March 12, 1849

*This Date in Missouri Senate History*

On *This Date in Missouri Senate History*, the date was March 12, 1849, the day the Missouri-Pacific Railroad was chartered.

Realistically, it was the Gold Rush of the previous year that was as much a catalyst as anything in starting interest in a coast-to-coast railroad.

Supporters, at that time, wanted the Pacific Railroad to run “from St. Louis to the western boundary of Missouri and thence to the Pacific Ocean.”

Because of several setbacks in 1849, including a cholera outbreak, nothing happened with building the railroad — aside from developers receiving the charter. Work would start the following year.

The first order was to come up with $100,000, which was handled by three of the organizers. Then, a nationwide search was conducted for a railway engineer. The last step was to determine the best place for the line westward through the Show-Me State.

In 1851, the Missouri Senate helped ensure $2 million would go toward the railroad, with an additional $1.5 million slated for the Hannibal-St. Joseph line.

The Civil War stopped construction, but the railroad reached Kansas City 1865.

March 12, 1849, the date marking charter of the Missouri-Pacific Railroad, on *This Date in Missouri Senate History*.

(Sources: [Missouri-Pacific Historical Society](http://www.mopac.org/corporate-history/73-missouri-pacific-railroad), Union Pacific)