

# Promontory Summit, May 10, 1869



*The Arizona Spike  
UP Museum*

**A History of the Site Where  
The Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads  
Joined to Form the First Transcontinental Railroad,  
1869,  
With a Special Focus on the Tents of May 10, and with  
Recommendations for Interpretation of and  
Historic Furnishings Study for the  
Tents at the Last Spike Site,  
Golden Spike National Historic Site, Utah**

**By**

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## THE GREAT EVENT CONSUMATED

“The last rail is laid; the last spike is driven; the Pacific Railroad is completed.” In such terse and brief terms as these is the announcement made to the world that the great event of the age is finally accomplished. In the face of natural obstacles of the most forbidding character, the shores of the Atlantic and the Pacific are at last practically united by an iron highway spanning the continent...

From henceforth we are in the Union and of it, and the great event of the age has brought us all home at last.

*Daily Alta California*, San Francisco, May 11, 1869

## PACIFIC RAILROAD

The greatest epoch in the history of Chicago was that which occurred on yesterday, in the laying of the last connecting link in the great iron band, the Pacific Railroad, which cements the social and commercial interests in the eastward and westward extremes of the American Continent. This event, stupendous in its results affecting the entire country, if not the entire world, is to Chicago the dawn of a new era in the future greatness and prosperity of the city, and it follows that Chicago should rejoice.

*Chicago Tribune*, May 11, 1869

## THE LAST RAIL LAID – THE LAST SPIKE DRIVEN

Monday, May 10, 1869, will be forever memorable in the history of Omaha. Not to Omaha alone, however, will it mark the commencement of an important epoch. It shall be remembered through all time as the starting point of a newer, broader and greater civilization than has ever hitherto dawned upon the progress of the world. The union of the two great Pacific Railroads, which with their connections span a continent, and, simultaneously kiss with iron lips, the waters of the two oceans is an event so important in its bearing to the well being and future progress of mankind, as not to be passed over without serious thought and reflection.

*Omaha Herald*, May 12, 1869

## EAST AND WEST

The long looked for moment has arrived. The construction of the Pacific Railroad is *un fait accompli*. The inhabitants of the Atlantic and the dwellers of the Pacific slope are henceforth emphatically one people. Your correspondent is writing at Promontory Summit amid the deafening shouts of the multitude, with the tick, tick of the telegraph close to his ear...

It was apparent throughout the [New York] City yesterday that an event of more than usual importance was taking place, and that there was an evident disposition among the people to be jubilant... The last rail of the road connecting our opposite ocean-bound shores was laid; the last spike (a gold one, bye-the-bye) was driven; and thereupon there was booming of cannon, peals from Trinity chimes, and general rejoicing over the completion of the great enterprise. In the success of which not only this country, but the whole civilized world, is directly interested.

*New York Times*, New York City, May 11, 1869

## COMPLETED

Yesterday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, at high noon, the last rail was laid and spiked, connecting the Union and Central Pacific railroads. It was the completing of an enterprise fraught with more interest than the tunneling of Mount Cenis or connecting the Red and Mediterranean seas by the Suez Canal. Exchanges and telegrams inform us that on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts it was to be celebrated with becoming ceremonies and popular demonstrations, while from down in the deserts of Utah, we have rumors of gold spikes, and silver spikes, diamond eyes, ruby lips, alabaster necks, sparkling vintage wit, sentiment, and what-not, that graced the occasion and fastened the rail.

Success to the great enterprise and a volunteer toast from Montana.

*Montana Post*, Helena, May 14, 1869.

## PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPLETE

The achievement can but strike one with wonder.

*Daily Bee*, Sacramento, May 13, 1869

What a stupendous achievement this of science, enterprise, progress... Truly we live in a wonderful age.

*New York Herald*, May 10, 1869.

Gold has paid its largest and best tribute to its elder and more useful brother – iron... California and Nevada are no longer far off provinces of the United States... The six months voyage of the ox team is superseded, forever, by the four days journey of the iron horse.

*Daily Appeal*, Carson City, May 11, 1869.

No grander achievement in earth's history overflowed the victorious marches of the Sons of Mars, than were heralded by the glorious event of the completion of the great continental railway of America... The driving of the last spike of the Pacific Railroads has not only united with insoluble bonds of friendship the two extremes of our own land, but has inaugurated a revolution in the commerce of the entire globe...

Of what stupendous magnitude is the change thus wrought!

*Cheyenne Leader*, May 14, 1869

A thousand throbbing hearts impulsively beat to the motion of the trains as the front locomotive of each company led on majestically up to the very verge of the narrow break between the lines, where, in a few moments, was to be consummated the nuptial rites uniting the gorgeous east and the imperial west of America, with the indissoluble seal of inter-oceanic commerce.

*Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, May 19, 1869

Yesterday... the Atlantic and Pacific oceans were united by an iron rail track three thousand miles in length. San Francisco and New York are within six days of each other. We may expect in a week or two to be enjoying a sight, if not a taste, of the luscious fruits and vegetables of the golden fields of California in the markets of the Eastern cities.

*National Intelligencer*, Washington, D. C., May 11, 1869

From our Philadelphia correspondent, May 10: --The Pacific Railway was completed this afternoon at half-past 2 o'clock.

*The Times*, London, May 11, 1869

The telegraph worked splendidly, and persons in the office here had the scene at Promontory Summit brought visibly before them, every stroke of the hammer being announced here.

*Rocky Mountain News*, Denver, May 11, 1869

This very hour the roar of cannons, the clang of bells from one end of the continent to the other, proclaim that the mightiest work ever undertaken in our land is today completed.

*News*, Gold Hill, Nevada, May 11, 1869

The great railroad problem of the age is now solved. The Continental iron band now permanently unites the distant portions of the Republic.

*Nunda News*, Nunda, New York, May 29, 1869

Today marks the commencement of the Age of Steam in America.

*Colorado Tribune*, Denver, May 11, 1869

All Hail the Pacific Railroad!

*Times*, Dubuque, Iowa, May 11, 1869.

Caption for next page:

Photographer Alfred A. Hart captured the last spike ceremony a little after noon, Promontory time, May 10, 1869. At center, Central Pacific Railroad president Leland Stanford wields the silver plated maul. At his left is Union Pacific Railroad vice-president Thomas Durant. The white bearded John Duff and the mutton chop whiskered Sydney Dillon, both Union Pacific Railroad directors, hold up golden spikes for the photographer. In front of Dillon stands Arizona Governor Anson P. K. Safford, who offered the Arizona spike. The proceedings were halted so that Hart, the Central Pacific's guest photographer, could capture the moment Leland Stanford wanted remembered, "the Last Act," as Hart captioned it. In the background at left is the Wells Fargo & Co. stage office tent and beyond the crowd and right of the locomotive are the Union Pacific Railroad's ticket and telegraph office tents. Courtesy Golden Spike National Historic Site Library.

Cover photograph:

Interior of Union Pacific paymaster's tent, Laramie, Wyoming, Courtesy Union Pacific Museum.

Title page photograph:

Arizona Spike, Union Pacific Museum, by Tom Richter, NPS.





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## **Chronology: The Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads**

- June 28, 1861 Central Pacific Railroad incorporated
- July 1, 1862 Pacific Railroad Act – charters Union Pacific Railroad and provides for Central Pacific to construct to California-Nevada border
- Jan. 8, 1863 Central Pacific ground breaking ceremony at Sacramento
- Dec. 2, 1863 Union Pacific ground breaking ceremony at Omaha
- 1865 UP surveyor Samuel Reed recommends route north of Salt Lake over Promontory Range
- July 3, 1866 Pacific Railroad Act amended – provides for CP to build to a junction with UP, location unnamed
- Sept 1867 Reconnaissance survey by CP's Butler Ives selects route through Promontory Range
- May 9, 1868 UP track reaches new town of Laramie, Wyoming;  
CP plats and sales lots for new town of Reno, Nevada
- Aug. 15, 1868 UP surveyor Frederick Hodge's location survey over Promontory Range stakes Promontory Summit
- 1867 UP and CP contract with Mormons to build grades, sometimes parallel to each other, across Utah
- Jan. 22, 1869 UP track layers reach 1,000 mile mark west of Omaha
- Feb. 1869 CP grade crews attack difficult east slope of Promontory range
- Mar 8, 1869 UP track reaches Ogden; CP near Nevada-Utah border
- Mar 28, 1869 UP begins work on Big Trestle east slope Promontory range. Estimate 2,000 at work along line
- March 1869 Reported 6,000 workers along line in Promontory Range area, especially eastern slope. UP at Corinne April 8<sup>th</sup>
- April 10, 1869 Joint Resolution of Congress fixes point of union of rails at summit of railroad pass through Promontory Range, but provides for purchase of Union Pacific line, Promontory – Ogden, by Central Pacific. Ogden to be junction

- Apr 11, 1869 UP orders halt to work west of Promontory, as far as Humboldt Wells, Nevada
- April 12-15, UP engineers stake land claims at Promontory Summit and Blue Creek valley, form land company
- Apr 26, 1869 CP completes Big Fill
- Apr 28, 1869 CP crews lay ten miles of track in a day, three and a half miles from Promontory. UP decides to haul track to Promontory Summit to block CP
- Apr 30, 1869 CP track reaches Promontory Summit, 690 miles from Sacramento
- May 5, 1869 UP crews finish Big Trestle and Carmichael Cut on east slope
- May 9, 1869 UP track reaches Promontory Summit, 1,086 miles from Omaha; Wells, Fargo & Co. runs last Overland stage
- May 10, 1869 Last Spike ceremony. UP decides not to remove from Promontory Summit, which becomes UP-CP junction
- May 11-12, Crews build yards at Promontory; transcontinental railroad opens for service. Promontory City arises. No water found to support trains; water trains come from Corinne and Blue Creek or Kelton on Indian Creek.
- June 1869 Chief Engineers Dodge, UP, and Montague, CP, meet and start rebuilding yard to improve operations; CP builds wood frame station that summer
- Aug 30, 1869 Western Union completes line north of Salt Lake via Promontory
- Sept, 1869 Government commission reports on railroad construction deficiencies, far less than rumored. Meeting of UP and CP officials at Promontory without a decision about moving junction  
UP builds station/eating house/hotel at Promontory
- Sept 10, 1869 Dr. Gregory appointed Justice of the Peace for Promontory Precinct; reports on gamblers and corruption of Promontory City
- Nov 17, 1869 Agreement, UP and CP, to relocate junction from Promontory to Ogden
- Nov 21, 1869 Vigilantes clean out Promontory City
- Dec. 1, 1869 Transfer of Promontory Station and line to Ogden from UP to CP
- Dec 6, 1869 First scheduled CP passenger train passes through Promontory to Ogden, and junction with UP trains

## **II. A History of Promontory Summit, 1869**

The history of the transcontinental railroad has been often told – the tales of visionaries, the organization of companies and government subsidies, the heroic engineers and construction feats of Chinese and Irish immigrants, with a golden completion and subsequent public scandal. The focus here, however, is on Promontory Summit, the site of laying the last rail and driving the golden spike, and the occupancy of the region by the railroad workers and optimistic town people until the end of 1869.<sup>1</sup>

Surprising little has been published about Promontory Summit as a place.<sup>2</sup> Writers of the standard histories give Promontory its moment of fame, May 10, 1869, then move on with their narratives. The events of that day are significant and will be detailed in this study. The following essay expands on the brief narratives about Promontory Summit during 1869.

The text chronicles the survey and construction work of the Central Pacific Railroad (CP) and Union Pacific Railroad (UP) at the site; the evolution of the small community of Promontory City; the railroad companies' operations and the associated businesses; and the executives's decisions, or, in reality, feud, that kept the junction at the summit until the close of the year 1869. For nearly seven months, "at Promontory," George Francis Train wrote, "there was no union between the Union and Central Pacific – although the rails had been laid end to end." After the removal of the junction to Ogden, Promontory station's history greatly changed.<sup>3</sup>

### **A) Mapping the Terrain**

On August 15, 1868, Frederick Hodge's survey crew pounded a survey stake into the ground marking Promontory Summit, a station point on their location survey for the to-be-constructed grade of the Union Pacific Railroad. The first Euro-American to camp at the summit of the gap through the Promontory Mountains, Hodge was preceded by nearly twenty years of official surveys for a route past Salt Lake to the Pacific.<sup>4</sup>

The Topographical Corps, under the Secretary of War, had mapped the lake shore, under Captain Howard Stansbury, 1849-50, and prepared a massive volume as part of the Pacific Railroad Surveys, 1853-4. In 1854, Lt. E. G. Beckwith's party had followed around the southern shore of Salt Lake, down the Humboldt River valley, and over the Sierra Nevada to California, recommending the route as the best for a transcontinental railroad. Eleven years later, parched and sun-bleached surveyors following Union Pacific engineer Samuel Reed had a different view of the crossing of the Salt Lake desert and south lake route. Back in Omaha, Reed recommended that the UP send a reconnaissance team around the north end of the lake instead. They were to find and map a new corridor. Hodge's survey would be one result of that reconnaissance.<sup>5</sup>

Learning of Reed's surveys, the fast moving Central Pacific railroad crews beat them across the Promontory range. Samuel Skerry Montague, thirty-one year old chief engineer for the Central Pacific Railroad, sent topographical engineer Butler Ives into the uncharted landscape along Salt Lake's north shore. In September 1866, Ives and party crossed to the head of the Humboldt River, near the Nevada-Utah line, then hurriedly kept on east across a half dozen ranges. At the Promontory Mountains, which blocked passage for some forty miles north of the lake, he found and entered a slightly inclined,

broad pass, a gap Central Pacific engineers would call Promontory Summit over the Promontory Range of Utah.<sup>6</sup>

In June 1867, Ives returned to more thoroughly survey the Central Pacific Railroad line. In letters to his brother, Ives explained the party's task. They would cross the dry alkali desert with dry camps and move at a pace of ten to thirty miles per day from the headwaters of the Humboldt River, around the north end of the lake, into the Weber River valley and beyond. The party was also well armed with Spencer rifles, he noted, probably because of an inflated fear of the Paiute and Shoshone.<sup>7</sup>

Ives's preliminary survey more accurately mapped a railroad crossing of the Promontory range. He camped near the summit, probably at Blue Creek, and surveyed several alternate paths, one of which ultimately had a relatively easy 53' per mile grade, included a proposed 800-foot tunnel and heavy rock-work for three miles down the eastern slope. The crew placed stakes every 500 feet through the pass and across the range. With some changes, this would be the route followed by the Central Pacific. His map also helped the CP lay claim to and get government approval of a railroad line across Utah, including over the Promontory range.<sup>8</sup>

The transcontinental railroad required three different types of surveys: reconnaissance, preliminary, and location surveys. The reconnaissance surveys found the best corridor, where crews moved quickly across the terrain seeking easy grades along water courses and over mountain passes. Next, small crews of a dozen or less did preliminary surveys, which mapped the selected corridor's elevations and set a rough line of stakes, moving ten or so miles per day. Last, the location survey crew slowly set the stakes followed by graders. Ives had finished the first two tasks and would be back in 1868 to begin the slow location survey from Nevada east. This time the Union Pacific acted first and sent Hodge, who beat Ives to the Promontory Summit.

## **B) Locating the Line Across the Promontory**

In 1868, while Central Pacific surveyors were doing final location surveys in Nevada, Union Pacific Railroad engineers entered Utah for an intense field season. Thirty six year old Grenville Mellen Dodge, Civil War general and chief engineer of the Union Pacific Railroad, sent his survey crews to stake out a number of surveys, and, late in the field season, to complete a location survey across the Promontory range. Later giving credit to Ives for finding the pass, they eliminated reconnaissance and preliminary survey work and began staking a location survey following the CP stakes.<sup>9</sup>

Assistant engineer Frederick Hodge started at Promontory Summit. Aided by the Central Pacific survey stakes (and bumping into Col Stevenson's CP survey crew on the eastern slope), Hodge's crew camped at the summit August 15, then began their location survey. Fortunately, Hodge's field books survive for that long summer season. The crews outfitted at Walker Brothers store in Salt Lake City and headed west in three wagons. According to one account, typical survey crews included "the assistant engineer in charge [Hodge], a transit man, two chainmen, two flag men, three axmen, stake maker, a leveler, topographer, two rod men, a cook," and teamsters with wagons to haul the gear. Hodge hired the laborers, teamsters and cook in Salt Lake City.<sup>10</sup>

Hodge's journal includes inventories of foods and the "Teamster's kit." Canned goods predominated. The crews slept on the ground in their bed rolls or in two tents and

the cook in the kitchen tent. Teamsters slept in the wagons. Meals were eaten in the cook tent, while animals foraged nearby or were fed with oats carried along. Meals became more indigestible and the alkali water bothered the men; Hodge constantly complained of “bowel troubles.”<sup>11</sup>

The crew moved slowly, around a mile or two per day, with rarely seeing a soul. Hodge noted seeing a Shoshone in the distance. Between August 15 and September 4 they placed stakes every 50 to 100 feet to near Red Dome Pass, when they joined chief engineer Dodge on a quick reconnaissance west. At Pequot Pass, fifty five miles west of Promontory, Hodge found an inscription: “Passed here on 8 July 1866, Butler Ives.”<sup>12</sup>

East of Promontory Summit, Dodge, assisted by Hodge and Col. J. O. Hudnutt, surveyed a line up the rugged eastern slope which connected with Hodge’s initial point on the summit. Dodge’s location survey followed below the CP stakes, Ives’s line, but at a steeper grade of 80’ per mile. By October, the UP engineers had finished the location line up and over Promontory Summit.<sup>13</sup>

### **C) Governor Stanford and Doctor Durant Revise the Surveys**

In 1868, the UP and CP construction crews following the surveyors were pushed into a race to build the most miles before the final meeting, a tale often told. As a tactic, Union Pacific Railroad Vice President, Doctor Thomas C. Durant, ordered graders into Nevada at Humboldt Wells, some 300 miles in advance of any other grading crew. CP Vice President Collis P. Huntington, desirous of reaching Salt Lake Valley, learned of the maneuver to try to check the CP advance, and wrote CP President Leland Stanford that Durant “is a bold, reckless, and in some things, a foolish man.”<sup>14</sup>

The construction race would force an abandonment of all surveys over the Promontory range, the Ives and Dodge lines. Routes were to be found which would have quicker and cheaper to construct grades, which also meant steeper grades and sharper curves. Leland Stanford arrived on the Promontory with consulting engineer George M. Gray, revisiting the Ives – Stevenson survey, which they threw out because of its costly tunnel. On the Promontory, his biographer later wrote, “twenty seven winter nights he [Stanford] spent in the open air at Promontory,” undoubtedly part of that time near or at the summit. He cleared snow for his bedroll, he later complained, not the usual task for a railroad president. In the end result, Stanford, Gray and crew revised the Ives line with a steeper grade and tighter curves. They eliminated the heaviest rock work and, more importantly, the tunnel, but inserted a fill, later dubbed “the Big Fill.”<sup>15</sup>

In January, 1869, a worried Thomas Durant arrived on the Promontory with UP consulting engineer Silas Seymour and assistant engineer Thomas Morris. Camping in winter weather as well, they changed Dodge’s line. It now had tighter curves, steeper grades -- up to the government’s legal limit of 116 feet per mile. The reduced rock work required a long, high trestle. As actually built, the Durant changes on the Promontory line would have the steepest grades along the entire 1,776 miles of transcontinental railway.<sup>16</sup>

The number of surveys across the summit, and the number of camping trips to converge the lines at the summit, Hodge’s and Ives’ survey stations, are uncertain. CP and UP engineers in the field probably had the most up to date information, but there is no complete record of the last changes. Durant moved Thomas Morris to construction on the Promontory to ensure work followed his changes and, more importantly, would be

hurried along. Copies of the UP's profile maps at the Nebraska Historical Society show numerous corrections, far more than the usual completed maps handed to contractors, or government officials.

On March 17, 1869, a party of government commissioners under Brevet Major General G. K. Warren rolled across Promontory Summit following the multiple survey stakes. They had been sent by the president to inspect the railroads and propose a junction point. General Warren carried copies of the CP surveys up to the time of Stanford's changes and copies of the Dodge survey of the previous summer. They were confused. As they followed the survey stakes through to their camp at Blue Creek, they noticed the location maps did not follow the stakes on the ground and the various lines crossed each other several times. On the Promontory Summit, Warren was not exactly sure where the two lines would be built.<sup>17</sup>

#### **D) Clearing and Building the Grade**

The end product of the locating engineer's work was a row of stakes on the ground and accurate drawings of the railroad line in plat and profile. The profile map was passed to the construction engineer who had the responsibility of estimating the amount of earth to be moved in order to build the grade. Contractors actually built the line, but the construction engineer set the pitons along the survey and measured the work done. Unfortunately, this latter unpopular task of approving funding for work completed by contractors often led to disputes. The engineers also determined when a contractor was in default.<sup>18</sup>

On May 21, 1868, the Union Pacific signed a contract with Brigham Young for construction work in Utah. Young, or, rather, the Mormons, would be the primary grading contractors through Utah. In June, Leland Stanford arrived and negotiated a contract with Young – in reality the Mormon firm of Benson, Farr & West -- to build in far western Utah for the CP. In the fall of 1868 and in January 1869, Young signed additional agreements to build the central section of the lines, Ogden west across the Promontory Mountains to Monument Point, approximately 100 miles. Benson, Farr & West for the CP and Sharp & Young (bishop Sharp and one of the Mormon leader's sons) for the UP took on this work, and subcontracted major portions of the grading to family or community groups of Mormon farmers.<sup>19</sup>

Reminiscences by Mormon workers along the Ogden – Promontory - Kelton section provide descriptions of how the crews were organized and how the grading was accomplished. In 1919, one of the graders recalled how twelve men in Ogden organized themselves into a work group with nothing but shovels, picks, and wheelbarrows. Between September 1868 and April 1869, as subcontractors for Sharp & Young, they built grade for the Union Pacific. Their first shoveling and moving of dirt was three stations done in fifteen days at Hot Spring Creek, west of Ogden, which netted \$5.50 per day each. By April, at the Promontory, they were making \$10.20 per day.<sup>20</sup>

They worked where others with teams, plows and scrapers would not, on wet and spongy ground. The old-timer related how they had no boss except they reported work done to the UP engineer. The company helped by filling their commissary with supplies at Omaha prices, without freight costs. They camped along the grade.

John Davis recalled that in October 1868, he joined a party of Ogdenites in a subcontract for two miles of railroad grade from Benson, Farr, & West for the CP. “We took our teams, wagons, plows, scrapers, tools and supplies from Plain City [Ogden] and drove out to a place about six miles west of Dove Creek, a little beyond Kelton. We finished about December 1 and made some money.” In February 1869, he recalled, they went back to work on 800’ of marshy ground on the UP east of Promontory. They used wheelbarrows and still made \$8 per day each. Some ground was so wet they worked in rubber boots.

Davis mentioned that in the evening they would occasionally go to Brigham City to see plays. Sundays were spent in Ogden, when possible. “When we wanted a little excitement we went over to Corinne, which was a city of tents.” Davis saw a man shot at the Corinne, the boisterous “Burg on the Bear.”

Other Mormons cut ties and delivered them to the railroad; contracted to cut timbers for trestles, and burnt charcoal to sell blacksmiths sharpening tools. Still others contracted to supply beef to the camps or drove out with wagons of vegetables and fruit to see what they would bring. Other farmers could make money with their teams. According to one Mormon’s experience on the Promontory, “The pay received was five dollars for a man and team, everything furnished him, and ten dollars for Sunday work. These wages seemed enormous to the frugal pioneers.” The daughter of one of the Mormon farmers recalled how the railroad work and its cash meant money for her first pair of shoes.<sup>21</sup>

These recollections suggest small work groups taking up subcontracts along the surveyed line all at one time. It was not a steady advance from one end to the other. On March 14, 1869, at Salt Lake City, Leland Stanford wrote a letter to his partners that explained his strategy: “I do not intend to finish up our line [Ogden over Promontory to Monument], but keep men scattered along it until our track is close upon them. I don’t think there will be any attempt to jump our line while it is unfinished and we are working on it.”

Excerpts from Lorin Farr’s diary and later accounts suggest that the firm of Benson, Farr & West had 1800 graders at work for the CP leading up to and on slopes of the Promontory during the late winter through the spring of 1869. Sharp & Young had as many along the UP. Engineer reports are more conservative in their estimate of numbers of workers and teams on the grade.<sup>22</sup>

The crews clearing the brush and shoveling dirt for the base grade camped along the way, usually at sites accessible to water. Archeological reports and period descriptions tell of tents, dugouts and makeshift shelters on every hill and slope along the grade. Recent archeological inventories estimate dozens of camp sites throughout the park.<sup>23</sup>

Company records, contemporary newspaper accounts, and reminiscences suggest that graders crossed Promontory Summit in February to early April, 1869. The pace of the crews, a week for several hundred feet, required they camp along the way, often in dry camps of a few tents and wagons. We lack specific information on who did what work and where they camped at Promontory Summit, other than they were Mormon farmers contracting with Benson, Farr & West for the CP and Sharp & Young for the UP. The Mormon graders most likely camped at one point in the summit, and then worked up

and down their stations of grade work, the two miles of easy incline taking a month or more.

On this section of the Promontory Summit, the grade work was less than substantial, clearing of sage and quick trenching on sides and piling of the dirt in a row down the survey line. Big Mormon work camps arose on the west slope in November, near Cedar Springs, and on the east after the first of the year (described below). Supply roads cut across the Promontory to serve these points. At Promontory Summit, once done with the easy work in the pass, the Mormon graders would not have lingered.

The difficult task of building up the rugged eastern slope of the Promontory would consume the UP and CP. In February, the CP put the first Mormons on the rock work, but they lacked powder and tools. They would be supplemented by experienced blasting crews. The tale of building the parallel grades up the eastern slope of the Promontory Mountains is one of unnecessary waste, more akin to the movement of troops and supplies during military campaigns.

A reported 6,000 workers were on the eastern slope by April. An often quoted reporter of the Salt Lake City *Telegraph* describes the scene. “As one approaches the Promontory,” he wrote,

a marvelous view reveals new clusters of tents, hitherto obscured by some towering mass of grey rock...From this camp the beholder may delight in vision with the discovery of camps almost innumerable – above the grade, along the grade, remote from the ...blasting, carting, shoveling, wheeling, picking, etc. The busy carvers of the iron ways for the Union and Central Pacific are being pushed to the utmost endurance to be ready for the tracklayers rushing upon them now, at such proximity, from front and rear...<sup>24</sup>

Besides graders, the reporter also noted, at a location known as Conner’s Spring, were camped a reported 100 Shoshone.

However, most workers lived in tents in the Blue Creek valley and on the eastern slope, not on the summit. Construction engineer Morris details in his letters the work and the camps on the eastern slope that spring. Camped in the valley, Morris noted he was surrounded by hundreds of workers in small camps; canvas villages arose in the valley, the largest cluster of tents being at Junction City.<sup>25</sup>

## **E) Junction City**

The biggest question along the line, however, was where would the two railroads meet? And, more importantly to the speculators and businesses following the railroad, where would the “junction city” be located? In February, a correspondent to the *Telegraph* wrote, “The companies are running a race side by side. But where will they meet? That’s the question. The Ogdenites seem to know it; then the New Bear Riverites are quite confident that they are building at the right place; then again the Junctionites, on Blue Creek, will bet anything they have struck it.”<sup>26</sup> Of the many sites touted as being in the right place, Junction City appeared to be the nearest where the engineers and speculators believed it would join and a city grow.

In January, the Junction City townsite had been platted and lots sold to the incoming merchants from the declining railroad construction towns in Wyoming and eastern Utah. By February, Junction City contained a cluster of tents, the number

increasing every day. In February, the *Reporter* correspondent informed readers of the leading businesses: J. S. Conner, Lamb & Sessins, Hague & Henry, and Watson & Co. plus four restaurants, corrals, saloons, etc., served the escalating number of workers on the eastern slope of the Promontory.<sup>27</sup>

“Junction City,” wrote a reporter for the *Deseret News*, “is the largest and most lively of any of the new towns in this vicinity. Built in the valley near where the lines commence the ascent of the Promontory, it is nearly surrounded by grading camps, Benson, Farr and West’s head quarters a mile or two south west.” Another reporter noted that Junction City contained a fine lot of boys “determined to have a town entirely devoid of psalm singing, whiskey guzzling, co-operative holiness to the Lord.” They also considered themselves part of Idaho Territory, not Utah – a “Gentile Town,” in the rhetoric of the day, founded more along the character of the track-side towns of Wyoming than the farm communities of Utah.<sup>28</sup>

Ed Watson of Watson & Co. left a diary of his activities. He left Indiana to sell shoes out West. In 1867, he opened a store in Cheyenne, then moved with the tide to Bear River City, Wyoming, but shifted to Echo Canyon by winter 1868-9. In January, he closed shop and followed the railroad workers to the Promontory. On February 3, he arrived in Junction City, “Idaho Territory,” bought a town lot and lumber for his wall tent (cost \$150), and opened for business by the 7<sup>th</sup>, selling \$60 worth of dry goods that day. Watson helped organize a town government – not unlike what he had down in previous communities along the railroad – and elected as mayor George Cockrell, merchant and one of his boarding house tent mates. With his bunkmates, Watson talked of business, played card games, and told of the girl back home. He also noted the toughs in town and wrote in his diary, “six shooters used freely.”<sup>29</sup>

Two miles from Junction City, a stage line built to serve the work camps had erected a tent station named Harrisonville, after its agent, but better known as Dead Fall for the tent saloons that lined its single street on the road to the Promontory. With a reported 6,000 workers in the hills above Junction City during March-April, the Blue Creek valley became the blow-off spot for over-heated workers, and Dead Fall became the most notorious for its violence, while Junction City’s grass-roots government exacted more control on the rougher elements of the population.<sup>30</sup>

Tales of murder and robbery (“garroting” to use the term of the day) abound for the region, the number of deaths having increased with the retelling of those days. A review of contemporary newspaper reports, always questionable, suggest a total of five shooting deaths in the Blue Creek Valley. After the camps were closing down, the number as reported began to escalate, without substantiation, first to 24, and grew from there with the retelling, especially in tourist guide books.<sup>31</sup>

One of the Mormon workers later recalled Blue Creek, alias Dead Man’s Gulch, “It was a lawless place until Patsy Marley was installed as police officer. He had as his deputy a big Frenchman, who was a noted gun man. Patsy did not believe in cash fines. He simply disarmed the toughs, taking away their revolvers, knives, and slungshots [sic]. He had a big pile of those weapons in his tent.”<sup>32</sup>

The residents of Junction City elected Patsey Marley constable.

Aiding Marley was merchant Will Riley, who replaced Cockrell as “mayor.” According to an Omaha reporter, Riley was known in the tough districts of that city. Marley and Riley were operating under the tradition of grass roots government, found in

the West's mining camps. A miner's meeting, in this case the workers of Blue Creek, formed a government for their own protection, and ignored the civil authorities within the Utah territorial system. Marley's law enforcement measures were outside the appointed legal authorities, but served their purpose.

While Junction City was founded and grew, a series of other speculative towns were promoted along the railroad. The UP platted Bonneville seven or eight miles north of Ogden, but lot sales were abysmal; while Mormon leader Brigham Young touted Ogden and offered 300 acres gratis to the railroad companies to join there. Boomers in clusters of tents on the respective grade crossings of the Bear River dubbed their prospective entrepôts "Stanford" and "Conner," after a local military leader. Both were abandoned when the UP supported town site of Corinne arose in March near the banks of the Bear River, twenty miles east of Promontory Summit. Promontory City at Cedar Springs on the western slope of the Promontory range was discussed as a possibility. And the Junction City residents concurred with a writer from Brigham City who commented on the busy scene at Blue Creek and concluded "We should not wonder much if the great city will yet be built there."<sup>33</sup>

These speculators were assisted by the engineers along the line. Engineers and surveyors had pocketed cash for non-work related activities. UP surveyor H. M. Chittenden wrote home that he had surveyed the townsite of Bear River City, Wyoming for \$100 in cash and a lot. CP surveyor Henry Root help lay out lots in Cisco, California. UP construction engineer Hezekiah Bissel was offered \$500 by gamblers to plat Sherman, Wyoming. Construction engineer Thomas Morris had speculated on coal mines and helped found towns separate from assigned UP work.<sup>34</sup>

Both the UP and CP had founded towns, best known being Cheyenne on the UP, and Reno on the CP. CP general superintendent Charles Crocker controlled the town site selection on the CP while chief engineer Dodge was in charge of right of ways, town site lots, and land sales during construction. He and a key staff of three, the former adjutant of his regiment, General James A. Williamson working with surveyor John O'Neil and land agent House, had platted towns and sold lots from Nebraska to Utah. On March 25, the trio sold \$20,000 worth of lots in the new Corinne (the second such named town along the railroad after Williamson's daughter). At the same time, the press asked Leland Stanford if the CP planned to create a new regional town in Utah, but he declined comment.<sup>35</sup>

By April, the contest appeared to be between Ogden (or near there) and Corinne. Ogden was the choice of the Mormons. Corinne appealed to non-Mormons as a competing business community in the valley's trade sphere. Small time speculators along the track, Wyoming to Nevada, however, were ready to fold their tents and jump at any new "junction city" opportunity that might appear. As one opportunist wrote, "this is a splendid country for speculation and anyone with a few hundred dollars and half a Yankee head, can make a fortune here in a few years."<sup>36</sup>

## **F) Deciding on the Junction Point**

In early April, the site of Promontory Summit consisted of a hurriedly constructed grade for the CP, a grade for the UP, a wagon trace, and a few errant survey stakes. Its name did not appear in any of the discussions about the junction point, nor was it

expected to be the great “junction city,” filling the pages of newspapers. No reporter bothered to describe Promontory Summit in glowing terms, if at all.

To the east, the UP track layers were racing along the shore line of Salt Lake headed west, already in a losing race to Humboldt Wells, Nevada, then even to Monument Point on the Salt Lake’s northwest shore. The CP had hurriedly built track across Nevada and on to the lake shore bound for Ogden, but the UP had already beaten them to the Mormon City. No one knew where the CP and UP would meet, or if they would meet. Maneuvers in Washington, however, would have an immediate effect on the railroad construction crews and on Promontory Summit.

In Washington, D. C., over the night of April 8-9, chief engineer Dodge of the UP met with vice president Huntington of the CP in the home of Congressman and UP stock holder Sam Hooper. UP director Rowland G. Hazard was there as well. There they hammered out an agreement on the meeting of the rails, an agreement that reflected the realities of construction progress, and one which brought Promontory Summit into the limelight. Huntington was able to add a clause, which gave the CP what it wanted, a junction at or near Ogden, and to the UP executive committee months of anxiety and discussions about how to void the agreement. It read, in part:

The place where the two roads shall meet and connect shall be at some point within eight miles of Ogden.

The Union Pacific company shall complete the track to the summit of Promontory Point (*sic.*) to which place the Central shall build from the west, and the Central Pacific company shall pay to the Union the cost of the road without rolling stock from the terminus near Ogden as aforesaid to Promontory Point (*sic.*)

The next day, on April 10, the U. S. Congress quickly passed a resolution blessing the agreement to join the rails at “Promontory Summit, at which place the rails shall meet and connect *and form one continuous line.*” One presumes that Congress feared the CP and UP would build to the summit, but not connect, forcing transfers of a few feet by land between the tracks.<sup>37</sup>

Huntington and Dodge wired the news, which was sent to the respective ends of track. Within a few days, Stanford ordered work stopped east of the Promontory. UP graders west of the Promontory were called back.

Thomas Morris and other UP engineers took the news as an opportunity. On April 12, the diary of UP bridge engineer at Promontory, Leonard Eicholtz, noted that he, Morris and two others staked a quarter section each at Promontory Summit. Surveyor Koons platted the ground and Schyler returned to erect a tent to hold their personal land claim.<sup>38</sup>

Eicholtz hedged his bets and with partners platted a new town on Blue Creek at the foot of the uphill grade. He named it Altoona, after the famed railroad town near the great Horse Shoe Curve of the Pennsylvania Railroad, where he had cut his engineering teeth during the 1850s. By mid-April the group had taken up twelve or thirteen quarter sections at the Summit and at the base of the grade. They met in Morris’s tent and formed a land company in order to speculate on the new terminus.

Eicholtz's diary indicates that he knew that the rails would meet at Promontory Summit, but not that the final junction would be at Ogden. On April 18, Eicholtz noted "the question of junction of the two roads still undecided." He was part of a meeting at the summit two days later between Stanford for the CP and director Dillon, engineers Seymour and Reed and others for the UP, without conclusion. The CP planned to connect at Promontory but to run on to Ogden via the UP tracks; the UP countered that the question of final juncture was not resolved. Stanford wrote his colleagues that the UP officials were "surlly" and intimated that the CP would never get possession of the road to Ogden. The *Deseret News* of April 28, broadcast to its readers that the UP would force the junction to remain where the rails would meet at Promontory Summit, not Ogden. The "junction city" would by default be at Promontory Summit.

### **G) Completing the Track and First days at Promontory Summit**

On April 30, the Central Pacific's crews, Chinese and Irish track layers and telegraph line builders, arrived at the survey station denoting the "Promontory Summit." CP crews had completed their 690 mile railroad first. The CP's Chinese crews began ballasting track and finishing the roadbed working back west from the end of the line. The UP – CP "summits" were about a half mile apart and no one was sure which would be the point of juncture.<sup>39</sup>

Two days before, Dillon, Dodge and other UP officials, after witnessing the CP's ten miles of track laying, ordered rail, ties, hardware, telegraph poles, and supplies taken by wagon to the summit. UP crews began building from their survey station on their "Promontory Summit" on the UP grade, building back east toward the rock blasters on the eastern slope. A few days later, a reporter noted that the UP had opened an office at the summit, a lone table with a telegraph key on top and battery underneath surrounded by sage, obviously meant to watch the movements of the fast track laying CP crews.

In early May, reporters noted that some 200 Chinese workers were in tents at Victory, six miles west, and at a gravel pit to the west of the summit. At Promontory Summit, tents began to appear along the UP and CP parallel track. J. S. Conner of Junction City moved the seven miles up the road and placed his wall tent opposite the end of the CP track. J. B. Keeney, Wells Fargo stage agent, established himself in a tent at the terminus as the last stage coaches ran between the ends of track, Junction City to the Summit. A migration out of the area had begun. Promontory City on the west slope and Junction City on the east were being abandoned. A few days later, a reporter visited Dead Fall and described the scene: "This town has almost entirely disappeared, a few deserted houses and old tent sites, alone marking where it formerly stood."<sup>40</sup>

Dodge, who was on the Promontory, probably met with his counterparts within the CP. They selected the point of junction between the UP and CP. The reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle* noted on May 8<sup>th</sup> that "a small pennon indicates the point where the last rail will be laid." Dodge did not disabuse reporters of the notion that the UP would stay at the junction on the Promontory; he would lay track up to the CP's end of line at their "Promontory Summit" point. UP construction engineer C. H. Sharman, who had placed the pennons to mark the grade up over the range, later recalled that "we ran the curve that connected the two roads." UP surveyors staked the arching grade line from the end of the CP track to a point back on the UP mainline, some 2500 feet.<sup>41</sup>

On May 7, Lewis Carmichael's crew finished the last blast of rock work and Jack and Dan Casement's track layers quickly laid the last 1.2 mile of rail to connect and finish the UP's two ends of track. Over the weekend, May 8-9, Casement's crews built a Wye at the Summit in order to turnaround locomotives and laid the 2500 feet of rail from the UP down to the CP end of track. The final rail links were left incomplete at the last spike site. The UP track which was laid earlier from the UP's "Promontory Summit" point, now became a long spur off its transcontinental line. The Wye and spur were indications to all that the UP planned to stay.<sup>42</sup>

Arriving May 7, too, was CP President Leland Stanford and his special car loaded with dignitaries for the scheduled laying of the last rail planned for May 8. At four or five p.m., depending on your clock, the Union Pacific locomotive No. 60 met the Central Pacific's "Jupiter" and "Whirlwind" with steam whistles blowing, the first steam salute across the continent. Dr. Stillman with the Stanford party described Promontory Summit the day the trains arrived, Friday, May 7. He wrote: "The morning was rainy and dreary; two or three tents were pitched in the vicinity for the rendezvous of those ruffians who hang about on the march of industry, and flourish on the vice of men. The telegraph operators at the end of the respective lines were then within a few rods of each other."<sup>43</sup>

A photograph taken about that time by Alfred Hart, CP photographer, looks west with a row of tents at left, J. S. Conner's sign board jutting out from one. In the distance is a cluster of what appears to be wagons, possibly the UP track grading crews and construction engineer (who may have been holding a quarter section claim at the spot). Also in the distance, at left, is a lone tent, possible one of the squatters on the quarter sections claimed by Eicholtz and partners.

But Eicholtz wasn't there. He had rushed to Devil's Gate, where his bridge had slipped from its foundations and caused a delay of the UP dignitaries and, thus, the delay of the last spike celebration until May 10.

## **H) May 10, 1869<sup>44</sup>**

Of the many historic events of the nineteenth century, the driving of the golden spike at Promontory Summit completing the transcontinental railroad is one of the most documented. Eastern and western newspaper reporters, three photographers, diarists, journalists, and correspondents, and innumerable reminiscences have helped later writers detail the progression of events. Unfortunately, this mass of information has led to conflicting bits of detail. And, on some topics, the record is silent.<sup>45</sup>

A reporter for the Virginia City, Nevada *Enterprise* rolled out of his tent and, at 7 a.m., noticed the telegrapher placing a flag atop a telegraph pole at the last spike site. CP telegraph line superintendent F. S. Vandenberg, assisted by James Gamble of the Western Union Telegraph Company, was on the ground. A half dozen telegraphers from along the line were ensuring that their wires were ready, battery strength up, and keys and relays at work sending the numerous dispatches and speeches of the day. A. D. Bell of the San Francisco *Bulletin* and every other reporter highlighted in their articles how the driving of the last spike would be instantaneously communicated to America by tapping the wired mail to the wired spike, an unparalleled feat.

Charles Savage of Salt Lake City spent a cold night in the tent of the UP ticket office, but was first photographer on the ground. He was soon joined by photographers

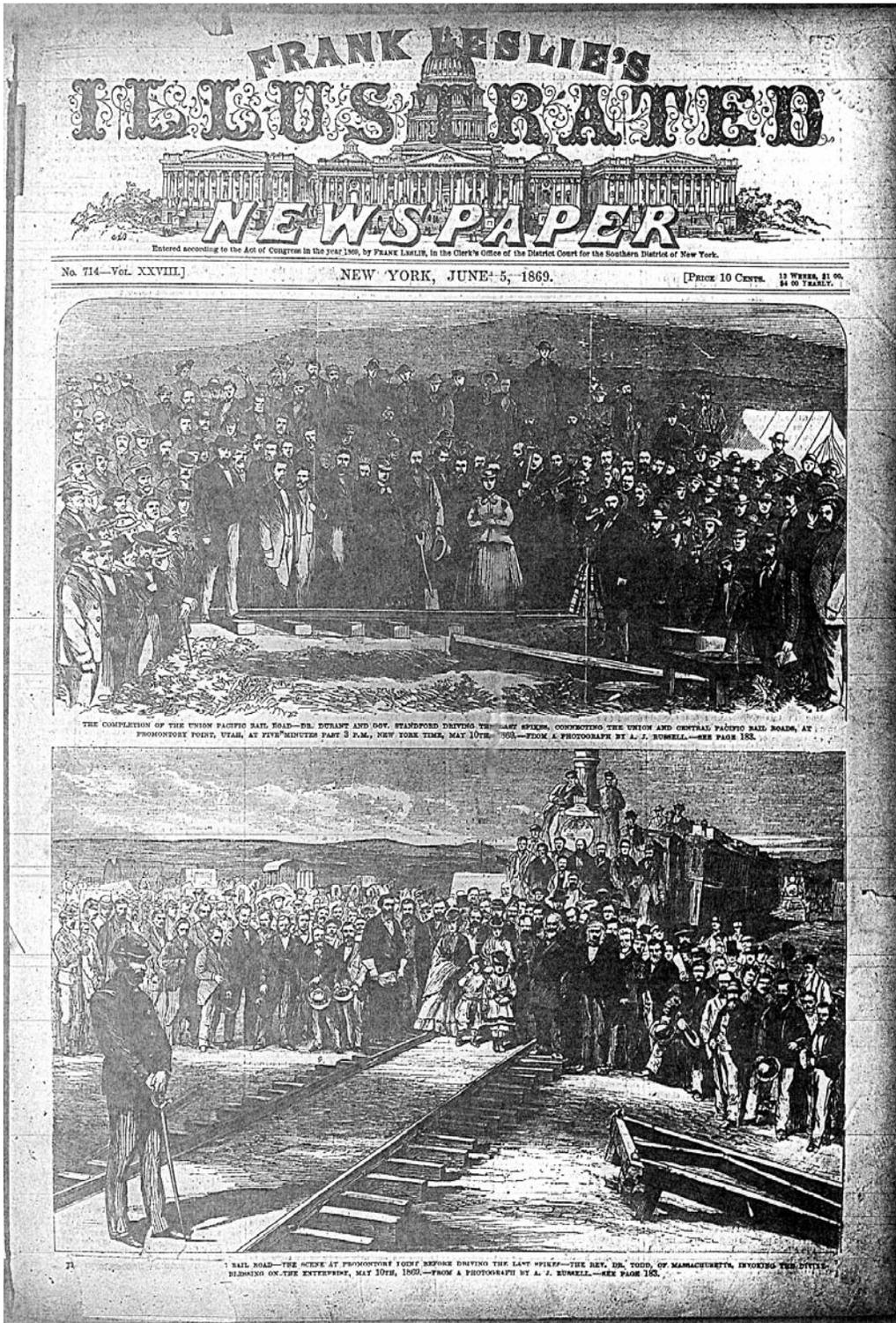


Figure 1. Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, June 5, 1869, published a description of the May 10 ceremony and a number of A. J. Russell's photographs as woodcuts. They and other newspapers miss-labeled the site as "Promontory Point" instead of Promontory Summit, which has caused continued confusion.

Alfred Hart, guest of the CP, and Andrew J. Russell, guest of the UP, who arrived with his wagon studio on the 8:20 train. Russell was in time to take shots of the Irish track layers placing the last rail and dirt on the UP grade. Alexander Toponce, beef contractor to the roads, later recalled “I took the shovel from an Irishman and threw a shovel full of dirt on the ties just to tell about it afterward.” He probably spent the night in a tent on site as well, possibly the restaurant which was like the one he once owned along the UP grade.<sup>46</sup>

The Virginia City reporter also noted that the UP crews were up early finishing the last section of a track closing the gap between the railroads. Photographer A. J. Russell captured the last of the crew at work ballasting the UP track. Russell’s photograph (Figure 2), one of his first taken that day, also shows the flag on the telegraph pole at left. The time is mid-morning.



Figure 2. A. J. Russell photograph of the Union Pacific tracklayers ballasting the last section of UP track early on May 10, 1869. Note flag atop telegraph pole at left. Golden Spike National Historic Site (GOSP)

Russell, author of the article published in *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, stated that he arrived around 8:20 a.m. with the UP train which carried vice-president Durant and other dignitaries. (The Virginia City reporter says it arrived at 9 a.m. – conflicting times reflects the lack of a standard time zone in 1869). Russell had his photography studio wagon with him and it is seen in a number of images of the day. The wagon was a simple buckboard with a box used as dark room on the back.

The strongest recollections of the children that were there was of where they slept, and of the flags. Gamble’s daughter slept under buffalo robes in a round tent, thought to be at Promontory, probably one of the sagging tents south of the CP track. Another old-timer remembered a tent divided at night by calico partitions. The flags on the

locomotive “Jupiter,” at the head of Leland Stanford’s special train, also caught the children’s eyes.<sup>47</sup>

CP construction superintendent Strobridge’s work train is seen in Russell’s morning photographs (Figure 3). He and a crew in the boarding cars spent the night at “the front.” Chinese workers would be photographed at the last spike site, but none appear in the mid-morning photographs.



*Figure 3. By mid-morning the crowds began to gather. The arrow indicates the CP’s impromptu station and telegraph office in a box car (or “outfit car”), part of the railroad company’s work train. GOSP.*

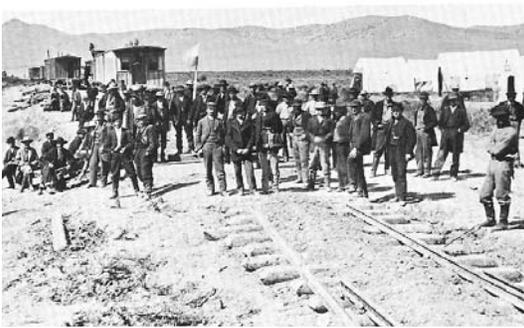
Russell also met up with Charles Savage, Salt Lake City photographer, who had spent a chilly night in the UP ticket and telegraph office tent. Savage, in his diary, mentioned none of the UP crew, although the tent was up and undoubtedly housed the crew whose responsibility would be the first transfer of trains along the line. UP contractor Casement’s work train followed shortly after Durant’s special. A portion of the work train sits in the UP siding.

By the time Russell was taking photographs, 9:00 or so in the morning, crowds began gathering around the last spike site. Russell’s photograph that looks back west at the last spike site shows a surveyor’s flag marking the end of the CP track (Figure 4).



*Figure 4. The flag at the end of the CP track. Detail from Figure 5. GOSP.*

Tents seen in the few images he took that morning, shown below (Figures 5, 6, 7), have one or two people standing near them or in their door ways. In the background is the row of commercial tents north of the CP tracks. A man stands in the doorway of the restaurant (Figure 6), possibly the owner or maybe someone who has just finished breakfast.



*Figures 5, 6, 7, top to bottom. Russell took a series of photographs on the morning of May 10. The tents were in parallel rows along the CP track. A customer is seen in the doorway of the restaurant in Figure 6 GOSP.*

Newspaper reporters on the ground, some of whom undoubtedly spent the night in the tents, note the day's activities and will later send detailed dispatches, unfortunately, many of them contradictory. General agreement is that CP president Leland Stanford's special train headed by CP locomotive #60, the "Jupiter," arrived at the end of the CP

track around 11:00 a.m. (it is visible down the track in the morning photographs by Russell, Figure 3). Around that time as well, a track gang of Chinese went to place all but the last plates and spikes.

A. J. Russell captured the Chinese crew at work, surrounded by celebrants, UP workers, and the growing crowd. He scratched on his glass plate the caption “Chinese laying last rail” (Figure 8).



*Figure 8. Russell scratched on his glass plate negative: “Chinese laying last rail;” this image. Chinese tracklayers place the last rails and ties, except the laurel tie, around 11:00 a. m., on May 10. The UP ticket and telegraph office tents are in the background right of the Durant special train. GOSP.*

In the background can be seen tents abutting the UP connection track, to the right of UP vice-president Durant’s special train (note no other trains have arrived behind it yet).

The UP tents are sturdily built with platform and wooden sidewalls indicating the intent of the UP to stay at Promontory for longer than the ceremony. The UP tents are seen in a number of photographs, some with a person sitting on a box or bench out front. These are hives of activity with agent and telegrapher taking care of business. UP chief engineer Grenville Dodge would later relate how he negotiated with the CP, the express and Western Union companies, and postal officials to have them set up their tents adjacent the UP ticket office, ensuring the terminus or junction would later be located there. But in the morning he was busy arranging the details of the ceremony with CP officials.

Reporter O’Leary of the *Sacramento Bee*, who had the pleasure of riding in the Stanford special from Sacramento, described the arrival of the party and then the scene: “At present, aside for the boxcars [of construction superintendent Strobridge of the CP] which are used for the offices and boarding-houses of the railroad company, the place consists of seventeen tents, half of which have been put up since my arrival [May 7].”

He added, “A few who have located eating houses and saloons here, predict that here it [the junction city] will be.” O’Leary commented on the pleasantness of the site and its possibilities as a good town location, except for the absence of water. He then proceeded to tell the folktale of 26 murders at Dead Fall, including one over gravy at breakfast. Later travel writers would move the shootings to Promontory station.<sup>48</sup>

The *Omaha Herald* reporter, W. W. Foote, wrote with amazement about the fresh strawberries from California available by the dish at a Promontory restaurant. Historic photographs show a restaurant at one end of the cluster of tents and a tent with “Red Cloud” painted on the front, probably a saloon named after the Chicago whiskey. The Mormon photographer Savage noted a half dozen tents and “rum holes” in his diary. The writer for *Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly* similarly highlighted the tents with vendors selling “Red Jacket, Red Cloud, and Blue Run,” popular spirits of the time.<sup>49</sup>

The Union Pacific entourage, led by vice-president Durant, included directors Duff and Dillon, who had been given explicit instructions by President Ames, who was not there, to make no agreements with the CP. He stated, “You will make no permanent arrangements for connection. Change cars only at end of track laid by us – till they pay.” Onboard as well was chief engineer Grenville Dodge, who met with Edgar Mills for the CP, to plan the day.<sup>50</sup>

With each new train arrived another load of expectant observers. Regular passenger trains on the CP and UP arrived, as did a special consisting of new passenger cars bound west for the CP, which Dodge filled with soldiers, politicians, newspaper editors and other guests from as far away as Cheyenne. J. H. Beadle of the *Corinne Reporter* stated he arrived around 11:30 on the regular UP train. N. D. Baker of the *Cheyenne Leader* arrived on a special train, which, he noted, arrived at 12:17, after events had started. By then, “a thousand throbbing hearts,” to use the words of E. L. Sloan of the *Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, watched the events. Sloan arrived with the Mormon delegation, which included the principals of the contractors Benson, Farr & West and Bishop Sharp.

An Iowa reporter who arrived with the crowded train from Corinne noted the “deadfall” saloons and the restaurants, both of which did a good business that day, as inferred from the reporters’ accounts. As the noon hour approached, the beginning time for the ceremony, the saloons and restaurants would have been busy feeding and refreshing the growing number of people.

The San Francisco *Bulletin* reporter noted that the crowd “thronged” the last spike site at the noon hour, as the dignitaries came forward to begin the ceremony. Horses and workers moved to a point in front of the photographers who had hoped to have a clear view of the proceedings. One of A. A. Hart’s first photographs that day shows the crowd moving in to the point, which made it impossible for him to take a clear photograph of the proceedings (Figure 9).

Hart’s image shows where wagons had been lined up behind the last spike site in order to provide an impromptu viewing stand for the participants. Participants, as noted above, would continue to arrive and fill the viewing space, causing the photographers to move closer.

Hart’s image also clearly shows the tent of J. S. Conner, the “grocery” owner from Junction City, who had moved the few miles to Promontory the week before. His

sign appears to line up with the last spike site; it was the best spot to watch the action until the crowd moved in.

Another tent is barely visible behind a spectator right of center; a closer photograph would show its flaps wide open for business. The row of spectators near the saloon and other tents suggests the accuracy of a reporter's comment that the saloons were well visited and the crowd swayed rather than stood still for the proceedings.



*Figure 9. A. A. Hart's photograph of the crowd "swarming" the last spike ceremony site. Note the spectators standing on a row of wagons on the north side of the tracks. Behind them is the commercial row of tents, prominent among which is J. S. Conner's tent at center. GOSP.*

The telegraphers are on the poles trying to protect the telegraph wire that extended to the ceremony site from being yanked loose by spectators. CP telegraph construction boss, Amos Bowsher, later recalled the crews wiring the maul and spike preparatory to telegraphing to the nation that the deed was done. Bowsher claimed to be the man on the ladder leaning against the telegraph pole, best seat to view events of the day.

At noon Promontory time, Edgar Mills opened the ceremony. Rev. Todd of Massachusetts gave a prayer offering thanks. Chinese track layers had already placed the last rail. The polished California laurel tie was placed under the joined rails by construction superintendents Reed and Strobridge. Comstock mining man and politician Frederick A. Tritle offered the first spike, a silver one from the state of Nevada. Arizona Governor Anson P. K. Safford offered the second spike, one gilded with silver and gold for Arizona. A third spike was offered by the San Francisco Newsletter and Advertiser. The fourth spike, one of California gold, was made per instructions of David Hewes and presented to Governor Stanford. He and Durant put the last spike, the "golden spike,"

into place as Vandenberg directed the telegraphers to let the nation know the rails were being linked.

Several photographs were taken during the proceedings. According to reporters for the *Alta California* and *Chicago Tribune*, after Stanford's speech, but before the placing of the last spikes, General Casement asked the crowds to step back to let the photographers have a better view. According to one paper, Hart asked that this be done; according to another, Russell requested the halt in the proceedings. Hart stood on the pilot of the "Jupiter," while Russell and Savage stood in the temporarily cleared area south of the last spike site.

Hart's often reproduced image of Stanford holding the silver plated maul was taken at this time, probably half past noon, Promontory time (Figure 10). The driving of the last spike is about to happen. Hart, standing on the front of the "Jupiter" has captured the center of the action.



*Figure 10. Hart's photograph captioned "the Last Act" shows the UP and CP officials at center ready to drive the last spike. CP president Stanford holds the silver maul and at his left is UP vice president Durant holding his sledge. At Durant's left are UP directors Duff and Dillon, each holding up a spike. GOSP.*

Russell's glass plate fortunately survives and provides clearer details, but from south of the tracks (Figure 11). Interestingly, Russell's image also shows the same dignitaries as Hart, but they are confused which way to look, either at Hart on the "Jupiter" (see Dillon in mutton chop whiskers with spike looking toward Hart on the "Jupiter") or at Russell (see white bearded Duff with spike next to Dillon looking at Russell). Durant with maul and fancy gloves looks at Russell; while Stanford's image is blurred -- he is turning with the maul not sure to look at Hart or Russell.



Figures 11. Russell's photograph taken at nearly the same time as Hart's (Figure 9), again, shows the principals holding up spikes and mauls (see detail, Figure 12). GOSP.



Figure 12. Detail from Russell photograph, Figure 11. Dillon holds spike. Laurel tie ready to be put in place.

In Figure 11, the locomotive “Jupiter” obscures Hart’s camera and all but part of the sign on Conner’s tent (seen under the headlight brace). The row of two tents to the right of Conner’s are 1) lost by the crowd in front of it and 2) just the upper stretch of canvas visible, but obviously the tent flaps are wide open for business.

According to reporters, after the photographers snapped their shots (and the telegraphers finished wiring the maul and spike), the ceremony continued with the placing of the last tie and last spikes. The nation was anxious and to quiet the line, the Promontory telegrapher announced “we have done praying.” According to the *Chicago Tribune*, “it was now announced that the last blow was to be struck.” Bell in the *San Francisco Newsletter* reported Stanford with the silver maul sent the electric announcement that the work was done by tapping the golden spike. Durant and Stanford finished the job by each driving the last spikes into the laurel tie, securing the last rail.

During this time, a UP train arrived with the reporter from Cheyenne who complained of its tardiness – the train had stopped at Corinne to pick up its loose population, according to the *Cheyenne Leader*, a couple hundred people, which meant standing room only. Also onboard, were the majority of troops who passed through Promontory on their way to San Francisco. Lt. Currier was with the troops and left the most detailed diary of May 10. He had arrived with his wife earlier, as a special guest of UP vice-president Durant.

The spike was driven at a reported 2:47 p.m. Washington, D. C. time (today, Promontory would be 12:47 p. m., the agreed upon time of the driving of the last spike, or the telegraph announcement of the great work being “done”). According to Lt. Currier, the trains were then moved forward, pilots touching. Lt. Currier noted that “the engines then backed about two rods. Our regiment marched up, stood at parade rest while our pictures were being taken.”

A reporter for the *Deseret News* noted that after the closing remarks “a half hour longer sufficed for the photographers to take views of the scenes from every available stand point.” This is probably when Lt. Currier mentions the locomotives backed up again and the troops stood at parade rest. The ceremonial photographic work continued.

The arrival of the troops and the placement as a perimeter around the last spike helps identify which photographs were taken when. The troops seen in Figure 14 and Figure 16 are as described by Lt. Currier, at parade rest on the north side of the track. Other soldiers can be seen as pickets in a semi-circle holding the crowd back south of the tracks while the photographers take their images.

The research of Paul Hedren suggests that the troops numbered nearly two hundred and fifty, a sizeable number. Their absence in the morning photographs coincides with Lt. Currier’s diary about arrival times and activities. They arrived at the end of the ceremony, too late to help with crowd control before the event.

The military also brought a band, commented upon by contemporary observers. At least one reporter lamented their tardy arrival, which precluded any music during the ceremony. The band was photographed by Hart in front of the locomotives after the ceremony.

The photographs taken by Hart, Russell and Savage are important records of the scene, especially of the tents during this half hour post-ceremony opportunity for photographs. The tents were hives of activity, business was good.



Figure 13. Russell photograph of UP officers in front of the Durant special shortly after the closing of the ceremony. GOSP.

Of the Russell image (Figure 13) of the dignitaries in front of the No. 119 taken at this time, the *Omaha Herald* reporter wrote: “After the conclusion of these ceremonies the officers and distinguished visitors standing in a handsome group, a fine engine and train being in the background, were photographed.” Photographer Charles Savage took a similar image; his and Russell’s work were later often confused. The Russell negative is in his collection of negatives at the Oakland Museum.

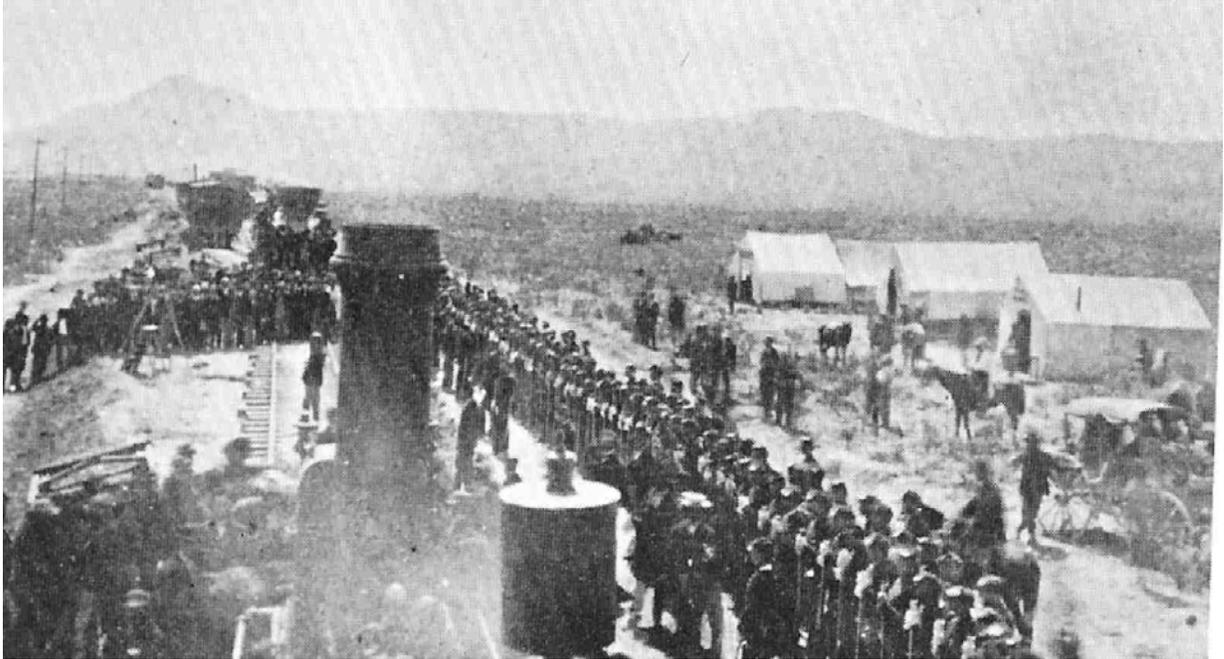
Some authors have stated that UP vice-president Thomas Durant had a headache and left the group after the ceremony. Durant with his fancy suit and gloves stands bearded at left of the rail just after the ceremony. To the right of the track are a row of UP officials, directors Duff and Dillon, engineers Dodge and Reed.

Hezekiah Bissell, one of the UP engineers, in his reminiscence, recalled standing at the smoke box of the UP “No. 119” during the ceremony. In the photo a line of men stand clinging to the locomotive’s front, its smoke box, among them the engineers who worked on the line and not a few who staked land claims around Promontory Summit.

In Figure 13, the UP ticket and telegraph office tent can be seen at the right of the train with people milling in front. The agent and telegraphers were probably busy helping people transfer from the UP to the CP, and assisting reporters and others send dispatches to the newspapers and listening dignitaries across the country, including president Grant (although that message may have been sent to Omaha early to ensure it would get through).

To the left of the train is the tent of the Wells Fargo & Co. stage line. Beyond it is the sage brush flats where Promontory City would arise over the next few days as the CP removed the squatters in tents along its right of way, and where the UP engineers had staked a land claim. With UP chief engineer Dodge present and his friend, town speculator J. A. Williamson present, an opportunity to lay out a town and sell lots was possible but not taken.

During this period, after the ceremony, Hart's photograph from atop the UP "No. 119" (Figure 14) shows the soldiers as noted in Curriers diary – at parade rest at right and in pickets forming a circular perimeter at left. The row of wagons earlier used as a grandstand for spectators at right, have been removed.



*Figure 14. Hart's photograph from atop the UP locomotive No. 119 shows the scene after the ceremony with troops controlling the crowds. At right is the west end of the commercial row of tents. GOSP.*



*Figure 15. A detail of Hart's image shows activity at the saloons and restaurants along the commercial row north of the tracks. In the distance, the CP crew begins work at the site of their yard, side track and turntable. A cluster of tents would be seen in later photographs of the area, possibly the Chinese workers' tents. GOSP.*

Meanwhile, Russell has moved to on top of the “Jupiter,” capturing Hart and his camera in his photograph looking east. Both the Hart and Russell photographs, one looking east and the other looking west, were taken within minutes of each other (Figures 14 and 16). They show the crowd after the ceremony, while also showing the celebratory activity starting up around the tents.

Russell’s view from atop the “Jupiter,” Figure 16, shows much of the surrounding activity. At right, the telegraph crew relaxing, two still on the ladder, leans against the pole, their work done. The telegrapher’s tent is open, but is barely visible at the right edge of the image. It and the wagon probably held batteries, spare wire, and other items. Only what may be a box out front hints at the confusion that must have centered there, and will continue as reporters try to send their dispatches via Western Union.



Figure 16. Russell’s image of the post-ceremony activities. GOSP.

Behind the poles at right, behind Casement’s work train on the spur track at right, are the tops of tents, a base camp of operation like many others the Casement brothers set up. The work crews would be getting ready to build sidings and finish track work over the next few days. A clear photograph of previous base camps reveals the clutter of

material and equipment that would have been located here, but is hidden in this scene by the railroad construction cars.

At center is the Union Pacific ticket and telegraph office, beyond which stretch the trains of visiting celebrants (Figure 17). Some of the passengers are ticketing through from one line to the other, a process yet settled. Luggage, boxes and crates can be seen near the tracks beyond the UP tents. Opposite them, along the road, is the Wells, Fargo & Co. stage and express office. What looks like bags of mail or express are now piled out front. Like the passenger exchange, workers have yet to learn of all the details in transferring mail and express between the various companies.

In Figure 17, beyond the stage office tent, in the distance can be seen the quiet tent of the UP engineers and speculators. They have claimed acreage and will offer land along the UP right of way. The tent is the beginning of Promontory City, which will grow over the next few weeks as the commercial row at the junction. The commercial row of May 10 north of the last spike and along the CP tracks will be removed to this area.



*Figure 17. Detail of Russell's post-ceremony image. Note distant tent of land speculators, site of future Promontory City. GOSP*

After the half hour of photographs, Lt. Currier noted that the engineers moved the trains back together, pilots touching. The railroad officials retired to their cars for celebrations. This is when Russell took his famous "champagne photograph," Figure 18.



*Figure 18. The Champagne photograph by Russell. GOSP.*



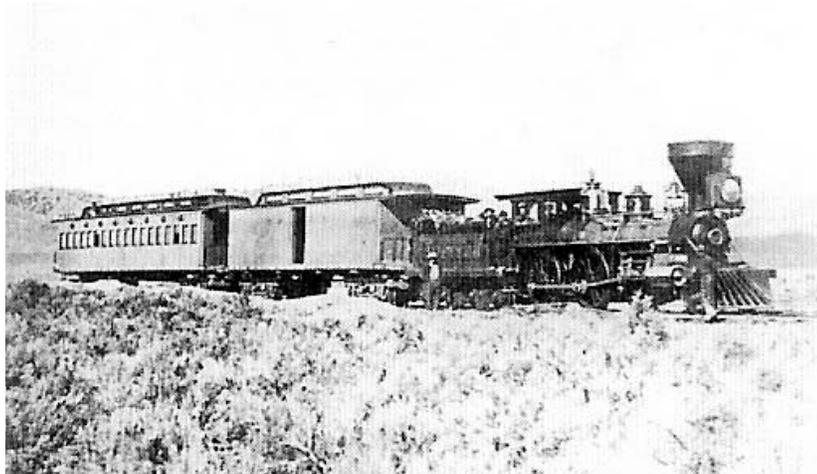
*Figure 19. Post-ceremony group Photographs by Russell, this of UP engineers and families. GOSP.*

“A clear, cool, beautiful day,” noted paymaster O. C. Smith in his diary. He and his wife had joined the celebration with other UP staff. The party began early – Eicholtz wrote in his diary that there was a “great deal of speechifying and wine drinking.” Wells Spicer wrote to the Tipton, Iowa *Advertiser* that drinking became general and not just water (at 50 cents a cup). He noted that after the photographers finished, “all then adjourned to the ‘deadfalls’ to irrigate.”

The first train, the UP work train bound east, left around 2:00, followed by the Stanford Special headed west, and then others. The UP kept the local run late. Noted editor John Beadle of the *Corinne Reporter*, the train “remained on the ground till evening, presenting a scene of merriment in which Officers, Directors, Track Superintendents and Editors joined with the utmost enthusiasm... At a late hour the excursionists returned to Corinne.”<sup>51</sup>

Many accounts relate the celebrations in the railroad cars and on the grounds. Historian Edwin Sabin, who interviewed some of the participants, noted that the celebration at Promontory continued into the evening, including an impromptu torch-light parade of workers in front of the row of tents.

Left at Promontory Summit were the shop owners and a few needed workers for the railroads. In his memoir, General Dodge wrote, “That evening the visitors started east and west, leaving the engineers and working parties to arrange the details for conducting business of each road at this terminal [Promontory]. It was only a day or two before trains bound for the Atlantic and Pacific were passing regularly.”<sup>52</sup>



*Figure 20. The “Stanford Special” at Promontory, May 10: locomotive “Jupiter,” commissary car, and the private car of CP President Leland Stanford. They departed by 5:00 p.m. GOSP.*

## **I) Building the Junction for the Transcontinental Railroad**

In order to move people across the continent, each company established terminal facilities at Promontory Station. The companies had already issued schedules, which had two trains daily, one freight and one passenger, each way, with required transfer of passengers and freight cars at Promontory. As already mentioned, the UP had built a



Wye east of the junction and had a spur made of its track on its original grade. The CP had built a siding west of the junction and had materials on hand to build a turntable for turning locomotives around and had ties and rail to build spur tracks. As for the actual transfer point and operations, Montague for the CP arranged the details with Dodge of the UP.<sup>53</sup>

However, Dodge created a minor crisis from the start. He explained in a letter to UP president Ames, "After our people left Monday, Gov. Stanford notified us that he would put in a siding on his old grade, that our line covered and east of our connecting point and told Hoxie not to put any in, but I immediately ordered up Casement, put the siding in before day light and when their workmen arrived in the morning we had it completed, much to their disgust. I then made arrangements that all transfers should be done opposite our office and opposite our main track."<sup>54</sup>

Dodge had already placed tents along the main line for the UP ticket office and telegraph office, and set-up an office there for assistant superintendent Hoxie for operations. A Pullman Palace car was ordered moved from Wahsatch and placed on a siding for emergency sleeping space. A June 30 photograph shows the tent row. A Wells Fargo express tent, a Western Union telegraph tent, and the tent for "terminus post office" of postal agent Ball are visible in the scene. CP agent Hildreth, in charge of operations at the junction, placed the CP ticket and telegraph office along the row. Between the main line and UP's 1350 foot siding workers built a wood platform to assist transfer movements.<sup>55</sup>

Hoxie operated the Utah Division for the UP, with crews from Bryan, Wyoming [part of Utah until creation of the new territory in 1869] to Promontory. The CP division ran from Toana, Nevada to Promontory. Trains were passed between crews, from one division to another, with a major shift between railroads at Promontory. Hoxie had a pony engine, No. 5, which was used up and down the line to switch cars.<sup>56</sup>

UP maintenance crews were directed out of Wahsatch, Utah under re-assigned Thomas Morris. Their focus was rebuilding the bridges of Echo canyon damaged by spring rains. The CP built shops at Terrace, Utah to the west and maintained a switching crew and gravel train at Promontory. A large force of Chinese was retained to gravel the track and, in essence, finish construction of the line. Historic photographs suggest that the CP's Chinese crews were located at the western end of the yard in a cluster of tents. UP crews and office clerks lived in the company tents or boarding houses soon erected at the station.

The biggest demand at Promontory was fuel and water for locomotives, both brought in by coal-filled gondola cars and water cars from the east, and water and flat cars piled with wood from the west. The locomotive servicing facilities were non-existent. No structures were built at first. Cars were shunted onto side tracks and workers shoveled coal and tossed wood into locomotive tenders. Yard work was labor intense.

The first train schedule show a four day crossing, Omaha to Sacramento. Passengers boarded trains in Omaha on Monday morning at 10 am and arrived at Promontory at 10 the next evening, Tuesday. The CP schedule, purposely or not, caused UP travelers to wait up to 22 hours at Promontory station. When CP trains left the following afternoon, travelers arrived at Sacramento two days later. The operations were not synchronized.

At Promontory, the railroads offered no accommodations and minimal services. The first travelers told of the horrors. W. L. Humason was deposited at the end of track May 11 and found nothing but “sand, alkali, and sage brush.” The passengers, he wrote, “sat on their carpet-bags, nodding in the hot sun,” waiting all day for the CP train. One of the party shot a rattlesnake. They ate at a local tent restaurant, which served Plover and other local fowl. Upon the arrival of the train, they left “curses loud and deep upon the place.” Returning a week later, Humason found the same vexations and delay at Promontory.<sup>57</sup>

On May 15, New Yorker Searls Niles wrote his wife about arriving at 3 a.m. after the train crawled across a dangerous trestle at 2 or 3 miles per hour. He added, “I write you sitting on the last rail. The spike of gold is not here.” He made no complaint about a delayed transfer, however he wrote that “a city is growing up here which dates from day before yesterday.”<sup>58</sup>

A few businesses were already on the ground by May 10; others would follow shortly. On May 15, reporter W. W. Foote of the *Omaha Herald* wrote a description of the changed scene:

“But a few days since, this point was an almost unsettled waste; now it is the temporary transfer point for freight transported from the extremities of the continent. Prior to the completion of the road, there were few or no houses, and with the exception of a few scattered tents for the accommodation of workmen, no signs of civilization were visible. Since the work is finished, however, many improvements have been made.

Foote did not believe the junction would stay long on the summit, but admitted accommodations were needed for travelers during the interim. He added, for even though there is but slight probability that the terminus will be fixed here, still there is a great need for buildings and conveniences, to accommodate through travelers. These improvements have been made. The railroad companies have erected a large platform between the two roads, upon which freight, express matter and baggage is transferred with ease and without incurring loss. Some enterprising individual has erected a large tent, 30 x 70 feet, in which is kept a first class eating house. Eggs, beefsteaks and other delicacies can be had in abundance; fresh strawberries from California are also served for a small extra charge – one dollar per saucer. Of course, there are the usual number of drinking saloons, etc., such as are always found in U. P. towns.”<sup>59</sup>

Dodge was interviewed by the *Omaha Herald* and other reporters. He confirmed that the UP would continue to use Promontory as its terminus and not Ogden. The CP, on the other hand, told the press it planned to move from Promontory within a “a day or two.”

Neither company had plans for supporting a town at the summit, it just grew there. The CP, obviously, angered at the failure of the UP to live up to its agreement, had no plans to build a town at Promontory, and, further, construction chief Strobridge would not let any whisky or other shop on the CP grounds. He later reminisced how if one would appear near his camps, there was a convenient group gathered to tear it down. The tents along the CP track, “J. S. Conner” and the other tent shops in the May 10, 1869 images, were removed from the CP right of way to opposite the tent stations in a row along the Union Pacific right of way.<sup>60</sup>

Dodge, as land agent for the company made no effort to plat a town at Promontory. His men, General Williamson and surveyor O'Neil were at the May 10 ceremony, but made no survey, filed no town site plat. The tents that began to appear at Promontory Summit stood outside any potential land grant section. Odd section numbers 5 and 9 were railroad land grant land, if approved; railroad surveyors had tentatively mapped in section lines as the track progressed, so the sections' locations were estimated and placed off limits.

It is not known if any of the UP crews that squatted on the lands, April 12, platted a town, like they had elsewhere. Eicholtz makes no mention in his diary of selling lots—probably a reflection of directives from officials higher-up, maybe Dodge. Maybe he left the work to others, a work he left unrecorded as he moved elsewhere to build railroads.<sup>61</sup>

On May 10, chief engineer Dodge was ready to sell the line and move off the Promontory. The cost of double heading locomotives up the grade to run its trains to Promontory was an unacceptable cost – engineers knew that steep grades meant more fuel consumption and higher operation costs as well as lower revenues because less freight and fewer passengers could be carried uphill. Steep grades could bankrupt a railroad.

He gave president Ames his opinion of the run up the east slope to Promontory. On May 26, he wrote: “we do not want the road, we want to get rid of it. It has 116 feet grades, 10 degree curves, in fact, its grades are equal to 132 feet, with high rough trestles and good deal of work to be done on it to get it in shape.” While the UP executive committee continued its indecision about selling the Ogden-Promontory line, division engineer Morris put crews at work putting additional bracing on the long trestle near Promontory. By then, Dodge had returned east.<sup>62</sup>

## **J) Promontory City**

“‘Ho! for the Promontory’ – no place like the Promontory. While writing this morning in the ticket office [at Taylor’s switch], in the rush for passage to the west by next train, I heard but one person ask for a ticket elsewhere.” The correspondent for the *Deseret News* writing May 16, heard that UP directors Dillon and Duff had made no agreements with the CP. The Promontory was the de facto junction. As the reporter noted, a general movement of speculators was underway toward the new station to the west.<sup>63</sup>

During the middle of May, a row of tents appeared along the north side of the tracks at Promontory Summit. Newspapers of the period mention various businesses that opened shop there. T. D. Brown & Co., General & Commission Merchants, Salt Lake City, opened a branch at the summit. J. S. Fyfer opened a dry good store. Contemporary photographs by itinerate photographer John Silvis shows the tents, signs of barber shops, billiard halls, the California store, the San Francisco saloon, Golden Crown cigar shop, the Pacific Hotel, the Club House gambling hall, and Sunnyside hall. The Echo Bakery next to the Pacific Hotel was probably moved from Echo City, the declining construction camp up the line. Two Chinese men, Sam Hing and Ah Lee, operated a laundry. On May 21, Ed Watson, formerly of Junction City arrived to find Junctionites relocated to Promontory. He noted in his diary that he met Will Riley, Barney Davis, Pugeson brothers and a character known only as “Whalebone.” (Possibly a name taken from Henry Ward Beecher’s description of the big men of the West, they’re all “whalebone

and catgut.”). New Yorker Riley, one-time “mayor” of the now deserted Junction City, was a 26 year old grocer with a 25 year old wife, Francis. Barney Mallory, a friend of Watson’s, was a clerk in Riley’s grocery. A “grocery” at that time could be any thing from saloon to dry good store, but sold any item the owner thought would turn a profit.<sup>64</sup>

As at Junction City, Riley probably helped maintain a semblance of governmental control. Unfortunately, newspapers of the period are silent about the residents of Promontory City organizing a quasi-government as they had done at Junction City and elsewhere. Reporters and travelers along the line mention such “miners’ court” type governments at Corinne, Uinta, and Wahsatch, all UP towns in Utah. One traveler wrote that the UP towns’ “organization of justice is on the mining region plan. A man of particularly bad character is warned out of town. If he refuses to go he is brought before the mayor and fined at discretion. If he has no money to pay, he is locked in a box car and sent East.” At its beginning, Promontory City probably followed this model.<sup>65</sup>

Newspaper editor Fred K. Freeman, brother of Leigh Freeman of the infamous *Frontier Index*, a rail side newspaper, surveyed Promontory City for possible relocation of his newspaper, to this next “Hell on Wheels” town on the UP. A newspaper in a frontier community meant a mouth-piece and proponent for its future. That Freeman chose not to stay indicates that he, like others, felt Promontory City’s future was too tenuous. Diarist Watson too, unfortunately for later historians, left for California.

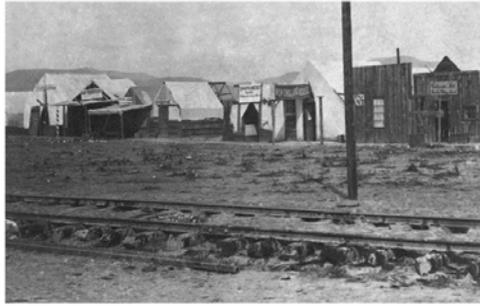
By the end of May the town reached its ultimate size of around thirty tents lined up along the UP railroad’s right of way. On May 28, Isaac Morris, a government official inspecting the line wrote a pessimistic review of the town. “It is a lonely and desolate locality, without water or fuel, both of which have to be brought from a distance, and Promontory City, as it is called, is not likely to become a commercial emporium, while it will have some fame and a romantic interest attached to it as the place where the Atlantic and Pacific first embraced.”<sup>66</sup>

However, Promontory station’s train crews – brakemen, firemen, engineers, section hands, clerks in the various offices – all needed basic goods, clothes, food, and lodging. They shopped in the tent row. The CP Chinese had a tent camp near the turntable and ordered supplies for their needs direct from San Francisco – teas, clothes, foods, and supplies. Later, California suppliers of Chinese goods would open shops in Utah, but not Promontory, to meet their demands. The 100 or so train crew members on the UP lived in tents near the station, but also used boarding houses in the tent row. William Henry Jackson ate at the New England House and noted in his diary that he had a “hearty supper.” He also noted in his diary: “Promontory was just like the other towns only there was no exception in the mile of canvas houses – all the RR offices, etc. being wall tents boarded up.”<sup>67</sup>

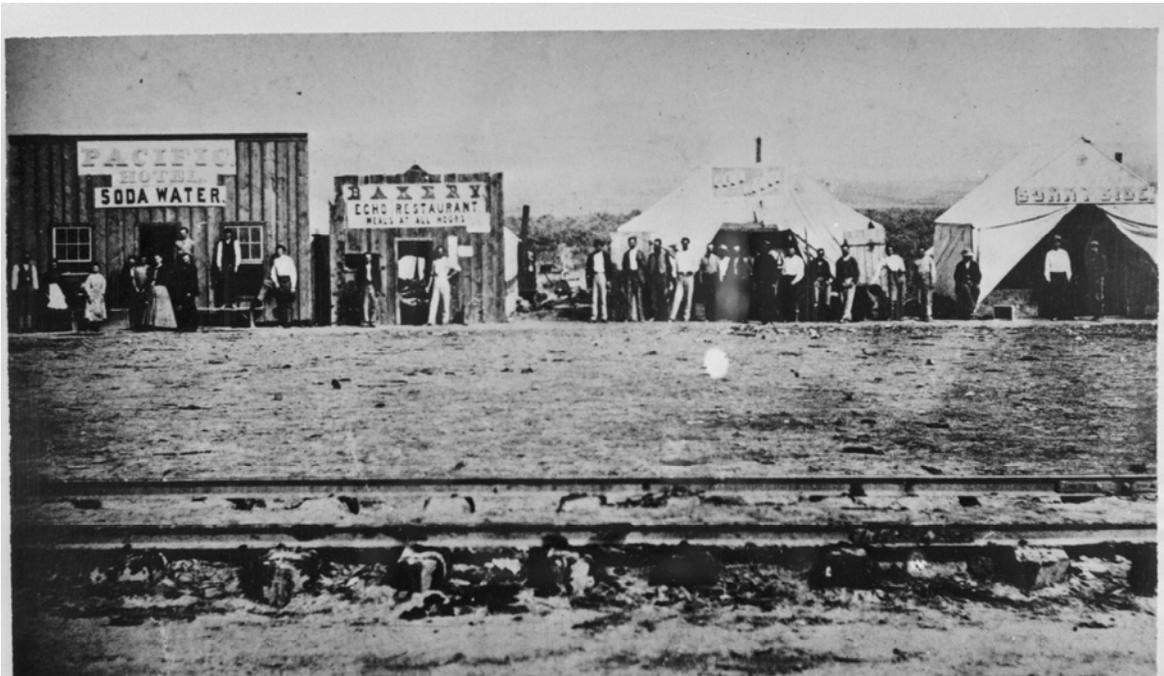
There are no population statistics for Promontory City, but 257 voters were counted in the precinct in an August election. This suggests a sizeable population along the railroad across the range to the Nevada border.

Most of our information about Promontory City comes from weary travelers who left published accounts. The description by a group of excursionists from Cincinnati is representative:

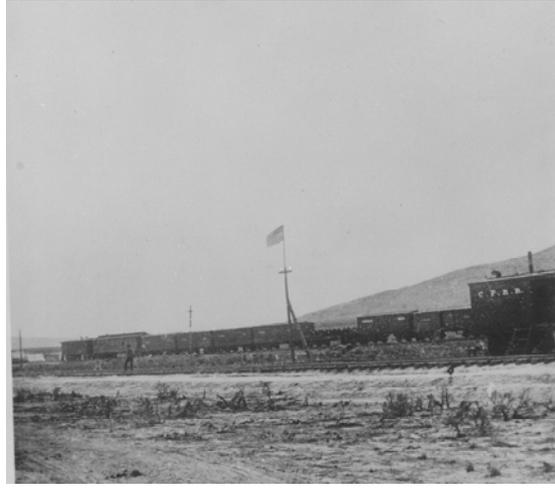
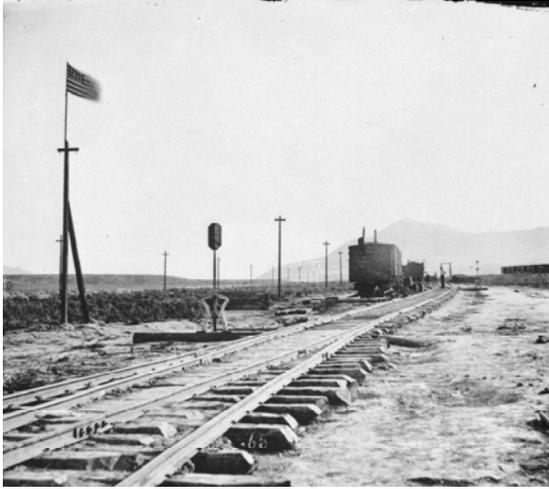
*Figures 22, 23, 24, 25. Images of Promontory: Summer 1869*



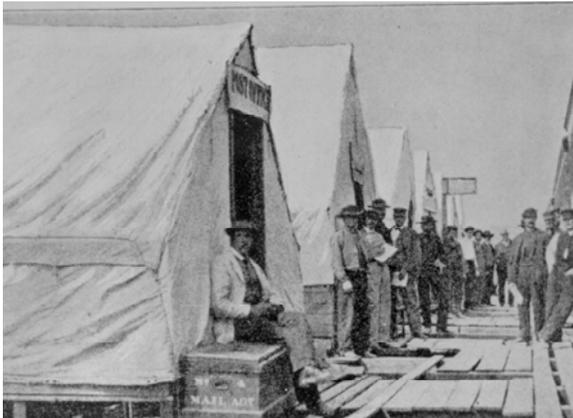
*Promontory City's single street as photographed by John Silvis during the summer of 1869. Silvis was an itinerate photographer who worked along the Union Pacific Railroad for a decade. In September, he met William H. Jackson and A. C. Hull in Utah. Images courtesy Barry Swackhamer. Todd Delyea prepared the line drawing based upon the Silvis and Russell images.*



*Figures 26, 27, 28, 29. Images of Promontory: June 30 – July 1, 1869*



*William H. Jackson and A. C. Hull were in Promontory, June 30-July 1, 1869. Jackson noted in his diary that they took three pictures on June 30, of the last spike site with flag still on telegraph pole, above. On July 1, they took several photographs of the town, none of which have been located. The row of tents along the track may have been taken either day.*



*The depots and tent row along the tracks photographed by Jackson and Hull June 30 or July 1 shows the primitive arrangement prior to September. Todd Delyea delineated the row based on the photograph.*

*Jackson images at Denver Public Library and U. S. Geological Survey; and Silvis images courtesy Barry Swackhamer.*

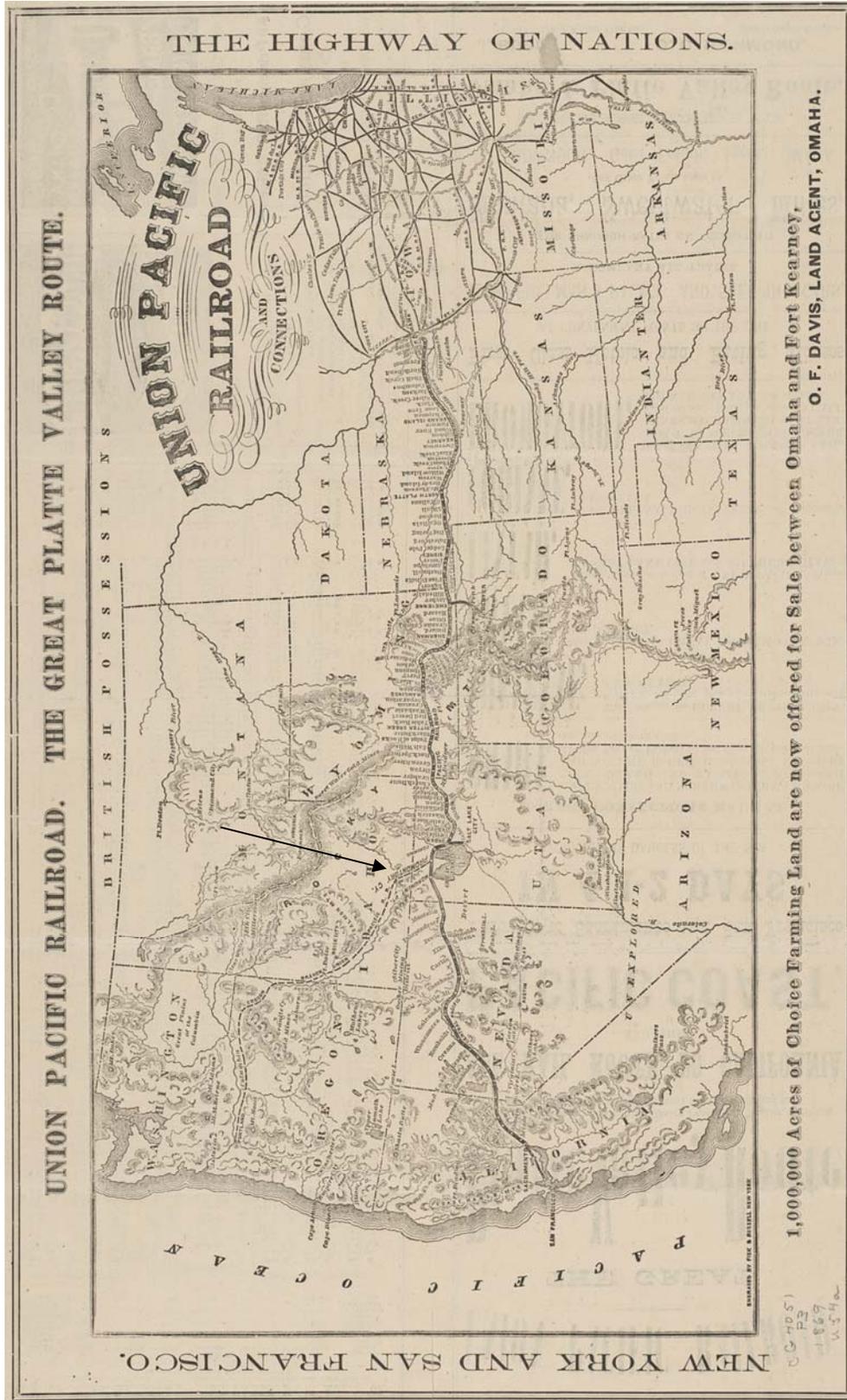


Figure 30. Union Pacific railroad route map showing proposed line from Promontory to Portland. Courtesy Denver Public Library.

Promontory consists of ... thirty-six houses in one row on the other side [of the tracks]. These thirty-six structures are all one story high and roofed with canvas. There is not a dwelling in the place, every shanty being occupied for business, the inhabitants sleeping in odd corners and recesses. A barber shop, drugstore, saloons, restaurants, fruit stalls, and stores filled with general merchandise compose the commercial row of the place ... The reputation of Promontory for rough characters is well established; but the gamblers did not bring out their games for the benefit of the Cincinnatians.<sup>68</sup>

The speculators of Promontory City lived on hope. Hopes, at first, that Promontory would become a freighting and staging jump off spot for Idaho and Montana died by midsummer. Freight teams and stage coach lines for Montana began running from Corinne, twenty-eight miles to the east, and, at Kelton, thirty-eight miles west, the companies followed a new wagon road to Boise, southwest Idaho, and eastern Oregon. The lack of water at Promontory was a factor. The railroad companies brought water to the station from Corinne on Bear River and Kelton on Indian Creek. Local residents brought water in a barrel by wagon from a spring six miles south of town.

Some residents hoped the UP might build on to the Northwest, with Promontory as division point, a constant rumor fed by track crews and a published map showing Promontory as the junction point for the road to Oregon (Figure 30). By midsummer the UP had called back its engineers locating that venture.

Of course, all hoped that the CP or UP might build a permanent terminal in Promontory. The companies took no action that summer to build shops or terminal structures, which might feed any such rumor. More often, newspaper stories were filled with rumors of the CP building its own line to Ogden, demoting the place to just another eating house stop along the line. One Promontory merchant published an advertisement that stated he would be moving any day, to Ogden or elsewhere, once the junction was removed.

One young man, a mail clerk at Promontory, expressed this desire to move in a letter home, July 7. "Dear Olive," he wrote, "my office is not five rods from where the last rail was laid," from which he helped transfer the 2 ½ tons of mail and express per day handled by the railroad. But he desired to return east rather than remain in the west even though there was fine grazing land in the region, he thought. But for most of the country, especially around Promontory, he wrote, the land was "entirely worthless consisting of boundless plains white with alkali and mountains covered with sage brush." He was ready to return east to farm -- "if we go to farming I think we will do better."<sup>69</sup>

Promontory City's future, or lack of one, evident by June, caused the tent city to remain a canvas town. As terminus it had facilities to house and feed workers. The row of tents, some with wooden false fronts, served the workers and travelers. The companies had tent offices as did associated businesses, with their clerks. The community's appearance remained much the same over the six to seven months of its existence.

Newspaper correspondents were universally critical of any railroad caused delay, which may have influenced their view of the tent city and that of their readers. None were more eloquent in their critique than New York *Tribune* reporter Albert Richardson. He penned, "Promontory is nether city nor solitude, neither camp nor settlement. It is bivouac without comfort, it is delay without rest. It is sun that scorches, and alkali dust

that blinds. It is vile whiskey, vile cigars, petty gambling, and stale newspapers at twenty-five cents apiece. It would drive a morbid mind to suicide. It is thirty tents upon the Great Sahara, sans trees, sans water, sans comfort, sans everything.”<sup>70</sup>

### **K) Sodom on the Sage**

“The Lord must have become more lenient and patient toward sinners since the destruction of Sodom, or Promontory would have fallen long ago,” wrote the editor of the Elko, Nevada *Independent* the next dining stop down the line west of the terminus. A series of tales of woe by passengers who had been fleeced there, and vented their anger in Elko, had the editor indignant. “It would be a mercy to the traveling public,” he wrote, “especially that portion coming west, and a relief to the honest mechanics of Promontory and the moral sentiments of the age, if the cleansing element of fire would sweep the town from the face of the earth.”<sup>71</sup>

Such a diatribe reflects how a gang of gamblers had found a way to profit from the bored transcontinental travelers as they waited for connections at Promontory station before continuing on their journey. Unfortunately, the popular image of the community, ca. summer-fall, 1869, is reflected in the few newspaper accounts available that highlighted the shocking, as opposed to an absence of opposing views like one would find in the “local topics” column of a small town newspaper showing the good side of the community.

A number of reporters related descriptions of the method of the gamblers. Colorful descriptions are those by *Cincinnati Commercial* correspondent and occasional editor of the *Corinne Reporter*, John H. Beadle. Beadle visited Promontory City August 1. He wrote the often quoted line, Promontory is “4900 feet above sea-level, though, theologically speaking, if we interpret scripture literally, it ought to have been 49,000 feet below that level; for it certainly was, for its size, morally nearest to the infernal regions of any town on the road.” (One could have said the same for early Corinne). Beadle did concede, in his later book *Western Wilds*, a compilation of his writings, that some individuals were fools tempted too easily to part with their cash. He wrote, “Strange that so many men are yet deceived when these tricks have been exposed so often; strange that even old travelers can be caught by devices explained a hundred years ago in the ‘Rogue’s Lexicon.’”<sup>72</sup>

World traveler and London newspaper man William Rae arrived in August as well. Between transferring luggage to the CP, he described the card sharps, saloons, and prostitutes.

There is usually ample time to stroll through the town and see the sights. The town is built partly of canvas and partly of wood, and has but one street. The signs are hardly in keeping with the structures to which they are attached. Over a shanty is painted in large letters, ‘Pacific Hotel,’ and over a tent, ‘Club House.’ One of the wooden dwellings attracts notice on account of the neatly arranged muslin curtains within the window. Unlike the others, it has no signboard to indicate its purpose, but a glance through the open door satisfies the curiosity of the passerby. He sees two or three smiling females ready to extend welcomes to whoever will enter ....Of drinking saloons there are many at Promontory; but there is only one gambling hell as far as I could learn.”<sup>73</sup>

Rae describes the various games in the halls, the use of cappers and an open air table with Three Card Monte game underway. He reported that one gambler had, the story went, made \$1700 on one notable day. Rae did not fear for his safety.

Woodcuts in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* published January 5, 1870, after the gamblers had left, gave a national audience its image of Promontory City, a row of tents and a street table gambler, as always, ready to fleece the foolhardy traveler. Railroad guidebooks, the first published in September, 1869, did not dispel the notion of Promontory as a "Hell on Wheels" town. Early newspaper articles and later guidebooks influenced traveler's views. One scared diarist on August 14 wrote an example view of Promontory: this "is a fearful place composed almost entirely of open gambling booths and whiskey shops. They tell one someone is killed here nearly every day. One of our passengers fleeced of all he had by the gamblers. Glad to get away."<sup>74</sup>

Contemporary newspaper accounts do not counterbalance the image. By July, the *Corinne Reporter*, the nearest newspaper to Promontory, was describing the systematic band of robbers who used marked cards, fixed three-card Monte games, and loaded dice. On June 27, the editor wrote the town was "infested with about as nice a set of sharps...as ever made Natchez under the hill notorious." The *Telegraph* of Ogden also noted murders of cattle men in the nearby hills and the work of a special postal agent at Promontory, who made a profit through a confederate secreting vegetables and fruits from Sacramento in a mail bag, which he sold to the boarding houses along the tent row.

The newspaper editors of Ogden, Corinne, and Elko reveled in attacks on the terminus town, and each other. This was a period of uncontrolled, local boosterism, in which an editor's duty was to praise his home, ignore its faults, and criticize every failing in neighboring communities, especially if it could help remove some plum, such as the junction city status. Promontory was an easy target for such editors, cursing it while praising its own advantages as the perfect site for the rail junction. The *Boise Idaho Statesman* editor, after reading one self-promoting article in the *Corinne Reporter* wrote: "One would think to look at the columns of the *Reporter* that New York, Chicago, and San Francisco were situated too far from Corinne ever to amount to much."<sup>75</sup>

Without its own editor to fight back, we have a biased image of the railroad transfer point. Reverend Sheldon Jackson, itinerant Presbyterian minister, and Episcopal missionaries preached in its tents, but left no impressions of Promontory station. Travelers who have left accounts, for the most part, note the gambling, but avoided it. Mary Mathews and her son traveled through Promontory, talked more of the comradery of the coaches, how she and her son were made part of a larger, caring family during the railroad trip. At Promontory, she could see inside the tents, men drinking at the bar, boarders eating baked beans and pork, a card game with four men, each with a revolver at his side. She could see all this because a wind gust hit several tents, which had their sides "blown away."<sup>76</sup>

A young boy, age nine, traveling west with his family would recall an enormous tent restaurant and the abundance of food. Somehow the boys also ended up with cards, probably the gift of a gambler. The diary of a school teacher mentions the hurry to change baggage, and to get a meal, but makes no notice of gamblers. J. P. Morgan and wife Francis passed through in their Pullman in July without discomfort or distraction. William Henry Jackson's diary makes no mention of gamblers, but he had been a frontier bullwhacker and was hardened to any card sharps by that summer of 1869.<sup>77</sup>

In July, a traveler from Chicago took a hike to a local mountain top, awed by the view of the lake below. Another from Wisconsin went to see the last tie, which was “in a very slim condition.” He also had an “excellent supper, served with meat and every edible good, was only \$1.” For drinking water, the restaurant owner paid \$2 for a barrel of water from the railroad company. He added, “here saw the first evidence of a mining town in a hard looking man, with blue spectacles on and a cunning wagging tongue, presiding at a three card monte table,” but he steered clear.<sup>78</sup>

An account of a shooting on the main dirt street of Promontory, between a rancher and a younger cattleman, adds a note of tragedy and is the only documented act of violence. “Uncle Jimmy” Williams accused the young man of cattle stealing, and was shot in the thigh as a response. He recovered. The only death that summer of 1869 at Promontory was a twenty-two year old brakeman. Injured in a wreck on the uphill run, he died in Promontory.<sup>79</sup>

Brakemen, conductors and firemen falling off trains, getting injured in minor accidents, and smashed between cars was, unfortunately, far more often the cause of death and injury on the Promontory and elsewhere along the line. These accidents receive a small note in the local columns of the Utah newspapers. Newspaper correspondents like Rae and Beadle shocked readers with morality tales, but failed to mention railroad deaths or major wrecks, the pangs of the industrial revolution. The evolving technology of the railroad and the mixed response of management still left safety as a low priority. Two years later the Wyoming territorial legislature, one of the first, would pass legislation making all railroads responsible for its employees disabled or killed on the job.

### **L) Telegraph and Railroad Operations.**

In mid-June, chief engineer Montague of the CP called a meeting at Promontory with chief engineer Dodge. He needed to settle disputes on trackage at the terminus plus try to develop a more interconnected operation between the lines. Dodge later wrote that his meetings with Montague had always been fair and professional. The CP planned improvements, to add a new switch and build a 18 x 24 wood frame ticket and telegraph office. The CP also desired coal from along the UP in the Wasatch Mountains and Wyoming as its locomotives were slowly converted from wood burners to that of coal.<sup>80</sup>

However there would be no shops or roundhouse built. Montague and Dodge agreed that the track alignment at the junction would be improved, lessening kinks, and adding more ballast. Sometime during their discussions, then or later, Dodge planned to better mark the junction. In a note to engineer Morris, July 15, then cutting stone abutments for new bridges, he wrote: “the stone for junction had better be marked ‘Junction of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads, May 10, 1869.’” The stone was probably meant to replace the tie at the last spike site. One traveler noted earlier that the company had to place a guard at the whittled tie since souvenir collectors continued to cause it to need to be replaced.<sup>81</sup>

During the summer, the Western Union built a new telegraph line along the railroad, across the Promontory. The CP signed an agreement where the Western Union used its lines, in part, but had to build a new line east to its earlier transcontinental telegraph wires in the Salt Lake Valley. By August the new wire and poles were strung

east from Promontory to Salt Lake Valley. Ed Conley, superintendent of the section, upgraded the system and placed a telegrapher in the CP's new station building. The UP later signed an agreement with the rival Atlantic & Pacific Telegraph Company, which began stringing additional wires along its line and upon the unused poles west of Promontory.<sup>82</sup>

Train movement continued to be hampered by the Promontory grade. Short trains with two engines was the norm. E. H. Derby traveling on one of the better trains wrote: After shifting luggage and thus losing two hours at Promontory, we enter the silver palace cars of the Central Pacific. Our train comprises two silver palace, two passenger and two baggage or mail cars, with about one-hundred first class passengers and we take the berths we have engaged by telegram. In ascending the short gradient of eighty feet or more, at Promontory, we have used two engines and crossed a trestle bridge – strong, but a temporary structure.”<sup>83</sup>

Other travelers noted that trains were split in half, a locomotive pulling each section up the eastern slope.

The editor of the nearby *Corinne Reporter* kept tabs on the size of trains passing west. He commented when the longest trains or newest passed by. A train of six passenger cars was good sized, where freights were no longer than a dozen cars with an immigrant car attached. The *Reporter* announced on August 12th the longest train ever to date on the UP passed by: engine, twenty box cars, two other cars, and caboos. The first all Pullman trains with diners and sleeping cars began crossing the transcontinental railroad in August. Within days, Morris was complaining to Dodge, “these Pullman sleeping cars are ruining track, it is almost impossible to keep it up under their weight.” His crews had to increase their work since a scheduled transcontinental Pullman train began running in October, but lasted only six months.<sup>84</sup>

Section crews were stationed at Promontory by both companies, according to reports, “Hibernians” of the UP on the east and Chinese of the CP on the west side. Travelers rolling into the station encountered their first Chinese at Promontory. One commented: “It was there the excursionists first saw the Chinaman. Sam Hing and Ah Lee have little huts adorned with signs vouching for ‘good washing and good ironing done here.’ A gang of Chinese laborers, in loose blue muslin garments and peaked parasol hats of straw were grading a new switch at the station.” Unfortunately we lack reminiscences by the Irish or Chinese of early Promontory, although three of first Chinese section gang members participated in Ogden’s fiftieth anniversary celebration of laying the last rail.<sup>85</sup>

One report counted 200 Chinese and several gravel trains at work on the CP division, Toano to Promontory. Morris had 278 men, four gravel trains, and a steam excavator on the UP’s Utah division, reportedly mostly Irish. The UP company kept secret its plans to supplement the crews with cheaper Chinese labor; the telegrapher at Promontory was told to not announce their movements over the wires.<sup>86</sup>

By order of Dodge, Morris was to do no maintenance work between Ogden and Promontory. Thus, the UP probably had few section crew workers there in 1869, after the initial work to brace the long trestle on the east slope of the Promontory. A train crashing through a short trestle on the stretch in the Salt flats brought repairs, but Dodge did not respond positively to Morris’s requests to fix the line to Promontory, nor his plea that it is “easier to keep up than put up.”<sup>87</sup>

Old timers recalled early train crews fifty years later. Names of locomotive engineers, yardmasters, telegraph operators were shared, a long list of young men. Unfortunately, payroll records for the period are lacking and, thus, most information is anecdotal. Each locomotive engineer was responsible for his engine, enhancing a close connection between man and machine. They put antlers, brass eagles, and other ornaments on headlights and domes, giving each a distinctive character. The locomotives in the terminus yard were the classic American 4-4-0s with names, on the CP, like “Swiftsure,” “Whirlwind,” and “Apollo.” One local newspaper note captures the flavor of the time: “The whirlwind which passed up toward Promontory last evening, at the rate of forty miles per hour, was the well-known locomotive of that name.” She must have been a wonderful sight.<sup>88</sup>

In July and August, respectively, the UP and CP changed management. Colonel Hammond of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy became superintendent of the UP, while A. N. Towne, former assistant superintendent of the CB&Q, became superintendent of the CP. Both would attempt to change the operations from the haphazard construction era to one of set time schedules and acceptable rate structures.<sup>89</sup>

UP superintendent Hammond took decided action to improve the condition for travelers transferred at Promontory, a bottle-neck that was hurting the line’s image. He ordered the construction of a wood-frame, eating house and hotel, which opened in September. The building would also include a telegraph and ticket office. In October, he also ordered a round house for Promontory with plans to upgrade facilities at the yard. On October 25, 1869, Hammond wrote president Ames: “We have after full consideration made Winter quarters at Promontory.” He added that, “I fear much to make Passengers comfortable at Promontory.” The continued problem of petty thievery and gambling outrages needed to be addressed.<sup>90</sup>

## M) Vigilantes

“Upon the telegraph poles of Promontory one Sunday morning in November 1869,” wrote historian H. H. Bancroft, “there appeared posted a notice, signed by the committee of Vigilance, warning all loafers, pimps, gamblers, pettifoggers, thieves, and cutthroats to quit the town within twenty-four hours, or to prepare to be hanged each upon a telegraph pole.” The town’s leaders, primarily the railroad men led by UP station keeper S. R. Edwards, had reached a point of action. The outrages to passengers had been endured too long.<sup>91</sup>

Previously, on September 6, the Box Elder county commissioners finally appointed a justice of the peace, James R. Gregory, for Promontory, with hopes it would bring order. Gregory was a Corinne druggist, who had help organize that town’s gymnasium, a physical fitness club. He arrived in Promontory and wrote the editor of the *Reporter* that gambling and whiskey swilling was the village’s prime business, though one cow was in town as a hint there might be a cattle industry built up there. He added, this is “a ‘canvas-back’ city – city, God save the mark!” Gregory stayed in town barely a month, leaving the town to its cappers, and the best three card monte dealers he had seen on the line.<sup>92</sup>

The cappers and gamblers’ boldness increased that fall, entering cars to tempt waiting passengers out. Station agent Edwards and conductors chased the characters off, but to no avail. Rev. John Ross’s journal provides a picture of the increasing boldness of

the gambling element. On October 7, he arrived a Promontory for a long wait for the CP train. In his journal he mentions foolish fellow passengers taken in by the gaming tables – one young man lost his watch, an Irishman lost \$12, all he had, and another passenger lost \$20. Friendly characters entered the coach and enticed the bored riders out of the cars. Ross went out to buy some tea and saw the tables in action.

A large bonfire burned in the street. We could see each den of inequity and all who came out and those who venture in. A gambling table stood beside the fire...One man was spokesman and actor. He had hands as smooth and white as those of any lady. They are generally enveloped in kids [gloves]. He held a pack of cards in his hands, and the way in which he fingered them over was only matched by the rapidity with which his tongue moved. The gambler dressed as a perfect gentleman.<sup>93</sup>

Those who staked down their money, “lose every time.” Ross felt robbed himself after paying \$3 per pound for tea. Ross, like every other writer, left no description of the shops or their merchants.

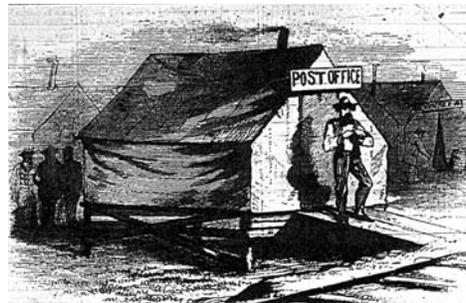
The catalyst for vigilante action was the robbery of an elderly German immigrant. Karl Kreka with his family was bound for California via a UP emigrant car. At Promontory, while changing trains, he was robbed of all his cash by “garroters,” or muggers. Edwards and other trainmen reacted quickly and, on November 19<sup>th</sup>, arrested four suspects led by “Big Jim.” Edwards took them to the justice of the peace at Corinne. The railroaders also raised funds, \$150, for Kreka and family to continue West. However, the Corinne justice of the peace let the prisoners get away bringing outcries of bribery and demands for his removal.<sup>94</sup>

Incensed by the Kreka robberies, Edwards and the train crews formed a vigilante committee, the “B of U” (“the Boys of the Union Pacific”). They posted notices and, on Sunday November 21<sup>st</sup>, a committee of three marched through the town, “visited every saloon and all disreputable houses and warned the proprietors harboring any suspicious person, under penalty of themselves being driven from town.” They loaded the thugs, thieves, and muggers into a UP box car and had them hauled out of Promontory. No lynchings occurred that evening.<sup>95</sup>

The *Deseret News* lauded the work of the “B of U.” “The conduct of Mr. Edwards and the railroad employees, in ridding their neighborhood of a set of harpies and scoundrels, and for extending aid to those who had been fleeced of the whole of their worldly wealth by them, is worthy of the greatest praise.” They cleaned out the tent row and, added the editor, Promontory “is now deserted except for the railroad employees.” The Elko *Independent* gave its blessing to the action, proclaiming that Promontory had been redeemed.<sup>96</sup>

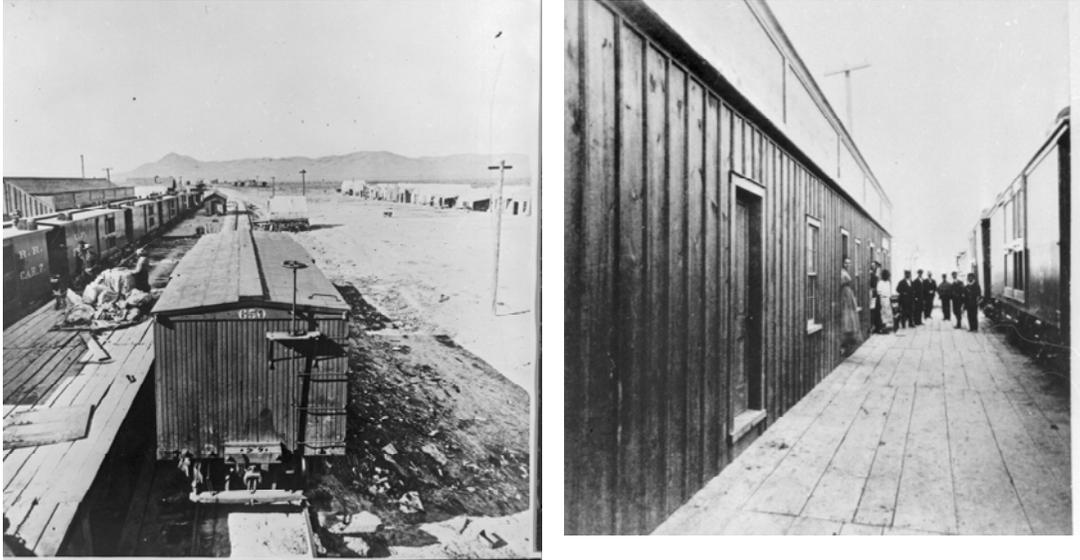
Law enforcement at Promontory greatly relied on the Union Pacific crews. Edwards as agent led the vigilantes. In his reminiscence, Dodge would describe what had occurred when the toughs took over Julesburg, Colorado, Cheyenne, Wyoming and elsewhere. “We laid out towns,” he wrote, “officered them, kept peace. Two or three times at the end of our tracks a rough crowd would gather and dispute our authority, but

*Figures 31, 32, 33. Images of Promontory: October 1869*



Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly sent artist Joseph Becker across the continent in October, 1869. Becker was briefly in Promontory, but his illustrations of the tent row, the gamblers in the street, and the post office appeared the following year, January 5 and March 19, 1870. The streetscape is probably based on the photographs by A. J. Russell, but with additions, changes in the names of business and other artistic license by Leslie's artists or editors.

*Figures 34, 35, 36. Images of Promontory: November 1869*



*Andrew J. Russell traveled across the country in November 1869, making a stop at Promontory. He captured the last days of “Promontory City” and the Union Pacific operations in the town. In the two photographs above is the railroad eating house, UP ticket and telegraph office with a row of new refrigerator cars in front. In the image at left, in the distance, can be seen the CP yards. Russell’s artistic skill in the use of perspective is seen in this near abandoned street scene of Promontory City and station.*



*Promontory City, November 1869.*

*All images in Golden Spike National Historic Site files. Better copies can be found at: Russell negatives at Oakland Museum, Oakland, California.*

they were soon disposed of.” The action at Promontory followed the pattern. Shortly thereafter, CP special agents joined the “B of U” to clean out thieves, thugs and gamblers along the railroad, from Bryan, Wyoming to Toano, Nevada. This activity coincided with the final decision to move the junction from Promontory station.<sup>97</sup>

## **N) Removing the Junction**

Promontory was site of a grand council of railroad leaders in September when CP president Stanford, vice-president Huntington, Crocker and other men met with president Ames and directors of the UP, all in private cars and many with their families. They had come to inspect the line and negotiate the relocation of the junction site for the CP - UP. Negotiations over costs and payment quickly broke down into heated quarreling, and the junction decision was left unsettled. Interviewed after the meeting, Crocker announced that the CP would build to Ogden and would immediately put surveyor Bates in the field.<sup>98</sup>

Meanwhile, the UP was strapped for cash and needed funds to maintain payments on loans and bonds. The Mormon hierarchy was demanding payment of its unpaid bills as well. As settlement, the UP offered surplus rails, ties, and equipment, which Brigham Young accepted for his branch railroad under construction from Ogden to Salt Lake City. In October, the UP finally built a railroad siding at Ogden, stopping at the Mormon town for the first time, and abandoned its Salt Lake City jump-off spot of Uintah station.<sup>99</sup>

On November 1, a report of “three eminent citizens” appointed by the U. S. President to assess the condition of the transcontinental railroad, allowed that the lines were complete, and, after repairs noted in the report, would meet the requirement of having built a “first class railroad.” The commission also advised the Secretary of Treasury to release final subsidy bonds to the companies. With the prospect of getting the bond money in hand, the UP leadership was more willing to negotiate with the CP over the sale of the Ogden - Promontory line. On November 17, Ames agreed to sell Huntington 48 ½ miles of road, to a point 5 ½ miles north of Ogden. Two days later the CP leadership approved the deal, although Stanford and Huntington were split on the building of a new town 5 ½ miles north of Ogden, Huntington for, Stanford opposed.<sup>100</sup>

Pressure by Young, dissension among the Big Four of the Central Pacific, and indecision by the UP leadership, brought about the abandonment of Huntington’s proposed town site five and a half miles away, “*near* Ogden.” Young had offered the companies 300 acres adjacent Ogden for its transfer facilities. Stanford knew it was better to compromise with the Mormons, meet at their junction, than create an opposing community. He met with UP officials at Ogden, where a worried director Duff wired president Ames, December 2d, Stanford “disposed to stop at Ogden ...shall not agree upon the other place.” Superintendent Towne organized the transfer of facilities from Promontory to Ogden and on December 6 had the first scheduled CP train run into the Ogden yard, the last five miles of the run on UP tracks.<sup>101</sup>

In its annual review of events for 1869, the *Deseret News* gave November 22nd as the official date for the removal of the junction to Ogden. The CP timetable of December 6, 1869 shows that as the date for initial removal of service to Ogden as terminus town, though operational feuds with the UP would continue into March, 1870, finally making transcontinental travel less a nightmare of delays at the junction. Later, the U. S.

Congress, on May 6, 1870, passed legislation setting the junction at a point five miles north of Ogden and transferred public lands to the railroad companies, but the CP continued to operate into Ogden yard, eventually leasing the last five miles of UP track into town for 999 years.<sup>102</sup>

In December 1869, Stanford also announced to the press that he would “move the CP track to its grade and off the UP line up the hill to Promontory.” Surveyor Bates had already relocated the survey stakes down the steep eastern slope. The Sacramento and Elko newspapers reported shipments of ties, gravel and fill, and building materials passing through their respective towns. On November 27, the Elko *Independent* editor had noted 300 Chinese workers sent east by train to work on the line, its relocation, and building the yard at Ogden.<sup>103</sup>

Over the next several months they laid rail on the Central Pacific’s unused grade down the east slope of the Promontory. From about a mile east of the station, the new track followed the ignored CP roadbed, over the fills and through cuts, for about four and a half miles further east to the bottom of the grade, where it rejoined the former UP track. The CP abandoned the UP’s 116’ foot grade, the hastily surveyed and built tight curves, steep grades, and spindly trestles, which remained standing a few years, monuments to the folly of the railroad race of 1869.

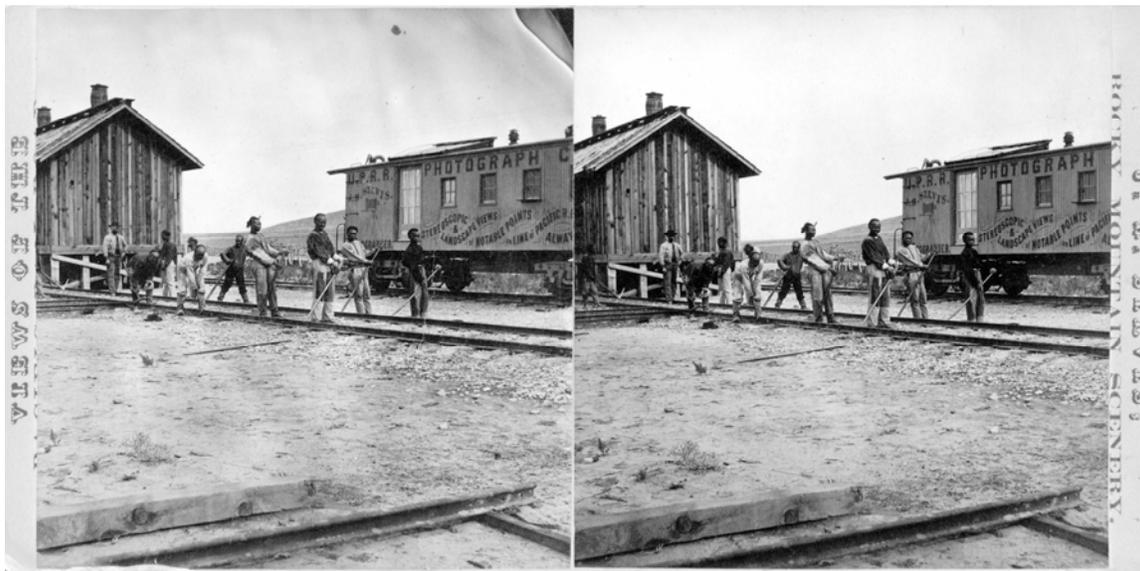
An Elko correspondent passed through Promontory in December and noted the town was moving west, and that the eating house crew was preparing to move to Ogden. Station agent Edwards was already at the Mormon town building a new UP eating house. As for the breakfast in Promontory, the correspondent wrote, “I arrived in time...to hear the bell ring and partake of the meanest breakfast any one ever sat down to: sour bread, sour hash, and sour hot cakes without syrup.” All for \$1 coin or \$1.25 in currency. A new proprietor, chosen by the CP, would take over the station eating house and hotel.<sup>104</sup>

Superintendent Towne had long anticipated the move and the extension of the Salt Lake Division, by December 6 running from Toano, Nevada to Ogden, Utah. The CP shops were left at Terrace (until 1893), west of Promontory. Salt Lake Division superintendent Campbell and roadmaster Casin relocated to Ogden. The CP and UP train crews were shifted off the Promontory to Ogden by the end of the year. A CP station agent and telegraph operator were left, as were a Chinese section crew, and the gravel train crew.

The remaining merchants and shop owners moved to other towns. People that served the transfer station moved to Ogden. Census data, local newspapers, and business directories provide some information about the movement out of Promontory. Will Riley and Barney Mallory moved a few miles west to Kelton, Utah, where Riley opened a dry goods store. He was still there a decade and half later. J. S. Conner may have moved to Elko, Nevada, as census enumeration sheets suggest. Of the movement of gamblers and cronies one can only speculate, though period newspaper editors recommended they shift operations to the mining camps of Utah, Nevada, and Montana. By June 1870, according to the Federal census takers, the population at Promontory Summit plummeted from a high of an estimated 200 down to 40, all worked for the railroad except the railroad eating house/hotel keeper and his family and a miner. Promontory City was no more.<sup>105</sup>

## O) Promontory Station, Post-1869

The ‘frontier railroad’ was ephemeral,” railroad historian Jim Wilkie wrote, “only lasting a few years – until towns grew up along the line [and] eastern standards of good track and facilities were installed.” With the transfer of the line to Ogden, the Central Pacific rebuilt the Promontory yard to service helper engines needed to assist trains moving up the Promontory grades, east and west. Track realignments, a roundhouse and new turntable and engine support facilities would transform Promontory from “Junction City” to a standard railroad eating stop, locomotive helper station, and home for the Chinese section crew (Figure 37). Superintendent Towne and crew transformed the CP over the Promontory from a frontier line to one that met eastern standards.<sup>106</sup>



*Figure 37. After the removal of the junction, Promontory served as eating stop, helper station, and home for a Chinese section crew. Photographer J. B. Silvis revisited Promontory Station in the fall of 1871 and took this image of a posed Chinese section crew on the Promontory. Courtesy Denver Public Library.*

As bigger and longer trains arrived on the scene, the need to re-build the line or reroute it caused the Southern Pacific Company, which had absorbed the Central Pacific Railroad, to survey alternative routes from Ogden west. In 1901-3, its engineers and construction crews built the Lucin cut-off across the Salt Lake, which shortened the line and left the difficult grades and curves of the Promontory on a branch-line. The last regularly scheduled transcontinental passenger train passed through Promontory station September 18, 1904.<sup>107</sup>

Around the station, the sage covered landscape became cattle country. Larger cattle firms such as John W. Kerr, John L. Edwards, and especially those of Charles Crocker and his son George, shipped via the railroad to San Francisco and Chicago markets. Early in the twentieth century, wheat farmers began changing the landscape with farms and families. Promontory, with its one room school, mercantile and post office, became a crossroads stop for small farms.

During the droughts of the 1930s, wheat farm families moved off the land. Land holdings were consolidated. Depression era railroad traffic revenues failed to meet costs of maintenance. The SP decided to abandon the line. In 1942, after a well-publicized “unspiking” of the last rail, September 8, the rails over the Promontory were removed.

Concerted efforts to preserve the historic site brought action at mid-century and resulted in reenactments of the driving of the last spike. In 1957, local boosters led by Bernice Gibbs Anderson, succeeded in getting the site recognized by the Federal government but without Federal land ownership. Subsequent studies and support from the SP, which still owned the right of way, proved the value of Federal management. Legislation for the creation of Golden Spike National Historic Site was signed into law July 30, 1965. The National Park Service built a visitor center, exhibits, and placed two historic locomotives on re-laid rail, which were the centerpiece for the transcontinental railroad centennial celebration of May 10, 1969.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The most recent works which fit this pattern are David Haward Bain, *Empire Express, Building the First Transcontinental Railroad* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1999) and Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nothing Like it in the World, the Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad, 1863-1869* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), although the latter contains many errors. Among the better, older works are Robert G. Athearn, *Union Pacific Country* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1976 reprint of 1971 edition) and Maury Klein, *Union Pacific, the Birth of a Railroad, 1862-1893* (New York: Doubleday, 1987).

<sup>2</sup> The exception is the unpublished manuscript by Michael Johnson, "Promontory Station, an Industrial Outpost in the American West," n.d., copy at Golden Spike National Historic Site.

<sup>3</sup> *Telegraph*, August 31, 1869.

<sup>4</sup> Copies of Frederick Hodge's field notebooks are in the Union Pacific Collection, Union Pacific Museum, Council Bluffs, Iowa (hereinafter UP Museum).

<sup>5</sup> William H. Goetzman, *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1959), *passim*.; a copy of Samuel Reed's 1865 field journal is in the UP Museum.

<sup>6</sup> Bain, *Empire Express*, pp. 276-77; Samuel Montague collection, Special Collections, Stanford University Library.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*; Lynn Farrar, former chief engineer of the Southern Pacific Railroad to author, July, 12, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Grenville M. Dodge, *How We Built the Union Pacific Railway and Other Railway Papers and Addresses* (Denver: Sage Books, 1965), *passim*; Dodge and Frederick Hodge affidavits, March 1869 in Union Pacific Railroad Collection, Nebraska Historical Society, Lincoln, hereinafter NHS.

<sup>10</sup> Hodge field notebook, UP Museum.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*; Dodge, *We Built the Union Pacific*, pp. 117-8.

<sup>14</sup> C. P. Huntington to Leland Stanford, October 9, 1868, in C. P. Huntington letters, Syracuse University Library, microfilm copy at California State Railroad Museum.

<sup>15</sup> Huntington to Stanford, December 7, 1868; *Ibid.*; Clark, *Stanford*, p. 42.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Utley, *Special Report on Promontory Summit, Utah (Golden Spike National Historic Site)*, (Santa Fe: NPS, 1960), p. 66; Dodge in his 1869 engineer's report published as an Senate Executive document noted on page 10, "we adopted the eighty-foot grade line, the location of which was readjusted, finished, and turned over to the construction department. *For some reason* the grading at this point was not commenced until February, 1869." (My italics—Dodge knew why the changes were made). In this official published report, Dodge did not write about the 80' line's abandonment by Durant and the construction of a much steeper and unsafe railroad grade, just that he passed the survey over to the construction crews. Dodge's words influenced later writers about the high quality of UP construction, which it was not.

<sup>17</sup> A microfilm copy of the Warren report manuscript is at the Western History Collection, Denver Public Library; Utley, *Report*, includes the Warren map.

<sup>18</sup> Hezekiah Bissel, "Recollections," Wyoming State Library and Archives, Cheyenne; Farrar to author, July 2003; A special edition of *Trains Magazine*, May 1969, explained construction techniques.

<sup>19</sup> Athearn, *UP Country*, *passim*., is best on the Mormon involvement.

<sup>20</sup> "The Golden Spike Celebration Souvenir," *Ogden Standard*, May 11, 1919 is the source for this and the following stories.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*; Bernard DeVoto's grandfather worked on the railroad as a grader, and his mother recalled the changes. "The Life of Jonathan Dyer, a Paragraph in the History of the West," in Bernard Augustine DeVoto, *Forays and Rebuttals* (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970 reprint of 1936 edition), pp. 3-24; the text refers to the young woman and her first shoes.

<sup>22</sup> Farr's diary is quoted in the May 10, 1919, *Ogden Standard*.

<sup>23</sup> Adrienne Anderson, "Ancillary Construction on Promontory Summit, Utah: Those Domestic Structures Built by Railroad Workers," in Albert E. Ward, ed., *Forgotten Places and Things: Archeological Perspectives on American History*. Contributions to Anthropological Studies No. 3 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: Center for Anthropological Studies, 1983).

<sup>24</sup> *Telegraph*, April 13, 1869.

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<sup>25</sup> Morris sent nearly daily reports to Dodge, which are reproduced in Grenville Dodge, "Autobiography," Council Bluffs, Iowa Public Library. The autobiography is a compilation of transcripts of letters to and from Dodge.

<sup>26</sup> *Telegraph*, February 2, 1869.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Deseret News*, March 25, April 7, 1869; *Reporter*, February 19, 1869.

<sup>29</sup> Edward Watson, Diary, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie.

<sup>30</sup> Major Howard Egan surveyed the line ending the days of the Overland Mail via the southern tip of Salt Lake. *Reporter*, February 6, 1869.

<sup>31</sup> For violence see *Reporter* February 20, 25, March 2, 27, April 4, 20, 1869; *Deseret News*, April 1, 1869; *Telegraph*, April 10, 13, 29, 1869.

<sup>32</sup> John Davis, "Reminiscences of the Long Ago are Related," *Ogden Standard*, May 9, 1919; Marley later settled in Farmington, Utah and lost his life in a cabin fire.

<sup>33</sup> *Telegraph*, February 2, 1869; *Reporter*, February 20, 1869. Named after General Patrick E. Connor, often misspelled Conner.

<sup>34</sup> Samuel H. Chittenden to Mother, May 19, 1868, Ft. Bridger, "The Chittenden Correspondence," *La Posta: A Journal of American Postal History* (April 1984), pp. 53-5; Bissell, "Recollection"; Morris letter to Dodge, in Dodge, "Autobiography."

<sup>35</sup> Brigham Madsen, *Corinne* (Logan: Utah State University Press), *passim*.

<sup>36</sup> Samuel H. Chittenden to Mother, Ft. Bridge, May 19, 1868, "The Chittenden Correspondence."

<sup>37</sup> Bain, *Empire Express*, pp. 632-3; Klein, *Union Pacific*, pp. 207-8; the agreement is reprinted in Charles Edgar Ames, *Pioneering the Union Pacific, A Reappraisal of the Builders of the Railroad* (New York: Meridith Corporation, 1969), pp. 317-8.

<sup>38</sup> Leonard Eicholtz diary, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

<sup>39</sup> *Alta California* and *Chronicle* reporters sent daily dispatches to San Francisco which detail these feats and the events described in the next paragraphs. *Daily Alta California*, San Francisco, May 1-10, 1869; *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 1-10, 1869.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*; Quote from *Omaha Herald*, May 16, 1869.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*; C. H. Sharman, "Tales from the Old-Timers – No. 24," *Union Pacific Magazine* (October 1925), p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> J. D. B. Stillman, "The Last Tie," *Overland Monthly* (July 1868) reprinted in Robert A. Bennett. *The Bohemians* (Walla Walla, Washington: Pioneer Press, 1987), pp. 109-117.

<sup>44</sup> See Appendix H, pp. 147-162 of this report.

<sup>45</sup> The following account is based on newspaper reports of the time, primarily from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Bulletin*, and *Alta California* of San Francisco, the *Sacramento Bee*, the Virginia City, Nevada, *Enterprise*, the *Omaha Herald*, *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Times*, *Deseret News* and *Reporter* of Utah, the *Cheyenne Leader*, and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*. The most referenced and focused study is flawed by many errors; see J. N. Bowman, "Driving the Last Spike at Promontory 1869," *Utah Historical Quarterly* (Winter 1969) 77-101, reprinted from *California Historical Society Quarterly*, June and September 1957; and see appendix H of this report; also see the unpublished manuscript, Michael Johnson, "The Golden Spike Ceremony Revisited," n.d., copy at Golden Spike National Historic Site, and Michael Johnson, "Rendezvous at Promontory: A New Look at the Golden Spike Ceremony," *Utah Historical Quarterly* (Winter 2004) 47-68.

<sup>46</sup> Quote from Alexander Toponce, *Reminiscences of Alexander Toponce Written by Himself* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971).

<sup>47</sup> Mary Gamble, "To Europe via Promontory in 1869," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 23 (1944), pp. 365-8.

<sup>48</sup> An example inflation of the tales is in Nelson's *Pictorial Guide Books, The Central Pacific Railroad* (New York: T. Nelson and Sons, 1870), p. 10: "This was a wild place at one time. As many as twenty-eight deaths by violence occurred in the course of a single month. A stranger, entering a restaurant, sat down to a table occupied by two men. One of these took too much gravy, and the other, drawing his revolver, immediately shot him dead. The stranger sprang up to retire from such unpleasant companionship, but, under the threat of another shot, was compelled to sit down and finish his breakfast, with the corpse of the murdered man beside him."

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- <sup>49</sup> Charles Savage, diary entry for May 9-10, copy in Utah Historical Society, Salt Lake City.
- <sup>50</sup> Ames letter to Dillon and Duff, April 29, 1869, is in Dodge, "Autobiography."
- <sup>51</sup> Smith diary quoted in Athearn, *UP Country*, p. 101; on Spicer see Lynn R. Bailey, *A Tale of the "Unkilled," the Life, Times, and Writings of Wells W. Spicer* (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1999), p. 17.
- <sup>52</sup> Dodge, *We Built the Union Pacific*, p. 31.
- <sup>53</sup> F. A. Ketterson, *Historical Base Map, 1869, Golden Spike National Historic Site, Utah* (Washington, D. C.: National Park Service, 1969).
- <sup>54</sup> Dodge to Ames, May 15, 1869, in Dodge, "Autobiography." Dillon in his reminiscence incorrectly places this event on the morning of May 10. Sidney Dillon, "Historic Moments: Driving the Last Spike of the Union Pacific," *Scribner's Magazine* (August 1892).
- <sup>55</sup> *Omaha Herald*, May 20, 21, 1869; William H. Jackson diary, June 30-July 1, 1869, microfilm copy at Colorado Historical Society, Denver; Jackson photographs are at the U. S. Geological Survey Library, Denver.
- <sup>56</sup> Letters from Hoaxie, Morris and others to Dodge detail activities, see Dodge "Autobiography," as does the nearest newspaper, the *Corinne Reporter*, May-June, 1869.
- <sup>57</sup> W. L. Humason, *From the Atlantic to the Golden Gate* (Hartford: Wm C. Hutchings, 1869), pp. 39-43.
- <sup>58</sup> "Coast to Coast by Railroad: the Journey of Niles Searls – May, 1869," *New York History*, (July 1969), p. 311.
- <sup>59</sup> *Omaha Herald*, May 20, 1869.
- <sup>60</sup> Strobridge reminiscence in Robert Lardin Fulton, *Epic of the Overland, An Account of the Building of the Central and Union Pacific Railroad* (Los Angeles: N. A. Kovach, 1954), p. 39, on Promontory see p. 100.
- <sup>61</sup> Eicholtz diary and introductory notes in American Heritage Center.
- <sup>62</sup> Dodge to Ames, May 26, 1869 and Morris to Dodge, May 27, 1869, Dodge, "Autobiography."
- <sup>63</sup> *Deseret News*, May 21, 1869; During the construction period, a short-lived "Promontory City" existed on the west slope of the Promontory Range, near Cedar Springs.
- <sup>64</sup> Watson diary, American Heritage Center. Information on Riley and others from Kelton enumeration sheets, 1870 census web accessible on Ancestry.Com.
- <sup>65</sup> Quotes from D. L. Harris diary published as "Memoranda Concerning the Union Pacific R. R.," *Bulletin No. 32*, Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, Inc. (1933), pp. 15-29.
- <sup>66</sup> Morris Report, p. 22. The nearby *Corinne Reporter* provided comment on visiting dignitaries like Freeman that summer and fall.
- <sup>67</sup> Jackson diary, CHS.
- <sup>68</sup> *The Cincinnati Excursion to California: Its Origin, Progress, Incidents, and Results* (Cincinnati: 1870), p. 39.
- <sup>69</sup> From unknown to Dear Olive, Promontory, July 7, 1869, copy at UP Museum.
- <sup>70</sup> Albert D. Richardson, "Through to the Pacific," letters to the *New York Herald*, May-June 1869, in Abby Richardson, *Garnered Sheaves* (Hartford, Conn.: Columbian Book Co., 1871).
- <sup>71</sup> *Independent*, October 13, 1869.
- <sup>72</sup> Beadle's colorful language and rants, mostly against the Mormons, fill the *Corinne Reporter*, March – July, 1869; quote from J. H. Beadle, *Western Wilds, and the Men Who Redeem Them* (Philadelphia: Jones Brothers, 1878), p. 103-4.
- <sup>73</sup> W. F. Rae, *Westward by Rail; the New Route to the East* (New York: D. Appleton, 1871), pp. 187-9.
- <sup>74</sup> Henry Austin diary, August 1869, copy at Golden Spike National Historic Site; the first guide book was G. A. Croffutt, *Great Transcontinental Railroad Guide* (Chicago: G. A. Croffutt & Co., 1869); for a review of the first edition of the guide see *Reporter*, September 18, 1869.
- <sup>75</sup> December 4, 1869.
- <sup>76</sup> Mary McNair Mathews, *Ten Years in Nevada, or Life in the Pacific Coast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985 reprint of 1880 edition).
- <sup>77</sup> Florence Bennett Anderson, *Leaven for the Frontier, the True Story of a Pioneer Educator* (Boston: Christopher Publishing, 1953), pp. 16-17; Cornelia E. Comstock, "Overland Diary – 1869," *Trains* (May 1969), pp. 51-54; Jackson diary, CHS. See appendix F for travelers' accounts.
- <sup>78</sup> James Ross, *From Wisconsin to California and Return, as Reported for the "Wisconsin State Journal,"* (Madison: Atwood and Rublee, 1869).
- <sup>79</sup> *Reporter*, August 4, 1869; *Telegraph*, November 2, 1869.

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<sup>80</sup> Montague to Dodge, June 7, 1869, Dodge, "Autobiography;" A list of CP structures along the line the summer 1869 is reprinted in Anan S. Raymond and Richard E. Fike, *Rails East to Promontory, the Utah Stations*, Cultural Resources Series No. 8 (Salt Lake City: Bureau of Land Management, 1994 reprint), p.24.

<sup>81</sup> Dodge to Morris, July 15, 1869, Dodge, "Autobiography"; Humason, *The Atlantic Surf to the Golden Gate*, p. 42.

<sup>82</sup> The *Corinne Reporter* and *Elko Independent* followed the telegraph activities.

<sup>83</sup> E. H. Derby, *The Overland Route to the Pacific* (Boston, October, 1869)

<sup>84</sup> Morris to Dodge, September 8, 1869, Dodge, "Autobiography"; Lucius Beebe, *The Overland Limited* (Berkeley, California: Howell-North, 1962), *passim*.

<sup>85</sup> *The Cincinnati Excursion*, p. 39; *The Ogden Standard*, May 11, 1919.

<sup>86</sup> Morris to Dodge, Dodge "Autobiography."

<sup>87</sup> Dodge to Ames, July 2, 1869, and Morris to Dodge, July 5, 1869, in Dodge, "Autobiography."

<sup>88</sup> *Reporter*, Corinne, May 16, 1871.

<sup>89</sup> "Life of Alban Nelson Towne," in H. H. Bancroft, *Chronicles of the Builders of the Commonwealth* (San Francisco: History Company, 1891), pp. 197-220; on Hammond see Klein, *Union Pacific*, *passim*.

<sup>90</sup> Hammond to Ames, October 25, 1869, Hammond letters file, Union Pacific Railroad Collection, Nebraska Historical Society; Morris to Dodge, October 8, 1869, Dodge, "Autobiography."

<sup>91</sup> H. H. Bancroft, *Popular Tribunals* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1887), p. 616.

<sup>92</sup> *Reporter*, September 3, 10, 29, and November 13, 1869; County Supervisors' Minutes, September 6, 1869, microfilm at Box Elder County Records, Brigham City.

<sup>93</sup> John Simpson Ross, *Crossing the Continent by Rail in 1869* (Fort Bragg, California: Mendocino County Historical Society, 1969), p. 15.

<sup>94</sup> *Reporter*, February 18, 22, 1870.

<sup>95</sup> Bancroft, *op. cit.*

<sup>96</sup> *Deseret News*, December 1, 1869; *Independent*, Nov 27, 1869.

<sup>97</sup> Dodge, *We Built the Union Pacific*, p. 39; *Independent*, January 5, 1870, editor noted

"The raid upon the gamblers and blacklegs at the Promontory and vicinity in November last, gave us a good earnest [example] of what we might expect, and we have not been disappointed."

<sup>98</sup> Klein, *Union Pacific*, p. 119; David Lavender, *The Great Persuader, the Biography of Collis P. Huntington* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1998 reprint of 1969 edition), p. 66; Hodge to Dodge, July 26 and September 10, Dodge, "Autobiography."

<sup>99</sup> Athearn, *Union Pacific Country*, p. 76.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*; Lavender, *Huntington*, p. 72.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*; Morris to Dodge, November 2, 1869, and Dodge to Ames, November 2, 1869, Duff telegram, Chandler to Dodge, November 18, in Dodge, "Autobiography."

<sup>102</sup> Klein, *Union Pacific*, *passim*. The "near Ogden" acreage granted by Congress for the junction is at section 25, 26 and 35 of Township 7, Range 2, and section 6 of Township 6, Range 1 and sections 30, 31 of Township 7 Range 1, section 36, Township 7, Range 2, northwest of Ogden. The UP also negotiated for joint use of the line Ogden – Promontory in case they ever planned an extension to Oregon, which it did build but along a different route.

<sup>103</sup> *Independent*, November 27, December 1, 11, 1869; *Ogden Junction*, January 12, August 17, 1870. *Reporter*, January 6, 1870.

<sup>104</sup> *Independent*, December 15, 1869.

<sup>105</sup> 1870 census enumeration sheets for Kelton, Elko and Promontory on the internet at Ancestry.com. Besides the forty, the Promontory Station census enumeration sheets include an additional three ranchers who lived nearby.

<sup>106</sup> Wilkie quote in Anne M. Lyden, *Railroad Vision, Photography, Travel and Perception* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003), p. 13.

<sup>107</sup> On the later history of Promontory and the railroad see Michael Johnson, "Promontory Station, an Industrial Outpost in the American West," n.d. [ca. 1989], copy at Golden Spike National Historic Site; and Don L. Hofsommer, *The Southern Pacific, 1901-1985* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1986).



### **III. Physical Description and Analysis of the Tents at “The Last Spike Site,” May 10, 1869**

#### **A) The Tents of Promontory Summit, May 10, 1869**

##### **1) Summary**

Seventeen tents stood at Promontory Summit on May 10, 1869. Fourteen of them were in somewhat parallel rows, seven on each side of the Central Pacific – Union Pacific connecting track. North of the tracks was the commercial row of restaurants, saloons, grocery, and stage office. South of the Central Pacific track were tents for railroad workers, contractors, telegraph crews, and station hands. A lone distant tent northeast of the junction suggested the plans of land speculators at the future site of the short-lived Promontory City.

This section of the report details the findings about the number of tents, their use, and occupants at Promontory Summit on May 10, 1869. As have previous historians, the author wishes to begin with a caveat that this is not the last word on the topic and new source material, hopefully, will appear which revises or clarifies conclusions given here about the tents that stood around the Last Spike Site during that celebratory day.

We are fortunate in the wealth of historic photographs of the scene during the laying of the last rail and driving of the last spike. Because of the work of Andrew J. Russell, Alfred A. Hart, and Charles R. Savage, we know where the tents stood in relation to the last spike site. Extrapolating information from the historic photographs and combined with tent manufacturers’ and Civil War era tent data, we can estimate the dimensions of each of the tents. Table 1 provides suggested dimensions. Creating replica tents fashioned after the ones at the celebration is a relatively straight-forward task thanks to the number of firms manufacturing replica Civil War era tents.

The more difficult task is answering the question: how were the tents used? Again, the historic photographs, combined with a few contemporary newspaper sources, provide definitive answers to three tents, which had signs attached to their fronts: the J. S. Conner grocery, the Red Cloud saloon, and the Restaurant, HS-9, HS-7, HS-6, respectively. They form part of a commercial row. These framed wall tents and their businesses were typical of railroad construction era “tent towns,” indeed, at least one of their owners, J. S. Conner, is known to have moved from Junction City, one of the Blue Creek valley construction camps seven miles east. The other owners most likely did as well.

Company records (letters, reports, and other documentation), newspaper accounts, and personal diaries and reminiscences, plus historic photographs, provide suggestive information about the use of seven additional tents. The Union Pacific Railroad related tents, east of the last spike site, are the ticket and telegraph tents, the construction crew tents, and the engineer’s tent, HS-12, HS-13, HS-14, HS-15, and HS-16. They served specific functions for the construction and operation of the railroad.

The combined Western Union - Central Pacific Railroad telegraph office and quarters, HS-1 and HS-2, can be similarly described. They stood nearest the last spike site.

Observers at Promontory noted other activities. Wells Fargo & Co. ran a stage to the end of the track and its office was at Promontory before and after May 10. North of the last spike site and at the end of the wagon road coming from the east is tent HS-11. The tent's location suggests it was an office for the Wells Fargo & Co. stage and express.

The number of the reporters who stayed in Promontory before and during May 10 needed housing. The Central Pacific Railroad provided support for reporters from California, at least one on the Stanford Special and another staying at and reporting from construction superintendent Strobridge's housing cars at the work camp of Victory and at Promontory. Other reporters sending dispatches datelined from Promontory stayed in the tents there. The more modest wall tent, HS-3, south of the CP tracks and nearest the CP telegraph office would have been a likely place for the reporters to gather, sleep and stay for the few days, May 8-10, when the country turned its attention to Promontory Summit.

The final five tents at Promontory, HS-4 and HS-5, south of the tracks, and HS-7, HS-17, and HS-10, north of the tracks, have uses that can be predicted, but less accurately than the other twelve. The Central Pacific Railroad may have had more tents at the last spike site to support workers and guests coming to orchestrate the last details for May 10, and to unwillingly establish the new terminus' operational details. The tents south of the tracks, HS-4 and HS-5, their smaller size, lack of lumber platforms, walls, and frame suggest a temporary, non-business tent. They are more the size of wall tents used for housing and simple mess than the larger ones across the tracks, the Red Cloud Saloon, HS-8, and the Restaurant, HS-6, for example. Reminiscences mention sleeping in tents at the site, which suggests the use of these simple wall tents as quarters.

Tents HS-7, HS-17 and HS-10 are more substantial, with at least one known to have built-up wood sides. They are built to the scale of the neighboring saloons and restaurant. Period observers note the row of restaurants and saloons, which suggest these as being used for those purposes, the half dozen "rum holes" noted by diarist Charles Savage.

Other uses were analyzed, but without further evidence they appear not to have contained functions found a day or two later at the site, including the terminus post office, barber shop, or cigar store, though these items may have been available along the "row." There appears to be no "gambling hell," billiard hall, or boarding house, though, every tent was used for accommodation of a crude fashion.

Other uses, including military camps or photographer's tent, were also analyzed, but at this time it appears none of the tents at Promontory on May 10 served these functions. Farmers and ranchers worked nearby but no farmer's or rancher's tent appears in the scene. Railroad workers, undoubtedly, dominated the demand for housing but the appearance in the photographs of work trains with boarding house cars suggests most workers at Promontory Summit found housing in them on May 10.

In summary, the suggested uses are:

- HS-1, Western Union - CP telegraph office
- HS-2, Western Union - CP quarters
- HS-3, CP quarters (reporters' tent)
- HS-4, (housing)
- HS-5, (housing)
- HS-6, Restaurant
- HS-7, (restaurant and/or saloon)
- HS-8, Red Cloud saloon
- HS-9, J. S. Conner grocery
- HS-10, (saloon and/or restaurant)
- HS-11, Wells Fargo & Co office
- HS-12, UP agent and telegrapher's quarters
- HS-13, UP ticket and telegraph office
- HS-14, UP engineer/land speculator's tent
- HS-15, UP construction crew (Casement's)
- HS-16, UP construction crew (Casement's)
- HS-17, (saloon and/or restaurant)

One of the interpretive goals of Golden Spike National Historical Site is to assist the visitor in attaining an empathy with the builders of the transcontinental railroad by showing them the environment of the workers and followers of the railroad. To correct some of the widespread, popular imagery created by the entertainment industry, the most appropriate site to create this environment is the row of tents at Promontory Summit. Not every tent should be replicated, but representative tents should stand near the last spike site.

Earlier National Park Service (NPS) plans have suggested five tents be replicated – the Union Pacific ticket and telegraph office and quarters, the Conner grocery, the Red Cloud Saloon, and the Restaurant, HS-12, HS-13, HS-9, HS-8, and HS-6, respectively. These decisions were based primarily upon historic information on hand at that time. Because of gaps that would be created in the tent-row-as-back-drop, and because of new information, it is recommended that the list be revised. If there is a need to replicate all tents, a suggested phasing of construction is discussed in Section IV of this report.

In the first phase, more appropriate than the UP ticket and telegraph office and quarters tents, HS 12 and HS-13, would be the commercial row on the opposite side of the tracks. The row is best represented with tents adjacent each other and nearest the last spike site, HS-9, HS-17, and HS-10. J. S. Conner's business and the tents east of it can be used for period interpretation, furnishings and displays. Near them should be rolled a replica of photographer Russell's studio wagon. The second phase would recreate the UP ticket and telegraph office and quarters tents, HS-12 and HS-13. The phases are more fully discussed in Section IV, the Historic Furnishing Plan.

Tents of Golden Spike NHS - III Physical Description

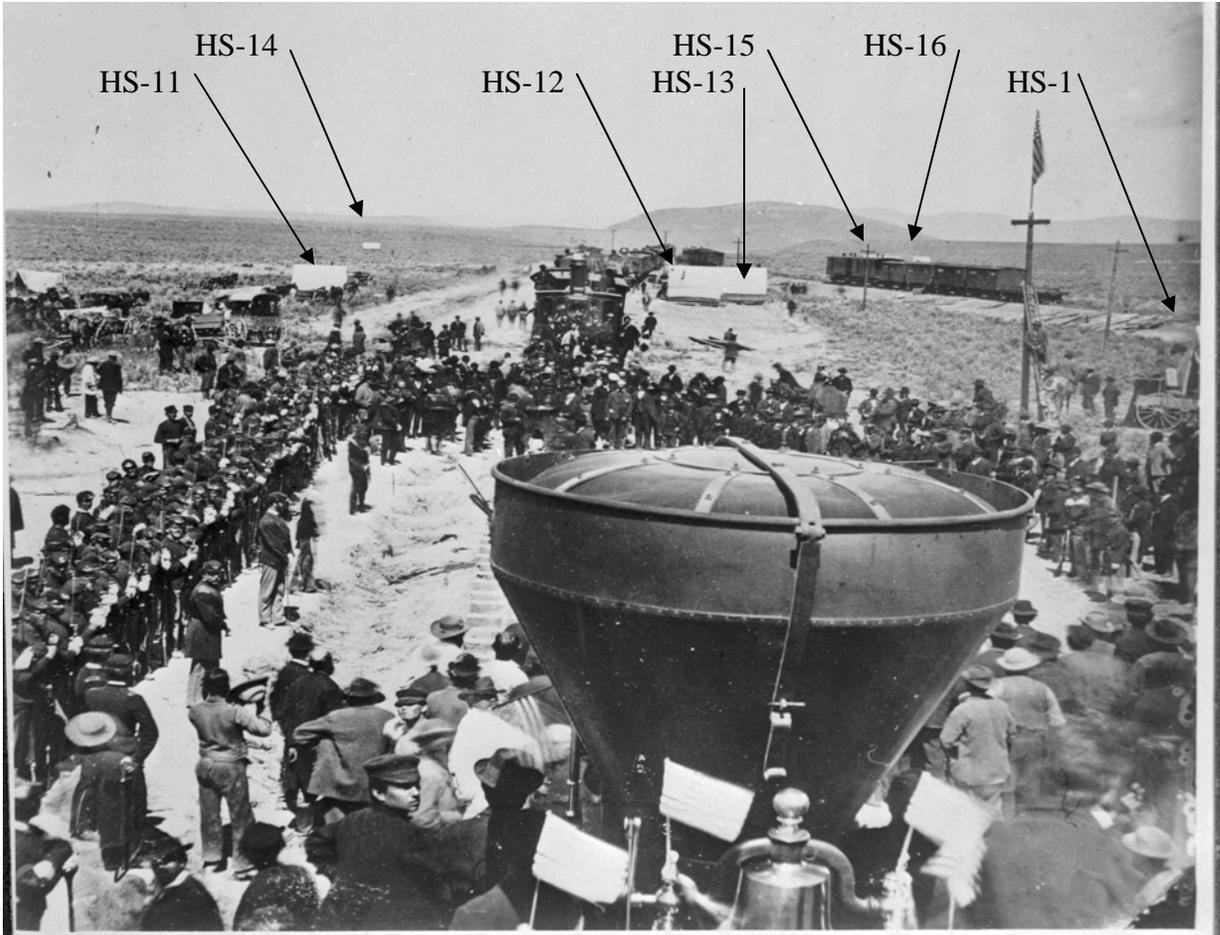


Figure 38. Andrew J. Russell image of the post-last spike ceremony looking northeast. Seven of the seventeen tents are visible.

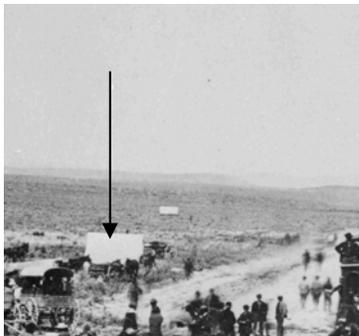


Figure 39. HS-11 stands adjacent the wagon road.

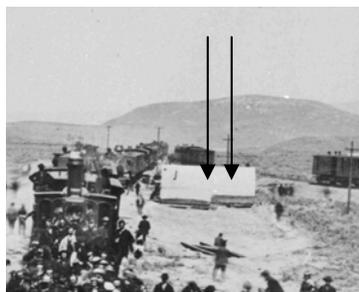


Figure 40. HS-12 and HS-13 Adjacent the tracks.



Figure 41. HS-1 near the telegraph pole

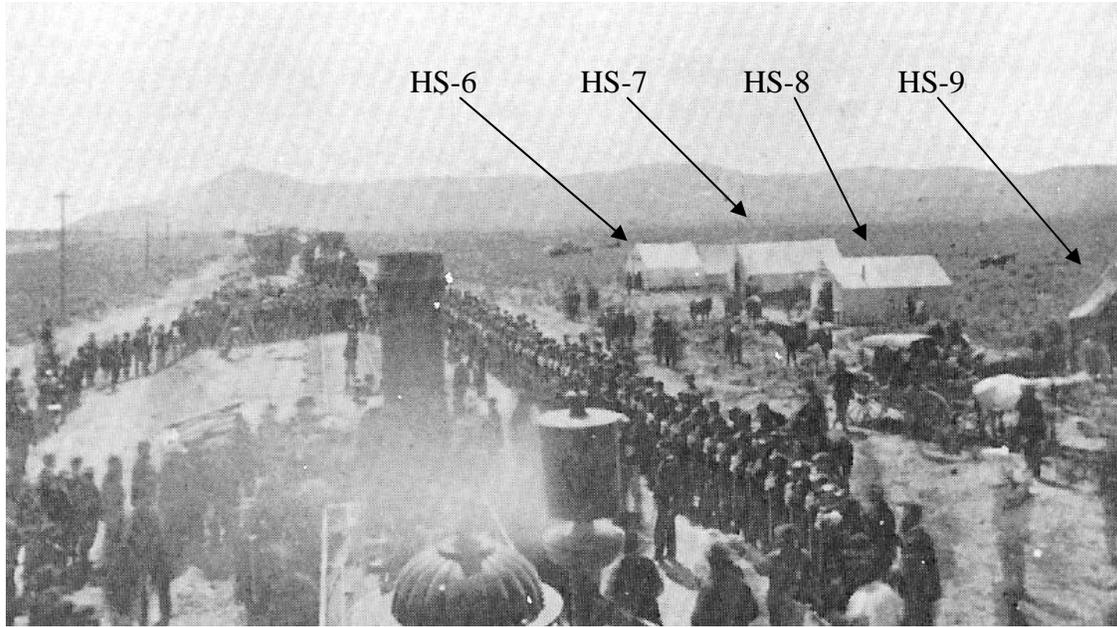


Figure 42. In the A. A. Hart image, “restaurant” can be read above HS-6’s entrance and “Red Cloud” is written on a canvas sign over the doorway of tent HS-8. A striped pole stands at angle at the nearest corner of HS-7. HS-9, J. S. Conner’s tent, stands with flaps wide open. The cluster of wagons and horses in the distance beyond HS-6 is at or near the future site of a CP siding and the Chinese section camp.

Below, Andrew J. Russell’s morning photographs (Figures 43 and 44), prior to the ceremony, show the tents to the south of the last spike site, HS-2, 3, 4 and 5, and northwest, HS-6, 7, and 8.

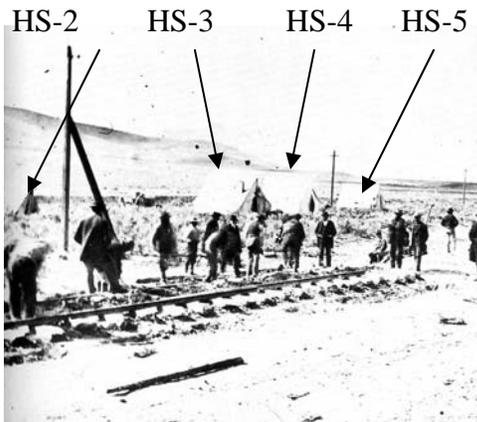


Figure 43. The row south of the CP tracks.

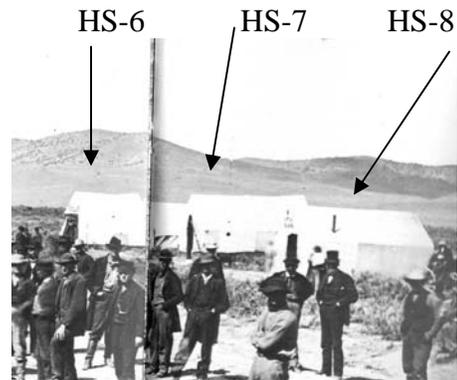


Figure 44. Part of the commercial row.



*Figure 45. Photographer Alfred Hart stood to the southwest of the last spike site and captured the tops of tents HS-9 and HS-17, behind the silhouetted man at right center. The "Conner" sign is visible extending from the front of HS-9. The HS-9 tent has an addition or wing visible here at left. Tent HS-10 is hidden from view by locomotive No. 119 at right.*



*Figure 46. HS-9, the "Conner" tent.*



*Figure 47. HS-17 behind spectators.*



Figure 48. Russell image showing HS-10 and part of Conner's sign behind the Jupiter's headlight. HS-17 is hidden by the crowd at center.

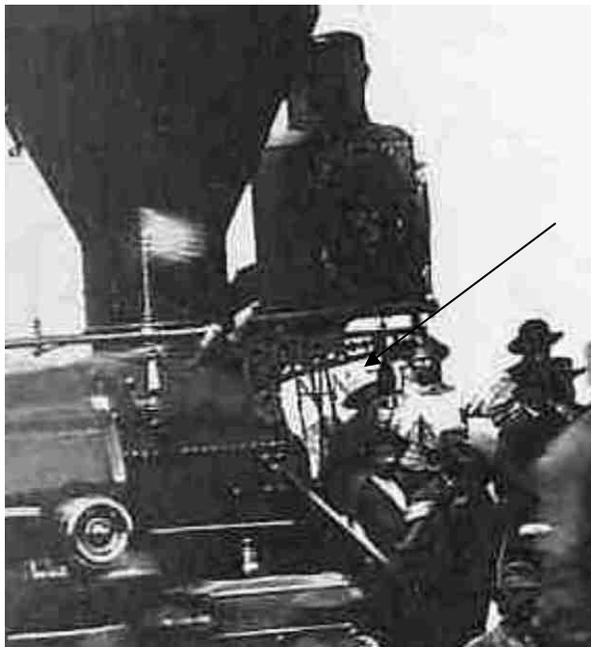


Figure 49 HS-10 behind crowd

Figure 50. "ONNER" of Conner's sign on HS-9 behind "Jupiter's" headlight.



Figure 51. Looking northwest, Alfred Hart's May 7, 1869 photograph of Promontory Summit shows the "Conner" sign for tent HS-9, tents HS-10, HS-11, and HS-17. The photograph is labeled "first greeting" because of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific locomotives' first meeting near the last spike site. Note absence of tents at right.

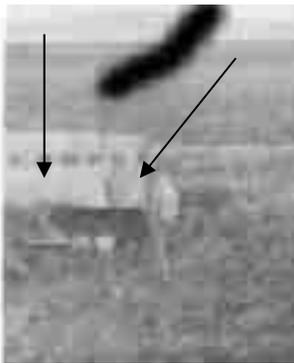


Figure 52. HS-17 and HS-10 up by May 5.

Fig. 53. CP locomotive greets UP No. 66. Note work camp in distance.



## 2) Source Material, Previous NPS Studies, Methodology

Because there are no extant governmental or official records of the events, appearance, or people at Promontory Summit, we must rely on the impressionistic writings of the day, historic photographs, reminiscences, and railroad company records. According to several accounts, over twenty newspapers were represented; we know of four diaries; we have access to the extant papers of the two railroad companies and their officials; and there are many and varied reminiscences, most of which were written long after the event. For example, while railroad officials, such as Grenville M. Dodge and Sydney Dillon, did not notice the tents in their published accounts, information about sleeping arrangements in the tents is most often found in the recollections of old timers who were children at the ceremony.

The Union Pacific railroad collections in various repositories (listed in the bibliography) provide additional source information about the physical appearance of the site. Historic photographs provide physical information, but little about use or occupancy of the sixteen tents. Un-cropped original prints were used if extant. Photographers Andrew J. Russell, Alfred A. Hart, and Charles Savage also provided brief period descriptions of the scene. Published histories of the transcontinental railroad are secondary sources, and were not of value to this study. Unfortunately, none of the many participants that wrote accounts stayed long after the ceremony, which may have provided more opportunity for contact with and thus information about the tents and their occupants.

The occupants of the tents, for the most part, were ignored. None of the photographers focused their cameras on the two rows of tents, on each side of the rail, but kept the last spike site at the center of their lenses. All the above sources, including county and state records, period business records, census data, tax records, and museum collections were reviewed for this study. A more thorough review of period newspapers was undertaken as part of this effort. The passing comments of observers, which, when combined with the photographs and other records, provide clues that allow us to come to some relatively useful conclusions.

### *Previous NPS Studies*

Previous NPS studies were consulted. These included: F. A. Ketterson's early work and "Historical Base Map," the 1974 tent village plan, Paul Hedren "Tent Study," 1978, and the Boyce "File Report," 1980, copies of which were used at the park. The staff at Golden Spike National Historic Site has prepared several brief studies on the tents of Promontory as well – on saloons, the telegraph office, ticket office, boarding houses, etc. Andy Ketterson did not include details about the tents in his 1969 study. The 1974 tent village plan was not of value to this study. In 1978, supervisory ranger Paul Hedren prepared a brief analysis of the tents based on the historic photographs. He created a numeric system and listing of possible historic uses. Park technician Benjamin Boyce, under Hedren's guidance, prepared a supplemental analysis of several tents's dimensions. Their numbering system, list of uses, and dimensions follows:

### Hedren, 1978, Tent Numbers and Descriptions

HS-1, unknown,  
HS-2, unknown,  
HS-3, unknown,  
HS-4, unknown,  
HS-5, unknown,  
HS-6, "Restaurant," 15' x 18'-20' wall tent 12' high  
HS6a, Rear of "Restaurant," 12'-13' x 12'-15' with 9' height  
HS-7, unknown, 15' x 24' wall tent 14' high  
HS-8, "Red Cloud" bar, 15' x 22' wall tent 12' high.  
HS-9, "S. Conner" (use unknown)  
HS-9a, Tent perpendicular to "S. Conner"  
HS-10, unknown,  
HS-11, unknown,  
HS-12, railroad establishments (ticket office and telegraph office), 12-15' x 15' wall tent 12' high  
HS-13, railroad establishments (ticket office and telegraph office), 15' x 26-28' wall tent 14' high  
HS-14, unknown,  
HS-15, unknown,  
HS-16, unknown,

For consistency, Hedren's numbering system will be used in this study. Inaccuracies in his report have been revised in the following.

Also reviewed were park staff reports contained descriptions of businesses of the period based on comparative research. Reports on the "Red Cloud Saloon," the "Restaurant," and other activities were too generalized or use descriptions of businesses far larger than the ones at Promontory, May 10, to be useful here.

Various park planning efforts, 1997-2000, recommended that at least the tents numbered HS-6, HS-8, HS-9, HS-12, and HS-13, be considered for replication and installation in the historic last spike site after collection of additional historic data. As noted elsewhere this list should be revised. These planning documents added no new historic information.

#### *Park Research Files*

This study benefited from the park's library, which has an extensive file of research materials. Included are previous park studies, research materials collected by staff over the past four decades, and notes taken from various sources placed in binders. Reports prepared for the publicity department of the Union Pacific Railroad, 1949, and a background research report for Cecil B. DeMille's movie "Union Pacific," which were used for the 1974 "Promontory Tent Village" plan, are also in the library.

The park library contains copies of historic photographs and copies of original documents copied from various libraries. These were of great help and have been cited as coming from “GOSP files.” The photographs, actually 4 x 5 negatives which the park allowed to be scanned for this project, were of primary importance to this study. Unfortunately, in reproducing the images for use in this report, some of the photographic detail has been lost, such as lettering on the tents’ signs.

The park files also included scattered newspaper transcripts that gave anecdotal descriptions of the tent row at Promontory Summit, May 10. These news dispatches, well known and often quoted, are as follows:

*“The town consists of a few tents, the ticket-houses of both companies, their telegraph offices, hordes of grass hoppers, and swarms of sand fleas.”*  
*Chronicle, San Francisco, May 11, 1869*

*“The place consists of seventeen tents, half of which have been put up since my arrival.”*  
*Daily Bee, Sacramento, May 13, 1869*

*“Fourteen tent houses for the sale of ‘Red Cloud,’ ‘Red Jacket,’ and Blue Run’ are about evenly distributed on each side of the track.”*  
*Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly, June 5, 69, 1869*

*“Promontory Summit...two or three tents were pitched in the vicinity for the rendezvous of those ruffians who hang about on the march of industry, and flourish on the vices of men.”*  
Dr. J. D. B. Stillman, “The Last Tie,” *Overland Monthly*, July 1869.

These quotes exemplify the apparently conflicting information in contemporary published accounts; were there 14 or 17 tents? They also give stereotyped, “Hell on Wheels” rhetoric, probably inserted by editors in California or New York. Were they all “saloons” and places that flourish on the vices of men? During the course of this project a host of new sources were found that suggest answers to the questions: how many tents, what did they look like, and how were they used and furnished.

### **3) How Many Tents?**

Historic photographs aid in establishing the number of tents at Promontory Summit on May 10, 1869. Alfred Hart, Andrew Russell, and Charles Savage, cumulatively, took photographs from each angle, providing a 360 degree look at the site with the Last Spike Site at center. We also have period descriptions that provide numbers as well. Combining the two sources provides a useable list.

Paul Hedren produced the initial 1978 list of the number of tents, incorrectly finding only sixteen tents. He methodically reviewed the historic photographs and developed a list of sixteen, HS-1 to HS-16, shown above. Following his process, the tents he identifies, HS-1 to HS-16, can still be identified. However, period descriptions that mention 14 or 17

tents do not agree with his number of 16, nor does a closer review of historic photographs.

Taking the descriptions and photographs into consideration, there is one additional tent in the May 10 scene, thus there are 17 tents, not 16.

In his discussion, Hedren mentions a tent, next to HS-10, in an Alfred Hart photograph of May 7. Hedren suggests it was moved before May 10. He also estimates that HS-10, located north of the last spike site, was moved further east away from the “Conner” sign sometime after the Hart stereo view captioned “First greeting of iron horse, Promontory, May 9, 1869” was taken (see appendix C on this photograph). Reviewing the images, the movement of the tents doesn’t appear to be the case, but is a result of the perspective of the Hart photograph (see appendix D for further discussion). For our discussions here, the additional tent will be referred to as HS-17.

Looking closely at a print from Hart’s glass plate negative it shows, just beyond the “Conner” sign, two – not one -- wall tents, HS-10 plus another. The “Conner” sign is in line with the last spike pennon, noted in a newspaper article. A newspaper reporter noted on May 7<sup>th</sup> that the tents opposite the last spike site were the location of recent muggings, suggesting a number of tents.

Dr. J. D. B. Stillman described Promontory of May 7 as including “two or three” tents that catered to the vices of men besides railroad company offices. This would have been the Conner tent, HS-9 and HS-10, and the additional tent, HS-17. Unfortunately, his article appeared in the magazine *Overland Monthly* in July 1869, so may lack an immediate accuracy of observation.

O’Leary of the *Daily Bee* also arrived on May 7<sup>th</sup> and noted that by May 10 there were 17 tents, half of them being built since his arrival. O’Leary was in Promontory for the period May 7 - 10 and his accounts in the Sacramento newspaper provide believable details. O’Leary had the time to look around him the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> and his count of all the tents, 17, appear in the photographs of the day. O’Leary’s 17 tents would include the two not one opposite the last spike site (HS-10 and HS-17).

Similarly, the writer of the article for *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly* counted 14 tents lined up equally along the tracks. Photographer Andrew J. Russell is the purported author of the article and, though he may have been busy, his number of 14 appears to be accurate, if one excludes the three tents far distant from the last spike site (HS-14, HS-15, HS-16).

One last observer, Charles Savage, counted half a dozen tents and “rum holes” at Promontory the night of the 9<sup>th</sup>. The number of tents in the row, from HS-6 to HS-10, if one includes the additional tent in the Hart image, HS-17, would equal six. This business row of six north of the tracks excludes HS-11, the stage coach office further east, which will be discussed separately.

In summary, neither HS-10 nor HS-17 were relocated -- their owners had prime spots opposite the last spike site. Photographs taken May 10 show one or the other, but not both, because the crowd obscures the photographer's (and our) view of them both at the same time. Taking the photographs and the at one time considered confusing contemporary numbers count, the number of tents at Promontory Summit on May 10, 1869 was 17, fourteen of which stood in two rows along the track at the last spike site.

#### **4) What Size?**

Tents of the period were influenced by Civil War era designs, shapes and sizes. In the images of May 10 are the classic tents used in the military campaigns, the A or Wedge tent, wall tent, and the larger wall or "Hospital" tent. The A or Wedge tent took its name from its overall shape and was a common field tent. Quartermaster guidelines described the canvas tent with single 6' to 8' ridge pole and two 6' to 8' support poles. Although they are seen in photographs of the Central Pacific Railroad construction camps to the west, only one A tent appears in the photographs of Promontory, May 10. HS-2, Central Pacific quarters, is south of and near the last spike site.

The Civil War era wall tents had canvas walls of various heights and were used as officer's quarters. During the war, field hospitals were large, framed wall tents with high side walls. Inside were rows of beds and a center aisle; a design easily converted to frontier boarding house use. The tents could be any length, often doubled in size or more by two tents abutting each other, ripping the center seams and rolling back the flaps. Wall tents were the same design, with canvas side wall, but smaller. Period descriptions and reminiscences along the railroad mention wall tents and "hospital" tents most often. All tents could be made taller by the addition of side boards, placing the canvas tent on top of the wooden partial walls. These tent types predominate in the Promontory historic scene, May 10.

Civil War era "Sutler" tents provided dry goods, tobacco, and, rarely, alcohol for soldiers. The Sutler business was well prescribed by the military, but it was a common trading post-like business that easily adapted to the tent towns along the railroad. Civil War era Sutler type tents could have easily been seen along the Union Pacific tracks.

Period records of the Union Pacific Railroad and those of the Casement brothers at the Nebraska Historical Society and the Central Pacific Railroad invoices at the California State Railroad Museum include the purchase of wall tents. There was no standard size, though military precedents were followed: 10 x 16, 12 x 14, 14 x 14, and 14 x 16, for example. The company records do not list the size of tents used at Promontory. However, the Union Pacific ticket office and quarters, HS-1 and HS-2, appear to meet the general size of other tents in photographs taken along the line, especially those at UP headquarters at Echo City, Utah. The same can be said for the Central Pacific tents.

Business records for Promontory businesses have not been found. The diary of Edward Watson, copy at the University of Wyoming, who had a cigar and stationary store at Junction City, another canvas camp on the Promontory, describes his tents. In February,

he had for his business a 16 x 20 wall tent, cost \$95. He bought \$150 worth of lumber (600') to frame it and add sides. Nails cost 75 cents per pound. He had it up within two days. He also had a 14 x 14 wall tent with stove and bed, but loaned that to a sick friend. He sold his tent to Ben Danforth, who continued the business. The size of Watson's 16 x 20 tent is near the estimated size of the larger tents at Promontory, May 10.

Period advertisements add support to the use of the A and wall tents, the nearest dealer being in Corinne, Utah. Most of these dealers were buying second hand tents from construction firms. The appearance of the tents along Promontory's commercial row, with their different colored or discolored sections of canvas, suggests that they were second hand. Watson bought his at Wasatch, a construction camp up the Union Pacific grade.

Park technician Benjamin Boyce's estimate on size of tents should be revised to match military standards and the rule of twos. Lumber for framing and canvas tents were sold in widths and lengths that can be divided by two (still a common practice). Though special orders could be filled with odd sizes, widths and lengths, the additional cost negated any value or rationale for not buying standard issue.

Using the same methods of measurement as Boyce, plus architectural perspective practices and the period description of tent standards, the dimensions of the tents at Promontory can be revised (see Table 1). The list of tents, their dimensions, and their use will be described in the following subsection.

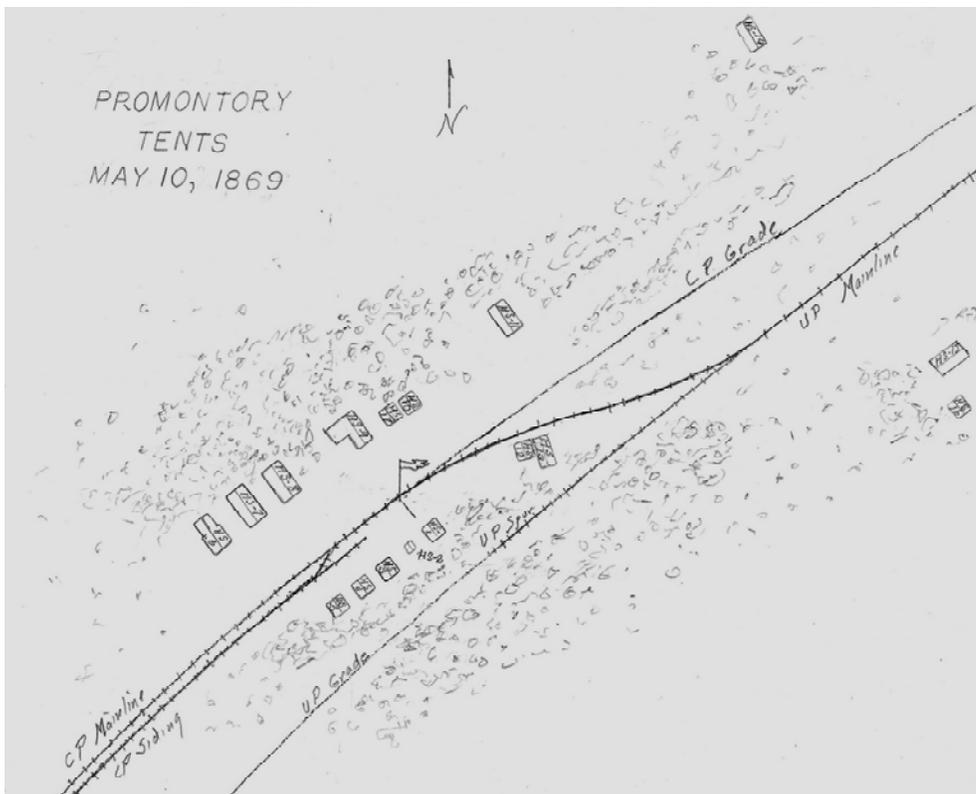


Figure 54. Tent layout as suggested by photographs. Note: track curves and distances exaggerated

Tents of Golden Spike NHS - III Physical Description

<b>Tent Number</b>	<b>Size/Description</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Sources</b>
HS-1	14x14 wall tent	Central Pacific – Western U telegraph office	Central Pacific RR	Russell photograph; Newspaper accounts
HS-2	8x8 “A” tent	Central Pacific – Western U workers bunk tent	Central Pacific Railroad	ditto
HS-3	14x14 wall tent	Bunk house	Possibly CP RR	Ditto, Gambell reminiscence
HS-4	14x14 wall tent	Bunk house	Possibly CP RR	Ditto
HS-5	14x14 wall tent	Bunk house	Possibly CP RR	Ditto
HS-6	16x24 two part hospital tent 14x14 back	Restaurant	Unknown	Hart and Russell photos
HS-7	16x24 hospital tent/high side wall tent	Multiple: possible saloon, restaurant and barber	Unknown	Hart and Russell photos
HS-8	16x22 hospital tent	Red Cloud saloon	Unknown	Hart and Russell photos
HS-9	16x22 hospital tent with 14x14 wall tent wing	Conner “Grocery”	Conner	ditto
HS-10	14x14	Saloon/rest.	Unknown	ditto
HS-11	14x20	Stage office	Wells Fargo	ditto
HS-12	14x14	Quarters	UP RR	ditto
HS-13	14x28	Ticket & Tele. Office	UP RR	ditto
HS-14	14x24	UP engineers		ditto
HS-15	14x24	Const. camp	Casement	ditto
HS-16	14x14	Const. camp	Casement	ditto
HS-17	14x14	Saloon/rest.	Unknown	ditto

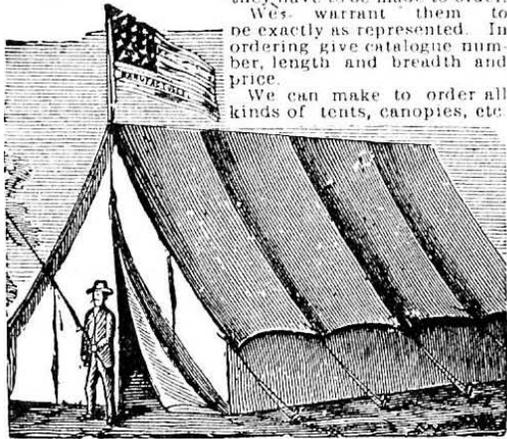
Table 1: The Tents of Promontory Summit, May 10, 1869.

Tents of Golden Spike NHS - III Physical Description

these pegs.

**Wall Tents.**

We can furnish tents in large or small quantities on short notice generally. Our tents are the best quality; they are *all full size* and all have a *good "pitch"* to roof, to turn rain, and all made in a durable and substantial manner. Prices in lots of 5 or more furnished on application. Tents will not be sent C. O. D., as they have to be made to order.



Wall Tent No. 49215

**Wall Tents.**

Weights without poles, 7x7, 30 lbs.; 9½x12, 40 to 50 lbs.; 14x16, 66 to 76 lbs.; 16x24, 120 to 130 lbs.; 18x32, 147 to 160 lbs. Ridge poles weigh 22 ounces to the foot. Upright poles, 14 oz. to the foot. Pins weigh ¼ to ⅓ pounds each. All of our 12 ounce duck tents are double filling, best quality.

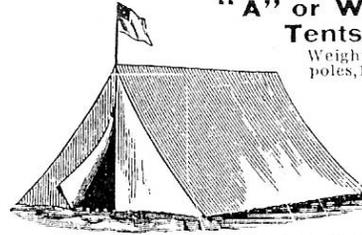
No.	Length and Breadth Feet	Height Wall Feet	Height Pole Feet	Price with Poles, Pins, Guys, etc. Complete ready to set up		
				8 oz. Duck.	10 oz. Duck.	12 oz. Duck.
Order 49215	7 x 7	3	7	\$3.70	\$4.30	\$5.80
	7 x 9	3	7	4.35	5.10	6.70
	9 x 9	3	7½	5.05	5.90	7.50
	9½ x 12	3	7½	5.95	6.95	9.20
	9½ x 14	3	7½	6.75	7.85	10.40
	12 x 12	3½	8	7.05	8.25	10.90
	12 x 14	3½	8	7.95	9.30	12.35
	12 x 16	3½	8	8.85	10.30	13.75
	12 x 18	3½	8	9.80	11.45	15.05
	14 x 14	4	9	9.45	11.10	14.75
	14 x 16	4	9	10.45	12.25	16.30
	14 x 18	4	9	11.65	13.70	18.15
	14 x 20	4	9	12.95	15.05	19.70
	14 x 24	4	9	14.60	17.00	22.10
	16 x 16	5	11	12.95	15.25	20.25
	16 x 18	5	11	14.25	16.65	22.60
	16 x 20	5	11	15.70	18.30	23.95
	16 x 24	5	11	17.85	20.80	27.15
	16 x 30	5	11	21.62	26.00	32.00
	16 x 35	5	11	24.20	28.25	36.90
	18 x 18	5	11	16.30	19.45	25.40
	18 x 20	5	11	17.95	20.95	27.45
	18 x 24	5	11	20.05	23.40	30.60
	18 x 30	5	11	24.00	28.00	36.75
	18 x 35	5	11	26.95	31.20	41.55

cents. Each.....\$0.70

**TENTS.**

SPECIAL NOTE.—If you are interested in other styles of tents not listed in this catalogue, we invite your correspondence. Quotations given on applications and at bottom prices. We can meet your expectation.

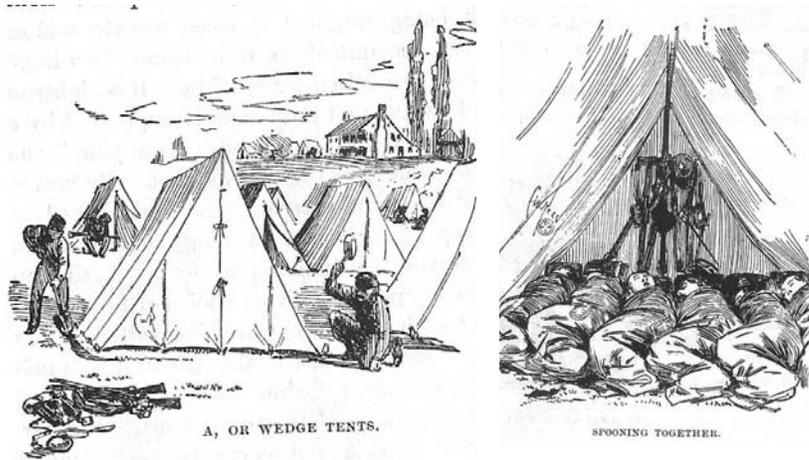
**"A" or Wedge Tents.**



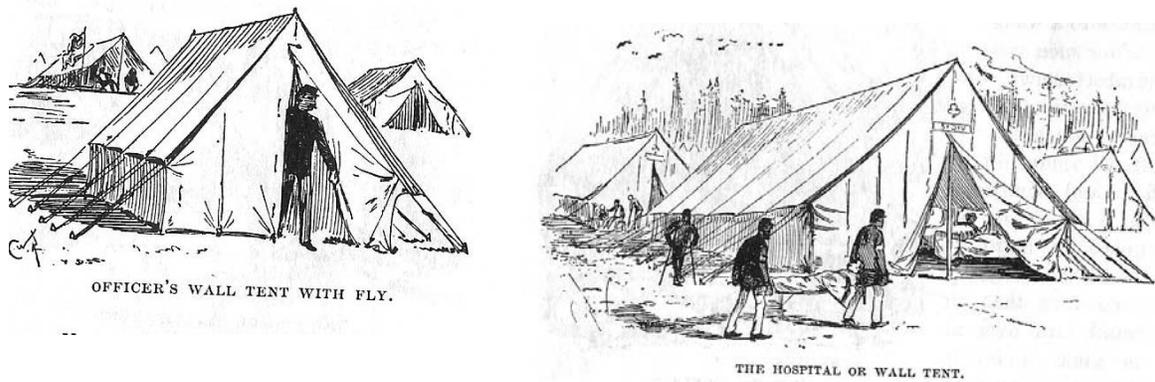
Weight without poles, 18 to 40 lbs.; weight of poles, 14 ounces to the foot in length.

Order No.	Length and Breadth, Feet.	Height, Feet.	Price 8 oz. Duck.	Price 10 oz. Duck.	Price 12 oz. Duck.
49190	7x7 ft.	7 ft.	\$2.90	\$3.40	\$4.50
	7x9 ft.	7 ft.	3.50	4.10	5.40
	9x9 ft.	7 ft.	3.85	4.55	6.00
	9½x12 ft.	7½ ft.	4.75	5.60	7.40
	12x14 ft.	9 ft.	6.80	8.00	10.70

Figures 55, 56. Nineteenth century tent advertisements for wall tents and "A" tent. These advertisements appeared in the 1890s Montgomery Wards catalogue and the Sears, Roebuck & Co. catalogues, though they are of earlier vintage design.



*Figures 57, 58, 59, 60. Often reprinted sketches of Civil War era tents suggests similar use as quarters at Promontory and elsewhere in the West during the 1860s. Along the railroad they were also used to temporarily house businesses and company offices. From John Billings, Hard Tack and Coffee (Boston: G. M. Smith, 1888).*



## 5) History and Use of the Tents, HS-1 to HS-17, at Promontory, May 10

### *HS-1, HS-2: Central Pacific Railroad and Western Union telegraph office and quarters tent*

Visible in images of the last spike site, nearest the Central Pacific Railroad's last telegraph pole, are tents HS-1 and HS-2. Dr. Stillman on the Stanford Special train wrote, "the telegraph operators at the end of the respective lines were then within a few rods of each other." The UP ticket and telegraph office, HS-12, is the first tent up the track about five rods from HS-1. Other observers noted the office – some writers call it the CP ticket office – at the end of the CP track. HS-1 would have served as ticket and telegraph office, while the "A" frame smaller tent, HS-2, would have been quarters. Working in concert with the CP and UP, the Western Union had a crew of telegraphers at the ceremony. They would have been at the Last Spike Site, working in and around these tents.

Besides the tent telegraph office, the CP used one of the box cars in Strobridge's work train as ticket and telegraph office. Telegrapher Louis Jacobs was in this "outfit car," according to CP telegraph foreman Amos Bowsher.

The agent in charge at Promontory was J. C. Hildreth. The terminus, of course, was supposed to be at Ogden, according to the April 9 agreement between Dodge and Huntington. With the decision by the UP not to give up the line, Ogden to Promontory, the CP was neither ready, nor desirous of putting buildings at Promontory. That the CP was not planning to stay and was ready to move with short notice is seen in the difference between the basic tents put up by the CP and the UP, which had tents with wood frames, side walls, and wooden platform. Leland Stanford's failure to reach agreement, again, with UP officials that day forced the CP to unwillingly build its terminus at Promontory Summit.

The telegraph operator at Promontory was Louis Jacobs. F. S. Vandenberg, superintendent of the CP telegraph line, arrived at Promontory in early May with a number of telegraphers from along the line, J. N. Stewart, R. F. Pixley, and John Curran. James Gambell of the Western Union, San Francisco office was with them as was Ed Conway, Western Union based in Corinne. They were at Promontory early on May 10, working in concert to send the news nationally by telegraph. HS-1 and HS-2 were probably crowded the night of the 9<sup>th</sup>, with overflow, possibly, in tents down the line to the southwest (HS-3, HS-4, and HS-5).

Amos Bowsher, foreman on CP telegraph construction based with Strobridge's construction train at Victory, later recalled how his CP crew connected the wires from the CP telegraph and UP telegraph lines to the last spike. His crew would have connected the wires to battery storage equipment in HS-1 or in the outfit car, the CP ticket and telegraph office, as well as to the telegraph in Strobridge's construction train moved up from Victory. They would have ensured that the battery was well charged. A special portable key and relay on a table were used outside near the last spike site. The CP

telegraph system would have been busy with news dispatches and ceremony tasks on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

A wagon visible in front of HS-1 has an odd shaped box in its bed. The box may have held the portable telegraph equipment and other equipment used by the Western Union - CP telegraph crews.

The CP invoices at California State Railroad Museum for the period list items purchased by the company including furniture, telegraph equipment, and tents. Telegraph keys and relays were purchased from the firm of Lundberg & Marwedel, San Francisco. Period photographs of tents elsewhere along the line taken by Alfred A. Hart show similar office wall tents used by the CP. The interiors included beds, table, and chair or two and the agent's ticket box and the telegrapher's equipment. "A" frame sleeping quarters were rare, bare ground covered with tarp used for field situations, quickly moved or replaced.

The CP – Western Union telegraph office tent and the quarters, wall tent HS-1 and "A" frame tent HS-2, would have been in the middle of events, May 10.

### *HS-3: CP quarters (Reporters Tent)*

A surprising number of reporters descended on Promontory for the driving of the last spike ceremony. Since the event was initially scheduled for May 8, several California newspapers sent field journalists to the "front" early. With the postponement of the ceremony until May 10, they stayed in the vicinity.

The San Francisco *Chronicle* unnamed reporter, who arrived by the initial date of the ceremony, sent a series of reports datelined from Promontory indicating he stayed there the 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>. Similarly, T. O'Leary of the Sacramento *Bee* arrived early and sent dispatches from Promontory those days. A reporter from the San Francisco *Bulletin* and Virginia City, Nevada *Enterprise* were there early.

The reporter for the *Enterprise* noted the telegraphers putting up a flag on the telegraph pole at the last spike site at 7 a.m. on May 10. The reporter undoubtedly slept nearby. The reporter for the *Chronicle* has the most dispatches from Promontory itself, and undoubtedly stayed in one of its tents. Unlike other news reports that include nothing more than the ceremony, O'Leary of the *Bee* and the *Chronicle* reporter included details about local residents. He related several tall tales about Dead Fall, adding to its notoriety. The *Chronicle* reporter noted that "those who have put up restaurants and saloons here plan to stay," indicating his taking time to interview one or two people.

The Central Pacific Railroad gave special attention to the *Alta California* of San Francisco. Editor Frederick MacRellish rode in Stanford's Special train to the ceremony. The *Alta California* also had a reporter, signed as "Evan," sent earlier from White Pine, Nevada to follow the CP crews building the last few miles. Evan was probably Albert S. Evans, reporter for the *Alta* who also published in February 1869 *Overland Monthly* a description of CP construction. He stayed with Strobridge then, and it is evident from his dispatches that he stayed with superintendent of construction Strobridge at Victory in his

camp cars and moved with them to Promontory. At least one newspaper was critical of this favoritism given the *Alta California*.

The numbers of reporters on the scene greatly increased with the arrival of UP and CP trains the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup>. Reporters or correspondents for the *Cheyenne Leader*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *New York Times* were on UP trains that arrived that morning. The only journalists that arrived early from the east were A. T. Drake of the soon to fold *Cheyenne Argus* and Fred K. Freeman of the defunct *Frontier Index*, both looking for a new home.

The initiation point (Promontory) of their dispatches by wire, the number of reporters (too many to fit in the Stanford Special), and the length of their stay at Promontory suggests that several reporters stayed at Promontory Summit at least a night or two. The question is where did they stay?

The only reporter to mention any lodgings is W. W. Foote of the *Omaha Herald*. In a May 12 wire from Promontory he mentions a 30 x 70 boarding house recently put up. Since none of the tents in the photographs of May 10 are that size, the tent probably arrived post-May 10. Conversely, a traveler who arrived in Promontory May 9 did not stay for the May 10 celebration because there was no place to stay.

Several reporters thanked the kindness of the Central Pacific Railroad, obviously for the free passes, possibly for more. The tents used by the Central Pacific telegraphers, HS-1 and HS-2, mentioned in newspaper accounts, suggest that the reporters slept, ate and worked in a tent south of the tracks, possibly in HS-3, one of the row of unmarked wall tents near the telegraphers and the last spike site. The impromptu use of the UP ticket office for the night of the 9<sup>th</sup> by photographer Savage, as noted in his diary, indicates that the companies provided limited housing for guests. A contractor's or CP company boarding house, possibly HS-3, would have become an impromptu field news center and reporter's tent.

#### *HS-4, HS-5: Housing Tents*

The tents identified by Hedren as HS-4, HS-5, HS-7, and HS-10 are of two different types. The tents HS-7 and HS-10 are more substantial and are located among the row of other businesses north of the tracks. Although they lack signs, their location and scale suggest they were built to house businesses to serve workers and travelers. O'Leary of the *Bee* reported "restaurants and saloons" in the town, a category which either of these tents may have fit.

The one comment that seven tent saloons lined each side of the CP tracks, that in *Leslie's*, has to be questioned. The purported author, photographer Andrew Russell, was too busy taking photographs that day to gather detailed information and the sentence smacks too much of a journalistic *mot*, made by editors back in New York City, rather than accurate reporting. The diary entry of photographer Charles Savage may have been more accurate in his description since it reflects the scene in photographs: "Promontory Point

[sic.] consists of ½ doz. Tents and Rum holes” – six tents, HS-6 to HS-11 (including HS-17), in a row north of the tracks, made up the town, the rest were company or contractor’s tents. The comment about rum was unnecessary since every tent probably had a celebratory bottle of rum (or other liquor), including Savage’s Mormon party, which “cracked champagne” on the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup> back in Ogden.

The tents south of the tracks, HS-4 and HS-5 described above, southwest of the CP ticket office are wall tents but of smaller scale and design. They appear less business-like. There are only flaps, not frame doorways. There are no boarded sides raising the ceilings, and they lack cleared paths, signs, or hitching rails.

A number of reminiscences suggest that they may have served as CP company tents or contractor’s housing. Years later, Anna Gamble recalled that as a child she slept in a tent at Promontory. Her father remained up all night as guard. Some suggest, if she recalled correctly sleeping in a large circular tent, then she was not at Promontory since there are none in the historic photographs. However, a tent with sagging sides may have seemed, to a child, circular, which may have been the case if she was in Promontory. Having someone stand guard would have been wise. If James Gamble of the Western Union and family stayed at Promontory, then, most likely, they were near the telegraphers on the south side of the CP tracks, possibly in HS-4 or HS-5.

Taking into account the limited information at hand, the tents HS-7 and HS-10 were most likely restaurants or saloons. Those south of the CP tracks, HS-4 and HS-5, were probably used for quarters, possibly by the CP company or a contractor.

#### *HS-6, Restaurant Tent*

In the Russell photos the last tent in the row southwest of the Conner and the Red Cloud saloons is a tent with the word “restaurant” stenciled on a canvas sign across its front. The tent restaurant is made up of two sections, the front tent being larger than the rear. It probably had tables in front, and kitchen in the rear tent. It has a frame doorway as well.

Period descriptions of restaurants at Promontory post-date May 10. Traveler Humason mentions one of the passengers looking for a meal on May 11. He is offered plover, a native bird. Plover is mentioned a number of places as a local meal, including the May 9 supper aboard the Stanford special. A reporter for the Omaha *Herald* noted an excellent meal available on May 12 of eggs, beefsteak and fresh strawberries from California. Diarists do not mention details of meals, although on June 30, W. H. Jackson noted he had a “hearty supper” at the New England boarding house in Promontory.

Construction era descriptions of restaurants are found in a number of sources. Alexander Toponce, who supplied beef to the railroads at Promontory, operated a tent restaurant along the UP. He hired a husband and wife to run the place, which had a dining room in front and a rear tent for cooking and as living quarters. Mollie Sheehan recalled her father going to work as a grader for the railroad near Corinne, while she and her mother operated a restaurant. She recalled, “I hated waiting on tables. I begged my stepmother

to let me stay out of sight back of the canvas partition and do the cooking and dishwashing.” Period newspapers describe similar restaurants as the one at Promontory. At Hot Springs, for example, another husband and wife team operated a tent restaurant. They had fresh produce and meats from the Salt Lake Valley.

Water was an expensive item at Promontory. Water was hauled in barrels by wagon from springs six miles distant. According to one source, restaurants paid \$2 for each barrel of water.

Period newspapers include advertisements for the sale of businesses. Two structures at Wasatch were for sale in April, the California Restaurant, 22 x 60, and the UP Boarding house, 22 x 50, ready to move (“made portable”), which suggests the mobility of businesses. The restaurant at Promontory was smaller than these structures, but tents of that size appeared shortly thereafter in Promontory City’s row.

In the Box Elder County deed records, Brigham City, Utah, is a mortgage inventory of a restaurant, the City Bakery in Corinne, which provides example period furnishings:

Two coffee pots  
One *ou* set pot  
4 candle sticks  
2 dippers  
3 stew pans  
1 frying pan  
3 milk pots  
2 kitchen spoons  
2 strainers  
15 cake pans  
1 castor  
1 dinner pail  
1 stove  
8 joints of [stove] pipe  
1 wood saw  
1 meat saw  
1 cork screw  
1 show case  
shelves  
1 waste dish  
3 butcher knives  
1 oil stone  
2 table stools  
1 scales  
5 table cloths  
24 pie plates  
4 buckets  
China and Queens ware  
Knives, forks, spoons

Some of these items were used primarily for the bakery, the remainder for restaurant. The list also includes lumber for bunks to build a boarding house. The restaurant at Promontory may have doubled as a boarding house with, at first, minimal amenities.

Unlike the other businesses of May 10, the use of HS-6 is easiest to define, another track side restaurant serving the travelers and workers at Promontory Summit.

*HS-7: Restaurant or Saloon Tent*

See discussion under HS-4 and HS-6. A striped pole leaning from the front of the tent suggests a barber inside. Because of the size, the tent may have had multiple uses. One period traveler took his meals in a tent boarding house with a barber chair in the corner.

*HS-8: "Red Cloud" Saloon Tent*

In the photographs by Russell and by Hart can be seen, southwest of Conner's tent, a wall tent with "Red Cloud" stenciled on a canvas sign, probably in red, and placed over the frame doorway. It has a built frame doorway, common in businesses in the tent towns along the railroad. The tent appears to be recently placed with vegetation cleared only for its base and on the trail crossing in front of the tent row. A hitching post is in front.

Red Cloud was a popular whiskey marketed by the firm of Taylor & Wright, River Street, Chicago. Although labeled "Red Cloud Stomach Bitters," it was less a bitters than a red whiskey named after the Sioux warrior. The company had other labels, best known being Red Jacket Bitters (whiskey) also mentioned in period newspapers. Archeologists have found numbers of the Red Jacket bitters bottles at the park. The firm also sold Blue Run.

The *Utah Daily Reporter* gives the following prices for whiskey, gin and Valley Tan in May;

*Market Report:*

whiskey, states, @ gal .....\$4.75 @ 10.00  
valley tan @ gal .....\$5.50  
gin, @ gal... .....\$6.00 @ 8.00

The Union Pacific Brewery near Ogden sold porter and ale by the keg.

The cheaper spirit, "Valley Tan" was a poor whiskey made in the Salt Lake valley. Alexander Topance's reminiscence mentions it being drunk at Promontory, May 10.

The *Leslie's* reporter mentions the sale of 'Red Cloud,' 'Red Jacket,' and Blue Run,' whiskey and gin, sold in Promontory's saloon. Historic photographs and analysis of other evidence suggests that the row of saloons was located only on the northwest side of the tracks. The Red Cloud saloon would have been in the middle of the row, and one of only three or four standing that day.

The Red Cloud saloon's owner may have been part of the migration from Junction City and Dead Fall. Diarist Watson, who arrived ten days later, mentions several people that shifted, but not by business name. The Red Cloud saloon would have served the workers, travelers, and celebrants at Promontory.

*HS-9: J. S. Conner Grocery Tent*

In the left of Alfred Hart's image of the Promontory, May 7, is the wall tent and sign of "[J.] S. Conner." The tent appears to be opposite the end of track, and closest to the last spike site. This is an opportune business location and evidence of early arrival to the summit. Period newspaper accounts of May 10 make no mention of an S. Conner at Promontory, nor any other business person that day. Nearby, however, was the tent city of Junction City founded the previous January by people who had followed the railroad and hoped that they would be at the point where the railroads joined. Newspapers mention several businesses including that of J. S. Conner, Will Riley, and Watson & Company.

Located in the Blue Creek valley seven miles west, Junction City residents would have been among the first to hear the news of the lines' proposed meeting at Promontory Summit, which was telegraphed to workers April 11. Conner, like Will Riley, operated "groceries." Ed Watson and Ben Davenport operated a cigar and notions store, and, more importantly, Watson kept a diary. Watson's diary describes the business practices of a construction era tent shop. He speculated on trade items, hoping the work crews would purchase their needs from him. The railroad provided more rapid access to suppliers, which gave Watson an advantage over the previous Utah merchants who had to rely on slow wagon freighters. However, they also bought agricultural products, "groceries," from Mormon farmers.

After the joining of the rails, Junction City was abandoned for Promontory. Watson went to Promontory where he met several Junction Cityites. His diary suggests a general movement of businesses to Promontory Summit from Junction City. Will Riley moved his "grocery" to Promontory, Watson noted. Watson sold his business to Ben Danforth, who moved to Promontory while Watson left for California. Many of the merchants sold out and left, providing cheap goods to their competitors. A reporter for the *Carson City Appeal*, August 28, 1868 noted the movement of merchants at the head of the CP. He wrote: "As we approached our destination [end of CP track] we passed several white tents, in one or two of which some enterprising sutler had set out his motley wares..." Conner would have operated with similar motley wares like a sutler, the term for a trader at a military post.

That Conner's tent was at the end of the CP track opposite the spot selected for the joining of the rails suggests that his was the first business on the scene. The grocery provided a variety of goods and supplies for workers and travelers, much like a military sutler or a frontier outfitter – clothes and foods, hardware and leather goods, blankets and utensils. He probably had standard goods shipped in by the railroad, bought products

from the farmers, and bought up bargain priced goods from his competitors abandoning the field. Along the railroad and elsewhere the “grocery” also became synonymous with the saloon. Conner probably sold more wet goods than dry goods on May 10.

Next to Conner’s tent, HS-9, is another tent, HS-9a, set back and most likely connected. This may have been a quarters or sleeping tent owned by Conner. Watson mentions in his diary buying a 16x22 business tent and a 14x14 tent for sleeping, which he shared with boarders. The set up for Conner is the same – main tent for business and side tent for quarters. However, on the days up to May 10, the side tent may have included some celebratory card games, a side room for gambling.

The Casement brothers invoices from W. R. King & Co., Omaha, now at Nebraska State Historical Society, provide examples of foodstuffs sent along the line, May, 1869: 2 chests black tea, 10 barrels brown sugar, 10 barrels ground coffee, 3 barrels rice, 5 gallon kegs molasses (10), 2 barrels cod fish, 1,000 lbs butter, 1,000 lbs. bacon, 6 barrels navy beans, 6 barrels soap, 10 barrels pork, 1,000 lbs. ham, 50 sacks potatoes, 4 boxes soap, 4 boxes candles, dozen brooms, dozen pails, 6 cases Imperial wine, and 10 gallons best sherry.

We know little about “J. S. Conner.” He is mentioned in a newspaper item on Junction City. He is not in the 1870 census of Utah but a J. D. Conner worked in a saloon at Elko, Nevada down the line, a possible incorrect middle initial written by the census taker. Promontory residents moved out upon the final transfer of the junction in November-December 1869, many to CP towns to the west.

On May 10, however, the business of J. S. Conner was a tent grocery and quarters recently relocated to the Promontory Summit. Conner’s tent provided workers with supplies and provision during the days leading up to the celebration, and on May 10 was front and center able to provide “wet” goods and relaxation for the celebrants.

#### *HS-10 and HS-17: Restaurant or Saloon*

In Hart’s May 7 photograph, at far left, stand two simple tents, HS-10 and HS-17. Both were early on the ground, near Conner’s tent, and were for commercial use, either as saloons or restaurants, and served the needs of the workers hurrying up to finish the grade and track before May 10. For the general discussion on commercial uses, see discussion under HS-4.

For details on restaurant furnishings see HS-6.

The following discussion focuses on uses and furnishings of saloons.

The first mention of the tents was by a San Francisco reporter. On May 7, a reporter from the *Alta California* noted that tough characters had moved to Promontory Summit, “A lot of them have commenced business here already. Last night they garroted and robbed two men in a dead fall tent opposite the junction, and two days since they knocked down and robbed a man of three thousand dollars in greenbacks in the same place.” The reporter’s

account suggests either HS-10 or HS-17 was a “dead fall,” euphemism for whiskey saloon.

Dr Stillman, with the Stanford party, which arrived May 7, also noted the tent saloons that took advantage of “the vices of men.” On May 9, Charles Savage noted in his diary the “Rum holes.” HS-10 or HS-17 and the “Red Cloud,” are responsible for the image of Promontory as a “Hell on Wheels” terminus.

A saloon set up of the size of HS-10 or HS-17 was common along the Union Pacific. Historic photographs of the period show the tent saloons of the towns along the track, most small. This is opposed to traveling journalists’ writings, who highlighted the grandest in size or ornament.

In 1868-9, A. R. Converse & Co of Cheyenne was a wholesale merchant who sold goods to the rail towns west into Wyoming and Utah. His records at the University of Wyoming show inventories of items sold to saloons, which reflects the set-ups of the period:

To Haas & Co  
Castor  
Salt cellar  
Matches  
Small brown glasses  
Dozen chairs  
Three dozen tumblers  
Six cordials  
Six frosted champs  
Pair jugs  
Ornaments  
Spittoons  
Duster  
Mats  
Stoppers  
Bucket

LA Rice, Laramie  
Japaned waiters  
24 bar tumblers  
6 wine tumblers  
6 ale tumbler  
set bar spoons

The 1869 mortgage of John Davies’ tent saloon in Corinne, for \$900, is suggestive of a period saloon. It included: “tent, all pictures, mirror, decorations, stove, furniture and everything appertaining to the bar and store in said tent plus eight barrels whiskey, ten

barrels ale, with all other barrels, kegs and vessels therein – all liquors and merchandise stock of every kind whatever now in the aforesaid tent.”

The description of the Wolf Tone saloon along the CP, east of Promontory, also provides a description of a construction era trackside saloon. The *Daily Alta California*, May 3, 1869, reported that the “Wolf Tone Hall” “upon entering...was found that it was a much more pretentious affair than the most imaginative could ever have supposed from a view of its exterior. A strip of canvas stretched along the side and over the counter, at which whiskey was retailed from tin pans.” The reporter bought coffee without milk and a chunk of bread weightier than lead.

HS-10 and HS-17 appeared to be on CP ground, or within the right of way. James H. Strobridge, CP superintendent of construction, did not tolerate saloons on company property and in his reminiscence says they were torn down. After May 10, the community of Promontory City arose but opposite the UP “connection track,” east of the last spike, and just beyond the 200’ right of way line. A tent similar to Conner’s is one of the first in the row.

By May 9, railroad travelers were able to arrive at the end of the CP and walk across a short piece of ground to the end of the UP. One newspaper correspondent from Delaware mentions doing this. During this layover time, a stop at HS-10 or HS-17 for a drink or chunk of weighty bread, would have been possible.

HS-10 or HS-17 as restaurant would have served the board and ad hoc meals of travelers and workers along the line. They would have also provided reporters and their readers with a taste of a “Hell on Wheels” terminus town

#### *HS-11: Wells Fargo & Co. Tent,*

On May 9, a number of reporters noted the Wells Fargo stage coach carried the last overland mail to the end of track of the CP at Promontory Summit. Wells Fargo had run stages between the ends of track as the rails approached each other. By May 9, the distance was a short seven miles from Junction City in the Blue Creek valley to the CP track at Promontory Summit. According to reports, at Promontory Summit, agent J. B. Keeny of the Wells Fargo terminus office, took the last bags of Overland express off the stage, symbolic end of an era of long, rough travel.

A reporter for the San Francisco *Bulletin* was at the end of track in April and wrote of the stage’s arrival:

A mail of twenty bags or more came from the East yesterday. All the passengers followed, and in an hour a train was dispatched West. The Central conductor, seeing the mail lying on the ground, offered to take it. Wells, Fargo & Co.’s people said “No,” they did not want to send it that day. The train and passengers went off West, and these bags lay on the ground outside Wells, Fargo & Co.’s tent all night, and are lying there now.”

*Daily Morning Call*, April 30, 1869 from *Bulletin*

The reporter's brief message helps us understand the concern of the West over the non-arrival of mail and the party to blame, the stage company. Also, the writer noted the arrival by stage of passengers. Most importantly, he noted Wells Fargo & Company's tent at the end of the track.

The story of the Overland stage is well known. Mark Twain's *Roughing It* is more entertaining than factual but captures the long travail of 1860s Overland stage travel. In 1868, Thomas Magee described running from the end of tracks as did many authors, but he took the stage road south of the lake. Until 1869, the Overland stage line followed the route from Salt Lake City to Austin, Nevada and west via south of the lake. In January, agent Egan rerouted stages to north of the lake between the rapidly approaching ends of track.

Probably the last to write about the stage trip was Frederick Whymper, a British world traveler. In early May he crossed from Corinne to Victory. In his "From Ocean to Ocean – The Pacific Railroad," *Illustrated Travels. A Record of Discovery, Geography and Adventure* (1870), 1-12, 32-40, 63-9, he wrote:

About the day's travel I shall say little. The line was not then quite finished; in less than a week it was open to traffic, and trains passing regularly on their way to California. I went over between the two companies' tracks (i.e. between the terminus points of the Union and Central Pacific railroads) by stage, passing several canvas towns, and in one or two cases smoking and burning, they having been intentionally destroyed by their late inhabitants. I passed the spot sacred to the "great track-laying feat,"... I furthermore saw the spot where the "last rail" was laid, the "last spike" driven, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May... I was neither surprised nor disappointed to find, on reaching the end of the "Central Pacific" track (a California enterprise), that gold prices commenced there. I slept in a railroad "car," there being no accommodation outside; a motley crew of rowdies, blackguards, gamblers, and abandoned women, made night hideous with their drunken orgies. A few days afterwards this camp ceased to exist. We were almost in sight of Salt Lake. No fresh water was to be found on the spot; it was brought from a distance in metal tanks on wheels, for the use of locomotives. Morning came at length, and our train started on the way..."

A San Francisco reporter noted the Wells Fargo tent stage office in Victory, but soon noted that passengers, by May 7, were being dropped at the end of track at Promontory. President Stanford had arrived by then and most likely arranged for the passengers to walk between the adjacent ends of tracks. Reporters noted an average of thirty passengers per day crossing between rail heads by foot. A traveler on May 9 noted walking from one train to the other.

The mail and express continued to be carried by the stage coaches. Per their contract with the Federal government, the stage line was to carry the government mail until the railroads met and formed a continuous line. Thus, the stage line now ran to Promontory,

but carried only mail and express for its last few days of operation. The last Overland stage ran May 9<sup>th</sup>. The reporter for the *Alta California* wrote:

At noon to-day Well's Fargo & Co's Overland Stage No. 2 Eastern Division, driven by Samuel V. Geltz, who has been eight years in the Company's service, arrived at Promontory Point [sic.] from Corinne, loaded with public documents and other mail matter. The four nags were worn and jaded, and the coach showed evidence of long service. The mail matter was delivered to the Central Pacific Company, and with that dusty, dilapidated coach and team the old order of things passed away forever.

*Daily Alta California*, San Francisco, May 10, 1869

The editor of the *Utah Daily Reporter* at Corinne gave a similar report, with corrections.:

The Last – The last run by Wells, Fargo & Co.'s stages, between the terminal of the two roads, was made May 9, 1869. The distance, eight miles, was accomplished in forty minutes. The drivers were John Mantle, Samuel Getts, and David Dickey, assisted by Mr. J. B. Keeny, agent at the terminus.

*Utah Daily Reporter*, Corinne, Utah, May 12, 1869

Thirty-two year old Ohian J. B. Keeny was responsible for the mail and express at the terminus. A tent office would have been a simple affair since none of the passengers were given meals or accommodations as noted by Whymper and other travelers. Although the railroad ended Wells Fargo's Overland staging business, they continued to send express and needed an office at the transfer point, May 10 and after.

The question is which of the tents would have most likely been used by the stage and express company? Historic photographs show only three of the sixteen tents with signs, and none are the standard Wells Fargo sign. Since the run was only seven miles there was no need for extensive corrals or a station that provided meals. Promontory lacked water so feed and water would have been handled at the Blue Creek end of the run. A modest wall tent for some security between trains and for quarters would have sufficed at Promontory.

Photographs show a tent, HS-11, east of the CP tracks adjacent the wagon trace. Although distant from the camera, the photograph shows, possibly, bags stacked in front of it. One reporter mentions stacks of mail bags on the ground. In the photograph, the wheel tracks of the wagon road appear to terminate in front of the tent as well, while the railroad construction road trace continues next to the CP tracks on west. There does not appear to be a road on the other side of the tracks. On May 10, the wagons and horses of visitors at the ceremony surround the wall tent, HS-11.

Tent stage stations were common during the construction era. They were simple affairs that did not provide meals for travelers. Not surprisingly, at Promontory, businesses appeared west of HS-11, the stage office, that met these travelers' needs. At the time of the driving of the last spike, the stage office would have been closing down.

Wells Fargo continued to maintain a presence at Promontory station, a reporter a week later mentioning agent Theodore Tracy, Wells Fargo & Co. arranging express for the

company at the railroad transfer at the junction. Stage operations were considered by some to be possible from Promontory station to the north. However, stage line operators selected Corinne for Montana and Kelton, thirty eight miles west, as the jump-off point to Idaho. The June 30 photograph of the office tent row shows what appears to be the express office along the railroad transfer point.

On May 10, based on photographs and period descriptions, the tent (HS-11) near the end of the CP tracks and adjacent the wagon road served as Wells Fargo & Co. office of agent J. B. Keeney.

*HS-12, HS-13: Union Pacific Railroad ticket and telegraph office and quarters tents,*

East of the last spike site, two wall tents appear along the railroad in photographs by A J Russell and Alfred Hart. The tents are located adjacent the UP "connection track" built sometime on May 9<sup>th</sup>, as described above. The photographs show the tents on wood platforms with wood side walls, one twice the length of the other. The ground around the tents has been recently cleared and lack vegetation. In one photograph, a person sits on a box in front of the tents and beyond the tent along the track are seen additional boxes.

Newspaper dispatches on May 10 mention that the UP had a ticket office at Promontory Summit, as does the diary of Charles Savage, who noted that he spent a chilly night sleeping in the UP ticket office May 9-10. Tents served multiple functions at the time, office and sleeping quarters being common.

Assistant superintendent Herbert Hoxie for operations was on the scene as was Grenville Dodge, chief engineer for the Union Pacific. In letters to president Ames, Dodge refers to putting up the ticket office and establishing the transfer point opposite their offices, on the UP connecting track. Dodge mentions in his reminiscence establishing operations for the railroad, May 10-11, but does not provide operational details.

The UP's two tents on a platform were of the pattern used elsewhere. Echo City and Laramie photographs show quarters with simple bed, tables and boxes interiors, with a mirror, spittoon, kerosene lamp, chairs, and, in one image, a board game. Travelers mention that the ticket agent kept materials -- tickets, schedules, and baggage checks, among other items -- in boxes. There may have been room for limited baggage storage. Traveler Humason mentions passengers on May 11 sitting on their carpet bags waiting for the connecting train.

Since the UP telegraph line wires ended at Promontory, the telegraph office would have included a heavy storage battery besides the key and relay. Photographs of an Echo City telegraph and wall tent suggest the arrangement at Promontory, key and relay on a small table connected to wires through the tent wall. The space would have been crowded with company and personal belongings.

The agent at Promontory on May 10<sup>th</sup> is unknown at this time. The agent would have shared space with one telegrapher, possibly two, the day and night crew. Telegrapher

Watson N. Shilling became momentarily famous for sending news of the last spike ceremony across the wires. His work that day has been written about often.

A June 30-July 1, photograph by W. H. Jackson and Arundel Hull, shows the ticket office arranged with other office tents. In the row of platform wall tents used as offices by the post office, Western Union, and others along the transfer point, the former “connecting track,” stands the original UP ticket office tent with ticket box out front. In the photograph can be seen a haphazard wooden walkway or platform connecting the fronts of the tents to the track level where a railroad coach stands. This arrangement post-dates May 10, but possibly by only a few days.

Historic photographs of the UP during construction show similar wall tents used as offices and quarters.

Reminiscences of former UP telegraphers relate sleeping in the tent with the key and on duty operator. The telegraph key and relay would have been on a table with battery underneath or in a separate space, maybe the next tent. The telegraphers would have kept track of train movements and dispatches for officials. Because the line was already moving passengers through Promontory, the agent’s hands would have been full.

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, the Union Pacific ticket and telegraph office tent and the quarters tent next door, HS-12 and HS-13, would have been busy places.

*HS-14: UP engineers/land speculator’s tent,*

On April 12, after learning that the UP and CP would meet at Promontory Summit, Leonard Eicholtz noted in his diary “After dinner Morris, Koons, Schyver [spelling unsure] and myself went to the summit of Promontory and staked out claims of quarter section each...Koons made plat of ground.” The next day he noted, “Schryver at work putting up buildings on our claims at Promontory.” On the 16<sup>th</sup> Eicholtz and the others met at Morris’s office and “formed a joint stock Land Company.” The group had claimed “12 or 13 quarter sections,” the equivalent of a parcel of land over three miles long and one mile wide.

Eicholtz was UP bridge engineer on the Promontory in charge of building the trestles up the slope. In camp nearby was Thomas Morris, UP assistant engineer in charge of construction on the Promontory. H. L. Koons was his assistant. All were based in the Blue Creek valley, where most of the construction work was focused that spring. Schryver may have been an assistant of Morris or Eicholtz.

The UP work was divided between the contractors building the grade and laying track and the company employees, the construction engineers who evaluated the work of the contractor. Thomas Morris was the engineer in charge on the Promontory, but survey crews did the actual work of putting pennons down the grade to ensure that ties and rails were placed at the right height. The surveyor worked in advance of rail layers in order not to stop or slow work. When the contractor finished, the engineer signed off or

accepted the work before the contractor received payment. Hezekiah Bissel, UP construction engineer at Ogden, recalled that the engineer's duties meant that they stayed near the contractor's camps.

Before May 10, the UP had determined to make Promontory a terminus town. The yards would need to be laid out. Dodge directed the track construction. In the reminiscences of C. H. Sharman, he tells of how the UP crew surveyed in the last curved connection track. Sharman had worked ahead of contractor Casement, putting down pennons along the grade, according to newspaper reports and his reminiscence, and with other engineers was at the spike ceremony. Dodge had the engineer corps on hand May 10 for a group photograph.

The tent of a construction engineer would have been along the track, near if not in the contractor's camp. The lone, distant tent, HS-14, in a Russell photograph is positioned near enough to the tracks to be accessible to work along the line. It also appears to be the only tent far enough distant from the tracks to be outside the UP company's right of way – suggesting the future site of the tent row of Promontory City. Eicholtz's diary, the descriptions of work along the line by newspapers and in company documents, either as part of the construction engineer work, or to hold a 160 acre land claim, suggest the tent (HS-14) most distant from the last spike site, was probably put up by the UP company construction engineers/land speculators.

*HS-15, HS-16: Union Pacific construction crew's (Casement Brothers) tents*

In the photographs of Hart and Russell, further northeast of the ticket office, in the background beyond the tracks, can be seen a camp or cluster of two tents. Harts photograph of May 7, shows the camp, possibly with wagons.

Newspaper reporters and other observers make no mention of these distant tents, other than in the numbers count of 17 at Promontory that day.

The location of the tents, nearer the UP tracks where the switch was placed in order to build the "connecting" track and the Wye beyond, suggests a non-business use. Rather, they most likely were used by UP construction crews. According to Eicholtz's diary, Dodge, Durant, and Dillon, officers of the UP, had ordered rail, ties, poles, and supplies to Promontory Summit after witnessing the 10 mile day track laying feat of the CP on April 28. Reporters that arrived May 7<sup>th</sup>, noted UP crews building the track at Promontory distant from the other workers on the east slope of the Promontory

These crews would have built grade and put down ties. A stack of ties is visible in a Russell photograph, piled near where the switch to the "connecting track" was built and opposite the two tents, HS-15, HS-16.

Chief engineer Dodge refers to the Casement brothers and their construction crews as doing the work at Promontory. The Casements primarily laid track, but took on additional work, such as building grades. The brothers had boarding cars and equipment

cars at Blue Creek siding May 10, but several of their cars can be seen on the UP spur at Promontory, blocking the view of the two tents, HS-15, HS-16, in Russell's photograph. The Casement brothers, contractors would have built the Promontory yard and had tents at their advance camp, probably the one seen in the photographs.

Contemporary descriptions of the work and the tents' locations in relation to the UP track work but distant from the CP, suggest that HS-15 and HS-16 were used by the construction crews building the terminus, the Casement brother's advance work camp. reminiscences of engineers, and the standard operations for the UP engineer corps infer its use.

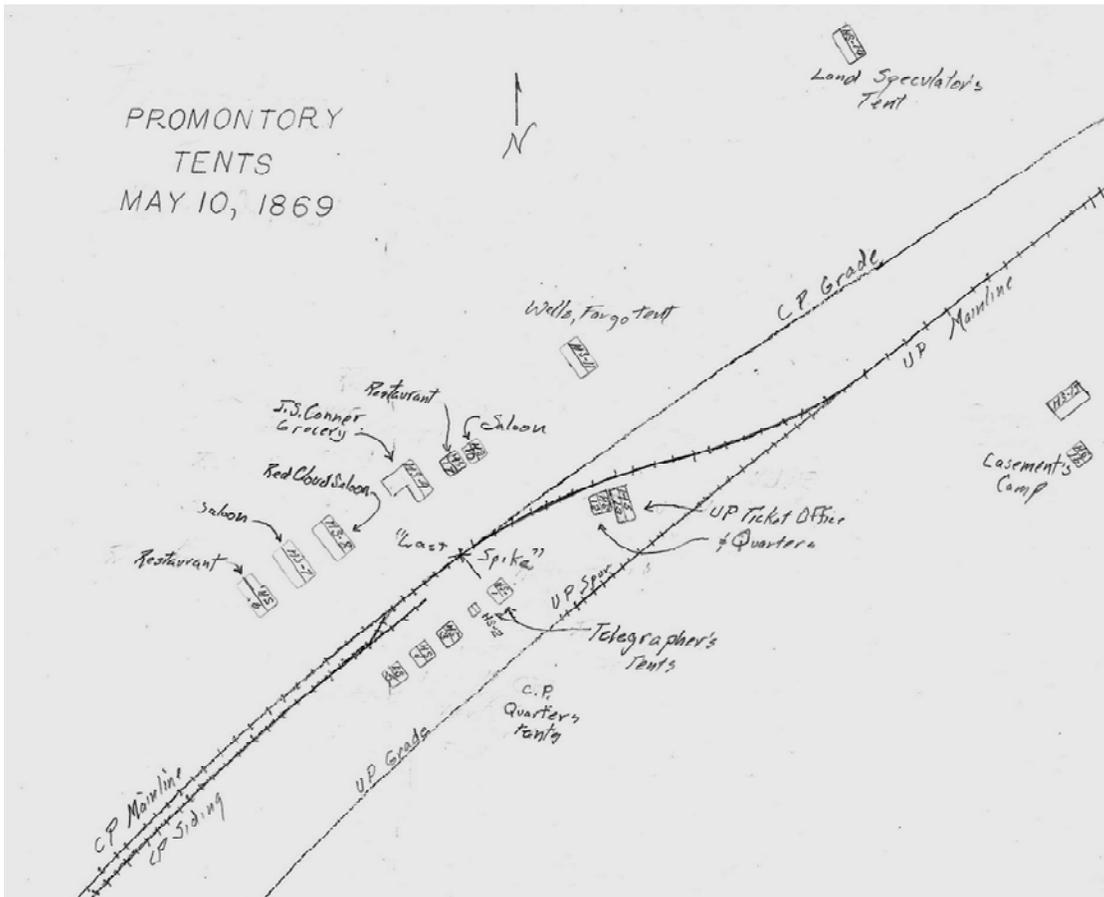


Figure 61. Suggested uses of the tents of Promontory, May 10, 1869. Note: Track distances and curvature exaggerated.

## 6) Other Uses Considered

### *Gambling Hall*

A number of histories of the transcontinental railroad include the stereotypical image of the “Hell on Wheels” towns, prominent in which are gambling halls. Their sources are the sometimes sensational travel accounts of journalists, most often quoting Henry Stanley or John H. Beadle. They wrote of shocking gambling halls. One hall that followed the camps along the line, and is noted in western Wyoming and then Corinne, was in a 50’ x 100’ tent. None of the tents in the photographs of Promontory Summit are that size. On May 10, the largest appears to be 16’ x 24.’ Reporters on the scene would not have ignored the opportunity to describe a gambling hall, or at least mention their presence. The saloons at Promontory that day may have had tables with card games, but, again, none were described as, to use a contemporary phrase, “gambling hells.”

### *Photographer’s tent*

An early morning view of Promontory shows at far left of A J Russell’s wagon studio. Of the three photographers at Promontory, we know that Alfred Hart was on the Stanford Special and that Charles Savage spent the night of the 9<sup>th</sup> in the UP ticket office and left around 5 pm on the 10<sup>th</sup> (see Appendix B).

Leonard Eicholt’s diary notes Russell arriving at Blue Creek early on the 6<sup>th</sup> and walking with him to camp (a photograph by Russell of Hall’s camp is annotated with “artist’s camp” – possibly his tent while at Blue Creek). During the 7<sup>th</sup>, reporters note “photographers,” plural, were at Promontory Summit, probably Hart and Russell. On the 8<sup>th</sup>, Savage notes in his diary he met Russell at Blue Creek.

A series of photos by Russell show the finished track work up the east slope of the Promontory, which were probably taken on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. His studio wagon is in at least one of the views, beneath the long trestle. He shot a series of images at Hall’s camp, at various cuts along the UP track, and one of “Dead Fall,” the notorious cluster of tents in the Blue Creek valley.

Many writers presume that Russell wrote the article for *Frank Leslie’s* on the last spike celebration. If so, Russell, the author, arrived with the 8:20 UP train, according to the article. If that is the case, then he would not have spent the night at Promontory. He used his studio wagon during the day. Later accounts have Russell and Savage working closely and using the studio wagon (Levi Leonard later confuses the issue by stating it was Savage’s wagon; Savage’s diary negates this assumption).

Photographer W H. Jackson with Arundel Hall were in Promontory June 30 – July 1 and tented at the site. Many photographs of their tent and operations were photographed that summer of 1869 along the rails. Jackson, in his diary and autobiography, detailed the work of the period. He helps later generations understand graphically the tedious work of wet plate photography. But he was not in a tent at Promontory May 10, 1869, his wedding day.

With the information at hand, especially the article in *Leslie's* which his biographers credit Russell as writing, then he (Russell) arrived the morning of the 10th. If this is the case, none of the photographers had a tent studio at Promontory May 10.

### *Terminus Post Office*

Special Agent Ball of the US Post Office was responsible for designating and operating post offices along the line and maintaining the “terminus” post office that moved with the tracks as they advanced. On May 10, he was joined at Promontory by assistant post master Jones of Omaha.

When the terminus post office moved to Promontory is unknown. Because most of the UP workers were in the Blue Creek valley on May 10, it may have still been in the valley to the east.

Photographs of the terminus post office after May 10 show a tent structure with box out front. *Leslie's* magazine included an illustrations and description of the operation, but from a later period, October 1869.

On May 10, though it is possible postal employees were in a simple tent preparing to relocate to the “terminus post office” to Promontory, none of the photographs of the tents suggests their use as post office and none of the observers mention a post office that day.

### *Western Union Telegraph tent*

Workers for the Western Union were at Promontory Summit on May 10<sup>th</sup>. They worked with the railroad companies' telegraph crews to connect the lines. The daughter of superintendent James Gamble recalled sleeping in a Promontory tent. However, Western Union did not have a telegraph line or office at Promontory until after May 10. The crews, including Gamble, probably worked and slept in the CP tents at the site.

The company built a line parallel the railroads from the Salt Lake Valley to Elko that summer of 1869, near the railroad. Assistant superintendent Ed Conway established Utah headquarters at Corinne in April and was at Promontory May 10. He established an office in Promontory, but after the ceremony.

In William H. Jackson's photo of the row of office tents at Promontory, June 30, prominent among them is the Western Union telegraph tent. Western Union later, ca. 1878, signed an agreement with CP to operate the CP system, except for railroad use. On May 10, though it is probable that Western Union crews slept in standing tents HS-2, HS-4 or HS-5, there is not enough evidence at this time to suggest that Western Union had a tent office open that day.

### *Will Riley Grocery*

One of the first businesses in Promontory was Will Riley's "Grocery." A grocery, the mid-nineteenth century American village general store with wet goods became, on the Western frontier, the near universal term for liquor store and saloon. In the West, the retailer usually sought to profit from whatever would sell on the market. In Promontory, as suggested by news articles, liquor predominated.

Riley was a twenty-six year old New Yorker who had opened shop at Junction City in January, 1869. He became "mayor" of the town, appointed by Junction Cityites in mining camp fashion. He decided criminal cases, usually with banishment or fine. He is also accused of being part of a band of thieves, at least according to one former resident. The victim claimed, after reaching Omaha, that he was threatened by Riley and others to give over his cash or suffer the consequences, whatever that meant. There is no appeal. Taking another view, it may have been the miner's court in action, with Riley as *alcalde* administering a fine and banishment.

Riley operated a grocery in Junction City, Promontory, and, later, at Kelton, Utah. A later business directory listed him as a Kelton dry goods merchant. In April, 1869, he was in Junction City when news of the location of the joining of the rails reached the valley. Riley and clerk Barney Mallory were among the first on the ground. According to newspaper accounts, Dead Fall and Junction City were deserted by May 12. Unfortunately, we lack specific evidence that he was at Promontory Summit on May 10<sup>th</sup>. If he did erect a tent, it was quickly moved. By May 13, the railroad companies had the tents relocated to "Promontory City," outside the UP right of way.

Although Riley's Grocery was at Promontory early, we lack specific information to date his opening shop on or before May 10. The possibility, however, should not be entirely discounted. If he was at Promontory on May 10, Riley would have been in one of the tents of the commercial row north of the tracks.

### *Barber Shop*

One of the common businesses of the period was a barber shop. Reminiscences of the region recall several very modest shops. One account, Hezekiah Bissel's, recalls getting a hair cut at an outdoor shop, one chair under a tree. In Corinne a barber shop was located in a boarding house. A contemporary sale of a barber shop in Wasatch to a Corinne barber included descriptions of interior fixtures: looking glass, wash stand, table, barber chair, stool, towels, chandelese, and burner.

The identifying feature of a barber shop is a striped pole out front. Such poles are seen in a contemporary photograph of Dead Fall, seven miles distant, and of Promontory City after May 10. John B. Silvis's photograph of the main street shows the San Francisco Barber Shop with barber pole jutting from a porch. The row of tents north of the tracks may have included a barber shop. They did shortly afterward.

Close-up photographs of the tents have not been found, but HS-7 may have such a pole out front suggesting this large tent may have also housed a barber shop. None of the brief newspaper dispatches from Promontory, May 10, mention a separate barber shop.

*Chinese Workers Tents.*

From all accounts, it appears that the Chinese workers's tents remained at Victory, west of Promontory, until after the ceremony. They arrived with Strobridge's train, and worked on the laying of the last rails and ties, but remained camped to the west. Several newspapers note that the Chinese workers of the CP were kept distant from the Irish UP workers because of a general fear of violence between the two ethnic groups. There is no evidence of any such violent encounter.

*Military tents*

The military presence is mentioned in reports and can be seen in historic photographs. Only Dr. Stillman in his later article for *Overland Monthly* reports that the soldiers camped at Promontory the night of May 10. The Stanford Special left at 4 p. m. with Stillman onboard, which suggests he may not have actually seen any soldiers in camp. The detailed research by Paul Hedren concludes that the troops at Promontory were able to leave that evening, none staying overnight at Promontory Summit.

*Ranchers' or Farmers' tents*

The 1870 census for Promontory Station includes three ranchers. Contemporary information shows that the Promontory range had been used to graze cattle by Mormons. The range industry of the region dates from the arrival of the railroad. No contemporary newspapers note ranch homes or farms in the immediate area. One reporter, O'Leary of the *Bee*, talked with graders, probably Mormon, who stated that the soil they tilled up to build the grade looked like it could produce wheat. However, there was no farming or ranching based at Promontory at that time.

## **B) The “Last Spike Site,” May 10, 1869 and After**

Because the tents will be described in relation to the site of the driving of the last spike, it is best to begin with that point. According to the agreement between the railroads on April 9, they were to join rails at Promontory Summit. At that time there were two survey station points pegged as “Promontory Summit,” one on the UP line, the other on the CP line. The UP profile map of grades over the summit of the Promontory Mountains, February 1869, is in the collections of the Nebraska Historical Society, while the CP profile has not been found.

The CP track reached their Promontory Summit May 1<sup>st</sup>. Dispatches by reporters at the front sent the news to San Francisco, Charles Crocker telegraphed his partners, and diarists noted the date. According to the Leonard Eicholtz’s diary the UP sent rails and ties to their Promontory Summit to build backwards, east from the UP survey station point. There is no record of who made the decision as to which end of track, UP or CP, would be the joining point. But in a May 7<sup>th</sup> newspaper dispatch published in the San Francisco *Chronicle*, May 8, 1869, a reporter noted, “a small pennon” at the end of the CP track “indicates the point where the last rail will be laid.” This may have been a result of the discussions between Stanford and UP contractor Casement that day.

During May 8-9, Casement’s crews built a Wye roughly one half mile east, while CP crews completed a siding west of the last spike site. Civil engineer Sharman, who had set the check surveys for the UP track laying crews, reminisced later that the UP built the curved “connection track” from a switch on the UP mainline across to the end of the CP track. Reporters give the distance of the connection as 2500 feet and record the connection being graded and track laid during May 9. In a Russell photograph taken early on May 10, a surveyor’s flag stands at the end of the CP tracks. Another Russell image shows UP crews, at left, shoveling ballast on the UP connecting track toward the gap, reported as a rail length, between the two ends of track.

The UP connection track followed, in part, the CP grade. On May 10, the UP unused grade and spur track on a section of it can be seen southeast of the last spike site. Casement’s work train sits on the spur track. The Golden Spike ceremony would occur at the end of the CP track, on its grade, 690 3/10 miles east of Sacramento, 1084 4/5 miles west of Omaha.

The row of commercial tents would have been aligned 100’ back from the CP track – out of the right of way.

According to a July 1869 letter from Grenville Dodge, a stone tie was to be placed at the last spike site. To be chiseled on it were the words: “Junction of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads, May 10, 1869.” This may still exist and if it does the tie should help locate the historic last spike site.

Several later documents help pinpoint the site today. In 1876, the Corps of Engineers measured the transcontinental railroad using a 100’ engineer’s chain. Captain James F.

Gregory measured the distance of the last spike site to the eastern wall of the depot at Promontory, 258.2 feet. An 1880 station plat held by the California State Railroad Museum was prepared by the Central Pacific land department and shows the depot, round house, housing, sheds and outbuildings. The distance of various track and sidings is also provided, but not the location of the last spike site, which can be accurately positioned from the Corps of Engineer's measurements. During the 1910s, the U. S. Geological Survey mapped the area and used the depot's west wall as a survey corner to measure to a red metal cap. Later a bench mark was placed on the Last Spike obelisk, built by the Southern Pacific Railroad, ca. 1916. The early twentieth century U. S. Geological Survey placement of survey caps can be used to relocate historic features on the ground today. It is estimated that the historic Last Spike Site is near but different than the site selected by the Southern Pacific Railroad for the Last Spike obelisk. The obelisk was the only structure at the site when NPS management began the recreation of the historic scene. The obelisk, after several relocations, now sits in the courtyard in front of the visitor center with no geographic relationship to the original Last Spike Site.

Unfortunately, the Last Spike Site grade was quickly altered by the railroads to accommodate thru traffic. In several May 10, 1869 images a swale is noted in the landscape east of the last spike, a bridge of ties crossing a shallow gully. Also, the initial track was laid on a bed of dirt built up from trenching along the grade line. Within two months, civil engineers realigned the track at the Last Spike Site for smoother operations. The area became entirely the Central Pacific yard in December 1869. Through the years the yard was rebuilt, leveled to the point where the 1869 layout and historic contour at Promontory Summit has been lost.

In 1969, Historian Andy Ketterson described the track plan and the telegraph line, both rebuilt for the 1869 centennial. During the 1970s, archeologist Adrienne Anderson and others revisited the track alignment, which was rebuilt to meet new findings. The present alignment serves the purpose of representing the track plan of May 10. The present track grade and ballast meets safety standards but is not representative of the period track work.



*Figure 62. In 1974, replica tents were introduced into the historic scene with the borrowed display locomotives. All color images from Golden Spike NHS slide file (GOSP).*



Figure 63. The “Tent Village” as built ca. 1974. The display locomotives are former Virginia & Truckee Railroad engines. GOSP.

### C) NPS Development of “Last Spike Site”

In anticipation of the centennial of the driving of the golden spike, the National Park Service initiated a number of developments, which included the visitor center, publications and exhibits, infrastructure, and the recreation of the historic scene at Promontory Summit, Utah, May 10, 1869. Track was laid and display locomotives were borrowed for the park. Telegraph poles were erected and wires restrung.



Replica tents were part of the initial proposal, but cost and time delayed their introduction. With American Bicentennial funding, a plan, “Construction Plan, Promontory Tent Village,” was implemented in 1974 with the introduction of eight tents at the “Last Spike Site.” The tents’ exterior appearances were based, roughly, on an 1869 photograph and drawings. Background research came from a report for the 1939 Cecil B. DeMille movie “Union Pacific” (Fig. 64).

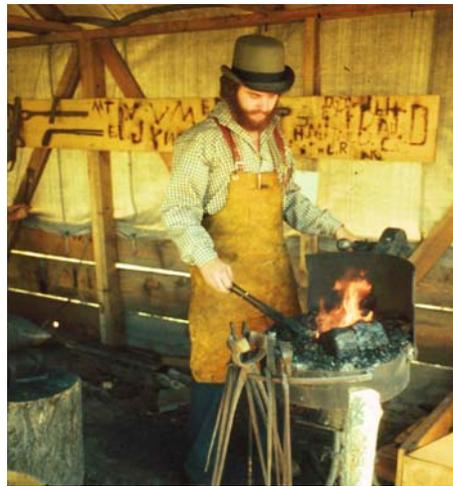
With concerns over potential loss of the display locomotives, the “Tent Village” plan was expanded to include living history, a growing interpretive tool. NPS Director George Hartzog had pushed for living historic sites. Golden Spike was one of the many units that developed living history programs during the 1970s. Images from the park files indicate the extent of activities. The number of tents was increased to eleven, including a tepee and canopies with sales outlets underneath.

Tents of Golden Spike NHS - III Physical Description



*Figures 65, 66, 67, 68, 69. Photographs of the 1970s Tent Village from park files: the melodrama, tepee, mountain man, and other scenes prompted concerns about their value as interpretive mediums. GOSP .*

Living History is popular with the public, but growing concern over accuracy and relevance to park themes brought into question exhibits of baking, blacksmithing, and other activities not related to the primary goals of the National Park Service units.



Figures 70, 71. Bakery and blacksmith shop of the 1970s were also questioned as to their relevance to the interpretation of the transcontinental railroad story. GOSP.

Barry MacKintosh details this widespread concern in his *Interpretation in the National Park Service* (Washington, D. C.: History Division, 1986). Golden Spike NHS also had its exhibits of baking and blacksmithing (above), which became questionable under the new NPS philosophy as expressed by chief historian Robert Utley. In 1974, he wrote:

“The more ‘living’ it is, the more likely it is to give the visitor his strongest impression, and memory of his park experience. Thus a program that is not unusually supportive of key interpretive objectives may be correspondingly distracting if not actually subversive. We are obsessed with showing what everyday life was like in the past... But most of our historic places are not preserved because of the everyday life that occurred there. The visitor whose fascination with ‘living’ portrayals of everyday activity inhibits his understanding and appreciation of the momentous significance of Lee’s surrender to Grant, or the progress and consequences of the Battle of Saratoga, has not been well served by our interpretive program, no matter how well conceived and presented..”

New guidelines were written to ensure living history met the goals of interpretation. These culminated in the Interpretive Guidelines (NPS-6) of 1980, which still influence standards. Pertinent sections stated: “*In parks established to commemorate...specific events..., interpretive presentations that illustrate period lifestyles will usually not be appropriate. [e. g. crafts at a battlefield]...All presentations dealing with history and prehistory must meet criteria for honesty as well as accuracy.*” At Golden Spike National Historic Site, park staff revised the living history program after first initiating research on appearances and locations. This was critical since the new, exquisite display locomotives, which arrived in 1979, encouraged a more accurate portrayal of May 10, 1869. The reports by chief of interpretation Paul Hedren and his staff changed the 1970s park tent village.

### Tents of Golden Spike NHS - III Physical Description

More accurate representations of the historic scene included improving the interpretation and furnishings at the Union Pacific Railroad ticket office. Paul Hedren related the exasperating problem of making changes using tents from the earlier plan, which did not fit the new needs and requirements of accuracy. Makeshift improvements were made, but additional information was needed.

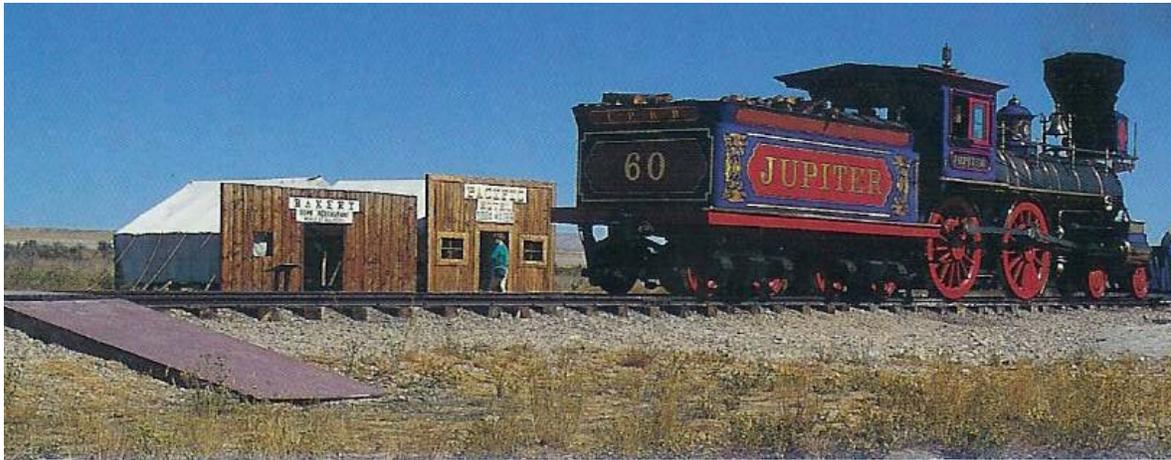
However, the goal of explaining the railroad functions and the “Hell on Wheel” towns was met by furnishing the UP ticket office and the Red Cloud Saloon, as depicted in color slides from the park’s files. Unfortunately, the tents and furnishings were not as accurate as hoped, in scale, location or furnishings.



*Figures 72, 73, 74. Later 1970s efforts to improve the accuracy of the tents included the UP ticket and telegraph office and the Red Cloud Saloon. GOSP.*

By the mid-1980s, with concerns over diminishing numbers in interpretive staff, the tents deteriorating beyond repair and needing replacement, and the decision to revamp the interpretive program, the “tent village” was removed and its accompanying “Living History” program refocused on just the reenactment of the driving of the last spike. Later, two tents were refurbished and false fronts placed on them for use by interpreters to provide some shelter for visitors. The interpretive programs were more traditional. While the tents served as backdrops to the May 10 reenactment, they were of the wrong period, post-May 10 false fronted, tent businesses of the later Promontory City.

In 1999, after a windstorm had damaged one of the frames, the superintendent, Bruce Powell, decided to eliminate the tents until further information could be gathered as outlined in the 1997 Comprehensive Interpretive Plan. The CIP recommends adding tents to the recreated historic scene. Superintendent Mary Risser followed with the request for this study prior to making a decision about adding tents to the Last Spike Site.



*Figure 75. Pacific Hotel and Echo Bakery Tents erected 1980s and removed 1999. GOSP.*

### **E) Existing Conditions of Last Spike Site**

Although the December 2000 implementation plan for the Last Spike Site called for an ambitious redevelopment of the historic scene, at present, only the wayside exhibits have been introduced. Other elements of the plan are still under consideration.

The park staff maintains the replica locomotives, the focus of the Last Spike Site. The track, telegraph poles, and flagpole have been maintained and replaced, as needed. Rustic seating for the last spike reenactment event have been improved and the stands for viewing the locomotives have been rebuilt in metal. The trail to the site has been upgraded and paved. A period wagon and cart are on the site as are replica barrels and wooden table for the telegraph key.





Figure 76. Reenactment of the May 10 ceremony at the Last Spike Site, 2004.

## IV. Exhibit Tents and Historic Furnishings Recommendations

### A) Introduction

To enhance the interpretive program and to provide a broader visitor experience, the following tents are recommended for replication. It is to be emphasized that these are furnished historic exhibits rather than architectural restorations/reconstructions. The exhibit tents should be accurate but replaceable replicas of tents at Promontory Summit on May 10, 1869. They will enhance the visitor experience adjacent to the replica locomotives “Jupiter” and “No. 119” at the Last Spike Site. Interior furnishings will represent period interiors while meeting interpretive goals described below.

Decisions on furnishings will be based upon the historic furnishing study. A traditional historic furnishing study asks the questions, will the furnishings meet interpretive goals, is there adequate documentation, and is the historic interior reasonably intact for the desired period of interpretation? The first two questions can be answered in the affirmative. However, none of the tents at the Last Spike Site remain. Canvas tents last but a short time in the Great Basin because of its harsh winters and summers. Again, the tents will be accurate replicas but interiors will serve as furnished exhibit spaces rather than reconstructions.

As essentially outdoor exhibits, the tents will be furnished with low cost replicas. No original items will be placed on exhibit in the tents. Where feasible, furnishings will be accessible to visitors -- chairs and benches to sit on, counters to lean on, and foot lockers and crates to handle. Small items will be secured by distance from visitors’ reach, but,

for example, replica paper ephemera could be printed in a volume which allows for some loss of example time tables, work sheets, passes, letterhead, etc.

The fourteen tents along the track at the Last Spike Site (HS-1 to HS 13, and HS-17) are described here for potential replication and furnishing. If replication of all tents is desired, the remaining three tents far from the last spike, Casement's work camp (HS-15 and HS-16) or the engineers/speculators tent (HS-14), should be utilized for other park goals, such as a nature trail and interpretive tent distant from the last spike site. They are not discussed further.

The exhibit tents will meet interpretive goals defined in the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan and other park planning documents. Furnished spaces provide the best visitor experience when focusing on one moment in time, May 10, 1869 in this case. They can help interpret the celebratory completion of the railroad in its many facets, and its impacts.

## **B) Interpretive Goals**

The 1997 Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP) and park Strategic Plan confirmed earlier planning decisions to interpret the completion of the transcontinental railroad through a number of means, including the recreation of the historic scene of May 10, 1869.

The park interpretive plan outlines the visitor experience and builds on earlier plans, especially that compiled by Bill Brown in 1966. There are three components: a hiking remote experience on the abandoned grades on the east slope, an auto tour in the basin at top and the long downward slope to the west past the "ten miles in a day sign," and the visitor center complex with a focus on recreating the historic scene at the Last Spike Site.

At the Last Spike Site, the plan emphasizes that the visitor experience the national euphoria on the completion of the railroad and the driving of the last spike, and how the event and place became significant as symbols of national goals. The image in the photographs of the day repeatedly reproduced has imprinted in the minds of many the scene of two locomotives, the Central Pacific Railroad's "Jupiter" and the Union Pacific Railroad's "No. 119," which met that day. The plan called for the recreation of that historic scene.

The CIP called for better understanding of the technology, space, and experiences of the day as well. What was the railroad's impact? The plan called for a broadening of the story from the primary individuals that drove the golden spike to include the other participants, a mixture of peoples that came to celebrate the event. The CIP also confirms interpreting the railroad's impact. Any introduction of tents and furnishings should meet these goals.

Example themes/compelling stories/concepts from the CIP, which may be interpreted through the tents or furnishings include:

- How the railroad and telegraph created Modern America – the obliteration of time and space, to use a phrase of the day
  - Telegraphic equipment in tents; timetables, maps (how far from home?) in ticket office tents; mail bags by tents
  - Photographers and reporters capturing the event instantaneously
- People that owned land along the route
  - Speculators’ tents there to take advantage of business opportunities, or the dream of helping found the next new Reno or Cheyenne along the line.
- “Hell on Wheels” camps
  - Saloons and other similar tents along the track
- Difficulty in getting supplies
  - Foodstuffs sold in the tents – Mormon produce and the railroad revolution caused bowl of fresh California strawberries
- Impact of railroad
  - The movement of goods; for example, hob nail boots from the East sold in stores or Chicago wares quickly imported via Omaha;
  - Stage coach office tent symbol of change; the old gives way to new
- Driving of the spike
  - The reporters in tents capturing the event for anxious readers
- Workers
  - Workers in the towns, including women and minorities; tents feeding and supplying workers.
- The crossing of space at speed, a break from previous era’s travel experiences
  - Promontory clocks set at Cheyenne time (UP tents) and Sacramento time (CP tents) and how quickly one could be at either point.

And the list of examples could continue. Each tent is discussed in the report with interpretive potential. The two clusters of tents described in more detail below can meet the themes listed above: the commercial row and the railroad companies’ telegraph and ticket office tents. Each can assist the visitor in experiencing the world around the May 10 moment at Promontory Summit.

### **C) Options for Interpretation**

During the preparation of this study, several options for interpreting the tent community were either found in previous planning documents or were brought up by park staff. These are briefly discussed here. Although the intent of recent planning documents has been to reintroduce several tents, these other options are provided as a record of discussion.

#### **1) Indoor Exhibit**

The tent community at Promontory Summit could be interpreted through a standard exhibit within the visitor center. Although present space is unavailable, when planning begins for new exhibits, this option could be considered. Among the suggestions heard during the development of this study were the production of a diorama of the last spike

site, accurately showing the landscape, the tents and the railroad related features. Rarer original items could also be exhibited in a more secure environment.

## **2) Minimum Exhibit Development Outdoors**

The first interpretive plan of 1966 suggested several small plaques or identification plates be placed at or near the site of each tent. Although the plan confused the later “Promontory City” with the tents of May 10, a simple series of wayside exhibits or plaques could be designed and placed at the estimated tent sites, which would provide the visitor with some information about the occupants of and use of each of the tents. The marking could include outlines on the ground, either with rough gravel or timbers, showing the site of each tent.

## **3) Wayside Exhibits**

A standard practice is to develop wayside exhibit panels with text and historic photographs. These have been discussed in previous planning documents. The waysides would focus on the tents, their uses, and the appropriate interpretive theme. They would not be site specific although near or directed toward the two rows of tents.

## **4) Introduce Furnished Tents at Last Spike Site**

The introduction of the tents to the historic scene is recommended in the park CIP, Strategic Plan and other documents. The proposal to introduce tents is most detailed in the December 2000 “Implementation Plan for the Reconstruction and Interpretation of the May 10, 1869 Last Spike Site Historic Scene,” which states:

Presently, the existing conditions of reconstructed components at the Last Spike Site have been successful. For the past 21 years, having working replica engines epitomizes the cultural landscape and the park story. However, while pleasing, the existing conditions at the Historic Site represents the tip of the iceberg. Many other important components are missing, such as tents, .... Thus, the entire scene (as currently reconstructed) is not a completely accurate picture. A more accurate representation of the historic scene will offer much additional interpretive value and potential for the park.

Because ... the Last Spike Site is a focal point for almost all park visitors, this reconstruction effort is consequently a very high priority for the park. Accordingly, this project continues to be identified as a top priority in the park’s strategic plan as well as in the comprehensive interpretive plan.

The plan further details specific actions for the reintroduction of the tents. After specific recommendations for which tents to reintroduce (a recommendation suggested for revision in this study’s next section), the plan states:

Four factors have driven the proposed reconstruction of 10 tents:

- North-view backdrop. Reconstructing tents on the north side of the tracks behind the locomotives provides an important backdrop to the historic scene, which is one of the main views depicted in the historic photographs. Also, visitors currently approach the Last Spike Site from the south and are mainly viewing the historic scene in a northerly direction.
- Proximity. Reconstruction of tents located in the immediate vicinity of the Last Spike Site is recommended. Those located further away are not recommended for reconstruction.
- Known Use and dimensions. Per the Boyce and Hedren reports, it is recommended that priority be given to reconstructing tents for which their use and function is known. Also, it is recommended that priority be provided to reconstructing tents for which we have information on their design, specifications, and dimensions.
- Visitor Use Conflict. Recommend that tents not be reconstructed that would conflict with modern visitor use and circulation.

This study goes into more detail on the physical description and use, and revises much of the findings of Hedren and Boyce mentioned above (see part III of this study). The Last Spike Site implementation plan concludes with a strong recommendation for introducing the tents: “Reconstructing five (and possibly nine) of the 16 tents in the immediate vicinity of the Last Spike Site is considered both desirable and feasible. The tent structures will provide a high level of interpretive value by creating the feeling or sense of place and time relative to May 10, 1869.”

The Last Spike Site plan and related plans, especially the interpretive plan, are the impetus for this study. The revised list of proposed exhibit tents and furnishings are described in the following.

#### **D) The Tents with Suggested Layout and Furnishings**

The introduction of tents into the Last Spike Site, as mentioned in previous planning documents, should be completed in phases. The following section details six phases for introducing up to 14 tents, those immediately along the tracks on May 10th. However, the number of tents introduced at once should be limited, initially completing phase I and phase II as a trial.

Phase I would create the start of the commercial row behind the locomotives (HS-9, HS-17 and HS-10). Phase II would add railroad office tents east of the locomotives (HS-12 and HS-13). Phase III would complete the commercial row (HS-6, HS-7, and HS-8). Phase IV would add the telegraphers tents and CP office (HS-1 and HS-2), though this may be delayed until safety concerns are addressed. Phase V introduces the Wells Fargo stage tent (HS-11). Phase VI completes the row south of the track (HS-3, HS-4, and HS-6).

In the following each of the tents is described in sequence of production, with broad suggestions for furnishings.

*Phase I: HS-9, HS-17, and HS-10.*

These wall tents were part of the commercial row of May 10, restaurants, “deadfalls” or whiskey saloons and “groceries” opposite the last spike site. J. S. Conner moved his tent “grocery” early to the site and his sign aligns with the last spike. HS-17 and HS-10 would be Civil War era standard canvas, wall tents without floor (NPS would put in tent platforms for stability). J. S. Conner’s wall tent with its wing would be similar, but larger with frame and floor. The “wing” or side tent would be connected to the main tent with passage between the two interiors. A colorful yellow and red sign would guide participants to Conner’s open tent flaps.

It is suggested that the area around the tents be “cluttered” with barrels, benches, lumber, and other debris seen in period photographs.

Furnishings: HS-9: Period interior descriptions, example period business records, mortgage records, and sketches reveal a similarity between Civil War era military Sutler’s trading post and the trackside frontier “groceries,” though the latter sold more and varied alcohol. HS-9, Conner’s “grocery” would include the counter, shelves, tables, chairs, stove and barrels of goods. The grocery would offer food stuffs, a few dry goods, and because of the anticipated celebration, boxes of bottles and barrels of wet goods. Card tables and chairs would be in the back tent, though normally this would be sleeping quarters with cot. The walls would have a period lithograph, “artistic” advertisement, and hanging kerosene lanterns with reflectors. Cigar boxes, bottles and glasses would be at hand ready to toast the day.

HS-17 would be furnished like the trackside restaurants described in numerous accounts. A table with benches would fill the front of the room, while a cook stove and pipe would be in the rear. The meal offered today might be better than the norm of basic beans, bread and beef. A pot of stew or roast plover might be on the stove with tin dishes nearby. The table would be set with tin ware, plates and utensils. A canvas sign might indicate the cost of meals, 25 cents. A water barrel with dipper, box of wood for the stove, and pantry with food would crowd the room. There might be a bowl of strawberries in cream, fresh from California, suggestive of the wonderful treats and changes brought about by the railroad.

HS-10 would be a basic “deadfall” or whiskey saloon with simple counter/bar, a few stools, but nothing fancy. The bottles and glasses and tin ware would be evident. Possibly here too a stove would have a stew pot cooking on top of it. A decorative mirror and “art” (framed lithograph) would be hanging from the tent frame. A well stocked bar would be ready to serve celebrants, since no one would deny the workers their holiday this day.

Layout: HS-9, HS-17, and HS-10 would be in an uneven row, unequally spaced, but facing the last spike, with Conner's sign aligned with the spike. The distance from the track was approximately 100', on the edge of the CP right of way (the tents appear to have nudged closer than the distance prescribed by the railroad). This location may be slightly adjusted for local conditions and landscape.

It is suggested as part of the exhibit tents site that a replica of photographer A. J. Russell's studio wagon be introduced east of HS-10, as seen in historic photographs of the day.

Interpretive themes: The "Hell on Wheels" towns. Workers' diversions and entertainment. Opportunistic businesses/speculation (including gambling) offering goods and services to workers and celebrants. The interpretive themes could be broadened by introduction of personalities, reporters, or props, such as Russell's photo wagon next to HS-10. Women along the railroad and their lives and work could be interpreted.

*Phase II: HS-12 and HS-13.*

Union Pacific Railroad wall tents with wood sidings, frame and platform. These tents served as ticket and telegraph office tent and the Union Pacific Railroad office crew's quarters. These are more substantial than the CP tents. Suggest NPS extend the wooden platform to the front of the tent to provide walkway and to define a safety zone between tents and the track. Tents should not block view of replica locomotives by staff in visitor center.

Furnishings: More substantial than CP (remember the UP came to stay). Quarters would have bedstead and bedding, chairs and table, personal gear box, games, kerosene lantern, platform with battery for telegraph, telegraph key on table, telegraph wire running from battery to tent pole then to UP's nearest telegraph pole, and stove. Ticket office would have desk and rear storage area screened off, baggage and agent's ticket box. Clutter with telegram receipts, railroad paper ephemera, and timetable. Front platform would have cart, boxes, baggage, and freight (may be arranged to guide traffic away from tracks). Ticket office sign placed on the front of tent.

Layout: Tents should be placed nearest the track, but further back than in historic photographs for safety reasons. Tents were located south of the track, approximately 100 to 150 feet east from the last spike. Suggest the tents be on platform that extends to track but piled with a barrier of boxes, etc. to provide a safety block for visitors between the tents and the track (this would be modeled after the Ogden tent station seen in the 1869 Russell photograph).

Interpretive themes: Railroad competition (CP vs. UP over location of junction). Technology and space and time (telegraphy, and railroad communication), workers' lives, and impact of railroad.

*Phase III: HS-6, HS-7, and HS-8*

The wall tents opposite and east and west of the last spike site are more substantial and house a variety of trackside business. They have wood floors, wood side walls and frames. They are of the “hospital tent” class of wall tent used during the Civil War era. HS-6 was a restaurant that would have also provided impromptu lodging; HS-7 is a similar business but with a barber chair inside as well; and HS-8 is the Red Cloud Saloon. They fill out the row of commercial tents.

Furnishings: HS-6 and HS-7 furnished with long table and bench. In the rear half of HS-6, divided by tent wall from the front, would be cook stove, bunk area, and work space for the cook. Women commonly worked in such businesses and would have been present on May 10 as waitresses or cooks. HS-7 would be one big space with barber chair in the corner opposite the cook stove. HS-9 would have bar fixtures, better wall art than Conner and a grander mirror. The chairs and tables would have cards and chips. Barrels and bottles would be in crates.

Layout: HS-6, HS-7, and HS-8 would be in an uneven row, unequally spaced, west of Conner’s tent, HS-9. The distance from the track was approximately 100’, on the edge of the CP right of way (the tents appear to have nudged closer than the distance prescribed by the railroad). This location may be slightly adjusted for local conditions and landscape.

Interpretive themes: The “Hell on Wheels” towns. Workers’ diversions and entertainment. Opportunistic businesses/speculation (including gambling). Women along the railroad.

*Phase IV: HS-1 and HS-2,*

Central Pacific Railroad wall tent and “A” tent nearest the last spike site. These tents served as impromptu quarters and, more importantly for the day, as telegraph office. Civil War era standard canvas tents, they would lack floors (though NPS may introduce non-obtrusive tent platforms for stability)

It is suggested as part of the exhibit tents site that a replica of the wagon with box, probably to hold the telegraph equipment, be placed next to it. Evidence of Western Union forms and equipment would be here.

Furnishings: simple (remember the CP did not plan to stay long) bedding, tarp, personal gear, platform with battery for telegraph, telegraph key on table, telegraph wire running from battery to tent pole then to CP’s last telegraph pole. Period newspapers, telegraph receipts and railroad ephemera should be near a standard CP agent’s ticket box.

Layout: The tents and wagon should be placed in relationship to the last spike site as seen in historic photographs. Their location may be slightly adjusted as well to screen the intrusive benches from the visitor approaching the historic scene.

Interpretive themes: technology and space and time (telegraphy, photography, and railroad communication), workers' lives, and impact of railroad.

Note: Since these tents would block the view of staff in the visitor center watching the locomotives, it is advisable to review security before placing them in the historic scene.

*Phase V: HS-11*

The Wells Fargo and Company tent served as agent office and quarters at the end of the stage run. The tent stood at the end of the wagon road along the UP.

The tent would contain express and mail, boxes and crates, and a counter. Furnishings would be simple.

Interpretive theme: The end of an era of transcontinental stage operations. The impact of the railroad.

Note: Suggest developing this exhibit with Wells, Fargo & Company bank.

*Phase VI: HS-3, HS-4, and HS-5*

These wall tents, patterned after Civil War era officer's quarters wall tents, suggest use as quarters, probably by the Central Pacific or its contractors. They lack wooden floors.

Furnishings: Simple bedding, tarp as flooring, personal gear, and mess. Portable wood stove in corner. Tents may be left vacant and provided for temporary use during special occasions such as Railroaders Festival.

Layout: The tents should be placed in relationship to the last spike site as seen in historic photographs. Their location may be slightly adjusted depending on terrain and conditions.

Interpretive themes: Workers' lives and impact of railroad.

*Additional Recommendations.*

The tents could be left up year round but without replica items. Quoting the Last Spike Site implementation plan: "Recommend that the tents be kept up year-round. It is believed that seasonal removal of the tents would cause more damage to the canvas and wood structures than would occur if they were just left up. Moreover, having the tents up year-round will provide additional interpretive value to the Last Spike Site Historic

Scene. It is fully recognized that the reconstruction of tents will subsequently require cyclical maintenance funding to replace the canvas and make repairs.”

It is recommended that all tents have a wood frame and deck; there should be no bare dirt floors. The wood structure would need to be placed on concrete foundation piers. The canvas tents would be open, so that visitors could wander inside.

It is recommended that the furnishings in the tents be used only for summertime visitation. The winter may be too harsh, especially for replica objects. The tents need not be staffed and any small items inside should be inexpensive replicas which the visitor can handle. The tents should be on a solid foundation, such as a wooden platform at grade, for visitor safety.

Historic data should be provided interpreters who may need to interpret the activities of telegraphers, or ticket agents, or trackside restaurant owners, “grocery” operators, and saloon men. Artifacts and objects can be used to advantage. The railroad towns had a diverse workforce. Women worked in restaurants and as laundresses. African-Americans worked in all the businesses as well on the rail cars. The Chinese, the Irish and other immigrants worked businesses of all sorts catering to the workers. Telegraphers might be young, white and male, but women telegraphers were more common than thought (Ogden’s Western Union telegraph operator was the wife of Bishop West at the time).

Simple personal items can show the coming changes. For example, the railroad brought changes visible inside the 1869 tents – a business tent could be “lit” by a glass kerosene lantern (as seen in historic photographs of railroad company tent interiors) while a quarters tent can be “lit” by a rag in a tin pan of grease (as mentioned in reminiscence accounts of the period). Again, simple personal items in the tents can help explain the transcontinental railroad’s impact, one of the park’s interpretive themes and goals.

Wagons may be placed around the historic scene, especially replicas of photographer Russell’s studio wagon and the telegrapher’s wagon near HS-1.

Because the park may limit the number of furnished tents, the fourteen listed above may serve the interpretive goals for the Last Spike Site. The phasing of the development would ensure that unknown costs or problems could be addressed before undertaking a major effort. Therefore, only phases I and II are further detailed here.

## E) Specifications for Phase I and Phase II Exhibit Tents

### 1) Phase I: HS-9, HS-17, and HS-10: J. S. Conner Grocery, Restaurant and Saloon

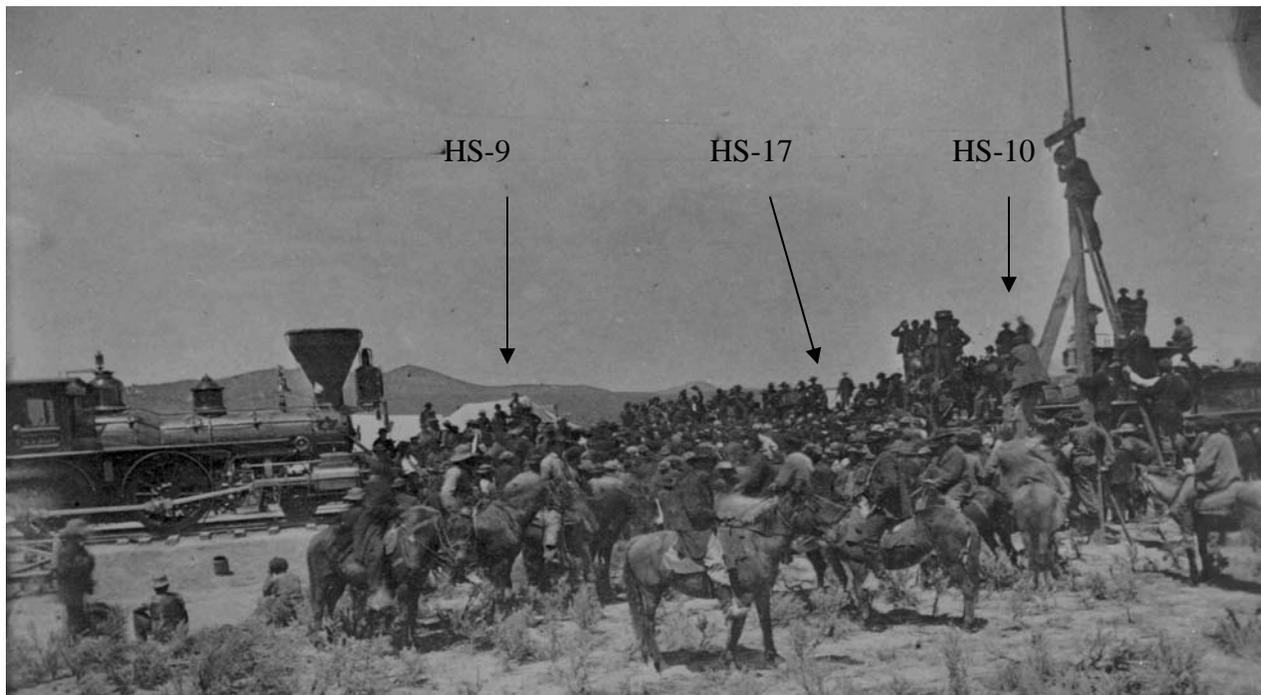


Figure 77. HS-9, HS-17, and HS-10 (hidden by UP locomotive No. 119) in this Hart photograph, May 10.

#### HS-9, J. S. Conner Grocery tent

*Scenario:* J. S. Conner represents the trackside businessman that followed the Union Pacific railroad from one boom and bust grade-side town to the next. He sold a variety of goods, whatever could turn a profit. The grocery sold food stuffs to the crews building the grade as well as some dry goods, pants, shirts, possibly military surplus boots, and other basic clothes. The stock was limited. Conner would purchase “groceries” from Mormon farmers, who showed up with garden goods, rare in May, or canned jars of pickled produce, cucumbers, apples or potatoes. A cracker barrel was on the floor as was some hardware, such as a couple of shovels. On the counter were a barrel of pickled eggs, a coffee grinder, and a cigar tip and tobacco cutter. The supply of dried foods was good because of the numbers of merchants selling out in the Blue Creek valley, from which Conner moved. A clock ticked the time, to CP rules based on a clock in Sacramento. A calendar had May 10 circled. Conner has a sleeping tent attached to the store for himself and a clerk, but for the days before May 10, it was converted to a card room. The supply of wet goods was also evident, with bottles of Red Cloud, Red Jacket and Blue Run whiskey in boxes, and barrels of Ale, some from the Ogden brewery ready for the celebration. A bottle and cups were on the counter ready for the celebration. The J. S. Conner sign, yellow with red letters out front, would direct people to the wide open tent flaps, for no one would deny the workers and participants their holiday this day.

## HS-17, Restaurant

*Scenario:* Mollie Sheehan is representative of the many young women who worked in the restaurants along the line. Although the tent was at Corinne, her story related in her memoirs, *Girl from the Gulches*, is universal for those found along the advancing railroad and can fit as a model for a restaurant scenario at Promontory. The restaurant was simple, which also provided board for railroad construction workers. Her father contracted to do grade work while she and her mother fixed meals, a drudgery to seventeen year old Mollie. Trackside restaurants had simple arrangements. A table with benches would fill the center of the tent, while a cast iron cook stove, pantry and kitchen utensils were in the rear. The meal offered today might be better than the norm of basic beans, bread and beef. A pot of stew or roast plover might be on the stove with tin dishes nearby. The table would be set with tin ware, plates and flat ware. A canvas sign might indicate the cost of meals, 25 cents. A water barrel with dipper, box of wood for the stove, and flour barrel and food crates would crowd the room. There might be a bowl of strawberries in cream, fresh from California, suggestive of the wonderful treats and changes brought about by the railroad.

Unfortunately, no author has penned a study of the meals available to railroad workers, but studies of foods used along the trails are of help. See Jacqueline Williams, *Wagon Wheel Kitchens, Food on the Oregon Trail* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993).

A contemporary photograph by W. H. Jackson of a western field camp shows what might appear inside a restaurant, without the tent. Furnishings include the cook stove and pots, table and benches, and tin ware. Note the deer head. Along the railroad, beef was available from contractors.



Figure 78. Jackson photograph during Hayden survey shows table ware, stove of the period, ca. 1869.



Figures 79, 80. Albert Richardson sketch of a tent saloon and HS-10 at right.

### HS-10 “Deadfall” or Saloon

*Scenario:* The Wolf Tone saloon stood along the Central Pacific grade east of Promontory, but can serve as the model for the furnishings of HS-10, a trackside “deadfall” or whiskey saloon. The Irish owner had followed the construction crews with his tent, simple counter/bar, and a few stools, but nothing fancy. He had bottles and glasses and tin ware plus poor bread and worse stew served in tin plates. (A stove in the back of the tent had a stew pot cooking on top of it). A decorative mirror and “art” (framed lithograph) hung from the tent frame and a canvas sign with black stenciled lettering, “Wolf Tone Hall” wrapped around the counter and out the front flap. A bar would be open to serve celebrants, ready for workers and revelers this day.

Albert Richardson’s above sketch of a frontier “deadfall” shows a row of shelves and barrels of whiskey. Promontory, like every other “Hell on Wheels” railroad town, unfortunately, earned a reputation as the place where the boys could blow off steam. On May 10, Promontory, would hear the wolf howl at the Wolf Tone Hall.



Figure 81. Barrels, benches, debris could be placed around the tent like here at a tent saloon and bakery in the UP town of Pine Bluff, Wyoming.

Phase I Items needed:

HS-9:

- 1 canvas wall tent, 16x22, with wooden platform, frame and sidewalls, and supports
- 1 canvas wall tent, 14x14, with front seam sewn into opening on side of above (HS-9a)
- 1 wooden sign and post with "J. S. Conner" stenciled in red on its yellow base.
- 1 wooden counter/bar, 10' long and 30" wide.
- 1 wall of shelves behind counter
- 1 ten part, cast iron cast iron stove
- 1 wood box with sage brush wood.
- 1 rack of stove tools
- 1 cot with gray wool blanket
- 1 round table of pine with two captain's chairs and deck of cards
- 1 foot locker or trunk with "J. S. Conner" stenciled in black on end
- 1 flour barrel on floor
- 1 cracker barrel on floor near stove at end of counter
- 6 crates of food stuffs on floor, one open with paper boxes of dried lemonade powder
- 6 bins of fresh vegetables, apples on floor
- Bin of three shovels and axe
- Spittoons
- Broom

On counter is:

- Pickled eggs in small barrel
- Coffee grinder
- E & T Fairbanks & Co. scale
- Small sign, in black letters: "Gold worth \$1, Greenbacks \$.75"
- Bread box
- Cigar and tobacco cutter
- California newspapers, somewhat used.
- Leslie's Illustrated weekly*
- Bottles of Red Jacket bitters and glasses
- Accounts ledger
- Stick candy jar

On shelves

- Tin pots and frying pan
- Coffee
- Goods in tin cans, Borden's milk.
- Sugar loaf
- Cigar boxes
- Bull Durham tobacco pouches
- pipes
- lanterns
- Jars of canned fruits and vegetables
- Candles and candle maker
- Lea & Perrin's Worcestershire sauce
- Stationery and writing box

Ink wells  
Dungarees  
Suspenders  
Checkered work shirts  
Hats and work caps  
Wool blankets  
Hob nail boots  
Medicinal goods in bottles  
    Dr. J. Hostetters Stomach Bitters  
    Red Jacket bitters  
Hanging from line between fram uprights:  
    Side of bacon  
    Row of coffee pots and pans  
Clock on shelf with Sacramento time  
Calendar with May 10 circled.  
Two kerosene lanterns with back reflectors attached to tent frame.  
Assorted period lithographs and “art” hanging from tent frame

HS-17:

1 canvas wall tent, 14x16, with wooden platform  
1 eight foot long pine table with benches  
2 stools  
1 two tier cooking wood stove and pipe  
wood box with sage wood  
table cloth  
box of friction matches (empty)  
pots and frying pan hanging from hooks on tent frame  
coffee pot  
bread pan  
pie tin and cake pans  
rolling pin  
Upright pantry  
Barrel of white flour on floor  
Bag of beans  
Butter tub,  
egg crate  
Potato bin  
cooking utensils, large spoons, forks and knives  
1 pot of stew on stove  
canned fruit jars, peach  
lard tin or bucket  
spices  
small coffee grinder  
On table  
    Platter with muffins  
    Condiments

Pie  
Bowl of strawberries in cream  
8 plates, cups and flatware  
Small canvas sign, meals 25 cents.  
Laundry supplies in corner  
Tub  
Washboard  
Soap  
Lye  
Fire hearth iron  
Two tin plates filled with grease and with rags for light  
Hanging from frame beam, keepsake wild flower wreath

HS-10:

1 canvas wall tent 14x14, with wooden platform  
1 simple wood counter/bar six feet long, 24 inches wide with bottles and glasses  
small framed wall mirror, 12x24 inches behind bar.  
1 table and chairs with cards, wooden poker chips, brown bottles and mugs  
1 cast iron trail stove  
pot of stew on stove  
2 shelves nailed to frame, four feet long, behind bar  
on shelves  
    bottles of Red Cloud whiskey  
    boxes of cigars  
    brandied cherries  
    tin cans of oysters  
8 barrels of ale and whiskey  
2 pieces of "art" in frame, possibly Currier & Ives lithographs:  
    "The Trappers Last Shot"  
    "Prairie Fires of the Great West" with train  
Coats hanging from tent frame beams  
Glass kerosene lantern  
Castor  
Salt cellar  
Matches  
6 Small brown glasses  
dozen tumblers  
Pair jugs  
2 Spittoons  
2 Mats  
dozen bottle stoppers  
Bucket  
set bar spoons  
1 canvas sign with "Wolf Tone Hall" stenciled in black letters.

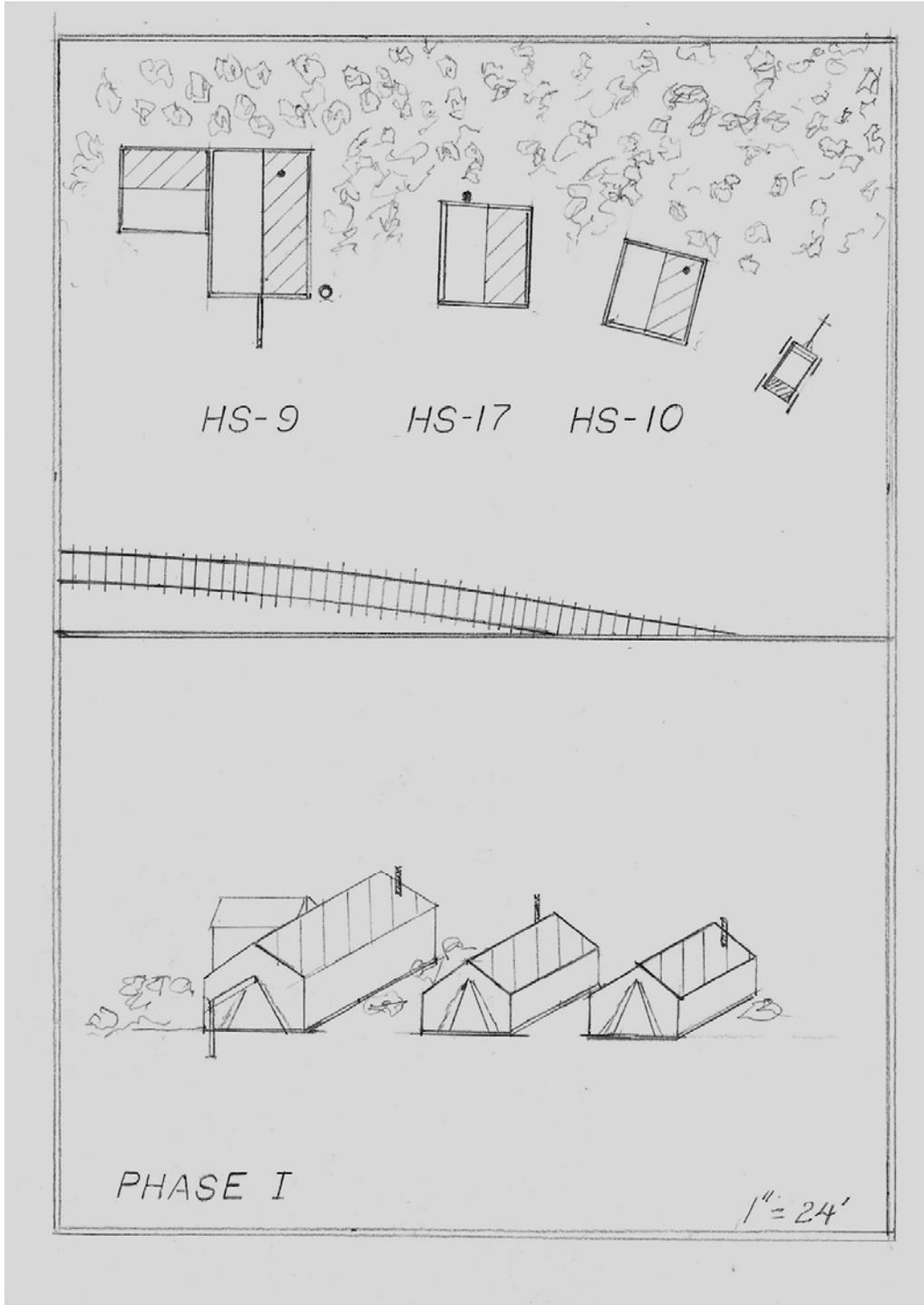


Figure 82. Sketch of J. S. Conner grocery and adjacent restaurant and saloon tents.

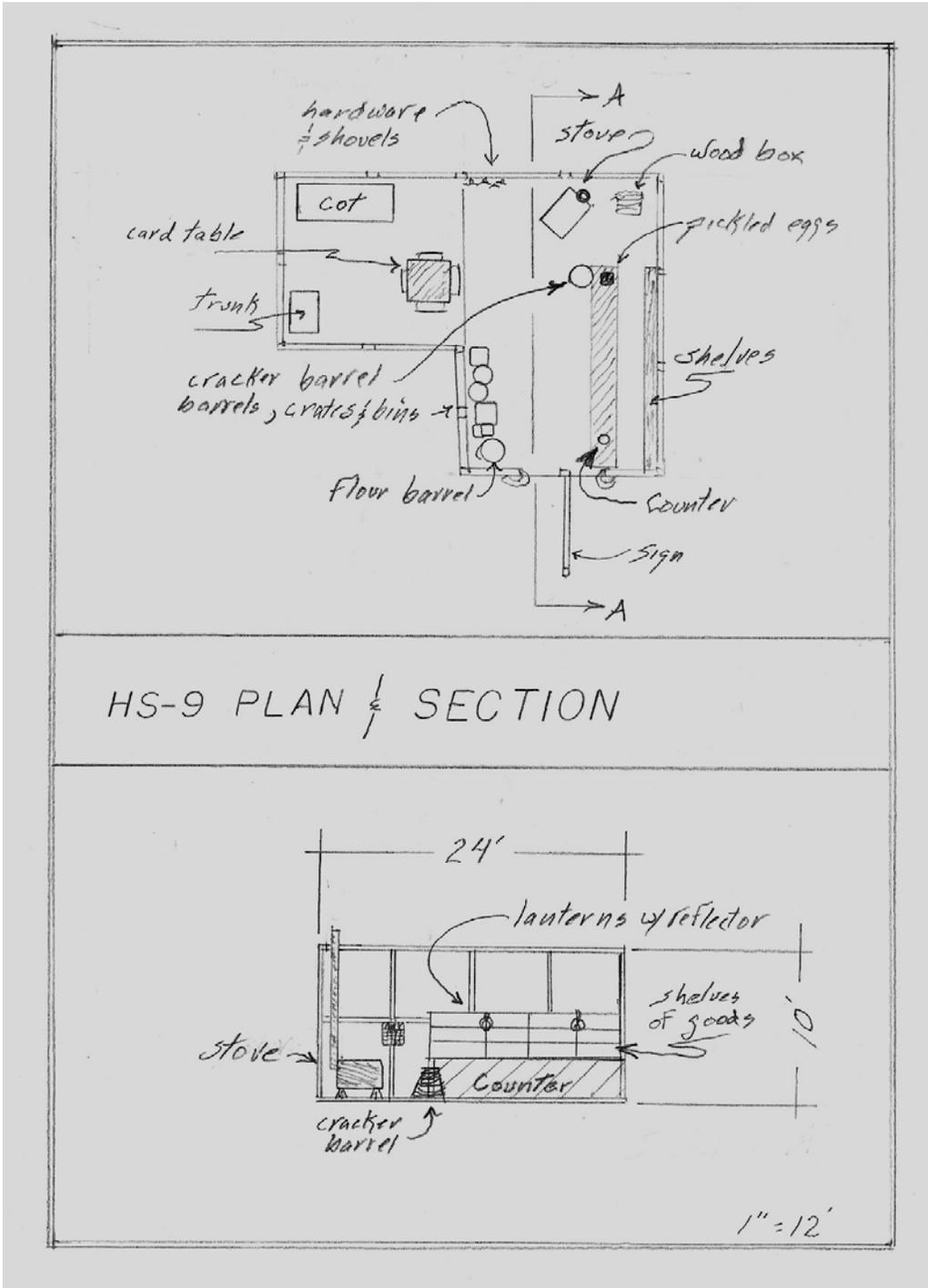


Figure 83. Sketch of the interior of J. S. Conner grocery.

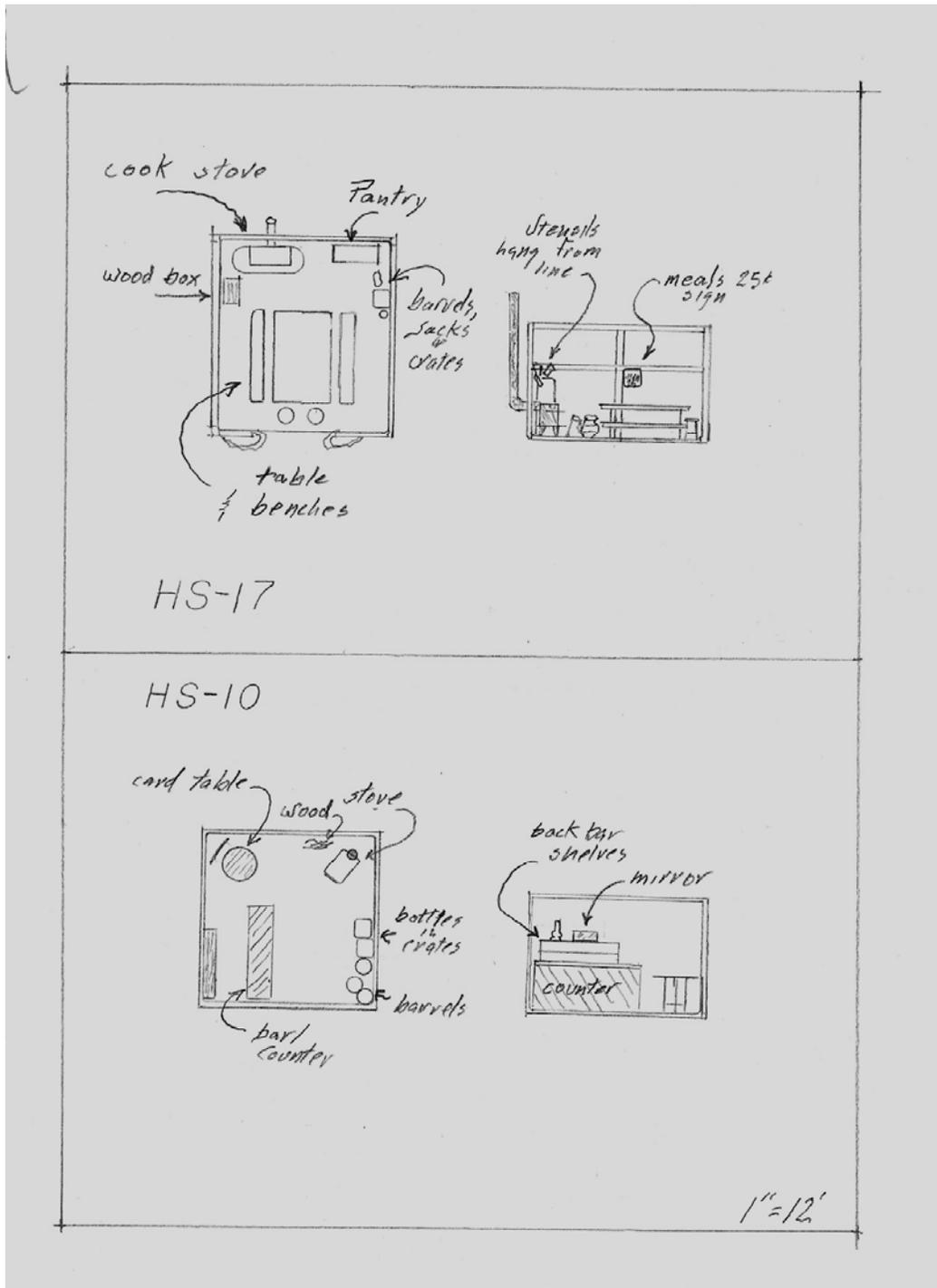
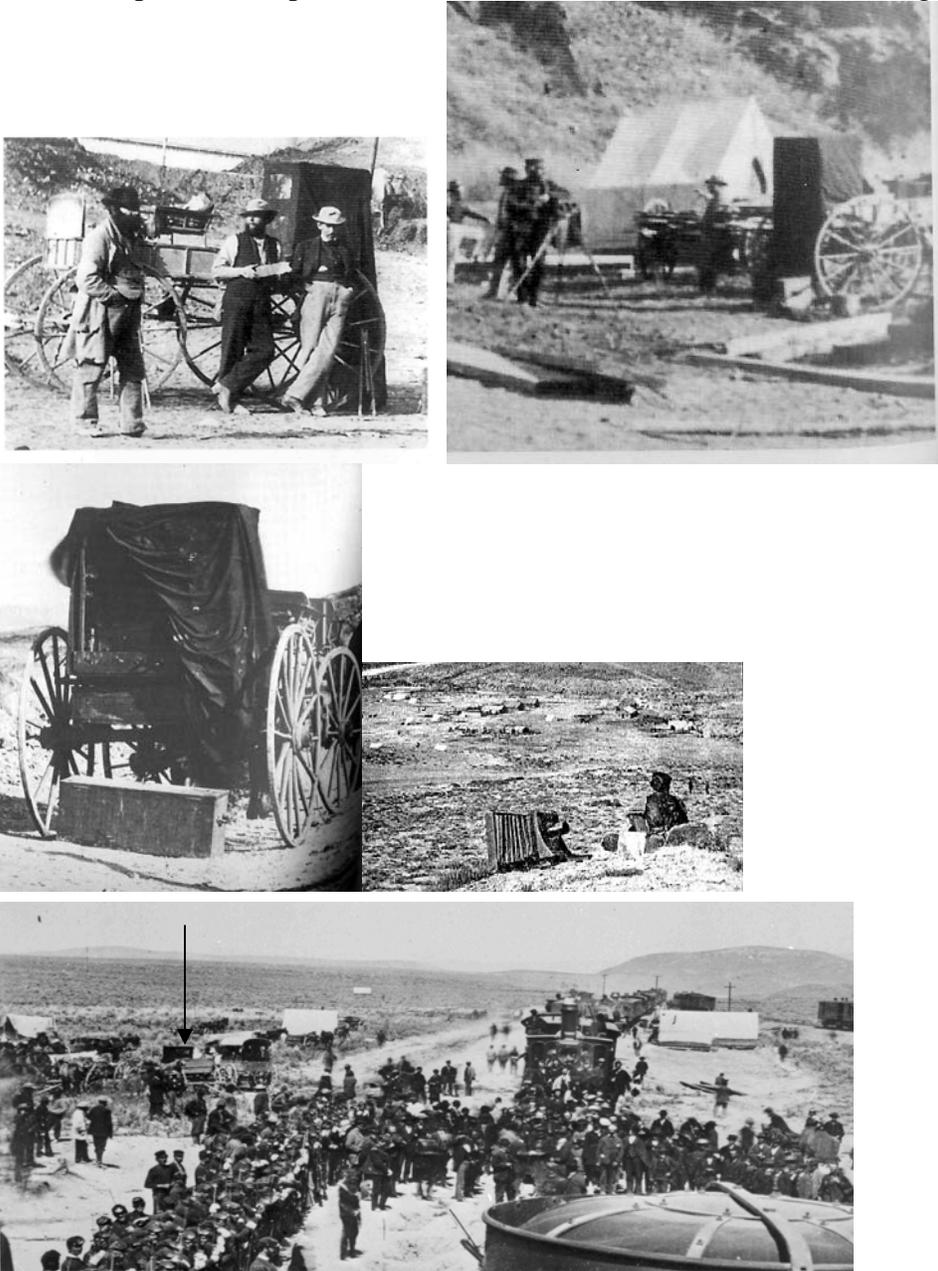


Figure 84. Sketch of the interior of restaurant and saloon tents.

### Andrew J. Russell's Studio Wagon

Andrew J. Russell's photographic studio wagon moved around the last spike site throughout the day. At one point, it was photographed near HS-10 at the end of the commercial row. The wagon studio and its box with chemicals and glass plate negatives could be replicated for placement near HS-10, as seen in the various images of it.



Figures 85, 86, 87, 88, 89. Charles Savage's studio wagon is seen in Figure 85, upper left, while the rest of the images show Russell's wagon. After the ceremony on May 10, his wagon was moved to the group of wagons west of the stage office (HS-11) tent as seen in Figure 89, bottom; note arrow to the wagon with its telltale black studio box on top.

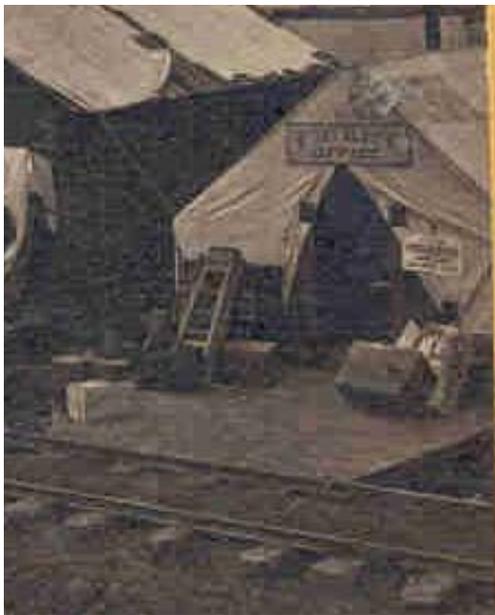
Items needed: buckboard with photographer's studio box and period equipment.

**2) Phase II: HS-12, HS-13: Union Pacific Railroad Ticket and Telegraph Office Tent and the Quarters Tent:**



*Figure 90. Union Pacific Railroad tents at trackside.*

The Union Pacific Railroad ticket and telegraph station office tent and quarters (HS-12, a 14 x 14 wall tent and HS-13, two such tents spliced together making it 14 x 28). It is recommended a platform be built to the track, like at Ogden, below. The sign reads “ticket office” and the platform is cluttered with handcart, boxes, crates, luggage and other impedimenta. The quarters would be similar to but less well furnished than the paymaster’s tent shown at Laramie, right.



*Fig 91. Ogden's tent station, 1869.*



*Fig. 92. Interior of UP quarters tent, Laramie.*

The Promontory station row of tents on June 30, 1869 had a platform as well, though far more crude. Some form of wooden walkway would provide more stable ground for visitors as well as provide space for display objects. A quarters tent at right shows chairs, bunk and wooden walkway in front. This is at Echo City, Utah.

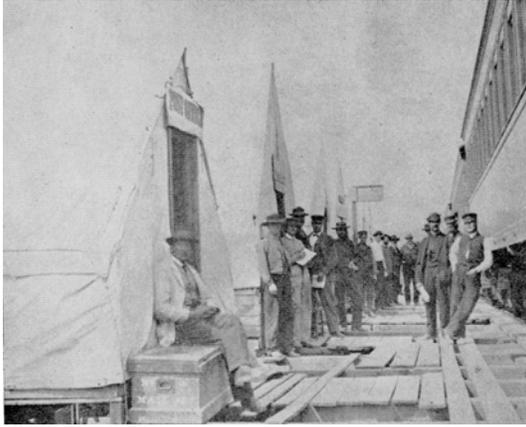


Figure 93. Promontory office tents, June 1869.

Figure 94. Example UP quarters.

The interior of the office would be simple, with a wooden floor, desk and chair, telegraph key and table with glass jar battery underneath. The below image at Echo shows the type of telegraph used by the UP in 1869.



Figures 95 and 96. "Group of Engineers" and tent at Echo, Utah and detail showing telegraph.

Inside the tent would also be boxes and general storage. The ticket office would have pamphlets, timetables, and other railroad information. Fortunately, the Denver Public Library has a rare original red timetable issued by the UP on May 10, 1869. This can be replicated for the office.

On the desk would be writing materials, telegraph slips, and baggage checks. Some of these items have been replicated and are in the park collections, used for previous displays. Inside HS-12 would be two beds along the side walls with a table in between. The table might have a cloth cover, a glass kerosene lantern, and a cigar box. A glass mirror is attached to one of the wooden tent supports. Folding chairs and a captain's

chair are also used for sitting. A game board would be evident as would a spittoon. The Promontory quarters tent would have a wood stove inside.

Personal gear and clothing would be in a steamer trunk or similar traveling box. The reminiscence of one telegrapher tells of buying a box and stenciling his name in coal black on the sides. Books may be present; many of the diarists of the period mention reading popular novels of the day. The flaps might be open for conversation with fellow workers or passersby.



Figures 97, 98, 99, 100. Details of interior of UP quarters tent, Laramie.



Figure 101. Union Pacific Railroad pass book and time table.

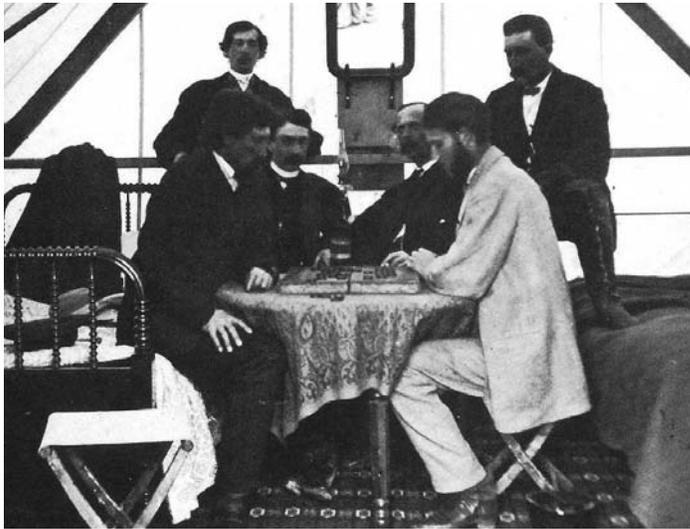


Figure 103. Another view of the UP paymaster's tent, Laramie.

Figure 104. Example paper CP railroad materials can be found at the California State Railroad Museum and elsewhere. Central Pacific Railroad timetable and fare chart would be in the UP ticket office as well. Courtesy Denver Public Library.

**FARE.**

**SACRAMENTO**

TO

**PROMONTORY,**

In Coin, - \$50 00

Children not over Twelve } 1/2 Fare.  
(12) years of age, }  
Under Five (5) years } Free.  
of age, }

**100 Pounds**

**BAGGAGE (per Passenger) FREE.**

**FOR TICKETS**

and other information, apply at the

**COMPANY'S OFFICE**

IN

**SACRAMENTO.**

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE PRESENT

**RATES OF FARE**

TO

**Union Pacific and Connecting Roads.**

From San Francisco or Sacramento to

Promontory,..... (coin) \$50.00
Omaha,..... (currency) 135.00
St. Louis,..... " 135.00
Chicago,..... " 152.00
Channah,..... " 166.50
Niagara Falls,..... " 176.50
New York,..... " 172.00
Boston,..... " 176.00

(Rates are subject to change.)

June 15, 1869.

**JUNE, THE GREAT OVERLAND MAIL ROUTE, 1869.**

**THROUGH TIME, EASTWARD.**

TRAINS PER DAY.	TIME.	DISTANCE.	EXISTING TIME.
SACRAMENTO.....Leave	6:30 A. M.	090	1 day and 12 1/2 hours.
PROMONTORY.....Arrive	9:55 P. M.		
OMAHA.....Leave	10:30 A. M.	1,774	4 days and 3 hours.
COUNCIL BLUFFS.....Leave	11:00 A. M.	4,000	5 days and 7 hours.
CHICAGO.....Arrive	1:30 P. M.	2,298	
".....Leave	5:15		
NEW YORK.....Arrive	6:30 A. M.	3,167	SEVEN DAYS.
COUNCIL BLUFFS.....Leave	10:00 A. M.		
ST. LOUIS.....Arrive	11:30 A. M.	2,214	5 days and 3 hours.

The Business of the Pacific Mutual is Larger and its Expenses LOWER than any other Company in America or Europe the First year.

**BUSINESS OF FIRST YEAR.**

From May 24th, 1868, to May 24th, 1869.

Number of Policies Issued.....	291
Amount Insurance Effected.....	\$3,000,000 00
Total Income.....	200,000 00
Total Assets.....	600,000 00
Ratio of Expenses.....	29.32.

**ALL POLICIES NON-FORFEITABLE!**

All Policies, by the Laws of California, and the Decision of the Supreme Court, exempt from Execution, provided the same is issued by a Company incorporated under the Laws of this State and the Premium does not exceed \$500 per annum.

This Company receives the Highest Rates of Interest of any Company in the world, and so will be enabled to pay the largest dividends.

**COMPARISON.**

\$100 per annum invested for 20 years, by a Company receiving 5 per cent, per annum, amounts to.....	\$6,976 08
By a Company receiving 6 per cent, per annum.....	8,380 17
By a Company receiving 10 per cent, per annum.....	19,004 34

How will you have your money invested? At 6 or at 10 per cent.?

**ROKOHL & HOLBROOK**

SAN FRANCISCO,

Special Agents Counties of San Francisco, San Mateo, Marin, Contra Costa, Alameda, and Santa Clara.

**TABLE**

OF

**DISTANCES and ELEVATIONS**

ON THE

**CENTRAL PACIFIC**

AND

**UNION PACIFIC**

**RAILROADS,**

FROM

**SACRAMENTO, CAL.**

TO

**NEW YORK,**

AND

**LIST OF BRIDGES**

**AND TUNNELS**

ON THE LINE OF THE

**CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILROAD.**

Published by the

**Pacific Mutual**

**LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY**

OF CALIFORNIA,

July, 1869.

**LELAND STANFORD,**

President.

**H. F. HASTINGS,**

Vice-President.

**JOSEPH CRACKBON,**

Secretary.

**JOS. M. FREY,**

Physician-in-Chief.

**SCHREIBER & HOWELL,**

General Agents,

37 and 39 Second St., Sacramento.

H. P. Crocker & Co's Print, San.

Phase II Items needed:

HS-12:

- 1 canvas wall tent, 14 x 14, wood platform, wood sidewalls, and supports and wood frame doorway.
- 2 beds with gray wool blankets
- 1 wooden box, 2 x 2 x 4, with lock and stenciled "U. P. RR Agent"
- 1 foot locker
- 1 coat hanging from tent frame
- 1 folding canvas stool
- 1 table and chairs
- 1 glass kerosene lantern
- 1 mirror
- box cigars
- 1 cuspidor
- 1 game board and checkers
- 1 pot bellied stove with coal bucket

HS-13:

- 1 canvas wall tent, 14 x 28, wood platform, wood sidewalls, and supports. Tent to have wooden frame for doorway.
- 1 oak desk and chair
  - clock on top with Cheyenne or UP time
  - metal and leather bag checks
  - tickets and receipt book
  - railroad pass book
  - UP letterhead
  - UP May 10 schedule pinned to side
  - Railroad timetable manual
- 1 small table and chair with
  - telegraph key and repeater
  - UP telegrapher's receipt book
  - Wire and clippers
- 1 pot bellied stove
- 1 coal bucket
- 1 wooden ticket box, 3x3x4 with "Agent, Union Pacific Railroad" stenciled on it in black
- 1869 calendar
- Union Pacific poster, May 10 but says Julesburg
- 2 wool blankets hanging from line across middle of tent dividing front office and back storage space
- Mail bags and express behind blanket in "secure" storage space
- 1 table with large, glass bell jar battery with acid
- wire connecting telegraph key with battery and leading out the back of the tent.
- 1 wooden bench in front of ticket office
- 1 wooden sign with "Ticket Office" stenciled on it
- 1 small posting board for time schedules

Tents of Golden Spike NHS -- IV Tents Exhibit Plan

1 hand cart

On walkway in front of ticket office and quarters:

Number of large steamer trunks,  
crates,  
carpet bags  
other impedimenta

Note: pot bellied stoves burn coal and would have only been used in the UP tents.

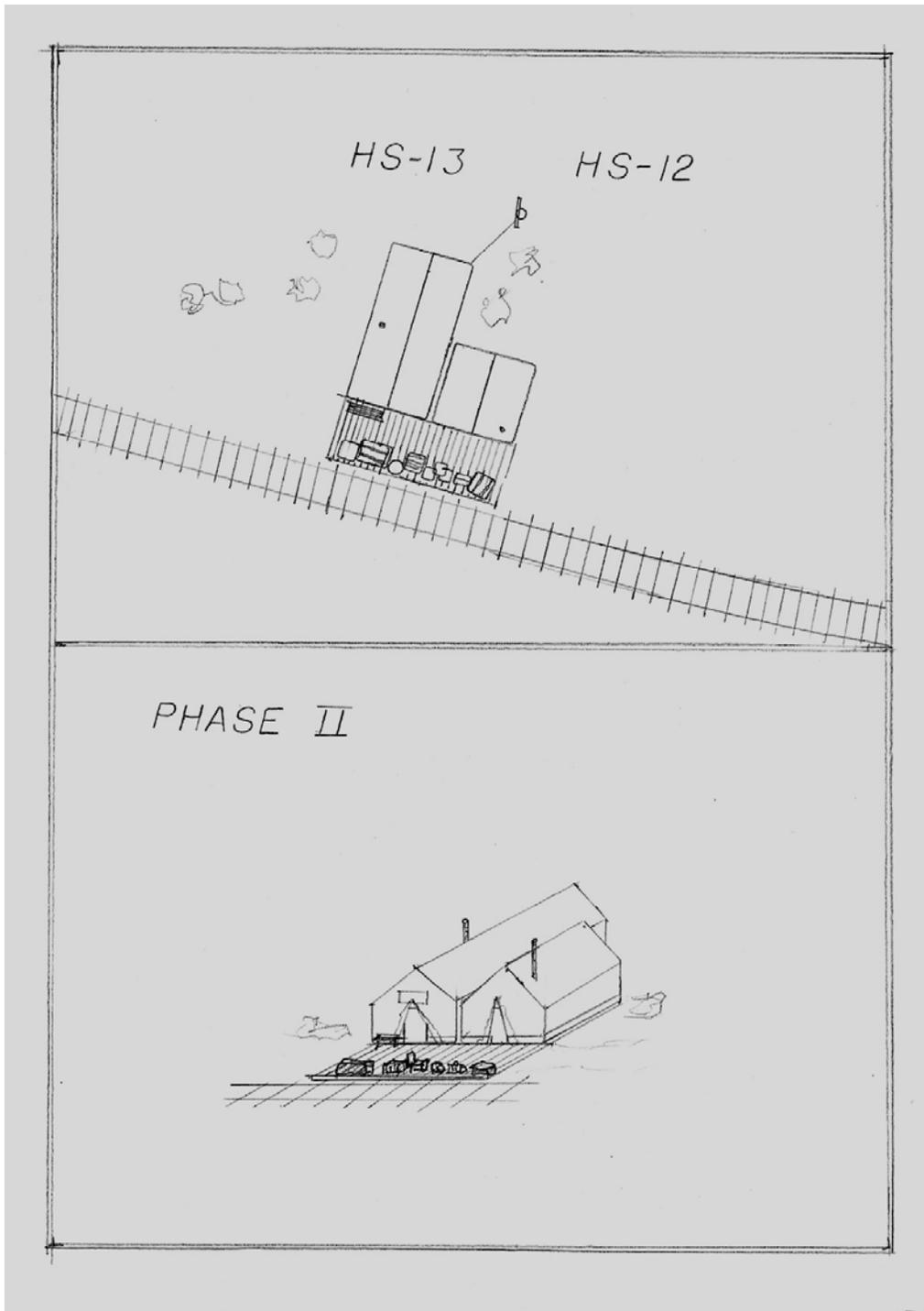


Figure 105. Union Pacific ticket and telegraph office and quarters tents. Note stacks of baggage, boxes and crates as safety block between tents and tracks.

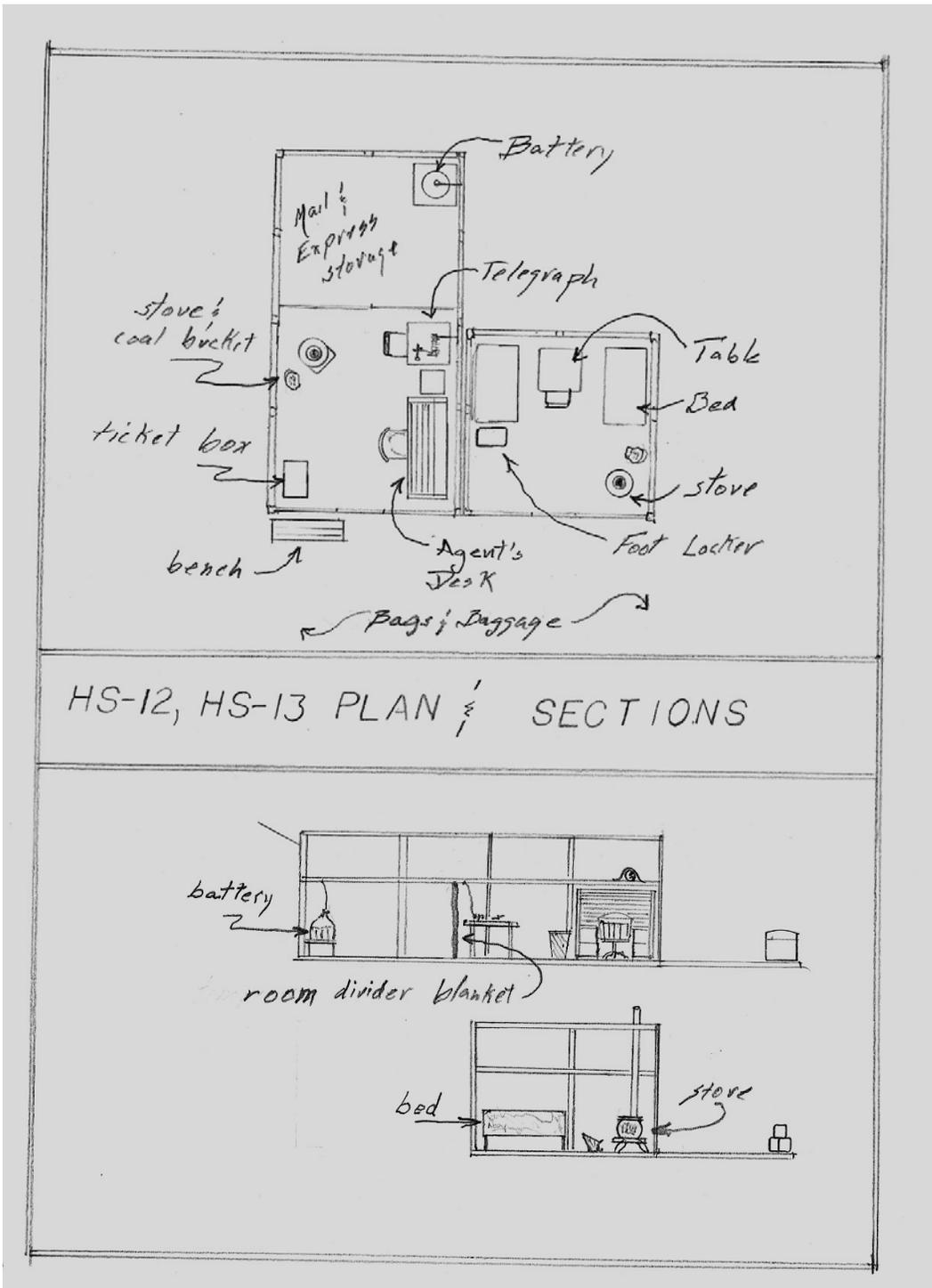


Figure 106. Interior of the Union Pacific tents.

### F) Recommended Locations for Phase I and II Exhibit tents

The Last Spike Site plan included recommendations for development zones. The area immediately to the north of the Visitor Center was considered a “Historic Reconstruction Zone,” the focus of the recreation of the historic May 10 scene.

The tents would be placed within the reconstruction zone as shown on the map below (from the “Implementation Plan For the Reconstruction and Interpretation of the May 10, 1869 Last Spike Site”). The commercial row, the tents recommended for replication first, would be placed just north of the railroad tracks. The Phase II tents would be to the east of the trail to the last spike site and south of the Union Pacific track, still within the reconstruction zone.

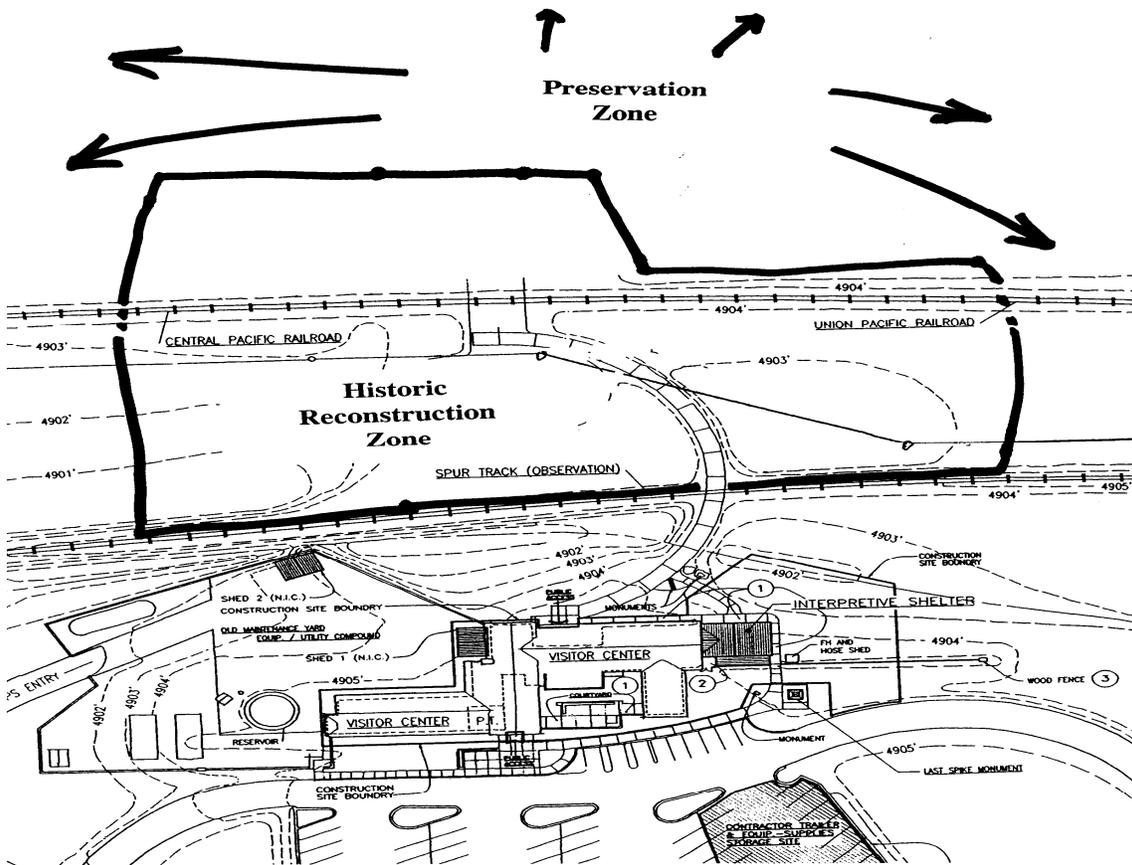


Figure 107. The Last Spike Site, or “Historic Reconstruction Zone.”



*Figure 108. Phase I tents, HS-9, HS-17, and HS-10, would serve as backdrop to the historic “Last Spike Site,” introduced into the space right of the locomotive “Jupiter” in the above scene. They would be placed opposite the benches with Conner’s sign aligned with the last spike. A replica of the Russell photograph wagon could be placed near HS-10.*



*Figure 109. Phase II tents, HS-12 and HS-13, would be placed east of the visitor path and approximately left of center in the above photograph. The tents would have a platform in front that extends to the edge of the tracks, but would be stacked with crates, baggage and hand cart that serve as a barrier between the replica tents exhibits and the rails.*



*Figure 110. The refurbished post trader's store, ca. 1876, at Fort Laramie National Historic Site served the troopers and surrounding settlers and is a good example of an accurately refurbished space that aids the park's interpretive goals. The J. S. Conner grocery was similar in supplying the railroad workers. His tent grocery at Golden Spike National Historic Site would be smaller and carry goods not found on a military post, but the overall impression of the visitor could be the same at Conner's and the other tents, the variety and abundance of goods in such isolated settings.*

## **G) Specific Sources for Objects and Display Exhibit Items**

Since the first tents were introduced in 1974, the business of manufacturing replica tents and period items has greatly increased. A number of firms are available that fabricate Civil War era replica tents. NPS sites have used a number of firms. Below are representative firms, although lines of products are always increasing and any purchase should be based on sound contracting practices.

Example sources for replica tents are:

### **1) Tentsmiths**

Tentsmiths produces wall tents and wedge tents, some of which are used at Gettysburg National Military Park and other units. They can be contacted at P. O. Box 1748, Conway, NH 03818, 606-447-2344. Their web address is: [www.tentsmiths.com](http://www.tentsmiths.com)

### **2) Panther Primitives**

Fort Laramie NHS has used Panther Primitives tents and have found them to bear up well under the Wyoming weather. Contact them at: [www.pantherprimitives.com](http://www.pantherprimitives.com)

### **3) Yakima Tent Company**

Yakima Tent Company also produces Civil War replica wall and wedge tents. They can be reached at their web page: [www.yakimatent.com](http://www.yakimatent.com)

### **4) Fall Creek Sutlery**

Fall Creek Sutlery manufactures Civil War replica Wall and Wedge Tents, as well as Sutler's tents. They can be reached at: <http://fcsutler.com/fccanvas.asp>

Example sources for replica interior furnishings:

A number of parks already sell replica items through their cooperating associations. Bents Old Fort National Historic Site has an extensive catalog of tin ware, trade goods, and other items worth reviewing. The manufacture of period items is a popular adjunct to educational programs at crafts museums and many living history museums sell their products. The best place to begin is the directory prepared by the Association for Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums (<http://www.alhfam.org/>). An example living history museum with an extensive catalogue of tin ware and other replicas of the period is at the Old Sturbridge Village, Massachusetts (<http://www.osv.org/>). A more detailed list of items to be purchased and suppliers can be developed in the implementation phase.



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*New York Times*  
*News*, Gold Hill, Nevada  
*Nunda News*, Nunda, New York  
*Ogden Junction*, Ogden  
*Omaha Herald*  
*Reporter*, Salt Lake City and Corinne, Utah  
*Rocky Mountain News*, Denver  
*San Francisco Chronicle*  
*San Francisco Newsletter and California Advertiser*  
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## **F) Note on Photographs**

Historic photographs for this report have come primarily from the Golden Spike National Historic Site Library. A good start is the collection of images gathered by Roy Appleman during the 1960s. He was helped by Gerald Best, railroad historian, whose collection is now at the California State Railroad Museum Library, Sacramento. In 1968, Park Historian Andy Ketterson made 4x5 copy negatives of the Appleman photograph albums as well as other images. Selections from these negatives were scanned by Walter Waite, NPS, Santa Fe, for use in this report. Again, with few exceptions, all historic images can be found in the Golden Spike National Historic Site files.

The Union Pacific Museum has an extensive collection of stereo cards by A. J. Russell, a number by Alfred A. Hart, and a few by Charles Savage. The image on the cover of this report, the paymaster's tent at Laramie City, was taken by A. J. Russell and is a stereo card image used courtesy the Union Pacific Museum, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Images by W. H. Jackson can also be found at the U. S. Geological Survey library, Denver. An album of A. C. Hull prints in the Western History Collection, Denver Public Library have the same prints as well as several mislabeled as Promontory. Copies are at the park.

Collector Barry Swackhamer shared images by and information about John B. Silvis.

The best collection of glass plate negatives from the period are those by A. J. Russell, now at the Oakland Museum, Oakland, California. The park has a set of prints acquired when the negatives were at the American Geographical Society, New York City.

The park also supplied slides of the 1970s-90s tents from its files for scanning. They appear in the report as well. The Arizona spike image on the title page is by Tom Richter, NPS, Omaha. All other present day park scenes, 2003-4, are by Robert Spude, NPS, Santa Fe.



## **VI. Appendices**

- A) Reporters at Promontory Summit, May 10, 1869
- B) Chronology of Photographers and Photographs
- C) Alfred Hart's First Photograph of Promontory, May 7 or May 9?
- D) How Many Tents? Or, Finding HS-17
- E) The Community of Promontory Summit, May 10, 1869, As Portrayed in Published Histories
- F) Traveler's Accounts, 1869.
- G) Promontory Station Hypothetical Track Plan, ca. Summer-Fall 1869
- H) A Commentary on J. N. Bowman's article "Driving the Last Spike at Promontory, 1869," Fifty Years Later



## Appendix A) Reporters at Promontory Summit, May 10, 1869

Chroniclers of the celebration on May 10 estimate twenty to thirty reporters present. Orson F. Whitney in his *History of Utah* compiled a list of fourteen reporters present plus “others.” Using the period newspapers and comments of other reporters the author has compiled a list of reporters known to have been on the scene. The two lists are here combined. Whitney mentions a Mr. Howard of the *Omaha Herald*, but that newspaper only published reports from W. W. Foote, so he is named below. This is the only difference in Whitney’s list, except the increase in numbers. Also, Whitney spells the reporter from the *Cheyenne Argus* as Barbardi, while Baker of the *Cheyenne Leader* spells it Carbanati, which is used here.

Those names marked with an *asterisk* (\*) are confirmed by checking newspapers. Unfortunately, some of the newspapers are not extant, such as the *San Francisco Times* and the *Cheyenne Argus*. The last five names are of special correspondents, who were there for other reasons. The “unknowns” may later be discovered. Their reports were among the best.

- 1) Dr. Adonis, *San Francisco Herald*
- 2) H. W. Atwell, *San Francisco Chronicle*
- 3) N. A. Baker, *Cheyenne Leader*\*
- 4) John Hanson Beadle, *Reporter*, Corinne, Utah\*
- 5) A. D. Bell, *Bulletin*, San Francisco, and *San Francisco News Letter*. \*
- 6) Carbanati of *Cheyenne Argus*, (per Baker of *Cheyenne Leader*)
- 7) A. M. Clapp, Springfield, Massachusetts *Republican*
- 8) W. W. Foote, *Omaha Herald* \*
- 9) Fred Freeman\*\*, of defunct *Frontier Index* (visits Beadle at *Reporter*)
- 10) Dr. H. W. Harkness of Sacramento Press.
- 11) T. O’Leary, *Sacramento Bee*\*
- 12) Frederick McRellish of *Alta California*\*
- 13) B. W. Miller, New York City press
- 14) G. F. Parsons, *San Francisco Times*, (visits Beadle of *Reporter*)
- 15) E. Richards, *San Francisco Times* (visits Beadle at *Reporter*)
- 16) E. L. Sloan, *Deseret News*\*
- 17) Amos Steck, Denver press (*Colorado Tribune*)\*.
- 18) T. B. H. Stenhouse, *Telegraph*, Ogden
- 19) W. S., *New York Times*\*
- 20) Unknown, *Chicago Tribune*\*
- 21) Unknown, *Call*, San Francisco\*
- 22) Unknown, *Enterprise*, Virginia City, Nevada\*
- 23) A. J. Russell, Nunda, New York *News*\* and *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly* (this is unconfirmed, but it is generally believed that Russell was the author of the heavily edited article)
- 24) J. D. B. Stillman, *Overland Monthly*\*
- 25) John Todd, Boston *Congregationalist* and New York *Evangelist*
- 26) Charles Savage, *Harpers Weekly*\*
- 27) Wells Spicer, *Advertiser*, Tipton, Iowa.\* (Spicer’s article published over a month after the event suggests there are many other letters published in the home town newspapers by people who were there.)

Also see Hugh F. O’Neil, “List of Persons Present, Promontory, Utah, May 10, 1869,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* (April 1956), 157-164, but his list is based on Whitney.

\*\*Fred was brother of Leigh Freeman, editor of the *Frontier Index*.



## **Appendix B) Chronology of Photographers and Photographs, 1869**

On May 6, Leonard Eicholtz, bridge engineer for the Union Pacific Railroad, returned from Devils Gate Bridge to Blue Creek at the eastern base of the Promontory Mountains. He noted in his diary, May 6, 1869: “Rode all night and got to Blue Creek at 5 A. M. Walked over to [Casement’s] camp with Maj. Russel [sic.] Co. Photographer who came up to take views of Road.” From this observation it appears photographer Andrew Joseph Russell arrived first in the area. Since the Union Pacific line was not completed to Promontory Summit until the next day, Friday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, Russell may have lingered in the Blue Creek area. In the Union Pacific Museum collections in Council Bluffs and the Russell collection of negatives at the Oakland Museum, there are photographs of work camps and crews preparing to leave the work area now that the big job building up the eastern slope to Promontory Summit was nearly done.

On May 7, a reporter for the *Alta California* writing from Promontory Summit, noted that: “photographers are busy to-day attempting to obtain photographs at the junction of the roads, the lines of the locomotives, the scenery, appearance of the squads of laborers, etc., but it is feared that in consequence of the sultriness of the weather very good sketches will not be obtained.” The Union Pacific had just completed the track and Union Pacific locomotive No. 60 with cars arrived at the Summit the afternoon of May 7<sup>th</sup>. Russell was undoubtedly on the flat cars pulled by No. 60.

The engineer of the UP No. 60 hailed the Central Pacific Railroad crews at the end of the track, the “Jupiter,” CP’s No. 60, and the “Whirlwind,” the CP’s No. 62. The “Jupiter” had just arrived with the special train of Governor Leland Stanford, president of the Central Pacific. Onboard the Stanford special was Alfred A. Hart, the guest photographer for the CP. An image by Hart, taken May 7, looks from the tender of the “Jupiter” west across the last spike site (see Appendix C). It is the earliest taken at Promontory Summit. A print of the image in the park collection shows a row of tents along the northwest side of the tracks, with the sign board of “J. S. Conner” shown at left. (J. S. Conner had moved his tent saloon up the seven miles from Junction City on Blue Creek.)

Because the last spike ceremony was rescheduled from Saturday, May 8, to Monday, May 10, on the morning of May 8<sup>th</sup>, the Stanford party including photographer Hart, traveled as guests of the UP into the Salt Lake Valley. Hart took a number of photographs along the new line. Meanwhile, Russell returned to Casement’s camp at the Blue Creek siding, probably taking more scenes of workers, work sites, and the rapidly declining camps. Again, stereo view cards of these camps are in the collections of the Union Pacific Museum with, presumably, Russell’s hand written captions. At Casement’s camp that Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup>, he met Salt Lake City photographer Charles R. Savage.

Savage had been invited to photograph the last spike ceremony by Union Pacific Railroad consulting engineer Silas Seymour. Savage’s diary details his leaving Salt Lake City by stage coach on May 6<sup>th</sup>, his night at the UP ticket office at Taylor’s Mill near Ogden, and then travel to the end of the track on the 7<sup>th</sup>. According to his diary, he “took 3 or 4

negative's around Casement's camp." During this period, on the 8<sup>th</sup>, he also bumped into Hart and Russell. On the 9<sup>th</sup>, Savage went to Promontory Summit and spent the night as guest of the Union Pacific in its telegraph and ticket office tent.

By Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup>, Hart had returned with the Stanford Special and had taken photographs of CP construction crews under James H. Strobridge at Victory siding, six miles from Promontory, and at Monument Point. Hart's images and the account of the Stanford party by Dr. J. D. B. Stillman published in the *Overland Monthly* details his movements during those early May days.

There is confusion regarding one of Hart's stereo view cards. According to Hart's later series of stereo cards, card No. 364, "First Greeting of Iron Horse, Promontory, 5/9/1869," he may also have been at Promontory Summit on May 9, if that caption's date is correct. However, the May 9<sup>th</sup> image lacks several tents that should have appeared by May 9, including those of the UP workers building the wye and the tent Savage slept in the night of the 9<sup>th</sup>. Also, according to the May 7 newspaper report, the first greeting of the locomotives was on May 7, not the 9<sup>th</sup>. Hart probably took the photograph May 7<sup>th</sup>, but changed the date to better fit his chronological and geographical sequence of stereo view cards. It is doubtful that Hart was at Promontory Summit, May 9, but, instead, was on the Stanford Special at points west. This is discussed further in Appendix C.

On May 10, Charles Savage was on the ground first at Promontory Summit having spent the night in the UP company tent. Russell, according to the article in the June 5<sup>th</sup> *Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*, which he presumably authored, arrived with the first UP train at 8:20 a. m., local time. With him was his photo studio wagon, which appears in several images (Savage worked closely with Russell in the studio wagon, which later UP historian Levi O. Leonard incorrectly credited as Savage's). Hart arrived with the Stanford Special, switched to the front at 10 a.m., local time.

Each photographer painstakingly prepared chemicals, spread the mix on glass plates, placed the negatives in their bulky, box cameras, and removed the lens caps for a set time to capture the images. They took photographs of the gathering crowd, the last work of joining the rails, and then the ceremony. The reporter for the *Deseret News* wrote that after the ceremony half an hour was given over to the photographers. This is when the posed views were taken, including the most famous images of two locomotives and crews joining hands. Photographer biographers Bradley, Palmquist, Williams and others have come to the general agreement on who took the most celebrated image on May 10<sup>th</sup>, that by Andrew J. Russell.

Hart and Savage were first to leave. Hart was on the Stanford Special, which left late in the afternoon bound for Sacramento. Savage joined the Mormon delegation on the UP train back to Ogden, which left around 5 o'clock. Each railroad used its own time schedules, the CP based on a tightly regulated clock in Sacramento and the UP on Cheyenne time, which makes accuracy about times of departure or any time questionable. Russell biographer Susan Williams suggests that he may have taken a slow route back to

Echo City, UP division construction headquarters, where on May 13 he wrote an article for the Nunda, New York *News* about the ceremony.

During the following months several itinerant photographers journeyed to Promontory station to photograph the historic junction. John B. Silvis, a traveling photographer who had formerly operated out of the mining camps of Nevada and at Salt Lake City, was in Promontory sometime during the summer of 1869. Silvis biographer Barry Swackhammer suggests that Silvis took a series of views, two of which are in his collection of stereo view cards. They are of the tent businesses of Promontory City. Contemporary newspapers fail to mention Silvis's visit to Promontory, which makes dating the images difficult. Traveling photographer William Henry Jackson met Silvis working out of a tent along the Union Pacific Railroad line in September. The Silvis views may date from that later time period or just before.

William Henry Jackson, at that time an Omaha photographer but who would become one of the most famous of frontier photographers, took stereo views along the Union Pacific that summer as well. With experienced photographer Arundel C. Hull, Jackson left Omaha in June and on June 30 arrived at Promontory station. He and Hull set up their tent camp. According to Jackson's diary, they took only three photographs that day, the original prints of which reside in the U. S. Geological Survey library, Denver. Prints are also in the Hull photograph album at the Denver Public Library. Their images show the last spike site from the north of the tracks and from the northwest.

Hull probably took the third photograph -- the tent row of ticket offices, post office, and Western Union office along the tracks. Jackson notes in his diary that during July 1<sup>st</sup> "took various views." These images have not been located. Jackson and Hull left Promontory station on the afternoon train east, July 1, 1869.

In the Hull photograph album at the Denver Public Library are two additional images captioned as being taken in Promontory that summer. Hull's daughter published these images in a biography about Hull titled *Shutters West*. The over view image of Promontory shows the Wasatch range in the background and is not Promontory, but is a photograph of Uinta, Utah taken by Hull and Jackson later that summer. The second Hull view is of a row of tents mistakenly labeled Promontory as well. This image shows Goldberg's cigar store and a billiard hall plus other tents. A close look of an image by Hull and Jackson of Montana Street, Corinne, shows these tents down the street. The image is of early Corinne, Utah not Promontory. Clear prints of these images, correctly labeled, are in the Jackson photograph prints, U. S. Geological Survey library, Denver.

In October, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* sent its artist Joseph Becker west on the transcontinental railroad. He left Omaha on the Pullman Palace cars October 19 and arrived in San Francisco several days later. In November, after six weeks in California, Becker returned to New York with a stopover in Salt Lake City. Becker's sketches of Promontory appeared January 5, 1870 and March 5, 1870. *Leslie's* also published woodcuts of A. J. Russell photographs to accompany the articles. Probably in early November, Russell traveled west again and passed through Promontory. He took at least three



*William H. Jackson photographed by A. C. Hull in Echo, Utah vicinity, summer 1869. Note tracks and telegraph pole in background. This is the set-up Hull and Jackson used at Promontory June 30-July 1, 1869. He holds a stereo negative. Note bottles of chemicals at his feet. USGS.*

views: 1) looking west past the new eating house toward the last spike site and the C. P. yards; 2) looking east down the street of Promontory City with the station at right; and 3) a view of the front of the station. The Russell images of ca. November, 1869, may be the last taken at Promontory while it was the junction point of the transcontinental railroad.

These views may have aided Becker. His street sketch of Promontory City may have benefited from the stereo cards published by Silvis as well. However, Becker's sketch mislabels several tents, suggesting he had poor copies of the Silvis stereo cards, or the sketch was miss-copied for publication. For example, the "Omaha House" did not exist in Promontory City, but shows in Becker's published street scene. The Russell and Silvis images confirm the incorrect naming of businesses by *Leslie's* magazine.

A stereo view card at the Denver Public Library is captioned "China Section Gang, Promontory." The image shows a Chinese section crew with crow bars standing in front of the CP freight house and next to John B. Silvis's photo studio railroad car. The undated image shows what was a common work scene in 1869, but it appears to be taken at a later date. Silvis purchased his photo studio car in the fall 1870 and was at Corinne, Utah, near Promontory, in August-September 1871, bound for the West. Silvis probably took the photograph during the late summer or fall of 1871.

Russell sold his negatives, which ended up in the hands of Stephen Sedgewick. Sedgewick had been with Russell as early as August 1869, according to William Jackson's diary, but there is no evidence that he was a photographer at Promontory as some writers suggest. Savage and Eicholtz do not mention him in their diaries, nor do any contemporary writers at May 10. Sedgewick converted many of the Russell and other photographers' images into lantern slides and gave traveling lectures about the railroad and the West. A catalogue published in 1873 lists the images. Through his efforts and his heirs the exquisite glass plate negatives by Russell were saved.

A. A. Hart's negatives were later used by Carleton Watkins, well-known San Francisco photographer, who similarly marketed his images as stereo view cards under his (Watkins's) name. The Watkins series included new views taken by him ca. 1871, including an image of a locomotive going through a cut on the eastern slope of the Promontory. There has been no confusion about Watkins not being at Promontory Summit, May 10, since he made no such claim.

The photographers at Promontory were, for May 10, Andrew J. Russell, Alfred A. Hart, and Charles R. Savage. All were there at the request of the railroad companies. Subsequently, itinerant photographers moved up and down the line taking photographs of sites, including Promontory, in order to meet the increasing market for stereo view cards. The few post-May 10 images of Promontory that we know of were taken by John Silvis, William Jackson, and Arundel C. Hull. A. J. Russell, probably on assignment for *Leslie's* magazine, where he would spend the end of his career, made one final photographic stop at Promontory late in its life as junction point for the transcontinental railroad.

**Sequence of Photographs taken May 10, 1869 at Promontory Summit.**

Three photographers, A. J. Russell, A. A. Hart, and C. R. Savage took at least 28 images of the events at Promontory Summit during Monday, May 10, 1869. The following list of photographs and descriptions provides a suggested chronology of photographs, mid-morning through the afternoon. The photographers were taking scenes often near each other and at about the same time. Accurate timing of these near duplicate images by different photographers, primarily Savage and Russell, makes their placement in the chronology interchangeable, to say the least. Sources include newspaper reporter accounts, the diary of Lt. Currier, and the photographs themselves. (All images from Golden Spike National Historic Site files)

Mid-morning photographs



A. J. Russell arrived at 8:20 a.m. and took the first images of the completion of the line. At left UP graders put ballast between the ties and inadvertently pose for the first photograph.

1-Russell



Russell has now moved south of the tracks. The crowd is beginning to gather and the flag can be seen on top the CP telegraph pole.

2-Russell



Russell has moved closer to the last spike site. The crowd continues to gather around the surveyor's flag, site for the driving of the golden spike.

3-Russell



Russell photographs the last rail, loose on the ties, and the laurel tie site, where the boy stands at center. The crowd continues to gather as noon approaches.

4-Russell



Charles Savage stayed the night in the U. P. tents and during the morning took this image of the CP's Stanford Special train, while the engine crew waits for the track to clear. Around 11:00 a.m. they moved up to the end of the track. This image was taken while Russell was shooting his series.

5-Savage

Mid-day photographs



Russell titled this image "Chinese laying last rail." At center is a Chinese track crew placing the last rail, at approximately 11:00 a.m., in preparation for the ceremony. Durant's special train is behind the gathering crowd.

6-Russell



Hart sold this image in his stereopticon series, titled "The Last Rail. The Convocation. Fixing the wire." As the crowd swarms the site at noon, Hart captures the beginning of the ceremony.

7-Hart



Russell took a similar photograph of the beginning of the ceremony.

8-Russell



C. R. Savage's first photograph was of the beginning of the ceremony as well.

9-Savage



Savage took a view of the telegraph crew on the CP pole, where wires led to the last spike. This is one of the few detail photographs of the ceremony.

10-Savage



Reporters noted that the audience was asked to clear a way for the photographers just at the peak of the ceremony. Russell's view was taken during this break in the ceremony from south of the tracks, about the same time as Hart's view (number 13).

11-Russell



Savage standing near Russell, took a similar image.

12-Savage



Hart's photograph when "Last Rail is Laid," also labeled "Last Act," shows the railroad dignitaries at the height of the ceremony, laurel tie in place. Hart has moved to stand on the front of the "Jupiter" for this photograph.

13-Hart

14-Savage – second image,  
similar to above #12 (see note below)

Between 1 and 2 p.m.



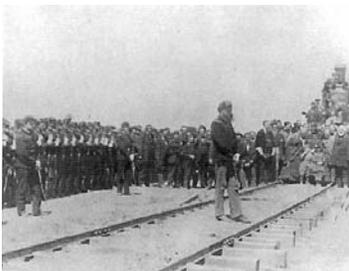
15-Hart

After the ceremony, reporters noted that photographers were given a half hour more to take photographs. Lt. Currier noted at this time that the locomotives backed from the last spike site, then the soldiers made a perimeter and stood at parade rest, captured here by Hart in his image from atop the UP's "No. 119."



16-Russell

At about the same time as the above (15-Hart), Russell took a photograph from atop the CP's "Jupiter," and captured Hart and camera standing atop the "No. 119."



17-Savage

About the same time as the two views above, Savage took a photograph of the troops and the UP dignitaries in front of the "No. 119." Hart's image above (15) shows the tripod of Savage left of the "Jupiter."



18-Russell

Russell took a similar image to the Savage photograph described above.

Mid to Late -Afternoon



19-Russell

Lt. Currier noted that after the photographers finished the ceremonial photographs, the troops retired, and the engines moved back together over the last spike site (and the company dignitaries returned to the cars). Russell took his famed “champagne photograph” at this time, without a railroad president, vice-president, or director present.



20-Savage

Savage took a similar view as Russell’s.



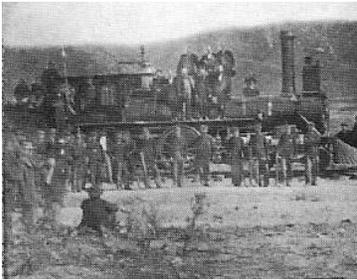
21-Savage

Savage took a second image this time probably with Mormon representatives in front of the locomotives.



22-Hart

While Russell and Savage were south of the locomotives, Hart stood north of them and took two photographs of the locomotives. The military band stood in front of the “Jupiter.”



Hart's image of the "No. 119."

23-Hart



After the ceremony the participants became more relaxed, as seen in Russell's views of workers that afternoon.

24-Russell



A second post-ceremony Russell image similar to the above.

25-Russell



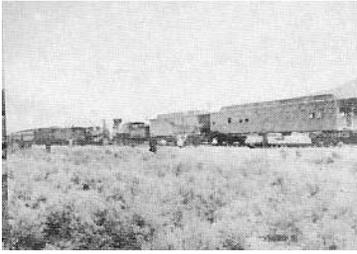
Russell moved to the north side of the tracks and adjacent UP Vice-President Durant's special train. He captures a line-up of UP engineers.

26-Russell



A second Russell image like the above shows some of the engineers with their families.

27-Russell



Hart took one last photograph of the Stanford special train before it left at 4:00 p.m., probably the last photograph of the day.

28-Hart

Note: Copies of photographs were collected by Roy Appleman with the assistance of Gerald Best in the 1960s, as part of the data collection for the proposed locomotive replication. The prints are at the Golden Spike National Historic Site. Better images are available for Russell and Hart than the ones at the park. The Russell glass plate negatives are at the Oakland Museum, while a set of the Hart photographs are at the Huntington Library and Stanford University.

The problem of confirming which photographer took which image has continued to be an issue. The above association of photographers with photographs, especially Hart and Savage, is a best guess at this time. The swapping and selling of plates was common.

Susan Williams, biographer of Russell and one-time curator of the Russell glass plate negatives at the Oakland Museum, shared her knowledge of Russell and confirmed which images he captured. The photographs by Russell were identified as his based on the glass plate collection, which have his inscriptions/captions on the emulsion. Williams has developed a chronology, which greatly assisted the above. She also found an undiscovered Savage image taken May 10 in the University of Iowa, listed above as “Savage-14.” More images will probably come to light, especially by Hart or Savage.

The above chronology is based on information available to the author. Hopefully, more images and information will be found.

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### Appendix C) Alfred Hart's First Photograph of Promontory, May 7 or May 9?



Alfred A. Hart produced a series of stereo card images of the Central Pacific Railroad, especially of scenes at Promontory Summit, before and during the driving of the last spike. One of his stereo cards, Number 354, is labeled “The First Greeting of the Iron Horse, Promontory Point, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1869.” Hart stood on the tender of a Central Pacific locomotive and looked east toward the Union Pacific train, taking the first photograph of Promontory Summit (not Promontory Point, a common error). As detailed below, the date of the stereo card is wrong; it should be May 7.

As Central Pacific Railroad’s guest photographer, Hart arrived with the Leland Stanford special train May 7<sup>th</sup>. Onboard the train was a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, who sent a May 7<sup>th</sup> dispatch, in which he noted that “Photographers are busy to-day attempting to obtain photographs of the junction of the roads, the line of locomotives, the scenery, appearances of the squads of laborers, etc., but it is feared that in consequence of the sultriness of the weather very good sketches [sic.] will not be obtained.” This suggests that Hart was busy photographing at Promontory May 7, but the weather interfered. His “First Greeting” shows the overcast scene.

The first greeting of the locomotives occurred on May 7 and was noted by reporters. In the same dispatch, published May 9, the *Chronicle* reporter wrote:

At about half-past four o’clock, the Locomotive No. 60, of the Union Pacific, with a box-car and train of flats came on the switch and stopped within two hundred feet of the end of the Central Pacific track. The Central Pacific locomotive “Jupiter,” No. 60, and “Whirlwind,” No. 62, came up to the end of the track.



The UP train in Hart's "First Greeting" image shows a Union Pacific locomotive pulling a box car and pushing a "train of flats" in front, as described by the *Chronicle* reporter. UP locomotives No. 60 through No. 67 were built by Schenectady in 1868 and had diamond smoke stacks, like the one shown in Hart's stereo card 354.

A reporter for the *Alta California* also described the "first greeting" in a May 7 dispatch, published May 8, 1869. He wrote:

This afternoon the Union Pacific finished their track to a switch forty rods east of the end of the Central...At twenty minutes past four, Central time, and fifteen minutes past five, Cheyenne time, engine No. 66 [60?] (they have no names on the engines on the Union road) arrived from the East with Casement the contractor and others. No. 66 came to a halt, and the engineer let off steam in such a manner as to throw two circles like wreaths or crowns of white vapor into the air. Not a breath of wind stirred at the moment, and the aureole ascended three or four hundred feet skywards before disappearing, creating a beautiful effect, and calling forth involuntary cheers from the spectators. Engine No. 60 [62], named the "Whirlwind" on the Central road, standing opposite and within 160 feet, replied with a sharp whistle, and thus the first meeting of locomotives from the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts took place.

Again, the first greeting occurred May 7 not May 9. Hart's stereo view shows the engines and train as described by the *Chronicle* and *Alta* reporters. The spur track connecting all but the last rail was built May 9, suggesting that locomotives could get only as close as the then parallel tracks on May 7, as shown in Hart's image.

The weather on May 7 was raining and overcast, as described in period accounts. The weather cleared on Saturday May 8 and was not described on May 9, though a reporter for the *Sacramento Bee* took a hike to a nearby peak and noted the grand views, without comment of clouds or rain. Hart's image reflects the weather of May 7 not May 9.

Hart probably took the photograph late on the overcast afternoon of May 7, while Casement was soothing the CP crowd in Stanford's special car, who were expecting the last spike celebration to occur on May 8. Casement invited them on a tour along the UP to Ogden the next day. Hart went with the Stanford party and took a number of photographs of Ogden and vicinity on Saturday, May 8.

On May 9, reporters noted that the Stanford special went on a tour to the west of Promontory, as far west as Monument Point. Hart took several images of the party at the Salt Lake shore that day. The party returned late in the day. Dr. J. D. B. Stillman was with the Stanford party and chronicles their movements in a July 1869 article in the *Overland Monthly*. Neither he nor do other reporters record Hart or any other photographer at Promontory until evening.

Reporters noted crews building the connecting track on May 9; such activity would have attracted attention. Later photographs, by Russell, Savage, and Hart, show a number of tents, such as those by the CP last telegraph pole and in Casement's camp that are absent in Hart's stereo card 354. If Hart's photograph of the "First Greeting" was taken on May 9, after returning from the tour of the lake, there would have been a flurry of tent building activity the night of May 9. This is doubtful. But, again, it appears that Hart did not take photographs at Promontory May 9.

Why did Hart date his stereo card 354 as May 9<sup>th</sup>? In the series of stereo cards reprinted in Kibbey Mead's *Alfred A. Hart, Artist* (Sacramento: California State Library Foundation, 1996), Hart arranged and numbered his stereo cards by geographic location, not chronology. Thus, the views of Ogden (numbers 361-4) taken May 8 appear after the last spike ceremony stereo cards of May 10 (numbers 355-60). The "First Greeting" stereo card, number 354, is before the last spike ceremony set, as it should be, except he dates it May 9, not May 7? Did he deliberately change the date for a tighter chronology? Did a type setter incorrectly think the 7 was a 9?

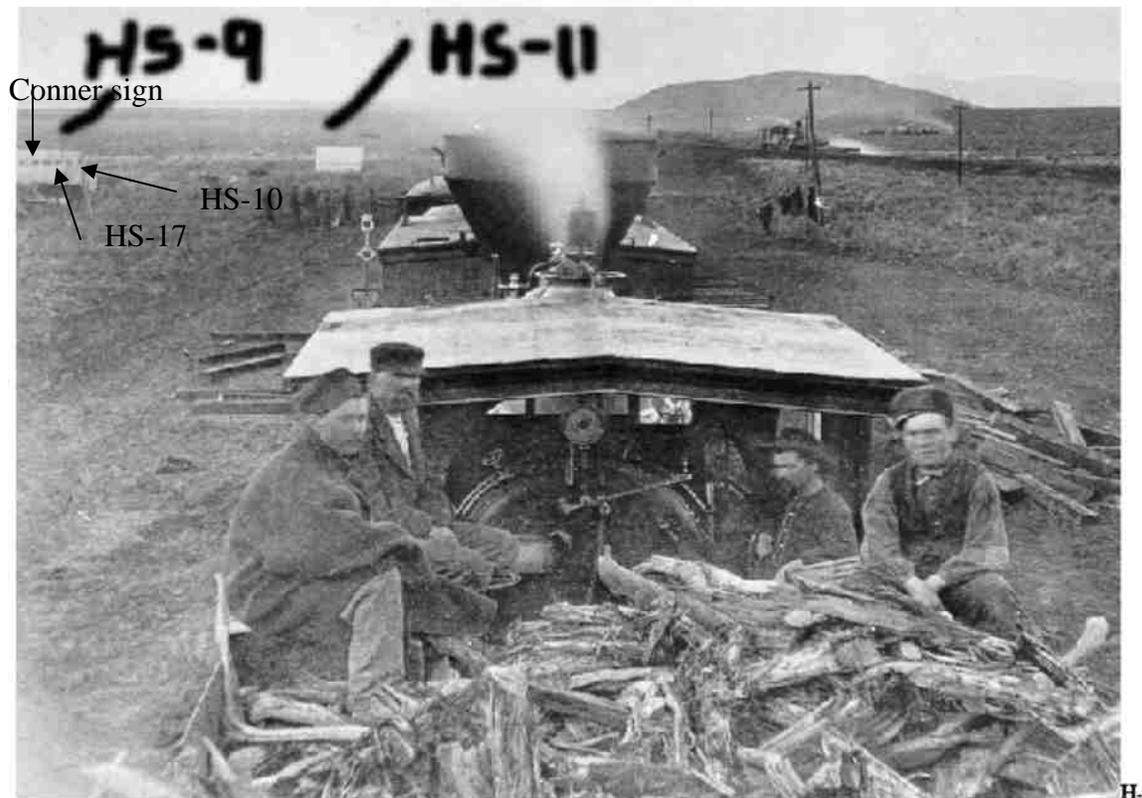
Looking at the stereo card 354 image, comparing it to contemporary descriptions of the "first meeting of locomotives from the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts," knowing the weather during May 7-10, and knowing Hart's travels over Friday-Monday, May 7-10, the stereo card he labels "The First Greeting of the Iron Horse, Promontory Point, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1869," should be dated May 7. This helps us understand the chronology of events preceding the May 10 celebration and the look of the landscape a few days before the last spike ceremony.



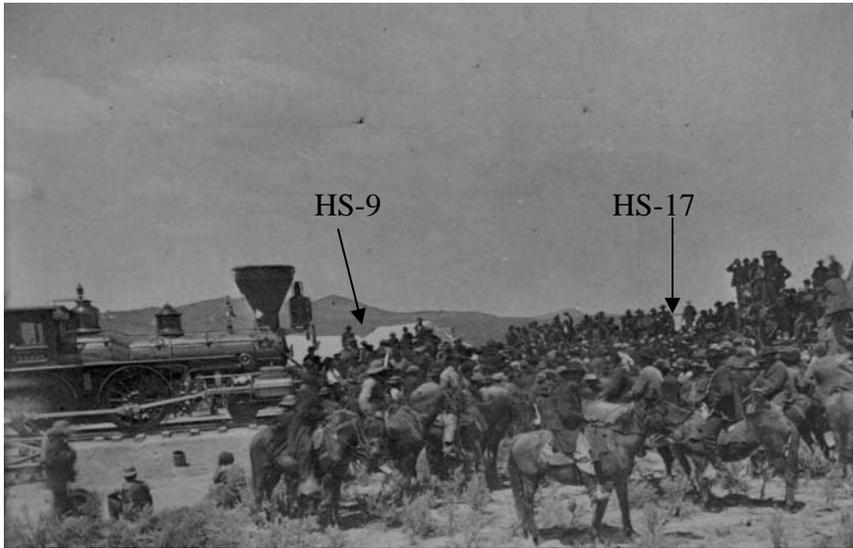
### Appendix D) How Many Tents? Or, Finding HS-17

After reviewing photographs, it was discovered that Promontory Summit had seventeen tents, one of which was lost behind the crowds. In order to confirm that the photographer's image of what was thought to be one tent was actually two, was tested by using an HO scale diorama of the site and then shifting the photographers' location. This shift confirmed that two tents, not one were behind the crowd.

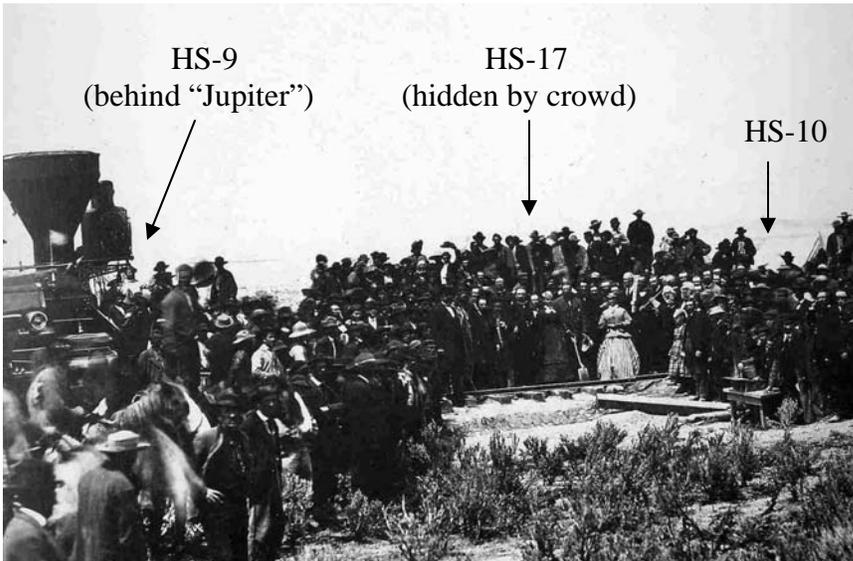
The original photograph suggesting two tents, HS-9 and HS-11, was a Hart image, the May 7, 1869 photograph with pencil numbering by Paul Hedren (below).



Looking closer one sees evidence of four tents. Two tents are visible just beyond the J. S. Conner sign (on HS-9) at left, tents HS-17 and HS-10. Hedren's study suggested one of these tents (HS-17?) was moved before May 10 since he thought he could not see it in the Hart or Russell photographs of May 10. The below images are the photographs he used to count only three (HS-9, HS-10, and HS-11) instead of four tents (with HS-17) north of the last spike.



HS-10 (off image)

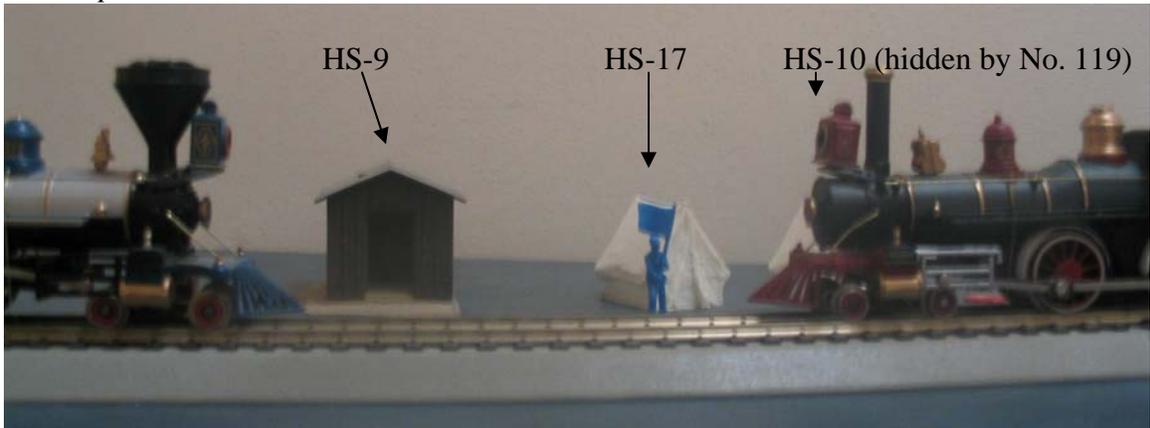


During the review of these photographs it was noted that the photographers' locations were different. If one looks at the crowd and compares the crowd's relationship to the tents in the background the tent seen above appears to move in the wrong direction, in front of instead of behind the crowd. Actually, the one tent (HS-10) Hedren thought he saw in the above is actually two different tents (HS-17 and HS-10).

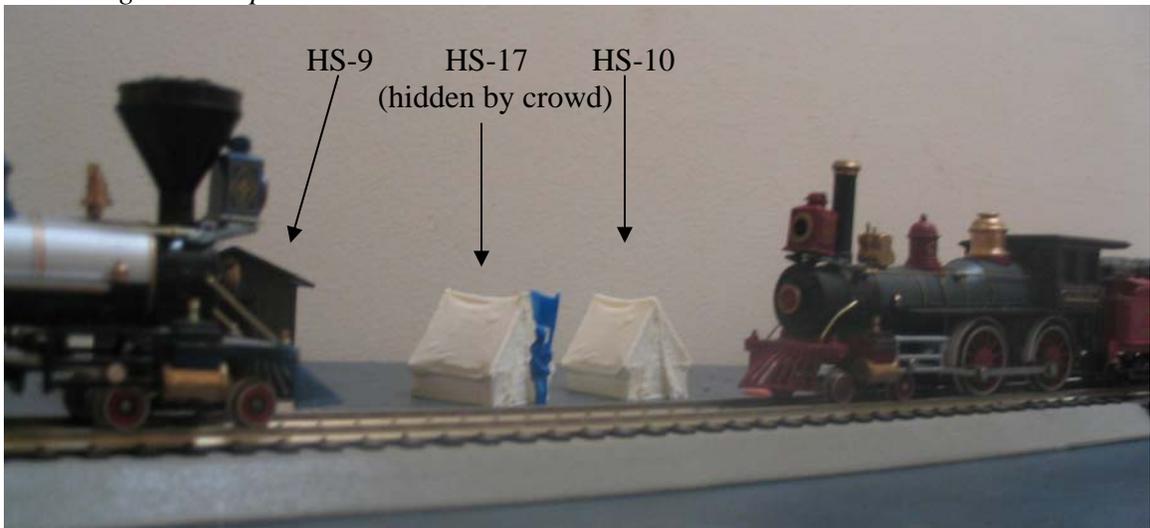
The mock-up of the historic Last Spike Site scene is shown in the following three images. The two locomotives are on the track. The brown structure represents Conner's tent (HS-9). The two tents in the early Hart image next to Conner's tent (brown structure) are in place (HS-17 and HS-10). The crowd is represented by a blue toy soldier. Hart and Russell by shooting from different locations show different tents. Note the shifting of the location of the tents in relationship to the "crowd" (blue soldier) and the locomotives. Thus, first hiding HS-10 from Hart and then hiding HS-17 from Russell.



*“Last Spike Site” diorama*



*Hart image mock-up*



*Russell image mock-up*

The first image shows the diorama. The middle image represents the Hart photograph with HS-10 “hidden” by locomotive “No. 119”; while HS-17 reveals itself behind the tall man (blue soldier). The last image represents Russell’s photograph, with HS-17 “hidden” by the crowd (represented by the blue soldier) and HS-10 now visible.



### **Appendix E) The Community of Promontory Summit, May 10, 1869, As Portrayed in Published Histories**

Promontory town, of a single miserable street lined with canvas and rough board shacks, was arrayed, the drab, in all her festal clothes. It was her hour. For one brief heyday she occupied the centre of the National stage and acted as hostess to giants of finance and industry. She would not have traded places with a New York or a San Francisco. She stood upon her present, not upon her rather dubious past, short and turbulent.

Edwin L. Sabin, *Building the Pacific Railway* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1919), p. 212.

On May 7, the first of several special trains arrived at the railhead, its occupants expecting to witness an immediate wedding of the rails. Instead they found the little village drenched and forlorn in a driving rain, its sodden street an extensive mudhole, colored bunting hanging limp and dripping across the facades of its wooden shacks.

Oscar Lewis, *The Big Four* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1938), p. 67.

Promontory! Immediately that name was writ large, for it was there that the two roads united in completion of the railroad to the sea. A better spot could not have been selected; it lay in the center of a small valley surrounded by low, rounded mountains. Early in the morning of May 10, *Jupiter* and *No. 119* (engines of the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific) stood facing each other. The place soon became alive with people who had come to see or take part in the ceremonies.

Levi O. Leonard and Jack T. Johnson, *A Railroad to the Sea* (Iowa City: Midland House, 1939), pp. 213-4.

This was the situation on the afternoon of Friday, May 7, when the Central's smartly groomed Schenectedy eight-wheeler, *Jupiter*, steamed into Promontory with the two cars of Leland Stanford's Presidential Special in tow. No welcoming committee awaited. There was nothing and nobody, in fact, but stand-by Central Pacific and U. P. telegraph crews huddled in tents beside their respective ends of track, and the thirty-odd tents and plank-and-canvas shacks of Promontory town itself straggling along their single muddy street in a down pour.

James McCague, *Moguls and Iron Men, the Story of the First Transcontinental Railroad* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 320.

“Two or three tents were pitched in the vicinity,” Stillman reported, “for the rendezvous for those ruffians who hang about on the march of industry and flourish on the vices of men.”...

The line of track ran roughly northeast-southwest, and along it fourteen tent saloons, on opposite sides of the rails, by now had sprung up to sell Red Cloud, Red jacket, Blue Run, and other varieties of rot-gut to the expected throng.

Wesley S. Griswold, *A Work of Giants, Building the First Transcontinental Railroad* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), pp. 318, 324.

There was one more event to be staged for the benefit of newspapermen and photographers who were gathering in that last of the railroad boom towns, Promontory City, which consisted of one long street of tents and false-fronted wooden structures set back only a few yards from the railroad track.

Dee Brown, *Hear that Lonesome Whistle Blow, Railroads in the West* (New York: Touchstone, 1977), p. 123.

Promontory Point's fourteen temporary saloons.

John Hoyt Williams, *A Great and Shining Road, the Epic Story of the Transcontinental Railroad* (New York: Times Books, 1988) p. 264

Two or three tents “were pitched in the vicinity,” said Dr. Stillman, “for the rendezvous of those ruffians who hang about on the march of industry, and flourish on the vices of men.” They found the desultory telegraph operators at the end of their respective lines, only a few yards from one another, who could explain nothing about the lack of Population and activity at Promontory...

Despite a moderate breeze, the air warmed with the rising sun; it was to be a clear day. More construction trains crammed with workers swelled the crowd. More construction trains crammed with workers swelled the crowd. Enterprising camp followers quickly rode up the valley, and soon they had expanded the temporary settlement of Promontory to fourteen tents, with signs advertising “Red Cloud,” “Red Jacket,” “Blue Run,” and other potent distillates; the sound of hammers on nails announced that some planned to stay awhile...

By 5:00 P.M. the upland valley of Promontory was deserted except for the few canvas tents flapping in the wind.

David Haward Bain, *Empire Express, Building the First Transcontinental Railroad* (New York: Viking, 1999), pp. 652, 658-9, 671-2.

Comment: Sabin writes of board shacks – there were none at the time. Lewis mentions bunting drenched by rain. There appears to be no bunting on the tents and the rain storms had stopped by Sunday May 9. McCague's row of thirty tents are from the later Promontory City, not May 10. Griswold uses the *Frank Leslie's* article by Russell and takes for granted the “fourteen tent saloons.” There were probably three, with the other three along the commercial row also selling alcohol to celebrants. Dee Brown also incorrectly describes Promontory with “one long street of tents and false-fronted structures.” Again, this depicts the later Promontory City. Williams like Griswold uses the inaccurate “fourteen temporary saloons” number. Bain is most accurate except the valley was not deserted, what with crews ready to build the yards of the junction, and town boomers moving in over the next few days.

## Appendix F) Traveler's Accounts, 1869.

April

“There are miles upon miles of alkaline tracts, looking like a badly-frosted cake; and the deserted camps of the railroad builders, with their debris of tin cans, bottles – always bottles – boxes and packing cases, disabled stoves and pots, skeletons of slaughtered beasts and over-worked mules – ay, and human skeletons too – do not add any attraction to the picture. ...The line was not then quite finished; in less than a week [sic.] it was open to traffic, and trains passing regularly on their way to California. I went over between the two companies's tracks (i.e. between terminal points of the Union and Central Pacific Railroads) by stage, passing several canvas towns, some of them already deserted, and in one or two cases smoking and burning, they having been intentionally destroyed by their inhabitants. I saw the spot where the 'last rail' was laid, the 'last spike' driven.”

Whymper, Frederick. “From Ocean to Ocean – the Pacific Railroad.” In H. W. Bates. Ed., *Illustrated Travels*. London, 1869-1870. Copy at Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

May

At Promontory, May 11, W. L. Humson rudely ordered out of UP cars; “they had carried us to the end of the road...and they had nothing more to do with us only to discharge us.” No depot or shelter, “nothing but sand, alkali, and sage brush.” He and other passengers made do until arrival of CP in the morning. “I went forward into the baggage car, rolled up into my blankets, cast my lot among the mail bags and slept soundly until morning. I awoke covered and choked with dust.”

Describes waiting at depot, killing a rattlesnake and going to a tent restaurant, which offered Plover for dinner.

W. L. Humason, *From the Atlantic Surf to the Golden Gate, or, First Trip on the Great Pacific Railroad* (Hartford: Press of Wm. C. Hutchings, 1869), microfilm copy at Denver Public Library.

May

“Dear May, I write you sitting on the *last rail*. The spike of gold is not here. We reached this place about 3 this morning having only come about 150 miles yesterday. Came at only 2 or 3 miles an hour – were pushed over trestle works & bridge 50 to 60 feet high where engines dare not pass. ...A city is growing up here which dates from day before yesterday. It is an open and barren desert. Our fare is rough but I like it. Its pioneer like. The Sacramento train is coming & we will be off as soon as baggage can be transferred. I must go & get my traps.”

Niles Searles letter, May 15, 1869, in Frances G. Long, “Coast to Coast by Railroad: The Journey of Niles Searls – May, 1869,” *New York History* (May 1969), pp. 303-315.

May

“This summit is a considerable plateau, covered with artemisia, and quietly resting between two mountain combs. Some thirty tents and a few board sheds mark the spot. The trader had reached it with his wares as soon as the road itself. It is a lonely and

desolate locality, without water or fuel, both of which have to be brought from a distance, and Promontory City, as it is called, is not likely to become a commercial emporium, while it will have some fame and a romantic interest attached to it as the place where the Atlantic and Pacific first embraced. No railroad buildings have been erected there, except one or two mere sheds for the storage of baggage and the use of the telegraph.”

Isaac Morris, railroad commissioner report May 28, 1869, Executive Document No. 180, House of Representatives, 44<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session

#### May

“At Promontory the two lines meet, but no station greets the passenger; the precise point for the station is not yet fixed, and the operatives of the two companies, Chinese on one side and Hibernians on the other, like two hostile armies, are still camped under canvas. An early decision as to the point of union, and suitable stations, are important to both parties.

The present spot is not fit for a station. Water is now drawn to it, twenty miles on one side and fifteen on the other, but at Ogden or Corinne, and at other points, pure water is easily accessible. ...

After shifting luggage and thus losing two hours at Promontory, we enter the silver palace cars of the Central Pacific. Our train comprises two silver palace, two passenger and two baggage or mail cars, with about one-hundred first class passengers and we take the berths we have engaged by telegram. In ascending the short gradient of eighty feet or more, at Promontory, we have used two engines and crossed a trestle bridge – strong, but a temporary structure.”

E. H., Derby, *The Overland Route to the Pacific* (Boston, October, 1869). Copy DeGolyer library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas.

#### June-July

“Promontory was just like the other towns only there was no exception to the mile of canvas houses. All the RR offices etc. being wall tents boarded up. The C. P. train was waiting & went out half an hour after we came in. Pitched our tent a little one side and exposed three plates on the last rail. Chemical effect good but was tortured with dust. Took a hearty supper at the New England house. Occupied the evening in walking about. Camped out in our tent & to bed early. Thursday July 1<sup>st</sup>, 69 – Slept very comfortable considering it was our first night camping. Got up early & after breakfast filtered baths etc to commence work. Photographed various subjects until near noon when we packed up to leave on the 1 p. m. train & very glad we were to get out of the old place.”

William Henry Jackson Diary at New York Public Library, microfilm copy Colorado Historical Society.

#### June

“Promontory is nether city nor solitude, neither camp nor settlement. It is bivouac without comfort, it is delay without rest. It is sun that scorches, and alkali dust that blinds. It is vile whiskey, vile cigars, petty gambling, and stale newspapers at twenty-five cents apiece. It would drive a morbid mind to suicide. It is thirty tents upon the Great Sahara, sans trees, sans water, sans comfort, sans everything.”

Describes new railroad coaches and Chinese workers along line.

Richardson, Albert D., “Through to the Pacific,” letters to the *New York Herald*, May-June 1869, in Abby Richardson, *Garnered Sheaves* (Hartford, Conn.: Columbian Book Co., 1871). Richardson’s earlier work does not mention Promontory.

#### June

“Promontory might be called Premonitory, or the symptom of a town, for that is all it is. But probably even the symptom will come to naught; for as the point of junction of the road is not to be here, but at or near Ogden, the temporary eruption of life and business will likely soon disappear from here. It is not a fit point for the terminus of either road.”

Pullman party’s cross country trip.  
*New York Times*, June 28, 1869.

#### July

“We got supper at Promontory, and here saw the first evidence of a mining town in a hard looking man, with blue spectacles on and a cunning wagging tongue, presiding at a three-card monte table, and endeavoring to tempt betters to try to get some of the pile of gold pieces heaped before him. Here is the location of the celebrated spike and tie, but all that can be seen now is the tie in a very slim condition caused by the cutting of curiosity seekers.”

James Ross, *From Wisconsin to California and Return as Reported for the “Wisconsin State Journal”* (Madison: Atwood & Rublee, 1869) microfilm copy at Denver Public Library original at Bienecke Library, Yale University.

#### July

“Here now is quite a ‘Railroad City’, but in a few days or weeks the point of junction with the U. P. and the C. P. roads will be changed and then Promontory will subside into its primitive insignificance.”

D. L. Harris diary published as “Memoranda Concerning the Union Pacific R. R.,” *Bulletin No. 32*, Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, Inc. (1933).

#### July

“We found seats in a Pullman, and went in comfort to Promontory, and there was confusion beyond anything we have yet had. Finally Pierpont came and told us he was all ready, but there was no time for tea, so we just went into our own car, and he brought us some bread and a black man with coffee, and we had quite a feast. Not near as nice quarters as before, yet still the best to be had. We grumbled a great deal, but it was only letting off steam.”

Frances Tracy Morgan Diary entry, July 26, 1869, Courtesy The Morgan Library, New York City.

#### August

“Many of the little towns along the line have nothing but tent-houses, and the sides and roofs are often blown off in wind storms....

“We stopped one day in a town called [Promontory] Summit for a train that was two hours behind time, when one of the storms arose while we were there, and several buildings had their sides, next to the cars, blown away. There stood men measuring cloth

at one counter, while others were hastily gathering the pails, baskets and other things from the sidewalk in front. In another place men were playing cards. A pile of money lay in the center of the table, around which four men sat playing. Each one had a revolver lying by him on the table.

At a bar, which seemed to be the only solid part of the building, several men were drinking, while a man behind the bar kept filling their glasses.

None seemed to be disturbed by the storm. In a boarding house they were just taking dinner. You could see them passing baked beans and pork, and all laughing and enjoying the dinner as if they were unconscious of the havoc the wind was making around them. There is but one wooden building in the place at this time. It is a store and post office together.”

Mathews, Mary McNair. *Ten Years in Nevada, or Life in the Pacific Coast*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985 reprint of 1880 edition). Editor Mary Lee Spence suggested to this writer that Mathews may have entered or peeked into the tents but uses the windstorm as a literary vehicle so as not to shock her Victorian readers.

#### August

“The point of junction was then the subject of controversy, and has not yet been finally settled. The present arrangement is the result of compromise.... In general the passengers have to change carriages, secure fresh sleeping berths, and get their baggage moved from one train to the other. Two hours are allowed for this, as well as for taking a meal.

There is usually ample time to stroll through the town and see the sights. The town is built partly of canvas and partly of wood, and has but one street. The signs are hardly in keeping with the structures to which they are attached. Over a shanty is painted in large letters, ‘Pacific Hotel,’ and over a tent, ‘Club House.’ One of the wooden dwellings attracts notice on account of the neatly arranged muslin curtains within the window. Unlike the others, it has no signboard to indicate its purpose, but a glance through the open door satisfies the curiosity of the passerby. He sees two or three smiling females ready to extend welcomes to whoever will enter in....Of drinking saloons there are many at Promontory; but there is only one gambling hell as far as I could learn.” He describes use of cappers and an open air table with three card Monte game underway. Gambler wins, on same day, \$1700.

“Although the small population of this place is composed for the most part of roughs and gamblers, with the admixture of a female element quite as obnoxious, yet the peace is tolerably well kept on account of the awe felt for the railway officials. It is tacitly understood that open lawlessness or any serious disturbance would end in the clean sweep of the whole nest of scoundrels. If those who had the power were at once to begin the cleansing process, they would do a service to all travelers over this railway.”

W. F. Rae, *Westward by Rail; the New Route to the East*. New York: D. Appleton, 1871. Reprinted often.

#### September

“Promontory consists of ... thirty-six houses in one row on the other side [of the tracks]. These thirty-six structures are all one story high and roofed with canvas. There is not a dwelling in the place, every shanty being occupied for business, the inhabitants sleeping

in odd corners and recesses. A barber shop, drugstore, saloons, restaurants, fruit stalls, and stores filled with general merchandise compose the commercial row of the place ....The reputation of Promontory for rough characters is well established; but the gamblers did not bring out their games for the benefit of the Cincinnatians.”

*The Cincinnati Excursion to California: Its Origin, Progress, Incidents, and Results*, (Cincinnati: 1870) Copy at Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

#### September

“In ascending Promontory Point we gained a point that gave us a splendid view of Salt Lake valley...We found but few stations on the route over the mountain plains where we could obtain meals or refreshment.”

Limited description of trip.

Harvey Rice, “A Trip to California in 1869,” *The Magazine of Western History*, (1887-1888), pp. 675-679, and (1888), pp. 1-7. Copy at Denver Public Library

#### October

“About seven p.m. we were moved down near the station. A large bonfire burned in the street. We could see each den of iniquity and all who came out and all who venture in. A gambling table stood beside the fire and a crowd stood by. In an iron basket, such as men in our country carry suspended from the bow of a canoe when they go to spear at night, blazed a great fire of fat pine that threw its dazzling brightness for acres around. One man was spokesman and actor. He has hands as smooth and white as those of any lady. He held a pack of cards in his hand...We saw several stake down their money and leave it there.”

Mostly describes gamblers while walking to tent shop for tea.

Ross, John Simpson, *Crossing the Continent by Rail in 1869* (Fort Bragg, California: Mendocino County Historical Society, 1969). Copy at Golden Spike National Historic Site.

#### October

And so we reach Promontory about six o'clock. Took supper here. Had a great time before going to eat, disposing of our baggage. Engaged a stateroom on one of the Silver Palace sleeping cars. Had to get our baggage checked – our satchels, I mean; they are not allowed in the cars. I didn't care for that, for the porter said we could go into the baggage room and open them when we pleased. We went into supper at last.”

Cornelia E. Comstock, “Overland Diary – 1869, a School Teacher Crosses the West by Train Five Months after Promontory,” *Trains* (May 1869), pp. 51-55.

#### October

“I really would like to know how many times I've answered the usual question “how did you enjoy your trip”? “have you had a pleasant time”? Just as if I could have done any thing else but enjoy such a glorious journey! Nothing of great importance occurred...the usual talking, card-playing, flirting &c varied by the novelty of changing cars several times with which I would willingly dispense.”

She accompanied train of Silver Palace cars from Wilmington, Del. To San Francisco and delivered to Central Pacific Railroad. Nothing on Promontory.

Annie M. Curtis to “Dear Cousin Annie,” November 12, 1869, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

October

Nothing on Promontory.

Robert von Echlagintweit, *Die Pacific-Eisenbahn in Nordamerika* (Liepzig: 1870)  
Copy at Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

November

Description of trip without mention of Promontory.

William Robertson and W. F. Robertson, *Our American Tour: Being a Run of Ten Thousand Miles from the Atlantic to the Golden Gate in the Autumn of 1869* (Edinburgh: W. Burness, 1871). Copy Denver Public Library.

**To locate:**

[Carrington, H. B.] *Ocean to Ocean. Pacific Railroad and Adjoining Territories, with Distances and Fares of Travel from American Cities*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1869.

Dalton, James *A Trip Across the Continent, by the Grand Lodge of the United States, I. O. O. F. September 1869*. Cincinnati: R. N. Carter, 1870.

**Also noted:**

Zider, H. F. *Report of the St. Louis delegation from Omaha to Terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad, September 1869*. St. Louis: G. Knapp, 1869. Date incorrect – to end of track, 1868. Nothing on Promontory.

## **Appendix G) Promontory Station Hypothetical Track Plan, ca. Summer-Fall 1869**

No map of Promontory Station and Promontory City, ca. summer-fall 1869 has been found. However, a hypothetical site plan can be recreated using historic photographs, Union Pacific Railroad and Central Pacific Railroad records and maps, period descriptions, government documents, and comparative data.

Unfortunately, the Promontory Station landscape has been altered through various re-buildings and filling in of the yard track over the subsequent seventy-three years. The 1869 landscape has been all but obliterated. A few elements have been relocated on the ground, such as the UP's wye track, but these are distant from the Last Spike Site.

Summer-fall 1869 has been selected as the peak build-up for the Union Pacific – Central Pacific junction. After November, the Union Pacific retreated to Omaha and, with the junction removed, the Central Pacific greatly altered the yard.

The hypothetical site plan is suggestive rather than definitive. The goal is to provide suggestive guidance for further field research, especially by archeologists, historians, and park staff. They may be able to relocate other features of the 1869 yard.

### **1) Historic Photographs of Promontory**

W. H. Jackson and A. C. Hull took photographs of Promontory, June 30 – July 1, 1869. These provide information about track at the last spike site and part of the CP yard.



The telegraph pole with the flag pole atop it marks the site of the driving the last spike. The track work appears to be little changed from what is seen in May 10 photographs. In the distant background of the photo at left can be seen the CP turntable gallows frame, which was built May 11-12. In the view at right can be seen the transcontinental main line, the then CP siding, and, behind the telegraph pole with flag, the UP spur with string of cars.



A. J. Russell's images of Promontory, November 1869, provide better views of The UP yard with some suggestions for the CP yard in the distance. The above view (and detail) looks west from the UP station. The blow-up shows the CP yard in the distance – turntable and two spurs with strings of cars..



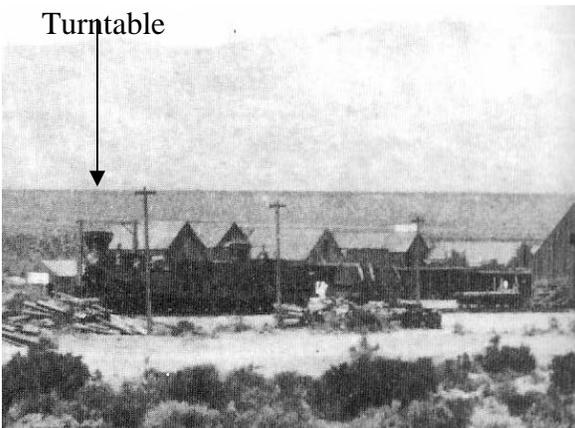
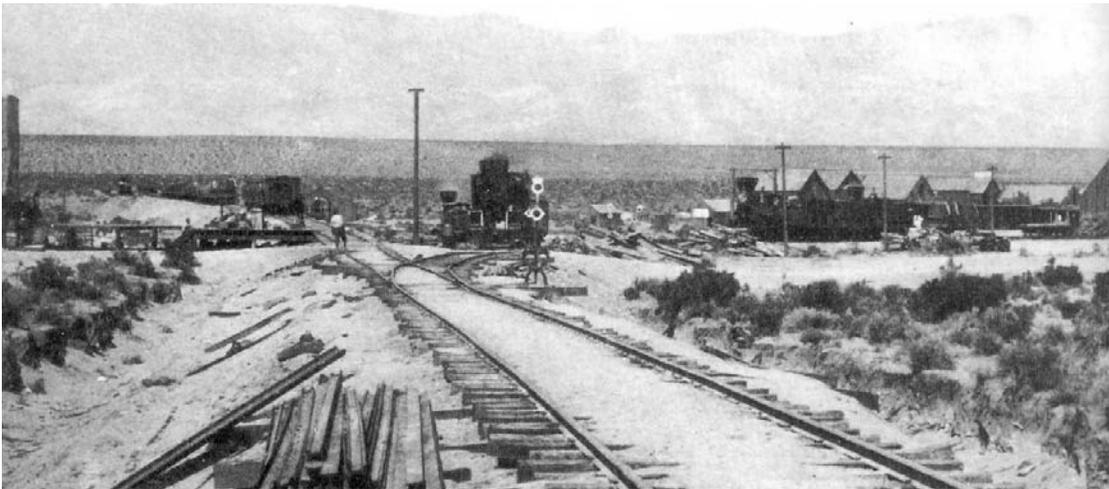
Russell's other November 1869 panoramic view looks east past the UP station. It shows the mainline and two sidings, one of them behind the eating house/depot. On this siding are water tank cars, probably providing water for the community and railroad.

All images in Golden Spike National Historic Site files. Better copies can be found at: Russell negatives at Oakland Museum, Oakland, California.

Photographs of other yards, UP and CP, provide illustrations of construction era yards similar to what was found at Promontory. The question about the location of the Central Pacific turntable and spur tracks at Promontory can be answered by looking at photographs of Wadsworth, Nevada, Newcastle, California, and Cisco, California. The track layout for these “typical” CP yards can be seen in period photographs below.

Standard practice was to build two spurs one after the other off a siding adjacent the main line. A turntable sat between the spurs and mainline. The track to the turntable came off the spur not the main line.

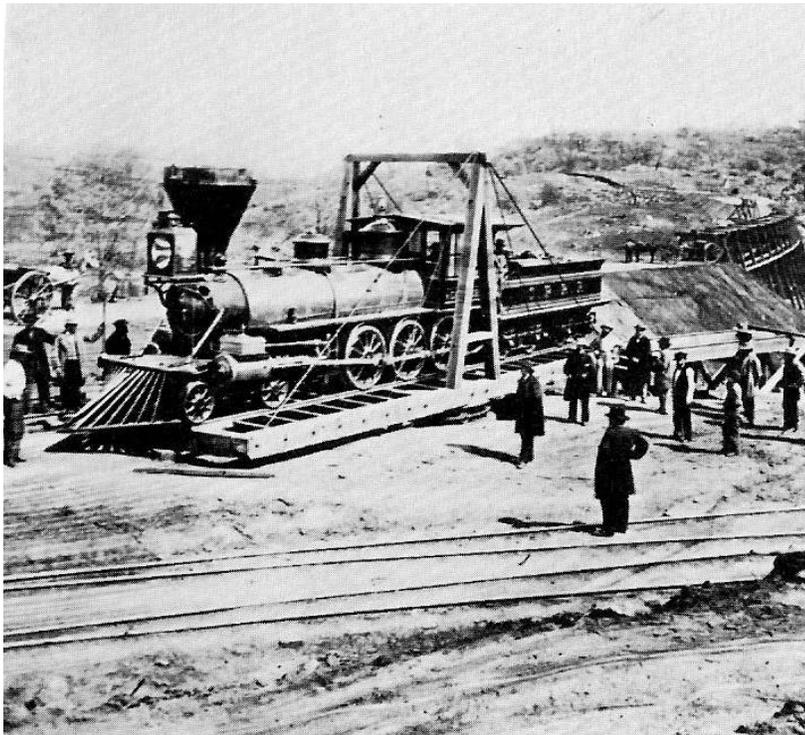
The Promontory yard, built by the CP the week of May 10, would have been similar to Wadsworth, Nevada yard (except with the spurs coming left off the main line instead of right as at Wadsworth). Note the main line track, then the spurs at right. The turntable was on its own switch on the spur. Visible above the locomotive on the siding at right center is the top of the gallows turntable (it frames the locomotive’s balloon smokestack). The switch stand for the turntable spur can be seen to the right of the locomotive at center (see enlargement below)





The Central Pacific Railroad yard at Cisco, California also shows the “typical” early CP layout. The mainline track is in the foreground with the spurs branching off from it (off the photograph at left) – the spurs are behind the main line, one leading to the turntable, the others to the warehouses. The CP turntable is between the mainline and the spur track to the warehouses at middle-left. The CP’s Promontory yard would have had a similar layout – mainline, then turntable, then spur tracks -- except the flat terrain at Promontory allowed the spur tracks to run straight across the landscape instead of curved as at Cisco.

The layout at Newcastle, California, below, was the reverse of Cisco. The spur tracks can be seen in the foreground. Behind the spurs is the turntable on its own spur. Then behind the spur tracks and turntable is the mainline leading off to the trestle and into the Sierra Nevada. Again, note spurs, then turntable, then mainline, a typical CP layout. Promontory would have followed this pattern only on the opposite side of the mainline – mainline then spurs, with turntable in between.



The Corp of Engineers surveyed the railroad during the 1870s. The 1876 list of survey points from the distances measured by Captain James F. Gregory, U. S. Corps of Engineers, provides detailed measurements for the 1880 yard, buildings and provides measurements to the Last Spike. Building measurements are from eastern wall, or wall first encountered. Thus, the last spike site is 449 feet from the eastern wall of the Promontory depot.

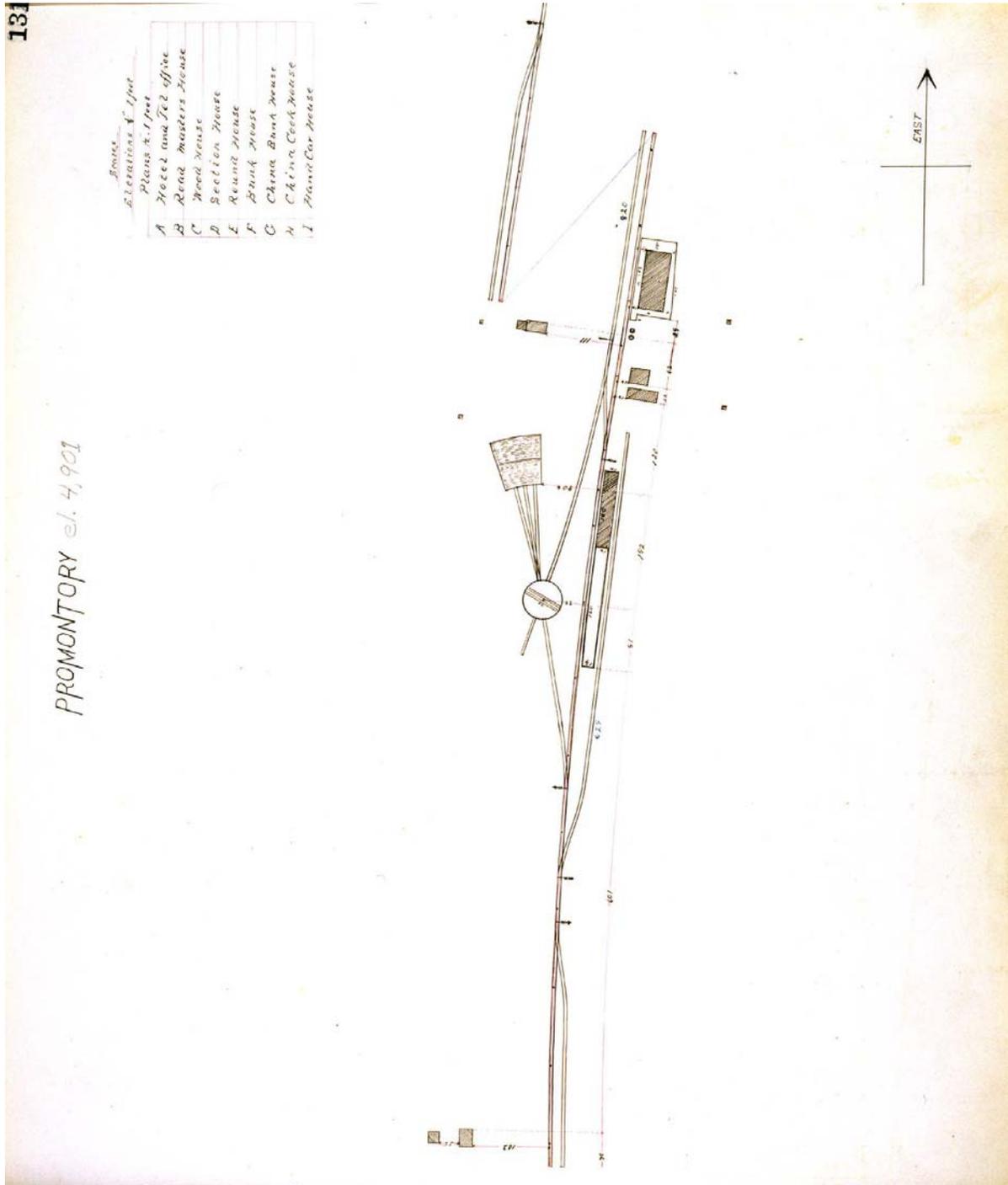
## UNION AND CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILWAYS.

23

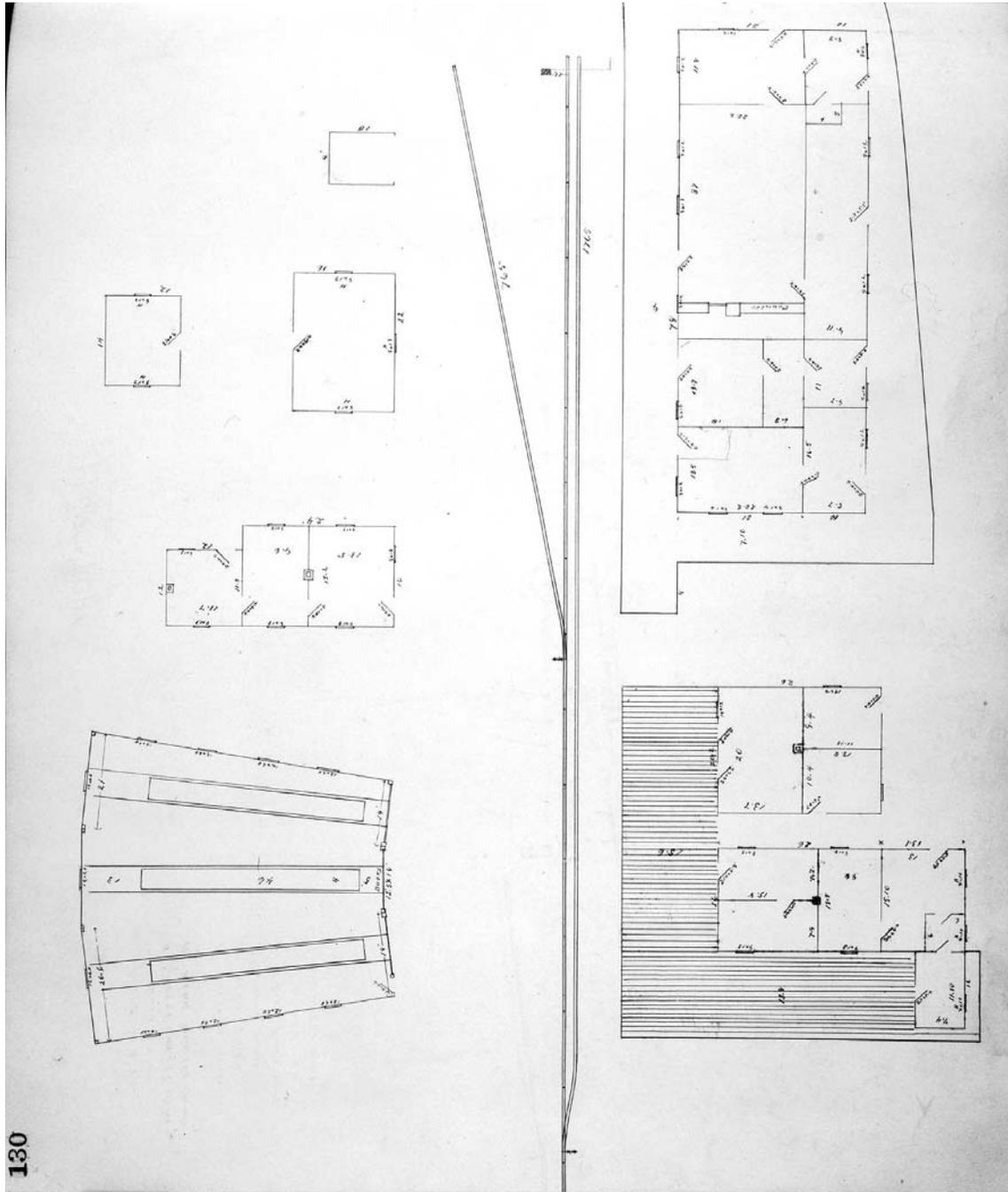
*Abstract of distances measured on second section, &c.—Continued.*

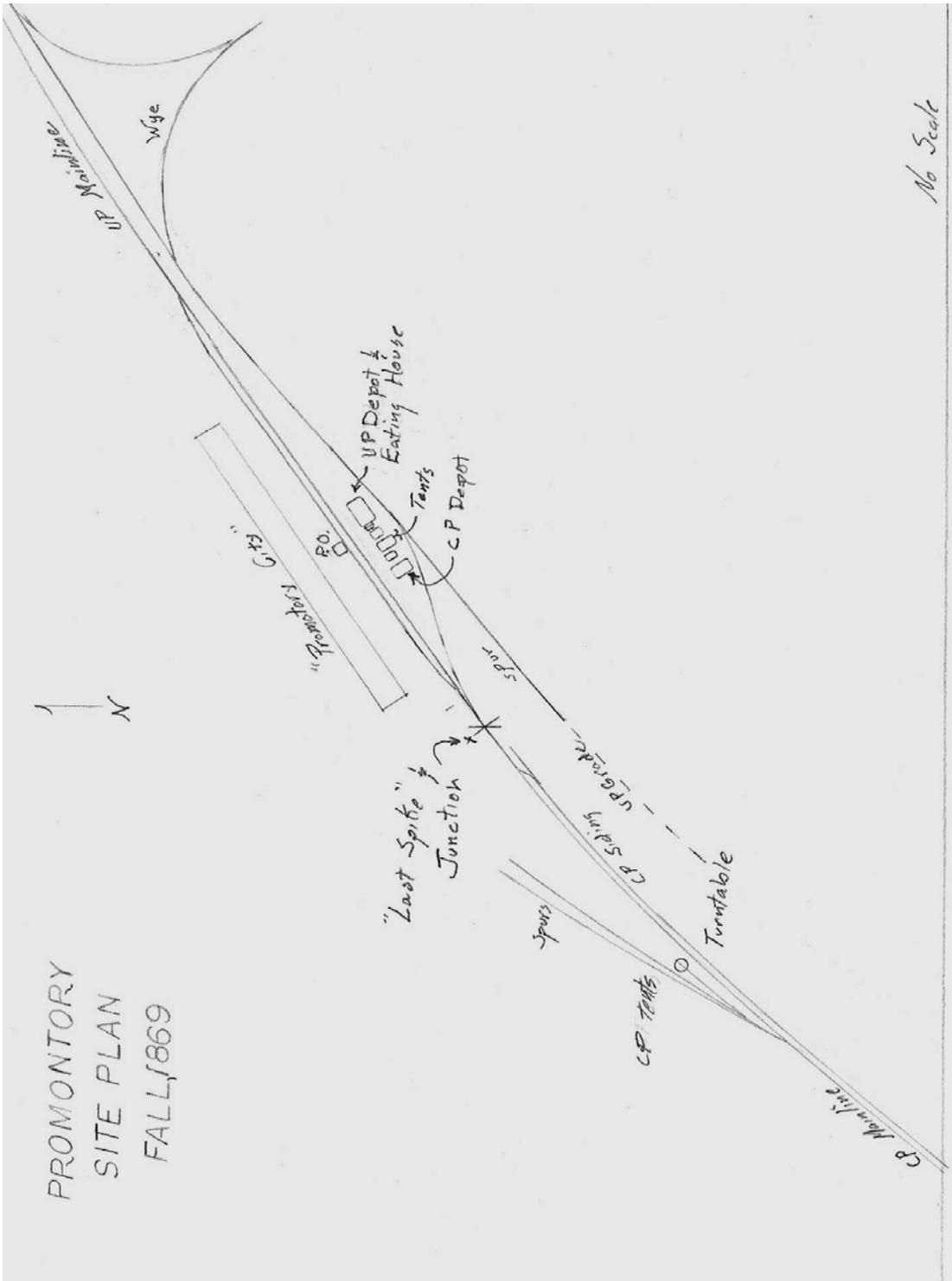
	Present location.	
	Miles.	Feet.
Corinne switch, (spur).....	24	1925
Corinne depot.....	24	2944
Corinne, west switch.....	24	4354
Half-mile post.....	25	833
Culvert 296.....	26	4075
Culvert, open.....	30	2714
Half-mile post.....	31	3783.8
Quarry, east switch.....	32	108.8
Quarry, west switch.....	32	1952.8
Half-mile post.....	33	25
Culvert 285.....	34	172
Section-house.....	34	2458.8
Culvert, open.....	34	4159
Culvert 282, open.....	35	1151
Culvert 281, open.....	35	3300
Culvert, open.....	35	5274
Culvert 279, open.....	36	610
Culvert 278, open.....	36	3935
Trestle 277, (36 feet).....	37	472
Culvert, box.....	40	3296
Half-mile post.....	43	2462.8
Blue Creek, switch 1.....	43	4577.8
Blue Creek, switch 2.....	43	4772.8
Blue Creek, switch 3.....	44	801.8
Blue Creek, depot.....	44	828.8
Blue Creek, switch 4.....	44	913.8
Blue Creek water-tank.....	44	986.8
Switch, (to spur).....	44	1275.8
Culvert.....	44	2523
Culvert.....	44	4557
Half-mile post.....	44	4946.8
Eastern junction of old and new grades, (original location, 47 miles 2089.3 feet).....	47	2089.3
Section-post 148 and 149.....	48	3275.8
Western junction of old and new grades, (original location, 51 miles 5188.5 feet).....	52	1187.8
Half-mile post.....	52	3275.8
Promontory, switch 1.....	52	4007.8
Promontory depot.....	53	443.8
Promontory, switch 2.....	53	707.8
Original junction Central Pacific Railroad and Union Pacific Railroad, (original location, 52 miles 4893.5 feet).....	53	892.8
Promontory, switch 3, (original location, 53 miles 28.5 feet).....	53	1307.8
Promontory, switch 4, (original location, 53 miles 1793.5 feet).....	53	3077.8
Half-mile post.....	53	5210.8
Culvert, open.....	54	3253
Sign-post, (10 miles track laid in one day).....	56	4115.8
Culvert.....	57	480
Culvert.....	57	2466
Section-post.....	57	2479.8
Culvert.....	58	1526
Culvert.....	59	734
Culvert.....	60	83
Half-mile post.....	60	127.8
.....	60	3547

The CP land department prepared a station plat ca. 1880. Fortunately, this track plan provides some information, though limited, about the previous, 1869, Promontory UP-CP track plan. The eating house platform suggests the angle of the original UP grade south of the building. The last spike site would be beneath the wood platform near opposite the turntable, 449 feet from the eastern wall of the depot. California State Railroad Museum Library.



Page two of the 1880 plat included plans of the 1869 UP eating house and ticket/telegraph office when operated by CP. To its left is the 1869 CP ticket and telegraph office. The 1869 CP spur and siding can be seen on the plat; the original turntable would have been between the two. Courtesy California State Railroad Museum Library, Sacramento.





*Hypothetical site plan of Union Pacific and Central Pacific junction at Promontory Station, Fall 1869.*

Primary Sources of data:

--W. H. Jackson & A. C. Hull and A. J. Russell 1869 photographs.

--Letters transcribed and compiled in Grenville M. Dodge's "Autobiography," Council Bluffs Public Library.

--Ca. 1880 plat map of Promontory yard with drawing of eating house, California State Railroad Museum Library.

--1876 Corps of Engineers measurements published as House Exec. Doc. 38, 44<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d Session.

--Previous NPS studies by Ketterson, Jones, Ayers, Ketterson & Anderson, Homstad et. al. (See bibliography).

## Appendix H) Commentary on J. N. Bowman's article, "Driving the Last Spike at Promontory, 1869," Fifty Years Later.<sup>1</sup>

During the development of the Golden Spike National Historic Site at Promontory Summit preparatory to the "driving of the last spike" centennial, National Park Service staff reproduced a number of historic objects. For much of the background information, the staff used an article written by J. N. Bowman, historian in charge of the California State Archives.<sup>2</sup> It detailed the spikes and laurel tie, trappings and site, and sequence of events. Park historian F. A. "Andy" Ketterson wrote that the article "was extremely helpful."<sup>3</sup> Bowman's article was considered by NPS historian Bob Utley "obviously the most authoritative discussion of the matter that is likely ever to be written"<sup>4</sup>

During the course of the present study, the author found Dr. Bowman's research beneficial and, in part, was guided by it. During the past half century, however, additional or new information has come to light suggesting a revision is needed of much of what Dr. Bowman detailed. The following review of his key points is intended to help clarify and revise interpretive programs, where needed, and further refine the discussion on objects and events of May 10. It is hoped that more information will come to light and the discussion continue.<sup>5</sup>

### Sources

Bowman checked twenty-six different newspapers, published primarily near or west of Promontory, with a main reliance on the half dozen with extensive coverage.<sup>6</sup> He used three diaries and six reminiscent accounts. He relied more on contemporary accounts than sources written years later, including the reminiscences.

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Gordon Chappell, Michael Johnson, and Kyle Wyatt for their suggestions and comments.

<sup>2</sup> J. N. Bowman, "Driving the Last Spike at Promontory, 1869," *California Historical Quarterly*, vol. XXVI (1957), pp. 97-106, 263-274, reprinted in *Utah Historical Quarterly* Vol. 37 (Winter 1969), pp. 76-101. Bowman began research in response to a 1954 request for information from the California governor's office.

<sup>3</sup> F. A. Ketterson, "Golden Spike National Historic Site: Development of an Historical Reconstruction," *Utah Historical Quarterly* vol 37 (Winter 1969), pp. 58-68, quote p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> Robert M. Utley, *Special Report on Promontory Summit, Utah (Golden Spike National Historic Site)* (Santa Fe: National Park Service, 1960), p. 64. David Haward Bain, *Empire Express, Building the First Transcontinental Railroad* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1999), on p. 756 similarly states Bowman is "probably the last word on the ceremony."

<sup>5</sup> Recently, the National Park Service contracted with Michael W. Johnson, Utah State University, to study the ceremony with far more accurate detail which resulted in "The Golden Spike Ceremony Revisited," copy at Golden Spike National Historic Site. A revision was published as "Rendezvous at Promontory: A New Look at the Golden Spike Ceremony," *Utah Historical Quarterly* (Winter 2004), pp. 47-68.

<sup>6</sup> Newspapers cited are: from San Francisco: *Alta, Bulletin, Chronicle, Examiner, Figaro, Herald, Times*; from Sacramento: *State Capitol Reporter, Bee, Record and Union*; Nevada: the *Enterprise, Appeal, News*; from Utah: *Reporter, Deseret News*; from Idaho, the *World*; New York, *Harper's, Leslie's*; Arizona, the *Arizona Miner, Arizonian; Chicago Tribune; Engineer's Journal, July*; Colorado: *Rocky Mountain News; Oregonian*. Most are single day, May 11, citations. The most extensively cited are the California newspapers and the Corinne, *Utah Reporter*.

For the present study, in addition to Bowman's list, I found useful the *Cheyenne Leader*, *Colorado Tribune*, *New York Times*, and *Omaha Herald*, among others, that had reporters on the scene and published lengthy accounts (see Appendix A). Unfortunately, some newspapers with reporters at the scene no longer have issues for that date extant, such as the *Cheyenne Argus*. Other eastern newspapers were randomly checked without additional results. However, newspapers may have had correspondents send letters about the event and published weeks later, such as Wells Spicer's letter in the Tipton, Iowa *Advertiser* and Andrew Russell's article in the Nunda, New York *News*.

The three diaries mentioned by Bowman are: Lt. J. C. Currier, Leonard Eicholtz, and Charles Savage. These are still available. The diary of paymaster O. C. Smith, quoted in Robert Athearn's *Union Pacific Country* is in private hands. The diary of Bishop Loren Farr is quoted in the *Ogden Standard*, "Golden Spike Special Edition," May 11, 1919, but it does not include May 10 entries. The diary may be extant, but in private hands. It was unavailable for this study. Grenville Dodge's papers at the Iowa State Department of Historic and Archives lacks Dodge's 1869 diary. Its whereabouts is presently unknown, though its one time existence adds credibility to his later reminiscence. If Bishop Farr's and Dodge's 1869 diaries are found they will add greatly to our understanding of the events of May 10. Lt. Currier's is the most detailed for the day.

Bowman did not use extensively the reminiscences of Union Pacific officials Grenville Dodge and Sydney Dillon. They are too filled with errors of detail. He relies on the reminiscences of Amos Bowsher, telegrapher, and David Lemmon, Union Pacific engineer, both of which should have received more scrutiny. Bowman adds E. L. Sabin to his list, but Sabin is not cited in his notes, so it is unsure who he refers to. There is an inaccurate report that Edwin L. Sabin, author of *Building the Pacific Railway* (1919) was at Promontory. Unfortunately, he was born in 1870 and could not have been there. This may be a tale Sabin nurtured to help market his books, similar to his other efforts.<sup>7</sup>

Bowman includes the article by Dr. J. D. B. Stillman among the reminiscences. This was published in the July, 1869 issue of the *Overland Monthly* and should be listed more among the on the spot accounts that obviously had editorial coloring added by editor Bret Harte.

Bowman should have looked at additional reminiscences published in the *Union Pacific Magazine* or the *Southern Pacific Bulletin* in the 1910s and 1920s, which add some overlooked details.<sup>8</sup> The reminiscences of Utahans also adds to the understanding of the event. Such reminiscences can be found, for example, in the *Box Elder News*, *Salt Lake Tribune*, and *Ogden Standard* during the golden anniversary. Published reminiscences by Alexander Toponce, Alexander Majors, and others add a few details.

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<sup>7</sup> On Sabin and his fabrications see Marc Simmons, "Introduction," in reprint of Edwin L. Sabin, *Kit Carson Days*, vol 1 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995 reprint of 1935 edition).

<sup>8</sup> A complete set of the *Union Pacific Magazine* is at the Richardson Library, Colorado Railroad Museum, Golden, and the *Bulletin* can be found at the California State Library, Sacramento.

The 28 photographs described elsewhere in this report also aided with the description of events on May 10. Photographers A. J. Russell, Charles Savage, and A. A. Hart documented the scene. Photographs by William Henry Jackson, and additional photographs by A. J. Russell, both taken in the summer-fall of 1869, add additional details about the physical layout (with care to account for changes made after May 10).

Union Pacific principals' papers were available at Bowman's time, which are useful: for example, Dodge's papers at the Council Bluffs Public Library and the Thomas Durant papers in the Levi Leonard collection, University of Iowa. Other records perhaps not available to Bowman were the Leland Stanford papers and other Southern (Central) Pacific records at Stanford University and the C. P. Huntington papers at Syracuse University, now on microfilm and available at a number of repositories. Many of the records of the Union Pacific Railroad and Central Pacific Railroad, though incomplete, have since been donated to institutions providing public access: the California State Railroad Museum, Sacramento, Union Pacific Museum, Council Bluffs, the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, and Stanford University, Palo Alto, California.

### **The Golden Spike**

General Comment: Bowman provides a description of the golden spike. David Hewes had the spike made for the event and provided it to Governor Stanford for the May 10 ceremony (planned for May 8). He described the physical dimensions of the golden spike, presently (2005) in the Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University, California. This spike was donated by David Hewes to the university in 1892.

Bowman examined the spike and noted that tradition states that the indents on the head of the spike were made by the silver hammer wielded by Stanford on May 10.

New/Additional Information:

On May 8, 1869, the *Mining & Scientific Press*, San Francisco, page 296, published a paragraph about the spike: "The 'Last Spike' was manufactured at the metal-working establishment of W. T. Garratt, in this city, and consists of \$360, U. S. Coin, San Francisco Mint, melted together. The work was done by Joseph Garratt, father of W. T. Garratt, and the oldest metal worker, probably, on the coast, who very naturally took pride in doing the job."

The W. T. Garratt foundry was a prominent brass and bronze factory in gold rush San Francisco. According to the 1870 census, Joseph Garratt, a resident of San Francisco, was a 63 year old brass founder born in England.

The golden spike was cast from gold coins from the San Francisco mint. In 1869, the mint received gold from districts from throughout the West, with California dominating gold production. The golden spike, like a gold coin, which included silver and base metals in its composition, was sturdier than a bar of refined, pure gold, a malleable metal.

In an e:mail dated November 9, 2005, Kyle K. Wyatt, Curator of History & Technology at the California State Railroad Museum, announced the museum's acquisition of a second golden spike made for David Hewes. He wrote<sup>9</sup>:

First, it appears that David Hewes had two gold spikes cast in 1869. One was hurriedly engraved and sent with Leland Stanford for use at the ceremonies at Promontory, anticipated to be on May 8, but actually held on May 10. This spike was engraved with the anticipated May 8 date. The casting sprue (also referred to as the "slug") from this spike was broken off and melted to cast mementoes (such as rings and watch fobs), a number of which are preserved at Stanford University, and at least one at Golden Spike NHS. After the ceremony, this spike was returned to David Hewes. In 1892 Hewes donated the spike to Stanford University, along with his significant art collection. (I gather the art collection was considered the much more significant donation at the time.)

The second Hewes spike was engraved after the event - it includes the May 10 date for the ceremony. I should note that the circumstantial evidence (including the receipt) seems to indicate that the two spikes were cast at the same time. We have no actual concrete evidence confirming that. Wording on the two spikes is very similar, but there are some slight variations between the two. Most distinctive, the words "The Last Spike" that appears on the head of the Stanford spike is engraved on the side of the spike head on the second spike, and is written as "The last Spike" (note small "l" in "last"). Also significantly, this second Hewes spike has never had the sprue ("slug") removed - it is still attached to the spike. The Hewes family retained this spike over the years, until last week when several of us completed the purchase of the spike and transported it to CSRM.

In 1937 Robin Lampson met a Hewes descendant who had two photos that he believed to be of "The Last Spike," the spike used at the Promontory ceremony in 1869, with sprue attached. Researching further, Lampson located a copy of the privately published Hewes family history printed in 1913, which included five photo views of the various sides of the spike, including the two views Lampson had received from the Hewes descendent. Lampson believed these photos were of the spike that was used at the Promontory celebrations, showing it before the sprue had been removed. Comparing the photos with the spike displayed at Stanford University, he noted a number of differences, leading him to the conclusion that the original spike had been lost. Compounding this, Stanford for many years displayed a brass replica because their security was not considered sufficient to protect the original on display. It is possible that Lampson only saw this brass replica. (Stanford has recently installed a high security display case for the Hewes spike, and the Nevada silver spike, and now displays the originals, except when they are out on temporary loan at other institutions.)

Comparing the five photos of the Hewes spike that Lampson used with the spike recently obtained by CSRM shows them to be the same. Details both of the

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<sup>9</sup> The text was slightly altered from the original e:mail per request of Kyle Wyatt

writing and of the shape of the sprue confirm this. Lampson did not realize (nor did anyone else) that Hewes had two spikes cast. He assumed that the photos he had were taken in 1869 before the spike went to Promontory.

I theorize that in preparing the 1913 Hewes family history, David Hewes (who died in 1915) wanted to include photos of "The Last Spike". Rather than arrange with Stanford University for photos of the spike he had given to them in 1892, Hewes had new photos taken of the spike he still had for inclusion in the book.<sup>10</sup>

Looking at the photos of the spike with new eyes, and with familiarity of many historic photos, I would say the photographic reproduction and appearance is much more consistent with photos printed with materials available around the turn of the century than of photos printed with materials available in 1869.

My conclusion is that the spike at Stanford University is in all likelihood the original 1869 Hewes spike that went to Promontory. Keep in mind it was a rush job, hurried to get it ready in time for Stanford to take it to Promontory. This may account for Lampson's comment about "crude engraving". (Alternately, Lampson may only have seen the brass replica at Stanford.) The spike that Hewes kept was engraved after the May 10 event, and was not a rush job, so the engraving may appear finer.

The Robin Lampson research mentioned in the above is published in a number of places, including "The Golden Spike Is Missing," *The Pacific Historian*, (Winter 1970), pp. 9-24.<sup>11</sup>

A photograph of the spike with casting sprue (some called it a nugget) attached to its end is reproduced in the *Southern Pacific Bulletin*, May 1940, p. 6; this is the spike now at the California State Railroad Museum as proven by the words "The last Spike" being on the side of the spike instead of the top. A photograph of the Stanford University spike, is in Gerald Best's *Iron Horse to Promontory*, and in his article in the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Winter 1969 special golden spike edition, and is being held by J. H. Strobridge in the *Southern Pacific Bulletin* June 1, 1916. The *Bulletin* photo also shows its polished wooden box, with miniature portraits on its sides, now also at Stanford University. Park historian Andy Ketterson directed the manufacturing of the replica for the park by the NPS Harpers Ferry Center with the Stanford University artifact as the model.

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<sup>10</sup> "In the Hewes' 1913 family history, Hewes makes many claims for things which others actually did. For instance he claims to have been responsible for most of the San Francisco sand hauling, and for the first locomotive built in San Francisco. He actually got into the business by first leasing and later buying the equipment used by a pioneer sand hauler named Cunningham. Hewes came a number of years later. In my opinion, any uncorroborated Hewes claim should be taken not with a grain of salt, but with a whole salt shaker," Wyatt to author.

<sup>11</sup> Reproduced on the cpr.org web site at:[http://cpr.org/Museum/Golden\\_Spike\\_Missing.html](http://cpr.org/Museum/Golden_Spike_Missing.html)

As Wyatt notes, there is little doubt that the spike at Stanford University is the golden spike. The California State Railroad Museum now has the second Hewes spike made at the time, but not used in the ceremony.

### **The Other Gold Spike**

Bowman describes this spike as one given by the San Francisco *News Letter and California Advertiser* and incorrectly notes its absence from the literature after that. The *Utah Daily Reporter*, Corinne, May 12, 1869, which he cites, mentions this spike, the “Hewes” golden spike, the Nevada spike, and the Arizona spike as does the San Francisco *Bulletin*. Some authors doubt that it was used at the ceremony, but these sources prove otherwise.

#### **Additional information:**

Bowman notes that no May 1869 issues of the *News Letter* were extant. Copies have been found and the pertinent issues of May 1, 8, and 15, 1869 are on the cpr.org web page. Edson Strobridge, a descendant of James Harvey Strobridge of the CP, has researched the San Francisco *News Letter* spike and has posted his findings on the cpr.org web page as well. The *News Letter* provided the most detailed description of the spike, including an engraving done from a photograph, and reporter A. D. Bell detailed its place in the ceremony as one of the four spikes used during the last spike ceremony. The spike was donated by Frank Marriott, editor of the *News Letter*, and, according to the May 8 issue, it was nine and a half ounces in weight, worth \$200. Its shape was that of an ordinary railroad spike. Strobridge quotes from the San Francisco *Bulletin*, which reporter Bell worked for as well, and its recognition of the *News Letter* spike, as he did the Nevada and Arizona spikes.

Recently, a spike was purchased from a dealer in Maine. The spike appears to match the description of the *News Letter* spike, but with a different head. The *News Letter* sketch shows a shoulderless head, used during the period, while the photograph of the found spike is a shouldered headed spike, also a design used at the time. Without further testing the authenticity of the recently found spike remains unconfirmed. See cpr.org for an image of the spike and a letter from Mr. Fenton, its owner.

An article in the Sacramento *Bee* stated that the *News Letter* spike was given to Grenville Dodge after the ceremony. Dodge was an avid collector and kept artifacts important to his past (his surveying equipment, for example, is on display at the Union Pacific Museum). Dodge artifacts are held by the Iowa State Department of History and Archives, the Council Bluffs Public Library, Iowa, the Union Pacific Museum, Council Bluffs, Iowa, and the Grenville M. Dodge House, a historic house museum in Council Bluffs. A check with these entities confirms that if the spike was given to Dodge, he would have kept it and it would be prominently displayed. It is not. Don Snoddy, former curator at the Union Pacific Museum, also looked in the Dodge collections for possible discovery of the spike’s whereabouts without results.

An alternative recipient of the second golden spike, the *News Letter* spike, is Thomas Durant, as vice-president, the ranking Union Pacific Railroad official at the ceremony. Durant was in reduced circumstances after the financial panic of 1873. If he had the spike, it is not among his papers in the Levi Leonard collection at the University of Iowa.

There is a contemporary report that “the last spike” was cut in half and divided between officials. While the report appears to be inaccurate, it is possible that the reporter confused the spike with the sprue that was cut off the Hewes spike before the ceremony, and/or when Stanford cut off part of the sprue before returning the rest to Hewes. Of course, all this is speculation.

### **Silver Spike**

The Nevada newspapers, especially the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise*, captured the details of Nevada’s silver spike, which Bowman relates well.

Additional information:

It is now presumed railroad commissioner Frederick A. Tritle, not Haines as suggested by Bowman, had the spike made. Tritle was manager of the Yellow Jacket mine on the Comstock and, though he ran for Governor of Nevada in 1869 he decided to drop-out, possibly as a deal among Republican party leaders. Interestingly, he later became Governor of Arizona Territory, a few years after Governor Safford left office.

As related by the newspapers, E. Ruhling & Co., assayers, Virginia City, were responsible for making the spike. According to the 1870 census, Ell Ruhling was born in Hamburg, Germany in 1839. They assayed and confirmed the value of silver bullion produced by the Comstock lode. Its value was much less than the golden spike; valued at \$2.25 15/100 per oz. its 25 ounces of silver was equal to \$56. The editor of the *Enterprise* was given a piece of the silver bar left over from making the spike. He noted that future fake silver spikes could be found false if they did not assay a fineness of 50 parts gold and .942 fine silver, according to Ruhling’s assay.<sup>12</sup>

After the ceremony it was returned to its owner, Tritle, who had it finished and displayed by Nye & Co., Virginia City, Nevada. Apparently it was given to Governor Stanford not long after the Promontory ceremony. Its production had been rushed to get it to the special train on time (barely made it). It apparently came into the possession of Stanford University from Stanford himself, although University records are not clear.

### **Arizona Spike**

Bowman provides a newspaper quote description of the Arizona spike, from the *Arizona Miner*, which quoted the *San Francisco Bulletin*. Newly appointed Governor Anson P. K. Safford presented the spike.

Additional Information:

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<sup>12</sup> *Territorial Enterprise*, May 7, 8, 1869.

Safford was a Nevada politician with close ties to Senator Stewart, friend of the Central Pacific Railroad. The *Gold Hill News* mentions that the Comstock lode gave gold and silver spikes; which suggests Safford's spike for Arizona was finished using Nevada gold and silver (a more appropriate metal for Arizona would have been copper). The *Carson Daily Appeal* reports movements of Anson P. K. Safford to and from Virginia City. From there he undoubtedly carried the Arizona spike to the ceremony. At the time Stafford had the spike made, he had only recently been appointed as Territorial Governor of Arizona, and had not yet set foot in Arizona. His recorded movements around Nevada strongly suggest his spike was made there. Newspapers in Tucson and Prescott, Arizona make no mention of the spike prior to the ceremony and the editor of the *Arizona Miner* voiced surprise that one was presented by the territory.

After the ceremony the spike ended up in the collection of Sydney Dillon, one of the Union Pacific Railroad directors at the ceremony. His estate donated the spike to the Museum of the City of New York, New York City. In response to my query, Deborah Dependahl Waters, Ph.D., Curator, Decorative Arts and Manuscripts, Museum of the City of New York, wrote:

The Museum of the City of New York owns a Promontory Point [sic.] celebration steel, silver, and gold spike inscribed "Arizona presents her offering to the enterprise that has banded a continent and dictated a pathway to commerce--ribbed with iron, clad in silver, and crowned with gold--presented by Gov. Safford." Its length is 5.75 inches, and its accession number is 43.33.4. It was the gift of Mrs. Arthur Whitney. The spike is presently on loan to the Union Pacific Railroad Museum in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

### **Other Ceremonial Spikes**

Bowman mentions the *Leslie's* article as source for the comment that Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and California gave spikes. The article is reputed to have been written by photographer Andrew J. Russell, who was present. Bowman confirms four spikes were given, but not the accuracy of *Leslie's* report on the presenters. This may be information added by editors in New York, who played with his words substantially in the June 5, 1869 article. It is doubtful that Montana and Idaho offered spikes. Neither the *Montana Post* of Helena or the *Idaho Statesman* of Boise mention spikes from their respective territories, before or after the event.

### **Lemon Iron Spike**

No comment except that there were probably a large number of "last spikes" as the iron ones and the ties they were in continued to be taken by collectors. Bowman quotes documents verifying Lemon's spike's authenticity. Reporters noted that workers with cold chisels were even trying to take bits of the last rail. By May 11, 1869, the railroads posted a guard at the site.<sup>13</sup> One traveler wrote his wife: "I write you sitting on the last

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<sup>13</sup> W. L. Humason, *From the Atlantic Surf to the Golden Gate, or, First Trip on the Great Pacific Railroad* (Hartford: Press of Wm. C. Hutchings, 1869), p. 42, mentions the guard.

rail. The spike of gold is not here.” Did he send her one of iron?<sup>14</sup> There are many reports of additional remaining iron spikes used May 10th (see note of Edson Strobridge in cpr.org).

Lemon’s reminiscence has several flaws. He states his locomotive was the first over the last spike after the ceremony. Obviously, he is mistaken since the No. 119 shows as first in the line-up of UP locomotives on May 10, not the UP No. 117. The No. 117 was used by Casement’s work train, and may have been first over the last spike when Casements work crews built the siding there early, pre-dawn on May 11.<sup>15</sup>

### **Silver Sledge**

No comment except Bowman’s “Pacific Express Company” should read “Pacific Union Express Company,” a short-lived competitor to Wells, Fargo & Company. The “silver sledge” spike maul preserved at Stanford University appears to be a shipwright’s spike maul, not a railroad spike maul. The Hart photo of Stanford holding the spike maul at the ceremony appear to show that the Stanford University spike maul was indeed the one used at the ceremony. Note that in the Hart photo #356 both Stanford and Durant are holding spike mauls. It would appear there were two mauls used in the ceremony, one for each official. We may never know 1. if Durant used a special maul, or just an ordinary one, and 2. what became of that maul. From period accounts, Durant and Stanford tapped the last spike, but, after much negotiation, Stanford was given first swing and that with the silver sledge. The San Francisco *Newsletter*, May 15, 1869 states that after Stanford’s tap with the silver sledge sent the electrical message of “done,” then “Durant and Stanford driving two spikes on each side, the same moment...” ended the event.

### **Laurel Tie**

No comment except a photograph of the tie has been found and shows a more ornate silver plate than first assumed. The *Chronicle*, cited by Bowman, notes that the silver for the plate came from White Pine, the latest Nevada mining boom town. The photograph can be found at: unknowns@CPRR.org

### **Iron Tie**

No Comment except the Union Pacific officials did bring an iron last tie, as noted in a letter by Dodge, but it was not used, obviously, since the golden spike could not fit in it. This may have been the cause for the reports that the Union Pacific threatened to have its own separate ceremony. The tie’s fate is unknown.

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<sup>14</sup> “Coast to Coast by Railroad: the Journey of Niles Searls – May, 1869,” *New York History*, (July 1969), p. 311.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Johnson has reviewed the UP payroll records for early May 1869 and finds no engineer Lemon on the 117 or any of the other four locomotives at the front. Johnson to author.

Later, to deter souvenir collectors, Grenville Dodge ordered a stone tie to be placed at the last spike site. In a note to engineer Morris, July 15, 1869, then cutting stone abutments for new bridges, he wrote: “the stone for junction had better be marked ‘Junction of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads, May 10, 1869.’” The stone was probably meant to replace the tie at the last spike site. If placed at the site, its present existence is unknown.<sup>16</sup>

### **Wiring for the Broadcasts**

Bowman relates that F. L. Vandenberg “of the Union Pacific” [sic.—actually Central Pacific] wired the last spike, but then discounts this story based on the reminiscence of Amos Bowsher published fifty-seven years after the event. In the article, Bowsher claimed that a regular iron spike was wired to the telegraph system. Bowman is uncertain of the wiring linkages. Based on the Bowsher published reminiscence, Bowman concludes that the golden spike was not used to send the telegraph message announcing that the transcontinental railroad work was done. Instead, again citing Bowsher, he claims a plain iron spike was wired for the ceremonial telegraphic click “done.”

#### **New/Additional Information.**

In the May 1926 issue of the *Southern Pacific Bulletin* appeared “Eye Witness Tells of ‘Last Spike’ Driving,” by Erle Heath, associate editor. In it, Heath tells Amos Bowsher’s story, that of his being at Promontory on May 10 and that “it was the tapping of an ordinary hammer in the hands of Governor Leland Stanford on an ordinary iron spike that formed the electric contact which flashed the telegraphic message over the country, May 10, 1869, that the last link had been made in the rail lines of the first transcontinental railroad.”

Bowsher, as foreman for telegraph construction for the CP, stated he was busy directing his crew “perfecting the telegraph circuits,” and that he stood on the ladder leaning on the last CP telegraph pole at the last spike site. Bowsher states that the CP’s Louie Jacobs was the telegraph operator at the end of track who sent out the final messages.

In 1923, Levi Leonard collected the reminiscence of Watson N. Shilling, a Western Union telegrapher, “the Record of W. N. Shilling, Telegraph Operator at Spike Driving,” now in the Leonard collection, University of Iowa. Shilling recounted that “Walter Frederick was sent as chief W. U. operator to Promontory Point [sic.] for the celebration and these two men, Walter Frederick and Watson N. Shilling, were the two operators at Promontory Point May 10, 1869, who gave to the world the information that the Union and Central Pacific had joined hands.” In a reminiscence published in the *Ogden Standard* May 7, 1919, Shilling mentions the golden spike, the laurel tie, and the silver hammer and states that he “assisted in connecting the spike to the telegraph wire from the west and the wire from the east to the silver hammer.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Grenville Dodge to Morris, July 15, 1869, Grenville Dodge, “Autobiography,” Council Bluffs Public Library.

<sup>17</sup> Thanks to Michael W. Johnson for bringing this article to my attention.

Unfortunately, none of the contemporary newspapers or other contemporary sources checked to date mention either Bowsher or Shilling in a prominent let alone any role at the ceremony on May 10, 1869. Period accounts provide details about the wiring of the spike that refute their recollections given fifty years after the event.

The *Utah Daily Reporter*, Corinne, May 9, 1869 states: “Arrangements are made for the [telegraph] instruments to ‘click’ at every stroke of the maul on the last spike, and at the exact instant it is driven cannon are to be fired by telegraph in San Francisco, Sacramento, Chicago, New York, and other cities. At the same time bells will be rung. This arrangement was made by Mr. F. S. Vandenberg [sic.], superintendent of the Central Pacific telegraph, assisted by Mr. James Gamble [of Western Union] and others. We are indebted to Messrs. J. N. Stewart, R. F. Pixley and John Curran, telegraph operators at Elko and westward, who reached our city yesterday, and propose to stay and witness the closing ceremonies.” California papers mention agent H. Sigler leaving Sacramento to assist Vandenberg. Vandenberg, as superintendent of the Central Pacific Railroad’s telegraph business, should be credited with arranging the details for sending of the news of driving the last spike to the nation. He was present at Promontory, May 10. The *Reporter* of May 12 states clearly that he held the wire during the ceremony. He probably had much assistance in the arrangement of details, but Vandenberg would have been front and center during the ceremonial sending of the telegraph message “done.”

Amos Bowsher probably helped as well, per his reminiscence. Bowsher standing on a ladder leaning against the last CP telegraph pole makes sense because a wire can be seen extending from the lower end of the pole into the crowd toward the last spike site. Bowsher or someone would have been needed to make sure that wire was not yanked loose during the ceremony (numerous photographs of the pole show him there throughout the ceremony). It is doubtful he was needed to step down off the ladder, walk through the crowd to the track, and then to wire the maul and spike with so many other CP hands available. One has to question the accuracy of his stating that he wired the last spike and maul, be they of iron or precious metals. There were many individuals there to do the wiring and it was a relatively simple task. Vandenberg probably did it, with help, to ensure its success (we lack a reminiscence by Vandenberg; one has yet to be found).

Finally, the news that an iron spike not a gold one was used sounds too much like a journalist’s fabricated “scoop” long after the event – “stop the presses, it wasn’t really a gold spike but one of iron.” The multitude of contemporary accounts mention the gold spike (none mention iron) and the ease of making the last connection as described in the *Journal of the Telegraph* (see below) brings up the question about the veracity of an iron spike being used. Until contemporary information confirms Bowsher’s published tale, it should not be relied on.

Telegrapher Frederick’s name but not Shilling’s is mentioned in the *Chicago Tribune*, May 11 issue, as the Western Union telegraph operator, with F. Kearney. The newspaper states that W. B. Hibbard, superintendent of the W. U. Eastern Division was there as was Gamble of the California Division. The reporter noted that Vandenberg wired the

arrangement and that “when the hammer hit [the] head of the golden ingot [spike] the stroke was carried with the speed of electricity.”

Western Union did not have a telegraph line at Promontory, but had just opened a branch off its transcontinental line from Ogden to Corinne, under the direction of Ed Conway. Reporters mention giving their dispatches to the staff of Western Union telegraphers, who were busy sending telegraphic news from mid-morning until 3:00 p.m., but note that they worked only one line east or west, suggesting they used the Central Pacific and Union Pacific wires.<sup>18</sup> The Western Union transcontinental line was south of Salt Lake; the line north of the lake through Promontory was not completed until the summer of 1869.<sup>19</sup>

In telegraph operations of the day, telegraph systems needed a battery and grounding at the end of the line. This wire undoubtedly went to the CP set-up of battery and ground at the junction, probably in the tent nearest the last CP pole, where the telegraphers congregated. There may have been a back up battery in the “outfit car” on the CP siding nearby, where telegrapher Louie Jacobs sat. The CP crews working with the Western Union crew would have ensured that all systems worked that morning, and Vandenberg is noted by a reporter to have been up by 7 a.m., when he had placed an American flag atop the last telegraph pole. The power from the source battery would have ensured an electrical connection when the maul and spike connected. Having the key and repeater on a table adjacent the tracks, probably moved from the tent nearby, gave the operator (Western Union’s Frederick and Kearny, but probably not Shilling) a good view of the proceedings.<sup>20</sup>

Bowman suggests that the reporters were wrong in that, taking the timing of events into consideration, the time allowed to connect the telegraph wires to the maul and spike was too long and, therefore, could not have happened. However, since Casement had already stopped the ceremony to let the photographers take photographs (and a wet plate negative took fifteen minutes at its quickest, according to photographer W. H. Jackson), it is most likely that Vandenberg and crew had plenty of time to wire the maul and spike – CP and UP officials would have ensured they had time, just as they had for the photographers.<sup>21</sup> This contradicts Bowman.

Reporters state that Stanford and Durant gave the symbolic driving of the last spike. Logic suggests they were ceremonial taps on the golden spike head to ensure electrical connection – as telegraphed, “dot, dot, done.” One source states Stanford hit the wired spike that announced the completion, then he and Durant finished driving the four spikes, two on each of the last the rails. My general suspicion (subject to countering evidence) is that Stanford had two spikes (probably the Hewes and Nevada spikes) and that Durant

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<sup>18</sup> *San Francisco News Letter*, May 15, 1869.

<sup>19</sup> L. O. Leonard, “Golden Spike Anniversary,” *Union Pacific Magazine* (May 1923), p. 9.; *Reporter*, April 9, 1869

<sup>20</sup> Thomas D. Lockwood, *Electricity, Magnetism, and Electric Telegraph* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1883), general on telegraphy; *Territorial Enterprise*, May 11, 1869.

<sup>21</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, May 11, 1869.

had two (probably the SF News Letter and the Arizona spikes). Each would have his own gold spike to “drive”, quite possibly at the same time. Stanford’s was the only wired one in this scenario. Bowman makes the point that the driving of the spike occurred on the south side of the rail, therefore not near the UP, but near the CP telegraph line. This is incorrect in that the UP telegraph line was further south along its track, just beyond the CP telegraph line. No matter where the principals stood at the last spike site they would be nearest the CP telegraph line. They could have stood at either rail and would have been nearest the CP telegraph poles.

The *Journal of the Telegraph*, the Western Union publication, May 15, 1869, suggests that “the task was easily done. The wire had only to be laid, severed on the top of the spike, each severed end resting on a piece of paper separating it from the iron, and the hammer swung so as to touch both wires at the same time. Some equivalent arrangement was no doubt made.” Though the editor admitted this was not a description of what occurred because he was not there, it does suggest transmitting the electrical message would have been an easy task, one Vandenberg could have done. Silver and gold conduct electricity better than iron, and wiring the silver maul and gold spike would have improved conductivity not hindered it.

Did Stanford hit the golden spike with the silver maul and cause the electric contact that announced the finish of the transcontinental railroad? Bowman says no, based on the flawless spike at Stanford University and Bowsher’s reminiscences. Reporters on the scene state, repeatedly Governor Stanford delivered the last stroke which announced, telegraphically, that the work was done; that the spike used was gold, with the telegraph wire attached to it; that Vandenberg and the CP crew wired the gold spike and silver maul so news would be sent out over the telegraph east and west; and Western Union and CP crews played critical roles in the event. The indents on top of the golden spike at Stanford University may be exactly as tradition says, where the silver maul tapped the electrified spike, where a telegraphic spark left additional scars. If the wire was laid across the last spike and held in place, with a piece of paper between wires and spike the spike maul could have tapped the wire and not the actual head of the spike to complete the circuit, but a spark could still have burnt through the paper and scarred the spike’s head. Looking at the head of the spike, especially the top view from Stanford University’s web site, I believe the marks might have been made by sparks. At San Francisco on the May 10 signal of “done,” the telegrapher at the Battery caused a rolling spark to go down the wire from the telegraph relay to a line of powder which ignited the fuses to the cannons.

Additional note: According to invoices at the California State Railroad Museum, the Central Pacific Railroad ordered its telegraph instruments and batteries from Lundberg & Marwedel, 810, Montgomery Street, San Francisco. Insulators were of Brooks patent.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The Brooks patents are: #45,221, Nov. 29, 1864, reissued #2,717, Aug. 6, 1867; #63,206, Mar. 26, 1867; #69,622, Oct. 8, 1867. There were other “rams horn” insulators as well (although not used by CPRR), including Waite, #70,052, Oct. 22, 1867; Van Choate, #47,141, Apr. 4, 1865.

Wire was probably no. 8 or 9 gauge.<sup>23</sup> The park collections at Golden Spike National Historic Site include originals of wire and insulators.

### **Date**

No comment except the date change from May 8 to May 10 may have been more a result from the undermining and near collapse of the Devil's Gate bridge of the UP than the well publicized capture and holding-for-ransom of vice-president Durant. The bridge was barely repaired in time for the ceremony.<sup>24</sup> And not fully repaired at that, just shored up. According to accounts it sounds like the cars were pushed across the bridge individually (without locomotive), with the locomotive #119 picking them up on the West side. Individuals walked across, instead of riding the cars across.

### **Hour of Driving the Spike**

Bowman and other writers state that the driving of the spike occurred at Promontory at 12:47 P.M. This is based on the report at Washington, D. C. that telegraphic news of the driving of the last spike was received at 2:47 P. M., Washington time. Using the modern time zone system, with Utah two hours earlier than Washington, then Promontory time would be, indeed, 2:47. However, time zones did not come into accepted national use until the 1880s. Using the system of 1869, which based local time on the position of the sun, Promontory time would have been approximately 12:27 since its location 35 degrees west of Washington would have meant a time difference of 140 minutes. To confuse matters further, the Union Pacific time for the Cheyenne to Promontory run was based on Cheyenne, Wyoming. The Central Pacific Railroad set the time along its entire line based upon the company clock at Sacramento, California. Thus, according to the railroads, Promontory time, May 10, 1869, would have been either based on clocks in Cheyenne or Sacramento.

### **Numbers in Attendance**

Bowman estimates, based on photographs, that 500 or 600 attended the event. This is too low. The reporters noted the increase in numbers as trains continued to arrive, the last one arrived seventeen minutes after the ceremony began. The *Cheyenne Leader* reporter stated that the UP train he was on arrived with most of the loose population of Corinne given a free ride, a couple hundred people. A study of the military unit's participation by Paul Hedren reported that there were 264 soldiers present. The reporters for the *Deseret News* of Salt Lake City, the *Corinne Reporter* and others generally agree to a little over 1,000. Most of the railroad work crews, several thousand in April, had been sent home, or remained at work camps miles east and west of Promontory Summit. There is some suggestion that officials feared that mob warfare might break out, especially between the Union Pacific's Irish crews and the Central Pacific's Chinese. Thus, they were kept at a

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<sup>23</sup> CP Invoices, California State Railroad Museum Library, May 1, 1869. Drawings of Brooks insulators are in Lockwood, *Electricity*, p. 164; wire gauge is described in Lockwood, while the spike set-up is not described, the wire and set-up used at the battery in San Francisco is in *Chronicle* May 11, 1869.

<sup>24</sup> See Eicholtz diary, University of Wyoming for details of the bridge engineer's movements and worry.

distance from each other, and, therefore, the numbers at Promontory were far smaller than they could have been.

Bowman states there were few women present, and states only two or three were seen in the photographs. One image by Russell, taken next to Durant's special car, shows six women. There are other women in the photographs, not officials's wives or family. One wonders who the woman on horse back is in the Russell image number 537, looking from the locomotive "Jupiter" to the "No. 119." Presumably a number of women were part of the contingent of "locals" (from Corrine and near by) that were present at the ceremony. However, the number of individuals in attendance from surrounding communities was probably small because of the long, rough wagon road to the site.

In the famous Russell photograph of the two locomotives pilot to pilot, the "champagne photograph," there appears to be a Native American (with long hair in ponytails on each side of his head) standing in the throng just in front of the pilot of the UP #119. His face is in shadow under his hat, but lightening a digital photo brings him out.

Bowman's information on the stage run is also incorrect. That is detailed elsewhere in this study. As the *Corinne Reporter* stated May 12: "The Last – the last run by Wells, Fargo & Co.'s stages, between the terminal of the two roads, was made May 9, 1869. The distance, eight miles, was accomplished in forty minutes. The drivers were John Mantle, Samuel Getts, and David Dickey, assisted by Mr. J. B. Keeny, agent at the terminus." Keeny was in a stage office tent at the last spike site on May 10.

### **Decorations**

Bowman states that no decorations or flags are visible, except the flag hoisted by Vandenberg. He is incorrect. Closer scrutiny of photographs show small American flags along the boiler of the Central Pacific's "Jupiter" and elsewhere. An invoice for the purchase of a dozen flags by Stanford from Dale & Co., Sacramento, is in the collections of the California State Railroad Museum. Reporters mention the flags and decorations as do the reminiscences of the children seen at the event. *Leslie's*, based on Russell's photographs and notes could report, on June 5, 1869, that Central Pacific's "Jupiter" "was gaily decorated with little flags and ribbons, the red, white, and blue."<sup>25</sup>

### **Point When Construction Ended and Maintenance Began**

No comment except UP issued its timetable Number 16, May 10, 1869 with scheduled trains to Promontory on May 10. Passengers were already using the line, with the first traffic connection at Promontory, May 11. For purposes of receiving Federal bonds for completing the track, the UP and CP did not receive their bonds until expected

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<sup>25</sup> May 6, 1869 invoice, CSR; *Chronicle* May 11, 1869; Bernetta Atkinson reminiscence in *Box Elder News* May 7, 1919.

improvements were accepted in November. By then, trains had been running for over six months.<sup>26</sup>

### **The Site**

Minor comments: the last spike site tracks run northeast to southwest not north-south; there were fourteen tents along the tracks at the last spike site with three more in the distance, not “twenty tents and shacks.” There were many more than four engines there on May 10. And the junction point was at or near Promontory Summit’s highest point on the CP, not UP, which was a half mile or so further east.

### **Stage Setting**

No comment except the south side of the CP track, or in reality, the land within the right of ways of the UP and CP overlapping rights of way were more easily controlled than the open area north of the CP track, where just beyond the right of way were the row of saloons and restaurants. A row of wagons served as grand stand here until after the ceremony, when the soldiers were marched up forming a perimeter while the photographers had their half hour or so in which to take photographs.

### **Driving the Last Spike**

Many other writers have described this scene better. For our purposes, a review is not necessary except to note that this description should not be used as an accurate portrayal of events because of its many omissions of details and commissions of errors.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Humason, *op. cit.*, was one of the first through passengers May 11; Maury Klein details the impact of not getting the government bonds in *Union Pacific, the Birth of a Railroad* (New York: Doubleday, 1987)

<sup>27</sup> See Johnson, “Rendezvous at Promontory,” *op. cit.*