

Mormon Church President, Brigham Young, was much more afraid that the railroad would by-pass Salt Lake City altogether. In 1847 due to persecutions suffered at the hands of mobs the Mormons fled their homes in Nauvoo, Illinois, and began their trek westward to the Great Basin. As they traveled, they looked for the best route westward, that could possibly later be used for a railroad (*DN* July 15, 1868e:n.p.). George A. Smith, a general authority of the Church, wrote:

We started from Nauvoo in February, 1846, to make a road to the Rocky Mountains. A portion our work was to hunt a track for the railroad. We located a wagon road to Council Bluffs, bridging the streams and I believe it has been pretty nearly followed by the railroad. In April 1847, President Young and 143 pioneers left Council Bluffs, and located and made the road to the site of this city (Salt Lake City). A portion of our labor was to seek out the way for a railroad across the continent, and every place we found that seemed difficult for laying the rails we searched out a way for the road to go around or through it (*DN* July 15, 1868e:n.p.).

In 1852, five years after their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young and the territorial legislature tried to stir the interest in a transcontinental railroad in Congress, when they sent a memorial to Congress asking for a railroad to be built to Utah (Ambrose 2000:279; *DN* June 17, 1868c:151). In 1863, at the request of Thomas Durant, Brigham Young sent a survey from Utah to locate an acceptable route between Salt Lake City and the east (Ambrose 2000:279). Young even financed the expedition out of his own pocket. Speaking of the railroad, Young stated in 1867, “This gigantic work will increase intercourse, and it is to be hoped, soften prejudices, and bind the country together” (Ambrose 2000:280). The following year, President Young expressed his views on the subject during a mass meeting held in Salt Lake City, where he said in part:

If I could direct the route they should take I should have it down through Echo and Weber Canyons and from there through the lower part of the Salt Lake City, and then pass the south side of the Lake to the Humboldt. Whether it is the province of this community to dictate in this affair will be better understood when the track is laid. We are willing to do our share of the work provided we get well paid for it... Whether I have hit the mark or not I do not know. I know what my wishes are and I understand what would be for our benefit in building this railroad (*DN* June 3, 1868b:19).

In an article discussing the approaching railroads, a reporter for the *Deseret News*, the Church’s newspaper, wrote:

How such people will be disappointed when they know that our citizens expect to do all in their power this Summer to grade the road for the rails between the head of Echo Canon and this valley! It is gratifying to think that we have such an opportunity offered to us. No number of words would have such an effect, as the