



The Union Pacific organized the Oregon Short Line Railway on April 14, 1881, to build northwest from the UP (1869) transcontinental line 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 dips south into the map area) and reached Oregon in 1884.

In January 1904, the Minidoka & Southwestern Railroad was incorporated to build a railroad from the town of Minidoka, on the OSL (1884), southwestward to access agricultural lands surrounding the Snake River. The M&SW mainline crossed the Snake River just north of Burley (this location), 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 to follow the northern floodplain of the Snake River to Wendell and built another branch south from Burley (this location) along Goose Creek, both 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 OSL trackage in southeastern Idaho, including all the former M&SW trackage and the IC Rogerson Branch (1910), were eventually folded into the UP system. The UP abandoned the IC Rogerson Branch (1910) in 1979-1980 and, probably around the same time, partially abandoned the OSL Goose Creek Branch (c1912) and OSL Raft River Branch (1916). In 1993, the UP sold the remaining lines to the Eastern Idaho Railroad, which runs trains to the present day.

Southwestward view at the west end of Burley. The M&SW (1905) is the mainline in the foreground and the siding on fresh white ballast and curving to the left (south) is the OSL Goose Creek Branch (c1912). Note the row of buildings between the two tracks and the two sidings just to their right; in Google satellite imagery viewed in 2019, those two tracks continue to switches connected to the curved part of the branch line and the fresh ballast is not present, therefore the disconnection of those sidings occurred prior to May 2018 when this photo was taken and the satellite imagery was taken earlier. The satellite imagery also shows two sidings just to the right (north) of the mainline, but these are gone in this photo. Note also the "Union Seed" silos (for location reference in subsequent photos).



Now we've moved 900 feet southwest and are looking northeastward at the OSL Goose Creek Branch (c1912). The buildings on the left are connected to the Union Seed silos.



Southwestward of the OSL Goose Creek Branch (c1912), same location as previous. The switch and trackage to the right may have been the west branch of a wye but today it is cut back to a spur (see below).



Closer look at the switch and trackage to the right that may have been the west branch of a wye for the OSL Goose Creek Branch (c1912). The Goose Creek Branch (c1912) originally extended 25 miles south of this location to Oakley but, probably around 1980, was cut back 13 miles. The line now ends 12 miles from here, where there are two spurs for (probably) active customers of the Eastern Idaho Railroad -- one spur for Sawtooth Stone and the other for Goose Creek Grain.



Southeastward view of the trackage that may have been the west branch of a wye for the OSL Goose Creek Branch (c1912), with the same switch that would have been the tip of the wye.



Northward view of the track that may have been the west branch of a wye for the OSL Goose Creek Branch (c1912), same location as previous. The Union Seed silos are to the left of the track and the buildings connected to it are to the right. The track ends where the buildings end but may have once continued as the west branch of a wye. The M&SW (1905) is on the other side of the distant storage units.



Now we're back at the M&SW (1905), just east of the junction for the OSL Goose Creek Branch (c1912) and looking east at the same location as the first photo. From left to right the tracks are a half-mile-long industrial spur, the M&SW (1905) mainline, a crossover track from sidings to the mainline, and two sidings. The two sidings converge to one track in the immediate foreground and that one track is the single siding that continues west (behind the viewer) as the OSL Goose Creek Branch (c1912). Note the silos in the right distance (which are not the "Union Seed" silos, which are behind the viewer).



Now we've moved a mile east along the M&SW (1905) in Burley and are looking southwestward; the silos in the right distance are the same ones that are visible in the previous photo but now viewed from the other side. From right to left, the tracks are a siding with stored cars, the M&SW mainline and, to the far left, the beginning of the OSL Raft River Branch (1916).





Southward view, same location as previous. From nearest to farthest, the tracks are a siding, the M&SW (1905) mainline, and the OSL Raft River Branch (1916). The snowcapped Albion Range, the northernmost of the Basin-and-Range normal-fault-bounded mountain ranges in this area, is in the distance. However, the Albion Range drains to the Columbia River (via the Snake River) and therefore is not in the Great Basin area of internal drainage.



Southeastward view, same location as previous. From nearest to farthest (left to right), the tracks are a siding, which converges with the mainline in the left distance; the M&SW (1905) mainline; and the OSL Raft River Branch (1916). Just out of view in the left distance, the M&SW (1905) alignment turns northeastward (left) toward Minidoka then crosses the Snake River one mile from this location.



A few steps south of the previous location, looking eastward. The OSL Raft River Branch (1916) is in the foreground and curving toward its initial southeastward alignment. The Raft River Branch (1916) originally extended 40 miles east then south to the Raft River Valley but, probably around 1980, was cut back 32 miles. The line now ends 8 miles from here at the town of Delco, where there are grain silos that were and possibly are customers of the Eastern Idaho Railroad.