



The story of America's first transcontinental railroad is legend. In 1853, Congress authorized surveys of potential routes for the "Pacific Railroad," which were completed in 1855 and identified a Northern Pacific, a Central Pacific, and two Southern Pacific routes. The 1862 Pacific Railway Act chose the Central Pacific route due to gold in northern California, silver in northern Nevada, and the absence of Southern Congressmen -- due to the Civil War -- to advocate for a Southern Pacific route, which would have been a much easier build. The Act specified two railroad charters: the Union Pacific Railroad would build railroad and telegraph lines west from the eastern shores of the Missouri River at Council Bluffs, Iowa, and would meet the Central Pacific Railroad and telegraph line built eastward from the navigable waters of the Sacramento River in California. On January 8, 1863, grading for the CP commenced at "K" Street at the waterfront of the Sacramento River and the first rails were laid later that year. The CP crossing of the Sierra Nevada required 15 tunnels, the most difficult being the summit tunnel at Donner Pass, and other engineering feats. The first train passed through the Donner Pass summit tunnel on June 18, 1868, and thanks to advance work, the first train arrived in Reno the next day. From Reno, the CP had relatively clear sailing as it wound its way around the normal-fault mountain ranges and across the flat alluvial valleys of northern Nevada, including this location at Lovelock, Nevada, and then through northwest Utah to meet the UP on May 10, 1869, at Promontory Summit, Utah, henceforth binding the nation. The CP was absorbed into the Southern Pacific over time, starting with a lease in 1885 and finally a full merger in 1959, and in 1996 the SP was absorbed into the UP.

Northwestward view of the CP's Lovelock depot. The track is on the original CP (1869) alignment. The depot was built in 1880 and was expanded in 1917. The depot was built to the CP's "Combination Depot #2" design, the only one that still stands of the six originally built on the CP system. The depot operated until the early 1990's, but instead of demolition, the City of Lovelock moved it across the tracks in 1999, off of railroad property, and completed a restoration in 2000. The depot was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004 and is leased to private retail businesses.