

October 19, 2019

Union Pacific Railroad

Union Pacific 4014: Wyoming – Utah – Nevada: October, 2019

During the period September 28 – October 6, 2019, several friends and I traveled to Wyoming, Utah and Nevada to experience and photograph UP 4014, “Big Boy” as it began what Union Pacific termed its “Great Race Across the Southwest.”

Among the friends who coordinated their travel plans for this trip were Ad van Sten (Rotterdam, Netherlands), Michael Allen (Michigan, USA), Matthew Malkiewicz (New Jersey, USA) and Thomas Schultz (California, USA).

Ad van Sten flew into Denver, rented a car, and chased, one-way, as far as Salt Lake City, Utah. Thomas, Michael and Matthew each flew into Las Vegas where they rendezvoused on Saturday, September 28, 2019. From Alamo, a GMC Acadia AWD SUV was rented, which proved to be comfortable, reliable, spacious and, on many gravel roads in Wyoming, Utah and Nevada, very practical. On more than one occasion our travels took us down gravel roads listed on State highway maps as legitimate county roads, but which included, on occasion, steep grades, larger rocks (where the high ground clearance of our GMC Acadia was appreciated) and, on one occasion east of Caliente, Nevada, the need to ford Clover Creek several times.

On Saturday, September 28, Matthew, Michael and I departed Las Vegas and drove as far as Provo, Utah, where we spent the night. The following day, Sunday, September 29, we drove north, via Heber City, to Echo, where the remainder of the day of Sunday, September 29, was spent reacquainting ourselves with various potential photo locations between Uintah, Utah and Green River, Wyoming.

This report includes images from most of the locations visited by us. Unless otherwise noted, all images were recorded by Thomas Schultz. Many of Michael Allen’s image were nearly identical to those recorded by me. Ad van Sten has authored his own report. Matthew publishes on-line images he records: <https://www.losttracksoftime.com/>

Monday, September 30, 2019: Rock Springs to Evanston, Wyoming

On the evening of Sunday, September 29, we rendezvoused in Rock Springs with Ad van Sten.

West of Green River, Wyoming: Climbing Peru Hill

Prior to traveling to Wyoming, Utah and Nevada, several days were spent on-line, researching the locations through which the train would pass. Among the interesting sites featuring images of trains in the areas we hoped to explore was the Denver Public Library’s Digital Collections.

West of Green River, westbound Union Pacific trains must surmount "Peru Hill," which begins at the west end of the bridge over the Green River and, for the next five miles, features a grade of 0.82%. In November, 1941, images of westbound Union Pacific trains at this location were recorded by the famous railway photographer Otto Perry. Many of these images can be viewed on-line at the Denver Public Library’s website: <https://www.denverlibrary.org/research> => DPL Digital Collections

On the afternoon of Sunday, September 29, the location from which Otto Perry photographed westbound trains in 1941 was easily located. While there, the passage of a westbound UP freight was witnessed. The afternoon light was fine; we guessed morning light could be nicely backlit or side-lit.

West of Green River, Wyoming: Climbing Peru Hill, continued



Above, left: Union Pacific 4001 climbing Peru Hill in November, 1941. Photo: Otto Perry, collection of Denver Public Library. Above, right: UP 2708 at the same location on September 29, 2019.



Above: Inspired by Otto Perry's images, on the morning of September 30, 2019, we convened to witness the passage of UP 4014. Prior to the arrival of "Big Boy," an eastbound Union Pacific freight train consisting of loaded covered hoppers passed this location, then stopped short of Green River. The diesels attached to the rear end of this train can be seen in the distance. Location: UP Evanston Subdivision, milepost 821.2.

In retrospect, morning light at this location was rather harsh. For future reference, we should have explored the west end of the bridge over the Green River. The following day, Jim Wrinn shared the view from the west end of the Green River bridge which includes in the view an iconic butte in Green River.

Approaching Granger, Wyoming

Since the train was scheduled to stop briefly in Granger, and Granger was not far off I-80, we elected to drive east of Granger to intercept the train. As we passed the signal bridge at East Granger, UP 4014's headlight could be seen in the distance. We quickly stopped and managed to grab a shot.



Above: UP 4014 is seen headed westbound, approaching Granger, Wyoming. Union Pacific Evanston Subdivision near milepost 843. Photo: Michael Allen.

Between Leroy and Altamont, Wyoming. Union Pacific Evanston Subdivision milepost 895.5

In May, 2019, Reid McNaught and I explored the area around Carter and Leroy, Wyoming. West of Leroy, the UP main line climbs toward the summit at Aspen Mountain, several miles distant. For September 30, we elected to photograph UP 4014 near milepost 895 where the UP main line crosses Uinta County 180, the original route of the Lincoln Highway.

Following the passage of UP 4014, we visited the nearby ghost town of Piedmont. Around 1910, that portion of the UP main line between Leroy and the summit of Aspen Mountain was re-built and re-located. The new route included two new tunnels and eliminated passage through the town of Piedmont. Left without railroad access, Piedmont eventually died. It is now a ghost town, site of Piedmont Charcoal Kilns State Historic Site.

While waiting for UP 4014 to appear, we met Malcom Harvey, a local rancher. Malcom informed us that the cowboy on horseback herding sheep nearby was Peruvian! As the train approached, the Peruvian on horseback approached our location and, withdrawing a mobile phone from his pocket, himself photographed the train.



Above: In the early afternoon of Monday, September 30, 2019, Union Pacific 4014, "Big Boy" is seen accelerating uphill, westbound, between Leroy and Altamont, Wyoming. UP Evanston Subdivision milepost 895. Two photos: Michael Allen.



Above: Another view of UP 4014, Union Pacific Evanston Subdivision milepost 895.5. September 30, 2019

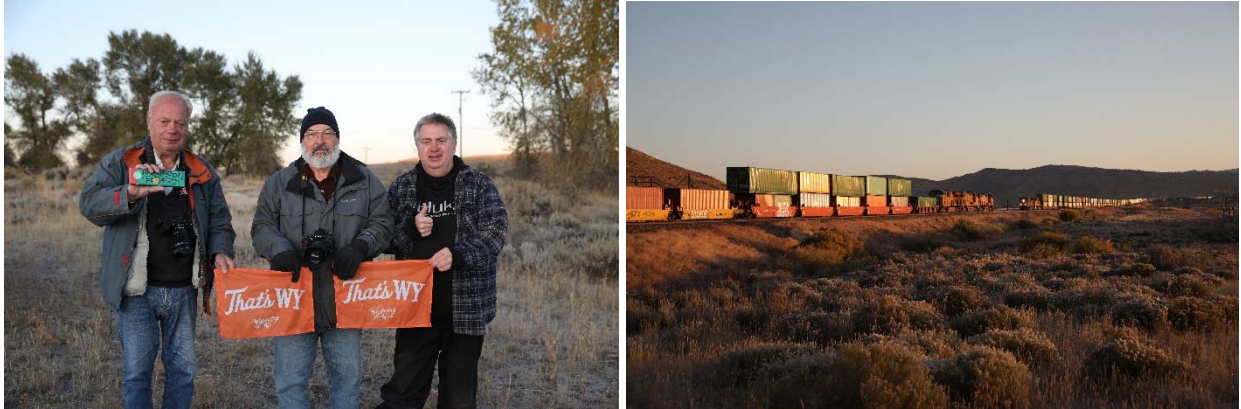


Above: The ghost town of Piedmont, Wyoming. September 30, 2019.

Tuesday, October 1, 2019: Evanston, Wyoming to Provo, Utah

Departing Evanston, Wyoming

Tuesday morning dawned clear and cold. As we waited for UP 4014 to depart Evanston, a parade of eastbound and westbound double-stack trains passed our location. All this freight traffic delayed slightly the westward progress of UP 4014, allowing us to photograph UP 4014 both departing Evanston, Wyoming and approaching Wahsatch, Utah, only a few miles distant.



Above, left: From left to right: Ad van Sten, Michael Allen and Matthew Malkiewicz. The cloth banners were acquired from a Wyoming tourist office in May, 2019. Above, right: Two double-stack trains meet on the west edge of Evanston, Wyoming.



Above: As UP 4014 approached our location, it presented a fantastic sight! Union Pacific Evanston Subdivision milepost 920. Temperature: 21° F (-6° C). October 1, 2019.

Approaching Wahsatch, Utah



Above: Delayed slightly by several westbound freight trains it was following, UP 4014 is here approaching Wahsatch, Utah, UP Evanston Subdivision milepost 925.75. Temperature: 21° F (-6° C). October 1, 2019.

Right: The “going away” view of UP 4014 and its train, westbound, approaching Wahsatch, Utah. Photo: Michael Allen.

October 1, 2019.



West of Wahsatch, Utah, Interstate 80 diverges south of the Union Pacific right-of-way, rejoining the railway at exit 185, "Castle Rock."

Between Wahsatch and Castle Rock, the double-track Union Pacific main line diverges, negotiates two tunnels at Echo Summit, then crosses-over itself at a location referenced as "Curvo." Union Pacific trains crossing over each other at Curvo have been featured on many publicity photos. Curvo is a remote location, however, seeming accessible only via Union Pacific-owned access roads.

Echo Canyon, Utah

In May, 2019, after photographing the departure of UP 4014 + UP 844 from Evanston, Wyoming, Reid McNaught and I were able to easily arrive before the train at the Interstate 80 for Castle Rock, Utah. Although the view from the Castle Rock exit is fine, if we elected to photograph UP 4014 at Castle Rock in October, 2019, we would not likely be able to again get ahead of the train for our preferred location just east of Echo.

Right: On September 28, 2019, we scouted locations near Echo, Utah. This view, located just east of Echo, looking east, Union Pacific's Evanston Subdivision milepost 950.6 would, two days later, find UP 4014 approaching the camera on the near track.



On October 1, however, we were ordered by a Union Pacific Railroad special agent to abandon this location. In the end, this special agent did us a favor as, just before the arrival of UP 4014, an eastbound UP freight train arrived. The eastbound freight would have spoiled this view.

"Twin Bridges," Between Croydon and Morgan, Utah

Just west of Croydon, Utah, the Union Pacific main line negotiates a tight canyon which includes several bridges across Weber River as well as two sets of tunnels. Eastbound trains exiting the easternmost tunnels at a location now named, "Taggart" have been featured on Union Pacific publicity photos as far back as 1869. Photographically, particularly for a westbound train, we found this area to be challenging. Many potential locations were cluttered with multiple pole lines.

Right: We elected to record the passage of UP 4014 at a site between two sets of tunnels where twin bridges allow the railway line to cross Weber River, Union Pacific Evanston Subdivision milepost 964.



Approaching Riverdale, Utah

While the train was stopped briefly at Morgan, Utah, we proceeded through Weber Canyon to a location in Uintah, Utah.



Above: Having negotiated Weber Canyon, UP 4014 is seen heading westbound through Uintah, Utah. Union Pacific Evanston Subdivision, near milepost 985. October 1, 2019.

After photographing UP 4014 at Uintah, Utah, Ad van Sten proceeded toward Salt Lake City airport.

We drove directly to Caliente, Nevada, a distance of 391 miles / 629 kilometers. Driving from Uintah to Caliente, we elected to follow as far as Lynndyl, Utah the route of the Union Pacific Sharp Subdivision. Along the way, a portion of the Sevier River Valley was explored. Although the scenes were pleasant, with several small bridges visible, in the end we elected to proceed west, through Leamington to Lynndyl, Utah and the junction with Union Pacific's Lynndyl Subdivision.

West of the Sevier River Valley, the terrain through which the Union Pacific railway passes is quite flat and barren. From Lynndyl to the Utah – Nevada state line, a pole line runs along the east side of the right-of-way most (all?) of the way. For these reasons, we elected to focus our attention on more scenic areas in southeast Nevada, near Caliente.

The next two days were spent exploring near Caliente, Nevada, Ruby Canyon and Clover River Canyon – and – in Utah, Chicken creek Canyon and Sevier River Canyon. None of us had ever previously explored these parts of Utah and Nevada. We wanted to be prepared for the imminent passage of UP 4014 two days hence.

Wednesday & Thursday, October 2 & 3, 2019: Union Pacific's Caliente Subdivision: Milford, Utah to Las Vegas, Nevada – and – Sharp Subdivision: Provo to Lynndyl, Utah.

After spending the better part of two days exploring in southeastern Nevada Ruby Canyon, Meadow Valley Wash and Clover Creek Canyon, we drove back toward Provo to position ourselves for the Friday departure of UP 4014 from Provo toward Milford. In Nephi, we encountered a westbound Union Pacific freight train which then followed toward Lynndyl.



Right: East of Leamington, an obvious location featured the Union Pacific track crossing the Sevier River. In the distance: The Ash Grove Cement Company. October 3, 2019.



Above: At the location featuring the Ash Grove Cement Company in the distance, we encountered Jim Wrinn - and - Cate Kratville-Wrinn. The "Mount Rushmore of Steam" was the title given to this image depicting, from left to right, Matthew Malkiewicz, Michael Allen and Thomas Schultz just east of Leamington, Utah along the Sevier River Canyon. Photo: Jim Wrinn. October 3, 2019.

Friday, October 4, 2019: Provo to Milford, Utah

South of Provo, Union Pacific's Sharp Subdivision is oriented nearly north-south. Since the train was scheduled to make a brief stop at Nephi, on October 3, the area between Provo and Nephi was explored. On the morning of October 4, we elected to photograph UP 4014 in the countryside, headed westbound, approaching Mona.

As we waited at this location, at least 10 carloads of local residents arrived. Among these folks were the owners and neighbors of the local farms.

We were informed that in this area, alfalfa is farmed. 3 – 4 crops of alfalfa are harvested annually. Most alfalfa production is exported to China and Saudi Arabia.

Approaching Mona, Utah



Above: On October 4, 2019, UP 4014 is seen operating southbound (railroad west) approaching the small community of Mona, Utah. In the distance, the Mona Reservoir is barely visible to the right of the 3/4 milepost. Union Pacific Sharp Subdivision, milepost 720.75.

“Chicken Creek Canyon,” west of Levan, Utah

While UP 4014 was stopped for servicing at Nephi, we proceeded further southwest, past Levan, Utah to Chicken Creek Canyon. There, we waited for UP 4014 to arrive.



Above: UP 4014 is seen crossing Chicken Creek, Union Pacific Sharp Subdivision milepost 692. Top photo: Michael Allen; bottom photo: Thomas Schultz October 4, 2019.



Above: A close-up view of UP 4014 negotiating Chicken Creek Canyon, Utah. Union Pacific Sharp Subdivision milepost 692. October 4, 2019.

Saturday, October 5, 2019: Milford, Utah to Caliente, Nevada

The scenery between Milford and Uvada (the Utah – Nevada state line) is bleak. Further, in Nevada, public access to the remote yet scenic Clover Creek Canyon is limited to several gravel roads. For these reasons, on October 5, we elected to limit our photographic efforts to only one location: Islen, Nevada.

Clover Creek Canyon, Nevada

Having reviewed many images recorded in Clover Creek Canyon available on-line, as well as having ourselves explored this area two days prior, on October 5, we proceeded directly to Islen, Nevada where we waited for UP 4014 to arrive.

Following the passage of UP 4014 through Islen, we met Frank Lopez of Cedar City, Utah. Frank had traveled to Islen specifically to witness UP 4014 in steam. "What can you tell us about this place?" we inquired. "Well," Frank replied, "In 1952, I was born here!" Frank went on to describe his early childhood years living with his family in one of several small homes which were once located on the south side of the railway tracks at Islen. Frank's father worked for the Union Pacific Railroad in track maintenance. At that time, no roads connected Islen to the outside world. When supplies were needed, Frank's father would flag down a train and the family would ride into Caliente, 14 miles distant. When shopping was complete, the Lopez family would wait for the next eastbound train to ride back to Islen.



Above: UP 4014 operates westbound through Islen, Nevada, Union Pacific Caliente Subdivision milepost 476. While waiting for UP 4014 to arrive, an eastbound Union Pacific freight train arrived, then stopped, waiting to meet the westbound UP 4014. Close inspection of this image reveals a bit of the eastbound freight train visible just above the passenger cars. October 5, 2019.

Sunday, October 6, 2019: Caliente to Las Vegas, Nevada

Ruby Canyon

Geographically south (railroad west) of Caliente, the Union Pacific Caliente Subdivision follows the course of Meadow Valley Wash through Ruby Canyon. Since publicly accessible roads do not allow through transit to Moapa, we elected to focus our efforts in Ruby Canyon, then travel directly via paved roads to Moapa.

In Ruby Canyon, several interesting photo locations were obvious.

On Saturday, October 6, we elected to station ourselves at different locations, planning to later share the results of our respective efforts. Michael Allen chose a location north of Etna. When, at around 8:20 AM, UP 4014 could be heard in the distance, and the location at which Thomas Schultz was located was still in shadow, Ben Kletzner kindly gave Thomas a ride to a location just north of Stine, where Matthew Malkiewicz had positioned himself.



Above: UP 4014 is seen approaching Etna, Nevada, Union Pacific Caliente Subdivision milepost 455.75. Photo: Michael Allen. October 6, 2019.



Above: UP 4014 is approaching Stine, Union Pacific Caliente Subdivision milepost 451. October 6, 2019.

Approaching Moapa, Nevada

From Ruby Canyon, just south of Caliente, we traveled directly to an area just north of Moapa, Nevada where, after the passage of an eastbound freight train, westbound UP 4014 arrived.



Above: UP 4014 is approaching Moapa, Nevada, Union Pacific Caliente Subdivision milepost 384.25.

Apex, Nevada

Although our exit from Moapa was delayed by a significant traffic jam, we were nevertheless able to arrive at Apex, Nevada before the arrival of UP 4014. This was our final action shot of this trip.



Above: UP 4014 is westbound, climbing toward the summit of a small hill at Apex, Nevada, Union Pacific Caliente Subdivision milepost 354.