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TRANSPORTATION HISTORY

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOLDEN SPIKE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE:
A HISTORY OF ITS CREATION

By

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INTRODUCTION

*"On the beaten road there is tolerable travelling;
but it is sore work, and many have to perish,
fashioning a path through the impassable"*

—Carlyle

One of the greatest achievements of the nineteenth century was the completion of the world's first transcontinental railroad at Promontory Summit, Utah Territory, May 10, 1869. The events of that day received great fanfare from a nation eagerly awaiting news that the heretofore impossible had been achieved. After the junction between the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific moved to Ogden in early 1870, Promontory's importance quickly faded from the minds of most Americans. After completion of the Lucin Cut-off across the Great Salt Lake in 1904, the route through Promontory was relegated to secondary status, and in 1942 it was abandoned completely. Another fifteen years passed before America paid much attention to this famous western site with the creation of the Golden Spike National Historic Site under non-federal ownership. Since then, the site has burgeoned into an internationally recognized symbol of industrialization, westward expansion, and sheer human will. Due to the paramount importance of Promontory Summit, it is imperative to trace its decline and reemergence in order to explain why a national historic site now commemorates the area's heritage for the benefit of historians and non-historians alike.

This paper will begin with a brief look at what happened on May 10, 1869, which constitutes the zenith of Promontory's national prominence. Then the paper will survey the years from 1869 to 1942 to reveal a pattern of change and neglect which contributed to the demise of distinction for Promontory. The larger portion of the paper will describe and explain the protracted development of public interest in that site and its history during the 1950s and 1960s, as Promontory was boosted, largely by the efforts of one individual, from its nadir of disregard. This interest culminated in 1969 when the centennial of the "Wedding of the Rails" was celebrated once again with the enthusiastic support of a proud nation. Golden Spike National Historic Site became part of the National Park Service in 1965 and since that time has evolved into an interpretive touchstone of railroad building, steam engines, and the great American West.

A large body of literature concerning the building of the trans-continental railroad and the great race to Promontory is available. Related subjects such as nineteenth century railroading and steam trains are offered by a seemingly endless number of books, papers, and articles devoted to them. Very little of this published material deals explicitly with the happenings at Promontory after the "Great Event" of 1869. In fact, the works that do address the period from 1869 to 1969 are primarily based on secondary sources or other scholarly publications. This paper aims to fill this void by utilizing primary resources that have previously been overlooked or unavailable to the historians

who have adequately described the justification not only for this report but for the creation of the park itself. The existing literature touches upon the fringes of the decline and renewal of interest in Promontory and the creation of Golden Spike National Historic Site, but seldom directly confronts these issues or attempts to trace what transpired between the two poles of public enthusiasm in 1869 and 1969. This account is intended to add detail and clarity to a subject that heretofore has only been alluded to.

THE RISE AND FALL OF PROMONTORY

*"What was it that the Engine said,
Pilots touching, --head to head
Facing on the single track,
Half a world behind each back?..."*
--Bret Harte

In the winter of 1868 and the spring of 1869, the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific grading crews labored side by side while constructing duplicate roadbeds between Echo Junction, Utah, and Wells, Nevada for a distance of nearly 250 miles. Each crew was working 300 miles ahead of the end of track, as permitted in the Pacific Railway Act of 1864, so that they might obtain as much of the profitable land grants as possible, in the "great race". As the two railroads competed for land grants and trade rights in the Great Basin it became increasingly clear that they had to agree upon a meeting point. On April 9, 1869, in Washington D.C., Collis P. Huntington of the Central Pacific and Grenville Dodge of the Union Pacific reached an agreement that established

Promontory Summit as the meeting point of the two lines and Congress approved it the following day.¹ The stage was set and all that remained to be done was to complete the railroad.

In a last-ditch effort to ease the sting of having lost the race to Ogden, Charles Crocker of the Central Pacific drove his crews up the western slopes of the Promontories to accomplish the historic feat of laying ten miles of track in one day. On the other side of the mountain a completely different story was unfolding as Union Pacific crews labored to climb the steep eastern gradient which ironically turned out to be one of the steepest grades of the entire transcontinental line.² The crews of both companies reached the summit and by May 7, 1869, they were ready to connect the rails and celebrate meanwhile the special train carrying Union Pacific dignitaries, including Thomas Durant, had been chained to a siding in Wyoming by unpaid workers demanding compensation. To make Durant's situation worse, Devil's Gate Bridge on the Weber River had been damaged. After he worked out the payroll problem in Wyoming he switched trains at the unusable bridge. Leland Stanford of the Central Pacific fared little better. His special engine, the *Antelope*, was damaged by a log placed on the tracks by a work crew. He, too, was forced to

¹Robert M. Utley and Francis A. Ketterson Jr. (Washington D.C.: Division of Publications, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1969), 27-52.

²ibid.

switch engines.³ After overcoming these travails, all parties were in place and ready to finish the work on May 10, 1869.

The morning air was chilly and the ground was damp from the rains the night before. During the morning hours transformed into midday, a crowd of between 600 and 1200 people gathered to witness the events that were about to take place. The photographer, Andrew J. Russell, who had tarried with the Union Pacific crews to create a "visual history" of the railroad's construction, made preparations to capture the scenes of the day. The telegrapher, W. N. Schilling, awaited the moment when he would tap out the prearranged message, "dot, dot, dot," to signify that the rails were joined. Telegraph lines across the country had been cleared and crowds of thousands had gathered in nearly every city in America to celebrate. Finally, after a speeches by Leland Stanford and others, and a prayer by the Reverend Dr. Todd of Massachusetts, the ceremonial laurelwood tie, special maul, and four precious metal spikes were presented.⁴ These showpieces were delicately set in place and removed as soon as the golden spike, which had been donated by David Hewes, was symbolically driven into a pre-drilled hole. A work crew followed the ceremony by sliding a regular tie into place and fastened it with regular spikes; save the last spike,

³"Everlasting Steam: The Fate of 'Jupiter' & '119.'" Information sheet produced and distributed by Golden Spike National Historic Site, March 1993. Brigham City, Utah.

⁴"The Proceedings at Promontory Summit," Deseret Evening News, May 11, 1869, 1.

Stanford was to have the honor of driving it. Both the maul and spike were wired to separate telegraph wires so that the actual blows could be transmitted across the nation. Many cities, like New York and Philadelphia, hung speakers in public squares so that the large crowds gathered could hear.⁵ Stanford missed the spike, so Thomas Durant took a swing and he, too, missed. With all the laughter, and the throng pressed together, it is not known who exactly drove in the last spike.⁶ Schilling dutifully tapped out three dots at 12:47 p.m., the Union Pacific's engine No. 119 crossed the newly joined rails and then backed away to allow the *Jupiter*, Stanford's engine, to do the same. Whistles blew at Promontory and around the country. Even the bells at Independence Hall chimed in acknowledgement of one of the greatest events in modern history.⁷ The United States were now truly and everlastingly united.

Promontory became the temporary junction between the two railroads. But due to its lack of services, poor location, and the agreement between Huntington and Dodge, Ogden soon took its place. By January of 1870 the junction relocated to Ogden where a new station was being completed. The

⁵"Celebrations in Chicago, Philadelphia, Buffalo, and Other Cities," New York Times, May 11, 1869, 1.

⁶Many publications have given credit for the driving of the last iron spike to Leland Stanford, Thomas Durant, James Strobridge, Samuel Reed, or various others. The position of the park is that no consensus of opinion exists, and that the last spike was probably driven by a section hand.

⁷"Celebrations in Chicago, Philadelphia, Buffalo, and Other Places," New York Times, May 11, 1869, 1.

agreement also included a provision that the Central Pacific would purchase the forty-seven miles of line between Promontory and Ogden from the Union Pacific. Promontory then served as a helper station, maintaining engines to assist trains coming from the east up the steep slopes of the mountains. A small community had developed on the site and remained for decades. Promontory Summit became a site to be seen only as one passed by on a passenger train that could travel from coast to coast in about seven days, an extraordinary accomplishment compared to the five to eight month journey by covered wagon. The Union Pacific, Central Pacific, Denver & Rio Grande, Utah Northern, and Utah Central railroads all ran into Ogden, which soon gained national recognition as "Junction City."

While Ogden became a beehive of railroad activity, other transcontinental railroads were being completed. The Santa Fe Railroad, the Canadian Pacific, and The Great Northern were among those railroads that spanned the North American continent. As these railroads were completed, more options became available for the transportation of goods and freight and for personal or business travellers. Promontory had been the site of the completion of the first transcontinental railroad but no longer held the distinction of being the only one, and as a result of this, the importance of the site waned, in addition to the attention given to it. To disassociate Promontory with its heritage even more, the Central Pacific, which had played such a large role in fashioning the greatness and history of the area, was consumed by the Southern Pacific in-

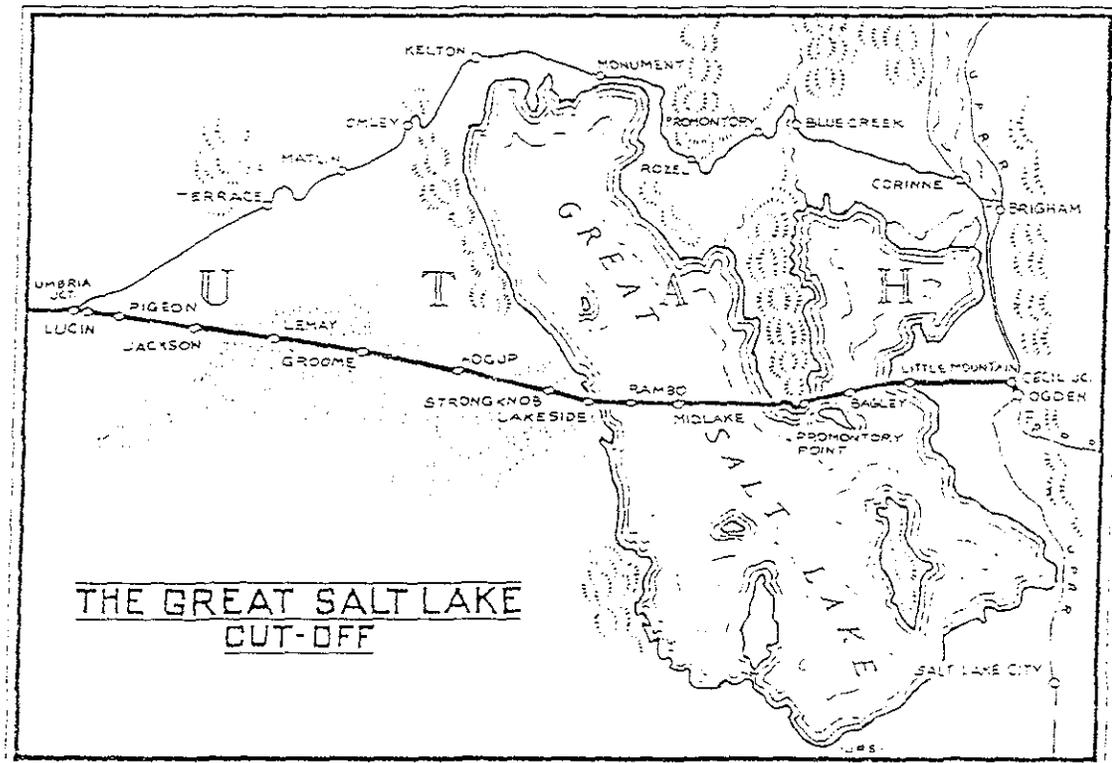
1899. After two full decades had passed, the once famous location was now under the control of a railroad company that had no part in the "Great Event" that by happenstance had thrust Promontory into the national spotlight.

Though the first two decades following May 10, 1869 bore witness to the rapid depreciation of fame, they paled in comparison to the ensuing years that lead Promontory Summit to near obscurity. As technology advanced and demands on railroads escalated, it became increasingly necessary to cut costs, streamline efforts, and make every attempt to get passengers to their destinations as quickly as possible. To keep pace with rival companies the Southern Pacific, under E.H. Harriman, elected to construct a cut-off over one hundred miles in length due west from Ogden, bridging the northern portion of the Great Salt Lake. When completed it would consist of fifteen miles of man-made embankments and over twenty-three miles of trestles (eleven were only temporary), and make contact with land only once at Promontory Point (thirty-seven miles south of Promontory Summit) before it reached the western shore.⁸ The trestle, which became known as the Lucin Cut-off, was completed in 1904. It saved the Southern Pacific over \$60,000 per month in operation and maintenance costs, lessened the trip time by forty-four miles and seven hours, and saved much needed manpower by providing a more direct route through the

⁸Don L. Hofsommer, The Southern Pacific, 1901-1985 (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 17-18.

region.⁹

The realization of the Lucin Cut-off in 1904 added to the descent of Promontory Summit by two of the most ruinous means possible. First, and most importantly, the new route removed Promontory Summit from the main line relegating it to secondary status for use only during times of hazardous weather over the lake or as a local route.



⁹David H. Mann, "The Undriving of the Golden Spike Utah Historical Quarterly 37 (Winter 1969): 124-134.

Secondly, the brief landfall by the trestle at Promontory Point lead to persistent, brutal confusion between the point and the summit. To this day, books, journals, articles, advertisements, and scholars have consistently referred to the events of May 10, 1869, as having taken place at Promontory Point. All this has propagated a collective, common, persistent, public misconception that has facilitated a lasting injustice to the honor of the site that once attracted the attention of the world and invoked the pride of a nation.¹⁰

After 1904, the cutoff was in full use, significantly decreasing the traffic through Promontory. Local farmers and ranchers depended on the trains to bring them supplies and to ship their goods to buyers. The region occasionally experienced summer draught conditions and the water and feed brought in by the trains were the only things that kept the livestock from perishing.¹¹ By the 1920s few runs were being made through the area each month. During the 30s, service slowed even more and by 1937 no more service was scheduled beyond the city of Corinne, which lies about thirty miles east of Promontory and about twenty miles north of Ogden. Some locals claimed that the Southern Pacific

¹⁰The assertion that Promontory Point has been routinely mistaken for Promontory Summit is the conclusion drawn from this author's experience as both a student of history and a former Ranger at Golden Spike National Historic Site.

¹¹Mann, "Undriving of the Golden Spike," 132.

removed the rails from the area to be laid elsewhere, and later laid smaller, lighter, mining rails.¹² Whether or not this actually happened is still under investigation, but it is certain that the line between Corinne and Lucin rapidly became obsolete and was defunct by the end of the 1930's.

On December 7, 1941, the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The terror and destruction of that day gripped the nation and functioned as the impetus that propelled America into World War II. The country responded with an uncharacteristic unanimity and immense efforts were undertaken to prepare for war. As America's industrial capacity mobilized it became evident that a desperate need for resources existed. Such was the case with steel; supplies were deplorably inadequate while demand was continually growing and incessantly urgent. The War Department sought to utilize all unused resources it could procure. Between Corinne and Lucin, 123 miles of steel rails lingered in obsolescence, and it was only a short time before Promontory was conclusively stripped of the railroad that had catapulted it to greatness only a generation earlier. Beginning on July 1, 1942, the Hyman-Micheals Company of Chicago embarked upon the task of removing all the rails on the abandoned line. They used a block-and-tackle hoist making the work relatively simple and uncomplicated when compared to the colossal endeavor required to install them.

¹²Bernice Gibbs Anderson, Notes concerning interview with Wilson Wright, an engineer with the Southern Pacific, stationed at Ogden. February 18, 1954, Bernice Gibbs Anderson Collection, Golden Spike National Historic Site.

On September 8, 1942, only five weeks later, the workers completed their task and a celebration of sorts was held. Two engines were placed head to head on a short stretch of track while L.P. Hopkins, Superintendent of the Southern Pacific, E.C. Schmidt, Assistant to the President, Union Pacific, and Utah Governor Herbert B. Maw performed a ceremonial "Undriving of the last spike."¹³ Many local citizens attended the event as well as elected officials, business leaders, academicians, a leader of the Mormon Church, and Mary Ipsen, who had been present for the 1869 ceremony. The salvaged remnants of the railroad were relaid at the Utah Quartermaster Depot in Ogden and at a naval base in Hawthorne, Nevada.¹⁴

TRANSITION

*"But there was the road windin' mile after mile,
And nothing to do but go."
--H.H. Knibbs*

The "undriving" ceremony could be construed to be the final violation in a long line of injustices suffered by Promontory Summit, the place that once personified America's supposed manifest destiny. A closer look, however, will reveal that this ceremony had dual implications that were diametric to one another. At first glance it represented the end of an era for a once significant place, but a careful inspection exposes the genesis of admiration and reverence

¹³"Undriving the Golden Spike," West (November 1942).

¹⁴Mann, "Undriving the Golden Spike," 131-134.

on a much larger scale than had existed for many years. Some individuals or small groups attempted to revitalize the fading legacy of 1869, but often met with little success, and seldom found interest outside of local circles. Though frequently fruitless, these efforts must be taken into consideration when exploring the history of Promontory and its transition from a declining national landmark to a prestigious site, formally recognized and widely appreciated. This reemergence began at the local level in Box Elder County, wherein Promontory lies, as a slow, local, grassroots activity, and it overlapped the national declination that was taking place. It is therefore necessary to go back in time to track the efforts of local individuals to maintain Promontory's acclaim and eventually their efforts to create an everlasting monument for posterity.

Residents of Box Elder County appeared to have taken a great deal of pride in Promontory and its legacy since its famous beginnings. It is not known exactly when reenactment ceremonies or anniversary celebrations began, though by 1900 it appeared that several had taken place. However, by 1919, for the 50th anniversary of the driving of the golden spike, Utahns held grand celebrations to commemorate the momentous accomplishment of their forebears. In Salt Lake City the social elite attended lavish parties. In Ogden, a parade of unprecedented proportions was held in the grandest of styles. Business dignitaries from around the country, leaders of the Mormon Church, and elected officials from around the state of Utah attended. The Southern Pacific brought in three former Chinese railroad workers, Ging Cui, Wong Fook,

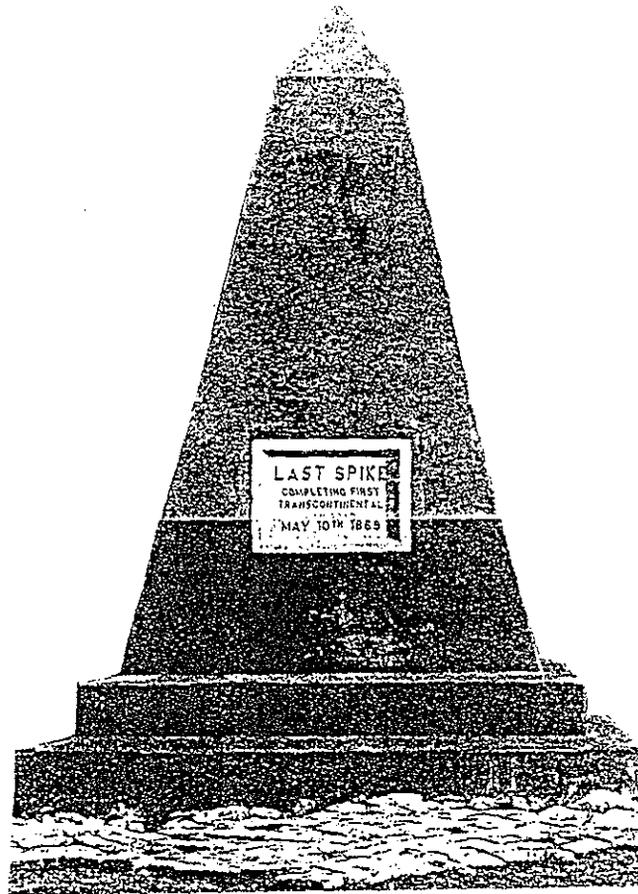
and Lee Cho, to ride aboard a float in the parade. All three men participated in the building of the line through Promontory and in 1919 were credited for laying "...the last rail of the Central Pacific road up to the point where the last spike was driven..."¹⁵

Curiously, there is no mention of the events at Promontory on this most festive occasion in any of the newspapers published in the state of Utah. Existing pictures support the notion that some type of ceremonies took place on the summit that day. In these pictures, a marker in the form of an obelisk, standing approximately eight feet tall, and measuring approximately four feet wide at the base, is clearly in existence. Some confusion surrounding this marker's erection has arisen as this historian has searched for the specific date of its construction. According to the notes of the site's biggest booster, Bernice Gibbs Anderson, the marker was built by the Southern Pacific in 1915 or 1916 at the request of Wilson Wright, an engineer stationed at Ogden. Mr. Wright recounted that the marker was refinished in 1924 and again 1951, turned over to the Utah Trails and Landmarks Association by the Southern Pacific and had a fence built around it in 1951, and painted white in 1953.¹⁶ Mrs. Anderson herself offered the year of 1917 as the date on which the marker was erected in an oral

¹⁵"Three Chinamen, All Over 90 Years of Age, Arrive to Take Part in The Parade Saturday," Ogden Standard, May 8, 1919, 1-4.

¹⁶Bernice Gibbs Anderson, Notes concerning interview with Wilson Wright, an engineer with the Southern Pacific, stationed at Ogden. February 18, 1954, Bernice Gibbs Anderson Collection, Golden Spike National Historic Site.

history in 1974.¹⁷ The National Park Service has installed a plaque next to the marker stating its construction was in 1919.¹⁸ Regardless of the year of construction, it is certain that it was in existence by 1919. It originally had an inscription engraved into the cement, but in later years a placard was fastened over the engraving to hide a shotgun blast that had obliterated the date.



Obelisk at Promontory Summit

¹⁷Bernice Gibbs Anderson, Oral history , transcript, by unknown historian, August 15, 1974, archives, Golden Spike National Historic Site, Brigham City, Utah.

¹⁸At the time this paper was written the Southern Pacific had not as yet responded to written inquiries into this matter.

According to Mrs. Anderson, after the 1919 celebrations some sort of annual acknowledgement of the "Great Event" was held in the various local communities of northern Utah.

Other than small, locally held ceremonies, little attention was given to Promontory Summit itself. Nonetheless, by the late 1920s, one individual stepped forward with the objective of winning federal recognition for Promontory as a national monument. Bernice Gibbs Anderson, a resident of Corinne in Box Elder County, where she worked as a newspaper correspondent for several years before later becoming a reporter for the *Salt Lake Tribune*. She wrote a great deal of poetry and news articles, but the subjects on which she most frequently reported were those of Promontory, Corinne, and the completion of the transcontinental railroad.¹⁹ By her own accounts, Mrs. Anderson commenced her efforts in earnest in 1927. Between the years of 1927 and 1946, few records exist attesting to her claimed efforts, but by 1947 she became vigorously active by embarking upon a letter writing campaign that reached every government official (local, state, and federal) that could in any way be construed as having some influence on winning official recognition for Promontory Summit.

Most of her energies were directed at Utah's Congressional delegation, the state's several governors during the coming decades, and National Park

¹⁹"Golden Spike Society Founder Taken by Death," Ogden Standard-Examiner, May 20, 1981, 16(c).

Service officials. As she wrote literally thousands of letters over the years, she faced rejection, disinterest, or 'buck-passing'. Very few people, it seemed, were willing to get involved in such a project. In a 1949 letter to Utah Congresswoman Reva Beck Bosone, Mrs. Anderson petitioned for the establishment of a national monument at Promontory. The letter was forwarded to the Department of the Interior which gave the following response:

"...a comparative evaluation of frontier sites, did not include Promontory Point and Promontory Summit, Utah, among the sites recommended for commemoration...only a limited number of historic sites that have played a major role in the growth and development of the nation can be administered by the Service."²⁰

In reply to a letter to Congressman Walter K. Granger requesting that he introduce legislation to perpetuate "the site and its national prominence," she was told her project was "worthwhile," but "essentially a state problem."²¹ Representative Granger forwarded her letter on to Governor Herbert B. Maw of Utah who then sent it on to Utah's Department of Publicity and Industrial Development to "investigate the advisability of placing a suitable monument and marker..."²² Aaron W. Tracy of the Department of Publicity and Industrial

²⁰Department of the Interior to Hon. Reva Beck Bosone, forwarded to Bernice Gibbs Anderson, April 23, 1949, Bernice Gibbs Anderson Collection, Golden Spike National Historic Site.

²¹Bernice Gibbs Anderson to Rep. Walter K. Granger, October 27, 1947, Bernice Gibbs Anderson Collection, Golden Spike National Historic Site.

W.K. Granger to Mrs. Bernice Gibbs Anderson, November 19, 1947, Bernice Gibbs Anderson Collection, Golden Spike National Historic Site.

Development replied to Mrs. Anderson in a brief letter stating that "The State of Utah has plans for the Creation of 'Driving of the Golden Spike State Park."²³

The park never materialized.

The treatment Mrs. Anderson received in 1947 established an all too common pattern that she experienced again and again for more than a decade to come. By 1949 she showed signs of frustration. In a letter to President Truman she lamented

"Any help you might give me on this project is sincerely appreciated. It is unlikely that it will receive any national consideration and action unless you are interested directly in creating a national monument here. It has been done in the past by other presidents for less important sites."²⁴

This letter was forwarded to Congressman Arthur V. Watkins who offered his assistance as soon as she would be able to stir up "sufficient interest" before sending the letter on to the Department of the Interior's National Park Service where Assistant Director, Hillory A. Tolson, advised Mrs. Anderson that her suggestion was a state or local matter, and referred her to the Utah State Historical Society.²⁵

²²Herbert B. Maw to Bernice Gibbs Anderson, November 24, 1947, Bernice Gibbs Anderson Collection, Golden Spike National Historic Site.

²³Aaron W. Tracy to Bernice Gibbs Anderson, December 1, 1947, Bernice Gibbs Anderson Collection, Golden Spike National Historic Site.

²⁴Bernice Gibbs Anderson to Harry S. Truman, May 12, 1949, Bernice Gibbs Anderson Collection, Golden Spike National Historic Site.

²⁵Hillory A. Tolson to Bernice Gibbs Anderson, June 13, 1949, Bernice Gibbs Anderson Collection, Golden Spike National Historic Site.

By 1952 the situation for Mrs. Anderson went from bad to worse. She now devoted more effort than ever to her project and had begun holding annual reenactment ceremonies at Promontory Summit. She invited President Eisenhower only to be rebuffed by a note, "The President feels sure that this historic event was a memorable one."²⁶ Also in that year she received one of the most discouraging letters of all. In it the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce told her that it "would dislike it very much to see any state or federal funds go into a project such as this...the initiative and sustained push for the project we feel must come from your own people in Box Elder County." Additionally, the letter advised Mrs. Anderson to create a Golden Spike Committee of Box Elder County to coordinate the work, and she wisely followed this advice.²⁷

After the disheartening year of 1952, things began to go Mrs. Anderson's way, and by 1955 Utah's Congressional delegation was lining up to present legislation in support to create a national monument to commemorate the happenings at Promontory so long ago. In a letter to Utah Representative Aldous Dixon, she praised him for placing a resolution in the Congressional Record and stated that "at least two thousand persons assembled there on May 10th" for the annual reenactment. Her attitude had noticeably shifted to one of optimism, as can be seen in the next paragraph of her letter to Representative

²⁶Matthew J. Connelly to R.M. Kaiser, May 14, 1952, Bernice Gibbs Anderson Collection, Golden Spike National Historic Site.

²⁷Mrs. G.P. Backman to Bernice Gibbs Anderson, February 7, 1952, Bernice Gibbs Anderson Collection, Golden Spike National Historic Site.

Dixon. "The event is gaining recognition and attendance, for which I am grateful to everyone who has aided the project in any way."²⁸ She was well on her way to success and appeared to be confident, yet still very persistent and demanding. She continued to prod Utah's members of Congress as well as those of other western states even though she had already won them over. A ground swell of support for Mrs. Anderson's project finally developed, and the creation of a national monument now advanced into the halls of government where legislators would take over, with Anderson's assistance, whether they wanted it or not.

REEMERGENCE

*"Out of the dreariness,
Into its cheeriness,
Come we in Weariness
Home."*

--Stephen Chalmers

If Bernice Gibbs Anderson thought 1955 was a good year for success, then the next two years must have been very delightful and gratifying for her. With support building both in Congress and around the state of Utah, things began to happen far more quickly than they ever had before. In 1954 John O. Littleton, a historian for the National Park Service, visited Promontory to

²⁸Bernice Gibbs Anderson to Aldous Dixon, May 17, 1955, Bernice Gibbs Anderson Collection, Golden Spike National Historic Site.

scrutinize its potential. He recommended that ten acres of land under non-federal ownership be set aside as a National Historic Site, and that state, local, and federal organizations could cooperate to preserve the site.²⁹ Littleton's advice was taken and on October 22, 1956 a joint agreement was signed by the United States Department of the Interior, the Golden Spike Association of Box Elder County, the state of Utah, and the Southern Pacific Company to establish a seven acre tract of land as a National Historic Site. The agreement went into effect on April 12, 1957.³⁰ Advancements such as these continued to occur for the next twenty years.

In 1959 Harold Fabian, Chairman of the Utah State Parks and Recreation Commission and Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments, teamed with Senator Wallace F. Bennett of Utah to push for further development of the Golden Spike site. In response, the Park Service dispatched historian Robert Utley to assess the area in 1960. He recommended at least fifteen miles of the original right-of-way be incorporated into the National Park system. Senators Bennett and Moss of Utah, Governor Clyde of Utah, the Box Elder Chamber of Commerce, and Bernice Gibbs Anderson all brought pressure to bear on Conrad Wirth, Director of the

²⁹John O. Littleton, Report on the Investigation of the Golden Spike Site, Promontory, Utah, (Santa Fe, New Mexico, Region Three Office, 1954).

³⁰Richard L. Jensen, "The National Park Service Moves Toward Responsibility for the Golden Spike National Historic Site, 1957-65" (History Report for Utah State University, 1969), 3.

National Park Service, and Secretary Udall of the Department of the Interior. It seemed as if things were going well until concerns over title claims to land by the Southern Pacific arose and stymied progress, much to the consternation of those who had worked so hard for so long.³¹

In 1963 Senator Moss introduced a bill to create Golden Spike National Monument, however, disagreement among Golden Spike supporters led to the bill's failure. Frustrated, Senator Moss attempted to persuade President Kennedy to create the site through executive proclamation. President Kennedy, touring the western states, seemed to inclined to do so. The Park Service, preferring a site over a monument, interfered and the proclamation never evolved.³² The following year fared somewhat better. The Director of the National Park Service visited Utah and was lobbied by Golden Spike supporters who were no longer in disagreement. Senator Moss asked President Johnson for an executive proclamation and, like before, did not receive it.³³

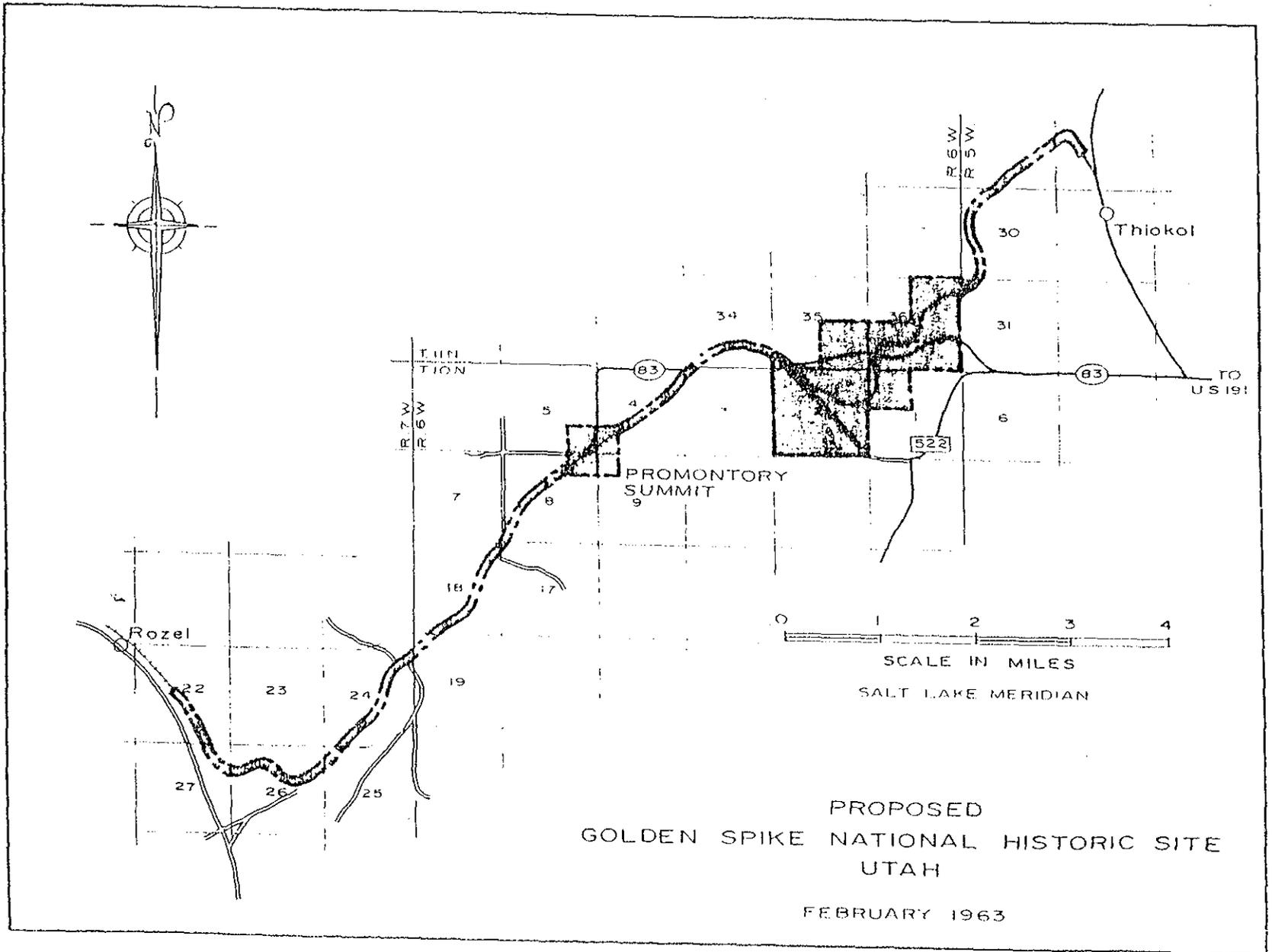
Finally, in 1965 every member of the Utah Congressional delegation introduced proposals to create Golden Spike National Historic Site under federal ownership. They intensified their pressure on the National Park Service to compel it to act on their behalf. The Park Service agreed to support an idea

³¹Betty McSwain, "Legislative History of Golden Spike National Historic Site," (1975?), 2.

³²ibid.

³³ibid.

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advanced by Robert Utley and Roy Appleman some years earlier. It called for 2,176 acres of land to be included in the park, but deleted a proposal for railroad operation at the site. With the Park Service behind the effort, Senator Moss' bill virtually sailed through Congress in June of 1965. Only a small change was made when the House passed the bill and the Senate responded by quickly adopting the change with no opposition. On July 30, 1965, President Johnson signed the bill making it Public Law 89-102 officially creating Golden Spike National Historic Site under federal ownership. The act that enabled the creation of Golden Spike limited land acquisition and development to \$1.16 million.³⁴

In the fall of 1965 C. Francis Solomon Jr. was contracted to appraise all lands in the proposed Golden Spike National Historic Site. He inspected the fifteen-mile length of the 400-foot wide right-of-way that had been deeded to the Park Service by the Southern Pacific, as well as local properties that would have to be purchased by the government. Mr. Solomon concluded that local properties varied in value from \$2.00 per acre for "steep mountain side" land, up to \$100 per acre for productive dry farm land. He determined the value of the right-of-way property to be \$18,061 and he further recommended that land owners be paid a total sum of \$51,156 for over 1,585 acres.³⁵

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵C. Francis Solomon Jr., Appraisal Report: Subject Property Golden Spike National Historic Site Box Elder County, Utah, (Santa Fe, New Mexico: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1965).

Now that the enterprise had been undertaken and accomplished, a magnificent jubilee beckoned the attention of Bernice Gibbs Anderson and others concerned with Golden Spike. The 100th anniversary of the completion of the first transcontinental railroad at Promontory was quickly approaching the fledgling National Historic Site. With support, unity, and pride still very high, an effort to allow a national commemoration of the "Great Event" was successful.

President Johnson appointed a Golden Spike Centennial Celebration Commission whose chairman was Thomas M. Goodfellow, President of the Association of American Railroads. The individual most responsible for the celebration was Nathan H. Mazer, Executive Director, Field Operations, National Golden Spike Centennial Celebration Commission. Nearly two years of planning and preparation went into the festivities and it soon developed into an international attraction. Dr. R.V.V. Nichols, President of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association, accepted an invitation to be an honorary guest at the Centennial Celebration.³⁶ In a letter to Mazer, the Association of Railway Enthusiasts (Australia) expressed their interest in sending a delegation to the Ceremony.³⁷ In addition to these attendants more than one thousand railroad and government officials were invited to Promontory for the celebration and hundreds more participated in similar events staged around the country.

³⁶R.V.V. Nichols to Nathan H. Mazer, February 15, 1969, Archives, Golden Spike National Historic Site, Utah.

³⁷E.R. Godwin to Nathan Mazer, March 19, 1969, Archives, Golden Spike National Historic Site, Utah.

Portions of the celebration were held in Ogden, Brigham City, Salt Lake City, Omaha, Sacramento, New York, San Francisco, Fort Worth, and various other cities throughout the nation. Special trains carried dignitaries across the country to arrive in Utah for the final ceremonies. To promote the 'western' theme, Paramount Pictures arranged for the premiere of its new film, *True Grit*, starring John Wayne, to be held on May 9, at the Capitol Theater in Salt Lake City. Music festivals were held, steam engines were showcased all over the nation, and parades abounded.³⁸

At Promontory over 28,000 people attended for the reenactment ceremonies, including Bernice Gibbs Anderson, who was Honorary Chairman of the Utah Golden Spike Centennial Committee. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir performed for the crowd. Two representative locomotives, the *Genoa* and the *Inyo*, were borrowed from the Virginia and Truckee Railroad in Nevada to create an authentic feeling background for the ceremonies. A reenactment of the driving of the Golden Spike was held, prayers were offered, and the pride of the nation once again focused on Promontory Summit.

A special medallion authorized by Congress helped to pay for the jubilant ceremonies, and a letter, such as the one from California's Governor, well articulates popular sentiment about the days proceedings:

³⁸"News From the Golden Spike Centennial Celebration Commission, Golden Spike Centennial Schedule of Events May 3-18," Press Release, Archives, Golden Spike National Historic Site, Utah.

"I want you to know that I, and members of my office who have been involved in the celebration of the Gold Spike Centennial, feel that it was a tremendous tribute to our forefathers. It certainly points out the importance of their great accomplishment as well as the vital role that transportation plays in our economy."

"As important as economics are, even more important is transportation's contribution in bringing the various areas of our great nation together. It is just as important today as it was 100 years ago to bring people together for the exchange of ideas and customs as well as goods."³⁹

Governor Ronald Reagan expressed the thoughts of so many who were involved with the celebrations, and he clearly stated the true reasons why the events of May 10, 1869, should be remembered.

CONCLUSION

E pluribus unum

Golden Spike National Historic Site has developed into a standard representing the glory days of steam engines. Interpretive programs have been developed, exact replicas of the *Jupiter* and No. 119 have been built and now steam up and down a short length of track laid for them. A visitor's center, complete with movies, slide shows, and a museum, has been built near the "last spike site" at the summit. National Park Service Rangers offer daily programs on various aspects of the transcontinental railroad and local history. Two self-guided tours are available for patrons to drive on the original grades to see such

³⁹Ronald Reagan to Nathan H. Mazer, July 23, 1969, Archives, Golden Spike National Historic Site, Utah.

sites as "Carmichael's Cut", the "Ten Miles of Track Laid in One Day" sign, the "Big Fill", and "Chinamen's Arch." Visitors come from all over the world to see the last spike site, and among railroad enthusiasts, making a pilgrimage to Promontory is almost a rite of passage.

1869 and 1969 make perfect bookends for one of the most recognized events in American history, but the legacy will continue for centuries to come at Golden Spike National Historic Site.

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