



An early version of the Pacific Railway Act of 1862, which authorized the first transcontinental railroad, included a branch north from the Central Pacific line into Oregon, but this was left out of the final law. Instead, an 1866 law offered land grants to build a railroad from the valleys of northern California to Portland, Oregon. The law specified grants to the California & Oregon Railroad of California and a company to be designated by the Oregon Legislature, which was ultimately the Oregon & California Railroad. In 1870, the CP acquired the C&O, which commenced construction north from Roseville, California, on the CP (1869) line about 15 miles northeast of Sacramento, then followed the flat Sacramento Valley northward to this location at Redding, at the north end of the valley, in 1872. Construction stopped at Redding due to the expense of building through the Klamath Mountains and because of difficulties experienced by the O&C in progressing to the state line from the north. The C&O and the O&C finally met in Ashland, Oregon, in 1887, fulfilling the mandate of the 1866 law. Commencing with a lease in 1885, the CP, O&E, C&O, and other railroads were merged into the Southern Pacific system over time.

Both freight trains and Amtrak passenger trains pass by today's Redding Depot.



C&O (1872) mainline to the left and a siding to the right at Redding. The Union Pacific acquired the SP properties, including the C&O route, in the 1990's.





C&O construction halted at Redding in 1872. Redding was established on the south bank of the Sacramento River, and construction farther north would require a crossing of the river. Today's bridge north of Redding probably replaced an earlier bridge.



Southward view of the C&O (now UP) Sacramento River bridge north of Redding.