As the population grew in Utah territory, leaders of many religious groups came, just as they did in other places in the west. Some came to provide for the needs of their followers. Others came to start schools and to convince the Mormon population of the errors in their religious practices, especially polygamy.

Thinking that protestant services would help the community, the Reverend Norman McLeod came to Fort Douglas, Salt Lake City’s U.S. Military post. He organized the First Congregational Church, and built Independence hall, a meeting place for non-Mormons of different religions. The group started schools in SLC, Ogden, Provo, and 23 rural communities.

Sheldon Jackson, a famous missionary throughout the West and Alaska, was appointed as a Presbyterian mission superintendent. After the Transcontinental railroad was completed he sent four missionaries on trains to western towns. Melancthon Hughes delivered the first worship service in the very unreligious town of Corinne. The next year, Josiah Welsh was sent to organize a congregation in SLC. The first group had twelve members. Unlike some religious groups, the Presbyterians built schools first, and churches later.

Baptists came quite a while later and eventually the Methodists came to Utah. Like most other Protestant groups, they tried to get Mormons to “see the light,” through sermons and the publications of pamphlets. In Spanish Fork, the Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized.

Many americans were alarmed by the flood of immigration coming to America. Some Americans, called nativists, wanted to preserve the country for native-born white citizens. Nativists demanded “America for Americans” and favored laws to limit immigration and voting. Nativists resented immigrants because they worked for low pay and forcd down the pay of everyone. Nativists often disliked the newcomers just because of a group’s racee or religion. For example, some protestants did not like the Irish and German immigrants who were catholic. Amerian Indians and jAfrican Americans were treated unfairly because of their race. They could not get good jobs, were not allowed into many public places and had trouble buying land or a home in many areas.

One particular group targeted during this period were the Chinese. Anti-Chinese feelings led congress to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The act kept Chinese people from coming to America. For many people, living with prejudice was as much a part of Utah life as it was in other parts of the United States.

By the order of the Council of Twelve Apostles, William Phelps had purchased a printing press for Deseret, and Howard Egan brought the equipment and supplies in a yoke of wagons in 1849. With this press, Deseret printed its first currency, made possible by the participation of many Mormons in the first year of the gold rush in California. Young and the Mormon political leaders also used the press to print a territorial constitution and publish the earliest laws.

Just a year later, in 1850, territorial Secretary of State Willard Richards wrote the prospectus for what he called the Deseret News, the first newspaper of the territory, and published the first issue on June 15. “If Brigham Young was the Washington of Deseret’s pioneers,” Wendell Ashton writes, “William Richards was the Franklin.” Richards’ masthead proclaimed “Truth and Liberty” as the values of his paper. His shop was located in the mint building in Great Salt Lake City, even though the capital was at Fillmore until 1856.

When Richards died in 1854, Young instructed Albert Carrington to assume the position of editor. In the mid-1850s, conflict between Deseret/Utah and the U.S. government intensified, based in part on mainstream opposition to the Mormon practice of plural marriage (polygamy).

In 1857, the U.S. government sent military personnel under future Confederate general Albert S. Johnston—the “Utah Expedition”—to take down Brigham Young, end Mormon rule, and install Alfred Cumming as the new territorial governor. That year, Mormon militia and Paiute Indians killed 120 immigrants from Arkansas in what has become known as the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Johnston and Young reached an accord whereby Cumming became territorial governor but Young retained de facto power over the territory.

The origins and the reason for a horse-and-rider mail delivery system between east and west can be summed up in two words: slow mail. Prior to the Coach and Pony Express mail delivery, time from the east to the west--by ship down the Gulf of Mexico, across Panama by mule, then by ship again up to San Francisco--might take six weeks, and if the winds were off, eight weeks.

With the discovery of gold in California in 1848, and the increasing political tensions of the 1850s which led to the Civil War, it became imperative to keep the far West in the Union by providing a more dependable source of information from the East. News was very slow in reaching eager California readers, and a standing joke of the time was that events in the East had already been forgotten by the time they were known by those out West.

The Vision

The solution to this problem came from a businessman of vision, William Russell. Russell owned a stage and freight company based in Leavenworth, Kansas (with partners A. Majors and W.B. Waddell). While on a promotional trip to Washington to help his ailing freight line, Russell and Senator William Gwin of California discussed the possibilities of an Express Mail Company to deliver mail to California by the Central Route along the Oregon and California Trail. Initially the stage express line was comprised of fifty coaches and extended about eight hundred miles. By February 1860, when the line was extended from Salt Lake City across Utah and Nevada to California, efficiency had improved the mail delivery time to a respectable number of days. However, financial losses were staggering, no government subsidies came through, and something was needed to promote the Central Route.

Finally it was decided: light, tough young men would be selected and hired to ride the best and fastest horse-flesh money could buy. There were to be eighty riders. Four hundred other men were to run the way stations, some of which already existed for the coach line.

By seven o'clock Monday morning, May 10, a bright and clear day, the first curious spectators were gathered around the gap where a huge American flag flapped from a telegraph pole. Along side the grade, whiskey sellers had already set up tents to provide refreshments at premium prices. About an hour later, a construction train arrived to unload cheerful gangs of tracklayers and graders, and then pulled away again. Shortly after ten o'clock, two Union Pacific trains arrived and came to a stop a short distance from the gap. The first train was Durant's delayed three-car special, and riding with him that morning were Grenville Dodge, the Casement brothers, and several other officials and guests. Aboard the second train were four companies of the Twenty-first Infantry and its headquarters band, as well as a delegation of prominent Utah citizens with a brass band from Salt Lake City.

As these arrivals got off their trains, a gang of Chinese workmen began leveling up the gap in the roadbed. They laid the last ties and rails, hammered in the fishplates, and drove all but the last few spikes. At 11.15 the Central Pacific train rolled into view. Both Iron Horses - the CP's "Jupiter" and the UP's No. 119 - were now uncoupled and brought into facing positions across the meeting place of the rails. Soldiers stood at ease on both sides of the tracks. By this time Stanford and his men were shaking hands with the Union Pacific officials, and they began discussing the program of the ceremonies. Stanford had brought along two golden spikes, a silver spike, a combination iron, silver and golden spike, a silver-plated sledgehammer, and a polished laurel tie, but little attention had been paid to the formalities of the occasion. With Stanford and Dodge both insisting on driving the last spike, the rivalry of the Great Race persisted to the very last hour. Only five minutes before the scheduled start of the ceremony, Durant overruled Dodge and agreed to follow Stanford's program.

To facilitate communication, a wire had been attached from a telegraph pole down to a key on a table facing the gap. At 12.20, operator Shilling sent out a message announcing that the last spike would be driven in about twenty minutes. Operators throughout the country began clearing their lines. James Strobridge and Samuel Reed took up the laurel tie and placed it in position. Spectators crowded in so much, that Jack Casement had to order them back as to enable photographers to set up their equipment. Reverend John Todd, who attended the ceremony as a correspondent for two religious magazines, offered a prayer. Then the supreme moment was there. To the great amusement of the track layers, both Stanford and Durant entirely missed the golden spikes when bringing down the silverheaded sledgehammer. But eventually the spikes were put in their place. At 12.45, telegrapher Shilling tapped out "Done" and loud cheers followed. After all the precious metals were removed again, the two locomotives eased forward until they touched. Workmen as well as engineers climbed on top of them and shook hands, while photographers captured the moment. Then the Jupiter reversed its wheels and let the No. 119 cross the new junction. Next, the No. 119 backed up and made room for the Jupiter to cross the UP tracks. Steam whistles blew, and the transcontinental railroad was ready for the Iron Horses to roll (see map of US railroads in 1870).