

Building the V&T: 1869-1870



2019 Virginia and Truckee Railroad History Conference

By Curtis Reid

Special thanks to:

Andrew Brandon

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Mike Collins

Stephen Drew

Setting the Scene:

1868 (last year):

- Reno is founded by the Central Pacific
- People start abandoning Washoe City
- Mines in VC are in a downturn
- Union Mill and Mining dominates the mining industry

Mills, Ralston, & Sharon see an opportunity:

- Mill low grade ore
- Reduce transportation costs
- Hire I.E. James to survey a railroad

Feb 18, 1869



- Ground breaking ceremony at American Flat
- Grading begins

By March 6th, 1869



Work begins on the American Flat tunnel

Not much later in March



Homestead and Yellow Jacket tunnels started

June, 1869



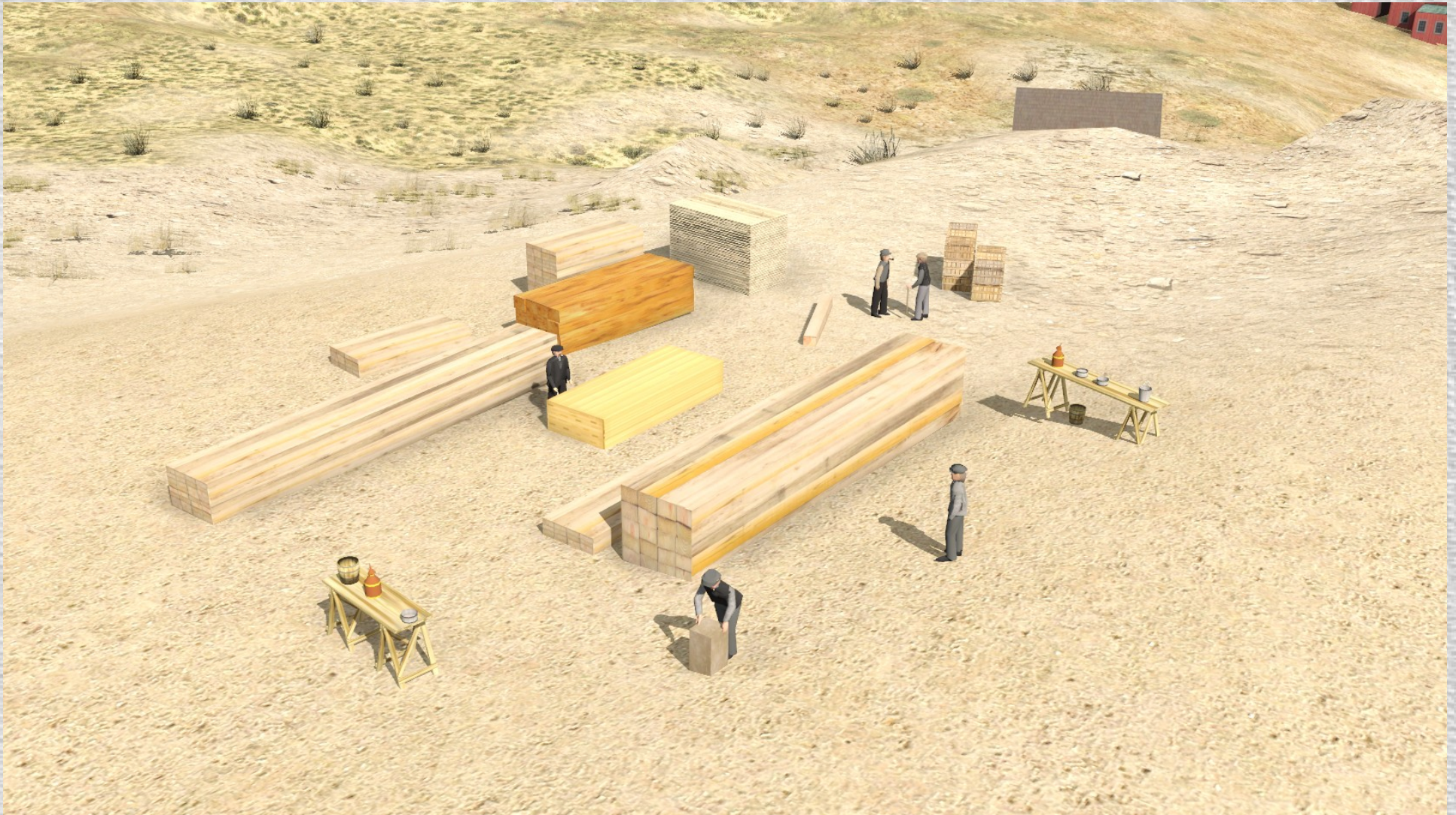
- Work begins on the Crown Point trestle

July 26th, 1869



- Homestead tunnel ends connected

August 4th, 1869



- Start of construction of the first V&T structure
- (Virginia City Car Shops)

August 6th, 1869



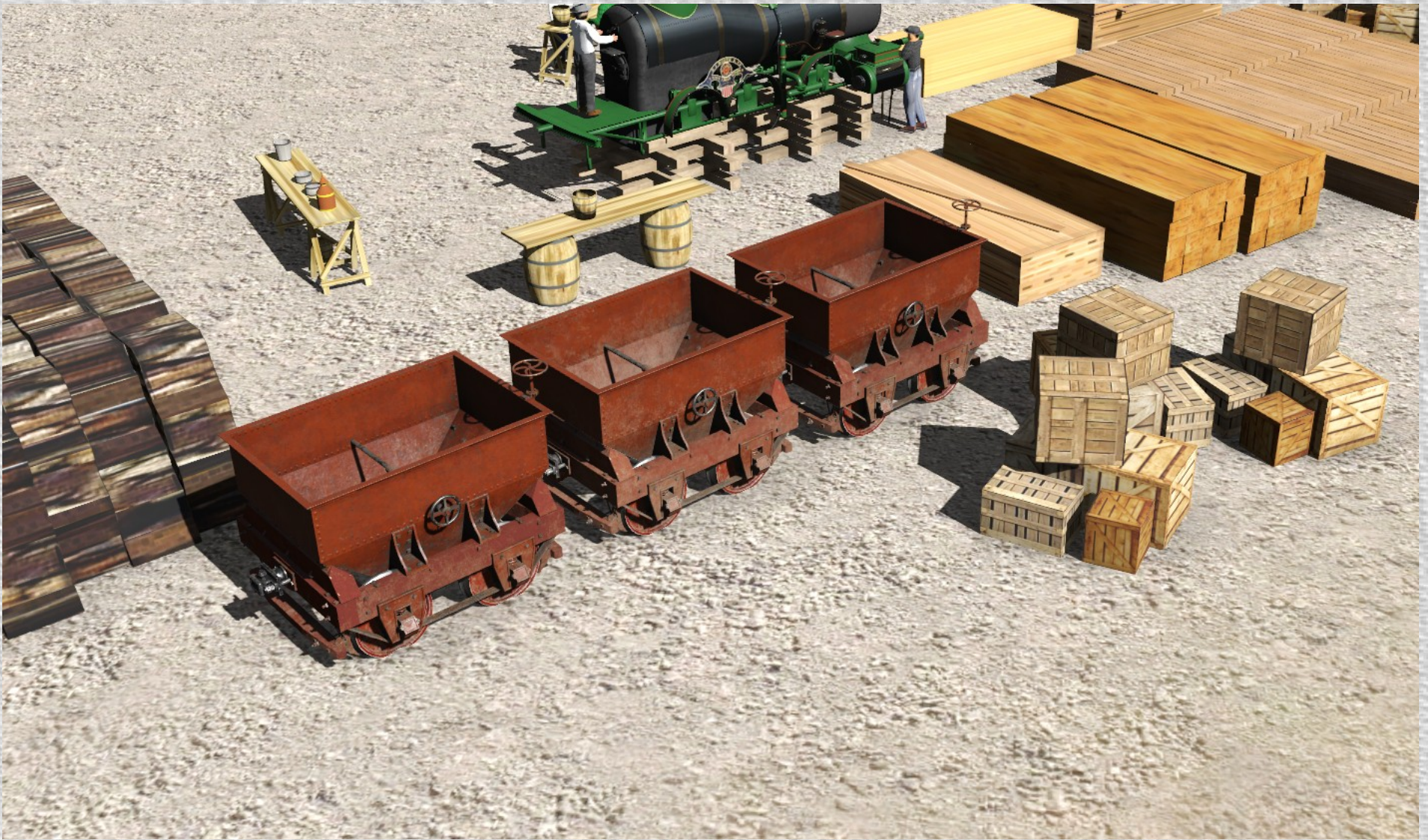
- The Lyon arrives in Carson City

August 6th, 1869



- Homestead tunnel is timbered

(around) August 10th, 1869



- Three ore cars spotted in Carson.

August 13th, 1869



- Crown Point trestle is about half-way completed

August 28th, 1869



- Waiting for rails....
- Ties, spikes, 2 locos, 25 dump cars in Carson

September 28th, 1869



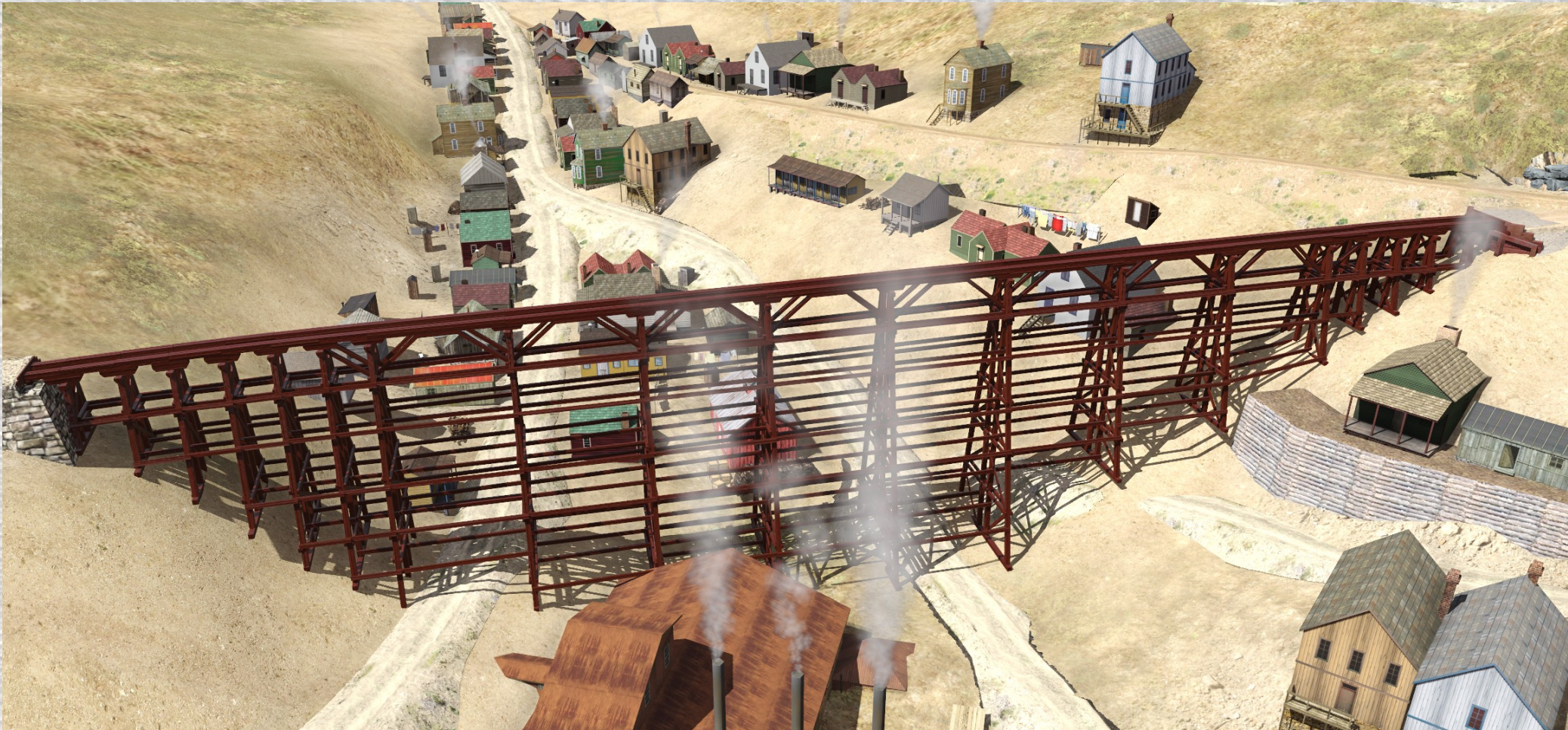
- The first rail is laid (Carson City)

September 29th, 1869



- The Lyon is placed on the rails

September 30th



- The Crown Point Trestle is completed
- Painting almost done

Around October 6th, 1869



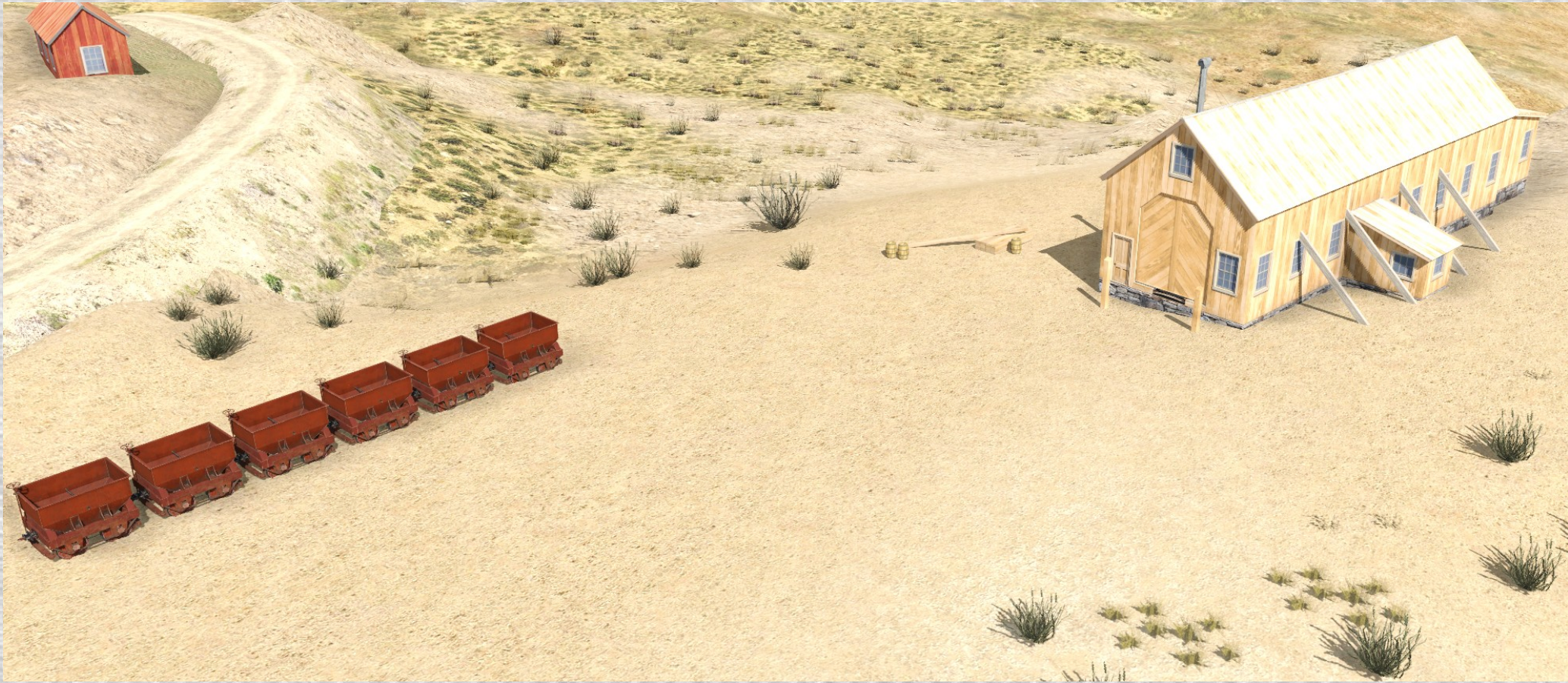
- Tracks reach Sierra foothills – Mill (Ash) Canyon
- Tracks almost to Empire

October 15, 1869



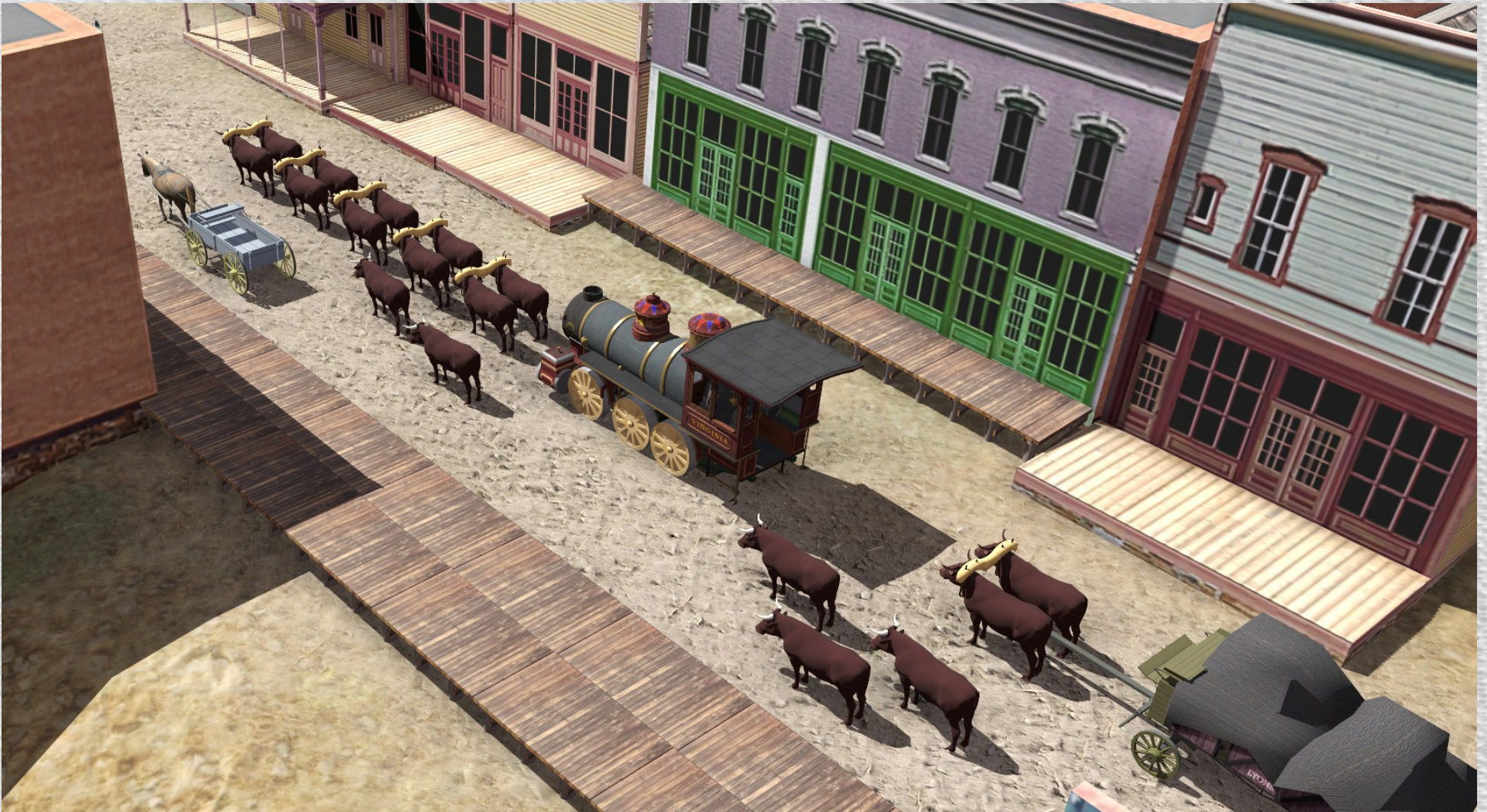
- Tracks are almost to the Brunswick Mill

October 17, 1869



“A lot of quartz cars made of boiler iron are to be seen near the line of the road in the southern part of the city.” Daily Territorial Enterprise

October 26th, 1869



- Locomotive No 4 (Virginia) reaches Virginia City
- Goes to new car shops for assembly

October 30th, 1869



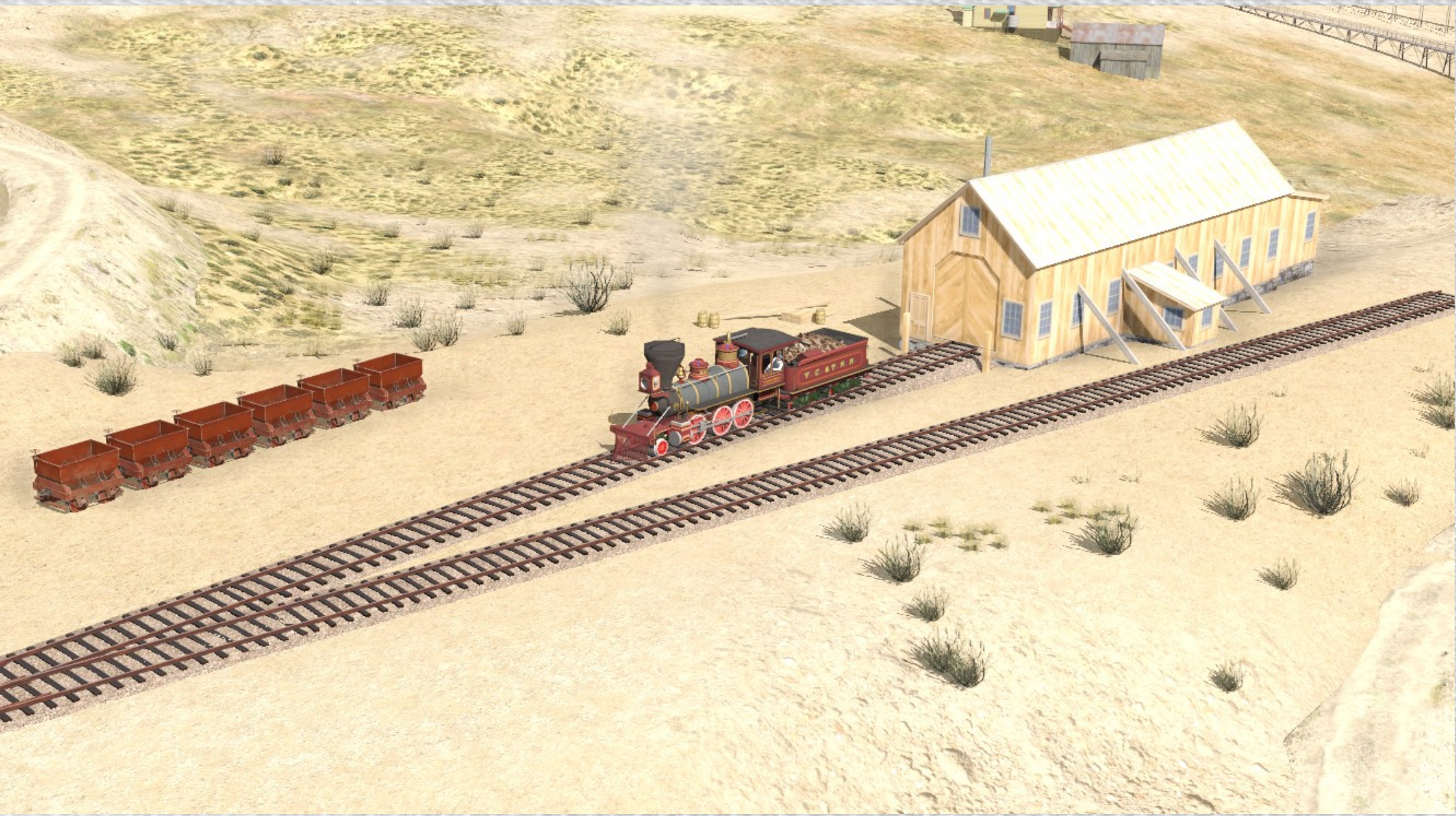
- 1st freight over 'VC&T RR'
- Farmer Treadway ships two sacks of potatoes and a sack of beets

November 3rd, 1869



- First train through the American Flat tunnel!

November 11th, 1869



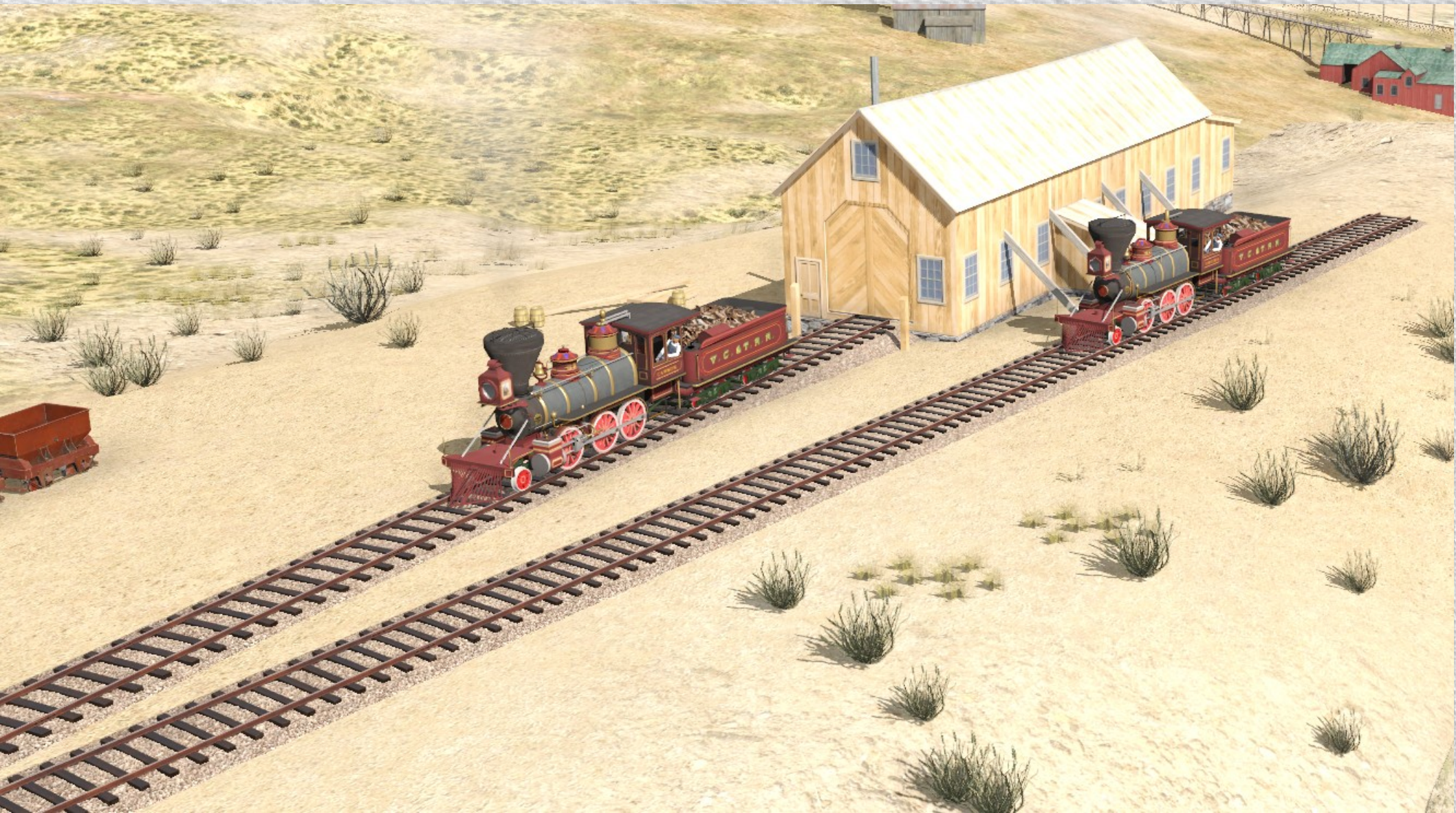
- Locomotive No 4 (Virginia) is completed

November 12th, 1869



- Tracks reach Gold Hill
- First train arrives in Gold Hill

November 14th, 1869



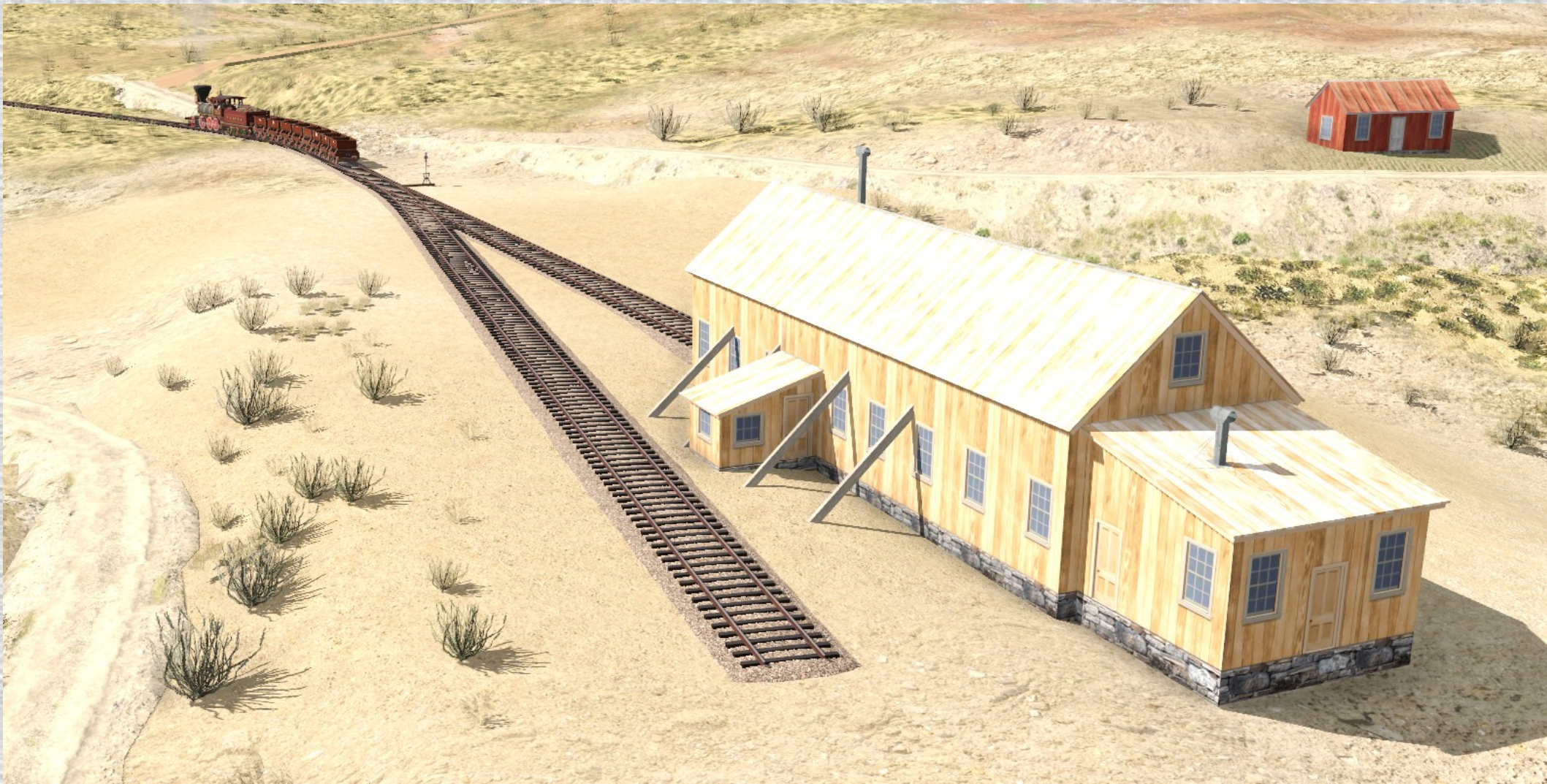
- Locomotive No 5 (Carson) is completed

Nov. 18th (Thanksgiving Day), 1869



- First ore delivered to a mill:
- 7 car loads of Yellow Jacket ore delivered to the Morgan Mill

November 19th, 1869



- Tracks reach Virginia City shop

November 26th, 1869



- Coach No. 1 completed

November 27th, 1869



- First passenger train (Carson to Gold Hill)

And....



- Area being filled / graded for the Virginia City roundhouse

December 6th, 1869



Track being graded toward Virginia City depot site

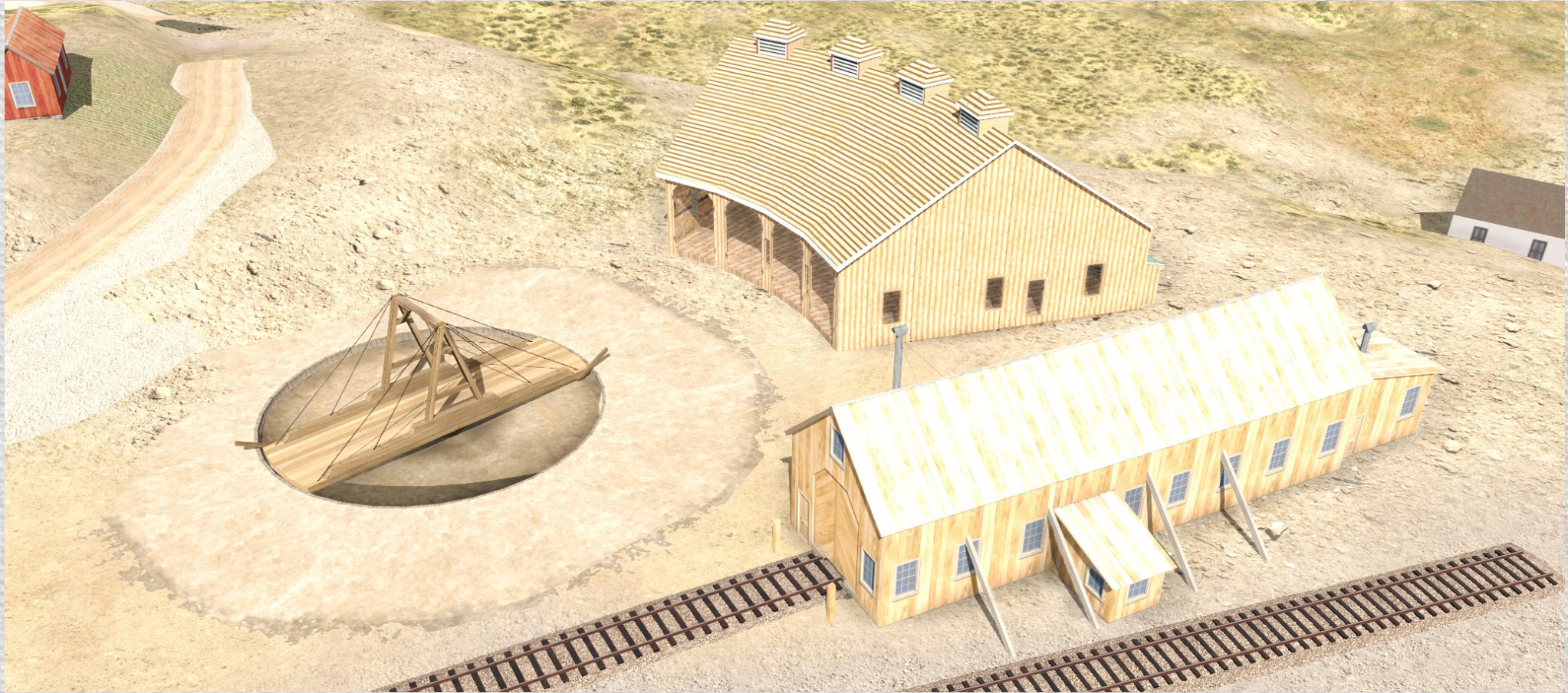
December 16th, 1869

- Passenger trains now scheduled:
“In answer to many inquires, we would state that a train leaves Gold Hill for Carson every morning at 8 o'clock, starting from the Yellow Jacket dump, and from Carson about 4 P.M. Until the road is completed to the depot at Virginia City, more definite time cannot be fixed. Early in January a time table will be issued. “
- Gold Hill News, Dec 16 1869

December 21st, 1869

- Timetable adjustment:
- Train now leaves Gold Hill 15 minutes later
(8:15)
- Train now leaves Carson City 50 minutes later
(4:50)

January 5th, 1870



- Virginia City round house roofed in and nearly completed.

January 6th, 1870



- Gold Hill platform nearly completed

January 6th, 1870

- Timetable flipped:
- Passenger train now leaves Carson at 8:00 AM and Gold Hill at 4:00 PM

January 10th, 1870



- Silver City branch grading underway

January 29th, 1870



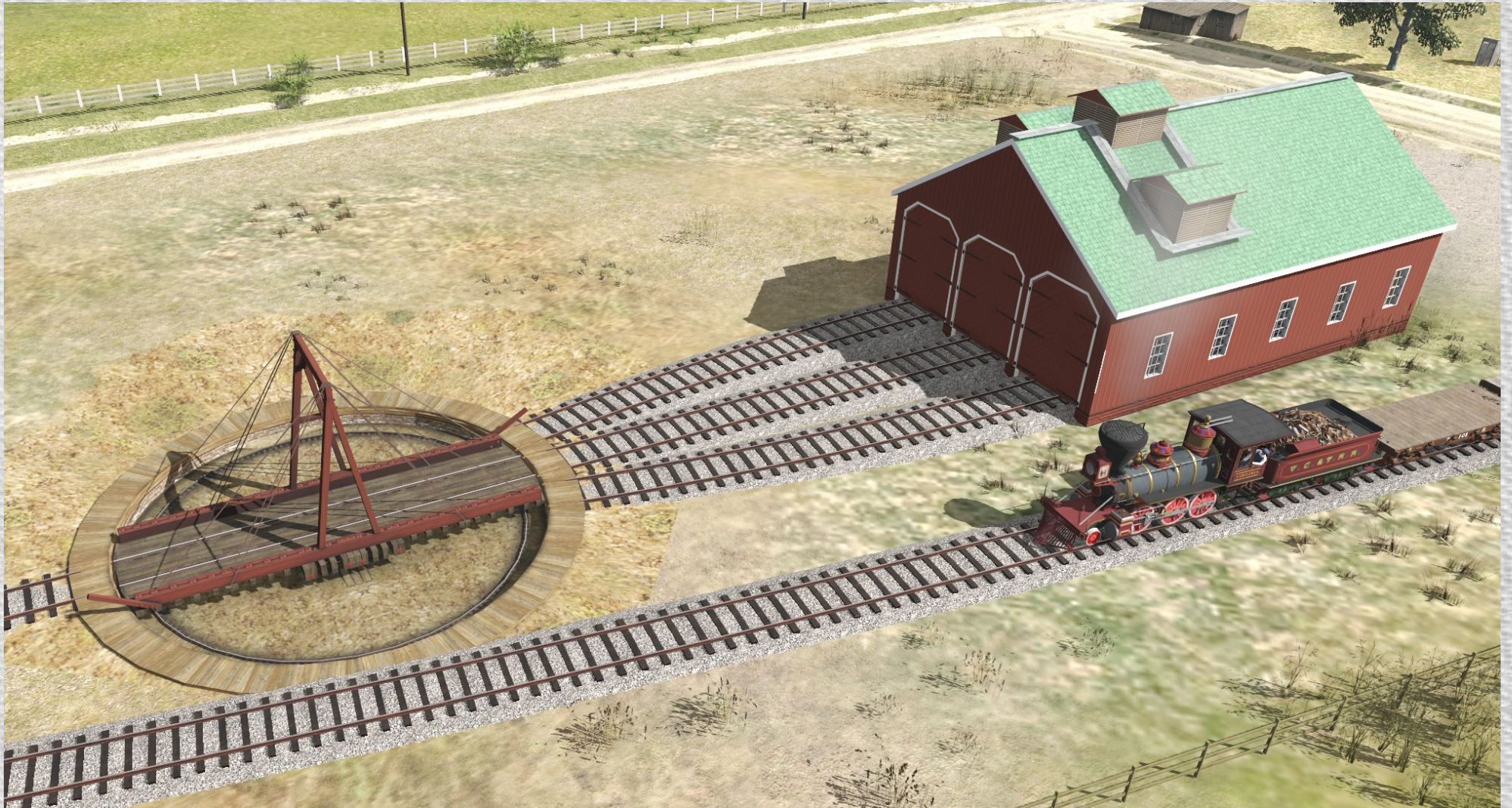
- First passenger train to Virginia City
- No depot yet...

February 5th, 1870



- Starting to lay rails for Silver City branch

February 15th, 1870



- Carson engine house 'recently completed'

March 5th, 1870



- Silver City branch open by now

March 29th, 1870



- New platform being built at Gold Hill

April 19th, 1870



- Coach 2 is in service.

June 2nd, 1870



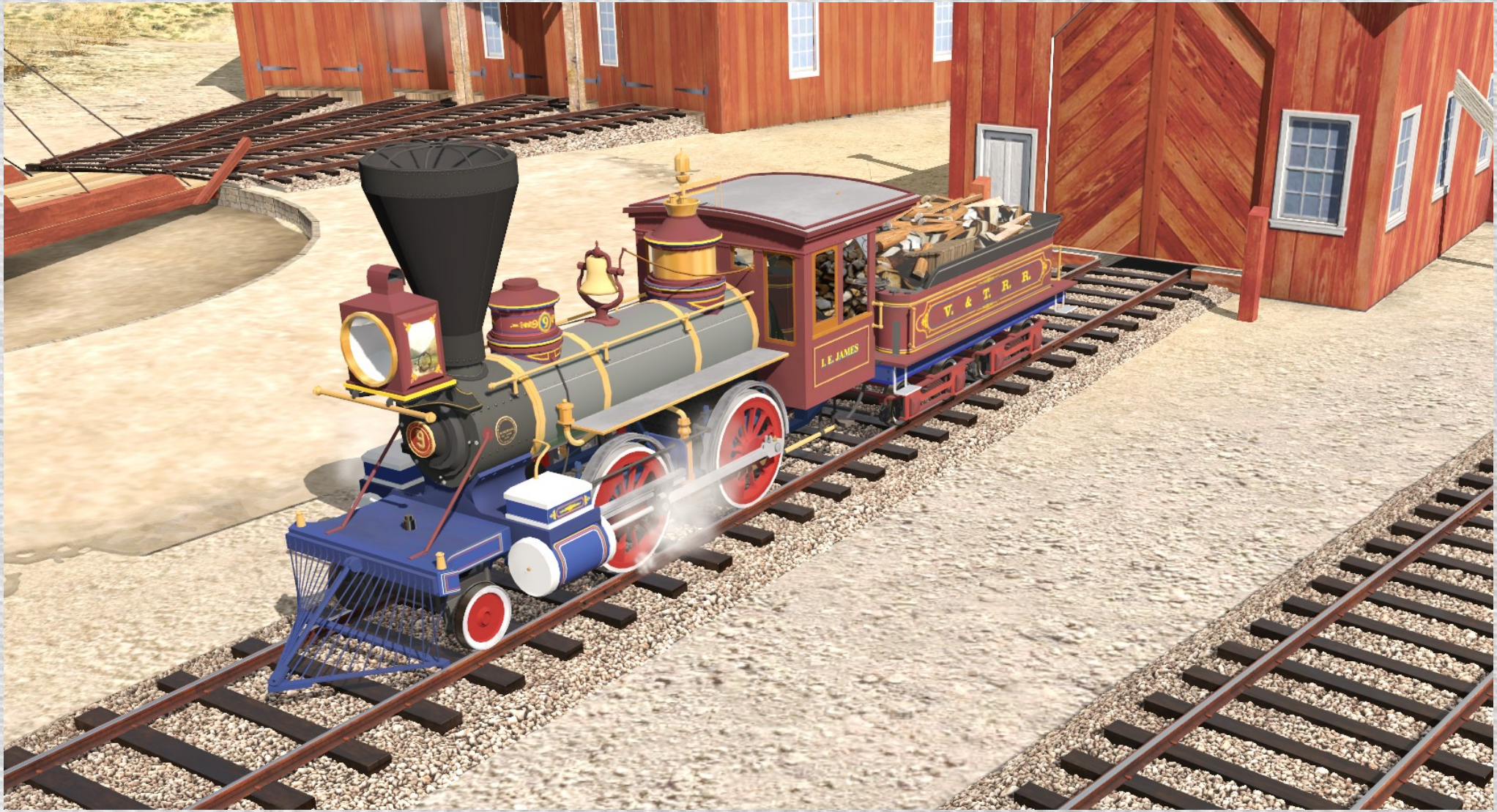
“56 8-ton cars and 9 10-ton cars take ore to the mills each day” - Daily Territorial Enterprise

September 25th, 1870



- Track laying started to Clear Creek flume

October 1st, 1870



- I.E. James is in service

October 6th, 1870



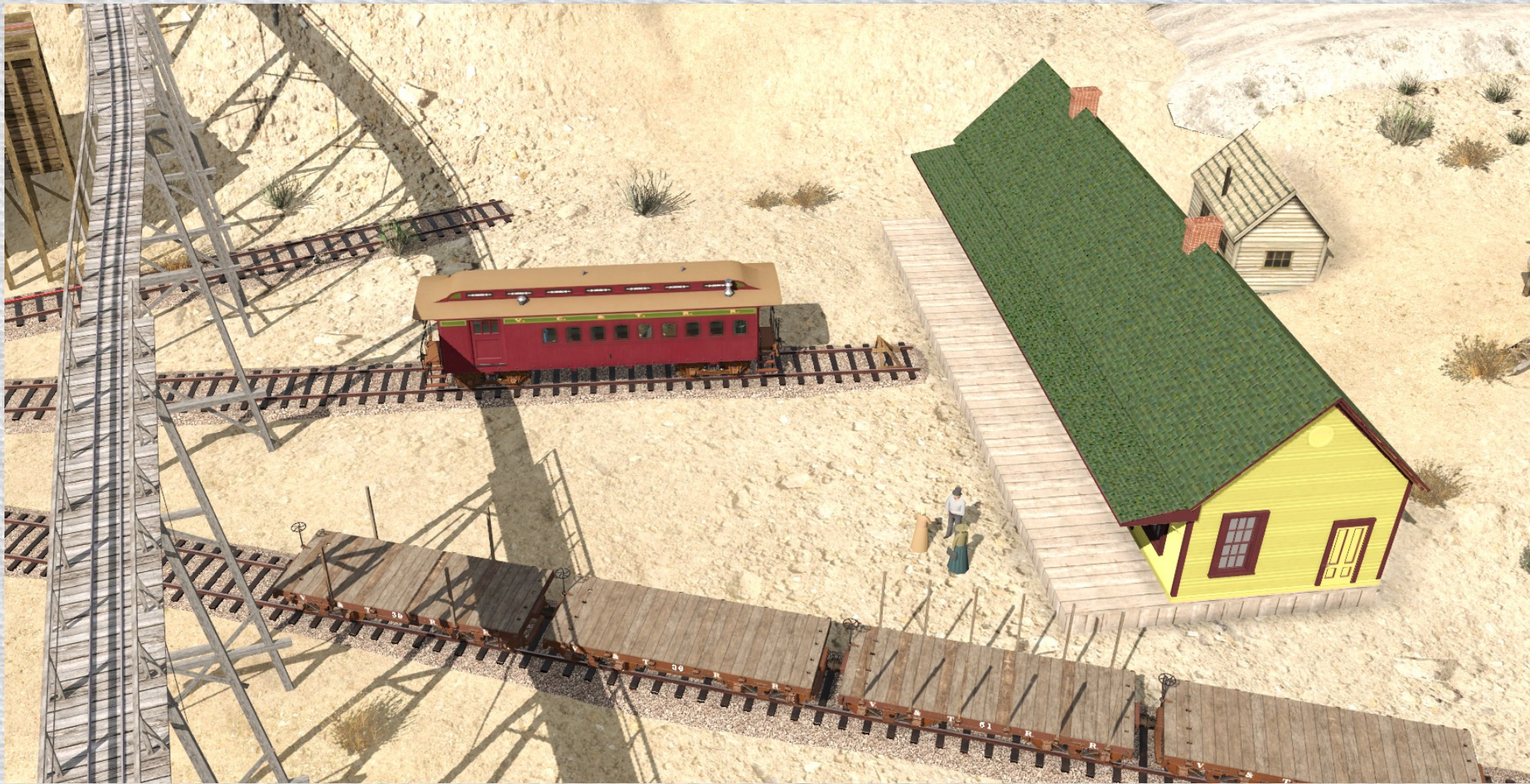
- Nevada is in service

October 7th, 1870



- Humboldt is complete and ready for trials

By mid-October, 1870



- VC passenger depot is in service