



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 River Valley northward to 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. On its way to Ashland in the middle 1880's, the C&O built north from Redding following the Sacramento River upstream somewhere near this location. Commencing with a lease in 1885, the CP, O&E, C&O, and other railroads were merged into the Southern Pacific system over time.

A dam on the Sacramento River in the foothills north of Redding was envisioned as early as 1919, and construction of Shasta Dam started in 1937 and was completed in 1945. When completed, the dam was the second-tallest in the United States (after Hoover) and one of the greatest of engineering feats. In the process, the C&O/SP grade was inundated by the huge lake and major re-alignment of the grade was required.

Westward view of one of five major bridges of the C&O/SP (now Union Pacific) re-alignment, this one over the inundated Salt Creek Arm of Shasta Lake. I have not explored the old grade, much of which is under the lake.



Another view of the same bridge.



Northward view of the same bridge.



Same location as previous but turned around (looking south) to view one of several tunnels required for the C&O/SP Shasta Lake re-alignment.