

# Thomas A. Burling

(1837-1917)



"Ice Bridge" across Missouri River at Omaha - 1868 | Source: UPRR Museum, Omaha, NE



First Union Pacific Bridge across Missouri River at Omaha in course of construction - 1870 | Source: UPRR Museum, Omaha, NE

1837 Born in Cambridgeshire, England

1854 At the age of 17, Thomas Burling emigrated to the U.S.

1858 Burling began his railroad career with the Chicaco-Burlington & Quincy in Illinois

1865 Burling became an engineer with the CN&W out of Clinton, IA on the construction engine laying track across Iowa

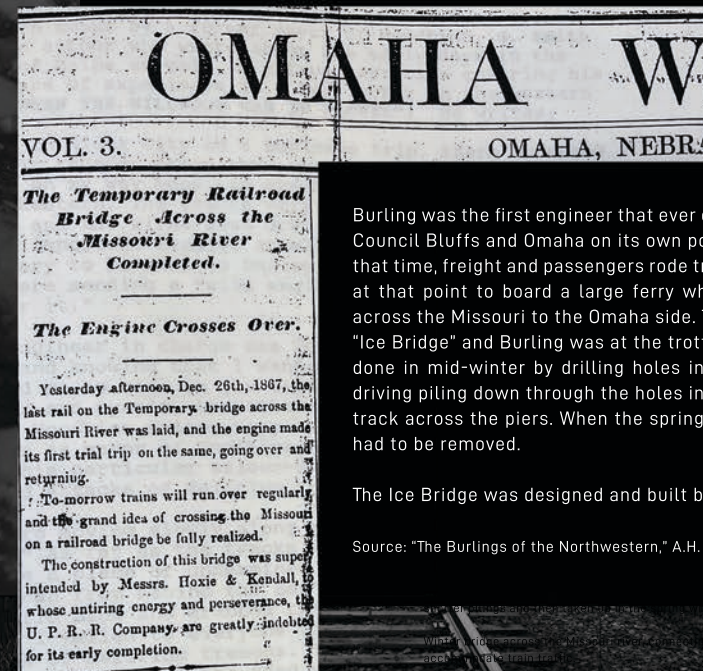
1868 Burling married Mary Broadie. As newlyweds, Tom and Mary rode in a CN&W passenger car from Illinois to Boone, IA. At that point, the passenger service ended and Tom and his new bride rode up in the cab of the engine, driven by Tom, to their new home in Dunlap.

In those days, there was only one engine on the West Division and Tom Burling and another engineer divided its operating time. Engines were named as well as numbered and this particular engine was "The Vesta" #44.

Burling was at the throttle of the first passenger train ever to pull into Council Bluffs, IA, the west end of which was just barely completed.

1917 Thomas Burling was laid to rest in the Dunlap Cemetery.

Source: "The Burlings of the Northwestern," A.H. "Buzz" Burling



Burling was the first engineer that ever crossed the Missouri River between Council Bluffs and Omaha on its own power on December 26, 1867. Prior to that time, freight and passengers rode trains up to Council Bluffs, unloaded at that point to board a large ferry which provided water transportation across the Missouri to the Omaha side. This first crossing was made on the "Ice Bridge" and Burling was at the throttle of the Alagonquin #211. This was done in mid-winter by drilling holes in the ice of the Missouri River and driving piling down through the holes into the river bottom and then laying track across the piers. When the spring thaw came, the pilings and tracks had to be removed.

The Ice Bridge was designed and built by Messrs. Hoxie & Kendall.

Source: "The Burlings of the Northwestern," A.H. "Buzz" Burling