

UNIVERSITY  
OF WYOMING

# Traveling Exhibits

## Hell on Wheels: Union Pacific Railroad Towns in Wyoming



**Union Pacific Railroad Contractor, Jack Casement, and his work train, circa 1868-1869. Photo by Andrew J. Russell. (American Heritage Center Collections)**

**T**he construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, linking the eastern and western United States, was an engineering marvel. Covering nearly two-thirds of the country, its completion resulted in quicker and cheaper transportation, and accelerated the westward expansion of the United States.

In Wyoming, and elsewhere along the construction line, end of track towns developed. Surveying and grading teams, and later track-laying teams, established temporary supply and construction camps along the rail route. Tent cities, consisting of canvas and wood structures sprang up around the work camps to supply services for the workers. Saloons, dance halls, brothels, mercantiles, and gambling houses were common. End of track towns were known for vigilantism, riots, and crime, earning the towns the name “Hell on Wheels.”

Size: 24 framed items (2 crates).

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American Heritage Center

**T**he American Heritage Center (AHC) is the University of Wyoming's repository of manuscripts and special collections, rare books, and the university archives. Its collections focus on Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain West (including but not limited to politics, settlement, and western trails), environment and conservation, the mining and petroleum industries, air and rail transportation, the performing arts (particularly radio, television, film, and popular music), journalism, and US military history.

Students and scholars from around the globe use these collections for research. The AHC also sponsors a wide range of scholarly and popular programs including lectures, concerts, symposia, and exhibits. Housed in a landmark building shared with the

University Art Museum, access to the AHC is free

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