



Railroad News

I hope you all were able to see the Uintah Cemetery on Christmas Eve with the luminaries a-glow. It was very impressive and for those of us who have loved ones there. A big thanks to the volunteers who spent time placing the luminaries. If you missed it this year, make note for next year. Our family said that it is a high light and a must see every Christmas Eve. Thanks Again to those involved.

I hope you are enjoying Mark Stuarts monthly history tidbits. As I said earlier, the 150th Anniversary of the driving of the Golden Spike which connected Union Pacific and the Central Pacific RR was quite an accomplishment, and is going to be quite a celebration this year. Uintah played a significant roll in the growth and development of Northern Utah along with the economic development of the inter- mountain west. If you missed the article in the Standard Examiner regarding some of the upcoming events and displays, may I share with you the information.

A WORLD TRANSFORMED , USU library to open transcontinental railroad exhibit for Golden Spike anniversary SALT LAKE CITY— The sesquicentennial of the driving of the Golden Spike is still more than four months out, but folks from the Utah State University library are getting a jump start on the momentous anniversary. Staffers from USU's Merrill -Cazier Library and the Utah Division of State History will soon open a new transcontinental railroad exhibit on the fourth floor of the Utah State Capital building in Salt Lake City. Titled, "A World Transformed: The Transcontinental Railroad and Utah," the exhibit highlights the impact of the first transcontinental railroad across the United States, which was completed in Northern Utah on May 10, 1869. Built between 1863 and 1869, the line connected the Pacific Coast at San Francisco Bay with the existing Eastern U.S. Railway. The railroad revolutionized the American West with a dependable transportation system that brought Western states economic prosperity through the relatively inexpensive and speedy movement of both goods and people.

The railroad played a major role in the history of Northern Utah, specifically Ogden. The ceremonial last Golden Spike was driven at Promontory Summit in Box Elder County 150 years ago. "The impact that the transcontinental railroad had on the history of Utah cannot be underestimated," said Todd Welch, USU's associate dean for Special Collections, in a press release. "The railroad linked the territory to the rest of the country and served as the catalyst for economic and cultural change." According to the USU's marketing office, a grand opening will be held from 3-5p.m. Jan. 23, featuring a short ceremony and guided gallery walks through the capitol. A companion exhibit presented by the Chinese railroad Workers Descendants Association will also be on display. According to the USU press release, the exhibit was funded by a \$55,000 grant from the state's history office. USU Special Collections and Archives photograph curator Dan Davis said the aim of the exhibit is to not only tell the story of the railroad's impact on Utah, but to also highlight the people who built it. "We looked at what Utah's role was in completing the Transcontinental Railroad who are the people who worked on it and how did it affect the people who used it?" Davis said. "Then we want to different institutions around Utah and asked, "What can you contribute?" The display features photographs, maps, lithographs and artifacts on loan from the Golden Spike National Historic Site, Brigham Young university, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints History Library and the Utah State Historical Society. Molly Cannon, the director of USU's Museum of Anthropology, is also contributing some artifacts related to Chinese laborers, according to the release.

After the exhibit's run at the capital building for the anniversary celebration, it will be moved to the Merrill-Cazier Library's atrium. It will be on display at USU from July to September 2019, then will be relocated to the Southern Utah Museum of Art, displaying from October through December. The exhibit will finish its tour of the state at the Park City Museum from early February through March 2020.

I hope this is informative
-Jerry Smith

UINTAH RAILROAD SNIPPETS —JAN 2019

An Overlooked Tidbit of American History

By Mark E Stuart

An overlooked tidbit of American History is the date inscribed on the original Golden Spike. That spike was used in the ceremony for the "Wedding of the Rails" which was the joining of the tracks laid by the Central Pacific Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad Companies in the spring of 1869. The engraving on the spike is "May 8, 1869" which was a Saturday. This was the date chosen by the Federal Government for the American Nation to celebrate this historic event. However, a quick check of history books shows that the actual date of the driving of the Golden Spike was Monday May 10, 1869 at Promontory Summit. What was going on here?

Few people realize that the Uintah area played an important role in the delay of the "Wedding of the Rails". After the Federal Government mandated the date and day for the completion of the railroad, Dignitaries of both the Central Pacific coming from California and the Union Pacific coming from Omaha Nebraska headed for Promontory Summit, Utah for this momentous occasion. Dignitaries from Central Pacific arrived on the appointed date without much trouble. The officials from the Union Pacific however, encountered two major delays that postponed the "Wedding of the Rails".

The first delay occurred in Piedmont, Wyoming where unpaid and very angry railroad workers laid railroad ties across the tracks and refused to allow the UP officials to continue to Promontory until they were paid back wages. The telegraph operator at Piedmont being sympathetic to the railroad workers refused to wire for military troops from near- by Fort Bridger or law officers from Green River to allow the train to continue. Finally, Thomas Durant and the other UP officials agreed to the demands of the unpaid workers. By the time the money arrived at Piedmont and the train allowed to continue, it was already Saturday May 8, 1869. Despite this fact the Nation celebrated this great event with wild celebrations in most of the big cities of the country. Uintah tie to this delay was the fact Piedmont was first settled by the Moses Bryne Family who were originally from the town of Uintah. Also, some of the unpaid rail workers were citizens of Uintah. Today, Piedmont is a ghost town but there are several huge charcoal kilns built by Moses Bryne which is a Wyoming State Historic Site. Moses Bryne and some of his family are also buried there in the pioneer cemetery. Piedmont can be reached by a good dirt road branching of 1-84 just before Fort Bridger. The Kendell, Fernelius and Pringle families of Uintah are related to Moses Bryne.

The second major delay of the UP officials occurred in lower Weber Canyon at Devils Gate/Horseshoe Bend two miles east of Uintah. The original UP railroad grade (today's lower track) was built by Mormon workers contracted to build the railroad grade from Rocks Springs Wyoming to Promontory Summit, Utah. The Mormons were known for their hard work and craftsmanship in building the railroad grade, bridges and culverts. But in their haste to finish the railroad, UP officials decided the Mormon workers were too slow and gave culvert and bridge building to other contractors.

Their haste sometimes resulted in shoddy work? One of those places was the bridge crossing the Weber River at Devils Gate. The bridge was also built in the late summer of 1868 when the river was at low flow. In the spring of 1869, the Weber River was at flood level from spring melt and the run off washed out and weakened the bridge supports at Uintah. When the UP officials arrived at Devils Gate Sunday May 9, 1869 the bridge was deemed unsafe to allow the special engine and train to cross. This event delayed the UP officials one more day until other transportation arrangements could be made. Hence, even though the Golden Spike was engraved May 8, 1869, the actual date was Monday May 10, 1869 because of events which involved the town of Uintah and its people.