

The Real Story

For many years people moved from the east to the west. But it was a long trip.

They could walk or ride in covered wagons. But the trip took them about three months. And it was very hard to do.

They could also ride in a ship. But the ship had to sail all the way around the bottom of South America. That trip took almost six months!

Finally some rich men decided that a railroad would be better. They decided to build a set of tracks from the east to the west.

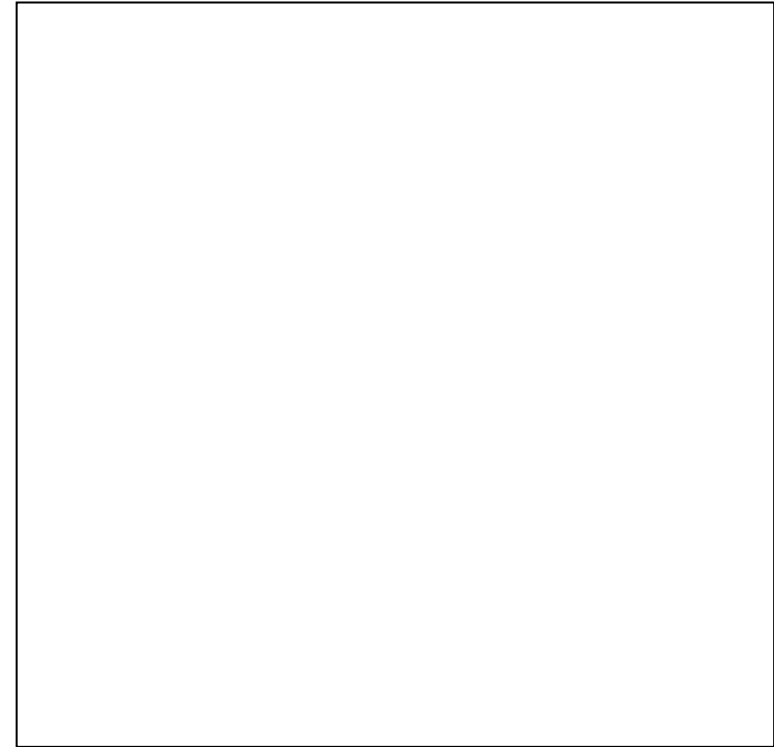
Then people could ride a train across America. They could be comfortable when they travelled. And the trip would take only days, not months.

It took a long time to build the tracks, but finally the day came. The two sets of tracks came together. There was a big celebration and a golden spike was put in the last rail.

Actually there were four special spikes. There were gold ones from some of the men. There was also a silver one from the state of Nevada. Silver had just been found there.

Of course, the spikes were pulled out right after the newspapers took pictures. Then a real spike was put in. A few days later the trains were making the trip across America.

Miss Jones and the Golden Spike



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Miss Jones and the Golden Spike/Caitlind L. Alexander

Summary: Miss Jones helps to make sure that the golden spike is laid to connect the east and west railroads.

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When she opened them she was standing in her own classroom.

She looked down. There was dirt around her feet. But there were no shoes on her feet! The shoes had stayed in Utah!

“My, my,” said Miss Jones. “That's not quite right! The shoes always come back with me. I have a whole closet full of them!”

“Oh well,” said Miss Jones. “No one is perfect”

She looked at the newspaper on her desk.

GOLDEN SPIKE LAID!, said the headline.

Just then the bell rang. All the second graders in Miss Jones' class came running in from recess.

There stood Miss Jones in a long skirt and a tight fitting jacket. They knew what that meant. She was about to tell them a story from history. And she told great stories. They were so good it almost sounded like she was there.

“With this spike we finish the railroad,” the man said.

He leaned down and held the spike in place. The other man hit it with a hammer and the spike slid into the log.

The railroad was done.

Miss Jones smiled. This was a great day.

Suddenly she looked at her watch.

“My, my,” said Miss Jones. “I must get back.”

She quickly took out a picture of her classroom.

She turned her watch to the inside of her wrist. Then she opened it up.

Miss Jones held the watch over the picture.

“My, my. Make time fly,” she said.

The edges of the picture moved. The wind swirled the sand up around her.

Miss Jones reached toward the picture. Her hand went right into it.

Then her arm.

Then her shoulder.

Then her head.

Suddenly nothing was left but her footprints in the sand of the Utah desert.

Miss Jones felt dizzy. She closed her eyes.

Miss Jones and the Golden Spike

Miss Jones sat at her desk at the front of the class. For once it was quiet. It was recess and all the children were outside.

“I have just enough time to finish my lesson,” she said.

She picked up a very old newspaper.

“May 10, 1869,” she said. “The Driving of the Golden Spike.”

Suddenly she looked at the paper again. The headline was gone. The paper said something about the Golden Spike, but it wasn't what Miss Jones wanted to see.

GOLDEN SPIKE STOLEN!

“My, my,” said Miss Jones. “This can't be right.”

Miss Jones looked at her watch. Eighteen minutes.

“That should be just enough time,” she said. “At least I'm dressed for it.”

She looked down. She had on a dress that went all the way to the floor. She also wore an old shirt that fit her very tight. Even her watch looked old-fashioned.

She turned her watch to the inside of her wrist. Then she opened it up.

Inside it wasn't a watch at all. It was a time machine.

Miss Jones held the watch over the newspaper.

“My, my. Make time fly,” she said.

The edges of the paper moved. A wind swirled in the classroom.

Miss Jones looked at a picture in the paper. It was a picture of Promontory Point, Utah.

Miss Jones quickly stepped back. She closed the door as quietly as she could.

Just then the bad guy opened the door on the other side. He climbed in. A moment later he came out with the box.

“I got it,” he said to his men. He put the box in his shirt.

Miss Jones watched as the men ran to their horses. They jumped on, then rode off into the desert.

The guards were just waking up. They stood up and looked around.

Just then everyone clapped. “To celebrate we will drive a spike of pure gold into the last rail,” the man said.

He turned to the man next to him. “Get the spike,” he whispered. “It's under the seat.”

The man went over to the coach. He came back a moment later with the golden spike. The man in charge looked at him.

“You should have brought the box,” he said.

“The box?” the second man said.

The man in charge just rolled his eyes. A moment later they were ready.

She reached toward the picture. But she didn't touch it. Instead her hand went right into the picture.

Then her arm.

Then her shoulder.

Then her head.

Suddenly nothing was left. Not even her shoes on the floor!

Miss Jones felt dizzy. She closed her eyes.

When she opened them she was standing in dirt. The wind was still blowing. But this wind was blowing across a flat desert.

It wasn't a desert with cactuses in it, but it was still a desert. The only plants that grew were clumps of weeds and sagebrush.

Promontory Point, Utah they called it. It was where the east and west parts of America would finally be joined together. A railroad would finally link one side of America to the other.

There were reporters everywhere. There were also lots of important people. Everyone had on their best clothes.

“Good,” said Miss Jones. “I'm just in time.”

She quickly started toward the group, but something felt different. Then she looked down.

She reached into the back of the wagon and saw the spikes in a big box. She pulled one out.

Then she hurried to the coach.

The bad guys stepped up behind the men at the back. They hit them on the head! Both men fell to the ground.

The bad men quickly pulled them behind the coach. Then two of the men stepped up behind the other guards. They put guns against their backs.

“Don't say a word,” they said in a low voice.

One of the men came up to one side of the coach. He stood there for a moment. He was looking around to see if anyone was watching. Miss Jones hurried up to the other side of the coach.

She quickly opened the door. Inside the coach was a black box. It was on the floor, under a seat.

Miss Jones pulled out the box. She opened it. Inside was the golden spike. It looked just like a real spike but it was made of pure gold. Almost a pound of gold! That was worth a LOT of money!

She took the real spike out and put it in the box. Then she put the gold spike under the seat. She put the box in front of the spike. Maybe the thieves wouldn't see the golden spike.

And the trip wouldn't take months. It would only take days. Trains didn't need to stop and rest. Only people and animals did.

A man stepped up on a box. He started giving a speech. "Today is a big day," he said.

Then Miss Jones saw it. There was a fancy stage coach off to the side. It had four men standing around it. All of the men had guns and they all wore a badge.

"That must be where the golden spike is," said Miss Jones.

She looked around some more. That's when she saw them.

There were four men standing behind a wagon. They didn't care about the speech. They didn't care about the tracks. All they kept looking at was the coach with the men around it.

The men nodded to each other. They started to go up to the coach.

The men at the coach didn't see them. They were looking at the man making the speech.

Miss Jones knew she had to do something. And she had to do it fast!

She hurried to the old wagon. She had seen the men getting spikes from there.

She had shoes on her feet! Usually she forgot to curl her toes. Then her shoes stayed on the floor back home. She almost always arrived in history with bare feet.

But this time she was wearing old shoes. They laced up tight. They also came over her ankles. They looked like high top tennis shoes, but they were made of goat skin.

"My, my," said Miss Jones. "I may have to wear these shoes more often. If only they didn't hurt so much."

"Oh well. Nothing is perfect," she sighed.

At least she was dressed right. Everyone else was wearing clothes like her.

Miss Jones quickly joined the group. Everyone was excited. Today the railroad men would finish the track. The railroad from the east and the railroad from the west would meet up here.

As Miss Jones looked, the railroad men were working hard. The track wasn't very far apart.

They would lay down lots of logs. They had to make sure they were all flat. Then they would put a rail across the top of the logs and hammer the rail into each log.

They would use long spikes that went deep into the logs. The spikes looked like a huge nail. They

were as big around as two fingers and as long as your arm from your elbow to your wrist. When they were done, they would do it again.

They had been doing this for a long time. The team from the east had laid track like this all the way from the Missouri River.

The men from the west had laid track all the way from the Pacific Ocean. The men from the east had come the farthest. But they had an easier job. They got to lay track across land that was mostly flat.

The men from the west had to blast their way through the Rocky Mountains. Sometimes they had to lay track on the side of the mountain. There was a cliff above them and a cliff below them. It was dangerous work. Some men died.

But the men had kept working, and now it was done. Today the track from the east and the track from the west would be joined together.

Miss Jones looked around. There were many important people there. This was a big day!

Off to one side was a stagecoach. There was also a covered wagon. Now people wouldn't need to ride in wagons and coaches all the way across the country. Now they could ride the train.