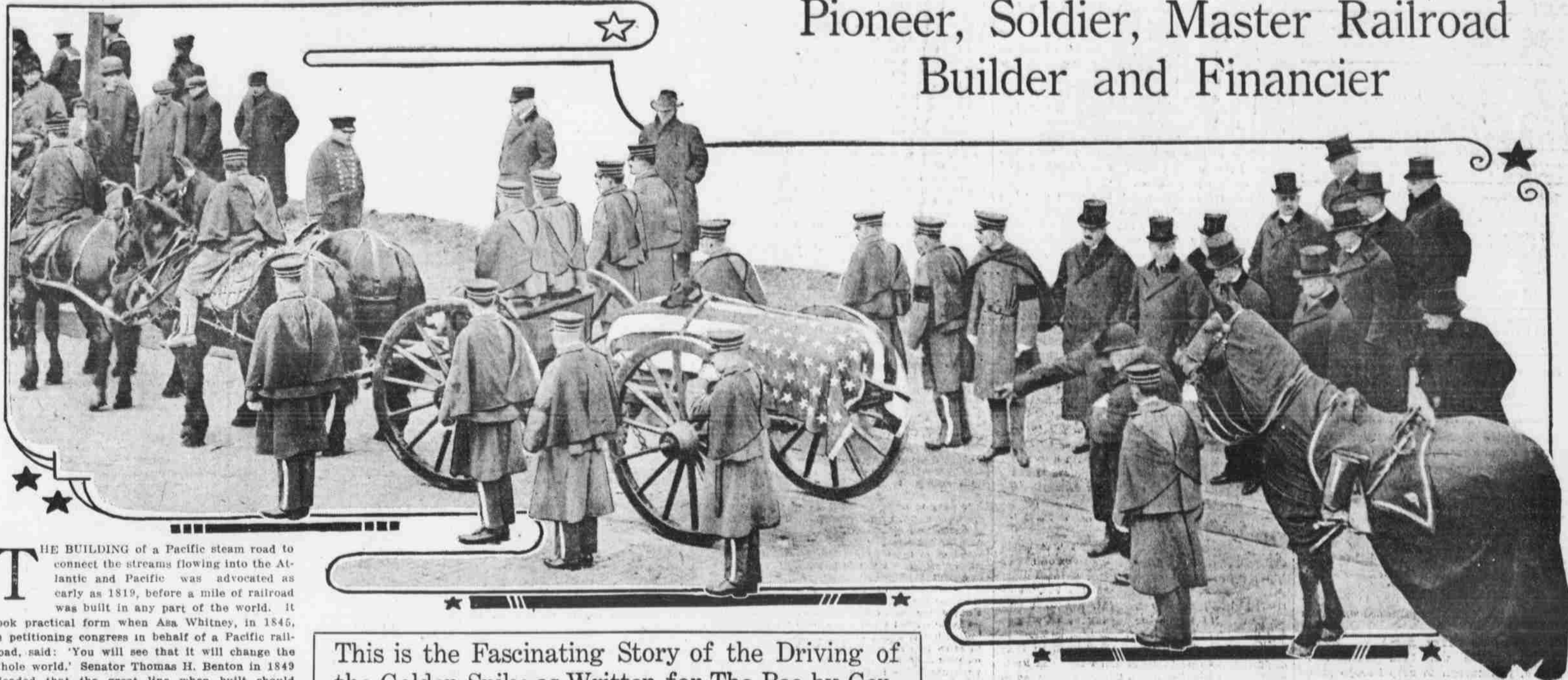


Military Funeral of Gen'l Grenville M. Dodge

Pioneer, Soldier, Master Railroad Builder and Financier



This is the Fascinating Story of the Driving of the Golden Spike as Written for The Bee by General Dodge on Occasion of Fortieth Anniversary

THE BUILDING of a Pacific steam road to connect the streams flowing into the Atlantic and Pacific was advocated as early as 1819, before a mile of railroad was built in any part of the world. It took practical form when Asa Whitney, in 1846, in petitioning congress in behalf of a Pacific railroad, said: "You will see that it will change the whole world." Senator Thomas H. Benton in 1849 pleaded that the great line when built should "be adorned with its crowning honor, the colossal statue of the great Columbus, whose design it accomplishes, hewn from the granite mass of a peak of the Rocky Mountains, overlooking the road, the mountain itself the pedestal, and the statue a part of the mountain, pointing with outstretched arm to the western horizon and saying to the flying passenger, 'There is the east! There is India!'" Charles Sumner in 1853 said: "The railroad from the Atlantic to the Pacific, traversing a whole continent and binding together two oceans, this mighty thoroughfare when completed will mark an epoch of human progress second only to that of our Declaration of Independence. May the day soon come!" And it did come, and all the prophecies were fulfilled when the first transcontinental line was completed and the tracks joined at Promontory Point, Utah, on May 10, 1869, just forty years ago.

"This ceremony was one of peace and harmony between the Union Pacific, coming from the east, and the Central Pacific, coming from the west. For a year or more there had been great contention and rivalry between the two companies, the Union Pacific endeavoring to reach Humboldt Wells, on the west boundary of Utah, and the Central Pacific rushing to reach Ogden, Utah, to give them an outlet to Salt Lake City, and the two lines were graded alongside of each other for 225 miles between Ogden and Humboldt Wells. Climbing Promontory mountain they were not a stone's throw apart.

"When both companies saw that neither could reach its goal they came together, and we made an agreement to join the tracks on the summit of Promontory mountain, the Union Pacific selling to the Central Pacific fifty-six miles of its road back within five miles of Ogden, and leasing trackage over that five miles to enable the Central Pacific to reach Ogden. These five miles were not only a part of the Union Pacific, but used by their line north to Idaho. This agreement was ratified by congress. Each road built to the summit of Promontory, leaving a gap of 100 feet of rail to be laid when the last spike was driven.

Arrival of the Official Parties

"On the morning of May 10, 1869, Hon. Leland Stanford, governor of California and president of the Central Pacific, accompanied by Messrs. Huntington, Hopkins, Crocker, and trainloads of California's distinguished citizens, arrived from the west. During the forenoon Vice President T. C. Durant and Directors John R. Duff and Sidney Dillon and Consulting Engineer Silas A. Seymour of the Union Pacific, with other prominent men, including a delegation of Mormons from Salt Lake City, came in on a train from the east. The national government was represented by a detachment of "regulars" from Fort Douglas, Utah, accompanied by a band, and 600 others, including Chinese, Mexicans, Indians, half-breeds, negroes, and laborers, suggesting an air of cosmopolitanism, all gathered around the open space where the tracks were to be joined. The Chinese laid the rails from the west end, and the Irish laborers laid them from the east end, until they met and joined.

"Telegraph wires were so connected that each blow of the descending sledge could be reported instantly to all parts of the United States. Corresponding blows were struck on the bell of the city hall in San Francisco, and with the last blow of the sledge a cannon was fired at Fort Point. General Safford presented a spike of gold, silver and iron as the offering of the territory of Arizona. Governor Tuttle of Nevada presented a spike of silver from his state. The connecting tie was of California laurel, and California presented the last spike of gold in behalf of that state. A silver sledge had also been presented for the occasion. A prayer was offered; Governor Stanford of California made a few appropriate remarks on behalf of the Central Pacific, and the chief engineer responded for the Union Pacific. Then the tele-

graphic inquiry from the Omaha office, from which the circuit was to be started, was answered: "To everybody: Keep quiet. When the last spike is driven at Promontory Point we will say 'Done.' Don't break the circuit, but watch for the signals of the blows of the hammer. The spike will soon be driven. The signal will be three dots for the commencement of blows." The 'magnet tapped one—two—then paused—'Done.' The spike was given its first blow by President Stanford, and Vice President Durant followed, neither of whom hit the spike the first time, but hit the rail, and were greeted by the lusty cheers of the onlookers, accompanied by the screams of the locomotives and the music of the military band. Many other spikes were driven on the last rail by some of the distinguished persons present, but it was seldom that they first hit the spike. The original spike, after being tapped by the officials of the companies, was driven home by the chief engineers of the two roads. Then the two trains were run together, the two locomotives touching at the point of junction, and the engineers of the two locomotives each broke a bottle of champagne on the other's engine. Then it was declared that the connection was made and the Atlantic and Pacific were joined together never to be parted.

Celebrate from Ocean to Ocean

"At the eastern terminus in Omaha, the firing of a hundred guns on Capitol Hill, more bells and steam whistles and a grand procession of fire companies, civic societies, citizens and visiting delegations echoed the sentiments of the Californians. In other large cities expressions of public gratification were hardly less hearty and demonstrative. Bret Harte was inspired to write the celebrated poem of 'What the Engines Said.' The first verse is:

"What was it the engines said,
Pilots touching, head to head,
Facing on the single track,
Half a world behind each back?
This is what the engines said,
Unreported and unread."

"After the ceremony a sumptuous lunch was served in President Stanford's cars and appropriate speeches were made by Governor Stanford and others, and a general jollification was enjoyed. At night each train took its way to its own home, leaving at the junction point only the engineers and the workmen to complete the work, ready for the through trains that followed in a day or two after.

"The one thought that was in the minds of all was, 'What of the future? What could a railroad earn that ran almost its entire length from Nebraska to the California state line through a country uninhabited, and at that date, with no developed local business upon its whole line.'

"My own views upon that question I expressed in my report upon the completion of the road in 1869, in which I said:

"Its future is fraught with great good. It will develop a waste, will bind together the two extremes of the nation as one, will stimulate intercourse and trade, and bring harmony, prosperity and wealth to the two coasts. A proper policy, systematically and consistently followed, will bring to the road the trade of the two oceans and will give it all the business it can accommodate; while the local trade will increase gradually until the mining, grazing and agricultural regions through which it passes will build up and create a business that will be a lasting and permanent support to the company."

"It is a great satisfaction to have lived and witnessed the development of our nation, from the lakes to the Pacific; as a result of the civil war it has made a century's growth in fifty years."

