

WEBER READS

2018

2019



THE
TRANSCONTINENTAL
RAILROAD



Dear Weber County Residents:

Please join us for Weber Reads, our community-wide reading program. Weber Reads provides opportunities for all of us to read, reflect, and engage in meaningful dialogue built around selected texts, which help illuminate experiences and beliefs that transcend group values to unite us as human beings.

During 2018-2019, we have chosen to study the building of the transcontinental railroad. Envisioned by Abraham Lincoln as an opportunity to unite people divided by a Civil War, construction of these 1,086 miles of track stoked our industries, melded our cultures, and forever changed the vast landscape between our coasts. We live in the place where on May 10, 1869, six years after work began, laborers of the Central Pacific Railroad building from the west, and workers of the Union Pacific Railroad building from the east, met and drove the golden spike. We are a product of this great project and of many cultures that made it so.

Our communities are still close to the railroad. We may be awakened by the sound of train whistles coming down Weber Canyon; we are stopped in a line of cars while a freight train lumbers into the station; if we're lucky, we've ridden the train out of town and into an adventure. There is fodder for discussion in all of us as we reflect on the fascinating story of how the trains crossed the country one hundred and fifty years ago this May, bumped cow catchers just outside of town, and forever changed our country and our individual lives.

To help facilitate involvement of young people in our discussions, every school in the County will receive Weber Reads teaching materials, created by teacher consultants from the Wasatch Range Writing Project, the local site of the National Writing Project. Copies of appropriate texts for children and teens, purchased in part by Friends of the Weber County Library, are being given to each school library, along with an invitation to have Librarians from the Weber County Library System visit classrooms to deliver a special presentation.

The Library Board will sponsor local book groups wishing to hold their discussions at a Weber County Library, and invite the community to join their conversations. If requested, the Library will provide refreshments and a discussion leader for these meetings. You are also invited to attend special programs hosted at the Library, on the campus of Weber State University, and throughout the community. Watch the Library Web site (www.weberpl.org) for details.

Please join us. We hope no one will be left out of the discussion.

Weber County Commissioners,


James "Jim" Harvey


James Ebert


Scott Jenkins



Weber Reads 2018-2019: The Transcontinental Railroad

Weber Reads is a coalition of people from the Weber County Library, the Wasatch Range Writing Project, Weber and Ogden School Systems, and Weber State University. Following the initiative of the One Book, One Community program from the Library of Congress, we in Weber Reads pick a topic, an author, or a book every year and encourage people to learn, read, and discuss the ideas we encounter. In our eleven years, we have explored *Frankenstein*, *The Odyssey*, Emily Dickinson, Shakespeare and the Japanese-American Internment, among others.

This year, we have chosen the transcontinental railroad as our topic. Weber County is a collection of railroad towns and people whose lives have been affected by the railroad. Some of us work or have worked on the railroad. Some of us as children rode the train across the Lucin Cutoff to California. And most of us know the story of the building of this transcontinental railroad, which was a vital part of Abraham Lincoln's vision of a united country, following the Civil War. Today, even with all of our technological wizardry, we marvel at what it took to map routes and build these railroads: expeditions over mountains and across prairies, rivers, and deserts; teams of enormously skilled Chinese workers to blast tunnels through miles of rock in the Sierra Nevada mountains and to build trestles across gorges; and teams of Irish and African Americans who laid mile after mile of track across the great plains of the Midwest.

There is another part to this story of industrial progress and that is the losses the railroad caused. The land the train crossed was not empty, but was the home of many Native American nations. The vast country also encompassed immense herds of bison, wild animals, and birds. While the coming of the train promised the people on both coasts great progress, to others it meant great change and losing their way of life.

The building of the transcontinental railroad is a story of many parts.

We invite you to join us in our investigation of the transcontinental railroad with this packet of books and lessons written by teachers in the Wasatch Range Writing Project. Students at all levels can consider the many aspects of building of the transcontinental railroad through professional lessons and superb books. Other resources are available at Weber County Libraries, which have a wide selection of books about the railroad. Library staff will also host lectures and discussions and they invite members of the community to these gatherings.

Here in Utah, we live close to the railroad. On many mornings, we are awakened by the sound of train whistles coming down Weber Canyon, or we are stopped in a line of cars while a freight train lumbers into the station. If we're lucky, we've ridden the train out of town and into an adventure. We hope that through the lessons and books given to the schools, and through programs in libraries throughout Weber County, we can begin to discuss the fascinating story of how the trains crossed the country, approaching from both the west and from the east, and how one hundred and fifty years ago this May, they bumped cow catchers just outside of town.



Weber Reads 2018-2019: The Transcontinental Railroad

Elementary

All Aboard: A Readers' Theater	Judy Chesley
Are We There Yet?	Pat Lowe
Building the Transcontinental Railroad: An Interactive Engineering Adventure	Felicia Bedwell
Coolies	Judy Chesley
Gandy Dancer, Hogger, Ballast: Vocabulary	Judy Chesley
Locomotive: Text Features	Felicia Bedwell
Onomatopoeia: What's That?	Pat Lowe
That Book's Not a Poem!	Pat Lowe
"Thundering & panting and breathing black smoke, it was a fearsome thing."	Judy Chesley

Secondary

What is Freedom?	Dee Anne Squire
Perspectives	Jana Patchett
Transcontinental Railroad in Pictures: A Study in Photojournalism	Paula Simonson

High School

Analysis of Act of Congress: Homestead Act of 1862	Vivian Easton
Analysis of Act of Congress: The Pacific Railway Act of 1862	Vivian Easton
Introduction to Pullman Porters: Choosing Servility to Staff the Trains	Michelle Braeden
Instructions to Porters, Attendants and Bus Boys	Michelle Braeden
Ogden Junction City of the West: Documentary and Pullman Advertising	Michelle Braeden
Pullman Porters: The Work of the Pullman Porters	Michelle Braeden