



The Union Pacific organized the Oregon Short Line Railway on April 14, 1881, to build northwest from the UP (1869) at Granger in southwestern Wyoming to Portland, Oregon. The OSL would create a direct "short line" to Portland that did not require the UP to use Central Pacific tracks (via Donner and Siskiyou passes) and would make up for transcontinental traffic lost in 1883 when the Southern Pacific (which owned the CP) completed its southern transcontinental Sunset Route. OSL tracks reached the narrow gauge Utah & Northern (1878n) at McCammon, Idaho, in 1882. From there, the OSL added a third rail to the U&N (1878n) northward to Pocatello, Idaho (north of map area), where the OSL left the U&N (1878n) to build westward across southern Idaho (including a segment that dipped south into the map area) and reached Oregon in 1884.

In January 1904, the Minidoka & Southwestern Railroad was incorporated to build a railroad from Minidoka, on the OSL mainline, southwestward to access agricultural lands surrounding the Snake River. The M&SW mainline crossed the Snake River at Burley, where the alignment turned due west to follow the southern floodplain of the Snake River. The line opened to Twin Falls in May 1905 and continued west another 15 miles to Buhl, probably in 1907 (as shown on the Southwest Railroad History Map; however, some references imply the M&SW reached Buhl in 1905 during the original construction). In 1910, the Idaho Central Railroad, which had no other trackage in the map area, built a line southward from the M&SW (1905) at Twin Falls to Rogerson to access agricultural traffic. In the same year of 1910, the OSL acquired the M&SW; the branch line to Rogerson remained an IC property. Around 1912, the OSL built a branch line westward from Rupert (this location) to follow the northern floodplain of the Snake River to Wendell and built another branch south from Burley along Goose Creek, both to access to access agricultural areas. In 1916, the OSL built another branch line, this one built east and south from Burley to access the Raft River Valley. The Idaho Central Rogerson Branch (1910) and the OSL Raft River Branch (1916) were subsequently partially abandoned. The OSL trackage in eastern Idaho and the former M&SW and IC trackage were eventually folded into the UP system, which sold the lines to the present operator, the Eastern Idaho Railroad, in 1993.

Southwestward view of the M&SW (1905) at Rupert, at the south end of the interchange with the OSL Wendell Branch (c1912).



Northeastward view of the M&SW (1905), same location as previous. The first split to the left (northwest) is the south branch of the wye for the OSL Wendell Branch (c1912). That track turns due west (left) in the distance.



Eastward view of the tip of the wye for the OSL Wendell Branch (c1912). The south branch of the wye is to the right and the north branch is to the left.



Westward view of the OSL Wendell Branch (c1912), same location as previous.



Now we've moved back to the M&SW (1905), looking southwestward. The bolted is the north branch of the wye for the OSL Wendell Branch (c1912); it curves to the right (west) in the distance. The track with cars is another siding and the M&SW (1905) mainline and another siding are on the other side of the cars.



Northeastward view, same location as previous. The bolted track is the north branch of the wye for the OSL Wendell Branch (c1912); the further of the two switches in this view is the crossover from the Wendell Branch wye to the siding with the cars and then the M&SW mainline.