

Mormons, the Transcontinental Railroad, and the Transformation of Native Americans in Utah, Compared to the Natives in Nebraska.

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Outline

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Why this topic?

- I wanted to understand the intersectionality between the transcontinental railroad, Native Americans, and Mormon settlers in the 1840-1860's in the greater Utah area including Nebraska.
- I researched out of curiosity, which turned into genuine interest of the way Native Americans were exposed to civilization.
- I wanted my old beliefs of the railroad challenged

Argument

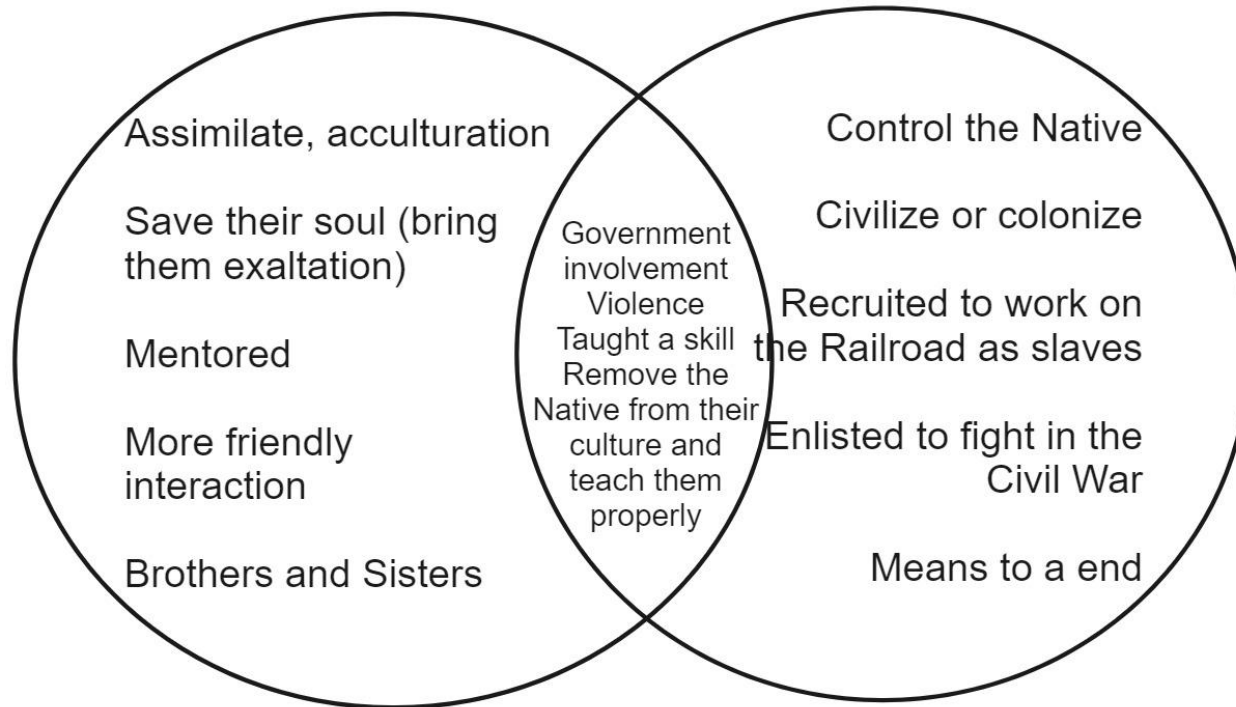
Though true the railroad brought civilization to these new territories and to Native peoples, I argue that the transcontinental railroad was insignificant to the acculturation and construction of Native American life in Utah. I further argue that the preexisting parties in Utah before the arrival of the railroad, i.e., Mormon settlers, mountain men and traders, were just as persistent in the process of assimilating the Ute, Paiute, Goshute, and Shoshone Indians into mainstream American life.

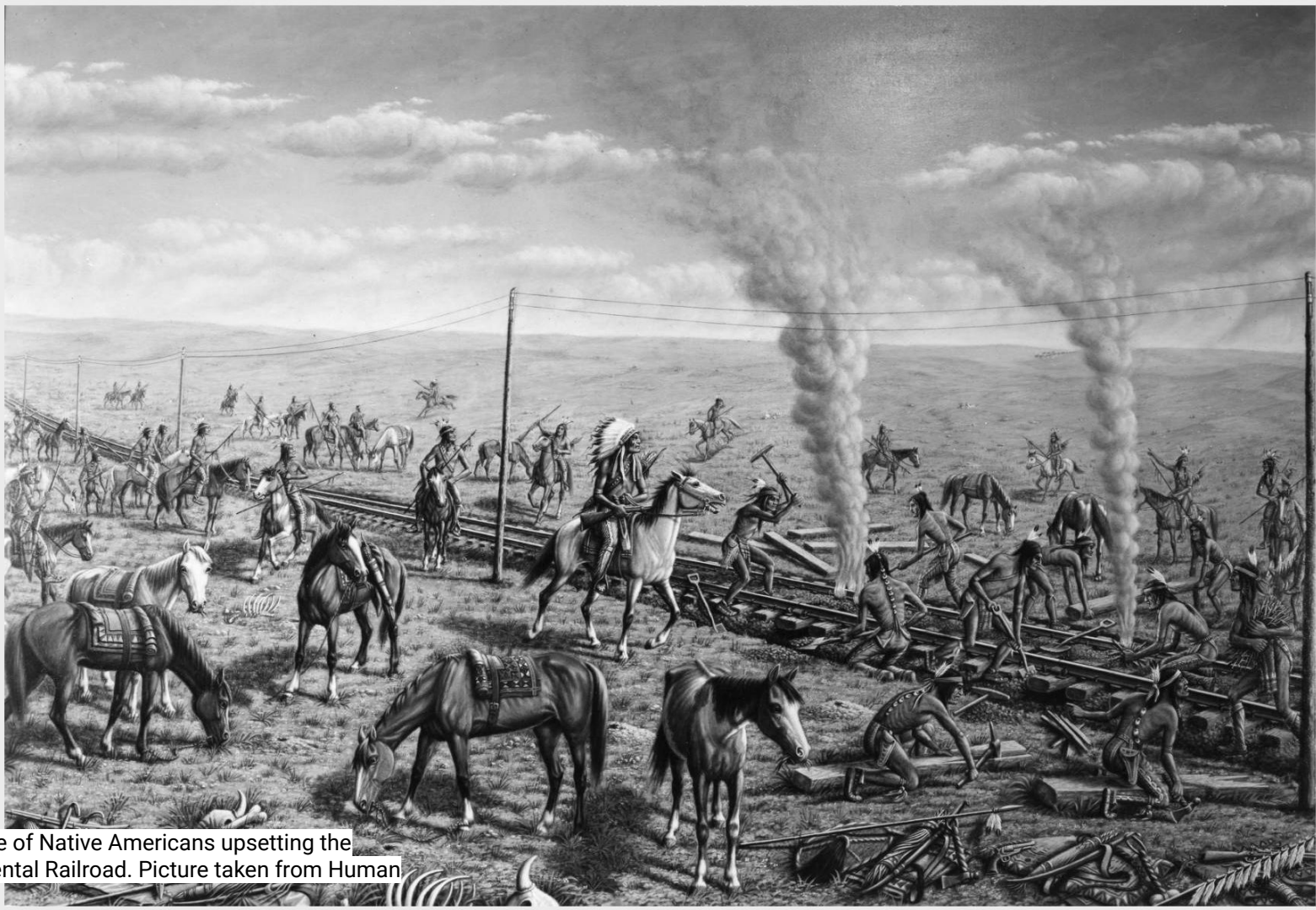
Sources

The language used in the sources illustrated a stark contrast in treatment towards Native Americans. The two sources below are taken from first, Brigham Young, the prophet of the LDS church back then, and second, General William Tecumseh Sherman, the Commander General of the U.S. Army.

1. “There was enough [land] for both them and us, that [instead of paying for the land] we would teach them to labor and cultivate the earth”
2. “The more [Indians] we can kill this year, the less will have to be killed the next war, for the more I see of these Indians, the more convinced I am that they all have to be killed or be maintained as a species of paupers”

Similarities and Differences





Shows a tribe of Native Americans upsetting the Transcontinental Railroad. Picture taken from Human Impact.



Shows a tribe of Native Americans with a Mormon missionary being taught the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Photo taken off online.

Conclusion:

The railroad in effect had no direct correlation to the civilization of Natives in Utah due to the pre-existing people occupying the state. When the railroad arrived in Utah, Natives were accustomed to the inference of their lands, food supplies, and culture. It did not take them by surprise, nor did it cut through their lands as severely as the railroad did in Nebraska. Therefore, the acculturation of Native Americans in Utah occurred due to the incoming settlers that raced to the state before the railroad, and was furthered by trading and federal policies.