

RACES WITHIN A RACE

The building of the Transcontinental Railroad

By Robert Lee Murphy

The Civil War ignited the race to build the first transcontinental railroad. Huge bets were made on the eventual outcome. In addition to that big wager, other challenges occurred.

President Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Railway Act in 1862 to better connect the Union states of the east with California and Oregon. Lincoln did not want the Pacific Coast states to secede and join the Confederate States of America.

The construction of a transcontinental railroad had been contemplated for years. Congress, divided over the slavery issue, could not agree whether to build the railroad across northern or southern territory.

When the Civil War started, a northern route became Lincoln's logical choice. The Pacific Railway Act created the Union Pacific Railroad to build west from Omaha, Nebraska, and authorized the existing Central Pacific Railroad to build east from Sacramento, California. Originally, the CP was authorized to build to the eastern border of California, but subsequent amendments to the act removed that restriction.

The construction risk was too large for private industry to finance alone. To encourage the effort, the act awarded the railroads 10 alternate sections of land for each mile of track. This was later increased to 20 alternate sections. To finance the mammoth undertaking, the government authorized bonds in the amount of \$16,000 for each mile of track laid on prairie land, \$32,000 per mile through hilly terrain and \$48,000 per mile in the mountains. Even with the government subsidy, both companies constantly struggled with financing.

The inspiration behind the Central Pacific Railroad came from Theodore Judah, a civil engineer. He mapped a route through the rugged Sierra Nevada Mountains when most said it could not be done. Judah had no

money, and in the process of soliciting investors, he met the men who benefited the most from his planning. Hardware wholesaler Collis P. Huntington and his partner, Mark Hopkins, joined by dry goods merchant, Charles Crocker, and by wholesale grocer, Leland Stanford, became known as the "Big Four."

When Judah refused to certify foothills east of Sacramento as "mountains," the Big Four cut him out of further decision making. In 1863, Judah traveled to New York to find investors to buy out the Central Pacific and restore his prominence. However, he died from yellow fever contracted during the journey.

The Big Four divided responsibilities among themselves, capitalizing on inherent talents. Huntington handled financing and purchasing from New York and served as a lobbyist in Washington. Crocker formed a separate company to perform the construction. Stanford, former governor of California, spearheaded interests in the West.

Hopkins, an introvert, remained in Sacramento to keep the books.

When the Union Pacific had difficulty selling stock, Thomas "Doc" Durant stepped in to solve their problem. Durant had a medical degree, but never practiced medicine. Still, he insisted on being called "Doc." His real calling was finance, and in late 1863 he gained control of the UP. He assumed the position of "vice president and general manager," equivalent to today's CEO.

During the war years, little construction occurred on either line. The UP managed to lay 40 miles of track west from Omaha, and the CP laid 43 miles east from Sacramento.

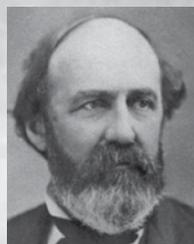
Durant perceived more opportunity from construction of the railroad than from eventual operations. He advocated building a meandering route to increase the miles for which the UP could collect government bonds. To construct the railroad, Durant created the *Crédit Mobilier of America*, an independent limited liability company,

RACES (continued on page 16)

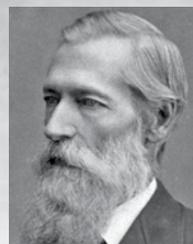
Commemorative Sign for Ten Miles of Track Laid in One Day. National Park Service



THEODORE JUDAH mapped Central Pacific's Sierra Nevada route. Wikipedia



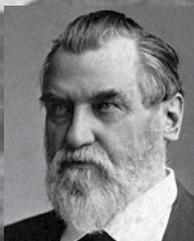
COLLIS P. HUNTINGTON, Central Pacific's lobbyist. C.E. Watkins



MARK HOPKINS, Central Pacific's treasurer. I.B. Taper



CHARLES CROCKER, Central Pacific's construction manager. American-Rails.com



LELAND STANFORD, Central Pacific's president. American-Rails.com



THOMAS "DOC" DURANT, Union Pacific's vice president and general manager. Mathew Brady. Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration



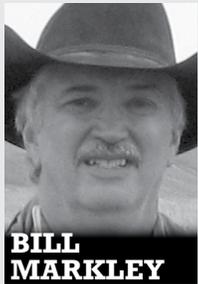
GENERAL GRENVILLE M. DODGE, Union Pacific's chief engineer. Mathew Brady. Courtesy of National Archives & Records Administration





High noon – it's about time

In the 1952 film classic *High Noon*, Marshal Will Kane (Gary Cooper) waits for the train to arrive, bringing vengeance-seeking outlaw Frank Miller (Ian MacDonald), who plans to kill Kane. When the train leaves town, it will take away Kane's bride, Amy (Grace Kelly), who demands he not fight Miller. The townsfolk refuse to help Kane and wait for the train's arrival as Kane sits at his desk writing his will.



**BILL
MARKLEY**

The wall clock ticks. Tension builds.

The entire film revolves around time and the train's arrival. The measurement of time was a localized concept in America before railroads. Each community set its own time based on sunrise, the sun's position at noon, and sunset. Many localities had a town clock by which residents set their timepieces.

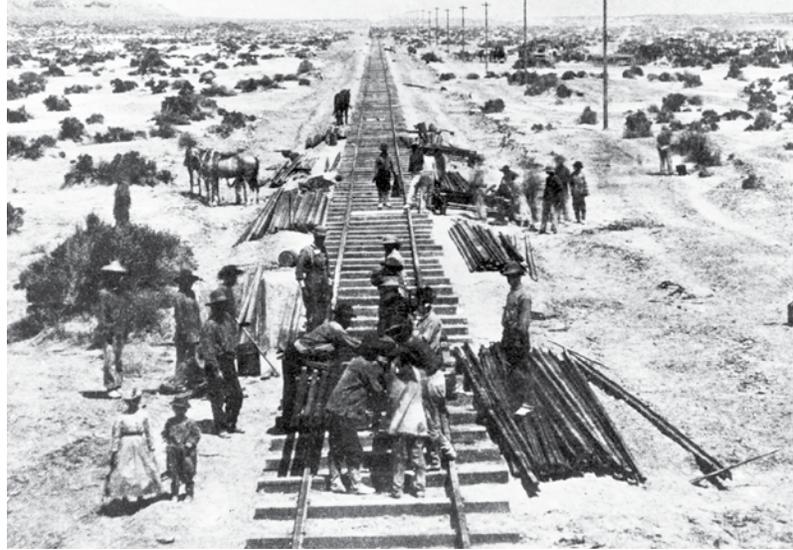
Railroads began setting schedules using their own timekeeping, which usually was different from the cities and towns they were servicing and thus causing confusion with passengers, shippers and receivers. If someone was going to meet you at the station, you better let them know if it was railroad time or the local time. In *High Noon*, the town of Hadleyville must have agreed to run on railroad time down to the very second.

Of equal importance were railroad timetables to ensure the efficient movement of trains and the whereabouts of those trains on the track to eliminate collisions. Telegraph lines became essential to coordinating train locations and times. Engineers and conductors were required to synchronize their timepieces to official railroad clocks. The Seth Thomas Regulator No. 3 was the most used standard clock in railroad stations.

The railroads first developed 100 different time zones, then reduced them to 49. In 1872, railroad officials met to try to standardize their schedules forming the General Time Convention. The General Time Convention established a Standard Time System, using five time zones for North America. Each time zone was one hour ahead of the next zone to the west. On October 11, 1883, the railroads began using the Standard Time System. Most cities adopted it, but there were some that refused. In March 1918, the federal government established the Standard Time Act.

So, the next time you're running late for a meeting and are glancing at your watch with increasing anxiety, thank the railroads.

Bill Markley is a Western historian and re-enactor based in Pierre, South Dakota. E-mail him at markley@pie.midco.net.



Chinese laying Central Pacific track on Humboldt Plains in Nevada. Alfred A. Hart. Courtesy of Golden Spike National Historic Site

RACES (from page 15)

and awarded it contracts at inflated prices. *Crédit Mobilier*, in turn, issued construction subcontracts to others. Durant controlled both corporations and stood to gain from their financial manipulation.

When Charles Crocker & Company got into financial trouble in 1867, the Big Four emulated Durant by creating the Contract & Finance Company. This limited liability company, managed by Crocker, received inflated contracts from the CP.

When the Railroad Act was amended in 1864, a provision was inserted to award construction of the eastern portion of the new Pacific Railroad to the company that first laid track to the Hundredth Meridian. Now, the UP had to win this race to participate in the big race.

The Union Pacific started its race for the Hundredth Meridian from Omaha, Nebraska. Its competitor, the Union Pacific Eastern Division, originally the Leavenworth, Pawnee & Western Railroad, began in Kansas City, Kansas. The UPED got a head start by laying its first track in September 1863. The UP did not lay track until 1865, and by year-end rails extended only 40 miles from Omaha, the minimum required to qualify for the race.

During the war years, Durant tried to entice General Grenville M. Dodge into joining the UP's team as chief engineer. Dodge refused while the fighting was on. Finally, on May 1, 1866, General William T. Sherman, agreed to let Dodge resign and accept Durant's offer. Sherman was a supporter of the railroad because he foresaw the benefit of rapid transportation of troops in confronting the Indian problem.

Durant agreed with a recommendation from Dodge to award the UP's tracklaying contract to the Casement brothers. General Jack Casement, a brevet brigadier general, stood only 5 feet, 4 inches tall, but he was a dynamic manager. Dan, who stood "five feet nothing," provided administrative skills.

Dodge and Casement combined their talents to drive the UP westward. The UP reached the Hundredth Meridian on October 6, 1866, and won the first race. With the UP's tracks extending 250 miles west of Omaha, the big race with the CP began.



Andrew J. Russell photograph of General Jack Casement with UP work train and photographer's wagon. Wikimedia Commons



James Strobridge (wearing black suit) on a flatcar at Camp Victory. Alfi Hart. Courtesy of Union Pacific Museum

The Central Pacific had James Harvey Strobridge on its team. He was a 6-foot-2 Irishman with a big temper, who had come west during the 1849 gold rush. Crocker initially awarded subcontracts to Strobridge. He performed them so well, Crocker hired him as construction manager. When the CP's Irish workforce became troublesome, Strobridge reluctantly agreed to Crocker's recommendation to employ Chinese. The "Celestials" proved to be outstanding workers. Strobridge had lost an eye during a blasting accident, and the Chinese called him *One-eye Bossy Man*. Strobridge and Crocker, whom the Celestials called *Cholly Clocka*, formed a powerful team.

The CP regularly put down four miles of rails a day, but on September 3, 1868, they set a tracklaying record of more than six miles. On October 26, 1868, in western Wyoming, Casement paid his workers triple-time when they laid eight miles. UP's management did not fail to brag.

Both companies raced to collect government bonds. A proviso put into the act in 1866 allowed each company to grade 300 miles in advance of laying rails and collect partial bond payment for the effort. In central Utah, the two companies graded past each other for 250 miles. In five locations, they crossed each other's grade.

An egregious example of the competition is visible today four miles east of the Golden Spike National Historic Site at Promontory Summit, Utah. Here, a 500-foot wide, 85-foot deep gully cut across the path of the intended route. Both companies had graded on either side of this ravine, but to connect their grades they had to bridge this gap. The CP constructed a large earth fill. The UP spanned the space with a wooden trestle. The UP won this race, allowing them to be first to lay track to Promontory Summit. Ironically, the tracks were later shifted to the fill, because it was more stable.

Government officials became increasingly frustrated with the wasteful actions of the two companies. When Ulysses S. Grant was inaugurated president on March 4, 1869, his first executive order was to suspend issuance of bonds. The UP and CP were forced to agree on a meeting point. On April 9, Dodge and Huntington decided the two railroads would meet near Ogden, Utah. A night session of Congress that

day resolved that meeting point would be Promontory Summit.

Crocker wanted to recapture the record for laying the most track in a day. He waited until the UP's rails were nine miles from Promontory Summit while the CP still had 13 miles to go. Crocker then bet Doc Durant \$10,000 he could lay ten miles of track in one day. Even though the UP did not have room left to beat a 10-mile record, Durant accepted the bet.

The date for the task was set for April 27, 1869. Durant, still on his way west from New York, could not reach the site by that date. He directed Grenville Dodge to witness the feat on behalf of the UP. When Dodge reached the location, he learned a CP locomotive destined to participate in the project had run off the tracks. Crocker rescheduled the event for April 28.

Crocker and Strobridge lined up five trains of 16 cars each at the starting point for the race. Each train consisted of 16 flatcars loaded with rails and materials to build two miles of track. Crocker gave the signal to start at 7:15 AM.

A swarm of Chinese workers clambered onto the flatcars of the first train, and as it inched forward, they threw rails and materials over the side. Strobridge timed the effort at eight minutes flat to empty the train.

The first train reversed and left the scene, immediately to be replaced by the next. While this exchange of trains took place, Chinese workers lifted handcars onto the track and transferred 16 iron rails from the ground onto each handcar. They also loaded spikes, bolts, and fishplates – enough to install the 16 rails.

Horses pulled the handcars at a fast pace to where Irish gandy dancers, four on either side of the car, lifted each 600-pound rail with tongs, walked the rail forward, and dropped it into place on the ties. An Irish supervisor checked the distance between the rails with a wooden track gauge to ensure it measured exactly 4 feet, 8½ inches. A Chinese crew distributed bolts and fishplates alongside the rails, while the spikes were dropped through the bottomless handcar onto the ties below.

Each 30-foot rail lay on 12 supporting ties. Forty-eight men, 12 on either side of each of the two rails, hammered a specified spike into place on the rail. Then, the crew of 48

shifted to the next 30-foot section and duplicated the spike-driving process.

Other crews swept in to fasten fishplates into position, threading bolts through predrilled holes to connect the rails. An additional crew raised the end of each tie and shoved ballast beneath it to ensure it was level. Following the ballasting crew, an Irishman sighted along each rail and motioned members of yet another Chinese team to adjust the level using shovels and tamping bars.

This breakneck speed continued all morning except when the tracks had to make a curve. Even this work was accomplished at a record-setting pace. A special crew of Irishmen supported a 30-foot length of iron rail on a short stack of wooden ties placed under each end of the rail, then proceeded to beat the rail into the desired arc with sledgehammers.

A bell signaled a halt for the midday meal at 1:30 p.m. Crocker and Strobridge circulated among the work crews offering congratulations.

The eight Irish gandy dancers and their foreman were devouring their food when Crocker informed them a new crew was ready to assume the afternoon shift. An immediate objection was simultaneously voiced by the Irishmen. The foreman, George Coley, informed Crocker his men had voted to do the afternoon work themselves. Crocker reluctantly gave in to their argument, and the morning crew continued the work.

At 7 p.m., Crocker called a halt. The CP had laid 10 miles and 56 feet of track. Crocker claimed he was happy to pay the men the four days' wages he had promised. Strobridge thought that if they had not slowed down to bend rails for curves, they could have laid 15 miles.

Dodge always maintained the CP cheated by prepositioning ties. Case-ment wanted to tear up enough UP track already laid to make a stab at beating the 10-mile record. Dodge refused. The races within the race were over.

Charles Crocker did not remain in Utah to attend the ceremonies commemorating the joining of the two rail-



Celebration at Completion of the Pacific Railroad at Promontory Summit. Andrew J. Russell. Courtesy of National Park Service

roads. He had won his personal race. The UP had laid 1,086 miles of track and the CP 690. The Pacific Railroad, finished seven years ahead of schedule, was complete at 1,776 miles.

The official ceremonies were set to take place at Promontory Summit on May 8. Doc Durant was racing west to join the festivities on board the Lincoln Palace Car, which had been used originally to transport the assassinated president's body to his grave site. On May 6, however, his special train was waylaid at Piedmont, Wyoming, by 300 recently laid-off construction workers. They demanded a ransom of \$200,000 for unpaid back wages. The UP, always strapped for cash, wired \$50,000 as a down payment, and the hijackers released Durant. He still could not reach the destination in time because a bridge had washed out on his route of travel. Both parties agreed to postpone the ceremony to May 10, 1869.

Stanford had arrived at Promontory Summit on May 7 to perform the honors on behalf of the Central Pacific. Doc Durant finally arrived on the morning of May 10 to represent the Union Pacific. Hundreds of workers crowded around to witness the ceremonies. Speeches by various dignitaries commenced the proceedings. Twenty newspaper reporters produced differing stories because they could not get close enough to hear the speakers.

Finally, it was time for the big

event. First Stanford, then Durant gently touched the golden spike with a silver-plated maul, officially signaling the completion of the race. Then the precious spike was replaced with a regular iron one. Stanford was handed a sledgehammer connected by wire to a telegraph key to automatically send a signal when contact was made with the metal spike. Stanford swung and missed the spike. Durant took a turn and missed both spike and tie. The Western Union telegrapher manually tapped out the signal "done" to listeners around the world.

Union Pacific's Engine No. 119 and Central Pacific's locomotive *Jupiter* inched toward each other and touched cowcatchers. Whistles blew, and bells clanged. Two brass bands blared out music. The witnesses toasted one another with champagne. The dignitaries enjoyed a quick luncheon, then they hurried away in their private railcars in opposite directions.

With the driving of the golden spike, Manifest Destiny became a reality. The Overland Trail that had required six months to traverse in a wagon could now be crossed in six days by train. The western lands that had been home to Indian tribes for centuries were rapidly taken from them.

The \$10,000 bet Durant made with Crocker would be equivalent to \$175,000 today. There is no record Durant ever paid Crocker.

Henry Morton Stanley and the West



HENRY MORTON STANLEY as he looked shortly after departing America. Emile Reutlinger, Bibliothèque Nationale de France

By Robert Lee Murphy

“Doctor Livingstone, I presume.” That famous utterance by Henry Morton Stanley in central Africa in 1871 would not have occurred had he not first traveled the American West four years earlier.

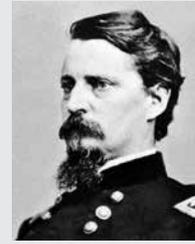
Stanley’s birth name was John Rowlands, the son of an unwed mother. At age 17, he escaped his dismal life in Wales and sailed in 1859 as a cabin boy to America. Jumping ship in New Orleans, he later said, an English cotton broker took him under his wing. The ensuing relationship resulted in John Rowlands changing his name to that of

his new mentor, Henry Morton Stanley.

The Civil War began shortly after Stanley arrived in America. At age 20, he enlisted in the Confederate army and was captured at the Battle of Shiloh. After several weeks in a prison camp, he switched sides. He only lasted a few days as a “galvanized Yankee” because he came down with dysentery, and the Union Army discharged him. After recovering, he served on several merchant ships before joining the Navy in July 1864. He became a record keeper on board the *USS Minnesota*, an experience that led him into freelance journalism. Stanley might be the only man to have served in the Confederate army, the Union Army and the Union Navy.

In 1867, the 25-year-old landed a job as a special correspondent for the *St. Louis Missouri Democrat*, to which he submitted articles about “matters of general interest affecting the Indians and the great Western plains.” His autobiographical book, *My Early Travels in America and Asia, Volume 1*, contains the letters he wrote to the newspaper while following the Army on “two Indian campaigns.” In the “Introduction” to his book, Stanley writes: “The incidents on these journeys afforded abundance of interesting matter to the press of the period, and were not without benefit to me in after years.”

During April and May 1867, he traveled with Major General Winfield Scott Hancock through Kansas and wrote in detail about negotiations with the



MAJOR GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT HANCOCK as he probably looked in 1867. Britannica Online

Lakotas, Cheyennes, Arapaho and Kiowas. His dispatches were filled with long paragraphs of quotations spoken by the participants in the meetings. Stanley does not explain how he remembered the conversations in such depth.

Stanley did not sympathize with the “poor Indian.” Recent disagreements between the War Department and the Indian Department had resulted in Congress assigning responsibility for negotiating with the Indians to the “civil authorities.” Stanley believed that this would only “increase the hostility and impudence of the Indian.” He felt there would be fewer “hellish outrages” if the military took charge. In a report he wrote in July 1867, Stanley stated: “We earnestly hope that peace may be secured, although we have grave doubts that anything lasting will come of treaties of peace between a civilized nation and bands of savages.”

Stanley described several of the great Indian chiefs who participated in the negotiations with General Hancock. He was particularly impressed with the feared Kiowa chief, Satanta, who had “won a great name for daring and recklessness ...” Satanta made a big impression on the correspondent. The chief was “large and very muscular.” Satanta told the peace commissioners that he would not object to a wagon road, but he did not want the railroad to travel up the Arkansas River. He accepted the fact that the railroad was already progressing farther north along the Smoky Hill River.

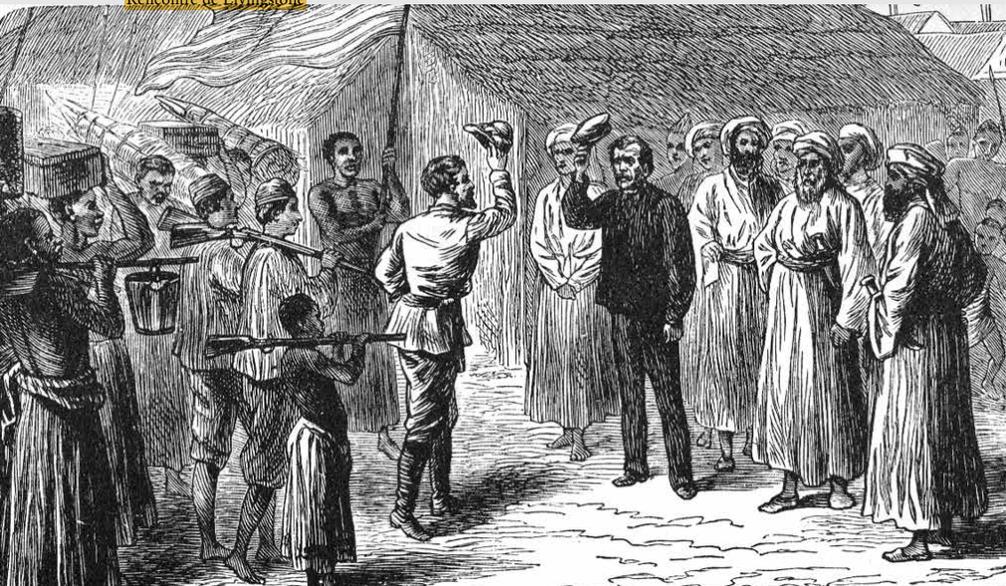
During his sojourn as an American journalist, Stanley came to know many generals, several peace commissioners and a few congressmen. His letters to the



Kiowa leader SATANTA wearing peace medal in later years. William S. Soule, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

HENRY MORTON STANLEY finds DOCTOR DAVID LIVINGSTONE in Africa in 1871.

Rencontre de Livingstone





LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER. Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

Missouri Democrat contain descriptions of and interviews with such notables as George Armstrong Custer. Stanley supported Hancock's assignment for Custer by writing: "He is then to commence active and offensive operations against the Sioux and Cheyenne tribes. Custer is precisely the man for that job. A certain impetuosity and undoubted courage are his principal characteristics." Stanley did not realize at the time he wrote it how aptly the word "impetuosity" would apply to Custer's frontier warfare.



"WILD BILL" HICKOK as Stanley would have seen him. Gurney & Sons, New York, Cowans Auctions

Another character who caught Stanley's attention was "Wild Bill" Hickok, "an inveterate hater of Indians." Hickok served at times as a scout for Custer. Stanley wrote that Hickok is "always armed with a brace of ivory-handled revolvers, with which weapons he is remarkably dexterous"

Although primarily assigned to write about the ongoing negotiations with the Indians, Stanley's dispatches provide us with some of our best descriptions of Hell on Wheels, those temporary towns that sprang up along the route of the railroad 150 years ago to cater to the cravings of the workers building the Union Pacific Railroad.

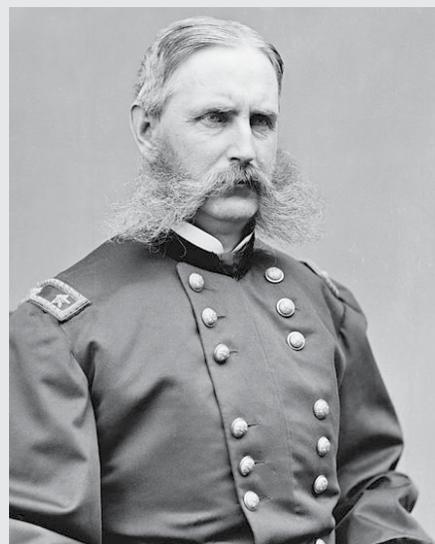
"As the 'iron horse' advances towards

the west, settlements spring up as if by magic along the intended route. The locomotive is the true harbinger of civilization." Stanley gained this impression from his travels across Kansas along the Smoky Hill River on the Union Pacific, Eastern Division, a competitor of the similarly named Union Pacific building at the same time across Nebraska. The two railroad companies were in a race to determine which would be declared the official builder of the eastern portion of the first transcontinental railroad.

In late May 1867, Stanley sailed up the Missouri River to Omaha, Nebraska, reaching there on the 19th. Here he joined Major General Christopher Columbus Augur, commanding officer of the Department of the Platte, for a mission to Fort Laramie, Dakota Territory. Augur led an entourage to deal with Indian troubles created by Red Cloud's War along the Bozeman Trail, which had resulted in the "Fetterman Massacre" at Fort Phil Kearny in December 1866. Because of concerns for the safety of emigrants traveling west, the Army had closed the Oregon Trail that followed the North Platte River. Wagon trains were forced to travel a longer and more southern route using the Overland Trail.

Boarding a train at Omaha, the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific, the *Missouri Democrat's* correspondent traveled to the end of track at North Platte, Nebraska, arriving there on May 25. The train covered the 290 miles in 15 hours, an average of just more than 19

Mathew Brady photograph of **BRIGADIER GENERAL CHRISTOPHER C. AUGUR,** commander, Department of the Platte. Library of Congress



miles per hour. Stanley was not impressed with the scenery along the muddy North Platte River, nor was he enamored with this first of the many Hell on Wheels towns. "Every gambler in the Union seems to have steered his course for North Platte, where every known game under the sun is played ... Every house is a saloon and every saloon is a gambling den. Revolvers are in great requisition. Beardless youths ... try their hands at the 'Mexican monte,' 'high-low,' ... 'chuck-a-luck,' and lose their all."

On June 25, Stanley reported on his first visit to Julesburg, Colorado. "The town we are now in (for if by a stretch of courtesy I denominate four tents and a half-finished eating-house a town, it is nobody's business) ..." He estimated the population of what he termed New Julesburg to be "forty men and one woman." He also predicted "in six months, it will have a population of 2,500 souls. ..." He goes on to forecast: "In six weeks, New Julesburg may be the capital of Colorado"

By July 12, Stanley was back in Kansas at Fort Harker to report further on Indian peace efforts there, but by July 22 he had returned to Omaha. He traveled west again on the railroad and once more passed through Julesburg. During this second visit to Hell on Wheels, he discovered a vastly expanded town where he enjoyed "comfortable quarters" and a "feast" at the Julesburg House. He was astonished to learn his expensively dressed dinner companions, whom he initially thought were "great capitalists ... were only clerks, ticket agents, conductors, engineers, and 'sich [sic] like.'"

After this sumptuous meal, Stanley visited "a dance house bearing the euphonious title of 'King of the Hill,' gorgeously decorated and brilliantly lighted." He wrote that "everyone seems bent on debauchery and dissipation." He describes the females he encountered as "monstrous creatures undeserving the name of women"

On August 23, Stanley left his pursuit of the railroad's construction and traveled by stagecoach to Denver. Those parts of Colorado he discovered after departing Julesburg impressed him. He declared Denver to be "the queen of the plains." After an enthusiastic tour of the Rocky Mountains west of Denver, Stanley

headed back to Omaha to pick up his responsibilities to report on Indian peace negotiations. On the return journey, he arrived in Julesburg on September 17 for his third visit. But things had changed in this Hell on Wheels. The railroad construction activity had moved farther west. Stanley wrote: "Julesburg is an overdone town, a played-out place."

On September 14, 1867, Stanley departed Omaha to head west in the company of Lieutenant General William Tecumseh Sherman, Brigadier General Alfred H. Terry, and Senator John B. Henderson of Missouri, who were on their way for yet another peace treaty negotiation to be held in North Platte, Nebraska. Upon reaching that destination, the commissioners learned the Indians had not yet arrived, so they proceeded on to the end of track to inspect the progress of construction of the railroad west of Julesburg.

"Taking a hasty dinner in Julesburg," Stanley wrote, "we again took the car and rolled past Sydney [Nebraska], Antelope, and one or two other places, and reached the end of track about dusk." Here, Stanley had "a most excellent breakfast on the boarding car of General Casement." Jack Casement and his brother Dan held the track-laying contract with the Union Pacific. Stanley described watching an incredible demonstration of the workers laying seven hundred feet of track in five minutes. He speculated that if that pace could be maintained, 16½ miles of track could be laid in one day.

The party returned to North Platte,

Mathew Brady photograph of **LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN**, *Division of the Missouri commander.* Library of Congress



arriving there the evening before the treaty meeting now rescheduled to occur on September 17. At the conference, representatives of the northern tribes, the Sioux and Cheyenne, voiced continuing objection to the Powder River road, known to the whites as the Bozeman Trail. Stanley reported that Pawnee Killer, a leader of the Northern Cheyennes, said: "If the Great Father stops the Powder River road, I know that your people can travel this road [UPRR] without being molested." The commissioners refused to make a decision during this conference and informed the Indians they would reconvene at Fort Laramie, Dakota Territory, in November to continue negotiations.

Toward the end of the North Platte peace conference, Stanley quoted Sherman as saying: "We build iron roads, and you cannot stop the locomotive any more than you can stop the sun or moon, and you must submit, and do the best you can. ... Our people east hardly think of what you call war here, but if they make up their minds to fight you they will come out as thick as a herd of buffalo, and if you continue fighting you will all be killed. We advise you for the best. We now offer you this, choose your own homes, and live like white men, and we will help you all you want."

Stanley had followed the various peace commissioners throughout 1867, back and forth across Nebraska and Kansas, and ended by reporting on the treaty meeting at Fort Laramie the end of November. Stanley summed up his impression of the plight of the American Indians with: "The Indian chiefs were asking the impossible. The half of a continent could not be kept as a buffalo pasture and hunting ground."

His reporting so impressed James Gordon Bennett Jr., publisher of the *New York Herald*, that Bennett hired Stanley to find the "long-lost" Doctor David Livingstone.

Early in 1869, during his first journey into Africa, Stanley happened to be present at the opening of the Suez Canal in Egypt. This impressive waterway put an end to one of the hoped-for benefits of the first transcontinental railroad across the United States. The



"I verily believe that there are men here who would murder a fellow creature for five dollars. Nay, there are men who have already done it and who stalk abroad in daylight unwhipped of justice. Not a day passes but a dead body is found somewhere in the vicinity with pockets rifled of their contents. But the people generally are strangely indifferent to what is going on."

Sir Henry Morton Stanley
New Julesburg, July 1867

Portion of Julesburg Historical Marker featuring quotation from Henry Morton Stanley. Robert Lee Murphy

railroad lost the anticipated China trade to the new canal. Stanley thus managed to witness the two most outstanding engineering feats of the 19th Century.

Stanley continued deeper into Africa in his search for the missionary-doctor and in late 1871 found Livingstone, who did not realize he was lost and did not want to be rescued. When Stanley returned to England, he was snubbed by the Royal Geographic Society. This so infuriated the new explorer he subsequently embarked upon additional journeys throughout Africa, becoming the first known individual to cross the entire continent.

Henry Morton Stanley's books describing his adventures became bestsellers. He gained the reputation of being the greatest African explorer. He might have remained a footnote to history if he had not done such an outstanding job reporting on the plight of the American Indians and the impact the new railroads were having on westward expansion.