The History of Railroading in Jackson Hole

by

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Finally, thank you to all those who've shared their train stories with me. What I've discovered, much to my surprise, is that even in a place like Jackson Hole where the wildlife, natural beauty, and recreational opportunities are the primary draws, so many still have a train story to tell. *This* train story is for you.

Preface

When I began to tell people I was awarded a grant to write the history of railroading in Jackson Hole, almost everyone would look at me with a puzzled expression and say, "What railroading history in Jackson Hole? Jackson Hole has railroad history?"

Given the fact that Jackson Hole never had its own railroad, and with the closest rails that once came to Victor, Idaho, pulled-up for scrap in the 1980s, it's not unexpected that most would think the railroad had little, if anything, to do with the growth and development of Jackson Hole. But the historical record suggests otherwise. The railroad was indeed a significant industry, critical form of transportation, and essential method of connecting and communicating with the outside world for the citizens and businesses of Jackson Hole from the beginning of the twentieth century through the 1960s.

Introduction

> All in all, Jackson Hole has a present and prospective greatness that aught to make every person who has or who will cast his fortunes here glad of his lot. The development of its wonderful latent resources is its one need. Remoteness from the railroad is the great retarding factor.
>
> Editorial
> *Jackson's Hole Courier*
> 1909[1]

The above quote from a local newspaper underscores the importance many once placed on the promise of the railroad coming to Jackson Hole. By 1909, the year of the above quote, the railroad network in the United States had reached 240,000 miles, close to its historic peak,[2] which benefited thousands of communities throughout the nation. The railroad's capacity to move people and goods faster, farther, and more efficiently than horse-drawn or wind power promised greater prosperity and an easier life. The leading-edge transportation technology of the railroad literally changed the world. Jackson Hole residents wanted to benefit, as well.

By 1909 there had been many plans for railroads to run into and through Jackson Hole to capitalize on its mineral resources, its agriculture, its bourgeoning tourist traffic, as well as its proximity to Yellowstone National Park. Though by this time many rail lines had been surveyed and formal company incorporation papers were issued to take advantage of these opportunities, no rails had yet reached Jackson Hole.

Still, by 1909, a regional rail network had developed near and around Jackson Hole that played a role in its economic development. It began with the completion in 1869 of the original transcontinental railroad, the Wyoming section of which was constructed through the southern tier of the state between 1867 and 1869. The rail network expanded over the next sixty years such that by 1926 seven different railroads had built toward Jackson Hole and Yellowstone National Park serving Victor, Idaho, and the five entrances to Yellowstone.

This railroad network supported into the 1960s the development of three of Jackson Hole's most important industries: cattle ranching, dude ranching, and tourism. The speed of the railroad and its hauling capacity helped create Jackson Hole's first export: cattle. It helped create the dude ranching industry, for without the railroad's geographic reach, despite how much the dude ranch guests valued Jackson Hole's remoteness, they may never have made the trip from back east. And all those other tourists who flocked to the Jackson Hole area for the many recreational and cultural offerings were well served by the multiple railroads.

This rail network so vital to Jackson Hole may never have been created were it not for the establishment of Yellowstone National Park. Tourism was seen as a revenue generator for the railroads, and the creation of the Park would provide a major catalyst for increased tourist traffic to the West. The railroad industry lobbied hard for the creation of the first national park and Jackson Hole benefitted as a result.

While many of the gateways serving Yellowstone may seem remote and insignificant to Jackson Hole, the railroads capitalized on the draw of two national parks by providing the option for travelers to enter the area from one direction and depart from another. As a

result, Jackson Hole entertained visitors coming and going through all of the entrances.

By the 1960s the railroad was quickly fading as a transportation alternative. American travelers were choosing the automobile and airplane over the train. Trucks were moving more freight. Heavy federal government regulation, left over from the days when the railroad was the largest industry in the country and creator of the most jobs, severely impacted its ability to compete.

Rail service in Victor gradually diminished throughout the 1960s, such that by 1970, it had all but stopped (Image #1). One or more sporadic trains may have chugged in and out of town thereafter, but those were the last days of rail service. No train has served the area since.

From the early days of settlement in Jackson Hole through the 1960s, the railroad played a key role in the lives of the residents of the area. The following chapters will shed a little more light on the history, as well as contemporary happenings, of railroading in and around Jackson Hole.

Chapter 1 – The Railroads as New Technology

> It was the railroad, more than any other single innovation, that [sic] made the general public aware of the impending transformation of life we call the Industrial Revolution.
>
> Leo Marx
> *The Railroad in the American Landscape*[1]

The history of railroading in Jackson Hole begins with the history of railroading itself.

The Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth century was marked by the rapid pace of the application of many existing and new technologies. Railroads combined two existing technologies: steam power and rails. Steam power had been around since the first century A.D., but serious applications to harness it in the form of an engine did not take shape until the early years of the seventeenth century.[2] Rails began being used in Germany in the twelfth century in mining operations.[3]

It was in England in the 1820s, and then in the United States in the 1830s, that the successful application of a steam engine and rails first took hold in the form of a railroad, which featured a steam-engine-powered locomotive pulling one or more cars.[4] This new transportation technology hauled passengers and goods over greater distances in much less time and typically with less cost than previous forms of transportation.

The improvement in time-savings was perhaps the most significant. Before the railroad, travelling from the East Coast to the West Coast of the United States in the 1840s to the 1860s took at least several months, and often longer, whether over land or by sea. With the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869, however, a traveler could now make that same trip in just one week.

Whereas travelling over land by horse-powered stagecoach or wagon had averaged just several miles per hour, passenger trains could now move up to sixty miles per hour, a staggering rate of increase.

The individual passenger could now get a train ticket to travel from one side of the country to the other for $150 for first class and $70 for emigrant class. The average cost to get from one side of the continent to the other using pre-rail methods was $1,000.

The completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869 provided a practical transportation connection between the eastern and western halves of the United States, as prior to that the states of California and Oregon had been separated from the developed eastern half of the country. In addition, it opened the vast, largely unknown regions in between for settlement and development,[5] including what was then Wyoming Territory.

Chapter 2 – Early Exploration

As the United States grew as a nation in the mid-nineteenth century, the federal government funded explorations and surveys through the High Plains and Rocky Mountain regions to develop a greater understanding of these largely uninhabited and unknown areas. Some knowledge had been gained from the pioneers who created wagon trails between the Midwest and the Oregon and California regions during their quest to find gold or start a new life in the far west. But this information proved sparse and unreliable. The federal government needed its own base of knowledge. One of those explorations became known as the Raynolds Expedition of 1860.

The Raynolds Expedition of 1860

The geographic focus of the Raynolds Expedition was the region sourcing the Yellowstone, Madison, and Gallatin rivers. Among the expedition's many objectives was the identification of "its topographical features, and the facilities or obstacles which the latter present to the construction of rail or common roads...[1]"

The leader of the expedition was Captain William F. Raynolds, a topographical engineer with the Corps of Topographical Engineers that, at the time, was part of the U.S. Army. His chief guide was the experienced, though aging, Jim Bridger.[2]

After departing from St. Louis in 1859, Raynolds original intent was to enter the Yellowstone region from either the east or the south via possibly Togwotee Pass or Two Ocean Pass. Due to difficult conditions, however, he chose neither route and instead his path took him into Jackson Hole via Union Pass (the naming of which is credited to him). After spending more than a week in Jackson Hole, which included an expedition member drowning while crossing the Snake River and time to rest his troops and horses, he moved out over Teton Pass.* As a result, this became the first military survey that included Jackson Hole in its coverage.[3]

In his report to Congress in 1867 on the many outcomes of the expedition, General Raynolds (he was a captain at the time of the original 1859-60 survey, but was promoted to general by the time the report was finalized and submitted) concluded on his objective of finding possible railroad routes:

> My route in 1860 ran near the base of the dividing ridge of the Rocky Mountains from the vicinity of the South Pass [Wyoming] to Henry's lake [Idaho], a distance of about 200 miles, keeping on the eastern slope to the head of Wind river [sic] and subsequently on the western. The summit of the ridge is lofty throughout, and I do not believe it will ever be thought expedient to cross it by rail between the points named.[4]

Thus originated the first formal report on the suitability, or the lack thereof, of a railroad running through Jackson Hole.

(* A US National Forest sign at the top of Teton Pass that describes the history of the pass refers to the Raynolds Expedition, though its wording suggests that the searching of a possible railroad route was the sole purpose of the exploration. In fact, the expedition included many other objectives, not just finding a possible railroad route. Image #2.)

Chapter 3 – Ghost Lines

One of the most fascinating aspects of the history of railroading in the Jackson Hole area is the railroads that were actually planned and considered for the valley but never built.

Snake River National Park and Pacific Railway Company

The earliest recorded railroad planned for Jackson Hole was the Snake River National Park and Pacific Railway Company (SRNP&P). It was formally incorporated on July 22, 1891, in Idaho, with headquarters in Idaho Falls, to build a standard gauge* railroad. Its route was to be from Idaho Falls south through Swan Valley, Idaho, to present-day Alpine, Wyoming, and then east/northeast up the Snake River Canyon to Jackson Hole. Once in Jackson Hole, it would skirt east into the Gros Ventre Mountains to a point on the Gros Ventre River, some 35 miles due east of its confluence with the Snake River. A branch line was planned off of this line, extending northward to the south end of Jackson Lake.[1]

This railroad's primary objective was to serve the Snake River Coal Fields discovered in the area bordered by the Gros Ventre River in the south, the Buffalo Fork River to the north, and Fremont County to the east.[2] It's possible that the Idaho Falls owners were seeking an alternative and competitive source of coal to keep local supplier's coal hauling rates down.[3]

In the same year, the Inta Coal Company was formed with a mine on the opposite side of the trail from what is now Slide Lake.[4] Perhaps the name "Inta" was derived from "Uinta," for today's Teton County was then Uinta County. The name of the company was later changed to Jackson Hole Coal Company, though it's unclear how long or how profitable its operation was.[5]

The railroad was never built and the articles of incorporation were formally forfeited in 1912.[6] It's possible a combination of higher capital costs, engineering challenges, the quality of the coal, the difficulty of mining it, and competition from other coal sources throughout Wyoming, as well as insufficient funding, kept the original investors from moving forward. (As for insufficient funding, the original articles of incorporation show the initial capital stock issuance at $1,000,000, a significant sum at that time and a reflection of what the initial ownership considered necessary to get the railroad off the ground. However, the original shareholders subscribed to only $200,000 of this, possibly an indication of the impending difficulty of obtaining the additional funding required.)[7]

(* This is notable, because many railroads back in the nineteenth century constructed in mountainous terrain were done so using "narrow gauge." Gauge refers to the measurement of space between the two rails, as well as the size of the engines, rail cars, and equipment that operate on the rails. Standard gauge includes a space of 4 feet, 8 ½ inches between the rails, which is the gauge we see in use on most railroads today. However, back in 1891, an alternative, smaller narrow gauge was a common option for railroads operating in mountainous terrain. The smaller size made it easier to engineer and construct a railroad over mountain passes and through river canyons, while typically lowering capital and operating costs compared to standard gauge. Narrow gauge would have been a reasonable choice for the Snake River National Park and Pacific Railway Company.)

Idaho and Wyoming Railroad

The Idaho and Wyoming Railroad was incorporated in Idaho on December 21, 1905.

Much of the route planned for the Idaho and Wyoming Railroad was almost identical to the route planned for the SRNP&P: start in eastern Idaho, build south to present-day Alpine, and build north/northeast via the Snake River Canyon into Jackson Hole (Map #1). Choosing an almost identical route may have been a defensive corporate maneuver against the SRNP&P to impede the competition, which was not uncommon in those days.

However, the exact starting points and ending points were different. The Idaho and Wyoming would start at Elva, Idaho (present day Ucon), off the existing Yellowstone Park Railroad Company line about ten miles north of Idaho Falls, whereas the SRNP&P would start in Idaho Falls. And while the SRNP&P planned to end in the Gros Ventre Mountains with a spur track to Jackson Lake, the Idaho and Wyoming planned to build almost straight north through Jackson Hole to Moran, then dog-leg left to the south entrance of Yellowstone National Park.

Another difference between the two railroads was their purpose: the Idaho and Wyoming's line to the south entrance of Yellowstone was for tourist traffic, whereas the SRNP&P sought coal.

The Idaho and Wyoming had other objectives, as well, including plans to build a spur line from Moran up Pacific Creek, possibly to capitalize on mining opportunities. Plans also included a spur track from present day Hoback Junction through Hoback Canyon to what was then known as Burns, near present-day Daniel, Wyoming. Possible evidence of the surveying of this proposed route was noted in *"A Community of Scalawags, Renegades, Discharged Soldiers and Predestined Stinkers"?* by Kenneth L. and Lenore L Diem, in which they cite the experience of William Balderson, who in 1912, as a "stake-artist" for one of the railroads, surveyed the right-of-way along the Hoback River drainage.[1]

Plans also called for a line from present-day Alpine over Tin Cup Pass and down to Soda Springs where it would link up with the existing Oregon Short Line Railroad. (The Idaho and Wyoming's board of directors included W.H. Bancroft, who was a principal in the Oregon Short Line, indicating a strong connection to and financial backing from that railroad. By this time, the Oregon Short Line had been constructed through southern Idaho and controlled almost all rail traffic in the state.)

As for the primary purpose of capturing Yellowstone National Park tourist traffic, the Idaho and Wyoming, according to Thornton Waite in his *Yellowstone Branch of the Union Pacific – Route of the Yellowstone Special*:

> Presumably it was planned to connect with one of the rail lines proposed for construction in the park itself. No construction was ever performed on this line, since Congress would not authorize construction of the line through the park, despite the support of Interior Secretary Lane.

Because of these dimmed prospects and lack of support, and after several years of inactivity and no prospects of constructing the line, the Idaho and Wyoming was dissolved on October 4, 1922.[2]

Had both the SRNP&P and the Idaho and Wyoming Railroad succeeded in their corporate objectives, the Snake River Canyon between Jackson and Alpine could have taken on a whole different look. It was not uncommon in those days for competing railroads to build almost side-by-side within very confined geography, such that it would not have been surprising, in this case, for each railroad to build on opposite banks of the Snake River.*

(* One notable example of this was when the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company chiseled-out a rail line on the south side of the Columbia River gorge between Washington state and Oregon in 1883, while the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway blasted a path on the north side that was completed in 1909.[3] These two competing rail lines are still in use today by their owners, Union Pacific Railroad and BNSF Railway. The one Wyoming incidence of side-by-side construction was the 120 miles of overlapping rails put down by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy and the Chicago & North Western between Shoshone to just east of Douglas.)

Denver, Laramie & Northwestern Railroad

In the first decade of the twentieth century, there was much talk and publicity about the Denver, Laramie & Northwestern. The four original Laramie investors intended to build a line from Denver to Seattle via Fort Collins, Laramie, South Pass, Lander, Jackson Hole, and on into Boise.[1]

The railroad was briefly headquartered in the now ghost-town of Carbon, Wyoming, just south of present-day Hannah.[2] There were locomotives and rolling stock purchased and lettered with the name of the railroad. There were several promotional photos taken with the train and the tracks in the background and a large number of promoters and boosters in the foreground.[3] They actually laid spur track as far north as Greely, Colorado, and they graded and completed related projects, such as going so far as building a tunnel just a mile south of the Colorado/Wyoming state line.

Investor confidence took a hit when, in 1907, it was determined the company fraudulently obtained coal properties near Elk Mountain. After giving the properties back, and unable to raise additional capital, the company went bankrupt and shut down in 1917.[4]

Teton-Yellowstone Line

A bill was introduced into Congress sometime between 1917 and 1919 granting the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) the right to build a Teton-Yellowstone Line.[1] By this time, the UP had already reached West Yellowstone, Montana (1908), and Victor, Idaho (1913), and had survey-rights through Jackson Hole via the Idaho and Wyoming Railroad from its ownership and control of the Oregon Short Line. Interior Secretary Lane felt strongly enough about the proposal that he instructed the director general of the United States Railroad Administration, Walker D. Hines, to meet with those who objected to see if an agreement could be reached. But the bill was never approved.[2]

Other Railroad Surveys and Plans

As noted with the planned railways above, surveys of potential routes were one of the many steps involved in actually constructing a rail line. Surveying demonstrated a clear indication of intent, yet required very little in the way of expensive capital investment.

The most remarkable evidence of a railroad survey through Jackson Hole includes a United States Geological Survey (USGS) marker located about two-hundred feet northeast of the Cunningham Cabin in Grand Teton National Park. This marker was set in 1896 by the USGS during surveys performed for topographical maps. It benefited the USGS to use already established datum, which the Burlington & Missouri River Rail Road (B&M) had generated when evaluating the construction of a line from Montana south through Cody, Wyoming, over the Continental Divide, and down the Buffalo Fork drainage into Jackson Hole in 1891. This marker is a forty-inch long, one-inch diameter pipe, one foot of which protrudes out of a boulder, on top of which is riveted a three and one-half inch diameter copper cap stamped with pertinent data, including the B&M reference (Image #3).[1]

The Chicago & North Western Railway was another "gateway" railroad serving Yellowstone National Park and western Wyoming with its line into Lander that it reached in 1906. Its original charter indicated the company's intent to build to the Pacific Ocean, so it would have been no surprise for the locals to read the following in the August 9, 1909, issue of *Teton Valley News* in an article titled, "Railroad for Teton Valley":

> It is a well-known fact in this part of the country that the Chicago and Northwestern surveyors have been working through the Jackson's Hole Country in the vicinity of Grosvont pass for some time, and a report reached here last week that the survey was completed to within a few miles of Driggs.

Even though the railroad's plans called for reaching the Pacific via South Pass, it's possible it considered alternate routes, including Grosvont Pass, which was, in that day, another name for the area known as Union Pass.

However, the above plans for the Chicago & North Western were halted when it entered into an agreement with the UP to use its existing lines to reach the Pacific Ocean in order to avoid the expense of building from Lander (in turn, the UP was able to use the Chicago & North Western's rail lines where it saw fit). This agreement terminated any Chicago & North Western plans to build east of Lander and possibly through Jackson Hole.[2]

Other railroads that surveyed through Jackson Hole include the Northern Pacific Railway, the first railroad to serve an entrance to Yellowstone National Park with its branch line from Livingston, which was completed into Gardiner, Montana, in 1902. It's reported to have surveyed lines through the Park and into Jackson Hole around that same time.[3]

The *Teton Peak Chronicle* of St. Anthony, Idaho, wrote in 1907 about railroad surveyors in Squirrel Meadows heading for Conant Pass.[4] This area at the north end of Jackson Hole and south of Yellowstone National Park was long used as a thoroughfare between Jackson Hole and the Idaho side of the mountains. It was a logical consideration for a rail line.

Chapter 4 – Rails Around Jackson Hole

Jackson Hole and the Greater Yellowstone region were directly or indirectly served by seven different railroads (Map #2). These seven railroads were constructed during the approximately sixty year period from 1867 to 1926. Though several of these lines were many miles away, they created railroad trunk lines, which, like the trunks of a tree, sprouted railroad branch lines that ultimately allowed greater proximity to Jackson Hole.*

Union Pacific Railway Company

The first to build into the Rocky Mountain region was the Union Pacific Railway Company (UP) that, along with the Central Pacific, constructed what came to be known as the first transcontinental railroad in the United States. While the Central Pacific Railroad started from the western side of the country, the UP started from Omaha, Nebraska, and was built almost directly west. The rails were laid into Cheyenne from the east in November 1867 and completed to the Wyoming-Utah border in December 1868.[1] The line was completed on May 10, 1869, at Promontory Point, Utah, where the Central Pacific and the UP joined rails.

The rails through southern Wyoming travelled through and included stations in Rock Springs and Green River City (as it was originally named), which were the closest rail stations to Jackson Hole at that time. Though this line was more than 150 miles to the south, it nevertheless became a source of supplies and mail for Jackson Hole, while contributing to the settlement of the area.[2]

Utah Northern Railroad

The construction of the UP transcontinental line through northern Utah provided a connection point from which the Utah Northern Railroad was able to construct a line from Brigham City, just north of Salt Lake City, continuing north through eastern Idaho, and into Butte, Montana. Started in 1871 and completed in 1883, this line ran almost directly north and south and provided much needed transportation for the mining districts of Montana.[1]

This line proved vital to the future of Jackson Hole, for it was off of this trunk line through eastern Idaho that the next owner, the OSL, was able to sprout the branch lines toward the Montana and Wyoming borders that became so important to this community.

After several corporate reorganizations and name changes the Utah Northern was merged into the OSL in 1897. The railroad's ownership originally included several principals of the UP until incorporation into the OSL, at which time it was completely controlled by the parent company.[2]

Oregon Short Line Railway

The Oregon Short Line Railway (OSL), a subsidiary of the Union Pacific, began construction in 1881 out of Granger, Wyoming, forty miles west of Green River, off of the original transcontinental rail line and continued northwest into and through southern Idaho with the ultimate objective of reaching Oregon.[1] It was off of the OSL that the closest branch

line to Jackson Hole, the Teton Valley Branch, was constructed into Victor.

The line to Victor was inspired by a trip to Yellowstone National Park in 1905 by E. H. Harriman, who was then president of the UP. To complete his trip from the Monida, Montana, station off of the old Utah Northern line he had to take an uncomfortable stagecoach ride due east for 50 miles to the west entrance of the Park. This experience, combined with the competitive pressures from three other railroads having already reached or getting close to Yellowstone, resulted in the creation of the Yellowstone Park Railroad Company, which was incorporated in 1905.

The Yellowstone Park Railroad Company's charter included plans to build from the terminus of the St. Anthony Railroad that had been constructed under OSL control from Idaho Falls northeast to St. Anthony, Idaho, in 1899-1900. From St. Anthony the Yellowstone Park Railroad Company would construct two branch lines: one named the Yellowstone Branch that would extend from St. Anthony northeast to the west entrance of Yellowstone National Park. The second was the construction of the Teton Valley Branch, which would extend off of the Yellowstone Branch near Ashton, Idaho, arcing southwesterly to Victor. (Newly discovered coal mines in Teton Valley, the valley's agricultural potential, and its close proximity to Jackson Hole also contributed to the railroad's decision to include, as part of the Yellowstone Park Railroad Company's charter, a branch to Teton Valley.[2])

The Yellowstone Branch between St. Anthony to West Yellowstone (known as Riverside at that time) was completed between 1905 and 1908. The construction of the Teton Valley Branch began in 1910 and ended in 1913 when it arrived in Victor (Map #3).

The Yellowstone Park Railroad Company, which constructed both branch lines, was conveyed to its parent company, the OSL, in 1910. The OSL was controlled by the UP, so over the years the line into Victor was known as both the Oregon Short Line and the Union Pacific.[3]

This extension of track to Victor saved forty miles and at least a day-plus of travel, depending on the weather, thus making it that much easier for tourists and locals alike to arrive or depart from Jackson Hole. (The OSL originally suggested it might terminate construction of the Teton Valley Branch in Driggs. However, it was so important to the citizens of Jackson Hole that the community raised and contributed a 25 percent match to funds generated in Teton Valley to support the purchase of private property for the railroad's required right-of-way to the south end of the valley. [4])

Northern Pacific Railway

The Northern Pacific Railway constructed the second transcontinental railroad from near St. Paul, Minnesota, where it broke ground in 1870, to Portland, Oregon. Its east-west route through southern Montana opened up northern Wyoming to greater development.[1]

The Northern Pacific is notable for being the first railroad to construct a line to an entrance of Yellowstone National Park. They completed a line from Livingston, Montana, south to

Cinnabar in 1883, the latter being a few miles north of the entrance at Gardiner.[2] It wasn't until nineteen years later in 1902 that the railroad was able to settle a land dispute with a local landowner, allowing them to complete the line to Gardiner.[3]

Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad

The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad (also known as The Burlington or the CB&Q) started in Aurora, Illinois, in 1849. It built westward, including a line from Nebraska through northeastern Wyoming into Montana, in the early 1890s.[1]

The Northern Pacific Railway and the Great Northern Railroad acquired 97 percent of the stock of the CB&Q in 1900 giving these two railroads control.[2] Nevertheless, the CB&Q maintained a great deal of independence and decision-making, including the decision to build a branch line from Toluca, Montana, (near Billings) into Cody, Wyoming, and the Big Horn Basin in 1901, where it saw opportunity for transporting livestock, crops, minerals, and passengers from the blossoming tourist trade to and from Yellowstone National Park.[3]

This line helped establish Cody as Wyoming's first gateway to Yellowstone National Park, with access to the east entrance.

Chicago & North Western Railway

This railroad got its name in 1859 when the Chicago, St. Paul, and Fond du Lac Railroad—created in 1855 to extend northwest out of Chicago—was reorganized and named Chicago & North Western Railway (C&NW). In 1864 the C&NW consolidated with what had been Chicago's first railroad, the Galena & Chicago Union, created in 1848.[1]

The C&NW entered Wyoming from Nebraska near Lusk and built westward to Casper in 1886. From there it continued building west, completing construction to Lander in 1906.

The C&NW had planned to build from Lander over South Pass to the Pacific Ocean. However, around this time it entered into an agreement with the UP to use the latter's existing lines to reach the West Coast in order to avoid the expense of constructing its own line.[2]

With a terminus in Lander, the C&NW became the second Wyoming railroad to provide access to Yellowstone National Park, this time through the south entrance.

Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad

The Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, aka the Milwaukee Road, was the last of the railroads to be built from the Midwest to the Pacific, which it did starting in the Twin Cities and finishing in Seattle in 1909.[1]

In 1926 it was also the last to build toward Yellowstone National Park, when it completed a branch line from its main line in Three Forks, Montana, to Salesville[2] (now Gallatin Gateway), Montana, with the intention of serving passengers destined for the Park.

According to Alan Runte in his book, *Trains of Discovery*:

> By 1930 no less than five major railroads served Yellowstone and its immediate vicinity. The last to make a concerted effort to increase patronage was the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul, which in 1926 developed the Gallatin Gateway in Montana as another alternative to existing points of entry.

Runte explains that despite the increasing competition from the automobile, it was understandable that another railroad sought to profit from Yellowstone tourist traffic, even at this relatively late date, as rail traffic had reached its pre-World War I ridership level.[3]

(* The railroad names used in this book were the names of the original entities when they were first organized. However, as a result of corporate reorganizations and mergers, the names of these entities often changed, including even a simple change from "Railroad" to "Railway" or vice versa. For example, the Union Pacific was originally chartered as the Union Pacific Railway Company in 1862, but was then changed to the Union Pacific Railroad Company during a reorganization in 1897.[4])

Chapter 5 – Cattle Ranching: Jackson Hole's First Export

> Cattle ranching is most important to the valley's history, because it anchored early settlement in the valley, providing an economic base and the stability needed to establish viable communities. Ranching became and remained the economic mainstay through World War II.
>
> John Daugherty
> *A Place Called Jackson Hole* [1]

The first recorded observation of cattle in Jackson Hole was by William Simpson, who said he saw in 1883 about 100 head of cattle when he arrived here as part of a posse looking for outlaws. It's possible these cattle belonged to the first homesteader in the valley, John Holland, who may have been grazing the cattle here for the summer, which he would have brought in from the Upper Green River Basin (before he finally sunk roots here in 1884). By 1900 almost all homesteaders had cattle.[2]

The industry grew, as the demand for cattle outside Jackson Hole increased. The big markets for exporting cattle were in Omaha and Los Angeles, which meant accessing the nearest rail lines to cover the distance from Jackson Hole.[3] Cattle drives in the fall of each year from Jackson Hole to the various railheads became an annual event.

It's likely the early ranchers who knew the routes between Jackson Hole and the Upper Green River Basin would drive their herds southeast where they would merge with the larger ranchers down there, then drive them further south to Opal, Wyoming (just east of Kemmerer), that was for a long time the major cattle exporting railhead for southwest Wyoming. From there, they could send them to Omaha or Los Angeles.

Once the Chicago & North Western reached Lander in 1906, ranchers could opt to drive cattle through the Gros Ventre Mountains over Union Pass and then east to Hudson, Wyoming, just north of Lander, some 150 miles. It was still a great distance to travel, but for the cost-conscious rancher, sometimes worth it, especially for those grazing in the north end of the valley or the hills to the east. To win over this cattle business, the Chicago & North Western offered to ship each head of cattle for less than the going-rate out of Rexburg, Idaho, which was the closest point served by the OSL at that time. D.E. Skinner and other Blackrock Creek-area ranchers from the northern half of Jackson Hole often chose this route.[4]

But by far the most popular route for driving Jackson Hole cattle to a railhead was over Teton Pass. It offered the shortest distance to the OSL's rails in eastern Idaho, despite the rigors of having to drive cattle over the pass (Image #4).

Doris Platts, in her book, *The Pass*, references a number of cattle drives both coming over from Idaho for the higher-quality Jackson Hole grasses, as well as drives by Jackson Hole ranchers destined for the railhead in Victor (or beyond for wintering in the mostly snow-free Snake River plain). One of the most notable drives included 1,800 head of "choice Hereford cattle" that required sixty-seven cattle cars to transport. She writes, "Old timers say this was the largest single shipment ever to leave Jackson Hole."[5]

Rancher and former Wyoming governor and U.S. senator, Cliff Hansen, was among those Jackson Hole ranchers who sometimes opted for the Teton Pass route. After driving his herd over the pass, "We'd store them in the stock pens provided by the railroad," he said, "where they'd be fed a little hay and water" until it was time to get them in the cattle cars.[6]

The Union Pacific eagerly pursued the cattle business, for they saw it as one of their primary sources of revenue for many years in the late-nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. So important was it that, when they built the line into Victor, they soon constructed large cattle pens for the benefit of ranchers driving their cattle to market. The cattle pens in Victor were tactfully located to the northwest of the present site of the Victor Railroad Depot so that prevailing winds would carry away the aroma that sometimes accompanied the herds.[7]

The last formally recorded cattle drive was in 1955. The UP, doing its best to compete with trucking, offered a "Cattle Feeder Special" to Jackson Hole ranchers. At least eight ranchers took part in driving about one thousand yearling Herefords over Teton Pass to the railhead in Victor, which filled fifty-four cattle cars. As was customary, the ranchers rode on the train to the final destination, which in this case was a two- to three-day trip to Omaha. Whereas with most drives the ranchers were often squeezed into a caboose, the UP offered a special car for the cattlemen on this particular train.[8]

Even after the time of the "Cattle Feeder Special" locals still moved cattle over the pass to Victor. One of the last unrecorded cattle drives was made in 1958 by long-time Jackson Hole resident Paul Von Gontard, who said he and local resident, John Horn, helped his mother and father drive six hundred head of cattle over Teton Pass to the Victor railhead.*[9]

Another local who took advantage of the improving quality of the roads *and* still relied on the railroad was Charlie Wilson. According to his grandson, resident Darrell Hoffman, Wilson would load his cattle in the back of his 2½-ton pickup truck with a modified bed to accommodate more cattle. Hoffman reports that his grandfather sometimes squeezed so many cattle in the back of the truck that the front wheels would rise up off the road on the way up Teton Pass. One way or the other, Wilson always managed to operate the truck safely and get his cattle to the pens in Victor.[10]

As improvements in roads and trucking began to give ranchers a more economical option for transporting their cattle to market compared to using rail, and as the UP phased-out cattle-car service to Victor, the 1950s saw the last formal and informal cattle drives to points outside Jackson Hole.[11]

(* On related notes, Paul Von Gontard said one of his first jobs was working as a horse wrangler for the UP in Sun Valley, Idaho. Also, Paul was a partner with John Horn when they purchased the Victor Railroad Depot from the UP in 1989.)

Chapter 6 – Dude Ranching

> That first day we left the train at four-thirty in the morning and stepped from the stuffy slumber of our still unawakened [sic] fellow passengers into the cool sleep of a little prairie town. Far off to the east, sixty miles or so away in the direction of our destination, gigantic serrated mountains were just beginning to be touched with light.
>
> Struthers Burt
> *Diary of a Dude Wrangler*[1]

Struthers Burt's description of getting off the train in eastern Idaho for the remaining journey to Jackson Hole is fitting, as it comes from one of the pioneers of local dude ranching, who, along with Louis Joy, started what was arguably the first dude ranch, the JY, in 1908.

Burt probably detrained in Rexburg or St. Anthony, Idaho, which were then the closest railheads to Jackson Hole at the time. Both locations had been reached in 1899-1900 by the St. Anthony Railroad, which had been built from Idaho Falls northeast to St. Anthony.[2]

By the time Burt first arrived in the area, the Yellowstone Park Railroad had completed an extension of the rail line from St. Anthony to Ashton in 1908,[3] such that Burt could have gone all the way to Ashton. But it was just as practical in those days for someone coming to Jackson Hole to stop in Rexburg or St. Anthony and head almost due east rather than go all the way up to Ashton and head south/southeast.

Dude ranching soon evolved from traditional working cattle ranches to a tourist destination. Easterners invited as guests to these ranches became enamored with the recreation opportunities, natural beauty, and good ole' cowboy charm and kept coming back for more. As time went on, in order to assuage the impact such increasingly frequent visits had on the ranch and its owners, more formal arrangements for payment for services developed and a new industry was born.

The railroads played a key role in the development of dude ranching in Jackson Hole. Amada Rees said in her work, "'A Classless Society': Dude Ranching in the Tetons 1908-1955," which appeared in the Autumn 2005 issue of *Annals of Wyoming: The Wyoming History Journal*:

> Railroad companies saw dude ranching as an essential part of their business promotional campaign including the Burlington & Quincy and the Union Pacific. They poured millions of dollars into promoting dude ranching vacations in the American West.[4]

For a number of years the UP produced the brochure "bible" of dude ranch promotion titled, *Dude Ranches Out West.* It featured dozens of dude ranches throughout the Rockies categorized by state, but included a special section just for those in Jackson Hole, which it noted were "reached from the Union Pacific rail gateways of Victor, Idaho, and Rock Springs, Wyo."[5]

It's no coincidence that this "bible," which is wrapped by a front and back cover emblazoned with dozens of ranch brands, included the Bar BC brand, one of Jackson Hole's most famous, featured prominently beside its own UP logo on the front cover.[6]

The Northern Pacific, which built the first line to an entrance of Yellowstone National Park —Gardiner, Montana, in 1902[7]—also spent heavily to promote ranch vacations in the Northern Rockies, including those in northwest Wyoming. Its *Ranch Vacations* brochure identifies more than one hundred ranches served by the railroad, along with seven in Jackson Hole, including Aspen, Bar BC, Bearpaw, Crescent H, Double Diamond, Teton Valley, and White Grass.[8]

In fact, the Northern Pacific played a key role in the development of the Dude Ranch Association (DRA), which was established in 1926 to increase the overall promotion of dude ranching. The DRA was created by a consortium of ranch owners and railroad officials of the Northern Pacific. Even national park service officials attended its first meeting in September 1926 in recognition of this burgeoning industry and its interplay with the national parks.[9]

Most dude ranches arranged to meet the dudes and dudeens, as the male and female guests were respectively called, at the nearest train station. There, they were met by horse, wagon, stagecoach, or automobile, depending on weather and road conditions, and escorted to the respective ranch.

Many dude ranchers would meet their guests at the Victor Railroad Depot, which was constructed by the OSL in 1913 (Image #5). In 1928 the OSL tripled the size of the passenger-end of the structure to accommodate an anticipated increase in the number of tourists. The additional space included a larger waiting room, bathrooms, and bigger dressing rooms with showers that would allow travelers to freshen up after a long journey.[10] In *Yellowstone by Train,* Thornton Waite cites the impending creation of Grand Teton National Park in 1929, as well as dude ranch promotion by the railroad earlier in the decade, as factors contributing to the decision to expand.[11]

Railroad travel was the primary means for dude ranch guests to get in and out of the valley for the majority of the prime dude ranch era of 1908 to 1940. Without the railroad, the industry would likely not have been as successful, for the speed and reach of the train was critical to the success of dude ranches in its most important years (especially considering the relatively unpredictable quality of the country's roads for much of this period).

As the railroad supported dude ranching, so did it support the local economy. John Daugherty, in *A Place Called Jackson Hole,* asserts that, "Dude ranches in Jackson Hole contributed to the economy in a significant way." He provides an extensive list of occupations and beneficiaries that directly or indirectly benefited from the influx of dudes and dudeens during these years, especially during the 1920s when cattle prices suffered from a decade of depressed prices.[12]

Finally, the railroad didn't just support dude ranching—it supported the creation of Jackson Hole as we know it today. The large influx of Easterners resulted in many who stayed, thus playing a part in creating the unique blend of citizenry who now call Jackson Hole home.

Chapter 7 - Tourism

Considering the timeframe that tourism has been a significant industry in Jackson Hole—that is, considering that tourism is arguably Jackson Hole's longest-running industry, starting with locals guiding royalty and well-to-do Easterners and Europeans on hunting expeditions in the late 1800s through today, a period of more than 110 years—the railroad played a relatively brief, though significant role in the industry's growth.

The timeframe during which the railroad was the primary form of transportation for tourists coming and going through Jackson Hole was from the late-nineteenth century through the 1920s, as it offered the fastest and most convenient mode of travel.

The first tourists in the area were primarily of royalty and wealthy origins, as they had the means to pay for what at that time was still a relatively expensive transportation alternative. It's hard to imagine now, but the alternatives to the train for covering great distances in the late-nineteenth century were horse, horse-drawn stagecoach, or horse-drawn wagon. With these time-consuming and less convenient choices, it's easy to infer that rail travel was the preferred choice of early tourists.

Nevertheless, these early tourists still had to endure stretches of travel by horse, stagecoach, or wagon to get to the area, as the railroads did not build to the entrances of Yellowstone National Park until the first decade of the twentieth century and thereafter and not to Victor until 1913.

In an interesting twist, even after the motorcar began to become popular for covering the distances between the end of the line and the Park entrances, the Chicago & North Western, which built to the end of the line in Lander in 1906, tried to make the most of the distance to the south entrance by offering the option to take the rest of the trip by horseback and camp along the way as a tour package.[1]

Ben Sheffield was one of the earliest local guides to utilize the multiple rail lines for getting guests to and from his lodge. After years of guiding in northern Jackson Hole, he purchased land near the present Jackson Lake Dam in 1903 and spent much of 1904 constructing the first buildings that became his Teton Lodge. In his 1905 brochure, he noted:

> ...a tourist could reach Teton Lodge via St. Anthony, Idaho, in addition to the usual National Park route.

For large groups, he would meet the train at St. Anthony, Idaho, which was the nearest railhead to the north end of Jackson Hole, with a pack outfit and team of horses, for which he required ten-day's -notice. For smaller groups, he encouraged them to take the daily stage line from St. Anthony. The Marysville Road, the main thoroughfare between the northern end of Jackson Hole and Idaho, was used for this purpose.

Sheffield's use of the word "usual" in reference to the National Park route reflected the fact that most of his guests prior to 1905 had arrived from Bozeman, Montana, or the Chicago area, where he had spent much of his time when he wasn't guiding in Jackson Hole. Guests arriving from these locations used the Northern Pacific line that reached the north entrance of Yellowstone National Park.[2]

Just as it is true today, tourism in Jackson Hole during the golden era of railroad transportation was driven, in large part, by tourism in Yellowstone National Park. Five railroads served the five Yellowstone National Park entrances from seven directions. The north entrance and the northeast entrances were served by the Northern Pacific. The east entrance was served by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy. The south entrance was served from the southeast by the Chicago & North Western and from the southwest by the Union Pacific. The west entrance was served from the southwest by the Union Pacific and from the northwest by the Milwaukee Road (Image #6).

While each of these railroads competed for the same tourist dollar, they saw the benefit of cooperating by offering passengers the flexibility of arriving on one railroad and entrance, then departing through a different entrance and possibly a different railroad at no extra charge.[3] In his book, *Trains of Discovery*, Alfred Runte credits Stephen T. Mather, who became the first director of the National Park Service when it was created in 1916, with being instrumental in organizing the railroads to work together in this way.[4]

This arrangement benefited Jackson Hole, as those travelers arriving through any distant Yellowstone entrance could be encouraged to complete their trip in Victor via Jackson Hole or begin their tour through Victor and Jackson Hole and exit through one of the five park entrances. For example, schedules for a standard three-day tour for "In Gallatin Gateway out Victor" and "In Victor out Gallatin Gateway" included maps of recommended routes through Yellowstone and Jackson Hole and featured a stop at Jackson Lake Lodge in Moran. In this case, the traveler was afforded the option of arriving or departing on the Oregon Short Line serving Victor or the Milwaukee Road serving the Gallatin Gateway.[5]

Railroad transportation to the area peaked in the 1920s based on totals compiled in the Annual Report of the Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. The year 1923 was the peak year, when 44,806 visitors arrived by train. This was out of a total of 138,352 visitors to Yellowstone that year, suggesting that about one of every three visitors arrived by train. Visitors to Yellowstone travelling by train leveled-off at about 40,000 per year throughout the 1920s, while total visitation increased dramatically to 260,697 in 1929, indicating by then only one-to-two visitors of every ten arrived by train.[6]

If the percentage of visitors to the area using the rails declined from one of every three in 1923 to only one or two of every ten just six years later in 1929, then how were the rest arriving? By automobile. The number of Americans who owned an automobile jumped dramatically from 8,000,000 in 1920 to 23,000,000 in 1930, an increase of 188 percent.[7] American's love affair with the automobile was taking off, and using it for traveling afforded greater flexibility and independence compared to the train.

After peaking in the 1920s, rail travel slowed during the depression years of the 1930s and into World War II. It picked-up slightly after the war, but resumed its steady decline, as automobiles, and increasingly, the airplane, became preferred transportation options for travelers. Regularly scheduled passenger trains to the park entrances ran until 1960. Service continued into the 1960s, though on a more infrequent basis and the railroads no longer stopped as close to the park entrances as they once did. Amtrak took over the nation's passenger railroads in 1971, thereby ending the era of privately-owned railroad transportation options for visitors to the area.[8]

Chapter 8 – The Railroad and Yellowstone National Park

As Yellowstone National Park has had, directly or indirectly, an impact on the history of Jackson Hole, and given the significant role the railroad played in its creation and early years, brief coverage of a couple of the story-lines is called for:

One of those story lines is the tourist trade, for without the attraction of Yellowstone, the history of Jackson Hole may have been much different.

Another major story line includes a much more conflicting dimension. On the one hand, the railroad, in particular, the Northern Pacific, was instrumental in the creation and ultimate preservation of the Park, albeit for clearly expressed for-profit motives. On the other hand, there are those who argue that the methods employed by the Northern Pacific in the early years of Yellowstone were anything but aboveboard.

As for the railroad's role in Yellowstone's creation and its influence on the Hayden Expedition of 1870, author Chris J. Magoc, in his 1999 book, *Yellowstone: The Creation and Selling of an American Landscape, 1870-1903*, had the following to say:

> Envisioning the value of a civilized Yellowstone, the Northern Pacific Railroad instigated the 1870 mission and ultimately the creation of the park. They brought this American institution to pass, not alone but through an association with a prominent Montanan, Nathaniel Pitt Langford. His story links the sublime spectacle of nature that defined Yellowstone for Americans with the political and economic forces that later managed and developed the region.[1]

Then there are those who objected to the Northern Pacific's tactics, such as Aubrey Haines, the first official Yellowstone historian and author of *The Yellowstone Story - A History of Our First National Park.* His displeasure with the railroad's influence in the early years is fairly evident when he states:

> The 'bad guys' in this part of the Yellowstone story are the railroads and the commercial enterprises they spawned...the Northern Pacific, by virtue of its priority upon the scene, was the chief antagonist...the methods employed by the railroad company in their approach...were mostly devious and usually camouflaged.[2]

It's possible that this conflict from the Park's early years, which has never really been resolved, resulted in the "campfire story" of the origins of Yellowstone National Park by those who have had a difficult time accepting and incorporating the role of the Northern Pacific.

This "campfire" storyline features the members of the Washburn Expedition of 1870 sitting around a campfire sharing their respective ideas for the creation of a national park. This story certainly does have a much more romantic, storybook sound to it, and was one that conveniently excluded the influence of the railroad.

Alfred Runte, a college professor, author, and consultant with expertise in the historic relationship between the railroads and the early years of our national parks, has his own perspective on this "campfire" story, as shared in his book, *Trains of Discovery*, in which he

describes the distinction between the role played by the railroad and the roles played by the explorers of the Washburn Expedition of 1870:

> According to popular tradition, the explorers who opened Yellowstone in 1870 conceived the national park idea while unraveling the mysteries of the region. But at best, ecology and altruism were afterthoughts of the Yellowstone Park campaign. From the outset, establishment of the Park owed far more to the financier Jay Cooke and to officials of the Northern Pacific Railroad – all of whom, upon completion of the line, expected to profit from the territory as a great tourist resort.(3)

Runte asserts that though both the Washburn Expedition of 1870 and Hayden Expedition of 1871 generated great publicity for the wonders of what was becoming known as the Yellowstone region, there were no specific efforts from any of the members following the expeditions to petition Congress for the creation of the Park. Indeed, Runte notes that following the Washburn Expedition:

> ...not one of the eighteen men present around the Yellowstone campfire ever mentioned the national park idea in the articles and speeches prepared immediately afterward.(4)

As for the follow-up to the Hayden Expedition, Runte notes:

> No one came forward, not even Professor Hayden, who had achieved great distinction in the public eye.(5)

Runte goes on to state that it wasn't until October 28, 1871, that an official of the Northern Pacific Railway, A.B. Nettleton, wrote a letter to Professor Hayden encouraging him to leverage his work and the resulting publicity to get Congress to pass a bill to protect the area. At least from Runte's perspective, this letter was the tipping point, as Hayden acted on this impetus, which resulted in a bill being introduced in Congress in December 1871 and the creation of the Park being approved within just three months in March 1872.(6)

Runte has been one of the only authors to attempt to draw the above distinctions between the role played by the railroad and the role played by the early naturalists. His efforts have been an attempt to add clarity to the unclear history, for much of the recent history has seemed to downplay the role played by the railroad, if it were to mention it at all.

While Runte may be one of the most outspoken on this topic of the "campfire creation story," he was not the first, which brings us back to Aubrey Haines. Though he clearly was no sympathizer of the Northern Pacific, to his credit he sought and interpreted that which he saw as the truth, as the following illustrates. When Haines submitted to his employer, the National Park Service, in 1969 his completed, two-volume manuscript for *The Yellowstone* Story, he questioned the validity of the story that the men sitting around the Yellowstone campfire during the Washburn Expedition of 1870 came up with the idea for creating Yellowstone National Park. This did not go over well with the "Washington Office," of the Park Service, which, it appears, preferred the popular campfire-creation origin story of the Park. The office responded that the story be reduced to one volume (inferring that certain portions of his history be removed). Haines did not comply and withdrew his manuscript from the Park Service, believing it needed to be published in its entirety. He

ultimately had it published in conjunction with Colorado University Associated Press and the Yellowstone Library and Museum Association in 1977. This action resulted in an earlier retirement than Haines had planned, but he was pleased with his decision.[7]

When considering the themes of Magoc, Runte, and Haines, it's clear they aren't calling for an exclusion of the campfire story, but rather, especially in the case of Magoc and Runte, a more all-encompassing, holistic approach to the Park's true origins. Perhaps as time goes on, a more complete and synthesized story on the origins of the Park will evolve, one that synthesizes both the commercial interests and naturalist sensibilities.

Chapter 9 – Other Facts, Stories, and Individuals

Communications with the Outside World

One of the most important benefits of the train coming as close as Victor was the ability to communicate more quickly with the outside world. Good 'ole U.S. Mail was the most common and affordable way to do so.

Before the railroad, citizens were dependent upon the much slower pace of horse- or wind-powered transportation to send and receive mail. But with the railroad on the other side of Teton Pass, it dramatically increased the speed with which mail was sent and received.

In addition to the mail, the train was able to bring in newspapers, magazines, and catalogs, which were widely valued by Jackson Hole's citizens.

Also, for those needing to make sure a message was sent or received with the greatest immediacy than even the quick transportation allowed by the train, there was the telegraph available in the Victor depot. Though much more costly than traditional mail service, the urgency of some messages required the extra expenditure.[1]

Teton Range Ski Resort

The Union Pacific explored various mountain locations throughout the West for the purpose of creating the region's first destination ski resort in the 1930s, which would benefit the railroad through increased passenger traffic and revenues.

Spearheading the idea was William Averell Harriman, who was inspired by his trips to destination ski resorts in the Alps and elsewhere in Europe. Better known as Averell Harriman, he rose to the level of chairman of the board of the railroad.[1] He was the son of E.H. Harriman, who ran and transformed the Union Pacific in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Averell Harriman hired his friend Count Felix Schaffgotsch, who he had met during his trips to Europe, to do the scouting. He instructed Schaffgotsch to visit and evaluate locations in California, Utah, Idaho, and Washington state, among others. Averell Harriman had Schaffgotsch include Victor, Idaho, on his list, as Averell's father put him to work on a railroad survey crew in Victor and Island Park when he was younger, where he learned first-hand the beauty and terrain of the area.[2]

For various reasons Sun Valley, Idaho, was chosen over all the others. Speculation as to why Victor or a location on the Teton Range was not chosen has included Victor's restrictive attitude toward social drinking,[3] the area on both sides of Teton Pass being too remote, and the State of Wyoming's inability to guarantee clear roads in the winter.

Jackson Hole's Own Railroad – Jackson Lake Dam Rail Line

A crude, though productive form of rail line was laid to support the construction of the permanent Jackson Lake Dam and the earthen dike to the north in 1915 and 1916. It ran

from across the top of the dam and then to the southeast, paralleled the Snake River, and then into what was known as the upper and lower rock quarries at the base of Signal Mountain and adjacent to the river. The "train" was powered by a gasoline engine attached to a flat-car that included a seat and operating controls. The engine pulled a string of hopper cars designed to hold and move rock, soil, and other materials.[1]

This was a narrow gauge line custom-made for the small confines of the operating area, with a distance of no more than three feet between the rails (compared to what was then and remains the standard gauge of four feet, eight and one-half inches between the rails).

Most Significant Cargo - First Prize

On a topic related to the Jackson Lake Dam, arguably the most significant cargo ever transported by rail into Victor, Idaho, and then transported over Teton Pass to Jackson Hole were six large 15,000-pound boilers, a 7,800-pound pumping unit, and related equipment to be used in the construction of the Jackson Lake Dam. The equipment arrived in Victor in April 1914. After a wet, cold winter, there were still three feet of snow in Victor and much more in the canyon and on Teton Pass. Special sleds for transporting the over-sized pieces were designed by a blacksmith in Victor, with each to be hauled by ten-horse teams. Each boiler and its related valves and equipment were transported one at a time, with each trip including more than eight tons of weight. The movement of the boilers was slow and cumbersome, and at times the gear would fall off the sleighs. Finally, by mid-May, all the boilers and the large pump were transported over the Pass and left above Wilson. Still, the job wasn't finished; the goods needed to get to Moran. The equipment sat in Wilson until a new contractor was found, who finally completed the job in July of that year.[1]

Most Significant Cargo - Honorable Mention

Honorable Mention for Most Significant Cargo ever to be transported by rail into Victor and then over Teton Pass into Jackson Hole was the tram cable used on the original tram at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort in the early 1960s.[1]

Tie Hack Memorial

The Tie Hack Memorial, located at the eastern base of Togwotee Pass and nineteen miles west of Dubois on the south side of U.S. Highway 26-287, honors the men who labored in the forests surrounding this area to produce crossties* used under the rails of the railroads in the western part of the United States. These outdoor craftsmen were known as tie hacks.

Between the early years of the twentieth century until 1946, hundreds of tie hacks from the Wyoming Tie & Timber Company produced more than 10 million railroad ties using little more than hand-tools and muscle. They would fell a lodgepole pine with a crosscut saw, then, using a selection of axes, most notably the broadax, cut the ties to the finished size, right then and there.

Tie hacks typically performed most of their cutting work throughout the winter months. Each spring or summer at high-water, they would float hundreds of thousands of ties down the Wind River to the distribution center in Riverton owned by the Chicago & North

Western Railway. The peak year was 1927 when more than 700,000 ties were floated to Riverton.[1]

The Tie Hack Memorial was erected in 1946 by the Wyoming Tie & Timber Company. It features a fourteen-foot high block of Bedford Limestone into which is carved a likeness of a tie hack with a broadax and saw (Image #7).

In 1974 the Memorial obtained official "historic site" status and was enhanced with restrooms, walkways, and additional interpretive plaques. A rededication was held by the five federal and state agencies whose coordination made this possible.

At the base of the larger-than-life bronze carving is a plaque that reads:

> Erected to perpetuate the memory of the hardy woods and river men who made and delivered the crossties for the building and maintenance of the Chicago Northwestern railway in this western country.
>
> Wyoming Tie & Timber Company
> 1946

The Memorial overlooks the location of what was once the Wyoming Tie & Timber Company headquarters, what Joan Trego Pinkerton, author of *Knights of the Broadax*, called "the greatest crosstie operation in the history of railroading."[2]

(* The words "crosstie" and "tie" are used interchangeably and mean the same thing.)

Jackson Hole's Own Railroad Depot – Keith Fay and The Fay Gallery

Jackson Hole has an exact replica of a Santa Fe Railroad depot, located on the Moose-Wilson Road, courtesy of long-time resident, Keith Fay. Keith was a life-long rail fan. He was also an artist (Image #8).

For many years he sold his beautiful Jackson Hole landscapes on consignment through local Jackson Hole galleries. In 1985 he had finally saved enough to construct his own art gallery. He decided to build it next to his home at 2155 Moose-Wilson Road. The biggest question he faced was its design. He was leaning toward choosing a traditional log-cabin structure, one that would fit in with Jackson Hole's architecture.

Before he had to make his final choice on the design, he took a weekend off to visit friends in Littleton, Colorado. They had agreed to meet at an opening at a local art gallery, a location to which he had never been. When he drove to the address described by his friends he thought they had given him the wrong address—there was nothing there but an old, refurbished railroad depot. When he walked inside to ask directions, there were his friends. The depot had been converted into an art gallery. That's when the "light went on" for Keith. He decided then and there to design his new art gallery in Jackson Hole after this very railroad depot.

Rather than looking at art, Keith spent most of the weekend taking measurements inside and out, which he gave to his builder upon his return to Jackson Hole. The result was an

exact replica of a Santa Fe Railroad depot. Inside the 900-square-foot structure was a passenger waiting room and depot agent's office. It even includes a bay window on the "track side" so the depot agent could view the arriving and departing trains (see Image #6).

The exterior included a passenger and cargo loading platform, as well as paint that matched the exact shade of Santa Fe light yellow the railroad used on hundreds of its depots throughout the West. He also placed outside the gallery a traditional railroad cross-buck sign, though it took him many arduous meetings in front of county planners and commissioners to obtain approval for such "outlandish, non-conforming" signage.[1]

Keith passed away in 2008. The property was passed on to his son, who has since sold it. The present owner has painted it a different color than the original Santa Fe light yellow and it appears to be used as a rental property.

Rails-to-Trails

Rails-to-Trails is the all-encompassing name given to programs designed to convert abandoned railroads and the easements that gave them the legal-right to use the land into multi-use, recreational trails.

Local successes include the conversion of the portion of the abandoned Teton Valley Branch line between Victor and Driggs into such a trail. Though the old rails and ties were pulled-up in 1984, it wasn't until 1997 that the Idaho Transportation Department paved this section, funded with a federal grant.[1]

North of Driggs to Ashton is the remaining portion of the Teton Valley Branch. North from Ashton to West Yellowstone is the abandoned Yellowstone Branch. Much of this spectacular route remains available for recreation, though some sections traverse private property, the owners of which prohibit use.*

(* In many cases, the easements were granted to the railroads by governmental authorities with language that caused the land to revert back to the original or now-owner of the land upon the cessation of the railroad's use.)

Maps & Images

Map #1: Idaho and Wyoming Railroad – General Map. Courtesy of Thornton Waite Collection, Idaho Falls, Idaho (1912).

Map #2: *Rails Around Jackson Hole* – Daniel V. Buchan (2014)

Map #3: *The Branch Lines* – Daniel V. Buchan (2014)

Image #1: Union Pacific Railroad Timetable – Pocatello-Yellowstone/Idaho Falls-Victor (1969). This is one of the last published schedules for train service in and out of Victor. It was for "mixed freight" service, which included both freight and passenger cars. Courtesy of Thornton Waite Collection, Idaho Falls, Idaho.

Image #2: US Forest Service Interpretive Sign, Teton Pass, Wyoming, with description of Raynolds Expedition (2004). Author's Collection.

Image #3: United States Geological Survey Benchmark, northeast of Cunningham Cabin, Grand Teton National Park (2013). Courtesy of Todd Cedarholm, On Sight Land Surveyors, Inc., Jackson, Wyoming.

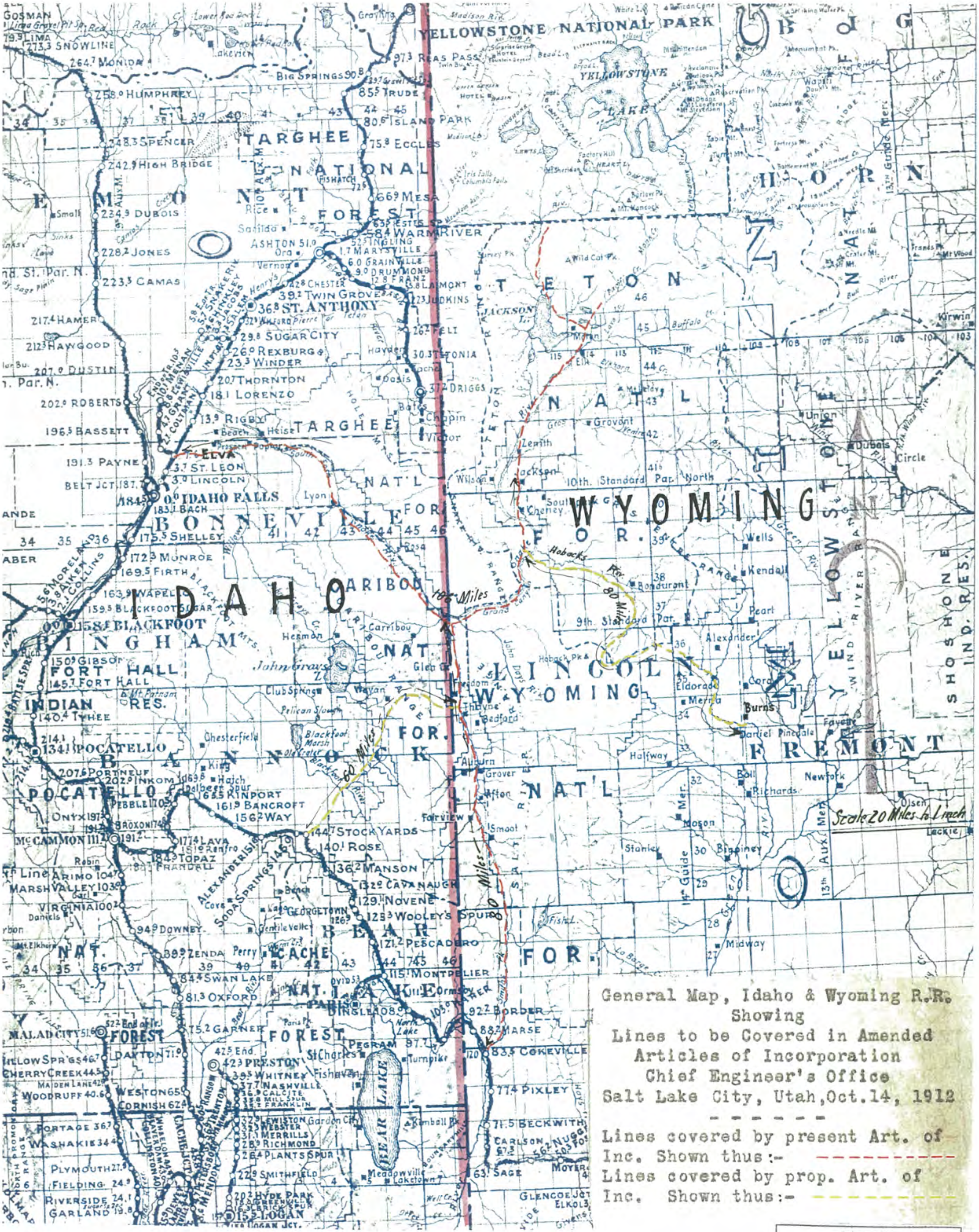
Image #4: Cattle in cattle cars being shipped from Victor, Idaho. Photographer – Parthenia Hansen Stinnett. Collection of the Jackson Hole Historical Society & Museum [accession #1958.1671.001].

Image #5: Victor Railroad Depot, Victor, Idaho, showing passenger cars being loaded with baggage prior to departure, while freight is handled on the opposite side of the depot (1927). Collection of the Jackson Hole Historical Society & Museum [accession #2007.0011.042].

Image #6: Union Pacific Railroad advertisement, featuring the popular bear theme, promotes travel and tourism through Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks just after the creation of the latter in 1929. Union Pacific Railroad Museum collection, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Image #7: Tie Hack Memorial – West of Dubois, Wyoming, on U.S. Highway 26-287 (2001). Author's Collection.

Image #8: Fay Studio, 2155 Moose-Wilson Road, Jackson Hole, Wyoming (1998). Photographer – Ray W. Beck, Deer Park, Washington. Author's Collection.



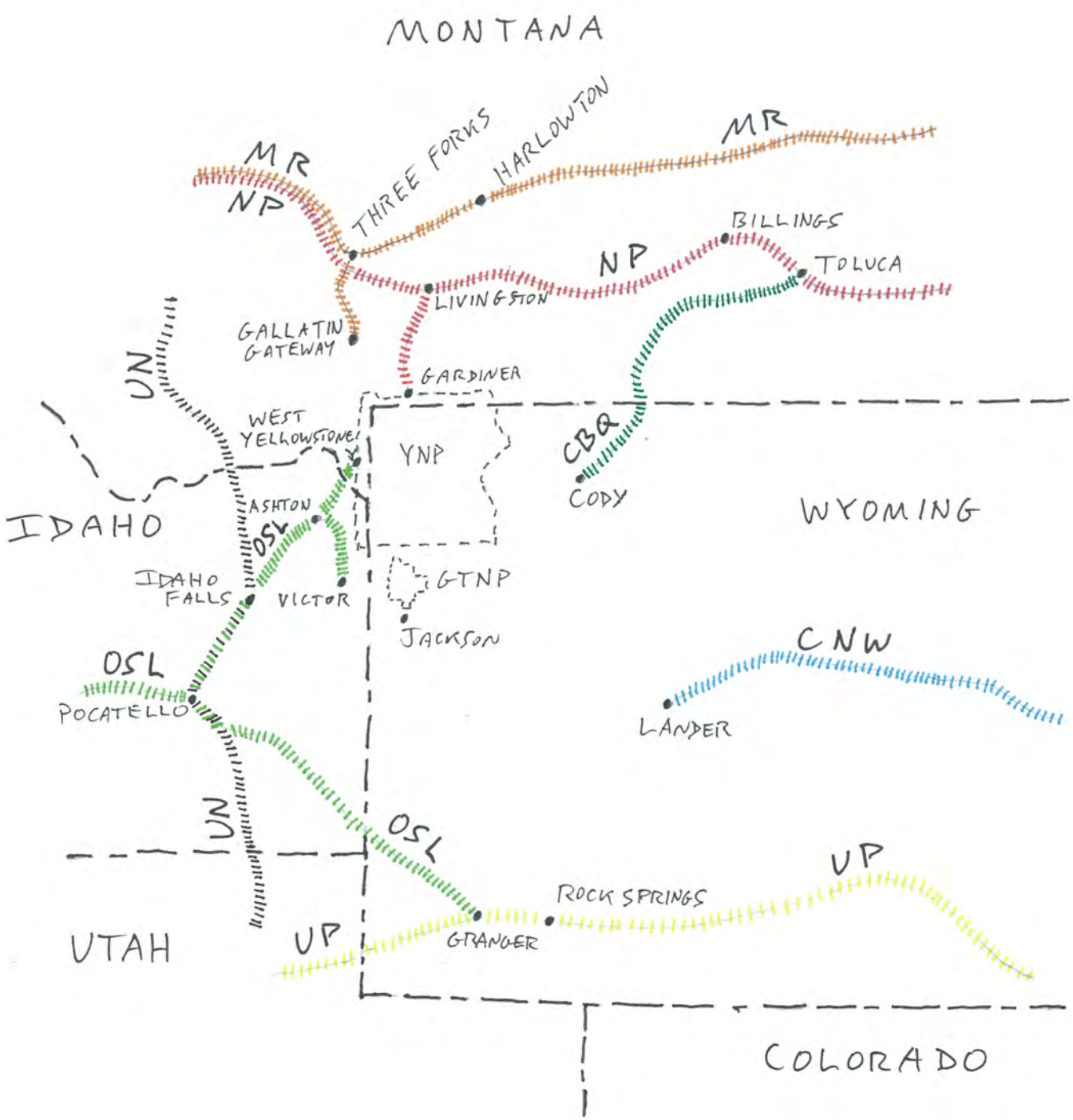
General Map, Idaho & Wyoming R.R.
Showing
Lines to be Covered in Amended
Articles of Incorporation
Chief Engineer's Office
Salt Lake City, Utah, Oct. 14, 1912

Lines covered by present Art. of Inc. Shown thus:- - - - - - - -

Lines covered by prop. Art. of Inc. Shown thus:- - - - - - - -

Map #1

RAILS AROUND JACKSON HOLE



MAP LEGEND

RAILROADS

- OSL - OREGON SHORT LINE
- UN - UTAH NORTHERN
- UP - UNION PACIFIC
- MR - MILWAUKEE ROAD
- NP - NORTHERN PACIFIC
- CBQ - CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & QUINCY
- CNW - CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN

NATIONAL PARKS

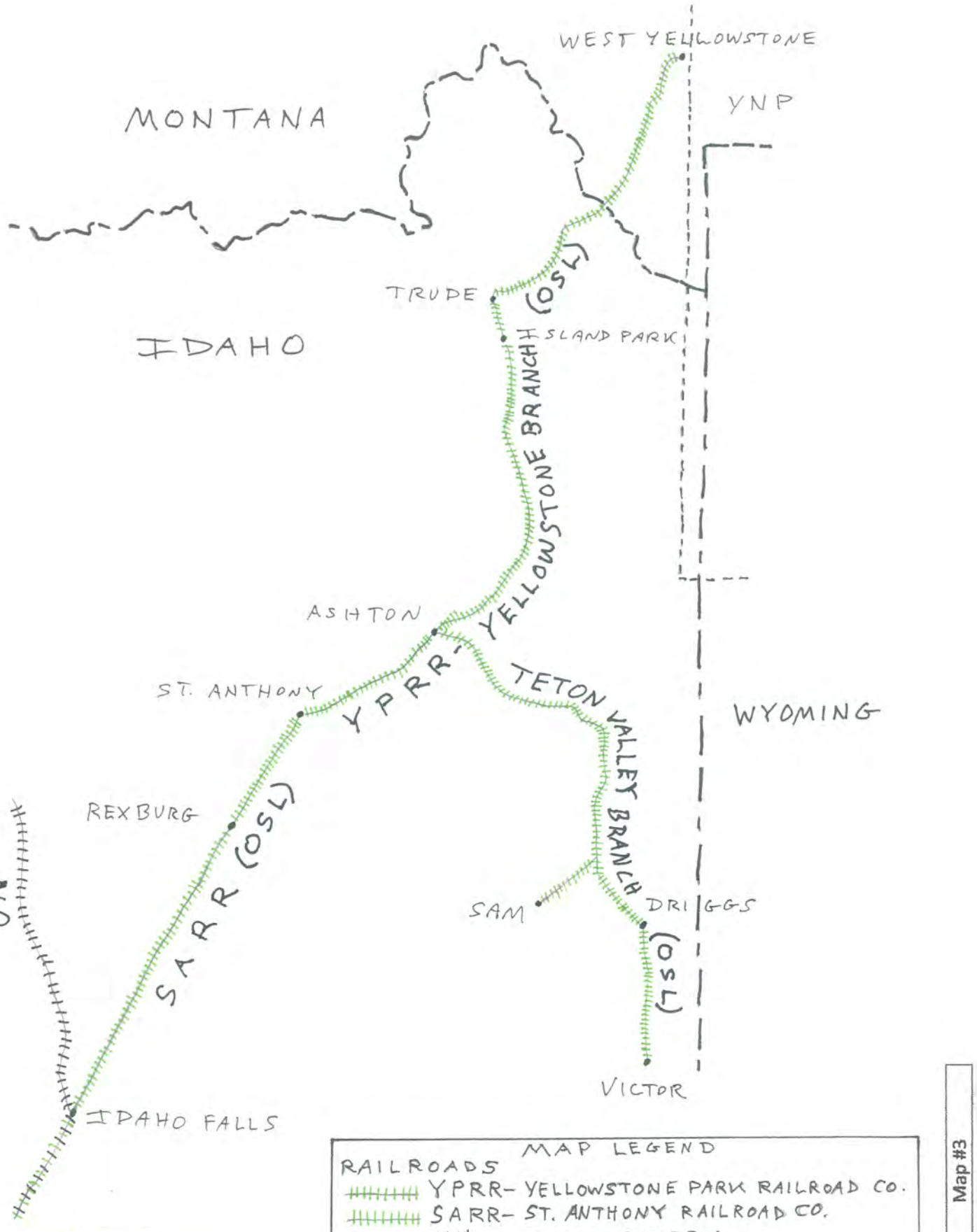
YNP - YELLOWSTONE
GTNP - GRAND TETON

BOUNDARIES

- STATE
- NATIONAL PARK

Map #2

THE BRANCH LINES



Map #3

Pocatello - Yellowstone

(Summer Season)

(June 1 - August 26)

Bus Daily ⊙	Mls.	Table No. 39 (*Mountain Time*)	Bus Daily ⊙
4.05	0	Lv **Pocatello** (Bus)...Ida. Ar	7.30
6.20	51	Ar **Idaho Falls** 36 (Bus) Ida. Ar	6.15
5.35	51	Lv Idaho Falls (Bus)... " Ar	5.40
8.05	158	Ar West Yellowstone " Mont. Lv	3.00

Idaho Falls - Victor

• Local freight with caboose only

		Mixed 477•	Mls.	Table No. 40 (*Mountain Time*)	Mixed •478		
....	....	†6.00	221	Lv **Idaho Falls**........Ida. Ar	†4.40	....	....
....	....	6.23	228	" Ucon.................. " "	4.15	....	....
....	....	....	233	" Garry.................. " "	....	....	....
....	....	6.42	235	" Rigby.................. " "	4.00	....	....
....	....	f 6.50	239	" Lorenzo.................. " "	f 3.45	....	....
....	....	f 6.57	242	" Thornton.................. " "	f 3.35	....	....
....	....	7.10	247	" Rexburg.................. " "	3.20	....	....
....	....	7.20	251	" Sugar City.................. " "	3.10	....	....
....	....	7.35	258	" St. Anthony.................. " "	2.55	....	....
....	....	8.10	272	Ar **Ashton**.................. " Lv	2.20	....	....
....	....	8.30	272	Lv **Ashton** 36.................. " Ar	1.55	....	....
....	....	....	274	" Marysville.................. " Lv	....	....	....
....	....	f 8.55	278	" Grainville.................. " "	f 1.33	....	....
....	....	9.10	281	" Drummond.................. " "	1.22	....	....
....	....	f 9.25	285	" France.................. " "	f 1.08	....	....
....	....	f 9.35	288	" Lamont.................. " "	f12.58	....	....
....	....	f10.08	293	" Felt.................. " "	f12.25	....	....
....	....	10.23	302	" Tetonia.................. " "	12.09	....	....
....	....	10.42	309	" Driggs.................. " "	11.50	....	....
....	....	†11.05	318	Ar **Victor**..................Ida. Lv	†11.20	....	....

Image #1

ELCOME TO TET

TORY

ack over 9,000 years have been
ail Creek areas. These findings are
s natural travel corridor between
daho. Early Indian groups used
and plant gathering areas in

rs used Teton Pass as the main
e Jackson Hole area. Historic documents tell of John Hoback, Jacob Reznor, and Edward Robinson leading Wilson Price Hunt and a party of Astorians over Teton Pass in 1811 on their way to the Pacific Northwest. Jim Bridger guided William Raynolds of the Topographical Engineers over Teton Pass in 1860, in search of a suitable railroad route to the west. Teton Pass was eliminated as a potential railroad route.

In the early 1880s, the first homesteaders began traveling over the Pass to Jackson Hole. The first horse-drawn wagon was driven over in 1886 by Joe Enfanger and Adolf Miller. At that time, it took about two weeks for adventuresome travelers to get over the Pass.

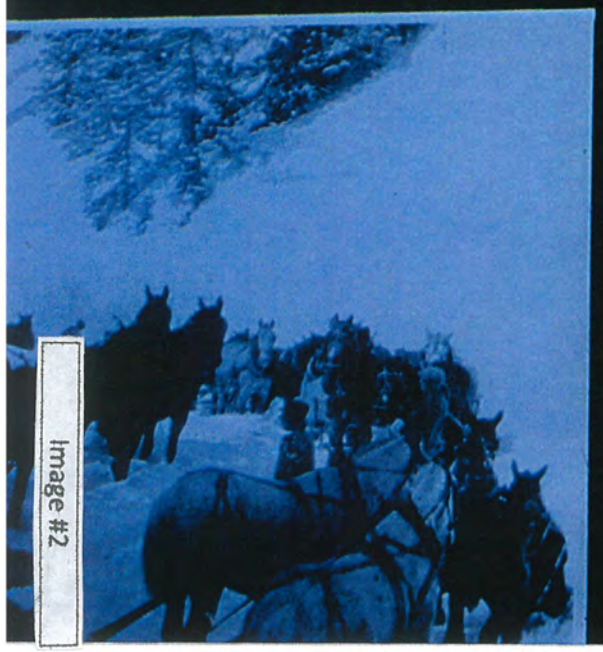


Image #2


U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
B.M.
250 DOLLARS FINE FOR DISTURBING THIS MARK
ELEVATION ABOVE SEA
6750 FEET
DATUM

Image #3

Image #4

Image #5

Reached via UNION PACIFIC

Image #6


ERECTED TO PERPETUATE THE MEMORY
OF THE HARDY WOODS AND RIVER MEN
WHO MADE AND DELIVERED THE CROSS
TIES FOR THE BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE
OF THE CHICAGO AND NORTH WESTERN
RAILWAY IN THIS WESTERN COUNTRY
WYOMING TIE & TIMBER COMPANY
1946

Image #7

Image #8

Epilogue

It is my hope that *The History of Railroading in Jackson Hole* will be considered a worthy addition to the collection of Jackson Hole history assembled thus far.

While very basic and bare bones, it nonetheless provides a foundation for understanding how one of the most important industries in American history played a role in Jackson Hole's history.

I believe its strengths are: 1. it focuses on a subject that prior to now has not been given exclusive coverage; 2. it provides a solid, primarily fact-based foundation upon which further study can be made; and, 3. it draws upon a wide-breadth of sources that can provide future researchers and those interested with numerous choices for further exploration.

I believe future editions can be strengthened by: 1. further elaboration on each subject, as many subjects have been condensed to one or two paragraphs; and, 2. a larger number of oral history references. Specifically, as time passes, the opportunities to capture the stories and experiences from members of the community relevant to this subject will diminish. These opportunities need to be made the most of before they are lost.

Endnotes

Introduction –

1. *"A Community of Scalawags..."*, Diem and Diem, p. 13

2. "A Short History of U.S. Freight Railroads," p. 4

Chapter 1 – Railroads as New Technology

1. *The Railroad in the American Landscape*, Walther, p. 12

2. *The Heritage of North American Steam Railroads,* Solomon, p. 8

3. *The World's Railroads,* Chant, p. 10

4. *Train*, Coiley, p. 12

5. *Nothing Like it in the* World, Ambrose, pp. 358, 369

Chapter 2 – Early Exploration

The Raynolds Expedition of 1860

1. *Enchanted Enclosure: The Army Engineers and Yellowstone National Park,* Baldwin, http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/baldwin/chap2.htm

2. *From Trapper to Tourist*, Hayden, p. 33

3. *A Place Called Jackson Hole,* Daugherty, p. 70

4. Report of Captain W. F. Raynolds' Expedition to Explore the Headwaters of the Missouri & Yellowstone Rivers,http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~familyinformation/fpk/raynolds_rpt.html#routes

Chapter 3 – Ghost Railroads

Snake River National Park and Pacific Railway Company

1. Copy of original Articles of Incorporation – Author's Collection

2. *The Production of Coal in 1894,* Parker, p. 218

3. Oral History, Waite

4. *From Trapper to Tourist*, Hayden, p. 39

5. *A Place Called Jackson Hole,* Daugherty, p. 215

6. Copy of original "Articles of Incorporation" – Author's Collection

7. Copy of original "Articles of Incorporation" – Author's Collection

Idaho and Wyoming Railroad

1. *"A Community of Scalawags..."*, Diem and Diem, p. 14

2. *Yellowstone Branch*, Waite, p. 22; Idaho and Wyoming Railroad summary document

3. *Spokane Portland and Seattle Ry* – Wood and Wood, p. 8; *The Northern Pacific*, Wood, p. 27; *A Glimpse Into the History of Portland, Oregon* - www.pdxhistory.com/html/railroads.html

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1. *History of Wyoming*, Larson, p. 340; *Trails To Rails*, King, pp. 25, 28, 90-91

2. *Trails To Rails*, King, pp. 25, 28, 90-91

3. AbandonedRails.com, Harrison
   http://www.abandonedrails.com/Denver_Laramie_and_North_Western_Railroad

4. TrainOrders.com, Clark, 1997
   http://www.trainorders.com/discussion/read.php?11,1970553

Teton-Yellowstone Line

1. *Yellowstone*, Bartlett, p. 316

2. Ibid.

Other Railroad Surveys and Plans

1. Oral History, Cedarholm

2. *Trails To Rails*, King, pp. 58, 62

3. *"A Community of Scalawags..."*, Diem and Diem, p. 10

4. Ibid, p. 13

Chapter 4 – Rails Around Jackson Hole

Union Pacific Railway Company

1. *A Place Called Jackson Hole*, Daugherty, p. 180

2. *Trails To Rails*, King, pp. 11, 42

Utah Northern Railroad

1. *Yellowstone Branch*, Waite, pp. 9, 11

2. Ibid., Waite, p. 17

Oregon Short Line Railway

1. *History of Wyoming,* Larson, p. 159
2. *Yellowstone Branch,* Waite, pp. 17-22
3. Ibid.
4. "Tracks to the Tetons," Moss, p. 68

Northern Pacific Railroad Company

1. *The Northern Pacific,* Wood, p. 20; *History of Wyoming,* Larson, p. 159
2. "To the Tetons by Train," Hoyle, p 24
3. Geyser Bob's Yellowstone Park History Service, *Gateways,* http://web.archive.org/web/20091027051425/http://www.geocities.com/geysrbob/Gateways-Gardiner.html

Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad

1. *History of Wyoming,* Larson, p. 298
2. *History of Wyoming,* Larson, p. 339; *The Life &* Legend, Klein, pp. 220-224
3. *Trails To Rails,* King, p. 85

Chicago & North Western Railway

1. "Merger Family Trees," *Trains,* p. 48
2. *Trails To Rails,* King, pp. 92-95

Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad

1. *North American Steam Railroads,* Solomon, p. 124
2. Montana Official State Travel Site, *Gallatin Gateway*
3. *Trains of Discovery,* Revised Edition, Runte, pp. 28-29
4. *Union Pacific Country,* Athearn, p. 372

Chapter 5 – Cattle Ranching: Jackson Hole's First Export

1. *A Place Called Jackson Hole,* Daugherty, p. 161
2. *A Place Called Jackson Hole,* Daugherty, pp. 147-148; *From Trapper to Tourist,* Hayden, p. 54
3. "Heading for the Last Roundup," Lee, p. 8
4. *A Place Called Jackson Hole,* Daugherty, p. 151; *The Pass,* pp. 121-122; "Heading for the Last Roundup," Lee, p. 8
5. *The Pass,* Platts, pp. 73-74, 105, 106, 110, 112, 115, 129

6. "Ties to the Past," Buchan, p. 79

7. "Heading for the Last Roundup," Lee, p. 7; "Ties to the Past," Buchan, p. 79

8. "Heading for the Last Roundup," Lee, p. 7-11

9. Oral History, Von Gontard

10. Oral History, Hoffman

11. "Heading for the Last Roundup," Lee, p. 10

Chapter 6 – Dude Ranching

1. *Diary of a Dude Wrangler*, Burt, p. 32

2. *Yellowstone Branch*, Waite, pp. 18-19

3. Ibid., p. 22

4. "A Classless Society," Rees, p. 19

5. *Dude Ranches Out West*, UP Railroad, p. 7

6. Ibid., front cover

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10. "Ties to the Past," Buchan, p. 78

11. *Yellowstone By Train,* Waite, p. 83

12. *A Place Called Jackson Hole,* Daugherty, p. 229

Chapter 7 – Tourism

1. *Yellowstone By Train*, Waite, p. 27

2. *"A Community of Scalawags..."*, Diem and Diem, pp 151, 158-159, 171

3. *Yellowstone By Train*, Waite, p. 21

4. *Trains of Discovery,* Runte, Revised Edition, pp 41

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8. *Yellowstone By Train*, Waite, pp. vi, 15

Chapter 8 – The Railroad and Yellowstone National Park

1. *Yellowstone*, Magoc, p. 2
2. *The Yellowstone Story*, Haines, pp. 30-31
3. *Trains of Discovery,* Runte, Revised Edition, p. 13
4. Ibid., p. 16
5. Ibid., p. 19
6. Ibid., p. 20
7. "Yellowstone History – 125 Years and More to Tell," p. 13

Chapter 9 – Other Facts, Stories, and Individuals

Communications with the Outside World

1. "Ties to the Past," Buchan, p. 80

Teton Range Ski Resort

1. Idahooutdoor.net, Skiing History, p. 2
2. Ibid.
3. "A Skiing Heritage," Russell, pp. 60-61

Jackson Hole's Own Railroad – Jackson Lake Dam Railroad

1. *"A Community of Scalawags..."*, Diem and Diem, pp 142

Most Significant Cargo – First Prize

1. *The Pass*, Platts, pp. 93-94; *"A Community of Scalawags..."*, Diem and Diem, pp 141

Most Significant Cargo - Honorable Mention

1. Oral History, Wright-Clark

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1. Tie Hack Memorial, Dubois, WY
2. *Knights of the Broadax*, Pinkerton, pp 17-18, 182-183, 186

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1. "A Station for Buying Art," Buchan, 1999

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1. "High-country History," Barracato, pp. 33; "Ties to the Past," Buchan, pp. 42-43

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