

A visual interpretation of the history of the Virginia City engine yard: 1869-present

Presented at the 2024 Virginia and Truckee Railroad History Conference

By Curtis Reid

Introduction

This is a graphical depiction of the changes to the Virginia City engine yard from 1869 to the present. It is largely based on research by Tom Smith, Stephen Drew, Charlie Siebenthal, and Michael Collins.

This presentation was originally presented at the Virginia and Truckee Railway Historical Society convention October 7th, 2011, and has been revised with feedback from that event, and with new information that has since come to light.

Where are we talking about?

Located South of Virginia City proper



August 4th, 1869



Car shop is under construction

October 26th 1869



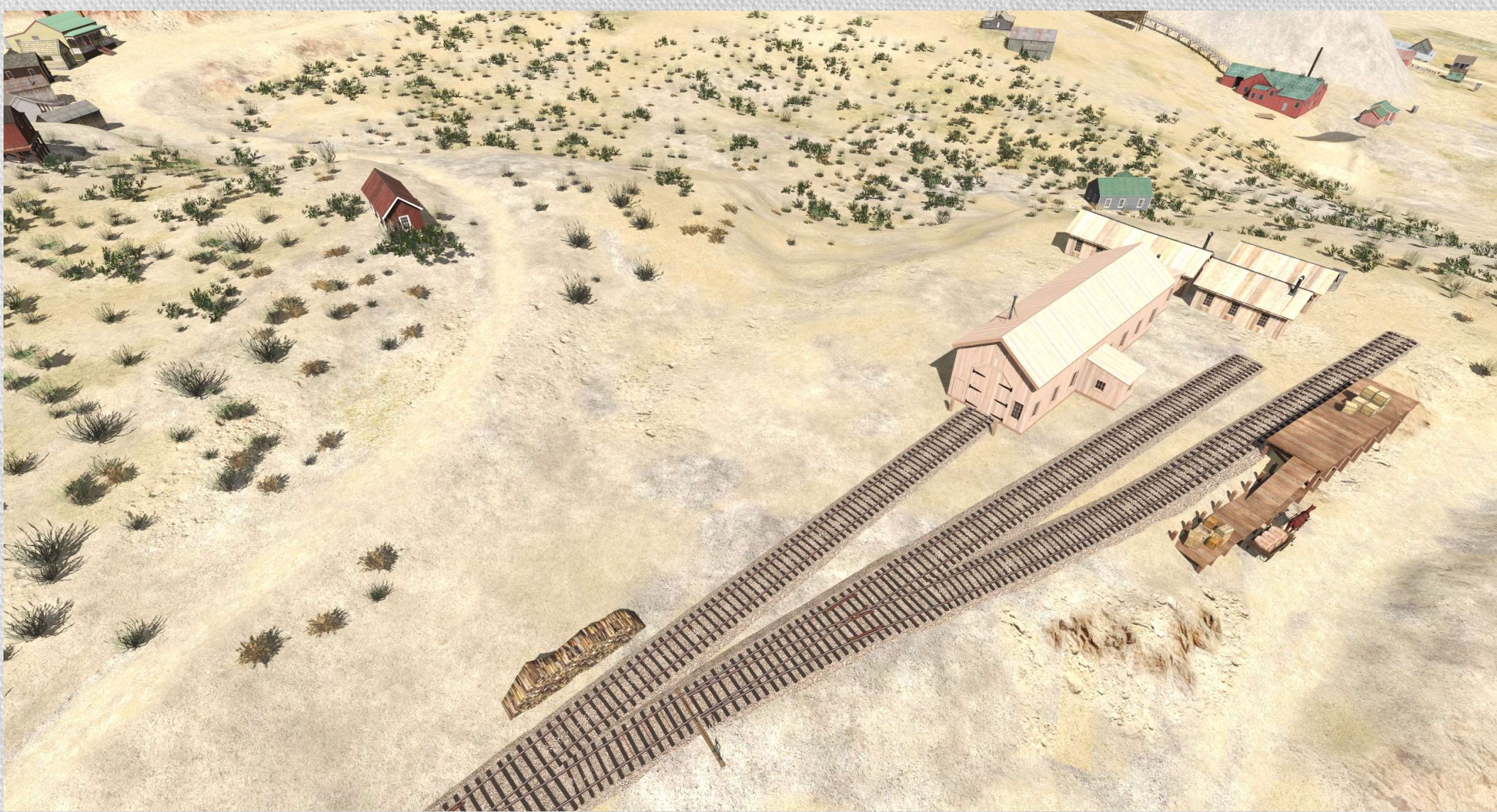
Car shop is completed
Locomotive No 4 'Virginia' arrives for final assembly

November 11-14th 1869



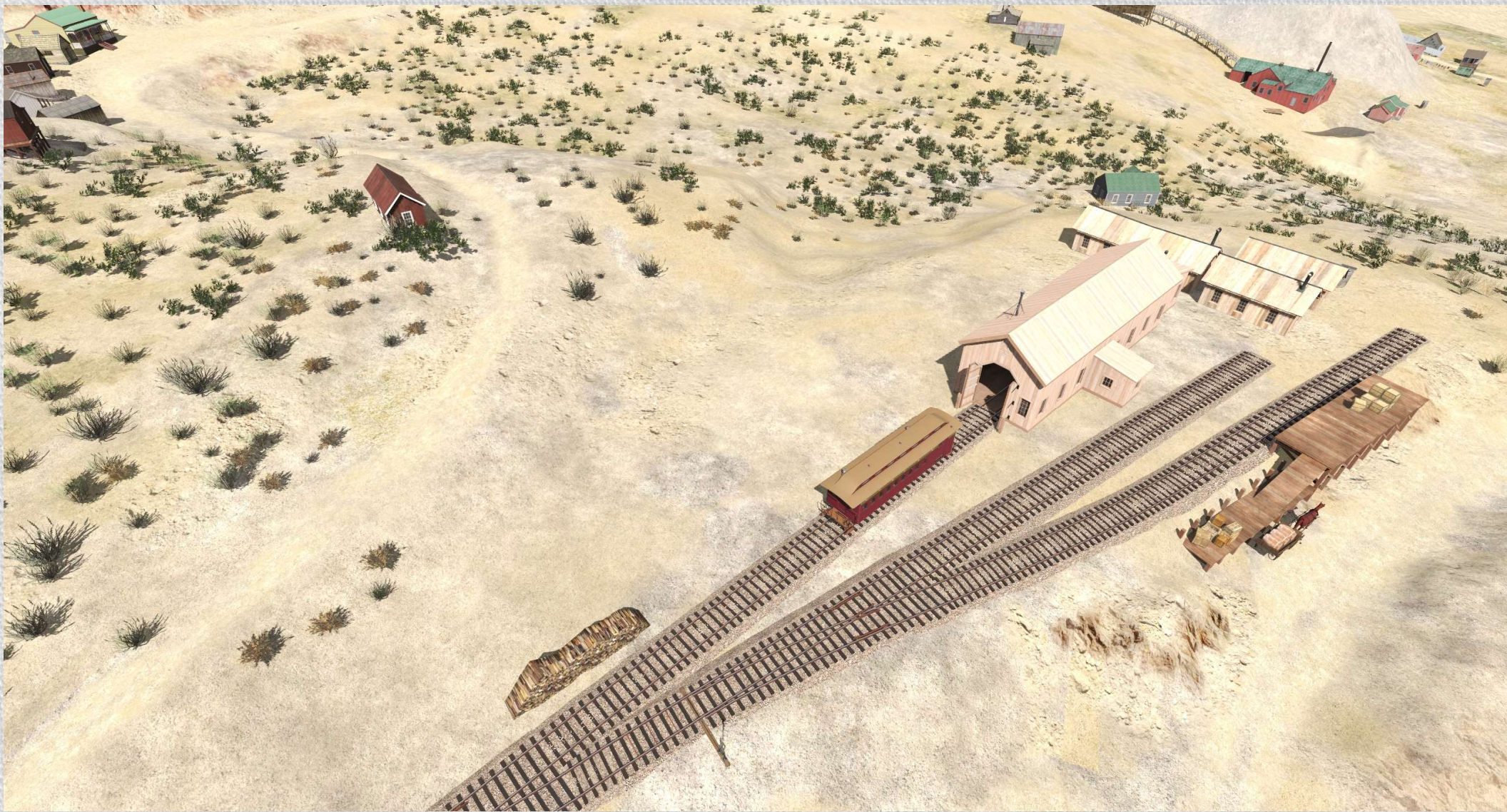
November 11: 'Virginia' is in running order
November 14: 'Carson' is completed

November 20th 1869



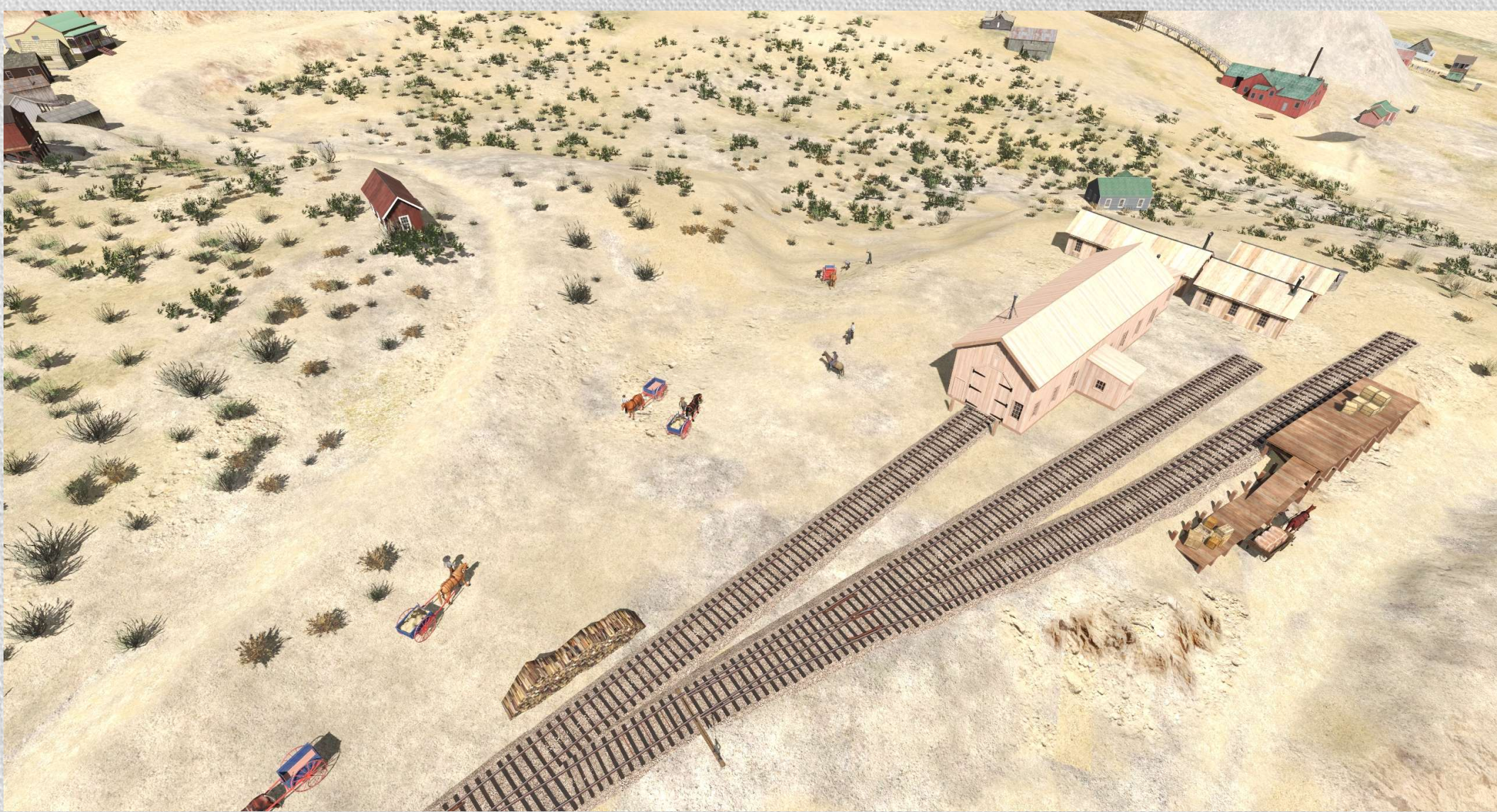
Tracks from Carson complete to the car shops

November 26th 1869



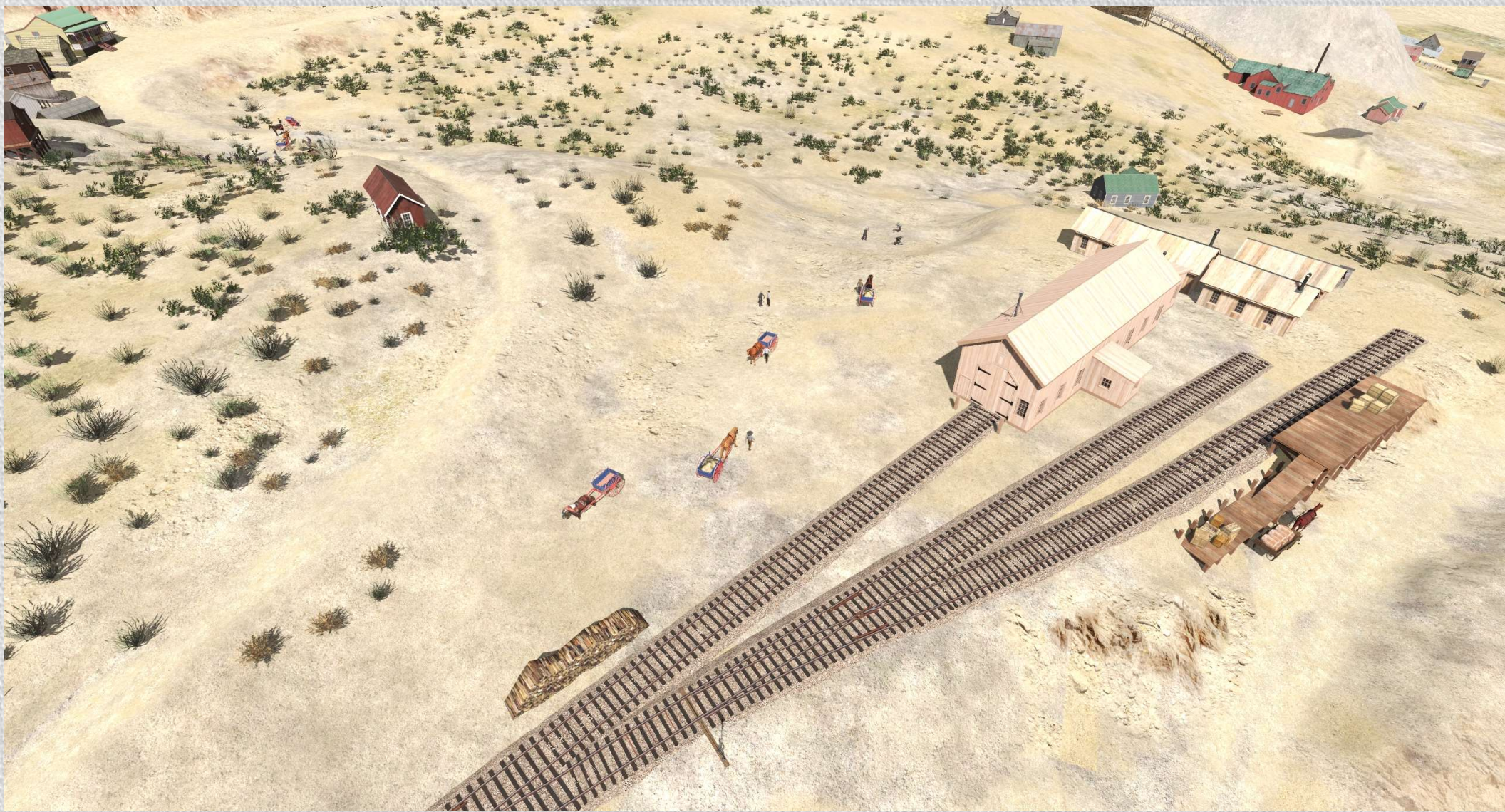
Passenger car No 1 (1st) completed

November 29th 1869



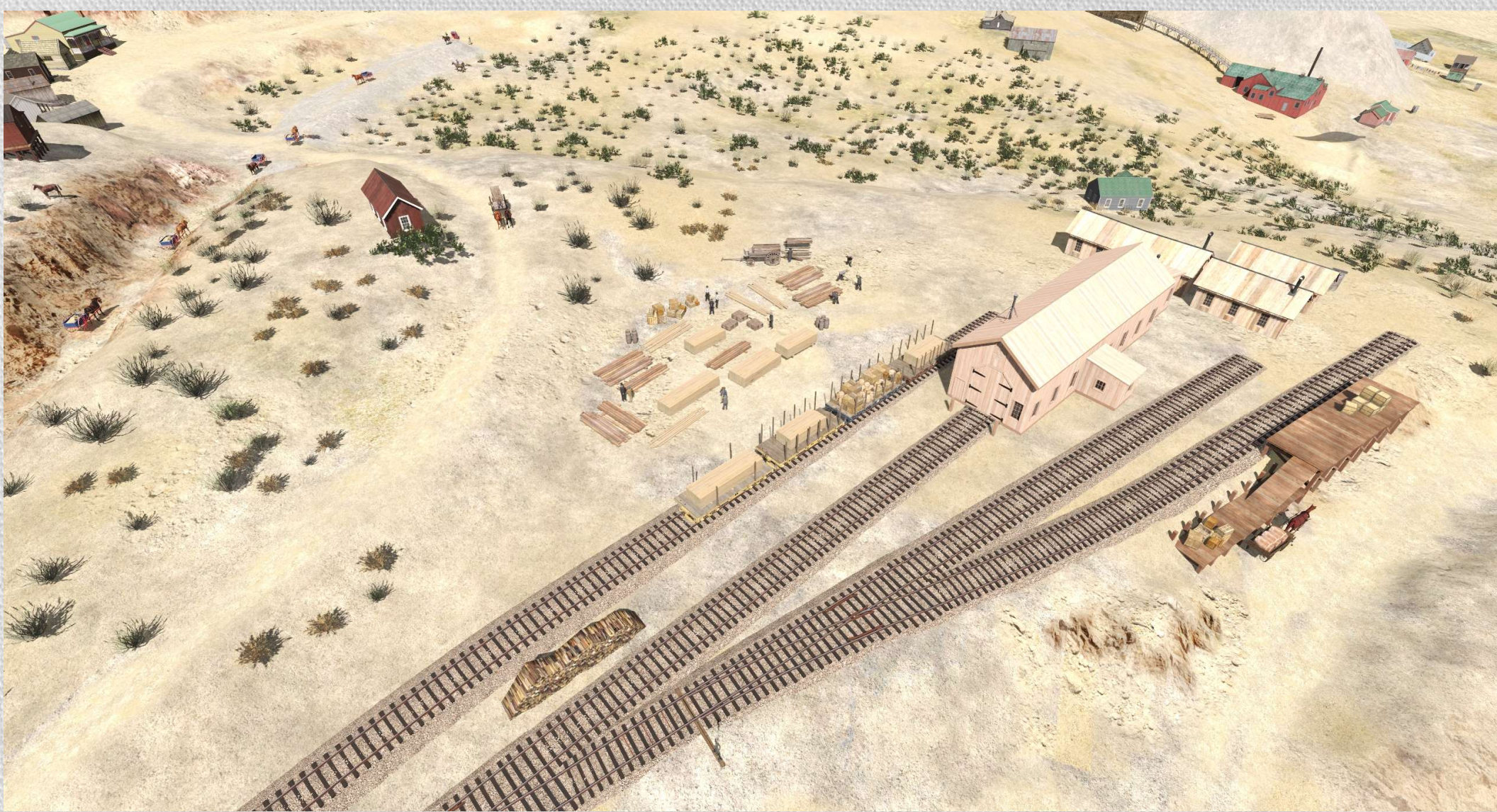
Area for round house being graded

December 6th 1869



Grading to downtown depot site has begun

December 22nd 1869



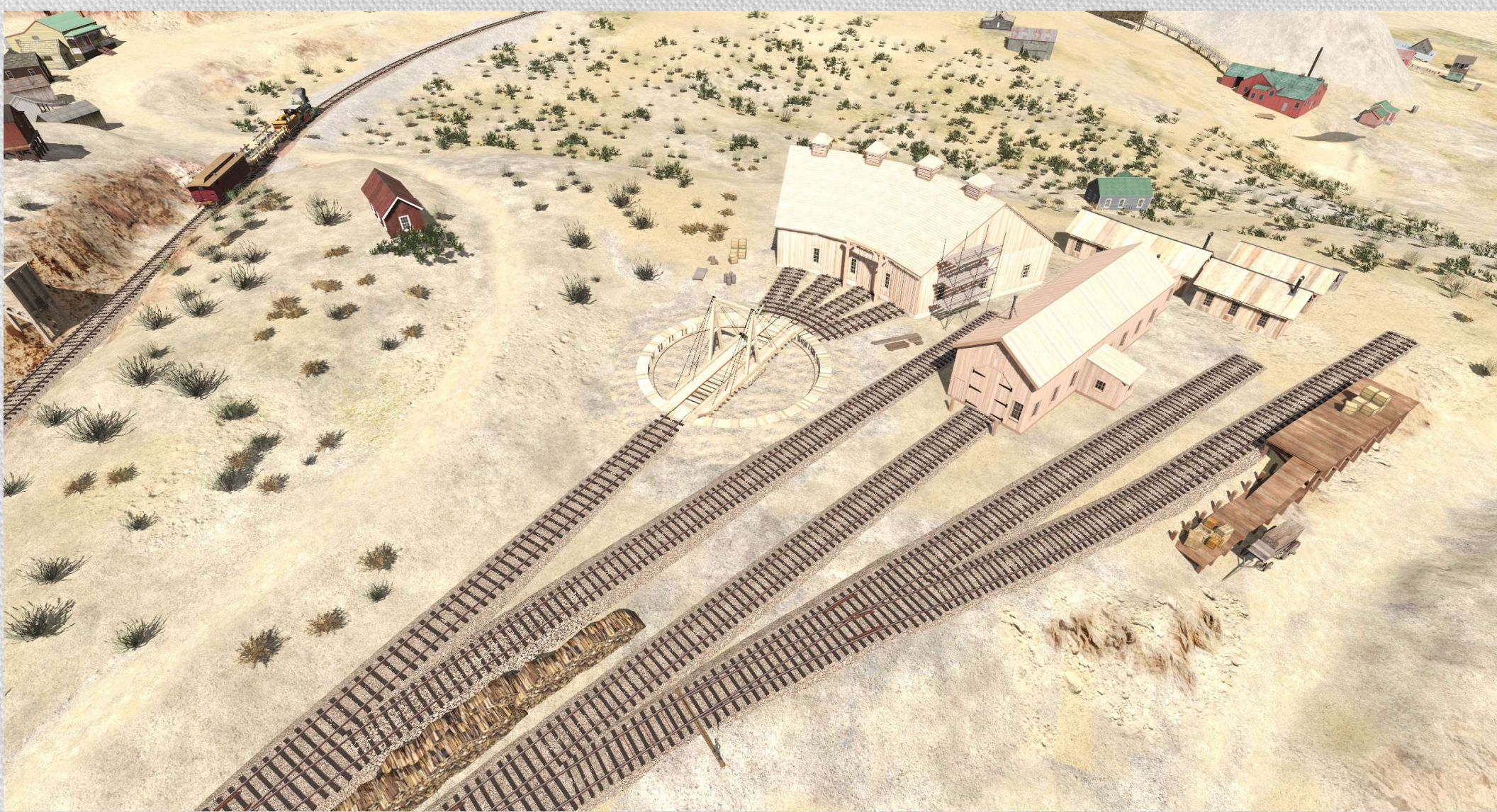
Round house construction begins

January 5th 1870



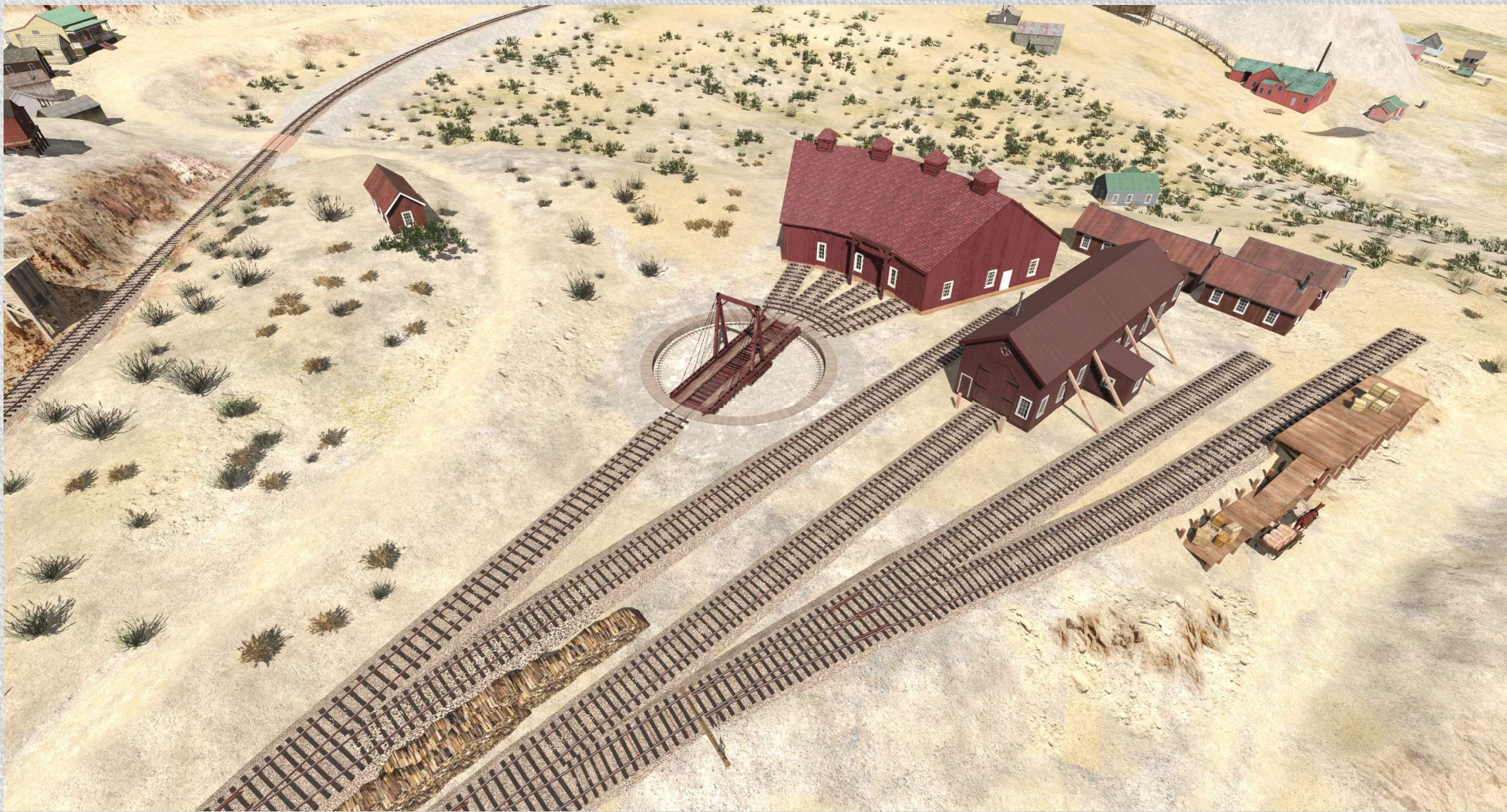
Round house is roofed in
The cut to the depot is complete

January 29th 1870



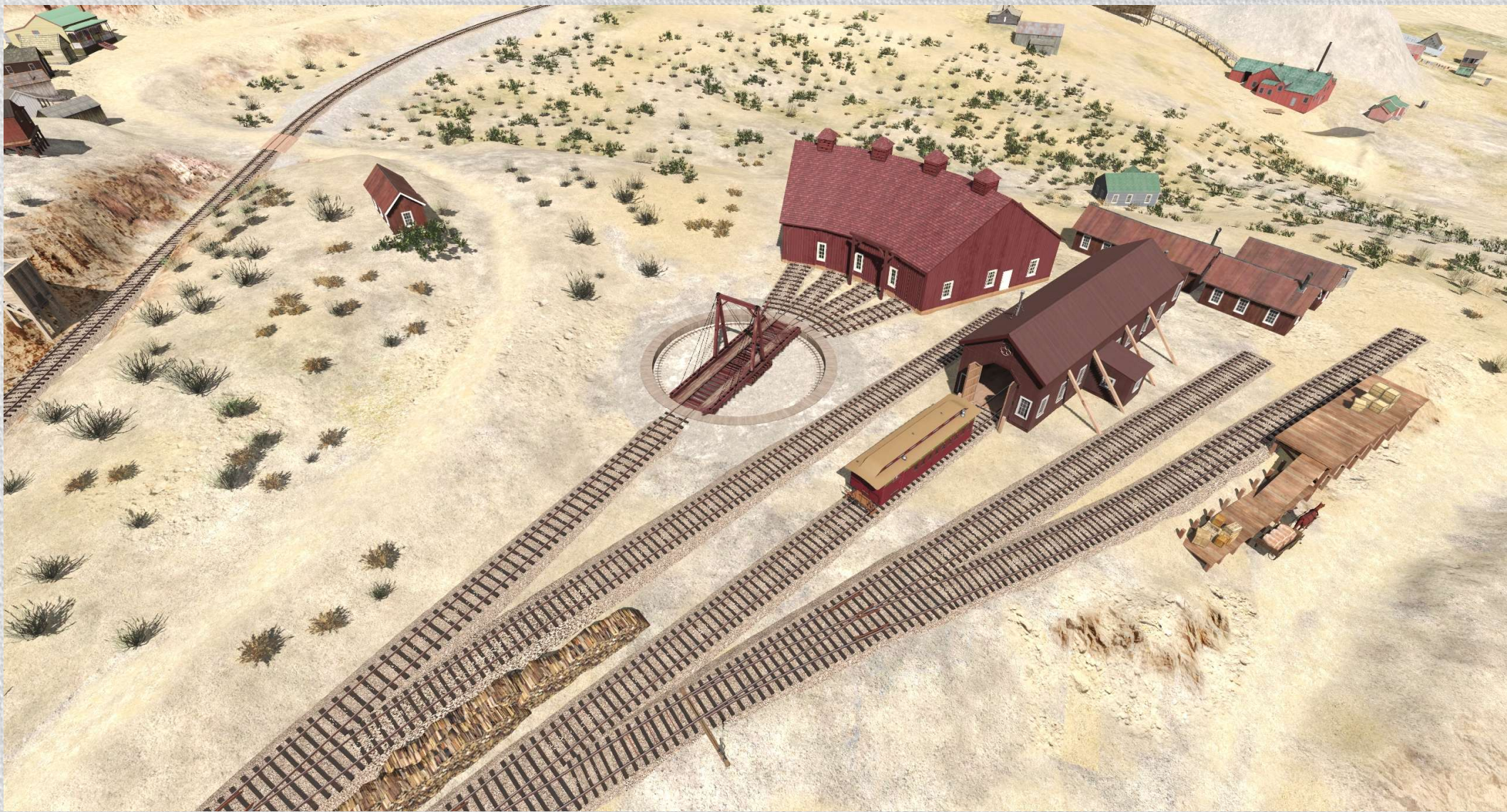
First passenger train to the Virginia City depot site

February 4th 1870



Round house being painted

April 17th 1870



Passenger car No. 2 (1st) put into service

October 1st - 7th 1870



October 1: 'I.E. James' in service

October 6: 'Nevada' in service

October 7: 'Humboldt' in service

January 12th - 31st 1871



January 12: Caboose No. 3 (1st) completed
January 31: Caboose No. 4 (1st) completed

September 1st, 1872



First through train from Reno

September 1872



Coal dump south of round house

Late May / early April 1873



First experimental combination ore car built at shops

June 10th 1873



The Chollar builds a trestle over the V&T's main line

December 22nd 1873



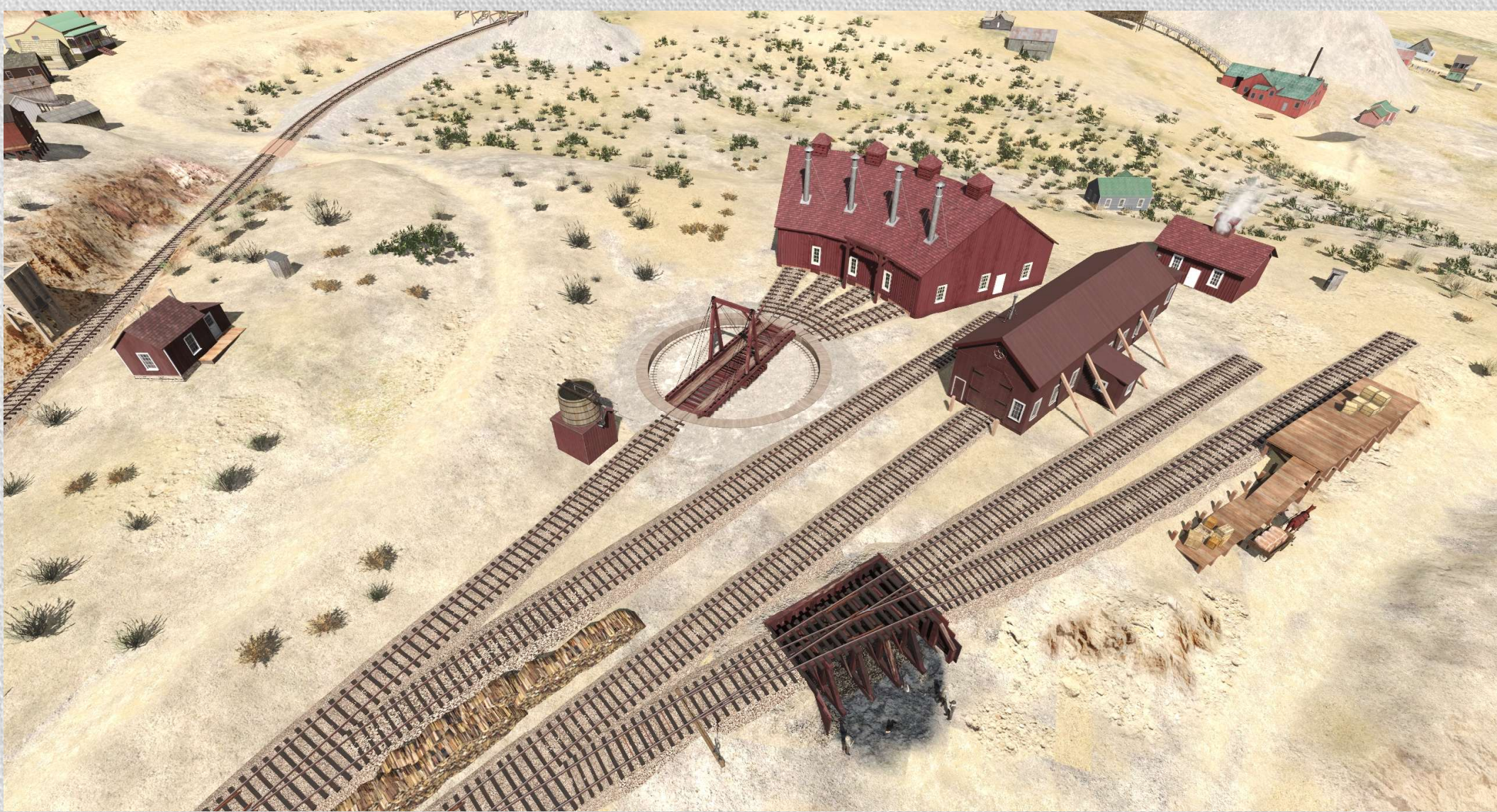
Small houses are built for the switch tenders

June 10th 1874



20' stacks added to the round house

Around July 20th 1874



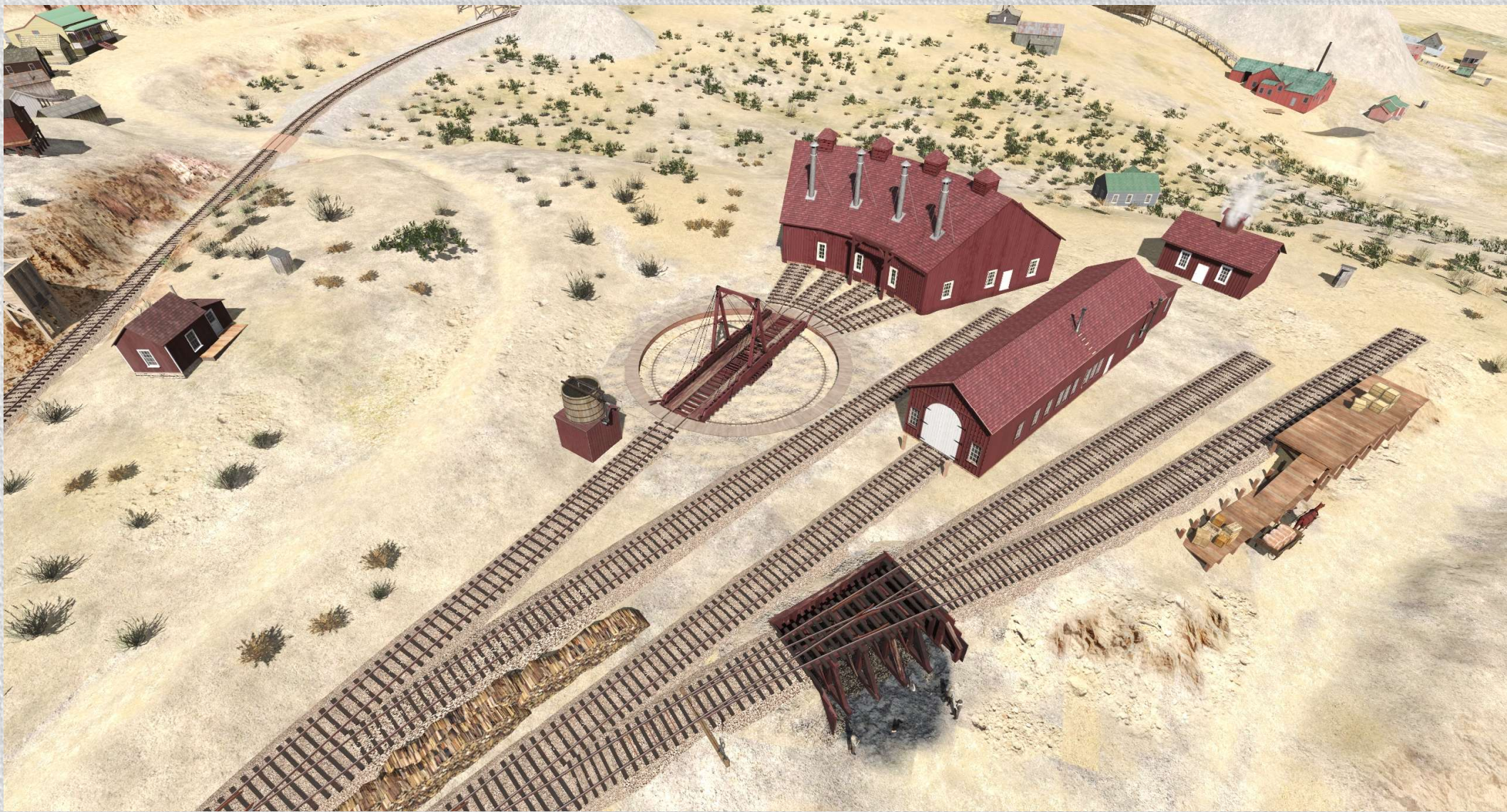
A new blacksmith shop is built

Around September 26th 1874



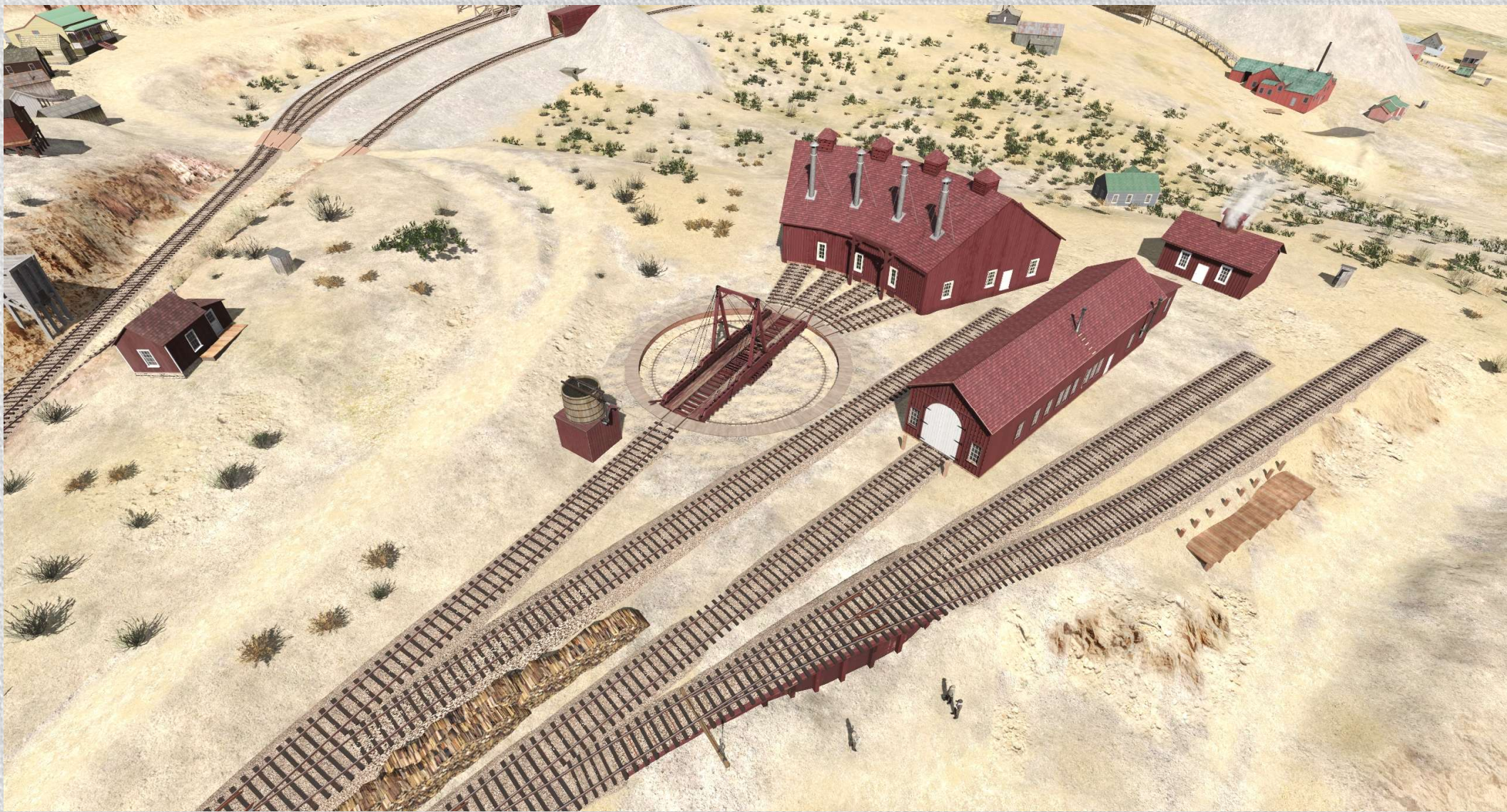
The turntable is replaced with a larger (60') table

October 6th 1874



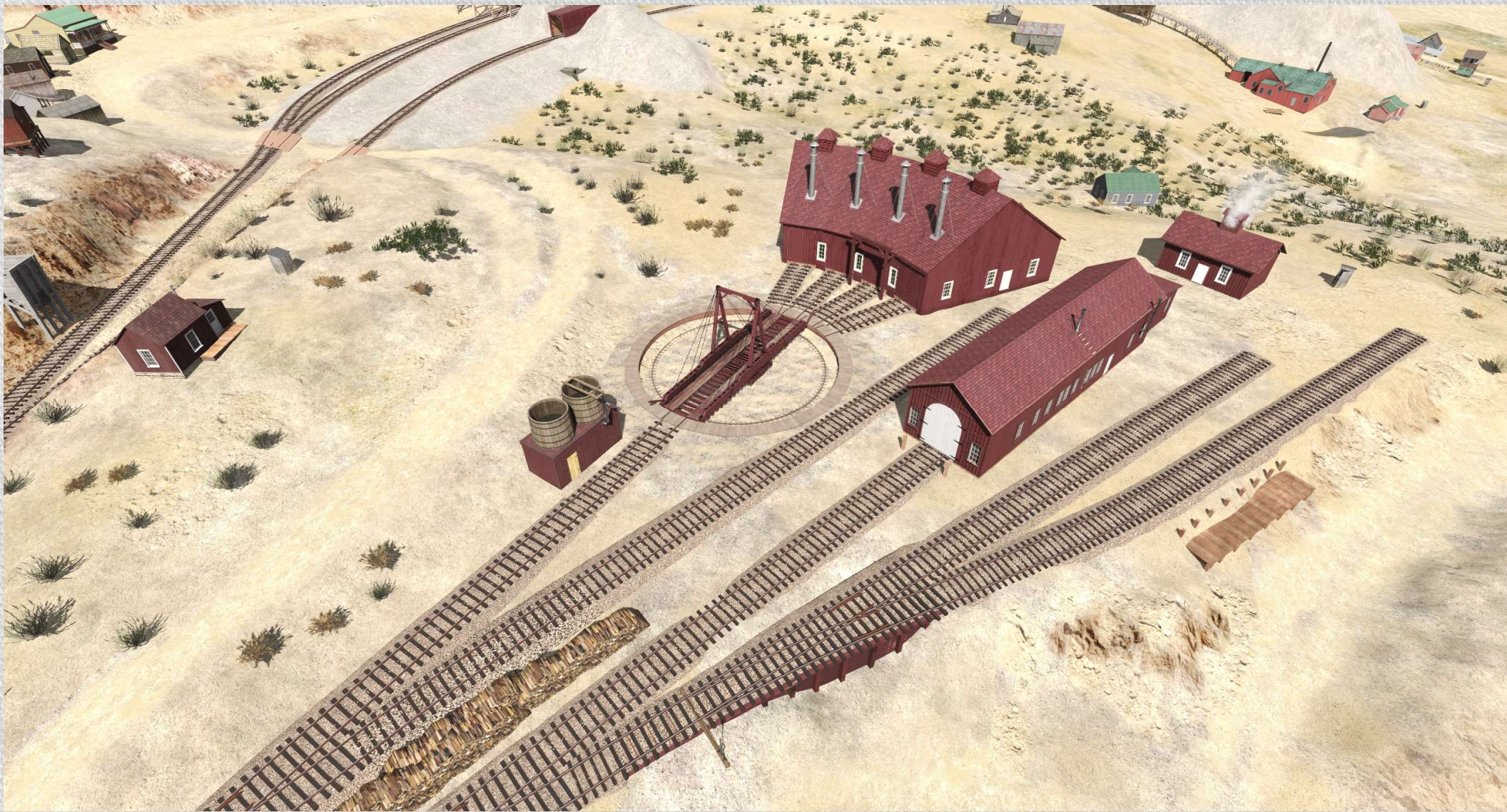
A new substantial machine shop

1875-1876



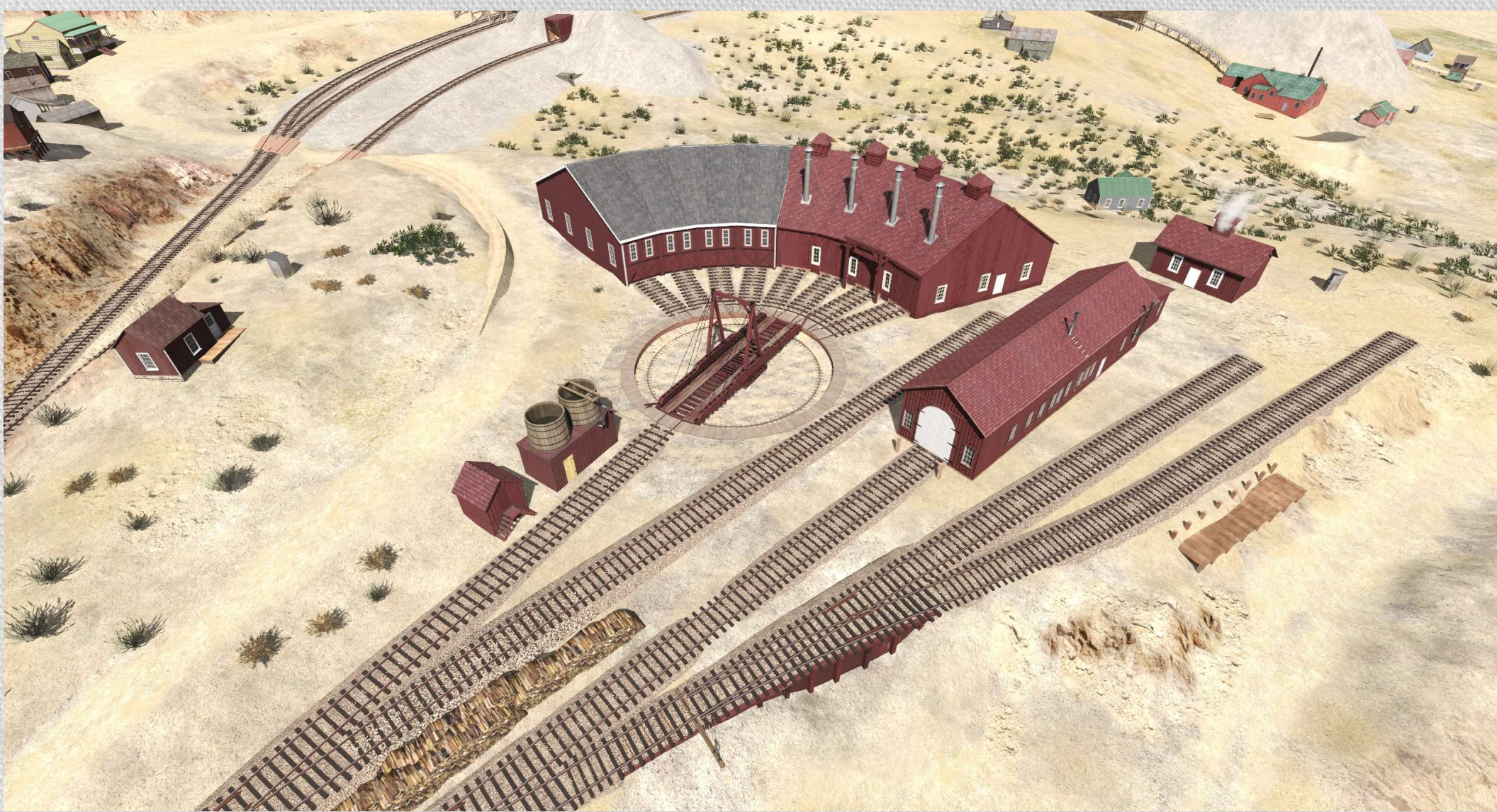
Chollar siding built (in place by October 1875)
Low line started

Around January, 1876



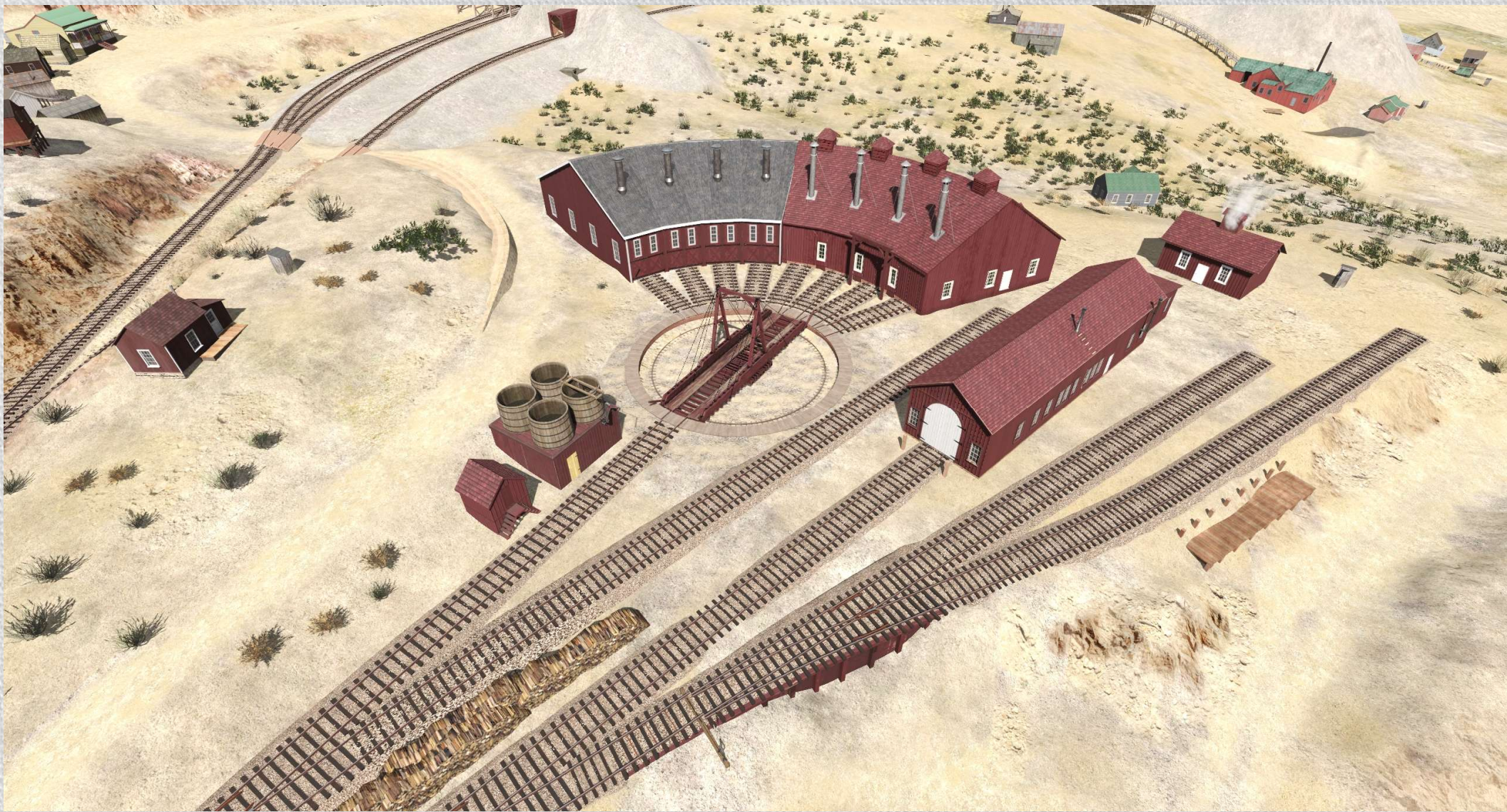
Second water tank added

October 14, 1876



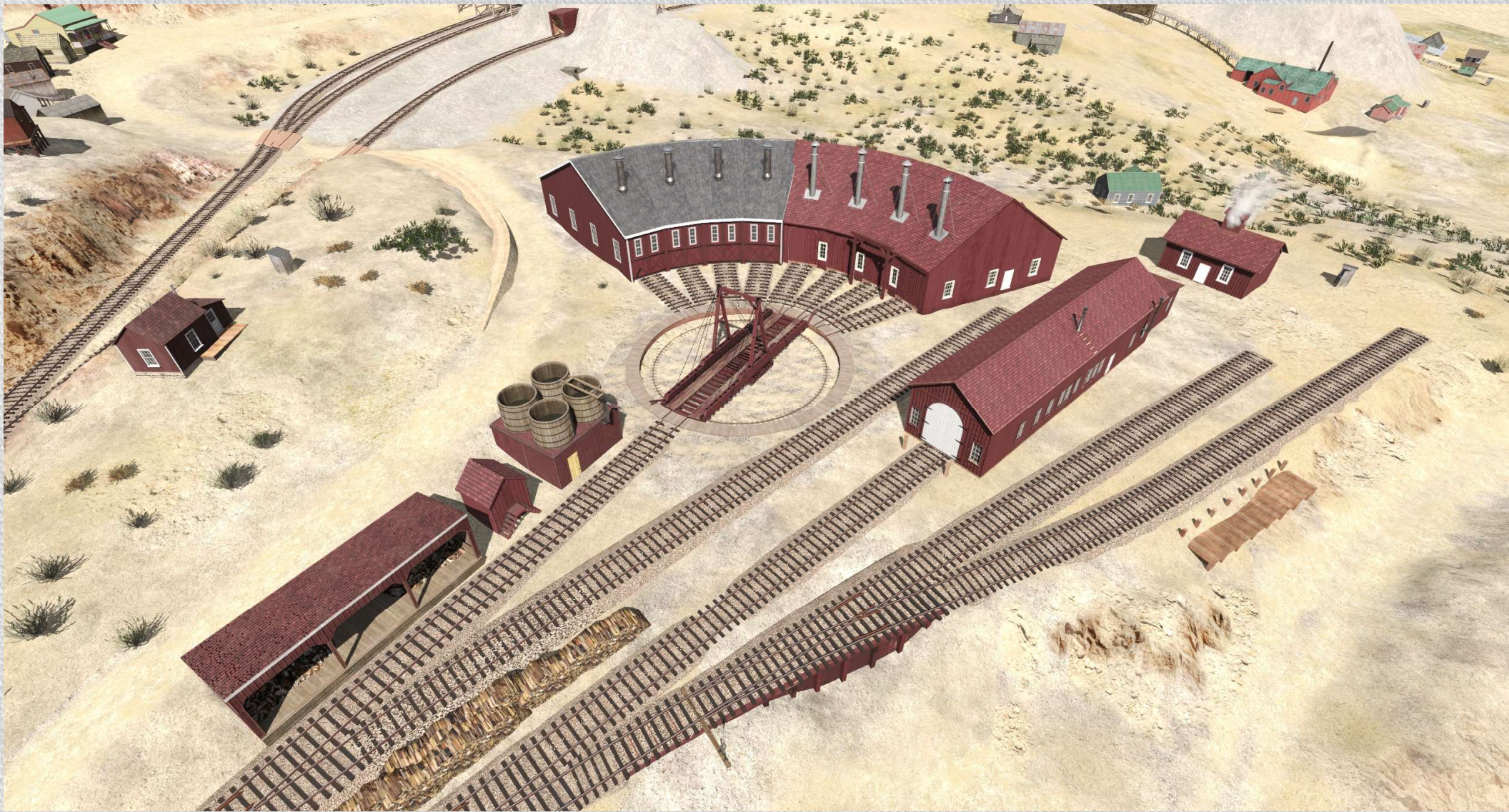
New section of round house complete except for smoke jacks
Sand house built by Oct 26

Around November 21st, 1876



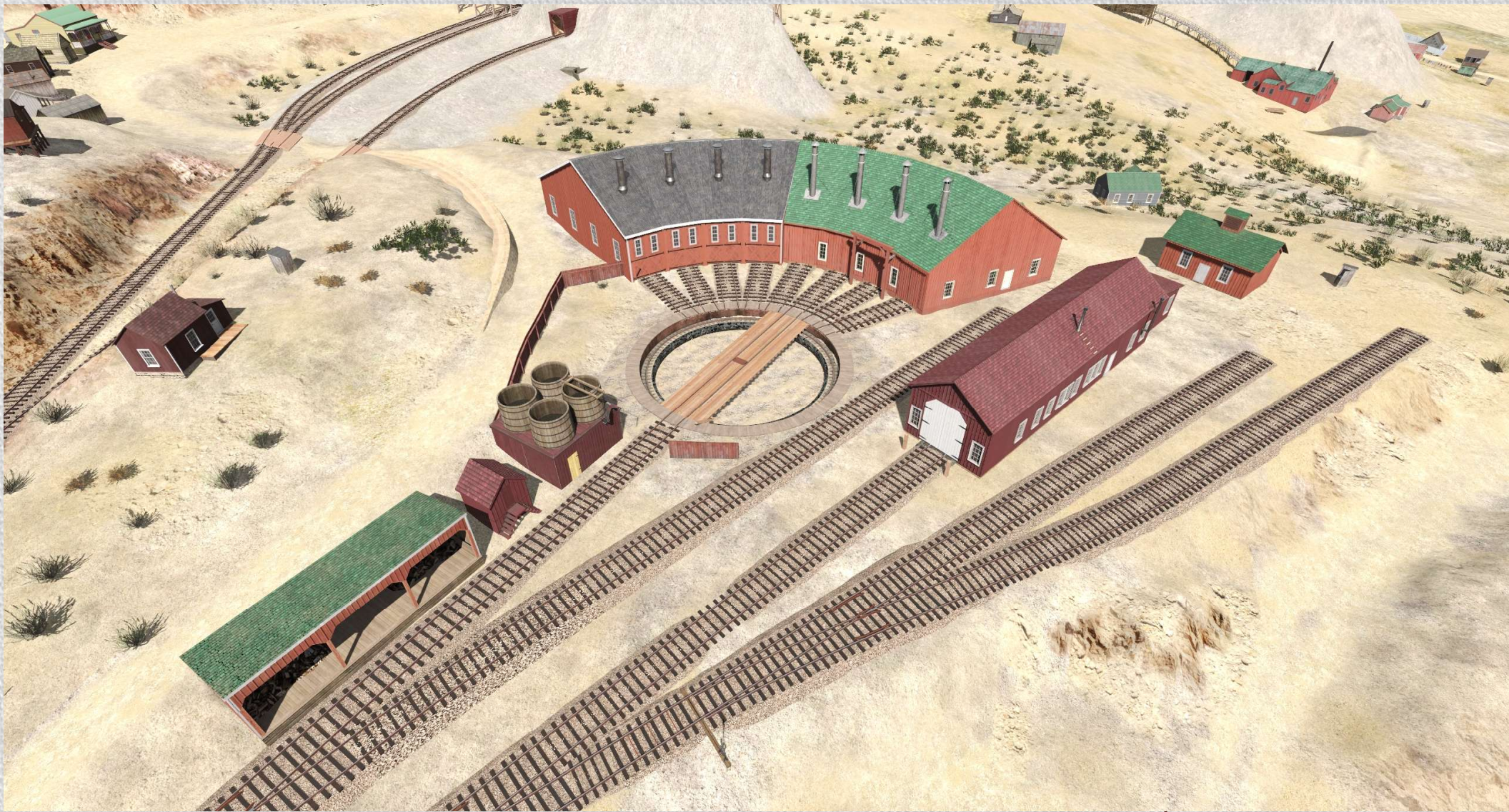
Two more water tanks added

Around 1878



Wood fuel shed added
Cupolas removed from old round house

December, 1890



Turntable replaced (operational by Dec 29th)
Cupola patches are gone by now
Buildings transitioning to cabooses red / green roofs?

1897



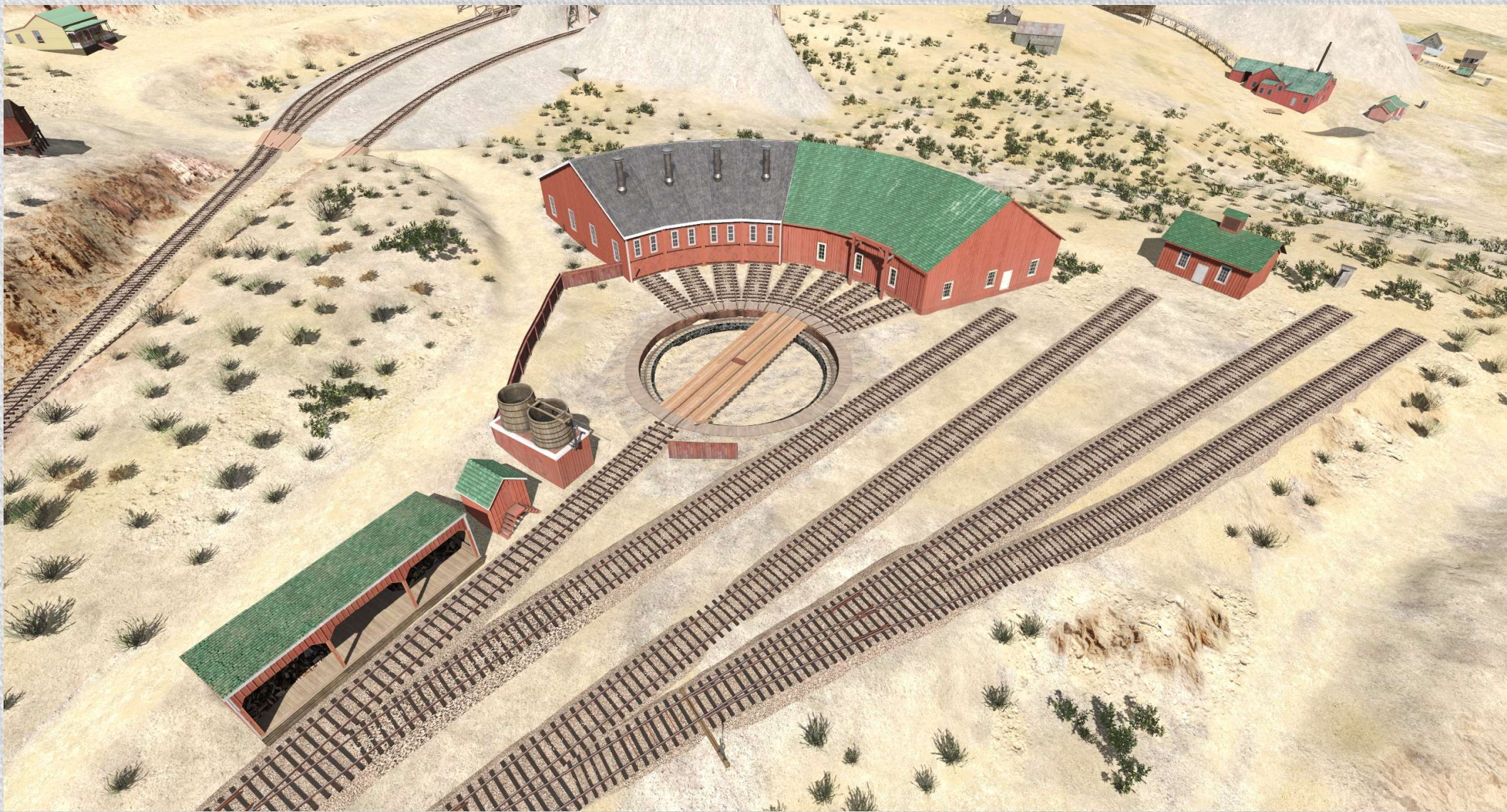
Water tanks rebuilt; two tanks now

1908



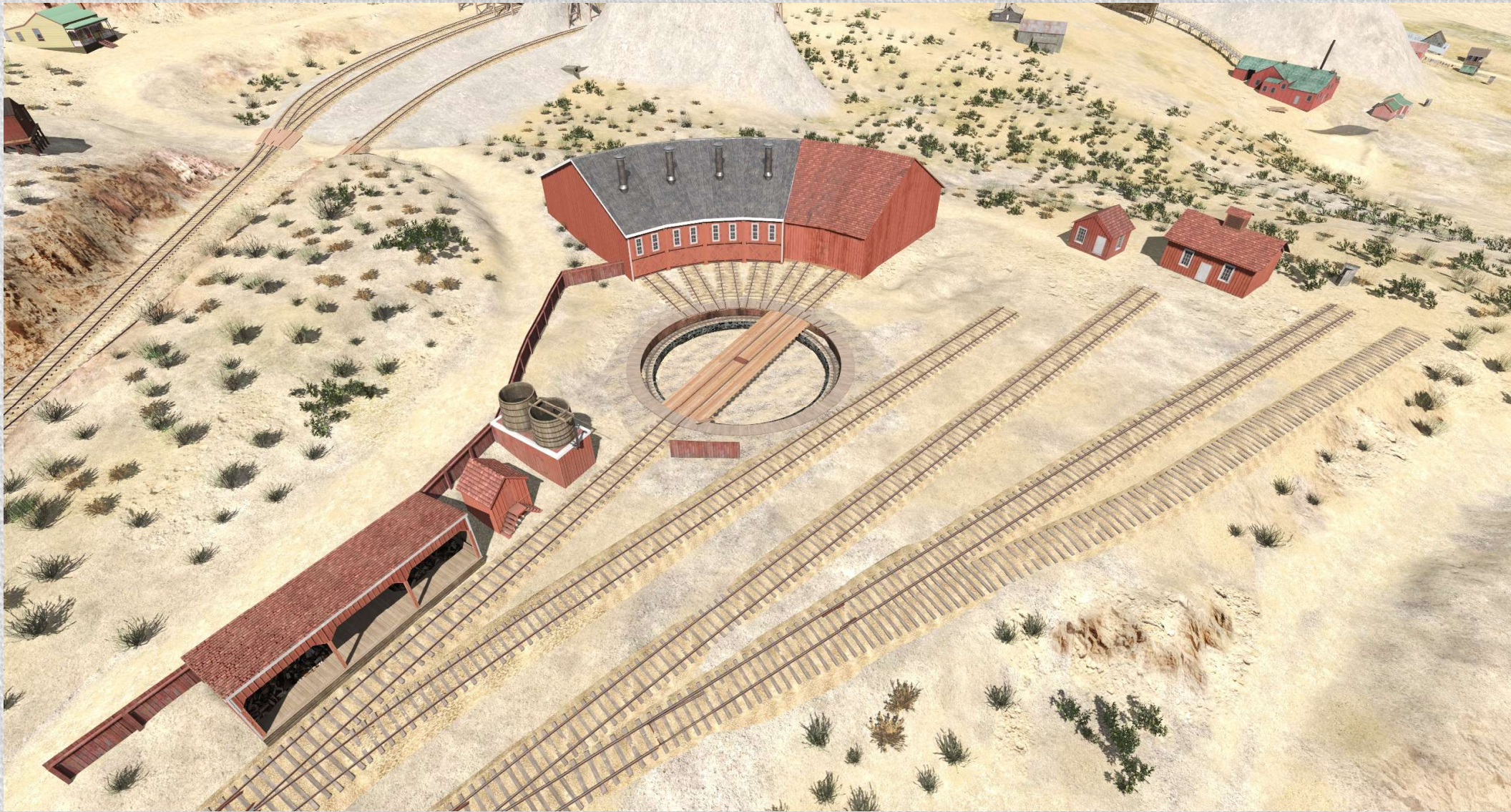
Car shops gone by now

1914



Smoke jacks removed from old round house by now
Chollar tunnel daylighted

August – September 1921



Round house stalls 1 & 2 removed; no more end windows
Office seperated and moved adjacent to blacksmith shop
Siding 'L' removed

May 1937



Round house is down to two smoke jacks by now

June 4 1938



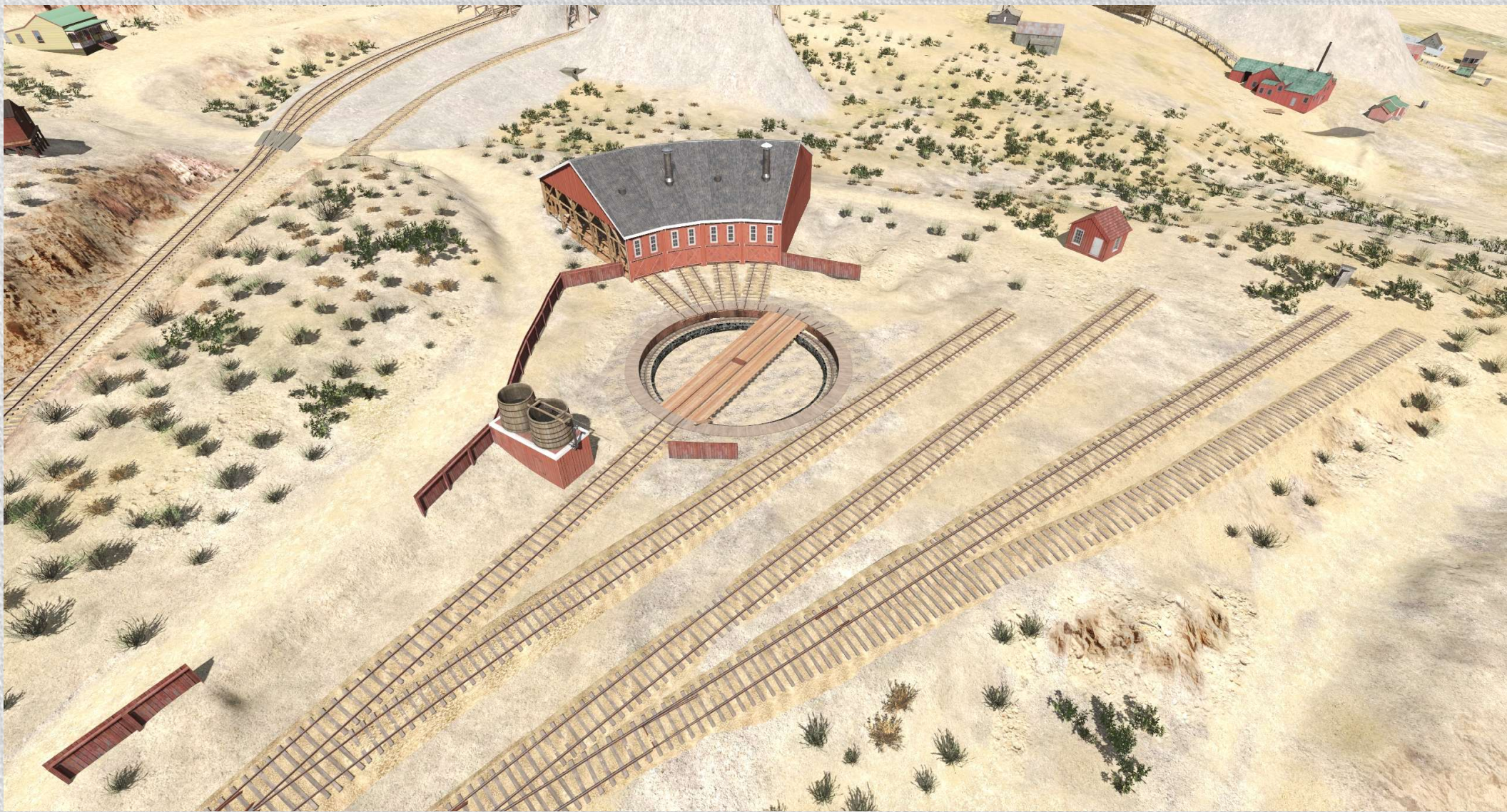
Round house is down to four stalls by now
Last freight train to Virginia City
Virginia City branch abandonment approved*

January 1939



Low line retired; rails removed

June 1940



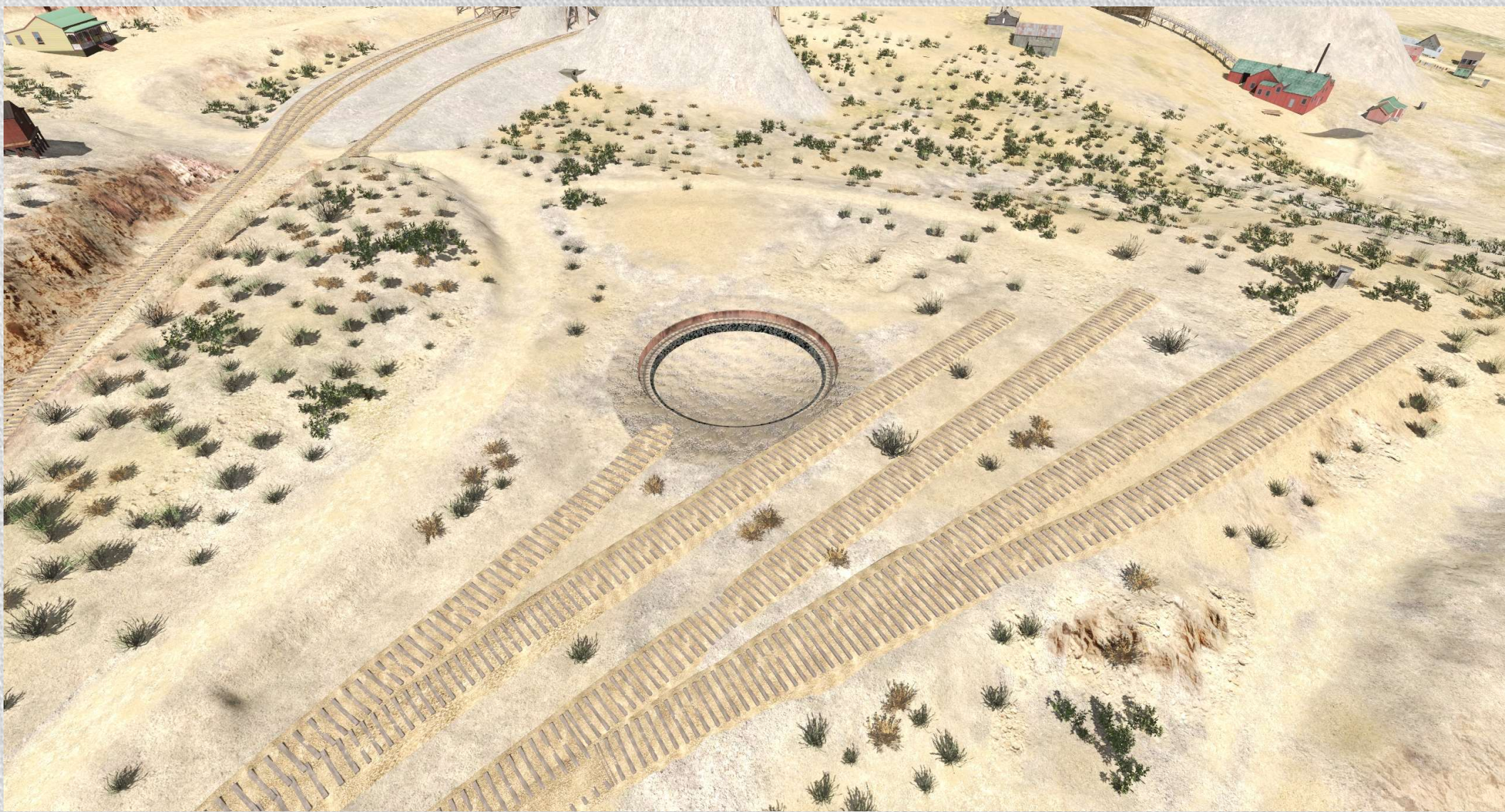
Buildings sold
Round house west wall salvaged

October 1941



Mid 1941 - Virginia City branch abandoned (again)
Rails pulled
Turntable removed and stored

November 1942



Round house burns in wildfire – Nov 13
Falls down next day

Time passes...



Site returns to nature...

October 1973



Bob Gray builds a new engine house

May 4, 1974



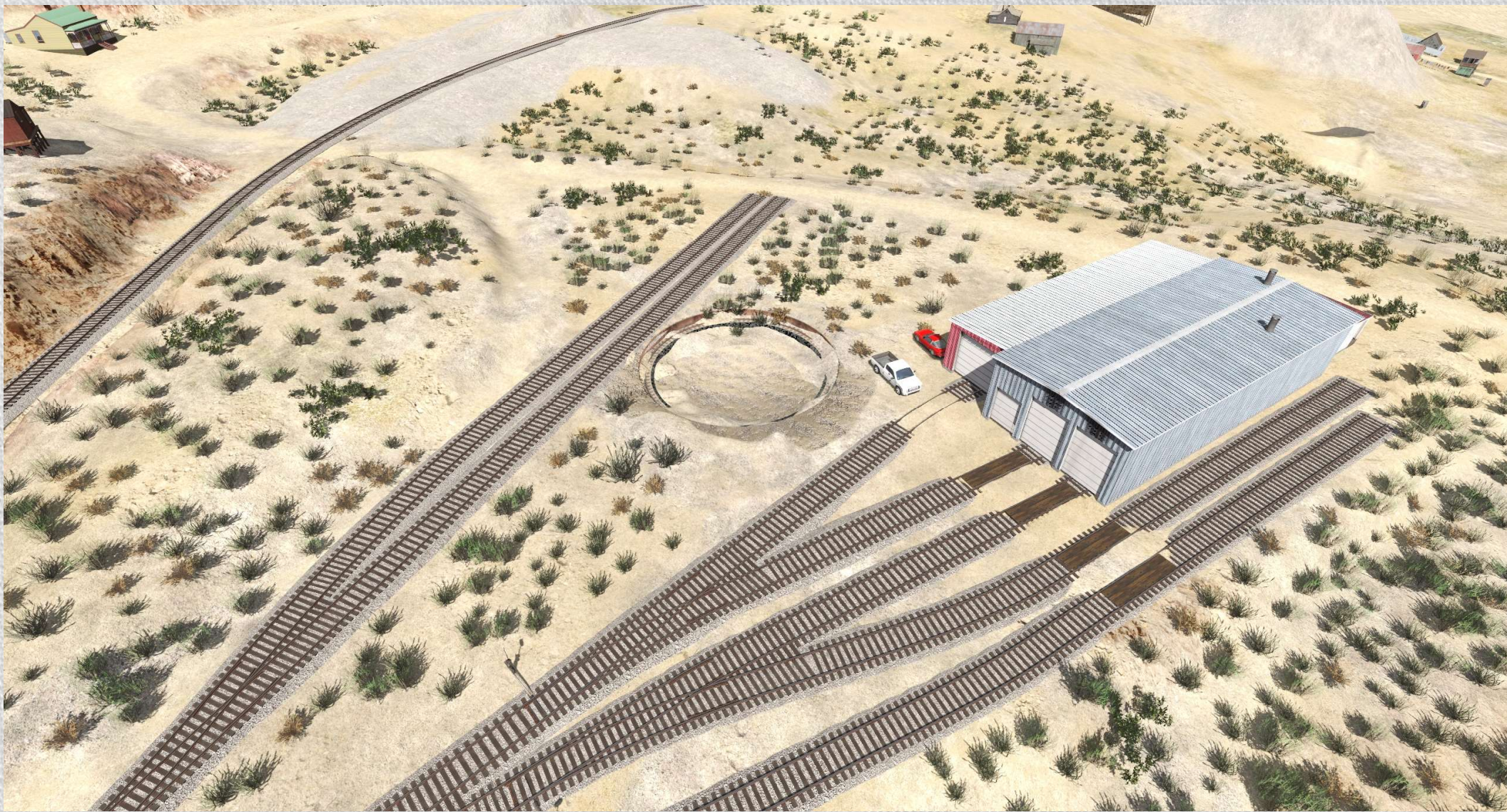
First spike driven at the shop

1975



Yard tracks laid

Winter 2023-2024



Extra stall built on west side