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event. Once viewed
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moment in the

making of the United States and the West, the events at Promontory Summit and their aftermath receive a great deal of critical attention in Richard White's provocative and polemical book,

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The transcontinental
railways developed
ocean steamship
services designed to

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feed traffic into their lines. Indeed, Canadian Pacific developed an integrated transport network that extended from Liverpool to Hong Kong and was regarded by contemporaries as an imperial, rather than a simply Canadian, project.

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public largess drew them into the corridors of power, initiating new forms of corruption.

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Experienced railway
men weren't
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investing in

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transcontinental routes, writes White (The Frontier in American Culture), so six Sacramento businessmen (who formed the Central Pacific) and a slapdash federally chartered corporation (the Union Pacific) took the bait of money and land offered by

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the federal
government.
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On May 10, 1869 at
Promontory Summit,
Utah, the lines of the
Union Pacific and
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Railroads were
symbolically linked
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the completion of
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In the broad sweep
of American history,
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the transcontinental railroads have long been hailed for their positive effects, chiefly the ability to reduce what had been a journey of weeks or months across the continent by foot, wagon, or waterborne vessel — or more likely some combination thereof — down to a few

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An interesting book about the Big Four in California and the impact they had on the building of the transcontinental railroad and on the development of California as a state. Sometimes the text was a bit wooden and a bit of in depth

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analysis was lacking, but overall, it was an interesting read.

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leviathan, a provocative challenge to a major myth about the American West: that transcontinentals were a triumph of American entrepreneurship and ingenuity, and a godsend to those

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many acclaimed
books in American
western and
environmental
history, including
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In the era of
transcontinental
railroad building
between roughly
1865 and 1895, local
populations in this
vast region were too
small to generate
much in the way of
paying freight. At
the same time,
California's central
valley and the

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Willamette in
Oregon were
adequately served
by steamships and
purely local
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