

PHILADELPHIA AND KENTUCKY.

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MAYSVILLE & BIG SANDY RAILROAD.

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TRADE OF THE SOUTH-WEST.

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RESOLUTION OF THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD DIRECTORY.

Correspondence between Col. Patterson, Col. Stevenson, and  
Edward Miller, Civil Engineer.

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PHILADELPHIA:

BROWN'S STEAM POWER BOOK AND JOB PRINTING OFFICE, LEDGER BUILDINGS

1853.

## RESOLUTION

*Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, June 9, 1853.*

*Whereas*, application has been made by the President of the Maysville and Big Sandy Railroad Company to the citizens of Philadelphia for aid, and a request made that the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company should express an opinion on the subject: *And Whereas*, in the opinion of this Board, the Maysville and Big Sandy Railroad, now the only link remaining unprovided for to connect Philadelphia with central Kentucky, will secure to Philadelphia an important link with Kentucky and Tennessee by a direct railroad of uniform gauge to be worked in close connection with the Pennsylvania Railroad, by which the revenue of this Road will be greatly increased: Therefore

*Resolved*, That this Board recommend to the citizens of Philadelphia such aid as will secure the construction of this Road, which will be returned to them by increasing the trade and commerce of Philadelphia.

## C O R R E S P O N D E N C E .

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PHILADELPHIA, 4th June, 1853.

COL. THOS. B. STEVENSON,

*President Maysville and Big Sandy Railroad Company :*

*Dear Sir :—*I am instructed by the Committee appointed at a recent meeting of the Board of Trade, to ask that you will have the goodness to furnish them an estimate of the prospective trade of your road, with any statistics you can conveniently communicate, showing its probable value as a feeder to the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Respectfully and truly yours,

W. C. PATTERSON, *Chairman.*

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PHILADELPHIA, June 7, 1853.

COL. WM. C. PATTERSON, *Chairman, &c. :*

*Dear Sir :—*In reply to your note of the 4th inst., I submit a general statement in regard to the probable value of the Maysville and Big Sandy Railroad, as a feeder to the Pennsylvania Railroad. It should be observed, at the outset, that the statement is to be regarded as conjectural, for the very reason that the lack of communication which this road is designed to supply, deprives us of accurate statistics on which to base calculations. But it is hoped that enough authentic matter will be contained herein, to justify any liberality of outlay on the part of Philadelphia in aid of the road.

The Company was organized in July last, under a perpetual charter granted by the General Assembly of Kentucky, in 1850. The powers and privileges conferred by the charter are extensive

and liberal, investing the Company with all rights for protection and defence that could be desired. The policy of the State towards such corporations has always been most kindly and beneficent.

The Maysville and Big Sandy Road commences at the city of Maysville, sixty-five miles above Cincinnati, on the Ohio river, and running all the way in the immediate ravine of the river, reaches Catlettsburg, at the mouth of Big Sandy River, the dividing line between Kentucky and Virginia. The length of the road, between these extreme termini, is eighty-eight miles.

The river bottoms, traversed by the road, are very fertile, well settled and cultivated, and rapidly advancing in improvements and value. The county of Mason, (of which Maysville is the seat,) is one of the most productive and wealthy in Kentucky, and is almost exclusively devoted to rural industry, the chief products being Tobacco, Hemp, Barley, Horses, Cattle, Asses, Mules and Hogs. The counties of Lewis and Greenup, lying next above Mason, and reaching to the Virginia line, are of more diversified character and resources. Their agricultural operations are chiefly confined to the wide river bottoms and the narrow valleys of the smaller streams. The uplands are high, hilly and mountainous, but covered with superior timber, almost untouched, and filled with inexhaustible deposits of iron ore and coal of excellent quality. So superior is the iron of this region, that its pig-metal commands about five dollars a ton in Pittsburg more than other iron. There are many furnaces vigorously operated in Greenup, and since the projection of the Big Sandy Railroad, the proprietors of the furnaces have subscribed an ample basis of stock to construct a branch railroad up the Little Sandy River, which will not only accommodate the iron interest, but drain the trade of the rear counties of Carter, Lawrence, Morgan, &c. The old furnaces are increasing their operations, and new ones are springing up; and along the line, since the organization of the Railroad Company, forty thousand acres of timber lands have changed hands, capitalists having invested not only in view of increased value as an effect of the Railroad, but of manufacturing iron and machinery of all kinds, ships, boats, wagons, ploughs, cooperage, and many other im-

portant products, invited by the extraordinary advantages of finding coal, iron, timber and water-power all contiguous.

At the distance of fifty-one miles above Maysville, the road reaches Springville, opposite the city of Portsmouth, at the mouth of the Sciota river. Here we make our connections with Philadelphia. The Sciota and Hocking Valley Railroad, now in operation to Jackson, and soon to be completed to Newark, runs out in a North-easterly direction, and intersects the Marietta and Cincinnati road, which leads to Wheeling, the point of intersection being about fifty-five miles from Portsmouth. From Wheeling, we pass over the Hempfield and Pennsylvania roads to Philadelphia.

This is the most direct and eligible pathway by which Philadelphia can reach the rich interior of Kentucky and Tennessee; and, indeed, there is no other pathway by which Philadelphia could reach Kentucky, which would not be more tributary to Baltimore, on the one hand, and New York, on the other, and which, at the same time, would not be longer and more expensive in time and cost, and subjected, moreover, to two, if not three, breaks of gauge on the way. But, by our road, Philadelphia will not only reach the border, but penetrate the very heart of Kentucky, over a continuous gauge of 4 feet 8½ inches, the same as the Pennsylvania road, for the railroad from Maysville to Lexington, 67 miles, now about laying down its iron, is of the same gauge.

A railroad from Lexington to Danville, 35 miles, in the direction of Nashville, Tenn., is now under construction, and a company is organized, having a strong basis of capital, and is pushing forward the line from Danville to Nashville, 172 miles further. This line, then, may be justly termed the great trunk line between the North Atlantic Seaboard and the vast regions of the Southwest, and at Paris, Lexington and Danville, in Kentucky, and at Nashville, in Tennessee, points, respectively, on which other important railway lines converge, it will receive vast tribute from them as feeders, there being no less than 3,000 miles of such roads beyond Maysville, now constructed or in progress, which will find the Maysville road the best highway to Philadelphia.



The city of Maysville is the most considerable commercial place in Northern Kentucky. From Lexington, it is the nearest point on the Ohio River, Covington, opposite Cincinnati, being nearly 30 miles more distant, and 60 miles further from Philadelphia. The Ohio cannot be crossed, above Maysville, in view of penetrating the rich interior of Kentucky and Tennessee, without traversing a mountainous region, with little population, production or wealth, over which a road would be unusually costly in both construction and operation; nor can it be crossed below, without traversing a longer line, through a less eligible route in every aspect, and both lines, as before observed, rendered more tributary to other commercial cities than to Philadelphia. It is then hardly employing a figure of speech to say that Maysville, with respect to the North Atlantic ports, holds the gateway and commands the pathway to Kentucky and Tennessee.

These considerations, and others which will be glanced at, present the Maysville and Big Sandy Railroad as an enterprise, manifestly, of very great importance to Philadelphia. It is important, because Kentucky, the richest of the Southwestern States, with unrivaled capacity for production, and her people large and liberal consumers, has, for more than fifty years, as the old merchants of your city will testify, preferred to conduct her commercial dealings with Philadelphia. The stock of her banks, held out of the state, is chiefly held by Philadelphians; and no banks in the country have been managed with more fidelity and advantage to the shareholders. The merchants of Kentucky, like the people of the state, are generally men of high spirit and solid integrity; and like their customers, both being solvent, generally pay up punctually. Is not an intercourse, both social and commercial, with such a people, so long, so agreeably, and so profitably maintained, worth preserving? Nay, is it not worth an effort to increase and improve it? Go ask the old merchants of your city who have retired on princely fortunes, and also the younger ones still in the full flow of successful operations, who have so long and profitably, and I am pleased to add, deservedly enjoyed this intercourse with our people—ask those, also, who may desire to avail of facilities for sharing

this agreeable and profitable intercourse—and I hope you will not forget at the same time to consult them with a little book in hand, for subscriptions of stock to this railroad ; for it ought not to be doubted that they will deem it both their duty and their interest to contribute something towards the comparatively slight aid now required.

These considerations appearing to me so strong in their force of appeal to the interest and duty of Philadelphia, I came hither last winter, hoping to receive at the hands of your Capitalists, Merchants, City Councils, or Railroad Companies, such aid as was requisite. But I found the Hempfield and Marietta Roads then applicants for aid. On surveying the ground, and considering my duty in the then posture of affairs, I did not hesitate to postpone our just claims, and, feeling a deep interest in both those roads, I wielded whatever influence I could in favor of their applications, and returned home more content with myself than if I had in the slightest manner embarrassed the friends of those roads in their critical struggles. But I returned with hope, because you and other citizens kindly and generously assured me that an application at a more propitious moment would be favorably responded to. Under this assurance, we put the road, between Maysville and Springville, in view of securing the Portsmouth and Marietta connections, under contract, assuming obligations which now must be promptly met, a large force being already at work on the line, which is to be ready for the cars on the first day of October, 1854.

You may ask why we seek abroad for stock in our road, Kentucky being a wealthy State. Kentucky is chiefly an agricultural State, and her people are not so readily inclined to invest in stocks as those more addicted to commerce. But Maysville had to lay the basis, not only of this, but of the Railroad to Lexington, besides other local improvements. No town or city in the country, probably, has done so much, relatively, as Maysville has done for public improvements. She has not gone beyond her ability, because she would surrender all rather than fail to accomplish the great objects that summon her energies ; but she has gone as far as she can go or ought to go, with any regard to prudence. If other towns and cities would do as much in pro-

portion to wealth, the whole country would be covered over with railroads, and every other valuable improvement. The stock of the railroad to Lexington was all raised at home, and nearly all so far raised for the Big Sandy road, was also raised there. For these reasons, and seeing also that Philadelphia is so deeply interested, we do not feel ashamed to ask aid here, believing, moreover, as we sincerely do, that the subscription will be a profitable investment.

I regret that the nature of the subject does not allow me to apply specific statistics to the elucidation of the question of the productiveness of the road. We can only infer general results, from experience in analogous cases. The true view of the question, as I take it, in the absence of the actual facts, which can only be known after the road shall have been in operation, is to consider the general operations and relations of the road. It is a link of a great thoroughfare between Philadelphia and Kentucky. It is the most direct and eligible channel of intercourse, and therefore must be preferred. The line of road from Maysville towards Nashville, though apparently a diagonal line, nevertheless cuts the state, its population and wealth, more centrally than any other which could be projected through it. By this line, from the boundary of Virginia, to that of Tennessee, fifteen counties are cut, the assessed taxable property of which, according to the State Auditor's Report for 1852, which lies before me, is \$79,209,075, the amount not exceeding two-thirds, by common opinion, of the actual value. The taxable property of the entire State, embracing one hundred counties, and the city of Louisville, is \$317,082,604. The taxable property of 19 other counties contiguous to the line, lying on either side, is \$76,815,217, showing that the line actually cuts the richest counties of the state; for the value in the 15 cut by the line is greater than that of 19 outside; but the aggregate of the whole tier of 34 counties, only one-third of the whole, (and the city of Louisville not embraced in the tier,) is \$156,024,292, nearly one-half the value of the 66 remaining counties, and the city of Louisville in addition. If we deduct the city of Louisville, whose value is chiefly estimated for commercial reasons, and not, like the rest, from actual productive capacity, the tier of 34



counties drained by this line of road, will be seen to exceed in value the remaining 66 of the state. These facts demonstrate that this grand trunk line, running through the wealthiest counties, and running precisely in the right direction, pointing from the expanded regions of the fertile Southwest towards your city, is the one of all others with which you should seek connection. Indeed, it was in this view, as I presumed, that so much interest was felt in Philadelphia in behalf of the Marietta road, traversing Southern Ohio. That road will conduct you by the most direct path to Kentucky. You could not have favored that road so greatly and so deservedly as you did, for the mere sake of reaching Cincinnati, because from Wheeling, the Eastern terminus of the Marietta road, there was a more direct road to Cincinnati already provided for. It was therefore to reach Kentucky and Tennessee, as I am, I trust, not too presumptuous in assuming, that you rendered such magnificent aid to the Marietta road. Although I believe our road is equally deserving your munificence, in whatever aspect it may be regarded, I do not in the least grudge that company all they got. Their road is a magnificent work, and their managers, whom I well know, a noble set of fellows, and, moreover, their road, and the Hempfield road, and the Pennsylvania road, will all be very valuable feeders to our road, as ours will in turn be a feeder of them all.

The passenger and freight business of the Maysville and Lexington Railroad, I find by a report of the President, is estimated for the first year, at \$251,250. That this is not overstated, may be inferred from the fact, that in 1851, as I learned by investigation, the wagonage alone between Maysville and Lexington, for dead freights, excluding the enormous amounts of live stock which pass over the line, and including nothing for passengers, exceeded \$120,000. The estimate for through passengers on that road is 30,000, and of the way passengers, 25,000 per annum; 14,000 cattle, horses and mules, 30,000 hogs and sheep, 20,000 tons groceries, dry goods, &c., 30,000 tons coal, and 30,000 tons bark, timber, lumber, tobacco, grain, iron, salt, &c. These quantities are approximations, founded on existing facts; but an infallible effect of the opening of the line of the road, will be to divert a very large amount of tonnage and travel, which now passes through Cincinnati and the Kentucky river, to its natural

and original channel through Maysville. Some of this business, estimated for the Lexington road, will of course not be enjoyed by the Big Sandy road; but, in turn, the latter will enjoy a large passenger and freight business, peculiar to its own position and relations, which will more than compensate the loss. From calculations based on what we know of the travel by steam, stage and otherwise, considering the feeding lines of the Big Sandy road, the Chief Engineer confidently believes that the passenger business alone will yield ten per cent. nett on the cost of the road. That its aggregate nett earnings will exceed that rate, I do not hesitate to affirm an earnest and confident conviction.

The road itself is most fortunate in its elements. The maximum grade is 15 feet to the mile, the sharpest curve having a radius of 2865 feet, (2 degrees,) very little of the line even of such light grades and curves, being nearly all level and straight—not a reverse curve on the line—all the bridges to be of cut stone, laid in cement—not a wooden structure on the whole line—and yet, thus imperishable in structure, obviating expenses, delays, fatal accidents, &c., it will, owing to the easy ground run over, and the abundance and superiority of stone, gravel and other materials along the line, be built at less cost, and what is still more important, operated at less cost, relatively, than any other road in Kentucky. In proof of this, the facts speak for themselves. We know by the contract for the entire construction, which has been entered into with capable and responsible parties, what the cost will be, except for iron. Taking the contract price for construction, and estimating iron and machinery at their present high rates, we shall have a first class railroad, equipped for business, at a cost not exceeding \$22,000 a mile. There is no room for mistake here, unless iron shall still further advance. These are facts of much significance to both capitalists and commercial men.

But in reference to the general merits of our road, and its importance to Philadelphia, I beg to subjoin a brief, but explicit testimony from Edward Miller, Esq., too well known here by his distinguished abilities as an Engineer, his high character for integrity, and his devotion to this city, to require eulogy at my hands. His testimony goes directly to the merits at all important points—the value of the Big Sandy road, both as a

commercial facility and as an investment. On such points his opinions will be deemed less interested than mine. The value of Mr. Miller's letter is the greater in my estimation, having been as voluntarily as kindly tendered.

In our policy we have aimed to raise stock enough to prepare the road bed for the iron, expecting, as usual with other companies, to purchase iron and machinery on the credit of the company. We have calculated closely and proceeded with rigorous economy. If Philadelphia will now promptly come forward with her accustomed liberality and wisdom, in regard to such enterprises, she will but meet the expectations of her Kentucky friends, and place us in a position to prosecute the work with unpausing energy. On the stock hitherto subscribed, calls of five per cent. have been made and paid, interest at six per cent. payable in stock, being allowed on all calls from time of payment till the completion of the road, when full stock will be issued to all the subscribers.

I have thus, my dear sir, rapidly sketched some of the considerations which appeal to Philadelphia to join in the work of extending and expanding her own social and commercial relations. If it shall aid any one in arriving at right conclusions, it will be a happiness to me to have been thus humbly instrumental in not only preserving an intercourse, so long, so happily, and so profitably conducted between your city and my state, but in subserving the solid interests of the country; for the line of connection which will thus be formed, is eminently entitled to be considered a national thoroughfare. If this line be secured, Philadelphia will retain, increase and improve her intercourse with Kentucky—if not, it is inevitable, however we may regret it, that it will be diverted to other points, over other lines. It is in her power, by one prompt and vigorous exertion, to avert the danger and secure increased advantages; and that, too, without exhausting her resources, but only investing a very small portion of them in a way productive both of commercial advantages and actual dividends.

But whatever may be the result of my mission here, be assured, sir, that I shall evermore cherish the liveliest sense of the goodwill and cordial co-operation which you and so many other kind friends have extended to me. Yours, truly,

THOS. B. STEVENSON, *President.*

## MR. MILLER'S LETTER.

PHILADELPHIA, June 4, 1853.

COL. THOMAS B. STEVENSON,

*President of Maysville and Big Sandy Railroad Co. :*

*My Dear Sir :—*I have examined the documents placed by you in the hands of Mr. Foster, and feel no hesitation in expressing my opinion on the following points :

1. The river route adopted by you is the proper one for your road, its grades, curves and cost giving it a decided preference over the cut-off lines.

2. The contract you have made is at fair cash prices ; the leading item of earth-work and hauling being low for the times. Of the masonry I cannot form a judgment, not knowing the character of the stone or facilities for obtaining it.

3. The width of your gauge, corresponding with that of the Pennsylvania, Hempfield and Marietta roads, and also with the Maysville and Lexington, which will be connected by your own to the former, renders your line the legitimate South-western extension of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

4. The contract entered into between your Company and the Cincinnati and Marietta Company, for the mutual advantage of both, is also a beneficial one for Philadelphia.

For these reasons, and for others which I have already made public, I consider your road to have strong claims upon the city of Philadelphia for substantial assistance, and I hope and believe that you will not be disappointed. Your road will be so cheap, and its grades and curves so good, that it cannot fail to be a good investment.

I earnestly hope that you will meet the success which your zeal in favor of a direct railroad connection between this city and the heart of Kentucky merits at the hands of our citizens ; and I will, with pleasure, bear my testimony in behalf of your road, if you think it will serve you.

With great respect, yours truly,

EDWARD MILLER,

*C. Engineer.*