

CHAPTER 10. THE END OF THE LINE

Demise of the Promontory Route

Within a few short years of the UPRR's completion, the once-bustling and rowdy town of Promontory was doomed to a slow but inevitable decline; the remoteness of the settlement and the barren environment in which it existed combined with more direct economic factors to push Promontory into near extinction by 1879. The slow death of the settlement began in November 1869, only six months after the historic joining of the rails, when the railroad terminus was relocated to Ogden (Carr 1972:10). With no passengers debarking at the Promontory depot, most town merchants abandoned their businesses and moved elsewhere. Within a decade, railroad operations and the Houghton's store composed the only establishments remaining in Promontory. The rail operations were even further reduced in 1904, when the Southern Pacific completed the Lucin Cutoff across the Great Salt Lake and largely bypassed the original transcontinental line through the Promontories (Box Elder County 1996:399).

Corinne, too, was all but deserted. By the close of 1877, most of the buildings in the town had been torn down for lumber or had been moved elsewhere (Carr 1972:9). However, Corinne was saved from permanent extinction when several Mormon farmers, many of whom lived in the surrounding area, moved into the community, buying up the ground they had considered unholy and turning it into productive farms (Madsen 1994:118). Today, Corinne is the antithesis of what it once was and what its founders and early residents intended it to be. It exists now as a small, predominantly Mormon farming community.

Numerous attempts were made, mainly by F. C. Houghton, to revitalize the little town of Promontory. From 1909 up to his death on 1926, Frederick Houghton placed advertisements and wrote articles in the Box Elder Newspaper attempting to bring more settlers out to Promontory. Prior to 1909, Houghton ran an ad on a fairly regular basis to bring customers to his Promontory store. This add read:

F. C. Houghton, Dealer in - GENERAL MERCHANDISE HAY AND GRAIN.
Sheepmen's supplies and accomodations for Travelers. Promontory, Utah (*Box Elder News* 1908:2).

By 1909 Houghton was trying a different tact to bring more business to Promontory. In March 1909, Houghton sent the following "communication" to the Box Elder News for Publication:

PROMONTORY - Mr. F. C. Houghton of Promontory sends a communication to this paper stating that old Promontory is beginning to boom again and everything points to a favorable future. He states that there is plenty of room for good settlers out there and invites the citizens of this city to consider Promontory as a good place to locate. The Asphaltum Development Co., which has holdings out there, promises to become a greater factor in the commercial world which will aid