

territories not yet organized into states. The traditional historic views of the construction and those of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad have focused on the Chinese laborers, who worked for the Central Pacific Railroad, and the hard-living Irish workers of the Union Pacific Railroad. This event is described in an 1870s railroad guide, which detailed the final joining of the rails, as follows:

The Union Pacific people [Irish laborers] brought up their pair of rails, and the work of placing them was done by Europeans. The Central Pacific people [Chinese laborers] then laid their pair of rails, the labor being performed by Mongolians. The foremen, in both cases, were Americans. Here, near the center of the great American Continent, were representatives of Asia, Europe and America --- America directing and controlling (Williams 1876:166).

This statement is accurate in its description of the final connection of the rails and was representative of the work done by both the Chinese and the Irish workers. However, a major contribution to the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, especially throughout the State of Utah has been left out of most histories. This is the story of the Mormon workers, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Although the Mormon contribution to the building of the railroad has not gone unrecognized, they have until recently been somewhat under-reported and their motives often misunderstood. Further, while railroad construction camps have been located within the Transcontinental Railroad construction corridor, they are often associated with the Irish or Chinese laborer's camps and not with those of the Mormon workers.

While the track-laying gangs consisted of European and Asian immigrants, predominately Irish for the Union Pacific and Chinese for the Central Pacific, the majority of the grading, as well as the construction of the cuts and fills, tunnels, bridges, and culverts for both railroads across Utah were carried out by Mormon workers. Although Mormon and local Non-Mormon contractors were responsible for the construction tasks, the Central Pacific and Union Pacific crews continued to be responsible for the survey of the routes and the laying of rails. As the rail layers followed behind the graders, the area along the rails became a mixture of sites occupied by two culturally diverse groups, that carried out separate and very specialized tasks and functions.

As the Union Pacific Railroad approached the Utah Territory from the east and the Central Pacific Railroad from the west, many people, such as General Patrick Connor, former commander at Fort Douglas, Utah, held the view that the Mormons and particularly their leader, Brigham Young, feared the problems and negative influences that the railroad would bring to the territory of Utah (Ambrose 2000:281; *Deseret News* [DN] 1869c:802; Klein 1987:8). This view was based on the belief that the Mormons, who had suffered persecutions in the east and Midwest, wished to remain isolated (Klein 1987:8). However, this represented a misunderstanding of the Mormon view and desires of the Church leaders and members concerning the railroad. The Mormons, in reality, held just the opposite point of view.