

Uintah Railroad Snippets
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Freight Wagons and Railroad Woes
By Mark E Stuart

The hey-day of Uintah's railroad boom was from 1868 to 1870. During this time, Uintah was the main rail head for all traffic heading to Salt Lake City and points beyond. Passengers and freight heading south was unloaded at Uintah which was an economic windfall to the local economy. On the north side of the lower tracks where Don Pearson's hay field is, were two stage coach stations (Wells Fargo and another stage company) which carried passengers and mail to Salt Lake City. West of the stage coach stations stood the Western Union Telegraph offices. On the south side of the railroad tracks on the first Weber River bench stood a huge freight yard. The freight yard extended from the present 1725 East (then called Cedar Street) west to almost 1540 East. There were short side tracks extending south from the Union Pacific mainline into the freight yard so goods could be loaded onto waiting freight wagons to be transported to their destinations. It was said that during this boom period numerous stage coaches and over a thousand freight wagons a day were traveling between Uintah and Salt Lake City. The huge freight wagons carried materials and goods to Salt Lake City and then returned to Uintah carrying locally produced goods and especially mining ore to be shipped on the railroad. These were heady days in Uintah with both good and bad happenings as illustrated by two period newspaper articles.

- Salt Lake Herald. 1870-08-27. **A Fearful Rumor.**

A FEARFUL RUMOR.—There is a rumor afloat that a quantity of buffalo robes, to the number of 1,300 were recently, if they are not still, stored at Uintah, on account of being infected with the small pox, having been bought from some of the northern tribes in Montana, who have had a terrible visitation of that dreadful scourge. It is also reported that an effort was made to send these robes by steamer, but failing in that they were sent by train to the terminus of the U. P., and the officers of the road learning a few facts concerning the said robes retained them at Uintah. If the rumor is true, there is a fearful responsibility resting on those who were parties in the transaction. We are strongly averse to any measures for punishing wrong-doers except those recognized by the courts; but in a case like the one reported a little lynch law, vigorously administered, would savor of justice. We publish the report, without, however, endorsing it, to give the officers of the road an opportunity of contradicting it, if it is false. It may be added that this storage is said to have been effected some length of time ago, and if so the question arises how far the small pox that has afflicted Ogden and other localities to which it has spread, is directly traceable to these robes.

- Salt Lake Herald. 1876-05-02. **Accident on the U.P.**

Early yesterday morning a farmer discovered a washout on the Union Pacific road near Uintah, and he immediately flagged the west-bound freight, which came to a halt between the first named place and Devil's gate. While standing on the track the latter gave way under the train, precipitating eight cars into the Weber River. Fortunately the engine and caboose remained on the track, and thus none of the train employees [sic] were hurt by the catastrophe. The cars were badly smashed by the fall, and the greater part of the merchandise which they contained was lost. Much of the contents was seen floating down the river past Ogden. Some of the goods were destined for Salt Lake, but to what houses they were consigned has not been ascertained. The loss will amount to several thousand dollars. Workmen were immediately put on the break, but it had not been sufficiently repaired last night to admit the passenger train crossing it.