
G. W. R. R., from Detroit to Suspension Bridge.....	290
N. Y. C. R., from Suspension Bridge to Albany.....	304
H. R. R., from Albany to New York.....	150
	998

#### MICHIGAN SOUTHERN AND CONNECTIONS.

M. S. R., from Chicago to Toledo.....	543
L. S. R., from Toledo to Dunkirk.....	555
N. Y. & R., from Dunkirk to New York.....	490
	988

By the Michigan Central route, all freight is transhipped at Detroit, and again at Suspension Bridge. The heaviest drawback, however, upon the latter route is the ferrage of Detroit river. It is during the winter months, when these roads are the sole reliance for transportation, that they should do the heaviest freighting business; but, during winter, the Detroit river is often impassable for days, and not unfrequently for weeks together. The bulk of the freight, by the Michigan Southern route, is transhipped at Toledo, and again at Buffalo, during the season of navigation, or at Cleveland or Dunkirk when carried by all rail. These facts render quite apparent some of the reasons for the frequent damming up of the swollen currents of commerce between the East and the West. (9)

#### Feasibility of New Routes.

It may well be doubted whether the opening of new water routes would greatly relieve the existing pressure upon the western railways. We have had occasion to note, that freights of all descriptions, not in bulk, prefer the roads to the water from Chicago; and we have quoted high authority for the assertion, that the commerce of the West can be carried on only by vast lines of railway. The immense business done by our "Express" lines, "Fast Freight," and "Dispatch" lines, indicate the preference of shippers for the most expeditious facilities, even over the ordinary traffic of the railways. Many able engineers question the practicability of additional thoroughfares across the great dividing ridge formed by the Alleghany mountains. It is therefore essential, that all projected lines farther to the westward shall secure a connection with one or more of these existing lines. And again, no railroad has been built in this country with a view solely to through business. In fact, the profits of all paying lines are comprised in their receipts from local traffic. Now, urgent as is the need of new commercial outlets from Chicago, it is not easy to meet these conditions. Indiana and Ohio are covered with a fine network of railways, connecting various through lines, and accommodating nearly every hamlet in those States. The Michigan Southern is already a double line most of the way to Chicago. An additional line to Detroit would only increase existing embarrassments, by swelling the accumulations which so frequently choke up railway transit there. More than all this, no new routes through those sections could command much new business beyond that offered at Chicago; and not one of them would facilitate the flow of the more northerly currents of this magnificent commerce.

#### Where is the Route?

An examination of a good railway map will disclose the proper route for any new railways from Chicago. It will be observed that Michigan lies about midway in the zone which, to the eastward, takes in the New England States, New York, the Canadas, and New Brunswick, and, on the west, portions of Indiana and Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Washington and Oregon; and that all the thoroughfares between the East and the West finally seek a parallel of latitude well within the southern limits of Michigan for their passage of the Alleghenies.

It will be observed further, that of the six trunk lines which we have found stretching to the seaboard, four of them converge at the foot of Lake Huron, viz., the New York and Erie, the New York Central, the Vermont Central and the Grand Trunk of Canada. It has been shown, that all the important railways of the West converge at Chicago. If, then, you connect Port Huron direct with Chicago, you will have united the entire railway systems of the East and the West, by the shortest possible line, and will have opened up the most legitimate channel for mingling the various currents of the commerce of a vast and prolific belt of States, the very garden of the continent.