



In 1900, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad started construction of an extension from Northport, Nebraska, northwest to Guernsey, Wyoming, to access farms along the North Platte River and to iron mines around Guernsey, which was reached in 1902. The coal train in the photo is at Guernsey, the 1902 end-of-track.

In 1908, James Hill owned the Northern Pacific, Great Northern, and CB&Q, and purchased the Colorado & Southern (including the former Cheyenne & Northern) and the Fort Worth & Denver (former Fort Worth & Denver City and Denver & New Orleans), which gave him an almost complete line between the Pacific Northwest and the Gulf of Mexico. To complete the new route required a new connecting line in Wyoming between Kirby (north of map area) and the North Platte River at the C&S line and the CB&Q end-of-the-line at Guernsey. Construction southwest from Kirby took the new line to Thermopolis in 1909 and through tunnels and granite in the Wind River Canyon, a water gap, to Casper in 1913. The CB&Q finally connected with the C&S (former C&N) line at Orin Junction on the North Platte River east of Casper in 1914 (all north of map area), creating the shortest route from the Gulf to the Pacific via rail. However, the opening of the Panama Canal that same year caused most shipping to bypass this rail route. In 1915, the CB&Q completed a 10-mile cutoff between Guernsey and Wendover (on the C&S/former C&N), which created a better link to the south and east.

The coal train in the photo is at Guernsey, where the 1902 CB&Q end-of-track was joined in 1915 to the C&S (former C&N) line and other Hill lines via a 10-mile cutoff. This and other coal trains today ply a mainline consisting of the 1887 C&N, 1902 CB&Q Guernsey Branch, and the 1915 cutoff.



Coal train just west of Guernsey, on the 1915 the CB&Q cutoff, crossing the North Platte River.



Coal train just west of Guernsey, on the 1915 the CB&Q cutoff, on the bank of Guernsey Reservoir, an impoundment of the North Platte River 2 miles upstream of the previous photo.