



PEOPLE

Theodore Judah

- Civil engineer, "father of the Central Pacific Railroad"
- Surveyed route through Sierra Nevada
- Won financial backing from the "Big 4," later had much friction with them

Grenville Dodge

- Chief engineer of Union Pacific Railroad
- General in Union Army during Civil War
- Led military campaign against Plains Indians prior to becoming chief engineer
- Elected to Congress from Iowa in 1866, where he lobbied for UP

Abraham Lincoln

- Republican President of the United States, 1861-65
- Oversaw Union victory in Civil War
- Believed railroads were essential to progress
- Major supporter of Pacific Railroad Bill of 1862

Collis P. Huntington

- One of "Big 4" directors of Central Pacific Railroad
- Made fortune selling supplies to prospectors during California Gold Rush
- Invested Gold Rush earnings in CPRR
- Ensured CP was not as obvious about crooked dealings as was Crédit Mobilier

Thomas Durant

- Vice President of Union Pacific and head of Crédit Mobilier
- Known as "Doc"; best-known and least-liked of all involved in Transcontinental Railroad project
- Paid himself massive amounts of Union Pacific funds while almost bankrupting the railroad
- Forced to resign before scandal broke in 1872, and so escaped the brunt of backlash

Leland Stanford

- One of "Big 4" directors of Central Pacific Railroad
- Named President of CP, 1863
- Later became U.S. Senator and Governor of California
- With wife, founded Stanford University, 1891

Charles Crocker

- One of "Big 4" directors of Central Pacific railroad
- Oversaw construction work as chief contractor
- First to employ Chinese immigrant labor force

EVENTS

1860 Central Pacific Railroad Formed

- Huntington, Stanford, Crocker, James Bailey, and Mark Hopkins formed first board of directors, buying into Judah's concept of Transcontinental Railroad

1862 Pacific Railroad Bill

- Federal law authorized Central Pacific to build east from Sacramento
- Established Union Pacific with mandate to build west from Missouri River
- Did not establish meeting point for UP and CP, which led to later (very profitable) inefficiencies
- Funded construction by giving land grants to railroads adjacent to rail lines

1865 Chinese Labor on CP

- Crocker experimented with Chinese labor to mitigate turnover among Irish workers
- Eventually switched almost entirely to cheap and effective Chinese labor
- Never treated Chinese workers well

1869 Golden Spike

- Central Pacific and Union Pacific lines joined at Promontory Summit in Utah Territory
- "Golden Spike" ceremony celebrated completion of Transcontinental Railroad

1872 Crédit Mobilier Scandal

- Durant and others implicated in massive fraud in construction and finance of UP
- Scandal implicated many corrupt members of congress

GROUPS

The Big Four (a.k.a. The Associates)

- Four primary directors of Central Pacific: Leland Stanford, Collis Huntington, Mark Hopkins, Charles Crocker
- Funded first phase of construction of Transcontinental Railroad
- All four became wealthy selling supplies to miners during California Gold Rush, then became immensely more wealthy as railroad barons

Central Pacific Railroad

- Given charter to build western part of Transcontinental Railroad by Congress
- Built challenging line through Sierra Mountains using Chinese labor force

Union Pacific Railroad

- Created by Congress in 1862
- Crédit Mobilier owned construction contract
- Employed mostly Union Army men, Irish immigrant laborers

CONCEPTS

Standard Gauge

- Standard for uniform width between rails
- Allowed for integration of smaller railroads into larger ones

Gilded Age

- Term, coined sarcastically by Mark Twain, for last quarter of 19th century
- Described an era marked by great wealth but also great corruption
- “Gilded” = golden on the outside, not golden inside

Self-Dealing

- When a person has position of control in two major companies and pays himself in one position from funds of another
- Avoids oversight from other parties
- What Durant did in Crédit Mobilier scandal

“Hell on Wheels”

- Makeshift towns that followed Union Pacific Railroad construction
- Workers would storm into tiny towns; saloons would be erected immediately
- Workers would proceed to gamble and drink away savings
- Famously violent

PLACES

Promontory Summit, Utah

- Place where Union Pacific and Central Pacific rail lines met, completing construction of Transcontinental Railroad